

CISTERCIAN STUDIES SERIES: NUMBER TWO HUNDRED SIXTY-FOUR

Saint Æthelwold of Winchester

**The Old English Rule
of Saint Benedict**

with Related Old English Texts

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of Saint Benedict**

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Translated and Introduced by
Jacob Riyeff



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For Sr. Pascaline Coff, OSB

*Fructus autem iustitiae
in pace seminatur facientibus pacem.*

James 3:18

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Abbreviations of Authors and Works Cited

- Bede
HE Bede the Venerable (673–735)
The Ecclesiastical History of the English People.
Edited and translated by Bertram Colgrave and
R. A. B. Mynors. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969.
- Blackwell *Blackwell Encyclopedia of Anglo-Saxon England*.
Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1999.
- CS Cistercian Studies Series
- CSEL Corpus scriptorium ecclesiasticorum latinorum.
Vienna, 1866– .
- Fry *RB 1980: The Rule of Saint Benedict*. Edited by Timothy
Fry. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1981.
- Gregory
Moral Gregory the Great (540–604)
Moralia in Iob. Edited by Marcus Adriaen. Corpus
Christianorum, Series Latina 143, 143A, 143B.
Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 2005. English transla-
tion in *Moral Reflections on the Book of Job*. 6 vols.
Translated by Brian Kerns. CS 249, 257, 258, 259, 260,
261. Collegeville, MN: Cistercian Publications 2014–
2017. (Vols. 5 and 6 forthcoming.)
- Reg past *Regula Pastoralis (Pastoral Care)*. *Regola pastorale =*
Regula pastoralis. Edited by Giuseppe Cremascoli.
Rome: Città nuova, 2008. English translation in
Pastoral Care. Ancient Christian Writers 2. Translated
by Henry Davis. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1978.

- Gretsch
DRB *Mechtild Gretsch*
Die Regula Sancti Benedicti in England und ihre altenglische Übersetzung. Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1973.
- IF *The Intellectual Foundations of the English Benedictine Reform.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.
- Reform “The Benedictine Rule in Old English: A Document of Bishop Æthelwold’s Reform Politics.” In *Words, Texts, and Manuscripts: Studies in Anglo-Saxon Culture Presented to Helmut Gneuss on the Occasion of his Sixty-Fifth Birthday.* Edited by Michael Korhammer. Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1992. 131–58.
- Trans “Æthelwold’s Translation of the *Regula Sancti Benedicti* and its Latin Exemplar.” *Anglo-Saxon England* 3 (1974): 125–51.
- RB *RB 1980: The Rule of Saint Benedict.* Edited by Timothy Fry. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1981.
- RB 1980 Latin text from Fry
- Schröer Arnold Schröer, ed. *Die angelsächsischen Prosabearbeitungen der Benediktinerregel.* 2nd ed. rev. by Helmut Gneuss. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1964.
- Smaragdus
Comm Smaragdus of St. Mihiel (ca. 760–ca. 830)
Commentaria in regulam sancti Benedicti; Commentary on the Rule of St. Benedict. Translated by David Barry. CS 212. Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 2007.
- Expositio *Smaragdi abbatis Expositio in Regulam S. Benedicti.* Edited by K. Hallinger, et al. *Corpus consuetudinum monasticarum* 8. Sieburg, Germany: F. Schmitt, 1974.
- Vulgate *Biblia Sacra: Iuxta vulgatem versionem.* Edited by Robert Weber. 2 vols. 3rd ed. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1983.

- Whitelock "An Account of King Edgar's Establishment of Monasteries." In *Councils and Synods with other Documents Relating to the English Church: I, A. D. 871–1204*. Edited by Dorothy Whitelock. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981. 142–54.

Introduction

I. A Translation of a Translation?

Old English is the name given to the ancestor of Modern English as it was spoken and written ca. 450–1100 (roughly the “Anglo-Saxon period”). During the latter half of the tenth century, the Latin *Regula Sancti Benedicti* (hereafter, the Rule) was translated into Old English, and this text has come down in five complete manuscripts (including one updating of the Old English into early Middle English) and four additional fragments.¹ It is widely agreed upon by scholars that Saint Æthelwold of Winchester (904x9–984),² abbot of Abingdon and bishop of Winchester, is responsible for this Old English translation.³ While a faithful translation overall, the Old English Rule cannot be described accurately as literal, for it contains a large number of Æthelwold’s additions as well as some compressions and omissions of Benedict’s Latin text. And yet the Old English Rule has received relatively little study from scholars of either monasticism or Old English literature. Its only edition remains Arnold Schröer’s German-language edition (1885; reissued in 1964), and it has never previously

¹ Oxford, Corpus Christi College, MS 197 (full Old English text [hereafter, OE]); Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 178 (full OE text); London, British Library, Cotton Tiberius A. iii (fragmentary OE text); London, British Library, Cotton Titus A. iv (full OE text); Wells Cathedral Library, MS 7 (fragmentary OE text); Durham Cathedral Library, B.IV. 24 (full OE text); Gloucester Cathedral Library, MS 35 (fragmentary OE text); London, British Library, Cotton Faustina A. x (full OE text); London, British Library, Cotton Claudius D. iii (full Middle English redaction of OE text). I follow the list of manuscripts on Gretsche, IF, 227.

² In such date references, “x” denotes a span of years in which an event could have taken place rather than a range of years over which an event did take place, denoted by a hyphen.

³ For the attribution to Æthelwold, see Schröer, xiii–xviii, 269–72.

been translated. Presumably this state of affairs has arisen because the text is a translation of a well-edited Latin text that is widely available in a number of Modern English translations. However, given the importance of the Old English Rule as the first translation of the Rule into a European vernacular language, exemplifying the strategies used to promote the tenth-century Benedictine Reform in England among religious as well as laity, witnessing to the development and standardization of written English in the early medieval period, and providing a window (however clouded) into the spiritual and pastoral concerns of a central figure in the Anglo-Saxon church and early medieval Benedictine monasticism more generally, the text deserves a wider audience than it has previously enjoyed.⁴

This translation is therefore primarily intended for two distinct, but at times overlapping, audiences. The first comprises monastics and others sympathetic to monastic practice and observance who are not equipped to study the Old English Rule in its original language, given that the comprehension of Old English requires specialized study. Whether these readers are engaged in scholarly work on the monastic tradition or are seeking personal edification, I have attempted to make the present volume accessible to those whose primary concerns are the traditions of monasticism and their religious implications, in keeping with Cistercian Publications' mission. While students of monastic culture who are not specialists in the classical languages Latin, Greek, and Syriac have increasingly found their needs for modern translations met, translations from medieval vernacular languages are still often neglected.⁵ Attention to such

⁴ For brevity's sake, I use the word *England* here to refer to the English kingdom, which varied in its boundaries throughout the period we call "Anglo-Saxon England." However, in Æthelwold's day this kingdom was coalescing into more or less what we now think of as England. For a recent examination of the details of this process, see George Molyneux, *The Formation of the English Kingdom in the Tenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

⁵ Exceptions to this trend of inattention to the Old English vernacular tradition include Benedicta Ward, trans., *Christ Within Me: Prayers and Meditations from the Anglo-Saxon Tradition* (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 2008); the *Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library* series, which includes a number of Old English volumes; and the *Classics of Western Spirituality* volume *Anglo-Saxon Spirituality: Selected Writings*, trans. Robert Boenig (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2001).

work is particularly important in Old English, for, earlier than other European peoples, the Anglo-Saxons employed the vernacular in legal and ecclesiastical matters, producing a large corpus of vernacular homilies, prayers, poetry, chronicles, charters, laws, and translations of philosophical and religious texts. A number of these texts bear directly and indirectly on monastic culture and tradition.

The Old English Rule of course speaks directly to monastic issues as a witness to Æthelwold's enterprising use, as bishop and abbot, of the vernacular to forward his program of reform. The very fact of the Rule's translation and dispersal throughout England in the tenth and eleventh centuries demonstrates the value of the vernacular within the sociocultural milieu of late Anglo-Saxon England for expanding the influence of reformed Benedictine monasticism.⁶ However, the text also offers a rare opportunity to see how an early medieval abbot and bishop understood the Rule and how he thought to welcome those without Latin training into its spiritual and disciplinary charism.

Æthelwold had a powerful command of Latin and translated the Rule remarkably accurately. However, he also made a significant number of additions—inserting his own interpretations, clarifications, and emphases throughout (without marking them as such), while also incorporating interpretations and commentary from the ninth-century Carolingian abbot Smaragdus of Saint-Mihiel. Æthelwold's translation, therefore, offers the student of monasticism a reasonably reliable text of the Rule, even as, simultaneously, his additions clarify how this abbot and bishop received and sought to teach it in his own time and place.

The second audience for whom the present volume is intended is students of Old English (both beginning and advanced) in search of a translation that can serve as a bridge into the Old English Rule. Therefore, I have provided a Modern English text that remains faithful enough to the original to facilitate the deciphering of the Old English as well as an apparatus that points to the additions and alterations Æthelwold made to the Rule's Latin text. Whether one's area is manuscript studies, lexicography, cultural studies, history,

⁶ The importance of the Rule for Anglo-Saxon England as evinced by the Old English Rule and its different versions can be found in Jerome Oetgen, "The Old English Rule of St. Benedict," *The American Benedictine Review* 26 (1975): 38–53.

religious studies, or literary studies, this translation is intended to open up the Old English Rule as a text that can now be readily accessed and assimilated in the interest of larger interpretive goals. Surely greater study of the earliest vernacular translation of one of the early medieval period's most important texts, as executed by one of the most prominent figures of the Anglo-Saxon church, will bear fruit if Anglo-Saxonists carefully tend to its details.

These two audiences are of course not mutually exclusive, because, at least in part, uniting them helps to (re)imagine the earliest people, religious institutions, religious practices, and language that we call English.⁷ Whether the concern stems from a committed religious perspective that seeks spiritual guidance today from a past religious figure, from a dispassionate scholarly perspective seeking greater historical understanding, or from somewhere between, the Anglo-Saxons and their literature have long been a sounding board for how latter-day Anglophones understand their origins and traditions. Whether this search seeks to return to the sources, to catalogue them disinterestedly, or carefully to avoid repeating their mistakes, understanding of these sources and their contributions to posterity will be fuller the more widely and deeply one delves into them.

II. Æthelwold of Winchester and the English Benedictine Reform

As is true of many medieval figures, a number of details concerning the life of Saint Æthelwold of Winchester remain unknown. Yet a number of extant texts shed light on the major events of his life, his religious and political role in the England of his day, and something of his personality. In addition to the Latin life composed after his death by his disciple Wulfstan of Winchester (fl. 996), Æthelwold is mentioned in a variety of later texts bearing on the history of the kingdom—e.g., *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*—and the monastic houses

⁷ For a recent and thorough review of the ways later thinkers of various stripes have used the idea of Anglo-Saxon England to understand their own pasts, presents, and futures, see John D. Niles, *The Idea of Anglo-Saxon England 1066–1901: Remembering, Forgetting, Deciphering, and Renewing the Past* (Malden, MA: Wiley Blackwell, 2015).

that he founded—e.g., the *Liber Eliensis* from Ely. Additionally, a number of surviving texts in Latin and Old English can be attributed to Æthelwold with greater and lesser certainty.

Regarding Æthelwold's childhood, Wulfstan reports in his *Vita Sancti Ætheluuoldi* only that Æthelwold was born in Winchester to noble parents.⁸ On the basis of the date of Æthelwold's ordination to the priesthood (934x39), Michael Lapidge and Michael Winterbottom estimate his birth as occurring in 904x9. Once old enough, the young Æthelwold went to King Æthelstan's (893/4–939) court, where he began his education and pursued a secular career before he was ordained to minor orders and the priesthood by Bishop Ælfheah of Winchester. After his ordination, the king sent Æthelwold to Glastonbury, where he became dean and studied grammar, poetry, and the fathers under the then-abbot Dunstan (d. 988). (Dunstan became another influential proponent of the Benedictine Reform movement championed by Æthelwold.) At some point during his tenure at Glastonbury and during the reign of King Eadred (d. 955), Wulfstan records, Æthelwold desired to go to the continent to learn more of monastic observance, but the king's mother, Eadgifu (d. in or after 966), convinced Eadred to make him stay. This is one of many examples of the royal family's apparently vested (and influential) interest in Æthelwold's career.

Once Eadred had prevented Æthelwold from going abroad, he made Æthelwold abbot of the refounded abbey at Abingdon, ushering in a new phase of Æthelwold's career in the English church. Æthelwold brought monks from Glastonbury, Winchester, and London together in his community, which was enriched by an endowment from the king and gifts from the queen. Though Æthelwold had been prevented from venturing overseas, he apparently set out to create an observant monastic community and even sent one of his monks to Fleury to study the observance of the Rule at a reformed continental monastery.

⁸ Except where otherwise noted, the account of Æthelwold's life presented here is based on the introduction to and text of Wulfstan of Winchester, *The Life of St. Æthelwold*, edited by Michael Lapidge and Michael Winterbottom (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991). The volume contains a full account of Æthelwold's life and milieu. For a collection of essays on various facets of Æthelwold's life, career, and influence, see *Bishop Æthelwold: His Career and Influence*, ed. Barbara Yorke (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell Press, 1988).

The close connection between the king and Æthelwold that had made this experiment possible grew even closer under Eadred's successor, King Edgar (943x44–975, r. 959–975), whom Æthelwold probably served as tutor before his appointment as abbot of Abingdon. In 963, Æthelwold was consecrated bishop of Winchester, and in 964 he replaced the secular canons at the Old Minster (his cathedral church) with Benedictine monks, with the support of King Edgar and a letter of Pope John XII. This was the first monastic cathedral chapter in western Europe, and the precedent set here spread throughout England, affecting ecclesiastical organization there until the Dissolution of the Monasteries under Henry VIII (1491–1547) in 1536–1541. With this expulsion of canons and installation of monks in the cathedral church of Winchester, added to the intimate ties between monastics and Crown as well as the urge to reform monastic customs and liturgy along continental lines, the distinguishing traits of the English Benedictine Reform coalesced.

The Benedictine Reform

While the precise details of the chronology, motivations, and extent of the tenth-century English Benedictine Reform continue to be debated, the general features are basically agreed upon.⁹ Saints Æthel-

⁹ For the standard account of the Benedictine Reform in Anglo-Saxon England, see, e.g., David Knowles, *The Monastic Order in England: A History of its Development from the Times of St. Dunstan to the Fourth Lateran Council, 940–1216*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), 31–56; Eric John, "The King and the Monks in the Tenth-Century Reformation," in *Orbis Britanniae and Other Studies* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1966), 154–80; and the essays in David Parsons, ed., *Tenth-century Studies: Essays in Commemoration of the Millennium of the Council of Winchester and the "Regularis Concordia"* (London: Phillimore, 1975). For revisionary arguments concerning the Benedictine Reform, see, e.g., Julia Barrow, "The Chronology of the Benedictine 'Reform,'" in *Edgar, King of the English 959–975: New Interpretations*, ed. Donald Scragg (Rochester, NY: Boydell and Brewer, 2008); Julia Barrow, "The Ideology of the Tenth-Century English Benedictine 'Reform,'" in *Challenging the Boundaries of Medieval History: The Legacy of Timothy Reuter*, ed. Patricia Skinner (Turnholt: Brepols, 2009), 141–54; and Christopher A. Jones, "Ælfric and the Limits of Reform," in *A Companion to Ælfric*, ed. Mary Swan and Hugh Magennis (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 67–108. For an overall assessment of the current view of the Benedictine Reform through the eleventh century, see Tracey-Anne Cooper, *Monk-Bishops and the English Benedic-*

wold, Dunstan, Oswald (d. 992), and their supporters sought to establish strict observance of the Rule (known in England before this time but not universally or exclusively observed in monastic communities) by celibate monks and nuns, to free monastic establishments from secular control and their lands from alienation, and to establish a strenuous liturgical observance.

As with reform movements generally, the Benedictine Reform looked back to what was understood to be a better past. This past was complex. The Reform sought monastic ideals in the apostolic community, in the Roman mission to England in the seventh century spearheaded by Saint Gregory the Great and carried out by Saint Augustine of Canterbury (both monks), and in the first flowering of monasticism in England in the great age of Bede. For pragmatic guidance concerning how to effect reform, however, the three primary figures of the English Benedictine Reform looked to the contemporaneous reforms on the continent, specifically those of Cluny and Gorze. These reforms in turn modeled themselves on the particular past represented by the reforms instituted by Saint Benedict of Aniane in the early ninth century under Charlemagne's son, Louis the Pious.¹⁰ Dunstan had resided at St. Peter's in Ghent (which had adopted the reforms of Gorze) during his exile, while Oswald had made his profession at Fleury (following Oda, his uncle and the archbishop of Canterbury).

In expelling the canons from Winchester cathedral and replacing them with monks in 964, Æthelwold insisted on a new vision of community life in the English church. While groups of canons staffed cathedrals throughout the Western church, Wulfstan described the Winchester canons as living dissolutely, having wives but also abandoning these wives for new ones, and neglecting to say Mass. Thus replacing the canons was in part simply a matter of establishing a certain rigor of discipline in the communal religious bodies of the English church. However, the reformers were addressing another systemic issue at the same time.

tine Reform Movement: Reading London, BL, Cotton Tiberius A. iii in its Manuscript Context (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 2015), esp. chap. 2.

¹⁰ For a concise and poignant summary of the Carolingian reforms, the continental reforms based upon them, and these reforms' collective influence on the English Benedictine Reform, see Jones, "Ælfric and the Limits of Reform," 76–78.

While the reformers looked back to an idealized monastic past in England (especially prominent in the anonymous Old English text known as “King Edgar’s Establishment of Monasteries,” now thought to have been written by Æthelwold himself; see Appendix 3), monasticism in pre-reform England was rarely as rigorous as the reformers imagined. Monasteries were often overseen by lay superiors whose positions and incomes were hereditary, and many of the so-called monks held private property. This was not necessarily aberrant behavior—it appears to have been the norm in pre-reform English monasticism.¹¹ Despite any misconceptions the reformers had about the past, however, their vision for the future of religious life in England was one in which a rigorous observance of the Rule included the communal holding of property among celibate monks.

But such an overhaul of the tenurial system in England needed royal backing, especially since many religious communities’ superiors and members came from powerful, land-owning families. So King Edgar’s support was essential to the reformers’ program. Especially in “King Edgar’s Establishment of Monasteries” (Appendix 3) and the *Regularis Concordia*, the code of observance intended for universal adoption throughout English monasteries, the role of the king and queen is stressed. Removing ecclesiastical lands from secular domination (*saecularium prioratus*) became a means to assure rigorous monastic observance and communal ownership. Yet the only way to achieve such freedom from local secular power in early medieval English society was to place the monasteries under royal power (*dominium*). In return, monks and nuns provided spiritual aid to the royal family and the kingdom through their prayers and through centers of learning and stability. Thus the intimate and reciprocal relationship between the English Crown and monasteries was institutionalized under Æthelwold’s direction. It should be noted, however, that while the close connection of the Crown and

¹¹ In this vein, it appears that the Cluniac reform was in part based on the same principle of communalizing an establishment’s endowment as a first step. For this particular argument, see John, “The King and the Monks.” The following paragraph draws on the same source. For a thorough reassessment of Anglo-Saxon monasticism between the conversion and the tenth-century Reform, which probes the nature of religious communities’ links with the secular world, see Sarah Foote, *Monastic Life in Anglo-Saxon England, c. 600–900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

ecclesiastical power continued in the next generation of the reform, there was what D. J. V. Fisher has referred to as an “anti-monastic reaction” on the part of secular land owners after King Edgar’s death, which led to a certain circumspection among these later writers regarding this union and royal power generally.¹²

Regardless of later developments, with royal support Æthelwold followed up his expulsion of canons at the Old Minster by expelling the canons at Winchester’s New Minster in the same year. The exceptional “New Minster Foundation Charter,” a lavish and illuminated charter that promoted the reform’s monastic and royal ideology and that was probably composed by Æthelwold himself, commemorated the refoundation of New Minster in high style.¹³ By the beginning of the 970s, Æthelwold had also refounded abbeys at Milton Abbas, Chertsey, Ely, and Peterborough and founded a new monastery at Thorney. His role in refounding and founding monasteries demonstrates his indefatigable efforts at spreading reformed monastic observance throughout England (see map 2, p. xiii).

In addition to these efforts and others,¹⁴ Æthelwold is also now widely recognized as the primary author of the *Regularis Concordia*, the document intended to regularize monastic observance throughout the English kingdom and drawn up after a synod at Winchester around 973.¹⁵ We do not know how widely the text was adopted, but

¹² D. J. V. Fisher, “The Anti-Monastic Reaction in the Reign of Edward the Martyr,” *The Cambridge Historical Journal* 10, no. 3 (1952): 254–70. For more recent studies of how these events affected the second generation of reformers, see, e.g., *Ælfric’s Letter to the Monks of Eynsham*, ed. Christopher A. Jones (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 47, 49, as well as Andrew Rabin, “Holy Bodies, Legal Matters: Reaction and Reform in Ælfric’s *Eugenia* and the Ely Privilege,” *Studies in Philology* 110, no. 2 (2013): 220–65.

¹³ The text of the “New Minster Foundation Charter” can be found in Dorothy Whitelock, ed., *Councils and Synods with other Documents Relating to the English Church: I, A.D. 871–1204* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), 119–33.

¹⁴ The most thorough explorations of the texts possibly attributable to Æthelwold, and so of the intellectual contribution of the Benedictine reform to Anglo-Saxon literate culture more generally, is Gretsch, IF.

¹⁵ For an account of Æthelwold’s authorship of the *Regularis Concordia*, see esp. Michael Lapidge, “Æthelwold as Scholar and Teacher,” in *Bishop Æthelwold*, 89–117, at 98–100. Reflecting our increasingly nuanced picture of the Benedictine Reform, D. J. Dales has argued for the reevaluation of Dunstan’s integral role in the compilation of the *Regularis Concordia* and the cooperative nature of the

we do know that at least Æthelwold's student Ælfric of Eynsham (ca. 950–ca. 1010), a major monastic author in his own right, made an abridged version of the *Regularis Concordia* for his own monks naming Æthelwold as the compiler of the larger work.¹⁶ Regardless of how widely the *Regularis Concordia* was adopted, it demonstrates the central importance of the public and communal celebration of an extended liturgy for the ideal of reformed monastic life, since it draws on a number of continental sources from the documents of the Carolingian reforms of Saint Benedict of Aniane to the contemporary customs at Fleury and Ghent. Æthelwold explicitly reveals in the *prohemium* to the work that advisors from these two continental monasteries advised him.

In addition to its importance for outlining the yearly, weekly, and daily observance of the liturgy in the monastery for the Divine Office and (less so) the Mass, the *Regularis Concordia* also demonstrates the vital and official role the Crown was intended to play in monastic life by calling for repeated prayers for the royal house. In combination with his refounding and founding of monasteries and other important achievements, Æthelwold's plan for the daily liturgical life of England's monks and nuns in the *Regularis Concordia* assured his status as a central creative force behind the Benedictine Reform, a coordinated movement that would persist for decades after its origins in the 960s and 970s.¹⁷

movement more generally ("The Spirit of the *Regularis Concordia* and the Hand of St. Dunstan," in *St. Dunstan: His Life, Times, and Cult*, ed. Nigel Ramsay, Margaret Sparks, and Tim Tatton-Brown [Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell Press, 1992], 45–56). However, even here Dales admits that "Because the reform of the monasteries was only a part of Dunstan's work as archbishop . . . , it was perhaps inevitable that much of the detailed collation of materials for the final document of the *Regularis Concordia* was masterminded by Æthelwold who was its draughtsman; these wider considerations also help to explain his leading role as the spearhead of the practical monastic reforms and foundations during Dunstan's primacy" (55).

¹⁶ For this text, see *Ælfric's Letter*.

¹⁷ For an account of the second and third generations of the Benedictine Reform, see Cooper, *Monk-Bishops*. Æthelwold's influence carried over into the reign of King Edgar's successors, (less under) Edward the Martyr (r. 975/978) and (more under) Æthelred (r. 978–1013, 1014–1016), for which, see Molyneux, *Formation*, 190, and, for Æthelwold's involvement in tenth-century politics more generally

After such wide-ranging and assiduous efforts, Æthelwold died on August 1, 984. Yet that was not the end of his presence in the English church. After a reported vision and miraculous healing, his remains were translated from his resting place in the Old Minster crypt to the church's choir on September 10, 996. While his cult never spread widely, he was canonized by his community at Winchester.¹⁸ A number of monasteries and churches in England, primarily those associated with Winchester in some way, commemorated him, and parts of the Mass and office for the feasts of his deposition and his translation are extant.¹⁹ Though not widely venerated as a saint today, Æthelwold is still found in the current *Martyrologium Romanum* under August 1, the day of his deposition: "At Winchester in England, the deposition of Saint Æthelwold, bishop, who composed the *Regularis Concordia* in order to renew monastic discipline, which he had learned from Saint Dunstan."²⁰

as well, see Barbara Yorke, "Æthelwold and Tenth-Century Politics," in *Bishop Æthelwold*, 63–88. For in-depth studies of what is known of the Divine Office in Anglo-Saxon England, see Richard W. Pfaff, ed., *The Liturgical Books of Anglo-Saxon England* (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1995); Richard W. Pfaff, *The Liturgy in Medieval England: A History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); and Jesse D. Billett, *The Divine Office in Anglo-Saxon England 597–c. 1000* (London: Henry Bradshaw Society, 2014).

¹⁸ For an account of Æthelwold's cult and how it developed, see Wulfstan, *Life of St. Æthelwold*, xcix–clxvii. For an account of the anachronistic ways in which later scholars received Wulfstan's *vita*, resulting in an emphasis on Æthelwold's harshness as a teacher and master in twentieth-century scholarship, see Alison Hudson, "From Medieval Saint to Modern *Bête Noire*: The Case of the *Vitae Æthelwoldi*," *Postmedieval* 4 (2013): 284–95. A recent and nuanced study on the role of obedience in agency and the formation of identity in Anglo-Saxon England takes one of these moments of perceived harshness in Wulfstan's *vita* as its point of departure; see Katherine O'Brien O'Keefe, *Stealing Obedience: Narratives of Agency and Identity in Later Anglo-Saxon England* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012).

¹⁹ These are edited and translated in Wulfstan, *Life of St. Æthelwold*, cxiii–cxxxvi.

²⁰ *Vintoniae in Anglia, depositio sancti Ethelwoldi, episcopi, qui, Regularem Concordiam illam exaravit ad monasticam disciplinam redintegrandam, quam a sancto Dunstano didicerat* (*Martyrologium Romanum: ex decreto sacrosancti oecumenici Concilii Vaticani II instauratum auctoritate Ioannis Pauli PP. II promulgatum*, Editio Typica [Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2001], *sub die* "1 Augusti").

III. The Old English Translation of the Rule

The Old English Rule has come down in nine manuscripts, five of which contain the entire text.²¹ On the basis of documentary, stylistic, and philological evidence, scholars widely accept that Æthelwold is the translator responsible for this work.²² A passage in the *Liber Eliensis*, a twelfth-century chronicle from Ely based on earlier documents (one of which is extant and the other of which dates to the late tenth century), declares,

King Edgar and Ælfthryth gave to the holy Æthelwold the estate called Sudbourne (which once belonged to a certain comes named Scule) and the chirography pertaining to that estate on the condition that he translate the *Regula S. Benedicti* from Latin into English; which he did. Subsequently, however, the blessed Æthelwold donated the estate in question (together with the chirograph) to Ely.²³

Many scholars have taken this passage to establish the outer dates for Æthelwold's translation of the Rule, since it appears on the surface that the translation was done after Edgar was married (964x965) and before his death (975). "Edgar's Establishment of Monasteries" suggests a similar range of dates.²⁴ Serving as an accompanying text

²¹ See n. 1 above.

²² For a thorough treatment of the evidence for this attribution, see Gretsch, IF, 226–60.

²³ Translation from Gretsch, IF, 230 n. 10. *Æadgarus rex et Alfreð dederunt sancto Æðelwoldo manerium, quod dicitur Sudburn, et cyrographum quod pertinebat, quod comes, qui dicebatur Scule, dudum possederat, eo pacto ut ille regulam sancti Benedicti in Anglicum idioma de Latino transferret. Qui sic fecit. Deinde vero beatus Æðelwoldus dedit eandem terram sancte Æðeldreðe cum cyrographo eiusdem terre* (E. O. Blake, ed., *Liber Eliensis* [London: Royal Historical Society, 1962]). The *Liber Eliensis* is translated as a whole in Janet Fairweather, trans., *Liber Eliensis: A History of the Isle of Ely from the Seventh Century to the Twelfth* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2005).

²⁴ Scholars now generally accept Æthelwold as the author of "King Edgar's Establishment of Monasteries" in large part because of Dorothy Whitelock's argument in "The Authorship of the Account of King Edgar's Establishment of the Monasteries," in *Philological Essays: Studies in Old and Middle English Language and Literature in Honour of Herbert Dean Meritt*, ed. James L. Rosier (The Hague:

to the Old English Rule (though only extant in a single copy), this text also mentions Edgar's wife Ælfthryth and likewise does not mention the king's death. However, Mechthild Gretsch has marshaled a wealth of evidence (none of it beyond doubt) that Æthelwold may have translated the Rule much earlier in his career (the 940s or early 950s), circulating it within his monastic communities at Glastonbury and Abingdon, and merely published the work at the request of the king and queen in exchange for the estate at Sudbourne.²⁵ Regardless of these finer points, it seems certain that Æthelwold translated the Rule sometime in the middle of the tenth century and that this project was supported by the royal family.

We do not know what manuscript(s) of the Rule Æthelwold used as his exemplar, but Gretsch has demonstrated that the Latin text belonged to the *receptus* recension.²⁶ Since the pioneering work of Ludwig Traube, scholars have recognized that the Rule has come down to us in three recensions: the *purus*, found earliest in St. Gall, Stiftsbibliothek 914, and thought to be most closely based on Benedict's original; the *interpolatus*, found in the oldest surviving manuscript of the Rule, Oxford, Bodleian Library Hatton 48, and exhibiting a high degree of variants *vis-à-vis* the *purus* recension; and the *receptus*, the predominant recension throughout Europe from the ninth to the nineteenth century, formed by mixing the two other recensions in a variety of ways.²⁷

In England, as was the case throughout Europe, the *interpolatus* recension was widespread in the seventh and eighth centuries. With Benedict of Aniane's reforms, the *purus* recension was promulgated as the authoritative text of the Rule in Carolingian monasteries, yet we have no evidence that this recension ever reached England during the medieval period. Once the *purus* recension was distributed and copied, however, it was mixed with readings from the *interpolatus*

Mouton, 1970), 125–36. Whitelock's findings are further substantiated in Gretsch, IF, 230–33.

²⁵ Gretsch, IF, 233–60.

²⁶ See Gretsch, DRB and Trans.

²⁷ For a more detailed account of the three recensions of the Rule, see *RB 1980: The Rule of Saint Benedict*, ed. Timothy Fry (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1981), 102–11, and Gretsch, IF, 241–51.

recension to form the *receptus* recension, and so these latter manuscripts exhibit a wide variety of readings from the two other recensions as well as original readings. Variants present in Æthelwold's text make clear that his exemplar(s) belonged to this last recension, though no manuscript of the Rule from Anglo-Saxon England matches all the variants found in the Old English Rule.²⁸

As with the Rule itself, Æthelwold's "text" as a singular entity is somewhat of a fiction. As a group, the nine extant manuscripts exhibit a number of variations in spelling and word choice readings, and, more significantly, though all but one manuscript contain a text clearly intended for male monks, every manuscript shows signs in its Latin or Old English texts (or both) of deriving from a version intended for nuns.²⁹ Though some of this evidence comes in the form of erased feminine forms that have been written over, more substantial changes take place in some chapters. Most substantially, two chapters in one copy have been replaced by translations of texts other than the Rule, which I include here as Appendix One and Appendix Two. These chapters clearly address the concerns of female communities. There currently exists no consensus among scholars as to whether there was an original copy that was masculine or feminine in form or whether there were two initial texts produced, or whether Æthelwold or a later adapter inserted the substantial changes. In any case, the evidence seems to point toward an original masculine copy that was later adapted by someone other than Æthelwold.

The intricacies of the arguments concerning the development of the text(s) are beyond the scope of this volume, but it is important for the reader of any text composed before the invention of printing to recognize that the single text presented in a modern edition or translation rarely reflects the manuscript evidence. This generality

²⁸ For a detailed examination of all the variants and their corresponding translations, see Gretsche, DRB, 129–56.

²⁹ For the most detailed analysis of this issue and its implications, see Rohini Jayatilaka, "The Old English Benedictine Rule: Writing for Women and Men," *Anglo-Saxon England* 32 (2003): 147–87. The material in this paragraph draws on this study. However, see also Julie Smith's recent contribution to the debate, which argues for the late introduction of the feminine version based on a historical examination of audience in "'I Consider Translation Very Rational': A Vernacular Translation of the Benedictine Rule in the Tenth-Century English Monastic Reforms," *American Benedictine Review* 67, no. 1 (2016): 58–80.

is particularly true in the case of the Old English Rule. Despite the complexity of the manuscript witnesses, in this volume I simply translate Schröer's text, as it is the only edition available, includes a significant number of variant readings from manuscripts other than its base text, and presents the two alternative chapters as appendices.

These textual matters aside, Æthelwold's translation is by and large accurate—it appears that there are only one or two places where he did not understand the Rule's Latin, and even there it may be simply that he wanted to change the text for his own milieu.³⁰ As may be deduced from the largely straightforward style of the translation's rhetoric, the explanatory and interpretive nature of the numerous additions that Æthelwold inserts into the text, and his own comments in "King Edgar's Establishment of Monasteries," it is evident that he sought to make the Rule more accessible and more readily understandable to a population that had interest in the religious and spiritual matters upon which the Rule sheds light but who lacked the skill (or time?) to comprehend the Rule in Latin. In this, Æthelwold's project is not that far off from the goals of a number of modern translations of patristic, monastic, and other religious works, especially in light of the contemporary monastic, oblate, and allied communities that form significant audiences for such material. With the current age's fall-off in the study of Latin and other dead languages, many members of such communities are aided in their religious pursuits by translated texts—even those with some knowledge of the original languages.

IV. Æthelwold's Old English Style

In general, Æthelwold offers his Old English reader a translation balanced successfully between overly literal calques on the one hand and free translations that depart from the literal sense of the Rule on the other. His is, in the main, a close but idiomatic translation into his native tongue. Two significant exceptions to this trend do exist, however.

³⁰ See Gretsches, *Trans*, 147 n. 5, and *Reform* 131–38.

At the end of the Prologue, while Æthelwold never strays wildly from the literal sense of the Rule, he presents a rhetorically embellished passage that—in order to exhibit the stylistic features he marshals—has to depart from the Latin more than is usual.³¹ While I allow for a certain complexity in my own translation of this passage, I do not attempt to reproduce Æthelwold's stylistic features. He employs what has been called "rhythmical prose" (a stylistic feature reminiscent of Old English poetic meter used at times by Ælfric and Wulfstan [d. 1023]), paranomasia, alliteration, doublets, parallel phrases, rare words, and neologisms, all to finish the Rule's exhortative Prologue in a rhetorically powerful and memorable way. Compared with this passage, much of the translation is sober and mild. On the other hand, chapters eight through twenty, which lay out the liturgical program of Benedict's monastic community, linger closer to the Latin to the point of being unidiomatic.³² In particular, here Æthelwold translates Latin ablative absolutes with dative absolutes (e.g., translating RB1980 8.4 "incipiente luce" as Old English *upasprunzenum dæzriman* [at the onset of daybreak]). Elsewhere, he generally translates Latin syntax into idiomatic Old English syntax—the more difficult syntactic constructions of the Rule lead Æthelwold into some of his freer translations.

Æthelwold's text represents an intermediate step on the way to a written form of Old English that possessed standardized morphological and phonological forms in a regularized orthography, as well as standardized vocabulary. Scholars have traced this "Standard Old English" and "Winchester Vocabulary"—exceptional for a vernacular language of such early date—to Æthelwold's school in Winchester.³³

³¹ Gretsch analyzes this passage more fully in IF, 117–21.

³² See treatment and sources in Gretsch, *Trans*, 147–48.

³³ For this process of standardization, see especially Helmut Gneuss, "The Origin of Standard Old English and Æthelwold's School at Winchester," *Anglo-Saxon England* 1 (1972): 63–83; Walter Hofstetter, "Winchester and the Standardization of Old English Vocabulary," *Anglo-Saxon England* 17 (1988): 139–68; and Mechthild Gretsch, "Winchester Vocabulary and Standard Old English: The Vernacular in Late Anglo-Saxon England," *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 83, no. 1 (2001): 41–87. For an in-depth study of how the language used in the Old English Rule fits into the development of this standardization and the Benedictine Reform culture more generally, see Gretsch, *IF*.

Most of the additions Æthelwold makes are for the sake of clarity. Doublets (translating one Latin word with two Old English words) regularly occur throughout the work. While some Old English texts translated from Latin appear to present doublets from a sense that one Old English word will not convey the full sense of the original, Gretsch suggests that Æthelwold employs doublets for more nuanced reasons: to convey a variety of semantic components of the Latin word, to convey both a literal and a metaphorical translation, to present synonyms—a practice pleasing enough for its own sake to the medieval mind—and, as a result of the preceding reasons, to achieve greater clarity of expression.³⁴ These factors, coupled with a frequent use of alliteration (another salient feature of Old English poetics) and other common rhetorical features like paranomasia, suggest that Æthelwold wanted a vigorous, intellectually and aurally exciting text that would assist its readers and auditors to engage with and come to a fuller understanding of the Rule. Unfortunately, many of these features are not reproducible in an idiomatic translation into Modern English, though I have tried to retain or echo them where possible.

What does come through clearly in a Modern English translation is Æthelwold's subtle yet persistent embellishment of the Rule. While the Rule was and is by its very nature a pragmatic and prescriptive text, it is also a central text of the Western spiritual tradition. In the numerous unannounced additions to the Rule's text Æthelwold reveals what appear to be elements of his own spiritual formation and offers guidance on how to understand the Rule's content. He did not set out to write a full commentary on the Rule; by his time, this task had already been accomplished by Smaragdus of Saint-Mihiel and another ninth-century Carolingian ecclesiast, Hincmar of Reims. While it remains unclear whether or not Hincmar's commentary was known in Anglo-Saxon England, Æthelwold certainly knew Smaragdus's commentary and used it to guide his own interpretation throughout his translation.

Æthelwold clearly sought not to expound the intricacies of the Rule for other learned monks and nuns; rather, as he explicitly states in "King Edgar's Establishment of Monasteries," he sought to make

³⁴ Gretsch, *IF*, 44–45, 113–15.

the Rule accessible to pious lay men and women as well as to new monastics who had not yet learned Latin so that they might have no excuse to plead ignorance of the Rule's stipulations. Another learned commentary was unlikely to accomplish these goals. However, a guided translation or—what Janet Bately has called with respect to the Old English translations of King Alfred's (848x49–899) circle—a “transformation” that leads the reader to more precise understandings of Benedict's text without the intrusion of self-conscious apparatus serves this purpose well.³⁵

A good number of the additions found in Æthelwold's translation are straightforward embellishments that apparently seek to make sure that the Rule's meaning is clear. For example, the Latin text of Prol. 39 reads,³⁶

Cum ergo interrogassemus Dominum, fratres, de habitatore tabernaculi eius, audivimus habitandi praeceptum, sed si compleamus habitatoris officium.

(Brothers, now that we have asked the Lord who will dwell in his tent, we have heard the instruction for dwelling in it, but only if we fulfill the obligations of those who live there.)

While Æthelwold translates the literal sense of the first independent clause with only slight changes, he also spells out for his audience more precisely what he thinks Benedict means by altering the dependent clause following *sed* and expanding it:³⁷

Ʒa we eornestlice urne drihten ahsedon be Ʒaem buʒendum his eardunʒstowe, we ʒehyrdan hwæt Ʒa ʒebodu synd, Ʒe we Ʒa eardunʒe mid ʒeearnian sceolon; mid ʒefyllednesse ʒodder e penunʒe <we weorðað heofena rices yrfeweardes>.³⁸

³⁵ See Janet Bately, *The Literary Prose of King Alfred's Reign: Translation or Transformation?* (London: University of London King's College, 1980).

³⁶ The English and Latin quotations of the Rule that follow are from Fry unless otherwise noted.

³⁷ The quotations of the Old English Rule that follow are from Schröer, while the translations are my own.

³⁸ Angle brackets indicate Æthelwold's additions in the text of the Old English Rule.

(Now that we have asked our Lord who may dwell in his tent, we have heard his precepts for meriting this. If we fulfill that service well, <we will become heirs of the Kingdom of heaven>.)

While the general sense of the verse does not change, it is certainly different in its particulars—Æthelwold has made explicit what this verse of Benedict’s text only implied: that the *tabernaculum* or *tent* is the Kingdom of heaven.

In the instance just cited, Æthelwold appears to be inserting his own reflections and suggestions for understanding into his translation. Yet he makes similar explanatory insertions when he borrows from prior authorities. For instance, without mentioning either Smaragdus or Gregory the Great, Æthelwold provides his audience with an explanation of the scriptural metaphor “to gird our loins” (“Succintis . . . lumbis nostris”). This metaphor is employed in Prol. 21:

Succintis ergo fide vel observantia bonorum actuum lumbis nostris, per ducatum evangelii pergamus itinera eius . . .

(With our loins girt in faith and the performance of good works, let us set out on this way, with the Gospel for our guide . . .)³⁹

While Æthelwold also replaces the phrase “with the Gospel for our guide” with the phrase “with the haven of holy virtues,” more important is his interpretation of the metaphor “With our loins girt” as “with purity of mind and body”:

We eornestlice mid <clænnesse modes and lichoman> and mid 3eleafan and 3odra weorca bi3zen3e and mid <hal3ra mæ3ena hæfene> his we3as 3eornlice faren . . .

(Therefore, we ought to eagerly tread his paths with <purity of mind and body>, faith and the observance of good works, <and the haven of holy virtues>.)

³⁹ “With our loins girt in”: my translation to demonstrate the Latin’s meaning more literally; the rest of the translation comes from *RB 1980*.

As above, Æthelwold seeks to make the text's meaning more transparent, but unlike in the previous example, he does not add a phrase but replaces one. Either way, "with purity of mind and body" is not Æthelwold's own contribution to the exegesis of what this scriptural metaphor entails. The meaning he provides is mediated to him twice: more immediately through Smaragdus's commentary and, more remotely, through Gregory the Great's *Moralia in Iob*. Smaragdus comments on Prol. 21 with a quotation from Gregory:⁴⁰

"Lumbos vero viriliter accingere est, vel in opera vel in cogitatione carnis et mentis luxuriam refrenare."

("Now to gird one's loins manfully is to curb the impurity of the flesh and of the mind, whether in deed or in thought.")

While Æthelwold's addition is not a direct translation, such similarities to Smaragdus's commentary in thought and phrasing occur too frequently to be reasonably considered coincidental. Yet again Æthelwold, without signaling to his audience that he is altering the Rule's text, transforms the received text in order to elucidate it for an audience he expects to lack the knowledge that he possesses.

Beyond these distinct but relatively straightforward additions to the text of the Rule that make elements left implied in the original explicit, in other places Æthelwold expands on points in ways that do not appear to be interpreting them so much as emphasizing them. In smaller matters, examples such as the following from *RB 1980* 43.3 appear numerous times:

Ergo nihil operi Dei praeponatur.

(Indeed, nothing is to be preferred to the Work of God.)

Ne sy nan ðin3 3eset toforam þam 3odes weorce, <ne nan ðin3 swa besorh, þæt he his tidsan3 fore forlæte>.

(Nothing is to be preferred to the Work of God, <nothing so loved that he would neglect his canonical hour>.)

⁴⁰ The Latin quotation here is from Smaragdus, *Expositio*, while the translation is from Smaragdus, *Comm*.

Many minor—yet, in their way, arresting—additions like this appear, but at several points it seems as though Æthelwold's concerns as a reformer of monastic life shine through in more substantial additions. One such instance occurs at *RB 1980* 64.1, which prescribes the method of choosing an abbot. Æthelwold expands the verse and shifts the syntax in several ways, but in one early clause and the final clause, he again (as in Prol. 39 above) contributes additions (set off in angle brackets), not expansions:

In abbatis ordinatione illa semper consideretur ratio ut hic constituatur quem sive omnis concors congregatio secundum timorem Dei, sive etiam pars quamvis parva congregationis saniore consilio elegerit.

(In choosing an abbot, the guiding principle should always be that the man placed in office be the one selected either by the whole community acting unanimously in the fear of God, or by some part of the community, no matter how small, which possesses sounder judgment.)

On abbodes hadunȝe a is þæt to besceawizenne <mid miclum ȝesceade>, þæt se sy to abbode ȝeset, þe eal ȝeferræden anmodum ȝeþeahte and halwendum æfter ȝodes eȝe ȝecyst; ȝif ȝeferræden þæne ræd on ȝemænum ȝeþeahte misredað and feawa witena þæs ȝeferes þa þearfe forȝode wislicor tocnawað, stande þara ræd, þe mid ȝodes eȝe and wisdome þa þearfe geceosað, þeah heora feawa siȝ. <Ne ða oþre onȝean þæt nan ðincȝ wiðcweðon.>

(In electing an abbot, the aim—<taken up with the greatest discretion>—should always be to install an abbot who is chosen by the entire community in unanimity and wholeness in accord with the fear of God. If in general council the community provides bad counsel and a few experienced individuals in the community who possess more wisdom recognize what is necessary, their counsel should prevail, since they make their decision with the fear of God and wisdom though they are few. <The others should offer no resistance to the decision.>)

Æthelwold's reshaping of the section from *sive* to *elegerit* emphasizes the importance of a smaller group with greater wisdom choosing

the abbot, but this does not add anything genuinely new to the literal sense of Benedict's text. Yet the warnings that the election "should be taken up with the greatest discretion" and that "The others should offer no resistance to the decision" appear to reflect a certain degree of anxiety about the ability of entire communities reliably and peacefully to choose the correct superior—a concern that would not be out of place in an era of reform that, according to one of its primary architects, needed assistance in understanding the very text that the reform was based upon.

Beyond these additions that seek to clarify ideas left implicit in the Rule, to unpack obscure metaphors, and to regulate monastic communities in the specific historical community of Anglo-Saxon England (examples of all these could be multiplied), perhaps one of the most touching aspects of Æthelwold's translation is the Christological emphasis that this bishop and abbot imports into his text. Whatever we might think of the political and social ambitions he possessed and of his tactics for reforming houses and establishing monastic life through the backing of royal power, we do find notes of a sincere and focused devotion to Christ in Æthelwold's translation, in keeping with *RB 1980* 4.21 ("set nothing before the love of Christ"—"nan þinȝ beforan Cristes lufe settan," as Æthelwold renders it).

Evidence of this Christological focus comes in the rhetorically charged ending to the Prologue mentioned above. Ensuring that his audience understand the final goal and purpose of the Rule, Æthelwold inserts Christ explicitly into two verses in the final paragraph, Prol. 46 and Prol. 48:

In qua institutione nihil asperum, nihil grave, nos constituros speramus . . .

(In drawing up its regulations, we hope to set down nothing harsh, nothing burdensome.)

Peah hwet teartlices hwæthwara stiðlice on þisum rezule, þe ures færyldes latteow to Criste is, ȝeset and ȝetæht sy . . .

(Though there are some things set out in this rule, <which is a guide on our journey to Christ>, that are a little severe and taught strenuously . . .)

non ilico pavore perterritus refugias viam salutis quae non est nisi angusto initio incipienda.

(Do not be daunted immediately by fear and run away from the road that leads to salvation. It is bound to be narrow at the outset.)

ne beo þu þurh þi forht and afæred, ne þurh yrhþe ðinre hæle we3 ne forlæt; þæs we3es on3in, <þe to Criste læt>, ne me3 beon be3unnen on fruman butan sumre ancsumnyse . . .

(Nor should you abandon the path of your salvation on account of sloth. The beginning of this path, <which leads to Christ>, cannot be begun without some distress at its outset.)

With similar reserve, but in a more substantial way, Æthelwold also explains Benedict's exhortation to "dash" one's wrongful thoughts against Christ in *RB 1980* 4.50 (which, though one might guess as much as Æthelwold offers, could probably use some explaining):

Cogitationes malas cordi suo advenientes mox ad Christum allidere et seniori spiritali patefacere.

(As soon as wrongful thoughts come into your heart, dash them against Christ and disclose them to your spiritual father.)

þa yflan 3eþohtas, þe him on mod becumað, he sceal sona on Criste toslean and his 3astlican lareowe andedtan. <Donne he hie toslyhð on Criste, þonne he 3eðenceð Cristes þrowunge and his wundra and mid þæm 3eþohtum aflymeð þa yfelam 3eþohtas.>

(When evil thoughts come into his mind, he must immediately dash them against Christ and confess them to his spiritual master. <To dash them against Christ, he remembers Christ's passion and his miracles—with those thoughts he puts the evil ones to flight.>)

In this short but wise interpretation of Benedict's counsel, we have a rare and precious example of an early medieval bishop and abbot's practical suggestion to new monks and layfolk alike as to how one should ward off temptation. While one might wish that Æthelwold

had inserted more additions like this into his translation of the Rule, any such snatches of the thought processes of and spiritual guidance offered by a learned religious in his own language and in such a remote period are rare gifts to posterity indeed. Such moments prevent Æthelwold's text from being merely a piece of valuable but arcane historical and linguistic trivia and secure it a place as a substantial contribution to the Benedictine tradition.

V. Principles of this Translation

Because Æthelwold's text is an early medieval vernacular translation of an earlier medieval Latin text with which readers will probably be far more familiar, I have approached this translation with the underlying assumption that many readers will use this text as a way of mediating between the Latin and the Old English texts. If one wishes to compare Æthelwold's text to Benedict's Latin text, a freely idiomatic translation may obscure more than it illuminates, and so I have rendered my Modern English closer to a literal translation of Æthelwold's Old English than I otherwise would have. While this approach makes for some admittedly clunky phrasing at times, it is my opinion that ease of comparing this work to Benedict's Latin outweighs a less literal text that would be easier to read on its own but would hinder readers' ability to see clearly how Æthelwold has shaped and transformed his source text. I hope that readers of this book will excuse this strategy, since such texts are not easy reading to begin with. With that said, I have tried to avoid archaism and obviously contorted syntax, and I have broken up many of Æthelwold's longer sentences to facilitate comprehension.

To aid in the effort of understanding how Æthelwold has transformed Benedict's text, I have placed angle brackets within the text to indicate Æthelwold's additions to the Latin text; footnotes throughout keep the reader apprised of his subtractions, replacements, and free translations. Except for doublets, when Æthelwold changes a text substantially I quote the relevant text from the Rule in Modern English translation and Latin from *RB 1980*, unless I note otherwise. I only insert my own translations of *RB 1980*'s Latin if Fry's translation departs from the literal sense to the extent that his idiomatic translation obscures the literal text. I also follow the para-

graph division found in *RB 1980* to facilitate comparison of the two texts.

However, although I use *RB 1980*, since it is now a standard text of the Rule in the English-speaking world, I have also noted where Æthelwold clearly translates a variant reading that is not included in *RB 1980*. Fry uses a Latin text based on that established by Jean Neufville and found in the edition by Adalbert de Vogüé, which in turn is based on the *purus* recension (see Fry, 155). Since Æthelwold used a *receptus* text for his exemplar(s), a number of readings throughout his translation do not match the text found in *RB 1980* and yet are clearly faithful translations of his *receptus* exemplar(s) of the Rule. These variants are particularly important for students of Old English and Anglo-Saxon culture. But for all readers of this text and others that have come down from manuscript culture, they are also important witnesses to the variability of pre-print texts. Although editors can take textual variability as evidence of corruption of an original text, in this volume I intend no such judgment on the purity of Æthelwold's text or his exemplar; I simply assume that he had access to certain readings and not others. Finally, although I also note places where it seems that Æthelwold has drawn on Smaragdus for his interpretation, I do not generally indicate Benedict's own dependence on other texts for the Rule; Fry provides citations for these texts in his notes.

In spending the last several years with Æthelwold's Old English text, I have developed a fondness for this relatively obscure ecclesiast from over a millennium ago; I suppose such attachment is common among translators who enjoy their subjects. It is my hope that enough of what I now see in him and his work comes through in these pages that the reader too will find a ready interest in the cultural and intellectual implications of his work but also in his elusive but careful voice, present throughout what follows.

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The Rule of Saint Benedict as Translated by Saint Æthelwold of Winchester

Here Begins the Prologue of the Rule for Monks.

¹My child, hear the precepts of your master and incline to them with the ear of your heart. Willingly receive your honorable father's admonition and fulfill it boldly, ²that through the labor of your obedience you may turn back to God, from whom you previously turned away in the idleness of your disobedience. ³My discourse and teaching are sent earnestly to everyone who denies his own desires and wishes to obey the true King,¹ Christ the Lord, with the strongest and most excellent weapons of obedience.

¹ "own desires": translating the *receptus* reading "propriis voluptatibus" ("own desires") instead of *RB 1980* Prol. 3, "propriis voluntatibus" ("own will") (here and below, when referring to Latin text, *RB 1980* indicates the Latin reading found in *RB 1980: The Rule of Saint Benedict*, ed. Timothy Fry [Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1981] [hereafter Fry], in order to differentiate this particular text from all the various readings found throughout the many manuscripts of RB, since some readings in *RB 1980* would have been found in Æthelwold's text(s) of the Rule and some would not; see Introduction, 24–25). "wishes to obey the true King": Æthelwold shifts the metaphorical martial imagery of *RB 1980* Prol. 3 ("to do battle for the true King, Christ the Lord") to the literal concept of "obedience," though by Benedict's day Lat *militia* and *militare* also have connotations of "service" more generally, for which see Fry, 158 n. to Prol. 3.

⁴First, as often as you begin a good work, eagerly desire with constant prayer that the Lord may permit it to come to a perfect conclusion. ⁵In this way, our heavenly Father, who considers us his own children, will never be offended by our evil deeds or become wrathful with us. ⁶At every moment, with those good gifts that he has granted us, we ought to obey him, lest he disinherit us—<that is, remove us from his happiness>.² A father disinherits his son <and refuses to grant him his wealth when the latter's sins anger him. Just so, he will not grant us our inheritance, separating us from his wealth>. ⁷Rather, like a fearful lord angered by our evil deeds, he will refuse to grant us his wealth as an eternal punishment if we refuse to follow him to glory.

⁸Therefore, let us now rise up on account of the admonition in Holy Scripture that says, *Now is the time for us to arise from sleep**—<that is, that we leave off our sins and be vigilant in good works>.³ ⁹With the manifest care of heavenly understanding, we should also listen to what the voice from heaven daily reminds us and calls out to us, saying, ⁴ ¹⁰*If today you hear God's voice, do not delay nor wish to harden your hearts.** ¹¹Again

*Rom 13:11

*Ps 94 [95]:8

² “that . . . happiness”: Æthelwold's additions to the Rule (of whatever kind) will be set off by angle brackets throughout the present text.

³ “that . . . works”: it is quite possible that Æthelwold has borrowed this interpretation of Rom 13:11 from Smaragdus, *Expositio Prol.* 8 (24; Comm 73): “Dormit anima, quae commissa praeterita non emendat et de futuris nihil cogitat; vigilat, quae praeterita peccata plangit et plangenda ulterius non committit” (“The soul that does not amend its past sins and has not thought for the future is asleep; the soul that laments its past sins and commits no more that it needs to lament is keeping watch”).

⁴ “we . . . what”: replacing *RB 1980 Prol.* 9, “et apertis oculis nostris ad deificum lumen” (“Let us open our eyes to the light that comes from God”).

it says,⁵ *He who has ears for hearing, let him hear what the Holy Spirit says to all those who are called to God:*^{6*} ¹²*Come, my children and hear me; I will teach you the fear of God.** ¹³*Run and hasten while you have the light of life, lest the darkness of death seize you.**

*Rev 2:7

*Ps 33 [34]:12

*John 12:35

¹⁴The Lord seeks and searches in the great multitude of people for those few who wish to do his will. Thus he asks, saying, ¹⁵*Who desires life and wishes to see good days?** ¹⁶If you hear this and answer, “I desire this,” almighty God says to you, ¹⁷If you wish to have true and eternal life, *restrain your tongue from evil speech and do not let your lips speak anything deceitful; turn from evil and do good; seek after peace and follow after it.** ¹⁸When you do this, *my countenance will be over you and my hearing will attend to your prayers,*^{7*} *and before you call to me, I will say, Even now I am completely at your need.*^{8*}

*Ps 33 [34]:13

*Ps 33 [34]:14-15

*Ps 33 [34]:16

*Isa 58:9

⁵ “and again it says”: translating the *receptus* and *interpolatus* reading “et iterum dicit” instead of *RB* 1980 Prol. 11, “et iterum” (“And again”).

⁶ “He . . . God”: translating *RB* 1980 Prol. 11, “*Qui habet aures audiendi quid spiritus dicat ecclesiis*” (“*You that have ears to hear, listen to what the Spirit says to the churches*”). When Æthelwold deviates substantially from the Latin of *RB* 1980’s quotations of the Bible, I follow his translation closely and note the Latin and Modern English from *RB* 1980 to illustrate how he conveys biblical material to his vernacular audience. Here he makes explicit what Lat *ecclesiis* means by describing the church, even though OE *circe* would translate *ecclesia* directly, and he uses this word to translate *ecclesia* in 13.10 below. For a discussion of this choice within the larger context of the texts produced in Æthelwold’s circle, see Gretsche, IF, 104–13.

⁷ “my countenance . . . prayers”: translating *RB* 1980 Prol. 18, “*oculi mei super vos et aures meas ad preces vestras*” (“*my eyes will be upon you and my ears will listen for your prayers*”). “my countenance”: Æthelwold may have translated Lat *oculi* (“eyes”) as OE *ansyn* (“countenance”) with an eye toward Ps 33 [34]:17, which refers to God’s *vultus* (“face” or “countenance”).

⁸ “and . . . need”: translating *RB* Prol. 18, “*et antequam me invocetis dicam vobis: Ecce adsum*” (“*and even before you ask me, I will say to you: Here I am*”).

¹⁹What is more desirable to hear than this voice of God calling out to us? ²⁰Even now, in his mercy the Lord shows us the paths of life. ²¹Therefore, we ought to eagerly tread his paths with <purity of mind and body>,⁹ faith and the observance of good works, <and the haven of holy virtues>. Thus we may merit to see the one *who called us <to that path> in his kingdom*.*

*1 Thess 2:12

²²And yet the tent of his kingdom is reached only with care and the observance of good deeds;¹⁰ <zeal and diligence in good works form the course of the path leading to that kingdom>. ²³But let us ask our Lord in accord with the prophet's admonition, saying, *Lord, who may dwell in your tent, and to whom is rest upon your holy mountain granted?** ²⁴After this question we must listen to the Lord, who answers and who shows us the path to his tent: ²⁵*He who remains without the contamination of sins and walks in just works goes on the correct path to my kingdom,* ²⁶*who considers the truth in his heart and speaks no deceitful thing with his mouth,* ²⁷*who does no evil to his neighbor, who does not set reproach*

*Ps 14 [15]:1

⁹“with purity of heart and body”: it appears that Æthelwold transfers the metaphorical Lat phrase “*succinctis . . . lumbis nostris*” (“with our loins girt” [my translation]) to the more literal “purity of heart and body” to make clear the appropriate preparation for the monastic life. It is possible that Æthelwold has taken his cue in this refashioning of RB 1980 Prol. 21 from Smaragdus, Expositio Prol. 21 (35; Comm 89), which draws on Gregory’s twofold interpretation of the scriptural phrase “to gird one’s loins”: “*Lumbos vero viriliter accingere est, vel in opera vel in cogitatione carnis et mentis luxuriam refrenare*” (“Now to gird one’s loins manfully is to curb the impurity of the flesh and of the mind, whether in deed or in thought”) (see Gregory, Moral 28.III.12; CCSL 143B:1402).

¹⁰“And . . . deeds”: translating RB 1980 Prol. 22, “*In cuius regni tabernaculo si volumus habitare, nisi illuc bonis actibus curritur, minime pervenitur*” (“If we wish to dwell in the tent of this kingdom, we will never arrive unless we run there by doing good deeds”).

and scorn upon his neighbor,^{11* 28} who rejects the cursed devil from his heart, that teacher of every evil, along with all his teaching, taking no account of him, and who places all his thoughts and hopes in God.^{12* 29} And those who fear God and do not exalt in their good deeds.^{13* 30} Rather, these praise and celebrate the Lord who works the good in them,* saying with the prophet, *Not to us, Lord, not to us, but to your name be the glory.*^{*} ³¹Similarly, Paul took no praise for his great preaching <but gave all the praise to God, who had given him prudence and wisdom>, saying, *Through God's grace I am what I am.*^{*} ³²Again Paul says concerning himself, *He who glories should glory in almighty God and not in himself.*^{14*} ³³Concerning this same notion the Savior says in the holy gospel, calling out, *I liken the one who hears these words of mine and fulfills them in his works to a wise man who built upon solid stone.* ³⁴Floods

*Ps 14 [15]:2-3

*Ps 14 [15]:4;
Ps 136 [137]:9

*Ps 14 [15]:4

*Ps 14 [15]:4

*Ps 113 [115:1]:9

*1 Cor 15:10

*2 Cor 10:17

¹¹ "He . . . upon his neighbor": translating RB 1980 Prol. 25-27, "dicens: Qui ingreditur sine macula et operatur iustitiam; qui loquitur veritatem in corde suo, qui non egit dolum in lingua sua; qui non fecit proximo suo malum, qui opprobrium non accepit adversus proximum suum" ("One who walks without blemish, he says, and is just in all his dealings; who speaks the truth from his heart and has not practiced deceit with his tongue; who has not wronged a fellowman [sic] in any way, nor listened to slanders against his neighbor").

¹² "and . . . God": replacing RB 1980 Prol. 28, "respuens, deduxit ad nihilum, et parvulos cogitatos eius tenuit et allisit ad Christum" ("While these temptations were still young, he caught hold of them and dashed them against Christ").

¹³ "who fear God": translating RB 1980 Prol. 29, "timentes Dominum" ("those who fear the Lord"). Æthelwold frequently translates titles for the deity interchangeably; e.g., here he uses "God" (Lat *deus*; OE *god*) where the literal translation would be "Lord" (Lat *dominus*; OE *dryhten*). In such instances I follow Æthelwold's translation practice, but after this I do not note his alterations.

¹⁴ He . . . himself: translating RB 1980 Prol. 32, "Qui gloriatur, in Domino gloriatur" ("He who boasts should make his boast in the Lord").