

Inculcating the Idea of the Inner Heart into the Laity of Pre-Conquest England

Tracey-Anne Cooper

The largely illiterate laity of eleventh-century England have left few hints of their internal spirituality. We simply do not have the same kind of evidence for this period as we have, for example, for the seventeenth century when Puritans kept spiritual diaries, documenting their inner religious lives.¹ This lacuna, I believe, has led to an over-emphasis on the evidence of the external aspects of their piety, particularly on pious gift-giving, which has left more abundant evidence in the form of charters, wills, and obituary lists.² This over-emphasis is often accompanied by the anachronistic assumption that their gifts were disingenuous or incongruous to true piety and that the churches and abbeys receiving them were more concerned with contributions than catechizing. Moreover the elite laity of this period of Anglo-Saxon history were becoming increasingly wealthy and among the various outlets for their conspicuous consumption was pious giving to the Church, which serves to eclipse further any internal aspect of their piety.

Frank Barlow recognized in the 1960s that the relationship between the church and the state in pre-conquest England warranted a thorough examination, as it had been, "obscured by two great shadows, the one cast by the Norman Conquest and the other by Edward's cult and canonization."³ Moreover, Barlow observes that by the time of William of Malmesbury, who chronicled the history of the English Church in 1124–25, the history of the last century of the Anglo-Saxon Church was confused by "broken continuity

¹ For a recent discussion of spiritual diaries see *Recording and Reordering: Essays on the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Diary and Journal*, Dan Doll and Jessica Munns eds., Bucknell University Press: Lewisburg 2006. On the question of literacy among the Anglo-Saxon laity see Susan Kelly, 'Anglo-Saxon Lay Society and the Written Word', in *The Uses of Literacy in Early Medieval Europe*, ed. Rosamund McKitterick, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1998, 36–62.

² See for example, Frank Barlow, *The English Church 1000–1066: A Constitutional History*, Longman: London, 1963.

³ Barlow 1963, 24.

and tradition".⁴ Barlow's book, therefore, addressed this period of English Church history and specifically the "fruitful cooperation between the royal and ecclesiastical government."⁵ More recently, John Blair has argued for the dynamism of the Anglo-Saxon Church in the period 850–1100: a dynamism which saw not only the transformation of minsters into the nuclei of urban sites but also the development of local churches and the emergence of parishes.⁶

This article seeks to use the collection of homilies, hagiography and confessional directives in a late Anglo-Saxon compilation manuscript, London, British Library, MS Cotton Tiberius A.iii (hereafter **T**),⁷ to delve into the internal piety of the laity in this period. This will provide a counterbalance to the overemphasis on external piety, and supplement other scholarly studies of the period which have concentrated on relationships between state and church and between local churches and minsters. The manuscript, given that it was produced at the archiepiscopal see, Christ Church Canterbury, provides us with the opportunity to reconstruct the direction in which the English Church, seems to have been trying to lead pastoral provision in the pre-conquest period, towards developing the *inweord heort*, the inner heart, of the laity. For example, in one of the confessional directives in **T**, the text instructs the priest to tell the penitent that, "After confession one is able to earn God's mercy quickly with penance, if, with inwards heart, he mourns and repents that which he previously committed through the devil's instigation".⁸ Of course, we can never extrapolate with complete certainty the idea that pastoral directions were enthusiastically put into practice by the laity, but this paper at the very least seeks to go some way towards overturning our long-held views of the irrecoverable nature of the eleventh-century lay religious experience and the associated assumption that their piety was showy and shallow. The lay religious culture of late Anglo-Saxon England was not, as the Norman

⁴ Barlow 1963, 24. William of Malmesbury, *De gestis pontificum Anglorum*, ed. N. E. S. A. Hamilton, Rolls Series 1870.

⁵ Barlow 1963, comment on book jacket.

⁶ John Blair, *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society*, Oxford University Press: Oxford 2005.

⁷ For further discussion of this manuscript see Neil R. Ker's *Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon*, Clarendon: Oxford, 1957, this manuscript is catalogued as no.186 and Helmut Gneuss, 'Origin and Provenance of Anglo-Saxon Manuscript: The Case of Cotton Tiberius A. III', in Pamela R. Robinson and Rivkah Zim eds., *Of the Making of Books: Medieval Manuscripts, their scribes, and readers: Essays presented to M. B. Parkes*, Scholar Press: Aldershot, 1997, 13–48. See also the author's work detailed in fn.10.

⁸ "Æfter andetnesse man mæg mid dædbote Godes mildheortnesse raðe geearnian, gif he mid innewardre heortan heofe þæt bereowsað þæt he þurh deofles scyfe ær gefremode to unrihte". All translations, except noted otherwise, are my own. Extract from the confessional directive **T78** see fn. 17.

Chroniclers would have us believe, degenerate or desultory, but rather, as an examination of the pastoral program in **T** demonstrates, it was dynamic and responsive.⁹ It appears to have been in a formative state but it was certainly evolving and not devolving, as it was influenced by two contradictory drives—exteriority and interiority.

T is a bilingual compilation manuscript of some ninety-four texts and two full-page illustrations. **T** is hard to define because its texts, to modern sensibilities, seem to be an incongruous jumble: monastic rules, homilies, liturgy, confessional directives, prognostics, scientific treatises, notes and commonplaces, hagiography, a charm, a lapidary, a manual for monastic sign language, and the *examinatio* of an incumbent bishop.¹⁰ More than half the texts in **T** are concerned with pastoral care and this could, perhaps, be seen as a reflection of the importance that the archbishop, and the community at Christ Church, placed on this aspect of his function. These texts include an Old English version of the *Life of St. Margaret*,¹¹ a collection of fifteen homilies,¹² mostly anonymous, but opening with a bowdlerized

⁹ On the Norman chronicler's treatment of their Anglo-Saxon predecessors see Barlow 1963, 24–29.

¹⁰ I have discussed this manuscript extensively elsewhere. My PhD dissertation examined the manuscript as a cohesive whole and argued for its utility as a pragmatic archbishop's handbook compiled between 1012 and 1023. Tracey-Anne Cooper, *Reconstructing a Deconstructed Manuscript, Culture and Community: London BL Cotton A. iii*, Boston College PhD, 2005 (UMI no.AAT33176659) <http://escholarship.bc.edu/dissertations/AAI3176659/>. For a detailed argument about the date suggested here, which differs from Ker (s. xi med) and Gneuss ("about the middle of the eleventh century or somewhat later") the reader is directed to Chapter One of this dissertation as further discussing the argument here would encumber this article to an unnecessary length and obfuscate our concentration on lay piety and pastoral care. For further information readers are directed to the following: an article in *Anglo-Norman Studies* discussed the compilation processes of the manuscript, and of its homiletic collection in particular, with an emphasis on a close reading of the texts and cross comparison with their occurrences in other manuscripts. Cooper, 'The Homilies of a Pragmatic Archbishop's Handbook in Context: Cotton Tiberius A. iii', *Anglo-Norman Studies* 28, (2006), 47–65 (hereafter Cooper 2006a). A further paper in the *Haskins Society Journal* examined a collection of confessional directives in **T** in a similar manner, Cooper, 'Lay Piety, Pastoral Care and The Compiler's Method in late Anglo-Saxon England', *Haskins Society Journal* 16, (2006), 47–61 (hereafter Cooper 2006b). A forthcoming chapter (in a book edited by Paul Szarmach with the working title *The Saintly Feminine*) is Cooper, 'Why was St Margaret's the Only Life in Cotton Tiberius A iii?', State University of New York Press: New York 2009. This article takes a step back from the minutiae of manuscript studies and will draw together many of the conclusions of my previous work in order to suggest that there was a sustained plan for pastoral care in the first half of the eleventh century which was promulgated from the heart of the English Church at Canterbury.

¹¹ See Mary Clayton and Hugh Magennis, *The Old English Lives of St Margaret* (Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England 9) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994 and Cooper 2009.

¹² The homilies were numbered by Ker as 186 nos.16, 17, 18, and 19a–l. Throughout my discussion of the manuscript I have renumbered its contents simply by the order that the item appears in the text, hence the homilies according to my numbering are **T59–73**. The renumbering of the items in **T** reflects the author's argument that certain items are part of a deliberate collection, which could be obscured by Ker's numbering, for example it is implied that homilies 19a–l are of a group, whereas 16,17 and 18 are not part of that grouping. Ker and Gneuss total the number of texts to 91, whereas I total the number of items to 96, which reflects a differing opinion of the division of a text (The Office of St Mary, Ker 186 no.30), the inclusion of the illustrations as **T1** and **T7** as numbered items. For an edition of **T59** (Ker 186 no.16), see

version of Ælfric's *Homily for Palm Sunday* and including two short extracts from larger homilies by Wulfstan; and two discrete collections of confessional directives, the first concerned with the actual performance of confessional rituals and the second with the assignment of a penance appropriate to the sin and the status of the sinner.¹³ The texts are united by their theological simplicity and a genuine concern for the salvation of the laity.

The extant evidence for lay piety in this period does indeed demonstrate that the landed elite were devotees of pious giving and were

Malcolm Godden, ed., *Ælfric's Catholic Homilies, The Second Series: Texts* (Early English Text Society, second series 5), Oxford University Press: London 1979, 381–90. This version of the *Homily for Palm Sunday* was so altered from the original text that Godden was unable to collate it with the other version and had to edit it separately. For an edition of **T60** (Ker 186 no.17), see A. S. Napier, *Wulfstan. Sammlung der ihm zugeschriebenen Homilien nebst Untersuchungen über ihre echtheit* (Sammlung englischer Denkmäler 4), 1883, no.44 at 215. Note that a long passage has been omitted at f.84/12. For an edition of **T61** (Ker 186 no. 18) see Fred. C. Robinson, 'The Devil's Account of the Next World: An Anecdote from Old English Literature', *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 73 (1972), 362–71 and Donald G. Scragg, "'The Devil's Account of the Next World' Revisited', *American Notes and Queries* 24, (1986), 107–110. **T62** (Ker 19a) was collated by Napier 1883, as no.19, p.108 and Dorothy Bethrum, *The Homilies of Wulfstan*, Oxford University Press: Oxford, 1957, 225–32, where it is collated as K in Wulfstan's Homily XIII, 'Sermo ad populum'; **T63** (Ker 186 no.19b) Napier (1883) as no.20–22, and 1st paragraph of no.24, pp.110–15, 119–21; **T64** (Ker 186 no.19c) Napier (1883) as no.24 2nd paragraph, pp.120–121; **T65** (Ker 186 no.19d) Napier 1883, as no.24 3rd paragraph, p.122; **T66** (Ker 186 no.19e) Napier 1883, as no.36 as a variant of no.35, p.176; **T67** (Ker 186 no.19f) Napier 1883, as no. 23, p.116; **T68** (Ker 186 no.19g) Napier 1883, as no.27, p.128; **T69** (Ker 186 no.19h) Napier 1883, as no.51, p.274; **T70** (Ker 186 no.19i) Napier 1883, as no.25, p.122; **T71** (Ker 186 no.19j) Napier 1883, as no.26, p.125 and Bethrum 1957, 166–8, where it is collated as K in Wulfstan's Homily VIIa, 'To eallan folke'; **T72** (Ker 186 no.19k) Napier 1883, as no.52, p.275 and **T73** (Ker 186 no.19) Napier 1883, no.53, p.276. Those interested in the occurrences of these homilies in other manuscripts are directed to Cooper 2006a and Appendix A of Cooper 2005, 336–355.

¹³ For editions of these confessional directives see – **T31** (Ker 186 no.8e) A. S. Napier, 'Altenglischer Kleinigkeiten', *Anglia* 11, (1889), 1–10 at p.3 and J. Raith, *Die altenglische Version der Halitgar'schen Bußbuches* (Bibliothek der angelsächsischen Prosa 13), Hamburg 1933, rpt. Darmstadt 1964; **T32** (Ker 186 no.9a), which is at first a translation of Alcuin's *Die inestimablis misericordie*, see P. Pulsiano and J. McGowan, 'Four unedited prayers in London Cotton Tiberius A. iii', *Medieval Studies* 56 (1994), 189–216 at pp.206–208. **T33** (Ker 186 no.9b) see M. Förster, 'Beiträge zur mittelalterlichen Volkskunde II', *Archiv für das Studium der neuren Sprachen und Literaturen* 120 (1908), 43–52 at p.46 and M. Förster, 'Zur Liturgik der angelsächsischen Kirche', *Anglia* 66 (1942), 1–51 at p.10; **T34** (Ker 186 no.9c) a Latin prayer with the incipit *Domine iesu christe tibi flecto genua mea* has not to my knowledge been edited in print; **T35** (Ker 186 no.9d) see Pulsiano 1994, 209–10; **T36** (Ker 186 no.9e) see Pulsiano 1994, 211–212; **T37** (Ker 186 no.9f) see Pulsiano 1994, 212–216; **T38** (Ker 186 no.9g) edited by H. Logeman, 'Anglo-Saxon Minora', *Anglia* 12 (1889), 497–518 at p.511; **T39** (Ker 186 no.9h) edited Logeman 1889, 513; **T40** (Ker 186 no.9i) edited Logeman 1889, 515–18; **T41** (Ker 186 no.9j) edited R. Fowler, 'A Late Old English Handbook for the Use of a Confessor', *Anglia* 83 (1965), 1–34 at 16; **T42** (Ker 186 no.9k), Fowler 1965, 17–19; **T43** (Ker 186 no.9l) Fowler 1965, 19–20. The second set of confessional directives succeeds the homiletic collection and the examination for an incumbent bishop **T74** (Ker 186 no.20) edited by H. A. Wilson, *Pontifical of Magdalen College* (Henry Bradshaw Society Publications 39), 1910, 70–2. Confessional directive **T75** is the same as **T43**. **T76** (Ker 186 no.21b) was edited by Fowler 1965, 26; **T77** (Ker 186 no.21c) Fowler 1965, 26–7; **T78** (Ker 186 no.21d) Fowler 1965, 27–8; **T79** (Ker 186 no.21e) Fowler 1965, 28–9; **T80** (Ker 186 no.21f) Fowler 1965, 29–31; **T81** (Ker 186 no.21g) Fowler 1965, 31–2; **T82** (Ker 186 no.21h) was collated by R. Spindler, *Das altenglische Bußbuch*, Leipzig 1934, 170 as Ia; **T83** (Ker 186 no.21i) collated by Spindler 1934, as Ib, p.173; **T84** (Ker 186

very generous patrons of the Church—they could afford to be, because the aristocracy of the late Anglo-Saxon period were wealthier than in any other period of Anglo-Saxon history; so naturally they gave more. As Robin Fleming summarizes, "One of the most striking differences between the ninth- and the eleventh-century's landed elite was wealth."¹⁴ They engaged wholeheartedly in displays of conspicuous consumption, in their clothing, homes and home furnishings, and their food, as well as in their donations to the Church. In the *Vita Ædwardi Regis*, there is a description of the fabulous clothing that Edward the Confessor's wife, Queen Edith, had picked out for him:

It had not been the custom for earlier English kings in bygone days to wear clothes of great splendour, apart from cloaks and robes adorned at the top with gold in the national style. [Queen] Edith, from the very beginning of her marriage, clad [Edward] in raiments either embroidered by herself or of her choice, and of such a kind that it could not be thought that even Solomon in all his glory was ever thus arrayed. In the ornamentation of these no count was made of the cost of the precious stones, rare gems and shining pearls that were used. As regards mantles, tunics, boots and shoes, the amount of gold which flowed in the various complicated floral designs was not weighed.¹⁵

However, it was not just kings who clothed themselves in such splendor; as Gale Owen-Crocker's examination of an illustration of great men in the eleventh-century Old English *Hexateuch* demonstrates, the long robes which were first adopted by King Edgar in the mid-tenth century were by the mid-eleventh century being worn by earls.¹⁶ Martin Biddle has traced this trickle-down effect of elaborate finery through the analysis of the occurrence of gold braid and gold thread embroidery found in graves in the ninth, tenth and eleventh centuries—not only do the instances of such gold ornamentation on clothing increase dramatically, but by the eleventh

no.21j) collated by Spindler 1934, as II, p.174. The second set of confessional directives are discussed extensively in Cooper 2006b.

¹⁴ Robin Fleming, 'The New Wealth, the New Rich and the New Political Style', *Anglo-Norman Studies* 23 (2000), 1–22. See also C. Senecal, 'Keeping up with the Godwinesons: In Pursuit of Aristocratic Status in late Anglo-Saxon England', *Anglo-Norman Studies* 23 (2000), 251–266.

¹⁵ *The Life of King Edward who Rests at Westminster*, F. Barlow ed., Clarendon Press: Oxford 1992, 24–5.

¹⁶ Gale R. Owen-Crocker, *Dress in Anglo-Saxon England*, Boydell and Brewer: Woodbridge Suffolk 2004, 151. See *The Old English Illustrated Hexateuch: British Museum Cotton Claudius B. iv*, C. R. Dodwell and Peter Clemoes, Rosenkilde and Bagger: Copenhagen 1974, f. 36v.

century the thread and braid was often mixed with silver gilt, making it less expensive and as Fleming has pointed out, putting such finery, "within reach of the gns-on-the make".¹⁷

Anglo-Saxon landed elites were not just wearing their wealth for display, they were also adorning their homes with it. Fleming comments that:

Besides clothing, people of substance would have had chests' full of tapestries, bed-cloths and bed-hangings, and many gave the church elaborately embellished copes, altars cloths and drapery as well. Examples are legion: great quantities of stunning vestments and hangings were presented to Waltham Holy Cross, for instance, by Earl Harold. The most ostentatious of these was a chasuble named 'The Lord Spake unto me', which alone was ornamented with twenty-six marks worth of gold. Textiles like this are all-pervasive in narrative sources.¹⁸

As the sumptuous and costly chasuble 'The Lord Spake unto me' demonstrates, the eleventh-century aristocracy wanted to share their wealth with the church, and there is no denying the fact that pious giving to the church was a popular practice. Its popularity was probably twofold: not only did the laity hope their generosity would benefit their souls, but it also gave them a highly visible locale within which to demonstrate their wealth and status through conspicuous consumption.

In terms of diet, both the landed elite and rich monasteries ate very rich and varied diets, and feasts were another highly visible stage for displays of conspicuous consumption. While food renders listed in the Domesday survey show that lords were supplied with high status foods like venison and porpoises, one food item that was regularly rendered also to lords stands out because it was not elaborate, rare or expensive, and that was herring.¹⁹ Herring was the cheapest fish, but bishops, monasteries as well as powerful lay men received renders of thousands of herring every year.²⁰ We might expect to see a high ecclesiastical consumption of fish, given that it is a permissible food to consume during a fast, which at this time, for the religious, included every Friday; but as Ann Hagen explains, "laymen were

¹⁷ Martin Biddle, *Objects and Economy in Medieval Winchester: Artifacts from Medieval Winchester*, 2 vols, Clarendon Press: Oxford 1990, ii, 468–72. Fleming 2000, 10.

¹⁸ Fleming 2000, 11.

¹⁹ Fleming 2000, 6 fn. 29.

²⁰ Christopher Dyer, 'The Consumption of Fresh-Water Fish in Medieval England', in Michael Aston ed., *Medieval Fish, Fisheries and Fishponds in England*, 2 vols (British Archaeological Reports, British Series clxxxii), John and Erica Hedges: Oxford 1988, 27–38 at 31.

to observe only the legal feasts and were otherwise free to eat what they wanted."²¹ We can only assume, therefore, that the high status laity had started to copy the ecclesiastical practice of more regular weekly fasting, which was encouraged in the homiletic collection of **T** (at **T66**) as a corporate endeavor for the well-being of society. It can be argued, therefore, that the landed elite were keen to secure a regular supply of salted fish so that they, too, could demonstrate their fasting piety. In the homily **T66**, the fast is not, however, imagined solely as an act of external piety because the laity are reminded that before the fast "in all things one should first submit to right and abandon every injustice".²² The inward reflection that is encouraged in the laity in this homily is supported by the prescribed actions for the churchmen, who are to sing and pray in order to intercede with God on behalf of the penitents, and for each of the fast days, priests will hear confession and submit penitents to painful questioning.²³

The theme of the struggle towards righteousness are also explored in the only saint's life in **T**, *The Life of St Margaret*, which precedes the homiletic collection and which would provide a lay man with an example *par excellence* of the ultimate application of the pastoral messages emphasized in the manuscript's homilies and confessional directives—it is also a very appealing and exciting story. St Margaret, as well as preserving her virginity, despite being tortured by her would-be paramour, also has two encounters with devils. The first devil appears in the form of a dragon and swallows her, but she makes the sign of the Cross inside the dragon's stomach and the dragon bursts into pieces. The second devil appears in the form of a black man and tries to engage Margaret in conversation, but she is having none of it:

The holy Margaret then grabbed the devil by the hair and threw him onto the ground and she put out his right eye and shattered all his bones and she set her right foot over his neck...²⁴

St Margaret, whose cult was relatively new in Europe, following the arrival of her relics in the early-tenth century,²⁵ had many appealing features, but

²¹ Ann Hagen, *Anglo-Saxon Food and Drink: Production, Processing, Distribution and Consumption*, Anglo-Saxon Books: Hockwold cum Wilton 1999, 398.

²² "ealra þincga ærest gebuge man to rihte 7 ælc unriht forlæte". Extracted from **T66** see fn.12.

²³ Paraphrase from **T66** see fn.12.

²⁴ Translation Clayton 1994, 125 "Seo halga Margareta gegrap þane deofol þa be þæm locce and hine on eorþan awarep and his swyþran ege ut astang and ealle his ban heo tobrysde and sette hire swiþran fott ofer his swyran..."

²⁵ Margaret's relics were translated from the East in 908 and came to rest at San Pietro della Valle near Lake Bolsena, which was a pilgrimage rest-stop frequented by Englishmen on their way to Rome, and perhaps the reason for the newfound veneration of St Margaret in the early-eleventh century in England

perhaps the one that most impressed the late Anglo-Saxon laity was the extraordinary promise she extracted from God in her final prayer before her martyrdom.

God who measured the heavens with your hand and enclosed earth in your fist, hear my prayer that whoever writes out my passion or hears it read may from that time have his sins blotted out; and if anyone puts a light in my church [bought] from what he has earned, may the sin for which he asks forgiveness not be counted against him. I ask you, Lord, if anyone is found at the time of your terrible judgment and he is mindful of my name and of yours, deliver him, Lord from your punishment. I ask you further, Lord, that the person who makes a book of my martyrdom or has it in his house may have remission of all his sins, for we are all flesh and blood and are always sinning and never ceasing. I ask you further, Lord, that to the person who builds a church in my name and writes out there [a copy of] my passion or buys one with what he has earned, you send, Lord, the Holy Spirit. And where the book of my martyrdom is [kept] may there not be born a child who is blind or lame or dumb or deaf or afflicted by an unclean spirit, but may peace be there and love and the spirit of truth. And to the person who asks there for forgiveness of his sins carry out, Lord, his prayer for him.²⁶

A dove then appears and confirms all that Margaret has asked. At first, this saint's provision of a path to salvation may seem at odds with the notion of developing the inner heart of the laity; however, it should be noted that alongside the pious-giving of books promulgating her story and the building

was the recent acquisition of her relics by pilgrims returning from Rome. Veronica Ortenberg has speculated that relics of St Margaret may have been collected by Archbishop Sigeric (990–995), when he went to Rome to receive his pallium in 990. Veronica N. Ortenberg, 'Archbishop Sigeric's Journey to Rome in 990', *Anglo-Saxon England* 19 (1990), 197–246.

²⁶ Translation Clayton 1994, 130–132. "God, þu þe heofenan mid honda gemettest and eorþan on þinre fyst betyndest, geher mine bena þæt swa hwilc man swa writeþ mine þrowunga oþþe hi geheraþ rædan, of þære tide syn adylgade heora synna; oþþe gif hwilc man leoht deþ on minum cirican of his geswinge, be swa hwylcan gylte swa he bidde forgifenesse ne si him seo synna geteold. Ic bidde þe, Drihten, þæt gif hwilc mon si gemetod on þinum þam egeslican dome and he si gemindig minum naman and þines, gefreolsa hine, Drihten, of tintregan. Get ic þe bidde, Drihten, þæt se þe macað boc mines martirhades oþþe on his huse hæbbe, sy his synna eal alætnesse, forþon þe we syndon flæsc and blod æfre syngiende and næfre ablinnende. Get ic þe bidde, Drihten, þæt se þe cyrcan timbrige on minum naman and þær awrite mine þrowunge oþþe of his gewinne gebicge, send on hine, Drihten, þono Halgan Gast. And þær boc sy mines martyrhad, ne sy þær geboren blind cild ne healt, ne dumb, ne deaf, ne fram unclænum gaste geswenct, ac sy þær sib and lufu and soþfæstnesse gast. And se þe þær biddeþ his synna forgifnesse, gecyþe him, Drihten, his bene."

of churches, the act of confession is also stressed and salvation is not reduced to a simple cash transaction.

The homilies that succeed *The Life of St Margaret* provide instruction on how to imitate her extraordinary piety in everyday and ordinary Anglo-Saxon lives. The homilies expound on the most basic fundamentals of a good lay-Christian life and, taken as a whole, these homilies are a deliberately simple handbook of only that which is truly necessary to facilitate entry into heaven. They provide a glimpse of what was being done to inculcate the inward heart and spread the eleventh-century reform movement beyond the cloister and into a salutary and salvatory lay context. Moreover, while the acts of pious giving and even some of the devotions suggested in St Margaret's final prayer were opportunities only for those who would had enough wealth for such generosity, the man or men who compiled this homiletic collection envisioned a comprehensive system of pastoral care that would be effective and realistically available to those at all stations of life. It was a plan to catechize even the most ignorant layman, but more importantly, it also stressed that—over and above external compliance, generosity and peaceableness—the true key to salvation was inner reflection.

The first homily in the collection, **T59**, is a heavily redacted version of *Ælfric's Homily for Palm Sunday*. The alterations which have been made to it and its manuscript context outside of the liturgical calendar have changed its function and it now has a wider application. This homily does much more than recount the events of Palm Sunday, it encompasses the Gospel story from the Transfiguration to the Resurrection; in other words it provides its audience with the real crux of the story of Jesus' life. The compiler of this collection was interested in efficiency and simplicity, and for the purposes of catechizing the laity with little or no prior knowledge of Christianity, or an incomplete or erroneous understanding, this text could provide them with the bare minimum of instruction that they would need in order to make sense of Christian ritual. The Transfiguration leaves no room for doubt that Christ was the Son of God; the Last Supper helps with the comprehension of the Eucharist and the Crucifixion and Resurrection allow the laity to understand that Christ's Passion led to their salvation. The accretions and redactions to the text of *Ælfric's Homily for Palm Sunday* have resulted in a greater emphasis on several interrelated themes—the fulfillment of prophecy, the punishment of injustice, the temptation of the Devil, the importance and efficacy of penance, the evils of heathenism, and of premier significance, the redemptive sacrifice of Christ.

The next homily, **T60**, is a version of a text known as the *Sunday Letter*, which was believed to have been written by Christ himself and to have fallen from heaven into clerical hands.²⁷ The main thrust of the story relates to working on a Sunday, but, as with the Ælfrician homily, it has a broader function in this manuscript context. It opens with the story of a fire that long ago spread from Scotland into Europe, which was sent against a sinful people because they worked on Sundays. The homilist then explains why working on Sunday is wrong by paraphrasing the Old Testament stories of Creation, the Flood and God giving the law to Moses, before he finishes with the most compelling reason not to work on a Sunday—it was the day of Christ's Resurrection. In the context of this manuscript and its simple pastoral program this homily is used to provide instruction on the essential stories of the Old Testament which relate directly to Christ's redemptive Passion.

These two heavily adapted homilies are then followed by an anonymous homily which purports to be an account of the next life given by a devil, who was captured and forced to talk by a holy hermit from Thebes. The devil had first hand experience of both heaven and hell, because he had once resided among the splendors of heaven until his pride caused his downfall. Heaven he describes as a summer land of honey and jewels, where men can enjoy long lives without misery or sorrow. The real reward of heaven, however, is the proximity to God; to be able "to behold the figure of the Heavenly King and joy which is only in heaven."²⁸ The devil's description of the delights of heaven, however, only comes after a harrowing description of the horrors to be found in hell. As well as extremes of heat and cold, and unremitting shrieking, slavery and sadness and constant hunger and thirst, there are also dragons. But perhaps the real horror for an Anglo-Saxon was the devil's description of the anarchy of hell,

[There is...] groaning and lamentation, strife and weeping, wickedness and murder, suffering and torment; and there no man is ever able to help another. There is no celebration of the king nor honor of the ealdorman; there no man is able to remember his lord with a song of praise on account of the sorrow which oppresses him.²⁹

²⁷ Clare Lee's work on the Sunday Letter does not address the **T** version, but is nevertheless a good background. Clare A. Lees, 'The "Sunday Letter" and the "Sunday Lists"', *Anglo-Saxon England* 14 (1985), 129–51.

²⁸ "sceawigan þær þes heofon kyning ansione 7 þa wensumness þe an heofonum biop." Extract from **T61** see fn.12.

²⁹ "granung and gnornung, wroht and swop, man and morþor, sar and susl; and þær nan man ne mæg opran næfre gehylpan. Nis þær cyninges weorþung ne ealdormannes werþnes; þer nan man ne mæg his

The suffering in hell is, therefore, not just about personal pain but about the inversion of the relative stability of late Anglo-Saxon society. The Anglo-Saxons, after the accession of Cnut in 1016, were enjoying a period of relative stability after many years of disruption by Vikings, and the early-eleventh century law codes promulgated by Archbishop Wulfstan had brought a respite of peace and order.³⁰ Hell, therefore, is imagined as a vicious, anarchic chaos, where it is not possible to behave honorably and the very concepts of good lordship and kingship have become irrelevant.

The next four homilies, **T62** to **T65**, provide a sustained contemplation on the themes of righteousness, loving God and salvation. The extract from Wulfstan's homily **T62** exhorts the laity to embrace good conduct in this life in order to avoid the pains of hell and to acquire eternal bliss. The message is simple and allows no room for confusion: one must "stand against the temptation of the devil" (*wiþstandan deofles lare*) and "have proper faith and cherish church attendance day and night" (*hæbbe rihtne geleafan 7 lufian cyricsocne dæges 7 nihtes*). The next homily, **T64**, is a reflection on the messages of the *Pater noster* and the *Credo*, which exhorts the audience to thank God for allowing Christ to suffer so that they might be saved. The seventh homily then underpins this contemplation by urging the laity to keep in mind the life which will face them when body and soul separate, because in the future life friends cannot help them. In the next life one can only depend on God, and so the faithful are exhorted to love him eagerly with an "inweord heort" (inward heart).

The four homilies, **T62–T65**, provided the laity with a model of Christian behavior which does not concentrate on external practices of devotion, such as pious donations, but on first understanding that the root of salvation lies in the development of a righteous conscience. This places the emphasis first and foremost on interiority and it is hoped that the developed inner heart will lead to good conduct and away from the instigations of the devil. It is only after this protracted reflection on pious introspection that the collection turns to explaining the external practices of Christianity, beginning with fasting in **T66** and paying tithes in **T67**. **T67** does not, however, just remind the laity of their financial obligation to the church, it also begins to address the collection's next theme—the

waldend gemunan mid nanum lofsange forþan sare þe hiom ansittap." Extract from **T61** see fn.12.

³⁰ For a chronology of Wulfstan's career see Patrick Wormald, 'Archbishop Wulfstan: Eleventh-Century State Builder', in Matthew Townend ed., *Wulfstan: Archbishop of York: The Proceeding of the Second Alcuin Conference* (Studies in Early Middle Ages 10), Brepols: Turnhout 2004, 9–27, especially the table at 26–7.

establishment of civil society. In the millennium period there had been a drive on the continent to establish a 'sanctified peace', with the introduction of the Peace of God and Truce of God movements, and the homily, **T67**, can be read as an English response to this same drive.³¹ The homily forbids "ordeals and oaths and every high dispute on feast-days and rightly on Emberfast Day and for fourteen days after a holy day and for fourteen days besides", and that a Christian man must be "a protector of the poor, widows, orphans, and God's servants and God's needy".³²

The next two homilies, **T68** and **T69**, take up this theme of communal responsibility, building on the theme of establishing a peaceable civil society. Sin is said to have ruled society for too long, leading to insults and injuries and the break down of familial relationships. In a series of alliterating couplets the sad situation is summed up:

war and hunger, burning and bloodshed on each side, theft and murder, slander and malice, plunderers and robbery injure us because in this land there are, so far as it may appear, many injustices.³³

This is, of course, a direct reflection of the devil's description of hell in **T61**, and the homilist is suggesting, in no uncertain terms, that men are making their own hell on earth. While **T68** laments the depravities of lawlessness, **T69** offers a solution. The anonymous homilist advises the laity to submit to the good civil law, "we must all rightly hold one liege lord and all together curse life and land, and we must earnestly exalt righteousness and earnestly abolish injustice."³⁴

The last two homilies for the laity in **T**, **T70** and **T71**, address the participation in Christian ritual. **T70** emphasizes the importance of understanding the meaning of baptism before one partakes in the sacrament,

³¹ This anonymous homily was not addressed by the authors of the anthology, edited by Richard Landes, *The Apocalyptic Year 1000: religious Expectation and Social Change, 950–1050*, Oxford University Press: Oxford 2003, but the treatment of Wulfstan and Ælfric's apocalypticism in the volume is nevertheless relevant, see chapters by William Prideaux-Collins, "'Satan's Bonds are Extremely Loose': Apocalyptic Expectation in Anglo-Saxon England during the Millennial Era", 289–310 and M. Godden, 'The Millennium, Time, and History for the Anglo-Saxon', 155–80.

³² "...ordal 7 aþas 7 ælc healic geflit on freolsdagum 7 on riht ymbrenum fæsten dagan 7 for feowertinum nyhtan ær halige dagan oð feowertynum nithum on ufan eastran," and, "beo ongebeorhge earmum wyderum 7 steopcildum 7 godes þeawum and godes þearfan." Extract from **T67** see fn.12.

³³ "here 7 hungor, bryne 7 blodgyte on hwylcum ende 7 us stalu 7 cwalu, hol 7 hete 7 ryperas 7 reaflic . derað swyþe þearle . forþam on þissum eard is swa hit þencan mæg unrihta fela". Extract from **T68** see fn.12.

³⁴ "we sculan ealle ænne cynehlaford rihtlice healdan 7 lif and land samod ealle wyrrian 7 we sculaniornlice riht upræran 7 unriht iorne afyllan". Extract from **T69** see fn.12.

and may very well encapsulate the *raison d'être* of the whole homiletic collection, perhaps these thirteen homilies for the laity were the minimum amount of instruction that a laymen ought to receive before he could be baptized. The emphasis is here again on the inner heart, on the ability to comprehend the faith and develop a Christian inner life. The last homily for the laity in this collection, **T71**, provides instruction on how to say the *Pater noster* and the *Credo* in English, the prayers that every Christian should know by heart. The last two homilies, **T72** and **T73**, are addressed to the mass-priest and not to the laity. The first insists that priests must lead by example and the second that priests must not accept money for the performance of their duties.

The order of the homilies within the collection in **T** is highly systematized, beginning with key stories of the New and Old Testament, which elucidate redemption, these are followed by dire warnings of the consequences of sinfulness. The next four homilies teach the laity how to avoid sinfulness by fostering inner piety, living a righteous life, loving God and avoiding the snares of the devil. Only after the inner heart has been addressed does the compiler move on to acts of external devotion, fasting and paying tithes. The collection then moves on to stress that the 'inweord heort' must be matched by righteous external behavior, before the actual rites of baptism and the most necessary Christian prayers are given in English.

The two collections of confessional directives in **T** demonstrate the methods behind this 'painful questioning' and indicate a move away from the rather mechanical process of assignment of a penance from a penitential, and towards a reasonable and responsible assessment of how the individual sinner may be absolved of his sins. The assignment of a penance according to social status, in particular, with the repeated emphasis that a rich man should be judged more strongly than a poor man, highlights the concentration on internal piety and the spiritual intent behind confession and subsequent penitential acts. The first collection of confessional directives, **T31–T43**, is concerned with the form of confession, including confessional prayers, the addresses and exhortations of the confessor to the penitent congregation and the formulas for the correct procedures and demeanor of the confessional process. The second collection of confessional directives, **T75–T85**, is of an entirely different character: this is private advice to the confessor on the subtle complexity of the task of assigning penance, which repeatedly emphasizes that the penance should depend not only on what is confessed but also on the status of the person who confesses. **T75**, for

example expresses the differences between penitents in a series of paired opposites:

And remember you must never judge similarly the rich and the poor, the free and the slave, the old and the young, the healthy and the sick, the humble and the proud, the strong and the dependant, the ordained and the layman. A wise judge must prudently distinguish each deed, how it is done, and where and when.³⁵

This confessional directive also tells the confessor the best way to extract a confession; at first he is advised to listen patiently to the penitent and only to question him further if he seems reticent. The form of this questioning is given in **T84**:

And yet I ask you that you say to me all that you have worked in evil for it is better for you that you are ashamed before me, one man, than afterwards on Judgment Day before God, and all the inhabitants of Heaven and all the inhabitants of earth and all the inhabitants of Hell.³⁶

This directive makes it explicitly clear that, "though they may have committed similar sins the rich man is to be judged more harshly than a poor [man]" (þæh þe hie gelice synne fremman, ricum mannum mon sceal strangor deman than heanum). This then, is the real crux of the second handbook, and it is reiterated in the confessional directives, **T77**, **T83** and **T80**. The latter of these directives provides a practical threefold classification of lay penitents according to their material resources. The confessor is advised to assign the man who has might (se ðe þara mihta hæbbe) penances which are more communal and involving external acts of piety than his poorer neighbors. First and foremost, he had to build a church, which he was to provide with lands and ten young men to serve there, and to build any necessary bridges, if he had the means. He was to free his own slaves as well as manumit those of other men. He was to feed, clothe and house the poor and provide them with fire, bed and bath. The rich man was

³⁵ "And geþengc ðu þæt þu ne scealt næfre gelice deman þam rican and þam heanan, þam freon and þam þeowan, þam ealdan and þam geongan, þam halan and þam unhalan, þam eadmodan and þam ofermodan, þam strangan and þam unmagan, þam gehadodum and þam læwedum. Ælce dæde sceal gescadwis dema wislice toscadan, hu heo gedon si and hwar oððe hwænne." Extracted from **T75** see fn.12.

³⁶ "And git ic bidde þe þæt þu me secge eall þæt þu to yfele hæfst geworht for þam betere þe is þæt þu scamige nu beforan me anum þonne eft on domes dæge beforan gode, 7 beforan eallum heofenwaran, 7 eorðwaran, 7 eac helwaran." Extracted from **T84** see fn. 13.

told to correct himself in his food, drink and bodily lusts, but he was not expected to develop the same kind of internal and private contrition as a man of secondary status (se þe þonne lessan speda hæbbe). As well as paying tithes, providing alms, visiting the sick and burying the dead, it was also expected of the man of secondary status that:

...he should kneel in secret and prostrate himself on the ground especially, fast and keep vigil and eagerly pray often and frequently.³⁷

The lowest status man, who has yet less power (git lessan mihte hæbbe), was to be assigned penances which were not dependent on money at all. He must fast, keep vigil, suffer cold baths and toil against lust. Even these poorest of men, however, was still expected to perform an act of communal good in his penance; first, he had to forgive those he had provoked to anger and, second, he had to try to lead other sinners towards the straight path. In this confessional instruction, therefore, we have a direct reference to the doctrine of the corporal acts of mercy, based on Christ's prophecy of the Last Judgment in Matthew 25: 41:

Then he shall say to them also that shall be on his left hand: Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry, and you gave me not to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave me not to drink. I was a stranger, and you took me not in; naked, and you covered me not; sick and in prison, and you did not visit me.

Given the tone of the homiletic collection, and its concentration on inculcating the idea of the inner heart into the laity, the assignment of penances, which deliberately address the faults that Christ found with those who would be damned at Judgment Day, seem particularly appropriate. The penances for the poorest of men, who have to forgive those who become angry with them and lead others to righteousness, not only reflect the compulsion toward peaceableness and good civil society, which was abundant in the homiletic collection, but also hint at the doctrine of the spiritual works of mercy, which compels all men to instruct the ignorant, counsel the doubtful, admonish sinners, bear wrongs patiently, forgive

³⁷ "And silf he on diglum cneowlie gelome, 7 hine on eorðan swiðe aþenige fæste 7 wacige 7 gebidde georne oft and gelome". Extracted from **T80** see fn.13.

offences willingly, comfort the afflicted and pray for the living and the dead. The spiritual works of mercy have a benefit for the poorest men of the period in that they can be performed without any financial cost.

The cure of souls, therefore, depended on the resources available to the penitent. Generous donations and pious giving was expected only of those who could afford it, but it would be a mistake to think that pious giving was not also accompanied by internal reflection; confession and penance were not considered automatic or mechanical processes, but the confessor is urged to establish his own level of penance rather than following a penitential, therefore, the primary goal, we must presume, was true repentance. Controversy continued to flare up in the eleventh century over the usefulness of traditional penitentials, which were little more than lists of sins and punishments. Egbert's penitential, for example, was described by Peter Damian, an eleventh-century Italian cardinal as "diabolical figments instituted to deceive the souls of the simple with cunning devices".³⁸ The second confessor's handbook of Cotton Tiberius A. iii perhaps, presents an attempt at an alternative.

The homiletic and confessional handbooks of **T**, demonstrate a real concern to catechize the laity and make the confessional process a genuinely redemptive experience. Internal piety had been a focus of the English Church since the tenth-century reform movement, and it would seem that two generations after this movement a genuine effort was being made to pass on this understanding to the laity. The laity, for their part, brought the same inclination towards ostentation and conspicuous consumption to their dealings with the church as they did to other highly visible aspects of their lives, through the pious donation of highly expensive items. We must not assume, however, that this was the sum of their religious experience: certainly the evidence of **T** demonstrates the importance that the Church placed on inculcating the idea of the inward heart into the laity. While the individual texts of the handbook, studied in isolation, give us little more than an oblique glimpse of eleventh-century lay piety and pastoral provision, when these texts are examined as part of comprehensive collections, a more detailed snapshot of pre-Conquest religiosity comes into sharp focus. The pastoral care program detailed in **T** is concerned not just with the laity's duties toward the Church, but is equally concerned with the obligations of the Church to the laity—an obligation to facilitate salvation by promoting inner reflection.

³⁸ Quoted by A. J. Frantzen, *The Literature of Penance in Anglo-Saxon England*, New Brunswick, NJ 1983, 148.

Tracey-Anne Cooper, PhD
Department of History, St. John's University
traceyanne.cooper[at]gmail.com