



# CREaTE

Canterbury Research and Theses Environment

Canterbury Christ Church University's repository of research outputs

<http://create.canterbury.ac.uk>

Please cite this publication as follows:

Bintley, M. (2014) The translation of St Oswald's relics to New Minster, Gloucester: royal and imperial resonances. *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History*, 19. pp. 171-181. ISSN 0264-5254.

Link to official URL (if available):

This version is made available in accordance with publishers' policies. All material made available by CReaTE is protected by intellectual property law, including copyright law. Any use made of the contents should comply with the relevant law.

Contact: [create.library@canterbury.ac.uk](mailto:create.library@canterbury.ac.uk)



## **ABSTRACT**

### **The Translation of St Oswald's Relics to New Minster, Gloucester: Royal and Imperial Resonances**

The relics of St Oswald were translated to New Minster, Gloucester, in the early tenth century, under the authority of Æthelflæd and Æthelred of Mercia, and Edward the Elder. This was ostensibly to empower the new *burh*, sited in the ruins of the former Roman town, with the potent relics of one of Anglo-Saxon Christianity's cornerstones. This article argues that the relics of Oswald were not only brought to Gloucester to enhance its spiritual and ideological importance, but also to take advantage of the mythologies attached to this king, saint, and martyr, which were perpetuated by a contemporary translation of Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica*. This work, which emphasizes Oswald's role in the unification of Northumbria under Christianity, consciously models Oswald on his imperial predecessor Constantine. These and other valuable attendant mythologies may have been consciously appropriated by the Mercians and West Saxons in the early tenth century, thereby staking a claim to the imperial Christian heritage of Rome and Northumbria, and furthering the notion of an *Angelcynn* that had only recently been promoted by Alfred the Great.

## **TEXT**

### **The Translation of St Oswald's Relics to New Minster, Gloucester: Royal and Imperial Resonances**

During the reign of Edward the Elder (*r.* 899-924), a silver penny was issued at Chester which is thought to have been minted in conscious imitation of a silver *argenteus* struck in Trier *c.* 306-07, during the rule of Emperor Constantine the Great (*c.* 272-337).<sup>1</sup> Works like the Old English *Elene* show that the Anglo-Saxons believed Constantine to have united the Roman Empire under the banner of Christendom. Constantine also served as a model for Bede's portrait of Oswald of Northumbria (*r.* 634-42) – king, saint, and martyr – in the *Historia ecclesiastica*, whose achievements had included the unification of Bernicia and Deira, however temporarily, through the power of the cross. Oswald's relics may have been translated from Bardney monastery in Lincolnshire to the New Minster at Gloucester with this legacy in mind. Whilst the importance of this translation has long been recognised, the contemporary cultural significance of the event has not yet been fully explored. Its symbolic resonances are considered in this article through an investigation into the social and physical geography of Gloucester, aristocratic relations between Wessex and Mercia in the early tenth century, and other traditions associated with Oswald and Constantine. The translation of Oswald's remains took place at the same time that other saintly relics were translated to fledgling *burhs*, the purpose of which was to magnify their spiritual and ideological significance. At Gloucester, however, the relics of Oswald may also have strengthened the alliance of Wessex and Mercia under Alfred's children Edward and Æthelflæd; the former as the new king of Wessex, and the latter as the wife of the Mercian ealdorman Æthelred. Consequently, the establishment of the New Minster at Gloucester, at around the time that the old Roman *colonia* was refounded as a *burh*, may have been intended to reinforce the physical stronghold with the spiritual potency of a sacred Christian dynasty.

[Fig. 1. Silver *argenteus* of Constantine the Great, Roman AD, *c.* 306-07, minted at Trier, Germany. © Trustees of the British Museum]

[Fig. 2. Silver penny of Edward 'the Elder', Anglo-Saxon, *c.* 899-924, minted in the kingdom of Mercia, central England. © Trustees of the British Museum]

**New Minster and the Relics of Oswald**

Carolyn Heighway and Michael Hare agree that the New Minster at Gloucester was founded by Æthelflæd and her husband Æthelred in either the 'last years of the 9th century or at the latest in the first decade of the 10th century'.<sup>2</sup> The site chosen for the church may already have been considered sacred, as eighth and ninth century cross shafts were built into the earliest church, whose builders also made substantial use of masonry from the ruins of Roman *Glevum*.<sup>3</sup> Heighway has argued that the foundation of the New Minster took place at around the same time that a *burh* was established at Gloucester *c.* 900, the most convincing evidence for this being the 'overall street pattern of the eastern half of the fortress area', though archaeological evidence has not yet confirmed this dating.<sup>4</sup> If this is the case, Heighway suggests that the founding of the *burh* and the New Minster would have been recognised as central to the 'propaganda which accompanied the new military regime'.<sup>5</sup>

In keeping with this programme, the translation of St Oswald's relics to the New Minster in 909 was an act which had both a 'political and religious character', serving both as a statement of Mercian power, and of Æthelred and Æthelflæd's legitimacy and potency.<sup>6</sup> The relics themselves were seized from Bardney Monastery in Danish Lincolnshire in a 'considerable coup' helmed by Æthelflæd and Edward.<sup>7</sup> The entry for this year in Chronicle MS A describes how:

Py ilcan gere sende Eadweard cyng firde ægðer ge of Westseaxum ge of Mercum, 7 heo gehegade swiðe micel on þæm norðhere, ægðer ge on mannum ge on gehwelces cynnes yrfe, 7 manega men ofslogon þara Deniscena 7 þær wæron fif wucan inne.

In that same year King Edward sent an army from both Wessex and Mercia, and it greatly harried the lands of the northern army, both in men and in every kind of livestock, and they killed many men of those Danes, and were there for five weeks.<sup>8</sup>

The Mercian Register in Chronicle MS C records that *her wæs Sancte Oswaldes lic gelæded of Beardanigge on Myrce* ('at this time the body of St Oswald was brought from Bardney into Mercia').<sup>9</sup> In addition to serving as a political statement, the translation would also have encouraged pilgrims and other 'generous visitors' to visit Gloucester and the New Minster, ensuring that the church itself gained a great deal of wealth in land and goods, as well as providing economic stimulus for the new *burh*.<sup>10</sup>

The translation of these relics was not an isolated event in the early tenth century, especially within Mercia. Michael Hare notes that St Werburg's relics were brought to Chester from Hanbury in Staffordshire, those of St Ealhmund were taken from Derby to Shrewsbury, and those of St Guthlac may also have been transferred from Crowland to Hereford.<sup>11</sup> Significantly, each of these saints had some connection with the Mercian aristocracy, as well as that of other Anglo-Saxon kingdoms. Werburg was the granddaughter of Penda, and the daughter of the Christian convert Wulfhere (on her Mercian side of the family), whilst her mother was the Kentish princess St Eormenilda, daughter of Eorcenberht of Kent and St Sexburga. Werburg, who was 'principally remembered for her work in the Mercian monasteries',<sup>12</sup> was translated to St Peter and St Paul, Chester, from where she had originally been interred at Hanbury (Staffs.) after her death *c.* 700 at her monastery in Threckingham (Lincs.).<sup>13</sup> Werburg's cult was fairly widely scattered across Mercia, with churches also dedicated further afield in Kent, Devon, and Cornwall, which Rollason has taken to indicate the promotion of her cult by the Mercian and West Saxon aristocracy, possibly at this time.<sup>14</sup> Rollason notes that her original burial place at Hanbury (where her body was elevated by Ceolred of Mercia (709-16) according to an eleventh-century *life*), may have been a centre of royal administration, as several Mercian councils are recorded to have met at *Werbunging wic*.<sup>15</sup> If her relics were translated to Chester when it became a *burh* in 907, Werburg's presence may have been intended to lend ideological support through her Mercian royal connections, the part she had played strengthening ecclesiastical networks, and her role as the daughter of the Christian convert Wulfhere and the Christian saint Eormenilda – with the latter having her own East Anglian and Kentish royal connections. It is also worth

noting that Æthelflæd may also have been responsible for the early development of Oswald's cult here, in here north-west midland stronghold.<sup>16</sup>

Guthlac was also believed to have been a member of the Mercian royal family, descended from the royal progenitor Icel, and in any case had a close relationship with the Mercian king Æthelbald (716–57).<sup>17</sup> As a young man Guthlac had fought in the retinue of Æthelred of Mercia (675–704), Werburg's uncle and successor to her father Wulfhere, before retiring from military service to become a monk at Ripon, eventually abandoning human company altogether and retreating to a fenland hermitage at Crowland. Felix, Guthlac's biographer and near contemporary, recorded that the saint's sister Pega buried Guthlac's remains in his oratory, where they were found to be uncorrupted a year later, and subsequently reinterred in a monument that was adorned with treasures by Æthelbald.<sup>18</sup> Churches dedicated to Guthlac are found throughout Mercia, though one of the most significant in the contexts of this study may be at Castle Green, Hereford, where a church that may have been established as early as the seventh century was probably rededicated to him in the eighth or ninth century.<sup>19</sup> If Guthlac's relics were translated to Hereford at this time, they may have been intended to lend this some of the saint's potent spiritual strength to the marches – strength that he had demonstrated in overcoming demons in the Lincolnshire fens, which would have been well-known via works such as the *Guthlac* poems of the Exeter Book.

Ealhmund's relics may have been translated to Shrewsbury for similar reasons to Werburg and Guthlac, though he is an obscure figure in many respects, despite dedications in Mercia which indicate the widespread dispersal of his cult.<sup>20</sup> Ealhmund, a Northumbrian prince and son of King Alcred (765–74), was killed c. 800 by the Northumbrian King Eardwulf in unclear circumstances described in the *Histora Regum* annals that were later considered martyrdom.<sup>21</sup> It is difficult to know what particular qualities Ealhmund's relics may have been thought to possess, beyond what is known about his status as a royal Northumbrian martyr. Ridyard agreed with Rollason that his cult at Derby may have flourished under Cenwulf of Mercia as part of an effort to stigmatise and undermine his Northumbrian rival.<sup>22</sup> It may have been the case that in addition to his saintly power, Ealhmund was seen at the time of his translation to represent both a direct connection with the Northumbrian royal line, and with the Mercian king Cenwulf as his protector.

The reasons why these particular locations were chosen to rehouse these saints are somewhat obscure, though they may, in part, have been due to perceived attributes that were deemed beneficial to their new place of rest. Additionally, as Hadley has argued, 'this transfer of cults may have served the dual role of satisfying Mercian pride and of establishing more firmly West Saxon control in Mercia', which was accomplished 'by reminding the Mercians of the fact that some of their major saints' cults had long involved them in looking up to foreign royalty'.<sup>23</sup> In any case, each of these translations was intended to lend symbolic power to these places, all of which were arguably *burhs* founded, developed, or reinforced during Edward's reign (899-924). Although responsibility for initiating this programme of defensive works is still attributed to his father, it was not Alfred but Edward who recognised the potential of this system 'for aggression, conquest and settlement'.<sup>24</sup> The tenth and eleventh centuries saw a gradual population increase in some of these *burhs*, many of which had originally been founded as forts, though the chronology of their development is not yet clear, and was not straightforward.<sup>25</sup> It was encouraged in part by commercial legislation, with Edward's laws stipulating that all trade was to be confined to towns, where it could be observed 'by officials and other trustworthy witnesses'.<sup>26</sup> The resituation of Oswald's relics at Gloucester, when understood in this context, may have granted the *burh* and the New Minster special favour as Æthelred and Æthelflæd's capital; as the site of their dynastic foundation and intended place of burial.<sup>27</sup> New Minster might be thought of in this sense as a reliquary in its own right, with the combined symbolism of Roman walls and royal relics lending their considerable ideological support to the proto-urban foundation.<sup>28</sup>

## Gloucester in the Landscape

If these relationships were implicit in the symbolic architecture of New Minster and Gloucester, it is reasonable to consider contemporary perceptions of the Roman and Northumbrian past in early tenth century England. Firstly, however, it is important to note why Gloucester was chosen as the site for a new Mercian ‘capital’. As Andrew Reynolds has noted of Gloucestershire more broadly, ‘the topography of the county is key to understanding both its role in territorial terms and the nature of settlement and its attendant agricultural regimes’.<sup>29</sup> Whilst this study cannot examine all of these possibilities, a few general points should be made about Gloucester’s geographical contexts. Recent archaeology has confirmed that the intramural area was largely deserted between the end of Roman rule in Britain and the establishment of the seventh century minster.<sup>30</sup> Despite this, the founding of an intramural minster in 679 serves to indicate the extent to which the ‘massive Roman remains continued to have a topographic and cultural influence’ over the area.<sup>31</sup> At this time Gloucester lay within the kingdom of the *Hwicce*, with the South Mercians to the north, and the *Magonsætan* to the west, separating the kingdom from the Welsh.<sup>32</sup> During the eighth and ninth centuries Gloucestershire was a notably turbulent border region between the Mercian and West Saxon kingdoms across which a series of battles were fought, occupying ‘a unique geographical role within Mercia bordering both Wessex and Wales’.<sup>33</sup>

The historical significance of Gloucester would not have been lost on Æthelflæd, her husband, or their Mercian, West Saxon, and Welsh contemporaries. A resurgence of the conflicts that had taken place in this landscape over the course of centuries was in no-one’s interests given the more immediate Viking threat. Gloucester’s development into a *burh* and the endowment of New Minster can thus be viewed not only as a display of Mercian potency, but also as part of an effort to promote the integration of Wessex and Mercia into a unified Anglo-Saxon kingdom – an idea which had only recently been promoted by Alfred.

Another important factor in Gloucester’s development was the River Severn. The river’s course had been instrumental in the siting of a Roman fort at Kingsholm, to the north of the subsequent *colonia*. The ‘loop’ of the river that ran close to this intramural area (which has long since silted up), was to be ‘the position of the quayside and the initiation point of much trade and commerce’ in the early and later medieval periods.<sup>34</sup> Heighway suggests that this quayside location may have been developed by Æthelred and Æthelflæd in order to establish a greater control over river traffic.<sup>35</sup> The river allowed a rapid response to a Viking raid in 914, for example, that was dealt with by a combined force of men from Hereford, Gloucester, and the nearest *burhs*, according to the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle (MS A).<sup>36</sup> From Gloucester, the Severn traces a course through the heartlands of western Mercia, passing through numerous sites of contemporary significance (including Worcester and Shrewsbury), before crossing the border into Wales halfway along the length of Offa’s Dyke.<sup>37</sup> Standing at the mouth of the Severn, Gloucester would have served as a gateway into central Mercia, and as a natural crossing point into southern Wales. Recent study has drawn attention to the role played by rivers and other waterways in early medieval England (and elsewhere) as points of connection between communities, precisely because they serve as self-defining borders in the landscape. In Anglo-Saxon England, Sarah Semple and Julie Lund have noted that these ‘natural barriers, crossing-places and routes of communication’ presented qualities that ‘may have been particularly valued for assembly locations’.<sup>38</sup> As a consequence, places that bridged them would have served as central points in the ‘cognitive landscape’.<sup>39</sup> Thus, when the defensive function of the former *colonia* was reinstated after a lapse of many centuries, it already occupied a key position in the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, bridging a gap on land and water between Mercia, Wessex, and the Welsh.

### **Gloucester and the Emergence of Anglo-Saxon Identity**

The creation and development of New Minster and the *burh* can be seen as a continuation of the efforts of Alfred and his circle to create a united Anglo-Saxon kingdom. Simon Keynes’s assessment of the relationship between Alfred and the Mercians suggests that by the end of the ninth century the antagonisms of the seventh and eighth, if not forgotten, had given way to

a friendlier relationship that had ‘grown only stronger in the 860s, and found expression in various ways’.<sup>40</sup> Certain aspects of this relationship may have been strengthened by a common enemy, the increasing dominance of Wessex over Mercia, and the threat of either kingdom suffering the same fate as Northumbria. Whilst it may not have been until later that Alfred assumed the title of ‘king of the Anglo–Saxons’, Wessex and Mercia that of ‘kingdom of the Anglo–Saxons’, and the people of both the name of *Angelcynn*, Keynes sees the events of 886 as being associated with the more conscious promulgation of these terms, even if they already existed at the time of Alfred’s assumption of power over Mercia c. 880.<sup>41</sup>

Central to the events of 886, according to the Chronicle and Asser, was the reoccupation of the intramural area at London, though Keynes notes that there is no indication that this involved force,<sup>42</sup> and Jeremy Haslam and Derek Keene have argued that it was probably part of a lengthy and ongoing process of refortification.<sup>43</sup> Asser writes that:

Eodem anno Ælfred, Angulsaxonum rex, post incendia urbium stragesque populorum, Lundoniam civitatem honorifice restauravit et habitabilem fecit; quam genero suo Ætheredo, Merciorum comiti, commendavit servandam. Ad quem regem omnes Angli et Saxones, qui prius ubique dispersi fuerant aut cum paganis sub captivitate erant, voluntarie converterunt, et suo dominio se subdiderunt.<sup>44</sup>

In that same year Alfred, the king of the Anglo–Saxons, after so many cities had been burned and people slaughtered, honorably restored and made habitable the city of London; he gave it into the care of his dependent Æthelred, the ealdorman of the Mercians. To King Alfred did all of the Angles and Saxons, who previously had been everywhere dispersed and put to flight, and were not under the captivity of the Vikings, voluntarily convert and submit themselves to his lordship.

The central act which accompanied the adoption of the term *Angelcynn* was thus essentially ‘urban’ in character – even if the reoccupation of this place and others like it was, in reality, conceptual, rather than actual.<sup>45</sup>

Keynes writes that by the end of Alfred’s reign his court would have been ‘positively crawling with Mercians’, including the king’s wife Ealhswith and her retinue, Eadburh (Ealhswith’s mother), Ealdorman Æthelwulf (Ealhswith’s brother), and Ealdorman Æthelred (Alfred’s son-in-law).<sup>46</sup> Although the two courts retained distinct identities, with developing centres at Winchester and Gloucester, they were ‘united rather than separated by the river which ran between them’, and the central focal point of the kingdom – London – that lay economically (and in future politically) at its heart.<sup>47</sup> The endowment and refortification of Gloucester may have been undertaken with similar ends in mind. Both London and Gloucester straddled loosely defined borders, occupied pivotal positions on two of the largest and longest rivers in Britain, and were anchored in the remains of walled Roman towns. Like the development of Winchester and London, the foundation of New Minster was also a ‘family and dynastic matter’ to which Alfred may have contributed personally.<sup>48</sup> Heighway, emphasizing Edward’s involvement in the reclamation of Oswald’s relics, and the foundation of a new minster at Winchester c. 901, has suggested that what took place at Gloucester may have been the fulfilment of plans originally set out by Alfred.<sup>49</sup> Even if Alfred had not sketched out plans for a church at Gloucester in an idle moment between devising candle–clocks and horn–lanterns, it is certainly the kind of idea for which he liked to assume responsibility.

To summarise the discussion so far, the founding of New Minster, the translation of Oswald’s relics, and the development of Gloucester, can be seen as a joint enterprise between the Mercian and West Saxon aristocracy. In this undertaking Edward, Æthelflæd, and Æthelred were apparently pursuing the union of an *Angelcynn* (under West Saxon *imperium*) that had been emphasized by Alfred. Gloucester was well-suited for this because it shared a number of characteristics with London, occupying a strategic location between the two kingdoms, standing in close proximity to old enemies in Wales, and acting as a gateway to the riverine highway into central Mercia.

## Why Oswald? Unification Mythologies<sup>50</sup>

One of the outstanding questions that this paper aims to answer is why the relics of Oswald were particularly suited to the New Minster, an issue which has previously been discussed by Heighway, Thacker, Hare, and others. Oswald's bones were difficult to obtain, and bringing them to New Minster enhanced the relationship between Mercia and Wessex, and increased the prestige of Gloucester. There are further possible reasons why these relics may have been especially well suited to the new *burh*, however, which are related to the mythologies surrounding Oswald, and the layers of meaning that his remains had accrued.

The 'cult' of St Oswald achieved unprecedented popularity throughout Europe, as is well known in early medieval studies. The Old English translation of Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica* at the time of Alfred – even if he played no part in its production – demonstrates the text's cultural currency at the end of the ninth century. Oswald's role in the *Historia* is as prominent as one might expect from Bede, as a Northumbrian writing within a century of his death in battle. The work is five books in length, and the third (perhaps its central pillar) begins with Oswald's victory over Cædwallon, with an army small in numbers *sed fide Christi munito* ('yet strengthened by their faith in Christ').<sup>51</sup> This force would in fact have consisted largely of heathen Bernicians who may have been particularly motivated by associations between the great wooden cross raised by Oswald and the cult pillars of their religion.<sup>52</sup> Following the defeat of Osric of Deira and his brother Eanfrith of Bernicia, whose identification by Bede as heathen kings indicates a return to heathen worship in Northumbria *c.* 632–34, Oswald rallied enough support to lead a successful counteroffensive against Cædwallon.<sup>53</sup>

Ostenditur autem usque hodie, et in magna ueneratione habetur locus ille, ubi uenturus ad hanc pugnam Osuald signum sanctae crucis erexit, ac flexis genibus Deum deprecatus est, ut in tanta rerum necessitate suis cultoribus caelesti succurreret auxilio. Denique fertur, quia facta citato opere cruce, ac fouea praeparata, in qua statui deberet, ipse fide feruens hanc arripuerit, ac foueae inposuerit, atque utraque manu erectam tenuerit, donec adgesto a militibus puluere terrae figeretur.<sup>54</sup>

The place is yet shown today, and held in great veneration, where before this battle Oswald erected the sign of the holy cross, and on bended knee prayed to God that in their desperate need He would hasten to the aid of his worshippers. Thereupon it is held that when a cross had been hastily manufactured, and the pit prepared in which it was to be firmly bound, he himself in the fervour of his faith seized it, and placed it in the hole, and then held it upright with both hands, while the soldiers piled up the earth to fix it in position.

The narrative framing this passage indicates that Oswald was leading a combined force of Bernicians and Deirans against the British, whose Christianity Bede is quick to pass over if not actively obscure.<sup>55</sup> In essence, this passage conveys the idea that the unification of Bernicia and Deira into one Northumbrian kingdom (however fractured its politics were until its ninth century conquest), took place under Oswald because of his Christian belief. This episode thus forms a pivotal point not only in Bede's *Historia*, but also in the narrative of Anglo-Saxon Christianity, and the establishment of a Northumbrian kingdom united under God.

Alan Thacker has noted that the *Historia ecclesiastica* also takes pains to emphasize the afterlife of Oswald's potent relics and secondary relics.<sup>56</sup> Bede, and presumably his readers, believed that they possessed great curative power. Soil from the place where Oswald was killed at Maserfield prevented the combustion of a post from which it hung in a bag during a house-fire, where although *consumta ergo domu flammis* ('the whole house was consumed by flames'), the post, protected from the flames by Oswald's earth, *tuta ab ignibus et intacta remansit* ('remained untouched by the fire and wholly intact').<sup>57</sup> Accounts of

miracles associated with this spot at Maserfield were widespread in Bede's day, by which time it had become a site of pilgrimage.<sup>58</sup> Similarly, Bede writes that a century after the battle of Heavenfield, splinters were still being cut from Oswald's cross for the benefit of their healing properties:<sup>59</sup>

Nam et usque hodie multi de ipso ligno sacrosanctae crucis astulas excidere solent, quas cum in aquas miserint, eisque languentes homines aut pecudes potauerint siue asperserint, mox sanitati restituuntur.<sup>60</sup>

For even to this day many are accustomed to cut splinters from the wood of this holy cross, which when placed in water, then brought to languishing men or beasts (to drink; or else they are sprinkled with it), soon restores them to health.

In much the same manner, an *astulam roboris* ('splinter of oak') cut from *quidem de ligno* ('some of the post') that Penda used to display Oswald's remains was placed in water that the Northumbrian missionary and later Frisian bishop Willibrord used to cure an Irish scholar of the plague.<sup>61</sup>

An Old English version of Bede's *Historia* produced at around the time of the translation would have reconfirmed Oswald's significance, as well as the authenticity of these stories and the power of his relics. The following mythologies are likely to have accompanied his relics, even for those unlikely to have read the *Historia*: that Oswald had served a pivotal role in Northumbrian history, and that his relics were powerful enough to imbue other objects with their own sacral agency. If Oswald's remains were relocated to Gloucester because of this transferrable potency, other mythologies associated with Oswald may also have accompanied them, and his role in the temporary unification of Northumbria may have been perceived as expedient to the unification of Mercia and Wessex into one kingdom of *Angelcynn*.<sup>62</sup>

### Why Oswald? Dynastic Pretensions

Æthelflæd may have perceived her role in the translation of Oswald's bones as that of a latter-day Osthryth (*d.* 697), Oswald's niece, who had been married to Æthelred of Mercia (*r.* 675–704) as partial settlement for the killing of Penda at Winwæd in 655. Osthryth had been responsible for the initial transfer of Oswald's remains to Bardney monastery after their dismemberment and display on large wooden posts by Penda.<sup>63</sup> This is likely to have taken place near the battle-ground at Maserfield, although this site has not been located with the same degree of certainty as Heavenfield.<sup>64</sup> Bede tells us that:

Est monasterium nobile in prouincia Lindissi, nomine Beardaneu, quod eadem regina cum uiro suo Aedilredo multum diligebat, uenerabatur, excolebat, in quo desiderabat honoranda patris sui ossa recondere.<sup>65</sup>

There is a noble monastery in the province of Lindsey, named Bardney, which that queen with her husband Æthelred esteemed highly, and greatly venerated and adorned it, and it was here that she wished to store the honourable bones of her uncle.

At first the monks of Lindsey did not look favourably upon these relics, and refused to allow them into their monastery, apparently because they harboured resentment against Oswald because of his military aggression against their people. It took the appearance of a divine column of light above his remains to convince them of his holiness and virtue, whereupon Oswald's bones were brought within and treated with all due ceremony.

The translation of Oswald's relics by these royal women make for an obvious point of comparison, and Æthelflæd must have been aware that her actions followed Osthryth's. Similarly, the endowment of New Minster may be seen in the same light as Offa's earlier

treatment of the shrine at Bardney, which he adorned with ‘precious metals, gems, and other ornaments’, though it is not certain that this was known amongst the West Saxons and Mercians.<sup>66</sup> This event in Bardney’s history is recorded in Alcuin’s poem about York, which is preserved in the early twelfth century portion of Reims 426 (ff. 210r-214r, and 215r), apparently because of the compilers’ interest in the ‘English intellectual tradition and history’.<sup>67</sup> Godman suggests that Alcuin’s praise of Offa in this poem may represent a ‘turning away from the Northumbrian tyrants and usurpers of his own times to the powerful monarch of the neighbouring Mercia’, whom Alcuin thought comparable with his ‘heroes’ Edwin, Oswald, and Oswiu.<sup>68</sup> He wrote that:

Postea rex felix ornaverat Offa sepulcrum  
argento, gemmis, auro, multoque decore,  
ut decus et specimen tumbae per saecula maneret,  
praemia pro modico sumpturus magna labore.

Later blessed king Offa adorned the sepulchre  
with silver, gems, gold, and much finery,  
making of it a splendid and enduring monument,  
and winning great rewards for such small effort.<sup>69</sup>

Though this work was probably not widely known in England, and knowledge of it cannot be assessed in Mercia or Wessex from the surviving manuscripts, this does not mean that the events it describes could not, and would not, have been known in the early tenth century.<sup>70</sup> In the first place, Alcuin is unlikely to have entirely fabricated his account of Offa’s gifts to the shrine, a contemporary event which, on the basis of this description, seems to have been public and ostentatious. Although Bardney is thought to have been attacked by Vikings at some point between this endowment and the translation of the relics in 909 (in the 860s or 870s), the importance of the place as the home of Oswald’s relics was clearly well known to the houses of Mercia and Wessex. This was a difficult period for the Mercians, and there is no direct evidence to indicate that Edward and Æthelflæd would have been aware of Offa’s contribution to the shrine. However, it is entirely reasonable to suppose that the local community at Bardney would have maintained the memory of this king’s generosity, even if the monastery had since been stripped of these adornments, and that the Mercian aristocracy would have had natural interest in promoting links with (and thus claims to) Oswald’s place of rest. If Æthelflæd’s treatment of Oswald’s remains was therefore intended to echo that of her Mercian and Northumbrian predecessors, this may have been in keeping with dynastic realignments under Alfred identified by Janet Nelson through which, via his mother’s line, Alfred assumed elements of Northumbrian royal identity.<sup>71</sup> Nelson has also suggested that Alfred named his daughter Æthelflæd after Osthryth’s own sister Ælflæd, and that he may have intended to dedicate her to God as an offering of thanks, in much the same way that Oswy had done with his daughter.<sup>72</sup> If this was the case, Æthelflæd may have been imitating Osthryth in order to further the tenuous dynastic connections that her father had made with the Northumbrian aristocracy.

### **Constantine and Helena: Unification Mythologies**

The translation of Oswald’s relics by Æthelflæd from Bardney to Gloucester may have been intended to recall their translation from Maserfield to Bardney by Oswald’s niece Osthryth, as part of a conscious assumption of Mercian and Northumbrian royal identity by Alfred, Edward, and Æthelflæd. If Oswald was understood at this time as Bede had portrayed him, it is important to remember that Bede had modelled Oswald, in part, on his imperial predecessor Constantine. Wallace–Hadrill observed that Oswald’s victory at the Battle of Heavenfield in the *Historia ecclesiastica* evokes Constantine’s victory over Maxentius at the Battle of the Milvian Bridge:

The cause is religious, and victory is won through faith. It is Oswald's faith that is rewarded by miracles at the site of the cross. How far this tallies with what actually happened cannot be asked or answered. It certainly places a royal victory within a historical context that began with Constantine...<sup>73</sup>

The exemplary episode in Eusebius' *Vita Constantini* tells us that six years after Constantine crowned Augustus at *Eboracum* (York), in the dawning hours of the day on which he led an army consisting largely of Gallic and Germanic conscripts to victory against Maxentius, Constantine was granted a vision of the cross, high in the heavens, accompanied by the written instruction to 'conquer by this'.<sup>74</sup> Constantine gave orders that his men should mark their shields with the *labarum*, which in turn secured his victory.<sup>75</sup> The episode in which Oswald's cross is raised at Heavenfield appears to consciously imitate this. Notably, Oswald grasps the cross-shaft himself whilst earth is piled up around its base, offering a potent metaphor for the unification of Bernicia and Deira under the banner of Christ. This may also have been intended to evoke the unification of Roman authority under Constantinian Christianity after the defeat of Maxentius. Even if the reality was far more complex in both cases, this may nevertheless have been the way in which events were broadly understood in the early tenth century.

It is not the aim of this article to mount a sustained discussion of Constantine's significance in Anglo-Saxon culture.<sup>76</sup> There are, however, relevant features of the Old English *Elene* that clarify the way in which he was thought about in England. In the Old English poem, as in Eusebius's *Vita*, Constantine is brought to Christianity before his mother, contrary to historical events, before sending her to search for the True Cross in Jerusalem. The 'thematic statement' at the heart of this poem, identified by Regan as 'the Cross, the Church, and its mission', suggests that its author, Cynewulf, was most probably working in connection with an ecclesiastical institution.<sup>77</sup> Owing to the survival of 'occasional' Mercian forms and metrical evidence in the epilogue, Gradon thought *Elene* most likely to have been composed by Cynewulf in Mercia during the first half of the ninth century.<sup>78</sup> In any case, the preservation of this poem in the Vercelli Book suggests that interest in Constantine was as prevalent when the codex was compiled (towards the end of the tenth century), as it had been at the time of its composition, thus spanning the period under discussion here.

Helena's most important act in this poem is the recovery of the cross. She succeeds in her search thanks to Judas, a initially non-compliant Jewish elder who is tortured into submission and repentance, before leading Helena to the cross's burial place. In his plea to God for divine assistance, Judas prays for the cross to be revealed in the manner of the bones of Joseph, son of Jacob, which were unearthed before the Exodus, thus situating this act firmly within the Scriptural tradition.<sup>79</sup>

Swa ðu gehyrdest þone halgan wer  
Moyses on meðle, þa ðu, mihta god,  
geywdest þam eorle on þa æðelan tid  
under beorhhlīðe þan Iosephes,  
swa ic þe, weroda wyn, gif hit sie willa þin,  
þurg þæt beorhte gesceap biddan wille  
þæt me þæt goldhord, gasta scyppend,  
geopenie, þæt yldum wæs  
lange behyded. Forlæt nu, lifes fruma,  
of ðam wangstede wynsumne up  
under radores ryne rec astigan  
lyftlacende.  
[...] Ða of ðære stowe steam up aras  
swylce rec under radorum. Þær aræred wearð  
beornes breostsefa.

‘Just as you listened to that holy man Moses in his pleading, when you, mighty God, revealed the bones of Joseph to that earl, in that noble time, under the height of the mountain, so I will ask you, joy of the multitudes, if it be your will, by that bright creation (Elene), that you will open to me that gold–hoard, Creator of souls, which has long been hidden from men. Origin of life, release now smoke to rise up beautifully from that place, twisting in the air, beneath the orbit of the heavens’. [...] Then from that place steam rose up just like smoke under the heavens. And in that the man’s heart was raised up.

(*Elene* 784–803)

The column of smoke that reveals the burial place of the cross echoes the pillars of fire and cloud that guided the Israelites across the desert, which also prefigured the redemptive cross of Christ itself.

If Constantine’s victory at the battle of the Milvian Bridge has its parallels in Bede’s account of Oswald’s victory at Heavenfield, the same might also be said of this episode in *Elene* and the means by which the sanctity of Oswald’s relics is revealed to the monks at Bardney. Bede writes that these monks had been reluctant to receive them within because of Oswald’s former military actions in Lindsey.

Vnde factum est, ut ipsa nocte reliquiae adlatae foris permanerent, tentorio tantum maiore supra carrum, in quo inerrant, extenso. Sed miraculi caelestis ostensio, quam reuerenter eae suscipiendae a cunctis fidelibus essent, patefecit. Nam tota ea nocte columna lucis a carro illo ad caelum usque porrecta omnibus pene eiusdem Lindissae prouinciae locis conspicua stabat.<sup>80</sup>

And so it came to pass, that for the whole night the relics were left out of doors, with only a large tent extended over the wagon in which they lay. But by the manifestation of a heavenly miracle it was brought to light with how much reverence they should be received by all of the faithful. For, throughout that whole night a column of light was seen by almost all of the inhabitants of the province of Lindsey, stretching up from that wagon all the way to heaven.

Whilst this does not draw an exact parallel with the episode described in *Elene*, the principal event in each story is a miraculous act of divine revelation. The location and significance of both Oswald’s relics and Helena’s cross is revealed with pillars of light and smoke, both of which guided the Israelites across the desert during the Exodus.

## Conclusions

The importance of the translation of Oswald’s remains to Gloucester by Æthelflæd, Æthelred, and Edward, has long been recognised. It took part as part of a conscious programme designed to reinforce the Mercian *burhs* with the spiritual power of saintly relics. Whilst each of these translations was unique in its own right, the endowment of New Minster with the remains of Oswald may have been conducted with specific symbolism in mind. The location of Gloucester in the landscape of late–Saxon England was central to this. Gloucester lay between Mercia, Wessex, and Wales, and controlled strategic crossing points between them by land and water. In this sense, the transfer of Oswald’s relics and the transformation of Gloucester into a *burh* is comparable with the reoccupation and refortification of intramural London under Alfred, continuing efforts to promote the cohesion of Wessex and Mercia.

In this article I have argued that the contemporary significance of this act may have been more complex than has previously been recognised. The relics of Oswald, with all their associated mythologies, were especially well suited to this purpose. As a saint, king, and martyr, Oswald had been a key figure in the perceived unification of the Northumbrian kingdoms of Bernicia and Deira under Christ at the battle of Heavenfield. His relics were also

believed to possess great restorative powers, which may have lent them additional potential to return Gloucester to its former Roman glory. The course of the river Severn through the heartlands of Mercia, crossing Offa's Dyke immediately to the south of a possible site of the battle of Maserfield, may also have been important in this respect, given known associations between Oswald, his relics, and holy water.

Æthelflæd's relationship with the memory of Oswald's niece Osthryth may also have been a contributing factor. It is possible that Alfred's children were consciously pursuing his claims to Northumbrian royal ancestry, from which it follows that Æthelflæd had Osthryth in mind when translating Oswald's relics. Bede's modelling of Oswald and Osthryth on Constantine and Helena may have been intended to invoke parallel mythologies of a Roman empire united under Christ, and of the divine revelation of the cross, ideas whose circulation in Anglo-Saxon England at this time is confirmed by the Old English *Elene*. These various elements may suggest that the endowment of New Minster was intended to draw upon the mythologies of Oswald and Constantine in the refortification of Gloucester as a *burh*, as well as additional associations between Æthelflæd, Osthryth, and Helena. In this respect, this act has much in keeping with the minting of Constantinian coinage under Edward in tenth century Mercia, which may similarly have sought to emphasize connections between the Roman past and the Anglo-Saxon present.

### **Acknowledgements**

I am grateful to the following for their helpful comments on this paper and its contents at various points: Michael Shapland, Richard North, Helen Gittos, Alan Thacker, Helena Hamerow, Sheila Sweetinburgh, and Paul Bennett. Images of Constantinian and Edwardian coinage appear by permission of the Trustees of the British Museum.

---

<sup>1</sup><[http://www.britishmuseum.org/explore/highlights/highlight\\_objects/cm/s/silver\\_penny\\_of\\_edward\\_the\\_eld.aspx](http://www.britishmuseum.org/explore/highlights/highlight_objects/cm/s/silver_penny_of_edward_the_eld.aspx)>.

<sup>2</sup> Heighway and Hare 1999, 7; Hare, 1999, 34.

<sup>3</sup> Heighway and Hare 1999, 8–9; Heighway 1999, 108; Bryant 1999, 154; Heighway 1984, 46.

<sup>4</sup> Heighway 2006, 219.

<sup>5</sup> Heighway 2006, 219.

<sup>6</sup> Heighway and Hare 1999, 11.

<sup>7</sup> Heighway, 1987, 119.

<sup>8</sup> Bately 1986, 63–64. Much the same account is also given in MSS B, C, D, and at the slightly earlier (erroneous) date of 906 in E.

<sup>9</sup> O'Brien O'Keefe 2001, 75. MS D also notes this.

<sup>10</sup> Heighway 1987, 119; Heighway 1984, 51.

<sup>11</sup> Hare 1999, 36.

<sup>12</sup> Ridyard 1988, 50, 60.

<sup>13</sup> Thacker 1985, 4.

<sup>14</sup> Rollason 1989, 117. Churches are also dedicated to Werburg at Burslem, Hanbury, and Kingsley (Staffs), Blackwell and Spondon (Derbs), Chorlton-cum-Hardy (Lancs), Warburton (Ches), Hoo (Kent), Wembury (Devon) Warbstow (Cornwall).

<sup>15</sup> Rollason 1989, 118.

<sup>16</sup> Thacker 1995, 120; Thacker 1982, 203–04.

<sup>17</sup> Thacker 1985, 5; also Roberts 2001, 73, 76.

<sup>18</sup> Colgrave 1956, ch. 5; Rollason 1989, 42.

<sup>19</sup> Churches dedicated to Guthlac are (or were) found in Crowland, Little Ponton, Market Deeping, and Fishtoft (Lincs), Knighton, Branston-by-Belvoir, and Stathern (Leics), Astwick (Beds), Passenham (Northants), and Little Cowarne (Herefs), as well as St Guthlac's priory, Hereford. Monument detail for St Guthlac's, Castle Green, can be found at

---

<[http://htt.herefordshire.gov.uk/smrSearch/Monuments/Monument\\_Item.aspx?ID=429](http://htt.herefordshire.gov.uk/smrSearch/Monuments/Monument_Item.aspx?ID=429)>  
[accessed 15 May 2014].

<sup>20</sup> Churches dedicated to ‘St Alkmund’ are (or were) found in Derby and Duffield (Derbs), Shrewsbury and Whitchurch (Salop), Blyborough (Lincs) and Aymestrey (Herefs).

<sup>21</sup> Thacker 1985, 15; Rollason 1982, 4; also Ridyard 1988, 243-7. Ealhmund’s death is described in chapter 61 of the *Historia Regum*; Arnold 1885, p. 63.

<sup>22</sup> Ridyard 1988, 247; Rollason 1982, 20.

<sup>23</sup> Hadley 2000, 286.

<sup>24</sup> Abels 2003, 265–79.

<sup>25</sup> Vince 1994, 112–14; Blair 2005, 334–38.

<sup>26</sup> Jones 1993, 673.

<sup>27</sup> Thacker 1982, 211; Baker and Holt 2004, 21; Rollason 1989, 154.

<sup>28</sup> Griffiths notes that except for the western wall, the *burh* at Gloucester seems to have made use of a similar ‘scheme of defences to that proposed for Chester’. See Griffiths 1995, 76.

<sup>29</sup> Reynolds 2006, 133.

<sup>30</sup> Heighway 2006, 219.

<sup>31</sup> Heighway 2006, 219.

<sup>32</sup> Reynolds 2006, 148.

<sup>33</sup> Reynolds 2006, 148–49.

<sup>34</sup> Heighway 2006, 218.

<sup>35</sup> Heighway and Hare 1999, 8; Heighway 2001, 102.

<sup>36</sup> Heighway and Hare 1999, 4.

<sup>37</sup> Hooke 2007, 38.

<sup>38</sup> Semple 2010, 31–32.

<sup>39</sup> Lund 2010, 53–56.

<sup>40</sup> Keynes 1998, 6–8.

<sup>41</sup> Keynes 1998, 21, 25–26.

<sup>42</sup> Keynes 1998, 21.

<sup>43</sup> Haslam 2010, 208–12; Keene 2003, 235–49.

<sup>44</sup> Stevenson 1959, ch. 82 (69).

<sup>45</sup> Kirby 2000, 1.

<sup>46</sup> Keynes 1998, 39.

<sup>47</sup> Keynes 1998, 36.

<sup>48</sup> Heighway 2001, 109.

<sup>49</sup> Heighway 2001, 110.

<sup>50</sup> A phrase borrowed from Lankov 2011, 63–71.

<sup>51</sup> All references to Bede’s *Historia ecclesiastica* from Colgrave and Mynors 1991, *HE* iii.1 (214). See discussion of this episode in Bintley, 2013, and Bintley, forthcoming.

<sup>52</sup> Stancliffe 1995a, 64; Cramp 1995, 22, 30. Oswald had been introduced to Christianity by the Irish Church during his formative years (age 11–28) of exile in Dál Riata. See Stancliffe 1995a, 69. Cramp attributes the introduction of free-standing wooden crosses into Northumbria to the ‘Celtic peoples’; see Cramp 1992, 302. See also discussion in Tolley 1992, 149-73; Bintley 2013, 211-27.

<sup>53</sup> This episode is also referred to in the Peterborough Chronicle entry for 634. See Irvine 2004, 24–25.

<sup>54</sup> Colgrave and Mynors 1991, *HE* iii.2 (214).

<sup>55</sup> Wood 2006, 6.

<sup>56</sup> Thacker 1995, 97–127.

<sup>57</sup> Colgrave and Mynors 1991, *HE* iii.10 (244).

<sup>58</sup> Colgrave and Mynors 1991, *HE* iii.10 (244).

<sup>59</sup> Stancliffe 1995b, 89–90; Thacker 1995, 107–08.

<sup>60</sup> Colgrave and Mynors 1991, *HE* iii.2 (214–16).

<sup>61</sup> Colgrave and Mynors 1991, *HE* iii.13 (254).

---

<sup>62</sup> Following the Severn upriver, it eventually joins with the Vyrnwy at Melverly on the Shropshire–Powys. The Vyrnwy continues for a few miles marking the border between Wales and England, crossing Offa’s Dyke at Llanymynech (52.7813° N, 3.0903° W). The Vyrnwy, a tributary of the Severn, flows south of Maesbury and Maesbury Marsh in Shropshire, crossing the West Mercian dyke frontier six miles from Oswestry. This site, as Stancliffe has argued, is a contender for the Battle of Maserfield, presenting a direct etymological connection with Maesbury and its environs (Stancliffe 1995b, 84–96). This is not certain, however, and alternative battle-sites are entirely feasible (Thacker 1995, 99). Even if Oswestry was not the battle-site, however, it may have been recognised as such in Edward’s day. One aspect of St Oswald’s cult that Alan Thacker has found ‘surprising’, is its association with holy wells. This is also confirmed by the curative properties of water in which his relics had been steeped (see above). Thacker notes that holy wells associated with Oswald are found at: ‘Oswestry (Shropshire), Elvet (Durham), Winwick, Warton (both Lancashire), Astbury (Cheshire), Kirkoswald (Cumberland), Grasmere Burneside (both Westmorland), and perhaps at Cathcart (Renfrewshire) and Heavenfield, near turret 25b on the Roman Wall’ (Thacker 1995, 102-03).

If secondary relics associated with the place where Oswald died were capable of granting healing properties to water, then the river into which the spring associated with his death-place flowed may have been similarly sanctified; first the Vyrnwy, and then the Severn. This may have blessed the landscape through which it flowed with Oswald’s holy power, until the waters rejoined his relics at Gloucester. Whilst this is admittedly speculative, it is the same way in which Ælfric was encouraging the English to think about the way in which all waters had been sanctified at the moment of Christ’s baptism: *Da ða he into ðam wætre eode, ða wæs þæt wæter and ealle wyllspringas gehalgode þurh cristes lichaman to urum fulluhte* (‘when he went into that water, then was that water and all well-springs sanctified by means of Christ’s body for our salvation’, *In Aepiphania Domini*, Godden 1979, 22 (ll. 96-98).

<sup>63</sup> Colgrave and Mynors 1991, *HE* iii.11 (246).

<sup>64</sup> Thacker 1995, 99.

<sup>65</sup> Colgrave and Mynors 1991, *HE* iii.11 (246).

<sup>66</sup> Thacker 1995, 113.

<sup>67</sup> Godman 1982, cxxi.

<sup>68</sup> Godman 1982, xlvi.

<sup>69</sup> Godman 1982, 34 (the translation follows Godman, p. 35).

<sup>70</sup> Godman 1982, cxxix.

<sup>71</sup> Nelson 1991, 53.

<sup>72</sup> Nelson 1991, 53.

<sup>73</sup> Wallace–Hadrill 1988, 89.

<sup>74</sup> Dräger 2007, 70–71; Cameron and Hall 1999, 81. This is followed by a dream vision of a cross-bearing Christ who instructs him to manufacture a standard in the form of the Chi Rho to be used as a safeguard in all his subsequent battles.

<sup>75</sup> Barnes 1981, 43.

<sup>76</sup> See discussion in Whatley 1981, 161–202; also Harbus 1994, 645–53.

<sup>77</sup> Regan 1996, 252.

<sup>78</sup> Gradon 1977, 23. Irvine also thinks it most likely that Cynewulf worked during the ninth century; see Irvine 1994, 42. Anderson cautiously suggests that Cynewulf may have been working in the ‘eighth or ninth or maybe as late as the tenth century’. See Anderson 1983, 23. For further discussion advocating a date later in the period, see Fulk 2001, 3–21, and Conner 2001, 46–47.

<sup>79</sup> Exodus 13.19.

<sup>80</sup> Colgrave and Mynors 1991, *HE* iii.11 (246).

---

## **Abbreviations**

ASSAH	Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History
CBA	Council for British Archaeology
EETS	Early English Text Society

## **Bibliography**

Abels, R. 2003. 'Alfred the Great, the *micel Hæðen Here* and the Viking Threat', in T. Reuter (ed.) *Alfred the Great: Papers from the Eleventh-Centenary Conferences*, 265-79, Aldershot, Hants: Ashgate.

Anderson, E. R. 1983. *Cynewulf: Structure, Style, and Theme in His Poetry*, London and Toronto: Associated University Presses.

Arnold, T. ed. 1882-85. *Sjmeonis Monachi Opera Omnia*, 2 vols, London: Longman.

Baker, N. and Holt, R. 2004. *Urban Growth and the Medieval Church: Gloucester and Worcester*, Aldershot and Burlington, VT: Ashgate.

Barnes, T. D. 1981. *Constantine and Eusebius*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Bately, J. (ed.) 1986. *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: a Collaborative Edition: MS A*, Cambridge: D. S. Brewer.

Bintley, M. D. J. 2013. 'Recasting the Role of Sacred Trees in Anglo-Saxon Spiritual History: the South Sandbach Cross "Ancestors of Christ" Panel in its Cultural Contexts', in M. D. J. Bintley and M. G. Shapland (eds.), *Trees and Timber in the Anglo-Saxon World*, 211-27, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bintley, M. D. J., *Trees and Woodland in Anglo-Saxon Religion* (forthcoming)

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

Bryant, R. 1999. 'Sculpture and Architectural Stone', in C. Heighway and R. Bryant (eds.), *The Golden Minster: the Anglo-Saxon Minster and Later Medieval Priory of St Oswald at Gloucester*, 146-93, CBA Research Report, 117, York: Council for British Archaeology.

Cameron, A. and Hall, S. G. (trans. and ed.) 1999. *Eusebius: Life Of Constantine*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Colgrave, B. (trans. and ed.) 1956. *Felix's Life of St Guthlac* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

Colgrave, B. and Mynors, R. A. B. (trans. and ed.) 1991. *Bede the Venerable Saint, 673-735: Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Conner, P. W. 2001. 'On Dating Cynewulf', in R. E. Bjork (ed.), *The Cynewulf Reader*, 23-56, New York: Routledge.

Cramp, R. 1995. 'The Making of Oswald's Northumbria', in C. Stancliffe and E. Cambridge (eds.), *Oswald: Northumbrian King to European Saint*, 17-32, Stamford: Paul Watkins.

Cramp, R. 1992. *Studies in Anglo-Saxon Sculpture*, London: Pindar Press.

- 
- Dräger, P. (trans. and ed.) 2007. *Eusebios: Über das Leben des Glückseligen Kaisers Konstantin (De vita Constantini)*, Oberhaid: Utopica.
- Fulk, R. D. 2001. 'Cynewulf: Canon, Dialect, and Date', in R. E. Bjork (ed.), *The Cynewulf Reader*, 3-21, New York: Routledge.
- Godden, M. (ed.) 1979. *Ælfric's Catholic Homilies, The Second Series*, EETS, ss. 5, London: The Early English Text Society.
- Godman, P. (ed.), 1982. *Alcuin: the Bishops, Kings, and Saints of York*, Oxford. Clarendon Press.
- Gradon, P. O. E. 1977. *Cynewulf's 'Elene'*, Exeter: University of Exeter Press.
- Griffiths, D. 1995. 'The North–West Mercian *Burhs*: A Reappraisal', *ASSAH*, 8, 75–86
- Hadley, D. M. 2000. *The Northern Danelaw: its Social Structure, c. 8000-1100*, London and New York: Leicester University Press, 2000.
- Harbus, A. 1994. 'Text as Revelation: Constantine's Dream in *Elene*', *Neophilologus*, 78, 645–53.
- Hare, M. 1999. 'The Documentary Evidence for the History of St Oswald's, Gloucester to 1086 AD', in C. Heighway and R. Bryant (eds.), *The Golden Minster: the Anglo-Saxon Minster and Later Medieval Priory of St Oswald at Gloucester*, 33–45, CBA Research Report, 117, York: Council for British Archaeology.
- Haslam, J. 2010. 'King Alfred and the Development of London: When was *Lundenburh* Founded?', *London Archaeologist*, 12(8), 208–12.
- Heighway, C. 2006. 'Gloucester', in N. Holbrook and J. Juřica (eds.), *Twenty–Five Years of Archaeology in Gloucestershire: a Review of New Discoveries and New Thinking in Gloucestershire, South Gloucestershire and Bristol, 1979–2004*, 211-29, Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Report, 3, Cirencester, Gloucestershire: Cotswold Archaeological Trust.
- Heighway, C. 2001. 'Gloucester and the New Minster of St Oswald', in N. J. Higham and D. Hill (eds.), *Edward the Elder 899–924*, 201-11, London and New York: Routledge.
- Heighway, C. and Hare, M. 1999. 'Gloucester and the Minster of St Oswald: a Survey of the Evidence', in C. Heighway and R. Bryant (eds.) *The Golden Minster: the Anglo–Saxon Minster and Later Medieval Priory of St Oswald at Gloucester*, 1-29, CBA Research Report, 117, York: Council for British Archaeology.
- Heighway, C. 1999. 'The Finds', in C. Heighway and R. Bryant (eds.) *The Golden Minster: the Anglo–Saxon Minster and Later Medieval Priory of St Oswald at Gloucester*, 108–45, CBA Research Report, 117, York: Council for British Archaeology.
- Heighway, C. 1987. *Anglo–Saxon Gloucestershire*, Gloucester: Alan Sutton Publishing Limited.

- 
- Heighway, C. 1984. 'Anglo-Saxon Gloucester to A.D. 1000', in M. L. Faull (ed.), *Studies in Late Anglo-Saxon Settlement*, 35-53, Oxford: Oxford University Department for External Studies.
- Hooke, D. 2007. 'Uses of Waterways in Anglo-Saxon England', in J. Blair (ed.), *Waterways and Canal-Building in Medieval England*, 37-54, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Irvine, M. 1994. 'Anglo-Saxon Literary Theory Exemplified in Old English Poems: Interpreting the Cross in *The Dream of the Rood* and *Elene*', in K. O'Brien-O'Keeffe (ed.), *Old English Shorter Poems: Basic Readings*, 31-63, New York: Garland.
- Irvine, S. (ed.) 2004. *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: a Collaborative Edition, Vol.7: MS. E*, Cambridge: DS. Brewer.
- Jones, S. R. H. 1993. 'Transaction Costs, Institutional Change, and the Emergence of a Market Economy in Later Anglo-Saxon England', *Economic History Review*, 46 (4), 658-78.
- Keene, D. 2003. 'Alfred and London', in *Alfred the Great: Papers from the Eleventh-Centenary Conferences*, 235-49, Aldershot, Hants: Ashgate.
- Keynes, S. 1998. 'King Alfred and the Mercians', in M. Blackburn and D. Dumville (eds.), *Kings, Currency and Alliances: History and Coinage of Southern England in the Ninth Century*, 1-45, Studies in Anglo-Saxon History, 9, Woodbridge and Rochester, NY: Boydell.
- Kirby, D. P. 2000. *The Earliest English Kings*, rev. edn., London and New York: Routledge.
- Lankov, A. 2011. 'The Unification Mythology and Reality of the North-South Divide', in B. Seliger and W. Pascha (eds.), *Towards a Northeast Asian Security Community: Implications for Korea's Growth and Economic Development*, 63-71, New York: Springer.
- Lund, J. 2010. 'At the Water's Edge', in M. Carver, A. Sanmark and S. Semple (eds.), *Signals of Belief in Early England: Anglo-Saxon Paganism Revisited*, 49-66, Oxford: Oxbow Books.
- Nelson, J. L. 1991. 'Reconstructing a Royal Family', in I. Wood and N. Lund (eds.), *People and Places in Northern Europe 500-1600: Essays in Honour of Peter Hayes Sawyer*, 47-66, Woodbridge: Boydell Press.
- O'Brien O'Keeffe, K. (ed.) 2001. *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: a Collaborative Edition: MS C*, Cambridge: D. S. Brewer.
- Regan, C. A. 1996. 'Evangelicism as the Informing Principle of Cynewulf's *Elene*', in R. E. Bjork (ed.), *Cynewulf: Basic Readings*, 251-80, New York: Garland Publishing Inc.
- Reynolds, A. 2006. 'The Early Medieval Period', in N. Holbrook and J. Juřica (eds.), *Twenty-Five Years of Archaeology in Gloucestershire: a Review of New Discoveries and New Thinking in Gloucestershire, South Gloucestershire and Bristol, 1979-2004*, 133-60, Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Report, 3, Cirencester, Gloucestershire: Cotswold Archaeological Trust.
- Ridyard, S. J. 1988. *The Royal Saints of Anglo-Saxon England: a Study of West Saxon and East Anglian Cults*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- 
- Roberts, J. 2001. 'Hagiography and Literature: the Case of Guthlac of Crowland', in M. P. Brown and C. A. Farr (eds.), *Mercia: an Anglo-Saxon Kingdom in Europe*, 69-86, Leicester: Leicester University Press.
- Rollason, D. W. 1982. 'The Cults of Murdered Royal Saints in Anglo-Saxon England', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 11, 1-22.
- 'Chester and Gloucester: Early Ecclesiastical Organization in Two Mercian Burhs', *Northern History*, 18, 199-211.
- Rollason, D. W. 1989. *Saints and Relics in Anglo-Saxon England*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Semple, S. 2010. 'In the Open Air', in M. Carver, A. Sanmark, and S. Semple (eds.), *Signals of Belief in Early England: Anglo-Saxon Paganism Revisited*, 20-48, Oxford: Oxbow Books.
- Stancliffe, C. 1995. 'Oswald; 'Most Holy and Most Victorious King of the Northumbrians'', in C. Stancliffe and E. Cambridge (eds.), *Oswald: Northumbrian King to European Saint*, 33-83, Stamford: Paul Watkins.
- Stancliffe, C., 'Where was Oswald Killed?', in C. Stancliffe and E. Cambridge (eds.), *Oswald: Northumbrian King to European Saint*, 84-96, Stamford: Paul Watkins.
- Stevenson, W. H. (ed.) 1959. *Asser's Life of King Alfred, Together with the Annals of Saint Neots Erroneously Ascribed to Asser*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Thacker, A. T. 1995. 'Membra Disjecta: the Division of the Body and the Diffusion of the Cult', in C. Stancliffe and E. Cambridge (eds.), *Oswald, Northumbrian King to European Saint*, 97-127, Stamford: Paul Watkins.
- Thacker, A. T. 1985. 'Kings, Saints and Monasteries in pre-Viking Mercia', *Midland History*, 10, 1-25.
- Thacker, A.T. 1982. 'Chester and Gloucester: Early Ecclesiastical Organization in Two Mercian Burhs', *Northern History*, 18, 199-211.
- Tolley, C. 1992. 'Oswald's Tree', in T. Hofstra, L. A. J. R. Houwen and A. A. MacDonald (eds.), *Pagans and Christians*, 149-73, Germania Latina, 2, Groningen: Egbert Forsten.
- Vince, A. 1994. 'Saxon Urban Economies: an Archaeological Perspective', in J. Rackham (ed.), *Environment and Economy in Anglo-Saxon England: a Review of Recent Work on the Environmental Archaeology of Rural and Urban Anglo-Saxon settlements in England*, 108-19, CBA Research Reports, 89, London: Council for British Archaeology, 1994.
- Wallace-Hadrill, J. M. 1988. *Bede's 'Ecclesiastical History of the English People: a Historical Commentary*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Whatley, G. 1981. 'The Figure of Constantine the Great in Cynewulf's *Elene*', *Traditio*, 37, 1981, 161-202.
- Wood, I. 2006. 'Constantinian Crosses in Northumbria', in C. E. Karkov, S. Larratt Keefer, and K. L. Jolly (eds.), *The Place of the Cross in Anglo-Saxon England*, 3-13, Publications of the Manchester Centre for Anglo-Saxon Studies, 4, Woodbridge: Boydell Press.