

**Exploring Representations of Women as Teachers and Students in Old
English Literature, 730 – 1050 AD**

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Abstract

Women in Old English texts have various roles ranging from wife and mother to queen and abbess. Although they appear far less often in the surviving source material than men, women play central roles that help to shape the early medieval English kingdoms from the eighth to the eleventh century. Their literary representations reflect their involvement in different areas of society, including education and instruction. This thesis explores the vocabulary used in examples which describe women as teachers and students. Evidence from the use of specific lemmata shows that royal and monastic women appear as teachers and learners in the corpus of Old English literature in more ways than previous studies suggested. My lexical analysis explores four Old English verbs readily associated with education and instruction (*læran*, *tæcan*, *leornian*, and *bysnian*). I examine examples of these words from several Old English texts, alongside accompanying Latin texts, from the eighth to the eleventh century. An investigation of the ranges of vocabulary used to depict women in different genres and contexts demonstrates that Old English writers and translators used stock representations of female students and teachers in different contexts and roles with set wording.

This examination also prompts a reconsideration of the audiences of these texts. My analysis discusses the readership of the Old English texts used in my study. I consider whether they were intended for certain groups of women and what impact these representations may have had on audiences' perceptions of women's roles in teaching and learning.

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Abbreviations

<i>ÆColl</i>	<i>Ælfric Bata 's Colloquy.</i>
<i>ÆGram</i>	<i>Ælfric of Eynsham's Grammar and Glossary.</i>
<i>ÆCHom II, 39.1</i>	<i>Ælfric's Homily for St. Martin.</i>
<i>ÆLS</i>	<i>Ælfric's Lives of Saints (Cotton MS Julius E.VII).</i>
<i>ÆLS (Agatha)</i>	<i>Ælfric's Life of St Agatha.</i>
<i>ÆLS (Basil)</i>	<i>Ælfric's Life of St Basil.</i>
<i>And</i>	<i>Andreas.</i>
<i>ApT</i>	<i>The Old English Translation of Apollonius of Tyre.</i>
<i>Beo</i>	<i>Beowulf.</i>
<i>BenR</i>	<i>The Old English Translation of The Rule of St Benedict.</i>
<i>BenRW</i>	<i>The Old English Translation of The Rule of Benedict (Winteney Version).</i>
<i>CP</i>	<i>King Alfred's Translation of Gregory the Great's Pastoral Care.</i>
<i>DOE</i>	<i>The Dictionary of Old English Database.</i>
<i>DOEC</i>	<i>The Dictionary of Old English Web Corpus.</i>
<i>DOML</i>	<i>Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library.</i>
<i>DMLBS</i>	<i>Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources.</i>

<i>DV</i>	Aldhelm of Malmesbury's <i>Prosa De Virginitate</i> .
EETS	Early English Texts Society.
<i>El</i>	<i>Elene</i> .
<i>GD</i>	The Old English Translation of Gregory the Great's <i>Dialogues</i> .
<i>HA</i>	<i>Historia Apollonii Regis Tyri</i> .
<i>HE</i>	Bede of Wearmouth-Jarrow's <i>Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum</i> .
<i>Max I</i>	<i>Maxims I</i> .
<i>Kings</i>	Ælfric of Eynsham's <i>The Book of Kings</i> .
<i>LS (Mary of Egypt)</i>	The Old English Translation of <i>The Life of St Mary of Egypt</i> .
<i>LS (Pantaleon)</i>	The Old English <i>Life of St Pantaleon</i> .
<i>LS 10.1 (Guth)</i>	<i>The Life of St. Guthlac</i> by Anonymous.
<i>OEHE</i>	The Old English Translation of Bede's <i>Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum</i> .
<i>Or</i>	The Old English Translation of Paulus Orosius' <i>Historiarum adversus Paganos Libri Septem</i> .
<i>HA</i>	<i>Historia Apollonii Regis Tyri</i> .
<i>Historiarum</i>	Paulus Orosius' <i>Historiarum adversus Paganos Libri Septem</i> .
<i>RA</i>	Redaction 'A' of <i>Historia Apollonii Regis Tyri</i> .
<i>RB</i>	Redaction 'B' of <i>Historia Apollonii Regis Tyri</i> .

<i>RSB</i>	The Latin Version of <i>The Rule of St. Benedict</i> .
<i>TOE</i>	<i>The Thesaurus of Old English</i>
<i>VSG</i>	<i>Vita Sancti Guthlaci</i> .
<i>VW</i>	<i>Vita Wilfridi</i> .
<i>WPol</i>	Wulfstan's <i>Institutes of Polity</i>

Introduction

In 841, Dhuoda, the wife of Duke Bernard of Septimania, composed a text for her son, after he turned fifteen. Her *Liber Manualis* is a handbook written in Latin, which she uses to advise him. It belongs to the *speculum* genre, which consists of texts that provide a ‘mirror of conduct’ for their audiences to reflect upon their actions, positions, and beliefs.¹ Dhuoda offers her son guidance on secular and religious concerns while he is in exile in the company of King Charles the Bald. She writes:

Quod volo ut cum ex manu mea tibi fuerit directus, in manu tua libenter
facias amplecti eum opus, et tenens, volvens legensque stude opere
compleri dignissime. Dicatur enim iste formatus libellus Manualis, hoc est
sermo ex me, opus in te ... utilitalis desiderio plena, hoc opusculum ex
nomine meo scriptum in tuam specie tenus formam legend dirigo gaudens.²

(What I desire is that when this work has been directed to you from my
hand, you’ll willingly grasp it in your own hands, and enfolding it, turning
it over, and reading it and studying it, you’ll strive to fulfil its teachings in
the most worthwhile actions. For let it be said that this little book in the
form of a handbook consists of words from me, and their actualization in

¹ Marcelle Thiebaux, ed. and tr., *Dhuoda: A Handbook for her Warrior Son*, Cambridge Medieval Classics 8 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 27. Taken from the Latin word *speculum*, meaning ‘mirror’, this genre is one of the more popular ones that have been studied for their content and impact on political, social, and religious matters in the medieval period. Thiebaux in her edition of Dhuoda’s handbook describes this genre as ‘traditional advice’, p. 32.

² Thiebaux, *Dhuoda: A Handbook for her Warrior Son*, pp. 40, 42.

you... I am happy, therefore, to address this little book to you, which is transcribed in my own name. It is for you to read as a kind of model).³

Her anxiety concerning her inability to be beside her son at a key moment in his life and education is evident in the prologue. Her words highlight her desire to ensure that he develops into a man worthy of his status. This text provides a unique insight into the life of a ninth-century Carolingian woman and her family. There are few texts written by laywomen in the corpus of early medieval literature, and even fewer which discuss their relationships with learning and education. The most significant aspect of Dhuoda's manual is that, as a didactic, text, it directly connects a duke's wife to secular teaching.⁴ Her role as a teacher is undisputed among the large number of scholars who have focused considerable attention on her work.⁵

Most representations from this period of women, whether they are from lay or religious backgrounds, do not focus specifically on their engagement with education as either students or teachers to the same extent as their male counterparts. This also applies to representations of women in texts written and circulated in the early medieval English kingdoms between the eighth and eleventh centuries. However, the evidence of Dhuoda's handbook indicates that women were interested and involved in education for themselves and their families. Although it is debated whether she wrote the handbook herself or whether she dictated to a scribe, the

³ Translation by Thiebaux, *Dhuoda: A Handbook for her Warrior Son*, pp. 40, 42. In this thesis, I use a mixture of own my translations and edited ones. Henceforth, all Latin and Old English text translations are my own unless stated otherwise.

⁴ Karen Cherewatuk, 'Speculum Matris: Duoda's Manual', *Florilegium* 10 (1991), 49 – 63, p. 52.

⁵ There are several studies about Dhuoda and her handbook which focus on different aspects of her writing and life, but there is an absence of current research and interest in this woman and her writing. At the end of the twentieth century, studies included Carol Neel, tr., *Handbook for William: A Carolingian Woman's Counsel for her Son* (London: University of Nebraska Press, 1991), pp. ix – xxviii; M.A. Claussen, 'Fathers of Power and Mothers of Authority: Dhuoda and the Liber Manualis', *French Historical Studies*, 19:3 (1996), 785–809; Janet Nelson, 'Dhuoda', *Lay Intellectuals in the Carolingian World*, ed. Patrick Wormald and Janet Nelson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 106 – 120; Cherewatuk, 'Speculum Matris: Duoda's Manual', 49 – 63. Stofferahn offers an overview of previous scholarship about Dhuoda and her handbook in Steven. A. Stofferahn, 'The Many Faces of Dhuoda's Mirror: The Liber Manualis and a Century of Scholarship', *Magistra*, 4:2 (1998), 89 – 134; J. LePree, 'The Liber Manualis as Spiritual Metaphorical Mirror for the Rule of St. Augustine and Rule of St. Benedict', *Magistra* 28:1 (2022), 29 – 39.

words and her knowledge of secular and religious matters demonstrate an undeniable level of education.⁶

However, Dhuoda's role as a teacher is not one which is usually associated with women, royal or monastic. For example, it is easier for Claussen to see her as an 'abbot' than a wife, mother, or noblewoman because of her knowledge of scripture and interest in education.⁷

There is substantial evidence of the education of Carolingian women in royal households, such as Dhuoda, because of Charlemagne's educational campaign and record keeping.⁸

Despite this, the roles traditionally given to women do not immediately conjure ideas of teaching or learning past the secular skills needed to run a household or produce heirs. The *Liber Manualis* challenges this idea not just for Carolingian women, but also for others outside of Frankia in the ninth century and beyond.

On the other side of the English Channel in the same year, Ealhswith, the wife of King Alfred of Wessex, watched over her daughter, Æthelflæd, who would eventually be called the 'Lady of the Mercians', as she grew up in the royal court. However, there is no surviving equivalent Latin or Old English *speculum* handbook written by this woman or any other from one of the early medieval English kingdoms. This absence of evidence led to the lack of attention by researchers who focused on sources that recount men's intellectual lives. Vernacular texts such as the translations of Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum*, Gregory the Great's *De Cura Pastoralis*, and various Latin saints' lives translated by Ælfric of Eynsham, contain many examples of men as students and teachers. However, these texts also contain several women and share ideas related to learning and counsel found in Dhuoda's handbook

⁶ Neel, *Handbook for William: A Carolingian Woman's Counsel for her Son*, pp. xvi, xxvii.

⁷ Claussen, 'Fathers of Power and Mothers of Authority: Dhuoda and the *Liber Manualis*', p. 801.

⁸ Rosalind McKitterick, 'The Carolingian renaissance of culture and learning', *Charlemagne: Empire and Society*, ed. Joanna Story (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), 151 – 166, pp. 151 – 156.

and other texts in the *speculum* genre.⁹ These sources include evidence of women's relationships with education which have been either overlooked or not considered in detail previously. Although there are few surviving accounts by women of their learning and teaching, their representations by male writers can offer an opportunity to discuss how women engaged with education and how contemporaries perceived them as students and teachers.

In this thesis, I investigate women who appear in texts from the eighth through to the eleventh century in the kingdoms of East Anglia, Northumbria and Deira, and Wessex. The writers of these texts depict women as students or teachers in different ways with a range of vocabulary related to education and instruction, which suggests that women had various and changing relationships with learning. The suggestion that women were able students and teachers extends the boundaries of female agency in this period to include intellectual, political, and social roles that have not often been explored previously. My examination focuses on the ranges of words used to depict royal and monastic women who share similar duties and backgrounds. I question how Old English and Latin writers' representations affect perspectives of women in educational and instructional positions in several case studies from early medieval poetry, hagiography, instructional texts, and others which use particular vocabulary to describe women as either capable or incapable teachers and students. Texts which I label as 'instructional' in this discussion refer to sources that have an explicit purpose to provide guidance or instructions on a particular subject, secular or religious.¹⁰ I also consider how such views might impact audiences of men and women. Were women such as

⁹ These include several written by men in Francia, such as the English monk, Alcuin of York, who taught at Charlemagne's court, Paulinus of Aquileia, Smaragdus of St. Mihiel and Jonas of Orleans. They wrote *speculum* texts for other laymen and women. See, Claussen, M. 'Fathers of Power and Mothers of Authority: Dhuoda and the *Liber Manualis*', p. 786.

¹⁰ Texts which I refer to as 'instructional' contain sets of guidelines, rules, or instructions for its readers to follow. These include a variety of texts with a religious and lay focus, such as *Bald's Leechbook*, the *Regularis Concordia*, and *The Rule of St Benedict*.

Ealhswith, Æthelflæd, and others inspired by the representations of women as educated and active teachers? To what extent do these depictions reflect women's agency and engagement in this period? I consider these questions and others in my study to provide an opening for further discussions about women's intellectual roles in early medieval texts. Before I examine these examples, it is first necessary to discuss what is meant by 'education' and its counterpart, 'instruction', in this period to better understand who could be 'students' and 'teachers'.

0.1 Education in Early Medieval England

There are several studies which focus on the theme of education in Old English sources, and many agree that 'learning' and 'teaching' have many different routes, representations, and forms in Old English literature. So far, there are few comprehensive pieces of research on education and schools in Old English sources.¹¹ Some of the earliest research by Pierre Riché describes the development of educational systems and curriculum in Europe from the third century onwards.¹² However, his work focuses on archaeological evidence of seats of learning (primarily monasteries) in the absence of sufficient written sources, although these are also scarce.¹³ Since then, researchers have only recently attempted to investigate education further through other methods and focuses.¹⁴ For example, Irina Dumitrescu sought

¹¹ This is an issue discussed by many. Irina Dumitrescu in her book *The Experience of Education in Anglo-Saxon Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), p. 18, notes that this is not due to the lack of attempts by researchers to explore this area. Benjamin Weber also noted this: Benjamin Weber, 'A brief history of Anglo-Saxon Education', *History Compass*, 17:2 (2014), 1 – 13, p. 2. Patrizia Lendinara commented on this in 'The world of Anglo-Saxon Learning', *The Cambridge Companion to Old English Literature*, ed. Malcolm Godden and Michael Lapidge (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 264 – 286, p. 264 and footnote 1, p. 279.

¹² See Pierre Riché, *Education and Culture in the Barbarian West, Sixth through Eighth Centuries*, trans. J. J. Contreni (Columbia : University of South Carolina Press, 1976), and *Les écoles et l'enseignement dans l'Occident chrétien de la fin du Ve siècle au milieu du XIe siècle* (Paris: Aubier-Montaigne, 1979).

¹³ Riché, *Education and Culture in the Barbarian West, Sixth through Eighth Centuries*, p. 308.

¹⁴ Some key examples of research include Michael Lapidge, 'Schools, Learning and Literature in the Tenth Century', *Anglo-Latin Literature, 900 – 1066*, (London: The Hambleton Press, 1993), 1 – 46; Dumitrescu, *The Experience of Education in Anglo-Saxon Literature*; Weber, 'A brief history of Anglo-Saxon Education', pp. 1 – 13; Lendinara, 'The world of Anglo-Saxon Learning', 264 – 281; Calvin B. Kendall, 'Bede and Education', *The*

to explore the experience of ‘education’ through an examination of emotions found in episodes of learning and teaching in Old English texts. She describes scenes of education in Old English texts as a ‘set of liminal zones’.¹⁵ There is no one way to ‘teach’ in early medieval England, according to the vocabulary used in the sources. She demonstrates that teachers use a variety of techniques to teach different subjects.¹⁶ These include reading and writing, the study of holy mysteries, and narratives given by saints. Representations of concepts, people, and emotions in texts such as Boethius’ *Consolation of Philosophy* and the poem known as *Solomon and Saturn I*, provide their audiences with examples of different teaching styles to reflect on. ‘Education’ in this period covers a range of ideas, which complicates our understanding of ‘teaching’ and ‘learning’ because of the wide spectrum of scenarios and people who fall under these categories. Therefore, the surviving source material might include a far larger range of evidence than previously thought. To uncover evidence in the texts, I draw on past research which considered teaching and learning in two main areas: monastic and secular settings.

Monastic Education, Schooling, and Literary Culture

The lack of evidence of education in early medieval England led to the creation of several studies which attempt to define schooling and other forms of learning between the seventh and the early eleventh centuries. The most frequently discussed area is monastic education. There is little textual and archaeological evidence of early medieval classrooms, especially from the earlier centuries when monasticism was still a new and developing concept in the early English kingdoms. However, they were a crucial part of monastic life. When

Cambridge Companion to Bede, ed. Scott DeGregorio, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 99 – 112.

¹⁵ Dumitrescu, *The Experience of Education in Anglo-Saxon Literature*, p. 157.

¹⁶ Also see Emily V. Thornbury, *Becoming a Poet in Anglo-Saxon England* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 40 – 41.

Christianity arrived in the early English kingdoms from overseas through the mission of Irish priests, the new religion sparked a wave of new learning which included reading and writing of Latin. These new communities needed specific skills to preach the new faith as well as create manuscripts filled with narratives and accounts to inspire new Christians. Sarah Foot details the importance of monastic schools to the development of Christianity, and she draws attention to the work by Augustine and Aidan as well as several kings to establish suitable educational sites for men and boys.¹⁷ The earliest example of a monastic school in England is the one created by Archbishop Theodore and Abbot Hadrian in Canterbury in the sixth century, mentioned by Bede in his *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum* (*HE* henceforth) [*HE*, iv. 1-2].¹⁸ There is scant evidence of schools in texts which describe *schola* (schools) as places where men and boys were taught by religious teachers and trained to enter a monastic life. Bede describes the *schola* founded by King Sigberht of East Anglia for men and boys *litteris erudirentur* (to be taught letters), which followed the style of monastic schooling in Kent and Gaul [*HE*, iii. 18]. Bede suggests that this school reflected a similar type of education seen in Europe because Sigberht wanted his foundation to *imitari* (imitate) the ones he saw while in exile.¹⁹ Evidence of schools in early medieval sources suggests that they were places of religious training and learning rather than of secular subjects. I will discuss the difference between these two later in this chapter.

There is more literary evidence of monastic teaching and learning and the texts used to teach religious subjects than about the locations used to facilitate education. Several surviving texts indicate some of the subjects taught on the monastic curriculum in the tenth and eleventh

¹⁷ Sarah Foot, *Monastic Life in Anglo-Saxon England, c. 600 – 900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 227 – 229.

¹⁸ Weber, 'A brief history of Anglo-Saxon Education', p. 3. I use Colgrave and Mynors's edition of Bede's Latin text (*HE*): Bertram Colgrave and R.A.B. Mynors, ed., *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1969). I also use the following Old English edition: Thomas Miller, *The Old English Version of Bede's Ecclesiastical History*, 2 vols (London: University of Toronto Press, 1890).

¹⁹ Lendinara, 'The world of Anglo-Saxon Learning', p. 270.

centuries. These include texts known as Ælfric's *Colloquy*, which describes a classroom scenario between a teacher and their pupils to learn Latin, Byrhtferth of Ramsey's *Manual* on the natural world, and Ælfric of Eynsham's *De Temporibus Anni* which concerns time and dating. Patrizia Lendinara argues that this large amount of evidence is the result of the high level of monastic education in early medieval England since its monastic schools were 'the finest in Europe'.²⁰ This is partly because of the curriculum and wealth of resources available to students. Monastic schools taught a range of subjects that would be beneficial for the new members of the monastery to complete their roles, such as reading and writing Latin texts, study of the psalter and other holy scriptures, grammar, metrics, singing, and other scientific studies (astronomy, arithmetic, geometry).²¹ Students learnt these subjects 'in part through imitating and doing', but the most influential tool in a monastic school was Latin.²²

The ability to read and write Latin was a key skill. Lapidge's exploration since the 1990s of the curricula taught in early medieval schools suggests that reading and memorising biblical texts and poetry was an essential part of education based on the evidence of glosses and notes found in several manuscripts.²³ Since then, further research confirms that Latin literature was a staple teaching tool in monasteries. For example, Elizabeth Tyler notes that early medieval audiences studied classical Latin texts such as Boethius' *De Consolatione Philosophie*, Orosius' *Historiarum Adversum Paganos Liberi Septem* (*Or*, from here on), and *Historia*

²⁰ Lendinara, 'The world of Anglo-Saxon Learning', p. 264.

²¹ Foot, *Monastic Life in Anglo-Saxon England, c. 600 – 900*, p. 288.

²² Kendall, 'Bede and Education', p. 99.

²³ Lapidge, 'Schools, Learning and Literature in the Tenth Century', pp. 2 – 5. Also see 'Latin Learning in the Ninth Century', *Anglo-Latin Literature, 600 – 899* (London: The Hambledon Press, 1996), 409 – 439; 'Versifying the Bible in the Middle Ages', *The Text in the Community: Essays on Medieval Works, Manuscripts, Authors, and Readers*, eds. Jill Mann and Maura Nolan (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006), 11 – 40. Also see Samantha Zacher, *Rewriting the Old Testament in Anglo-Saxon Verse: Becoming the Chosen People* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), pp. 13 – 14.

Apolloni Regis Tyri ‘to shape and explore their own experiences’.²⁴ She suggests that Latin texts were essential platforms of learning.

Benjamin Weber’s research also discusses the importance of literature to monastic pedagogy. He suggests that monastic education had a rigid structure which necessitated the understanding of Latin before the study of holy scriptures and grammar.²⁵ Manuscripts which contain psalms, glosses, saints’ lives, and poetry are a ‘principal source of our knowledge’ about schooling in this period.²⁶ The most effective way to discuss teaching and learning by early medieval women is to first examine the various depictions of education found in contemporary manuscripts. These texts contain not only many examples of education, but different types of learning and teaching, which are not always obvious from first glance. Students at monastic schools were ‘trained to read closely and beneath the surface of the text, they left clues we often miss’.²⁷ Latin texts including many biblical ones are multi-layered with hidden meanings, metaphors, and rhetoric.²⁸ Students were expected to interpret each reading correctly with the skills given to them by their teachers, such as the Greek tradition of hermeneutics.²⁹ These dense and complex readings bleed into the vernacular translations of these texts and create difficulties for researchers who seek to understand their intended reading and hidden messages.

Secular Learning and Subjects

²⁴ Elizabeth Tyler, ‘Vernacular Foundations’, *England in Europe: English Royal Women and Literary Patronage, c.1000–c.1150* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017), 20–50, p. 20.

²⁵ Weber, ‘A brief history of Anglo-Saxon Education’, pp. 2 – 6.

²⁶ Lendinara, ‘The world of Anglo-Saxon Learning’, p. 265.

²⁷ Dumitrescu, *The Experience of Education in Anglo-Saxon Literature*, p. 1.

²⁸ These are key elements of schooling, discussed by Carin Ruff, ‘The Place of Metrics in Anglo-Saxon Latin Education: Aldhelm and Bede’, *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 104:2 (2005), 149 – 170; and Michael Lapidge, ed., *Anglo-Latin Literature*, 600 – 899 (London: The Hambledon Press Ltd., 1996), pp. 253 – 269.

²⁹ Derek A. Olsen, *Reading Matthew with Monks: Liturgical Interpretation in Anglo-Saxon England* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2015), pp. 1 – 26.

From the ninth century, there are more examples of secular teaching and learning in Old English texts because of the increased use of the vernacular. Stephanie Hollis argues that the lack of evidence of vernacular teaching and learning on subjects such as medicine prior to this period was because of the ‘low survival of manuscripts from this period’.³⁰ The ninth and tenth centuries saw a revival of education which focused not only on religious audiences but members of the laity. Alfred the Great’s educational programme ‘introduced the idea that education was a royal, rather than purely ecclesiastical, prerogative’.³¹ He deplored the lack of learning, especially the state of Latin understanding by priests, according to prefaces of translations. Alfred aimed to increase the understanding of literature and promote a good Christian lifestyle through the translation of key texts into Old English.³² These included various pieces of prose such as Bede’s *HE*, Gregory the Great’s *Cura Pastoralis* and Orosius’ *Historiarum*, all of which contain examples of education, good and bad. These texts also contain references to laymen and women and their various roles for their audiences to consider and use as exemplars for their own writings and daily practice.

Vernacular texts contain a wide range of subjects which encompass skills and concepts more applicable to the laity than religious communities. Similar scenes also occur in Latin texts, mainly hagiography, which also contain examples of men and women as students of different subjects, including some considered highly inappropriate for women. For example, there are mentions of young women either learning about fornication or teaching prostitution in saints’

³⁰ Stephanie Hollis, ‘Anglo-Saxon Secular Learning and the Vernacular: An Overview’, *Secular Learning in Anglo-Saxon England*, *Amsterdamer Beiträge zur älteren Germanistik*, ed. Chaddam and Carella (2012), 1 – 43.

³¹ Weber, ‘A brief history of Anglo-Saxon Education’, p. 7.

³² There is a large body of literature on Alfred and his impact on education. See, Nicole Guenther Discenza, ‘Wealth and Wisdom: Symbolic Capital and the Ruler in the Translational Programme of Alfred the Great’, *Exemplaria*, 13:2 (2001), 433-467, p. 433, Malcolm Godden, ‘Did King Alfred Write Anything?’, *Medium Ævum*, 76:1 (2007), 1-23; Daniel Anlezark, *Alfred the Great* (Kalamazoo: Arc Humanities Press, 2017); and Janet Batley, ‘Did King Alfred actually Translate anything? The Integrity of the Alfredian Canon Revisited’, *Medium Ævum*, 78:2 (2009), 189–215.

lives.³³ Other subjects include philosophy, riding, sword fighting, and customs. Customary knowledge, or the preservation and continuation of ideals such as honour, duty, and traditions, is an unusual subject which has not yet been considered fully as teachable information.³⁴ However, it is an essential part of women's relationship with education. Teachers of secular subjects do not often teach in the same way or with the same tools as religious tutors. For example, these types of teachings do not often use books and instead focus on the regurgitation of information given through conversation or modelling of behaviour. Set examples, whether verbal or physical, are another important aspect of education which is often overlooked in favour of more traditional means of learning such as through reading and writing. This alternative style of learning reminds modern readers of the breadth of areas which fall under the umbrella of 'education', and of the diverse communities of the early medieval period which need to be considered.

Reading, Writing, and Translating

It is essential to consider the textual communities of Old English and Latin texts who interacted with the representations and ideas contained in manuscripts.³⁵ Monasteries trained their students to be able readers, translators, poets, and even singers, yet these communities were not made up solely of monks and nuns. These institutions educated and housed laymen and women, some of whom had religious roles as priests, and others who came from royal houses to be trained.³⁶ Not all entered monastic vocations after their education. It is likely

³³ Two examples occur in the *Life of Agatha* and the *Life of St. Mary of Egypt*. These are important texts because they describe laywomen as students and teachers. See Mary Clayton and Juliet Mullins, ed., 'Saint Agatha and Saint Lucy', *The Old English Lives of Saints*, DOML 58 (Harvard University Press, 2019), 249 – 277, p. 250; Johanna Kramer, Hugh Magennis, and Robin Norris, eds. and trs., 'Saint Mary of Egypt', *Anonymous Old English Lives of Saints*, DOML 63 (Cambridge Ma.: Harvard University Press, 2019), 379 – 439.

³⁴ I discuss these in further detail in Chapter 3.

³⁵ For more information about textual communities and their importance to early Medieval society, see Elaine Treharne, 'Textual communities (vernacular)', *A Social History of England, 900 – 1200*, ed. Elizabeth Van Houts and Julia Crick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 341 – 351; and Teresa Webber, 'Textual communities (Latin)', *A Social History of England, 900 – 1200*, 330 – 340.

³⁶ See Foot, *Monastic Life in Anglo-Saxon England c.600 – 900*, pp. 108 – 110.

that not all students received the same level of education since they engaged with texts in different ways. Manuscripts were mobile tools, transferred between monasteries and people, and written for different groups, including kings and princes, to educate and inspire them. These audiences and writers brought with them their own ideas and interpretations, which creates ‘textual’ communities of different audiences.³⁷ This is especially relevant for Old English word choices since the understanding of word use along with contemporary notions of history, language, and society, affect the wording of translated texts. Translations of Latin texts are crucial sources in my study since many examples of education and teaching occur in these texts, and the translators’ choices provide key evidence of their culture.

Scribes relied on various markers to determine word meaning when they translated a text from Latin to the vernacular, such as the passage’s context, the genre, and other pre-existing translations. Other factors also affected their word choices, such as dialect, time, and audience, but there are two which provide significant evidence of word comprehension: glossaries and glosses. Glosses were another important tool of translation and education. They often provided close translations of Latin words to provide lexical, morphological, syntactical and commentary suggestions to assist the reader to interpret the text.³⁸ These include interlinear texts and glosses of Latin texts written in the margins or in-between lines, or as dry point annotations.

However, glosses are also problematic to the purposes of determining word usage in Old English texts. The words used to gloss Latin texts are not necessarily indicative of general word use elsewhere in the corpus of Old English literature.³⁹ Stanton warns that glosses are

³⁷ Hugh Magennis, *Images of Community in Old English Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 4.

³⁸ Robert Stanton, *The Culture of Translation in Anglo-Saxon England* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2002), pp. 14 – 16.

³⁹ Antonette diPaolo Healey, ‘Late Anglo-Saxon Glossography: The Lexicographic View’, *Rethinking and Recontextualising Glosses: New Perspectives in the Study of Late Anglo-Saxon Glossography*, ed. Patrizia Lendinara, Loredana Lazzari, and Claudia Di Sciacca (2011), 1 – 18, pp. 3 – 6.

plagued with issues of ‘tradition and novelty, continuity and disjunction, reproduction and displacement’ as the use and meaning of words changes.⁴⁰ They should be read as individual texts with specific contexts and compared with other examples of glosses of Latin texts to ‘construct a truer, denser history of scribal practice, lexical choice’ and gain further insight in early medieval translation.⁴¹ Also, according to Fulk, it is better to translate one word in multiple ways to provide comprehensible conceptions and attitudes which time and cultural difference have tended to obscure.⁴² Different glosses often use more than one word to translate a single Latin word, which suggests that the Latin diction contained a range of connotations and ideas which Old English translators were aware of and thus chose words to suit the different meanings attached to certain words. These rely on context, and modern readers are not privy to all of these because there are aspects of their culture that we no longer have access to in the surviving source materials, such as oral tradition.

0.2 Women, Education, and Instruction

It is evident that we know far more about men’s roles as teachers and students than we do about women’s roles. Above, I suggested that education for men involved a combination of reading, writing, translating, practising, and demonstrations in a variety of secular and religious subjects. Many of these sources were written by men about other men. Education has long been considered a masculine pursuit in the early medieval period because of men’s prevalence in the existing artistic and textual evidence. The lack of evidence of women in episodes of education and instruction creates a lack of familiarity with women in educational

⁴⁰ Stanton, *The Culture of Translation in Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 49.

⁴¹ Healey, ‘Late Anglo-Saxon Glossography: The Lexicographic View’, p. 18.

⁴² R.D. Fulk, ed. and trs., *The Old English Pastoral Care*, DOML 72 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2021), p. xii.

roles. This is a widely recognised problem that sparked a wealth of research on women's intellectual roles.

One of the earliest pieces of research on women's education by Helen Dominica Leibell in the early twentieth century showed that there was more to discuss than their depictions as child bearers, nuns, and political peace weavers.⁴³ Her research focuses on monastic women and their involvement in teaching, which she implies they fulfil in order to provide metaphorical nourishment.⁴⁴ She draws attention to writers such as Bede, Aldhelm, Alcuin, to demonstrate that a great many writers wrote about monastic women as teachers in the early medieval period. Her book was the first to address the issue of women's roles in religious education. Others such as Riché mention them in passing, but he also suggests that women in early medieval Europe had a strong presence as teachers and students in monastic and secular settings.⁴⁵ Since Leibell, there has not been an in-depth investigation of women's representation or agency which focuses specifically on teaching and learning. Instead, scholars used smaller case studies of fragmentary manuscript evidence to explore women's roles. They identified manuscripts which show that women were involved in different types of education in a similar way to their male counterparts. Much of this evidence concerns women's presence in monasteries. For example, there are several manuscripts such as the *Regularis Concordia* in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 201 and the Wintney version of the *Rule of St. Benedict* that use feminised terminology.⁴⁶ There are also texts

⁴³ Helen Dominica Leibell, *Anglo-Saxon Education of Women: From Hilda to Hildegard* (New York: Lenox Hills Pub. And Diss. Co., 1922) [repr. 1971].

⁴⁴ Leibell, *Anglo-Saxon Education of Women: From Hilda to Hildegard*, p. 12.

⁴⁵ Riché, *Education and Culture in the Barbarian West, Sixth through Eighth Centuries*, p. 329.

⁴⁶ Joyce Hill, 'Making Women Visible: An Adaption of the *Regularis Concordia* in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS. 201', *Conversion and Colonization in Anglo-Saxon England*, Essays on Anglo-Saxon Studies, 2, ed. Catherine E. Karkov and Nicholas Howe, (Tempe, AZ.: ACMRS, 2006), 153 – 168. I discuss the Wintney *Rule* later in Chapter 4 of my thesis.

intended for a female audience which include Aldhelm's *Prosa De Virginitate* for Abbess Hildelith and her nuns at Barking, as I discuss below.

Other source material shows female ownership and readership.⁴⁷ Weber's examination of a seventh-century manuscript of Jerome's commentary on *Ecclesiastes* shows that it contains the appearance of the female name 'Cuthswith' inscribed in its folios. This manuscript contains a reference to Cuthswith, the Abbess of Inkberrow. He suggests that 'the description of the curriculum ... applies to female religious as much as male', which makes the appearance of this name less astonishing.⁴⁸ Another manuscript known as the *Vercelli Book*, which contains many famous poems such as *Andreas* and *Elene*, marks another female name, 'eagip', in a margin.⁴⁹ Mary Dockray-Miller considers that this is a reference to St Edith, the Abbess of Wilton and the daughter of King Edgar, noted by an unknown reader who saw a direct parallel to her in *Andreas*.⁵⁰ Whether as readers or sources of inspiration, it seems that monastic women have a strong connection with some of the most famous Old English and Latin texts of the early medieval period; texts which also have a strong association with education.

There is also evidence of women's teaching and learning in Latin and Old English texts which describes their involvement in monastic life as well as rarer episodes of lay women, namely queens and king's daughters. Texts include Bede's *HE* and its later Old English translation (*OEHE* henceforth), Ælfric's *Lives of Saints*, an early medieval romance known as

⁴⁷ This is a well-researched area. For further reading, see Michelle P. Brown, 'Female Book-Ownership and Production in Anglo-Saxon England: The Evidence of Ninth-Century Prayerbooks', *Lexis and Texts in Early English: Studies Presented to Jane Roberts*, eds. Christian Kay and Louise M. Sylvester (Amsterdam: Rodolphi, 2001), 45 – 68; David Pratt, 'Kings and books in Anglo-Saxon England', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 43 (2014), 297–377; and Mary Dockray-Miller, 'Female Devotion and the Vercelli Book', *Philological Quarterly*, 83:4 (2004), 337 – 354. I also discuss women's literacy later in this chapter.

⁴⁸ Weber, 'A brief history of Anglo-Saxon Education', p. 7. Patrick Sims-Williams provided a detailed study of this text: 'Cuthswith, Seventh-Century Abbess of Inkberrow, near Worcester, and the Würzburg Manuscript of Jerome on Ecclesiastes', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 5 (1976), 1–21.

⁴⁹ Mary Dockray-Miller, 'The eagip Erasure: A Gloss on the Old English Andreas', *ANQ*, 18:1 (2005), 3 – 7.

⁵⁰ Dockray-Miller, 'The eagip Erasure: A Gloss on the Old English Andreas', pp. 6–7.

Apollonius of Tyre, and several others.⁵¹ The presence of women in various roles and inscriptions of female names in manuscripts, as noted above, suggests that there was a female audience for specific Latin and Old English texts, whether intended or not. Women as intended audiences has been a key focus by researchers such as Kathryn Maude who argues that female audiences, both lay and religious, shaped texts.⁵² Her research on modes of address to women in religious texts suggests that texts such as homilies, sermons, and hagiography spoke directly to women whilst rarely mentioning them. She comments that these direct addresses could be ‘radically transformative’ for individuals and their communities, especially monastic women who had easier access to reading materials.⁵³ Texts are evidently an important tool for learning for early medieval women.

The above evidence implies that women might have used similar texts to men in order to learn and teach, especially during the development of Christianity. Lendinara comments that women ‘seem to have had the same opportunities as men’ in the earliest period when double houses were open to communities of men and women and run often by an abbess.⁵⁴ However, there is doubt about whether they shared the same experience of education because of the paucity of evidence. Clare. A Lees and Gillian R. Overing note that ‘evidence of women as teachers and students’ is ‘hard to interpret’ and question how women taught and learned.⁵⁵ They argue that women undergo a ‘communal process of teaching and of learning’, which is why the relationships between women are just as important as the connection between

⁵¹ Singular or small numbers of examples of women described as students or teachers occur in many texts. Some examples include *Genesis A/B*, Paulinus Orosius’ *Historiarum adversus Paganos Libri Septem* (Seven Books of History against the Pagans), *Elene*, *Juliana*, Wulfstan’s *Institutes of Polity*, the anonymous *Life of St. Mary of Egypt*, and the homily known as *The Invention of the Cross*.

⁵² Kathryn Maude, *Addressing Women in Early Medieval Religious Texts* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2021).

⁵³ Maude, *Addressing Women in Early Medieval Religious Texts*, p. 166.

⁵⁴ Lendinara, ‘The world of Anglo-Saxon Learning’, p. 301.

⁵⁵ Lees and Overing, *Double Agents*, p. 49, fn 35.

women, manuscripts, and their literary depictions.⁵⁶ The most prominent 'communal' setting for women in Old English texts is the monastery. The seventh and eighth centuries saw some of the most well-known and influential women of the period, and many of these women had important connections to seats of learning in monastic communities. It is necessary to understand women's complex relationship with monasticism to consider whether their involvement in monasteries paralleled their male counterparts. This includes their influence as audiences of texts. In the next section, I discuss the development of female monasticism in England from the seventh to the tenth century.

Female Monasticism in England

Before the late eighth century, monastic women have a more engaging literary presence than in later years. The 'willingness' of contemporary authors such as Bede 'to accord equal attention to female as to male religious' has helped bring them to the forefront of our attention.⁵⁷ Most still consider the earlier centuries (the seventh to the eighth) as the 'golden age' for women primarily because of their visibility in the textual evidence.⁵⁸ In order to understand the reasons for their frequent appearances in seventh- and eighth-century texts, I first explain why this period provided a suitable environment for royal monastic women to be 'visible'.

I begin with evidence from Bede's *HE*, his prose account of the conversion of England to Christianity. His text presents the first half of the seventh century as a time of change, especially for religious matters. It offers a view of England at this time as a nation divided in

⁵⁶ Clare A. Lees, and Gillian R. Overing, 'Women and the Origins of English Literature', *The History of Women's Writing, 700 – 1500*, ed. Liz Herbert McAvoy and Diane Watt (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015) 31 – 40, p. 37.

⁵⁷ Sarah Foot, *Veiled Women*, 2 vols (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2000), 1, p. 22.

⁵⁸ Barbara Yorke and Patricia Halpin have commented on this: Yorke, *Nunneries and the Anglo-Saxon Royal Houses*, pp. 1 – 2; Patricia Halpin, 'Women Religious in Late Anglo-Saxon England', *The Haskins Society Journal* 6 (1994), 97 – 119, p. 97.

its choice of faith, although Christianity was widely accepted by 731 AD when Bede composed his text. *HE* reveals that centres of worship and religious education were scarce:

HE, iii. 8:

Nam eo tempore necdum multis in regione Anglorum monasteriis
constructis, multi de Brittania monachicae conversationis gratia Francorum
vel Galliarum monasteria adire solebant [...].

(At the time, because there were not yet many monasteries founded in
England, numbers of people from Britain used to enter the monasteries of
the Franks or Gauls to practise the monastic life).⁵⁹

The famous religious houses in Francia had a substantial impact on the monastic expansion in Britain, but they also play a role in the development of female monasticism. Leibell describes these monasteries as 'the cradle of Anglo-Saxon religious communities'.⁶⁰ Bede informs his audience that the English people, namely *cyningas* and *rice men* (kings and great men), sent their daughters 'erudiendas et sponso caelesti copulandus mittebant' (to be taught and wedded to the heavenly bridegroom) in Frankish monasteries such as Chelles, Brie, and Andelys-sur-Seine [*HE* iii.8]. The absence of adequate religious leaders and teachers in England gave women new opportunities at the centre of an essential stage of intellectual and political development. They became involved in the 'monastic boom' of the seventh century, which saw an increase in religious foundations.⁶¹ English male and female religious took over roles in these religious centres from previous foreign mentors from the Continent and Ireland.⁶² These newly trained men and women became part of mixed religious communities known as

⁵⁹ Translation by Colgrave and Mynors, *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, pp. 237, 239.

⁶⁰ Leibell, *Anglo-Saxon Education of Women*, p. 52.

⁶¹ John Blair, *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 79.

⁶² Blair, *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society*, p. 79.

double houses which thrived in the seventh and eighth centuries across Europe. The early monasteries are well-regarded as foundations of learning and literary production in England for both sexes.⁶³ Women's involvement in this early stage of monasticism indicates that they played a significant role which included different forms of education and instruction.

A New Role from the Continent

Women engaged in education and instruction differently after the seventh century because of these new monasteries, especially royal women. The relationship between education, instruction, and royal women, before and during the early years of monastic expansion involved their engagement as counsellors and instructors as the wives of kings, those associated with lay authority to command.⁶⁴ New roles became available to them as female religious, such as teachers and monastic governors. Barbara Yorke provides an excellent study of the royal associations of abbesses and concludes that royal status did benefit the careers of monastic women.⁶⁵ According to the source material, only royal women could become abbesses because this was a powerful position with several responsibilities. Sarah Foot, who also worked extensively on women's involvement in early English monastic houses, claims that the 'absence of a rigid framework' led to more opportunities.⁶⁶ She comments that the lack of a strict interpretation of monastic 'rules' in this period, which led to the 'vitality' of female religious, also created a suitable environment for royal women:

‘The double house provided an outlet for the satisfaction of the religious devotion and administrative energy of Anglo-Saxon royal and aristocratic women’.⁶⁷

⁶³ Lees and Overing, ‘Women and the Origins of English Literature’, pp. 33 – 34.

⁶⁴ For my discussion on the roles of royal women, see Chapter 3.

⁶⁵ Yorke, *Nunneries and the Anglo-Saxon Royal Houses*, p. 147.

⁶⁶ Foot, *Veiled Women*, 1, p. 59.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

Foot refers to those known as abbesses. These women were at the heart of many of these foundations as their spiritual and authoritative heads.⁶⁸ They were royal women, the sisters, daughters, or wives of kings, such as the women who travelled to Francia in *HE* iii.8. There are several examples of royal abbesses in England who first came from Frankish monasteries such as Chelles. Stephanie Hollis argues that Hildelith, the abbess of Barking in the late seventh century, came from Francia to educate Æthelburh, the first abbess, and her nuns.⁶⁹ Others include Bertha and Folcburg, 'the abbess and *decana*' of the monastery in Bath who came from Francia to assist monastic development in England.⁷⁰ English women such as Mildrith also travelled for religious education and she returned to fulfil the role of abbess in places such as Minster-in-Thamet.⁷¹ These educated women brought with them monastic practices and 'rules' from the Continent, including the concept of an abbess as the head of the community.

Frankish double houses were governed by an abbess or jointly with an abbot in some cases. They followed Caesarian, Columban, and Benedictine rules (the latter was the most common in England). Each rule had a different approach to monasticism and the assignment of those who governed the monasteries. Caesarius' rule, for example, stated that 'noble origin or wealth' was not to be 'taken into consideration in the selection of an abbess'.⁷² Nevertheless, many royal women took this position on the Continent and in England. We know of at least thirteen double houses led by royal abbesses before the end of the eighth century at Whitby,

⁶⁸ Virginia Blanton, 'Imagining the Lost Libraries of Anglo-Saxon Double Monasteries', *New Readings on Women and Early Medieval English Literature and Culture: Cross-Disciplinary Studies in Honour of Helen Damico*, ed. Helene Scheck, and Christine E. Kozikowski (Leeds: Arc Humanities Press, 2019), 75 – 96, p. 76.

⁶⁹ Stephanie Hollis, 'Barking's Monastic School, Late Seventh to Twelfth Century: History, Saint-Making and Literary Culture', *Barking Abbey and Medieval Literary Culture: Authorship and Authority in a Female Community*, eds. J. Brown & D. Bussell (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2012), 32 – 55, pp. 38 – 40.

⁷⁰ Hollis, 'Barking's Monastic School', pp. 38 – 40.

⁷¹ Yorke, *Nunneries and the Anglo-Saxon Royal House*, p. 27.

⁷² Suzanne Fonay Wemple, *Women in Frankish Society: Marriage and the Cloister, 500 – 900* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), p.164.

Barking, Ely, Coldingham, Bath, Hartlepool, and Thanet.⁷³ These religious houses appear as esteemed and successful institutions in the seventh and eighth centuries. However, some acquired more attention than others. For instance, Hild's monastery at Whitby is famous for fostering the poet Cædmon while Hildelith's Barking Abbey was a famed place of religious learning.

Education and Literacy

Education is the main priority of monastic communities. The absence of a 'framework' mentioned by Hollis enabled them to engage in teaching in ways not previously seen in England. Research has begun to focus more on monastic women's literary and educational engagement in the seventh century. Diane Watt's research on women and literary culture argues that religious houses associated with women such as Barking were 'at the centre of a vibrant network of textual exchange',⁷⁴ and there is a wealth of evidence to support her claim. For example, Aldhelm of Malmbury's treatise on virginity known as the *Prosa De Virginitate* [*DV* henceforth] was commissioned by Abbess Hildelith and her nuns at Barking for devotional use in the seventh century.⁷⁵ Aldhelm was a well-known Latin writer and poet in this period, and his popularity stretched well into the tenth century.⁷⁶ In the opening of the letter, he mentions these women by name (Hildilthae, Iustinae, Cuthburgae, Aldgithae, Scolasticae, Hidburgae, Berngithae, Eulaliae, and Theclae) and his familial connections to one in particular: 'Osburgae, mihi contribulibus necessitudinum nexibus conglutinatae'

⁷³ Blanton, 'Imagining the Lost Libraries', pp. 90 – 93.

⁷⁴ Diane Watt, 'Lost Books: Abbess Hildelith and the Literary Culture of Barking Abbey', *Philological Quarterly*, 91:1 (2012), 1-22, p. 3.

⁷⁵ Aldhelm lived between 639 and 709. See Michael Lapidge and Michael Herren, ed. and tr., *Aldhelm: The Prose Works* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer Ltd., 1979) pp. 5 – 10. There is very little known about Hildelith.

⁷⁶ For information on Aldhelm and his works, see Scott Gwara, *Aldhelmi Malmesbiriensis Prosa De Virginitate: cum Glosa Latina atque Anglosaxonica*, Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina CXXIV A,2, ed. Rudolf Ehwald (Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 2001); Lapidge and Herren, *Aldhelm: The Prose Works* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer Ltd., 1979); and Michael Lapidge and James Roiser, *Aldhelm: The Poetic Works* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer Ltd., 2009).

(Osburg, connected to me by familial bonds of kinship).⁷⁷ His writing suggests that he had great respect for their literary abilities and interest. He also describes their abbess as 'regularis disciplinae et monasticae conversationis magistrae' (teacher of the regular discipline and monastic life).⁷⁸ The noun *magistra* is used to describe her as a teacher, which is a significant title awarded to an abbess because of its associations with monastic teaching.⁷⁹

There is an admiration for their level of learning in this text. According to Lees and Overing, Hildelith and her nuns were able to commission the text by Aldhelm 'as wealthy, older women with established aristocratic networks'.⁸⁰ They argue that their status was beneficial to their education and their community. The fact that the abbess commissioned the work for her monastery shows an interest in her community's education and the promotion of her minster as a centre of religious learning. Other communities held a similar status. Stefany Wragg notes that Cuthburh, the wife of Aldfrith, had strong associations with 'seats of learning' before and after her installation as an abbess.⁸¹ She founded a monastery in Wimborne which had an impressive 'reputation for learning, including manuscript production, poetry, letter-writing, and more'.⁸² Her example of support and encouragement of monastic education suggests that lay women were able to influence and promote education that was considered suitable for Christians. Other locations which gained status as places of education, such as Barking and Whitby, had strong ties to royal women.

Another example that praises the educational quality of double monasteries appears in the 'Boniface Correspondence'. This collection of letters survives in an eleventh-century

⁷⁷ Gwara, *Aldelmi Malmesbiriensis Prosa De Virginitate*, p. 27.

⁷⁸ Gwara, *Aldelmi Malmesbiriensis Prosa De Virginitate*, p. 31.

⁷⁹ For a definition, see Howlett et al, *DMLBS*, 2, pp. 1680 – 1681. They also list 'magistra' as 1. A 'woman in charge, mistress, abbess', 2. in charge of 'a principal church, region, or city', 3. 'woman entrusted with the care and supervision of children in the household, governess', 4. A 'female teacher, instructress', p. 1682. I discuss nouns in further detail on pp. 168 – 169.

⁸⁰ Lees and Overing, 'Women and the Origins of English Literature', p. 34.

⁸¹ Stefany Wragg, *Early English Queens, 650 – 850: Speculum Reginae* (London: Routledge, 2022), p. 69.

⁸² Ibid.

manuscript known as the *Vienna Codex* (Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Cod. Lat. Vindobonensis 751) because of the popularity of Bishop Wynfrith, who was also named Boniface. He is well known for his correspondence with women in England and taught many of them. He writes several times to one woman, Abbess Eadburg of Minster in Thanet, about her role in the provision of manuscripts and materials to missionaries overseas. One letter commends the *librorum* (books) and *vestimentorum* (vestiments) produced at her monastery.⁸³ He requests in the same letter that she 'auro conscribas epistolas domini mei, sancti Petri apostoli' (create a copy in gold of the epistles of my master, St. Peter the Apostle). Like Aldhelm, Boniface presents the abbess's position as focused on the provision of literary education for religious communities. Latin authors' attentions focus on the abbess as the focal point of religious community when they discuss their educational esteem. Katie Ann-Marie Bugyis states that abbesses of double monasteries are 'outstanding witnesses to the level of leadership and education that nuns could attain'.⁸⁴ The number of royal women mentioned and praised for their involvement in monastic education indicates that the seventh century provided a suitable environment for them to engage with religious education as abbesses.

The Influence of the Laity

There is no doubt that female monasticism in England in the seventh and eighth centuries had strong ties to royal families. Lees and Overing pointed out that it was a 'partnership between royal and ecclesiastical interests' because of the extent of royal interest in monasteries and their leaders.⁸⁵ The Church benefited from the wealth and support of powerful families which came from the instalment of female relatives as abbesses. Charters before the eighth century

⁸³ Tangl, Brief 35, *Briefe Des Bonifatius Willibalds Leben Des Bonifatius*, p. 114.

⁸⁴ Katie Ann-Marie Bugyis, ed., 'Introduction: Curates of Nuns', *The Care of Nuns: The Ministries of Benedictine Women in England during the Central Middle Ages* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 1 – 38, pp. 11 – 12.

⁸⁵ Lees and Overing, *Double Agents*, pp. 40 – 41.

testify to the gifts of land and benefits given to monasteries run by royal abbesses. One example includes a charter by King Nothhelm of Sussex who granted 33 hides to his *soror* (sister), Nothgyth, to found a minster in 692 AD.⁸⁶ There is a wealth of documented evidence from Kent which shows the generosity of its kings to abbesses. King Wihtred, for instance, provides several grants of land to Æbbe and Mildrith, abbesses of Minster-in-Thanet, as well as privileges and immunities to Kentish monasteries.⁸⁷ The fact that female religious appear in the witness lists of these charters demonstrates their importance to lay society as landowners connected to royal houses.

Historians continue to view royal abbesses as an integral part of early English lay society because of their position as head of a 'household'. Many researchers, such as Yorke, Lees and Overing, conclude that the lay role of royal women did not dramatically change once they became abbesses. Steven Vanderputten's recent research argues along similar lines:

Yet such royal women did not give up all their former status: even after they retired to a monastery, their queenly function as political interface continued to be operative, transforming the institutions themselves into symbolic and actual meeting points for aristocratic networks.⁸⁸

His view presents the significance of monastic women to royal families and their lay authority through their role as abbesses who govern strategic places for religious and political reasons. Yorke asserts that Christianity provided new roles for royal women as 'spiritual leaders within the family group', which correlates with her earlier comment on the

⁸⁶ King's College London, *The Electronic Sawyer: Online Catalogue of Anglo-Saxon Charters* (2022), Sawyer no. 45, <<https://esawyer.lib.cam.ac.uk/charter/45.html>>, [Accessed 29/09/2022].

⁸⁷ Sawyer nos. 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22. S20 and 22 award privileges to all the monasteries and churches of Kent; both name abbesses as witnesses.

⁸⁸ Steven Vanderputten, *Dark Age Nunneries: The Ambiguous Identity of Female Monasticism, 800 – 1050* (New York: Cornell University, 2018), p. 25.

significance of abbesses and their royal ties.⁸⁹ These women kept land within the royal family and under their control and protection as landowners. They created focal points for networks between royal families and the Church. According to John Blair, these monasteries were considered a 'spiritual kind of family property' of which abbesses were guardians.⁹⁰ The concept of the monastery as an extension to the royal domain shows a strong relationship between monastic women and royal authority.

The close connection of royal abbesses and secular authority indicates that they were the most appropriate candidates for the head of a religious community. Hollis' claim that abbesses were 'royal women who had transferred their rule to a smaller kingdom' upholds the idea that they provided more than just religious education.⁹¹ The 'replication of secular rule in a monastic context' suggests that the main authority of the monastery would need a particular set of skills that go beyond the capabilities to teach.⁹² Abbesses' association with royalty implies these women were trained or at least had some experience of governance from their time in royal courts and around other persons of secular authority. Stefany Wragg in her recent publication on early English queens suggested that an abbess' role is 'very similar to temporal queenship' because both roles share skills such as management of households, governance, and mediation.⁹³ It is these skills which allowed queens to fulfil the office of abbess better than other women.⁹⁴

Widowed or separated queens are strong candidates for abbesses because of their previous experience as head of the royal household, which enabled them to fulfil the managerial requirements of an abbess. For example, Æthelthryth separated from her husband Ecgrith to

⁸⁹ Yorke, *Nunneries and the Anglo-Saxon Royal Houses*, p. 146.

⁹⁰ Blair, *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society*, p. 82.

⁹¹ Hollis, *Anglo-Saxon Women and the Church*, p. 162.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Wragg, *Early English Queens*, p. 69.

⁹⁴ Ibid, p. 69.

become a nun, and later, the abbess of Ely. Eanflæd, the wife of King Oswiu, also retired to become an abbess at Whitby with her daughter, Ælfflæd, after her husband's death. The number of royal women who became abbesses in the seventh and eighth centuries demonstrates that they were chosen for their skills as well as political purposes. Their capacity to manage estates, households, finances and provide security with royal patronage highlights the suitability of royal women to be abbesses in the early period of monastic expansion. It is evident that female monasticism in the seventh century had close ties to lay society through the abbess as well as monasteries' relationships with royal houses.

The Impact of Ecclesiastical Reform

The influence of lay society was one factor that led to the decline of the double monastery system in the tenth century. Attitudes towards these institutions and their royal abbesses varied even as far back as the late seventh century. Bede and other authors display their contempt for the inappropriate behaviour of men and women in monasteries such as Coldingham. Among the references to 'comesationum, potationum, fabulationum' (feasting, drinking, [and] gossip), Bede specifically mentions the nuns who spent their time 'texendis subtilioribus indumentis' (weaving fine garments) [*HE* iv. 25]. His depiction of the disorganisation and *incuriae* (carelessness) at Coldingham reflects badly on the abbess, Æbbe, whom he suggests did not perform her role as adequately as others. The leading cause of his concern is the impact of lay influences in the governance of monastery, especially on female members.

Women and their 'attachments to secular symbols of status such as dress' is an issue addressed by several Latin authors.⁹⁵ Aldhelm also chastises those are 'pretioso indumentorum comptus ornatu' (adorned with the precious ornament of garments) and flaunt

⁹⁵ Yorke, *Nunneries and the Anglo-Saxon Royal Houses*, p. 176.

themselves *saeculariter* (in a worldly manner).⁹⁶ He aims his comment at the virgins of Christ, whom he describes as 'ornamentis vestium dilicatis decorari' (adorning themselves with a luxurious decoration of dress). Although Aldhelm does not name any specific examples of monastic women, he likely included this reference as a gentle reminder to his female audience. The reference to this type of behaviour in this text demonstrates that he considered it to be an issue at this time.

Monastic women and their symbols of lay status remained a problem for monasticism in the tenth century. It was one of the factors which led to the need to improve monastic standards. The flexibility of early monasticism in England mentioned by Foot, which enabled many royal women to engage in new religious roles, also caused concern and disorder.⁹⁷ Discontent with monastic practice across Europe increased in the tenth century and had an especially fierce response towards female religious. New approaches to monasticism led to the Benedictine Reform, after the influence of St. Benedict of Nursia, which 'tightened monastic practice...with a new emphasis on celibacy'.⁹⁸ This movement impacted the double house model, lay influence, and the involvement of monastic women. These changes altered the way Old English authors approached them in their writing.

Texts such as the *Rule of St. Benedict* and the *Regularis Concordia* set out strict guidelines for monasteries and nunneries in accordance with the new rules. One of the central ideas of the reform concerned the separation of male and female religious into different monasteries, which rendered the double house model irrelevant. Furthermore, royal interest which had once supported these foundations, politically and financially, dissipated with the change of attitudes towards mixed religious communities. Royal and noble patrons who had been

⁹⁶ Gwara, *Aldhelmi Malmesbiriensis Prosa De Virginitate*, LV, p. 715.

⁹⁷ See my discussion above, p. 28.

⁹⁸ Lees and Overing, *Double Agents*, p. 165.

willing to contribute toward these foundations in the past waned and instead favoured male monasteries.⁹⁹ The influence and esteem of the abbess dwindled without royal support and a system that offered more opportunities compared to later years.

It is evident that women's relationship with monasticism altered drastically over the 400-year period, just as Old English writers and translators changed how they described and included women in their texts. The evidence above suggests that monastic women had a large impact on education and instruction inside and outside of monasteries, and that they contributed to the high level of religious learning in this period. It also indicates that royal and religious women had shared roles in many aspects which contribute to education, and their unique relationship needs to be explored further. In the following section, I consider the role of royal women in the early medieval period, including the development of queenship and evidence of their education to better understand their position. As I suggested above, royalty also played a part in education inside and outside of monasteries, but there is less evidence for queens than their religious counterparts. The fragmentary nature of the source material regarding laywomen, especially about their education and involvement in teaching, creates a challenging investigation.

Women Outside of the Monastery

In my previous section, I discussed the level of education of female religious in monasteries. These were women who had access to a range of written materials and teachers. This experience was not the same for other groups of women, such as members of the laity. Laywomen are particularly notable for their absence in the literary evidence, as many scholars have commented over the past decades.¹⁰⁰ Although there is evidence of royal

⁹⁹ Yorke, *Nunneries and the Anglo-Saxon Royal Houses*, pp. 88, 130.

¹⁰⁰ There is a large body of research about this topic. The most notable are Lees and Overing, *Double Agents*, pp. 1 – 12; Maude, *Addressing Women in Early Medieval Religious Texts*, pp. 3 – 10; and Watt, *Women, Writing and Religion in England and Beyond, 650 – 1100*, pp. 19 – 25.

women from sources such as Bede's *HE* which shows that they did enter Frankish monasteries such as Chelles, these environments were exclusively for women who wished to enter monastic positions and 'were not finishing schools' for young, elite women.¹⁰¹ Therefore, it is difficult to understand how laywomen were educated and prepared for their roles as mothers, wives, and queens.

Royal women as a group include a variety of roles: queens, king's wives, princesses, dowagers, mothers, and sisters. These are women who have connections to the royal houses of the early medieval kingdoms. They make up one of the largest groups of women in the corpus of Old English and Latin literature because of their political, dynastic, and often religious importance. Many abbesses from the seventh to the late tenth century had royal backgrounds, such as Hild, Æthelthryth, and Edith. The boundaries between the two groups of women blur as female networks, political influence, and family ties intertwine the lives of secular and monastic women. This raises the question of whether secular royalty 'teach' in the same way as monastic women in these Old English texts? This can only be discussed by examining the role of the queen in early medieval texts.

Queenship in Early Medieval England

When it comes to royals in Old English texts, queens are far more common in the source material than princesses. It is important to consider what a queen's role entailed in the early English kingdoms to understand how these women were taught. Queenship evolved in this period because of a series of factors which altered perceptions of royal women. A queen was known as the *cyninges wīf* (wife of the king) in Old English texts rather than by her title, especially in later sources.¹⁰² It was not an official role which required a ceremony, but a

¹⁰¹ Madge Hildebrandt Klais and M. M. Hildebrandt, *The External School in Carolingian Society* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1992), p. 43. Also see Bede *HE*, iii.8, as I discuss on page 26.

¹⁰² Anlezark, *Alfred the Great*, p. 18.

fluid position recognised through marriage.¹⁰³ Consecration of queens did not become a practice in early English kingdoms or on the Continent until the ninth and tenth centuries.¹⁰⁴ It was this lack of regulation which enabled royal women to have a large social and political presence. According to previous scholarship, just as the seventh and eighth centuries are named the ‘golden age’ for monastic women, this time is also considered a period of influential queens.¹⁰⁵ This idea stems from the greater presence of queens in Latin texts written by men such as Bede and Eddius Stephanus. The freedom of royal wives to influence events and people created an ideal opportunity to engage in various types of education, which sources imply from representations of a queen’s role.

There are several studies which examined the literary lives of kings’ wives, many of which focus on their political roles and influence.¹⁰⁶ For example, Stacy Klein discusses the literary depictions of women such as Gezabel, the infamous wife of King Ahab from *The Books of Kings* [*Kings* henceforth], and Ælfric’s *Esther* in comparison to contemporary women, namely Queen Ælfthryth.¹⁰⁷ Wragg focuses on queenship in the eighth and ninth centuries. Her research covers the idea of a ‘Christian’ queen and peace-weaving, a concept which suggests that royal wives were mediators to prevent war and disruption.¹⁰⁸ Both comment on

¹⁰³ Wragg, *Early English Queens, 650 – 850*, p. 7.

¹⁰⁴ Pauline Stafford, ed., ‘Queens and Queenship’, *A Companion to The Early Middle Ages: Britain and Ireland c. 500 – c. 1100* (Chichester: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2013), 459 – 476, p. 471.

¹⁰⁵ See Lees and Overing, *Double Agents*, p. 4; Hollis, *Anglo-Saxon Women and the Church: Sharing a Common Fate*, p. 3; Catherine E. Karkov, ‘The Body of St. Æthelthryth: Desire, Conversion and Reform in Anglo-Saxon England’, *The Cross Goes North: Processes of Conversion in Northern Europe, AD 300 – 1300*, ed. Martin Carver (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2005), 397– 413, p. 397.

¹⁰⁶ These are numerous. Some examples of studies include Christine Fell, Cecily Clark, and Elizabeth Williams, *Women in Anglo-Saxon England and the Impact of 1066* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd, 1984); Michael Enright, *Lady with a Mead Cup: Ritual, Prophecy and Lordship in the European Warband from La Tene to the Viking Age* (Four Courts Press, 1996); Kathrin Prietzel, ‘Appetite for Power: The Anglo-Saxon Regina Gratia Dei’, *English Studies*, 93:5 (2012), 549-558; Stafford, ‘Queens and Queenship’, 459 – 476; Kathryn Maude, *Addressing Women in Early Medieval Religious Texts* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2021), pp. 105 - 107; Stacy Klein, *Ruling Women: Queenship and Gender in Anglo-Saxon Literature* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007).

¹⁰⁷ Klein, *Ruling Women*, pp. 125 – 154.

¹⁰⁸ Wragg, *Early English Queens*, pp. 64 – 107, 165 – 207. Klein also commented on the peace-keeping role of queens in *Ruling Women*, p. 5.

the use of royal women in Old English texts to provide audiences with positive and negative depictions of queenly behaviour. These studies aim to provide an analysis of queenship and its associated duties, which includes discussions of their representation in Old English texts.

Queens performed several roles which could vary, as the above suggests. In the Old English source material, the most immediate role of the queen is as mother. This role appears frequently in texts across the early medieval period such as *OEHE*, Ælfric's hagiographies, and the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. Dockray-Miller's research on motherhood provides a detailed examination of the role of royal mothers, mostly in the later ninth and tenth centuries, as does Wragg's more recent research.¹⁰⁹ Dockray-Miller discusses queens as teachers to children in their households since teaching is a part of their 'maternal performance'.¹¹⁰ This involves the protection, nurture, and education of their children. She also notes that mothers had a strong relationship with secular teaching, and she uses the word 'teach' in her research rather than 'train' to describe the guidance given to children and husbands.¹¹¹ She admits that 'train' does not fit their maternal performance of a mother, but 'teach' reflects the 'intellectual feat of raising a child' in which they make children aware of customs, behaviour, morals, and more.¹¹² The nurturance provided by mothers, secular and monastic, was another form of teaching which utilised different skills than the ones taught in the cloister.¹¹³ This role required particular skills and knowledge, yet so far there is little evidence of how they acquired this information.

They were also expected to be mediators, politically and religiously. Queens in this period created alliances between kingdoms and families through marriage and children. They also

¹⁰⁹ Dockray-Miller, *Mothering and Motherhood in Anglo-Saxon England*, pp. 1 – 115; and Wragg, *Early English Queens, 650 - 850*, pp. 112 – 163.

¹¹⁰ Dockray-Miller, *Mothering and Motherhood in Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 5.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹² *Ibid.*

¹¹³ Dockray-Miller, *Mothering and Motherhood in Anglo-Saxon England*, pp. 4, 41.

‘exercised significant influence in matters related to national spirituality’ because of their influence in pre-Christian religious matters as well as the later conversion of their husbands to Christianity.¹¹⁴ Their religious influence is one of the most discussed aspects of queenship at present by researchers such as Máirin MacCarron, Stacy Klein, and Kathryn Maude.¹¹⁵ The role of a political mediator (or advisor) is less studied because of the absence of evidence in the source material. Klein broached this subject in her investigation of counsel in representations of queenship.¹¹⁶ Her work demonstrates that secular counsel was an important aspect of queenship, and she remarks that there is ‘a powerful link in Anglo-Saxon thought between wives and counsel’.¹¹⁷ Wives can advise their husbands and provide counsel in a way that other women cannot because of their close position. However, writers do not always present female counsel in a positive light. For example, the examples of Gezabel in *Kings* suggest that she is a corrupt queen who does not perform her duty to advise the king correctly, but instead misleads him for her own gains.¹¹⁸ Klein’s research suggests that Old English writers showed a tendency to compare queens with Gezabel after the tenth century in a show of malcontent and mistrust aimed at royal wives.¹¹⁹

Post Ninth-Century Developments

There was a shift in attitudes towards queens which began in the ninth century that affected the influence and representations of early English queens and those abroad. Both Wragg and Stafford suggest that sources from the Continent can provide valuable insight into the lives of royal women in English kingdoms because they share ‘important parallels’ of queen’s

¹¹⁴ Klein, *Ruling Women*, p. 11.

¹¹⁵ Máirin MacCarron, ‘Royal Marriage and Conversion in Bede’s *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum*’, *The Journal of Theological Studies*, 68:2 (2017), 651 – 670; Klein, *Ruling Women: Queenship and Gender in Anglo-Saxon Literature*, pp. 53 – 87; Maude, *Addressing Women in Early Medieval Religious Texts*, pp. 105 – 107.

¹¹⁶ Klein, *Ruling Women*, pp. 125 – 162.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid*, pp. 154 – 155.

¹¹⁸ See also my discussion of Gezabel on pp. 130 - 131, 267 – 270.

¹¹⁹ This is also supported by Andrew Rabin in the article: ‘Female Advocacy and Royal Protection in Tenth Century England: The Legal Career of Queen Ælfthryth’, pp. 263 – 264.

roles.¹²⁰ One of these parallels concerns the changing attitudes toward royal wives and how it affected queens' representations. Early English queens, such as Bertha, the wife of Æthelbert of Kent, share many similarities to Frankish queens and Frankish cultural practices through marriage.¹²¹ They were also 'peacemakers, intercessors, and patrons', and had substantial connections with monastic houses, but their royal role was more extensive. Frankish queenship developed from a series of Roman, Germanic, and Christian traditions that were not as stringent as early English customs.¹²² They could inherit land and act as regents to a far greater extent than early English queens could.

Frankish queens also had a more visible role as counsellors according to the evidence found in letters. An example from a letter by Charlemagne to his wife, Fastruda, shows that she was a 'valued counsellor with an audible public role'.¹²³ There is more information available on Frankish women than their early English counterparts, which might account for the perception that Frankish queens were more heavily involved in political and religious matters. Nelson highlights several sources of writing and imagery from this period which depict women engaging in a variety of activities from reading and writing to hunting and ruling.¹²⁴ She argues that the inclusion of women in these manuscripts and on artefacts was evidence of the engagement of women with these sources.¹²⁵ There are also several letters written by Carolinian royal women, such as Charlemagne's two daughters who wrote to Alcuin of York (their tutor), which demonstrate their high level of education and interest in

¹²⁰ Wragg, *Early English Queens*, pp. 33 – 35, and Stafford, ed., 'Queens and Queenship', p. 472 [quoted].

¹²¹ Wragg, *Early English Queens*, p. 31.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Janet L. Nelson, 'Women and the Word in the Earlier Middle Ages', *Frankish World, 750-900* (London: The Hambledon Press, 1996), 119 – 222, pp. 209 – 210.

¹²⁴ Janet L. Nelson, 'Women at the Court of Charlemagne: A Case of Monstrous Regiment?', *Medieval Queenship*, ed. J. Parsons (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 43 – 62. Others also suggest that Carolingian women were highly educated and uses texts as models. See Rosalind McKitterick, *The Carolingians and the Written Word* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp.225 - 227; R. McKitterick, 'Nuns' scriptoria in Francia and England in the early Middle Ages', *Francia* 19 (1992), 1 – 35; Neel, *Handbook for William: A Carolingian Woman's Counsel for her Son*, pp. xvi - xxv.

¹²⁵ Nelson, 'Women at the Court of Charlemagne: A Case of Monstrous Regiment?', pp. 45 – 46.

literature.¹²⁶ Writings by these women and others, such as Dhouda who I mentioned in my introduction, provide greater perspective of the lives of elite women in Francia than sources reveal about women in the early English kingdoms.

Despite some differences which suggest that Frankish women had more influence, both groups of women experienced substantial changes in the tenth century caused by the ecclesiastical reforms.¹²⁷ Valerie Garver notes that the shift in perspective of women's roles and morality impacted queens:

Ninth century emphasis on female exemplarity explains how and why some men perceived that elite women could undermine the reputation of their husbands and stability of their households.¹²⁸

The Carolingian reform affected elite women's lives in the early medieval period by reshaping ideas about women as 'exemplary model and informal teachers', which impacts queens as tutors to royal children, peace-weavers, and royal advisors.¹²⁹ Changing public opinion of wives reduced the status of queens on both sides of the Channel and caused a hesitation by kings to consecrate their wives, therefore making a public act which diminishes royal women's power.¹³⁰ The power and influence exercised by these women varied between kingdoms and women, but this did not change the impact that reforms had on a queen's authority.¹³¹

¹²⁶ Valerie Garver, *Women and Aristocratic Culture in the Carolingian World* (London: Cornell University Press, 2011), p. 7. For examples of letters see Ernst Dümmler, ed., *Epistolae*, Monumenta Germaniae Historica, 8 vols (Berlin: 1895), 4, no. 342, 25 – 7.

¹²⁷ Stafford, ed., 'Queens and Queenship', p. 472.

¹²⁸ Valerie Garver, *Women and Aristocratic Culture in the Carolingian World* (London: Cornell University Press, 2011), p.163.

¹²⁹ Ibid, p. 9.

¹³⁰ Stafford, ed., 'Queens and Queenship', p. 472.

¹³¹ Klein, *Ruling Women*, p. 13.

The most noticeable evidence of this change appears in the literary representations of royal women from the late ninth century onwards. For example, several royal women are compared to Ælfric's representation of Gezebel as a misleading and cruel queen in *Kings* in later texts, such as Æthelgifu in *Vita Dunstani*, which demonstrates that depictions of royal wives changed dramatically.¹³² Old English and Latin sources display a distinctive approach to queens after this time since queens are either described in a negative way or not at all.¹³³ Wessex queens, for instance, are infamously absent from early English sources written in the tenth and eleventh centuries.¹³⁴ There is no extensive mention of Alfred's wife or any other queen of Wessex who did not become an abbess, thus, these royal women do not receive the same literary attention as their predecessors. Factors, such as changes to the impact of the laity on monasticism, marriage, and attitudes towards female rulers may have affected writers' representations of royal wives. Representations of meddling queens could be a reference to the discomfort felt by men in monastic positions about the influence of royal women on monastic life which was a contributing factor that led to the Benedictine Reform, as I discussed earlier.¹³⁵ It is important to consider the bias of writers, scribes, and commissioners and how their attitudes influenced royal women's literary descriptions. The change of perception of queens and their roles also undoubtedly affected their representation

¹³² Matthew Firth, 'Deconstructing the Female Antagonist of the Coronation Scandal in B's *Vita Dunstani*', *English Studies*, 103:4 (2022), 527 – 546, pp. 533 – 542.

¹³³ Tom Shippey, 'Wicked Queens and Cousin Strategies in *Beowulf* and Elsewhere', *The Heroic Age*, 5 (2001), available at: <http://www.heroicage.org/issues/5/Shippey1.html>, [Accessed 06/01/2023]; Erin Sebo and Cassandra Schilling, 'Modthryth and the Problem of Peace-Weavers: Women and Political Power in Early Medieval England', *English Studies*, 102:6 (2021), 637-650, pp. 640 – 642;

¹³⁴ Pauline Stafford, 'The King's Wife in Wessex 800-1066', *Past & Present* 91:1 (1981), 3 – 27, pp. 6-7.

¹³⁵ This is mentioned in several studies, and not all agree that the reform was a response to the meddling of the laity. Catherine Cubitt suggests that there were other, major factors which led to this: Catherine Cubitt, 'Review article: The tenth-century Benedictine Reform in England', *Early Medieval Europe*, 6:1 (1997), 77 – 94, p. 86. Also see Stafford, 'The King's Wife in Wessex 800-1066', pp. 23 – 25; and Pauline Stafford, 'Queens, Nunneries, and Reforming Churchmen: Gender, Religious Status and Reform in Tenth- and Eleventh Century England', *Past & Present*, 163:1 (1999), 3–35.

as students and teachers in later sources. Thus, it is essential to consider whether there are any vocabulary changes in texts that were written after these developments.

The various duties acted out by royal wives and queens included different forms of education and instruction, from giving counsel and rearing children in the royal household to giving commands. The extent to which they performed the same roles as queenship developed in the tenth century is unclear because of the paucity of references to royal women in the source material. There is also an absence of information about how royal women were taught and what they studied to prepare them for their different roles as mothers, wives, and queens.

Below, I discuss the evidence of royal women's education to better understand their upbringing.

Educating Royalty

There are brief glimpses of the early education of royal daughters in English and Frankish sources, although the evidence is far from certain since there are not direct or detailed accounts which discuss taught subjects or teachers. However, the evidence of the poetic and scriptural knowledge of women such as the nuns of Barking, female missionaries, and the wisdom of Hild suggest that their education was similar to that of men. We have a considerable number of sources which reveal aspects of men's training, such as *ÆGram*, Bede's treatise on metrics, and Aldhelm's works on Latin prosody.¹³⁶ There is no reason to doubt that these subjects would also be available to women in monasteries which had access to similar materials and teachers.

There are a few sources which contain pieces of information which help modern readers to locate evidence of royal education. One of the most famous texts is the *De rebus gestis Ælfredi*, also known as the *Life of King Alfred*, written by a Welsh bishop named Asser in

¹³⁶ Hollis, 'Anglo-Saxon Secular Learning and the Vernacular: An Overview', 1 – 43.

approximately 893 AD.¹³⁷ Alfred is one of the only early English kings with a biography. Asser was a member of Alfred's royal court between 883 and 908, and his position suggests that he knew the king well enough to write about the king's life and family since he was one of Alfred's tutors.¹³⁸ There are several issues about the reliability and authenticity of this text for a number of reasons, including the fact that it was transcribed by many hands over the years and there is no existing contemporary version.¹³⁹ The earliest known copy of Asser's text is a sixteenth-century manuscript known as Cotton MS Otho A XII/1, which was destroyed in a fire in the eighteenth century.¹⁴⁰ However, evidence of the text's use as a source for other tenth-century manuscripts, such as Ælfric's *Life of St Edmund*, as well as the mention of Asser's name in *CP*, suggests that it was written in Alfred's lifetime.¹⁴¹ It is generally thought to be a trustworthy account of many aspects of Alfred's life.¹⁴²

This source is important for my discussion because it offers descriptions of two types of education: one which had a monastic focus and another related to secular life. Asser mentions the education of two of Alfred's children, Edward and Ælfthryth, at court (*curto regio*) together along with the children of other noble families on subjects relevant to their status.¹⁴³ He describes that they were brought up by 'nutritorum et nutricum' (nurses and tutor) to 'ad omnes indigenas et alienigenas humilitate affabilitate et etiam lenitate' (to show humility,

¹³⁷ William Henry Stevenson, *Asser's The Life of King Alfred together with the Annals of St Neots erroneously ascribed to Asser* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1904), pp. 1 – 96.

¹³⁸ Malcolm Godden, 'Did King Alfred Write Anything?', *Medium Ævum*, 76:1 (2007), 1-23, p. 3.

¹³⁹ This subject has been heavily debated. See, Daniel Anlezark, *Alfred the Great* (Kalamazoo: Arc Humanities Press, 2017), pp. 5 – 6, 10; Stevenson, *Asser's The Life of King Alfred together with the Annals of St Neots erroneously ascribed to Asser*, pp. xi – xxxii; David Townsend, 'Cultural difference and the meaning of Latinity in Asser's Life of King Alfred', *Cultural Diversity in the British Middle Ages: Archipelago, Island, England*, ed. J. Cohen (New York: Palgrave Macmillan US, 2008), 57 – 74, pp. 58 – 59; Godden, 'Did King Alfred Write Anything?', pp. 12 – 14.

¹⁴⁰ For more information about this manuscript, see *Asser's Life of King Alfred*, British Library, Collection Items (2022), available at < <https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/assers-life-of-king-alfred> >.

¹⁴¹ Stevenson, *Asser's The Life of King Alfred together with the Annals of St Neots erroneously ascribed to Asser*, p. lxxv; and Anlezark, *Alfred the Great*, p. 11.

¹⁴² Anlezark, *Alfred the Great*, p. 5. More details about his manuscript are available in Stevenson, *Asser's The Life of King Alfred together with the Annals of St Neots erroneously ascribed to Asser*, pp. xlix – lv.

¹⁴³ Stevenson, *Asser's The Life of King Alfred together with the Annals of St Neots erroneously ascribed to Asser*, p. lxxv; and Anlezark, *Alfred the Great*, pp. 58 – 59.

affability, and gentleness towards all, natives and foreigners). Neither of them went on to fulfil monastic roles, unlike their siblings, Æthelweard and Æthelgifu. However, both received *liberal disciplina* (liberal education), which Asser describes as *nobilibus convenient* (fitting for nobility). This included vernacular literature: ‘psalmos et Saxonicos libros et maxime Saxonica carmina studiose didicere’ (they carefully learned psalms and Saxon books and especially Saxon poetry). He suggests that both of Alfred’s children were well versed in Old English literature, yet there is no information about their teachers other than ‘nutritorum et nutricum’. This representation of a royal daughter’s education reflects a similar curriculum to royal women in Frankia. Evidence suggests that royal women on the Continent were encouraged to learn a range of subjects and skills, more so than the extant Old English evidence reveals. A Northumbrian deacon named Alcuin of York entered the court of Charlemagne in 782 AD and acted as a tutor to his daughters who excelled in all manner of subjects. Charlemagne believed that ‘his daughters and sons should be educated, first in the liberal arts, which he himself had studied’.¹⁴⁴ He also specified that his daughters were trained in needlework, namely ‘knitting, spinning, weaving, and embroidery’.¹⁴⁵ This information suggests that kings’ daughters in the ninth century had access to education, but it was tailored to their role.

Asser explains that Æthelweard’s monastic schooling also involved *literariae disciplina* (literary education), in which he learnt Latin and Old English under the care of *diligenit magistorum* (diligent teachers). Anlezark comments that Asser describes two separate types of education given by teachers (*magistorum*) and caretakers (*nutritorum*).¹⁴⁶ However, the use of a separate noun to describe Edward’s and Ælfthryth’s tutors suggests that they

¹⁴⁴ Rosalind McKitterick, ‘The Carolingian renaissance of culture and learning’, *Charlemagne: Empire and Society*, ed. Joanna Story (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), 151 – 166, p. 158.

¹⁴⁵ John J. Butt, *Daily Life in the Age of Charlemagne* (London: Greenwood Press, 2002), p. 135.

¹⁴⁶ Anlezark, *Alfred the Great*, p. 74.

received forms of learning. The noun *nutritor* used above denotes someone who rears children, but it does usually occur in the context of education in the same way as teaching in other contexts, such as school environments. This new vocabulary suggests that royal children such as Ælfthryth did not receive the same level of education taught in monastic schools.

The extent to which this presents an accurate representation of childhood education in early medieval England is debatable, particularly in the case of a princess. There are no other references to support the shared courtly education of Alfred's children or those of any other king. Asser's example of a *schola*, a school at court for the education of royal and noble children, with extensive reading and other arts may only apply specifically to Alfred's period of educational reform. Moreover, this information may well have changed over the centuries of transcription to the point that we cannot say for certain whether these were Asser's words or a rough interpretation. However, this text highlights a crucial aspect of education for royal women which concerns the areas of society that they were encouraged to learn.

Ælfthryth's education focuses on vernacular texts which might have included Old English poetry. Poems often contain more scenes of secular life than monastic, such as *Beowulf* (*Beo*), *Deor*, and *The Wanderer*. Even the *OEHE* contains several scenes of secular life as well as representations of women in various roles. The vernacular focus of her education suggests that she was exposed to portrayals of secular life which would help her to understand her role as a wife. Sarah Foot observes that Edward's and Ælfthryth's education 'represented an education fit for a future king (or in Ælfthryth's case, a princess destined for a prestigious marriage)'.¹⁴⁷ She also noted that the setting of the court for their tuition enabled

¹⁴⁷ Sarah Foot, *Æthelstan: The First King of England* (London; Yale University Press, 2011), p. 35 – 36.

their father to monitor their learning under his watchful eye. It suggests that he supervised their education unlike that of his younger son, Æthelweard.

The subjects that women such as Æthelthryth learnt from vernacular poetry and prose included many representations of queens and wives from sources such as *OEHE* and *Or* because of their association with her father's programme of learning. These might have functioned as a part of her preparation for her future role, but what sort of role was she meant to enter? Representations of royalty in Old English texts vary between contemporary women, women from early English kingdoms before the ninth century, and royalty from the Continent and eastern kingdoms. In these texts, royal women act according to the period and culture in which they live, such as in third-century Rome or seventh-century East Anglia, which results in several different representations of queens' duties. However, they share several similarities related to their involvement in counsel and giving commands as well as secular and religious learning as students. Therefore, it is important to consider how Old English writers represent royalty and their roles to better understand their relationship with teaching, learning, and commands.

Issues Concerning Evidence of Laywomen's Education

There are some pieces of research which raise important questions about laywomen's education that need to be considered before an examination of the sources. One issue concerns the relationship between education and literature in this period. This is a key factor to explain the scarcity of evidence of women as teachers, learners, scribes, and readers. Diane Watt researched women and their involvement in literary culture in depth.¹⁴⁸ There is a

¹⁴⁸ See Diane Watt, 'Literature in pieces: female sanctity and the relics of early women's writing (500-1150)', *The New Cambridge History of Early Medieval English Literature*, ed. Clare Lees (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 357 – 380; 'Lost Books: Abbess Hildelith and the Literary Culture of Barking Abbey', *Philological Quarterly*, 91:1 (2012), 1-22; *Women, Writing and Religion in England and beyond, 650 – 1100* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020).

limited number of examples of women's writing, in the vernacular and Latin, which forces modern readers to rely on the accounts of male or anonymous writers to understand women's roles and lives.¹⁴⁹ The large presence of male authors and perspectives affects how writers describe women and modern readers view the sources. Watt notes that the 'complex relationship between male authors and their female subjects' often leads to the 'overwriting' of women either through omission or carefully controlled representations.¹⁵⁰ For example, Bede's decision to include many educated abbesses and nuns in *HE* but few laywomen (as does his Old English translator) suggests that he had certain views about women and education. The nature of most Old English sources as a product of monastic training and lifestyle focuses the majority of research on a single group of women: nuns, abbesses, and other female religious. This suggests that this group of women are more likely to appear in and interact with the literature of the time.

This is not to say that laywomen could not access texts, but that it was more difficult for them to gain a literary education and materials.¹⁵¹ Watt claims that 'women's more limited access to formal education' outside of the monastery and royal courts led to their 'reliance on readers, secretaries, and scribes'.¹⁵² Others suggest they did not have the same training, such as Linda Tollerton, who argues that it is unclear whether laywomen (and laymen) were 'sufficiently literate enough' to read texts independently.¹⁵³ However, education for this

¹⁴⁹ In my study, I refer to Old English and Latin writers and translators as men. There is a large body of research which discusses the possibility of women as scribes, writers, and translators in the early medieval period, but this is not the focus of my examination in this thesis. For further reading see Watt, 'Lost Books: Abbess Hildelith and the Literary Culture of Barking Abbey', *Philological Quarterly*, 91:1 (2012), 1-22; Watt, *Women, Writing and Religion in England and beyond, 650 – 1100*; Lees and Overing, 'Women and the Origins of English Literature', 31 – 40; and Jane Stevenson, *Women Latin Poets: Language, Gender, and Authority from Antiquity to the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 1 – 107.

¹⁵⁰ Watt, *Women, Writing and Religion in England and beyond, 650 – 1100*, p. 4.

¹⁵¹ Brown, 'Female Book-Ownership and Production in Anglo-Saxon England: The Evidence of Ninth-Century Prayerbooks', pp. 46 - 47.

¹⁵² Watt, 'Literature in pieces: female sanctity and the relics of early women's writing (500-1150)', p. 359.

¹⁵³ Linda Tollerton, *Wills and Will-Making in Anglo-Saxon England* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer Ltd, 2012), p. 276.

group of women did not necessarily focus on texts and writing. As I suggested earlier, ‘education’ concerned more than ‘formal’ teaching given in a monastic setting for women, especially laywomen who were mothers, wives, and daughters who had different roles to female religious. There is an absence of written evidence of other, less-formal teachings given to royal women, such as sewing, singing, and politics. However, Helen Conrad O’Brian commented that ‘the evidence for laywomen’s literary education is greater than that of men’ in the early medieval period in Europe because men ‘depended upon their women for primary education and the encouragement of learning’.¹⁵⁴ Although most of O’Brian’s evidence concerns women from Europe, she does not dismiss the possibility that women in early English kingdoms had a similar role. She suggests that ‘encouragement’ given by wives or mothers could also be a form of teaching. Nelson also argued that laywomen provided a ‘basic teaching role’ within their households, which included the provision of counsel, and her view was later supported by the work of Rosalind McKitterick.¹⁵⁵

So far, most research on women’s teaching and learning focuses on monastic women who receive religious education. However, there are multiple types of education which different groups of women, lay and monastic, received in various forms. This also concerns the different subjects taught to laywomen and nuns. If there is more than one way to be ‘taught’ in the early medieval period, then how can we categorise a woman as ‘educated’? Jane Stevenson argues that we need a definition of woman as ‘learned’ in order to understand what it meant to be educated, which she suggests has been much underestimated in the past.¹⁵⁶ She is not the first to raise this issue. Christine Fell in the 1980s pointed out an extract from a

¹⁵⁴ Helen Conrad O’Brian, ‘Were Women Able to Read in the Middle Ages?’, *Misconceptions about the Middle Ages*, eds. Stephen Harris, and Bryon L. Grigsby (Abingdon: Routledge Ltd., 2007), 236 – 239.

¹⁵⁵ Nelson, ‘Women and the Word in the Earlier Middle Ages’, pp. 213 - 214, and Rosalind McKitterick, *The Carolingians and the Written Word* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 211- 227.

¹⁵⁶ Stevenson, *Women Latin Poets: Language, Gender, and Authority from Antiquity to the Eighteenth Century*, pp. 2 – 3.

Latin love letter in an eleventh-century manuscript which describes a female singer as *docta puella* (educated girl).¹⁵⁷ Fell notes that this copy of a foreign manuscript resembles a textbook because of its content. While she focuses on the importance of the audiences' acceptance of the girl's role as a singer, it is also evident that her description as 'educated' was also accepted. Did early medieval writers consider monastic and laywomen to be educated in the same way?

Women's roles as described in early medieval sources need to be reconsidered through alternative approaches. The new wave of interest in the intellectual lives of women has begun to shed much-needed light on this period over the past decade, and it has highlighted the different educational environments and opportunities of monastic and laywomen. However, there has not yet been any research which addresses the use of vocabulary, especially a semantic approach. Examples such as the one mentioned by Fell suggest that vocabulary is an important factor which provides modern audiences with a better perspective on the source material. A lexical study can provide further evidence to support the understanding of women in the early medieval period through an examination of writers' word choice in episodes of education and instruction. Other researchers successfully used a similar approach in the past to discuss concepts with little or complicated literary evidence, as I discuss below. My next section outlines how I intend to investigate women's education using Old English semantics.

0.3 Methodology

One approach used by scholars of Old English literature to investigate words and themes in the extant texts is through lexical and corpus-based analyses. This is a popular method of research which several researchers have employed to explore a variety of texts and themes, such as words for anger, fear, and colour, as well as other areas of study such as Old English

¹⁵⁷ Fell et al, *Women in Anglo-Saxon England and the impact of 1066*, p. 55.

semantics and pragmatics.¹⁵⁸ These concepts refer to the different meanings of words, or ‘senses’ and their ‘sense relationships’, and word use in context and time.¹⁵⁹ The recent popularity in this approach stems from the digitalisation of dictionaries, thesauruses, and datasets and databases which were only available in paper form until recently. Victor Strite’s *Old English Semantic Field Studies* used the strategy of linguistic analysis in the late 1980s and argued that this method ‘greatly enriched our understanding of the distinctiveness’ of early medieval culture.¹⁶⁰ He used microfiche sources, concordances and the first version of *Dictionary of Old English* (DOE) to compile samples of medium-frequency words from various texts.¹⁶¹ Other research, such as work completed by Michiko Ogura and Bertil Weman, used a similar approach to discuss areas such as thinking, movement, and taste.¹⁶² A lot has changed since then. The online publication of databases such as the DOE made research of Old English words and word forms more accessible.¹⁶³ Roberta Frank used the DOE to investigate words associated with ‘sex’ and their occurrences in the corpus of Old English literature.¹⁶⁴ She highlighted the use of such digital resources to locate examples of words in many texts to scrutinise their use in specific contexts to obtain a wider

¹⁵⁸ For example, see Daria Izdebska, ‘The semantic field of ANGER in Old English’ (unpublished doctoral-thesis submitted: University of Glasgow, 2015), available at: <https://eleanor.lib.gla.ac.uk/record=b3108653> [Accessed 10/01/2023]; Małgorzata Fabiszak, ‘A semantic analysis of FEAR, GRIEF and ANGER words in Old English’, *A Changing World of Words*, Studies in English Historical Lexicography, Lexicology and Semantics (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 255 – 274; C.P. Biggam, *Blue in Old English: An Interdisciplinary Semantic Study* (Amsterdam: Rodopi B.V., 1997).

¹⁵⁹ Christian Kay and Kathryn Allan, *English Historical Semantics* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015), pp. 28 – 29.

¹⁶⁰ Victor Strite, *Old English Semantic Field Studies* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing Ltd., 1989), p. 1.

¹⁶¹ For Strite’s sources and methodology, see Strite, *Old English Semantic Field Studies*, pp. 11 – 14.

¹⁶² Other examples of studies which investigate areas such as verbs of senses, movement, knowledge, and taste, include M. Ogura, ‘Old English Verbs of Tasting with Accusative/Genitive/Of-Phrase’, *Neophilologus*, 93 (2008), 517 – 522; M. Ogura, ‘Old English Verbs of Thinking’, *Neophilologische Mitteilungen*, 87:3 (1986), 325 – 341; and B. Weman, *Old English Semantic Analysis and Theory: with Special Reference to Verbs Denoting Locomotion* (Lund, A.-B. p. Linstedts univ.-bokhandel, 1933).

¹⁶³ *Dictionary of Old English online*, ed. Angus Cameron, Ashley Crandell Amos, Antonette diPaolo Healey et al (Toronto: Dictionary of Old English Project, 2018), <<https://tapor-library-utoronto-ca.nottingham.idm.oclc.org/doe/>> [Accessed 01/10/2022]. The DOE contains a comprehensive collection of Old English texts from 650 to 1200 AD.

¹⁶⁴ Roberta Frank, ‘Sex in the Dictionary of Old English’, *Unlocking the Wordhord: Anglo-Saxon Studies in Memory of Edward B. Irving, Jr.*, ed. Mark C. Amodio and Katherine O’Brien O’Keeffe (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), 302 – 312.

understanding of word use for a particular idea. Others such as Janet Bately used another digital resource, the *Thesaurus of Old English* (TOE from here on), to search for synonymous words by categories such as ‘bravery’.¹⁶⁵ Searches on this platform can also subcategories with more precise meanings located in a theme, such as ‘courage’ or ‘might’. Bately noted that this method contained inaccuracies since certain words contain multiple meanings which are not easily distinguishable in specific contexts, as others such as Robert S. Rudolph commented on previously.¹⁶⁶ Old English is inherently more polysemous than Modern English because it has a smaller vocabulary than Modern English.¹⁶⁷ Aleksandrs Berdicevskis showed that the older a word is, the more likely it is to have a wider semantic range as language develops and merges with others over time.¹⁶⁸ However, linguistic borrowing and contact does not always affect the semantic ranges of words, which is why it is important to consider the reasons for semantic development over time. Lexical and corpus-based analyses enable researchers to identify and discuss word meaning, relationships between words, and how they develop over time.

The polysemous use of Old English words is a notable issue even in the case of words which are direct translations of Latin texts because certain Latin words also vary depending on context and genre. For this reason, it is imperative to consult individual examples within texts as case studies across a wide variety of genres and writings. Newer research such as Daria Izdebska’s study of the use of ‘torn’ highlights the usefulness of linguistic analysis of corpora

¹⁶⁵ Janet Bately, ‘Bravery and the Vocabulary of Bravery in Beowulf and the Battle of Maldon’, *Unlocking the Wordhord: Anglo-Saxon Studies in Memory of Edward B. Irving, Jr.*, ed. Mark C. Amodio and Katherine O’Brien O’Keeffe (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), 274 – 301. For details about the *Thesaurus of Old English* see Jane Roberts, and Christian Kay with Lynne Grundy, *A Thesaurus of Old English*, University of Glasgow (2017), <http://oldenglishtesaurus.arts.gla.ac.uk/> [Accessed 27/09/2022].

¹⁶⁶ Bately, ‘Bravery and the Vocabulary of Bravery in Beowulf and the Battle of Maldon’, pp. 274 – 275.

¹⁶⁷ R.D. Fulk, ed. and trs., *The Old English Pastoral Care*, DOML (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2021), p. xiii.

¹⁶⁸ Aleksandrs Berdicevskis, ‘Older English words are more polysemous’, *The Evolution of Language: Proceedings of the 13th International Conference on the Evolution of Language (EvoLang13)*, ed. Andrea Ravignani et al, (2020), 14 – 21, available at: <https://brussels.evolang.org/proceedings/paper.html?nr=115> [Accessed 10/02/2023].

with new technologies, including new programmes used to compile and organise large collections of words and phrases from numerous texts.¹⁶⁹ Izdebska's research indicates that an analysis of verbs provides insight into early medieval writers' dialects and different uses of terms depending on genre, location, and time.

Recently, Miguel Lacalle Palacios explored verbs related to learning in Old English texts using a similar method. Palacios notes that semantic research has not received the same amount of attention as other areas, such as syntax, because it is an isolated area.¹⁷⁰ However, research which combines the two enables researchers to consider the 'verbal lexicon of Old English' to have a better understanding of the consistency of word use in different contexts.¹⁷¹ His research uses the DOE and TOE to investigate the use of seven words with different connotations of learning [(ge)cneordlæcan, gefragian, (ge)fricgan, (ge)frignan, (ge)leornian, ofacsian, and onfindan], which produced 715 attestations.¹⁷² He examines whether these words belong to the same 'class', or field of learning, through an exploration of their semantic and syntactical behaviour. Palacios concludes that these verbs of learning show a particular behaviour and use in Old English texts.¹⁷³ His research demonstrates that Old English writers and translators were careful in their choice of verbs of knowledge and information acquisition, and that each word had its own meaning which affected its behaviour and use.

¹⁶⁹ Daria Izdebska, 'The curious case of TORN: the importance of lexical-semantic approaches to the study of emotions in Old English', *Anglo-Saxon Emotions. Series: Studies in Early Medieval Britain and Ireland*, eds. Alice Jorgensen, Francis McCormack, Jonathon Wilcox (Ashgate: Burlington, 2015), 53-74. Other recent studies include the collection of essays on lexicology and lexicography: Maren Clegg Hyer, Haruko Momma, and Samantha Zacher, eds., *Old English Lexicology and Lexicography: Essays in Honour of Antonette dePaolo Healey* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2020). These studies demonstrate the use and importance of collections such as the DOE to research of Old English history, language, and literature.

¹⁷⁰ Miguel Lacalle Palacios, 'Old English verbs of learning: Information and knowledge acquisition', *Selim26* (2021), 25–56, p. 26.

¹⁷¹ Palacios, 'Old English verbs of learning: Information and knowledge acquisition', p. 27.

¹⁷² Ibid, p. 32.

¹⁷³ Ibid, p. 51.

The results of the combined method used by the researchers mentioned above of searching for groups of words with digital resources, followed by close readings of several case studies suggests that this is a fruitful approach for examinations of word use. So far, studies which explore the semantics of Old English verbs have not approached the representations of women. As the above research demonstrates, these remain fixed on the understanding of themes (taste, movement, learning) and their grammatical use. The consistency of words in the corpus of Old English literature reveals not only their meaning but perceptions about a particular subject. Words used to denote education, for example, tell us about the writers' and their audiences' understanding of teaching and learning, and of the people involved in these instances.

A Lexical Analysis of 'Education' and 'Instruction'

My research seeks to use a similar approach to these studies to explore representations of women as teachers and learners in texts from the eighth to the early eleventh century. I use the DOE along with other resources to identify the vocabulary used in the corpus of Old English literature to denote instances of 'instruction' and 'education'.¹⁷⁴ However, the variety of forms and types of education and instruction mentioned in the corpora led to various verbs used to describe teaching and learning. Concepts of 'education' and 'instruction', 'teachers' and 'students', and even 'man' and 'woman' have a broad range of definitions between the eighth and early eleventh centuries. This period saw many changes to social norms, political movements, and religious conversions. The variety of connections to teaching and learning described in Old English texts suggests that 'education' and 'instruction' are two different and complex concepts which are difficult to define. I begin with an explanation of the

¹⁷⁴ I define how I use and separate these two concepts below.

differences between these two concepts and how I will use them in this study to locate words related to these categories and to examine examples of ‘teachers’ and ‘students’.

Defining ‘Instruction’ and ‘Education’

To a modern reader, the words ‘instruction’ and ‘education’ refer to the transmission of information from one person to another, whether it is factual news, a lesson about a specific subject, a command, or a demonstration of a technique. Both words can be used interchangeably because they share several categories of meaning as polysemous words, yet their similarity only extends so far, especially for ‘instruction’. Each also contains separate and distinct semantic categories and subcategories, such as ‘teaching’ and ‘commanding’, which creates complications for readers in some contexts. The polysemous nature of certain Old English verbs, especially the ones used more often than others to signify ‘teaching’, indicates their complexity and the need to closely examine the contexts in which they appear.

Modern translators of Old English and Latin texts frequently use ‘instruction’ interchangeably with ‘education’ to denote teachings given by a teacher in a formal, classroom setting, and commands given by a figure of authority in religious and secular settings. For example, Walter Skeat translates the Old English word *lār*, a noun associated with teaching, as ‘instruction’ in the *Life of St. Maur* in an example of monastic teaching: ‘se wæs to lare befæst sona fram iugoðe þam halgan benedictē’ (who from his early youth was confided to Saint Benedict for instruction).¹⁷⁵ However, he also describes the ‘instruction’ given by an abbot in the context of his governance and commands: ‘under martines lareow-dome’ (under Martin’s instruction).¹⁷⁶ It is evident from the two different nouns used to

¹⁷⁵ Walter Skeat, ‘January 15. St. Maur, Abbot’, *Ælfric’s Lives of Saints*, 4 vols., EETS 76, 82, 94, 114 (London: 1900) [repr. in 2 vols. 1966], 1, pp. 148-149. I use Skeat’s translation in this example to highlight his word choice.

¹⁷⁶ Skeat, ‘St. Martin, Bishop and Confessor’, *Ælfric’s Lives of Saints*, 2, pp. 240 – 241. This is also Skeat’s translation.

describe Benedict's and Martin's 'instructions' that Ælfric refers to two separate concepts. In these examples, *lār* signifies religious teaching in the monastery, while *lareow-dom* (governance) denotes a type of order or governance given by a religious teacher, indicated using *dōm* (judgement, decree, command). Examples from other tenth-century writers suggest a similar distinction between a teacher's ability to 'teach' and 'instruct'.¹⁷⁷ There are many types of education and instruction in the early medieval period, but these two appear as separate concepts in Old English texts which writers distinguish with different vocabulary. Education takes many forms in the source material, but instruction is more specific. In my research, I refer to 'instruction' as a command to be obeyed, given either as an oral or written order. Examples which I describe as education and teaching concern either the action, practice, or profession of teaching as the imparting of knowledge, skill, or information. This includes guidance on a given subject, which I refer to as 'counsel'. Education also concerns information about a subject or fact, such as an account, narrative, report, or direction; spoken, written, or demonstrated visually. I consider these as two distinct areas because this same division occurs in Old English texts. Examples from Old English texts suggest that writers use words such as *læran* to describe education given by a teacher.

Relevant Vocabulary

Based on my definitions above, I selected four verbs which occur the most often in Old English texts in the context of education and instruction.¹⁷⁸ These are *læran*, *tæcan*, *bysnian*, and *leornian*.¹⁷⁹ These lexical items are strongly associated with teaching or learning in

¹⁷⁷ Examples found in the DOE show that the translations of Gregory the Great's *Pastoral Care*, *Dialogues*, and Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum* refer to *lār* and *lareow-dom* as a teacher's religious teachings about specific subjects and commands given to uphold a monastic way of life. See *CP*, chapter 6; *GD*, 1.4; and *OEHE*, iv.3.

¹⁷⁸ I used the TOE to locate examples which signify 'teaching', 'learning', 'counselling', 'instructing', and 'set examples'. Jane Roberts, and Christian Kay with Lynne Grundy, *A Thesaurus of Old English*, University of Glasgow (2017), <http://oldenglishthesaurus.arts.gla.ac.uk/> [Accessed 27/09/2022].

¹⁷⁹ I explore each of my chosen words individually in Chapter 1 to outline their semantic ranges, spelling variants, and attestations.

different ways because of their use in Old English texts to suggest teaching, counsel, advice, demonstration, or commands. Writers use these words in various contexts and genres to denote teaching and instruction provided by men and women on religious and secular subjects. There are other words writers use to denote other types of education and instruction. These include: *geteon* (to teach, incite, educate), *rædan* (to read) *gewissian* (to guide, make known), *intimbrian* (to instruct), *getyhtan* (to train, instruct), *manian* (to admonish, suggest, teach), and *cyðan* (to make known, reveal, tell). However, these have very few attestations in the extant source material and do not appear in examples of women. Despite the paucity of literary evidence of women in the early medieval period, the four words which I examine in this thesis occur more often than others in examples of women in Old English texts. Therefore, I seek to investigate the importance of these four verbs to education in this period, and to consider how their use affects the perception of women as teachers and students.

Considerations for this Study

Despite the success of other studies in using the DOE and similar resources to search words, there are several flaws with this methodology. First, the lemmata chosen for study in my research fall into either the category of instruction or education because writers use these to denote a command or order, a piece of information, or a taught knowledge of a subject. Several of these words are polysemous and fall into one or more of these categories to signify multiple types of education and instruction. For example, the word *cræft* has different meanings in two different texts, which range from ‘art, ability, science’ in the Old English translation of Orosius’ *Historiarum*, to ‘work, product of art’ in the translation of Bede’s *HE*.¹⁸⁰ Many of the texts examined in my research are translations of Latin texts, which are also sometimes translations or copies of older texts, or texts written in Greek. The

¹⁸⁰ Elvira Pérez Iglesias, ‘Polysemy in specialised lexicon from Old English to Present-Day English’, *Revista de Lenguas para Fines Específicos*, 15/16 (2010), 205 – 227, p. 208.

polysemous use of certain verbs such as *tācan* indicates that Old English writers created literal and ‘sense’ translations. I use the term ‘sense’ in my discussion because it refers to ‘the relationships which words have with other words in the language system’, that is, the different meanings attached to specific words.¹⁸¹ However, the semantic ranges of Old English words do not always align with the senses attached to certain Latin words, which leads to different types of translation. Writers mention the difference between the two types of translation in prefaces to their texts, as a work associated with King Alfred demonstrates when the translator describes his approach as ‘hwilcum he sette worde be worde, hwilum andgit of andgite’ (he set them down sometime word for word, sometimes sense to sense).¹⁸² Therefore, it is necessary to consult ‘the scope of the sentence, syntactic frame, and semantics of the argument’ to locate the intended use of the word.¹⁸³ It is also crucial to investigate the vocabulary used in the original Latin texts to examine how the meanings of words affect word choice. I use a series of Latin dictionaries to examine the semantic ranges of the Latin vocabulary which occur in examples of education and instruction.¹⁸⁴ In Old English texts, it is important to consider the episode of education/instruction in the context of its genre, time, people involved, and other vocabulary used. I refer to these contexts as ‘markers’ in my

¹⁸¹ Kay and Allan, *English Historical Semantics*, p. 28.

¹⁸² Susan Irvine and Malcolm R. Godden, eds. and trs., *The Old English Boethius with verse Prologues and Epilogues Associated with King Alfred*, DOML 19 (Cambridge Ma.: Harvard University Press, 2012), Prose 1: Preface, p. 2. The word *andgit* has several meanings: ‘sense’, ‘meaning’, ‘understanding’, ‘faculty of intellect’, and ‘reason’ according to the DOE dictionary. See ‘and-gyt’ in *Dictionary of Old English: A to I online*, ed. Cameron et al, <https://tapor-library-utoronto-ca.nottingham.idm.oclc.org/doi/> [Accessed 10/01/2023].

¹⁸³ Anna Rumishisky and Olga Batiukova, ‘Polysemy in verbs: systematic relations between sense and their effect on annotation’, *Proceedings of the workshop on Human Judgements in Computational Linguistics* (Manchester, 2008), 33 – 41, p. 33.

¹⁸⁴ My study uses the following Latin dictionaries: D.R. Howlett, et al, *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources, Volume III REG - Z* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); D.R. Howlett, et al, *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources, Volume II M - REG* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); and R.E. Latham, D. R. Howlett, et al, *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources, Volume I A – L* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975–1997). I will abbreviate these texts to *DMLBS* from here on.

study. Sometimes, even with a nuanced approach, it is not possible to determine any single meaning for polysemous words.¹⁸⁵

Another issue related to the study of Old English words concerns the spelling variation since there was no standardised spelling until the late tenth century when the Late West Saxon dialect became normalised.¹⁸⁶ Some forms occur only once in the corpora while others occur more frequently, such as *leren* and *bysenian*. This variation results in a lengthy process of systematic searches in the DOE web corpus for individual spellings and inflexions, which might lead to the misplacement of attestations. Although the DOE contains an extensive set of Old English texts, there is a possibility that some texts are also missing from the database. Their absence results in an inaccuracy related to the generalisation of word use across the corpus of Old English literature. The DOE also does not contain the most recent editions of texts, which may result in inaccurate spellings, arguments, or dating in some instances.

To alleviate these difficulties, I use a systematic approach which uses the ‘Word Wheel’ function on the online version of the DOE to note all the possible forms of my chosen words. Once I created a list of these, I searched for each individually on the DOE search and compiled examples which used verbs of instruction and education into datasets. These spreadsheets contain information about the word form, writer, genre, edition the example came from (according to the DOE), and the example and a translation. I also noted who the ‘teacher’ and ‘students’ were in the texts, and whether the example referred to a particular taught subject. I supplement the older resources cited on the DOE with newer editions of texts, such as Mary Clayton and Juliet Mullin’s edition of the *Lives of Saints* by Ælfric of

¹⁸⁵ Sara M. Pons-Sanz, *The Language of Early English Literature: From Cædmon to Milton, Perspectives on the English Language* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

¹⁸⁶ Mechthild Gretsch, ‘A Key to Ælfric’s Standard Old English’, *Leeds Studies in English*, n.s. 37 (2006), 161-77, pp. 161 – 163. Also see Mark Faulkner, ‘Quantifying the Consistency of ‘Standard’ Old English Spelling’, *Trans Philologic Soc*, 118 (2020), 192-205.

Eynsham.¹⁸⁷ I also examined several manuscripts, Latin and Old English, for certain texts which do not have an accessible edition. From here I was able to pinpoint examples related to women as teachers and learners.

0.4 Findings, Evidence, and Outline

My examination of four Old English words compiled almost 3000 examples from over 220 texts. These include men, women, and others who offer or receive teachings and instructions. ‘Others’ includes a group which do not fit into the category of ‘man’ or ‘woman’ in early medieval texts. These include persons with profound spiritual status, such as Christ and God, personification allegories such as Philosophy and Wisdom in *Boethius*, and abstract objects, mainly books, wills, and other documents.¹⁸⁸ I found 123 examples which include representations of women as teachers and students which occur in eighty texts. This is a small sample compared to the overall number of attestations. However, if we consider the same general paucity of women in Old English literature and their restricted representations in the surviving source material, this is a significant number. It is also apparent that writers preferred to use some words over others, as the table below demonstrates.

Table 1: Total number of examples of four Old English verbs in the context of women as students and teachers.

<i>Word</i>	<i>Total Attestations</i>	<i>Examples of Women</i>	<i>%</i>
<i>leornian</i>	593	14	2.361
<i>læran</i>	1635	69	4.22
<i>tæcan</i>	640	31	4.844
<i>bysnian</i>	78	7	8.97

¹⁸⁷ Mary Clayton and Juliet Mullins, ed., *The Old English Lives of Saints*, 3 vols, DOML 58, 59, 60 (Harvard University Press, 2019). I use these editions in my thesis.

¹⁸⁸ ‘Others’ make up a large percentage of examples of teachers, especially for religious subjects. For an example of Wisdom and Philosophy, see Irvine and Godden, *The Old English Boethius with verse Prologues and Epilogues Associated with King Alfred*, Prose 2, pp. 12, 14.

When I calculated the percentages of examples which contain women in instances of education and instruction, I discovered that although these are small in comparison, they show that Old English writers used words such as *tācan* and *læran* more frequently than *leornian*. *Læran* is the most significant verb studied in this thesis because of the large number of attestations which refer to women when compared with the overall total of examples of this word. Examples of *læran* also include many different types of women in secular and religious contexts. This information highlights the need to examine examples of these words to discuss how their use affects the perception of women's teaching and learning, and whether they indicate that women provided and received specific type of education and instruction.

It is also evident that different genres contained different examples of education and instruction, indicated using particular words. This is especially relevant for my discussion of women as teachers and students because writers depict women as teachers in some genres more than others. The results of my study reveal that prose texts contain an exceptionally large number of examples of representations which use *læran* to describe women teaching while legal texts contain only a few examples of women as 'students' (see fig. 1 and 2).

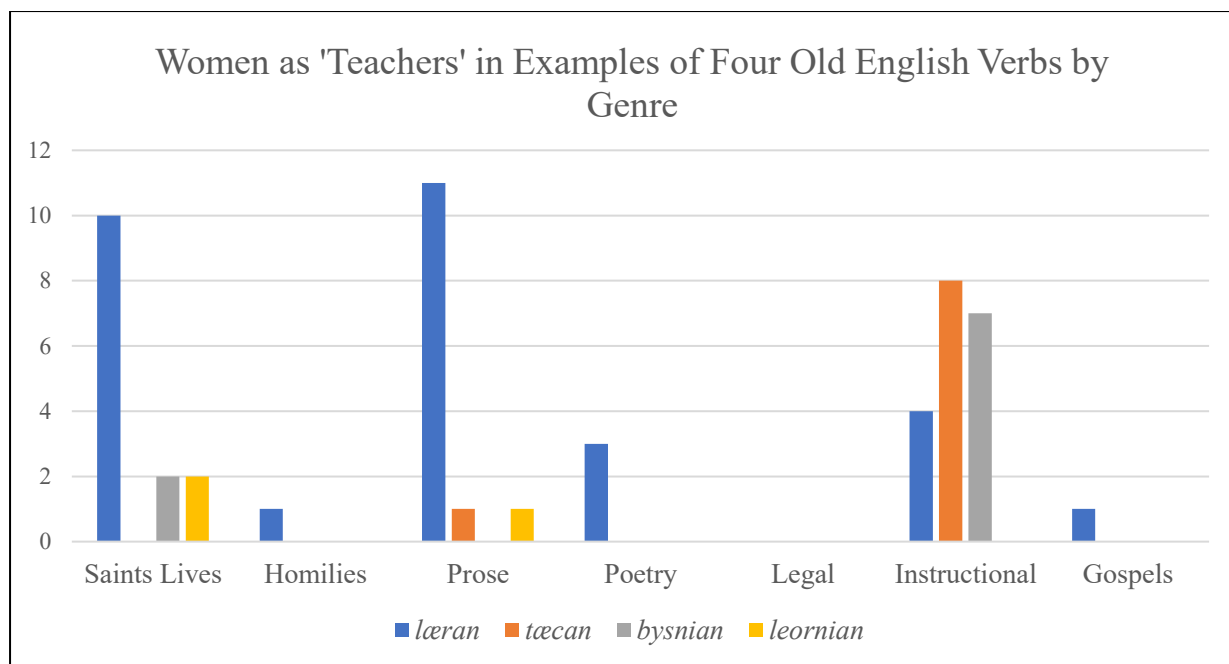


Figure 1: The number of examples of women as teachers which use one of four Old English words in the corpus of Old English literature, separated by genre.¹⁸⁹

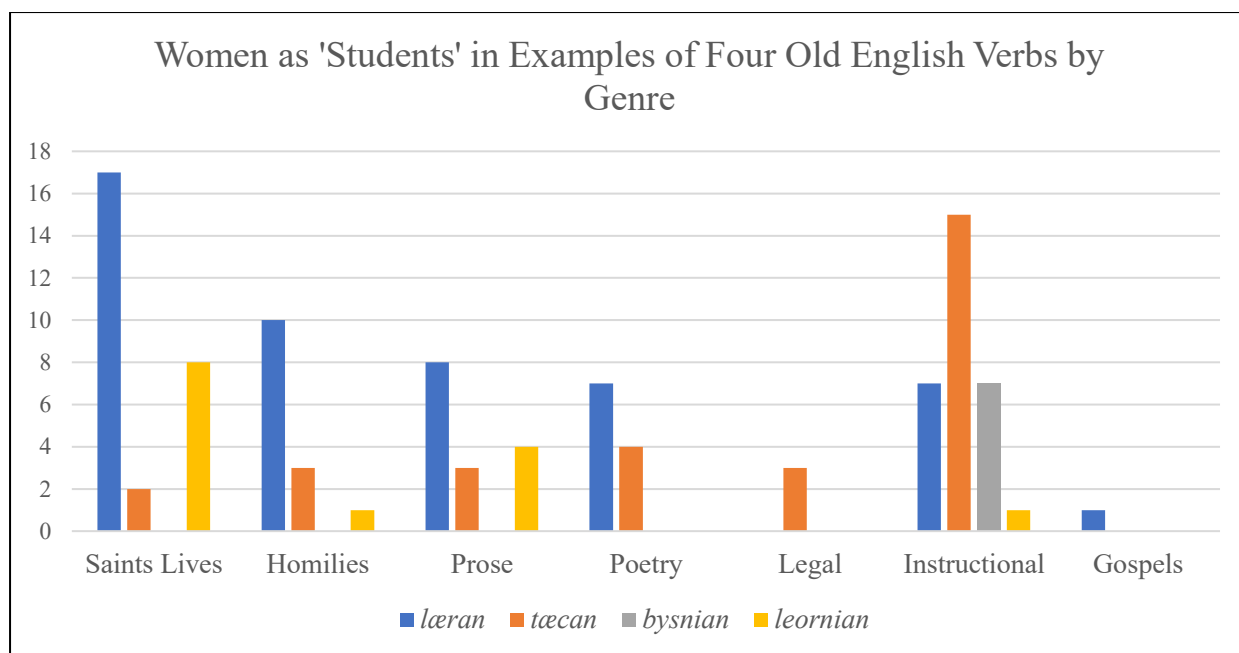


Figure 2: The number of examples of women as students which use one of four Old English words in the corpus of Old English literature, separated by genre.

¹⁸⁹ I list the texts used in my research by my method of categorisation in the Appendix under *List of Old English Texts: 'Genres' and 'Forms'*, pp. 285 – 288.

Groups of Women

These texts contain examples of different types of women whom writers depict as teachers of students. They form different groups of women who perform different roles in society and have unique spheres of influences. These groups include monastic women who reside in religious communities, laywomen, royal women (which covers women with familial connections to royalty), female saints, and references to feminised personification allegories (such as Philosophy). As figures 1 and 2 demonstrate, saints have a large presence in episodes of teaching and learning in Old English texts for several reasons. There is a large collection of hagiography in the surviving source material, which includes a considerable number of examples of women. Also, saint lives often coincide with religious instruction and conversion and encompasses candidates for sainthood learning and teaching. However, I do not discuss female saints in this thesis because they have a relationship with teaching and learning which differs from other groups of women.¹⁹⁰ One of the key reasons for the need approach saints separately is their unique spiritual status which cannot be compared to any other role. However, I will refer to several examples of saints as students because these examples provide important evidence of the use of some of the words discussed in this thesis.

Royal and Monastic Women

To create a suitable comparison of the ranges of vocabulary used to define education, I focus specifically on examples of monastic and royal women because of the number of examples which include queens, abbesses, princesses, nuns, and women in other related roles. These two groups present an opportunity to compare the different relationships between women, teaching, and learning in secular and religious contexts, which are implied in Old English

¹⁹⁰ I discuss female saints and scope for future research in my Conclusion.

texts. The graph below illustrates that writers also use separate ranges of vocabulary to describe their education and instruction.

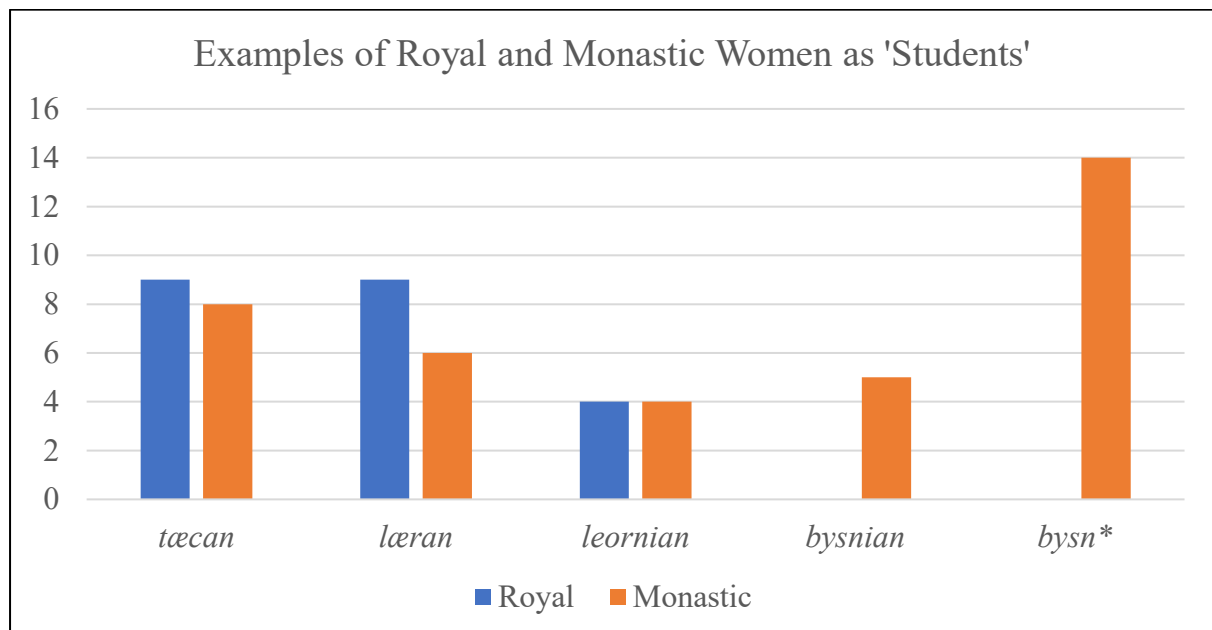


Figure 3: The number of examples of royal and monastic women as students in a study of four Old English verbs and 'bysn'.

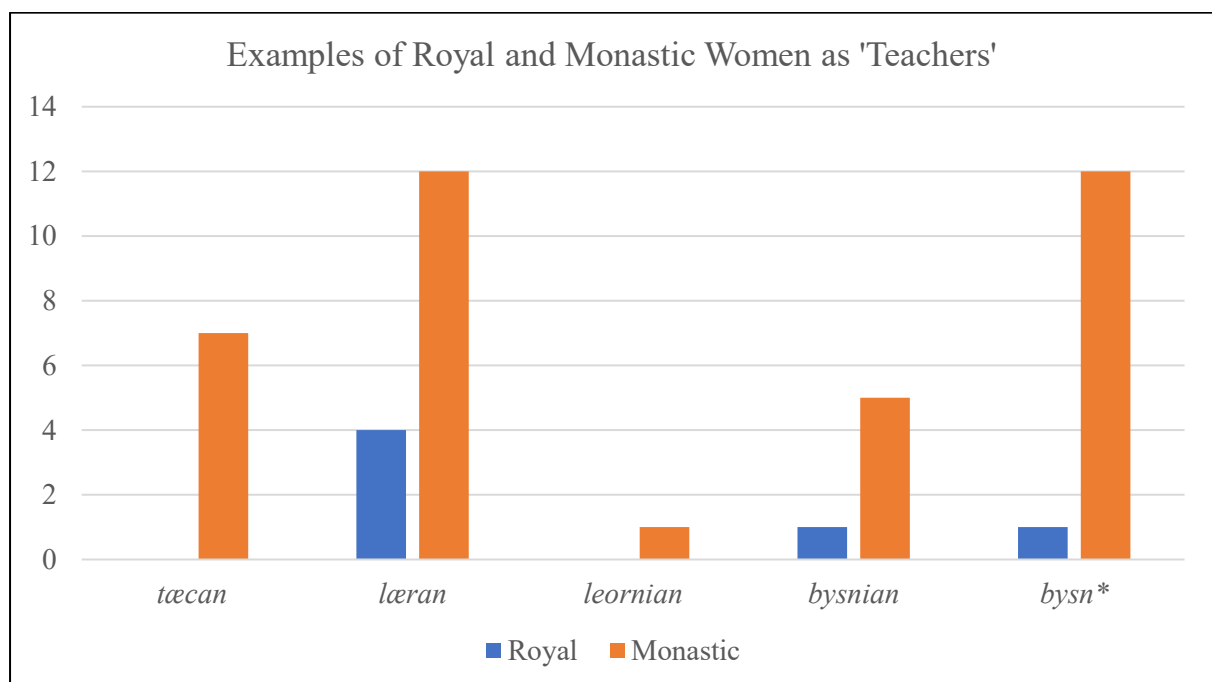


Figure 4: The number of examples of royal and monastic women as teachers in Old English texts, defined by the four words studied and 'bysn'.

These results indicate that writers used different ranges of vocabulary to describe royal and monastic women in education and instruction, which suggests that they considered the two groups of women to engage with education in different ways. As stated before, there is some crossover: queens could become abbesses, abbesses often had royal relations, and both could intervene in religious and secular concerns. There is evidence related to word use in Latin and Old English texts which suggests that the two shared similar roles, especially in education and instruction. I will examine different examples of royal and monastic women in a collection of texts to discuss whether the evidence indicates that they had distinctive relationships with teaching or learning, or if their shared backgrounds impact the ways which writers describe their involvement.

Research Outline

I separate my discussion into sections dedicated to each of the four words examined. In my chapters, I use case studies to closely analyse excerpts from Old English texts which contain different groups of women, contexts, and from different periods between the eighth and eleventh centuries.¹⁹¹ My discussion opens with an overview of the four lexemes in Chapter 1 in which I examine the overall number of attestations and where they occur, and the semantic range of the word, accompanied by a single example to demonstrate each sense. I also consider the number of examples of women for each word and address the genres, contexts, and groups which frequently occur in them to present an overview of my data.

The following chapters focus on specific examples of my chosen words to investigate how writers and translators used these words in examples of education and instruction with women. My first case study in Chapter 2 examines a section from *OEHE* about Abbess Hild

¹⁹¹ I also discuss the *BenRW*, which is a thirteenth-century copy based on a tenth-century text, in Chapter 4.

of Whitby. This takes place during her encounter with Cædmon, an Old English poet. I examine the translator's use of *læran* in this text and compare it to the Latin original to consider whether it affects the perception of Hild's role as a monastic teacher. I also comment on the use of *leornian* its impact on *læran* in this text. In Chapter 3, I analyse another two examples of *læran* in the *OEHE* and the Old English translation of Paulus Orosius'

Historiarum adversus Paganos Libri Septem (Seven Books of History against the Pagans)

[Or henceforth; I refer to the Latin Text as *Historiarum*]. Both concern queens who provide teachings to their husbands. I examine the use of *læran* in these examples because they occur in a secular context and with a different set of vocabulary to depict good and bad counsel provided by royal women. My fourth chapter focuses on *tæcan* which writers use in various genres, such as instructional texts, legal texts, and homilies. I examine two examples from two different genres: a piece of Old English fiction, known as *Apollonius of Tyre* [*ApT* henceforth], and the Winteneý version of the *Rule of St. Benedict* (*BenRW*) which is a feminised instructional text for monastic purposes. These texts demonstrate the use of *tæcan* in examples of different groups of women in secular and religious contexts. I also consider the use of *bysnian* in this chapter because it occurs often in *BenRW* beside examples of *tæcan*. I highlight an unusual example from Ælfric's version of the *Book of Kings* in which he describes examples set by a queen to discuss the emphasis on 'good' and 'bad' teaching by different groups of women.

My main question is 'what does the chosen wording of Old English texts suggest about perceptions of women as capable teachers and students'? Also, does the choice of vocabulary indicate how women taught and learnt? I intend to discuss whether use of specific ranges of verbs and nouns indicates the extent of women's intellectual roles as well as attitudes towards their involvement in education. Furthermore, were these depictions of women as teachers and students intended to reach particular female audiences? In my discussion, I argue that there is

evidence which implies that different types of women read and engaged with these representations, which writers created to provide a source of reference for them.

1. Old English Verbs: *Læran*, *Leornian*, *Bysnian*, and *Tæcan*

I begin my discussion with an exploration of the four Old English words used in my research. As I mentioned in the previous chapter, several of these words contain varying semantic. In this chapter, I examine each word individually to provide an understanding of its use. I consider the setting, context, genre for each attestation as well as the writers (where known) and whether there are any associations with notable Latin words in translations. My examination uses case studies from the corpus of Old English literature to demonstrate the different uses of these words. I also discuss the attestations of each word to discuss their use in certain genres, texts, and groups of women before I examine case studies of women's education and instruction in the following chapters.

1.1 *Læran*: 'teach, advise, admonish'

Læran has the second largest number of examples in the corpus of Old English literature out of the four words examined in this thesis. There are 1534 instances of *læran* recorded in the DOE under several spelling variants such as *laran*, *laren*, *leren*, *læren*. This word has a wide semantic range. According to the *Bosworth-Toller Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*, it can mean 'to teach, instruct, educate', 'to preach', 'to enjoin a rule', or 'to exhort, admonish, advise, persuade, suggest'.¹ It is used widely in Old English texts and occurs in multiple genres. The most frequent texts include homilies written by Wulfstan of York and Ælfric of Eynsham, hagiographies found in the *Old English Martyrology* and Ælfric's *Lives of Saints*, religious treatises, and translations such as the Old English versions of Gregory the Great's *De Cura*

¹ Joseph Bosworth, 'læran', *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary Online*, ed. Thomas Northcote Toller et al., Faculty of Arts, Charles University (2014), <<https://bosworthtoller.com/20977>> [Accessed 29/09/2022]. The dictionary by the University of Toronto (DOE) only covers words beginning with A – I at this time, see *Dictionary of Old English: A to I online*, ed. Angus Cameron, Ashley Crandell Amos, Antonette diPaolo Healey et al (Toronto: Dictionary of Old English Project, 2018), <https://tapor-library-utoronto-ca.nottingham.idm.oclc.org/doe/> [Accessed 20/12/2023].

Pastoralis (CP) and Bede's *HE*, and devotional texts such as psalms. It also occurs in several Old English glosses of Latin manuscripts.

Old English writers and translators use *læran* to describe teachings given by men, women, and others about a range of themes and subjects. It is the only word covered in this study which appears in examples of both religious and secular subjects. Religious subjects focus on engagement with the Christian faith through a mixture of reading, writing, and listening as examples from texts, as examples from homilies such as *Palm Sunday*, and religious treatises such as the text entitled *The Christian Life* by Wulfstan demonstrate.² For example, the anonymous writer of the homily *The Third Sunday in Lent* reminds his audience that mass priests should use certain texts when addressing their congregation: 'þa sceolan heora scriftbec mid rihte tæcan & læran' (they should rightly instruct and teach with their books of penance).³ These texts have a direct emphasis on preaching and monastic instruction and include hagiography, religious instructional texts (including canons, books of rules, and guidelines for monasteries), and ecclesiastical histories.

Secular subjects vary widely in examples of *læran* and are dependent on the context. Sword fighting, navigation, medicine, and music are subjects 'taught' by men and women from different social and political positions. Examples of secular subjects (swordplay, medicine, and others) occur in texts such as *Bald's Leechbook*, *Beowulf*, and *Andreas*.⁴ Bald's medical text comprises several sections and books and features an impressive number of medical remedies written in the vernacular. One example describes how a person named Oxa

² P.A.M. Clemoes, 'Palm Sunday', *Ælfric's Catholic Homilies: The First Series, Text*, EETS s.s. 17 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 290 – 298, ll. 139 – 142; and Dorothy Bethurum, 'The Christian Life', *The Homilies of Wulfstan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1957), 200 – 10, ll. 34 – 36.

³ R. Morris, 'The Third Sunday in Lent', *The Blickling Homilies*, 3 vols., EETS 58, 63, 73 (London: 1880) [repr. in 1 vol. 1967], 39 – 53, ll. 65 – 66.

⁴ See examples in G.P. Krapp, *The Vercelli Book*, ASPR, 2 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1932), 3 – 51, l. 1352.; E. Dobbie, ed., *Beowulf and Judith*, ASPR, 4 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1953), ll. 227, 3079; and T.O. Cockayne, 'Bald's leechbook', *Leechdoms, Wortcunning and Starcraft of Early England*, Rolls Series 35, 3 vols (London: 1864) [repr. Wiesbaden 1965], chapter 18, para 1.

‘lærde þisne læcedom’ (taught this medicine), which is followed by a remedy using various ingredients such as *bisceopwyr*t (bishopwort) and *reade netlan* (red nettle).⁵ The diversity of secular texts in which *læran* appears demonstrates its widespread use between the ninth and eleventh centuries by writers. However, it is the varied use of this word in different genres and contexts, which makes it complicated to interpret.

Semantic Range

To discuss the various ways that Old English writers use *læran*, it is first essential to examine how writers and their audiences understood the word through their translation practices. Evidence of *læran* in Old English glosses and glossaries suggests that writers use this word to denote two types of teaching. Not all the terms studied in this thesis appear in Old English glossed texts. However, *læran* is attested in several manuscripts, according to the number of entries found in the DOE. Several of these texts include glossaries: London, British Library, MS. Cotton Cleopatra A.III, a mid-tenth-century manuscript which also includes an interlinear gloss of Aldhelm’s *DV*; in London, British Library, MS. Additional 32246, an eleventh-century collection of glossaries and fragments of Old English texts such as Ælfric’s *Colloquy*; and British Library, Cotton MS Faustina A X, an eleventh-century textbook which contains Ælfric of Eynsham’s *Grammar* and *Glossary*. Other texts with interlinear glosses or glossed words include Aldhelm’s *DV* and *Epistola ad Ehfridum* in MS. Brussels, Royal Library 1650, and *The Durham Proverbs, Regula Concordia*, and Ælfric Bata’s *Colloquies*. Each of these texts has different subject matter and intended audiences. For example, Aldhelm wrote his treatise on virginity for a community of female religious, and Ælfric created his grammatical treatise and accompanying glossary to explain Latin to his students

⁵ Cockayne, ‘Bald’s leechbook’, chapter 47, p. 120.

and others. Thus, each manuscript has a unique context, but the examples of *læran* still offer valuable insight into word choice in the tenth and eleventh centuries.

These sources are crucial to my investigation because of the range of the Latin words associated with *læran*. They suggest that words such as *læran* do not have a single use to denote education but a range of types of teaching in different scenarios. Glossed texts show that Old English translators used *læran* to replace words such as *persuadere* [including *suadere*] (to persuade, suggest, incite successfully), *instruere* (to construct, direct, teach), *disserere* (to declare, argue, discuss), *hortari* (to urge, incite, encourage), *docere* (to teach, instruct), and *erudire* (to teach, educate).⁶ The semantic ranges of these words reflect different types of education and instruction although they all belong to the semantic field of ‘teaching’. *Persuadere* and *hortari* suggest guidance while *dissere*, *docere*, and *instruere* imply education, yet some writers gloss all these with the same Old English word.

However, *læran* is not the only word used to replace these Latin words. For example, Ælfric in his *Grammar* and *Glossary* also uses *tæcan* for *docere*, and *tihtan* (to incite, persuade) for *suadere*.⁷ Therefore, it is important to consider not only why Old English writers used *læran* in these examples and others, but why some decided to use alternative words to denote teaching. A comparison of translated texts with the associated Latin version provides one way to explore the semantic range of verbs in the context of education and instruction. There are others which can assist in uncovering the meaning of passages in translated and original vernacular texts. These involve an examination of the type of taught subjects and the overall context of the text in question. Without the evidence of Latin vocabulary to support the

⁶ For the following definitions, see Latham and Howlett et al, *DMLBS*, 1, ‘disserere’, p. 694, ‘docere’, p. 710, ‘erudire’, p. 798 [*erudire* is a complex verb because it can denote teaching or learning], ‘hortari[are]’, p. 1174, ‘instruere’, pp. 1414 – 1415. Also see Howlett et al, ‘persuadere’, *DMLBS*, 2, p. 2241; ‘suadere’, pp. 3222 – 3223. *Suadere* has a similar semantic range to *persuadere* (to urge, advise counsel, encourage, persuade).

⁷ See examples in J. Zupitza, *Ælfrics Grammatik und Glossar*, Sammlung englischer Denkmäler 1 (Berlin: 1880); repr. with intro. by H. Gneuss (1966), pp. 148 – 160.

reader's understanding of the text, the audience needs to rely on other indicators. These include clues found in the context and description of the people involved in the example.

Education and Guidance

Examples in the second semantic category indicate a stronger advisory emphasis. These refer to a form of teaching which provides advice that a teacher might offer to their students in religious or secular contexts. This group suggests a less formal style of education than the first since it does not necessarily require someone who holds the position of 'teacher' as monastic or religious education often does. Writers who emphasise this sense often include other pieces of information in the text to highlight the semantic change, such as the taught subject, setting, or the inclusion of other words related to counsel. For instance, when the taught subject refers to admonishment or persuasion, *læran* often relates to advice concerning behaviour or customs in a secular setting.

In my next section, I examine two examples from the corpus of Old English literature which clearly demonstrate the different uses of *læran* to denote teaching and counsel. Extracts from the *Life of St Basil* written by Ælfric of Eynsham, and an Old English poem known widely as *Andreas*, provide evidence of not only the types of subjects which occur in Old English texts but the diverse ways that writers emphasise the educational or advisory use of *læran* in examples about men.

Education in Ælfric's *Life of St. Basil*

My first example suggests that writers used *læran* to denote academic teaching of secular and monastic subjects. A wide variety of teaching and learning occurs in hagiography because of the genre's didactic nature to encourage and inspire its audiences to maintain their Christian

faith.⁸ These texts use a range of vocabulary, but *læran* is one of the most frequently used words in examples of teaching by Old English writers, many of whom remain anonymous. The writings of a well-known writer and translator, Ælfric of Eynsham, present an opportunity to discuss and compare the use of *læran* in examples of education because a substantial amount of his work has survived. His works exist in numerous copies from the tenth to the sixteenth century.⁹ Ælfric was the Abbot of Eynsham Abbey in Oxfordshire at the end of the tenth century and one of the most prolific authors of the period. He is most famous for his vernacular texts such as his homilies, letters, and hagiographies.¹⁰ He used several sources to create his vernacular translations, including Latin *vitae* written by Bede as well as those contained in the collection of hagiographies known widely as the *Cotton-Corpus Legendary* (CCL).¹¹

Læran occurs in the context of education in many examples in Ælfric's translations of Latin *vitae* as well as his vernacular homilies, and concerns preaching and religious instruction given by saints, male and female candidates for sainthood, and male religious. Examples from Ælfric's lives of St. Cecilia, Thomas, and Martin demonstrate that he placed an educational emphasis on *læran* in his collection of hagiographies of insular and early Christian saints, the *Lives of Saints* [ÆLS], as well as his collection of catholic homilies.¹² For

⁸ Clare A. Lees, *Tradition and Belief: Religious Writing in Late Anglo-Saxon England*, Medieval Cultures 19 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), p. 10, 109, 110.; and Lees and Overing, *Double Agents*, p. 9, 190.

⁹ Elaine Treharne, 'Making Their Presence Felt: Readers Of Ælfric, C. 1050-1350', *A Companion to Ælfric*, (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2009), 399 – 422, p. 399.

¹⁰ For a full list and study of his writings, see Aaron J. Kleist, *The Chronology and Canon of Ælfric of Eynsham* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2019).

¹¹ Mechthild Gretsch, *Ælfric and the Cults of Saints in Late Anglo-Saxon England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 17 – 20.

¹² See Clayton and Mullins, *Old English Lives of Saints*, DOML 58, 59, 60. I also use Johanna Kramer, Hugh Magennis, and Robin Norris, eds. and trs., *Anonymous Old English Lives of Saints*, DOML 63 (Cambridge Ma.: Harvard University Press, 2019). I reference these texts by volume and line number. There are many examples of religious instruction and education in Ælfric's texts. For those mentioned above, see: Clayton and Mullins, 'Saint Cecilia', *Old English Lives of Saints*, 3, ll. 49 – 52; 'Saint Thomas', 3, 330 – 332. For Ælfric's homilies, see Malcolm Godden, *Ælfric's Catholic Homilies: The Second Series, Text*, EETS s.s. 5 (London: 1979) [referenced by homily and page number].

instance, the use of *læran* in an episode about book learning in his homily for St Martin [*ÆCHom II*, 39.1] provides a good example of this meaning. He describes the following: ‘beggan ða to secgenne þam sceaðan geleafan and mid boclicere lare hine læran ongann’ (then, he began to speak to the criminal about the faith and began to instruct him with book-learning) [*ÆCHom II*, 39.1, 290].

It also appears in examples about secular subjects such as the teaching of medicine, philosophy and other *weorold-wisdom* (secular knowledge or learning) in *ÆLS*.¹³ The Latin *vita*e used as sources for his translations contain multiple words to denote teaching, such as *docere*, *instruere*, and *erudire*, while Ælfric prefers to use one verb more than others: *læran*.¹⁴ He is known to have gone to great lengths to provide literal translations for his audience, and researchers have shown by examinations of his translation style that Ælfric was a masterful translator with a ‘penchant for linguistic analysis’.¹⁵ The simplified vocabulary in *ÆLS* suggests that ‘he was aware of the semantic flexibility of Old English words’.¹⁶ However, the polysemous nature of words such as *læran* can be problematic, especially for understanding his representations of teachers. I begin my investigation of Ælfric’s translation style by exploring *The Life of St Basil*. The Latin text and its Old English translation tell the spiritual journey of a young, unbaptised nobleman in Cappadocia from educated layman to becoming a bishop and saint. Ælfric’s translation is based on the Latin version in Cotton MS Nero E I/1, a late eleventh-century manuscript. This is the first part of two volumes, which contain the

¹³ Joseph Bosworth, “weorold-wisdom”, *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary Online*, ed. Thomas Northcote Toller et al., (Faculty of Arts, Charles University, 2014), <https://bosworthtoller.com/35289> [Accessed 01/10/2022].

¹⁴ Although he also uses other Old English verbs such as *tæcan* in *ÆLS*, these examples occur far less frequently.

¹⁵ Christopher A. Jones, ‘*Meatim Set et Rustica*: Ælfric of Eynsham as a Medieval Latin Author’, *Journal of Medieval Latin*, 8 (1998) 1 – 57, p. 37. Kiriko Sato also wrote on his linguistic prowess in ‘Ælfric’s linguistic modifications of the *Vita Basilii* for his two works on the death of Julian the Apostate’, *Studia Neophilologia*, 92:3 (2020), 302 – 314.

¹⁶ Richard Marsden, ‘Ælfric as Translator: The Old English Prose *Genesis*’, *Anglia: Zeitschrift für Englische Philologie*, 109:3/4 (1991), 319 – 358, pp. 356 – 357.

earliest extant versions of the *Cotton Corpus Legendary*, a collection of hagiographies.¹⁷ This text contains the most examples of *læran* in *ÆLS*, but for the purpose of this discussion, I will examine a case study from the beginning of Basil's *vita* during the candidate's secular education.¹⁸

The Latin Text

The Latin *vita* includes secular and religious teaching. The writer first describes the subjects Basil learned as a young boy, which include a selection of secular subjects. After his father encourages him to learn from philosophers, Basil attends schooling and acquires a teacher named Eubolus who provides him with a secular education, which includes variety of subjects:

Monans quoque in doctrinis quinque et decem annis, omnemque graecalem
philosophiam percurrens in fine astronomiam ac optima quaequoque
colligens, et nullatenus invenire valens per ipsa omnium creatorem.¹⁹

(He remained in education for five and ten years, and quickly
comprehended the extent of Greek philosophy and astronomy, and acquired
them well, but it was not enough to discover for himself about the
creator).²⁰

¹⁷ For more information about this manuscript, see Cotton MS Nero E.I/1, British Library Digital Manuscripts, available at: http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Cotton_MS_Nero_E_I/1 [accessed 23/03/2022]. Also see Helmut Gneuss and Michael Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts: A Bibliographical Handlist of Manuscripts and Manuscript Fragments Written or Owned in England up to 1100* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), no. 344.

¹⁸ *Vita et miraculosa sancti Basilii episcopi*, London, British Library, Cotton Nero E.I/1, ff. 61v – 70r. The example used in this section appears on f. 61r. All transcriptions and translations are my own unless specified otherwise.

¹⁹ Gabriella Corona, *Ælfric's Life of Saint Basil the Great: Background and Context*, Anglo-Saxon Texts, 5 (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2006), p. 224. Also see Cotton Nero E.I/1, f. 61v.

²⁰ The first part of this passage literally translates as 'advising/teaching in instruction'. There is not yet an edited edition of the Latin *vita*.

This quote contains the first instance of education found in the *vita*. The Latin writer reveals that Basil's ability to acquire knowledge of subjects such as philosophy and astronomy was *optima* (best or good), which suggests that he has an aptitude for learning. The writer does not use verbs which often occur in examples of education (*docere*, *erudire*) in this section. Despite this, the vocabulary used in this section of the *vita* shows the extent to which the writer describes the educational experience as academic learning. He uses words associated with education such as *doctrina* (education, teaching), *disciplina* (teaching, education, training), and names his teacher by the title *praeceptor* (teacher, instructor) in the surrounding lines [f. 61v]. Furthermore, the Latin hagiographer describes Eubolus as a *philosophus* (philosopher) which is an appropriate role for a teacher of the subjects mentioned here. This example illustrates one way that the writer describes lay education.

Later in the text, there are several instances that use words such as *docere* in the context of Basil's religious teaching to laymen and women. It is important to note that two out of the three examples of Basil's teachings use *docere* in the context of Christian preaching.²¹ For instance, after Basil saves a young boy from a devil who intended to trap him in a written contract, the writer describes how Basil was 'docens puerum, ac instruens seu dans ei regulam decentum' (teaching the boy and instructing him in the appropriate rule) [f. 66v].²² The verb form *docens*, from *docere*, demonstrates that this is an example of religious teaching which has a unique value because of its association with formal training. *Docere* is a significant word in my discussion because it has several meanings related to education: 'to cause to know, make aware, teach, instruct, inform, show, prove, convince'.²³ It is an important signifier of teaching in Latin texts because it mostly occurs in the context of

²¹ For these two instances, see Cotton Nero E.I/1, ff. 66v and 68r. Alternatively, see Corona, *Ælfric's Life of Saint Basil the Great*, pp. 237 and 246.

²² Corona, *Ælfric's Life of Saint Basil the Great*, p. 237.

²³ Howlett and Latham et al, 'docere', *DMLBS*, 1, p. 710. They list four uses of *docere*: 1. 'to teach, inform', 2. 'to instruct, show the way', 3. 'to teach', 4. To denote someone or something that is 'learned, skilled'.

academic teaching, which includes many subjects included in monastic and religious instruction. For example, Aldhelm uses *docere* in several texts to denote teaching of grammar, metre, and Christian scripture in sentences such as the following: ‘harum rerum exempla versibus ad hanc speciem pertinentibus doceri desidero’ (I desire to teach examples of things in verses pertaining to this subject [concerning poetic metre]).²⁴ The Latin hagiographer of the *Passio Sanctae Caeciliae* also uses this word in a similar way, as his description of Valerian’s religious instruction from Pope Urban demonstrates:

Tunc scs urbanus baptisavit eum . & eum docens eum fidei omnem regulam
 . remisit eum ad ceciliam diligentem instructum.²⁵

(Then Saint Urbanus baptised him and, instructing him in every rule of the faith, sent him back to Cecilia diligently instructed).

In the above text, the writer uses *docens* to denote the religious instruction on Christian lifestyle which is provided by a man with a special religious role. He also supports the idea that Urban offers a high degree of education by using words such as *diligentem instructum* (diligently instructed) to describe Valerian as a student. Thus, words such as *docere* have a strong association with religious education which includes academic learning, reading, writing, and other similar subjects taught in monastic schools.

In Basil’s *vita*, the writer uses another word in the third example of Basil’s teaching, *instruere* (to construct, prepare, teach), which also indicates another example of education.

Instruere is another word which often occurs in the context of religious education. Bede uses

²⁴ *De septenario et de metris*, p. 238. Also see examples of *docere* in Aldhelm’s *Carmen De Virginitate*, ll. 132, 613, 1855; *De Virginitate*, LVI, p. 316, ‘C. Creatura’, *Ænigmata Aldhelmi*, l. 71, in R. Ehwald, ed., *Aldhelmi Opera*, *Momenta Germaniae Historica, Auctorum antiquissimorum*, 15 (Berlin: Weidmann, 1919) [repr. 1961]. For more examples, see Ehwald’s ‘index verborum’, p. 599. I explain Bede’s use of *docere* in greater detail in the following chapter.

²⁵ *Passio Sanctae Caeciliae*, Cambridge, Parker Library, Corpus Christi College, MS 009, ff. 162r – 168v, f. 163r.

instruere often in *HE* in the context of religious teaching. In Book IV, chapter 1, he describes a man as ‘saeculari et diuina litteratura et Graece instructus et Latine’ (instructed in secular and religious literature, Greek and Latin). Another example from *HE* occurs in the context of preaching:

HE ii. 14:

quibus diebus cunctis a mane usque as uesperam nil aliud ageret quam
confluentem eo de cunctis uiculis ac locis plebem Christi uerbo salutis
instruere.

(During these days, from morning till evening, [Paulinus] did nothing else
except instruct the crowds who flocked to him from every village and
district in the teaching of Christ).²⁶

These examples suggest that Bede used *instruere* to denote various types of religious teaching. *Instruere* in the above example occurs in a similar context to the one in Basil’s *vita*, which suggests that these two examples share similar descriptions of teaching. The *vita* writer only uses verbs with a strong association with academic teaching after Basil becomes a bishop and begins to give religious education to others. Therefore, this evidence suggests that Basil’s position as a bishop and the religious context of the teaching affect the writer’s word choice in this text.

Ælfric’s Translation

The later Old English translation demonstrates a different approach to education. *ÆLS (Basil)* occurs near the beginning of the Old English manuscript and sits between the lives of St Eugenia and St Julian and his wife Basilissa, both of which focus on the importance of

²⁶ Translated by Colgrave and Mynors, *Bede’s Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, p. 189.

religious instruction from appropriate teachers.²⁷ An example from *The Life of St. Eugenia* describes Eugenia as *gelærede* (educated) in ‘Greciscre uðwytegunge and Lædene getingnyse’ (Greek philosophy and Latin eloquence) to the extent that she ‘þeah on wisdom and on uðwytegunge’ (increased in wisdom and philosophy).²⁸ However, Ælfric also mentions that she cannot be *lærde* (educated) through Christian preaching of *cristnera lare* (Christian instruction) because of the paucity of teachers.²⁹ These texts share a common theme of teaching from lay and religious sources, and they compare which is the most beneficial for Christians. Ælfric offers a similar focus in his retelling of Basil’s life in the opening section of his text, which describes Basil’s earlier education. In this translation, he introduces Basil as a keen student of secular subjects.

ÆLS (Basil), 22 – 28:

Basilius ða wunode mid þam uþwytan on lare ealles fiftyne gær
and eallne þone wysdom wundorlice asmeade
þe Grecisce larewas him læran cuðan.

(Basil then remained studying with the philosopher for fifteen years in all
and wonderfully comprehended all the wisdom that the Greek teachers were
able to teach him).³⁰

Ælfric’s word choice in this passage is significant. He refers to the *uðwytan* (philosopher) as ‘teacher’ with the noun *lareow* which occurs often in the context of monastic or religious teachers in Old English prose. Also, Ælfric uses *læran* to describe their teaching of wisdom (of religious and secular matters) and secular subjects. The use of other words such as the

²⁷ *Vita et miraculosa sancti Basilii episcopi*, London, British Library, Cotton MS Nero E I/1, ff. 61v – 70r.

²⁸ Clayton and Mullins, ‘Saint Eugenia’, *Old English Lives of Saints*, 1, ll. 21 - 23.

²⁹ Clayton and Mullins, ‘Saint Eugenia’, l. 27.

³⁰ Translated by Clayton and Mullins, ‘Saint Basil’, *Old English Lives of Saints*, 1, p. 79.

noun *lareow* indicates that this example refers to education unlike other examples of *læran* in Old English texts in which it signifies ‘to advise’ or ‘persuade’. *Lareow* only occurs in descriptions of teachers, lay and monastic, because it signifies someone who has a great deal of knowledge and wisdom. Ælfric substitutes *lareow* in the place of two Latin words: *magister* and *doctor*, both of which signify a teacher, or ‘master’ of a learning.³¹ Ælfric uses this noun as well as adjectives which praise Basil’s learning (*wundorlic*) to present this episode as a positive example of secular teaching. However, he has some reservations. He abbreviates the description of Basil’s learning and only refers to his education as *woruld-wisdome* (lay or worldly wisdom) [*ÆLS (Basil)*, 5] and does not go into any further detail. His decision to shorten this section suggests he did not want his audience to focus on the male candidate’s secular learning, but on his religious education instead. Despite this, he includes several key points found in the Latin and uses semantically similar words to depict his learning and his teachers.

Ælfric uses the same word, *læran*, in the context of religious education when he describes Basil teaching laymen and women. He remains truthful to his Latin source by using the same three references to education, and he uses the same vocabulary in each example to signify Basil’s teachings to laymen and women.³² For instance, Ælfric uses the word *læran* in the same passage that describes Basil teaching a boy about Christianity:

ÆLS (Basil), 457 – 460:

Hwæt þa Basilius his sona totær
and gehuslode þone cnapan and þam hælende betæhte

³¹ Zupitza, *Ælfrics Grammatik und Glossar*, pp. 46, 48.

³² See *ÆLS (Basil)*, ll. 459, 616, and 618.

and lærde hine georne hu he lybban sceolde

on Cristes geleafan oð his lifes ende.

(Well then, Basil then immediately tore it into pieces and gave the boy

communion and commended him to the saviour and eagerly taught him

how he should live in the faith of Christ until the end of his life).³³

Words such as *gehúslian* (to offer Eucharist, communion) and *betācan* (to deliver, commit, entrust) occur often in the context of religious teaching given to and by male saints in Ælfric's saints' lives.³⁴ When used together with *læran*, the translation continues the same nuance of religious teaching which appears in the Latin text, marked using words such as *docere*, *instruere*, and *communio* (communion). Nevertheless, there is a distinct difference in Ælfric's translation. The Latin text contains less description of the teaching and the taught subject than the translation. The Old English text contains multiple verbs which provide context for the reader, such as *gehúslian* and *betācan*, and describes the boy's learning experience when he is 'delivered' to the Christian faith. The different range of vocabulary used by Ælfric affects the reading of *læran* in this example for the audience to understand the type of education provided by Basil. The extra detail added to his translation suggests that he was aware that his vernacular audience would need more markers to indicate meaning. Therefore, this evidence suggests that Ælfric uses *læran* to signify teaching of more than one subject in his translations of saint's lives, and that he was aware of its diverse usage.

Ælfric's translations are considered literal ones in which he takes into account the Latin vocabulary but also literary devices such as rhyme.³⁵ Gabriella Corona's research on the

³³ Translated by Clayton and Mullins, 'Saint Basil', *Old English Lives of Saints*, 1, p. 107.

³⁴ For some examples of the verbs in Ælfric's saints' lives, see for *gehuslian*: Clayton and Mullins, 'Saint Agatha and Lucy', *Old English Lives of Saints*, 1, l. 384. For *betācan*: 'Saint Oswald', *Old English Lives of Saints*, 3, l. 160; 'Saint Cecilia', l. 359.

³⁵ Corona, *Ælfric's Life of Saint Basil the Great: Background and Context*, p. 81.

Latin and Old English lives of St Basil demonstrates that Ælfric took great care to provide his audience with a coherent text, which suggests that he chose words based on their suitability for the context of the teaching.³⁶ The above evidence suggests that he was a careful and considerate translator who chose words based on their meaning as well as the context of the situation. Ælfric offers two examples of education, lay and religious, beside each other in these texts to demonstrate the value of each. However, he uses *læran* to denote that these are both episodes of teaching. Instead of different verbs to reflect the different types of education, Ælfric uses the same word, *læran*, which refers to a wide scope of ‘teaching’, alongside vocabulary which reflects the taught subject. These provide the audience with the information needed to understand either the secular or religious mode of learning described in these examples.

Other texts which use *læran* in different contexts which demonstrates that it could signify teaching of multiple subjects. There are several examples in other texts which describe education, such as the medicinal manual known as *Bald’s Leechbook*, the *OEHE*, the *Old English Martyrology*, and the poem known as *Genesis*, as I mentioned earlier in this chapter.³⁷ *Bald’s Leechbook* provides a clear example of how a writer uses *læran* in a secular context, as my earlier example demonstrated.³⁸ Anonymous saints’ lives such as the eleventh-century *Life of St. Pantaleon* also contain examples of *læran* in the context of lay and religious education.³⁹ The writer uses the same word to denote teaching in both contexts. For instance, when Pantaleon is asked who taught him the Christian faith, he replies ‘min drihten ermolaus se preost me þæt lærde’ (my lord, the priest, Ermolaus, taught me that) [*LS (Pantaleon)*, 52]. Similarly, the writer uses the same verb to denote that Pantaleon wished to

³⁶ Corona, *Ælfric’s Life of Saint Basil the Great: Background and Context*, p. 81.

³⁷ G.P. Krapp, ‘Genesis’, *The Junius Manuscript*, ASPR 1 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1931), ll. 609-613, as an example.

³⁸ See p. 66.

³⁹ Kramer et al, eds. and trs., ‘Saint Pantaleon’, *Anonymous Old English Lives of Saints*, sections 15 and 52.

be trained in the medical arts: ‘lærde ælcne læcecraeft’ (to be educated in every medical art) [*LS (Pantaleon)*, 15]. Thus, this text shows that writer uses *læran* in the context of teaching multiple subjects.

The above evidence demonstrates that Old English writers used *læran* to denote academic education in secular and religious contexts. However, this is only one use of *læran*. Below, I discuss another example from the Old English poem about St. Andrew the Apostle, which is known widely as *Andreas*. In the following section, I explore an example of the second category in *læran*’s semantic range concerned with guidance and advice.

Counsel in *Andreas*

In this section, I focus on several lines of *Andreas* which suggest that *læran* could also refer to counsel given by laymen. The anonymous poem survives in the *Vercelli Book*, a collection of vernacular poetry, homilies, and prose compiled in the tenth century written by a single scribe.⁴⁰ George Krapp states that the Old English text was originally written and produced in one of the early medieval English kingdoms, but later ended up in Northern Italy, where the manuscript now resides.⁴¹ *Andreas* is the longest poem in this manuscript and appears alongside other well-known texts such as *The Fates of the Apostles* and *Elene*, attributed to Cynewulf, and *The Dream of the Rood*. It is also in the same manuscript as the longest surviving collection of homilies. Samantha Zacher notes that these texts ‘provide little consistency with respect to a supposed audience’ because of the diverse genres and subjects

⁴⁰ For this discussion, I use G.P. Krapp’s edition of *The Vercelli Book*: G.P. Krapp, ed. and trs., *The Vercelli Book*, ASPR 2 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1932), pp. 3 – 50. For information on the manuscript, see Krapp, *The Vercelli Book*, pp. xi – lxxx; Samantha Zacher, *Preaching the Converted: The Style and Rhetoric of the Vercelli Book Homilies* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), pp. 3 – 30; and Elaine Treharne, ‘The Form and Function of the Vercelli Book’, *Studies in Anglo-Saxon Literature and its Insular Context in Honour of Éamonn Ó Carragáin* (2007), 253–266.

⁴¹ Krapp, *The Vercelli Book*, p. xvi; Treharne offers a detailed examination of the dating of this manuscript: ‘The Form and Function of the Vercelli Book’, pp. 253 – 259.

compiled within the manuscript.⁴² However, there is one overarching theme that they all share, and this relates to religious learning.

Andreas recounts the life of St. Andrew and his journey to rescue his fellow apostle, Matthew, and to preach the word of God to the murderous Mermerdonians.⁴³ Alongside a deep religious and hagiographic focus, this text also contains several instances of learning, teaching, and counsel. The excerpt below occurs in the latter half of the poem during Andrew's torture at the hands of the Mermerdonians. Andrew, chained and weakened by his captors, is set upon by a group of warriors. The poet describes how he remarkably is saved from their blows by his faith, and that the warriors retreat in fear. When the lord of the Mermerdonians asks them why they could not kill Andrew, one of them responds with an explanation of what they had seen. The soldier warns that any who attempt to harm Andrew will meet a wretched end. He subsequently offers his lord some advice on how to deal with such a man. These lines read the following:

And, 1348b – 1357a:

Ga þe sylfa to!

þær þu gegninga guðe findest,
frecne feohtan, gif ðu furður dearst
to þam anhagan aldre geneðan.
We ðe magon eaðe, eorla leofost,
æt þam secgplegan selre gelæran;
ær ðu gegninga guðe fremme,

⁴² Samantha Zacher, *Preaching the Converted: The Style and Rhetoric of the Vercelli Book Homilies* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), p. xvii.

⁴³ A. Bolintineanu, 'The Land of Mermedonia in the Old English *Andreas*', *Neophilologus* 93 (2009), 149 – 164.

wiges wōman, weald hu ðe sæle
æt þam gegnslege.

(‘Go to it yourself;

your war you will find there without delay,

a dangerous fight if further you dare to

venture your life with that lone survivor!’

‘We can without difficulty, dearest of gentlemen,

better instruct you in that sword-play

before you rush headlong into battle,

combat’s melee, however it may befall you

in the counterattack’).⁴⁴

The poet uses a prefixed form of *læran* in the following line, and the *ge-* prefix in *gelæran* is significant because it affects its meaning.⁴⁵ Just as writers use the *on-* prefix to alter a base word’s meaning to signify the opposite an of action (*onlocan* – ‘unlock’), Cronan argues that they also attach the prefix *ge-* to create a perfect sense of a word in order to denote the completion of an action, (*geascian* – ‘to find out by asking’, ‘discover’, compared with *ascian* – ‘to ask’).⁴⁶ In this example, the poet uses *gelæran* to denote a ‘complete’ type of

⁴⁴ Translation by Richard North and M.D.J Bintley, *Andreas: An Edition* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2016), pp. 117 – 210, [style set by North and Bintley].

⁴⁵ Dennis Cronan, ‘Alliterative rank in Old English poetry’, *Studia Neophilologica*, 58:2 (1986), 145-158.

⁴⁶ Javier Martín Arista, ‘The Old English Prefix *ge-*: A Panchronic Reappraisal’, *Australian Journal of Linguistics*, 32:4 (2012), 411-433, p. 429. Bruce Mitchell and Fred C. Robinson also take this view in *A Guide to Old English*, 4th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 58. However, the meaning of *ge-* prefix as ‘perfective’ is debated as J.W. Lindemann in *Old English preverbal ge-: Its meaning* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1970), and Tracey Crouch in ‘The Morphological Status of Old English *ge-*’, *Journal of Germanic Linguistics*, 7:2 (1995), 165-178.

teaching that the ‘teacher’ can assuredly offer. Despite this, the type of education described above is difficult to determine because the setting and teachers are different from other examples of teaching found in texts such as *ÆLS (Basil)*. The vocabulary used in the above lines does not reflect the wording used in examples of religious or secular academic teaching. Furthermore, this text does not have a Latin text for reference. Thus, how are we to understand *læran* in this text? The *And* poet is aware of the polysemous nature of *læran* and uses it in examples of teaching which juxtapose each other to encourage his audience to consider the value of different types of education, secular and religious. Elements of this concept have been touched upon previously in a study by Alenka Divjak who suggests that the poem is ‘a tale of discipleship’.⁴⁷ The various depictions of relationships of Christ and his disciples, teachers and students, and warlords and warriors, which occur throughout the poem, highlight the theme of learning and leadership. However, to express the different types of teaching and their worth from a Christian perspective to his audience, the poet employs different ranges of vocabulary to depict laymen and religious as teachers. To understand the intended reading in this example and others, there are markers to consider which provide readers with necessary clues. These are the context of the teaching (whether secular or religious) and the description of the ‘teacher’.

Læran in a Lay Context

In lines 1348b – 1357a, the poet uses *læran* in a secular setting, which he identifies with particular vocabulary. This episode takes place in a secular building in a non-Christian community. Also, he mentions *secgplegan* (swordplay) and *gegnsele* (counterattack), alluding to battle and war which in this case refers to the Mermerdonian warriors’

⁴⁷ Alenka Divjak, ‘The exploitation of heroic conventions in the OE poem Andreas: an artistic misconduct or a convincing blend of traditional literary concepts and new Christian ideas?’, *Neophilologica* 45:1-2 (2012), 139 – 152, p. 147.

confrontation with Andrew. He uses words such as *wiges* (combat) and *guð* (warfare), which are terms associated with battle. These descriptions match other Old English poems which have a strong secular focus. *The Battle of Maldon*, *Beowulf*, and *The Battle of Brunanburh* contain similar vocabulary and images related to fighting, warriors, and the roles of laymen. For instance, the poet in *The Battle of Maldon* refers to *grim guðplega* (grim war-play) and *wiges georne* (eager for battle).⁴⁸ These texts also have a strong secular focus on concepts and roles which would be familiar and appeal to laymen. The setting of this example of ‘teaching’ in *And* is different from the one described in *ÆLS Basil* which alludes to scenes of philosophical learning in an educational environment. Instead, the poet makes his audience aware of the poem is set in an uncivilised land fraught with *morðor* (murder) and *facn* (deceit) [*And*, 19b, 20a]. The audience are faced with a hostile scene unconducive to the type of meditative learning taught in monastic schools or by religious teachers. Therefore, the poet suggests that teaching within this setting is unlike other examples of religious education and needs to be understood differently.

Lay Counsellors

Another point to consider concerns the poet’s description of the ‘teachers’ in these lines. A consideration of the vocabulary used to describe the ‘teacher’ and ‘student’, including their position, character, and any evidence of their learning, can further our understanding of the type of teaching described by the poet. He provides the role of the ‘teacher’ to a man with a secular role, a warrior, who ‘teaches’ the Mermerdonian lord how to incapacitate Andrew. The warrior’s teachings concern the secular subject of battle tactics, which is more appropriate for members of the laity than clergy or monastic communities. His position and information about battle suggests that *læran* could denote a suitable example of secular

⁴⁸ E.V.K. Dobbie, *The Battle of Maldon, The Anglo-Saxon Minor Poems*, ASPR 6 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1942), 7 – 16, ll. 61a, 73b.

counsel rather than academic teaching. Counsel is still considered a form of education, as I explained in my introduction, yet it is a distinct type of teaching because it often relates to secular matters and people.

It is evident in the poet's choice of words that he intended to create a purposeful description of the warrior as laymen who offers secular counsel. The interaction in *And* occurs between a non-Christian chieftain and seven of his men, his *heremāegen* (warband, army) [1298a]. There is no named teacher in this section, marked using nouns such as *lareow* (teacher), for example, which occurs earlier in the poem to describe a religious teacher [*And*, 404]. Here, he only refers to the men by their position as retainers of the chieftain as part of his war band. The poet also suggests to his audience this type of teaching has a lower value than religious instruction through his decision to use vocabulary with negative connotations; *ælglaeca* (wretch), *yfele gemundig* (mindful of evil), and *reowe* (cruel) [1312, 1334a]. These are features found in hagiography such as *ÆLS*, which present the antagonists, the non-Christians, as not only sources of distrust and hatred but of the wrong kind of knowledge. These men are not appropriate religious teachers because of their status and morals, but they can be secular counsellors to members of the laity. Their knowledge of war and 'swordplay' as warriors enables them to provide advice on this subject to other warriors, such as their lord. Here, the men provide counsel about their experience with Andrew and his supernatural protection to assist the chieftain in the confrontation. Therefore, the poet uses *lāran* to signify secular advice instead of academic teaching, which he identifies to his audience through his depiction of the secular setting, taught subject, and teachers.

The poet also uses *lāran* elsewhere in this poem on several occasions. These examples suggest a similar emphasis on counsel because they share many of the markers mentioned above. Earlier in the poem, the poet uses *lāran* to describe the lord's advice to his war band. In lines 1195 – 1196a, 'se wiðermeda / wordum lārde / folc to gefeohte' (the hostile one

exhorted his people with words to the battle), the poet depicts the warlord in a traditional role of a warrior chief who urges his men to stand firm against an enemy, who in this instance is Andrew. Later in lines 1297b – 1298a, the poet uses the same word to describe another instance related to the lord: ‘wigend lārde / for þam heremægene’ (the warrior instructed before the army). The use of *læran* in these examples, which share the same type of ‘teacher’, subject, and context, indicates that this word signifies a similar type of ‘teaching’ to the above example. The use of *læran* instead of another synonymous word such as *manian* (to urge, admonish, advise) or *trymman* (to encourage) suggests that the Mermerdonian lord provides a type of secular teaching that is unique to laymen. For example, Andrew also encourages his companions on the ship to strengthen their resolve for which the poet uses *trymman* [428b]. This is different from the examples above because of Andrew’s status as a religious man whose teachings the poet describes with another set of vocabulary. Therefore, *læran* indicates another form of exhortation in this poem when it is used to describe a layman’s counsel.

Religious Teaching

As I mentioned earlier, the poet is aware of the polysemous nature of *læran* and uses it accordingly to describe two kinds of teaching. The audience’s understanding of this word changes depending on the range of vocabulary used to describe the key markers. For example, he uses *læran* to denote religious education given by Andrew as well as counsel offered by warriors. In lines 1680 – 1686, the poet describes how the apostle preached to the people to believe in the Christian faith by telling them of the *halgan ham* (the holy house) of God and the *heofena rices* (heavenly kingdom) [1683]. *Læran* occurs also at the beginning of the text in the same context: ‘leode lārde on lifes weg’ (he instructed the people in the [Christian] way of life) [And 170]. In these examples, the poet makes a clear distinction between Andrew as a teacher and the non-Christians through references to his religious

position as an apostle, the religious subject, and his own education from God and Christ. While on a ship, Andrew encounters a mysterious figure whom the audience later learns is Christ. The poet makes an important connection between Andrew and Christ as Christian teachers by using the same noun to describe them. Andrew, God, and Christ are the only ones given the title of *lareow* in the poem.⁴⁹ Old English writers often depict Christ as a teacher with this title, which shows that this is a familiar description for an early medieval audience.⁵⁰ Thus, *lareow* is associated with religious teaching in this text. The description of Andrew as a *leofne lareow* (beloved teacher) at the end of the poem highlights his capability as an educator to the audience and suggests that his religious teachings are educational rather than advisory [1707a]. The absence of this noun in the examples of the warriors' teachings indicate that they provide a different role.

Other Evidence

Many of the examples of *læran* in Old English poetry also have the same connection to persuasion or advice instead of teaching in examples of laymen and women. These include examples from *Beowulf*, *Genesis A/B*, and *Elene*. A reason for this could be the secular setting and contexts of these Old English poems, which include subjects such as battle tactics, political manoeuvres, and other secular wisdom. For example, at the end of *Beowulf*, Wiglaf provides a short speech about the death of his lord and reminds his people (and the audience) about the relationship between a retainer and his lord:

Beo, 3079 - 3081:

Ne meahton we gelæran leofne þeoden,

⁴⁹ There are several references to Christ and God as *lareow* in lines 404, 1321, 1466, and 1707.

⁵⁰ Examples occur in P.A.M. Clemoes, 'Assumption of St John', *Ælfric's Catholic Homilies: The First Series, Text*, EETS s.s. 17 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 206 – 216, p. 208; 'Dedicatio ecclesiae sancti Michaelis', p. 470; H. Hecht, *Bischof Waerferths von Worcester Uebersetzung der Dialoge Gregors des Grossen*, Bib. ags. Prosa 5 (Leipzig and Hamburg) [repr. Darmstadt 1965], chapter 9, p. 59.

rices hyrde, ræd ænigne,

þæt he ne grette goldweard þone.⁵¹

(Nothing we advised could ever convince

the prince we loved, our land's guardian,

not to vex the custodian of the gold).⁵²

Here, the poet uses vocabulary that has connections to guidance such as *ræd* (counsel, advice) and *gelæran*. The proximity of these two words demonstrates that this example concerns advice. Furthermore, the similarity of the secular setting and the presence of a lord and his retainers suggests that this is another example of the type of teaching reflected in *Andreas*.

Another example of secular advice occurs in *Genesis A/B*. This poet describes an interaction between Abraham and his wife Sarah in which the husband advises her against revealing their relationship: 'ongan þa his bryd frea / wishydg wer / wordum læran' (then the wise-minded man began to advise his bride with words) [*Gen*, 1822b - 1823]. In this instance, *læran* might also be interpreted as 'cautioned' or 'warned', but these are not common uses of this word in poetry or prose. The wording of these lines is similar to the way in which the *Andreas* poet describes the warlord's exhortation to the people [1195 – 1196a]. The distinction of the teaching as given verbally through words might be an important feature of this type of secular education.

The last example that I discuss in this section appears in the same manuscript as *Andreas*. In Cynewulf's poem, *Elene*, Empress Helena, the mother of Constantine I, seeks the true cross

⁵¹ I use the following edition for line numbers: R.D. Fulk, ed. and tr., *The Beowulf Manuscript: Complete Texts and "The Fight at Finnsburg"*, DOML 3 (Cambridge Ma.: Harvard University Press, 2010).

⁵² Translated by Seamus Heaney, tr., *Beowulf: A Verse Translation*, ed. Daniel Donoghue (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2000), p. 77.

so that she can acquire a better understanding of Christianity. Once a man named Judas reveals the cross to her, she celebrates and addresses her people about the findings. Cynewulf uses *læran* to describe how the queen ‘teaches’ her people about the Christian faith:

El. 1204b – 1205a:

þa seo cwen ongan

læran leofra heap þæt hie lufan dryhtnes

(Then the queen began

to teach the band of dear ones to firmly maintain

the love of the Lord).⁵³

Although Helena is a Christian, unlike the other examples mentioned in this section, she is a still laywoman who encourages her ‘students’ (the people) to behave in a certain way.

Cynewulf’s poem has some resemblances to *Andreas* and other texts in this manuscript, as Zacher and Treharne noted.⁵⁴ There is an especially strong connection between *Elene* and *Andreas* since they share several lexical and literary features, themes of exhortation, and attribution.⁵⁵ Their similarity might also include the use of particular words such as *læran* to

⁵³ Robert E. Bjork, ed. and tr., *Elene: The Finding of the Cross, The Old English Poems of Cynewulf*, DOML 23 (Cambridge Ma.: Harvard University Press, 2013), 141 – 235. Translation on p. 227.

⁵⁴ Researchers have debated the poems similarities previously because of the inconsistency of the similarities, especially in relation to lexical borrowings and semantic distinction. See N.A. Porter, ‘Wrestling with Loan-Words: Poetic Use of “engel”, “seraphim”, and “cherubim” in “Andreas” and “Elene”’, *Neophilologische Mitteilungen*, 89:2 (1988), 155–170; E. Louviot, ‘Transitions from Direct Speech to Narration in Old English Poetry’, *Neophilologus* 97:2 (2012), 383–393; Francis Leneghan, ‘The departure of the hero in a ship: The intertextuality of Beowulf, Cynewulf and Andreas’, *SELIM: Journal of the Spanish Society for Medieval English Language and Literature* 24 (2019), 105–132; and Zacher mentions that *Elene* and *The Dream of the Rood* are considered “Cynewulfian” in style’: Zacher, *Preaching the Converted: The Style and Rhetoric of the Vercelli Book Homilies*, p. 30.

⁵⁵ See Zacher, *Preaching the Converted: The Style and Rhetoric of the Vercelli Book Homilies*, pp. 30, 272 – 278; and Treharne, ‘The Form and Function of the Vercelli Book’, pp. 253 – 265.

denote guidance, which is a familiar concept found in other poetic texts with secular contexts as we have seen in other examples.

Understanding *Læran*

Old English writers use *læran* in two ways: to denote teaching (to teach, to educate, to preach) and to describe giving advice or warnings (to advise, to admonish, to persuade). We can divide these meanings into two categories of education and guidance. The first category listed above suggests the type of teaching given by a teacher – someone with specific knowledge or skills about a particular subject - to a group of students or a single person to improve their understanding. This category also implies a special relationship with religious teaching provided by a priest or clergy member or by a religious teacher in a monastic setting. A considerable amount of the extant evidence about the early medieval period survives in manuscripts with a strong religious focus, such as saints' lives, homilies, and religious treatises.

The vocabulary employed in the above texts demonstrates that they share similar features, including depictions of secular counsel as a separate and unique form of teaching in the poetry of the tenth-century manuscript. The different ways to interpret *læran* in an Old English text demonstrates that writers used this word in a variety of contexts and were aware of its polysemous uses. Writers understood that the semantic range of *læran* encompassed 'teaching'. However, 'teaching' covered a broad range of concepts from formal education in school environments to advice given on a personal level. The poets above use *læran* to indicate people teaching different subjects in certain settings, just as Ælfric does in his account of St Basil. Although it denotes both secular and religious education, the emphasis on either religious teaching or counsel relies on a set of markers found within these texts. These include the writers' descriptions of 'teachers' using nouns such as *lareow*, the context of the 'lesson', and the religious and secular settings.

Even with these markers, the intended reading of *læran* is not always easily determinable in an Old English text. There are occasions when the context is unclear, or when it is difficult to decipher the relationship between the ‘teacher’ and ‘student’. These issues are especially prevalent in examples related to women. Representations of women in the context of learning and teaching offer some of the more complicated examples of *læran* in the corpus of Old English literature. The taught subjects, settings, and positions of the ‘teachers’ involved do not always fit into neat categories. It is not always possible to determine whether an example refers to moments of teaching or counsel. Therefore, it is necessary to closely analyse examples within texts.

Læran and Women

My next section focuses on the use of *læran* in examples of women as students and teachers. Although *læran* appears often in the corpus of surviving Old English texts, there are few related to women. Only sixty-nine examples use *læran* to describe women as students or teachers, which is approximately 4.2%. This is a small number when compared to others such as *bysnian*. An important feature of the results of my study is the division between representations of women as students and teachers in different genres. The graph below shows the number of examples, which use *læran* in the context of women as students and teachers across seven genres.

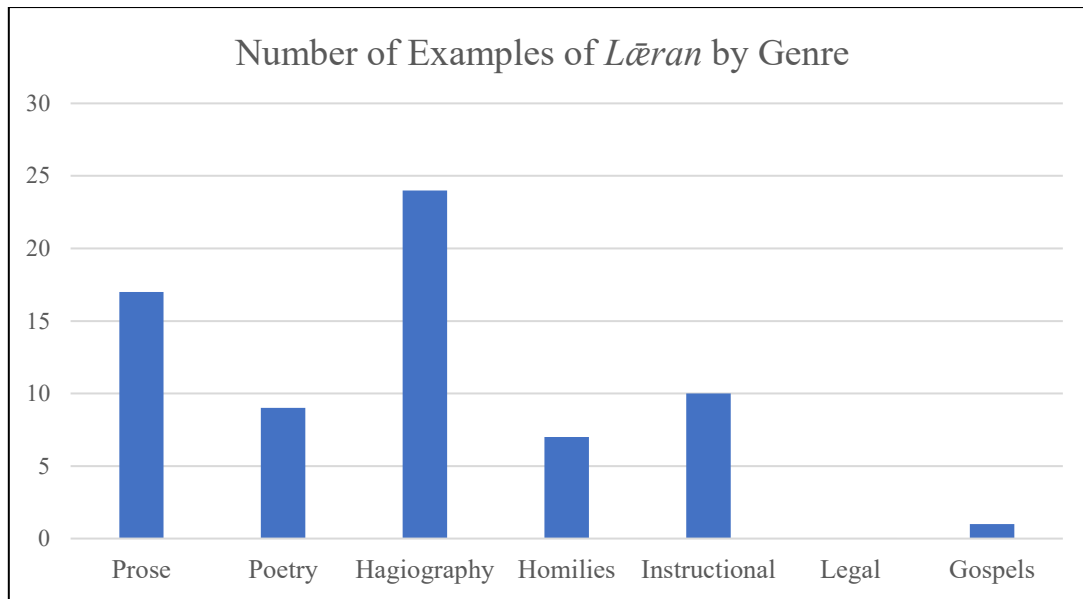


Figure 5: The number of examples of women which include *læran* in the corpus of Old English literature.

Examples of *læran* do not occur in a select number of texts by a handful of writers but in a wide collection of different genres, which range from religious treatises to poetry. Saints' lives contain the largest number of examples of women, followed by prose.⁵⁶ Saints' lives include hagiographies written by Ælfric as well as anonymous writers. For example, the anonymously translated *The Life of St Mary of Egypt* contains the most references to a woman as a student and a teacher than any other saint's life.⁵⁷ For example, the translator uses *læran* to describe Mary teaching sexual activities to others:

ÆLS (Mary of Egypt), para. 51:

“Nis nan asecgendlic oððe unasecgendlic fracodlicnysse hiwung þæs ic ne
sih tihtende and lærende”.

⁵⁶ See my Appendix for further examples of texts which fit into the 'prose' category.

⁵⁷ This saint's life contains seven examples of a laywoman as a teacher and student. For examples see Kramer et al, 'Saint Mary of Egypt', *Anonymous Old English Lives of Saints*, pp. 402, 406, 418, 422.

(There was no form of obscenity, mentionable or unmentionable, which, after becoming its instigator, I did not incite and teach).⁵⁸

Examples from hagiography illustrate the use of *læran* in different contexts to denote teaching and learning. However, most examples in prose occur in the *OEHE*. Other texts in this category include translations of Gregory the Great's *De Cura Pastoralis*, Orosius' *Historiarum*, and *ApT*, which I discuss later. Many of these examples contain representations of women as students who are educated by a variety of different teachers. Several female students occur in poems such as Cynewulf's *Juliana* and *Genesis A/B*, and homilies and hagiographies written by Ælfric. Homilies contain an especially large number of female students compared to the number of women represented as teachers.

Royalty

There are many examples of royal women as teachers and student which use *læran*, and these occur large in a collection of texts. The number of examples suggests that this was the most popular word to describe royal education out of the four studied in my research. These texts include the *OEHE*, *Or*, *ApT*, the lives of St Mildred and Mildryth, Ælfric's *The Life of St. Æthelthyrth* and *Dedicatio ecclesiae*, Cynewulf's *El*, *The Life of St Thomas*, and *Genesis A/B*. Five of these examples refer to queens as students while two describe queens as teachers.⁵⁹

Royal women, especially queens, appear as students more often in a wide variety of genres than they do as teachers in examples of *læran*. It is important to note that none of these texts describes a royal woman (who does not have a religious position) as a teacher to another royal woman. In hagiography and homilies, royal women are usually represented as the students of men, saints, or religious teachers, instead of teachers themselves. They are all

⁵⁸ Translated by Kramer et al, 'Saint Mary of Egypt', p. 407.

⁵⁹ See the *OEHE*, ii, 12, and the *Life of St Mildryth*; F. Libermann, *Die Heiligen Englands* (Hanover: 1889), section 14.

either taught by men or abbesses or teach secular men such as their husbands or sons. For example, Æthelthryth is taught by Bishop Wilfrid in the *OEHE* and Ælfric's hagiography, while an abbess named Domne Eafe instructs Mildred in religious subjects for her to become a nun.⁶⁰ In another example, the anonymous writer of the *Life of St Thomas* depicts the saint as a preacher and teacher to an unnamed queen and her daughter by using *læran*.⁶¹ However, there are also examples of secular education given by laymen. These are rare, yet they provide some insight into the use of *læran* in more than religious contexts. In *Dedicatio ecclesiae*, Ælfric suggests that King Solomon teaches a *cwēn* named Sheba through his use of *læran* in the following line: 'Salomon ða hi lærde and hire sæde ealra ðæra worda andgit þe heo hine axode' (Then Solomon taught her and spoke to her about the meaning of all the words which she had asked him).⁶² This is the only occasion that a writer uses *læran* to describe a king teaching a queen who is not his wife in an Old English text.

These texts include different types of women. Writers include a mixture of royal, monastic, and laywomen as both students and teachers of different subjects, yet some appear more than others do such as monastic women and saints. There is an evident divide between the types of women represented as students and teachers with *læran*, which highlights one of the main issues in this chapter: what sort of women did writers describe as teachers with *læran*?

1.2 Leornian: 'to learn'

Leornian has one of the smallest number of examples out of the four studied in this thesis, with 593 attestations overall. These include variants such as *liornian*. It also has one of the

⁶⁰ See *OEHE*, iv. 19 and Clayton and Mullins, 'Saint Æthelthryth', *Old English Lives of Saints*, 2, p. 196; Max Förster, 'Die altenglischen Beigaben des Lambeth-Psalter', *Archiv für das Studium der Neueren Sprachen und Literaturen* 132 (1914), 333 – 334, ll. 16 – 17.

⁶¹ See the following example: 'Thomas þa bletsode blipelice þa cwene, and lærde hi georne to geleafan' (Thomas then joyfully blessed the queen and taught her eagerly in the faith). Translated by Clayton and Mullins, 'Saint Thomas', *Old English Lives of Saints*, 3, p. 287.

⁶² M. Godden, 'Dedicatio ecclesiae', *Ælfric's Catholic Homilies: The Second Series*, Text, EETS s.s. 5 (London: 1979), 335 – 345, p. 340.

smallest semantic ranges compared to the other words examined in my research. According to Bosworth-Toller, writers use this word to denote learning, studying, and reading, all of which relate to academic study to develop a person's understanding and knowledge ('to learn').⁶³ It is the ancestor of the modern English word, *to learn*, which has a similar semantic range.

Unlike some of the other words studied in my thesis, *leornian* is not a polysemous word. In translations of Latin texts, it covers a small number of Latin words, but the most common substitution is *discere* (to learn).⁶⁴ For example, Ælfric uses the following phrase in *ÆGram* to demonstrate the use of *leornian* by using *discere* as an example of a synonymous word: '*hi pueri discunt, þas cild leorniað*' (this child learns).⁶⁵ Palacios' study demonstrated that there are many words which Old English writers used to denote learning and different types of understanding, including *oncnawan*, *rædan* and *gewitan*, all of which mean 'to know', 'to understand', 'to learn'.⁶⁶ However, *leornian* is the only one which has a direct association to academic education, both secular and religious, because of its use in descriptions of book-learning and other text-based teachings. Two examples illustrate this. First, *leornian* occurs in Wulfstan of York's text concerning the translation of the pater noster and the creed. He advocates that people should *geleornian* (learn) these two things either in Latin or English: '*butan ge hit on Leden geleornian magan, geleorniað hit huru on Englisc*' (unless you are able to learn it in Latin, learn it in English at least).⁶⁷ A second example uses *leornian* in a formulaic expression in the phrase '*swa swa we leorniað on bocum*' (just as we learn in

⁶³ Joseph Bosworth, 'leornian', *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary Online*, ed. Thomas Northcote Toller et al. (Faculty of Arts, Charles University, 2014), <<https://bosworthtoller.com/21483>> [Accessed: 01/10/2022].

⁶⁴ *Leornian* replaces *discere* more often than other words in texts such as Bede's *HE*, *ÆGram*, and several homilies. Latham and Howlett, 'discere', *DMLBS*, 1, p. 676.

⁶⁵ Zupitza, *Ælfrics Grammatik und Glossar*, p. 23.

⁶⁶ See my discussion of Palacios' work on pp. 54 – 55.

⁶⁷ Dorothy Bethurum, *Translation of the Pater Noster and of the Creed, The Homilies of Wulfstan* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957), 166 - 168.

books) in Ælfric's works as well as others.⁶⁸ These suggest that *leornian* has a strong association with the type of learning provided by monastic communities who had ready access to books and other texts as teaching tools.

Evidence from the location of attestations in particular genres also indicates that writers use *leornian* to denote a specific type of learning. There are fewer examples in poetry, legal texts, and texts which have a secular focus, than in texts which focus on themes related to religious education, such as homilies, hagiography, instructional texts, and religious prose. Examples include the writings, hagiographies and homiletic writings of Ælfric, the *Old English Martyrology* [OEM], and Bede's translator. The *OEHE* contains the largest number of examples of *leornian* in an Old English prose text, according to the result found in *The Dictionary of Old English Web Corpus* (DOEC). Many of these attestations occur in the context of religious education, as the following example demonstrates. In the *OEHE*, the translator uses *leornian* in place of *discere* in the context of monastic education to describe the type of learning achieved by the students of Aidan.

HE, iii. 5:

ut omnes qui cum eo incedebant, siue adtonsi seu laid, medita 'i deberent, id
est aut legendis scripturis aut psalmis discends operam dare.

⁶⁸ J.C. Pope, ed., 'Feria VI in prima ebdomada Quadragesimae', *Homilies of Ælfric: A Supplementary Collection*, 2 vols, EETS 259, 260 (London: 1968), 1, 230 – 42, ll. 223 – 230; Pope, 'Sermo ad populum in octavis Pentecosten dicendus', 1, 415–47, ll. 182 – 184. M. Godden, ed., 'Feria II in Letania maiore', *Ælfric's Catholic Homilies: The Second Series*, Text, EETS s.s. 5 (London: 1979), 180 – 189, p. 180. Donald Scragg, ed., 'Epiphany', *The Vercelli Homilies and Related Texts*, EETS 300 (Oxford: 1992), 267–74, l. 130. B. Fehr, 'First Old English Letter for Wulfstan', *Die Hirtenbriefe Ælfrics*, Bib. ags. Prosa 9 (Hamburg: 1914), 68–145; repr. with supplement by P.A.M. Clemons (Darmstadt: 1966), l. 37.

(all who accompanied him, whether tonsured or laymen, had to engage in some form of study, that is to say, to occupy themselves either with reading the scriptures or learning the psalms).⁶⁹

OEHE, iii. 3:

þætte eall, þa þe mid hine eodan, ge bescorene ge læwede, on swa hwilcre stowe swa hi coman, þæt hi sceoldan oððe sealmas leornian oððe oþre halige gewrito oððe þridde on halgum gebedum standan.

(That all who went with him, whether tonsured or lay, wherever they came, must either learn psalms or other holy writings, or thirdly devote themselves to holy prayer).⁷⁰

This example also implies a strong connection of *leornian* to learning of different types of subjects taught in a monastic environment, such as reading, writing, and religious knowledge. The prevalence of examples of *leornian* in the context of religious instruction might be the result of the focus of writers and their audiences on Christian education, monastic and preaching. Although there are texts which discuss learning of secular subjects, as I mentioned above, writers rarely use *leornian* to describe the student's education. Instead, they use verbs related to teaching (*læran*, *tācan*). Despite this, there are a few examples which describe secular learning, and many of these refer to women as students. This is important to my discussion of women as students because it suggests that writers use different ranges of vocabulary in representations of women learning and teaching.

Leornian and Women

⁶⁹ Translation by Colgrave and Mynors, *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, p. 227.

⁷⁰ Translation by Thomas Miller, ed. and tr., *The Old English Version of Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, 2 vols (London: University of Toronto Press, 1890), 1, pp. 161, 163.

Although there are several attestations of this word in the corpus of Old English literature, few occur in examples of women. It has the second smallest percentage of examples related to women as teachers and students; only 2.3%. There are several examples in this small group which depict women as students in Old English prose and hagiography. These are limited to a handful of texts such as the *OEHE*, *ApT*, and the *Life of St. Mary of Egypt*. However, there are a few which show women as teachers. These include the *OEHE*, book IV, in which the translator suggests that a nun named Begu is a religious teacher to her fellow nuns, Ælfric's *Life of St Agatha*, which contains a female teacher and student, and the entry for St. Marina in the *OEM*.⁷¹ Each of these examples refers to religious education except for the *Life of Saint Agatha* which concerns secular teaching to lead the candidate for sainthood away from Christianity. This is an unusual example of *leornian* which focuses on secular teachings related to sexual activities. In the text, Agatha's suitor, Quintianus, places her in the care of a *fracedosta wimman* (most shameful woman) and her daughters who are also described as *myltestran* (prostitutes) [*ÆLS Agatha*, 14, 13] after Agatha refuses his advances. Ælfric informs his audience that Agatha's suitor intended for her to learn (*leornian*) Afrodosia's ways:

þæt heo geond þrittig nihte hire þeawas leornode

Andhire mod awende þurh þæra myltestrena forspennincgæ.

(...in order that for thirty days she might learn her way of conducting

herself and change her mind through the enticements of the prostitutes.).⁷²

⁷¹ See *OEHE*, iv. 24; G. Kotzor, 'London, British Library, MS. Cotton Julius A.X', *Das altenglische Martyrologium*, Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften 88/1, 2 vols (Munich: 1981), 2, 1 – 266, July 7th; Mary Clayton and Juliet Mullins, eds. and trs., 'Saint Agatha and Saint Lucy', *The Old English Lives of Saints*, 1, 249 – 279, p. 250.

⁷² Translated by Clayton and Mullins: 'Saint Agatha and Saint Lucy', *Old English Lives of Saints*, 1, p. 251.

Ælfric's decision to use *leornian* in this context is complicated since the Latin *vita* of Agatha does not use *discere* or any other related verb.⁷³ Ælfric also does not use any nouns related to education (*lareow* or *magistra*) to indicate the context of the learning provided here. Thus, how did Ælfric intend his audience to understand the laywomen's involvement in Agatha's 'education'? This example of *leornian* demonstrates that its use in representations of women as students is less straightforward than in other examples which often occur in religious contexts.

My examination of *leornian* focuses on the depictions of religious and royal women as students to consider whether the use of this word indicates moments of academic education for secular and religious subjects. Although there are few texts which use this word to describe women's learning, there are some examples from texts such as the *OEHE* and *ApT* which are important to my discussion. I consider whether these writers used words such as *leornian* alongside other words (*læran* and *tācan*) to highlight especial instances of learning.

1.3 Tācan: 'teach, show, command'

Tācan has a more complicated use in Old English texts because it has an extensive semantic range. This word has the most diverse semantic range out of the four studied because writers use this verb in the following ways: 'to offer a view, show; to direct, appoint, decree; to teach, educate'.⁷⁴ There are 640 examples of this word found in the DOE and other sources. Despite its less frequent use than other words such as *læran*, examples of *tācan* occur in a wider range of genres and texts, which include both men and women as teachers, instructors, and students. However, some genres contain more attestations than others. These include

⁷³ *Passio sancte Agathe virginis et martyris*, London, British Library, Cotton MS Nero E i.1, ff. 148r–149v, f. 148r.

⁷⁴ Joseph Bosworth, 'tācan', *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary Online*, ed. Thomas Northcote Toller et al (Faculty of Arts, Charles University, 2014), <<https://bosworthtoller.com/30117>> [Accessed 05/10/2022].

legal texts (such as law codes, charters, and wills), homilies, and instructional texts. Some examples include grammatical texts such as *ÆGram* and Wulfstan's *Institutes of Polity* (*WPol* henceforth) in which he describes the duties of men and women from kings to monks and nuns from his perspective.⁷⁵ The use of *tācan* in these three genres more often than others suggests that it has a special purpose.

There is an evident difference between the sources which use *tācan* and those who use other words such as *lāran* to describe education and instruction. For example, there is a distinct lack of examples of *tācan* from the *OEHE*, *CP*, and Ælfric's saints' lives, which use *lāran* more frequently. There is also an absence of *tācan* in Old English poems which include secular themes, such as *Beo* and *The Battle of Maldon*. However, there are several examples from poems with a religious focus such as *Genesis A/B* in the Junius manuscript and *Andreas* and *Elene* in the *Vercelli Book*, and singular occurrences in a few minor poems. These include poems known as *The Season for Fasting*, *The Soul to the Body (A)*, and *Christ and Satan*. The prevalence of examples of *tācan* in texts which discuss religious subjects or that mention monastic instruction suggests that writers used this word in religious contexts more than secular. These texts include homilies, religious instructions, and religious treatises. There are many texts written by Ælfric, Wulfstan, and others which discuss matters of religious practice in letters and instructional texts.

Glosses, Latin Sources, and Translations

Tācan appears less often in Old English glosses than the other words examined in this thesis. In *Carmen Pascale*, the translator uses *tæcende* to gloss *monstrantes* from the Latin word *monstrare*.⁷⁶ This word has several meanings which range from showing information to

⁷⁵ K. Jost, 'Die 'Institutes of Polity, Civil and Ecclesiastical'', *Swiss Studies in English*, 47 (1959), 39 – 164.

⁷⁶ H.D. Meritt, 'Carmen Paschale', *Old English Glosses: A Collection*, MLA General Series 16 (New York: 1945), [repr. 1971], gloss 65.

speech: ‘to show’, ‘point out’, ‘indicate’, ‘intimate’, ‘inform’, ‘advise’, ‘teach’, ‘instruct’, ‘tell’.⁷⁷ In this discussion, I refer to this visual transmission of information, noted above by ‘to show’ and ‘point out’, as *demonstration*. Several of the above meanings also refer to education. It implies that examples of ‘teaching’ which use *tācan* can refer to a unique type of education that uses demonstration as a principal method of communication.

It is essential to assess other evidence from Old English translations of Latin texts to examine the use of *tācan* since it was used to gloss a few Latin words. There are three main words which occur most frequently in examples which use *tācan* as a substitute: *monstrare*, *docere*, and *iubere*. These three signify different approaches to teaching and instruction which I separate into three categories: education, instruction, and demonstration. Below, I consider how translators use *tācan* to replace each of these Latin words in examples of Old English translations.

Semantic range

Writers use *tācan* in a variety of ways and in different contexts. Its most common use is to describe how teachers ‘teach’ students and ‘show’ information in a way that leads to new ideas or to accomplish tasks.⁷⁸ Wulfstan refers to the religious teaching provided by books several times in his writings: ‘swa swa bec tæcan’, which reflects a similar academic education suggested in the use of *leornian* and reading materials, as I mentioned previously. Similar to examples of *læran*, *tācan* also appears in examples of negative or incorrect teaching and instruction. The only example of *mistācan*, with the prefix *mis-*,⁷⁹ occurs in a homily attributed to Ælfric of Eynsham in which he describes the expectations of *lareowas* (teachers): ‘gif hi mistæcað oððe misbysniað hi forpærað hi sylfe’ (if they teach wrongly, or

⁷⁷ Latham and Howlett et al, ‘monstrare’, *DMLBS*, 2, p. 1833.

⁷⁸ Bosworth-Toller uses ‘shewing’ as the most suitable word to describe *tācan*.

⁷⁹ See Bosworth, ‘mis-tæcan’, *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary Online*, ed. Thomas Northcote Toller et al (Faculty of Arts, Charles University, 2014), <<https://bosworthtoller.com/22990>>. [Accessed 05/10/2022].

set examples wrongly, they pervert themselves).⁸⁰ In these examples and others, writers primarily use *tācan* to signify teaching in religious contexts such as monastic instruction and preaching.

Old English writers also use *tācan* to describe direction, declaration, showing, and demonstration of information. These do not relate directly to education but instruction. I refer to these connotations as ‘instructions’ rather than teachings because they often refer to commands, decrees, and directions. The latter occurs in a small number of contexts, namely in legal texts or instructional texts to signify monastic governance given by a man or women of rank, such as a bishop or abbess. Writers emphasise the same sense in legal texts. For example, in the legal text known as ‘The Dispute of Wynflæd’ (the case of Wynflæd and her son over her right to certain land), the scribe describes events with the following line: ‘Þa tæhte man hyre þæt hio sciolde bringan his fæder gold & siolfor eal þæt hio hæfde’ (then, she was ordered to bring all his father’s gold and silver, all that she had). In this example, the scribe uses *tācan* to describe an instruction instead of teachings.⁸¹ Thus, *tācan* is a word which can refer to education or instruction, that is, teaching or commands. Evidence from Old English glosses and translations also indicates that translators used *tācan* to denote a diverse range of teaching. The difference between these meanings suggests that *tācan* is a complicated verb.

In the sections below, I will analyse three examples from Old English texts which demonstrate the different uses of *tācan* in different contexts and genres. Each of the examples suggests a different reading of *tācan* which concern either education, instruction,

⁸⁰ M. Godden, ‘Epiphany’, *Ælfric's Catholic Homilies: The Second Series, Text*, EETS s.s. 5 (London: 1979), 19 – 28, p. 26.

⁸¹ Other examples include the law codes of Cnut, Æthelstan, and Eadgar, the charter of King Æthelred to Ælfthryth his Mother (S.887) in S. Miller, ed., *Charters of the New Minster, Winchester, Anglo-Saxon Charters*, 9 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 150 – 151; and several versions of the *Rule of St. Benedict*. I discuss some of these examples in chapter 4.

or demonstration. These texts include *The Life of St Guthlac*, Ælfric's *Colloquy*, and a section from the Old English translation of *The Rule of St. Benedict*. Each of these examples contains essential markers which are relevant to the understanding of the different uses of *tācan* in religious and secular contexts.

Monstrare: Demonstration in *The Life of St. Guthlac*

My first example of *tācan* suggests that this word can signify the communication of information through images, visions, physical examples, or any medium that uses sight to provide information. To discuss this, I examine an example from an anonymous hagiographic text, known as *The Life of St. Guthlac (LS 10.1 [Guth])*.⁸² Guthlac was a Mercian warrior who converted to Christianity and became a hermit in Crowland. This text presents a reasonable entry point to examine *tācan* because of the volume of examples of this word in this genre, especially in saints' lives with anonymous translators.⁸³ An anonymous translator created *LS 10.1 (Guth)* in the tenth century. This text provides a vernacular retelling of the life of St. Guthlac from the Latin source known as Felix's *Vita Sancti Guthlaci (VSG)*, located in three tenth-century manuscripts such as London, British Library, Royal MS 13 A XV; this manuscript was written by an East Anglian monk.⁸⁴ The example of *tācan* occurs during Guthlac's encounter with a man named Tatwine. Below, I place both the Latin and vernacular descriptions of this encounter.

⁸² I use the edition by Johanna Kramer, Hugh Magennis, and Robin Norris, eds. and trs., 'Saint Guthlac' *Anonymous Old English Lives of Saints* (Cambridge, Ma.: Harvard University Press, 2021), 141 – 217.

⁸³ Other anonymous Old English saints' lives which have examples of *tācan* include the lives of St. Margaret, Mary of Egypt, Neot, Nicholas, James the Greater, and The Seven Sleepers. See examples in various editions: Mary Clayton and Hugh Magennis, eds. and trs., *The Old English Life of St. Margaret* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), para 4. Also, Kramer et al, *Anonymous Old English Lives of Saints*: 'Saint Mary of Egypt', p. 384; 'Saint Neot', p. 470; 'Saint Nicholas', p. 502; 'Saint James the Greater', p. 228; 'The Seven Sleepers', p. 642.

⁸⁴ See Royal MS 13 A XV, British Library, Digital Collections (2021), available at: < https://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Royal_MS_13_A_XV >. Three copies of VSG are located in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 207 (ff. 1r – 52r) which contains a complete copy, London, British Library, Royal MS 13 A. xv (ff. 1r - 45v), and Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 8389 (ff. 18r - 66r). Christine Voth, 'Three Tenth-Century Latin Manuscripts of Felix's Vita S. Guthlaci', *Guthlac: Crowland's Saint*, ed. Jane Roberts and Alan Thacker (Donnington: Shaun Tyas Publishers, 2020), 116 – 137, p. 161.

VSG, xxv, 88:

Quo audito, vir beatae recordationis Guthlac ilium locum monstrari sibi a
narrante efflagitabat.⁸⁵

(Guthlac, the man of blessed memory, on hearing this, earnestly besought
his informant to show him the place).⁸⁶

LS 10.1 (Guth), 3. 21 - 22:

Mid þam þe se halga wer Guðlac þa word gehyrde, he bæd sona, þæt he
him þa stowe getæhte, and he þa sona swa dyde.

(When the holy man, Guthlac, heard these words, he immediately asked
that he show him the place, and he immediately did so).

Although the Old English saint's life diverges from the original Latin text, much of the narrative remains the same. In both texts, the main character, Guthlac, asks a local man to show him the way to a place named Crowland. This is an obscure and hidden island which is only known to a selected few, as the following reveals: 'hit swyþe feawe men wiston, buton þam anum, þe hyt him tæhte' (very few men knew of it, except for one who showed it to him) [*LS 10.1 (Guth)*, 3. 23].⁸⁷ Tatwine has the information and provides this to Guthlac to enable him to find the location.

The Old English translator uses *tæcan* in the two examples above of Tatwine providing directions, as demonstrated above, which suggests that translator found this word to be the most appropriate for the context. However, to what extent can we consider this teaching? The

⁸⁵ I use Betram Colgrave's edition: B. Colgrave, ed. and tr., *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac: Texts, Translation and Notes* (Cambridge: Cambridge, 1985), 59-172. See page 88.

⁸⁶ Colgrave, *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, p. 89.

⁸⁷ There is no equivalent of this line in *VSG*.

writer does not use any nouns such as *lareow* to indicate that the translator viewed Tatwine as a teacher. Instead, he has a vague description of *sum man* (a man) in the Old English version. The lack of any further information about him highlights the need to carefully examine his association with *tācan*. The secular subject of ‘showing him the way to a physical location’ along with his vague description suggests that Tatwine does not provide education but demonstration. More detail appears in the Latin account which uses an important set of vocabulary.

Felix uses the word *narrante* ('the one narrating') to describe Tatwine when he informs those present of his specialised knowledge of the island. The Latin writer also uses *monstrare* (to reveal, point out, show) to describe how Tatwine provides the location to Guthlac. Both details direct the audience to a particular understanding of the type of education depicted in this example. He uses *monstrare* to describe the transmission of information, which could either suggest that Tatwine *teaches* Guthlac the location, or that he *shows* him the place. As I mentioned above, *monstrare* is a polysemous Latin word, but it does not often occur in educational contexts such as monastic settings or teacher-pupil interactions. These situations more often use *docere* or other descriptors such as nouns for teacher (*doctor*, *doctrix*). The absence of another verb more directly associated with teaching suggests that this instance is unrelated to education as seen in *ÆColl*. Instead, *tācan* refers to the transmission of information achieved visually.

Evidence from Felix’s writing style also suggests that he wished to describe this type of communication of information. Felix’s *VSG* took inspiration from other Latin hagiographies such as Bede’s *Vita Sancti Cuthberti* and Sulpicius Severus’ *Vita Martini*.⁸⁸ His text contains

⁸⁸ Britton Brooks, ‘Felix’s Construction of the English Fenlands: Landscape, Authorising Allusion, and Lexical Echo’, *Guthlac: Crowland’s Saint*, ed. Jane Roberts and Alan Thacker (Donnington: Shaun Tyas Publishers, 2020), 55 - 71, pp. 56 – 62.

several instances of lexical borrowings from these saints' lives to create 'literary allusions' that he 'expected his readers to recognise'.⁸⁹ Brooks notes that Felix took lines directly from Bede's text to use in his *vita* to achieve this. An examination of Bede's account of St Cuthbert shows that it contains the word *monstrare* as well in a similar context to the example in *VSG*. For example, Bede describes how Cuthbert looked for evidence of a man's footsteps: 'recens autem nix terram texerat, quae facillime uiantis iter proderet, et quo declinaret monstraret' (fresh snow had covered the earth which would very easily betray the steps of a person walking over it and would show whither he had turned).⁹⁰ Since he used Bede as a source, Felix may also have used similar verbs to Bede to describe certain actions such as the 'showing' of information, especially related to directions of travel.

There is no Old English translation of the *Vita Sancti Cuthberti* which we can use to confirm whether a translator would have also replaced this instance of *monstrare* with *tācan*. Old English translators rarely use *tācan* to translate *monstrare* in other texts. This Latin word does not appear often in the context of education because it occurs in the context of manifestations of information, as Bede's example indicates. Instead, translators use other words with strong associations to visual forms of communication. Defensor's *Liber Scintillarum* and the Old English translation of *The Rule of St. Benedict* use *geswutelian* (to declare, make known, show, manifest) to replace *monstrare*.⁹¹ This Latin word is synonymous with other verbs used to denote visual methods of information transmission,

⁸⁹ Brooks, 'Felix's Construction of the English Fenlands: Landscape, Authorising Allusion, and Lexical Echo', p. 56.

⁹⁰ Bertram Colgrave, ed. and tr., *Two Lives of Saint Cuthbert: A Life by an Anonymous Monk of Lindisfarne and Bede's Prose Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), chapter VII, p. 178. For other examples of *monstrare*, see chapter XXII, p. 228: 'fragilia saeculi huius et prospera simul et adversa monstrare' (at show them how fleeting were both the pleasures and sorrows of this world), and chapter XLII, p. 290: 'volens autem latius monstrare divina dispensatio quanta in gloria vir sanctus post mortem viveret' (however, the divine Providence wished to show further in what glory the holy man lived after his death) [all translations by Colgrave].

⁹¹ See examples in Henricus M. Rochais, *Liber scintillarum, Corpus Christianorum*, series Latina 117 (Turnholt: 1957), chapters 1 and 8; Bruce L. Venarde, ed. and tr., *The Rule of Saint Benedict*, DOML 6 (Cambridge Ma.: Harvard University Press, 2011), chapters 7, 34, 73; and H. Gneuss, *Hymnar und Hymnen im englischen Mittelalter*, Buchreihe der Anglia, 12 (Tübingen: 1968), 265 – 413, hymn 58.

such as *indicare* (to point out, inform, declare), *exhibere* (to present, deliver), and *ostendere* (to show, point out, exhibit). Thus, the use of *monstrare* in Felix's *vita* is more likely to relate to the demonstration of information than the type of academic education signified by *docere* or *instruere* in other examples.

There are other factors which affect the reading of *tācan* in this text: the 'teacher' and the taught subject. Tatwine's experience presents another significant clue to uncover the semantic range apparent in this example. He is not described as a teacher but a person with a distinct type of knowledge. Therefore, we cannot view him in the same way as the teacher in *ÆColl* or the monastic teachers in Hild's monasteries. Tatwine is simply a layman in both versions with knowledge of a location, which is key to his association with *tācan*. In the Old English version, Tatwine tells Guthlac that he knows of the place he seeks [3.15]: 'þæt he wiste sum ealand synderlice digle' (...that he knew of some especially hidden island). Felix also describes him as a man with key information about the location. He reveals to his audience that Guthlac asked others, *illius loci* ([people] of the place), but they did not know about the island. Tatwine has this special knowledge from his experience to provide a demonstration of this information.

Also, this reading relies on the focus on a physical place. The best way for Guthlac to learn of a location is through a guide with experience of the area. As a local man, Tatwine can provide the knowledge in a way most appropriate to the subject and the type of 'teacher', which the Latin indicates with *monstrari*. Therefore, *tācan* more than likely signifies a form of demonstration in these situations. It depends on similar markers which indicate education, such as the expertise of the teacher, but they are not always as easy to distinguish. The presentation of the instructor in this example as a suitable source, any other linguistic evidence such as Latin, and the taught subjects are essential pieces of information. The instructor does not need to have an educational role to provide physical directions but does

need to have a specific type of knowledge applicable to the subject. The taught subject requires a visual method of teaching, such as a location or hidden object which must be ‘shown’ to be revealed. All these are present in *LS 10.1 (Guth)*, and it provides evidence of an alternative use of *tācan*.

Other examples which suggest that same sense appear in texts that have a focus on narrative such as historical prose, like *OEHE* [iii.8, iv.1, v.17], and poems like *Beo* [312, 2013] and *Genesis A/B* [2874, 2686, 2886]. For instance, the *Beo* poet uses *tācan* to describe how a man offers directions to Beowulf.

Beo, 312 – 313a:

Him þa hildedeor hof modigra
torht getæhte þæt hie him to mihton
gegnum ganga.
(So their gallant escort guided them
to that dazzling stronghold and indicated
the shortest way to it).⁹²

In these lines, the context suggests that the man provides directions to place, not a lesson. These examples include men in various roles, who direct or show their 'student(s)' to a location, placement, object, or person. There are no examples of *tācan* in representations of women as teachers in texts which suggest this reading.

⁹² Translated by Heaney, *Beowulf: A Verse Translation*, p. 10.

Docere: Education in Ælfric's Colloquy

My second example concerns the use of *tācan* to denote education in monastic settings. The most common setting in which writers use this word is when the original Latin source uses *docere*. In these translated texts, *tācan* signifies the provision of new knowledge or skills to educate students. The educational purpose signifies that the individual who provides the information is a 'teacher' regardless of the subject. A clear example of this use occurs in a translation of Ælfric of Eynsham's *Colloquy* (*ÆColl* hereafter). This is a widely discussed Latin text with an interlinear gloss that provides crucial evidence of pedagogy in the early medieval English kingdoms.⁹³ A copy survives in a late eleventh-century manuscript known as London, British Library, MS Cotton Tiberius A iii, ff. 60v-64v, which is believed to be the closest to Ælfric's original text.⁹⁴ This manuscript also contains several texts which share similar themes and vocabularies such as the Old English version of *RSB* and the *Regularis Concordia*. It was written after Ælfric's *Grammar* and *Glossary*, two texts which included lessons in Latin and Old English grammar and translation.⁹⁵ It is also assumed that 'the three texts thus formed a systematic pedagogical set'.⁹⁶

ÆColl contains a written dialogue between a teacher and their pupils on the matter of correct speech. Whereas Ælfric was responsible for the Latin text of *ÆColl*, another anonymous author provided the Old English translation. The translator, Ælfric Bata, is one of Ælfric's male students who likely translated the Latin text using the study materials of the grammar

⁹³ For the most recent publications about this text, see Thomas N. Hall, 'Ælfric As Pedagogue', *A Companion to Ælfric*, ed. Hugh Magennis and Mary Swan, (Leiden, Brill, 2009), 193 – 161; Irina A Dumitrescu, 'Violence, Performance, and Pedagogy in Ælfric Bata's Colloquies', *Exemplaria*, 23:1 (2011), 67-91; Rebecca King Cerling, 'Learning to Talk: Colloquies and the Formation of Childhood Monastic Identity in Late Anglo-Saxon England', *Literary Cultures and Medieval and Early Modern Childhoods*, ed. Naomi Miller and Dianne Purkiss, *Literary Cultures and Childhoods* 18 (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 21 – 36.

⁹⁴ See *British Library Digital Collections*, (2021), available at:

https://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=cotton_ms_tiberius_a_iii_f002r, [accessed 30/08/2022].

⁹⁵ Joyce Hill, 'Winchester Pedagogy and the Colloquy of Ælfric', *Leeds Studies in English*, 29, (1998), 137-52, p. 140.

⁹⁶ Ibid. Also see Scott Gwara and David W. Porter, tr., *Anglo-Saxon Conversations: The Colloquies of Aelfric Bata* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press Ltd., 1997), pp. 2 - 17.

and glosses.⁹⁷ Dumitrescu also comments that Ælfric Bata used his translations to help other students in his community in Canterbury.⁹⁸ In this example, the pupils open the discussion with a plea for learning. The example below presents the Latin original with the Old English parallel translation:

ÆColl, 1 – 3:

Nos pueri rogamus te, magister, ut doceas nos loqui latialiter recte, quia
idiote sumus & corrupte loquimur.

Ʒe cildra biddaþ þe, eala lareow, þæt þu tæce us sprecaþ forþam ungelærede
we syndon & gewæmmodlice we sprecaþ.

(We children ask you, O' teacher, that you teach us to speak because we are
unlearned and speak incorrectly).

It is evident that the Latin text was written with male students in mind because of the use of *puer* (a boy). In the Latin line above, the translator uses *doceas* from *docere* which carries the senses ‘to teach’, ‘to inform’, or ‘to cause to be known’, as I explained earlier. In these texts, *docere* has a strong emphasis on education related to the transmission of knowledge. The Old English text follows the Latin original closely and provides a word-by-word translation to allow students to learn vocabulary and grammar. *Tæcan* is the word used to describe the teaching given by a *lareow* and *magister* on matters of speech, as the Old English word *sprecaþ* and the Latin term, *loquare* (both mean ‘to speak’) demonstrate. Since *tæcan* appears as the replacement of *docere*, it is likely that it also had an educational emphasis in *ÆColl*.

⁹⁷ Gwara and Porter, tr., *Anglo-Saxon Conversations: The Colloquies of Aelfric Bata*, p. 2.

⁹⁸ Dumitrescu, ‘Violence, Performance, and Pedagogy in Ælfric Bata's Colloquies’, pp. 68 – 69.

In this text, the translator used a small vocabulary to create sense and cohesion for the audience, which suggests that it was intended to be a teaching tool.⁹⁹ However, this is the only example of *tācan* in the text. Also, *docere* can also refer to someone signalling or showing information in a similar way to *monstrare*, but these instances are much rarer. The various uses of words such as *docere* and *monstrare* to denote education and demonstration suggests that teaching was a complex practice in the early medieval period. Without further evidence of the Latin text to support the reading of *tācan*, the audience needs to rely on other markers within the example to uncover the type of ‘teaching’ performed here.

First, the context of this text can also help to identify the intended reading of *tācan* here. Many examples of *tācan* occur in the context of religious education. This involved a variety of subjects, including religious matters, language, writing, and reading. Thomas Hall notes that this colloquy was ‘unambiguously designed for use in monastic schools’ alongside the *Grammar* and *Glossary* to the extent that it continued to be of use long after Ælfric’s lifetime.¹⁰⁰ Therefore, the teaching described is an example of religious education similar to the type taught in monastic schools.

The next markers involve the other vocabulary used in this example. The translator uses the adjective *ungelæred* (uneducated, untaught, unskilled) to describe the children. This is the only time that this appears in the text. The use of this word suggests that this is an example of education rather than another type of education since it appears often in examples of monastic teaching. For instance, it occurs frequently in texts with a religious focus, namely homilies and religious treatise written by Ælfric, Wulfstan, and Gregory the Great’s translator.¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ Hill, ‘Winchester Pedagogy and the Colloquy of Ælfric’, p. 141.

¹⁰⁰ Hall, ‘Ælfric As Pedagogue’, p. 194.

¹⁰¹ See for examples: P.A.M. Clemoes, ‘Circumcision’, *Ælfric’s Catholic Homilies: The First Series*, 224-31, p. 226; Malcolm Godden, ‘Cuthbert’, *Ælfric’s Catholic Homilies: The Second Series*, Text, EETS s.s. 5 (London: 1979), 81 – 91, p. 84; ‘Eighth Sunday after Pentecost’, 230 – 234, p. 233; ‘Ninth Sunday after Pentecost’, 235-40, p. 237; H. Bischof Hecht, *Wærferths von Worcester Uebersetzung der Dialoge Gregors des Grossen*, Bib.

Wulfstan uses the phrase *ungelærede men* several times in his criticisms of unlearned priests and laymen.¹⁰² Also, the use of the noun *lareow*, which refers to a teacher often in monastic settings, suggests that this example is set in a specific type of educational environment.

Although Ælfric did not write the Old English text, he regularly paired *lareow* with *tæcan* in *ÆGram*. The noun and the verb in his grammatical treatise appeared with the Latin noun *magister* and the verb *docere* more than once, as the example below demonstrates:

ÆGram, 23.2:

o magister, doce me aliquid.

eala ðu lareow, tæce me sum ðing.

(O' teacher, teach me something).

Ælfric Bata perceived *tæcan* to be the appropriate term for the monastic teaching given by someone in a teaching role, such as a priest or member of the Canterbury religious community. Although teachers in Old English texts did not need to be described with *lareow* or *magister* to teach, the presence of these nouns offers an indication that academic teaching took place rather than any other form of education. The role of a teacher, given the title *lareow* or *magister*, also focuses on education in other Old English sources. Examples of this pairing occur in Ælfric's homilies, the Old English translation of *CP* [21.161], and instructional texts like Chrodegang of Metz's *Regula Canoniorum* [Ch. 58]. Each of these uses *tæcan* to describe a teacher to signify an instance of teaching. Thus, Ælfric Bata demonstrates that this word could denote teaching in this context.

ags. Prosa 5 (Leipzig and Hamburg: 1907) [repr. Darmstadt 1965], Book 1, p. 34; Preface to Book 2, p. 95; Book 2, p. 110.

¹⁰² See Dorothy Bethurum, 'The Deeds of Antichrist', *The Homilies of Wulfstan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1957), 128-33; 'An Outline of History', 142-56; 'Baptism', 172-4, for examples.

Iubere: Instruction in The Rule of St. Benedict

My third example of *tācan* concerns a form of instruction, demonstrated using *iubere*. This word has only one use to denote an order or instruction.¹⁰³ An example of *iubere* appears in an instructional text with a religious focus, the Latin version of *The Rule of St. Benedict* (*RSB*). The original Latin *Rule* was created in 540CE for Italian monasteries by Benedict of Nursia to act as a guide to monastic conduct and governance.¹⁰⁴ It was one of many religious handbooks written in the medieval period, yet this one grew in popularity in European and English kingdoms from the ninth century.¹⁰⁵ However, the *RSB* was already familiar to monasteries in the early English kingdoms in the seventh and eighth centuries since the earliest copy was produced in the south around this time.¹⁰⁶ There are several Old English and Middle English translations of this text, some written for a male audience, as evident in the pronouns used, and feminised versions, which I discuss in Chapter 4. In this section, I examine one of the earliest known Old English translations that King Edgar and Queen Ælfthryth commissioned in the late tenth century during the period of Benedictine reform. Bishop Æthelwold provided this text, which I refer to as the *BenR*, for the use of male monastic communities.¹⁰⁷ It contains several examples of *tācan*.

An example from the *BenR* shows that writers applied this word to monastic instruction. The *Rule* is an instructional text devised to provide a set of rules for the organisation of monasteries and set the behaviour of religious communities.¹⁰⁸ I wish to discuss the example in Chapter 60, which details the proper conduct for priests who wish to reside in the

¹⁰³ Latham and Howlett et al, ‘iubere’, *DMLBS*, 1, p. 1505. They list the following uses with this verb: ‘to direct, tell, order’.

¹⁰⁴ Venarde, *The Rule of Saint Benedict*, pp. vii – xi.

¹⁰⁵ Scott G. Bruce, ‘Textual Triage and Pastoral Care in the Carolingian Age: The Example of the Rule of Benedict’, *Traditio*, 75 (2020), 127–141, p. 121.

¹⁰⁶ Sarah Foot, *Monastic Life in Anglo-Saxon England, c. 600 – 900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 50, also see fn. 59.

¹⁰⁷ Gretsch, ‘Æthelwold’s translation of the Regula Sancti Benedicti and its Latin exemplar’, p. 125.

¹⁰⁸ I use the following edition of the Old English text: A. Schröer, *Die angelsächsischen Prosabearbeitungen der Benediktinerregel*, Bib. ags. Prosa 2 (Kassel: 1888) [repr. with appendix by H. Gneuss (Darmstadt 1964)].

monastery. The Old English and Latin versions have similar terminology with little differentiation between the readings.

RSB, 60.194:

Concedatur ei tamen post abbatem stare et benedicere aut missas tenere, sit
amen iusserit ei abbass.

(Still, he should be permitted to stand behind the abbot and give blessings
or celebrate Mass, if the abbot orders him to).¹⁰⁹

BenR, 60. 107:

Sy him gefafod, þæt he styde æfter þam abbode healde and þæt he mæssan
singe, gif se abbod swa tæce.

(He should however be permitted to stand next to the abbot and sing mass if
the abbot so directs).¹¹⁰

These two sections concern the appropriateness of the priest to participate in monastic activities. The Latin *RSB* uses *iusserit* from *iubere* to signify that the abbot commands or decrees this motion, whereas the Old English uses *tācan*. *Iubere* is not an educational word but an instructional one which signifies a command or decree (to command, order, tell). This word is used for direct and jussive instructions given by instructors in positions of rank and authority, such as kings, lords, bishops, and abbots. The use of *iubere* instead of another more educational term shows that the abbot does not offer any form of teaching in this context. Instead, the author focuses on the abbot's role as the leader of his monastic community to

¹⁰⁹ Translation by Venarde, *The Rule of Saint Benedict*, p. 195.

¹¹⁰ I use Rieff's translation of the Old English Rule from his book: Jacob Rieff, ed. and tr., *The Old English Rule of Saint Benedict with Related Old English Texts* (Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2017), pp. 27 – 140. See p. 119 for the above translation.

direct them. It is the instructor's social position which is key to this understanding of *iubere* and *tācan*.

There is further evidence which demonstrates this reading of *tācan* in the feminised version of the *Rule*, known as the Winteney version (*BenRW*) because of its connection to Winteney Priory. This text is significant for the study of women and *tācan* as it is one of the few sources to mention women as teachers. It is equally valuable as a source of reference to understand the vocabulary used in Æthelwold's version. Chapter 60 in *BenRW* contains the same sentence with similar connotation:

BenRW, 60:

Sy hyre gefafod, þæt heo stede æfter þære abbodesse healde & bletsunge
sylle, gyf þeo abbodesse swa hate.

(Still, she should be allowed to stand behind the abbess and give blessings
if the abbess so commands).

This text is much later than Æthelwold's version as it was a thirteenth-century compilation for a group of Cistercian nuns.¹¹¹ For this reason, there are several differences between the two. However, there are also many shared aspects, such as the concepts, themes, and vocabulary which have similar semantic ranges. For instance, in this example the translator substitutes *tācan* for *hātan* (to command, order) which carries the same connotation as *iubere*. Since the *BenRW* and the Latin *RSB* versions uses synonymous words, *tācan* in *BenR* may also contain the same emphasis of a command. Thus, the three sources offer evidence that this verb can convey instructions to direct readers in instructional texts when delivered by a person of authority.

¹¹¹ Mechthild Gretsch, 'Æthelwold's translation of the "Regula Sancti Benedicti" and its Latin exemplar', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 3 (1974), 125-151, p. 138.

Other examples which suggest a similar use of *tācan* include legal texts such as various law codes (Æthelstan, Edgar, Edmund, and Cnut) and charters.¹¹² Earlier, I cited an example of *tācan* in the law dispute between Wynflæd and Leofric which suggested that the scribe used this word to signify a legal decree.¹¹³ *Tācan* also appears in the *Penitential of pseudo-Egbert*, confessors' handbooks, and Wulfstan's *WPol* on multiple occasions.¹¹⁴ In these texts, the writers' use *tācan* in religious contexts to describe instructions given by a person of rank. An example from an account of King Edgar's establishment of monasticism, written in the late tenth century by Bishop Æthelwold, suggests a similar focus on instructions given to female religious:

Abbodissum we eac tæcaþ þæt hi inholde sin and þæs halgan regoles
gebodum eallum mode þeowigen.¹¹⁵

(To abbesses, we instruct that they must uphold loyalty and serve the
commands of the holy rule with all their heart).

Here, the writer directs abbesses to consider their behaviour and maintain their loyalty rather than asking or advising, which another word such as *læran* or *trymmian* might indicate. This example shows that writers used *tācan* to indicate that men and women received instructions. It is unclear in this text whether it is Æthelwold or King Edgar who is the instructor here.¹¹⁶

¹¹² For examples, see F. Liebermann, 'V Æthelred', *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen* (Halle: 1916) [repr. Aalen 1960], law 27; 'VI Æthelstan', law 8.8, 8.9; 'IV Eadgar', law 1.5.

¹¹³ See p. 104 above.

¹¹⁴ For examples see Roger Fowler, 'A Late Old English Handbook for the Use of a Confessor,' *Anglia* 83, (1965), 27. 325; Jost, K., 'Die Institutes of Polity, Civil and Ecclesiastical', *Swiss Studies in English*, 47 (Bern: 1959), ll. 7-9, 210 – 211; J. Raith, *Die altenglische Version des Halitgar'schen Bussbuches*, Bibliothek der angelsächsischen Prosa, 13 (Hamburg: Henri Grand Publishers, 1933), 14., 2.1, 2.14.

¹¹⁵ Whitelock, 'An Account of King Edgar's Establishment of Monasteries', l. 315.

¹¹⁶ David Pratt disputes the idea of the speaker in this section from the presence of first-person narration which implies 'a "royal" voice constructed and presented as the king's by Æthelwold as author'. See David Pratt, 'The voice of the king in 'King Edgar's Establishment of Monasteries'', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 41, (2012), p. 160.

However, both as men in high-ranking positions could provide the type of instruction suggested by *tācan*.

Understanding *Tācan*

Each of the three examples discussed above suggests that translators of Latin texts use *tācan* to emphasis different senses in its semantic range. This includes the denotation of different forms of teaching and instruction. Other examples also mentioned above from original Old English texts, such as *Beo*, Wulfstan's writings, and legal texts, show that *tācan* had multiple uses in the wider corpus of Old English literature. The contrast between the educational and demonstrative uses of *docere* and *monstrare*, and the instructional emphasis of words such as *iubere*, demonstrate that Old English translators used *tācan* as a polysemous word. However, the polysemous nature of the Latin words, such as *monstrare*, which cover both aspects, also shows that it is difficult to determine the intended reading of *tācan* without an examination of the markers present in the text. Also, it is not always possible to place an example neatly into a single category based on the information presented in the text. It is necessary to consult the surrounding vocabulary and genre of a text to understand the use of *tācan* in a single example. This is essential in examples of women as teachers and students because of the diverse ways in which *tācan* can impact their representations. There are fewer texts which use *tācan* in the context of women as students and teachers than some of the other words discussed in this study, yet these examples are important. An examination of these examples in a small number of texts demonstrated that these writers intended to depict women as certain types of teachers and students with the use of *tācan* in different contexts. The genre and setting of an example are also key to the reading of this word and understanding the various relationships that groups of women had with education and instruction.

Tācan in Examples of Royal and Monastic Women

Out of the 640 examples of *tācan*, there are thirty-one examples which include women as either students or teachers. This is a large percentage of examples related to women. This trend is the result of many examples in instructional texts as the graph shows below.

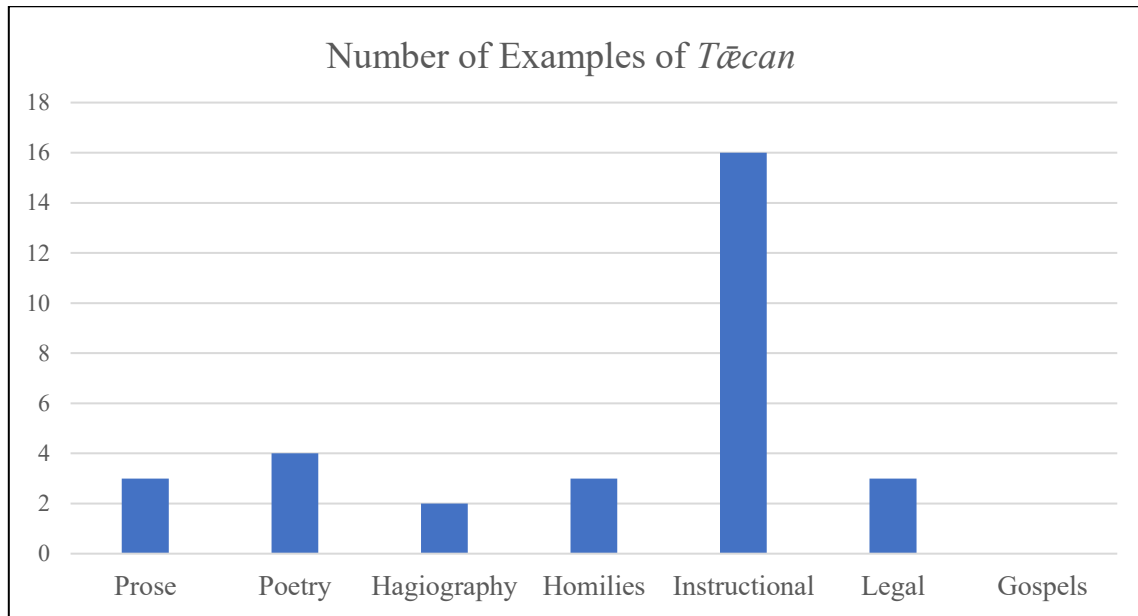


Figure 6: The number of examples of *tācan* which refer to women as teachers and student in various genres.

There is a large difference between the number of examples in instructional texts and other genres, which shows that these examples occur more often in texts which offer religious guidance and instructions. These include the *Penitential of Pseudo Egbert*, *The Handbook for the Use of a Confessor*, *ÆGram*, and the *BenRW*. The feminised *Rule* contains over half of these attestations.

There are far more examples which use *tācan* in representations of women as students rather than as teachers or instructors. An examination of these examples shows that they include a significant number of laywomen whom the writers suggest are students of both secular and religious subjects. These also involve a considerable number of royal women such as the Empress Helena who appears in three texts. The writers use *tācan* to describe her education

on the cross by different teachers.¹¹⁷ Helena demands that a man named Judas reveal the cross to her so that she might learn about the Christian faith. At the end of the poem when the cross and nails are uncovered, she confirms that he ‘þone æðelan beam / rode rodera cininges / ryhte getæhtesð’ (rightly revealed the noble tree, the cross of the king of the firmament [to Helena]) [*El*, 1074].¹¹⁸ The fact that *tæcan* occurs so often in the same context suggests that it indicates a specific type of learning applicable to Helena as a royal woman. Another text, the Old English translated romance, *ApT*, contains a description of a king’s daughter, Arcestrate, as a student. *ApT* is an important text in my research because it is the only prose text to use *tæcan* in a depiction of a laywoman’s education.¹¹⁹ However, most examples which refer to female students concern monastic women, and many of these examples belong to the instructional genre. The lack of texts which use *tæcan* in representations of laywomen as students compared to female religious suggests that Old English writers associated this word with different types of teaching and instructions (commands) for religious and laywomen. The appearance of *tæcan* in Cynewulf’s poem, *Elene (El)*, and in *ApT*, is unusual and offers unique insight into perceptions of royal women as students.

The percentage of examples of women as teachers reflects the idea that *tæcan* has a strong association with the education and instructions of female religious. There are nine instances of *tæcan* associated with women as teachers which appear in three texts: the *BenRW*, the translated version of Gregory the Great’s *Dialogues (GD)*, and *ÆGram*. The emphasised sense of *tæcan* varies in these examples varies to include demonstrative, educational, and instructional readings because of the different contexts and types of teachers involved. For

¹¹⁷ These include *The Invention of the Cross*, *Elene*, and *The Menologium*. There are three examples in *El*: ll. 599 – 600, 630 – 631, 1073 – 1074, and two examples in *Inv*: ll. 161 and 527. For the single example of *tæcan* in *The Menologium*, see E.V.K. Dobbie, ‘The Menologium’, *The Anglo-Saxon Minor Poems*, ASPR 6 (New York: 1942), ll. 83 - 86.

¹¹⁸ Translated by Bjork, *Elene, The Old English Poems of Cynewulf*, p. 217.

¹¹⁹ I discuss Arcestrate in Chapter 4.

example, the Old English version of *Dialogues*, translated by Bishop Wærferth of Worcester, includes a passage about a vision offered by the Virgin Mary to a young woman named Musa.¹²⁰ This example refers to another type of teaching, indicated by the use of the word *ostendere* (to show, produce, reveal, exhibit, make known) in the Latin version.¹²¹ Also, the word *ywed* from *iewan* (to reveal, show, display) appears before *tācan* in Wærferth's translation. His use of vocabulary which contains similar connotations to one part of *tācan*'s semantic range suggests he wishes to emphasise a single reading: that Mary directs or shows Musa a vision. Therefore, this example does not indicate teaching but an instruction. It is crucial to examine the vocabulary which accompanies words such as *tācan* to determine its intended reading as examples such as the one from *GD* demonstrate. Ælfric in *ÆGram* also suggests this when he describes an example of teaching with *tācan*. His record for *docere*, *ic tæce*, (I teach) includes a list of associated nouns as examples and refers to women as teachers of a skill.

ÆGram, 244.1:

[...] wer tæcð and wif tæcð and MANCIPIVM, þæt is weal, tæcð sumne cræft.

(A man teaches, and a woman teaches, and *MANCIPIUM*, that is a servant, teaches some craft).

This is the second time in this text that he uses *tācan* in the context of women teaching. He implies that *cræft* was a skill which could be performed by anyone, regardless of gender or station, according to this source. He also suggests that this could be taught from his use of *tācan* as a replacement of *docere*. The words *cræft* (an art, skill, trade, knowledge), *tācan*,

¹²⁰ Hans Hecht, ed., *Bischofs Waerferth von Worcester Übersetzung der Dialoge Gregors des grossen* (Leipzig: G. H. Wigand's Verlag, 1900), Book IV, 18, p. 287.

¹²¹ London, British Library, Egerton MS 3089, fol.68v. Howlett et al, 'ostendere', *DMLBS*, 2, pp. 2065 – 2066.

and *docere*, indicate that Ælfric uses *tācan* in this context to describe education of a skill or work. It is important to mention that this example has both men and women as the subject of the word *tācan*, which implies that both could provide this form of education.

Another example in *ÆGram* focuses specifically on the education of girls by religious woman. The Latin text reads ‘ipsa monialis uigilat docendo puellas’ (a religious woman watches over young girls while teaching), and the Old English provides the following translation: ‘seo mynecene wacað tæcende ðam mædencildum’ (a nun watches over the young girls while teaching) [*ÆGram*, 151. 19]. His example in his instructional text suggests that he considers women as teachers for secular and religious subjects because of the use of *docere*. His use of *tācan* in his translations of these examples also suggests that he considered this to be an appropriate word to describe their teachings. The above examples from *ÆGram* and *GD* show that writers used *tācan* to denote education and instructions given by women and to women as students.

Tācan is a significant lemma in my investigation of royal and monastic women because it occurs in specific genres to denote religious teaching and instruction given in monasteries where women teach, learn, and live. The third text, *BenRW*, includes examples of female teachers in a monastic community. This text is the only text which uses *tācan* in representations of monastic women as teachers on multiple occasions.¹²² The *BenRW* is a significant text for the study of female religious and their intellectual lives because it is a translation created for the use of a female religious community in Winteneý. In Chapter 4, I examine whether the vocabulary used in this text was created purposefully for its audience,

¹²² Arnold Schroer, ed., *Die Winteneý-Version der Regula S. Benedicti: Lateinisch und Englisch mit Einleitung, Amerkungen, Glossar und einem Facsimile*, (Halle: Max Niemeyer, 1888) [repr. with appendix by Mechthild Gretsch (Tubingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1978)], (listed by chapter no. and page), 2. 15, 5. 27, 6. 29, 7. 39, 61. 123, 61. 125, 68. 141.

and whether the wide semantic range of *tācan* was more suited to descriptions of religious teaching and instructions.

1.4 Bysnian: ‘to set an example’

The last of my four words is *bysnian* (to set an example).¹²³ This word has a small semantic range with only one use to denote the setting of examples by ‘teacher’ in a religious and secular context. It relates to a person’s conduct, behaviour, and manner of thinking. It has the smallest number of occurrences in the corpus of Old English literature with only seventy-eight examples. Despite the small number of attestations, writers use a range of spelling variations which include *(ge)bysnian*, *bysenian*, *bisnian*, and *bisenian*. Writers use its corresponding noun, *bysn* (an example), more often to describe men and women as examples instead of using the related verb. There are several spelling variants which can be confused with different inflexions of *bysn*.¹²⁴

Examples of *bysnian* appear in different genres, although most occur in homilies, instructional texts, and religious prose. Homilies attributed to Ælfric such as the *Homily for the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary*, the *OEHE*, and instructional texts such as the different versions of the *Rule of St. Benendict* and Wulfstan’s *WPol* use *bysnian* to describe the use of set examples as a method of religious teaching. These texts include many religious men, women, and saints as teachers to lay and religious students. There is no distinct division between the types of male and female religious who could offer examples. Wulfstan uses

¹²³Also see Angus Cameron, Angus, Ashley Crandell Amos, Antonette diPaolo Healey et al, *Dictionary of Old English: A to I online* (Toronto: Dictionary of Old English Project, 2018), <https://tapor-library-utoronto-ca.nottingham.idm.oclc.org/doi/> [Accessed 20/12/2023]; Joseph Bosworth, ‘býsnian’, *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary Online*, ed. Thomas Northcote Toller et al. (Faculty of Arts, Charles University, 2014), <<https://bosworthtoller.com/5701>> [Accessed 28/09/2022]. The entry for ‘bysnian’ assigns the following meanings: ‘to give, set, or make clear by an example’, ‘to model, shape according to a pattern’, and ‘to give an example (from a book), illustrate, exemplify’.

¹²⁴For example, *bysna* (or *bisna*) could refer to either the nominative, accusative, genitive plural form of *bysn*, or the imperative singular form of *bysnian*.

bysnian to describe teaching given by priests, monks and nuns, and abbots and abbesses, as the following example demonstrates:

WPol, 78:

Riht is þæt abbodas and huru abbadissan fæste on mynstrum singallice
wunian and georne heora heorda symle begyman and aa heom wel bysenian
and rihtlice bodian.¹²⁵

(It is right that abbots, and especially abbesses, constantly reside closely in
minsters and eagerly take care of their flock, and always set them a good
example and rightly preach).

The above example suggests that it is a particular type of education used in monastic settings. Many other examples in hagiography and homilies reflect the same understanding of set examples as an important part of a monastic teacher's teachings to his students. For instance, one of Ælfric's homilies (*Feria II in Letania maiore*) contains the line 'biscop sceal læran his leoda symle mid boclicere lare and him bysnian wel' (a bishop should always teach his people with teachings from books and set good examples to them).¹²⁶ Also, *bysnian* occurs often in examples of preaching by male religious, as Ælfric's depiction of a bishop's teachings to Oswald in the *Life of St Oswald* demonstrates: 'and him wel gebysnode mid weorcum symle' (and always set them good examples with works).¹²⁷ In this passage, Bishop Aidan travels around Northumbria to teach and convert people to Christianity. There are no examples which concern secular settings or subjects, even in legal texts which also refer to religious teachers such as bishops and their duty to provide their communities with this form

¹²⁵ K. Jost, *Die 'Institutes of Polity, Civil and Ecclesiastical'*, Swiss Studies in English 47 (Bern: 1959), 39 – 164, section 78.

¹²⁶ Malcolm Godden, 'Feria II in Letania maiore', *Ælfric's Catholic Homilies: The Second Series, Text*, EETS s.s. 5 (London: 1979), 180 – 189, p. 183.

¹²⁷ Mary Clayton and Juliet Mullins, eds. and trs., 'Saint Oswald', *Old English Lives of Saints*, 3, p. 6, l. 73.

of education.¹²⁸ The evidence strongly suggests that Old English writers used *bysnian* in precise contexts, mainly religious education, more so than any of the other verbs studied in this thesis.

Bysnian and Women

Despite the small number of attestations, these examples contain the largest percentage of instances related to women at 9%. There are seven examples in six texts from instructional texts and hagiography. These texts include the *BenRW*, *WPol*, and Ælfric's *Life of St Eugenia*, and his translation of the *Book of Kings* [*Kings*].¹²⁹ They share religious themes and a focus on different types of teachings aimed at female religious. Wulfstan also uses *bysnian* in reference to abbess' examples as I discussed above in the passage from *WPol*. This line with the same wording occurs in the MS. Cambridge Corpus Christi 201 manuscript and Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Junius 121.¹³⁰ Old English writers describe monastic women's teachings as using set examples, especially abbesses, in a similar way to their descriptions of monastic men. They suggest that it is a significant teaching method used by religious women to educate other women and men about religious subjects.

Other examples in hagiography also refer to female religious, such as Eugenia who provides good examples of Christian and monastic behaviour to her monastery when she is elected abbot. Ælfric describes that 'hwæt ða Eugenia hym eallum gebysnode mid goddre gedrohtnunge to godes þeowdome' (Eugenia set an example to them all with good conduct in the service of God).¹³¹ He also mentions that she 'mid carfulnysse þonne hyred gewissode'

¹²⁸ Examples include the laws of Cnut, which describe a bishop's teachings. See, F. Liebermann, 'I Cnut', *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen* (Halle: 1906) [repr. Aalen 1960], 26; and Grið: Liebermann, 'Grið', *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen*, 19.1.

¹²⁹ Schroer, *Die Winteney-Version der Regula S. Benedicti*, 2.15, 33, 75, 60, 123; Jost, 'Die Institutes of Polity, Civil and Ecclesiastical', sections 78 and 170; Clayton and Mullins, 'Saint Eugenia', 1, ll. 323 - 326; 'Kings', *Old English Lives of Saints*, 2, 139 - 171, ll. 229 - 230.

¹³⁰ For the Junius manuscript example, see Jost, *Die 'Institutes of Polity, Civil and Ecclesiastical'*, section 170.

¹³¹ Mary Clayton and Juliet Mullins, 'Saint Eugenia', *Old English Lives of Saints*, 1, p. 52, ll. 125 - 126.

(governed her community with carefulness) [l. 127]. His description of her set examples and careful monastic ruling also highlights the association of *bysnian* with a specific role. These representations of abbesses as demonstrators who educate with their own examples of behaviour and religious conduct illustrate the use of *bysnian*.

Gezabel: A Queen's Harmful Example

There is only one example which uses *bysnian* to denote a laywomen's teachings. The description of Ælfric's Gezabel in *Kings* does not fit into the other examples because of the secular context.¹³² One of the main characters of this text is Gezabel who is a main antagonist in this text. Throughout *Kings*, Ælfric describes her as a tyrant and evil woman with nouns that convey her misuse of her position. She is a *forcupost wifa* (most despicable of women) [*Kings*, 49]. Her husband, Ahab, is also an *arleasa cyning* (impious king) [*Kings*, 45]. Gezabel is a constant source of malice for the prophet, Elijah, and conducts many evil deeds. In one of these examples, Ælfric uses *bysnian* to provide his audience with a negative representation of a queen and king who set an example to their son, Ahaziah:

Kings, 229 - 231:

He ferde swa swa his forcuða fæder and swa swa his fracode modor him
yfele gebysnodon, and binnon twam gearum his lifes ðolode and his lænan
rices.

¹³²Robert K. Upchurch, 'Virgin Spouses as Model Christians: The Legend of Julian and Basilissa in Ælfric's Lives of Saints', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 34 (2005), 197–217, p. 207, and Joyce Hill, 'The Dissemination of Ælfric's Lives of Saints: A Preliminary Survey', *Holy Men and Holy Women: Old English Prose Saints' Lives and Their Contexts*, ed. Paul E. Szarmach (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1996), 235–59, p. 251.

(He behaved according to the evil example his father and his wicked mother had set him and within two years had lost his life and his transitory kingdom).¹³³

In this example, Ahab's and Gezabel's inappropriate behaviour had catastrophic consequences for their people as well as their son. Ælfric reveals that it was their 'teaching' which led to his downfall later in the narrative. The use of *bysnian* instead of another phrase suggests that he intended to depict this as an example of secular teaching.

Just as *Kings* seems to be an unclear fit for Ælfric's collection of saints' lives, Gezabel is also a conundrum. Her representation as a queen and royal mother reflects the opposite of other royal women in the corpus of Old English literature. Ælfric uses a word which has a stronger connection to religious teachings and teachers to describe her teaching, which also creates problems for modern readers. How are we meant to understand her example in this text, and what does this suggest about Ælfric's perception of queens? I will return to Gezabel later in my discussion when I consider whether the evidence of writers' word choices suggests that they viewed royal and monastic as different types of students and teachers.

1.5 Summary

My examination of four Old English words shows that, although there are fewer examples related to women than men, women were included in descriptions of teaching, learning, and instructing. Examples of *læran* and *tæcan* contain the most complex readings because of the different contexts, types of women, and polysemous use. A discussion of the use of these two words offers an opportunity to examine how writers and translators present women to their audiences and how their readers/listeners would understand their use of polysemous words.

¹³³ Translation by Mary Clayton and Juliet Mullins, ed. and tr., 'Kings', *Old English Lives of Saints*, 2, p. 155.

There is less to remark on in examples of *leornian* and *bysnian* since there are so few instances of these verbs in relation to women and because of their single uses. However, they can provide insight into the intended readings of *læran* and *tæcan* by providing context. These two words occur often alongside *bysnian* or *leornian* and need to be considered together in most cases. I start my discussion with an examination of *læran* and *leornian* in the Old English translation of Bede's *HE*. I investigate how the use of particular groups of words affects the view of a monastic woman as a suitable and active teacher.

2. Female Agency: *Læran*, *Leornian*, and Hild

In this chapter, I focus on a representation of a monastic woman which uses two words, *læran* and *leornian*, to depict her as a religious teacher and student. I analyse an example from Bede's *HE*, book IV, alongside the subsequent translation to examine how an Old English translator uses *læran* to denote teaching provided by and to women. I focus on his description of Abbess Hild who has a prominent role in the Latin and Old English texts and a special relationship with religious education. However, so far few have discussed her representation as a student and teacher. Furthermore, no one yet has commented on the translator's choice of words and how this affects her depiction as a capable abbess. An examination of Hild and her community in Bede's text and the translation will help to determine how writers represent women's education and teachings and identify what the role of the abbess entailed.

2.1 Case Study: *Hild in the OEHE*

There are several examples of *læran* in the Old English translation of Bede's *HE*, but the use of this word has been previously overlooked in this text. Book IV, chapter 24 contains a famous section involving a man named Cædmon who composed the first known piece of Old English verse, which is known widely as *Cædmon's Hymn*. This poem is considered the earliest extant example of vernacular poetry in the corpus of Old English literature.¹ It has been studied many times in the past, but not often in the context of the agency of a monastic woman, Abbess Hild of Whitby, in Cædmon's education. Studies which examined this section of *HE* focused on her presence in the text as primarily aimed to provide legitimacy to Cædmon's miraculous abilities. However, an analysis of the vocabulary used in this section

¹ Lees and Overing, *Double Agents*, p. 12.

by Bede, and later by his translator, suggests that her involvement in his monastic education was far greater.

In this case study, I consider how the vocabulary used in this section affects the audiences' perception of teachers and teaching in this passage. This passage is important because it is the only text to use the Old English doublet of *læran* and *manian* in the context of a woman as a religious teacher. I discuss Hild's education and upbringing as well as how Bede and his translator describe her role as abbess to determine whether Hild was capable of providing teachings on poetry and how the two writers perceived her involvement in this event.

Bede and the Manuscripts of HE

Bede was a monk who lived in a monastery in Wearmouth-Jarrow in the kingdom of Northumbria. He completed a Latin narrative of the history of Christianity in the early medieval English kingdoms (*HE*) in 731 and addressed it to King Ceolwulf of Northumbria for his pleasure and consideration.² This is a valuable source that 'gives us our primary route into the early Anglo-Saxon world' due to the amount of information contained within its folios.³ It was also popular in the medieval world because of its content, subject area, and author, as the evidence of its widespread transmission across England and Europe indicates.⁴ There are many manuscripts and copies which date from the eighth to the fourteenth centuries.⁵ The earliest known manuscript, the *Moore Bede* (MS Kk.5.16), dates from the eighth century and may well have been copied at Bede's monastery a few years after his death in 735.⁶ There are two other versions known as the *Tiberius Bede* and the *Leningrad*

² Ceolwulf is mentioned in the preface of Bede's Latin text and the Old English translation. See, King, *HE*, 1, p. 2, and Miller, *OEHE*, 1, p. 2.

³ Michelle Brown, 'Bede's life in context', *The Cambridge Companion to Bede*, ed. Scott DeGregorio (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 3 – 24, p. 3.

⁴ Colgrave and Mynors, *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, pp. xliv – lxxiii.

⁵ *Ibid*, pp. xxxix – xlvi.

⁶ For the manuscript and further information, see Joanna Story, 'MS Kk.5.16', *University of Cambridge Digital Library*, (2015), <http://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/view/MS-KK-00005-00016/1>.

Bede, which were compiled between the early eighth and late ninth centuries.⁷ We are aware that Bede had access to a wide selection of information about Northumbrian history from his position at Wearmouth-Jarrow, but he required outside sources for the other kingdoms.⁸ His chief sources were Albinus, an abbot from Canterbury and Bede's teacher, and a priest named Nothelm from London.⁹

Bede was a popular and respected source of information, and it is essential to note that several references to him occur in passages about women in other texts, such as saints' lives. It is possible that *HE* provided one of the only 'historical' sources for the seventh and eighth centuries. He is also one of the most cited and read writers of the period since other writers such as Ælfric of Eynsham, Boniface, and Byrhtferth name him and his works in their writings.¹⁰ For example, he is described in the Old English poem, known as *Durham*, as *breoma bocera* (famous scholar).¹¹ Bede is a central writer, historian, and religious man who had a tremendous impact on the early medieval western world, especially its writings. Therefore, it is essential to explore his word choice since many of his later readers and audiences undoubtedly interpreted and used his vocabulary in their works, or adapted them as they understood his writing, as the examples of vernacular translations demonstrate.

⁷ London, British Library, Cotton MS Tiberius A XIV; London, British Library, Cotton MS Tiberius C II; and Leningrad, Leningrad Public Library, MS Lat. Q. v. 1. 18.

⁸ Colgrave and Mynors, *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, p. xxv.

⁹ King, *HE*, 1, pp. 4 – 8.

¹⁰ There are references to Bede in several texts by Ælfric such as his *Life of St Æthelthryth* and *Life of Oswald*, Ælfric's *Grammar and Gloss*, several of Ælfric's homilies and letters, *De temporibus anni*. Other texts include the Old English poem known as 'Durham', the *Old English Martyrology* (London, British Library, MS. Cotton Julius A.X), Byrhtferth's Manual, charters such as Sawyer 779, 'King Edgar to Ely Abbey', and Boniface's letters, such as 'Letter 76', in which he asks Abbot Huetbert of Wearmouth-Jarrow to send him a copy of Bede's words. See Michael Tangl, 'Brief 76', *Briefe Des Bonifatius Willibalds Leben Des Bonifatius: Nebst Einigen Zeitgenössischen Dokumenten* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1968), p. 235.

¹¹ E.V.K. Dobbie, *Durham, The Anglo-Saxon Minor Poems*, ASPR 6 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1942), ll. 14 – 15.

There is a substantial amount of research on Bede, his life, and his writings.¹² Sharon Rowley's research on the *OEHE* provides a detailed analysis of the extant manuscripts of the Old English translation as well as its reception in the eighth century and beyond.¹³ More recently, Andreas Lemke also examined the translation and picked up where Rowley left off to discuss the various audiences and purposes of the later text.¹⁴ Studies such as these provide detailed analyses of the various manuscripts, scribes, and historical context of Bede and his works.

There are also several pieces of research on Bede's representations of women. Bede's *HE* contains an unusual number of women; for example, he includes references to several monastic, royal, and laywomen in this text, and provides far more detail about them and their lives than other writers of the early medieval period. Since it is one of the few surviving sources which include references to women, it is popular among modern researchers of medieval gender and history. Clare A. Lees and Gillian R. Overing described Book IV as 'the book of female abbesses' because monastic women feature prominently in this section.¹⁵ However, the majority of research argues that Bede aimed to 'overwrite' their lives and achievements. For example, Diane Watt's investigation of women and religion in the early medieval period suggests that he deliberately downplays the roles of women such as Abbess Hild in important political and religious events.¹⁶ Hild remains one of the most discussed

¹² There is a wealth of information about Bede from historical, literary, and ecclesiastical perspectives, several of which I discuss later in this chapter. See Scott DeGregorio, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Bede*, Cambridge Companions to Literature, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010) for some examples of recent scholarship.

¹³ Sharon Rowley, *The Old English translation of Bede's Historia Ecclesiastica*, Anglo-Saxon Studies 16 (Cambridge: Brewer, 2011).

¹⁴ Andreas Lemke, *The Old English Translation of Bede's Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum in its Historical and Cultural Context*, Göttinger Schriften zur Englischen Philologie, Band 8 (Universitätsverlag Göttingen, 2015).

¹⁵ Clare A. Lees and Gillian R. Overing, 'Birthing Bishops and Fathering Poets: Bede, Hild, and the Relations of Cultural Production', *Old English Literature: Critical Essays*, ed. R. M. Liuzza (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 125-156, p. 126.

¹⁶ See her most recent work: Watt, *Women, Writing and Religion in England and beyond, 650 – 1100*, pp. 14 - 45.

women from the early medieval period. She is a central figure in discussions of Bede's work because his writings offer the most detailed account of her life, which also includes the Old English translation as an extension of that work. Hild is the most prominent woman in Bede's *HE* and the *OEHE*, except for Æthelthryth, a Northumbrian queen and saint. There are many parables in *HE* which indicate that Bede used his text as a platform to venerate Hild, and even that he used a pre-existing and now lost 'life of Hild' as a source, but this idea is debatable.¹⁷ The space afforded to her in these texts also presents modern audiences with the opportunity to examine women in the context of education because of the number of references to her learning and 'teaching'.

Hild in HE

Hild features markedly in *HE*, Book 4. She performs several roles: first as a monastic student who, according to Bede, learned from esteemed men such as Theodore, then later as an abbess of renown. She was abbess of two double monasteries, which welcomed men and women, in *Heruteu* (Hartlepool) and *Streoneshealh* (Whitby). *Streoneshealh* in the seventh century represents the pinnacle of the double house as an institution of religious worship and education.¹⁸ When researchers discuss this monastery, they often mark its importance to the development of Christianity in the early medieval English kingdoms. For example, Blair comments that 'it was not by accident that one of the earliest and most famous ecclesiastical

¹⁷ The similarities of Bede's depiction of Hild to other female saints, and discussions about a lost *liber vitae* of Hild, occurs in several studies. These include: Diane Watt, 'The Earliest Women's Writing? Anglo-Saxon Literary Cultures and Communities', *Women's Writing*, 20:4 (2013), 537-554, and Lees and Overing, 'Women and the Origins of English Literature', 31 - 40. Dennis Cronan is sceptical about Bede's sources and his use of a lost vita of Hild in 'Cædmon's Audience', *Studies in Philology*, 109:4 (Summer, 2012), 333 - 363, p. 351 - 352.

¹⁸ Several have discussed the importance of Whitby as a monastic centre: see Watt, 'The Earliest Women's Writing? Anglo-Saxon Literary Cultures and Communities', pp. 543 - 545; Peter Hunter Blair, 'Whitby as a Centre of Learning in the Seventh Century', *Learning and Literature in Anglo-Saxon England: Studies Presented to Peter Clemoes on the Occasion of his Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, ed. Michael Lapidge and H. Gneuss (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 3 - 32; Lees and Overing, 'Birthing Bishops and Fathering Poets: Bede, Hild, and the Relations of Cultural Production', 125-156; and Penelope Walton Rogers, 'In Search of Hild: A Review of the Context of Abbess Hild's Life, Her Religious Establishment, and the Relevance of Recent Archaeological Finds from Whitby Abbey', *Art and Worship in the Insular World* (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 121 - 153, pp. 121 - 134.

gatherings was held at Whitby'.¹⁹ He refers to the Synod at Whitby in 664 AD, which gathered the most influential and notable people of the time to determine the date of Easter and other important details. The fact that it took place under Hild's governance suggests that contemporaries held high regard for her and her monastery.

Bede affords a large amount of space in his text for Hild as the head of this monastic community at its peak, including details about her early education and religious teachings. Aside from Bede's evident emphasis on virtue and Christian behaviour of the Hild and her community, he also pays particular attention to the high standards of education provided at Whitby. The fame of Hild's monastery continues to grow with the coming of a man named Cædmon. He is a farmhand and a talented but untrained poet who enters Bede's historical narrative at a key moment to provide further evidence of the proficiency and merit of Whitby and its abbess. After a layman encourages the farmhand to go to the monastery to demonstrate his gifts, Cædmon finds himself in the presence of Abbess Hild. Bede mentions how she gives him a command (*iussus*) to perform his song before 'multis doctioribus uiris' (many learned men) who gathered to judge his capabilities [*HE*. iv. 24]. Bede reveals that he does so, and so successfully that he delights the abbess and her company as the following passage shows:

HE. iv. 24:

Unde mox abbatissa amplexata gratiam Dei in uiro, saecularem illum
habitum relinquere, et monachicum suscipere propositum docuit,
susceptumque in monasterium cum omnibus suis fratrum cohorti
adsociauit, iussitque illum seriem sacrae historiae doceri. At ipse cuncta,
quae audiendo discere poterat, rememorando secum, et quasi mundum

¹⁹ Blair, 'Whitby as a Centre of Learning in the Seventh Century', p. 3.

animal ruminando, in carmen dulcissimum conuertebat, suauiusque
resonando doctores suos uicissim auditores sui faciebat.

(The abbess, who recognised the grace of God which the man had received,
instructed him to renounce his secular habit and to take monastic vows. She
had all her people received him into the community of the brothers and
ordered that he should be instructed in the whole course of sacred history.
He learned all he could by listening to them and then, memorising it and
ruminating over it, like some clean animal chewing the cud, he turned it
into the most melodious verse: and it sounded so sweet as he recited it that
his teachers became in turn his audience).²⁰

This episode refers to an important part of monastic life: the interaction between students and teachers. The presence of monastic teachers, ‘learned men’, and their students provides a unique opportunity to examine the representation of a woman in an educational setting. Bede’s choice of vocabulary reflects this environment of learning because of his use of *docere* on two occasions in the example above. This word has a strong association with religious teaching in Bede’s writings, and it occurs frequently in *HE* in the context of monastic education.²¹ Bede also uses nouns and adjectives associated with a high-status form of education, which in this period refers to religious instruction under the monastic rule. These include *doctioribus* (learned, educated) and *doctores* (teacher, master). The presence of these words in a monastic context related to an abbess and her community suggests that the type of teachings referred to in the example are educational.

²⁰ Translated by Colgrave and Mynors, *Bede’s Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, p. 419.

²¹ Putnam Fennel Jones, *A Concordance to the Historia Ecclesiastica of Bede* (Cambridge Ma.: The Medieval Academy of America, 1929), provides a list of examples of various Latin words in *HE*. For *docere* (pp. 153 – 154), there are a large number of entries that span across books 1 – 5. This word occurs more often than any of the other Latin verbs mentioned above in my discussion of ‘Glosses and Glossaries’, p. 45.

Translating the Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum

The Old English translation also has multiple manuscripts dating from the ninth to the twelfth centuries.²² There are four which are relevant to my discussion because of their dating and lexical similarities:

1. [T] Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Tanner 10.
2. [O] Oxford, Corpus Christi College, MS 279B.
3. [B] Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 41.
4. [Ca] Cambridge, University Library, MS Kk. 3.18.

Researchers such as Rowley, Lemke, Whitelock, and Miller argue that these manuscripts had different Latin sources, but all suggest that [T] and [B] used an earlier Latin version than [O] and [Ca].²³ The dialect, content, and date of composition of the earliest translation [T] provide a strong connection to the educational reform programme instigated by King Alfred.²⁴ Not all researchers agree with this connection, such as Rowley who argues that the translator worked ‘independently’ of the reform.²⁵ Nevertheless, the translation came about in another period of change. It was a time of ecclesiastical upheaval which sought to create a set of cohesive rules and regulations for monastic communities across the Continent, as the creation of the *Regularis Concordia* indicates.²⁶

²² Rowley, *The Old English Version of Bede's Historia Ecclesiastica*, pp. 15 – 33.

²³ Rowley and Lemke discuss the debates about whether there were originally two variants of a single Latin text, which served as sources for the translations, or if there was only one variant version which became the base from [O] and [Ca]. See Rowley, *The Old English Version of Bede's Historia Ecclesiastica*, pp. 27 – 36; Lemke, *The Old English Translation of Bede's Historia Ecclesiastica*, pp. 50 – 65; Dorothy Whitelock, ‘The Old English Bede’, Sir Israel Gollancz Memorial Lecture, PBA 48 (1962), 57-90, pp. 58 – 59, 81; and Thomas Miller, ed. and tr., *The Old English Version of Bede's Ecclesiastical History*, 2 vols (London: University of Toronto Press, 1890), 1, pp. xxiv – xxv.

²⁴ Lemke and Rowley provide further discussions on this: Lemke, *The Old English Translation of Bede's Historia Ecclesiastica*, p. 156; Rowley, *The Old English Version of Bede's Historia Ecclesiastica*, pp. 2, 37 – 53. Rowley, pp. 27 – 36; and Lemke, pp. 66 – 72.

²⁵ Rowley, *The Old English Version of Bede's Historia Ecclesiastica*, pp. 37 – 56.

²⁶ Lees and Overing, *Double Agents*, pp. 125 – 126.

The period which followed saw a marked increase in manuscript production and translation because of the Alfredian educational movement. Translation increases the text's accessibility to a wider range of readers/listeners, many of whom could not understand Latin as Alfred bemoans in his preface to the translation of Gregory's *Pastoral Care* (*CP*).²⁷ He describes that ‘Gode ælmihtegum sīe ðonc ðætte we nu ænigne onstal habbað lareowa’ (Thanks be to God Almighty that we now have any supply of teachers) because of the low standards of education among his countrymen.²⁸ The *OEHE* had a potentially larger female audience than the original Latin text as a result. Rowley commented that the *OEHE* showed an ‘increased usefulness of the vernacular text to lay or female audiences’ because of its availability to audiences unfamiliar with Latin.²⁹

The *OEHE* contains many references to teachers, students, and different types of learning which might account for its translation in this period. However, the vernacular version contains some considerable differences to the Latin text. Most of these are lexical additions, such as the use of doublets, or extra words added into the passage to clarify certain parts for the later audience. Lexical doublets are two synonymous words which when placed together form a lexical substitute for another word. These changes significantly impact the reading of the text. For example, the translator aims to retell Cædmon’s story closely but with some alterations. Cædmon is brought before the abbess, ‘þa heht heo gesomnian ealle þa gelæredestan men & þa leorneras’ (then, she commanded all the learned men and the students to assemble). The difference in this line is the inclusion of the students (*þa leorneras*) who do not appear in the original text. Instead of a congregation of *doctioribus uiro*, the witnesses include a larger gathering which likely included female religious who were sent to Hild’s

²⁷ Elaine Treharne, ed., ‘Preface to the Translation of Gregory’s *Pastoral Care*’, *Old and Middle English c. 890 – 1450: An Anthology*, 3rd ed. (Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), p. 14, ll. 10 – 15.

²⁸ See the ‘Epistolary Preface’ in Fulk, *The Old English Pastoral Care*, p. 4.

²⁹ Rowley, *The Old English Version of Bede’s Historia Ecclesiastica*, p. 115.

monastery for religious education because of the setting in a double monastery. Even before the main passage about Cædmon's song, the audience is introduced to the idea that this is not a selective performance attended by learned men, but a wider collection of people from different backgrounds.

The translation expands on the original text and offers more details of Hild's involvement in Cædmon's monastic upbringing with a special mention of the lessons given to him.

OEHE, iv. 25:

Ða ongan seo abbudisse clyppan 7 lufigean þa Godes gife in þæm men; 7
heo hine þa monade 7 lærde þæt he woruldhad anforlete & munuchad
onfenge: 7 he þæt wel þafode. Ond heo hine in þæt mynster onfeng mid his
godum, 7 hine geþeodde to gesomnunge þara Godes þeowa; 7 heht hine
læran þæt getæl þæs halgan stæres 7 spelles. Ond he eal, þa he in
gehyrnesse geleornian meahte, mid hine gemyndgade; 7 swa swa clæne
neten eodorcende in þæt sweteste leoð gehwerfde. 7 his song 7 his leoð
wæron swa wynsumu to gehyranne, þætte seolfan þa his lareowas æt his
muðe wreoton 7 leornodon.

(Then the abbess began to welcome and find a pleasure in God's grace in the man; and she admonished and enjoined him to leave the world and become a monk: and he readily assented. And she admitted him with his property into the monastery, and attached him to the congregation of God's servants; and she directed, that he should be taught the whole round of sacred history and narrative. And he retained in his memory, whatever he learnt by hearing: and, like a clean animal, he ruminated and converted all into the sweetest music. And his song and his music were so delightful to

hear, that even his teachers wrote down the words from his lips and learnt them).³⁰

It is apparent in this section the translator could not find suitable Old English replacements for several Latin words. Thus, this section is far wordier than the Latin example above. The translator clarifies elements related to monastic education, such as the *sacrae historiae*, which he refers to as *stæres 7 spelles* (history and narrative). This is an example of an Old English doublet, as I mentioned earlier. The translator also uses these to replace single Latin verbs, specifically ones related to teaching in this example. Most of these relate to the abbess who ‘ongan clyppan 7 lufigean and monade 7 lærde’. The use of *læran* in a doublet to describe how a woman such as Hild provides information to visitors and her community is important because it replaces *docere*.

However, the translator’s alterations and additions in the vernacular version present a modern audience with certain challenges, namely how we should read this as an example of monastic teaching and learning when more than one word is present. For example, in the lines following *monade 7 lærde*, the translator uses a single word, *læran*, in the place of the Latin word *doceri*. This is problematic because it is the same verb used in the first which he replaces with a doublet. The inconsistent use of single words and doublets indicates that there are multiple readings of the section and the entire chapter to the extent that his representation of Hild and her community is debatable.

Another unclear feature concerns the ‘teachers’ who provide education in this passage. Hild’s community is comprised of male and female members. The abbess’ reaction in this example suggests that the women of *Streoneshealh* had an active role in Cædmon’s monastic education. Bede and his translator place a considerable amount of focus on Hild. She is the

³⁰ Translation by Miller, *The Old English Version of Bede’s Ecclesiastical History*, 2, pp. 345, 347.

one who arranges the meeting and orders her fellow members to hear Cædmon's verse, and then welcomes him into the monastery and provides him with teachers who offer him religious education. She is not a background figure who is merely intended to provide witness to Cædmon's achievements but the authoritative governess behind his success. However, there is more to Bede's representation of Hild than his depiction of her as a monastic governess. His use of *docere* to describe her 'teachings' suggests that she has another role as a teacher. The differences found in the Latin text and the later Old English version prompt several questions, but the main one centres on learning in a mixed congregation of men and women. In my discussion, I intend to address the question of whether Bede's translator perceived Hild as a capable teacher to Cædmon?

Cædmon, Hild, and Bede

Cædmon's Hymn is an iconic poem in English history because it is often considered to be the first example of Old English poetry.³¹ Yet, recent discussions focus on the problematic relationship between Cædmon, Abbess Hild, and Bede. Hild plays an integral role in Cædmon's life and hence is part of this important point in English literary history, as the above examples demonstrate. However, she remains unnamed in his account of events since the translator only refers to her by her position as abbess. Despite her importance to Whitby and Cædmon's integration into the monastic community, Bede's description of events places her in a supporting role. His treatment of Hild is the focus of many recent studies. Lees and Overing's re-examination of her in *HE* and *OEHE* implies that Bede deliberately draws attention away from the abbess:

³¹ Vander Blit, 'Cædmon and the Translated Word: Orality, Textuality, and Authority', p. 299.

‘When literary history remembers Caedmon’s “Hymn” as the originary event of English poetry, it tends to forget Hild – as a direct consequence of Bede’s structuring of the event’.³²

Bede’s interest drives his version of events to focus on Cædmon’s gift and spiritual journey. Hild and her community are witnesses to Cædmon’s divine inspiration and talent instead of contributors to his success. Several researchers suggest that Bede’s representation of Hild as an abbess offers a downgraded version of a powerful woman. For example, Lees and Overing comment on the downplaying of Hild’s agency and attribute it to Bede’s omissions in *HE*, which impacted the Old English translation.³³ Watt has more recently discussed this concept in her research about women, writing, and religion in which she explains that early writers ‘overwrote’ women and their writings in a variety of ways by distancing them, silencing them, or completely omitting them from the narrative.³⁴ She suggests that Bede was ‘uncomfortable’ with the power and authority of abbesses since he shows a preference for male-centric narratives and witnesses in his writing.³⁵ She also notes that he ‘distances’ women such as Æthelthryth and Hild from their female family members and connections, which include other monastic women.³⁶ Instead, these influential women are limited to the role of spiritual mothers. All three researchers argue that Bede and his translator had a desire to represent Hild in a maternal role instead of a political one. Lees and Overing’s footnote

³² Lees and Overing, ‘Birthing Bishops and Fathering Poets: Bede, Hild, and the Relations of Cultural Production’, p. 126. Lees and Overing contributed much research about re-reading women in *HE* and other Old English texts. For studies about the overwriting of women, see Lees and Overing, *Double Agents*; and Clare A. Lees and Gillian R. Overing, ‘Women and the Origins of English Literature’, *The History of Women’s Writing, 700 – 1500*, ed. Liz Herbert McAvoy and Diane Watt (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015) 31 – 40. Also see the footnote below (32) about Diane Watt’s recent work.

³³ Lees and Overing, *Double Agents*, p. 20. Also see their comments on Bede’s ‘omissions’ in Lees and Overing, ‘Birthing Bishops and Fathering Poets: Bede, Hild, and the Relations of Cultural Production’, pp. 134 – 135.

³⁴ See Diane Watt, ‘Literature in pieces: female sanctity and the relics of early women’s writing (500-1150)’, *The New Cambridge History of Early Medieval English Literature*, ed. Clare Lees (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 357 – 380; ‘The Earliest Women’s Writing? Anglo-Saxon Literary Cultures and Communities’, *Women’s Writing*, 20:4 (2013), 537-554; *Women, Writing and Religion in England and beyond, 650 – 1100* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020). Her most recent publication focuses primarily on Hild.

³⁵ Watt, *Women, Writing and Religion in England and beyond, 650 – 1100*, p. 25.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

material outlines the concept of cultural reproduction in which Hild represents a maternal source in the passage about Cædmon's poem.³⁷ They argue that she fulfils a maternal role in his text, and little else, despite the historical evidence of her active involvement in the monastery.³⁸

These researchers suggest that the abbess depicted in Bede's text and its translation is an inaccurate representation of an active and influential woman. In Cædmon's story, she is nothing more than a background figure whose purpose is to welcome him at Whitby and witness his miraculous song. Lees, Overing, and Watt are not the only ones who take this view. For example, Dennis Cronan also argues that Hild merely provides a setting for the miraculous event in his analysis of the *Hymn*'s context, yet he also notes that she is an important member of Cædmon's audience.³⁹ Also, John D. Niles remarks that if the narrative 'has a hero besides Cædmon himself, then that person is the Abbess'.⁴⁰ All these studies call for Hild to receive the representation that she deserved as head of an influential intellectual centre of learning, policy, and literacy. The same attention has not yet been given to her teaching role, which, I argue, is emphasised more in Bede's writing and the translation than in any other text.

Bede has a distinct way of writing about women in his texts, especially in an ecclesiastical context. This is more noticeable when his representations of women like Hild are compared with others. Pauline Stafford notes the different depictions of Hild in texts written by Bede and other Latin writers, such as Eddius Stephanus in the early eighth century:

³⁷ Lees, and Overing, 'Birthing Bishops and Fathering Poets: Bede, Hild, and the Relations of Cultural Production', 125-156.

³⁸ Lees and Overing, *Double Agents*, p. 26.

³⁹ Dennis Cronan, 'Cædmon's Hymn: Context and Dating', *English Studies*, 91:8 (2010), 817 – 825, p. 820.

⁴⁰ John D. Niles, 'The Myth of the Anglo-Saxon Poet', *Western Folklore* 62 (2003), 7–61, p. 16.

‘For Bede, Hild was a holy woman, a mother of a religious community where a string of bishops were trained under her aegis. Yet, Bishop Wilfrid’s biographer, Eddius Stephanus, shows her deeply involved in questions of episcopal appointment, and thus in matters of secular as well as ecclesiastical politics.’⁴¹

Eddius Stephanus (I refer to him as ‘Stephan’ from here on) mentions Hild briefly in his hagiography, the *Vita Wilfridi* (*VW* henceforth), in chapters xx and liv.⁴² In Stephan’s *VW*, he recounts that Hild was present at the Synod of Whitby and contributed to allegations against Wilfrid (*VW*, xx and liv). There is no mention of her as an educated teacher or counsellor in this text, not to the same extent as Bede’s *HE*.

Although many of the studies mentioned in this section argue that Bede’s representation of Hild in chapter 24 does her a disservice, there is in fact more evidence to consider. Watt, Lees, Overing, and others describe Hild as the head of an educated, scholarly community, yet few examined whether writers such as Bede depict her as a teacher.⁴³ The consensus is that she is a liminal woman in *HE* and *OEHE*; someone who Bede does not depict as directly involved in education. Comments such as ‘women have no place at the beginning of English poetry, it would seem’ paint Hild as a marginal character in Cædmon’s story in the eyes of past researchers.⁴⁴ However, an examination of the vocabulary used in the Latin and Old English texts suggests otherwise. My discussion continues Lees and Overing’s investigation and intends to examine Hild’s representation in chapter 24 to provide a re-reading of women

⁴¹ Stafford, ‘Powerful women in the early middle ages: Queens and Abbesses’, p. 401.

⁴² Bertram Colgrave, ed., *The Life of Bishop Wilfrid by Eddius Stephanus*, revised ed. (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2010). This text was written a decade or so before Bede’s *HE*.

⁴³ Lees and Overing questioned whether Hild was a teacher but never explored this idea entirely. See, Lees and Overing, *Double Agents*, p. 34.

⁴⁴ Lees and Overing, *Double Agents*, p. 34.

in *HE* and *OEHE*. A woman such as Hild, who has a large presence in the text, provides a chance to interrogate the words used to describe her role as abbess of a double monastery.

Replacing Latin with Old English Doublets in OEHE

The process of translation before the late tenth century varied greatly. The lack of regular spelling, dialectal vocabularies, and narrowing semantic ranges which occur with vocabulary changes, impacted on the many translated texts in the corpus of Old English texts. It results in a collection of manuscripts that have many irregularities and different readings. However, these can be useful to understand a scribe or translator's thought processes and comprehension of Latin texts. Evidence of lexical doublets, for example, shows that translators recognised that not all words had a suitable equivalent in the vernacular. The translator of Bede's *HE* found ways to accommodate this in the texts by using multiple Old English words, as the example in this case study demonstrates. A closer examination of the doublet of *lærde*, *monade*, and the other vocabulary used in this example indicates that there is more to Hild's role in Cædmon's life than previously argued.

Bede's translator uses doublets frequently to the extent that they are widely studied by scholars of Old English language and literature. Some of the earliest studies by J.M. Hart and Sherman M. Kuhn in the early and mid-twentieth century provided lists of these pairs and argued that these doublets formed part of a literary tradition from Old English glosses which continued into the tenth century.⁴⁵ Their research suggests that Bede's translator either used a pre-existing gloss which contained a variety of doublets, or that the archetype manuscript of

⁴⁵ J.M. Hart, 'Rhetoric in the translation of Bede', *An English Miscellany, Presented to Dr. Furnivall*, (Oxford, 1901), pp. 150-154; Sherman M. Kuhn, 'Synonyms in the Old English Bede', *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, vol. 46, no. 2 (1947), pp. 168-76, pp. 175 - 176. Also see, P. Fijn Draat, 'The Authorship of the Old English Bede', 39: *Jahresband* (1915), pp. 319-346, and Sherman M. Kuhn, 'The Authorship of the Old English Bede Revisited', *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen*, 73:1/3 (1972), pp. 172-80. See Kuhn, *Synonyms in the Old English Bede*, p. 168.

the *OEHE* was intended to be a gloss. Both points raise questions about where these doublets came from and how their origins affect a modern reading of the text.

Recent research provides a more definitive answer to some of these questions. Research by Ursula Schaefer, Brian O’Camb, Andreas Lemke, and Greg Waite, explored some of the doublets present in the *OEHE* and other texts such as *Maxims I*.⁴⁶ They noted that different writers formed different sets of doublets across texts in the ninth and tenth centuries. Waite commented that the ‘Bede translator’s practice is markedly different from that of Waerferth in *GD*’ in reference to *OEHE*’s translator’s use of *mārsian* (to proclaim, honour, glorify) which has another semantic emphasis than in *GD*.⁴⁷ These different emphases determine the words writers use to form doublets since the overall meaning of the passage changes depending on each use.

To examine the purpose of the doublet in *OEHE*. iv, 24, I draw on Andreas Lemke’s recent study of the Old English translations of Bede’s text. He examined the use of synonymous pairs of words, such as ‘bodedon 7 lærdon’ as an example [*OEHE*, i. 24]. This pair of Old English verbs replace the Latin word *praedicarent*, from *praedicare*, which relates to announcements: ‘to preach, to praise, to make known, to announce’.⁴⁸ He argues that *bodian* and *læran* have a similar semantic range, and the use of two words instead of one shows that ‘the translator tried to cope with polysemic Latin lemmata’.⁴⁹ Bede uses polysemous verbs in

⁴⁶ Ursula Schaefer, ‘A Dialogue Between Orality and Literacy: Considerations on Linguistic Strategies in the Old English Bede’, *Dialogische Strukturen: Festschrift für Willi Erzgräber zum 70. Geburtstag*, ed. T. Kühn und Ursula Schaefer (Tübingen, 1996), 17-33; Brian O’Camb ‘Bishop Æthelwold and the Shaping of the Old English Exeter Maxims’, *English Studies*, 90:3 (2009), 253-273; Andreas Lemke, *The Old English Translation of Bede’s Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum in its Historical and Cultural Context*, (Saint Phillip Street Press, 2020); Greg Waite, ‘The “Old English Bede” and the glosses in the Tiberius Bede’, *Parergon*, 30:1 (2013) 1–49; and Waite, ‘Translation Style, Lexical Systems, Dialect Vocabulary, and the Manuscript Transmission of the Old English Bede’, *Medium Ævum*, 83:1, (2014), 1–48.

⁴⁷ Waite, ‘Translation Style, Lexical Systems, Dialect Vocabulary, and the Manuscript Transmission of the Old English Bede’, p. 19.

⁴⁸ Lemke, *The Old English Translation of Bede’s Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum in its Historical and Cultural Context*, p. 192.

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, p. 195.

HE for a variety of contexts. Lemke's example concerned preaching, and thus the translator chose two verbs which suggest proclamation (*bodian*) and 'teaching' (*læran*) to best present the meaning of the original Latin word as 'to preach' in a religious setting. A similar pairing occurs in other parts of the *OEHE*, such as 'geworht 7 getimbrad' (made and built) for *exstructa* (constructed), 'neosade 7 sohte' (visited and sought) for *visitare* (to go to see, visit), and 'secan 7 acsian' (to seek and to ask) for *inquirere* (to inquire, investigate).⁵⁰

Lemke's research demonstrated that doublets help to provide a sense-by-sense reading. The wording of the text demonstrates that the *OEHE* translator went to lengths to provide his audience(s) with a careful 'sense-by-sense' translation that uses multiple words to provide meaning.⁵¹ However, it is important to mention that the translator also uses two words to replace multiple Latin words. In Book IV, chapter 11, he presents a nun named Torhtgyth who assists the abbess in teaching religious subjects to the younger girls in her community. He uses the phrase 'lærde 7 clænsade' (taught and chastised), which reflect the use of 'docendo uel castigando' [*HE*, iv. 9] in the Latin text. Thus, not all the doublets found in *OEHE* are examples of sense-by-sense translations. In the examples above, he only provides translations of words directly. This is another reason it is essential to consult the original and the translation together.

Læran and Manian

The translator uses 'lærde 7 monade' in a similar way to the above examples. There are two examples of the doublet in *OEHE* which refer to male religious as teachers and appear in the context of religious guidance and education. The first describes the teachings given by Augustine in one of the headings of Book II: 'Agustinus Brytta biscopas for rihtgeleaffulre

⁵⁰ For all fifty examples of synonymous pairs, see Lemke's research, pp. 192 – 194.

⁵¹ Several researchers have discussed this, including Rowley, *The Old English translation of Bede's Historia Ecclesiastica*, Anglo-Saxon Studies 16, p.6, and Lemke, *The Old English Translation of Bede's Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum in its Historical and Cultural Context*, pp. 23 – 24.

sibbe lærde 7 monade’ (Augustine advised and admonished the British bishops for the unity of the faithful) [*OEHE*, Head. ii. 2]. He was a religious teacher who came to the early English kingdoms to preach Christianity. The other example occurs in Book V, chapter 22. When Ecgberht, a bishop and former king, arrived at the isle of Iona, he approached the local religious community and found their practices wanting. The translator reveals ‘he hi ðy apostolican þeawe monade 7 lærde’ (he admonished and advised them according to apostolical custom) to spread the Christian faith and keep it in a good manner among themselves. These two examples replace different Latin words. The first uses *monureit* from *monere* (to teach, instruct, inform) [*HE*, Head. ii. ii] while the second uses *docuit* from *docere* [*HE*, v. 22]. The religious contexts and teachers suggest that ‘lærde 7 monade’ as a replacement for these words denotes a type of religious guidance because of the inclusion of *manian* in these sections. *Manian* alters the meaning of the Old English translation enough for readers to question the reading of words such as *monere* and *docere* in *HE*.

Both examples suggest that the translator uses the doublet in the context of religious education regardless of the Latin word used in the original. It demonstrates that he relied on a sense-by-sense method of translation instead of a strict formula of word substitution. His use of two similar verbs implies that he wished to highlight a distinct reading of *læran*, which has the largest semantic range out of the two words. Since it is the only verb out of the two to have an emphasised educational usage, he intended to represent Hild’s teachings as a combination of education and admonition. This could be viewed as ‘counsel’. The example of ‘lærde 7 monade’ in the examples related to Hild must therefore follow the same formula.

Female Counsel

Manian and *læran* are a common pair in this text in contexts of counsel. There are fourteen instances of *manian* in *OEHE*, and seven of these occur as a doublet with *læran*.⁵² Four of these examples of doublets concern religious women, both abbesses and nuns, in the contexts of advice and exhortation.⁵³ It is important to note that the translator does not use *manian* singularly in instances related to women as the subject as he does for examples of men, yet he has no reservations about using it in a doublet. It is important to note that the majority of instances of this doublet occur in examples of women teaching. The *OEHE* contains more examples of this doublet than any other text in the corpus of Old English literature.⁵⁴ Three of these examples refer to Abbess Hild's 'teachings': one in the section about Cædmon and another two in chapter 23. Two of these examples render the Latin word *docere*, as I discuss shortly, while one uses another word, *admonere*.

Shortly before her death, Hild summons *Godes þeowas* (God's servants) of the monastic community to her to offer them counsel. The passage in the Latin text relates that after Hild received holy communion, she summoned to her (*accersere*) 'ancellis Christi, quae erant in eodlei monasterio' (the handmaidens of Christ to her, all who were in the monastery) while on her deathbed [*HE*, iv. 23]. Once they are gathered, 'de seruanda eas inuicem, immo cum omnibus pace euangelica ammoneret' (she advised them to preserve the gospel peace among themselves and towards all others). *Admonere* has several meanings, but all relate to an

⁵² See *OEHE* Heading 2 (10), i.12, ii.2, ii.12 (126), ii.12 (130), iv.3, iv.10, iv.14, iv.24 (338.15), iv.24 (338.25), iv.25, iv.30, iv.33, v.20.

⁵³ *OEHE* ii.12 (130), iv.24 (338.15), iv.24 (338.25), iv.25.

⁵⁴ There are several examples of the doublet in texts such as the Old English translation of Gregory the Great's *Dialogues* (Book 2, chapters 29 and 31), two of the Blickling Homilies: *Quinquagesima Sunday* and *The Nativity of John the Baptist*, a homily attributed to Wulfstan, and 'An Account of King Edgar's Establishment of Monasteries', edited by Dorothy Whitelock: 'An Account of King Edgar's Establishment of Monasteries', *Councils and Synods with Other Documents Relating to the English Church*, eds. D. Whitelock, M. Brett, and C.N.L. Brooke, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981).

advisory form of teaching: 'to admonish, remind, suggest, advise, urge, persuade, caution'.⁵⁵

This is the only point in the text that Bede uses *admonere* in the context of Hild's activities.

Admonere occurs elsewhere in *HE* in a variety of contexts, such as Book IV, chapter 25,

when Bede warns his readers about God's wrath. There is also a line used in Book IV,

chapter 3 which mirrors the example of Hild:

Qui cum uenissent, primo admonuit eos ut uirtutem dilectionis et pacis ad
inuicem et ad omnes fideles seruarent.

(When they had come, he first of all urged them to live virtuously in love
and peace with each other and with all the faithful).⁵⁶

The teacher in this example is Bishop Chad, a man with a monastic position who has the right training and knowledge to provide religious teaching. However, the translator only uses a single word in the translation: *manian* [*OEHE*, iv. 3], which implies that Chad provided admonishment rather than teaching.

The Old English text uses *læran* and *manian* to substitute *admonere* in other examples of monastic teaching as demonstrated below:

OEHE, iv. 23:

⁵⁵ Alternative spellings of this verb occur in different editions; for example, *admonere* and *ammonere*. Latham and Howlett et al, 'admonere', *DMLBS*, 1, p. 33. They only list one use of *admonere* as 'to warn, urge', and they also do not include the variant spelling. However, other dictionaries suggest that this lexeme contains multiple senses, including 'to bring to mind', 'remind', 'advise', and 'warn'. P.G.W. Glare, ed., 'admoneo', *Oxford Latin Dictionary, Volume I A – L*, 2nd ed (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 55; William Smith, 'admonere', *A Smaller Latin – English Dictionary*, ed. J.F. Lockwood 10th ed. (London: John Murray Publishers Ltd, 1965), p. 18; Charlton Lewis and Charles Short, ed., 'admoneo', *A Latin Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1876) [repr. 1969], p. 41.

⁵⁶ Translated by Colgrave and Mynors, *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, p.341.

þa geheht heo þa Godes þeowas to hire, þa ðe in þæm ilcan mynstre wæron;
7 heo þa gyt hy monade & lærde, þæt hy betweoh hym heoldon 7 eallum
Godes monnum sibbe & lufan.

(Then she summoned to her the servants of God, who were in this
monastery; and she once more warned and taught them to maintain peace
and love with one another and all men of God.).⁵⁷

The use of two different words suggests that Bede recognised each as an example of separate types of teaching since the semantic range of *admonere* is different from the one assigned to *docere*. In the above example, Bede uses *admonere* to distinguish admonishment from teaching, similar to his example of Hild. Therefore, the use of a doublet which includes *læran* in the examples related to an abbess' teachings suggests something more than admonishment. This is an example of religious counsel.

References to abbesses as counsellors occurs in other sources. In *VW*, Stephan describes Hild's successor, Ælfflæd, as 'semper totius provinciae consolatrix optimaque consiliatrix' (always the best consoler and counsellor of the whole province) [*VW* 60]. Stephan's use of *consiliatrix* associates the role of an abbess with guidance. An archaeological find from Whitby Abbey also associates Ælfflæd with advisory position. The remains of a grave marker found during an excavation by Peers and Radford in the early twentieth century is believed to belong to the abbess.⁵⁸ The excavation produced only two inscribed stones and the one belonging to Ælfflæd is the most significant, according to Peers and Radford.⁵⁹ Although much of the inscription has eroded, they reconstructed it to read 'AEFLEADA / QUAE AB

⁵⁷ Translated by Miller, *The Old English Version of Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, 2, p. 339.

⁵⁸ C. Peers and C.A. Raleigh Radford, 'The Saxon Monastery of Whitby', *Archaeologia*, 89 (1943), 27–88, p. 40 – 43.

⁵⁹ Peers and Radford, 'The Saxon Monastery of Whitby', p. 40.

INFANTIA / CONSILIATRIXQUE VAS' (Ælfflæd, who was a counsellor and vessel of God from infancy).⁶⁰



Figure 7: Fragment of an epitaph to Abbess Ælfflæd, Whitby Abbey, located in Whitby Museum. Image by English Heritage.

They compared this find to others of Irish origin, 'pillow stones', and an inscribed cross found in Hackness, a daughter house of Whitby.⁶¹ Their formulaic similarity and link to an early Christian tradition of inscription suggests that this marker is also from the seventh century, during her lifetime and Hild's. If this is indeed Ælfflæd's grave marker, the reference to her role as a counsellor on a memorial to her life indicates that it was a significant aspect of her position. According to Watt, her involvement in 'counsel' demonstrates that she is a 'source of authority' whose 'words counted in the courts and ecclesiastical circles of her day'.⁶² Ælfflæd appears as an active and influential woman in this text who influences both the religious and lay parts of society. Therefore, it is likely that Hild

⁶⁰ Peers and Radford, 'The Saxon Monastery of Whitby', p. 42. For more information on the transcription and translation, also see Dockray-Miller, *Motherhood and Mothering in Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 17.

⁶¹ Peers and Radford, 'The Saxon Monastery of Whitby', p. 42, also see footnote 1.

⁶² Watt, *Women, Writing and Religion in England and beyond, 650 – 1100*, p. 24.

would also carry the same role of counsellor as an abbess of Whitby. This evidence suggests that *læran* and *manian* as a doublet could denote female guidance in a monastic setting rather than academic teaching.

Religious Teachings

The two other examples of the doublet occur in chapters 23 and 24 of Book IV and occur in the context of monastic teachings given to students and teachers at Whitby. For example, one of the examples in chapter 23 occurs near the end of Hild's life when she contracts a fatal illness:

Ond in ealre þære tide heo næfre blon hire sceppende ælmehtegum Gode
þoncunge don, ge eac þa bebodenan heorde hire monian 7 læran, þæt heo
ealle gemyndige wæron hire bisene.

(And during all that time she never ceased to give thanks to God Almighty
her Creator, and also to admonish and instruct the flock committed to her,
to remember one and all her example).⁶³

In *HE*, Bede uses *docere* to describe how Hild taught her students 'publice et privatim' (in public and private) [*HE*, iv. 23]. The fact that the translator uses the same doublet as a replacement for this word suggests that this refers to a specific type of teaching by Hild.

Docere always occurs in the context of religious education in *HE*, as I mentioned earlier.⁶⁴

Although Bede uses other words to denote teaching, such as *erudire*, *instruere*, *monere*, and *praedicare*, he is consistent in his use of *docere* in examples about Hild, except for one occasion. His description of Hild as an educated and efficient abbess suggests that she is

⁶³ Translated by Miller, *The Old English Version of Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, 2, p. 339.

⁶⁴ Examples include *HE*, iii. xx; iv [heading], xvi; iv. xviii; v. xx; v. xxi.

capable of providing the same type of religious teaching as other bishops and abbots, for which Bede also uses *docere*.

The number of examples which use *docere* highlight that it had an express purpose in *HE* to highlight a certain type of religious teaching. This includes monastic teachings given by someone in a high-ranking position, such as an abbot, bishop, or abbess. *Læran* has a strong emphasis on education and teaching in this text because it forms part of a doublet which substitutes for the Latin word. However, its pairing with *manian* complicates the matter. Its narrower semantic range which relates more to suggestion and admonishment implies that this is not a simple example of teaching. Thus, in these examples of *læran* and *manian*, the translator intends to describe a type of religious education which involves counsel. However, this example is different from the description of Hild's guidance to kings in chapter 23 of *HE* which used *admonere* to denote admonishment. Instead, Bede and his translator describe another type of monastic teaching which has a stronger connection to academic education. The use of *docere* in the example from chapter 24 on Cædmon demonstrates that Bede wished to highlight that same type of education by his choice of words. This suggests that Hild is a teacher in this instance. The change of wording in *HE* from *docere* to *admonere* suggests that the Bede intended to describe more than one type of education given by an abbess, which the translator describes with a polysemous doublet. Doublets can provide evidence of monastic women's role as teachers, but there is more evidence to consider in order to evaluate Hild's role as abbess in these texts.

Leornian

Other evidence in the example of Cædmon also suggests that the translator intended to provide a particular reading for his audience. The translator uses words with a strong connection to academic learning in his representation of monastic education: *geleornian*, *leornodon*, and *læran*, as shown in the example of Cædmon. The Latin text assigns words

with a similar register since the word *discere* also means ‘to learn’. The use of *leornian* in this example more than once is an important feature which affects the representation of the education by Bede’s translator. It suggests that the translator chose his words purposefully to describe monastic education. Hild’s representation as monastic student uses the same vocabulary. For example, the translator describes how she established a monastic community near Tadcaster ‘swa swa heo æt gelærdum wæpnedmonnum geleornian meahte’ (as well as she could learn from learned men) [*OEHE*, iv. 23]. In the *HE*, Bede uses *discere* in the line ‘doctis uiris discere’ (learned from educated men). There are only three examples of *leornian* which describe women learning in *OEHE*.⁶⁵ However, there are many more examples elsewhere in this text and all these attestations occur in the context of monastic and religious education given by religious teachers and educated men. For example, in Book IV, chapter 2, the translator describes that men learned to sing, or chant, in church, and he uses *leornian* to signify that education:

Swylce eac sonas to singenne in circan, ða ðe oððæt in Cent anre menn
cuðon, of þære tide ongunnon men leornian þurh ealle cirican Ongolcynnes.

(Also from that time throughout all the churches in England, men began to
learn how to use chanting in church, which hitherto they had only known in
Kent).⁶⁶

This suggests that the translator was also particular in his representations of learning and education to highlight only instances of monastic teaching. The use of *leornian* to describe Hild’s religious education indicates that is also an example of this type of academic learning.

⁶⁵ The two examples occur in *OEHE*, iii. 6, and iv. 24. One concerns a nun named Begu who informs her community of nuns about Hild’s upcoming death, and the other refers to Ercongote who learns of a tragedy through a vision.

⁶⁶ Translated by Miller, *The Old English Version of Bede’s Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, 2, p. 259.

It suggests that this is an example of academic tuition because other examples of *leornian* all occur in the same context, as I discussed earlier in this chapter.

Leornian also has a strong association with texts and writing as teaching mediums. In *HE*, Bede describes that Cædmon learnt by listening (*audiendo discere*), and the Old English translator echoes this with the use of *gehyrnesse geleornian*. This description suggests that his teachers gave lectures to their students, but also that they used books and other texts and read from them aloud. Monasteries in the early medieval period encouraged their students to read often to educate themselves and others because reading in the early medieval period was not often a private endeavour, but a ‘communal’ one.⁶⁷ A reader would speak the words aloud for others to hear and learn. Nicholas Howe suggests that this was a critical part of early medieval monastic society since reading binds together a community:

‘Both readers and listeners belong in a community at once textual and spiritual, written and oral, in which intellectual and spiritual life is created through the communal interchange of reading’.⁶⁸

He suggests that the ‘interchange’ created by this process of reading aloud and with others is a frequently used type of education which benefits the monastic community. This reflects the type of teaching given to Cædmon by his *lareowas*, who later ‘wreoton 7 leornodon’ (wrote down and learned) everything he spoke about. Therefore, it is likely that the teachers referred to in this example were highly educated and capable to provide Cædmon with a similar monastic experience to other monks and nuns who entered the monastery, that is, an academic education.

⁶⁷ Nicholas Howe, ‘The Cultural Construction of Reading in Anglo-Saxon England’, *Old English Literature: Critical Essays*, ed. R.M. Liuzza (New York: Yale University Press, 2002), pp. 1 – 22, p. 2. Also see Sarah Foot, *Monastic Life in Anglo-Saxon England, c. 600 – 900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 226 – 228, for her discussion on reading as educational tool in monasteries.

⁶⁸ Howe, ‘The Cultural Construction of Reading in Anglo-Saxon England’, p. 15.

The evidence of the doublet and words such as *leornian* suggest that Cædmon received a similar high standard of religious education as taught in other monasteries of the time in England and abroad. It implies that Hild as the head of her monastery was deeply involved in his education alongside the ‘teachers’ mentioned in the passage. In order to investigate this further, it is necessary to consider whether a woman such as Hild had the necessary learning and abilities to teach a man to compose poetry in a monastic setting. Below, I discuss Hild’s background to explore whether the description of her education and monastic role in *HE* and *OEHE* encourages the audience to consider her as a suitable teacher.

Hild’s Background and Education

The Latin and Old English texts share many similarities, one of which is an emphasis on Hild’s origins as a royal woman. So far, there are several studies that take note of Bede’s and his translator’s introductions of Hild which recount her development from a laywoman to a renowned abbess.⁶⁹ Her position as abbess places her in a group of women who came from royal stock or of *nobilis natu* (noble birth) [*HE*, iv. 24]. The Old English translator follows this theme and includes a section in this chapter on Hild’s origins and describes her as ‘æðele in woruldgebyrgum’ (nobly born in worldly origin) [*OEHE*, iv. 23] Bede mentions that she is the daughter of Hereric, the nephew of Edwin who was king of Deira, Bernicia, and for a short time, East Anglia in the early seventh century. He is a central figure and point of inspiration for Bede and his audience because of his miraculous victory caused by his acceptance of Christianity from the teachings of Paulinus [*OEHE*, iv, 23].⁷⁰ The fact that Bede refers to Edwin in this section shows that Hild’s background and relations are essential

⁶⁹ These include Virginia Blanton, *Signs of Devotion: The Cult of St. Æthelthryth in Medieval England, 695-1615* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001), pp. 22 – 31; Pauline Stafford, ‘Powerful women in the early middle ages: Queens and Abbesses’, *The Medieval World*, ed. Peter Linehan, Janet L. Nelson, and Marios Costambeys (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018), 562 – 582; Watson Rogers, ‘In Search of Hild: A Review of the Context of Abbess Hild’s Life, Her Religious Establishment, and the Relevance of Recent Archaeological Finds from Whitby Abbey’, 121–153.

⁷⁰ I discuss Edwin and the women associated with him in Chapter 3.

to her portrayal as an abbess in this text. Stafford also comments that ‘early medieval abbesses’ and their religious communities ‘owed much of their significance to the fact that these women were royal daughters’.⁷¹ It is no coincidence that Bede mentions how she also received preaching from the same holy man as Edwin, named Paulinus [*HE*. iv, 23, *OEHE*. iv, 24]. Both texts suggest that Hild is destined for greatness because she is a royal woman from an esteemed Northumbrian line.

This is not the only occasion that Bede and his translator refer to her royal connections. Bede comments that she was *propingua* (related), to the East Anglia king, Æthelhere, through his wife Hereswith who was Hild’s sister. In the translation, she is described as *cyninges mæge* (king’s kin). Her ties to her family and the secular world are fundamental to her representation as an early medieval woman. She lived a secular life just as much as a religious one. Bede mentions that she was thirty-three years old when she decided to receive a monastic education and reminds his audience that she lived in a *saeculari habitu* (a secular condition) [*HE*, iv. xxiii] prior to this. This detail also appears in the *OEHE*. The translator describes how she ‘æðelice gefylde in weoruldhade drohtiende’ (nobly accomplished dwelling in a secular condition) [*OEHE*, iv. 24]. Hild spent a considerable amount of time living as a laywoman in lay society, and as a member of the royal family, it is likely that she acted as any other elite woman. Virginia Blanton argues that this might be evidence that Hild was a widow when she entered the monastic life.⁷² Her previous experience in a secular role as a royal woman who might have been a wife, and head of a household, suggests that had the right type of background which was suitable for the position of abbess.

⁷¹ Stafford, ‘Powerful women in the early Middle Ages: Queens and Abbesses’, p. 403.

⁷² Blanton, *Signs of Devotion: The Cult of St. Æthelthryth in Medieval England, 695-1615*, p. 30.

A Monastic Education

Hild became determined to follow a monastic lifestyle after she and her family heard Aidan of Lindisfarne's preaching. She travelled abroad for one year to the monastery of *Cale* (Chelles) in Francia. This is the same province which Bede mentioned earlier in *HE* as one of the few places of education for daughters of kings.⁷³ Bede lists several influential royal women in this section, including Saeðryð and Æthelburh, the daughter of King Anna, both of whom became abbesses of Brie. He suggests in Book iii, chapter 6, that there was a network of monastic women who trained future abbesses. For example, Bede mentions the influence of Hild's sister, Hereswith (who was also a member of same monastery) when Hild was at Chelles under the tutelage of Frankish abbesses and teachers.⁷⁴ Hereswith retired to Chelles to live a religious life after the death of her husband and her sister followed her. Chelles was an important place for Hild's education. Bede states that Hild *aemulata exemplum* (followed the example) of her sister in studying and living at the monastery. The Old English version uses the phrase 'bysene heo wæs inhyrgende' (she imitated her example), which contains another word examined in my thesis. *Bysn* (an example) occurs often in examples about female religious in my research. Imitation of behaviour, mindsets, and faith is a crucial part of religious instruction and education in the early medieval period since references to set examples occur frequently in texts about monastic life and hagiography.

⁷³ See my earlier discussion on Frankish monasteries on p. 26.

⁷⁴ It is important to note that in this section of chapter xxiii, Bede also describes Hereswith by her connections to her son, Aldwulf, the King of East Anglia. As I mentioned earlier, Chelles was one of the monasteries where kings sent their daughters to be educated. For more information on Chelles, see Michèle Galiard, 'Female Monasteries of the Early Middle Ages (Seventh and Ninth Century) in Northern Gaul: Between Monastic Ideals and Aristocratic Powers', *Women in the Medieval Monastic World*, ed. by Janet Burton and Karen Stöber, MMS 1 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2015), 75–96, notably pp. 85 - 88; Stevenson, 'Brothers and Sisters: Women and Monastic Life in Eighth Century England and Frankia', pp. 5 – 21; Felice Lifshitz, *Religious Women in Early Carolingian Francia: A Study of Manuscript Transmission & Monastic Culture*, (New York: Fordham University Press, 2014), pp.; and Nelson, 'Women and the Word in the Earlier Middle Ages', pp. 120 – 122.

Bede mentions the same type of teaching by example in the context of abbots and monks in the description of Cuthbert's monastic education.⁷⁵ His translator describes how Boisil, the 'mynstres profost 7 regolweard' (the minster's prior and director) at Melrose educated Cuthbert with 'wisdom haligra gewrita & godra weorca bysene' (the wisdom of sacred writings and the example of good works) [*OEHE*, iv. 27]. Similarly, Hild was educated by women who used their example texts to train younger royal women to fulfil the role of abbess, which included teaching others in the same way that they were taught. It is also likely that these newly trained abbesses brought similar teachings to their monasteries when they returned from Francia. There is a pattern of royal women who become teachers in monasteries which appears elsewhere in Bede's text as the example of Ælfflæd, the daughter of King Oswiu, shows:

OEHE, iii. 24:

... seo gemyngade cyninges dohtor aerest wæs *discipula* 7 *leornungmon*
regollices lifes, ond eft aefter þon wæs *magister* 7 *lareow* þises mynstres.

(... the aforesaid king's daughter was first a pupil and novice in monastic
life, and after mistress and teacher in the monastery).⁷⁶

An important detail of this passage is that it describes a young royal woman's development from a student to a teacher while in the care of Abbess Hild. The Old English translator refers to Ælfflæd as *discipula* and *leornungmon*, and *magister* and *lareow*, which replace two Latin nouns, *discipula* (student) and *magistra* (teacher) [*HE*, iii. 24]. This is one of the few occasions in the Latin text which describe a female student and teacher. It is interesting to

⁷⁵ There are several more examples of this description of monastic teaching in Bede's writing. See *OEHE*, iii. 3, 14, 20; iv. 4. For my discussion of *bysnian* and religious instruction, see Chapter 3.

⁷⁶ Translated by Miller, *The Old English Version of Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, 2, pp. 237, 239.

note that the Old English translator uses two masculine forms of nouns while the Latin text use two feminine words. I explain Bede and his translator's use of nouns in the following section because they are an important indicator in this text of the perception of women like Hild as educators. Although Bede and the translator rarely refer to women as teachers or students directly, it is likely that monastic women, especially abbesses, assumed this role to ensure the education of their successors.

Taught Subjects

Bede comments that Aidan and 'quique noverant eam religiosi' (many other religious persons who knew her) respected Hild's diligence for the monastic life and went to visit her 'diligenter erudire' (to instruct her diligently) [*HE*, iv, xxiii]. The Old English translator substitutes *erudire* with a doublet of 'tydon 7 lærdon' (educate and instruct). The use of *læran* in this example of Hild's learning in a monastic setting suggests that it was important for her representation as a monastic student. *Tydon*, the past plural form of *tyn* (to educate, teach, instruct), is another word which denotes teaching, but it occurs in fewer examples relating to women.⁷⁷ In the *OEHE*, this doublet appears two other times in the context of religious and secular education. First, in relation to teaching *disciplina* (students) about 'metercræft 7 in tungolcræft 7 in gramaticcræft' (metre, astronomy, and grammar), and secondly about *halgum leorningum* (sacred learning) [*OEHE*, iv. 2]. These are subjects which are usually taught by religious teachers in monasteries who had access to book materials and equipment. Therefore, Hild's education under Aidan and other religious men might have mirrored these examples, and even included a similar array of subjects.

⁷⁷ This is either a scribal misspelling or a spelling variant of the preterite, plural form of *tyn*, *tydedon*. It occurs three times in the *OEHE* (Book IV, chapters 2 and 24), and once in *The Meters of Boethius*, see G.P. Krapp, *The Paris Psalter and the Meters of Boethius*, ASPR 5 (1932), metre 13, line 35.

Learning and Teaching Verse

The mention of *metercraft* is notable because of its use in poetic composition. The *metricae artis* (art of metre) described in *HE* refers to poetic verse which uses complicated metres [HE, iv. ii]. This is the same art mentioned by Aldhelm in *DV*. His addressees in Barking also lived in a double monastery, a mixed community of men and women, the same as Whitby and others of the time. He also composes a poetic version, the *Carmen De Virginitate*, some years after the prose version, which he refers to at the end of *DV*.⁷⁸ In the prologue, Aldhelm commends their 'melliflua divinarum studia scriptuarum' (mellifluous studies of the Holy Scriptures) evident in their *sagacissima* (perceptive) writing.⁷⁹ His comment suggests that education at Barking was deeply versed in studies of texts by men and women. He alludes to their literary ability several times in his text through direct compliments and the insertion of several passages about poetic composition.⁸⁰ Watt also comments on their ability to proficiently craft verse:

‘There is good reason to believe that he was not overstating the literary activities of Anglo-Saxon nuns in England, given that poetry from their later counterparts on the continent has survived.’⁸¹

Here, Watt refers to the poems found in letters written by religious women to Boniface and other men in a collection of eighth-century letters known widely as the ‘Boniface Correspondence’. Nuns such as Leoba and Berhtgyth write about their compositions and ask the recipient for advice and remediation and include verses in their correspondence. Berhtgyth’s two Latin poems are the most famous because they belong to a limited collection

⁷⁸ Gwara, *Aldhelmi Malmesbirienis Prosa De Virginitate*, LX, p. 753.

⁷⁹ Gwara, *Aldhelmi Malmesbirienis Prosa De Virginitate*, p. 31.

⁸⁰ Diane Watt, ‘Lost Books: Abbess Hildelith and the Literary Culture of Barking Abbey’, *Philological Quarterly*, 91:1 (2012), 1 – 22, pp. 10 – 11.

⁸¹ Watt, ‘Lost Books: Abbess Hildelith and the Literary Culture of Barking Abbey’, p. 11.

of evidence of women's writing before the eleventh century.⁸² Both these women were born in England before they joined Boniface's mission in Germany and may have received the same training in Francia as Hild and other royal women did. It is important to mention that one of the women whose letters survive in the 'correspondence' was Æfflæd, Hild's successor at Whitby. Her letter to Abbess Adolana (Adela) of Pfalzel suggests that the women at Whitby might also be included in the same intellectual milieu as the female missionary poets.⁸³

If Hild's education at Chelles or her lessons from Aidan included some knowledge of metre and verse, it is possible that she was also able to compose poetry and critique others. There are references in Bede's *HE* and the *OEHE* which suggest that Hild was a highly educated and active member of Whitby's community. An examination of Hild's royal background and monastic education as described by Bede and his translator suggests that Hild learnt through different teaching methods on a variety of subjects. The most important conclusion from this evidence is that women such as Hild had both male and female teachers in the seventh century. It is essential to consider the setting of these texts in double monasteries where men and women lived, studied, and interacted with people from religious and secular backgrounds.

Abbess of Streoneshealh

Once installed as the abbess of *Streoneshealh*, Hild's is shown to develop from a student to a governess who manages her community and becomes a valuable source of wisdom and guidance for the wider community. An abbess held a large amount of influence, respect, and

⁸² Tangl, *Die Briefe Des Heiligen Bonifatius und Lullus, Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Epistolae Selectae*, , letters 143, 147 and 148. For Kathryn Maude's latest analysis of her letters, see Kathryn Maude, ed. and tr., 'Berhtgyth's Letters to Balthard', *Medieval Feminist Forum, Subsidia Series*, Medieval Texts in Translation 4, 7, ed. Mary Dockray-Miller (University of Iowa: 2017).

⁸³ Joan Ferrante et al, ed. and tr., 'A letter from Elfed, abbess of Whitby', *Epistolae* (2014), <https://epistolae.ctl.columbia.edu/letter/338.html> [Accessed 27/08/2022].

power in the centuries before ‘The Benedictine Reform’. Hild lived at a time of strong ecclesiastical growth and development in the early English kingdoms where abbesses performed two roles: governance of monastic communities and religious education. Jane Stevenson summarises that ‘an abbess was the economic manager of their community, its political and executive head’.⁸⁴ They were active women who engage in political and ecclesiastical debates and interact with a wide selection of men and women, as evidence from sources such as *VW*, *HE*, and letters show. Many refer to the early centuries as a ‘golden age’ for monasticism, and for women for this reason.⁸⁵

Bede and the *OEHE* translator emphasise Hild’s role as a good monastic governess. In *HE*, Bede reveals that she was responsible for the creation of the monastery at Whitby which she accomplishes with great speed and diligence [*HE*. iv, xxiii]. He infers that her role as abbess is intricately connected with monastic instruction and education because of several mentions of her involvement in teaching and governing in this chapter. Bede describes her position as one which involves the monitoring and organisation of the institution, as the example of ‘etiam hoc disciplinis vitae regularis instituit’ ([she] truly established the rule for her students) demonstrates. He draws attention to Hild as an efficient and effective monastic governess through her ability to maintain order and provide good examples to her community. A similar depiction occurs in the *OEHE*. The translator uses words which denote governance and management, such as *endebyrdienne* (ordering) and *insette* (appointed), to describe her role as abbess [*OEHE*, iv. 24]. She encourages her community (*trymmian*) and fulfils her position diligently (*geornful*) rather than slothfully (*unaswundenlice*). In these examples, she is a monastic woman with spiritual and communal authority.

⁸⁴ Jane Stevenson, ‘Brothers and Sisters: Women and Monastic Life in Eighth Century England and Frankia’, *Dutch Review of Church History*, 82 (1995), 1 – 34, p. 5.

⁸⁵ See Klein, *Ruling Women*, pp. 4 – 5, 17 – 18.

A Teacher Without a Title?

Among scholars of early medieval history and literature, there is no doubt that Hild is a highly educated and active woman. Aside from her excellent ability to maintain the monastery and her community, it is likely that they also perceived her as an exemplary religious teacher. In Book IV, chapter xxiii, Bede describes Hild and her monastery as shining examples of monasticism in England and beyond. Hild, the ‘Christi ancilla et abbatissa’ (handmaid of Christ and abbess), displays a good example (*vitae exemplo*) for her community, but also ‘plurimis longe manentibus, ad quos felix industriae ac virtutis eius rumor pervenit’ (to many that were far away, to whom the happy report of her industry and virtue reached). Her representation in this chapter concentrates on her ability to provide her community with a model of Christian behaviour, which suggests a similarity to the form of teaching by example described in monasteries such as Chelles.

However, neither Bede nor his translator refer to her by the title of teacher. Both describe others such as bishops and other abbesses as teachers in their texts. I note that both versions use gendered nouns to describe monastic men and women: *abbod* and *abbadisse* (abbot and abbess), *doctor* and *doctrix*, *magistra* and *magister* (male and female teacher), *disciplinus* and *disciplina* (male and female student). For example, Bede describes Abbess Æfflæd as *magistra* and *disciplina* in *HE*, iii. xxiv, but he also refers to her as *doctrix* later in *HE*, iv. xxvi. These are feminine nouns which show that they were purposefully chosen to describe the abbess. However, Old English texts rarely use feminine forms of nouns related to educators such as *lareow* and Latin-borrowed *magister*, as I mentioned earlier. However, there is a phenomenon in which translators use masculine forms for women, particularly abbesses. Ælfric’s *Grammar* and *Glossary* (*ÆGram*) includes a feminised version of *lareow* in his section about nouns, for which he offers the Latin word *doctrix*, and the Old English

term *laerestre* [71.4].⁸⁶ He also describes Redempta as a *laerestre* (a female teacher) in his homily about martyrs.⁸⁷ This noun only occurs three times in the corpus of Old English texts.⁸⁸ Other examples include the Old English translation of Gregory the Great's *Dialogi* (*GD*) which describes a religious woman named Redempta as *lareow* (teacher), a masculine form [*GD*, 16].

Bede's translator follows the same pattern. He uses the masculine nouns *lareow* and *leorningmon* to describe Ælflæd as a student and a teacher. This is the only occasion that he explicitly describes a woman in this way in *OEHE*. In Book IV, chapter 26, Ælflæd is demoted from a *doctrix* to a *fæmne* (a maiden, virgin). However, in the *OEHE*, iv. 7, the translator describes another abbess, Æthelburh, as 'wifmonna lareow 7 festermodor' (teacher and foster mother of women), while Bede uses the 'mater ac nutrix' (mother and nurturer) [*HE*, iv. vi]. Their descriptions of abbesses as teachers are inconsistent and complicated since there are no discernible markers in the texts to explain their reasoning for their choice of words. Thus, it is difficult to determine which women Bede and his translator perceived as teachers. Their treatment of Hild, for example, presents an issue. Bede never describes Hild as a *doctrix* or *magistra*, just as the translator never uses *magister* or *lareow* in his descriptions of her. Hild does not receive the same recognition for her role as a teacher or a student in the same way as other monastic women. The absence of such nouns suggests that they did not see her predominantly in the role of teacher. Despite this, there is other evidence which suggests she participates in education.

⁸⁶ J. Zupitza, *Ælfrics Grammatik und Glossar*, p. 71.

⁸⁷ M. Godden, 'Martyrs', *Ælfric's Catholic Homilies: The Second Series, Text*, EETS s.s. 5 (London: 1979), 310 – 317, p. 316.

⁸⁸ The third example occurs in Defensor's *Liber Scintillarum*: T. Rochais, *Liber Scintillarum*, Corpus Christianorum, series Latina 117 (Turnholt: 1957), chapter 77. The example refers to the feminised concept of learning (as a female noun).

Guidance, Wisdom, and Teaching

In chapter 24, Bede and his translator suggest that Whitby is a place of religious education and wisdom. As the patron of the monastery, Hild reflects the community's high degree of education since Bede refers to her as *prudentiae* ([of such] wisdom). The *OEHE* translator describes her as *snyttro* (wise) and full of *wisdomes* (wisdom), especially when she provides counsel. Bede and the translator describe her counsel as an example of education with the use of the nouns *consilium*, *geþeaht*, and *wisdom*. This is the only moment in the Latin and Old English texts which refers to an abbess' teachings in this way, yet there are other examples related to laymen, as I discuss later. Thus, this is not a typical representation of an abbess, but it is nevertheless important to Hild.

Bede describes her impact on the local and wider communities to provide evidence of her abilities. He reveals that she encouraged her students to engage in 'lectioni diuinarum scripturarum' (the reading of divine scripture) [*HE*, iv. xxiii]. He suggests that there was a high standard of teaching at Whitby since it produced many students who excelled in religious professions. Her monastery produced those who Bede describes as 'ecclesiasticum gradum' (the rank of ecclesiastic), or who 'altaris officium apte subirent' (undertook the service of the altar). Hild's monastery gained the title of 'cradle of bishops' because of its role in the education of several important religious men in the seventh century.⁸⁹ Bede mentions that five bishops (Bosa, Ætla, Otfar, John and Wilfrid) were trained under Hild, all of whom went on to achieve high-ranking positions in Northumbria and Kent. These are important names for the time, and some appear elsewhere in Bede's text, such as Bosa and Wilfrid. Bede's mention of these men as examples of Hild's students suggests that not only was she an efficient abbess but the head of an excellent institution of religious learning.

⁸⁹ Dumitrescu, *The Experience of Education in Anglo-Saxon Literature*, p. 11.

Although there is no direct mention of her teaching the bishops named above, it is implied that she took some agency in their development. These men are *subditos* (placed under) her, or into her care as abbess of the monastery, which is why she sets them to study. Bede implies that she is the driving force behind their learning since he names her as the one who encourages and *faciebat* (made) them undergo rigorous reading. Therefore, he implies that she taught men as well as women as an abbess.

The reference to her wisdom and prudence suggests that she is an ideal religious teacher. There are several examples which demonstrate that she teaches both male and female students in the monastery in the *OEHE*. She ‘Godes lufan geornlice lærde’ (eagerly taught God’s love) to her community in *HE*. iv, 23. She teaches her community with her example (*bisene*) to follow the rule and maintain virtue, just as she does in the Latin version. Also, in the passage about the five student bishops, the translator replaces the Latin with Old English words which depict Hild as actively involved in the future bishops’ education. He describes that she set those within her charge to practice (*bigongen*) and study (*leornung*) writings and good works. Here, the translator uses words which also refer to religious education elsewhere in the *OEHE* given by abbots and bishops [*OEHE*, iv. 28].

Also, he uses words which relate specifically to education, such as *leornung* and *lār*. As I mentioned previously, *lār* is a significant noun which refers to teaching. Near the beginning of her introduction as an abbess, the translator refers to her involvement in monastic education as follows: ‘mid þy heo þa feola geara þissum mynstre in regollices lifes lare swiðe geornful fore waes’ (when she had for many years ruled over this monastery, with great diligence in the teaching of regular discipline) [*OEHE*, iv. 23].⁹⁰ *Lār* only occurs in the context of religious teaching in *OEHE*, often in the context of bishops or abbots. There are

⁹⁰ Translated by Miller, *The Old English Version of Bede’s Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, p. 335.

several examples which use the phrase ‘lare 7 þurh his lifes bysene’ (with some variation) in relation to male teachers.⁹¹ The number of these examples suggests that this is a stock phrase used to denote moments of monastic education. Therefore, the use of *lār* in this passage is significant because it refers to a woman’s religious education. Only one other example uses this word to denote women teaching. In *OEHE*, iv. 9, a nun named Torthgyth assists her abbess, Æthelburh, ‘lare 7 mid ge lifes bysen’ (through teaching and by life’s example). The absence of other examples of female religious teaching the monastic rule indicates that this was not a common way to represent women in the *OEHE*. This example is also important because it does not have an equivalent in the Latin text. Bede describes that Hild ‘disciplinis vitae regularis instituit’ (truly established the regular discipline), but there is no reference to her teaching. The translator’s decision to include *lār* suggests that he understood her role as abbess as an educational one.

How does the OEHE Translator Portray Hild?

The evidence provided in this chapter shows that Old English writers use *læran* as a polysemous word in a variety of situations to denote different types of education. However, when it is used in the context of monastic women, either as students or teachers, it refers to religious education in the same way as it does in examples of men. The doublet of *læran* and *manian* is a significant phrase which is unique to high-status members of ecclesiastical communities in this text. The translator’s use of vocabulary related to academic education suggests that both men and women had an active role in education in monasteries of the seventh century. Therefore, Hild is a religious teacher to Cædmon in this passage. The appearance of *læran* as part of a doublet is not a coincidence, but a meaningful choice of

⁹¹ See examples in *OEHE*, iii. 17; ii. 19; iv. 9.

words to describe one of the abbess' duties. Hild is crucial to Cædmon's development and the creation of what might be the first piece of Old English verse.

The evidence highlights the vital role that abbesses fulfil in double monasteries because of the space given to them in the Latin and Old English texts. There is no doubt that Bede and the Old English translator viewed women such as Hild as capable teachers at the time. The translation shows this especially because of use of words which emphasise her educational engagement with her community and others. However, there is one other point to consider which, so far, has not been discussed. Although Hild has a privileged, elite position as an abbess, she was once a nun. Her representation in the *HE* and *OEHE* offers no reason to think that she received a different education than other royal women at Chelles and in the early English kingdoms. Other monastic women of the seventh and eighth centuries were highly educated as examples from women's letters and the *OEHE* highlighted. Did the 'teachers' and 'students' mentioned by Bede's translator include female members of Whitby?

Several researchers have commented on the teaching activity of monastic women in the seventh and eighth centuries,⁹² yet only some of these researchers noted the role of nuns in monastic education. For instance, Jane Stevenson and Laura Michele Diener described the impact of senior nuns as teachers for a variety of subjects, including embroidery.⁹³ Mostly, studies focus on the abbess as the principal educator of the monastery because they appear more often than nuns in sources. Hild is the only woman mentioned as present in Cædmon's education because she is an abbess and an influential female saint. Although neither Bede nor

⁹² Rosalind McKitterick, 'Nun's Scriptoria in England and Frankia in the Eighth Century', *Francia*, 19 (1992), 1 – 35, pp. 27 – 28, 31; Patricia Halpin, 'Women Religious in Late Anglo-Saxon England', *The Haskins Society Journal*, 6 (1994), 97 – 110, pp. 97 – 106; Dockray-Miller, *Mothering and Motherhood in Anglo-Saxon England*, pp. 28 – 32; Benedicta Ward, "To my dearest sister": Bede and the Educated Woman', *Women, the Book, and the Godly: Selected Proceedings of the St. Hilda's Conference*, ed. Lesley Smith and Jane H.M. Taylor (1993), 105 – 112, pp. 107-108.

⁹³ Stevenson, 'Brothers and Sisters: Women and Monastic Life in Eighth-Century England and Frankia', p. 5; and Laura Michele Diener, 'Sealed with a Stitch: Embroidery and Gift-Giving among Anglo-Saxon Women', *Medieval Prosopography*, 29 (2014), 1–22, p. 5.

his translator ever mention her sainthood, Hild had a large cult following in Northumbria as the lost ‘Life of Hild’ attests, but it did not extend further.⁹⁴ However, Hild is unnamed throughout the chapter, which gives rise to the argument about Bede’s reluctance to recognise abbesses in his text as active participants in religious education. Earlier, I highlighted Watt’s comment about Bede’s discomfort with the agency of abbesses, which is considered to be a factor that affected his writing.⁹⁵ It also impacted the Old English translation. The omission of letters which included references to women and their roles in the later text also suggests that the translator shared Bede’s view and removed material which he believed was not necessary for his audience. The absence of Whitby’s female community in chapter 24 is raises the question of why nuns do not appear often in either text.

Their absence might be related to the audience of the *OEHE*. Lemke argues that the contents of the *OEHE* and *CP* suggest that these texts shared a similar purpose and audience:

‘Therefore, judging from its contents alone, the *OEHE*, not unlike the *OE Pastoral Care*, appears to have served as edifying manual for men and women who were set to rule or guide in worldly as well as spiritual matters and instruct their subjects or their flock’.⁹⁶

He suggests that Bede’s translator envisioned an audience of abbots and abbesses rather than ordinary monks and nuns. Hence, he had no need to mention the work of female members of Whitby in this section, only the abbess’ involvement. This might also explain why he presents Hild as an exemplary governess and monastic teacher to provide his audience with a suitable model to emulate. Thus, the absence of Hild’s name in chapter 24 does not mean that she was unimportant, just as the lack of named women in *HE* and *OEHE* does not necessarily

⁹⁴ Jane Tibbets Schulenberg, *Forgetful of their Sex: Female Sanctity and Society, ca. 500 - 1100* (London: University of Chicago Press, 1998), p. 25; and Lees and Overing, *Double Agents*, p. 33.

⁹⁵ Watt, *Women, Writing and Religion in England and beyond, 650 – 1100*, p. 25.

⁹⁶ Lemke, *The Old English Version of Bede’s Historia Ecclesiastica*, p. 208.

equate to a reluctance to speak about women. Both the Latin and Old English texts include many women regardless, more than other texts of the period. Despite the translator's omissions, he also includes several nuns, named and unnamed, in *OEHE* who perform vital roles in monasteries.

There is sufficient evidence to argue that a double monastery such as Whitby, which had a renowned status as a community of highly educated and capable members, produced more than just male teachers and abbots. Ælfflæd is proof of the high level of learning under Hild because of her description as a teacher and governess. There is also Torhtgyth to consider. I mentioned earlier in this chapter that both Bede and his translator describe a nun of Barking Abbey named Torhtgyth who assisted her abbess [*HE*, iv. 9; *OEHE*, iv. 8]. In the Old English version, the translator uses *læran* to signify that she provides teachings alongside her abbess, which renders *docere* in *HE*. This is another example of a monastic woman who teaches religious subjects which the writers indicate with specific words. Her position as a *sweoster* (sister) who spent *monig ger* (many years) in the monastery makes her a candidate to teach younger members.

My discussion above demonstrates that Bede and his translator do not always directly describe monastic teachers, and instead use words which reflect education to imply that these men and women provide teachings. *Læran* is an important word in the *OEHE*, especially for women's representations as students and teachers, because it indicates moments of teaching. Thus, it is likely that the congregation of 'learned' teachers and students included women who also taught Cædmon *spelles* and *stæres*. It is important to include Hild as part of a vital stage of his learning, but also to consider the impact of the other nameless women of Whitby and other double monasteries of the time.

2.2 Læran and Monastic Women

In their discussion of women and religion in early medieval England, Lees and Overing proposed that women were ‘double agents’, by which they mean that women moved in the ‘real’ world of early medieval society, yet modern readers can only perceive glimpses of them through focused sources written by men.⁹⁷ This applies to their representations as educated women who received and gave teachings in monastic and secular settings. Evidence of the ‘real’ activity of women in this period is slim and often hidden under centuries of omission. However, their involvement in monastic education is well attested with a specific vocabulary range which presents them as teachers and students, especially *læran*.

Abbesses such as Hild were extremely influential women whose descriptions do not always reflect their agency, but the vocabulary used in examples about their teachings offers evidence of their role as monastic teachers. The translator’s use of vocabulary reflects other examples in the corpus of Old English, which suggests that writers used *læran* purposefully in the context of men and women as students and teachers. My investigation suggests that their involvement in monastic education was far greater than previous research acknowledged because of the linguistic evidence, which is an important addition.

Texts such as Bede’s *HE* along with the Old English translation are invaluable assets to the study of women’s roles in education in the early medieval period. They include many detailed examples of learning, teaching, and women, and not just monastic women but others as well. *Læran* is a complex word in my research because it also occurs in examples related to laywomen, namely royal women. Although abbesses have a strong relationship with teaching in Old English texts, denoted using *læran*, so do queens, which needs exploration. My next chapter investigates the education given to royal women and whether their representations suggest that they also teach in the same way as abbesses.

⁹⁷ Lees and Overing, *Double Agents*, p. 2.

3. The Duty of Royal Women to Counsel

In my previous chapter, I suggested that Old English writers used words such as *læran* in examples of women to denote education taught in monastic environments. Abbess Hild's representation as a religious teacher in the *OEHE* offers evidence of women's role in teaching in the seventh century. However, several examples also use *læran* to signify the education given by royal women. Although Old English writers use many verbs to describe education in examples about royalty, *læran* is the most popular. It is a significant word because it appears frequently in depictions of the engagement of queens and princesses at court or another political stage outside of the monastic environment. This chapter explores the use of this word in two texts to discuss whether this group of women has a different relationship with education than others. My examination highlights two representations of royal women in *OEHE* (Book 2, chapters 12 and 15) and *Or* (Book III).¹ These instances involve two queens who provide similar forms of counsel. The advisory role of wives has long been considered a key characteristic of their position, but the evidence discussed in this chapter suggests that their counsel was not always viewed in a positive light. The appearance of royalty in similar instances of counsel which use *læran* suggests that there is a unique educational role that is only available to this group of women. I begin my discussion with Bede's description of a queen's counsel to her husband in seventh-century East Anglia.

3.1 *Rædwald's Wife and Queenly Persuasion*

My first example of a royal woman and her 'teachings' occurs in Bede's *HE* and the later Old English translation. The translator describes the wife of King Rædwald of East Anglia as

¹ Malcolm Godden, tr. and ed., *The Old English History of the World: An Anglo-Saxon Rewriting of Orosius*, DOML 44 (Cambridge Ma.: Harvard University Press, 2016).

‘teaching’ with the verb *læran*. She appears in chapters 12 and 15 of Book II, which contain an account of the exile and later conversion of a Northumbrian prince, Edwin. This narrative is set in the turbulent transition period of the early seventh century. The kingdom of East Anglia appears as one of the main challenges to the unified acceptance of the Christian faith in England in this period,² which might explain Bede’s focus on Edwin’s reign. He was a person of great importance to Bede since his narrative spans nine chapters to create a detailed account of his life, including his dealings with East Anglian royalty.³

In this section, I examine the vocabulary used in two examples in *HE* and *OEHE* that present the queen as a ‘teacher’ of secular and religious subjects to her husband. My analysis reveals that she has a two-sided depiction as a good and bad ‘counsellor’, which is apparent from the use of two verbs: *læran* and *biswīcan*. The change of verbs in different contexts of counsel and persuasion suggest that the translator used different words to describe two types of secular teaching. Her dual representation presents the East Anglian queen as a woman who had a contentious relationship with advice. I consider the impact of her representation on the various audiences of *HE* and *OEHE* from the eighth and tenth centuries. I argue that both Bede and his translator had a certain reason to include two examples of a pre-Christian woman’s counsel.

Representing the Queen in the Latin and Old English Texts

Rædwald’s queen appears in two separate segments in the description of Edwin’s reign. Both examples given insight into early English values of morality and secular counsel as well as the queen’s role in the narrative as an advisor. My discussion focuses primarily on the first

² Joseph Grossi, ‘A Place of Long-Lasting Evil and Unhappiness: Rædwald’s East Anglia in Bede’s Ecclesiastical History’, *New Medieval Literatures*, 15, (2013), 97 – 120, p. 98.

³ Edwin appears in chapters 9 - 20 of *HE*, and chapters 8 – 14, 16 - 20 of *OEHE*.

example which has not received the same attention as the second. I begin with the examples in the Latin version before I move on to the Old English translation.

The Latin Text

Where does the East Anglian queen fit into Bede's eighth-century text? *HE* contains many royal women, named and unnamed, far more than in the Old English translation because of several omissions of sections and the translator's choice of phrasing. Most women occur in Books II and IV. For my discussion, I focus on three of the Latin manuscripts: the Moore Bede, the Tiberius Bede, and the Leningrad Bede.⁴ As I mentioned earlier, Bede had access to information from a wide selection of written sources and oral testimony.⁵ For events in East Anglia, he especially mentions that he learned of events through an abbot named Isse and 'partim ex scriptis vel traditione priorum' (partly from earlier writings or traditions) [*HE*, Pref.]. He used these earlier sources to recount the lives of two women, Edwin's wife, Æthelburh, and Rædwald's queen, both of whom feature prominently in the narrative.

In chapter 12, Edwin seeks the protection of Rædwald from the Bernician king, Æthelfrith, who offered to reward the East Anglian king in exchange for the prince. Through the course of the chapter, the audience learns that Rædwald, who intended to betray Edwin, changed his mind. Instead, he leads an army against Æthelfrith's forces near the River Idle where the Bernician king is slain, and Edwin not only gains his freedom but becomes Rædwald's successor after the death of Regenhere. It is in the middle of this narrative that the queen first makes an appearance in the earliest Latin manuscript.⁶ There is no doubt that Bede attributes Edwin's survival to Rædwald's queen. She plays an essential role in this chapter which leads to the king's change of heart as the passage below shows:

⁴ I discussed these manuscripts in Chapter 2, p. 134.

⁵ Colgrave and Mynors, *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, pp. 6 – 7.

⁶ Cambridge, University Library, MS Kk.5.16, fol. 83r. I use various manuscripts in my study to examine the vocabulary used in different copies by different scribes to explore any variations.

HE, ii. 12:

Postquam enim cogitationem suam, de qua tibi ante dixi, reginae in secreto revelavit, revocavit eum illa ab intentione, ammonens quia nulla ratione conveniat tanto regi amicum suum optimum in necessitate positum auro vendere, immo fidem suam, quae omnibus ornamentis pretiosior est, amore pecuniae perdere.

(When he secretly revealed to the queen the plan I told you of, she dissuaded him from it, warning him that it was in no way fitting for so great a king to sell his own honour, which is more precious than any ornament, for the love of money).⁷

Bede presents the queen as the one who is responsible for Rædwald's decision which saves Edwin's life. The key word in this passage is the Latin verb *ammonens*, a form of the verb *admonere*. It has a particular use in the twenty-six occurrences in Bede's text to signify either advice or a warning.⁸ For example, there is a similar instance earlier in *HE*, ii. 12 in which Paulinus urges Edwin to fulfil his vow to convert to Christianity. Bede describes Paulinus' counsel as follows: 'regem ammoneret explere votum' (he warned the king to fulfil his vow). The use of *admonere* suggests that Bede refers to an advisory form of education, which I refer to as counsel, that could be provided by both men and women. This passage occurs in all four of the Latin manuscripts.⁹

⁷ Translation by Colgrave and Mynors, *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, p. 181.

⁸ These instances occur in *HE*. i. 7, 20, 23, 27, 32; ii. 1, 5, 12, 13, 19; iii. 19, iv. 3, 11, 23, 25, 29, 32; v. 6, 13, 14, 15, 21. For more information on examples of *admonere*, see P. Fennell Jones, *A Concordance to the Historia Ecclesiastica of Bede* (Cambridge, Ma: The Medieval Academia of America, 1929), p.10.

⁹ Cambridge, Cambridge University Library, MS Kk.5.16, fol. 75v; London, British Library, Cotton MS Tiberius A XIV, fol. 59r; London, British Library, Cotton MS Tiberius C II, fol. 51v; and Leningrad, Leningrad Public Library, MS Lat. Q. v. 1. 18, fol. 49b.

The second example in Book II, chapter 15, depicts Rædwald's queen differently as a misleading woman who persuades the king against Christianity. In this passage, she becomes an instigator of Rædwald's apostasy after he returns from Kent, where he had been first instructed in the Christian faith:

HE, ii. 15:

[...] ab uxore sua et quibusdam peruersis doctoribus seductus est atque a
sincereitate fidei deprauatus [...].

(he was seduced by his wife and by certain evil teachers and perverted from
the sincerity of his faith).¹⁰

This is the second time that she influences the king's decisions in this text, but this instance has a negative depiction. Bede reveals in the lines following this passage that the extent of her influence leads Rædwald to worship both Christian and pagan gods in a temple with two shrines. This was a serious offence. The wording reflects his disapproval of her behaviour because of the occurrence of the verb *seductus* from *seduce* (*seducere*) which can mean 'to lead away, lead astray, seduce, or corrupt'. This suggests that he associates her with 'evil teachers' in this example.

The words used in these two examples provide a view of the queen's suitability as an advisor in two contrasting areas. The first instance concerns a moral and political focus on a private interaction between husband and wife. The second has a much stronger religious emphasis. Together, their representations show that a royal wife had a distinct relationship with counsel in Bede's text.

¹⁰ Translation by Colgrave and Mynors, *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, p. 191.

The Old English Text

The ninth-century Old English translation differs from its Latin source and contains a series of omissions and changes which occur throughout. For example, the Latin letters included in *HE* are missing and large sections of chapters are reduced to shorter paragraphs in all the extant manuscripts of the vernacular text.¹¹ Several of these involve women.¹² The absence of laywomen is more noticeable in *OEHE* because of the changes made to the text, such as the removal of Pope Boniface's letter to Edwin's queen, Æthelburh [*HE*, ii, 10]. Rowley in her study of the Old English translation suggests that this was a deliberate choice influenced by tensions amid ideas of conversion, marriage, and the role that women played in the development of Christianity.¹³ The downplaying of laywomen's agency in secular and monastic settings is one of the reasons why there are so few mentions of women as teachers, instructors, or counsellors.¹⁴ This is not the case for Rædwald's queen. She appears twice in the text in chapters 12 and 15. Out of the five extant manuscripts of the translation which survive, Rædwald and his queen feature in the four which contain Book II.¹⁵ The vocabulary used to describe the queen remains unchanged across the various versions. The manuscripts listed below include the same reading in chapter 12:

1. [T] Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Tanner 10, fol. 19r.
2. [O] Oxford, Corpus Christi College, MS 279B, fol. 16v.
3. [B] Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 41, p. 107.¹⁶

¹¹ Lemke, *The Old English Translation of Bede's Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum in its Historical and Cultural Context*, pp. 19, 132, 157.

¹² These include chapters 10, 11, and 16 of *HE*.

¹³ Rowley, *The Old English Version of Bede's Historia Ecclesiastica*, pp. 117 – 118.

¹⁴ This issue has been addressed by many over recent years, including Lees and Overing in *Double Agents*, and more recently by Watt in her book *Women, Writing and Religion in England and beyond, 650 – 1100*. See my earlier discussion of their arguments on pp. 136, 145.

¹⁵ For my discussion of the Old English translations of *HE*, see p. 133.

¹⁶ *Parker Library on the Web*, page no. assigned to the digital edition at: <https://parker.stanford.edu/parker/catalog/qd527zm3425>.

4. [Ca] Cambridge, University Library, MS Kk. 3.18, fol. 24r.

In the first example, the translator of *OEHE* similarly depicts the king as the 'student' of the queen in two examples. The passage below shows that Rædwald's wife also advises the king to reconsider his actions:

OEHE, ii. 12:

Se cyning his gepoht, bi ðæm þe ic ðe ær sæde, þære cwene in deagolnesse
onwreah. Ða onwende heo hine from þære yflan inngehygde his
modes; lærde hine 7 monade, þætte þæt nænige þinga gedafenode swa
æðelum cyninge 7 swa gebunnum, þæt he sceolde his freond þone
betstan in neede gesetum in gold bebycgan, 7 his treowe for fea gitsunge 7
lufan forleosan, seo wære deorwyrðre eallum maðmum.

(The king disclosed to the queen in secret his intentions, of which I told you
before. Then she diverted him from the evil purpose of his heart, instructing
and admonishing him, that it in no wise became a king so noble and so
excellent to sell for gold his best friend in the hour of his need, and to
sacrifice his honour, which is dearer than all treasures, for greed and love of
money).¹⁷

In this version, the translator uses a lexical doublet in the place of a single Latin word: 'lærde
hine 7 monade' (instructing and admonishing him).¹⁸ The fact that the translator/scribes did
not omit or abbreviate this passage in these manuscripts indicates that the queen's advice was
key to Edwin's narrative. Edwin owes his survival and power to the counsel of a woman,

¹⁷ Translated by Miller, *The Old English Version of Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, 1, pp.131, 133.

¹⁸ The same doublet occurred in my earlier discussion of Hild. For further information about doublets, including Lemke's study, see pp. 148 – 160.

Rædwald's queen. This unnamed woman is pivotal to the plot because her intervention in political and religious affairs alters Edwin's fate in the Latin and Old English texts. Despite several attempts to pinpoint her role as a royal wife and advisor in early medieval England, her relationship with education presents a complicated situation.¹⁹ Both Bede and his translator give her a multi-faceted presentation as a good wife, a queen, and a pre-Christian temptress, dependent on the context of her teaching.²⁰ Furthermore, this is the only example from the *OEHE* which utilises *læran* to signify a queen's counsel of her husband. Her representation as a 'teacher' is crucial. Bede's decision to include the queen in *HE* as a motivating force behind Edwin's success suggests that her description had a specific purpose for his eighth-century audience. It is likely that the Old English translator also had a similar reason to include her.

Researchers have not yet considered the impact of the vocabulary associated with her teaching on her depiction as a royal woman. The absence of other examples which describe a queen providing advice indicates that these passages are significant and require further examination to better understand the queen's role as a secular 'teacher'. A reconsideration of the secular subject and the use of *læran* is necessary to better understand the queen's position in this text. We need to consider whether her counsel was only viewed as female advice, or if it refers to another form of counsel strongly associated with education, such as Hild's counsel to the poet Cædmon [*OEHE*. iv, 24].

In chapter 15, the queen is mentioned again in a different context. Here, the translator uses a different set of vocabulary to depict her teaching in a similarly negative way to the Latin

¹⁹ I discuss research on the queen's role in *HE* and *OEHE* shortly. See pp. 187 – 193.

²⁰ Máirín MacCarron, 'Royal Marriage and Conversion in Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum*', *The Journal of Theological Studies*, 68:2 (2017), 651 – 670, p. 666.

version. She is the only woman in Bede's text and the Old English translation to offer misguidance:

OEHE, ii. 15:

Wæs Rædwald his fæder geo geara in Cent gelæred in þa gerynu Cristes
geleafan, ac holinga; forðon þa he eft ham com, wæs biswicen from his
wife & from sumum unrihtum lareowum, þæt he forlet þa hluttornesse
Cristes geleafan.

(Long before, his father Rædwald had been instructed in the sacraments of
Christ's faith in Kent, but to no purpose; for on returning, he was seduced
by his wife and unrighteous teacher, and left the first purity of Christ's
faith).²¹

The queen is portrayed as a disruptive element which disturbs other teaching. She has assistance from teachers (*lareowum*), whom the translator describes as *unrihtum* (wicked or false), to seduce (*biswican*) the king to return to his idolatrous practices. The verb *biswican* has a similar range of meanings to *seducere*, 'to deceive, entice, seduce, delude'.²² This verb occurs in more than one manuscript, as shown in T (fol. 21v), O (fol. 20v), B (p. 115) and Ca (fol. 26r). Neither *biswican* nor the Latin word it replaces have any relation to academic education. Both have heavily negative connotations.

Bede and his translator present a woman who has considerable influence over her husband. However, her association with education remains unclear. The representation of a laywoman as a 'teacher' seems out of place in *HE* and *OEHE* since there are no other instances with

²¹ Translation by Miller, *The Old English Version of Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, 1, pp. 141, 143.

²² Joseph Bosworth, 'be-swican', *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary Online*, ed. Thomas Northcote Toller, Christ Sean, and Ondřej Tichý (Prague: Faculty of Arts, Charles University, 2014), <https://bosworthtoller.com/4015>.

admonere, *læran*, or any other verb in these texts. Queens especially are not portrayed as teachers in the same way as men or monastic women with the use of words such as *læran*, except for Rædwald's wife. Instead, writers use other words to describe a female form of counsel and persuasion. For example, the translator mentions how Bishop Swiðberht achieved the favour of King Pippin of Francia when Queen Blithryth *geerendade* (interceded) [OEHE, v. 12] on his behalf. This is a translation of the Latin word *interpellante* from *interpellere* (to interrupt, address) [HE, v, 11]. The vocabulary used in these examples is different to the type witnessed in descriptions of abbesses. However, his description of Rædwald's queen offers an exception. As the only woman in Bede's text to have positive and negative depictions as a counsellor with a word usually assigned to monastic teachings, the above example provides a suitable point to examine a royal woman's position with education in an Old English text.

A Pre-Christian Queen in a Christian Text

The little information we have about Rædwald's queen comes from her presence in *HE* and *OEHE* in the example mentioned above. We do not know her name or origins, only that she is the wife of a powerful man in a time of religious and political upheaval. The instances in chapters 12 and 15 offer conflicting depictions of a royal woman in early English society. Scholars of early medieval literature and history have discussed both in recent years since the inclusion of a pre-Christian woman in a Christian text invites discussion. Her representation captured researchers' attention because of the distinctiveness of the lay concepts related to social etiquette compared to Bede's Christian themes. Both tie in with the theme of 'morality' which is fundamental to his narrative of the conversion of the English kingdoms, but the queen's advice draws on ideas which are prevalent in sources with a strong secular focus.

However, the scarcity of information about her in the written record led to an equal lack of attention to her association with education. There are only a handful of articles that discuss her intervention and several book chapters about her persuasion of Rædwald from the Christian faith.²³ Hardly any studies examine the vocabulary used in the examples. Instead, most consider the queen in terms of her royal role in early East Anglian society and whether this reflects the reality of queenship in seventh-century England, as I discuss below.

A Reflection of Heroic Tradition

There seems to be no doubt among researchers that the queen's advice in chapter 12 is integral to her role as a pre-Christian royal wife. For example, Stephanie Hollis commented that Rædwald's queen in chapter 12 'fulfils an approved role' in the secular domain of seventh-century society,²⁴ and more recently, Máirin MacCarron argued similarly, that she fulfils 'the traditional role of an Anglo-Saxon queen as advisor to her husband'.²⁵ An archaeologist, Martin Carver, also commented on the queen's role during his research on Sutton Hoo. He goes a step further and states the following:

‘The political acumen of Rædwald’s queen recorded by Bede shows that England had a tradition of female guidance in matters of policy and belief which was active in the early seventh century’.²⁶

The consensus is that the queen reflects an older tradition in place before the Christianisation of the early English kingdoms. The above views suggest that the traditional role of female

²³ Several studies have approached the inclusion of the queen in Bede's *HE* and the *OEHE*. The most notable are Stacy Klein, *Ruling Women: Queenship and Gender in Anglo-Saxon Literature* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006), pp. 34-35; Damian Tyler, 'Reluctant Kings and Christian Conversion in Seventh Century England', *History*, 92:2 (2007), 144 – 161; MacCarron, 'Royal Marriage and Conversion in Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum*', 651 – 670; and Joseph Grossi, *Angles on a Kingdom: East Anglian Identities from Bede to Ælfric* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2021), pp. 41 – 47.

²⁴ Stephanie Hollis, *Anglo-Saxon Women and the Church* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1998), p. 233.

²⁵ MacCarron, 'Royal Marriage and Conversion in Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum*', p. 667.

²⁶ Martin Carver, ed., 'Introduction: Northern Europeans Negotiate their Future', *The Cross Goes North: Processes of Conversion in Northern Europe AD 300 – 1300* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press Ltd., 2005), 3 – 14, p. 14.

counsel encompassed both political and religious agendas equally. Even so, her role is limited. Barbara Yorke asserts that Rædwald's wife carries out 'the traditional role of queens in such situations'.²⁷ Her comment highlights the specificity of the secular context in which this woman offers advice to her husband in a secular context.²⁸ However, it is unlikely that her influence was so far-reaching as described in this text. There are no queens in *HE* or its translation who directly alter the belief of other people in a similar way, especially a king. The lay focus of the conversation in chapter 12 on the relationship between a king and his retainers may be a significant factor that could explain why Rædwald's wife is portrayed as a counsellor in this setting.

Yorke and Carver's views stem from the similarity of the queen's speech and intervention to other depictions of royal women as advisors of kings for secular matters.²⁹ Michael Enright's important research demonstrates that elite women in Old English poetry, such as Hroðgar's wife, Wealhþeow, and the queen in *Maxims I*, have a ritualistic involvement focused on the maintenance of the *comitatus*, the bond between the lord and his retainers.³⁰ Their role, which includes the provision of advice to their lords, is a 'general prescription which applies to all noblemen's wives' in the heroic tradition.³¹ Therefore, as Nathan Breen also suggested, royal women in Germanic tradition were expected to provide counsel to their husbands and their retainers, which might explain why women like Wealhþeow show a 'willingness to reproach [their] husbands'.³²

²⁷ Barbara Yorke, *Kings and Kingdoms of Early Anglo-Saxon England* (London: Seaby Ltd., 1990), p. 77.

²⁸ Klein also noted that her advice has limitations in *Ruling Women*, p. 35.

²⁹ The relationship between Rædwald's queen in representations of women in Germanic literature is a widely accepted concept. Also see Stacy Klein, *Ruling Women*, pp. 11-12.

³⁰ Michael Enright, *Lady with a Mead Cup: Ritual, Prophecy and Lordship in the European Warband from La Tène to the Viking Age* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1996), pp. 5 – 6.

³¹ Enright, *Lady with a Mead Cup*, p. 6.

³² Nathan Breen, 'The King's Closest Counsellor: The Legal Basis of Wealhtheow's Comments to Hrothgar, Beowulf 1169–87', *The Heroic Age: A Journal of Early Medieval North-western Europe*, 14 (2010), para. 10.

Aside from instances in *OEHE* and Old English poetry, there is a distinct lack of evidence of this representation of women in the corpus of Old English literature. However, when writers describe kings' wives in an Old English text as queens, such as Wealhþeow or Rædwald's queen, they include references to their role as counsellors. Previous research also suggests that descriptions of royal women in Old English texts are reflections of early medieval queenship.³³ They conclude that the East Anglian queen's representation in *HE* and *OEHE* follows a formula prescribed to royal women from an older Germanic tradition which included the role of the royal wife as a suitable advisor.

Queenship, Women, and Bede

I also consider whether the similarity of these representations shows that Bede was aware of secular concepts of queenship and female counsel when writing his ecclesiastical history. For example, Damian Tyler noted in his article about kings and conversion in the seventh century that queens were influential, especially in Northumbria.³⁴ He argued that there are several royal women in *HE* such as Eanflæd, the daughter of Edwin, Æthelthryth, and Æthelburh, who demonstrate 'proactive' and independent involvement in society.³⁵ They had powerful family members, wealth, and influence as landowners, but their most prominent domain of authority was the royal household.³⁶ Bede was not ignorant of the power of these women which is evident from examples such as Eanflæd's assistance in Wilfrid's monastic education [*HE*. v, 19].³⁷ His representation of her teaching concerns counsel with the use of the noun *consilium* (counsel). Bede associates queens with the provision of advice in the seventh

³³ See also Fiona Gameson, 'Women in Anglo-Saxon Poetry', *Women in Ancient Societies: An Illusion of the Night*, ed. L.J. Archer, S. Fischler, and M. Wyke (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1994), 204 - 232, pp. 211 - 212; Grossi, *Angles on a Kingdom*, pp. 41 - 50; Mary Ellen Rowe, 'Leoba's Purple Thread: The Women of the Boniface Mission', *Magistra*, 17:2 (2011), 3-20, pp. 9 - 11.

³⁴ Tyler, 'Reluctant Kings and Christian Conversion in Seventh Century England', pp. 156 - 157.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 156.

³⁶ I discuss these key ideas at the beginning of this chapter in greater detail.

³⁷ For my discussion about this example, see Chapter 4.

century to an extent because it was irrevocably linked to their position and authority. This association of royal women and counsel continues in the Old English translation with the frequently used word *geþeaht* (council, deliberation, advice) as the equivalent of *consilium* [*OEHE*, ii. 13, v.19 for example]. Examples such as this demonstrate that it is essential to examine the differences in the Latin and Old English versions. These texts shed some light on the perceptions of royal women from the past and suggest that the author and his translator wished to present them to their audiences as reflections of real women.

Despite his desire to provide a ‘historical’ narrative of the conversion of the early English kingdoms, his ideas of seventh-century society and queenship are blurred. Bede wrote his text in a different ‘world’ than the pre-Christian landscape of Rædwald’s time, governed by Christian views which did not always look upon women favourably. Stacy Klein argues that although wives continued to perform their role as advisors to their husbands in the centuries that followed, their behaviour provoked the ire of churchmen like Bede.³⁸ Her research focuses on the queen’s involvement in Rædwald’s apostasy from the point of view of Bede as a Christian author. She states that he depicts the counsel of wives ‘as a practice that is operative within the pagan courts of England's past’.³⁹ Her comment implies that it might be considered obsolete a hundred years later when he wrote his text. She also comments that it is an act that had ‘no place in Christian royal households’, and yet in *HE*. ii, 12, Bede does not present the queen’s counsel negatively.

Joseph Grossi’s more recent book also considers the influence of royal women, but he views Bede’s portrayal of these women as a reflection of his conflicted ideas of queenship in a time of conversion from paganism. Grossi argues that ‘the East Anglian queen challenged Bede’s very notion of what a strong woman could be and should be’, a ‘strong woman’ being a

³⁸ Klein, *Ruling Women*, p. 35.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

woman in a position of politic and religious power, such as a queen.⁴⁰ Bede's portrayal of other influential women who convert their husbands or advise men to pursue a religious life, such as Æthelburh and Eanflæd, suggests that his understanding of biblical commentaries impacted his writing of elite women.⁴¹ His Christian views of the problematic nature of women who 'sow seeds of doubt' into men's minds undoubtedly affected his representation of laywomen in *HE*,⁴² but the extent of this is debatable.

The idea of the persuasive wife as a bad influence is a trope that occurs frequently in Christian texts. In early medieval texts, women are inherently prone to misleading men as shown in the example Gezabel in *Kings* and another example in *Or* of a queen who abuses her position to mislead her husband, which I discuss later in this chapter.⁴³ Portrayals of laywomen as a source of correct counsel are more difficult to locate outside of the heroic tradition in Old English literature, and yet there is a clear example in *HE* and *OEHE*. Klein implies that Bede was reluctant to present the past performance of a pre-Christian woman and her 'wifely counsel' because it interfered with his Christian ideals.⁴⁴ Bede's view of this matter is directly related to religious counsel. He concedes that she provides a role which fits the agenda of conversion when she intervenes to save Edwin's life.⁴⁵ His depiction of the queen in chapter 15 suggests that he was uncomfortable with the extent of her influence as a non-Christian wife on subjects outside of her area of authority.

The queen's role as a spiritual advisor does not sit well with Bede because it does not fit in with his representation of Christian queens. Máirín MacCarron's work on the role of royal

⁴⁰ Grossi, *Angles on a Kingdom*, p. 47.

⁴¹ Ibid. Also see fn. 53 and 54 (pp. 47 and 242). Grossi draws attention to other researchers such as Judith McClure, Alan Thacker, Georges Tugène, H.E.J. Cowdrey, and Scott DeGreggio, who argue that Bede's *HE* and other texts were heavily influenced by biblical texts, especially the Old Testament.

⁴² Grossi, *Angles on a Kingdom*, p. 47.

⁴³ For my discussion of Orosius' text and the Old English translation, see pp. 213 – 233.

⁴⁴ Klein, *Ruling Women*, p. 35.

⁴⁵ Grossi, *Angles on a Kingdom*, p. 47.

marriages in conversion demonstrates that Christian queens do not overtly influence their husbands or play a direct role in their conversion.⁴⁶ Bede's discomfort with laywomen and their teachings occurs when the topic relates to religious matters such as conversion as the evidence of chapter 15 demonstrates. However, he has no qualms with women's teachings when they concern subjects of a secular nature, such as chapter 12 indicates. Bede's depiction of the queen indicates his desire to include her in Edwin's success, but he is also uncomfortable with the agency of royal women in Rædwald's time. The difference in the representations of the two examples as either positive or negative shows that the queen's role in *HE* and *OEHE* is a complex mixture of Christian and non-Christian expectations of queenship.

The Queen's Purpose in *HE* and *OEHE*

According to Grossi, Rædwald's queen appears as an 'ethical force' who revives the royal honour and reputation of her husband by being a moral source of guidance in *HE*.⁴⁷ She has a significant role in Bede's narrative which follows his theme of morality and conversion. So far, Grossi is the only researcher who has investigated the reason Bede and his Old English translator include a pre-Christian queen in their Christian 'history'. The first example from chapter 12 seems especially out of place if we consider the religious focus of his work, although both instances are unusual representations of laywomen in these texts. Although Grossi argues that the queen's advice 'does accord with the exhortation to spiritual over material values',⁴⁸ there is a foreignness to her counsel which is not seen in other examples of royal women in Bede's text or the *OEHE*. Thus far, no one has questioned the examples'

⁴⁶ MacCarron, 'Royal Marriage and Conversion in Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum*', pp. 652 – 654. This idea comes from the concept that the 'believing' wife converts the 'unbelieving' husband. See Alison Gulley, "Seo fæmne þa lærde swa lange þone cniht oðþæt he ge-lyfde on þære lifigendan god": The Christian Wife as Converter and Ælfric's Anglo-Saxon Audience', *Parergon*, 18:2 (2002), 39 – 51, pp. 42 – 48.

⁴⁷ Grossi, *Angles on a Kingdom*, pp. 43 – 44.

⁴⁸ Grossi, *Angles on a Kingdom*, p. 44. He also notes that the queen's advice is 'not uniquely Christian'.

uniqueness or oddity. Instead, many researchers continue to focus on Bede and the translator's disregard of monastic and laywomen.

One of the most common ideas shared among researchers is the view that Bede's writings are inherently misogynistic because of his marginalised representation of women.⁴⁹ Lisa Bitel argues that Bede had little interest in women, and *HE* only contains a relatively large number of them 'incidentally' because they provide 'exemplars of good Christian behaviour'.⁵⁰ Moreover, she states that 'villainesses served no function in his history'.⁵¹ Her second comment refers to the example of evil women in other early medieval texts such as Queen Eadburh of Mercia who appears in Asser's *Vita Alfredi* as a tyrant.⁵² There are no such representations of murderous queens in *HE* or *OEHE*, except for Balthild who is mentioned briefly in *HE*, v. 19, and *OEHE*, v. 17. Queens who do make an appearance are presented as less active than their male counterparts. While laywomen are particularly underrepresented in *HE*, and especially in *OEHE*, Bede's attention on Rædwald's queen suggests that he was interested in her role from a religious perspective with a focus on her morality. The evidence of Rædwald's wife who is both the heroine and 'villainess' of Edwin's story shows that he did use women as examples of bad behaviour.

Bede's decision to include two conflicting representations implies that he had an explicit agenda to show exemplary and inappropriate queenly behaviour. The view that Bede's *HE* provides a catalogue of exemplary men and should 'be read as an extended form of sermon' is already an established idea.⁵³ The queen's appearance in *OEHE* also calls into question the

⁴⁹ There is a large amount of research on Bede's views of women which I discuss in greater depth in Chapter 2.

⁵⁰ Lisa Bitel, *Women in early Medieval Europe, 400 – 1100* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 86.

⁵¹ Bitel, *Women in early Medieval Europe, 400 – 1100*, p. 88.

⁵² William Henry Stevenson, ed., *Asser's Life of King Alfred together with the Annals of Saint Neot* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), pp. 12 – 14. Although Eadburh lived after Bede's time, it is likely that she was not the only misbehaving woman in this period judging by the inclusion of Rædwald's queen in *HE* and *OEHE*.

⁵³ N.J. Higham, *(Re-)Reading Bede: The Ecclesiastical History in context* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2006), p. 208.

intention of the translator and his intended audience. Few researchers have considered the idea of a female audience of *HE* and *OEHE*,⁵⁴ and even fewer have explored the impact of depictions of laywomen such as Rædwald's wife. Since the queen's representation is connected to her teaching, it is important to consider if the eighth-century audience of *HE* and the tenth-century audience of *OEHE* viewed these examples as didactic.

The example of Rædwald's wife and her complicated relationship with education through her counsel demonstrates that there is still much to gain from studying Bede's writings and the Old English translation. The contrast of the vocabulary in the two chapters presents an important distinction between suitable and unsuitable subjects 'taught' by royal women. In my discussion, I argue that the queen's association with education as counsel is a specific form of secular teaching allocated only to royal wives. I also discuss the audiences of Bede's *HE* and the later translation to discuss whether these examples of appropriate and inappropriate teaching by a queen were for the benefit of their royal male and female audiences.

The Old English Vocabulary

Before I approach the representation of Rædwald's queen as an advisor, the Old English vocabulary needs to be explored. As I mentioned earlier, *OEHE* contains many omissions, abbreviations and alterations which affect the reading. Rowley perceives the differences found in the Old English version to be an intentional choice by the translator:

'Bede's translator changes emphasis, order and nuance so as to produce new meaning in the spaces between Bede's time and his own'.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Rowley has mentioned this idea briefly in *The Old English Version of Bede's Historia Ecclesiastica*, p. 115, and Blanton, in *Signs of Devotion: The Cult of St. Æthelthryth in Medieval England, 695-1615*, pp. 25 – 31, also broached the subject from the view of female religious as exemplars.

⁵⁵ Rowley, *The Old English Version of Bede's Historia Ecclesiastica*, p. 115.

Her suggestion that the translator willingly redrafted parts of the *HE* to suit his own agenda in the tenth century has major implications for the presentation of Rædwald's queen. It implies that the queen's depiction as a royal woman and a 'teacher' might be unique to the translation and its time. To discuss this, I examine the key verbs used in the *OEHE* and their relationship with education in this text.

The first example in chapter 12 in *HE* and *OEHE* contains three keywords: *admonere*, *læran*, and *manian*. The Old English verbs appear as a doublet, which I discussed previously in Chapter 2. The key to understanding the queen's representation as a 'teacher' in *OEHE* relies on the use of a doublet instead of a single verb. There is a distinct pattern related to advisory teaching in these three verbs, that is, teachings that seek to provide advice or admonishment. However, both *læran* and *manian* can also refer to educational teaching while *admonere* does not. It is this variant meaning which presents Rædwald's queen as a provider of a slightly different form of education in *OEHE* than *HE*. The translator implies that her initial teaching given to her husband has a more educational focus than Bede's Latin text indicates, especially with the use of *læran*.

Læran

Læran is the most frequently used verb to denote teaching in the *OEHE*. The translator prefers this verb over others associated with educational teaching such as *tæcan*, which only appears three times in the text and with a small number of subjects related to the presentation of information, which is not apparent in *læran*.⁵⁶ An example in Book IV shows that it refers to the leading of 'students' either to locations or people:

OEHE, iv. 1:

⁵⁶ See Miller's edition of *OEHE*, Book ii, 8. 180; Book iv, 1. 254; Book v, 17. 460.

Tæhte þa þam biscope in þæm neahnunmynstre sumne gedefne munuc,
þæs noma wæs Andreas.

(Accordingly he pointed out to the pope a suitable monk in the
neighbouring cloister, whose name was Andrew).⁵⁷

None of these examples of *tæcan* include references to women either as teachers or students. *Tæcan* appears in several examples of monastic women who provide religious instruction to their communities and others in other texts (*BenRW*, *ÆGram*, *GD*), and it can also refer to commands given by an abbess as the head of her community in certain situations. My discussion in Chapter 2 demonstrated that the translator used the same verb (*læran*) in instances of education, admonishment, and orders to show that monastic women provide a range of different teachings. Several of these include the use of the doublet seen in *OEHE*, ii. 12. I will discuss their similarity later in this section. The specialised use of *tæcan* and the frequent use of *læran* in the context of educational teaching indicate that these two verbs have separate readings in the Old English version. Therefore, to what extent did the translator understand the queen's counsel as education in Bede's original narrative?

Manian

Old English writers rarely use the other verb, *manian*, to signify the same type of education as *læran* in *OEHE*. The TOE places *(ge)manian* under the headings ‘to suggest, hint, urge’, ‘to advise, instruct, tell’, and ‘to demand (what is due)’, and Bosworth Toller provides the following meanings for this word: ‘to urge, to admonish, exhort, instigate; to remind, suggest; to teach, instruct, advise’.⁵⁸ Bosworth-Toller also quotes the queen’s advice in *OEHE*, ii.12 as

⁵⁷ Translated by Miller, *The Old English Version of Bede’s Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, 2, p. 255.

⁵⁸ The TOE only provides *manian* with a prefix: <https://oldenglishtesaurus.arts.gla.ac.uk/category-selection/?qsearch=manian>. Bosworth, *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary Online*, ‘manian’, <https://bosworthtoller.com/22335>.

an example of the meaning ‘iii. to tell what ought to be done, to teach, instruct, advise’, but this is the only example listed. It seems unlikely that it would refer to education because of the consistency of examples related to exemplary behaviour. Instances of *manian* as a singular verb show that it refers to education as incitement or urging of a particular behaviour. An example from Book IV, chapter 3, demonstrates its use to describe the bishop’s admonishment of his monastic brethren:

‘þa monade he heo ærest, þæt heo betweenan him þæt mægen lufan & sibbe
& between eallum Godes monnum geornlice heolde’.

(he admonished them first to maintain zealously among themselves and
with all men of God the virtue of love and peace).⁵⁹

In this instance and others, it signifies the ‘instructor’ as someone who offers advice or a warning to correct a specific behaviour, usually related to Christian values of virtue or in a monastic setting, as my earlier example of Hild’s teachings demonstrated.⁶⁰ It also replaces *admonuit* from *admonere* [*HE*, iv. iii] which shows that the translator did not always use a doublet to translate this verb. Therefore, why does the doublet appear often in examples of women’s teaching?

The translator’s decision to use the pairing in the passage about Rædwald’s queen and its association with religious education has important implications for the perception of her own advice. The association of *manian* with admonishment in *OEHE* presents the queen’s first teaching as a form of counsel or warning to her husband. This falls in line with the scholarly arguments about the queen’s role as an advisor, which I mentioned earlier. However, the subject matter differs from the other religious examples in *OEHE*. The queen’s counsel

⁵⁹ Translated by Miller, *The Old English Version of Bede’s Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, 2, p. 267.

⁶⁰ See pp. 152 – 156.

covers a secular subject in chapter 12, related to values connected to the king's hall and his retainers instead of a religious focus as other examples show. Therefore, the effect of the pairing of these two words on the depiction of the queen's counsel is essential to understand how Bede and his translator perceived her role as 'teacher'.

Another Doublet

As I discussed in Chapter 2, Bede's translator uses the doublet of *læran* and *manian* to accommodate several polysemous Latin words found in *HE*. The use of the same doublet in *OEHE*, ii. 12 is problematic since this example and the one related to Hild's advice in iv. 23 have different contexts, and people, and include different subjects. The focus on secular matters and lay society in chapter 12 provides a stark comparison to the monastic environment described in Book IV. However, the similarity of the Latin vocabulary used to describe Hild and Rædwald's queen in chapters iv. 23 and ii.12 suggests that these women provided a more basic form of teaching which does not require extensive monastic or academic training. Instead, their ability to counsel others relied on another type of knowledge from secular customs and morals which both women would have understood because of their status as royal women. Thus, it is necessary to consider the significance of the queen's position to better understand why the translator used this doublet. There are other examples of laywomen in Old English texts with a similar association with advice, such as in *Beo* and *Max I* which I discuss shortly. These include depictions of kings' wives as their most personal advisors on matters of the mind, morality, and etiquette. Other examples with similar focuses can shed some light on her involvement with 'teaching' in this specific subject area.

A Queen and Confidante

MacCarron's and Yorke's comments on Rædwald's queen suggest that her 'teachings' are only acceptable because of her 'traditional' role as a royal wife in a secular setting.⁶¹ I now investigate this claim through an examination of the pre-Christian queens in other Old English texts, namely *Beo* and *Maxims I* (*Max I*). For this section, I return to a comment that I made earlier about Bede's sources, especially the 'writings and tradition' he cites in the preface to *HE*. The translator also refers to these in *OEHE* as 'ealdra manna gewritum oððe segen' (the writings or traditions of older men).⁶² Bede has limited knowledge of East Anglian society for which he sought the assistance of others. The focus on 'traditions' is noteworthy because it implies that the depiction of Rædwald's wife refers to a stock representation of queens in the seventh century. To discuss this, I consider the concept of a royal wife as the king's most personal counsellor in Old English poetry to uncover whether her presentation in *OEHE* reflects a wider trend associated with royal women.

Maxims I

The first point of comparison between Rædwald's wife and depictions of other queens concerns her unique conversation about 'yflan inngehygde his modes' (his mind's evil intention). Bede's translator reveals that the king conversed with his wife about this matter in private, *deagolnesse* (secrecy, privacy, solitude), which replaces the Latin phrase *in secreto* (in secret, separately).⁶³ This distinction informs the audience that the king spoke to his wife alone rather than in the presence of his retainers. It presents the idea that kings could consult their wives about their decisions without the assistance of counsellors or teachers who appear in other examples, such as Book II, chapter 10. This is especially relevant for matters of personal nature like Rædwald's moral dilemma.

⁶¹ See pp. 187 – 193.

⁶² Miller, *The Old English Version of Bede's Ecclesiastical History*, Preface, p. 4.

⁶³ Klein also discussed this aspect briefly in *Ruling Women*, p. 35.

Secrecy between spouses appears elsewhere in Old English literature. For example, the tenth-century wisdom poem from the Exeter Book, *Maxims I* [*Max I* henceforth], presents the idea that a queen should *rune healdan* (keep secrets) [86a].⁶⁴ She must also 'him ræd witan' (offer him counsel) [92b]. The similarities of the two queens in *Max I* and *HE* show that the poet and Bede both represent royal wives as providers of secret advice. It suggests that the poet refers to an earlier model of queenship from Bede's time. Leonard Neidorf argues that the poem has an early composition date; he suggests that the poem was composed in the seventh or eighth century from the lexical, dialectal, and metrical evidence.⁶⁵ The shared representation of queens in these two texts offers further evidence that the poem and *HE* use ideas from the same period. Therefore, *Max I* either has an older composition date or it uses a pre-existing model. The poem and *OEHE* exist in later manuscripts and yet contain the same depiction of queens as advisors to their husbands. The parallels between these two texts reinforce the idea that the concept of a king's wife as his private counsellor existed in the tenth century.

The association of women with lay 'counsel' in these texts applies only to a specific group of women. Bede and the translator emphasise the royal status of Rædwald's wife through the inclusion of *regina* and *cwen*, both of which signify 'a queen'. The same description (*cwen*) appears in *Max I* [81b]. These nouns show that these women have a certain economic and political status which entail a set of unique roles and characteristics. Rædwald's queen's relationship with teaching as private advice is one of those attributes because it does not apply to any other group of women in *OEHE*. Further evidence from the corpus of Old

⁶⁴ This poem appears in the Exeter Book, (MS 3501). Also see G.P. Krapp and E. Dobbie, eds., *The Exeter Book*, ASPR 3 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1936).

⁶⁵ Leonard Neidorf, 'On the Dating and Authorship of *Maxims I*', *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 117 (2016), 137-53, pp. 137 – 146.

English literature suggests that this was a unique form of teaching only provided by royal wives.

Beowulf

The representation of female advice in the next poem also focuses on a queen's mediatory role. Wealhþeow in *Beo* offers a similar type of counsel to the examples in *OEHE* and *Max I*. The date of this poem is much discussed, but the surviving manuscripts have been dated to around the end of the tenth century.⁶⁶ The poet presents Wealhþeow, Hroðgar's wife, as the keeper of social etiquette in the king's hall. He first introduces her to his audience as 'cwen Hroðgares / cynna gemyndig' (Hroðgar's queen, mindful of etiquette) [613]. From the moment she enters the hall, and the poem, she is presented by her role as a 'mindful' and influential queen. She is quick to remind her husband of all the qualities and duties expected of him as king of the Scyldings.⁶⁷ He should be *glæd* (kind, courteous) to his people as well as *geofena gemyndig* (mindful of gifts) [1170b – 1172]. She also calls upon his nephew, Hrothulf, to keep his promises at the end of her speech [1184 - 1187]:

wene ic þæt he mid gode gyldan wille
uncran eaferan gif he þæt eal gemon,
hwæt wit to willan ond to worðwyndum
umbor wesendum ær arna gefremedon.
(He will honour, I am sure, our two sons,
repay them in kind, when he recollects

⁶⁶ Leonard Neidorf, ed., 'Introduction', *The Dating of Beowulf: A Reassessment* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2016), 1 – 18.

⁶⁷ This section of the poem can be found in the manuscript, Cotton MS Vitellius A XV, ff. 158v – 159r.

all the good things we gave him once,

the favour and respect he found in his childhood.).⁶⁸

The main difference of this text in contrast to the other examples is that Wealhþeow's 'teachings' are not given in private to her husband. She performs a public speech in the middle of the lively mead hall. Also, her counsel does not just apply to Hrothgar but to other male family members, as her advice to Hrothulf demonstrates. The reach of her influence extends to the whole household as part of the *comitatus*. It presents the queen's duty to maintain order and honour in the king's hall, publicly or secretly, as dependent on the situation. Rædwald and his wife discuss a matter with grave ramifications, which the queen argues could cause the ruin of them both through the effect it would have on his character, position, and household. Therefore, it is a matter best discussed in private. The poet portrays Wealhþeow as a woman who seeks to remind her male audience of their expected behaviour. Her depiction as a queen is essential to this association because her role as the king's 'delegate' allows her to be a 'part of a specialised ritual which others cannot perform in the same way'.⁶⁹ In Helen Conrad O'Brien's recent examination of Wealhþeow, she describes her as a woman who 'approaches intervention boldly' because she has 'freedom of movement and power' of her place in society beside the king.⁷⁰ Her role presents a 'culturally accorded power and field of action' specific to heroic royal women in the poem.⁷¹ However, the evidence of the queen in *OEHE* demonstrates that this extends beyond poetry.

⁶⁸ Translated by Heaney, *Beowulf: A Verse Translation*, p. 32.

⁶⁹ Enright, *Lady with a Mead Cup*, p. 8

⁷⁰ Helen Conrad O'Brien, 'Listen to the Woman: Reading Wealhtheow as Stateswoman', *New Readings on Women and Early Medieval English Literature and Culture: Cross-Disciplinary Studies in Honour of Helen Damico*, ed. Helene Scheck, and Christine E. Kozikowski (Leeds: Arc Humanities Press, 2019), 191 – 208, p. 193.

⁷¹ O'Brien, 'Listen to the Woman: Reading Wealhtheow as Stateswoman', p. 193.

Rædwald's queen echoes the same self-assurance which comes from a strong understanding of her position as a queen to act as a source of morals and etiquette. The *OEHE* translator also uses words associated with the idea of *comitatus*, such as *gedafenian* (to behove), concepts of virtue, faithfulness, and trust (*treowe*), and nobility (*æthel*) when she speaks to her husband. The noun *treowe* which translates the Latin word *fidem* from *fides* (faith, loyalty, trust) suggests that the tenth-century concept of royal 'virtue' embodies an older idea of loyalty. The use of the verb *manian* particularly emphasises that the queen's counsel is interventional. Her role in this narrative is to remind her husband of his duty as a king to act in a certain way for the benefit of their household, just as Wealhþeow does. It is this similarity that suggests her representation as a royal wife is formulaic. It is also exclusive to the king's household. No other example in *HE* or *OEHE* describes monastic men or women as providers of education on secular subjects. While there are several references to Christian themes in *Beo* and *Max I*, neither explicitly relates the behaviour of kings or queens to religion. Both consider the interaction between husband and wife, or king and queen, as a lay area of concern. Therefore, Rædwald's wife seems the best candidate to 'educate' the king about his behaviour.

The shared subject matter of 'honour' and the provision of 'counsel' to kings demonstrate that Rædwald's wife, Wealhþeow, and the queen from *Maxims I* are stock representations of queens from a similar time. It also implies that they share the same association with secular education as admonishment. The Old English doublet of *læran* and *manian* signifies that the queen's teaching of Rædwald intended to 're-educate' him about his position as king, which, only his wife could do.⁷² The queen plays a vital role in her household in seventh-century East Anglia, and the use of *læran* bolsters her image as a legitimate queen. Although neither

⁷² Enright, *Lady with a Mead Cup*, p. 22, and Conrad O'Brien, 'Listen to the Woman: Reading Wealhtheow as Stateswoman', p. 193.

the *Beo* poet nor the *Max I* poet use *læran* or *manian* in their descriptions of women, all three texts demonstrate the importance of lay counsel to the role of the queen in heroic tradition.

A Misleading Woman

My focus now turns to the example of the queen's advice in chapter 15. Her portrayal as a suitable counsellor alters dramatically in the second instance when the subject changes to a religious focus. The translator offers his audience a wife who misleads her husband with the help of *unrihtum lareowum* to uphold his non-Christian views. Both Bede and his translator represent this second 'teaching' as a negative example of a wife's intervention with different verbs, *seducere* and *biswican*. It is this alteration of vocabulary which implies that Rædwald's queen is only suitable to offer advice on lay subjects.

The Old English verb, *biswican*, occurs only three times in *OEHE*.⁷³ It has a negative connotation in his text to describe someone led astray as the example of the afflicted, proud man in Book V, chapter 14 shows: 'he wæs earmlice beswicen mid deofles searwum' (he was miserably deceived by the devil's wiles). Here, the translator associates the devil with a harmful act of persuasion which leads the sinful layman to be guided by his pride and fear rather than salvation. The absence of verbs of education and instruction such as *læran* or *tæcan* indicates that this does not involve education. It is another form of negative teaching unique to non-Christian 'teachers'. The translator associates the queen's persuasion in chapter 15 with the treachery of the devil by using a verb like *biswican*. He also places her alongside other examples of 'evil' women from Christian narratives, such as Gezabel and Delilah, each of whom *beswac* (deceived) her husband.⁷⁴ The queen's association with these women in

⁷³ See *OEHE*, i. 14, ii. 12, v. 14.

⁷⁴ See, S. Crawford, 'Judges', *The Old English Version of the Heptateuch*, EETS 160 (London); repr. with additions by N.R. Ker (1969), l. 82; P.A.M. Clemoes, 'Decollation of St. John the Baptist', *Ælfric's Catholic Homilies: The First Series, Text*, EETS s.s. 17 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 457.

particular highlights the concept of wives as sources of bad counsel from a religious perspective.

Royal Wives as Spiritual Advisors

There is more evidence of this representation in the sharp contrast between Edwin's wife, Æthelburh, and Rædwald's queen. As I discussed earlier, Bede depicts both women in *HE* as distinct types of spiritual advisors to their husbands. They are either a help or a hindrance to kings' conversions. Bede includes copies of two letters written by Pope Boniface and addressed to Edwin and Æthelburh separately [*HE*, ii. 10, 11]. In his address to the new Northumbrian queen, he implores her to help convert her husband's mind to the true faith. He exhorts her to 'duritiam cordi ... mollire' (soften the hardness of his heart) by 'infundens sensibus eius' (pouring into his mind) Christian ideas [*HE*, ii, 11]. It is evident that she does not *teach* her husband to convert, but the Pope expects her to intervene in more personal ways as the king's wife. Boniface believes that a royal wife could be an adequate 'domestic spiritual adviser'.⁷⁵ The inclusion of this letter in *HE* confirms this belief for matters such as conversion, even in a seventh-century Christian royal household, and that Bede also considered female counsel important in the correct context.

This connection is lost in the tenth-century translation. The *OEHE* omits all the Latin letters which further removes evidence of early English queens' involvement in their husbands' conversion. It also suggests that the Old English translator may not have perceived laywomen, especially wives, as legitimate providers of religious advice. This would explain his decision to include the episode about Rædwald's queen as an example of women's persuasion gone wrong, but not include Æthelburh. The representation of the queen's persuasion with negative vocabulary associated with religious misteaching presents her

⁷⁵ Klein, *Ruling Women*, p. 31.

advice as unacceptable for her position as a royal wife, which has stronger ties to secular subjects. The placement of these two women in the overarching narrative around Edwin emphasises the purpose to provide contrasting examples of female counsel for religious subjects.

Fit for Royalty? Audience and Purpose of *HE* and *OEHE*

In this section, I discuss the purpose and audiences of Bede's *HE* and the later translation. In Bede's preface of *HE*, he calls upon his addressee, Ceolwulf, to contemplate (*meditandum*) the examples in his text.⁷⁶ The translator does the same when he asks his audience to examine (*smeaganne*) and instruct others (*læranne*). Both encourage their readers (or listeners) to consider the narratives in detail and with thoughtful examination rather than as an account of historical events. It is because of this educational focus that the men and women mentioned in *HE* and *OEHE* have purposes as exemplars of Christian and non-Christian behaviour. Therefore, if Edwin's journey was meant to be an inspiring one for his eighth-century audience, the episodes about Rædwald and his queen must also have a significant message, but for whom?

Bede and 'Mirrors for Princes'

To consider this concept, I consider some similarities between these texts and those in the literary genre known as *specula principum*, 'mirrors for princes'.⁷⁷ This genre provides a set of ethical and political guidelines for royal behaviour aimed at rulers with models for them to follow. Many of these texts in the early medieval period came from the Continent, such as Sedulius Scottus's *De rectoribus Christianis* and Smaragdus of Saint Mihiel's *Via Regia*.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Colgrave and Mynors, *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, p. 4, and Miller, *The Old English Version of Bede's Ecclesiastical History*, 1, p. 2.

⁷⁷ Lemke, *The Old English Version of Bede's Historia Ecclesiastica*, p. 206.

⁷⁸ Rachel Stone, *Morality and Masculinity in the Carolingian Empire*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 42 – 43.

There is even an example of a woman's writing in this genre, as Dhuoda's 'manual' for her son demonstrates.⁷⁹ Her writing demonstrates that the *specula principum* genre was known and used by elite women abroad, but it may also have existed in early medieval England between the eighth and early tenth centuries. Some of the writings of Alcuin, the English advisor to Charlemagne, also contain features of this genre, as do the late eighth-century letters of Cathwulf.⁸⁰ Colgrave's and Mynors's list of texts used by Bede in *HE* does not mention any belonging to this genre, thus we do not know if it affected in his writing.⁸¹ However, the similarities of *HE* to *specula principum* offer the view that he may have intended for this work to have a similar didactic purpose for royalty.

Lemke argues that Bede's preface shows an intention to follow the design of this genre not only because of his address to a king but also because it was written for him 'to learn from the good exempla and shun the bad exempla'.⁸² The preface to *HE* reveals that he intended for a king to read his text, and both *HE* and *OEHE* contain many examples of royalty. The text includes many high-ranking individuals, religious and royal, each with either a good Christian depiction or an advisory moral against particular behaviours. There are also multiple examples of monastic women, and some describe less than desirable behaviour, such as Abbess Æbbe of Coldingham, the daughter of King Æthelfrith of Northumbria. Bede suggests that she is an abbess with poor judgement for allowing *malitia* (wickedness) to occur in her community, such as feasting and drinking (*comesationum, potationum*) which is admonished by a visiting monk [*HE*, iv. 25]. Although negative instances of women are more difficult to locate in *HE* and *OEHE*, examples such as Æbbe's show that Bede and his translator included both good and bad representations of women. The inclusion of Rædwald's

⁷⁹ See Karen Cherewatuk, 'Speculum Matris: Duoda's Manual', *Florilegium* 10 (1991), 49 – 64, pp. 49 – 51.

⁸⁰ Joanna Story, 'Cathwulf, Kingship, and the Royal Abbey of Saint-Denis', *Speculum* 74:1 (1999), 1 – 21, p. 2.

⁸¹ Colgrave and Mynors, *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English people*, pp. xxv – xxvii.

⁸² Lemke, *The Old English Version of Bede's Historia Ecclesiastica*, p. 206.

queen as an exemplary and an inappropriate counsellor also indicates that royal wives could be used as *exempla*. The evidence from the preface and the many *exempla* included in Bede's text demonstrates that his writing uses several features found in *specula principum* to provide examples of male and female behaviour.

A Mirror for Princesses and Queens?

The two representations of a queen as either a positive or negative counsellor may suggest that *HE* was a 'mirror' for royal women. The episodes which feature Rædwald's queen follow the aim of *HE* to provide 'moral renewal' to its audience.⁸³ They reflect subjects related to two different areas associated with Christian kingship found in other examples of *specula principum*: honour and devotion. Instances in chapters 12 and 15 mirror those of kings and princes in *HE* who also provide moments of moral reflection. These moments include the contrast between Edwin's Christian *devotionis* (devotion, zeal) and the misled Rædwald in Book II [*HE*, ii. 15]. The queen's teachings fit into the same category to demonstrate appropriate and inappropriate Christian behaviour for royal women, especially kings' wives. They had influence over their husbands which they exerted through their counsel and behaviour. Therefore, wives affected the behaviour of kings. The idea that Rædwald's queen's counsel was intended to provide examples of good and poor conduct to a royal female audience may explain the inclusion of her two representations.

There is no surviving evidence to indicate that Bede wrote to women aside from the short correspondence between himself and a nun about the request of a book.⁸⁴ He wrote extensively to monks and laymen, including kings, in 'letters of advice and admonition', the

⁸³ Samuel Cardwell, "What sort of love will not speak for a friend's good?": pastoral care and rhetoric in early Anglo-Saxon letters to kings', *Journal of Medieval History*, 45:4 (2019), 405 – 431, p. 425.

⁸⁴ Benedicta Ward, "To My Dearest Sister": Bede and the Educated Woman', *Women, the Book, and the Godly Selected Proceedings of the St. Hilda's Conference, 1993*, 1, ed. Leslie Smith and Jane H. M. Taylor (Cambridge: Brewer, 1995), 105 – 112, p. 105.

same as other notable churchmen such as Aldhelm, Alcuin, and Boniface.⁸⁵ From the letters included in *HE* like Æthelburh's, and other collections such as the 'Boniface Correspondence', it is evident that men also wrote to royal women to either admonish them for their behaviour or provide counsel. It is also apparent that women wrote to men for spiritual and practical advice as the letters of missionary women demonstrate.⁸⁶ There is no discernible way to know if Bede ever wrote to a queen before or after his work was finished. His addressee, Ceolwulf, never married or had children and retreated to Lindisfarne following his abdication in 737. Thus, there was not an immediate female audience for this Latin text. Nevertheless, Bede had bigger goals, as did Ceolwulf. Bede also states that he wrote the text with the intention that it will be published widely, not just for the Northumbrian king, and that his addressee also shared this desire.⁸⁷ The abridged Old English version also focuses on his point that it is 'for þinre ðearfe 7 for þinre ðeode' (for your benefit and your people) [*OEHE*, Pref. 1]. Thus, Bede wanted his work to have a wider audience as did his royal addressee. The inclusion of so many women in his Latin text, especially examples of royal women like Rædwald's wife, suggests that it was aimed at royal women as well as men.

OEHE and Royal Women

The Old English translation also contains evidence of usefulness to a royal female audience in the early tenth century. The popularity of Bede's *HE* to the extent that it has several copies spanning centuries across England and the Continent demonstrate that its themes and narratives interested audiences in the later period. Its earliest audiences in the ninth and tenth centuries may have included a greater number of women because of its accessibility, as I

⁸⁵ Cardwell, "What sort of love will not speak for a friend's good?": pastoral care and rhetoric in early Anglo-Saxon letters to kings", p. 406.

⁸⁶ I refer to the 'Boniface Collection' which includes several women's letters on pp. 31 – 32, and 166. Examples include letters by Eadburg, Leoba, and Berhtgyth in Tangl, *Briefe Des Bonifatius Willibalds Leben Des Bonifatius*, letters 14, 28, 142, 143, 147.

⁸⁷ Colgrave and Mynors, *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, p. 6.

discussed above. The little information we have about women's lay education at this time from sources such as Asser propose that laywomen also had access to translations like *OEHE*. Children of elite families, such as Alfred's daughter, Ælfthryth, grew up in court learning from vernacular texts, as I mentioned earlier.⁸⁸ The idea that a young Ælfthryth learnt about her future role as a royal woman through the examples of Rædwald's queen is tantalising. It suggests that the association with royal women and secular counsel continued into the tenth century.

Why would this text interest royal men and women in the tenth century if it uses representations of women from a past tradition? The ninth and tenth centuries were a time of development for education and religious practices. It was also a period of reflection, back to the days when Christianity and learning in England were at their peak. The Preface to *CP* invokes a return to the 'Golden Age' of learning and royal prosperity and piety reminiscent of seventh- and eighth-century Northumbria.⁸⁹ Bede's subject matter would be a good fit for Alfred's programme if *OEHE* was part of this programme because of his focus on the lives of men and women from Northumbria's glorious past, the good and the bad.

The translator's depiction of royal women is also significant to this connection. This period had a different attitude to royal women than in previous centuries. In Asser's *Vita Alfredi*, for example, Alfred's wife and queen, Ealhswith, is not mentioned once.⁹⁰ Also, the involvement of queens in teachings of lay and political subjects was a contentious point in Wessex because of their lowered status between 800 and 1066.⁹¹ Asser's presentation of Eadburh of Mercia as a villainous woman provides an example of the negative view of wives who exert

⁸⁸ I mentioned more about Alfred and his children in the introduction, pp. 45 - 49.

⁸⁹ Lemke, *The Old English Translation of Bede's Historia Ecclesiastica*, p. 99.

⁹⁰ Pauline Stafford, 'The King's Wife in Wessex 800-1066', *Past & Present* 91:1 (1981), 3 - 27, p. 7

⁹¹ Stafford, 'The King's Wife in Wessex 800-1066', p. 20.

their authority.⁹² Dominant royal women like Eadburh are still at the forefront of early English memory at the time of the translation of *HE*. The negative attitude toward royal wives is more noticeable in the *OEHE* than the *HE* mostly because of their absence. The depiction of Rædwald's queen and her counsel related to morality and intervention suit the climate and agenda of reform. She provides a stark reminder to the audience of *OEHE* about the expectations placed on queens. Royalty who overstep their boundaries are unacceptable. They should consider their role in secular society and be wary of the consequences of their counsel.

Queenly Teachings and Persuasion

Although there are several examples of abbesses who admonish and instruct others, the example of Rædwald's wife provides another two models for a potential female audience to consider. Together, *manian* and *læran* present her as a woman who instructs and urges her husband to act in a manner in concordance with social custom and political ethics. The other verb, *biswīcan*, presents the opposite idea of the queen as a temptress and bad counsellor. Bede's and his translator's vocabulary show that they provided two examples of a royal woman 'teaching' appropriately and inappropriately for her status. Hence, the second passage acts as a warning to women not to attempt to hold sway over matters which were not in their jurisdiction just as it was a reminder for men to not be swayed by their wives.

The Old English translator uses *læran* to signify that her teaching covered an alternative form of education provided by women: counsel. He uses instructional vocabulary in the first example to offer the view that her counsel held value as secular education. Thus, Bede and his translator suggest that royal women were secular teachers. However, unlike monastic women who provide a wide range of teachings, her association was limited to lay concerns.

⁹² Klein, *Ruling Women*, p. 65 - 66.

Any subject outside of her area of influence or which produced unsuitable counsel did not have an association with this verb. The contrast of her two types of teachings demonstrates that Bede and his translator considered her as an example of good and bad female persuasion. However, the translator's decision to include Rædwald's honourable queen in chapter 12 demonstrates that he wished his audiences to look back to another time to reflect upon past examples. This was a period when exemplary royal women played a role in education within the household. *OEHE*'s pre-Christian queen relays a message to an audience of men and women centuries after the original text, warning them about the appropriate contexts of counsel for kings' wives.

3.2 Transforming Eurydice into an Old English Queen

There is an example in the translation of Paulus Orosius' *Historiarum* that uses vocabulary similar to *OEHE* which concerns a queen who advises her husband.⁹³ This is another early tenth-century text with connections to the Alfredian educational programme. In Book III, Eurydice, the wife of King Phillip Arrhidaeus of Macedonia, is portrayed as an influential and manipulative woman who advises her husband poorly. Eurydice's advice provides a negative depiction of a queen as a lay counsellor, and the vocabulary used to describe her counsel bears a similarity to the example of Rædwald's wife in *OEHE* which needs to be explored. While Orosius and the Old English translator both depict her as a malicious force, it is the translation which elevates Eurydice to the role of a 'teacher'. This is evident through the vocabulary associated with educational teaching: *læran* and *lār*.

Orosius' Latin text

⁹³ I use the following editions in this chapter: Malcom Godden, tr. and ed., *The Old English History of the World: An Anglo-Saxon Rewriting of Orosius*, DOML 44 (Cambridge Ma.: Harvard University Press, 2016); and K.F.W. Zangemeister, *Pauli Orosii Historiarum adversum paganos libri VII: accedit eiusdem Liber apologeticus* (Vindobonae, C. Gerold, 1882).

Paulus Orosius, a Spanish priest, wrote a detailed narrative of the events in Roman history in the fifth century (417 AD).⁹⁴ His text was a response to the event known as the ‘Sack of Rome’ by the Visigoths in 410 and aimed to defend Christianity in the city. This work is on a similar topic to Augustine of Hippo’s treatise titled *De civitate Dei contra paganos* (*On the City of God against the Pagans*) some years earlier. It was Augustine who encouraged Orosius to write a piece to accompany his text since the prologue states that he ‘praeceptis tuis parui’ (obeyed [Augustine’s] teachings) [*Historiarum*, i. 1].⁹⁵

There are multiple extant manuscripts of this text, and many of the copies date from the tenth to the sixteenth centuries and a few from the sixth and seventh.⁹⁶ It was another text which was popular in the medieval period because of its historical content. *Historiarum* was known and read by many early medieval authors such as Bede, Aldhelm, Asser, and Berhtferth.⁹⁷ Evidence of twenty-three instances of borrowings from *Historiarum* which appear in Bede’s *HE* demonstrates that he had access to Orosius’ work.⁹⁸ Studies by Simonetta Mengato and Malcolm Gooden highlighted the impact of the text on Bede’s ecclesiastical history from a stylistic point of view.⁹⁹ One of the reasons for Orosius’ popularity was the originality of his writing which differed from other Christian authors of the time since he ‘produced a history of the secular world from a Christian perspective’.¹⁰⁰ Bately also wrote in the 1960s that ‘Orosius’ method was simply to retell the history of the world in a brief form’, yet he does

⁹⁴ For more information on Orosius, see Godden, *The Old English History of the World*, pp. vii – xi.

⁹⁵ Augustine was Orosius’ tutor whom he likely took inspiration from. Andrew Fear discusses the creation of *Historiarum* in *Orosius: Seven Books of History against the Pagans, Translated Texts for Historians*, 54 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2010), pp. 7 – 8.

⁹⁶ J.M. Bately and D. J. A. Ross, ‘A checklist of manuscripts of Orosius’ *Historiarum aduersum paganos libri septem*’, *Scriptorium: Revue internationale des études relative aux manuscrits* 15 (1961), 329–334.

⁹⁷ Janet Bately, ‘The Old English Orosius’, *A Companion to Alfred the Great*, ed. Nicole Guenther Discenza and Paul. E. Szarmach (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 313 – 343, p. 313.

⁹⁸ For the instances, see Colgrave and Mynors, *Bede’s Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, chapters 14, 20, 22, 24, 26, 28, 36, 38, 40, and 44. Bately comments on this in *The Old English Orosius*, p. 103.

⁹⁹ See Malcolm Godden, ‘The Anglo-Saxons and the Goths: Rewriting the Sack of Rome’, *Anglo-Saxon England*, 31 (2002) 47–68, and Simonetta Mengato, ‘The Old English Translations of Bede’s *Historia Ecclesiastica* and Orosius’ *Historiarum aduersus Paganos*: A Comparison’, *Linguistica and Filologia*, 16 (2003), 191 – 213.

¹⁰⁰ Fear, *Orosius: Seven Book of History against the Pagans*, pp. 7 - 8.

more than this.¹⁰¹ His Christian view of the ancient world and its pre-Christian rulers offers a distorted view of history in which men and women are set within strict parameters of ‘good’ and ‘bad’. *Historiarum* is a narrative about the morality and behaviour of people as much as it is an account of events.

The text was produced during a period of political and religious unrest, similar to the kind witnessed in Bede’s *HE*. The seven books, which start at the beginning of the Roman Empire and end with the Christian king, Alaric, cover a series of disasters. He states in the prologue that he was instructed to write his books ‘uti aduersus uaniloquam prauitatem eorum’ (to use against their arrogant wickedness) of the *paganus* (pagans) in Rome [*Historiarum*, i. 9]. His text covers the deeds of ‘evil’ men and women who incite war and destruction alongside natural disasters such as disease and earthquakes. It is a text which encourages its audience(s) to consider their behaviour and its effect on society against these past examples. Moreover, it focuses on lay society specifically. The text’s intended audience is debated, and recent research comments that his intended audience might have included both the laity and religious communities.¹⁰² Orosius seeks to bridge the gap between the past and the present with his narrative to demonstrate the need for correct Christian behaviour in all parts of society: ‘nactus sum enim praeteritos dies non solum aequae ut hos graues’ (I found that the days of the past were equally as grave as the present) [*Historiarum*, i. 14]. It is his attention to

¹⁰¹ Batley and Ross, ‘A checklist of manuscripts of Orosius’, p. 329.

¹⁰² Peter Van Nuffelen discussed issues of audience in *Orosius and the Rhetoric of History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 15 – 18. He raises ideas that it was a ‘lower type of literature’ intended for the laity, but also that they were not non-Christians. However, Van Nuffelen dismisses the idea that it was only intended for non-Christians based on Orosius’ introduction in which he suggests that there are few left at that time of composition, p. 16. For other views on the lay audience of *Or*, see F. Martelli, ‘Reazione antiagostiniana nelle historiae di Orosio’, *RSA*, 12 (1982), 217–39, p. 238; and A. Lippold and A. Bartalucci, *Orosio, Le storie contro i pagani* (Scrittori greci e latini), 2 Vols (Fondazione Lorenzo Valla, 1976), 1, p. xxxiii; C. Tornau, *Zwischen Rhetorik und Philosophie. Augustins Argumentationstechnik in De civitate Dei und ihr Bildungsgeschichtlicher Hintergrund* (Untersuchungen zur antiken Literatur und Geschichte 82), (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter Ltd., 2006), p. 113.

the past lives of laywomen which suggests that it may also have had a didactic purpose for a lay audience.

Book III contains an account of the wars between the Spartans and Athenians, but also of the life of Alexander the Great. Eurydice emerges near the end of this book because of her conflict with Olympia, the mother of Alexander. Arrhidaeus' queen appears as an opportunistic woman who uses her position and influence to raise not only her own profile but that of her lover, Cassander. She achieves this by manipulating powerful men, as the reading below shows:

Historiarum, 3. 23:

[...] interea Eurydice, Arridaei regis Macedonum uxor, multa sub nomine uiri nefaria gerit per Cassandrum, quem flagitiose cognitum ad summum fastigium per omnes honorum gradus prouexerat: qui ex libidine mulieris multas Graeciae ciuitates adflixit.

(Meanwhile, Eurydice, the wife of Arrhidaeus, the Macedonian king, committed many crimes in the name of her husband and through Cassander with whom she had formed a most shameful alliance. She advanced him through all the grades of honour to the highest rank, and he ruined many cities of Greece through a woman's lust).

For my discussion, the most prominent feature of this passage is that lack of references to Eurydice and her teaching. There is no mention of persuasion, good or bad, or counsel, as witnessed in other examples from medieval Latin texts of the period. In this lack of emphasis on any form of female education or instruction it is different from later medieval works, such as Bede's *HE* or Stephen of Ripon's *Vita Wilfridi*. Orosius depicts a royal wife who abuses her position by using her husband's power along with her own immoral behaviour to

influence others. Cassander appears as the tool of her agency, yet there is no mention of how she manages to manipulate his status. The author focuses on her lusts and the moral implications of her actions rather than her ability to persuade or counsel. This passage presents its audience with a powerful and corrupt woman whose relationship with education is non-existent.

Translating the Queen into Old English

The Old English translation does not strictly follow the original fifth-century text. There are two extant copies: the late ninth, early tenth-century manuscript which is the earliest extant copy of the Old English version (London, British Library, Add MS 47967), and the eleventh-century manuscript known as British Library, Cotton MS Tiberius B 1.¹⁰³ The translation is famous for its association with King Alfred, who is named in the translation, as well as the additional passages about the voyages of Ohthere and Wulfstan.¹⁰⁴ However, this text is not a faithful translation because of its many revisions. Janet Bately, who has written extensively on *Or* and its differences from the original, commented that the Old English text is written ‘from his own point of view’, that is, the translator’s.¹⁰⁵ She considers it to be another example of ‘rendering of sense for sense, not word for word’.¹⁰⁶ Other more recent studies agree with Bately’s argument that it is a new version of *Historiarum*, written by a West-Saxon scribe who ‘rewrote the whole narrative’.¹⁰⁷ However, there is some scepticism of the translator’s knowledge and comprehension of the original, which stems from the extent of the

¹⁰³ The first is known widely as the ‘Tollemache Orosius’. See, Alistair Campbell, ed., *The Tollemache Orosius (British Museum Additional Manuscript 47967)*, *Early English Manuscripts in Facsimile*, 3, ed. Bertram Colgrave et al (Copenhagen: Rosenkilde and Bagger, 1953). For details about the Cotton MS Tiberius manuscript, see http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Cotton_MS_Tiberius_B_I.

¹⁰⁴ See Godden, *Or* Book 1, chapter 1, pp. 36 – 48.

¹⁰⁵ Bately, ed., *The Old English Orosius*, p. 340.

¹⁰⁶ Bately, *The Old English Orosius*, p. xciii. For more details about his extensive alterations and revisions, see pp. xxiii – cix.

¹⁰⁷ Quote from Godden, *The Old English History of the World*, p. xii. Other studies include Mary Kate Hurley, ‘Alfredian Temporalities: Time and Translation in the Old English Orosius’, *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 112:4 (2013), 405 – 432; and Mengato, ‘The Old English Translations of Bede’s *Historia Ecclesiastica* and Orosius’ *Historiarum adversus Paganos*: A Comparison’.

alterations.¹⁰⁸ Parts of the Latin narrative are abbreviated, cut entirely, the wording changes, and the translator occasionally includes extra information. These changes impact the representation of women like Eurydice dramatically. For example, he expands the passage related to Eurydice, as demonstrated in the lines below:

Or, iii. 11. 212:

Æfter þæm Euredica, Aripeusses cwen, Mæcedonia cyninges, heo wæs
þæm folce monig yfel donde þurh Cassander hiere hlafordes þegn, mid
þæm heo hæfde dierne geligre. & under ðæm heo gelærde þone cyning þæt
he hiene swa upp ahof þætte he wæs bufan eallum ðæm þe on þæm rice
wæron to ðæm cyninge. & heo gedyde mid hiere lare þæt ealle Mæcedonie
wæron þæm cyninge wiðerwearde[...].

(After that, Eurydice, the queen of Arridaeus, king of Macedonia,
committed many crimes against her people by means of her lord's officer
Cassander, with whom she was having a secret affair. In the course of that
she persuaded the king to promote Cassander so high that he was above
everyone else in the kingdom, next to the king).¹⁰⁹

This 'translation' offers a different perspective of Eurydice to the Latin text. While Orosius focuses on the agency of men such as Cassander, the Old English translator highlights the queen's to a far greater extent. He implies that Cassander had an impact on events as did other men such as Eurydice's husband. Men's agency is evident through the mention of the pairing 'ægðer ge þone cyning ge þa cwene' (both the king and the queen) on more than one occasion. However, it is Eurydice who he presents as the driving force. She is the one

¹⁰⁸ Batley, *The Old English Orosius*, pp. 333 – 334.

¹⁰⁹ Translated by Godden, *The Old English History of the World*, p. 213.

depicted as responsible for these events because she is the subject of the verbs, indicate by the female pronoun *heo* (she). This change places the queen at the centre of the passage in a way that the original text does not. In this translation, the audience is faced with a different woman than the one presented by Orosius because of the altered vocabulary and emphasis on her involvement.

It is important to mention that both the ‘Tollemache Orosius’ and the Cotton MS Tiberius manuscript contain the same phrasing in this passage.¹¹⁰ First, the text describes her by her status as a *cwen* (queen) rather than a wife or woman, which places her in a special position in society. There are two significant words used in this text: *gelærde*, from *læran*, and *lare* from *lār* (teaching, counsel). The verb appears in a variant form with a prefix, but it retains the same meanings as witnessed in *OEHE* of ‘advise, instruct, persuade’. The noun, *lār*, provides further evidence which supports Eurydice’s depiction as a teacher because of its association with educational teaching.¹¹¹ It is a frequently used word in the corpus of Old English but rarely appears in the contexts of women as teachers or counsellors. Therefore, its appearance in this translation in the context of a queen’s persuasion of her husband is unusual. I discuss this concept later in this section and analyse the noun’s significance when used to depict the disastrous teachings of a laywoman.

The example of Eurydice in *Or* suggests that Old English translators also use words such as *læran* to describe women’s counsel in a negative way. It indicates the complex relationship between queens and counsel which varies across different texts and periods. However, the similarity of the vocabulary used to present her counsel as a queen to other Old English texts suggests a discernible pattern of representation in the tenth century. There is an undeniable

¹¹⁰ See London, British Library, Add MS 47967), f. 46v, and British Library, Cotton MS Tiberius B 1, f. 60v.

¹¹¹ There are various meanings for this noun, mostly related to ‘knowledge’ or ‘learning’. See Bosworth, ‘LÁR’, *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary Online*, ed. by Thomas Northcote Toller et al. (2014), <https://bosworthtoller.com/21175>.

association between royal women and secular education as part of their role in Old English texts since it does not appear in the Latin original. The differences between the two versions highlight the opposing views about women in the fifth and tenth centuries which affect their depicted relationship with teaching. Therefore, it is important to consider the various approaches to Eurydice as a royal woman over the centuries.

Examining Women in Historiarum and Or

Orosius' Latin text and its Old English translation are popular texts for study and have been covered extensively for their information about written histories, landscape, translation practice, and connections to Alfred.¹¹² Most studies cover the translation practices of the translator, including his word choices, name-forms, and spelling. Others, such as Peter Van Nuffelen and Malcolm Godden, focus on Orosius' approach to 'history' and his style of writing which differs from other authors of his time.¹¹³ The radical differences between the Latin and Old English versions which separates them into two distinct narratives created a widespread academic interest in these areas. This is especially relevant for discussions of women's literary representations. Researchers have not commented on the representation or inclusion of women in *Or*.

Writing Eurydice

The Latin text attracted a large amount of attention from researchers over the years, and more recent studies focused on the depiction of women as military and political leaders. One of these women, Eurydice (also known as Adea-Eurydike), who lived between 335 and 317

¹¹² Some of the more recent studies include I. Valtonen, *The North in the Old English Orosius: a geographical narrative in context*, (Helsinki: Société Néophilologique, 2008); Helen Appleton, 'The northern world of the Anglo-Saxon mappa mundi', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 47 (2018), 275–305; Ben Allport, 'Home thoughts of abroad: Ohtere's Voyage in its Anglo-Saxon context', *Early Medieval Europe*, 28:2 (2020), 256–288.

¹¹³ See Peter Van Nuffelen, *Orosius and the Rhetoric of History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), and Malcolm Godden, 'The Old English Orosius and its Sources', *Anglia* 129:3-4 (2011) 297-320.

BCE, was the daughter of Cynnane and Amyntas.¹¹⁴ She has been at the centre of plenty of discussions about female royal power for several decades because of her many appearances in various Greek and Latin texts.¹¹⁵ Her portrayal in Diodorus Siculus' *Bibliotheca Historica*, Justinus' version of *Historiae Phillipicae*, and Orosius' prose as an influential wife and queen continues to draw the attention of researchers of Ancient Mediterranean history.¹¹⁶ Elizabeth D. Carney is one of the main researchers on Eurydice's life and representation in texts by Greek and Latin authors, including Orosius.¹¹⁷ Each author has a different representation of Eurydice as either a strong, competent female ruler, or a cruel and misleading wife.¹¹⁸ Carney particularly comments on her excellent military and political capabilities, namely her apparent prowess in her spoken address to the Macedonian armies.¹¹⁹ Eurydice is a queen whom writers of Greek and Latin literature portray as a royal woman with precise training related to her role as a royal leader in this period. In these representations, there is nothing to suggest that her training included 'teaching'.

Orosius' text does not provide a positive view of Eurydice. The lack of references to her activity as a royal woman, including her persuasion, removes all traces of her position from

¹¹⁴ Elizabeth D. Carney, *Women and Monarchy in Macedonia* (Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 2000), pp. 132 – 137.

¹¹⁵ See Russel M. Greer, tr., *Diodorus Siculus, Library of History, Volume IX: Books 18-19.65*, Loeb Classical Library 377 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1947), Book 18, chapter 11; and J.C. Yardley, tr., *Justin: Epitome of the Philippic history of Pompeius Trogus with introduction and explanatory notes by R. Develin*, (Atlanta GA: Scholars Press, 1994) Book 14, section 5 for two examples of her representation in earlier texts.

¹¹⁶ Studies include those by Waldemar Heckel, 'Adea-Eurydike', *Glotta* 61:1/2 (1983), 40–42; Dolores Miron, 'Transmitters and Representatives of Power: Royal Women in Ancient Macedonia', *Ancient Society* 30 (2000), 35–52; Aimee Turner, "She Acted with Arrogance": Orosius and Women', *Studies in Late Antiquity* 4:2 (2020), 203 - 227; and Elizabeth Carney (mentioned above, fn. 114).

¹¹⁷ She has written a long list of papers, books, and book chapters about women in the Ancient Mediterranean period. For some of her discussions of Eurydice, see: Elizabeth D. Carney, 'The Career of Adea-Eurydike', *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte*, Band 36:4 (1987), 496 – 502; Carney, 'Women and Basileia: Legitimacy and Female Political Action in Macedonia', *The Classical Journal*, 90:4 (1995), 367–391. Carney, *Women and Monarchy*. Her most recent edited book is Carney and Sabine Müller, ed., [et al], *The Routledge Companion to Women and Monarchy in the Ancient Mediterranean World* (London: Routledge, 2021).

¹¹⁸ Carney comments that ancient authors show a more favourable attitude to Eurydice than other women, such as Olympia; see 'The Career of Adea-Eurydike', pp. 496.

¹¹⁹ Carney, *Women and Monarchy in Macedonia*, pp. 132 – 141.

her description in the Latin text. Instead, she is a manipulating *uxor* (wife), not a queen. She is not the only woman who Orosius downplays and villainises. Brigitte Truschneegg noted that he also ‘intensifies the negative evaluation of Semiramis’, another queen whom I discuss later.¹²⁰ She shares a similar description to Eurydice because of her licentious sexual behaviour and cruelty. Women’s representations as competent queens and wives are dependent on the attitudes of the author, or translator, towards women. Before I begin to analyse the wording of the Old English translation and its effect on Eurydice’s agency, I address Orosius’ approach to women in *Historiarum*.

Attitudes towards Women

Orosius’ text includes many misogynistic references, many more than the Old English version, which shows Orosius’ staunchly religious perspective on secular society. Van Nuffelen argues that he includes many examples of women in his text since ‘women overstepping the limits of their sex fascinated Orosius’ as a Christian.¹²¹ Orosius presents royal women as foolish, cruel, and quick to anger. An example of this is his depiction of Olympia, the mother of Alexander the Great and Eurydice’s rival [*Historiarum*, 3. 23]. She is another powerful woman who challenges Eurydice and eventually dies at the hands of Cassander. These two women, who appear in the same section, offers examples of women in positions of power who use their status to ill effect. Even though Olympia attempts to resolve the strife caused by Eurydice, Orosius continues to demonise her with his remark: ‘ipsa Olympias continuo meritis crudelitatis poenas luit’ (Olympia herself immediately paid the penalty for her cruelty which she deserved). He encourages a further negative reaction from his audience(s) with the line which refers to her flaw as a feature of femininity: ‘nam cum

¹²⁰ Brigitte Truschneegg, ‘Semiramis: Perception and Presentation of Female Power in an Oriental Garb’, *The Routledge Companion to Women and Monarchy in the Ancient Mediterranean World*, ed. E. Carney and S. Müller (London: Routledge, 2020), 479 – 490, p. 481.

¹²¹ Van Nuffelen, *Orosius and the Rhetoric of History*, p. 128.

muliebri audacia multas principum caedes ageret' (for when she was arranging the deaths of many leading men, with the recklessness of women).

When placed beside Olympia, the author implies that Eurydice's 'persuasion' is a flawed feature of her gender. His representations suggest that royal women have a prescribed attachment to being ill-advised and unsuitable as counsellors and leaders. They are reckless, foolish, hot-headed, and unwise. Orosius' lack of reference to Eurydice's advice as teaching or counselling supports his negative depiction of women especially royal wives and mothers. In his perspective, powerful wives are a problem rather than a solution for kings and their society. His focus on 'evil' women does not indicate his fascination with them, but that he perceived women as the best examples to display his views on secular society and its pitfalls.

The translator of the Old English version suggests another view of Arrhidæus' queen, and women in more general terms. He abbreviates the section about Olympia and removes Orosius' comment about women's foolishness. Instead, he focuses on Eurydice and her actions as a queen. His decision to alter this passage in this way reveals that he did not feel comfortable with Orosius' intensely negative depictions of women. Although no one has yet commented on this alteration, Kretzschmar suggested that the translator intended to transform the text so that the material was 'more susceptible to exemplary imitation'.¹²² His argument that the translation provides a less negative view of the past implies that the translator had a different approach to learning through exempla than Orosius.

However, this does not mean that the translator described women solely in a positive light. Despite his abbreviation of many of the Latin passages, it is significant that he kept the sections on royal women and their misbehaviour. Queens in the Old English narrative have

¹²² William. A. Kretzschmar, 'Adaptation and Anweald' in the Old English Orosius', *Anglo-Saxon England* 16, (1987), 127–45, p. 133.

the same negative portrayal as the Latin original as unsuitable leaders. Olympia is also described as an *yfel* (evil) and controlling woman who terrorised the people in this chapter [*Or*, iii. 11]. It is the lack of references to women's cruelty and aggression which erases the underlying association of royal wives as unwise sources of counsel witnessed in the Latin text. Instead, the writer provides his audience with another example of women behaving badly, that is, women who perform their roles incorrectly. Therefore, to what extent did Eurydice function as an example of inappropriate royal behaviour to an early medieval audience with her education?

An Altered 'Translation'

The Old English translation is the only text which depicts Eurydice as a 'teacher' who 'instructs' her husband which causes it to stand out from the earlier representations. It is uncertain whether this difference came about through the decision of the translator, or whether it is another example of misinterpretation, evidence from a lost version, or a previous oral tradition.¹²³ Thus far, no one has commented on this peculiar feature in *Or*, or on the translator's blatant divergence from the original for this section. Instead, research focuses on the additions to the text, namely of Ohthere's and Wulfstan's journeys as well as the mention of King Alfred.

The translation's connections to Alfred, either from the idea that the king translated the text himself, or that it belongs to his translation programme of the late ninth century, continue to be discussed. Although researchers now agree that it is unlikely that Alfred translated *Historiarum*, he remains important to the text's creation.¹²⁴ Bately supports the idea that the translation fits into the theme of Alfred's educational programme; that 'he would certainly

¹²³ See Bately's discussion in *The Old English Orosius*, p. 334.

¹²⁴ See Janet Bately, 'Did King Alfred actually Translate anything? The Integrity of the Alfredian Canon Revisited', *Medium Ævum*, 78:2 (2009), 189–215; Kretzschmar, 'Adaptation and Anweald' in the Old English *Orosius*, p. 128.

have welcomed and approved' its inclusion.¹²⁵ Orosius' text provides a detailed view of the world and the events leading to the end of the Roman Empire, which suggests that it as a suitable text for education. The overwhelming acceptance that the Old English translation was affected by the Alfredian programme, either as one of the 'books all men must know' or as a work inspired by the translation boom, suggests that the translations of this period share certain features.¹²⁶ The Old English translations of *Boethius*, Bede's *HE*, Gregory the Great's *Dialogues*, and Orosius' *Historiarum* are all related to the circle of Alfred, and all use exempla to educate their audiences. Their shared aim to encourage their audiences through the provision of good and bad examples of behaviour suggests that the depictions of 'bad' women in *Or* also had an educational purpose.

Another similarity of this group of texts concerns their descriptions of women, especially royal women, which has been long overlooked. Women like Rædwald's queen in *OEHE* and Eurydice in *Or* have not received the academic attention that they are due. As I mentioned earlier, Rædwald's wife provides an important glimpse of the views on queenship from the seventh to the tenth centuries, but few have considered her role as a counsellor. The aim of texts related to Alfred's educational programme to inspire and educate their audiences suggests that women's descriptions are significant. The uniqueness of Eurydice in the Old English translation also offers a special opportunity to discuss this matter further. The abrupt change in her description as a royal wife prompts an investigation of the similar representations of queens in this period of translation. It is necessary, therefore, to discuss the vocabulary of the translator of *Or* to better understand why he revised this passage in this way.

¹²⁵ Bately, *The Old English Orosius*, p. 343.

¹²⁶ Kretzschmar, 'Adaptation and Anweald' in the Old English Orosius', p. 128. Also see N.J. Higham, *(Re-)reading Bede: The Ecclesiastical History in context* (London: Routledge, 2006), p. 24.

The Teaching of Queens

The vocabulary choice of the Old English translator is critical to understanding views of royal women and education, especially in this text. In this section, I examine the uses of *læran* and *lār* in the context of Eurydice's persuasion. I consider the relationship between these words and her status which is a significant feature of both her portrayal and other queens in Old English texts. Eurydice is a woman with a distinct social and political position as a king's wife, just as Rædwald's wife is in *OEHE*. Carney argues that Eurydice's 'role as a royal wife was not typical of other women in this situation', in reference to her marriage to Arrhidaeus.¹²⁷ In the Latin text, she is a woman who assumes complete royal authority in the place of her inept husband. She was also not a mother, which was the 'usual source of female status' for royal women.¹²⁸ Therefore, her representations focus on her ability to act as a wife and queen. I investigate whether Eurydice's unique association with teaching in *Or* is the result of her position as a royal wife, which required a set of vocabulary linked to secular teaching.

A Queen's Counsel and Intervention

Eurydice's connection to education stems from the combined use of *læran* and *lār*. These are not substitutions of Latin terms but additional input by the translator. He offers his audience a revised version of the Macedonian queen with this change. She is still a powerful woman who influences men and political situations for her own benefit, but she appears in a set role. The translator first introduces Eurydice by her status as a royal wife (*cwen*) before he describes her misbehaviour. While the Latin version reveals that she committed evil deeds in her husband's name ('nomine uiri') [*Historiarum*, 3. 23], the translation emphasises that it is the queen who is responsible for the misdeeds. The translator places far greater importance

¹²⁷ Carney, 'The Career of Adeia-Eurydike', p. 499.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

on her persuasion, her ‘counsel’, than in the Latin version, which suggests that it is a significant aspect of her depiction as a royal woman in *Or*.

The use of *læran* in this passage is ambiguous when considered on its own. Its wide semantic range, as I mentioned earlier, demonstrates that it could signify different meanings from ‘teach’ to ‘suggest’. My discussion of other examples of women and *læran* in Chapter 1 also showed that its meaning varies between distinct groups of women. For royal women, it has a more precise use to signify female counsel, as the different examples in *OEHE* of Abbess Hild and Rædwald’s queen demonstrate. The translators of *Or* and *OEHE* use the same verb to describe the queen’s teachings as well as the same type of ‘student’. Eurydice and Rædwald’s wife both ‘persuade’ their royal husbands to change their behaviour with opposite effects. The main difference which separates them is the use of *lār* in *Or*.

Eurydice’s association with *lār* is unusual. This noun refers to education often as educational teaching or counsel and signifies that the translator wishes to present her persuasion of Arrhidaeus as a type of teaching. We can argue that there are no instances which refer to a royal woman’s ‘teachings’ with *lār*. The closest examples to this are in the Old English *ApT* in which the translator describes Arcestrate as ‘lare lufigend’ (lover of education), and the poem *Judith* which describes her as ‘idese ... gearoþoncolre’ (a clever-minded woman) and her teaching as ‘gleawe lare’ (prudent counsel).¹²⁹ In these instances, the women involved have a strong relationship with intelligence and learning. The references to prudence and their desire for education demonstrate this, especially when Arcestrate pleads for Apollonius’ teachings [*ApT*, xviii].¹³⁰ However, Judith is not described as royalty, and it is unclear whether the translator refers to Arcestrate as a teacher or simply an avid student. Thus, the

¹²⁹ I discuss this example in greater detail in Chapter 3, p. 245. For the line from *Judith* [l. 331b], see E. Dobbie, ed., *Beowulf and Judith*, ASPR 4 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1953).

¹³⁰ See my discussion of Arcestrate’s representation in Chapter 4 from p. 234.

Old English version of Eurydice is the only one which offers a king's wife as a provider of 'teaching' with this noun.

Previously, I demonstrated that the use of *lār* is different in the texts such as the *OEHE*. Bede in *HE* uses set of words to describe secular counsel which differs from the words used in monastic contexts (*doctrina*, for example). He refers to Queen Eanflæd's counsel with the nouns *consilium* (counsel) and *praeceptum* (teachings, commands) [*HE*, v. 19]. *Praeceptum* is a complex noun, as I explain below. The same wording occurs in other Latin texts, such as Stephan's *Vita Wilfridi* [*VW*], which Bede might have used as a source for his text.¹³¹ Stephan also includes Eanflæd in his text in which she assists Wilfrid as a young man and arranges for him to receive monastic education which begins his career as a churchman [*VW* 2]. Stephan refers to Wilfrid's desire to serve God with her 'consilio et munimine' (counsel and protection) as a young man.¹³² The inclusion of the word *consilium* is important in this section because it suggests that the queen is a suitable source of advice for a young man like Wilfrid.¹³³ After Eanflæd accepts his request to receive religious instruction and teaching, she *commendavit* ('commends' from the verb *commendare*) him to Cudda, a former retainer of her husband who retired to the monastery at Lindisfarne. She does this twice in the text. The second time occurs several years after his initial education in Lindisfarne when she commends him with the same verb to the King Erconberht of Kent [*VW* 3].

¹³¹ Many attribute the original text to 'Eddius Stephanus'; see Colgrave, *The Life of Bishop Wilfrid by Eddius Stephanus*, p. ix. The Latin author's identity is unclear because there are mentions of several candidates in sources such as William and Malmesbury's and Bede's *HE*, all with links to 'Stephanus'. See Colgrave discusses this in detail on pp. x – xii. William of Malmesbury in his text *Gentis Pontif. Anglorum*, III, Prologue that a priest named 'Stephanus' wrote the vita.

¹³² Colgrave, *The Life of St Wilfrid by Eddius Stephanus*, p. ix.

¹³³ Latham and Howlett et al, *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources, Volume I, A – L*, p. 452. They note that this word has several uses but all of them relate to counsel: 1. A 'consultation, discussion, counsel, advice', and 'practical wisdom', 2. 'instigation', 'counsel', 3. 'attention, treatment' (medical context), 4. An 'advisory body', 'council', specifically a 'king's council' or 'council of the realm'.

The queen is responsible for Wilfrid's appointed task to learn in the monastery in *VW* from the phrase 'secundum praeceptum reginae' (according to the queen's commands) [*VW* 2]. The word *praeceptum* is significant because it has an association with more than one semantic category. In this instance, it is an imperative noun meaning a 'command', 'instruction', 'order', but it can also refer to 'education' as 'advice', 'a precept', or 'teaching'.¹³⁴ It appears more than ten times in the text and is associated with the commands of bishops and kings. An example from *VW*, chapter 9 demonstrates that it refers to instructions: 'secundum praeceptum regis' (according to the king's commands). When applied to the queen's teachings, *praeceptum* reflects her status as the king's wife, which allows her to give commands with lay authority. Stephan uses other words, such as *consilium* and *commendare* to describe her counsel and intervention.

Although there is not an Old English translation of *VW*, it is evident from *OEHE* that the translator seems reluctant to associate kings' wives with the equivalent, *lār*, because he uses it in precise contexts of religious teachings. For example, the pairing *godcunde lare* (religious education) occurs twenty-seven times in *OEHE* in instances about teachings given by bishops, abbots, and saints such as Paulinus [*OEHE*, ii. 14, iii. 1]. Although there is one case which describes teachings given by monastic women, Abbess Ætheburh and Torhtgyth [*OEHE*, iv. 11], it is noteworthy that it pertains to a form of education in a monastic setting. The translator does not use *lār* to describe commands or orders because this word does not concern instructions but academic teaching.

Or's translator, however, uses this noun in both instances of religious men, laymen, and women.¹³⁵ Its frequent use in this text suggests that *lār* encompasses a wider range of teachings, lay and religious. In the section about Eurydice's intervention, *lār* does not replace

¹³⁴ Howlett et al, *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources, Volume II M – REG*, pp. 2381 – 2382.

¹³⁵ For examples of Orosius' other uses of *lār*, see *Or*, iv. 6, 7, 11, 12; v. 12; and vi. 4, 34, 35.

a word with a similar semantic range. Orosius blames the recklessness of Cassander on the *libidine mulieris* (lusts of a woman) while the *Or* text emphasises the 'teaching' of a woman. His use of the noun to describe Eurydice's counsel shows that he viewed this as an example of lay education, one which might be unique to women who tempt men through lust. The translator's use of words with a strong connection to teaching suggests that he describe her counsel as a unique form of education specific to wives. He uses her to provide his audience with an example of the consequences of bad female counsel.

Persuasion vs. Counsel

There is further evidence in the vocabulary of *Or* which shows that the translator considers Eurydice as a counsellor rather than a manipulating woman. Other than the example of Olympia, there is another royal woman in Book 1, chapter 2, named Queen Semiramis who appears as a source of deceitful persuasion. The translator uses a verb discussed earlier in this chapter, *biswican* (to betray, deceive, seduce) to portray her negatively. He describes her betrayal of her suitors in a comparable way to the example of Rædwald's wife: 'and syððan hio hy ealle mid facne beswac to deaðe' (and afterwards betrayed them all to death).¹³⁶ It is evident that he does not consider her persuasion as a form of education because of the absence of a word such as *læran* which occurs often in the context of teaching and learning. As I discussed earlier, the Old English translator of *OEHE* uses *læran* to present Rædwald's queen's counsel as a legitimate part of her role. He uses words such as *biswican* to point out unsuitable or incorrect teachings which are usually presented as persuasion or seduction.

I argue that the translator of *Historiarum* applies the same approach as Bede to descriptions of female counsel and persuasion, using two words to indicate each one as separate acts. *Or* uses *læran* and *biswican* in specific contexts related to the accepted areas of royal women's

¹³⁶ Translated by Godden, *The Old English History of the World*, p. 59. The phrase 'mid facne' translates to 'with treachery'.

influence. His use of *læran* along with other words, such as *lār*, suggests that he considers Eurydice's persuasion of her husband as an appropriate act of counsel because of her role and the suitable context that is abused. Rather than showing the audience an example of female persuasion, he offers them a view of the dangers of female counsel in a secular context if it is misused.

The vocabulary used to portray Eurydice as a royal wife and advisor is significant. Although her counsel continues to have a negative representation in the Old English version, the use of *læran* alongside *lār* shows that it was an expected aspect of her royal role. Furthermore, the vocabulary suggests that the translator refers to a form of secular teaching which was distinct to queens. The similarity of Eurydice's depiction to other royal women in Old English texts indicates that it is her role as a king's wife which allows the translator to portray her as a counsellor in *Or*. He highlights her teachings because it is an essential duty of a queen in the eyes of his early medieval audience.

3.3 Representing Royalty as Counsellors in the Tenth Century

Eurydice in *Or* and Rædwald's wife in *OEHE* share many features. Although Bede's translator presents Rædwald's queen in a more favourable light as a secular teacher than *Or*'s Eurydice, both texts describe royal women as secular advisors to kings. Their similarity suggests that the Old English translators recognised that descriptions of queens' counsel required a precise set of vocabulary. The use of *læran* in situations related to queens' counsel suggests that their advice was a form of education unique to their status as royal wives. Their teachings apply to a distinct audience of kings and husbands. Queens' relationship with teaching is tied to secular society and its relevant concerns. Hence, both translations suggest that royal women are suitable counsellors in this setting even when their teaching leads to disaster. The use of words which signify teaching, such as the combination of *læran* and *lār*,

indicate that their counsel belongs to a form of secular education. The only time that they are not portrayed as counsellors but as seducers is when they interfere in matters outside of their jurisdiction. Therefore, the vocabulary used to describe royal women in *OEHE* and *Or* demonstrates that translators had set ideas about their literary representation. They indicate that the role of the royal wife as synonymous with the position of secular counsellor to kings. This is a change from the Latin *Historiarum* which does not consider Eurydice as a queen or a teacher. Therefore, the association of royal wives and counsel is a feature of early medieval texts, Latin and Old English. The evidence that Bede read and used *Historiarum* in *HE* suggests that Orosius' work affected his perception of queens, yet Bede's text contains a different approach to women. His positive view of influential laywomen who engage in lay teaching show that he did not consider queens in the same way as Orosius. His example of Rædwald's wife as a motivating force of morality in Edwin's narrative demonstrates that early seventh-century queens could be involved in education as suitable teachers in the correct setting. It suggests that Bede had a more open view of the roles of queens and chose to include them in both secular and religious contexts. He uses similar images of persuasive women to present negative examples of behaviour, as the instance of Rædwald's queen demonstrates. However, he also provides his audience with positive reflections of royal women as teachers for them to consider.

The Old English translations of *HE* and *Historiarum* reflect Bede's approach. The translators describe the wives of kings cautiously, that is, they focus on both the positive and negative aspects of women's persuasion. The negative representations of women reinforce the idea that audiences were concerned with the influence of kings' wives at the time of the manuscripts' compositions. However, the translations provide a more rounded collection of women than in Orosius' text who behave appropriately and inappropriately inside and outside of their designated areas as queens. The inclusion of these women suggests that these

translations shared the same intention to educate a wider audience about female counsel. Therefore, *Or* may have also had a female audience in mind. So far, this is an unexplored concept, but further analysis of women in Orosius and other tenth-century translations could provide more information about possible female audiences of these texts.

4. *Tācan*, *Bysnian*, Teaching Royal Daughters and Female

Religious

In this chapter, I consider *tācan* in examples of women as teachers and students in two Old English texts: the romance prose *ApT* and the Winteney version of *The Rule of St Benedict*. Both texts contain women in separate roles. *ApT* contains a unique example of a royal woman whom the writer describes as a student of the ‘hero’ of the narrative, Apollonius. The latter text contains a feminised version of the *RSB* which an anonymous writer wrote for the female religious community at Winteney. This text contains guidance for female monastic communities in areas such as order and education. I also examine the use of *bysnian*, which is strongly associated with monastic women’s teachings and often appears in *BenRW* alongside words such as *tācan*.

An exploration of these texts offers an opportunity to observe *tācan* in secular and religious settings to consider how Old English writers approach women in the context of education and instruction, that is, teaching and commands. The extent of writers’ use of *tācan* in these texts and other examples shows that it encompasses a far broader semantic range than the Modern English word *teach*, which is derived from this Old English verb to include concepts of direction and decrees.¹ Since examples of *tācan* more often concern monastic women than laywomen, as I discussed previously, it is important to consider the use of the word in

¹ The *Oxford English Dictionary* lists ‘teach’ as ‘to show by way of information or instruction’, ‘to communicate something to a person’, ‘to inform’, ‘to impart knowledge’, ‘to educate’, or ‘to school’. Older meanings such as ‘to show the way’, ‘to point out’, ‘to prescribe’, ‘to decree’, and ‘to assign’ are now considered obsolete. See, ‘teach, v.’, *OED Online* (2019), www.oed.com/view/Entry/198345, [Accessed 08/09/2020]. However, all these are meanings for *tācan*, as noted by Joseph Bosworth, *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary: Based on the Manuscript Collections of the Late Joseph Bosworth*. Ed. Thomas Northcote Toller (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1898), p. 967, and J.R. Clark Hall and D. Herbert, *A Concise Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*, 4th ed. with supplement by Herbert D. Meritt (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), p. 336.

relation to a royal woman's education in *ApT*. Therefore, my examination of sections from *ApT* and *BenRW* investigates whether Old English translators suggest that separate groups of women had distinct relationships with education and instruction based on the vocabulary used in their representations.

4.1 Teaching Arcestrate in *Apollonius of Tyre*

I begin my discussion with an extract from the Old English romance, *ApT*. This text includes an unusual example of *tācan* which occurs in a description of a royal woman's education. *ApT* is an anonymous translation from the eleventh century of a lost Latin text with earlier Greek origins.² While there are several later Latin and Middle English versions of the original, known as *Historia Apollonii Regis Tyri* (*HA*), *ApT* is unusual because there are no other extant Old English romances.³ Moreover, it is one of the only prose texts with a secular focus to use *tācan*, aside from one example in the translated text *Or*,⁴ and one of the few texts to apply it to a woman's education. Its uniqueness captured the attention of researchers previously because of its genre, narrative, and vocabulary, yet few studies have considered the translator's approach to one woman, Arcestrate, the daughter of the King of Tyre.⁵

² G.A.A. Kortekaas, *The Story of Apollonius, King of Tyre*, (Leiden: Brill, 2004), pp. 3 – 4; this is also the Latin edition used in my discussion. The Old English version is thought to have been written earlier than the eleventh-century manuscript in which it was compiled, according to Elizabeth Archibald, *Apollonius of Tyre: Medieval and Renaissance Themes and Variations* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1991), pp. 46 – 47. For my analysis, I use Peter Goolden, ed., *The Old English Apollonius of Tyre* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1958), which contains versions of one of the Latin texts and the Old English translation. There is also an edition by Elaine Treharne which I also referred to in my examination: Elaine Treharne, ed. and tr., 'Apollonius of Tyre', *Old and Middle English c.890 – c.1450: An Anthology*, Third Edition (Chichester: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2010), 275 – 300.

³ For information about the various manuscripts of *Apollonius of Tyre* in Latin, Old and Middle English, see Goolden, *The Old English Apollonius of Tyre*, pp. xii – xxi.

⁴ The example in Orosius' text occurs in Book 3, chapter 3. The line reads 'ic gehwam wille þærto tæcan þe hiene his lyst ma to witanne' (I am happy to refer anyone who wants to know more) [translated by Godden], in the context of knowledge found in books about Augustine. Malcolm R. Godden, *The Old English History of the World: An Anglo-Saxon Rewriting of Orosius*, DOML 44 (Cambridge Ma.: Harvard University Press, 2016), p. 156.

⁵ Previous studies focus on themes such as familial relationships, Christian elements, the romance genre, and manuscript transmissions. These include Mercedes Salvador-Bello, 'The Old English Apollonius of Tyre in the Light of the Early Romance Tradition: An Assessment of its Plot and Characterisation in Relation to Marie de France's *Eliduc*', *English Studies*, 93:7 (2012), 749 – 774; William Sayers, 'Þoðer and Top in the Old English Apollonius of Tyre', *Notes and Queries*, 56:1 (2009), 12 – 14; Elizabeth Archibald, *Apollonius of Tyre*:

The narrative, set in the eastern Mediterranean, focuses on a prince named Apollonius. After many misfortunes, he arrives at the court of King Arcestrates in Pentapolis and catches the attention of the king's daughter as a potential lover and tutor. The woman, Arcestrate, is the heroine of this text even though she remains unnamed in the Old English version until the end section. The translator made several alterations to her representation but retains her intimate connection with learning.⁶ In this section, I discuss the significance of this relationship with education and *tācan* and consider how the Old English translator depicts her positively as a female student and royal woman.

Arcestrate, the Eager Student in HA

One twelfth-century Latin manuscript of *HA* survives intact, which provides readers with an opportunity to examine the Latin words used to describe Arcestrate and her education. The Latin version is a translation of an unknown Greek text which was created in the third century.⁷ G.A.A. Kortekkas' research on *HA* provides a useful page-by-page study of two redactions from separate manuscripts from the fifth and sixth centuries, known as *RA* and *RB*, with the latter considered as a revised account of *RA*.⁸ He noted that both have slightly different approaches to the narrative with vocabulary and syntax changes and some Christian revisions which separate them from the original Greek text.⁹ Despite their differences, both

Medieval and Renaissance Themes and Variations (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1991); Joseph McGowan, 'The Old English Apollonius of Tyre and the Latin Recensions', *Proceedings of the PMR Conference*, 12 – 13 (1989), 179 – 195. McGowan also comments on the rarity of the Old English translation as a piece of fiction and the subsequent increase in interest in the text which began in the late nineteenth century in 'The Old English Apollonius of Tyre and the Latin Recensions', p. 179. Only a few turn their attention to the women in the text, such as Anita. R. Riedinger, 'The Englishing of Arcestrate: Woman in Apollonius of Tyre', *New Readings on Women in Old English Literature*, ed. Helen Damico and Alexandra Hennessey Olsen (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 292 – 306; Melanie Heyworth, 'Apollonius of Tyre in Its Manuscript Context: An Issue of Marriage', *Philological Quarterly*, 86:1/2 (2007), 1 – 26; and Salvador-Bello, 'The Old English Apollonius of Tyre in the Light of the Early Romance Tradition: An Assessment of its Plot and Characterisation in Relation to Marie de France's *Eliduc*'.

⁶ Riedinger, 'The Englishing of Arcestrate: Woman in Apollonius of Tyre', p. 296.

⁷ Kortekaas, *The Story of Apollonius, King of Tyre*, p. 177.

⁸ For further explanation of the redactions, see Kortekaas' study: Kortekaas, *The Story of Apollonius, King of Tyre*, pp. 2 – 4, and 17 – 29.

Kortekaas, *The Story of Apollonius, King of Tyre*, pp. 177 – 178.

redactions contain the same passage in which Arcestrate goes to her father and asks him to make the newcomer, Apollonius, her tutor. They use the same wording to describe the king's proposal to Apollonius.

HA: RA and RB, xviii:

Rex gaudio repletus iussit ad se iuvenum vocari. Cui (sic) ait: "Apolloni, studorium tuorum felicitatem filia mea a te discere concupivit [...]."

Apollonius hoc audito docet puellam, sicut(i) (et) ipse didicerat.¹⁰

(The king was delighted, he sent for the young man and said to him:

'Apollonius, my daughter has formed a desire to be taught the happiness of your learning by you'. [...] After this conversation, Apollonius began to teach the girl, just as he himself had been taught).¹¹

This passage occurs shortly after Arcestrate witnesses Apollonius' musical ability at the feast [xvii]. The Latin scribes use some familiar words: namely *docere* (*docet*) and *discere* (*didicerat*), which refer to teaching and learning. Education is 'a very important theme' which 'characterises' the main characters and impacts the plot.¹² The use of *docere* and *discere* as words which have a strong connection to education fit into this theme. The translator's decision to use these two words suggests that he wished to draw attention to Arcestrate's tutelage by Apollonius. The survival of this section in multiple versions with the same wording implies that it was an important part of the narrative and significant to the princess' representation. Not only do the Latin translators suggest that Apollonius is a skilled and educated man, but also that Arcestrate has a fervent desire to learn. The support from her

¹⁰ I marked the difference between *RA* and *RB* in brackets.

¹¹ I use Archibald's translations of *HA* (from the *RA* text) which appear in her book Elizabeth Archibald, *Apollonius of Tyre: Medieval and Renaissance Themes and Variations*, pp. 112 – 179. For the above translation, see p. 131.

¹² Archibald, *Apollonius of Tyre*, p. 22.

father in this endeavour is essential as well because it suggests that her desire for learning is important to her representation as a royal woman.

Translating Arcestrate's Education in ApT

The Old English translation contains vocabulary with similar connotations of learning. There is only one extant copy of the Old English translation in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, 201. This eleventh-century manuscript also contains a copy of the *Regularis Concordia*, homilies by Wulfstan and Ælfric, Wulfstan's *WPol*, several law codes, and other items.¹³ The contents display a strong focus on religious and legal texts, specifically on the order of society and social roles, which suggests that *ApT* is an unusual choice for inclusion. Also, the fact that *ApT* is older than the two extant Latin redactions indicates that this version stemmed from another older manuscript. There is no way of knowing if the original, lost text contained other revisions or omissions that differ from *RA* and *RB*, yet a comparison of these two texts demonstrates that this passage about Arcestrate shares many similarities.

The Old English translator introduces the audience to the dynamic between Apollonius and Arcestrate as one bound by a desire for education in the following lines:

ApT, xviii:

Ða wearð se cyningc þearle geblissod & het feccan apollonium & him to
cwæð. Min dohtor girnð þæt heo mote leornian æt ðe ða gesæligan lāre ðe
þu canst [...]. Ða ða apollonius þæt gehyrde. he onfengc þam mædenne to
lāre. & hire tæhte swa wel swa he silf.

¹³ For information about the manuscript and its contents, see Stanford Libraries, *Parker Library on the Web*: Manuscripts in the Parker Library at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge (2022), available at: <<https://parker.stanford.edu/parker/catalog/cr485km1781>>.

(Then the King was overjoyed, and commanded Apollonius to be fetched and said to him: 'My daughter is eager to learn from you the fortunate skills that you know [...]'. When Apollonius heard that, he accepted the maiden for instruction, and taught her as well as he himself had learned).¹⁴

In the above example, the text presents a woman who wishes to learn from Apollonius' *gesæligan lāre* (fortunate skill, or knowledge). She begged her father to allow him to teach her, *to lāre* (for education) [XVIII], and the king appears *geblissod* (overjoyed) by his daughter's request. The translator offers a receptive environment for *lār*, teaching, through his choice of vocabulary and description of the people involved. In the following section, I discuss that there is evidence which shows that in this instance *tæcan* refers to teaching. This is unusual in examples of women as students since there are so few in the corpus of Old English. As with my previous examples, I intend to examine several markers: the terminology, evidence from different versions, and the presentation of the 'teacher' and the 'student' to uncover the intended reading of *tæcan*. The latter is essential in this discussion since Arcestrate's connection with *tæcan* relies on her depiction as an eager pupil.

Both versions provide a positive depiction of the king's daughter. Her desire for learning is one of the key features of this representation, which is unusual for royal women in Old English texts aside from saints. Also, the strong focus of this text on teaching and learning is unusual for a narrative that does not have a strong religious focus. Most of the extant texts in the corpus of Old English literature which discuss learning and teaching are found in manuscripts aimed at monastic audiences, such as instructional texts or religious 'historical' prose (*OEHE*). The fact that education is the focus of not just the narrative but also the main

¹⁴ Treharne translates the sentence as follows: 'My daughter is eager to be taught by you in the fortunate skills that you know...', which returns the focus to Apollonius as the teacher, rather than focusing on Arcestrate as an eager student, noted in *ApT* by *leornian*. Thus, I used my own translation to refocus on the student. See Treharne, 'Apollonius of Tyre', p. 291.

characters suggests that it had a significant message for its audience. It suggests that Arcestrate's relationship with education was ideal for women of her status. Furthermore, it is the only text which uses *tācan* in a representation of a woman's education. It is crucial to consider why the translator chose this word when he could have used others which are associated with women's learning, such as *lāran* which occurs in several examples about royal women. Therefore, the choice of vocabulary used in this text is essential to understanding the type of education referred to by the translator and whether Arcestrate's representation provides new insight into the relationship between royalty and learning.

Arcestrate, an Early Medieval Reimaging

I am not the first to notice Arcestrate's representation as a woman who is eager for education. Riedinger previously commented on this feature of her representation because it offers a unique approach to a royal woman in an early medieval manuscript. There are several features in the Old English translation which suggest that the translator intended to depict Arcestrate as an 'ideal woman' who is virtuous and educated, as Riedinger notes.¹⁵ Although she shares a similar depiction in the Latin text because the translation is 'very close to the Latin in its inclusion of major episodes', there are some differences.¹⁶ The audience is drawn to the hero's breadth of learning each time they encounter Arcestrate and Apollonius in *HA*.¹⁷ However, the wording used in the Old English translation draws an equal amount of attention to Arcestrate's eagerness and development as a student. Her character and description are reshaped in *ApT* to focus more intently on her love of learning and development because of her education.¹⁸ The fact that the translator made these alterations, which impact the depiction of her role as a king's daughter, suggests that he made choices to suit his

¹⁵ Riedinger, 'The Englishing of Arcestrate: Woman in Apollonius of Tyre', pp. 295-296.

¹⁶ Treharne, 'Apollonius of Tyre', p. 275.

¹⁷ Archibald, *Apollonius of Tyre*, p. 13.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, p. 296.

contemporary audience. Therefore, it is important to consider the intended audience of the Old English text in the eleventh-century manuscript.

There is little evidence of whom MS Corpus Christi College 201 was created by or for, or how the narrative of Apollonius ended up into a manuscript filled with religious homilies, poems, and legal texts. However, previous research noted that *ApT* was likely not copied directly from an earlier exemplar but altered to fit the style of the eleventh century by the copyist, as the lack of Alfredian style and particular punctuation conventions show.¹⁹ It is considered more of an adaption than a true translation because substantial changes to word choice and construction diverge from the original classical text.²⁰ Thus, this text might contain more concepts and descriptions which resonate with the later period rather than the earlier eighth or ninth centuries. Mary Richards argues that the manuscript was compiled under the supervision of Wulfstan whose works take up a large number of folios, but it is debated whether it was intended for his personal usage or another audience.²¹ Mark Atherton's study of MS Cambridge Corpus Christi 201 explores whether this manuscript fits into the *speculum principum* genre, and he argued that the texts written by Wulfstan, the law codes, and *ApT* contain several features that resonate with this group of texts.²² He suggests that the provenance of the manuscript is New Minster and the contents of this manuscript had close connections to royalty of the early eleventh century, namely King Cnut, whom he argues used these texts to prepare himself for his role as king and husband.²³ Richards also

¹⁹ Javier Calle Martín and Antonio Miranda García, 'Aspects of punctuation in the Old English Apollonius of Tyre', *Folia Linguistica Historica*, 39, 26-1-2 (2005), 95-113, p. 97. Also see Goolden's analysis in *The Old English Apollonius of Tyre*, pp. xxiii – xxiv.

²⁰ Martín and García, 'Aspects of punctuation in the Old English Apollonius of Tyre', p. 97.

²¹ Mary Richards, 'The Manuscript Contexts of the Old English Laws: Tradition and Innovation', *Studies in Earlier Old English Prose*, ed. Paul Szarmach (New York: State University of New York Press, 1986), 171-92, p. 178. Also see Carla Morini, 'The Old English Apollonius and Wulfstan of York', *Leeds Studies in English*, n.s. 36 (2005), 63-104, p. 65.

²² Mark Atherton, 'Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 201 as a Mirror for a Prince: Apollonius of Tyre, Archbishop Wulfstan and King Cnut', *English Studies*, 97:5 (2016), 451-472.

²³ *Ibid*, p. 467 – 470.

comments on the similarity of the subjects covered in each text, whether they had a religious or secular focus, and suggests that the manuscript had an instructional use.²⁴ If so, who was this intended to assist? The mixed genres suggest that this manuscript would be useful to either monastic or clerical students, or a member of the social elite because of the inclusion of law codes and aspects specific to the laity, such as marriage. The latter is crucial to understanding a potential readership because it is a theme that runs through multiple texts, including *ApT*. Heyworth notes that *ApT* shares several thematical and moral similarities to other texts found in the same eleventh-century manuscript. One of Wulfstan's texts, *WPol*, which takes up a large amount of space in the manuscript, and appears directly before *ApT*, mentions the responsibilities of men and marriage. Heyworth comments that the translator of *ApT* makes references to Wulfstan's text about marriage laws through his description of Arcestrate as a *mæden* (maiden, virgin) on many occasions.²⁵ The translator and Wulfstan 'prescribe for people in similar circumstances', that is, to laymen and women.²⁶

The focus of the texts found in MS Cambridge Corpus Christi 201 on roles of the laity and members of monastic communities provides a reason for the inclusion of the romance text. However, if *ApT* offered its audience positive and negative depictions of royalty, this could also be considered an instructional text for the elite. The texts' purpose has been discussed previously, but only with a view of a monastic audience. Wormald and Archibald discuss the use of *HA* and *ApT* as exemplars for monastic audiences, yet both have conflicting conclusions about their intended purpose. Wormald suggests that *HA* and *ApT* 'can be classified as works of edification or entertainment' for a variety of audiences, lay and monastic.²⁷ He considers several reasons for the translation's inclusion in CCC MS 201 and

²⁴ Richards, 'The Manuscript Contexts of the Old English Laws: Tradition and Innovation', p. 65.

²⁵ Heyworth, 'Apollonius of Tyre in Its Manuscript Context: An Issue of Marriage', pp. 14 – 15.

²⁶ Ibid, p. 15.

²⁷ Patrick Wormald, *The Making of English Law: King Alfred to the Twelfth Century, Vol. 1: Legislation and Its Limits* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, Ltd., 2001), p. 54.

suggests that it is either a textbook for ‘Christian government’ or for the use of ‘monk-bishops’ to educate them about their various duties, or alternatively, as a piece of exemplary fiction to entertain monks and nuns.²⁸ However, Archibald suggests that it does not fit neatly into the ‘exemplary genre’ or the ‘homiletic genre’.²⁹ Although she notes that past researchers such as Raith insisted that there was no other reason for a monk to translate such a text than for its exemplary content, she asserts that *HA* and *ApT* are not necessarily didactic texts or *exemplum* because they do not fit neatly into the categories of *exemplum* or romance.³⁰ However, Heyworth’s analysis of the manuscript context of *ApT* considers that it does have a didactic purpose to promote key concepts for an early medieval audience, such as lawful marriage and chastity.³¹ These views of *HA* and its translation show that there is much debate concerning the intended audience and purpose of this text in the eleventh century.

In my examination, I consider whether *ApT* had a lay audience in mind. Analyses, such as Heyworth’s, suggest that *ApT* contains features which are representative of an exemplar for men and women because of its moral messages. Its key themes including marriage and chastity are highly relevant to young women of status. So far, there has not been an investigation of a wider audience of *ApT* or of the impact of its representations of women. The unique depiction of Arcestrate highlights the need to consider her in further detail since her representation might provide evidence of perceptions of royal women as students which were intended to be used as instructional aids. The fact that the translation differs from the original text implies that the translator made choices to suit the time and audience. McGowan argues that the translator of *ApT* ‘acclimated a late classical romance’ to an early medieval

²⁸ Ibid, pp. 208-209.

²⁹ Archibald, *Apollonius of Tyre*, pp. 87 – 90.

³⁰ Archibald, *Apollonius of Tyre*, p. 86. For Raith’s comments, see Josef Raith, *Die alt- und mittelenglischen Apollonius-Bruchstücke: mit dem Text der Historia Apollonii* (München: M. Hueber, 1956), pp. 49 - 50. Raith also argues that *HA* was closer to hagiography than romance fiction, p. 49. Also, see Heyworth who also discusses this issue in ‘Apollonius of Tyre in Its Manuscript Context: An Issue of Marriage’, p.4.

³¹ Heyworth, ‘Apollonius of Tyre in Its Manuscript Context: An Issue of Marriage’, p.18.

audience through the rendering of classical scenes and ideas into early medieval equivalents.³² It is an adaption of a Latin text with elements that resonate with the contemporary eleventh-century audience, and earlier if this was a copy of an earlier translation. *ApT* contains many elements which would also be useful for a future wife and queen, such as Emma, the wife of Æthelred and later Cnut, and mother of Harthacnut. Emma was a politically active queen and queen-mother who commissioned manuscripts and counselled her husbands and son.³³ Therefore, did this text also have a royal female audience as well as a king? This idea has not yet been explored or considered, but an examination of the text suggests that this is plausible. However, this translation uses words which are not usually found in descriptions of royal women, especially those in secular roles such as kings' daughters. *Tācan* is not a regular occurrence in depictions of royalty in either secular or monastic settings. For it to appear in a description of a woman who has a strong association with learning suggests that it has a key role in the text and in her representation.

A Woman's Desire for Learning

The translator uses words which relate to learning: *leornian* (to learn) and *lār*. The concentration on terms related to education implies that *tācan* has the same educational reading as other examples which use similar vocabulary, such as *ÆColl* and *CP*. Furthermore, the focus on skills, learning, and the significant word *lār*, suggests that Apollonius offered to teach Arcestrate in an educational sense, which she is eager to receive. Her quest for knowledge is an important detail which presents her as a willing student. She first appeared in the text as the *cynges dohtor* (king's daughter) with a curious mind,

³² McGowan, 'The Old English Apollonius of Tyre and the Latin Recensions', p. 190.

³³ There is a wealth of research written on Emma and her political activities. See Pauline Stafford, *Queen Emma & Queen Edith: Queenship and Women's Power in Eleventh-Century England* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 2001), pp. 28 – 40, 182, 220 – 254; Pauline Stafford, 'The Portrayal of Royal Women in England, Mid-Tenth to Mid-Twelfth Centuries', *Medieval Queenship*, ed. J. Parsons (New York: Palgrave Macmillan Ltd., 1998) 143 – 167, pp. 161 – 166; and T. Heslop, 'The production of de luxe manuscripts and the patronage of King Cnut and Queen Emma', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 19 (1990), 151-195.

demonstrated by her many questions about Apollonius' sobriety at the feast [xv]. It is important to note that her father described her as *sapiens* (wise, sensible) in *HA* [xvi], but there is no mention of this in *ApT*. Therefore, this text depicts a woman who is educated in a skill(s) by a man. The translator uses *tæcan* as an educational word in this context.

It is also apparent from the emphasis on education that this is fundamental to the genre of the text as a romance. The translation follows the original text in repeatedly referencing Arcestrate's willingness to learn from Apollonius and her admiration for his skill. After playing her harp for the guests, she witnesses Apollonius' excellent abilities and becomes enamoured:

HA, XVII:

Inter haec filia regis, ut vidit iuvenem omnium artium studionimque esse
cumuiatum, vulneris saevo carpitur igne. Incidit in amorem infinitum.

(Meanwhile, when the princess saw that the young man was full of every
kind of talent and learning, she was wounded by a fiercely burning passion,
and fell very deeply in love).³⁴

ApT, XVII:

Soðlice mid þy þe þæs cynges dohtor geseah þæt Apollonius on eallum
godum cræftum swa wel wæs getogen, þa gefeol hyre mod on his lufe.

(Truly, when the king's daughter saw that Apollonius was so accomplished
in all good skills, her mind fell in love with him).

³⁴ Translation by G. A. A. Kortekaas, *Commentary on the Historia Apollonii Regis Tyri* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), p. 234.

She values Apollonius for his learned skills rather than his appearance or deeds. Moreover, the use of the phrase ‘gefeol hyre mod on his lufe’ in the Old English translation might draw the audience's attention to her mind, *mōd*, in this crucial moment.³⁵ This reference to her mind does not occur in the Latin text, as the above example demonstrates since she is instead *vulneris saevo carpitur igne* (wounded by a burning passion) with no mention of her mind or spirit. This is the point at which the Old English text begins to associate her character with a desire and appreciation for knowledge. Also, this association appears much earlier than her tuition, signified by *tācan*, which implies that it is a significant factor in the narrative and her characterisation. For example, an essential description of Arcestrate, given to her by Apollonius, refers to her as a keen scholar: *lare lufigend* (lover of knowledge) [xvii]. Hence, *ApT* presents a woman who actively sought out a man to be her teacher. She does this so that she may improve her knowledge of a specific skill(s) because she has an affinity for learning. Furthermore, the male characters in this narrative recognise and encourage her connection with learning.

The context and vocabulary used in *ApT* and *HA* to describe the relationship between Apollonius and Arcestrate as student and teacher, and lovers, suggest that their bond is grounded in learning. Arcestrate approaches Apollonius as her tutor on more than one occasion and repeatedly refers to him as *magister* in the Latin texts and *lareow* in the Old English.³⁶ Even after their marriage, Arcestrate continues to call her husband *lareow* either in recognition of his former position as her tutor or because of his wisdom. Archibald also recognised this as an essential feature of his representation, but she noted that only a few versions refer to him as a 'teacher'.³⁷ The use of this description in *ApT* suggests that it was

³⁵ According to Bosworth, ‘mód’, An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary Online, <https://bosworthtoller.com/23026>, this word could also mean ‘heart, soul, spirit’. I decided to translate *mōd* in this example as ‘mind’ because of the context and characterisation of Arcestrate as a woman whom the translator associates with intellect.

³⁶ The nouns *lareow* and *magister* appear in sections XVII, XIX, XX, and XXII in *HA* and *ApT*.

³⁷ Archibald, *Apollonius of Tyre*, p. 23.

significant to the Old English translator and his audience to understand the characters' positions as 'teacher' and 'student'.

The Student and the Teacher

Although Arcestrate appears as a worthy student, the use of *tācan* also relies on the representation of the teacher. Apollonius could only appear as her tutor, and a proficient one at that, if the other characters and the audience accepted him as a suitable educator for the context. Both versions imply that Arcestrate's tuition was successful as Apollonius taught her to his own level, as shown by the phrase *swa wel swa he silf geleornode* (as well as he himself had learned). The translator informed the audience of his musical expertise, which far surpasses that of the king's daughter, as well as other areas. They describe Apollonius as *swa well* [...] *getogen* (so accomplished) in *eallum godum cræftum* (in all good skills) [XVII] as well as *snotor* (wise) several times.³⁸ The attention given to his teaching ability suggests that the prince is an excellent tutor in this situation, not just for musical subjects but for others as well. Apollonius also educated the daughter in writing when he asked her to provide the name of her chosen husband. He mentioned that she could do so *ðurh ða lāre þe þu æt me underfenge* (through the education which you received from me) [XX]. Thus, it is possible that *tācan* also covers a variety of academic subjects including music, but these require a suitable teacher. Apollonius' experience in the subjects taught, musical and literary, is one explanation for the use of *tācan*.

Other characters, such as the king, also refer to Apollonius as a teacher because of his depth of knowledge. However, he also presents his daughter's new role as a student when he asks Apollonius to deliver the suitors' letters to her:

³⁸ See sections IV, VI, and XVII in *ApT*.

ApT, xix:

[The King] cweðende: ‘Nim nu, lareow Apolloni, swa hit þe ne mislicyge,
and bryng þinum læringcgmædene.’

([The King] said: ‘Take these now, Master Apollonius, and bring [them] to
your student, as long as it does not displease you).

Their relationship concerns a teacher and their student from his perspective. The king accepts Apollonius' role as a teacher publicly before his daughter's suitors with the use of the title. However, he also presents his daughter as a ready student with *læringcgmæden* (female student). Apollonius' assumed role, which the translator reinforced with *lareow*, suggests that he could be associated with *tæcan* as a word which connotes teaching. More importantly, the audience could also associate Arcestrate with this term because of her presentation as his protégé. As a *læringcgmæden*, she assumes an academic role. Just as Apollonius' presentation is essential for *tæcan*, so is Arcestrate's in this situation. Here, she is not only the daughter of a king but a learned woman to whom the translator gives an unusual noun, unused elsewhere in Old English.³⁹ This distinction singles her out among the secular women in Old English literature who did not associate with this noun or *tæcan* in the same way. Therefore, while Apollonius' depiction as an educator is a crucial factor, the presence of *tæcan* as an educational verb also depends on the appropriate presentation of the student.

Other evidence in the chosen vocabulary indicates that she is a student. The translator does not always use *tæcan* to describe her tutelage as the following example shows. At the end of

³⁹ This noun only occurs in *ApT*. See Bosworth, ‘læring-mæden’, *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary Online*, <https://bosworthtoller.com/20984> [Accessed 10/01/2023]. The TOE also notes that this word ‘occurs once or infrequently’: <https://oldenglishtesaurus.arts.gla.ac.uk/category/?type=search&qsearch=l%C7%A3ringm%C7%A3den&word=l%C7%A3ringm%C7%A3den&page=1#id=11617> [Accessed 12/01/2023].

the text, *ApT* and *HA* reiterate that her relationship with Apollonius was based on her admiration of his wisdom:

ApT, xlix:

“Ic eom Arcestrate, þin gemæcca, Arcestrates dohtor þæs cynges, and þu eart Apollonius, min lareow, þe me lærdest; þu eart se forlidenan man ðe ic lufode, na for galnesse ac for wisdom”.

("I am Arcestrate, your wife, King Arcestrates' daughter, and you are Apollonius, my teacher, who taught me. You are the shipwrecked man whom I loved, not because of lust but for wisdom").

In this example, the translator uses *læran* instead of *tæcan* and refers to Apollonius as *lareow*. All these words share a focus on academic education. The corresponding line in *HA* uses the same word as the previous example, *docuisti* from *docere* [xlix], which also has a strong connection to teaching in this text. The use of Old English words that share meanings related to teaching in the same context suggests that the translator used multiple words to describe the same type of education. The use of *tæcan* in some examples, but not others in *ApT*, implies that the translator understood the synonymy of verbs such as *tæcan*, *leornian*, and *læran*, and used them interchangeably to reinforce his theme of education. Thus, vocabulary is important to the narrative and to the relationships between the characters.

Educating Royalty in ApT

This instance of *tæcan* contains several markers of supporting vocabulary, context, and character presentation which suggests that it denotes teaching and education in this text. It also provides evidence that this word was in representations of women's education. Still, the most important detail is the focus on the king's daughter as a woman who engages readily in her education. The key aspect of this example is the emphasis on the theme of learning. Her

eagerness for tutelage and perception of Apollonius as an educator presents *tācan* as a term associated with adept teaching. Therefore, *ApT* offers the view that *tācan* could signify the education of a royal woman by a teacher if the woman fits the correct criteria. Arcestrate, as Apollonius' protégé and queen, was an excellent student and the most appropriate candidate for his wife, and therefore met the requirements. Here, *tācan* highlights not only the academic activities of the hero but of the intellectual engagement and interest of the heroine.

Arcestrate's representation as a learned student also provides evidence which suggests that this Old English romance had particular audience. The absence of *tācan* in examples of laymen and women as a word used to denote academic education implies that a lay audience would be less familiar with its meaning in this context. It would therefore be a more suitable vocabulary choice for a monastic audience or someone who had a prior understanding of vernacular religious texts which use *tācan* more often. This criterion suggests that *ApT* would be more suited to monastic women than a lay audience because they had appropriate training and experience. There is little evidence of the type and contents of the education that laywomen received; thus, it is difficult to say with confidence that a king's wife or daughter had the breadth of learning needed to understand and reflect on Arcestrate's representation in *ApT*. However, the lack of surviving evidence does not mean that it was not possible. There is information which suggests that royal women were interested and invested in manuscripts of the eleventh century. Queen Emma who I mentioned earlier commissioned a manuscript which depicts her and her son and used it as a political tool to justify her actions as a queen.⁴⁰ An illustration from the *Encomium Emmae Reginae* illustrates that Emma was a ruler who understood the significance and impact of documentation, careful wording, even more careful representations.

⁴⁰ Stafford, *Queen Emma & Queen Edith: Queenship and Women's Power in Eleventh-Century England*, p. 39.



Figure 8: An illustration of Queen Emma and her sons looking at the *Encomium Emmae Reginae*, from British Library, Add. MS 33241, fol. 1v.

Stafford comments that Emma curated and ‘forged’ her own image in the *Encomium* to appear as a suitable wife, mother, and royal woman for future lay audiences.⁴¹ It is evident that Emma as a queen understood the importance of manuscripts since she commissioned manuscripts and received gifts of psalters.⁴² Also, she had a comparable connection to the place of provenance of MS Corpus Christi College, 201 to her second husband. New Minster in Winchester was an active and prominent place for political affairs in the early eleventh century under Cnut’s reign and it had a strong connection to the court since it was adjacent to the royal palace and visited frequently by Cnut and Emma.⁴³ Also, they regularly gifted manuscripts to churches in York, Canterbury, London, and New Minster.⁴⁴ Therefore, it is

⁴¹ Ibid, p. 40. Also see Alistair Campbell, ed., *Encomium Emmae Reginae*, with supplement by Simon Keynes (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. xlii, lxxvii – lxxi.

⁴² Heslop, ‘The production of de luxe manuscripts and the patronage of King Cnut and Queen Emma’, pp. 156 – 159.

⁴³ Atherton, ‘Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 201 as a Mirror for a Prince: Apollonius of Tyre, Archbishop Wulfstan and King Cnut’, pp. 467 – 468.

⁴⁴ Stafford, *Queen Emma & Queen Edith*, p. 144.

possible that Emma was aware of the manuscript that houses *ApT*, and she might have read it herself (or had it read to her).

Tyler also mentions that Emma ‘may have been familiar with the story of Apollonius ... in Latin and in English’ while in England and across the channel.⁴⁵ *HA* was popular in Carolingian lay circles long before *ApT*’s creation, and there is evidence that the elite gifted their copies of this text to their daughters. For example, Eberhard the count of Friuli, and his wife, Gisela, had left a copy to their daughter Engeltrud in the ninth century.⁴⁶ Emma also had two daughters by Æthelred and Cnut, Goda (Godgifu) and Gunnhild, and the latter went on to marry Emperor Henry III.⁴⁷ If she was familiar with *ApT*, it is important to consider whether she might have encouraged her children to read these texts for their education. This text contains representations which may have resonated with these young women, including representations of learned princesses, loyal wives, and chaste queens. Its narrative and themes suit elite and royal women as much as it suits kings and princes, which suggests that this text might also belong to the *speculum* genre.

As tantalising as it is to imagine that royal women reflected on their positions through narratives such as *ApT*, there are some considerations that need to be addressed which concern the use of *tācan*. Arcestrate’s representation does not fit other examples of royalty in the corpus of Old English texts, except for those who have a monastic role, as I mentioned previously. *ApT* is the only Old English text that praises a royal woman for her interest in education concerning non-religious subjects. Her connection with learning in the text suggests that Arcestrate may provide readers with an exemplary Christian princess. However, the absence of other representations of royal women as eager students also suggests that this

⁴⁵ Tyler, ‘Vernacular Foundations’, p. 29.

⁴⁶ Ibid, p. 29, fn. 109.

⁴⁷ Campbell, *Encomium Emmae Reginae*, p. xxxii.

may not be realistic or overly popular at the time. Archibald's argument that *HA* does not fit into the exemplary genre suggests that female members of the manuscript's audience might not have considered this text as a textbook but as an imagining of an ideal Christian royal couple. The relationship between Apollonius and Arcestrate as one based on education resonates more with married saints and monastic communities than laymen and women who favour wisdom over worldly pleasures. Therefore, while it is likely that laywomen may have read this text, it is unlikely that they considered Arcestrate as a reflection of a contemporary royal woman.

The similarity of *ApT*'s vocabulary and themes with texts that include representations of religious men and women indicates that there is another audience to consider. Words with strong connections to academic learning and teaching such as *tācan* occur more frequently in my next case study in the *BenRW* in descriptions of monastic women (abbesses and nuns) as students, teachers, and instructors. In the following section, I examine several examples from my next case study to further discuss how writers use words such as *tācan* to describe the learning and teaching by royal women. I consider the vocabulary used in the *BenRW* to describe abbesses' roles, including the use of *tācan* to denote a series of teaching and instructing activities in the monastic community. In Chapter 2, I discussed the duties of abbesses as described in Bede's *HE* and the *OEHE*, which included religious teaching and monastic governance. The dual role of abbesses in these texts also occurs in the later feminised version of the *Rule*. However, the translator of *BenRW* uses a different vocabulary than *OEHE* and other texts to describe teaching and learning in a monastic context. It is essential to consider how the use of *tācan* in examples about monastic women affects their representation, and whether these differ from other descriptions that use alternative wording.

4.2 The Feminised Version of The Rule of St. Benedict

The *BenRW* contains descriptions of women who taught and instructed other women. For this reason, it is a rare source of evidence of women's education. The manuscript London, British Library, Cotton MS Claudius D. iii, is one of seven surviving feminised copies of the Benedictine Rule, dating from the thirteenth century to the seventeenth.⁴⁸ This text is an alteration of another Old English translation which I mentioned previously, the *BenR*. The *BenRW* is the only extant vernacular copy of the feminised *Rule* and one of the few texts with confirmed female ownership and readership.⁴⁹ It was written by a single, anonymous scribe sometime in the thirteenth century for the Cistercians nuns of Wintoneney Abbey in Hampshire.⁵⁰ The bilingual text consists of alternating chapters of Latin and Old English and appears with other texts which have relevance to Wintoneney's community, including calendars and a martyrology. Before I begin my examination of the examples, I address the issue of the relevance of this manuscript to my discussion of Old English representations of women.

The Rule in Cotton MS Claudius D. iii

The Wintoneney nuns' association with *BenRW* as the intended audience suggests that they were highly educated and could read both Old English and Latin. Although this text concerns Benedictine nuns and abbesses, the representation of women and 'teaching' could extend to include the Cistercian nuns of Wintoneney who are connected with this manuscript. The issue of the manuscript's late date raises questions of whether this text represents women from the tenth century or the thirteenth.

⁴⁸ J.F. Henderson, 'Feminizing the Rule of Benedict in Medieval England', *Magistra*, 1:1 (1995), 9 – 38, p. 9. More information about this manuscript is available at: Orietta Da Rold, 'London, British Library, Cotton Claudius D. iii', *The Production and Use of English Manuscripts 1060 to 1220* (2013), <<https://www.le.ac.uk/english/em1060to1220/mss/EM.BL.Clau.D.iii.htm#ker44>> [Accessed 23/09/2022]. The *BenRW* appears between ff. 52r – 140v. There is only one edition of the feminised rule by Schoer: *Die Wintoneney-Version der Regula S. Benedicti*.

⁴⁹ Sara Charles, 'The Literacy of English Nuns in the Early Thirteenth Century: Evidence from London, British Library, Cotton MS Claudius D. Iii', *The Journal of Medieval Monastic Studies*, 6 (2017), 77-107, p. 77.

⁵⁰ There are various spellings of this community, which include Whitney, Wintney, and Wintoneney.

The date and the various spelling and grammatical differences present several issues which affect my analysis of this source. Some of the differences are extensive and show a close resemblance to Middle English which led researchers such as Frank Henderson to determine that ‘Winteney is in early Middle English’.⁵¹ This distinction might affect the vocabulary used. However, he also notes that ‘substantial portions are closely related to the masculine Anglo-Saxon versions of the Rule’.⁵² There are several factors which point to an association of *BenRW* with an older Old English text. Mechthild Gretsch, in her discussion of the various editions of the *Rule*, claims that the *BenRW* displays traits of an earlier edition. She argues that it ‘goes back to an Old English exemplar which belongs to the tradition of the “masculine” version’, either the *BenR* or another lost translation.⁵³ *BenRW* is considered one of the closest texts to Æthelwold’s translation.⁵⁴ Pratt’s study of a text known as *King Edgar’s Establishment of Monasteries* also explored the origins of the feminised Rule and its connection to this text.⁵⁵ Pratt and others, such as Rohini Jayatilaka, conclude that there was an earlier feminised translation which circulated with Edgar’s text in the tenth century, the same time that the *BenR* was also created.⁵⁶ Thus, the feminised version might contain a similar text to an earlier copy which was intended to be used by monastic women in the tenth century.

⁵¹ Henderson, ‘Feminizing the Rule of Benedict in Medieval England’, p. 10. Maria Artamonova also discussed the changes in syntax and vocabulary found in the Winteney version. See M. Artamonova, ‘Construing Old English in the Thirteenth Century: The Syntax of the Winteney Adaptation of the Benedictine Rule’, *Leeds Studies in English*, New Series XL, ed. Alaric Hall (2009), 27 – 46.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Gretsch, ‘Æthelwold’s translation of the *Regula Sancti Benedicti* and its Latin exemplar’, p. 138. Charles also agrees with this in ‘The Literacy of English Nuns in the Early Thirteenth Century: Evidence from London, British Library, Cotton MS Claudius D. iii’, p. 79.

⁵⁴ Charles. ‘The Literacy of English Nuns in the Early Thirteenth Century: Evidence from London, British Library, Cotton MS Claudius D. iii’, pp. 78 – 79.

⁵⁵ This text was likely also intended for a female audience because of the inclusion of several mentions of abbesses and monastic women. There are also examples in this source of *tæcan* used in the context of instructions given to abbesses about their conduct as monastic governesses. See Whitelock, ‘An Account of King Edgar’s Establishment of Monasteries’, 1, pt.1, 315.

⁵⁶ David Pratt, ‘The Voice of the King in King Edgar’s Establishment of Monasteries’, *Anglo-Saxon England*, 41 (2012), 145–204, pp. 173 – 176; Rohini Jayatilaka, ‘The Old English Benedictine Rule: Writing for Women and Men’, *Anglo-Saxon England*, 32 (2003), 147 – 187, p. 186 – 187.

BenRW's 'substantial' similarities to the Old English translation by Æthelwold urged a debate about the classification of this manuscript. For example, Neil Ker argues that it is neither an Old English nor a Middle English text, but somewhere in between.⁵⁷ The Old English text was updated to suit Anglo-Norman attitudes to monasticism, which shows that it is not an entirely faithful copy of the ninth-century text that includes new gendered vocabulary, but an adapted text with new additions.⁵⁸ However, I argue that although there are noticeable changes made to the *BenRW*, these do not affect the original depiction of abbesses and nuns created by Æthelwold in *BenR* and the Latin author of the *RSB*. The examples from these texts that I use in my research demonstrate enough similarities in the choice of lexical registers to suggest that they contain the same readings which do not alter the representation of the women. Therefore, I refer to it as an Old English text in my discussion because of the use of *tācan* and its similarity to other Old English versions. It is likely that there was not much alteration to the lexical register used in the various Old English versions, which suggests that these texts have the same readings and representations of monastic men and women. Therefore, the depictions of teaching and learning in *BenRW* might relate more to monastic women of the tenth century than the Cistercians at Winton. This text has relevant evidence of the use of Old English vocabulary in representations of early medieval abbesses and nuns, which can be compared to other sources.

Although this source is dated much later than the others examined in my study, it contains significant evidence about the roles of abbesses, nuns, and female visitors to the monastery, as I explain later in this section. The translator uses keywords such as *tācan* to highlight the relationships that these women had with instruction and education. This word covers a series of teachings and instructions which can only be determined as the intended reading by an

⁵⁷ Neil R. Ker, *Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990), p. xix, fn. 2.

⁵⁸ Charles, 'The Literacy of English Nuns in the Early Thirteenth Century: Evidence from London, British Library, Cotton MS Claudius D. iii', p. 79.

examination of any relevant markers in the text, or from the Latin text. The *RSB*, as I mentioned earlier in this chapter, contains many similarities to the Old English translations. To explore the translator's representations of women in the feminised version, I will discuss two examples which use *tæcan* and compare them to the Old English translation by Æthelwold (*BenR*) and the Latin text. These occur in chapters 2 and 5 of the *Rule*. The first example concerns teaching within the minster provided by an abbess:

1. *RSB*, 2:

Ergo cum aliquis suscipit nomen abbatis, dupplici debet doctrina suis praeesse discipulis. Id est, omnia bona et sancta factis amplius quam uerbis ostendat, ut capacibus discipulis mandata Domini verbis proponere, duris corde vero et simplicioribus factis suis divina praecepta monstrare.

(Therefore, when anyone takes up the name of abbot, he must lead his disciples with twofold teaching, that is, he should show all good and holy things in deeds more than words, setting out God's commandments verbally for receptive disciples, but teaching the hard-hearted and less intelligent the divine precepts by his example).⁵⁹

BenR, 2:

Eornestlice, se þe þone mæren naman abbodes underfehð, he sceal mid twyfealdre lare þa wyldan and tyn, þe him underþeodde synt, þæt is þæt he ælc god and halignesse mid godum dædum swiðor tæce, þonne mid worda lare þæt þa andgetfullan mid worda lare to Godes willan gemynegod syn &

⁵⁹ I use a translation by Venarde, *The Rule of Saint Benedict*, p. 23 for the above example.

þa unandgytfullan mit godum dedum getrymede and anbryde hine
geefenlæcen.

(Whoever receives the great title of abbot must earnestly govern and
instruct those who are subordinate to him with a twofold teaching. He must
teach each good thing and holiness through good deeds more than through
instruction with words so that those with understanding may be reminded of
God's will through instruction with words and that those lacking
understanding, strengthened and goaded on by good deeds, may imitate
him).⁶⁰

BenRW, 2:

Eornestlice, þeo þe þone meren naman habbodesse underfeheð, heo sceal
mid twifealde lare þa wyldan & tyn, þe hyre underþeodde synd, þet is, þet
heo ealle gode þing & haligenesse mid godum dædum swyðor tæce, þonne
mid wordum lære, þat þa andgetfullan mid worda lare to Godes willan
gemynegod syn & þa unandgytfullan mit godum dedum getrymede syn &
gelærede.

(Whoever receives the great title of abbess must earnestly govern and
instruct those who are subordinate to her with a twofold teaching, that is,
she must teach each good thing and holiness through good deeds more than
through instruction with words so that those with understanding may be
reminded of God's will through instruction with words and that those
lacking understanding are strengthened and taught by good deeds).

⁶⁰ I use Riyeff's translation from *The Old English Rule of St Benedict: with Related Old English Texts*, pp. 40 – 41.

The above segments provide insight into the educational role expected of an abbess, according to the *Rule*. The Latin writer uses nouns such as *doctrina* (teaching) and *discipulus* (students), and the Old English translator uses *lare* (teaching), which implies an emphasis on monastic education. Both writers include details of more than one type of teaching, students with different abilities, and the methods used to teach each of these students. They show this through the use of a variety of verbs to describe these different types of teaching. The Latin text uses *ostendere*, *propenere*, *monstrare*, and the Old English uses *tācan*, *lāran*, *trymian*, and more.

The second outlines another duty of an abbess to oversee and direct her community as the head of the monastery:

2. *RSB*, 5:

Quibus ad vitam aeternum gradiendi amor incumbit; ideo angustam viam arripiunt, unde Dominus dicit: *Angusta via est quae ducit ad vitam* [Matt. 714], ut non suo arbitrio viventes vel desideriis suis et voluptatibus oboedientes, sed ambulantes alieno iudicio et imperio, in coenobiis degentes abbatem sibi praeesse desiderant.

(The love of moving toward eternal life urges them on; therefore, they immediately take the narrow path, of which the Lord said, “Narrow is the path that leads to life,” so that not living by their own will or obeying their desires and pleasures but going along according to another’s judgement and

command and dwelling in monasteries, they desire to have an abbot over them).⁶¹

BenR, 5:

On swylcum wunað seo lufu þæs færeldes to ecum life, forði þonne hi þæne ancsuman weg geceosað, be þæm se hælend cwyð: se hælend cwyð:

Ancsum and neara is se weg, þe to life læt, þæt is, þæt he be his agenum dome ne libbe, ne he agenum lustum ne hyrsumige, ac be fremedum dome and hæse donde sy, on mynstre wunigende, þæt abbod his wealde and tæce, a gewilnige.

(In such disciples dwells a love of the course to eternal life, since they chose the narrow path, concerning which the Saviour says *Narrow and strict is the way which leads to life* -, that is, that he should not live by his own judgement, nor does he obey his own desires. Rather, he acts according to another's judgement and behest to dwell in a monastery, so that an abbot may guide and teach him).⁶²

BenRW, 5:

On swilcum wunað seo lufu þæs færeldes to ecum life, forþi þonne hig þone ancgsuman weig geceorad, he þam se hælend cwyð: Angsum & nearu is se wei, þe to life let, þæt is, þæt hig be heore agenum dome ne libbe, ne heore agenum lustum ne gehyrsumian, ac be [fremedon] mode & hæse donde sy, on mynstre wuniende, þæt abbodesse heom wealde & tæce a gewilniað.

⁶¹ Translation by Venarde, *The Rule of Saint Benedict*, pp. 39, 41.

⁶² Translated by Rieff, *The Old English Rule of St Benedict: with Related Old English Texts*, p. 51.

(In such disciples dwells a love of the course to eternal life, since they chose the narrow path, concerning which the Saviour says: *Narrow and strict is the way which leads to life* -, that is, that she should not live by her own judgement, nor obey her own desires, but act according to another's mind and behest to dwell in a monastery, so that an abbess may guide and teach her).

These second examples suggest another aspect of an abbess' role which concerns her duty to provide order. The Latin writer and the Old English translator use nouns in these examples with a different focus on instruction, such as *iudicium* (a direction, order), *imperium* (judgement), *dōm* (judgement), and *hæse* (a command). He also uses the verb *wealdan* (to control, command). The use of these words in the same monastic context implies that these sections refer to another part of monastic life that the abbess was expected to oversee.

Both translated texts use *tācan* to describe an abbess' teachings and instructions to their fellow female religious. The examples above show that *BenRW* is remarkably similar to the *BenR*. The Old English translation by Æthelwold was intended to be read without the Latin text, although the two appear together in some manuscripts. Although the *BenR* is a faithful translation it 'has its own coherence' which does not necessarily need the assistance of the original text to determine meaning, according to Maria Caterina de Boris.⁶³ However, an examination of the Latin passages above shows that *tācan* replaces different Latin words in each example (*ostendere* and *praesum*), which suggests two representations of teaching and instructing. The *BenRW* also contains an interlinear Latin text which was intended to be used

⁶³ Maria Caterina de Boris, 'Learning Latin through the Regula Sancti Benedicti: The Interlinear Glosses in London, British Library, Cotton Tiberius A.III', *Form and Content of Instruction in Anglo-Saxon England in the Light of Contemporary Manuscript Evidence*, ed. Patricia Lendinara, Loredana Lazzari, and Maria Amalia D'Aronco, *Textus et Études Du Moyen Âge*, 39 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007), 184 – 216, p. 189.

in conjunction with the translation. Thus, it is necessary to consider the Latin vocabulary as well as the wording used in the *BenR* to uncover the intended reading of *tācan* in the feminised text.

In my analysis, I examine the two extracts from the *BenRW* to discuss how the translator uses *tācan* and how this choice affects the representations of abbesses. My first example examines the use of *tācan* to depict abbesses' religious teachings in an educational setting, and my second example concerns another duty associated with this role: the authority of the abbess to govern her community. I also consider whether these depictions reflect other evidence of monastic women's teachings from early translated texts.

Abbesses and Religious Education

The translator defines the position of the abbess in the *BenRW* as primarily a teaching role. Example 1 above appears in Chapter 3 of the *Rule*, titled 'Qualis Debeat Abbas Esse', or 'Hwylc se Abbod Beon Scyle' (What the Abbot should be).⁶⁴ The chapter outlines the qualities and behaviour that an abbot (or abbess) should have to fulfil the role successfully. This passage offers information about an abbess and her role in the monastery after the ecclesiastic reform in the ninth century. It describes methods of teaching used by an abbess, the types of students, and terms used to signify several types of teaching.

In the *RSB*, the Latin writer uses a range of vocabulary to describe the different types of religious education needed for groups of students. He refers to the teaching with the word *doctrina*, which writers use often in the context of monastic and religious education, as my example from the *Life of St Basil* showed in Chapter 1. This is also described as a dual form of teaching *discipulis* (*students*), noted with the use of the word *dupplici* (*double*). This includes two methods that use two different tools: *verbis* and *factis*. *Verbis* (*with words*)

⁶⁴ In the *BenRW*, this title reads 'Hwylc Sceal seo Abbodesse Beon' (What the Abbess should be).

refers to a verbal form of teaching, where the teacher supplies information through speech and readings. I mentioned in Chapter 1 that religious education utilised reading and listening as key teaching methods. This type of teaching is suitable for *capacibus* (capable, receptive) students. The Latin word *capax* refers to something or someone who is ‘capable of holding’ or ‘retentive’. These students can understand the complex metaphors and themes found in the manuscripts used in early monasteries, which require multiple levels of comprehension and consideration. The description of this group of students and the use of words associated with religious education also implies that this first method of teaching requires the abbot to be a highly educated teacher.

Factis (with deeds), on the other hand, signifies a more demonstrative approach with set examples of behaviour. According to the text, the abbot has a responsibility to teach this *doctrina* (instruction) to *duris corda vero et simplicioribus* (those who are hard-hearted and less intelligent). This description suggests that these students are less intelligent or less receptive to the verbal style of teaching used to teach others. This includes students who have difficulties or lack the skills needed to read and understand Latin and vernacular texts. The mention of this group of students suggests that the abbot was responsible for all students in the monastery regardless of their ability. It also implies that this type of teaching which used examples of good behaviour was a more common practice used to teach all the members of the community rather than just those lacking understanding. This method refers to the same teaching described in other Latin texts which use the word *exemplum* (example). Bede in *HE* as well as Latin hagiographies also describe the role of the abbot as an exemplary one which used set examples of monastic conduct and Christian belief to guide their community. Deeds are therefore an important part of an abbot’s religious teachings.

The Latin writer uses three verbs to denote teaching at different points in this passage.

Ostendere, proponere, and monstrare. Ostendere (to show, make known, clarify) and

monstrare (to reveal, show, advise), both denote the demonstrative style of teaching which uses set examples to teach the less capable students.⁶⁵ The third word *proponere* has a slightly different meaning related to bringing forth information verbally (to lay out, set forth, expose, propose), such as through a spoken or written argument or treatise.⁶⁶ The fact that the Latin writer uses two semantically similar verbs to describe teaching given to one group of students, and another verb with a separate meaning to describe the teaching of the other groups, suggests that he intended to clarify that the teachers provide this twofold teaching with different methods. He does not use a word such as *docere* to describe this education because he wishes to provide his audience with an in-depth description which gives a more specific reading of the two teachings. Later in this chapter, the writer does use *docere* to describe the abbot's teachings across the community more generally.⁶⁷ The monastic context and the position of the teacher suggest that *ostendere*, *monstrare* and *proponere* signify that the abbot used more than one type of teaching to guide different students in the *RSB*.

The vernacular translations or *BenR* and *BenRW* show that these texts contain similar readings to the *RSB*. The *BenRW* replaces *abbatis* (of the abbot) with the feminine form, *abbatisse*, and uses other female nouns such as *mynece* (nun) to show that this text was intended for a female audience and concerns female monasticism. However, much of the vocabulary related to education remains the same. Æthelwold and the translator of *BenRW* replace *doctrina* with *lār* (instruction, teaching), which suggests that these two texts also describe an example of religious teaching since *lār* often replaces this *doctrina* in translated texts such as Ælfric's homilies and hagiography, and *ÆColl*.⁶⁸ Both translators note that it is

⁶⁵ I discuss *monstrare* in an earlier example on p. 108.

⁶⁶ Lewis and Short, 'propono', *A Latin Dictionary*, p. 1471. Lewis and Short note that this verb occurs in the context of proposing or laying out ideas 'mentally' to answer questions or solve problems.

⁶⁷ *RSB*, 2.11: 'omnia vero quae discipulis docuerit esse contraria in suis factis indicet non agenda' (he should show in his deeds that nothing must be done that is contrary to what he taught his students).

⁶⁸ For example, see Zupitza, *Ælfrics Grammatik und Glossar*, pp. 23, 95.

a *twifeald lare* (twofold instruction), which implies that there were two parts or forms of teaching required to achieve effective learning in the monastery. They refer to these as *godum dāedum* (good deeds) and *wordum* (words). These two teaching tools are also not equal in these versions and require different teaching styles. The distinction between the two types of students, the *andgetfullan* (intelligent, understanding) instructed with words and the *unandgytfyllan* (unintelligent, lacking understanding) educated by deeds, implies that some students were more challenging to teach in both male and female religious communities. Both texts replace *ostendere* with *tācan* to signify that the abbot and abbess supply education using demonstrations. *Tācan* in the *BenR* refers to a form of demonstrative teaching that uses the abbot's example to encourage students to imitate the abbot's behaviour. The Old English writer adapts the last sentence with *monstrare* by using the word *geefenlācan* (to imitate). The context of the teaching from the *RSB* version implies that *tācan* and *geefenlācan* also refer to the same demonstrative method of education mentioned in the Latin text. The same applies to the abbess' teachings since the *BenRW* also uses *tācan* in the same context, and it is important to note that *tācan* is the only verb used in my research that has a semantic range that encompasses demonstrational teaching. All three texts recommend that abbots and abbesses need to use more than one method of teaching to suit different students. The similarity of the texts' vocabulary shows that the role of the abbess in *BenRW* reflected the position of the abbot in religious education. This passage indicates that the abbess needed to be educated and capable of teaching verbally (and with texts) as well as through her own conduct. The use of *tācan* rather than another word to denote her teaching is significant because it suggests that abbesses taught in different ways, indicated by specific vocabulary.

Demonstrative Teaching: *Bysnian* and *Tācan*

The Latin version of the *Rule* in *BenRW* contains some lexical differences from the original *RSB*, but an examination of the wording shows that the text carries the same connotation

related to the abbess' teachings as demonstrative. The writer uses *demonstret* instead of *monstrare* in Chapter 2.12. *Demonstrare* (to show, point out, indicate) has a similar semantic range to *monstrare*.⁶⁹ His use of this word describes the abbess' teachings as the type that relied on using her own behaviour to set examples for her community as well as her ability to teach verbally.

Using a method of religious teaching which focuses on behaviour appears often in Old English descriptions of monastic women. It is often indicated with the use of the word *bysn* or *bysnian*. For example, I mentioned previously that the translator of the *OEHE* depicts monastic women, namely abbesses, as providers of set examples of good conduct for their communities. His representations of women such as Hild, Æthelthyrth, and Hereswith use the word *bysnian* or *bysn* to describe their teachings which use their own behaviour to inspire their fellow monks and nuns to follow it. Other examples which use the same representation of abbesses as providers of set examples of behaviour occur in Ælfric's *Life of St.*

Æthelthryth, St Eugenia, and WPol.⁷⁰ The use of *bysn* and *bysnian* provides further evidence of how certain types of women provided teaching in different environments but always in a religious context. They suggest that examples of conduct and faith were an essential aspect of monastic life and teaching, especially for high-ranking positions such as abbot and abbess.

The *BenRW* translator also makes this distinction when he uses *bysnian* several times in the translation. This includes the example of the abbess' teaching of *unandgytgyllan* students. In the same passage as above, he uses *bysnian* to demonstrate to his audience that this is a distinct type of education.

BenRW, 2:

⁶⁹ Latham and Howlett et al, 'demonstrare', *DMLBS*, 1, p. 607. They comment that this verb denotes 1. 'to show, point out draw attention to, display', 2. 'to demonstrate, give evidence'.

⁷⁰ Jost, 'Die Institutes of Polity, Civil and Ecclesiastical', pp. 87, 170.

Ealle þo þing, þe heo hire underþyddan forbeode, sceawge mid hyre dede,
þat hi ne beon to donde; gif hu þonne wel lærð & yfele mid weorce bysnað,
heo byð forþearlice aworpen.

(All of those things that she forbids before her subjects, she should observe
that they are not done in her works; if she teaches them well and then gives
an example of evil in her works, she will be severely punished).⁷¹

The same word also occurs in the *BenR*. Therefore, this example shows that successful religious instruction depends on the teacher to supply good examples to her students. This suggests that the type of teaching which *tācan* and *bysnian* signify in monastic contexts is a fundamental part of religious education and significant to the abbess' role. *Tācan* has a strong association with an abbess' teaching in this text, as does *bysnian*, because of the number of examples related to this role. *Tācan*'s use as a replacement for words such as *ostendere* indicates that the translator intended to emphasise the demonstrative sense included in its semantic range to describe a certain type of teaching. This is a form of education which an abbess was capable of providing to her community because it implies that she needed a certain level and form of education to teach both verbally and with her conduct.

The vocabulary used in this example demonstrates that there was little variation between the *Rule* intended for monasteries and the thirteenth-century one written for women. The association of abbesses with this Rule presents them as equally appropriate and capable teachers in their minsters. It also shows that writers used the same vocabulary for religious men and women. The use of *tācan* indicates that the educational role of an abbess was more

⁷¹ I translated *sceawge* from *sceawian* in this section as 'should observe' since the verb means 'to look, observe, behold', as well as 'inspect, examine, scrutinise', according to Bosworth, "sceáwian", *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary Online* <<https://bosworthtoller.com/26645>>. This is different from the chapter in *BenR*, which uses the wording: 'Eal þæt he forbeode and his gingrum læpe, he þæt no mid weorce ne gefremme' (All that he forbids and detests before his disciples he must shun in his own works) [translated by Rieyeff].

diverse than originally thought. The evidence in the *BenRW* supports the view that nuns received monastic education ‘simply by living in the community day by day’, that is, ‘following the example of older sisters and the directives of superiors’.⁷² It shows that the verb could apply to their teachings as it represented one of their duties to guide and teach other female religious under their care. An abbess, as teacher and head of her community, taught other women with set examples and words in the same way as their male counterparts, which suggests that they needed to be highly educated and receive the same training. This was a highly regarded and unique position for women given only to abbesses. Queens and royal women did not have the same association with *tācan*, as my next section demonstrates.

Queens and Inappropriate Examples

As I discussed earlier, words such as *tācan* and *bysnian* do not occur often to describe teachings given by royal women outside of a monastic setting. Although writers use these words in examples of princesses’ and queens’ learning, they reserve these words more often for religious men and women. The absence of examples suggests that writers consider royal and monastic women to engage in different forms of teaching because of their roles. In this section, I discuss the importance of set examples in monastic teaching by examining an example which has a negative representation. Previously, I mentioned Gezabel in *Kings* and her example of misleading behaviour to her son: ‘swa swa his fracode modor him yfele gebysnodon’ (just as his mother and father set examples improperly).⁷³ As I mentioned previously, there are no other examples which describe a royal woman setting an example with *bysnian* or *bysn*. Ælfric uses *bysnian* in this text in an unusual setting to suggest that the queen provides an incorrect type of teaching. His use of this word also suggests that she acts outside of her role.

⁷² Henderson, ‘Feminizing the Rule of Benedict in Medieval England’, p. 38.

⁷³ See pages 130 – 131.

The version of Gezabel offered by Ælfric is not an exact depiction of the real wife of Ahab. The historical 'Jezebel' was the daughter of King Ethbaal of Sidon before she became the queen of Israel when she married and, like many other women in biblical texts, there is little mention of her life.⁷⁴ Queen Jezebel was a highly influential woman who performed accepted roles such as royal advisor and regent according to Phoenician custom.⁷⁵ She also persuaded her husband to follow a new religion, Baalism. There is also a similar mention of her and her husband's example of behaviour which affected their son's view of leadership: 'as were the father and mother, so is the son' [1 *Kings* 22:51-53].⁷⁶

Klein and Prietzel comment that it is unlikely that writers, such as Bede and Aldhelm, from the seventh to the tenth century, saw direct parallels of contemporary royal women to biblical women, including Gezabel.⁷⁷ Instead, early medieval readers of the Hebrew Bible saw Jezebel and other queens of Israel and Judah as women who wielded powerful positions over their husbands, children, and lands which they influenced through their counsel and behaviour. This did not sit well with Christian audiences who feared the influence of 'corrupt' women. Gezabel's representation in *Kings* could be a reference to the discomfort felt by men in monastic positions about the influence of royal women on monastic life which was a contributing factor that led to the Benedictine Reform.⁷⁸ In Ælfric's lifetime (995-1010), the concept of queenship went through a series of changes which affected not only the image of the queen as a consecrated position but one with specified duties.⁷⁹ Previously in the

⁷⁴ Janet Howe Gaines, *Music in the Old Bones: Jezebel through the Ages* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1999), pp. 3 – 4. She appears in 1 and 2 *Kings* (1, 16:31 – 2, 9: 37) at several points.

⁷⁵ Patricia Dutcher-Wells, *Jezebel: Portraits of a Queen* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2004), pp. 103 and 105.

⁷⁶ Dutcher-Wells, *Jezebel: Portraits of a Queen*, p. 61.

⁷⁷ Prietzel, 'Appetite for Power: The Anglo-Saxon Regina Gratia Dei', p. 551. Also see Klein, *Ruling Women: Queenship and Gender in Anglo-Saxon Literature*, pp. 143 – 144.

⁷⁸ This is mentioned in several studies, and not all agree that the reform was a response to the meddling of the laity. Catherine Cubitt suggests that there were other, major factors which led to this: Catherine Cubitt, 'Review article: The tenth-century Benedictine Reform in England', *Early Medieval Europe*, 6:1 (1997), 77 – 94, p. 86. Also see Stafford, 'The King's Wife in Wessex 800-106', pp. 23 – 25; and Pauline Stafford, 'Queens, Nunneries, and Reforming Churchmen: Gender, Religious Status and Reform in Tenth- and Eleventh Century England', *Past & Present*, 163:1 (1999), 3–35.

⁷⁹ Klein, *Ruling Women: Queenship and Gender in Anglo-Saxon Literature*, pp. 142 – 143.

ninth century, the ‘ambiguity that surrounded the status and functions of women became especially apparent in regard to the queen’.⁸⁰ It was an undefined role with socially accepted duties, but nothing fixed in writing. The new approach to queenship in the eleventh century offered royal wives a greater extent of power and influence than they had previously, at least from a legal point of view. Women in Wessex such as Ælfthryth could now act as their own political agents instead of relying on the power of their husbands. For Ælfric and other abbots, this change might have triggered anxieties about the influence of women who in the Bible often cause disastrous events, such as Eve in the Garden of Eden. Klein suggests that Ælfric intended to discuss the problems associated with the ‘formalisation of queenly authority’ and demonstrate the possible danger it posed to monastic authority.⁸¹ To warn his audiences about the misuse of royal power, Ælfric had to transform his characters to provide accessible exemplars for his audience.⁸² This became a more common trend in the twelfth century when the ‘Gezabel’ *topos* became associated with the deeds of wicked wives instead of noblewomen who persecuted saints.⁸³

The use of *bysnial*, a word associated with an abbess’ teachings, suggests that Gezabel’s set examples are a perverse version of religious education, which Ælfric suggests she is unqualified to provide. He places Gezabel in between examples of monastic women such as Eugenia, Basilissa, and Æthelthryth, to allow his audience to compare them. Although he makes no direct reference to any contemporary queens in *Kings*, he likely wanted his

⁸⁰ Prietzel, ‘Appetite for Power: The Anglo-Saxon Regina Gratia Dei’, p. 551.

⁸¹ Klein, *Ruling Women: Queenship and Gender in Anglo-Saxon Literature*, p. 143. Firth also discusses this idea and agrees with Klein that Ælfric had a specific purpose in mind when he wrote about Gezabel and queenly power: ‘The Character of the Treacherous Woman in the Passiones of Early Medieval English Royal Martyrs’, *Royal Studies Journal*, 7:1 (2020), 1 – 21, pp. 15 – 16.

⁸² Klein, *Ruling Women: Queenship and Gender in Anglo-Saxon Literature*, p. 135.

⁸³ Jan Ziolkowski, *Jezebel: A Norman Latin Poem of the Early Eleventh Century* (New York: P. Lang, 1989), pp. 15-16. Some examples include Matthew Paris’ description of Isabella, the second wife of King John and John of Worcester’s depiction of Queen Cynethryth in his text, *Passio Æthelberhti*. Carey Fleiner, ‘She Is My Eleanor’: The Character of Isabella of Angoulême on Film—A Medieval Queen in Modern Media’, *Premodern Rulers and Postmodern Viewers: Gender, Sex, and Power in Popular Culture*, eds. J. North, K. Alvestad, E. Woodacre, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, Cham., 2018), 91-110, pp. 93 – 94, and Matthew Firth, ‘The Character of the Treacherous Woman in the Passiones of Early Medieval English Royal Martyrs’, p. 12.

audience to consider the roles of royal women whose influence over monastic life and governance paralleled abbesses in many ways. His message to his tenth-century audience is a warning for wives and royalty to be mindful of their behaviour and how they counsel others. The lack of other examples of *bysnian* in examples of laywomen's teachings offers further evidence that this word denoted a specialist type of education which could only be provided by someone with proper religious training.

The Authority of the Abbess

My second example of *tācan* shows that it signifies more than just the abbess' religious teachings in this text. It also occurs in examples which concern another duty of the abbess in her monastery to provide governance and order. A passage from Chapter 5 of the *RSB*, or *Be Gehyrsumnesse* (Obedience) in the *BenRW*, describes the necessary obedience of monastic members and reminds them of their conduct and respect towards their fellow members and especially to their abbot. The writer advises his audience to put aside their desires and pleasures, specifically to not live by their own *arbitrio* (judgement, will) or *oboedire* (to obey) their wants. Instead, they should live 'alieno iudicio et imperio' (by another's judgement and command) to reside in a *coenobiis*, in monastic environments. These two words, *iudicium* and *imperium*, are critical to this passage because they offer insight into the positions of monastic women who lived according to the Benedictine Rule.⁸⁴ They also provide evidence of the intended reading of *tācan*. This description suggests that the members of the community must be subservient to another person, someone who has authority in the monastery to issue orders and carry out judgement to maintain the values and integrity of the Christian community. This also suggests that a monastery is a place of order with a community made up of different ranks. The last line in this passage reveals that the

⁸⁴ The same wording occurs in both the *RSB* and the Latin text in *BenRW*.

abbot is the only one who can supply the necessary command and judgements detailed above since the community should ‘*abbatem sibi praeesse desiderant*’ (desire to have an abbot over them). The verb *praeesse*, from *praesum* (to preside over, to command, to rule), is integral to this example, as I explain shortly.⁸⁵ The writer mentions that is the abbot’s duty to not only teach the members of his monastery but to instruct them and cause them to desire the abbot’s leadership.

There are several references to the abbot’s instruction in the *RSB*, as I demonstrated in an example in Chapter 1.⁸⁶ The writer does not use the same Latin vocabulary in each example but instead uses nouns and verbs that contain similar semantic ranges such as *imperium* and *iubere* in similar contexts, which denote commands and giving instructions. It is evident from this example and others which use similar words that the writer does not refer to the abbot as a teacher, or to his commands as a form of education. Other examples appear in Chapters 61 and 68, and all refer to the abbot as the instructor and his community as the audience. This is a separate instruction which does not relate to the exchange of information to teach but to command.

In the Old English translations, the translators use a smaller range of words to describe how an abbot and abbess provide instructions. The most frequently used word in this context is *tæcan* in both *BenR* and *BenRW*. In Chapter 5, the translators use this word to describe how an abbot and an abbess should instruct their members through judgement and order to prevent them from falling into temptation. They describe these concepts with different words.

Æthelwold replaces the nouns *iudicium* and *imperium* with *dome* (judgement) and *hæse* (command). However, the translator of *BenRW* depicts another representation of the abbess’ instructions which concerns the mind through his inclusion of another word. He describes her

⁸⁵ Lewis and Short, ‘*praesum*’, *A Latin Dictionary*, p. 1432.

⁸⁶ See my discussion of *iubere* on p. 118.

judgement and command with the words *mode* from *mod* (heart, mind, spirit) and *hæse*. This is an important distinction which suggests that the role of the abbess requires specific skills to provide monastic instruction and teachings. While the *BenR* emphasises the abbot's ability to govern with references to his commands and governance, the *BenRW* emphasises the requirements of the abbess to command but also to be wise. The line in the *BenRW* consequently reads as follows: 'that they should live according to someone else's mind and command', or 'by the abbess' wisdom and orders'.

The *BenR* and *BenRW* translators continue to suggest the idea that the abbot's and abbess' governance used more than just their status to command their communities with their choice of words in the second half of the passage. Both Old English texts use the same two words to replace a single Latin word, *praesum*. The phrase 'wealde and tæce' uses two verbs with similar semantic ranges. *Wealdan*, which conveys someone's or something's power over another thing; 'to control', 'relegate' or 'govern', according to Bosworth-Toller.⁸⁷ As my earlier examination demonstrated in the *OEHE* in Chapters 2 and 3, translators often choose words to emphasise certain concepts to create the closest possible reading to the original text. If *wealdan* refers to ruling, to preside over something, then the addition of *tācan* must mean that the writers refer to something more than this but with a similar connotation. Therefore, it is possible that 'wealde and tæce' is an Old English doublet used to account for the difficulty of translating *praesum* in this context. The translators chose *tācan* in this example because of its wide semantic range which includes teaching and instruction, but it needed to be paired with another verb with a stronger association to commands to convey the correct message. They imply that monastic governance did not concern just the ability to command a community, but to guide them. To pass judgement, especially in a monastic setting, an abbot

⁸⁷ Bosworth, 'wealdan', *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary Online*, <<https://bosworthtoller.com/34752>> [Accessed 30/09/2022].

must be worthy of the respect of his brethren which he earns through his conduct, faith, and level of education. Commands require the instructor to have a particular status that provides him with authority, yet judgement requires intellect and consideration which come from learning and wisdom. Therefore, the use of two words instead of a single word in this situation highlights the need for an abbot and an abbess to have authority over their communities' behaviour and knowledge (religious and otherwise). This suggests that an abbot and abbess needed to have status, learning, and wisdom to rule their monasteries effectively.

We can acquire further insight into the idea of the abbess as an instructor elsewhere in the text. The translator uses *tācan* and emphasises the authoritative aspect of its semantic range to signify orders in another example which concerns the abbess' delegation of ranks.

BenRW, 61.125:

Gyf þeo abbodesse hyre geearnunge swilce ongyte, heo mot hy be sume
dæle furður wurðian & hire innor stede & setl tæcen.

(If the abbess also perceives her merit, she should honour her further and
assign her a higher position and seat).

This example uses the same word, *tācan*, because of its semantic range which fits the role of the abbess as a teacher and instructor better than others because of the abbess' status. I mentioned previously that Old English writers do not use *tācan* in examples of women as teachers often, except for examples about abbesses. This word has a specific use in monastic contexts to denote the type of teaching and governance provided by a person with a high status, such as an abbot, abbess, or bishop. Another example suggests a similar type of instruction witnessed in other instructional texts in 'King Edgar's Establishment of Monasteries', which was also written by Bishop Æthelwold. In an example, he instructs

abbesses to maintain the *Rule* and conduct themselves well: ‘abbodissum we eac tæcaþ þæt hi inholde sin’ (to abbesses, we instruct that they are thoroughly loyal).⁸⁸ He uses *tæcan* to describe his own instruction to abbesses because he outranks them.

Also, in Chapter 68 of *BenRW*, the translator uses an unusual noun to describe the abbess:

BenRW, 68. 141:

Gyf ænig hefityme oddæ unacumelic þing ænigre swuster betæht byð,
underfo heo þa hese hyre tæcendes mid ealre manþwærnesse & mid
eadmodre gehyrsumnisse.

(If any sister is assigned any difficult or impossible task, she should receive
the commands from her governess with all courteousness and humble
obedience).

Here, the context is similar to the above examples. An abbess is responsible for delegating tasks to her community, particularly difficult (*hefityme*) or even impossible (*unacumelic*) ones, which could stir up discontentment. The abbess is referred to as *tæcend*, which means ‘one who prescribes or orders’ according to Bosworth-Toller.⁸⁹ In this example, I translate it as ‘governess’ in reference to the abbess’ duty to govern her community, as emphasised in this section. It is an important word because it only occurs once in the *BenR* and *BenRW*, and these two examples are the only known attestations in the corpus of Old English literature.⁹⁰ *Tæcend* does not replace a Latin noun from the *RSB*. As a new addition to the translations, it provides audiences with further information about the role of the abbess in her community as

⁸⁸ Whitelock, ‘An Account of King Edgar’s Establishment of Monasteries’, p. 315.

⁸⁹ Bosworth, “tæcend”, *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary Online*, <<https://bosworthtoller.com/30118>>. This noun is related to *tæcan*.

⁹⁰ This spelling appears seventeen times in the *DOE*, but only two refer to the noun. The other fifteen are the subjunctive form of *tæcan*, found in texts such as Ælfric’s *Grammar and Gloss* [Zupitza, *Ælfrics Grammatik und Glossar*, pp. 63, 151, 152, 244, 248, 249], and Ælfric’s homily, *Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost* [P. Clemoes, *Ælfric’s Catholic Homilies: The First Series*, pp. 410, 416].

well as how her students perceived her as a teacher and governess. It also demonstrates that the related verb, *tācan*, has more than one use in this text as well as the *BenR*.

These examples suggest that the translator of the *BenRW* uses *tācan* to denote different aspects of monastic instruction, that is, religious education and orders given by the abbess as the head of her community. He describes the same type of teaching and instruction as the abbot in *BenR*, which indicates that the roles of the abbot and the abbess were similar in the tenth century. Both were expected to provide their students and communities with teaching and governance to create efficient and noteworthy environments that were suitable to culture and maintain the monastic life. Therefore, his depiction of an abbess as a highly educated and active woman in the minster reflects other examples of women's agency in texts such as the *OEHE*. The abbess mirrors the *OEHE* translator's representation of women such as Hild, Hereswith, and Ælflæd, as educators and instructors who taught and governed their communities by using a combination of set examples, reading, and reprimands. It is likely that the representation of the abbess in the *BenRW* reflects the perception and practice of abbesses in the tenth century and perhaps earlier.

4.3 The Difference between Abbesses, Princesses and Queens

My examinations in this chapter showed that Old English texts contain different examples of women as students and teachers. Translators used *tācan*'s polysemous nature in a variety of ways to signify different types of teaching. In *ApT* and *BenRW*, they used *tācan* in different contexts to denote teachings given to monastic and secular women on a variety of subjects. Its appearance in *ApT* suggests that Old English writers and their audiences understood that *tācan* applied to many situations and people, including royal women. However, the most examples occur in the *BenRW*, a text aimed at monastic women with the intention of reminding its audience of their roles. The feminised *Rule* instructs abbesses to consider and

reflect on their position: ‘æfre seo abbodesse mot beon gemyndig, þat heo is abbodesse (the abbess must be ever mindful that she is an abbess) [*BenRW*, 2. 15]. Representation of abbesses in this text shows that they had a diverse role which included religious education and monastic instruction. *Tæcan* as a word which can denote both teaching and commands is the ideal verb to describe their activities in the monastery, especially when it appears alongside other words with a strong connection to religious teaching, such as *bysnian*.

This evidence prompts the question of why it occurs in the representation of Arcestrate as a wife, queen, and mother? If *tæcan* is more readily associated with religious women and education, why did the translator use this word when he might have used one such as *læran* that has more attestations in examples of royal women as students? I argue that his word choice was related to two aspects: his audience and perception of Arcestrate. *ApT* contains significant evidence of perceptions of royal women and their education. However, this text contains a depiction of a specific type of royal woman. Arcestrate has a secular role as a king’s daughter and wife of Apollonius, but she is also a religious woman at the end of the narrative when she becomes a priestess.

Salvador-Bello describes Arcestrate as a queen-abbess because of her high-ranking position and similarity to depictions of early medieval abbesses, such as their desire for education, chastity, and governance.⁹¹ It is evident from the vocabulary used to describe her and her education that the translator intended to show her in a similar way to other monastic women. He uses a vocabulary which is more often found in examples of monastic education and instruction. Representations of kings’ daughters as highly educated women are not well-attested in Old English texts in examples of *tæcan* or any of the other words mentioned in this thesis. These depictions of education are reserved for kin of royalty who enter a monastic life,

⁹¹ Salvador-Bello, ‘The Old English Apollonius of Tyre in the Light of the Early Romance Tradition: An Assessment of its Plot and Characterisation in Relation to Marie de France’s *Eliduc*’, p. 769.

such as Hild and Ælfflæd who became abbesses. The *OEHE* translator uses *leornian* and *læran* rather than *tæcan* to describe abbesses as teachers and students. However, other writers later in the early medieval period used *tæcan* often. This information suggests that the translator of *ApT*'s word choice might have been influenced by his eleventh-century audience as well as Arcestrate's religious role. This time coincides with an increase in female religious houses and the number of women in monastic positions who would be familiar with the type of vocabulary used in texts with religious contexts. This includes words to define education and instruction, namely *tæcan*. Texts such as *ApT* and *BenRW* belong to the eleventh century and beyond, and both use the same word to denote education in examples of royal and monastic women.

Therefore, it is easier to read Arcestrate as an abbess and religious woman than a wife or queen in this text because of her association with education through the vocabulary used to depict her as a student. The use of *tæcan* strengthens the claim that CCC MS 201 had a royal as well as a monastic audience. It is likely, given that *tæcan* and representations of educated women occur in religious texts and contexts, that this narrative was meant to be read by royal women who entered monasteries. One text in this manuscript already has a strong connection to female religious, the *Regularis Concordia*, written by Æthelwold. This is another instructional text that detailed guidelines about the roles of monks and nuns, abbots and abbesses, and the king and queen as their 'guardians', created at the behest of King Edgar and Queen Ælfthryth.⁹² A group of religious women in the later tenth century altered the copy of this text 'with interlineation and marginalia', which was designed to add feminised forms of words such as 'abbess' or 'sisters'.⁹³ There was a material of interest for monastic women in this manuscript in the tenth century, and it is likely that this interest did not dwindle. It is also

⁹² Lucia Kornexl, 'The 'Regularis Concordia' and Its Old English Gloss', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 24 (1995), 95–130, pp. 96 – 97. Also see Wragg, *Early English Queens*, p. 190.

⁹³ Maude, *Addressing Women in Early Medieval Religious Texts*, p. 25.

possible that *ApT* is a version of an older translation which was written for an abbess or royal daughter who entered a monastery. Although this text was popular in the eleventh century and beyond, it was also in existence in the tenth century and perhaps earlier.⁹⁴ The translator deliberately chose not to use words such as *læran*, because he wished to demonstrate to his audience that Arcestrate was not a typical king's daughter, but a suitable candidate for an abbess.

⁹⁴ Archibald, *Apollonius of Tyre*, p. 46.

Conclusions

I began my examination with the thought of Dhuoda and Ealhswith and their own teaching and learning experiences. Ealhswith, the little-known wife of Alfred the Great who is absent from the extant literary sources of the ninth and tenth centuries, is only known to us by her name, familial connections, and the occasional witness of charters after her husband's death.¹ However, it might be possible to reconstruct an idea of her involvement in education and instruction from the evidence found in representations of royal and monastic women in vernacular texts. Ealhswith and her daughters enacted both royal and monastic roles at different points in their lives. Ealhswith founded and entered a monastery in Nunnaminster in the early tenth century when the ecclesiastical reform reached the early English kingdoms. Her daughters, Æthelflæd and Æthelgifu, played different roles. Æthelflæd became the famed 'Lady of the Mercians' when she married Æthelweard. Her sister, Æthelgifu, never married and instead took up a monastic position at Shaftesbury Abbey where she became an abbess who ruled over the community of nuns.² My observations from early medieval texts on the vocabulary used to depict different groups of women who taught and learnt in various ways suggest that Ealhswith and her children had multiple relationships with education and instruction at different times.

My examination of verbs of instruction and education suggest that Old English texts contain diverse representations of royal and monastic women as teachers, counsellors, instructors, and students. Evidence of writers' use of verbs to describe teaching is especially important

¹ Dockray-Miller, *Mothering and Motherhood in Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 51.

² Foot, *Monastic Life in Anglo-Saxon England, c. 600 – 900*, p. 83. The charter which describes her installation as Abbess is a later forgery. See Foot, fn. 34, p. 83. Dockray-Miller also discusses this in *Mothering and Motherhood in Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 55. She suggests that 'the forgers were simply drawing on an oral literary tradition'.

because of the disparity of examples of nouns used to indicate women in educational and instructional roles compared to men.³ Unlike their Carolingian cousins, there is no evidence that women such as Ealhswith wrote *specula* for their sons or daughters. Thus, researchers cannot discuss how Ealhswith and others perceived their roles in teaching and learning in the same way as women such as Dhuoda. Instead, we rely on literary representations to reflect on their lives.

Royal Education and Counsel

Writers use particular words to describe royal women in their secular roles as daughters, wives, mothers, and queens in episodes of teaching and learning. In texts such as *OEHE*, *ApT*, and *BenRW*, writers describe women's education with words that are widely used to denote academic education: *leornian*, *tācan*, and *lāran*. Although *tācan* and *lāran* are polysemous words, the use of other markers (relevant nouns and context) suggests the writers emphasise royal women as students of academic subjects in secular and religious contexts. These include words such as *wisdom*, *lār*, *lareow*, *magister*. The vocabulary used to describe Arcestrate in *ApT* and Hild in *OEHE* is similar to the wording used in descriptions of men as students, which suggests that royal women learn in a similar way and that they had a comparable education in subjects such as music, reading, writing, and religion. It also implies that writers understood the importance of referencing royal education in order to support their representations of women who take on high-ranking positions, such as abbess. It was necessary for their audiences to view women such as Hild and Ælfflæd as educated women who had an interest in developing Christianity through literary culture and religious education at a time when there were few candidates for this role.

³ This includes the infrequent use of feminine forms of nouns (*lārestre*, *magistra*, *leonestre*).

Royal women were not just educated to become religious teachers. The different uses of words such as *læran* which appear in their descriptions of queens indicate that they also provided an advisory role. Evidence from the *OEHE* and *Or* suggests that writers favoured *læran* to describe queens as counsellors in their texts. Royal wives and mothers have a strong association with guidance on secular subjects, including morals and customs. The example of Rædwald's wife demonstrates the use of *læran* to portray the queen as a positive teacher who steers her husband in the right direction. Another example of Eurydice in *Or* shows that royal women are not always depicted as counsellors in good way. Female guidance could be dangerous if misused, which is why writers offer their audiences negative descriptions of queens who provide inappropriate advice. In the *OEHE*, the translator uses different verbs to signify to the audience that the queen's religious guidance is not the same as royal counsel given by a Christian wife, but female persuasion, as *biswican* demonstrates. Others continue to use *læran* in examples such as *Or*, which suggests that some writers viewed this as the most appropriate word to describe Eurydice's advice despite its consequences.

Evidence from the Latin texts indicates that writers were aware of the differences between counsel and persuasion because of their use of different vocabulary. The important distinction between words such as *admonere* and *persuadere* helps readers to understand the writers' perceptions of queens' relationship with education. The Old English translations attempt to render the same reading. *Læran*, as a word with more than one sense related to either advisory or academic teachings, as evident in examples such as *ÆLS (Basil)* and (*ÆColl*), suggests that queens had a particular role to educate others through their counsel. It is evident that there was discomfort felt about women's counsel. However, writers in these texts suggest that it was an essential part of their role which they describe using the same vocabulary that is part of a stock representation of queens in the tenth century.

Counsel is not unique to queens. My examination of Hild in the *OEHE* demonstrated that the translator followed Bede's description of her as a highly educated and capable monastic teacher who taught various subjects such as Christian writings, behaviour, and provided counsel to secular men. The translator makes it clear to his audience that as an abbess she provides more than one form of education. *Læran* is a keyword in many examples of religious women teaching, but it can signify more than one type of education given by groups of women. Writers use *læran* to denote education given by abbesses because of its multiple uses which encompass the concept of religious teaching and its expected duties. It is also relevant to royal women who took up positions in monasteries.

Unlike in examples of men as teachers, writers rarely use nouns to describe monastic women. The *OEHE* translator uses *lareow*, *magister*, *leornestre* and *tācend* to depict monastic women in similar roles to men. The absence of nouns elsewhere in examples of women leads us to look for other markers in the vocabulary, such as verbs. *Læran*, *leornian*, *tācan*, and *bysnian* are important indicators which show that religious women provide a similar service to their male counterparts, and in a similar way. This includes an involvement in teaching, counselling, and supervision by abbesses.

Further evidence of abbesses' portrayals as teachers appears in instructional texts. I discussed the use of *tācan* and *bysnian* in examples of monastic women's teaching and learning. These two verbs have a strong connection to religious subjects and monastic women, which suggests that this group of women also have a stock representation as teachers who provide religious education through set examples and academic teaching. Writers such as Ælfric imply that this depiction of education is reserved specifically for those with religious training. The absence of examples which use *tācan* and *bysnian*, or *bysn*, in representations of laywomen, and the use of *bysnian* in Gezabel's portrayal as a bad queen, suggests that royal and laywomen should not teach in the same way as monastic women. It suggests that

abbesses and queens cannot teach subjects outside of their sphere of influence because their roles contain different ranges of teaching and instructing. The lines between royal instruction and education are thinner in some places more than others. My investigation suggested that these women's shared backgrounds and experiences provided them with the skills and knowledge to provide similar types of teaching and instruction. However, their representations as teachers and counsellors have strict boundaries made evident by these different range of vocabulary used to denote their teachings and titles.

The evidence of royal women's changing relationships with education as they move from a secular life to a monastic one suggests that Ealhswith may have experienced all of these types of teaching and instructing. It is likely that she received some religious and secular teaching from tutors either in the household or a monastery, and gave counsel to laymen and others in her time as queen and abbess. Although she may have engaged widely in these types of education throughout her life, Ealhswith would have been aware of the thin boundary between appropriate and inappropriate teachings as a royal wife. It would not be until her installation as Abbess of Nunnaminster that she would have more freedom to teach and instruct others on secular and religious matters.

Audiences

Contemporary women were at the forefront of Old English writers and translators as models for depictions of women and audiences. The presence of Eadgyth's name in a manuscript containing the *Vercelli Homilies* and Old English poetry, women's commissioning of manuscripts, such as Emma's *Encomium* and Aldhelm's *DV* for the nuns of Barking Abbey, indicates the interest of royal women in literature.⁴ Writers likely intended for royal women, whether in monastic or secular positions, to read or listen to their

⁴ Dockray-Miller, 'The eagip Erasure: A Gloss on the Old English Andreas', 3 – 7.

representations of women. The reason for this is the precise depictions of women's roles as positive or negative teaching examples to provide their female audience with 'mirrors' with which to examine their behaviour. Therefore, texts such as the *OEHE*, *OR*, *ApT*, and *BenRW*, suggest ways that queens and abbesses learnt and taught about religious and secular subjects. For example, it implies that Ealhswith provided other men and women with education and instruction on secular and religious matters at different points in her life. She also may have seen or heard representations of women in royal and monastic roles from the literature of the time, or heard the ways that writers depicted them during her children's upbringing in the royal household.

Looking Back and Going Forward

I showed in this thesis that a lexical analysis of verbs of instruction and education can provide another strategy to explore perceptions of women in early medieval texts in the absence of other direct evidence. My examination of several case studies suggests that writers used particular sets of words to describe women in different positions as student, teachers, instructors, and counsellors. The evidence of word use shows that writers had different perceptions of secular and religious women as educators who were bound to separate spheres of influence. My research suggests that word choice is an important factor for representations of women and that writers chose words purposely for their audiences.

On reflection, a similar approach could be applied to research about women in Old English texts in other ways. These include a focus on individual writers' use of vocabulary, such as Bede and Ælfric, and comparing their word choice. Alternatively, a focus on particular women and their descriptions in different Latin and Old English texts would also provide a worthwhile study. It is also possible to explore different ranges of words. Examples from Old English texts use different verbs and literary markers to suggest that other groups of women

such as saints teach and learn in other ways. At the beginning, I mentioned that there are other words related to teaching, such as *geteon* and *cyðan*.⁵ The latter is an important word used to discuss female saints and their relationship with education. Female Saints are another group of women with distinct relationships with learning and teaching in Old English texts because of their special spiritual status and the different ranges of vocabulary used to describe them as students and teachers. *Cypan* occurs often in examples of saints as teachers.

Examples of *cypan* demonstrate that writers used this word to denote the following: ‘to make known’, ‘tell’, ‘relate’, ‘proclaim’, ‘announce’, ‘declare’, ‘reveal’, ‘perform’, ‘confess’, and ‘confirm’.⁶ *Cypan* often occurs during conversations as the modern English translations ‘to make known’, ‘tell’, and ‘relate’ demonstrate. However, there is also a further performative aspect of information transmission suggested here since this word can also mean ‘to reveal’, ‘perform’, or ‘confess’. This describes a different method of teaching than indicated in the other verbs studied in my research.

Writers such as Ælfric, Cynewulf, and other anonymous translators depict female candidates for sainthood as excellent learners and exemplary religious teachers in different contexts.⁷

These vary from monasteries to deserts in the cases of Eugenia and Mary of Egypt. There are many others which follow a similar formula of word use which suggests that female saints have their own stock representations as teachers. A similar lexical analysis might provide useful insight into the representations of women’s sainthood and education.

My methodology showed one way to collect data on word use, but there are others. Although my research utilised recent databases and online tools for collecting and analysing sections of

⁵ See my Introduction, p. 59.

⁶ Joseph Bosworth, ‘CYÐAN’, *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary Online*, ed. Thomas Northcote Toller et al., Faculty of Arts, Charles University (2014), <<https://bosworthtoller.com/7294>> [Accessed 29/09/2022]. Also see Cameron et al, ‘cyþan’, *Dictionary of Old English: A to I online*, <https://tapor-library-utoronto-ca.nottingham.idm.oclc.org/doi/>.

⁷ Examples include Juliana, Æthelthryth, Mildgyth, Eugenia, Mary of Egypt, The Virgin Mary, Margaret, and Euphrosyne.

text for linguistic purposes, new resources are available which could improve process of examining large quantities of texts. Corpus-based analyses of groups of words is an effective way of gauging different perceptions of women in various roles, but its potential has not yet been recognised in this area. My examination offers a glimpse of possibilities rather than definitive information on women as teachers and learners. It leaves the door open for further investigations which could use the newest technologies and different focal points to explore women in early medieval texts.

Appendix

List of Old English Texts: ‘Genres’ and ‘Forms’

Below, I clarify my categorisation of Old English texts used in my research by genre and form, as mentioned in the introduction. Texts can fall under more than one category, such as homilies written in poetic form, however, I chose to collate texts as detailed below in order to focus on themes and audience rather than form.

Poetry	<i>Elene</i> <i>Genesis A/B</i> <i>Julianna</i> <i>The Menologium</i> <i>The Husband's Message</i>
Prose	The Old English Translation of <i>Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum</i> The Old English translation of Gregory the Great's <i>Dialogues</i> <i>Apollonius of Tyre</i> The Old English Translation of Paulus Orosius' <i>Historiarum Adversum Paganos</i> , Book IV. The Old English translation of Gregory the Great's <i>Pastoral Care</i> <i>Exeter - List of Relics</i> An Account of King Edgar's Establishment of Monasteries <i>Joshua</i> (London, British Library, MS. Cotton Claudius B.IV) <i>The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, A</i>
Saints Lives	<i>Kentish Royal Legend</i> <i>Martyrology</i> (London, British Library, MS. Cotton Julius A.X)

	<i>Old English Martyrology</i> <i>Vitae Patrum</i> <u>Hagiography by Ælfric of Eynsham:</u> <i>The Book of Kings</i> <i>The Life of St Aethelthryth</i> <i>The Life of St Agatha</i> <i>The Life of St Agnes</i> <i>The Life of St Cecilia</i> <i>Passion of Saint Chrysanthus and his Wife Daria</i> <i>The Life of St Eugenia</i> <i>The Life of St Thomas</i> <i>The Life of St Vincent</i> <i>The Life of St Euphrosyne</i> <i>The Maccabees</i> <u>Anonymous:</u> <i>The Life of Saint Mildred</i> <i>The Life of St Margaret</i> <i>The Life of St Mary of Egypt</i> <i>The Life of St Mildred</i> <i>The Life of St Mildrythe</i>
Homilies	<i>The Invention of the Cross</i> <i>In Sabbato sancto</i> (Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Bodley 340) <i>Blickling Homily 1</i> <i>Ælfric's All Saints</i>

	Wulfstan's <i>De temporibus Anticristi</i> <i>Nativity of Mary the Virgin</i> (Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Hatton 114) <i>Homily for the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary</i> <i>Nativity of Mary the Virgin</i> (Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Bodley 343) Ælfric's <i>Dedicatio ecclesiae</i> Ælfric's <i>Dominica XII post octavas</i> <i>Blickling Homily no. 10</i> <i>Easter Day</i> <i>Mage we gyt her gehyran. men þa leofostan. eowre sawle þearfe</i> (MS. Cambridge, U.L. Ii.1.33). <i>Peter and Paul</i> (<i>Blickling Homilies</i>) <i>An Outline of History</i> (attributed to Wulfstan) Ælfric's <i>Annunciation</i> Ælfric's <i>Second Sunday in Lent</i> Ælfric's <i>Purification</i> <i>Judith</i> (<i>Homily</i>)
Legal	<i>Cartularium Saxonicum</i> <i>Dispute between Wynflæd and Leofwine</i>
Instructional	<i>The Rule of St Benedict</i>, Wintoneney Version <i>Penitential of Pseudo-Egbert</i> Wulfstan's <i>Institutes of Polity</i> Ælfric's <i>Grammar and Gloss</i> <i>Handbook for the Use of a Confessor</i> <i>Prognostics</i> <i>Canons of Edgar</i> (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS. 201).

	<i>Capitula</i> (Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Bodley 865). <i>Poenitntiale Theodori and Capitula d'Acheriana</i>
Gospels	<i>The Lindisfarne Gospels</i>

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