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Anglo-Saxon Women: The Art of Concealment*

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The tomb of the Anglo-Saxon saint, Cuthbert, which had remained behind the high altar in Durham Cathedral since the construction of the building in 1104, was excavated in 1827.¹ St Cuthbert, a Northumbrian ascetic, had died in 687, but his shrine subsequently became a cult centre, and his coffin was opened on a number of occasions when relics were removed and precious gifts added.² The nineteenth-century excavation revealed the remains of textiles which had encased the saint's body in ever-increasing layers of expensive shrouding over several hundred years of devotion. The most sumptuous were a silk stole and maniple, lavishly embroidered in coloured silks and spun gold (filé thread made by winding a gold lamella round a silk core). These matching vestments have become landmarks in Art History and Textile History.³ The stole is embroidered on the front with elegant, full-length depictions of named Old Testament prophets flanking a central motif of the hand of God; busts of Thomas and James, saints of the extreme east and west, occupy the terminals. The maniple is decorated on the front with the figures of two popes and their deacons, again all named, and flanking the hand of God. The terminals here are also distinctive, with busts of St John the Baptist and St John the Evangelist, the predecessor and successor of Christ. The backs of the stole and maniple are plain, apart from the terminals. However, on the reverses of these terminals are embroidered inscriptions: one end carries the words *ÆLFFLÆD FIERI PRECEPIT* 'Ælflæd had [this] made', and the other *PIO EPISCOPO FRIDESTANO*, 'for pious Bishop Frithestan'.⁴ The texts give a secure historical context for the vestments. Though the language is Latin, the letters ash (Æ) and eth (Ð) are derived from the Old English alphabet. Both Ælflæd and Frithestan are known persons whose identification confirms an English provenance for the embroideries and provides close dating. Ælflæd was the second wife of the Anglo-Saxon king Edward the Elder;⁵ she was dead, or at least out of favour, by about 919, when Edward remarried. Frithestan was bishop of Winchester, the royal and ecclesiastical centre of Wessex, from 909 to 931. The embroideries, then, must have

been commissioned in the decade between 909 when Frithestan became bishop and 919 when Ælfflæd was no longer in the position of royal patron. The vestments were almost certainly given to the shrine of St Cuthbert by Ælfflæd's stepson, King Athelstan, who visited the cult centre at its temporary base in Chester-le-Street in about 934, when, it is recorded, he presented several gifts, including a stole and maniple.⁶

The reverse-side inscriptions are very important to scholars of our own era. They localise the vestments in southern England, and in supplying a fairly precise date in the early tenth century, demonstrate that the Anglo-Saxon Winchester Style, with its characteristic windswept-looking garments and its use of acanthus leaf ornament, was already well developed in England long before the making of the most famous manuscripts that manifest it, such as *The Benedictional of St Æthelwold*; and that *opus anglicanum*, the gold embroidery for which England was famous in the later Middle Ages, had already reached a high level of sophistication in the Anglo-Saxon period. What, though, did the inscription of her name signify for Ælfflæd?

In the Anglo-Saxon era literacy was restricted, therefore the inclusion of text on an artefact was a somewhat esoteric act. If the text included the name of, for example, a prophet or archangel who was depicted on the artefact without distinguishing mark, the text was potentially informative and instructive. There are examples among the Cuthbert relics: the seventh-century reliquary coffin which has named archangels and apostles incised into the oak,⁷ and the embroidered stole with its series of prophets. The incorporation into a decorative scheme of the name of a contemporary person, however, whether owner, donor, maker, or the recipient of prayer, was an extravagant addition, unnecessary to understanding the iconography of the artefact, an addition which would not be undertaken without thought since it entailed additional expertise, labour and expense. Such names were generally depicted in the same techniques as the primary decoration.⁸ The gold and silk of the Cuthbert vestments⁸ were particularly elite raw materials.

Vestments inscribed with the name of a royal patron would carry regal prestige to the wearer. The giver of them might also expect some benefit of a more spiritual kind: in general terms, the gift of a precious object to the Church was made for the good of one's soul, but more specifically the presence of the donor's name meant that every time the bishop vested in the garments he would see the name of Ælfflæd and would probably pray for her;⁹ and her name would be close to his body as he carried out the holy rites. However, the queen gained an even greater sanctity than she might have expected: the stole and maniple, in being placed in a reliquary, became *brandea* – cloths sanctified by proximity to the holy relics. Ælfflæd's name was to spend nine

hundred years close to the body of one of Anglo-Saxon England's premier saints.

Names are not common on Anglo-Saxon artefacts¹⁰ and it is noticeable that, where these are women's names,¹¹ they are sometimes, like Ælfflæd's, on the back. Is this coincidence, or does it reflect a deliberate suppression of the female names? Is the situation any different with male names, which appear far more frequently than female?¹² These questions will be considered here in a series of case studies.

Men's names, it seems, are usually depicted where they can, or could, be seen. The names of owners and donors are, not surprisingly, particularly prominent. The name *ETHELVVLF*FRX, 'Ethelwulf R[e]x' is inscribed in a panel on the bezel on the front of a finger ring, where it is clearly visible.¹³ The inscription is an integrated part of the ornament, sharing the materials – gold and niello – and the decorative techniques of the triangular zone above it, which has an ornamental, possibly Christian, design of birds and plant. Ethelwulf was the name of a ninth-century King of Wessex (reigned 828-58),¹⁴ the father of the more famous Alfred the Great (see below). It is supposed by art historians that the king was the donor, rather than the owner of the ring, in which case the wearer would carry the prestige of bearing the king's gift visible to all who could read it.

Although the name of a man may appear on what seems to us a secondary surface of an object, the text can be both decorative and authoritative. The Alfred Jewel is a gold and enamel terminal which was probably once mounted on a slim rod.¹⁵ The front face is decorated with part of a human figure, depicted in cloisonné enamel beneath a covering of rock crystal, and the back with an incised plant design in gold; but round the curving sides of the pear-shaped plaque is an inscription in Old English: *AELFRED MEC HEHT GEWYRCAN*, 'Alfred ordered me to be made'. The object is generally, if not certainly, associated with King Alfred of Wessex (reigned 871-99), who was not only famous for coming to terms with the Vikings, but also for instituting educational reform and establishing written English as a literary language. The inclusion of the name 'Alfred', and the choice of the English language for the inscription could link the object with Alfred's programme of translating classic Latin works into the vernacular. The gold, scarce in later Anglo-Saxon England, suggests high prestige patronage. The Jewel was discovered only four miles from Athelney, a place particularly associated with King Alfred. (This marshy area was where Alfred went into hiding in 878, the worst period of his conflict with the Vikings.) The King built a monastery at Athelney in gratitude for his victory and the Jewel could have been part of his endowment. The iconography of the plaque, with a human figure that may represent the Sense of Sight, and hence 'Insight' or 'Wisdom', is an emblem

appropriate to King Alfred, a scholarly and philosophical man, who mentions, in the preface to his English translation of St Gregory's *Pastoral Care*, that a valuable object which he calls an *æstel* will accompany every copy of the book sent out to his bishops. Though the purpose and appearance of an *æstel* cannot be identified with certainty, there are several reasons to suggest it may have been a pointer for reading, which would also protect a precious book from the soiling effect of hands.¹⁶ If the Alfred Jewel is the handle of an *æstel* of this kind we can see how the name of the king, inscribed in gold letters, would inspire the recipient and function as a propaganda device, promoting Alfred's educational reform programme.

It seems to have been particularly desirable for a man to have his name inscribed on fighting equipment. The first example I would like to consider is a helmet found at Coppergate in York.¹⁷ This is a rare object, one of only four surviving Anglo-Saxon helmets. They are all different, but it may be no coincidence that they all bear religious emblems, either pagan, or Christian, or in one case, both.¹⁸ The Coppergate helmet, which is the latest in the series, dating to the second half of the eighth century, carries a repeated inscription consisting of Latin words, some abbreviated, which can be expanded and translated into a prayer: 'In the name of Lord Jesus, the Holy Spirit, God and with all we say Amen.' There follow the name *OSHERE* and *XPI*, 'Christ'. The inscription is much more obscure than might appear from conventional photographs.¹⁹ The words are set into sunken panels which run from front to back and from side to side of the helmet in a cruciform arrangement, and hence much of the inscription is separated from the main decorative area, which is the face-mask. Because of its position over the top of the helmet, the writing would not have been readable when the object was on the head of an adult man, though part of it would have been visible. The message is encrypted, either deliberately or inadvertently, in that the front-to-back strip letters are set sideways, the left-to-right inscription is not in sequence and the two parts have their letters facing in different directions; also the inscription is retrograde.²⁰

Three of the long, iron fighting knives known by the Old English name *seax* or *scramasax*, a mid to late Anglo-Saxon weapon-type, have inlaid decoration which includes a personal name. A *seax* found in the River Thames at Battersea, London, inlaid with silver, copper and brass wire, has a 28-letter Anglo-Saxon runic alphabet and the personal name *Beagnoþ*, also in runes, inlaid on one face.²¹ Runic writing is an angular script, designed to be carved into things, cut into wood or engraved into metal, and may have carried a recondite significance different from that of Roman script: the Old English word *run* means 'secret'.²² Although runic letters were in existence in England before the conversion to Christianity, the pagan Anglo-Saxons

had tended to use them as isolated symbols such as the arrow-shaped *Tyr*, the name of a war-god,²³ or in short and unintelligible strings.²⁴ The custom of using letters to spell out text is, in England, a development of the Christian era.²⁵ Ironically, the pre-Christian runes are used alongside or instead of Roman letters, even for Christian purposes.²⁶ The use of runes gives an esoteric, probably protective, aura to the Battersea *seax*. Though the name could not be read by any except the runically literate, the lettering comprises the major part of the ornament. Even if the owner carried the knife in a sheath which concealed the blade,²⁷ the decorative inscription would have been clearly visible as the object was held in the hand, either in its primary function as a fighting weapon or on other occasions we might imagine, when it would be used for practice and demonstration, when it was being polished, and at social occasions where it was likely to be handed around for admiration and comparison.

Another name-bearing fighting knife, a *seax* from Sittingbourne, Kent, has inlaid decorative panels of silver, copper, brass and niello.²⁸ Most of them are ornamental, with acanthus leaves and interlace, but each side of the knife includes panels inscribed in Old English, one proclaiming *S GEBEREHT ME AH* 'S[i]gbert owns me',²⁹ the other *BIORHTHELM ME WORHTE*, 'Biorhthelm made me'.³⁰ We see a pride in the ownership of a fine weapon by a man consciously promoting his image as warrior; and pride in the craftsmanship of the skilled smith who created it.³¹ Another inlaid knife, from the River Thames at Putney, bears the name *Osmund*.³²

The Brussels Cross, an eleventh-century reliquary made to hold a piece of the so-called 'True Cross' on which Jesus Christ was believed to have been crucified, bears four personal names. Like the Alfred Jewel it has an inscription in Old English round the side, less prominent than that of the Jewel, but nevertheless visible and expensively executed in silver and niello.³³ The words include some poetic phrases on the crucifixion similar to words on The Ruthwell Cross and in *The Dream of the Rood*, together with *PAS RODE HET ÆPELMÆR WYRICAN 7 ÆDELWOLD HYS BEROPO[R] CRISTE TO LOFE FOR ÆLFRICES SAVLE HYRA BEROPOR*, 'Athelmer and his brother Athelwold ordered this cross to be made for the glory of Christ for the soul of their brother Ælfric'. The names of patron/donors and the deceased Ælfric would surely be seen by every cleric who handled the cross, and the brothers would be prayed for. The name of the maker, like the maker of the Sittingbourne *seax* clearly a skilled smith, is inscribed on the back of the cross: *DRAHMAL ME WORHTE*, 'Drahmal made me'. Though the reverse was not as magnificent as the front, which though now damaged was originally jewelled, it is still fairly lavish, the oak wood core being covered with silver sheeting which is partially gilded. The back of the cross has its own iconographic programme including

the four Evangelists and the Lamb of God holding the Book of Judgement, and was probably displayed on some occasions, even used for teaching. If the cross was carried in procession,³⁴ the jewelled front would be visible to the congregation but the instructive back would be seen by the processing clergy following the cross bearer.

It seems that normally the proper place for the name of a craftsman, like the moneyer who struck coins, was the reverse of an artefact,³⁵ but makers' names, which are always masculine, could be ornamental or appear on a decorated surface. Arguably, the backs of the the Brussels Cross and the Sittingbourne *seax* were meant to be seen, but made to appeal to different audiences from the fronts. The back of the Brussels Cross bears a highly intellectual programme. In the case of the *seax*, though the decorative areas on each side are of similar size and shape, the maker's name is written larger and more clearly than the owner's, filling the decorative space, while the owner's shares its space with panels of ornament. The maker's side is attractive to a more literate eye.

The name of Bishop Frithestan, which shares the invisible position of Queen Ælflæd's on the Cuthbert vestments, is, so far as I have been able to ascertain, unique in identifying the recipient of a gift. The bishop must have gained prestige from the dedication, and might have expected to benefit from the prayers of others who wore the vestments after his death. This perhaps did not happen. The fact that Athelstan was able to give them to the shrine of St Cuthbert suggests that the royal house reclaimed the gift from the Winchester minster.

As we have seen, male names, though visible, are sometimes cryptic; but if the names *Beagnop* on the *seax* and *Oshere* on the helmet are deliberately made secret, they are open secrets, puzzles inviting interpretation. There is a different kind of secrecy in the presence of a woman's name inscribed *inside* a gold and niello finger ring.³⁶ The ring is decorated with the Christian emblem of the *Agnus Dei*, 'The Lamb of God', in ninth-century style on its bezel. Lightly incised on the back of the bezel is the Old English-Latin inscription *EAEDELSVID REG[I]JNA* 'Queen Ethelswith', the name and title of a queen of Mercia (853-88), wife of King Burgred. Ethelswith belonged to the Wessex royal house which displayed a fondness for exhibiting personal names; she was King Alfred's sister and the daughter of King Ethelwulf.

At 2.6 cm the diameter of the ring is rather large for a woman's finger, but it could have fitted the thumb.³⁷ Whoever wore it, the inscription was hidden against the body, a private message for the wearer like the initials which are sometimes engraved inside a wedding ring today. The name and title are neatly and competently inscribed, but not ornamental. Was the ring essentially personal, Ethelswith's own possession

recording her marriage and resultant queenship? She must, surely, have had more spectacular manifestations of status than this. If, on the other hand, she was named as donor, the inscription might have been added to a pre-existing ring in the only possible space on the occasion of the gift.³⁸ In this position it lacked the force of the inscription on Ethelwulf's ring, and any added value and authority could only be made public by removal of the ring.

An engraved silver brooch from Sutton, Isle of Ely, dated to the eleventh century by its combination of late Viking and Anglo-Saxon decorative motifs, has a prayer and a curse against theft engraved on the back.³⁹ The words comprise two kinds of poetry, first an alliterative line in typical Old English style: *ÆDVWEN ME AG AGE HYO DRIHTEN*, 'Ædwen owns me, may the Lord own her'. (The use of the feminine pronoun *hyo* identifies Ædwen as female.) This is followed by two lines which rhyme: *DRIHTEN HINE AWERIE DE ME HIRE ÆTFERIE/ BVTON HYO ME SELLE HIRE AGENES WILLES*, 'May the Lord curse him who takes me from her, unless she gives me of her own will'. It is hard to imagine that anyone would want to steal such an ugly brooch, which is a degenerate in style and inferior in workmanship, though its design is intriguing, with the head of one of the quadrupeds doubling as a grotesque human face. The brooch is extremely big, however, considerably larger than earlier, more tasteful examples of the silver disc brooch type, and no doubt had considerable bullion value.⁴⁰ Similar statements of ownership-plus-curse occur in Latin and Old English wills.⁴¹ Ædwen cunningly attaches the deterrent formula to the precious object itself. We do not have to imagine a literate thief suddenly paralysed with fear when he turns the brooch over. The poetry is surely a protective charm secretly guarding the object, for the security of its owner.

A seal is a public statement of authority, functioning similarly in some respects to a name-bearing ring, but the seal is attached to a document and augmented in some cases by a portrait of the signatory. Most surviving seals and seal dies from the Anglo-Saxon period belonged to men, but I would like to consider one bearing a woman's name.⁴² It carries the inscription *SIGILLVM GODGYDE MONACHE D[E]O⁴³ DATE*, 'The seal of Godgytha, a nun given to God'. However, this seal-die is two-sided: the other face of the ivory matrix is the mould for another seal, bearing the name and image of a man, Godwin. The Godwin image is related to a well-known coin type of King Harthacnut, which dates it to the mid-eleventh century. There has been some attempt to establish Godgytha's side as the earlier, and hence the primary face, mainly on stylistic grounds, but the argument that she wears the fluttering draperies of the tenth-century Winchester Style is unacceptable. The engraving of the nun, who carries a book and has her right hand raised, is certainly not dissimilar in

positioning to the tenth-century painting of St Etheldreda in *The Benedictional of St Ethelwold*,⁴⁴ even to the spread fingers, and it is probably a standard image, but it is not characteristic of the Winchester Style. The projections beneath the figure's elbows are not floaty garments but a cushion, and though folds of the dress are shown, they are quite firmly depicted and lack the typical windswept look. There is one oddity about the depiction: Godgytha is bare headed. All the models of a holy woman in late Anglo-Saxon art would have shown her with covered head,⁴⁵ and it is one of the established facts of Anglo-Saxon costume history that nuns wore veils and veils were associated with nuns.⁴⁶ Was the seal carver so used to depicting bareheaded men that he began with the same spiky hair as Godwin, later modifying it to suggest long hair, loose or braided? Was the artist unaware that he was depicting a nun? Whatever the reason, the result is that Godgytha is *décoiffée*, a style shared only by personified Vices and immoral women. Her portrait, then, is presumably incorrect as well as lightly incised and clumsy. Godwin's image is more boldly carved, his lettering more expert; above all, the finely carved handle with its depiction of the Trinity is on Godwin's side of the matrix. His seal die is artistically superior to Godgytha's which suggests it was the primary carving. The ivory is walrus tusk from the Scandinavian seas. This material would have been rare and expensive. Does this explain why Godgytha's seal is on the back of Godwin's? Was it an economy measure to re-use an ivory matrix; or was the reason that, seals of women being apparently uncommon, Godgytha's juxtaposition to Godwin lent her authority? Perhaps he was her late father or husband – many Anglo-Saxon widows became nuns – and if so she may have literally inherited his status, which the re-use of his seal die represented.

In fact propinquity is a common element in all our case studies of inscribed women's names so far: Godgytha may have taken status from the relationship of her name to Godwin's; in the cases of the jewellery and vestments, propinquity of the inscriptions to the wearer was significant and in the cases of the ring and the vestments, proximity also to the religious emblems on the outer face. The names on the ring and the vestments may have carried regal prestige to the wearer, and the vestments might also, when worn by a celebrant, have transmitted blessedness to the patron. Propinquity does not, however, explain why the only Anglo-Saxon coins bearing the name of a woman – Cynethryth, Offa's queen – carry it on the reverse.⁴⁷ Anglo-Saxon coins normally carry the name and portrait of the king on the obverse and that of the moneyer who struck them on the reverse. When King Offa of Mercia (reigned 757-96) followed Roman or Byzantine⁴⁸ practice and had coins struck in the name of his queen, the name on the obverse (the 'portrait' side) was that of Offa's moneyer Eoba. The coins uniquely honour Cynethryth – she was, as far as we know,

the only Anglo-Saxon queen consort to have her own coinage – but keep her in secondary position. Can we deduce that, despite the popular modern belief that Anglo-Saxon women had greater status than their Norman successors,⁴⁹ even the most rich and powerful were deliberately subordinated? There is an obvious practical explanation for the placing of the names in that the rather long word 'Cynethryth' would not fit round the large bust chosen for the obverse of the coin,⁵⁰ but the shorter name of the moneyer slotted in there neatly. Whatever the reason, the result is the elevation of the name of the male moneyer in relation to the queen.

Women's names then are frequently consigned to the back. In searching for Anglo-Saxon artefacts with women's names on the major face I found some of the evidence ambiguous. Some of the earliest Anglo-Saxon examples of written names are on grave-stones in the cemeteries of early Northumbrian monasteries and convents. In the cemetery of the convent at Hartlepool, County Durham, there were several of these stones, small rectangular slabs apparently intended to be laid flat, each incised on one face with a cross and a woman's name, such as *Hildithryth*, *Hildigyth* and *Berchtgyd*.⁵¹ However, the nineteenth-century excavators recorded that the stones were found buried in the graves, rather than resting on the surface, an observation supported by the lack of weathering on the slabs.⁵² If the record is correct, though the names are on the major face of the artefact, they are another example of the woman's name being hidden.⁵³

Why should the name be placed in the grave? Possibly for certain identification in case of exhumation. Both St Cuthbert, a Northumbrian bishop, and St Etheldreda, at one time a Northumbrian queen, were exhumed some years after burial when their bodies were found to be miraculously incorrupt. Both had led extremely ascetic lives and proof of sanctity was probably anticipated when they were exhumed. Perhaps the Hartlepool abbesses (if this is what they were) were also candidates for sainthood which was not pursued. There is another alternative, that these names were not written for the human eye to read, but for God on the Day of Judgement.

There are several name-bearing memorial stones from Lindisfarne, Northumberland, the site of the famous monastery of which St Cuthbert was once bishop, mostly carrying male names. One, rather surprisingly in this masculine context, is inscribed with a woman's name, *Osgyð*, which is written twice, once in runes, and below in Anglo-Saxon capitals. This stone is round-headed like traditional Egyptian *stelae*, and as exhibited, looks like an upright grave marker; but interestingly, Dominic Tweddle finds these Lindisfarne stones 'remarkably small and thin. If they stood upright . . . they must have been partially sunken into the ground, obscuring part of the decoration. Alternatively they may have been laid on the ground

over the grave . . . or actually in the grave as [apparently at] Hartlepool'.⁵⁴ If this stone were partially buried to keep it upright, the lower version of the name would be obscured; if laid flat in the grave, both versions would have been hidden.

Female names inscribed on free-standing crosses are or were visible, since the viewer could walk round the sculpture and view all sides; but female names seem to be separated from the primary face, that is, the face with figural sculpture. The almost-complete, eighth-century cross at Bewcastle, Cumbria, has the female name *KYNIBURUG* as one of two single-line runic inscriptions on the north face, which at the present day is the least noticeable side since it is adjacent to the church building. The obvious principal face, which has three panels of figure-sculpture, is much more extensively inscribed and has been claimed to include names of men significant in Northumbrian history, including sub-king Alcfrith, whose wife was named Cyniburg, which gives a tentative identification for *KYNIBURUG*. However the authenticity and interpretation of the long inscription, and hence the identity of the woman named, has been much disputed.⁵⁵

A fragmentary, eighth- or ninth-century cross shaft from Hackness, East Yorkshire, carries what may be a female portrait on one face and on two other faces Latin inscriptions commemorating Abbess *OEDILBURGA*, as 'blessed forever' and 'most loving mother'.⁵⁶ Again a royal association has been suggested: Carol Farr plausibly argues that the woman named should be identified with Ethelburga, who brought Christianity to Northumbria from Kent on her marriage to King Edwin in 625, and who founded England's first nunnery at Lyminge in Kent on her widowhood in 633. Her descendants were distinguished abbesses at the famous convent of Whitby. Hackness was the site of a nunnery which was a daughter-house of Whitby, founded by St Hilda in 680.

Elisabeth Okasha notes an 'oddly positioned' Latin text containing a woman's name ('here lies the body of Fri[ð]burg, buried in peace') 'set in [a] panel in [the] thickness over [the round] head' on a later, southern piece of sculpture which has a decorated front. The stone, at Whitchurch, Hampshire, is dated ninth- to eleventh-century.⁵⁷

Only a small number of women's names appear on the primary face of an artefact and sometimes these appear in company with male names. *Aethelgyth* is written with six other names, certainly or probably male, on a lead memorial plate, Flixborough II, South Humberside;⁵⁸ and the soul of the deceased *Gvnwaru* is mentioned in an inscription commemorating *Vlf's* erection of a church at Aldborough, East Yorkshire.⁵⁹ Women's names appearing alone on the primary face of any artefact are rare. There are two, probably female, names⁶⁰ that appear alone

engraved round the hoops of finger rings,⁶¹ respectively, *BVREDRVD* and the sentence beginning *EAWEN MIE AH* 'Eawen owns me'. These names are not recorded elsewhere and nothing further is known of these persons.

A better-known name is recorded in a border inscription reading *ÆLFGIVV ME AH*, 'Ælfgifu owns me' on a small, silver disc from Cuxton, Kent. The function of the object, which has a central, openwork motif of a bird of prey clutching a smaller creature, is not clear.⁶² Ælfgifu, or Ælfgifu, was the name of both an Anglo-Saxon queen and a royal mistress who enjoyed high status in the early eleventh century and who have inspired modern scholarly interest, particularly since the rise of feminist studies.⁶³ Queen Ælfgifu, who was of Norman birth and originally called Emma, took the English name Ælfgifu on her first marriage, in 1002, to King Ethelred ('the Unready'). Her second husband was the Viking usurper, King Cnut. She was the mother of two kings, Harthacnut and Edward the Confessor. She witnessed charters, was a patron of the church and, uniquely among English queens, appeared in a portrait miniature with her husband, King Cnut, where, incidentally her name is written, not so neatly or prominently as her husband's, but nevertheless very clearly recorded.⁶⁴ She commissioned a book, the *Encomium Emmae Reginae*, about herself, Cnut and her sons. She lived a very long time (died 1052) and was extremely wealthy. The other famous Ælfgifu was her rival, 'Ælfgifu of Northampton', King Cnut's mistress, mother of his son King Harold I ('Harefoot'), and regent for him in the kingdom of Norway. It might be either of these women who was still the subject of animated discussion in the 1060s, as depicted in the Bayeux 'Tapestry'.⁶⁵ It is tempting to link the named silver disc, like the named Hackness sculpture, with one of these unusually prominent and powerful women, but this probably stretches coincidence too far. If we accept David Wilson's dating of the disc to the tenth century,⁶⁶ it is a little early to be associated with the very famous ladies called Ælfgifu. However, recent research by Simon Keynes and Catherine Karkov makes it clear that Ælfgifu was a popular royal name in the tenth century, which appears repeatedly in the family tree of West Saxon monarchs.⁶⁷ Emma of Normandy would have been given this name on her marriage into the Wessex royal family specifically because it carried prestige. Therefore although the object may not have been associated with one of the figures who is still famous now, it may have belonged to a rich and well-born woman, perhaps a queen consort, who was important in her own day.

These openly displayed, isolated, names of women, *Ælfgivv* on a silver disc, and the more obscure *Bvredrvð* and *Eawen* on finger-rings, are in the minority. The names of others, [Queen] Ælflæd, Queen Ethelswith and Ædvwen were inscribed on artefacts only to be concealed. The names of Godgytha and [Queen] Cynethryth were

consigned to the reverse faces of objects bearing men's names on the other side. Perhaps these women did not need or choose to display their names; yet they were written. The less certain cases of the recumbent grave stones, which might have been buried in the earth, similarly give mixed messages. The very purpose of inscribing the name of a dead person is to ensure that he or she be remembered; but burying the name suggests the person does not seek worldly fame. The names of *Oedilburga* and *Kyniburug* were written on the sides of the cross-shafts which commemorate them and *Friðburg* over the top of her memorial stone; was it not considered proper to inscribe them on the principal face?

What does the corpus of female names and the fact that so many of them were inscribed only to be concealed add to the debate about the status of women in the Anglo-Saxon world? The little we know about the lives of Ælflæd, Ethelswith and Cynethryth is because of their associations with kings. Christine Fell notes that Hildithryth, Hildigyth, Oedilburga and a Cyniburg are listed as women 'who should be remembered at the altar' in the ninth-century Lindisfarne/Durham *Liber Vitae*⁶⁸ but we cannot know if it was their saintliness or their benefaction which earned them this place. We know nothing of Ædwen and Godgytha. The male names of Anglo-Saxon history were openly recorded in high-profile works by historians such as Bede, Asser and a succession of chroniclers. Female names recorded by Bede reflect his subject matter of ecclesiastical history, such as Queen Ethelburga, St Hilda, St Etheldreda and her sister Seaxburg. Women simply do not feature in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* and it is only Queen Emma and Queen Edith, who commissioned texts, who are really well known from the late Anglo-Saxon period. Recovering the names of women and their contributions to history is far from straightforward, but we now recognise the energetic contribution women made to the establishment of the Anglo-Saxon Church and its missionary houses,⁶⁹ the feminine 'dynasties' in early nunneries⁷⁰ and the role of the queen in post-Benedictine Reform religious life.⁷¹ We know of Æthelflæd, Lady of the Mercians, because she took on a man's role on behalf of her husband and in support of her brother King Edward the Elder of Wessex.⁷² Information about women as property owners can be teased out of documents such as wills and records of land grants and law suits.⁷³ On the whole, however, the day to day life of women remains obscure. Elisabeth Okasha notes the lack of inscriptions commemorating female commissioners of churches, memorial stones and other objects, and that this absence is inconsistent with the documentary evidence for female founders of religious houses and commissioners of churches.⁷⁴ Her conclusion points to an Anglo-Saxon world in which women were neither assertive⁷⁵ nor oppressed, but one in which 'depressingly . . . male interests were paramount and where women and their rôles were drawn and

delimited through male eyes and from a male perspective'.⁷⁶

I see the evidence of female names, albeit concealed, in more positive terms. The men whose names were crafted into weapons and other artefacts were, in different degrees, public figures: monarchs, warriors or skilled smiths whose inscribed names might inspire, intimidate or demonstrate their renown. These were probably not roles that Ælfflæd and our other subjects aspired to. Yet the very fact that the woman's name was inscribed, unseen but readily revealed for authority or protection, indicates a power and self-recognition in these women, which is otherwise hidden from history.

Godgytha, though 'a nun consecrated to God' must have had considerable worldly responsibility and regular communication with distant people if she required a personal seal matrix, a category of object more often associated with high-ranking men. Was she an unusual, even controversial woman? Ælfflæd was not only religious enough to give expensive vestments to the Church, she was also a discriminating patron who commissioned a great work of art, in the forefront of western European fashion. Ædvwun, too, was a wealthy patron of the arts, though her designer's achievement is less than great. Ædvwun commissioned a poetic inscription for her brooch, a text that reveals her piety and faith in the protective power of the almighty against the theft of her secular jewellery. The Trewhiddle Style *Agnus Dei* ring shows us that, in the ninth-century court circle of Queen Ethelwun, religion could be combined with expensive elegance, a far cry from the rather grim asceticism Bede ascribes to St Etheldreda two centuries before. Thus these objects with their discreet names have much to tell us if we are willing to listen.

NOTES

*This essay developed from a conference paper, 'The hidden name of woman: invisible Anglo-Saxons', read at a session titled 'The Spectatorship of Knowledge: Invisible and Illegible in Late Roman and Medieval Art' sponsored by The International Center of Medieval Art at the 89th College Art Association Conference held in Chicago in March 2001. I am grateful to the session organizers, Genevra Kornbluth and Carol Neuman de Vegvar, for their helpful suggestions and to the Kress Foundation for a travel award. An expanded version of the paper, under the present title, was given as a public lecture at Texas Woman's University in May 2001. The lively questions and discussion which followed have to some extent directed the present version, and I would like to express my appreciation for that input. I am also grateful to Elisabeth Okasha who read the revised paper in typescript and made several useful criticisms and suggestions.

¹ Unlike the disputed resting places of other Anglo-Saxon saints, St Cuthbert's is 'generally accepted'; John Crook, 'The architectural setting of the cult of St Cuthbert in Durham Cathedral (1093-1200),' *Anglo-Norman Durham 1093-1193*, ed. by David Rollason, Margaret Hervey and Michael Prestwich (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1994), pp. 235-50 (p. 235).

² The coffin was certainly or probably opened on the following documented occasions. The body was revested at the first translation of 698. The relics of other saints were added at the evacuation of Lindisfarne in 875. The tomb was possibly opened for the future Edward the Elder some time before King Alfred's death in 899 and certainly for Athelstan in 934 and perhaps on another occasion; also for Edmund in 944 or 945. Eadred (reigned 946-55) also visited the shrine. A distinguished southern cleric, probably Bishop Ælfwold of Sherborne, visited and allegedly conversed with the saint in the tenth century. The relic-collecting priest Ælfred Westou opened it in the eleventh century, adding the remains of St Bede and probably a mitre. The tomb was opened at the translation of 1104 and ransacked at the Reformation, probably in 1539. It was opened in 1827 and re-examined in 1899; *The Relics of St. Cuthbert* ed. by C. F. Battiscombe (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1956), pp. 2-114. The finds are treated in detail in this volume. See also *St Cuthbert, his Cult and his Community to AD 1200*, ed. by Gerald Bonner, David Rollason and Clare Stancliffe (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1989). The vestments are in Durham Cathedral, England. All other artefacts discussed in this paper are in the British Museum, London, England, unless otherwise stated.

³ R. Freyhan, 'The place of the stole and maniples in Anglo-Saxon art of the tenth century,' in Battiscombe, pp. 409-32, pls XXXIII-XXXIV.

⁴ The inscriptions on stole and maniple are not identical. The letters are set out differently, but the words are the same.

⁵ The identification was made by Raine, witness to the excavation. Battiscombe's alternative suggestion of Ælflæd, or Æthelflæd, Lady of the Mercians (p.13 note 3), has not received support.

⁶ Athelstan's benefactions including *I stolam cum manipulo* were recorded in the anonymous *Historia de sancto Cuthberto* (Section 26); *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto*, ed. by Ted Johnson South (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2002), p. 64. The text is also printed in *Symeonis monachi Opera omnia*, ed. by T. Arnold, Rolls Series (2 vols, London: Longman, 1882-85), 1, 211 and translated in Battiscombe, p. 33.

⁷ 'In Mediterranean art, from the fifth century onwards, the figures of the twelve apostles were frequently inscribed with their names'; Ernst Kitzinger, 'The Coffin Reliquary', in Battiscombe, pp. 202-304 (p. 268). On Cuthbert's coffin only SS Peter and Paul are distinguished iconographically. The naming may occasionally seem tautologous, for example on the stone carving, Ipswich I, in the church of St Nicholas, Ipswich, Suffolk, where St Michael and the dragon are named in addition to the descriptive sentence 'Here St Michael fights (or fought) against the dragon' (Elisabeth Okasha, *Hand-List of Anglo-Saxon Non-Runic Inscriptions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), No. 58, pp. 82-83, pl. 58), but generally it would act as a trigger to anyone who did not immediately recognize the characters from the graphics.

⁸ See Elisabeth Okasha, 'The commissioners, makers and owners of Anglo-Saxon inscriptions,' *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History*, 7 (1994), 71-77.

⁹ I am grateful to Susan L. Ward for drawing my attention to the practice of praying while vesting, which became formalised during the later Middle Ages. The point is developed in her forthcoming paper 'Saints in Split Stitch: Representations of Saints in *Opus Anglicanum* Vestments'.

¹⁰ Apart from coins. There are a small number of names of contemporary persons in manuscripts, identifying figures illustrated, naming scribes and in the unique case of a Gospel Book (Stockholm, Royal Library MS A. 135), naming the husband and wife who had ransomed the book from the Vikings. Names are also found on seal dies and on grave-stones, examples of which are considered below. Metalwork, which survives in considerable quantity, has yielded relatively few examples. Elizabeth Coatsworth and Michael Pinder, *The Art of the Anglo-Saxon Goldsmith: fine metalwork in Anglo-Saxon England* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2002), p. 220, state that 'Of the . . . thousands of Pre-Conquest objects of fine [i.e. gold] metalwork, only fifty-one have inscriptions'. Not all of them include names. I am grateful to Drs Coatsworth and Pinder for allowing me to read part of their book in typescript and for providing a number of useful ideas and

references.

¹¹ Though some Anglo-Saxon names are still in use (*Eadweard* and *Eadgyth* survive in the forms Edward and Edith, for example) the gender association of others is not immediately obvious. It may be deduced from textual context, which may include for example a patronymic ('son of') or profession ('nun'); otherwise it is generally assumed that the biological gender of a person corresponds to the grammatical gender of their name. Elisabeth Okasha gives the examples of *Aelfgifu*, with the grammatically feminine element *gifu* and *Aelfraed* with the grammatically masculine *raed*; Elisabeth Okasha, 'Anglo-Saxon Women: the Evidence from Inscriptions', *Roman, Runes and Ogham: Medieval Inscriptions in the Insular World and on the Continent*, ed. by John Higgitt, Katherine Forsyth and David N. Parsons (Donington: Shaun Tyas, 2001), pp. 79-88 (p. 80).

¹² Male names appear 4.5 times more frequently on inscriptions than female; Okasha, 'Anglo-Saxon Women', p. 81.

¹³ Illustrated and discussed in London, British Museum Exhibition Catalogue, *The Making of England: Anglo-Saxon Art and Culture AD 600-900*, ed. by Janet Backhouse and Leslie Webster (London: British Museum, 1991), No. 243, pp. 268-69, where the photograph is wrongly numbered 244.

¹⁴ He was King of Kent from 828 and reigned in Wessex from at least 839.

¹⁵ In the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, England; discussed and illustrated in Backhouse and Webster, *The Making of England*, No. 260, pp. 282-83.

¹⁶ There have been other functions suggested, for example that this and two similar objects are terminals of staffs of office, but I am convinced by the traditional interpretation.

¹⁷ In The Castle Museum, York, England; Dominic Tweddle, *The Anglian Helmet from 16-22 Coppergate, The Archaeology of York*, ed. by Peter V. Addyman, 17.8 The Small Finds (1992), as reconstructed pp. 942-45, Fig. 408 a-d.

¹⁸ The Sutton Hoo, Suffolk, helmet has two scenes which are believed to reflect the cult of Woden, as well as heads of the boar, a beast associated with Thunor and much used as a protective emblem. This helmet also has dragon heads. The Wollaston, Northamptonshire, and Bentley Grange, Derbyshire, helmets have free-standing boar figures as crests. The Bentley Grange helmet also has a Christian cross on the nose-piece.

¹⁹ For example in Backhouse and Webster, *The Making of England*, No. 47, pp. 60-62.

²⁰ The sideways lettering could be simply the result of the artist writing the inscription from left to right on a strip of metal that was then turned sideways. Lack of anticipation of the finished result is not uncommon on, for example, Anglo-Saxon stone carvings executed flat and subsequently erected. The helmet inscription may be reversed

because it was engraved by an illiterate person who set the template the wrong way round, or because the strips of metal bearing the inscription were attached wrong-side up, resulting in letters which were not only retrograde but also repoussé when they should have been incised; see the comments by Elisabeth Okasha in Tweddle, p. 1013.

²³ London, British Museum Exhibition Catalogue, *The Golden Age of Anglo-Saxon Art*, ed. by Janet Backhouse, David H. Turner and Leslie Webster (London: British Museum, 1984), No. 94, pp. 101-02.

²² Raymond I. Page strikes a note of caution; 'I am prepared to accept that runes were sometimes used to enhance magical activities, and even to suspect that they may originally have been a magical or esoteric script, without wanting to think them essentially magical during the Anglo-Saxon era', *An Introduction to English Runes* (London: Methuen, 1973), p. 14.

²³ See Gale R. Owen, *Rites and Religions of the Anglo-Saxons* (Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1981), pp. 28-29, 59.

²⁴ Page (p. 15), describes three runic inscriptions as 'magic gibberish' and about a dozen others as of uncertain meaning.

²⁵ Ralph W. V. Elliott, *Runes: an introduction* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1959), p. 76. An early example is the runic inscription which transliterates as 'Luda repaired this brooch' on the back of a brooch found in a grave of the conversion period, which was probably repaired about the middle of the seventh century; John Hines, 'The runic inscription on the composite disc brooch from Grave 11,' in *Excavations on the Norwich Southern by-Pass Part III The Anglo-Saxon Cemetery at Harford Farm, Markshall, Norfolk*, East Anglian Archaeology Report, 92, ed. by K. Penn (Gresenhall: Norfolk Archaeology Unit, 2000), pp. 81-82.

²⁶ In some cases there may have been a subtle distinction between what was thought appropriate to be written in Roman script and what might be written in runes. For example, on the Ruthwell Cross (Dumfries and Galloway, Scotland), an eighth-century Northumbrian stone carving, the captions to the panels of figure sculpture, which mostly derive from the Bible and are in Latin, are carved in Latin letters, while the poetic text, which concerns the crucifixion but is uncanonical, is in the Old English language, and carved in runes. Runes occur on Anglo-Saxon coins from the sixth to ninth centuries, identifying moneyers or non-royal 'sponsors of issues'; see Philip Grierson and Mark Blackburn, *Medieval European coinage. I. The Early Middle Ages (5th-10th centuries)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 158; Hines, 'Runic inscription,' pp. 81-82; Coatsworth and Pinder, *Art of the Anglo-Saxon Goldsmith*, p. 220 n. 63.

²⁷ Since the fighting knife came into fashion in the seventh century, when some graves were still furnished with grave-goods, there are examples which were buried with

their owners. Some of these were carried in sheaths, suspended from the body in various positions. See for example, Vera I. Evison, Appendix to John Musty, 'The excavation of two barrows, one of Saxon date, at Ford, Laverstock, nr. Salisbury, Wiltshire,' *Antiquaries Journal*, 49 (1969), 98-197 (pp. 114-16).

²⁸ Backhouse, Turner and Webster, *Golden Age*, No. 95, pp.102-03 (one side only illustrated). Both sides are shown in David M. Wilson, *Anglo-Saxon Ornamental Metalwork 700-1000 in the British Museum*, Catalogue of Antiquities of the Later Saxon Period Volume I (London: British Museum, 1964), No. 80, pl. XXX.

²⁹ Wilson (*Metalwork*, p. 173) translates the first inscription 'Geberht owns me' adding 'The meaning of the initial letter S is unclear'; The personification of an artefact in its inscription is a common device in Anglo-Saxon art (discussed in Thomas A. Bredehoft, 'First person inscriptions and literacy in Anglo-Saxon England,' *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History*, 9 (1996), 103-10). It is related to the prosopopoeia found in Old English poems such as *The Dream of the Rood* and certain riddles.

³⁰ In this and other cases I have used the convention of representing the Old English letter *wynn* with W.

³¹ Inscribing the maker's name ensured both fame for the craftsman and prestige for the patron who could afford the work of a well-known smith. The practice of smiths 'advertising' is discussed in Coatsworth and Pinder, *Art of the Anglo-Saxon Goldsmith*, pp. 221-22.

³² Backhouse, Turner and Webster, *Golden Age*, 102.

³³ In the Cathedral of Saint-Michel, Brussels, Belgium; Backhouse, Turner and Webster, *Golden Age*, No. 75, pp. 90-92 and colour pl. XXIII.

³⁴ The foot of the cross extends into a shaft, indicating that it was once mounted, perhaps on a wooden carrying pole.

³⁵ Thus the name of the repairer, *Luda*, was added to the Harford Farm brooch (note 25, above) and the maker's name is recorded (*WVDEMAN FECID*) on the back of a coin brooch from Canterbury, Kent, now in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford (Wilson, *Metalwork*, pp. 35, 101). An exception is the maker's name prominently placed on the decorated surface of a censer-cover from Pershore, Worcestershire (Backhouse, Turner and Webster, *Golden Age*, No. 74, p. 90). I am grateful to Elizabeth Coatsworth and Michael Pinder for drawing my attention to these examples.

³⁶ Wilson, *Metalwork*, No. 1, pp. 117-19, Fig. 8 and unnumbered figure, pl. XI.

³⁷ Christine Fell has other suggestions: '... unless it was designed deliberately in order to slide over gloves or arthritic knuckles, its size suggests that it was intended for the male hand, and the name on it intended to record giver not owner'; Christine Fell, Cecily Clark and Elizabeth Williams, *Women in Anglo-Saxon England and the impact of 1066*

(London: British Museum, 1984), p. 94.

³⁸ The suggestion is in keeping with Elisabeth Okasha's observation that the state of preservation of the text inside the ring implies that the ring was not worn much after its engraving, and therefore the text may slightly post-date the ring; Okasha, *Hand-List*, p. 113.

³⁹ Wilson, *Metalwork*, No. 83, pp. 174-77, Fig. 34, pls XXXI, XXXII; R. I. Page 'The Inscriptions' Appendix A in Wilson, pp. 86-9. The relevant inscription is not the roughly scratched pseudo-runic nonsense on the central riveted silver strip, but the more carefully executed lettering round the circumference of the object.

⁴⁰ The diameter is between 14.9 and 16.4 cm. The Strickland Brooch is 11.2 cm and the Fuller Brooch 11.4 cm.

⁴¹ Page, 'Inscriptions', p. 87 and note 7.

⁴² Backhouse, Turner and Webster, *Golden Age*, No. 112, pp. 113-14.

⁴³ Elisabeth Okasha's suggestion. Backhouse, Turner and Webster have *D[OMIN]O*.

⁴⁴ Robert Deshman, *The Benedictional of Æthelwold*, Studies in Manuscript Illumination, 9 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), pl. 28.

⁴⁵ The majority of female images represent the Virgin Mary. An uncovered head is very rare on an image of a woman in late Anglo-Saxon art, and indicative of sin (see Gale R. Owen-Crocker, *Dress in Anglo-Saxon England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986), p. 141). This may not have been so in earlier art. The portrait on the Hackness sculpture discussed below, which is possibly non-Maryan, 'seems to have long hair'; Carol Farr, 'Questioning the monuments: approaches to Anglo-Saxon sculpture through gender studies', in *The Archaeology of Anglo-Saxon England: basic readings*, ed. by Catherine E. Karkov, Basic Readings in Anglo-Saxon England, 7 (New York: Garland, 1999), pp. 375-402 (p. 382); John Higgett is more precise; 'The hair . . . hangs in a plait over the shoulder', in *British Academy Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture, III, York and Eastern Yorkshire*, ed. by James Lang (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 137.

⁴⁶ Owen-Crocker, *Dress*, p. 144.

⁴⁷ Versions of the coin are illustrated in Grierson and Blackburn, No. 1132, pl. 52; and Backhouse and Webster, *The Making of Anglo-Saxon England*, No. 215, p. 248. I am grateful to Dr James Booth, University of Hull, for discussing these coins with me.

⁴⁸ Grierson and Blackburn (p. 280) suggest that information about coins of the Byzantine Empress Irene may have reached England, though there is no direct copying.

⁴⁹ Christine Fell (Fell, Clark and Williams, pp. 13-14), attributes the dissemination of this view to Doris Stenton (D. S. M. Stenton, *The English Woman in History* (London and New York: Allen & Unwin, Macmillan, 1957).

⁵⁰ This is not a true portrait and is very stylised. Some versions are 'virtually identical

with those on [Eoba's] coins of Offa' (Grierson and Blackburn, p. 280). Although some scholars have assumed the bust represents Cynethryth (Marian Archibald in Backhouse and Webster, *The Making of England*, p. 247, discussing a version in the British Museum collection, calls it a 'female head grafted on to the usual Offa fourth-century style Roman bust') there are no distinctive feminine features about it; it probably represents Offa.

⁵¹ *British Academy Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture, I, County Durham and Northumberland*, ed. by Rosemary J. Cramp (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), p. 7; Hartlepool 1 (St Hilda's church): No. 433, p. 98, pl. 84; Hartlepool 2: (Museum of Antiquities, Newcastle upon Tyne) No. 430, pp. 98-99, pl. 84; Hartlepool 6: (Durham Cathedral): No. 444, pp. 100-01, pl. 85.

⁵² Hartlepool 8 (British Museum, London) inscribed with the incomplete name *-gyth* can probably be identified with the small square stone which the excavators found underneath the head of a skeleton: Cramp, *Corpus I*, p. 101.

⁵³ It is interesting to note that two similar markers, Hartlepool 3 and 5, naming both a man and a woman (*Vermund* and *Torhsuid*) are weathered: Cramp, *Corpus I*, pp. 99, 100.

⁵⁴ Priory Museum, Lindisfarne, Northumberland. Dominic Tweddle in Backhouse and Webster, *The Making of England*, No. 71, pp. 103-04.

⁵⁵ R. I. Page, 'The Bewcastle Cross' (1960) reprinted in R. I. Page, *Runes and Runic Inscriptions: collected essays on Anglo-Saxon and Viking runes*, ed. by David Parsons (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1995), pp. 47-70; *The British Academy Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture, II, Cumberland, Westmorland and Lancashire North-of-the-Sands*, ed. by Richard N. Bailey and Rosemary Cramp (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 12-22, 71. I am grateful to Catherine Karkov for pointing out that the Bewcastle cross conformed to my thesis.

⁵⁶ Farr, pp. 380-92, pl. 14.1; Hackness 1 (church of St Peter): Lang, pp. 135-41, pls. 454-63, 466.

⁵⁷ Okasha, *Hand-List*, No. 135, pp. 125-26.

⁵⁸ Elisabeth Okasha, 'A second supplement to *Hand-List of Anglo-Saxon Non-runic Inscriptions, Anglo-Saxon England*, 21 (1992), 37-85, No. 193 (pp. 46-7).

⁵⁹ Okasha, *Hand-List*, p. 47.

⁶⁰ From Swindon, Wiltshire; Wilson, *Metalwork*, No. 85, p. 178, pl. XXXII; No provenance; Wilson, No. 145, pp. 205-06, pl. XLII.

⁶¹ Late Anglo-Saxon finger-rings are a particularly fruitful source of inscriptions, usually arranged decoratively on the outside, some of them, like Ethelwulf's ring discussed above, exhibiting the names of men. They include a ring from Llysfaen, Wales, now in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, with the name *Ahlstan* (Wilson, *Metalwork*, p. 75) and another from Lancashire with 'Ædred owns me Eanred engraved me'; Idem, No. 30, p.

141, pl. XIX.

⁶² Wilson, *Metalwork*, No. 14, pp. 129-30, pl. XVII. Although described as a brooch in the account of its purchase in the British Museum Register, the disc has no evidence of a pin across the back.

⁶³ See M. W. Campbell, 'Queen Emma and Ælfgifu of Northampton: Canute the Great's women,' *Medieval Scandinavia*, 4 (1971), 66-79; Pauline Stafford, *Queen Emma and Queen Edith: queenship and women's power in eleventh-century England* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997).

⁶⁴ London, British Library MS Stowe 944, fol. 6v; *The Liber Vitae of the New Minster and Hyde Abbey Winchester: British Library Stowe 944, together with leaves from British Library Cotton Vespasian A. VIII and British Library Titus D. XXVII*, ed. by Simon Keynes, *Early English Manuscripts in Facsimile*, 26 (Copenhagen: Rosenkilde & Bagger, 1996).

⁶⁵ David M. Wilson, *The Bayeux Tapestry* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1985), pl. 17.

⁶⁶ Wilson, *Metalwork*, No. 14, pp. 129-30, pl. XVII. Wilson does not give any grounds for this dating, and there seem to be few comparable objects, but he is the highest authority. Wilson specifically dismisses R. A. Smith's suggested association of the object with Queen Emma as 'highly hypothetical'.

⁶⁷ I am grateful to Professors Karkov and Keynes for unpublished information.

⁶⁸ Fell, Clark and Williams, pp. 121-22.

⁶⁹ Christine Fell, 'Some implications of the Boniface correspondence,' in *New Readings on Women in Old English Literature*, ed. by Helen Damico and Alexandra H. Olsen (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990), pp. 29-43; Stephanie Hollis, *Anglo-Saxon Women and the Church: sharing a common fate* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1992).

⁷⁰ Mary Dockray-Miller, *Motherhood and Mothering in Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford: Macmillan, 2000).

⁷¹ Deshman, pp. 204-07.

⁷² F. T. Wainwright, 'Æthelflæd, Lady of the Mercians,' in Damico and Olsen, *New Readings*, pp. 44-55.

⁷³ See Fell, Clark and Williams, *passim*.

⁷⁴ Okasha, 'Anglo-Saxon women', pp. 85-86.

⁷⁵ The word is taken from Fell, Clark and Williams, p. 21.

⁷⁶ Okasha, 'Anglo-Saxon women', p. 87.