

## The Two Ages of King Edward the Confessor in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle

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**Abstract:** The events related to the youth of King Edward the Confessor (1042–1066) can be reconstructed on the basis of several historical and literary sources (Cnut's Laws; Knútsdrápa; Encomium Emmae Reginae; The Life of King Edward who rests at Westminster; Vita Sancti Oswaldi), as well as chronicles of the 11th–12th centuries (The Gesta Normannorum Ducum of William of Jumièges, Chronicon ex chronicis of John of Worcester, The Gesta Guillelmi of William of Poitiers, Historia Anglorum of Henry of Huntingdon, Gesta Regum Anglorum of William of Malmesbury). The main source describing the old age and death of King Edward is the enigmatic record of the Worcester and Abingdon Manuscripts of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. The record sub annum 1065 stands out among other annals because it is one of the longest in the whole Chronicle; it is preceded by a two-year break when records were not made or were not preserved; it is both prose and also poetic; it describes the events which took place from spring 1065 to spring 1066, including the death of King Edward in January 1066. The prose part in both manuscripts narrates the political and social events of the year in which the main participants were Harold Godwinson and his brother Tostig, whose actions in Northumbria and Wales led to undermining the royal power and had tragic consequences in the fate of the country. The poetic part, on the contrary, is devoted to King Edward and only mentions Harold in its concluding lines. So far it has remained unclear why, at the demise of the Anglo-Saxon alliterative tradition, the creator of the poem chose the traditional vocabulary, syntax, formulaic style and canonical metre (the preceding poem in the Chronicle on the death of Alfred, the brother of Edward the Confessor, is composed in nearly rhymed verse) in his poem describing the death of the last king of the Wessex dynasty.

**Keywords:** Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, Old English poetry, Old English prose, alliterative verse, poetic tradition, metre, hagiography.

The main source of information about the youth and old age of Edward the Confessor who was the last King of the Wessex dynasty and ruled England for twenty-four years is the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. However its testimony is scarce and controversial and, in order to be adequately interpreted, needs to be supplemented by other historical, hagiographical and literary sources: *Anglo-Saxon Charters*, *Encomium Emmae Reginae*, *Vita Ædwardi Regis qui apud Westmonasterium Requiescit* (The Life of King Edward who rests at Westminster), as well as the Anglo-Norman and Norman chronicles of the 11th–12th centuries (The Gesta Normannorum of William of Jumièges, The Chronicle of John of Worcester, The Gesta Guillelmi of William of Poitiers).

The paucity of information about King Edward's youth and old age makes it essential to collect all historical evidence extant. King Edward was the son of Æthelred and Emma of Normandy; the date of his birth cannot be determined with certainty; it is usually considered that he was born around 1003–1005 in Islip (a few miles north of Oxford), which he later granted to Westminster Abbey<sup>1</sup>. The earliest event in Edward's life is registered by the Peterborough Chronicle (MS. Laud Misc. 636), sub anno 1013 (when he must have been about ten years old). According to the Chronicle, he and his

<sup>1</sup> Anglo-Saxon Charters S 1148 (A.D. 1065 x 1066) "Writ of King Edward declaring that he has given to Westminster Abbey the estate at Islip where he was born and a half hide at Marston, Oxon. He directs his kinsman Wigod of Wallingford to transfer the land to the abbey on his behalf. English, Westminster" (*Anglo-Saxon Charters: an Annotated List and Bibliography*. Ed. P.H.Sawyer. L., 1968); See also: Keynes S. *Edward the Aetheling*. In: *Edward the Confessor. The Man and the Legend*. Ed. R.Mortimer. Woodbridge, 2009. P. 44.

younger brother Alfred were sent by their father Æthelred to Normandy, the birth-place of their mother Emma of Normandy, when Svein Forkbeard with his son Cnut invaded England: “And se cyning sende Ælfun bisceop mid þam æpelingum Eadwarde and Ælfrede ofer sæ þæt he hi bewitan sceolde”<sup>2</sup>, “And the King sent Bishop Ælfhun across the sea with the æthelings Edward and Alfred in order that he [Richard of Normandy, their uncle on their mother’s side] should look after them”<sup>3</sup>. King Æthelred returned to England, most likely with his sons and his wife Emma, when Svein died in February 1014, and remained there till his death in April 1016.

Two years later Svein’s son Cnut gained power over the whole country and married Æthelred’s widow, Emma of Normandy. It has been postulated that Emma agreed to this marriage in order to save the lives of her sons, who were allowed to leave England and go to Normandy<sup>4</sup>. However there is evidence that both Edward and Alfred were already in Normandy at the time of their mother’s second marriage<sup>5</sup>. Edward’s second exile to Normandy is commented on in the *Encomium Emmae Reginae*, which was composed by order of his mother Emma between 1041 and 1042. As is stated in the *Encomium*, after the birth of Harthacnut, Emma’s son by her second husband Cnut, the happy parents (Emma and Cnut) sent their other legitimate sons to be educated in Normandy (alios uero liberales filios educandos direxerunt Normanniae<sup>6</sup>). The *Encomium Emmae* does not mention that Edward and Alfred were the sons of Æthelred and therefore implies that it was Cnut and Emma who were their happy parents.

According to some Norman sources, including William of Jumièges, in 1034 Robert, Duke of Normandy, tried to invade England in order to ensure Edward’s accession to the throne but was blown off course. Though Edward was supported by a number of Norman clergymen, including Robert, the Abbot of Jumièges Abbey, who later became the Archbishop of Canterbury<sup>7</sup>, he had to wait for another seven years before he could return to England.

After Cnut’s death in 1035, the chief pretender to the throne became Harold the Harefoot, Cnut’s son by his first wife Ælfgifu of Northampton. According to the Abingdon and Worcester Chronicles (MS. Cotton Tiberius A. vi, B. I, B. iv), Harold the Harefoot began to suppress Emma, as soon as he achieved power (Sub anno 1035, He sende to and let niman of hyre ealle þa bestan gærsuma ... þe Cnut cing ahte<sup>8</sup>, ‘He sent and had taken from her all the best treasures which King Cnut had’). It does not seem improbable that Emma sent a letter to Normandy to her sons by Æthelred, Edward and Alfred, asking them to return to England and to protect her from Harold<sup>9</sup>. However, the *Encomium* affirms that Emma did not send the invitation, and that it was forged by Harold with the aim of ensnaring her sons<sup>10</sup>. As is implied by the *Encomium Emmae*, she could not be held responsible for the tragic fate of her younger son Alfred the Aetheling<sup>11</sup>.

Alfred, Edward’s younger brother, embarked on a journey near Boulogne, came to Dover and tried to reach London (or Winchester, if he hoped to visit his mother, as stated in the Abingdon and in the Worcester Chronicles, sub anno 1036). The return of a member of the Wessex dynasty must have

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<sup>2</sup> Quotations from the Peterborough manuscript of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* are from: *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. A Collaborative Edition*. Vol. 7. MS E. Ed. Susan Irvine. Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2004.

<sup>3</sup> Translations of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* are from: *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicles*. New Edition. Translated and edited by Michael Swanton. London: Phoenix Press, 2000.

<sup>4</sup> Cole T. *The Norman Conquest. William the Conqueror’s Subjugation of England*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Stroud: Amberley Publishing, 2018. P. 41.

<sup>5</sup> Keynes S. *The Æthelings in Normandy*. Anglo-Norman Studies. Vol. 13. 1991. P. 173–205.

<sup>6</sup> Quotations from the *Encomium Emmae Reginae* are from: *Encomium Emmae Reginae*. Ed. A. Campbell. Cambridge, 1998. P. 41–42.

<sup>7</sup> van Houts E. *Edward and Normandy*. In: *Edward the Confessor. The Man and the Legend*. Ed. R. Mortimer. Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2009. P. 63–75.

<sup>8</sup> Quotations from the Abingdon Manuscript of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* are from: *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. A Collaborative Edition*. Vol. 5. MS C. Ed. Katherine O’Brien O’Keeffe. Woodbridge: DS Brewer, 2001.

<sup>9</sup> Rex P. *King and Saint: The Life of Edward the Confessor*. Stroud: The History Press, 2008.

<sup>10</sup> *Encomium Emmae Reginae*. P. 52–53.

<sup>11</sup> The term Ætheling could be applied to any member of the royal family who could inherit the throne by law (Dumville D.N. *The Ætheling: A Study in Anglo-Saxon Constitutional History*. In: *Anglo-Saxon England*. Vol. 8. 1979. P. 1–33).

been perceived as a challenge to Danish rule: in some Norman sources (including *The Gesta Guillelmi of William of Poitiers*) it is even asserted that Alfred's aim was to capture the paternal throne and inherit his father's kingdom<sup>12</sup>. Guided by King Harold's orders, the powerful earl of Wessex, Godwine, caught Alfred, killed his companions and had him blinded and taken to Ely, where he died of wounds or was killed.

Two Norman sources (*William of Jumièges*, *Gesta Normannorum Ducum* and *William of Poitiers*, *Gesta Guillelmi*) mention not only Alfred's but also Edward's unsuccessful attempt to return to England after Cnut's death in 1035<sup>13</sup>. William of Jumièges states that Edward landed in Southampton but saw that he needed a bigger army, so went back to Normandy<sup>14</sup>. According to William of Jumièges, Edward returned to England only six years later when he was invited by his brother Harthacnut (the son of Emma and Cnut): "Soon after he [Harthacnut] became strong as a king, he called his brother [Edward] from Normandy, so that he [Edward] returned and began to live with him [Harthacnut], but in less than two years he [Harthacnut] died, leaving the whole kingdom to Edward"<sup>15</sup>. The same reason (i.e. brotherly affection) for Edward's return is given in the *Encomium Emmae*, which was composed between Edward's return to England in 1041 and Harthacnut's death in 1042<sup>16</sup>. Another reason is given in the *Quadripartitus* (CCCC MS 383, 12<sup>th</sup> century), a collection of Anglo-Saxon pre- and post-Conquest legal materials, which describes Edward's return to England, his reception by 'the thegns of all England' and the oath to observe the laws of Cnut he had to take. Basing on this treatise, it has been suggested that the main role in securing Edward's return from exile belonged to earl Godwine and Bishop Ælfwine of Winchester, who made the future king accept the laws putting restraints on his power and made him enter into agreement with his future subjects<sup>17</sup>.

The Chronicle does not give details of Edward's return to England. All four manuscripts state that Edward was consecrated king in 1043, and the Abingdon and Peterborough manuscripts add that he was accorded 'great honour' ("mid myccelum wyrðscype", Sub anno 1043). Edward's first deed as king is mentioned in the same two manuscripts (as well as in the Worcester manuscript) in the annals for the same year: "7 raðe þæs se cing let geridan ealle þa land þe his modor ahte him to handa, 7 nam of hire eall þæt heo ahte on golde 7 on seolfre 7 on unasegendlicum þingum, forðam heo hit heold ær to fæste wið hine forþan heo hit heold to feste wið hine" ("and quickly after that the king brought into his hands all the lands his mother owned and took from her all she owned in gold and silver and in untold things because earlier she had kept it from him too firmly", Sub anno 1043). The Abingdon Manuscript implies a causal connection between Emma's falling into disfavour and the punishment of her counsellor, Bishop Stigand: "7 raðe þæs man sette Stigant of his bisceoprice 7 nam eal þæt he ahte þam cinge to handa, forðam he wæs nehst his modor ræde 7 heo for swa swa he hire rædde, þæs ðe men wendon", "And quickly after, Stigand was put out of his bishopric and all that he owned was taken into the king's hands, because he was his mother's advisor and because she did just as he advised her – so men supposed", Sub anno 1043). Bishop Stigand is portrayed in the Abingdon Manuscript as responsible for misguiding the Queen (possibly, giving her advice to concentrate more property in her hands than could have been tolerated by the King<sup>18</sup> or his advisors, such as Godwine and his clan).

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<sup>12</sup> *The Gesta Guillelmi of William of Poitiers*. Ed. and transl. R.H.C. Davis, M. Chibnall. Oxford Medieval Texts. Oxford: OUP, 1998. P. 2–6.

<sup>13</sup> William of Jumièges. *The Gesta Normannorum Ducum of William of Jumièges, Orderic Vitalis and Robert of Torigni*. Ed. E.M.C. van Houts. 2 vols. Oxford: OUP, 1992–1995. Vol. II. P. 104–106: *The Gesta Guillelmi of William of Poitiers*. Ed. and transl. R.H.C. Davis, M. Chibnall. Oxford Medieval Texts. Oxford: OUP, 1998. P. 2–6.

<sup>14</sup> William of Jumièges. *The Gesta Normannorum Ducum of William of Jumièges, Orderic Vitalis and Robert of Torigni*. Ed. E.M.C. van Houts. 2 vols. Oxford, 1992–1995. Vol. II. P. 104–105.

<sup>15</sup> William of Jumièges. *The Gesta Normannorum Ducum*. Vol. II. P. 106.

<sup>16</sup> *Encomium Emmae Reginae*. P. 53.

<sup>17</sup> Maddicott J. R. *Edward the Confessor's Return to England in 1041*. In: *English Historical Review*. Oxford University Press, 2004. CXIX (482): 650–666.

<sup>18</sup> The Abingdon Chronicler could have based his supposition on the knowledge that Emma's property was mostly in the part of the country where Stigand was bishop. She possessed Winchester, Rutland, Devonshire, including Exeter, Suffolk, and Oxfordshire (Honeycutt L. *Matilda of Scotland: a Study in Medieval Queenship*. Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2003. P. 41). However, both Stigand and Emma soon regained their former

It has been suggested that Edward's displeasure with his mother was caused by her asking the Norwegian King Magnus for protection and promising him her possessions in case he decided to invade England<sup>19</sup>. However the Worcester manuscript gives a different reason for Edward's actions: "7 þæs geres .xiiii. nihton ær Andreas mæssan man gerædde þan cyngc 7æt he rad of Gleawcestre 7 Leofric eorl 7 Godwine eorl 7 Sigward eorl mid heora genge to Wincestre on unwær on þa hlæfdian, 7 bereafedan hi æt eallon þan gærsaman þe heo ahte, þa wæron unatellendlice, for þan þe heo wæs æror þam cyngc hire suna swiðe heard, 7æt heo him læsse dyde þonne he wolde, ær þam þe he cyng wære 7 eac syððan" ("And that year, 14 days before St Andrew's Day, the king was so counselled that he – and Earl Leofric and Earl Godwine and Earl Siward and their band – rode from Gloucester to Winchester, on the Lady by surprise, and robbed her of all the treasures which she owned because she was very hard on the King her son, in that she did less for him than he wanted before he became king and also afterwards"). As is implied by the Worcester manuscript, Edward's actions could have been accounted for by advice of his councillors, in particular, Godwine, who accompanied the King in his raid on his mother. It was in Godwine's interests to make mother and son enemies so that he would be safe in the event of Emma's open expression of hostility, as she obviously could not forgive him for the murder of her son Alfred.

Unlike his mother, Edward must have forgiven Godwine for the murder of his brother Alfred, as he gave Hereford to Godwine's older son Sveinn (in 1043) and made Harold, Godwine's second son, the ruler of East Anglia (in 1045)<sup>19</sup>. The same year, as is stated in the Abingdon Chronicle, Edward entered into marriage with Godwine's daughter Edith (Eadgyþ): "And on þam ylcan gere Eadward cing nam Eadgyþe, Godwines eorles dohtor him to wife x nihtum ær Candelmaessan", "and the same year King Edward took Edith, the daughter of Earl Godwine, as his wife ten days before Candlemass"<sup>20</sup>. Like her mother-in-law Emma, Edith commissioned a description of the life of her husband, *Vita Edwardi Regis qui apud Westmonasterium Requiescit* (*The Life of King Edward who rests at Westminster*, folios 38-57, British Library, Harley MS 526), which is our main source of knowledge about her own virtues, education, talents and her family<sup>21</sup>. According to William of Jumièges, both Edward and Emma retained purity and their marriage was only in words<sup>22</sup>, though Edward made Edith one of the greatest landowners in the country<sup>23</sup>. Edward's marriage to Edith is mentioned in the Abingdon and Peterborough manuscripts, though not in the Worcester Chronicle. All three manuscripts dwell on the conflicts King Edward had with Edith's father Godwine and his sons, as well as Godwine's outlawry together with his family. The Godwins left England in 1051, but returned the next year, 1052, with a large army, aided by the Flemish. Godwine however did not enjoy power for long, as he died the next year (April 1053) of a stroke<sup>24</sup>.

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wealth and social status: Stigand later became Bishop of Winchester and Archbishop of Canterbury; Emma's name in the list of witnesses of the Charters of 1044 comes second to the King's. (O'Brien H. *Queen Emma and the Vikings. The Woman who Shaped the Events of 1066*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing House, 2005. P. 209).  
<sup>19</sup> Oleson T.J. *The Witenagemot in the Reign of Edward the Confessor*. Oxford: OUP, 1955. P. 126.

<sup>20</sup> The date of Edward's marriage is usually given as 23 January (see Swanton M., *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicles*. New Edition. Translated and edited by Michael Swanton. London: Phoenix Press, 2000. P.164, note 2; Stafford P. *Queen Emma and Queen Edith. Queenship and Women's Power in Eleventh-Century England*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1997. P. 258).

<sup>21</sup> The first part of *Vita Edwardi* could have been written during Edward's rule and focuses on Edith's family; the second part concentrates on Edward's holiness and could have been written after his death (*The Life of King Edward who rests at Westminster attributed to a monk of Saint-Bertin*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Ed. and transl. by Frank Barlow. Oxford Medieval Texts. Oxford: OUP, 1992).

<sup>22</sup> William of Jumièges. *The Gesta Normannorum Ducum*. P. 106-108. The absence of the heir caused the Norman historians to argue that Edward could have had plans of making William his successor: John E. *Edward the Confessor and the Norman Succession*. In: *English Historical Review*. Volume XCIV, Issue CCCLXXI. 1979. P. 241–267; Baxter St. *Edward the Confessor and the Succession Question*. In: *Edward the Confessor. The Man and the Legend*. Ed. R.Mortimer. Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2009. P. 77–118.

<sup>23</sup> Edith owned lands in Wessex, Essex, Suffolk, Devon, Kent, Mercia (Northamptonshire, Gloucestershire, Buckinghamshire, Lincolnshire, Rutland), the nunnery of Leominster, houses in Bath, Sherborne, Canterbury, Worcester (Strachan I. *Emma, the Twice-Crowned Queen: England in the Viking Age*. London: Peter Owen, 2004. P. 146–147).

<sup>24</sup> Barlow F. *The Godwins. The Rise and Fall of a Noble Dynasty*. Harlow: Longman, 2002. P. 67.

Having lost his most powerful subject, Edward could have felt himself in complete control for the first time, but in the later years of his life his name almost entirely disappears from historical sources. After 1053 the Chronicle annals become more and more scarce, and for some years (1062 and 1064) there are none. The King's name is hardly ever mentioned in them at all, the only exception being the enigmatic record of the Worcester and Abingdon Manuscripts, for the year 1065. The record sub annum 1065 stands out among others because it is one of the longest in the whole Chronicle; it is preceded by a two-year break, when no records were made or none preserved; it is both prose and also poetry; it describes the events which took place from spring 1065 to spring 1066, including the death of King Edward in January 1066.

In both Worcester and Abingdon manuscripts the prose part narrates the political and social events of the year: Harold Godwinson's winning an estate (Portskewett) in Wales, gathering goods and people there and ordering construction works (1 August); a Welsh ruler Caradog, son of Gruffydd killing people and capturing goods on St Bartholomew's day (24 August); the thegns of Yorkshire and Northumberland outlawing their earl Tostig and choosing Morcar, son of Earl Ælfgar, as their earl; Morcar joining forces with his brother Edwin, going to Earl Harold Godwinsson and charging him with a message to King Edward; Edward confirming Morcar as their earl and sending Harold to Northampton on the eve of St Simon and Jude (28 October); the Northumbrians rebelling against Tostig, killing his people, burning houses and corn; Tostig and his family leaving England and going across the sea to Earl Baldwin, ruler of Flanders.

According to the prose part of the annals for 1065, the main participants in these events were Godwine's two sons: Harold Godwinson and his brother Tostig, whose actions in Northumbria and Wales led to the undermining of royal power and had tragic consequences for the country. In the prose part of the annals for the year 1065 very little is said about King Edward. His only royal deed in the whole year was coming to Westminster and consecrating the minster, which he had built to the glory of God and St Peter and all God's saints. The King consecrated the Church eight days before his death and was buried in it: "And Eadward kingc com to Westmynstre to þam Middanwintre<sup>25</sup>, and þæt mynster þar let halgian þe he sylf getimbrode Gode to lofe and Sancte Petre and eallum Godes halgum, and seo circhalgung wæs on Cilda mæssedæg<sup>26</sup>, and he forðferde on Twelftan Æfen<sup>27</sup>, and hyne man bebyrigde on Twelftan Dæg on þam ylcan mynstre swa hyt her æfter seigð", "And King Edward came to Westminster towards midwinter, and had consecrated there that minster which he himself built to the glory of God and St Peter and all God's saints; and the church consecration was on Holy Innocents' Day; and he passed away on the eve of Twelfth Night and he was buried on Twelfth Day in the same minster, as it says hereafter" (Abingdon Manuscript, Sub anno 1065). Like the church in Westminster, the poem of the Chronicle commemorates the glory of the King who would be called the Confessor<sup>28</sup>.

In the Peterborough Chronicle (Sub anno 1066, describing the events of both 1065 and 1066), in which the poetic text on Edward's death is omitted, the death of the King is also related to the consecration of the Westminster Church: "On þissum geare man halgode þet mynster æt Westmynster on Cildamæssedæg. 7 se cyng Eadward forðferde on twelfta mæsse æfen. 7 hine mann bebyrgede on twelftan mæssedæg. innan þære niwan halgodre circean on Westmynstre. 7 Harold eorl feng to Englalandes cynerice. swa swa se cyng hit him geuðe. 7 eac men hine þær togecuron. 7 wæs gebletsod to cyng on twelftan mæssedæg. 7 þy ilcan geare þe he cyng wæs", "In this year the minster at Westminster was consecrated on Holy Innocents' Day, and King Edward passed away on the eve of Twelfth Night, and was buried on Twelfth Night inside the newly consecrated church in Westminster.

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<sup>25</sup> As John of Worcester writes: "and after the Feast of All Saints (1 November) with the help of Earl Edwin expelled Tostig from England; and despite failing health, he held court at Christmas in London as well as he could" (*The Chronicle of John of Worcester*. Ed. P. McGurk, R.R. Darlington. Oxford, 1995. Vol. II, P. 599). See Swanton M., *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicles*. New Edition. Translated and edited by Michael Swanton. London: Phoenix Press, 2000. P. 192, note 4.

<sup>26</sup> 28 of December (see Swanton M., *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicles*. New Edition. Translated and edited by Michael Swanton. London: Phoenix Press, 2000. P. 193, note 5).

<sup>27</sup> Fifth of January (see Swanton M., *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicles*. New Edition. Translated and edited by Michael Swanton. London: Phoenix Press, 2000. P. 193, note 6).

<sup>28</sup> Trilling R.R. *The Aesthetics of Nostalgia. Historical Representation in Old English Verse*. Toronto, 2009. P. 209.

And Earl Harold succeeded to the kingdom of England just as the king granted him – and also men chose him for it – and he was blessed as king on Twelfth Night”. The prose record of 1066 on the death of King Edward in the Peterborough Chronicle gives the name of his successor, the Earl of Wessex Harold, second son of Godwine. Peterborough Chronicle goes on to relate the events of the year including Harold’s victory in the battle of Stamford Bridge, his defeat and his death at Hastings.

Maintaining, like the compiler of the Peterborough Chronicle, that King Edward entrusted the country to Harold and the people chose him as their ruler, John of Worcester affirms that Harold was nominated by King Edward as his successor (*subregulus*), chosen by the witan of the country and consecrated by Ealdred, archbishop of York, on the day of King Edward’s funeral<sup>29</sup>. He gives a brief characterisation of Harold as a ruler, stating that he immediately abolished unjust laws and made good laws, was reverent towards the Church, was firm with those who committed evil deeds and laboured by land and sea, to protect the country<sup>30</sup>. William of Poitiers also confirms that Edward on his death had appointed Harold as his successor but tries to provide a justification of William’s claim to the English throne<sup>31</sup>.

In the Abingdon and Worcester manuscripts the annals for 1065 also conclude with statement of Harold’s anointment, which follows the poetic text on King Edward’s death: “Her wearð Harold eac to kyngge gehalgod, 7 he lytle stillnesse þar on gebad þa hwile þe he rices weold”, “And here also Harold became consecrated as king and he experienced little quietness in it while he ruled the kingdom”. The added references to the troubled time of Harold’s rule could testify to the later date of the composition of the annals for 1065: the prose text of the annals, which follows the poem on King Edward’s death, could have been compiled in autumn of 1066 after Harold’s death, i.e. after the Norman conquest<sup>32</sup>. Although both the prose and the poetic parts of the annals for 1065 were written by one scribe<sup>33</sup>, it is possible that different sections of the annals for 1065 were made at different times. The prose part, preceding the poem, could have been compiled during spring-autumn 1065; the poem on King Edward’s death could have been composed during winter 1066; the last part on Harold’s troubled times could have been added after the Norman Conquest. If this is the case, then the last lines of the poem can be interpreted as giving additional justification to Harold’s claim to the throne.

Temporal data, which interest the compiler of the prose part of the annals for 1065 in the Abingdon Chronicle infinitely more than the composer of the poem, also lend veracity to the events narrated and implicitly confirm Harold’s right as Edward’s successor. In the poem dates are mentioned only twice (“XXIII wintra gerimes and healfe tid”, “24-and-a-half in number of years”; “XXVIII wintra gerimes”, “twenty eight years in number”), whereas the prose text contains eight temporal indications: “to þam Middanwintre”, “towards midwinter”; “on Cilda mæssedæg”, “on the Holy Innocents’ Day”; “on Twelftan Æfen”, “on the Twelfth Night”; “Twelftan Dæg”, “Twelfth Day”; “on þissum gear foran to hlafmæssan”, “this year before Lammas” (i.e. 1 August); “on Sancte Barþolomeus mæssedæg”, “on St Bartholomew’s Day”; “þa æfter Michaeles mæssan”, “after Michaelmas”; “on þon dæg Simonis 7 Iude”, “on Simon and Jude’s Day”. It is possible that in the prose text of the annals the exact day, infrequently coinciding with a Church feast, is stated for each event with the aim of establishing a connection between the events of earthly history and eternity. The events of earthly history, precipitating the passing away of King Edward and the future succession of Harold, which form the theme of the poetic part of the annals, are related to the days of martyrdom of saints, who on these days ended their earthly existence but entered the realm of eternal glory.

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<sup>29</sup> *The Chronicle of John of Worcester*. Ed. P. McGurk, R.R. Darlington. Oxford, 1995. Vol. II, P. 600–601. See also Swanton M., *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicles*. New Edition. Translated and edited by Michael Swanton. London: Phoenix Press, 2000. P. 194, note 2.

<sup>30</sup> *The Chronicle of John of Worcester*. Ed. P. McGurk, R.R. Darlington. Oxford, 1995. Vol. II, P. 601–602. See also Swanton M., *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicles*. New Edition. Translated and edited by Michael Swanton. London: Phoenix Press, 2000. P. 194, note 2.

<sup>31</sup> William of Poitiers states that Edward on his death had sent Harold to Normandy so that he confirmed with his oath the King’s choice of William as successor to the English throne (*The Gesta Guillelmi of William of Poitiers*. Ed. and transl. R.H.C. Davis, M. Chibnall. Oxford Medieval Texts. P. 68–79, 118–119).

<sup>32</sup> O’Brien O’Keefe K. *Deaths and Transformations: Thinking through the ‘End’ of Old English Verse*. P. 165.

<sup>33</sup> *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. Ms C. Ed. K. O’Brien O’Keefe. P. xlix. O’Brien O’Keefe K. *Visible Song*. P. 135. O’Brien O’Keefe K. *Deaths and Transformations: Thinking through the ‘End’ of Old English Verse*. P. 166.

The poetic part of the annals for 1065 is devoted entirely to King Edward and only mentions Harold in its concluding lines. In the Abingdon and Worcester manuscripts the poem on Edward's death is introduced by the phrase "swa hyt her æfter seigð" ("as it says hereafter") and is separated from the preceding prose text with the help of a capital letter<sup>34</sup>. Similar to the majority of poetic annals, the poem on the death of the King opens with the initial adverb "her" which refers not only to space but also to time:

<p>1 Her Eadward kingc, Engla hlaford,                  2 sende soþfæste sawle to Criste                  3 on godes wæra, gast haligne.                  4 He on worulda her wunode þrage                  5 on kyneþrymme, cræftig ræda,                  6 XXIII, freolic wealdend,                  7 wintra gerimes, weolan brytnode,                  8 and healfe tid, hæleða wealdend,                  9 weold wel geþungen Walum and Scottum                  10 and Bryttum eac, byre Æðelredes,                  11 Englum and Sexum, oretmægcum,                  12 swa ymbclyppað cealde brymmas,                  13 þæt eall Eadwarde, æðelum kinge,                  14 hyrdon holdlice hagestealde menn.                  15 Wæs a bliðemod bealuleas kyng,                  16 þeah he lange ær, lande bereafod,                  17 wunode wræclastum wide geond eorðan,                  18 syððan Cnut ofercom kynn æðelredes                  19 and Dena weoldon deore rice                  20 Engla landes XXVIII                  21 wintra gerimes, welan brytnodon.                  22 Syððan for becom freolice in geatwum                  23 kyningc kystum god, clæne and milde,                  24 Eadward se æðela, eðel bewerode,                  25 land and leode, oðþæt lungre becom                  26 deað se bitera, and swa deore genam                  27 æþelne of eorðan; englas feredon                  28 soþfæste sawle innan swegles leoht.                  29 And se froda swa þeah befæste þæt rice                  30 heahþungenum menn, Harold se sylfum,                  31 æþelum eorle, se in ealle tid                  32 hyrde holdlice hærran sinum                  33 wordum and dædum, wihte ne agælde                  34 þæs þe þearf wæs þæs þeodkyniges<sup>35</sup>.</p>	<p>Here King Edward, lord of the English,                  sent a righteous soul to Christ,                  a holy spirit into God's keeping.                  Here in the world he lived for a while                  In kingly splendour, skilful of counsel;                  In kingly splendour, skilful of counsel;                  23 and a half, a noble ruler,                  in number of winters, distributed riches,                  ruler of heroes, greatly distinguished ruled Welsh                  and Scots, and Britons too, Æðelred's son, Angles                  and Saxons, combatant champions.                  Thus encircle cold sea waves                  all youthful men who loyally obeyed                  Edward, the noble king.                  The blameless king was ever blithe of mood, though                  he long before, bereft of land, lived in paths of exile                  widely through the earth, after Cnut had overcome                  the race of Æðelred, and Danes ruled the dear                  kingdom of the land of the Angles for 28                  winters in number, dispensed riches.                  Afterwards came forth, noble in array,                  A king good in virtues, pure and mild,                  Edward the noble defended homeland,                  country and people, until the very bitter death                  suddenly came and seized so dear                  a prince from the earth. Angels conveyed                  the righteous soul into heaven's light.                  And the wise man though committed the kingdom                  to a distinguished man, Harold himself, a noble earl,                  who at all times                  loyally obeyed his lord                  in words and deeds, neglecting nothing                  of which the people's king was in need.</p>
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The poem does not give the exact date of Edward's death, using instead a formula referring to the number of years of his rule: "XXIII wintra gerimes freolic wealdend, weolan brytnode", 6a-7, "23 and a half, a noble ruler, in number of winters, distributed riches"<sup>36</sup>. It is not easy to agree with those scholars who consider that the poem offers "a clumsy calculation of Edward's date of death"<sup>37</sup>, as the creator of the poem is less interested in establishing the date of King's death than in celebrating the duration of his unusually long rule. The formulaic phrase, mentioning the length of Edward's

<sup>34</sup> It is considered that the Chronicle scribes usually separate the poetic text from the prose with the help of a capital letter (Bredehoft T. A. *Textual Histories: Readings in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. Toronto, 2001. P. 82).

<sup>35</sup> The text of the poem on the death of Edward is quoted from: *The Anglo-Saxon Minor Poems*. Ed. E. van K. Dobbie. New York: Columbia University Press, 1942.

<sup>36</sup> Edward came to power after Harthacnut's death in June 1042 and died in January 1066, so he ruled for 23 and a half years. John of Worcester confirms that Edward ruled for 23 years, 6 months and 27 days: "Anglorum decus, pacificus rex Eduardus, Athelredi Regis filius, postquam xxiii annis, mensibus vi, et xxvii diebus potestate regia prefulit Anglisaxonibus... mortem obit Lundonie. Et in crastino sepultus region more, ab omnibus qui tunc affuere non sine lacrimis plangebatur amarissime" (*The Chronicle of John of Worcester*. Ed. P. McGurk, R.R. Darlington. Oxford, 1995. Vol. II: *The Annals from 450 to 1066*. P. 600).

<sup>37</sup> O'Brien O'Keefe K. Deaths and Transformations: Thinking through the 'End' of Old English Verse. In: *New Directions in Oral Theory*. Ed. M. Amodio. P. 165.

distribution of riches (the twenty three and a half years of his rule), is echoed in another temporal indication, referring to the length of the Danish rule: “XXVIII wintra gerimes welan brytnodon”, 20b-21, “for 28 winters in number, dispensed riches”<sup>38</sup>. Both formulas having identical meaning are used with opposite connotations: if Edward is distributing riches, the Danes are dispersing and wasting the wealth of a country which does not belong to them.

Temporal formulas are not the only ones used in the poem. Each of the lines contains formulas which have parallels in the main poetic corpus<sup>39</sup> or have potential reproducibility (cf. “Engla hlaford”, “lord of the English”; “on Godes wæra”, “into God’s keeping”; “Engle and Seaxe”, “Angles and Saxons”; “lande bereafod”, “bereft of land”; “welan brytnodon”, “dispensed riches”; “land and leode”, “land and people”; “swegles leoht”, “heaven’s light”; “in ealle tid”, “at all times”; “wide geond eorðan”, “widely through the earth”; “wintra gerimes”, “in number of winters”; “wordum and dædum”, “words and deeds”). Approximately half of the formulas are reproduced in the poetic corpus unchanged, the other half allow variations in one of the components: e.g. in the noun, which is included in the formula “a noun + a participle” (“lande bereafod” or “since bereafod”, “ealdre bereafod”, “golde bereafod”, “blæde bereafod”, “dome bereafod”, “deprived of land”, or “deprived of treasure”, “deprived of life”, “deprived of gold”, “deprived of might”, “deprived of fame”) or in the formula “adjective + a noun” (“cræftig ræda” or “wordes cræftig”, “niða cræftig”, “skilled in counsel” or “skilled in words”, “skilled in battle”; “freolic wealdend” or “freolic frumbearn”, “noble ruler”, “noble leader”). The verbs in the formulaic systems of the poem are not usually interchangeable, only their grammatical forms vary: plural number (“welan brytnodan”, “riches dispersed”) or singular number (weolan brytnode, “gave out riches”). The style of the poem on Edward’s death is characterized by highest degree of formulaicity, as formulas occur in it more frequently than in *Beowulf* or the *Battle of Brunanburh* or any other surviving old English poem. The use of formulas brings the poem on Edward’s death close to the tradition of classical alliterative verse, which must have been largely shattered by the time the poem was composed. Since, in terms of quantity of formulas and frequency of their use, the poem substantially surpasses all other poems in the poetic corpus, it is possible to suggest that formulaic style is used in the poem as a poetic device.

Not only formulaic language but also other stylistic features going back to the Anglo-Saxon poetic tradition are characterised by a kind of superfluity in the poem. Syntactic enjambements (e.g. Her Eadward kingc, / Engla hlaford, // sende soþfæste / sawle to Criste, 1-2, se in ealle tid // hyrde holdlice / hærran sinum // wordum and dædum, 31b-33a) are used in the poem more frequently than in classical alliterative verse (in 29 lines out of 33), and syntactical borders coincide with metrical ones in only four lines (3, 14, 21, 28), whereas in the first 64 lines of *Beowulf* they coincide in 11 lines (3, 11, 19, 25, 31, 37, 42, 46, 52, 58, 64). It is possible to conclude that syntactic enjambements are used in the poem on Edward’s death more frequently than in classical alliterative verse.

Like phraseology and syntax, metre in the poem can also be said to be characterised by hyper-correctness. All sound devices used in the poem correspond to the alliterative canon. The prevailing scheme of alliteration is ax/ax, e.g. He on worulda her / wunode þrage), double alliteration is used more rarely, i.e. in thirteen lines (aa/ax, e.g. hyrdon holdlice / hagestealde menn, cf. also lines 2, 9, 13, 14, 17, 23, 24, 25, 27, 28, 31, 32), cross alliteration is used twice with a compound proper name (and Bryttum eac, / byre ædelredes, syððan Cnut ofercom / kynn ædelredes). All metrical types in the poem are distributed exactly as in classical alliterative verse<sup>40</sup>: A-type occurs in more than half the lines (1b, 2b, 4b, 5b 6a, 6b, 7a, 8a, 9a, 9b, 11a, 11b, 12b, 13b, 16b, 17b, 19b, 20a, 20b, 21a, 22b, 23b, 24a, 24b, 25a, 26a, 27a, 27b, 28a, 29b, 30b, 31a, 32b, 33a, 33b); other types are also used as in classical alliterative verse, with B-type prevailing over C (B: 1a, 4a, 8a 10a 15a, 18a22a, 25b, 26b, 28b, 31b, 29a; C: 3a, 5a, 12a, 13a, 19a, 34b), and D-type prevailing over E (D: 2a, 3b, 7b, 10b, 14a,

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<sup>38</sup> The Danish rule started with Sveyn’s invasion in November 1013 and finished with the death of Harthacnut in June 1042, so lasted for 28 years with some breaks.

<sup>39</sup> O’Brien O’Keefe K. *Deaths and Transformations: Thinking through the ‘End’ of Old English Verse*. In: *New Directions in Oral Theory*. Ed. M. Amodio. P. 173-178.

<sup>40</sup> The high metrical regularity of the poem has been commented upon by several scholars. Thomas Cable remarks that “despite the extra syllable in 28a, the poem as a whole can be said to be in the classical meter” (Cable Th. *English Alliterative Tradition* P. 55); Julie Townsend thinks that the regularity of metre in the poem indicates a shift towards rhythmic verse (Townsend J. *The Metre of the Chronicle-verse*. In: *Studia Neophilologica*, Vol. 68. Issue 2. 1996. P. 158).



17a, 18b, 23a, 32a; E: 14b, 30a). The creator of the poem uses A and D types more frequently than C and E types, which contributes to the rhythmical stress on the initial syllables of half-lines<sup>41</sup>. The number of unstressed syllables, varying from four to six, is also exactly the same as in classical alliterative verse.

Variation in the poem is also characterized not only by strict adherence to the canons of alliterative verse but also by a kind of superfluity. In comparison with the variation in *Beowulf*, the variation in the poem on Edward's death is expanded and comprises more members: "Syððan for becom / freolice in geatwum // kyningc kystum god, clæne and milde, // Eadward se æðela, / eðel bewerode, // land and leode", "Afterwards came forth, noble in array, a king good in virtues, pure and mild, Edward the noble defended homeland, country and people", 22-25a. In *Beowulf* variation usually involves two or three members (e.g. "him þæs *Liffrea*, // *wuldres Wealdend* / woroldare forgeaf", "them for that the *Life-Lord, Ruler of Glory*, granted honour on earth", 16b-17; þær æt hyðe stod / *hringedstefna* // *isig ond utfus*, / *æpelingas fær*, "there at the harbour stood with a ringed-prow, icy and keen to sail, a hero's vessel", 32-33); but in the poem on Edward variation includes four appositional constructions, expanding the subject group ("freolice in geatwum // kyningc kystum god, clæne and milde, // Eadward se æðela", "noble in array, a king good in virtues, pure and mild, Edward the noble"), two appositional constructions expanding the object group ("eðel bewerode, // land and leode", "defended homeland, country and people"), as well as two predicates ("for becom", "came forth"; "bewerode", "defended"). The expansion of variation creates the effect of retardation, slowing down the development of the main theme and making the poem static.

Poetic synonyms going back to the common alliterative poetic stock also occur with a higher frequency in the poem on Edward's death than in other Old English poems: in 33 lines 13 denotations of ruler are used, all of which occur in other poetic texts: Eadward (13a) or King Edward (Eadward kingc 1a) is called "Engla hlaford", "lord of the English" 1b; "freolic wealdend", "a noble ruler" 6b; "hæleða wealdend", "ruler of heroes" 8b; "byre Æðelredes", "Æðelred's son" 10b; "æðele king", "the noble king" 13b; "bealuleas kyng", "blameless king" 15b; "kyningc kystum god", "a king good in virtues" 23a; "Eadward se æðela", "Edward the noble" 24a; "deore æðela", "dear prince" 26b-27a; "se froda", "the wise (*man*)" 29a; "hærre", "the lord" 32b. Not only do the denotations of ruler find parallels in other Anglo-Saxon poems, but several lines are partially reproduced in other poetic texts: e.g. the first line of the poem echoes the initial half line of the *Battle of Brunanburgh* ("Her Æðelstan cyning") and almost literally repeats the first line of another Chronicle poem (*The Capture of the Five Boroughs*: "Her Eadmund cyning / Engla þeoden")<sup>42</sup>. It is possible to suggest that the creator of the poem not only followed old models but constructed his poem by reproducing those which already existed in the poetic corpus.

The adherence to the old heroic style in the poem influences the depiction of Edward as a real Germanic hero, the leader of the comitatus, "æðele king" (13b), dispensing treasures ("weolan brytnode" 7b), protecting homeland, country and people ("eðel bewerode, // land and leode" 24b-25). The adjective "æðele" becomes the key word in the poem and is reproduced 6 times in 34 lines (10b, 13b, 18b, 24a, 27a, 31a), including Edward's father's name Æðel+red. As in Old Germanic epic, the weak adjective in post-position ("Eadward se æðela" 24a) is used with the function of conferring eminence underlining Edward's noble descent, his belonging to the Wessex dynasty, stressed once again in Edward's denotation as "byre Æðelredes", "Æðelred's son" 10b. Edward's genealogy is echoed in his denotation as "skillful on counsel" ("cræftig ræda" 5b), because it contains a veiled reference to Æðelræd's name, which means "noble counsel", and to his nick-name "un-ræd"<sup>43</sup>. Æðelræd's nickname (unræd), in which the same root "ræd" is used as in his name (Æðelræd), could be understood as "lacking advice or evil advice", perhaps containing a hint of the murder of his step-brother Edward, which cleared the way to the throne for Æðelred. Unlike his father Æðelræd, who

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<sup>41</sup> Townsend J. *The Metre of the Chronicle-verse*. *Studia Neophilologica*, Vol. 68. Issue 2. 1996. P. 156.

<sup>42</sup> As Katherine O'Brien O'Keefe has pointed out, "Edward is described in the traditional language of lordship as well as of kingship" (O'Brien O'Keefe K. *Deaths and Transformations: Thinking through the 'End' of Old English Verse*. In: *New Directions in Oral Theory*. Ed. M. Amodio. P. 168).

<sup>43</sup> Edward's direct contrasting with his father has been mentioned in: Trilling R.R. P. *The Aesthetics of Nostalgia: Historical Representation in Old English Verse*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009. P. 210.

was called “un-ræd”, “lacking advice”, Edward is presented in the poem as “cræftig ræda”, “skillful in counsel” 5b, “wise”, “se froda” 29a<sup>44</sup>; “bealuleas kyng”, “blameless king” 15b, i.e. an ideal ruler for his country and people.

In accordance with the canons of heroic poetry, Edward is shown as a “ruler of warriors” (“hæleða wealdend” 8b), “noble ruler” (“freolic wealdend” 6b), “noble in array” (“freolice in geatwum”, 22b), “greatly renowned” (“wel gepungen” 9a), a “king great in virtues” (“kyninge kystum god” 23a, reminding the audience of the formula “guma cystum god”, “man great in virtues” used in *Beowulf* 1486, 2543), ruling all the peoples inhabiting his kingdom: Walum and Scottum and Bryttum eac ... Englum and Sexum (9b-11b). Enumerating different peoples of the King’s realm, the creator of the poem composes a list of nations similar to the one in the Anglo-Saxon *Widsith* and singles out Edward’s main characteristics as a ruler, his ability to unite his kingdom, to bring together many nations inhabiting it.

The poem contrasts the two ages of Edward the Confessor: his youth when he like an elegiac hero wandered along the paths of exile<sup>45</sup> (“þeah he lange ær, / lande bereafod, // wunode wræclastum / wide geond eorðan, // syððan Cnut ofercom / kynn Æðelredes // and Dena weoldon / deore rice // Engla landes / XXVIII // wintra gerimes, / welan brytnodon”, “when he long before, bereft of land, lived in paths of exile widely through the earth, after Cnut had overcome the race of Æðelred, and Danes ruled the dear kingdom of the land of the Angles for 28 winters in number, dispensed riches” 16-21) and his death in old age (“oðþæt lungre becom // deað se bitera, / and swa deore genam // æpelne of eorðan”, “until the very bitter death suddenly came and seized so dear a prince from the earth” 26-28). King Edward’s old age is associated with his purity, mildness and wisdom, which leads him to appointing Harold as his heir and descendant on the English throne<sup>46</sup>.

It is the same two ages that are given greatest attention in the prose annals of the Chronicle: the youth of Edward is referred to in the annals for 1013 (Peterborough manuscript: “And se cyning sende Ælfun bisceop mid þam æpelingum Eadwarde and Ælfrede ofer sæ þæt he hi bewitan sceolde”, “And the King (Æðelred) sent Bishop Ælfhun across the sea with the æðelings Edward and Alfred in order that he should look after them”) and for 1014 (Peterborough manuscript: “Ða sende se cyng his sunu Eadward mid his ærendracan hider. 7 het gretan ealne his leodscipe”, “Then the king sent his son Edward here with his messengers, and ordered [them] to greet all his nation”) which, like the poem, narrate his exile and subsequent return to England. After the narrative of exile and return, Edward’s name disappears from the Chronicle till 1041, when it is mentioned again in connection with his final return to England and his coronation (Abingdon manuscript, sub anno 1041: “7 þæs geres sona com Eadward his broðor on medren fram begeondan sæ, Æþelrædes sunu cinges, ðe wæs ær for fela gearon of his earde adrifen, 7 ðeh wæs to cinge gesworen, 7 he wunode þa swa on his broðor hirede þa hwile ðe he leofode”, “And soon in that year came from beyond the sea Edward, his [Harthacnut’s] brother on the mother’s side – King Æðelred’s son, who had been driven from his country many years earlier, and yet was sworn in as king; and then he dwelled thus in his brother’s court as long as he lived”; sub anno 1042: “7 eall folc underfeng ða Eadward to cinge, swa him gecynde wæs”, “And all the people then received Edward as king, as was his natural right”; sub anno 1043: “Her wæs Eadward gehalgod to cinge on Wincestre on forman Easter dæg mid myccelum wyrðscype”, “Here Edward was consecrated as king in Winchester on the first day of Easter with

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<sup>44</sup> Britt Mize suggests that the poem memorializes King Edward not only by his holiness but also by his mental qualities: wisdom and skill in counsel (Mize Br. *Traditional Subjectivities: The Old English Poetics of Mentality*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013. P. 240).

<sup>45</sup> Renée Trilling draws attention to parallels with “Biblical heroes, in whom the Anglo-Saxons saw literary models for their own identity... being deprived of *eðel* and forced to wander on *wræclastum* marks the breaking of faith with God; it is the fate suffered by Adam and Eve, by Cain, and by the Israelites in the desert, and it also informed the myth of migration that was so important to Anglo-Saxon cultural identity” (Trilling R.R. P. *The Aesthetics of Nostalgia: Historical Representation in Old English Verse*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009. P. 210).

<sup>46</sup> Katherine O’Brien O’Keefe has suggested that the tropes of lordship and heroic verse are used in the poem in order to shore up Edward’s image and to assist in legitimating Harold as Edward’s heir (O’Brien O’Keefe K. *Deaths and Transformations: Thinking through the ‘End’ of Old English Verse*. In: *New Directions in Oral Theory*. Ed. M. Amodio. P. 165).

great honour”). Edward must have been around forty when he became King and therefore could hardly have been considered young.

Subsequent prose annals for 1047-1057 narrate King Edward’s deeds between the age of forty four and fifty four: he is bestowing bishoprics (1047-1048), ending contracts (1049), promising payments (1049), calling council-meetings (1051), abolishing taxes (1052), having armed conflicts with Godwine and his sons (1051-1052), abandoning his wife (Godwine’s daughter) and sending her to a nunnery at Wherwell (1051). At the age of sixty King Edward is said in the Chronicle to have appointed rulers in Wales and Northumbria (Worcester manuscript, sub anno 1063, 1065) and to have consecrated the minster in Westminster, in which he was buried (Worcester and Abingdon manuscript, sub anno 1065).

It is possible to compare the way Edward’s youth and old age are presented by the Chronicle poetry and prose with the two ages of the Anglo-Saxon epic hero *par excellence* who is also shown through the contrast of his youth and old age. The two ages of Beowulf make him crucially different from other epic heroes, who are usually shown as if outside aging, either conventionally old (like Hildebrand or Hroðgar) or conventionally young (like Roland or Old Norse epic heroes, such as Sigurðr). Beowulf is the only epic hero whose age changes through the poem: in the first (longer) part of the poem, describing his feats in the Danish realm, the epithet “geong”, “young” (13, 854) is more than a constant epic epithet, together with the formulaic denotations “Ecgþeowes sunu”, “the son of Ecgþeow” 1550, 2367, 2398; “bearn Ecgþeowes”, “the child of Ecgþeow” 529, 631, 957, 1383, 1473, 1651, 1817, 1999, 2177, 2425 (cf. “byre Æðelredes”, “the son of Æðelred” 10b in the Chronicle poem about Edward), which occur more often in the first part than in the second, and are thus endowed with a compositional function. Yet Beowulf’s youth is represented not merely as a temporal characteristic but as a quality of a victorious hero reaching the height of his fame, defending the Danes and restoring the status of their realm. In the poem about Edward the protective function of the hero is also brought into prominence as his main role (Syððan for becom / freolice in geatwum // kyningc kystum god, / clæne and milde, // Eadward se æðela, / eðel bewerode, // land and leode, “Afterwards came forth, noble in array, / a king good in virtues, pure and mild, / Edward the noble defended homeland, / country and people” 22-25), although it is contrasted with the exile in his youth.

Old age for Beowulf as well as for the hero of the Chronicle poem lies not in the frailty associated with it but in its proximity to death (cf. in *Beowulf*: “wyrd ungemete neah se ðone gomelan / gretan sceolde”, “unexperienced fate [is] near which the old man must greet” (2420b–2421). Both poems lead their heroes to the same end: like Beowulf, Edward in the Chronicle is shown as close to death. As in epic poetry, in the Chronicle poem it is not the victory of the hero but his death which becomes the high point in the narration. Beowulf’s death, like Edward’s, foreshadows the ruin of the whole realm:

<p>nu se herewisa hleahtor alegde  gamen ond gleodream. Forðon sceall gar wesan  monig morgenceald mundum bewunden,  hæfen on handa, nalles hearpan sweg  wigend weccan ac se wonna hrefn  fus ofer fægum fela reordian,  earne secgan hu him æt æte speow  þenden he wið wulf wæl reafode  (3020–3027)<sup>47</sup>.</p>	<p>‘now that their leader of warriors has laid down  laughter, joy and merriment. Therefore many,  morning-cold spears must be grasped in palms,  raised in hands, but not at all the sound of harp,  waking the warrior, but the black raven, eager  over those who are doomed to death, speaking of  many things, telling the eagle, how he succeeded  in eating, while he with the wolf plundered  corpse’.</p>
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The death of the king (both in *Beowulf* and in Edward’s poem) signifies the ruin of the kingdom, massive slaughter of people, preyed on by the beasts of battle, the ruin of the nation and of the whole heroic world. Edward’s description as a heroic ruler embodying the might of his kingdom could hardly have been created in the time of his rule (it has been suggested that in later times more attention would have been given to his moral spiritual qualities than to his heroic traits, such as the warrior’s fame, wisdom in ruling<sup>48</sup>). Similarities which were noticed between Edward’s list of virtues in the poem (“clæne and milde”, “clean and mild”, “cræftig ræda”, “wise in counsel”) and the end of

<sup>47</sup> The text of Beowulf is quoted from: *Beowulf and the Fight at Finnsburg*. Ed. with introduction, bibliography, notes, glossary and appendices Fr. Klaeber. 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. London: Heath and company, 1950.

<sup>48</sup> Alistair Campbell in: *Encomium Emmae Reginae*. Ed. A. Campbell. Cambridge, 1998. P. xvi.

*Encomium Emma Reginae* in the Paris manuscript<sup>49</sup> seem to suggest that the creator of the Chronicle poem could have been influenced by the *Encomium*. It has also been considered that the poem was based on the re-use of old material, as Anglo-Saxon churches made use of Roman foundations<sup>50</sup>. But so far it has remained puzzling why, at the demise of the Anglo-Saxon alliterative tradition, the creator of the poem chose the traditional vocabulary, syntax, formulaic style and canonical metre in his poem on the death of the last king of the Wessex dynasty. The demise of the alliterative tradition is manifest in the poem on the murder of Alfred<sup>51</sup> (immediately preceding in the Chronicle the poem on Edward's death) in which rhyme (e.g. **sealde** : ac**wealde**, **bende** : **blende**, **lende**: **blende**, **hamelode** : **hættode**) is used in more than half the lines (the number of rhymed lines in the poem equals the number of lines with alliteration: 14 out of 20<sup>52</sup>) and formulas are virtually absent.

It can be suggested that the creator of the poem deliberately chose to imitate the old heroic style of Anglo-Saxon poetry. Contrary to the views of some scholars, it may be argued that the poem was composed after Edward's death, most likely after the Norman Conquest<sup>53</sup>. Like Germanic epic poetry (and unlike other Chronicle poems) it evokes not the present but the past, and is permeated with yearning for that past, for the peaceful times associated with Edward's reign as opposed to the troubled times of Harold and William<sup>54</sup>. It is possible to see an expression of this logging in the choice of the traditional poetic style at the time when the alliterative verse was going out of use. Thus it might be suggested that the poem, in which each line reminded the audience of the glorious past, was composed as a panegyric to the Anglo-Saxon rulers (*encomium regis*)<sup>55</sup> in whose line Edward was destined to be the last. Its art lies in the use of the characteristic features of alliterative verse (metre, poetic vocabulary, phraseology, syntax) as an extended technical device, reconstructing characteristic features of heroic epic, in elegiac celebration of a lost social world. It is also possible to see another, an ideological, function in the use of the archaic poetic form of alliterative verse. It could have been used by the chroniclers, for the last time after the Norman Conquest, in order to proclaim that it was Edward they considered to be the last Anglo-Saxon King and Harold (not William) his descendant on the English throne. A poetic lament for the last Anglo-Saxon King could best be expressed in the traditional Anglo-Saxon alliterative verse style. The end of the Wessex dynasty would be marked by the last alliterative poem composed in England. With Edward's death not only the dynasty, which had ruled England for five centuries, came to an end, but also the tradition of alliterative verse, which had

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<sup>49</sup> Barlow Fr. *Edward the Confessor*. Yale: Yale University Press, 1997.P. 52.

<sup>50</sup> Trilling R.R. P. *The Aesthetics of Nostalgia: Historical Representation in Old English Verse*. Toronto, 2009. P. 209.

<sup>51</sup> The poem on the death of Edward's brother Alfred the Ætheling was either not considered to be poetry and excluded from the analysis of the Chronicle poems (Townsend J. *The Metre of the Chronicle-verse*. *Studia Neophilologica*, Vol. 68. Issue 2. 1996. P. 143-176); or regarded as belonging to the low poetic tradition (Clark C. *The Narrative Mode of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle before the Conquest. England before the Conquest: Studies in Primary Sources presented to Dorothy Whitelock*. Ed. P.Clemons, K. Hughes. Cambridge, 1971. P. 230); or referred to primitive types of rhymed couplets (Oakden J.P. *The Dialectal and Metrical Survey*. Vol. I *Alliterative Poetry in Middle English*. Manchester, 1930. P. 135), fully breaking with the tradition of Anglo-Saxon alliterative verse (Pearsall D.A. *Old English and Middle English Poetry*. The Routledge History of English Poetry. L.. 1977. P. 71) and belonging to a later poetic tradition of Middle English verse (Friedlander C. v. D. *Early Middle English Accentual Verse*. In: *Modern Philology*. Vol. 76. 1979. P. 222).

<sup>52</sup> Rhyme in the poem on Alfred's death is used so frequently that Ferdinand Holthausen managed to get fully rhymed text only with a few conjectures (Holthausen F. *Zu dem Gedichte von Ælfreds Tode (1036)*. In: *Beiblatt zur Anglia*. Bd. 50. 1937. S. 157-158)

<sup>53</sup> As has been suggested by Katherine O'Brien O'Keefe, the writing of the entry for 1065 was done in three parts: first the opening prose, then the verse which was added afterwards, then the final comment as a later addition (O'Brien O'Keefe K. *Deaths and Transformations: Thinking through the 'End' of Old English Verse*. In: *New Directions in Oral Theory*. Ed. M. Amodio. P. 165).

<sup>54</sup> The end of the Anglo-Saxon period is described in detail in: Stenton Fr. M. *Anglo-Saxon England*. Oxford History of England. Oxford, 2004. P. 545-580.

<sup>55</sup> The genre of the poem has been defined as an obit by Thomas Hill (Hill Th.D. '*The Variegated Obit' as an Historiographic Motif in Old English Poetry and Anglo-Latin Historical Literature*. In: *Traditio*, Vol. 44, 1988. P. 116); as a eulogy by Renée Trilling (Trilling R.R. P. *The Aesthetics of Nostalgia: Historical Representation in Old English Verse*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009. P. 208) and as an epitaph by Catherine A.M. Clarke (Clarke C.A.M. *Writing Power in Anglo-Saxon England. Texts. Hierarchies, Economies*. Cambridge: D.S.Brewer, 2012. P. 63-64).

existed in England for several centuries and, as foreshadowed in *Beowulf*, the whole heroic world embodied in that poetic tradition.

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