

mentioned in the sermons, though less frequently, which also suggests that preachers used sermons as a means of social critique during difficult times, sometimes expressing discontent with war, sometimes expressing discontent with peace.

One popular subject was British trade. Preaching about the strength of British commerce in times of peace and war was also tied to identity formation, as Johnston posits: “There was a common feeling about the widespread gains coming to British society from lively and expansive commercial pursuits” (210).

Religious unity was the overarching theme in the sermons, as Johnston suggests, so dissent from the Anglican ranks was frowned upon. Johnston also notes examples of anti-Catholic sentiment in thanksgiving sermons in the eighteenth century: “Prominent themes included the religious and political characteristics of ‘popery’, the association between Roman Catholicism and fears of persecution for non-Catholics, the doctrinal criticisms of Catholic beliefs and worship, and a clear connection—in British minds—between Catholic motives and the French” (250).

In the chapter titled “Britishness and the Empire,” Johnston illustrates that thanksgiving sermons provided a critique of colonial rule, even questioning the merits of it. The most hauntingly interesting chapter is the last one, “Others and Britons” where Johnston talks about the concept of the Other in the thanksgiving sermons, with various examples ranging from the French to Native Americans and Africans. This is a valuable contribution, for British religious and national identities were also crafted vis-à-vis Others, from both within and without.

Johnston’s assessment of thanksgiving sermons is a valuable contribution to a fuller understanding of the early modern British agenda. It highlights the importance of religious ceremonies as indicators of British psyche. Thanksgiving sermons were not just about thanksgiving: they were indicators of a multifaceted political and cultural agenda of the church in the ancien régime.

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STEFAN JURASINSKI and LISI OLIVER, eds. *The Laws of Alfred: The “Domboc” and the Making of Anglo-Saxon Law*. Studies in Legal History. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021. Pp. 472. \$99.99 (cloth).  
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With *The Laws of Alfred: The “Domboc” and the Making of Anglo-Saxon Law*, Stefan Jurasinski and Lisi Oliver present a much-needed edition and translation of the *domboc* of King Alfred (r. 871–899). Their edition has two parts, each a contribution to early English legal studies. The first part, a monograph-length discussion of the backgrounds to Alfred’s laws, is organized into five chapters that thoroughly situate Alfred’s laws in the longer history of English law: “The Emergence of Written Law in Early England,” “Legal Erudition in Seventh- and Ninth-Century Wessex,” “Oaths, Ordeals, and the ‘Innovations’ of the *Domboc*,” “The Transmission of the *Domboc*,” “Reception, Editorial History, and Interpretative Legacies.” Across these chapters, Jurasinski and Oliver summarize decades of scholarship and synthesize the major arguments concerning sources and the place of Alfred’s laws in West Saxon and the larger English society.

As Jurasinski and Oliver observe in their preface, it was by no means inevitable that the kingdom of Wessex would have produced the foundation of medieval English law, and the rhetorical and political work that the *domboc* performed for both Alfred and his successors was manifold and accretive. Counter to prior editions of Alfred’s laws that treat them as emerging either from a deep Germanic past or as a revolutionary invention that changed the face of English law that followed, Jurasinski and Oliver establish their context with careful attention

to extant evidence from both England and the European mainland. They begin with the seventh-century Kentish laws—an obvious extension and updating of the discussion in Oliver's *Beginnings of English Law* (2002)—then follow through to the rise of Wessex under Ine, whose laws Alfred included as a kind of historical appendix to the *domboc*. Approaching the laws this way allows Jurasinski and Oliver to do away with some antiquated views that seem to linger, such as the notion of the laws' reliance on Germanic oral tradition, and introduce the newcomer or remind the seasoned legal historian of the revised understandings of important matters, such as the role of the church and Anglo-Welsh contact, which were fundamental to Alfred's court and certainly influenced his laws in profound ways.

Although part one is an impressive synthesis of scholarship and a thoughtful contextualization of the *domboc*, part two is what specialist readers come for and what will endure as the standard edition because Jurasinski and Oliver treat the *domboc* as a whole and curate an edition that is reflective of the extant manuscript witnesses. The volume presents the rubrics, the "Mosaic" and "English" prologues to the laws, the laws of Alfred, and the laws of Ine, each with a preface to the individual text, but the texts themselves remain unified. This is an important advance on previous editions, most of which omit the Mosaic prologue entirely, judging it to have no bearing on the laws, and many of which treat Ine's laws as a stand-alone text even though it survives only in copies of Alfred's *domboc*.


Moreover, across the edition, there is substantive commentary in the footnotes that rewards attention. These notes draw connections between clauses in Old English and mainland European law, situate Alfred's laws in relation to scriptural commentary, clarify vocabulary choice in relation to other texts in the Old English corpus, offer philological and cultural commentary, and provide comparisons in the thought of later English writers such as Ælfric or Wulfstan. Two examples give a sense of the kind of value the notes provide. The first, 205n61, explains that the clauses concerning payments for killing a foreigner probably did not include "Welsh taxpayers" because they would not have been viewed as foreigners. As too many studies, older and more recent, have emphasized the foreignness of the Welsh, even imposing modern racialized readings on Old English texts' references to the Welsh, the distinction between the Welsh who were or were not included under West Saxon rule is a welcome one. Another, 235n24, addresses a tricky translation concerning the purchase or sale of a Christian slave's daughter. The note treats both the problematic verb, *gebycge*, the previous commentary on the verb choice, and further clarification of the kind of slave that was likely indicated by the noun *mennen* when considered in light of the history of early English slavery.

My criticisms of this edition are few and of the nitpicking variety. First is the introduction of modern punctuation and capitalization. This is a standard editorial practice, and there is no question that such modernization aids reading, especially for those new to the laws. While normalizing capitalization and punctuation makes reading easier, it also misrepresents what the manuscript itself presents and can provide a definitive reading where the original may have been ambiguous. Nonetheless, the decision is between facilitating reading and preserving manuscript presentation: Jurasinski and Oliver have made their choice and it is a reasonable one. Those interested in the manuscript presentation can easily make use of facsimile editions, at least of Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 173.

Second, a glossary, or at least a concordance of vocabulary would have proved a valuable feature of this edition, especially given the philological strengths of the editors and their extensive commentary in the notes. Nonetheless, volume 2 of Felix Liebermann's *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen* (1903–1916) includes such a feature, and scholars can consult it alongside this new edition of the *domboc*.

As to the translation, while I have my quibbles about occasional inconsistencies and interpretations of obscure passages, I was as likely to find that Jurasinski and Oliver changed my mind about my own long-standing readings as I was to prefer mine to theirs. Moreover, they almost always provide notes to the translation to explain their choices when the Old English is tricky.

In short, Jurasinski and Oliver's edition of the *domboc* largely supplants earlier editions and translations while thoroughly embedding itself in the editorial history and scholarly discussions on the laws. It is a great resource for students and established scholars alike, and it will stand as a testament to the memory of Lisi Oliver.

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KATHRYN KERBY-FULTON. *The Clerical Proletariat and the Resurgence of Medieval English Poetry*. The Middle Ages Series. Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2021. Pp. 432. \$89.95 (cloth).  
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In the late Middle Ages, England was home to a substantial class of highly educated, underemployed clerics engaged in work other than what they had trained and hoped for—a depiction that both explicitly and implicitly mirrors the state of the contemporary humanities. Performing repetitive salaried or piecework that required specialized skills (primarily linguistic, scribal, and musical) but did not provide the security of a priestly benefice, this precarious proletariat left its mark in marginal jottings, self-referential depictions, and formally inventive poetry—lyrical, satiric, dramatic, pastoral—from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century. In *The Clerical Proletariat*, Kerby-Fulton evokes these clerics' intellectual, social, and literary worlds, arguing that the clerical proletarians' "ambidextrous" engagement (15) with clerical and lay settings encouraged vernacular composition, a tendency furthered in many cases by their communal living or working situations. While the production side of this picture might well evoke today's outpouring of tweets, blogs, fan fiction, and other accessible, often situational creative modes, the "career disappointment" (16) side gives a new poignancy to modern academics' awareness of the medieval roots of the university.

Kerby-Fulton opens with an argument for the value of recapturing a long-ago experience of educated male precarity that can shed light on contemporary, and broader, forms of such precarity. She then sketches out the inhabitants of the clerical class who lacked a priestly benefice, which she regards as the ultimate object of their professional desire. The unbeficed include, at various levels of precarity, salaried priests, vicars (choral and otherwise), household chaplains, chantry priests, and choristers; many of these, Kerby-Fulton shows, moonlighted as professional scribes in various contexts. Drawing on extensive and well-established historical scholarship (the work of Michael Bennett and K. L. McHardy is particularly central) and her own investigations of clerical communities and networks and showing their relevance for literary history, Kerby-Fulton brings the landscape of these figures to life. Throughout, she acknowledges both the usefulness and the limits of Marxism for understanding clerical proletarians, noting that in many cases they seem to have found genuine spiritual sustenance in their labor even when working in impecunious, "alienated" situations (178).

Following the opening orientation, Kerby-Fulton examines texts, mostly by writers whose names scholars know, that offer self-referential depictions of their authors' (or sometimes their authors' friends') professional hopes and disappointments, ranging from *The Owl and the Nightingale* up through John Audelay and attending along the way to figures both well known (Layamon, Thomas Hoccleve) and less so (Thedmar, John Tyckhill). Tyckhill, a chantry chaplain, wrote an alliterative love lyric on the back of the rent roll he compiled as "cathedral rent collector" at St. Paul's (98) and copied Latin scientific prose into another; these suggestive adjacencies make him a recurring figure in Kerby-Fulton's evocation of clerics working between lay and ecclesiastical communities and genres. The degree of precarity