In July 2008, as scholars from all over the world gathered at the University of London’s Institute of Historical Research to celebrate Felix Liebermann’s contributions to the study of early English law, another international group also met. This was the assembly of Anglican bishops, which convened at Lambeth Palace to address the pressing problems facing the worldwide Communion. As it happened, the two conferences had something in common, namely, the figure of King Edward the Confessor, the penultimate Saxon ruler before the Norman invasion of 1066, the only medieval English king to be canonized, and the patron saint of Westminster Abbey. Noted for his miracle-working powers and for restoring peace in his kingdom, Edward was also celebrated as a just king who abolished the Danegeld and behaved charitably toward the poor.1

Although he died in 1066, St. Edward continues to be revered in modern ecclesiastical communities. The Anglican Church accords him two feast days, 5 January, probably the date of his death, and 13 October, when Henry III ordered his body translated to Westminster Abbey.2 Then there are the numerous churches throughout the world which claim the Confessor as their patron saint. Most striking perhaps is St. Edward’s evocation in discussions of how best to heal the rift in the international Anglican Communion. Thus, at evensong on 13 July 2008, in the midst of the Lambeth Palace meeting and on the eve of the Liebermann conference, the officiant at Westminster Abbey suggested that Anglicans worldwide look to St. Edward for inspiration. Who, after all, was better equipped to mend the breach than this

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1 The standard biography of Edward is Frank Barlow’s *Edward the Confessor* (Berkeley, 1970).
man of peace and the patron saint of the Abbey which he himself had re-founded? The faithful should remember his holy presence in healing past wounds, as when Becket faced off against Henry II and de Montfort against Henry III. Contemporary feast sermons strike the same note.\footnote{See, e.g. "The Rector’s Sermon at the Civic Service on 12 October 1997," preached by the Reverend P. L. S. Barrett at Winchester Cathedral (http://compton.parish.hants.gov.uk/civicser.htm); and “Sermon delivered by Rev’d Ralph Holden, St. Peter’s Cathedral Adelaide, 19 October 2005” (http://www.monarchist.org.au/membership-bulletins-2005.htm)}

But Edward is more than an ecclesiastical hero. In the medieval and early modern period he was renowned as a great giver of laws, which, according to some medieval sources, he made in his parliaments. The \textit{laga Edwardi}, especially in the form of the \textit{Leges Edwardi}, played an especially significant role in English history. They were closely associated with Magna Carta and sometimes called the first Magna Carta and the “groundwork of all that followed.”\footnote{Sir Edward Coke, \textit{La Neufme Part des Reports de Sr. Edw. Coke} (London, 1613), “To the Reader,” unnumbered.} Writers also equated them with the common law itself, thus making Edward “the father of common law.”\footnote{See, e.g. John Speed, \textit{History of Great Britaine} (London, 1611), pp. 399, 411; Sir Edward Coke, \textit{La Tiere Part Des Reportes del Edward Coke} (London, 1602), "To the Reader," unnumbered; Polydore’s \textit{English History, Containing the first Eight Books, Comprising the Period Prior to the Norman Conquest}, ed. Sir Henry Ellis, (Camden Society) 1 (London, 1846), p. 292; John Foxe, \textit{The first Volume of the Ecclesiastical history contaynyng The Actes and Monumentes of thynges passed in every kinges tyme in this Realm} (London, 1570), pp. 215–16.} So great was the early modern reputation of St. Edward and his laws that in “the century of revolution,” as the 17th century is called, they proved absolutely indispensable to the enemies of the Stuart kings. In the 1628 debates over the Petition of Right, for example, a speaker critical of Charles I’s policies suggested that the king had violated the \textit{lex terrae}, which he identified with St. Edward’s laws.\footnote{The speaker was John Williams, bishop of Lincoln and later archbishop of York, and a long-time critic of the king. \textit{Commons Debates 1628}, eds. Robert C. Johnson and Maija Jansson Cole, assisted by Mary Frear Keeler and William B. Bidwell, 6 vols. (New Haven, 1977), 2:333.} Toward the end of the civil war, the Leveller and “radical Saxonist” Edward Hare offered the \textit{laga Edwardi} as a solution for ending bloodshed between Charles I and the Long Parliament. In his tract \textit{St. Edward’s Ghost}, he traced the nation’s troubles to inequitable and unjust laws. The analectic he prescribed was an admission from the king that he “derived