II \textbf{BEHAVIOUR AND CUSTOMS}
Notions of kingship go back to medieval times: royal power when combined with wisdom, and justice tempered by mercy are essential in any ideal of kingship. In biblical terms, and in the Middle Ages, good kingship is to be seen in terms of a Christian ideal, “Mercy and truth preserve the king; and his throne is upheld by mercy” (A.V. Proverbs 20:28). A mighty king will keep his enemies at bay, or defeat them in battle. I shall revert to these basic principles at the end of this paper. An immediate aim of good kingship may be victory; but a wise king’s ultimate aim is peace for and within his realm. A good king is not a usurper, nor a slayer of kinsmen, neither before nor after his accession. Political notions of constitutionality do not go far back: when kings were absolute there was before the seventeenth century no well-defined notion of constitutionally limiting their prerogative.

Laȝamon writes of many kings in the Brut; Marie-Françoise Alamichel has counted them: there are 114 of them in the long gallery of kings that he presents to us. But, as she says, the subject of his book is not the