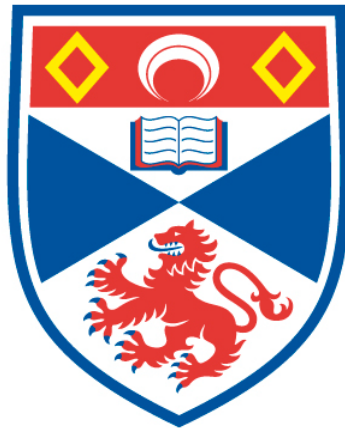# DEPICTIONS OF SAINTHOOD IN THE LATIN SAINTS' LIVES OF TWELFTH-CENTURY ENGLAND

Eilidh Harris

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD
at the
University of St Andrews

2014

Depictions of Sainthood in the Latin Saints' Lives of Twelfth-Century England
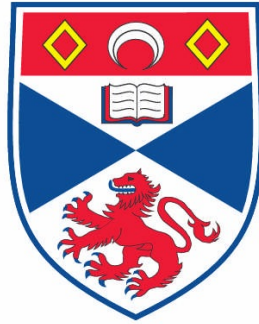
Eilidh Harris

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment for the degree of PhD
at the
University of St Andrews

26 May 2014

✦ Declarations ✦

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I, Eilidh Harris, hereby certify that this thesis, which is approximately $80,000$ words in length, has been written by me, and that it is the record of work carried out by me, or principally by myself in collaboration with others as acknowledged, and that it has not been submitted in any previous application for a higher degree.

I was admitted as a research student in September 2010 and as a candidate for the degree of PhD in May 2011, the higher study for which this is a record was carried out in the University of St Andrews between 2010 and 2014.

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✦ Abstract ✦

This thesis examines the depiction of saintly figures within the Latin *vitae* of twelfth-century England (1066–c.1215). It tests the extent to which these depictions are homogeneous and examines what factors may have shaped representations. Analysis focuses on *vitae* of twelfth-century saints, a sample of texts that have not previously been examined as a corpus in this way. By encompassing a range of different types of saint, authors and contexts, utilising this corpus allows a comparative examination of how different facets of sainthood could be expressed in hagiography.

The textual analysis at the heart of this study aims to unpick individual texts' ideals of saintly behaviour. Whilst hagiographers functioned within a well-established genre, considering a wide range of saints' *vitae* allows scrutiny of the impact of context in shaping depictions. It will be argued that these portrayals of saintly figures demonstrate thematic harmony which is tempered by individuality and context to form recognisable and yet distinctive depictions of sainthood.

The analysis is structured around four common hagiographical themes, each worthy of detailed examination: Outer Appearance, Sexuality and Chastity, Food and Fasting, and Death. Chapter 1 investigates how saintly figures are described in terms of physical appearance, deportment and demeanour, and clothing. Chapter 2 focuses upon sexuality, exploring the manifestations of chastity and virginity within the *Lives* and testing how this might vary from saint to saint and between the sexes. Chapter 3 examines food and food abstention, previously under-represented in secondary literature on twelfth-century hagiography and on male saints. The thesis ends with a consideration of death, a surprisingly understudied theme in Anglophone scholarship. By examining the process of dying and the moment of mortality, this chapter will fill an important analytical vacuum between lived sanctity and sanctity in death.

✦ Table of Contents ✦

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✦ Acknowledgements ✦

✦ Abbreviations ✦

AASS	*Acta sanctorum*, 68 vols to date (Antwerp, Brussels etc., 1643–).
Anonymous, *Vita Ædwardi*	*The Life of King Edward who Rests at Westminster: Attributed to a Monk of Saint-Bertin*, ed. and trans, Frank Barlow (2nd ed., Oxford, 1992).
Ailred, *Vita S. Edwardi*	Ailred of Rievaulx, *Vita S. Edwardi regis et confessoris, PL*, 195, col. 737-90. Translated in Ailred of Rievaulx, *Life of St. Edward Confessor*, trans. Jerome Bertram (2nd ed., Southampton, 1997).
Barlow, 'Introduction'	Frank Barlow, 'Introduction', in *The Life of King Edward Who Rests at Westminster: Attributed to a Monk of Saint-Bertin*, ed. and trans. by Frank Barlow (2nd ed., Oxford, 1992), pp. xvii–lxxxi.
Bartlett, *WCD?*	Robert Bartlett, *Why Can the Dead do Such Great Things?: Saints and Worshippers from the Martyrs to the Reformation* (Princeton, 2013).
BR	Benedict of Nursia, *The Rule of St Benedict*, ed. and trans. by Bruce L. Venarde (Cambridge, 2011).
Brown, *Body and Society*	Peter Brown, *The Body and Society: Men, Women and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (New York, 1988).
CCCM	*Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Mediaevalis*
Consuet. Cart.	Guigo I, *Coutumes de Chartreuse*, ed. and trans. Chartreux (Paris, 2001).
Daniel, 'Letter to Maurice'	Walter Daniel, 'Epistola ad Mauricum' in, *Vita Ailredi*, pp. 66-81.
DMLBS	R. E. Latham and David R. Howlett (eds.), *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British and Irish Sources* (London, 1975–).
Ead, *VD*	Eadmer, *Vita Dunstani*, in *Lives and Miracles of Saints Oda, Dunstan, and Oswald*, ed. and trans. Andrew J. Turner and Bernard J. Muir (Oxford, 2006), pp. 41–105.
Ead, *Vita Oswaldi*	Eadmer, *Vita Oswaldi*, in *Lives and Miracles of Saints Oda, Dunstan, and Oswald*, ed. and trans. Andrew J. Turner and Bernard J. Muir (Oxford, 2006), pp. 213–289.

Ead, *Vita Wilfridi*	*Vita Sancti Wilfridi Auctore Edmero: The Life of Wilfrid by Edmer*, ed. and trans. Bernard J. Muir and Andrew J. Turner (Exeter, 1998).
ES, *Vita Wilfridi*	*The Life of Bishop Wilfrid by Eddius Stephanus*, ed. and trans. by Bertram Colgrave (Cambridge, 1927; repr. 1985).
Foreville and Keir, 'Introduction'	Raymonde Foreville and Gillian Keir, 'Introduction', in *The Book of St Gilbert,* ed. and trans. *eadem* (Oxford, 1987), pp. xv–cxiii.
Geoffrey, *Vita Godrici*	Geoffrey of Durham, *Vita S. Godrici,* AASS, 21 May V, pp. 70–85.
Gerald, *Vita Hugonis*	Gerald of Wales (Giraldus Cambrensis), *The Life of St. Hugh of Avalon, Bishop of Lincoln, 1186–1200*, ed. and trans. Richard M. Loomis (New York, 1985).
GPA	William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum: The History of the English Bishops*, ed. and trans. M. Winterbottom and R. M. Thomson, 2 vols (Oxford, 2007).
GRA	William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum Anglorum: The Deeds of the English Kings*, ed. and trans. R.A.B. Mynors, R.M. Thomson and M. Winterbottom, 2 vols (Oxford, 1999).
Instituta	'Instituta Generalis Capituli Apud Cistercium', in *Narrative and Legislative Texts from Early Cîteaux: Latin text in dual edition with English translation and notes*, ed. by Chrysogonus Waddell (Cîteaux, 1999), pp. 453-497.
JS, *Vita Anselmi*	John of Salisbury, *Vita Anselmi* in *Joannis Saresberiensis Opera Omnia*, ed. by J.A. Giles, 5 vols (Oxford, 1848), V, pp. 305-357.
Latham	R. E. Latham, *Revised Medieval Latin Word-List from British and Irish Sources* (London, 1965).
LDT	Michael Staunton (trans.), *The Life and Death of Thomas Becket* (Manchester, 2001).

Liber Eliensis	*Liber Eliensis*, ed. by E. O. Blake (London, 1962). Translation in, *Liber Eliensis: A History of the Isle of Ely from the seventh century to the twelfth compiled by a monk of Ely in the twelfth century*, trans. Janet Fairweather (Woodbridge, 2005).
Life of Christina	*The Life of Christina of Markyate: A Twelfth Century Recluse*, ed. and trans. C.H. Talbot (Oxford, 1959; revised and repr. Toronto, 2005). A revised English translation, which takes into account some corrections to Talbot's text, was prepared by Samuel Fanous and Henrietta Leyser: *The Life of Christina of Markyate*, ed. by Samuel Fanous and Henrietta Leyser (Oxford, 2008).
MGH	*Monumenta Germaniae Historica*.
Monastic Constitutions	Lanfranc, *The Monastic Constitutions of Lanfranc*, ed. and trans. Christopher N. L. Brooke (Oxford, 2002).
MTB	J.C. Robertson and J.B. Sheppard (eds.), *Materials for the Study of Thomas Becket,* 7 vols, Rolls Series 67 (London, 1875-1885), I-IV (1875–1897).
MVSH	Adam of Eynsham, *Magna Vita Sancti Hugonis. The Life of St Hugh of Lincoln*, ed. and trans. Decima L. Douie and David Hugh Farmer, 2 vols (Oxford, 1985).
ODS	David Farmer, *The Oxford Dictionary of Saints* (5th ed., Oxford, 2011).
OLD	P. G. W. Glare and Christopher Stray (eds), *Oxford Latin Dictionary* (2nd ed., Oxford, 2012).
Osb, *VD*	Osbern of Canterbury, *Vita Sancti Dunstani,* in *Memorials of St Dunstan, archbishop of Canterbury,* ed. by William Stubbs, Rolls Series, 63 (London, 1874), pp. 68–164.
Osbert, *Vita beati Eadwardi*	Osbert of Clare, *Vita beati Eadwardi*, ed. by M. Bloch, 'La vie de S. Edouard le Confesseur par Osbert de Clare', *Analecta Bollandiana*, 41 (1923), pp. 5-131.
PL	J. P. Migne (ed.), *Patrologia cursus completus: Patrologia Latina*, 221 vols, (Paris, 1844–64).

Rule of St Augustine	*Augustine of Hippo and his Monastic Rule,* ed. and trans. George Lawless (Oxford, 1987; repr. 1991).
RS, *Vita Wenefredae*	*The Life of St Wenefred: Virgin and Martyr*, ed. and trans. Thomas Swift (London, 1888).
Senatus, *Vita Wulfstani*	Senatus of Worcester (attrib.), *Vita Wulfstani* in *The Vita Wulfstani of William of Malmesbury*, ed. Reginald R. Darlington (London, 1928), pp. 68-108.
Staunton, *Becket and his Biographers*	Michael Staunton, *Thomas Becket and his Biographers* (Woodbridge, 2006).
VA	Eadmer, *The Life of St Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury*, ed. and trans. R.W. Southern (Oxford, 1962; repr. 1972).
Vauchez, *Sainthood*	André Vauchez, *Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages,* trans. by Jean Birrell (Cambridge, 1997).
Vita Ailredi	Walter Daniel, *The Life of Ailred of Rievaulx*, ed. and trans. by Maurice Powicke (Oxford, 1950; repr. 1978).
Vita Antonii	Evagrius of Antioch, *Vita beati Antonii Abbatis, Auctore Sancto Athanasio, Episcopo Alexandrino, Interprete Evagrio Presbytero Antiocheno*, *PL*, 73, col. 125-167.
Vita Bartholomaei	Geoffrey of Durham (Coldingham), *Vita Bartholomaei Farnensis,* in *Symeonis monachi opera Omnia*, ed. T. Arnold, Rolls Series, 75, 2 vols (1882-5), I (1882), pp. 295-325.
Vita Edithe	Goscelin, *Vita S. Edithe*, ed. A. Wilmart, 'La légende de Ste Édithe en prose et vers par le moine Goscelin', *Analecta Bollandiana*, 56 (1938), pp. 5-101, 265-307. Translations based on Goscelin, 'The *Vita* of Edith', trans. by Michael Wright and Katheleen Loncar in *Writing the Wilton Women: Goscelin's Legend of Edith and Liber Confortatorius*, ed. by W. R. Barnes and Stephanie Hollis (Turnhout, 2004), pp. 17–98.
Vita Godrici Throckenholt	'The *Life* and Miracles of Godric of Throckenholt', ed. and trans. Tom Licence, *Analecta Bollandiana*, 124 (2006), pp. 15-43.
Vita Gundulfi	*The Life of Gundulf Bishop of Rochester*, ed. Rodney Thomson (Toronto, 1977). The Latin text

has been translated by the nuns of Malling Abbey, *The life of the venerable man, Gundulf, bishop of Rochester* (West Malling, 1984).

Vita Margaretae   Turgot, *Vita S. Margaretae* in *Pinkerton's Lives of the Scottish Saints*, ed. W.M. Metcalfe, 2 vols (Paisley, 1998), II, pp. 159-82.   Translated in *Ancient Lives of Scottish Saints*, trans. W. M. Metcalfe (Paisley, 1895), pp. 297-321.

Vita Martini   Severus Sulpicius, *Vie de Saint Martin*, ed. and trans. Jacques Fontaine, 3 vols (Paris, 1976), I.

Vita Moduenne   Geoffrey of Burton, *Life and Miracles of St Modwenna*, ed. and trans. Robert Bartlett (Oxford, 2002).

Vita Odonis   Eadmer, *Vita S. Odonis* in *Lives and Miracles of Saints Oda, Dunstan, and Oswald*, ed. and trans. Andrew J. Turner and Bernard J. Muir (Oxford, 2006), pp. 1-40.

Vita Prima Wenefredae   *Vita Prima Sancti Wenefredae* in *Vitae sanctorum Britanniae et genealogiae*, ed. and trans. A.W. Wade-Evans (1944), pp. 288-309.

Vita Remigii   Gerald of Wales, *Vita S. Remigii*, ed. J. F. Dimock in *Giraldus Cambrensis Opera*, ed. by J. S. Brewer, J. F. Dimock and G. F. Warne, 8 vols, Rolls Series, 21 (London, 1861-1891), VII (1877), pp. 1–80.

Vita Sexburge   Goscelin, *Vita Beate Sexburge Regine* in *The Hagiography of the Female Saints of Ely*, ed. and trans. Rosalind Love (Oxford, 2004) pp. 133-189.

Vita Waldevi   George Joseph McFadden, 'An Edition and Translation of the Life of Waldef, Abbot of Melrose by Jocelin of Furness', (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Columbia, 1952).

Vita Werburge   Goscelin, *Vita S. Werburge* in *The Hagiography of the Female Saints of Ely*, ed. and trans. Rosalind Love (Oxford, 2004), pp. 25-51.

Vita Wihtburge   Goscelin, *Vita S. Wihtburge*, in *Hagiography of the Female Saints of Ely*, ed. and trans. Rosalind Love (Oxford, 2004), pp. 53-93.

Vita Wulfrici   *Wulfric of Haselbury, by John, Abbot of Ford*, ed. by Maurice Bell, Somerset Record Society, 47

✦ Note ✦

References to translations published separately from the Latin editions are given in round brackets after reference to the Latin text. Significant modifications to published translations have been noted in the footnotes. Where translations are entirely my own, only reference to the Latin text has been given.

Spelling has been retained as it appears in printed editions, although punctuation has been modernised.

✦ Introduction ✦

On their deathbeds, most saintly figures look forward joyfully towards death. Not St Anselm of Canterbury. Anselm was instead concerned that if God chose to take him at that moment, then no one would ever solve the theological problem he was tackling. Nonetheless, Anselm conceded; if it was God's will that he should die, then he would gladly obey.[1] This anecdote from Eadmer's *Vita Anselmi* demonstrates that hagiographers were not always strictly bound by convention when it came to depicting their protagonists. What is striking in this case is that Eadmer brings Anselm's veracity (or perhaps pomposity) as a scholar to the fore, rather than adhering strictly to hagiographical models. This example touches upon some of the questions that this thesis seeks to explore: Just how uniform were depictions of saintly figures in twelfth-century England? When the saints' *vitae* of this period are examined collectively, what similarities and variations can be seen? And what factors might influence these depictions?

This study examines the depiction of saintly figures within the Latin *vitae* of post-Conquest England (1066-c. 1215), specifically concentrating on the corpus of *Lives* relating to twelfth-century saints. These texts have rarely been examined collectively, and have not been studied comparatively to explore their depictions of sainthood. Through comparative textual analysis, this study will augment existing scholarship on hagiography and sainthood by surveying this under-represented corpus. The analysis is channelled through four themes: Outer Appearance, Chastity and Sexuality, Food and Fasting, and Death. Within these 'standard' themes, analysis aims to unpick the individual texts' ideals of saintly behaviour. I argue that the

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[1] *VA*, pp. 141–142.

representations of saintly figures within these texts demonstrate thematic harmony, which is tempered by individual nuance and context to form recognisable and yet distinctive depictions of sainthood.

The study of hagiography has flourished in recent decades; the bibliographies compiled by Stephen Wilson and Thomas Head attest to the proliferation of work on hagiography and the cult of saints.[2] The late seventies and eighties witnessed the introduction of a variety of sociological approaches, including the application of quantitative and social-scientific methods to canonisation processes and saints' *vitae*.[3] Such approaches have been criticised both for neglecting the shared motifs of sainthood that cut across categories of saint, and for overlooking the specificities of individual circumstance.[4] Partly in response to these quantitative methodologies, certain scholarship has moved towards closer readings of saints' *Lives*. Emerging out of the linguistic turn, some scholars were influenced by post-modern approaches. Thomas Heffernan, for example, utilised a methodology concentrating on genre and text, rather than focusing on empiricist concerns of historicity. He examined the literary conventions of the hagiographical genre, emphasising the edificatory purpose of these texts, and how hagiographers worked within the tradition of Christ to present their

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[2] Stephen Wilson (ed.), *Saints and Their Cults: Studies in Religious Sociology, Folklore and History* (Cambridge, 1983), pp. 309–419; Thomas Head (ed.), *Medieval Hagiography: An Anthology* (London, 2001), pp. xxvi–xxxii. Robert Bartlett's recent volume on the cult of saints demonstrates the continuing vitality of study, Bartlett, *WCD?*.

[3] For example, Michael Goodich, *Vita Perfecta: The Ideal of Sainthood in the Thirteenth Century*, (Stuttgart, 1982); André Vauchez, *La sainteté en occident aux derniers siècles du moyen âge d'après les procès de canonisation et les documents hagiographiques* (Rome, 1981), published in English as, *idem, Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages,* trans. Jean Birrell (Cambridge, 1997); Weinstein and Bell, *Saints and Society*. The first two studies are based on canonisation dossiers and the last on saints' *vitae*. The work of Peter Brown has also been critical to the development of the study of the cult of saints. See, for example, Peter Brown, 'The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity', *The Journal of Roman Studies*, 61 (1971), pp. 80–101; *idem, The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago, 1981); *idem*, 'The Saint as Exemplar in Late Antiquity', *Representations*, 2 (1983), pp. 1–25.

[4] See Richard Kieckhefer, *Unquiet Souls: Fourteenth-Century Saints and Their Religious Milieu* (Chicago; Chicago, 1984), pp. 18–20; Aviad M. Kleinberg, *Prophets in Their Own Country: Living Saints and the Making of Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages* (Chicago, 1992), pp. 9–17.

subject demonstrating the 'corporate personality' of sainthood.[5] This kind of approach, however, tends to reduce hagiographical texts to their constituent literary and rhetorical resonances, to the exclusion of historical context and the idiosyncrasies of individual depictions.[6]

Richard Kieckhefer adopted a different method in response to studies that systematised sainthood, taking what he called a 'theological' approach, drawing out the shared themes of fourteenth-century sainthood which he suggested were also apparent in the broader devotional culture of the time.[7] A further methodology has been to examine the performativity or self-fashioning nature of living sainthood; for example, Aviad M. Kleinberg was less interested in the texts as literary representations and more in the negotiation that took place between figures who sought sainthood and their audiences.[8] A number of scholars have used a gendered approach to study hagiographical depictions of saints, some asserting the importance of examining the *Lives* themselves, rather than using them to reconstruct the historical saints, and others

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[5] Thomas J. Heffernan, *Sacred Biography: Saints and Their Biographers in the Middle Ages* (New York, 1988), for 'corporate personality' see p. 157. For another approach to literary motifs see Alison Goddard Elliott, *Roads to Paradise: Reading the Lives of the Early Saints* (Hanover, 1987). On postmodernism and hagiography see also, Felice Lifshitz, 'Beyond Positivism and Genre: "Hagiographical" Texts as Historical Narrative', *Viator*, 25 (1994), pp. 95–114.

[6] Patrick Geary, 'Saints, Scholars, and Society: The Elusive Goal', in *Living with the Dead in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, 1994), pp. 9–29 (p. 17); See also Sharon K. Elkins, 'Review: Thomas J. Heffernan, *Sacred Biography: Saints and Their Biographers in the Middle Ages*', *Speculum*, 66: 2, (1991), pp. 417–419.

[7] See Kieckhefer, *Unquiet Souls*, esp. pp. 1–20.

[8] Kleinberg, *Prophets in Their Own Country*. See also Nancy Caciola, 'Through a Glass, Darkly: Recent Work on Sanctity and Society. A Review Article', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 38 (1996), pp. 301–309 (esp. pp. 302–304). Also the debate between R.W. Southern and Sally Vaughn regarding the extent to which St Anselm of Canterbury modified his behaviour to conform to the types of actions commonly associated with hagiography: R. W. Southern, 'Sally Vaughn's Anselm: An Examination of the Foundations', *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies*, 20 (1988), pp. 181–204; Sally N. Vaughn, 'Anselm: Saint and Statesman', *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies*, 20 (1988), pp. 205–20. Vaughn originally set out her argument in two earlier articles: *eadem*, 'St. Anselm: Reluctant Archbishop?', *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies*, 6 (1974), pp. 240–50 and *eadem*, 'St. Anselm of Canterbury: The Philosopher-Saint as a Politician', *Journal of Medieval History*, 1 (1975), pp. 279–305. Marylou Ruud, '"Unworthy Servants": The Rhetoric of Resignation at Canterbury, 1070–1170', *Journal of Religious History*, 22 (1998), pp. 1–13 also suggests that there is a relationship between the topoi used in episcopal saints *Lives* and the actions of real bishops.

the relationship between saint and hagiographer.[9] Other scholars have chosen to approach saints' *Lives* by focusing on a particular type of saint or the canon of works surrounding one particular subject.[10]

Thus, whilst saints' *vitae* might once have been criticised for providing little historical detail and favouring the general over the individual, recent scholarship demonstrates that hagiography is open to a variety of interpretations and approaches. These collectively serve to highlight the various nuances and similarities within the genre across time and space. Post-modern methodologies that favour genre and form over context tend to lose sight of the mutability of sainthood. Nonetheless, when approaching hagiographical *vitae*, the long-standing textual tradition cannot be overlooked. In order to present a persuasive case for their subject's sainthood, hagiographers relied upon drawing parallels with earlier recognisably saintly characters. This thesis adopts a comparative approach, across a range of *vitae,* seeking to balance genre and circumstance. Whilst hagiographical *vitae* as a genre can be highly conventional and repetitive, it is important to acknowledge how hagiographers adapted convention to fit their particular historical moment or subject.[11]

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[9] For these different approaches see John Kitchen, *Saints' Lives and the Rhetoric of Gender: Male and Female in Merovingian Hagiography* (New York, 1998) and Catherine M. Mooney (ed.), *Gendered Voices: Medieval Saints and Their Interpreters* (Philadelphia, 1999). For an appraisal of these works see Katherine J. Lewis, 'Gender and Sanctity in the Middle Ages', *Gender & History*, 12 (2002), pp. 735–744. See also Lynda L. Coon, *Sacred Fictions: Holy Women and Hagiography in Late Antiquity* (Philadelphia, 1997); Jane Tibbetts Schulenburg, *Forgetful of Their Sex: Female Sanctity and Society, 500–1100* (Chicago, 1998); Caroline Walker Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women* (Berkeley, 1986).

[10] For example, on lay sanctity see André Vauchez, 'Lay People's Sanctity in Western Europe: Evolution of a Pattern (Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries)', in *Images of Sainthood in Medieval Europe*, ed. by Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski and Timea Szell (Ithaca, 1991), pp. 21–32; Stuart Airlie, 'The Anxiety of Sanctity: St Gerald of Aurillac and His Maker', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 43 (1992), pp. 372–395; Joanna Huntington, 'Lay Male Sanctity in Early Twelfth-Century England' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of York, 2004). On queen-saints, Sean Gilsdorf (trans.), *Queenship and Sanctity: The Lives of Mathilda and The Epitaph of Adelheid* (Washington, D.C, 2004), esp. pp. 1–67. On particular saints for the period in question see, Catherine Keene, *Saint Margaret, Queen of the Scots* (New York, 2013), esp. ch. 7; Staunton, *Becket and his Biographers*.

[11] See Aviad M. Kleinberg, 'Proving Sanctity: Selection and Authentication of Saints in the Later Middle Ages', *Viator*, 20 (1989), pp. 183–205; Robert Bartlett, 'Rewriting Saints' Lives: The Case of Gerald of

It is important to establish the scope of this thesis. Firstly, the core corpus of texts utilised are the hagiographical *vitae* written in England over the 'long' twelfth century (1066–c.1215), which have as their subject saintly figures who died within the same time frame. Although twelfth-century *vitae* of pre-Conquest saints will also be referenced, they do not form the focus of analysis; this is not primarily a study of how the *vitae* of earlier saints were re-written in the twelfth century. Focusing on the *Lives* of twelfth-century saints facilitates a combination of close analysis within, and comparative survey across, the sample. Subsequently, although attentive to context, this thesis concentrates on textual depictions of saintly figures and thus is not mainly concerned with the performativity or self-fashioning of sainthood.[12] As the analysis is concerned with textual depictions, the epithet 'saint' has been applied to any figure who was the subject of a *vita* aimed at promoting distinct holiness and sanctity.[13]

The focus of study is the depiction of saintly behaviour *in vita*. The period has been highlighted as a time in which 'lived sanctity' was gaining currency with contemporary writers.[14] Sanctity in Anglo-Saxon England has been characterised as a localised phenomenon, which focused on the posthumous power of relics; by the early twelfth century a growing propensity for sanctity demonstrated through virtue was

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Wales', *Speculum*, 58 (1983), pp. 598–613 (p. 598); cf. Timothy Reuter, 'Bishops, Rites of Passage, and the Symbolism of State in Pre-Gregorian Europe', *The Bishop: Power and Piety at the First Millennium*, ed. Sean Gilsdorf, pp. 23–36, (p. 36); Julia M. H. Smith, 'Review Article: Early Medieval Hagiography in the Late Twentieth Century', *Early Medieval Europe*, 1 (1992), pp. 69–76.

[12] Cf. Kitchen, *Saints' Lives and the Rhetoric of Gender*, pp. 16–17.

[13] For some of these figures cultic evidence is scant, for example, Gundulf of Rochester and Christina of Markyate. On Christina see Bartlett, *WCD?*, p. 148, n. 30 and Samuel Fanous and Henrietta Leyser, 'Introduction' in *The Life of Christina of Markyate*, ed. by *eadem* (Oxford, 2008), pp. vii–xxviii (pp. xii-xxvi). On Gundulf see, Julie Potter, 'The *Vita Gundulfi* in Its Historical Context', *Haskins Society Journal*, 7 (1995), pp. 89–100.

[14] See Huntington, 'Lay male sanctity', pp. 6–7; cf. Vauchez, *Sainthood*, p. 499ff on the sanctity of virtue and canonization; see also Kleinberg, 'Proving Sanctity', p. 197ff. Miracles, of course, remained important: see Bartlett, *WCD?*, pp. 336–342.

emerging.[15] Concentrating on sanctity in life, this analysis will thus complement those on thaumaturgic aspects of sanctity.[16]

So why twelfth-century England? The first reason is historiographical: these texts are rarely considered holistically and remain under-represented in studies of saints' *Lives*. Taking a more comprehensive approach and reappraising them for what they can reveal about sainthood thus supplements hagiological scholarship.[17] Furthermore, a number of factors recommend this particular corpus of texts. It is well acknowledged that England witnessed a growth in the production of historical and hagiographical texts after the Norman Conquest.[18] A number of the saints' *vitae* written at this time concerned figures who had lived and died in the period after the Conquest; for the purposes of this thesis, these texts provide a manageable sample of *Lives* for comparison, relating to 19 saints.[19] The *vitae* represent a variety of types of saints, authors and contexts, making them ideal for cross-textual comparison. This sample is

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[15] Michael Lapidge, 'The Saintly Life in Anglo-Saxon England', *The Cambridge Companion to Old English Literature*, ed. by Malcolm Godden and Michael Lapidge (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 251–272 (p. 245). On the decline in miracles in *vita* see R. I. Moore, 'Between Sanctity and Superstition: Saints and Their Miracles in the Age of Revolution', in *The Work of Jacques Le Goff and the Challenges of Medieval History*, ed. by Miri Rubin, (Woodbridge, 1997), pp. 55–67 (pp. 61-62); cf. Huntington, 'Lay Male Sanctity', pp. 6-7. For twelfth-century *Lives* playing down miracles see *Vita Margaretae*, p. 176; *Vita S. Werburge*, pp. 38–39; and favouring virtue see *VSG*, pp. 94–95; *MVSH*, II, p. 90.

[16] See, for example, Simon Yarrow, *Saints and Their Communities: Miracle Stories in Twelfth-Century England* (Oxford, 2006).

[17] Most approaches to English hagiography of this period have not examined depictions and tend to favour hagiographies of one particular saint or author, cultic activity or examine historical or cultural change. See for example, S. J. Ridyard, '*Condigna Veneratio*: Post-Conquest Attitudes to the Saints of the Anglo-Saxons', *Anglo-Norman Studies*, 9 (1986), pp. 179–206; Paul Antony Hayward, 'Translation-Narratives in Post-Conquest Hagiography and English Resistance to the Norman Conquest', *Anglo-Norman Studies*, 21 (1999), pp. 67–93; Huntington, 'Lay Male Sanctity'; Staunton, *Becket and His Biographers*; Yarrow, *Saints and Their Communities*; Helen Birkett, *The Saints' Lives of Jocelin of Furness: Hagiography, Patronage and Ecclesiastical Politics* (Woodbridge, 2010); Keene, *Saint Margaret*. For a review of the historiography of English hagiography, now slightly out of date but still useful, see Michael Lapidge and Rosalind Love, 'Hagiography in the British Isles 500–1550: Retrospect (1968-1998) and Prospect', *Hagiographica*, 6 (1999), pp. 69–89.

[18] See for example R. W. Southern, 'Presidential Address: Aspects of the European Tradition of Historical Writing: 4. The Sense of the Past', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5, 23 (1973), 243–263; S. J. Ridyard, 'Condigna Veneratio', pp. 179–206; Robert Bartlett, 'Cults of Irish, Scottish and Welsh Saints in Twelfth-Century England', in *Britain and Ireland 900–1300: Insular Responses to Medieval European Change*, ed. by Brendan Smith (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 67–86.

[19] See below, p. 9. Edward the Confessor, of course, died in 1066, prompting the Conquest.

also especially interesting because of the close proximity of many of the hagiographers to their subjects; several of the texts have been seen as examples of 'intimate biography' as well as hagiographical works.[20] Writing the *Life* of someone within living memory might involve different demands to writing one of long-dead saints.[21] Although the focus of this study is not the historical saints themselves, this relationship adds to the depiction of sainthood and must be considered when examining the variances in representation across standard themes.

Finally, the twelfth century sits at a crucial point in the development of various wider religious trends, which may have influenced depictions of sanctity. For example, the concerted emphasis on clerical celibacy, which formed one of the central aims of the so-called Gregorian Reform movement, has been identified as one area of renegotiation that had important ramifications for the identity of religious men and relations between *laici* and *clerici*. This may subsequently have influenced concepts of sanctity.[22] Furthermore, it was only at the end of this period that the formal process of papal canonisation started to solidify. These texts were therefore largely forged at a time when depictions of sainthood might be considered more fluid.[23]

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[20] Ienje van't Spijker, 'Saints and Despair: Twelfth-Century Hagiography as "Intimate Biography"', in *Invention of Saintliness,* ed. by Anneke B. Mulder-Bakker (London, 2002), pp. 185–205. Many of the texts have been viewed as demonstrating various genres of writing. See for example Lois L. Huneycutt, 'The Idea of the Perfect Princess: The Life of St. Margaret in the Reign of Matilda II (1100-1118)', *Anglo-Norman Studies*, 12 (1989), pp. 81–97; Raymonde Foreville and Gillian Keir, 'Introduction', in *The Book of St. Gilbert*, ed. and trans. by *eaedem* (Oxford, 1987), pp. xv–cxiii (pp. lxxv–lxxxiv); Barlow, 'Introduction', pp. xxii–xxiii; Leyser and Fanous, 'Introduction', pp. xii-xxvi; R.W. Southern, *Saint Anselm and his Biographer* (Cambridge, 1963), p. 229.

[21] Cf. Kleinberg, *Prophets in their Own Country,* p. 2.

[22] See Huntington, 'Lay male sanctity', p. 19ff. On the papal reforms see, for example, Colin Morris, *The Papal Monarchy: The Western Church from 1050 to 1250* (Oxford, 1989), esp. pp. 79-108 (reform of the clergy discussed at pp. 101ff); C. N. L. Brooke, 'Gregorian Reform in Action: clerical marriage in England, 1050-1200', *The Cambridge Historical Journal*, 12 (1956), pp. 1-21; Gerd Tellenbach, *The Church in Western Europe from the Tenth to the Early Twelfth Century,* trans. by Timothy Reuter (Cambridge, 1993). For a recent approach see Kathleen G. Cushing, *Reform and Papacy in the Eleventh Century: Spirituality and Social Change* (Manchester, 2005).

[23] Cf. Huntington, 'Lay male sanctity', pp. 3ff. That is not to say that post-canonisation sainthood was necessarily uniform or entirely dictated by the papacy. See, for example, Kleinberg, *Prophets in their own Country,* pp. 21, 39.

The multiplication of monastic orders in the twelfth century, and their individual spiritual agendas, is another important development that influenced depictions of sainthood.[24] The Benedictine Order was the most widely spread and deeply embedded form of monasticism in Western Europe; however, Benedictine foundations were increasingly viewed as lax in their observations of their Rule, and the twelfth century saw the birth of the popular Cistercian movement, which sought to return to a life of obedience and austerity. The twelfth century also witnessed the increasing spread and gradual codification of the Augustinian canon movement; this was somewhat divided between those wanting to return to a more ascetic, eremitic way of life and those seeking a pastoral vocation. Priories adopted the rather open-ended Rule of St Augustine, supplemented with their own choice of customs.[25] The Gilbertines, the only Order of English origin, mixed two forms of Rule in their constitutions; the nuns and lay brethren followed the Rule of St Benedict, the male canons the Rule of St Augustine. The founder, Gilbert of Sempringham, also appears to have collated various constitutions from churches and monasteries, which he felt were most appropriate for his Rule.[26] Perhaps the most austere of these new movements was the Carthusian Order, founded high in the mountains at La Grande Chartreuse in 1084. They followed a semi-eremitic coenobitic life, in which monks primarily lived and worshipped within

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[24] On changing spiritualties see Robert L. Benson and Giles Constable (eds.), *Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelfth Century* (Toronto, 1991); Giles Constable, *The Reformation of the Twelfth Century: The George Macaulay Trevelyan Lectures, 1985* (Cambridge, 1996); Caroline Walker Bynum, *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages* (Berkeley, 1982). David Knowles, *The Monastic Order in England: A History of Its Development from the Times of St. Dunstan to the Fourth Lateran Council, 940-1216* (2nd ed., Cambridge, 1963) remains a classic work on monastic reform.

[25] See, for example, John Compton Dickinson, *The Origins of the Austin Canons and Their Introduction into England* (London, 1950), p. 171; R. W. Southern, *Western Society and the Church in the Middle Ages* (London, 1970), p. 242. The Augustinian Rule was often adopted by hermitages developing into more formal communities, or by communities that had been turned down by other orders. See Henrietta Leyser, *Hermits and the New Monasticism: A Study of Religious Communities in Western Europe 1000–1150* (London, 1984).

[26] See Foreville and Keir, 'Introduction', p. xxii; Brian Golding, *Gilbert of Sempringham and the Gilbertine Order c.1130–c.1300* (Oxford, 1995), p. 78ff.

the confines of their cell. As the Order developed, a series of *consuetudines* were drawn up, between 1121 and 1128, by Guy the fifth prior of Grande Chartreuse.[27] Henry II founded the first English Carthusian monastery at Witham in 1179, possibly as further penance for the death of Thomas Becket. Outwith the cloister, other forms of religious expression, including the eremitic life, also witnessed developments during this period.[28] Consequently, this study must consider how changes to the religious life affected perceptions of ideal behaviour, and hence depictions of sainthood.

This thesis focuses on a core of texts relating to 19 figures who were the subject of a hagiographical *vita* and died between 1066 and c. 1215: eight died between 1066 and 1135, five between 1135 and 1170 and six between 1170 and 1215.[29] Before looking at this corpus in more detail, it is worth briefly considering the types of saint who make up the sample. Throughout most of the twelfth century, papal canonisation was the exception rather than the rule. Only five of the saints examined within this thesis received official canonisation before 1220; indeed, these five represent the only English candidates to receive canonisation in the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. They are Edward the Confessor (1161), Thomas Becket (1173), Gilbert of Sempringham (1201), Wulfstan of Worcester (1203) and Hugh of Lincoln (1220).[30]

Of all the saints considered here, only two gained their sanctity through martyrdom: the boy-saint William of Norwich, allegedly martyred at the hands of the

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[27] 'Introduction', *Conseut. Cart.*, pp. 13–17

[28] See, for example, Tom Licence, *Hermits and Recluses in English Society, 950–1200* (Oxford, 2011); On the transition of some communities from the eremitic to the monastic life see, Leyser, *Hermits and the New Monasticism*.

[29] In the following section I have often retained the names of authors along with abbreviated references to the texts for clarity. On hagiographical works from England in this period see Bartlett, *England under the Norman and Angevin Kings 1075-1225* (Oxford, 2000), p. 460ff and Michael Lapidge and Rosalind C. Love, 'The Latin Hagiography of England and Wales (600-1550)', in *Hagiographies: Histoire internationale de la litterature hagiographique latine et vernaculaire en Occident des origines a 1550*, ed. by G. Philippart, 5 vols (Turnhout, 1994-2010), III (2001), pp. 203-325 (pp. 224-68).

[30] See Bartlett, *England under the Norman and Angevin Kings*, p. 461. Although just outwith the boundaries of the current sample, the case for William of York's canonisation was far enough advanced for him to be canonised in 1226.

Jews, and Thomas Becket, murdered in Canterbury Cathedral. Seventeen confessor saints make up the rest of the sample. The largest group of these were male regulars, either the heads of religious houses or bishops. Four were members of Benedictine houses (Wulfstan, bishop of Worcester; Remigius, bishop of Lincoln; Anselm, archbishop of Canterbury; and Gundulf, bishop of Rochester); two belonged to Cistercian communities (Ailred of Rievaulx and Waltheof of Melrose, both abbots); and one each to the Augustinian, Gilbertine and Carthusian orders (Robert of Béthune, Gilbert of Sempringham and Hugh of Lincoln respectively). There are six episcopal saints within the sample, two of whom were archbishops of Canterbury.[31] Thomas Becket is the only secular episcopal saint.

The next largest group of saints consists of hermits. Although the proliferation of hermits active at this time in England is well attested, only four were the subject of surviving near contemporary *vitae*.[32] The hermit saints, all of Anglo-Saxon or Anglo-Scandinavian descent, provide a striking contrast to the above prelate saints, who are largely continental or of continental descent.[33] With the exception of Godric of Throckenholt, all the eremitic saints died in the latter part of the period and their *Lives* were completed post-1170. The sample also contains two royal saints, Edward the Confessor and Margaret of Scotland, and one 'holy woman', Christina of Markyate, who at various times was both a recluse and head of a religious community. A particularly striking feature of English hagiography at this time is its domination by male subjects.[34] This appears to be a characteristic facet of English sainthood

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[31] Bishops: Remigius of Lincoln, Wulfstan of Worcester, Robert of Béthune, Gundulf of Rochester, Hugh of Lincoln; Archbishops: Anselm and Thomas Becket.
[32] Licence, *Hermits and Recluses,* pp. 15–21.
[33] Bartlett, *The Norman and Angevin Kings*, p. 463.
[34] See Bartlett, *The Norman and Angevin Kings,* pp. 461–2 and *WCD?*, pp. 147–148.

throughout the medieval period, with the only exceptional group being the Anglo-Saxon abbesses of the seventh and eighth centuries.[35]

These 19 saints are the subjects of 31 identified Latin prose *vitae* written within the period under consideration. Some saints were thus the subject of more than one text. Of the texts, five were written between 1066 and 1135, each with a different saintly subject.[36] A further seven were written over the next 50 years.[37] Two of these *vitae* were additions to the hagiographical canon concerning Edward the Confessor.[38] From 1170 through to the end of the period a further 19 saints' *vitae* were produced. Whilst at first glance this appears to be a dramatic increase on the previous half century, nearly half of these texts relate to Thomas Becket. Becket's death in 1170 has been dubbed the '1066 of the English saintly cult', having a lasting impact upon all hagiographical production.[39] Numerically, the immediate effect on hagiographical output is notable. An unusually large number of works were written about Thomas in the twelfth century, both in England and on the continent. The exact number is hard to gauge, as some are lost, including one by a female author, whilst others only survive in fragmentary form.[40] Seven hagiographical accounts of Becket's life were written by English authors between his death in 1170 and c. 1215.[41]

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[35] *Ibid.*

[36] Anonymous, *Vita Ædwardi Regis*; Eadmer, *VA*; Turgot, *Vita Margareta*; Anonymous, *Vita Gundulfi*; William of Malmesbury, *VSW.*

[37] Osbert of Clare, *Vita Edwardi*; Anonymous, *Life of Christina*; William Wycombe, *VRB;* Thomas of Monmouth, *VWN*; Ailred, *Vita S. Edwardi*; John of Salisbury, *Vita Anselmi*; Walter Daniel, *Vita Ailredi*.

[38] Osbert of Clare, *Vita Edwardi* and Ailred, *Vita S. Edwardi.*

[39] Bartlett, 'The Hagiography of Angevin England', p. 40.

[40] Staunton, *Becket and his Biographers,* p. 1.

[41] John of Salisbury, MTB 2. 299–352; Edward Grim, MTB 2. 353–451; Anonymous II (Anonymous of Lambeth), MTB 4. 80-144; William of Canterbury MTB 1.136; William Fitzstephen, MTB 3.1-154; Alan of Tewkesbury, MTB 2.323-352; Herbert of Bosham, MTB 3.155-553. Benedict of Peterborough's *passio* is not included in the above statistical analysis as it is not a *vita*, although it will be drawn on during examination of Becket's death. John of Salisbury's *Vita* was based on his letter, *Ex insperato,* no. 305 in John of Salisbury, *The Letters of John of Salisbury: Volume Two The Later Letters (1163-1180)*, ed. W. J. Millor and C. N. L. Brooke (Oxford, 1979), pp. 725–739.

Aside from Becket, within the period after 1170, nine saints share the remaining 12 *Lives*.[42] Two of these concern bishops who died in the 1090s, and thus are less contemporary productions.[43] Within this last third of the twelfth century there appears to be a slightly increased number of contemporary saints' *Lives*, leaving aside the Becket corpus.[44] Godric of Finchale and Hugh of Lincoln lay claim to five texts between them.[45] It is also significant that, excluding Becket, all the saints who died in or after 1170 were hermits, or belonged to the new monastic orders.[46]

Nearly 80% of the texts were written by male authors who belonged to a regular community. By far the largest portion were members of Benedictine houses: 16 out of 31 texts are of Benedictine authorship.[47] The next largest group of texts, totalling four, are those written by different Cistercian authors.[48] The two remaining texts with regular authors are of Augustinian and Gilbertine origin.[49] Secular clerks or canons were

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[42] Thurstan Dod, *Vita Godrici Throkenholt*; Senatus of Worcester, *Vita Wulfstani*; Reginald of Durham, *VGF* (while Reginald appears to have started his *vita* of Godric as early as 1160, he did not complete the text until after the hermit's death in 1170); John of Ford, *Vita Wulfrici*; Geoffrey of Durham, *Vita Bartholomaei*; Walter, *Vita Godrici*; Geoffrey of Durham, *Vita Godrici*; Anonymous, *VSG*; Adam of Eynsham, *MVSH*; Jocelin of Furness, *Vita Waldevi*; Gerald of Wales, *Vita Hugonis*; Gerald of Wales, *Vita Remigii*.

[43] Senatus of Worcester, *Vita Wulfstani*; Gerald of Wales, *Vita Remigii*.

[44] Cf. Bartlett, 'The Hagiography of Angevin England', p. 38.

[45] Hugh of Lincoln has two *Lives*: Adam of Eynsham, *MVSH*; Gerald of Wales, *Vita Hugonis*. There are three *Lives* of Godric of Finchale by Reginald of Durham, Walter and Geoffrey of Durham (written in that order- pers. comm. Margaret Coombe). Walter's *vita* is effectively footnoted in the Surtees Society edition of Reginald's *vita*, Geoffrey's is printed in the *AASS*. Walter and Geoffrey add no new material and are effectively abbreviations of Reginald's *Life*, although Geoffrey's also draws on a now lost *vita*. Unabbreviated texts have generally been favoured within the analysis, unless the abbreviated texts provide additional details or a particularly useful comparison. This also applies to John of Salisbury's abbreviation of Eadmer's *VA* and Senatus of Worcester's abbreviation of William of Malmesbury's *VSW*.

[46] Cf. Bartlett, 'The Hagiography of Angevin England', p. 38. Hugh of Lincoln was of course also a bishop.

[47] Anonymous, *Vita Ædwardi*; *Vita Margaretae; VA; VSW;* Osbert, *Vita S. Edwardi; Vita Gundulfi; Life of Christina; VWN;* Senatus of Worcester, *Vita Wulfstani; Vita Godrici Throkenholt; VGF;* William of Canterbury, MTB 1. 1-136; Alan of Tewkesbury, MTB 2.323-352; Geoffrey of Durham, *Vita Godrici; Vita Bartholomaei; MVSH.*

[48] *Vita Ailredi*; Ailred, *Vita S. Edwardi; Vita Wulfrici; Vita Waldevi.*

[49] *VRB; VSG.*

responsible for seven texts.[50] The authors who were members of the new monastic orders and the secular authors were all active within the second half of the period.

At least half of the authors of these texts knew their subjects personally, and often intimately.[51] Where they did not, they were often working with written or oral sources that could claim an origin in close proximity to the saint. Five of the texts have authors who remain anonymous.[52] Nonetheless, it is usually possible to extrapolate further information. For example, in the cases of the *Lives* of Gilbert and Gundulf, although the authors' names have not been transmitted, they were certainly a Gilbertine canon at Sempringham and a monk of Rochester respectively.[53]

Production of these texts was concentrated around the north, east and south-east of England. The high proportion of Becket *Lives* somewhat skews the sample towards the south-east and so it is useful to leave him temporarily to one side. Without Becket, one third of the texts were produced in the north, clustering around the major religious centres of Durham, Rievaulx and Melrose.[54] The east and south-east of England both produced approximately 20% of the texts.[55] The remaining 25% of texts are split

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[50] John of Salisbury, *Vita Anselmi*; John of Salisbury, MTB 2. 299-352; Edward Grim, MTB, 2. 353-451; William Fitzstephen, MTB 3. 1-154; Herbert of Bosham, MTB 3. 155-553; Gerald of Wales, *Vita Hugonis* and *Vita Remigii*.

[51] A few examples in which hagiographers knew their subjects intimately include: Turgot and Margaret of Scotland; Eadmer and Anselm of Canterbury; Walter Daniel and Ailred of Rievaulx; John of Salisbury, William Fitzstephen and Herbert of Bosham with Thomas Becket; Adam of Eynsham and Hugh of Lincoln; Reginald of Durham and Godric of Finchale.

[52] The Anonymous, *Vita Ædwardi*, *Life of Christina of Markyate*, *Vita Gundulfi*; Anonymous II (Anonymous of Lambeth), MTB 4. 80-144. Nothing is known about the identity or origins of the author of an abbreviated *Life* of Godric of Finchale, known as Walter.

[53] *VSG* (possibly written by Ralph, the sacrist); *Vita Gundulfi;* The *Life of Christina* was written by a Monk of St Albans.

[54] *Vita Margaretae*; *Vita Ailredi*; *VGF*; Walter, *Vita Godrici*; Geoffrey of Durham, *Vita Bartholomaei* and *Vita Godrici*; *Vita Waldevi*.

[55] East: *VWN*; *Vita Godrici Throkeholt*; *VSG*; Gerald of Wales *Vita S. Hugonis* and *Vita Remigii*. South east: Anonymous, *Vita Ædwardi*; *VA*; Osbert, *Vita beati Eadwardi*; *Vita Gundulfi*; John of Salisbury, *Vita Anselmi*.

between the Midlands (3 texts), Welsh Marches (1 text) and the south-west of England (2 texts).[56]

The location of composition largely correlates with the site of the saint's cult or place of habitation. However, there are a few exceptions. When these occur the text was either commissioned, or there was a strong connection between the location of composition and the saint. For example, Ailred of Rievaulx wrote his *vita* of Edward the Confessor at the behest of his kinsman, Laurence, abbot of Westminster, for the occasion of the saint's translation in 1163; Ailred also prepared a homily which was probably delivered in the abbey on this occasion.[57] This is similarly true of William of Malmesbury, who was asked to prepare a Latin *Life* of Wulfstan of Worcester by the prior and community at Worcester, from whom William had previously enjoyed hospitality.[58] In the north, the two *Lives* of 'Scottish' saints, those of St Margaret of Scotland and Waltheof of Melrose, were produced at religious centres with strong connections to these saints.[59]

If the Becket *Lives* are included in the sample then the south-east lays claim to approximately 35% of the texts, a total of eleven *Lives* over the eight from the north. While the careers of some of Becket's biographers are hard to trace after the murder, the

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[56] West midlands: Senatus of Worcester, *Vita Wulfstani*; *MVSH*. East midlands: *Life of Christina* (though very close to the southeast border). Southwest: *VSW*; *Vita Wulfrici*. Welsh marches: *VRB*.

[57] Barlow, 'Introduction', *Vita Ædwardi*, p. xxxvii; Powicke, 'Introduction', *Vita Ailredi*, pp. xlvii-xlix.

[58] M. Winterbottom and R. M. Thomson, 'Introduction', in *Saints' Lives*: *Lives of SS. Wulfstan, Dunstan, Patrick, Benignus and Indract*, ed. and trans. M. Winterbottom and R. M. Thomson (Oxford, 2002), pp. xiii-xxxviii (pp. xiii-xiv). Similarly Adam of Eynsham was Hugh's private chaplain for the last three years of his life. Eynsham was under Lincoln's jurisdiction and Adam dedicated his text to Prior Robert of Witham, the Carthusian Priory where Hugh was prior previous to his election as Bishop of Lincoln.

[59] Waltheof's *vita* appears to have been commissioned by Melrose Abbey upon the confirmation of his incorrupt state in 1206. Jocelin of Furness, a well-known Cistercian hagiographer was asked to undertake the task. See Helen Birkett, 'The Struggle for Sanctity: St Waltheof of Melrose, Cistercian In-house Cults and Canonisation Procedure at the Turn of the Thirteenth Century', in *The Cult of Saints and the Virgin Mary in Medieval Scotland*, ed. by Steve Boardman and Elia Williamson (Woodbridge, 2010), pp. 43-44; Margaret's *Life* was written at Durham, to whom the Scottish royal family had strong connections. Turgot, the most likely author, was Prior at Durham and appears to have been the queen's chaplain.

majority appear to have been writing in Canterbury.[60] Herbert of Bosham provides an exception to this. Although he returned from exile with Becket in 1170, Herbert left for the continent two days before the murder, and his *vita* was undoubtedly composed in France while he remained in exile. The *vita* was dedicated to Baldwin, archbishop of Canterbury (1185-1190), a city to which Herbert paid a visit in 1187.[61] Herbert's intimacy with Becket, and the detail and length of his *Life*, make it worthwhile including in the sample.

Finally, some comments can be made on the manuscript survival of these 31 texts.[62] From the available evidence the following observations can be made in terms of numbers: 13 texts survive in a single manuscript; 11 in 5 or less; 4 in between 6 and 15 copies; and only 3 in 20 or more (Eadmer's *Vita Anselmi*, Ailred of Rievaulx's *Vita Ædwardi* and John of Salisbury's *Vita S. Thomae*).[63] Roughly two-thirds of these manuscripts date from the twelfth or thirteenth centuries and the remaining third to the fourteenth century or later. Of the latter group, just under a third represent single extant copies. The rest are copies of *vitae* that generally exist in larger numbers and have a strong earlier textual survival.[64]

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[60] John of Salisbury, Alan of Tewkesbury and William of Canterbury definitely operated out of Canterbury in the aftermath of the murder. Anonymous II may have been a monk at Christ Church, although clearly had links with the diocese of London (See Staunton, *Becket and his Biographers* p. 40). William Fitzstephen's career after the murder is very unclear, although he again was probably writing from Canterbury or London, the latter to which his text is dedicated.

[61] Frank Barlow, 'Bosham, Herbert of (*d. c.*1194)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004) [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/13014, accessed 27 Nov 2013]

[62] The following summary is based on information available from critical editions, library catalogues and Richard Sharpe, *Handlist of the Latin Writers of Great Britain and Ireland before 1540* (Turnhout, 1997).

[63] One MS: Anonymous, *Vita Ædwardi*; *VSW*; *Life of Christina*; *Vita Gundulfi*; *VWN*; JS, *Vita Anselmi*; *Vita Ailredi*; *Vita Godrici Throkeholt*; Anonymous II, MTB 4.80-144; William of Canterbury, MTB 1.1-136; *Vita Waldevi*; Gerald of Wales, *Vita Remigii* and *Vita Hugonis*. 2–5 MSS: *Vita Margaretae*; Osbert, *Vita beati Eadwardi*; *VRB*; *VGF*; Senatus, *Vita Wulfstani*; Edward Grim, MTB 2. 353–451; Herbert of Bosham, MTB 3. 155–553; *Vita Wulfrici*; Geoffrey, *Vita Bartholomaie;* Walter, *Vita Godrici*; *VSG*. 6–15 MSS: William Fitzstephen, MTB 3. 1–154; Alan of Tewkesbury, MTB 2. 323–352; Geoffrey, *Vita Godrici*; *MVSH*. 20 + MSS: *VA*; Ailred, *Vita S. Edwardi*; John of Salisbury, MTB 2. 299–35.

[64] There are some exceptions, for example, *MVSH* of which 90% of the extant MS date from the fourteenth-century or later. The date of composition of the original text is towards the end of the time-period of this thesis.

It is hard to comment authoritatively on how many of the manuscripts are strictly contemporary with the date of composition given the difficulties of dating manuscripts precisely. Nonetheless, it is possible to offer some cautious observations. At least two of the texts are known to survive in autograph: Eadmer's *Vita Anselmi* and Herbert of Bosham's *Life* of Thomas Becket.[65] Aside from this, it seems that at least 19 texts survive in manuscripts datable as roughly contemporary.[66] Of those that survive in only one manuscript, approximately 60% date to the twelfth century.[67] The three *vitae* that survive in over 20 manuscripts demonstrate robust earlier survival. In the case of Anselm, approximately 65% of the surviving manuscripts date from the twelfth century. Ailred's *Life* of Edward the Confessor also demonstrates a very strong twelfth- and thirteenth-century survival, with a third of the texts dated twelfth or thirteenth century. Likewise, approximately 75% of the surviving manuscripts of John of Salisbury's *Life* of Thomas Becket survive in copies datable to the twelfth or thirteenth centuries.

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By examining external manifestations of the virtues of the saintly life, this thesis explores how hagiographers portray ideal saintly behaviour within these *vitae*. The themes of Outward Appearance, Chastity and Sexuality, Food and Fasting, and Death form the four main foundations of this analysis. Although the first three may be

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[65] Eadmer's personal copy of the *VA* is at Parker Collection, Corpus Christi College Cambridge MS 371, 147r-197v. See Southern, 'Introduction', *VA*, pp. ix–xxxiv (p. xix-xx). Herbert of Bosham's autograph is at Arras, *Bibliothèque municipale*, MS 375 (c. 1184, Ourscamp). See Sharpe, *Handlist*, p. 177.

[66] For example, the Anonymous, *Vita Ædwardi* and *Vita Gundulfi* appear to survive in manuscripts contemporary to composition. For many texts 'late twelfth-century' or 'twelfth/thirteenth century' is as close as it is possible to get dating; this is often the case for materials in the Becket canon, and for some of the copies of the *Lives* of late twelfth-century hermit saints such as Godric of Finchale and Bartholomew of Farne. Osbert of Clare's *Vita Beati Edwardi* has been included in the above count, although in his case the text was probably composed c. 1138 and the earliest manuscript is described as late twelfth or early thirteenth-century. Likewise for William of Malmesbury's *VSW*.

[67] Anonymous, *Vita Ædwardi*; *VSW*; *Vita Gundulfi*; *VWN*; Anonymous II (Anonymous of Lambeth), MTB 4.80-144; William of Canterbury MTB 1.1-136; Gerald of Wales, *Vita Remigii* and *Vita Hugonis*. The others that survive in one MS date from the fourteenth century or later: *Life of Christina*; JS, *Vita Anselmi*; *Vita Ailredi*; *Vita Godrici Throkenholt*; *Vita Waldevi*.

associated more with certain inner virtues than others (humility, chastity and temperance), by adopting a thematic approach it will be possible to gain a clearer idea of how inner virtues are combined to create an image of sanctity.

Chapter One considers outward appearance and the way in which hagiographers present the relationship between outer appearance and inner virtue. This will investigate how saintly figures are described in terms of physical appearance, bodily carriage and demeanour. The role of clothing will also be explored; here in particular the vocation of the saint appears to have an effect on hagiographical depictions. Chapter Two addresses sexuality and sexual renunciation and will examine the ways in which the virtues of chastity and virginity are manifested within the *Lives*, testing how this might vary from saint to saint and between the sexes. Chapter Three considers the roles of food and food abstention within these texts. Although much studied in later contexts, particularly for its devotional role within the lives of women, this aspect of piety remains under-studied for the twelfth century and for its role in the lives of men. The final chapter considers death, or more exactly, the process of dying and the moment of death. As Robert Bartlett points out, although there were many expressions of sanctity and roles that saints could take, death was an experience shared by all.[68] While this is indeed the case, this theme remains remarkably understudied within Anglophone historiography.[69] By exploring the process of dying and the moment of mortality, this final chapter fills an analytic vacuum between lived sanctity and sanctity in death.

Overall, these *Lives* illustrate the fluidity of depictions of sainthood. They highlight the importance of broader hagiographical themes, but elucidate how hagiographers could tailor images of sainthood to their own individual needs. Analysis

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[68] Bartlett, *WCD?*, pp. 529-30.
[69] See below p. 164, n. 1 for a historiographical summary.

demonstrates the importance of context, highlights the potential for idiosyncrasies and the ability for an ideal to be presented in an individual without masking personality. The *vitae* show holy figures living and dying as both individuals and as saints; the one does not preclude the other, but both are able to exist in tandem.

✦ Chapter 1: Outward Appearance ✦

In his *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum,* William of Malmesbury records how one man reacted to the sight of St Anselm of Canterbury. As Anselm was crossing the Alps, the Duke of Burgundy arrogantly decided to rob him:

> But one glance at Anselm was enough to soften the duke's heart; he breathed out his pride and became humble once more. Anselm's pleasant look, gentle face and benign grey hairs so captivated all who saw them that he immediately attracted the love of anyone he favoured with his gaze.[1]

In this incident Anselm's appearance is powerful enough to transform a man and set him on the path to humility.[2] Although not every saintly face inspired a change of heart, external appearance was one way in which hagiographers might depict holiness. Whilst physical form, movement and clothing have all been identified as important features, there has been no overarching examination focusing on depictions of outward appearance in saints' *Lives*.[3] This chapter adds to existing scholarship by presenting an exploration of this subject within the saints' *Lives* of twelfth-century England.

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[1] *GPA*, pp. 150–151: 'Sed uno tantum aspectu eius emollitus omnem exhalauit superbiam, resumpsit humilitatem. Adeo dulci intuitu, leni fatie, placida canitie aspitientem capiebat ut in quemcumque oculorum gratiam iniceret, statim in amorem sui alliceret.' Interestingly, this incident is not in Eadmer's *vita*.

[2] Compare an example given by Vauchez of the face of St Louis of Anjou which converted a carnal and sinful man, cited in Vauchez, *Sainthood*, p. 435.

[3] For various aspects of appearance see, for example, Vauchez, *Sainthood,* pp. 435–438; C. Stephen Jaeger, *The Envy of Angels: Cathedral Schools and Social Ideals in Medieval Europe, 950–1200* (Philadelphia, 1994), pp. 106–116; Teresa M. Shaw, 'Askesis and the Appearance of Holiness', *Journal of Early Christian Studies*, 6 (1998), pp. 485–99; Walter Simons, 'Reading a Saint's Body: Rapture and Bodily Movement in the *Vitae* of Thirteenth-Century Beguines', in *Framing Medieval Bodies* (Manchester, 1994), pp. 10–23. On clothing see, D. Alexander, 'Hermits and Hairshirts: The Social Meanings of Saintly Clothing in the *Vitae* of Godric of Finchale and Wulfric of Haselbury', *Journal of Medieval History*, 28 (2002), pp. 205–226; Dyan Elliott, 'Dress as Mediator between Inner and Outer Self: The Pious Matron of the High and Later Middle Ages', *Mediaeval Studies*, 53 (1991), pp. 279–308.

Some broad tendencies within the discourse of appearance are worth highlighting. By the twelfth century there was a well-established inclination to view the body and its movements as reflections of the state of the soul. This tradition is evident in the charismatic teaching of the Victorine School and in the work of Cistercian authors such as Bernard of Clairvaux and Gilbert of Holland.[4] This view was informed by both classical scholarship and Scripture, often mediated though the work of early Christian philosophers.[5] Thus a saint's beautiful visage, or composed deportment, might be a sign of inner virtue.[6] Conversely, beauty could be perceived as a dangerous bodily trait. Clerical authors in particular attacked female beauty for encouraging vanity and leading to seduction; luxurious clothing was also often a subject of criticism.[7] Beauty could pose a threat to the sexual integrity of female saints and, although not evident in twelfth-century England, in some cases self-mutilation was deemed the best antidote to beauty.[8] Moreover, ugliness could also be understood as a

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[4] See, for example, Hugh of St Victor, *De institutione novitiorum, PL*, 176, col. 925–952; Bernard of Clairvaux, *Sermones in Cantica*, LXXV, *PL*, 183, col. 1193; Gilbert of Holland, *Sermones in Canticum Salomonis*, XXV, *PL*, 184, col. 129. On the Victorine tradition and Bernard of Clairvaux see Jaeger, *Envy of Angels*, pp. 244–268, 269–277.

[5] On the classical inheritance see, for example, Umberto Eco, *Art and Beauty in the Middle Ages*, trans. by Hugh Bredin (New Haven, 1986), p. 4; Jaeger, *The Envy of Angels*, *passim*. On the influence of physiognomy see Irina Metzler, *Disability in Medieval Europe: Thinking about Physical Impairment in the High Middle Ages, c.1100–c.1400* (New York, 2006), p. 54 (and pp. 48ff more widely); Shaw, 'Askesis and the Appearance of Holiness', pp. 485–99 (esp. p. 489); Paolo Squatriti, 'Personal Appearance and Physiognomics in Early Medieval Italy', *Journal of Medieval History*, 14 (1988), pp. 191–202. On physiognomics in the classical period see Elizabeth C. Evans, *Physiognomics in the Ancient World* (Philadelphia, 1969). St Augustine, who remained one of the key influences aesthetics and the soul–body relationship, was highly influenced by Plato; see Carol Harrison, *Beauty and Revelation in the Thought of Saint Augustine* (Oxford, 1992), esp. pp. 36–37, 190.

[6] Vauchez, *Sainthood,* p. 435; Cf. Simons, 'Reading a saint's body'.

[7] Shulamith Shahar, *Growing Old in the Middle Ages: 'Winter Clothes Us in Shadow and Pain'*, trans. by Yael Lotan, (London; New York, 1997), p. 52; Valerie L. Garver, *Women and Aristocratic Culture in the Carolingian World* (Ithaca, 2009), pp. 31–37; see also Diane Owen Hughes, 'Regulating Women's Fashion', in *History of Women in the West, Volume II: Silences of the Middle Ages*, ed. by Christiane Klapisch-Zuber, (Cambridge, Mass., 1992), pp. 136-158.

[8] See for example St Oda from Hainault who cut off her own nose to avoid marriage, cited in Bartlett, *WCD?*, p. 528.

mark of holiness; for example, the perceivable effects of severe asceticism on bodily appearance or the unkempt clothes of a hermit could be taken as a sign of sanctity.[9]

This chapter is divided into three sections: bodily appearance; deportment and demeanour; and clothing. Although the first two can be closely linked (and often are within these *vitae*), they have been separated in order to distinguish between what might be conceptualized as intrinsic characteristics, and more behavioural aspects of outward appearance, such as posture, gait and demeanour. I argue that, whilst some recurrent themes are clearly discernable, depictions of outward appearance are malleable and utilised by hagiographers in varying ways.

Bodily appearance

This section will examine how hagiographers depict the bodily appearance of their subject, focusing on visage and physique. I will first consider male saints, before examining some female saints' *Lives* to highlight differences within depiction. The descriptions given by hagiographers vary in length from text to text.[10] Two broad kinds of description can be discerned. In the first, descriptions of bodily appearance, whilst often lacking in specificity, reveal or enhance the saint's holiness.[11] The second might be termed 'physical description', in which specific details of appearance are given, but

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[9] Vauchez, *Sainthood*, p. 438; Shahar, *Growing Old in the Middle Ages*, p. 44; Claudia Rapp, *Holy Bishops in Late Antiquity: The Nature of Christian Leadership in an Age of Transition* (Berkeley, 2005), pp. 101–102; Shaw, 'Askesis and the Appearance of Holiness'. See also Ailred of Rievaulx, *De Speculo Caritatis, in Aelredi Rievallensis Opera I: Opera Ascetica,* ed. C.H. Talbot, CCCM 1 (Turnhout, 1971), pp. 5-161 (p. 126) and 'In annuntiatione Beate Marie de tribus tunicis Ioseph', in *Sermones ineditii B. Aelredi Abbatis Rievallensis*, ed. by C. H. Talbot (Rome, 1952), pp. 83–89 (p. 84); St Augustine had argued that incorporeal beauty was more important than corporeal beauty, see Harrison, *Beauty and Revelation*, p. 153.

[10] Some texts offer no description of physical appearance at all. Interestingly, Eadmer makes no reference to Anselm's physical appearance or deportment in the *VA* (or *Historia Novorum*). See also *Vita Gundulfi* and *VRB*.

[11] Victoria Tudor, 'Reginald of Durham and St. Godric of Finchale: A Study of a Twelfth–Century Hagiographer and His Major Subject' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Reading, 1979), p. 69, n. 1 states that hagiographers are usually more interested in the divine power that shone through the saint than their physical appearance. See also R.W. Southern, *St Anselm and his Biographer* (Cambridge, 1963), pp. 326-7. Cf. Vauchez, *Sainthood,* pp. 435ff.

not always directly related to holiness. The two types of description are not mutually exclusive as some texts demonstrate elements of both. The second category of description has antecedents within classical secular biography, such as the works of Suetonius. His *Lives of the Caesars* were an important model for many subsequent medieval authors, including Einhard's *Life of Charlemagne* and William of Malmesbury's portraits of the kings of England.[12] The growing influence of classical biography in shaping descriptions of personal appearance, either directly or indirectly, can be seen throughout the twelfth century, fitting within a broader development in realistic observation and representation.[13]

William of Malmesbury draws on both kinds of description in his *Life* of Wulfstan of Worcester. The first reference to Wulfstan's appearance falls into the first type, explicitly associating the perfection of a saint's soul with pulchritude of body:

> The beauty of his body added to the grace of his heart; though I do not count that among the virtues, I do not altogether rule it out, for, just as a craftsman's art shines forth in superior material, so virtue stands out more splendidly in a beautiful form.[14]

While physical beauty could thus be an authentication of virtue, this passage reflects the ambiguity of some Christian writers regarding this relationship. Although St Ambrose was less willing than Cicero to locate virtue in physical beauty, he did concede that: 'Just as a craftsman tends to work better when his material is more suitable, so modesty

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[12] Squatriti, 'Personal Appearance and Physiognomics', p. 194; Tomas Hägg, *The Art of Biography in Antiquity* (Cambridge, 2012), trans. by Stephen Harrison, p. 102; Southern, *St Anselm*, p. 325. On Suetonius and William of Malmesbury see Jean Blacker, *The Faces of Time: Portrayal of the Past in Old French and Latin Historical Narrative of the Anglo–Norman Regnum* (Austin, 1994), pp. 53–134.

[13] See, for example, Antonia Gransden, 'Realistic Observation in Twelfth-Century England', *Speculum*, 47 (1972), pp. 29–51; Colin Morris, *The Discovery of the Individual, 1050–1200* (Toronto, 1987), pp. 86–95. Broadly speaking this kind of 'realistic' observation or representation seems to appear towards the end of the twelfth-century. On physical descriptions in classical biography see Hägg, *The Art of Biography*, pp. 227ff.

[14] *VSW*, pp. 22–23: 'Cumulabat pectoris gratiam spetiositas corporis, quam licet inter uirtutes non numerem, non tamen omnino excludo, quia sicut ars opificis in commodiore materia elucet, ita uirtus in pulchritudine formae splendidius eminet.' (Translation amended.) Cf. William of Malmesbury's *Vita Dunstani*, p. 254 in which he uses a very similar method of description.

too stands out when it is evinced in the body's own attractiveness.'[15] William's description of Wulfstan clearly reflects the language and sentiment of St Ambrose. Bodily beauty was only worthy of praise if it augmented an already pure character.[16] In other cases, the divine grace of a saint enhances their outer appearance.[17] Wulfstan's handsome appearance rather seems to be an inherent quality, a sign of his suitability to be a carrier of the spiritual grace that accompanies sainthood. Later in the text, William of Malmesbury gives a short depiction of Wulfstan that fits the descriptive model of representation. He records that Wulfstan was of middle height and well proportioned throughout, proceeding to describe his habits and gait.[18] Although short and somewhat general, it has been suggested that this reflects William's interest in the classics, and in particular the influence of the personal descriptions drawn by Suetonius in his *Lives of the Caesars*.[19]

The *vita* of Cistercian Abbot Waltheof of Melrose provides another example of correlation between appearance and virtue. Drawing upon *Ecclesiasticus* 19:26, Jocelin of Furness states of Waltheof: 'The face of the man of God was the faithful interpreter of the inner man and persuaded by means of manifest signs that the Holy Spirit was present as an inhabitant of his heart.'[20] Jocelin gives further details about Waltheof's appearance. Waltheof's face was thin, but fair (*candida*) except for his rosy (*rubens*) cheeks, which were soft as doves. His handsome white hair (*grata canities*) was 'in

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[15] Ambrose, *De officiis ministrorum libri tres*, *PL*, 16, col. 48: 'Ut enim artifex in materia commodiore melius operari solet, sic verecundia in ipso quoque corporis decore plus eminet.'

[16] Cf. Ead, *Vita Oswaldi*, pp. 232–233 on hypocrisy and appropriate beauty. On beauty and vanity in women see Garver, *Women and Aristocratic Culture*, pp. 35–36.

[17] For example, Ead, *Vita Oswaldi*, pp. 230–31. Vauchez records that in some texts the beauty of a saint is seen as a permanent miracle, giving the example of the miracles of St Dominic, Vauchez, *Sainthood*, p. 435, n. 30.

[18] *VSW*, pp. 106–107.

[19] See Gransden, 'Realistic Observation', pp. 40–41; see also, Southern, *St Anselm*, p. 326 and Blacker, *Faces of Time*, pp. 53–134.

[20] *Vita Waldevi*, p. 129 (pp. 259–260): 'Erat vultus Viri Dei fidus interpres hominis interioris ac evidentibus indiciis Spiritus sancti praesentiam persuadebat adesse cordis ipsius inhabitatoris.' Cf. Eccli. 19:26: 'Ex visu cognoscitur vir, et ab occursu faciei cognoscitur sensatus.'

keeping with his reverent and religious character'.[21] Red and white are often deployed in bodily descriptions both in life and death. Both colours have strong associations with Christ in biblical exegesis, and subsequently became associated with confessors and martyrs respectively to place them in the mould of *imitatio Christi*.[22]

Jocelin continues his description by expanding on the impact that Waltheof's appearance had on those who saw him: 'His appearance showed grace infusing his spirit with happiness and exultation; it expressed the fact that the Lord treasured him, and induced all who saw and spoke to him to hold him in affectionate reverence by virtue of a certain sweet and gentle agreeableness.'[23] This example echoes one from Eadmer's *Vita Oswaldi* in which enhanced appearance is presented as an outward sign of grace (*gratia*). [24] Although Waltheof's visage is not represented as bringing about conversions, it does nonetheless induce those who see him to regard him with reverence.[25]

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[21] *Vita Waldevi*, p. 129 (p. 260): '… grataque canities reverendae religiosaeque personae…'. Cf. WM, *VD*, p. 255. White hair embodied the dignity of old age and wisdom; Charlemagne is frequently described in the Song of Roland with white hair. Cummins points to the example of St Bartholomew in Aelfric's homilies who is described at the age of 26 as having an 'ample beard, somewhat hoary', see Josephine M. Cummins, 'Attitudes to Old Age, and Ageing in Medieval Society' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Glasgow, 2000), pp. 72, 141–142. See also Einhard's description of Charlemagne, Einhard, *Vita Karoli Magni*, ed. by O. Holder-Egger, *MGH, Scriptores rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum separatim editi XXV* (6th ed. Hanover, 1911), pp. 26-27.

[22] On the symbolism of colour in the middle ages see, John Gage, *Colour and Culture: Practice and Meaning from Antiquity to Abstraction*, (Berkeley, 1999) and Heather Pulliam, 'Color', *Studies in Iconography*, 33 (2012), pp. 3–14. See also Jennifer L. O'Reilly, 'The Double Martyrdom of Thomas Becket: Hagiography or History?', *Studies of the Medieval & Renaissance Association*, 7 (1985), pp. 183–247 (p. 197); See also, Bede, *On the Tabernacle*, trans. by Arthur G. Holder (Liverpool, 1994), pp. 48–50.

[23] *Vita Waldevi,* pp. 129–130 (p. 260): '…grataque canities reverendae religiousaeque personae gratiam praeferendo spiritualem jucunditatem et exultationem quam thesaurizavit super eum Dominus, exprimebant, omnesque aspicientes et alloquentes eum in sui dilectionem et reverentiam quodam dulcifluo placore conducebant.' For further examples in which appearance and holiness are connected see Ead, *Vita Wilfridi*, pp. 14–17, and from a pre-twelfth-century context Abbo of Fleury, *Vita Edmundi* in *Three Lives of English Saints*, ed. by Michael Winterbottom (Toronto, 1972), p. 70. Christina of Markyate's eremitic mentor is described as having some trace of holiness apparent in his appearance. *Life of Christina*, p. 100. Hugh of Lincoln is described as having divine grace affect all his faculties- he appears physically and mentally renewed and youthful, *MVSH*, II, p. 49.

[24] Ead, *Vita Oswaldi*, p. 230.

[25] Cf. Gilbert of Holland, *Sermones in Canticum*, XXV, col. 129. On St Augustine and how a beautiful visage could instruct the observer to a greater knowledge of God see Harrison, *Beauty and Revelation*, pp. 21–39, 54.

Potential for a saint's outward appearance to reflect his holiness was not limited to monastic or episcopal saints. The corpus of twelfth-century *vitae* of Edward the Confessor provides a pertinent example in which significance of bodily appearance changes as the textual tradition develops from the Anonymous *vita*, written between 1065 and 1067, to Ailred of Rievaulx's *vita* written for the translation of Edward's body in 1163. The Anonymous *vita* appears to have been written in two stages. The first part of the text has a strong secular emphasis and demonstrates especial interest in Edward's wife Edith and other members of the Godwin family. The second part, probably written after his death, changes significantly in character and concentrates instead on Edward, stressing his sanctity and miracles.[26] The description of Edward appears in the first half of the text, and demonstrates the 'physical descriptive' type of representation. The following description is part of a passage describing Edward's character more generally:

> And not to omit his bearing and appearance, he was a very
> proper figure of a man—of outstanding height, and
> distinguished by his milky white hair and beard, full face
> and rosy cheeks, thin white hands, and long translucent
> fingers; in all the rest of his body he was an unblemished
> royal person.[27]

The passage then outlines Edward's behaviour and demeanour as king. Edward's appearance is described in idealised terms appropriate for a noble king. Although the description shares similarities with bodily descriptions in other saints' *Lives*, notably the references to white and red, little directly relates Edward's appearance to holiness.[28]

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[26] For the problems in classifying the Anonymous *Life* see Barlow, 'Introduction', p. xviiff.

[27] Anonymous, *Vita Ædwardi*, pp. 18–19: 'Et ut statum siue formam eiusdem non pretereamus, hominis persona erat decentissima, discretae proceritatis, capillis et barba canitie insignis lactea, facie plena et cute rosea, manibus macris et niueis, longis quoque interlucentibus digitis, reliquo corpore toto integer et regius homo.' Cf. Osbert, *Vita beati Edwardi*, pp. 74–5.

[28] See Anonymous *Vita Ædwardi*, p. 19, n. 41 where Barlow offers a comparison to a description of St Audemer.

The model for this description may rather conform to the pattern of secular biographies, such as that by Einhard of Charlemagne.[29]

In Ailred of Rievaulx's *vita*, commissioned for the translation of Edward's relics in 1163, any sense of Edward's individual portrait is absent. Ailred says: 'The spirit of inner sanctity shone in his very body, and you could see in his face an unusual mildness, dignity in his walk, straightforwardness in his affection.'[30] For the first time an explicit connection is made between Edward's outer appearance and his inner holiness. The transition between these texts reveals an aspect of re-writing. Whilst with regard to genre the Anonymous *Life* has somewhat defied definition, Ailred is writing a self-conscious *vita* of a recently canonised saint with an established cult. Ailred is only interested in Edward's appearance in so much as it demonstrates his sanctity, and the illumination of the holiness within.

Having considered examples in which bodily appearance is directly equated with holiness or grace, I will now examine examples that more strongly favour the 'descriptive' model of representation. As suggested, these two modes of description are not mutually exclusive; even in the case of Waltheof, although interested in the spiritual dimensions of the saint's visage, Jocelin later gives a comparatively detailed account of his appearance more generally.[31] There are two particularly good examples from the current corpus which adopt a more 'realistic' or individual approach to representation: the Becket *Lives* and Reginald of Durham's *Vita Godrici*.[32]

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[29] Cf. Einhard, *Vita Karoli Magni*, pp. 26-27. The kings share traits in their white hair and height. Compare to Suetonius, *De Vita Caesarum*.

[30] Ailred, *Vita S. Edwardi*, col. 745 (p. 30): 'Lucebat in ipso etiam corpore interioris spiritus sanctitatis, cum singularis quaedam suavitas appareret in vultu, gravitas in incessu, simplicitas in affectu.' (Translation modified.)

[31] See below, pp. 39, 57–58. Cf. Odo of Cluny, 'The Life of Gerald of Aurillac' in *Soldiers of Christ: Saints and Saints' Lives from Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages,* ed. by Thomas F.X. Noble and Thomas Head (London, 1995), pp. 293-362 (pp. 306–307).

[32] These may fit within broader intellectual trends: Morris, *Discovery of the Individual*; Gransden, 'Realistic Observation', pp. 29–51; Southern, *Saint Anselm,* pp. 325–327.

Edward Grim records that, even in youth, Becket demonstrated the best manners (*optimis moribus*), had a bright natural disposition, and had a face that mixed dignity (*gravitas*) and agreeableness (*jocundus*). Becket had pleasing looks (*venustus aspectans*), an elegant (*elegans*) appearance, was acceptable to all men and worthy of love.[33] Other hagiographers agree with this description.[34] William Fitzstephen gives a slightly longer account, recording that Becket was handsome and pleasing of countenance (*placido vultu et venusto*), tall (*procersus*) with a prominent and slightly aquiline nose, nimble and active in his movements and gifted with eloquence of speech.[35] Becket clearly cuts the fine figure of a man, and his hagiographers' descriptions fit very closely with C. Stephen Jaeger's model of the 'courtier bishop' in which good looks and elegance are important attributes. Jaeger suggests that, on a practical level, physical beauty was an important attribute for an episcopal candidate, as ugliness or feebleness could be raised as an objection to their advancement.[36] Becket's appearance is not characterised as a manifestation of, or enhancement of, divine grace as in the *Life* of Wulfstan or Waltheof. Nonetheless, his attractive appearance is definitely recorded as a positive attribute, and might intrinsically carry moral implications. This association is aided by the textual juxtaposition of appearance with lists of virtuous traits. For example, Fitzstephen follows his physical description with references to Becket's virtue and compassion.[37] Thus through association good looks and good manners combine within these idealised portraits of episcopal subjects.[38]

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[33] MTB, 2. 359–60.
[34] E.g. MTB, 1. 3; See also Frank Barlow, *Thomas Becket* (London, 1986), p. 24.
[35] MTB, 3. 17.
[36] C. Stephen Jaeger, 'The Courtier Bishop in *Vitae* from the Tenth to the Twelfth Century', *Speculum*, 58: 2 (1983), pp. 291–325 (p. 299); Cf. *Vita Martini,* c. 9 (pp. 270-272).
[37] Se MTB, 3. 17.
[38] Jaeger points out that in many episcopal lives descriptions of bodily appearance often occurred close by descriptions of other positive attributes, 'Courtier Bishop', p. 297.

An episode from Herbert of Bosham's *vita*, in which Becket's appearance makes him stand out from other men, demonstrates one way in which such a description could still confer symbolic meaning. After his escape from the council at Northampton, Becket is lying low at Gravelines and his host believes he recognises his guest:

> To gain more certain proof of the identification he had already conceived, he inspected the build and posture of the whole man: the great height, the large brow and serious expression, the long and handsome face, the long hands, and their elegant and quite exquisite fingers.[39]

The innkeeper observes that Becket was quite different from the other men, in his way of eating and in the nature and posture of his body; he quickly assumes that he is giving hospitality to some great man, and concludes that it is the archbishop of Canterbury. This passage reflects the earlier descriptions of Becket, but more significantly Becket's appearance makes him recognisably different. Within episcopal *vitae*, Jaeger suggests that in the rare cases of bishops who were not of high birth, their *vitae* attempted to instil that nobility in some other way, usually through praise for their nobility of mind, spirit and manners.[40] Bodily appearance was an important marker of status, particularly of nobility.[41] Nobility, furthermore, could be associated with virtue; indeed, in Merovingian hagiography, nobility was thought to be such an important characteristic of sanctity that a noble background was fabricated for St Martin of Tours.[42] Becket's bodily appearance, his height, handsome face and elegant hands imbue him with some sense of greatness that separates him from his companions, bestowing upon him a sense

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[39] MTB, 3. 322–35 (LTB, p. 123): 'Praeterea ad certius conceptae jam agnitionis argumentum, totius hominis compositionem intuebatur et gestum, corporis videlicet proceritatem egregiam, frontem amplam et aspectum severum, faciem oblongam et venustam, formam manuum oblongarum, et articulorum in manibus congruam et quasi exquisitam his protensionem.'

[40] Jaeger, 'Courtier Bishop', p. 297.

[41] Squatriti, 'Personal Appearance and Physiognomics', p. 198; See also Garver, *Women and Aristocratic Culture*, p. 31ff for women of high status.

[42] John Kitchen, *Saints' Lives and the Rhetoric of Gender: Male and Female in Merovingian Hagiography* (New York, 1998), p. 47; See also Alexander Murray, *Reason and Society in the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1978), p. 271–272 on nobility and virtue.

of nobility that he does not have by birth, but is appropriate for his standing as archbishop. Born in Cheapside, London, Becket was the son of a Norman merchant; despite spending time in the service of a knight as a youth, his own family origins were relatively humble.[43] Although the descriptions of Becket's appearance do fit this idealised image of episcopacy, and can be inherently associated with virtue, there is little to suggest that his bodily appearance is posited as direct evidence of his sanctity.[44]

At over 400 words, Reginald of Durham's description of Godric of Finchale's bodily appearance is the longest and most detailed example within this corpus of saints' *Lives*. Reginald appears to have been directly influenced by classical biography, modelling this chapter of his *vita* on the description of given by the late antique author Sidonius Apollinaris of Theodoric II, although, as Victoria Tudor highlights, most of the details are Reginald's own.[45]

He records that Godric was of moderate stature (*statura modicus*), but broad across the shoulders, strong and vigorous. He had a long, thin face with clear and bright blue-grey eyes. These were framed by shaggy eyebrows (*supercilium hirsutum*), which nearly touched in the middle. His forehead was wide and his nose long and round at the bridge, and curled up at the end with moderate sized nostrils (*foramen moderatum*). Reginald records that Godric had a narrow chin, and long cheeks from which protruded a shaggy beard; his hair and beard had been completely black in youth. His mouth was neither very big nor very small, and he had full lips. Reginald extends the impression of Godric's burliness by describing a short thick neck upon which veins, arteries and

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[43] Barlow, *Thomas Becket*, pp. 10–11.

[44] As will be shown later, the opposite is the case when it comes to descriptions of Becket's clothing.

[45] See Sidonius Apollinaris, *Espitulae et Carmina*, ed. by Christianus Leutjohann in *MGH*, *Auctores Antiqussimi*, VIII, pp. 2–3; Southern, S*aint Anselm*, p. 327 n. 1; See also Tudor, 'Reginald of Durham and Godric', pp. 35, 69 n. 1. Tudor posits that classical texts formed an important part of the library at Durham, and it may be that Suetonius was also influential. Cf. Rosalind B. Brooke, *The Image of St Francis: Responses to Sainthood in the Thirteenth Century* (Cambridge, 2006), pp. 40-41.

sinews were visible. His chest was broad, with a hollow that appeared below his ribcage as he grew older.[46]

Although in general Reginald does not depict God's power shining through Godric's appearance, the descriptions of the impact of asceticism on Godric's body still have a positive effect on the depiction of sanctity. For example, in later life, Godric's hair and the whole of his body became suffused with a pallor of 'angelic whiteness' (*angelica canitie*), no doubt a result of his ascetic lifestyle. Reginald records that, due to Godric's plunges into a nearby stream, the hermit's skin barely appeared to adhere to his body, and because of his great abstinence, his stomach was small, never swollen by gluttony.[47] The hermit had short legs (*tibae… modicae*), and due to his unremitting kneeling in prayer his knees were swollen and covered in callouses. Reginald describes Godric's feet as small with hard skin, because he wore no shoes. However, in old age the surface of his whole body became as soft as the skin of a child. Reginald finishes his depiction by referring to Godric's hands, which were broad and flat, with long tapering fingers. In time, Godric lost the use of one of his little fingers, which curled up towards the palm.[48]

This detailed description of Godric clearly makes him stand out. Whilst there are some shared characteristics (broad forehead and long, thin face), the depiction of the shaggy haired, brawny hermit is a far cry from the tall, elegant episcopal figure of Becket. Whilst differences in appearance can clearly be put down to the fact that these two men looked dissimilar in reality, the textual representation of their appearance should be considered as important. The bodily traits thought to be suitable for the ideal bishop were not those required in a hermit. Godric's shaggy appearance reflects his

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[46] *VGF*, pp. 212–213.
[47] See below on asceticism and holy ugliness, pp. 35–37.
[48] *VGF*, pp. 212–213. Cf. Geoffrey, *Vita Godrici*, col. 70, almost certainly based on Reginald's.

isolated existence, removed from society and largely outside the confines of public ecclesiastical leadership.[49] Asceticism and rusticity, definitive elements of Godric's eremitic life, are worn on his body, evident in his untrimmed beard, emaciated figure, calloused knees and feet, and his arthritic hands, apparently caused by carrying a psalter around with him.[50] The descriptions of Becket and Godric are alike because they do not depict an outward appearance that directly reveals God's grace. Nonetheless, they can still convey symbolic meaning. In both cases these descriptions signpost positive temporal attributes, which act as signs of the saint's virtue, rather than presenting physical manifestations of the saint's divine power.

But what of female saints? As there are only two twelfth-century women with hagiographical *Lives*, it is instructive to draw upon the twelfth-century *Lives* of a selection of earlier female saints. Although there does appear to be a shared vocabulary with male saints, there are striking differences. Comments on beauty are more standardised and often briefer. Female saints are described as beautiful with very few exceptions.[51] Routinely this consists simply of a reference to their beauty; descriptions are often devoid of detail and lack the direct spiritual exegesis seen in some of the texts above. Generally, descriptions appear near the start of the text, frequently when the saint has just reached adulthood.[52] Notably, at this point in the saintly life-cycle some female saints reject marriage in favour of a life of virginity. Reference to physical appearance at this point in the narrative serves to enhance the depiction of sanctity. Beauty was often conceived of by medieval authors as the cause of temptation, but was

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[49] It should be noted that Godric eventually came under the authority of the community at Durham, and from this point on descriptions of his most extreme behaviour tail off in the *vita*, suggesting to an extent that Godric was 'tamed' by this event. See, for example, D. Alexander, 'Hermits and Hairshirts', p. 218.

[50] *VGF*, pp. 200–201.

[51] Seaxburh and Margaret are the exceptions.

[52] See for example Æthelryth in *Liber Eliensis*, p. 16, *Vita Werburge*, pp. 32–33; *Vita Wihtburh*, pp. 56–57; *Vita Moduenne* p. 10; *Vita Primi Wenefredae*, p. 291; *Vita Edithe*, pp. 48–49. This is also the case for some male saints, for example, descriptions of Thomas Becket occur at this point in his life cycle. See, for example, MTB, 2.359–60.

an important commodity in marriage.[53] The ability to resist the snares of marriage *and* be beautiful made the saint's restraint even more powerful.

This is illustrated in the *Life* of Christina of Markyate. While beauty could have inherent connotations of virtue, Christina's beauty is represented as the spark for the first series of trials she experiences in her quest for the religious life. When Ranulf Flambard, the lecherous bishop of Durham, sets eyes on the 'beautiful daughter' (*elegans puella*) of his friend Autti, the Devil inspires him to lust for her. As Samuel Fanous has argued, the first half of Christina's *Life* follows the pattern of a virgin martyr as she struggles against various threats to her virginity.[54] Thus it might appear that this *vita* presents female beauty as a problematic, negative trait. Nonetheless, Christina's sanctity is earned through her ability to circumvent these challenges and maintain her spiritual and bodily integrity; her beauty meant that she could have had the pick of eligible bachelors, but she still chose saintliness. Thus in her *Life* beauty is both a cause of tension and a sign of sanctity.

The potential danger beauty might pose to women who have dedicated themselves to God is captured in a number of other *Lives*. For example, a miracle of St Modwenna recounts that a newly appointed abbess is concerned that her own youth and beauty (*pulcher*) will lead her into sin by attracting the attention of young men when Modwenna is no longer present: the saint subsequently turns the abbess into a grave and venerable old woman in order to protect the community.[55] Within the female saints' *Lives* worldly beauty is often represented as a threat to female spiritual integrity.

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[53] See, for example, Karen A. Winstead, *Virgin Martyrs: Legends of Sainthood in Late Medieval England* (Ithaca, 1997), p. 69.

[54] Samuel Fanous, 'Christina of Markyate and the Double Crown', in *Christina of Markyate: A Twelfth–Century Holy Woman*, ed. by Samuel Fanous and Henrietta Leyser (London, 2005), pp. 53–78 (on beauty see p. 55); cf. Bartlett, *WCD?*, pp. 539–540.

[55] *Vita Moduenne*, pp. 31–33- this example also emphasises the association of youth and beauty; cf. *Vita Prima Wenefredae*, p. 291.

For many female saints, particularly those of noble birth, sanctity was forged from a renunciation of the married life expected of a young noble girl, and the decision to follow a life of virginity.[56] The importance of beauty in noble marriage transactions is underlined by some of the *Lives*. In Goscelin's *Life* of Wihtburh of Ely he describes how, as she grew to womanhood, 'the hopes of those who set store by her beauty (*forma*) were dashed' as she had already pledged herself to God.[57] The account of Æthelryth in the *Liber Eliensis* syntactically juxtaposes her holiness and beauty, thus emphasising the saint's rejection of the world. The *Liber* says of Æthelryth when she reached marriageable age:

> … once her reputation spread, her holiness of mind and beauty (*pulchritudo*) of body were celebrated far and wide; very many people came, were amazed by the excellence of the virgin's appearance, and honoured with high praise the glories of her virginal purity. For indeed her beauty (*pulchritudo*) pleased innumerable princes, and her pretty face used to move them to offer her chaste caresses.[58]

Although Æthelryth proceeds to marry twice, neither of her marriages was consummated. Thus, her sanctity was ultimately conditional upon the renunciation of her status as a queen and wife, and of the normal pattern of life this entailed.[59] Only two of the female saints' *Lives* examined do not pass comment on the bodily appearance of their subjects: those of Seaxburh and Margaret, both married mothers. This may underline that beauty is strongly associated with youth and the prospect (and subsequent rejection) of marriage.

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[56] Cf. Susan J. Ridyard, *The Royal Saints of Anglo–Saxon England: A Study of West Saxon and East Anglian Cults* (Cambridge, 1988), p. 89. See below, pp. 110ff.

[57] *Vita Wihtburh*, pp. 56–57: 'Adolescebat puella, et cassabantur sperantes in eius forma.'

[58] *Liber Eliensis,* p. 17 (p. 16): '[…] fama divulgante, sanctitudo animi ac pulchritudo corporis illius longe lateque celebris existeret; accedunt plurimi, atque formae virginis excellentiam admirantes virgineae puritatis titulos egregia laude prosequuntur. Innumeris etenim ejus pulchritudo principibus complacebat et venusta facies ejus ad puellares promovebat amplexus.' (Translation modified.)

[59] E.g. Ridyard, *Royal Saints*, pp. 82–83.

Although beauty appears most frequently within the female *Lives* in this context, it is not always the case. In Goscelin's *vita* of Wærburh of Ely he says, 'And so it was that from the tenderest flowering of her years, when the beauty (*pulchritudo*) of her outward form corresponded remarkably with her nobility, she began with her beautiful face (*speciosa facie*) and most beautiful mind (*speciosissima mente*) to strive towards Him who is beautiful (*speciosus*) in form above all sons of men.'[60] The difference between Wærburh's earthly beauty and the beauty of her holiness is here emphasised through vocabulary. Whilst *pulchritudo* is used in the first instance, the subsequent repetition of *speciosa* for her face, mind and then for the beauty of Christ links these three things and thus enhances the holiness of her face and mind. It is also significant that her mind is more *speciosa* than her body. As in the other texts, however, this reference still occurs when Wærburh is in her youth.[61]

Thus far all the saints, both male and female, have been described as attractive in some way. Many words are used in the *vitae* to describe comely appearance: the most common are the adjectives *pulcher/pulchra*, *elegans*, *venustus*, *comis*, *speciosus*, *decorus* and the nouns *forma* and *decus*. Word-choice is not generally gender specific, although *pulchra* does appear more commonly in the *Lives* of female saints.[62] This vocabulary of beauty is not specific to twelfth-century *Lives*. Valerie Garver identifies a variety of words that are used to describe female beauty in ninth-century Carolingian hagiographies, including *elegans*, *venustus*, *pulcher*, *forma*, *praepulcher*, *decorus* and *speciosa*. According to Garver most of this terminology does not have a consistent, specific connotation within the texts beyond conveying attractiveness of appearance; it

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[60] *Vita Werburge*, pp. 32–33: 'A tenero igitur eui flore, cum forme pulchritudo insigniter responderet generositati sue, cepit speciosa facie cum speciosissima mente ad illum qui speciosus est forma pre filiis hominum contendere.'
[61] Cf. *Vita Edithe*, pp. 48–49.
[62] Cf. Garver, *Women and Aristocratic Culture*, p. 39. Garver also finds that, within her sample of Carolingian female hagiographies, *pulchritudo/pulcher* is the most common term for beauty.

is the context, rather than the word itself, that lends the chosen vocabulary moral meaning.[63] From the sample analysed here, contextually, *speciosus* appears to be used most often in relation to the beauty of holiness. Conversely, *pulcher* is most often used in relation to earthly beauty, although not exclusively.

Although in the examples so far, attractiveness appears to be the dominant pattern for bodily descriptions in hagiography, there are some exceptions; ugliness or an ascetic appearance could also enhance holiness. Severe asceticism, as seen in the example of Godric, had a visual effect upon the body; the ugliness of certain saints could be a positive reflection of their devotion. In the *Speculum Caritatis*, Ailred of Rievaulx considers how an unappealing appearance did not preclude holiness; where a fine vessel may contain spoilt food, an ugly one may contain wholesome food.[64] St Martin of Tours himself had been described by Sulpicius Severus as '*deformis*', which in his case was considered by contemporaries as a reason for exclusion from the episcopacy.[65] Gilbert of Sempringham, founder of the Gilbertine Order, was also described as *deformis*. Despite portents at his birth, Gilbert starts out life without much further sign of the future holiness that was to earn him his sanctity; his hagiographer says that, 'To tell the truth, at his earliest period he was as modestly endowed with distinction and virtue as with age', so much so, that as Gilbert used to recount, even the household servants refused to eat with him.[66] The reason for this becomes clearer:

> In addition his bodily form was mis-shaped (*incompositus*)
> and disfigured (*incultus*), and no greatness of soul had yet
> emerged to redeem the misfortune of his external

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[63] *Ibid.*

[64] See Ailred of Rievaulx, *De Speculo Caritatis,* p. 126. St Augustine also argued that beauty of the soul was more important than temporal beauty. Augustine also maintained that internal beauty could radiate outwards and make even the ugliest person seem beautiful. Harrison, *Beauty and Revelation*, p. 153.

[65] *Vita Martini*, c. 3 (pp. 256–258), c. 9 (pp. 270–272).

[66] *VSG*, pp. 12–13: 'Nempe in primeuo sui tempore, sicut etate, ita notitia et uirtute modicus, adeo erat abiectus in domo patris, ut nobis narrare consueuerat, quod nec famuli domus dignarentur cum eo cybum sumere.'

deformity (*deformitatis*). But there lay hiding within, in the goodness of his excellent nature, whatever he was able to be or was afterwards when grace (*gratia*) was bestowed upon him as he grew older, like a lamp despised in the thoughts of the wealthy but prepared against a certain hour.[67]

The *vita* implies that Gilbert's misshapen form had an impact upon his route through life. Gilbert was probably the eldest son of the family, and his deformity may have been the reason that he was sent to school rather than following his father in a military career.[68] In this example, rather than bodily appearance reflecting what is within, 'greatness of soul' (*animi uirtus*), the goodness of Gilbert's excellent nature and the subsequent grace (*gratia*) bestowed upon him atone for his ugliness.

The *Life* of the hermit Wulfric of Haselbury gives another example of a saint who is not beautiful. In this case, however, Wulfric strives to 'wring out all elegance of the body and restore to himself the beauty of holiness through extremes of abstinence and watching.'[69] The bloom of youth and 'good looks that passed the ordinary' dried up in him until the 'wasted flesh bodied forth no longer the carnal man, but the spiritual.'[70] Through his asceticism Wulfric shuns the earthly world and the physical comeliness associated with it, and rather strives towards spiritual beauty. This is similar to the physical state of Ailred of Rievaulx in his final years. Due to his ascetic devotions Ailred is emaciated, 'hardly any flesh clung to his bones; his lips alone remained, a frame to his teeth.' Nonetheless, Walter Daniel records that the excessive emaciation of

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[67] *VSG*, pp. 12–13: 'Porro corporali scemate incompositus et incultus, nulla quae adhuc emineret redemit uitium exterioris deformitatis animi uirtute. Erat tamen intrinsecus latens, in bono scilicet eximie nature, quicquid postmodum, aduentiente gratia, esse poterat uel fuit in maiori etate, tanquam lampas contempta apud cogitationem diuitum parata un tempus statutum.' Cf. Job 12:5.

[68] Brian Golding, *Gilbert of Sempringham and the Gilbertine Order c.1130–c.1300* (Oxford, 1995), p. 11.

[69] *Vita Wulfrici*, p. 17 (p. 102): 'et ad exprimendam carnis munditiam sibique reconciliandum sanctimoniae decus omni abstinentiae et vigilarum labore sudabat.'

[70] *Vita Wulfrici*, p. 102 (p. 17): 'non jam carnalem carne nimirum absumpta, se spiritualem etiam in ipso corpore virum exhiberet.'

his body and the thinness of his face gave an angelic expression to his countenance.[71]

Thus holiness could both compensate for, and be presented as a result of, physical deformity.

Two patterns appear within the descriptions of the bodily appearance of these saints. In the first hagiographers present outward beauty as directly connected to inner virtue or holiness; in the second they follow a more descriptive/realistic mode which concentrates more on the details of appearance. Terminology of beauty is largely shared between male and female saints. In some cases, the saints' physical appearance is not beautiful, but can still act as a reflection of holiness. Having now considered the depiction of the physical appearance of saints, I now turn to behavioural aspects of outward appearance.

Deportment and demeanour

Aside from physical features, hagiographers may also pass comment on the saints' behaviour, such as the way they move or their manner. These descriptions often occur alongside accounts of bodily appearance. I will first examine the depiction of bodily movement before considering saintly demeanour. A recurrent theme throughout this section is an emphasis on control and moderation.

Recently there has been a developing interest in movement in the Middle Ages, specifically in relation to 'gesture'.[72] In his study of charismatic teaching, C. Stephen Jaeger examines the transmission of 'virtue made visible' and highlights the importance

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[71] *Vita Ailredi*, p. 49: 'ut nulla pene carne adherente ossibus tantummodo labia derelinquerentur circa dentes eius'.

[72] For example, Jean-Claude Schmitt, *La Raison des gestes dans l'occident médiéval* (Paris, 1990); Moshe Barasch, *Gestures of Despair in Medieval and Early Renaissance Art* (New York, 1976); J. A. Burrow, *Gestures and Looks in Medieval Narrative* (Cambridge, 2002). See also Jan N. Bremmer and Herman Roodenburg (eds), *A Cultural History of Gesture: From Antiquity to the Present Day* (London, 1991), esp. Schmitt at pp. 59–70.

of proper bodily decorum.[73] The disciplined body reflected the virtue of the soul and could become a model for emulation; this emulation could then lead others onto the cultivation of their own virtue.[74] In these saints' *Lives* appropriate bodily movement is interpreted as a sign of inner virtue; moderation and control of the body are important signs of positive movement, inherited from classical tradition.[75] Further, deportment and gesture often serve as a visual marker that sets the saint aside from his peers.

In some instances it is hard to separate deportment from physical appearance. It has been demonstrated above how Thomas Becket's identity was exposed by his appearance, however, it is not just Becket's handsome face and exquisite fingers that reveal his identity, but also the nature of his body (*corpus qualitas*) and bearing (*gestus*).[76] Although precisely what about Becket's bearing sets him apart is not entirely clear, something makes him appear exceptional. In the description of Edward the Confessor given in the Anonymous *Life*, his appearance and deportment also sit side by side; it is his bearing (*status*) as much as his appearance (*forma*) that create an appropriate depiction of a saintly king. Edward's walk and demeanour also appropriately reflect his virtues, as he is pleasant, 'but with constant dignity, he walked with eyes of humility, most graciously affable to one and all.'[77] The dignity of Edward's walk and humility of his appearance are preserved in the later *Lives*.[78]

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[73] Jaeger, *Envy of Angels*, pp. 106–116. Bodily gesture and movement lends itself to studies interested in performativity, although this is not the focus here. See, for example, Peter Burke, 'Performing History: the Importance of Occasions', *Rethinking History*, 9 (2005), pp. 35–52.

[74] See Jaeger, *Envy of Angels*, pp. 10–15.

[75] Jaeger, *Envy of Angels*, pp. 10–55. On appropriate control of the body in the classical world see, for example, Maud W. Gleason, *Making Men: Sophists and Self-Presentation in Ancient Rome* (Princeton, 1995), esp. ch. 3.

[76] MTB, 3. 322–35.

[77] Anonymous, *Vita Ædwardi*, pp. 18–19: 'continua grauitate iocundus, humilitatis incedens uisibus, gratissime cum quouis affabilitatis.' Cf. *BR*, c. 7.62–66. Walking with the eyes downcast is one of the 12 steps of humility; this may be what underlies the eyes of humility in this example.

[78] Osbert, *Vita beati Eadwardi*, pp. 74–5; Ailred, *Vita S. Edwardi*, col. 745.

Two texts contain particularly striking examples in which the deportment and gait of their subjects are described. The first is William of Malmesbury's *Vita Wulfstani*. When Wulfstan enters the household of the Bishop of Worcester as an episcopal clerk, his hagiographer gives a short description. After explaining that Wulfstan was of medium height, he records that 'insolence of mind, hastiness of speech, unrestrained gesture (*gestus)* and irregular gait (*incessus*) were all foreign to him; he avoided impudence and was untouched by impropriety, and – a particular mark of distinction at such an age – guarded his modesty with the greatest care.'[79] Here there is a clear association between movement and morality; in this case unrestrained gesture and an erratic gait are associated with insolence, imprudence and loose sexual morals.[80] Wulfstan is clearly set apart as his behaviour, reflected in his deportment, is morally superior to those around him in the episcopal entourage.

The second, more extended example comes from Jocelin of Furness's *Vita Waldevi*. More than the other hagiographers, Jocelin explicitly holds up Waltheof as an example of appropriate deportment and gives a specific picture of what constitutes inappropriate gesture in a man of the Church. The descriptions occur within the same passage in which Waltheof's physical appearance is described. Jocelin compares Waltheof's behaviour and manner to that of 'pompous' prelates. He records that Waltheof followed Christ and yearned to be 'gentle and humble of heart' (*mitis et humilis corde*). Indeed, Jocelin says Waltheof displayed true humility (*praetendebat proinde humilitatem veram*), which was apparent in his contempt for his own excellence, wealth and honours, and in his speech (*lingua*), walk (*incessu*) and the

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[79] *VSW*, pp. 22–23: 'quippe a quo mens insolentior, uox preruptior, gestus solutior, incessus fractior exulabat, fugitans proteruiae, immunis custos uerecundiae.'
[80] Cf. Schmitt, *La raison,* p. 140.

'carriage of his whole body' (*totius corpus gestu*).[81] A few pages later, Jocelin explicitly contrasts Waltheof's comportment to that of less humble men:

> His bearing and the demeanour of his entire body was religious and most becoming, such as to afford edification to anyone who saw him. On this point I am ashamed to speak of some who walk as if rowing themselves with their shoulders or arms, or trick out their walk pompously in the style of the turtle-dove or the peacock, or a crane. Still others point their fingers in speaking, shake their heads, raise their eyebrows, and by the very becks of their eyes seem to shout that description of Eliu the Buzite, 'my belly is like new wine which wants a vent, which bursts the new'.[82]

A few key points arise from this extract. This passage, and the surrounding text, clearly encapsulate the didactic purpose of hagiography. The concept of *imitatio*, in which a reader might be stimulated by the text to live a better life, was an integral element of the hagiographical tradition. The extent to which this was emphasised, however, could change depending on the author; Jocelin demonstrates a particularly keen interest in *imitatio*.[83] The emphases within his texts correspond with the audiences he was writing for. In other hagiographies, broadly aimed at the secular clergy, Jocelin reflects wider reformist concerns, such as clerical celibacy and simony. These issues appear less immediately relevant within the *Vita Waldevi*, written for the Cistercian community at

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[81] *Vita Waldevi*, p. 125. Cf. *Benedictine Rule*, c. 7.62-66.

[82] *Ibid*., p. 127 (p. 255): 'Incessus ejus et totius corporis gestus erat religiosus et decentissimus, et ideo aedificationem pariebat intuentibus; unde pudet me dicere de quibusdam, qui scapulis aut brachiis remigando incedunt, aut in modum turturis vel pavonis sive gruis pompatice gressus depingunt. Alii quidam loquendo digitos extendunt, caput concutiunt, supercilia erigunt, ipsis nutibus oculorum illud Eeliu clamare videntur: 'En venter meus quasi mustum absque spiraculo, quod langunculas novas disrumpit.'

[83] On Jocelin and *imitatio* see Robert Bartlett, 'The Hagiography of Angevin England', in *Thirteenth Century England, V: Proceedings of the Newcastle upon Tyne Conference 1993,* ed. by P. R. Coss and S.D. Lloyd, (Woodbridge, 1995), pp. 37-52 (pp. 42–43) and Helen Birkett, *The Saints' Lives of Jocelin of Furness: Hagiography, Patronage and Ecclesiastical Politics* (Woodbridge, 2010), pp. 259–278. On the exemplary nature of hagiography see Bartlett, *WCD?,* pp. 510–511; See also Jo Ann McNamara, '*Imitatio Helenae*: Sainthood as an Attribute of Queenship', in *Saints: Studies in Hagiography*, ed. by Sandro Sticca, (Binghamton, N.Y, 1996), pp. 51–80; For alternative types of *imitatio* see Lester K. Little, '*Imitatio Francisci*: The Influence of Francis of Assisi on Late Medieval Religious Life', in *Defenders and Critics of Franciscan Life: Essays in Honour of John V. Fleming,* ed. by Michael F. Custato and Guy Geltner, (Leiden, 2009), pp. 195–218.

Melrose. Instead, indicated by the context of several of the comments and the use of allusions to the Rule, Jocelin appears primarily concerned with the faults of contemporary abbots.[84]

Secondly, the extract presents a detailed description of inappropriate manners of walking. Whereas in Wulfstan's *Life* there is little detail about what constitutes an unbefitting gait, here it is clear that exaggerated use of the arms and shoulders, strutting and over-articulation with the hands and eyes when speaking is incongruous. Waltheof's *Life* draws together the main themes of the relationship between inner virtue and deportment highlighted by the other examples cited. Jocelin paints a clear image of what a well-controlled body should and should not look like, plainly drawing the relationship between inner virtue and outer deportment, as well as highlighting the subsequent pedagogical nature of saintly bodily control.[85]

Aside from modes of walking and deportment of the body, certain specific 'devotional' gestures and movements are recorded. Hagiographers might describe the way their subjects pray, depicting the physical actions they perform.[86] For those hagiographers writing about figures who participated in the cloistered life at any time, one main concern was how to distinguish them from everyone else. Contemplative prayer was an integral part of the monastic life; thus in order to present it as evidence of sainthood it had to appear more heartfelt than that of others. In the case of Gilbert of Sempringham, his prayers are described as exceptionally physical. This account occurs

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[84] Birkett, *Saints Lives of Jocelin*, pp. 274–275, 277–278.

[85] See also *VSG* in which Gilbert is described as demonstrating 'gravitas in incessu', pp. 24–25, and *Vita Ailredi* in which Ailred's positive attitude, humble heart and orderly body when carrying out manual tasks are contrasted to the indecent shoving of other monks, p. 21.

[86] On the gesture of prayer see Schmitt, 'De la prière à l'extase', in *La raisons du gestes*, pp. 289–310. See also Richard C. Trexler, 'Legitimating Prayer Gestures in the Twelfth Century. The *De Penitentia* of Peter the Chanter', *History and Anthropology*, 1 (1984), pp. 97–126; Jean Claude Schmitt, 'Between Text and Image: The Prayer Gestures of Saint Dominic', *History and Anthropology*, 1 (1984), pp. 127–162; Przemyslaw Mrozowski, 'Genuflection in Medieval Western Culture: The Gesture of Expiation- the Praying Posture', *Acta Poloniae historica*, 68 (1993), pp. 5–26; Cf. Rachel Fulton, 'Praying with Anselm at Admont: A Meditation on Practice', *Speculum*, 81: 3 (2006), pp. 700–733.

when Gilbert is still a member of the court of Bishop Alexander of Lincoln, where he 'used to subdue his body more strenuously with fastings, vigils, prayers and other spiritual exercises' than later on.[87] His hagiographer describes Gilbert's prayers:

> For although his life and behaviour was a prayer offered at all hours, he stole opportunities for secret prayer whenever he could. And this he performed not like most people just with movements of the lips, nor with his mind set on other matters; by raising his thoughts as well as his hands and eyes to heaven, by beating his breast, by kneeling, he revealed the longings of the inner man.[88]

Whilst in the previous descriptions of deportment the saint is often identifiable through his controlled movements, in the case of devotional gestures, excess or physicality is often presented as ideal saintly behaviour; Gilbert's prayers comprise far more bodily involvement than the hagiographer implies is usual. Significantly, for this behaviour to be appropriate the mind, as well as the body, must be focused on the divine. The secrecy of Gilbert's praying is also significant, reflecting the Biblical tenet of Matthew 6: 2-6 which states that devotions should be undertaken privately and only in the sight of God.[89] The secrecy of these exaggerated gestures is necessary so that they do not appear immodest and thus infringe upon the humility of the saint. Further, for Gilbert, it is significant that these examples of amplified devotion occur whilst he is still a member of the episcopal household, before he enters the regular life. The hagiographer is keen to stress that at this point it was already possible to think of

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[87] *VSG*, pp. 22–23: 'magis dum esset in curia quam postea ieiuniis, uigiliis et orationibus ceterisque spiritualibus exerciciis corpus suum edomabat.'

[88] *VSG*, pp. 20–23: 'Nam quamuis uita et moribus oraret omni hora, quandocumque potuit secreto furabatur orandi horas. Hoc autem fecit non motis tantum ut plerique labiis, nec corde in diuersa disperso, sed mente cum manibus et oculis in superna erecta, tunsione pectoris et genuflexione, interioris hominis desiderium indicauit.'

[89] This passage is particularly relevant when considering concealed asceticism, a common hagiographical theme that will be explored in more depth presently.

Gilbert, not as a secular clerk, but as a regular canon.[90] Gilbert's sanctity is enhanced as he acts like a monk before he has entered the cloister. As Gilbert's role as a founder is crucial for his sanctity, demonstrating his natural propensity for a cloistered life strengthens the depiction of his sainthood.

As with most 'secret' devotions of saints, they must be witnessed in order for them to be recorded, thus allowing the actions to be lauded and yet the saint remain humble in their enactment. Gilbert's hagiographer offers two examples to substantiate his description of Gilbert's prayers, both of which serve to emphasise their unusual physicality. First, Gilbert occasionally invited one of his fellow clerks to pray with him. The text records that whenever they reached the name of the Lord or of God, Gilbert would lie prone upon the ground. Following Gilbert's example, the clerk did likewise; however, Gilbert remained prostrate for so long that his companion grew weary and swore he would never pray with Gilbert again. In the second example, Gilbert's actions are observed without his knowledge by a visiting bishop who is being housed in Gilbert's quarters. During the night, the bishop awakes and is struck with amazement and horror to see what he thinks is an apparition in the form of a shadow alternately rising and falling all night. Upon investigation he discovers that the shadow is created by Gilbert, frequently raising his hands and kneeling down in prayer; the next morning he laughingly accuses his host of keeping a dancer in his chamber, who had given him a fright.[91] The initial horror and surprise of the bishop serves further to emphasise the unusually physical nature of Gilbert's devotions.[92]

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[90] *VSG,* pp. 24–25: 'ut iam tunc non clericus secularis sed canonicus regularis putari potuisset.'

[91] *VSG*, pp. 22.

[92] Gilbert's prayers are particularly energetic; often the saint's devotion or frequency in prayers is emphasised rather than the gestures involved. For references to physical posture see for example, *VSW*, pp. 24–25; *VRB*, p. 160; *Vita Gundulfi*, pp. 45ff.

The *vita* of Ailred of Rievaulx provides another extended illustration of prayer as a marker of sanctity. Rather than concentrating on the position of Ailred's body, Walter Daniel focuses on a different physical manifestation of piety. After highlighting that prayer is a commune between the individual and God alone, Walter says that Ailred scarcely 'ever prayed without tears; tears, he said, are the signs (*indicia*) of perfect prayers, the embassies between God and man: they show the whole feeling of the heart and declare the will of God to the soul.'[93] This passage may reflect the interests of a particularly Cistercian spirituality, which fostered a new intimacy in the union between man and God.[94] The text goes on to explain that without tears, prayer is not strong enough to pierce the clouds of heaven and without tears to nourish them, petitions dry up and go unheard.[95] As well as symbolising the penitential washing away of sins, religious weeping was perceived as sign of an inner spiritual process, or as a gift from God. Prayers offered up with tears were regarded as more efficacious.[96]

Devotional weeping occurs within the *Lives* of saints of all vocations, usually alongside prayer, confession or delivery of the mass.[97] However, in terms of the frequency with which this particular devotional gesture occurs, Bishop Gundulf of Rochester stands out. One particular example is worth citing as a contrast to that given above. Although Walter Daniel's descriptions of Ailred's prayers may have formed a

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[93] *Vita Ailredi*, p. 20: 'Vix autem aliquando orauit sine lacrimis; lacrime, inquit, indicia sunt oracionis perfecte, lacrime legaciones existunt inter Deum et hominem, lacrime cordis totum produnt affectum, lacrime Dei ad animam uoluntatem nunciant.'

[94] On Cistercian spirituality see Janet E. Burton and Julie Kerr, *The Cistercians in the Middle Ages* (Woodbridge, 2011), esp. ch. 6 and Caroline Walker Bynum, *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages* (Berkeley, 1982), esp. ch. 2 and 4.

[95] *Vita Ailredi*, p. 20: 'Sine lacrimis oracio nubem celi pertransire non sufficit, sine lacrimis postulaciones tepescunt aresceunt et deficiunt, sine lacrimis ociosis auribus ingeritur oracio et ideo non capiunt uerba arentis anime.'

[96] Piroska Nagy, 'Religious Weeping as Ritual in the Medieval West', *Social Analysis: The International Journal of Social and Cultural Practice*, 48 (2004), pp. 119–137. On crying in the Middle Ages see Elina Gertsman, *Crying in the Middle Ages: Tears of History* (Abingdon, 2011).

[97] See, for example, *Vita Margaretae*, p. 166, in which Margaret teaches Malcolm her husband to pray with a groaning heart and a profusion of tears; *Vita Godrici Throkenholt*, pp. 34–35; *VSW*, pp. 24–25, 54–55, 116–117; *Life of Christina*, pp. 106, 116, 132; *VRB*, pp. 128, 160.

model of encouragement and emulation for those reading the text, the descriptions of Gundulf's tears are framed in a way that explicitly emphasises *imitatio*. In the following passage Gundulf's hagiographer relates an incident in which the bishop weeps whilst preaching a sermon on the feast of Mary Magdalene:

> At times he himself was unable to speak for tears, nor could the people do other than weep and lament as they listened to him. As his words failed, tears completed his sermon. This happened especially on the Feast of St Mary Magdalene: when he was preaching of her penitence he roused his flock to penitence, and telling of her tears, he moved himself and them to tears.[98]

A chain of saintly emulation is evident; contemplation of the weeping and penitence of St Mary Magdalene leads Gundulf to penitential weeping, which in turn leads his flock to devotional tears. This passage highlights Gundulf's pastoral role as bishop. Whilst Ailred's devotional tears are presented as part of a commune between the individual and God, suitable for the reflective life of a Cistercian monk, Gundulf's serve a more public role. Thus, although hagiographers of many different types of saints note devotional weeping, the institutional context of the saint might dictate the presentation of devotional practice.

Moving on from the representation of bodily behaviour, examination will now turn towards saintly demeanour. Appropriate control of demeanour emerges as a central positive quality within many of the texts.[99] Contemporaries were particularly concerned

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[98] *Vita Gundulfi*, p. 56 (p. 50): 'Aliquando interrumpentibus lacrimis loqui et ipse non poterat, nec populus quicquam aliud quam flere uel gemere illum attendens poterat. Cessabant uerba, lacrimae sermonem explebant. Hoc autem maxime fiebat cum in festiuitate beatae Mariae Magdalenae de eius poenitentia uel lacrimis sermonem ad populum faciebat: loquens quippe de eius poenitentia, populum ad poenitentiam prouocabat, recitans illius lacrimas, lacrimans et ipse caeteros ad lacrimas succendebat.' (Translation slightly modified.) For a gendered interpretation of Gundulf's weeping see, William M. Aird, 'The Tears of Bishop Gundulf: gender, religion, and emotion in the late eleventh century', in *Intersections of Gender, Religion and Ethnicity in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Cordelia Beattie and Kirsten A. Fenton (Basingstoke, 2011), pp. 62-84.
[99] An emphasis on the importance of control of demeanour and emotion was not new to the Middle Ages. On emotion in the classical period see Robert A. Kaster, *Emotion, Restraint, and Community in Ancient*

with the relationship between emotion and action; such concerns are evident, for example, in discussions of monastic spirituality and the provision of royal justice.[100] Exhibiting unchecked emotion might lead to sinful actions, and possibly even breed acts of violence.

In the *Life* of St Margaret, Turgot records how Margaret kept the women of her retinue in order, saying that she 'united such strictness to her sweetness and such sweetness to her strictness, that all who were in her service, men as well as women, whilst fearing loved her and while loving feared her.'[101] The passage continues by saying that Margaret was joyful in her dignity but could grow righteously angry. However, she never had too much hilarity in loud laughter, nor poured out her anger in great wrath.[102] These positive traits, of moderation in both gaiety and anger, recur in other texts.[103] Turgot is keen to highlight that Margaret, although always angry with her own faults, would sometimes reprimand others' faults with a commendable anger tempered by justice.[104] While appropriate wielding of justice clearly aligns Margaret with ideals of kingship, her control of temperament reflects wider models of saintly behaviour. The passage from Margaret's *Life* centres around her moral guidance and

Rome (Oxford, 2005); On the social context of anger in the Middle Ages see Barbara H. Rosenwein (ed.), *Anger's Past: The Social Uses of an Emotion in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, 1998); On anger in a specifically monastic context, Lester K. Little, *Benedictine Maledictions: Liturgical Cursing in Romanesque France* (Ithaca, 1996).

[100] For anger and patience in the Rule of St Benedict, see, Prologue, 49–50; 2. 23–25; 4. 22–23; 71. 6–8. Although other commentators saw all anger as sinful, sixth century pope Gregory the Great differentiated between unrestrained anger borne of vice, and zealous anger borne of reason. For a summary of anger in monastic spirituality see, Lester K. Little, 'Anger in Monastic Curses', in *Anger's Past: The Social Uses of an Emotion in the Middle Ages,* ed. by Barbara H. Rosenwein (Ithaca, 1998), pp. 9–35 (esp. pp. 12–18). On royal anger see, for example, Gerd Althoff, '*Ira Regis*: Prolegomena to a History of Royal Anger', in *Anger's Past: The Social Uses of an Emotion in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Barbara H. Rosenwein (Ithaca, 1998), pp. 59–74.

[101] *Vita Margaretae*, p. 164 (p. 302): 'Inerat enim Reginae tanta cum jucunditate severitas, tanta cum severitate jucunditas, ut omnes qui erant in ejus obsequio, viri et feminae, illam et timendo diligerent, et diligendo timerent.'

[102] *Ibid*.

[103] Cf. Hugh of Lincoln when at table; he is gay and lively, but dignified and restrained, thus demonstrating control even in happiness, *MVSH*, I, p. 125. And Edward the Confessor who also does not let his anger show through railing, Anonymous, *Vita Ædwardi*, p. 18.

[104] *Vita Margaretae*, p. 164. Cf. royal behaviour and justice see Geoffrey Koziol, *Begging Pardon and Favor: Ritual and Political Order in Early Medieval France* (Ithaca, 1992), ch. 7.

leadership of the court, and reflects the ideal behaviour of a monastic leader as much as a secular ruler; the description of her as loved and feared mirrors the Benedictine Rule's description of the characteristics of an abbot.[105] Further, temperance of levity was one step in the Benedictine guide to humility.[106] Margaret's sanctity is enhanced by good rulership that reflects multiple models of ideal application of authority, both royal and monastic.

Similar emphases, albeit with different nuances, can be found elsewhere. The *vita* of Wulfstan of Worcester provides a good comparison. For instance, Wulfstan is also controlled in his discipline; he does not fly into a rage with monks who miss the early morning mass, but is still strict in making sure that they repent for their fault.[107] Elsewhere his hagiographer emphasises Wulfstan's appropriate control of demeanour, providing evidence of how Wulfstan reacts when others upset his tranquillity (*tranquillum animus*). Once, when Wulfstan was about to say mass, he found that all the ornaments were not fit for the performance of the rite. Wulfstan therefore asked a minor clerk to fetch the chamberlain to set things right; the chamberlain, however, 'flew into a rage, and gave the boy a great smack'. Wulfstan was enraged by the chamberlain's high-handed behaviour and showed it in his face: 'But he restrained his feelings and for the moment let the whole thing go.'[108] That Wulfstan's anger shows in his face emphasises the difficulties in restraining emotion; Wulfstan's behaviour is to be

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[105] *BR,* c. 2. 23–26. On Margaret fitting models of un–gendered rulership, both monastic and secular, see Joanna Huntington, 'Lay Male Sanctity in Early Twelfth-Century England' (unpublished PhD Thesis, University of York, 2004), pp. 99–152. Cf. Simon MacLean, 'Monastic Reform and Royal Ideology in the Late Tenth Century: Ælfthryth and Edgar in Continental Perspective', in *England and the Continent in the Tenth Century: Studies in Honour of Wilhelm Levison (1876–1947)*, ed. by David Rollason, Conrad Leyser and Hannah Williams (Turnhout, 2010), pp. 255–274.

[106] *BR*, c. 7.60–61.

[107] *VSW,* pp. 120–121. Wulfstan is portrayed as kind and not arrogant during confession, *VSW,* p. 116. Cf. Anselm who does not condone beating young novices, *VA*, pp. 37–40. Abbot Waltheof of Melrose is described as preferring to be punished for being abundantly merciful rather than dealing out strict justice, *Vita Waldevi,* p. 123.

[108] *VSW*, pp. 96–97: 'commoto felle pergrandem colphum puero impegit.'; 'Verum tamen intra pectus eam cohibens rem omnem pro tempore quieto dissoluit silentio.'

admired because, unlike the chamberlain, he is able to control his temper.[109] Furthermore, this restraint is condoned by God, as at the same moment Wulfstan feels angry the chamberlain falls down ill and was only be cured by confession of his sins and a blessing from Wulfstan.[110]

A similar emphasis on self-control is apparent in the depiction of Wulfstan's reaction to those who mock him. His hagiographer records how the bishop was very tolerant and able to withstand the taunts of those who ridiculed him.[111] Wulfstan is again able outwardly to temper his reactions when others are not. Nonetheless, the hagiographer continues: 'For I do not wish to claim for him the credit for something I have no grounds for asserting, that he was not even moved in his mind. No religion has ever been able to get rid of feelings, and never will; even if it can restrain them for an hour, it has no power to remove them for ever.'[112] Thus, although even saints might not be immune from human emotion, their ability to control these emotions enhances their virtue.[113] Anger is presented as ideally managed and used in a moderated fashion, particularly when rebuking others. Crucially, it emerges that self-control and moderation, both in the movement of the body and in demeanour are a central aspect of saintliness.[114]

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[109] On this passage see Kirsten A. Fenton, 'The Question of Masculinity in William of Malmesbury's Presentation of Wulfstan of Worcester', in *Anglo-Norman Studies*, 28 (2006), pp. 124–137 (p. 132); on anger and patience in monastic spirituality see Little, 'Anger in Monastic Curses', pp. 12–27.

[110] *VSW*, pp. 96–98.

[111] *Ibid*., p. 114: 'qua ita mentem armauerat ut nulla eum illusio turbaret, nullum incommodum in peccatum concuteret.'

[112] *Ibid*., pp. 114–115: 'Nec enim ei hanc laude arrogare uolo quam affirmare non uaelo, ut nec animo moueretur. Affectiones enim animi nulla umquam religio delere potuit uel poterit, quas et si ualet ad horam compescere non ualet in aeternum auferre.'

[113] Cf. *Vita Ailredi*, pp. 5–9. In this similar episode, whilst Ailred is still at the court of David I, the saint remains kind and serene in the face of abuse from a jealous knight; Ailred's humility brings the knight around to seeing the error of his ways. For another example of appropriate emotion cf. *VRB*, p. 188 when Robert demonstrates an appropriate emotional response to the civil war, upset about the disruption to mass but not to his personal property.

[114] As will be seen in the following chapters, moderation and self-control are important traits that emerge in relation to other themes as well, most notably sexuality and food.

Clothing

Alongside these physical and behavioural characteristics, clothing is another significant feature of appearance noted by some hagiographers. Clothing is an important marker of social status with long antecedents. Religion has used clothing as a way of marking out particular divisions within a belief group and, building on Roman foundations, early Christianity also developed a system of symbolism in which clothing came to have great significance.[115] This section will consider the presentation of clothing in two broad segments. The first considers worldly dress, examining how hagiographers address the juxtaposition of saintly figures with secular clothing. The second examines religious clothing, first in the context of transition and religious development, and secondly in relation to depictions of asceticism.

The worldly, or secular, clothing of saints occurs primarily in two contexts; the *Lives* of royal saints and within the pre-conversion lives of saints who enter the religious life or episcopacy. Worldly clothing often furnishes hagiographers with a conflict between the corporeal world and their saint, which must be reconciled, and in doing so heightens the sense of sanctity.

Recently it has been argued that sanctity could be achieved through secular status, such as royalty, rather than in spite of it.[116] Nonetheless, within the *Lives* of Edward the Confessor and Margaret of Scotland, their relationship with clothing is

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[115] See, for example, Mary Harlow, 'Clothes Maketh the Man. Power Dressing and Elite Masculinity in the Later Roman World', in *Gender in the Early Medieval World*, ed. by Leslie Brubaker and Julia M. H. Smith (Cambridge, 2004), pp. 44–69 and Lynda L. Coon, 'The Rhetorical Uses of Clothing in the Lives of Sacred Males,' *Sacred Fictions: Holy Women and Hagiography in Late Antiquity* (Philadelphia, 1997), pp. 52–70.

[116] Gábor Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers and Blessed Princesses: Dynastic Cults in Medieval Central Europe* (Cambridge, 2002); Catherine Keene, *Saint Margaret, Queen of the Scots* (New York, 2013), esp ch. 6; Sean Gilsdorf (ed. and trans.), *Queenship and Sanctity: The Lives of Mathilda and The Epitaph of Adelheid* (Washington, 2004), esp. pp. 34–35; See also Stuart Airlie, 'The Anxiety of Sanctity: St Gerald of Aurillac and His Maker', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 43 (1992), pp. 372–395. Cf. Susan J. Ridyard, *The Royal Saints of Anglo–Saxon England: A Study of West Saxon and East Anglian Cults* (Cambridge, 1988), pp. 90–91.

presented as something that needs to be negotiated. Worldly clothing must both reflect their position as king or queen, but not impinge upon their claim to sanctity. The Anonymous *Life* of Edward the Confessor emphasises the king's lack of interest in fine clothing. In one example, although Edward is depicted dressed in great royal splendour, the hagiographer emphasises Edward's disdain for such finery, placing responsibility for his rich clothing on his wife.[117] Edith is praised for her care in such matters, depicted as an ideal queen-consort for her saintly king. Given the contemporary association of queens with treasure and finery, this passage may be more concerned with the depiction of Edward as a good king, and Edith as an ideal queen-consort, than specifically with Edward's sanctity.[118] The splendour of Edward's royal raiments is further justified by comparison with the biblical Solomon, who was rewarded by God with wealth and success because he was deemed worthy.[119] Thus Edward's wealth is legitimised and any potential tension between splendour and sanctity is resolved.

A parallel can be drawn with the *Vita Margaretae*. Turgot, Margaret's hagiographer, describes how she reformed the Church and court in Scotland; one of her contributions to the royal court was the introduction of new fashions and finery.[120]

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[117] Compare to an example later when Edward's attire is mentioned when he attends church. The king is depicted taking 'no mental pleasure' in wearing the royal finery in which Edith has arrayed him, Anonymous, *Vita Ædwardi*, pp. 62–65; cf. Ailred, *Vita S. Edwardi* col. 748. As will be seen in Chapter 3, this is a recurrent tool for representing saintly attitudes towards worldly goods.

[118] See Pauline A. Stafford, 'Queens and Treasure in the Early Middle Ages', in *Treasure in the Medieval West*, ed. by Elizabeth M. Tyler (York, 2000) pp. 61–82, esp. pp. 73–74 on this passage.

[119] Anonymous, *Vita Ædwardi*, pp. 22–25. The MS of the Anonymous *Life* is incomplete at this point; this passage has been reconstructed by Barlow from Richard of Cirencester's fourteenth-century *Speculum Historiale*. See Elizabeth M. Tyler, '"When Wings Incarnadine with Gold Are Spread": The *Vita Ædwardi Regis* and the Display of Treasure at the Court of Edward the Confessor,' in *Treasure in the Medieval West*, ed. by Elizabeth M. Tyler (York, 2000), pp. 83–107 (pp. 100–106); and Joanna Huntington, 'St Margaret of Scotland: Conspicuous Consumption, Genealogical Inheritance, and Post-Conquest Authority', *Journal of Scottish Historical Studies*, 33 (2013), pp. 149–164 (pp. 4–5). For Solomon see 1 Kings: 3–9.

[120] The account of Margaret is different from the 'hair–shirt under fine clothes' found in the *Lives* of other female royal saints. Cf. *Vita Edithe*, p. 70–71 and Venantius Fortunatus, *Vita Sanctae Radegundis*, ed Bruno Krusch, *MGH*, *Scriptores rerum Merovingicarum*, II (Hanover, 1888), pp. 364-77 (p. 367); See Dyan Elliott, 'Dress as Mediator', pp. 279–308; Huntington, 'Conspicuous Consumption', p. 150.

However, Turgot ensures that this material sophistication sits in harmony with Margaret's sanctity:

> And this the Queen did not because the honour of the world delighted her, but because she felt compelled to do what royal dignity required of her. For when she walked in state clad in splendid apparel, as became a Queen, like another Esther, she in her heart trod all these trappings beneath her feet, and bore in mind that under gems and gold there was nothing but dust and ashes.[121]

This passage resonates with those in the *Life* of Edward, particularly with regard to the saint's attitude towards finery. Stylish clothing, and other adornments, are presented as a necessary evil for these royal saints; something that they know is appropriate for their role as king or queen, but that they take no personal enjoyment in.[122] Although evoking Solomonic kingship elsewhere in his *vita*, here Turgot draws upon the biblical example of Esther, a common model for medieval queens, and a central biblical referent for the justification of the lavish lifestyle of royalty and the aristocracy.[123] Just like Esther, Margaret engaged with worldly trappings only when necessary, and viewed them with disdain, retaining her humility despite the disruptive trifles of queenship: 'in the midst of her exalted dignity she always took the greatest care to preserve her humility.'[124] Moments of enforced interaction in worldly affairs can be seen as a kind of trial in which the subject's sanctity is confirmed through their steadfast dedication to God, despite the temptations the world offered them through their secular positions.

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[121] *Vita Margaretae*, p. 167 (p. 305): 'Et haec quidem illa fecerat, non quod mundi honore delectabatur; sed, quod regia dignitas ab ea exigebat, persolvere cogebatur. Nam cum pretioso ut Reginam decebat cultu induta procederet, omnia ornamenta velut altera Esther mente calcavit; seque sub gemmis et auro nihil aliud quam pulverem et cinerem consideravit.' Cf. Esther 14:16.

[122] Cf. *BR*, c. 7. 31–33.

[123] See Lois L. Huneycutt, 'Intercession and the High-medieval Queen: The Esther Topos', in *Power of the Weak: Studies on Medieval Women*, ed. by Jennifer Carpenter and Sally-Beth MacLean (Urbana, 1995), pp. 126–146 for an account of this topos.

[124] *Vita Margaretae*, p. 167 (pp. 305–306): 'in tanta celesitudine dignitatis, maximam semper habuit servandae curam humilitatis.' On this passage see Huntington, 'Conspicuous Consumption', pp. 149–164.

This model of 'endured finery' is not used in all cases where tension arises between worldly clothing and sanctity. For example, in the case of Thomas Becket his worldliness whilst chancellor was a source of criticism when he later became archbishop and his hagiographers work to rehabilitate his image by presenting his entire life as a journey towards sainthood.[125] Herbert of Bosham describes how Becket, in his youth, was intent on courtly trifles and that he had an insatiable desire for costly attire; rather than following the teaching of *Ecclesiasticus*, which admonished glorifying dress, Becket preferred to follow the spirit of popular acclaim.[126] Becket's clothing is more youthful folly than necessary evil. At this stage, Herbert excuses Becket's dress by emphasising that, despite his worldliness, he maintained his chastity.[127] During Becket's chancellorship, Herbert suggests that Becket was led into vanity by the other courtiers. He offers further justification by admitting that fine clothes befitted someone of Becket's position as chancellor; this has more resonance with the royal saints discussed above. Herbert presents Becket as taking on a variety of roles throughout his life and adapting to each as necessary; in his role as archdeacon these clothes would not be appropriate, but as chancellor they were forgivable.[128] Becket's ability to fulfil each of these roles becomes compatible with his ultimate sanctity.

William Fitzstephen opts to present a more explicit inner/outer dichotomy in relation to Becket's worldly clothing (and lavish lifestyle more widely).[129] Fitzstephen depicts Becket playing chess, resplendent in a sleeved cape.[130] When the prior of Leicester challenges him about the unsuitability of his dress for an archdeacon, and possible future archbishop, Becket responds that there are three poor priests in England

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[125] See Staunton, *Becket and His Biographers,* pp. 8–13, 78–79.
[126] MTB, 3. 165–166.
[127] See Chapter 2 for the role that Becket's chastity plays in this context.
[128] MTB, 3. 173–174.
[129] E.g. MTB, 3. 20–23.
[130] On this see Staunton, *Becket and his Biographers,* p. 61.

whom he would see elevated in preference to himself.[131] Fitzstephen's juxtaposition of worldly trappings and Becket's apparent humility addresses contemporary criticism of Becket's worldliness, emphasising that inwardly Becket demonstrated the requisite qualities for his future religious calling.

Secular clothing also features in the *Lives* of two abbatial saints, with some differences. Gilbert of Sempringham's hagiographer presents his family as a noble one; his father was an active knight and a wealthy man.[132] Prior to founding his Order, Gilbert was first a school-master and later church rector. Before he had fully turned to the religious life Gilbert:

> conformed to other people only in dress and appearance for inside everything was different from them. Thus while he wore the costly and elegant clothes befitting the dignity of his birth, he thought fashionable garments contemptible, and as far as he could he altered their use and form to a manner of humility (*humilitatis*).[133]

Whilst the inward/outward disparity between appearance and virtue and the lack of enjoyment of fine clothes chimes with the examples above, Gilbert's clothing itself is different. Although once again secular clothing is tied to status, and Gilbert wears the fine clothes that are fitting of his station, he is presented as coping with the accoutrements of the secular world by adapting his clothing, which serves to emphasise his humility. The development of Gilbert's humility (*humilitas*), a key monastic virtue, demonstrates the saint striving towards a monastic life even before he has left the

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[131] MTB, 3. 22.
[132] *VSG*, p. 10. Many twelfth-century commentators make this connection between nobility and sanctity, see Murray, *Reason and Society*, pp. 316–415. Brian Golding points out that we should be wary of accepting Gilbert's father's wealth at face value; whilst he was a relatively prosperous member of the knightly-class in post-Conquest Lincolnshire, he was not a tenant-in-chief and was merely of local status, Brian Golding, *Gilbert of Sempringham*, pp. 10–11.
[133] *VSG*, pp. 16–17:'Habitu tantum et fronte populo conueniens, intus habuit omnia dissimilia; preciosis et nitidis secundum natalium suorum dignitatem utens indumentis, ducens cultum in contemptum, usum pocius et formam eorum quantum potuit ad humilitatis modum conuerit.' (Translation modified.) Robert of Béthune is also recorded as unostentatious in his dress whilst a schoolmaster, *VRB*, p. 109.

world.[134] Walter Daniel similarly presents Ailred of Rievaulx shunning the fashions of the time and favouring simple dress, 'lest he be seen to imitate the arrogant and soft'.[135] Once again, Ailred's customisation of clothing foreshadows his move into the cloister.

Analysis will now turn towards religious clothing, which occurs in two main contexts: moments of transition and asceticism. Clothing can feature as an outward marker of identity at transformative parts of hagiographical narratives as saints move from one state to another, for example entering the cloister or taking on a new position of authority.

In the sample of saints who follow a regular life, the moment of monastic profession is frequently a time when clothing is mentioned.[136] The Benedictine Rule describes how a new recruit must be stripped of the clothes he is wearing and put on those of the monastery instead.[137] The significance of adopting the habit is captured in the *Life* of Wulfstan of Worcester, when his parents enter the religious life: 'The change of garb [into monk's habit and nun's veil] encouraged practice in good things, so that it should not be a waste of time to have altered clothes without an increase of virtue.'[138] However, although all the *Lives* mention clothing at the point of profession, donning the habit generally plays little part beyond signalling that the saint has entered

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[134] See *BR*, c. 7.

[135] *Vita Ailredi*, pp. 4–5: 'ne uideretur imitari superbos et molles, set mediocri toga et pallio simili usus est nulla ex parte mensuram excedente competentis honestatis.'

[136] On monastic clothing see Julie Kerr, *Life in the Medieval Cloister* (London, 2009), p. 57 and on monastic profession see, Giles Constable, 'The Ceremonies and Symbolism of Entering Religious Life and Taking the Monastic Habit, from the Fourth to the Twelfth Century', in *Segni e riti nella chiesa altomedievale occidentale* (Spoleto, 1985), pp. 771–834. On the adoption of white habits as a response to increasing Benedictine wealth see Lester K. Little, *Religious Poverty and the Profit Economy* (London, 1978), pp. 61–9; Cf. Giles Constable, *The reformation of the twelfth century* (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 188–91. On the visual impact of the white robes of the Cistercians see *Vita Ailredi*, pp. 10–11.

[137] *BR*, c. 58; cf. *Les Ecclesiastica Officia Cisterciens Du XIIème Siècle*, ed. by Danièle Choisselet and Placide Vernet (Reiningue, 1989), c. 102, p. 295–298.

[138] *VSW*, pp. 20–21: 'Pannorum mutatio inuitauit bonorum exercitium, ut non esset otiosum alterasse uestes nec auxisse uirtutes.' Compare to the tenth-century *vita* of St Rictrud by Hucbald of St Amand: 'However, so that she could appear outwardly as she bore herself inwardly, she changed the clothing of her body just as she changed her state of mind.' Hucbald of St Amand, *Vita Rictrudis, AASS*, 12 May III, c. 15, p. 84.

the monastic life. Reference to clothing during profession is usually limited to a phrase such as the saint 'received' or was 'granted' the religious habit.[139]

Clothing is deployed slightly more powerfully at such moments of transition in the *Lives* of female saints. An incident of cross-dressing makes Christina of Markyate's transition from the world to the religious life stand out amongst the female saints examined. Christina is forced to dress as a man, discarding her feminine garments and putting on 'manly courage' in order to escape from her parents and marriage.[140] This is a common theme in accounts of saints within the desert literature tradition, which frequently depict secret flight from marriage; female saints often had to escape disguised as men. Unlike many late-antique saints, however, Christina did not have to remain dressed as a man.[141] When Christina arrives at the cell of the recluse Alfwen she puts on the religious habit, 'and she who had been accustomed to wearing silk dresses and luxurious furs in her father's house was now covered with a rough garment as her religious habit.'[142] Christina's secular clothing symbolises the life she has left behind. Her silks are frequently mentioned at points of tension during the trials enacted on her by her parents, either pulled or rolled up to show off more of her body.[143] This description is similar to those found in other female *Lives* that describe a profession; in these *Lives* unlike those of male saints, profession is normally marked by reference to the discarding of worldly clothing, emphasising rejection of the world.[144]

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[139] *Vita Ailredi*, p. 18; *VSG*, pp. 68–69; *Vita Waldevi*, p. 119; *Vita Gundulfi*, p. 7; *VSW*, p. 25.

[140] *Life of Christina*, p. 92.

[141] Fanous, 'The Double Crown', p. 64; Alison Goddard Elliott, *Roads to Paradise: Reading the Lives of the Early Saints* (Hanover, NH, 1987), p. 109; See also Vern L. Bullough, 'Cross Dressing and Gender Role Change in the Middle Ages', in *Handbook of Medieval Sexuality*, ed. by Vern L. Bullough and James A. Brundage (New York, 2000), pp. 223–242 (pp. 228–29).

[142] *Life of Christina*, p. 92 (p. 34): 'eadem die pro religionis habitu asperam induebatur tunicam que sericis vestimentis et delicatis variarum pelliciarum deliciis in patris domo consueverat uti.'

[143] *Life of Christina*, p. 44, 48, 72.

[144] Cf. *Vita Edithe*, p. 42; *Vita Wærburh,* p. 34 and *Vita Seaxburh,* p. 151. See also above, n. 138.

Although this added emphasis is not present in most of the male monastic saints' *Lives,* there are a few instances from male *vitae* in which clothing is used in this context to stress sanctity. Robert of Béthune's entry to the Augustinian priory of Llanthony is not marked by reference to adoption of the habit, but rather by a dramatic scene in which Robert deliberately removes his shoes. Robert approaches the isolated, mountainous settlement with bare feet, a clear Christological reference.[145] In Jocelin of Furness's *Vita Waldevi,* Waltheof professes twice, first of all to the Augustinian order, and secondly to the Cistercians. When he ultimately professes to the Cistercian Order, Waltheof's hagiographer records that Waltheof 'became a monk in dress as well as deed: to sum up, he stamped his whole being with the visible seal of sanctity.'[146] At this point in Waltheof's *Life* his inner spirituality and outer appearance become synchronised as his profession to the Cistercian Order completes his conversion.

Clothing features prominently in the account of Gilbert of Sempringham's profession; the importance of clothing to corporate identity is emphasised alongside Gilbert's humility. Despite conforming to the religious life, as the founder of the Order, Gilbert of Sempringham did not immediately profess to his own Rule, or adopt the habit of a canon regular. Eventually, however, 'he also agreed to accept the outward sign of the habit, in order to conform in every detail with his community.'[147] Previously, he had dressed in undyed clothing: 'in our opinion he deliberately delayed making his profession until his new foundation gained in size and strength, because he was afraid that he would be accused of arrogance if he took a solemn vow to rules which, even

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[145] *VRB*, p. 118. William records that Robert would not approach the dwelling place of living martyrs without martyrdom.

[146] *Vita Waldevi*, p. 107 (p. 243): '… habitu et actu induit monachum, et ut breviter concludam, totius sanctitatis evidens in se expressit exemplum.'

[147] *VSG,* pp. 66–67: 'cum per omina esset in illis quasi unus ex illis, exterius quoque habitus signaculum non refugit suscipere ut omnimodam gregis haberet conformitatem.'

though they were inspired by God, were of his own devising.'[148] Gilbert's delay in profession, which may have left him open to criticism, is justified as an example of humility. Gilbert's hagiographer stresses that Gilbert's canons were afraid that it was risky for them to profess obedience to a man clothed in a different habit. The Gilbertine community was concerned that if their first profession was not made to a member of their own Order that, after Gilbert's death, an outsider might be placed into his position by force, or princely influence, 'a common event': 'they therefore begged him and urged him with cogent arguments to put on the habit of the Order.'[149] Although very different in circumstance, this example further highlights the concern shown by hagiographers when their subjects do not necessarily dress to meet expectations. In this case collective identity is very strongly linked to visual outward appearance. Gilbert's formal profession to his Rule, and the outward sign that he has done so, are crucial to protect against the threat of lay investiture in the event of Gilbert's death; perhaps a particularly important concern for such a newly founded order.

The *Vita Waldevi* is useful for revealing contemporary concerns over inappropriate dress, and stresses the importance of outward appearance for monastic identity. Although Jocelin does not give much detail regarding Waltheof's clothing, he does say that it reflected his humility and was 'in no way remarkable, since it was neither precious, nor yet shabby or unkempt, but in between. In accordance with St Augustine's advice, he took care to please more by his conduct than his clothes.'[150] As already highlighted, Jocelin frequently pits Waltheof's exemplary conduct against those of contemporaries whom he feels were falling short of the monastic ideal. Waltheof's

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[148] *Ibid.,* pp. 66–69: 'Quam profitendi dilationem, ut credimus, ideo subintulit quoadusque nouella sua plantatio caperet incrementum et solidamentum; timuit tamen ne arrogantie notaretur si ipse suis adinuentionibus, licet a Deo essent, sollemne uotum defferet.'
[149] *Ibid.,* pp. 68–9: '…pecierunt et probabilibus rationibus persuaserunt ut habitum illius ordinis…'
[150] *Vita Waldevi*, p. 127 (p. 256): '… erat nullo modo notabilis, quia nec pretiosus, nec nisi abjectus aut vilis, se mediocris, et, juxta B. Augustini monita, magis moribus placere satagebat, quam vestibus.'

humility is compared to those who wear the religious habit, but whose conversation is idle and concerned with affairs of the world.[151] Jocelin further records that some abbots travel to the court of the king with great eagerness and great trains of luggage; he is particularly critical of the Benedictine abbots who travel with so much baggage that passers-by think that they are sheriffs and overlords, rather than the heads of monasteries. Jocelin then laments that this practice has leaked into the Cistercian Order, some abbots travelling with many horses and wearing cloaks of the finest wool, lined or trimmed with lambskin.[152]

We turn now to the episcopal saints. Thomas Becket is the only secular archbishop within the sample, and there are some points of difference between Becket and the monastic bishops. For monastic bishops, the moment of profession to the cloister is often presented as an equally, if not more, important moment of transition than their consecration to the episcopate. For Becket the comparable moment of conversion is his consecration. The descriptions of Becket's consecration present some of the best examples in which clothing symbolises a transition.

Although Michael Staunton has aptly demonstrated how Becket's 'conversion' was an ongoing process spanning his whole life, Becket's consecration is earmarked by his hagiographers as a critical moment of change.[153] The biographers draw on the Pauline epistles to frame their accounts: 'Strip yourselves of the old man, with his deeds, and clothe yourself with the new man'.[154] For example, in the first *vita*, John of Salisbury describes how, 'after he [Becket] was consecrated, he immediately "cast off the old man" and put on the hair-shirt and the monk, crucifying his flesh along with his

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[151] *Ibid*., pp. 127–128.
[152] *Ibid*., p. 129. This can be compared to the Cistercian Institutes, which state that, 'Clothing is to be simple and cheap, without skins…'. See *Instituta*, no. 4, p. 459.
[153] Staunton, *Becket and his Biographers,* esp. ch. 8 'Conversion'.
[154] Col. 3: 9–10; Eph. 4:20-4. Cf. for example, MTB 1. 10; 2. 306; 3. 37, 185, 193.

vices and desires.'[155] Although at this point largely described in symbolic terms, the 'hair-shirt' and monastic habit become an important part of Becket's legend.[156] Becket's secular status was a point of contention with the community at Canterbury, as there was a strong tradition of monastic preference for the position.[157] Thus it was important for his biographers to associate Becket with a monastic identity during the consecration, to offset his secularity.

William of Canterbury, a monk at Christ Church during Becket's archiepiscopacy, provides a valuable description of Becket's transition at his consecration, encapsulated through clothing. William records that Becket was prepared to renew the 'old man'. Remembering how he had spent his time as chancellor, after his consecration Becket became more abstinent, vigilant, more frequent in prayers and more moved in his preaching, 'just as if transformed into another man'. William of Canterbury then explains how Becket took on a monastic habit and hair-shirt.[158] William gives an extended gloss on the symbolism of clothing:

> And few being aware, he served under the breastplate of faith, happy because in his threefold dress he bore three persons; on the outside he displayed the clerk, inside he concealed the monk, and deep within he suffered the hardships of the desert though away from the desert; happy because on the outside he deceived the world, inside he conformed to his brothers, and deep within he restrained the illicit urges of the flesh; on the outside he exposed the canon, inside he hid the hermit, and deep within he fulfilled the mandate of the Lord.[159]

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[155] MTB, 2. 306: 'Consecratus autem statim veterem exuit hominem, cilicium et monachum induit, carnem crucifigens cum vitiis et concupiscentiis suis.'

[156] On Becket's hair-shirt see below pp. 67–68; cf. MTB 1. 10–1; MTB, 2. 368, 370. See Staunton, *Becket and his Biographers*, p. 92

[157] Staunton, *Becket and his Biographers,* p. 92; William of Canterbury holds up the ignominious examples of the secular archbishops Aelsige and Stigand to encourage Becket to adopt the monastic habit, see MTB 1. 10–11.

[158] MTB, 1.10: 'Unde tanquam transformatus in virum alterum…'

[159] *Ibid*.: 'sub lorica fidei militabat, gaudens quia in triplici veste triplicem personam gereret; exteriori

According to Staunton, these layers represent Becket's turning away from secular life, his concealed asceticism and his championing of the Church.[160] This passage, therefore, captures the symbolic relationship between clothing and identity and also reveals an inner/outer dichotomy, previously used by Becket's biographers. Concealment emerges as an important theme. It was a frequent criticism of errant monks that they had changed their dress, but not their lifestyle; the account of Thomas resonates with other hagiographical narratives in which the saints keep their conversion to the monastic life a secret, including the secret asceticism of previous archbishop of Canterbury, Alfeah.[161]

William Fitzstephen also highlights Becket's increased personal piety, and repeats the allusion to the tripartite nature of Becket's dress. Continuing this inner/outer dichotomy drawn on by most of the biographers, Fitzstephen says, 'His outward visage was like that of ordinary men, but within all was different', later stating that in food and clothing Becket desired to be, rather than to appear, more religious.[162] Moreover, he expands on this by stating that Becket took as his models Saints Sebastian and Cecilia, 'the former of whom under cover of a warrior's cloak conducted himself as a soldier of Christ, while the latter, mortifying the flesh with sackcloth, appeared outwardly adorned with vesture of gold'.[163] Both these saintly exemplars were known for their concealment of piety. A member of the Pretorian guard, Sebastian was a covert Christian, martyred in c. 300 when the Emperor Diocletian discovered his religious conviction. Cecilia was another early martyr saint of noble background who persuaded

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clericum exhiberet, interiori monachum occultaret, intima deserti molestias citra desertum sustineret; gaudens quia exteriori mundum falleret, interiori fratribus suis se conformaret, intima motus illicitos carnis reprimeret: gaudens quia exterius canonicus pateret, intima solitarius lateret, interius mandatum Domini compleret.' (Translation based on that of Staunton, *Becket and his Biographers*, p. 92.)

[160] Staunton, *Becket and his Biographers*, p. 93.

[161] See Staunton, *Becket and his Biographers,* p. 94 and Karl Frederick Morrison, *Understanding Conversion* (Charlottesville, 1992), p. 73; Osbern of Canterbury, *Vita Elphegi, PL*, 149, col. 379.

[162] MTB, 3. 37: 'Facies ejus exterior similis erat multitudini, intus omnia dissimilia [...] In esu et vestitu religiosior studebat esse quam videri.'

[163] *Ibid*.,: 'Sancti Sebastiani et santae Caeciliae imitator; quorum ille sub absconso chlamydis Christi militem gerebat absconditum, illa, cilicio carnem domans, desuper auratis vestibus tegebatur.'

her husband to enter into a chaste marriage; she is often described and depicted as wearing a hair-shirt concealed beneath golden garments.[164] Significantly, both were martyred. Becket's biographers emphasise that his outward appearance, even after his consecration, did not truly reflect his inner virtue: Becket's actions should not be judged on his outward appearance as within his precious clothes he maintained the spirit of a pauper.[165]

Thus Becket's consecration is a pivotal point in the texts, where most of his hagiographers utilise symbolic clothing to interpret Becket's transition from the worldly to the spiritual spheres. His unique circumstances, and problematic status as a secular bishop, were addressed by adopting the language of monasticism to further emphasise his suitability for sanctity.

Rather than a change in behaviour, other episcopal *Lives* tend to present renewed devotions upon assumption of authority as an extension of the saint's previous lifestyle. For example, the account of Hugh of Lincoln's consecration mentions clothing, but only during Hugh's procession to the cathedral. Adam does so as part of a narrative emphasising Hugh's humility, recalling that the saint prepared no display of costly vestments or plate from motives of ostentation and vainglory, but rather steeled his soul against temptation, foreseeing the change in his life and dreading it.[166] Adam records that outwardly Hugh was white in 'habit, appearance and countenance' and that inwardly he was much more so by his virtue and that he maintained the usual signs of the poverty of his order.[167] Not only does this draw together the symbolism of clothing, appearance, countenance and inner virtue, but serves to emphasise how Hugh is

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[164] SS. Sebastian and Cecilia in the *ODS*. Cf. Mention of Cecilia and her cloak in *Vita Edithe*, p. 70. Herbert of Bosham makes similar comments regarding Becket's change upon consecration and the hidden nature of his new piety, e.g. MTB 3. 193, 196, 198.
[165] MTB, 2. 308.
[166] *MVSH*, I, p. 99.
[167] *Ibid.*, pp. 102–3.

adhering to his Carthusian identity even upon the brink of becoming a bishop. There is

no reference to clothing at the consecration itself.

The example of Becket can be compared to other accounts of episcopal clothing.

Whilst some figures might be accused of seeming too worldly, some hagiographers had

to defend their subjects against allegations of false or contrived humility.[168] This is

demonstrated in a well-known story told by William of Malmesbury of a reported

exchange between Wulfstan and Geoffrey, bishop of Coutances. William records

attributes of Wulfstan's lifestyle and clothing:

> His dress, bedding, and shoes were moderate in quality
> (*moderata*), neither ostentatiously expensive nor self-
> deprecatingly cheap. He avoided both kinds of pride:
> there can be display even in mourning garments. But if he
> tipped in either direction, it was towards the humble: but
> in such a way that while all pomp was absent there was no
> lack of grace [...] So he shrank from showing off; despite
> the wealth at his disposal, he would only wear
> lambskins.[169]

Geoffrey asked why Wulfstan wore lambskin when he 'could and should' have had

sable, beaver or fox. Wulfstan replied that Geoffrey and other men more versed in the

way of the world than himself should wear the skins of crafty animals, but as Wulfstan

was conscious of no shiftiness in himself he was happy with lambskin. Geoffrey then

suggested that the bishop might at least wear cat, but Wulfstan replied, 'the Agnus Dei

is more often chanted than the Cattus Dei (*sepius cantatur Agnus Dei quam Cattus*

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[168] For example, William of Malmesbury noted that Wulfstan was criticised by one of the Worcester brethren when he began preaching, because Wulfstan seemed to be usurping the duties of the bishop and demonstrating behaviour that looked more like canvassing for office than the performance of a religious duty. *VSW*, p. 36. Cf. *Vita Bartholomaei* when Prior Thomas accuses Bartholomew of hypocrisy, p. 307.
[169] *VSW,* pp. 106–109: 'Indumenta eius, lectisternia, calciamenta moderata, nec arrogantis pretii nec abiectae uilitatis. Vitabatur in utroque fastus, quia et in sordibus luctuosis potest esse iactantia; pronius tamen ad id quod esset humile uergebat, ut totum deesset pompae et nichil desideraretur gratiae. [...] Itaque semper omnis ostentationis refugus, in cunctis diuitiis agninis tantum amitiebatur pellibus. '

Dei)', at which Geoffrey laughed.[170] It is important, however, that Wulfstan's dress is described as moderate; he did not display excessive austerity. Whereas Becket's humility is hidden beneath the robes of office, Wulfstan wears his externally.[171]

Thus, clothing was an important marker of status both as a religious individual, and as a member of a community, sometimes featuring at moments of transition. Moderation of clothing could demonstrate a saint's suitability for the profession he later makes within the *Life*. It could also be used to answer problematic aspects of a person's sanctity, such as in the case of Becket, by tying them into recognisable models.

The final aspect of clothing examined is that of asceticism. Clothing could be a means of physical mortification and became a specific identifier of saintliness through asceticism. We have already seen how Ailred of Rievaulx's simple clothing, which signals his future poverty, is explicitly contrasted with the garments of a soft, non-saintly life.[172] Whilst in some circumstances donning simpler and coarser clothing was sufficient evidence of the saint's superior strength of spirit, in others specific items of ascetic clothing are depicted. The classic ascetic garment was the hair-shirt (*cilicium*), which appears to have gained renewed currency in the eleventh century alongside the rise of the new holy men of the reform movement. Around the same time the *lorica,* or ascetic mail-shirt, also frequently appears as a piece of penitential clothing.[173] Whilst the *cilicium* could indicate that the wearer was a *pauper Christi*, the *lorica* signified their status as a *miles Christi*.[174]

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[170] *Ibid.*, pp. 106–109.
[171] Cf. Adam of Eynsham recording Hugh laying aside his lambs wool cloak in favour of a plain sheepskin whilst in respite at Witham priory, *MVSH,* II, pp. 49–50.
[172] *Vita Ailredi*, pp. 4–5.
[173] Alexander, 'Hermits and Hairshirts', p. 208.
[174] On *loricae* see also, Katherine Allen Smith, 'Saints in Shining Armor: Martial Asceticism and Masculine Models of Sanctity, ca. 1050–1250', *Speculum*, 83: 3 (2008), pp. 572–602.

Hair-shirts and/or *loricae* are most commonly found in the *Lives* of eremitic saints. Rough clothing was a defining marker of eremitic identity, transmitted through the Desert Father tradition and ultimately drawing on the example of John the Baptist, described in the Gospels as wearing a garment of camel hair.[175] Indeed, when describing his dress, Bartholomew of Farne's hagiographer records that he had the appearance of the ancient fathers (*antiqui patres*).[176] Of those who entered into an eremitical life, Christina of Markyate is the only saint not depicted in ascetic clothing, although she suffers many other hardships during her enforced enclosure in the hermit Roger's cell. The hagiographers of all the other eremitic saints present their subjects as wearing a hair-shirt, mail-shirt, or both. The non-eremitic saints who are depicted wearing hair-shirts are all episcopal: Hugh of Lincoln, Robert of Béthune and Thomas Becket. It may be significant that Hugh and Robert both belonged to religious orders upon which asceticism and the eremitical lifestyle were a particularly important influence; although Robert was an Augustinian canon, a movement known for its emphasis on moderation, the community at Llanthony to which he belonged had developed from a hermitage and retained a strong interest in asceticism.[177]

Ascetic secrecy was an important convention within hagiography, rooted in the Gospels.[178] The trope of saintly humility recommended that extreme asceticism should be hidden; asceticism and humility should go hand in hand.[179] This convention of secrecy is evident in the *Life* of Godric of Finchale. Reginald of Durham says that Godric, 'did not wish the struggle of his martyrdom to be known to anyone but the Lord

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[175] On hermit-saints see Bartlett, *WCD?*, pp. 196–202 (p. 198 for John the Baptist; cf. Mark 1:6.)

[176] *Vita Bartholomaei*, p. 302.

[177] There appears to have been a strong eremitic and ascetic interest at Llanthony Priory; the hagiographical content of the library at Llanthony Secunda reflected an interest in spiritual retreat and asceticism, see Mesley, 'Construction of Episcopal Identity', pp. 149–150. See below, pp. 67, 137.

[178] See Matt. 6:2–6. Cf. Aviad M. Kleinberg, *Prophets in Their Own Country: Living Saints and the Making of Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages* (Chicago, 1992), pp. 7, 111–112.

[179] See above p. 42.

alone from Whom he could receive the reward of recompense.'[180] Reginald earlier

makes similar comments regarding Godric's ascetic clothing, recording that Godric

covered his hair-shirt and *lorica* with woollen clothing so that what was 'inwardly

hidden' would not appear to 'observing eyes'.[181] In other eremitic *Lives*, however, there

is not the same emphasis on secrecy. Although Bartholomew of Farne wears garments

over his shirt, there is no suggestion of concealment.[182] Furthermore, Bartholomew's

vita depicts him moderating his asceticism by removing his hair-shirt to accommodate

Thomas, an ex-Prior of Durham who retires to Farne, because Bartholomew worried

that, 'the sweat and stench that arose from it would offend his cohabitant.'[183]

Moderation in asceticism could be acceptable when it served another.

Whilst ascetic clothing formed part of the eremitic uniform, there could be

variations between depictions. This is evident through comparison of Wulfric of

Haselbury and Godric of Finchale, who are both portrayed wearing hair-shirts and

loricae.[184] Wulfric progresses to a *lorica* when he grows quickly accustomed to his

hair-shirt, and the *lorica* becomes a defining feature of his sanctity in the eyes of his

hagiographer.[185] Whilst Godric seemingly wore out three mail-shirts during his eremitic

career, Reginald of Durham places more emphasis upon his hair-shirt.[186] John of Forde

depicts the nobility of Wulfric's simplicity, defined by his *lorica*. Throughout his *Life*

Wulfric appears as a 'social climber in spiritual terms', and as a hermit who fits into his

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[180] *VGF*, p. 91.
[181] *Ibid*., p. 78.
[182] This is the same for the hermits Wulfric of Haselbury and Godric of Throckenholt.
[183] *Vita Bartholomaei*, p. 301: 'ne sudor et faetor qui ex eo exibant cohabitem offenderet'.
[184] See Alexander, 'Hermits and Hairshirts', pp. 205–226.
[185] *Vita Wulfrici*, pp. 18–19.
[186] *VGF*, p. 78.

local networks with relative ease.[187] Godric, on the other hand, is not depicted as noble in his asceticism; the emphasis in his *Life* is instead upon his rusticity.[188]

Godric starts his eremitic career by leading a particularly severe and wild life. At this stage, his hair-shirt is identified with extreme asceticism, and explicitly with his rusticity:

> In the time of winter he inflicted excessive asperity of cold on naked flesh, yet in the heat of summer out of excessive sweat he begat a corruption of worms, of which the copious multitude devastated his flesh most ferociously, as the hairy rusticity of the hair-shirt had been accustomed to nourish a full great flock of them.[189]

Although Godric's asceticism is initially represented as rather extreme, it becomes tempered once Godric has accepted the authority of the prior of Durham.[190] After Godric has accepted Durham's authority, the hair-shirt is no longer identified with extreme asceticism, although the descriptions of it are still vivid, emphasising that it is 'horrible and hairy'.[191] In comparison to Wulfric, Godric's *lorica* receives minimal attention from his hagiographer at any point in the narrative, despite recurrent references to his ascetic clothing. Unlike Wulfric, Godric does not become ennobled by his *lorica* as Reginald frequently refers to the rustic context of Godric's life.[192]

Whereas *loricae* are the especial preserve of hermits, hair-shirts also occur within the *Lives* of episcopal saints. Depictions of ascetic practices in episcopal saints' *Lives* could be deployed to demonstrate how the saint could lead both an active and

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[187] Alexander, 'Hermits and Hairshirts', pp. 212, 220–222.
[188] *Ibid.*, pp. 218–219.
[189] *VGF*, pp. 77–78: 'Tempore vero hiemali nimiam frigoris asperiem nudae carni ingerebat; aetatis autem fervore ex sudore nimio tabes vermium procreabat, quorum multitudo copiosa carnes ejus saevissime devastabat, et cilicii hirsuta villositas plurimum eorum gregem plenius enutrire consueverat.'
[190] Alexander, 'Hermits and Hairshirts', p. 218.
[191] *VGF*, p. 146; cf. p. 241, another account of the hair-shirt lacking in detail.
[192] Alexander, 'Hermits and Hairshirts', pp. 218–219.

contemplative life.[193] Within the *Lives* examined here the hair-shirts tend to be depicted

in the context of concealment, thus also emphasising humility in such contemplation.

For example, in his *Life* of Hugh of Lincoln, Adam of Eynsham mentions Hugh's hair-

shirt during one of the bishop's periods of respite at Witham priory. Adam records that

Hugh put aside his lambs wool cloak which he wore in public and donned a plain

sheepskin: 'The hair-shirt which he wore, as always, next to his skin was concealed by a

tunic worn under his leather cloak.'[194] The other monastic episcopal saint depicted

wearing a hair-shirt is Robert of Béthune; this occurs during a description of Robert's

clandestine nocturnal devotions whilst prior of Llanthony.[195] It is significant that these

two references occur within the *Lives* of episcopal saints who were members of

communities with a strong interest in spiritual retreat and asceticism.   Both

hagiographers were writing for the communities to which their subjects had belonged,

and emphases on asceticism might reflect the interests of these audiences.[196]

The well-known case of Thomas Becket's hair-shirt is a little different.

Although Becket's hair-shirt is used symbolically by many hagiographers during the

passages describing his assumption of the archiepiscopacy, and his subsequent change in

behaviour, the secrecy of Becket's hair-shirt is an integral part of the legend. The

hagiographers record the surprise of the monks when they strip Becket after his

martyrdom and discover that beneath his vestments he was wearing a monk's habit, and

beneath that a hair-shirt crawling with vermin. In his *Passio,* Benedict of Peterborough

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[193] David Rollason, 'The Concept of Sanctity in the Early Lives of St. Dunstan', *in St. Dunstan: His Life, Times and Cult*, ed. Nigel Ramsay, Margaret Sparks and Tim Tatton–Brown (Woodbridge, 1992), pp. 261–272, (pp. 268–69).

[194] *MVSH*, II, p. 49: 'Cilicio, ut semper, tegebatur ad nudum, hinc tunicam in medio superinducto uelabat pelliceo.' The hair-shirt was a standard Carthusian garment, see *MVSH*, I, p. 37. See also description of the Carthusians by Guibert of Nogent , *De Vita Sua Liber Tres,* I, *PL*, 156, col. 853 sqq.

[195] Cf. Matthew M. Mesley, 'The Construction of Episcopal Identity: The Meaning and Function of Episcopal Depictions within Latin Saints' Lives of the Long Twelfth Century', (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Exeter, 2009), p. 161.

[196] See above p. 64 and below p. 137.

records the monk's astonishment at this revelation: 'How could such a man have been suspected of greed or betrayal? Could he ever have set his thoughts upon an earthly kingdom, who had thus secretly preferred sackcloth above all worldly pleasures?'[197] William Fitzstephen also uses the hair-shirt to recall Becket's ongoing conversion from the worldly chancellor to secretly ascetic archbishop. Fitzstephen similarly records that the monks' sorrow turned to joy once they had seen with their own eyes his double martyrdom, 'the voluntary one of his life and the violent one of his death. […] They all ran up to view him wearing a hair-shirt – he whom they had seen as chancellor clothed in purple and satin.'[198] In Becket's death his sanctity is fully consummated as both a white and a red martyr. As well as demonstrating that Becket's sanctity was earned through his holy life as much as his bloody death, however, the revelation of the monks' habit and hair-shirt was a crucial device reconciling Becket with the monastic community at Canterbury.

Herbert of Bosham describes Becket's clothing once he is archbishop at length, focusing on the hair-shirt and his stole. He comments that these were two insignia, the first marking Becket out as a soldier of Christ, the second as a priest of Christ.[199] Herbert records that he wore both of these as he went about his daily public life, except that the hair-shirt was hidden, to preserve the respect of his name and the sincerity of his piety. By removing his stole when he went into exile, Becket was effectively de-priested, as such a distinction was not befitting of an exile in foreign lands. However,

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[197] MTB, 2. 17: 'Quid putandum est in homino isto fuisse cupiditatis quid proditionis? Nunquid ad regnum aspiravit terenum, quem constat saeculi deliciis tam occulte praetulisse cilicium?'

[198] MTB, 3. 148: 'et de utroque martyrio ejus, et viventis voluntario et occumbentis violento, ad oculum edocti … Omnes accurrunt, visuri illum in cilicio, quem cancellarium viderant in purpura et bysso.' Cf. Alan of Tewkesbury claims that the hair–shirt was unknown even to Becket's closest companions, MTB, 2.346. Benedict of Peterborough and William Fitzstephen attest to the monks' surprise, MTB, 2. 16; 3. 148. Herbert of Bosham records both the monks' and the murderers' surprise, MTB, 3. 513

[199] MTB, 3.195–196. As will be seen in the final chapter there is a recurring motif of Becket as victim and priest that emerges especially in the narratives of his death. The duality of the ascetic/sacerdotal symbolism at this point reflects forward to later references.

Herbert says that Becket did not take off his hair-shirt until he had won 'the triumph of his glorious fight, that is to say, was consummated in martyrdom.'[200] Becket's continual struggle for the rights of the church was shadowed in his inner ascetic ordeal before finally culminating in his death.

Conclusion

Outward appearance features in the *vitae* of these saints in different ways and to different ends. An examination of bodily appearance revealed two forms of description. The first was primarily concerned with bodily appearance in as far as it reflected inner holiness, or demonstrated God's power shining forth through the saint. The second was 'descriptive' in form, recording more details of physical appearance. These descriptions might still communicate aspects of sanctity by emphasising, for example, the effects of asceticism on the appearance of the body. Both ugliness and beauty could be signs of holiness. Within the *Lives* of female saints, references to beauty tended to be shorter and more general, often featuring at the moment they rejected marriage; being beautiful and yet resisting marriage intensified the saint's restraint. Whilst Gilbert of Sempringham was born deformed, his hagiographer suggests that Gilbert's sanctity came to compensate for an ugly appearance; in other examples, outward ugliness served as a sign of the holiness inherent in the ascetic life. Overall, the bodily appearance of these saints served to distinguish them from others and made them recognisably holy, be this through divine grace shining forth, a visibly refined appearance, or outward marks of asceticism.

In relation to deportment and demeanour the main ideal of saintly behaviour to emerge was that of moderation and control. The main exception to this was

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[200] MTB, 3. 196: 'donec gloriosi certaminis sui consummasset triumphum.'

devotional gesture, in which the saint was often marked out through their physicality and enthusiasm. The didacticism of hagiography was particularly clear in the case of the *Vita Waldevi*, in which Jocelin of Furness explicitly contrasts Waltheof's deportment to that of strutting pompous prelates. Control over the body extended to demeanour as well as movement, in which restraint over the emotions surfaced as especially important in some *Lives*.

Whilst bodily appearance and deportment often outwardly revealed or emphasised virtue, clothing seems to play a more nebulous role. Fine, worldly clothing could be presented as a point of tension between secular status and sainthood, as in the cases of the royal saints and Thomas Becket. This tension was then resolved, and in doing so the sense of sanctity heightened, often through emphasis on inner humility. The examples of saints who entered the cloistered life tended to depict their subjects as refashioning their secular dress to a more moderate style, foreshadowing their future monastic careers. Although clothing was often mentioned at moments of transition, such as profession to a religious order, it was only emphasised as an explicit sign of sanctity in a few *Lives*. In the case of Becket's consecration, clothing was used to emphasise his transformation, accentuating the inner/outer dichotomy between inner holiness and outer appearance. Here it is clear how hagiographers moulded depictions to suit their context, saint and audience: depicting Becket as secretly donning the habit and hair-shirt defended a problematic subject against criticism, and aligned him with the monastic tradition at Canterbury.

Ascetic clothing featured prominently in the accounts of hermit saints, as well as appearing in some episcopal *Lives*. In addition to hair-shirts, eremitic saints could also wear *loricae*. As demonstrated by a comparison between Godric of Finchale and Wulfric of Haselbury, the depiction of these garments could vary from text to text;

whilst Wulfric is ennobled by his *lorica*, Reginald of Durham instead stressed Godric's rusticity, symbolised by his hair-shirt. Aside from the case of Godric, there is little suggestion that eremitic hair-shirts were worn secretly. This was not the case for episcopal saints, in whose *Lives* their ascetic clothing was presented as hidden in some way. The regular bishops recorded as wearing ascetic clothing belonged to reformed monastic orders, which sought to a greater or lesser extent to situate the ascetic lifestyle within a coenobitic setting. Thomas Becket's concealed hair-shirt, revealed on his deathbed, presented the archbishop as a covert ascetic martyr; it served as evidence of his inner devotion, redressing his previous lifestyle and secular status, and addressing contemporary criticism.

An examination of outward appearance revealed many common features across the depictions of these saintly figures, whilst demonstrating how these representations varied from text to text, and were tailored depending on context. As will become apparent, many of the threads picked up in this first chapter continue to weave throughout the analysis that follows.

✦ Chapter 2: Chastity and Sexuality ✦

By the twelfth century the importance of sexual renunciation to sainthood and its depictions was already long established. Stemming from the writings of St Paul, the discourse of chastity and notions of a hierarchy of sexual perfection were passed down through the writings of the Church Fathers and early hagiography, providing models for later authors.[1] Maintaining sexual purity became a major accomplishment underscored by hagiographers as proof of their subject's sanctity.[2] Sexual temptation was a central motif transmitted from these early accounts of saints, particularly associated with men. Early female saints often faced different challenges, commonly fending off the advances of pagan tyrants or convincing their husbands to live in chaste matrimony.[3] These narratives served to emphasise the exceptional nature of the protagonist's virtue and subsequent sanctity.[4]

The majority of scholarship considering male sexuality in the eleventh and twelfth centuries focuses upon the impact of clerical celibacy, enforced with greater vigour in the wake of Gregorian Reform.[5] Increasing pressure was applied to exclude

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[1] Brown's *Body and Society* remains the formative work examining the genesis and subsequent evolution of the ideology of sexual renunciation, stretching from St Paul through to St Augustine. On the importance of SS. Anthony and Martin, and the writings of Jerome, on shaping hagiography see, Bartlett, *WCD?*, pp. 18–22.

[2] See Jane Tibbets Schulenburg, 'Saints and Sex, ca. 500–1100: Striding down the Nettled Path of Life', in *Sex in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Joyce E. Salisbury (New York; 1991), pp. 203–232 (p. 204). For some saints their sexual renunciation was their only claim to sanctity; in other cases a life of sexual renunciation became seen as a prerequisite for sainthood, see Bartlett, *WCD?* p. 202.

[3] On temptation as a male trait see Jane Tibbetts Schulenburg, 'Saints and Sex, ca. 500–1100', pp. 207–215. See also on this point, and on the influence of the *Vitae Patrum,* Kathryn Kelsey Staples and Ruth Mazo Karras, 'Christina's Tempting: Sexual Desire and Women's Sanctity', in *Christina of Markyate: A Twelfth-Century Holy Woman*, ed. by Samuel Fanous and Henrietta Leyser (London, 2005), pp. 184–196 (p. 186). On early female saints see, for example, Jane Tibbetts Schulenburg, *Forgetful of Their Sex: Female Sanctity and Society, 500–1100* (Chicago, 1998), esp. ch. 3 and 4.

[4] This was especially important in a monastic environment, where chastity was meant to be the norm. It was necessary to distinguish the saintly figure from their peers in some way.

[5] On clerical celibacy and reform see Henrietta Leyser, 'Clerical Purity and the Re-Ordered World', in *Cambridge History of Christianity*, ed. by Miri Rubin and Walter Simons (Cambridge, 2009), pp. 9–21 and H. E. J. Cowdrey, 'Pope Gregory VII and the Chastity of the Clergy', in *Medieval Purity and Piety:*

priests from lay markers of masculinity, such as sexual virility and bearing arms. This 'monasticisation' of the clergy has been seen as precipitating a crisis of masculinity, which led to a restructuring of the gender system.[6] This 'crisis', and the perceived tensions between *clerici* and *laici*, have been interpreted in various ways, both as causing the reformed clergy to pursue a policy of extreme masculinity and fostering the emergence of a third 'e-masculine' gender for clerical men.[7] Although the hagiography of twelfth-century England has been used in some of these studies, scholars have been predominantly interested in monastic or clerical identity, and less explicitly in depictions of sainthood.[8] Whilst the theological and canonical debates of the reform movement may have had an influence on hagiographical depictions, it is important to keep in mind the longevity of concerns over sexual renunciation.

Virginity has received much attention from scholars in recent decades, where its study has predominantly been approached from a gendered perspective and focused on women.[9] The twelfth-century has been highlighted as a transitional point within the

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Essays on Medieval Clerical Celibacy and Religious Reform, ed. by Michael Frasetto (New York, 1998), pp. 269–302.

[6] Jo Ann McNamara, 'The "Herrenfrage": The Restructuring of the Gender System, 1050–1150', in *Medieval Masculinities: Regarding Men in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Clare A. Lees (Minneapolis, 1994), pp. 3–29.

[7] Maureen C. Miller, 'Masculinity, Reform, and Clerical Culture: Narratives of Episcopal Holiness in the Gregorian Era', *Church History: Studies in Christianity and Culture*, 72 (2003), pp. 25–52; Robert N. Swanson, 'Angels Incarnate: Clergy and Masculinity from Gregorian Reform to Reformation', in *Masculinity in Medieval Europe*, ed. by Dawn M. Hadley (London, 1999), pp. 160–177.

[8] For recent work on clerical identity and masculinity see, Jennifer D. Thibodeaux (ed.), *Negotiating Clerical Identities: priests, monks and masculinity in the Middle Ages* (Basingstoke, 2010); On the importance of defining clerical identity by more than sexuality see Derek Neal, 'What Can Historians Do with Clerical Masculinity? Lessons from Medieval Europe', in *Negotiating clerical identities: priests, monks and masculinity in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Jennifer D. Thibodeaux, pp. 16–38; See also Patricia H. Cullum, 'Clergy, Masculinity and Transgression in Late Medieval England', in *Masculinity in Medieval Europe*, ed. by Dawn M. Hadley (London, 1999), pp. 178–196; Jacqueline Murray, 'Masculinizing Religious Life: Sexual Prowess, the Battle for Chastity and Monastic Identity', in *Holiness and Masculinity in the Middle Ages*, ed. by P.H. Cullum and Katherine J. Lewis (Cardiff, 2004), pp. 24–42.

[9] For a variety of contributions to the field see: John M. Bugge, *Virginitas: An Essay in the History of a Medieval Ideal* (The Hague, 1975); Clarissa W. Atkinson, '"Precious Balsam in a Fragile Glass": The Ideology of Virginity in the Later Middle Ages', *Journal of Family History*, 8 (1983), pp. 131–143; Barbara Newman, *From Virile Woman to womanChrist: Studies in Medieval Religion and Literature* (Pennsylvania, 1995); Schulenburg, *Forgetful of Their Sex*; Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, *Saints' Lives and Women's Literary Culture c. 1150–1300: Virginity and Its Authorizations* (Oxford, 2001); Anke Bernau,

discourse of virginity. Late-antique Christianity has been associated with a gender-neutral model of virginity; female virgins were frequently praised for their manliness, and virginity was a legitimate aspiration for men. However, it has been suggested that by the twelfth-century, as pious men looked toward the priesthood to distinguish themselves, virginity became increasingly feminised.[10] The language of virginity also evolved; nurtured by contemporary interests in the humanity of Christ and mysticism, marriage to Christ became increasingly central to the discourse of female virginity.[11]

Although far less well represented within scholarship, male virginity has also attracted attention. Kathleen Coyne Kelly emphasises the divisions between female and male virginity, suggesting that male virginity has to be put to trial, often by temptation. She also proposes that, whereas female virginity has set narrative tropes for representation, portrayals of male virginity are more fluid.[12] In response to this, John Arnold argues that certain narrative patterns of male virginity are discernable, additionally suggesting that it is possible to distinguish between male virginity and chastity.[13] He advances that male chastity is the control of lust, whereas virginity is lust made absent; virginity must also be confirmed by an act of divine intervention.[14] He

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Sarah Salih and Ruth Evans (eds.), *Medieval Virginities* (Cardiff, 2003). On virgin martyrs see Karen A. Winstead, *Virgin Martyrs: Legends of Sainthood in Late Medieval England* (Ithaca, 1997).

[10] See, for example, Bugge, *Virginitas*, p. 106; Jocelyn Wogan–Browne, 'The Virgin's Tale', in *Feminist Readings in Middle English Literature: The Wife of Bath and All Her Sect*, ed. by Ruth Evans and Lesley Johnson, (London, 1994), pp. 165–194 (p. 166); Sarah Salih, *Versions of Virginity in Late Medieval England* (Cambridge, 2001), pp. 10–11; See Hildegard Elisabeth Keller, *My Secret Is Mine: Studies on Religion and Eros in the German Middle Ages*, (Leuven, 2000), pp. 21–44 on gendering in the Bride of Christ motif; see also on feminisation of spiritual language and increased devotion to the Virgin Mary and more 'human' conceptualisations therein, Caroline Walker Bynum, *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages* (Berkeley, 1982), pp. 110–169, esp. pp. 135–146.

[11] Summarised at Salih, *Versions of Virginity*, p. 10.

[12] Kathleen Coyne Kelly, *Performing Virginity and Testing Chastity in the Middle Ages* (London, 2000), pp. 93–101.

[13] John H. Arnold, 'The Labour of Continence: Masculinity and Clerical Virginity', in *Medieval Virginities*, ed. by Anke Bernau, Sarah Salih and Ruth Evans (Cardiff, 2003), pp. 102–118. Arnold's four models are: lust overcome and chastity protected by bodily chastisement; direct exercise of the will over the self; narratives of revelation, linked to the exercise of the will but frequently involving outside intervention; and temptation overcome by divine physical intervention. He suggests that only the final two scenarios that inscribe true male virginity.

[14] *Ibid*., pp. 104–108.

rightly cautions against broad generalisations, recognising that similar narrative patterns can be seen in some accounts of female virgins.[15] Although Arnold's model provides a useful framework for testing narratives of male virginity, his terminological distinctions do not reflect those of all medieval authors.[16]

It is crucial to point to some potential problems with the terminology of sexual renunciation. The early authors and their successors do not offer a uniform picture; indeed, definitions of varying sexual states remain somewhat fraught. The *Oxford Latin Dictionary* defines *virgo* as a girl of marriageable age, or a virgin (that is, someone who has never had sexual intercourse) or a woman requiring a state of virginity (e.g. a priestess); *virginitas* is thus the condition of being a virgin.[17] This meaning is largely retained in the medieval period.[18] From the end of the eighth century *virgines* became a discrete category within the litany of saints, reserved exclusively for holy females.[19] In classical Latin, *castitas* could refer to moral purity, uprightness, integrity, sexual purity, chastity, virginity or continence; in medieval Latin it appears predominantly to signify chastity or purity of doctrine.[20]

Although in its primary definition *virgo* appears to apply to women, by the middle ages *virgo* also appears in reference to men.[21] In some instances, *virginitas* is used to refer to physical intactness and *castitas* as the more encompassing idea of

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[15] *Ibid.*, p. 109.

[16] See Ruth M. Karras, 'Thomas Aquinas's Chastity Belt: Clerical Masculinity in Medieval Europe', *Gender and Christianity in Medieval Europe*, ed. by Lisa M. Bitel and Felice Lifshitz (Philadelphia, 2008), pp. 52–67 (p. 63).

[17] *OLD*, s.v. *virgo* and *virginitas*.

[18] First definition in *DMLBS*, s.v. *virgo*: Young (unmarried) woman, maiden. Cf. Isidore of Seville, *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville*, trans. by Stephen A. Barney (New York, 2010), p. 242.

[19] Felice Lifshitz, 'Priestly Women, Virginal Men', in *Gender and Christianity in Medieval Europe: New Perspectives,* ed. by Lisa M. Bitel and Felice Lifshitz (Pennsylvania, 2008), pp. 87–128 (pp. 87–88); Robert Bartlett, *WCD?* p. 202.

[20] *OLD*, s.v. *castitas*; *DMLBS* s.v. *castitas*: defined as 'chastity', or 'purity of doctrine'.

[21] Latham, p. 514. Under definition two in the *DMLBS*, s.v. *virgo*: One who has never had sexual intercourse... c. with reference to specially committed abstinence from sexual intercourse.

spiritual integrity.[22]   Nonetheless, this is not always the case; virginity can be understood as a mental or spiritual state of commitment, rather than a physical condition.[23] In practice an author might use *castitas* or *virginitas* to refer to a variety of states. This terminology could be used to describe someone who had never experienced coitus, an individual committed to the religious celibate life or even someone who practised sexual faithfulness in a monogamous marriage.[24]   'Chaste marriage' was frequently used to refer to married couples who kept their wedding vows. The word *caelebs* is also used in discussions of sexual renunciation; whilst it tends to retain its pure meaning of 'single', it may be employed to refer to 'celibate marriage' in which a couple has made the transition to celibate life.[25] The flexibility of the Latin terminology is evident and therefore it is important to take each word within its specific context.

My analysis is centred on examining how narratives of virginity and chastity contribute to depictions of sainthood within the saints' *Lives* of twelfth-century England. Analysis will begin with an exploration of sexual renunciation in the *Lives* of male saints, examining how it is demonstrated as exceptional in the majority of texts, before moving on to draw together examples of 'male virginity'. A section examining the presentation of chaste marriage in royal saints provides a bridge between this and examinations of virginity and chastity in the *Lives* of female saints.

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[22] Kathleen Coyne Kelly and Marina Leslie, 'Introduction: The Epistemology of Virginity', in *Menacing virgins: representing virginity in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, ed. by Kathleen Coyne Kelly and Marina Leslie (London, 1999), pp. 15–28 (pp. 16–17).

[23] See Lifshitz, 'Priestly Women, Virginal Men', pp. 88–89 and Gillian Cloke, *This Female Man of God: Women and Spiritual Power in the Patristic Age, AD 350–450* (London, 1995), pp. 57–70, 82–99; cf. Jo Ann McNamara, *Sisters in Arms: Catholic Nuns through Two Millennia* (Cambridge, Mass., 1996), p. 3.

[24] Kelly and Leslie, 'Introduction: The Epistemology of Virginity', pp. 16–17.

[25] Dyan Elliot, *Spiritual Marriage: Sexual Abstinence in Medieval Wedlock* (Princeton, 1995), p. 4.

Men: Sex before sainthood

Most hagiographers, either overtly or through omission, present their saintly protagonists maintaining a chaste life from childhood to death. Even those who at some point have had an active interest in worldly pursuits, for example Wulfric of Haselbury or Thomas Becket, do not number sexual transgressions amongst their pre-conversion indiscretions.[26] There only appears to be one exception within this corpus. In the *Life* of Bartholomew of Farne his pre-conversion worldly pleasures are recounted in rather general terms, although there are sexual undertones. Initially, Bartholomew does not follow a spiritual path: 'What is spiritual [*spirituale*] is at first carnal [*carnale*], he gave over the rest of his youth to laws of levity [*levitatis*], all business of scurrility [*scurilitatis*] poured out of him, lavish in all leisures.'[27] Although *carnale* might just be referring to earthly pleasures generally, it often refers to pleasures of the flesh, enhanced by the use of *scurrilitas,* which also has connotations of lecherous or lascivious behaviour.[28] This passage is followed by a vision featuring the Virgin Mary and the Apostles, which was still not enough to stir Bartholomew to conversion: 'For at that time the flesh, as the older and more experienced of the two, knew how to desire against the spirit, and the spirit, pressed down by the pleasures of youth, was not able to battle the flesh.'[29] Here the struggle between spirit and flesh is clearly articulated, and it is suggested that Bartholomew is not yet at the point where his flesh is ready to convert and the spirit able to triumph.

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[26] Despite the model provided by St Augustine of Hippo.

[27] *Vita Bartholomaei,* pp. 296–7: 'Quia vero non primum quod spirituale est, sed quod carnale, cunctis adolscentiae suae temporibus levitatis legibus animum dedit, et de se sibi prodigus in otia totum et scurilitatis negotium effudit.'

[28] See *DMLBS* s.v. *scurrilitas*.

[29] *Vita Bartholomaei*, pp. 297–98: 'Nec tamen hic Bartholomaeus ad conversionis amorem compunctus est. Jam tunc enim caro tanquam prudentior et aetate major, concupiscere noverat adversus spiritum, et spiritus, adolescentiae voluptate depressus, obluctari non poterat adversus carnem.'; c.f. John 2: 4.

In at least one case, a hagiographer faced criticism for neglecting to mention his protagonist's carnal indulgences. Writing soon after Ailred's death, Walter Daniel says little about the abbot's sexuality.[30] Nonetheless, there is independent evidence that Ailred was sexually active before entering the Cistercian Order, attested to both by Ailred's own writings and an *apologia* prefaced to Daniel's *vita*.[31] This *apologia* was a response to criticism aimed at the *Vita Ailredi* by some anonymous clerics.[32] Unfortunately, the clerics' original complaints are not extant, but it is possible to discern a number of them from Daniel's reply. For example, Daniel writes that he was criticised for comparing Ailred to a monk at a point in his life when he was known to have deflowered his chastity.[33] Jacqueline Murray suggests that the anonymous clerics reproached Daniel for suppressing Ailred's youthful sexual activity because mentioning his sexual dalliances would have enhanced Ailred's monastic chastity and thus elevated his later bodily disciplines, rather than subtracted from his sanctity.[34] However, while a 'battle' for chastity did indeed enhance the value of the virtue, in this case an alternative explanation is more likely, especially when the above example is placed within its broader textual context:

> For what is their case? It is that, because in that same
> period of his life Ailred several times deflowered his

[30] Certainly in comparison to other saints' *Lives*, as will be seen.

[31] Ailred reveals his own sexual experiences when writing to his sister, advising her how to maintain her own virginity, Ailred of Rievaulx, *De Institutione Inclusarum,* in *Aelredi Rievallensis Opera I: Opera Ascetica,* ed. C.H. Talbot, CCCM 1 (Turnhout, 1971), pp. 638–682 (p. 674): 'Recole, si placet, illas foeditates meas pro quibus me plangebas et corripiebas saepe puella puerum, femina masculum. [...] Recole nunc, ut dixi, corruptiones meas cum exhalaretur nebula libidinis ex limosa concupiscentia carnis et scatebra pubertatis, nec esset qui eriperet et saluum faceret.'

[32] Maurice Powicke, 'Introduction', *Vita Ailredi*, pp. ix–lxxxix (pp. xxx–xxxi). Criticism of a hagiographer's method, or indeed his choice of subject, was not unusual. Criticism of method is often seen when an author sets out his reasons for revising an older saint's *Life*; Eadmer and William of Malmesbury are both very conscious of portraying what they see as improved accounts in their revised *vitae*. See for example Eadmer in *Vita Dunstani*, pp. 44–45; also William of Malmesbury, *VSW*, pp. 8–11 (just one example of him criticizing Coleman); See also Reginald of Durham who deprecated envious criticism, Reginald of Durham, *Vita sancti Oswaldi regis et martyris*, in Symeon of Durham, *Opera Dunelmensis Opera et Collectanea*, ed. by Hodgeson Hinde, Surtees Society, 51, 2 vols (London, 1868), I, pp. 326–85 (p. 327).

[33] 'Letter to Maurice', p. 76.

[34] Murray, 'Masculinizing Religious Life', p. 35.

virginity [*virginitatem*] I ought not to have compared a man of that sort to a monk. But in that passage I spoke not of his chastity [*castitate*], but rather his humility. By the word 'monk' I commended this; wantonness [*lasciuiam*] was not in my mind. I did not refer to the darnel but called attention to the wheat. I kept silence about the vices and recommended the virtues. When, I beg, is corn without husks? No one is free from stain, not even an infant a day old.[35]

Thus, rather than being criticised for omitting Ailred's chastity, it was Daniel's representation of Ailred as monk-like which was problematic for his critics. This both highlights the potential challenge faced by hagiographers when writing about figures still within living memory and provides clear evidence for competing models of sanctity. Whilst Daniel represents humility as a more important saintly virtue than life-long chastity, his clerical critics appeared to feel otherwise.

Nonetheless, chastity was important enough to Daniel that he still suggests that Ailred, unlike other adolescents, was able to restrain his lust (*libidine*) and began to perfect his holy meditations with works 'before he entered on his manhood.'[36] Youth was a stage in the male life-cycle when boys learnt how to be men by engaging in the actions and behaviours appropriate to society's construction of adult masculinity, including sexual activity. Hagiographers highlighted this as a time of particular danger to a saint's sexual integrity.[37] Daniel establishes Ailred's chastity in his youth, passes

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[35] 'Letter to Maurice', p. 76: 'Nam quid cause pretendunt? Idcirco uidelicet quod Alredus eodem tempore uirginitatem suam aliquociens deflorauerit talem hominem a me non debuisse monacho comparari. Ego autem illo in loco non de castitate Alredi sum locutus set de humilitate. Hanc itaque commendaui nomine monachi, non lasciuiam introduxi. Triticum ostendi, non lolium predicaui. De uiciis tacui, uirtutes insinuaui. Et quando, queso, frumentum nichil habebit acuris? Sic nemo mundus a sorde, nec infans cuius est diei unius uita super terram.' The clerics also appear to have criticised Walter Daniel's written style and some apparently spurious miracles he recorded.

[36] *Vita Ailredi*, p. 2: 'antequam iuuenis fieret.'

[37] See Georges Duby, 'Youth in Aristocratic Society: Northwestern France in the Twelfth Century', in *The Chivalrous Society: Essays by Georges Duby*, trans. by Cynthia Postan (London, 1977), pp. 112–122; William M. Aird, 'Frustrated Masculinity: The Relationship between William the Conqueror and His Eldest Son', in *Masculinity in Medieval Europe*, ed. by Dawn M. Hadley (London, 1999), pp. 39–55 (p. 43); Ruth Mazo Karras, *From Boys to Men: Formations of Masculinity in Late Medieval Europe* (Philadelphia, 2003), pp. 12–17. For the importance of sexual activity to definitions of lay masculinity in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, see Kirsten A. Fenton, 'The Question of Masculinity in William of

over the issue during his time at court, and does not return to the subject until Ailred is a professed monk. Even then the reference is rather oblique: Daniel records that Ailred would plunge himself into freezing baths to vanquish the heat (*calor*) of all vice (*vitium*).[38] While these vices are not specified as sexual, saints are commonly depicted using a freezing bath to dispel lust.[39] Daniel presents a narrative in which, due to Ailred's sexual dalliances, the saint's chastity is not emphasised.[40] Instead, he demonstrates Ailred's consistent suitability for the monastic calling by accentuating his humility, circumventing Ailred's 'deflowering of his virginity', while still portraying him as saintly. This illustrates how hagiographers dealing with contemporary subjects had to negotiate a balance between the specificity of their individual subject, models of sainthood and the expectations of their potential audience, particularly when aspects of that individual's sanctity could be perceived as problematic.

Men: Sexual Temptation

Accounts of sexual temptation are the most common narrative trope for exploring sexual renunciation within the *Lives* of male saints. Successfully struggling to maintain chastity emphasised the exceptional nature of virtue and thus strengthened the depiction of sainthood.[41] For chastity to form an integral element of saintly identity it must be

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Malmesbury's Presentation of Wulfstan of Worcester', in *Anglo-Norman Studies*, 28 (2006), pp. 124–137 (pp. 126–127).

[38] *Vita Ailredi*, p. 25: 'et aqua frigidissima totum corpus humectans calorem in sese omnium extinxit uiciorum'.

[39] See *VGF*, pp. 91–92; *Vita Wulfrici*, pp. 18–19; Ead, *Vita Wilfridi*, p. 87; Other examples cited in Schulenburg, 'Saints and Sex', pp. 212–213.

[40] Cf. to the *VA* in which reference to Anselm's chastity barely features; Anselm may also have been sexually active at some point. See R. W. Southern, *Saint Anselm: A Portrait in a Landscape* (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 148–153; Brian Patrick McGuire, 'Love, Friendship and Sex in the Eleventh Century: The Experience of Anselm', *Studia Theologica: Nordic Journal of Theology*, 28 (1974), pp. 111–152. See also Anselm, 'Mediation 2: A lament for virginity unhappily lost', in Anselm, *The Prayers and Meditations of St. Anselm with the Proslogion*, trans. Benedicta Ward (Harmondsworth, 1973), pp. 225–229.

[41] There are, as to be expected, a few exceptions; a small selection of *Lives* either do not mention chastity, or do so very briefly. As suggested, chastity does not feature in the *Vita Ailredi* any more than outlined

actively articulated, for example through an episode of sexual temptation. The *topos* of sexual temptation has long antecedents within hagiography, drawn from patristic writings and the *Lives* of the Desert Fathers.[42] A mere statement of chastity was not enough to set saintly men apart from other monks and ecclesiastics. To depict their renunciation as saintly, it was necessary to present explicit evidence of control over bodily desire. Thus, by dramatising a struggle for chastity, hagiographers re-emphasised the virtue.[43] By representing saints as overcoming temptation in their youth, when at their most susceptible, hagiographers presented the best possible case for sanctity reinforced through sexual renunciation.[44]

The following analysis is structured around the two main strategies for overcoming temptation as presented in these texts: bodily mortification and exercise of will.[45] Borne out of the Desert Father tradition, acts of asceticism are the most common response.[46] I will consider two examples from episcopal *Lives* in which asceticism features as a cure for temptation, before turning towards the eremitic saints. The first

above. The *VA* makes oblique reference to Anselm's purity (*munda*) when he cures the sexual troubles of a young monk by looking at him; beyond this Anselm's personal chastity does not feature at all. See *VA*, pp. 23–24. The *Vita Gundulfi*, passes no comment on Gundulf of Rochester's chastity or virginity, although the bishop does have very good relationships with women. See also Eadmer's *Vita Oswaldi*, where there is no explicit mention of the saint's chastity although Eadmer may imply it in a list of virtues at pp. 228–9, and the *Vita Odonis*, pp. 6–7 chastity is briefly mentioned in relation to Oda's sacerdotal duties. See also Gerald of Wales's *Vita Remigii*.

[42] See above, p. 72. See Schulenburg, *Forgetful of their Sex*, pp. 311–14 for other examples of male sexual temptation. For the influence of the Church Fathers of the fourth and fifth centuries in twelfth–century monasticism see Giles Constable, *The Reformation of the Twelfth Century: The Trevelyan Lectures given at the University of Cambridge, 1985* (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 160–162; On the influence of St Anthony see Jean Leclercq, 'St. Antoine dans la tradition monastique médiévale', *Antonius Magnus Eremita, Studia Anselmiana*, 38 (1956), pp. 229–247. The Rule of St Benedict demanded the reading of the *Lives* of the Fathers, *BR*, c. 42.3.

[43] Cf. Murray, 'Masculinizing Religious Life'.

[44] For example: *Vita Ailredi*, p. 2; *Vita Waldevi*, p. 104; *VSG*, pp. 14–15; *Vita Wulfrici*, pp. 18–19. See also the comments of Gerald of Wales on the worthiness of resisting temptation in youth, versus old age, *Gemma Ecclesiastica*, 2.8.

[45] Cf. Schulenburg, 'Saints and Sex, ca. 500–1100', esp. pp. 207–215.

[46] See Brown, *Body and Society*, pp. 224–5, 69 and Schulenburg, 'Saints and Sex, ca. 500–1100', pp. 211–213. On early Christian asceticism see, for example, Philip Rousseau, *Ascetics, Authority, and the Church in the Age of Jerome and Cassian* (2nd ed., Notre Dame, 2010); Elizabeth A. Clark, *Reading Renunciation: Asceticism and Scripture in Early Christianity* (Princeton, 1999). Even when they are not explicitly part of narratives of chastity, acts of asceticism often appear associated with sexual control: Ailred of Rievaulx plunges himself into freezing water, *Vita Ailredi*, p. 25; See also similar brief comments in Eadmer, *Vita Wilfridi*, pp. 58–59 and Goscelin, *Vita Wulfsige*, pp. 104–105.

episode of sexual temptation in William of Malmesbury's *Life* of Wulfstan of Worcester is resolved through a pairing of asceticism and divine intervention. The narratives that negotiate Wulfstan's chastity take place during his adolescence (*adolescentia*).[47] The text stresses that Wulfstan maintains his chastity (*castimonia*) despite attempts of the Devil to lead him astray. The Devil places Wulfstan in the way 'of a girl of the district who was designed by nature for shipwrecking modesty and luring men into pleasure. She would grab his hand, wink at him, and do everything that signifies virginity [*virginitatis*] on the point of departure.'[48] Wulfstan's temptation is thus caused by an external threat: the presence of the girl influenced by the Devil. Although he did not yield, Wulfstan was so affected by her alluring gestures that he gave himself over wholly to love. However, he immediately came to his right mind and, shedding tears, bolted to a spot bristling with thorns and brambles.[49]

Wulfstan thereby fends off temptation with a combination of self-mortification and compunction. A divine sign from God acknowledges this moment as a heavenly light shines down on Wulfstan. The saint explains these occurrences to bystanders: 'He had recently (he said) been pricked by lusts of the flesh, and had blazed up to an enormous heat; but now he had been watered by the dew of heaven, and was cold in his groin and in his whole innards.'[50] Wulfstan said that he hoped that from now on he would be free of fleshly impulse, and would, by God's mercy, have no further trouble with sexual temptation. Wulfstan's prophetic words came true: 'Never after that was

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[47] *VSW*, p. 16

[48] *Ibid*., pp. 18–19: '… puella e uicino nata ad naufragium pudoris et illecebram uoluptatis molesta erat. Denique manum prensitare, oculo annuere, et cetera quae sunt moriturae uirginitatis inditia lasciuis etiam gestibus impudicititiae facere solebat.'

[49] *Ibid*. Cf. St Benedict of Nursia who also rolls in brambles, Gregory the Great, *Dialogues,* tr. Odo J. Zimmerman (Washington, 1959; repr. 2002), c. 2, p. 60. Cf. Schulenburg, 'Saints and Sex, Ca. 500–1100', p. 211; Bartlett, *WCD?*, pp. 45–46.

[50] *VSW*, pp. 20–21: 'Nuper se stimulis carnis aculeatum in immensum excanduisse; nunc superno rore irrigatum et uentre et totis uitalibus algere.'

his heart or eye distracted by anyone's striking beauty, never was his quiet sleep interrupted by a wet dream.'[51]

Some comparisons can be drawn between the *Life* of Wulfstan and the *Life* of the late-twelfth century bishop Hugh of Lincoln, a member of the newly founded Carthusian Order. Hugh also overcame his temptation through a combination of ascetic devotion and divine intervention. The evocation of Hugh's struggle for chastity is most extensively played out in the *Magna Vita*, written by Adam of Eynsham in the decade following Hugh's death in 1200. Adam, although a Benedictine monk, wrote the *Magna Vita* for the Carthusian Priory of Witham. His account of Hugh, therefore, demonstrates the interests of the semi-eremitic Carthusian audience, providing a model of spiritual training for Carthusian monks.[52]

From the moment that Hugh entered the Carthusian order in his early twenties he was assailed by 'temptations' sent by the Devil:

> "As soon," he said, "as I crossed the threshold of my cell I felt the stirrings of new temptations in my heart. It was not always the same one. Rather did the tempter direct all the ancient weapons of its infernal armoury against a new recruit in this holy warfare, […] I mean that he aroused my carnal lusts."[53]

Hugh embarks upon an eremitic-style apprenticeship in order to demonstrate his worthiness for the Carthusian order. Although Hugh is always able to temporarily dispel these temptations, through extensive prayers and tears of compunction, they do become a recurrent difficulty. Hugh's enclosure within his cell means that his temptation is largely internalised, not stimulated by the presence of an actual woman as

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[51] *Ibid.*: 'Numquam enim deinceps animum uel oculum eius sollicitauit ullius formae miraculum, numquam turbalenta eluuies dormientis interpellauit quietem.' Cf. the same incident in Senatus, *Vita Wulfstani*, p. 70.

[52] The Carthusian way of life drew heavily on the desert tradition, tempered by the Rule of St Benedict: Douie and Farmer, 'Introduction', *MVSH*, pp. vii–liv (p. xxiii).

[53] *MVSH*, I, pp. 28–29: '"Mox," inquit, "ut infra celle limen pedem misi, exsurgentem noue temptationis motum in corde meo sensi. Nec uniformis temptatio illa fuit; immo nouam ingresso militiam omnia temptator innouauit antique sue malitie instrumenta; […] immo accendit contra me stimulum carnis mee."' See 2. Cor. 12:7.

in the case of Wulfstan. Hugh even says of the Devil that, 'as if from a very powerful crossbow, he shot bolts which, he hoped, I could not resist, since they were part of myself.'[54]

The description of Hugh's temptation is steeped in martial imagery. Derived from Scripture, the rhetoric of spiritual warfare was pervasively employed within the early martyr tradition. It was subsequently adopted into the discourse of ascetic 'martyrdom' to present the earliest desert monks as the direct successors of these martyr saints. The rhetoric was then transmitted through later centuries within fundamental texts such as those of the Desert Father corpus and the Rule of St Benedict.[55] It has been suggested that during periods of anxiety, martial imagery also allowed religious men to maintain a Christian masculinity by adopting language that reflected a standard definer of normative male identity; physical strength and the expression of violence have often been seen as fundamental marks of manhood.[56]

Hugh's temptation provides an example of how this discourse may be read as engendering masculinity. The Devil sends his ancient weapons against Hugh when he

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[54] *MVSH*, I, p. 28: 'quasi balistam robustissimam et eo, ut sperabat, insuperabilem, quo michi inseparabilem tetendit'. Cf. Charles Garton (ed. and trans.), *The Metrical Life of Saint Hugh of Lincoln: The Latin Text* (Lincoln, 1986), pp. 16–23, in which Hugh is assailed by a real woman.

[55] For a summary of the transmission of the language of spiritual warfare see Katherine Allen Smith, *War and the Making of Medieval Monastic Culture* (Woodbridge, 2011), pp. 71–111. On such language in the passions of martyrs see, Peter Brenan, 'Military images in hagiography', in *Reading the Past in Late Antiquity*, ed. by Graeme Clark et al. (Rushcutters Bay, 1990), pp. 323–45. On the adoption of the language of martyrdom to early monasticism see Edward E. Malone, 'The Monk and the Martyr', *Studia Anselmiana*, 38 (1956), pp. 201–228. On military rhetoric in a monastic context more broadly see, for example, Barbara H. Rosenwein, 'Feudal War and Monastic Peace: Cluniac Liturgy as Ritual Aggression', *Viator*, 2 (1972), pp. 129–158; Lester K. Little, *Benedictine Maledictions: Liturgical Cursing in Romanesque France* (Ithaca, 1996).

[56] Be this Roman ideals of masculinity in the late antiquity, or lay masculinity in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. For example, Matthew Kuefler, *The Manly Eunuch: Masculinity, Gender Ambiguity, and Christian Ideology in Late Antiquity* (Chicago, 2001), pp. 105–124; Murray, 'Masculinizing Religious Life', pp. 24–42 and Katherine Allen Smith, 'Saints in Shining Armor: Martial Asceticism and Masculine Models of Sanctity, ca. 1050–1250', *Speculum*, 83: 3 (2008), pp. 572–602. On violence as a mark of masculinity see, Karras, *From Boys to Men*, p. 21. Also see Emma Pettit, 'Holiness and Masculinity in Aldhelm's *Opus Geminatum de Virginitate*', in *Holiness and Masculinity in the Middle Ages*, ed. by P.H. Cullum and Katherine J. Lewis (Cardiff, 2004), pp. 8–23 (p. 12). For some twelfth-century context in relation to the writings of William of Malmesbury see Kirsten A. Fenton, *Gender, Nation and Conquest in the Works of William of Malmesbury* (Woodbridge, 2008), pp. 24–55.

is still a 'new recruit' (*novam ingresso militiam*) in 'holy warfare'.[57] Adam describes

Hugh's final battle by using the language of hand-to-hand combat, in which Hugh, the

'most courageous warrior' (*athlete fortissimo*), is attacked and wins a magnificent

victory. Adam records that Hugh's temptation is so violent that he would rather have

endured the torments of Hell than the violence of his own desires:

> The conflict was so huge and fierce that undoubtedly it
> was through divine power alone that his human nature was
> not defeated; but by resisting manfully [*viriliter*] he
> emerged victorious. […] The lists for the combat in
> which he fought so manfully [*virilis*] was his cell, where
> finally the stout-hearted champion [*athlete*], prostrate but
> unconquered, worn out but undefeated, snatched a short
> sleep.[58]

Hugh's chastity is being affirmed, while ensuring that he is masculine.[59] Similar

language was used in the *Lives* of early saints: Anthony himself was described as

viriliter when fighting off temptations.[60] Sometimes the 'battle' for chastity was not so

metaphorical. A later episode in the *Vita Wulfstani* records how Wulfstan slaps a

gabbling woman when she incessantly attempts to solicit him in a church; in this case

physical violence appears an acceptable response in defence of chastity.[61] Nevertheless,

it is important not to overstate the implications of military rhetoric for masculinity;

there are other connotations that may be more important for depictions of sainthood. As

stated above, the imagery of spiritual warfare was appropriated from the passions of

martyrs in order to affiliate monastic asceticism with the ultimate form of sainthood;

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[57] *MVSH*, I, pp. 28–29.

[58] *Ibid*., pp. 50–51. 'Tam ingens pugna, tam forte certamen fuit, ut solius diuine non dubitetur uirtutis fuisse quod humanitus non cessit, set uiriliter resistendo triumphum reportauit. […] Palestra adeo uirilis pugne area fuit celle sue, in qua demum athlete fortissimo, prostrate quidem non superato, non uicto set fatigato, tenuis obrepsit sopor.'

[59] On the masculinity of chastity see e.g. Karras, 'Thomas Aquinas's Chastity Belt', pp. 53–58.

[60] See e.g. *Vita Antonii*, col. 132. See below, p. 116 and n. 189 for female saints described in this way. In his tenth-century work *De Virginitate* Aldhelm tells his readers to act manfully (*viriliter*) in their chastity. Aldhelm, *The Prose Works [of] Aldhelm*, trans. by Michael Lapidge and Michael Herren (Ipswich, 1979), p. 66.

[61] *VSW*, pp. 30–33. For the gendered connotations of this incident see Fenton, 'The Question of Masculinity', pp. 124–137.

these associations with martyrdom should not be overlooked when considering the deployment of these motifs.

On the eve of his promotion to prior of Witham, Hugh's demonic assailants returned; the location of this incident within the narrative suggests that Hugh's battle with sexual temptation must be won before he becomes prior. After a long and pugnacious struggle, Hugh finally triumphs and experiences a vision of the recently deceased prior of Chartreuse. Hugh beseeches the prior to aid him in his ongoing struggles and the prior immediately cuts open Hugh's bowels with a knife, extracting something resembling 'red hot cinders'. Hugh is healed and restored, 'completely cured both in spirit and body.'[62] Although the removal of these 'cinders' may merely signify expulsion of the fires of lust, there are two further accounts of this story that are less enigmatic.[63] The metrical *Life* refers to the prior probing Hugh's 'vital parts' and removing the 'inflamed gland of the flesh', while the account given by Gerald of Wales in his *Gemma Ecclesiastica* records that an angel appeared and cut off Hugh's genitals.[64] Even if Adam's account is not as literal as the others, it is possible to interpret this event as amounting to a metaphorical castration. Adam purports to have accurately recounted this story as Hugh passed it on to him, and has done so in an attempt to counter other accounts which he says incorrectly imply that the Virgin Mary appeared to Hugh and made him a eunuch.[65] Nonetheless, the narrative of Hugh's struggle for mastery over his own desire culminates in a climactic vision which,

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[62] *MVSH*, I, pp. 51–52: '…quasi strumam igneam'; 'et in corde et in carne se repperit immutatum'. Hugh's 'castration' can be compared to the account of the fifth-century saint Equitus, see Jacqueline Murray, 'Mystical Castration: Some Reflections on Peter Abelard, Hugh of Lincoln and Sexual Control', in *Conflicted Identities and Multiple Masculinities: Men in the Medieval West*, ed. by Jacqueline Murray (New York, 1999), pp. 73–91 (on Hugh, pp. 80–85, on parallel with Equitius, p. 83).
[63] Cf. Murray, 'Mystical Castration', p. 83.
[64] *Metrical Life of Saint Hugh*, trans. Charles Garton (Lincoln, 1986), lines 398–402, pp. 28–29; Gerald of Wales, *Gemma Ecclesiastica*, ed. by J.S. Brewer, in *Giraldus Cambriensis Opera*, ed. by J. F. Dimock and G. F. Warne, 8 vols, Rolls Series, 21 (London, 1861-1891), II (1862), p. 247 and in *Vita Remigii*, p. 76.
[65] *MVSH*, I, p. 52.

whether rendering an allegorical castration or not, does resolve Hugh's recurring temptation. After his castration-like experience, there is no suggestion of a shift in gender identity as Hugh continues to be portrayed as a brave warrior in other contexts. For example, Adam recounts that in order to quell violent tempers he often 'bravely and intrepidly' thrust himself into the middle of armed bands of men.[66]

A clear parallel exists between Hugh and Wulfstan in their experiences of divine intervention. Although Wulfstan's experience is not conceptualised as castration, he obtained divine mediation which cooled his innards and left him 'cured' of lustful pricking.[67] Adam of Eynsham records that Hugh felt he had been completely cured in body and spirit. When Adam asks Hugh if he has felt any stirrings of the flesh since his vision, Hugh replies: 'I will not deny that I have felt some, but these were so insignificant that I did not have to fight against them but could simply ignore them.'[68] Clearly, Hugh deems carnal feelings only significant when they have to be actively fought against, emphasising that the virtue of chastity was not as impressive when it came without a struggle.[69] Both saints experience divine mediation that effectively curbs the dangers of temptation and significantly their struggles for chastity are long passed before they are elected to the episcopacy. Hugh's experience prepares him for his pastoral role as bishop by facilitating his safe interaction with women; this stands out from the Carthusian tradition, which strictly banned any contact with women.[70] During his time as bishop of Lincoln, Adam records that Hugh's 'amazing gift of

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[66] *MVSH*, II, p. 17; cf. Murray, 'Masculinizing Religious Life', pp. 36–37.
[67] *VSW*, pp. 20–21.
[68] *MVSH*, I, p. 52: '"Reuera," inquit, 'quod aliquem senserim non nego, set simplicissimum et quem non minus contempnere quam comprimere esset facillimum."'
[69] Murray, 'Masculinizing Religious Life', p. 35.
[70] H. E. J. Cowdrey, 'Hugh of Avalon, Carthusian and Bishop', in *De Cella in Seculum: Religious and Secular Life and Devotion in Late Medieval* England, ed. by Michael G. Sargeant (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 41–57 (p. 55).

chastity' gave him the confidence to invite women to eat with him, and even to embrace them reverently.[71]

Although Wulfstan and Hugh's *Lives* draw on similar narrative structures, they differ in the telling and in purpose. Whereas Wulfstan experiences two discrete instances where his chastity is endangered, Hugh's struggle is much more drawn out. Due to the strong influence of the desert tradition on Carthusian monasticism, Hugh's elongated struggle with temptation bears more resemblance to those experienced by the eremitic saints for whom the battle for chastity is so protracted that it can take decades to win.

One such account can be found within the *Life* of Godric of Finchale written by Reginald of Durham. Although there are many similarities, divine recognition does not come so readily to Godric; battling temptation was a main occupation of a hermit, and the length of the conflict was a measure of success.[72] Godric continued his struggle for mastery over desire for forty years.[73] Like Hugh, Godric's temptations at this point are brought on internally by the Devil, not through an external agency, and are imbued with the language of spiritual warfare.[74] His ascetic mortifications, however, are the most dramatic within the corpus. Reginald records that Godric, despite striving after a more rigorous way of life, often 'perceived the awful drives of the flesh and hastened through the many-faceted fiery arrows of temptation caused by the Devil.'[75] Godric attempted to suffocate the initial stages of wantonness through excessive fasting and unceasing sobs; his fasts could last for two, three or even six days. He stayed awake in vigil and

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[71] *MSVH*, II, pp. 47–48: 'eximie castitatis celitus'. On 'useful' temptation see Henrietta Leyser, 'Two Concepts of Temptation', in *Belief and Culture in the Middle Ages: studies presented to Henry Mayr–Harting*, ed. by Richard Gameson and Henrietta Leyser (Oxford, 2001), pp. 318–326 (pp. 318–322).

[72] Tom Licence, *Hermits and Recluses in English Society, 950-1200* (Oxford, 2011), p. 132.

[73] *VGF*, p. 90.

[74] For example, *VGF*, p. 76. Translations based around those kindly shared by Margaret Coombe (pers. comm.), OMT edition forthcoming.

[75] *VGF*, p. 76: 'dira saepius carnis incentiva persensit, et multimoda temptationis jacula diaboli ignita percurrit.' Cf. to the 'bolts' thrown at Hugh above.

during the night only left his prayers for hard manual labour. If this did not quell his burning desires, Godric would plunge his bare body into thorns and spines: 'thus, the whole of his body torn from the multitude of wounds, he turned desire into pain.'[76] Godric's struggle continued and he extended his mortifications, vigils and fasts.[77] The narrative proceeds to relate that, after a great deal of time, the Lord saw forbearance in Godric's sufferings and began to cool the heat of temptation. Although Godric experiences some divine intervention to aid him in his struggle, in his case the Lord only steps in to help after a protracted period; the length of Godric's training in the field of sexual temptation reflects his eremitic vocation. It is only after forty years of this struggle that the soldier of Christ (*Christi miles*) had 'completed his term of service' and endured no more inducements to temptation from apparitions sent by the Devil.[78]

Such extreme asceticism was not praised so highly in the *Lives* of all twelfth-century saints, even other hermits. In the *Vita Wulfrici*, Wulfric is reprimanded for excessive asceticism: 'While a passion as cruel as hell was thus contending in the cause of chastity more strongly than was wise, up in the heavens a kite recognised its time and in order to tempt the man of God it sought him out and took hold of him.'[79] One night when Wulfric was getting out of his freezing vat as usual and was brushing off the water with his hand, he found a snake hanging from his thigh.[80] The snake bit Wulfric and, despite vomiting out the poison, as long as he lived the saint bore the scar of the serpent's teeth. The text continues: 'So it was that excess of zeal was reined back and

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[76] *VGF*, p. 76: 'et sic toto dilaceratus corpore, ex vulnerum multitudine voluptatem in dolorem convertere.' See above p. 82, n. 49.

[77] Godric also made use of a barrel of freezing water *VGF*, pp. 90–92. See above p. 77, n. 46.

[78] *VGF*, p. 90. 40 days is the length of time that Christ spent in the desert, but also the standard amount of service required from a knight per annum. Although not about sexual temptation, compare the language in the *Vita Wulfrici* in the saint's struggle with the devil, e.g. at pp. 21–22.

[79] Song 8:6; Jer 8:7. *Vita Wulfrici*, p. 19: 'In hunc modum dum dura ut inferus aemulatio fortiter magis quam prudenter pro castitate zelaret milvus in caelo cognovit tempus suum et virum Dei ut temptaret et expetiit et accepit.' On moderation of ascetic practices see Giles Constable, 'Moderation and Restraint in Ascetic Practices in the Middle Ages', in *From Athens to Chartres: Neoplatonism and Medieval Thought. Studies in Honour of Edouard Jeauneau*, ed. by Haijo Jan Westra (Leiden, 1992), pp. 315–327.

[80] See Acts 28:3–5.

brought within the limits of discretion, while the holy man learnt that the purity of the flesh he sought was to be hoped for more by strength of faith and the grace of God than won through intemperate physical training.'[81] Released 'by heaven', Wulfric now turned to other spiritual exercises to compensate for the excessive nature of his earlier warfare.[82] Whereas Godric's extended ascetic battle is eventually rewarded, Wulfric's was instead criticised. Although there are clear similarities between accounts in which asceticism is used to overcome temptation, flexibility is evident within these models.

After the curbing of his ascetic practices, Wulfric is later depicted using alternative strategies to cope with temptation. Like his eremitical counter-part Godric, Wulfric is assailed by the Devil for a long time. His hagiographer records that the worst of these molestations involved the Devil lying in wait to stroke Wulfric's genitals (*genitalia contrectare*), with a caressing hand (*manus blandissima*), whenever the hermit went to the privy to empty his bowels.[83] This continued for eighteen years, during which Wulfric was tormented beyond measure, to the point that he loathed the privy so much he would often use a pot instead. In the end, when Wulfric was ready to be 'delivered from the disgrace of such a servitude', he went to face the Devil. In an outburst Wulfric reproached the Devil: 'Is it not right that you, you wretch, whose desire it once was to be like the Most High, should now be a filthy thing that inhabits a stinking latrine?'[84] This taunt was too much for the enemy to bear and, thus weakened, he left the privy and ceased to concern Wulfric. This is the only example found within these *Lives* in which devilish temptation is banished with saintly derision.

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[81] 1 Tim 4:8. *Vita Wulfrici*, p. 20 (p. 105): 'Itaque et aemulatio nimia ad lineam discretionis castigata est, et eam quam affectabat vir sanctus carnis puritatem de fidei virtute et gratia Dei potius quam de immoderata corporis exercitione didicit esse sperandam.'

[82] *Vita Wulfrici*, p. 20. As will be seen in the next chapter, concern over excessive asceticism is a recurrent theme.

[83] *Ibid*., p. 41.

[84] *Ibid*., p. 41 (p. 127): 'Numquid non recte accidit tibi, o miser, ut qui olim similis esse Altissimo concupisti, nunc cloacales faeculentias foedas inhabites?'

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Another possible method of overcoming temptation was exercise of will. In Jocelin of Furness's *vita* of Waltheof of Melrose, a key moment of the saint's journey of conversion is related to preservation of chastity. Jocelin describes how Waltheof grew up in the court of David I of Scotland and that 'among other marked good qualities which he possessed, one outstanding adornment, the whiteness of virginity [*virginitatis*], he carried with him from his mother's womb to heaven.'[85] Jocelin then narrates how Waltheof was nearly tricked into compromising his chastity when still a youth. Inspired by the Devil, Waltheof catches the attention of a noble girl; she gives him a gold ring set with precious stones as a sign and pledge of their love. When his fellow courtiers see this ring on Waltheof's finger one of them says, 'See, Waltheof is one of us now, a sweetheart and a lover, flashing a new ring - a love-token, no doubt, from his lover.'[86] Upon the taunting of his peers, Waltheof comes to his senses and destroys the ring in a fire: 'from that day forward Waltheof cut himself off from familiarities with women, presents, and private affairs, realising that it was not safe to lie down among serpents.'[87] Waltheof's self-will ensures his triumph and preservation of his virginity.[88]

Unlike Hugh, Waltheof's temptation leads him to subsequently shun the company of women, and he is not alone in this. Robert of Béthune, the bishop of Hereford, also does not enjoy the company of women:

> Moreover, concerning the preservation and proof of his
> chastity [*pudicitie*], as far as we know, he was wont never

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[85] *Vita Waldevi*, p. 103 (p. 220): 'Inter cetera, quae possidebat, insignia virtutum, illud singulare decus, virginitatis videlicet candidatum, ex utero matris secum vexit ad caelum.'

[86] *Ibid.*, p. 105 (p. 221): 'Ecce Walthevus factus est, quasi unus ex nobis, procus et amator, et in indicium amoris, annuli ab adamata dati sibi novus gestator.'

[87] *Ibid.*, p. 105 (p. 222): 'Ab illo ergo die mulierum familiaritates, munuscula, secretos affatus abscidit a se, sciens non esse tutum secus serpentes saepius dormire'. See Prov. 6:27.

[88] Dunstan's decision to enter the religious life is framed in similar, if not identical terms. Dunstan actively makes the decision between marriage and the cloister, originally choosing for the marriage before a fever convinces him of the error of his ways. See Osb, *VD*, pp. 82–83, Ead, *VD*, pp. 64–65 and WM, *VD*, pp. 184–5. See also *VGF*, pp. 38–40 in which Godric overcomes the desire he feels for a quasi-divine woman who accompanies him on pilgrimage.

> to fix his eyes on a woman. For he had read that he who
> so fixes his eyes is an abomination of the Lord. He
> nowhere presumed to sit or speak alone with a woman
> except in the presence of appointed companions, not even
> in confession nor in any secret matter. What therefore
> may be thought about the purity of his flesh, I have said in
> a few words, that as far as I knew, he died an old man still
> a virgin [*virgo*].[89]

Although there is no specific incident of temptation, this passage imparts the potential

threat caused by being alone in the presence of women. Furthermore, it is significant

that his hagiographer distinguishes between Robert's chastity (*pudicitia*) as a virtue tied

to his pastoral interaction with women, and Robert's virginity (from *virgo*) as an

affirmation of his sanctity.[90]

Gilbert of Sempringham's *vita* provides an unusual depiction of willpower. As

in the case of Hugh, Gilbert's chastity allows him to care for women: 'no one had ever

heard that he touched a woman, from his youth to the end of his life […] and because he

had overcome the serious conflict of youth he was later deservedly raised to the firm

direction of the weaker sex'.[91] Gilbert's chastity, however, becomes potentially

compromised during one incident while he is still relatively young. When staying with

a local family a hidden infection steals over Gilbert for the beautiful daughter of his

hosts: 'for Gilbert dreamt that he put his hand into this girl's bosom and was unable to

draw it out. The most chaste of men was terrified that, human frailty being what it is,

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[89] *VRB*, pp. 159–160: 'proinde quod ad custodiam et argumentum pudicitie pertinere dinoscitur nunquam oculum in feminam figere consuevit. Legerat enim quem ac abbominatio est domino defigens oculum. Nusquam solus cum sola sedere vel loqui nisi coram positis arbitris presumsit, nec de confessione quidem vel quolibet archano. Quid igitur de mundicia carnis eius sentiendum sit cito dixerim quod scire potui. Virgo senex obiit.' Cf. *Rule of St Augustine*, c. 4.
[90] Charlotte Lewandowski, 'Cultural Expressions of Episcopal Power, 1070–c. 1150' (unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Birmingham, 2010), p. 167.
[91] *VSG*, pp. 14–15: '… nec illum tetigisse mulierem ab ineunte etate usque ad finem uite quisquam unquam audiuit […] et quia grauius adolescentie certamen superauerat ad forcius infirmioris sexus regimen haut inmerito postmodum assumptus est.'

his dream foretold a sin of fornication.'[92]   Gilbert and his chaplain companion immediately leave the house and build themselves a dwelling in the churchyard. At first this appears to be a successful exercise of will over the self; nonetheless, the author goes on to offer further elucidation. He proposes a hagiographic reinterpretation of the dream, suggesting that it was not carnal, but instead demonstrative of Gilbert's sanctity and virginity; the vision did not 'herald future sin' but was of 'glorious merit, for this girl was later one of the seven original people with whom Gilbert founded his order'. The inability to remove Gilbert's hand was merely a sign of his dedication to the Church and his cause.[93] Gilbert's dream becomes allegorical, reflecting in particular the motif of disembodying the Bride from the Song of Songs into a figure for the soul or Church.[94] The reinterpretation of this dream from carnal to prophetic is emphasised by the metamorphosis of the girl from *puella* in the first account to *virgo* in the second. Gilbert's temptation is not only overcome by his own ability to resist it, but is written out of the narrative and textually dissolved into divinely inspired prophecy.

From this juncture, Gilbert's identity is strongly interwoven with his foundation, initially established around a small group of women. Indeed, after Gilbert's death a canon experiences a vision in which he sees that Gilbert, 'virgin in body and mind' (*virgo corpore et mente*) has been accepted into the choir of virgins, both because of his own virginity and his protection of virgin women.[95] The author thereby forges a connection between Gilbert and the women he encloses by consciously using the same

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[92] *Ibid*., pp. 16–19: 'Gileberto in somnis quod manum suam in synum predicte puelle iniecisset, nec inde eam extrahere posset; quod somnium uehementer expauescens uir castissimus, ne forte, ut est humana fragilitas, futurum fornicationis crimen portenderet'.

[93] *VSG*, pp. 18–19: 'Veruntamen hec somnii uisio non futuri peccati sed gloriosi meriti fuit prefiguratio; hec enim uirgo postmodum una erat de septem illis primitiuis in quibus idem pater inchoauit tocius ordinis sui congregationes.'

[94] On exegesis of the Song of Songs see, for example, E. Ann Matter, *The Voice of My Beloved: The Song of Songs in Western Medieval Christianity* (Philadelphia, 1990). On this passage see Sarah Salih, 'When Is a Bosom Not a Bosom? Problems with "Erotic Mysticism"', in *Medieval Virginities*, ed. by Anke Bernau, Sarah Salih and Ruth Evans (Cardiff, 2003), pp. 14–32 (pp. 23–24).

[95] *VSG*, pp. 128–129. See p. 33ff for description of Gilbert guarding the convent.

word (*virgo*) to describe their sexual purity. Gilbert's virginity is of central importance to his suitability for guiding this community of women. Contemporary concerns over the dangers of double monasteries and the proximity of men and women meant that Gilbert's sexuality had to be depicted as beyond reproach.[96] Given the unfortunate publicity received due to the scandal of the nun of Watton, who fell pregnant by a lay brother and was then forced to castrate him, it was particularly important that in Gilbert's *vita* the order's founder was depicted as sexually and spiritually infallible.[97]

One final threat to sexual control articulated within some of the texts is nocturnal emission. Concerns over the nature of nocturnal emissions, and how to combat them, were not new but in the twelfth century monastic debates over the issue re-emerged on a scale not seen since the seventh; this was in part a result of ecclesiastical reform placing renewed emphasis on the Eucharist and the importance of a ritually pure clergy.[98] This anxiety filters into some of the *vitae*. For example, Wulfstan was so perfectly cured of lust that he was not subsequently distracted by striking beauty or subject to the interruption of a wet dream (*turbulenta eluuies*).[99] The division here between waking desire and that brought on without encouragement is clear. Further, it seems that to Wulfstan's hagiographer, eradication of these disturbances symbolises the ultimate expression of sexual control. Similarly, in Godric's *vita* nocturnal emissions feature as an outward sign that his mortifications have not yet cured him of impurity: 'and indeed his flesh still boiled with the great heat of

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[96] See, for example, Sharon K. Elkins, *Holy Women of Twelfth-century England* (Chapel Hill, 1988), pp. 155–56; Staples and Karras, 'Christina's Tempting', p. 189; See also Brian Golding, *Gilbert of Sempringham and the Gilbertine Order c. 1130–c. 1300* (Oxford, 1995), pp. 75–76.

[97] On the nun of Watton see Foreville and Keir, 'Introduction', pp. liv–lv and Golding, *Gilbert of Sempringham*, pp. 33–38. For an alternative reading of Gilbert's dream and relationship to the nuns see, Salih, 'When Is a Bosom Not a Bosom?', pp. 22–25.

[98] See Conrad Leyser, 'Masculinity in Flux: Nocturnal Emission and the Limits of Celibacy in the Early Middle Ages', in *Masculinity in Medieval Europe*, ed. by Dawn M. Hadley (London, 1999), pp. 103–120 and Dyan Elliott, *Fallen Bodies: Pollution, Sexuality, and Demonology in the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia, 1999), pp. 14–34; Staples and Karras, 'Christina's Tempting', p. 187.

[99] *VSW*, p. 20.

extreme pleasure such that very often through the natural channels of the male genitals semen was seen to flow out. What therefore might the soldier of Christ do, since no moderation could extinguish the filthy impurities?'[100] These emissions in Godric's case are clearly driven by his body, rather than by his will. At this stage in his ascetic struggle, Godric has not obtained the level of bodily control necessary to keep these emissions in check.[101]

The saints analysed here experienced temptation and resolved it in varying ways. Some use asceticism; the length of time they undertake these acts is contingent on their context. Others overcome temptation purely through an exercise of will. Gilbert removes himself physically from the threat whilst his hagiographer explains away his temptation as an allegorical prophecy. In some cases, saints receive affirmation of their efforts through a divine sign or intervention. This often frees the saint from temptation for the rest of their life, or lessens the difficulty of the struggle. Ensuing relationships with women are often affected by the saint's experience: some are more able to care for women whilst others shun them.

The case of Thomas Becket presents an exception to the patterns explored above. Becket's sanctity was largely predicated on his martyrdom and the subsequent miracles at his tomb. As his earlier years did not fit neatly into the model of a saintly man, his hagiographers work hard to make sense of his worldly life whilst depicting him on a continuing path towards sanctity.[102] Although Becket's chastity formed the keystone of this argument, his hagiographers do not present it as challenged in any great

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[100] *VGF*, p. 89: '… quin tanto ardore nimiae delectationis caro fervesceret, quod etiam multoties per naturales virilium meatus fluxus seminis videretur affluere. Quid miles igitur Christi faceret, cum nulla parcitatis cautela putrida inquinamina potuisset exstinguere?'
[101] See also *Vita Wulfrici* in which Wulfric publicly confesses to his nocturnal delusions, pp. 42–43 and *VRB*, p. 124. Cf. the example of Anthony who is tempted by nocturnal fantasies *Vita Anthonii*, col. 129. See also *Vita Ailredi,* p. 51 where the monks of Rievaulx may articulate similar concerns. Anxieties over sexual control within the cloister are also evident within a story regarding a young monk at Bec in the *VA*, p. 24.
[102] See Staunton, *Becket and his Biographers*, pp. 8–13.

way.[103] The solidity of Becket's chastity is especially crucial to their depictions because it acts as a counter-balance to his worldliness. Furthermore, in the context of post-Gregorian Reform England, illustrating Becket's sexual purity demonstrated that he was fit to undertake the clerical vocation he would later fulfil.[104]

The biographers introduce Becket's chastity at two key points in the narrative where his secularity creates tension with his sainthood: during his youth and during his time as chancellor. In his earlier years, juvenile folly is used to justify Becket's vanities. For example, John of Salisbury's narrative states that, although Becket was governed by youthful (*juvenilis*) inclinations, his zeal for faith and nobility of spirit thrived, and, like St Brice of Tours, 'although he was proud and vain, and sometimes assumed the appearance and brought forth words of those who love foolishly, nevertheless he must be admired and imitated for his bodily chastity [*castitate*].'[105] St Brice (or Briticius) provided a comparative model of an episcopal saint who was accused of vanity but proved his bodily chastity.[106] Tailoring established models to fit the needs of their subject, and drawing such parallels, was one way in which hagiographers could present their protagonists as meeting the expectations of sainthood.

Edward Grim also demonstrates Becket's indulgences in worldly recreations emerging at a young age, recording that he took pleasure in the pursuits associated with youth and enjoyed hunting.[107] However, 'this vessel of election was preserved unimpaired by [his] various pleasures and immune from those things by which tender

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[103] Canonically, Becket would have been expected to remain chaste after taking deacon's orders in 1154, just months before he also became chancellor.

[104] Cf. Hanna Vollrath, 'Was Thomas Becket Chaste? Understanding Episodes in the Becket Lives', *Anglo–Norman Studies*, 27 (2005), pp. 198–209 (p. 208).

[105] MTB 2. 303: '… quod etsi superbus esset et vanus, et interdum faciem praetenderet insipienter amantium et verba proferret, admirandus tamen et imitandus erat in corporis castitate.'

[106] See, 'St Brice', *ODS* and Vollrath, 'Was Thomas Becket Chaste?', p. 203. The model is also used by William of Canterbury and Herbert of Bosham. St Brice was also driven into exile by his critics.

[107] MTB, 2. 359.

youth in particular is usually troubled.'[108] The use of *infestari,* which can mean to molest or disturb, is almost certainly referring to sexual sins. Furthermore, Grim is explicitly linking Becket's future role as both archbishop and champion of God with his physical integrity.[109] Herbert of Bosham also remarks on Becket's love of chastity during his youth, again drawing on the model of St Brice: 'although he was proud and vain, he nonetheless kept his body chastity [*castus*].'[110] Herbert later recalls Becket's chastity (*continentia*) at this age and absolves him of the responsibility of his transgressions, marking them down 'more to nature than to sin and more to age than to fault'.[111]

Clearly, sexual temptation does not form an integral part of the narrative of Becket's chastity. Grim's account simply implies that Becket was immune from these troubles of youth, but does not expand upon them in any way. William of Canterbury introduces Becket's chastity into the narrative during his chancellorship; at this point, youthful folly can no longer be relied on as a partial excuse. Chastity now becomes an antidote for Becket's other indiscretions. Despite depicting Becket enjoying hunting, splendour and courtly refinement, William stresses that Becket stood up for the rights of the Church against the 'beasts of the court' (*bestias curiae*), and 'although this seldom happens with those who are accustomed to such affluent circumstances, he was admirable and exemplary in the chastity of his body.'[112] William then also draws a comparison with St Brice, who was similarly vain but chaste. William's account demonstrates the division between normal lay noble behaviour and Becket's chastity; for someone who was steeped in this noble milieu, chastity was particularly

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[108] *Ibid.*, 2. 360: '[...] integrum et immune servatur vas electionis ab his quibus tenera praesertim solet juventus infestari.'
[109] Cf. Acts 9: 15.
[110] MTB, 3. 166: '… etsi superbus et vanus, castus tamen habebatur in corpore.'
[111] MTB, 3. 168–9: 'naturae magis quam culpae et aetati potius quam errori.'
[112] MTB, 1. 5–6: 'Postremo, quod rarius accidere solet in affluentia rerum, mirandus et imitandus erat corporis castitate.'

noteworthy.[113]   Becket's surroundings, whether in youth or in the court, provided opportunities to transgress and thus served to emphasise his chastity and strengthen his claim to sanctity.[114]

The following episode underlines this point. William reports that the king was rumoured to be the lover of a beautiful woman who lived in Stafford. Once, when Becket was visiting the town, this woman sent him so many gifts that the chancellor's host suspected her of attempting to entice Becket. When night came the host went to Becket's bedchamber and peeped through the keyhole, to find the bed empty and untouched. His host immediately thought that he had caught Becket giving in to the woman's temptations, but then spied him on the floor exhausted from vigils of prayers: 'and so it happened that he, who was suspected of wantonness, was found to be a pious man; and we, who easily judge a man without knowing his inner self, are being shown our rashness by the Lord.'[115] This episode of mistaken temptation chimes with the hagiographical motif of clandestine piety seen in other contexts.[116]

Although William Fitzstephen seems more at ease with Becket's splendour than the other hagiographers, he still emphasises Becket's chastity alongside other examples of his piety.[117] Fitzstephen's account of Becket's chastity is the closest to a narrative of sexual temptation within the Becket corpus. He relates that he has heard from Becket's confessor, Robert of Merton, that from the time Becket became chancellor 'no excess ever stained his life':

> Concerning this, the king used to lay traps for him, day
> and night. But as a devout man, and one predestined by
> God, he concentrated on keeping his flesh pure and used

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[113] See, for example, Weinstein and Bell, *Saints and Society,* p. 76.

[114] Edward Grim and Herbert of Bosham also use chastity as a counter-balance for Becket's worldly pursuits at the time of his chancellorship. See MTB, 2. 365; 3. 168–169.

[115] MTB 1. 6: 'Et factum est ut religiosus inveniretur qui luxuriosus putabatur; forsan ostendente Domino temeritatem nostram, qui facile judicamus hominem, nescientes quid sit in homine.'

[116] Cf. Secret devotions above, pp. 42, 64 and below pp. 127, 137–138, 148, 151.

[117] Cf. Vollrath, 'Was Thomas Becket Chaste', p. 206; MTB 3. 21.

to have his loins girded. And indeed, as a wise man, he attended to the management of the kingdom and so many important public and private concerns, and was rarely assailed by allurements of this kind.[118]

This example is the most comparable to the instances of sexual temptation found within other twelfth-century saints' *Lives*; the virtue becomes all the greater because of the temptations put in Becket's way by the king. Even then, the 'battle for chastity' has little place in the accounts of Becket's sexuality: rather he appears uninterested. The stability of Becket's chastity is a crucial part of his hagiographers' argument, written within the context of criticism in which their saintly protagonist's other indiscretions were well known.[119]

Men: Virginity

Four of the saints examined above are referred to as *virgo* or possessing *virginitas*: Wulfstan of Worcester, Robert of Béthune, Gilbert of Sempringham and Waltheof of Melrose. Although a term predominantly associated with women, especially given the liturgical associations with female sanctity and the Virgin Mary, there were clearly circumstances in which an author might consciously choose to designate their male subject as virginal.[120] In this section I want to examine whether any common elements connect the examples within my sample in which male saints are referred to as *virgines*.

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[118] MTB 3. 21: 'Super quo rex ipse diuernas ei et nocturnas tendebat insidias; sed tamquam vir timoratus et a Deo praedestinatus, munditiae carnis intendens, lumbos praecintos habebat. Et quidem vir sapiens, regni moderamini et tantarum curarum publicarum et privatarum intentus occupationi, rarius illecebris talibus attentabatur.'

[119] See Staunton, *Becket and his Biographers*, pp. 8–13 on Becket's posthumous reputation. Gilbert Foliot's letter *Multiplicem nobis* is a cutting character-assassination: *The Correspondence of Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury, 1162-1170,* ed. and trans. Anne J. Duggan, 2 vols (Oxford, 2000), I, no. 109 (pp. 498–537).

[120] For the liturgy, see Lifshitz, 'Priestly Women, Virginal Men', p. 87; cf. Bartlett, *WCD?*, p. 202. On Mary as model for female saints see for example, Katrien Heene, *The Legacy of Paradise: Marriage, Motherhood, and Woman in Carolingian Edifying Literature* (Frankfurt am Main, 1997), pp. 120–121. On men as *virgines* see Heene, *Legacy of Paradise*, pp. 118–120. See also, writing in the seventh century, Aldhelm of Malmesbury's treatment of male virgins in *De virginitate*. See Emma Pettit,

Other studies have attempted to classify male virginity and to uncover the narrative patterns that underpin its representation. For example, Arnold suggests that male virginity can be characterised as the absence of lust, confirmed by an act of divine intervention, as distinct from chastity which is rather the control of lust.[121] However, this particular model of male virginity does not easily map onto the texts examined here. It fits most closely onto the *Life* of Wulfstan of Worcester, in which Wulfstan overcomes temptation and has his sexual integrity confirmed by an act of divine intervention, leaving him free from lust. However, he is the only one within the sample to receive such divine aid. Waltheof and Gilbert are presented as ultimately absent from lust, the first through his rejection of women and the latter through his protection of them. In Robert of Béthune's case an absence of lust is less clearly stipulated; the passage depicting Robert's chastity (and ultimately that confirms his virginity) also hints at the dangers of being left alone with a woman. However, by examining the context in which the words *virgo* and *virginitas* appear within these texts, a pattern does emerge. In three of the examples, virginity occurs directly in reference to the saint's ascension to heaven; in the fourth, virginity is explicitly connected with the saint at death. The position of virgins at the top of the hierarchy of sexual perfection, espoused by some patristic authors, helped foster a continuing association between virginity and heavenly ascension.[122] In each of these cases, reference to virginity is thus a firm affirmation of the subject's sanctity and assured place in heaven. It is worth examining the four examples in a little more detail.

'Holiness and Masculinity in Aldhelm's *Opus Geminatum de Virginitate*', p. 10 and listing male virgin saints p. 20, n. 10.

[121] Arnold, 'The Labour of Continence', p. 111.

[122] See, for example, Jerome, *Adversus Jovinianum*, *PL*, 23, col. 231-338. On the hierarchy of sexual perfection and the proximity of virgins and heaven see, for example, Joyce E. Salisbury, *Church Fathers, Independent Virgins*, (London, 1991), pp. 28, 14, 76–78. And below, p. 104, n. 139.

In the *Vita Gilberti*, after Gilbert's death a canon experiences a vision in which he sees that Gilbert has been accepted into the choir of virgins (*virgines*) because he was 'virgin in body and mind, with the wholeness of his flesh and his faith intact' and because he laboured his whole life to protect the virginity (*virginitas*) of many women.[123] Gilbert's virginity clearly constitutes two elements, the physical and the spiritual.[124] The use of the same terminology for both Gilbert and the women in his order suggests that their sexual status is seen as in some way analogous; Gilbert's virginity in part derives from his protection of the virginal women of his order.

In the *Life* of Waltheof of Melrose, the saintly abbot is described as carrying 'the whiteness of virginity [*virginitas*]' with him from his mother's womb to heaven.[125] This attestation introduces the narrative of Waltheof's rejection of sexual relations and subsequent shunning of women. Robert of Béthune also avoids the company of women, only attending to them in the presence of a chaperone. This regulated interaction is presented by his hagiographer as proof of Robert's chastity (*pudicitia*), distinct from his virginity. While Robert's chastity is a virtue tied to his pastoral vocation, his virginity is rather presented in direct connection with his state at death. William closes the account by saying that as far as he was aware Robert, 'died an old man still a virgin [*virgo*]'; this acts as an emphatic conclusion to the passage, asserting Robert's suitability for sanctity.[126] Although there is no direct reference to heaven, it is telling that virginity is directly connected to Robert's condition at death.

Whilst the *Vita Wulfstani* once again makes a direct association with heaven, there is a difference in the terminology used by William of Malmesbury. Directly before the narrative of temptation William says that Wulfstan never 'allowed any stain

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[123] *VSG*, pp. 128–129: 'qui et uirgo corpore et mente, carnis scilicet et fidei integritate'.
[124] Cf. Church fathers (Jerome and Ambrose) on the physical and spiritual integrity of virginity, Salisbury, *Church Fathers*, p. 37.
[125] *Vita Waltheof*, p. 103. See above n. 85 for the Latin text.
[126] *VRB*, p. 159.

to betray his chastity [*castimoniam*], and he took to heaven the prize of unblemished virginity [*pudoris*].'[127] Wulfstan, however, is described in the Latin as maintaining unblemished *pudor* (decency) and not *virginitas*. Nonetheless, given the association between virginity and heaven made in other *Lives*, in this context a reading of *integer pudor* as conveying virginity may be acceptable. Furthermore, during the subsequent temptation narrative, the seductive girl's gestures are described as the kind of actions that indicated virginity [*virginitatis*] was about to perish; in the *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum* William directly refers to Wulfstan's *virginitas*.[128] Once again, a distinction is made between chastity and virginity.

Though Arnold may be right to distinguish between male chastity and male virginity, his particular model cannot be applied to these texts. It does seem, however, that within these male saints' *Lives* a distinction can be made between chastity and virginity. Virginity is depicted as an ideal quality at death and strongly associated with heavenly ascension; it is thus represented as a vital sign of their sanctity.

Rulership: Virgin Kings and Chaste Marriage

Edward the Confessor is also described as *virgo,* although his royal status, and the way in which his virginity is framed, differentiate him from the other male saints within the corpus. A king's dynastic duty to father heirs was somewhat at odds with the saintly ideals of chastity and virginity.[129] Nonetheless, sexual restraint and control of lust were important attributes that could be lauded in a king. For example, Ailred of Rievaulx

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[127] Winterbottom and Thomson's translation, *VSW*, pp. 16–17: 'aliqua labe castiomoniam prodidit, sed integri pudoris palmam in caelum tulit.' Cf. Senatus, *Vita Wulfstani,* pp. 69–70: 'et integri pudoris palmam in celum tulit.'

[128] *VSW*, pp. 18–19; *GPA* c. 137: 'Pudoris singularis, saluum signaculum uirginitas post uitam caelo exhibuit.' In Senatus of Worcester's later abbreviation, he also makes reference to Wulfstan's virginity on the brink of departing, Senatus, *Vita Wulfstani*, p. 70.

[129] Cf. Bartlett, *WCD?*, p. 219.

praises David I of Scotland as 'an exemplar of chastity' (*castitas exemplar*), although the attribute remains largely undeveloped.[130]   Edward the Confessor took sexual restraint to new heights and his supposed virginity became the foundation of his sanctity.   Although the historical veracity of Edward's sexual renunciation may be viewed with scepticism, chastity was a useful *topos* for helping explain the dynastic fracture caused by an issueless marriage.[131]   Virginity became one of the definitive identifiers of Edward's saintly identity, and was effectively deployed by later rulers in their own representations.[132]

The development of the rhetoric of virginity surrounding Edward's cult can be clearly traced throughout his three twelfth-century *vitae*.[133]   In the Anonymous *Life*, Edward is not depicted as virginal. A chaste marriage is implied between Edward and Edith, although this is not explicitly presented as mutually chosen or spiritually motivated; in the account of Edward's marriage it is Edith, rather than her husband, who is described as chaste.[134] It is not until the second part of the Anonymous *Life*, which is more concerned with Edward's holiness, that Edward himself is described as 'chaste':

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[130] Ailred of Rievaulx, *Eulogium Davidis Regis Scotorum* in *Pinkerton's Lives of the Scottish Saints*, ed. by W. M. Metcalfe, 2 vols (Paisley, 1889), II, pp. 269–285 (pp. 269, 274). William of Malmesbury also frequently praises sexual control in laymen, see Fenton, *Gender, Nation and Conquest,* pp. 62–75.

[131] Elliot, *Spiritual Marriage*, pp. 119–120. See also Weinstein and Bell, *Saints and Society*, p. 76, who suggest that those male saints who are portrayed in a chaste marriage are often those of high status.

[132] Frank Barlow, *Edward the Confessor* (London, 1970), p. 82; Katherine J. Lewis, 'Becoming a Virgin King: Richard II and Edward the Confessor', in *Gender and Holiness: Men, Women and Saints in Late Medieval Europe*, ed. by Samantha E. J. Riches and Sarah Salih (London, 2002), pp. 86–100; See Gábor Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers and Blessed Princesses: Dynastic Cults in Medieval Central Europe* (Cambridge, 2002), pp. 155–194 on the model of the chaste prince.

[133] And has been done so by Joanna Huntington, 'Edward the Celibate, Edward the Saint: Virginity in the Construction of Edward the Confessor', in *Medieval Virginities*, ed. by Anke Bernau, Sarah Salih and Ruth Evans (Cardiff, 2003), pp. 119–139, to which the following owes a great debt. Cf. Domenico Pezzini, 'The Geneaology and Posterity of Aelred of Rievaulx's *Vita Sancti Edwardi Regis et Confessoris*', in *idem, The Translation of Religious Texts in the Middle Ages: Tracts and Rules, Hymns and Saints' Lives* (Bern, 2008), pp. 333-372 (p. 345).

[134] Anonymous, *Vita Ædwardi*, pp. 22–23. This part of the text is missing from the original MS and has been reconstructed from Richard of Cirencester, see Barlow, 'Introduction', p. xxxix.   See also Huntington, 'Edward the Celibate, Edward the Saint', pp. 122–123 and Monika C. Otter, 'Closed Doors: An Epithalamium for Queen Edith, Widow and Virgin', in *Constructions of Widowhood and Virginity in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Cindy L. Carlson and Angela Jane Weisl (Basingstoke, 1999), pp. 63–94, which argues that what virginity is in the text belongs to Edith.   See also Pauline Stafford, *Queen Emma and Queen Edith: Queenship and Women's Power in Eleventh-Century England* (Oxford, 1997), p. 47.

'He preserved with holy chastity [*castimonia*] the dignity of his consecration, and lived his whole life dedicated to God in true innocence.'[135] In this text, however, the king's miraculous touch is a far stronger sanctifying force than his chastity.

In the *vitae* by Osbert of Clare and Ailred of Rievaulx, however, Edward's virginity firmly begins to take shape and function as part of his sanctity.[136] Osbert introduces the theme of virginity into Edward's legend, but he does so overwhelmingly in relation to Edward when he is dying or dead, particularly in reference to his incorruptibility. Even the passage relating Edward and Edith's chaste marriage ends with a reference to Edward's corpse; Edward's sexual purity is projected forwards to his corporeal purity in death.[137] This development in representation is understandable given the context of writing. Edward's incorrupt corpse had been revealed in 1102; a subsequent surge in activity around Edward's cult occurred in the 1130s, centred on Westminster, culminating in Osbert's *vita* and the first bid for canonisation.[138] The virginal incorruptibility of Edward's corpse was crucial to the prestige of his cult and thus for Osbert; virginity defined Edward's corporeal body as a site of saintly power.[139]

In Ailred's *vita* Edward's virginity becomes associated with his living person as much as with his corpse. He records that Edward in his youth, while in exile in Normandy, was immune from the vices to which that age is usually wont.[140] Later, Ailred dedicates an entire chapter of his work to Edward's chaste marriage and virginity. When Edward's advisers broach the subject of marriage in order to ensure

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[135] Anonymou*s*, *Vita Ædwardi*, pp. 92–93: 'Cuius consecrationis dignitatem sancta conseruans castimonia, omnem uitam agebat deo dictam in uera innocentia.'
[136] Huntington, 'Edward the Celibate, Edward the Saint', pp. 119–139; Elliot, *Spiritual Marriage*, pp. 122–123.
[137] Osbert, *Vita beati Eadwardi*, p. 75. Cf. Huntington, 'Edward the Celibate, Edward the Saint', p. 125–127.
[138] Barlow, 'Introduction', p. lxxiv; cf. Huntington, 'Edward the Celibate, Edward the Saint', p. 125.
[139] Huntington, 'Edward the Celibate, Edward the Saint', p. 127. Compare the examples of male virginity cited above with strong connections to ascension to heaven and death, p. 100ff. On virginity and incorruptibility see Bartlett, *WCD?*, p. 101; Cloke, *This Female Man of God*, p. 59; Hans Boersma, *Embodiment and Virtue in Gregory of Nyssa: An Anagogical Approach* (Oxford, 2013), pp. 119–121.
[140] Ailred, *Vita S. Edwardi*, col. 742.

succession, Edward is 'struck with fear that by the heats of passion the treasure he kept in an earthen vessel might be lost.' The king is concerned that if he refused then the 'secret of his pious resolve' would be betrayed, but he dreads the 'shipwreck of his chastity' if he agrees.[141] Ailred clearly articulates the tension between Edward's role of king, and his desire to remain chaste. Edward offers up an impassioned prayer that his chastity can be preserved within marriage, ultimately calling on the Virgin Mary as an example of how it is possible to be both a virgin (*virgo*) and a spouse.

Edward's prayers are answered. A suitable wife is found in the virgin (*virgo*) Edith, who from infancy had a love of chastity (*castitas*). Once united, the King and Queen agree to preserve their chastity, with God as their only witness:

> She was a wife in heart, but not in flesh: he a husband in name, not in deed. Their conjugal affection remained, without their conjugal acts, and their affectionate embraces did not rupture her chaste virginity. He loves, but was not weakened; she was beloved but untouched, and like a second Abishag warmed the king with her love but did not dissipate him with lust; she bowed to his will, but did not arouse his desires.[142]

The chaste marriage is clearly spiritually motivated. Further, Ailred places more emphasis on the link between Edward's chastity and extra-corporeal manifestations of his sanctity, such as visionary powers and healing abilities.[143] The emphasis on Edward's virginity in death, therefore, is an extension of a theme already established in his life. It is clear that, as the cult of Edward developed, the narrative of his chastity took on a new and altered significance. Initially Edward's virginity is associated with

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[141] *Ibid*., col. 747 (p. 34): 'Stupet rex thesauro metuens suo, qui in vase fictili reconditus, facile poterat calore dissolvi.'; 'sui proderetur dulce secretum'; 'naufragium pudicitiae formidabat.'

[142] Ailred, *Vita S. Edwardi*, col. 748 (pp. 35–36): 'Fit illa conjux mente, non carne; ille nomine maritus, non opere. Perseverat inter eos sine actu conjugali conjugalis affectus, et sine defloratione virginitatis castae dilectionis amplexus. Diligit ille sed non corrumpitur, diligitur illa nec tangitur, et quasi nova quaedam Abisac regem calefacit amore, nec dissolvit libidine, mulcet obsequiis, sed desideriis non emollit.'

[143] Huntington, 'Edward the Celibate, Edward the Saint', p. 130. See, for example, Ailred, *Vita S. Edwardi*, cols. 748, 754, 762.

his incorrupt corpse, but in Ailred's *vita* it becomes a crucial lived virtue articulated as one of the core features of his sanctity.

Although it was not the most obvious route to sanctity for a king, Edward was not alone in his possession of virginity.[144] Huntington makes a worthy comparison between Osbert's *Life* of Edward and his *Life* of St Ethelbert, in order to demonstrate that Osbert does not shy away from narrating virginity in life. Osbert spends far more time agonising over Ethelbert's internal dilemma concerning his marriage and reluctance to forsake his virginity, than he does in his account of Edward.[145] Further, Gerald of Wales, in his re-writing of the *Life*, conspicuously eliminates the justifications for marriage given by Osbert and increases the threatening nature of matrimony, depicting Ethelbert earnestly reading anti-marriage literature.[146]

St Margaret of Scotland provides a contrast to Edward in many ways. The depiction of Margaret also stands out amongst those of female saints, as it scarcely comments on her sexual integrity. The *vita* proposes that Margaret wanted to dedicate herself to the religious life, but by the wish of her people and by God's ordination 'more than by her own will' she was joined in marriage with Malcolm, King of the Scots. Margaret's marriage, however, is not depicted as problematic because it represents a threat explicitly to her chastity, but rather because of the requirement that she remain in the secular world.[147] Her chastity is not raised anywhere within the *vita*. This lack of

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[144] Bartlett and Klaniczay both draw a comparison to Edward's contemporary the Germanic emperor Henry II, who was also a saint (d. 1024). See Bartlett, *WCD?*, p. 202 and Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers*, pp. 160, 171. Cf. Dyan, *Spiritual Marriage*, pp. 113–31.

[145] Huntington, 'Edward the Celibate, Edward the Saint', p. 127 (also n. 57, 58). Huntington also highlights other works of Osbert that dwell on virginity, p. 127, n. 56.

[146] Gerald of Wales, *Vita Æthelberti*, edited in M. R. James, 'Two Lives of St Ethelbert, King and Martyr', *The English Historical Review*, 32 (1917), pp. 214–244 (p. 224); Robert Bartlett, 'Rewriting Saints' Lives: The Case of Gerald of Wales', *Speculum*, 58 (1983), pp. 598–613 (pp. 602–603); cf. Huntington, 'Edward the Celibate, Edward the Saint', p. 127, n. 58.

[147] *Vita Margaretae*, p. 163.

reference to personal chastity is particularly striking; even in the case of other queen-saints who were mothers, some reference is made to the chastity of their marriage.[148]

To emphasise the peculiarity of this point further, it is worth making a comparison to the account of Margaret's marriage in another source. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle D for 1067 records that, when Malcolm decided he wanted to marry Margaret, she 'refused, saying that she would have neither him nor any other if the heavenly mercy would graciously grant it to her to please in maidenhood [*mægðhade*] with human heart the mighty Lord in pure continence [*clærne foræfednysse*] through this short life.'[149] Here the chronicler not only places more emphasis on Margaret actively opposing the match, but stresses that she wished to live a life of chastity.

Margaret is unusual among queenly saints because she does not follow the typical pattern of pious widowhood; Malcolm died only shortly before her own demise. Instead, at the point when a cloistered widowhood would typically have been advantageous, Margaret's *vita* concentrates on pronounced expressions of her pious devotions.[150] Consequently, a significant moment in the narrative at which bodily integrity could have been emphasised is absent.[151] As she does not enter the cloister, all of Margaret's continuing worldly roles, as wife, mother and queen, work towards creating her sanctity; Margaret's sanctity is achieved through her earthly status, rather

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[148] See, for example, St Matilda of Saxony in 'The "Later Life" of Queen Matilda' in *Queenship and Sanctity*, trans. Sean Gilsdorf (Washington, 2004), pp. 88-127 (p. 94); See pp. 109–110 below. See also William of Malmesbury's account of her daughter Edith/Matilda who fulfils her conjugal debt of producing heirs and is described as, 'preter regium cubile pudoris integra, nulla suspitione lesa.' *GRA*, p. 756.

[149] Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, D 1067, *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition, Volume 6, MS D*, ed. by G. P. Cubbin (Cambridge, 1996), p. 82. (Translation from *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Revised Translation*, trans. by Dorothy Whitelock with David C. Douglas and Susie I. Tucker (London, 1961), pp. 146-147.

[150] See, the examples of SS. Radegund, Matilda, Adelheid, Seaxburh and Æthelryth. Cf. Catherine Keene, *Saint Margaret, Queen of the Scots* (New York, 2013), pp. 75–6, 82.

[151] Cf. *Vita Sexburge*, pp. 150–151.

than in spite of it.[152] It has been suggested that Turgot passes over the subject of sex, partially due to the patronage of the *vita* by Margaret's daughter Edith-Matilda, and instead focuses on what the children revealed about Margaret herself.[153] Indeed, the text stresses the role Margaret took in educating her children properly, emphasising in particular their religious instruction and their good behaviour during mass. Her children were trained in the most reputable morals and were well disciplined, traits directly connected to Margaret's religious zeal.[154] Margaret's children undoubtedly act as an affirmation of her own virtues.

If the ways in which Margaret's children embody her own virtues can be extended to other groups over which she has guidance, it may be possible to see how the text obliquely passes comment on Margaret's chastity. The only allusion to the virtue of chastity is made within a general comment on the good moral reputation of the women in Margaret's service, and her prohibition against any man entering their company without her presence: 'None was disgraced by familiarity with men, nor any immodest levity.'[155] The value Margaret places on chastity can be inferred from the way she protects those within her entourage. Aside from reflecting the responsibilities of a mother and a queen, the descriptions of Margaret's guidance of both her children and her court echo the concerns of those in pastoral office, such as abbots, abbesses and bishops, for the instruction and welfare of those under their care. Indeed, Turgot often appears to be more comfortable interpreting Margaret's secular concerns within the

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[152] On the compatibility of rulership and sanctity see Joanna Huntington, 'Lay Male Sanctity in Early Twelfth–Century England' (unpublished PhD Thesis, University of York, 2004), esp. p. 99, 152; Keene, *Saint Margaret,* p. 76; Gilsdorf, *Queenship and Sanctity* pp. 35–4 on this in relation to Ottonian saints Matilda and Adelaide; See Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers* on the development more broadly.

[153] Huntington, 'Lay Male Sanctity', p. 127.

[154] *Vita Margaretae,* pp. 164–165.

[155] *Vita Margaretae*, p. 164: 'Nulla eis inhonesta cum viris familiaritas, nulla unquam cum petulantia levitas.'

models of these holy authority figures.[156] Although Margaret does not retire from the world like other saintly-queens, when her rulership is viewed through the prism of religious leadership it is possible to see her court emerge as a metaphorical cloister. By protecting the morals and virtues of her entourage, Margaret appears in the mould of abbot/abbess and her moral integrity is inferred from her concern for that of her court/cloister. Her association with chastity is thus mediated through the rulership of her flock of attendant ladies.

In order to place Margaret's *vita* in context, a comparison can be made to *Lives* of other queenly saints written around the same time. Chastity forms a much more central role in the *vita* of the seventh-century Queen Seaxburh, widowed far earlier than Margaret. Goscelin, who wrote the first *Life* of Seaxburh many centuries after her death, portrays her as chaste from youth, ignoring comely suitors and youths with curly locks; indeed, Seaxburh is described as *virgo* before she marries.[157] When it comes to marriage, the struggle is narrated in a similar way to the *Lives* of Edward the Confessor and Ethelbert. Despite reservations, Seaxburh enters into the marriage, at her father's entreaty, even though she wishes to enter spiritual wedlock instead. During her marriage Seaxburh's chastity continues to be emphasised within the text.[158] Her children also feature in her *vita*, and their births are portrayed as pleasing to God. Goscelin makes a point of charting the holiness that passes from Seaxburh through her daughter and into her granddaughter Wærburh.[159]

Towards the end of Seaxburh's *Life* there is an interesting passage in which Goscelin holds up the benefits of a chaste life against that of virginity, explicitly

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[156] On abbatial undertones see Huntington, 'Lay Male Sanctity', pp. 126–129, 136ff (pp. 128ff for mother/abbot parallel); See also Keene, *Saint Margaret,* pp. 84–87 on 'rulership' and abbatial tones in the texts. See above on Gilbert protecting the women in his convent, p. 93, and n. 95.
[157] *Vita Sexburge*, pp. 140–141.
[158] *Ibid.*, pp. 140–41, 144–6.
[159] *Ibid.*, pp. 144–145.

comparing Seaxburh to her sister Æthelryth. Goscelin highlights that, although the sisters were equal in merit, divine grace adorned them with garlands of virtues which did not match:

> [...] this one with virginity [*virginitate*], the other with continence [*continentia*]. This one he preserved inviolate amidst the fires of the flesh, the other He kept in holy devotion amidst fleshly embraces. This one He endowed with perpetual virginity within the bedchambers of two husbands, that one within the bond of marriage He made fruitful with the increase of good works.[160]

As with Margaret, Seaxburh's children again are presented as a positive, sanctity-enhancing outcome of her marriage. Although Goscelin expands upon the virtues of virginity, he concludes that it is no less virtuous to abstain from a marital union which once gave enjoyment, than not to know the pleasures of marriage at all: 'Thus, St Seaxburh, devoted to Christ, kept the glorious crown of widowhood with spotless reputation for chastity.'[161] Although Goscelin is clearly arguing a case for a non-virginal route to sanctity, it is significant that he ties Seaxburh's sexual continence back to her cloistered widowhood. Thus, within the texts examined there are multiple methods for portraying royal female saints dependent on context. It seems that in Margaret's case, perhaps because of her inability to fit into the role of chaste widow, her personal chastity was not emphasised by her biographer. Instead, her rulership over a morally pure entourage of women is one of the means by which she could lay claim to the title of saint.[162]

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[160] *Ibid.*, pp. 176–177: '…illam uirginitate istam continentia. Illam inter carnis incendia inuiolatam, istam inter carnales complexus in sancta deuotione seruauit. Illam inter duorum coniugum thalamos perpetua uirginitate dotauit, istam in maritali copula bonorum operum fecundauit incrementis.'

[161] *Ibid.*, pp. 178–179: 'Viduitatis ergo gloriosam beata Sexburga coronam illeso pudicitie nomine, Christo deuota conseruauit.'

[162] Seaxburh and Margaret can be compared to St Æthelryth who persuaded her first husband to live in chaste matrimony and evaded the sexual advances of her second. See *Liber Eliensis*, pp. 17ff and 26ff.

Women: Virginity and Sexual Temptation

The aim of this concluding section is to offer some comments on the differences in presentation of male and female saints with respect to sexual abstinence. It is not possible to compare male and female twelfth-century saints 'like for like', as Christina of Markyate is the only unmarried twelfth-century female with a contemporary *vita*. Nonetheless, by extending the sample to include twelfth-century *vitae* of earlier female saints, some comparative conclusions can be offered.

It has been demonstrated that the word 'virgin' is applied to certain male saints in specific contexts. A crucial difference between the male and female saints in this sample is that the words virgin and virginity (*virgo/virginitas*) are more frequently associated with female saints, and are used within their *Lives* in less narrow circumstances. Perhaps reflecting liturgical categorisations, the word *virgo* is often used as an epithet; with the exception of St Margaret, all the female saints considered here are described as *virgo* at some point.[163] A further difference between the depictions of sexual renunciation more generally can be seen with respect to narrative structure and chronology. Male saints tend to convert later in life, sometimes spurred on by an adolescent experience of sexual temptation; almost all the *Lives* of female saints examined depict their subjects avowed to the chaste religious life in childhood, or even infancy. For example, Christina of Markyate dedicates herself to a life of God while still a young girl by scratching a cross into the fabric of the church she visits.[164] Some

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[163] Lifshitz, 'Priestly Women, Virginal Men', p. 87, and see also p. 88 on the conceptual understanding of virginity; Robert Bartlett, *WCD?* p. 202. On the multivalency of virginity and the ability to be co-opted also see also Cloke, *This Female Man of God,* pp. 57–70, 82–99.

[164] *Life of Christina*, pp. 5–6; See Weinstein and Bell, *Saints & Society*, pp. 19–47 (table at pp. 123–37) show that in their sample twice as many women converted in childhood as men (31% vs. 15%); cf. Caroline Walker Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women* (Berkeley, 1986), p. 24; See e.g. *Vita Margaretae*, pp. 164–5; *Vita Seaxburh*, pp. 136–141; Æthelryth, *Liber Eliensis*, pp. 15–16; *Vita Werburge*, pp. 36–39; *Vita Prima Wenefredae*, pp. 288–89 (cf. RS, *Vita Wenefredae*, col. 7100; *Vita Moduenne*, pp. 8–11; Osbert, *Vita Edburge* ed. by Susan Ridyard as 'The Life of St Edburga of Winchester by Osbert of Clare, prior of Westminster' in *eadem, Royal Saints of Anglo-Saxon England* (Cambridge, 1988), pp. 253–308 (p. 265).

saints are even younger: Goscelin presents Edith of Wilton selecting the religious life whilst she is still an infant, encapsulated as a choice between earthly and heavenly marriage.[165]

Whereas in male saints' *vitae* references to chastity are generally brief, unless there is an account of sexual temptation, in the *Lives* of female saints it was possible for sexual status to be foregrounded without recourse to such narratives. The motifs of the Bride of Christ and spiritual marriage provided hagiographers of female saints with a vocabulary to discuss virginity or chastity outside the context of temptation.[166] For example, Edith of Wilton's purity is never actively threatened, but Goscelin makes extensive and heightened use of this motif and allegorisation of the Song of Songs.[167] Edith's decision to follow the religious path and remain a virgin is conceptualised as a spiritual quest to reach union with her divine bridegroom, and nuptial imagery becomes the main discourse in which Edith's virginity is explored.[168] An increasing use of the *sponsa Christi* motif has been seen as one manifestation of the growing emphasis on feminine virginity in the high Middle Ages.[169] Although the image of the *sponsa Christi* was utilised by both men and women to articulate their relationship to Christ, in hagiography it is rarely associated with men.[170]

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[165] *Vita Edithe*, pp. 17–98. Cf. Osbert, *Vita Edburge*, p. 265 (cf. *GPA*, p. 78).

[166] On the Bride of Christ see, for example, Keller, *My Secret Is Mine*, pp. 21–44; Dyan Elliott, *The Bride of Christ Goes to Hell: Metaphor and Embodiment in the Lives of Pious Women, 200–1500* (Philadelphia, 2012).

[167] See also, for example, *Vita Werburge*, pp. 32–35; *Vita Sexburge*, pp. 138–9; *Vita Moduenne*, pp. 10–11, 28–29; *Vita Mildrethae*, pp. 133–34.

[168] Stephanie Hollis, 'Introduction', in *Writing the Wilton Women: Goscelin's Legend of Edith and Liber Confortatorius* (Turnhout, 2004), pp. 1–15 (p. 9); Stephanie, Hollis, 'Edith as Contemplative and Bride of Christ', in *Writing the Wilton Women: Goscelin's Legend of Edith and Liber Confortatorius*, ed. by W. R Barnes and Stephanie Hollis (Turnhout, 2004), pp. 281–306 (p. 281).

[169] Wogan-Brown, 'The Virgin's Tale', p. 166; see Bugge, *Virginitas*, ch. 4. This feminizing can be seen alongside an increase in devotion to the Virgin Mary and feminisation of spiritual language in general. See Bynum, *Jesus as Mother*, esp. pp. 101–169.

[170] Hollis, 'Edith as Contemplative', p. 287; Anke Bernau, 'Virginal Effects: Text and Identity in "Ancrene Wisse"', in *Gender and Holiness: Men, Women and Saints in Late Medieval Europe*, ed. by Sarah Salih and Samantha E. J. Riches (London, 2002), pp. 36–48 (p. 117 n. 41). On gendering in the Bride of Christ see Keller, *My Secret is Mine,* pp. 21–44.

While accounts of temptation do occur in the *Lives* of female saints, they almost exclusively portray women as objects of temptation, rather than subject to it themselves.[171] Prior to the twelfth century, overcoming temptation was not a central element of female sanctity.[172] As will be seen, however, Christina of Markyate's *vita* marks a turning point; she is depicted as both the object and subject of temptation.

The first threat to Christina's sexual integrity emerges during her youth, when she is placed under pressure to marry. Youth is thus a perilous time for both men and women.[173] In Christina of Markyate's case, the repeated attempts of her parents, and her suitor, to break her resolve over her vow of virginity eventually drive her to run away from home. Many of the features of the early part of Christina's *vita* are reminiscent of the narrative format of the passions of virgin martyrs, even although Christina herself does not die.[174] She is a noble and beautiful girl, estranged from her family through her vow of virginity. Renouncing worldly goods and earthly marriage, she is both mentally and physically tormented by her parents and the man they want her to marry. Christina is aided and protected from her tormentors by her strong faith and holy intervention. Traditionally the virgin martyr is pitted against a pagan tyrant. Here this role is fragmented between a variety of adversaries including Ranulf Flambard, her parents and would-be husband Beorthred.[175]

The above narrative elements embody the virgin martyr's triumphant struggle to maintain her sexual, and consequently spiritual, integrity. The tortures undergone by female martyrs can be distinguished from their male counterparts through focus on the

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[171] Staples and Karras, 'Christina's Tempting', p. 187; Karras, 'Thomas Aquinas's Chastity Belt', pp. 55, 63; Schulenburg, 'Sex and Sainthood', p. 214. See for example *Vita Prima Wenefredae* (virgin martyr), pp. 290-292; *Vita Mildrethae*, pp. 122ff; *Vita Moduenne*, pp. 44–47; Æthelryth, *Liber Eliensis*, pp. 27ff.

[172] Staples and Karras, 'Christina's Tempting', pp. 185, 190.

[173] For an example in which female youth is explicitly associated with encouraging the unwanted attention of secular men see *Vita Moduenne*, pp. 31–33.

[174] Samuel Fanous, 'Christina of Markyate and the Double Crown', in *Christina of Markyate: A Twelfth–Century Holy Woman*, ed. by Samuel Fanous and Henrietta Leyser, pp. 53–78. Fanous then argues that the following section of the text casts Christina as an ascetic martyr.

[175] Fanous, 'Christina of Markyate and the Double Crown', pp. 60–61.

whole body, rather than discrete parts.[176] For example, before she is tortured, the virgin

martyr is commonly stripped. This draws attention to the corporeal femininity of the

martyr, endangering her virginity by putting her body on display; the stripped virgin

appears passive and vulnerable. However, this image is paradoxically empowering,

symbolising the inability of the authorities to control the virgin's sexual identity.[177] In

a direct hagiographic borrowing from the *Lives* of virgin-martyrs, when Christina

continually refuses to consummate her marriage to Beorthred, her father Autti, disturbed

by anger, strips Christina and taunts her: 'If you want to have Christ, then naked go and

follow Christ.'[178] Christina's willingness to follow Christ naked undermines her

father's authority, enhancing her spirituality. The power of the virgin martyr seems to

derive from her ability to re-appropriate her body from the authority of her adversaries

and to re-inscribe their torments to enhance her spirituality.[179]

Christina's relationship with Christ within her *vita* features as both an

expression of her holiness and as a narrative device. The *sponsa Christi* metaphor is

used throughout her *Life*. During the twelfth century, a growing emphasis on the

humanity of Christ was disseminated in England in part by Anselm, archbishop of

Canterbury, whose writings were known at St Albans where Christina's *vita* was

produced.[180] The humanity of Christ is manifested here as he assumes a 'human'

identity for Christina, comparable but superior to those in the world around her.

Despite working within the biblical tradition of the Song of Songs, unlike other authors,

Christina's hagiographer does not cite the biblical text, even indirectly. Instead, he

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[176] Wogan-Browne, 'The Virgin's Tale', p. 167.

[177] Thomas Heffernan, *Sacred Biography: Saints and Their Biographers in the Middle Ages* (New York, 1988), pp. 278–81; cf. Fanous, 'Christina of Markyate and the Double Crown', p. 59.

[178] *Life of Christina*, p. 24; Fanous compares Autti's behavior to that of the father of the virgin-martyr St Juliana, 'Christina of Markyate and the Double Crown', p. 59

[179] Cf. Fanous, 'Christina of Markyate and the Double Crown', p. 59; Wogan-Browne makes similar comments regarding the 'Katherine Group' in 'The Virgin's Tale', pp. 177–178.

[180] Fanous and Leyser, 'Introduction', in *The Life of Christina of Markyate*, ed. by Fanous and Leyser, pp. vii–xxxi (p. xiv).

draws on the legal and liturgical language of contemporary marriage practice. Christina uses her marriage to Christ as a legal reason for annulling her betrothal to Beorthred; her marriage to Christ is not metaphorical, but real.[181] Explicit comparisons between her heavenly relationship and marriage on earth are made; when Beorthred suggests he would kill someone who stole his bride, she replies 'Beware then of wanting to take to yourself the Bride of Christ, lest in his anger he slay you.'[182] This foreshadows a new literal sense to the manner in which holy relationships were conceptualised.[183]

Christina of Markyate is unique amongst the women considered here. Not only is her virginity threatened by the lust of another, but she also sexually tempted herself; Christina's *vita* is innovative in this articulation of a woman suffering from sexual temptation. While the motif went on to play an important role in the *Lives* of women in the later Middles Ages, it was only in the twelfth century that sexual temptation emerged as a prominent concern for women as well as men.[184] A variety of factors sparked such concerns, including an increase in the number of women religious, the movement for monastic reform (and the impact of clerical purity) and the increasing claustration of nuns. Accordingly, unease over double monasteries was particularly rife in the twelfth century.[185] Christina's temptation thus reflects anxieties arising from the changing monastic and religious environment in England.

The incident of sexual temptation takes place soon after Christina's flight from the home of her parents. In a vivid scene, Christina and an anonymous clerk become sexually attracted to one another under the influence of the Devil. The language of the

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[181] Thomas Head, 'The Marriages of Christina of Markyate', in *Christina of Markyate: A Twelfth–Century Holy Woman*, ed. by Samuel Fanous and Henrietta Leyser (London, 2005), pp. 116–137 (pp. 117–118).
[182] *The Life of Christina*, p. 72 (p. 23): 'Et tu ergo cave sponsam Christi velle tibi tollere, ne in ira sua interficiet te.'
[183] Fanous and Leyser, 'Introduction', p. xi; Bynum, *Jesus as Mother*.
[184] Staples and Karras, 'Christina's Tempting'(esp. pp. 185–186, 190–92).
[185] Karras and Staples, 'Christina's Tempting', p. 189. See above Gilbert, pp. 93-94.

temptation scene suggests that resisting temptation is viewed as a masculine trait. Christina is portrayed as manly in her resistance and the cleric takes on womanly qualities: 'Whence sometimes he said she was more like a man than a woman, where she with her masculine qualities [*virago*], might more justifiably have called him a woman'.[186] Christina becomes a *virago*: not entirely a man, but a manly-woman.

Christina attempts to cure herself using ascetic measures:

> Would you like to know how manfully [*viriliter*] she behaved when she was in so great a danger? By long fasting, little food and only raw herbs at that, a ration of drink, sleepless nights, and harsh scourgings she vehemently resisted the desires of her own flesh, lest her own members become the agents of wickedness against her.[187]

Despite the novel narrative scenario, the strategies deployed by Christina and the language of this passage are familiar from the ascetic martyr tradition and the accounts of male sexual temptation explored above.[188] The description of Christina's struggle also reflects patristic texts that presented virginity, and the struggle of asceticism, as a way for women to become more like men.[189] Thus, in some cases, female saints are presented as worthy of praise for the manliness with which they preserve their virginity. Any gender connotations aside, Christina's biographer is drawing on language with long-standing hagiographic associations to describe her sexual temptation.

Christina has a vision which frees her from temptation:

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[186] *Life of Christina*, p. 114 (p. 46): 'Unde nonnunquam virum illam non feminam esse dicebat quem virago virtute virili predita recte effeminatum appellare proterat.'

[187] *Life of Christina*, p. 114 (pp. 46–47): 'Vis scire quam viriliter ipsa se continuerit in tam grandi periculo? Violenter respuebat desideria sue carnis. ne propria membra exhiberet adversum se arma iniquitatis. Protracta ieiunia. modicus cibus isque crudarum herbarum potus aque ad mensuram noctes insomnes severa verbera.'

[188] See above p. 84ff. The language used here can be compared to that found in the *Life* of St Hugh and the *Vita Anthonii*. For Christina in the mould of ascetic martyr see, Fanous, 'Double Crown', pp. 63–70.

[189] Another example of the deployment of this imagery can be found in the case of St Æbbe, pp. 12–13. For 'manly women' see Susanna Elm, *Virgins of God*, pp. 101, 120–1; Gillian Cloke, *This Female Man of God*, pp. 214–21; Julia M. H. Smith, 'The Problem of Female Sanctity in Carolingian Europe c. 780–920', *Past & Present,* 146 (1995), pp. 3–37 (pp. 18–20); Smith, *War and the Making of Monastic Culture*, p. 84.

> In the guise of a small child, he came to the arms of his sorely tested spouse and remained with her a whole day, not only being felt but also seen. The maiden took the child in her hands, gave thanks, and pressed him to her bosom. And with immeasurable delight she held him at one moment to her virginal breast, at another felt him in her innermost being.[190]

From this moment, Christina is cured of the fires of lust. It is notable that this scene of temptation in which Christina becomes more manly is resolved by a particularly feminine vision of mystical motherhood. Her vision appears similar to the episodes of divine intervention and elimination of desire experienced by Hugh of Lincoln and Wulfstan of Worcester, but visualised in feminine terms.[191] Significantly, not only is Christina's lust dispelled, but the vision is followed in the text by the death of one of her 'persecutors', the bishop of Lincoln.[192] Thus, although the account of Christina's temptation is framed in language recognisable from the early ascetic martyrs, it is resolved with a vision employing images of feminised spirituality current in the twelfth century. This scene presents a motif of sanctity in the process of transition from a masculine environment to one available to saints of both sexes.

It is worth raising one final point. Christina is the only saint depicted questioning the effect that sexual temptation might have had on her virginity, echoing the Pauline teaching that physical and spiritual integrity are necessary for a virginal state.[193] As Christina was about to make her profession to St Albans, she found herself in a great state of agitation:

> [...] not knowing what she should do nor what she should say when, at the moment of consecration, he [the bishop] would ask her about her virginity. For she remembered

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[190] *Life of Christina,* p. 118 (p. 48): 'Ipse namque in forma parvuli venit inter brachia probate sibi sponse, et per integrum diem mansit cum illa, non modo sensibilis, sed eciam visibilis. Accipiens itaque virgo puerum in manibus: gracias agens astrinxit sibi ad pectus. Et inestimabili delectacione nunc et virginali illum in suo tenebat sinu, nunc intra se immo per ipsam cratam pectoris apprehendebat intuitu.'
[191] Cf. Salih, 'When is a Bosom not a Bosom?', pp. 25-26.
[192] *Life of Christina,* p. 118.
[193] 1 Cor 7:34.

> the forcefulness of the thoughts and the stings of the flesh
> with which she had been troubled, and even though she
> was not aware that she had fallen either in deed or desire,
> she did not dare assert that she had escaped unscathed
> from such great storms.[194]

Thus troubled, Christina turns her heart to the Virgin Mary and asks that by her intervention she might be relieved of this uncertainty.[195] She is clearly concerned that the lustful thoughts she had towards the cleric have compromised her virginity.[196] Her concerns are put to rest when she has a vision of angels sent by Christ, who come down to reward her with a crown of virginity. Christina can then profess safe in the knowledge that, 'Christ had safeguarded her as a virgin in mind and body.'[197]

Conclusion

Sexual renunciation remained an important feature of depictions of sainthood, for both male and female saints, although some basic differences in representation emerged. For example, whilst narratives of sexual temptation were used to demonstrate the exceptional nature of the saints' virtues in both male and female *Lives*, male saints were more likely to be subject to temptation themselves, whereas female saints were predominantly the objects of others' temptation. The *Lives* of female saints also dominated the terminology of virginity; *virgo* remained a term principally associated with women.[198] Nonetheless, a small number of male saints within the sample were

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[194] *Life of Christina*, p. 126 (pp. 52–53): '[…] ignorans quid sibi faciendum, quid dicendum foret, quando sacraturus eam episcopus de virginitate sua requireret. Recordabatur namque quos impetus cogitacionum quam ignotos carnis sue stiumlos sustinuerat nec audebat se profiteri de tantis procellis integram evasisse, et si nusquam meminerit se neque actu neque voluntate lapsam fuisse.'

[195] *Ibid*.

[196] Cf. *VSG*, p. 18. Whilst Gilbert does not actively question the validity of his own virginity, the inclusion by his hagiographer of the initial, erotic interpretation of his dream does suggests anxieties over the relationship between sexual temptation and sexual integrity; this is compounded in later versions of the life which leave out this incident altogether. See Salih, 'When Is a Bosom Not a Bosom?', p. 25; John Capgrave, *John Capgrave's Lives of St. Augustine and St. Gilbert of Sempringham and a Sermon*, ed. by John James Murno, Early English Text Society, 140 (London, 1910), p. 64.

[197] *Life of Christina*, p. 128 (p. 54): 'per celeste coronam quod Christus eam mente et corpore virginem usque servaverat.'

[198] The only female saint examined not referred to as *virgo* at some point was St Margaret.

ascribed this title; in these cases virginity was underlined as an important quality at death, or associated with ascension into heaven.

While these texts presented standard hagiographical motifs of sexual renunciation, this examination also revealed variation in how these motifs were used. For example, an analysis of male sexual temptation accentuates the differences present in the representation of this trope. The length of time saints suffered from temptation depended on their vocation. In some cases temptation was an isolated incident. For instance, Bishop Wulfstan and Abbot Waltheof both experienced a single episode of temptation, which took place before they entered monastic orders and eventually progressed to a position of authority. For eremitic saints, fighting temptation was a crucial feature of their religious vocation; Godric and Wulfric were thus presented fighting with sexual temptation for many years. Hugh of Lincoln, a Carthusian saint, bridged the gap between these two groups. His battle with temptation recurred over a period of time and formed part of his training within the Carthusian Order. Then, before he became bishop, his struggle was fundamentally resolved, facilitating his later pastoral care of women. Even within saints of the same vocation, however, there could be variation. Amongst the eremitic saints, for example, Godric's ascetic endeavours to overcome temptation were eventually rewarded by divine recognition, whilst Wulfric's hagiographer presents his subject as chastised for being too ascetic.

Certain saints' sexual activities presented more of a problem to their hagiographers than others and thus required different treatment. In the case of Ailred of Rievaulx, Walter Daniel presented Ailred as chaste in youth, and then skimmed over his sexual misdemeanours whilst a member of David I's court. He was later criticised for his treatment of Ailred's sexual status, and defended his work by placing emphasis on Ailred's other virtues. Thomas Becket's earlier worldliness also made him a

problematic saint. His hagiographers relied upon his unshaken chastity to counter-balance his other misdemeanours, which allowed them to use the hagiographical comparator of St Brice, who was also vain but chaste. This emphasis on chastity within the *Life* of a male saint, without temptation, appears unusual within this sample. Margaret of Scotland's lack of avowed widowhood made her unusual amongst saintly-queens and may have influenced the depiction of her chastity; while she herself was never personally described as chaste, her chastity may be inferred from her protection of the modesty of her entourage.

The *vita* of Christina of Markyate was critical for demonstrating how models and motifs of sainthood could change over time, as well as highlighting how different motifs could be used within one *Life*. Her *vita* presents her virginity as threatened in a narrative pattern familiar from the *Lives* of virgin martyrs. It also articulated a new concern for women as subject to sexual temptation, which went on to play an important part in the *Lives* of later female saints. In Christina's *vita* this innovative scenario was conveyed in language familiar from earlier hagiographical tradition, although her temptation was ultimately resolved with a mystical vision of Christ typical of emergent expressions of spirituality in the twelfth century. Christina's *vita* is an excellent distillation of the manner in which hagiographers reflected their contemporary context, whilst gazing back on old traditions. Ultimately, the struggle to maintain sexual purity provides some of the most dramatic and intriguing anecdotes within the *Lives* of these saints.

✦ Chapter 3: Food and Fasting ✦

Sexual abstinence was not the only expression of renunciation central to depictions of sainthood. Fasting and abstinence from food emerged as a substantial part of corporate Christian practice in the third and fourth centuries, both for the laity and within monasticism.[1] Indeed, in many works of ascetic literature from the fourth and fifth centuries, the issue of food was more important than that of sex.[2] Although sexual renunciation came to take the place of fasting as the chief preoccupation in Christian self-cultivation, fasting and control over sexuality were, nevertheless, continually linked.[3] An interest in fasting arose from the belief that Adam's first sin was not a sexual one but rather one of greed, a lust for physical food; to fast unwaveringly was to succeed where Adam had failed. Fasting at Lent could thus be a symbolic way of undoing a little of Adam's sin, as well as an imitation of Christ's time in the desert.[4] Although strictly speaking to 'fast' meant to abstain from food completely, early Christian practice was varied and 'fasting' came primarily to denote abstaining entirely from certain kinds of food and often limiting intake to a single meal every day.[5]

Varying expectations of eating practices were placed on different segments of society; there was a distinction between the ritual abstention required of the laity and the added proscriptions governing the daily practices of those within the regular life. The Church stipulated certain ritual fasts for all of its members, predominantly forty days at Lent (the *Quadragesima*) from Ash Wednesday until Easter, and then during

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[1] Caroline Walker Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women* (Berkeley, 1986), p. 38.
[2] See Brown, *Body and Society*, pp. 219–222.
[3] David Brakke, *Athanasius and the Politics of Asceticism* (Oxford, 1995), p. 187; Brown, *Body and Society*, pp. 218–24; See, for example, Elizabeth A. Clark, *Reading Renunciation: Asceticism and Scripture in Early Christianity* (Princeton, 1999), pp. 347–353.
[4] On Adam and food see, Brown, *Body and Society,* pp. 220–221.
[5] Bynum*, Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, pp. 37–38.

Advent.[6] During these fasts, meat, cheese, eggs and milk had to be avoided; meat was also forbidden on Wednesdays and Fridays throughout the year.[7] During Lent the number of meals allowed was also cut to one per day.[8] A special exemption to the prohibition on meat was made for the sick, the old, the poor and the young.

Those members of society confined in monasteries and other religious foundations had their own stricter regulations. The renunciation of the world symbolised by taking on the monastic habit involved renunciation of rich foods and gluttony just as much as property and sexual relations. The most widespread monastic rule of the Middle Ages was that of St Benedict, used by both the Benedictine and Cistercian Orders. On a non-fasting day, monks were allowed two meals, made up of two cooked dishes and one raw. Monks also received a daily portion of bread and a measure of drink, usually ale in England and wine in France. On special occasions such as feasts and anniversaries, the diet could be supplemented with cheese, eggs and small fish.[9] The meat of quadrupeds was prohibited, except to the sick, although the growing wealth of monasteries in the tenth and eleventh centuries led to laxity in many cases.[10] Extra days of fasting were required throughout the year.[11] Most monastic orders adopted a similar diet, based primarily upon bread, fruit and vegetables, with the

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[6] There is evidence for the observation of Lent from at least the second century, and the fast of 40 days was confirmed at the Council of Nicea in 325. Christmas appears celebrated from the fourth century. See Thomas J. Talley, *The Origins of the Liturgical Year* (Collegeville, 1991), pp. 57–58, 121ff; Bartlett, *WCD?*, p. 113.

[7] Johanna Maria van Winter, 'Obligatory Fasts and Voluntary Asceticism In the Middle Ages', in *eadem*, *Spices and Comfits: Collected Papers On Medieval Food* (Totnes, 2007), pp. 259–266 (p. 260).

[8] Bridget Ann Henisch, *Fast and Feast: Food In Medieval Society* (London, 1976), pp. 31–32.

[9] See *BR* c. 38, 39; Julie Kerr, *Life in the Medieval Cloister* (London, 2009), pp. 46–47.

[10] For example see, Maria Dembinska, 'Fasting and Working Monks: Regulations of the Fifth to Eleventh Centuries' in *Food in Change: Eating Habits from the Middle Ages to the Present Day*, ed. Alexander Fenton and Eszter Kisbán (Edinburgh, 1986), pp. 152–160 (p. 157). See also Kerr, *Life in the Cloister,* pp. 48–49 and Barbara Harvey, *Living and Dying in England, 1100–1540: The Monastic Experience* (Oxford, 1993), p. 40.

[11] For example the Rule of St Benedict stipulated extra fasting at Lent. *BR*, c. 49. In 1336 Pope Benedict XII prescribed a monastic long Lent of 8 weeks for the Benedictines, see Harvey, *Living and Dying in England,* p. 40; the Cistercian constitutions also called for fasting during Advent, the Ember Week in September and on nine other vigils: *Instituta*, no. 25, p. 466.

occasional supplement of fish and milk-products.[12]   The Augustinian Rule, adopted by many of the newly emerging monastic orders, was less specific in its requirements than that of St Benedict, simply stating that monks should abstain from food and drink as far as health permitted, but giving little detail.   The Carthusian institutions imposed far stricter conditions of consumption than the other orders.[13]

There is a strong historiographical tradition underpinning the study of food abstention within medieval spirituality, though this has tended to focus either on desert monasticism in late antiquity or on later medieval women's piety.[14]   Studies have often concentrated on issues of gender, the lived experience of renunciation, or specifically on asceticism.[15]   This chapter will examine how food abstention is depicted across my corpus of twelfth-century *Lives,* exploring the variations within their representations of eating practices.   Within these depictions of sainthood, the necessary level of abstention changes depending on context; in some circumstances moderation of intake appears sufficient, whilst in others more extreme measures are required.   The analysis is divided into three sections, examining the depictions of eating practices both inside and outside the confines of a monastic rule.   I begin by exploring moderation of consumption, subsequently examining the eating practices of monastic saints, and ending by considering ascetic fasting outwith the cloister.

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[12] See Janet E. Burton and Julie Kerr, *The Cistercians in the Middle Ages* (Woodbridge, 2011), pp. 110–116 on Cistercian eating practices.

[13] *Rule of St Augustine*, c. 3; On the Carthusians see See Henrietta Leyser, 'Hugh the Carthusian', in *St Hugh of Lincoln: lectures delivered at Oxford and Lincoln to celebrate the eighth centenary of St Hugh's consecration as bishop of Lincoln,* ed. Henry Mayr-Harting (Oxford, 1987), pp. 1–18, (p. 4); C. H. Lawrence, *Medieval Monasticism: Forms of Religious Life in Western Europe in the Middle Ages* (2nd ed. London, 1989), p. 135.

[14] See, for example, Teresa M. Shaw, *The Burden of the Flesh: Fasting and Sexuality in Early Christianity* (Minneapolis, 1998); Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*; Rudolph M. Bell, *Holy Anorexia* (Chicago, 1985); For older but still useful studies of early food asceticism see Herbert Musurillo, 'The Problem of Ascetical Fasting in the Greek Patristic Writers', *Traditio*, 12 (1956), pp. 1–64; Rudolf Arbesmann, 'Fasting and Prophecy in Pagan and Christian Antiquity', *Traditio*, 7 (1949), pp. 1–71.

[15] An exception to this latter point is Bynum's *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, which deals with a large range of food practices.

Moderation outside the Rule

Abstinence from food did not have to be extreme in order to help build the image of a saint. Context is key: food intake is relative to the surroundings of the saint. Thus for those saints operating in the secular sphere, depictions of their self-restraint and moderation in consumption are effective expressions of their saintly piety. In the following two cases, both examples of non-monastic saints, eating habits are thus presented as moderated but not ascetically austere. The first illustration comes from the canon of Edward the Confessor and the second from the biographies of Thomas Becket.

The Anonymous biography of Edward the Confessor makes no comment on Edward's eating practices. Temperance in eating, let alone any more stringent ascetic piety, does not feature in the Anonymous' claim for Edward's sanctity. In Ailred of Rievaulx's *vita*, Edward's behaviour towards food is commented on briefly at two points. Ascetic piety, however, never becomes a central part of the depiction of Edward's sanctity. In a chapter describing Edward's admirable behaviour and manners, Ailred mentions that 'none ever saw him conceited, unrestrained in anger or the worse for overeating [*dehonestatum gula*].'[16] Edward's temperance is also touched on later in the text, forming part of the context for his vision of the seven sleepers. After receiving mass Edward took his place at the royal table, but was careful lest the groaning board and festivities should distract him from heavenly contemplation.[17] The carnality and splendour of the feasting are consciously juxtaposed with Edward's restraint and holiness. When relating his vision to Earl Harold and others, Edward says: 'Whilst I was in the midst of brimming cups, rich dishes and the splendour of shining metal, I

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[16] Ailred, *Vita S. Edwardi*, col. 746 (p. 30): 'Nullus unquam eum vidit aut inflatum superbia, aut ira effrenatum, aut dehonestatum gula.' Ailred claims that any time Edward was led unintentionally into any kind of excess this was due to his 'natural candour' (*innatam simplicitatem*) and openness to others (*circa omnes sinceritatem*).

[17] *Ibid*., col. 767.

remembered my Lord God and I looked inward. The vessel of my mind expanded and my inner eye was filled with a special light, and reached out to the rays up to the city of Ephesus with wondrous haste.'[18] Edward's restraint in appetite is directly linked to his visionary experience, and is therefore a sign of sanctity. His exceptional holiness is emphasised through direct contrast with the display of royal luxury and surfeit. As a result, Edward's inversion of the inherent secular splendour expected of a king is sufficient to accord him a reputation of sanctity, without needing recourse to ascetic practices.

As highlighted in previous chapters, in order to combat his worldly involvement, Becket's hagiographers made conscious efforts throughout their *vitae* to portray Becket continually showing signs of sanctity. Becket's relationship to food is always depicted as one of moderation and temperance.[19] This is especially relevant given the known splendour of his table as chancellor and archbishop. William Fitzstephen provides the most detailed depiction of Becket's table whilst he was chancellor; Becket hardly ever dined without fine company and a table resplendent in gold and silver, dainty dishes and costly wines, indeed 'whatever food and drink was commended by its rarity, no price was too high to deter his buyers from procuring it.' However, 'amidst all this he [Thomas] was singularly frugal, and his luxurious table provided rich store for

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[18] *Ibid*., col. 768 (p. 78): 'Ecce quidem ego inter fecundos calices et pinguia fercula ac radiantis metalli splendorem recordatus sum Domini Dei mei, et effudi in me animam meam, dilatoque sinu mentis oculus interior speciali perfusus lumine radios usque Ephesiorum civitatem mira celeritate porrexit.' Cf. Psl. 41:5. On the theme of spiritual food and contemplation during meals times in a monastic context see pp. 138, 143 below.

[19] It has been suggested that Becket may have suffered from a sensitive constitution, which led to this moderation in consumption; of course this may be another piece of retrospective justification for his behaviour: Frank Barlow, *Thomas Becket* (London, 1986), pp. 24–25; Cf. MTB, 2. 330.

almsgiving.'[20] Thus, Becket's frugality and almsgiving stands out in comparison to the grandeur and richness of his table.

Moderation of consumption also emerges in the depictions of Becket as archbishop, originating in John of Salisbury's narrative and recurring within subsequent biographies.[21] Some hagiographers, however, cast a more austere light on Becket's consumption of food after his election. In Edward Grim's account, Becket's abstention from food features as part of a list of ascetic practices. Becket cut the desire of appetite by diminishing his food, beat back illicit emotions through holy reading and speech and intrusions of physical extravagance by shortening his sleep; he also changed the 'softness of clothes' (*vestis mollitiem*) for a coarser hair-shirt (*cilicio*).[22] William Fitzstephen's account is similar. He says that Becket tamed his body with the sparsest diet, drank only the water used for the cooking of fennel, and would eat some of the meat put in front of him but fed chiefly on bread.[23] Fitzstephen comments that in food and clothing Becket desired to be, rather than just to appear, more religious.'[24]

Herbert of Bosham favours a depiction more akin to that of John of Salisbury, emphasising Becket's moderation. Herbert's description of Becket's table as archbishop has a lot in common with William Fitzstephen's account of Becket as chancellor. He first dedicates a chapter to the splendour and arrangements of Becket's archiepiscopal table at meal times. At length he describes the wide range of secular guests, including many high-ranking knights. These honoured guests sat at a separate table from the archbishop lest the edifying reading of his cross-bearer impair their

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[20] MTB, 3. 21: 'ut siqua esculenta vel poculenta commendaret raritas, emptores ejus nulla eorum comparandorum repellere deberet caritas. Summe tamen sobrius erat in his, ut de divite mensas dives colligeretur eleemosyna.'
[21] MTB 2. 306–7; 2. 370; 4. 20–21.
[22] MTB, 2. 370.
[23] MTB, 3. 37.
[24] *Ibid.*

enjoyment of their meal. Noble boys and youths, including the king's son and heir, serve Becket's table.[25] Herbert records that, 'Everything about this table was splendid – splendid in its guests, in its assistants, in its servers and most sumptuous in its food. Everything, I say, was splendid; everything was tasty and rich.'[26] Herbert even comments that Becket's table seemed more akin to that of Caesar than Christ, but justifies his extensive description of this splendour by stating that it demonstrates how Becket was all things to all men.[27]

After Herbert describes the glory and magnificence surrounding the office of archbishop, he resolves the potential contradiction between this and Becket's sanctity by dedicating an entire chapter to Becket's moderation amongst all this feasting. The virtue of self-control appears all the greater when placed within this context of surfeit. Herbert portrays Becket eating and drinking with moderation (*temperantia*/*abstentia*), although he kept his abstinence a secret and pretended to be eating with the other revellers, distracting attention by passing on his dishes of food to others, and engaging in conversation about Scripture.[28] Whilst Becket still partakes of fine foods, because he had been used to them since his youth, Herbert is keen to emphasise that he did so sparingly, and without any pleasure; he also favourably contrasts Becket's temperate consumption of fine foods to the gluttony of a man who overindulges in coarser fare.[29] Thus, temperance is presented as a virtue of the mind as much as of the body; either way, control of the self and moderation are crucial.

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[25] MTB, 3. 226–231.
[26] MTB, 3. 228: 'Mensa haec splendida tota; splendida in discumbentibus, splendida in adstantibus splendida in ministrantibus, et in epulis splendidissima. Tota inquam, splendida, tota epularis et opulenta tota'.
[27] MTB, 3. 230; 1 Cor 9:22.
[28] MTB, 3. 231–232.
[29] MTB, 3. 233–234.

The relationship between saints and food is shaped by the context of the saint and *Life*. In the examples considered above, moderation and temperance, rather than severe fasting, emerge as qualities of saintly behaviour. The non-monastic setting of these virtues lends them spiritual currency; moderation was not the norm of behaviour within these settings and the contrast created between the saint and the luxury around them intensifies their virtue. Within the *Lives* of both Edward and Becket, their restrained eating practices help resolve the tension between their secularity and saintly identity. Within the corpus of Becket's *Lives* there is some variation in the presentation of self-restraint. Although once he becomes archbishop some authors choose to present Becket's consumption with a more rigorous quality, others choose to emphasise his continued moderation, which is lauded at length in Herbert of Bosham's narrative.[30] Thus, at certain points in these hagiographical narratives, self-control manifests itself as moderation rather than extremism, and still proves important within depictions of saintly figures.

Eating by the Rule

The *vitae* focused around cloistered saints reflect different themes and expectations of eating which are largely shaped by their monastic context. Those who entered monastic orders automatically had extra proscriptions placed upon their eating habits, in both everyday life and at times of ritual abstention.[31] The Benedictine Rule had strict stipulations about the number of meals and content of the monastic diet, although by the

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[30] The biographers return to Becket's abstention during his exile at the Cistercian monastery of Pontigny, which will be examined presently.

[31] See above, p. 122 and n. 11.

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eleventh century there are signs of increased flexibility within Benedictine houses.[32] This was just one example of the perceived laxity within the Benedictine Order that gave rise to new monastic forms of life within the twelfth century. The lifestyle in some of these did not suit everyone. As one Cistercian wavering in his calling lamented, 'The food cleaves to my mouth, more bitter than wormwood.'[33]

The new forms of regular life strove either to return stringently to the Rule of St Benedict, or to fashion a new path. Within the saints' *vitae* examined there are representatives from the Benedictine, Cistercian, Augustinian, Gilbertine and Carthusian orders. It is worth highlighting that all of the saints examined in this section rose to some position of administrative authority, either to become abbot of their institution or bishops within the wider Church administration. The saints' relationships with food and fasting, therefore, must be examined not only relation in their positions as monks, but also in their positions of authority. Each monastic Order will be considered in turn. The main concern is to investigate the extent to which saints are depicted as operating within the expectations of their governing Rule. Such an examination reveals that the institutional context of the saint has an effect upon the presentation of their relationship with food.

Three of the *vitae* in this sample concern saints who were part of the Benedictine Order, namely Wulfstan of Worcester and Gundulf of Rochester (both bishops) and Anselm, archbishop of Canterbury. Within the *Lives* of these Benedictine saints, their protagonists are portrayed as surpassing necessity in their abstinence from food. The theme is first introduced in the *Life* of Wulfstan before he has turned to the religious life. Fasting is mentioned, alongside other pious practices, when his hagiographer is

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[32] Dembinska, 'Fasting and Working Monks', p. 157; Harvey, *Living and Dying,* pp. 39–40; cf. Henisch, *Fast and Feast,* p. 46. Lanfranc's *Constitutions* imply 3 dishes at the main meal by the end of the eleventh century, *Monastic Constitutions*, pp. 112–113.
[33] *Vita Ailredi*, p. 30: 'esce abscinthio in ore herent amariores'.

describing Wulfstan's suitability for joining the priesthood. Wulfstan was humble about his elevation, and diligent in his duties. Further, 'to such an extent did he endeavour to slim down his body by fasting [*inedia*] and every kind of restraint, and thus to widen the scope of his soul' that he resembled a layman in his dress and a monk in his manners.[34]

Wulfstan's engagement in abstemious food practices, before required by the monastic rule, mark him out as remarkably well suited to life in the cloister, foreshadowing his future profession to the Benedictine Rule.[35] The conceptualisation of fasting as a technique to open up the soul suggests a shared mentality with some of the Church Fathers. For example, in Athanasius' writings he suggests that fasting prepared the soul to be fed by virtues rather than vices.[36] This pattern of renunciation in excess of the expected requirements continues after Wulfstan has professed and become prior of the abbey:

> Three days a week he abstained from all food, continuing
> his fast for twenty-four hours, while during the day he
> curbed his tongue to complete silence, for fear he should
> make a slip even in a single word. On the other three
> weekdays he maintained his victuals on leek or cabbage,
> cooked or boiled, together with coarse bread.[37]

The three days of fasting undertaken by Wulfstan are not part of the Benedictine regulations, although the description of his fare on the days he does eat is in accordance with the Rule.[38] It is significant that Wulfstan's fasting is mentioned alongside the

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[34] *VSW*, pp. 22–23: '… adeo inedia et omni parsimonia corpus attenuare et animae uires dilatare curabat […] laicum uestibus, monachum moribus agebat.'

[35] Other saints also observe moderation, to varying degrees, in their pre-regular or pre-conversion life: e.g. *Vita Ailredi*, p. 4, *Vita Wulfrici*, p. 15.

[36] See Braake, *Athanaius and Politics of Asceticism*, p. 188.

[37] *Vita Wulfrici*, pp. 44–45: 'Tribus in ebdomada diebus omnis cibi abstemius, noctem perinde ac lumen continuabat ieiunio; ipsis etiam diebus, ne ullo saltem laberetur uerbo, perpetuo linguam cohibebat silentio. Tribus reliquis porros caulesue coctos uel elixos panis cibaria aditiens uictum transigebat.' Later on it is recorded that Wulfstan also never indulged in rich food, both before and after he took the habit, never indulging in fat and flesh, but only fish, *VSW*, p. 108.

[38] On the measures of food and drink stipulated in the Rule see *BR* c. 39 and 40 respectively.

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virtue of silence, which is a particularly important tenet of the Rule, and emphasises the centrality of control over the body within the presentation of virtue.[39]

The *Vita Anselmi* presents a very similar picture of Anselm after his election to the priorship of Bec.

> About his bodily discipline - I mean his fasts [*jejuniis*], his prayers, his vigils - I think it is better to be silent than to speak. For what should I say about his fasts [*jejunio*] when from the time he became prior he so emaciated his body with fasting [*inedia*] that not only from this time was all desire of the belly utterly extinguished, but even as he used to say, neither hunger nor pleasure in eating were induced by any amount of abstinence?[40]

Comparable to the saints who have their sexual urges quelled forever, Anselm's appetite for food is instead supressed. The exceptional nature of Anselm's fasting is emphasised in the *Vita Gundulfi*. The anonymous author says of Anselm and Gundulf, bishop of Rochester, that 'they were not troubled, as many often are, by murmuring about food or drink or clothing, and since in their lives they despised the things of this world, and, refusing *even what was permitted*, sought God earnestly by abstinence and the practice of virtue; therefore, as we may assume, they indeed deserved to lay hold of him.'[41] Therefore, within the *vitae*, Benedictine saints are presented as operating beyond the abstinence dictated by their Rule. Anselm's *Life* emphasises that control over the

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[39] See Conrad Leyser, 'Masculinity in Flux: Nocturnal Emission and the Limits of Celibacy in the Early Middle Ages', in *Masculinity in Medieval Europe*, ed. by Dawn M. Hadley (London, 1999), pp. 103–120 on the earlier medieval association of control over speech with control over the mind. Cf. *BR*, c. 6 and c. 38 on the reader during meal times and the necessity of the other brothers remaining silent.

[40] *VA*, p. 14: 'De corporalibus ejus exercitiis, jejuniis dico, orationibus atque vigiliis, melius estimo silere quam loqui. Quid nanque de illius jejunio dicerem, cum ab initio prioratus sui tanta corpus suum inedia maceraverit, ut non solum omnis illecebra gulae penitus in eo postmodum extincta sit, sed nec famem sive delectationem comedendi pro quavis abstinentia utpote dicere consueverat aliquando pateretur?'; John of Salisbury, whose account is based on Eadmer's makes the same point, JS, *Vita Anselmi*, p. 310

[41] *Vita Gundulfi*, p. 31 (pp. 9–10- my emphasis): 'Non eos uexabat, ut plerosque multotiens solet, cibi uel potus aut uestium murmuratio. Et quia, perfecte in uita sua mundi contemptum habentes, Deum studiose per abstinentiam etiam licita respuendo et per sanctarum uirtutum exercita quaesierunt, ideo, sicut credendum est sine ambiguitate, Illum ueraciter apprehendere meruerunt.' Gundulf is later described as worn thin from fasting, *Vita Gundulfi*, p. 52.

pleasure taken from eating is just as important as control over the physical need for food.[42]

Indeed, in the *Vita Wulfstani*, it is the pleasure accrued by the anticipation of eating which first causes Wulfstan to adopt his regime of abstinence. One day when he was still a priest, before he had developed his distaste for succulent food, Wulfstan ordered a goose to be cooked. Everyone relished the smell, and happily anticipated eating. Even Wulfstan 'was in a transport of delight as he awaited the taste of the goose.'[43] Just before the serving of the goose, Wulfstan was called away. This distraction allowed Wulfstan to upbraid himself for his short-lived pleasure: 'Wretched (he thought) is the flesh that can be stirred to such evil; the pleasure drains away but the sin remains.'[44] Wulfstan's *vita* is unusual within the sample for pointing to a particular event that acts as the catalyst for the saint's adoption of a more abstemious regime. Wulfstan imposes his fasting regime on himself as a penance for the carnal temptation of food: 'compensating by life-long abstinence for one hour's pleasure.'[45]

Once this regime of abstention or fasting has been adopted, the biographers present continuity in practice within their subjects, even after they assume the position of episcopal authority. The *Vita Wulfstani* records that once he was bishop, Wulfstan would always dine publicly in his palace, except when he ate with the monks. Wulfstan preferred to eat only vegetables if he could, although he would occasionally taste fish or milk products that were brought to him. Further, whilst everyone else was drinking beer or mead at lunch he would drink water. Only he himself and his server, however,

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[42] This reflects the second step on the Benedictine scale of humility- to take no pleasure in one's own desire, *BR*, c. 7. 31–33. Cf. to Wulfstan and Becket above, pp. 127, 132.

[43] *VSW*, pp. 108–109: 'His captus presbiter ipse, quoque in delectationem animum resoluerat, spe aucam prelibans.'

[44] *Ibid*., pp. 108–109: 'miseram carnem ad tanta instigari mala; delectationem effluere, peccatum manere'.

[45] *Ibid*., pp. 110–111: 'uoluptatem unius horae totis abstinendo compensauit temporibus.'

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knew this to be the case.[46] Once he has adopted his austere regime, at each point in his career Wulfstan is portrayed as going above and beyond what is expected of him.

Eadmer is also keen to emphasise the continuity in Anselm's practice throughout his career. The descriptions of Anselm's continuing devotions serve to counter his gradual assumption of authority. It is from the moment that he becomes prior of Bec that Anselm emaciates his body with fasting. Eadmer is keen to point out that Anselm's behaviour does not change when he becomes abbot: 'How active he continued to show himself in the practice of every holy virtue can be gathered from the fact that he never on account of his abbacy abated anything of his former exercises in holiness.'[47] When Anselm is archbishop, Eadmer records that he deploys his tongue as an 'instrument of spiritual melody' during meal times; Anselm is far more interested in the edifying conversation that occurs around his table than in eating.[48] Eadmer continues: 'But when, someone will say, did he eat? He ate indeed while he talked, but sparingly, so that you would sometimes wonder how he supported life.' This feeling of wonderment at how a saintly figure could survive on so little food is repeated throughout other texts.[49] Anselm himself admits that he gets caught up in scholarly arguments; nonetheless, when there is no spiritual conversation Anselm toys with his food, listening to the reading whilst the others eat.[50] Anselm's lack of attention to food appears as a conveniently pious by-product of his yearning for spiritual conversation.

A few points worth highlighting arise from Eadmer's description. The first is the place of spiritual learning during meal times. The Benedictine Rule stipulated that

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[46] *Ibid*.

[47] *VA*, p. 45: 'Qualem vero se deinceps in cunctis sanctarum virtutum exercitiisa exhibuerit inde colligi potest, quod nunquam de retroacta sanctitatis suae conversatione causa abbatiae quicquam minuit.'

[48] *Ibid*., pp. 74–78, at p. 74: 'Quibus modulis linguae plectrum inter epulas commodaverit'.

[49] *Ibid*., p. 78 '"Quando ergo" ait aliquis "manducabat?" Manducabat plane inter loquendum, parce quidem, et ut aliquando mirareris unde viveret.' Cf. *Vita Ailredi*, p. 34 and *Vita Waldevi*, p. 127.

[50] *VA*, p. 78; cf. *Vita Antonii* c. col. 146-147.

spiritual reading should take place during meal times whilst the monks ate in silence.[51]

Although Anselm's archiepiscopal table shows more flexibility than this, the emphasis on spiritual learning is evident within Eadmer's account.[52] Secondly, Wulfstan and Anselm's behaviour in these instances is saintly in comparison to those around them. This point is emphasised in the *Vita Anselmi* when Eadmer draws attention to the fact that Anselm does not expect his companions to follow his example; if he sees them rushing their food because he seems to be waiting he will urge them to enjoy their meal.[53] More broadly, this point can be extended to include the potential monastic audiences of these texts. One of the purposes of hagiographical texts was to be read as part of the liturgy, and provide models of behaviour for emulation. Although not every Benedictine monk at Christ Church, Canterbury, and Worcester could have hoped to uphold the stringent lifestyle presented in these texts, the saint did nevertheless provide a model.

However, Eadmer reveals that Anselm was not unanimously praised for his abstinence. Anselm was criticised whilst he was archbishop for an exaggerated 'cultivation of those virtues which were more fitting for a monk of the cloister than for the primate of so great a nation. His high humility, his boundless patience, his too great abstinence [*pro nimia abstentia ejus*], were all in this respect noted, censured and condemned.'[54] Despite these criticisms, Eadmer presents Anselm's continued cultivation of these monastic virtues as an important part of his subject's sanctity.[55]

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[51] *BR,* c. 38; See also *Rule of St Augustine,* c. 3.

[52] Cf. Becket in Herbert of Bosham's account. Becket sets up separate table so that secular guests are not disturbed by the readings. See above, pp. 126–127.

[53] *VA*, p. 78.

[54] *Ibid*., p. 79: 'Hoc pro excellenti humilitate ejus, hoc pro immensa patientia ejus, hoc pro nimia abstinentia ejus dicebatur, dictum accusabatur, accusatum damnabatur.'

[55] Compare *VRB,* p. 158 in which William emphasizes that Robert had not taken a vow of abstinence from meat but simply did not eat it because he rejoiced in abstinence. This may be further evidence that there were concerns over episcopal abstinence.

Concern over 'excessive' abstinence had been reiterated throughout the centuries.[56] The first main problem is exemplified above: it could lead the abstinent to fall into pride, or leave them open to accusations of such, and in a monastic environment might be construed as insubordinate.[57] The second was more simply the negative physical effects of over-fasting.[58] It is this second theme that is more frequently articulated within these twelfth-century *Lives*. Wulfstan's *vita* records that on a Sunday, to mark the festival, Wulfstan would 'relax his frugal diet so far as to take fish and wine, rather to keep his body and soul together than to pander to his appetites.'[59] By highlighting that Wulfstan only took the minimum sustenance needed to keep up physical strength, the contrasting sins of gluttony and bodily pleasure through overeating are also stressed. Similar concerns are expressed in Anselm's *Life*. Eadmer says that when Anselm was so distracted by enlightened conversation that he forgot to eat, 'we who sat nearest to him sometimes kept secretly plying him bread.'[60]

Turning to examine the new monastic orders, while certain similarities emerge, different emphases in the representation of abstinence can also be seen. The depictions of Cistercian saints appear very similar to those drawn in the Benedictine *Lives*. Although fewer details are given than in the above examples, Cistercian hagiographers also present their subjects as engaging in great abstinence. As in the case of Anselm,

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[56] See especially Shaw, *The Burden of the Flesh*, ch. 3, 'The Physiology of Ascetic Fasting' and Giles Constable, 'Moderation and Restraint in Ascetic Practices in the Middle Ages', in *From Athens to Chartres: Neoplatonism and Medieval Thought. Studies in Honour of Edouard Jeauneau*, ed. by Haijo Jan Westra (Leiden, 1992), pp. 315–327. See also Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast,* pp. 41–45 for later expressions of concern.

[57] See for example the *Rule of St Basil*, cited in Sarah Downey, 'Too Much of Too Little: Guthlac and the Temptation of Excessive Fasting', *Traditio,* 63 (2008), pp. 89–127 (p. 14). Cf. *Vita Bartholomaei*, p. 307, in which Thomas, ex-prior, of Durham accuses Bartholomew of hypocritical asceticism.

[58] Downey has demonstrated how a concern with excessive fasting can be traced in Anglo–Saxon culture, through examining its interest in the elements of Guthlac's life that involve warnings against it. Sarah Downey, 'Too Much Of Too Little', pp. 89–127 (esp. p. 16).

[59] *VSW*, pp. 44–45: 'Dominicis porro propter festi reuerentiam pisce uinoque frugalitatis parsimoniam soluebat, magis ut contineret naturam quam deliniret gulam.'

[60] *VA*, p. 78: 'nobis qui propinquiores sedebamus clanculo panem ei nonnumquam sumministrantibus.'

Ailred's fellows feel wonder at how he is able to survive: 'He used to eat what was set before him as a sick man, who was greatly afflicted, and so sparingly that those who loved him found it hard to believe that he was a man and not a spirit.'[61] Jocelin of Furness makes a similar comment regarding Waltheof, Cistercian abbot of Melrose: 'he took so little of the fare that it was a marvel to servers and guests how so weak a body, practically living on nothing, could carry on in his office.'[62] Although both saints evidently indulge in greater abstention than their fellows, there is little emphasis on the possible problems of excessive abstinence. The only exception to this occurs when Walter Daniel describes Ailred's devotions prior to death. He records that Ailred deprived himself even of necessary sustenance, refusing food and becoming emaciated in appearance.[63] Nonetheless, it is clear that Ailred's abstention at this point is related specifically to the process of dying, rather than reflecting his practices more generally. The Cistercian regime was, of course, designed to encourage a return to a stricter way of life. Indeed, when he first joined the Cistercian Order, Waltheof yearned to return to the laxer life of the Augustinian Rule, to which he had previously been professed. Waltheof found the food and drink of the Cistercians tasteless, the clothing scratchy, manual labour too hard and 'the tenor of the whole order too austere'.[64]

Some Augustinian priories, however, were stricter than others. By the mid-twelfth century the Rule of St Augustine was the typical binding set of principles for most canons leading a communal life. However, the Rule itself was somewhat vaguer than that of St Benedict and open to a greater degree of interpretation. There were thus

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[61] *Vita Ailredi*, p. 34: 'Manducabat quod apponebatur ei utpote infirmus multis languoribus et ita parce ut amantes non eum hominem set spiritum pocius esse pene credere potuissent.'
[62] *Vita Waldevi*, p. 127 (p. 256): 'ipse vero de appositis tam modice sumebat, ut assidentibus et assistentibus admirationi esset, qualiter corpus imbecille, tam quasi de nihilo vivens, officium suum exercere valeret.'
[63] *Vita Ailredi*, p. 42.
[64] *Vita Waldevi*, pp. 118.

two sides to the Augustinian movement; whilst one strove to combine the contemplative and pastoral role, others were more interested in following a specifically contemplative life.[65] Robert of Béthune, bishop of Hereford, is the only saint of twelfth-century England who shared his profession as an Augustinian canon with his biographer. Although the *vita* by William Wycombe is eager to demonstrate both the devotional and pastoral sides of Robert, the roots of both bishop and hagiographer were in a community that leant more towards the eremitical and ascetic than the pastoral. In the early twelfth century the foundation at Llanthony in the Welsh Black Mountains was gradually expanding from its hermitage origins into a fully-fledged priory under the Rule of Augustine. This Rule was probably chosen for its flexibility, which allowed a smoother transition to the coenobitic way of life.[66] A concerted interest in asceticism at Llanthony can be demonstrated through hagiographies and other texts present in the Llanthony Secunda library. Of the hagiographies, none were contemporary, but rather early texts emphasising spiritual retreat and asceticism.[67]

The depiction of Robert's relationship with food touches on many themes already raised, but also contains its own individualities. The *Vita Roberti* demonstrates the possible difficulties that a hagiographer might encounter when endeavouring to balance the conventions of a didactic genre. Whilst the behaviour of a saint was ideally meant to be exceptional, this was somewhat at odds with the rhetoric of Augustinian moderation.[68] William Wycombe thus had to reconcile these two ideals to present Robert as both a model of ideal Augustinian behaviour and a saint. The two elements

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[65] R. W. Southern, *Western Society and the Church in the Middle Ages* (London, 1970), p. 242; Henry Mayr-Harting, *Religion, Politics and Society in Britain 1066–1272* (Harlow, 2011), p. 167.

[66] Matthew M. Mesley, 'The Construction of Episcopal Identity: The Meaning and Function of Episcopal Depictions within Latin Saints' Lives of the Long Twelfth Century', (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Exeter 2009), p. 153; cf. J. Herbert, 'The Transformation of Hermitages into Augustinian Priories in Twelfth-Century England', in *Monks, Hermits and the Ascetic Tradition*, ed. W. J. Sheils, (Oxford, 1985), pp. 131–45 (p.131).

[67] Mesley, 'The Construction of Episcopal Identity', pp. 150–51

[68] *Ibid*., pp. 158–159.

are evident when William records that, after Robert joined the Augustinian order, he strove 'to keep blamelessly the common observances of the brotherhood, but to add secretly private devotions so far as it might be done without infringement of his vows.'[69] Robert is immediately presented as aspiring to keep to the Augustinian regulations, and yet wishing to strive beyond the ordinary in his devotions. However, he attempts to do so within the limits of his vows; for example, the Rule of St Augustine stipulated that abstinence should only be undertaken as far as health allowed.[70]

Robert is presented as maintaining his abstention into his episcopate, much like Wulfstan and Anselm. William describes how Robert kept a frugal table without trace of greed and that during meals he was wont to listen to readings from useful passages of the Scriptures, and discuss these modestly and briefly during the meal; once again, the prominence of meals as a time for spiritual edification is clear. Robert never eats in his private chamber unless there is very great necessity. This serves to emphasise his humility by showing that he continues to function as a member of the regular community even after he rises to a position of authority.[71] This is followed by a description of the dish kept by Robert at his side, which he would fill with the food placed before him to distribute to the sick.[72] Robert was cheerfully bountiful and liberal towards others, but out of habit was sparing towards himself.[73] Robert's own frugality is underlined through the juxtaposition with his generosity towards others.

The secrecy of Robert's extra devotion highlighted immediately after his profession is a theme that continues throughout William Wycombe's narrative. William

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[69] *VRB*, p. 123: 'communes observantias conventus irreprehensibiliter custodire, privatas tamen religionis hostias quantum fas erat occultius adicere'.
[70] *Rule of St Augustine*, c. 3. 1. William continues to list Robert's devotions, including that he was most sparing in food and drink, *VRB*, p. 123: 'in cibo et potu parcissimus.'
[71] *Ibid*., pp. 155–158.
[72] Cf. Gilbert who also has a dish to take food for alms at meals, *VSG*, pp. 62–3.
[73] *VRB*, p. 157.

records that Robert deceived his guests by pretending to eat meat when he was really

eating bread. Furthermore, he would occasionally eat meat in order to avoid hurting the

feelings of strangers; if this had been necessary Robert would subsequently expiate the

indulgence with tears and fasting as though atoning for a sin.[74] In his everyday life,

however, Robert followed a monastic diet, rarely eating fish, his meals largely

consisting of milk, cheese, fruit and vegetables. The dangers of excessive abstention

are clearly expressed within Robert's *vita*. William records that:

> […] whilst he [Robert] wished to follow the example of
> Paul saying, "I chastise my body and bring it into
> subjection"; and also the teaching of Augustine: "subdue
> your flesh with fasts and abstinence from food as far as
> health allows", his medicine exceeded moderation. For he
> fell into a disease called syncope. But when in his
> extremity he was willing to restore to nature her due, she
> could not receive it, because the power of his appetite was
> already dead. Yet in some wonderful way, with
> undiminished zeal, he forced his emaciated body to its
> task.[75]

Fears over excessive abstinence are clearly vindicated here as Robert's practices cause

him to suffer ill health, the effects of which he is then unable to reverse. Notably, it is

emphasised that Robert is still trying to operate within his professed Rule, despite

showing great abstinence. The anecdote thus provides a model of obedience and a

didactic warning. It offers a caution to other canons who might feel the urge to engage

in extra devotions that are too extreme. Robert's abstinence is presented as acceptable

because he was always mindful of the Rule, and further because of his extraordinary

nature. Robert's ability to continue with his duties under such strain is described as

wondrous or miraculous (*mirandum*). The message is clear: the majority of canons

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[74] *Ibid*.

[75] *Ibid*., pp. 157–160: 'Sed cum Paulum imitari vellet dicentem, castigo corpus meum et in servitutem redigo, itemque Augustinum docentem carnem vestram domate ieiuniis et abstinentia esce quantum valitudo permittit; excessit medicina modum. Nam incidit in morbum, quem sincopin vocant. Cum autem ex necessitate reddere vellet sua iura nature, praemortua iam appetitiva virtute refutabat accipere. Non segnius tamen quod mirandum est corpus effetum laboribus subigebat.'

should not be tempted to stray outside the moderation recommended by the Rule and thus risk damaging their health. Robert was only able to overcome this hardship because of his sanctity.

The Gilbertines were the only monastic Order to be founded in England. The *vita* of their founder, Gilbert of Sempringham, conforms to many of the patterns thus far explored, demonstrating similarities in saintly behaviour. His hagiographer develops the depiction of his eating habits throughout the text. In the *vita*, Gilbert's temperate consumption is first introduced within a litany of other pious attributes: 'his dress was not luxurious but moderate and suitable for a clerk; he ate temperately and drank sparingly; he kept the crown of his head bare and was properly tonsured; he displayed modesty in speech and dignity in his gait; so that even at that time he could have been taken not for a secular clerk but a regular canon.'[76] Gilbert's temperance is held up as a positive attribute. He already displays the behaviour of a regular canon rather than a secular clerk. The salient point is that Gilbert evidently chooses to live this stricter kind of life; Wulfstan provides a good comparison as he also displays behaviour appropriate for a monk before he was professed.[77]

Later in the text, after Gilbert has been ordained and founded the Order at Sempringham, a more extended description of his habits is given. It is vital that this description depicts Gilbert's behaviour before he formally professes to any Rule; Gilbert postpones formally professing because he is concerned it will appear like a mark of pride given that the Order was of his own devising.[78] Nonetheless, Gilbert does everything he can to conform to his community. His diet reflects those seen above,

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[76] *VSG*, pp. 24–25. 'Vestis illi non lasciua sed moderata et clericalis, cibus sobrius et potus parcus, corona patens et tonsura conueniens, modestia in uerbis, grauitas in incessu, ut iam tunc non clericus secularis sed canonicus regularis putari potuisset.'
[77] See above, pp. 129–130.
[78] *VSG*, pp. 66–68.

consisting primarily of vegetables and pulses and regular abstention from meat. Evidently, however, he is seen as more abstemious than other members as, whilst they marvel that he can be sustained on so little, Gilbert complains that he has offended through gluttony. Gilbert's disproportionate abstinence is emphasised as his hagiographer records that his dishes were often prepared more luxuriously against his wishes, and without his knowledge, to prevent him from fainting from excessive weakness.[79] Once again, the dangers of excessive abstinence are stressed. Although, in many ways Gilbert conforms to the patterns already established within the other monastic *Lives*, he differs because he is conforming to a Rule he himself compiled. The hagiographer's depiction of Gilbert partaking in monastic observances before he has professed legitimises Gilbert's vocation and stresses his natural holiness and humility. He is both a model of his new Rule, and particularly holy in his abstention.

The final order to be examined is that of the Carthusians, perhaps the most austere of the emergent orders in the twelfth century. The *vita* of Hugh of Lincoln, the only Carthusian saint of twelfth-century England, provides an interesting contrast to some of the patterns thus far distinguished. In all of the examples above, the subjects appear saintly by comparison to others around them. In his earlier life, Hugh is presented as saintly by the embodiment of Carthusian practice; he joined the Carthusian order at Grande Chartreuse at the age of twenty-three. The monks led a semi-coenobitic life, enclosed in cells in which they prepared most of their meals and ate alone, after collecting supplies on a Sunday. Adam of Eynsham records that, after Hugh is raised to the priesthood, his devotions increased to correspond with his new rank. Adam lists these devotions, of which eating habits are only one:

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[79] *Ibid*., p. 62.

> He kept his body in subjection by vigils, fasting and the discipline of beatings, and, as was the custom of his order, wore the hair shirt and lived on water and dry bread. He omitted no austerity which the rule, or the example of his superiors suggested. […] Throughout Lent for three days in the week, he partook only of bread and water with no flavouring, except possibly salt, and in the last week observed the same diet on the Saturday.[80]

Hugh is clearly leading an austere life, but there is little to suggest that he is going beyond what was expected of a Carthusian. This passage seems to bear out the fact that some of the fasts codified in the *consuetudines* drawn up in the 1120s had been abandoned by the time of Hugh's residence;[81] the fasting practices given for Hugh during Lent match almost exactly those given to be followed three days a week every week in the *consuetudines*.[82] Although Adam does suggest that Hugh adds some 'individual practices' to his observances, concentration on individual devotions was an important element of the Carthusian way of life.[83] Adam is primarily interested in emphasising that Hugh represented the epitome of the ideal Carthusian monk, stressing that Hugh wore the hair-shirt and only ate bread and water 'as was the custom of his order' (*morem ordinis*). Adam explicitly underlines Hugh's unbending dedication by saying that, 'before he became a bishop, neither sickness nor physical weakness, nor any other happening would make him alter his diet on these four days.'[84] As with some of the other saints, Hugh suffers as a result of the austerity of his regime: Adam records that doctors attributed the 'numbness of his digestive organs' (*etate progressiori stomachi illius nimiam infrigidationem*) to this abstinence and credited the fact that at

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[80] *MVSH*, I, p. 37 'Domabat corporis membra uigiliis, ieiuniis, flagellis, et iuxta morem ordinis usu cilicii et potu aque cum arido pane. Nichil omittebat de austeritate ulla quam communis regula uel maiorum admittebant exempla. […] In omni Quadragesime septimana ferias tres in aque et solius panis edulio, nullo penitus condimento adhibito, nisi forte salis adderetur prelibatio, transigere consueuit. In ultima uero ebdomada sabbati adiciebatur obseruantia in simili dieta.' (Translation amended.)

[81] *Consuet. Cart.*, pp. 234–235; Douie and Farmer, 'Introduction', *MVSH*, pp. vii–liv (p. xxiv).

[82] *Consuet. Cart.*, pp. 234–235

[83] *MVSH*, I, p. 37; Leyser, 'Hugh the Carthusian', pp. 3ff.

[84] *Ibid.*: 'Numquam infirmitas aut debilitas seu casus alius ante sumptum episcopatum, alio cibo uel potu istud quadriduum eum compulit aliquatenus releuare.'

fifty he was fatter than he had been in his youth to Hugh requiring more food than he could digest. Although there is little evidence that Hugh was stretching the boundaries of expectations, Adam does feel it is necessary to underline that Hugh lived 'not merely temperately' (*non modo sobrie*) but with great devotion for God.[85]

In a passage describing Hugh's eating habits whilst prior of Witham, Adam includes a beautiful description of a theme already raised, that of the spiritual nourishment. He says:

> When he took bodily nourishment, his teeth chewed material food, but his ears were hungering and swallowing the word of God. If he entered the refectory to eat with the brethren as was customary on feast days, just as he counselled and taught the rest of them his eyes were on the table, his hand was beside his plate, his ears were engrossed in the book, and his heart fixed on God. When he was eating alone in his cell, his eyes were on his book and on his food, and turned alternately to each of them, now to the open book and now to the bread set before him, for he rarely added relish of any kind. Water alone generally sufficed him both for drink and for broth. The word of God never failed to be the most precious condiment to his meal. [*Condimentum hiis epulis pretiosissimum numquam defuit sermo Dei.*] Reading with great rapidity and complete absorption, his object was to give his mind food for meditation rather than personal enjoyment or satisfaction of his desire for information.[86]

The two halves of Carthusian life, the communal and the private, are presented side by side, but in both contexts spiritual learning is entwined with eating, literally acting as a

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[85] *Ibid*.

[86] *Ibid*., p. 76. 'Cum uero corporalia sumebat alimenta, cum faucibus tereret cibi nutrimenta terreni, tunc potissimum aures eius esuriebant et hauriebant uerbum Dei. Si cum fratribus pro more, iuxta consuetudinem diei festi, refectorium ingressus una cum illis pranderet, prout ipse ceteros et monebat et docebat, oculos in mensa, manus in scutella, aures ad librum, cor ad Deum habebat. Si solus edebat in cellula, partiebantur sibi liber et mensula oculorum officia; tunc enim lumina eius sibi detrahebant uicissim, hinc liber apertus, hinc panis appositus, nam pulmenta rarius adiciebantur. Aqua sola sepius poculum simul et iuscellum fuit. Condimentum hiis epulis pretiosissimum numquam defuit sermo Del. Codicem uero celeri perstringens obtuitu, uelud raptim animo potius transmisit quod ruminaret quam desiderio quod illud satiaret aut studio quod illi satisfaceret.' (Translation slightly amended.) Cf. *VSG*, pp. 64–65: 'Post refectionem magis mentis ex uerbo diuino quam uentris ex corporali cibario, quod modicum temporis labori surripere potuit lectioni et orationi sacreque meditationi indulsit.'

'condiment' to Hugh's food. Although similar themes are visible in the *Lives* of Anselm, Robert and Gilbert, Hugh's hagiographer places more emphasis on the metaphor of the word of God as food. In his pre-episcopate life, Hugh is consistently represented as adhering to the strict regulations of his monastic calling. His sanctity is accentuated by presenting him as an exemplary Carthusian monk, rather than by any demonstration of excess.

Adam's description of Hugh's life as bishop proffers both parallels and differences to the other regular episcopal saints. As demonstrated in the other saints' *Lives*, it is common for hagiographers to describe increased devotional practices, or to emphasise the continuation of the observance of a regular life once their subject has been elevated into a position of authority. Here Adam's representation of Hugh diverges:

> I believe that I should mention that he was somewhat less abstemious in the matter of food after his assumption of the episcopal office than had been his wont before. He never touched flesh meat whether in sickness or health, but frequently ate fish.[87]

Adam continues to say that Hugh discovered by experience that his episcopal duties were very heavy, and that he could not properly discharge them without a strong [*viribus*] physique. He thus gave to his body, as to a baggage animal, the food necessary to perform his task adequately: 'He did this more readily and with less scruple because he knew that through his long mortifications it was so much under control that there was no cause to fear that it would rebel against its master.'[88] Hugh altered his behaviour to suit the physical demands of the role he was currently fulfilling.

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[87] *Ibid*., p. 125: 'nequaquam duximus reticendum quia in uictus parsimonia, post susceptum pontificatus laborem, solito minorem uisus est tenuisse districtionem. A carnis siquidem et sanguinis omnimoda perceptione et sanus et egrotus abstinens, piscibus crebo uescebatur.'
[88] *Ibid*., p. 126: 'Quod eo securius eoque sufficientius faciebat quo minus ne contra suum recalcitraret sessorem, castigatione diutissima iam satis edomitum metuendum erat.'

Whilst Becket similarly altered his behaviour, an instructive contrast can be made. Becket became more austere in his eating habits upon assumption of the archbishopric; Hugh, who started out within a severe monastic order, was able to relax his diet upon elevation to the episcopate. Again, a close parallel can be drawn to the narrative of Hugh's sexual renunciation. Whilst his trials as a Carthusian monk, and eventually mystical castration, left him free of lust and able to administer his pastoral duties to women, so his mortifications left him able to take in the sustenance necessary to perform his role as bishop without the fear of gluttony. Significantly, it is the lack of pleasure taken from eating that is once again emphasised.

After his ascension to the episcopate, Hugh returns to Witham for periods of respite. Adam is thus able to demonstrate Hugh's maintenance of his monastic life-style within these allocated times of contemplation. When describing Hugh's practices at meal times, he comments that Hugh chooses to eat the stale crusts and that 'in fact, what had been spiced by the blessings of holy men seemed more delicious to his healthy digestion', continuing the allusion of spiritual food begun earlier.[89] Despite relaxing his diet during his episcopate, Hugh is nonetheless portrayed as endeavouring to adhere strictly to the Carthusian Rule right until his death. During his final illness Hugh's doctors suggest that he should eat some meat for the sake of his health, an opinion subsequently compounded by the archbishop of Canterbury. As the Carthusian constitutions forbade the eating of meat, even during illness, Hugh initially refuses. Finally, when the permission of the prior and monks of Witham is secured, as an act of obedience to his archbishop and because he does not wish to offend so many reverend

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[89] *MSVH,* II, p. 50: 'Reuera quidem benedictionibus condita iustorum gratius sano palato eius sapiebant.'

persons, Hugh gives in to the pressure. Hugh ultimately triumphs over his doctors, as when he is eventually served the meat he sends it away again after one mouthful.[90]

This episode is followed by an interesting passage in which Hugh reprimands an abbot for insisting that his monks abstain from meat even though it is not in their Rule. He suggests that if the monks frequently turn away meat they will rise from the table hungry and subsequently will suffer from sleeplessness, and then torpor of the spirit. Finally, bodily weakness will render them unfit for any of the exercises of the religious life.[91] Hugh emphasises that he does not eat meat because it is the rule of the Order to which he subjected himself; the reason his Order is very small is because only certain temperaments are able to cope with the austerity. This is the most clearly didactic illustration of the perceived problems of unnecessary abstinence. Although also making a comment about the role of abbot as leader of a community, Hugh is clearly depicted emphasising the importance of remaining within the parameters of your chosen Rule and the potential dangers of exceeding it.

Across the corpus of regular saints there are clear themes in eating behaviour that reoccur, particularly the dangers of excessive abstinence, the miraculous ability of the saint to survive on so little sustenance, and an emphasis on spiritual edification at meal times. All the saints are presented as eating very little, often with consequences for their health or appetite, which they are able to overcome in order to fulfil their duties. Thus, there are clear norms of saintly behaviour. However, there are also subtle differences across the corpus dictated by institutional context. The sanctity of the saints following the Benedictine Rule is displayed through their excess in comparison to the dictates of their Rule. While both Robert and Gilbert appear more abstemious than

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[90] *Ibid*., pp. 195–196.
[91] *Ibid*., p. 196.

those around them, they do seem to be at least trying to operate within the regulations of their orders; Gilbert is a unique case as he follows a Rule of his own devising, doing so before his formal profession. Hugh of Lincoln also stands out. He too is represented as behaving in line with the dictates of, in this case, the Carthusian constitutions. There is little suggestion during his early life that he is any more abstemious than the other monks. Hugh of Lincoln is saintly because he proffers the ideal adherent to the Carthusian Rule, which then prepares him to fulfil his role as bishop. Unlike the other episcopal saints he relaxes his eating habits as bishop, although appropriate adherence to the Rule is emphasised throughout. Therefore, the different institutional context of each saint could be a determining factor in the presentation of food abstention within his *vitae*.

Ascetic fasting outside the Rule

The representation of fasting shows different emphases in the *Lives* of saints who lived outwith the proscription of a monastic rule. However, before turning to examine non-monastic fasting in more depth, I will first consider two examples of childhood fasting that occur within my corpus. Despite the various Christian ritual proscriptions relating to food and fasting, children were not subject to the same regulations as adults and were often allowed a more lenient diet. For example, prohibitions regarding the consumption of meat on a Friday, or during the entire celebration of Lent, were waived for the young, old and sick.[92] However, the childhood of a saint was often portrayed as exceptional in some way. The topos of the *puer/puella senex,* in which the saint was depicted as wise or sensible beyond their years, was particularly common. Saintly children were also

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[92] Henisch, *Fast and Feast: Food in Medieval Society*, p. 31.

portrayed as especially pious for their age.[93] Despite often stressing the exceptional

virtues demonstrated by their subjects in their early years, very few of the *Lives* offer

any observations about fasting in childhood; only two comment on this at all, the *vitae*

of Robert of Béthune and William of Norwich. Whilst recounting Robert of Béthune's

quick-witted nature as a child, William Wycombe describes how Robert was already

leaning towards a spiritual way of life, including that 'he began before his time by

covert fasting [*furtivus ieiuniis*] to torment his tender little body.'[94] The 'secrecy' of

Robert's fasting serves two purposes. It reflects the model of hidden piety, drawing on

the biblical standards set out in Matthew: in order to prevent pride, devotional practices

should occur in secret. Robert's secrecy at this point, however, may also hint that

fasting in a child might have been discouraged and therefore the young Robert felt the

need to hide his actions.

The child-martyr, William of Norwich, is the other saint depicted fasting in

childhood. William's sanctity is primarily defined by his martyrdom, allegedly at the

hands of the Jews. Nonetheless, his *vita* portrays him as an exceptionally pious child

during his short life and his abstinence is one of the main features of his devotions. His

hagiographer, Thomas of Monmouth, reports that, at the age of seven, William became

so devoted to abstinence that he fasted on three days a week, and observed saints' days

by fasting. Significantly, his brothers did not join in this habit. Thomas says that

William's zeal was increased so that 'he used to pass many days content with nothing

but bread and his whole innermost being overflowing with piety, whatever he could

save from his own portion of food or extort from his mother by his entreaties, he used to

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[93] See for example Bartlett, *WCD?,* pp. 526–527; Weinstein and Bell, *Saints & Society*, p. 29; On the motif of *puer senex* see Teresa C. Carp, '" Puer Senex" in Roman and Medieval Thought', *Latomus*, 39: 3 (1980), pp. 736–739.

[94] *VRB*, pp. 107–108: 'quoniam furtivus ieiuniis premature cepit tenerum corpusculum macerare.'

bestow upon the poor, if he did not dare do this openly, he would do it secretly'.[95] The

comparison between William's behaviour and that of his brothers highlights the unusual

nature of William's devotions. His intake of only bread and water clearly goes beyond

the standard practice expected of a child, even during ritual fasts. William's regime of

fasting does not appear as secret as Robert's; Thomas of Monmouth affirms that he

learnt of these devotions from William's mother.[96]

Whilst fasting does not feature widely within the childhood of these saints, this

stands in sharp contrast to trends emerging on the continent. Around the turn of the

thirteenth century, in the *Lives* of both male and female saints, abstention from food

during childhood materialised as a prevalent trope within hagiography.[97] Nonetheless,

within the *vitae* examined here, food and fasting are more frequent within depictions of

adult sainthood. I will next turn to depictions of ascetic fasting in the *Lives* of Thomas

Becket, whose moderation has already been observed, and subsequently St Margaret of

Scotland, before turning to saints engaged in eremitic lifestyles.

Although Becket was not professed as a monk, during part of his exile he

withdrew to the Cistercian monastery of Pontigny and subsequently adapted his conduct

to reflect that of his surroundings.[98] In the *vitae* Becket's retreat to Pontigny is

represented as a period of penance and spiritual learning, one of many on his path to

martyrdom. Here Becket embarked upon a kind of asceticism thus far unknown to

him.[99] It is accordingly significant that his eating habits are presented at their most

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[95] *VWN*, pp. 13–14: 'et excrescente paulatim deutionis ardore nonnullos pane contentus et aqua transigebat dies. Pietatis siquidem affluens uisceribus quod sibi de uictu subtrahere uel a matre precibus extorquere poterat, siquando aperte non auderet, totum pauperibus clam ergobat.'
[96] *VWN*, p. 13.
[97] See Weinstein and Bell, *Saints and Society*, p. 24.
[98] Some hagiographers do claim that Becket was given the monastic habit at Pontigny; see John of Salisbury MTB 2. 345; Anon I (Roger of Pontigny), MTB, 4. 64.
[99] Staunton, *Becket and his Biographers,* pp. 143–147, 173.

ascetic during the time he is living within a monastic community, building on foundations set up by his hagiographers earlier in their works.[100]

The majority of Becket's biographers do not give a great amount of detail about this part of his exile. Edward Grim and Herbert of Bosham give the fullest accounts of Becket's mortifications of the flesh; indeed Herbert travelled into exile with Becket and was closely involved in the archbishop's programme of scriptural education at Pontigny.[101] In his biographies, Becket's withdrawal to Pontigny is presented as an opportunity for him to make amends for his previous sins and lax behaviour.[102] Contrasted with his earlier habits, the depictions of his asceticism during this time demonstrate Becket's spiritual development, and thus enhance the presentation of his sanctity. Although Becket's ascetic endeavours only form a small part of the trials he endures, by accentuating his suffering they contribute to the depiction of the archbishop's worthiness of the title of white martyr in life, before he gains the honour of red martyrdom in his bloody death: as William of Canterbury says, 'Hence before the martyrdom he was made a martyr.'[103]

In Edward Grim's account, Becket's change in eating habits is presented alongside other ascetic practices as part of his penitential programme. He records that at Pontigny Becket was 'content with eating vegetables and coarser feasts and things that were of lesser cost, he furtively withdrew certain delicacies from himself, without the knowledge of his fellow diners, and used them to minister to the infirm poor.'[104] Grim emphasises Becket's humility and self-imposed rigour in his asceticism as he

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[100] See above, concerning moderation pp. 125ff.

[101] For example, William Fitzstephen says that this is a time when Becket works on improving his penance, cleansing his conscience and sanctifying his life. MTB 3. 76–77. Cf. William of Canterbury, MTB, 1. 49.

[102] Staunton, *Becket and his Biographers,* p. 173.

[103] MTB 1. 48: 'Hinc ante martyrium martyr factus est.'

[104] MTB 2. 412 (LTB, p. 138): 'Ex eo igitur tempore olerum esu et grossioribus contentus epulis, et quae levioris essent sumptus, delicatiora quaeque furtim sibi subtrahere, nescientibus qui considebant, et indigentibus infirmis ministrare fecit.'

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gradually undertakes a more austere regime. Grim also records that Becket would

lower himself into a stream which ran between the workshops of the monastery 'where

he would remain for longer than human fragility can take.' [105] Herbert of Bosham also

focuses on the mortifications of the flesh undertaken by Becket at Pontigny, once again

framed within the context of 'repentance' (*poenitentia*). In Herbert's account, Becket

dons a hair-shirt (*cilicium*) and secretly takes the lash, living more strictly than usual.

Again Becket is depicted covertly curbing his intake of food, opting to consume the dry,

tasteless food that forms the regulation diet of the Cistercian Order.[106] Although Becket

is not depicted exceeding the austerity of the Cistercian diet, his status as a secular

bishop makes the adoption of a monastic regime appear more potent. Viewing Becket's

abstention at Pontigny in the context of his previous moderation at his archiepiscopal

table stresses the contribution that adherence to the monastic regime makes to his

spiritual development.

Becket's mortifications, so against the normal custom of his life, take their toll

on his health and after several days he falls ill; he eventually admits that he suspects his

illness has occurred because he is not used to the austerity of the life.[107] Herbert records

how he remonstrates with the archbishop, who eventually agrees to abate his rigour.[108]

Herbert's account, more so than Grim's, highlights the perceived dangers caused by

severe asceticism.   What is crucial about this account, however, is that it demonstrates

Becket's willingness to adopt a rigorous lifestyle. Although his body, accustomed to a

secular diet, is not able to support the same ardours as the other monks, this is not

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[105] MTB 2. 412–3 (LTB, p. 138): 'In amnem quoque, qui per officinas monasterii decurrit, latenter descendens, et supra virtutem fragilitatis humanae moratus, quantas cruces corpori ex illa frigoris injuria intulerit, ut concupiscentiarum stimulos, qui adhuc vivere videbantur in eo, contereret, sequens infirmitas declaravit.'
[106] MTB, 3. 376.
[107] MTB, 3. 376.
[108] MTB, 3. 377–379.

considered to be a cause for criticism. Instead, his sanctity is shown through his voluntary emulation of the monastic diet, above and beyond what was expected of someone in his position. There is clearly a development in the presentation of Becket's eating habits from moderation to asceticism. The monastic context appears to have an impact on the presentation of abstinence; although he is not presented going beyond the regulations of the Cistercian rule, there are many points of similarity to the *Lives* of regular saints. Perhaps the most obvious is the concern within Herbert's narrative over the excess of Becket's austerity, albeit that in this case Becket falls ill because his body is not used to the regime. Becket's sojourn within the monastic surroundings of Pontigny represents one example of trial and suffering that is intended to boost the depiction of Becket's martyrdom in life.

Fasting also plays a part in the spiritual devotions of St Margaret of Scotland. In her *vita*, fasting is initially mentioned in conjunction with other pious activity: 'In the body only was she here on earth; her mind was with God; for besides God and the things which are God's, in her pure prayer she sought nothing. But what shall I say about her fasting? Only that through excessive abstinence she incurred the trial of a very great infirmity.'[109] Margaret's hagiographer presents her devotional piety as an indication of sanctity despite her lay status; as in the case of other saints, however, Margaret's abstention leads to physical illness. Her sufferings are clearly represented as trials, linking her with the tradition of ascetic martyr. Nonetheless, at this point in the *Life*, little more can be gleaned about how regularly Margaret fasted, or exactly of what her fasts might have consisted.[110]

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[109] *Vita Margaretae*, p. 172 (p. 310): 'solo quidem corpore in terra, sed mente Deo proxima: nam praeter Deum, quae Dei erant, nil ejus pura quæsivit oratio. De jejunio autem quid dicam? nisi quod per nimiam abstinentiam gravissimae infirmitatis incurreret molestiam.' (Translation modified.)
[110] Cf. *Vita Sexburge* in which fasting is briefly mentioned alongside other devotions, but no details are provided, pp. 144–45, 150–51, 178–9.

A more extended description is given of Margaret's fasting during times of proscribed ritual abstinence, at Lent and in the period before Christmas. The text starts by outlining Margaret's abstinence in general:

> She ate no more than sufficed for the preservation of her life, and not to gratify her palate. Her slight and frugal refreshment, stirred up a greater hunger than it satisfied. She seemed only to taste her meal rather than to ingest it. Hence, I ask, from these examples, how great and what kind of continence in fasting did she have, whose abstinence had been so great in feasting?[111]

Margaret's abstention resembles the depictions of the regular saints examined above, especially in the emphasis on eating to survive rather than for pleasure. Margaret's behaviour is also depicted as exceptional; her sanctity is shown through her distinction from what is considered normal. The saintly queen's temperance in everyday life is used to emphasise the magnitude of her fasting during periods of ritual abstinence:

> And, although, she lived her whole life in great restraint, nevertheless in the forty days before Easter and Christ's birth she was accustomed to weaken herself with incredible abstinence. And because of this excessive rigour in fasting, up until the end of her life she suffered from very harsh pains in her stomach, yet this bodily infirmity did not diminish the excellence of good works […] she freely accepted her sorrows of the body, as though a scourge from the most merciful father, with patience and thanksgiving..[112]

Even more clearly within this description, Margaret's suffering is constructed as a type of ascetic trial, which Margaret accepts with the patience of a martyr. Her hagiographer closes the passage with reference to the Pauline Epistles, emphasising how her infirmity

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[111] *Vita Margaretae*, p. 175 (p. 314): 'Comedebat enim ut tantum vitam servaret, non ut delectationi acquiesceret. Refectio tenuis sobria, incitabat esuriem magis quam restinguebat. Gustare videbatur cibum, non sumere. Hinc rogo, hinc perpendatur, quanta qualis ejus continentia fuerit in jejunando, cujus tanta extiterat abstinentia in convivando.' (Translation amended.)

[112] *Ibid.,* pp. 175–6 (pp. 314–315): 'Et quamvis totam in magna continentia vitam duxerit, his tamen, id est quadraginta ante Pascha et Natale Domini diebus, incredibili abstinentia se affligere consuevit. Unde, propter nimium jejunandi rigorem, acerrimum usque ad finem vitae passa est stomachi dolorem: nec tamen infirmitas corporis virtutem debilitavit boni operis. […] suae carnis dolores, quasi clementissimi patris flagellum, cum patientia gratiarum actione libens amplectitur.'

added to her virtues: 'Therefore, because she was devoted to these works and to other works of this kind, she suffered constant infirmities, so that, since according to the Apostle, "virtue is perfected in infirmity", she became better daily, passing from virtue to virtue.'[113] The severity of Margaret's fasting is one element within the depiction of her exceptional piety which paints her not just as a pious queen, but as a saintly one.[114]

It is useful to compare the presentation of diet and fasting in Margaret's *vita* with that of Edward the Confessor, another royal saint. Whereas Margaret is depicted as engaging in ascetic practices, Edward is not. Instead, only his temperance is emphasised. These representations might be explained by gendered roles, ascetic fasting being seen as a more suitable role for a female ruler than for a male one.[115] However, as has been suggested, the constraints of the sample at hand prevent any generalised conclusions on the importance of gender as the sole determining factor in these differing presentations.[116] The depiction of Margaret's abstention clearly mirrors descriptions found in the *Lives* of other male saints, such as those within the Regular life and the accounts of Becket at Pontigny. As highlighted in the previous chapter, Margaret is quite unusual amongst queen-saints because she never enters a convent. The emphasis on ascetic piety may therefore be an attempt to overcome her lay status through aligning her with monastic and ascetic models of sanctity. As Edward's virginity was the focus of his sanctity, it was not necessary to give a similar level of attention to his devotional piety. What is clear is that Margaret's fasting is presented as

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[113] *Ibid.*, p. 176 (p. 315): 'Cum ergo his hujusmodi dedita esset operibus, continuis laboraret infirmitatibus, ut juxta Apostolum virtus in infirmitate perficeretur; de virtute transiens in virtutem, de die in diem melior reddebatur.' cf. 2 Cor. 12:9.

[114] Compare to St Radegund, an example of a queenly saint whose *vita* demonstrates an emphasis on ascetic piety. See Catherine Keene, *Saint Margaret, Queen of the Scots* (New York, 2013), p. 75.

[115] See Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast* on the relationship between women and food in the later Middle Ages.

[116] For references to male royal saints fasting see Gábor Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers and Blessed Princesses: Dynastic Cults in Medieval Central Europe* (Cambridge, 2002), pp. 103–104 (St Wenceslas), p. 155 (citation from the *Life* of St Emeric).

an indication of her renunciation of the secular world of which she was a part, and as an example of her exceptional behaviour that is her sanctity manifest.

Food practices are also highlighted as an aspect of sanctity within the other female *Life* of this period, that of Christina of Markyate. Three main themes arise in the presentation of Christina's fasting: control over the body, ascetic suffering and facilitation of visionary reception. Christina endures four years of hard fasting when she is forced to remain enclosed in a cell while in hiding with Roger the hermit:

> O what trials she had to bear of cold and heat, hunger and thirst, daily fasting! The confined space would not allow her to wear the necessary clothing when she was cold. The place was so well sealed, that when Christina became hot there was no hope of a breath of air. Through long fasting her insides contracted and dried up. There was a time when her burning thirst caused little clots of blood to bubble up from her nostrils.[117]

Although Christina is in many ways fasting out of necessity, as she remains imprisoned in the cell to stay hidden from her parents, there is a very clear echoing of the tradition surrounding the Desert Fathers. Her endurance of harsh surroundings, extreme temperatures and exceptional fasting are particularly reminiscent of the early anchoritic ascetic tradition.[118] This is also stressed in the choice of words employed to describe Christina's physical hardship; rather than *infirmitas* (maladies, or infirmities as seen in the *Vita Margaretae*) they are often described as *passiones* (passions/sufferings), making the connection to this hagiographical tradition more overt.[119] The appropriation of such language to describe the sufferings of early desert monastics was a crucial way of presenting them as the natural successors of the early-martyr saints.

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[117] *Life of Christina*, p. 102–103 (p. 40): 'O quantas sustinuit illic incomoditates frigoris et estus, famis et sitis, cotidiani ieiunii. Loci angustia non admittebat necessarium tegumentum algenti. Integerrima clausula nullum indulgebat refrigerium estuanti. Longa inedia, contracta sunt et aruerunt sibi intestina. Erat quando pre ardore sitis naribus ebullirent frusta coagulati sanguinis.'

[118] See Samuel Fanous, 'Christina of Markyate and the Double Crown', in *Christina of Markyate: A Twelfth–Century Holy Woman*, ed. by Samuel Fanous and Henrietta Leyser (London, 2005), pp. 53–78.

[119] Fanous, 'Christina of Markyate and the Double Crown', p. 67.

In a further section that resonates with the tradition of the Desert Fathers, reference to fasting recurs. As previously outlined, the Devil causes Christina and the cleric she is staying with to become sexually attracted to one another. However, unlike her male counter-part, Christina does not allow herself to be overcome by temptation.[120] Christina uses fasting as an aid to overcome sexual temptation and regain control of her body. More so than in the examples seen so far, Christina's *Life* overtly portrays fasting as a method of control over the body and its physical desires.

At this stage the text also gives a glimpse into what Christina's fasting actually consisted of; she is not abstaining entirely from food, but is surviving apparently on a diet of raw vegetables and herbs (*crudarum herbarum*).[121] From this point on, fasting is primarily connected with Christina's visionary and intercessory powers, alongside praying and vigils. For example, when Abbot Geoffrey does not believe in Christina's visionary powers, she relies on her 'usual practices' of fasting, vigils and prayers; Geoffrey then receives his own vision persuading him to take Christina's divinely inspired advice and from this point he extols her holiness.[122] Clearly fasting, vigils and prayers form a normal part of Christina's routine and are especially connected to her ability to communicate with the divine. Christina's relationship to food chimes with some themes already explored, and tallies with some of the examples to be examined in the following section.

Having touched on the ascetic practices of Christina during her time spent as an anchorite, analysis will now move on to consider the final group of saints living 'outwith' a rule: those saints who chose to follow the eremitic life. Those who elected to express their devotion to God in this way emulated the lives of early desert ascetics,

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[120] *Life of Christina*, p. 114.
[121] *Ibid*., p. 114
[122] *Ibid*., pp. 136–137.

such as SS Paul of Thebes and Anthony. The eleventh century saw a renewal in interest for following the asceticism of the early church.[123] Christina aside, those who led an eremitic lifestyle in the twelfth century and caught the attention of hagiographers were male.[124] There are two sides to the eremitic relationship with food examined below. The first is the theme of self-sufficiency. In order to present eremitical saints as renouncing reliance on the world, their hagiographies often depict them surviving on their own home-grown food, produced through hard labour, supplemented with what God provided for them (*manna*).[125] The second theme is ascetic fasting; the most extreme examples of fasting within the corpus are found within the eremitic *Lives*, in keeping with the hagiographical tradition.[126]

   Although episodes in which food is miraculously obtained occur throughout the *Lives*, God's provision is a pervasive theme in those of the eremitic saints.[127] Bartholomew of Farne is a good example of a hermit surviving primarily from his own self-sufficiency and provision by God; furthermore Bartholomew's relationship with food changes as he becomes more hardened to his eremitic lifestyle. His hagiographer tells us that Bartholomew's food was made up of bread, vegetables and cheese (*panis et olera, et quae de pinguedine lactis expire solent*) and that he practised fishing. God also equipped him with a seagull (*mootam*) to provide him with nourishment and to test and strengthen the still unformed hermit. This gull supplies him with a lump-fish for eating at the decided place each day during Lent of the first year that he is resident on Farne. This provides an opportunity for Bartholomew to develop his eremitic strength, since if

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[123] See for example, Tom Licence, *Hermits and Recluses in English Society, 950-1200* (Oxford, 2011), p. 11; Jean Leclerq, 'The Monastic Crisis of the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries', in *Cluniac Monasticism in the Central Middle Ages*, ed. by Noreen Hunt (London, 1971), pp. 217–237.

[124] There were of course far more adherents to the eremitic life than are evidenced by the extant hagiography, attested to in other sources. See Licence, *Hermits and Recluses,* pp. 16–21.

[125] *Ibid.,* pp. 104–105.

[126] Eremitic saints followed more directly within the footsteps of the early desert monks, renowned for their feats of asceticism.

[127] See License, *Hermits and Recluses* pp. 104–5.

nothing was caught at the accustomed time then Bartholomew would 'repel hunger' (*proletabat jejunum*) until he was brought provisions. It is clear from this passage that Bartholomew is also relying upon some provisions being brought over to the island from the mainland. His hagiographer says that Bartholomew never ate meat, and after several years he abstained from fish as well; in the seven and a half years prior to his death he also stopped drinking altogether. Bartholomew increasingly places restrictions on himself, as he becomes more accustomed to the eremitic lifestyle. Nonetheless, Bartholomew remains cheerful whilst following this great abstinence and neglect of the body.[128]

In reality, the 'self-sufficiency' of hermits could also take on the form of quite an impressive size of farmstead; Godric of Throckenholt and Godric of Finchale appear both to have eventually built up an estate of twenty or thirty acres around them, including crops and fish-weirs.[129] Yet, farmed land aside, before he finds his fixed abode, Godric of Finchale spends time in the woods surviving through scavenging, modelling his life on John the Baptist. Godric eats plants, woodland honey, fruits, bitter acorns, and nuts.[130] The main objectives of a hermit were to have a mind dedicated to prayer and to have his flesh in submission to his spirit; Godric of Finchale clearly sets about taming both.[131] In Godric's *Life* self-sufficiency and asceticism are melded together. During his search to find a suitable place to live in the woods, Godric chooses somewhere able to support a crop of barley and oats and then uses his crops to create flour.[132] He then mixes his flour with water and burnt ash root, itself of penitential significance, before kneading the dough into rolls for baking over the fire, which he

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[128] *Vita Bartholomiae*, pp. 301–302.
[129] Licence, *Hermits and Recluses,* pp. 98, see also 101–105.
[130] *VGF,* pp. 42–43.
[131] *Ibid*., pp. 68, 77. Cf. Licence, *Hermits and Recluses*, pp. 136–137.
[132] *Ibid*., pp. 74–75.

names most luxurious, opulent cakes (*delicatissima deliciarum placenta*). These he stores in his room and eats when stale and hairy.[133] Although practical reasons for some of Godric's apparent mortifications may be surmised, within the text they are presented as acts of asceticism.[134]

Like Christina of Markyate, fasting is one weapon that Godric wields against attacks of sexual temptation. During his struggle with temptation, Godric would sometimes abstain completely from the consolation of all food for six days at a time.[135] Godric's ascetic fasting is often accompanied by another form of devotion, predominantly either prayers or prolonged vigils over several nights.[136] Thus fasting features as a method of preparing the soul for more effective prayer.[137] Whilst some saints become stricter as their life progresses, Godric's devotions become less austere later in life. In the *vita* Godric's ascetic practices become milder in character after the hermit has accepted the authority of the prior of Durham; this link may have brought with it the moderating influence of the Benedictine Rule.[138]

The final *Life* to be considered is that of the hermit Wulfric of Haselbury, which provides an excellent description of the physical effects of fasting. Again Wulfric's eating regime develops throughout his *Life*. He is depicted as temperate in his eating, and abstaining from meat before he has entered the eremitic life.[139] This abstinence progresses as he undertakes the eremitic life. John of Ford records how Wulfric started

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[133] *Ibid*., pp. 79–80.

[134] Licence suggests that rolls may have been used as a way of storing grain that would otherwise go off, and the mouldy roots Godric later makes may actually have been for the creation of yeast. It appears that no one actually saw him eat them. Licence, *Hermits and Recluses,* p. 103.

[135] *VGF* p. 76, 89.

[136] *Ibid*. p. 89.

[137] Cf. above to Wulfstan p. 130 and Ailred of Rievaulx's tears, pp. 44.

[138] D. Alexander, 'Hermits and Hairshirts: The Social Meanings of Saintly Clothing in the *Vitae* of Godric of Finchale and Wulfric of Haselbury', *Journal of Medieval History*, 28 (2002), pp. 205–226 (p. 218). See also Victoria Tudor, 'Reginald of Durham and St Godric of Finchale: A Study of a Twelfth-century Hagiographer and his Major Subject' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Reading, 1979), pp. 279–280.

[139] *Vita Wulfrici*, pp. 14–15.

to mortify 'what was earthly in him' with strict fasting, striving to restore himself to the beauty of holiness through the extremes of fasting and vigils. Soon Wulfric had dried up his good looks and youth, and his skin barely clung to his bones; his wasted flesh no longer embodied the carnal man, but the spiritual.[140] The attainment of a spiritual state at the expense of an earthly one, achieved through fasting, is clearly presented; the juxtaposition of 'carnis munditiam' and 'sanctimoniae decus' emphasises the contrast between the sacrifice of the earthly to the gain of the spiritual. John then proceeds to give details of Wulfric's diet, recording that he ate oatmeal, bread and porridge and that this formed 'his choicest fare'. He did not touch wine or ale, or any intoxicating drink, except on major feast days when he would take some wine, but more for the honour of the feast than to reinvigorate his body.[141] Consistently presented as part of a variety of ascetic and devotional practices, fasting is portrayed as more extreme in the *Lives* of hermit saints. Nonetheless, some of the motivations behind the act are clearly the same as in other cases.

Conclusion

Fasting and other food related practices are pervasive themes within the hagiographies of twelfth-century England. These themes manifest themselves in a variety of different ways, and are often highly dependent on the context of the saint and *vita*. Restraint in consumption was not always demonstrated explicitly through fasting. In certain *Lives*, and at certain points, moderation and temperance were sufficient evidence of holiness. Within some of the *vitae* the eating practices of the saint developed across time as their religious vocations grew. For example Thomas Becket, Gilbert of Sempringham and

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[140] *Ibid.*, p. 17.
[141] *Ibid.*, pp. 17–18.

Bartholomew of Farne all became more abstemious at certain points in their life, indicating their spiritual development. Conversely, Hugh of Lincoln and Godric of Finchale appear to relax their eating practices, in Hugh's case in order to fulfil his episcopal duties, and in Godric's case possibly because of the moderating influence of the authority of Durham.

Although there are many discernable fundamental similarities within the *Lives* of regular saints, there are also important differences between the Orders. The texts shared concerns over excessive abstinence, emphasised astonishment at a saint's low sustenance levels, and highlighted the association between spiritual edification and meal times. All the saints are presented as exceptional in some way and eating very little, often with consequences to their health or appetite. Nonetheless, differences in representation can be teased out. Whereas the Benedictine saints appeared saintly by exceeding their Rule, Gilbert of Sempringham and Robert of Béthune operated within their respective Rules, although were still depicted as more abstemious than those around them. The case of Hugh of Lincoln was slightly different, as his ascetic eating habits characterise him as the ideal embodiment of the Carthusian Order. Unlike the other episcopal saints, he relaxes his eating habits when a bishop, although appropriate adherence to the rule is emphasised throughout. Therefore, the institutional context of each saint was a determining factor in the presentation of food abstention within his *vita*.

While food and fasting have been strongly associated with women in the later Middle Ages, a gender divide is less immediately obvious within this sample. While the differing depictions of Margaret's ascetic fasting and Edward's moderation may result from gender-appropriate models of behaviour, gender is not the only factor worth considering. It may be that Edward's *vitae* do not stress devotional fasting because his

sanctity was already firmly rooted in his virginity and miracle working, rather than his personal devotional endeavours. Further, whilst Edward may only exercise temperance in his eating, in Ailred of Rievaulx's narrative this is still sufficient to facilitate saintly visions. Indeed, this link between food abstention and visionary activity is something that Edward's *vita* shares with the representation of fasting in Christina of Markyate's *Life*.

Comparing Christina's *vita* to other texts suggests that the vocation of the saint may often have more of an effect on the presentation of food practices than gender. Fasting does not play a greater role in her *Life* than in some of the male saints and the representation of her ascetic fasting during her time as an anchorite does not diverge greatly from other examples of saints who led eremitic *Lives*. The *Lives* of the eremitic saints presented some of the most severe examples of abstention within the corpus. Furthermore, the association of control of the body through fasting and sexual control was more clearly articulated within these models. Within these *Lives*, self-sufficiency was also emphasised; gifts of food from God allowed the saints to abandon their reliance on the world and secular society.

Limitations on space have precluded an examination of food practices more widely within these *Lives*. For example, charity and hospitality also play an important role. These acts of victual generosity are often directly juxtaposed with the abstention of the saint and serve to emphasise their virtue. Biblical tradition associated Christ with both the poor, and the role of the unknown pilgrim. The motifs of both charity and hospitality thus presented another way for hagiographers to connect their subject's sanctity to Christ. Future examination of the relationship between acts of abstention and generosity within these *Lives* would prove useful.

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Food related practices are only one element within the representation of saintly virtue, and in its most ascetic form is often accompanied by other forms of devotion. Examined within the context of each *Life* it becomes clear that food abstinence manifests itself in a variety of ways in response to diverse aims within these texts.

✦ Chapter 4: Death ✦

Whatever their experiences in life, all saints eventually had to face the journey towards death. Whilst the saintly death has received attention from French scholars, it has been comparatively understudied in Anglophone scholarship.[1] Further, the majority of studies that have considered the presentation of death and dying focus on continental source material.[2] This chapter will address this gap in scholarship through its focus on the saintly death in twelfth-century English hagiography.

Existing historiography has highlighted many standard themes that occur surrounding the moment of death within saints' *vitae*. These include saintly foreknowledge of impending death, allusion to terminal illness, preparations undertaken before death, the saint's final message, the scene of death, and depictions of the body post-mortem.[3] There is undoubtedly a typical model and vocabulary for describing the death of a saint, which transcends temporal and geographical boundaries. However,

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[1] See, for example, Pierre Boglioni, 'La scène de la mort dans les premières hagiographies latines', in *Le sentiment de la mort au Moyen Âge*, ed. by C. Sutto (Montreal, 1979), pp. 183–210; Michel Lauwers, 'La mort et le corps des saints. La scène de la mort dans les *Vitae* du Haut Moyen Age', *Le Moyen Age: Revue d'histoire et de philologie*, 94 (1988), pp. 21–50; Jacques Dalarun, 'La mort des saints fondateurs. De Martin à François', in *Les Fonctions des saints dans le monde occidental (IIIe–XIIIe siècle)*, ed. by Jean-Yves Tilliette et al. (Rome, 1991), pp. 193–215; Pierre-André Sigal, 'La Mort des saints dans les Vies et les procès de canonisation du Midi de la France', in *La Mort et l'au–delà en France méridionale (XIIe–XVe siècle)*, ed. by Jean–Louis Biget (Toulouse, 1998), pp. 17–40. In English see Michael E. Goodich, 'The Death of a Saint: a Hagiographical Topos', in *Hoping for Continuity: Childhood, Education and Death in Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, ed. by Katariina Mustakallio et. al (Rome, 2005), pp. 227–238; Robert Bartlett, *WCD?*, pp. 529–35; in Russian hagiography see T. Allan Smith, 'Death and Transfiguration: The Final Hours of Muscovite Monks', *Canadian Slavonic Papers / Revue Canadienne des Slavistes*, 48 (2006), pp. 119–136. For death in the Middle Ages more widely see, Philippe Ariès, *The Hour of Our Death*, trans. by Helen Weaver (Harmondsworth, 1983); Paul Binski, *Medieval Death: Ritual and Representation* (London, 1996); Christopher Daniell, *Death and Burial in Medieval England, 1066–1550* (London, 1997); Dawn M. Hadley, *Death in Medieval England: An Archaeology* (Stroud, 2001). On depictions of death in an Anglo-Norman context see David Crouch, 'The Culture of Death in the Anglo-Norman World', in *Anglo-Norman Political Culture and the Twelfth-Century Renaissance: Proceedings of the Borchard Conference on Anglo-Norman History, 1995*, ed. by C. Warren Hollister (Woodbridge, 1995), pp. 157–180.

[2] Crouch does use some of these hagiographies alongside other sources in his article, 'The Culture of Death in the Anglo-Norman World' (hereafter 'Anglo-Norman Death Culture'). For a literary approach to the death of Ailred of Rievaulx see Thomas Heffernan, *Sacred Biography: Saints and Their Biographers in the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1998), ch. 3.

[3] See, for example, Lauwers, 'La mort et la corps des saints'; Sigal, 'La mort des saints'; Boglioni, 'La scène de la mort'; and Smith, 'Death and Transfiguration', who all highlight similar themes.

existing scholarship has also revealed how these hagiographical narratives can differ in nuance across time and place.[4] My analysis will underline the fundamental elements in the descriptions of the dying process, whilst highlighting where texts diverge in their narratives and how individual circumstance might influence this.

This chapter is structured around the stages of dying presented in these texts. Initially, because of their traditionally very different routes to sanctity, confessor and martyr saints will be examined separately. The first three sections examine the confessor *Lives*, investigating the dying process, preparations undertaken in advance of death, and the moment of death itself. The fourth section examines the two twelfth-century English martyrs, William of Norwich and Thomas Becket, observing some of their particularities as well as placing them within the wider context of saintly death. Finally, descriptions of the post-mortem body and its preparation for burial will be considered.[5]

The journey towards death

Hagiography rarely depicts death as a sudden or unexpected occurrence. Saints are customarily forewarned of their death, allowing them to make the proper preparations.[6] The description of St Martin's death, so influential as a blueprint for other texts, attributes Martin with such knowledge: 'Martin foresaw his own death long in advance

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[4] Sigal, 'La mort des saints'; cf. Lauwers, 'La mort et le corps des saints', Boglioni, 'La scène de la mort', Smith, 'Death and Transfiguration' and to Crouch's comments on Anglo-Norman material in 'Anglo-Norman Death Culture'.

[5] As her *vita* is incomplete consideration of the depiction of Christina of Markyate's death will not be possible.

[6] See Sigal, 'La mort des saints' pp. 20–21; Lauwers, 'La mort et le corps des saints', p. 23; Boglioni, 'La scène de la mort', p. 189; Bartlett, *WCD?,* p. 530. There are very few exceptions. Gerald of Wales says that Hugh of Lincoln's death was 'sudden' so as to preserve his virtue: Gerald, *Vita Hugonis*, p. 35. No mention of foreknowledge is given in Ead, *Vita Odonis*.

and told the brethren that the death of his body was imminent.'[7] Aside from allowing

preparation, the trope of premonition also allowed hagiographers to portray their

subjects as Christ-like, reflecting the evangelists' descriptions of Jesus' awareness of his

own approaching death.[8] Within the twelfth-century *Lives*, some saints acquire this

foreknowledge through divine means, be that a vision or prophetic abilities.[9] In other

cases, proximity to death is simply sensed by the saint, usually becoming apparent

through the onset of debilitating illness or loss of physical strength.[10] The numerical

difference between these two groups is marginal and both contain a mixture of saints;

when a sample of twelfth-century *vitae* of earlier saints is also considered, however,

divine intervention becomes the dominant method of foreknowledge.[11]

Instances in which the timing of death is revealed with precision tend to involve

divine agency.[12] The *vitae* of the hermit Bartholomew of Farne and Cistercian Abbot

Waltheof of Melrose provide good examples. Bartholomew receives a vision disclosing

the time of his death well in advance, and is then warned more imminently of his

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[7] Sulpicius Severus, *Epistula III Ad Bassulam Socrum Suam*, *PL*, 20, col. 181: 'Martinus igitur obitum suum longe ante praescivit, dixitque fratribus dissolutionem sui corporis imminere.' On the influence of Martin see e.g. Crouch, 'Anglo-Norman Death Culture', p. 158, 161. The importance of forewarning to the construction of a 'good death' was not solely reserved for hagiographical texts, or indeed saintly subjects. See for example Ailred of Rievaulx, *Eulogium Davidis Regis Scotorum* in *Pinkerton's Lives of the Scottish Saints*, ed. by W. M. Metcalfe, 2 vols (Paisley, 1889), II, pp. 269–285 (p. 62); cf. William of Malmesbury of Prior Lanzo of St Pancras, Lewes, *GRA*, p. 778.

[8] See, for example, Mark 9:30–32; Cf. Smith, 'Death and Transfiguration', p. 125.

[9] Ailred, *Vita S. Edwardi*, col. 769– 770; *Vita Margaretae*, pp. 177–178; *Vita Waldevi*, pp. 157–159; *Vita Ailredi*, pp. 52–53 in which a brother has a vision of Ailred's death; *Vita Bart,* p. 318; *Vita Wulfrici*, pp. 124–125; *Vita Godrici Trokeholt*, pp. 36–38; *VSW*, pp. 136–137, 142–3; *VGF*, p. 317.

[10] *VSG*, p. 118; Anonymous, *Vita Ædwardi*, p. 116–117; Osbert, *Vita S. Edwardi*, p. 104; *VRB*, p. 192ff.; *VA*, p.140ff.; *Vita Gundulfi*, p. 62ff; *MVSH*, pp. 178, 182–3. Cf. Sigal, 'La mort des saints' p. 20- states that in most cases foreknowledge appears as a divine gift; in Lauwers' sample one in three saints sense their death without the implication of divine interference, 'La mort et la corps des saints', p. 23.

[11] Although both groups contain a mixture it is worth noting that all the twelfth–century eremitic saints are divinely inspired. For examples of *Lives* of earlier saints who gain divine sight see WM, *Vita Dunstani*, pp. 293f; *Vita Moduenne*, p. 155, 157–63 in which she refuses to postpone her death; Ead, *Vita Wilfridi*, p. 128–129 (cf. ES, *Vita Wilfridi*, pp. 120–21); Æltheryth in *Liber Eliensis*, pp. 54–55; *Vita S. Werburge*, pp. 44–47; *Vita Edithe*, pp. 90–92; *Vita Wulfsige*, p. 108. Cf. *Vita Seaxburge*, p. 181 and *Vita Withburga*, p. 66 in which no divine inspiration is noted.

[12] Those who gain specific insight include Bartholomew of Farne, *Vita Bartholomaei,* pp. 318f, Waltheof of Melrose, *Vita Waldevi*, p. 159, Godric of Finchale, *VGF*, p. 317 and Edward the Confessor in Ailred, *Vita S. Edwardi*, col. 769–770. Cf. Goscelin's depiction of Edith, *Vita Edithe*, pp. 90–92.

passing by a miraculous sounding of his bell.[13] In Waltheof's *vita* the efficiency of heavenly bureaucracy is revealed in all its glory when the saint receives a writ of summons to heaven, delivered by an angel through the hands of a lay brother.[14] In the majority of cases, however, the saint is not given a specific time of death, but is simply aware that their passing is impending. The amount of time a saint has to prepare varies greatly. Whilst Bartholomew is given nine years' notice, Ailred of Rievaulx has four years to arrange his affairs before his death.[15] A few others only have around a year to prepare.[16] For some the awareness is closer (apparently a matter of months) to the moment of death, usually amongst those who do not gain any divine insight.[17]

The *vitae* of Edward the Confessor demonstrate a narrative development regarding Edward's awareness of his impending death. The Anonymous *vita* suggests that Edward became aware 'of the approaching end of his mortal life' and closer to death 'perceived that the power of the disease was forcing him to his end'.[18] Thus Edward's failing health reveals that his death is approaching; this manner of foreknowledge is repeated in Osbert's *Life*.[19] Ailred of Rievaulx, however, inserts a miracle into the narrative that does not feature in the earlier *vitae*.[20] In Ailred's text

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[13] *Vita Bartholomaei*, p. 318. Bartholomew's bell is struck three times; since this is the number of times the bell is to be tolled after the death of a monk according to Lanfranc's monastic constitutions, this may be no coincidence; cf. *Monastic Constitutions*, p. 183

[14] *Vita Waldevi*, p. 159; See Crouch, 'Anglo-Norman Death Culture', p. 159.

[15] *Vita Bartholomaei*, pp. 318–323. It should be noted that although Bartholomew is given nine years to prepare for his final illness and death, this nine years is related in the space of one paragraph; the narrative of the events that take place between Bartholomew falling ill and dying takes up a further five pages of the Rolls Series edition; *Vita Ailredi*, pp. 48–49

[16] E.g. *Vita Wulfrici*, pp 124–125; Ailred, *Vita S. Edwardi*, col. 769–770; *Vita Gundulfi*, p. 62; *VSW*, pp. 136–137.

[17] For example, *Vita Margaretae*, pp. 177–178 and *VSG*, pp. 118–119.

[18] Anonymous, *Vita Ædwardi*, pp. 112–113 & 116–117: 'Senciebat autem appropinquantem sibi mortalis uitae terminum'... 'exinstanti morbo urgueri se ad exitum'.

[19] Osbert, *Vita S. Edwardi*, pp. 104–105. Cf. Other *Lives* where death is revealed through failing health: *VSG*, pp. 118–119; *VA*, pp. 134–5; *VRB*, pp. 193ff; *MVSH*, II, pp. 182–83.

[20] The miracle does appear in one manuscript of Osbert's *vita*. This, however, dates from the first half of the thirteenth century, post-dating Ailred's text of the 1160s. On the inserted miracles in this MS see Marc Bloch, 'La vie de S. Edouard le Confesseur par Osbert de Clare', *Analecta Bollandiana*, 41 (1923), pp. 5-131 (p. 57ff.).

John the Baptist discloses to two English pilgrims on their way to Jerusalem that Edward's death will be within six months. The pilgrims report this prophecy to the king upon their return.[21] Thus Ailred uses a motif of divine revelation to supplement earlier accounts of Edward's death.

Generally, the saint learns of his or her demise at the beginning of the death narrative sequence. Wulfstan of Worcester's *vita* presents the only exception to this. While at the start of the account of Wulfstan's death, his hagiographer signals that the bishop's renewed efforts during Maundy Thursday suggested that he knew his end was looming, the main exposition on Wulfstan's foreknowledge comes *after* the moment of death.[22] The author says 'it is amazing to observe' that while he was alive Wulfstan seemed aware of his future longevity. A sleeping Wulfstan once awakens to find his brethren weeping in grief, mistakenly believing that his death was imminent. He reassures them: 'Believe me, I shall not die so long as my aged body can last out; and my frame will only disintegrate after a prolonged old age.'[23] Although neither this, nor the description of Wulfstan's increased Maundy Thursday devotions, explicitly attributes him with divine knowledge, the use of *mirari* in this latter description implies that the foreknowledge is miraculous in some way.

The topos was not limited to hagiography, and elsewhere William of Malmesbury gives a more specific account of the 'signs' that portend Wulfstan's death. William records that when Wulfstan heard the news of his sister's death, he knew that this was a sign that he was to follow within a few days.[24] The difference between the two accounts suggests that the version within the *Vita Wulfstani* reflects Coleman's lost

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[21] Ailred, *Vita S. Edwardi*, col. 769–770.
[22] *VSW*, pp. 136–137.
[23] *Ibid.*, pp. 142–3: 'Crede michi, quantum senile corpus durare poterit, non moriar, nec nisi longo senio dissoluetur haec compago.'
[24] *GPA*, pp. 436–7.

text. It is not clear why William did not use the same version in both accounts, or where this alternative story originates. As Rodney Thomson suggests, William may have heard it from his friend Prior Nicholas of Worcester.[25] Nonetheless, it is still significant that some premonition of death is included in both the *vita* and the *Gesta Pontificum.* Whether they gain the knowledge through prophetic abilities, a vision from God, or simply by earthly means of incapacitating illness, the saints of twelfth-century England show awareness of impending death.

Before considering the preparation that this foreknowledge allows the saints to undertake, it is helpful to examine the cause and nature of the dying process. Although not every *vita* gives a detailed description of the saint's terminal illness it is nonetheless possible to distinguish an overarching pattern in this particular set of texts; the saints may die of varying illnesses, but they do so invariably in old age.[26] Scholars from the medieval period paint a disparate picture of the process of ageing, although it is possible to reach some synthesis. Medieval texts tend to divide the life cycle of man into four, six, or more stages, based on models from Antiquity.[27] Within these texts, however, there is a great disparity between the ages at which 'old age' commences, often anywhere between 35 and 60.[28] Josephine Cummins highlights that medieval authors themselves recognised the complexity of determining the onset of old age. She asserts that, taking an overview, 60 seems to represent the onset of old age, although physical

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[25] *GPA*, II, p. 199.

[26] On illness see, Sigal 'La mort des saints', p. 21; Boglioni, 'La scène de la mort', pp. 187–88; Smith, 'Death and Transfiguration', pp. 124.

[27] J. A. Burrow, *The Ages of Man: A Study in Medieval Writing and Thought* (Oxford, 1986), p. 2; Josephine M. Cummins, 'Attitudes to Old Age and Ageing in Medieval Society' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Glasgow, 2000), pp. 25–26. Also on old age in general see Shulamith Shahar, *Growing Old in the Middle Ages: 'Winter Clothes Us in Shadow and Pain'*, trans. by Yael Lotan (London, 1997).

[28] Cummins, 'Attitudes to Old Ages', p. 26, gives a list of examples at n. 39.

decline was generally felt to take place from approximately 40 onwards.[29] With this in mind, it is now instructive to consider the sources at hand.

The saints with *vitae* written in England between 1066 and the start of the thirteenth century range between 50 and 100 in age at the time of their death; the majority fall into the 60-plus bracket, when most medieval sources concerning age agree decline becomes much steeper.[30] Margaret of Scotland's age is not recorded in her *vita* and her exact year of birth is unknown, but she seems to have been around 50 when she died, the youngest saint within the sample.[31] Ailred of Rievaulx is also relatively young at 57, his age at death recorded by Walter Daniel in the *vita*.[32] Hugh of Lincoln was almost certainly around 60 when he died, although Adam of Eynsham does not record his age in the *vita* and Gerald of Wales records that the saint was 50.[33] Given his episcopal status, Robert of Béthune (d. 1148), may well have been around this age as well, although his age is not recorded in his *Life*. Bartholomew of Farne's age is unspecified in his *vita*, but his hagiographer does record that Bartholomew had been a hermit on the island of Farne for 42 years, six months and 19 days at the time of his death.[34] On the basis that Bartholomew had travelled in Norway for three years, where he accepted ordination as deacon and priest, and then briefly held responsibility for a church in Northumberland, before becoming a monk of Durham, it can safely be assumed that he too is likely to have been at least 60.[35]

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[29] *Ibid*., pp. 41–42.

[30] *Ibid*., p. 42.

[31] G. W. S. Barrow, 'Margaret [St Margaret] (*d*. 1093)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004) [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/18044, accessed 3 June 2013]

[32] *Vita Ailredi*, p. 52.

[33] Gerald of Wales, *Life of Hugh of Lincoln*, p. 37. Cf. dates given by Henry Mayr–Harting, in 'Hugh of Lincoln (1140?–1200)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford, 2004) [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/
article/14060, accessed 16 March 2014]

[34] *Vita Bartholomaei*, p. 322.

[35] *Ibid*., pp. 296–299. See other saints within the sample: Godric of Finchale is at least 100, although his age is not recorded in his *vita*; Anselm was 76, *VA,* p. 143; Godric of Throkenholt was 80, *Vita Godrici*

Some of these saints are explicitly referred to as old, or in a state of decline. In the description of Wulfstan of Worcester's last moments he is referred to as feeble with age (*aevo inualidus*).[36] This recurs in the passage explaining how Wulfstan knew the time and manner of his death; he says that he will survive as long as his aged body (*senile corpus*) can last out, and he will only dissolve (*dissoluetur*) after a prolonged old age (*longus senio*).[37] Wulfstan is recorded to be 86 years old.[38] Edward the Confessor is also referred to as 'burdened in age' (*aevo gravis*).[39]

Gilbert of Sempringham was apparently over one hundred at the time of his death, and his *vita* provides an excellent description of the degeneration of old age:

> As the time of his summons approached he began to grow weary more than usual, and he declared that he could no longer endure this life since the supports of his whole bodily nature had were deserting him. One worn out by illness and old age is compelled to leave this world. Illness attached itself to Gilbert in the proper course of nature: for it always accompanies old age. But his old age lasted so long because of the gift of grace.[40]

This passage is notable for a number of reasons. Whereas in other hagiographical samples few details of physical decline or illness are given, this passage overtly represents the bodily demise that was expected to accompany old age, and consequently lead to death.[41] What is more exceptional is that Gilbert's longevity is directly linked

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Trokenholt, pp. 38–39; Waltheof of Melrose and Wulfric of Haselbury both appear to have been around 64 at the time of their deaths– see entries in the *ODNB*.

[36] *VSW*, pp. 140–41.

[37] *Ibid*., pp. 142–3.

[38] *Ibid*., pp. 142–3. It should be noted that there appear to be some erroneous calculations regarding dates between the manuscripts and authors of the *Life*. See *VSW*, pp. 142–143, n. 1.

[39] Ailred, *Vita S. Edwardi*, col. 769. Edward was around 63 when he died.

[40] *VSG*, pp. 118–119: '… appropinquante tempore uocationis sue, cepit plus solito lascessere, pronuntiauitque se in hac uita diutius non posse subsistere, quia tocius nature corporalis amminiculis destituebatur. Morbo nempe et senio confectus hinc compellitur migrare, et morbus quidem ex proprietate inhesit nature: nam solet semper senium comitari. Sed senectus ex dono durauit gratiae'. See p. 125 for record of his age at the time of death.

[41] See also the *Vita Godrici* for an extended, and rather moving, description of the effects of old age, e.g. pp. 186–7, 196, 311. Wulfric is recorded as 'decaying' and 'wearing out like a garment', *Vita Wulfrici*, p. 125. Cf. Crouch on the 'realistic' increase in the representation of death in the twelfth century, 'Anglo-Norman Death Culture', pp. 157–180.

with his sanctity, presented as a gift of grace. Thus, to Gilbert's hagiographer, living to an old age might become part of the evidence for a saint's sanctity. Whilst not all the twelfth-century saints are described using the vocabulary of old age, the majority can be considered to have reached this stage of life, even if they cannot match Gilbert's centenarian credentials. Aside from whether or not old age was linked to the gift of grace, in a more practical light the longer a person lived the more opportunity they had for the enactment of 'saintly' activities worthy of record.

Most texts provide some description of the terminal illness of the saint, whether this is directly associated with old age or not. These can vary greatly in detail. In some texts the spiritual significance of the role played by illness is amplified. The physical symptoms of the illness, however, are regularly unspecified or only briefly recorded, simply marked by a fever or strong pains.[42] Nonetheless, there are some exceptions. Walter Daniel provides a detailed description of Ailred of Rievaulx's illness; indeed, the narrative of Ailred's final sufferings and death takes up 25% of Daniel's text. It appears to be based on close personal observation, understood in light of contemporary medical theory; Daniel himself had medical training.[43] David Crouch uses Daniel's account as a consummate illustration of what he refers to as the 'realistic mode' of reporting death, which he suggests was on the increase in the twelfth century.[44]

Daniel records that throughout the last year of his life, Ailred was racked by a dry cough, which 'added to all his other various infirmities' and left him so debilitated

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[42] From my sample see: *VA*, pp. 140ff offers vague descriptions; Anon, *Vita Ædwardi*, pp. 80–81; Ailred, *Vita S. Edwardi*, col. 771; *Vita Margaretae*, pp. 178–179; *VSW*, pp. 140–141; *Vita Wulfrici,* pp. 125–127. Cf. Sigal 'La mort des saints', p. 21; Boglioni, 'La scène de la mort', pp. 187–89; Smith, 'Death and Transfiguration', p. 124.

[43] Maurice Powicke, *Vita Ailredi*, p. 55, n. 1; David N. Bell, 'Daniel, Walter (*fl.* 1150–1167)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004) [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/52452, accessed 25 April 2014].

[44] Crouch, 'Anglo-Norman Death Culture', pp. 164–165. For other descriptions of illness see *Vita Bartholomaei*, p. 320 which gives details about his internal abcess rupturing and pus coming out of his mouth; also Waltheof, Abbot of Melrose's *vita* contains far less detail about his illness, but emphasizes his sufferings, *Vita Waldevi*, pp. 159–161 especially.

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after mass that he could not speak or move, but lay as though unconscious on his pallet.[45] Daniel then gives a precise account of Ailred's cough, blaming it not on rheum but an intense dryness and stringency from the pit of his stomach to the top of his throat.[46] He continues to say that it severely inhibited Ailred's breathing and almost prevented the passage of life to and from his heart. Ailred's feverishness (*frigiditas*) is also described; Daniel relates that it started from his brain and affected his eye sockets, forehead and every part of his head. The pain was so great that the abbot could not withstand the weight of anything placed upon him, from the crown of his head to his extremities. Daniel puts Ailred's difficulties down to an 'abnormal distemper in the head', which created a vicious cycle of fever and respiratory difficulties; Ailred felt like he had a weight on his chest, his tongue was rough, his gullet ulcerated and contracted, and he suffered from a raging thirst.[47] Daniel then reiterates that Ailred suffered like this for a whole year. This passage is particularly interesting for what it reveals about contemporary medical theory, and especially unusual for the detail it gives regarding Ailred's symptoms.

Walter Daniel was a close companion of Ailred and attended his bedside during his final days. In other cases where the hagiographer was close (physically and often personally) to the saint, extended descriptions of the physical symptoms can also be found. For example, in his *Life* of Hugh, bishop of Lincoln, Adam of Eynsham says that during Hugh's final illness, as soon as Hugh lay down the perspiration flowed from him and continued to do so during the whole day and for the greater part of the night.[48] Later Adam records that Hugh's condition deteriorated as he suffered paroxysms every day, his whole body was consumed by fever, and his internal organs were weakened by

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[45] *Vita Ailredi*, p. 54: 'eciam cum aliis plurifariis infirmitatum.'
[46] *Ibid.*
[47] *Ibid.*, p. 55.
[48] *MVSH*, II, p. 178.

dysentery.[49] Adam also stresses that Hugh refused to remove his hair-shirt, despite the heat of his fever and the excessive perspiration. The shirt became as stiff as mud because of the moisture, and was twisted like rope because he tossed and turned so much.'[50]

In other accounts written by close companions of the saints, however, there is less concentration on physical symptoms.[51] Eadmer was present when Anselm died and yet provides comparatively few details on Anselm's physical suffering.[52] In other hagiographical samples an increasing medicalization of saints' deaths has been noted from the thirteenth century onwards.[53] It may therefore be significant that Ailred and Hugh's *Lives* date from the last third of the twelfth; the presence of 'doctors' (*medici*) at the sickbed, alongside the interest in physical symptoms, suggests that they might reflect this wider trend towards medicalization.[54] Overall, a range of factors, including the proximity of the hagiographer during the final illness, the individual interests of the author, and the period in which they were writing, have an effect on how physical symptoms of illness were described.

Often, the hagiographers juxtapose the decay of the corporeal body with the perfection of the mind or spirit. This again is apparent in the *Lives* of saints of all vocations. The Anonymous *vita* of Edward describes the Confessor as a gem of God, stripped of the corruption of his earthly body and obtaining a place of eternal splendour

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[49] *Ibid*., p. 190.
[50] *Ibid*., p. 191.
[51] For example, *Vita Margaretae*, pp. 178–179; *VRB*, p.191ff. In these cases it is important to note that Turgot and William Wycombe do not appear to have been at the deathbed of their respective subjects: On William's relationship with Robert see Matthew M. Mesley, 'The Construction of Episcopal Identity: The Meaning and Function of Episcopal Depictions within Latin Saints' Lives of the Long Twelfth Century', (unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Exeter, 2009), p. 114.
[52] *VA*, p. 140ff
[53] Sigal, 'La mort des saints', pp. 22–23.
[54] *Vita Ailredi*, p. 49; *MVSH*, II, pp. 186, 193, 194.

in heaven.[55] In the chapter preceding the description of Anselm's final moments, Eadmer records that Anselm had slowly been losing strength for about half a year, but was 'mentally as alert as he had ever been', 'strong in spirit' (*spiritu fortis*) but 'weak in flesh' (*carne fragilis*).[56] Among the eremitic saints, Wulfric of Haselbury provides an excellent example: 'For if from day to day his outer man was decaying and, wearing out like a garment, was hastening to yield what was its own to death, so day upon day the inner self was as surely being renewed and hastening too in turn towards its own.'[57]

The suffering endured during this final illness may be presented as spiritually enhancing, or in its most potent expression may allow the confessor saint to be presented as a martyr.[58] Robert of Béthune's obedience in responding to a papal summons to Rheims, despite his illness, is depicted as an expression of pseudo-martyrdom; later, William reiterates how Robert's death, and in particular his increase in self-discipline, might be perceived as a spiritual recreation of the Passion of Christ.[59] This follows in the tradition of the *vitae* of the earliest eremitic and coenobitic saints, presented in their *Lives* and elsewhere as the direct successors to the martyrs of the early Christian tradition.[60]

Such language is echoed in other *Lives*. In Gilbert of Sempringham's *vita,* the description of Gilbert's decline in old age, and failing eyesight, is followed with a reference to the gospel of Luke, saying that the Lord wished to test Gilbert with many

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[55] Anonymous, *Vita Ædwardi*, pp. 122–123.

[56] *VA*, p. 141: 'Quo vi per dimidium circiter annum vitam quoquomodo transigens, sensim corpore deficiebat, animi virtute semper idem qui esse solebat existens.' Cf. *VSW*, pp. 136–137.

[57] *Vita Wulfrici*, p. 125 (p. 209): 'Nam et si exterior ejus homo jam indies corrumperetur et sicut vestimentum veterascens festinaret morti reddere quod suum est; sed interior plane renovabatur de die in diem, festinans etiam ipse ad ea quae sua sunt'. See also *Vita Moduenne*, pp. 156–159 for similar description.

[58] Similarly in Sigal's sample, 'La mort des saints', p. 20

[59] *VRB*, pp. 192 ff., esp. p. 202.

[60] Edward E. Malone, 'The Monk and the Martyr', *Studia Anselmiana*, 38 (1956), pp. 201–228; Clare Stancliffe, 'Red, White and Blue Martyrdom', in *Early Medieval Ireland in Europe: Studies in Memory of Kathleen Hughes*, ed. by Dorothy Whitelock, Rosamund McKitterick and David N. Dumville (Cambridge, 1982), pp. 21–46 (p. 30).

trials and to crown his labours so that his rewards might be great in heaven.[61] The suffering of other saints also appears to have an advantageous effect on their soul. Bishop Wulfstan of Worcester was struck down by a severe discomfort and taken over by a slow fever. Although sometimes he seemed easier, he would then relapse into bed, worn down by the fever that was driving him to his end: 'The failure of his body only increased the powers of his soul, so that the heat of his illness could sweat off anything in him that was unprepared for eternal glory.'[62] Thus, through penitential suffering, or reference to martyrdom, some authors construct the illness of their subjects as a spiritually beneficial part of the dying process.

Although the relationship between pseudo-martyrdom and suffering may not be expressed explicitly within all the texts, most *vitae* share one significant theme with the martyr tradition: the attitude of the saint towards suffering and death. Constancy is a pervasive attribute of martyrdom, but also occurs frequently within the *Lives* of non-martyred saints, demonstrated through their welcoming attitude to death and stalwart devotion when faced with hardship.[63] In the majority of cases the saint is represented as stoically accepting, or even welcoming death.[64] This is often contrasted to the grief of the surrounding community.[65]

Both joy at the thought of death, and an active wish for the moment of passing, feature throughout the canon, regardless of whether the saint is a bishop, hermit, ruler or

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[61] Luke 6:23; *VSG*, pp. 118–119; Walter Daniel describes Ailred 'sicque sese mactauit in ara passionum indeficiencium' during his increased rigours in later life, *Vita Ailredi*, p. 49.

[62] *VSW*, pp. 140–141: 'Labes corporis augebat uires animae, uti quid in eo erat immaturum aeternae gloriae feruor infirmitatis posset decoquere.' Cf. The account of agony of Prior Lanzo, *GRA*, pp. 788–781.

[63] On constancy in martyrdom see Staunton, *Becket and His Biographers*, p. 127. On saintly patience and suffering see also Richard Kieckhefer, *Unquiet Souls: Fourteenth-Century Saints and their Religious Milieu* (Chicago, 1984), pp. 51–88.

[64] Cf. Lauwers, 'La mort et le corps des saints', p. 26; Sigal, 'La mort des saints', p. 21; Cf. St Cunigunda of Cracow (d. 1292) who bore her painful sufferings patiently and devoutly, cited in Bartlett, *WCD?*, p. 531.

[65] Cf. Sigal. 'La mort des saints', p. 29. For example, Anonymous, *Vita Ædwardi*, pp. 122–123; *Vita Ailredi*, pp. 55–56.

monk. In his *vita*, the hermit saint Wulfric of Haselbury is depicted calling out to the heavenly kingdom with longing sighs, and hovering in happy expectation, 'with wings already spread for the flight and swelling heart' ready to welcome death.[66] Nonetheless, some *vitae* deploy this motif in a more individual way. For example, Walter Daniel depicts Ailred as ready to 'depart and be with Christ' on his deathbed. Ailred says to the gathered monks: 'Brethren, to be with Christ is by far the best. How much longer shall I be able to endure this dreadful trouble of the flesh? I wish and crave, if it please him, that God may speedily deliver me from this prison and lead me into a place of comfort, to be with Him in the place of his marvellous tabernacle.'[67] While it is possible to interpret Ailred as concerned with being relieved from the pain of his body, he is still nevertheless depicted with a 'strong and unconquerable soul'.[68] Moreover, his speech affirms that he is secure in the belief that he will join God and the saints in Heaven after his death, which further stresses his rejection of the world and his focus on the afterlife.

Eadmer's account of St Anselm's attitude towards death provides an even more idiosyncratic example. On Palm Sunday, during the final term of his illness, Anselm's companions say to him that they know he will spend Easter at the court of the Lord. Anselm replies:

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[66] *Vita Wulfrici*, p. 127 (p. 209): 'quasi ad jam volandum alas plene expandisse et toto sinu laxato.'
[67] *Vita Ailredi*, pp. 55–56: '… set et animo ualidissimo et inuictissimo cupere *dissolui et esse cum Christo*. Unde dicebat, "cum Christo," inquit, "esse multo magis optimum, fratres. Et quomodo diu durare potero in hac durissima molestia carnis ? Ego igitur uolo et desidero, si Deo placet, quatinus me de hoc carcere cito educat et in locum refrigerii deducat, *in locum tabernaculi admirabilis usque ad* seipsum." Hec fratres audientes […] suspirabant et lacrimabantur.'
[68] Crouch argues that Ailred's impatience did not fit in with Walter Daniel's idea of what made a good death and was thus problematic, 'Anglo-Norman Death Culture', p. 166.

> And indeed if his will is set on this, I shall gladly obey his will. However, if he would prefer me to remain among you, at least until I can settle a question about the origin of the soul, which I am turning over in my mind, I should welcome this with gratitude, for I do not know whether anyone will solve it when I am dead. Truly I think I might recover if I could eat something, for I feel no pain in any part of my body, except that I am altogether enfeebled by the weakness of my stomach which refuses food.[69]

Unlike in instances where saints refuse treatment, Anselm seems keen to regain his strength if he can.[70] Although Anselm defers to God's greater purpose, Eadmer presents an anecdote which reveals a glimpse of Anselm's personality and his stubbornness. Even though he does not rush gladly towards death like some of the other saints, Anselm is nonetheless still presented with the same determination and strength in the face of physical weakness and imminent death.[71] The distinctive elements of Eadmer's account are still presented within a recognised framework of saintly death.[72]

Gundulf of Rochester provides an especially good example of a saint demonstrating strength in the face of adversity. Gundulf's hagiographer records that his constancy and devotion in good works deserves praise as, when he was so weak that he could not even sit on a horse, he was carried from manor to manor in a horse-cart in order to care for the poor and *praebendarii* whom he believed would be neglected after his death. In doing this, 'he did violence to himself, disregarding the severity of his illness.'[73] These events not only stress Gundulf's charity and dedication during his

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[69] *VA*, p. 142: 'Et quidem si voluntas ejus in hoc est, voluntati ejus libens parebo. Verum si mallet me adhuc inter vos saltem tam diu manere, donec quaestionem quam de origine animae mente revolve absolvere possem, grantater acciperem, eo quod nescio utrum aliquis eam me defuncto sit soluturus. Ego quippe si comedere possem, spero convalescerem. Nam nichil doloris in aliqua corporis parte sentio, nisi quod lassescente stomacho ob cibum quem capere nequit totus deficio.'
[70] Cf. *MVSH*, II, pp. 182–3 where Hugh refuses treatment for his eyes.
[71] *VA*, p. 141.
[72] Cf. Crouch, 'Anglo-Norman Death Culture', p. 104.
[73] *Vita Gundulfi*, p. 61.

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illness, but also emphasise his humility; despite his episcopal status, he cares for the poor right up until his death.[74]

Preparing to meet the Lord

One of the most important stages en route to death is preparation, and it is for this reason that the saint must be aware of the moment of death in advance. Varying in duration, based on how much warning the saint has, preparations for death take two principal forms: devotional preparations and management of temporal affairs.[75]

Devotional preparations are the most dominant provisions for death depicted in the saints' *Lives*, and take a variety of forms. For example, prayers often comprise an important part of pre-death preparation. In the *Life* of Bartholomew of Farne, throughout the nine years prior to his death the hermit is portrayed planning earnestly for its coming, more vigorously applying himself to vigils (*vigiliis*), prayers (*orationibus*) and other exercises of the spiritual life (*caeteris spiritualis vitae exercitiis*), priming his soul for the contemplation of heavenly brilliance.[76] Bartholomew makes more immediate preparations closer to the moment of his death, fasting for seven weeks.[77] Similarly, in an abbatial *vita,* Walter Daniel depicts Ailred of Rievaulx following a life of increased austerity within the last four years of his life.[78] From this point Ailred shut himself away in his oratory and armed himself with prayers

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[74] Cf. Robert's continuing devotion, *VRB*, pp. 199–202; Godric is also cheery in the face of illness towards the end of his life, e.g *Vita Godrici*, p. 323; Hugh of Lincoln refuses to remove his hair-shirt, *MVSH*, II, p. 191; St Margaret does not lose faith in God despite adverse circumstances, *Vita Margaretae*, p. 181. Edward the Confessor continues to preside over feasts etc., Ailred, *Vita S. Edwardi*, col. 771; See also Anonymous, *Vita Ædwardi*, pp. 122–123.

[75] On devotional preparations, cf. Sigal. 'La mort des saints', pp. 24–26; Lauwers, 'La mort et les corps des saints', p. 24.

[76] *Vita Bartholomaei*, p. 318.

[77] *Ibid.*, p. 320.

[78] *Vita Ailredi*, p. 49.

and vigils; ignoring regular hours and meals, he neglected the present and lived for things to come.[79]

Three *vitae* represent their subjects prior to death undertaking devotional discipline in the form of flagellation; all concern monastic bishops. Wulfstan and Gundulf are Benedictine, and Robert of Béthune an Augustinian canon. In Wulfstan's case, when death was imminent he made his confession and received the discipline of the rod. His hagiographer praises Wulfstan for not flinching from the corporeal punishment, though being feeble with age and broken by illness.[80] A comparable scene in the *vita* of Gundulf has a slightly different outcome. The bishop also wants to receive lashes when he knows his end is near; he orders the whole community to come before him and witness the discipline. In this case, however, the monks are shocked given his infirm state and, rather than allowing their frail bishop to take the lash, they each offer to take one in his place.[81]

An analogous event takes place in the *vita* of Robert of Béthune. According to William Wycombe, immediately prior to his death Robert twice received penitential discipline, once in the presence of the abbot of Rheims and his convent, and once before his friends. In both instances Robert asks those present to discipline him with switches, but is underwhelmed by their inadequate efforts and snatches the instrument before administering the lashes himself with unrestrained vigour.[82] Robert's *vita* is particularly noteworthy for the pairing of communal and self-inflicted discipline. Further, whereas flagellation within the *vitae* of Wulfstan and Gundulf occurs within the specific context of pre-mortem corporate discipline, private self-flagellation also occurs elsewhere

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[79] *Ibid*., p. 50. For further examples of devotional preparations, including prayers see *VA*, p. 141; *Vita S. Edwardi*, col. 770–771; *Vita Margaretae*, p. 181; *VSW*, pp. 140–41; *Vita Wulfrici*, pp. 125–126.
[80] *VSW*, pp. 140–141. On Maundy Thursday see *VSW*, pp. 136–137.
[81] *Vita Gundulfi*, pp. 66–67.
[82] *VRB*, pp. 196, 213–214

within Robert's *vita*.[83] This is a clear illustration of how an apparently 'stock' trope can be tailored to the requirements of individual *Lives*.[84]

While the most severe of ascetic preparations are found in the *Lives* of monastic and eremitic saints, other saints make similar devotional provisions. The chapter of St Margaret's *vita*, dedicated to her death, opens by highlighting such activity, stressing that whilst God was preparing to reward her for her pious works, Margaret was preparing herself for the next life even more eagerly than she had been accustomed.[85] Similarly, Edward the Confessor is depicted increasing his devotions, specifically prayers, in preparation for death.[86]

Liturgical measures are also recorded within the majority of these texts. Whereas other studies have commented on the lack of reference made to the liturgy or reception of the sacraments in saintly deaths, within this twelfth-century English material hagiographers are frequently concerned to record the saint's reception of the last rites during their terminal illness; this may include a mention of all or some of final confession, extreme unction and receiving the *viaticum*.[87]

Within many *vitae* references to anointing, confession or the *viaticum* are brief and the last is only recorded as being administered once.[88] In other texts, more detail is given; for example the *vita* of Wulfstan of Worcester records that, eight days before his

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[83] *VRB*, p. 128; See *Vita Waldevi*, p. 123 for another example of penitential flagellation (though not self-inflicted). Waltheof sought penitential flagellation if he uttered an idle word, or if he accidentally killed a fly he made sure his blood was spilt to repent. There is no record of the practice within the death narrative.

[84] Cf. Mesley, 'Constructions of Episcopal Identity', pp. 168–172 on flagellation in the *VRB*.

[85] *Vita Margaretae*, pp. 177, 181.

[86] Ailred, *Vita S. Edwardi*, col. 770–771.

[87] Lauwers, 'La mort et la corps des saints', p. 27; Boglioni, 'La scène de la mort', p. 193; Sigal has noted that for the eleventh and twelfth-century texts within his sample of 20 texts from Aquitaine, Languedoc and Provence records of liturgical preparations are less common than within later texts, 'La mort des saints', p. 25.

[88] For example, *Vita Margaretae*, p. 179 (viaticum); *Vita Ailredi*, p. 56 (anointed, viaticum); *Vita Godrici Throkenholt*, p. 38 (communion); *VSG*, p. 121; Anonymous, *Vita Ædwardi*, p. 123 (viaticum); *MVSH*, II, p. 187 (extreme unction); *VRB*, pp. 215–6 (eucharist), pp. 217–8 (absolution).

death, he was anointed and from that day on he received the *viaticum* daily.[89] Adam of Eynsham's *vita* of Hugh of Lincoln gives comparatively extensive detail about Hugh's last rites and final confessions. Hugh is recorded saying that, despite being frequently ill since childhood, he has never received the unction reserved for the sick; however, he feels that he should make himself worthy by undertaking 'full and sincere confession' before he can be anointed.[90] Adam then recounts that Hugh made his confession to many devout men, taking two days to do so.[91] Then, on the vigil of St Matthew, he rose from bed at nine o'clock to receive the Eucharist, clad in his hair-shirt, habit and cowl, with his feet bare. He prayed for a long time, and then received the Eucharist and extreme unction (*extrema unctione*). Hugh then committed himself to God:

> Now let the doctors and our sickness come to what agreement they will, henceforth neither are of any consequence to us. I have committed myself to Him whom I have received; I shall hold fast and stick to Him to whom it is good to adhere.[92]

The perceived transformative nature of these sacraments is clear in Hugh's words. After this point Hugh's fever worsened and Adam relates how he continued to confess daily and took to receiving the *viaticum* of the body and blood of Christ weekly, accepting it one final time the day before he died.[93] Taking the *viaticum* could thus become a regular part of the final stages of death, be that for days or months.

Although not always necessarily divisible from spiritual concerns, preparations of a more temporal nature are also undertaken by some saints. The manner of temporal arrangement necessary is affected by the vocation of the saint. For example, Margaret of Scotland is recorded as asking Turgot two favours when she knows she is dying; as

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[89] *VSW*, pp. 140–1

[90] *MVSH*, II, p. 185: 'in pura et uera confessione'.

[91] *Ibid*., p. 185.

[92] *Ibid*., p. 186: 'Iam medicis et morbis nostris, ut potent, conueniat ; de utrisque amodo erit in pectore nostro cura minor. Ei me commisi, illum suscepi; ipsum tenebo, ipsi adherebo cui adherere bonum est.' (Translation slightly modified.)

[93] *MVSH*, II, pp. 190, 197.

well as saying masses and praying for her after her death, she also asks him to take care of her sons and daughters.[94] The text at this point emphasises Margaret's role as a mother and her request can be compared to an abbatial saint selecting someone to take over their role as spiritual father of their community.[95] In the Anonymous *Life*, on his deathbed, Edward the Confessor settles his temporal affairs in perhaps the most contested bequest of the eleventh century. Edward addresses Harold, his brother-in-law, and commends to him the care of his wife Edith and the men of England, before outlining where his grave should be prepared.[96] The passage combines Edward's concern to set his temporal affairs in order and his attentiveness to his soul and place of burial.

In a similar vein, bishops may offer some comment on their successor and show interest in temporal affairs. The *vita* of Gundulf of Rochester demonstrates a concern with temporal property, although couched in a way that highlights Gundulf's charity: Gundulf rejoices that he has such an abundance of property that he is able to leave his episcopal successor with sufficient rents and still administer to the poor.[97] Additionally, the *vita* portrays Gundulf on his deathbed bestowing his episcopal ring on Ralph, abbot of Séez, as he senses that Ralph may have need of it. After Gundulf's death, Ralph is elected bishop of Rochester, and Gundulf's actions immediately appear prophetic.[98] Gundulf's *vita* endorses and sanctifies the succession by placing the selection within the hands of the saint himself.

Similar situations occur outwith the realm of episcopal saints. After many religious men have come to visit Gilbert of Sempringham, they leave his deathbed, until

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[94] *Vita Margaretae*, p. 178.
[95] Cf. *VSG*, pp. 122–125.
[96] Anonymous, *Vita Ædwardi*, pp. 122–125; cf. Osbert, *Vita beati Edwardi*, pp. 110–111.
[97] *Vita Gundulfi*, p. 62.
[98] *Ibid.*, pp. 66, 69–70.

the only person remaining is Roger, prior of Malton, who stays long enough to hear Gilbert utter the words 'Upon you the responsibility rests, from now on.'[99] As the *vita* was commissioned by Roger, it is hardly surprising that he is depicted as the nominated successor; any other potential claimants are absent from the *vita*'s version of events.[100]

There are also two examples of bishops making a will. Robert of Béthune is depicted suffering frequent lapses of health, which cause him to worry that he is about to die. When he falls ill Robert hurriedly pays his servants their year's wages, adding to these a gift for each of them. He then makes donations to the poor, and draws up a will to account for anything that remains.[101] This underlines the transient nature of life, and the high potential for fatality that came with illness, while highlighting Robert's concern with making a good end by putting his affairs in order before he dies.

Hugh of Lincoln, after he has made an extensive confession and committed himself to his deathbed, is advised to make a will 'as was the custom'.[102] Hugh, apparently unlike Robert, is not comfortable with this advice. He responds: 'I find this practice recently adopted by ecclesiastics a burden, for to my mind I have never possessed, nor do I possess anything of any kind which I considered my own, rather than the property of the church which I ruled.'[103] However, Hugh agrees to make a will, leaving any temporal goods that might seem to be his to the poor, in order to prevent the usual usurpations of the Exchequer.[104] By showing Hugh as reluctant to undertake this 'recently adopted' practice, Adam is able to maintain Hugh's rejection of temporal

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[99] *VSG*, p. 122.

[100] Brian Golding, *Gilbert of Sempringham and the Gilbertine Order: c.1130–c.1300* (Oxford, 1995), p. 59.

[101] *VRB*, pp. 167–168: 'Si quid alibi haberet testamentum facere.'

[102] *MVSH*, II, pp. 186–7: 'de more conficeret'.

[103] *Ibid*. p. 187: 'Tedet me sane huius consuetudinis iam passim in ecclesiam traducte. Nam quo ad animum meum, nichil omnimodis aut possedi umquam uel possideo quod censerem meum et non potius ecclesie quam regebam proprium.' (Translation modified.)

[104] *Ibid*., p. 187. See also pp. 186, 205; Cf. John Hudson, *Oxford History of the Laws of England*: *Volume II* (Oxford, 2013), pp. 684 n. 26, 685.

property, whilst accounting for why he then chose to make a will. Although Hugh's *vita* suggests that the practice of making a will was 'recently adopted' by ecclesiastics, William Wycombe's *vita* of Robert of Béthune was written around half a century prior. Testamentary practices for ecclesiastics were evidently still solidifying in the late twelfth century, and these *Lives* point to the fluidity of practice. Hagiographers were able to depict bishops embracing the practice enthusiastically, or disapproving of it in principle but appreciating the temporal benefits.

Thus, the preparations for death depicted within these *vitae* further demonstrate both agreement across the corpus regarding the ideal pre-mortem provisions, and the ability of hagiographers to tailor these models to their own particular concerns and contexts.

The deathbed

After the texts have depicted their subjects undergoing the appropriate preparations, the narrative then focuses on the main event. Core motifs that meld together to forge the death of a saint are shared across the corpus.[105] Usually there is a sign that the saint is on the brink of death, either an increase in pain or steep decline in physical strength.[106] Death is rarely a solitary experience, as members of their entourage attend the saint. The grief of those around, be they monks or members of the royal court, often creates a contrast to the peaceful acceptance or joy of the saint.[107] The saint sometimes offers some dying words, usually of great significance, or is asked to bestow a final blessing.[108] Especially in a monastic context, there may be readings at the deathbed,

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[105] For similar themes see for example, Lauwers, 'La mort et la corps des saints', pp. 24ff; Sigal, 'La mort des saints', pp. 28–30; Smith, 'Death and Transfiguration', pp. 124.

[106] E.g. *Vita Bartholomaei,* pp. 320, 321; *VA,* p. 141; *Vita Gundulfi*, p. 64; Ailred, *Vita S. Edwardi*, col. 771; *Vita Margaretae*, pp. 178–179; *VGF*, p. 322.

[107] E.g. *VA*, p. 143; *Vita Ailredi*, p. 59; *VSG*, p. 122; *Vita Wulfrici*, pp. 126–127; *VGF*, p. 323.

[108] E.g. *VA*, p. 141; Ailred, *Vita S. Edwardi*, col. 774; *Vita Ailredi*, p. 58.

either from the Passion or Psalms.[109] Death often comes at a symbolic moment in the reading or at a significant time of day; for example, dying at daybreak symbolised the saint's journey from the darkness of this world into the light of heaven.[110] Finally, after the saint has passed on, hagiographers often include a short obituary, normally stating the date and either the age of the saint or their time in office.[111]

The most consistent group of *Lives* are those of the monastic saints following the Benedictine Rule. Corporate identity is heavily emphasised on the deathbed. A particular feature of these monastic *Lives* is the hagiographer's concern with depicting the correct observation of the monastic liturgy.[112] The Cluniac tradition provided the most prevalent monastic burial liturgy, which gradually became standardised throughout the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and was followed by other monastic orders.[113] This liturgy is reflected in Lanfranc's *Monastic Constitutions*, which were composed in 1077 for his monks at Christ Church but enjoyed wider circulation. Similar procedure can be seen in the statutes for the Cistercian Order.[114] One particular element of the burial liturgy, now specified in monastic codes, was the practice of laying out the dying on sackcloth and ashes.[115] Although there are other similarities in

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[109] E.g. *VA*, pp. 142–3; *Vita Gundulfi*, p. 67; *Vita Margaretae*, p. 181.

[110] E.g. *VA*, p. 143; *Vita Gundulfi*, p. 68; *VSG*, pp. 122–123; *Vita Margaretae*, p. 181; *VGF*, p. 326.

[111] E.g. *Vita Bartholomaei*, pp. 322; *VA*, p. 143; *Vita Gundulfi*, p. 69; Ailred, *Vita S. Edwardi*, col. 776; *VSW*, pp. 141–142; *VSG*, pp. 122–123; *Vita Ailredi*, p. 62; *VGF,* p. 326.

[112] Cf. Sigal, 'La Mort Des Saints.', p. 25. As suggested, record of the liturgy in the earlier texts in his sample is rare.

[113] On Cluniac liturgy see Geoffrey Rowell, *The Liturgy of Christian Burial* (London, 1977), pp. 64–65; Daniell, *Death and Dying,* p. 27.

[114] *Monastic Constitutions*, 112, pp. 179–185; *Ecclesiastica Officia*, c. 93, pp. 266–268.

[115] The penitential symbolism of ashes and sackcloth was well established by the twelfth century. On ashes see the biblical precedent of Job 42:6, and on sackcloth and ashes at burial, the hagiographical tradition of St Martin of Tours, Sulpicius Severus, *Epistula III,* col. 182. There is pre-twelfth-century evidence for the practice being adopted in both monastic and lay deaths. On the Anglo-Saxon period see Victoria Thompson, *Dying and Death in Later Anglo-Saxon England*, (Woodbridge, 2004), pp. 81–82, 119; cf. Dawn M. Hadley, 'Late Saxon Burial Practice' in *The Oxford Handbook of Anglo-Saxon Archaeology*, ed. by Helena Hamerow, David A. Hinton and Sally Crawford (Oxford, 2001), pp. 288–311 (p. 297) and Daniell, *Death and Burial,* pp. 158–159; See also Frederick S. Paxton, *Christianising Death: The Creation of a Ritual Process in Early Medieval Europe* (Ithaca, 1996), pp. 73–74 who

procedure, this laying out is not mentioned in the late-tenth-century *Regularis Concordia*, which is in general less detailed.[116] Recording this practice at death in saints' *vitae* seems of particular interest in the twelfth century to monastic authors; with one exception, the motif appears in all the examples of twelfth-century saints who die within a monastic setting. Eadmer even adds it into his re-writing of the *vita* of the tenth-century Bishop Oswald.[117] William of Malmesbury's account of Wulfstan of Worcester's death provides the exception; indeed, no element of the liturgy is mentioned at Wulfstan's death. This may reflect the concerns of William of Malmesbury's source, an earlier Old English *Life* by the monk Coleman (d. 1113).[118] However, as the earliest evidence for the adoption of Lanfranc's *Constitutions* at Worcester is not until the mid-twelfth century, it is also possible that at the start of the twelfth century this recently inscribed practice did not inspire the same attention from hagiographers as was seen a few decades later.[119]

Aside from Wulfstan, the practice is recorded in all the monastic *vitae* in which the saint's death takes place within their monastic community.[120] Recording these

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records the ritual as part of an early medieval Spanish deathbed rite for the laity in which the dying man takes the habit.

[116] *Regularis Concordia: The Monastic Agreement*, ed. by Thomas Symons (Edinburgh, 1953), pp. 65–55.

[117] Eadmer, *Vita Oswaldi*, p. 285; cf. Byrhtferth, *Vita S. Oswaldi*, p. 472 in which it is not mentioned. The practice is also not recorded in the pre-twelfth-century *Lives* of St Dunstan, or in Eddius Stephanus' *Vita Wilfridi*. See *Vita Oswaldi*, p. 285, n. 13 where the editors state this this represented the practice at Christ Church. The practice does not appear to be mentioned in other twelfth-century accounts of Anglo–Saxon saints, including those written by Eadmer. It may be significant that of those examined, this is the latest re-write of an Anglo-Saxon saint.

[118] See Winterbottom and Thomson, 'Introduction', in William of Malmesbury, *Saints' Lives: Lives of SS. Wulfstan, Dunstan, Patrick, Benignus and Indract*, ed. and trans. M. Winterbottom and R. M. Thomson (Oxford, 2002), pp. xiv–xxxviii (pp. xvi–xvii).

[119] Julie Kerr, *Monastic Hospitality: The Benedictines in England, c.1070–c.1250* (Woodbridge, 2007), p. 15.

[120] It does not appear to be a feature of the *Lives* of saints who were regular canons. For example, although Gilbert of Sempringham's death reflects other monastic texts in many ways this practice is not recorded. There is no mention in the *VRB*; despite his Augustinian identity, his home cathedral chapter was of secular canons, and he died whilst attending a council at Rheims. Remigius' *vita* by Gerald of Wales also does not mention this liturgical practice; the *vita* is quite short, and the early dates of Remigius and the comparatively late date of the composition of the *vita* by a secular clerk can be considered as influencing factors.

practices provides both a record that the correct procedure was carried out at death, and a didactic model for a 'good' monastic death.[121] Both Anselm of Canterbury and Gundulf of Rochester are depicted as being laid down on sack-cloth and ashes.[122] A similar account of liturgy is given in the *Lives* of the Cistercians Ailred of Rievaulx and Waltheof of Melrose. Walter Daniel records Ailred's final moments thus: 'Then, when we were aware he was about to die, he was placed, as is the custom of monks, on a hair-cloth strewn with ashes.'[123] The *vitae* of monastic saints also regularly refer to the presence of the monastic community at the deathbed and the recitation of the Psalms.[124]

The practice is also recorded in the *vita* of the hermit Godric of Finchale. Godric was not a professed monk, but had acknowledged the authority of the prior of Durham.[125] Subsequently, Durham was keen to emphasise this relationship in order to legitimise its claim to the hermitage after Godric's death.[126] Both undertaking and recording the observation of monastic liturgy at Godric's death was part of a broader statement of Durham's proprietorship over both the saint and his hermitage.

In the *Magna Vita*, Hugh of Lincoln is depicted as delivering extensive instructions to his companions regarding procedure at his death. Hugh emphasises that it is the Carthusian custom to be laid only on ashes, as the hair-shirt is worn by the monk, rather than placed under him, 'because each of us who dies desires to be clad in what he wore whilst he was alive'.[127] Hugh thereby differentiates the ascetic Carthusians from the standard monastic custom elsewhere. Adam later records the

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[121] The practice is recorded at the deaths of non–saintly monks. See for example the case of the monk Edward, Eadmer, *Miracula S. Dunstani*, p. 201.

[122] *VA*, p. 143; cf. *Vita Gundulfi*, p. 67; also JS, *Vita Anselmi*, p. 350.

[123] *Vita Ailredi*, p. 63: 'At tunc nobis eum iam iamque obiturum sencientibus, positus est super cilicum et cinerem more monachorum.'; cf. *Vita Waldevi*, p. 162.

[124] E.g. *VA*, pp. 142–143; *Vita Gundulfi*, p. 66*; Vita Ailredi*, p. 59; *Vita Waldevi*, pp. 161–162.

[125] *VGF*, p. 326.

[126] See Tom Licence, 'The Benedictines, the Cistercians and the Acquisition of a Hermitage in Twelfth–Century Durham', *Journal of Medieval History*, 29 (2003), pp. 315–329.

[127] *MVSH*, II p. 190.

community at Witham following Hugh's instructions, as they uncover the floor in front of him and arrange the ashes scattered over it in the shape of a cross.[128]

In the *Lives* of the episcopal saints it is their corporate, rather than their episcopal, identity that is most clearly articulated at death. The *vita* of Gundulf is particularly notable in this regard, a point which can be related to the specific role he played at Rochester and the context in which his *vita* was produced. One of Gundulf's first acts as bishop of Rochester was to transform the cathedral community from a dwindling population of cathedral clerks into a monastic settlement.[129] Between them Lanfranc and Gundulf consciously modelled Rochester in constitution and in plan on Christ Church, Canterbury.[130] As Rodney Thomson highlights, the *vita* was clearly crafted by the monastic community at Rochester to express their own concerns, and there is a consistent emphasis on Gundulf's monastic identity.[131]

This accent on monasticism is particularly clear in the narration of Gundulf's death. Gundulf is depicted as 'preferring to die not as a bishop in a grand house, but humbly as a monk and in the midst of monks'.[132] This is re-emphasised when Gundulf is distributing his belongings, freeing himself from the burden and shame of temporal possessions, 'that he might freely be a monk'.[133] On the day of his death, Gundulf found himself unable to speak, although still conscious, and lay until midnight awaiting the end.[134] The brethren recited the liturgy over Gundulf and when they came to the seventy-ninth psalm, at the words 'Turn thee again, thou God of hosts, look down from

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[128] *Ibid*., p. 197.

[129] R. A. L. Smith, 'The Place of Gundulf in the Anglo-Norman Church', *The English Historical Review*, 58 (1943), pp. 257–272 (p. 264).

[130] Smith, 'The Place of Gundulf', p. 264; Cf. Kerr, *Monastic Hospitality*, p. 15, n. 17.

[131] Thomson, 'Introduction', *Vita Gundulfi,* pp. 1–21 (p. 7). See also Julie Potter, 'The *Vita Gundulfi* in its Historical Context', *Haskins Society Journal*, 7 (1995), pp. 89–100 (pp. 98–99).

[132] *Vita Gundulfi*, p. 64: 'nec ut episcopus in domo sullimiori sed ut monachus et inter monachos in loco humiliori mori mallet'.

[133] *Ibid*., p. 65: 'utpote liber monachus'

[134] *Ibid*., pp. 66–67.

heaven; behold and visit this vine,' Gundulf's soul left his body just as dawn was breaking: 'So, the vineyard which he had planted, the community of his church which in so many ways he had instructed in the study of the heavenly discipline, was left to the protection and visitation of the Creator of all.'[135]

Although the description of Gundulf bears close resemblance to the deaths of other monastic saints (and indeed expresses themes common to the whole corpus) his *vita* follows Lanfranc's *Constitutions* the most thoroughly when recording the actions of the community surrounding his death. For example, the text details not just the ritual laying out on sackcloth and ashes, but also the striking of the board to call the community, who come running in haste – the necessity to hurry to the bedside is emphasised in the *Constitutions* – as well as specifically mentioning the chanting of the Creed, the Psalms and liturgy.[136] As in this example, the hagiographical subject will often die at a particularly symbolic moment of the liturgy, usually at a time when the verse of the Psalms being recited reflects the saint's passage into Heaven or symbolises an important element of their identity. In Gundulf's case the reference to Psalm 79 reflects his paternity of the newly founded monastic cathedral chapter.

Gundulf's identity as a monk is once again emphasised in the *Life's* obituary statement detailing the date of his demise: 'It was the year of our Lord's Incarnation 1108, the eighth of the reign of Henry, king of the English. Gundulf was then about eighty-five years old; he had been a monk for fifty-one years and for thirty-one of these, a bishop'.[137] Gundulf's obituary stands out from the other episcopal examples because

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[135] Cf. Ps. 79:15; *Vita Gundulfi,* p. 68 (p. 70): '… uineam quam ipse plantauerat, scilicet congregationem aecclesiae suae, quam in studio caelestis disciplinae multipliciter erudierat, custodiae et uisitationi summi Creatoris relinquens.'
[136] *Vita Gundulfi*, pp. 67–68.
[137] *Ibid.*, p. 69: 'Fuit autem tunc Incarnationis Dominicae annus millesimus centesimus octauus, regni uero regis Anglorum Henrici octauus, aetatis autem suae plus minus octogensimus quintus, monachatus uero quinquagesimus primus, episcopatis autem ut dictum est tricesimus primus.'

his life as a monk is differentiated from his time as bishop, suggesting its equal, if not greater, importance to his hagiographer: in the narrative of Gundulf's death he is clearly a monk first and bishop second.[138]

Turning to a non-episcopal example, similar nuances in the expression of death as the culmination of the saint's life can be seen. Gilbert of Sempringham's death also occurs at the hour of Lauds:

> Those who were present could scarcely say anything; their sobbing and their tears caused their tongues to stick in their throats, for it was that sad day which took from us our father and pastor, our brother and friend. He was not such a father as others under monastic authority possess and lose; but a man who begot us all, however many we were or had been, in the word of the gospel and cared for us like a guardian, in the same way that a hen gathers her chicks under her wings.[139]

Gilbert's identity as the founder, not just of a community but of a religious order, is stressed both through comparison to other monastic leaders and the encapsulation of Gilbert's spiritual fatherhood in terms of reproductive paternity. Gilbert's *vita* also shows the potential significance of the precise moment of death: 'On that Saturday which was 4 February 1189, as night was giving place to day and while the community was celebrating Lauds, he left the darkness of this age and worldly labours for the true light and everlasting rest.'[140]

Although eremitic saints had chosen the solitary life, this does not mean that they were cut off from society or alone in their final days. When news of Wulfric of

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[138] This can be compared to the obituaries in eremetic *Lives* which record the length of time that they lived as a hermit. Bartholomew's hagiographer, for example, states that Bartholomew had remained a hermit on the island for 42 years, six months and 19 days. *Vita Bartholomiae*, p. 322; cf. *VGF*, p. 321.

[139] *VSG*, pp. 122–3: 'Vix aliquid dicere poterant qui interfuerant: singultus enim et lacrime adherere fecerunt linguas suas faucibus suis; lacrimosa enim illa dies que tulit nobis patrem et pastorem nostrum, germanum et amicum. Nec qualem patrem habent uel amittunt ceteri in monasteriis subditi, sed qui omnes nos quotquot fuimus, quotquot fueramus genuit in uerbo euangelii et fouit ut nutricius, quemadmodum gallina congregat pullos suos sub alas.'; cf. Cor. 4:15; Matt. 23:27.

[140] *VSG*, pp. 122–124: 'sabbato ergo illo, pridie scilicet nonas Februarii, anno ab incarnationis dominice M.C.LXXX.IX., cum nox immutaretur in diem, dum celebrarentur laudes a conuentu, a tenebris huius seculi et laboribus mundi ad ueram lucem requiemque eternam migrauit.' Cf. *Vita Godrici*, p. 326.

Haselbury's illness spreads to the neighbouring faithful they flock to his bedside to weep over him and receive his dying blessing.[141] Similarly, the monks of Lindisfarne and Coldingham visit Bartholomew of Farne in his final days.[142] Godric of Finchale is visited by not just the monks of Durham, but also Cistercians and other men who wish to speak with him before he dies.[143]

The earlier *Lives* of Edward the Confessor demonstrate many of the common themes highlighted thus far, including the final sign of the saint's passing, and the presence of the community and their grief, which is contrasted with the joy of Edward. Ailred of Rievaulx includes an obituary in his *vita*, which records the length of Edward's reign. Ailred also recalls the king's virginity, by this point a defining feature of his sanctity, specifically in relation to his assumption into heaven.[144]

One final point worth noting is the saint's last words on the brink of death.[145] Sometimes these are spiritual in nature; for example, Ailred of Rievaulx offers a final allocution for his monks.[146] Other examples may be more practical. The importance of the selection of a successor has already been mentioned. The location of the body of the saint after death is another significant issue. This is clearly demonstrated in the *vita* of Robert of Béthune. Robert died in Rheims and on his deathbed was asked what should be done with his body after his death; initially the bishop humbly replies that he should be hidden in a deep ditch (*scrobem depressum*). However, upon seeing the confusion of his companions, Robert then proposes that the archbishop should be consulted to determine Robert's final resting place; William Wycombe records that the archbishop of Rheims says that Robert's body should be 'restored to his own church' (*redderent*

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[141] *Vita Wulfrici*, pp. 126–127.
[142] *Vita Bartholomaei*, p. 318.
[143] *Vita Godrici*, p. 323.
[144] Ailred, *Vita S. Edwardi*, col. 775.
[145] See, for example, Sigal, 'La mort des saints', pp. 26–27.
[146] *Vita Ailredi*, pp. 57–58.

ecclesie sue).[147] The following chapter describes the dispute between the cathedral clerks of Hereford and the monks of Rheims over the 'body of so great a bishop'; the authority of Robert's words on his deathbed therefore lends credence to Hereford's claim to his body and consequently cult. Similar events are recorded in the *Vita Wulfrici* in which the hermit Wulfric asks his friend Osbern the priest to bury his body on the spot as soon as he is dead, prophesying that otherwise a great dispute will arise; Osbern does not heed Wulfric's advice and a disagreement breaks out between the monks of Montacute and Osbern. Robert, bishop of Bath, eventually rules the case in favour of the priest.[148] The *vita,* written in the Cistercian abbey of Ford, another institution with which Wulfric had close ties, clearly legitimises this decision against the Montacute community by expressing Wulfric's own wish to be interred in his cell.[149]

While the standard motifs of the deathbed are repeated across the corpus, it is possible to detect different emphases and individualities between the texts. Within the *Lives* of monastic saints, there is a strong emphasis on representing adherence to constitutional regulations and liturgy within the deathbed scenes. For monastic episcopal saints, it is their monastic identity that is accentuated at the moment of death. The role of community is one that transcends vocation; death is rarely experienced alone. Finally, the importance of speeches near to death should be highlighted, particularly when the site of a corpse, usually the prime locus for any cultic activity, is in dispute.[150]

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[147] *VRB*, pp. 217–218.

[148] *Vita Wulfrici*, pp. 126–129.

[149] Pauline Matarasso, 'Introduction', in *The Life of Wulfric of Haselbury, Anchorite*, trans. by *eadem*, pp. 1–84 (pp. 1–3, 10–18, 30–31); Tom Licence, *Hermits and Recluses in English Society, 950–1200* (Oxford, 2011), p. 190ff.

[150] See Patrick J. Geary, *Furta Sacra: Thefts of Relics in the Central Middle Ages* (Rev. ed, Princeton, 1990).

Martyrdom

Not every saint had the dubious pleasure of dying from a lingering illness in his own bed. Some suffered the violent death of 'red' martyrs, sacrificing themselves for the cause of the Church. Martyrs were the first saints within the Christian church and their legends continued to have a marked impact upon the depiction of saints long after martyrdom became a rare privilege. Many of the fundamental aspects of the saintly death have their antecedents within accounts of martyrdom.

In this sample of twelfth-century saints there are only two red martyrs: Thomas Becket and William of Norwich. This section will demonstrate the aspects of death that are shared with confessor saints, despite the very dissimilar causes, while remaining sympathetic to the peculiarities present within these particular examples of martyrdom. Central themes identified include: prophecy of death; bravery and constancy in the face of martyrdom; and the details of the death itself.[151]

Although both martyrs, these two saints fit disparate models. The twelfth century saw the emergence of a new kind of martyr hagiography, initiated in England with the *vita* of child-saint William of Norwich (d. 1144), allegedly ritually murdered by the Jews. This text set the standard structure of 'blood libel' charges, in which Jews were accused of ritual murder, paving the way for further accusations in the thirteenth century.[152]

Thomas Becket's martyrdom was the essence of his claim to sainthood, and for his hagiographers his violent death scene was the culmination of their argument for his

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[151] Cf. Goodich, 'The Death of a Saint', p. 230.
[152] See John M. McCulloch, 'Jewish Ritual Murder: William of Norwich, Thomas of Monmouth, and the Early Dissemination of the Myth', *Speculum,* 72: 3 (1997), pp. 698–740. On William of Norwich see also Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, 'The Flow of Blood in Medieval Norwich', *Speculum,* 79: 1 (2004), pp. 26–65; Denise L. Despres, 'Adolescence and Sanctity: The Life and Passion of Saint William of Norwich', *The Journal of Religion*, 90 (2010), pp. 33–62.

sanctity. Becket's death has been the subject of a great deal of scholarly attention, from a variety of different approaches.[153] Michael Staunton in particular has made valuable progress in the examination of Becket's *vitae* as hagiographical texts, and his detailed consideration of the martyrdom draws out many important scriptural and hagiographical referents used by the hagiographers to frame his death.[154] Whilst an entire thesis could be dedicated to the death of Becket, my purpose here is to view it alongside other twelfth-century saintly deaths.

Premonition of death is again a central feature of martyr hagiography. Thomas of Monmouth records that William of Norwich's future martyrdom is hailed from before his birth.[155] Thomas reports that William's mother envisioned herself on a road where she found a fish at her feet; the fish had twelve fins on either side, which were red and dabbled with blood. She takes the fish to her bosom, whereupon it slips from her grasp and flies heavenwards. When she awakes she asks her father the meaning of the dream; he tells her that it means she is with child, and that child will be exalted in heaven and will attain this glory at the age of twelve.[156]

However, what Jennifer O'Reilly refers to as 'the stock device of dreams and visions' is used very sparingly within the Becket corpus.[157] William Fitzstephen and Edward Grim record a dream of Becket's mother in his infancy, although only Grim

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[153] The accounts of Becket's death are gathered and compared in Edwin Abbott, *St. Thomas of Canterbury: His Death and Miracles*, 2 vols. (London, 1898), I, pp. 11–219; For reconstructions of the events see Frank Barlow, *Thomas Becket* (London, 1986), pp. 238–50, William Urry, *Thomas Becket: His Last Days* (Stroud, 1999), pp. 100–139; Anne J. Duggan, *Thomas Becket* (London, 2004), pp. 209–13; On particular elements of the death see, Jennifer L. O'Reilly, 'The Double Martyrdom of Thomas Becket: Hagiography or History?', *Studies of the Medieval & Renaissance Association*, 7 (1985), pp. 183–247, and more recently Hugh M. Thomas, 'Shame, Masculinity, and the Death of Thomas Becket', *Speculum*, 87: 4 (2012), pp. 1050–1088.

[154] Michael Staunton, 'Martyrdom', *Becket and his Biographers*, pp. 184–215.

[155] Cf. *VSG*, pp. 10–13; *Life of Christina*, p. 34. See Bartlett, *WCD?*, p. 525.

[156] *VWN*, pp. 10–12. Cf. Child-saint St Kenelm who has a vision that portends his martyrdom. *Vita Kenelmi*, in *Three Eleventh-Century Anglo-Latin Saints' Lives*, ed. and trans. Rosalind C. Love (Oxford, 1995), pp. 49–89 (pp. 56–57).

[157] O'Reilly, 'The Double Martyrdom of Thomas Becket', p. 190.

elaborates upon its possible meaning. In the dream, she reprimands the child's nurse for not covering him in his cot and yet, when they go to check, he is covered by a quilt which is so large that it cannot be unfolded even in the whole of England.[158] Grim claims that the cloth was purple and interprets it as signifying the 'blood of the martyr innocently killed, which covered him in his passion as he lay dead, but is now spread through so many kingdoms and foreign nations, as this vision prefigured'.[159]

The hagiographers do offer prophetic interpretations of events in the run up to Becket's murder. For example, in 1169 Henry II came as a pilgrim to the shrine at Montmartre, the traditional site of St Denis's martyrdom, where he sought to make terms with Becket. Herbert of Bosham records that, at this meeting, one member of the archbishop's household noted the ominous portent of the king refusing to give Becket the kiss of peace. This prophecy is later seen fulfilled in Thomas's dying invocation of the martyred bishop St Denis.[160] Becket himself is also represented with foreknowledge of what is to come. William Fitzstephen records Becket's prophetic words upon leaving King Louis, the bishop of Paris, and Henry. Becket tells Louis that he is going to England to 'play for heads' and, even more explicitly, to the bishop of Paris, that 'I am going to England to die.'[161] His death is also prophesised by a mad woman who cries out repeatedly when Becket is processing through London: 'Archbishop, watch out for the knife!'[162] The motif of premonition is also clearly articulated in Benedict of Peterborough's *passio*. In a gloss on the martyrdom towards the start of the text, Becket says:

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[158] MTB, 3. 14; See also, MTB, 4. 4.

[159] MTB, 2. 358 (LTB, p. 41): '*purpuram pretiosam sanguinem interpretamur martyris innocenter occisi, quo perfusus in passione jacuit et velatus, nunc vero per tot terrarum regna exterasque nationes extensum est, secundum quod praecedens visio figuravit.*'

[160] MTB, 3. 445–9, 499.

[161] MTB, 3. 116.

[162] MTB, 3. 123: '*Archiepiscope, cave a cutello!*' For foreknowledge see also William of Canterbury and Edward Grim, MTB, 1. 113–15; 2. 427.

> "Let them find me prepared to die; let them do what they
> want to do. I know indeed, my son, and am certain that I
> shall die by arms. All the same, they will not kill me
> outside my church." This surely proves that he had
> foreknowledge, not only of his passion, but also of the
> manner and the place?[163]

Becket is consistently depicted with the ability to prophesy his own death, and in many cases the exact nature and location.

Armed with this foresight, preparations may be undertaken for the moment of consummation. William Fitzstephen records how Becket contemplated all the signs of his martyrdom and so 'from day to day he prepared himself, more prodigal in almsgiving, more devoted in prayer, more anxious in the care of his soul.' [164] Numerous times when speaking with his clerks Becket had said that the matter would not be brought to completion without bloodshed, and that he would stand by the Church's cause until death.[165] Other accounts agree that Becket lived out the rest of his life in holiness and strengthened his spirit to stand immobile in defence of the Church's rights.[166] Some hagiographers present Becket referring directly to his martyrdom in the sermon he delivers on Christmas day, his last public act; he points to Archbishop Ælfeah, declaring that the church of Canterbury already has one martyr, and might soon have another.[167]

Although it was adopted into the narratives of confessor saints, constancy in the face of death originated within the martyr tradition.[168] William of Norwich stands out in comparison to other martyrs because he remains unaware of his future fate; the innocence of his childhood is thus compounded by the innocence of his martyrdom, and

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[163] MTB, 2. 18: "'Paratum me ad mortem invenient; faciant quod facere voluerint. Scio quidem, fili me, et certus sum per arma me moriturum. Veruntamen extra ecclesiam mea non occident me." Nonne et his verbis non solum passionis suae, sed et modi et loci praescius fuisse comprobatur.'
[164] MTB, 3.126–7.
[165] *Ibid*.
[166] MTB, 2. 427; 4. 69.
[167] MTB, 3. 130; 2. 43; 3. 484.
[168] See Staunton, 'Martyrdom', pp. 194, 197; Goodich, 'The Death of a Saint', p. 230.

enhances the horror of the tortures inflicted upon William during his death scene.[169]

Becket is more typical of other martyr saints as his *vitae* are permeated with descriptions of his constancy in the run up to his martyrdom. William Fitzstephen and Edward Grim give similar accounts of the initial interview between the archbishop and the knights:

> You threaten me in vain; if all the swords of England were ready for my head, your terrors cannot move me from the observation of God's justice and obedience to the lord pope. Foot to foot you will find me in the battle of the Lord […] If it is allowed to me to discharge my priesthood in peace, I think it good; if it is not, let the will of God be.[170]

When the knights leave the chamber to arm themselves they ask the monks and clerks who are present to guard the archbishop. Benedict of Peterborough records that Thomas replies: 'What is this? Do you think I want to slip away by escape? Not for the king, not for anyone living will I take to flight. I have not come to flee, but to await the fury of the aggressors and the malice of the impious.'[171] Others claim he followed them to the door placing his hand on his neck: 'Here, here you will find me.'[172]

Most of Becket's hagiographers describe how the knights returned armed only to find the doors barred, and were forced to break through a partition. Becket wished to remain where he was, but was persuaded, or forced, to enter the cathedral. Grim gives the most extended account. He records that the servants and almost all the clerks, terrified by the uproarious din, scattered like 'sheep before wolves'. Those who

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[169] *VWN*, pp. 19–21. This can be compared to the *Life* of another child–martyr, the tenth-century Prince Kenelm who demonstrates bravery and steadfastness, even directing his killer to the proper place to carry out the martyrdom, *Vita Kenelmi*, pp. 58–61. See also constancy of other martyrs, for example, Osbern of Canterbury, *Vita S. Elphegi*, *PL*, 149, col. 382; Abbo of Fleury, *Vita S. Edmundi*, in *Three Lives of English Saints*, ed. Michael Winterbottom (Toronto, 1971), p. 75.

[170] MTB, 3.134–5: 'Frustra mihi minanimi; si omnes gladii Angliae capiti me immineant, ab observatione justitiae Dei et obedientia domini papae terrores vestri non me dimovere poterunt. Pede ad pedem me reperietis in Domini proelio […] Si liceat mihi in pace fungi sacerdotio meo, bonum est mihi; si minus, fiat de me voluntas Dei.' Cf. MTB, 4. 72.

[171] MTB, 2. 433.

[172] MTB, 2. 8; Cf. MTB, 1. 130.

remained called out for Becket to flee into the church, but he refused, mindful of his

former promise that he would not run away from his killers for fear of death. Grim goes

on to say that Becket had 'for a long time burned with the love of martyrdom'. Having

attained an opportunity to fulfil this desire, Becket feared that if he fled into the church,

the moment would be deferred, or even lost. Becket instead remained stationary,

'determined to await the happy hour of his consummation which he had longed for with

many sighs and sought with much devotion' until he was physically cajoled into the

cathedral.[173] A similar desire and determination feature in the other accounts.[174] The

desire is an especially important part of the martyr narrative; a reluctant martyr is not

particularly saintly. Similarly, other martyrs have a chance to escape but choose not to,

preferring to die in God's name.[175] There are certainly resonances with confessor saints

who wish to die as martyrs, or generally long for death; the difference here is that

Becket's constancy appears all the more vivid because of the violent death that is to

come.

The *vitae* of martyred saints usually include a detailed description of the death,

which by definition differs fundamentally from the deaths of confessor saints. Thomas

of Monmouth records the particulars of the torture inflicted on William of Norwich,

describing him as a lamb led to the slaughter, a commonly utilised image.[176] The Jews

seize him whilst he is eating and insert an instrument of torture known as a teazle into

his mouth, binding it around his jaws with straps and tight knots. Then they tie a piece

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[173] MTB, 2. 433–4: 'Mansit ille immobilis minoris reverentiae loco, felicem illam ac multis praeoptatam suspiriis, multa devotione quaesitam, consummationis suae horam exspectare deliberans'.

[174] MTB, 1. 131–2; 2. 9–11; 3. 137–9; 4. 74, 129.

[175] See, for example, Stephan of Novara, *Passio maior S. Kyliani et sociorum eius*, ed., Franz Emmerich, *Der Heilige Kilian: Regionarbischof und Martyrer* (Würzburg, 1896), pp. 11-25 (c. 10, p. 17.). Benedict of Peterborough records how Becket choose to face his fate rather than fleeing, or calling in an army, just as Christ refused to call for the 12 legions of angels when he could have done so: MTB, 2. 17–19; Cf. Matt 26:63.

[176] Cf. *Vita Kenelmi*, pp. 58–59; MTB 2. 437.

of knotted rope around his head very tightly in a 'dreadful engine of torture'.[177] Then, not yet content, the torturers shave his head and stab it with countless thorn points; given the ritualistic crucifixion that consummates William's martyrdom, this clearly mirrors Christ's crown of thorns.[178] Thomas focuses on the evil malice of the Jews: 'And so cruel were they and so eager to inflict pain that it was difficult to say if they were more cruel or more ingenious in their tortures.'[179] Vying with one another to finish the boy off, the Jews then hang William on a cross. Thomas claims to have been to the house where the murder took place and to have observed the marks where the cross was fixed; further, he says, when the body was discovered it was seen to have puncture wounds.[180] Christ's death, the ultimate comparison for martyr saints, is plainly simulated in William's martyrdom.

Becket's murder is the most dramatic scene of twelfth-century hagiography, and one of the most studied. Therefore my focus here is to explore a few central points, namely Becket's continued constancy, the Christological context and exegesis at the moment of death. The location of Becket's death is significant, although it varies between accounts. John of Salisbury and the account of Anonymous II place the murder in front of the altar.[181] Others place it elsewhere: Roger of Pontigny says it occurred near the altar of St Benedict and William of Canterbury says before the icon of the blessed Mary.[182] The eagerness of some of the hagiographers to place Becket's

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[177] *VWN*, p. 20: 'insolitum tormenti genus.'
[178] *Ibid*., pp. 20–21.
[179] *Ibid*., p. 21: 'Adeoque crudeles atque promptissimi in inferenda erant pena ut uix discerneres utrum crudeliores siue ad torquendum forent promptiores.'
[180] *VWN*, p. 21.
[181] MTB, 2. 319; 4. 29; Cf. MTB, 3. 498–499. Similarly in most visual representations, Staunton, 'Martyrdom', p. 195
[182] MTB, 4, 129; 1. 132–3.

murder before the altar can be explained by its symbolism in constructing the martyrdom as sacrifice.[183]

Aside from such details, most accounts agree on the basic pattern of events which occurred in Canterbury cathedral. The *vita* most probably written by Roger of Pontigny gives the most concise narrative of events: Becket knew that his martyrdom was imminent and joined his hands in prayer, commending himself to God, St Denis and St Ælfeah. As he was doing this, one of the knights, Reginald, struck him powerfully on the side of his head and knocked off the cap. Roger then records Edward Grim's valiant attempt to protect Becket, and how William de Tracy struck the fatal blow, rendering Becket prone on the pavement. Hugh Mauclerk is branded as the most wicked of all men, laying his foot upon Becket's neck and thrusting the point of his sword into his head to spread his brains onto the pavement, crying out, 'Let us go, the traitor is dead.'[184] The other accounts follow the same basic pattern of events, but offer more reflection on their significance. Most echo the reported dedication made by Becket at the moment of his death; most also refer to the Virgin Mary and simply mention the patron saints of Canterbury, rather than specifically Ælfeah. Many also reflect the image of Becket either bending in prayer, offering his neck to the killers, or both.[185]

All emphasise Becket's constancy in the face of martyrdom. Edward Grim describes him as a 'sacrificial lamb', accepting the first blow. He records how the same blow almost cut off his own arm as he stood by the archbishop, as everyone else fled. The fear of Becket's companions at the moment of death, in comparison to his own (and in this case Edward Grim's) stoicism, can be compared to the contrast between the grief

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[183] Staunton, 'Martyrdom', pp. 195–199, 207–211.
[184] MTB, 4. 76–7.
[185] MTB,1.133; 2. 230, 437; 3. 141; 4. 131.

of the community around a confessor saint and the saint's own patience in death. Grim records that Becket offered his body to the persecutors, so that he preserved unharmed his head, 'that is his soul and the Church […] Then he received another blow in the head but still remained immoveable. But at the third blow the stricken martyr bent his knees and elbows, offering himself as a living sacrifice, saying in a low voice, "For the name of Jesus and the well-being of the Church I am prepared to embrace death."'[186]

The scattering of Becket's brains upon the pavement of the cathedral is for some hagiographers an horrific event: John of Salisbury declares that the knights were more monstrous than the crucifiers of Christ.[187] Other hagiographers interpret the scene as symbolising the relationship between Becket's life and death.[188] Edward Grim records that, 'the blood white from the brain, and the brain equally red from the blood, brightened the floor with the colours of the lily and the rose, the Virgin and Mother, and the life and death of the confessor and martyr.'[189] William Fitzstephen offers a longer gloss:

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[186] MTB, 2. 437 (LTB, pp. 202–203): 'animam scilicet vel ecclesiam […] Deinde alio ictu in capite recepto adhuc quoque permansit immobilis. Tertio vero percussus martyr genua flexit et cubitos, seipsum hostiam viventem offerendo, dicens submissa voce. "Pro nomine Jesu et ecclesiae tuitione mortem amplecti paratus sum.'; Cf. Rom. 12:1.
[187] MTB, 2.320.
[188] See Staunton, 'Martyrdom', p. 198; O'Reilly, 'The Double Martyrdom'.
[189] MTB, 2. 437–8: 'ut sanguis albens ex cerebro, cerebrum nihilominus rubens ex sanguine, lilli et rosae coloribus virginis et matris ecclesiae faciem confessoris et martyris vita et morte.'

> Certainly to the flowers of the Church neither lilies nor roses are lacking, and in the passion of the blessed Thomas with the cruel point of the sword was extracted both the white brain and the red blood. Surely true and most certain signs, that the pastor of Christ's sheep, his archbishop and agonist, confessor and martyr laid down his life for his people, to get hold of the double stole from the Lord, the white from the archiepiscopacy faithfully administered, the purple from the martyrdom faithfully consummated.[190]

As O'Reilly illustrates, in patristic exegesis the white lily represents the blameless life of the confessor and the red rose the violent death of the martyr.[191] The immediacy of Becket's claim to sanctity rested on his martyrdom and, as suggested, the hagiographers had to work to construct an image of sanctity for Becket throughout his life. Thus at the moment of death his hagiographers symbolically represent Becket as martyr and confessor, combining the nature of Becket's life and death.

The most potent tool available to Becket's hagiographers was to paint him in the image of Christ, the ultimate martyr.[192] As has been seen, confessors are also sometimes cast in Christ's image and readings from his Passion often occur at the deathbed of confessor saints. Nonetheless, the parallel carries far more impact in the context of a violent death. The imagery used throughout the narrative of Becket's martyrdom, employed by all his hagiographers, reflects central tropes of the Passion of Christ, and other significant Scriptural moments. For example, in the account given

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[190] MTB, 3.143: 'Equidem floribus ecclesiae nec lilia desunt nec rosae, et in beati Thomae passione cum aevo extragitur mucrone et cerebrum candens et sanguis rubena. Vera nempe et certissima signa, quod ovium Christi pastor et pro eis animam poneret archiepiscopus et agonista, confessor et martyr, duplicem stolam a Domino percepturus, et de archiepiscopio fideliter administrato candidam, et de martyrio feliciter consummato purpuream.' (Translation Staunton, *Becket and his Biographers*, p. 198); cf. Herbert of Bosham, MTB, 3.523.

[191] O'Reilly, '*Candidus et Rubicundus*'; O'Reilly, 'The Double Martyrdom', esp. p. 197. On colour symbolism in saintly typology see Clare Stancliffe 'Red, White and Blue Martyrdom', pp. 21–46; and Thomas S. Freeman 'Introduction: Over their Dead Bodies: Concepts of Martyrdom in Late-Medieval and Early-Modern England', in *Martyrs and Martyrdom in England, c.1400–1700*, ed. *idem* and Thomas F. Mayer (Woodbridge, 2007), pp. 1–34. On the influence of Becket in this discourse see: Mesley, 'The Construction of Episcopal Identity', pp. 283–285.

[192] Staunton draws out the consistent comparisons made by Becket's hagiographers with Christ, 'Martyrdom', *passim*.

above from Edward Grim's *vita*, Grim deploys a diverse range of Christological metaphors; the motifs of the shepherd and sacrificial lamb, priest and victim, and the body offered to preserve the head, all recall Christ's passion, and are similarly used by other authors.[193]

What is particularly unusual about Becket's hagiography is that, despite the traditional imagery of martyrdom, there is little direct comparison between Becket and other martyrs.[194] To most of his hagiographers Becket is the greatest of all martyrs: 'To whom did ever the title of martyr stand out more glorious?' Benedict of Peterborough even goes as far as to say, 'We do not believe that any other martyr's passion was so similar to that of the Lord'.[195] In William of Canterbury's *Life* the comparison to Christ is made from the outset in an extended passage in which William lists the ways in which their deaths were similar.[196]

Many of the biographers go a step further and, following in the footsteps of John of Salisbury's letter *Ex insperato,* which became the basis of his *vita*, claim that the murder of Thomas was, in some respects, a greater crime than the killing of Jesus.[197] John highlights that the executioners of Jesus did not defile the city or pollute the Sabbath; Becket was murdered not just within the city boundaries, but inside a Church, and on a day that was part of the Christmas festival. Christ was killed by non-Christians, and tried by their law, whereas Becket was murdered by Christians, who professed to God's law. Like Christ, Becket was betrayed by disciples; John depicts those who planned Becket's execution as outweighing the wickedness of those who

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[193] For extended analysis see Staunton, 'Martyrdom', *passim*, but esp. pp. 196–197, 207–211.

[194] Staunton, 'Martyrdom', p. 212.

[195] MTB, 2. 14, 18–19: 'Cui unquam martyri titulus extitit gloriosior?'... 'Nec ullius martyris passionem facile credimus inveniri, quae passioni Dominicae tanta similitudine respondere videatur.'; See also MTB, 3. 517.

[196] MTB, 1. 1–2.

[197] Written to his friend the bishop of Poitiers in 1171.

accused Christ, because they do not allow Becket to face judgement and offer him the chance to answer his accusers.[198] In his *vita* John also claims that, in spreading Becket's brains on the pavement, the murderers were worse than the crucifiers of Christ who did not break his legs once they knew he was dead.[199] Other hagiographers make similar remarks about the extraordinary nature of Becket's death.[200]

The martyrs of twelfth-century England are in many ways idiosyncratic, one reflecting future hagiographic trends and the other an extreme and dramatic tale of Church-king relations gone wrong. Of all the texts examined, that of William of Norwich is the one with the fewest parallels to other *Lives*. This may be attributed to the innovative plot of the text. The lack of foreknowledge makes William of Norwich unusual, but makes the event even more shocking when contrasted to William's childhood innocence. Constancy is a particularly important theme within the Becket *Lives*: stoicism in the face of adversity, be that a raging fever or a sharp sword, is a crucial trait of dying saints. Welcoming death and preparing for the moment, whilst their companions stand by grieving or aghast, are also themes shared between the Becket canon and the other *Lives*. However, the predominant *leitmotif* within the descriptions of Becket's death is the emphasis on the parallel to Christ, the ultimate martyr.

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[198] *The Letters of John of Salisbury: Volume Two The Later Letters (1163-1180)*, ed. and trans. W. J. Milnor and C. N. L. Brooke (Oxford, 1979), no. 305, pp. 736–9. See Staunton, 'Martyrdom', pp. 214–215.
[199] MTB, 2. 320; John 19:33.
[200] MTB, 3. 143, 510.

Post-mortem: from death to entombment

The concluding section of this chapter will consider the journey of the corpse from death to burial. Three main points will be explored: the appearance of the body in death, preparation of the body for burial, and accounts of the funeral.

As demonstrated in the first chapter, the physical appearance of a saint could carry important symbolic meaning. Appearance becomes an especially important after death; the perfection of the saintly soul is expressed through the perfection of the saintly body.[201] Two main themes emerge. Often the body is described as possessing qualities similar to those in life, with the saint appearing asleep rather than dead.[202] The saintly corpse can also be represented as glowing, filled with light, or white in colour. The key scriptural model for the glowing body in death was the Transfiguration, in which Christ appeared after his death in radiant glory to three of his disciples.[203] As already highlighted, more generally white denoted purity and the spotlessness of a holy life.[204] Recording such a phenomenon was thus a means of identifying the saint with Christ, and a visible manifestation of the assumption of the soul into Heaven.[205]

Such descriptions permeate the corpus. For example, in the second part of his text the Anonymous biographer of Edward uses the description of Edward's corpse as evidence of his soul journeying to God:

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[201] See Sigal, 'La mort des saints', p. 32.
[202] Cf., for example, Sigal. 'La mort des saints', pp. 31–32; Boglioni, 'La scène de la mort', p. 200.
[203] Matthew 17: 1–9, Mark 9: 2–8, Luke 9: 28–36.
[204] See above pp. 23–24 (and p. 24, n. 21).
[205] See Smith, 'Death and Transfiguration', p. 123; cf. Goodich, 'The Death of a Saint', p. 236 and Bartlett, *WCD?*, p. 534.

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> Then could be seen in the dead body the glory of a soul departing to God. For the flesh of his face blushed like a rose, the adjacent beard gleamed like a lily, his hands, laid out straight, whitened, and were a sign that his whole body was given not to death but to favourable sleep.[206]

Edward is represented as demonstrating the characteristics of life, even in death. His saintliness is emphasised by scriptural allusions to the rose and the lily. His hagiographer clearly reads his corporeal appearance as evidence for his assumption into heaven. In Ailred's description of Edward's death the pure light radiating from Edward's body also becomes an outward confirmation of his virginity:

> […] when suddenly the body offered glowing evidence of his future beautitude, for a heavenly rosiness shone on his face, and drew the eyes of all who were present. Amazed, they stripped the body, and its glory increased their amazement, for it shone with such a pure light that the splendour of his virginity could not escape even the most incredulous.[207]

Other saints demonstrate similar physical properties in death. The emphasis is always on whiteness or perfection of appearance, and for some the lack of bodily decay is emphasised by an aromatic perfume.[208] Walter Daniel gives one of the more extended descriptions of the corpse in death in the *Vita Ailredi.* He says:

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[206] Anonymous, *Vita Ædwardi*, pp. 124–125: 'Erat tunc uidere in defuncto corpore gloriam migrantis ad deum animae, cum scilicet caro faciei ut rosa ruberet, subiecta barba ut lilium canderet, manus suo ordine directae albescerent, totumque corpus non morti sed fausto sopori traditum signarent.' St Margaret is described in a very similar way, *Vita Margaretae*, Col. 0335: 'Et quod mirum est, faciem ejus, quae more morientium tota in morte palluerat, ita post mortem rubor cum candore permixtus perfuderat, ut non mortua, sed dormiens credi potuisset.'; cf. Gregory of Tours' description of his ancestor, Gregory of Langres, in death cited in Peter Brown, *Cult of Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity*, p. 77.

[207] Ailred, *Vita S. Edwardi*, col. 776 (p. 94): 'cum subito cadaver exanime quoddam futurae beatitudinis praeferret insigne, cujus vultus coelesti rubore perfusus omnium assistentium in se convertebat aspectus. Mirantur omnes, sed nudati corporis gloria auxit admirationem quod niveo candore coruscans ita resplenduit, ut virginitatis illius decus etiam incredulos latere non posset.'

[208] On odour see Smith, 'Death and Transfiguration', p. 32; Goodich, 'The Death of a Saint', p. 236; Bartlett, *WCD?*, pp. 534–535; Vauchez, *Sainthood,* p. 427.

> When his body was laid naked before us to be washed, we
> saw how the glory to come had been revealed in the father.
> His flesh was clearer than glass, whiter than snow, as if his
> members were those of a boy five years old, without a
> trace of stain, but altogether sweet, and composed and
> pleasant. There was no loss of hair to make him bald, his
> long illness had caused no distortion, fasting no pallor,
> tears had not bleared his eyes. Perfect in every part of his
> body, the dead father shone like a carbuncle, was fragrant
> as incense, pure and immaculate in the radiance of his
> flesh as a child.[209]

Descriptions such as this are ubiquitous throughout hagiography and Daniel openly admits that this passage is modelled on St Martin of Tours, who was a particularly key hagiographical model for the appearance of the posthumous saintly body.[210]

It is Adam of Eynsham who makes the most judicious use of St Martin as a hagiographical comparator, especially in his description of Hugh of Lincoln's post-mortem appearance. Adam says that the purity (*puritatem*) and brilliance (*decorum*) of Martin's corpse were reflected in Hugh's dead body with an enhanced splendour. Like Martin's it was 'clearer than glass, whiter than milk'.[211] Adam later records that when he stripped the body in readiness for pre-burial preparations, 'its cleanness and whiteness were almost unbelievable'.[212] The most detailed description of Hugh's appearance in death is included in the narrative of his funeral. His body is described as miraculously fresh, 'white and beautiful as if he had risen from the dead instead of

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[209] *Vita Ailredi*, p. 62: 'Cum autem corpus eius ad lauandum delatum fuisset et nudatum coram nobis, uidimus quodamodo futuram gloriam reuelatam in patre, cuius caro uitro purior, niue candidior, quasi quinquennis pueri membra induerat, que ne parue quidem macule neuus fuscabat, set erant omnia plena dulcedinis decoris et delectacionis. Neque defeccio capillorum caluum fecerat eum nec longa infirmitas curuum, nec ieiunia pallidum nec lacrime lippum set, integerrimis partibus corporis existentibus, lucebat pater defunctus ut carbunculus, ut thus redolebat, apparebat in candore carnis ut puerulus purus et inmaculantus.'

[210] Daniel, 'Letter to Maurice', p. 77.

[211] *MVSH*, II, p. 206. Cf. Sulpicius Severus, *Epistula III*, col. 183–184 (interpolated text).

[212] *Ibid*., p. 218: 'Quod ubi nudatum est, supra quam credi posset mundum multoque nitore conspicuum apparebat.'

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having been dead for so many days.'[213] There were no traces of discolouration, pallor, shrinking or darkening, but rather a 'milk-whiteness or lily-whiteness'.[214] Adam describes how the body remained supple, and that Hugh looked as if he were sleeping, rather than dead.[215] He then records how Hugh's face miraculously appeared to take on a rosy hue, again utilising the symbolism of red and white colouration to enhance sanctity.[216] The perfection of the body in death can sometimes even entail a change in physical appearance. For example, in the *vita* of Wulfstan of Worcester not only is his corpse gleaming (*prefulgidum*) and milk-white (*lacteum*), but 'his nose, excessively prominent while he lived, retreated and glowed so beautifully in death that those who saw it marvelled.'[217]

In the case of Thomas Becket, the descriptions of his body immediately post-mortem also serve to emphasise his constancy. William Fitzstephen observes that, through everything, 'the dead man's countenance reflected his serene and constant mind.'[218] William of Canterbury records that in death Becket seemed by his appearance to be only sleeping. His limbs did not tremble, there was no stiffness in the body, nor any flowing from his mouth or nose the whole night: 'the suppleness of his fingers, the composition of his limbs, the joy and grace of his countenance, foreshadowed his glorification, if either his life or the cause of the passion said nothing.'[219] Herbert of Bosham also describes the body of Becket as it was placed on the altar after his death. The part of his head that had been cut off was reattached, and astoundingly Becket's

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[213] *Ibid*., p. 228: 'Caro namque eius ita niueo quodam et uniformi candor nitescebat ut quoddam resurrectionis decus iam tot diebus extincta manifeste preferret.'

[214] *Ibid*., p. 229: 'lacteum aut potius liliosum renitebat'

[215] *Ibid*.; Cf. *Vita Margaretae*, p. 181; MTB, 1. 135–6.

[216] *MVSH*., p. 230.

[217] *VSW*, pp. 142–145: 'Denique nasus, qui uiuenti citra modum protuberabat, ita pulchre defuncto subsedit et incanduit ut mirum uisentibus esset.' (Translation amended.) See also Gundulf of Rochester whose white and shining appearance is attributed to his abundance of tears and holy life. *Vita Gundulfi*, p. 68 and Godric of Finchale whose face is the same in death as in life, *VGF*, p. 326.

[218] MTB, 3. 147: 'Ille etiam adhuc animi dulcedenim et constantiam in vultu praeferebat.'

[219] MTB, 1. 135–6.

face did not appear pallid or wrinkled, nor did his body seem drooping or rigid. Mirroring William of Canterbury, Herbert says that Becket looked more like he was sleeping:

> This was the grace, this beauty of the whole body, this vivacity of the face, this happiness, the hilarity of the face was brightened, rather now anointed in oil. This, as we have said above, this was the glory of his face when he first enters the church on his return from exile, but now in his departure going home consummated.[220]

Whilst these descriptions of the martyr's body in death bear many similarities to those of the confessor saints, the hagiographers heighten the impact of the violent martyr's death by juxtaposing it with the peaceful, life-like corpse of the murdered saint.

Alongside a description of the corpse, hagiographers may detail the preparation of the body for burial. This normally consists of the practice of washing, and then in some cases anointing, and wrapping.[221] While some *vitae* of monastic saints indicate that the body was prepared 'according to custom', thus highlighting the wider application of these funerary practices, the post-mortem preparation of the body also often reflects the saint's standing in the world or the Church, rather than specifically their monastic identity. For example, Anselm is washed 'according to custom' (*ex more*) and then anointed with balsam before being clothed in the vestments and the habit of an archbishop and carried into chapel. Similarly, it is recorded that Gundulf is washed and clothed in his episcopal garments.[222] These regular saints may die as monks, but they are buried as bishops. Likewise, other saints are adorned in the appropriate clothing. Waltheof of Melrose is washed according to custom and clothed

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[220] MTB, 3. 520: 'Haec (inquam) fuit gratia, hic decor totius corporis, haec faciei vivacitas, haec jocunditas, haec hilaritas exhilarati, immo jam impinguati, in oleo. Haec, (ut supra nos dixisse meminimus,) haec fuit gloria vultus ejus reversi ab exsilio in primo ecclesiae suae ingressu inchoata, nunc vero in egressu repatriante ipso consummate'. (Translation from Staunton, *Becket and his Biographers*, p. 211.)

[221] For washing see *Vita Ailredi*, p. 62; *VSW*, pp. 142–3. Washing the corpse, in particular, was a standard Christian burial practice.

[222] *Vita Gundulfi*, p. 68.

in a monk's habit; there is then a debate about whether or not he should be adorned in his vestments, 'as they had read of Blessed Bernard' (*sicut de beato Bernardo legerant*). It is not clear whether a decision is reached, but the body is wrapped in waxed cloths (*pannus inceratus*) covering the tunic and cowl and the body is carried into the church.[223] Gilbert of Sempringham is also washed and clothed in priestly vestments before he is interred.[224] The royal saints similarly receive treatment suited to their special status in life. Edward and Margaret are both wrapped (*involvitur*), Edward in fine linen and precious cloth and Margaret 'as befitted a queen' (*ut reginam decebat*).[225]

Hugh of Lincoln's *vita* stands out amongst the *Lives* for its detailed description of the preparation for burial. As Hugh has to be carried the long distance between London and Lincoln between death and burial, it is thought necessary to disembowel the body to prevent it from decaying on the way.[226] Adam of Eynsham then records how, despite some objections to the disembowelling, God obviously willed it to be done as when the surgeon cut his corpse open 'no water or stool was found, and they [the bowels] were as clean and immaculate as if someone had already carefully washed and wiped them.'[227] Adam then says that those who observed this thought it amazing (*mirabile*), but that certain people present made light of the miracle declaring that it was a result of Hugh's abstinence and a 'violent attack of dysentery' (*tanti uis dissenterie*), which had acted as a purgative. Adam accepts that this may be the case, but asserts that Hugh's body resembled that of St Martin's as the outer skin was 'whiter than milk' (*exercitus quidem lacte candidior*) and that his internal organs 'shone like glass' (*extra*

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[223] *Vita Waldevi*, pp. 161–162 (p. 311).
[224] *VSG*, pp. 128–9.
[225] Ailred, *Vita S. Edwardi*, col. 776; *Vita Margaretae*, p. 181
[226] *MVSH*, II, p. 218.
[227] *Ibid*., p. 219. 'Et quidem tunc, ubi manu cirurgica ipsa interaneorum secreta patuerunt, inuenta sunt nichil superflue collectionis, nil prorsus concreti, ut assolet, humoris intra se retinentia, set tali quodam purissimo nitore prelucebat ac si plurima cuiusbet hominis diligentia abluta essent et undique purgata.'

vitro purior), so that he could rightly be called 'the pearl of priests' (*gemma sacerdotum*).[228] This passage provides an excellent example of medicine and miracle side by side. The body is then embalmed with sweet spices and the procession begins its journey to Lincoln.

Sometimes the sanctity of the recently deceased is affirmed immediately with a miraculous sign during this preparation. For example, Anselm's sanctity is confirmed whilst the monks are undertaking post-mortem arrangements when an abundance of balsam is miraculously provided for anointing the body; a similar phenomenon occurs in the *vita* of Ailred of Rievaulx.[229] Anselm's coffin is also miraculous: upon discovering that the coffin is too small for Anselm, one of the monks draws the staff of the bishop of Rochester over the casket, which then wondrously expands to fit Anselm's body.[230]

The funeral of the saint is often presented as a moment when people of all levels of society come together in commemoration.[231] The funeral of Edward the Confessor attracted persons from across the breadth of society: according to Ailred, 'bishops arrived, priests and a great concourse of clergy; the leaders of the kingdom, earls and other nobles collected, and battalions of monks congregated. An immense crowd of both sexes gathered from villages and towns for the king's funeral.'[232] His Anonymous biographer gives fewer details, but does mention that the funeral was arranged 'amid the boundless sorrow of all men' and describes the corpse as 'washed by his country's tears.'[233]

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[228] *MVSH*, II, p. 219. The editors have favoured 'pearl' over 'gem' as a translation.
[229] *VA*, pp. 143–4; *Vita Ailredi*, pp. 63–64.
[230] *VA*, pp. 144–145.
[231] Cf. Goodrich, 'The Death of a Saint', p. 228.
[232] Ailred, *Vita S. Edwardi*, col. 776.
[233] Anonymous, *Vita Ædwardi*, pp. 126–7

A similar sense of society-wide participation in the mourning process is seen within Wulfstan of Worcester's *vita*. The mourners' genuine emotions are emphasised, and Wulfstan's passing is marked as a critical point in the history of England: 'It was no superficial or pretend weeping, genuine were the tears forced by their sobs, as they proclaimed in one man's death the collapse of religion and the disaster to England.'[234] His hagiographer comments that it is difficult to tell who wept the more just tears, the clergy or the people:

> the former bewailing the pastor for their protection, the latter the teacher for the instruction they had lost; the old or the young, the former missing his ripeness, the latter his sweet character; the rich or the poor, the former praising his abstinence from riches, the latter his generous expenditure.[235]

Emphasising the widespread involvement of society at the funeral was important for demonstrating the popularity of the saint, and consequently for gaining recognition, and subsequent cultic development. These descriptions are comparable to the popular acclaim, particularly amongst the common people and paupers, which met Becket in 1170 upon his return to London and on his way to Canterbury.[236]

Bishop Hugh of Lincoln's funeral appears a similarly grand affair. In a chapter directly comparing Hugh and St Martin, Adam of Eynsham essentially puts the saints into funereal competition. Adam records that the grandeur of Hugh's funeral defied description and that, although there were fewer monks and nuns from monastic orders present than had attended the funeral of St Martin, this was compensated for by the presence of 'persons of higher rank'; Adam records the attendance of three archbishops,

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[234] *VSW*, pp. 146–7: 'Nec erat simplex fletus aut simulatus, sed exprimebantur ueris singultibus lacrimae, religionis ruinam, patriae miseriam in uno testantes homine.'; Cf. WM, *VD*, pp. 294–295.

[235] *VSW*, pp. 146–147: 'dum hic pro tutela pastorem, ille pro disciplina doctorem clamaret; senes an pueri, dum hi maturitatem, hi dulcedinem desiderarent; diuites an pauperes, dum isti opum abstinentiam, illi expensarum munificentiam predicarent.'; Cf. *Vita Gundulfi*, p. 68 and *VGF*, p. 327ff.

[236] For example, MTB, 3. 476–80.

fourteen bishops, many earls and two kings, 'not to mention a multitude of humbler folk, which no-one could number.'[237] Later, in his narrative proper, Adam reiterates the variety of people present, and expounds the sorrow of the mourners. In particular, the king of Scotland, overcome by emotion, is unable to approach the coffin as others carry it into the cathedral.[238] Gilbert of Sempringham, despite not being a bishop, is given a similar send off. The funeral rites were celebrated over four days until all the priors and prioresses of the Order could arrive for the burial of their 'noble father'. His hagiographer records that if the other representatives of the Order were also counted then they totalled more than 2,200. On the fourth day abbots, priors and religious of both sexes, layfolk both noble and wealthy, and countless other people came flooding to partake in Gilbert's funeral.[239] The funerary narratives are again a moment where the saint's public, popular identity is foregrounded; humility is no longer so important, as the popularity of the holy person must be proved in order to bolster his saintly reputation.

The final resting place of a saint is of paramount importance, as it usually becomes the prime site for the cult; the frequency of squabbling over the location of a saint's corporeal remains emphasises its significance.[240] As highlighted earlier, some of the saints in this sample foresee the disputes that are to take place over their bodies.[241] The *vitae* often specify the location of the saint's tomb, and sometimes offer a description of it. Gilbert of Sempringham's tomb is especially noteworthy, reflecting the double nature of the Gilbertine Order. It was set between the high altars of St Mary and St Andrews at Sempringham, 'in a sort of double hollow where he could be

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[237] *MVSH*, II, pp. 206–107.
[238] *Ibid*., pp. 224–225, 227–228. Adam also mentions that even the Jews mourn for Hugh.
[239] *VSG*, pp. 128–131.
[240] See Bartlett, *WCD?*, pp. 306ff. Cf. *VSG*, pp. 121–122 in which Gilbert's bodily is hurriedly carried back to Sempringham to prevent others from claiming his body.
[241] See above pp. 192–193.

venerated and adored on both sides of the intervening wall, on this side by the men and on the other by the women.'[242] This division between the sexes is borne out in the miracles associated with Gilbert; witnesses to the miracles only attended the tomb if they were of the same sex as the person looking to be cured. Otherwise, they were only able to certify the condition of the cured before and after the miracle.[243] The tomb of St Anselm served as a visual reminder of the fate of all men. Eadmer finishes his description of the miracle of Anselm's expanding stone coffin with reference to the human condition: 'and so the venerable body of Father Anselm, archbishop of Canterbury and primate of all Britain, was shut in its sepulchre, a warning to all passers-by to learn from its example the condition to which mankind is subject.'[244]

Nonetheless, the location of the tomb is usually of more interest to hagiographers than its appearance. As suggested earlier, saints are often depicted choosing the location of their internment whilst they are still alive, which lends authority to the location of their cult. For example, St Margaret is buried 'just as she had ordered' in the Holy Trinity church, which she had built, by the altar and the venerable sign of the Holy Cross, at the place where she had often knelt, pouring out tears while offering up vigils and prayers.[245] Godric of Throckenholt demarcates his grave with a twig, which he then bids to root and grow, which it does, flourishing into a great ash tree. Godric of Finchale similarly picks the spot of his final resting place and builds his own tomb in advance of the event.[246] Adam of Eynsham records that Hugh of Lincoln was placed, according to his instructions, by the wall near the altar of St John

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[242] *VSG*, pp. 130–31: 'quasi in splenuca duplici, ubi ex utraque parte parietis interclusi, hinc a uiris, illinc a mulieribus, possit cum ueneratione adorari, honorifice collocatur.'
[243] *VSG*, 'Introduction', p. xxvi, n. 1. The editors refer to Miracles, nos. 9, 24 and 30 as evidence of this practice.
[244] *VA*, pp. 144–45.
[245] *Vita Margaretae*, pp. 181–182. See also Anonymous, *Vita Ædwardi*, pp. 122–23; Ailred, *Vita S. Edwardi*, p. 95.
[246] *Vita Godrici Throkenholt*, p. 37; *VGF*, p. 176. See also *Vita Bartholomaei*, pp. 319, 323.

the Baptist. Adam, however, proposes that this also seemed like the best place 'because of the crowds flocking to see his tomb', hence validating the choice of burial location through saintly endorsement and the practicalities of cult management.[247]

Thus, descriptions of the post-mortem corpses of the saint are important for emphasising the sanctity of the subject often through direct comparison to 'model' hagiographies, but also in the outer reflection of inner purity. Certain necessary rituals in advance of burial are highlighted in many texts; the wider relevance of these practices, not exclusive to saints, is underlined in some texts which point out that the saint's body is being prepared 'according to custom'. The social status of the saint, however, is often accentuated by the clothing in which he or she is dressed for burial. Funerary scenes emphasise the public role of the saint and are important for affirming popular support. Although the style and nature of tombs can vary from saint to saint, the site of the tomb is crucial to subsequent development of the cult: by depicting a saint selecting his or her own resting place, a *vita* can play an important role in authorising the eventual site of the cult.

Conclusion

In his study of death scenes, Lauwers concluded that his hagiographers preferred typification and abstraction over individualisation; his *vitae* were less concerned with presenting the death of a monk, hermit or bishop than, transgressing these categories, the death of a saint.[248] In some ways this holds true for my corpus. The texts examined here all agree on the aspects that signified a saintly death, such as foreknowledge, preparation, constancy, and the appearance and treatment of the body after death.

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[247] *MVSH*, II, p. 232: 'et sicut uisum est propter accessum confluentis populi magis congruere'.
[248] Lauwers, 'La mort et la corps des saints', p. 32.

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Within such tropes, however, there was substantial flexibility and variation. This contextualisation should also be borne in mind when comparing this sample with those studies carried out by historians in other geographical regions and time periods. The longevity of the saints and the number of extended descriptions of physical decline are features which distinguish this body of texts from others that have already been examined.

At every stage of the dying process there was the opportunity for hagiographers to introduce individuality into their narratives. Some include very detailed descriptions of the final illness, for example, in the cases of Ailred and Hugh, while others offer the bare minimum. The description of the deathbed and moment of death is a point at which vocation was frequently emphasised, particularly in the case of monastic saints. Yet, more general allusions to Christ and to other saints were also an especially important part of the dying narrative. In particular, descriptions of the post-mortem corpse frequently reflected accounts of St Martin of Tours, and by association the Transfiguration of Christ. And whilst the funeral of the saint might exhibit his particular social position, funereal accounts were relatively ubiquitous, designed to lend the acclaim of popular support to the saint in the final moments before interment.

The *Lives* of the martyr saints, William of Norwich and Thomas Becket, differ slightly, as one would expect, and demonstrate elements of the 'traditional' narrative of a martyr's death, as well as elements specific to their own peculiarities. Comparison to Christ's Passion was more direct in the martyr *Lives*, with some of Becket's hagiographers even suggesting that his hardships had been far worse than those of Jesus himself. Although twelfth-century England was not a hotbed of martyrdom, the two to whom it lays claim were both formative in the production of later hagiographies.

Of all the themes examined in this thesis, death is the one with the widest social significance. Although the other aspects of saintly behaviour examined could form a model for emulation, seen particularly in descriptions of outward appearance and food practices, preparing for a good death was universally important, and not just to other monks, hermits and bishops, but also to the Christian population more widely. Hence, while some of the 'idealistic' elements of the saintly death were designed to emphasise sanctity (miraculous foreknowledge, a shining corpse), others provided a model of certain elements that anyone could emulate: for example, dispensing with temporal goods, reception of the last rites and proper preparation of the corpse. Thus lay audiences could conceivably connect with an aspect of sanctity in their own lives.

Within the cloister, the wider application of some of these practices beyond the saintly figure is emphasised at certain points when the hagiographers refer to the liturgy and practices carried out 'according to custom'. The accessibility of dying well may have held especial significance to monks (and those of other religious vocations) as the one aspect of sanctity that they could emulate well. Whilst not every monk could demonstrate the patience of a saint, expect to have a life-changing experience of sexual temptation, or overcome the difficulties posed by extreme asceticism, they might at least be able to make the correct provisions for a good death. Death is a particularly good theme for highlighting the didactic function of hagiography, even if in many cases a text may only have been read out within the cloister, it still provided a model for a good death accessible to more than simply the saintly.

✦ Conclusion ✦

Whilst twelfth-century hagiographers drew on a common template of sainthood, their depictions of saintly figures were enriched by individuality and idiosyncrasy. Following scrutiny of four significant manifestations of saintly behaviour, it is evident that hagiographers were able to conform to the conventions of genre, yet adapt these to individual circumstances. Thus, when St Anselm was on his deathbed, it was possible for Eadmer to depict the archbishop as both a saint, dutiful to God's will, and a tenacious scholar, hoping to hold off death until he had solved one last theological problem. Eadmer reshaped the convention of saintly joy at oncoming death to create a more individual portrait of his subject.

Analysis began by examining the ways in which twelfth-century hagiographers used the outward appearance of their saints to communicate sanctity. Regarding bodily appearance, two forms of description were apparent within these *Lives*. The first, often lacking in specificity, was only concerned with bodily appearance as far as it demonstrated, or enhanced, inner holiness shining forth in the saint's form. The second gave specific details of appearance. Although these did not always reflect inner holiness, they might contribute to a depiction of sanctity by emphasising, for example, the effects of asceticism on the appearance of the body. Both beauty and ugliness were interpreted as a sign of holiness, depending on context. Appropriate control and moderation emerged as significant attributes of the body in terms of carriage and demeanour. However, in the case of devotional gesture such as praying, unusual physicality was one way in which saints could be marked out as exceptional.

Hagiographers presented the clothing of their saintly protagonists in a variety of ways, often dependant on the vocation of the saints. Sometimes it demonstrated the

worldly status of the saints contrasting with their internal holiness, whilst in other cases it was an outward marker of virtue, distinguishing the saint from those around them.[1] Although clothing was often mentioned at moments of transition, most *Lives* of male monastic saints refer to it only briefly. In *Lives* of female saints it appears to symbolise the rejection of the world more explicitly: adoption of the habit or rough clothing was directly juxtaposed to the renounced luxurious clothing of the world. Nonetheless, in the case of Becket, at the point of his consecration, his hagiographers used clothing extensively to argue that he was inwardly an ascetic monk, despite outward appearances. Instead of all depictions of clothing following a set pattern, they were tailored to the individual context of the saint.

Heterogeneous representations of sanctity were also evident in the different methods of presenting the virtue of sexual renunciation, often dependant upon the vocation and gender of the saint. For example, male saints were frequently depicted overcoming sexual temptation. Such narratives emerged as the predominant way in which hagiographers talk in an extended manner about the sexual status of male saints. Female saints were instead overwhelmingly the object of temptation, although it was additionally possible for their hagiographer to draw on motifs such as the Bride of Christ to discuss their sexuality. The vocation of saints also influenced representations of their sexual renunciation. For example, eremitic saints were more likely to struggle with temptation over long periods because the struggle formed an integral part of their ascetic training. For other saints their temptations were shorter lived and prepared them to fulfil their pastoral roles as bishops or convent leaders.

The depiction of certain saints, however, did not fall neatly into these categories. Although chastity played an important part in the depictions of Becket's sanctity, it was

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[1] As in the cases of SS Edward and Margaret, and Thomas Becket, in comparison to Gilbert of Sempringham, Ailred of Rievaulx and Robert of Béthune in their pre-monastic lives.

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not presented as dramatically tested within his *Lives*. Christina of Markyate, on the other hand, did experience temptation; her *vita* reflects a newly emerging concern with women as subject to temptation, thus illustrating how representations of sexual renunciation were able to respond to changing contexts rather than existing as static tropes.

Context and audience also affected the depiction of food and abstention within these *Lives*. The extent of abstinence necessary to appear holy varied from text to text, and often within the lifecycle of a particular saint. In certain *Lives,* and at certain points, moderation and temperance were sufficient evidence of holiness; in others, more extreme measures were appropriate. Food practices could also reflect spiritual development; while most of the saints became more austere, some relaxed eating practices as circumstances saw fit. Nonetheless, all the saints were presented as eating very little. The didactic nature of hagiography was particularly highlighted here. Whilst, for example, the *Lives* of monastic saints often demonstrated the exceptionality of their subject, they also warned against excessive abstention, aimed at discouraging their monastic audiences from straying too far beyond the regulations of their Rule. The presentation of eating habits also varied from order to order. The most severe forms of abstention within the corpus are depicted in the *Lives* of eremitic saints, with the association of control of the body through fasting and sexual control more clearly articulated within their *vitae*.

Lastly, the representation of the journey towards death was examined. The expectations of the hagiographic genre were clearly discernible as the texts agreed on the main elements that signified a saintly death, including foreknowledge, preparation, attitude towards death, and the appearance and treatment of the body post mortem. However, within these tropes there was substantial flexibility. Closer examination

revealed distinctive elements varying across the corpus, and from text to text. Certain features also distinguished this twelfth-century English corpus from others that have been studied; the advanced age of the saints at their death and the descriptions of physical decline surfaced as a particular feature of this sample. Despite the stages in the dying process being relatively universal, different requirements at death were evident in different contexts; for example, recording observation of the monastic liturgy was important in the *Lives* of monastic saints. Representations of the process of dying provided an ideal model of practice to be followed; recording the appropriate procedure taking place also enhanced the claim to sanctity of the subject. Analysing the saintly death is especially useful for highlighting the customisation possible, even while adhering to the expectations of genre.

It has been argued that these texts should thus be approached with a balance of circumstance and genre in mind.[2] Whatever the idiosyncracies, the authors of these texts drew on a shared intellectual and textual heritage. Hagiographers wrote to present an argument for sanctity.[3] Whether implicitly or explicitly, the hagiographers sculpted their protagonists into the image of Christ and earlier saints to strengthen this argument. Scripture and the earliest hagiographic *vitae* provided many of the motifs evident in these texts. For example, the discourse of renunciation, be that of sex or sustenance, was rooted in biblical tradition and subsequently became part of the textual tradition of saintly behaviour.[4] It has also been demonstrated that the writings and *vitae* of the Church Fathers and other model saints such as St Martin of Tours continued to have a lasting influence on shaping depictions of sainthood in the twelfth century. The impact

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[2] Cf. Aviad M. Kleinberg, 'Proving Sanctity : Selection and Authentication of Saints in the Later Middle Ages', *Viator*, 20 (1989), pp. 183–205 who argues that from the twelfth century, as interest in contemporary saints grew, saints' *Lives* were more inclined to include historically recognisable and realistic details of their subjects alongside the iconographic core.

[3] See Kleinberg, 'Proving Sanctity', esp. p. 185ff.

[4] See above Ch. 2.

of monastic Rules and, in particular, that of St Benedict of Nursia should also be emphasised. This is hardly surprising in the *Lives* of monastic saints, however, the effect of monastic authorship is revealed when elements of the Rule are reflected in depictions of non-monastic saints.[5]

Likewise, the fundamental heritage of classical learning should not be overlooked. This is evident in emphases on control, which was part of an inherited classical tradition.[6] Symbolic understandings of physical appearance were also rooted in the classical tradition, but mediated through earlier Christian authors. Those hagiographers who offered a detailed physical description of their subject drew on the model of secular biography, particularly that provided by Suetonius and diffused in the works of later authors such as Sidonius Apollinaris.[7]

Some common threads can be drawn out from the chapters. Two interrelated and recurrent themes were control and moderation. Control emerged as a concern in relation to deportment, demeanour, sexuality and temperance. Moderation also emerged as significant. It appeared particularly relevant for episcopal saints, especially in their attitude towards food. This worked both ways; they should not eat too much, but also be moderate in their abstention. Discourses of moderation infused texts that set out the ideal behaviour of bishops. For example, influenced by the writings of the Church Fathers and Gregory the Great's *Liber Regulae Pontificalis*, Gratian's *Decretum* emphasised that bishops should be moderate in food and dress and desist from quarrelling.[8] Nonetheless, it was not just bishops who had to be moderate; as seen in

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[5] See above pp. 46–47. For example the case of St Margaret, see Catherine Keene, *Saint Margaret, Queen of the Scots* (New York, 2013).
[6] On control in the classical period see, for example, Mathew Kuefler, *The Manly Eunuch: Masculinity, Gender Ambiguity, and Christian Ideology in Late Antiquity,* (Chicago, 2001) and C. Stephen Jaeger, *The Envy of Angels: Cathedral Schools and Social Ideals in Medieval Europe, 950-1200* (Philadelphia, 1994).
[7] See above, pp. 29–30.
[8] Vauchez, *Sainthood*, p. 287.

the case of Wulfric and his snakebite, hermits could also be encouraged to observe moderation in their asceticism.[9]

The didactic purpose of hagiography is worth reiterating. Hagiographers had to strike a balance between presenting their subjects as exceptional, and yet as models to be emulated; this was evident across the analysis, but especially in the final two chapters. For example, this issue arose in the depictions of the eating habits of monastic saints. These passages provided instruction for the monastic communities for whom they were written and while all the saints were presented as eating very little, the *Lives* consistently emphasised the dangers of extreme abstention; saints could get away with it because they were saints, normal monks might not.[10] Such extremism may have been a problem in some communities; perhaps this was one way in which a monk might seek to distinguish himself in an environment that emphasised uniformity. Of all the themes explored, death held the widest social significance. As suggested, certain elements of preparing for a good death were accessible and could be emulated by everyone. Whilst it might not have been possible, even for the most pious monk, to imitate all other aspects of saintly behaviour hagiographers provided a model of dying that was applicable to more than solely the saintly.

This thesis chose to address a wide range of texts from the twelfth century. Is it possible to trace any change over time? The most obvious trend is the increasing diversity of the religious life. All of the surviving eremitic *Lives* come from the latter part of the century. Further, the emergence of new monastic orders had an evident impact on depictions of sainthood. The *Life* of Gundulf articulates the concerns of the Benedictine community at Rochester in which (and for whom) it was written,

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[9] See above pp. 89–90. Cf. Bartholomew of Farne who was accused of hypocrisy in his asceticism, *Vita Bartholomaei,* p. 307.
[10] This was particularly clear in the example of Robert of Béthune who attempted to stick to the guidelines of his Rule, and yet still made himself ill.

demonstrating different interests from that of Robert of Béthune's Augustinian *vita* or that of Gilbert of Sempringham.[11]

The longer, and more detailed, *Lives* tend to date from later in the century.[12] This may reflect a number of broader trends. For example, the increased interest in 'realistic' representation, or the 'discovery of the individual', identified at this time might be reflected in longer *Lives*.[13] Aviad Kleinberg suggests that an increasing interest in contemporary hagiographies from the twelfth century (where eye-witnesses to the saint were still alive) also resulted in a narrative shift within saints' *Lives* in which the balance between convention and the unique shifted, with the latter playing a bigger role than previously.[14] Undoubtedly the proximity of the hagiographer to the subject was a governing factor in these extended depictions of sainthood, providing the hagiographer with more material for inclusion or a more personal interest in their representation. An increase in detail may also reflect the move towards papal canonisation as the papacy became more selective and interested in the specifics of sanctity.[15] Authors had to make their saint stand out from others in some way; this may account for some of the detail provided in the *Lives* of Gilbert of Sempringham and Hugh of Lincoln. However, in the case of Thomas Becket, canonised almost immediately after his death, this cannot be used as an explanation for the length of

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[11] On the importance of audience to the *VRB* in particular see, Matthew M. Mesley, 'The Construction of Episcopal Identity: The Meaning and Function of Episcopal Depictions within Latin Saints' Lives of the Long Twelfth Century', (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Exeter, 2009), pp. 113-177.

[12] Reginald's *Vita Godrici,* Adam of Eynsham's *Magna Vita Sancti Hugonis* and Herbert of Bosham's *Life* of Becket are particularly long.

[13] See Antonia Gransden, 'Realistic Observation in Twelfth-Century England', *Speculum*, 47: 1 (1972), pp. 29–51; David Crouch, 'The Culture of Death in the Anglo-Norman World', in *Anglo-Norman Political Culture and the Twelfth-Century Renaissance: Proceedings of the Borchard Conference on Anglo-Norman History, 1995*, ed. by C. Warren Hollister (Woodbridge, 1995), pp. 157–180; Colin Morris, *The Discovery of the Individual, 1050-1200* (Toronto, 1987; repr. 2004); Cf. Caroline Walker Bynum, *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages* (Berkeley London, 1982).

[14] Kleinberg, 'Proving Sanctity', pp. 183–205.

[15] *Ibid.*, pp. 188-189.

Herbert of Bosham's *Life*. In this particular case it is tempting to associate the length of the text with the verbosity of the author.

As suggested in the Introduction, this balance of content, and the relationship between hagiographer and subject, has led many of the *vitae* written at this time to be considered works of 'intimate biography'.[16] However, it is not just these later *Lives* that give 'individual' depictions of their saints. A sense of intimacy is evident in some of the earlier works, resulting more from the substance of the content than its quantity; Eadmer's portrayal of Anselm is the clearest example. It is not possible to say within this sample that the later *Lives* were always more interested in individual details. In the example of Edward the Confessor, depictions of the saint-king became less intimate and more generic as his cult developed.

It has necessarily been impossible to cover every important feature within depictions of sainthood in depth. Manifestations of humility could easily be the subject of an analysis in their own right. A particularly important monastic virtue, humility has flowed as an undercurrent throughout the thesis.[17] Whether in relation to the saint's appearance, their manner, asceticism or the period before their death, humility underpinned much holy behaviour. Many other hagiographic motifs might also have been examined, for example exile, or conversion. Whilst the political exiles of Anselm and Becket have been usefully compared from a hagiographic point of view, consideration of exile more broadly might also prove revealing.[18] In some of the texts examined it is possible to see how a state of exile might impact saintly behaviour. For

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[16] For example, Ienje van 't Spijker, 'Saints and Despair: Twelfth-Century Hagiography as "Intimate Biography"', in *The Invention of Saintliness*, ed. by Anneke B. Mulder-Bakker (London, 2002), pp. 185–205.

[17] See *Benedictine Rule,* c. 7.

[18] Michael Staunton, 'Exile in Eadmer's *Historia Novorum* and *Vita Anselmi*', in *Saint Anselm: bishop and thinker*, ed. by Roman Majeran and Edward Iwo Zielinski (Lublin, 1999), pp. 47–59; *idem,* 'Exile in the Lives of Anselm and Thomas Becket'', *Exile in the Middle Ages,* ed. by Laura Napran and Elisabeth van Houts (Turnhout, 2004), pp. 150-180; cf. Staunton, *Becket and his Biographers*, ch. 11.

example, Becket adopts a more austere regime whilst in political exile, reflecting the change in life that might be experienced by a monk or hermit making the transition from the world into self-imposed exile of the spiritual life. This might also be seen in the case of Christina of Markyate, whose exile from the world is also ultimately an exile from her family. The processes of conversion within the *Lives* might have made a further interesting subject for comparison, both in the sense of a 'road to Damascus' moment, and on-going spiritual development more generally. While some elements of conversion have been highlighted, a more explicit comparison would uncover what the main components were, and how important conversion appeared to hagiographers.

Inevitably, a number of questions arise from the conclusions of this thesis, which suggest directions for further inquiry. Whilst this thesis focused on the *Lives* of twelfth-century saints, the example of Edward the Confessor suggests that a wider examination of the process of re-writing would prove instructive. This might be undertaken both vertically within the tradition of one saint, and horizontally to test which factors might have the greatest influence on depictions. Further to this, do the conclusions of this thesis bear out over a longer period of time? Considering a wider temporal range of sources would allow broader patterns of development in English saints' *vitae* to be traced. This might fruitfully be extended in either direction. As well as extending the temporal boundaries of analysis, a geographically broadened study would also prove instructive for revealing to what extent the depictions of saints in twelfth-century England were unique. Extending analysis of saintly figures into non-hagiographical texts would also be revealing, and particularly instructive for further illuminating to what extent depictions are governed by genre.

This thesis, while unable to cover all aspect of sainthood in depth, provides a starting point for further comparative investigations. Hagiography was a complex genre; this complexity is demonstrated through the variety in representation evident even within this corpus of *vitae* from one particular time and place. Whilst saints were all ultimately cast within the mould of sainthood, they could be fashioned from different materials and customised to reflect individual context and specificity. This ability of hagiographers to negotiate the boundary between idealised tropes and individuality, genre and context, is what makes the saints' *Lives* of twelfth-century England so compelling; the variety of personality– from political martyr, through royalty, to the most rustic of hermits– combined with the brilliance of sainthood makes the depictions within this corpus particularly vivid.

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