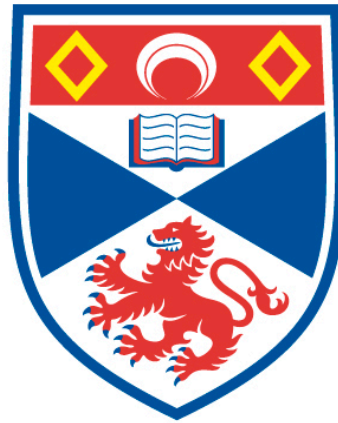# DEATH IN ANGLO-SAXON HAGIOGRAPHY : APPROACHES, ATTITUDES, AESTHETICS

Jennifer Selina Key

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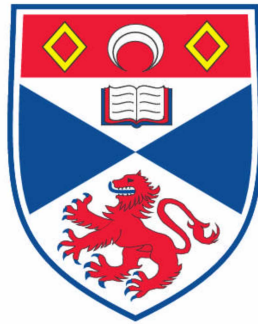University of St Andrews

2014

Death in Anglo-Saxon Hagiography:
Approaches, Attitudes, Aesthetics

Jennifer Selina Key

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in the School of English
at the University of St Andrews

17 January 2014

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines attitudes and approaches towards death, as well as aesthetic representations of death, in Anglo-Saxon hagiography. The thesis contributes to the discussion of the historical and intellectual contexts of hagiography and considers how saintly death-scenes are represented to form commentaries on exemplary behaviour. A comprehensive survey of death-scenes in Anglo-Saxon hagiography has been undertaken, charting typical and atypical motifs used in literary manifestations of both martyrdom and non-violent death. The clusters of literary motifs found in these texts and what their use suggests about attitudes to exemplary death is analysed in an exploration of whether Anglo-Saxon hagiography presents a consistent aesthetic of death. The thesis also considers how modern scholarly fields such as thanatology can provide fresh discourses on the attitudes to and depictions of 'good' and 'bad' deaths. Moreover, the thesis addresses the intersection of the hagiographic inheritance with discernibly Anglo-Saxon attitudes towards death and dying, and investigates whether or not the deaths of native Anglo-Saxon saints are presented differently compared with the deaths of universal saints. The thesis explores continuities and discontinuities in the presentations of physical and spiritual death, and assesses whether or not differences exist in the depiction of death-scenes based on an author's personal agenda, choice of terminology, approaches towards the body–soul dichotomy, or the gender of his or her subject, for example. Furthermore, the thesis investigates how hagiographic representations of death compare with portrayals in other literature of the Anglo-Saxon period, and whether any non-hagiographic paradigms provide alternative exemplars of the 'good death'. The thesis also assesses gendered portrayals of death, the portrayal of last words in saints' lives, and the various motifs relating to the soul at the moment of death. The thesis contains a Motif Index of saintly death-scenes as Appendix I.

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I, Jennifer Selina Key, hereby certify that this thesis, which is approximately 80,097 words in length, has been written by me, that it is the record of work carried out by me 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 Doctor of Philosophy in September 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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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are a number of people to whom I wish to record my thanks for their help during the writing of this thesis. First and foremost, I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr Christine Rauer, for her support, encouragement and constant good advice over the past three years. In addition to her guidance regarding this thesis, she has provided me with a number of opportunities for professional development, and I am extremely grateful to have such a dedicated and understanding supervisor. My second supervisor, Dr Ian Johnson, was always on hand with help and encouragement and to him I am very thankful. I must also thank Sandra Wallace, who kindly answered many questions.

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Finally, my heartfelt thanks go to Matt, who has lived with this PhD from its beginning, and for whose encouragement, patience and unfailing good humour I am forever grateful.

CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS

I.   PERIODICALS
II.   PUBLICATION SERIES
III. EDITIONS
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VI.   OTHER

I.   PERIODICALS

ASE	*Anglo-Saxon England*
ASNSL	*Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen und Literaturen*
ASSAH	*Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History*
EME	*Early Medieval Europe*
ES	*English Studies*
MÆ	*Medium Ævum*
N&Q	*Notes and Queries*
OEN	*Old English Newsletter*
PBA	*Proceedings of the British Academy*
PQ	*Philological Quarterly*
RES	*Review of English Studies*
SP	*Studies in Philology*
YES	*Yearbook of English Studies*

II.   PUBLICATION SERIES

ASS	Anglo-Saxon Studies
ASPR	Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records, ed. Krapp and Dobbie, 6 vols
BAR	British Archaeological Reports (Oxford)
CSASE	Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England
CSEL	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum
CSML	Cambridge Studies in Medieval Literature
EETS	Early English Text Society
os	original series
ss	supplementary series
HBS	Henry Bradshaw Society Publications
MGH	Monumenta Germaniae Historica
Auct. antiq.	Auctores antiquissimi
PL	Patrologia Latina, ed. J.-P. Migne, 221 vols (Paris, 1844–64)
RS	Rolls Series
SCH	Studies in Church History

III.   EDITIONS[1]

ÆCHom I	*Ælfric's Catholic Homilies: The First Series*, ed. Clemoes
ÆCHom II	*Ælfric's Catholic Homilies: The Second Series*, ed. Godden
ÆLS	*Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, ed. Skeat
And.	*Andreas*, ed. ASPR 2, pp. 3–51
ASC	*The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*
BHom	*The Blickling Homilies*, ed. Morris
Brunanburh	*The Battle of Brunanburh*, ed. ASPR 4, pp. 16–20
Cdv	Aldhelm, *Carmen de virginitate*, ed. Ehwald, pp. 327–71
Dialogues	Gregory the Great, *Dialogues*, ed. and trans. de Vogüé, Sources Chrétiennes 265
Dv	Aldhelm, *De virginitate* (prose), ed. Ehwald, pp. 211–323
Fates	*Fates of the Apostles*, ed. ASPR 2, pp. 51–4
Felix's Life	*Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, ed. Colgrave
EHD	*English Historical Documents c.500–1042*, ed. Whitelock
Gneuss, *Handlist*	H. Gneuss, *Handlist of Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts: A List of Manuscripts and Manuscript Fragments Written or Owned in England up to 1100*, Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies 241 (Tempe, 2001)
GuthA	*Guthlac A*, ed. Roberts, pp. 83–107
GuthB	*Guthlac B*, ed. Roberts, pp. 108–24
HE	Bede, *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum*, ed. Colgrave and Mynors
Jul.	*Juliana*, ed. ASPR 3, pp. 113–33
LS 1.2 (AndrewMor)	*S. Andreas, Blickling Homily* 19, ed. Morris, pp. 228–49
LS 3 (Chad)	*The Life of St. Chad: An Old English Homily*, ed. Vleeskruyer
LS 4 (ChristopRyp)	Old English *Life of St Christopher*, *Three Old English Prose Texts in MS Cotton Vitellius A.xv*, ed. Rypins

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[1] For full publication details, see Bibliography.

LS 7 (Euphr)	*Natale Sancte Eufrasiæ virginis*, ed. Skeat, pp. 335–55
LS 8 (Eust)	*Passio Sancti Eustachii martyris sociorumque eius*, ed. Skeat, pp. 191–219
LS 9 (Giles)	Old English *Life of Saint Giles*, *The Old English Life of St Nicholas with the Old English Life of Saint Giles*, ed. Treharne
LS 14 (MargaretCCCC303)	'Old English *Life of St Margaret* in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 303', *The Old English Lives of St Margaret*, ed. Clayton and Magennis
LS 16 (MargaretCot.Tib.A.iii)	'Old English *Life of St Margaret* in Cotton Tiberius A.iii (composite text)', *The Old English Lives of St Margaret*, ed. Clayton and Magennis
LS 17.1 (MartinMor)	*To Sancte Martines Mæssan*, *Blickling Homily* 18, ed. Morris, pp. 211–27
LS 20 (AssumptMor)	*Assumptio S. Mariæ virginis*, *Blickling Homily* 13, ed. Morris, pp. 137–59
LS 23 (MaryofEgypt)	*The Old English Life of Saint Mary of Egypt*, ed. Magennis
LS 29 (Nicholas)	*The Old English Life of St Nicholas*, *The Old English Life of St Nicholas with the Old English Life of Saint Giles*, ed. Treharne
LS 30 (Pantaleon)	*The Old English Life of St Pantaleon*, ed. Pulsiano, in *Via Crucis*, ed. Hall, pp. 61–103
LS 32 (PeterPaul)	*Spel be Petrus & Paulus*, *Blickling Homily* 15, ed. Morris, pp. 171–93
LS 34 (SevenSleepers)	*The Anonymous Old English Legend of the Seven Sleepers*, ed. Magennis
Mart.	*The Old English Martyrology: Edition, Translation and Commentary*, ed. Rauer
Stith Thompson	*Motif Index of Folk-Literature*, ed. Thompson, 6 vols (Helsinki and Bloomington, 1932–6)
Suppl.	*Homilies of Ælfric: A Supplementary Collection*, ed. Pope, 2 vols
Two Lives	*Two* Lives *of Saint Cuthbert. A Life by an Anonymous Monk of Lindisfarne and Bede's Prose Life*, ed. Colgrave
VHom	*The Vercelli Homilies*, ed. Scragg
Zimmerman	*Saint Gregory the Great: Dialogues*, trans., Odo John Zimmerman, O.S.B, Fathers of the Church 39 (Washington D.C., 1959)

IV.   REFERENCE WORKS

BHL	*Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina*, ed. Bollandists, 2 vols (Brussels, 1899–1901), with supplement by H. Fros (Brussels, 1986)
BT	Bosworth, *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*, ed. and rev. Toller
DACL	*Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie*, ed. F. Cabrol and H. Leclerq, 15 vols (1907–53)
DiNapoli	*An Index of Theme and Image to the Homilies of the Anglo-Saxon Church*, ed. DiNapoli
DMLBS	*Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources*, ed. R. E. Latham and David R. Howlett (London, 1975–2013)
Farmer	D. H. Farmer, *The Oxford Dictionary of Saints*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1987)
Glossary	M. H. Abrams, *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, 7th ed. (Boston, 1999)
LexMA	*Lexikon des Mittelalters*, ed. L. Lutz, 10 vols (Munich and Zurich, 1977–99)
OCD	*The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, ed. J. Hornblower and A. Spawforth, rev. 3rd ed.
ODCC	*The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, ed. Cross and Livingstone, rev. 3rd ed.
TOE	*A Thesaurus of Old English*, ed. J. Roberts and C. Kay with L. Grundy, King's College London Centre for Late Antique and Medieval Studies, 2 vols (Exeter, 1995)
Whatley, 'Acta Sanctorum'	E. G. Whatley *et multi*, 'Acta Sanctorum', *Sources of Anglo-Saxon Literary Culture Volume One: Abbo of Fleury, Abbo of Saint-Germain-des-Prés, and Acta Sanctorum*, ed. Frederick M. Biggs, Thomas D. Hill, Paul E. Szarmach and E. Gordon Whatley (Kalamazoo, 2001), pp. 22–548

V.   ONLINE TOOLS

DOEC	*Dictionary of Old English Corpus*, ed. A. diPaolo Healey *et al.* (Toronto, 2005), http://tapor.library.utoronto.ca/doecorpus/
Fontes	*Fontes Anglo-Saxonici Project*, ed., *Fontes Anglo-Saxonici: World Wide Web Register*, http://fontes.english.ox.ac.uk/
ODMA	*Oxford Dictionary of the Middle Ages*, online ed., ed. R. E. Bjork (Oxford, 2010), http://www.oxfordreference.com/

ODNB	*Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online ed., ed. L. Goldman (Oxford, 2004), http://www.oxforddnb.com/
OED	*Oxford English Dictionary* online, http://www.oed.com/

VI. OTHER

BNF	Bibliothèque nationale de France
CCCC	Cambridge, Corpus Christi College
DOE	*Dictionary of Old English: A to G on CD-ROM*, ed. A. diPaolo Healey *et al.* (Toronto, 2008)
London, BL	London, British Library
ns	new series

All quotations from Old English poetry are from ASPR, ed. G. P. Krapp and E. V. K. Dobbie, 6 vols (New York, 1931–53), except *Beowulf*, which is from *Klaeber's Beowulf*, ed. R. D. Fulk, R. E. Bjork and J. D. Niles, 4th ed. (Toronto, 2008), *The Battle of Maldon*, where the text is from *The Battle of Maldon*, ed. D. G. Scragg (Manchester, 1981), and *GuthA* and *GuthB*, which are from *The Guthlac Poems of the Exeter Book*, ed. J. Roberts (Oxford, 1979). Translations of *Maldon* are from D. Scragg, 'The Battle of Maldon', *The Battle of Maldon AD 991*, ed. D. Scragg (Oxford, 1991), pp. 15–36. All other poetry translations are my own unless otherwise specified.

Translations of Aldhelm are from M. Lapidge and M. Herren, *Aldhelm: the Prose Works* (Ipswich, 1979) and M. Lapidge and J. L. Rosier, *Aldhelm: the Poetic Works*, with an appendix by Neil Wright (Cambridge, 1985), hereafter cited as *Prose Works* and *Poetic Works*, respectively. Texts and translations of Ælfric's *Lives of Saints* are from Skeat, except in the case of Cecilia, Julian and Basilissa and Chrysanthus and Daria, which are from R. K. Upchurch, ed. *Ælfric's Lives of the Virgin Spouses: With Modern English Parallel-Text Translations* (Exeter, 2007). Skeat's translations have been modernized in cases of archaic lexis. Text and translations of the *Old English Martyrology* (hereafter *Mart.*) are from Rauer, and are cited by entry number (following the systems of Kotzor and Rauer) and saint's name.

All Biblical references are from R. Weber *et al.*, *Biblia Sacra iuxta vulgatam versionem*, 5th ed. (Stuttgart, 2007). Translations are from *The Holy Bible: Translated from the Latin Vulgate and Diligently Compared with Other Editions in Divers Languages (Douay, A.D. 1609; Rheims, A.D. 1582* (London, 1914).

In Appendix I, I have used title abbreviations based on the conventions of the *Dictionary of Old English* project and M. Lapidge, *Abbreviations for Sources and Specification of Standard Editions for Sources Compiled for* Fontes Anglo-Saxonici *and* Sources of Anglo-Saxon Literary Culture (Binghamton, 1988). The principles on which the latter is based have been used for texts not included in Lapidge's volume. For Old English editions without line numbers, I have followed the *DOE*'s conventions where possible. In the main thesis text, certain of these title abbreviations appear differently. The aim of the main text has been readability, whereas the purpose of the Appendix is to provide full source information in as brief an abbreviation as possible. Hence, the main text of the thesis refers to Aldhelm's *Dv*, for example, whereas references to the same text in the MI appear as follows: **ALDH.Pros.virg.** (saint's name). Likewise, the main thesis text refers to the anonymous *Vita S. Rumwoldi*, whereas the Appendix uses **ANON.Vit.Rum**., for example.

INTRODUCTION

Writing in *The Guardian* newspaper about his father's death, Luke Allnutt notes that his 'expectations of death [. . .] had been skewed. All those HBO television families, flawed yet fundamentally decent, in which fathers told sons they loved them, and wept, and skeletons were uncovered and put to rest [. . .] This was nothing like that; there was no denouement [sic], no emotional epiphany'.[1] This quotation is illuminating in its illustration of Allnutt's assumptions that certain culturally codified events occur at death. Such presumptions may be made both on behalf of the dying and the living and constitute part of a cultural ideology informing ideas of what makes a 'good' death. The desire for a 'good' death, a seemingly fundamental human concern, may partly explain why death is so frequently represented in aesthetic media such as literature or art.

As the inevitable end of the biological life-course, death affects all humans across time, space and place, but attitudes to and events surrounding the cessation of life differ widely within different contexts. Ideals of death are informed by myriad factors and should be assumed to change between individuals. The definition of death has become complicated, particularly in the postmodern world, with the advances of medical science, and the point at which death occurs – 'with the last breath, the last beat of the heart, or with brain death' – is not always straightforward.[2] Furthermore, death may be defined in either social or physical terms, although such distinctions are not purely postmodern. 'Social death' can occur through the removal of an individual from a communal environment, whether through choices made by that individual or on behalf of them (in the case of illness), and it has been noted that 'the physical deaths of those who have already

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[1] L. Allnutt, 'No Sunlit Rooms, No Last Words', *The Guardian*, 27 October 2012, http://www.guardian.co.uk/lifeandstyle/2012/oct/27/luke-allnutt-father-dying-goodbye [accessed 1 March 2013]. HBO (Home Box Office) is an American television network.
[2] K. Croucher, *Death and Dying in the Neolithic Near East* (Oxford, 2012) p. 9; also L. W. Sumner, *Assisted Death: A Study in Ethics and Law* (Oxford, 2011), pp. 3–6.

suffered a social death are unremarked events, in which a discourse regarding the relative

merits of that person's death is not deemed necessary'.[3] L. W. Sumner argues that this kind

of death occurs with 'the irreversible cessation of whatever psychological states or

capacities are taken to be essential to being a person'. Physical, or biological, death occurs

when the various integrated subsystems needed for the overall functioning of an organism

cease to work integratively.[4]

This thesis seeks to address Anglo-Saxon approaches to primarily physical death in

the didactic, religious genre of hagiography through an assessment of the literary portrayals

of saintly death-scenes, and considers how such approaches contribute to a religiously

sanctioned set of ideals concerning death. Christianity, to which the Anglo-Saxon

population would have subscribed, could be seen as fundamentally paradoxical; only with

physical death does life begin. It was just such a view that led Gregory the Great (*c.* 540–

604), the driving force behind the conversion mission to Anglo-Saxon England in 597, to

state in his *Dialogues* (Book 4, §4) that 'man begins to live only when he has completed this

visible life through bodily death'.[5] Indeed, it has been argued that 'Christianity has

historically been a defence against death, offering a place in heaven for the righteous and

defining death as a spiritual passage'.[6] This notion of physical death as a necessary

precursor to spiritual life is demonstrably present in Anglo-Saxon hagiography, but what

this thesis explores is how far such ideals contribute to the presentation of a consistent

aesthetic of death – either 'good' or 'bad' – in hagiographic texts. It can be expected that

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[3] M. Bradbury, *Representations of Death: A Social Psychological Perspective* (London and New York, 1999), p. 162. Later medieval women who became anchorites, for example, were pronounced dead in a liturgical service that 'symbolised that death to the world which was also the beginning of a new life for the anchoress'; D. Piroyansky, '"Thus May a Man be a Martyr": The Notion, Language and Experiences of Martyrdom in Late Medieval England', *Martyrs and Martyrdom in England, c. 1400–1700*, ed. T. S. Freeman and T. F. Mayer, Studies in Modern British Religious History 15 (Woodbridge, 2007), pp. 70–87 at 78–9. J. Gilbert also addresses this idea in *Living Death in Medieval French and English Literature*, CSML 84 (Cambridge, 2011), pp. 6–7.
[4] Sumner, *Assisted Death*, pp. 6–7.
[5] Zimmerman, p. 195.
[6] T. Walter, *The Revival of Death* (London and New York, 1994), p. 14.

any such aesthetic of death is likely to be very different from prevalent attitudes found in postmodern Britain, for example, where the religious demographic has changed substantially since the end of the Second World War.[7] Although religion is not the only framework within which people attempt to make sense of death, the place of formalized Christianity in managing death historically, and its perhaps less-encompassing influence in postmodern British society as a result of increased secularization, for instance, mean that attitudes to and management of death have altered considerably. It is perhaps fair to say that many people no longer seek an organized religious consolation for death nor an organized framework within which to understand it.[8] David Clark has gone so far as to suggest that 'following the collapse of grand narratives, particularly those associated with formal religion, individuals in modern societies must shape their own identities and systems of meaning within a private sphere of social relations'.[9] This increased autonomy can be seen in an increased desire among individuals to manage their own deaths, as noted by Tony Walter in his assertion that 'the good death is now the death that we choose'.[10] Alongside this rests, sometimes uneasily, the reality of death in postmodern Britain, which often occurs as a result of pathological conditions such as heart disease or cancer, and frequently necessitates some kind of medicalized end-of-life environment (what has been called the 'high-tech death').[11] This places death into a professionalized context that often removes an individual's autonomy in managing their death; hospitals, hospices and, later,

[7] M. Guest, E. Olson and J. Wolffe, 'Christianity: Loss of Monopoly', *Religion and Change in Modern Britain*, ed. L. Woodhead and R. Catto (London and New York, 2012), pp. 57–78.

[8] Ibid. 'Practical theology' texts discussing how to 'die well' in modern Christian contexts are readily available, however; see, for example, J. Swinton and R. Payne, ed., *Living Well and Dying Faithfully: Christian Practices for End-of-Life Care* (Grand Rapids and Cambridge, 2009).

[9] D. Clark, 'Introduction', *The Sociology of Death: Theory, Culture, Practice*, ed. D. Clark (Oxford, 1993), pp. 3–8 at 4.

[10] Walter, *Revival*, pp. 2 and 9–10. This point is made primarily with reference to non-violent, non-sudden death. Unexplained death (whether as a result of violence or not) must be rendered legally and medically explicable, otherwise it becomes disruptive to various social systems. Bureaucratically, this desire to ascribe a cause to any unexplained death takes precedence over the needs of the dead or their relatives (e.g. autopsies must take place before a body can be released for burial in the case of unexplained or unexpected death).

[11] J. A. Tercier, *The Contemporary Deathbed: The Ultimate Rush* (New York, 2005), p. 166.

undertaking firms typically deal with the practicalities of death.[12] Despite disjunctions between ideals of individually sanctioned control of death in the postmodern West compared with the more communally sanctioned governance of death in the Anglo-Saxon period, however, points of contact may be discerned, not least in the desire to die a 'good' death. The subjectivity implicit in the term 'good' inevitably results in different sets of values throughout the various historical periods from the Anglo-Saxon age to the present day, but, nonetheless, this desire to die 'well' seems to remain in many ways constant.

The scholarly study of death has become increasingly common over the course of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, largely on the basis of work by historian Philippe Ariès and sociologist Geoffrey Gorer in the twentieth century.[13] Ariès, for example, propounded a view that death in the past was 'tame' (an event 'close and familiar yet diminished and desensitized'), but in modernity had become 'so terrifying that we no longer dare say its name'.[14] Although Ariès's views and methodologies have been variously critiqued, his influence in showing death to be a worthy topic of scholarly enquiry should not be underestimated. The rise of disciplines such as thanatology (the study of death, concerned not only with its physical and forensic elements, but also its wider social aspects) also negates the view that death remains a taboo subject. 'Death Studies' has established itself as a scholarly discipline, and publishing series such as Ashgate's 'Death Studies' highlight continuing scholarly interest in the field as an interdisciplinary area of study.[15] Individuals are also charting their own experiences of dying in literature. The

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[12] Tercier, *Contemporary Deathbed*, pp. 10, 13 and 21.

[13] See R. Norris, 'Deathbed Confessors: Mourning and Genre in Anglo-Saxon Hagiography' (unpubl. PhD dissertation, Univ. of Toronto, 2003), pp. 14–16.

[14] P. Ariès, *The Hour of Our Death*, trans. H. Weaver (London, 1983), p. 28; also P. Ariès, *Western Attitudes toward Death from the Middle Ages to the Present*, trans. P. M. Ranum (Baltimore, 1974); G. Gorer, *Death, Grief, and Mourning in Contemporary Britain* (London, 1965); Norris, 'Deathbed Confessors', pp. 15–17.

[15] Ashgate Death Studies Catalogue 2012, http://www.ashgate.com/pdf/leaflets/Death-Studies-2012-ROW.pdf [accessed 26 March 2013]. This series encompasses studies of death across a range of disciplines. The journal *Death Studies*, published by Routledge, typically covers social and psychological aspects of dying, death, grief and bereavement.

autobiographical nature of so-called 'death-zone literature', in which personal experiences

of dying are charted, reflect this attempt to take control of an event that ultimately remains

a mystery.[16] This thesis considers how modern death scholarship can provide discourses

through which to discuss attitudes to and depictions of 'good' and 'bad' deaths, and,

although it could be argued that applying modern discursive frameworks to Anglo-Saxon

texts risks falling into the trap of anachronism, I would argue that a modern reader can

never hope to comprehend fully an Anglo-Saxon worldview and its conceptions of death

and dying across space and place. Modern theoretical frameworks can, therefore, provide

helpful parameters against which to measure Anglo-Saxon ideals by taking account not

only of details in the texts themselves, but also of cultural ideals that modern audiences

may bring to their readings of Anglo-Saxon death. The application of theoretical

frameworks enables a tighter focus on particular aspects of death as areas for study.[17]

'Good' and 'Bad' Deaths in History and Literature

The literary examination of the 'good' death has a long history. In Roman literature, for

example, Suetonius' descriptions of emperors' deaths in *The Twelve Caesars* (written in 121)

provide early literary models for 'good' and 'bad' deaths, with the description of Augustus'

end most aptly fitting the bill of the good death.[18] Across history particular death-motifs

have been assigned value judgements that are consequently embodied in literature, with

death-scenes being 'constructed to suit the needs of the author, the political climate, or

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[16] P. Gould, *When I Die: Lessons from the Death Zone* (London, 2012); T. Lubbock, *Until Further Notice, I Am Alive* (London, 2012); also H. Fawkes, 'A List for Living, Not a Bucket List', BBC News Magazine, 11 October 2013, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-24477163 [accessed 3 December 2013].

[17] For the dangers of studying death without recourse to some theoretical grounding, see A. Classen's review of S. Knaeble, S. Wagner and V. Wittmann, ed., *Gott und Tod: Tod und Sterben in der höfischen Kultur des Mittelalters* (Münster, 2011) in *The Medieval Review* (29 June 2012).

[18] D. Noy, '"Goodbye Livia": Dying in the Roman Home', *Memory and Mourning: Studies on Roman Death*, ed. V. M. Hope and J. Huskinson (Oxford and Oakville, 2011), pp. 1–20 at 1; Suetonius, *The Twelve Caesars*, trans. R. Graves, rev. ed. (London, 2007).

both'.[19] In light of this, any propagandistic, panegyric or defamatory motivations of specific authors must invariably be borne in mind. Suicide in ancient Rome was viewed as an honourable death if it met certain normative standards; it had to be a rational decision (typically of a higher-status individual) and occur by specific means, such as stabbing oneself or taking poison. Cato's suicide was thus held as an archetype of the noble death and is noted as such in the writings of Cicero.[20] The inculcation of death-scenes with particular value judgements seems to demonstrate that death has been and continues to be used a communicative cultural tool. (A sudden death denies that communicative power, and is often presented as a bad death across historical periods.) In England specifically, the preoccupation with dying a 'good' death has a long literary history, as evidenced, for example, by the *ars moriendi* manuals of the later Middle Ages.[21] Although no extant Anglo-Saxon evidence suggests that comparable volumes existed in this earlier period, numerous Anglo-Saxon texts do indicate concern over the nature of dying well, as is discussed in detail in Victoria Thompson's important study (see below, p. 14). The saint's death represents the pinnacle of the good death, to the extent that it is better described as 'exemplary' than 'good'. Despite this, there has been neither a monograph-length study of the nature of saintly death, nor a wide-ranging interpretation of its importance. Although this thesis privileges the study of the deaths of an especially exclusive elect, I shall assess how ideas expressed in hagiography may have informed attitudes to death more widely.

A number of Anglo-Saxon texts demonstrate uncertainty, and, in some cases, a very real fear over the prospect of dying and death. Cynewulf in his *Fates of the Apostles* notes

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[19] V. Hope, *Roman Death: The Dying and the Dead in Ancient Rome* (London, 2009), p. 64.

[20] C. Edwards, *Death in Ancient Rome* (New Haven, 2007), p. 2; Hope, *Roman Death*, p. 48; V. M. Hope, 'Contempt and Respect: The Treatment of the Corpse in Ancient Rome', *Death and Disease in the Ancient City*, ed. V. M. Hope and E. Marshall (London and New York, 2000), pp. 104–27 at 112.

[21] N. L. Beaty, *The Craft of Dying: A Study in the Literary Tradition of the* Ars Moriendi *in England* (New Haven and London, 1970); S. M. Butler, 'Art of Dying', *ODMA* [accessed 28 February 2012]; C. Daniell, *Death and Burial in Medieval England 1066–1550* (London and New York, 1997), pp. 37–40.

that he (if the I-persona is indeed Cynewulf) devised 'þysne sang' while 'siðgeomor' (1).[22]

Bede's Death Song, commonly transmitted with the *Epistola Cuthberti de obitu Bedae*, expresses a

similar sense of uncertainty at the prospect of death and the destination of the soul:

> For þam nedfere   næni wyrþeþ
> þances snotera,   þonne him þearf sy
> to gehicgenne   ær his heonengange
> hwæt his gaste   godes oþþe yfeles
> æfter deaþe heonon   demed weorþe.[23]

It seems that fear of death is commonly conflated with fear of the afterlife and the

attendant uncertainty regarding the fate of the soul. Death is perhaps not feared for its own

sake, but rather for what it signifies of salvation or damnation on the Day of Judgement.

Fear of death, and fear over the fate of one's soul once dead, is thus evident in a number of

hagiographic and non-hagiographic texts and was presumably also a concern for the wider

population. Bede's recitation of the enigmatic poem noted above (whether a spontaneous

composition or not) reflects not only his own uncertainty at the prospect of impending

death, but serves as a reminder to later readers of the poem to meditate on their own

deaths. One of the ways in which one could further cogitate on the meaning of death and

its comprehension as a signifier of moral and spiritual conduct was through exposure to

death exempla, such as are provided in hagiography. One of the questions that this thesis

seeks to answer, then, is whether hagiography, in addition to its many other purposes,

served to mitigate such fears by providing models for the death-scene. The details of a

saint's death-scene are based ultimately on a hagiographer's choice, with topoi and motifs

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[22] See R. C. Rice, 'The Penitential Motif in Cynewulf's *Fates of the Apostles* and in His Epilogues', *ASE* 6 (1977), 105–119 at 106, note 2, for an assessment of *siðgeomor*.

[23] ASPR 6, p. 108: 'Before that inevitable journey, no man becomes wiser of thought that it is not necessary for him to think upon, before his going hence, what may be adjudged to his soul of good or evil after death.' The poem is extant in Northumbrian (p. 107) and West-Saxon (as here) versions. E. V. K. Dobbie, *The Manuscripts of Cædmon's Hymn and Bede's Death Song: With a Critical Text of the Epistola Cuthberti de obitu Bedæ* (New York, 1937), p. 2, notes that the Northumbrian versions of the text are only preserved in continental manuscripts, whereas the West-Saxon versions are found in insular manuscripts. Twenty-nine manuscripts of the *Epistola* contain the *Death Song* according to S. A. J. Bradley, ed. and trans., *Anglo-Saxon Poetry* (London, 1982), p. 6.

carefully chosen 'to clarify a major hagiographical theme'.[24] As well as investigating whether any death-motifs are culturally specific to Anglo-Saxon England, then, an awareness of whether such motifs change or differ over place or time further enables comment on what Susan Ridyard calls the 'changing literary fashions' of hagiography.[25] Although it is the fact of death rather than its means that is the transformative act enabling the conferring of beatitude, it would not be surprising to find, given the potentiality of certain forms of death to codify cultural, societal and hierarchical attitudes, that particular deaths inculcate particular value judgements. It is for this reason that the symbolic capital invested in the representations of saintly deaths warrants further attention.

Hagiography in Anglo-Saxon England

'gloriosa in conspectu Domini mors sanctorum eius' (Ps. CXV.15)[26]

The primary functions of hagiography ('l'étude scientifique des saints') are liturgical and devotional; saints' lives are designed to be recited on saints' feast days as an act of veneration.[27] As Hippolyte Delehaye, a member of the Société des Bollandistes and one of the most prolific twentieth-century scholars of hagiography, suggests, 'On le voit, pour être strictement hagiographique, le document doit avoir un caractère religieux et se proposer un but d'édification'.[28] Van Uytfanghe notes that the actions ('le comportement') of saints 'doit inspirer les autres fidèles en vertu de la fonction parénétique et édifiante de

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[24] S. Ridyard, *The Royal Saints of Anglo-Saxon England*, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought 9 (Cambridge, 1988), p. 14.

[25] Ibid. p. 14.

[26] 'Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints'.

[27] R. Aigrain, *L'hagiographie: Ses sources – Ses méthodes – Son histoire*, Subsidia Hagiographica 80 (Brussels, 2000), p. 7; *Three Eleventh-Century Anglo-Latin Saints' Lives*, ed. and trans. R. C. Love (Oxford, 1996), pp. xxix–xxxiii.

[28] H. Delehaye, *Les légendes hagiographiques*, 4th ed. (Brussels, 1955), p. 2. The work of the Society of Bollandists in hagiographic research is paramount. They have been responsible for compiling the *Acta Sanctorum* (a compendium of *vitae* and *passiones* of nearly all known saints from the Middle Ages whose feast days fall between January and November) and the *BHL* (a handlist of Eastern and Western saints with Latin hagiographies). For the study of Anglo-Saxon hagiography, Whatley, 'Acta Sanctorum' and the *Fontes Anglo-Saxonici* project are particularly useful. For more on tools for hagiographic study, see E. G. Whatley, 'An Introduction to the Study of Old English Prose Hagiography: Sources and Resources', *Holy Men and Holy Women: Old English Prose Saints' Lives and their Contexts*, ed. P. E. Szarmach (Albany, 1996), pp. 3–32.

l'hagiographie'.[29] It has likewise been suggested that hagiography aims 'to teach the faithful to imitate actions which the community had decided were paradigmatic'.[30]

The Anglo-Saxons were introduced to Christianity partly through the Gregorian-backed Roman mission, led by Augustine, in 597. It was with this mission that many saints' cults were introduced to England, and, as Michael Lapidge and Rosalind Love note, the missionaries perhaps brought '*vitae* of the most important saints of the universal church'.[31] Although a discussion of the nature of conversion is beyond the scope of this study, it is pertinent to note that the establishment of the Christian church in Anglo-Saxon England was informed not only by the Roman Latin learning of the missionaries, but by the Germanic heritage of the Anglo-Saxons and by Irish Christian influences.[32] The first hagiographies written in Anglo-Saxon England itself were not composed until the seventh century, but incoming literature prefigured the rise in hagiography as an extremely popular literary genre, which is evidenced by the fact that it was eventually written in Latin and the vernacular, in prose modelled on existing hagiography and in verse which often reflects

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[29] M. Van Uytfanghe, 'L'empreinte biblique sur la plus ancienne hagiographie occidentale', *Le monde latin antique et la Bible*, ed. J. Fontaine and C. Pietri (Paris, 1985), pp. 565–611 at 573. A. Yasin, *Saints and Church Spaces in the Late Antique Mediterranean: Architecture, Cult and Community* (Cambridge, 2009), p. 250, also acknowledges this: 'Though individual saints' cults could be promoted and molded through the creation of biographical and miracle accounts, at the same time the recording and dissemination of saints' memories was also an exercise in compilation and comparison'.

[30] T. J. Heffernan, *Sacred Biography: Saints and their Biographers in the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1988), p. 5. A number of factors influenced the development of Christian saints' cults; see D. Rollason, *Saints and Relics in Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford, 1989), p. 4; D. W. Rollason, 'Lists of Saints' Resting Places in Anglo-Saxon England', *ASE* 7 (1978), 61–93; D. W. Rollason, 'Relic-Cults as Instruments of Royal Policy *c.* 900–*c.* 1050', *ASE* 15 (1986), 91–103; D. Weinstein and R. Bell, *Saints and Society: The Two Worlds of Western Christendom, 1000–1700* (Chicago, 1982), p. 3.

[31] M. Lapidge and R. C. Love, 'The Latin Hagiography of England and Wales (600–1550)', *Hagiographies: histoire internationale de la littérature hagiographique latine et vernaculaire en Occident des origines à 1550*, ed. G. Philippart (Turnhout, 2001), III, 203–325 at 207. For a notable exception see St Alban, a Romano-British martyr whose cult seems to have been sustained throughout 'Roman, British, and Saxon times' according to R. Sharpe, 'Martyrs and Local Saints in Late Antique Britain', *Local Saints and Local Churches in the Early Medieval West*, ed. A. Thacker and R. Sharpe (Oxford, 2002), pp. 75–154 at 92.

[32] See M. Clayton, 'Preaching and Teaching', *The Cambridge Companion to Old English Literature*, ed. M. Godden and M. Lapidge, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, 2013), pp. 159–79 at 160–1; M. B. Parkes, 'History in Books' Clothing: Books as Evidence for Cultural Relations between England and the Continent in the Seventh and Eighth Centuries', *Text, Image, Interpretation: Studies in Anglo-Saxon Literature and its Insular Context in Honour of Éamonn Ó Carragáin*, ed. A. Minnis and J. Roberts (Turnhout, 2007), pp. 71–88 at 74–7; C. D. Wright, *The Irish Tradition in Old English Literature*, CSASE 6 (Cambridge, 1993).

elements of the Anglo-Saxon Germanic heritage.[33] In her study of early modern martyrdom, Alice Dailey suggests that 'Martyrology mediates historical events through literary form, a form that itself has a history, a history that the form everywhere self-consciously indexes', and this applies to hagiography across space and place.[34] The intersection of history and literary genre is applicable to all hagiography; it is not just historical events that are important, but the history of the genre itself. Hagiography is generically derivative, with lives referencing and recasting earlier versions in a continuum of imitation, or as Candida Moss calls it, a 'mimetic economy', which ultimately recalls Christ's passion.[35] A general understanding that death came about as a result of the transgression of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden is discernible in Anglo-Saxon literature; indeed, Ælfric relates the coming of death with 'Ure ealda fæder adam' in his Christmas homily, and Christ's passion and death were understood as the necessary 'payment' for this sin, by which mankind might experience eternal life.[36]

Anglo-Saxon hagiography is thus set within a continuum ('une chaîne biblico-hagiographique ininterrompue'[37]) stretching back ultimately to the archetypal exemplar of Christ, but simultaneously within an expressly Anglo-Saxon context in which 'insular

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[33] See Bede, *HE*, I.23; H. Mayr-Harting, *The Coming of Christianity to Anglo-Saxon England*, 3rd ed. (Pennsylvania, 1991), pp. 29–30 and 63–8; Lapidge and Love, 'Latin Hagiography', 207. Note that 'England' as a single-kingdom concept came into being only after the ninth-century Scandinavian invasions with King Alfred's efforts to win back territory from Danish settlers north of the Danelaw. Before this, 'England' was a series of kingdoms of differing size; see B. Mitchell and F. C. Robinson, *A Guide to Old English*, 8th ed. (Malden, MA and Oxford, 2012), p. 116; J. Campbell, E. John and P. Wormald, *The Anglo-Saxons* (Oxford, 1982); C. Hills, 'Overview: Anglo-Saxon Identity', *The Oxford Handbook of Anglo-Saxon Archaeology*, ed. H. Hamerow, D. A. Hinton and S. Crawford (Oxford, 2011), pp. 3–12. On the spread of relics and cults, see Rollason, *Saints and Relics*, p. 11.

[34] A. Dailey, *The English Martyr From Reformation to Revolution* (Notre Dame, 2012), p. 5.

[35] C. R. Moss, *The Other Christs: Imitating Jesus in Ancient Christian Ideologies of Martyrdom* (Oxford, 2010), p. 103.

[36] *ÆCHom* II,1 (Christmas), lines 117–18. The same idea can be seen in *ÆLS* (Vincent), lines 80–6, and in *Felix's Life*, §50. *GuthB*, lines 825–70, includes the metaphor of death arriving through the serving of a bitter drink to Adam by Eve. On the notion of death as a 'bitter drink' taken from the 'cup of death', see H. Magennis, 'The Cup as Symbol and Metaphor in Old English Literature', *Speculum* 60 (1985), 517–36; C. Brown, '*Poculum Mortis* in Old English', *Speculum* 15 (1940), 389–99; T. N. Hall, 'A Gregorian Model for Eve's *Biter Drync* in *Guthlac B*', *RES* ns 44 (1993), 157–75; also, L. R. Bailey, Sr., *Biblical Perspectives on Death* (Philadelphia, 1979), pp. 36–47, 81 and 88.

[37] Van Uytfanghe, 'L'empreinte biblique', p. 573.

authors [. . .] adapted and acculturated the incoming text for its novel milieu'.[38] Presumably, such processes of acculturation and assimilation affect the way in which Anglo-Saxon hagiography represents saintly death within an accepted trajectory of faith. By the Anglo-Saxon period, a mimetic layering of exemplarity can be seen, whereby saints' deaths participate in a communal discourse of emulation, imitating Christ's death through a filter of other saints. Simultaneously, the cultural relativity of the periods in which saints' lives are written jostles for position with this hagiographic inheritance.[39] Saints are by their very nature non-normative; the presumed joys of heaven are preferable to the loss of the joys of life, and, in that sense, being dead is the idealized state for a saint because it enables celestial life within a community of saints with simultaneous intercessory power in the terrestrial world. That said, Anglo-Saxon attitudes to death-scenes operate within multifaceted systems of constitution and negotiation, and attitudes are likely to have been influenced by cultural factors other than Christianity, which may have influenced audience responses to saints' lives.[40]

Although Anglo-Saxon saints' lives invariably participate in inherited discourses of sanctity, it is simultaneously important to contextualize these texts within the boundaries of their specific cultural frames of reference. Indeed, 'where death is concerned, there are very few consistent elements in Christian mythology, and these can only be expressed in the broadest terms before cultural relativity starts creeping in'.[41] Even within the frame of

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[38] J. Hewish, 'Living on the Edge: A Study of the Translations of the Life of St Martin into Old English, Middle Irish, and Old Norse–Icelandic' (unpubl. PhD dissertation, Univ. College Dublin, 2005), p. i; M. Lapidge, 'The Saintly Life in Anglo-Saxon England', *The Cambridge Companion to Old English Literature*, ed. M. Godden and M. Lapidge, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, 2013), pp. 251–72 at 254.

[39] M. Gretsch, *Ælfric and the Cult of Saints in Late Anglo-Saxon England*, CSASE 34 (Cambridge, 2005), pp. 7–20, suggests that the Benedictional of Æthelwold (London, BL, Add. 49598) served as a source for Ælfric's *sanctorale*.

[40] On the dissemination of hagiography, see G. Philippart, *Les Légendiers latins et autre manuscrits hagiographiques*, Typologie des sources du moyen âge occidental (Fasc.) 24–25 (Turnhout, 1977), pp. 112–21.

[41] V. J. Thompson, 'The Understanding of Death in England from c. 850 to c. 1100' (unpubl. PhD dissertation, Univ. of York, 2000), p. 2; V. Thompson, *Dying and Death in Later Anglo-Saxon England*, ASS 4 (Woodbridge, 2004), p. 27.

Anglo-Saxon Catholicism, which cannot really be discussed in terms of any religious homogenization, consistent attitudes to and practices surrounding death are not a given. Christian Anglo-Saxons had a different worldview compared with many postmodern Western individuals in relation to death, which inevitably affects the expression of codified attitudes towards death in Anglo-Saxon literature.

Broadly speaking, a saint's legend may be classified into one of two main categories: the *passio* and the *vita*.[42] A *passio* depicts primarily the death of a saint who dies for the faith (a martyr), whereas a *vita* typically charts the life of a saint who undergoes a spiritual rather than a physical martyrdom.[43] The implications of this taxonomic classification invariably mean that martyrs and confessors suffer different deaths; a martyr dies violently in defence of his or her faith at the hands of typically pagan persecutors, whereas confessors typically die at the end of a long life spent in the service of the faith. Indeed, Robin Norris suggests that 'the saint's cause of death is key to the question of genre', an idea that Margaret Bridges has also noted: 'The saint's death may be represented in the gradational pattern of a progression towards beatitude [. . .] or in the diametrical pattern of relief from suffering'.[44] Thompson's notion of death as 'a source of profit' is particularly pertinent to saints' lives insofar as death is a sought-after goal by which a saint can ascend to heaven.[45] Such attitudes explain the use of the term *dies natalis* to describe a saint's death; physical death enables birth into heaven and is an occasion for joy. Death is thus a necessary topos of the saint's legend, and the textual designation of *passio* or *vita* inevitably creates a certain set of expectations in an audience. The topoi of death are thus corralled to a certain extent by the generic dictates of the type of hagiography being written. As well as the confines of the

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[42] Lapidge, 'Saintly Life', p. 260.
[43] Ibid. There are, inevitably, exceptions to these general rules. See also *LexMA*, vol. 4 (1993), s.v. 'martyrium'.
[44] Norris, 'Deathbed Confessors', p. 25; M. E. Bridges, *Generic Contrast in Old English Hagiographical Poetry*, Anglistica 22 (Copenhagen, 1984), p. 20.
[45] Thompson, 'Understanding', p. 4.

genre itself, one must be aware of trends in the use of hagiographic paradigms and how they may affect the use of certain motifs within wider generic boundaries.[46] As the name suggests, *vitae* are ultimately concerned with the lives of saints and how *lived* experiences demonstrate sanctity, and it may be assumed that the deaths of these saints are less fundamental to the narrative development of sanctity than the deaths of martyrs. It is the motifs, the recurrent elements and characteristics associated with death found in these texts, and the various other topoi associated with them, that this thesis investigates.

In tracing the use of hagiographic motifs, the thesis will demonstrate how literary convention regarding saintly death was established and maintained – or challenged – over time. By exploring the approaches to and attitudes surrounding death, I investigate whether any consistent aesthetic of death can be seen in Anglo-Saxon hagiography. Continuities and discontinuities in representations of saintly death are thus explored, alongside an assessment of how an author's personal agenda, his or her choice of terminology, or the gender of the subject may influence the motival elements of hagiographic narratives. Furthermore, the thesis examines how hagiographic death-scenes compare with death-scenes in other Anglo-Saxon literature, and whether any non-hagiographic paradigms provide alternative exemplars of 'good death'. Despite the acknowledgement of the death of a saint as a crucial component of hagiography, the motival elements comprising hagiographic death-scenes have not been studied in a comprehensive manner, and it is this balance that the present thesis seeks to redress. Studies that do exist often focus on one aspect of death, only consider a small sample of saints, or concentrate on the later medieval period.[47] Norris's recent insightful study of mourning in hagiography, by way of example,

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[46] See Gretsch, *Cult of Saints*, pp. 1–20, on Ælfric's choices for his *sanctorale* and *temporale* (fixed saints' feasts and moveable feasts, respectively).

[47] For example, J. Wilcox, 'Famous Last Words: Ælfric's Saints Facing Death', *Essays in Medieval Studies: Proceedings of the Illinois Medieval Association* 10 (1993), 1–13; M. Goodich, 'The Death of a Saint: A Hagiographical Topos', *Hoping for Continuity: Childhood, Education and Death in Antiquity and the Middle Ages,* ed.

provides an extremely useful introduction to the understanding of sorrow and grief in the Anglo-Saxon period, as well as a nuanced discussion of portrayals of mourning men, but the emphasis on *vitae* written in the vernacular, however, demonstrates scope to consider death-scenes in the Anglo-Saxon hagiographic corpus more widely.[48] Furthermore, it is frequently stated in scholarship that the death-motifs of particularly martyrs, but also confessors, follow strict forms, and I shall examine adherence to, and any deviation from, these 'norms'.[49]

In addition to the body of scholarship on hagiography, recent years have seen a number of studies relating to dying and death in Anglo-Saxon England more generally. Many of these studies are primarily concerned with the archaeological record, and cover such topics as 'deviant' burial or memorialization; this thesis therefore does not consider such things as the historical reality of death, burial practice, or how 'ordinary' people died, for instance. Thompson's study of dying and death in late Anglo-Saxon England makes use of a range of literary and historical sources, and assesses how the social and cultural contexts of late Anglo-Saxon England affected attitudes to death, dying, funerals and burial.[50] Studies such as Thompson's, however, do not include any sustained treatment of hagiography, although it is acknowledged that 'Tales of the deaths of [. . .] saints like

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K. Mustakallio *et al.*, Acta Instituti Romani Finlandiae 33 (Rome, 2005), pp. 227–38. Goodich is concerned primarily with thirteenth-century depictions of peaceful death.

[48] See Norris, 'Deathbed Confessors'.

[49] It is asserted in a range of scholarship that martyrs die by beheading. Lapidge, 'Saintly Life', p. 261, for instance, argues that the subject of a *passio* 'is eventually killed, usually by beheading' (also M. Lapidge, 'Roman Martyrs and their Miracles in Anglo-Saxon England', *Miracles and the Miraculous in Medieval Germanic and Latin Literature*, ed. K. E. Olsen, A. Harbus and T. Hofstra (Leuven, 2004), pp. 95–120, at 101 and 109); E. Harney, 'The Sexualized and Gendered Tortures of Virgin Martyrs in Medieval English Literature' (unpubl. PhD dissertation, Univ. of Toronto, 2008), p. 3, notes that the deaths of female virgin martyrs 'usually takes the form of beheading'; Daniell, *Death and Burial*, p. 78, suggests that decapitation 'was a common method of Christian death'; R. S. Anderson, 'Saints' Legends', *A History of Old English Literature*, R. D. Fulk and C. M. Cain (Oxford, 2003), pp. 87–105 at 88, argues that martyrdom usually occurs 'by decollation (since that was the manner of St. Paul's death, and it is not therefore to be resisted by subsequent martyrs)'; R. S. Farrar, 'Structure and Function in Representative Old English Saints' Lives', *Neophilologus* 57 (1973), 83–93 at 84, cites beheading as the most common means of martyrdom, but notes that his assertion is based only on Lucy, Agatha, Agnes and Cecilia in *ÆLS*. (In *ÆLS* (Agatha), the saint in fact gives up her ghost: 'heo ageaf hire gast and to gode siðode', 196).

[50] Thompson, *Dying and Death*, pp. 1–7.

Cuthbert, Martin and Guthlac are likely to have had a wide audience'.[51] Thus, nowhere to my knowledge has the Anglo-Saxon *literary* aesthetic of *idealized* death received a comprehensive study, and a detailed study of saintly death can enhance and complement recent studies to provide a fuller, and more nuanced, understanding of death in Anglo-Saxon England. This thesis uses a range of approaches to tackle the varied Anglo-Saxon hagiographic material.

Methodology

I have charted the literary motifs comprising death-scenes in Anglo-Latin and Old English saints' lives, and the resulting Motif Index (hereafter MI; Appendix I) in which these data are collated provides a survey of typical and atypical formulae. This enables a comparison of the 'constellation of motifs' across various texts.[52] I include some fifty texts in this study, many of which contain multiple individual entries (see Chapter I).[53] Given that my data are to some extent subjective and open to differing interpretations, I have decided against employing any standardized system of statistical analysis for the purposes of this thesis. (The ambiguity over the interpretation of certain death-scenes illustrates the need for caution in attempting to apply statistical significance to my data set.) What these data do show regardless of statistical interpretation, however, is the relative frequency, or even ubiquity, of certain motifs, which in itself is meaningful. Any variant methodologies are highlighted in individual chapters where applicable.

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[51] Ibid. p. 62.

[52] C. Rauer, *Beowulf and the Dragon: Parallels and Analogues* (Cambridge, 2000), p. 89.

[53] For more on Anglo-Saxon saints and the scholarly landscape, see J. Blair, 'A Handlist of Anglo-Saxon Saints', *Local Saints and Local Churches in the Early Medieval West*, ed. A. Thacker and R. Sharpe (Oxford, 2002), pp. 495–565; Whatley, 'Introduction'; J. E. Cross, 'English Vernacular Saints' Lives before 1000 A.D.', *Hagiographies: histoire internationale de la litterature latine et vernaculaire en Occident des origines à 1550*, ed. G. Philippart (Turnhout, 1996), II, 413–27; D. G. Scragg, 'The Corpus of Vernacular Homilies and Prose Saints' Lives before Ælfric', *ASE* 8 (1979), 223–77; C. Watson, 'Old English Hagiography: Recent and Future Research', *Literature Compass* 1 (2004), 1–14.

This thesis does not engage with the question of Latin sources in any comprehensive manner, because I am primarily interested in the attitudes to death expressed in the Anglo-Saxon texts themselves, and how these attitudes informed audiences. Furthermore, a discussion of the wider proliferation of saints' cults falls outside the scope of this study.[54] Again owing to scope, the thesis does not provide an exhaustive study of every hagiographic text mentioned; it is instead hoped that a wide-ranging survey will provide outlets for further research (not only for literary scholars, but also historians and archaeologists) into attitudes and approaches to death in Anglo-Saxon England.

Conceptual Definitions

I have thus far referred to 'death' without any elucidation of exactly what 'death' means here. The term encompasses a range of senses, and may refer to the last moment in a person's life, the event, or 'temporal boundary', marking the end of life or a temporal period after life.[55] Furthermore, 'death' can function as an abstract concept that may also be personified or anthropomorphized. When referring to death as a condition or event, this thesis is predicated on an understanding of a tripartite schema of 'death'. This discursive framework follows the likes of philosophers John Fischer and L. W. Sumner who divide 'death' into three discrete concepts: dying, death and being dead.[56] Fischer suggests that 'Dying is a process. Being dead is a condition or state. Death intervenes between dying and being dead; it takes place at the end of dying and the beginning of being dead'.[57] Sumner explores the justification for such a division as a result of the ambiguity over interpretations of 'death'. Indeed, the *DOE* demonstrates that Old English *deaþ* can encompass a range of

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[54] On textual conflations of history and fiction, see G. W. Bowersock, *Fiction as History: Nero to Julian* (Berkeley and London, 1994), p. 141.

[55] Sumner, *Assisted Death*, pp. 2–3.

[56] J. M. Fischer, 'Introduction', *The Metaphysics of Death*, ed. J. M. Fischer (Stanford, 1993), pp. 3–30; Sumner, *Assisted Death*, pp. 2–3.

[57] Fischer, 'Introduction', pp. 3–4.

meanings, including the act of dying, the state of being dead and the death of the soul.[58] Thus, 'death-motif' in this thesis refers to the means by which physical life ends or is terminated. The ante- and post-mortem motifs occur during processes of dying and being dead, respectively.[59] 'Death-scene' refers to the collective narrative expression of these concepts and encompasses the processes of dying, the death-motif and being dead.

This study is ostensibly concerned with literary representations of death-scenes. Representation involves placing something in a system that assigns a particular meaning to it, and 'necessarily involves politics – in the sense of principles, aims and policies'.[60] Representation requires both a 'maker' and a 'beholder' and effective communication is a necessary requisite for 'correct' interpretation.[61] Literary representation involves the aesthetic use of language, and is further influenced by the generic form that literature takes. As Karl Guthke notes, literary images (in the same way as visual art) may not necessarily impart any fundamental or universal wisdoms regarding death, but they do tell us something about how the people who made the images conceptualized the nature of death by orientating themselves within a particular imaginative matrix.[62] The representation of death-scenes is constituted by the use of particular literary motifs, and I follow the general definition of 'motif' suggested by *The Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*: 'A situation, incident, idea, image, or character-type that is found in many different literary works'.[63] I use 'topos' and 'motif' synonymously.

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[58] *DOE*, s.v. *deaþ*.

[59] With regards to 'being dead', this thesis only considers events with a causal link to the moment of death; therefore, there is insufficient scope to consider shrines and the later proliferation of cults.

[60] J. Neville, *Representations of the Natural World in Old English Poetry*, CSASE 27 (Cambridge, 1999), p. 10.

[61] W. J. T. Mitchell, 'Representation', *Critical Terms for Literary Study*, ed. F. Lentricchia and T. McLaughlin, 2nd ed. (Chicago, 1995), pp. 11–22 at 12.

[62] K. S. Guthke, *The Gender of Death: A Cultural History in Art and Literature* (Cambridge, 1999), p. 256.

[63] C. Baldick, ed., *The Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*, 3rd ed. (Oxford, 2008), s.v. 'motif'; also *Glossary*, s.v. 'Motif and Theme'.

An ancillary investigative area of this thesis focuses on acculturation and analyses how cultural contexts inform literary representation.[64] I use the precepts of acculturation psychology as a means to approach the Anglo-Saxon material, because it seems to provide a helpful interpretative framework within which to assess attitudes to death. 'Acculturation' may be defined as 'the meeting of cultures and the resulting changes' that come about following contact between those cultures.[65] The term encompasses 'all the changes that arise following "contact" between individuals and groups of different cultural backgrounds'.[66] Religious mentalities expressed in Anglo-Saxon literature are a product of many layers of acculturation including the contact between pagan Anglo-Saxons and Christian missionaries, for instance. On this 'meeting of two distinct mentalities, one outcome of the Christianisation of Anglo-Saxon literature must have been the creation of a hybrid mental schema incorporating elements from both cultures'.[67] It is my contention that attitudes to death in the literature of Anglo-Saxon England are shaped by the interactions between these contrasting cultural and ideological heritages. A remark made by Roberta Frank with reference to *Beowulf* seems helpful to ponder in relation to these notions of acculturation, demonstrating that it does not have to be unidirectional: '*Beowulf* projects onto the distant past features of the society of its own day, consciously and deliberately, in order to provide a sense of continuity'.[68] Changes caused by acculturation can occur on both the individual and group level and may affect identity, values and attitudes as well as social structures and political organization. Most of the literature discussed here is an outcome of long and complicated processes of acculturation, but one

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[64] Weinstein and Bell, *Saints and Society*, p. 7.

[65] D. L. Sam and J. W. Berry, 'Introduction', *The Cambridge Handbook of Acculturation Psychology*, ed. D. L. Sam and J. W. Berry (Cambridge, 2006), pp. 1–7 at 1.

[66] D. L. Sam, 'Acculturation: Conceptual Background and Core Components', *The Cambridge Handbook of Acculturation Psychology*, ed. D. L. Sam and J. W. Berry (Cambridge, 2006), pp. 11–26 at 11; also http://www.oed.com, s.v. 'acculturation' [accessed 26 September 2011].

[67] A. Harbus, *The Life of the Mind in Old English Poetry* (Amsterdam and New York, 2002), p. 183.

[68] R. Frank, 'Three 'Cups' and a Funeral in *Beowulf*', *Latin Learning and English Lore: Studies in Anglo-Saxon Literature for Michael Lapidge*, ed. K. O'Brien O'Keeffe and A. Orchard (Toronto, 2005), I, 407–20 at 409.

in which, ultimately, Christianity prevailed, and a key factor in this presumably would have been what acculturation psychologists term 'socialisation', that is, 'the deliberate and systematic "shaping" of an individual through teaching'.[69] The ensuing contacts between insular and continental Christianity throughout the course of the period further influenced the cultural productions of Anglo-Saxon England.[70] The cultural contexts in which early Christian hagiography was written affect the hagiography that emerges from Anglo-Saxon England, as hagiographers write lives that conform to the ideals set out in their hagiographic exemplars.[71] Anglo-Saxon versions of the Seven Sleepers legend, for example, demonstrate how the context of Anglo-Saxon capital punishment seems to have explicitly informed the text.[72] In the Old English version (which appears in one of the *ÆLS* manuscripts and was printed by Skeat as part of his *ÆLS* edition, but which was not written by Ælfric) the heads of Christian martyrs are 'sette [. . .] swilce oþra ðeofa buton ðam port-weallon on ðam heafod-stoccum' (75–6); the specific reference to the 'heafod stocc' (a term not found in the Latin version) as a means of bodily display after martyrdom supports archaeological evidence from 'execution cemeteries'.[73] Furthermore, Reynolds has suggested that the reference in *Juliana* to the saint's execution taking place at a land

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[69] Sam, 'Acculturation', p. 20.

[70] A source for *GuthB* is Felix's earlier Latin life. Felix in turn uses Bede's prose life of Cuthbert and Aldhelm's *Dv* and *Cdv*, demonstrating the intertextuality of hagiographic traditions within the Anglo-Saxon corpus itself; *Felix's Life*, pp. 17–18. Likewise, much has been written on Bede's modifications to the details of the anonymous *vita* of Cuthbert, especially in his prose version. See W. Berschin, '*Opus deliberatum ac perfectum*. Why Did the Venerable Bede Write a Second Prose Life of St Cuthbert?', *St Cuthbert, His Cult and His Community to A.D. 1200*, ed. G. Bonner, D. Rollason and C. Stancliffe (Woodbridge, 1989), pp. 95–102; F. Tinti, 'Personal Names in the Composition and Transmission of Bede's prose "Vita S. Cuthberti" ', *ASE* 40 (2011), 15–42.

[71] As Whatley, 'Introduction', p. 13, notes, many Latin hagiographies known in Anglo-Saxon England were based on Greek originals which migrated to the Latin Christian West; see M. Van Uytfanghe, 'Modèles bibliques dans l'hagiographie', *Le Moyen Age et la Bible*, ed. P. Riché and G. Lobrichon (Paris, 1985), pp. 449–88 at 456; S. Wilson, 'Introduction', *Saints and their Cults: Studies in Religious Sociology, Folklore and History*, ed. S. Wilson (Cambridge, 1983), pp. 1–55.

[72] See *The Anonymous Old English Legend of the Seven Sleepers*, ed. H. Magennis, Durham Medieval Texts 7 (Durham, 1994) for the text; also H. Magennis, 'The Anonymous Old English *Legend of the Seven Sleepers* and its Latin Source', *Leeds Studies in English* ns 22 (1991), 43–56; H. Magennis, s.v. 'Dormientes (Septem), passio', in Whatley, 'Acta Sanctorum', pp. 175–7; Thompson, *Dying and Death*, pp. 188–9.

[73] A. Reynolds, *Anglo-Saxon Deviant Burial Customs* (Oxford, 2009), pp. 31 and 119. See *Seven Sleepers*, ed. Magennis, Appendix, pp. 74–91 for the Latin *passio* and translation. See also *HE*, III.12, where Oswald's head and hand are displayed on stakes ('stipitibus').

boundary (londmearce, 635b) reflects Anglo-Saxon judicial practice.[74] Anglo-Saxon

hagiography thus in many cases displays a fusion of elements drawn from literary models

and from contemporary Anglo-Saxon culture.

My analysis of death-scenes is organized on the presence of violence as a factor in

causing death. My definition of violent death-scenes essentially encompasses martyrdom. I

predicate my understanding of martyrdom on the basis of 'red martyrdom' (that in which

blood is shed) as opposed to 'white martyrdom' (that which represents a spiritual sacrifice;

see below). As has been argued, 'red or crimson could be associated with the martyrs by

analogy with the blood they had shed'.[75] This association is current from the writings of

early Church Fathers such as Cyprian (d. 258) and Origen (d. 253/4).[76] Moss asserts that

martyrdom is 'extreme and removed' to a modern reader, but postmodern Western

conceptions of martyrdom have been complicated by the adoption of the term in current

religious and political discourses, as well as by such events as the continuing war in Gaza

and effects of the 'War on Terror' launched in response to the September 11 2001 suicide

attacks.[77] Notions of martyrdom today are informed by the cultural, political and religious

sensitivities of a particular cultural milieu, in the same way as notions of martyrdom in the

early centuries of Christianity, or in the Anglo-Saxon period, are likewise informed by the

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[74] Reynolds, *Deviant Burial*, p. 26. M. Clayton, 'Suicide in the Works of Ælfric', *RES* ns 60 (2009), 339–70 at 360, has identified other elements of possible acculturation in relation to death, noting how Ælfric's references to hanging in *ÆCHom* include a description of the victims spinning by their feet. Clayton notes that these descriptions are not found in any of Ælfric's sources and may be based on either first-hand knowledge or at least artistic representations of hanging.

[75] C. Stancliffe, 'Red, White and Blue Martyrdom', *Ireland in Early Medieval Europe: Studies in Memory of Kathleen Hughes*, ed. D. Whitelock, R. McKitterick and D. Dumville (Cambridge, 1982), pp. 21–46 at 32.

[76] Stancliffe, 'Red, White and Blue', p. 32. A study of one further colour of martyrdom – blue – falls beyond the scope of this study owing to its primary association with the Irish church. Aldhelm writes martyrdom in terms of colour in his description of the *passio rubra* ('blood-red martyrdom') of Chionia, Irene and Agape in the *CdV*; Ehwald, p. 443, line 2198; *Poetic Works*, p. 151.

[77] Moss, *Other Christs*, p. 19; Moss uses the same phrase ('extreme and removed') to describe martyrdom in her recent monograph on the ideologies of martyrdom; see C. R. Moss, *Ancient Christian Martyrdom: Diverse Practices, Theologies, and Traditions* (New Haven and London, 2012), p. 1. See also P. Middleton, *Martyrdom: A Guide for the Perplexed* (London, 2011), p. 2. Postmodern conceptions of martyrdom have been complicated by the frequent conflation of the term with what has been called 'suicide terrorism'; see L. Richardson, *What Terrorists Want: Understanding the Terrorist Threat* (London, 2006), pp. 134–5.

interaction of various ideas within a multifaceted system of interpretation. It is not within

the scope of this thesis to discuss the history of the emergence of 'martyrdom', but it is

nonetheless necessary to stress a number of points: 'martyrdom' as a linguistic concept and

'martyrdom' as an idea were not necessarily conterminous, and 'the ideologies and language

of martyrdom are never stagnant and fixed'.[78] Ancient Jewish as well as Roman and Greek

concepts of death inform early Christian writings on martyrdom, which in turn inform

ideas of martyrdom in the Christian literature of later centuries.[79] In many ways, then,

attitudes towards violent death are heterogeneous rather than homogenous, but from the

beginnings of Christianity the potentiality of martyrdom to serve as a discourse on

Christian identity seems to have been exploited by those who committed the events to

memory in writing. The written record of martyrdom became a mode of communication,

and an awareness of the potentiality of martyrdom accounts to manage and direct Christian

rhetoric can be seen in a proliferation of writings on the martyrs from the fourth century

onwards. Martyrdom creates a discourse of identity contingent upon violent dying and

death, and the codification of these discourses in literature provides models for later texts.

Thus, martyrdom must follow a particular trajectory for it to be considered valid, but that

trajectory is determined by those who are left to record it. In analysing the concept of

imitatio Christi in the earliest *acta*, Moss suggests that a martyr's death-scene promoted a

particular range of virtues on which Christians could model themselves; she also notes the

limitations of 'legitimate' martyrdom and argues that 'the unevangelical enthusiasm of

Quintus' in the account of Polycarp's martyrdom, for example, was widely disapproved

of.[80] As Christianity became established, the parameters within which martyrdom could be

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[78] Moss, *Ancient Christian Martyrdom*, p. 6.
[79] Ibid. pp. 26–44. Such texts also informed notions of 'good' and 'bad' death.
[80] Moss, *Other Christs*, pp. 4–5 and 108; S. Ashbrook Harvey, 'Martyr Passions and Hagiography', *The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Studies*, ed. S. Ashbrook Harvey and D. G. Hunter (Oxford, 2008), pp. 603–27. See Byrhtferth's *Vita S. Ecgwini*, §iv.10, in which he explicitly comments that a peasant who beheads himself

considered legitimate were consolidated, which in turn led to an expectation around the trajectory that a martyr act would take: 'each *passio* had to fulfill the expectations appropriate for that type of saint's life, most particularly with regard to the saint's death'.[81] In this way, martyrdom can be said to be a teleological act that is validated by its end result (that is, death). Moss's study concentrates on the virtues expressed by suffering martyrs as exemplary mimetic salvific or sacrificial models, however, rather than on martyrdom as a literary motif.

My discussion of death does not only encompass those deaths that were violently inflicted, however. The legalization of Christianity in the early fourth century meant that alternative models of sanctity not dependent on martyrdom were required, as 'Asceticism was assimilated to martyrdom, and sanctity was also ascribed to those who spread the gospel among the heathen or who governed the Church with piety'.[82] Non-violent death-scenes feature saints who experience biological death predominantly as a result of natural causes, including illness and old age, and these alternative death-scene paradigms presumably affect Anglo-Saxon conceptions of dying well. This thesis therefore questions how these paradigms form discourses on dying, death and being dead across the Anglo-Saxon period.

I have hoped to show here that, regardless of cultural milieu, any death presents 'certain physical, metaphysical and social challenges'.[83] As such, all cultures attempt to manage both the functionality and the symbolism of death. In Chapter I, I shall turn to the Anglo-Saxon hagiographic corpus to begin my assessment of how hagiography participates

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accidently with a scythe after attempting to steal some land from a monastery patronized by Ecgwine does not make himself a martyr: 'non se martyrem faciens pro Christi amore, sed semetipsum ex hac uita emittens zabulo uincente' ('not making of himself a martyr for Christ's love, but dismissing himself from this life, the devil gaining the victory'); *Byrhtferth of Ramsey: The Lives of St Oswald and St Ecgwine*, ed. and trans. M. Lapidge (Oxford, 2009), pp. 296–7.

[81] Norris, 'Deathbed Confessors', p. 46.
[82] Wilson, 'Introduction', p. 3; *ODCC*, s.v. 'confessor'.
[83] Bradbury, *Representations*, p. 5.

in a discourse of codified behaviour in relation to dying, death and being dead, by assessing collections of motifs. The chapter provides an overview of both typical and atypical death-motifs found in Anglo-Saxon hagiography.

Chapter II considers the death-scenes of native Anglo-Saxon saints. The underlying motivation here is to assess how far hagiographic accounts of native saints followed or deviated from wider trends adopted in Anglo-Saxon England for portraying saintly death, and to assess processes of acculturation in these accounts. The chapter also considers whether historical practices of violent death are reflected in Anglo-Saxon hagiography.

Drawing on the evidence presented in the earlier chapters, Chapter III considers gendered representations of death, and questions whether male and female saints are presented as dying differently. The chapter considers how far scholarly generalizations made on the basis of gender may be said to be fair in respect of gendered bodies in Anglo-Saxon hagiography, and to consider more fully possible reasons for such assumptions.

Chapter IV investigates portrayals of non-saintly death-scenes and explores whether non-hagiographic narratives offer alternative portrayals of exemplary death. Using the examples of Beowulf and Byrhtnoth, I aim to show that their death-scenes are represented in ways that authors found appropriate to particular ideals. This provides a means of comparison to hagiography and allows an assessment of how far genre dictates the typical conventions of Anglo-Saxon death-scenes.

Chapter V analyses last words in saints' lives, but takes account of last words from other Anglo-Saxon literature. The chapter attempts to decipher the kinds of dying utterances saints are presented as saying and how these function within hagiographic contexts. These trends and patterns are then related to non-saintly narratives.

The final chapter surveys various death-scene motifs relating to the soul, which themselves reflect the dual ontological existence of saints in both the earthly and heavenly

spheres. The presentation of souls during death-scenes is an aspect of hagiographic enquiry that could benefit from further investigation; thus, the underlying premise of this chapter is to assess the distribution of soul motifs in death-scenes and to elucidate the significance of any topoi.

CHAPTER I
DEATH-SCENES IN ANGLO-SAXON HAGIOGRAPHY

This thesis examines the trends found in the literary depictions of saints' death-scenes to assess whether hagiography attempts to inform attitudes towards death more widely. This chapter comprises a survey of the trends found in saintly death-scenes from across the corpus of Anglo-Latin and Old English hagiography (see below, pp. 27–32, for a brief description of the texts and authors discussed). I shall consider whether aesthetic depictions of death-scenes demonstrate differences in attitudes and approaches towards death, and, in light of this analysis, will suggest reasons for any discernible anomalies. Taking account of the literary and historical contexts of hagiography, I shall analyse how saints' lives form part of a wider discourse informing attitudes on the nature of 'good' and 'bad' death in Anglo-Saxon England. Hagiography typically functions as an exposition on sanctity as well as a record of it, and, therefore, how Anglo-Saxon hagiographers attempt to manage the presentation of death for the purposes of its symbolic capital will be scrutinized.

A range of evidence suggests that the Anglo-Saxons understood death not only as a biological event at the end of physical life, but as an eschatological event that would take place on Judgement Day. This is evident in Ælfric's homily *Sermo ad Populum, in Octavis Pentecosten Dicendus*: 'Twegen deaðas synd [. . .] / an is ðæs lichaman deað, þe eallum mannum becymð, / oðer is ðære sawle deað, þe ðurh synna becymð'.[1] Milton McC. Gatch has commented on Ælfric's use of 'death [as] a metaphor for the condition of the soul' and it seems evident that Ælfric equates the soul's purity with this idea of a hierarchy of death;

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[1] *Suppl.*, I, pp. 415–47 at 421, lines 129–35: 'There are two deaths [. . .] one is the body's death that comes to all men, the other is the soul's death, which comes through sins'.

the best outcome for anyone is to suffer only bodily death.[2] *VHom* 9 presents a tripartite

schema of death, whereby the first type of death comes as a result of 'manegum synnum'

(line 33); the second type involves the division of soul and body ('þære sawle gescead 7

lichoman', 34); and the third type concerns the eternal damnation of souls 'on helle' (35),

but this 'triadic scheme' is generally uncommon in Anglo-Saxon texts and seems to have

been more indebted to the 'Hiberno-Latin tradition' according to Charles Wright.[3] For the

most part, physical death signals physical decay of the body and the beginning of an interim

period for the soul until the Last Judgement when the dead are raised, re-embodied and the

eternal fate of the soul decided. The physical deaths of saints occupy an ambiguous

position in this understanding of death inasmuch as their souls are commonly represented

as ascending directly to heaven at the moment of physical death. Such ideas regarding the

nature of death might lead one to believe that, in the case of saints especially, physical

death is ultimately unimportant; it is not the way in which death occurs that is important,

but 'the cause died for'.[4] But here a paradox is met; physical death is significant for what it

demonstrates about the state of the soul, and, furthermore, hagiographers frequently

appropriate the death-scenes of saints to achieve a didactic aim. The way in which the

moment of death is approached plays into these didactic aims, and, as such, a

comprehensive study of death-scenes in their entirety will enable a deeper understanding of

how hagiography attempts to inform audience attitudes to dying, death, and being dead.

The rendering of a saint's death into literature enables the codification of a set of ideals that

direct the allegorical interpretation of the text. At this juncture, an elucidation of the

particular hagiographies that this thesis explores is necessary.

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[2] M. McC. Gatch, *Preaching and Theology in Anglo-Saxon England: Ælfric and Wulfstan* (Toronto, 1977), p. 67. See Chapter VI for more on the soul at death.

[3] D. G. Scragg, ed., *The Vercelli Homilies*, EETS os 300 (Oxford, 1992), pp. 151–90; Wright, *Irish Tradition*, pp. 90–1. See also Thompson, *Dying and Death*, pp. 49–50; DiNapoli, pp. 83–4. For Biblical representations of death, see Bailey, *Biblical Perspectives*.

[4] D. Loades, 'Introduction', *Martyrs and Martyrologies: Papers Read at the 1992 Summer Meeting and the 1993 Winter Meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society*, ed. D. Wood, SCH 30 (Oxford, 1993), pp. xv–xviii at xv.

There is a large corpus of extant hagiography from Anglo-Saxon England, much of which is included in the MI to this thesis.[5] The earliest extant hagiographic material written in Anglo-Saxon England was the *Dv* and *Cdv* by Aldhelm (*c.* 639–709), abbot of Malmesbury and bishop of Sherborne.[6] Both elements of this twinned work on virginity were written for a community of nuns at the double monastery of Barking. The prose work was composed before the verse, sometime before Aldhelm became abbot of Malmesbury *c.* 685, but the *Cdv* cannot be dated with any certainty.[7] Although Aldhelm was 'not a hagiographer in the strict sense, [. . .] he had an extensive knowledge of hagiographical texts and was instrumental in disseminating knowledge of earlier saints among literate Anglo-Saxon audiences', and, for that reason, it seems necessary to include his works in this study.[8] Lapidge and Love suggest that Aldhelm's choice of martyrs in the prose *Dv* is 'eccentric',[9] but hypothesize that he may have had, in addition to the accepted sources, access to a single passional from which he drew his saints.[10] Juliet Mullins, however, has recently argued that Aldhelm's choice of saints in the *Dv* represents 'a growing interest in universal saints and an artistic response to the material of the Mass'.[11]

From *c.* 700 a number of individual Latin lives were written, including anonymous *vitae* of Cuthbert (*BHL* 2019), Gregory the Great (*BHL* 3637) and Ceolfrith (*BHL* 1726). The Mercian priest Stephen of Ripon (*fl. c.*670–*c.*730) composed a *vita* of Wilfrid (*BHL* 8889), and a *vita* of Guthlac (*BHL* 3723) was written (730×740) by the East-Anglian monk

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[5] Lapidge's introductory article also provides a useful overview; Lapidge, 'Saintly Life', pp. 251–72. See also R. C. Love, 'Hagiography', *Wiley Blackwell Encyclopedia of Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. Michael Lapidge, John Blair, Simon Keynes and Donald Scragg, 2nd ed. (Malden, MA and Oxford, 2014), pp. 231–3.

[6] M. Lapidge, 'The Career of Aldhelm', *ASE* 36 (2007), 15–69; M. Lapidge, 'Aldhelm [St Aldhelm] (*d.* 709/10)', *ODNB* [accessed 11 January 2012].

[7] Lapidge, 'Career', 61.

[8] Lapidge and Love, 'Latin Hagiography', 209.

[9] Ibid. 211.

[10] Ibid. 210–11; J. Mullins, 'Aldhelm's Choice of Saints for his Prose *De Virginitate*', *Saints and Scholars: New Perspectives on Anglo-Saxon Literature and Culture in Honour of Hugh Magennis*, ed. S. McWilliams (Cambridge, 2012), pp. 33–53 at 35; see Lapidge, 'Career', 34, on Aldhelm's 'first-hand knowledge' of texts.

[11] Mullins, 'Aldhelm's Choice', p. 53.

Felix.[12] Bede (673/4–735), a monk of the monastery of Wearmouth-Jarrow, and one of the best-known Anglo-Saxon authors, also falls into this early phase.[13] For the purposes of this thesis I am concerned with his hagiographic entries in the *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum* (hereafter *HE*; completed 731), which was dedicated to King Ceolwulf (who reigned from 729), and with his prose life of Cuthbert (*BHL* 2021).[14] It has been suggested that Bede's placement of saints in the *HE* depended 'on their roles in a larger narrative, not their individual narratives of holiness', and such authorial motivations are considered in the course of the thesis.[15]

Early hagiographies were composed in the vernacular as well as in Latin, and a number of Old English texts have survived. Although it is preserved in a twelfth-century manuscript (Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Hatton 116, Worcester, s. xii[med]), the life of St Chad is suggested by Vleeskruyer to date from 'not later than the third quarter of the ninth century'.[16] A vernacular life of Machutus (*LS* 13), a translation of a Latin *Vita S. Machutis* by Bili, a deacon at Alet, survives in damaged form in London, BL Cotton Otho A.viii (s.xi[1/4]), with a fragment of one folio found within London, BL Cotton Otho B.x, fol. 66.[17] The acephalous vernacular *passio* of St Christopher is found in the same manuscript as *Beowulf*, and there were vernacular lives written of SS Pantaleon, Nicholas, Giles, Mary of Egypt and Margaret. Some of these lives are only preserved in later manuscripts, and the dates of composition are in many cases contested. In addition to these texts, various vernacular hagiographic poems are included in the MI, notably, *GuthA*, *GuthB*, *And.*, *Jul.* and *Fates*. Although J. E. Cross argued that *Fates* is 'not within the genre of saints' legend,

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[12] *Felix's Life*, p. 19; A. Thacker, 'Stephen of Ripon (*fl. c.*670–*c.*730)' *ODNB* [accessed 9 August 2013].

[13] J. Campbell, 'Bede (673/4–735)', *ODNB* [accessed 11 January 2012].

[14] Mayr-Harting, *Coming of Christianity*, p. 210.

[15] D. Defries, 'St. Oswald's Martyrdom: Drogo of Saint-Winnoc's *Sermo secundus de s. Oswaldo*', *Heroic Age* 9 (2006), http://www.heroicage.org/issues/9/toc.html [accessed 19 November 2013].

[16] *The Life of St. Chad: An Old English Homily*, ed. R. Vleeskruyer (Amsterdam, 1953), p. 70. Manuscript dates and origins follow Gneuss, *Handlist* unless otherwise specified.

[17] *The Old English Life of Machutus*, ed. D. Yerkes, Toronto Old Series 9 (Toronto, 1984), p. xxv. Owing to the damaged state of the manuscript, Machutus' death-scene is not covered in the MI.

since [. . .] the poem about the apostles is too limited in information', it is included in the MI because it does impart useful information regarding saintly death-scenes.[18]

The *Old English Martyrology*, written by an anonymous author (hereafter referred to as the martyrologist), covers a huge geographical and chronological range and deviates from previous martyrological conventions in its detailed narrative treatment of saints as well as its inclusion of non-hagiographic material. It was 'probably composed sometime between *c.* 800 and *c.* 900', according to its most recent editor.[19] Six medieval fragments of the text survive, which cover most of the calendric year, except '25 January to ?27 February and perhaps also late December'.[20] The ninth-century was not, however, a high point in the landscape of Anglo-Saxon scholarly production, in part owing to various Viking invasions, and there is not a great deal of (surviving) hagiography from this period relative to the earlier and later periods. Towards the end of Alfred the Great's reign in the 880s, scholarly production did revive somewhat, and, by the late tenth century, a number of hagiographies had been written, partly as a result of the Benedictine Reform movement.[21] The reform has been associated with a 'renewed interest in the commemoration of the dead', and it may prove useful to bear this in mind.[22] Byrhtferth of Ramsey (*fl. c.* 986–*c.* 1016) was, like Bede, the author of works on a number of subjects.[23] His known hagiographies include a life of Oswald (archbishop of York and founder of Ramsey Abbey) and a life of Ecgwine (an eighth-century Worcester bishop and founder of Evesham Abbey). Lapidge supposes him also responsible for a *Passio SS. Æthelredi et Æthelberhti*, preserved at the beginning of the

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[18] Cross, 'Vernacular Saints' Lives', 418.

[19] *The Old English Martyrology: Edition, Translation and Commentary*, ed. C. Rauer, Anglo-Saxon Texts 10 (Cambridge, 2013), p. 3. Also, Fulk and Cain, *History*, p. 133.

[20] Rauer, *Mart.*, p. 18.

[21] N. Brooks, 'The Social and Political Background', *The Cambridge Companion to Old English Literature*, ed. M. Godden and M. Lapidge, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, 2013), pp. 1–18 at 8–9; *Anglo-Latin Saints' Lives*, ed. Love, p. xxxiv.

[22] C. Cubitt, 'The Tenth-Century Benedictine Reform in England', *EME* 6 (1997), 77–94 at 81.

[23] M. Lapidge, 'Byrhtferth of Ramsey (*fl. c.* 986–*c.* 1016)', *ODNB* [accessed 5 March 2013]; Lapidge and Love, 'Latin Hagiography', 220–1.

Historia Regum attributed to Symeon of Durham.[24] Lantfred, a Benedictine monk of the Old

Minster, Winchester, in the tenth century, wrote his *Translatio et miracula S. Swithuni* (*BHL*

7944–6) from the perspective of an eyewitness to many of Swithun's posthumous

miracles.[25] Wulfstan of Winchester (or Wulfstan Cantor), another monk of the Old

Minster, and like Lantfred patronized by Bishop Ælfheah, reworked Lantfred's *Translatio*

into a verse account now known as the *Narratio metrica de S. Swithuno*. He was also

responsible for a Latin *vita* of Æthelwold venerating the bishop of Winchester under whom

Wulfstan and Ælfric had studied.[26] The *Vita S. Dunstani* by the hagiographer known as 'B.'

is also considered here. B. stresses his eye-witness credentials ('fidissima fidelium

attestatione purgabo', §I.7) and emphasizes that he knew Dunstan personally.[27] Each of the

works mentioned above is included in the MI.

The most prolific hagiographer of the later Anglo-Saxon period was Ælfric (*c.* 950–

c. 1010), abbot of Eynsham, whom Mechthild Gretsch calls 'one of the best researched

authors in Old English literature'.[28] Another product of the Benedictine Reform

movement, Ælfric lived and produced most of his works during a time of political and

social turmoil. Despite this, he produced a huge output; indeed Clayton notes that Ælfric is

responsible for some fifteen per cent of extant Old English.[29] This thesis primarily

considers Ælfric's *Lives of Saints* and the hagiographic entries in his two series of *Catholic*

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[24] M. Lapidge, 'Byrhtferth of Ramsey and the Early Sections of the *Historia Regum* attributed to Symeon of Durham', *ASE* 10 (1981), 97–122 at 118.

[25] M. Lapidge, 'Lantfred (*fl.* 974–984), *ODNB* [accessed 9 August 2013].

[26] M. Lapidge, 'Wulfstan Cantor (*fl.* 996), *ODNB* [accessed 9 August 2013].

[27] The *Lectiones in Depositione S. Dunstani* by Adelard of Ghent is not included here. See *The Early Lives of St Dunstan*, ed. and trans. M. Winterbottom and M. Lapidge (Oxford, 2012), on the origin and provenance of each text. The editors hypothesize that, although B. may have drafted or composed parts of the texts while at Liège, it was composed into a final *vita* after B. returned to England (p. lxxxviii).

[28] M. Gretsch, 'Ælfric's *Sanctorale* and the Benedictional of Æthelwold', *Early Medieval English Texts and Interpretations: Studies Presented to Donald G. Scragg*, ed. Elaine M. Treharne and Susan Rosser, Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies 252 (Tempe, 2002), pp. 31–50 at 31; M. Godden, 'Ælfric of Eynsham (*c.* 950–*c.* 1010)', *ODNB* [accessed 11 January 2012]; J. Hill, 'Ælfric: His Life and Works', *A Companion to Ælfric*, ed. H. Magennis and M. Swan, Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition 18 (Leiden and Boston, 2009), pp. 35–65.

[29] Clayton, 'Preaching', p. 159.

Homilies, although references are made to other Ælfrician homilies. Gretsch has analysed Ælfric's choice of saints, taking account of such things as his mistrust of dubious source material and the requests of his patrons Æthelweard and his son Æthelmær (both counsellors to King Æthelred from 993 until Æthelweard's death and Æthelmær's banishment from court).[30] In his Latin Preface to *ÆLS* Ælfric states his intent to translate only those saint's lives considered 'fitting' to be read by monks, and details that his work is based explicitly on Latin books: 'Hunc quoque codicem transtulimus de latinitate ad usitatem Anglicam sermocinationem'.[31] He goes on to state his intent to edify ('edificando') others in the faith ('ad fidem'), because 'martyrum passiones nimium fidem erigant languentem', noting his inclusion of saints who are venerated by the English nation.[32] Ælfric may be particularly interesting with regards to the death-motifs of his subjects given that he excises anything from his sources that does not meet his moral or pedagogical requirements.[33]

The second half of the eleventh century saw another revival in hagiographic production, after it had significantly declined in the period leading up to the Norman Conquest of 1066. Love contends that the 'groundwork' for this revival was laid with the works produced at the end of the tenth century, with which later hagiographers seem to have been familiar.[34] Given that the incoming Normans, as well as the foreign clerics who preceded the Conquest, were undeniably pivotal in the hagiographic revival, it seems pertinent to consider at least some of their hagiographic contributions. The Conquest did not mark an immediate cataclysmic end to all Anglo-Saxon culture, and I do not wish to

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[30] Gretsch, *Cult of Saints*; also E. G. Whatley, '*Pearls Before Swine*: Ælfric, Vernacular Hagiography, and the Lay Reader', *Via Crucis: Essays on Early Medieval Sources and Ideas in Memory of J. E. Cross*, ed. T. N. Hall (Morgantown, 2002), pp. 158–84.

[31] *ÆLS* I, Latin Preface, lines 1–2: 'This book also have I translated from the Latin into the usual English speech'.

[32] Ibid. lines 16–17: 'the Passions of the Martyrs [may] greatly revive a failing faith'. See also *ÆLS* (Pref), lines 42–3.

[33] Clayton, 'Preaching', p. 173.

[34] *Anglo-Latin Saints' Lives*, ed. Love, pp. xxxvii–xxxviii.

use it as an arbitrary putative cut-off point at which to end this study.[35] Indeed, Whatley has

noted the 'value of studying the post-Conquest manuscripts for literary evidence of the pre-

Conquest saints' cults', and it is evident that Anglo-Saxon texts were used in the post-

Conquest period, as attested by a number of annotated manuscripts.[36] A number of Anglo-

Latin saints' lives attributed to Goscelin of Saint-Bertin (*c.* 1035–1107) are considered here,

which in many cases provide the only extant information on a number of Anglo-Saxon

saints.[37] Goscelin is described by Lapidge and Love 'the busiest of all Anglo-Latin

hagiographers', and he seems to have had a vested interest in the saints of the Anglo-Saxon

past.[38] Given the potential usefulness of including later material in this study, it seems

worth considering the likes of Goscelin's works and what they can divulge regarding

veneration from the pre- to post-Conquest eras.

A number of types of text in addition to hagiography proper attest to the popularity

of saints in Anglo-Saxon England, namely calendars, martyrologies and litanies, and the

evidence of these texts is considered where appropriate.[39] Hagiographic entries in homily

collections such as *BHom* are also explored.[40] Given the variety of the sources discussed,

the motivations of particular authors, the audiences and dissemination of particular texts

are important considerations. The purpose of Aldhelm's *Dv* and *Cdv*, for example, written

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[35] M. Swan, 'Marginal Activity? Post-Conquest Old English Readers and their Notes', *Saints and Scholars: New Perspectives on Anglo-Saxon Literature and Culture in Honour of Hugh Magennis*, ed. S. McWilliams (Cambridge, 2012), pp. 224–33 at 224, argues that the 'textual traditions of Anglo-Saxon England extend well beyond the Norman Conquest'.

[36] Whatley, 'Introduction', p. 15; C. Jones, 'Old English After 1066', *The Cambridge Companion to Old English Literature*, ed. M. Godden and M. Lapidge, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, 2013), pp. 313–30 at 314–18.

[37] F. Barlow, 'Goscelin (*b. c.* 1035, *d.* in or after 1107)', *ODNB* [accessed 12 January 2012]; *Goscelin of Saint-Bertin: The Hagiography of the Female Saints of Ely*, ed. and trans. R. C. Love (Oxford, 2004), p. xiii.

[38] Lapidge and Love, 'Latin Hagiography', 225; *Anglo-Latin Saints' Lives*, ed. Love, p. xlii.

[39] See M. Lapidge, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Litanies of the Saints*, HBS 106 (London, 1991); Lapidge, 'Roman Martyrs', p. 112.

[40] See Whatley, 'Introduction'. This article is a useful starting point for the study of Anglo-Saxon hagiography, and also illustrates the extent of the vernacular corpus. See G. Jones, 'Saints of Europe: Introduction', *Saints of Europe: Studies towards a Survey of Cults and Culture*, ed. G. Jones (Donington, 2003), pp. 1–28 at 11, for the 'expected components' of a saint's cult. Although Lapidge, 'Saintly Life', p. 269, calls the various means by which saints are known and appealed to a 'cumbersome apparatus', he argues that this apparatus 'was an urgent necessity in an age when other kinds of spiritual comfort were few'.

for a community of Barking nuns, is different from that of *ÆCHom*, which was intended

for preaching to the laity. Furthermore, the ways in which certain hagiographies respond to

others must be taken into consideration. Scholars have argued for a dialogue between the

lives of Cuthbert and Wilfrid, for instance, with a kind of propaganda war taking place

between Lindisfarne and Wilfridian 'factions', where Stephen of Ripon's *vita* was written in

response to the anonymous *vita* of Cuthbert, and Bede's prose *Vita S. Cuthberti* was written

in response to Stephen's work.[41] I therefore consider texts of different date, origin and

provenance alongside one another, and the point should be made that continuity as well as

change may be expected in saintly death-scenes even within the generic dictates of

hagiography. I shall now consider the range of approaches to saintly death-scenes, turning

first to accounts of martyrdom, before moving to an assessment of non-violent death.

Martyrdom

'The death itself of the martyrs is the prize of their life'[42]

The vast majority of martyrs venerated in Anglo-Saxon England were foreign saints. To the

Anglo-Saxons, the legends of the Christians who suffered under the persecutions could be

mined for much material that could be turned to educational purposes. The representation

of some form of confrontation is particularly ubiquitous, either in the form of requests for

the saint to renounce God, or (for female martyrs) to agree to some form of relationship

with a pagan, whose religious beliefs are diametrically opposed to the Christianity of the

saint. This frequently continues into a verbal exchange between the saint and their enemy.

The purpose of these ante-mortem motifs is ostensibly to demonstrate the steadfastness of

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[41] C. Stancliffe, 'Disputed Episcopacy: Bede, Acca and the Relationship Between Stephen's *Life of Wilfrid* and the Early Prose Lives of St Cuthbert', *ASE* 41 (2012), 7–39.

[42] 'The Two Books of St. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, on the Decease of his Brother Satyrus', §45, *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, Second Series, ed. P. Schaff and H. Wace, Vol. 10: 'St Ambrose: Select Works and Letters', pp. 159–97 at 180.

the saint, which itself is an explicit signal of his or her grace. This unwavering determination to achieve eternal life through earthly death typically continues until the moment of death itself. A number of martyrial death-motifs appear across the Anglo-Saxon hagiographic record; these are listed in descending order in Table 1.1 below. Each death-motif is subdivided on the basis of whether or not the saint undergoes ante-mortem torture. On the basis of previous scholarship, one would expect to find beheading at the top of this list (see p. 14, note 48).

Table 1.1

Representations of Martyrdom in Anglo-Saxon Hagiography			
Literary motif	Inclusion of torture other than means of death	Only means of death mentioned	Total occurrences of motif
Unspecified martyrdom	27	57	**84**
Beheading	27	31	**58**
Stabbing/ death by sword[43]	13	21	**34**
Giving up ghost/ spirit departing	18	11	**29**
Crucifixion	1	8	**9**
Drowning	1	6	**7**
Beating	3	4	**7**
Burning	4	3	**7**
Stoning	0	5	**5**
Torturing to death	4	0	**4**
Strangling/ breaking neck	2	1	**3**
Dying in battle	0	2	**2**
Burying alive	1	1	**2**
Death involving animals	0	2	**2**
Flaying	0	1	**1**
Death not mentioned	1	0	**1**
Total	**102**	**153**	**255**

It was hypothesized above that beheading would be the most common death-motif. What is immediately apparent is that an 'unspecified martyrdom' is the most typical death-motif found across the Anglo-Saxon hagiographic corpus. The amassed data indicate that

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[43] For the subdivision of beheading and death by the sword, see below, p. 210.

beheading is the most common motif used by authors desiring a *specific* literal death-motif, but what is interesting is that, frequently, authors seem to choose *not* to use a specific death-motif. It may not seem an important distinction, especially given the argument that the meaning of death, rather than the means by which is occurs, is important, but given the symbolic capital attributed to various specific death-motifs the deliberate stylistic choice of a non-specific motif may in itself highlight a hagiographer's particular aims.

Before analysing the trend of using a non-specific death-motif, it may prove helpful to assess the nature of specific death-motifs and the symbolic capital invested in them as hagiographic topoi. The assumption that martyrs die by beheading may stem from the fact that many of these saints were drawn from Roman tradition and were, or were assumed to be, Roman citizens. Executed Roman citizens were, historically, most likely to be beheaded 'because it was considered a dignified death', whereas a non-citizen facing capital punishment was more likely to have faced a grislier fate.[44] Although it is unclear whether educated Anglo-Saxons had any understanding of the implications of citizenship on capital punishment in Roman legal contexts, the fact that many Roman saints came to be venerated in Anglo-Saxon England inevitably contributed to the perpetuation of the idea that beheading was an appropriate saintly death-motif.[45] Christopher Daniell makes a similar point, suggesting that 'an iconographic link was made – many saints were beheaded, therefore it was a Christian way of death'.[46] Further iconographic connections are provided

[44] L. Tracy and J. Massey, 'Introduction', in their *Heads Will Roll: Decapitation in the Medieval and Early Modern Imagination* (Leiden and Boston, 2012), pp. 1–13 at 4; see also Daniell, *Death and Burial*, p. 79; Lapidge, 'Roman Martyrs', p. 101; D. G. Kyle, *Spectacles of Death in Ancient Rome* (London and New York, 1998); Hope, *Roman Death*, p. 48. E. G. Whatley, 'More than a Female Joseph: The Sources of the Late Fifth-Century *Passio Sanctae Eugeniae*', *Saints and Scholars: New Perspectives on Anglo-Saxon Literature and Culture in Honour of Hugh Magennis*, ed. S. McWilliams (Cambridge, 2012), pp. 87–111 at 92, notes that Lactantius differentiated between forms of execution meted out to Christians under Diocletian, with drowning 'reserved for household slaves', for example. Thus, hierarchies of execution evidently existed in late antiquity.

[45] In the later medieval *Golden Legend* (*c.* 1260) by Jacobus de Voragine, a link is made between death-motif and citizenship in the entry on Peter and Paul; see Daniell, *Death and Burial*, p. 79.

[46] Daniell, *Death and Burial*, p. 79. Although Daniell's study does not cover Anglo-Saxon England, it touches on attitudes expressed in Anglo-Saxon texts. On Roman citizenship and the implications for punishment, see *OCD*, s.v. 'citizenship, Roman', 'punishment, Greek and Roman practice' and 'crucifixion'; A. M. Riggsby,

by Scripture such as Rev. XX.4, where a link is drawn between beheading and the elect: 'vidi [. . .] animas decollatorum propter testimonium Iesu et propter verbum Dei et [. . .] vixerunt et regnaverunt cum Christo mille annis'.[47] *LS* 32 (PeterPaul; homily 15 in *BHom*), for example, sees the homilist attempt to account for differing death-motifs for the saints, but the difference here seems to be attributed to Nero's assessment of Peter as 'æfestig' ('malicious'). After Simon's death, Nero commands the saints to be killed with 'irenum þislum & ordum' ('iron poles and swords'). The 'burhgerefa' Agrippa, however, suggests that 'me þynceþ unscyldiglicre þæt him man heafod of aceorfe buton oðrum witum & Petrus ðonne, forðon þe he is mansleges scyldig & eac æfestig, hat hine on rode gebindan'.[48] It seems that a distinction between death-motifs is drawn on the grounds of the perceived guilt of each saint in causing Simon's death, with beheading presented as a form of execution that will reflect less badly on the pagans, rather than as an appropriate form of execution for a Roman citizen. Other Anglo-Saxon traditions of the martyrdom of Peter and Paul do not make this distinction; the *Mart.* and *ÆCHom* note that Peter and Paul are executed differently but offer no comment on this and *Fates* notes no such difference. Scott DeGregorio has discerned variant models of sanctity prioritized by the *BHom* author and by Ælfric (in *ÆCHom*) in their treatments of Peter and Paul, with the former presenting a 'humanistic' portrayal of sanctity, and the latter an 'iconic' one.[49]

In light of the symbolic capital of decapitation, the common use of the unspecified martyrdom motif is particularly interesting. If hagiography functions to mitigate the fear of

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Roman Law and the Legal World of the Romans (New York, 2010), pp. 22–4, 198 and 202. Also, see Acts XVI.36–7 and XXII.29.

[47] 'I saw [. . .] the souls of them that were beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God and [. . .] they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years'.

[48] *LS* 32 (PeterPaul), p. 189: 'it appears to me a more unguilty (excusable) mode to cut off his (Paul's) head without any other torments. And Peter, since he is guilty of murder, and also malicious, order him to be bound to the cross'.

[49] S. DeGregorio, 'Ælfric, *Gedwyld*, and Vernacular Hagiography: Sanctity and Spirituality in the Old English Lives of SS Peter and Paul', *Ælfric's Lives of Canonised Popes*, ed. D. Scragg, *OEN Subsidia* 30 (Kalamazoo, 2001), pp. 75–98 at 81.

death by providing models of exemplary faith and courage at the end of life, the ubiquity of metaphorical and non-literal expression may function as a universally applicable model. The lack of motival detail may be explained if it is less important than a saint's work as a teacher or a healer of the sick, for instance. This motif may feature references to the mutilated or tortured saintly body while they are dying, but the details of the moment of death are suppressed, and attention is focused instead on the significance of the martyrdom. For example, the *Cdv* entry for Thecla sees Aldhelm emphasize the 'focus' and 'flagrans [. . .] ignis' (1990), and the 'tormenta rogorum' (1992) that are used to torture the saint, and, although the audience are then told that Thecla 'adorned the last hours of her life: bathing her holy body in red blood' ('Haec suprema suae decoravit tempora vitae / Purpureo sanctam perfundens sanguine carnem', 2006–2007), Aldhelm only notes that she is a 'martira' (2008), and does not expound on how she eventually meets her death.[50] The *Mart.* (193 Thecla) is similarly vague, and after references to various torments ('monegu witu', 'byrnende fyr', 'wildra deora menigo', 'sædeora seað' and 'wilde fearras'), no mention is made of an eventual martyrdom. This lack of specificity in terms of death-motif may arise from confusion over the saint herself, for, as Whatley notes, 'She is frequently referred to as a martyr, although she died an old woman at Seleucia after living many years in a cave'.[51] In many cases, the use of the unspecified martyrdom motif seems to be a conscious and deliberate choice designed to align with wider imaginative discourses of saintly death, whereby the spiritual significance of the act of martyrdom is accentuated. This supports the suggestion that the wider meaning of martyrdom rather than the means by which it occurs is of utmost importance in the interpretation of violent death.

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[50] Ehwald, pp. 435–6; *Poetic Works*, p. 147.
[51] Whatley, 'Acta Sanctorum', s.v. 'Thecla, passio', p. 444. Ælfric does not include Thecla in his works, perhaps owing to her popularity among 'heretical sects' and the proscription of her *passio* in 'some circles', p. 445.

The ubiquity of this unspecified martyrdom motif perhaps reflects the idea of all

saints being subsumed into, and thus representing, a collective elite identity. Indeed, Clare

Lees suggests that individual saints matter less than the 'significance of the phenomenon of

sanctity to the Christian community', where saints are subsumed to a greater or lesser

degree into a collective.[52] As Thompson has noted, authors 'became the custodians of the

dead' inasmuch as their decisions regarding the significance of death enabled its recording

and memorialization.[53] It is possible to argue that, in memorializing a saint in text, he or she

is translated from a mode of subjectivity to one of objectivity; hagiography enables a saint

to become a cipher, written and manipulated in text by those who seek to direct their

potential power. Saints' lives can function, to varying extents, as written articulations of

power by which devotional practice may be directed, and this may go some way to

explaining the prevalence of the unspecified martyrdom motif. A lack of detail ensures that

a saint's death can command greater significance by shifting the focus from the mechanics

of death to its wider meaning. This subsumption into a collective identity can be seen in

accounts in which a martyr facing death declares himself or herself as a Christian first and

foremost, to the extent that this referential signifier is offered before a personal name. In

the *HE* Alban responds to the question ' "Cuius [. . .] familiae uel generis es?" ' (' "What is

your family and race?" ') with the retort ' "Quid ad te pertinet qua stirpe sim genitus? Sed si

ueritatem religionis audire desideras, Christianum iam me esse Christianisque officiis uacare

cognosce" '.[54] Only after continued questioning does Alban provide his name. Likewise,

George asserts his Christian status before his name in the *ÆLS*: 'Ic eom soðlice cristen and

ic criste þeowige / Georius ic eom gehatan' (27–8).

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[52] C. A. Lees, 'At A Crossroads: Old English and Feminist Criticism', *Reading Old English Texts*, ed. K. O'Brien O'Keeffe (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 146–69 at 159. This may be true as a general rule, but whether it applied on a personal or a local level in the Anglo-Saxon period is potentially different.

[53] Thompson, 'Understanding', p. 36.

[54] *HE*, I.7, pp. 30–1: ' "What concern is it of yours to know my parentage? If you wish to hear the truth about my religion, know that I am now a Christian and am ready to do a Christian's duty" '.

One may wonder whether the large volume of data from the *Mart.* skews the results

to privilege the motif of an unspecified martyrdom given that the martyrologist includes so

many saints, some of whom do not seem to have been well-known. Indeed, he notes that

many of his subjects are found in 'ðæm eldran mæssebocum' (104 Nicander). Many of the

saints whose martyrdoms are reported in this way, however, are saints who were

commemorated more widely, such as Perpetua and Felicity (39):

> Þære Perpetuan mætte [. . .] þæt heo wære on wæres hiwe, ond ðæt heo hæfde
> sweord on handa, ond ðæt heo stranglice fuhte mid þy. Þæt wæs eall eft on hire
> martyrdome gefylled [. . .] Ðonne wæs seo Felicitatis cristenwif [. . .] heo geþrowade
> martyrdom for Criste.[55]

The martyrologist simply notes that both saints suffered martyrdom, but pays little

attention to the details of its form. Perpetua and Felicity were 'widely commemorated in

Anglo-Saxon calendars and liturgical books', also being found in a number of litanies.[56]

They are excluded, however, from Aldhelm's *Dv* and *Cdv*, on account of not being virgins,

and from Ælfric's works either because he did not consider them liturgically important or

because their *passio* contained problematic material; as such, an extensive knowledge of

their legend is not likely to have been widespread.[57] It cannot be ruled out that the

martyrologist used many saint's legends in which the details of death were not preserved,

but the high incidence of the unspecified martyrdom motif in the works of Aldhelm, for

example, suggests wider implications for the relative frequency of the motif. Shari Horner

suggests that Aldhelm's texts display a concern over the nature of penetration (spiritual and

corporeal), which relates directly to anxieties over female monastic enclosure, and, if this is

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[55] 'Perpetua dreamed that she looked like a man, and that she carried a sword in her hands, and that she fought fiercely with it. That was all later fulfilled at her martyrdom [. . .] Then there was the Christian woman Felicity [. . .] she suffered martyrdom for Christ'.

[56] Whatley, 'Acta Sanctorum', s.v. 'Perpetua et Felicitas, passio', pp. 383–5; Rauer, *Mart.*, pp. 243–4; J. E. Cross, 'On the Library of the Old English Martyrologist', *Learning and Literature in Anglo-Saxon England: Studies Presented to Peter Clemoes on the Occasion of His Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, ed. M. Lapidge and H. Gneuss (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 227–49 at 237; Lapidge, *Litanies*, pp. 309 and 316; T. J. Heffernan, ed., *The Passion of Perpetua and Felicity* (Oxford and New York, 2012). Note that inclusion in a litany does not necessarily signal wider veneration of a saint.

[57] Whatley, 'Acta Sanctorum', s.v. 'Perpetua et Felicitas, passio', pp. 384.

accepted, it may explain his common use of an unspecified martyrdom.[58] Ælfric, on the contrary, does not often use the motif of the unspecified martyrdom, instead using either the motif of beheading or giving up the ghost (which in itself is rather unspecific) for his martyrs.

Table 1.1 also shows that torture features as a common motif in martyrdom narratives. Many of the accounts featuring torture are typically those of late antique or medieval continental saints, and it is usually presented as a means either to force a saint to enter a sexual or marital relationship with a pagan, or to cause the saint to offer sacrifices to pagan gods. Elaine Scarry suggests that the idea of agency is a key tool in the effectiveness of torture, and, in *passiones*, torture is a means by which a saint can exert an element of control in the process of martyrdom.[59] The spectacles of martyrdom enacted in hagiography function as a means by which to demonstrate the power of God working through the saint; this is exemplified in the martyrs' abilities to surpass normative bodily limits. Both Aldhelm and Ælfric are more likely than not to feature torture in their descriptions of death-scenes, whereas the martyrologist only mentions ante-mortem tortures in approximately a third of his hagiographic entries. Of the most common death-motifs (1–4) in Table 1.1, the only death-motif in which preliminary tortures are more commonly mentioned is that of giving up the ghost. (This motif in many ways features the same lack of specificity as that of an unspecified martyrdom, and is discussed in greater detail in Chapter VI.) Narratives including less common death-motifs, namely drowning, stoning, flaying and being killed by animals, are also less likely to feature ante-mortem tortures, although the reverse is true for strangling or breaking the neck. It is interesting to observe that, despite depictions of torture and mutilation in the *passiones* and long, drawn-

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[58] S. Horner, *The Discourse of Enclosure: Representing Women in Old English Literature* (Albany, 2001), p. 11.
[59] E. Scarry, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (Oxford, 1985), p. 47. For references to torture in Anglo-Saxon homilies, see DiNapoli, pp. 88–9.

out illnesses in the *vitae* of confessors, only rarely are references found to screaming, shouting, delusion, bodily effluence or any of the aspects that one may expect to find in the representations of someone in pain. The death of a saint is, by and large, typically presented as a dignified affair (even in the case of torture and mutilation), which affirms his or her exemplarity. In the same way that martyrs may acknowledge their torture while simultaneously being miraculously protected from the pain it should cause, confessors (or their hagiographers) may mention pain, only either to deny it or reject its effect on the body. It is one of the typical features of hagiography that the saint should not be shown to waver in his or her faith but always remain intent on martyrdom, whether that be a 'red' or a 'white' martyrdom.

James Earl has argued that violence 'resists literary representation', and that violence in text 'often remains referred to, unseen and unspoken'.[60] This position raises some interesting questions with respect to hagiography. Although Earl focuses on the denotation of violence in accounts of Edmund's death, and Edmund's pacific stance in the face of immediate physical threat, I would argue that the purpose of violence in hagiography more widely is not necessarily to represent 'lived reality'. Rather, violence functions as a plot device by which a saint may transcend their bodily limits and thereby demonstrate their position as a conduit of God's power.[61] Violence in hagiography is neither unseen nor unspoken in death-scenes, but the denial of any impact it may have on the person of the saint reflects the didactic aims of hagiography rather than the inadequacy of literature to express it. Indeed, it is worth considering more widely how the violence of martyrdom is subsumed into a triumphalist rhetoric, as seen in Aldhelm's *Cdv* entry on Rufina and Secunda, in which the latter declares:

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[60] J. W. Earl, 'Violence and Non-Violence in Anglo-Saxon England: Ælfric's "Passion of St. Edmund" ', *PQ* 78 (1999), 125–49 at 127.

[61] Ibid. Edmund's death is discussed more fully below.

> Affer cuncta simul nobis tormenta cruenta,
> Ignes et macheras et rubras vibice virgas,
> Restes et fustes et dura grandine saxa
> Caerula sanguineis arpagans vulnera rivis;
> Ast ego tanta feram victo tortore tropea,
> Quot tu poenarum genera crudeliter infers;
> Quot tu concinnas crudi discrimina leti,
> Tot nos in supera numerabimus arce coronas!
>
> (2310–2317)[62]

This speech simultaneously suggests a latent potential for extreme violence, while using the cumulative effect of the references to fire, swords, ropes and clubs almost to negate their power. The initial imperative reinforces the saints' position of power (a paradox given their physical situation), and the repeated phrase 'quot tu' at the beginning of successive lines asserts the culpability of the executioner. Even in Aldhelm's accounts that highlight the depiction of violence both leading up to and during the moment of martyrdom, its presentation is stylized to underline its ineffectuality. As further demonstrated with reference to his *Cdv* passage on Lucia, Aldhelm is thus a key proponent of this kind of portrayal in respect of physicality. After rejecting the advances of a suitor, the saint is dragged ('traheretur') to a brothel ('lupanar', 1820), pressed by cattle ('boves [. . .] trusissent', 1821) before being roasted in 'black streams of pitch and of fatty oil' ('nigra picis necnon et pinguis olivi / Flumina', 1823–4).[63] The emphasis on the saint's physical delicacy juxtaposed with the verbs associated with pressing, constraining and dragging – all of which suggest a kind of violation – serves to demonstrate her saintly status. Despite the best attempts of the people around her to feed the flames, the attempted tortures have no physical effect on the *virgo beata*. Thus, an audience is presented with a highly stylized

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[62] Ehwald, p. 447; *Poetic Works*, p. 154: 'Inflict all bloody tortures on us at the same time – fires and swords and blood-drawing switches; ropes and clubs and rocks in hard hailstorms drawing blue-black weals with rivers of blood – but I shall carry away as great a prize when the executioner is defeated: however many kinds of torture you harshly inflict, however many dangers of violent death you cause, that many crowns shall we have in the heavenly region!'

[63] Ehwald, p. 428; *Poetic Works*, p. 143.

tableau in which the reality of violence is denied. This is further evident in Aldhelm's *Dv*

entry on Julian, where an extensive list of tortures is presented in a characteristic purple

passage. Julian is set alight in a vat of pitch, has his hands and feet wrapped in oil-soaked

string that is set alight, and is thrown to the beasts before eventually dying ('Ad ultimum

beatus Iulianus cum ceteris commilitonibus stricta machera crudeliter percussus et

rubicundo cruoris rivo perfusus feliciter occubuit').[64] It is true that the literary realization of

this cumulative violence cannot reflect any lived reality of martyrdom, but in hagiography it

does not need to. The accumulation of tortures needs only to suggest to an audience the

investment of God's power in the person of the martyr. It could perhaps be argued that the

saint is no longer an embodied subject, but rather a universal, objectified depiction

manipulated to demonstrate God's ultimate might. A similar kind of stylization of death-

scene violence can be seen in the cumulative references to the actions and instruments of

Edmund's torture. In just seventeen lines, Ælfric makes reference to the binding of the

saint with hard bonds ('heardum bendum', 110), the clubs ('saglum', 107) and whips

('swipum', 111) that beat him, the shooting of the saint with javelins ('mid gafelucum', 116)

and his eventual beheading. It is worth noting that torture is not frequently represented in

the martyrdoms of native Anglo-Saxon saints, which suggests at least some degree of

acculturation inasmuch as torture is less obviously a factor in these saints' deaths. The

situating of pagans in these martyr passions enables the violence directed at the saint to be

redirected and translated onto the pagan bodies, and this is discussed further in the section

on vengeance miracles below (pp. 75–84).

     Occasionally an Anglo-Saxon author acknowledges variant death-motifs for a

subject. A notable example of this can be found in the *Mart.* (238 Thomas) where the

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[64] Ehwald, p. 284, lines 12–13; *Prose Works*, pp. 101–2: 'In the end, Julian, together with his other fellow-combatants, was ruthlessly struck down by a drawn sword and died blessedly, pouring out a ruby river of blood'.

martyrologist notes different narrative traditions for the apostle's death: 'Þa þæra hæðenra bysceopa sum ofsloh þone Crystes þegen, and gewrytu secgað hwylum þæt he wære myd sweorde þurhstungen, hwylum hig secgað þæt he wære myd sperum ofsticod'.[65] Cross suggests that this demonstrates the author's conflation of sources.[66] Ælfric states emphatically that a sword blow kills the saint: 'Þa clypodon þa hæþen-gildan and hetelice grimetodon / and heora an sona ofsloh þone apostol / mid atogenum swurde'; the same death-motif is used by Cynewulf.[67] In the Latin preface to the entry, Ælfric expresses doubts over the nature of Thomas' legend and suggests that he translates it only at the urging of his patron Æthelweard: 'Dubitabam diu transferre anglice passionem sancti thome apostoli ex quibusdam causis'.[68] It may be that the martyrologist felt comfortable presenting both variants of Thomas's death-motif to demonstrate his extensive knowledge and to provide an accurate reflection of what the Latin sources contain, even if that information is conflicting. Ælfric and Cynewulf, however, seem to have been concerned with presenting what they believe to be an authoritative account of the apostle's death-scene.

One may assume that violent death affected only a minority of the Anglo-Saxon population; indeed many of the death-motifs seen in the hagiography may have seemed particularly gory and outlandish, and, by concentrating on the courage and steadfastness of the saints during their martyrdom, it is these characteristics that can be stressed as models worthy of imitation. Terms denoting more unusual hagiographic death-motifs, such as flaying, are not represented commonly elsewhere in the vernacular corpus. The *DOE*

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[65] 'One of the pagan bishops then killed the servant of Christ, and the texts sometimes say that he was stabbed with a sword, sometimes they say that he was stabbed with spears'.

[66] J. E. Cross, 'Cynewulf's Traditions about the Apostles in *Fates of the Apostles*', *ASE* 8 (1979), 163–75 at 168.

[67] *ÆLS* (Thomas), lines 411–13: 'Then cried the idolaters and furiously roared, and one of them immediately slew the apostle with a drawn sword'; see also *Fates* and J. M. McCulloh, 'Did Cynewulf use a Martyrology? Reconsidering the Sources of the *Fates of the Apostles*', *ASE* 29 (2000), 67–83, for different narrative traditions for the apostles' deaths.

[68] Ibid. lines 1–2: 'I was for a long while in doubt as to translating into English the Passion of St. Thomas the apostle, for various reasons'.

corpus indicates that, other than in the *Mart.* where flaying is used once as a torture motif and once as a death-motif, other instances of words denoting flaying predominantly occur in glosses and glossaries.[69] Table 1.1 indicates that more unusual forms of martyrdom were not especially common in Anglo-Saxon hagiography, and Whatley suggests that some representations of saintly death 'might have been troubling to some readers', as in the presentation of Clement's drowning in *ÆCHom*, which 'takes place abruptly and ignominiously', and is not particularly exemplary.[70] Indeed, the *Cdv* omits any mention of Clement's death. This does not seem to have stopped Clement's cult achieving widespread popularity in Anglo-Saxon England, however, which complicates perceptions of death-motifs.[71] (Daniell has argued that 'Drowning was always portrayed as a cause of death for non-Christians. Christians could not drown'.)[72] Clement is not, in fact, the only saint represented as drowning; the *HE* (for Peter; this is the only example featuring ante-mortem torture) and *Mart.* (for Cæsarius (219) as well as for Clement (228)) also present this motif.[73] The drowning motif is by no means typical, however. Furthermore, the enemies of saints often attempt to drown them, only for saints to survive miraculously and die at a later point in the narrative.[74] Thus, relative to the corpus as a whole drowning is not a common motif, and in some instances, hagiographers do not use it despite assumed knowledge of its association with particular legends. This suggests that particular forms of

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[69] *DOE*, s.v. *beflean*; the term is also found once in the Old English version of Gregory's dialogues. See also *flean*, which occurs twice in glossaries, and *aflean*, found twice in Gregory's *Dialogues*.

[70] Whatley, '*Pearls*', pp. 163–5.

[71] B. E. Crawford, *The Churches Dedicated to St. Clement in Medieval England: A Hagio-Geography of the Seafarer's Saint in 11th Century North Europe*, Scripta Ecclesiastica 1 (St Petersburg, 2008), pp. 37–40. Clement is also commemorated in the *Menologium*, where it is also noted that enemies of God drown the saint ('fan gode / besenctun on sægrund   sigefæstne wer', 211b–212 (ASPR 6, p. 54). Lapidge, *Litanies*, pp. 306–7, lists litanies featuring Clement.

[72] Daniell, *Death and Burial*, p. 71.

[73] The Four Crowned Ones are locked alive in boxes that are thrown into a river, and Irenaeus and Abundius are executed in a sewer, so it may be assumed that they too drown, although the texts do not explicitly state this.

[74] On drowning as judicial punishment, see Reynolds, *Deviant Burial*, pp. 1 and 24.

death were inculcated with value judgement, which may go some way to explaining the

textual ubiquity of the unspecified martyrdom motif.

Non-Violent Death

> Tantae ergo fidei fuit, ut mortem, quae cunctis mortalibus timenda
> formidandaque videtur, ille velut requiem aut praemium laboris iudicaret.[75]

As mentioned above, some saints are venerated for their exemplary spirituality throughout

life, which has been proposed as a form of spiritual martyrdom.[76] It has been argued that

'asceticism was not a consolation for the absence of opportunities for the martyr's

experience of pain [. . .] rather it was a way of passing on [. . .] the mighty image of the

presence of Christ among men'.[77] Ælfric acknowledges in his homily *In Natale Sanctorum*

Martirum that:

> Twa cynn sind martirdomes. An dearnunge oðer eawunge; Se ðe on ehtnysse for
> cristes geleafan his lif alæt se bið openlice martir; Eft se ðe forberð ðurh geðyld
> hosp and teonan and ðone lufað þe hine hatað and his agene unlustas and þæs
> ungesewenlican deofles tihtinge forsihð se bið untwylice martyr on digelre dæde.[78]

Ælfric extends the description of the spiritual martyr to his wider audience,

suggesting that they too may participate in a collective spirituality by practising 'geðyld' in

'urum mode'. The deaths of these 'martyrs in concealed deed' occur by non-violent means,

as noted by Lapidge in his suggestion that a confessor 'dies calmly'.[79] The *vita* of Antony of

Egypt by Athanasius, translated into Latin by Evagrius, and the *Vita S. Martini* by Sulpicius

Severus provided exemplary figures in the mode of white martyrdom, serving as popular

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[75] *Felix's Life*, §50, pp. 154–5: 'So great was his faith that death, which seems something to be feared and dreaded by all mortals, he considered to be, as it were, a rest and a reward for his labour'.

[76] Stancliffe, 'Red, White and Blue', pp. 29–30; A. Thacker, '*Loca Sanctorum*: The Significance of Place in the Study of the Saints', *Local Saints and Local Churches in the Early Medieval West*, ed. A. Thacker and R. Sharpe (Oxford, 2002), pp. 1–43 at 2.

[77] P. Brown, "The Saint as Exemplar in Late Antiquity', *Representations* 2 (1983), 1–25 at 16.

[78] *ÆCHom* II,42 (Martyrs), lines 132–7: 'There are two kinds of martyrdom, one secret and the other open. He who in persecution gives up his life for Christ's faith is openly a martyr. Thereupon, he who endures insult and injury in patience and loves who hates him and rejects his own evil desires and the instruction of the invisible devil is certainly a martyr in concealed deed.'

[79] *ODCC*, s.v. 'confessor'; Lapidge, 'Saintly Life', p. 261.

models into and throughout the Anglo-Saxon period, along with lives of Malchus, Hilarion and Paul of Thebes by Jerome.[80] Indeed, Aldhelm explicates the worthiness of such saints as Martin in the *Cdv*: 'Quamlibet expertus non esset vulnera ferri / Umquam nec rubro roraret sanguine martyr / Aut etiam diris arsisset torribus ignis, /Attamen illustrem meruit confessio palmam, / Dum mens parta fuit mortis discrimina ferre'.[81] Although the models of death offered by this form of sanctity are inevitably removed from those exemplified by martyrdom, a non-violent death is not viewed as an inferior kind of death by Anglo-Saxon authors, but rather underscores the sanctity of the holy men and women who could encourage others to emulate their especial Christian virtues. It is evident that hagiographers viewed their subjects as worthy of imitation. B., in the Prologue to his life of Dunstan, addressed to Ælfric, archbishop of Canterbury (995–1005), explicitly signals Dunstan as a model for the archbishop:

> teque sine tuae offensionis molestia moneo tanti patris uirtutibus informari, exemplis eius instrui, moribus muniri, disciplinis iustificari, ut cuius extitisti successor in terris, eius merearis perennis esse consessor in caelis[82]

Kate Greenspan has argued that certain lives and passions may have been intended to inspire awe rather than direct imitation, but here is a saint whose exemplary characteristics may be copied.[83] Dunstan is presented as dying three days after succumbing to a severe illness ('uehemens morbus'); his death-scene is dealt with swiftly by B. (§38.5), and is presented in realistic terms, so even his death is not beyond the realms of plausible experience for an 'ordinary' Anglo-Saxon religious.

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[80] Lapidge, 'Saintly Life', p. 261.

[81] Ehwald, pp. 382, lines 702–6; *Poetic Works*, p. 118: 'Although Martin was never known to have experienced the wounds of a sword nor as a martyr to have shed red blood nor even to have been burned with hideous firebrands, nevertheless his confession (of Christ) merited the illustrious palm-branch, since his spirit was prepared to endure the dangers of death'.

[82] *Vita S. Dunstani*, §I.9, *St Dunstan*, ed. Winterbottom and Lapidge, p. 9: 'And, if I may say this without causing you offence, I suggest that you model yourself on the virtues of this great father, taught by his example, fortified by his character, put right by his teaching, so that, having been his successor on earth, you may be found worthy to sit with him in heaven for all time'.

[83] K. Greenspan, 'Translation and the Miraculous in the Legend of St Eulalia', *Miracles and the Miraculous in Medieval Germanic and Latin Literature*, ed. K. E. Olsen *et al.* (Leuven, 2004), pp. 81–94 at 87.

Thus, confessors commonly die 'natural' deaths, as opposed to the unnatural deaths inflicted by martyrdom and, in many cases, these saints inhabit what Thompson calls a 'liminal state' of dying.[84] By this I mean that, typically, confessors undergo a longer and more defined period of dying than martyrs, and I would suggest that such a period begins at the moment that the saint is forewarned of his or her impending death, which is a common topos of *vitae*. Some of the phenomena associated with death appear more commonly in *vitae* than in *passiones*; a proportionally higher number of *vitae* than *passiones* feature angels or angelic phenomena associated with the moment of death. These death-related miracles are discussed in greater detail in Chapter VI, but demonstrate that the topoi deemed appropriate for representing the deaths of different kinds of saints are not homogeneous. In many accounts of non-violent death, it is this post-mortem temporality of the death-scene that provides the focus. Turning to the *Mart.* entry for Æthelthryth (110), of the total number of words making up the entry, approximately 27% are devoted to the period in which the saint is physically dead, compared to some 2% for the moment of death, and 6% for the period of dying. This contrasts with the martyrologist's presentation of violent death. In Cecilia's entry (227), 38% of the words comprising the entry are devoted to dying, and some 8% to the moment of death. The period of being dead is ignored here. Likewise, Lawrence (151) sees 45% of the entry devoted to dying, 8% to the moment of death, and 21% to being dead.

It is apparent that there is much less variety in representing non-violent than violent deaths. In Table 1.2 below I chart the narrative motifs for portraying non-violent death-scenes to demonstrate the common representational trends.

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[84] V. Thompson, 'The View from the Edge: Dying, Power and Vision in Late Saxon England', *Boundaries in Early Medieval Britain*, ed. D. Griffiths, A. Reynolds and S. Semple, *ASSAH* 12 (Oxford, 2003), pp. 92–7 at 92.

Table 1.2

Non-Violent Death-Motifs in Anglo-Saxon Hagiography	
Motif	Total Number of Occurrences
Death recorded (means unspecified)	48
Giving up ghost, spirit departing	27
Illness	22
Death not mentioned	8[85]
Total	**105**

These data indicate that the most common death-motif for confessors involves reporting the fact of physical death without presenting any specific details regarding exactly how it occurred. The motif recalls that of an unspecified martyrdom inasmuch as a conspicuous absence of detail is a salient feature of this mode of representation, and a number of examples illustrate this point. In the *Mart.* (63 Guthlac), Guthlac's death is presented as follows: 'On ðone ændleftan dæg þæs monðes bið Sancte Guthlaces geleornes ðæs anceran on Brytone, þæs lichoma resteð on þære stowe ðe is cweden Cruwland'.[86] Bede relates Hædde's death as follows: 'Huius regni principio antistes Occidentalium Saxonum Haeddi caelestem migrauit ad uitam'.[87] Aldhelm is typically rather more verbose in his denotation of non-violent death, as demonstrated in his portrayal of Amos's end: 'Hunc vidit ferri felix Antonius olim, / Linqueret egregius cum carnis vincula miles, / Angelicis turmis ad caeli

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[85] In these accounts, the death of the saint is not discussed. E. M. Treharne, ed., *The Old English Life of St Nicholas with the Old English Life of Saint Giles*, Leeds Texts and Monographs ns 15 (Leeds, 1997), p. 60, notes that the life of St Nicholas does not seem to have an ending missing, and it must be assumed that it was a deliberate decision by the hagiographer not to cover the saint's death.

[86] 'On the eleventh day of the month is the death of the hermit St Guthlac in Britain, whose body rests in the place called Crowland'. This kind of notice is very similar to those found in resting-place lists such as *Secgan be þam Godes sanctum þe on Engla lande ærost reston* or the Kentish Royal Legend. See F. Liebermann, *Die Heiligen Englands: Angelsächsisch und lateinisch* (Hannover, 1889) for the texts of these lists, and Rollason, 'Lists', 74 for discussion.

[87] *HE*, V.18, pp. 512–13: 'At the beginning of his [Osred's] reign Hædde, bishop of the West Saxons, departed to the heavenly life'.

sidera vectum / Pulchraque perpetuae penetrantem limina vitae'.[88] Ælfric often uses the

motifs of either illness or giving up the ghost, but, even in his many portrayals of illness, he

glosses over the specifics of the malady. The *ÆLS* narrative of Maur is a case in point;

despite 'an hund muneca and syxtyne munecas' (348) of the monastery and Maur himself

succumbing to 'cwealm' (pestilence), Ælfric pays little attention to the details of the

sickness, instead noting simply that 'maurus se abbod geendode siððan' (350). In fact, the

abiding memory of infirmity in the account is rather of the many sicknesses that Maur

cures.[89] Ælfric perhaps uses illness to demonstrate a confessor's spiritual martyrdom, thus

demonstrating his or her worthiness for sanctity. The various depictions of death from or

after illness found across the hagiographic corpus present the compromise of the body as a

form of physical sacrifice, which provides a counterpart to physical martyrdom. The

noteworthy point about illnesses is that saints are typically represented as *enduring* them as

peacetime equivalents of the martyrs' trials, which in themselves imitate Christ's suffering.

Endurance in this sense enables the manifestation of sanctity. Consider Ælfric's description

(based on the *HE*) of Æthelthryth's attitude to her tumour, which she sees as penance for

the youthful adornment of her neck ('swuran', 56) with necklaces ('mænig-fealdum swur-

beagum', 57). Æthelthryth suggests that her illness is a sign of 'godes arfæstnyss' ('God's

justice') that may expiate her guilt ('gylt', 58). The motif of a saint attributing illness to past

sins is not especially common, but this is unsurprising given the exemplary status of saints;

their deeds in life function to negate any accumulation of sin (in excess of the original sin

with which all humans after the Fall are touched). The aim of Æthelthryth's hagiographers

in equating physiological symptoms with sin seems to be to encourage an audience to

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[88] Ehwald, p. 415, lines 1500–3; *Poetic Works,* p. 136: 'Blessed Anthony (the Egyptian hermit) once saw this excellent soldier, when he had left behind the fetters of the flesh, borne by a multitude of angels, entering the beautiful threshold of perpetual life'.

[89] Maur performs the following healing miracles: cures crippled boy (line 41); heals two companions who fall from a tower (92–5); cures blind man (98); cures unconscious boy (102–3); cures priest who falls while building monastery (163–75); heals possessed workman (192–205); resurrects madman killed by devil (206–13); heals bedridden man (257–9); heals man with *cancor* (283–8).

reflect on their own conduct. If an exemplary individual such as Æthelthryth can be affected by the trial of illness, what could an 'ordinary' Anglo-Saxon expect if they did not set their mind to improving their own behaviour? It may be that this conflation of sickness and sin is affected by Æthelthryth's gender, and this is discussed further in Chapter III.

The martyrologist does not often use the illness motif, demonstrating that authorial preference plays a large part in the narrative composition of the death-scene. Perhaps authors of texts such as the *Mart.* are more concerned with elucidating the sanctity of a saint through their associated miracles, for example, than through the physiological details of their death. The martyrologist, does, however place a great deal of meaning on chronological age, and a number of accounts of confessors mention the great age at which these saints die. The martyrologist mentions that Paul the Hermit (entry 16) dies at 113 years of age, Antony the Hermit (22) at 105 years, Patrick (44) at 131 years, the Virgin Mary (156) at 64 years, Ceolfrith (196) at 74 years, Luke (207) at 77 years and Hild (226) at 66 years (none of these saints are presented as suffering from illness before death). Saintly senescence therefore seems to function as a signifier of spiritual worth.[90] This provides a huge contrast to the martyrs found in the *Mart.*, many of whom are extremely young (Agnes is 13, Pancras 15, Vitus 7, Marina 15, Cyricus 2, Mamas 12, Justus 8 and Eulalia 13 years of age). Likewise, B. explicitly calls Dunstan 'senex' when he goes 'ad perhennem requiem' (§38.6), demonstrating a wider application of the idea that excessive age in saints is a signifier of spiritual purity.

Summary

The evidence presented in the foregoing discussion illustrates some typical trends found in the textual conceptualizations of saintly death in the corpus of Anglo-Saxon hagiography.

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[90] Consider Biblical paradigms for old age, including Gen. V.27; Gen. XLVII.9; Job XLII.16.

Death-scenes in general, and death-motifs in particular, are typically different for martyrs and confessors, which reflects the different paths to sanctity for these saints. Although many scholars have posited that martyrs are executed by beheading, the most common death-motif of an unspecified martyrdom in fact demonstrates a lack of specificity. This seems to reflect the aims of hagiographers from across the Anglo-Saxon period to focus on the fact of sanctity itself, and accords with the lack of specificity commonly found in portrayals of non-violent death-scenes. There is less variety among the death-motifs found in *vitae*, and differences in the elements presented in the death-scenes of martyrs and confessors are discernible, such as the kinds of phenomena that accompany the different types of saint. There appear to be certain differences in the lives of native Anglo-Saxon saints, where the same lack of death-motif does not always apply, and this is an issue that warrants further attention. In light of this, whether the lives of native Anglo-Saxon saints demonstrate differences particularly in relation to death-scenes deserves further investigation, and this investigation forms the next chapter.

CHAPTER II
DEATH-SCENES IN NATIVE ANGLO-SAXON SAINTS' LIVES

Chapter I above outlines the motival trends in the death-scenes of saints from across the Anglo-Saxon hagiographic corpus. The MI data illustrate certain exceptions to these general characteristics for the sub-corpora of texts on native Anglo-Saxon saints, and these exceptions warrant further attention. By 'native' I mean a saint who flourished within one of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms that by *c.* 800 comprised Northumbria, East Anglia, Wessex and Mercia.[1] Lives of Anglo-Saxon saints whose hagiographies were written on the continent are not considered here. The lack of any formalized process of canonization in Anglo-Saxon England until Pope Gregory IX's 'Decretals' in the thirteenth century meant that local native saints could be professed without the authority of the Pope.[2] Native lives, although not reliant on a pre-existing source for the *details* of the saint in question, are still typically made to meet certain generic criteria by which saints can be claimed to be equal to the community of universal saints. Thus, lives of Anglo-Saxon saints are often modelled on lives of universal saints as a means of hagiographic validation. The present chapter analyses the trends commonly encountered in the hagiographic death-scenes of native Anglo-Saxon saints, and assesses whether differences in the portrayal of exemplary death occur in these accounts. The depictions of native saints' deaths are dependent on and influenced by a number of factors. Historical practice, local tradition, hagiographic heritage, real events and other literary sources all affect the ways in which the deaths of saints were imagined and represented in hagiographic literature. Anglo-Saxon literary death-scenes are likely to have been informed by Anglo-Saxon cultural practices, and this chapter considers whether such

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[1] Brooks, 'Background', p. 118. Such boundaries necessarily mean that Irish, Scottish, Welsh and Cornish saints (the writings concerning which fall under the banner of 'Celtic hagiography') are not considered here unless otherwise stated.

[2] Lapidge, 'Saintly Life', p. 253; C. Cubitt, 'Universal and Local Saints in Anglo-Saxon England', *Local Saints and Local Churches in the Early Medieval West*, ed. A. Thacker and R. Sharpe (Oxford, 2002), pp. 423–53; D. W. Rollason, 'The Cults of Murdered Royal Saints in Anglo-Saxon England', *ASE* 11 (1982), 1–22.

evidence is more discernible in hagiographers' approaches to the deaths of native compared with non-native saints. As noted in the previous chapter, Anglo-Saxon hagiographers begin to write lives of their native saints from the seventh century onwards, and in many cases the purpose of such enterprises was to align a particular subject with the body of universal saints to legitimate a particular claim to sanctity.[3] Certain hagiographic texts, such as the anonymous *Vita S. Cuthberti*, were written relatively soon after the saint's death compared with texts such as the *Vita et miracula S. Kenelmi*, which was written at an extreme chronological remove from the events described. The purpose of the early hagiographies of native saints written soon after the deaths of their subjects was presumably to signal the importance of particular figures in the establishment of the Anglo-Saxon church, and to align these proclaimed saints with the sanctity of saints from established hagiographic traditions.[4] The writings of lives such as that of Kenelm may have had an impetus related to the formal establishment of an originally local, oral devotion to the saint.[5] It may be fruitful to consider whether the establishment or development of native saints' cults is in any way reflected in approaches to the death-scenes of these saints, and whether such death-scenes are appropriated to form commentaries on 'good' death for specifically Anglo-Saxon saints. The portrayals of the deaths of these saints may present different preoccupations compared with those of non-native saints.

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[3] As T. D. Hill, '*Imago Dei*: Genre, Symbolism and Anglo-Saxon Hagiography', *Holy Men and Holy Women: Old English Prose Saints' Lives and their Contexts*, ed. P. E. Szarmach (Albany, 1996), pp. 35–50 at 35 notes, 'all of the medieval vernacular hagiographic traditions are dependent to one degree or another on Medieval Christian Latin prototypes'.

[4] Anderson, 'Saints' Legends', p. 88.

[5] *Anglo-Latin Saints' Lives*, ed. Love, pp. cx–cxi; Cubitt, 'Universal and Local Saints', pp. 437–43 and 451–3; J. Blair, 'A Saint for Every Minster? Local Cults in Anglo-Saxon England', *Local Saints and Local Churches in the Early Medieval West*, ed. A. Thacker and R. Sharpe (Oxford, 2002), pp. 455–94.

Native Anglo-Saxon Martyrs

It is evident from the range of data presented in the MI that there are few Anglo-Saxon martyrs relative to the overall number of Anglo-Saxon saints. The acknowledged martyrs have some connection to royalty, and most are murdered not necessarily for their faith, but for reasons motivated by an enemy's desire 'for the pursuit of political interests', or for territorial or social gain.[6] Many of the cults of native Anglo-Saxon martyrs were fostered after their deaths specifically in response to the manner of those deaths, and David Rollason has argued that this veneration of murdered native saints, which 'was to retain a decidedly political complexion' occupied part of the Anglo-Saxon imagination for some time.[7]

Below, Table 2.1 illustrates the literary motifs used in the hagiography of native Anglo-Saxon saints. It is worth noting here that Alban is not considered with these native saints, because he is a Romano-Briton.[8] Anglo-Saxon redactions of his legend do, nevertheless, reflect many motival elements found in Anglo-Saxon native lives (such as the use of the beheading death-motif), and this is discussed where appropriate. Although many of these entries portray beheading as a death-motif, the circumstances in which these native martyrdoms occur are very different, and it seems worth exploring further whether any differences in approach or attitude may be gleaned from these accounts.

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[6] Ridyard, *Royal Saints*, p. 238.

[7] Rollason, 'Murdered Royal Saints', 22.

[8] The earliest references to a cult of St Alban are found in Constantius of Lyon's *Life of Germanus* (*c.* 480), but Gildas in *De excidio Britanniae* first situated the martyrdom at Verulamium (modern St Albans). Sharpe, 'Martyrs and Local Saints', p. 113, notes a *Passio S. Albani*, which survives in three forms (*BHL* 210d, 211a, 211) and which must be early ('mid-fifth-century' according to Sharpe) in its original form because it was used by Gildas. Also, M. Biddle, 'Alban (*d.c.* 303?)', *ODNB* [accessed 14 December 2011]; Farmer, s.v. 'Alban'; T. D. Barnes, *Early Christian Hagiography and Roman History* (Tübingen, 2010), pp. 307–12; Whatley, 'Acta Sanctorum', s.v. 'Albanus', pp. 62–4.

Table 2.1

Martyrdom Motifs in Hagiography of Anglo-Saxon Saints			
Literary motif	Inclusion of torture other than means of death	Only means of death mentioned	Total occurrences of motif
Beheading	2	1	**3**
Dying in battle	0	2	**2**
Unspecified martyrdom	0	2	**2**
Stabbing etc.	0	1	**1**
Beating	1	0	**1**
Torturing to death	1	0	**1**
Total	**4**	**6**	**10**

What is immediately apparent in comparison to Table 1.1 (p. 35) is that far fewer modes of execution are used to present the martyrdoms of this small corpus of Anglo-Saxon saints. It is interesting to observe that, in these native martyrdom accounts, reference to the manner of execution is often explicit, which contrasts with the evidence presented in Chapter I for the wider corpus, where a deliberate lack of specificity regarding the manner of a martyr's death is a frequent topos. Here, the only examples of an 'unspecified martyrdom' come from the *Mart.* (for Oswald and the Two Hewalds), and the 'giving up the ghost' stock motif is not used. One may question this difference in the usage of a literal versus a metaphorical, figurative or euphemistic death-motif, and the fact cannot be discounted that these accounts may simply be more historically accurate. Hagiographers are likely to have known the circumstances of the death of a king-saint such as Oswald, whereas the historical veracity of the death of a saint from more remote continental traditions perhaps could not be 'verified' in the same way. There have been differing interpretations of how images of violent death would have been received in Anglo-Saxon England. Indeed, Gale Owen-Crocker has argued for an Anglo-Saxon familiarity with 'stories of the decapitation of Christian martyrs (and, occasionally, their accusers), though

this is not a common means of death in Old English saints' lives, many of the protagonists enduring more colourful and imaginative mutilations and ordeals'.[9] It seems that Owen-Crocker understands beheading to be something of a commonplace in hagiography generally, but that Old English lives instead present even more gory accounts of death. The MI shows that this is not strictly true. Indeed, the more recherché methods of death, which are in any case unusual and not typical of hagiography in general, are found in non-native lives in Old English and in Latin. Compared with the graphic aesthetics of beheading in other Anglo-Saxon literature, such as *Beowulf*, beheadings of saints tend to be factual and not given a great deal of narrative space. The beheading of Denis and companions in *ÆLS* provides an illustrative non-native example: 'and hi wurdon beheafdode swa se wælhreowa het / mid scearpum æxum' (288–9). This contrasts with the portrayal of the decapitation of Grendel's mother, where the audience is told that, in facing the monster, Beowulf:

> yrringa sloh,
> þæt hire wið halse   heard grapode,
> banhringas bræc;   bil eal ðurhwod
> fægne flæschoman,   heo on flet gecrong;
> sweord wæs swatig,   secg weorce gefeh.
>
> (1565b–1569)[10]

The circumstances of this beheading are clearly different from the context of a saint's beheading, where a passive 'victim' readily welcomes death, but more explicitly gory approaches to narrating beheading accounts demonstrate the exemplarity of hagiographic examples. Beheaded saints approach and experience death in a manner that contributes to the understanding of that death as 'good'.[11]

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[9] G. R. Owen-Crocker, 'Horror in *Beowulf*: Mutilation, Decapitation, and Unburied Dead', *Early Medieval English Texts and Interpretations: Studies Presented to Donald G. Scragg*, ed. Elaine M. Treharne and Susan Rosser, Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies 252 (Tempe, 2002), pp. 81–100 at 96.

[10] 'struck angrily, so that it [the sword] grasped hard against her neck, broke the bonerings; the sword entirely penetrated the fated flesh, she fell dead on the floor. The sword was bloody. The man rejoiced in that deed'. The decapitation of Holofernes in *Judith* (97b–111a) provides another example.

[11] F. Ström, *On the Sacral Origin of the Germanic Death Penalties*, Kungliga Vitterhets Historie och Antikvitets Akademiens Handlingar 52 (Stockholm, 1942), p. 164, suggests that 'beheading is an uncommonly effective

A number of other patterns can be observed in these native lives. No miraculous punishments occur ante-mortem; all references to any kind of divine retaliatory action occur post-mortem, whether immediately or at a chronological remove from a saint's death. Moreover, no native martyrs predict the downfall of their enemies. Such differences are not unsurprising given the circumstances of native martyrdom; Anglo-Saxon martyrs typically do not suffer death as a form of spectacle in the same way as martyrs drawn from late antique traditions, and many of the common motifs found in lives of universal saints are not applicable to native saints. As explored in Chapter V, the last words of native martyrs typically take the form of prayer, but no examples of God's voice being heard from heaven occur, as is common in so many lives of non-native saints, and again, this is likely to be related to the nature of native martyrdoms, which often occur either in battle or as a result of secretive murder. It is also possible that representations of violent death in these native lives may have been partly informed by knowledge of Anglo-Saxon judicial punishment.

Capital Punishment in Anglo-Saxon England

It has already been noted that Anglo-Saxon cultural practices informed hagiographical representations of death-scenes in the Old English legend of the Seven Sleepers and in the Cynewulfian poem *Jul.* (see above, pp. 19–20). Value judgements assigned to particular deaths in Anglo-Saxon literature must therefore have been influenced by the contexts in which violent death is likely to have occurred historically as well as by inherited generic traditions. Anglo-Saxon audiences would probably not have encountered beheading, or other forms of violent death, only through the medium of hagiography (or homilies, or poetry), and attitudes towards beheading, for example, may have been informed by judicial

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way of annihilating a person's physical existence, which is a sufficient explanation of its primary penal employment'.

punishment contexts as well as by its use as a literary death-motif. Beheading seems to have belonged to a multivalent system of interpretation, and held varying significance depending on its context. Although the evidence from the native saints' lives indicates the prevalence of beheading as a death-motif, its placing within this interpretative nexus is surely influenced by its use as a means of enacting secular justice. In the archaeological record many excavated skeletons have been found to be decapitated, as Lucy and others have noted.[12] Reynolds suggests that the burials of many of these beheaded bodies can be classed as 'deviant', and that beheading in the early period was ostensibly employed 'to prevent the dead from haunting the living'.[13] He goes on to suggest the likelihood of a superstitious motivation for beheading continuing into the middle and later periods, but notes that beheading would have been the designated punishment for particular offences, as demonstrated by the evidence of a number of law codes.[14] In a code of King Æthelred (III Æthelred §4.1., which 'was promulgated at Wantage (Berkshire), probably before 1013'), it is noted of a thief that 'If then he is proved guilty, he shall be struck a blow as shall break his neck'.[15] Another code, I Æthelred 1, 2:1, explicitly references beheading as a legal punishment:

> And if a slave be found guilty at the ordeal, let one brand him on the first occasion. And on the second occasion, let there be no other compensation there but his head.[16]

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[12] S. Lucy, *The Anglo-Saxon Way of Death* (Stroud, 2000), p. 75; Reynolds, *Deviant Burial*, pp. 76–81, 91–2 and 166–9. S. Semple, 'Illustrations of Damnation in Late Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts' *ASE* 32 (2003), 231–45 at 238, refers to images of decapitation in the Harley Psalter, which she suggests may also reflect contemporary practice. Hanging seems to have been used as a means of capital punishment in Anglo-Saxon England, but as this does not feature as a saintly death-motif, it is not discussed in any detail here. Hanging of non-saintly figures, however, features in hagiography, such as *ÆLS* (Edmund), as discussed below, pp. 63–4.

[13] Reynolds, *Deviant Burial*, p. 91.

[14] Ibid.; Reynolds, 'Crime and Punishment', *The Oxford Handbook of Anglo-Saxon Archaeology*, ed. H. Hamerow *et al.* (Oxford, 2011), pp. 892–913 at 906. It is worth considering the symbolic importance attributed to the head in early medieval literature (seen in later Scandinavian traditions as well as in vernacular Anglo-Saxon literature). M. F. Godfrey, '*Beowulf* and *Judith*: Thematizing Decapitation in Old English Poetry', *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 35 (1993), 1–43 at 30, notes that the decapitated heads of saints can be seen as manifestations of God's power that enable the saints to participate in the recording of their own martyrdoms.

[15] Reynolds, *Deviant Burial*, Appendix 1, p. 258, §D.a–b.

[16] P. Wormald, *The Making of English Law: King Alfred to the Twelfth Century* (Oxford, 1999), p. 325.

It is difficult to assess how far the written evidence of the law codes informed Anglo-Saxon practice, but the combination of evidence shows that decapitation did occur throughout the period, and it is therefore not unlikely that it held some imaginative sway over the Anglo-Saxon population. As has been shown above, beheading was used as a means of capital punishment for criminals in the Anglo-Saxon period, but the native saints to whom the motif is applied are the antitheses of the criminal. Indeed, the bodies of saints and those of executed criminals form extremes in a complex system of interpretation, but the same death-motif can equally apply to each figure, which gives rise to a number of questions. How are the different interpretations of decapitation found across varying types of evidence reconciled? How can the ubiquity of the beheading motif for native saints be explained? Is beheading so common a motif because it simply represents known historical reality? Alternatively, does the decollation motif provide a commentary by which to stress the injustice of the deaths of these native saints? In light of these questions it seems necessary to investigate the circumstances of the beheading motif within the wider narrative contexts of these native saints' lives.

Edmund

Edmund, king of the East Angles, met his death at the hands of the Great Heathen Army in 869.[17] *ASC* manuscript A for 870 provides a dispassionate account of the king's death, noting: '7 þy wintra eadmund cyning him wiþ feaht, 7 þa Deniscan sige namon 7 þone cyning ofslogon 7 þæt lond all geeodon'.[18] Based on Abbo of Fleury's *passio* of Edmund (written 985–7 at Ramsey), Ælfric's account details Hingwar the Dane's attempts to convince Edmund to submit to be his 'under-kyning', Edmund's refusal and his eventual

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[17] A. Gransden, 'Edmund [St Edmund] (*d.* 869)', *ODNB* [accessed 14 December 2011].
[18] J. M. Bately, ed., *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition*, Vol. 3: MS A (Cambridge, 1986), p. 47.

martyrdom at the hands of the 'deniscan leode'.[19] Edmund is presented as imitating Christ in his refusal to bear arms against his enemy: 'eadmund cynincg (101) [. . .] awearp his wæpna wolde geæfen-læcan / cristes gebysnungum' (103–4).[20] After numerous tortures (including being shot full of arrows, like St Sebastian, evidence of Ælfric's attempt to validate Edmund's martyr status through the mimetic representation of suffering), Edmund is beheaded while praying to Christ:

> þa tugon þa hæþenan þone halgan to slæge
> and mid anum swencge slogon him of þæt heafod
> and his sawl siþode gesælig to criste
>
> (124–126)[21]

The alliterative emphasis of line 126 ('sawl siþode gesælige') reinforces the notion of death as a positive transformative experience and demonstrates Ælfric's affirmation of Edmund's saintly status; there is no doubt that Edmund's soul journeys *joyfully* – and immediately – to Christ.

What is interesting here is the subsequent narrative trajectory of the story and its concentration on Edmund's disembodied head, which is hidden by the departing Danes so that it cannot be buried (lines 130–2). The head is later found in the woods under the guardianship of a grey wolf, and reveals its very location to the people searching for it, crying 'Her her her' (151) to signal its presence in a speech-act that aligns Edmund with the corpus of cephalophoric saints. Edmund's subsequent translation provides evidence of his sanctity through the miracle of his head and body having re-joined: 'and his swura wæs gehalod þe ær wæs forslagen' (178). Contemporary body theory would argue that death signals the end of the body as a 'bearer of value', but the case of saints signals the very

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[19] According to Ælfric, Abbo was told the story by Archbishop Dunstan, who heard it from King Æthelstan, who had himself been told by Edmund's sword-bearer. 'Þa gesette se munuc ealle þa gereccednysse on anre boc' (*ÆLS* (Edmund), lines 7–8) so, although Ælfric cites the authority of Abbo's book, the legend itself has relied heavily on oral dissemination up to that point.

[20] Ibid. 'Edmund the king [. . .] threw away his weapons, desiring to imitate Christ's example'.

[21] Ibid. 'the heathen drew away the saint, to slay him, and with one blow struck off his head; and his soul departed joyfully to Christ'.

opposite.[22] Thus, despite the historicity of Edmund, Antonia Gransden believes the hagiographies concerning him to be 'attractive literature but not sober history'.[23] Although differences occur in the constellation of motifs found in Abbo and Ælfric, the latter maintains the beheading motif depicted by the former, where Edmund's head is struck off ('decapitando').[24] In both Abbo and Ælfric, decapitation seems to function as a social performance whereby the Danish army attempt to establish dominance by depriving the people of their king – their head. Therefore, beheading functions as a literalization of the wider significance of the murder of a king. The later miracle of recapitation, which is enabled by the community, functions as another social performance, this time demonstrating the king-become-saint's power. Earl suggests that Ælfric's focus on Edmund's passivity in the face of violence reflects his belief in the role of the king as Christian non-combatant.[25] Indeed, Earl goes on to argue that the wolf guarding Edmund's head symbolizes the 'flot-mannum' (77) and their eventual conversion, thereby demonstrating the effectiveness of kingly non-violence.[26] If Ælfric is promoting an anti-violence stance, this may explain the lack of a pagan-directed vengeance miracle; the pagans eventually convert, so it would not do to have them represented as suffering God's divine vengeance. An example of secular justice is also depicted at Edmund's church, enabled by a miracle whereby thieves are bound ('wundorlice geband', 207) in the act of attempted theft, and hanged as punishment by Bishop Theodred: 'Hi wurdon þa gebrohte to þam bisceope

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[22] C. Shilling, *The Body and Social Theory*, 2nd ed. (London, 2003), p. 162.

[23] Gransden, 'Edmund', *ODNB* [accessed 14 December 2011].

[24] *Vita S. Eadmundi*, §10, *Three Lives of English Saints*, ed. M. Winterbottom (Toronto, 1972), p. 79.

[25] Earl, 'Violence and Non-Violence', 130–5.

[26] Ibid. 140. The Vikings are explicitly called 'wælwulfas' in *Maldon*, 96a, suggesting a wider association of Vikings and wolves, perhaps on account of their paganism and therefore their state of being outcast from God. The wolf – a beast of battle – is a creature explicitly associated with fighting in Old English poetry. (Note also that Grendel's mother – another outcast – is called 'brimwylf' during her contest with Beowulf, lines 1506a and 1599a.)

ealle / and he het hi hon on heagum gealgum ealle'.[27] The anecdote is found in Abbo's earlier life, but Ælfric's version promotes his view that clergy should not become involved in the dispensation of justice. Ælfric's opinion is made explicit in his assertion that Theodred rued his hasty action for the rest of his days: 'ðeodred […] behreowsode mid geomerunge þæt he swa reðne dom sette / þam ungesæligum þeofum and hit besargode æfre / oð his lifes ende'.[28] These views also find expression in Ælfric's first Pastoral Letter to Wulfstan, archbishop of York, in which he states that 'We ne moton beon ymbe mannes deað. Þeah he manslega beo oþþe morðfremmende oþþe mycel þeofman, swaþeah we ne scylon him deað getæcan'.[29] Despite the prevalence of violent miracles of vengeance in many of Ælfric's lives, he stresses that they are only legitimate when a miraculous manifestation of God's wrath. With the anecdote of the thieves Ælfric seems to be making the point that God's miracle was enough; the discovery of the transfixed thieves could have enabled some form of confession and penance and ultimate saving of their souls. Theodred's rash reaction denies this possibility, consigning the thieves not only to a 'bad' physical death, but also a spiritual death, and Ælfric is at pains to stress to his audience of monks the error of such behaviour.

Kenelm

Kenelm's hagiography illustrates certain narrative differences compared with the above example, despite the fact that the saintly death-motif is the same. The historical veracity of Kenelm's *vita* is also much more problematic. If it is indeed written by the Flemish monk

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[27] *ÆLS* (Edmund), lines 214–15: 'Then they were brought to the bishop, and he commanded men to hang them all on a high gallows'.

[28] Ibid. lines 225–8: 'Theodred [. . .] rued with lamentation that he had awarded such a cruel doom to these unhappy thieves, and ever deplored it to his life's end'.

[29] 'We may not be concerned in any man's death. Even though he is a homicide or murderer or great thief, yet we must not prescribe death for him'; D. Whitelock, M. Brett and C. N. L. Brooke, ed., *Councils and Synods: With Other Documents Relating to the English Church* (Oxford, 1981), I, 255–302 at 299–300, §201; also Thompson, *Dying and Death,* p. 85.

Goscelin of Saint-Bertin, he was writing over two hundred years after the life of a subject who seems to have existed, but about whom nothing is known. (Love notes that a Cynhelm attested a number of charters from 803 to 811, but the name ceases after the latter date; furthermore, the details of Kenelm's hagiography do not align with what can be deduced from the scant historical evidence.)[30] Much of what Goscelin writes, then, may be assumed to be an imaginative construct fashioned to fit certain conventions of hagiography as well as to satisfy the demands of Kenelm's popular, localized veneration (demonstrated by heavy use of topographical elements in the *vita*, as well as the nature of the miracles associated with the saint). Unlike the author of the anonymous life of Cuthbert (*BHL* 2019), whose hagiography was probably written within approximately twelve to nineteen years of Cuthbert's death following Colgrave's dating, Goscelin could not rely on living memory. The matter is further complicated by the fact that Kenelm's account is heavily dependent on and thought to have developed from local tradition.[31] The hagiographer does attempt to imbue some sense of legitimacy in his saintly subject in his Preface through his suggestion that Dunstan, Æthelwold and Oswald ('sancti patres') would not have recognized the cult had it not been worthy.[32]

The text detailing Kenelm's martyrdom has been designated the *Vita et miracula S. Kenelmi* (*BHL* 4641n, 4641p, 4641r; hereafter *Vita et miracula*), and is distinguishable from the *Vita brevior* (*BHL* 4641m), which comprises a series of feast-day lections. Lapidge and Love suggest that the *Vita et miracula* was 'probably written between 1066 and 1075, when Goscelin was still based in the West Country'.[33] The legend of Kenelm is not included in

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[30] *Anglo-Latin Saints' Lives*, ed. Love, pp. lxxxix–xc. See also Rollason, 'Murdered Royal Saints', 10; D. Rollason, 'Cynehelm (*sup. fl.* 803×11)', *ODNB* [accessed 14 December 2011]; Farmer, s.v. 'Kenelm'; Whatley, 'Acta Sanctorum', s.v. 'Kenelmus', pp. 287–8; Lapidge and Love, 'Latin Hagiography', 225–33.

[31] Lapidge and Love, 'Latin Hagiography', 227; C. Cubitt, 'Sites and Sanctity: Revisiting the Cult of Murdered and Martyred Anglo-Saxon Royal Saints', *EME* 9 (2000), 53–83 at 68.

[32] *Vita et miracula S. Kenelmi, Anglo-Latin Saints' Lives*, ed. Love, p. 50.

[33] Lapidge and Love, 'Latin Hagiography', 227.

earlier hagiographical compendia, for example, and Kenelm has largely been regarded as a local saint. This notion would seem to be supported by references to Kenelm in the surviving litanies, many of which seem to have a connection to Winchester (such as MS CCCC 422, ?Winchester, New Minster, s. xi[med], which features Kenelm alongside a number of other native martyrs), although, as Love notes, 'it is not safe to make too many inferences about such evidence'.[34] Kenelm's literary death-scene takes the following basic form: on the orders of his sister, Cwoenthryth, who desires the kingdom of their father (the Mercian king Cenwulf or Ceonwulf) herself, Kenelm is beheaded by his tutor Æscberht while hunting:

> sub arbore spinea caput Kenelmi lacteum septennis, ut dictum est, paruuli absciditur, quod ipse protinus extensis palmulis excepisse memoratur, quo uelut lilium aut demessa rosa gratificatur, ut in conspectu Domini pretiosa mors sancti sui commendetur[35]

Æscberht attempts to bury the body, but a column of light signals the site of the murder, and a grazing cow yields twice her normal supply of milk. A dove then appears to Pope Leo the Younger and delivers a letter detailing the murder, which instigates the recovery of the saint's body and a fight between men of Worcester and Gloucester to retain it. Various miracles ensue. An interesting aspect to this account is the use of certain motifs, such as the saint's foreknowledge of his death owing to a dream which is interpreted by his nurse, that are found more commonly in accounts of non-violent death. This motif of foreknowledge through dreams or visions is a typical topos of non-violent death-scenes (MI §II.1.1), and does not commonly feature in martyrdom accounts. Its use in Kenelm's *vita*, however, serves to stress the saint's sanctity, and reinforces his purity, both of which

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[34] Lapidge, *Litanies*, p. 126, line 51; *Anglo-Latin Saints' Lives*, ed. Love, p. cxv.
[35] *Vita et miracula,* §7, p. 60: 'under a thorn-tree the milky-white head of Kenelm, a little lad, as has been said, of 7 years, is cut off. He himself is said to have caught it straightaway with outstretched hands, in order that, just as a lily or a plucked rose gives pleasure, so in the sight of the Lord the precious death of his saint may be commended'.

are further stressed by post-mortem miracles, including vengeance miracles.[36] Beheading is presumably adopted to highlight the Kenelm's innocence, but also to align him with other native Anglo-Saxon saints; it may have been a deliberate effort to associate Kenelm with a body of accepted native holy figures. The hagiographer implies that Kenelm dies like a saint, therefore his sanctity cannot be in doubt.

Oswald

Another literary depiction of martyrdom of a native saint is death in battle, which is used to portray the death of Oswald, king of Northumbria. Oswald became king in 634, having spent much of his life in exile in Ireland and Scotland. He was killed in 642 by Penda and an alliance of Britons, and, by the time of Bede's *HE*, written some eighty-eight years after his death, various legends had begun to circulate concerning him.[37] Bede's *HE* (III.9) makes reference to a great battle ('graui proelio'), but the *Mart.* (based on Bede's account[38]) omits any battle reference, noting only that Oswald was killed ('sloh'). Ælfric's account (likewise based on Bede) also references the battle, but as with the other two accounts, makes no references to the specific way in which Oswald is killed. It is possible that, within the context of Anglo-Saxon England, further elucidation may not have been deemed necessary.[39] Bede implies that Oswald's head was removed and displayed post-mortem, along with his hands ('Porro caput et manus cum brachiis a corpore praecisas iussit rex, qui occiderat, in stipitibus suspendi', *HE* III.12) but it is less clear in Ælfric's life whether the removal of Oswald's head caused death or occurred post-mortem, and it is possible to

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[36] Norris, 'Deathbed Confessors', p. 48. Cubitt, 'Sites and Sanctity', 57, suggests that accounts of murdered royal Anglo-Saxon figures are unusual in their hagiographic topoi and do not conform to the standards of established models owing to the origin of their cults in lay devotion.

[37] D. J. Craig, 'Oswald [St Oswald] (603/4–42), *ODNB* [accessed 10 January 2012].

[38] Rauer, *Mart.*, p. 279.

[39] *HE*, III.9: 'Quo conpleto annorum curriculo occisus est, commisso graui proelio'; *Mart.* (146): 'Oswald endade his lif in gebedes wordum ða hine mon sloh'; *ÆLS* (Oswald), lines 162–3: 'Þa het se hæþena cynincg his heafod of-aslean / and his swiðran earm'.

conjecture that Ælfric may have been attempting to align Oswald more closely with other decapitated saints.[40] Ælfric also stresses the details of various miracles associated with the saint more than the other two accounts. In Ælfric's life, the synecdochic nature of Oswald's relics is stressed so that his incorrupt hand can stand for his whole body.[41] A clear demarcation between the significance of bodily disintegration for saints and their persecutors is thus evident. Curiously, the use of a dismembered head and hand as tokens of victory features as a motif in *Beowulf*, as Orchard notes, but here it is the body parts of Beowulf's monstrous enemies that are displayed.[42]

Summary

The death-motifs in each of these lives form part of very different constellations of topoi. Despite the mutability of these death-scene motifs, the consistency with which beheading, for example, is portrayed perhaps suggests a wider significance in the context of Anglo-Saxon England. Clear evidence demonstrates that fewer death-motifs are used to portray the deaths of native martyrs. The ubiquity of precise death-motifs for this sub-corpus of saints points to a mode of specificity not always found in the wider corpus of hagiography written in Anglo-Saxon England. An investigation of the attitudes to death espoused in the lives of native confessors will enable a more comprehensive judgement of the representation of death in Anglo-Saxon hagiography to be made.

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[40] *HE*, III.12, pp. 250–3: 'The king who slew him ordered his head and hands to be severed from his body and hung on stakes'.

[41] It is the hand that forms the focus of Oswald's miraculous activity, rather than his head, in both Ælfric and in Bede. For a discussion of this see A. Thacker, '*Membra disjecta*: the Division of the Body and the Diffusion of the Cult', *Oswald: Northumbrian King to European Saint*, ed. C. Stancliffe and E. Cambridge (Stamford, 1995), pp. 97–127 at 101–4.

[42] A. Orchard, *A Critical Companion to* Beowulf (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 146–7. Orchard also notes the use of head and hand in I Macc. VIII.47 and II Macc. XV.30–35, which would have been familiar as part of the Vulgate Bible. Lockett also suggests that the display of Grendel's arm functions to signify the legitimacy of his murder by Beowulf. Grendel's mother also displays the head of her victim Æschere, further suggesting that the head and hand were imbued with a particular importance in forms of display; L. Lockett, 'The Role of Grendel's Arm in Feud, Law, and the Narrative Strategy of *Beowulf*', *Latin Learning and English Lore: Studies in Anglo-Saxon Literature for Michael Lapidge*, ed. K. O'Brien O'Keeffe and A. Orchard (Toronto, 2005), I, 368–88 at 372.

Non-Violent Death

For native Anglo-Saxon saints, there are more examples of non-violent than violent death, which is largely a consequence of the cultural contexts in which Anglo-Saxon confessors flourished. Lapidge concludes from the evidence of surviving Anglo-Saxon litanies that Æthelthryth and Cuthbert were the most popular native Anglo-Saxon saints, demonstrating the widespread esteem in which native confessors could be held.[43] Like non-native confessors, native saints are typically portrayed as experiencing death in a communal environment, which contrasts sharply with native martyrdoms, in which saints are often killed in a secretive, furtive manner. This in itself contrasts with late antique martyrdom, where death was a spectacle enacted before large audiences. Saints living at the time of the Viking invasions are the only protagonists likely to come up against non-Christian enemies, but the evidence indicates that this only affects a small number of saints relative to the number of early Christian martyrs. Consequently, most native saints are confessors, and most confessors die peaceful deaths.[44] In these accounts of non-violent death, the most typical means of representing death is simply to report that the fact of death, without providing further detail.[45] The table below outlines the distribution of non-violent death-motifs.

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[43] M. Lapidge, *The Cult of St Swithun*, Winchester Studies, 4.2 (Oxford, 2003), p. 34.

[44] *ODCC*, s.v. 'confessor'.

[45] Examples include: *HE*: Eorcengota, Æthelburh, Ælfflæd, Chad, Cuthbert, Hædde, Wilfrid; Goscelin: *In Festivitate S. Sexburge, In Natale S. Eormenhilde, Vita S. Werburge, Miracula S. Ætheldrethe, Vita S. Cuthberti Auctore Anonymo*.

Table 2.2

Non-Violent Death-Motifs in the Hagiography of Anglo-Saxon Saints	
Motif	**Total number of occurrences**
Death recorded (means unspecified)	**21**
Dying as a result of or after illness	**15**
Giving up ghost, spirit departing	**8**
Death not mentioned	**3**
Total	**47**

Death Recorded (Means Unspecified)

The most common confessorial death-motif is a bald statement of fact of death. Cummins suggests that the 'good death in healthy old age which could be foreseen and prepared for was presented as the reward of a saintly life which very few could hope for'.[46] Thus, a peaceful death is presented as the saintly exemplar, and the lack of descriptions of pain, bodily effluence or noise in any negative sense in these accounts supports this ideal. For instance, in the *HE* Bede notes for Ælfflæd: 'deinde etiam magistra extitit, donec conpleto unde LX annorum numero, ad conplexum et nuptias sponsi caelestis uirgo beata intraret'.[47] The martyrologist presents death in the following terms for Chad (37): 'On þone æfteran dæg þæs monðes bið þæs biscopes geleornes Sancte Ceaddan'; for Æthelburh (204): 'On ðone endlyftan dæg þæs monðes bið þære halgan abbodissan forðfor ond ðære æðelan fæmnan þære noma wæs Sancta Æðylburh'; and for Cedd (214): 'On ðone sex ond twentigoþan dæg þæs monðes bið Sancte Ceadweallan geleornes þæs biscopes'.[48]

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[46] J. M. Cummins, 'Attitudes to Old Age and Ageing in Medieval Society' (unpubl. PhD dissertation, Univ. of Glasgow, 2000), p. 176.

[47] *HE*, III.24, pp. 292–3: 'then, about the age of sixty, the blessed virgin departed to be united with her heavenly bridegroom'.

[48] 'On the second day of the month is the death of the bishop St Chad'; 'On the eleventh day of the month is the death of the holy abbess and noble virgin whose name was St Æthelburh'; 'On the twenty-sixth day of the month is the death of the bishop St Cedd'.

A non-specific, presumably peaceful, death is the most likely of all the modes of representation in Table 2.2 to feature miraculous phenomena, which again suggests a focus on the meaning of death rather than its means; what matters is that death-scenes feature various motifs to signal to the audience saints' direct ascension to heaven and their indisputable sanctity. These signs and portents include sweet smells, the sound of bells or singing, visiting angels or animals, and all serve to highlight the sanctity of the saint. Where phenomena occur at a chronological remove from the moment of death, for example at a later translation, the motifs serve to ensure that the audience can be in no doubt over the veracity of a particular saint's claim to sanctity, even if that saint's companions were originally unaware of sanctity (in the case of a saint such as Swithun).[49] These phenomena are investigated further in Chapter VI.

Illness

The native saints who are presented as suffering from illness include: Wilfrid in Stephen's life; Cuthbert in Bede's prose and the anonymous life, Æthelthryth in the *HE* and *ÆLS*; Chad, Cedd and Hild in the *HE*; Chad in *LS* 3; Guthlac in *Felix's Life* and *GuthB*; Eadberht in the *Mart.*; Ecgwine in Byrhtferth's life, Dunstan in B.'s life, and Wulfstan of Winchester's *Æthelwold*. Occasionally, a saint is presented as suffering from illness only for the final death-motif to be different, typically giving up the ghost or the spirit departing. Illness was feared as a process of decay, which in turn could be attributed to sin, and, as shown, Æthelthryth's legend sees her ascribe the large tumour on her neck to her vanity in youth. The literature is not always entirely straightforward on the relationship between sickness and sin, however.[50] Æthelthryth (d. 679) was the daughter of King Anna of East Anglia and

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[49] A. Thacker, 'The Making of a Local Saint', *Local Saints and Local Churches in the Early Medieval West*, ed. A. Thacker and R. Sharpe (Oxford, 2002), pp. 45–73.

[50] Thompson, *Dying and Death*, pp. 94–8.

remained a virgin ('clæne fæmne', *Mart.* 110) despite being married off twice before eventually being granted permission to become a nun at Coldingham. She eventually founded a double monastery at Ely in 673 and, as noted above, was one of the most popular Anglo-Saxon saints, with 'twelve ancient churches [. . .] dedicated to her'.[51] Bede's treatment of Æthelthryth's death is somewhat fleeting and he spends a great deal more time focusing instead on her *translatio*, presumably because this is the point at which her sanctity is proved to be beyond doubt: 'Cumque corpus sacrae uirginis ac sponsae Christi aperto sepulchro esset prolatum in lucem, ita incorruptum inuentum est, ac si eodem die fuisset defuncta siue humo condita'.[52] The saint's death in Bede is described as occurring as a result of plague ('pestilentiam'). Ælfric, who explicitly cites 'se halga beda' as a source, pays more attention to the translation than to the moment of death itself. He mentions the tumour that causes the saint's death, but focuses more intently on the saint herself, with less emphasis on the other sisters mentioned in Bede's account who also succumb to the plague. Her death is presented in Ælfric with Æthelthryth in perhaps a more autonomous role, departing gloriously ('mid wuldre', 66) to God rather than being taken ('rapta' in the *HE*). The martyrologist does not represent Æthelthryth's illness, noting rather her 'departure': 'Ond þurh Godes gast heo self ær foresægde hwonne heo sceolde of middangearde leoran, ond heo þa geleorde'.[53] This is typical of the martyrologist, who rarely presents illness as a death-motif, but rather uses alternative motifs.

Cuthbert, bishop of Lindisfarne, lived *c.* 635–87 during the period of transition to Christianity in north-east England.[54] His recognition as a saint closely followed his death

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[51] See above, p. 69; Farmer, pp. 148–9.

[52] *HE*, IV.19, pp. 394–5: 'When the tomb of the sacred virgin and bride of Christ was opened and the body brought to light, it was found to be as uncorrupt as if she had died and been buried that very day'.

[53] 'And through God's spirit she herself predicted when she would depart from the world, and she did then depart'.

[54] For further information on Cuthbert's life and the context of the various hagiographies concerning him, see the numerous essays in G. Bonner *et al.*, ed., *St Cuthbert, His Cult and His Community to AD 1200* (Woodbridge, 1989). Also, D. Rollason and R. B. Dobson, 'Cuthbert [St Cuthbert] (*c.* 635–87), *ODNB*

and his importance and popularity is attested by the number of single lives memorializing him, including: (i) the anonymous Life by a Lindisfarne monk (dated by Colgrave to 699×705); (ii) Bede's metrical Life, written *c.* 705; and (iii) Bede's prose Life, the *Vita S. Cuthberti* (*BHL* 2021), based on the verse, dated to *c.* 721 by Colgrave.[55] In Bede's prose life the physical reality of illness is not ignored, and the saint's end is recounted through the eye-witness testimony of Herefrith: 'Uidebam nanque in facie eius, quia multum inedia simul et languore erat defessus'.[56] The eventual death-motif is that of sending the soul ('intentam supernis laudibus animam ad gaudia regni coelestis emisit'), which functions similarly to the giving up the ghost motif.[57] The anonymous author uses the same motif in his earlier Life ('emittens spiritum, sedensque sine gemitu obiit in uiam patrum').[58] Bede expounds on another illness in his work, that of Hereberht, and suggests that he suffers a long, protracted illness in order to match Cuthbert in worthiness:

> Sed Herebertus diutina prius infirmitate decoquitur [. . .] ut si quid minus haberet meriti a beato Cuthberto suppleret dolor continuus longae egritudinis, quatinus equatus gratia suo intercessori sicut uno eodemque tempore cum eo de corpore egredi, ita etiam una atque indissimili sede perpetuae beatitudinis mereretur recipi.[59]

This excerpt is not found in the anonymous Life, indicating that Bede deliberately shapes his Cuthbert as an object of imitation and demonstrates that bodily infirmity, attitudes to which are complicated by perceived associations between sickness and sin, can be used as a trial through which to prepare spiritually for death. Anxiety over the link between sickness

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[accessed 10 January 2012]; Whatley, 'Acta Sanctorum', s.v. 'Cuthbertus, vita' and 'Cuthbertus, historia', pp. 157–61.

[55] *Two Lives*, p. 16. This is not counting his inclusion in compendia or works such as the *HE*.

[56] *Vita Sancti Cuthberti auctore Beda*, §37, *Two Lives*, pp. 274–5: 'I saw by his face that he was greatly wearied both by lack of food and by disease'.

[57] Ibid. §39, pp. 284–5: 'he sent forth his spirit in the very act of praising God to the joys of the heavenly kingdom.'

[58] *Vita Sancti Cuthberti auctore anonymo*, §13, *Two Lives*, pp. 130–1: 'he breathed his last, and without a sigh went in the way of his fathers.'

[59] *Vita Sancti Cuthberti auctore Beda*, §28, *Two Lives*, pp. 250–1: 'But Hereberht was first consumed by a long illness [. . .] so that though he had less merit than the blessed Cuthbert, the continual pain of a long illness would make up for it, and being made equal in grace to his intercessor, he may be counted worthy to depart from the body with him at one and the same hour and also to be received into one and the same dwelling of perpetual bliss'.

and sin is potentially discernible in the fact that only rarely is illness used as a final death-motif. By using illness alongside a secondary motif such as giving up the ghost a hagiographer may make use of illness as an equivalent of the martyrs' trials, thus negating any association of sickness with sin, and demonstrating that, by means of such a trial, one's soul becomes spiritually worthy to ascend to heaven. Anxieties over illness are perhaps even more entrenched in the later hagiography, where illness is used as a death-motif rather more infrequently. Given that the metaphorical (at least to modern sensibilities) death-motifs of giving up the ghost or sending forth the spirit are intimately related to ideas of the soul, they are explored in detail in Chapter VI. It is worth noting that such motifs are typically only used to describe the non-violent deaths of native saints, whereas in the wider corpus the depiction may relate to both martyrdoms and non-violent deaths. In various texts pertaining to the Crowland hermit Guthlac, the portrayal of illness is followed by a secondary, non-literal death-motif. [60] *GuthA*, found in the Exeter Book (Exeter, Cathedral Library MS 3501, 'prob. SW England (or Canterbury CC??)', s. x^2), is chiefly concerned with the saint as a *miles Christi*, rather than with the circumstances of his physical death, which is reported as follows: 'Swa wæs Guðlaces   gæst gelæded / engla fæðmum   in uprodor' (781–782).[61] In the manuscript *GuthA* is immediately followed by *GuthB*, which is explicitly concerned with the saint's death, but Jane Roberts assumes a 'separate authorship' for the poems, with *GuthB* focusing sustained attention on Guthlac's death-scene.[62]

Both Felix and the *GuthB*-poet describe the saint's long illness, but his eventual death is represented by means of a non-literal motif; Felix notes that Guthlac sends up his soul ('animam ad gaudia perpetuae exultationis emisit', §50), as does the *GuthB*-poet ('þa his

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[60] H. Mayr-Harting, 'Guthlac [St Guthlac] (674–715), *ODNB* [accessed 15 December 2011]; Whatley, 'Acta Sanctorum', s.v. 'Guthlacus', pp. 244–7.

[61] Gneuss, *Handlist*, p. 54. 'Then Guthlac's spirit was led into heaven in the embrace of angels'.

[62] J. Roberts, ed., *The Guthlac Poems of the Exeter Book* (Oxford, 1979), p. 48

gæst onsende', 1303b). In Guthlac's case, the use of such motifs seems to align the saint more closely with other models of exemplary non-violent death.[63]

Vengeance and Death

Hagiography, as has been seen, often serves a didactic purpose directed towards informing audience behaviour and providing models of appropriate moral conduct. As well as demonstrating exemplary 'good' deaths, hagiographic texts typically feature 'bad' death-scenes as foils to those of the saints. Indeed, Ælfric suggests differences between the deaths of the 'good' and the 'sinful' in his Palm Sunday homily:

> Synfulra manna deað is yfel 7 earmlic for þan þe hi farað of þisum scortan life to ecum pingungum; And rihtwisra manna deað is deorwyrðe for ði þonne hi geendiað þis geswincfulle lif þonne beoð hi gebrohte to ðam ecan life[64]

Many of these 'bad' death-scenes occur as part of the hagiographic vengeance miracle motif. Catherine Cubitt has argued that vengeance miracles are a common motif of royal *vitae* but that they are 'otherwise rare in Anglo-Saxon hagiography'.[65] I believe that this requires some qualification, given that Cubitt seems to consider only the miracles that occur at a temporal remove from a saint's death.[66] The vengeance miracle, with its frequent motival connection to death, is in fact a frequent hagiographic topos in both *passiones* and *vitae* of both native and non-native saints. The motif is considered in this chapter specifically on account of the fact that the lives of native saints present particular forms of vengeance.[67] A wider survey of vengeance miracles is provided as background against which to measure the motif in the lives of native saints. The manifestation of vengeance in hagiography is a form of miracle first and foremost, and vengeance typically appears in

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[63] *Felix's Life*, §50, p. 159. Note similarities of expression with Bede's life of Cuthbert.
[64] *ÆCHom* I,14.1 (Palm Sunday), lines 210–15: 'The death of sinful men is evil and miserable because they go from this short life to eternal torments. And the death of righteous men is precious because when they end this toilsome life then they are brought to the eternal life'.
[65] Cubitt, 'Sites and Sanctity', 57.
[66] Ibid. 64.
[67] See *TOE* §12.05.04.02 for vernacular terms for vengeance and revenge.

narratives as part of a wider constellation of motifs that demonstrate the power of God and the exemplarity of his saints.[68]

The different hagiographic genres of *vitae* and *passiones* feature different representations of vengeance, which I organize into three paradigms or types. Firstly, vengeance may be presented as divine punishment for the killing of a saint, with a direct causal link between the two events. This type of vengeance is found commonly in the hagiography of martyrs, and the saint typically occupies a passive role. An example from the *Mart.* (190 Matthew) demonstrates this:

> Ond ða sona æfter Matheus þrowunge þa forborn ðæs cyninges heall mid eallum his spedum, ond his sunu awedde, ond he sylf ahreofode ond tobærst mid wundum from ðam heafde oð ða fet. Ond he asette his sweord upweard, ond ða hyne sylfne ofstang.[69]

The second paradigm involves vengeance miracles that occur at a post-mortem remove from a saint's death, often at his or her church. Where vengeance miracles are found in *vitae* of Anglo-Saxon saints, they typically take this form. This paradigm is found in both *vitae* and *passiones*, as demonstrated again in the *Mart.* (181 Audomarus). A man who gives another man a 'scilling seolfres' finds that he cannot reclaim his money, so asks the man to whom he loaned money ('to borge') to accompany him to 'Audomares ciricean' and ' "swere me her þær wit standaþ" '. The man refusing to pay back the loan tries to swear, at which point the saint's power is manifested: 'þa feol he sona niþerweard on þa eorþan ond him toburston ða eagan, ond he lifde twegen dagas ofer þæt, oþrum monnum to brogan, ond þy þryddan dæge he swealt mid earmlicum deaþe'.[70] In another example, from the life of Gregory the Great, the saint himself enacts vengeful behaviour on his successor who

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[68] For various vengeance episodes see MI §I.1.5; I.5.18; I.5.19; II.4.8.

[69] 'And then soon after Matthew's martyrdom the king's residence burnt down with all his riches, and his son became insane, and he himself became all scabby and burst out in sores from head to foot. And he turned his sword upwards, and then stabbed himself'.

[70] 'Then he suddenly dropped to the ground and his eyes popped out, and he lived for two more days beyond that, to the horror of the other people, and on the third day he died a miserable death'.

does not adequately provide for the 'multitudinem'. Gregory appears in three visions attempting to remedy the situation, but failing. On the third occasion he kicks the man in the head ('pede suo percussit in caput', §28), causing his death a few days later.

The third paradigm presents vengeance occurring during a saint's earthly life. This is a paradigm not often found in Anglo-Saxon lives (of either native or non-native saints), although it is common in Irish hagiography. Where type-3 vengeance episodes are presented in Anglo-Saxon texts the saint is often a passive player in the vengeance episode. The *Vita S. Wihtburh virginis* (BHL 8979), probably by Goscelin of Saint-Bertin, details the death of a reeve following his attempt to steal the saint's magical hind:

> Villicus uero non tam bestiis quam Dei domesticis gratuito noxius, sue maliuolentie sine dilatione penas soluit. Nam eadem hora dum emissario equo feras insectatur fugaces, equus in obstantem sepem urgentibus calcaribus incurrit, sepisque acuta sude transfixus ilia, dum resiliendo tergiuersatur, sessor superbus supino capite excutitur, fractaque ceruice exanimatur.[71]

This is not a common model of vengeance, however, and is not particularly representative of the wider trends in Anglo-Saxon hagiography.[72] What is evident from much of the Anglo-Saxon material is that vengeance as a motif is in most cases explicitly related to death. The death of a saint can be a cause for vengeance, but vengeance can also be a cause of death, in the case of sinners and saints' enemies. That the typical end point of vengeance in *passiones* and *vitae* is the death of a sinner, and a particularly unpleasant, *yfel* or *earmlic* death at that, highlights their especial iniquity when juxtaposed with the relaxed and

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[71] *Vita S. Wihtburh*, §4, *Female Saints*, ed. Love, pp. 60–1: 'The reeve, however, pointlessly doing more harm to the servants of God than he did to the animals, paid the price for his evil intent without delay. For in the very same hour that he was chasing the fleeing animals on his stallion, as he was spurring it on, the horse ran into a fence which blocked the way, and its belly was pierced by the sharp stake of the fence, and as it leapt away and fell on its back, the proud rider was thrown off and fell back on his head and died of a broken neck.'

[72] Alongside these general vengeance types, which are broadly based on chronology, M. Johnson, '"Vengeance is Mine": Saintly Retribution in Medieval Ireland', *Vengeance in the Middle Ages: Emotion, Religion and Feud*, ed. S. A. Throop and P. R. Hyams (Farnham and Burlington, 2010), pp. 5–50, outlines particular Irish vengeance forms: (i) cursing; (ii) negative or maledictory prophecy, which differs from outright cursing on the basis of time of onset; (iii) prayer vengeance; (iv) 'passive retaliatory judgement'. See also D. F. Johnson, 'Divine Justice in Gregory the Great's *Dialogues*', *Early Medieval Studies in Memory of Patrick Wormald*, ed. S. Baxter, C. E. Karkov, J. L. Nelson and D. Pelteret (Farnham and Burlington, 2009), pp. 115–28. I plan to address further the issue of vengeance in hagiography in a forthcoming article.

triumphant nature of saintly death. This can be seen in *ÆLS* (Julian and Basilissa), after Julian's execution: 'Þa fleah Martianus, fornean adyd, and he wearð fornumen æfter feawum dagum swa þæt wurmas crupon cuce of his lice, and se arleasa gewat mid wite to helle. Þæra halgan lic þurh geleaffulle menn wurdon gebyrigde sona mid blisse binnan Godes cyrcan' (306–11).[73] Upchurch argues that Ælfric seems to have used a shortened version of the Latin *Passio Sanctorum Martyrum Iuliani et Basilissae* (*BHL* 4532), similar but not identical to that found in two copies of the 'Cotton-Corpus Legendary', collated with a version of *BHL* 4529, which is the commonest form of the legend.[74] In the Latin text printed by Upchurch, the Cotton Nero version of the *passio* is collated with two other versions of *BHL* 4523.[75] These Latin texts do not include the precise detail of Martianus departing to hell found in Ælfric's version, only mentioning his death.[76] Ælfric's immediate source potentially contained this extra detail, or it may be an embellishment made by Ælfric to stress to his audience that hell is the only destination for such a sinner; there is no possibility for redemption. Ælfric's focus on post-mortem fate as well as on the form of death itself again seems intended to encourage his audience to address their own moral conduct; otherwise an eternal spiritual death as well as a physical one awaits. Likewise, the last words of Julian in *ÆLS* comprise a direct address to Martianus, rather than a prayer to God as in the Latin. Ælfric includes Julian's prediction of the very torments that will later

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[73] *Passio S. Iuliani et Sponse eius Basilisse*, §62–3, *Ælfric's Lives of the Virgin Spouses: With Modern English Parallel-Text Translations*, ed. R. K. Upchurch (Exeter, 2007), pp. 70–1: 'Then Martianus fled, nearly killed, and he was destroyed after a few days so that worms crawled alive out of his body, and the wicked one departed with torture to hell. The bodies of the saints were at once buried with rejoicing by believing men inside God's church'.

[74] London, BL, Cotton Nero E.i, pt i (s. xi3/4) and CCCC 9 (s. xi2/4/ximed); *Virgin Spouses*, ed. Upchurch, p. 29.

[75] Ibid. pp. 110–11.

[76] Ibid. pp. 170–1, lines 915–16: 'Ipse autem impiissimus semiuiuus euasit; qui non post multos dies uermibus ebulliens exspirauit' ('But the utterly impious one himself escaped more dead than alive; he died a few days later boiling with maggots').

afflict Martianus, reinforcing the saint's status as one of God's elect and signifying the denial of *mildsung* (mercy) to Martianus.[77]

In martyrdom accounts, therefore, vengeance miracles function to inscribe a persecutor's spiritual status on their body in an explicit connection between sin and bodily disintegration. A preponderance of vengeance miracles depict physical calamity, with persecutors becoming covered in sores and scabs, suffering from bodily atrophy, contracting leprosy and being filled with poison, with each affliction presented as occurring because of the extremity of sinfulness, which damns the soul. In the *ÆLS* example noted above, a deliberate parallel is drawn between the cumulative disintegration of Martianus's body and the incorruptibility of the saints' bodies even after death. The integrity of the saintly body is juxtaposed with the destruction of Martianus's body, which undergoes total annihilation. Interestingly, in hell the body will be reintegrated ('geedniwod', 279) to enable its eternal torture from the 'ece fyr' and the 'undeadlic wyrm' (278).

A similar idea can be seen in Aldhelm's *Dv* entry for Victoria, in which the sin of the saint's killer is inscribed on his body: 'Nec tamen cruentus carnifex victoriam de Victoria nanctus est, sed mancus manu arida et elefantina cutis callositate purulentus ac vermibus scaturiens putidum exalavit spiritum'.[78] Here, the very hand that kills the saint is the one that withers, and, in a reversal of the common motif of a sweet odour being released upon a saint's death, here the persecutor's breath is stinking; his sinfulness is shown as operating from the inside out as well as the outside in (see below on the significance of sweet odours at death, p. 188).[79] Could the stinking breath of the 'carnifex'

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[77] Although Julian actively predicts vengeance against Martianus, in terms of its enactment, it is God who is presented as the active player.

[78] Ehwald, p. 309, lines 22–4; *Prose Works*, p. 121: 'Nor did her bloody butcher achieve any 'victory' from Victoria, but rather, maimed with a withered hand, festering with an elephantine roughness of skin and crawling with worms, he breathed out his last stinking breath'. On the Anglo-Saxon association with worms and maggots with the soul's fate, see Thompson, *Dying and Death*, pp. 132–43.

[79] Later Anglo-Saxon legal practices of mutilating criminals rather than killing them are perhaps worth noting here, whereby the body served as a permanent indicator of crime, but also allowed for the possibility of

represent his soul (coming from the ancient idea that the soul is released through the mouth)? Ælfric emphatically rejects the idea of equating the soul with breath in his assertion that 'Nis seo orþung þe we ut blawaþ and in ateoð oþþe ure sawul ac is seo lyft þe ealle lichamlice þing on lybbað', but it is possible that Aldhelm held that breath was in some way linked to the idea of the soul.[80] The depiction of the body as indicative of the state of a person's soul is thus enacted in hagiography both positively (for saints) and negatively (for their persecutors or for sinners in general) in discourses of disintegration and reintegration.[81] The nature of burial or disposal of a body further reinforces this distinction. It is a conventional hagiographic topos to include details of a martyr's burial place, which typically later becomes the locus of miracles. In many of the accounts discussed here, persecutors are not buried and, often, their bodies are represented as being destroyed, as in *Mart.* (26 Ananias and Petrus), where the pagan reeve is devoured by sea beasts 'þæt his ne com þy furðor an ban to eorðan'.[82] For both martyrs and their persecutors, then, death functions as a transformative act that either signals the body as the

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salvation; see K. O'Brien O'Keeffe, 'Body and Law in Late Anglo-Saxon England', *ASE* 27 (1998), 209–32 at 217. She suggests that, by the time of Æthelred's 1008 law code, an express concern over use of the death penalty for minor offences led to a consequent emphasis on visible bodily punishment as a reminder of transgression and a call to salvation for criminals. Thompson, *Dying and Death*, p. 82, questions whether the shift in attitudes to punishment as detailed in these Wulfstanian laws represent a wider cultural shift or 'one particularly conscientious churchman's meditation on the operation of a Christian legal system'.

[80] *ÆLS* (Christmas), lines 214–16: 'it is not our breath [*spiritus*] or our soul that we blow out and draw in, but air, in which all bodily things live'. On earlier associations of the soul with a person's final breath see M. S. Mirto, *Death in the Greek World: From Homer to the Classical Age*, trans. A. M. Osborne (Norman, 2012), p. 10. See Chapter VI below.

[81] Similar themes can also be seen in non-hagiographic literature, such as the Old English *Judith*, ed. and trans., R. D. Fulk, *The Beowulf Manuscript* (Cambridge, MA and London, 2010), pp. 306–7, where it is said of Holofernes *gast*, 'Ne ðearf he hopian no, / þystrum forðylmed,   þæt he ðonan mote / of ðam wyrm-sele, ac ðær wunian sceal / awa to aldre   butan ende forð / in ðam heolstran ham,   hyht-wynna leas' (117b–121) ('Hemmed in by shadows, he need not hope that he will be allowed to escape that snake-hall, but he shall remain there ever and a day, time without end, in that dim realm, devoid of the comfort of hope'). The presentation of the soul as inhabiting a dark and dreary place provides a point of contrast with the description of Judith as 'beorhtan idese' (339). The reference to hell as a 'wyrm-sele' suggests Holofernes' bodily disintegration.

[82] 'so that not a single bone of his body reached dry land'. In the Roman period, death at sea was feared partly because expected funerary and burial rites could not be enacted on the body; see J. Huskinson, 'Bad Deaths, Better Memories', *Memory and Mourning: Studies on Roman Death*, ed. V. M. Hope and J. Huskinson (Oxford and Oakville, 2011), pp. 113–25.

site of Christian power or condemns it to physical extinction and a spiritual eternity of torments to be continuously inscribed on that very body.

Where vengeance miracles occur in accounts of native martyrs, a motif commonly used is that of an adversary's eyes falling out.[83] This particular motif is found in both the type-1 and type-2 vengeance paradigms elucidated above. Eye-loss vengeance enacted on Cwoenthryth occurs after the death of Kenelm in the *Vita et miracula*, following her attempt to recite Psalm 108 backwards to prevent the discovery of her brother's body:

> Cum enim a fine ascendendo hunc uersum ore uolueret uenefico: 'hoc opus eorum qui detrahunt mihi apud Dominum et qui locuntur mala aduersus animam meam', continuo sibi utrique oculi suis sedibus extirpati decidere super ipsam quam legebat paginam.[84]

She subsequently dies and is unable to be buried 'nec in ecclesia nec in atrio nec in campo sepultam posse teneri' ('in either the church or the fore-court nor in the cemetery'). She is eventually buried 'in quodam profundo semoto proici' ('in some remote gully').[85] The same fate of eye-loss befalls a proud lady who questions the benefit of Kenelm's feast day: '"Pro Kenelmo", inquit, "nescio quo fructum diei perderemus." Vix elocuta erat et utrique oculi supra mensam cecidere excussi, ut supra indigne martyris sorori'.[86]

Eye-loss vengeance is not found solely in martyrdom accounts; it also occurs in the *Miracula Sancte Ætheldrethe virginis* (BHL 2638), another potential work by Goscelin, for

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[83] There are examples of madness, transfixion and being thrown from a horse; see MI §I.*5.18–19*.

[84] *Vita et miracula*, §16, p. 72: 'For, working upwards from the bottom, as this verse rolled off her venomous lips: "This is the work of them who detract me before the Lord: and who speaks evil against my soul", straightaway both her eyes, rooted out from their sockets, dropped upon the very page she was reading'.

[85] Ibid. See Love's note 2 discussing Bede's *HE* reference to a similar miracle after Alban's death as 'the best-known instance of this punishment'; the miracle is also recounted in *ÆLS* (Alban). No other sources are suggested for this motif. The Psalm Cwoenthryth attempts to recite begins 'Pro Victoria David Canticum / Deus laudabilis mihi ne taceas quia os impii et os dolosi contra me apertum est'. The psalm contains a cursing section from verses 5 to 9. As Love notes, p. 71, note 5, Cwoenthryth is prevented from reaching this section. J. D. Niles, 'The Problem of the Ending of the Wife's "Lament"', *Speculum* 78 (2003), 1107–50 at 1120 suggests that 'it was Psalm 108 that was most likely to be incorporated into the ecclesiastical maledictions of the early Middle Ages'. Interestingly, no reference to the fate of Æscberht is given, who drops out of the story entirely after his murder of Kenelm.

[86] *Vita et miracula*, §20, p. 76: ' "Just because of Kenelm", she said, "I don't know why we should lose a day's profit." Scarcely had she spoken when both her eyes shot out onto the table, as had happened above to the unworthy sister of the martyr'.

instance. Here, a thief attempting to break into Æthelthryth's tomb is punished: 'Quo facto nulla celestis ultionis fuit dilatio, sed mox cum intolerabili dolore utroque priuatus lumine miserabiliter uitale flamen exhalauit, sicque a temporali uita sacrilegus exiens, in perpetue portas mortis infelici et luctuoso transitu precipitanter intrauit'.[87] Death is the end-point of vengeance for this paradigm as well, suggesting that the dishonouring of a saint is an irredeemable crime.

There may have been a particular belief in the notion of the eyes as the windows to the soul in Anglo-Saxon England, an idea that may find expression in what Lapidge and Winterbottom call a 'mysterious' phrase in B.'s life of Dunstan.[88] After Dunstan admonishes Æthelgifu and her daughter Ælfgifu, who are both presented by B. as consorts of King Eadwig, Æthelgifu 'inanes orbes oculorum contra uenerandum abbatem feruenti furore retorsit'.[89] Lapidge and Winterbottom note that the phrase 'inanes orbes' is not found in an earlier author, but suggest that it may refer to Æthelgifu's plan to blind Dunstan, which B. mentions in §23.1.[90] I would tentatively suggest that B. may be commenting on Æthelgifu's soul, with the 'empty orbs' reflecting its spiritually dubious state, and alluding to spiritual blindness.

There does not seem to be a comparable interest in this extreme form of blindness in the lives of saints from continental traditions, and, to my knowledge, the only other example of this motif from Anglo-Saxon England is in the *Mart.* entry (181 Audomarus)

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[87] *Miracula S. Ætheldrethe*, §2, *Female Saints*, ed. Love, pp. 110–11: 'Once that was done heavenly vengeance did not delay, but soon with unbearable pain deprived of both eyes the desecrator wretchedly breathed his last living breath, and departed from his earthly life, and by an unhappy and lamentable passage entered headlong the gates of everlasting death'.

[88] On the notion of eyes as windows to the soul, see *ÆCHom* I,38 (Andrew), lines 142–3.

[89] *Vita S. Dunstani*, §22.1, *St Dunstan*, ed. Winterbottom and Lapidge, p. 69: 'directed the empty orbs of her eyes in blazing fury against the reverend abbot'. See the editors' note 201.

[90] Ibid. p. 73.

mentioned above.[91] The *Cdv* entry on Narcissus features a man who goes blind after swearing a false oath, but includes no mention of eyes specifically falling out:

> Tertius ast testis profert e pectore questus
> Et iuramenti nodosis vincla catenis
> Nititur imprudens verbis constringere falsis:
> 'Sic mea non tenebris nigrescant lumina furvis
> Glaucoma nec penitus lippos suffundat ocellos,
> Assertor verax si fingam famina falsa!'
>
> (935–940)
>
> […] Tertius orbatur geminis sub fronte fenestris,
> Limpida dum tenebris clauduntur lumina tetris
>
> (958–959)[92]

Although the Bible contains many references to blindness as a result of vengeance, no examples of eyes falling out as a sign of divine retribution are found.[93] (Medically, this is also unusual given that it seemingly does not reflect any physiological ailment or condition.) If the body is a metaphor for the church, do vengeance miracles of sensory deprivation (relating to Christians, not pagans) signal expulsion from the Christian community as in the case of Cwoenthryth? The inability to bury her in consecrated ground reinforces this. Blindness as vengeance thus often takes a specific and extreme form in insular lives, and is

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[91] Here the vengeance miracle affects a layperson rather than a saint's persecutor. See also Cubitt, 'Sites and Sanctity', 71.

[92] Ehwald, pp. 393–4; *Poetic Works*, pp. 123–4: 'Then the third man brought forth an accusation from his breast and unwisely he strove to bind together with lying words the links of his oath in intricate elaborations: "May cataracts thus not darken my sight with gloomy shadows nor inwardly fill my half-blinded eyes, unless I, a truthful witness, speak false utterances" […] The third man was deprived of the double windows below his forehead when his clear eyes were closed by dark shadows'. The cause of this blindness is noted as *ultio* (vengeance).

[93] In *ÆLS* (Julian and Basilissa), a persecutor's eye rolls out ('wand ut', 143) when a rod he is using to beat Julian hits him in the face; Julian heals the man when the pagan gods prove ineffective. As a consequence of his healing the man believes in God and is beheaded by Martianus. J. Hawkins, 'Seeing the Light? Blindness and Sanctity in Later Medieval England', *Saints and Sanctity*, ed. P. Clarke and T. Claydon, SCH 47 (Woodbridge, 2011), pp. 148–58 at 150, notes that, as well as blindness functioning as a physical manifestation of God's wrath, it could serve as a shield against temptation, particularly in the later Middle Ages. Hawkins goes on to note that self-inflicted blindness has a strong association with faith and righteousness, p. 156. Furthermore, in the Audomarus example, the miracle seems to occur through the agency of the saint, because the miracle happens outside 'Audomares ciricean'. This type of miracle seems to have a wider resonance; in the Middle English romance *Sir Launfal*, Guinevere's eyes fall out after swearing falsely; 'Sir Launfal', *The Middle English Breton Lays*, ed. A. Laskaya and E. Salisbury (Kalamazoo, 1995), lines 1006–08, http://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/laskaya-and-salisbury-middle-english-breton-lays-sir-launfal [accessed 25 October 2013]. Note also references to vengeance miracles involving eyes in later Middle English romances, such as 'The Siege of Milan', where a 'Sarasene' is hit in the eyes with fire from a crucifix which he had previously thrown on a bonfire: 'A fire than fro the crosse gane frusche / And in the Sarasene eghne it gaffe a dosche'; see 'The Siege of Milan', *Three Middle English Charlemagne Romances*, ed. A. Lupack, TEAMS (Kalamazoo, 1990), pp. 105–56 at 123, lines 469–70.

a topos that can be traced across a range of texts from the early to the post-Conquest periods. These insular eye-loss miracles perhaps reflect contemporary judicial punishments, whereby a sin or wrongdoing was codified on the body as an explicit signal to the wider community, and may also represent exclusion from the Christian community, as demonstrated in the examples above.

Summary

The lives of native Anglo-Saxon saints do not always feature the same motival trends found in those of non-native saints, especially in relation to martyrs. Differences between native and non-native lives include explicit references to the type of martyrdom, the lack of unusual death-motifs and particular forms of vengeance miracles for native saints. Native hagiography typically seems to adopt only a small number of representative motifs for portraying both the martyrdoms and non-violent deaths of native saints, reflecting the more narrow modes of death in a converted nation. For martyrdom accounts of native saints, typically only a small number of death-motifs are used, namely beheading, beating or death in battle; for native confessors a non-specific motif is most common. For accounts of non-violent death, sanitized death-scenes, in which the presumed realities of death from illness, for example, are subsumed into a rhetoric of saintly triumph (see above, p. 42), are also found in native saints' lives. In accounts of severe illness or disease (Æthelthryth, Guthlac), hagiographers only infrequently represent the distressing elements that one would expect to find in realistic accounts of such physical compromise. Hagiography, as a general rule, does not aim to depict reality for its own sake, rather the symbolic potential of saints' lives and deaths provides the narrative focus. Even in depictions of illness, one could theoretically expect saints to be shown vomiting, sweating, or screaming, for instance, to demonstrate their suffering. Despite the literary potential of such scenes, these

presumed realities of illness are never shown. This desire to present an idealized aesthetic of saintly death, and the loose adherence to presumed reality, support an argument for the subordination of the body to the soul. The noteworthy point about saints' deaths is that they demonstrate direct ascent to heaven, and the lack of emphasis on the body in many death-scenes discussed here may serve to highlight the saint's spiritual aspect. This portrayal of the effect of dying on the body takes particular forms in relation to the gender of the saint, and it is to this area that I shall turn in the next chapter.

CHAPTER III
DEATH AND GENDERED BODIES

The previous chapters provide a broad picture of what is representative of non-native and native saints' death-scenes in Anglo-Saxon hagiography, and investigate how hagiographers reinforce or challenge stereotypes in respect of the death-motifs of saints. This chapter assesses whether or not particular constellations of death-scene motifs are in any way related to portrayals of the gendered bodies of saints. Gendered death-motifs are found across literatures. Catherine Edwards notes general differences in portrayals of Roman female death compared with male death and argues that 'where the deaths of females are concerned, the process of dying is important but there is often a notable focus on the corpse, as a beautiful object on display'.[1] Given such historical precedents for gendered representations of death, it seems worth investigating whether similar ideas are found in hagiography.

Much scholarship has been undertaken on various aspects of gender in Anglo-Saxon texts, debating such issues as the construction of gender identities, the relationship between biological sex and gender, female agency, and the enclosure of women.[2] Owing to

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[1] Edwards, *Ancient Rome*, p. 180. Other associations between death and gender are found in symbolic links drawn between Death and maidenhood across cultures and time periods. Although it is not within the scope of this study to discuss historical traditions of eroticizing death by linking its personified characterization in art and literature with the figure of 'the maiden', such traditions should be borne in mind. See D. Brewer, *Symbolic Stories: Traditional Narratives of the Family Drama in English Literature* (Cambridge, 1980), for parallels between sex and death in literature based on folklore, for example. The motif of the bride of Christ in some ways demonstrates this link, with death presented as enabling the consummation of a (spiritual) union with Christ. Another facet to the discussion explores the gendering of personified Death. For an insightful study on Death's gendered personification in western art and literature, see Guthke, *Gender of Death*. Guthke notes how, in English and German cultures, 'Death more often than not appears as a man', p. 7. Where Death is personified in Anglo-Saxon literature, male characteristics are typically applied; Death in *The Phoenix*, for instance, is a 'wiga wælgifre' (483). Although it has been assumed that grammatical gender determines such depictions, Guthke argues that Death can be gendered in languages featuring no grammatical gender and, even where gender does apply, the personification of Death does not always follow defined rules. For an analysis of iconographic portrayals of Death in Anglo-Saxon manuscripts (e.g. the Leofric Missal), see J. Bradley, 'The Changing Face of Death: The Iconography of the Personification of Death in the Early Middle Ages', *On Old Age: Approaching Death in Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, ed. C. Krötzl and K. Mustakallio (Turnhout, 2011), pp. 57–87 at 78.

[2] See Horner, *Discourse*; J. M. Bennett, *History Matters: Patriarchy and the Challenge of Feminism* (Philadelphia, 2006); C. A. Lees and G. R. Overing, *Double Agents: Women and Clerical Culture in Anglo-Saxon England*

constraints of space, this chapter cannot provide an exhaustive study of the concept of

'gender' in Anglo-Saxon hagiography; instead what I wish to do is focus on portrayals of

gender as they relate specifically to the death-scenes of saints to elucidate how different

bodies and their treatment at the moment of death can be interpreted as serving didactic

aims and informing exemplary behaviour.[3] Shari Horner's study of the enclosure of women

in Old English literature suggests that religious discourses are an important constituent of

gender identity in the Anglo-Saxon period, and that the interaction of these discourses in

text and in culture serve to codify particular gender assumptions.[4] Indeed, Horner argues

that the 'saint's body emblematizes Christian reading practices, by functioning as a text

containing both literal and figurative meaning'.[5] This is an idea expounded by Clare Lees

and Gillian Overing who suggest that 'concepts of Christian subjectivity are related

historically and dialectically to concepts of gender because components of self, psyche, and

body are constructed by Christian didactic literature'.[6] Expressions of gender in text can

thus be read both literally and allegorically, with each type of reading demonstrating

something different to the reader. This raises questions of how the gendered body of a

saint as a culturally constructed emblem can be manipulated to serve various didactic

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(Philadelphia, 2001); S. Klein, 'Gender', *A Handbook of Anglo-Saxon Studies*, ed. J. Stodnick and R. R. Trilling (Malden, MA and Oxford, 2012), pp. 39–54. Abrams has suggested that feminist criticism often seeks to redress writings by men that present women in one of two antithetic ways based on their latent sexual desires and fears. On the one hand, there is a tradition of presenting women in an idealized manner as an embodiment of male desire, and, on the other hand, there is a discernible trend of presenting them as demonic, evil or harm-causing. This in part recalls Christian notions of viewing women along the lines of a Mary–Eve dichotomy; see *Glossary*, s.v. 'Feminist Criticism'. Eve and Mary are held in opposition in *BHom* 1 *Annunciatio S. Mariæ*, for example. A. J. Frantzen, *The Literature of Penance in Anglo-Saxon England* (New Brunswick, 1983), p. 11*,* suggests that 'certain social and sexual stereotypes were perpetuated by the church because they suited the church's own prejudices'.

[3] In *The Old English Lives of St Margaret*, ed. Mary Clayton and Hugh Magennis, CSASE 9 (Cambridge, 1994), p. 6, it is suggested that beheading is the most common death described for female virgin martyrs. N. L. Conner, 'Body and Soul: Sexuality and Sanctity in the English Lives of Women Saints, 800–1500' (unpubl. PhD dissertation, Brown Univ., 1993), p. 11, notes that Agatha dies 'peacefully' after undergoing manifold tortures; E. A. Gulley 'Virginity, Chastity, and Modes of Female Piety: Ælfric's Virgin Martyr Legends and His Latin Sources' (unpubl. PhD dissertation, Univ. of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1997), p. 88, notes that Agnes's death-motif of stabbing in the throat was 'a common Roman execution'.

[4] Horner, *Discourse*, p. 7.

[5] Ibid. p. 103.

[6] C. A. Lees and G. R. Overing, 'Before History, Before Difference: Bodies, Metaphor, and the Church in Anglo-Saxon England', *Yale Journal of Criticism* 11 (1998), 315–34 at 317.

purposes. In light of this, I wish to relate the idea of literal and allegorical readings of gender in hagiography particularly to the death-scenes of saints to investigate the kinds of interpretations that these events might have suggested to an Anglo-Saxon reader. The death-scene may therefore be mined in the context of gender-representation for expressions of spiritual ideologies. Ideas of gender in hagiography are frequently intertwined with ideas of bodies, and, as such, this chapter will engage with body theory as well as gender theory. Bodies in hagiography can be read in a variety of ways as meaning is encoded both on them and by them, and, in many instances, the body is treated and interpreted differently based on the gender of the subject.[7]

Although it is clear from evidence such as the dedications of Aldhelm's *Dv* and *Cdv* that females were among the audiences of hagiographic texts, our knowledge of female saints is predicated almost entirely through men, whereby any performances of gender are, for the most part, mediated through the male gaze and explicated by male hagiographers to suit a particular authorial agenda. As Conner notes, it cannot be assumed that male hagiographers 'attempted or even desired to report on the reality of medieval women's "condition," or even that medieval women had a unitary "condition" to be reported', and thus, male hagiographers construct female bodies in ways that suit a particular didactic aim, which must be taken into account in an assessment of whether death-scenes are gendered.[8] Furthermore, it is the especial spiritual purity of a saint that encodes meaning onto the body. It therefore seems worth considering how saintly power is manifested by means of the gendered body during processes of dying, death and being dead. The physical body is an obvious site of enactment insofar as moral status can be inscribed in a way that it is outwardly manifested to an audience, and, for male and female saints, an exemplary

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[7] The bodies of saints' persecutors can be taken into account here, inasmuch as the morally dubious spiritual status of these characters is reflected in the depictions of their disintegrative bodies; see Chapter II.

[8] Conner, 'Sexuality and Sanctity', p. 4. In fact, one must question whether hagiographers attempt to report on the historical reality of any social 'condition'.

physical death emphasizes an exemplary spiritual status. Marianne Chenard explores

embodied constructions of sanctity in Anglo-Saxon hagiography, but does not focus on the

death-scenes of these saints or how they contribute to various constructions of sanctity.[9]

Chenard notes that practices of sanctity are inscribed on the body in a number of ways, but

in many instances these practices are highly notable at the moment of death and any

relationships between death-motifs and gendered bodies may provide insights into what, if

anything, is 'normal' or standard practice in Anglo-Saxon texts.[10]

Gendered Bodies and Saintly Death

Chris Shilling argues that the demise of religious frameworks, which 'constructed and

sustained existential and ontological certainties residing *outside* the individual', has led to an

idea of the body having 'symbolic value' as a signifier of individuality in modernity.[11] By

this understanding, the body in what Shilling calls 'high modernity' has increasing capital as

an object through which a person's sense of self is conceptualized, which stands in some

contrast to early Christian attitudes that conceptualized individual bodies as part of a

collective Christian identity. In terms of gender, attitudes towards bodies have inevitably

been shaped by assumptions that particular kinds of bodies demonstrate particular

capabilities, and this in many ways continues to affect ideas of 'symbolic value'. Shilling

argues that, historically, gender differences between males and females have been

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[9] M. A. M. Chenard, 'Narratives of the Saintly Body in Anglo-Saxon England' (unpubl. PhD dissertation, Univ. of Notre Dame, 2003). Chenard's thesis demonstrates how bodies are variously depicted to accentuate sanctity. Conner's 'Sexuality and Sanctity' thesis concentrates on female saints in a discussion of saintly sexuality. Harney, 'Sexualized and Gendered Tortures', discusses in great detail the narratives of four virgin martyrs throughout the medieval period, addressing the issue of sexualized tortures and discussing how the 'overt sexual implications' (p. 7) in these texts can be charted through the narrative history of the stories. The four saints chosen by Harney for her study, although interesting examples of female sanctity, are chosen precisely because they are unusual and deal with specific elements of pagan lust, attempted rape and sex-related tortures. The present thesis aims to link the codification of sanctity specifically to death-scenes.

[10] Although Anglo-Saxon hagiography shares a common literary genre, the cultural milieux from which distinct texts emerged differed. Thus, Aldhelm's cultural frame of reference is very different from Ælfric's, and motival differences as well as similarities should be borne in mind.

[11] Shilling, *Body and Social Theory*, p. 2.

emphasized over similarities and that 'average' differences have been taken as 'absolute'. In general terms, this causes a disjunction whereby particular social categories are accentuated, which in turn can affect physical capabilities and perpetuate codified attitudes by limiting a gender group's ability to successfully achieve the same capabilities of other groups.[12] Constructions of gender are undeniably contingent upon sociocultural context, and within and across the Anglo-Saxon period attitudes to what gender signified and how it was understood are variable. Each of the contextually specific periods in which saints venerated in Anglo-Saxon England originally flourished may have different attitudes towards the body, towards gender, and towards death and dying within wider Christian frameworks. As such, processes of acculturation and hagiographic 'fashions' as well as more societally embedded notions of gender and body must be considered.[13] This chapter considers these constructions of gender in light of the death-scenes of saints, where often the writing of the saintly body is manipulated in some way to produce a desired aesthetic of sanctity. The body is fundamental to processes that enable a saint to demonstrate sanctity, whether those processes be the abnegation of sin, the inefficacy of torture, or the self-denial of bodily comforts. The body is also a major signifier of post-mortem sanctity, as discussed in Chapter VI. An awareness of the physical body's capacity for change over time contributes to conceptions of gender, as in the cases of women and men who entered religious houses after having married or produced children. In such cases, the gender performativity of the body is substantially modified and 'the physical actuality of the body is negotiated, manipulated, and interpreted in an evolving interaction with other bodies, other lives, other boundaries for categorizing, limiting, or empowering the individual'.[14] Interpretations of

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[12] Ibid. pp. 94–6.
[13] Gretsch, *Cult of Saints*, pp. 1–20.
[14] S. Crawford, 'Overview: The Body and Life Course', *The Oxford Handbook of Anglo-Saxon Archaeology*, ed. H. Hamerow *et al.* (Oxford, 2011), pp. 625–40 at 626–7.

specifically saintly bodies on the basis of 'body theory' are complicated by the imperatives of Anglo-Saxon authors to conform to an 'established model' of sanctity.[15]

I shall now turn to an examination of death-motifs in light of both the gendered bodies of saints and the context of any gender-related bodily performativity. The following tables survey the gender breakdown for each literary death-motif, and, in what follows, I shall explore how various death-motifs communicate (and perpetuate) literary representations of sanctity, to assess how far the death-scenes of gendered bodies are emblematic of a particular type of saint. [16]

Table 3.1

Female Martyrdom			
Literary motif	**Inclusion of torture other than means of death**	**Only means of death mentioned**	**Total occurrences of motif**
Unspecified martyrdom	14	12	**26**
Beheading	7	0	**7**
Stabbing / death by sword	5	6	**11**
Giving up ghost etc.	7	2	**9**
Burning	3	1	**4**
Stoning	0	1	**1**

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[15] Ridyard, *Royal Saints*, p. 11.
[16] The MI notes gender inconsistencies in death-motifs within single accounts.

Table 3.2

Male Martyrdom			
Literary motif	**Inclusion of torture other than means of death**	**Only means of death mentioned**	**Total occurrences of motif**
Unspecified martyrdom	10	38	**48**
Beheading	18	30	**48**
Stabbing / death by sword	7	14	**21**
Giving up ghost etc.	10	7	**17**
Drowning	1	6	**7**
Crucifixion	1	8	**9**
Beating	3	4	**7**
Burning	1	1	**2**
Stoning	0	3	**3**
Torturing to death	3	0	**3**
Strangling/ breaking neck	2	1	**3**
Dying in battle	0	2	**2**
Burying alive	0	1	**1**
Death involving animals	0	2	**2**
Flaying	0	1	**1**
Death not mentioned	1	0	**1**

A number of enquiries can be instigated based on the above data. It is evident that gender-based differences in death-motif are rather pronounced for martyrs, whereas each of the non-violent death-motifs applies to male and female saints (see Table 3.4). As Rauer has suggested, female martyrdom is frequently linked to gender, and this motival connection is not often apparent in male martyrdoms.[17] The bodies of female martyrs are attacked and compromised in a manner relating to their gender, whether through being pursued by a pagan for sex or marriage or through tortures designed to expose or compromise the body. Although the bodies of male and female martyrs may become a spectacle, it is typically only in female *passiones* that such a spectacle is linked to a gendered body.[18] That said, there are particular death-motifs that are never used to portray female martyrdom, whereas male martyrdoms can be described using the full range of available motifs. Given that many of these male-exclusive motifs tend to be particularly lurid, this seems to warrant further attention and is discussed below. The death-scenes of confessors typically seem to be linked less explicitly to gender, and there is no gender exclusivity as is seen with martyrial death-motifs. The death-scenes of confessors are important indicators of the culmination of a long journey to sanctity. Male and female confessors must practice the same virtues to achieve sanctity, and, although varying emphases are placed on gender in certain of these lives, it arguably becomes less of a focus at the moment of death than the ascent of the

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[17] C. Rauer, 'Female Hagiography in the *Old English Martyrology*', *Writing Women Saints in Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. Paul E. Szarmach (Toronto, 2013), pp. 13–29 at 17.

[18] Rauer also notes the variant terminologies applied to male and female martyrs; ibid. pp. 18–20. There are a number of female saints who deliberately compromise their own bodies as a dimension of their devotion to Christ, including SS Triduana, Wilgefortis (Uncumber), Brigit and Ffraid; see J. Cartwright, 'Dead Virgins: Feminine Sanctity in Medieval Wales', *MÆ* 71(2002), 1–28 at 14. (I am unaware of male saints acting in the same way when faced with the prospect of marriage.) In these cases of self-disfigurement, female saints, either through God's response to their prayers or through their own agency, attack the integrity of their physical body to attenuate male desire. These traditions, especially those relating to self-blinding (autoenucleation), are probably based on the exemplar of St Lucy, although this motif is not found in Anglo-Saxon traditions of the saint. In modern culture, autoenucleation is typically understood as an extreme form of self-harm, often resulting from psychosis. Case studies indicate that patients – often male – suffering from hallucinations or delusions with a religious (Christian) aspect may perform this form of self-mutilation as a response to self-perceived sinfulness; see R. S. Shiwach, 'Autoenucleation – a Culture-Specific Phenomenon: a Case Series and Review', *Comprehensive Psychiatry* 39:5 (1998), 318–22.

saintly soul to heaven. How, therefore, should constructions of sanctity by means of different bodies be interpreted, and how do the death-scenes of saints contribute to codifications of holiness? An archetypal saintly death can be viewed across hagiographic subgenres as a performance of power, but it seems fair to say that that performativity of martyrdom is more intently focused on ante-mortem spectacle and the moment of death itself than confessors' deaths, where spectacle is reserved most typically for the post-mortem period. Given that routes to sanctity in *passiones* and *vitae* are undeniably different, it is not unsurprising that different motival elements are found in the different hagiographic forms. The more explicit link between gender and death in martyrdom accounts may allow for the possibility that 'good' deaths were informed by, and informed, the very constructions of that gender.

Virgin Martyrs

It was demonstrated above that the death-scenes of female martyrs especially feature elements that link the moment of physical death to the gender of the saint. In many instances, it is a female martyr's defence of her virginity that instigates her death-scene, and a discernible emphasis on virginity as a virtue to be modelled across a range of texts perhaps illustrates the concerns or anxieties of hagiographers over the conduct of their various audiences. Treatises on virginity and chastity are a mainstay of the writings of the Church Fathers, and the weight of this literary history certainly seems to have informed Aldhelm's ideas.[19] Whereas patristic authors for the most part differentiate between virginity, widowhood and marriage, in Anglo-Saxon England at the time that Aldhelm writes his *opus geminatum* on virginity, the practice of leaving a spouse to enter a religious

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[19] For Aldhelm's familiarity with patristic works on virginity, see Lapidge, *Prose Works*, p. 52. Patristic authors such as Cyprian, Jerome, Ambrose and Augustine are influenced by St Paul's attitudes in his First Letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor. VII).

house seems to have been widespread enough for Lapidge to suggest that it was a 'social institution'.[20] Leaving a marriage explicitly contravened the teaching of St Paul and the tripartite schema of virginity–chastity–marriage employed by Aldhelm must be explained against the contextual backdrop of the early Anglo-Saxon period. Although in both schemata, virginity is maintained as an ideal state, Aldhelm asserts that 'Non, inquam, ita laudandae virginitatis sublimitas quasi praecelsa farus in edito rupis promontorio posita splendescit, ut arta castitatis continentia, qui secundus est gradus, omnino inferius spreta vilescat'.[21] The maintenance of virginity is one example of exemplary behaviour for a saint, male or female, but also for the hagiographers writing these texts, and for the Anglo-Saxon religious to whom they are often addressed.[22] Virginity as a narrative element functions simultaneously as a physical condition and a symbolic signifier of internal spiritual purity, and reinforces the moralizing purposes of the hagiographer. At this juncture, it seems legitimate to think that portrayals of virgin gendered bodies may contribute to Anglo-Saxon ideals of the 'good' death.

A typical hagiographic trope involves the virgin body being compromised in some way, for example through a pagan's desire for sex, or through undesired political marriage. As such, virginity as a point of conflict is typically found in *passiones* of female saints, and it

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[20] *Prose Works*, p. 55.

[21] Ehwald, pp. 237–8, lines 25–6; *Prose Works*, p. 66: 'The sublimity of virginity, like a lofty lighthouse placed on the uprearing promontory of a cliff, does not shine so resplendently that the strict moderation of chastity, which is the second grade, is scorned as completely inferior and grows vile'.

[22] Virginity needs to be considered within an interpretative nexus alongside chastity and continence, especially given that many saints (particularly native ones) are not virgins. For a brief introduction to the historical interpretation of *parthenia* and *virginitas* and the classical understanding of virginity, asceticism, continence and chastity, see K. Cooper, 'The Virgin as Social Icon: Perspectives from Late Antiquity', *Saints, Scholars, and Politicians: Gender as a Tool in Medieval Studies: A Festschrift in Honour of Anneke Mulder-Bakker on the Occasion of her Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, ed. M. van Dijk and R. Nip, Medieval Church Studies 15 (Turnhout, 2005), pp. 9–24 at 10–11. Although a female-orientated approach has traditionally been seen in studies of medieval virginity and sexuality, the imbalance is beginning to be redressed. See S. J. E. Riches and S. Salih, *Gender and Holiness: Men, Women and Saints in Late Medieval Europe* (London and New York, 2002); D. Clark, *Between Medieval Men: Male Friendship and Desire in Early Medieval English Literature* (Oxford, 2009); C. Rhodes, '"What, after all, is a male virgin?" Multiples Performances of Male Virginity in Anglo-Saxon Saints' Lives', *Representing Medieval Genders and Sexualities in Europe: Construction, Transformation, and Subversion, 600–1530*, ed. E. L'Estrange and A. More (Farnham and Burlington, 2011), pp. 15–32.

is the conflict surrounding this bodily and cultural condition that functions as an enabler of sanctity.[23] It is important to note female virgin martyrs' justifications for rejecting pagans reside in their desire to avoid adultery. Female saints already imagine themselves to be married to Christ; therefore, any earthly marriage would be adulterous. Stephen Morrison suggests that 'the conflict of love' in hagiography functions as a symbolic representation of 'spiritual warfare' whereby 'the point of engagement for the audience lies [. . .] not in the love itself but in the conflict between [. . .] God and his servants, and the devil and his followers'.[24] In *passiones* pagans stand representatively for the devil, who is held in contrast to Christ as the virgin's true 'lover'. Consider Agnes' extended speech in *ÆLS* to her would-be suitor, which continues to extol the virtues of her other lover ('Ic hæbbe oðerne lufiend', 27) for thirty-six lines in Skeat's edition. Agnes announces, 'Ne mæg ic him to teonan oðerne geceosan / and hine forlætan þe me mid lufe beweddode'.[25] Likewise, Aldhelm writes in the *Cdv* that Eustochium 'Aspidis ut morsum spernebat basia buccis, / Dulcia sed Christi compressit labra labellis, / Oscula dum supero defixit limpida sponso'.[26] Male saints typically do not experience the same fear of adultery as females given that the *sponsa Christi* motif does not operate in the same way; often it is made known by God to these saints that earthly marriage is acceptable if it remains chaste (see the *Dv* entry for Julian).[27] A virgin can thus use her body in order to acquire capital as a Christian,

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[23] Maintenance of virginity is a point of conflict in some *vitae*, such as that of Æthelthryth, but it is much less common.

[24] S. Morrison, 'The Figure of the *Christus Sponsus* in Old English prose', *Liebe – Ehe – Ehebruch in der Literatur des Mittelalters*, ed. X. von Ertzdorff and M. Wynne, Beiträge zur deutschen Philologie 58 (Giessen, 1984), pp. 5–15 at 10. The figure of the *christus sponsus* announcing Christ as (typically) her bridegroom therefore represents a collective union of the faithful with Christ, through extolling Christian virtue and rejecting sin, rather than expresses an individual saint–Christ relationship.

[25] *ÆLS* (Agnes), lines 40–1: 'I may not to his dishonour choose another and forsake him who has espoused me by his love'.

[26] Ehwald, p. 441, lines 2136–8; *Poetic Works*, p. 150: 'spurned kisses on her cheeks as the bite of an asp, but rather pressed the sweet kisses of Christ to her lips and gave in return pure kisses to her supreme Spouse'.

[27] See, however, the reference in the *Cdv* to Christ's lips lingering upon Chrysanthus's, line 1160 (a reference not present in the *Dv*); *Poetic Works*, p. 128. Cecilia provides the female example of a saint who agrees to marriage and then succeeds in converting her spouse (and brother-in-law) and remaining chaste. The *typical* trend seems to be that male saints convert females, whereas male pagans attack female saints with violence. In

particularly by positioning herself as a bride of Christ.[28] The narrative impetus of these

hagiographies therefore focuses on saints' refusals to repudiate virgin status, which, for

female martyrs, typically leads to death, and, for male martyrs, usually results in a

conversion scene. Indeed, Cassandra Rhodes suggests that male virginity is less explicitly

focused on as a signifier of sanctity. Whereas for many female saints, the protection and

maintenance of virginity provides the narrative impetus, many male saints' lives mention

virginity as a given, but how it is achieved, maintained or performed does not always

inform the primary narrative.[29]

The conflict topos is thus a frequent precursor to eventual martyrdom, and for

female saints the conflict typically arises over the saint's rejection of a pagan's sexual

advances. Male martyrdom more typically comes about after a refusal to worship pagan

idols. Male saints are less likely to be desired for sex or marriage by a pagan female; any

confrontation is usually described as occurring between a saint and their parents, who wish

for their offspring to marry and procreate.[30] In most cases, males eventually marry and then

convert their spouses, in contrast to female saints who refuse even to consider an

adulterous marriage.[31] Occasionally, male martyrs are presented as wholly rejecting

marriage, as with Malchus in the *Dv*: 'maluit mucrone transfossus crudeliter occumbere

quam pudicitiae iura profanando vitam defendere, nequaquam animae periculum

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his homily *In Natale Sanctarum Uirginum*, Ælfric exposits on the idea that male and female Christians may be understood as brides of Christ, writing that such a union should be understood spiritually ('gastlice') rather than corporeally ('lichamlice'), whereby 'Crist is se clæna brydguma and eal seo cristene gelaðung is his bryd', *ÆCHom* II,44 (Virgins), lines 87–8.

[28] D. Elliot, *The Bride of Christ Goes to Hell: Metaphor and Embodiment in the Lives of Pious Women, 200–1500* (Philadelphia, 2012), p. 3, suggests that Tertullian first used the *sponsa Christi* motif 'in an effort to impose some kind of discipline on the independent virgins of Carthage, who perceived themselves as living the genderless angelic life'; see also pp. 14–29. For later patristic interpretations of virginity, see pp. 30–62.

[29] Rhodes, 'Male Virginity', pp. 15–32.

[30] See lives of Julian and Basilissa, and Chrysanthus and Daria.

[31] Some instances in which female Christians marry pagans and then convert their male spouses occur, as with Cecilia, but this is less common.

pertimescens, si integer virginitatis status servaretur'.[32] Typically, this trope is more

commonly found in female lives, as is the depiction of sexualized tortures. Male saints do

not face explicit sexual threats such as rape or sexualized tortures from pagans, reflecting

the rarity of female figures of authority in the pagan societies depicted; furthermore, there

are neither examples of homosexual advances nor descriptions of pagan persecutors

wilfully exposing or attacking male body parts that signify biological sex in the hagiography

under discussion here.

For females, the refusal to submit sexually or matrimonially to a pagan in nearly

every instance leads to a chain of events resulting in a saint's death, often after manifold

tortures. In fact, Rhodes suggests that 'tortuous martyrdom' is the 'apex of the

performance of virginity' for female saints.[33] A large number of female virgin martyrs suffer

ante-mortem tortures, and Lees and Overing suggest that, although male and female saints

'share these experiences' of torture, female bodies 'are exposed [. . .] rather more and rather

longer than male ones'.[34] The bodies of male martyrs are undeniably exposed, but the issue

is complicated by the fact that the exposed female body is often subject to a male gaze, a

narrative element that has no gendered equivalent for male saints. A great deal of

scholarship has focused on the elements of sexualized tortures frequently found in the lives

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[32] Ehwald, p. 270, lines 16–18; *Prose Works*, p. 91: 'he preferred to die transfixed cruelly by the sword rather than to defend his life by profaning the laws of chastity, fearing in no way the danger to his soul if the status of his virginity were preserved intact'. For changes made by Aldhelm to the Hieronymian source, *Vita Malchi monachi*, see T. Cramer, 'Defending the Double Monastery: Gender and Society in Early Medieval Europe' (unpubl. PhD dissertation, Univ. of Washington, 2011), pp. 154–67. See K. Scarfe Beckett, 'Worcester Sauce: Malchus in Anglo-Saxon England', *Latin Learning and English Lore: Studies in Anglo-Saxon Literature for Michael Lapidge*, ed. K. O'Brien O'Keeffe and A. Orchard (Toronto, 2005), II, 212–31.
[33] Rhodes, 'Male Virginity', p. 21. S. Horner, 'The Language of Rape in Old English Literature and Law: Views from the Anglo-Saxon(ist)s', *Sex and Sexuality in Anglo-Saxon England: Essays in Memory of Daniel Gillmore Calder*, ed. C. Pasternack and L. M. C. Weston, Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies 277 (Tempe, 2004), pp. 149–81 at 164, argues that religious literature nearly always conflates representations of sex with those of violence, in what she argues is an attempt by the church to emphasize its 'strict disapproval' of sex, which should only be used as a means of procreation.
[34] Lees and Overing, *Double Agents*, p. 119.

of female martyrs.[35] The sexual elements to the tortures or deaths of these female saints reflects a pagan ignorance of the importance of spiritual salvation; to these saints the compromise or even death of the physical body is a finite event that pales into insignificance when compared with the prospect of infinite spiritual communion with Christ.[36]

The failure to convince female Christians to submit to pagans may explain the narrative weight afforded to portrayals of torture in the accounts of female martyrdom. As demonstrated above Agnes in Ælfric's life is shown to reject Sempronius' son as a suitor because she believes herself to be promised to Christ. Agnes is addressed by Sempronius himself, who threatens manifold tortures if she refuses to renounce her faith ('He [. . .] behet ðam mædene menig-fealde wita / buton heo wiðsoce þone soðan hælend'.[37] The judge eventually loses patience with Agnes (who is only thirteen) and orders her to be stripped naked and taken to a brothel. A number of miracles ensue, including that of her hair immediately covering her naked body, an angel of God attending her, whose countenance is so bright that no-one is able to look upon her and God sending her a tunic that fits perfectly. (Interestingly, saints never seem to experience shame or embarrassment at the exposure of their bodies, illustrating the ante-mortem negation of their own bodies

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[35] See A. Rossi-Reder, 'Embodying Christ, Embodying Nation: Ælfric's Accounts of Saints Agatha and Lucy', *Sex and Sexuality in Anglo-Saxon England: Essays in Memory of Daniel Gillmore Calder*, ed. C. Pasternack and L. M. C. Weston, Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies 277 (Tempe, 2004), pp. 183–202; Harney, 'Sexualized and Gendered Tortures'; V. Burrus, *The Sex Lives of Saints: An Erotics of Ancient Hagiography* (Philadelphia, 2004); Conner, 'Sexuality and Sanctity'; J. Coleman, 'Rape in Anglo-Saxon England', *Violence and Society in the Early Medieval West*, ed. G. Halsall (Woodbridge, 1998), pp. 193–204 at 200–3.

[36] C. Jones, 'Women, Death, and the Law During the Christian Persecutions', *Martyrs and Martyrologies: Papers Read at the 1992 Summer Meeting and the 1993 Winter Meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society*, ed. D. Wood, SCH 30 (Oxford, 1993), pp. 23–34 at 33, has suggested that the torture of early Christian female martyrs often elicited surprise among Roman spectators that a female could withstand torments that would be considered terrible even for men and notes that 'shame of defeat at the hands of a woman weighed heavily on many governors'.

[37] *ÆLS* (Agnes), lines 96–7: 'He [. . .] promised to the maiden manifold punishments unless she would renounce the true saviour'.

in the pursuit of spiritual communion – or 'marriage' – with Christ.)[38] Sempronius' son falls

down dead upon entering the brothel but is later reanimated through Agnes's intercession.

Eventually a fire is kindled into which Agnes is thrown, but the flames fail to harm her and,

finally, one of the pagans orders her death by the sword: 'Aspasius [. . .] het hi acwellan mid

cwealm-bærum swurde' (243–4). This account is somewhat typical of female virgin martyr

beheadings across the corpus of Anglo-Saxon hagiography (Agatha is also presented in

ÆLS as being sent to a brothel after refusing the advances of Quintianus). It is evident that

the prospect of tortures is not a deterrent to female virgins, but rather seems to be sought

to validate their positions as brides of Christ. The female body incites lust, and it is

significant that the body in these types of accounts becomes a spectacle (compared with

the accounts mentioned above) in the same way as the martyrdom itself is a spectacle

manipulated by saints to further the Christian cause. Aldhelm in particular is interesting

given his tendency to describe the tortures and deaths of female saints in great detail. In the

Cdv account of Thecla, Aldhelm concentrates on the details of the saint's torture in an

extended and characteristic purple passage: 'Tali femineam sontes molimine spinam /

Excruciare student, membratim quatenus ossa, / Si fieri posset, vacuarent cruda medullis'.[39]

Aldhelm then notes that lions are set on the saint ('Truditur ad rictus virgo laceranda

leonum, / Diris ut rodant muliebres morsibus artus'), but ultimately the creatures will not

touch her owing to God's protection and, 'Haec suprema suae decoravit tempora vitae /

Purpureo sanctam perfundens sanguine carnem, / Martira perpetui dum scandit limina

caeli'.[40] Winterbottom has noted Aldhelm's 'constant urge to expand and to vary' and, as

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[38] J. Wilcox, 'Naked in Old English: The Embarrassed and the Shamed', *Naked Before God: Uncovering the Body in Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. B. C. Withers and J. Wilcox, Medieval European Studies 3 (Morgantown, 2003), pp. 275–309 at 303. This lack of shame at nakedness mirrors that of the prelapsarian Adam and Eve.
[39] Ehwald, p. 435, lines 1994–6; *Poetic Works*, p. 147: 'Evil men sought to mutilate her female frame on the rack so that limb by limb, her bloody bones would be emptied of marrow, if that were possible'.
[40] Ibid. lines 1999–2000: 'Then the virgin was thrust towards the jaws of lions to be torn asunder, so that they would gnaw her feminine limbs with ferocious bites'; lines 2006–8: 'This maiden adorned the last hours of her life: bathing her holy body in red blood, as a martyr she ascended to the threshold of eternal heaven'.

part of this stylistic imperative, his desire 'to be *specific*'.[41] This is certainly evident in Aldhelm's portrayal of the tortures that many of his virgins undergo, but, even though in such instances he remains characteristically verbose, Aldhelm often uses the motif of an unspecified martyrdom, as here. This perhaps suggests a subordination of the moment of death to the process of dying, whereby ante-mortem motifs most ably reflect the virgin's status as one of God's elect.

In many summaries of these female 'virgin martyr' passions it is stated that the saint is eventually killed by either beheading or the sword, and the MI data support this assumption; in every instance of female beheading, for example, the saint is portrayed as having been harassed by a pagan for sex or marriage. Much has been made of the eroticized aesthetics of the sword as phallic cipher, and it is possible to argue that death-motifs involving swords metonymically reflect pagans' latent unfulfilled desires.[42] In only approximately a third of accounts of female martyr death involving a sword is the pagan later afflicted by a vengeance miracle. The potentiality of the vengeance miracle motif to demonstrate the danger of uncontrolled lust is not consistently applied, but it is seen to illustrate extreme examples of pagan iniquity across the range of texts. Conner argues that conflicts between pagans and female virgins are as much a manifestation of political struggle as lust.[43] The persecutions of male martyrs also represent pagan attempts at oppression and dominance, but the more explicit focus on sexualized torture and public display of the female body may highlight the denial of the possibility of the pagan regime's perpetuation. As well as paving the way for the female saint's ascension to heaven as a pure bride, her rejection of marriage and sex, and with it the possibility of procreation, highlights the instability of the pagan regime. A female virgin's repudiation of adulterous sex is so

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[41] M. Winterbottom, 'Aldhelm's Prose Style and its Origins', *ASE* 6 (1977), 39–76 at 43 and 45.
[42] Burrus, *Sex Lives*, p. 53.
[43] Conner, 'Sexuality and Sanctity', pp. 6–7.

fundamental to her principles that it is more acceptable to her to die than to risk her faith

and her position as *sponsa Christi*.[44] In fact, Conner argues that a repudiation of sex can be

viewed as a reclamation, rather than denial, of sexuality by 'redirecting that sexuality [. . .]

toward God'.[45] Male virgins, in contrast, destabilize pagan regimes through the conversion

of female pagans who have previously attempted to incite them to lust. Stodnick has

argued that the *Mart.* focuses less on post-mortem miracles for female saints than for

males, and this is true not only of the *Mart.*, but of the range of texts under discussion here,

with the majority of the post-mortem miracles listed in the MI attributed to male saints.[46]

The symbolic value of the female martyr body is presented as at its most potent during

processes of dying and at the moment of death, which may point to a hierarchically

gendered view of sanctity by Anglo-Saxon hagiographers.

It is worth noting that, even where a detailed death-motif of a saint forms a part of

his or her historic narrative tradition, Anglo-Saxon authors do not always preserve this, and

this seems to occur more often in accounts of female sanctity. Eulalia's death, for example,

is described as an unspecified martyrdom in the *Dv*, but as a beheading in the *Mart*, which

illustrates the need to account for the stylistic preferences of an author as well as their

educational or moralizing concerns.[47] The martyrologist, for instance, condenses pages of

source material into short narrative entries, and the same constraints can be assumed to

affect other authors as well; the necessity for brevity may thus affect the choice of death-

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[44] D. Rankin, *Tertullian and the Church* (Cambridge, 1995), p. 180, suggests that Tertullian saw the category of virgin as exclusively female, and that in these women was the bodily expression of 'the church as the Virgin Bride of Christ'.

[45] Conner, 'Sexuality and Sanctity', p. 2.

[46] J. Stodnick, 'Bodies of Land: The Place of Gender in the *Old English Martyrology*', *Writing Women Saints in Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. Paul E. Szarmach (Toronto, 2013), pp. 30–52 at 37.

[47] Whatley, 'Acta Sanctorum', s.v. 'Eulalia Barcinone', p. 197, suggests that Aldhelm may have had Eulalia of Merida rather than Eulalia of Barcelona in mind, although he notes the difficulties in deciphering whether wholly separate traditions for the saints existed in Anglo-Saxon England. If Aldhelm was unsure about the details of a St Eulalia's death, this may explain the use of the non-specific death-motif. Likewise, Aldhelm relates a non-specific death-motif for Agnes in both the *Dv* and *Cdv*, whereas the martyrologist and Ælfric both use a specific death-motif.

scene detail. The lack of explicit detail in some descriptions of martyrdom may occur because authors are more intent on describing the outcome rather than the method of the martyrdom.

Mixed Gender Death-Scenes

Table 3.3

Mixed-Gender Martyrdom			
Literary motif	**Inclusion of torture other than means of death**	**Only means of death mentioned**	**Total occurrences of motif**
Unspecified martyrdom	3	7	**10**
Beheading	2	1	**3**
Stabbing / death by sword	1	1	**2**
Giving up ghost etc.	1	2	**3**
Burning	0	1	**1**
Stoning	0	1	**1**
Torturing to death	1	0	**1**
Burying alive	1	0	**1**

The MI data demonstrate differences between representations of death in mixed-gender accounts (those lives that feature both male and female saints). In *ÆLS* (Julian and Basilissa), only Julian dies by the sword, whereas Basilissa departs to Christ ('gewat on mægðhade of middan-earde to criste', 100). In the *Mart.* (99 Artemius, Candida and Virgo) Artemius is presented as being killed in a manner different from that of his wife and daughter: 'Ða het se dema ðone carcernweard slean mid sweorde for þæm geleafen, ond

þæt wif ond þa dohtar weorpan on seað ond þær mid stanum offellan'.[48] Likewise in the

Mart. (65 Eleutherius and Antia), Eleutherius dies by the sword, but Antia instead is

presented as giving up the ghost. In many of these accounts it is the death-motif of the

male rather than the female saint that is accorded a degree of specificity, with the female

death-motif often being described in a non-specific manner. In the majority of these

mixed-gender lives, a 'lead' saint is accorded more narrative space and his or her life and

death is typically dealt with in greater detail. Sometimes the division between narrative

space accorded to each saint is greater than others; occasionally, no hierarchy is discernible,

as in the *Mart.* for Marius, Martha, Audifax and Abucuc or Symphorosa and her Sons. In

most instances, the male saint of mixed-gender pairings takes narrative precedence

(Chrysanthus, Julian, Cyricus, Victor, Adrian), perhaps owing to the perceived importance

of each saint; where female saints take narrative precedence (Luceia, Fausta), the narratives

typically end with conversion of male characters.

Of the accounts in which male and female saints suffer the same deaths, the most

common motif is again an unspecified martyrdom.[49] Despite this consistent use of the

death-motif, certain of the ante-mortem torture motifs illustrate gendered portrayals of

saintly power. Thus, although Ælfric notes that both Chrysanthus and Daria are killed in

the same way ('Hi wurdon þa buta bebyrigde swa cuce swa swa se casere het, and hi mid

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[48] 'Then the judge commanded the prison-guard to be killed with a sword, for his faith, and the wife and daughter to be thrown into a pit and killed there by stoning'.

[49] *Mart.*: 129 Symphorosa and her Seven Sons, 197 Justina and Cyprian, 232 Chrysanthus and Daria; *Cdr.* Chrysanthus and Daria. The remaining accounts in which male and female saints die by the same means are *Mart.*: 29 Marius, Martha, Audifax and Abacuc, 87 Victor and Corona, 124 Anatolia and Audax, 127 Cyricus and Julitta, 144 Theodota and her Three Sons, 128 Speratus and the Scillitan Martyrs, 189 Fausta, Evilasius, 232 Chrysanthus and Daria; *Dr.* Chrysanthus. The only account of mixed-gender martyrdom not to feature death-motif traditions is that of Julian and Basilissa in the *Mart.* Indeed, no information on how the saints meet their deaths other than reference to the *prowung* of Julian is offered. According to Rauer, 'Ælfric's treatment of these saints shows that several divergent traditions of Julian and Basilissa were available in Anglo-Saxon England, and the precise route of transmission of this material to the martyrologist remains uncertain'; see Rauer, *Mart.*, p. 234. See also R. K. Upchurch, 'Virgin Spouses as Model Christians: The Legend of Julian and Basilissa in Ælfric's *Lives of Saints*', *ASE* 34 (2005), 197–217. Elsewhere Upchurch suggests that Ælfric used models of chastely married saints to encourage 'greater asceticism and steadfast belief' in his audience; R. K. Upchurch, 'The Legend of Chrysanthus and Daria in Ælfric's *Lives of Saints*', *SP* 101 (2004), 250–69 at 251.

clænnysse ferdon / of worulde to wuldre to wunigenne mid Criste'[50]), the tortures represented for each saint clearly participate in a discourse of sanctity whereby female saintly power is embodied in Daria's ability to withstand sexual advances. Whereas Chrysanthus is bound, beaten, urinated upon and racked, Daria is sent to a brothel 'ac God hi gescylde wið þa sceandlican hæðenan' (174–5). Here, a voyeuristic focus on Daria's female body is shielded from not only the pagans but also from the viewer, and, rather, Chrysanthus's body is afforded greater narrative attention, with the cumulative references to the saint's legs, naked body, neck, hands and feet (lines 99–118). Immediately before execution, however, another link between female sanctity and the body is made in the types of miracles narrated. Whereas God's power is manifested in Chrysanthus through the bursting of bonds and the extinguishing of fires, for example, the same power in Daria is enacted specifically on the bodies of her persecutors. Here, any man who attempts to touch Daria is prevented by God through the shrinking of their 'sinews' ('swa þæt heora sina sona forscruncon / swa hwa swa hi hrepode, þæt hi hrymdon for ece')[51].

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[50] *Passio Chrisanti et Darie sponse eius*, §26, *Virgin Spouses*, ed. Upchurch, pp. 96–7, lines 225–7: 'Then they were thus buried alive just as the emperor commanded, and with chastity they departed from this world to glory to live with Christ'.

[51] *ÆLS* (Chrysanthus), lines 218–19: 'so that their sinews shrunk immediately whoever touched her, that they cried out for pain'.

Confessors

Table 3.4

Gendered Non-Violent Death-Motifs	
Literary motif	**Total occurrences of literary representation of motif**
Death recorded (means unspecified)	**M: 34** **F: 14**
Dying as result of or after illness	**M: 19** **F: 3**
Giving up ghost, etc.	**M: 18** **F: 9**
Death not mentioned	**M: 7** **F: 1**

Given that confessors follow an alternative trajectory to God compared with martyrs, their deaths typically do not rely on the physical body to justify their cause, but this is not to say that the body is unimportant in confessorial death-scenes. Both male and female confessors are typically presented as living much longer lives than martyrs and, as a result of living to old age, bodies in these accounts are shown in many instances to succumb to its ravages.[52] Thus, these saints often suffer from illnesses which, in the hagiographic worldview, are made to stand as counterpoints to martyrs' trials. In the *Epistola Cuthberti de obitu Bedae*, Bede's own illness, from which he eventually expires, is seen as a mark of esteem. Cuthbert, later abbot of Monkwearmouth–Jarrow, and not to be confused with St Cuthbert, writes 'Deo gratias referebat quia sic meruisset infirmari'.[53] Rollason explores the status of Bede as a saint after his death, and notes that, although Cuthbert's letter seems to have been an attempt to sponsor Bede's saintly status, his cult was never anything more

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[52] The resignation of Pope Benedict XVI in February 2013 on grounds of ill health demonstrates an alternative, modern, papal approach to illness; see *The Guardian*, http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2013/feb /13/pope-standing-down-good-church [accessed 13 February 2013].

[53] 'he [Bede] gave God thanks that he had been found worthy to suffer this sickness'; see Colgrave and Mynors, pp. 579–87 at 582.

than 'informal' in Anglo-Saxon England in the years immediately following his death.[54] The portrayal of Bede's death-scene is, however, deliberately modelled on hagiographic exempla, whereby Bede's death recalls those of saints such as Cuthbert. As such, the potentiality of the death-scene to direct how a person is viewed after death evidently influenced Anglo-Saxon authors.

For many native Anglo-Saxon female saints, the religious life is entered into after a rejection of a previously secular life; consequently, many of these saints have a sexual history that excludes them from the same rank of virginity assumed by late antique virgin martyrs.[55] In contrast, this is seemingly not the case for native male confessors (nor in fact, native male martyrs).[56] Physical violence is not a typical feature of the death-scenes encountered in *vitae*, but maintenance of virginity in the face of external pressures occasionally features as a motif in certain narratives. Æthelthryth, for example, exerts a remarkable degree of autonomy in her refusal to consummate her two marriages owing to what she considers to be her true marriage to Christ. Bede's 'hymn' 'in laudem ac praeconium eiusdem reginae ac sponsae Christi' situates Æthelthryth along a continuum of female sanctity and seems to make the point that she is the obvious successor to those 'uirgineos flores', Agatha, Eulalia, Thecla, Euphemia, Agnes and Cecilia (*HE*, IV.20). Much of the scholarship on the *vitae* of Æthelthryth has concentrated on her virginity and rejection of marriage, but it seems to be the case the Æthelthryth's gender plays into how her death is conceptualized.[57] In Bede's account at least (*HE*, IV.19), there seems to be an

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[54] D. Rollason, 'The Cult of Bede', *The Cambridge Companion to Bede*, ed. S. DeGregorio (Cambridge, 2010), pp. 193–200.

[55] Whether this rejection historically came about owing to the woman's desire or a male's command has been debated; see Elliot, *Bride of Christ*, pp. 70–1.

[56] Even Edward the Confessor's marriage to Edith is supposed to have been unconsummated; see Farmer, s.v. 'Edward the Confessor'.

[57] P. Jackson, 'Ælfric and the Purpose of Christian Marriage: a Reconsideration of the *Life of Æthelthryth*, lines 120–30', *ASE* 29 (2000), 235–60 at 257–8, concentrates on Ælfric's attempts to reconcile Æthelthryth's autonomous virginity and rejection of marriage with codified church teachings. He suggests a twofold reasoning behind Ælfric's inclusion of the exemplum of the layman at the end of Æthelthryth's *vita*, 'First, to

implicit link between the saint's gender and the particular illness that leads to her death.

Although Bede initially ascribes Æthelthryth's neck tumour to an outbreak of plague, he

goes on to report the saint's assertion in direct speech that it is penance for her practice of

wearing necklaces in her youth.[58] Thus, Æthelthryth's illness is linked directly to her

youthful desire to ornament herself, a reflection of gendered cultural practice. It seems

worth noting here a change over time in the presentation of female saints such as

Æthelthryth. Bede makes repeated references to Æthelthryth's secular status, calling her

variously a wife ('coniugem'), daughter ('filiam') and queen ('reginae'). The change in Bede's

terminology to encompass references to the saint as an abbess ('abbatissa') and virgin

mother ('mater virgo') follows a chronological trajectory that aligns with Æthelthryth's

monastic enclosure. (This trend is also found in *Mart.*) After her death she is referred to as

a sacred mother and bride of Christ ('sacrae uirginis ac sponsae Christi'). By the time Ælfric

– who used Bede as a source – came to write on Æthelthryth, these references to worldly

status have been almost entirely omitted. Thus, references to the saint being a wife

('gebedden') and being taken as a wife ('to wife') occur, but all other references, both

before and after her death refer to Æthelthryth as a virgin ('mæden'), holy woman ('halgan

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reassert that the proper function of the laity – both men and women – is to marry, and that the true purpose of marriage is childbearing, not lifelong abstinence. Secondly, to affirm that any decision to renounce intercourse after procreation must be the free choice of both parties'. Jackson at 259 argues that the layman and his wife are the real models of sanctity here. As noted in Gretsch, *Cult of Saints*, pp. 218–20, Ælfric stresses that Æthelthryth's virginity is a result of God's intervention. The layman story more obviously upholds the standards of an ideal Christian marriage and is 'more amenable to the ordinary married couple' who could emulate such standards. C. E. Karkov, 'The Body of St Æthelthryth: Desire, Conversion and Reform in Anglo-Saxon England', *The Cross Goes North: Processes of Conversion in Northern Europe, AD 300–1300*, ed. M. Carver (Woodbridge, 2003), pp. 397–411, considers how Æthelthryth's 'voice' is mediated by and through males so that she becomes increasingly objectified by those who 'write' and 'read' her body in texts.

[58] *HE*, IV.19, p. 396: 'credo quod ideo me superna pietas dolore colli uoluit grauari, ut sic absoluar reatu superuacuae leuitatis, dum mihi nunc pro auro et margaretis de collo rubor tumoris ardorque promineat.' See also Aldhelm's admonishment of the vanity of personal ornamentation (admittedly directed at both sexes) in the *Dv*, §55–6; Ehwald, pp. 313–16; *Prose Works*, pp. 124–6. On dress and gender, see G. R. Owen-Crocker, 'Dress and Identity', *The Oxford Handbook of Anglo-Saxon Archaeology*, ed. H. Hamerow *et al.* (Oxford, 2011), pp. 91–116 at 103–4. Interestingly, Bede refers to a dream of Hild's mother in which she finds a 'monile pretiosissimum' (*HE*, IV.23, p. 410), meant to signify Hild's future 'gratia splendoris'. Presumably the point Bede is making here is that Hild is precious to God, and this idea can be codified in a material object of some worth, ensuring that audiences recall the saint's spiritual worth. This contrasts with the necklaces worn by Æthelthryth as demonstrative of earthly, youthful vanity.

femnan') or abbess ('abudissan'). This emphasis on the female body as an unsexed vessel perhaps reflects Ælfric's didactic aims as a product of the reform movement, with its increased emphasis on celibacy.

Bede often portrays the illnesses of male and female saints differently, with the latter frequently suffering more sustained ordeals. Bede's Hild, for example, is depicted as suffering a six-year-long 'infirmitate carnis [. . .] ut iuxta exemplum apostoli uirtus eius in infirmitate perficeretur' (*HE*, IV.23). Conversely, Bede does not link the illnesses of Cedd, Aidan or Fursa to their gender, and no long expositions are given on their suffering as they are for Bede's female saints.

Lexical Classification

The extant hagiographic evidence seems to suggest that gender was not typically used as an organizing principle within individual collections. Aldhelm's *Dv* and *Cdv* are the obvious exceptions, where firstly male and then female saints are listed, but there remains a lack of consensus on the reasons for such ordering.[59] Lapidge notes that Aldhelm's list of male virgins has 'no antecedent in earlier patristic treatises on virginity' and suspects that this technical innovation was employed because Barking 'was a double monastery'.[60] Elliot argues, however, that Aldhelm was in fact 'conspiring to deemphasize female virginity' through including more male than female saints, and presenting males but not females as 'pursuing vigorous ministries that were grounded in their virginal strength' and 'deliberately' omitting particular activities of female saints.[61] Elliot suggests that Aldhelm's motivation for this recasting of female virginity could be seen as an attempt to articulate a

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[59] Note, however, that Aldhelm includes expositions on Joseph, David, Samson, Melchisedech and Abel, an argument against lavish dress and a discussion of Judith at the end of the *Dv*, §53–7.

[60] *Prose Works*, pp. 56–7. In terms of Aldhelm's choice of saints, Lapidge goes on to suggest, p. 58, that it is best to view the *Dv* as an ' "anthology" or *florilegium* in the proper sense of these words'. Cramer, 'Gender and Society', pp. 147–50, however, suggests different reasons for Aldhelm's choices.

[61] Elliot, *Bride of Christ*, pp. 68–70.

view of spirituality that better reflects the situations of his dedicatees.[62] Mullins, however, suggests that Aldhelm's choice of saints and the structure of the *Dv* and *Cdv* owe more to 'the eclectic nature of Anglo-Saxon learning' in the seventh century and the influence of Roman, Eastern and Irish traditions on early Anglo-Saxon hagiographic dissemination.[63]

Some legendaries, calendars and martyrologies, however, do display evidence of gendering, although Berschin and Philippart suggest that there was no standardized system and that inconsistencies were common.[64] Love, for example, notes the 'roughly hierarchical scheme' of ordering in the manuscript now known as Paris, BNF, lat. 10861 (s. ix[1]) but which is possibly 'the earliest surviving passional from Anglo-Saxon England'.[65] In the calendar contained in London, BL, Cotton Nero A.ii (s.xi[2/4], possibly originating from Leominster, according to Rushforth) the following patterns can be found when saints are listed with more than one descriptor: for January 23, *Emerentiana uirginis et martiris*; for 24 January, *Babilli episcopi et martiris*; for 4 April, *Ambrosi episcopi et confessoris*; and for 5 August, *Oswaldi regis et martiris*.[66] For male and female saints, the 'martyr' or confessor' epithet always seems to follow the reference to a saint's earthly rank or state (king, bishop, virgin; if a male saint is also a virgin, calendars typically omit this information, perhaps suggesting that his powers lie in more tangible earthly status). The same trend appears in continental martyrologies such as that of Usuard of Saint-Germain (s. ix), with 6 January mentioning *Melanii episcopi et confessoris*, and 23 January listing *natalis sanctae Emerentianae virginis et*

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[62] Ibid. pp. 70–1.

[63] Mullins, 'Aldhelm's Choice', p. 52.

[64] On distinctions between terminologies, see Philippart, *Légendiers*, pp. 24–5. On martyr–confessor and male–female ordering (and conversely 'de répartitions enchevêtrées') in primarily continental texts, see pp. 62–4 and 85–7; W. Berschin, *Biographie und Epochenstil im lateinischen Mittelalter I: Von der Passio Perpetuae zu den Dialogi Gregors des Großen*, Quellen und Untersuchungen zur lateinischen Philologie des Mittelalters 8 (Stuttgart, 1986), p. 6.

[65] *Anglo-Latin Saints' Lives*, ed. Love, p. xiv. See also M. P. Brown, 'Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, lat. 10861 and the Scriptorium of Christ Church, Canterbury', *ASE* 15 (1986), 119–37 at 122 for the list of saints.

[66] R. Rushforth, *Saints in English Kalendars before A.D. 1100*, HBS 117 (Oxford, 2008), pp. 17 and 36–7; F. Wormald, ed., *English Kalendars before A.D. 1100: Texts*, HBS 72 (London, 1934), pp. 30, 33 and 37.

martyris.[67] A similar lexical hierarchy can be seen in the incipit to such lives as *LS* 14 (*Passio beate Margarete uirginis et martyris*[68]), where again *uirginis* is used to primarily classify the saint and underscore virginity as the means by which her sanctity is achieved.[69]

An assessment of the nomenclature used in extant Anglo-Saxon litanies highlights further gender hierarchies, with some insular litanies demonstrating a distinct pattern.[70] London, BL, Royal 2.A.xx (?Worcester, s. viii^2 or ix$^{1/4}$), presents eleven female martyrs after Christ, the archangels, Mary, the apostles, the male martyrs and the confessors.[71] The same pattern can be seen in the litany in London, BL, Add. 37517, which has a possible Canterbury origin and is dated to s. x or xi by Gneuss, and includes the invocation 'Omnes sancte uirgines orate' after the list of the female virgins.[72] The same invocation can be seen in Salisbury, Cathedral Library, 150 (southwest England, s. x^2) with the female saints coming only after the various classes of male saints.[73] The compartmentalization of saints into distinct gendered categories seems to have been standard practice in litanies, suggesting a common hierarchy of veneration across a range of material written at different centres and at various stages of the Anglo-Saxon period. Likewise, despite the effects of localized veneration in many cases, the ordering frequently seen in legendaries, calendars and martyrologies from across a wide geographical and temporal range seems to suggest a

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[67] J. Dubois, *Le Martyrologe D'Usuard. Texte et Commentaire*, Subsidia Hagiographica 40 (Brussels, 1965).

[68] *Lives of St Margaret*, ed. Clayton and Magennis, p. 152.

[69] The Athelstan Psalter (London, BL, MS Cotton Galba A.xviii), f. 21^r, represents a hierarchical depiction of the various 'types' of saints surrounding God. The image can now be viewed online as one of the BL's digitized manuscripts, http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Cotton_MS_galba_a_xviii [accessed 6 December 2013]. Owing to space constraints the present thesis cannot assess further the patterns found in these texts; whether any localization of gendered hierarchies occurs would perhaps make an interesting future study.

[70] Lapidge, *Litanies*, p. 25, suggests that litanies were first used for 'devotional purposes' in the British Isles before the practice spread among the western church. A proportion of the Anglo-Saxon Christian population is likely to have been familiar with these patterns through listening to and repeating Latin litanies. Evidence of regional and local variations can be expected, where different saints might have been venerated at different centres; however, there are definite patterns in the gendering and hierarchical ordering of the litanies.

[71] Lapidge, *Litanies*, pp. 75 and 212–13; Gneuss, *Handlist*, p. 79. Note that this litany features no invocations at the end of each group of saints, although hierarchical ordering of the saints can still be seen.

[72] Lapidge, *Litanies*, pp. 67 and 138, line 31; Gneuss, *Handlist*, p. 59.

[73] Lapidge, *Litanies*, pp. 83 and 283–7; Gneuss, *Handlist*, p. 111. The Virgin Mary was held in especial esteem and, therefore, her place near the top of this litany, and many others, is unsurprising.

gendered hierarchy of sanctity. Rauer has also noted that, despite the prevalence of female

martyrs in the *Mart.*, 'only a male saint can be designated with the Old English noun *martyr*

in this text', which further demonstrates gendered distinctions in ascribing sanctity.[74] There

do not seem to be strict gender distinctions made in terms of hagiographic death-motifs,

although some martyrdom motifs are never used for female saints. All non-violent death-

motifs may be applied to both male and female saints. Where a gender difference arises in

relation to death, it seems to be in the configuration of the motival death-scene elements.

Female saints are portrayed as experiencing tortures that attempt to display and

compromise the physical body, and are associated more commonly with ante-mortem than

with post-mortem miracles, illustrating differing conceptions of idealized death-scenes for

male and female saints.

Summary

This chapter has demonstrated the effect of gender on portrayals of saintly death-scenes in

the lives of martyrs and confessors, and gender can be seen to have a narrative function in

determining the circumstances of death. It seems fair to say that, although certain

differences in the representations of saintly death-scenes on the basis of gender exist, what

is ultimately important for hagiographers at the moment of physical death is the reception

of that saint into the universal community of other saints, and this applies equally for male

and female saints. Where gendered bodies are written differently, this is typically most

evident in martyrdom accounts, where the body is manipulated as a tool enabling sanctity,

especially in the case of female saints. The MI data indicate that particular death-motifs

appear to be gendered, but historical contexts of death and its dissemination through

saints' literary traditions may affect this. Confessors have less need of their physical bodies

to emphasize their exemplary deaths, inasmuch as sanctity is predicated through ascetic

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[74] Rauer, 'Female Hagiography', p. 18.

practices during life rather than through the circumstances of physical demise. Consequently, there is much greater uniformity between genders in the representations of confessors' deaths. Gendered modes of exemplary death have been discussed here, but it seems worth considering whether such models coexisted in Anglo-Saxon England with modes of death of non-saintly figures. The next chapter addresses this question in greater detail.

CHAPTER IV
NON-SAINTLY DEATH-SCENES

Thus far, I have investigated the motival elements of the Anglo-Saxon saintly death-scene.

The previous chapters illustrate how these death-scenes engage with discourses of

exemplarity, whereby saintly deaths are constructed to inform and direct audience

behaviour. Hagiography presents death-scenes that are predicated primarily on ideological

grounds, but, inevitably, alternative models of the death-scene are likely to have held

currency. These alternative models may be especially important in light of the fact that

saints' deaths are unattainably exemplary. It seems important to ascertain whether the force

of the imaginative constructs of non-hagiographic narratives also reflect ideals of death and

whether these ideals perpetuate notions of the 'good' death.

In *Felix's Life*, Guthlac is moved to become a monk after contemplating the deaths

of kings (despite originally taking up arms because 'tunc valida pristinorum heroum facta

reminiscens'[1]):

> Nam cum antiquorum regum stirpis suae per transacta retro saecula miserabiles
> exitus flagitioso vitae termino contemplaretur, necnon et caducas mundi divitias
> contemtibilemque temporalis vitae gloriam pervigili mente consideraret, tunc sibi
> proprii obitus sui imaginata forma ostentatur[2]

The implication is such that these kings' deaths were not appropriate examples and that a

more exemplary life must be sought by Guthlac if he is to achieve a death that will enable

direct entry to heaven. What kinds of deaths would these kings have died, and why were

these inappropriate models for men such as Guthlac? It is the wider implications of these

questions that this chapter engages with. Here, therefore, the focus shifts from hagiography

to enable a wider assessment of the multiplicity of understanding of literary death based on

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[1] *Felix's Life*, §16, p. 80: 'he remembered the valiant deeds of heroes of old'.
[2] Ibid. §18, p. 82: 'For when, with wakeful mind, he contemplated the wretched deaths and shameful ends of the ancient kings of his race in the course of past ages, and also the fleeting riches of this world and the contemptible glory of this temporal life, then in imagination the form of his own death revealed itself to him'.

alternative models found in non-hagiographic literature. The intention of this chapter is to foreground alternative models of death, and thereby to demonstrate not only the multifaceted interpretation of death in the Anglo-Saxon period, but also the representational specificity of the saintly death-scene.

There are many modes of death in the Old English poem *Beowulf* (possibly s.viii[1], although the dating of the poem is one of the most contested issues in *Beowulf*-criticism)[3], but it is the death-scene of the legendary Geatish king himself that forms a primary focus of this chapter, along with the death-scene of Byrhtnoth, ealdorman of Essex, in *The Battle of Maldon*. Although Byrhtnoth is a historical character, he is best known through his literary incarnation in *Maldon*, which was probably composed within 'a few years of the battle' it commemorates, although its dating is similarly contested.[4] It has been shown that saints' death-scenes conform to certain broad representational rules, so it can be hypothesized that the death-scenes of Beowulf and Byrhtnoth must likewise meet certain expectations. Scragg indicates that 'poets inevitably present characters and events in ways that suit their artistic purpose, rather than conforming to documentary standards of truth',[5] and this must be borne in mind for these poems as much as for hagiographic texts. This chapter questions whether generic expectations inform conceptions of non-saintly death,

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[3] The dating of *Beowulf* is still much contested, with suggested dates of composition 'ranging from the middle of the seventh century to the second or third decade of the eleventh'; see *Klaeber's Beowulf*, ed. R. D. Fulk, R. Bjork and J. Niles, 4th ed. (Toronto, 2008), p. clxxix. The editors note that linguists and archaeologists generally seem to favour an earlier date (s. viii[1]), but it is unlikely that a definitive date for *Beowulf* can be assigned. Also, Rauer, *Dragon*, pp. 17–18.

[4] D. Scragg, 'The Battle of Maldon', *The Battle of Maldon AD 991*, ed. D. Scragg (Oxford, 1991), pp. 15–36 at 32. Given that the manuscript has been destroyed, no comments on dating can be made on the grounds of palaeography, and Scragg notes that, because there is nothing to definitively suggest otherwise, a date contemporary with the battle cannot be ruled out; D. G. Scragg, 'The Battle of Maldon: Fact or Fiction?', *The Battle of Maldon: Fiction and Fact*, ed. J. Cooper (London and Rio Grande, 1993), pp. 19–32. On the historical Byrhtnoth, see R. Abels, 'Byrhtnoth (*d*. 991)', *ODNB* [accessed 8 February 2012]. Abels writes that 'In 991 Byrhtnoth was King Æthelred II's senior ealdorman and, given the illness of Æthelwine, probably the most influential layman in England after the king'. A number of later references to Byrhtnoth in twelfth-century texts attest to his bequeathing land to Ely and Ramsey; see A. Kennedy, 'Byrhtnoth's Obits and the Twelfth-Century Account of the Battle of Maldon', *The Battle of Maldon AD 991*, ed. D. Scragg (Oxford, 1991), pp. 59–78. The will of Byrhtnoth's widow indicates that her husband was buried at Ely, see M. A. L. Locherbie-Cameron, 'Byrhtnoth and his Family', *The Battle of Maldon AD 991*, ed. D. Scragg (Oxford, 1991), pp. 253–62 at 254.

[5] D. Scragg, 'Introduction', *The Battle of Maldon AD 991*, ed. D. Scragg (Oxford, 1991), pp. xii–xiii at xiii.

and whether non-saintly deaths feature their own set of stereotypical or derivative death-scene elements that privilege alternative ideals of death.

As Orchard points out, saints' lives may be usefully compared with *Beowulf* insofar as they focus on the life of one protagonist and are comparable in scope.[6] Fulk *et al.* suggest that, in his attitude towards the dragon, Beowulf has 'the zeal of a saint [. . .] even while lacking any consciousness of the religious significance of what he does', and Rauer has suggested the influence of 'a secular as well as a hagiographical paradigm' for Beowulf's dragon-fight.[7] Such comparisons may usefully be extended to Byrhtnoth as the main protagonist of *Maldon*, given that the poem concentrates on the exploits of a main protagonist, who dies at the hands of pagans, thereby following a similar trajectory to saints' lives. Indeed, N. F. Blake argued that it is just as possible to equate *Maldon* with hagiography as with other battle poems such as *The Battle of Brunanburh*.[8] Blake further suggests that '*Maldon* shows the resolution and unflinching courage of the English just as [Ælfric's] *St. Edmund* does', thereby demonstrating a scholarly trend towards linking Byrhtnoth and king-saints Oswald and Edmund.[9] J. E. Damon has argued for Byrhtnoth's credentials for sanctification, because he 'died under conditions that had elevated more than one Anglo-Saxon to the ranks of the holy, defending the region under his care from an invasion by men whom the *Maldon*-poet twice describes as "heathen."'[10] Cross likewise

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[6] Orchard, *Critical Companion*, p. 149; also B. Colgrave, 'The Earliest Saints' Lives Written in England', *PBA* 44 (1958), 35–60 at 36.

[7] *Klaeber's Beowulf*, ed. Fulk *et al.*, p. lxxix; Rauer, *Dragon*, p. 136.

[8] N. F. Blake, '*The Battle of Maldon*', *Neophilologus* 49 (1965), 332–45 at 333. Note that *Brunanburh*, found in A, B, C and D versions of the *ASC*, is unlike *Maldon* in many ways. No similar characterization in *Brunanburh* is comparable to that of Byrhtnoth, nor are there any death speeches, or indeed specific death-scenes.

[9] Blake, '*The Battle of Maldon*', 336.

[10] J. E. Damon, 'Sanctifying Anglo-Saxon Ealdormen: Lay Sainthood and the Rise of the Crusading Ideal', *Via Crucis: Essays on Early Medieval Sources and Ideas in Memory of J. E. Cross*, ed. T. N. Hall (Morgantown, 2002), pp. 185–209 at 193. Given the preponderance of royal figures achieving sanctity in Anglo-Saxon England, would Byrhtnoth's lay status have proved another barrier to his elevation to sainthood? J. E. Cross, 'Oswald and Byrhtnoth: a Christian Saint and a Hero Who is Christian', *ES* 46 (1965), 93–109 at 93, does not seem to consider royalty as a necessary criterion for sanctity in his discussion of Byrhtnoth's qualifications. C. Chase, 'Saints' Lives, Royal Lives, and the Date of *Beowulf*', *The Dating of* Beowulf, ed. Colin Chase (Toronto, 1981), pp. 161–71 also compares saints' lives, including that of Oswald, with Beowulf, but uses his comparison to

argues that Byrhtnoth could easily have been designated a saint inasmuch as he dies in battle as part of a *justum bellum* against pagan invaders.[11] Peter Baker, however, argues that Byrhtnoth's death meets the requirements of the 'good death' for neither a secular hero nor a saint; his cause was historically not taken up after his death (with tribute eventually being paid to the Vikings), and neither was his death attended by miracles.[12] Indeed, whereas martyrs are witnesses to the faith and ultimately die for it, Byrhtnoth dies not for God but rather for his king's 'folc and foldan' (54a).[13] Therefore, although both *Maldon* and *ÆLS* (Edmund) admittedly illustrate a last stand against a pagan enemy, they present different moral imperatives and motivations for their characters. Edmund refuses to engage the enemy, in an imitation of the passion of Christ and St Sebastian, whereas Byrhtnoth fails in his very active attempt to defeat the invading army.[14] The generic conventions of each text cannot be discounted; the *Maldon*-poet is not attempting to write hagiography, and Byrhtnoth is not expected to lay down his arms and accept death (which is much more appropriate a motif in hagiography) but rather to fight to the death in an attempt to defend his land. This is an important distinction, and Woolf has acknowledged the generic conventions in depicting 'Edmund the pacific beside Byrhtnoth the exultant fighter'.[15] Regardless of attempts (by later Ely monks or by twentieth-century critics) to view Byrhtnoth as a martyr, he should instead be seen as dying a death appropriate to an

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argue for less of a perceived contradiction between secular heroic values and monastic ones in the later Anglo-Saxon period.

[11] Cross, 'Oswald and Byrhtnoth', 93. On the notion of the just war, see the commentary in *ÆLS* (Maccabees), lines 708–9: '*Iustum bellum* is rihtlic gefeoht wið ða reðan flot-menn / oþþe wið oðre þeoda þe eard willað fordon' ('*Justum bellum* is just war against the cruel seamen, or against other peoples that wish to destroy (our) land').

[12] P. S. Baker, *Honour, Exchange and Violence in* Beowulf (Woodbridge, 2013), p. 206.

[13] Cross, 'Oswald and Byrhtnoth', 104.

[14] There is a distinct lack of enemy individuality in the poem, as has been attested by a number of critics. Blake, '*The Battle of Maldon*', 333, suggests that this aligns with the lack of individuality of the devils presented in verse saints' lives but, to draw comparisons with saints' lives, does it not also reflect the conflation of pagan emperors in the works of Ælfric, for example, who signals his intention to only name one persecutor of the saints?

[15] R. Woolf, 'The Ideal of Men Dying with their Lord in the *Germania* and in *The Battle of Maldon*', *ASE* 5 (1976), 63–81 at 78.

exemplary tenth-century ealdorman fighting the king's cause against an invading enemy. Byrhtnoth's death is the catalyst for (as well as the initial embodiment of) the enactment of a heroic ethos by his loyal retainers, and his literary death is not presented as demonstrative of exemplary faith in God, but rather as an instigator of a heroic ideal of loyalty. I follow the likes of Cross in my belief that *Maldon* is not an attempt to advance a sanctifying ideal for Byrhtnoth, and there can be no doubt over reading Beowulf as in any way saintly.[16] It is the intention of this chapter then to demonstrate how these two texts, which display considerable anxiety over death, present alternative ideals of the 'good' death.

Heroic Death

The deaths of heroes are often as stylized as the deaths of saints, with the typology of death presented for each figure privileging particular ideals. To categorize a literary death as heroic, it has to be recognized as a sacrifice for a cause that readers can deem to be important in some way.[17] Furthermore, heroes are rarely flayed, drowned, crucified or stoned to death, for example, in extant Old English texts. (The heroic Christ-figure of the devotional vernacular poem *The Dream of the Rood* forms a notable exception.) Likewise, heroes rarely die in their beds; the peaceful death typical of *vitae* is not an appropriate mode of death for a hero. These parameters seem to matter because they set up a system of interpretation in which to conceptualize Anglo-Saxon notions of heroic death. In saints' lives, a violent death-scene enables a multivalent system of interpretation to be predicated through that violence. The death-scenes of heroes are not associated with the same sense

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[16] Cross, 'Oswald and Byrhtnoth', 93–109, notably rejects an understanding of Byrhtnoth as saintly and highlights the elements of the poem that signal his secular desires and motives, such as exhorting his men to strive for worldly glory in battle. Neither poem features epithets attributing an especial blessedness to the main protagonist, for example.

[17] J. D. Niles, 'Pagan Survivals and Popular Belief', *The Cambridge Companion to Old English Literature*, ed. M. Godden and M. Lapidge, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, 2013), pp. 120–36; *Klaeber's Beowulf*, ed. Fulk *et al.*, p. clxiii. The editors note the argument posited by scholars such as Kiernan, which suggests that the *Beowulf*-manuscript and the poem are 'contemporaneous'. The more commonly held view is that the extant poem was copied from a pre-existing exemplar.

of triumph that pervades the various hagiographic sub-genres. Moreover, heroes fulfil different functions to saints and it is not unexpected that heroic death is encoded differently in text. It is possible to argue that death is commonly presented as a logical outcome of the actions of heroes, which is also the case for saints. The difference lies in the fact that saints seek death, whereas heroes more commonly seek 'honour' or other such abstract concepts, the pursuit of which commonly causes death. These attitudes towards death or the potential of death are particularly interesting given that they can tell us something about alternative literary ideals of 'good' death.

I have noted Christ's passion as a paradigmatic death-scene above (pp. 10–11), which leads to the question of whether Anglo-Saxon texts predicate their illustrations of heroic deaths on similar archetypes. Vergil's *Aeneid* is an example of classical heroic poetry most likely to have been available to the *Beowulf*-poet, and, although Tom Haber noted similarities between the poems, including similar figurative representations of 'to die' as a metaphorical expression, Orchard argues that the problem with drawing parallels between the texts lies in the fact that no suggested parallel 'seems sufficiently specific'.[18] Orchard suggests that it is a 'more promising line of enquiry' to consider the transmission of Vergilian influences by means of later texts.[19] In order to evince a more thorough understanding of the ideals of death and dying expressed in *Beowulf*, and in *Maldon*, it is to the texts that I now turn.

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[18] T. B. Haber, *A Comparative Study of the* Beowulf *and the* Aeneid (Princeton, 1931), pp. 18–19 and 62–66; Orchard, *Critical Companion*, p. 133. See also Rauer, *Dragon*, p. 14; F. Klaeber, 'Aeneis und Beowulf', *ASNSL* 126 (1911), 40–8 and 339–59; R. North, *The Origins of Beowulf: From Vergil to Wiglaf* (Oxford, 2006), pp. 80–94. A. Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies: Studies in the Monsters of the Beowulf Manuscript* (Cambridge, 1995), p. 45, notes that the 'works of Vergil and Lucan were certainly known and imitated in Anglo-Saxon England from the time of Aldhelm on'. *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*, for example, were probably not known in Anglo-Saxon England; see *Klaeber's Beowulf*, ed. Fulk *et al.*, p. clxxxvi.

[19] Orchard, *Critical Companion*, p. 133.

Beowulf

The poem known as *Beowulf* survives in only one copy, found in London, BL, Cotton Vitellius A.xv, fols. 129^r–198^v.[20] The events depicted in *Beowulf* are consciously positioned in a pagan past (the poem establishes itself as a retrospective in the first line, recounting events that occurred 'in geardagum'), although the poet is undoubtedly Christian, and frequently references biblical events, God and the devil. Although Beowulf and the other characters refer to a higher power, there is no sense that they understand this to be the Christian God that the poem's audience would have identified with. The protagonists of the poem would have been understood as heathens by the poem's audience, while simultaneously being perceived as embodying the heroism and valour associated with the Anglo-Saxons' ancestors. Fulk *et al.* suggest that the *Beowulf*-poet shows 'a strong interest in depicting a version of the pagan past that, with its high deeds and sententious speeches, has its own narrative consistency and could have had ethical value for the members of his Christian community'.[21] Niles likewise notes that *Beowulf* 'praises a life lived in accord with ideals that help perpetuate the best features of the kind of society it depicts. The ideals deserve the name "heroic," but they are of Christian and well-nigh universal significance as well'.[22] (Thus, if the dragon is seen as an embodiment of paganism, in defeating it Beowulf is defeating paganism without knowing it, rather like the embodiment of Christian ideals in Old Testament characters.) The discussion of the poem here focuses on the death of Beowulf rather than other deaths recounted in the narrative.[23]

Beowulf's single-minded determination to defeat the dragon (a creature which is often a manifestation of the devilish or the pagan in early medieval literature) in many ways

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[20] On the history and nature of the manuscript, see *Klaeber's Beowulf*, ed. Fulk *et al.*, pp. xxv–xxxv.

[21] *Klaeber's Beowulf*, ed. Fulk *et al.*, p. lxix.

[22] J. D. Niles, Beowulf. *The Poem and Its Traditions* (Cambridge, MA and London, 1983), p. 236.

[23] For a synopsis of the action prior to Beowulf's death, see *Klaeber's Beowulf*, ed. Fulk *et al.*, pp. xxiii–xxv.

reflects the intensity of the martyrs in their ruthless determination to die.[24] The difference

comes in the fact that martyrs are determined to die for Christ, whereas Beowulf is not

even determined to die, but rather to assert his prowess and uphold his honour. Death is

not sought in the same way as it is by martyrs. Indeed, Beowulf is explicitly cast as

melancholy before engaging the dragon ('Him wæs geomor sefa, / wæfre ond wælfus',

2419b–2420a), which may parallel Christ's mood before his crucifixion, but does not

parallel the jubilation of saints at the prospect of death.[25] What, then, can be said about

Beowulf's motivation? A typical feature of saints' lives is the dichotomy between activity

and passivity, whereby martyrs in particular actively engage with their persecutors. In many

ways this activity speeds up the process of their deaths, but, at the point at which the

moment of death become certain, martyrs passively and unflinchingly accept their fate.

Beowulf is presented as highly active right up to the moment of his death; at no point is the

dragon's superiority passively accepted. Thus, in the narrative sequences comprising the

dragon-fight, the poet presents Beowulf as actively participating in the events that cause his

death, which largely contrasts with many martyred or murdered saints. This perhaps

supports Margaret Goldsmith's assertion that Beowulf functions as an Adam-figure who 'is

in the end brought to death by the flaws in his human nature, the legacy of Adam's sin, in

trying to fight the dragon alone'.[26] Although even Beowulf acknowledges the possibility of

his death (lines 2532b–2537), he refuses to accept help, stressing that the undertaking ('sið',

2532b) against the adversary ('aglæcean', 2534a) is his alone. He goes on to state that if he

fails to win gold ('gold gegangan', 2536a) the fight will carry him off.

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[24] On the dragon as a typological adversary, see Rauer, *Dragon*, pp. 52–8.

[25] 'His mind was sad, restless and ready for death'. See Rauer, *Dragon*, p. 37; *Klaeber's Beowulf*, ed. Fulk *et al.*, p. 244.

[26] M. E. Goldsmith, *The Mode and Meaning of Beowulf* (London, 1970), pp. 239 and 241. See p. 238 for parallels between the mode of death of Beowulf and Adam through serpentine poison.

'deað ungemete neah': Beowulf's Death-Scene

The section of the poem concerned with Beowulf's death-scene runs from lines 2688 to 2820.[27] Death-scenes in fact envelop the poem, whereby Beowulf's death at the end of the poem recalls Scyld's at the beginning.[28] Having defeated Grendel and his mother and having ruled the Geats for fifty years, Beowulf sets out for what turns out to be the last time to battle a dragon that has been ravaging the people in revenge for the theft of a 'fæted wæge' (2282a) from its hoard. The narrative of Beowulf's death-scene runs as follows: Beowulf hears of the nightly ravages of a dragon, determines to fight the beast and sets off with an army. On approaching the dragon's lair, Beowulf signals his intention to fight alone and sends his retainers away to wait 'on beorge' (2529a). (This reference perhaps prefigures the hero's own death.) These retainers (with the exception of Wiglaf) then run away to a wood when the fight begins to go badly for their lord. Wiglaf, however, hastens to help Beowulf and succeeds in striking a mortal blow to the dragon's belly ('nioðor', 2699b). This enables Beowulf (who has by now been mortally wounded) to cut through the dragon in the middle ('forwrat Wedra helm   wyrm on middan', 2705). In dying, Beowulf asks Wiglaf to bring some treasure from the barrow, then orders that a burial mound be constructed on the headland in which his ashes are to be interred after his cremation. After bequeathing his war-gear to Wiglaf, he dies: 'he bæl cure, / hate heaðowylmas;   him of hræðre gewat / sawol secean   soðfæstra dom' (2818b–2820).[29] Although the dragon, and its poison, are the agents of Beowulf's death, the particular death-motif adopted by the *Beowulf*-poet is that of the soul departing. There is an ambiguity over the fate of Beowulf's soul, and Fulk *et al.* note the varying interpretative traditions for

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[27] The quotation from the subtitle is line 2728b.

[28] G. R. Owen-Crocker, *The Four Funerals in* Beowulf *and the Structure of the Poem* (Manchester and New York, 2000), esp. p. 2.

[29] 'he chose the pyre, the hot, hostile flames; the soul departed from him to seek the judgement of the righteous'. See *Klaeber's Beowulf*, ed. Fulk *et al.*, p. 257.

the phrase 'soðfæstra dom', but argue that 'In any poem of this period of an overtly

religious character, the phrase would mean that a righteous person was saved'.[30] Goldsmith

argues that the phrase probably refers to some kind of divine judgement of Beowulf's

personal merits.[31] Interestingly, the soul is presented as an active entity that seeks this

'dom', and Leslie Lockett argues that non-Christians whose souls possess agency at the

moment of death 'are [. . .] marked as heroes', although she goes on to note that in

comparison with the souls of saints, this autonomy 'is still relatively ineffectual'.[32]

An interesting point of contrast between saints' lives and *Beowulf* at the moment of

death comes with the hero's preoccupation with treasure. Initially, Beowulf has two

motivations in setting out to fight the dragon: (i) winning treasure; and (ii) stopping the

dragon's destruction. At the moment that Beowulf becomes aware of his impending death,

the former motivation occupies his whole thought; he does not, for instance, signal his

pleasure at helping the people who have been previously ravaged by the dragon's actions.

Whereas saints either pray to God or address their followers, typically with some

instruction regarding their burial, Beowulf is represented as desiring to gaze upon the

treasure that has been liberated from the dragon's lair; only then does he give instructions

for his burial. Given Beowulf's paganism, the poet can hardly be expected to present him

as praying to the Christian God, although he is shown to demonstrate an awareness of 'the

existence of a deity'.[33] Beowulf's death is thus written in terms of what an Anglo-Saxon

Christian thought a pagan such as Beowulf would be concerned with at the moment of

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[30] *Klaeber's Beowulf*, ed. Fulk *et al.*, p. lxx. 'Soðfæst' is used in many Old English poems such as *GuthA* (lines 22, 506, 567, 790); it is also commonly applied to angels or souls, as in *Exodus* (544a), *And.* (228) and *The Phoenix* (540).

[31] Goldsmith, *Mode and Meaning*, p. 178; also F. C. Robinson, '*Beowulf*', *Cambridge Companion to Old English Literature*, 1st ed., ed. M. Godden and M. Lapidge (Cambridge, 1991) pp. 142–59 at 147.

[32] L. Lockett, *Anglo-Saxon Psychologies in the Vernacular and Latin Traditions* (Toronto, 2011), p. 28.

[33] *Klaeber's Beowulf*, ed. Fulk *et al.*, pp. lxviii–lxx at lxix. R. Frank, 'The *Beowulf* Poet's Sense of History', *The Wisdom of Poetry: Essays in Early English Literature in Honor of Morton W. Bloomfield*, ed. L. D. Benson and S. Wenzel (Kalamazoo, 1982), pp. 53–65 at 54, here argues for the poet's sense of the past and his care in omitting obviously anachronistic elements from the poem.

death. Beowulf's speech (2729–2751) focuses on the *hord*, with six references to treasure ('hord', 'sinc', 'goldæht', 'gearo sceawige', 'swegle searogimmas', 'maððumwelan') coming in swift succession in lines 2744 to 2750, which seems to suggest that, in imagining a legendary pagan king's death, the poet is influenced by what he assumed to be pagan ideals.

It is possible to discern an undercurrent of tension in the description of Beowulf's death, particularly in the poet's assessment that Beowulf dies a 'wundordeaðe' (3037b). *TOE* glosses the hapax legomenon 'wundordeaþe' as 'marvellous death' (*TOE*, §02.02.01) and *BT* defines it as 'wondrous death' (a definition also adopted by George Jack and Orchard). Fulk *et al.* gloss it as 'strange death', but Bradley chooses to translate it as 'awful death'.[34] Even in its sense of 'wondrous' or 'marvellous', the use of *wundor* as the first element of the compound carries certain implications that Beowulf's death is not a 'normal' death, although whether this is because of the involvement of the supernatural dragon or Beowulf's heroic status requires further elucidation. The alliterative emphasis on 'w' in line 3037 further emphasizes the 'wundor' element of the compound. *BT* lists a range of other compounds beginning with *wundor-*, but the sense in these seems to be one of admiration. One possible exception is *wundor-bebod*, found in *Beowulf* at line 1747a, which *BT* glosses as 'a monstrous command'. Lines 3062b–3064a also associate 'wundur' with death ('Wundur hwar þonne / eorl ellenrof   ende gefere / lifgesceafta'[35]), but the sense of *wundur* here seems to be neutral, with most editors glossing it as 'mystery'. So, the idea here seems to be that the uncertainty over when death will come is the 'wonder', rather than the death itself.[36] Where *wundor* is used as a simplex term in *Beowulf*, it typically means 'wonder' or 'marvel', although the genitive plural *wundra* (1509b) is generally assumed to refer to strange

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[34] G. Jack, *Beowulf: A Student Edition* (Oxford 1994); Orchard, *Critical Companion*, p. 27; *Klaeber's Beowulf*, ed. Fulk *et al.*, p. 461; Bradley, *Poetry*, p. 491.

[35] 'It is a wonder then where a brave warrior may reach the end of his allotted life'.

[36] This aligns with Byrhtnoth's assertion that only God knows the outcome of battle: 'God ana wat / hwa þære wælstowe   wealdan mote' (94b–95).

creatures, indicating that the term has a slightly wider semantic frame of reference, which would support an interpretation of Beowulf's death as belonging outside the realms of the normative.[37]

The use of *wundor* in relation to Beowulf's death perhaps reflects the ambiguity felt over the fate of a non-Christian's soul. Beowulf's death is in no way understood as unambiguously 'good' relative to a saint's death, and this general tension is further demonstrated in the description of the disposal of Beowulf's body. The disposal of a corpse requires a conscious decision by, and the agency of, the living and can serve as a potent symbol of power. In depicting Beowulf's cremation the *Beowulf*-poet deliberately invokes a burial system that is reflective of the pagan past and simultaneously demonstrates an interpretative ambiguity over the fate of Beowulf's soul, thereby reflecting concerns which would have been uppermost in the minds of a Christian Anglo-Saxon audience. Fulk *et al.* suggest that the reference to Beowulf's soul leaving his breast at death could reflect Christian thought and complicates how the fate of the hero's soul should be interpreted.[38]

Before his death Beowulf leaves explicit instructions regarding his post-mortem memorial, which is a feature commonly found in saints' lives: 'Hatað heaðomære   hlæw gewyrcean / beorhtne æfter bæle   æt brimes nosan' (2802–2803)[39]. Beowulf's request for his ashes to be interred in a headland barrow is a potent reminder of his former prowess to potential invaders and, as Howard Williams suggests, this promontory on the headland boundary of Beowulf's former kingdom becomes 'charged with symbolic and socio-political importance'; Beowulf essentially creates his own 'shrine' in this action, even determining its dedication by ordering its construction of the headland 'þæt hit sæliðend

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[37] See lines 771, 840, 931, 1724, 1607, 2759, 3103.

[38] *Klaeber's Beowulf*, ed. Fulk *et al.*, p. 257; also A. L. Meaney, 'Anglo-Saxon Pagan and Early Christian Attitudes to the Dead', *The Cross Goes North: Processes of Conversion in Northern Europe, AD 300–1300*, ed. M. Carver (Woodbridge, 2003), pp. 229–41 at 238.

[39] 'Order men renowned in battle to build a barrow, a magnificent pyre, on the sea's cape'.

syððan hatan / Biowulfes Biorh' (2806–2807a).[40] Equally, the topography of Beowulf's

burial mound simultaneously serves as a reminder of his deeds and of what his people have

lost. Indeed, the death of the hero precipitates the messenger's prediction of war

('orleghwile', 2911a) to come. Williams argues that Beowulf's barrow provides a point of

convergence for 'imaginary', 'inherited' and 'inhabited' landscapes and that retelling the

performance of Beowulf's burial within the context of the performance of the poem served

to link the 'Anglo-Saxon audience to the heroic past'.[41] Although the action depicted in

Maldon is not situated in the pagan past, the English protagonists embody many of the

ideals vaunted as part of the earlier Germanic heroic ethos (which in all likelihood did not

reflect historical reality in tenth-century Anglo-Saxon England), and an evaluation of

representations of death in this text may provide a useful comparison.

The Battle of Maldon

The Battle of Maldon, which foregrounds the lord–retainer relationship between Ealdorman

Byrhtnoth of Essex and his men, has been described as exemplifying the manifestation of

the Germanic heroic ethos in Anglo-Saxon literature. The ideal of the *comitatus* referred to

in Tacitus' *Germania* (written *c.* 98) as fundamental to early Germanic societies displays

various similarities with the ethos of the fighting Englishmen in *Maldon* (and Hrothgar's

retainers in Beowulf), but has been shown to be a poetic fiction that does not reflect the

historical reality of tenth-century England.[42] Indeed, it is extremely unlikely for there to

have been such continuity between historical practice in the times of Tacitus and Byrhtnoth

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[40] 'so that sailors will afterwards call it Beowulf's barrow'; H. Williams, *Death and Memory in Early Medieval Britain* (Cambridge, 2006), p. 186.
[41] Williams, *Death and Memory*, p. 201.
[42] Woolf, 'Ideal', 68.

(*Maldon* was most probably written around the time of the historical battle in 991).[43] Nevertheless, the *Maldon*-poet chooses to represent a particular ideal of death that may not have been commonplace among the various historical armies but that enables him to expound a particular moral judgement.

The only surviving manuscript copy of *Maldon* (London, BL, Cotton Otho A.xii) was burnt in the Ashburnham House fire in 1731 and all that survives is the transcription made by David Casely.[44] Even before the fire, manuscript leaves had been lost and the beginning and end of poem are missing.[45] Although the manuscript was almost completely destroyed, Scragg notes that the catalogue of Cotton's library from 1621 indicates that *Maldon* was found in the codex along with Asser's life of Alfred and various other eleventh- and twelfth-century Latin saints' lives and hagiographic texts (including Latin lives of Ælfheah by Osbern, and of Wulfhilda, Æthelburh and Hildelitha by Goscelin, for example), as well as a Latin and an Old English charm.[46] Scragg goes on to suggest that the composition of the manuscript may have been down to Cotton, given his penchant for 'dismantling manuscripts which came into his possession and binding them up differently'.[47] *Maldon* is situated in the genre of battle poetry, but is notable for its focus on: (i) an ealdorman, not a king; and (ii) a defeat, not a victory.[48] The ethos of *Maldon* is interesting given that the Anglo-Saxon 'folc' (22a) and 'heorðwerod' (24a) are Christians fighting a pagan enemy. The poem provides an interesting contrast to many saints' lives and a poem such as *Beowulf* insofar as the death of its hero, Byrhtnoth, and the subsequent

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[43] D. Clark, 'Notes on the Medieval Idea of Dying with One's Lord', *N&Q* 58 (2011), 475–84 at 275, has most recently explored the unreliability of Tacitus as historian. He also charts analogues for men dying with their lords in Latin, Norse, Celtic, Anglo-Saxon, Old Saxon and medieval French traditions.

[44] See Scragg, 'The Battle of Maldon', p. 35, note 3 on the attribution of the copy; also Scragg, '*Maldon*: Fact or Fiction?', p. 20.

[45] Bradley, *Poetry*, p. 518.

[46] See *The Battle of Maldon*, ed. D. G. Scragg (Manchester, 1981), p. 1 for a list of contents.

[47] Scragg, 'The Battle of Maldon', p. 15.

[48] Strategically, if all of Byrhtnoth's men decided to die, the king's army would be left weak and the ultimate loyalty at this moment should have been to the king; Woolf, 'Ideal', 71.

defeat of the English forces is a literary depiction of a known historic event. The poem

reflects a concern over what may constitute a 'good' death for warriors faced with an

unbeatable enemy. In much the same way as Alfred Tennyson's 'The Charge of the Light

Brigade' has come to many to demonstrate heroic steadfastness in the face of

insurmountable military obstacles in modern popular culture, the *Maldon*-poet attempts to

celebrate the heroism of the loyal retainers while simultaneously counting the cost of one

person's actions and the widespread suffering it causes. Indeed, both poems essentially deal

with a military blunder. In the case of *Maldon* it is this blunder that causes Byrhtnoth's

death, and Robinson has argued that 'the slaying of Byrhtnoth [. . .] becomes a type and

emblem of the many death-agonies suffered by Englishmen in the battle'.[49] Byrhtnoth's

death inspires certain of his men to a heroic stand, however, and the deaths of these

retainers have occupied much scholarship on the poem.[50] The poet presents various

insights into conceptions of what constitutes 'good' death, and it seems worth investigating

this further, including addressing whether *Maldon* commemorates Byrhtnoth's death

specifically, as Ute Schwab has argued, or criticizes Byrhtnoth's actions.[51]

Byrhtnoth's Death-Scene

991. Her wæs Gypeswic gehergod, and æfter þon swiðe raðe wæs Brihtnoð
ealdorman ofslegen æt Mældune.[52]

In contrast to the terse entry in the *ASC*, *Maldon* provides an elaboration on the nature of

its hero's death and the events that death precipitates. A comparison of narrative motifs in

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[49] F. C. Robinson, 'God, Death and Loyalty in *The Battle of Maldon*', *Old English Literature*, ed. R. M. Liuzza (New Haven and London, 2002), pp. 425–44 at 427.
[50] See Woolf, 'Ideal', 81.
[51] U. Schwab, '*The Battle of Maldon*: A Memorial Poem', *The Battle of Maldon: Fiction and Fact*, ed. J. Cooper (London and Rio Grande, 1993), pp. 63–85.
[52] *Battle of Maldon*, ed. Scragg, p. 9; translation on p. 43, note 29: 'In this year Ipswich was ravaged, and very soon afterwards Ealdorman Brihtnoth was killed at Maldon'. This forms part of the *ASC* entry for 991 in versions C, D and E.

saints' lives and *Maldon* reveals substantial descriptive differences for the portrayal of the

death-scene. Given that *Maldon* characterizes a lay nobleman whose duty is to defend his

'eþel' (52b) from marauding 'wælwulfas' (96a), this is unsurprising; it can be assumed that

death is not desired by Byrhtnoth as it is by saints.[53] Like many martyrdom accounts,

Maldon begins with a conflict, whereby the request for pagan worship or sex or marriage to

a pagan typically found in saints' lives has been replaced with the pagan request for tribute

('gafole forgyldon', 32b). In the ensuing exchange (lines 25–61) between the 'wicinga ar'

(26a) and the leader of the Essex forces, Byrhtnoth suggests that it is the 'sælida' (45a) and

his companions who will die; victory is conceptualized as earthly triumph in battle, from

which it can be inferred that death is seen as defeat rather than the heavenly reward sought

by saints. This exchange eventually leads to Byrhtnoth agreeing to concede his territorially

advantageous position by allowing the Vikings to cross a causeway, which in turn leads to

his death. A certain amount of criticism has posited Byrhtnoth a hero, but one whose

heroism is simultaneously tainted by his decision to allow ground to the invaders and

whose downfall, in the parlance of tragedy, is precipitated by a central flaw ('for his

ofermode', 89b).[54] In contrast with some of the extended purple passages often used to

depict saintly death, Byrhtnoth's is dealt with swiftly. He is described as being 'heowan'

(hewn down) by 'hæðene scealcas' (heathen soldiers, 181). The depiction of Byrhtnoth's

death represents a literary stylization of the historical reality of death in battle. In other

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[53] Note here the dehumanization of the enemy, which also perhaps functions as an embodiment of one of the creatures of the beast of battle motif; see Scragg, '*Maldon*: Fact or Fiction?', p. 27.

[54] Or, perhaps, his *hamartia*, or error of judgement, if an Aristotelian theory of tragedy is followed. See *Glossary*, s.v. 'Tragedy'. Viewing Byrhtnoth's death as tragic precludes any possibility of sanctity, given that a saint's death is never a tragedy but rather a triumph. As Cross, 'Oswald and Byrhtnoth', p. 94, notes, readers should ostensibly be concerned with what the poet tells us, and his manifest concern with presenting Byrhtnoth's death as an example of encouragement to his loyal men (against whom the cowards are held in opposition) to hold firm in battle. The poet does not focus on the factual accuracy of the battle, which the English lost and which was therefore somewhat of a political and economic 'tragedy', but rather uses Byrhtnoth's death as a means to expound the exemplary manifestation of loyalty, in which defeat is less important than the way in which it is approached. E. B. Irving, Jr., 'The Heroic Style in *The Battle of Maldon*', *SP* 58 (1961), 457–67 at 462, also suggests how the enactment of a particularly heroic virtue can precipitate a tragic outcome. On the much-discussed interpretation of Byrhtnoth's *ofermod*, see H. Gneuss, ' "The Battle of Maldon" 89: Byrhtnoð's "Ofermod" Once Again', *SP* 73 (1976), 117–37.

Anglo-Saxon battle texts (such as *Brunanburh*, 23a), references to combatants being hewn down are commonplace, which supports the view of the literature reflecting historical reality to some degree. (Cross also makes this point.)[55] Reynolds describes the archaeological evidence of Anglo-Saxon battle victims and suggests that 'injuries sustained during formal combat with edged weapons are characterized by blows to the head, shoulders and upper limbs', which seems to accord with the poet's description of Byrhtnoth's death and perhaps demonstrates a first-hand knowledge of the kinds of physical traumas faced in battle.[56] Byrhtnoth's death functions as the precursor to the ensuing desertion by a number of the English force and eventual English defeat by the Vikings. Despite this, Byrhtnoth's loyal retainers are not presented as viewing Byrhtnoth's decisions as 'bad', which contrasts with a great deal of modern battle poetry, particularly that arising from the First World War.[57] Instead the poet attributes the defeat to the treachery of the deserters; indeed Offa is presented as berating the cowardly Godric, 'Abreoðe his angin, / þæt he her swa manigne   man aflymde' (242b–243).[58] The cowards who run from the battle are presented as narrative foils to those who remain, whose grim determination to finish what Byrhtnoth started provides the focus of the remainder of the poem. The poet presents an appropriate death for a nobleman such as Byrhtnoth, and there does not appear to be a value judgement inculcated in the death-motif itself. What is more ambiguous is the poet's opinion on Byrhtnoth's decision-making. This ambivalence is subsumed into the description of the actions of the loyal retainers, which enables the poet ultimately to turn Byrhtnoth's death into something good. Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe suggests that Byrhtnoth's 'noble decision to engage the enemy ultimately led to his death,

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[55] Cross, 'Oswald and Byrhtnoth', 106.

[56] Reynolds, *Deviant Burial*, pp. 40–4.

[57] See works such as 'The General' by Siegfried Sassoon in B. Gardner, ed., *Up the Line to Death: The War Poets 1914–1918* (London, 1976), p. 97.

[58] 'May his action fail, that he here put so many men to flight'.

but it is his death, in part responsible for the following defeat, which ensures his glory'.[59]

What *Maldon* perhaps does more than commemorate Byrhtnoth is suggest that an

unnecessary death can have a positive outcome in the ideals it inspires in those who

observe that death.

Dying, Death and Being Dead

In what follows I have analysed the number of lines in *Maldon* and in *Beowulf* devoted to the

processes of dying, the moment of death and being dead as defined by Fischer.[60] This has

made it possible to investigate whether each poet conceptualized death as comprising

discrete elements and, if so, how much of the poem as a whole concentrated on each such

element. An elucidation of the motifs leading up to, including and following death in the

poetry provides an interesting comparison to hagiography. Based on this assessment, the

following motifs can be seen in *Beowulf*:

> I.*2.3*. Beowulf addresses followers
> I.*2.4* Death speech reported in direct speech
> I.*4.12* Death in battle with dragon (poison from dragon-bite contributes to death)[61]
> I.*5.2* Disposal of body by followers
> I.*5.18* Beowulf's enemy dies (although this is not the result of a vengeance attack)

Beowulf's death-scene begins at line 2688 and ends at 3182 with the conclusion of the

poem. The process of dying arguably begins at line 2688 when Beowulf is grabbed round

his neck by the dragon (which 'heals ealne ymbefeng / biteran banum', 2691b–2692a). This

episode ends at line 2751 (omitting the episode in which Wiglaf fetches the treasure

because it does not directly describe Beowulf's dying). The moment of Beowulf's death

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[59] K. O'Brien O'Keeffe, 'Values and Ethics in Heroic Literature', *The Cambridge Companion to Old English Literature*, ed. M. Godden and M. Lapidge, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, 2013), pp. 101–19 at 117. See also P. Clemoes, *Interactions of Thought and Language in Old English Poetry*, CSASE 12 (Cambridge and New York, 1995), p. 419, on Byrhtnoth as 'an archetype' of the Christian ealdorman.
[60] See *TOE* I, §2.02.03.02. Compare with the lexical signifiers found in §02.02 'Act of dying, decease'.
[61] Beowulf's soul is also presented as departing; see above, p. 122.

occupies lines 2819a–20. Finally, the period of Beowulf 'being dead' begins when his

followers come out of the wood (line 2845) and ends at line 3182.[62]

In *Maldon*, the following motifs appear:

I.*1.3* Confrontation (request for monetary tribute)[63]
I.*2.1* Byrhtnoth addresses God and prays
I.*2.2* Byrhtnoth addresses persecutors
I.*2.4.* Death speech reported in direct speech
I.*4.12* Death in battle (no ante-mortem torture)

Byrhtnoth's dying is described in lines 134–180; his death occupies a single line

(181) and his 'being dead' is represented in lines 185–325.[64] In both *Beowulf* and *Maldon* the

state of the main protagonists 'being dead' occupies more lines than the processes of dying

or the moment of death, presumably because in both cases the death of the hero has far-

reaching consequences for a number of people. There is an ambiguity, however, over what

would have been made of characters such as Beowulf or Byrhtnoth in their state of being

dead. In their descriptions of the periods of 'being dead', both poets shift the focus onto

the people affected by the deaths of Beowulf and Byrhtnoth. The deaths of saints benefit

others (in most cases), whereas the deaths of these non-saintly characters signal uncertainty

and doubt, thus affecting interpretations of these deaths as 'good'. Given the relative

importance placed on worldly as opposed to miraculous post-mortem events in both

Beowulf and *Maldon*, it may be instructive to consider in more detail the prominence of the

'being dead' schema in the death-scenes of Beowulf and Byrhtnoth.

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[62] Beowulf's dying: 91 lines (2.9% of whole poem); Beowulf's death: lines 2819a–20 (0.01%); 'being dead': 337 lines, 10.6%). The deaths of other heroes who may have served as analogues for Beowulf in his fight with the dragon, such as Þórr in *Vǫluspá*, *Gylfaginning* and *Skáldskaparmál*, for example, happen very quickly; see Rauer, *Dragon*, pp. 44–5.

[63] See references to tribute-payment in the martyrdom of Ælfheah, Bishop of Winchester and Archbishop of Canterbury, who is taken prisoner by the Danes, in the *ASC*, 1012: 'Then on the Saturday the army became greatly incensed against the bishop [Ælfheah] because he would not promise them any money, but forbade that anything should be paid for them'. This refusal to allow tribute to be paid leads directly to the archbishop's martyrdom: 'they pelted him with bones and with ox-heads, and one of them struck him on the head with the back of an axe, that he sank down with the blow, and his holy blood fell on the ground, and so he sent his holy soul to God's kingdom'; *EHD*, p. 245. Also, H. Leyser, 'Ælfheah (*d.* 1012), *ODNB* [accessed 28 February 2012].

[64] As a percentage of the whole poem Byrhtnoth's dying occupies lines 134–180 (46 lines, 14.2%), his death line 181 (1 line, 0.3%), and his being dead lines 185–325 (140 lines, 43.1%).

Post-Mortem Phenomena

Unlike many of the saints' lives included in the MI, neither *Beowulf* nor *Maldon* feature miraculous death-scene phenomena: no voices from heaven, no animals, no bells or singing, no angels. This is unsurprising given Beowulf's pagan and Byrhtnoth's lay status.[65] The nearest thing to such phenomena is perhaps the smoke rising to heaven in *Beowulf* ('Heofon rece swealg', 3155b). Fulk *et al.* suggest that this refers simply to 'natural [. . .] phenomena', and argue that its placement after the image of the mourning women reflects 'the indifference of the universe to that suffering'.[66] Such an interpretation rejects any ambiguity over the nature of the motif, and thereby the possibility of it signalling a positive post-mortem spiritual experience for Beowulf. I find the poet's remark intriguing and think it offers more than just a depiction of the mechanics of cremation; it may be that the poet wishes to account for his own uncertainty over the post-mortem fate of his hero.

After his death, the narrative focus shifts away from Byrhtnoth and, although his loyal retainers express their desire either to avenge their lord or die trying ('unearge men efston georne: / hi woldon þa ealle   oðer twega, / lif forlætan   oððe leofne gewrecan', 206–208[67]), no more about the body of Æthelred's thegn is heard, striking an immediate contrast with the focus in saints' lives. Given that *Maldon* is ostensibly a battle poem, the lack of focus on Byrhtnoth's body is not unexpected, with logistics making it likely that Byrhtnoth's body remained where it fell until the conclusion of the battle. The late twelfth-century *Liber Eliensis* narrates how Byrhtnoth's head is removed by the Vikings after his death, but states that his body is recovered by the religious community of Ely, who bury it

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[65] It might be worth noting references to post-mortem portents in the chronicle poem 'The Death of Edgar'. Although these are not direct post-mortem motifs insofar as there is a temporal dislocation between Edgar's death and portents mentioned ('steorra on staðole'), the literary portrayal of such elements as signifiers of God's might does appear across genres; see 'The Death of Edgar' (975), ASPR 6. Edgar 'geendode [. . .] lif þis lære' (30), which reflects a common motif for representing the peaceful deaths of saints. Not much is known about Edgar's historic death; see A. Williams, 'Edgar [*called* Edgar Pacificus] (943/4–975)', *ODNB* [accessed 15 March 2012].

[66] *Klaeber's Beowulf*, ed. Fulk *et al.*, p. 270.

[67] 'undaunted men hastened eagerly: they all wished one of two things, to lose their life or avenge their lord'.

with a ball of wax in place of the head.[68] The poem narrates no such detail, but the lack of an extant ending makes it impossible to state conclusively that such a reference never existed. The appearance of the detail in the *Liber Eliensis* could potentially have been part of an imperative to align Byrhtnoth with other murdered Anglo-Saxon saints.

The evidence from each poem demonstrates a lack of interest in associating miraculous phenomena with the deaths of either Beowulf or Byrhtnoth. This suggests that neither a conclusive statement of salvation for Beowulf nor an alignment of Byrhtnoth with saints was at the forefront of either poet's mind, thus foregrounding the ambiguity over the interpretation of the respective death-scenes.

Summary

Similarities do exist between the deaths of saints and the deaths of 'heroes' found in Old English poetry. Although somewhat paradoxical, the deaths of saints function to energize their followers and the same can be seen of Byrhtnoth. Beowulf's death does not function in this way, but instead operates as a catalyst for an outpouring of grief and lament. Following an analysis of the death-scenes of Beowulf and Byrhtnoth, it is evident that a number of important differences exist between them and the death-scenes of saints. Firstly, neither Beowulf nor Byrhtnoth are presented as wanting to die; death is not victory for heroes, unlike for saints who are shown to be fixed upon dying for the Christian faith. Secondly, whereas the deaths of saints are always triumphant, the deaths of the characters considered in this chapter cannot be conceptualized in the same way and are rather shown to be negative for those left behind. Old English heroic poetry is concerned with ideals of heroism in the same way that *passiones* are concerned with ideals of martyrdom, and such differences in interpretative ethos are not always complementary. In the poetic examples,

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[68] E. Coatsworth, 'Byrhtnoth's Tomb', *The Battle of Maldon AD 991*, ed. D. Scragg (Oxford, 1991), pp. 279–88 at 279.

heroic ideals are expressed externally, but not always realized, whereas the outward expression of saintly ideals inevitably leads to physical embodiment and realization of those expressions. Things go wrong in heroic poetry in ways not found in saints' lives, and heroes are often presented as flawed in a way that does not apply to saints.

There is a conspicuous lack of miraculous phenomena in the majority of non-saintly compared with saintly death-scenes. (Christ's death in *DOTR* features various phenomena, such as earthquakes and darkness, but this is unsurprising given notions of Christ's death-scene as an archetypal paradigm.) Thus, in Beowulf's and Byrhtnoth's death-scenes, no equivalents of the sweet smells or lights that are typical conventions of saintly death are portrayed. Given that these various phenomena are explicit signals of sanctity, the lack of such signs is unsurprising, and the hypothesis that non-saintly deaths may be accompanied by an appropriate equivalent can be discounted. Beowulf's death in the far past is not predicated as a model of imitation given that his demise precipitates a predicted catastrophe for his people; indeed Judith Garde describes his fight with the dragon as 'an unwise heroic undertaking', and Beowulf's own companions attempt to dissuade their lord from the fight.[69] It must be understood, however, that Beowulf succeeds in his aim of killing the dragon and, therefore, an awareness of the definitions of 'success' or 'failure' is necessary. Beowulf's pagan status leads to a degree of ambiguity over the fate of his soul, and the moral judgements that Byrhtnoth's death may have elicited are ambiguous, and this reflects an issue that would have been of utmost concern to an Anglo-Saxon audience.[70] When viewed through the prism of judgement cast by the Anglo-Saxons' cultural inheritance on the one hand, Byrhtnoth dies an honourable death in battle defending his

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[69] J. Garde, 'Christian and Folkloric Tradition in *Beowulf*: Death and the Dragon Episode', *Literature and Theology* 11 (1997), 325–46 at 325. Compare this with *Mart.* 106 Mark and Marcellian, where Sebastian urges the saints to martyrdom when they contemplate apostasy immediately before death.

[70] Thompson, *Dying and Death*, pp. 26–7.

king's land and people.[71] On the other hand, depending on the interpretation of 'ofermod',

Byrhtnoth's death is avoidable and prefigures a wider defeat for his forces, a defeat which

historically ultimately led to the establishment of tribute to the invaders.[72] In light of the

heroic ethos presented in poetry such as *Maxims II*, for example, Byrhtnoth's decision to

cede ground to his enemies is more explicable ('Ellen sceal on eorle', 16a).[73] If one were to

accept the tripartite interpretation of 'death' referred to earlier, it is not Byrhtnoth's *death*

that is bad (he dies like Oswald, struck down on the battlefield), but rather his *being dead* and

its related uncertainties for those left behind, which is also true of Beowulf's death. The

deaths of Beowulf and Byrhtnoth are 'bad' for the characters on a personal level insofar as

they deprive their subjects of what Nagel calls 'the goods that life contains'.[74] For Beowulf,

with his desire for earthly memorialization, this would have been more of an issue, but to a

Christian audience any goods of life would be superseded by the goods of heaven, and this

is also reflected in Byrhtnoth's request that his 'sawul' (177a) be allowed to journey to God

peacefully ('mid friþe ferian', 179a). As well as affecting the 'self' of the characters,

Beowulf's and Byrhtnoth's deaths are objectively bad in that they lead to uncertainty or

undesirable events for those left behind. This is an important point of contrast to the

deaths of the saintly non-pareils discussed in earlier chapters, whereby their deaths and

consequent deprivations of 'the goods of life' pale into insignificance compared with what

may be termed 'the goods of heaven'. Likewise, deaths of saints are good for Christians left

behind because the dead body becomes an intercessory object through which 'good' things

can be requested from God. The deaths of Beowulf and Byrhtnoth thus contribute to

different aesthetics than the deaths of saints. These non-hagiographic texts demonstrate

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[71] In this, Byrhtnoth may have been viewed as successfully embodying the heroic ethos of the Germanic past which informed Anglo-Saxon attitudes.

[72] M. Blackburn, 'Æthelred's Coinage and the Payment of Tribute', *The Battle of Maldon AD 991*, ed. D. Scragg (Oxford, 1991), pp. 156–69 at 164–6.

[73] 'Maxims II', ASPR 4, pp. 55–7.

[74] T. Nagel, 'Death', *The Metaphysics of Death*, ed. J. M. Fischer (Stanford, 1993), pp. 61–9 at 62.

that alternative death-scene aesthetics were current across the Anglo-Saxon period, but the deaths of the non-saintly characters within these literary artefacts are not as unambiguously 'good' as those of the saints presented in hagiography.

Hagiographers seem intimately concerned with portraying the post-mortem efficacy of their saintly subjects, and their ability to perform miracles and intercede on behalf of a specified Christian community. Although the manner of death is important inasmuch as it typically has to conform to a set of literary standards, the particular method of dispatch (beheading, drowning, dying peacefully in one's sleep) is perhaps secondary to the wider fundamentals of the whole death-scene. The (liminal) state of being dead generally receives a large amount of attention in many hagiographic accounts because that is the state in which sanctity can predominantly be confirmed. With the non-saintly deaths considered here, the focus in the state of being dead typically shifts away from the heroic protagonist and concerns itself with more worldly issues such as the immediate fate of those left behind. Although the analyses above suggest that more narrative space in both *Beowulf* and *Maldon* are given over to the chronological time in which each hero is dead than the respective processes of their dying and moment of death, and although in many ways they still feature heavily in the minds of the characters still living, Beowulf and Byrhtnoth lose the agency that saints possess in death. Although both protagonists die for a cause, their deaths precipitate war and defeat, respectively. Their deaths might therefore be held up as models of a heroic ideal, but they are not exemplary in the same way that saints' deaths are. In that sense, genre seems to impact on the literary representation of death regardless of the status of the one dying. Even for historical personages such as Byrhtnoth, the representation of death is highly stylized (as indeed is Beowulf's death) and is informed by literary ideals more than by historical reality. Thus, the evidence presented in this chapter indicates that genre and authorial ideals concerning 'types' of characters shaped the

portrayal of death as much as historical veracity (where applicable). At the same time there seems almost to be a taxonomy of death, with the exemplary deaths of saints held as being most worthy, followed by the deaths of heroes and the deaths of ordinary people, of whose demise there is often no literary record.

CHAPTER V
DEATH SPEECHES AND LAST WORDS

'Great farewells often belong to great people, whose deaths
interest us because their lives interest us'.[1]

The discussion of non-saintly death in the previous chapter posed certain questions

regarding the ways in which the deaths of 'heroes' are typically approached in Anglo-Saxon

literature. One of the areas requiring further study relates to the speeches made by these

characters before they die, not least the question of why it is important to reproduce a

hero's last words. Why is Beowulf shown to be so preoccupied with treasure? Why is

Byrhtnoth worried about devils assailing his soul? How do these utterances relate to the

kinds of things saints say? The questions posed by the representations of Beowulf's and

Byrhtnoth's last words open the debate over the wider relevance of, and interest in, last

words. This chapter thus considers descriptions of final utterances across Anglo-Saxon

literature, with the emphasis returning to saints' lives. The turn back to hagiography is an

attempt to decipher what kinds of dying utterances saints are presented as saying, how

these utterances function within hagiographic contexts, and how any trends and patterns

relate to non-saintly narratives. Authorial intent and generic convention are important

contributing factors to the representation of final utterances, and the factors motivating

such depictions need careful consideration. I shall begin by assessing saints' final utterances

before considering non-saintly last words as a means to assess how far they are determined

by the 'type' of literary character.[2] Saints must say 'saintly' things; heroes must say 'heroic'

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[1] G. S. Morson, *The Words of Others: From Quotations to Culture* (New Haven and London, 2011), p. 173.

[2] In his discussion of language in the *Iliad*, R. P. Martin, *The Language of Heroes: Speech and Performance in the* Iliad (Ithaca and London, 1989), p. 45, suggests that, although speeches of heroes are highly stylized, they are simultaneously mimetic; for example, battlefield speeches as presented in the literary artefact of the poem reflect the poet's impression of what warriors say. Likewise, R. Fletcher, *Bloodfeud: Murder and Revenge in Anglo-Saxon England* (London, 2002), p. 66, notes how the presentation of a character, and their words, can be influenced by a later writer's knowledge of events, as with the presentation of King Æthelred in the *ASC*. Fletcher suggests that 'the chronicler has skewed our image of the king, to his lasting disadvantage'.

things; pagans must say 'pagan' things. The impression is such that last words must be

exemplary of the kind of life lived, hence the idea that a saint must in dying say something

that reflects that saintly life. It would not be appropriate for a saint to forget God or waver

in their faith, because in such a case the distillation of the 'vital' characteristics of that life

would have failed. What is of paramount importance in an assessment of speech in

literature is that characters say things that authors want them to say. An investigation of the

nature of dying speeches provides another means of assessing how far lives of Anglo-

Saxon saints conform to typical hagiographic conventions.

The words of saints, including last words, have received a fair amount of scholarly

attention, although final utterances as a speech category have not been studied exhaustively.

Likewise, the dying words of heroes or culturally significant figures have been a popular

topic.[3] Claudia Englhofer notes that in Antiquity the 'citation of true or fictitious *ultima*

verba (UV) was popular [. . .] and appeared as a literary topos'.[4] Nevertheless, there remain a

number of areas for further discussion of saintly (and heroic) last words. The *TOE* does

not note 'last words' or 'death speeches' as a distinct category under either its 'Death' or

'Speech' sections, which may suggest that, although last words are an integral part of many

Anglo-Saxon hagiographies (and texts such as *Beowulf* and *Maldon*), they were not

understood as a speech genre in or of themselves during the Anglo-Saxon period.[5] Rauer

has noted the triumphant nature of saintly last words, given that death is a joyous moment,

and it will be interesting to compare whether or not a contrasting elegiac or melancholic

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[3] J. Harris, 'Beowulf's Last Words', *Speculum* 67 (1992), 1–32; Wilcox, 'Famous Last Words', 1–13; R. Waterhouse, 'Ælfric's Use of Discourse in Some Saints' Lives', *ASE* 5 (1976), 83–103; C. Rauer, 'Direct Speech, Intercession, and Prayer in the *Old English Martyrology*', *ES* 93 (2012), 563–71; Goodich, 'Death of a Saint', pp. 227–38; D. G. Bzdyl, 'Prayer in Old English Narratives', *MÆ* 51 (1982), 135–51; Bridges, *Generic Contrast*, p. 14.

[4] C. Englhofer, 'Ultima verba', *Brill's New Pauly*, Antiquity vols, ed. H. Cancik and H. Schneider (Brill Online, 2013), http://www.encquran.brill.nl/entries/brill-s-new-pauly/ultima-verba-e1224470 [accessed 4 October 2013]. Suetonius, in his *Vitae Caesarum*, for instance, records last words for the majority of the emperors included.

[5] *TOE* §02.02 'Death' and §09 'Speech, vocal utterance'.

tone pervades the last words of non-saints.[6] Furthermore, a study of how the last words of

saints and heroes affect an understanding of these figures as exemplary within an Anglo-

Saxon context can hopefully add to the present state of knowledge. For instance, do last

words in any way contribute to the construction of a 'good' death, and by extension to the

cults of Anglo-Saxon saints?[7] In seeking to understand the nature of literary last words, it

may be fruitful to investigate whether any thematic links exist between the last words and

deaths of saints (that is, do particular kinds of utterance prefigure particular kinds of death-

motif?) or whether last words function as performative utterances.[8] By the latter point, I

mean to question whether final utterances perform particular kinds of act (such as a

promise or an oath) and, if so, whether or not these utterances work as successful

communication. As Thomas Shippey has noted in his study of conversation in *Beowulf*,

modern discourse analysis and pragmatics can be usefully applied to Old English texts to

highlight: (i) how Old English discourse follows many of the same laws as modern English;

(ii) the 'literary and stylistic' effects of particular texts; and (iii) whether the conversational

principles found in these texts indicate that 'speech is a reflection of cultural ethos'.[9]

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[6] Rauer, 'Direct Speech', 564.

[7] The role of last words in determining the course of a saint's cult in the later medieval period after the advent of papal authorization of canonization was extremely important, as Goodich, 'Death of a Saint', pp. 229 and 235, notes. Eye-witness testimony from the thirteenth century was fundamental in the process of beatification and was scrutinized in a highly judicial context, whereby any eyewitness 'depositions necessarily demanded conformity to stricter legal norms'. This emphasis on eye-witness depositions necessarily took account of saints' last words and, consequently, 'the final testament of the saint was often of prime importance in shaping his legacy'.

[8] Speech-Act Theory understands three types of utterance: locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary. For the purposes of this chapter, I am interested in the final two types. An illocutionary act describes that which is performed in the utterance of a sentence (so, a sentence can be a demand, a request, a promise etc.). A perlocutionary act is performed upon a participant by or through the utterance of a sentence and results in a wider number of possible consequences insofar as it can instigate a variety of responses in whoever it is directed at. See R. Ohmann, 'Literature as Act', *Approaches to Poetics: Selected Papers for the English Institute*, ed. S. B. Chatman (New York and London, 1973), pp. 81–107 at 82. As D. Blakemore, *Understanding Utterances: An Introduction to Pragmatics* (Oxford and Cambridge, MA, 1992), p. 48, suggests, this view of language works on the understanding 'that when a speaker communicates, he communicates the fact that he is performing an act of a certain type, and communication is successful only if the hearer identifies the type of act being performed'.

[9] T. A. Shippey, 'Principles of Conversation in Beowulfian Speech', *Techniques of Description: Spoken and Written Discourse: A Festschrift for Malcolm Coulthard*, ed. J. M. Sinclair, M. Hoey and G. Fox (London and New York, 1993), pp. 109–26 at 110.

Although I am not ostensibly studying discourse in these texts, many saintly final

utterances occur as part of literary representations of conversation and some of these

principles can be usefully applied to not only the vernacular but also the Latin texts under

investigation here.[10]

Methodology

The MI accounts for speeches included in Anglo-Saxon hagiography of both martyrs and

confessors, noting martyrs' addresses to pagans, martyrs' and confessors' addresses to

followers and martyrs' and confessors' prayers or invocations to God. I shall consider both

direct and reported speech here. The chapter concludes with a consideration of non-saintly

last words and death speeches in Anglo-Saxon literature, which discusses speech

conventions in the corpus more generally.

It is difficult to categorize the trends and patterns in the final utterances of saints,

largely because their deaths are presented as fluid processes that do not function along

normal physiological standards. This fluidity means that physically dead saints often

paradoxically have a post-mortem physicality that enables them to do such things as move,

grow hair and nails, and, occasionally, speak. This would seem to suggest that final

utterances demonstrate fewer distinctive trends, and this will be assessed throughout this

chapter. Given that physical death is not an obstacle to physical bodily expression for

saints, my working definitions in this chapter need to be elucidated more closely. My

definition of a final utterance encompasses both 'last words' and 'death speeches'. For the

purposes of this chapter I consider 'last words' to be the final utterance made before the

moment of physical death, whereas 'death speech' pertains to utterances made at any point

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[10] On discourse in written texts, see M. McCarthy, 'Spoken Discourse Markers in Written Text', *Techniques of Description: Spoken and Written Discourse: A Festschrift for Malcolm Coulthard*, ed. J. M. Sinclair *et al.* (London and New York, 1993), pp. 170–82.

during the three-part division of death elucidated earlier (this includes post-mortem utterances; see below, pp. 157–8). This may not necessarily align with other definitions, but it seems helpful to make such distinctions given the non-normative nature of the death-scenes of saints. Such definitional specificity will, it is hoped, enable a more nuanced consideration of the place of speech within the wider context of the saintly death-scene. It can be expected that the things saints say before they die are exemplary, as their lives are exemplary, and death speeches are unlikely, therefore, to be representative of what ordinary people may say. A hagiographer can be expected to represent something appropriately exemplary, regardless of whether there is any historical precedent for a saint having made such an utterance; last words are thus often anecdotal or follow pre-existing literary conventions. It is necessary, therefore, to account for the authorial intent of literary texts, because speech is a product of the author's imagination rather than an accurate representation of the historical record, even in the case of historically verifiable figures. Modern phenomenological criticism, such as that of the Geneva School, propounds the view that the world of an author affects their literary constructions, as Abrams explains: 'Geneva critics regard each work of literature as a fictional world that is created out of the *Lebenswelt* [lived world] of its author and embodies the author's unique mode of consciousness'.[11] If this is applied to Shippey's assertion that speech in Anglo-Saxon texts can be analysed to assess how far it reflects a 'cultural ethos', it can be expected that hagiographers not only rely on hagiographic traditions in forming the last words of their characters, but also draw on the cultural relativity of their world to form appropriate dying utterances. Guthke notes the impact of authorial intent on the production of literary images, arguing that 'last words [. . .] are often artifacts whose truth is not empirical but

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[11] *Glossary*, s.v. 'Phenomenology and Criticism'.

artistic, shaped by the creative imagination'.[12] It may be useful to keep these ideas in mind

in attempting to determine the motivations of Anglo-Saxon hagiographers.

Last Words and Popular Culture

A fascination with final utterances persists into postmodern popular culture, as evidenced

by the fact that the signifier 'last words' has become a distinct literary form, as Morson has

noted.[13] This popularity has been affirmed by Joseph Harris, who has argued that last

words in modern western culture can be construed as a distinct 'speech genre'.[14] Last words

in popular culture are very often apocryphal (relating to the idea that they should reflect an

appropriate rather than an historical truth), but this in itself can result in the conferring of

status upon someone that is then perpetuated through history.[15] As Guthke notes, the

human capacity for self-reflection is exemplified nowhere better than in 'a final, self-

validating articulation of consciousness' that comes with a person's last words, and it is this

notion that last words should reflect something of the qualities of the life of the speaker

that is typically propounded in last words apocrypha.[16] Guthke goes on to suggest that as a

cultural paradigm the record of last words is for many people the only reminder that a

person had lived a life worth reflecting on (it will be interesting to assess whether the words

of the retainer Byrhtwold in *Maldon*, for example, illustrate the supposition that last words

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[12] Guthke, *Gender of Death*, p. 256.

[13] Morson, *Words of Others*, p. 174.

[14] Harris, 'Beowulf's Last Words', 2. On the argument that genres stem from human discourse, see T. Todorov, 'The Origin of Genres', trans. R. M. Berrong, *New Literary History* 8 (1976), 159–70.

[15] Morson, *Words of Others*, p. 180. A common twentieth-century example of just such a phenomenon would be Captain Lawrence Oates, one of the members of Scott of the Antarctic's doomed mission to the South Pole. He is widely considered to be an epitome of heroism on the basis of his last words (usually reported in popular culture to be along the lines of 'I am going outside and may be some time'), essentially signalling his suicide, which he believed would enable the survival of the remaining members of the expedition. The preponderance of historical figures (such as Oscar Wilde) to whom numerous traditions of last words relate illustrates the often apocryphal nature of last words.

[16] K. S. Guthke, *Last Words: Variations on a Theme in Cultural History* (Princeton, 1992), p. 4.

reflect the essence of a life).[17] This abiding cultural interest in last words is attested by the

vast number of anthologies and volumes either devoted solely to this topic or including it

as a defined subsection within collections of quotations.[18] Morson notes that last words are

often historically unverifiable, but argues that 'Questions about historical accuracy hardly

matter, for this genre depends not on historical accuracy, but on literary appropriateness of

various sorts'.[19] He goes on to suggest that in ancient cultures last words afforded a speaker

an opportunity to distil the fundamental principles of a life, whereby 'last words served as a

recognized form in which the essence of a life, and not necessarily a historical event, was

reported'.[20] This is an interesting consideration in light of last words in Anglo-Saxon texts;

are last words just another conventional topos or are they used to fulfil other functions?

Hagiographers are often temporally removed from the death they seek to record, and they

have a particular motivation in writing a particular type of text. In light of this, do Anglo-

Saxon authors make explicit claims to historical veracity? Ælfric, for instance, in recounting

Abbo's version of Edmund's death (allegedly based on what Abbo was told by Dunstan,

who heard it from King Æthelstan, who was told by Edmund's sword-bearer) is not an

entirely reliable witness to what Edmund said when he was dying. So, Ælfric's assertion

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[17] Guthke, *Last Words*, p. 49. Byrhtwold exhorts the loyal men to courage (' "Hige sceal þe heardra,   heorte þe cenre . . ." ', 312) and determines not to leave the field now that his lord lies dead (' "fram ic ne wille / ac ic me be healfe   minum hlaforde / be swa leofan men,   licgan þence" ', 317b–319). Owing to the fact that the end of the poem is missing, it is not possible to discern whether these are in fact the last words of Byrhtwold.

[18] An interest in last words has also found its way into modern fiction. See John Green's young adult book, *Looking for Alaska*, in which a 'skill' of the main character is his knowledge of the last words of famous people. Note also the pertinent point made by that character, when, after winning a bet armed with such knowledge, he reflects that no-one would know if he was right; J. Green, *Looking for Alaska* (London, 2006), p. 61. Last words are also a feature of popular culture, as demonstrated by the BBC quiz posted as part of the response to the interest in poet Seamus Heaney's last words, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-23944612 [accessed 4 September 2013]. Heaney's last words ('noli timere') were not in fact spoken, but rather sent via text message, indicating the potentiality of modern technology to record the 'truth' of final utterances; see C. Howse, 'Why Seamus Heaney's Last Words Weren't the Last Laugh', *The Telegraph*, 3 September 2013, http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/books/10283710/Why-Seamus-Heaneys-last-words-werent-the-last-laugh.html [accessed 19 November 2013].

[19] Morson, *Words of Others*, p. 176.

[20] Ibid. p. 185; also H. Soukupová, 'The Anglo-Saxon Hero on his Death-Day: Transience or Transcendence? (A Motivic Analysis of Beowulf and Byrhtnoth's Death Speeches)', *Litteraria Pragensia* 18 (1999), 5–26.

that 'he symble clypode / betwux þam swinglum mid soðan geleafan / to hælende criste',

as will be seen, suits hagiographic convention as much as it does historical reality.[21]

Speech-Act Theory and Performative Utterances

The death speeches of saints allow for an ultimate acknowledgement and reflection of

exemplary faith in God, and it may be expected that reports of any 'self-validating

articulation of consciousness' conform to certain hagiographic standards.[22] It has been

suggested that last words in saints' lives are predictable and monotonous, given their

operation within a 'dogmatically established pattern' intended to illustrate the idea that a

person dies as they have lived (that is, displaying exemplary piety at the moment of death).[23]

Jonathan Wilcox has refuted this for many of the martyrs in *ÆLS* who, he suggests, are

portrayed as adopting humour in the face of death as an act of defiance.[24] Such humour is

famously apparent in Lawrence's hagiography, as demonstrated in the *Mart.* (151) where

the saint, tied to a gridiron over a fire, says to the emperor to eat ' "þas sidan þe her

gehirsted is, ond acer me on þa oþre." '[25] Thus, hagiographers may often use speech during

their presentation of a death-scene as an opportunity for a performance that validates or

reinforces a saint's holiness. In light of this, it may be useful to consider whether speech-act

theory may provide a useful framework for the discussion of last words and death

speeches. Originally outlined by the philosopher J. L. Austin, speech-act theory posits that

in the articulation of a particular type of utterance particular kinds of act are performed,

whereby the words uttered enable or instigate an action.[26] This association between

utterance and action is known as a 'illocutionary act' (as opposed to a 'locution', which

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[21] *ÆLS* (Edmund), lines 111–13: 'ever he called, between the blows, with true faith, on Jesus Christ'.

[22] Guthke, *Last Words*, p. 4.

[23] Ibid. p. 57; also p. 49.

[24] Wilcox, 'Famous Last Words', 7. On conceptions of speech in Anglo-Saxon England, see E. Jager, 'Speech and the Chest in Old English Poetry: Orality or Pectorality?', *Speculum* 65 (1990), 845–59.

[25] ' "this side which is cooked, here, and turn me over on the other." '.

[26] See *Glossary*, s.v. 'Speech-Act Theory'.

refers to the basic uttering of a sentence) and can encompass many kinds of speech-act, including promising, praising, boasting or cursing. Illocutionary acts are assessed on whether they are 'performed' successfully, by which definition they must be performed appropriately by the speaker, who has an intention to do what is spoken, and must be interpreted correctly by the hearer (if utterances operate under these conditions successfully, they are said to have been performed 'felicitously'). Thus, a performative utterance is one 'that brings about a desired end by virtue of the very pronouncement'.[27] Another category of utterance – the 'perlocutionary act' – 'has an effect on the actions or state of mind of the hearer which goes beyond merely understanding what has been said'.[28] Although Austin omitted literature from his original theory, it has been argued that literature is a primary example of the performative insofar as it creates the characters and world that it represents.[29] Literary utterances are also 'rule-governed' and characters within a work itself, as well as an external audience, must be able to interpret these rules and their implications within a particular context. Do the death speeches of saints adhere to the same rules as other types of literary utterance? Lester Little has analysed liturgical curses in the context of speech-acts and concludes that, despite the criticisms sometimes directed at Austin's theory, it can be useful as a model for assessing the structure and function of a curse, for example.[30]

Utterance-Types in Hagiography

Although martyrs may be presented as experiencing lengthy death-scenes, especially if they undergo numerous tortures, confessors are more commonly presented as experiencing

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[27] Martin, *Language of Heroes*, p. 41; also J. H. Miller, *Speech Acts in Literature* (Stanford, 2001).

[28] *Glossary*, s.v. 'Speech-Act Theory'.

[29] Ibid. Contrast this view with that of Ohmann who suggests that literature is complicated by the fact that the person writing speech-acts has no intention of performing them. Ohmann, 'Literature as Act', p. 82.

[30] L. Little, *Benedictine Maledictions: Liturgical Cursing in Romanesque France* (Ithaca and London, 1993), p. 115.

extended deathbed scenes and are often forewarned of their approaching deaths. Can it be

said that confessors are in the process of 'dying' from the moment of this forewarning? If

this is taken to be so, it may follow that confessors therefore have longer to prepare their

last words. Despite the fluidity of saintly death, and the fact that death speeches and last

words are typically not uniform in terms of when they occur, some patterns are still

observable. The MI indicates that death speeches are a common topos of *passiones*, and they

may be represented in either direct or reported speech, although reported speech is by far

the more common narrative form.[31] For the majority of hagiographies featuring last words

in direct speech, the death-motif is that of beheading, with many of these accounts coming

from the *Mart.* The most common addressees of martyrs' last words are pagans.[32] That a

larger number of martyrdom accounts feature some form of utterance directed at a

persecutor, normally highlighting their iniquity, reflects a widespread concern among

hagiographers to reinforce a saint's power. This presumably relates to a hagiographer's aim

of presenting a saint as an effective intercessor, who is able to benefit those who pray to

him or her. The desire to highlight a saint's power can be manifested through a

hagiographer's choice of utterance-type. A common utterance-type is, therefore, the

imperative (including optative and jussive subjunctives, such as Sixtus's speech in the *Mart.*

(146), ' "Towyrpe þe Crist" '), often directed at pagans in *passiones*, although other addresses

include family members, God, the devil or even the saint's own soul. In such utterances,

saints (such as Victor Maurus; see the example on the next page) typically give orders and

commands that have the effect of either speeding up their martyrdom, causing something

to happen to a persecutor through God's intervention, or ensuring that a particular action

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[31] Other references to saints addressing God or praying or addressing their followers or persecutors may come earlier in the entry.

[32] The following saints whose death speeches are recorded in direct speech are beheaded: *Mart.*: 34 Babylas etc., 67 George, 83 Victor Maurus, 87 Victor, Corona, 112 Luceia and Auceia, 121 Procopius, 122 Marina, 160 Symphorian, 163 Genesius the Comedian, 170 Felix of Thibiuca etc., 184 Cyprian, 209 Justus, 230 Chrysogonus, 234 Eulalia; *ÆLS*: Oswald, Denis, Edmund (post-mortem utterance); *ÆCHom* I,26 Peter and Paul; *LS* 32 (PeterPaul).

(or actions) is carried out by a saint's companions. The ubiquity of commands serves to underscore the saint's status as a vehicle of God's power, and the demonstrable success of their last words presumably functions to highlight to an audience the saint's efficacy as an intercessor after their death. The success of many martyrs' death speeches, for example, is predicated not on a pagan's ability to respond to a saint's utterance, but on God's. This is evident in the *Mart.* (83 Victor Maurus), where the saint commands his guards to tell Maximian of his impending death: ' "Secgað ge Maximiane þæm casere þæt he bið togeare dead, ond him beoð þa scancan forbrocen ær þon he sy bebyrged" '.[33] Victor's power is reinforced by the fact that the addressees do not respond verbally to the saint's command, and by the fact that Maximian's later command that the saint be denied burial is wholly unsuccessful. Maximian intends that wild animals and worms ('wilde deor ond wyrmas') consume ('forswelgan') Victor's body, but in a complete reversal of Maximian's utterance the saint's body is instead guarded by 'tu wilddeor' and later buried. A consistent trend towards omitting the last words of saints' persecutors (as opposed to their utterances as part of discourse with a saint), warrants further attention. Staying with the *Mart.*, which includes a large number of pagan adversaries, the presentation of the last words of one of these characters in direct speech is found in only one entry (154 Hippolytus). Here, the last words of the prefect Valerianus and the emperor Decius are represented, the former declaring ' "Eala, Laurentius, þæt ðu me gebundenne mid fyrenum racenteagum tyhst in ece fyr" ', and the latter crying ' "Eala, Yppolitus, þæt ðu me grimlice lædest gebundenne in forwyrd" '.[34] Where the last words of saints' enemies are represented, then, they are typically antithetical to the ethos found in the death speeches of saints. The entry for Theodoret (54) is also perhaps telling; the judge who orders the saint's death consequently

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[33] 'Tell emperor Maximian that he will be dead within a year, and that his legs will be crushed before he will be buried'.
[34] ' "Alas, Lawrence, that you pull me into the eternal fire, tied with red hot chains" '; ' "Alas, Hippolytus, that you cruelly lead me bound into perdition" '.

suffers intense pain but, instead of being allowed a final utterance, the only thing that

leaves his mouth are his own 'innoð', which he 'spaw [. . .] ut þurh his muð'.

The most common addressees of utterances by female martyrs are likewise pagan

persecutors, closely followed by God. Pagans are usually addressed with an imperative

utterance, commanding them to do something the saint desires, as in Agnes's utterance in

the *Dv*:

> Discede a me, fomes peccati, nutrimentum facinoris, pabulum mortis, quia iam ab
> alio amatore praeventa sum, qui me anulo fidei suae subarravit, circumdedit me
> vernantibus atque coruscantibus gemmis, induit me ciclade auro texta, cuius pater
> feminam nescit, cuius mater virgo est, cui angeli serviunt, cuius pulchritudinem sol
> et luna admirantur.[35]

It would be fair to say that such utterances call attention to the martyred female body

(either its beauty or its impending physical trials) more so than imperatives uttered by male

saints, emphasizing its physicality. Although the last words of female saints are found in

these texts, these female 'voices' are not really female voices at all but a female voice

imagined by and mediated through a male.[36] Equally, male voices are representations, but

feminist criticism would argue that a female presence in these texts is doubly removed. It

will, therefore, be interesting to investigate any convergence or divergence between literary

realizations of male and female last words. The mediation of female voices is

problematized through the emphasis on a discourse of physicality and bodily recognition

that is less pronounced in accounts of male martyrdom.

There are similarities between the death speeches of martyrs and confessors insofar

as both typically occur before an audience (although audiences to the deaths of confessors

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[35] Ehwald, p. 298, lines 17–21; *Prose Works*, p. 112: ' "Depart from me, oh incentive to sin, nourishment of evil, food of death; for I am already engaged by another lover who has betrothed himself to me with a ring of his good faith, surrounded me with glowing and glistening gems, and dressed me with a robe woven from gold; whose father knew no woman, whose mother is a virgin, whom angels attend and whose beauty the sun and moon admire." '

[36] Even the anonymous hagiography, although theoretically possibly written by women, is presumably more likely to have had male authors.

are generally friendly, comprising various brethren, followers or servants of the saint,

compared with audiences of martyrdoms). Confessors are much more likely to have a

'deathbed scene' than martyrs, whose deaths typically occur as public, outdoor spectacles.

Often, the final utterances of confessors take the form of a prayer to God or instructions

to followers concerning the treatment and burial of the saintly corpse. There are deviations

from these general trends, with various addresses to the soul and the devil, for example.

The last words of Martin are reported in *ÆLS* as addressing the devil, while surrounded by

his priests:

> Hwæt stendst þu her wæl-hreowa deor
> ne gemetst þu on me þu manfulla ænig þincg
> Ic beo underfangen on abrahames wununge[37]

Where confessors call attention to their bodies at the moment of physical death, such

utterances normally function as their rejection of the worldly life, as shall be seen below

with regards to Æthelthryth. Bede's prose *vita* of Cuthbert, for example, comments on the

saint's struggles with speech in the throes of his illness ('Nec multa loquebatur, quia

pondus aegritudinis facilitatem loquendi minorauerat').[38] These are not Cuthbert's dying

words, however, which instead take the highly conventional form of praise of God,

although Bede does not see fit to record the details of his prayer in direct or reported

speech.

Dialogue is found in certain of the MI texts, but the use of dialogue tends not to

follow any set patterns. Dialogue appears in accounts of martyrdom and peaceful death,

although in the former it generally represents a confrontation between a saint and a pagan

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[37] *ÆLS* (Martin), lines 1366–8: ' "Why standeth thou here, thou cruel beast? Thou wilt find nothing in me, thou evil one. I shall be received into Abraham's dwelling." '

[38] *Vita Sancti Cuthberti auctore Beda*, §39, *Two Lives,* pp. 282–3: 'He did not say much because the weight of his affliction had lessened his power of speech'. Bede notes in the same chapter how Cuthbert does, however, manage to give extensive instructions regarding such things as keeping peace among brethren, hospitality, modesty, upholding the correct rule of the Catholic faith, the date of Easter and the rejection of schismatics, so it can only be assumed that he miraculously regains the power of speech later.

persecutor, whereas in the latter it is represented more as a means for passing on information to followers (such as information regarding a desired burial). It is true to say that phatic language is extremely uncommon across the corpus, with utterances typically working instead either to issue instructions or impart information (this is the case for martyrs and confessors).[39] Ruth Waterhouse has made many useful observations on the nature of discourse in Ælfric's works, and a number of points are of particular interest: (i) in *ÆLS*, 'with the exception of the stories of Mark and Maurice, it is the lives of the English saints, Æthelthryth, Oswald, Edmund, Alban and Swithun that have the lowest proportions of discourse'[40]; and (ii) *ÆLS* (Julian and Basilissa) displays a trend towards good characters' words being represented in direct speech and bad characters' in indirect speech.[41] In applying Waterhouse's findings to the wider corpus to assess whether these Ælfrician approaches to writing speech extend to other hagiographies or whether these modes of representation are peculiar to Ælfric, some findings warrant particular mention. For instance, God's words (like many saints') are generally depicted in direct speech. To Ælfric, the evil speech of persecutors may have been relatively unimportant compared with that of saints, unless in the context of that persecutor being admonished by the saint, so they are less worthy of direct representation. Because Ælfric had relatively little space in his entries compared with some hagiographers, he evidently decided to prioritize the edificatory words of saints.

Moreover, successive lives of the same saint do not necessarily reproduce the same death speeches. For example, Aldhelm includes entries on Agnes in both the *Dv* and *Cdv*, but portrays the saint's utterances differently in each text, with the former presenting a long

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[39] Rauer, 'Direct Speech', 563, notes this in respect of the *Mart.*
[40] Waterhouse, 'Use of Discourse', 85–6. (See above, p. 56, on Alban as 'native'.)
[41] Ibid. 91. Martianus's words are occasionally given in direct speech (e.g. lines 130–1, 147–8, 198–201 and 310–13), and, at one point, the direct speech of devils is presented (156–9), but it is fair to say that such episodes are much less frequent than for the 'good' characters.

direct speech by the saint that is omitted from the latter. The *Mart.*, which Rauer suggests

may be informed by Aldhelm's works as well as by Pseudo-Ambrose's *Passio S. Agnetis*

(*BHL* 156), includes only the saint's post-mortem direct speech. *ÆLS* includes numerous

speeches by Agnes, including her prayer before death and two post-mortem visions in

which the saint addresses her parents and Constantia. Presumably stylistic sensibilities play

a part in such decisions by individual hagiographers, but authorial motivations seem likely

to have had an effect. The decision by the martyrologist to include only Agnes' post-

mortem utterance, for example, may have had as much to do with his penchant for the

miraculous as with the constraints an encyclopaedic text imposed. (Anderson uses the

example of Agnes to suggest that the martyr was a model of positive female counsel to a

ruler; however, one would have to question here what Agnes is trying to achieve other than

her martyrdom, given that Sempronius does not convert.)[42]

It is not unsurprising that prayer constitutes a substantial section of saintly last

words. Bzdyl has noted that narrative prayers are found not only in Anglo-Saxon saints'

lives, in which they are ubiquitous, but also secular narratives such as *Beowulf* and *Maldon*.[43]

Bzdyl lists the compositional elements of a narrative prayer (invocation, comment, petition

and doxology), but shows that no hard and fast rules regarding the inclusion of each

element exist: 'narrative prayers often omit the doxology and sometimes they consist only

of an invocation and a petition'.[44] In the hagiographic examples, the majority of these

prayers are interrogative utterances addressed to God. In the *Mart.*, for example, no distinct

link between utterance-type and death is observable, with prayers as last words being

followed by different death-motifs: beheading and giving up the ghost.

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[42] R. S. Anderson, 'Ælfric's Kings: Political Hagiography in Anglo-Saxon England' (unpubl. PhD dissertation, Indiana Univ., 2004), pp. 121–7, and Appendix 1, pp. 205–6.
[43] Bzdyl, 'Prayer', 135.
[44] Ibid. 141.

Rauer has noted intercession as an interesting feature of prayer in the *Mart.*, especially in the entries for George (67), Christopher (73), Erasmus (97), Marina (122) and Cyricus (127). Generally represented in direct speech, these prayers are conspicuous in the fact of each saint's ante-mortem involvement in his or her post-mortem cult.[45] Each of these direct speeches is based on the same representations in Latin source texts, and Rauer suggests that the martyrologist seemingly never inserts a speech of his own composition.[46] The interest in these prayers lies in the fact that the saints predict their own cults, as demonstrated by Erasmus's speech (entry 97): 'Þa bæd he God, þæt æghwelc mon þe him gebæde on þære stowe, ðær his eardung wæs, þæt he þæs hæfde mede wið God'.[47] Rauer questions the theological implications of the immediacy with which requests for things such as pre-emptive 'protection from illness, hunger and misfortune [. . .] and harm to harvests' are granted by God.[48] Of these saints, only George is found in *ÆLS* or *ÆCHom*; Marina and Christopher each have anonymous vernacular lives, but the passions of Cyricus and Erasmus are not recounted elsewhere in the texts included in the MI. *Mart.* (67 George) presents the saint praying while he is still alive for those who celebrate his memory:

> ic þe bidde þæt swa hwilc man ðe min gemynd on eorðan do, þonne afyrr þu fram þæs mannes husum ælce untrumnesse; ne him feond sceþþe, ne hungor, ne mancwyld. Ond gif mon minne naman nemneð on ænigre frecennesse, oððe on sæ oþþe on siðfæte, þonne gefylge se þinre mildheortnesse[49]

George's prayer is immediately answered by a voice from heaven ('Ða com stefn of heofonum') granting his conditions, which is similar for the other intercessory prayers in

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[45] Rauer, 'Direct Speech', 566.

[46] Ibid. 564–5.

[47] 'Then he asked God, that everybody who would pray in the place where his dwelling had been, that he should be rewarded for this by God'.

[48] Rauer, 'Direct Speech', 567.

[49] ' "I ask you that whichever man may celebrate my memory on earth, remove then from this man's dwellings every illness; no enemy may harm him, nor hunger, nor pestilence. And if anyone mentions my name in danger, either at sea or on a journey, may he obtain your mercy." '

the *Mart.* (in Erasmus's entry, the voice from heaven affirms the saint's request: ' "Eall hit

bið swa þu bidest" '). The fact that God is shown granting these dying wishes reinforces

the power of these saints.[50] Ælfric's account of George presents a different version of this

prayer, and uses reported rather than direct speech:

> He þancode ða gode eallra his godnyssa
> þæt he hine gescylde wið þone swicolan deofol
> and him sige forgeaf þurh soðne geleafan.
> He gebæd eac swylce for eall cristen folc
> and þæt god forgeafe þære eorðan renas
> for þan ðe se heaða þa hynde ða eorðan[51]

Here, no resounding voice from heaven validates the saint's wishes, which may reflect, as

Waterhouse suggests, Ælfric's strong sense of 'the potentiality of both direct and indirect

speech in reinforcing the message which he wished to bring home to his audience'.[52]

Clearly the martyrologist and Ælfric had different ideas about the role of speech and

appropriate words for saints and God to utter. Rauer also notes that, although Bede and

Ælfric express concern over prayers made for secular or financial gain, litanies of the saints

in Anglo-Saxon England, which do include requests for protection from such things as

pestilence, hunger and injury or misfortune, suggest that they were not uncommon.[53] What

is interesting to note is that these kinds of intercessions are not typically found in *ÆLS* or

ÆCHom, nor are intercessory prayers a common feature of the *Dv*, *Cdv* or *HE*.[54] Wilcox

suggests that the motivational intent of Ælfric's saints' last words is 'to turn an audience

toward God', and predictions of personal cult may have seemed theologically problematic

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[50] Bzdyl, 'Prayer', 148; Rauer, 'Direct Speech', 567.

[51] *ÆLS* (George), lines 163–8: 'Then he thanked God for all His mercies, that He had shielded him against the deceitful devil, and had given him victory through the true faith. He prayed likewise for all Christian folk, and that God would give rain to the earth, because the heat was then wasting the land'.

[52] Waterhouse, 'Use of Discourse', 83.

[53] Rauer, 'Direct Speech', 567.

[54] Ibid. See the litany in Oxford, Bodleian Library, Douce 296, line 154, which includes the request for protection: 'A peste et fame et clade libera'; Lapidge, *Litanies*, p. 238. (Ælfric's account of Lucy does include in her last words to her followers the surety that God has granted her requests: 'swa ic eom forgifen fram þam ælmihtigan gode / nu þyssere byrig siracusanan / eow to geþingienne gif ge foð to geleafan', lines 136–8).

to so careful a hagiographer.[55] The death-motif used in the *Mart.* is beheading, and Ælfric

assigns death by the sword to George (see the MI for the differentiation of these motifs),

but there does not seem to be a causal link between speech and death-motif. It is thus

possible to map how each hagiographer uses last words as a means by which to reinforce a

particular hagiographic agenda. Aldhelm, as another example, does not typically represent

the last words of his virgin martyrs, although where they are included, words are used as an

opportunity for a saint either to highlight their virginity or express their desire for death,

thereby highlighting Aldhelm's authorial purpose.

Last Words as Vengeance?

In Chapter II it was noted that vengeance miracles involving the sensory deprivation of

blindness are common in Anglo-Saxon lives of native saints especially. Given this interest

in miracles affecting the senses of wrongdoers, and the importance placed on speech in

hagiography to direct or instigate action, it may be assumed that vengeance miracles

relating to muteness, for example, would be found in the texts under discussion. In other

words, given that speech is fundamental to such things as the eventual condemnation of a

martyr to physical death, it could be expected that there would be examples of punitive

divine vengeance related to speech.[56] No vengeance miracles involving speech occur in the

Anglo-Saxon corpus, however. The only possible exception is found in *ÆCHom* at the end

of the homily on the Invention of the Holy Cross ('eodem die Sanctorum Alexandri,

Eventii et Theodoli'). After ordering the saints' deaths, by decapitation for the mass priests,

but stabbing for Alexander ('prician oð þæt he swulte ðurh swylcum pinungum', 136),

Aurelian is left wretched ('earman', 148), bemoaning his misery ('his yrmðe bemænende',

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[55] Wilcox, 'Famous Last Words', 9.

[56] Johnson, 'Vengeance is Mine', p. 49, notes examples of muteness as vengeance in *vitae* of Irish saints Berach, Ciarán of Saigir, Colmán Élo and Finán Cam, and in the Latin and vernacular lives of Brigit, so the motif seems to be more common in Irish hagiography.

148) before biting his tongue, dying and departing 'to wælhreawum cwicsuslum' (150).[57]

The punishment-motif operates to silence Aurelian physiologically in a reversal of the

structures of authority; Aurelian's belief in his ultimate authority is shown to be misguided

because the power of God, mediated through the saints, destabilizes and ultimately

destroys any earthly power.[58] The lack of other vengeance miracles involving speech

indicates that striking wrongdoers mute is not a common Anglo-Saxon motif, and

vengeance miracles that compromise the body more fully to demonstrate both a

persecutor's especial sinfulness and a saint's holiness seem to be a more common trend

among Anglo-Saxon hagiographers.[59]

Post-Mortem Utterances

The tripartite division of 'death' (dying, the moment of death, being dead) was noted above

(pp. 16–17), and I wish to relate this concept more closely to saints who speak after the

moment of their physical death (that is, in the stage of 'being dead'; see MI §I.*5.10*). As a

sub-section of the post-mortem miracle category, this corpus includes: (i) beheaded saints

whose disembodied heads give instructions to followers; and (ii) saints who appear to

followers or relatives in visions and speak. Confessors also appear to followers in visions

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[57] *ÆCHom* II,20 (Alexander, Eventius and Theodolus). Godden notes the source of this section to be the *acta* of Pope Alexander (*BHL* 266), found in the Cotton-Corpus Legendary on which Ælfric seemingly draws. See M. R. Godden, 'Catholic Homilies 2.18 (Cameron C.B.1.2.22/23)', 1998, http://fontes.english.ox.ac.uk [accessed 14 August 2012]; also Whatley, 'Acta Sanctorum', s.v. 'Alexander papa', pp. 65–7.

[58] L. Tracy, *Torture and Brutality in Medieval Literature: Negotiations of National Identity* (Cambridge, 2012), pp. 40–53, investigates how later medieval English hagiography works to present the authority of those who torture saints to be 'illegitimate and corrupt', but similar discourses of power (worldly or spiritual) can be seen in Anglo-Saxon hagiographic examples. Johnson, 'Vengeance is Mine', p. 49 lists scriptural parallels for muteness as vengeance (striking adversaries mute frequently operates as a mode of vengeance for Irish saints): Ps. XXX.19; Ps. LXII.12; Wis. IV.19; Zach. XIV.12–14; 3 Macc. II.22. None of these Old Testament parallels explicitly refers to the tongue being bitten, but the sense of the unjust being struck mute is the same.

[59] Cursing Anglo-Saxon saints are not especially common. On curses, see P. Hofmann, 'Infernal Imagery in Anglo-Saxon Charters' (unpubl. PhD dissertation, Univ. of St Andrews, 2008); B. Danet and B. Bogoch, ' "Whoever Alters This, May God Turn His Face from Him on the Day of Judgement": Curses in Anglo-Saxon Legal Documents', *Journal of American Folklore* 105 (1992), 132–65 at 134 (as Hofmann, 'Infernal Imagery', p. 30, note 14, has noted, this study is 'problematic'); Little, *Benedictine Maledictions*. Ælfric condemns non-liturgical cursing in *ÆCHom* II,2 (Stephen), line 203: 'Ne mæg nan man oðerne wyrian and him sylfum gebeorgan' ('Nor may any man curse another and protect himself'). See DiNapoli, p. 30, for homiletic references to cursing.

after their death and speak, so this motif is not limited solely to martyrs.[60] Post-mortem

utterances are presumably included by hagiographers as evidence of the holiness of their

subjects, but they also implicate the dead saints in determining the trajectory of their post-

mortem veneration (see above, p. 154–6). In the *Mart.* entry on Justus (209), the saint's

father and uncle wonder what to do with the saint's decapitated body, after which the head

speaks and provides them with instructions: ' "Gongað on ðis stanscræf ðæt her neah is,

ond git þær metað weal se is mid ifige bewrigen. Bedelfað on ðam þone lichoman, ond

sendað min heafod on yncre teage, ond bringað minre meder þæt heo ðæt cysse" '.[61]

Instructions such as these concerning burial are typical of post-mortem utterances (as well

as often forming the last words of saints before the moment of death) and offer examples

of successful illocutionary acts; both speaker and hearer are represented as operating along

appropriate lines in a performative act that is understood as an instigator of a particular

action. Unlike many speeches between saints and their adversaries, in which the 'rules' of

successful discourse are frequently contravened (most often by the saint), the death

speeches of saints to their followers are generally successful.

Last Words of Native Saints

Drawing on the evidence presented above, in what follows I shall demonstrate whether the

last words of native Anglo-Saxon martyrs and confessors follow any hagiographic patterns

for last words. Of the texts included in the MI that feature no representations of saintly

death speeches, many relate the lives of native saints (B.'s life of Dunstan, and Goscelin's

lives of Wærburh, Seaxburh and Wihtburh, for instance). On the whole, however, there is a

discernible trend for portraying the death speeches of native saints, which accords with the

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[60] See *Mart.* 60 Ambrose of Milan where the saint appears in a vision telling the general where to fight.
[61] ' "Go into this cave which is near here, and there you will find a wall which is covered with ivy. Bury the body next to that, and put my head into your bag, and take it to my mother so that she may kiss it" '.

general trend for non-native lives. Some of these death speeches are considered in more

detail below.

   Oswald

As has been noted, Oswald dies in battle against a pagan enemy, and his life and death are

commemorated in hagiography from across the Anglo-Saxon period. Bede was the first to

assign a prayer to the lips of the dying Oswald:

> Vulgatum est autem, et in consuetudinem prouerbii uersum, quod etiam inter uerba
> orationis uitam finierit; namque cum armis et hostibus circumseptus iamiamque
> uideret se esse perimendum, orauit pro animabus exercitus sui. Vnde dicunt in
> prouerbio: 'Deus miserere animabus, dixit Osuald cadens in terram.'[62]

Bede's description of Oswald's last words demonstrates the belief in a link between the

kind of life lived and the kinds of words uttered at death, with the prayer being associated

to Oswald's habit of frequently praying during his earthly life. The example demonstrates

the ease with which last words seem to enter popular consciousness, with Oswald's

utterance being held up as an appropriate example of something to say in the face of death.

The sense of Oswald's last words having become proverbial is not found in the *Mart.* or

ÆLS, although both texts report that they took the form of prayer. The martyrologist, who

tends to be reasonably literal as a translator, also reproduces the speech in its Latin version:

'Oswalde endade his lif in gebedes wordum ða hine mon sloh, ond þa he feol on eorþan,

þa cwæð he: "Deus miserere animabus." He cwæð: "God, miltsa þu saulum."'[63] Oswald's

entry in *ÆLS* likewise records the saint's last words in direct speech: ' "God gemiltsa urum

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[62] *HE*, III.12, pp. 250–1: 'It is also a tradition which has become proverbial, that he died with a prayer on his lips. When he was beset by the weapons of his enemies and saw that he was about to perish he prayed for the souls of his army. So the proverb runs, "May God have mercy on their souls, as Oswald said when he fell to the earth."' Chase, 'Saints' Lives', p. 166 sees in Bede's overall description of Oswald's death a certain wariness regarding the heroic values encoded in Oswald and the circumstances of his death.

[63] 'Oswald ended his life in words of prayer when he was killed and when he fell to the ground, he said "*Deus miserere animabus*." He said: "God, have mercy on the souls" '. On sources, see Rauer, *Mart.*, p. 279.

sawlum" '.[64] The biblical echo in Oswald's final utterance firmly situates the saint in a

mimetic network recalling Christ's passion in each of these texts.

Kenelm

These words of Kenelm to his tutor Æscberht feature a biblical echo and recall Jesus'

prediction of Judas' betrayal in the Gospel of John ('dicit ei Iesus "quod facis fac citius"',

John XIII.27): 'Iam herentem hostem et diuersa petentem secreta mente furiata sic

increpare martyr uidebatur ex uoce dominica, "Quod facis, fac citius"'.[65] The last utterance

of the saint before the moment of death, however, is a hymn ('Te Deum laudamus, Te

Dominum confitemur'), noted in reported speech. It is stated that Kenelm dies when he

gets to the verse 'Te martyrum candidatus laudat exercitus', which seems to function to

suggest Kenelm's own status as a martyr, again through the process of *imitatio*.[66] In many

ways this account is unusual compared with other *passiones* insofar as no verbal sparring

occurs between the saint and his persecutor, although this may reflect the fact that the

saint's murder is politically rather than religiously motivated, or the fact that he is so young.

By this I mean that Kenelm's murder is reported as being ordered by Cwoenthryth to

enable her to achieve her dynastic aims rather than occurring as a result of religious

difference. Moreover, the public 'spectacle' of martyrdom found in many of the late-

antique-based *passiones* is lacking here; there is neither an audience to hear the saint's

admonishment of their evil persecutor, nor one to watch the saint's fortitude in the face of

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[64] *ÆLS* (Oswald), line 161: 'God have mercy on our souls'. For Ælfric's sources, see R. Jayatilaka, 'Lives 26 (St Oswald) (Cameron B.1.3.26)', 1996, http://fontes.english.ox.ac.uk [accessed 4 May 2012].

[65] *Vita et miracula*, §7, pp. 60–1: 'Now as the foe stood perplexed and hunted for secluded spots in different places with maddened mind, the martyr seemed, with the voice of the Lord to rebuke him saying: "That which thou dost, do quickly" '. Cephalophoric saints normally walk with their heads to choose their own burial site, but Kenelm does not do this and is instead buried by Æscberht where he falls (see Love's note 5).

[66] Ibid. §8, p. 60: 'Noble army of martyrs: praise Thee'. Translation in *The Psalms of David in Metre According to the Version Approved by the Church of Scotland* (London, 1913), pp. 636–7. Love notes that the hymn was prescribed by the Rule of St Benedict for use 'on Sundays and feastdays, after the twelfth and last response at nocturns' (see Love's note 7); its use here may prefigure Kenelm's cult.

death. Kenelm does not suffer tortures; no verbal sparring occurs between him and Æscberht, and, if last words are intended to reflect the essence of a life, Kenelm's final utterance emphasizes his innocence and align his death with Christ's sacrifice.

Æthelthryth

It has been discussed above that peaceful deaths afford saints with different opportunities in terms of death speeches. Confessors typically undergo a 'deathbed-scene', and in most instances of this kind of death-scene, the final utterance is not needed to defy an enemy. Moreover, confessors are typically surrounded by a friendly audience, which inevitably affords them with an opportunity to impart wisdom or leave instructions for their burial, in contrast to martyrs, who often use their last words to defy their persecutors. Æthelthryth's death is attributed to illness, but neither Bede nor the martyrologist recount the last words of the saint. Like Bede, Ælfric repeats the saint's reference to the tumour on her neck as occurring because of youthful vanity, but there is no sense that these are meant to represent last words, given the temporal remove between their utterance and the saint's death, during which time a doctor called Cynefrith ('sum læce [. . .] cynefryð gehaten', 61–2) lances her tumour so that it is thought she will recover. It is noteworthy that Ælfric explicitly represents Æthelthryth as suggesting that her youthful worldliness is a factor in her illness and death and makes no mention of the plague referred to in his Bedan source (Bede's reference to the other sisters carried off with Æthelthryth is also omitted):

> Heo cwæð ic wat geare þæt ic wel wyrðe eom
> þæt min swura beo geswenct mid swylcere untrum-nysse
> forðan þe ic on iugoðe frætwode minne swuran
> mid mænig-fealdum swur-beagum and me is nu geþuht
> þæt godes arfæstnyss þone gylt aclænsige   (54–8)[67]

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[67] *ÆLS* (Æthelthryth): 'She said "I know truly that I am well deserving that my neck should be afflicted with so great a malady, because in my youth I adorned my neck with manifold neck-chains, and now I think that God's justice may cleanse my guilt."'

Perhaps to Ælfric a plague ('pestilentiam', *HE*, IV.19) that carries off not only the saint but many of her nuns, did not represent an appropriate death. By concentrating solely on Æthelthryth's illness, Ælfric is able to expound on the nature of atonement for sins, and his death-speech description concentrates on aspects of the saint's death-scene that are worthy of imitation, namely her humility and devotion to God.[68]

Guthlac

Guthlac's final utterance is afforded narrative space in *Felix's Life* and *GuthB*. Given that *GuthA* is not concerned with the circumstances of Guthlac's death, there is, unsurprisingly, no mention of his last words. The martyrologist omits reference to Guthlac's death, and thus to his last words. In Felix's account, Guthlac's last words are rendered as follows: ' "Fili mi, praepara te in iter tuum pergere, nam me nunc tempus cogit ab his membris dissolvi, et decursis huius vitae terminis ad infinita gaudia spiritus transtolli malit." '[69] According to Love, there is no known direct source for the speech in Felix, although the section on sending forth his spirit is modelled closely on Bede's prose *Vita S. Cuthberti*.[70] *GuthB* pays sustained attention to the saint's death (based on Felix's *vita*) and includes a version of the saint's supposed last words:

> Tid is þæt þu fere,
> 7 þa ærendu   eal biþence,
> ofestum læde,   swa ic þe ær bibead,
> lac to leofre.   Nu of lice is,
> goddreama georn,   gæst swiðe fus.
>
> (1295b–1299)[71]

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[68] *pestilentia* can mean a pestilential or unhealthy condition, as well as plague or infectious disease; see *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, ed. P. G. W. Glare, s.v. *pestilentia*.

[69] *Felix's Life*, §50, pp. 158–9: 'My son [Beccel], get ready for your journey [to Pega], for now the time has arrived for me to be loosed from the body; the end of my life has come and my spirit is eager to be carried away to joys without end'. (Guthlac previously gives instructions concerning his burial.)

[70] R. C. Love '*Vita S. Guthlaci* (L.E.2.1)', 1997, http://fontes.english.ox.ac.uk [accessed 4 May 2012].

[71] 'It is time that you go, and call to mind all those messages, speedily take, as I previously instructed you, a message to my most dear one. Now my spirit is desirous of the joys of heaven, most eager (to be) gone from my body'.

In both the prose and verse texts, the saint's last words take the form of issuing directions

to followers and simultaneously signal a sense of triumph at impending death and the soul's

ascent to heaven. It is this paradigm of separation of the body and soul that James Rosier

believes is explicitly emphasized throughout *GuthB*:

> The form and action of Death, with his precursor *adl* (*sar*, *wærc*), is that of a
> trespasser or alien warrior who seeks to enter, to unlock, the saint's domain (his
> door, house, and hoard = the body) and plunder the treasure (his life = the soul).[72]

Death is consistently personified in the poem as a warrior ('wiga'; lines 999a and 1033b–

1034), which seems to be an aesthetic representation peculiar to vernacular poetry.

Moreover, death is portrayed as a battle that the saint is willing to lose; in defeat comes

victory. This faith in victory is reflected in Guthlac's choice of final utterance, and his last

words further illustrate attitudes towards burial, which is a duty Guthlac intends his sister

to carry out.[73]

The death speeches of native saints often adhere to similar patterns found in the

lives of non-native saints, although there are some discernible differences. Native martyrs

do not explicitly call attention to the physical enactment of death on their bodies during

their death-scenes, but this is unsurprising given that the ante-mortem torture motif does

not commonly feature in these lives. Kenelm's verbal echoing of Jesus' words and his

hymn and Oswald's recalling of Jesus' words are included to indicate impending death to

an audience, but they also signal a link between Christ's sacrificial death and the deaths of

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[72] J. L. Rosier, 'Death and Transfiguration: *Guthlac B*', *Philological Essays: Studies in Old and Middle English Language and Literature in Honour of Herbert D. Meritt*, ed. J. L. Rosier (The Hague and Paris, 1970), pp. 55–64 at 86.

[73] The image of life as treasure may have implications for *Beowulf*. If life is equivalent to treasure, it is the theft of such that (albeit indirectly) leads to Beowulf's death. Here, the agent of death is the dragon (perhaps representative of 'bad' paganism), who, like personified Death in *GuthB*, sets out to seek (or to regain) the treasure and, in doing so, causes the death of the hero. Although Beowulf may be a 'good' pagan, his death may signify the uncertainty of his soul's post-mortem fate, and although the treasure is retained, it is buried with the dead hero; is Death then ultimately victorious? J. W. Sutton, *Death and Violence in Old and Middle English Literature* (Lewiston, Queenston and Lampeter, 2007), p. 56 suggests that the burying of the treasure with Beowulf amounts to hoarding, which means that the Geats call their downfall upon themselves. Beowulf's passing of the treasure and his own accoutrements of war onto Wiglaf is a symbolic figuring of Wiglaf's inheritance, which is negated by the interment of that treasure.

these saints. What Guthke calls 'verbal imitatio Christi' therefore highlights the innocence of the slain saints, especially in the case of Kenelm.[74] This lack of continuity between speech and embodiment is in marked contrast to the treatment of death in many of the accounts of non-native saints, in which saints are presented as calling attention to their physical bodies through the many tortures that are frequently inflicted on them. The cumulative sense of these 'savageries' announces impending physical death in a different manner, as with the *Dv* (Rufina and Secunda), where Secunda exclaims: ' "Applica ignes, saxa, gladios, flagella, fustes et virgas; quot tu poenas intuleris, tot ego glorias numerabo; quot tu violentias irrogaveris, tot ego martirii computo palmas" '.[75] Last words such as these are undoubtedly performative, and many are presented as instigating the very moment of death, which is the ultimate intention of the saint.

Where the last words of native confessors are included in the texts, they often call attention to the saints' knowledge of their deaths, of which they have been forewarned. These last words take the form of instructions to followers or declarative statements rather than prayers to God or addresses to devils, for example. Implications that arise from this evidence include the supposition that, as performative utterances, the last words of native confessors prefigure some kind of required action from their followers, such as burial at a specified location. Bede reports Chad's death using the motifs of both foreknowledge and giving instructions to followers:

> Deinde subiunxit diem sui obitus iam proxime instare. 'Namque hospes' inquit 'ille amabilis, qui fratres nostros uisitare solebat, ad me quoque hodie uenire meque de saeculo euocare dignatus est. Propter quod reuertentes ad ecclesiam dicite fratribus, ut et meum exitum Domino precibus commendent et suum quoque exitum, cuius hora incerta est, uigiliis orationibus bonis operibus praeuenire meminerint.[76]

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[74] Guthke, *Last Words*, p. 159.

[75] Ehwald, p. 307, lines 16–17; *Prose Works*, p. 119: 'Lay on fire, stones, swords, whips, cudgels and rods: however many penalties you inflict, that many glories shall I number; however many savageries you impose, that many palms of martyrdom shall I count'.

[76] *HE*, IV.3, pp. 340–1: 'Then he added that the day of his death was close at hand. "For", he said, "the beloved guest who has been in the habit of visiting our brothers has deigned to come today to me also, to summon me from this world. So return to the church and tell the brothers to commend my departure to the

For the most part, such performative utterances are shown to work as successful communication. The sum of this evidence indicates that hagiographic death speeches contribute to an understanding of saints' deaths as exemplary. In order to assess whether this is a phenomenon unique to hagiography, or whether last words in non-hagiographic texts conform to their own generic conventions, an analysis of non-saintly last words now follows.

Last Words in Non-Hagiographic Texts

The depictions of non-saintly protagonists' last words go some way to illustrate how generic conventions dictate the form of final utterances. Wilcox has suggested that representations of the deaths of heroes participate in an 'aestheticization of death' in the same way as portrayals of saintly death, and he includes speeches in this aesthetic: 'Last words give heroes a chance to establish their heroic credentials by displaying appropriate indifference to death'.[77] Wilcox's heroes are drawn from Old Norse sagas, however, and a different set of heroic imperatives may be applicable compared with heroes found in Old English literature. Nevertheless, a similar analysis can be applied to the heroic characters in *Beowulf* and *Maldon*, and I argue that neither Beowulf nor Byrhtnoth seem indifferent to death.[78] In their death speeches, neither character displays the overweening pride with which they are sometimes associated. Last words in literature are ostensibly the construct of the author, and, just as a saint must say something appropriate to that holy status, Beowulf must say something appropriate for a pagan king, and Byrhtnoth for a Christian

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Lord by their prayers and that they also remember to prepare for their own departure, the hour of which is uncertain, by fasting and prayers and good works.'"

[77] Wilcox, 'Famous Last Words', 9.

[78] Ibid. 4. S. B. Greenfield, 'Beowulf and the Judgement of the Righteous', *Learning and Literature in Anglo-Saxon England: Studies Presented to Peter Clemoes on the Occasion of His Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, ed. M. Lapidge and H. Gneuss (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 393–407 has noted the lack of critical consensus over the interpretation of the *Beowulf*-poet's rendering of the hero's last words. On speech-acts more generally in *Beowulf*, see Shippey, 'Principles of Conversation', pp. 109–26.

ealdorman.[79] The last words of Beowulf and Byrhtnoth are therefore just as much performances as the words of saints, and Sutton suggests that heroic last words extend the notion of death as spectacle, taking the place of deeds when a hero becomes incapacitated.[80]

Two categories of last words are considered here, which demonstrate broad similarities with the categories of saints' death speeches: prayers and invocations and addresses or instructions to followers. Byrhtnoth's last words fall into the former category and Beowulf's into the latter. Memory seems to be an important function of saintly and heroic last words, although the desires behind memorialization differ. Saints desire the heavenly kingdom, but simultaneously wish to be buried appropriately to enable the veneration of their relics; Beowulf wants to be remembered for his earthly successes and requests that his barrow is visible from the sea (2802–2808); the loyal retainers in *Maldon* cannot bear to leave the battlefield, lest their memory is tainted with cowardice for future generations. Schwab suggests that *Maldon* is a commemorative poem for those who fell in battle, and that the speeches of the retainers function as 'auto-epitaphs' intended to impress the names of the loyal retainers onto the reader's memory.[81] Given the importance of earthly deeds in directing forms of remembrance in heroic narratives (Harris also notes the importance of establishing a 'retrospective narrative' in heroic 'death songs' by which means to recount the life experiences of that character), it may be expected that last words reflect personal desires for memorialization of some sort.[82] Thus, whereas saints are fixed on their future, post-mortem spiritual 'life' even during their terrestrial existence, arguably Beowulf and Byrhtnoth only display concern over a future (spiritual) existence when it

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[79] The historically accurate last words of Byrhtnoth are unknown and the *Maldon*-poet's description of speech is based on his conception on what is appropriate.
[80] Sutton, *Death and Violence*, p. 27.
[81] Schwab, 'Memorial Poem', p. 83.
[82] Harris, 'Beowulf's Last Words', 11.

seems that physical life is failing.[83] Is this idea reflected in the kinds of things these

characters are presented as saying during their death-scenes?

Prayers and Invocations

The last words of Byrhtnoth neither recount deeds of his life nor request that he be

remembered, but rather are a prayer to God ('ðeoda Waldend', 173b) to receive his soul,

and prevent its attack by 'helsceaðan' (180a), which is perhaps unexpected, given the heroic

context of the poem:

> Nu ic ah, milde Metod,   mæste þearfe
> þæt þu minum gaste   godes geunne,
> þæt min sawul to ðe   siðian mote,
> on þin geweald,   Þeoden engla,
> mid friþe ferian
>
>   (175–179a)[84]

Bzdyl has noted the different critical responses to Byrhtnoth's dying prayer (that he is a

saint, that he is 'selfish', that he is simply praying as an 'ordinary' Christian would do), and

demonstrates the lack of scholarly consensus over the interpretation of these last words.[85]

Robinson has suggested that the Christian context of *Maldon*'s composition and the ideals

of death that arise from that culture were 'incompatible' with the ideals of heroic life

presented in the poem, which inevitably complicates a view of the text as a purely heroic

exemplar.[86] Robinson goes on to suggest that Byrhtnoth's men 'appear to be oblivious of

the Christian assurances which were available to men in their predicament' (facing

imminent death at the hands of an enemy other) and this in part highlights the heroic

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[83] Orchard, *Critical Companion*, pp. 203–37. The table on pp. 206–7 illustrates the division of Beowulf's last words into three separate speeches.

[84] 'Now, merciful God, I have the greatest need / that you should grant grace to my spirit, / so that my soul might journey to you / into your dominion, Lord of angels, / travel with your protection'.

[85] Bzdyl, 'Prayer', 145.

[86] Robinson, 'God, Death and Loyalty', p. 425.

elements of the poetic ethos.[87] Although commentators have used Byrhtnoth's last words
to support various claims for his status as a martyr, Robinson instead argues that the
psychomachia motif of the *judicium particulare* found within that speech 'subtly de-
Christianizes' the poem. He goes on to note examples of the motif in other vernacular and
Anglo-Latin texts that he suggests illustrate the 'apparent negation of the usual Christian
consolations for death'.[88] Saints have no such doubt that their souls will ascend to heaven.
To my knowledge, the only similar manifestation of psychomachia featured in Anglo-Saxon
hagiography is found in the *Mart.* (211 Hilarion), and even here, the possibility of struggle
is only hinted at: 'ond þy dæge þe he geleorde, he cwæð to him sylfum: "Gong ut, sawl,
hwæt drædest ðu ðe? Gong ut, hwæt tweost ðu ðe nu? Hundseofontig geara þu þeowodest
Gode, ond nu gyt þone deað þe ondrædest?" '[89] The possible reference in this entry, which
is based on Jerome's *Vita S. Hilarionis* (*BHL* 3879), may reflect the prevalence of the motif
in patristic texts that variously influenced Anglo-Saxon texts.[90] It is possible to infer from
the *Mart.* (21 Fursa) an oblique reference to the motif in an ante-mortem context in the
account of the saint's soul being led from his body: 'he geseah ma ondrysnlices ond eac
wuldorlices þonne he mihte monnum asecgan'.[91] Unlike Byrhtnoth, neither of these saints
faces a violent death, and the hagiographic examples do not present quite the same sense of
fear found in Byrhtnoth's invocation to God. Thus, his last words are imbued with a
pathos not found in the entries on Hilarion or Fursa. Although the historical context of the
battle in which Byrhtnoth died means that whether any last words did cross his lips is

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[87] Ibid. p. 426.

[88] Ibid. pp. 428–9. On the patristic motif of *judicium particulare*, see A. C. Rush, 'An Echo of Christian Antiquity in St. Gregory the Great: Death a Struggle with the Devil', *Traditio* 3 (1945), 369–80. Rush, at 369, argues that 'In Gregory's mind there was no doubt that each Christian had to struggle with the devil at death'.

[89] 'and on the day when he died, he said to himself: "Leave, soul, why are you afraid? Leave, why do you hesitate? You have served God for seventy years, and you are still afraid of death?"'

[90] See Rauer, *Mart.*, pp. 300–1.

[91] 'he saw more horror and marvels than he was able to relate to men'.

essentially unknowable, the literary Byrhtnoth's last words display something of the poet's sense of what one should turn their mind to at the moment of death.

Instructions or Addresses to Followers

It has been demonstrated that dying saints issuing instructions to or addressing their companions on their deathbeds is a common motif, and this is also found in non-hagiographic narratives. Beowulf, through his last words, is keen to present himself as a model of kingship and deserving of the great barrow he orders to be built 'æt brimes nosan' (2803a) to house his remains. Fulk *et al.* suggest that 'Beowulf's dying speeches are finely appropriate to the occasion', but there has been a divergence of scholarly opinion on the interpretation of this speech, with critics variously arguing for its support of Beowulf as saved and damned.[92] Bjork has suggested that speeches function as a form of gift in *Beowulf*, which break down as the poem progresses in a reflection of the disintegration and decay of the elaborate societal structures presented in the first half of the poem (in the same way that far fewer instances of feasting, treasure- and gift-giving feature in the latter part of the poem, lines 2200–3182).[93] The dragon episode can perhaps be seen as the ultimate disintegration of this gift-giving society, insofar as the theft of a cup from a hoarding creature (theft and hoarding both actions *contra* to the premises of a successful warrior society) prefigures the eventual death of the hero.[94] Bjork goes on to argue that the power of speech similarly breaks down and loses its stabilizing function in the society depicted in

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[92] Fulk *et al.*, *Beowulf*, pp. lxxxviii and 257; Robinson, '*Beowulf*', p. 147; Greenfield, 'Judgement', pp. 393–407.

[93] R. E. Bjork, 'Speech as Gift in *Beowulf*', *Speculum* 69 (1994), 993–1022.

[94] Goldsmith, *Mode and Meaning*, pp. 86, 256 and 238–9 has allegorically linked the stolen cup to 'Adam's *poculum mortis*'. On the cup of death image, see Hall, 'Eve's *Biter Drync*'; Magennis, 'Cup as Symbol'; Brown, '*Poculum Mortis*'; S. O. Glosecki, 'Beowulf and the Queen's Cup: Determining the Danish Succession', *The Power of Words: Anglo-Saxon Studies Presented to Donald G. Scragg on his Seventieth Birthday*, ed. H. Magennis and J. Wilcox (Morgantown, 2006), pp. 368–96 at 368–71. A further link between drinking and death is made in *The Fortunes of Men*, but an extension of the 'cup of death' metaphor is not necessary here; the poet is making a point regarding the dangers of drunkenness.

the poem.[95] Throughout the course of his last words, Beowulf stresses his credentials as a

good king (lines 2729–2742), and his desire to view the dragon's hoard before he dies

demonstrates a discernible concern for worldly things, namely treasure, as discussed above

(pp. 121–2). Although Beowulf's final utterance is an extended monologue broken by

narrative digressions, his very last words before the moment of death are ultimately

concerned with his dynastic line and following his kinsmen:

> 'Þu eart endelaf   usses cynnes,
> Wægmundinga;   ealle wyrd forsweop
> mine magas   to metodsceafte,
> eorlas on elne;   ic him æfter sceal.'
> Þæt wæs þam gomelan   gingæste word
> breostgehygdum,   ær he bæl cure,
> hate heaðowylmas;   him of hræðre gewat
> sawol secean   soðfæstra dom.
>
>   (2813–2820)[96]

Beowulf's concern with situating himself within a genealogical continuum perhaps serves

to reiterate his pagan status; he is more concerned with worldly commemoration and oral

memorialization worthy of his ancestors than with the post-mortem fate of his soul.[97] In

this can be seen the ambiguity over whether Beowulf's death can be classified as a good

death to a Christian readership.[98] As a Christian interpretation of what a pagan may say at

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[95] Bjork, 'Speech as Gift', 1017–22 analyses the speeches in three Appendices. Harris, 'Beowulf's Last Words', 9–10 provides his breakdown of what he calls 'Beowulf's death song'. See also Rauer, *Dragon*, p. 36.

[96] ' "You are the last remnant of our kin, the Wægmundings; fate has swept away all my kinsmen, warriors in courage, to death. I must go after them." That was the last word from the thoughts of the old man's heart, before he chose the pyre, the hot, hostile flames; the soul departed from him to seek the judgement of the righteous'.

[97] The importance of reputation as a literary device can be seen across historical periods. Indeed, Cassio in Shakespeare's *Othello* rues the loss of his reputation, which he describes as 'the immortal part of myself'; 'The Tragedy of Othello, the Moor of Venice', II.3, 256–9, *William Shakespeare: the Complete Works*, ed. S. Wells and G. Taylor (Oxford, 1988).

[98] In the Old English *Letter of Alexander to Aristotle*, found in the same manuscript as *Beowulf* (fols 107ʳ–131ᵛ), Alexander expresses concern over the manner of his death, which he is told will occur by poison. His mother's end 'þurh scondlicne deað 7 unarlicne' is also predicted. The weeping of Alexander's companions at this news, however, is explicitly linked to the fact that their lord has but a short time ('lytle hwile') to live. Alexander also expresses concern not at the nature of his death but at the fact that it will curtail his pursuit of glory: 'Ond me næs se hrædlica ende mines lifes swa miclum weorce swa me wæs þæt ic læs mærðo gefremed hæfde þonne min willa wære' ('And to me the swift ending of my life was not so much pain as the fact that I had achieved less glory than I would have wished'); text and translation in Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies*, Appendix IIb, §40, pp. 224–53 at 253.

the moment of death, Beowulf's last words do seem appropriate and it is to the notion of appropriateness that this discussion of last words ultimately returns. The final utterances of characters in literary works, regardless of whether those characters are present in the historical record, signify what an author deems suitable. If Beowulf's last words are considered briefly once again, his final utterance seems an appropriate distillation of the essence of his life. Like many of the death speeches of saints, Beowulf's final utterance works as a successful performative utterance in as much as his instructions are carried out.

Summary

The above discussion illustrates that there is no prescriptive way of presenting the last words of a saint (or hero for that matter). Likewise, historical authenticity takes second place to an appropriate congruence between type of character and the form of their last words; what matters is not legitimacy, but that characters say something indicative of the kind of life they have lived. The lack of standardization of last words in hagiography seems to be a reflection of the fact that saintly death as a biological phenomenon does not operate along biologically or physiologically defined principles. As such, examples of death speeches coming after physical death occur, which makes elucidating typical patterns somewhat complicated. Both *passiones* and *vitae* frequently display a disjunction between the physical realities of death and saintly self-expression. The fact that saints' death speeches are rarely represented by hagiographers as paying sustained attention to pain, physical suffering or other terrestrial concerns, but rather focus on the celestial realm, prefigures their imminent translation to heaven. In *ÆLS*, Agatha rejoices in 'these painful torments' during torture, and goes on to link the joys of heaven with the necessity of earthly suffering: 'Ne mæg min sawl beon gebroht mid blysse to heofonum / butan min lichama

beo on þinum bendum genyrwod'.[99] The accumulation of words associated with pleasure such as *lust* and *bliss* in many saintly death speeches creates a direct link between the process of dying, the moment of death and pleasure at the prospect of being dead, in a physical sense at least.

A number of similarities among the various hagiographic texts can be seen. For example, universal martyrs seem to call attention to their bodies and their Christian status more explicitly than native martyrs, and, of these, female martyrs are presented in this way more than males. Moreover, non-native martyrs are more commonly described as engaging in speech-acts that speech-act theorists would argue disrupt the rules of conversation (answering the question 'what is your name', for example, with the exclamatory 'I am (a) Christian').[100] Speech is used as a means of defiance, whereas native martyrs typically use their death speeches to pray to God, which situates them within a different mould of sanctity.

The assessment of Byrhtnoth's and Beowulf's final utterances has provided a point of contrast to the recording of death speeches in saints' lives. Although it is problematic to try and guess at the feelings regarding death and dying of a people far removed from the (post)modern world, and whose thoughts on death are often only represented by what has been preserved in literary texts, the material discussed in this chapter can divulge some of the differing Anglo-Saxon attitudes on the form and function of final utterances. For saints such as Lawrence or Oswald, whose last words seem to have crossed over into the realm of popular legend, the assertion by Guthke that the 'legend' of last words in many ways

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[99] *ÆLS* (Agatha), lines 119–20: 'My soul cannot be brought with joy to heaven / except my body be cramped in your bonds'.

[100] It is important to note how such examples subordinate the individual to the wider Christian community. Christian collectivism is emphasized against the 'pagans'. Modern pragmatics and discourse analysis could usefully be applied to some of these texts in greater detail to assess more fully how representations of conversations work and how this may demonstrate whether the principles of speech are influenced by the cultural contexts of Anglo-Saxon England, as has been explored for *Beowulf*; see Shippey, 'Principles of Conversation', pp. 109–26.

trumps the need for historical authenticity seems to be borne out. The same could be said of Beowulf and Byrhtnoth; what is ultimately important is that the literary manifestation of their last words suits the expectations of their audiences. This attitude to final utterances has persisted throughout history and the interest of the living in the words of the dying shows no signs of abating. Many of the death speeches discussed here have illustrated a trend for verbalizing a preoccupation with the soul at death, and it is to this topic that the next chapter turns.

CHAPTER VI
DEATH AND THE SOUL

                    Nu se eorðan dæl,
        banhus abrocen,   burgum in innan
        wunað wælræste,   7 se wuldres dæl
        of licfæte   in leoht Godes
        sigorlean sohte

                                                    (1366b–1370a)[1]

This quotation from *GuthB* exemplifies the notion of a division between corporeal (and

mortal) body and incorporeal (and immortal) soul at the moment of death, a notion that

finds expression across a range of Anglo-Saxon texts, hagiographic and otherwise.

Although previous chapters focus on the physicality of the death-scene, a study such as this

must necessarily consider death's spiritual elements and the complex nexus of ideas

surrounding the interrelationship between body and soul.[2] This is nowhere more relevant

than in respect of saints' deaths. As R. C. Finucane notes, 'Saints were not "altogether"

dead', and the especial status whereby they maintain a degree of earthly power through

their physical remains reiterates their precedence in a spiritual hierarchy.[3] This precedence,

and the associated miracles that both signal it and arise from it, reflect the purity of a saint's

soul, which is further demonstrated by the miraculous phenomena that form a fundamental

part of saintly death-scenes. This chapter surveys death-scene motifs relating to the soul,

which themselves reflect the dual ontological existence of saints in both the earthly and

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[1] 'Now the earthly part, the broken bone-house, remains in its grave in the dwelling-place, and the heavenly part has sought from the body the reward of victory in God's light'.

[2] 'At death, the soul would separate from a body compounded of earthly dregs, and would gain, or regain, a place intimately congruent with its true nature in the palpable, clear light that hung so tantalizingly close above the earth', P. Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago, 1981), p. 2.

[3] R. C. Finucane, 'Sacred Corpse, Profane Carrion: Social Ideals and Death Rituals in the Later Middle Ages', *Mirrors of Mortality: Studies in the Social History of Death*, ed. J. Whaley (London, 1981), pp. 40–60 at 52. On early Christian attitudes to the body see J. A. Glancy, *Corporal Knowledge: Early Christian Bodies* (Oxford, 2010). It is noteworthy that confessors especially give detailed instructions regarding the fate of their bodies, illustrating an awareness of their potency after death. It is, however, the purity of the soul that imbues the body with this potency.

heavenly spheres.[4] I shall primarily address: (i) whether or not the presentation of the soul at death is different for martyrs and confessors; and (ii) whether or not there are representational differences for native saints. In this context it seems worth pursuing a detailed investigation of *hagiographic* representations of soul, given that its portrayal in death-scenes is an aspect of scholarly enquiry that could benefit from further treatment.

A number of Anglo-Saxon texts attest to the idea of the soul separating from its body at death and illustrate how the soul's fate is perceived to be affected by the body's conduct.[5] Likewise, many texts demonstrate the notion of the soul as representative of the person, as in this synecdochic example from *Jul.*, where the soul (or perhaps the mind, given *mod*) is used *pars pro toto* to represent Juliana in her address to a devil: 'Him þæt æþele mod unforht oncwæð' (209).[6] A similar sense is gleaned from *LS* 20 (AssumptMor): 'heo gewat of lichoman fram us'. The implication is that what makes Mary 'she' is the soul, because 'she' departs *from* the body to 'Sancte Michahele þæm heahengle'. This homily introduces an interesting aspect of representations of the saintly soul, in the assertion that Mary's soul is 'seofon siþum beorhtran [. . .] þonne snaw'.[7] This introduces the notion of

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[4] Heffernan, *Sacred Biography*, p. 10.

[5] Although the soul is assumed to have a continuing existence after death, opinions on its creation vary widely. See *ÆLS* (Christmas), lines 171–4: 'Seo sawul is gesceadwis gast æfre cucu and mæg underfon ge godne wyllan and yfelne æfter agenum cyre. Se welwillende scyppend læt hi habben agenes cyrs geweald þa wearð heo be agenum wyllan gewæmmed þurh þæs deofles lare'. In the Old English prognostic on the growth of a foetus, the soul is assumed to develop only after the third month of pregnancy: 'On þam þriddan monþe he biþ man butan sawle' ('In the third month he is a man without a soul'), R. M. Liuzza, ed. and trans., *Anglo-Saxon Prognostics: An Edition and Translation of Texts from London, British Library, MS Cotton Tiberius A.iii*, Anglo-Saxon Texts 8 (Cambridge, 2011), pp. 200–1. Also see M. McC. Gatch 'Perceptions of Eternity', *The Cambridge Companion to Old English Literature*, ed. M. Godden and M. Lapidge, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, 2013), pp. 190–205.

[6] The same has survived into modern English idiom in such phrases as 'don't tell a soul', 'Save our Souls (SOS)' and 'poor soul'.

[7] 'Seven times brighter than snow'. J. Neville, 'Selves, Souls, and Bodies: The Assumption of the Virgin in Anglo-Saxon England', *Miracles and the Miraculous in Medieval Germanic and Latin Literature*, ed. K. E. Olsen *et al.* (Leuven, 2004), pp. 141–54, argues that the soul in this text is secondary to the body, with the body continuing to function and call attention to itself post-mortem, whereas the 'entirely passive' (p. 151) soul quietly ascends to Paradise. It is certainly true that the text is somewhat confused in its chronology, which complicates the issue of spiritual and bodily ascension. Indeed, references to the body of Mary outweigh those to the soul, but I do not completely accept that the body alone is presented as Mary's 'self' in the text, given the various references to 'her' and 'she' being distinct from Mary's physical body. Neville also suggests that the description of Mary's soul as seven times whiter than snow is 'entirely generic' (p. 151), which I

visible excess in depicting the saintly soul at death and is discussed further below (p. 191).

Although this chapter is not ostensibly investigating the link between soul and body in

terms of the 'mind–body' debate, it is worth noting that Anglo-Saxon authors often display

distinct ideas about the moral status of the soul and its relation to the physical body.[8]

Saints, generally speaking, are not subject to anxieties over the fate of the soul, and

consequently, the images of psychomachia, or of decaying bodies that are 'wyrma mete'

(*BHom* 10), are not typically found. The deaths of those who harm or dishonour saints in

any way are frequently presented using such motifs, and provide antitypes to saintly

exemplars. It seems likely that literary portrayals of physical and spiritual death served a

didactic purpose and were intended to remind audiences of the need to devote themselves

to their spiritual salvation to ensure that they are not prescribed spiritual death and eternal

torments in hell at the Last Judgement. It is thus to a study of the soul in the death-scenes

of saints that this chapter turns, after a brief discussion of terminology.

Problems of Terminology

Studies based on Anglo-Saxon conceptions of the soul have remained popular since work

by Clemoes and Godden.[9] Arising from this early work, the investigative areas of Anglo-

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would suggest requires some qualification, given that this specific numerical motif is not entirely ubiquitous in hagiography and is only used of those of especial spiritual importance.

[8] This debate receives continuing attention across a variety of disciplinary fields and invariably informs postmodern conceptions of the ideas of soul, mind and body. On the various interpretative strategies of the mind–body debate, see B. Beakley and P. Ludlow, ed., *The Philosophy of Mind: Classical Problems/Contemporary Issues* (Cambridge, MA, 1992), p. 3; M. Cortez, *Embodied Souls, Ensouled Bodies: An Exercise in Christological Anthropology and its Significance for the Mind/Body Debate* (London and New York, 2008), p. 2; Harbus, *Life of the Mind*, pp. 3–9.

[9] P. Clemoes, '*Mens absentia cogitans* in *The Seafarer* and *The Wanderer*', *Medieval Literature and Civilization: Studies in Memory of G. N. Garmonsway*, ed. D. A. Pearsall and R. A. Waldron (London, 1969), pp. 62–77; M. R. Godden, 'Anglo-Saxons on the Mind', *Learning and Literature in Anglo-Saxon England: Studies Presented to Peter Clemoes on the Occasion of His Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, ed. M. Lapidge and H. Gneuss (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 271–98. Godden, p. 271, draws attention to conflicting Anglo-Saxon mind–soul modes of expression, one drawn from classical traditions (ultimately indebted to Plato and mediated through Boethius and Augustine, and secondarily through Alcuin of York), and another that represents 'a vernacular tradition more deeply rooted in the language'. For an introduction to the debate from the classical to early modern periods, see P. S. MacDonald,

Saxon psychologies and mentalities, which are related to discussions of soul, mind and

spirit, have become popular in current scholarship, as attested by recent monographs by

Harbus and Lockett, for example.[10] Studies of the soul are necessarily tied up with the

thorny issue of terminology, and what soul, as well as spirit and mind, means throughout

the Anglo-Saxon period. One of the challenges of this chapter is to account fully for the

complexity of motival representations, as well as the terminological intricacies, of 'soul' in

hagiography.[11] Indeed, often what Anglo-Saxon authors mean by 'mind' and 'soul' is

multifaceted. For authors heavily reliant on inherited traditions of classical and patristic

thought, the mind (intellect) becomes more closely associated with the soul over time (see,

for example, Alcuin's *De animae ratione liber*), whereas Anglo-Saxon authors expressing

themselves in the vernacular tend to maintain a soul–mind distinction, as Godden notes.[12]

It becomes apparent that 'linguistic expression' is fluid, with concepts such as 'mind' and

'soul' meaning different things to different writers in different contexts, as Paul MacDonald

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History of the Concept of Mind: Speculations about Soul, Mind and Spirit from Homer to Hume (Aldershot and Burlington, 2003).

[10] Harbus, *Life of the Mind*; Lockett, *Psychologies*; also H. E. Fox, 'Mind, Body, Soul, and Self in the Alfredian Translations' (unpubl. PhD dissertation, Univ. of Notre Dame, 2011), p. 57.

[11] T. L. Given, *When Souls Had Wings: Pre-Mortal Existence in Western Thought* (Oxford, 2010), pp. 2–13, explores the earliest religious systems of ancient Mesopotamia and creation myths of human souls within these, which influenced Semitic and Greek belief-systems and were in turn filtered through to the early Church Fathers in various guises. Although Given's focus is the 'preexistence' of souls, a useful account of the conflicting ideals regarding the origin of souls is provided. Traducianism, which Given suggests can be traced to Tertullian, purports that the soul or spirit is produced by biological parents in the same way as the physical body. Creationism understands the existence of the soul to be a special act of individual creation by God, as possibly first taught by Lactantius. Postmodern conceptions of 'the soul' are very often influenced by the inheritance of Cartesian dualism, on which exists a wealth of scholarship. As a starting point, see J. Cottingham, 'Cartesian Dualism: Theology, Metaphysics, and Science', *The Cambridge Companion to Descartes*, ed. J. Cottingham (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 236–57. For problems caused by a 'modernist bias' and its privileging of dualism, see Lockett, *Psychologies*, pp. 9–16. On early Christian attempts to reconcile the production of physical bodies with the production of an incorporeal, immaterial soul, see Given, *When Souls Had Wings*, p. 2. On doctrines of resurrection in the early church see F. Young, 'Naked or Clothed? Eschatology and the Doctrine of Creation', *The Church, the Afterlife and the Fate of the Soul*, ed. P. Clarke and T. Claydon, SCH 45 (Woodbridge, 2009), pp. 1–19.

[12] Godden, 'Anglo-Saxons on the Mind', pp. 272 and 275. Despite drawing on Cassian, Augustine and possibly Lactantius, Alcuin differs from certain of his sources, who distinguish between the soul and mind, by equating the two, and Godden notes that the Old English Boethius 'shows distinct similarities to Alcuin's ideas'. On knowledge of Alcuin's *De animae ratione liber* in Anglo-Saxon England, see Clemoes, *'Mens absentia cogitans'*, p. 63, note 2; for the text, see J.-P. Migne, ed., *De animae ratione liber ad eulaliam virginem*, PL 101 (Paris, 1863), pp. 639–50. On Alcuin more generally, see D. A. Bullough, 'Alcuin [Albinus, Flaccus], *c.* 740–804', *ODNB* [accessed 22 October 2012].

notes: 'One would be hard pressed to make a coherent statement about the relative positions of the concepts of 'mind', 'soul', 'spirit' and 'psyche' in the framework of an all-inclusive understanding of human being'.[13] This chapter does not systematically consider the linguistic diversity of soul (and mind) concepts across the corpus, but instead focuses on Anglo-Latin and Old English modes of expression in hagiographic death-scenes.[14] The lexical choices and semantic range of soul-related vocabulary used at death is discussed to assess whether there is a discernible taxonomy of expression in hagiography. Phillips has suggested that *sawol* and *gast* are 'transcendent' 'soul-terms' in Old English insofar as they are used to describe the soul 'after a person has died and when his soul departs to the afterlife'.[15] Godden's suggestion that '*Sawl* is the word used [. . .] in *Beowulf* and other Old English poetry, and indeed in prose, along with *gast*' to describe that substance which leaves at death or survives death supports this.[16] In *Maldon*, both *gast* and *sawul* are used in Byrhtnoth's last speech to describe that which he believes will be released upon his death (lines 176–177), but Lockett argues that 'The *sawol* appears to possess more autonomy in the death-scenes of individuals who are looking forward to the rewards of the afterlife'.[17] It may be that differences in terminology are applied depending on a person's awareness of their post-mortem fate, and this is explored throughout this chapter. The lexical terms that this chapter is primarily concerned with then are: Old English *sawl*, *gast* and, secondarily, *mod*; and Latin *anima*, *spiritus* and, secondarily, *mens*.

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[13] Godden, 'Anglo-Saxons on the Mind', p. 271; MacDonald, *History*, p. 1.

[14] For a discussion of the semantic situation, see Harbus, *Life of the Mind*, pp. 23–59; M. J. Phillips, 'Heart, Mind, and Soul in Old English: A Semantic Study' (unpubl. PhD dissertation, Univ. of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1985).

[15] Phillips, 'Heart, Mind, and Soul', pp. 254 and 19.

[16] Godden, 'Anglo-Saxons on the Mind', p. 289. Harbus, *Life of the Mind*, p. 24, offers a response to Phillips, taking issue with his omission of compounds and suggesting that he tends to 'over-extrapolate distinctions' between the nine Old English simplex terms discussed and that the study does not come to any conclusions of particular 'wider cultural import'.

[17] Lockett, *Psychologies*, p. 27.

Death-Scene Phenomena

Christianity is predicated on a rejection of the earthly world, and the spiritual change of state at the moment of death is fundamentally important. In hagiography, this change of state is signalled by the inclusion of various death-related phenomena that signal the status of a saintly soul. One persistently recognizable element of saintly death-scenes is thus the inclusion of miracles and phenomena indicating the exemplarity of a saint. Typically, such manifestations of the miraculous testify to this exemplarity, either through the presentation of miracles involving the soul, or through the cumulative effect of various thaumaturgic phenomena. The prevalence of these phenomena at saints' physical deaths functions as a precursor to their spiritual triumph.

Vitae show more evidence of miraculous death-scene phenomena than *passiones*, which reflects the alternative routes to sanctity of martyrs and confessors. This is true of lives of non-native and native saints, and the fact that similar patterns can be observed across the Anglo-Saxon corpus indicates that important trends are operating.[18] Rollason notes that the author of the *Mart.*, for example, 'had a predilection for the spectacularly miraculous', but nearly all hagiographers considered in this thesis include death-scene phenomena in their works, and many of these phenomena are directed towards demonstrating the especial purity of the saintly soul.[19] It is this purity that enables a saint to ascend directly to heaven. There are a range of common representative motifs whose use contributes to the creation of a particular aesthetic of death.[20]

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[18] There are categories of phenomena that buck this trend, such as water miracles, which only appear in martyrdom accounts.

[19] D. W. Rollason, review of *Das altenglische Martyrologium* by G. Kotzor, *YES* 16, Literary Periodicals Special Number (1986), 223–4 at 224. Rauer, *Mart.*, p. 17, notes frequent references to the Holy Ghost, miracles and angels, for example.

[20] Owing to space, not all motifs are discussed in detail. For instance, water-related miracles (including such things as the spontaneous eruption of springs at the site of a saint's death) are not analysed. These miracles are far more common in accounts of martyrs' than confessors' deaths. Springs bursting forth at martyrdom sites are not commonly found in non-native saints' lives, but appear in the lives of many saints associated

Foreknowledge and Predictions

In his homily *In Natale Sanctarum Uirginum* Ælfric suggests that the 'ordinary' man cannot

know when his death might come because 'Menig man wolde þone maran dæl his lifes

aspendan on his lustum and ðone læssan dæl on dædbote gif he wiste hwænne he geendian

sceolde' (208–10). He continues: 'Us is bedigelod ure geendung to ði þæt we sculon symle

us ondrædan ðone endenextan dæg þone ðe we ne magon næfre foresceawian' (210–12).[21]

The same idea is found in Bede's *Death Song* (see above, p. 7). The foreknowledge motif

marks saints out as extraordinary; an awareness of impending death negates any possibility

of the 'bad' sudden death ('færlic deaþ'), and also sets saints apart from 'ordinary' mortals.[22]

Associated with this motif is that of saints making predictions during their death-scenes.

Lockett notes that, in the *Dialogues*, Book 4, Gregory responds to Peter's question

concerning deathbed premonitions with three suggestions, one being that the soul, during

the process of dying, has especial access to heavenly knowledge. Gregory states: 'aliquando

autem exiturae de corpore animae per reuelationem uentura cognoscunt, aliquando uero,

dum iam iuxta fit ut corpus deserant, diuinitus afflatae in secretis caelestibus incorporeum

oculum mentis mittunt'.[23] Gregory continues that this foreknowledge may take place in

dreams or during 'a state of full awareness'. The examples of people receiving the gift of

foreknowledge are by no means all saintly; it is thus the combination of numerous death-

scene motifs that contributes to the overall aesthetic of sanctity for saints.

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with Britain or England, such as Alban and Kenelm. See John VII.37–9 on the Holy Spirit as rivers of living water; also DiNapoli, p. 92.

[21] *ÆCHom* II,44 (Virgins): 'many a man would spend the greater part of his life in his lusts and the lesser part in penitence if he knew when his end must be'; 'Our end is concealed from us so that we must always dread the final day that we may not ever foresee'.

[22] Sudden death (*færlic deaþ* in Old English) was feared in both the late antique and medieval periods because it did not allow for adequate preparations to be made for any journey into an afterlife. Old English also contained the masculine noun *fær-deaþ*, but this is only attested four times in the corpus; see *DOE*, s.v. *fær-deaþ*; Thompson, *Dying and Death*, pp. 60–1.

[23] *Dialogues*, Bk 4, §27, p. 86; translation in Zimmerman, p. 219: 'At other times the future is made known to them [souls] through revelation shortly before death. Again, they are sometimes divinely inspired when they are on the point of leaving the body, and thus enabled to gaze upon the secrets of the heavenly kingdom with the incorporeal eye of their mind'. Also, Lockett, *Psychologies*, pp. 203–4.

Foreknowledge is found as a motival element of non-native and native lives, although it is much more prevalent in *vitae* than *passiones*.[24] The foreknowledge motif is often found in accounts featuring the death-motif of giving up the ghost (or its variants) as either a primary or secondary motif.[25] The *Mart.* (68 Wilfrid) describes how 'Sanctus Michahel' tells the saint 'hu lange his lif sceolde beon'. Wilfrid later 'his gast ageaf, ða com sweg suðaneastan of ðære lyfte swa swa micelra fugla sweg, ond gesetton on þæt hus ðær he inne wæs. Þæt wæs ðara engla flyht þe hine to heofonum læddon'.[26] Divine intervention in the acquisition of foreknowledge, here from St Michael, but sometimes also from God, is fairly typical of accounts featuring the motif; the use of miraculous signs and heavenly visitors in these accounts serves to affirm the sanctity of the saint and their place among God's elect.

Lights

'Deus lux est et tenebrae in eo non sunt ullae' (I John I.5)[27]

A common motif in hagiographic death-scenes is a column of light shining from saintly corpses, which is intended to signify the ascension to heaven of an especially blessed soul. Hodson suggests that 'light as an emblem of the Holy Spirit goes beyond the ideas of spirituality and love, in adding to them the suggestions of *purity* and *glory*'.[28] There is a lack of consistency over the direction in which columns of light move; occasionally being

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[24] Foreknowledge of death is not restricted to hagiography; in *The Letter of Alexander to Aristotle,* §40, p. 253, a tree (*trion*) tells Alexander that he will die 'in Babilone, nalles mid iserne acweald swa ðu wenst ac mid atre'. See above, p. 170, note 98.

[25] Bede's prose *vita* of Cuthbert (after illness); Stephen of Ripon's *Vita S. Wilfridi* (after illness); Felix's *Vita S. Guthlaci; Mart.*: 68 Wilfrid, 80 Eadberht (after illness); *ÆLS*: Basil; *ÆCHom*: Cuthbert, Assumption of St John, Benedict (after illness), Martin (after illness); *GuthB* (after illness); *LS* 3 (Chad) (after illness); *LS* 7 (Euphr); *LS* 9 (Giles); *LS* 17.1 (MartinMor) (after illness); *LS* 20 (AssumptMor); Byrhtferth's *Vita S. Oswaldi*; *Vita S. Rumwoldi*; Goscelin: *Vita S. Wihtburge, Vita S. Seaxburg Regine*; CCCC 41 (Assumption homily, Mary).

[26] 'gave up his ghost, a noise came from the southeast in the air, like the noise of large birds, and they settled on the house in which he was. That was a host of flying angels who took him to heaven'.

[27] 'God is light and in him there is no darkness'.

[28] J. H. Hodson, *Symbols of the Holy Spirit* (London, 1913), p. 28; also G. Henderson, *Vision and Image in Early Christian England* (Cambridge, 1999), p. 149.

presented as coming from heaven, sometimes moving towards heaven. There is a general

trend for light phenomena in martyrdom accounts to come from a saint's body, but this is

not consistently observable across the corpus. In the *Mart.* (209 Justus) it is related that 'on

niht scan leoht [. . .] of ðam heafde'. Ælfric notes that a 'heofonlic leoht [. . .] stod up to

heofonum' (183–4) from Oswald's bones, and Bede makes an explicit connection between

light ('radius lucis permaximus') and martyrdom in his discussion of the Two Hewalds in

the *HE*, V.10. The *Mart.* (201) adopts the same motif as its Bedan source for these saints,

noting that they travel to Frisia 'ond ðær geðrowodon martyrdom for Criste, ond heofonlic

leoht wæs gesewen ofer heora lichoman', but here the martyrologist is not specific about

the directionality of the light.[29] At Kenelm's martyrdom, light shines *from* heaven, which is a

form of the phenomenon found commonly in confessor's death-scenes (as with Hild and

Eorcongota in the *HE*), but *GuthB* presents a light-column extending *to* heaven, further

demonstrating the lack of consistent patterning.[30] Martyrdom accounts thus use light

phenomena as either identifying motifs in the recovery of a saintly body (Rollason notes

the prevalence of the motif as identificatory in accounts of various murdered royal Anglo-

Saxon saints[31]) or as clarifications of sanctity, whereas, in *vitae* (where the motif is more

common) light phenomena are frequently associated with the ascent of a saintly soul to

heaven. Thus, the motif is not exclusively adopted in relation to the transit of souls. Of the

martyrs whose hagiographies mention this motif, most are beheaded (Justus, Oswald and

Kenelm), which leads one to wonder whether a link is made between this death-motif and

the depiction of particular phenomena. It is evident that the motif in *vitae* is intended to

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[29] 'and there suffered martyrdom for Christ, and a heavenly light was seen above their bodies'.

[30] See H. Magennis, 'Imagery of Light in Old English Poetry: Traditions and Appropriations', *Anglia* 125 (2007), 181–204 at 189.

[31] Rollason, 'Murdered Royal Saints', 13, note 60. From the wider corpus the entries to which this motif applies include: *HE*: Eorcengota, Hild; *Mart.*: 51 Benedict of Nursia, 201 The Two Hewalds, 209 Justus; *ÆCHom*: Assumption of St John, Benedict, St James the Apostle; *ÆLS*: Oswald, Martin; *Vita et miracula S. Kenelmi*; CCCC 41 (Assumption homily, Mary); *LS* 20 (AssumptMor); *GuthB*; Byrhtferth's *Vita S. Oswaldi*; *Vita S. Ceolfridi*.

accentuate the purity of the saintly soul ascending to heaven, with the column of light functioning as the signifier of the spiritual journey from darkness ('praesentis mundi tenebras', *HE*, III.8) to the light of heaven.[32] For confessors, then, there is a discernible conflation of spiritual purity and light motifs. As evident from the martyrologist's interest in visible phenomena, if a saintly soul is represented as invisible at the moment of death it would disallow the opportunity to represent the exemplary nature of the saint and the purity of his or her soul and, therefore, does not help to promote that saint's cult. Felix parallels the motif at the moment of Guthlac's death with the shining of the saint's garments at his later translation (§50–51), demonstrating the use of the topos as a signifier of sanctity throughout the tripartite schema of death.

Bells and Sounds

This motif is typically absent from *passiones* but is found frequently in *vitae*.[33] The presence of bells or singing angels at the moment of death is usually presented along with other motifs such as the soul being carried to heaven by angels. Gregory suggests in the *Dialogues* that heavenly voices may distract the dying from the pain of death, which is caused by the separation of body and soul.[34] *Mart.* entry 226 (Hild) is representative of this motif, whereby 'englas hyre gast to heofenum læddon, and heo glytenode on þæra engla mydle swa scynende sunne oððe nigslycod hrægel'.[35] Not only are angels seen but a 'beautiful bell' ('wundorlicre bellan') is heard and a 'very large and marvellous Christian cross' ('wundorlice Crystes rode') is held up to her soul by angels. The motif is also found in *GuthB*, where the saint's 'gæst' (1305b) is accompanied by troops of rejoicing angels (1314b–1316). Alongside

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[32] On the motif in homilies more generally, see DiNapoli, p. 60.

[33] *HE*: Eorcengota, Hild; *Mart.*: 226 Hild; *ÆLS*: Martin; *LS* 9 (Giles); *ÆCHom*: Martin; CCCC 41 (Assumption homily, Mary); *GuthB*; Stephen of Ripon's *Vita S. Wilfridi* (sound of birds). No references to bells or singing are included in DiNapoli.

[34] *Dialogues*, Bk 4, §15, p. 58; Zimmerman, p. 207.

[35] 'angels took her soul to heaven, and it shone amid the angels like the bright sun or a new dress'.

these many 'englas', light phenomena are also portrayed: 'ða þær leoht ascan, / beama beorhtast' ('Then a light shone there, brightest of beams', 1308b–1309a). In both instances, witnesses verify the presence of noises, lights and angels, and this is typical of death-scenes, especially those of confessors. Bede recounts Egbert's story of a man in 'hac insula' (Ireland) who sees Cedd's soul: 'uidit animam Ceddi fratris ipsius cum agmine angelorum descendere de caelo, et adsumta secum anima eius ad caelestia regna redire'. Bede goes on to pre-empt any doubters who may question the likelihood of such a vision being seen from such a distance by noting that 'dum tamen hoc, quod tantus uir dixit, quia uerum sit, esse non possit incertum'.[36]

This motif is not restricted to lives of native saints, as evidenced by the *ÆLS* entry on Martin's 'forðsiðe', where 'fela manna þa gehyrdon on his forðsiðe / singendra engla swiðe hlude stemna / upon heanysse geond þa heofonas swegende'. Ælfric goes on to note that his body was 'beorhtre þonne glæs hwittre þonne meolc / and his andwlita scean swiþor þonne leoht / þa iu gewuldrod to þam to-werdan æriste'.[37]

Incorrupt Bodies

The deaths of saints are fundamentally paradoxical events. Even if death is seen as 'the final denial of the body' as Wilson suggests, it simultaneously enables, for saints, a prevention of bodily decay and the consequent preservation of the body as a vehicle for devotion.[38] Thus, sanctity is embodied in the very physicality a saint seeks to reject during life; in 'being dead', this embodiment of sanctity is directed towards others. The potency of

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[36] *HE*, IV.3, pp. 344–5: 'he saw the soul of Chad's brother Cedd descend from the sky with a host of angels and return to the heavenly kingdom, taking Chad's soul with him'; 'what cannot be uncertain is that whatever such a man said must be true'. Henderson, *Vision*, p. 150, notes that the death of Chad is paralleled in Gregory of Tours's account of St Gall.

[37] *ÆLS* (Martin), lines 1374–5 'many men heard at his departure very loud voices of angels singing, sounding upon high through the heavens'; lines 1379–81: 'brighter than glass, whiter than milk, and his countenance shone more than light, then already glorified for the future resurrection'.

[38] Wilson, 'Introduction', pp. 10–11.

a saintly corpse or remains resides in its thaumaturgic power to benefit those who seek the

saint out as a vehicle of intercession (see p. 68 on how Oswald's arm stands for his entire

body). At Æthelthryth's translation, at which her body is discovered to be incorrupt and a

wound on her neck healed, Ælfric talks of her 'sawl-leasan lichaman'.[39] Bede, Ælfric's

source for this life, simply refers to the saint's 'corpus' and does not describe it as soulless,

which perhaps suggests a conscious desire by Ælfric to stress the separation of the saint's

body from her soul, which resides in heaven.[40] As has been demonstrated, Anglo-Saxon

attitudes to death often conflate the condition of the soul with that of the body (which

functions as 'a locus of various practices of faith'),[41] and the incorruptibility of saints'

bodies and the post-mortem physical disintegration of non-saintly bodies form poles on

this spectrum of bodily codification. The faith of saints is continually enacted and inscribed

on their bodies in both ante- and post-mortem contexts, through martyrs' wounds,

confessors' illnesses, and post-mortem incorruptibility. Thus, although any soul is released

from the body at death to face an eternity of bliss or torments, the physical body functions

as a potent site of both positive and negative enactment on which this fate is cast.

The blandishments cast on the sinful body in the *Soul and Body* poems, for example,

are frequently far removed from the attitudes expressed of saintly bodies in hagiography.

Soul and Body II (found in the Exeter Book) portrays the soul berating its dead, decaying

body for its sinful gluttony and excess in life (although the 'soul' was created by God it was

subject to man's free will, hence its sinfulness.) The intense, macabre description of this

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[39] *ÆLS* (Æthelthryth), line 97. On the nature of the soul and the typology of the resurrection, see A. M. L. Fadda, 'The Mysterious Moment of Resurrection in Early Anglo-Saxon and Irish Iconography', *Text, Image, Interpretation: Studies in Anglo-Saxon Literature and its Insular Context in Honour of Éamonn Ó Carragáin*, ed. A. Minnis and J. Roberts (Turnhout, 2007), pp. 149–67. Although this essay does not specifically deal with hagiography, its discussion of illustrations of the soul at death in art sheds light on certain motifs found in Anglo-Saxon hagiography. On terminology for the soul–body separation at death, see *TOE* §02.02.

[40] DiNapoli, pp. 20–1.

[41] Fox, 'Mind, Body, Soul, and Self', p. 76.

decay focuses on disintegration as a result of the body's earthly sinfulness and disregard for

its spiritual fate:

> Biþ þæt heafod tohliden,   honda tohleoþode,
> geaflas toginene,   goman toslitene,
> seonwe beoð asogene,   sweora bicowen;
> rib reafiað   reþe wyrmas,
> drincað hloþm hra,   heolfres þurstge.
>
>   (103–107)[42]

Although one of the less subtle poetic treatments of post-mortem fate, the poem reflects a

real concern over the nature of sin and the vulnerability of both the soul and the body.[43] If

the same concern is applied to hagiography, it can be seen that authors play on the anxiety

over the body's integrity in two distinct ways: (i) by emphasizing the incorrupt nature of the

saintly body; and (ii) by presenting post-mortem decay as affecting the especially iniquitous

(those who kill or order the killing of saints) in an ante-mortem context. Indeed, with

respect to saints, the psychomachia motif is typically absent; in *GuthB*, for example, the

body and soul are represented as 'sinhiwan tu' (968b).[44] Here, Guthlac's body is presented

as a temporary abode ('sawelhus', 1141a) prefiguring the eternal abode of Heaven, rather

than as a prison, which is another common motif found in Anglo-Saxon literature, and

which is based on neo-platonic thought. Although Finucane suggests that 'The function of

the body as symbol for the soul is most evident in rites associated with saints' in which 'the

uncorrupted, sweet-smelling and light-emitting corpse of a holy man "represents" the soul',

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[42] 'The head is burst open, the hands split apart, the jaws are yawning, the gums torn asunder, the sinews are sucked away, the neck is chewed thoroughly. The fierce worms ravage the ribs, drink the corpse in hoards, thirsty for gore'. Translation from *The Old English* Soul and Body, ed. and trans. D. Moffat (Woodbridge, 1990), pp. 58–60. Although Bradley, *Poetry*, pp. 358–9, criticizes the 'hysterical revulsion' displayed in a poem that 'offers no wisdom, no true debate', he acknowledges its evident popularity, given that there is also a fragmentary version of the poem in the Vercelli Book (see *Soul and Body I*, ASPR 2).

[43] Not all Anglo-Saxon texts are as explicitly gruesome. *The Phoenix*, lines 485b–90, represents the separation of the body and soul at death: 'þonne deað nimeð, / wiga wælgifre,   wæpnum geþryþed, / ealdor anra gehwæs,   ond in eorþan fæðm / snude sendeð   sawlum binumene / læne lichoman,   þær hi longe beoð / oð fyres cyme   foldan biþeahte'. Although in this poem Death is personified, the state of the body in death is not cast in such macabre language as in the *Soul and Body* dialogues.

[44] This phrase appears in various forms in *GuthB*, *Genesis*, *Jul.* and *Mart.* (100 Columba of Iona), although the referents vary; see *DOEC* [accessed 13 December 2012].

there in fact seem to be a much wider tradition of the body as the site of codification of the soul's status.[45]

Daniell and Thompson note that 'processes of decay almost always represent sin when they are discussed in Old English literature and, conversely, for a body to remain wholesome means that its inhabitant was a person of special virtue'.[46] The use of post-mortem reintegration and incorruption motifs explicitly mark saintly bodies as sites of sanctity, and these motifs are found in accounts of violent and non-violent death and in lives of male and female saints. The incorruption motif occurs with particular frequency in *vitae* to provide irrefutable evidence of blessedness and is uncommon in *passiones;* it also has a particular association with native saints, especially virginal ones.[47] In the death-scenes of native martyrs, although repudiation of sexuality does not lead to martyrdom, bodily purity prevents bodily decay and provides irrefutable proof of sanctity, as Ælfric acknowledges of Edmund: 'His lichama us cyð þe lið un-formolsnod / Þæt he butan forligre her on worulde leofode / And mid clænum life to criste siþode'.[48] These lives exploit the narrative juxtaposition of sexual purity and sanctity in their death-scenes, and the association of the motif with native saints may reflect a wider Christian cultural preoccupation with expressions of sexuality. Aldhelm does not use the post-mortem bodily incorruption motif in the *Dv* or *Cdv*, nor does he seem unduly concerned with reporting post-mortem phenomena associated with the saints more generally, other than various vengeance

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[45] Finucane, 'Sacred Corpse', p. 60. See also his comments on the politics of burial.

[46] C. Daniell and V. Thompson, 'Pagans and Christians: 400–1150', *Death in England: An Illustrated History*, ed. P. C. Jupp and C. Gittings (Manchester, 1999), pp. 65–89 at 78. On attitudes to ageing as another result of original sin and a form of death-in-life, see Cummins, 'Old Age', p. 77.

[47] Even in cases where historical reality dictates that a saint's body was physically separated, as in the case of Oswald, whose head and hands ended up at Lindisfarne and Bamburgh before being moved to Lindsey, the disintegration of a saintly body has miraculous effects. See above, p. 68, on the synecdoche in *ÆLS* (Oswald). The reverse of the incorruption motif involves the obliteration – frequently occurring ante-mortem – of the bodies of pagans; see Chapter II.

[48] *ÆLS* (Edmund), lines 186–8: 'His body shows us, which lies undecayed, that he lived without fornication here in this world, and by a pure life passed to Christ'.

miracles for certain martyrs and angelic phenomena for some confessors.[49] It may be the

case that Aldhelm was specifically concerned with how his virgins behaved during life,

given that it is these attributes that he is trying to impress on his audience. Furthermore,

the tortures that he presents many of his saints enduring may have been viewed as evidence

enough of sanctity.

Associated with the motif of incorruptibility is the description of a sweet smell

emanating from saintly corpses; this motif can be associated with both martyrs and

confessors and again provides an exemplary equivalent to normal expectations of death,

which was associated with decay and disintegration. The incorrupt body is in many senses

equivalent to the invulnerable body, and emphasizes the continued potency of a saint's

remains.

Dove Symbolism and Iconography

The stylized representation of a dove associated with a saint at the moment of their death is

a ubiquitous hagiographic motif.[50] This motif is found more commonly in *passiones* than

vitae, and there seem to be two relevant ideas operating. One idea recalls the biblical and

patristic associations of the embodied Holy Spirit with doves, as per Scriptural precedents

such as Matthew III.16 and Luke III.22.[51] Indeed, Clemoes calls the characterization of the

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[49] In his *Cdv* entries for Agatha and Rufina and Secunda, Aldhelm makes explicit reference to their bones in their respective tombs. An exception may be Aldhelm's treatment of John the Evangelist, regarding whom he acknowledges the tradition in the *Dv* that he may not have died 'according to the usual death' ('generali morte defunctum'), but is instead alive in his tomb awaiting Christ; Ehwald, p. 255, lines 11–12; *Prose Works*, p. 81.

[50] For more homiletic references to doves, see DiNapoli, pp. 19 and 36–7; see *DOE*, s.v. 'culfre', which lists *c.* 200 instances of the word in the Old English corpus; *DACL* III (pt. 2), s.v. 'colombe'.

[51] Matthew III.16: 'et vidit [Jesus] Spiritum Dei descendentum sicut columbam venientem super se'; Luke III.22: 'et descendit Spiritus Sanctus corporali specie sicut columba'. Fadda, 'Mysterious Moment', pp. 158–61, especially note 30, argues that the image of the soul issuing from the mouth of the deceased priest Spes in Gregory's *Dialogues* may have its origins in Ancient Egyptian iconography. Fadda also notes the representation of the dead Jesus being restored of the breath of life by 'the Holy Spirit, close by in the form of a dove' on the stone Cross of Clonmacnoise in Co. Offaly, p. 165. In her discussion of the resurrection and the reconstitution of body and soul, Fadda does not discuss saints. Saints are not the only personages to be associated with birds; in *Christ II* Christ is explicitly described *as* a bird ('fæla fugel', 645).

Holy Spirit as a dove a 'basic symbol'.[52] Sühling also notes, 'So erscheint in vielen

Märtyrerberichten und Heiligenlegenden die Taube als Seele des Verstorbenen'.[53] The other

sense sees a particular conflation of saints' souls with doves at death. Some commentators

have drawn other interpretations from the portrayal of doves in saints' death-scenes;

Cubitt, for example, argues that the appearance of a bird at Kenelm's death must be

reflective of the 'ancient archetype of a murdered child reincarnated as a bird'.[54] Although

Cubitt's argument that Kenelm's cult is deeply rooted in lay devotion and contains a

number of folkloric elements is largely persuasive, the possibility that the bird flying to

heaven at Kenelm's death is representative of the dove-as-soul motif must be entertained.[55]

In these instances, it is interesting to assess whether the iconographic symbol of the dove

simply suggests a saint's embodiment of God's grace, or whether it taps into other

traditions, especially in vernacular texts. If the soul is imagined as a gift of God to be given

back at death, the denotation of that spirit as something representing purity and innocence

(the dove) seems apt.[56] Ælfric reinforces the connection between innocence and purity in

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[52] Clemoes, '*Mens absentia cogitans*', p. 68; *ODCC*, s.v. 'dove'. As well as being a symbol of peace, the Holy Spirit, or the Church, the dove is used to represent the 'individual soul regenerated by baptism'. The *ODCC* entry notes that the symbol of the dove indicates 'inspired theological knowledge in the case of many saints'. The dove is the 'principal iconographic emblem' of SS Ambrose, David, Gregory and Samson; see Farmer, p. 465. Also, *ÆCHom* I,22 (Pentecost), lines 156–72.

[53] F. Sühling, *Die Taube als religiöses Symbol im christlichen Altertum*, Römische Quartalschrift für christliche Altertumskunde und für Kirchengeschichte 24 (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1930), p. 118.

[54] C. Cubitt, 'Sites and Sanctity', 70. For the folk-motif of a murdered child being reincarnated as a bird, see Stith Thompson, II (Helsinki, 1933), §E613.0.1.

[55] See J. S. Ramirez, 'The Symbolic Life of Birds in Anglo-Saxon England' (unpubl. PhD dissertation, Univ. of York, 2006), pp. 188, note 768, and 189, note 769. Ramirez's study includes a reference alerting the reader to the anonymous life of Gregory the Great (§17, pp. 100–1), where the soul ('anima') is represented thus: 'qualis est cignus, alba specie avis, satisque pulchra' ('in the form of an exceedingly beautiful great white bird, like a swan'). Ramirez suggests a tradition of representing the soul as a sparrow, based on biblical and patristic sources, and discusses doves briefly in this section, although the idea of the soul being represented in dove-form at death is not fully explored; pp. 167–89, esp. 183. The Old English 'Swan' riddle describes the swan as a 'travelling spirit' ('ferende gæst'), perhaps indicating a wider tradition of conflating the soul with birds. Old Norse literature, of course, often conflates swans and Valkyries, who decide the fate of men in battle and accompany the dead to Valhalla.

[56] Hodson, *Symbols*, p. 47 suggests that the dove as symbolic of the Holy Spirit 'cannot dwell in any heart or in any Church which is filled with the noise and clamour of sin and strife and ill-will', which perhaps strengthens the association of the Holy Spirit and saints. One wonders, in that case, what such a dove would have made of often noisesome Anglo-Saxon churches with their many pilgrims, petitioners and incubations, or indeed of the sounds of bells and singing at moments of assumption. Lapidge, 'Saintly Life', p. 251 also makes this point of the difference in atmosphere between Anglo-Saxon and modern churches. On the souls of sinners

his homily on the Assumption of the Virgin Mary, who is 'as white as a dove': 'Heo is swa

wlitig swa culfre for þan ðe heo lufode þa bilewitnysse þe se halga gast getacnode þa ða he

wæs gesewen on culfran gelicnysse ofer criste on his fulluhte'.[57] Furthermore, the pictorial

embodiment of the Holy Spirit as a dove finds iconographic representation, for example in

the 'Quinity' image in Ælfwine's Prayerbook (London, BL, Cotton Titus D.xxvii, s. xi[1]),

where a dove is pictured on Mary's head.[58] In his life of Basil, Ælfric notes the presence of

heavenly fire at Basil's baptism, and 'an scinende culfre scæt of þam fyre / into ðære ea and

astyrede ðæt wæter'; the presentation of the Holy Spirit as a dove is thus much evident in

Anglo-Saxon texts.[59] The influence of Gregory's *Dialogues* on Anglo-Saxon conceptions of

death-scenes has been demonstrated above, and the specific association of the soul and

doves is also found in this text. Gregory writes of Abbot Spes's death thus, 'Cuius idcirco

animam in columbae specie apparuisse credendum est, ut omnipotens Deus ex hac ipsa

specie ostenderet, ei uir ille quam simplici corde seruisset', and links Christian virtues with

the iconographic symbol of the dove.[60] The description of the dove at death thus had a

wide resonance. (Kate Greenspan notes an early example of the motif in the presentation

of a dove leaving the mouth of the dying Eulalia in Prudentius' *Peristephanon*.)[61]

('earman gastas') in the form of black birds ('on sweartra fugela onlicnissum') in a letter from Wynfrith (later Boniface) on the Wenlock monk's vision of the otherworld, see K. Sisam, 'An Old English Translation of a Letter from Wynfrith to Eadburga (A.D. 716–17) in Cotton MS. Otho C', §7, *Studies in the History of Old English Literature* (Oxford, 1953), pp. 199–224 at 217. This indicates that the conflation of souls and birds had some imaginative currency in Anglo-Saxon England. See also S. Foot, 'Anglo-Saxon "Purgatory"', *The Church, the Afterlife and the Fate of the Soul*, ed. P. Clarke and T. Claydon, SCH 45 (Woodbridge, 2009), pp. 87–96 at 92–3; Lockett, *Psychologies*, pp. 387–8.

[57] *ÆCHom* I,30 (Assumption of the Virgin), lines 133–5: 'She is as white as a dove because she loved innocence that the Holy Spirit revealed when he was seen in the likeness of a dove over Christ at his baptism'.

[58] B. Günzel, *Ælfwine's Prayerbook (London, British Library, Cotton Titus D. xxvi + xxvii)*, HBS 108 (London, 1993), fig. II; E. H. Kantorowicz, 'The Quinity of Winchester', *The Art Bulletin* 29:2 (1947), 73–85 at 73; Thompson, *Dying and Death*, pp. 41–3.

[59] *ÆLS* (Basil), lines 73–4: 'a shining dove darted out of the fire into the river, and stirred the water'.

[60] *Dialogues*, Bk 4, §11, p. 48; Zimmerman, p. 203: 'I believe that the soul took the form of a dove because God wished to indicate by this symbol the simplicity of heart in which this man had served him'.

[61] Greenspan, 'Translation and the Miraculous', p. 84. Of the Anglo-Saxon versions of the legend considered here, only the *Mart.* includes the dove miracle.

Further evidence from the MI indicates a pneumatological conflation of doves with the soul itself. Kirsch suggests that 'Plusieurs récits sur la mort de martyrs et de saints et quelques monuments prouvent que cette conception était restée vivante parmi les fidèles: l'âme, d'après ces récits, était sortie du corps sous forme de colombe'.[62] The martyrologist seems particularly keen on this motif, and his entry on Quentin (217) is typical: 'Þa sona fleah of ðam lichoman culfre swa hwit swa snaw, and seo fleah to heofenum'. The entry on Vitus and Modestus (102) is also representative, although in this instance a further detail is provided which is presumably used to emphasize the purity of the souls in their departure to heaven: 'Ðær gesegon Cristne men heora sawle fleogan to heofonum swa swa culfran, ond hi wæron seofon siðum hwittran þonne snaw'.[63] This again affirms the notion of exemplarity of saintly deaths insofar as many of the phenomena associated with the event are presented in terms of excessive dimensionality. The idea of souls being seven times whiter than snow perhaps reflects the idea of the pre-lapsarian universe having been seven times 'better' than the current age, whereby saints, through their exemplary faith in God, are reflective of this 'better' age.[64] The paralleling of the saintly body with the assumed purity of snow finds expression in texts such as *LS* 8 (Eustace), where the author notes 'heora lichaman wæron hwittran þonne snaw' (460–1); however, the notion of the 'seven-times' excess is not discernible here.

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[62] *DACL* III (pt. 2), s.v. 'colombe'; Fadda, 'Mysterious Moment', p. 158.

[63] Although it is common to find references to angels' vestments or doves being whiter than snow in vernacular texts, the application of the motif to the soul specifically is uncommon relative to these occurrences. As well as its use here, the specific 'seven times whiter than snow' motif is used twice in *BHom* 13 to refer to Mary's soul (lines 166, 177). Ælfric, in *ÆLS* (Christmas), lines 176–7, states that souls are without colour ('butan bleo').

[64] T. Hall '"Their Souls Will Shine Seven Times Brighter than the Sun": An Eschatalogical Motif and its Permutations in Old English', conference handout, Fontes Anglo-Saxonici 14th Open Meeting, March 1998, explores the 'seven times' motif and its variations, noting for this particular permutation other occurrences in *Transitus Mariae Recensio C*. See *Mart.*: 217 Quentin, 220 Benignus, 234 Eulalia; *Vita et miracula S. Kenelmi*; Byrhtferth's *Vita S.Oswaldi*. The idea of dimension is important here; souls are extraordinary in their brightness.

Along with doves, another common motif used to signal the soul's ascent is that of

the angelic guardian, and the next section considers representations of angels and devils at

the moment of death and the motif of the struggle over the soul. (It is worth noting that

portrayals of angels are also conflated with those of birds, and Winterbottom and Lapidge

note that the portrayal of angels as doves, although commonly found in hagiography, is not

a biblical formulation.)[65]

Psychopomps and Chthonic Entities

The above discussion of Byrhtnoth's death in *Maldon* posed some interesting questions

regarding the soul as something over which angels and devils fight at the moment of death.

In Chapter V a wider application of this conflict motif was demonstrated by Hilarion's

admonishment of his fearful soul, reluctant to leave the body at death. Although neither of

these accounts extends its treatment of the motif to encompass the moment of struggle,

this does find expression in other texts. The motif of devils assailing the soul at death is

derived from patristic motifs found particularly in the writings of Gregory the Great; the

motif is also evident in Ambrose and his reference to God's power that 'delivered my

brother's soul from the pains of death and from the attacks of wicked spirits'.[66] In Anglo-

Saxon texts such as the *Mart.* (236 Ursicinus) the martyrologist likens 'seo halige sawl' to a

'deorwyrðan gym' that 'þe deofol wolde gereafian'.[67] In *Jul.* the devil is described as

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[65] *St Dunstan*, ed. Winterbottom and Lapidge, p. 38, note 101. An interesting conflation of bird (although not specifically a dove) and angel occurs in the passage on St Michael the Archangel in the *Homiliary of Saint-Père*. God sends St Michael 'in speciem alitis praeclari' to help the population of a region ravaged by a dragon ('draco'). Although the author is not explicit here that this winged creature is a bird, the passage ends with the assertion that 'Non omittendum quoque quod in illo loco ubi stetit sanctus Michael in forma auis quando draconem occidit signa ungularum eius in petra quasi in caera mollissima apparent onmi tempore' ('Nor should one forget to mention that, where St Michael had been standing in the shape of a bird when he killed the dragon, the marks of his claws are now permanently visible in the stone as if in the softest wax'; cited in Rauer, *Dragon*, pp. 158–61; also pp. 116–24.

[66] See Rush, 'Echo', 369–80 and Chapter V above; also 'Two Books of St. Ambrose', §29, p. 164.

[67] On the devil in the Anglo-Saxon period, see P. Dendle, *Satan Unbound: The Devil in Old English Narrative Literature* (Toronto, 2001).

'gæstgeniðla' (245b), 'sawla feond' (348a), and 'sawla gewinnan' (555b). He tells Juliana that

he is more concerned with the soul than the body ('ymb þæs gæstes forwyrd / þonne þæs

lichoman', 414b–415a), which he suggests is good only to become worms' food ('wyrme to

hroþor', 416b) in the grave. In these examples, the soul is explicitly identified as the object

of devils' desires, and, although this may refer to the devil's role as tempter, there seems to

be a parallel tradition of devils attempting to steal the soul at the moment of death, when it

is most vulnerable. This may explain the reluctance of Hilarion's soul to leave the saint's

body at death in the *Mart.* In Ælfric's homily 'Visions of Departing Souls', 'se deofol', after

stabbing his 'force' (42) into the heart of a sinner, eventually causes death and the soul's

departure from the body ('þæt he his sawle genam swa of þam lichaman', 46).[68]

It has been argued that devils are often represented as attacking the mind rather

than the soul, 'which for Old English poets is generally the *mod* (or some aspect of it) and

not the *sawol*'.[69] This may be true of tempting scenes; indeed the devil of *Jul.* admits to

perverting the 'mod' (363b) of one who tries to turn his 'ferhð' (364b) to God.[70] Likewise,

mod in compound form is used in *GuthB* to depict an impending angelic–demonic struggle:

'he his modsefan / wið þam færhagan fæste trymede / feonda gewinna' (959b–961a).

Harbus makes an association between the diabolic attack, the mind and the beheading-

motif in *Jul.*, which:

> appears to be one of Cynewulf's conceptual innovations, since the Latin text has 'ut
> gladio puniretur' (§18) 'to be punished by the sword', which implies but does not
> mention decapitation, a common means of dispatching early martyrs. By making

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[68] *Suppl.*, II, pp. 775–9; on authorship, see pp. 770–4. See also J. Wilcox, 'The Moment of Death in Old English Literature', *Heroes and Saints: The Moment of Death in Cross-Cultural Perspectives*, ed. P. Granoff and K. Shinohara (Newcastle, 2007), pp. 30–46, esp. 34–6. Wilcox considers narratives in which someone is granted a ante-mortem 'death experience' in a vision to be 'the most informative Christian accounts of death', p. 34. Although Wilcox also considers heroic and martyrial death-modes, the peaceful deaths of confessors (and how these death-scenes contribute to the understanding of death) are omitted from his study.
[69] B. Mize, 'The Representation of the Mind as an Enclosure in Old English Poetry', *ASE* 35 (2006), 57–90 at 81.
[70] Dendle, *Satan*, p. 39.

the nature of execution explicit, the Old English poem seems to suggest that Eleusius attacks that aspect of the maiden which most threatens him, the mind.[71]

At the moment of death, it is notably the 'sawl' which Juliana gives up 'þurh sweordslege' (671a). Is it possible that a difference is drawn between devils assailing a saint's mind as a narrative function by which to signify God's power working through the saint, and devils struggling over that which is released from the body at the moment of death? The narrative inclusion of angels and devils finds wider expression in hagiography than simply this motif, however, which warrants further discussion. Indeed, the conflict motif suggests an uncertainty over the soul's fate, which is not a typical feature of saints' lives.

In *BHom* 11 (Holy Thursday), Christ's ascension is accompanied by two men in white ('twegen weras big on hwitum hræglum. Þæt wæron Drihtnes englas'), and angels accompanying virtuous souls to heaven has been shown to be a common death-scene motif.[72] Indeed, the homilist exclaims in *BHom* 8 (Soul's Need): 'Men, geearnian we nu þæt ure se ytmesta dæg sy engla gefea, & us seo upplice eadignes onfo'.[73] The majority of death-scenes featuring angels involve the accompaniment of saints' souls to heaven, and this psychopompic function in hagiography is exemplified in Bede's *HE* entry on Chad: 'soluta ab ergastulo corporis anima sancta ducentibus, ut credi fas est, angelis comitibus aeterna gaudia petiuit'.[74] The primary psychopomp in Anglo-Saxon England is St Michael the Archangel, who is associated with taking faithful souls to heaven, as well as with

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[71] Harbus, *Life of the Mind*, p. 97. On the Latin *passio* of Juliana (*BHL* 4522–3), see M. Lapidge, 'Cynewulf and the *Passio S. Iulianae*', *Unlocking the Wordhoard: Anglo-Saxon Studies in Memory of Edward B. Irving, Jr.*, ed. M. C. Amodio and K. O'Brien O'Keeffe (Toronto, 2003), pp. 147–71.

[72] *BHom* 11, pp. 120–1.

[73] *BHom* 8, pp. 100–1: 'Let us, [dearest] men, now merit it, that our last day may be an angel's joy, and that the heavenly bliss may receive us'.

[74] *HE*, IV.3, pp. 342–3: 'his holy soul was released from the prison-house of the body and in the company of angels, as one may rightly believe, sought the joys of heaven'. DiNapoli, pp. 14–15. Henderson, *Vision*, pp. 148–9, notes references to angels appearing at continental saints' deaths, as well as lights and singing, indicating the wider hagiographic application of such motifs.

psychostasy (the weighing of souls).[75] Richard Johnson argues that the influence of the

syncretism of Roman and Irish devotional practices in Anglo-Saxon England can be seen

in the association of Michael with these psychopompic functions, which typically are linked

to Irish traditions, whereas Roman devotional practices stress the archangel's role as enemy

of Satan and champion of the Christian people.[76] Johnson notes Irish traditions of

associating Michael with birds, and because the association of the soul with birds has been

demonstrated, there may be a further Irish-influenced link here.[77] In Bede's *HE*, although

Wilfrid's death is dealt with in rather a cursory manner, a vision of the saint is previously

described, in which the archangel Michael tells Wilfrid ' "missus sum, ut te a morte

reuocem [. . .] Sed paratus esto; quia post quadriennium reuertens uisitabo te." '[78] In

Stephen's life of Wilfrid, Michael is represented as accompanying Wilfrid's soul to heaven,

but Bede omits this psychopompic function, which Johnson puts down to Bede's strict

adherence to Roman practice.[79] The *Mart.* entry on Wilfrid (68) may have been based on

Stephen's text, but Rauer notes that 'not all details have close parallels there'.[80] The *Mart.*

mentions that 'þissum biscope onsundrum ætywde Sanctus Michahel ond him sæde [. . .]

hu lange his lif sceolde beon', and goes on to liken the noise of birds ('micelra fugla sweg')

to the flight of angels ('ðara engla flyht') at Wilfrid's death.[81] Although Michael is not

explicitly mentioned at Wilfrid's death, it seems possible that the martyrologist may have

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[75] R. F. Johnson, *Saint Michael the Archangel in Medieval English Legend* (Woodbridge, 2005), pp. 71 and 87. See Henderson, *Vision*, pp. 153–5, who discusses pictorial images of St Michael, for example on Cuthbert's coffin, as well as the role of SS Peter and Paul as psychopomps, pp. 159–60.

[76] R. F. Johnson, 'Archangel in the Margins: St. Michael in the Homilies of Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 41', *Traditio* 53 (1998), 63–91 at 64.

[77] R. F. Johnson, 'The Cult of Saint Michael the Archangel in Anglo-Saxon England' (unpubl. PhD dissertation, Northwestern Univ., 1998), pp. 108–10.

[78] *HE*, V.19, pp. 526–9: ' "I have been sent to recall you from death [. . .] but be prepared, for in four years I will visit you again." '

[79] Johnson, 'Cult', p. 192.

[80] Rauer, *Mart.*, p. 254.

[81] 'St Michael appeared more than once to this bishop and told him [. . .] how long his life would be'.

been perpetuating an association of the archangel's psychopompic function with the figure

of a bird.

Although angels most commonly function as psychopomps for saints, they

occasionally accompany the souls of lay people to heaven, as Ælfric's addenda to *ÆLS*

(Æthelthryth) illustrates. A 'ðegn' produces three sons with his wife before living chastely

with her for another thirty years. After this time 'se wer ferde / to munuclicere drohtnunge

and drihtnes englas / comon eft on his forð-siðe and feredon his sawle / mid sange to

heofonum swa swa us secgað bec' (127–30).[82] The motif here highlights the status granted

to chastity (through an example of male secondary virginity) and thereby emphasizes the

purity of the 'ðegn', suggesting to an audience that perhaps a death worthy of a saint is not

beyond reach if they conduct their earthly lives along similar lines. The assumption is that

only the supremely worthy may be granted such privileges because, ostensibly, this literary

motif is *typically* only applied to saintly deaths. The prevalence of the motif in *vitae* and its

relative paucity in *passiones* further identifies the psychopomp motif with the peaceful

deaths of (sexually) pure saints (compare MI §I.5.8 with §II.4.7).[83]

There is, moreover, a trend for saints acting as psychopomps for other saints, as in

the *HE* with Chad and Cedd. Saints are also assumed to have the power to help mortals at

the transitional event of death, as shown in *Jul.*, where the poet states his great need that

'seo halge me   helpe gefremme, / þonne me gedælað   deorast ealra, / sibbe toslitað

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[82] *ÆLS* (Æthelthryth): 'the man entered the monastic life, and God's angels came just at his death, and carried his soul to heaven, as the books tell us'.

[83] Gatch, *Preaching*, p. 69, notes that other holy people often see saints going to heaven. See the following examples in the *Mart.*: Antony (16) sees Paul's soul going to heaven amidst angels and saints; Ecgberht (37) sees Cedd's soul ascend to heaven among angels; Cuthbert (49) sees souls of men when they leave bodies; Maximus (64) sees souls of Valerianus and Tibertius leave bodies with angels; a hermit sees Pope John's soul (89); an executioner sees souls of saints carried by angels (98); Christians see souls of saints fly to heaven (102); Cuthbert (171) sees Aidan's soul carried to heaven by angels; a holy man sees Cedd's soul carried to heaven by angels (214); the king's brother sees a soul carried to heaven by angels (238).

sinhiwan tu, / micle modlufan' (696–699a).[84] These lines present the same idea of the soul

and body being spouses found in *GuthB*, indicating that the motif is not restricted to

descriptions of the soul–body relationship of saints. Cynewulf does stress, however, the

anxiety he feels over the thought of judgement after the separation of 'gæst ond lic' (714a),

which signals a difference with hagiography. Cynewulf uses *gæst* and *sawul* in the context of

death, and these terminologies are discussed further in the following section.

Giving Up the Ghost

It has been noted that the periphrastic expression 'giving up the ghost' is a common

hagiographic metaphor for depicting both violent and non-violent saintly deaths. The

related motifs of the spirit departing, or the soul being sent to God, are encompassed by

this semantic field, and are grouped together in the MI. The 'giving up the ghost' motif has

its origins in the Old Testament, where death is typically depicted in terms of the 'going-

out' of the life-force (Hebrew *nepesh* or *ruah, ruach*), as Lloyd Bailey shows, using illustrative

biblical passages such as Gen. XXXV.18. This life-force is usually understood as residing in

the blood or breath (probably owing to their significance as signs of life), and, although it is

sometimes depicted as going back to God, it is not equated with a soul.[85] By the time that

the canonical books of the New Testament were written, an eschatological emphasis on

death as something to be overcome by God through the person of Jesus, most notably

through his death and resurrection, can be seen, and it is this general idea that finds

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[84] 'that the saint affords me help when those dearest of all to me divide, the wedded couple separate their relationship, their great heart's affection'.

[85] Bailey, *Biblical Perspectives*, pp. 42–4. See Gen. II.7: 'formavit igitur Dominus Deus hominem de limo terrae et inspiravit in faciem eius spiraculum vitae et factus est homo in animam viventem'. *DMLBS*, s.v. 'anima', defines the term variously as breath, soul, heart and life. See MacDonald, *History*, pp. 2–12 and 80–1, and R. B. Onians, *The Origins of European Thought: About the Body, the Mind, the Soul, the World, Time and Fate*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, 1988), pp. 168 and 172, for further discussion of terminology. See also Godden, 'Anglo-Saxons on the Mind', p. 285. K. Dekker, 'Aldred's Appetite for Encyclopaedic Knowledge: The Secret of Warm and Cold Breath', *ES* 93 (2012), 583–92 at 588 discusses how many heterodox texts emphasize a connection between 'God's breath and the human soul'.

expression in the hagiography discussed here.[86] Physical death comes to serve as a

necessary marker of transition to spiritual life, and it is this idea that applies to the deaths of

the saints. Giving up the ghost or sending up the spirit therefore functions as a stock motif

to represent the transformative moment of transition from terrestrial to celestial life. Rather

than representing the physical machinations of death, hagiographers who adopt some

variation on the phrases (for example, 'his gast ageaf', *Mart.* (44 Patrick); 'animam [. . .]

emisit', Felix's *Vita S. Guthlaci*) seem primarily concerned with highlighting the direct

ascension of saints' souls to heaven as manifestations of their especial status in the

Christian hierarchy.[87] Table 4 below illustrates the vernacular and Latin terminologies

adopted in these various euphemistic motifs (when used as both primary and secondary

topoi) as it seems worth investigating whether hagiography features any discernible lexical

taxonomy or hierarchy.[88]

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[86] See Mark XV.37 and Luke XXIII.46 for descriptions of Jesus giving up the ghost ('exspiravit') at death.

[87] D. Crystal, *Begat: The King James Bible and the English Language* (Oxford, 2010) notes how this phrase has survived into modern English idiom.

[88] See *BT*, s.v. *gast* and *sawel (ol, ul)*; also *DOE*, s.v. *gast, gæst*, especially sense 10.

Table 4

	Martyrs	Confessors
Gast	***Mart.***: 3 Eugenia, 23 Speusippus, Eleusippus, Meleusippus, 26 Ananius, Petrus etc., 30 Agnes, 31 Vincent, 33 Emerentiana, 38 Adrian and Natalia, 41 Forty Soldiers of Sebastea, 56a The Crucifixion, 61 Irene, 70 Mark, 72 Vitalis, 126 Phocas, 127 Cyricus, Julitta, 130 Christina, 149 Afra, Hilaria, 151 Lawrence, 157 Mamas, 227 Cecilia, 235 Lucy, 65 Eleutherius and Antia, 94 Petronilla, 97 Erasmus, 103 Ferreolus and Ferrucio, 130 Christina 154 Hippolytus, 176 Marcellus, 195 Andochius, Thyrsus and Felix, 233 Andrew ***ÆLS***: Agatha, Chair of St Peter (re: Felicula), Mark the Evangelist, Forty Soldiers ***LS*** 32 (PeterPaul) ***ÆCHom***: Seven Holy Sleepers, Lawrence	***Mart.***: 17 Benedict Biscop, 40 Eastorwine, 44 Patrick, 60 Ambrose of Milan, 68 Wilfrid, 80 Eadberht, 133 Mary Magdalen, 181 Audomarus, 208 Tryphonia, 211 Hilarion ***GuthB*** ***LS*** 7 (Euphr) ***ÆCHom***: Assumption of St John
Sawl	***Mart.***: 64 Valerianus, Tiburtius, Maximus, 98 Marcellinus and Peter, 102 Vitus and Modestus, 231 Saturninus ***LS*** 8 (Eust)	***Mart.***: 16 Paul the Hermit, 37 Chad, 171 Aidan, 214 Cedd ***ÆCHom***: Martin, Assumption of the Virgin ***LS*** 3 (Chad) ***LS*** 20 (AssumptMor)
Feorh	***Mart.***: 124 Anatolia and Audax ***Fates***: Peter, Paul	
Anima		Felix's *Vita S. Guthlaci*; Bede's prose *Vita S.Cuthberti*
Spiritus		Anon. *Vita S. Rumwoldi*; Byrhtferth's *Vita S. Oswaldi*; Wulfstan of Winchester's *Vita S. Æthelwoldi*; anon. *Vita S. Cuthberti*

The specific idiom of 'giving up the ghost' is amalgamated with similar variations on the

death-motif such as 'sending up one's spirit' or 'departing to the Lord' in the MI. Where

some form of the figurative expression in used in vernacular texts, Old English *gast* is

almost always used to depict that which is given up at death for native saints, and this

reflects the general trend in the wider corpus. Lockett suggests that '*Sawol* is more or less

interchangeable with *gast* as a name for the human soul', before noting that *gast* can be applied to non-human entities and express other concepts.[89] Some evidence suggests that certain authors display particular preferences in their choice of terminology. The martyrologist commonly uses *gast* or *gæst* in depicting the moment of death: 'Ond se casere hi het gemartyrian, ond God wuldriende heo ageaf hire gast' (65 Eleutherius, Antia).[90] *Sawol* more commonly seems to be used specifically for the entity that leaves the body at death: ' "Heofones God ond eorðan, onfoh mine sawle, forðon ic wæs unsceðþende ond clænheort." ' (209 Justus).[91] One wonders then whether the choice of *gast* or *sawol* rests on notions of embodiment. In the *Mart.* entry on the Crucifixion (56a), Christ gives up his ghost ('gast') on the cross; those released from hell, however (those already dead), go 'mid sawle on ece wuldor'. The idea is further supported by the fact that, when the spirit of a person appears in a vision, they are usually described as a 'gast'. Thus, the souls ('sawle') of Vitus and Modestus (102) 'fleogan to heofonum', but Vitus appears to a woman in a vision as a 'gast'. The fact that the martyrologist occasionally uses *gast* where *sawol* would be expected, as in the entry for The Seven Brothers (123), however, suggests the use of a particular term is not entirely consistent: 'ond heora gastas somod flugan to heofonum'. In Latin texts, *anima* and *spiritus* are used, but there is a large degree of variability in their application across the corpus. In Aldhelm's *Cdv* account of Eustochium's death, *spiritus* and *anima* are used in proximity: 'Aurea tum propere penetrarat regna polorum / Spiritus, ad superas anima remeante catervas' (2160–1216).[92] In general, Aldhelm does not make explicit reference to a non-corporeal soul or spirit departing at death as a primary death-motif; he does, however, make reference to *saints* (suggesting a corporeal body and

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[89] Lockett, *Psychologies*, p. 19.
[90] 'And the emperor had her martyred, and, praising God, she gave up the ghost'.
[91] 'God of heaven and earth, receive my soul, because I was innocent and pure of heart'.
[92] Ehwald, p. 442; *Poetic Works*, p. 150: 'her spirit entered the golden kingdoms of heaven, as her soul returned to the celestial multitude'.

incorporeal soul) departing or ascending to heaven.[93] Lockett cites Isidore's *Etymologiae* (which seems to have been popular in Anglo-Saxon England, given the evidence of the nineteen extant manuscripts containing it) on the nature of the soul and demonstrates that Isidore was 'more thorough than consistent' in his ideas relating to the soul, using various terminologies.[94] It may be that even in texts that influenced Anglo-Saxon understandings of soul terminology a lack of consistency resulted in no standardized use of particular soul or spirit terms.[95] Ælfric in *ÆLS* (Christmas) attempts to delineate the various aspects of the soul, citing *anima* as *sawul* and *spiritus* as *gast* (181–183). This aligns with the *DOE*, which in turn shows that, where Old English texts are based on Latin sources, *gast* most frequently is used for *spiritus*, and *spiritus* is translated as *gast* when the latter is used by vernacular authors to mean 'to die'.[96] Lockett notes, however, that 'Bede and Haymo use the words *anima, animus, mens,* and *spiritus* interchangeably' in Bede's commentary on Luke and Haymo's reconfiguration of the text in the *De confessoribus*, respectively.[97]

Ælfric in the *Lives of Saints* tends to use the specific phrase 'give up the ghost' rarely and rather describes the spirit departing, most typically using the Old English *gewat*.[98] This is true of both violent and non-violent deaths. It is interesting to observe that the term *gewat*, often used to depict a soul's departure, also functions as a general descriptor for physical death. The fact that it is used for a variety of characters – saint, pagan, hero – across a number of texts suggests that no value judgement is placed on the term. This

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[93] He uses a variation of the euphemism in the *Cdv* entry for Silvester, but here it is applied to a bull rather than a human: 'Dum magus in taurum pellax sine voce susurrat, / Corruit in terram quadrupes spiracula linquens' (580–1). Ehwald, p. 377; *Poetic Works*, p. 115: 'When the seductive magician whispered without voice to a bull, the quadruped fell to the ground giving up the ghost'.

[94] Lockett, *Psychologies*, p. 209; see p. 225 on manuscripts of the *Etymologiae*.

[95] See also Roberts, *Guthlac Poems*, pp. 23–4.

[96] See *DOE*, s.v. *gast, gǣst*, especially sense 3. A systematic study of soul terms in glosses and glossaries, and in translated texts, would enable a thorough testing of this hypothesis. For a discussion of the choice of terminology in the Old English Boethius, see Lockett, *Psychologies*, pp. 317–25.

[97] Lockett, *Psychologies*, p. 399.

[98] *Gewat* is the third person preterite singular of the Class I strong verb *gewitan*, 'to set out, depart, go, pass away'.

seems to suggest that a particular author's preference is important in his or her depiction of death-motif. Giving up the ghost and its variants thus seem to be general hagiographic closing formulae or stock phrases used to represent the deaths of saints and to signify their souls' journeys to heaven. The frequent presentation of death as an open-ended rather than finite journey is emphasized through the ubiquity of verbs of departure in saintly death-scenes, with numerous references to saints departing to Christ (see *ÆLS* for Basil, who 'mid herunga gewat / to þam lifigendan gode', 622–623). Forms of the verb *agyfan* appear much more regularly with *gast* than with *sawol*, but the alliterative compatibility of *gast* with *agyfan* may explain this. The evidence from Table 4 supports Lockett's assertion that typically 'the entity called *mod*, *hyge*, and *sefa* is not said to leave the body at death or to participate in the afterlife'.[99]

Summary

This chapter has surveyed and analysed descriptions of the soul and the associated miraculous phenomena at the moment of death. The current state of scholarship seems to suggest that, in terms of death-scene phenomena, the majority of motifs can plausibly be construed as occurring with similar frequency in legends of non-native and native saints. As far as can be established at present, any differences tend to be between images of the soul at the deaths of martyrs and confessors rather than between native and non-native saints. Drawing on the evidence presented in the MI, this chapter has aimed to illustrate both differentiation and similarity in various descriptions of the saintly soul at death, and it seems apparent that the narrative demands of the literary genre determine the composition of death-scenes. Given the representational variety of death-motifs discussed earlier in the thesis for native versus non-native saints, it would have been reasonable to assume that

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[99] Lockett, *Psychologies*, p. 35.

there may have been differences in the portrayal of the soul at death. It seems to be the case, however, that the corpus features a certain degree of uniformity, and, in light of the foregoing examples, it is reasonable to assume that hagiographers are more concerned with presenting the exemplary nature of the saintly soul within a general hagiographic model. It is thus not surprising that motival differences in native lives relate to different aspects of death-scenes. Certain phenomena are more typically found in native lives, such as miraculously erupting springs at the site of a saint's death, but the motifs relating to portrayals of the soul at death are generally standard across the corpus. The fundamental point for hagiographers is to show the purity of saints' souls at death, and continuity with earlier authoritative hagiography is important. Motival variation is seen in *passiones* and *vitae*, with phenomena such as doves, bells and bright lights found less frequently in the former than the latter, where discernible manifestations of sanctity demonstrate the alternative trajectory of sanctity for confessors. Furthermore, various phenomena occur at the deaths of sinners, but these always function to signal the iniquity of the sinner. So, at the deaths of pagans, earthquakes, thunder and lightning are evident. When held in contrast to the kinds of miracles found in saintly death-scenes, the disparity between the blessedness of saints and the forthcoming eternal damnation of sinners is reiterated.

CONCLUSIONS

Death is an important topic. It is a universal event that affects everyone, regardless of time or place. This thesis contributes to the scholarship on the nature of death in Anglo-Saxon England, and the particular focus on the literary death-scenes of saints has aimed to provide a new perspective on the attitudes and approaches to death in this period. Anglo-Saxons at every level of society would have encountered death as a physical and emotional event, just as any human encounters death, but Anglo-Saxons also clearly thought deeply about death and what it meant. It seems evident that a range of influences impacted on the various attitudes and approaches to death, and this accounts for various aesthetic differences in the Anglo-Saxon literary record, not only for hagiography, but also for other forms of literature. The myriad approaches to death expressed in Anglo-Saxon literature indicate a number of attitudes to the practical, emotional and spiritual problems posed by physical death, and the death-scenes of saints form one imaginative response to such problems. This thesis has not been intended as a comprehensive study of death as a universal theme, but rather as an exploration of the attitudes expressed towards death in its literary manifestations in saints' lives of the Anglo-Saxon period, and hagiography has been shown to be a useful medium for the study of these attitudes. Death-scenes abound in this genre, presenting models not only of exemplary death, but also cautionary tales of unworthy death. This thesis has addressed the central questions of whether Anglo-Saxon hagiography portrays consistent aesthetics of good and bad death, and whether such aesthetic representations contribute to the didactic aims of hagiography, whereby death-scenes are meant to serve as examples which encourage audiences to reflect on their own moral conduct.

The thesis has been based on data presented in the Motif Index (MI), which charts the narrative elements found in texts from across the extensive Anglo-Latin and Old English hagiographic corpus. Such a large body of data has enabled a thorough investigation of representative Anglo-Saxon hagiographic trends, thereby providing a contribution to knowledge on the imaginative responses to death throughout the period. Chapter I analysed trends found in the literary portrayals of both violent and non-violent saintly death in the corpus of Anglo-Saxon hagiography. The collections of topoi found in narratives of martyrs and confessors are typically different, which reflects differing routes to sanctity. These data indicate the ubiquity of metaphorical or non-specific death-motifs for both martyrs and confessors across the corpus, which reflects a general desire to focus on the implications of sanctity rather than the means by which it occurred. One sub-corpus of saints' lives in which particularity of death-motif *is* important is that of native Anglo-Saxon martyrs, discussed in Chapter II. The ubiquity of the beheading motif, for example, for this sub-corpus of saints points to a particular mode of specificity in the death-scenes of these saints, and this representational specificity does not extend to native confessors in the same way. For native martyrs the specificity of death-motif frequently highlights the injustice of the saints' deaths and encodes a particular set of values onto the interpretation of those deaths as valid martyrdoms. Certain differences are thus discernible in portrayals of native compared with non-native saints' deaths, with explicit references to the type of martyrdom, the absence of any 'unusual' death-motifs, vengeance miracles focusing on a specific form of bodily disintegration, and the incorrupt body motif commonly appearing in native saints' death-scenes. The body was also shown to be important in Chapter III, particularly in terms of its gender and its manipulation by hagiographers in death-scenes. In both violent and non-violent death-scenes the portrayal of the gendered body is depicted by hagiographers to express particular ideals, and gendered death-scenes often codify

different attitudes to ideal deaths for male and female saints. Chapter IV addressed literary portrayals of non-saintly death, noting that a number of important differences preclude the likes of Beowulf or Byrhtnoth from close alignment with martyrs. Chapter V explored the abidingly popular topic of final utterances. The lack of uniformity of last words in hagiography seems to be a reflection of the fact that saintly death as a biological phenomenon does not operate along expected biological principles. Universal martyrs call attention to their bodies and their Christian status more explicitly than native martyrs, and, of these, female martyrs are presented in this way more than males. Moreover, non-native martyrs are more commonly described as engaging in speech-acts that speech-act theorists would argue disrupt the rules of conversation. They use speech as a means of defiance, whereas native martyrs are typically represented as using their final utterances to pray to God and commend their souls. The final chapter surveyed depictions of these saintly souls at death, and representational differences in images of the soul in death-scenes tend to occur between *passiones* and *vitae* rather than between native and non-native saints.

Although seams of continuity, and unifying trends, may be found across the Anglo-Saxon hagiographic corpus, it is important to stress the mutability of motifs relating to the detailed constitution of saintly death-scenes. Differences occur in the kinds of death-related miracles found in different kinds of texts, and differences in attitudes to such things as illness are found in Bede compared with Ælfric, for example. Although the cultural milieux in which early and late Anglo-Saxon hagiographies were produced must have had some impact on the representational form of the death-scene, I am not suggesting a consistent and traceable diachronic change for the clustering of death-scene motifs found in the texts discussed here. What seem to be more common reasons for death-scene differences are author preferences and authorial purposes. There is a very general hagiographic idiom of death presented in these texts, rather than a strictly codified set of attitudes towards

aestheticized saintly death, with motival differences occurring, although these are generally bounded by the limitations of appropriate hagiographic imitation.

This thesis has built on recent scholarship undertaken on various aspects of Anglo-Saxon death, burial and memorialization, but the emphasis on the death-scenes of saints offers an original contribution to the field of study. There remain a number of areas of study that could productively build on the research arising from this thesis. Although Chapter IV considered the deaths of two non-saintly figures, the fictional Beowulf and the historical Byrhtnoth, the deaths of secular heroes or extraordinary figures could provide a full-length study by themselves. There is certainly more scope to extend a study such as that undertaken for this thesis and address 'important' deaths more widely. Moreover, a systematic semantic study of some of the terminology relating to death might prove a fruitful area of further research.

It seems evident that death as presented in Anglo-Saxon hagiography functions as a communicative tool. Hagiography may have been written to support the claim to sanctity of a particular saint, to enhance the prestige of a particular institution, or to satisfy the requests of a particular patron. What it also seems to have done is inform the behaviour of its audience, and the ubiquity of the death-scene in hagiographies with vastly different audiences, purposes and cultural contexts suggests the concern with which death was conceptualized. The noteworthy point about saintly deaths is that they are, for the most part, *unattainably* exemplary; they are not the sorts of deaths that the 'ordinary' person can realistically hope to experience. Indeed, Peter Brown argues that saints can be perceived as holy by the fact that they are 'inimitable in their physical sufferings'.[1] Despite the fact that the 'average' Anglo-Saxon (if such a category existed) could not expect to die a saintly death, the conduct of the saints in their death-scenes and their steadfast courage

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[1] P. Brown, 'Enjoying the Saints in Late Antiquity', *EME* 9 (2000), 1–24 at 16.

demonstrate attributes that an audience could at least aspire to, if not imitate. The rise in thanatological disciplines has demonstrated the interest in death-studies as an area for scholarly research, and the Introduction to this thesis noted a change from twentieth-century views of death as taboo to twenty-first century trends of charting personal narratives of dying, for example. The popularity of such narratives demonstrate a kind of circularity back to (but not necessarily a continuity with) the Anglo-Saxon period, inasmuch as autobiographical or biographical literature is recognized as something that cannot only shape ideals of how to die well, but that can provide a source of comfort to the living at this most fundamental of events in the human experience.

APPENDIX I
MOTIF INDEX (MI)

The purpose of this Motif Index (MI) is to chart the narrative motifs found in the literary depictions of death in Anglo-Saxon hagiography. The following catalogue surveys and classifies the motifs found across saintly death-scenes, encompassing the processes of dying, death, and being dead as outlined in the Introduction above. The primary purpose of the MI is to enable a reader to access the typical elements found in hagiographic death-scene narratives. By comparison, this invariably enables the reader to investigate what is atypical or uncommon in Anglo-Saxon hagiography. The index also charts ante- and post-mortem events. Section I comprises accounts of martyrdom, whereas Section II comprises accounts of peaceful death. In hagiographic compendia, such as the *Mart.*, only entries that explicitly deal with the death of a saint, or the events leading up to that death, are included. Thus, entries such as that for Macedonius, Patricia and Modesta (43) are omitted, because no details are given other than the notice of the saints' feast. Also, for accounts in which more than one saintly death is mentioned (accounts containing multiple saints), I have counted that entry as only one textual example in the main body of the thesis (and for numerical values), but variations between death-motifs for protagonists in these accounts have been noted here. These accounts are discussed in the body of the thesis where applicable.

In certain cases, the death-motif of a saint is ambiguous, with a saint's death being depicted using multiple motifs. An example of the phenomenon is found in Lucy's legend, where the saint survives an attempted beheading, but lives for three days before giving up her ghost. In this instance, because beheading does not cause immediate death, the death is categorized under the giving up the ghost motif. Elsewhere, a hagiographer may reference a

particular means of causing death, such as beheading or stabbing, only to go on to say that the relevant saints then give up their ghosts. In these cases 'giving up the ghost' seems to be used as a stock expression for 'to die', which comes about as a result of the initial death-motif, so it is the initial motif under which the saint is classified in the MI. A death is only classified under the giving up the ghost or spirit departing motif where that is the only death-motif mentioned. The MI also distinguishes between the motif of beheading and that of dying by the sword. Simon James has analysed the evidence suggesting that, rather than beheading, a plunging sword thrust was the typical Roman means of execution: 'This was an execution or coup-de-grâce thrust, used to kill an unresisting victim, with the sword reversed in the right hand and plunged downwards, dagger-like, between throat and clavicle, into the heart'.[1] For saints who flourished in the times of the Christian persecutions, for example, non-specific references to death by the sword in hagiographic accounts do not therefore automatically mean decapitation, hence the inclusion of the death-motif as a separate category in the MI.

I have used title abbreviations based on the conventions of the Toronto *Dictionary of Old English* project and on M. Lapidge, *Abbreviations for Sources and Specification of Standard Editions for Sources Compiled for* Fontes Anglo-Saxonici *and* Sources of Anglo-Saxon Literary Culture (Binghamton, 1988). The principles on which the latter is based have been used for texts not included in this volume. For Old English editions without line numbers, I have followed the *DOE*'s lineation where possible. In addition, for the *Mart.*, the numbering system for individual entries used by the *DOE* follows the systems of Kotzor and Rauer.

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[1] S. James, *Rome and the Sword: How Warriors and Weapons Shaped Roman History* (London, 2011), p. 37; H. R. E. Davidson, *The Sword in Anglo-Saxon England: Its Archaeology and Literature* (Oxford, 1962).

LIST OF TEXTS INCLUDED IN MOTIF INDEX[2]

Anonymous Latin *Vitae*
Vita S. Birini: **ANON.Vit.Bir.**
Vita S. Ceolfridi: **ANON.Vit.Ceolfr.**
Vita S. Cuthberti Auctore Anonymo: **ANON.Vit.Cuthb.**
Vita et miracula S. Kenelmi: **ANON.Vit.Mir.Ken.**
Vita S. Rumwoldi: **ANON.Vit.Rum.**
Whitby Life of Gregory the Great: **ANON.Vit.Greg.**

Authored Latin *Vitae*
Abbo, *Vita S. Eadmundi*: **ABBO.FLOR.Pass.Eadmund.**
B., *Vita S. Dunstani*: **B.Vit.S.Dunstani**
Bede, *Vita Sancti Cuthberti Auctore Beda*: **BEDA.vit.Cuth.pr.**
Byrhtferth, *Vita S. Oswaldi*: **BYRHT.V.S.Oswaldi**
——, *Vita S. Ecgwini*: **BYRHT.V.S. Ecgwini**
Felix, *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*: **FELIX.Vit.Guth.**
Goscelin of Saint-Bertin, *Lectiones in festiuitate S. Sexburge*: **GOSC.Fest.S. Sexburge**
——, *Lectiones in natale S. Eormenhilde*: **GOSC.Nat.S. Eormenhilde**
——, *Vita S. Werburge*: **GOSC.V.S.Werburge**
——, *Vita S. Wihtburge*: **GOSC.V.S. Wihtburge**
——(?), *Miracula S. Ætheldrethe*: **GOSC.Mir.S.Ætheldrethe**
——(?), *Vita Beata Sexburge Regine*: **GOSC.V.Beate Sexburge Regine**
Lantfred, *Translatio et miracula S. Swithuni*: **LANTFR.Trans.mir.Swith.**
Stephen of Ripon, *Vita S. Wilfrithi*: **STEPH.HYRP.Vit.Wilfr.**
Wulfstan of Winchester, *Vita S. Æthelwoldi*: **WULF.WINT.Vit.Æthelwold.**

Other Latin Texts[3]
Aldhelm, *De virginitate* (prose)
    Felix: **ALDH.Pros.virg.** (Felix)
    Malchus: **ALDH.Pros.virg.** (Malchus)
    Babilas: **ALDH.Pros.virg.** (Babilas)
    Cosmas and Damian: **ALDH.Pros.virg.** (Cosmas and Damian)
    Chrysanthus: **ALDH.Pros.virg.** (Chrysanthus)
    Julian: **ALDH.Pros.virg.** (Julian)
    Amos: **ALDH.Pros.virg.** (Amos)
    Caecilia: **ALDH.Pros.virg.** (Caecilia)
    Agatha: **ALDH.Pros.virg.** (Agatha)
    Lucia: **ALDH.Pros.virg.** (Lucia)
    Justina: **ALDH.Pros.virg.** (Justina)
    Eugenia: **ALDH.Pros.virg.** (Eugenia)
    Agnes: **ALDH.Pros.virg.** (Agnes)
    Thecla and Eulalia: **ALDH.Pros.virg.** (Thecla and Eulalia)
    Christina: **ALDH.Pros.virg.** (Christina)

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[2] This includes individual *vitae* and *passiones*, *vitae* in hagiographical collections, poetry and other hagiographical material. The title of an individual hagiographical entry is given, followed by the classification number and title used in the Motif Index.

[3] In texts containing numerous saints, such as the *Dv*, *Cdv*, *HE* and *Mart.*, only those entries that feature the death-scene of a saint, or allude to a saint's death, are included.

Dorothea: **ALDH.Pros.virg.** (Dorothea)
Chionia, Irene and Agape: **ALDH.Pros.virg.** (Chionia, Irene, Agape)
Rufina and Secunda: **ALDH.Pros.virg.** (Rufina and Secunda)
Anatolia and Victoria: **ALDH.Pros.virg.** (Anatolia and Victoria)
Joseph: **ALDH.Pros.virg.** (Joseph)

——, *Carmen de virginitate*
John the Baptist: **ALDH.Carm.virg.** (John the Baptist)
Martin: **ALDH.Carm.virg.** (Martin)
Paul the Hermit: **ALDH.Carm.virg.** (Paul the Hermit)
Gervasius and Protasius: **ALDH.Carm.virg.** (Gervasius and Protasius)
Narcissus: **ALDH.Carm.virg.** (Narcissus)
Babilas: **ALDH.Carm.virg.** (Babilas)
Cosmas and Damian: **ALDH.Carm.virg.** (Cosmas and Damian)
Chrysanthus: **ALDH.Carm.virg.** (Chrysanthus)
Julian: **ALDH.Carm.virg.** (Julian)
Amos: **ALDH.Carm.virg.** (Amos)
Apollonius: **ALDH.Carm.virg.** (Apollonius)
Agatha: **ALDH.Carm.virg.** (Agatha)
Lucia: **ALDH.Carm.virg.** (Lucia)
Justina: **ALDH.Carm.virg.** (Justina)
Agnes: **ALDH.Carm.virg.** (Agnes)
Thecla: **ALDH.Carm.virg.** (Thecla)
Eustochium: **ALDH.Carm.virg.** (Eustochium)
Chionia, Irene and Agape: **ALDH.Carm.virg.** (Chionia, Irene and Agape)
Rufina and Secunda: **ALDH.Carm.virg.** (Rufina and Secunda)
Anatolia and Victoria: **ALDH.Carm.virg.** (Anatolia and Victoria)

Bede, *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum*
Alban: **BEDA.Hist.eccl.** (Alban)
White Hewald: **BEDA.Hist.eccl.** (White Hewald)
Black Hewald: **BEDA.Hist.eccl.** (Black Hewald)
Peter: **BEDA.Hist.eccl.** (Peter)
Oswald: **BEDA.Hist.eccl.** (Oswald)
Aaron and Julius: **BEDA.Hist.eccl.** (Aaron and Julius)
Eorcengota: **BEDA.Hist.eccl.** (Eorcengota)
Chad: **BEDA.Hist.eccl.** (Chad)
Æthelthryth: **BEDA.Hist.eccl.** (Æthelthryth)
Cuthbert: **BEDA.Hist.eccl.** (Cuthbert)
Wilfrid: **BEDA.Hist.eccl.** (Wilfrid)
Fursa: **BEDA.Hist.eccl.** (Fursa)
Gregory: **BEDA.Hist.eccl.** (Gregory)
Ælfflæd: **BEDA.Hist.eccl.** (Ælfflæd)
Hædde: **BEDA.Hist.eccl.** (Hædde)
Aidan: **BEDA.Hist.eccl.** (Aidan)
Cedd: **BEDA.Hist.eccl.** (Cedd)
Hild: **BEDA.Hist.eccl.** (Hild)
Germanus: **BEDA.Hist.eccl.** (Germanus)
Æthelburh: **BEDA.Hist.eccl.** (Æthelburh)

Anonymous Old English Poetry
Andreas: **And.** (A2.1)
Fates of the Apostles: **Fates** (A2.2 [saint's name])
Guthlac A: **GuthA** (A3.2)
Guthlac B: **GuthB** (A3.2)
Juliana: **Jul.** (A3.5)

Anonymous Old English Saints' Lives
Chad: **LS 3** (B3.3.3 Chad)
Christopher: **LS 4** (B3.3.4 ChristophRyp)
Eufrasia: **LS 7** (B3.3.7 Euphr)
Eustace: **LS 8** (B3.3.8 Eust)
Giles: **LS 9** (B3.3.9 Giles)
Margaret: **LS 14** (B3.3.14 MargaretCCCC303) and **LS 16** (B3.3.16 MargaretCot.Tib.A.iii)
Mary of Egypt: **LS 23** (B3.3.23 MaryofEgypt)
Nicholas: **LS 29** (B3.3.29 Nicholas)
Pantaleon: **LS 30** (B3.3.30 Pantaleon)
Seven Sleepers*:* **LS 34** (B3.3.34 Seven Sleepers)

Hagiography in Old English Hagiography and Homily Collections
Anonymous, *Blickling Homilies*
    S. Andreas, *BHom* 19: **LS 1.2** (B3.3.1.2 AndrewMor)
    To S. Martines Mæssan, *BHom* 18: **LS 17.1** (B3.3.17.2 MartinMor)
    Assumptio S. Mariæ virginis, *BHom* 13: **LS 20** (B3.3.20 AssumptMor)
    Spel be Petrus & Paulus, *BHom* 15: **LS 32** (B3.3.32 PeterPaul)

Ælfric, Catholic Homilies
    Passion of Blessed Stephen Protomartyr: **ÆCHom I,3** (B1.1.4 the Passion of the Blessed Stephen protomartyr)
    Assumption of St John the Apostle: **ÆCHom I,4** (B1.1.5 Assumption of St John)
    Holy Innocents: **ÆCHom I,5** (B1.1.6 Holy Innocents)
    Nativity of St John the Baptist: **ÆCHom I,25** (B1.1.27 John the Baptist)
    Passion of Apostles Peter and Paul: **ÆCHom I,26** (B1.1.28 Peter and Paul)
    Passion of Martyr Lawrence: **ÆCHom I,29** (B1.1.31 Lawrence)
    Assumption of Mary: **ÆCHom I,30** (B1.1.32 Assumption of the Virgin)
    Passion of Bartholomew: **ÆCHom I,31** (B1.1.33 Bartholomew)
    Nativity of Clement the Martyr: **ÆCHom I,37** (B1.1.39 Clement)
    Nativity of Andrew the Apostle: **ÆCHom I,38** (B1.1.40 Andrew)
    St Gregory the Great: **ÆCHom II,9** (B1.2.10 Gregory the Great)
    Deposition of St Cuthbert: **ÆCHom II,10** (B1.2.11 Cuthbert)
    St Benedict: **ÆCHom II,11** (B1.2.12 Benedict)
    The Apostles Philip and James: **ÆCHom II,18** (B1.2.21 Philip and James)
    St James the Apostle: **ÆCHom II,18** (B1.2.21 St James the Apostle)
    Sts Alexander, Eventius and Theodulus: **ÆCHom II,20** (B1.2.23 Alexander, Eventius, Theodulus)
    Nativity of St James the Apostle: **ÆCHom II,31** (B1.2.34 Nativity of St James the Apostle)
    The Seven Holy Sleepers: **ÆCHom II,32** (B1.2.34 Seven Holy Sleepers)
    Passion of St Matthew: **ÆCHom II,37** (B1.2.40 Matthew)

Passion of Holy Apostles Simon and Jude: **ÆCHom** II,38 (B1.2.41 Simon and Jude)
Of the Death of St Martin: **ÆCHom** II,39.1 (B1.2.42 Martin)

Ælfric, *Lives of Saints*[4]

Eugenia: **ÆLS** (B1.3.3 Eugenia)
Basil: **ÆLS** (B1.3.5 Julian and Basilissa)
Julian and Basilissa: **ÆLS** (B1.3.5 Julian and Basilissa)
Sebastian: **ÆLS** (B1.3.6 Sebastian)
Maur: **ÆLS** (B1.3.7 Maur)
Agnes: **ÆLS** (B1.3.8 Agnes)
Agatha: **ÆLS** (B1.3.9 Agatha)
Lucy: **ÆLS** (B1.3.10 Lucy)
Chair of St Peter: **ÆLS** (B1.3.11 Chair of St Peter)
Forty Soldiers: **ÆLS** (B1.3.12 Forty Soldiers)
George: **ÆLS** (B1.3.15 George)
Mark the Evangelist: **ÆLS** (B1.3.16 Mark the Evangelist)
Alban: **ÆLS** (B1.3.20 Alban)
Æthelthryth: **ÆLS** (B1.3.21 Æthelthryth)
Swithun: **ÆLS** (B1.3.22 Swithun)
Apollinaris: **ÆLS** (B1.3.23 Apollinaris)
Abdon and Sennes: **ÆLS** (B1.3.24 Abdon and Sennes)
Maccabees: **ÆLS** (B1.3.25 Maccabees)
Oswald: **ÆLS** (B1.3.26 Oswald)
Maurice and Companions: **ÆLS** (B1.3.28 Maurice and his Companions)
Denis and Companions: **ÆLS** (B1.3.29 Denis)
Martin: **ÆLS** (B1.3.30 Martin)
Edmund: **ÆLS** (B1.3.31 Edmund)
Cecilia: **ÆLS** (B1.3.32 Cecilia)
Chrysanthus and Daria: **ÆLS** (B1.3.33 Chrysanthus and Daria)
Thomas the Apostle: **ÆLS** (B1.3.34 Thomas the Apostle)
Vincent: **ÆLS** (B1.3.35 Vincent)

Other Old English Texts

Anonymous, *The Old English Martyrology*

Anastasia: **Mart.** (B19.1.2 Anastasia)
Eugenia: **Mart.** (B19.1.3 Eugenia)
Stephen: **Mart.** (B19.1.4 Stephen)
John the Evangelist: **Mart.** (B19.1.5 John the Evangelist)
The Holy Innocents: **Mart.** (B19.1.6 The Holy Innocents)
Pope Silvester I: **Mart.** (B19.1.7 Pope Silvester I)
Pope Anteros: **Mart.** (B19.1.10 Pope Anteros)
Emiliana: **Mart.** (B19.1.11 Emiliana)
Julian and Basilissa: **Mart.** (B19.1.13 Julian and Basilissa)
Pope Telesphorus: **Mart.** (B19.1.14 Pope Telesphorus)
Pega: **Mart.** (B19.1.15 Pega)
Paul the Hermit: **Mart.** (B19.1.16 Paul the Hermit)
Benedict Biscop: **Mart.** (B19.1.17 Benedict Biscop)

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[4] Texts included in Skeat's edition that are not by Ælfric are listed as separate texts (Mary of Egypt, Eustace, Eufrasia).

Felix: **Mart.** (B19.1.19 Felix)
Pope Marcellus: **Mart.** (B19.1.20 Pope Marcellus)
Fursa: **Mart.** (B19.1.21 Fursa)
Antony the Hermit: **Mart.** (B19.1.22 Antony the Hermit)
Speusippus, Eleusippus and Meleusippus: **Mart.** (B19.1.23 Speusippus, Eleusippus, Meleusippus)
Ananias, Petrus etc.: **Mart.** (B19.1.26 Ananius, Petrus etc.)
Sebastian: **Mart.** (B19.1.27 Sebastian)
Pope Fabian: **Mart.** (B19.1.28 Pope Fabian)
Marius, Martha, Audifax and Abacuc: **Mart.** (B19.1.29 Marius, Martha, Audifax, Abacuc)
Agnes: **Mart.** (B19.1.30 Agnes)
Vincent: **Mart.** (B19.1.31 Vincent)
Anastasius: **Mart.** (B19.1.32 Anastasius)
Emerentiana: **Mart.** (B19.1.33 Emerentiana)
Babylas etc.: **Mart.** (B19.1.34 Babylas etc.)
Chad: **Mart.** (B19.1.37 Chad)
Adrian and Natalia: **Mart.** (B19.1.38 Adrian and Natalia)
Perpetua and Felicity: **Mart.** (B19.1.39 Perpetua and Felicity)
Eastorwine: **Mart.** (B19.1.40 Eastorwine)
Forty Soldiers of Sebastea: **Mart.** (B19.1.41 Forty Soldiers of Sebastea)
Pope Gregory the Great: **Mart.** (B19.1.42 Pope Gregory the Great)
Patrick: **Mart.** (B19.1.44 Patrick)
Cuthbert: **Mart.** (B19.1.49 Cuthbert)
Benedict of Nursia: **Mart.** (B19.1.51 Benedict of Nursia)
Theodoret: **Mart.** (B19.1.54 Theodoret)
Annunciation Day, The Crucifixion: **Mart.** (B19.1.56,56a Annunciation Day, The Crucifixion)
Agape, Chionia and Irene: **Mart.** (B19.1.59 Agape, Chionia, Irene)
Ambrose of Milan: **Mart.** (B19.1.60 Ambrose of Milan)
Irene: **Mart.** (B19.1.61 Irene)
Seven Women at Sirmium: **Mart.** (B19.1.62 Seven Women in Sirmium)
Guthlac: **Mart.** (B19.1.63 Guthlac)
Valerianus, Tiburtius and Maximus: **Mart.** (B19.1.64 Valerianus, Tiburtius, Maximus)
Eleutherius, Antia: **Mart.** (B19.1.65 Eleutherius, Antia)
Æthelwald: **Mart.** (B19.1.66 Æthelwald)
George: **Mart.** (B19.1.67 George)
Wilfrid: **Mart.** (B19.1.68 Wilfrid)
Mark: **Mart.** (B19.1.70 Mark)
Alexandria: **Mart.** (B19.1.71 Alexandria)
Vitalis: **Mart.** (B19.1.72 Vitalis)
Christopher: **Mart.** (B19.1.73 Christopher)
Pope Alexander I, Eventius and Theodolus: **Mart.** (B19.1.76 Pope Alexander I, Eventius, Theodolus)
Eadberht: **Mart.** (B19.1.80 Eadberht)
John of Beverley: **Mart.** (B19.1.81 John of Beverley)
Victor Maurus: **Mart.** (B19.1.83 Victor Maurus)
Gordianus: **Mart.** (B19.1.84 Gordianus)
Calepodius: **Mart.** (B19.1.85 Calepodius)

Pancras: **Mart.** (B19.1.86 Pancras)
Victor and Corona: **Mart.** (B19.1.87 Victor and Corona)
Pope John I: **Mart.** (B19.1.89 Pope John I)
Basilla: **Mart.** (B19.1.90 Basilla)
Sisinnius, Martyrius and Alexander: **Mart.** (B19.1.93 Sisinnius, Martyrius, Alexander)
Petronilla: **Mart.** (B19.1.94 Petronilla)
Erasmus: **Mart.** (B19.1.97 Erasmus)
Marcellinus and Peter: **Mart.** (B19.1.98 Marcellinus and Peter)
Artemius, Candida and Virgo: **Mart.** (B19.1.99 Arthemius, Candida, Virgo)
Vitus and Modestus: **Mart.** (B19.1.102 Vitus and Modestus)
Ferreolus and Ferrucio: **Mart.** (B19.1.103 Ferreolus and Ferrucio)
Nicander: **Mart.** (B19.1.104 Nicander)
Blastus: **Mart.** (B19.1.105 Blastus)
Mark and Marcellian: **Mart.** (B19.1.106 Mark and Marcellian)
Gervase and Protase: **Mart.** (B19.1.107 Gervase and Protase)
James the Less: **Mart.** (B19.1.108 James the Less)
Alban: **Mart.** (B19.1.109 Alban)
Æthelthryth: **Mart.** (B19.1.110 Æthelthryth)
Luceia and Auceia: **Mart.** (B19.1.112 Luceia and Auceia);
John and Paul: **Mart.** (B19.1.113 John and Paul)
Peter and Paul: **Mart.** (B19.1.114 Peter and Paul)
Cassius: **Mart.** (B19.1.115 Cassius)
Martial: **Mart.** (B19.1.116 Martial)
Processus and Martinianus: **Mart.** (B19.1.117 Processus and Martinianus)
Zoe: **Mart.** (B19.1.118 Zoe)
Tranquillinus: **Mart.** (B19.1.120 Tranquillinus)
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Victor of Marseilles etc. : **Mart.** (B19.1.132 Victor of Marseilles etc.)
Mary Magdalen: **Mart.** (B19.1.133 Mary Magdalen)
Apollinaris: **Mart.** (B19.1.134 Apollinaris)
James the Greater: **Mart.** (B19.1.135 James the Greater)
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Lupus: **Mart.** (B19.1.138 Lupus)
Abdon and Sennes: **Mart.** (B19.1.139 Abdon and Sennes)
The Machabees: **Mart.** (B19.1.140 The Machabees)
Germanus: **Mart.** (B19.1.141 Germanus)
Eusebius of Vercelli: **Mart.** (B19.1.142 Eusebius of Vercelli)
Pope Stephen I: **Mart.** (B19.1.143 Pope Stephen I)
Theodota and her Three Sons: **Mart.** (B19.1.144 Theodota and her Three sons)

Oswald: *Mart.* (B19.1.146 Oswald)
Pope Sixtus II: *Mart.* (B19.1.147 Pope Sixtus II)
Donatus and Hilarinus: *Mart.* (B19.1.148 Donatus and Hilarinus)
Afra, Hilaria, etc.: *Mart.* (B19.1.149 Afra, Hilaria etc.)
Romanus: *Mart.* (B19.1.150 Romanus)
Lawrence: *Mart.* (B19.1.151 Lawrence)
Tiburtius: *Mart.* (B19.1.152 Tiburtius)
Euplius: *Mart.* (B19.1.153 Euplius)
Hippolytus: *Mart.* (B19.1.154 Hippolytus)
Cassian: *Mart.* (B19.1.155 Cassian)
The Assumption of the Virgin Mary
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Symphorian: *Mart.* (B19.1.160 Symphorian)
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Felix of Thibiuca etc.: *Mart.* (B19.1.170 Felix of Thibiuca etc.)
Aidan: *Mart.* (B19.1.171 Aidan)
Antoninus: *Mart.* (B19.1.173 Antoninus)
Marcellus: *Mart.* (B19.1.176 Marcellus)
Bertinus: *Mart.* (B19.1.178 Bertinus)
Sinotus: *Mart.* (19.1.179 Sinotus)
Audomarus: *Mart.* (B19.1.181 Audomarus)
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Pope Cornelius etc.: *Mart.* (B19.1.183 Pope Cornelius etc.)
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Fausta and Evilasius: *Mart.* (B19.1.189 Fausta and Evilasius)
Matthew: *Mart.* (B19.1.190 Matthew)
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Thecla: *Mart.* (B19.1.193 Thecla
Andochius, Thyrsus and Felix: *Mart.* (B19.1.195 Andochius, Thyrsus and Felix)
Ceolfrith: *Mart.* (B19.1.196 Ceolfrith)
Justina and Cyprian: *Mart.* (B19.1.197 Justina and Cyprian)
Cosmas and Damian: *Mart.* (B19.1.198 Cosmas and Damian)
The Two Hewalds: *Mart.* (B19.1.201 The Two Hewalds)
Dionysius, Rusticus and Eleutherius: *Mart.* (B19.1.203 Dionysius, Rusticus and Eleutherius)
Æthelburh: *Mart.* (B19.1.204 Æthelburh)
Pope Callistus I: *Mart.* (B19.1.205 Pope Callistus I)
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Quentin: ***Mart.*** (B19.1.217 Quentin)
Caesarius: ***Mart.*** (B19.1.219 Caesarius)
Benignus: ***Mart.*** (B19.1.220 Benignus)
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The Four Crowned Ones: ***Mart.*** (B19.1.222 Four Crowned Ones)
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Milus and Senneus: ***Mart.*** (B19.1.225 Milus and Senneus)
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Felicity: ***Mart.*** (B19.1.229 Felicity)
Chrysogonus: ***Mart.*** (B19.1.230 Chrysogonus)
Saturninus: ***Mart.*** (B19.1.231 Saturninus)
Chrysanthus and Daria: ***Mart.*** (B19.1.232 Chrysanthus and Daria)
Andrew: ***Mart.*** (B19.1.233 Andrew)
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Lucy: ***Mart.*** (B19.1.235 Lucy)
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* Only Rufina   ****** Only Victoria

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[5] In the *DOE* categorization, *ÆCHom* Nativity of St James the Apostle and The Seven Holy Sleepers are combined.

1.2   *Requests or Demands for Sex or Marriage*
ALDH.Pros.virg. (Malchus); **ALDH.Pros.virg.** (Chrysanthus); **ALDH.Pros.virg.** (Julian); **ALDH.Pros.virg.** (Caecilia); **ALDH.Pros.virg.** (Lucia); **ALDH.Pros.virg.** (Justina); **ALDH.Pros.virg.** (Eugenia); **ALDH.Pros.virg.** (Agnes); **ALDH.Pros.virg.** (Thecla and Eulalia); **ALDH.Pros.virg.** (Dorothea); **ALDH.Pros.virg.** (Chionia, Irene, Agape); **ALDH.Pros.virg.** (Rufina and Secunda); **ALDH.Pros.virg.** (Anatolia and Victoria); **ALDH.Pros.virg.** (Joseph); **ALDH.Carm.virg.** (Chrysanthus and Daria); **ALDH.Carm.virg.** (Julian); **ALDH.Carm.virg.** (Lucia); **ALDH.Carm.virg.** (Justina); **ALDH.Carm.virg.** (Agnes); **ALDH.Carm.virg.** (Thecla); **ALDH.Carm.virg.** (Chionia, Irene and Agape); **ALDH.Carm.virg.** (Anatolia and Victoria); *Mart.* (B19.1.13 Julian and Basilissa); *Mart.* (B19.1.30 Agnes); *Mart.* (B19.1.38 Adrian and Natalia); *Mart.* (B19.1.59 Agape, Chionia, Irene); *Mart.* (B19.1.61 Irene); *Mart.* (B19.1.90 Basilla); *Mart.* (B19.1.94 Petronilla); *Mart.* (B19.1.112 Luceia and Auceia); *Mart.* (B19.1.122 Marina); *Mart.* (B19.1.124 Anatolia and Audax); *Mart.* (B19.1.144 Theodota and her Three Sons); *Mart.* (B19.1.190 Matthew: not involving saint but he meets his death after telling a king he cannot marry a nun); *Mart.* (B19.1.193 Thecla: remained virgin after marriage); *Mart.* (B19.1.197 Justina and Cyprian); *Mart.* (B19.1.227 Cecilia); *Mart.* (B19.1.232 Chrysanthus and Daria); *Mart.* (B19.1.234 Eulalia); *Mart.* (B19.1.235 Lucy); *ÆLS* (B1.3.33 Chrysanthus and Daria); *ÆLS* (B1.3.3 Eugenia – Basilla also in this account refuses bridegroom); *ÆLS* (B1.3.5 Julian and Basilissa); *ÆLS* (B1.3.8 Agnes); *ÆLS* (B1.3.9 Agatha); *ÆLS* (B1.3.10 Lucy); *ÆLS* (B1.3.11 Chair of St Peter: Felicula); *ÆLS* (B1.3.32 Cecilia); *ÆCHom* **II,37** (B1.2.40 Matthew: referring to maiden Effigenia); *Jul.* (A3.5); *LS* **16** (B3.3.16 MargaretCot.Tib.A.iii); *LS* **14** (B3.3.14 MargaretCCCC303)

1.3   *Requests for Monetary Tribute, Property, Political Submission*
ANON.ASChron. (1012 Ælfheah); **ABBO.FLOR.Pass.Eadmund.**

1.4   *Miraculous Punishment, Reprisal for Dishonouring or Injuring Saints Before Death*[6]
ALDH.Carm.virg. (Chrysanthus and Daria: those desiring to violate Daria to suffer savage death); **ALDH.Carm.virg.** (Julian: one eye lost after lash meant for saint hits persecutor; saint heals this); **ALDH.Carm.virg.** (Agnes: persecutor struck down by God then healed by the saint); *Mart.* (B19.1.30 Agnes); *Mart.* (B19.1.67 George); *Mart.* (B19.1.144 Theodota and her Three sons: would-be ravisher given nose-bleed by God's angel); *Mart.* (B19.1.157 Mamas: pagans and Jews savaged by lion); *Mart.* (B19.1.198 Cosmas and Damian: stones and arrows used against saints turn back against perpetrators); *Mart.* (B19.1.235 Lucy); *ÆLS* (B1.3.3 Eugenia: Melantia's house destroyed by fire from heaven); *ÆLS* (B1.3.10 Lucy: Paschasius beheaded); *ÆLS* (B1.3.5 Julian and Basilissa); *ÆLS* (B1.3.8 Agnes); *ÆLS* (B1.3.9 Agatha: counsellor and another man crushed by wall); *ÆLS* (B1.3.12 Forty Soldiers: flints turn back against pagans); *ÆLS* (B1.3.15 George); *ÆLS* (B1.3.23 Apollinaris); *ÆLS* (B1.3.33 Chrysanthus and Daria: sinews of those who try to touch Daria shrink: wizards will be tormented for three days, then healed); *ÆCHom* **II,38**

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[6] Aldhelm in the *Cdv* refers to divine vengeance in his commentaries on Elijah, Elisha and Daniel.

(B1.2.41 Simon and Jude); **LS 1.2** (B3.3.1.2 AndrewMor); **LS 4** (B3.3.4 ChristophRyp); **And.** (A2.1)

1.5   *Saints Predict Downfall of Persecutor(s)*
ALDH.Carm.virg. (Cecilia); **Mart.** (B19.1.7 Pope Silvester I); **Mart.** (B19.1.83 Victor Maurus); **Mart.** (B19.1.126 Phocas: prediction comes three days after saint's death when he appears in vision); **Mart.** (B19.1.225 Milus and Senneus); **Mart.** (B19.1.235 Lucy); **ÆLS** (B1.3.5 Julian and Basilissa); **ÆLS** (B1.3.10 Lucy); **ÆLS** (B1.3.20 Alban); **ÆCHom II,20** (B1.2.23 Alexander, Eventius, Theodulus*****); **LS 4** (B3.3.4 ChristophRyp); **LS 14** (B3.3.14 MargaretCCCC303: curses devil)
     * Prediction comes in form of voice from heaven

2.   **Events Leading Up to Death: Speeches and Visions**
2.1   *Saints Address God or Pray*
ALDH.Pros.virg. (Felix); **BEDA.Hist.eccl.** (Alban); **Mart.** (B19.1.38 Adrian, Natalia); **Mart.** (B19.1.39 Perpetua and Felicity); **Mart.** (B19.1.67 George); **Mart.** (B19.1.71 Alexandria); **Mart.** (B19.1.73 Christopher); **Mart.** (B19.1.94 Petronilla); **Mart.** (B19.1.97 Erasmus); **Mart.** (B19.1.103 Ferreolus and Ferrucio); **Mart.** (B19.1.122 Marina); **Mart.** (B19.1.124 Anatolia and Audax); **Mart.** (B19.1.127 Cyricus and Julitta); **Mart.** (B19.1.146 Oswald); **Mart.** (B19.1.154. Hippolytus); **Mart.** (B19.1.176 Marcellus); **Mart.** (B19.1.182 Protus and Hyacinth); **Mart.** (B19.1.184 Cyprian); **ÆLS** (B1.3.15 George); **ÆLS** (B1.3.31 Edmund); **ÆLS** (B1.3.3 Eugenia); **ÆLS** (B1.3.8 Agnes); **ÆLS** (B1.3.12 Forty Soldiers); **ÆLS** (B1.3.16 Mark the Evangelist); **ÆLS** (B1.3.29 Denis); **ÆLS** (B1.3.26 Oswald); **ÆCHom I,3** (B1.1.4 the Passion of the Blessed Stephen protomartyr); **ÆCHom I,26** (B1.1.28 Peter and Paul); **ÆCHom I,29** (B1.1.31 Lawrence); **ÆCHom I,38** (B1.1.40 Andrew); **ÆCHom II,31** (B1.2.34 Nativity of St James the Apostle); **ÆCHom II,37** (B1.2.40 Matthew); **ÆCHom II,38** (B1.2.41 Simon and Jude; angel); **Jul.** (A3.5); **LS 16** (B3.3.16 MargaretCot.Tib.A.iii); **LS 14** (B3.3.14 MargaretCCCC303); **LS 4** (B3.3.4 ChristophRyp); **LS 1.2** (B3.3.1.2 AndrewMor); **LS 32** (B3.3.32 PeterPaul); **And.** (A2.1); **ANON.Vit.Mir. Ken.**; **LS 8** (B3.3.8 Eust); **LS 30** (B3.3.30 Pantaleon); **ABBO.FLOR.Pass.Eadmund.**

2.2   *Saints Address Persecutors (Pagans, Devil, Demons)*
ALDH.Pros.virg. (Babilas); **ALDH.Pros.virg.** (Agnes); **ALDH.Pros.virg.** (Secunda); **ALDH.Pros.virg.** (Victoria); **ALDH.Carm.virg.** (John the Baptist); **ALDH.Carm.virg.** (Cecilia); **ALDH.Carm.virg.** (Rufina and Secunda; S); **BEDA.Hist.eccl.** (Alban); **Mart.** (B19.1.7 Pope Silvester I); **Mart.** (B19.1.34 Babylas etc.); **Mart.** (B19.1.83 Victor Maurus); **Mart.** (B19.1.90 Basilla); **Mart.** (B19.1.121 Procopius); **Mart.** (B19.1.122 Marina); **Mart.** (B19.1.140 The Machabees); **Mart.** (B19.1.149 Afra, Hilaria etc.); **Mart.** (B19.1.151 Lawrence); **Mart.** (B19.1.153 Euplius); **Mart.** (B19.1.160 Symphorian); **Mart.** (B19.1.163 Genesius the Comedian); **Mart.** (B19.1.170 Felix of Thibiuca etc.); **Mart.** (B19.1.190 Matthew); **Mart.** (B19.1.230 Chrysogonus); **Mart.** (B19.1.234 Eulalia); **ÆLS** (B1.3.5 Julian and Basilissa); **ÆLS** (B1.3.15 George); **ÆLS** (B1.3.31 Edmund); **ÆLS** (B1.3.24 Abdon and

Sennes); *ÆLS* (B1.3.33 Chrysanthus and Daria); *ÆLS* (B1.3.6 Sebastian); *ÆLS* (B1.3.8 Agnes); *ÆLS* (B1.3.9 Agatha); *ÆLS* (B1.3.10 Lucy); *ÆLS* (B1.3.32 Cecilia); *ÆLS* (B1.3.12 Forty Soldiers); *ÆLS* (B1.3.20 Alban); *ÆLS* (B1.3.25 Maccabees); *ÆLS* (B1.3.34 Thomas the Apostle); *ÆLS* (B1.3.35 Vincent); *ÆCHom* **I,3** (B1.1.4 the Passion of the Blessed Stephen protomartyr); *ÆCHom* **I,26** (B1.1.28 Peter and Paul); *ÆCHom* **I,29** (B1.1.31 Lawrence); *ÆCHom* **I,31** (B1.1.33 Bartholomew); *ÆCHom* **I,38** (B1.1.40 Andrew); *ÆCHom* **II,18** (B1.2.21 St James the Apostle[7]); *ÆCHom* **II,20** (B1.2.23 Alexander, Eventius, Theodulus); *ÆCHom* **II,31** (B1.2.34 Nativity of St James the Apostle); *ÆCHom* **II,32** (B1.2.34 Seven Holy Sleepers); *ÆCHom* **II,38** (B1.2.41 Simon and Jude); *LS* **16** (B3.3.16 MargaretCot.Tib.A.iii); *LS* **14** (B3.3.14 MargaretCCCC303); *LS* **4** (B3.3.4 ChristophRyp); *LS* **1.2** (B3.3.1.2 AndrewMor); *LS* **32** (B3.3.32 PeterPaul); *LS* **30** (B3.3.30 Pantaleon); *LS* **34** (B3.3.34 Seven Sleepers); *And.* (A2.1); *Jul.* (A3.5: Juliana has long exchange with devil); **ANON.Vit.Mir.Ken**.[8]

2.3   *Saints Address Followers*
       Mart. (B19.1.23 Speusippus, Eleusippus, Meleusippus); *Mart.* (B19.1.31 Vincent); *Mart.* (B19.1.140 The Machabees); *Mart.* (B19.1.184 Cyprian); *Mart.* (B19.1.227 Cecilia); *Mart.* (B19.1.235 Lucy); *ÆLS* (B1.3.23 Apollinaris); *ÆLS* (B1.3.33 Chrysanthus and Daria: D); *ÆCHom* **I,26** (B1.1.28 Peter and Paul); *ÆCHom* **I,38** (B1.1.40 Andrew); *ÆCHom* **II,31** (B1.2.34 Nativity of St James the Apostle); *LS* **14** (B3.3.14 MargaretCCCC303); *LS* **32** (B3.3.32 PeterPaul)

2.4   *Last Words of Saints Reported in Direct Speech*
       Mart. (B19.1.7 Pope Silvester I); *Mart.* (B19.1.23 Speusippus, Eleusippus, Meleusippus); *Mart.* (B19.1.34 Babylas etc.); *Mart.* (B19.1.67 George); *Mart.* (B19.1.71 Alexandria); *Mart.* (B19.1.83 Victor Maurus); *Mart.* (B19.1.87 Victor and Corona*****); *Mart.* (B19.1.90 Basilla); *Mart.* (B19.1.112 Luceia and Auceia******); *Mart.* (B19.1.121 Procopius); *Mart.* (B19.1.122 Marina); *Mart.* (B19.1.127 Cyricus and Julitta); *Mart.* (B19.1.140 The Machabees); *Mart.* (B19.1.146 Oswald); *Mart.* (B19.1.147 Pope Sixtus II); *Mart.* (B19.1.151 Lawrence); *Mart.* (B19.1.163 Genesius the Comedian); *Mart.* (B19.1.170 Felix of Thibiuca etc.); *Mart.* (B19.1.225 Milus and Senneus); *Mart.* (B19.1.227 Cecilia); *Mart.* (B19.1.230 Chrysogonus); *Mart.* (B19.1.234 Eulalia); *ÆLS* (B1.3.6 Sebastian)[9]; *ÆLS* (B1.3.8 Agnes); *ÆLS* (B1.3.9 Agatha); *ÆLS* (B1.3.12 Forty Soldiers); *ÆLS* (B1.3.16 Mark the Evangelist); *ÆLS* (B1.3.23 Apollinaris); *ÆLS* (B1.3.25 Maccabees); *ÆLS* (B1.3.26 Oswald); *ÆLS* (B1.3.29 Denis); *ÆLS* (B1.3.31 Edmund? – head speaks after death)[10]; *ÆCHom* **I,3** (B1.1.4 Stephen protomartyr); *ÆCHom* **I,26** (B1.1.28 Peter and Paul); *ÆCHom* **I,29** (B1.1.31 Lawrence); *ÆCHom* **I,38** (B1.1.40 Andrew); *ÆCHom* **II,20** (B1.2.23 Alexander, Eventius, Theodulus); *ÆCHom* **II,31** (B1.2.34 Nativity of St James the Apostle); *ÆCHom* **II,32** (B1.2.34 Seven Holy Sleepers); *ÆCHom* **II,38** (B1.2.41 Simon and Jude); *LS* **4** (B3.3.4

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[7] The note on James the Apostle is found at end of the entry on Philip and James.
[8] On Goscelin of Saint-Bertin's authorship, see above, p. 65.
[9] The last ante-mortem words are recorded in direct speech but Sebastian then appears in a vision to Lucina and these words are not recorded in direct speech.
[10] See above, pp. 61–4, on Edmund's death-scene.

ChristophRyp); **LS 32** (B3.3.32 PeterPaul); **LS 14** (B3.3.14 MargaretCCCC303); **LS 16** (B3.3.16 MargaretCot.Tib.A.iii); **LS 8** (B3.3.8 Eust); **LS 30** (B3.3.30 Pantaleon); **ANON.Vit.Mir.Ken**.
* Last words are Corona's   ** Auceia

2.5 *Voice from Heaven*
Mart. (B19.1.35 Conversion of St Paul); **Mart.** (B19.1.65 Eleutherius, Antia); **Mart.** (B19.1.67 George); **Mart.** (B19.1.70 Mark); **Mart.** (B19.1.73. Christopher); **Mart.** (B19.1.76 Pope Alexander I, Eventius, Theodolus); **Mart.** (B19.1.97 Erasmus); **Mart.** (B19.1.122 Marina); **Mart.** (B19.1.127 Cyricus and Julitta); **Mart.** (B19.1.157 Mamas); **ÆLS** (B1.3.3 Eugenia); **ÆCHom I,29** (B1.1.31 Lawrence); **ÆCHom II,20** (B1.2.23 Alexander, Eventius, Theodulus); **Jul.** (A3.5); **LS 16** (B3.3.16 MargaretCot.Tib.A.iii); **LS 14** (B3.3.14 MargaretCCCC303); **LS 4** (B3.3.4 ChristophRyp); **LS 1.2** (B3.3.1.2 AndrewMor); **LS 8** (B3.3.8 Eust); **And** (A2.1); **LS 30** (B3.3.30 Pantaleon)

2.6 *Vision*
ALDH.Pros.virg. (Agnes); **Mart.** (B19.1.2 Anastasia); **Mart.** (B19.1.3 Eugenia); **Mart.** (B19.1.4 Stephen); **Mart.** (B19.1.13 Julian and Basilissa); **Mart.** (B19.1.38 Adrian and Natalia); **Mart.** (B19.1.41 Forty Soldiers of Sebastea); **Mart.** (B19.1.70 Mark); **Mart.** (B19.1.87 Victor and Corona); **Mart.** (B19.1.102 Vitus and Modestus); **Mart.** (B19.1.112 Luceia and Auceia); **Mart.** (B19.1.117 Processus and Martinianus: women see vision of saints); **Mart.** (B19.1.130 Christina); **Mart.** (B19.1.153 Euplius); **Mart.** (B19.1.185 Valerian); **Mart.** (B19.1.198 Cosmas and Damian); **Mart.** (B19.1.227 Cecilia); **ÆLS** (B1.3.16 Mark the Evangelist: angel); **ÆLS** (B1.3.29 Denis); **ÆCHom I,3** (B1.1.4 the Passion of the Blessed Stephen protomartyr); **ÆCHom II,38** (B1.2.41 Simon and Jude); **ÆCHom I,26** (B1.1.28 Peter and Paul); **LS 1.2** (B3.3.1.2 AndrewMor); **ANON.Vit.Mir.Ken**.

2.7 *Other (Miraculous) Events*
ALDH.Pros.virg. (Caecilia); **ALDH.Pros.virg.** (Lucia: rain showers put out torture fire); **ALDH.Pros.virg.** (Chionia, Irene, Agape: clothes cannot be removed); **Mart.** (B19.1.61 Irene: angels carry saint to mountain-top); **Mart.** (B19.1.112 Luceia and Auceia: pagan asks to be beheaded too after Luceia's death); **Mart.** (B19.1.142 Eusebius of Vercelli: prediction); **Mart.** (B19.1.192 Sosius: death predicted); **ÆCHom II,31** (B1.2.34 Nativity of St James the Apostle: healing miracle on way to execution); **ÆCHom I,38** (B1.1.40 Andrew: light from heaven); **ÆCHom II,38** (B1.2.41 Simon and Jude: saints cause idols to break); **LS 16** (B3.3.16 MargaretCot.Tib.A.iii: dragon and devil appear and are defeated by saint); **LS 14** (B3.3.14 MargaretCCCC303: dragon and devil appear and are defeated by saint; God comes down to earth); **LS 4** (B3.3.4 ChristophRyp: pagan king is blinded but Christopher tells him he will be cured after his martyrdom if he follows his instructions); **LS 34** (B3.3.34 Seven Sleepers: saints remain in sleep for hundreds of years)

3. Events Leading Up to Death: Concealment or Change in Identity

3.1   Saints Conceal Themselves or Take on Another Identity

> ***Mart.*** (B19.1.3 Eugenia: dresses as man and enters monastery to escape pagan marriage); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.39 Perpetua and Felicity: Perpetua dreams she looks like a man and this is fulfilled at her martyrdom); ***ÆLS*** (B1.3.3 Eugenia)

4. Torture and Execution[11]

4.1   Beheading

> This is a particularly common motif. Historically, this may have been such a popular mode of execution because it was quick and largely efficient. Only texts that explicitly state that a saint is beheaded (*beheafdian*; *decollandi*; *sententiam decollationis*) are included here.

4.1.1   **ALDH.Pros.virg.** (Babilas); **ALDH.Pros.virg.** (Cosmas and Damian); **ALDH.Pros.virg.** (Justina); **BEDA.Hist.eccl.** (Alban); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.32 Anastasius); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.54 Theodoret); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.64 Valerianus, Tiburtius, Maximus); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.67 George); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.73 Christopher); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.83 Victor Maurus); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.87 Victor and Corona); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.98 Marcellinus and Peter); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.122 Marina); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.170 Felix of Thibiuca etc.); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.198 Cosmas and Damian); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.234 Eulalia); ***ÆLS*** (B1.3.5 Julian and Basilissa*****); ***ÆLS*** (B1.3.20 Alban); ***ÆLS*** (B1.3.29 Denis); ***ÆLS*** (B1.3.31 Edmund); ***ÆLS*** (B1.3.32 Cecilia******); ***ÆCHom*** **I,31** (B1.1.33 Bartholomew); ***ÆCHom*** **II,20** (B1.2.23 Alexander, Eventius, Theodulus**†**); ***Jul.*** (A3.5); ***LS*** **16** (B3.3.16 MargaretCot.Tib.A.iii); ***LS*** **14** (B3.3.14 MargaretCCCC303); **ABBO.FLOR.Pass.Eadmund.**
>
> ***** Only Julian dies this way; Basilissa departs to Christ   ****** Takes three days to die after attempted beheading; no other death-motif mentioned   **†** Alexander does not die this way

4.1.2   **ALDH.Carm.virg.** (John the Baptist); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.34 Babylas etc.); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.86 Pancras); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.106 Mark and Marcellian); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.107 Gervase and Protase*****); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.109 Alban); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.112 Luceia and Auceia******); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.113 John and Paul); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.121 Procopius); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.153 Euplius); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.160 Symphorian); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.161 Timothy); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.163 Genesius the Comedian); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.166 Hermes); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.168 The Death of John the Baptist); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.182 Protus and Hyacinth); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.183 Pope Cornelius etc.); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.184 Cyprian); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.209 Justus); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.213 Sixteen Soldiers); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.217 Quentin); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.224 Mennas, Heliodorus); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.230 Chrysogonus); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.236 Ursicinus); ***ÆLS*** (B1.3.28 Maurice and His Companions); ***ÆCHom*** **I,26** (B1.1.28 Peter and Paul**†**); ***ÆCHom*** **I,25** (B1.1.27 John the Baptist); ***ÆCHom*** **II,31** (B1.2.34 Nativity of St James the Apostle); ***Fates*** (A2.2 Bartholomew); ***LS*** **32** (B3.3.32 Peter and Paul**‡**); **ANON.Vit.Mir.Ken.**
>
> ***** Only Protase   ****** Only Auceia (male)   **†** Only Paul   **‡** Only Paul

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[11] The first section within each death-motif contains accounts in which ante-mortem torture occurs. The second section comprises accounts featuring no ant-mortem torture.

4.2 Stabbing, Slaying with Sword, Shooting

> This mode of death can be caused by a sword, spear or some other implement (for example, pencils) in the case of stabbing. Where the saint is depicted as having been slain with a sword, it is unclear whether this is a reference to beheading or a sword thrust more generally, hence its inclusion here.

4.2.1 **ALDH.Pros.virg.** (Julian); **ALDH.Pros.virg.** (Lucia); **ALDH.Pros.virg.** (Irene; stabbed with arrows); **ALDH.Carm.virg.** (Lucia); **ALDH.Carm.virg.** (Chionia, Irene and Agape*****); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.65 Eleutherius, Antia******); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.76 Pope Alexander I, Eventius, Theodulus**†**); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.103 Ferreolus and Ferrucio**‡**); ***ÆLS*** (B1.3.15 George); ***ÆLS*** (B1.3.24 Abdon and Sennes); ***ÆLS*** (B1.3.34 Thomas the Apostle); ***ÆLS*** (B1.3.8 Agnes); ***LS* 30** (B3.3.30 Pantaleon∞)

> ***** One of three shot with arrows   ****** Only Eleutherius; Antia gives up the ghost   **†** Only Alexander   **‡** Also give up ghost   ∞ On basis of emperor's previous reference that the saint be killed with a sword

4.2.2 **ALDH.Pros.virg.** (Malchus); **ALDH.Pros.virg.** (Anatolia and Victoria); **ALDH.Carm.virg.** (Justina); **ALDH.Carm.virg.** (Anatolia and Victoria*****); **BEDA.Hist.eccl.** (White Hewald); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.30 Agnes******); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.90 Basilla); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.99 Artemius, Candida, Virgo**†**); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.114 Peter and Paul**‡**); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.135 James the Greater); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.185 Valerian); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.190 Matthew); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.216 Cyrilla); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.225 Milus and Senneus); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.238 Thomas); ***ÆCHom*** **II,37** (B1.2.40 Matthew; assassinated); ***ÆCHom*** **II,38** (B1.2.41 Simon and Jude; shot at); ***Fates*** (A2.2 James); ***Fates*** (A2.2 Thomas); ***Fates*** (A2.2 Matthew)[12]; ***Fates*** (A2.2 Simeon and Thaddeus)[13]

> ***** Only Victoria   ****** Then gives up ghost   **†** Only Arthemius (male)   **‡** Only Paul

4.3   Drowning

> This is a rather uncommon motif and, where it appears, it usually occurs in urban environments (sewers, for example). Where saints are thrown into the sea (with the intention of drowning them), they often miraculously survive.

4.3.1 **BEDA.Hist.eccl.** (Peter)

4.3.2 **BEDA.Hist.eccl.** (Peter); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.164 Irenaeus, Abundius); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.219 Caesarius); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.222 Four Crowned Ones); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.228 Pope Clement I); ***ÆCHom*** **I,37** (B1.1.39 Clement)

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[12] The text says he was killed with weapons, but the precise means is not made explicit.

[13] Likewise, the text for these two apostles notes that they were killed with 'weapon-wielding hate' (Bradley, *Poetry*, p. 156) but the weapons are not described in any more detail. In both instances I have assumed that a sword is intended because this seems to be the most common weapon mentioned in other sources and the battle iconography throughout the text is strong.

4.4   *Stoning*
This is a fairly uncommon narrative element, and only occurs in accounts of non-native saints.

4.4.1 —

4.4.2 **Mart.** (B19.1.4 Stephen); **Mart.** (B19.1.33 Emerentiana*****); **Mart.** (B19.1.99 Arthemius, Candida, Virgo******); **Mart.** (B19.1.157 Mamas**†**); **ÆCHom** **II,18** (B1.2.21 St James the Apostle)
* Then gives up ghost   ****** Candida and Virgo   **†** Then gives up ghost

4.5   *Beating*
This type of death involves the saint being hit (sometimes the implement is specified: sticks, a weaver's beam) until he or she give up their ghost.

4.5.1 **Mart.** (B19.1.27 Sebastian); **ÆLS** (B1.3.6 Sebastian); **ANON.ASChron.** (1012 Ælfheah)

4.5.2 **Mart.** (B19.1.107 Gervase and Protase*****); **Mart.** (B19.1.108 James the Less); **Mart.** (B19.1.155 Cassian); **Fates** (A2.2 James)
* Only Gervase

4.6   *Crucifixion*
Used as the method of execution at Jesus' martyrdom; *OCD* suggests that this was a form of execution borrowed by the Romans, probably from Carthage, and usually used as a means of execution for slaves and non-citizens.[14] When put to death in this way, the saint is nailed to a cross through the hands and feet and left to suffocate, although there are examples of inverse crucifixion. It is not a common literary motif for presenting saintly death, despite Jesus' death providing the archetype.

4.6.1 **ÆCHom** **I,38** (B1.1.40 Andrew*****);
* Then gives up ghost

4.6.2 **Mart.** (B19.1.56,56a Annunciation Day, The Crucifixion*****); **Mart.** (B19.1.114 Peter and Paul******); **Mart.** (B19.1.233 Andrew**†**); **ÆLS** (B1.3.11 Chair of Peter); **ÆCHom** **I,26** (B1.1.28 Peter and Paul**‡**); **Fates** (A2.2 Andrew); **Fates** (A2.2 Philip); **LS 32** (B3.3.32 Peter and Paul∞)[15]
* Then gives up ghost   ****** Only Peter   **†** Then gives up ghost   **‡** OnlyPeter, who then gives up ghost   ∞ Only Peter; then gives up ghost

4.7   *Strangling or Breaking Neck*
This can either take the form of a rope being used to asphyxiate and then drag around the saint, or some instrument such as a cudgel being used to break the neck of the saint. This is an uncommon death-motif.

4.7.1 **Mart.** (B19.1.195 Andochius, Thyrsus and Felix*****); **Mart.** (B19.1.220 Benignus)
* Then souls depart

4.7.2 **Mart.** (B19.1.70 Mark*****);
* Then gives up ghost

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[14] See *OCD*, s.v. 'crucifixion'; Moss, *Other Christs*, pp. 61–5.
[15] It is interesting to note how in many of the poetic examples, crucifixion is often described as hanging on the gallows. In the instance of Philip, it is made explicit that he meets his end on a cross but this is not always the case.

4.8   Burying
   The saint is put in deep hole filled with earth or stones until dead (either crushed or suffocated); the motif only occurs in accounts of non-native saints.
*4.8.1 **ÆLS*** (B1.3.33 Chrysanthus and Daria)

*4.8.2 **Mart.*** (B19.1.72 Vitalis*****)
   * Then gives up ghost

4.9   Burning
   The saint is usually thrown into a fire and stays there until he or she dies. Interestingly, in many hagiographic narratives fire is often used as an unsuccessful means of torture. Considering the prevalence of later historical practices of execution by fire, this is a fairly uncommon motif.
*4.9.1 **ALDH.Pros.virg.*** (Chionia, Agape); **ALDH.Carm.virg.** (Chionia, Irene and Agape*****); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.126 Phocas******); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.149 Afra, Hilaria etc.**†**)
   * Chionia and Agape   ****** Then gives up ghost   **†** Then gives up ghost

*4.9.2 **Mart.*** (B19.1.59 Agape, Chionia, Irene*****); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.105 Blastus); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.144 Theodota and her Three sons)
   * Agape and Chionia

4.10   Flaying
   As a method of execution, this is a very uncommon literary motif. [16]
4.10.1—

*4.10.2**Mart.*** (B19.1.162 Bartholomew)

4.11   Torturing to Death
   Torture is explicitly mentioned as the death-motif in these martyrdom accounts.
*4.11.1**BEDA.Hist.eccl.*** (Black Hewald; torn limb from limb); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.123 The Seven Brothers); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.140 The Machabees); ***ÆCHom*** **II,20** (B1.2.23 Alexander, Eventius, Theodulus*****)
   * Alexander

4.11.2—

4.12   Dying in Battle
   This only occurs for one saint across the texts included, the historically verifiable Oswald. Ælfric notes that Oswald is beheaded in battle, but I have included this as a separate category to distinguish between the circumstances of Oswald's death and judicial beheadings, for example.
4.12.1—

*4.12.2 **BEDA.Hist.eccl.*** (Oswald); **ÆLS** (B1.3.26 Oswald; beheaded)

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[16] The laws of Ine refer to flogging as a form of punishment for theft; *EHD*, §48, p. 404.

4.13   Death Involving Animals
>   This usually involves the saint being tied to an animal (such as a bull) and dragged around until dead. (Animals used by pagans to attempt to kill saints are frequently represented as helping or protecting the holy person.)

4.13.1—

4.13.2 **Mart.** (B19.1.20 Pope Marcellus: killed while tending governor's animals); **Mart.** (B19.1.231 Saturninus*****)
>   ***** Then gives up soul

4.14   Unspecified Martyrdom
>   There are a number of instances in which martyrdom or killing is explicitly mentioned, but the means by which it occurs is not specified. The martyrdom is sometimes described as being 'glorious'. This is a ubiquitous narrative element across the Anglo-Saxon hagiographic corpus.

4.14.1 **ALDH.Pros.virg.** (Chrysanthus); **ALDH.Pros.virg.** (Agatha); **ALDH.Pros.virg.** (Christina); **ALDH.Pros.virg.** (Dorothea); **ALDH.Pros.virg.** (Rufina and Secunda); **ALDH.Pros.virg.** (Joseph); **ALDH.Pros.virg.** (Thecla and Eulalia*****); **ALDH.Carm.virg.** (Babilas); **ALDH.Carm.virg.** (Cosmas and Damian); **ALDH.Carm.virg.** (Chrysanthus and Daria); **ALDH.Carm.virg.** (Julian); **ALDH.Carm.virg.** (Agatha); **ALDH.Carm.virg.** (Thecla); **ALDH.Carm.virg.** (Rufina and Secunda); **ALDH.Carm.virg.** (Agnes); **BEDA.Hist.eccl.** (Aaron and Julius); **Mart.** (B19.1.2 Anastasia); **Mart.** (B19.1.71 Alexandria[17]); **Mart.** (B19.1.102 Vitus and Modestus); **Mart.** (B19.1.187 Euphemia); **Mart.** (B19.1.189 Fausta and Evilasius); **Mart.** (B19.1.193 Thecla); **ÆLS** (B1.3.3 Eugenia[18]); **ÆLS** (B1.3.25 Maccabees); **ÆLS** (B1.3.35 Vincent); **LS 4** (B3.3.4 ChristophRyp); **LS 1.2** (B3.3.1.2 AndrewMor)[19]
>   ***** Only Thecla

4.14.2 **ALDH.Pros.virg.** (Agnes); **ALDH.Pros.virg.** (Eulalia); **ALDH.Pros.virg.** (Eugenia); **ALDH.Pros.virg.** (Caecilia); **ALDH.Pros.virg.** (Thecla and Eulalia*****); **ALDH.Carm.virg.** (Gervasius and Protasius); **ALDH.Carm.virg.** (Cecilia); **ALDH.Carm.virg.** (Anatolia and Victoria******); **BEDA.Hist.eccl.** (Aaron and Julius); **Mart.** (B19.1.6 The Holy Innocents); **Mart.** (B19.1.7 Pope Silvester I); **Mart.** (B19.1.10 Pope Anteros); **Mart.** (B19.1.13 Julian and Basilissa); **Mart.** (B19.1.14 Pope Telesphorus); **Mart.** (B19.1.28 Pope Fabian); **Mart.** (B19.1.29 Marius, Martha, Audifax, Abacuc); **Mart.** (B19.1.39 Perpetua and Felicity); **Mart.** (B19.1.62 Seven Women in Sirmium); **Mart.** (B19.1.84 Gordianus); **Mart.** (B19.1.85 Calepodius); **Mart.** (B19.1.89 Pope John I); **Mart.** (B19.1.93 Sisinnius, Martyrius, Alexander); **Mart.** (B19.1.104 Nicander); **Mart.** (B19.1.112 Luceia and Auceia**†**); **Mart.** (B19.1.117 Processus and

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[17] Although the martyrologist notes that the saint is sentenced to be beheaded, there is a narrative digression in which Alexandria goes back to her hall before fulfilling her martyrdom. It is not clear from the martyrologist's text whether this martyrdom did eventually occur by beheading, hence its inclusion here.

[18] The text refers to an executioner ('cwællere'), so it can be assumed the saint is beheaded or otherwise killed by the sword. Given that this cannot be corroborated further, the death-motif is classified as an unspecified martyrdom.

[19] Andrew's death is not mentioned in this account. He does, however, suffer tortures at the hands of the pagans before converting a large number of them.

Martinianus); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.118 Zoe); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.120 Tranquillinus); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.125 Rufina and Secunda); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.128 Speratus and the Scillitan Martyrs); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.129 Symphorosa and her Seven Sons); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.132 Victor of Marseilles etc.); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.134 Apollinaris); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.137 Nazarius and Celsus); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.139 Abdon and Sennes); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.142 Eusebius of Vercelli); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.143 Pope Stephen I); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.146 Oswald); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.147 Pope Sixtus II); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.148 Donatus and Hilarinus); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.150 Romanus); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.152 Tiburtius); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.173 Antoninus); ***Mart.*** (19.1.179 Sinotus); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.188 Januarius etc); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.191 Maurice and Theban legion); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.192 Sosius); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.197 Justina and Cyprian); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.201 The Two Hewalds); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.203 Dionysius, Rusticus and Eleutherius); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.205 Pope Callistus I); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.212 Genesius); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.229 Felicity); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.232 Chrysanthus and Daria); ***ÆCHom* I,5** (B1.1.6 Holy Innocents); ***Fates*** (A2.2 John); ***LS* 34** (B3.3.34 SevenSleepers); ***And.*** (A2.1)
    * Eulalia ****** Anatolia **†** Luceia

4.15 Giving up Ghost, Yielding Up Spirit or Departing to God[20]

A frequently adopted death-motif, this stock image is also used to describe non-violent deaths. It is commonly used to describe the deaths of martyrs who have undergone torture (perhaps to emphasize the fact that they are active in their martyrdom and will only depart after the miracles of Christianity or their own sanctity have been made manifest). Martyrs often give up their ghosts after having a vision of Christ. In many cases the image is used after another literal death-motif has been mentioned; here, only cases in which no other death-motif is mentioned are included.

4.15.1 ***Mart.*** (B19.1.3 Eugenia); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.23 Speusippus, Eleusippus, Meleusippus); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.26 Ananius, Petrus etc.); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.31 Vincent); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.41 Forty Soldiers of Sebastea); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.61 Irene); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.127 Cyricus and Julitta); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.151 Lawrence); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.227 Cecilia); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.235 Lucy); ***ÆLS*** (B1.3.9 Agatha); ***ÆLS*** (B1.3.10 Lucy, after stabbing); ***ÆLS*** (B1.3.11 Chair of St Peter: Felicula); ***ÆLS*** (B1.3.12 Forty Soldiers); ***ÆLS*** (B1.13.16 Mark the Evangelist); ***ÆLS*** (B1.3.23 Apollinaris); ***ÆCHom* I,29** (B1.1.31 Lawrence); ***LS* 8** (B3.3.8 Eust)

4.15.2 ***Mart.*** (B19.1.38 Adrian and Natalia); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.94 Petronilla); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.97 Erasmus); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.124 Anatolia and Audax); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.130 Christina); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.154 Hippolytus); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.176 Marcellus); ***ÆCHom* II,32** (B1.2.34 Seven Holy Sleepers); ***Fates*** (A2.2 Peter); ***Fates*** (A2.2 Paul); ***ÆCHom* I,3** (B1.1.4 Stephen protomartyr)

4.16 Death not Mentioned

4.16.1 ***Mart.*** (B19.1.19 Felix)

4.16.2 —

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[20] It should be noted that 'giving up the ghost' or its variants on occasion occur after a more specific death-motif, such as beheading. All the entries in this section only feature giving up the ghost or its variants. Where a specific and non-specific death-motif are used in tandem, the motif is categorized under the specific motif, with a footnote noting the use of a secondary non-specific motif.

5   Events At or Following Death[21]

5.1   Disposal or Finding of Body by Persecutors
Mart. (B19.1.31 Vincent); **Mart.** (B19.1.217 Quentin); **ÆLS** (B1.3.6 Sebastian); **ÆLS** (B1.3.12 Forty Soldiers); **ÆLS** (B1.3.16 Mark the Evangelist: pagans fail to burn body); **ÆLS** (B1.3.29 Denis: fail to dispose of body); **ÆLS** (B1.3.35 Vincent); **LS** 4 (B3.3.4 ChristophRyp: but king converts); **ABBO.FLOR.Pass.Eadmund.** (head); **ANON.Vit.Mir.Ken**.

5.2   Finding of Body by Followers (Including Burial by Followers) or Reference to Burial Place
ALDH.Carm.virg. (Gervasius and Protasius); **BEDA.Hist.eccl.** (Two Hewalds); **Mart.** (B19.1.4 Stephen); **Mart.** (B19.1.10 Pope Anteros); **Mart.** (B19.1.14 Pope Telesphorus); **Mart.** (B19.1.20 Pope Marcellus); **Mart.** (B19.1.23 Speusippus, Eleusippus, Meleusippus); **Mart.** (B19.1.26 Ananius, Petrus etc.); **Mart.** (B19.1.28 Pope Fabian); **Mart.** (B19.1.30 Agnes); **Mart.** (B19.1.31 Vincent); **Mart.** (B19.1.32 Anastasius); **Mart.** (B19.1.33 Emerentiana); **Mart.** (B19.1.39 Perpetua and Felicity); **Mart.** (B19.1.61 Irene); **Mart.** (B19.1.70 Mark); **Mart.** (B19.1.73 Christopher; body bought for money); **Mart.** (B19.1.76 Pope Alexander I, Eventius, Theodolus); **Mart.** (B19.1.83 Victor Maurus); **Mart.** (B19.1.84 Gordianus); **Mart.** (B19.1.86 Pancras); **Mart.** (B19.1.94 Petronilla); **Mart.** (B19.1.102 Vitus and Modestus); **Mart.** (B19.1.103 Ferreolus and Ferrucio); **Mart.** (B19.1.107 Gervase and Protase); **Mart.** (B19.1.109 Alban); **Mart.** (B19.1.122 Marina); **Mart.** (B19.1.126 Phocas); **Mart.** (B19.1.132 Victor of Marseilles etc.); **Mart.** (B19.1.137 Nazarius and Celsus); **Mart.** (B19.1.147 Pope Sixtus II); **Mart.** (B19.1.149 Afra, Hilaria etc.); **Mart.** (B19.1.150 Romanus); **Mart.** (B19.1.151 Lawrence); **Mart.** (B19.1.160 Symphorian); **Mart.** (B19.1.161 Timothy); **Mart.** (B19.1.162 Bartholomew); **Mart.** (B19.1.166 Hermes); **Mart.** (B19.1.173 Antonius); **Mart.** (B19.1.187 Euphemia); **Mart.** (B19.1.190 Matthew); **Mart.** (B19.1.197 Justina and Cyprian); **Mart.** (B19.1.198 Cosmas and Damian); **Mart.** (B19.1.203 Dionysius, Rusticus and Eleutherius); **Mart.** (B19.1.205 Pope Callistus I); **Mart.** (B19.1.209 Justus); **Mart.** (B19.1.212 Genesius); **Mart.** (B19.1.216 Cyrilla); **Mart.** (B19.1.217 Quentin, fifty-five years later); **Mart.** (B19.1.220 Benignus); **Mart.** (B19.1.222 The Four Crowned Ones); **Mart.** (B19.1.225 Milus and Senneus); **Mart.** (B19.1.228 Pope Clement I); **Mart.** (B19.1.230 Chrysogonus); **Mart.** (B19.1.231 Saturninus); **Mart.** (B19.1.233 Andrew); **Mart.** (B19.1.234 Eulalia); **Mart.** (B19.1.238 Thomas); **ÆLS** (B1.3.3 Eugenia); **ÆLS** (B1.3.10 Lucy); **ÆLS** (B1.3.5 Julian and Basilissa); **ÆLS** (B1.3.11 Chair of St Peter: Felicula); **ÆLS** (B1.3.15 George); **ÆLS** (B1.3.20 Alban); **ÆLS** (B1.3.31 Edmund); **ÆLS** (B1.3.24 Abdon and Sennes); **ÆLS** (B1.3.6 Sebastian); **ÆLS** (B1.3.9 Agatha); **ÆLS** (B1.3.12 Forty Soldiers, bones); **ÆLS** (B1.3.16 Mark the Evangelist); **ÆLS** (B1.3.29 Denis); **ÆLS** (B1.3.34 Thomas the Apostle); **ÆLS** (B1.3.26 Oswald); **ÆLS** (B1.3.35 Vincent); **ÆCHom I,37** (B1.1.39 Clement); **ÆCHom I,26** (B1.1.28 Peter and Paul); **ÆCHom I,29** (B1.1.31 Lawrence); **ÆCHom I,31** (B1.1.33 Bartholomew); **ÆCHom I,25** (B1.1.27 John the Baptist); **ÆCHom I,38** (B1.1.40 Andrew); **ÆCHom II,18** (B1.2.21 St James the Apostle); **ÆCHom II,20** (B1.2.23 Alexander, Eventius, Theodulus); **ÆCHom II,32** (B1.2.34 Seven Holy Sleepers); **ÆCHom II,37** (B1.2.40

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[21] This category includes varieties of post-mortem miracles ascribed to various saints. Many saints appear in multiple categories.

Matthew); **ÆCHom II,38** (B1.2.41 Simon and Jude); ***Jul.*** (A3.5); ***LS* 8** (B3.3.8 Eust); ***LS* 16** (B3.3.16 MargaretCot.Tib.A.iii); ***LS* 32** (B3.3.32 PeterPaul); **ANON.ASChron.** (1012 Ælfheah); **ABBO.FLOR.Pass.Eadmund.** (head); **ANON.Vit.Mir.Ken.** (dove flies to Pope with letter revealing location)

5.3   *Conversion-Scene Before, At or After Execution*
        ALDH.Carm.virg. (Cecilia); **BEDA.Hist.eccl.** (Alban); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.26 Ananias, Petrus etc.); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.41 Forty Soldiers of Sebastea); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.64 Valerianus, Tiburtius, Maximus); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.87 Victor and Corona); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.98 Marcellinus and Peter); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.112 Luceia and Auceia); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.124 Anatolia and Audax); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.162 Bartholomew); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.173 Antoninus); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.189 Fausta and Evilasius); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.197 Justina and Cyprian); **ÆLS** (B1.3.3 Eugenia); **ÆLS** (B1.3.20 Alban); **ÆCHom II,31** (B1.2.34 Nativity of St James the Apostle); **ÆCHom I,37** (B1.1.39 Clement); **ÆCHom I,29** (B1.1.31 Lawrence); **ÆCHom II,18** (B1.2.21 St James the Apostle); ***LS* 4** (B3.3.4 ChristophRyp); ***LS* 30** (B3.3.30 Pantaleon)

5.4   *Post-Mortem Miracles of Healing*
        ALDH.Pros.virg. (Agnes); **BEDA.Hist.eccl.** (Oswald: healing miracles at site of death); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.4 Stephen: heals sick, brings child back to life); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.203 Dionysius, Rusticus and Eleutherius); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.209 Justus: blind girl is healed); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.217 Quentin: healing miracles); **ÆLS** (B1.3.29 Denis: body picks up severed head and takes it to chosen resting place; healing miracles); **ÆLS** (B1.3.34 Thomas the Apostle: healing miracles); **ÆLS** (B1.3.26 Oswald: healing miracles); **ÆCHom I,37** (B1.1.39 Clement); **ÆCHom II,38** (B1.2.41 Simon and Jude); ***LS* 16** (B3.3.16 MargaretCot.Tib.A.iii); ***LS* 14** (B3.3.14 MargaretCCCC303); ***LS* 4** (B3.3.4 ChristophRyp: pagan king's blindness is cured); **ANON.Vit.Mir.Ken**.

5.5   *Incorrupt Body*
        ÆLS (B1.3.26 Oswald: body parts incorrupt); **ABBO.FLOR.Pass.Eadmund.**

5.6   *Miraculous Emissions from Body*
        ***LS* 30** (B3.3.30 Pantaleon) (milk issues from body instead of blood)

5.7   *Sweet Smells from Body, Grave or Sarcophagus*
        Mart. (B19.1.56,56a Annunciation Day, The Crucifixion); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.103 Ferreolus and Ferrucio); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.217 Quentin: on recovery of body fifty-five years after martyrdom); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.220 Benignus); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.4 Stephen)

5.8   *Light Phenomena*
        BEDA.Hist.eccl. (Two Hewalds); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.209 Justus: light shines from head); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.233 Andrew); **ÆCHom II,18** (B1.2.21 St James the Apostle: star and comet seen); **ÆLS** (B1.3.26 Oswald: great light shines from bones); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.201 The Two Hewalds: light above bodies); **ÆCHom I,38** (B1.1.40 Andrew); **ANON.Vit.Mir.Ken.** (light shines to heaven)

5.9   *Angels or Angelic Phenomena*
       Mart. (B19.1.64 Valerianus, Tiburtius, Maximus); **Mart.** (B19.1.98 Marcellinus
       and Peter: executioner sees souls of saints carried to heaven by angels); **ÆLS**
       (B1.3.9 Agatha: angel sets headstone at saint's coffin); **ÆCHom** **II,18** (B1.2.21
       St James the Apostle: army seen in clouds); **LS 14** (B3.3.14
       MargaretCCCC303); **LS 16** (B3.3.16 MargaretCot.Tib.A.iii)

5.10   *Saints Appear in Vision (and Speak)*
       BEDA.Hist.eccl. (Two Hewalds: one saint appears in vision telling where
       bodies can be found); **Mart.** (B19.1.30 Agnes: appears in vision to parents);
       Mart. (B19.1.114 Peter and Paul: often seen at death-scenes of dying
       Christians); **Mart.** (B19.1.209 Justus; disembodied head asks God to receive
       soul, tells relatives where to bury body); **ÆLS** (B1.3.3 Eugenia: appears in
       vision to mother); **ÆLS** (B1.3.6 Sebastian: tells Lucina where body lay in
       sewer, tells her to recover body and bury it in catacombs at feet of the bodies
       of Peter and Paul); **ÆLS** (B1.3.8 Agnes: speaks to parents in vision); **ÆLS**
       (B1.3.12 Forty Soldiers: tell bishop in vision where to find bones); **ÆLS**
       (B1.3.31 Edmund: severed head reveals its position); **ÆLS** (B1.3.29 Denis:
       body picks up severed head and takes it to chosen resting place, praising God);
       ÆCHom **II,31–32** (B.1.2.34 Seven Holy Sleepers: tell Theodosius to let them
       rest in the earth when he plans to build them golden coffins); **ÆCHom** **II,37**
       (B1.2.40 Matthew)

5.11   *Saints' Intercession Prevents Some Kind of Calamity*
       ALDH.Carm.virg. (Agatha; relic of saint placed in path of lava from eruption
       of Mt Etna stops the volcanic flow); **Mart.** (B19.1.73 Christopher: saint's body
       protects a city against flooding); **Mart.** (B19.1.67 George: anyone seeking
       saint's protection from enemies helped)

5.12   *Miracles Involving Animals*
       Mart. (B19.1.198 Cosmas and Damian: camel commands bodies to be buried
       together); **ÆCHom** **II,18** (B1.2.21 St James the Apostle: cow gives birth to
       lamb); **ABBO.FLOR.Pass.Eadmund.**; **ANON.Vit.Mir.Ken**. (animals make
       body known to men; cow's milk yield increases)

5.13   *Miracles Involving Birds (Including Representations of Doves)*
       Mart. (B19.1.31 Vincent: great bird guards body); **Mart.** (B19.1.102 Vitus and
       Modestus: eagles guard bodies of saints); **Mart.** (B19.1.217 Quentin: dove flies
       to heaven from body); **Mart.** (B19.1.220 Benignus: dove flies to heaven from
       body); **Mart.** (B19.1.234 Eulalia: dove flies to heaven); **ANON.Vit.Mir.Ken**.
       (dove flies to heaven from body)

5.14   *Miracles Involving Plants*
       LS 30 (B3.3.30 Pantaleon); **ANON.Vit.Mir. Ken**.

5.15   *Miracles Involving Springs, Rivers or Water*
       BEDA.Hist.eccl. (Two Hewalds: bodies carried forty miles downriver to
       followers, spring bursts forth at site of martyrdom); **Mart.** (B19.1.109 Alban);
       Mart. (B19.1.173 Antonius: dismembered body gathers together in sewer,

allowing women to recover it); **_Mart._** (B19.1.228 Pope Clement I: sea dries up, body found in house made by God, every year on feast-day sea dries up to allow passage to church, forgotten child found well in church year later); **_ÆLS_** (B1.3.20 Alban); **_ÆCHom_ I,37** (B1.1.39 Clement); **ANON.Vit.Mir.Ken.** (spring bursts forth at burial site)

5.16   *Earthquake*
       LS 32 (B3.3.32 PeterPaul)

5.17   *Other (Unspecified) Miracles*
       Mart. (B19.1.26 Ananius, Petrus etc.[22]); **_Mart._** (B19.1.225 Milus and Senneus); **_Mart._** (B19.1.72 Vitalis); **_Mart._** (B19.1.114 Peter and Paul); **_Mart._** (B19.1.129 Symphorosa and her Seven Sons); **_Mart._** (B19.1.146 Oswald); **_Mart._** (B19.1.160 Symphorian); **_Mart._** (B19.1.170 Felix of Thibiuca etc.: moon turns to blood); **_Mart._** (B19.1.173 Antonius); **_Mart._** (B19.1.195 Andochius, Thyrsus and Felix); **_Mart._** (B19.1.198 Cosmas and Damian); **_Mart._** (B19.1.201 The Two Hewalds); **_Mart._** (B19.1.220 Benignus); **_Mart._** (B19.1.222 The Four Crowned Ones); **_Mart._** (B19.1.232 Chrysanthus and Daria); **_ÆLS_** (B1.3.20 Alban); **_ÆCHom_ I,26** (B1.1.28 Peter and Paul); **_ÆCHom_ II,18** (B1.2.21 St James the Apostle); **_LS_ 1.2** (B3.3.1.2 AndrewMor: a number of miracles occur as Andrew is being tortured; his death is not recounted, however); **ANON.ASChron.** (1012 Ælfheah); **ANON.Vit.Mir.Ken.**

5.18   *Persecutors Die or are Injured (*Vengeance Miracle*)*
       ALDH.Pros.virg. (Lucia: persecutor sentenced to death by Roman senate); **ALDH.Pros.virg.** (Agnes: persecutor tries to defile saint in brothel but is struck down); **ALDH.Pros.virg.** (Victoria: executioner's hand withers, his skin festers and he dies); **ALDH.Carm.virg.** (Lucia: persecutor punished in Rome); **ALDH.Carm.virg.** (Anatolia and Victoria: persecutor's right arm withers, he develops leprosy and dies); **BEDA.Hist.eccl.** (Alban: executioner's eyes fall out); **_Mart._** (B19.1.6 The Holy Innocents: Herod kills himself); **_Mart._** (B19.1.7 Pope Silvester I: reeve dies night after saint's execution, just as Silvester predicts); **_Mart._** (B19.1.26 Ananius, Petrus etc.: reeve suffers intense pain, requests to be thrown into sea by own men, devoured by sea beasts); **_Mart._** (B19.1.30 Agnes: reeve's son dies after attempting to rape saint);[23] **_Mart._** (B19.1.33 Emerentiana: thunder and lightning kills pagans); **_Mart._** (B19.1.54 Theodoret: judge suffers intense pain, spits entrails from mouth, dies); **_Mart._** (B19.1.70 Mark: thunder and rain kills pagans); **_Mart._** (B19.1.76 Pope Alexander I, Eventius, Theodolus: voice from heaven promises hell, dies a terrible death); **_Mart._** (B19.1.89 Pope John I: king Theoderic killed); **_Mart._** (B19.1.108 James the Less: emperors ravage land of those who kill saint so that they are starved to death or sold into slavery); **_Mart._** (B19.1.109 Alban: executioner's eyes fall out); **_Mart._** (B19.1.113 John and Paul: arrow from heaven kills emperor after hitting him in cheek, son of executioner goes mad); **_Mart._** (B19.1.122 Marina: executioner kills himself with same sword used to behead saint); **_Mart._** (B19.1.126 Phocas: addresses pagan three days after

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[22] Where references to 'many' or 'great' miracles occur in the Motif Index, this represents what the texts say: the hagiographer in question does not elaborate on the nature of these miracles.
[23] Cf. MI, §1.4.

death, forewarns emperor of hell, emperor dies shortly afterwards); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.140 The Machabees: king falls from chariot, body begins to stink, becomes infested with worms and dies in alien land); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.154 Hippolytus: prefect dies, emperor goes mad and dies); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.162 Bartholomew: king goes mad, pagan bishops go mad and die); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.184 Cyprian: governor dies); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.190 Matthew: king's palace burns down, his son goes mad, he becomes covered with scabs and sores and stabs himself); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.219 Caesarius: governor killed by snake bite while riding through forest); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.225 Milus and Senneus: evil brothers shoot each other with arrows while out hunting just as saint predicts); ***Mart.*** (B19.1.233 Andrew: governor torn to pieces by devil); ***ÆLS*** (B1.3.5 Julian and Basilissa: Martianus nearly killed by thunder, lightning and earthquakes that kills many others, dies of disease few days later); ***ÆLS*** (B1.3.20 Alban: executioner's eyes fall out); ***ÆLS*** (B1.3.15 George: Datian killed by fire from heaven); ***ÆLS*** (B1.3.9 Agatha: Quintianus flung overboard ship by horse and body never found); ***ÆLS*** (B1.3.23 Apollinaris: heathen who opposes saint goes mad and meets an 'evil death'); ***ÆLS*** (B1.3.16 Mark the Evangelist: pyre meant to burn saint's body put out by rain, many heathens killed by thunder); ***ÆLS*** (B1.3.31 Edmund: Leofstan denies saint's power, goes mad, dies; thieves attempting to steal from church miraculously bound, discovered, sentenced to be hanged); ***ÆCHom*** (B1.1.6 Holy Innocents: Herod afflicted with disease, unable to sate appetite or sleep, poison issues from body, eventually stabs himself); ***ÆCHom* I,26** (B1.1.28 Peter and Paul: Nero hears rumours of assassination so flees to wood where he is torn to pieces by wolves); ***ÆCHom* I,29** (B1.1.31 Lawrence: Decius and Valerianus both suffer 'torments' and die); ***ÆCHom* I,31** (B1.1.33 Bartholomew: Astryges goes mad and dies); ***ÆCHom* I,38** (B1.1.40 Andrew: Ægeas goes mad and dies); ***ÆCHom* II,18** (B1.2.21 St James the Apostle: Roman army kills Jewish people in Jerusalem); ***ÆCHom* II,20** (B1.2.23. Alexander, Eventius, Theodulus: Aurelian bites tongue then dies); ***ÆCHom* II,38** (B1.2.41 Simon and Jude, two wizards: fire from heaven destroys temple and magicians); ***ÆCHom* II,37** (B1.2.40 Matthew: king's dwelling sets alight, son goes mad, he become afflicted with disease and kills himself); ***Jul.*** (A3.5); ***LS* 14** (B3.3.14 MargaretCCCC303: executioner kills himself after believing in God); ***LS* 16** (B3.3.16 MargaretCot.Tib.A.iii: executioner kills himself after believing in God); ***LS* 32** (B3.3.32 Peter and Paul: Nero disappears on hearing judgement of scourging till death 'affixed' on him); **ABBO.FLOR.Pass.Eadmund.** (thieves miraculously bound while attempting to rob saint's church; man opens saint's tomb, is struck dumb, turned out by father and dies); **ANON.Vit.Mir.Ken.** (Cwoenthryth's eyes fall out, grave will not hold her body)

5.19   *Other Vengeance Miracles* (*Extended Time Lapse Between Saints' Deaths and Miracles*)
        Mart. (B19.1.67 George: dishonourers of saint's image punished); **ANON.Vit.Mir.Ken.** (Osgot goes mad, soon dies, Godric struck dumb, proud lady's eyes shoot out, hand of blacksmith working on Kenelm's feast sticks to tools)

II.   ACCOUNTS OF NON-VIOLENT DEATH

1.   Events Leading Up to Death

1.1.   Predictions or Foreknowledge of Death
BEDA.vit.Cuth.pr.;   **ANON.Vit.Cuthb.**;   **STEPH.HYRP.Vit.Wilfr.**;
BEDA.Hist.eccl. (Eorcengota); **BEDA.Hist.eccl.** (Chad); **BEDA.Hist.eccl.**
(Æthelthryth); **BEDA.Hist.eccl.** (Cuthbert); **BEDA.Hist.eccl.** (Wilfrid);
FELIX.Vit.Guth.; *Mart.* (B19.1.11 Emiliana); *Mart.* (B19.1.68 Wilfrid); *Mart.*
(B19.1.80 Eadberht); *Mart.* (B19.1.110 Æthelthryth); *Mart.* (B19.1.115
Cassius); *ÆLS* (B1.3.4 Basil); *ÆLS* (B1.3.7 Maur); *ÆLS* (B1.3.30 Martin);
ANON.Vit.Rum.; *ÆCHom* **I,4** (B1.1.5 Assumption of St John); *ÆCHom*
II,10 (B1.2.11 Cuthbert); *ÆCHom* **II,11** (B1.2.12 Benedict); *ÆCHom* **II,18**
(B1.2.21 Philip and James: Philip); *ÆCHom* **II,39.1** (B1.2.42 Martin); **CCCC**
41 (Assumption homily, Mary); *GuthB* (A3.2); **BYRHT.V.S.Oswaldi**
(another monk predicts Oswald's death in a vision); *LS* **3** (B3.3.3 Chad); *LS* **7**
(B3.3.7 Euphr); *LS* **9** (B3.3.9 Giles); *LS* **17.1** (B3.3.17.2 MartinMor); *LS* **20**
(B3.3.20 AssumptMor); *LS* **23** (B3.3.23 MaryofEgypt); **GOSC.V.S.Werburge**;
GOSC.V.Beate Sexburge Regine

1.2   Requests for Pagan Worship or Renunciation of Christ
ÆCHom **I,4** (B1.1.5 Assumption of St John); *LS* **7** (B3.3.7 Euphr): requests
for pagan marriage)

1.3   Miraculous Punishment, Reprisal for Dishonouring or Injuring a Saint Before His or Her
Death
ALDH.Carm.virg. (Narcissus: swearers of false oaths against saint punished);
ALDH.Carm.virg. (Apollonius: prophesies death of pagans);
ANON.Vit.Greg. (excommunicated man and magicians blinded; *ÆLS*
(B1.3.4 Basil); *ÆLS* (B1.3.7 Maur: false accusers of saint go mad, bite
themselves and die)

1.4   Other
Mart. (B19.1.22 Antony the Hermit: tempting by devils); **CCCC 41**
(Assumption homily, Mary: apostles miraculously brought to Mary's door); *LS*
7 (B3.3.7 Euphr: disguises herself as a man)

2.   Events Leading Up to Death: Speeches and Visions[24]

2.1   Saints Address God or Pray
BEDA.vit.Cuth.pr.; *ÆLS* (B1.3.30 Martin); *Mart.* (B19.1.208 Tryphonia);
ÆCHom **I,4** (B1.1.5 Assumption of St John); *ÆCHom* (B1.2.42 Martin);
CCCC 41 (Assumption homily, Mary); *LS* **17.1** (B3.3.17.2 MartinMor); *LS* **20**
(B3.3.20 AssumptMor); **BYRHT.V.S.Oswaldi**;
WULF.WINT.Vit.Æthelwold.

2.2   Saints Address Followers or Companions
BEDA.vit.Cuth.pr.; **STEPH.HYRP.Vit.Wilfr.**; **FELIX.Vit.Guth.**; *Mart.*
(B19.1.80 Eadberht); *ÆLS* (B1.3.30 Martin); **BYRHT.V.S.Ecgwini**;

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[24] Where saints address followers or pray to God, this does not necessarily refer to a death speech but rather
can come at any point prior to death.

B.Vit.S.Dunstani; *ÆCHom* **I,4** (B1.1.5 Assumption of St John); *ÆCHom* **II,10** (B1.2.11 Cuthbert); *ÆCHom* **II,11** (B1.2.12 Benedict); *ÆCHom* **II,18** (B1.2.21 Philip and James: Philip); **CCCC 41** (Assumption homily, Mary); *LS 3* (B3.3.3 Chad); *LS 7* (B3.3.7 Euphr); *LS 17.1* (B3.3.17.2 MartinMor); *LS 20* (B3.3.20 AssumptMor); *GuthB* (A3.2); **GOSC.V.Beate Sexburge Regine**; **WULF.WINT.Vit.Æthelwold.**

2.3 *Last Words of Saints Reported in Direct Speech*
FELIX.Vit.Guth.; *Mart.* (B19.1.211 Hilarion); *ÆCHom* **II,39.1** (B1.2.42 Martin); *ÆCHom* **I,4** (B1.1.5 Assumption of St John); **BYRHT.V.S.Ecgwini**; *LS 7* (B3.3.7 Euphr); *LS 17.1* (B3.3.17.2 MartinMor); *GuthB* (A3.2)

2.4 *Vision*
BEDA.vit.Cuth.pr. (visions); **BEDA.Hist.eccl.** (Fursa, visions); *Mart.* (B19.1.11 Emiliana); *Mart.* (B19.1.21 Fursa: vision); *Mart.* (B19.1.60 Ambrose of Milan, sees Christ who smiles on him)

3. Death

3.1 *Death Recorded (Means Unspecified)*
ALDH.Pros.virg. (John the Evanglist); **ALDH.Pros.virg.** (Amos); **ALDH.Carm.virg.** (Paul the Hermit); **ALDH.Carm.virg.** (Amos); **ALDH.Carm.virg.** (Eustochium); **BEDA.Hist.eccl.** (Gregory); **BEDA.Hist.eccl.** (Eorcengota); **BEDA.Hist.eccl.** (Æthelburh); **BEDA.Hist.eccl.** (Ælfflæd); **BEDA.Hist.eccl.** (Cuthbert); **BEDA.Hist.eccl.** (Hædde); **BEDA.Hist.eccl.** (Wilfrid); **ANON.Vit.Greg.**; *Mart.* (B19.1.5 John the Evangelist); *Mart.* (B19.1.15 Pega); *Mart.* (B19.1.16 Paul the Hermit); *Mart.* (B19.1.21 Fursa); *Mart.* (B19.1.22 Antony the Hermit); *Mart.* (B19.1.37 Chad); *Mart.* (B19.1.42 Pope Gregory the Great); *Mart.* (B19.1.49 Cuthbert); *Mart.* (B19.1.51 Benedict of Nursia); *Mart.* (B19.1.63 Guthlac); *Mart.* (B19.1.66 Æthelwald); *Mart.* (B19.1.81 John of Beverley); *Mart.* (B19.1.110 Æthelthryth); *Mart.* (B19.1.115 Cassius); *Mart.* (B19.1.138 Lupus); *Mart.* (B19.1.141 Germanus); *Mart.* (B19.1.167 Augustine of Hippo); *Mart.* (B19.1.171 Aidan); *Mart.* (B19.1.178 Bertinus); *Mart.* (B19.1.186 Mamilian); *Mart.* (B19.1.196 Ceolfrith); *Mart.* (B19.1.204 Æthelburh); *Mart.* (B19.1.207 Luke); *Mart.* (B19.1.210 Pelagia); *Mart.* (B19.1.214 Cedd); *Mart.* (B19.1.221 Winnoc); *Mart.* (B19.1.223 Martin of Tours); *Mart.* (B19.1.237 Higebald); **ANON.Vit.Bir.**; *LS 23* (B3.3.23 MaryofEgypt); **GOSC.Fest.S. Sexburge**; **GOSC.Nat.S. Eormenhilde**; **GOSC.Mir.S.Ætheldrethe**; **GOSC.V.Beate Sexburge Regine**; **GOSC.V.S.Werburge**

3.2 *Death as Result of or Following Illness or Bodily Weakness*
ANON.Vit.Cuthb.*; **BEDA.vit.Cuth.pr.****; **BEDA.Hist.eccl.** (Aidan); **BEDA.Hist.eccl.** (Fursa); **BEDA.Hist.eccl.** (Chad); **BEDA.Hist.eccl.** (Cedd); **BEDA.Hist.eccl.** (Æthelthryth); **BEDA.Hist.eccl.** (Hild); **STEPH.HYRP.Vit.Wilfr.†**; *Mart.* (B19.1.80 Eadberht‡); *ÆLS* (B1.3.7 Maur); *ÆLS* (B1.3.21 Æthelthryth); *ÆLS* (B1.3.30 Martin); *ÆCHom* **II,11** (B1.2.12 Benedict∞); *ÆCHom* **II,39.1** (B1.2.42 Martin•); **B.Vit.S.Dunstani**;

BYRHT.V.S. Ecgwini; *LS 3* (B3.3.3 Chad°); *LS 17.1* (B3.3.17.2 MartinMor); *GuthB* (A3.2***); **WULF.WINT.Vit.Æthelwold.****; **FELIX.Vit.Guth.††

* Then goes in 'way of his fathers'   ** Then sends forth spirit   † Then gives up ghost
‡ Gives up ghost after prolonged illness   ∞ Then gives up ghost   • Then gives up ghost
° Then gives up ghost   *** Then gives up ghost   **** Then gives up spirit   †† Then sends forth spirit

3.3 *Giving Up Ghost, Spirit Departing, Going to Lord, Sending Up Soul (Sole Death-Motif)*
ALDH.Carm.virg.   (Martin);   **BEDA.Hist.eccl.**   (Germanus); **ANON.Vit.Ceolfr.**; *Mart.* (B19.1.17 Benedict Biscop); *Mart.* (B19.1.40 Eastorwine); *Mart.* (B19.1.44 Patrick); *Mart.* (B19.1.60 Ambrose of Milan); *Mart.* (B19.1.68 Wilfrid); *Mart.* (B19.1.133 Mary Magdalen); *Mart.* (B19.1.156 Assumption of the Virgin Mary); *Mart.* (B19.1.181 Audomarus); *Mart.* (B19.1.208 Tryphonia); *Mart.* (B19.1.211 Hilarion); *Mart.* (B19.1.226 Hild); *ÆLS* (B1.3.4 Basil); **ANON.Vit.Rum.**; *ÆCHom* I,4 (B1.1.5 Assumption of St John); *ÆCHom* II,9 (B1.2.10 Gregory the Great); *ÆCHom* II,10 (B1.2.11 Cuthbert*); *ÆCHom* II,18 (B1.2.21 Philip and James**); *ÆCHom* I,30 (B1.1.32 Assumption of the Virgin); **BYRHT.V.S.Oswaldi**; **CCCC 41** (Assumption homily, Mary); *LS 7* (B3.3.7 Euphr); *LS 9* (B3.3.9 Giles); *LS 20* (B3.3.20 AssumptMor); **GOSC.V.S. Wihtburge**

* Illness perhaps implied, as it is noted that the saint is confined to bed   ** Only Philip

3.4 *Death not Mentioned*
ALDH.Carm.virg. (Narcissus);   **ALDH.Carm.virg.** (Apollonius);   *Mart.* (B19.1.11 Emiliana: death implied); *Mart.* (B19.1.116 Martial); *ÆLS* (B1.3.22 Swithun); *LS 29* (B3.3.29 Nicholas); *GuthA* (A3.2); **LANTFR.Trans.mir.Swith.**[25]

4.   **Events at or Following Death**
4.1 *Burial of Body by Followers or Reference to Place of Burial*
ANON.Vit.Cuthb.; **BEDA.Vit.Cuth.pr.**; **STEPH.HYRP.Vit.Wilfr.**; *Mart.* (B19.1.21 Fursa); *Mart.* (B19.1.22 Antony the Hermit); *Mart.* (B19.1.37 Chad); *Mart.* (B19.1.60 Ambrose of Milan, sees Christ who smiles on him); *Mart.* (B19.1.80 Eadberht); *Mart.* (B19.1.81 John of Beverley); *Mart.* (B19.1.116 Martial); *Mart.* (B19.1.133 Mary Magdalen); *Mart.* (B19.1.138 Lupus); *Mart.* (B19.1.167 Augustine of Hippo); *Mart.* (B19.1.171 Aidan); *Mart.* (B19.1.178 Bertinus); *Mart.* (B19.1.181 Audomarus); *Mart.* (B19.1.196 Ceolfrith); *Mart.* (B19.1.207 Luke); *Mart.* (B19.1.210 Pelagia); *Mart.* (B19.1.214 Cedd); *Mart.* (B19.1.211 Hilarion); *Mart.* (B19.1.237 Higebald); *ÆLS* (B1.3.4 Basil); *ÆCHom* II,10 (B1.2.11 Cuthbert); *ÆCHom* II,11 (B1.2.12 Benedict); *ÆCHom* II,39.1 (B1.2.42 Martin: although fighting over body between Poitevins and Turonians ensues); *ÆCHom* II,18 (B1.2.21 Philip and James: Philip); **CCCC 41** (Assumption homily, Mary); **BYRHT.V.S.Oswaldi**; **BYRHT.V.S.Ecgwini**; **ANON.Vit.Ceolfr.**; *LS 3* (B3.3.3 Chad); *LS 7* (B3.3.7 Euphr); *LS 20* (B3.3.20 AssumptMor); *LS 23* (B3.3.23 MaryofEgypt); **WULF.WINT.Vit.Æthelwold.**; **ANON.Vit.Rum.**; **GOSC.Fest.S. Sexburge**; **GOSC.Nat.S. Eormenhilde**; **GOSC.V.Beate Sexburge Regine**; **GOSC.V.S.Werburge**; **GOSC.V.S. Wihtburge**

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[25] There are no references to the circumstances of Swithun's death in the various accounts pertaining to him, hence, the accounts are placed here.

4.2. *Post-Mortem Miracles of Healing*
ANON.Vit.Cuthb.;   **BEDA.vit.Cuth.pr.**;   **STEPH.HYRP.Vit.Wilfr.**;
BEDA.Hist.eccl. (Chad: miracles of healing); **BEDA.Hist.eccl.**
(Æthelthryth: marble coffin found, original coffin has healing properties);
BEDA.Hist.eccl. (Hædde: healing miracles); **FELIX.Vit.Guth.**; *Mart.*
(B19.1.178 Bertinus: healing miracle); *ÆLS* (B1.3.21 Æthelthryth: marble
coffin found for translation, healing miracles); *ÆCHom* **I,4** (B1.1.5
Assumption of St John: grave filled with manna); *ÆCHom* **II,10** (B1.2.11
Cuthbert); *ÆCHom* **II,11** (B1.2.12 Benedict); *ÆCHom* **II,18** (B1.2.21 Philip
and James: Philip); *LS* **7** (B3.3.7 Euphr: heals blind man); **BYRHT.V.S.
Ecgwini**;   **ANON.Vit.Ceolfr.**;   **LANTFR.Trans.mir.Swith.**;
WULF.WINT.Vit.Æthelwold.;   **ANON.Vit.Bir.**;   **ANON.Vit.Rum.**;
GOSC.Fest.S. Sexburge; GOSC.Nat.S. Eormenhilde;
GOSC.V.S.Werburge; GOSC.V.S. Wihtburge; GOSC.Mir.S.Ætheldrethe

4.3. *Incorrupt Body*
ANON.Vit.Cuthb.; **BEDA.vit.Cuth.pr.**; **BEDA.Hist.eccl.** (Æthelburh);
BEDA.Hist.eccl. (Fursa); **BEDA.Hist.eccl.** (Cuthbert); **FELIX.Vit.Guth.**;
Mart. (B19.1.110 Æthelthryth); *ÆLS* (B1.3.21 Æthelthryth); *ÆCHom* **II,10**
(B1.2.11 Cuthbert); **GOSC.V.S.Werburge; GOSC.V.S. Wihtburge;**
GOSC.Mir.S.Ætheldrethe

4.4. *Sweet Smells from Body, Grave or Sarcophagus*
BEDA.Hist.eccl. (Eorcengota: sweet fragrance when tomb opened);
FELIX.Vit.Guth.; *Mart.* (B19.1.5 John the Evangelist: but no body); *Mart.*
(B19.1.181 Audomarus); **CCCC 41** (Assumption homily, Mary: from body);
GuthB (A3.2); **ANON.Vit.Ceolfr.**

4.5. *Light Phenomena*
BEDA.Hist.eccl. (Eorcengota); **BEDA.Hist.eccl.** (Hild); **FELIX.Vit.Guth.**;
Mart. (B19.1.51 Benedict of Nursia); *Mart.* (B19.1.171 Aidan); *Mart.*
(B19.1.226. Hild); *ÆLS* (B1.3.30 Martin); *ÆCHom* **I,4** (B1.1.5 Assumption of
St John); *ÆCHom* **II,11** (B1.2.12 Benedict); **CCCC 41** (Assumption homily,
Mary); *LS* **20** (B3.3.20 AssumptMor: soul is very bright); *GuthB* (A3.2);
BYRHT.V.S.Oswaldi; ANON.Vit.Ceolfr.; GOSC.V.S. Wihtburge (star
lights way when body stolen)

4.6. *Voices, Singing and Bells*
STEPH.HYRP.Vit.Wilfr. (sound of birds); **BEDA.Hist.eccl.** (Eorcengota);
BEDA.Hist.eccl. (Hild); **FELIX.Vit.Guth.**; *Mart.* (B19.1.37 Chad); *Mart.*
(B19.1.226. Hild: sound of bell); *ÆLS* (B1.3.30 Martin); *ÆCHom* **II,39.1**
(B1.2.42 Martin); **CCCC 41** (Assumption homily, Mary); *LS* **9** (B3.3.9 Giles);
GuthB (A3.2)

4.7. *Angels and Angelic Phenomena*
ALDH.Pros.virg. (Amos: soul seen by St Anthony being taken to heaven by
angels); **ALDH.Carm.virg.** (Martin: taken to heaven by angels);
ALDH.Carm.virg. (Paul the Hermit: accompanied to heaven by angels);
ALDH.Carm.virg. (Amos: seen by St Anthony being taken to heaven by

angels); **BEDA.Hist.eccl.** (Chad: soul accompanied to heaven by angels); **BEDA.Hist.eccl.** (Hild: soul seen ascending to heaven accompanied by angels); **BEDA.Hist.eccl.** (Cuthbert: soul taken to heaven by angels); *Mart.* (B19.1.16 Paul the Hermit; soul taken to heaven among angels and saints); *Mart.* (B19.1.22 Antony the Hermit: led to heaven by angels); *Mart.* (B19.1.37 Chad: soul ascends to heaven among angels and St Cedd); *Mart.* (B19.1.51 Benedict of Nursia: angel tells brothers the way Benedict ascends to heaven); *Mart.* (B19.1.68 Wilfrid: taken to heaven by host of angels); *Mart.* (B19.1.171 Aidan); *Mart.* (B19.1.226 Hild: angels take soul to heaven); *ÆCHom* **II,11** (B1.2.12 Benedict); *ÆCHom* **II,39.1** (B1.2.42 Martin); **ANON.Vit.Rum.**; **CCCC 41** (Assumption homily, Mary: archangel Michael); *GuthA* (soul taken to heaven by angel); *GuthB* (A3.2: angels sang melody); *LS 3* (B3.3.3 Chad); *LS 9* (B3.3.9 Giles); **B.Vit.S.Dunstani** (led to eternal rest by Christ); **GOSC.V.S.Werburge**; **GOSC.V.S. Wihtburge**; **GOSC.V.Beate Sexburge Regine**

4.8.   *Vengeance Miracles at Saints' Churches or Shrines*
        ANON.Vit.Greg. (Gregory appears to successor in vision, kicks him on the head for wrongly judging Gregory's motives; man dies); *Mart.* (B19.1.116 Martial: two men joined in 'illicit sex' thrown out of church and deed discovered by townspeople); *Mart.* (B19.1.181 Audomarus: man's eyes pop out and he dies miserable death after refusing to pay back loan at saint's church); **CCCC 41** (Assumption homily, Mary: chief priest tries to upset Mary's bier but his hands stick to it); *LS 20* (B3.3.20 AssumptMor: leader of Jews wants to cast down palm branch at front of bier but hand sticks); **GOSC.V.S. Wihtburge** (ante-mortem and post-mortem vengeance miracles, and vengeance miracle referring to Æthelthryth); **GOSC.Mir.S.Ætheldrethe** (eyes of Viking who tries to rob tomb fall out; of men who try to rob saint's clothing, one dies of plague, two die immediately, one goes mad and one becomes paralysed); **GOSC.V.Beate Sexburge Regine** (monk refuses drink to brethren; all his vessels miraculously smash)

4.9.   *Saints Appear in Vision (and Speak)*
        FELIX.Vit.Guth.; *Mart.* (B19.1.60 Ambrose of Milan: appears in vision and speaks to general, telling him where to fight); *ÆLS* (B1.3.22 Swithun: appears to smith telling him to tell Eadsige that Swithun has said his bones must be moved into church, appears to smith twice more, appears to another man instructing him to go to the Winchester Old Minster and admonish the monks for their sloth, appears to sick man and catalogues sins that he should not commit); **LANTFR.Trans.mir.Swith.** (tells smith to go to Eadsige to organize Swithun's translation; various other appearances in visions); **WULF.WINT.Vit.Æthelwold.** (tells Ælfhelm to go to his tomb at Winchester to regain his sight); **GOSC.V.S. Wihtburge** (no specific details)

4.10.   *Saints' Intercession Prevents Some Kind of Calamity*
        BEDA.Hist.eccl. (Aidan; buttress against which saint leans when dying survives a fire when rest of church burns down)

4.11. *Miracles Involving Animals*
Mart. (B19.1.16 Paul the Hermit: lions dig grave); **LS 23** (B3.3.23 MaryofEgypt: lioness digs grave); **BYRHT.V.S.Oswaldi** (dove)

4.12 *Miracles Involving Water*
GOSC.V.S. Wihtburge

4.13 *Earthquake*
GuthB (A3.2: earth trembles)

4.14 *Other Post-Mortem Miracles* (*Including Unspecified Miracles*)
BEDA.Hist.eccl. (Eorcengota[26]); *Mart.* (B19.1.17 Benedict Biscop: soul flies to heaven); *Mart.* (B19.1.21 Fursa); *Mart.* (B19.1.133 Mary Magdalen); *Mart.* (B19.1.171 Aidan: many miracles); **ÆLS** (B1.3.30 Martin); *Mart.* (B19.1.204 Æthelburh: soul drawn to heaven with golden chains); *Mart.* (B19.1.214 Cedd: draws Chad's soul to heaven with angels); **ÆLS** (B1.3.7 Maur); **ÆCHom II,10** (B1.2.11 Cuthbert); **ÆCHom II,39.1** (B1.2.42 Martin); **LS 20** (B3.3.20 AssumptMor: Lord tells Peter where to bury body; Mary speaks, although soul has supposedly departed); **WULF.WINT.Vit.Æthelwold.** (body suffused with whiteness, then rosy redness); **GOSC.Nat.S. Eormenhilde** (frees man from iron bonds; punishes abusive monk); **GOSC.V.S. Wihtburge** (cracked coffin repairs itself)

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[26] Bede, *HE*, III.8, p. 238, suggests that these miracles should be left for 'her own people' to relate.

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