

# THE LIFE AND WORKS OF OSBERT OF CLARE

BRIAN BRIGGS

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD  
at the  
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# **The Life and Works of Osbert of Clare**

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Submitted for the Degree of Ph.D.

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## Thesis Abstract

Osbert of Clare was an English monastic writer, whose works extended from the mid-1120s to the mid-1150s. His Latin hagiography reflects a deep admiration for Anglo-Saxon saints and spirituality, while his letters provide a personal perspective on his turbulent career. As prior of Westminster Abbey, Osbert of Clare worked to strengthen the rights and prestige of his monastery. His production of forged or altered charters makes him one of England's most prolific medieval forgers. At times his passion for reform put him at odds with his abbots, and he was sent into exile under both Abbot Herbert (1121-c.1136) and Abbot Gervase (1138-c.1157). Also Osbert, as one of the first proponents of the Immaculate Conception of Mary, wrote about the feast, worked to legitimize its celebration, and provided us with the only significant narration of its introduction to England.

This thesis is divided into two sections. The first section is principally historical and the second is principally literary. In the first section, I provide an overview of Osbert of Clare's career and examine in greater detail two of his most significant undertakings: his promotion of Westminster Abbey and his attempted canonization of Edward the Confessor. In the second section, I give a philological study of Osbert Latin style and examine themes that run throughout his writings, such as virginity, exile and kingship. Osbert's promotion of the feast of the Immaculate Conception is included in the second section of the thesis because of its ties to the themes of virginity and femininity within his writings. There are also two appendices: the first is a survey of the extant manuscripts of Osbert's writings, and the second is an edition of Osbert's unpublished *Life of St Ethelbert* from Gotha, Forschungsbibliothek MS Memb. i. 81.

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- (ii) I was admitted as a research student in September, 1999 and as a candidate for the degree of Ph.D. in May, 2000; the work was carried out in the University of St Andrews.

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## Contents

List of Tables	i
Acknowledgements	ii
Abbreviated References	iii
Part I: Life	
1) Career of Osbert of Clare	1
2) Osbert of Clare and Westminster Abbey	37
3) The Canonization of Edward the Confessor	62
Part II: Writings	
4) Osbert of Clare's Latin Style	98
5) The Immaculate Conception of Mary and the Theme of Virginit	122
6) Kings and Kingship	153
7) Exile and Friendship	174
Conclusion	192
Appendix I- The Extant Manuscripts of the Writings of Osbert of Clare	194
Appendix II- Osbert of Clare's <i>Vita S. Aethelberti</i>	205
Bibliography	249

## List of Tables

Table 3:1.	The Sources of Osbert of Clare's <i>Vita S. Eadwardi</i>	75
Table 4:1.	<i>Cursus</i> Cadences from Osbert of Clare's <i>Vita S. Eadwardi</i>	107
Table 4:2.	Comparison of Cadences and <i>Cursus</i> Types	108

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## Abbreviated References

- Letters Osbert of Clare, *The Letters of Osbert of Clare*, ed. E.W. Williamson (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1929).
- Miracula S. Aedmundi* Osbert of Clare, *Miracula regis et martyris Aedmundi*, extant in Samson, *Opus de miraculis sancti Aedmundi*, *Memorials of St Edmund's Abbey*, i, ed. Thomas Arnold, Rolls Series 96 (1890), pp. 107-208.
- St Anne Osbert of Clare, "Les compositions d'Osbert de Clare en l'honneur de sainte Anne", ed. A. Wilmart, *Annales de Bretagne* 37 (1925-6), pp. 261-286.
- Vita S. Aethelbrichti* Osbert of Clare, *Vita Aethelbrichti, regis et martyris*, Gotha, Forschungsbibliothek MS Memb. I 81, fols. 30r-39r. Edited below, pp. 208-242.
- Vita S. Eadburgae* Osbert of Clare, *Vita beatae virginis Eadburgae*, in S.J. Ridyard, *The Royal Saints of Anglo-Saxon England* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1988), pp. 253-308.
- Vita S. Eadwardi* Osbert of Clare, *La vie de S. Edouard le Confesseur*, ed. M. Bloch, *Analecta Bollandiana* 41 (1923), pp. 4-131.
- AASS *Acta sanctorum*  
 AB *Analecta Bollandiana*  
 BL British Library  
 CCCM *Corpus Christianorum, continuatio medievalis*  
 CCSG *Corpus Christianorum, series Graeca*  
 CCSL *Corpus Christianorum, series Latina*  
 DB *Domesday Book*  
 EHR *English Historical Review*  
 HBS Henry Bradshaw Society  
 JEH *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*  
 LHS London Record Society  
 PL *Patrologia cursus completus, series Latina*, ed. J.-P. Migne (221 vols.; Paris, 1844-1864)  
 PRS Pipe Roll Society  
 RHS Royal Historical Society  
 RS *Rerum britannicarum medii aevi scriptores* ('Rolls Series') (251 vols.; London, 1858-1896)

## Chapter One

### The Career of Osbert of Clare

In the first decade of the twentieth century, J. Armitage Robinson wrote a description of Osbert of Clare, the English hagiographer and sometime prior of Westminster Abbey. Robinson noted that: "He is a forgotten worthy of the English Church of twelfth century. ... But he did his work, and left a deeper mark upon his time than others whose names are better known today."<sup>1</sup> Despite nearly a century's passing since Robinson traced the career of Osbert of Clare, a century that has produced extensive research in all facets of Anglo-Norman history, Osbert of Clare remains a somewhat elusive figure. Certain aspects of Osbert's career have been looked at more extensively, particularly his involvement in the canonization of Edward the Confessor<sup>2</sup> and in the early promotion of the feast of the Immaculate Conception of Mary.<sup>3</sup> Other aspects of his hagiography have been examined in reference to specific saints' cults.<sup>4</sup> Perhaps the most significant research done regarding Osbert of Clare in the last century has been his identification as a prolific

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<sup>1</sup> Armitage Robinson's article was originally published as, "Westminster in the Twelfth Century: Osbert of Clare", *The Church Quarterly Review* (July, 1909). It was then reprinted, with a few changes, as the introduction to Williamson's edition of Osbert of Clare's letters. *Letters*, pp. 1-20.

<sup>2</sup> Bernhard Scholz, "The Canonization of Edward the Confessor", *Speculum* 36 (1961), pp. 38-60; Frank Barlow, *Edward the Confessor* (University of California Press, Berkeley, 1970).

<sup>3</sup> Edmund Bishop, "On the Origins of the Feast of the Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary", in *Liturgica Historica* (Clarendon, Oxford, 1918), pp. 238-259; P. Van Dijk, "The Origin of the Latin Feast of the Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary", *Dublin Review* 223 (1954), pp. 251-267, 428-442; H. Francis Davis, "Origins of the Devotion to our Lady's Immaculate Conception", *Dublin Review* 223 (1954), pp. 375-392.

<sup>4</sup> Most notably, Susan Ridyard's examination of Osbert's *Vita S. Eadburgae* in *The Royal Saints of Anglo-Saxon England* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1988).

forger of charters by Pierre Chaplais.<sup>5</sup> However, what has been absent in the research is significant analysis into how all of these different aspects of Osbert of Clare's career connect and affect each other.

One reason why Osbert of Clare has remained an elusive figure in Anglo-Norman history is the lack of references to his career in contemporary historical sources. The only medieval chronicle that he appears in is John Flete's fifteenth-century *De fundatione ecclesiae Westmonasterii*.<sup>6</sup> Osbert appears in Aelred of Rievaulx's *Vita S. Edwardi*, but only in a peripheral role in a few of the miracles.<sup>7</sup> References to Osbert of Clare are even scarce within Westminster charters, principally due to the amount of time he spent away from Westminster in exile.<sup>8</sup> Therefore a picture of Osbert of Clare's career has to be almost completely drawn from his extant writings.

Fortunately almost all of Osbert's known works survive in complete or near complete forms,<sup>9</sup> although there are only single extant medieval copies of each work. This makes it very difficult to determine whether each work is actually complete or if Osbert composed multiple versions of a given work. Particularly useful for interpreting Osbert of Clare's career is his large extant letter collection.<sup>10</sup> With the exception of the introductory letters to his hagiographical works, all of Osbert of

<sup>5</sup> Pierre Chaplais, "The Original Charters of Herbert and Gervase, abbots of Westminster", in *A Medieval Miscellany for D.M. Stenton*, PRS 36 (1960), pp. 89-110.

<sup>6</sup> John Flete, *Flete's History of Westminster Abbey*, ed. J. Armitage Robinson (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1909), p. 92.

<sup>7</sup> Aelred of Rievaulx, *Vita sancti Edwardi regis et confessoris*, PL 195, cols. 783-786. In the fourteenth century, the Westminster historian Richard of Cirencester also mentions Osbert, but only in reference to a miracle taken from Aelred's *Life*. Richard of Cirencester, *Speculum historiale*, ii, RS 30 (1869), pp. 310-312.

<sup>8</sup> Beside the letters relating to Osbert's mission to Rome for the canonization of Edward the Confessor, Osbert only occurs in four extant Westminster charters. *Westminster Abbey Charters*, eds. Emma Mason et al., LRS 25 (1988), nos. 249, 254, 265 & 341.

<sup>9</sup> The one exception to this is Osbert's *Miracula S. Aedmundi*, which only survives as an incorporation into the *Opus de miraculis sancti Aedmundi*, printed in *Memorials of St Edmund's Abbey*, i, ed. Thomas Arnold, RS 96 (1890), pp. 107-208. See below, pp. 200-203.

Clare's letters survive in one manuscript from the twelfth-century, BL Cotton MS Vitellius A. xvii. Based on the paleographic evidence, the Vitellius manuscript was probably made either while Osbert of still living or shortly after his death. Osbert, therefore, may have decided on the letters to place in the collection and on the final order of the letters.<sup>11</sup> Further, there is evidence that there was at one time a complete second volume of letters which is no longer extant.<sup>12</sup> Even the surviving letters are difficult to interpret. Most of Osbert's Letters are not easily dated, and because of his writing style it is sometimes even difficult to know what subject he is discussing. Therefore, Osbert of Clare's career can usually only be pieced together in likely, and rarely certain, terms.

### Background

Very little is known about Osbert of Clare's background and early career, but a vague picture can be drawn from references in his letters. Throughout his letters Osbert describes himself as "*Osbertus de Clara*." In two letters he clarifies his place of origin further, saying in one that he was, "...born and raised in the town which is called Clare,"<sup>13</sup> and in the other that he was, "...called a native of the town of Clare."<sup>14</sup> He also calls himself, "Osbert who is from the castle which is called Clare,"<sup>15</sup> in his *Vita S. Eadwardi*. Clare is located in southern Suffolk near the border to Essex. The

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<sup>10</sup> Edited by E.W. Williamson in *The Letters of Osbert of Clare* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1929).

<sup>11</sup> This collection is discussed below on pp. 194-96. It is noteworthy that the letters are not placed in strict chronological order and the letters dealing with canonization of Edward the Confessor are given a prominent place at the beginning of the collection. This probably reflect the fact that the collection was compiled around the same time as Edward's canonization.

<sup>12</sup> See below, pp. 196-198.

<sup>13</sup> "...*municipio quod Clara dicitur oriundus et altus*," *Letters*, no. 1, p. 39.

<sup>14</sup> "... *Osbertus municipii Clarensis appellatus indigena*," *Ibid.*, no. 43, p. 179.

<sup>15</sup> "...*Osbertus qui de castello quod Clara dicitur...*," *Vita S. Eadwardi*, p. 123.

*Domesday Book* gives a good account of the size and nature of Clare in the late eleventh century, perhaps just shortly before Osbert was born.<sup>16</sup> At the time, Clare was a significant sized borough worth a value of forty pounds. The *Domesday Book* records that in 1086 there were thirty villagers, thirty smallholders, twenty slaves, forty-three burgesses and five freemen who owed duties. It had both a significant rural farm economy and a town economy, with a total of thirty-one ploughs and a market.

In 1086, when the Domesday survey was produced, Clare was the *caput* of the lands of Richard fitz Gilbert in Suffolk, and it became the *caput* of all his family's lands and where they derived their name, the Clares.<sup>17</sup> The Clares were descendant of Count Gilbert of Brionne (d. 1040), but they first gained significant prominence under Count Gilbert's two eldest sons, Richard and Baldwin. Both Richard fitz Gilbert and Baldwin fitz Gilbert loyally served William I and were therefore granted significant lands in England: Richard principally in the east and Baldwin in the west. The Clare family also ascended to two earldoms under the Norman kings: Pembroke and Hertford.

References in Osbert of Clare's writings suggest that he was perhaps either a member of the Clare family or closely tied to it. As stated above, in the prefatory letter to his *Vita S. Eadwardi* states that he was from the 'castellum' of Clare, rather than simply from the town of Clare,<sup>18</sup> thereby implying that he was from the household of Richard fitz Gilbert.<sup>19</sup> This connection to the Clares is reinforced in the

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<sup>15</sup> *DB*, ii, 389b; Suffolk § 25.1. Given that by the mid-1120s Osbert was in exile at Bury and apparently of significant stature, then he must have been born in the late eleventh century or very early twelfth century.

<sup>17</sup> The rise of the Clare family under the Anglo-Norman kings is examined in Jennifer Ward, "Royal Service and Reward: The Clare Family and the Crown, 1066-1154", *Anglo-Norman Studies* 11(1988), pp. 261-278.

<sup>18</sup> *Vita S. Eadwardi*, p. 123.

<sup>19</sup> Being of Richard's household did not necessarily mean that Osbert was related to the Clares. He may have been related to one of Richard fitz Gilbert's officers, such as his steward.

prefatory letter to his *Vita S. Eadburgae*, where Osbert writes: “My grandparents and ancestors were counted among honorable men, and still those who are surviving in the flesh are considered so eminent that they shine among illustrious men.”<sup>20</sup>

There are, however, few people who Osbert describes as relatives in his extant writings. The most prominent of these is Athelwold, the bishop of Carlisle, whom he refers to as his kinsman.<sup>21</sup> Besides being the first bishop of Carlisle, Athelwold was as well Henry I’s confessor.<sup>22</sup> In another letter, Osbert also refers to Henry, a priest at Westminster, as his kinsman.<sup>23</sup> The only close relatives that Osbert mentions by name in his letters are his nieces Cecilia and Margarita, both nuns at Barking Abbey. Osbert seems to have been very fond of them. Letters to each of them are extant in Osbert’s letter collection,<sup>24</sup> and he mentions them in a letter to Abbess Adeliz of Barking.<sup>25</sup> He also had a sister who is only mentioned as Cecilia and Margarita’s mother.<sup>26</sup>

Osbert’s career and letters contain further hints that he was of significant social background. The last of Osbert’s extant letters dates from c. 1160; therefore, he was perhaps fairly young when he wrote his earliest extant letters in the mid-1120s. However, even in the mid-1120s Osbert held significant ecclesiastical responsibilities and apparent authority. The social status of the recipients of Osbert’s letters also shows that Osbert was well connected. Most of his letters are to significant ecclesiastics, particularly abbots and priors. Osbert’s connection to many of these ecclesiastics developed out of his role as prior of Westminster. Some of his letters,

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<sup>20</sup> “*Quamvis et inter ingenuos avi mei numerati sunt et proavi, et adhuc qui videntur in carne superstites generosi resplendant inter viros illustres.*” *Letters*, no. 43, p. 182.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 9, p. 72.

<sup>22</sup> As shown by his frequent appearances, both as prior of Nostell and bishop of Carlisle, in the charters of Henry I. *Regesta regum Anglo-Normannorum*, ii, eds. Charles Johnson & H.A. Cronne (Clarendon, Oxford, 1956).

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 3, p. 53.

<sup>24</sup> *Letters*, nos. 21-22, pp. 89-91, 91-96.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 42, p. 178.

however, seem to reflect a more personal connection independent of his role at Westminster. For example, in the 1130's Osbert wrote a very personal letter to Robert de Sigillo, a Norman clerk in Henry I's court.<sup>27</sup>

In England in the early twelfth century ethnicity was an important factor for both lay and ecclesiastical figures. If, as it appears, Osbert was closely connected to the Clare family then he was probably at least partially of Norman descent. This is also supported by his name. The name 'Osbert', and the similar name 'Osbern', could represent either Gallo-Norse or Anglo-Norse descent, although it was more commonly Norman.<sup>28</sup> However, one of Osbert's kinsmen, Athelwold of Carlisle was clearly of English descent due to the Anglo-Saxon nature of his name. Therefore Osbert of Clare at least had English familial relations. Osbert also seems to have had strong sympathies for Anglo-Saxon ecclesiastical tradition. All of his hagiography relates to Anglo-Saxon royal saints, and he zealously promoted the feast of the Conception of Mary, which for early promoters such as Eadmer represented the simple devout piety of the Anglo-Saxon church.<sup>29</sup>

There are only hints in his letters regarding Osbert of Clare's background; however, based upon his quick ecclesiastical promotion, his praise of his lineage in the *Vita S. Eadburgae*, and his statement that he was from the 'castellum' of Clare, it can be assumed that Osbert was born into some degree of nobility connected with the household of Gilbert fitz Richard.

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<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 42, p. 178.

<sup>27</sup> *Letters*, no. 10, p. 75.

<sup>28</sup> Cecily Clark, "Women's Names in Post-Conquest England", in *Words, Names and History*, ed. Peter Jackson (Brewer, Cambridge, 1995), pp. 129-130. This article was originally published in *Speculum* 53 (1978), pp. 223-251. Names, however, are not always an accurate indicator of ethnicity because shortly after the Normans came to England Norman names became very popular amongst both the English and the Norman populations. Therefore, while an English name could fairly reliably identify a person of English descent, a Norman name was less certain.

<sup>29</sup> Eadmer, *De conceptione sanctae Mariae*, eds. H. Thurston & T. Slater (Freiburg, 1904). See below p. 131.

### Early Career

In the sixteenth century the Tudor antiquary John Leland described Osbert of Clare as, “*Stochae Clarae alumnus.*”<sup>30</sup> This seems to imply that Leland believed that Osbert took his monastic profession at the Benedictine house of Stoke by Clare. This is somewhat problematic because the monastery, which was originally founded at Clare, was not moved to Stoke until 1124, by which time Osbert was probably already a monk. Nevertheless, Henry Bradley, who wrote the *Dictionary of National Biography* article for Osbert of Clare in the late nineteenth century, took Leland’s statement as basically true and said that Osbert probably made his monastic profession at Clare.<sup>31</sup> There is no medieval evidence for this, and it is perhaps simply Leland’s assumption made from Osbert’s designation of being from Clare.

Osbert’s earliest letters appear to come from well into his monastic career after he was sent into exile away from Westminster Abbey. However, an accurate chronology of this early exile is somewhat difficult to establish because so few of the exilic letters can be dated. The only easily dated exilic letter from this period is Osbert’s letter of Bishop Athelwold of Carlisle, which seems to mark the end of his exile.<sup>32</sup> This letter can be accurately dated from late 1133 to early 1134, between when Athelwold was consecrated as bishop of Carlisle and when Osbert was said to have become prior of Westminster.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> John Leland, *Comentarii de scriptoribus Britannicis*, ed. A. Hall (Oxford, 1709), p. 187.

<sup>31</sup> Henry Bradley, “Clare, Osbert de”, in *Dictionary of National Biography* 10 (1887), p. 386.

<sup>32</sup> *Letters*, no. 9, pp. 72-74.

<sup>33</sup> In a letter most likely dating from mid- to late 1139 Osbert is said to have been prior for five years. *Letters*, no. 17, p. 86.

Previous scholarship assumed that Osbert's first period of exile began in the early 1120s, based upon a letter from Osbert to Prior Hugh of Lewes.<sup>34</sup> The identification of Prior Hugh by J. Armitage Robinson as Hugh of Amiens has been universally accepted,<sup>35</sup> although there is clear evidence against this as shall be shown below. Hugh of Amiens was prior of Lewes from 1120 to early 1123, when he was transferred to Henry I's foundation of Reading Abbey. In 1130, Hugh of Amiens became the archbishop of Rouen, where he stayed until his death in 1164. There were good reasons to identify the recipient of Osbert's letter as Hugh of Amiens. He was the most prominent Hugh at Lewes in the first half of the twelfth century, and Osbert referred to him, then as abbot of Reading, in a letter to Anselm of Bury from c.1129.<sup>36</sup> Also the shared interest in the feast of the Immaculate Conception between Osbert and Hugh of Amiens implies that they had a cordial relationship. Finally, in his letter to Hugh, Osbert claims that the king did not support him in his election and sent him to Ely.<sup>37</sup> The significance of the king's interference in Westminster's internal affairs led Robinson to argue that the election was to the abbacy of Westminster.<sup>38</sup> This theory supported the identification of Osbert's addressee as Hugh of Amiens because Hugh was prior of Lewes in 1121 when Herbert was elevated to the abbacy.<sup>39</sup>

If the recipient of Osbert's letter were Hugh of Amiens, then his exile would have begun c.1121 after a failed election to the abbacy of Westminster Abbey. The letter to Hugh states that this exile was spent at Ely, but by the late 1120s Osbert was at Bury. He finally returned to Westminster in 1134 after enlisting the help of Bishop

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<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 1, pp. 39-48. For Osbert's perception of exile and how exile is portrayed within his writings see below, ch. 7.

<sup>35</sup> *Letters*, p. 2. David Knowles et al., *The Heads of Religious House: England and Wales 940-1216* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1972), p. 119.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 7, p. 67.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 1, p. 47.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4.

Athelwold and was made prior. This traditional interpretation of Osbert's early career provides a cohesive, although not entirely clear, single period of exile lasting from the c.1121 until 1134.

There is, however, one significant problem with the identification of Osbert's recipient as Hugh of Amiens. In the *incipit* Osbert simply calls him Hugh, prior of St Pancras (Lewes),<sup>40</sup> but a little later in the letter Osbert calls him Hugh of St Margaret.<sup>41</sup> Williamson suggested that Osbert called him this because he may have been from Ste Marguerite near Laon where Hugh of Amiens studied.<sup>42</sup> However, in the *Lewes Annals* under the year 1143, it records that an otherwise unknown Hugh of St Margaret, prior of Lewes, had died.<sup>43</sup> This Hugh must have become prior sometime after Prior Ansger left to become the Abbot of Reading in 1130.<sup>44</sup> It is unlikely that this reference to Hugh of St Margaret was an error on the part of the chronicler. Under the year 1164, the same twelfth-century hand records the death of Hugh of Amiens.<sup>45</sup> Therefore, this letter actually should be dated to after 1130 and does not constitute the beginning of Osbert of Clare's early exile.

Three other letters were probably written around the same time as the letter to Prior Hugh: Osbert's letters to Abbot Herbert, Henry, and David, all of Westminster Abbey. These letters share a similar tone and also share many common contextual references: in the letters to Prior Hugh and to David of Westminster Osbert mentions his failed election,<sup>46</sup> in the letters to Abbot Herbert and Henry of Westminster he

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<sup>39</sup> Knowles et al., *Heads of Religious Houses*, pp. 77, 119.

<sup>40</sup> *Letters*, no. 1, p. 39.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 1, p. 40.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 184.

<sup>43</sup> *The Annals of Lewes Priory*, ed. F. Liebermann, *EHR* 17 (1902), pp. 86-89.

<sup>44</sup> John of Worcester, p. 194.

<sup>45</sup> *The Annals of Lewes Priory*, p. 88. The chronicler did make a few errors in his dating of events, such as mistakenly recording the death of Earl William of Warren in 1150 instead of 1160. *Ibid.*, p. 87.

<sup>46</sup> *Letters*, nos. 1,4, pp. 47, 60.

relates how his conflict arose because he struggled for the rights of church;<sup>47</sup> in the letters to Herbert and David he mentions the ruinous state of Westminster Abbey;<sup>48</sup> and in the letters to Herbert, Henry and David he describes how he was betrayed by some of the Westminster brethren.<sup>49</sup> Throughout all four letters Osbert expressed his desire to reconcile the conflict that sent him into exile. Osbert states in the letter to Henry that he had held the office of prior for more than two years.<sup>50</sup> Since the first time that Osbert is recorded as holding the office of prior is in 1134,<sup>51</sup> all four letters perhaps date to c.1136/1137.

If the letter to Prior Hugh was written in the 1130s, then the first datable letters by Osbert of Clare are two letters written at Bury St Edmunds in which he pleads with Abbot Anselm of Bury to return from a trip abroad, perhaps dating from early in the year 1126.<sup>52</sup> In one of these two early letters Osbert calls Anselm his ‘*protector*’ and ‘*asylum*’, thereby implying that Bury St Edmunds was his refuge in exile.<sup>53</sup> However, Osbert does not hint at the cause of his exile in either of the letters. Osbert’s lasting relationship and gratitude to the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds and specifically to Abbot Anselm lasted well after his return to Westminster, as shown by the total of five extant letters written by Osbert to Anselm.<sup>54</sup> Besides Osbert’s correspondence with Abbot Anselm, the most significant example of Osbert’s continued ties to the abbey was his production of a new, or perhaps more likely an expanded collection of St Edmund’s miracles. Unfortunately this only survives incorporated into later

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<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, nos. 2-3, pp. 51, 54.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, nos. 2, 4, pp. 51, 60-61.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, nos. 2-4, pp. 50, 53, 58, 60-61.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 3, pp. 53, 56.

<sup>51</sup> See below pp. 12-13.

<sup>52</sup> *Letters*, nos. 5-6, pp. 62-65. For the dating of these letters see Rodney Thomson, “Early Romanesque Book-Illustration in England”, *Viator* 2 (1971), pp. 214-215.

<sup>53</sup> *Letters*, no. 6, p. 64.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, nos. 5-8, 23. Williamson also suggested that letter 29 might have been written to Anselm, although there is little evidence for this attribution.

collections,<sup>55</sup> but from the extant prologue the collection appears to have been composed after 1139,<sup>56</sup> well after his return to Westminster.

It was while at Bury that Osbert was probably first exposed to the celebration of the feast of the Conception of Mary.<sup>57</sup> In a letter to Anselm of Bury, probably written in late 1129 or early 1130, Osbert claimed that it was Abbot Anselm who introduced the celebration of the feast to post-conquest England.<sup>58</sup> The feast of the Immaculate Conception plunged Osbert into the center of an ecclesiastical debate that engulfed not only the English church, but the whole western church from the twelfth century through the nineteenth century. Osbert wrote his *letter discussing the feast* to request Anselm's advice against opposition to the celebration of the feast. He describes how bishops Roger and Bernard tried to stop him from celebrating the feast at an unspecified church, but that he carried on nevertheless.<sup>59</sup> In England the feast was given official approval in 1129 by Henry I at the Council of London,<sup>60</sup> but opposition to some of the philosophical ideas implied by the celebration of the feast seems to have remained strong. In the late 1130s when Osbert penned his *Sermon on the Conception of Mary* he was openly cautious in what he said about Mary's conception.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> The section of the miracle collection attributed to Osbert of Clare is edited in *Memorials of St Edmund's Abbey*, i, ed. Thomas Arnold, RS 96 (1890), pp. 152-155, 178-207. For a more complete discussion of this work and of its extant manuscripts see below, pp. 200-203.

<sup>56</sup> Rodney Thomson suggested this date based upon a reference within the prologue to a visit to Rome (*Miracula S. Aedmundi*, p. 152). The only recorded journey that Osbert made to Rome was in 1139 (see below, pp. 83-84), thus setting a *terminus post quem* for his collection at 1139. Rodney Thomson, "Two Versions of a Saint's Life From St. Edmund's Abbey", *Revue Bénédictine* 84 (1974), p. 392.

<sup>57</sup> For a more complete discussion of the development of this feast and of Osbert of Clare's role in promoting the feast see below, ch. 5.

<sup>58</sup> *Letters*, no. 7, p. 67.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 7, p. 65. These were likely Bernard of St Davids (1115-1148) and Roger of Salisbury (1102-1139). Bishop Roger of Coventry (1129-1148) was not consecrated until after the 1129 Council of London.

<sup>60</sup> John of Worcester, *The Chronicle of John of Worcester*, iii, ed. & tr. P. McGurk (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1998), pp. 186-188.

<sup>61</sup> In the sermon's introductory letter to Dean Warin of Worcester, Osbert claims that he does not dare say everything that he believes about the conception of Mary. *Letters*, no. 13, p. 79.

The location of the church where Osbert celebrated the feast of the Conception of Mary when bishops Roger and Bernard attempted to stop him is of some significance to setting out the chronology of his early career. Osbert does not tell which church the incident occurred in, but simply says that they were celebrating the feast 'in the church of God.'<sup>62</sup> Osbert was no longer at Bury since he wrote the letter to Abbot Anselm and there is no indication within the letter that Anselm was away from Bury at this time. The presence of bishops Roger and Bernard and the proximity of the 1129 Council of London implies that Osbert was at Westminster Abbey. However, in the letter to Bishop Athelwold of Carlisle dating from 1133/1134 Osbert claims to be in exile.<sup>63</sup> Therefore if Osbert was at Westminster then he either returned and left into exile again before 1134 or just returned for a brief visit to Westminster. If he was not at Westminster then there is no indication of where this incident occurred. The only hint at Osbert's location in the early 1130s comes from his letter to Bishop Athelwold, where he states that he is in exile in England.<sup>64</sup> Whether this is at Bury, Ely, where he latter found refuge, or another church is unknown.

### **Prior of Westminster Abbey**

Although when Osbert of Clare went into exile is not entirely certain, when he returned from exile and took up the position of prior is fairly certain. A letter

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<sup>62</sup> "*in ecclesia dei*," *Ibid.*, no. 7, p. 65.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 9, p. 72. This letter can be dated with good accuracy to late 1133 or early 1134, between when Athelwold was made bishop of Carlisle and when Osbert was said to have taken the position of prior or Westminster.

<sup>64</sup> "... *in Anglorum regno proscriptus*," *Letters*, no. 9, p. 72. Henry I was in Normandy from 3 August 1133 until his death on 1 December 1135, and after his consecration Athelwold followed the king and attests Henry I's charters at Rouen between 1133 and 1135. Osbert refers to his exile "*in Anglorum regno*" simply because Athelwold was in France at the time.

ostensibly written by King Stephen to Innocent II, probably dating from 1139,<sup>65</sup> states that Osbert had been prior of Westminster for five years.<sup>66</sup> This places Osbert's return to Westminster in the year 1134. This dating is also confirmed by other documentary evidence. In Osbert's letter to Bishop Athelwold, which has a *terminus post quem* date of August 1133 when Athelwold was consecrated as the bishop of Carlisle, Osbert describes himself as in exile.<sup>67</sup> Conversely, Osbert is called prior in the Westminster charter establishing the nunnery of Kilburn, which has a *terminus ante quem* date of August 1134. Therefore Osbert's return can be firmly placed between August 1133 and August 1134, and probably in the first half of 1134. Although there is no direct reference to the cause of his return, the impetus for Osbert's return to Westminster is perhaps hinted at in his letter to Bishop Athelwold. In it Osbert asks Athelwold to take up his cause, perhaps with King Henry I, to whom Athelwold had been a confessor.<sup>68</sup> Although it is tempting to link this request for aid with Osbert's reinstatement, there is not sufficient evidence to argue it conclusively.

What is evident is that once Osbert returned to Westminster he immediately took up a significant role within the abbey. Shortly after returning Osbert became involved in the foundation of a religious community of women at Kilburn. His exact role in the foundation is not directly stated, but his prominence within the foundation charter demonstrates the centrality of Osbert's influence. Rather than using the typical greeting of Abbot Herbert's charters, "Abbot Herbert and the community of Westminster," the foundation charter says, "Abbot Herbert of Westminster and Prior

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<sup>65</sup> For the dating of this and the other letters relating to the canonization of Edward the Confessor see below, pp. 80-84. The letter was likely, as suggested by Armitage Robinson (*Letters*, p. 18), drafted by Osbert himself.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, no.17, p. 86.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 9, p. 72. Athelwold was consecrated as the bishop of Carlisle in August of 1133. John of Hexham, *Historia Johannis prioris Hagustaldensis*, in *Symeonis monachi opera omnia*, ii, ed. Thomas Arnold, RS 75 (1885), p. 285.

Osbert of Clare, along with all the venerable members of that holy church.<sup>69</sup> This is only one of two extant charters from Herbert's abbacy that includes the prior in the superscription.<sup>70</sup> Further evidence for Osbert's significance in the foundation of the Kilburn community can be found in a later charter from Abbot Gervase, confirming the gift of lands at Gore in Knightsbridge (Middlesex).<sup>71</sup> It states that the community is to hold it free of service, as they were given it, not by Abbot Herbert as it appeared in the original grant,<sup>72</sup> but rather by brother Osbert of Clare. Abbot Herbert is not even mentioned in the charter, nor does the charter appear to be the work of Osbert of Clare, as he is not included in the salutation or the witness list.<sup>73</sup>

The foundation charter gave the hermitage of Kilburn, originally built by the hermit Godwin, to three maidens to form a religious community there.<sup>74</sup> In the fifteenth century, John Flete claimed apparently without authority that Emma, Gunhild and Christine, the three females named in the charter, were maids-in-waiting to Henry I's wife, Queen Edith-Matilda.<sup>75</sup> Godwin was to oversee the community, and after his death the community was to elect, with the abbot's advice, a new master to oversee them.<sup>76</sup> It is uncertain what the exact status of these women was. Throughout the twelfth century they are described simply either as 'handmaids of God' (*ancillae Dei*) or 'handmaids of Christ' (*ancillae Christi*),<sup>77</sup> but John Flete called them

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<sup>68</sup> *Letters*, no. 9, p. 74.

<sup>69</sup> "...*Herebertum abbatem Westmonasterii et Priorem Osbertum de Clara, una cum omni venerabili eiusdem sancte ecclesie conventu*," *Westminster Abbey Charters*, no. 249, pp. 117-118.

<sup>70</sup> The other is a letter to Warin, dean of Worcester, that has Abbot Herbert and Prior Edwy as joint addressers. Typically, Herbert's charters list him and the convent as the addressers, although some simply list him without reference to the Westminster community. *Ibid.*, nos. 243-250.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 265.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 250.

<sup>73</sup> Because Osbert is described as *frater* rather than *prior* it is likely that this charter was written after Osbert was demoted from the position of prior and perhaps while he was in exile. *Ibid.*, no. 265, p. 129.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 249, p. 118. For a further discussion of this community, see Emma Mason, *Westminster Abbey and its People* (Boydell Press, Woodbridge, 1996), pp. 239-241.

<sup>75</sup> John Flete, p. 88.

<sup>76</sup> *Westminster Abbey Charters*, no. 249, p. 118.

<sup>77</sup> *Westminster Abbey Charters*, nos. 249-50, 264-65, 280.

canonesses.<sup>78</sup> Further, Sally Thompson has suggested that they did not follow the rule of St Benedict and in the late medieval period they were perhaps associated with St Paul's community.<sup>79</sup>

Osbert's role in the foundation of the community at Kilburn reflects a deep interest which Osbert had in the feminine religious experience.<sup>80</sup> Among his letters there are five addressed to women, all of whom were nuns. Two of these were to his nieces Cecilia and Margaret, to whom he appears to have been close.<sup>81</sup> Others were addressed to Ida, the niece of Henry I's second wife, Queen Adeliza, and perhaps a nun of Barking,<sup>82</sup> and to Matilda of Darenth, a nun at Malling.<sup>83</sup> Finally, *De armatura castitatis*, perhaps Osbert's last extant work, was a treatise on virgins addressed to Adeliz, the abbess of Barking, where Osbert styles himself as, "the lover of virgin modesty in Christ."<sup>84</sup> Throughout all of these letters Osbert concentrates on his praise of the religious life of these women, particularly their chastity.

Although the Kilburn foundation charter is the only authentic charter in which Osbert of Clare appears from Herbert's abbacy, it was perhaps in this period in the mid-1130s when a considerable number of forged charters inflating the rights of Westminster Abbey were composed by Osbert and monks working under him.<sup>85</sup> Certainly the three charters in the name of Edward the Confessor were written around this time as their influences appear in his *Vita S. Eadwardi*.<sup>86</sup> It is also likely that

<sup>78</sup> John Flete, p. 87.

<sup>79</sup> Sally Thompson, *Women Religious* (Clarendon, Oxford, 1991), p. 63.

<sup>80</sup> Osbert's impressions of female religious and the theme of femininity within his writings is discussed in greater length below, ch. 5.

<sup>81</sup> *Letters*, nos. 21-22, pp. 89-96.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 40, pp. 135-140.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 41, pp. 140-153.

<sup>84</sup> "...*amator virgineae in Christo pudicitiae...*," *Ibid.*, no. 42, p. 153.

<sup>85</sup> For a more complete discussion of Osbert of Clare's role in the production of forged charters see below ch. 2; Chaplais, pp. 91-95; and Mason, pp. 102-105.

<sup>86</sup> Chaplais, p. 93. The *First Charter* and the *Third Charter* are edited in H. Pierquin, *Recueil général des chartes anglo-saxonnes* (Paris, 1912), pp. 802-815. The *Second Charter* is edited in Bernhard

Osbert drafted other forged charters at the same time, while going through Westminster archives. Pierre Chaplais, who first identified Osbert as the principal forger of Westminster charters, noted Osbert's stylistic influences in several forged charters such as those from King Edgar, St Dunstan and William the Conqueror to Westminster Abbey, as well as in forged charters to other churches.<sup>87</sup> These charters were meant to enforce the abbey's authority over its properties and inflate Westminster's own ecclesiastical rights and privileges. Although Osbert was not the only instigator of forgeries at Westminster Abbey, as Emma Mason has noted the volume of forgeries that both preceded and followed Osbert of Clare,<sup>88</sup> his activities represented a golden age for Westminster, and English monastic forgeries.

Although the 1130s were a very productive period in Osbert of Clare's career, he did not stay out of trouble with his authorities. In 1136, or shortly after, when Osbert had been the prior of Westminster for more than two years,<sup>89</sup> a dispute arose between Osbert and some of the monks at Westminster, including Abbot Herbert. Osbert was sent away from Westminster again into exile. There are several reasons that Osbert alludes to for his expulsion from Westminster Abbey at this time. In a letter to Abbot Herbert that purports to be a letter of contrition, Osbert is openly critical of Herbert's management of Westminster's property.<sup>90</sup> During the abbatial vacancy of 1118 to 1121 many of Westminster's properties were alienated, and Herbert was fairly unsuccessful at regaining control over the abbey's finances.<sup>91</sup> Osbert was also exiled at least partially because of the animosity felt against him by

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Scholz, "Two Forged Charters from the Abbey of Westminster and their relationship with St. Denis", *EHR* 76 (1961), pp. 474-475. P.H. Sawyer, *Anglo-Saxon Charters: An Annotated List and Bibliography* (RHS, London, 1968), nos. 1043, 1011, 1041.

<sup>87</sup> Chaplais, pp. 93-94.

<sup>88</sup> Mason, pp. 100-105.

<sup>89</sup> *Letters*, no. 3, pp. 53, 56.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 2, pp. 49-52.

some of the Westminster brethren. His sense of betrayal comes out very strongly in two letters to Westminster monks dating from this period of exile,<sup>92</sup> and in his letter to Abbot Herbert he complains that he has not received a fair hearing to answer the slanders against him.<sup>93</sup>

The precise nature of this exile is uncertain. In the letter to Prior Hugh he says that the king, presumably Stephen, sent (*mittere*) him to Ely.<sup>94</sup> However, although he describes himself as '*proscriptus*' and says in the letter to Abbot Herbert that he ought to be free to return, his exile may have been partially voluntary.<sup>95</sup> In his letter to Henry of Westminster he implies that he left Westminster voluntarily to keep peace.<sup>96</sup> He may have left voluntarily but once away from Westminster found his position had hardened, or he may have claimed that the exile was voluntary to look more benevolent to Henry.

Interpreting Osbert's failed election at this time, which he mentions in his letters to Prior Hugh of Lewes and David of Westminster, is also problematic.<sup>97</sup> In the letter to Prior Hugh, Osbert wrote: "If my election (*electio*) had prevailed at that time with the king I would have turned to you in my troubles, but the king convinced me with flattery and enticements to leave our church for a while and sent me to visit Ely."<sup>98</sup> Osbert's meaning of '*electio*' is somewhat vague; it could mean Osbert's election to an office at Westminster, an office at another church, or simply his decision or choice. However, in his letter to David he is more specific: "The care of

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<sup>91</sup> For the alienation of Westminster properties and Herbert's attempts to recover them see Mason, pp. 32-34.

<sup>92</sup> *Letters*, nos. 3-4, pp. 53-62.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 2, p. 50.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 1, p. 47.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 2, p. 51.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 3, pp. 56-57.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, nos. 1,4, pp. 47, 60.

your souls was regularly entrusted to me, not by my own merits, but by the election of your community.”<sup>99</sup> Osbert was clearly elevated to a position of leadership over other monks, and this position was stripped from him when his election was not supported by King Stephen.

These passages suggest that Osbert was turned away from either the office of prior or of abbot of Westminster in 1136/1137. Osbert had been in the office of prior since 1134, but Abbot Herbert and some members of the community may have tried to strip him of his position, thereby sending him into exile at Ely. However, it is unlikely that King Stephen would have become involved in an internal Westminster dispute. If the election was to the abbacy of Westminster, then the dispute between Osbert and the community would have started while Abbot Herbert was alive. After Herbert’s death Osbert may have returned and, with the help of a faction within the monastery, tried to take the office of abbot.<sup>100</sup> Besides being an overly complex chronology, this explanation is problematic in other ways. The common animosity by members of the community at Westminster that is alluded to in his letters to Herbert, David and Henry suggests a single cohesive conflict. Also Osbert’s statement that the king sent him to Ely implies that his failed *electio* was the start, not the mid-point, of the conflict. Both explanations of Osbert’s *electio* are plausible, but neither is entirely convincing.

One consistent theme throughout all four of the letters from this exile is Osbert’s desire to reconcile the conflict that sent him into exile and to return to Westminster Abbey. Although Osbert is somewhat critical of Herbert in his letter to

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<sup>98</sup> “*Quod si mea olim coram rege praevaluisset electio, in tribulationibus meis ad te mea fuisset conversio. Sed quia rex me blanditiis et precibus delinivit, ut aliquamdiu ecclesiae nostrae cederem et Eliensem ecclesiam ad quam missus sum visitarem.*” *Ibid.*, p. 47.

<sup>99</sup> “*Et cum non meis meritis sed electione vestra communi mihi cura vestrarum regulariter attributa sit animarum.*” *Letters*, p. 60

the abbot, he nonetheless says that he is ready to honor him with obedience and humility,<sup>101</sup> and asks for the abbot to judge him fairly.<sup>102</sup> Both alluding to Herbert's harshness and requesting leniency, Osbert describes Herbert's use of abbatial authority by saying that, "...just as he should not spurn to correct the delinquent with the sharp end, so he should not spurn to draw back the repentant in mercy with the curved end of the pastoral staff."<sup>103</sup> Later in the same letter Osbert states that he should be free to return to Westminster.<sup>104</sup> In his letter to Henry of Westminster he does not discuss returning, but does address rectifying the conflict that sent him into exile. Following his reprimand of Henry for betraying him, Osbert suggests a meeting, perhaps to make peace.<sup>105</sup> Osbert also alludes to his desire to return in his letter to David of Westminster, where after thanking David for reconciling with him, Osbert states that he hopes to thank David in person.<sup>106</sup> It is perhaps David whom Osbert referred to in his letter to Hugh when he states that those who had been his enemies had turned into friends and desired his return.<sup>107</sup> Evidently this conciliatory approach worked because Osbert was away from Westminster for no more than two years, and perhaps much less, at this time.<sup>108</sup>

Although there is no evidence that Osbert wrote anything for the community of Ely in appreciation for their hospitality during this exile, his appreciation to the community comes out in references in his letters to the community and to its patron, St Etheldreda. In one letter to the community of Ely, that dates from perhaps the late

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<sup>100</sup> Herbert died on 3 September, between 1136 and 1138.

<sup>101</sup> *Letters*, no. 2, p. 52.

<sup>102</sup> *Letters*, no. 2, pp. 49-50

<sup>103</sup> "... *sic cum acuto ferri delinquentes corrigere, ut cum reflexo pastoralis virgae paenitentes in misericordia non aspernetur attrahere.*" *Ibid.*, no. 2, p. 49.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 2, p. 51.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 3, p. 58.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 4, p. 61.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 1, p. 47.

1130s or early 1140s, Osbert describes himself as, “co-senator of their citadel,”<sup>109</sup> and shares with them a new miracle story about St Etheldreda.<sup>110</sup> Osbert also includes Etheldreda in his *De armatura castitatis* written to Adeliz, the abbess of Barking, as an example of the saintly life of chastity.<sup>111</sup> In the *De armatura*, written after Henry II’s ascension in 1154, Osbert also states that he had recently visited Ely and asked for Etheldreda’s protection for an upcoming trip overseas to see the king.<sup>112</sup> It is perhaps even Osbert’s influence with the community at Ely that procured a letter from Bishop Nigel of Ely in support of the canonization of Edward the Confessor in 1160.<sup>113</sup>

Even with Osbert’s conflict with the community at Westminster, the second half of the 1130s was the most productive literary period in Osbert of Clare’s career. Both of Osbert’s Marian liturgical texts appear to have been written in this period.<sup>114</sup> The first of these, a series of lessons and hymns regarding the Virgin Mary’s mother, St Anne, was written at the request of and dedicated to Bishop Simon of Worcester.<sup>115</sup> In the introductory letter to the work, Osbert relates how he was approached by Bishop Simon at the funeral of an unnamed abbot of Pershore. This was almost certainly Abbot Guy, who died in 1136/1137.<sup>116</sup> In the introduction to his second

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<sup>108</sup> Osbert was at least at Westminster by December 1138, when he presented his *Vita S. Eadwardi* to Bishop Alberic. See below, p. 79-80. Abbot Herbert’s death may have also instigated Osbert’s return.

<sup>109</sup> “...consenator capitolii eorum,” *Letters*, no. 33, p. 116.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 33, pp. 116-119.

<sup>111</sup> *Letters*, no. 42, pp. 156-157.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 42, p. 157.

<sup>113</sup> Edited in Frank Barlow, *Edward the Confessor* (University of California Press, Berkeley, 1970), pp. 316-317.

<sup>114</sup> These are discussed in greater depth below, pp. 136-141.

<sup>115</sup> Edited in “Les compositions d’Osbert de Clare en l’honneur de sainte Anne”, ed. André Wilmart in *Annales de Bretagne* 37 (1925-1926), pp. 261-286. The introductory letter is also printed in *Letters*, no. 12, pp. 77-79.

<sup>116</sup> Based upon the dates of Simon’s episcopacy and when Warin, to whom Osbert later writes about the work’s reception, held the office of prior of Worcester, Guy is the most probable abbot, although it could have been Guy’s successor, Abbot William. John of Worcester has Guy’s death taking place in 1136 (p. 222), but the Tewkesbury chronicler records that he died in 1137. *Annales de Theokesberia*, in *Annales monastici*, i, ed. Henry Luard, RS 36 (1864), p. 46.

Marian work, a sermon on the Conception of Mary,<sup>117</sup> Osbert claims that his work on St Anne had spread to many churches. Following the good reception that the Anne work received, Osbert composed his *Sermon on the Conception of Mary* and sent it to Warin, the Prior of Worcester.<sup>118</sup> This work concerned the veneration of Mary and specifically the feast of the Conception of Mary, but it does not address the philosophical arguments for the Immaculate Conception of Mary. As has been noted above, Osbert openly acknowledged in the introductory letter to the work that he did not state all that he believed concerning the Conception of Mary.<sup>119</sup> His sermon on the subject was meant to be a liturgical and instructional piece and not necessarily a theological tract.

Osbert of Clare's *Vita S. Eadburgae* can also tentatively be dated to shortly after 1136.<sup>120</sup> While the work does not have much exact internal dating evidence, Osbert does state that it was written at the request of the Pershore monks.<sup>121</sup> Osbert's visit of 1136/1137 for the funeral of Abbot Guy is his only recorded visit to the abbey. In the introductory letter to his *Vita S. Eadburgae*, Osbert also relates a vision that he had had fifteen years earlier, before he had been to Pershore Abbey, and when he was, "... concerned with secular business outside the boundaries of virtue."<sup>122</sup> This last statement appears to relate to the period of Osbert's life before he took monastic vows. The earliest of Osbert's datable letters is from 1126, and therefore the *Vita S. Eadburgae* most have been written before c. 1140. That Osbert stated that he was

<sup>117</sup> This work is edited in Eadmer, *De conceptione sanctae Mariae*, eds. H. Thurston & T. Slater (Freiburg im Br., 1904), pp. 60-83. The introductory letter is also printed in *Letters*, no. 13, pp. 79-80.

<sup>118</sup> *Letters*, no. 13, p. 80. Following the local custom at Worcester, Warin is called the dean (*decanus*), rather than prior, in Osbert's letters.

<sup>119</sup> *Letters*, no. 13, p. 79.

<sup>120</sup> The work is published as an appendix to Susan Ridyard, *The Royal Saints of Anglo-Saxon England* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1988), pp. 253-308. The introductory letter is also printed in *Letters*, no. 43, pp. 179-182.

<sup>121</sup> *Vita S. Eadburgae*, p. 259; *Letters*, no. 43, p. 179.

entreated by the monks to write the work, rather than by the head of the house, is also perhaps indicative of a composition date during the inter-abbacy period following Guy's death. Nevertheless, this evidence is conjectural and it is possible that another visit to Pershore was simply not recorded in Osbert's extant letters.

Osbert states that the *Vita S. Eadburgae* was also written for the community of Nunnaminster, Winchester.<sup>123</sup> Edward Williamson even suggested that Osbert may have composed two versions of the life: one for Pershore Abbey and one for the community at Winchester.<sup>124</sup> This hypothesis is supported by the difference between the *incipit* in the extant manuscript and the *incipit* given by the sixteenth-century antiquarian John Bale. The extant life, which is clearly of Pershore origin, begins: "*Fidelibus sanctae matris aeclesiae filiis...*," while Bale gave the *incipit* as: "*Fidelibus in Christo sororibus.*" This difference can be explained by the former existence of a separate introductory letter addressed to the nuns at Winchester in a second version of the work.

While Osbert of Clare was connected to the recipients of many of his writings through personal relationships forged while in exile, his relationships with the community at Pershore and Bishop Simon of Worcester were perhaps based upon the economic landholdings of Westminster Abbey. The majority of Westminster's lands in the twelfth century lay within a thirty mile radius around the abbey, but Westminster also had significant landholdings in Worcester around Pershore.<sup>125</sup> The manor of Pershore, which had once belonged to Pershore Abbey, was given to

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<sup>122</sup> "...extra fines virtutis in saecularibus negotiis constituto," *Vita S. Eadburgae*, p. 260; *Letters*, no. 43, p. 180.

<sup>123</sup> *Vita S. Eadburgae*, p. 260; *Letters*, no. 43, p. 180.

<sup>124</sup> *Letters*, p. 25. This issue is also addressed below, pp. 199-200.

<sup>125</sup> Westminster Abbey's landholdings in 1086 are mapped out in Barbara Harvey, *Westminster Abbey and its Estates in the Middle Ages* (Clarendon, Oxford, 1977), p. 471.

Westminster by Edward the Confessor.<sup>126</sup> However, in the twelfth century the abbots of Westminster upheld the duties due to Pershore Abbey as the local mother church.<sup>127</sup> Given the complex economic relationship between Westminster and Pershore, it is not surprising that Osbert's works written for Simon, bishop of Worcester, Warin, prior of Worcester, and the community at Pershore all likely date from Osbert's most influential time as prior of Westminster, when he had significant control over the abbey's economic holdings. Even Osbert's visit to Pershore for the funeral of Abbot Wido should perhaps be seen as a business trip for the prior. These ties to Western England, however, did not end after Osbert was demoted from the position of prior, as can be seen by the composition of his *Vita S. Aethelbrichti* and its dedication to Bishop Gilbert Foliot of Hereford.

It is also in this prolific period that Osbert composed his *Vita S. Eadwardi*, perhaps his most significant hagiographical work.<sup>128</sup> Besides promoting Edward the Confessor's sanctity, Osbert's *vita* was intended, like the series of forged charters produced at Westminster around this time, to elevate the rights and privileges of the abbey. To this end, Osbert portrays Edward as the patron of Westminster, and in doing so changes him from the good English king, which the earlier anonymous biographer depicted him as, to Westminster's royal saint. Osbert even incorporated large sections of the forged *First* and *Third Charter of King Edward*, thereby reinforcing both its authenticity and Edward's qualifications as a church patron.<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> A complete description of the manor of Pershore and the lands in Worcester that came to Westminster with the manor is in the *DB*, i, 174c –175b; Worcestershire § 8.

<sup>127</sup> Mason, pp. 243-244.

<sup>128</sup> Marc Bloch (ed.), “*La vie de s. Edouard le confesseur*”, *AB* 41 (1923), pp. 4-131. Osbert's composition of the *Vita S. Eadwardi* and his subsequent attempted canonization of Edward the Confessor is discussed below, ch. 3.

<sup>129</sup> *Vita S. Eadwardi*, pp. 77-91. *Recueil général des chartes anglo-saxonnes*, ed. H. Pierquin (Paris, 1912), pp. 802-815.

Shortly after the composition of the *Vita S. Eadwardi*, Osbert of Clare began the process to obtain official recognition for the cult of Edward the Confessor. He had probably already instigated the celebration of Edward's feast day at Westminster,<sup>130</sup> but official recognition could increase Edward the Confessor's reputation as a saint, and in turn increase the prestige and revenue of Westminster Abbey. Osbert composed a prefatory letter to the life addressed to Alberic, bishop of Ostia and papal legate,<sup>131</sup> and probably approached him at the 1138 Council of Westminster.<sup>132</sup> It is not entirely certain why Osbert chose to approach Alberic concerning Edward's canonization. In the 1130s the papacy had not yet established itself as the principal judge of sanctity, and there was no tradition of legatine canonization.<sup>133</sup> However, a simple episcopal canonization of Edward the Confessor was problematic. Not only was Westminster at the time trying to exert its independence from the see of London, a theme that Osbert even works into the *Vita S. Eadwardi*,<sup>134</sup> but also the sees of London and Canterbury were both vacant.<sup>135</sup> Although there is no record of what Alberic's response was to Osbert's request for canonization, as Osbert began gathering materials to take his case to Rome shortly after the 1138 Council of

<sup>130</sup> This is attested to in a series of miracles which only occur in Aelred of Rievaulx's reworking of the *vita*, but probably originated from a no longer extant version of Osbert's *Vita S. Eadwardi*. See below, pp. 76-78. Aelred of Rievaulx, cols. 784-787.

<sup>131</sup> *Vita S. Eadwardi*, pp. 64-66. *Letters*, no. 14, pp. 80-83.

<sup>132</sup> Bishop Alberic arrived in England during the summer of 1138, travelled to Scotland and then oversaw the Council of Westminster in December. Alberic's visit and the Council of Westminster are described in Richard of Hexham's *Chronicle* in *Chronicles of the Reigns of Stephen, Henry II and Richard*, iii, RS 82 (1886), pp. 167-176; *Councils and Synods with Other Documents Relating to the English Church*, i (part 2), ed. D. Whitelock, M. Brett & C.N.L. Brooke (Clarendon, Oxford, 1981), pp. 766-779.

<sup>133</sup> The first instance where a papal legate appears to canonize a saint by the authority of the pope is the canonization of St Rosendo in 1172 by Cardinal Hyacinth, the future Celestine III. See Kemp, pp. 89-90.

<sup>134</sup> By including the miraculous dedication story, where St Peter dedicates the abbey rather than Bishop Mellitus of London, Osbert emphasized Westminster's independence from the diocese. *Vita S. Eadwardi*, pp. 83-86.

<sup>135</sup> London was vacant from the death of Gilbert the Universal in 1134 until the election of Robert de Sigillo in 1141, with the exception of Abbot Anselm of Bury's contentious election which was quashed in 1138. E.B. Fryde et al., *Handbook of British Chronology* (RHS, London, 1986), p. 258. Canterbury

Westminster, it can be reasonably conjectured that Alberic deferred the decision over Edward's sanctity to the pope.

Osbert of Clare's mission to Rome for the canonization of Edward the Confessor is attested by two sets of letters: one set from England supporting the canonization and one set from Innocent II which Osbert brought back with him from Rome. There are three extant letters supporting the canonization. The first two of these, one from the chapter of St Paul's and one from Bishop Henry of Winchester, are short letters that are lukewarm in their support.<sup>136</sup> The third, from King Stephen, is longer and stronger in its support of Edward's canonization, but was probably drafted by Osbert.<sup>137</sup> Although the dating of Osbert's mission to Rome is not entirely certain, it is perhaps most likely that these letters of support were written in 1139 and that Osbert made his journey to Rome late in that year.<sup>138</sup>

When Osbert arrived in Rome, probably in late November or early December, 1139, he found a warm reception at the Lateran, but ultimately no success in his effort to canonize Edward the Confessor.<sup>139</sup> In a letter addressed to Abbot Gervase and the community of Westminster, Innocent II explains that Westminster needed further evidence of Edward's sanctity and that the petition should come from the kingdom as a whole rather than just Westminster.<sup>140</sup> It is possible that Osbert's transformation of Edward into a Westminster saint was too complete and that Innocent thought that Edward should be a saint for the whole English church. The small number of letters of

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was vacant from the death of William of Corbeil until the election of Theobald of Bec at the 1138 Council of Westminster. Fryde, p. 232. Richard of Hexham, p. 175.

<sup>136</sup> *Letters*, pp. 85, 87. Bishop Henry was the brother of King Stephen and uncle of Gervase, the abbot of Westminster at the time. Osbert's letter requesting Henry of Winchester's support is also extant, and is considerably longer and more elaborate than his response. *Ibid.*, no. 15, pp. 83-85.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 17, p. 85-87.

<sup>138</sup> See below, pp. 83-84.

<sup>139</sup> The approximate dating and location of Osbert's meeting with Innocent are indicated in the four letters from the pope that Osbert brought back, all of which are dated 9 December at the Lateran.

<sup>140</sup> *Letters*, no. 19, pp. 87-88.

support and, with the exception of the letter from King Stephen, the lukewarm tone of the letters, showed that there was little interest outside of Westminster for the canonization. There were also possible political reasons for Innocent not wanting to canonize Edward the Confessor. By December of 1139 civil war had broken out in England, and Innocent might not have wanted at the time to show support for either King Stephen or the Empress Matilda.<sup>141</sup> Additionally, Innocent might have been concerned about the political and symbolic implications of officially canonizing a royal saint.

Osbert used his trip to Rome to obtain significant papal bulls that protected Westminster's properties and incomes. There are four extant letters, all dated 9 December, that attest to Osbert's complaints to the pope over the sad state of Westminster's economy. The first three of these principally involve the protection of Westminster's incomes from external threats: in one Innocent ordered Bishop Henry of Winchester to protect Westminster's properties and restore property which had been seized unjustly,<sup>142</sup> in another Innocent informed Abbot Gervase why he postponed the canonization of Edward the Confessor and how he told Henry of Winchester to protect Westminster Abbey,<sup>143</sup> and in the third Innocent ordered King David of Scotland to confirm a land grant which he had promised Westminster.<sup>144</sup>

The fourth letter is more problematic.<sup>145</sup> It is a second letter from Innocent II to Abbot Gervase in which Innocent somewhat severely rebukes Gervase. He orders Gervase to recover lands that were alienated without the consent of the convent and to consult them in the governing of the abbey. This letter has been used to show what a

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<sup>141</sup> For the considerable secondary writings on the possible political considerations in the canonization of Edward the Confessor see below, pp. 72-83.

<sup>142</sup> *Letters*, no. 20, p. 88.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 19, pp. 87-88.

<sup>144</sup> *Papsturkunden in England*, i, ed. Walther Holtzmann (Berlin, 1930), no. 25.

bad abbot Gervase was, but in the last forty years new interpretations of this letter have developed.<sup>146</sup> In 1963 H.G. Richardson and G.O. Sayles argued that Gervase had not been in office long enough to warrant such a severe rebuke, and they suggested that the letter was actually written at Gervase's request in order to help him recover lost lands.<sup>147</sup> Barbara Harvey went further by questioning the bull's authenticity. She argued that the extant bull was a creation of Osbert of Clare, who took a real papal bull which he obtained in Rome and altered it to address his own concerns.<sup>148</sup> However, the most plausible explanation is simply that Osbert complained to Innocent about Gervase's performance as abbot. Innocent then, biased by Osbert's opinion of Gervase, reprimanded the abbot. Whether Osbert altered a papal bull, as Harvey argued, or simply complained to Innocent about Gervase, the result for Osbert of Clare was the apparent displeasure of Abbot Gervase. By the early to mid- 1140s Osbert was once again in exile from Westminster Abbey, perhaps for the third time.

### Later Career

Osbert of Clare's last exile from Westminster Abbey appears to have lasted from the early to mid- 1140s until the late 1150s. Although there are more than ten extant letters which appear to date from this period of exile, a complete and accurate chronology of this section of Osbert's career is even more elusive than his earlier exiles in the 1120s and 1130s. This is principally due to the lack of clarity in these letters. Most contain very few dateable names or events; six do not even give the recipient. Only a few can be dated with much accuracy. The earliest of these is a letter

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<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 24.

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<sup>147</sup> H.G. Richardson and G.O. Sayles, *The Governance of Medieval England from the Conquest to Magna Carta* (Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 1963), p. 416.

to Abbot Geoffrey of St Albans, which probably dates from 1145/6.<sup>149</sup> Although Osbert does not tell Geoffrey that he is in exile, he complains that the humble house which he oversees is impoverished, and thereby implying that he is not at Westminster Abbey.<sup>150</sup> One of Osbert's letters to Abbot Anselm of Bury can also be tentatively dated to this period of exile due to similar themes and tone.<sup>151</sup> This letter had to have been written before January 1148 when Anselm died.<sup>152</sup> The next dateable exilic letters all date from late 1153 through 1154. The three letters from this period are addressed to Abbot Silvester of St Augustine's,<sup>153</sup> Archbishop Theobald of Canterbury,<sup>154</sup> and Duke Henry, just before his coronation as King Henry II.<sup>155</sup> In all three Osbert requests financial assistance; in the letter to Silvester he complains that his small house is poor,<sup>156</sup> and in the letter to Theobald he states that his brothers requested that he ask for help.<sup>157</sup> Finally, there is one letter to the senior brethren at Westminster in which Osbert claims that he has been unfairly charged. Since Osbert addressed this to the seniors instead of the abbot, it can be surmised that he wrote it after Gervase was deposed c. 1157/8 and before Lawrence became abbot of Westminster c. 1158.

Besides these datable letters there are several letters that tentatively date from this period of exile based upon common themes running through both the dateable

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<sup>148</sup> Barbara Harvey, "Abbot Gervase de Blois and the Fee-Farms of Westminster Abbey", *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research* 40 (1967), pp. 128-129.

<sup>149</sup> *Letters*, no. 32, pp. 114-116. Although Geoffrey was abbot of St Albans from 1119-1146, Osbert mentions a certain Prior Ademar of Lewes within the letter who occurs in 1145, but could only have taken office after the death of Prior Hugh of St Margaret. Knowles et al., *Heads of Religious Houses*, pp. 67, 119.

<sup>150</sup> *Letters*, no. 32, p. 115.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 23, pp. 96-99.

<sup>152</sup> Knowles et al., *Heads of Religious Houses*, p. 32.

<sup>153</sup> *Letters*, no. 34, pp. 119-120.

<sup>154</sup> *Letters*, no. 36, pp. 122-128.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 38, pp. 130-132.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 134, p. 120.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 136, p. 128.

and non-internally dateable letters. The most consistent themes throughout these letters are Osbert's claims of poverty and his requests for assistance. In his letter to Abbot Geoffrey he states that he was in such poverty that he was forced to give up his studies for manual labor.<sup>158</sup> Throughout these letters he expresses concern for his companions, both servants and brethren, and notes their lack of basic amenities such as food and clothing. In two separate letters he complains about being in debt to Jews.<sup>159</sup> For a period of time Osbert was also in poor health, as he notes in two letters.<sup>160</sup> Although all of these letters share a common tone, the lack of internal evidence leaves the dating of many of these letters as somewhat ambiguous, and some may even date to his earlier exiles in the 1120s and early 1130s.

Besides the much more downcast tone of Osbert's later exile, it differed significantly from his earlier exiles in the nature of the exile. While Osbert's seems to have spent most of his earlier exiles in residence at other wealthy communities such as Bury and Ely, there is no evidence that he lived in other large monasteries in the 1140s or 1150s. Instead he appears to have overseen a small and very poor monastic community. In a letter to Silvester, abbot of St Augustine's, Osbert described how, "Obedience compelled me to lead the family of this small house...,"<sup>161</sup> and to Geoffrey, abbot of St Albans, he described his dwellings as, "humble huts."<sup>162</sup> When Osbert wrote his letter to Archbishop Theobald, at approximately the same time as his letter to Abbot Silvester, he refers to his companions as, "our brothers,"<sup>163</sup> thus implying that he was living in a monastic community rather than simply with lay servants. In two other letters that were probably written during this period of exile,

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<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 32, pp. 114-115.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*, nos. 24, 28, pp. 100, 107.

<sup>160</sup> *Letters*, nos. 29, 31, pp. 108, 113-114.

<sup>161</sup> "*Praeesse me parvulae domus familiae coegit obedientia...*," *Ibid.*, no. 34, p. 120.

<sup>162</sup> "...*humiles casas...*," *Ibid.*, no. 32, p. 115.

Osbert describes himself as, "a pilgrim and stranger in a foreign land,"<sup>164</sup> and, "...exiled into the barbaric cohabitation of an ancient swamp."<sup>165</sup>

If, as appears from his letters, Osbert was entrusted with the supervision of a small community of monks, then he was likely sent to *one of Westminster's three dependent priories*: Hurley in Berkshire, Great Malvern in Worcestershire or Sudbury in Suffolk.<sup>166</sup> Of these Great Malvern is the least likely location for Osbert's exile as it had a prior throughout the 1140s.<sup>167</sup> Sudbury, which Emma Mason suggests may have only had two monks at any time,<sup>168</sup> may have been too small of a community to warrant Osbert's concern over the '*fratres*'. Further Osbert's claim that he was in a '*terra aliena*' does not match with Sudbury, located in south-western Suffolk within fifteen miles of Clare. Hurley Priory is perhaps the most likely site of Osbert's exile in the 1140/1150s. There is no record of a prior at Hurley between 1140 to 1158.<sup>169</sup> Also in the 1140s Hurley priory produced a series of forgeries that perhaps reflect Osbert's influence.<sup>170</sup> One possible problem with this identification of Hurley as the small house that Osbert oversaw is that Osbert never seems to have actually taken the title of prior of Hurley. It is perhaps tempting to think that if Osbert was deposed of the office of prior of Westminster and sent to oversee Hurley priory, then he would have taken the title of prior at Hurley, but in the letters dating from this period Osbert only styles himself *frater*.<sup>171</sup> Another possible, although less plausible, explanation is that

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<sup>163</sup> "...*fratres nostri*...", *Ibid.*, no. 36, p. 128.

<sup>164</sup> "...*in terra aliena peregrinus et hospes*," *Ibid.*, no. 24, p. 99.

<sup>165</sup> "...*in paludis antiquae barbara cohabitatione proscriptus*," *Ibid.*, no. 30, p. 109.

<sup>166</sup> Emma Mason discusses these three cells in *Westminster and its People*, pp. 236-239.

<sup>167</sup> Knowles et al., *Heads of Religious Houses*, p. 90.

<sup>168</sup> Mason, p. 238.

<sup>169</sup> Prior Aeiricus occurred before 1140 and Prior William occurred between 1158 and 1173, but there is no record of prior between these occurrences. Knowles et al., *Heads of Religious Houses*, p. 92.

<sup>170</sup> Chaplais, p. 97-98.

<sup>171</sup> More often in this period Osbert does not use any title, but rather simply calls himself '*Osbertus de Clara*'. In two letters he styles himself as '*frater*' (*Letters*, nos. 24, 39, pp. 99, 133) and in another, written to the monks of Westminster, he calls himself '*confrater*' (*Letters*, no. 35, p. 120).

the small house which Osbert described is Sudbury, whose monks did not take the title of prior,<sup>172</sup> and the letters referring to him being in a foreign land and barbaric swamp date to a different exile or a different period of his exile from Westminster.

Given the difficult dating of most of Osbert's letters from this period, it is possible that Osbert did not spend all of the time between 1140 and 1157 in exile. During the decade between the mid-1140s and 1154, Osbert appears to have lived at the small monastic house,<sup>173</sup> but the records are unclear for the years immediately preceding and following this. After returning from Rome, Osbert may have gone directly into exile, either at the monastic community or elsewhere, or he may have remained at Westminster for as much as six years. The presence of two more priors at Westminster by the mid-1140s indicates that Osbert did not remain in the office of prior long after 1140, so it is perhaps more likely that he went into exile shortly after his return. Nevertheless, he may have simply been demoted.

A letter to the seniors of Westminster seems to shine some light on the equally unclear later phase of his last exile, from 1154 to 1158.<sup>174</sup> In the letter, apparently from 1157/1158,<sup>175</sup> Osbert defends himself against the charge that he let a Cistercian into the monastic house, claiming that he simply gave hospitality to the monk.<sup>176</sup> The need to write a letter defending himself shows that Osbert was away from Westminster at the time of the letter's composition, probably in some form of exile. This leaves two possible interpretations. Osbert may have returned to Westminster in the mid-1150s and then after, and perhaps because of, the contentious hospitality he

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<sup>172</sup> Mason, p. 238.

<sup>173</sup> Osbert alluded to the community in a letter from the mid-1140s to Geoffrey of St Albans (*Letters*, no. 32, p. 115) and again in letters from 1153/1154 to Abbot Silvester of St Augustine's (*Ibid.*, no. 34, p. 120) and to Archbishop Theobald of Canterbury (*Ibid.*, no. 36, p. 126).

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 35, pp. 120-122.

<sup>175</sup> Because of its address to the seniors of Westminster, this letter was apparently from the inter-abbacy that followed Gervase's deposition.

showed the Cistercian then went back into exile. If this incident had occurred at Westminster Abbey, then reasonably it can be surmised that Elias, then prior of Westminster, would have objected at the time. The more probable interpretation of this letter is that Osbert did not return to Westminster in the mid-1150s and that the incident in fact occurred at the monastic cell which Osbert oversaw. If this is the case, then Osbert must have been overseeing this community from at least the mid-1140s until 1157/1158.

Osbert's absence from Westminster and his demotion from the office of prior throughout the 1140s and most of the 1150s is also attested to by the presence of other priors at Westminster Abbey.<sup>177</sup> Besides Osbert of Clare, who was prior before Gervase became abbot and remained in office during the beginning of Gervase's abbacy, there were two other priors of Westminster under Abbot Gervase. The first of these was a monk named Hugh, who was probably prior in the beginning of the 1140s.<sup>178</sup> Hugh later went on to become the abbot of Bury St Edmunds in 1157. Elias, the second of Osbert's successors in the office of prior of Westminster, began appearing in Westminster charters in the mid-1140s and remained in office during the vacancy after Gervase was deposed.<sup>179</sup>

Osbert probably wrote two major works during this period. The first, his *Miracula S. Aedmundi*, was dedicated to Abbot Anselm of Bury, and therefore has a

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<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 35, p. 121-122.

<sup>177</sup> It is perhaps interesting to note that even during his first exile in the 1120/1130s, a monk named Edwy appears as prior in two charters. *Westminster Abbey Charters*, nos. 245, 248a.

<sup>178</sup> Hugh does not appear as prior in any extant charters, but his position as prior at Westminster is attested to by Bury sources. *Cronica Buriensis*, in *Memorials of St Edmund's Abbey*, iii, ed. Thomas Arnold, RS 116 (1896), p. 6.

<sup>179</sup> Elias appears as prior in three charters, two during Gervase's abbacy, and one during the vacancy following Gervase's deposition. *Westminster Abbey Charters*, nos. 261, 271, 341. The second of these charters was extended in the thirteenth century, but the basic framework, which indicates the time by which Elias was in office, was probably retained. Mason, p. 91.

*terminus ante quem* date of January 1148 when Anselm died.<sup>180</sup> In the prologue Osbert alludes to a trip to Rome, so he had to have either composed or revised his *miracula* sometime after 1139.<sup>181</sup> Although Osbert's *Miracula S. Aedmundi* only survives as an incorporation into later collections, the stylistic evidence seems to indicate that Osbert simply updated the already existing miracle collection with a new prologue and new miracles.<sup>182</sup> The second, and later, work which Osbert composed during this period is his *Vita S. Aethelbrichti*.<sup>183</sup> Osbert dedicated this work to the bishop of Hereford, Gilbert Foliot, and therefore the work must have been written between September 1148, when Gilbert Foliot was consecrated bishop of Hereford, and March 1163, when he was translated to London.<sup>184</sup> It is not certain what Osbert's connection to Gilbert Foliot was.<sup>185</sup> Bishop Gilbert may have given Osbert assistance while in exile, or Osbert may have come to know Gilbert through his Worcester connections which he formed while prior. Osbert's association with Gilbert Foliot may also have arisen out of Gilbert's support for Westminster against an attempt by Great Malvern to secure its independence from Westminster.<sup>186</sup> Although Osbert's *Vita S. Aethelbrichti* is based upon an older anonymous life, he completely rewrote the life, approximately doubling its size, and added additional miracles.<sup>187</sup>

Osbert's return to Westminster c. 1158 is attested to by a charter written during the vacancy following Abbot Gervase's deposition, in which Osbert appears as the

<sup>180</sup> The sections attributed to Osbert of Clare are printed in *Memorials of St Edmund's Abbey*, i, ed. Thomas Arnold, RS 96 (1890), pp. 152-155, 178-207.

<sup>181</sup> *Miracula S. Aedmundi*, p. 152.

<sup>182</sup> Thomson, "Two Versions...", pp. 391-393. Also see below, pp. 200-203.

<sup>183</sup> Edited below, pp. 214-248.

<sup>184</sup> Fryde, p. 250.

<sup>185</sup> Gilbert Foliot was a monk and had been the abbot of Gloucester from 1139-1148. As such he may have been at Westminster on many occasions. There is also evidence that Osbert may have helped forge charters for Gloucester around this time. See below, p. 54.

<sup>186</sup> Mason, pp. 238-239.

second witness, following Prior Elias.<sup>188</sup> Whether Osbert's controversy over giving hospitality to the Cistercian monk affected his return or whether it instigated a dialogue which led to his return is not certain. Clearly his position at Westminster was improved by Gervase's departure, whom Osbert had been *critical of*. His appearance as a witness in this charter also provides the last datable reference to Osbert of Clare, and any analysis of the final years of his career are strictly conjectural.

Shortly after Osbert's return to Westminster Abbey, Lawrence, a monk of St Albans, who previously as a layman had strong connections to Durham cathedral priory, was elected abbot c. 1158.<sup>189</sup> In the fourteenth century, the Westminster historian Richard of Cirencester described how shortly after his arrival, Abbot Lawrence was approached by monks about the canonization of Edward the Confessor.<sup>190</sup> Given Osbert's previous efforts at Edward's canonization and given that his presence at Westminster at that time is documented, there is no reason to believe that Osbert was not also behind this second push for canonization. After reviewing Edward's hagiography and enlisting the support of the leading ecclesiastics in England, Lawrence led a Westminster delegation to Normandy in 1160 to obtain King Henry II's support for the canonization.<sup>191</sup>

Although Osbert of Clare is only listed in this delegation by the fifteenth-century historian John Flete,<sup>192</sup> there is reason to think that Osbert accompanied Lawrence to France. In his *De armatura castitatis*, written to Abbess Adeliz of

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<sup>187</sup> The anonymous life was edited by M.R. James in, "Two Lives of St. Ethelbert, King and Martyr", *EHR* 32 (1917), pp. 236-244. A discussion of Osbert's work and its relationship to the earlier work can be found below, pp. 205-212.

<sup>188</sup> *Westminster Abbey Charters*, no. 341.

<sup>189</sup> The date of Abbot Lawrence's accession is discussed by J. Armitage Robinson in Flete, p. 143.

<sup>190</sup> The principal narrative for the canonization of Edward the Confessor is in Richard of Cirencester's *Speculum historiale*, pp. 319-327.

<sup>191</sup> Richard of Cirencester, p. 321.

<sup>192</sup> Flete, p. 92.

Barking, Osbert notes that he is preparing to go overseas to see King Henry.<sup>193</sup> Given the time when Adeliz held office and Henry II's itinerary, Osbert's letter could only have been written either between January 1156 and April 1157 or between August 1158 and January 1163.<sup>194</sup> There is no plausible reason for Osbert to go to France to see the king at this time other than to accompany Lawrence and the Westminster delegation.

From Normandy the delegation proceeded to Paris where they obtained the support of the papal legates Cardinal Henry of St Nereus and Achilles and Cardinal Otto of St Nicolas.<sup>195</sup> In Paris the Westminster delegation appears to have split. Abbot Lawrence sent an envoy on to Pope Alexander III in Anagni, while he returned to England.<sup>196</sup> The Westminster delegation apparently received a warm welcome in Anagni. Alexander was amply impressed with the canonization materials which they brought with them and on 7 February, 1161, Alexander issued two bulls of canonization, one addressed to Westminster Abbey and one addressed to the English church as a whole.<sup>197</sup> There were two more papal charters issued on 7 February confirming Westminster properties<sup>198</sup> and a further charter that was likely composed later that spring, implying that a representative from Westminster stayed for a time with the papal curia.<sup>199</sup>

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<sup>193</sup> *Letters*, no. 42, p. 157.

<sup>194</sup> Adeliz was abbess of Barking from 1136x1138 until her death 25 January, 1166. Knowles et al., *The Heads of Religious Houses*, p. 208. For Henry II's movements during this period, see W.L. Warren, *Henry II* (Eyre Methuen, London, 1973), pp. 64-96.

<sup>195</sup> As shown by their letter to Alexander III supporting the canonization edited in Barlow, pp. 311-312.

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 312.

<sup>197</sup> The bull addressed to Westminster is edited in Barlow, pp. 322-323, while the bull addressed to English church is in Richard of Cirencester, pp. 322-323.

<sup>198</sup> These are calendared in *Westminster Abbey Charters*, nos. 169-170, and edited in *Papsturkunden in England*, nos. 85-86.

<sup>199</sup> Calendared in *Westminster Abbey Charters*, no. 173, and edited in *Papsturkunden in England*, no. 118.

Osbert's fate throughout this is uncertain. If he did join the delegation in France then it is impossible to tell whether he continued on to Anagni, perhaps staying for a time with the curia or even dying somewhere along the difficult journey, or whether he returned to England with Abbot Lawrence and lived out his last years at Westminster. By 1160, Osbert can hardly have been less than sixty, and he was perhaps much older, with an ecclesiastical career that spanned approximately forty years. No epitaph or notice of his death survives for Osbert, who had been such a prolific writer and the friend to some of the most important churchmen of his day.<sup>200</sup> Unfortunately, the imprint that Osbert of Clare's career left on the historical record disappears in much the same way as it appeared, in a cloud of uncertainties and surmises.

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<sup>200</sup> D.E. Davy in his four-volume catalogue of Suffolk writers from the mid-nineteenth century suggested that Osbert of Clare died c.1170, but there is no medieval evidence of this. BL Addit. MS. 19165, fol. 5r.

## Chapter Two

### Osbert of Clare and Westminster Abbey

Although Osbert of Clare spent much of his career in exile away from Westminster Abbey because of conflicts with successive abbots, he was nevertheless a steadfast advocate of Westminster's rights and properties. Osbert's most active period of promoting Westminster was in the mid- to late-1130s when he was prior of the abbey, but his activities extended well before and after this period. It was even his ardent support of Westminster's ecclesiastical and property rights that put Osbert at odds with abbots Herbert and Gervase.<sup>1</sup> In his own word, his exile in the 1130s was caused by his desire, "for there to be a free counsel of the church and for ecclesiastical rights to prevail in everything."<sup>2</sup> Osbert travelled throughout England and even to Rome for the promotion of Westminster Abbey; he apparently led a small group of monks in the production of a large number of forged and altered charters; and, in Edward the Confessor, he gave Westminster its own saint.

As well as his advancement of Westminster's rights and prestige, Osbert also turned his pen to the promotion of other abbeys through the composition of his various pieces of hagiography. Hagiography benefited the monastic community that possessed the shrine of a specific saint both internally, through its use in liturgy, and externally, through the added prestige and revenue that a popular saint's shrine could produce. Therefore, when Osbert produced a hagiographic text, he tailored it to

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<sup>1</sup> In a letter to Herbert, dating from c.1136/1137, Osbert was critical of Herbert's management of the abbey (*Letters*, no. 2, p. 51), and Osbert likely altered a papal bull to be more critical of Abbot Gervase. *Papsturkunden in England*, i, ed. Walther Holtzmann (Berlin, 1930), no. 24; also see above, pp. 26-27.

address the specific community for whom he was writing. His *Vita S. Eadburgae* was produced at the request of the monks of Pershore Abbey, which had been refounded c.972 and dedicated to Mary, Peter and Paul, and Edburga.<sup>3</sup> Although Pershore possessed some relics of St Edburga, her principal home was at Nunnaminster, Winchester, where she had been a nun. In writing his *Vita S. Eadburgae* Osbert shifts the focus of his last eight chapters away from Winchester to Pershore.<sup>4</sup> Although he conceded that Winchester possesses the greater part of her body,<sup>5</sup> the position of the Pershore chapters within the *Vita* sets Pershore Abbey as the new center of Edburga's miracles. Likewise in his *Vita S. Aethelbrichti*, which Osbert dedicated to Gilbert Foliot, then bishop of Hereford, Osbert added at least one miracle relating to Hereford.<sup>6</sup> Osbert's manipulation of the hagiographic tradition to be more favorable to the monastic community he was addressing is perhaps less evident in his *Miracula S. Aedmundi*. Osbert, who was simply updating the miracle collection at the request of his friend and protector, Abbot Anselm of Bury, mentions St Edmund's shrine at Bury in most of the miracles, but he was writing within a hagiographic tradition that was already centered on the popular pilgrimage city of Bury.

Osbert's work promoting Westminster was part of a larger movement of self-promotion within Westminster in the late-eleventh and twelfth centuries. Because Edward the Confessor rebuilt and was buried at Westminster, the abbey was used in 1066 by both Harold and William as their coronation site to give each of their reigns a

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<sup>2</sup> "Et quoniam saluum ecclesiae volui esse senatum et iura in omnibus ecclesiastica praevalere..." *Letters*, no. 2, p. 51.

<sup>3</sup> *Vita S. Eadburgae*, p. 259; *Letters*, no. 43, p. 179.

<sup>4</sup> *Vita S. Eadburgae*, pp. 301-308. Unfortunately the earlier life, which was Osbert's source, no longer survives, so it is impossible to determine what, if any, role Pershore played in it. Nevertheless, there are indications within Osbert's *vita* that his source originated from Winchester. Susan Ridyard, *The Royal Saints of Anglo-Saxon England* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1988), pp. 29-36.

<sup>5</sup> *Vita S. Eadburgae*, p. 260.

<sup>6</sup> *Vita S. Aethelbrichti*, fols. 38v-39r, pp. 239-241. Osbert likely added other miracles that only survive in Gerald of Wales' reworking of the life. See below, pp. 211-212.

symbolic legitimacy as Edward's successor. The abbey continued to be used as the site of coronation and was one of three churches, along with Gloucester and Winchester, that the Norman kings attended on the major crown-wearing feasts: Christmas, Easter and Pentecost.<sup>7</sup> This special relationship between Westminster and the crown helped industrious abbots, such as Vitalis (1076-1085) and Gilbert Crispin (1085-1117/1118), obtain significant royal grants.

Westminster's special relationship with the crown also proved useful in its campaign for episcopal exemption from the See of London. In the twelfth century many of the wealthiest monasteries in England, such as Bury, St Alban's and Battle, attempted to become exempt from the jurisdiction of local bishops by appealing for direct papal protection.<sup>8</sup> Westminster's wealth and close proximity to London made it an apparent target for the bishop of London's incursion. In 1133 Bishop Gilbert the Universal of London arrived uninvited at Westminster on 29 June to celebrate the feast of saints Peter and Paul. Shortly afterwards Westminster sent an envoy to Pope Innocent II, who on 30 September in Pisa issued a bull to King Henry placing Westminster Abbey under his protection and exempting it from the jurisdiction of the see of London.<sup>9</sup> A similar confirmation of these rights was obtained on 22 April 1139

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<sup>7</sup> Although the Norman kings intended to celebrate the three major feasts at these locations, their practice was much less regular. For example, during the reigns of William I, William II and Henry I there are more recorded instances of these feasts being celebrated at Windsor than at Gloucester. In this same period Westminster appears to have had the most number of crown-wearing feasts, twenty-four out of eighty recorded feasts in England. These consisted of thirteen Pentecosts and eleven Christmases; Easter was principally celebrated at Winchester. Martin Biddle, "Seasonal Festivals and Residence: Winchester, Westminster and Gloucester in the Tenth to Twelfth Centuries", *Anglo-Norman Studies* 8 (1985), pp. 51-63. Also see Emma Mason, "'The Site of King-Making and Consecration': Westminster and the Crown in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries", in Diana Wood (ed.), *The Church and Sovereignty c.590-1918*, Studies in Church History, *Subsidia* 9 (Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1991), pp. 57-76; reprinted in Emma Mason, *Westminster Abbey and its People* (Boydell, Woodbridge, 1996), pp. 288-305 (at pp. 298-299).

<sup>8</sup> David Knowles, *The Monastic Order in England*, second edition (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1963), pp. 575-591.

<sup>9</sup> *Papsturkunden in England*, i, no. 17. Calendared in *Westminster Abbey Charters*, no. 155.

by a Westminster delegation at the Second Lateran Council.<sup>10</sup> There is no evidence that Osbert was directly involved in either of these missions to Rome; however, Osbert addresses the theme of the Westminster's exemption from the see of London both in forged charters which have been attributed to him and in the *Vita S. Eadwardi*.<sup>11</sup> Osbert probably returned to Westminster in late 1133 or early 1134, shortly after the exemption was first proclaimed, and it likely affected how Osbert saw Westminster Abbey.

### **Authentic Charters and Other Evidence of Osbert's Activities at Westminster**

Osbert appears in few Westminster charters, and is a witness in only two extant charters. The first, a land grant from Abbot Gervase to William de Wenden, probably dates from the late 1130s to the early 1140s.<sup>12</sup> The second is a confirmation of a land grant to William of Darnford, written during the vacancy following Gervase's deposition.<sup>13</sup> The only other charters in which Osbert's name appears are both related to the foundation of Kilburn. The first, probably written in 1134, is the foundation charter for the nunnery,<sup>14</sup> and the second, written sometime during Gervase's abbacy, confirms Kilburn's lands.<sup>15</sup> In the foundation charter Osbert appears as one of the grantors alongside Abbot Herbert; however, in the later charter Osbert is only referred to in the body as '*frater Osbertus de Clara*', implying that he had already been demoted and perhaps sent into exile.

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<sup>10</sup> *Papsturkunden in England*, i, no. 21. Calendared in *Westminster Abbey Charters*, no. 156.

<sup>11</sup> See below, pp. 51-52.

<sup>12</sup> *Westminster Abbey Charters*, no. 254.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 341.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 249.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 265.

Osbert played a central role in the creation of Kilburn and the ideals set out within the foundation charter reflect his notions of church governance.<sup>16</sup> In it Kilburn was given partial autonomy, while still being connected to Westminster Abbey. Godwin, the hermit who had built the hermitage of Kilburn, was to watch over the initial three religious women of the community. After Godwin's death the community of women, with the help of the abbot of Westminster, was to elect another older man to watch over them.<sup>17</sup> This succession procedure reflected the belief that secluded female religious could not by themselves adequately select someone to watch over themselves, but it also reflected Osbert's fierce belief in free monastic elections. The women of the convent were to be the principal electors of the new overseer, while the abbot was simply to provide them counsel. Further, no one, including the abbot and prior of Westminster, was to enter Kilburn without the inmates' permission, and the convent was to hold its possessions just as Westminster held its possessions.<sup>18</sup> Osbert saw the community of Kilburn as functioning independently with only minimal outside influence. This mirrors Osbert's claims in the spurious diplomas of Edward the Confessor, perhaps written shortly after the founding of Kilburn, that the abbot of Westminster Abbey should be elected unanimously by the brethren and not installed by outside force.<sup>19</sup>

Although Osbert of Clare does not appear in many extant Westminster charters, he was an active participant in the business matters of the abbey. There is significant evidence within his letters that Osbert traveled extensively throughout his

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<sup>16</sup> The centrality of Osbert's role in the foundation of Kilburn is discussed above, p. 13-15. Kilburn is discussed in greater depth in Emma Mason, *Westminster and its People* (Boydell, Woodbridge, 1996), pp. 239-241.

<sup>17</sup> *Westminster Abbey Charters*, no. 249, p. 118.

<sup>18</sup> *Westminster Abbey Charters*, no. 249, p. 118.

<sup>19</sup> *Recueil général des chartes anglo-saxonnes*, ed. H. Pierquin (Picard & Fils, Paris, 1912), pp. 805; 811.

career on the business affairs of Westminster Abbey. In his letter to Prior Hugh of Lewes, apparently from c.1136/1137, Osbert was grateful for the reception that he and two other monks received from Prior Hugh.<sup>20</sup> Osbert's presence at the funeral of Abbot Guy of Pershore in 1136/1137 was presumably also related to the abbey's business, given Westminster's extensive landholdings around Pershore Abbey.<sup>21</sup> Osbert's journey to Rome c.1139 was also a business trip. Not only was Edward the Confessor, as depicted by Osbert of Clare, very much a Westminster saint, but Osbert used the occasion to acquire important papal confirmations.<sup>22</sup> Even near the end of Osbert's career he still continued to travel to promote the abbey. In the *De armatura castitatis*, perhaps written c.1160 while Westminster was preparing for a second attempt at obtaining the papal canonization of Edward the Confessor, Osbert noted that he had recently been to Ely and that he was preparing to cross the channel to meet with King Henry II.<sup>23</sup> The incidental nature of these references likely indicates that they were only a small portion of the total travel that Osbert undertook for Westminster Abbey.

### Forged charters

In his *Vita S. Eadwardi*, after incorporating a section of the so-called *Third Charter of King Edward*, Osbert states that: "These privileges were preserved with greatest diligence in the treasury, having been certified with the seal of the holy king."<sup>24</sup> However, this supposed discovery of the charter within Westminster's archives is unlikely. Based upon paleographical evidence Pierre Chaplais determined

<sup>20</sup> *Letters*, no. 1, p. 40. For the dating of this letter see above, pp. 8-10.

<sup>21</sup> *Letters*, no. 12, p. 77. See above, pp. 22-23.

<sup>22</sup> See below, pp. 87-88.

<sup>23</sup> *Letters*, no. 42, p. 157.

that the *Third Charter of King Edward* was forged during the tenure of Abbot Herbert (1121-1136), along with the *First Charter* (which was also used in the *Vita S. Eadwardi*) and *Second Charter of King Edward*.<sup>25</sup> Further, based upon stylistic evidence he concluded that they were drafted by Osbert of Clare.<sup>26</sup> He also linked Osbert to several other forged charters at Westminster,<sup>27</sup> including another spurious charter of Edward the Confessor,<sup>28</sup> one charter of Archbishop Dunstan,<sup>29</sup> the so-called *First Charter of King Edgar*,<sup>30</sup> two charters of King William I,<sup>31</sup> one charter of King Henry I,<sup>32</sup> and one bull of Pope Paschal II.<sup>33</sup> Chaplais's attribution of these forgeries to Osbert is principally based upon strong similarities between phrases and wording used in these charters and the wording of Osbert's letters and hagiography. Chaplais also noted that the *First Charter of Edgar* states that King Saeberht of Essex founded Westminster.<sup>34</sup> The first extant reference to Saeberht as the founder of the abbey is in Osbert's *Vita S. Eadwardi*; before the mid-twelfth century Ethelbert of Kent was

<sup>24</sup> "*Que privilegia cum maxima in thesauro custodiuntur diligentia, eiusdem sancti regis sigillo consignata.*" *Vita S. Eadwardi*, p. 91.

<sup>25</sup> The *First* and *Third* are edited in *Recueil général des chartes anglo-saxonnes*, pp. 802-808, 808-815; the *Second* is edited in Bernhard Scholz, "Two Forged Charters from the Abbey of Westminster and their Relationship with St. Denis", *EHR* 76 (1961), pp. 474-475; all three are calendared in P.H. Sawyer, *Anglo-Saxon Charters: An Annotated List and Bibliography* (RHS, London, 1968), nos. 1043, 1011, 1041.

<sup>26</sup> Pierre Chaplais, "The Original Charters of Herbert and Gervase, Abbots of Westminster", in *A Medieval Miscellany for D.M. Stenton*, PRS 36 (1960), pp. 92-94.

<sup>27</sup> Osbert was responsible for both large diplomas, usually referred as the '*magna carta*' of an individual or numerated if there are multiple diplomas from the same individual, and smaller specific charters. Besides those diplomas listed here, he probably also drafted the *Great Charter of King Ethelred the Unready* (Sawyer, no. 894), *Telegraphus of King Edward* (Sawyer, no. 1039), the *Third and Fourth Charter of King William*, the *Telegraphus of King William* (*Regesta regum Anglo-Normannorum: The Acta of William I*, ed. David Bates (Clarendon, Oxford, 1998), nos. 305, 306, 324) and the *Great Charter of King Stephen* (*Westminster Abbey Charters*, no. 111).

<sup>28</sup> Edited in Richard Widmore, *An Enquiry into the Time of the First Foundation of Westminster Abbey* (London, 1743), pp. 14-18; calendared in Sawyer, no. 1040.

<sup>29</sup> Edited in *Recueil général*, pp. 643-648; calendared in Sawyer, no. 1293.

<sup>30</sup> Edited in *The Crawford Collection of Early Charters and Documents*, eds. A.S. Napier & W.H. Stevenson, *Anecdota Oxoniensia* 7 (Clarendon, Oxford, 1895), no. 6; calendared in Sawyer, no. 774.

<sup>31</sup> Edited in *Regesta regum: The Acta of William I*, nos. 290, 303; calendared in *Westminster Abbey Charters*, nos. 1, 14.

<sup>32</sup> Edited in *Regesta regum Anglo-Normannorum: 1066-154*, ii, eds. H.A. Cronne & R.H.C. Davis (Clarendon, Oxford, 1956), no. 486, pp. 305-306; calendared in *Westminster Abbey Charters*, no. 57.

<sup>33</sup> Edited in *Papsturkunden in England*, i, no. 9; calendared in *Westminster Abbey Charters*, no. 154.

<sup>34</sup> Chaplais, p. 92.

usually given as the abbey's founder, as in Sulcard's *Prologus de constructione Westmonasterii*.<sup>35</sup>

Westminster was not the only church to forge charters during the twelfth century.<sup>36</sup> Giles Constable, after noting that there were periods of heavy production of forgeries throughout the Middle Ages, described the twelfth century as the, "golden age of medieval forgery."<sup>37</sup> Because of the increased reliance on written documentation for legal claims in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, many churches chose to embellish their muniments to better fit the demands of their day. This, in turn, gave rise by the end of the twelfth century to increased efforts to curtail the production of forgeries and a greater criticism of documents.<sup>38</sup> Benedictine monasteries in particular found it necessary to forge documents to uphold properties and privileges that they had held for a long period of time. Besides Westminster, a large number of forgeries were composed at the English abbeys of St Albans, Battle and both Canterbury houses between the late eleventh and the mid-twelfth centuries.<sup>39</sup>

Although stylistic evidence shows that Osbert drafted many of the twelfth-century Westminster forgeries, paleographic evidence shows that he was not working alone on this endeavor. Chaplais identified the scribe who wrote the *First*, *Second* and

<sup>35</sup> Sulcard, *Prologus de constructione Westmonasterii*, ed. Bernhard Scholz, *Traditio* 20 (1964), pp. 82-83.

<sup>36</sup> Medieval forgery has received considerable academic attention, most notably in a five-volume collection of articles covering a variety of specific issues relating to medieval forgery. *Fälschungen im Mittelalter* (6 vols.), *Schriften der Monumenta Germaniae Historica* 33 (Hahnsche Buchhandlung, Hannover, 1988-90). For general examinations of medieval forgery see Giles Constable, "Forgery and Plagiarism in the Middle Ages", *Archiv für Diplomatik* 29 (1983), pp. 1-41; and Christopher Brooke, "Approaches to Medieval Forgery", *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 3 (1968), pp. 377-386, reprinted in Christopher Brooke, *Medieval Church and Society* (Sidgwich and Jackson, London, 1971), pp. 100-120.

<sup>37</sup> Constable, p. 12.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 13-14.

<sup>39</sup> Antonia Gransden, "Baldwin, Abbot of Bury St Edmunds, 1065-1097", *Anglo-Norman Studies* 4 (1984), pp. 70-72; Eleanor Searle, "Battle Abbey and Exemption: the Forged Charters", *EHR* 83 (1968), pp. 449-480; Susan Kelly, "Some Forgeries in the Archives of St Augustine's Abbey, Canterbury", in *Fälschungen im Mittelalter*, iv, *Schriften der Monumenta Germaniae Historica* 33

*Third Charter of King Edward* as the same scribe who wrote an extant original charter of Abbot Herbert, and he identified one of Gervase's scribes as the scribe who wrote the *Great Charter of Dunstan*, the *Great Charter of King Edgar*, and several spurious charters of kings Edward the Confessor, William I, and Stephen.<sup>40</sup> The creation of forgeries was therefore not a lone enterprise and Osbert of Clare was apparently at the head of a small team of monks working on these documents at Westminster Abbey.

There are considerable uncertainties as to the authorship and dating of many of Westminster's forgeries. Although Osbert's handiwork can be detected in the so-called "Great Charters" of Westminster Abbey, there are a large number of smaller charters, particularly many purportedly from the reigns of Edward the Confessor and William I, that were enhanced by Westminster scribes. Given the close links between these and the *magnae cartae*, most of these smaller forgeries were probably also produced by Osbert and the monks working with him, but some perhaps date from both before Osbert's time and after.<sup>41</sup> The smaller charters composed by the Westminster monks often addressed specific, and sometimes contested, land grants or extended Westminster's legal rights over certain lands.

The Westminster forgeries reflect various levels of enhancement. Some, such as the so-called 'Great Charters', are probably composed entirely by Osbert.<sup>42</sup> Others appear to have been authentic charters that were then embellished with additional land

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(1988), pp. 347-369; C.N.L. Brooke, "The Canterbury Forgeries and their Author", in two parts, *Downside Review* 68-69 (1950-1951), pp. 462-476; 210-231 (respectively).

<sup>40</sup> Chaplais, pp. 91-92, 97.

<sup>41</sup> One forged Latin charter of King Offa of Mercia to Westminster (Sawyer, no. 125). and several Anglo-Saxon charters of King Edward of doubted authenticity perhaps date from the late eleventh century. *Anglo-Saxon Writs*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., ed. & tr. Florence Harmer (Paul Watkins, Stamford, 1989; reprinted with the same numeration from the first edition published by Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1952), nos. 73-82, 84-86, 89-95, 97-98, 100-106. The production of forged charters at Westminster Abbey also continued in the late-twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Osbert likely had nothing to do with the altered charters of Henry II (*Westminster Abbey Charters*, nos. 123, 126, 129, 138), as well as two altered charters of King Stephen (*Ibid.*, nos. 120, 121), and one of Abbot Gervase (*Ibid.*, no. 271).

rights or attestations.<sup>43</sup> Even when Osbert apparently created a completely original composition, however, there is evidence that he had earlier precedents within the Westminster muniments. Sulcard, writing in the late eleventh century, appears to paraphrase an already existing charter from Dunstan to Westminster, a charter which perhaps inspired Osbert to compose a newer charter in Dunstan's name that better fitted the needs of Westminster Abbey in the twelfth century.<sup>44</sup> Additionally, all royal coronations from Edward's time on took place at Westminster and the abbey perhaps used these occasions to procure new grants or confirmations of rights and privileges, such as is depicted in the *Great Charter of King Henry*.<sup>45</sup>

The Westminster monks frequently inserted witnesses into the altered charters, particularly into William I's charters.<sup>46</sup> Often King William's charters did not contain witness lists, so by adding attestations Osbert made the charters appear more official to a demanding twelfth-century audience.<sup>47</sup> This was not done with any particular subtlety, and some of the most significant churchmen of the late eleventh century appear in many of the same forgeries. These identical attestations made it appear as if all of these prominent witnesses were attending the court at the same time on many different occasions. Some of the witness lists also contain two or more witnesses who did not hold their given titles at the same time.<sup>48</sup>

Although the work on the muniments of Westminster Abbey in the eleventh to thirteenth centuries shows that the process of charter enhancement was an ongoing

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<sup>42</sup> However, for some of these *magnae cartae* Osbert drew extensively from external sources such as St Denis charters. See below, pp. 47-48.

<sup>43</sup> Such as, *Westminster Abbey Charters*, nos. 3, 17-18, 20, 25, 28, 30, 34-36, 38-40, 46, 70, 74.

<sup>44</sup> Sulcard, pp. 86-87.

<sup>45</sup> However there are no authentic Westminster charters that can be accurately dated to royal coronation.

<sup>46</sup> Attestations were added to what were apparently authentic grants in *Westminster Abbey Charters*, nos. 11-12, 24.

<sup>47</sup> Mason, *Westminster Abbey*, pp. 102-103.

<sup>48</sup> *Westminster Abbey Charters*, nos. 11-12, 14, 25, 35, 83.

operation at the abbey, much of the work can be dated to Osbert of Clare's career based upon paleographic and stylistic evidence. The incorporation of large portions of the *First* and *Third Charter of King Edward* into the *Vita S. Eadwardi* give them a *terminus ante quem* date of 1138.<sup>49</sup> The nature of references to Westminster's exemption from episcopal jurisdiction within the forgeries suggest that they were produced between Innocent II's first and second exemptions granted in the 1130s. The first, issued in 1133, notes that there that been papal and royal precedents but does not list them.<sup>50</sup> The second exemption, granted in 1139, lists specific exceptions given by popes Nicholas II and Pascal II, both forgeries, as precedents.<sup>51</sup>

Some of Osbert's forged charters, including the *Great Charter of King Edgar*, the *Great Charter of Dunstan*, and the *Second Charter of King Edward*, show heavy influence from charters from the French abbey of St Denis.<sup>52</sup> In places Osbert drew on the exact wording of St Denis charters and only replaced proper names or inserted extra details into the text. This close link between the Westminster forgeries and St Denis charters led earlier commentators to the conclusion that the Westminster forgeries were composed by a former monk of St Denis.<sup>53</sup> However, given Chaplais' conclusions based upon stylistic and paleographic evidence, it is more likely that the St Denis influence derived from a cartulary model that made its way to Westminster through the migration of French monks to England following the conquest. Although there is no evidence of a direct connection between St Denis and Westminster at this

<sup>49</sup> The extant form of the life is dedicated to Bishop Alberic of Ostia and was presented to him during his mission to England as papal legate in 1138. However, there is a hint within the *First Charter of King Edward* that its language may have been taken from the text of the *Vita S. Eadwardi*. See below, p. 69-71.

<sup>50</sup> *Papsturkunden in England*, no. 17.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 21.

<sup>52</sup> Bernhard Scholz, "Two Forged Charters from the Abbey of Westminster and their Relationship with St. Denis", *EHR* 76 (1961), pp. 466-478.

time, there were at least monks from Normandy at the abbey by the late eleventh century.<sup>54</sup> Another possible source of the St Denis model was Abbot Baldwin of Bury (1065-97), a former monk of St Denis and physician to Edward the Confessor.

Antonia Gransden identified Baldwin as the instigator of a series of forgeries at Bury and suggested that these may have influenced the Westminster forgeries, perhaps indirectly through forgeries produced at St Augustine's, Canterbury.<sup>55</sup> Osbert of Clare may also have become familiar with both the Bury St Edmunds forgeries and St Denis charters during his exile at Bury during the 1120s.

Osbert's use of the St Denis model was both *symbolic and practical*.

Westminster cultivated the special relationship it had with the monarchy, while St Denis was the spiritual center of the Capetian monarchy in France. Although Westminster was the coronation church and had been one of the principal locations for crown-wearings, St Denis was the burial site of the earlier Capetian kings. In the twelfth century only Edward the Confessor and Queen Edith-Matilda, the wife of Henry I and sister of King David of Scotland, were buried at Westminster.

Unfortunately for Westminster, the royal patronage of the Norman kings favored the separate churches that each king chose to be buried in, rather than the church in which they were crowned.<sup>56</sup> Practically, the St Denis charters provided a good example for Westminster because in the mid-eleventh century St Denis had obtained exemption

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<sup>53</sup> Napier and Stevenson make this argument specifically for the *Magna carta Edgari*. *The Crawford Collection*, pp. 90-92. Scholz extended their conclusion to also encompass the *Magna carta Dunstani* and the *Secundi carta Edwardi regis* in "Two Forged Charters...", pp. 466-467.

<sup>54</sup> Most notably a string of Norman post-conquest abbots, including Geoffrey of Jumièges (c. 1072-c.1076), Vitalis of Fécamp (1076-1085) and Gilbert Crispin of Bec (1085-1117/1118). These men likely brought over French-speaking monks with them, such as Prior Robert (Mason, *Westminster Abbey*, p. 88) and Herbert, the almoner and then abbot (*Letters*, pp. 1-2).

<sup>55</sup> Gransden, "Baldwin", pp. 71-72.

<sup>56</sup> Emma Mason, "Pro statu et incolumnitate regni mei: Royal Monastic Patronage 1066-1154", in Stuart Mews (ed.), *Religion and National Identity* (Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1982), pp. 99-117.

from episcopal authority, the principal subject matter of the *Great Charter of Dunstan* and the *Second Charter of King Edward*.<sup>57</sup>

Westminster's forged charters address issues that directly affected the abbey in the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries. The political upheaval of the Norman Conquest created economic insecurities within English monastic communities and forced them into legal battle to retain their lands. Reflecting this, the majority of the forgeries produced at Westminster by Osbert of Clare and those who preceded him involve lands supposedly granted to the abbey by Edward the Confessor and then confirmed by William I, thereby creating a continuity over the turbulent years following the Conquest. Additionally, monastic lands were vulnerable during abbatial vacancies, or when abbots did not actively protect the abbey's lands. Osbert noted the sad state of the abbey following the two or three-year vacancy after Abbot Gilbert Crispin's death,<sup>58</sup> while Abbot Gervase was reprimanded for selling the abbey's lands in a papal bull that was either forged or heavily influenced by Osbert.<sup>59</sup> Besides simply providing documents that could be used to support Westminster's claims to certain lands, the forgeries produced by Osbert emphasized the difference between the riches that Westminster once possessed and its greatly weakened state in the 1130s.<sup>60</sup>

Osbert and the monks working with him incorporated disputed lands within the forgeries. Westminster's claim to the manor of Lessness in Kent was in dispute throughout the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries.<sup>61</sup> The manor was probably bequeathed to Westminster by Aestere and confirmed by Edward the Confessor, as is

<sup>57</sup> *Recueil des actes de Philippe I<sup>er</sup>*, ed. M. Prou (Imprimerie Nationale, Paris, 1908), no. 40, pp. 114-117; cf. Scholz, "Two Forged Charters", p. 467.

<sup>58</sup> *Letters*, no. 2, p. 51.

<sup>59</sup> *Papsturkunden in England*, no. 24; calendared in *Westminster Abbey Charters*, no. 161. For the charter's authenticity, see above, p. 26-27.

<sup>60</sup> Osbert makes this parallel in his *Vita S. Eadwardi*, p. 105.

<sup>61</sup> Mason, *Westminster Abbey*, p. 221.

stated in a suspect Anglo-Saxon writ.<sup>62</sup> However the Domesday Book notes that Robert Latimer held the manor from Bishop Odo of Bayeux in 1086.<sup>63</sup> Westminster possessed the land during the reign of William II, when Robert Bloet, bishop of Lincoln, held the land of the abbey. Apparently, the bishop did not uphold his commitments to Westminster for the land and Henry I ordered him to do so in the early 1120s.<sup>64</sup> Perhaps with this dispute in mind, Osbert incorporated Lessness into several forged charters. Supplementing the Anglo-Saxon confirmation by Edward the Confessor of the gift of Lessness by Aestere, Osbert includes the manor in two Latin charters attributed to Edward, one of which was the so-called *First Charter of King Edward*.<sup>65</sup> Also, to show that Westminster continued to hold the manor after the Norman Conquest, Osbert included Lessness in the *First Charter of King William*.<sup>66</sup> By attempting to create a tradition of Westminster's possession of a specific property, Osbert even presented impossible claims. In the *First Charter of King William*, allegedly written in 1087, and in two spurious charters of King Henry I, Westminster claimed the church of St Magnus in London, even though Magnus, the earl of Orkney, was not martyred until 1116.<sup>67</sup>

Because of their special relationship to the abbey, kings are portrayed favorably within the forged charters and in Osbert's writings in general;<sup>68</sup> instead he reserves his criticism for ineffectual abbots and usually unnamed 'tyrants'.<sup>69</sup> The kings in Osbert's longer charters are pious and respectful of tradition. Edward rebuilt

<sup>62</sup> *Anglo-Saxon Writs*, no. 76.

<sup>63</sup> *DB*, i, 6c; Kent § 5.19

<sup>64</sup> *Westminster Abbey Charters*, no. 81. *Regesta regum*, ii, no. 1383.

<sup>65</sup> Sawyer, nos. 1040, 1043.

<sup>66</sup> *Westminster Abbey Charters*, no. 1. Other examples of disputed manors that were incorporated into forged charters include Islip (*Ibid.*, nos. 3, 83) and Battersea (*Ibid.*, nos. 17, 83).

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, nos. 1, 70, 93.

<sup>68</sup> For the portrayal of king and kinship within Osbert of Clare's writings, see chapter six below.

<sup>69</sup> In his letters, Osbert uses 'tyranni' in a nonspecific manner, however in his hagiography Osbert labels historical kings, such as Penda or Offa, as tyrants.

Westminster Abbey out of love for St Peter and in place of a vowed pilgrimage to Peter and Paul's shrines in Rome.<sup>70</sup> King William I allegedly had the *First Charter of King William* composed to honor the church where his predecessor was buried and where he was crowned.<sup>71</sup> Both the *Third Charter of King William* and the *Great Charter of King Henry* were supposedly granted for the, "holy memory of King Edward."<sup>72</sup> The piety of the kings is emphasized in the salutations of the forged charters, many of which begin with: "In the name of holy and indivisible Trinity," and typically incorporate the *dei gratia* clause in the king's title.<sup>73</sup> Likewise Westminster is linked to the kings through the language in which it is styled. In the forgeries, Westminster is the '*sedes regia*'<sup>74</sup> and a place of '*regalis excellencia*'.<sup>75</sup>

Perhaps the most significant recurring theme within these forged charters is Westminster's exemption from the jurisdiction of the bishops of London. Given Gilbert the Universal's intrusion into the abbey in 1133, the issue of episcopal jurisdiction was a key concern to the abbey in the 1130s. Although they were granted exemption from London by Innocent II in 1133,<sup>76</sup> Osbert of Clare and the monks of Westminster Abbey fortified this authentic privilege with a spurious tradition of papal and royal privileges granting them exemption. Osbert and those working with him traced this exemption back to the time of St Dunstan, as incorporated in the *Great*

<sup>70</sup> *Recueil général*, pp. 804-805.

<sup>71</sup> *Regesta regum: The Acta of William I*, no. 290, p. 875.

<sup>72</sup> *Regesta regum: The Acta of William I*, no. 305, p. 909. *Regesta regum*, ii, p. 305.

<sup>73</sup> Most of the large diplomas drafted by Osbert of Clare begin with the incipit: "*In nomine sancte et individue Trinitatis*". Some notable exceptions are the *Great Charter of King Edgar*, the *Great Charter of King Henry* and the *Great Charter of Dunstan*. Even these, however, incorporate the "*dei gratia*" clause or an equivalent in the salutation. The '*dei gratia*' clause was not used in authentic English royal charters until 1172/1173. T.A.M. Bishop, *Scriptores regis* (Clarendon, Oxford, 1961), p. 19.

<sup>74</sup> The abbey is styled the '*sedes regia*' in the *Magna carta Edgari* (*The Crawford Collection*, p. 13) and the '*regia antiquitus sedes*' in the spurious bull of Nicholas II (*Recueil général*, p. 811). In the authentic exemption charter from 1133, Westminster is also described as the '*regni corona*' (*Papsturkunden in England*, i, no. 17, p. 241).

<sup>75</sup> *Recueil général*, p. 812.

<sup>76</sup> *Papsturkunden in England*, i, no. 17; calendared in *Westminster Abbey Charters*, no. 155.

*Charter of Dunstan*,<sup>77</sup> but the principal effort was to show that from the time of King Edward on Westminster's exemption from the bishops of London was repeatedly confirmed by successive popes and kings. The exemption was confirmed by Pope Nicholas II in a letter to Edward the Confessor<sup>78</sup> and by Pascal II in a letter to King Henry I, both forged.<sup>79</sup> Westminster's episcopal exemption was also inserted in some forged royal charters, including the *Second Charter of King Edward*,<sup>80</sup> the *Second Charter of King William*,<sup>81</sup> and the *Great Charter of King Henry*.<sup>82</sup> In Innocent II even used the forged exemption of Nicholas II as precedence for his authentic reconfirmation of Westminster's exemption.

By creating or altering royal charters Osbert and his fellow monks were also perhaps attempting subtly to change the historical record of royal customs to favor Westminster. The abbey's role as one of three churches where solemn crown-wearings took place, was a source of prestige and revenue. In one authentic charter from early in his reign, Henry I declared that Gloucester, Westminster and Winchester were to be given the customary one ounce of gold whenever the king attended the church on one of the three crown-wearing festivals: Christmas, Easter and Pentecost.<sup>83</sup> It was, therefore, to Westminster's advantage to make it appear as though

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<sup>77</sup> *Recueil général*, pp. 643-648; calendared in Sawyer, no. 1295. Although Dunstan's exemption is not as important as the papal and royal charters for establishing a tradition of exemption, it is significant because of Dunstan's position as the bishop of London at the supposed time of writing. It was meant to show the twelfth-century bishops of London, such as Gilbert the Universal, that even their famous and saintly predecessor had supported Westminster's rights of exemption.

<sup>78</sup> Incorporated in the *Third Charter* in *Recueil général*, pp. 819-811; calendared in *Westminster Abbey Charters*, no. 153.

<sup>79</sup> *Papsturkunden in England*, i, no. 9.

<sup>80</sup> Scholz, "Two Forged...", pp. 474-475.

<sup>81</sup> *Regesta regum: The Acta of William I*, no. 303, p. 904;

<sup>82</sup> *Regesta regum*, ii, p. 305.

<sup>83</sup> *Westminster Abbey Charters*, no. 58; *Regesta regum*, ii, no. 490. Henry I's actual practice, however, represented a significant expansion of the churches in which the three major feasts were celebrated. During William I's and William II's reign twenty-four of the thirty-one recorded feasts in England were celebrated at Westminster, Winchester and Gloucester, while six were at Windsor and one was at York. During Henry I's reign there were forty-nine feasts with recorded sites in England celebrated at eighteen different churches. This expansion of sites where the feasts were celebrated was principally at

past kings had attended Westminster more regularly than they actually had, and thereby set an example to future kings. Osbert and the monks he worked with accomplished this by setting several of their forged charters as being granted at Westminster, usually at Christmas, although sometimes at Pentecost.<sup>84</sup> Besides expanding the expectations for kings to attend Westminster at major festivals, by setting a large number of forgeries on these festivals, Osbert increased the expectation that these visits would also include royal benefactions.<sup>85</sup>

Similarly, Osbert wrote or reworked forgeries for royal coronations, the other occasion that brought the Anglo-Norman kings to Westminster Abbey. With the *Great Charter of King Henry*, Osbert showed what the Westminster monks felt they were entitled to upon the coronation of a new king: an extensive confirmation of Westminster's liberties and privileges and a commitment from the king that he would protect the abbey.<sup>86</sup> To protect Westminster's place as the coronation church, Osbert incorporated Westminster's right to host the coronation into several of the forgeries,

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the expense of Gloucester, at which there are no recorded feasts, and Winchester, which still remained the second most popular church with eight feasts. Thirteen of the forty-nine (27%) of the three principal feasts during Henry's I reign were celebrated at Westminster. Biddle, pp. 53-55.

<sup>84</sup>The *Second Charter of King William*, significant for its proclamation of Westminster's exemption from episcopal jurisdiction, was supposedly granted on Pentecost, 1075. *Regesta regum: The Acta of William I*, no. 303, p. 903.

<sup>85</sup>Mason, *Westminster Abbey*, p. 103. The forged charters seem to particularly emphasize the celebration of Christmas at Westminster. During William I's reign there are four recorded instances of the king celebrating Christmas at Westminster and three instances of him celebrating Pentecost there (Biddle, pp. 52-55); however, there are seven extant forged or altered charters purportedly granted by William I during Christmas at Westminster and only two during Pentecost celebrations. Although instances of the Norman kings celebrating Pentecost at Westminster were about the same as instances of them celebrating Christmas at Westminster, they perhaps felt a greater need to emphasize Westminster's role as a site of Christmas celebrations because it was already the traditional site of Pentecost celebrations.

<sup>86</sup>*Regesta regum*, ii, pp. 305-306. The *First Charter of King William* (*Regesta regum: The Acta of William I*, no. 290) is not a coronation charter, as it was claimed to have been written in 1067, but in it William grants the charter in memory of Edward the Confessor and his own coronation at Westminster. The *Great Charter of King Stephen* (*Westminster Abbey Charters*, no. 111) is almost identical in content to the *Great Charter of King Henry*, so it is perhaps meant to be a coronation charter, although does not include a date.

including the spurious letter from Pope Nicholas II to King Edward, which was supposedly written before Westminster had even hosted a coronation.<sup>87</sup>

Just as Osbert composed pieces of hagiography that helped promote the cults of other communities, he also apparently played a role in the production of forgeries at other abbeys. Chaplais discovered the hands of the two scribes that produced many of the forgeries under Osbert of Clare in forgeries for the abbeys of Coventry, Ramsey, Gloucester and St Peter's, Ghent, as well as noting Osbert's stylistic influence in some of these charters.<sup>88</sup> Besides paleographic and stylistic parallels, these charters are also similar to the Westminster forgeries in substance. All are purportedly from the same kings, Edgar, Edward the Confessor, and William I, who play significant roles in Osbert's productions for Westminster Abbey, and they take the form of both short land grants and larger charters of rights. In these forgeries Osbert uses the familiar formula of charters purporting to date from the time of William I confirming spurious grants and rights given or confirmed by Edward the Confessor. The forged charter of William I to Coventry states that he confirmed the gifts given to the abbey by Earl Leofric and confirmed in Edward the Confessor's charters, referring to another spurious charter forged at the same time.<sup>89</sup> Like Westminster, Ramsey in the early twelfth century was engaged in a struggle to obtain exemption from episcopal jurisdiction, an exemption that was claimed to have been granted by Edward the Confessor in two forged charters for Ramsey Abbey that were produced by Osbert of Clare and the Westminster scriptorium.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> *Recueil général*, p. 811.

<sup>88</sup> These included charters from King Edgar, Edward the Confessor and William I to Ramsey (Sawyer, nos. 798, 1030; Bates, no. 220), Edward the Confessor and William I to Coventry (Sawyer, no. 1000; Bates, no. 104), William I to Gloucester (Bates, no. 152), and Edward the Confessor to Ghent (Sawyer, no. 1002). Chaplais, "The Original Charters", pp. 92-4, 97.

<sup>89</sup> *Regesta regum: The Acta of William I*, no. 104, p. 381. The forged charter of Edward the Confessor to Coventry is calendared in Sawyer, no. 1000.

<sup>90</sup> Sawyer, no. 1030.

### The *Vita S. Eadwardi* and Osbert's Mission to Rome

Emma Mason noted that, "The rights of Westminster and the cult of Edward were inextricably interwoven."<sup>91</sup> This was principally due to the efforts of Osbert of Clare. His composition of the *Vita S. Eadwardi* and the subsequent campaign for the papal canonization of Edward the Confessor are closely tied to the production of forgeries at Westminster Abbey, as an extension of the same policy of promotion of the abbey.<sup>92</sup> Osbert's personal veneration of St Edward is shown in the miracle stories of which he was personally involved;<sup>93</sup> nevertheless, his promotion of the cult within the church militant was perhaps as much for the prestige of Westminster Abbey as for the glory of St Edward. While the charters forged at Westminster supported their legal claims, by placing these claims within the context of hagiographic literature Osbert sought to validate them twofold. In the *Vita S. Eadwardi* Westminster privileges are confirmed by the historic king and by the saint.

Although other kings and ecclesiastical figures are used in the forged charters, Edward was Westminster's principal builder and benefactor. Because of this Edward's history is also the history of Westminster Abbey. Besides simply relating St Edward to the rebuilding of Westminster that he undertook, Osbert also linked Edward to the original building of Westminster by inserting the story of Saeberht's founding of the original church and its miraculous consecration into the *Vita S. Eadwardi*.<sup>94</sup> Osbert's connection of King Edward to Westminster Abbey is further emphasized by comparison of the *Vita S. Eadwardi* to the first anonymous Life of

<sup>91</sup> Mason, "The Site of King-Making", p. 299.

<sup>92</sup> Osbert's *Vita S. Eadwardi* and his mission to Rome for Edward's canonization are discussed in greater detail below in chapter three.

<sup>93</sup> Aelred of Rievaulx, *Vita sancti Edwardi regis et confessoris*, PL 195, cols. 784-787.

<sup>94</sup> *Vita S. Eadwardi*, p. 83.

King Edward. While the anonymous *Vita Aedwardi regis* only briefly discusses Edward's rebuilding of and burial at Westminster Abbey,<sup>95</sup> seventeen out of the thirty chapters in Osbert's life involve the abbey. In bringing out the history of Westminster Abbey through the *Vita S. Eadwardi*, Osbert made Edward into a Westminster-centered saint.

Incorporating the story of Westminster's consecration into the *Vita S. Eadwardi*, Osbert also addressed the theme of the abbey's independence from the see of London. In the consecration story, taken from Sulcard's *Prologus*,<sup>96</sup> Bishop Mellitus was prevented by high tide from consecrating the newly founded church. In his place St Peter came to the church in disguise and performed the consecration ceremony and then told a fisherman to notify Bishop Mellitus.<sup>97</sup> The story emphasized Westminster's view that it was a "special daughter" of St Peter and the papacy, rather than subject to the bishops of London. Osbert also included in the *Vita S. Eadwardi* a spurious bull from Nicholas II which was incorporated into the *Third Charter of King Edward*. This bull explicitly stated that the abbey is to be exempt from episcopal jurisdiction.<sup>98</sup>

There are examples of individuals from all social backgrounds financially supporting Westminster abbey in the *Vita S. Eadwardi*. In some instances this is benevolent and voluntary and in some instances it is more contractual and involuntary. Osbert dedicated a whole chapter in the *vita* to a description of Edward's generous donations to Westminster. Although he does not list specific land grants, as in the spurious charters of Edward the Confessor, he notes the rich ornamental gifts

<sup>95</sup> *The Life of King Edward*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., ed. & tr. Frank Barlow (Clarendon, Oxford, 1992), p. 66-70, 124-126.

<sup>96</sup> Sulcard, pp. 83-86.

<sup>97</sup> *Vita S. Eadwardi*, pp. 84-86.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 89-90; *Recueil général*, pp. 810-811.

for the church as well as significant gifts of various types of land from the royal demesne.<sup>99</sup> Osbert even compared Edward, as the bride-groom of Westminster Abbey, to God, the bride-groom of the universal church. “With these rich dowry gifts the new bride of God bloomed again, and, as much internally in conduct and externally in possessions, shone out more fruitfully.”<sup>100</sup> Osbert then juxtaposes the wealth given to Westminster by Edward the Confessor with the sad state of the abbey caused by tyrants.<sup>101</sup>

While Osbert portrays Edward as a generous patron, there is also a contractual aspect of Edward’s rebuilding of Westminster Abbey. In the *Vita*, Edward decides to go on pilgrimage to the tombs of Peter and Paul in Rome, but is dissuaded by the concerns of nobles. He obtained a dispensation from Pope Leo IX and in place of the pilgrimage committed himself to build a monastery dedicated to St Peter.<sup>102</sup> Edward’s rebuilding of Westminster was, therefore, simply a fulfillment of his commitment to go on pilgrimage to Rome. There are also other examples of contractual financial obligations in the *Vita S. Eadwardi*. The spurious bull of Pope Nicholas II, included in the *Third Charter of King Edward* and incorporated into the *Vita S. Eadwardi*, states that divine and papal authority protected the grants given to Westminster by previous

<sup>99</sup> *Vita S. Eadwardi*, p. 105. In one miracle Osbert noted that the royal town of Windsor was given to Westminster by Edward the Confessor (p. 97). Windsor also appears in a list of lands granted by Edward in *The First Charter of King Edward* (p. 806). However, William I exchanged the estates of Feering and Ockendon for Windsor. *Westminster Abbey Charters*, no. 9.

<sup>100</sup> “...opulentisque dotibus noua Dei sponsa refluuit et sicut intus in moribus, sic extra in facultatibus uberius coruscauit.” *Vita S. Eadwardi*, p. 105. The translation is Frank Barlow’s from *The Life of King Edward*, p. 115.

<sup>101</sup> *Vita S. Eadwardi*, p. 105.

<sup>102</sup> *Vita S. Eadwardi*, pp. 77-80. In the *Vita* Osbert incorporates large sections of his *First Charter of King Edward*, which describes Edward’s motivation for rebuilding Westminster Abbey. Initially, Osbert probably derived this story from Sulcard’s *Prologus*, pp. 90-91.

kings and barons.<sup>103</sup> Osbert also related a miracle story about a fisherman who was divinely punished for failing to give his tithe to the abbey.<sup>104</sup>

Osbert used a legend about St Wulfstan of Worcester in the *Vita S. Eadwardi* to exemplify the significance of Edward's tomb at Westminster. According to the miraculous story, Archbishop Lanfranc attempted to depose Bishop Wulfstan during a council at Westminster Abbey. Wulfstan, however, insisted on only returning his crozier to King Edward, who had appointed him. When Wulfstan set the tip of his crozier on the stone covering Edward's grave it sank into the stone and could not be removed by anyone but Wulfstan. This was taken as a *divine sign* that Wulfstan still had Edward's favor and he was allowed to retain his office.<sup>105</sup> In the 1130s, when Osbert wrote his *Vita S. Eadwardi*, Wulfstan was also gaining a reputation as a saint, and his connection to Edward the Confessor was a support to the claims for Edward's sanctity.<sup>106</sup> It was also an important symbolic story for Westminster Abbey. During Edward's life he watched over England by appointing men such as Bishop Wulfstan, and after his death he still continued to watch over England from his sepulchre at Westminster. Osbert perhaps intended the miracle to emphasize the centrality of Westminster Abbey's connection to the governance of England.

Just as the *Vita S. Eadwardi* was propaganda for Westminster Abbey, Osbert's mission to Rome for the canonization of Edward the Confessor was used principally to promote Westminster's interests. Although the canonization was rejected, Osbert obtained several papal bulls that served to protect Westminster's lands and incomes.

<sup>103</sup> *Vita S. Eadwardi*, p. 90; *Recueil général*, p. 811.

<sup>104</sup> *Vita S. Eadwardi*, p. 86.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 116-120. The history of the legend of St Wulfstan's staff is discussed in Emma Mason, "St Wulfstan's Staff: A Legend and its Uses", *Medium Aevum* 53 (1984), pp. 157-179.

<sup>106</sup> Notably, one of the principal early supporters of the cult of St Wulfstan was Prior Warin of Worcester, for whom Osbert wrote his *Sermo de conceptione sanctae Mariae*. Emma Mason, *St Wulfstan of Worcester* (Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1990), esp. pp. 274-277.

Two of these are letters relating to alienated lands: the first was to Bishop Henry of Winchester requesting that he restore lands that had been taken from Westminster and that he protect Westminster in the future,<sup>107</sup> and the second was to Abbot Gervase notifying him that Bishop Henry was entreated to do so.<sup>108</sup> The third letter that Osbert brought back from Rome was a specific request to King David I of Scotland that he uphold his obligation to give Westminster thirty shillings for the commemoration of his sister, Queen Edith-Matilda.<sup>109</sup> The fourth letter surviving in this group, purportedly brought back from Rome in 1139, was perhaps altered or completely forged by Osbert of Clare.<sup>110</sup> Highly critical of the abbot, Innocent II in the charter ordered Gervase to restore lands which had been alienated, to consult the monks in the running of the abbey and protect the regalia of King Edward. Osbert's aggressive promotion of Westminster Abbey again turned against his own abbot, as it had done earlier during Herbert's tenure as abbot of Westminster, and Osbert was soon sent into exile again.

Osbert's promotion of the cult of Edward the Confessor was more successful for Westminster Abbey than even he perhaps imagined. If not for the composition of Osbert's *Vita S. Eadwardi* and the subsequent papal canonization, then King Henry III perhaps would not have taken an interest in the cult of his predecessor and rebuilt the abbey in the mid-thirteenth century. Osbert of Clare, both in his production of forged charters and in his composition of the *Vita S. Eadwardi*, played on the role of kings in the patronage of Westminster Abbey. By exaggerating the privileges and grants given,

<sup>107</sup> *Letters*, no. 20, p. 88; calendared in *Westminster Abbey Charters*, no. 159.

<sup>108</sup> *Letters*, no. 19, pp. 87-88; calendared in *Westminster Abbey Charters*, no. 158.

<sup>109</sup> *Papsturkunden in England*, i, no. 25; calendared in *Westminster Abbey Charters*, no. 160.

<sup>110</sup> *Papsturkunden in England*, i, no. 24; calendared in *Westminster Abbey Charters*, no. 161. This charter is discussed above, pp. 26-27. It was first identified as a forgery by Barbara Harvey in "Abbot Gervase de Blois and the Fee-Farms of Westminster Abbey", *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research* 40 (1967), pp. 128-129.

principally by Edward the Confessor, but also by other prominent Anglo-Saxon kings and bishops, Osbert created a tradition of a special relationship between the king and the abbey, which was still tentative in the twelfth century.<sup>111</sup> This tradition was then continued through the forged and enhanced charters of Norman kings, particularly William I. The illusion was apparently successful and allowed Westminster to procure authentic charters and bulls based upon these supposed originals. In the papal bull obtained by the Westminster delegation at the Second Lateran Council, Innocent II confirmed the abbey's papal protection that was granted by Leo IX and Nicholas II as contained in the forged *First and Third Charters of King Edward*.<sup>112</sup> Pope Eugenius III's bull from 1151 is even more encompassing of the series of forged charters.<sup>113</sup> It confirms the privileges granted by earlier popes, kings, Archbishop Dunstan and others.

Westminster's rise to prominence in the Anglo-Norman period is perhaps even more interesting when compared to other significant Benedictine monasteries in England. Like other Benedictine houses, such as Bury where Osbert spent much time, Westminster used the cult of a local saint as a source of wealth and prestige. However, Bury, unlike Westminster, did this by housing a popular pilgrimage site, the shrine of St Edmund. Although Osbert may have wanted Westminster to become a major pilgrimage destination, as his preaching on the feast of St Edward the Confessor indicates,<sup>114</sup> his principal focus was on courting royal patronage. In the long term this approach proved beneficial to Westminster Abbey. In the thirteenth century Henry III took a strong interest in Edward the Confessor and rebuilt

<sup>111</sup> Emma Mason, "Westminster Abbey and the Monarchy", *JEH* 41 (1990), pp. 199-216; reprinted in Emma Mason, *Westminster and its People*, pp. 278-287.

<sup>112</sup> *Papsturkunden in England*, i, no. 21. Calendared in *Westminster Abbey Charters*, no. 156.

<sup>113</sup> *Papsturkunden in England*, i, no. 47. Calendared in *Westminster Abbey Charters*, no. 163.

<sup>114</sup> Osbert preached on St Edward's feast day in one miracle surviving in Aelred's *vita*, cols. 786-787.

Westminster Abbey. When Henry VIII dissolved the English monasteries in the sixteenth century Westminster was briefly made an episcopal seat, and although the ornate shrine of Edward the Confessor was plundered, a simpler shrine built during the reign of Mary I survived the reformation intact.

## Chapter Three

### The Canonization of Edward the Confessor

Osbert of Clare's attempt at the canonization of Edward the Confessor and his promotion of the feast of the Immaculate Conception of Mary were the most historically significant projects he undertook. While he was an early promoter of both the cult of St Edward and the celebration of the Immaculate Conception, he was not the originator of either. The feast of the Immaculate Conception was first celebrated in England under Anselm of Bury, and Eadmer wrote a theological treatise concerning the feast shortly before Osbert became involved in the controversy. Similarly, there had existed a quasi-hagiographical anonymous life of King Edward written approximately seventy years before Osbert penned his *Vita S. Eadwardi*. Just as Osbert was not the originator, nor was he to be the final authority in either of these religious phenomena. His role in instituting the feast of the Immaculate Conception was soon lost in the immense theological debate that followed for centuries over the feast, and his *Vita S. Eadwardi* was reworked by Aelred of Rievaulx just over twenty years later.

In the case of the feast of the Immaculate Conception, it is difficult to determine Osbert's actual impact on the spread of the feast. Surviving evidence only reveals him to be one of a group of English churchmen promoting the feast in the second quarter of the twelfth century. However, his importance in the cult of St Edward the Confessor is evident. He took rumors of Edward's celibacy and hagiographical sections from the early life, and centered them on his burial site at

Westminster Abbey. He wrote the first true saint's life for King Edward and attempted to have him papally canonized. Although this failed, it laid the groundwork for his canonization twenty years later, under another pope and in a more politically viable time. Without his stimulus there is little chance that the cult of Edward the Confessor would have developed beyond the primordial state that it was in when Osbert took up its cause.

### **The Early Cult of Edward the Confessor**

The early history of the cult of Edward the Confessor is unclear. Although some sources, such as the anonymous *Vita Aedwardi regis* and William of Malmesbury's *Gesta regum Anglorum*, portray Edward as a saint, there is little evidence of an active cult at Westminster before Osbert took up the cause in the 1130s. Nevertheless, there were at least rumors of his sanctity shortly after, or possibly even before, his death in 1066.<sup>1</sup> Edward was not the first of his kinsmen to be sanctified. His aunt, St Edith, and his uncle, St Edward the martyr, had cult followings around their shrines at Wilton and Shaftsbury, respectively, and his grandfather, King Edgar, had a small cult at Glastonbury. Edward's saintly image was probably also affected by the legends of the thaumaturgical powers of the French king, Robert the Pious (996- 1031).<sup>2</sup> These legends were no doubt known to Edward's Norman courtiers, and are likely behind the stories of Edward often healing the sick as a youth in Normandy.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The best sources to date for Edward's early cult are Frank Barlow's appendix, "The Development of the Cult of King Edward", in *The Life of King Edward*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., ed. & tr. Frank Barlow (Clarendon, Oxford, 1992), pp. 150-163; and his chapter on the cult of St Edward in Frank Barlow, *Edward the Confessor* (Eyre & Spottiswoode, London, 1970), pp. 256-284.

<sup>2</sup> Marc Bloch, *The Royal Touch*, tr. J.E. Anderson (Dorset Press, New York, 1961), pp. 18-21.

<sup>3</sup> *The Life of King Edward*, p. 94.

The *Vita Aedwardi regis*, the first life of King Edward, was written by a monk of the monastery of St Bertin at St Omer in Flanders, probably in the 1060s.<sup>4</sup> Its composition spanned the Norman conquest of England, and therefore has a very different mood from start to finish. Book I is a history of King Edward's reign, with a strong focus on and heavy praises of the Godwin family. Godwin's daughter and Edward's wife, Edith, was the anonymous author's patroness.<sup>5</sup> The book includes Edward's death, but appears to have been begun during the king's lifetime, and finished before the deaths of Earl Tostig and King Harold. It is therefore datable to 1065-1066.<sup>6</sup> Both the first and the second book employ alternating verse and prose in a dialogue between the author, or '*poeta*', and his '*musa*', in a Boethian manner. Both books are also each missing a section from the sole surviving manuscript of the *Vita Aedwardi regis*.<sup>7</sup>

The second book is a radical departure from the historical nature of the first book. The author begins it with a lament that his labor has proved pointless.<sup>8</sup> By October 1066, both Harold and Tostig, who had played key roles in book I, were dead. Because of this change of fortune, the author decided to go back and tell the story of Edward's religious life. So while Book I is a political chronicle of Edward's reign, Book II is a hagiographical examination of Edward's life. Book II, probably written c. 1067, was the primary source for Osbert's *Vita S. Eadwardi*, and consists of two *in vita* healing miracles<sup>9</sup> and the death of King Edward, including the prophetic

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<sup>4</sup> This section is heavily indebted to Frank Barlow analysis of the Anonymous' work. See *Life of King Edward*, pp. xlv-liv, for the authorship.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 4-6, 88-90.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. xxx-xxxii.

<sup>7</sup> The missing section in Book I dealt with the early careers of Godwin's children and the marriage of Edward and Edith. Part of this section can be recovered from Richard of Cirencester. *Ibid.*, pp. xiv-xv, xxxix-xl, 22-24.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 84-88.

<sup>9</sup> These are the healing of a scrofulous woman and the healing of a blind men. Both were healed using the water with which Edward washed his hands. *Ibid.*, pp. 92-96.

vision of the Green Tree.<sup>10</sup> There were probably also two or three additional healing miracles and the dedication of Westminster Abbey in the section missing from Book II.<sup>11</sup> The Anonymous ends the work by saying that there were many healing miracles occurring at Edward's tomb, but gives no details.<sup>12</sup> Although the Anonymous attributes miracles to King Edward, he is still somewhat reticent, and as Frank Barlow notes, does not achieve any more than a quasi-hagiographical life.<sup>13</sup> Nevertheless, the Anonymous *Vita* does show that in the year just after Edward's death there were at least rumors of his sanctity.

The other main source for Osbert of Clare's *Vita S. Eadwardi* was Sulcard's *Prologus de contruccione Westmonasterii*.<sup>14</sup> Sulcard was a Westminster monk in the second half of the eleventh century. His *Prologus*, the first history of Westminster Abbey, was dedicated to Abbot Vitalis, and can therefore be dated to 1076-1085.<sup>15</sup> Although Sulcard uses the *Vita Aedwardi regis*, he neither depicts Edward as a saint nor relates any miracles performed by him. Eleanor Heningham has suggested that Sulcard avoided the subject of Edward's supposed sanctity because it was unpopular with the Norman abbot Vitalis.<sup>16</sup> Whether it was Abbot Vitalis or Sulcard himself who was skeptical of Edward's sanctity, it does not appear that there was anything at the time to support it besides the *Vita Aedwardi*. Sulcard's language even implies that

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 116-126.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. xl-xli. Also see Frank Barlow, "The *Vita Aedwardi* (Book II); the Seven Sleepers", *Speculum* 40 (1965), pp. 385-397.

<sup>12</sup> *Life of King Edward*, p. 126.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xxv.

<sup>14</sup> Edited in Bernhard Scholz, "Sulcard of Westminster: *Prologus de construccione Westmonasterii*", *Traditio* 20 (1964), hereafter referenced as Sulcard, pp. 59-91.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 80. Emma Mason, *Westminster Abbey and its People* (Boydell, Woodbridge, 1996), pp. 23-24.

<sup>16</sup> Eleanor Heningham, "The Genuineness of the *Vita Aeduardi regis*", *Speculum* 21 (1946), pp. 442-443.

at the time he was writing the exact location where Edward was buried was in doubt.<sup>17</sup> He depicts Edward as a devout king and as the secular patron of Westminster Abbey. The saintly patron of Westminster, according to Sulcard, is clearly St Peter. Half of the *Prologus* is taken up with the miracles that St Peter worked at Westminster.<sup>18</sup>

Although Sulcard does not portray Edward as a saint, Osbert nevertheless incorporates many details from the *Prologus* into his *Vita S. Eadwardi*. Osbert even ties the cult of Edward the Confessor to that of St Peter at Westminster by incorporating the narrative of the miraculous consecration of Westminster by St Peter in the seventh century, a story taken from Sulcard's *Prologus*.<sup>19</sup> Similarly, Osbert takes Edward's motivation for rebuilding Westminster from Sulcard. While the Anonymous says that Edward was motivated simply by the beautiful area surrounding Westminster and by his love of St Peter,<sup>20</sup> Sulcard relates how Edward planned to make a pilgrimage to St Peter's in Rome, but was persuaded instead to rebuild Westminster Abbey by nobles who feared for the security of the kingdom.<sup>21</sup> Osbert also may have taken the relative ages of Edward and his brother Alfred from Sulcard,<sup>22</sup> but while the *Prologus* simply mentions that Alfred was older, Osbert imbues it with religious significance. That Edward, as a younger brother, was chosen to be king, showed divine favor.<sup>23</sup>

The first substantial activity in the cult of Edward the Confessor was the opening of his tomb in 1102. The earliest authority for this is Osbert's *Vita S.*

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<sup>17</sup> Frank Barlow noted how Sulcard seems uncertain of the tomb's exact location. Barlow, *Edward the Confessor*, pp. 263-264. Sulcard, p. 91.

<sup>18</sup> Sulcard, pp. 82-86, 87-89.

<sup>19</sup> *Vita S. Eadwardi*, pp. 83-86.

<sup>20</sup> *Life of King Edward*, pp. 66-68.

<sup>21</sup> Sulcard, pp. 90-91.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 90; Bernhard Scholz examines the different views of their relative ages. *Ibid.*, pp. 76-79.

<sup>23</sup> *Vita S. Eadwardi*, pp. 70-71.

*Eadwardi*, written well after the events it described.<sup>24</sup> Osbert, writing with hagiographical bias, described it as a *translatio*, but it appears to have been more complex than that. The uncertainty of exactly where Edward was buried, as shown by Sulcard, may have been a motivation to open the tomb; Edward's first translation may have been no more than checking to see if he was actually buried there. Osbert himself admits that there were some present who doubted Edward's sanctity. "Six and thirty years had King Edward lain in his tomb, and many thought that like other men he had fallen to ashes after our common mortal lot."<sup>25</sup> He then goes on to describe two other groups of people who attended the translation: those who thought that Edward was a saint, and those who had known him in life and just wanted to look upon his face again. Osbert's description of those attending the translation may easily have been a reflection of ideas about Edward's sanctity when he was writing in the 1130s. There were the skeptics, the believers, and those who felt Edward was a good king, but who were uncertain of his sanctity.

That there were at least some who felt that Edward was a saint is also shown by the presence of Bishop Gundulf of Rochester.<sup>26</sup> His attendance even led Eric Kemp to postulate, "...that this may have been an episcopal translation performed by Gundulf of Rochester on behalf of the archbishop of Canterbury."<sup>27</sup> While there is no evidence for such strong ecclesiastical support, Bishop Gundulf's presence showed that it was more than simply checking on the location of the king's body. The timing of the translation is also interesting. In the Fall of 1102, Anselm held a ecclesiastical

<sup>24</sup> *Vita S. Eadwardi*, pp. 121-123.

<sup>25</sup> "Sex namque et xxx annis rex delituerat Eadwardus in tumulo, eumque iuxta condicionem mortalitatis nostre arbitrati sunt nonnulli humanitus in cineres defluxisse." *Ibid.*, p. 121. The translation is from J. Armitage Robinson, *Gilbert Crispin* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1911), p. 24.

<sup>26</sup> *Vita S. Eadwardi*, p. 121.

<sup>27</sup> Eric Kemp, *Canonization and Authority in the Western Church* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1948), pp. 76-77.

council at Westminster Abbey, where it was decreed, “That no one without the sanction of the bishop is on his own responsibility to attach sanctity, as we have known to be done, to the bodies of dead persons or to wells or other things.”<sup>28</sup> The opening of Edward’s tomb may have even been in response to the council’s declaration, as an attempt to prove or disprove Edward’s sanctity.

When the top stone was lifted off of his sarcophagus, the room was filled with a sweet fragrance and Edward’s body was found uncorrupted.<sup>29</sup> Bishop Gundulf attempted to pull out a hair from Edward’s beard to take away as a relic as his right for overseeing the translation. The hair, however, would not come out, a miraculous sign of how completely preserved his body was, according to Osbert.<sup>30</sup> He also lists the sceptre, crown and all the regal ornaments alongside Edward’s body. These items were likely taken at this time from the coffin, and constitute the crown and regalia, which, in charters forged by Osbert of Clare, were said to have been left to the abbey.<sup>31</sup> This is further supported by an account of the translation of 1163, in which the only piece of regalia that is listed is a ring.<sup>32</sup>

The opening of Edward’s tomb does not appear to have had a significant effect on his cult, although in Henry I’s reign there began to be a stronger emphasis on King Edward and the royal connection to Westminster. Osbert claims that following the translation there were many miracles that occurred at Edward’s tomb, but he describes none of them for fear of boring his audience.<sup>33</sup> This might represent a vague oral tradition at Westminster that miracles had been performed at the tomb, or it could

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<sup>28</sup> “*Nequis temeraria novitate corporibus mortuorum, aut fontibus, aut aliis rebus, quod contigisse cognovimus, sine episcopali auctoritate reverentiam sanctitatis exhibeat.*” Eadmer, *Historia novorum in Anglia*, ed. Martin Rule, RS 81 (1884), p. 143. The translation is from Eadmer, *History of Recent Events in England*, tr. Geoffrey Bosanquet (Cresset, London, 1964), p. 151.

<sup>29</sup> *Vita S. Eadwardi*, pp. 121-122.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 122.

<sup>31</sup> *Regesta regum Anglo-Normannorum*, ed. David Bates (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1998), p. 876.

<sup>32</sup> Richard of Cirencester, *Speculum historiale*, ii, ed. John Mayor, RS 30 (1869), p. 325.

have been Osbert simply filling in where he saw a deficiency. In either case it does show that there were no miracles of any significance written down or remembered at Westminster at this time.

In the reign of Henry I, all things English began to come back into fashion. Henry married Edith Matilda, the daughter of King Malcolm of Scotland and Queen Margaret. Through Margaret, Edith Matilda was descended from the old Anglo-Saxon royal family. This lineage was emphasized by Edith Matilda's burial in 1118 at Edward the Confessor's side.<sup>34</sup> In this period fugitives begin to flee to "King Edward's body."<sup>35</sup> Also during Henry I's reign, in the mid-1120s, William of Malmesbury abbreviated the hagiographical elements of the *Vita Aedwardi regis* into his *Gesta regum Anglorum*.<sup>36</sup> Through his history, William of Malmesbury was able to spread the account of the miracles of St Edward the Confessor to a wider audience than the *Vita Aedwardi regis* previously had. Nevertheless, while William emphasizes that Edward's miracles derive from his sanctity and not from his royal office, he does not seem enthusiastic about the veneration of St Edward. In this way, William is more a reporter of facts than a promoter of Edward's cult.

### Osbert of Clare's *Vita S. Eadwardi*

Osbert of Clare was the first person to write a traditional saint's life for Edward the Confessor and to promote his cult actively. His interest in the cult of Edward the Confessor must be traced back from 1138, the year he wrote his *Vita S.*

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<sup>33</sup> *Vita S. Eadwardi*, p. 123.

<sup>34</sup> *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, tr. Dorothy Whitelock (Eyre & Spottiswoode, London, 1961), p. 186; Mathew Paris, *Historia Anglorum*, i, ed. Frederic Madden, RS 44 (1866), p. 222.

<sup>35</sup> "corpus Regis Edwardi," *Westminster Abbey Charters*, eds. Emma Mason, et al., LRS 25 (1988), pp. 111, 116. Emma Mason discusses Edward's tomb as a place of sanctuary in *Westminster and its People*, p. 264.

*Eadwardi*.<sup>37</sup> Before this, Osbert's interest in King Edward is seen in the *First, Second, and Third Charters of King Edward*. While these charters are examined in greater detail above, it is useful to note their influence in Osbert's promotion of Edward's cult.<sup>38</sup> Pierre Chaplais suggested that Osbert drafted these charters at about the same time as he wrote his *Vita S. Eadwardi*.<sup>39</sup> It is also possible that the production of these forgeries, along with others attributed to other Anglo-Saxon and Norman kings, preceded the composition of Osbert's *Vita*. Perhaps Osbert first became interested in King Edward, and in the significance for Westminster of promoting Edward's cult, while researching and producing these charters. Chaplais notes one problem with this chronology. The *Vita S. Eadwardi* incorporates the *First Charter of King Edward*, but while the *First Charter* uses a first person voice, the *Vita* uses a third person voice. However, there is one place where the scribe makes a mistake and inserts, "*pio patrie rege absente*," as opposed to, "*me absente*."<sup>40</sup> This implies that the *First Charter* was drafted from Osbert's *Vita*. It seems unlikely though that Osbert began the series of forgeries in his composition of the *Vita S. Eadwardi*, and therefore, at least some of the forgeries probably predate the *Vita*. Whether the charters were composed just before or at same time as the *Vita S. Eadwardi*, they had a significant impact on Osbert's *Vita*. The role of Edward as a generous patron to Westminster, which is the key feature of his spurious charters, is a strong idea throughout the *Vita*. Besides

<sup>36</sup> William of Malmesbury, *Gesta regum Anglorum*, ed. & tr. R.A.B. Mynors, et al. (Clarendon, Oxford, 1998), pp. 406-420. For the use of the Anonymous in both William and Osbert's works, see Frank Barlow's discussion of the textual history in *The Life of King Edward*, pp. xxxiii-xl.

<sup>37</sup> The date of the *Vita S. Eadwardi* can be ascertained from its dedication to the papal legate Alberic upon his arrival in England during the summer of 1138. *Vita S. Eadwardi*, p. 64. The longest account of Bishop Alberic's visit to England and Scotland is in Richard of Hexham's *Chronicle* in *Chronicles of the Reigns of Stephen, Henry II and Richard*, iii, RS 82 (1886), pp. 167-172.

<sup>38</sup> See above, ch. 2.

<sup>39</sup> Pierre Chaplais, "The Original Charters of Herbert and Gervase Abbots of Westminster", in *A Medieval Miscellany for Doris Mary Stenton*, eds. P.M. Barnes & C.F. Slate, *PRS*, new series, 36 (1960), p. 93.

<sup>40</sup> *Recueil général des chartes anglo-saxonnes*, ed. H. Pierquin (Paris, 1912), p. 803.

repeating Edward's confirmation of rights, Osbert also includes Pope Leo IX's dispensation, which also appears in the *First Charter of King Edward*.<sup>41</sup>

Osbert finished his *Vita S. Eadwardi* in the second half of 1138.<sup>42</sup> The basic attributes of Osbert's *Vita S. Eadwardi* were taken from the anonymous *Vita*. To this, as has already been shown, Osbert added features from Sulcard's *Prologus* and from his own work on the monuments of Westminster Abbey. This changed Edward from an English saintly king, as portrayed in the *Vita Aedwardi regis*, to the Westminster saint Osbert depicts. This becomes evident when the amount of text concerning Westminster is compared in the two *vitae*. The Anonymous devotes only a small section to Edward's rebuilding of Westminster Abbey, no larger than his section on Queen Edith's rebuilding of Wilton nunnery.<sup>43</sup> He likely also had a section on the rededication of Westminster in the missing section of Book II. Conversely, almost one-third of the *in vita* section of Osbert's work involves Westminster.

In the creation of a purely hagiographic life of Edward the Confessor, Osbert synthesized those sections from Book I and Book II of the Anonymous' work which dealt with King Edward, and eliminated those elements which did not. In Book II this consisted of simply taking out the long verse dialog between the poet and his muse, but retaining all the other elements.<sup>44</sup> Book I, with its historical approach, was cut more extensively by Osbert. He included Bishop Brihtwald's vision,<sup>45</sup> the description of Edward,<sup>46</sup> and his early history and accession.<sup>47</sup> The stories of the Godwin family, which formed the basis of the Anonymous' Book I, are almost entirely absent from

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<sup>41</sup> *Vita S. Eadwardi*, pp. 77-80.

<sup>42</sup> The dedicatory letter at least was written between August 1138, when Alberic of Ostia arrived in England, and December 1138, when he attended the Council at Westminster.

<sup>43</sup> *The Life of King Edward*, pp. 66-70, 70-72.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 84-90.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 12-14. *Vita S. Eadwardi*, p. 72.

<sup>46</sup> *The Life of King Edward*, p. 18. *Vita S. Eadwardi*, pp. 74-75.

<sup>47</sup> *The Life of King Edward*, pp. 12-18. *Vita S. Eadwardi*, pp. 70-73.

Osbert's work. Both the Anonymous and Osbert include Edward's rebuilding of Westminster Abbey, but as has already been shown, Osbert followed Sulcard's tradition for this rather than the *Vita Aedwardi regis*. Additionally, Osbert enhanced the theme of Edward's celibate marriage, which was ambiguous and only played a minor role in the *Vita Aedwardi regis*.<sup>48</sup>

The vision of the Seven Sleepers, present in Osbert's *Vita*, poses a particular problem within the history of Edward's hagiography.<sup>49</sup> In the narrative, Edward is at an Easter feast with many of his nobles, when he suddenly bursts into laughter. Later, after being asked by Earl Harold what provoked his laughter, he explains how he had experienced a vision where the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus, who had previously been sleeping on their right side, turned over to sleep on their left sides for a period of seventy-four years. This vision marks a period of wars and natural disasters that would last for seventy-four years. He then goes on to describe to Harold, along with the bishop and abbot who were with him, how the Seven Sleepers were seven Christians who had been trapped in a cave under Mount Celius during the persecution of Decius Caesar. There they were preserved by God in their sleep. When Harold, the bishop, and the abbot heard this, they each sent messengers to Emperor Maniches in the East, only to discover that the Sleepers were just as Edward had seen in his vision. Osbert then goes on to describe disasters which occurred following this.

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<sup>48</sup> The extent of the Anonymous' intent to show Edward as celibate is uncertain. The main section that might have given a clear picture of the Anonymous' view is the description of Edward and Edith's marriage in the missing section of Book I. Even the portion recovered from Richard of Cirencester is ambiguous, although it does note that Edith loved chastity and was more like a daughter or mother to Edward than a wife. *Life of King Edward*, pp. 22-24. In Book II he is described as ruling with 'castimonia', and the Anonymous describes Edward and Edith's relationship in one place as that of a father and daughter. *Ibid.*, pp. 90, 122. Frank Barlow tends to down play these references, while Eric John even believes that Edward historically had a celibate marriage in his article. "Edward the Confessor and the Celibate Life", *AB* 97 (1979), pp. 171-178. Whatever the case, Edward's celibacy became a more central sign of his sanctity in Osbert's *Vita* than it had played in the Anonymous. See below, pp. 143-144.

Osbert was not the first person to describe Edward's vision of the Seven Sleepers; William of Malmesbury includes it in his *Gesta regum*, and it is inserted along with a section of the *Vita Aedwardi regis* into a Bury copy of John of Worcester's *Chronicon ex chronicis*.<sup>50</sup> It was probably not, however, in the original version of the Anonymous' work.<sup>51</sup> From this Frank Barlow hypothesized that the vision was added to a later version of the work, a tradition of which the surviving manuscript of the *Vita Aedwardi regis* (BL MS Harl. 526) may belong.<sup>52</sup>

The most significant addition Osbert made to the Anonymous *Vita* was in the number of miracles described. Osbert's *Vita* included the vision of the Green Tree, Bishop Brihtwald's vision and the *in vita* curative miracles given by the Anonymous, but to these he added twelve more miracles. The first six of these were added to the section of the *Vita* which deals with Edward's lifetime: Edward's vision of the death of King Svein of Denmark,<sup>53</sup> a hermit's vision through which St Peter told Edward to restore Westminster Abbey,<sup>54</sup> Edward's curing of a cripple after carrying him to Westminster upon the order of St Peter,<sup>55</sup> the miraculous dedication of Westminster by St Peter,<sup>56</sup> the divine punishment of a fisherman who did not pay his tithe to Westminster,<sup>57</sup> and Edward and Earl Leofric seeing the Christ while attending mass.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> *Vita S. Eadwardi*, pp. 98-103. The present section is heavily indebted to the analysis of Frank Barlow in his article, "The *Vita Aedwardi*...".

<sup>50</sup> William of Malmesbury, pp. 410-114; Barlow, p. 387; John of Worcester, *The Chronicle of...*, ii, eds. R. Darlington & P. McGurk (Clarendon, Oxford, 1995), pp. 648-651. The insertion into John of Worcester is also edited in Barlow, "The *Vita Aedwardi*...", pp. 396-397.

<sup>51</sup> The historical material implies a later date and style does not seem to agree with the Anonymous, *The Life of King Edward*, pp. xliii; Barlow, "The *Vita Aedwardi*...", p. 394.

<sup>52</sup> Barlow, "The *Vita Aedwardi*...", p. 395.

<sup>53</sup> Osbert claims that he drowned while setting out to invade England. *Vita S. Eadwardi*, pp. 75-77.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 80-81.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 82-83.

<sup>56</sup> As has been shown above, this was taken from Sulcard. *Ibid.*, pp. 83-86.

<sup>57</sup> Like the dedication, this vindictive miracle relates to Westminster and St Peter rather than Edward the Confessor. *Ibid.*, p. 86.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 91-92.

The remaining six miracles added by Osbert represent the first *post mortem* miracles attributed to St Edward. The first are curative miracles which occurred within thirty days of Edward's death. In the first, a cripple named Radulf was cured at Edward's tomb,<sup>59</sup> and in the second, six blind men and one monocular man were cured by Edward at his tomb.<sup>60</sup> In Osbert's third *post mortem* miracle, St Edward comes to Abbot Aelfwine in a vision and prophesizes Harold's victory at Stamford Bridge.<sup>61</sup> Next, Osbert describes how Edward visited a blind bellringer at Westminster in a dream and restored his vision.<sup>62</sup> Osbert dedicates considerably more space to the fifth *post mortem* miracle. In it, Osbert links Edward's sanctity to multiple key figures in post-conquest England. He describes how Lanfranc attempted to depose Bishop Wulfstan of Worcester at a council held at Westminster. However, Wulfstan insisted on giving his crozier back to Edward, who had raised him to the see of Worcester. When the metal end of the crozier touched the stone covering Edward's tomb it sank into it as though the stone were wax. Because of this miraculous sign Wulfstan kept his office. King William was so astonished by this that he commissioned a decoration to be placed above Edward's tomb.<sup>63</sup> When Osbert was writing his *Vita S. Eadwardi*, Bishop Wulfstan was also beginning to be venerated in England as a saint and his apparent reliance on St Edward was a significant support to Edward's perceived sanctity. Osbert ends his *Vita* with the description of Edward's first "translation" in 1102, where his body was found miraculously uncorrupted.<sup>64</sup> In his prefatory letter to the *Vita*, written to Cardinal Alberic, Osbert wrote that he had

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<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 112-113.

<sup>60</sup> *Vita S. Eadwardi*, pp. 113-114.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 114-115.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 116.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 116-120; Also see Emma Mason, "St Wulfstan's Staff: A Legend and its Uses", *Medium Aevum* 53 (1984), pp. 157-179.

<sup>64</sup> *Vita S. Eadwardi*, pp. 121-123.

derived the miracles from diverse *scedulae*. It is likely that these included miracles that were recorded at Edward's tomb by Westminster monks, perhaps Osbert's source for some, if not all, of the additional miracles.<sup>65</sup>

Table 3:1 The Sources of Osbert of Clare's *Vita S. Eadwardi*.<sup>66</sup>

Chapter	Content	Source
I	Prologue	Osbert
II	Edward's genealogy	Osbert
III	Of Edward's accession and his older brother Alfred	Anonymous/Sulcard
	Bishop Brihtwald's vision	Anonymous
IV	The description of Edward	Anonymous
	Edward and Edith's marriage	Anonymous*
V	Edward's vision of King Swein	Osbert
VI	Edward's vow to go on pilgrimage to Rome	Sulcard/First Charter of King Edward
VII	The objection of Edward's nobles	Sulcard/First Charter of King Edward
	Pope Leo's dispensation	First Charter of King Edward
VIII	Wlsinus' vision of St Peter directing Edward to restore Westminster	First Charter of King Edward
IX	Edward's curing of Gillomichael after carrying him to Westminster	Osbert/Schedules?
X	St Peter's ancient dedication of Westminster	Sulcard
	Divine punishment of a fisherman who withheld tithe	Osbert
XI	The sending of envoys to Pope Nicholas and his privileges	Third Charter of King Edward
XII	Edward and Leofric's vision of Christ during mass	Osbert/Schedules?
XIII	Edward's curing of scrofulous woman	Anonymous
XIV	Healing of blind man with Edward's wash water	Anonymous
XV	The blind man from Lincoln who regained his vision	Anonymous
XVI	The blind man who regained his vision through Edward's touch	Anonymous*
XVII	Three blind men and one monocular man are cured by Edward's wash water	Anonymous*
XVIII	The vision of the Seven Sleepers	A later version of the Anonymous*
XIX	Edward's sickness	Anonymous*
	The dedication of Westminster	Anonymous*
XX	Edward's grants to Westminster	Perhaps the Anonymous, although probably greatly expanded by Osbert
XXI	Edward's vision of the Green Tree	Anonymous
XXII	The interpretation of the vision of the Green Tree	Anonymous to which Osbert added commentary
XXIII	Edward's last words	Anonymous
XXIV	Edward's death	Anonymous
	Edward's burial at Westminster	Anonymous
XXV	The curing of a cripple at Edward's tomb	Osbert/Schedules?
XXVI	The curing of seven blind and one monocular at his tomb	Osbert/Schedules?
XXVII	Abbot Aelfwine's vision of Edward predicting Harold's victory	Osbert/Schedules?
XXVIII	The bellringer who regained his sight after a vision of Edward	Osbert/Schedules?
XIX	The attempted deposition of Bishop Wulfstan	Osbert/Schedules?
XXX	The "translation" of 1102	Osbert/Schedules?

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 66. *Life of King Edward*, pp. xxxv-xxxvi.

<sup>66</sup> Those sections which represent original additions by Osbert, or for which there is no surviving tradition, are marked as Osbert for the source. It is likely that Osbert wrote some of these from an oral tradition at Westminster Abbey. Sections where the Anonymous is marked with an asterisk represent elements that are believed to have been in the *Vita Aedwardi regis*, but are missing from the surviving manuscript.

It remains to be examined whether the sole surviving manuscript that contains Osbert's *Vita S. Eadwardi* is actually complete.<sup>67</sup> In a letter to Bishop Henry of Winchester, Osbert stated that he had three sources for the miracles he recorded: written sources, surviving witnesses, and his own personal experiences.<sup>68</sup> The anonymous *Vita*, Sulcard's *Prologus*, and perhaps Westminster miracle schedules would have been in the first group. Surviving witnesses to the 1102 translation may have comprised the second group, but there is nothing in the extant manuscript of Osbert's *Vita* that represents his own personal experiences. If Osbert is to be believed in his letter to Bishop Henry, then there must be a section of the *Vita* which has not been transmitted in the surviving manuscript. A possible explanation for this is that the surviving manuscript may have derived from an earlier version of the work, perhaps that given to the papal legate, Bishop Alberic, but that Osbert subsequently expanded it in preparation for his trip to Rome.

This missing section can be seen rewritten in Aelred of Rievaulx's *Life of St Edward* from 1163. Aelred added six twelfth-century cures, two of which specifically involve Osbert of Clare.<sup>69</sup> The first miracle describes how a servant of a London noblewoman was paralyzed after denigrating St Edward. She was cured on being carried to Westminster Abbey.<sup>70</sup> The second tells how Osbert, having been sick for six months, was cured after praying at Edward's tomb.<sup>71</sup> It was this miracle which

<sup>67</sup> The manuscript from which Bloch's edition was taken was B.M. Add. MS. 36737, fols. 139-157v. There is also an early-thirteenth-century abbreviation of Osbert's work in C.C.C.C. MS. 161, fols. 138v-152v. These manuscripts are described by Bloch in the *Vita S. Eadwardi*, pp. 56-58.

<sup>68</sup> *Letters*, no. 15, p. 84.

<sup>69</sup> Aelred of Rievaulx, *Vita sancti Edwardi regis et confessoris*, PL 195, cols. 783-790. Migne reprinted the work from R. Twysden, *Rerum Anglicarum scriptores* 10 (London, 1652), pp. 369-414. Frank Barlow discusses these five miracles and argues that they originally stemmed from Osbert's work in *The Life of King Edward*, p. xxxviii, 157-160.

<sup>70</sup> Aelred, cols. 783-784.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, cols. 784-786.

inspired Osbert to the devotion to St Edward, and Osbert, through his preaching on St Edward's anniversary, in turn inspired a feverish knight named Gerin to keep vigil at Edward's tomb. That night Gerin was cured of his fever.<sup>72</sup> The fourth miracle describes how a nun was cured while at Barking Abbey by praying to St Edward.<sup>73</sup> The fifth miracle tells how a Westminster monk was cured by St Edward on Edward's anniversary. This monk then spoke praise of St Edward to a senior brother, whose leg was subsequently cured.<sup>74</sup> Besides this group of miracles fitting into the group of miracles which Osbert learned from personal experiences, the locations of the miracles points to Osbert's authorship. The only location besides Westminster where a miracle occurs is at Barking, a nunnery with which Osbert had close ties. Osbert had two nieces, Cecilia and Margaret, who were both nuns at Barking,<sup>75</sup> and later Osbert was close to Adeliz, the abbess of Barking.<sup>76</sup>

These miracles represent an awakening in the cult activity at Edward's tomb prior to the canonization attempt, and Osbert's involvement in them shows his role as the key promoter of Edward's sanctity at this time. In the second miracle Osbert, while praying to Edward to be cured of his persistent fever, said, "Where, I ask, are your great works that our fathers told us about, works which you did in their days?"<sup>77</sup> Even Osbert admits that miracles had long since ceased to occur at Edward's tomb when he first took an interest in St Edward. The next miracle, where Gerin the knight first became interested in St Edward after hearing Osbert preach on St Edward's day, was likely indicative of the interest at this time in the cult of Edward the Confessor.

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<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, cols. 786-787.

<sup>73</sup> Aelred, cols. 787-788.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, cols. 788-790.

<sup>75</sup> There survives letters from Osbert to each of them, and they are mentioned in his letter to Abbess Adeliz. *Letters*, nos. 21-22, 42, pp. 89-96, 178.

<sup>76</sup> As shown by the composition of his *De armatura castitatis* for her. *Ibid.*, no. 42, pp. 153-179.

<sup>77</sup> "Ubi sunt, rogo, magnalia tua quae narraverunt nobis patres nostri, opera quae operatus es in diebus eorum?" Aelred, col. 785.

Osbert may have even played a role in the first miracle in this group. The servant woman who was struck down with paralysis was taken to an unnamed prior of Westminster, but given the time of the other miracles in the group, it was likely Osbert of Clare.<sup>78</sup> It seems that Osbert was both the enactor and recorder of the activity around Edward's tomb in the 1130s.

### Osbert of Clare's Mission to Rome

The time of Osbert's mission to Rome for the canonization of Edward the Confessor was an important period in the history of canonization itself. In the late eleventh and twelfth centuries the Church hierarchy consolidated their authority in sanctification. Generally, it was stressed that all saints should be officially authorized, and specifically that they should be authorized by the bishop of Rome.<sup>79</sup> It has already been noted that at the Council of Westminster in 1102, the same year as Edward's first translation, it was decreed, "That no one without the sanction of the bishop is on his own responsibility to attach sanctity... to the bodies of dead persons..."<sup>80</sup> Papal canonizations had occurred since the end of the tenth century,<sup>81</sup> but it was not until the twelfth century that papal canonizations, as a result of the centralizing force of the Gregorian Reform Movement, became the established supreme form of sanctity. In 1130 Bernard, bishop of Hildesheim, delayed performing an episcopal canonization because he believed that, "...no one ought to be canonized without apostolic

<sup>78</sup> Frank Barlow suggest this identification in *The Life of King Edward*, p. 158.

<sup>79</sup> The best analysis for the evolution of papal canonization is Eric Kemp, *Canonization and Authority in the Western Church* (Oxford University Press, London, 1948). Also see André Vauchez, *Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages*, tr. Jean Birrell (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1997, first published in French in 1988), pp. 22-32.

<sup>80</sup> "*Nequis temeraria novitate corporibus mortuorum, ... sine episcopali auctoritate reverentiam sanctitatis exhibeat.*" Eadmer, *Historia novorum*, p. 143. The translation is from Eadmer, *History of Recent Events*, p. 151.

<sup>81</sup> The first papal canonization for which a bull exists is the canonization of Bishop Ulric of Augsburg (†973) by Pope John XV in the year 993. Vauchez, p. 22.

permission.”<sup>82</sup> This came to a head in the pontificate of Alexander III (1159-1181), from which time the basic process of sanctification derives. Nevertheless, even before this time many saw papal canonization as the final verification of an individual’s sanctity. In the case of Edward the Confessor’s cult, while Osbert had celebrated the feast of St Edward at Westminster before attempting to obtain papal canonization, he still felt that papal authorization was ultimately necessary.

The first stage of Osbert’s campaign for Edward’s canonization was the writing of the new *vita* and its presentation to Alberic, the papal legate and bishop of Ostia, during his visit to England in 1138. While Bishop Alberic arrived in England during the summer of 1138, it was probably not until December, when an ecclesiastical council was held at Westminster, that he was approached about the canonization of Edward the Confessor.<sup>83</sup> The only document that survives concerning Osbert’s petition to the legate is the prefatory letter to the *Vita S. Eadwardi* which Osbert addressed to Alberic.<sup>84</sup> In arguing for Edward’s sanctity, Osbert sets Edward’s virtues and miracles against the deteriorated state of the English church, thereby making Edward a model of virtue through his canonization.<sup>85</sup>

Osbert, writing to Alberic, claims that, “...the exaltation of saints is your duty.”<sup>86</sup> Whether Osbert expected Alberic to proclaim Edward’s sanctity, and whether Osbert actually believed that it was the papal legate’s responsibility to canonize is uncertain. There was no tradition of legatine canonizations in the first half of the

<sup>82</sup> “...ne quis sine apostolica auctoritate... canonizaretur.” This was regarding the canonization of St Godehard, bishop of Hildesheim. The case of Godehard’s canonization is discussed in Kemp, pp. 74-76.

<sup>83</sup> This council is described by Richard of Hexham, pp. 172-176.

<sup>84</sup> Edited in *Vita S. Eadwardi*, pp. 64-66, and *Letters*, no. 14, pp. 80-83.

<sup>85</sup> *Vita S. Eadwardi*, pp. 64-65. *Letters*, no. 14, pp. 81-82.

<sup>86</sup> “...officium tuum exaltatio sanctorum est.” *Vita S. Eadwardi*, p. 66. *Letters*, no. 14, p. 82.

twelfth century.<sup>87</sup> Perhaps Osbert approached Alberic because he felt that it would impart higher universal prestige than simply an episcopal canonization. A canonization proclaimed by the papal legate would also have asserted Westminster's independence from the see of London. Even if Osbert had wished for an episcopal canonization, the positions of those bishops who might have performed a translation were precarious. The see of London was vacant from 1134 to 1141,<sup>88</sup> and the see of Canterbury was vacant from November of 1136 until Theobald of Bec was elected at the Council of Westminster in 1138.<sup>89</sup> Whatever Osbert's reasons or intentions in approaching Cardinal Alberic, Bernhard Scholz's suggestion that it showed a lack of knowledge about Roman custom seems unfounded.<sup>90</sup> In regards to sanctification, the pontificate of Innocent II was a period of the formation of Roman custom, and Osbert of Clare and Cardinal Alberic were figures in the formation of those ideas. It is not known what exactly Alberic's response to Osbert's request was, but possibly he directed Osbert to take the case before Pope Innocent II in Rome. Soon after the Council of Westminster Osbert began gathering letters of support for the papal canonization of Edward the Confessor.

There are three letters that survive supporting the canonization of St Edward, although there may have originally been more. Abbot Gervase and the community at Westminster might have written a letter which no longer survives, but equally Osbert may have simply served as the representative of Westminster interests himself.<sup>91</sup> In

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<sup>87</sup> The first instance where a papal legate canonizes a saint by the authority of the pope is the canonization of St Rosendo in 1172 by Cardinal Hyacinth, the future Celestine III. See Kemp, pp. 89-90.

<sup>88</sup> Following the death of Gilbert the Universal, Abbot Anselm of Bury was very contentiously elected bishop, but this was quashed in 1138. See Christopher Brooke, *London 800-1216* (Secker & Warburg, London, 1975), pp. 356-357, and Williamson's note on Anselm of Bury in *Letters*, pp. 198-199.

<sup>89</sup> Richard of Hexham, p. 175.

<sup>90</sup> Bernhard Scholz, "The Canonization of Edward the Confessor", *Speculum* 36 (1961), p. 39.

<sup>91</sup> Scholz believed that there was no question as to whether the community of Westminster wrote Innocent a letter. His evidence is a passage in the Innocent's reply to Westminster, where Innocent

the vacancy of the see of London, the canons of St Paul's wrote a brief letter praising St Edward and Westminster Abbey.<sup>92</sup> They were not enthusiastic in their promotion of St Edward, and their ambivalence could not have helped Osbert's cause much. Like many monasteries in the twelfth century, Westminster was constantly trying to assert its independence from the local diocese, that of London.<sup>93</sup> This struggle for greater autonomy is even seen in the *Vita S. Eadwardi*, by the inclusion the miraculous dedication of Westminster by St Peter. In the early seventh century, Bishop Melitus of London was going to perform Westminster's dedication ceremony, but was prevented from reaching the Abbey by high tide. In his absence the dedication was miraculously performed by St Peter himself.<sup>94</sup> Taken symbolically, this story was a statement of Westminster's autonomy from the diocese of London, in which it claimed that it had gained its authority from St Peter and as such from the papacy, the vicar of St Peter. The conflict over authority between Westminster and London came to a head in 1133, when Bishop Gilbert the Universal arrived at Westminster and celebrated mass on the feast of Peter and Paul (29 June). The abbey then sent an embassy to Innocent II, who issued a bull telling King Henry I to place the abbey directly under his protection.<sup>95</sup> Given this antagonistic relationship, it is not surprising that the canons only gave a lukewarm letter of support. Bishop Henry of Winchester, Abbot Gervase's uncle and then papal legate, gave a similarly uninterested response to Osbert's much more

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refers to Osbert coming, '*cum litteris vestris*'. *Letters*, no. 19, p. 87; Scholz, p. 40. I am less certain that there had been a formal letter written by the Westminster monks. The '*litterae vestrae*' could have simply referred to the other letters of support which Osbert and the Westminster community obtained.

<sup>92</sup> *Letters*, no. 18, p. 87.

<sup>93</sup> Westminster's exemption from episcopal authority is addressed above, pp.39-40, 51-52.

<sup>94</sup> *Vita S. Eadwardi*, pp. 83-86.

<sup>95</sup> Mason, *Westminster and its People*, pp. 34-35.

colorful request.<sup>96</sup> The only sincerely supportive letter is from King Stephen, Abbot Gervase's father, but this was penned by Osbert.<sup>97</sup>

In the introduction to Marc Bloch's edition of Osbert's *Vita*, he proposed that King Stephen, his brother Bishop Henry, and his natural son Gervase, abbot of Westminster, were the driving force behind the attempted canonization of Edward the Confessor. For Bloch, Osbert's work was part of an official campaign to enhance the legitimacy of Stephen's reign.<sup>98</sup> In 1961, Bernhard Scholz reexamined the canonization of Edward the Confessor and convincingly displayed the problems with this attractive but unlikely model.<sup>99</sup> The most significant problem with Bloch's model of a royally sponsored canonization attempt is the lack of enthusiasm from those who should be its chief proponents. Most notably, Henry of Winchester's letter is both brief and seemingly uninterested in actually obtaining the canonization of Edward the Confessor. In it his praise of Osbert comes off as more genuine than his reverence for St Edward.<sup>100</sup> King Stephen's letter to Innocent II is more enthusiastic and considerably longer, but this perhaps is because it was likely drafted by Osbert.<sup>101</sup> Furthermore, Osbert's letter to Bishop Henry requesting him to write a letter of support is inconsistent with Henry being one of the main promoters of the mission.<sup>102</sup> However, Scholz perhaps goes too far in discrediting the support Osbert received from the Blois'. Osbert was likely supported by Gervase who, as prior of Westminster, would have benefited from Edward's canonization. Gervase perhaps even petitioned his father for his support. Nevertheless, Osbert was the initiator of the

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<sup>96</sup> Osbert's letter to Henry is the only letter requesting support for the canonization of Edward the Confessor that survives. *Letters*, nos. 15-16, pp. 85; 83-85.

<sup>97</sup> *Letters*, no. 17, pp. 85-87.

<sup>98</sup> *Vita S. Eadwardi*, pp. 12-13.

<sup>99</sup> In the, "The Canonization of Edward the Confessor", Scholz examines both canonization attempts, and especially examines the political implications and connections to Edward's canonization.

<sup>100</sup> *Letters*, no. 16, p. 85.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 17, pp. 85-87.

campaign and not simply an instrument of a royal mission. For the first stage of the campaign, that of the writing of the *Vita* and the petitioning of Alberic, Osbert would have worked without the support of even an abbot, as Gervase was not elected until December of 1138.<sup>103</sup>

After the letters of support, the next surviving documentation of Osbert's mission to Rome is the letter from Innocent II to Abbot Gervase and the community at Westminster explaining why he rejected the petition to canonize Edward the Confessor.<sup>104</sup> This makes the chronology and the details of Osbert's mission to Rome somewhat uncertain.<sup>105</sup> The letter rejecting Edward's canonization is dated 9 December, but does not state a year. Based upon Innocent II's itinerary it would have to be between 1139 and 1142.<sup>106</sup> As Robert de Sigillo was consecrated as the bishop of London in July of 1141,<sup>107</sup> and as it would have been unlikely for the canons of St Paul's to write a letter of support if there had been a bishop, the date of Osbert's mission to Rome can be dated to December of either 1139 or 1140. Osbert's letter to Bishop Henry also contains some clues to the dating of his campaign. In it Osbert refers to Henry as the papal legate.<sup>108</sup> Henry was made legate 1 March 1139, but it was not announced until 29 August.<sup>109</sup> With Henry's nephew as the abbot of Westminster, it is possible that Osbert knew of Henry's position before 29 August, but it is perhaps more probable that the letter dates from after August 1139. In the

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<sup>102</sup> Scholz, "The Canonization...", p. 42.

<sup>103</sup> Osbert does claim that he wrote the *Vita* at the insistence of 'seniores', perhaps other monks working on the monuments of Westminster Abbey alongside Osbert. *Vita S. Eadwardi*, p. 68. As with the production of forgeries at Westminster Abbey, I think it would be wrong to see Osbert as working entirely alone, although his support likely came more from within Westminster as opposed to outside Westminster.

<sup>104</sup> *Letters*, no. 19, pp. 87-88.

<sup>105</sup> The best analysis of the dating of Osbert's trip is in Scholz, "The Canonization...", p. 43.

<sup>106</sup> *Papsturkunden in England*, i, ed. Walther Holtzmann (Berlin, 1930), p. 249.

<sup>107</sup> *Handbook of British Chronology*, third edition, eds. E.B. Fryde, et al. (RHS, London, 1986), p. 258.

<sup>108</sup> *Letters*, no. 15, p. 83.

same letter Osbert states that it is in the fourth year of Stephen's reign, thus providing a terminal date of December 1139.<sup>110</sup> Therefore, although Osbert may have gone to Rome as late as December 1140, late 1139 is a more likely date for Osbert's trip. After first approaching Alberic, it is more plausible that Osbert spent one year gathering letters of support and preparing for his trip, than that it was drawn out over two years.

From the letter of reply that Pope Innocent II sent to Abbot Gervase and the community of Westminster, it appears that Osbert was well received at Rome.<sup>111</sup> After briefly commending Osbert, Innocent goes on to explain why he did not canonize Edward the Confessor. He explains that Edward's canonization required further evidence beyond the letters and the *Vita* which Osbert had brought with him. Innocent also stated that a petition for Edward's canonization should come from the kingdom as a whole, rather than simply from Westminster. This last condition provides an interesting insight into Innocent's perception of Edward's sanctity. Although in his letter to Alberic, Osbert described Edward's canonization as benefiting the whole English church,<sup>112</sup> he predominantly portrayed Edward as a Westminster saint. Innocent's demand that the petition for Edward's canonization come from the whole realm of England shows that he thought that Edward as a saint should hold national, rather than simply local, significance. There were no similar requirements made of the

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<sup>109</sup> William of Malmesbury, *Historia novella*, ed. Edmund King & tr. K.R. Potter (Clarendon, Oxford, 1998), p. 50.

<sup>110</sup> Henry I died on 1 December 1135 and Stephen was crowned on 22 December 1135. It is uncertain how the regnal years of Norman kings were calculated, but from Henry II through Henry III they were calculated from the date of coronation. C.R. Cheney, *Handbook of Dates* (RHS, London, 1945), p. 12. Therefore the latest possible date that the letter could have been written is 21 December 1139.

<sup>111</sup> *Letters*, no. 19, pp. 87-88. The journey from England to Rome typically took approximately seven weeks. See Reginald Poole, *Studies in Chronology and History*, ed. Austin Poole (Clarendon, Oxford, 1934), pp. 263-264. From this it can be presumed that Osbert left Westminster in late September or early October.

<sup>112</sup> *Letters*, no. 14, p. 81. *Vita S. Eadwardi*, pp. 64-65.

four saints Innocent had canonized before December of 1139.<sup>113</sup> Innocent was perhaps also reluctant to papally canonize a lay saint, especially a royal saint. Amongst Innocent's earlier canonizations there were two bishops and two abbots, but no laymen. Although there was a long tradition of royal saints being venerated, the precedent for a papally canonized confessor-king did not take place until the pontificate of Innocent's successor, when in 1146, Eugenius III canonized the Emperor Henry II.<sup>114</sup> The timing of Osbert's visit may also have played a part in the rejection of his cause. While the canonizations of St Godehard of Hildesheim and St Sturm of Fulda were done at church synods, Innocent only had his curia to consult about the petition for Edward's canonization.<sup>115</sup> Additionally, there is no indication that Osbert had supporters within the curia to help push his cause through.

Osbert's mission to Rome was probably also undermined by the deterioration of political stability in England. In June of 1139, King Stephen arrested the bishops of Salisbury, Ely and Lincoln on suspicion of supporting the Angevin claims of the Empress Matilda, and on 30 September Matilda landed in England to claim the throne by force.<sup>116</sup> By the time Osbert was received in Rome, full civil war was raging in England. The actual extent of the effects of political considerations in the rejection of Edward's canonization is highly debatable. In the early part of the twentieth century,

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<sup>113</sup> The canonizations of Godehard of Hildesheim, Gerard of Brogne, Hugh of Grenoble, and Sturm of Fulda are discussed in Kemp, pp. 74-76.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 78-79. The only papally canonized king before this was the murdered King Canute IV of Denmark, whose cult was approved of in 1101 by Pope Paschal II. *Ibid.*, pp. 69-70.

<sup>115</sup> Scholz, "The Canonization..." p. 48.

<sup>116</sup> Orderic Vitalis, *The Ecclesiastical History*, vi, ed. & tr. Majorie Chibnall (Clarendon, Oxford, 1978), pp. 531-535. William of Malmesbury, *Historia novella*, pp. 44-62. *Gesta Stephani*, ed. & tr. K.R. Potter (Clarendon, Oxford, 1955), pp. 51-58.

both Armitage Robinson and Marc Bloch saw Innocent's rejection of Osbert's cause in purely political terms.<sup>117</sup>

... Osbert started for Rome, carrying his *Life of St Edward* with him. But the moment was most unpropitious. On 24 June 1139, the king suddenly arrested Roger of Sarum and Alexander of Lincoln at Oxford, and the news must quickly have reached Rome. So, too, must the further news of the landing of the Empress Matilda on 30 September. Pope Innocent II, who had hitherto supported Stephen, would not now be likely to do any favour for his son, the abbot of Westminster.<sup>118</sup>

Conversely, Bernhard Scholz rejected the notion that Innocent's decision was based upon political considerations, and only conceded that, "...the Curia sensed the political imponderables which an officially canonized king might carry in the relationship between church and state."<sup>119</sup> More recently, Frank Barlow has restated the purely political hypothesis.<sup>120</sup>

Innocent's true reasons for postponing the canonization of Edward the Confessor perhaps lie between these two extremes. There is no reason to completely reject the reason which he gave in his letter to Gervase and the community of Westminster that Edward's canonization required further testimonies and evidence.<sup>121</sup> The letters of support which he brought with him were lacking in both quantity and quality. Particularly, Innocent stated that he wanted more testimonies from abbots and bishops. Nevertheless, it seems improbable that the familial ties of those who gave their support to the canonization escaped Innocent's scrutiny. One letter came from King Stephen, one was from his brother Henry of Winchester, and the abbot of Westminster, where the petition originated from, was his son. Only the letter from the canons of London and Osbert's own testimony originated outside of Stephen's

<sup>117</sup> Robinson argues this in his article on Osbert of Clare, printed as the introduction to Osbert's *Letters*, no. 1, p. 47. Bloch makes a similar argument in the introduction to his edition of the *Vita S. Eadwardi*, p. 14.

<sup>118</sup> *Letters*, p. 18.

<sup>119</sup> Scholz, "The Canonization...", p. 47.

<sup>120</sup> Barlow, *Edward the Confessor*, p. 276.

immediate family. While it does not appear that King Stephen, or even his son Gervase, was behind Osbert's mission to Rome, it perhaps appeared that way to Pope Innocent. At least it would have been a favor to Stephen's son Gervase; at most it would have been a sign of papal support for King Stephen. Given all of this, Innocent's cautious reply is not surprising.

Although Innocent deferred the canonization of Edward the Confessor until Westminster had obtained further evidence, Osbert's mission to Rome was not a complete failure. He used his audience with the curia as an opportunity to champion the rights and property of Westminster Abbey. Four papal bulls survive attesting this, all dating from 9 December: two addressed to Westminster, one to Bishop Henry, and one to King David of Scotland. In the first letter to Westminster, Innocent stated that he had written to Henry of Winchester, ordering him to protect Westminster and to restore property which had been unjustly seized.<sup>122</sup> The letter from Innocent to Bishop Henry stated how Osbert told Innocent that many of Westminster's properties were wrongly taken, and then went on to instruct Henry to regain these lands for Westminster and protect the abbey in the future.<sup>123</sup> Innocent's letter to King David of Scotland requested that he confirm the land grant to supply the thirty shillings which he had promised to the abbey for the commemoration of his late sister Queen Matilda, wife of Henry I, who was buried at Westminster.<sup>124</sup>

The final papal bull in this group is addressed to Abbot Gervase and the monks of Westminster.<sup>125</sup> It may actually have been produced or expanded by Osbert,

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<sup>121</sup> *Letters*, no. 19, pp. 87-88.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 20, p. 88.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 20, p. 88.

<sup>124</sup> *Papsturkunden in England*, pp. 250-251.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 249-250.

although the proof is inconclusive.<sup>126</sup> Regardless of whether or not Osbert altered the letter, his influence is clear within it. Gervase is instructed to protect the regalia of King Edward, items which first appeared in Osbert's forged charters, and not to sell them. He is also instructed to regain lost lands and tithes and to consult the Westminster monks in governing the monastery. Further, the papal bull ordered the monks to obey their abbot. That Osbert went to Rome to seek the papal canonization of Edward the Confessor and returned to England with letters protecting the rights and lands of Westminster only emphasizes the strong link between Osbert's promotion of St Edward's cult and his promotion of Westminster's rights.<sup>127</sup>

### **The Canonization of St Edward**

Nothing more is heard of St Edward at Westminster for twenty years after Osbert of Clare's failed canonization attempt. Osbert was likely sent back into exile not long after returning from Rome, and without its chief promoter there does not appear to have been any interest in the papal canonization of Edward the Confessor. The stimulus for the next attempt by Westminster Abbey to obtain the canonization of St Edward appears to have been the election of Abbot Lawrence c. 1158.<sup>128</sup> Shortly after his arrival at Westminster, Abbot Lawrence was approached by some of the monks about Edward's canonization.<sup>129</sup> "For how long will our precious treasure remain hidden in the ground? For how long will so great and so splendid virtues of the

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<sup>126</sup> See Barbara Harvey, "Abbot Gervase de Blois and the Fee-Farms of Westminster Abbey", *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research* 40 (1967), pp. 128-129.

<sup>127</sup> See above, pp. 55-59.

<sup>128</sup> Armitage Robinson discusses the date of Lawrence's accession in Flete, *Flete's History of Westminster Abbey* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1909), p. 143.

<sup>129</sup> The main narrative for the canonization of St Edward is in Richard of Cirencester's fourteenth-century *Speculum historiale*, ii, RS 30 (1869), pp. 319-327. Also see Barlow, *Edward the Confessor*, pp. 277-283.

holy man remain hidden from the world?”<sup>130</sup> After consulting the Westminster monks and examining the life and book of miracles, presumably Osbert’s *Vita* and perhaps the Anonymous’,<sup>131</sup> Lawrence sought the support of Archbishop Theobald of Canterbury, Archbishop Roger of York, Bishop Richard de Belmeis of London, and bishops, abbots and religious men from across England. In the fall of 1160, Lawrence crossed over to Normandy to get the support of King Henry. From there he appears to have gone to Paris and enlisted the support of the papal legates Cardinal Henry of St Nereus and Achilles and Cardinal Otto of St Nicolas.<sup>132</sup> Besides simply arguing his case to the cardinals, Lawrence brought with him a piece of Edward’s burial shroud, the pristine condition of which showed the incorruption of Edward’s body.<sup>133</sup> After receiving a letter of support from the two cardinals, Lawrence sent an envoy to Pope Alexander III in Anagni, although he himself did not go because of the difficulty of the journey.<sup>134</sup>

In the fifteenth century, the Westminster historian John Flete claimed that Osbert was amongst the delegation of men Abbot Lawrence had sent to Alexander III.<sup>135</sup> However, there is no indication what his source is for this detail. He seems to have inserted Osbert into the narrative taken from Richard of Cirencester’s *Historiale*. Because of this, most modern historians have discounted Osbert’s direct involvement in the canonization mission of 1160/61.<sup>136</sup> Only Frank Barlow suggested that the nagging monk who approached Abbot Lawrence in Richard’s narrative was in fact

<sup>130</sup> “*Usquequo celabitur in terra defossus thesaurus noster pretiosus? Usquequo merita beati viri tanta tamque praeclara absconderunt a saeculo?*” Richard of Cirencester, p. 319.

<sup>131</sup> See Barlow, *Edward the Confessor*, p. 278.

<sup>132</sup> As shown by their letter to Pope Alexander III edited in *Ibid.*, pp. 311-312.

<sup>133</sup> Barlow, *Edward the Confessor*, pp. 311-312.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 312.

<sup>135</sup> Flete, p. 92.

<sup>136</sup> See, for example, Scholz, “The Canonization...”, p. 50, or Robinson in *Letters*, p. 19.

Osbert of Clare.<sup>137</sup> However, Barlow stops there, and then claims that Osbert would have been too old to have accompanied the embassy to Pope Alexander III.<sup>138</sup> There are indications though that Osbert did go abroad at this time to promote the cult of St Edward. In his *De armatura castitatis*, written to Abbess Adeliz of Barking, Osbert claimed that he had gone to Ely to pray to St Aetheldreda in preparation for his crossing to see King Henry.<sup>139</sup> Osbert's comment only serves as a passing note in the treatise, yet it tells immense amounts about both Osbert's career at this time and about Abbot Lawrence's campaign for Edward's canonization. Due to Henry's itinerary and when Abbess Adeliz was in office, this letter can be dated either January 1156 x April 1157 or August 1158 x January 1163.<sup>140</sup> The only explanation for Osbert's crossing over to Normandy at this time is that he intended to accompany Abbot Lawrence to obtain Henry II's support for the canonization of Edward the Confessor, and if he went to Normandy then he must also have accompanied the party on to Paris where they met with cardinals Henry and Otto. In Paris the party split, and it is impossible to tell if Osbert returned to England with Abbot Lawrence or joined the delegation to the curia at Anagni. However, seen in this light, Flete's assertion that Osbert was among those who met with Alexander does not seem improbable.

Even though Osbert may have instilled the idea of the canonization of Edward the Confessor in Abbot Lawrence's head, much of the execution of the canonization should be attributed to Lawrence. This is exemplified by the difference in the preparation between the canonization attempt of 1139/40 and that of 1160/61. While in the first attempt, Westminster obtained letters of support from King Stephen, the

<sup>137</sup> Barlow, *Edward the Confessor*, p. 278.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 280.

<sup>139</sup> *Letters*, no. 42, p. 157. Interestingly, Frank Barlow does note this letter but stops short of drawing any conclusions from it. Barlow, *Edward the Confessor*, p. 280 (note 6).

canons of London, and the bishop of Winchester, in 1160 Westminster obtained letters from fourteen men, including King Henry, two cardinals, one archbishop, six bishops, two abbots, and two other churchmen.<sup>141</sup> Additionally, both Archbishop Theobald of Canterbury and Richard de Belmeis of London supported the canonization, as shown by Richard of Cirencester's narrative, although their letters have not survived.<sup>142</sup> Westminster made sure to fulfill Innocent II's requirement that the petition for Edward's canonization come from the whole of England.

In the letters for the first canonization attempt Osbert's virtues were praised; in those from 1160, it is Lawrence's virtues that are praised.<sup>143</sup> These letters show that Lawrence was seen by his contemporaries as the chief instigator of the canonization attempt of 1160/61. There is, however, a possibility that Osbert played an active role at this time in the gathering of support for Edward's canonization. In the same letter to Abbess Adeliz where Osbert wrote that he was going abroad to see King Henry, he says that he had just been at Ely.<sup>144</sup> It is possible that on this trip to Ely Osbert obtained the letter from Bishop Nigel supporting the canonization attempt.<sup>145</sup>

When the Westminster delegation arrived at Anagni they received a warm welcome from the papal curia. It was noted above that in 1139 the political situation in England may have had an adverse effect on Innocent's decision to postpone Edward's canonization. The situation in 1160 was reversed. In 1139 there were two

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<sup>140</sup> For Henry's movements in this period of his reign, see W.L. Warren, *Henry II* (Eyre Methuen, London, 1973), pp. 64-96.

<sup>141</sup> There are thirteen letters in all, as the cardinals Henry and Otto wrote a joint letter. They are edited in Barlow, *Edward the Confessor*, pp. 310-323. As Barlow notes, the identities of some of the writers are not certain.

<sup>142</sup> Richard of Cirencester, p. 320. Nigel of Ely also refers to Theobald's support in his letter. Barlow, *Edward the Confessor*, p. 317.

<sup>143</sup> Of the thirteen letters, nine mention Lawrence by name as the instigator of the petition.

<sup>144</sup> *Letters*, no. 42, p. 157.

<sup>145</sup> The letter from Bishop Nigel is edited in Barlow, *Edward the Confessor*, pp. 316-317. Interestingly, Bishop Nigel's letter is one of only four letters which does not give Lawrence as the instigator of the canonization attempt. Instead he claims that he was joining with Archbishop Theobald in petitioning

claimants to the English throne; in 1160 there were two rival popes vying for the papacy. During the fall of 1160 King Henry II announced his support for Alexander III over the rival claimant Victor IV. King Louis VII of France also supported Alexander, but Victor was supported by the Emperor Frederick Barbarossa.<sup>146</sup> By the time that the Westminster delegation arrived in Anagni, Alexander was inclined to do favors for Henry and a cause which he supported. Alexander's debt to England comes out in the letters supporting Edward's canonization. Nine out of the thirteen surviving letters make reference to the papal schism and Henry II's support of Alexander III.<sup>147</sup> Gilbert Foliot even implies that canonization should be granted in gratitude for England's support.<sup>148</sup> Certainly, Henry had much to gain from the canonization of an English king, especially one who was his kinsman, but the canonization attempt was essentially a Westminster project and seems to have simply benefited from the canonization's association with King Henry.<sup>149</sup>

The Westminster delegation met with Alexander III in private where they showed him Innocent II's letter postponing the canonization, the *Vita* (presumably Osbert's) and the letters obtained by Westminster supporting Edward's canonization.<sup>150</sup> Pleased with the evidence brought before him, and with the common consent of the cardinals, Alexander proclaimed the canonization in nearly identical

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for the canonization of Edward the Confessor. This perhaps implies that it was not Lawrence who asked Nigel for support.

<sup>146</sup> The English and French kings were advised in councils in the summer of 1160 to support Alexander III, but Henry did not announce his position until October or November of the year. See Frank Barlow, "The English, Norman, and French Councils Called to Deal with the Papal Schism of 1159", *EHR* 51 (1936), pp. 264-268.

<sup>147</sup> Scholz, "The Canonization...", pp. 50-51. These references date the letters to late 1160 to early 1161, as the canonization was proclaimed on 7 February.

<sup>148</sup> Barlow, *Edward the Confessor*, p. 314.

<sup>149</sup> Scholz thoroughly discusses the political significance for Henry II of Edward the Confessor's canonization, but seems to lose sight of the principal role of Westminster Abbey in the canonization attempt of 1160. "The Canonization...", pp. 51-60.

<sup>150</sup> Richard of Cirencester, pp. 321-322.

bulls to Westminster and the English church as a whole dated 7 February 1161.<sup>151</sup> In these letters Alexander stated that normally canonizations were proclaimed through a church council, but in the case of Edward the Confessor, he was happy to proclaim it at the time.<sup>152</sup>

Alexander III's decision may have been politically expedient, but nevertheless there seems little reason to disregard the *prima facie* reason that Alexander was satisfied with the documentation that the Westminster monks brought with them. Innocent II's letter had been very favorable to the canonization of Edward the Confessor, but had simply asked for further evidence from the kingdom of England as a whole. This was very clearly supplied by the letters that had been gathered supporting Westminster's petition. Of the thirteen English bishops in the fall of 1160, the Westminster petition was supported by nine, including both archbishops.<sup>153</sup> This would seem to have fulfilled the requirement set out by Innocent II.

Just as in the case of the earlier canonization attempt, the Westminster monks used their audience with the pope to promote Westminster rights and possessions.<sup>154</sup> There are two other papal bulls dated 7 February securing Westminster lands. The first is to Roger, the infirmarer, confirming the churches of Battersea and Wandsworth to the infirmary;<sup>155</sup> the second is to Walter the sacrist, confirming the church of Sawbridgeworth to provide candles for the altar.<sup>156</sup> There is also a papal bull dated 18 April, granting Abbot Lawrence and his successors the right to wear the mitre and

<sup>151</sup> The letter to the English church is in *Ibid.*, pp. 322-323, while the Westminster letter is edited in Barlow, *Edward the Confessor*, pp. 323-324.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 324.

<sup>153</sup> The bishoprics of Carlisle, Coventry, Exeter and Worcester were vacant at this time.

<sup>154</sup> See Mason, p. 54.

<sup>155</sup> Calendared in *Westminster Abbey Charters*, no. 169, and edited in *Papsturkunden in England*, no. 85.

<sup>156</sup> Calendared in *Westminster Abbey Charters*, no. 170, and edited in *Papsturkunden in England*, no. 86.

ring.<sup>157</sup> This bull was written sometime between 1160 and 1173, although 1161 seems the most probable date.<sup>158</sup> If it was obtained in 1161, then either a representative from Westminster, perhaps even Osbert of Clare, stayed at the papal curia, or they sent a new delegation in the spring of 1161.

Alexander appointed a cardinal to say the first mass of St Edward, and once back in England a second mass was celebrated, with the bull of canonization being read at it.<sup>159</sup> However, Lawrence waited to translate Edward's body until King Henry could be present, which, as Henry was on the continent until the early part of 1163, meant that over two years passed between the papal proclamation of canonization and the translation of Edward's body.<sup>160</sup> This gave Lawrence time to ask his kinsman, the distinguished Cistercian abbot and author, Aelred of Rievaulx, to rewrite the *Vita S. Eadwardi*.<sup>161</sup>

The translation took place in two stages. Before the formal translation, Abbot Lawrence and the some of the monks of Westminster opened Edward's tomb to examine the body and make sure that it was still incorrupt. After they found Edward's body in the same condition as it had been left sixty years earlier, Lawrence took Edward's ring as a personal relic and they moved the body to the new shrine.<sup>162</sup> The formal translation took place on 13 October 1163, just twelve days after the great council of Westminster which marked the beginning of the schism between Henry II

<sup>157</sup> Calendared in *Westminster Abbey Charters*, no. 173, and edited in *Papsturkunden in England*, no. 118. Knowles briefly discusses the significance to twelfth century English abbots of this and other exemption rights in *The Monastic Order in England*, second edition (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1963), pp. 583-586, 711-712.

<sup>158</sup> See Mason, p. 54.

<sup>159</sup> Richard of Cirencester, p. 323.

<sup>160</sup> For the purpose of this present I have only glossed the events following Edward's canonization. A more indepth examination can be found in Barlow, *Edward the Confessor*, pp. 281-284.

<sup>161</sup> Walter Daniel, *The Life of Ailred of Rievaulx*, ed. & tr. Maurice Powicke (Clarendon, Oxford, 1950), pp. 41-42.

<sup>162</sup> Richard of Cirencester, pp. 324-325.

and Archbishop Thomas Becket.<sup>163</sup> Given the growing conflict between Henry and Becket, the canonization and subsequent translation would have had more significance to Henry's legitimacy than it would have had even two years earlier. Nevertheless, both sides came together at Westminster for the translation of St Edward the Confessor. Aelred of Rievaulx perhaps gave the sermon and presented his new *Vita S. Edwardi*.<sup>164</sup> Interestingly, Thomas Becket, rather than taking the customary corporeal relic as his fee for overseeing the translation, took the stone in which St Edward held Bishop Wulfstan of Worcester's crozier, showing his support for the future saint against King William.<sup>165</sup>

#### **Aelred of Rievaulx's *Vita S. Edwardi regis et confessoris***

It remains only to examine briefly Aelred of Rievaulx's *Vita S. Edwardi*, the successor to Osbert of Clare's *Vita*. While Osbert drew from multiple sources to create a purely hagiographical life, Aelred simply had to rewrite Osbert's *Vita*. Aelred added very little to Osbert's *Life*, but rather rewrote it in a smoother and more modern style. The one secular aspect to Edward the Confessor remaining in Osbert's *Vita*, Edward's description, was removed, and Aelred supplemented the historic aspects of the *Vita* with information from chronicles.<sup>166</sup> Aelred's main additions consisted of four *in vita* stories and five new miracles that follow the first translation of St Edward, where the surviving copy of Osbert's *Vita* ends. There is evidence that the five

<sup>163</sup> This council is discussed in Warren, pp. 465-470.

<sup>164</sup> Walter Daniel, pp. 41-42. Most modern historians have taken Aelred's presence from the mid-fourteenth century *Chronicon Anglie Petriburgense*, ed. J.A. Giles, Caxton Society 2 (1845), p. 96. This, however, could be a misreading of Walter Daniel, who simply states that Aelred wrote the *Vita S. Edwardi* and a homily to be read at the ceremony. Aelred Squire, *Aelred of Rievaulx* (S.P.C.K., London, 1969), p. 95.

<sup>165</sup> Gervase of Canterbury, *Gesta regum* in *The Historical Works of Gervase of Canterbury*, ii, ed. W. Stubbs, RS 73 (1880), pp. 285.

miracles at the end of the *Vita* actually represent Osbert's work,<sup>167</sup> but the four *in vita* stories appear to be Aelred's own additions. These include: a story of Edward catching a thief who is stealing from the treasury and helping him escape,<sup>168</sup> a story of Harold and Tostig as children fighting and Edward's prophecy thereof,<sup>169</sup> the story of Earl Godwin's miserable death<sup>170</sup> and a story of how Edward gave a ring to St John the Evangelist disguised as a beggar, which was then returned to him by way of some wayward pilgrims.<sup>171</sup>

The other significant change that occurs in Aelred's *Vita* is the reinterpretation of Edward's prophecy of the Green Tree. While lying on his deathbed Edward told those around him that great evils would plague England until a green tree, which had been cut down and the top carried three furlongs away from the trunk, was rejoined and began to bear fruit.<sup>172</sup> Osbert interpreted this vision as an impossibility, and thereby forecasting the Norman invasion.<sup>173</sup> Aelred, however, writing in the reign of Henry II, interpreted the tree as representing the English line of kings. The tree, just like the line of Anglo-Saxon kings, was cut with Edward's death. It is only through Henry II, who is related by blood to Edward the Confessor, that the English line of Kings is restored.<sup>174</sup> Edward's prophecy of the Green Tree to Aelred looked forward to the prosperity of Henry II's reign.

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<sup>166</sup> In his prefatory letter to Lawrence, Aelred even states his intention to keep the basic meaning of Osbert's work, but to add information gathered from reliable chronicles and the accounts of old men. Aelred, col. 740.

<sup>167</sup> See above, pp. 76-77.

<sup>168</sup> Aelred, col. 746.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*, cols. 765-766.

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*, cols. 766-767. This story was likely taken from William of Malmesbury. *Gesta regum*, p. 355.

<sup>171</sup> Aelred, col. 769-770. This is a very interesting story which becomes a key iconographic image in later pictures of Edward the Confessor. It may in fact have been in Osbert's *Vita*, although probably not. However it is in a partial copy of Osbert's *Life* in C.C.C.C. MS 161. This is edited as an appendix to Bloch's edition of the *Vita S. Eadwardi*, pp. 124-128. Also see Bloch's analysis, pp. 58-59.

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 108. Aelred, col. 773.

<sup>173</sup> *Vita S. Eadwardi*, pp. 108-109.

<sup>174</sup> Aelred, cols. 773-774.

Although Aelred's *Vita S. Edwardi* became the standard Latin life and the source for all later vernacular lives and chronicle narrations, its role in the historical development of the early cult of Edward the Confessor was relatively insignificant.<sup>175</sup> It was written only after the papal canonization perhaps to publicize the cult. Historically, the most important life of Edward the Confessor was clearly that of Osbert of Clare. Pieced together from very different sources to form a coherent hagiographical text, it not only served as the body of Aelred's *Vita*, but it was also the text that was used to prove Edward's sanctity before the papal curia. Similarly, Osbert himself can be seen as the double fountainhead of the cult of Edward the Confessor. Through his preaching he established the celebration of Edward's feast day at Westminster and encouraged what small local cult existed; through his active campaigning he brought about the official papal canonization. Although he may not have lived long enough to see Edward's translation to a new shrine where he could be appropriately venerated as a saint, nevertheless the triumph was Osbert's.

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<sup>175</sup> The earliest adaptation of Aelred's *Vita S. Edwardi* is the Anglo-Norman verse life of St Edward produced at Barking Abbey between 1163-1169. Barking at that time was closely associated with the royal court, but Osbert of Clare also had close ties to the abbey in the mid-twelfth century. Two of Osbert's nieces were nuns at Barking and he was also in correspondence with Abbess Adeliz. M. Dominica Legge, *Anglo-Norman Literature and its Background* (Clarendon, Oxford, 1963), pp. 60-66.

## Chapter Four

### Osbert of Clare's Latin Style

Few modern scholars have been kind towards Osbert of Clare's Latin style. In the early twentieth century André Wilmart stated that, "As writer, he displays... magnificent faults."<sup>1</sup> Marc Bloch was somewhat less harsh when describing Osbert's *Vita S. Eadwardi*: "His style does not miss a certain personal savor. He has his favorite literary devices, notably the direct speech that he uses and abuses. In brief he has his style; but what a style!"<sup>2</sup> Noting Aelred of Rievaulx's reworking of the *Vita S. Eadwardi*, he continued: "We understand that posterity preferred the colorless and easy Latin of Aelred to this pretentious verbosity."<sup>3</sup> In a thankful criticism of Osbert's wordiness, Stephen van Dijk noted Osbert's contribution to our knowledge of the early celebration of the conception of Mary in England by saying:

Fortunately for us, Osbert could never bring himself to come straight to the point. With a dose of flourish and verbiage, he first reviews some detailed facts, explaining how he himself became involved in the discussions around the feast, and why he needed the information requested.<sup>4</sup>

Even the editor of his letters, Edward Williamson, who is typically complimentary to Osbert, noted that he was too verbose. "His devotion to religion and his scholarship were deep and genuine; but they lacked restraint, and were too florid even for the

<sup>1</sup> "Comme écrivain, il étale ... des défauts magnifiques." *St Anne*, pp. 267-268.

<sup>2</sup> "Sa manière ne manque pas d'une certaine saveur personnelle. Il a ses procédés littéraires préférés, notamment le discours direct dont il use et abuse. En un mot il a son style; mais quel style!" *Vita S. Eadwardi*, p. 55.

<sup>3</sup> "On comprend que la postérité ait préféré à cette prolixité prétentieuse le latin incolore et facile d'Ailred." *Ibid.*, p. 55.

<sup>4</sup> S.J.P. van Dijk, "The Origin of the Latin Feast of the Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary", *Dublin Review* 228 (1954), pp. 432-433.

monks who lived in ‘the renaissance of the twelfth century’.<sup>5</sup> Similarly, in the nineteenth century, Henry Bradley stated: “... his letters show some literary ability, though their style is disfigured by excessive affection of wit and display of classical learning.”<sup>6</sup>

Some modern scholars, however, have been more favorable to Osbert’s Latin style. Frederic Raby, after claiming that Osbert’s hymns to St Anne did not “reach a high flight”, praised the prose style of his sermons.<sup>7</sup> More recently, Rodney Thomson argued that Osbert’s florid style was an example of the colorful style of Benedictine writing in the first half of the twelfth century.<sup>8</sup>

Osbert also had medieval critics of his style. Both Aelred of Rievaulx and Gerald of Wales rewrote different pieces of Osbert’s hagiography in the late twelfth century. Aelred, in writing his *Vita S. Edwardi*, stated that he merely updated Osbert’s life.<sup>9</sup> Gerald of Wales, however, used the opportunity of the writing of his *Vita S. Ethelberti* to criticize his predecessor’s Latin style. “At the insistence of our canons we have explained more briefly and clearly the life of the St Ethelbert... than the earlier sermon, composed awkwardly and with long digressions.”<sup>10</sup> Gerald’s criticism was in part a justification for the need for a new life of St Ethelbert;<sup>11</sup> nevertheless, Osbert and Gerald’s *vitae* are stylistically different. In reworking Osbert’s *Vita S. Aethelbrichti*, Gerald removed many of Osbert’s florid dramatic elements, making a shorter and smoother saint’s life.

<sup>5</sup> *Letters*, p. 36.

<sup>6</sup> Henry Bradley, “Clare, Osbert de”, in *Dictionary of National Biography* 10 (1887), p. 388.

<sup>7</sup> F.J.E. Raby, *A History of Christian-Latin Poetry from the Beginnings to the Close of the Middle Ages*, second edition (Clarendon, Oxford, 1953), p. 344.

<sup>8</sup> Rodney Thomson, “Two Versions of a Saint’s Life from St Edmund’s Abbey: Changing Currents in XIIth Century Style”, *Revue Bénédictine* 84 (1974), p. 383.

<sup>9</sup> Aelred of Rievaulx, *Vita S. Edwardi*, PL 195, cols. 39-40.

<sup>10</sup> “*Vitam sancti Aethelberti... longis ambagibus ante rudique sermone congestam concanonicorum nostrorum instantia brevius admodum et dilucidius explanavimus.*” Gerald, p. 236.

Most of the criticism of Osbert of Clare's Latin style centers around his undisputedly florid writing style. Although his ornate manner can seem almost melodramatic in places to modern readers, it is nevertheless a vivid style. The beginning of Osbert's description of Edward the Confessor's vision of the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus is typical of the tone of his writings.

The zeal of the house of God freed this glorious prince's soul from the weight of worldly cares, so that he might more easily be an eager explorer of divine studies. As far as he could, he put off harmful tasks, and his mind thrived, busy with spiritual duties. Accordingly 'the King of kings and the Lord of lords' showed him so much love that he intimately instilled in him many of his hidden secrets.<sup>12</sup>

A similar vibrancy can be seen in the writings of Osbert's contemporary Orderic Vitalis (1075-c.1143). In his *Historia ecclesiastica*, Orderic describes the downfall of William fitzOsbern as such:

Truly the glory of this world falls and withers like the flower of grass: even as smoke it fades and passes. Where is William fitzOsbern, earl of Hereford, regent of the king, steward of Normandy and gallant leader in battle? He indeed was the first and greatest oppressor of the English, and harshly supported a huge following, which caused the ruin and wretched death of many thousands. Verily the judge sees all things and rewards each one according to his deserts. For Alas! see how the brave warrior William fell and received just retribution.<sup>13</sup>

Both Osbert and Orderic's prose styles reflect their Benedictine monastic education.<sup>14</sup>

Their writings are steeped in biblical models, not only in direct references to scripture,

<sup>11</sup> Osbert himself uses this hagiographic topos to justify the need to compose a new *Life of St Edburga*. *Vita S. Eadburgae*, p. 259; *Letters*, no. 43, p.179.

<sup>12</sup> "Zelus domus Dei gloriosi principis animum a secularium remouebat repressione curarum, ut liberius diuinorum feruidus existeret indagator studiorum. Noxia quantum poterat reiciebat onera, et spiritualibus mens eius uigebat stipendiis occupata. Unde Rex regum et Dominus dominantium tantam ei dilectionem exhibuit, quod multa de secretis suis archana regi familiariter insinuaui." *Vita S. Eadwardi*, p. 98. The translation is from *The Life of King Edward*, ed. & tr. Frank Barlow (Nelson & Sons, London, 1962), p. 66.

<sup>13</sup> "Vere gloria mundi ut flos foeni decedit et arescit, ac velut fumus deficit et transit. Ubi est Guillelmus Osborni filius, Herfordensis comes et regis uicarius, Normanniae dapifer et magister militum bellicosus? Hic nimirum primus et maximus oppressor Anglorum extitit, et enormem causam per temeritatem suam enutriuuit, per quam multis milibus ruina miserae mortis incubuit. Verum iustus iudex omnia videt, et unicuique prout meretur digne redibet. Proh dolor ecce Guillelmus corruit, audax athleta recepit quod promeruit." Orderic Vitalis, *The Ecclesiastical History*, ii, ed. & tr. Majorie Chibnall (Clarendon, Oxford, 1969), pp. 318-321.

<sup>14</sup> Although this florid writing style was characteristic of some early twelfth-century Benedictine writers, it was in no way a universal characteristic. Many English Benedictine authors from the first half of the twelfth century, such as Eadmer of Canterbury or William of Malmesbury, wrote in a much

but also in their use of biblical syntax and vocabulary. This early twelfth-century Benedictine style is a stark difference from the less rhetorical, university-trained style of authors such as Gerald of Wales, who wrote a generation after Osbert.<sup>15</sup>

In the introductory letter to his *Vita S. Eadburgae*, Osbert explained his own beliefs as to what constituted good style:

As Seneca of Corduba said: ‘Often good subject matter fails without oration.’<sup>16</sup> Therefore the rhetorical beauty of the orator should increase this dignity, so that the pure idea is laid out in the elegance of words, the construction responds equally polished in composition, and the handsome sentence flourishes in dignity with distinct diversity. And since there are three types of speech, namely the serious, common and simple forms of speech, thus for me the middle form is the path to employ so that I do not carry speech to the lowest position.<sup>17</sup>

For Osbert, like many of his contemporaries, good composition consisted of decorating preexisting *materia* with ornamentation.<sup>18</sup> The subject matter, in this case the deeds of St Edburga, exists with or without the composition, but the author's duty was to tell this matter in a beautiful and interesting way. This is done throughout the writing process. The author carefully selects words, places these words into sentences and arranges these sentences to make an engaging composition.

Osbert's division within this passage between the three types of speech, *gravis*, *mediocris* and *attenuata*, was a common rhetorical concept from classical Latin. It

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more concise style. Richard Southern even praised Eadmer's ability to be rhetorical and vivid, but still remain clear and precise. Eadmer, *The Life of St Anselm*, ed. & tr. R.W. Southern (Nelson and Sons, London, 1962), pp. xxv-xxvii.

<sup>15</sup> Robert Bartlett specifically addressed the differences between Osbert of Clare's biblical style and Gerald of Wales' classical style in their respective lives of St Ethelbert. Robert Bartlett, "Rewriting Saints' Lives: The Case of Gerald of Wales", *Speculum* 58 (1983), pp. 607-610. Aspects of the changing Latin style of the twelfth century are considered in Rodney Thomson, "Two Versions..."; and in Janet Martin, "Classicism and Style in Latin Literature", in *Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelfth Century*, eds. Robert Benson and Giles Constable (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, 1982), pp. 537-568.

<sup>16</sup> Seneca, *Ep.* xlvi, 16.

<sup>17</sup> "Ut enim Seneca Cordubensis ait: Saepe bona materia cessat sine artifice. Oratoris igitur color rhetoricus hac maiestate debet excellere ut in elegantia verborum puritas sit aperta, et in compositione constructio respondeat aequaliter perpolita, et in dignitate reflorat sententia pulcra varietate distincta. Et cum tria sint orationis genera, gravis figura scilicet, mediocris et attenuata, sic medium terere penes me decretum est tramitem ut ad locutionis infimum non decurram sermonem." *Letters*, pp. 179-180; *Vita S. Eadburgae*, p. 259.

<sup>18</sup> Martin, "Classicism and Style...", p. 540-541.

was elucidated in the widely distributed *Rhetorica ad Herennium* (often called the *Rhetorica nova*), which was wrongly attributed to Cicero in the Middle Ages.<sup>19</sup> Augustine also uses this same threefold division in his *De doctrina Christiana*, using the terms ‘*graviter*’, ‘*moderate*’ and ‘*submissa*’.<sup>20</sup> However, Osbert’s statement that he tries to keep to the middle level so as not to digress into the *attenuata* level of speech, goes against Augustine’s teaching on the three levels of speech. For Augustine the three levels were not strictly hierarchical, and each level should be used in different situations. For example, according to Augustine, the *submissa* level of speech should be used for teaching.<sup>21</sup> Augustine also thought that an author should mix the different forms of speech to maintain the audience’s attention.<sup>22</sup> Osbert, on the other hand, believed that he should keep to one level speech, and apparently viewed the unornamental *attenuata* level of speech as inferior to the other two levels of speech. His indirect acknowledgement that he did not write in the grand, or *gravis* style, was perhaps meant to show Osbert’s humility.

Osbert of Clare’s writings are also notable for their variety. The anonymous author of the *Rationes dicandi* (c. 1135) described how there are three types of Latin writing: metrical verse, rhythmical verse, and prose.<sup>23</sup> Amongst Osbert’s extant writings there are examples of each of these three types of composition, although the overwhelming majority of Osbert’s written output, and where he excelled, was in prose writing. This output also included a variety of literary genres, including letters,

<sup>19</sup> *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, iv, 8-11.

<sup>20</sup> Augustine, *De doctrina Christiana*, XVIII.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, XIX.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, XXII.

<sup>23</sup> *Rationes dicandi*, ed. Ludwig Rockinger, in *Briefsteller und Formelbücher des-elften bis vierzehnten Jahrhunderts*, i (Neudruck der Ausgabe, Munich, 1863-1864; reprinted in one volume by Scientia Verlag, Aalen, 1969), pp. 9-28 (at p. 9-10); translated as *The Principles of Letter Writing*, tr. James Murphy, in *Three Medieval Rhetorical Arts*, ed. James Murphy (University of California Press, Berkeley, 1971), pp. 3-25.

hagiography, sermons, treatises, hymns and secular poems, all written for a wide range of purposes and audiences.

Although the tone of his writing style varied depending on his personal situation, nevertheless, Osbert of Clare maintained a consistently ornamental style throughout his writings: from the very public compositions, such as his office for the feast of St Anne, to his personal letters. He complemented his ornamental language with extensive use of rhyme and rhythm to produce a rhetorical writing style, and like much of the prose written during the twelfth century, Osbert probably intended his compositions to be read aloud.

### The *Cursus* in Osbert of Clare's Prose

An interesting stylistic feature of Osbert of Clare's prose is his subtle use of sentence end-rhythm, known as the *cursus*.<sup>24</sup> The *cursus* was a system of arrangement of rhythmical cadences at the end of sentences, and to a lesser degree clauses, that was used by many medieval writers.<sup>25</sup> This system was based upon where the accents fell in relation to the final syllables of a sentence. The three most common of these cadences were the *cursus planus* (^ - - ^ -), the *cursus velox* (^ - — - ^ -), and the *cursus tardus* (^ - - ^ - -). These were typically formed using the last two words of a clause or sentence. Therefore, the standard *cursus planus* is a paroxytone word

<sup>24</sup> Although no previous study has significantly examined the *cursus* in Osbert's prose, his use of rhythmical *clausae* has been noted by several scholars, including Marc Bloch (*Vita S. Eadwardi*, p. 55), Edward Williamson (*Letters*, p. 36), and Frederic Raby (*A History of Christian-Latin Poetry*, p. 344).

<sup>25</sup> The best modern full length study of the *cursus*, noted for its statistical method, is Tore Janson, *Prose Rhythm in Medieval Latin* (Almquist & Wiksell, Stockholm, 1975). Recently, the *cursus* has been discussed in Terence Tunberg, "Prose Styles and Cursus", in *Medieval Latin: An Introduction and Bibliographical Guide*, eds. F.A.C. Mantello & A.G. Rigg (Catholic University of America Press, Washington, D.C., 1996), pp. 111-121; and Peter Stotz, *Handbuch zur lateinischen Sprache des Mittelalters* (C.H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, Munich, 1998), pp. 482-487. Sten Eklund addresses the specific problems involved in using the *cursus* in textual criticism in: "The Use and Abuse of Cursus in Textual Criticism", *Bulletin du Cange* 43 (1984), pp. 27-56. Also see Tore Janson, "Schools of Cursus in the Twelfth Century and the Letters of Heloise and Abelard", in *Retorica e*

followed by a trisyllabic paroxytone word, such as *vanitáte dispérdunt*; the standard *cursus velox* is a proparoxytone word followed by a tetrasyllabic paroxytone word, such as *sufficeret adhibére*; and the standard *cursus tardus* is a paroxytone word followed by a tetrasyllabic proparoxytone word, such as *veheménter insúrgere*. In these standard forms it is both the location of the accent and the number of syllables that is important for the last word of the sentence, but only the location of the accent that is important for the penultimate word. A fourth form of *cursus*, the *trispōndiacus* (^- - - ^-), was used by some authors, but went out of use in the twelfth century.<sup>26</sup> The standard form of the *cursus trispōndiacus* was a paroxytone word followed by a tetrasyllabic paroxytone word (*extermináret univérsum*).

There were also numerous variants on these four types of *cursus*. Most of these involved non-accented monosyllabic word in the penultimate position in the sentence that were in effect attached to the last word of the sentence for rhythmical purposes and then the antepenultimate word would become part of the cadence.<sup>27</sup> Examples of variants of this sort of the three principal types of *cursus* are: *coronántur in célis* (*planus*), *póstulat et impértit* (*velox*), and *spárgit in próximo* (*tardus*). There are also variants used by some authors which Tore Janson referred to as “heterotomous variants”.<sup>28</sup> These variant cadences contain only two words and have the same number of syllables after the accents as the standard forms of the *cursus*, but they shift one syllable from the ultimate word to the penultimate word or vice versa. Examples of this could be: *grácias égit* (*planus*), *sanctórum apostolórum* (*velox*), *prótinus éxtraxit* (*tardus*).

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*poetica tra I secolu XII e XIV*, eds. C. Leonardi & E. Menestò (La Nouva Italia Editrice, Umbria, 1988), pp. 171-200.

<sup>26</sup> Janson, pp. 72-74.

<sup>27</sup> The linking of monosyllabic words in this way for rhythmical purposes is often called *consillabificatio*. *Ibid.*, pp. 28-30.

The *cursus* was used by different authors in different regions from late antiquity through the Middle Ages. In the early Middle Ages there seems to have been at least two strands of the *cursus*: an Italian tradition and a northern tradition. Both used the *planus*, *velox*, and *tardus*, but the Italian tradition accepted the range of variants that are described above, and the northern tradition, found in France and Germany, was not as open to variants as the Italian tradition but incorporated the *cursus trispondiacus*. In the late eleventh and twelfth century the two traditions began to merge. At this time, the *cursus velox* increasingly became the dominant form and the *cursus tardus* became less prevalent. Both heterotomous variants and the *cursus trispondiacus* went out of style, but variants using monosyllabic words remained in use.

Although Tore Janson did much to clarify the history of the *cursus* in the central Middle Ages in his statistical study of the subject, one area which he seems to have completely passed over is its use in England. In 1934, N. Denholm-Young in his article on the use of the *cursus* in England stated that it had come to England late and was not used in official documents until the mid-thirteenth century. He noted that John of Salisbury used the *cursus*, but attributed it simply to his studies in Paris.<sup>29</sup> It may be that a further statistical study of twelfth-century English authors may shed a different light on this analysis. This is clearly the case with Osbert of Clare.

The key feature of Janson's analysis of the history of the *cursus* in the High Middle Ages is the method for statistical internal comparison, which he developed to determine the extent of rhythmical intent within different authors.<sup>30</sup> Before the

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<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 37-38.

<sup>29</sup> N. Denholm-Young, "The Cursus in England", in *Oxford Essays in Medieval History* (Clarendon, Oxford, 1934), pp. 68-103 (at p. 73); repr. in *Collected Papers of N. Denholm Young* (University of Wales Press, Cardiff, 1969), pp. 42-73.

<sup>30</sup> Janson, pp. 19-22.

development of Janson's method for internal comparison Latin philologists relied upon external comparisons between authors who were considered rhythmical and those who were not. The principal difficulty with these external comparisons is that they do not take into account the wide range of linguistic preference among both rhythmical and unrhythmical authors. Janson's method of internal comparison both provides a reasonably reliable objective test as to whether an author uses end-rhythm and it can bring out subtle features of individual authors' writing styles.

To make analysis simpler, Janson used a system of notation where he represented proparoxytone words as 'pp' and paroxytone words as 'p'.<sup>31</sup> Cadences were then classified based upon the type of the penultimate word, followed by the number of syllables in the last word, and then followed by the type of the last word. Therefore the standard form of the *cursus velox*, such as *sanctorum apostolorum*, is classified as 'pp 4p'. By tabulating all of the cadences in a text, separating each out into its two parts and then turning these counts into percentages of the whole document, the likeliness of any given part of a cadence can be calculated. For example, in Osbert of Clare's *Vita S. Eadwardi* the penultimate word is proparoxytone 34.1% of the time, paroxytone 51.1% of the time and monosyllabic 14.8% of the time. Given the dual importance of both the length and the placement of the accent in the last word, there are eleven different types of words in the final position in sentences in the *Vita S. Eadwardi*. The most common of these are trisyllabic paroxytones (31.1%), tetrasyllabic paroxytones (42.4%) and tetrasyllabic proparoxytones (5.3%). By multiplying the percentages of occurrence of each individual part of a given cadence, an estimated number can be calculated of how many times that cadence should appear if both individual parts are not interrelated.

Then, using a statistical calculation known as the ' $\chi^2$  test for closeness of fit', it can be determined if the difference between the observed occurrences of cadences and the estimated number of occurrences is within the statistical range of randomness.<sup>32</sup> A statistical analysis of this sort for Osbert's *Vita S. Eadwardi* is as such:

Table 4:1. *Cursus* Cadences from Osbert of Clare's *Vita S. Eadwardi*<sup>33</sup>

	Observed	Estimated	(O-E) <sup>2</sup> /E
p 3p ( <i>planus</i> )	116	96	4.167
p 4pp ( <i>tardus</i> )	25	16	5.063
pp 4p ( <i>velox</i> )	140	87	32.287
p 4p ( <i>trispondiacus</i> )	104	130	5.200
Other <sup>34</sup>	216	272	11.529
Sums	601	601	58.246

The sum of the  $\chi^2$  test is 58.25, well above the statistical critical value of 9.49 for studies with five fields. This analysis shows that Osbert, in the *Vita S. Eadwardi* at least, favored certain cadences, most notably the *cursus velox* and *cursus planus*.

Further studies of other pieces of Osbert's prose show similar results.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>31</sup> Janson, pp. 13-15.

<sup>32</sup> Further details on the  $\chi^2$  test, along with tables of critical values, can be found in statistical manuals such as George Snedecor and William Cochran, *Statistical Methods*, eighth edition (Iowa State Press, Ames, 1989), pp. 76-79, 467-468.

<sup>33</sup> These include cadences at full stops, but do not include cadences in incipits, interrogatives, direct quotes from other authors, dates, or a few circumstances where it is uncertain where accents fall in words.

<sup>34</sup> The  $\chi^2$  test comes unreliable when a large numbers of the estimated occurrences are below five, therefore I have combined cadences other than the four principal forms of *cursus* for these calculations.

<sup>35</sup> The three works sampled here presents a range of types of Osbert of Clare's prose. Cadences in Osbert's sermons on St Anne have a  $\chi^2$  value of 23.30, while cadences in Osbert's letter to Theobald of Canterbury (Ep. 36) have a  $\chi^2$  value of 32.92. Both are well above the critical value of 9.49.

Table 4:2. Comparison of Cadences and *Cursus* Types

	Type of Cadence	<i>Vita S. Eadwardi</i>	Anne Sermons	Epistle 36
7p		2	0	0
6p		12	1	1
6pp		2	1	0
1 5p		5	0	0
p 5p	<i>variant velox</i>	14	2	5
pp 5p		11	6	0
1 5pp		0	0	0
p 5pp		6	1	0
pp 5pp		0	0	0
1 4p		11	7	0
p 4p	<i>trispondiacus</i>	104	21	6
pp 4p	<i>velox</i>	140	33	16
1 4pp		4	1	0
p 4pp	<i>tardus</i>	25	13	8
pp 4pp		3	1	0
pp 1 3p	<i>variant velox</i>	25	2	1
p 1 3p		15	5	1
other 1 3p		2	0	0
p 3p	<i>planus</i>	116	32	19
pp 3p	<i>var. trispondiacus</i>	29	6	1
p 1 3pp	<i>variant tardus</i>	7	3	1
other 1 3pp		0	0	0
p 3pp		10	1	0
pp 3pp	<i>variant tardus</i>	7	2	1
p 1 2	<i>variant planus</i>	15	5	3
other 1 2		3	2	0
pp 2 2	<i>variant velox</i>	0	3	0
pp 2	<i>variant planus</i>	12	8	0
p 2 2		7	3	1
p 2		13	2	1
1		1	0	0
Sum		601	161	65

There is one significant limitation to Janson's method of internal comparison, which Janson himself notes.<sup>36</sup> Because the estimated results are calculated from characteristics of the actual observed cadences, if an author favors a specific cadence then the estimated frequencies for cadences that share one part of that favored cadence will be higher. This 'neighbor effect' is especially true for cadences that share the same characteristics for the last word. In the three pieces of Osbert's prose

sampled above, the *cursus trispondiacus* (4 p4) is either the third or fourth most frequent cadence. However, in each case the observed instances of the *cursus trispondiacus* are much lower than the estimated frequency.<sup>37</sup> There are two possible explanations for Osbert's frequent use of the cadence 'p 4p'. Either he intentionally favored the cadence, but not as much as he favored the *cursus velox* so the neighbor effect skewed the estimated value, or he did not favor it and the high frequency of the cadence simply shows his preference to end sentences with tetrasyllabic paroxytone words. Neither the external method of comparison nor Janson's internal method convincingly explains it.

It has already been stated above that Osbert strongly favored the standard forms of the *cursus velox* (pp 4p) and *cursus planus* (p 3p). The *cursus velox* is the most common cadence in both the *Vita S. Eadwardi* and the sermons on St Anne, with 23.3% and 20.5% of the total cadences respectively. In Osbert's letter to Archbishop Theobald (Ep. 36) the *cursus planus* (29.2%) is slightly more common than the *cursus velox* (24.6%), but this perhaps more represents random variation due to the smaller size of the sample than any real stylistic change. Similarly, the *cursus planus* is the second most common cadence in the *Vita S. Eadwardi* (19.3%) and the sermons on St Anne (19.9%). The *cursus tardus* (p 4pp), although not particularly prevalent in Osbert's prose, occurs much more often than its estimated occurrence.<sup>38</sup> Osbert also statistically favors the variant cadences of all three principal forms of the *cursus* that employ monosyllabic words,<sup>39</sup> but he does not seem to favor other variants. In all,

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<sup>36</sup> Janson, pp. 26-28.

<sup>37</sup> Janson, pp. 28, 51-58.

<sup>38</sup> This is principally due to Osbert's avoidance of ending sentences with proparoxytone words. However, when proparoxytone words were used to end sentences over half of the instances (50.8% in the *Vita S. Eadwardi*, 69.6% in the Anne Sermons, and 90% in Epistle 36) were either the *cursus tardus* (p 4pp) or its variant (p 1 3pp).

<sup>39</sup> This is especially true in the *Vita S. Eadwardi*.

these six *cursus* cadences make up 54.6% of the total cadences in the *Vita S. Eadwardi*, 54.7% in the Anne sermons and 73.8% in the letter to Theobald.<sup>40</sup>

One key stylistic feature of Osbert's prose is his strong preference to end sentences with paroxytone, rather than proparoxytone words. The percentage of cadences ending in paroxytone words is as high as 89.2% in the *Vita S. Eadwardi*, 85.7% in the Anne sermons and 84.6% in Osbert's letter to Archbishop Theobald. In the penultimate position the percentage of paroxytone words decreases to approximately fifty percent.<sup>41</sup> Of the sentences which end in proparoxytone words, a significant portion are the *cursus tardus* or its variant, p 1 3pp.<sup>42</sup> One interesting statistical feature of Osbert's sentence-endings is his strong preference for the standard *cursus velox* (pp 4p) over the *cursus trispondiacus* (p 4p), even though as a whole he prefers paroxytone words over proparoxytone words in the penultimate position of sentences. This feature is prevalent in almost all authors who regularly employ the *cursus*, and absent in most unrhythmical authors.<sup>43</sup>

### Prose Rhyme

Although in modern languages rhyme is solely a stylistic feature of poetry, in the Middle Ages rhyme, along with rhythm, was an important feature of medieval

<sup>40</sup> Osbert's use of prose rhythm is similar to his French contemporary Peter the Venerable of Cluny, who used the *cursus* 61% of the time in his letters. Janson, p. 113. Osbert did, however, use the *cursus trispondiacus* much more than Peter.

<sup>41</sup> 51.1% in the *Vita S. Eadwardi*, 49.7% in the Anne sermons and 63.1% in Epistle 36. It is interesting to note that although monosyllabic words only occur once as the last word in the sampled sources, they occur in the penultimate position 14.8%, 15.5% and 9.2% (respectively). Proparoxytone words occur in the penultimate position in the three sources 34.1%, 34.8% and 27.7%.

<sup>42</sup> In the *Vita S. Eadwardi* 49.2% of sentences ending in proparoxytone words are either p 4pp or p 1 3pp. In the Anne sermons this percentage is 69.6% and in Epistle 36 nine out of ten of such instances are the *cursus tardus*.

<sup>43</sup> Michael Winterbottom noted this in his review of Janson's book, and suggested that it could be used as a simple and fast determination for the intentional use of the *cursus*. Michael Winterbottom, "Review of *Prose Rhythm in Medieval Latin*", in *Medium Aevum* 45 (1975), pp. 299-300. The trend in unrhythmical authors to end sentence with 'p 4p' rather than 'pp 4p' is further shown by Sten Eklund

*Kunstprosa*, or artistic prose.<sup>44</sup> Latin prose rhyme dates back to classical Latin where it was used in a limited amount in the rhetorical prose of authors such as Apuleius, Tertullian and Augustine.<sup>45</sup> It began to be used more in the mid-tenth century, and reached its period of greatest use in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. In England, however, even in the twelfth century the use of prose rhyme was more the exception than the rule.<sup>46</sup> Nevertheless, in the first half of the twelfth century many significant writers in England employed rhymed prose, including Anselm of Bec, Eadmer of Canterbury, William of Malmesbury and Gilbert Foliot. Osbert of Clare, in his rhetorical style, employed rhyme throughout his letters and hagiography. His rhyming is not always consistent; in a given passage he might rhyme several sentences and then not one or more sentences. Nevertheless, he rarely wrote for very long without instilling his prose with rhyme.

Compared with Osbert's use of rhyme in his poetry, which was almost always formed through a complete replication of the last two syllables of the rhymed words, his prose rhymes are much looser in form. This passage from his letter to Abbot Herbert of Westminster is typical of Osbert's use of prose rhyme:

Satis satisque pater, et ultra quam expediat, in vulnera filii tui vinum infudisti. Superest ut oleo permisceatur antidotum, cuius ope ad salutem convertas aegrotum. Sic debet pater puerum virga percutere ut eum a delicto liberet et errore; ita convenit patri adhibere correptionem, ne delinquentem adducat in desperationem. Si aliquid simplicitas, qua te provocavi ad iracundiam, lacrimarum pene cotidie fluctibus irrigat faciam meam. Non quod me conscientia arguat studio aut voluntate tibi quaesisse detrimentum, sed quia quolibet modo paternae severitatis me incurrisse timeo maledictum.<sup>47</sup>

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in his sum of six unrhythmical authors, in which he found 'p 4p' used almost twice as often as 'pp 4p'. Eklund, p. 31.

<sup>44</sup> The principal authority on medieval prose rhyme is Karl Polheim, *Die lateinische Reimprosa* (Berlin, Wiedmannsche Buchhandlung, 1925). Also Peter Stotz recently included a short summary of the use and history of medieval prose rhyme in his *Handbuch zur lateinische Sprache*, pp. 487-495.

<sup>45</sup> Raby, pp. 22-24.

<sup>46</sup> Polheim, pp. 422-424.

<sup>47</sup> *Letters*, no. 2, p. 49.

Typically, Osbert maintained disyllabic rhymes, but often this was attained with similar sounds, rather than an exact duplication of the last two syllables. In this manner Osbert rhymed *percutere: errore*, *iracundiam: meum* and even *detrimentum: maledictum*. One of the most common instances within Osbert's prose of the rhyming of similar, but not identical, disyllabic word-endings is the rhyming of verb infinitives. In one instance he even rhymed three different conjugations within one sentence:

Quos concordiae videmus et paci *militare*, in eorum mentibus suum novit spiritus sanctus *sacrarium condere*, qui etiam ab illis suae dulcedinem gratiae solet *retrahere* qui rixis et discordiae consuescunt *inservire*.<sup>48</sup>

Besides disyllabic rhymes, Osbert also used monosyllabic, and occasionally trisyllabic,<sup>49</sup> rhymes in his prose:

In huiusmodi curriculo vectabantur fratres illi, qui fratrem amore non tractavere *fraterno*, sed affectu et effectu *profligarunt alieno*. Redeo igitur ad *inceptam* de historiae sacrae narratione *materiam*. Cum *superbia primum* e caelis *nativitatis* ducat *originem*, semper ad altiora dirigit *animum* quam *adquirendi* habeat *instrumentum*.<sup>50</sup>

Osbert was fairly liberal in the types of words he used to create rhyme. Unlike some authors who preferred one type of word, Osbert used nouns, verbs and even adjectives to create rhyme.<sup>51</sup>

Rhyme added to the rhetorical aesthetic of Osbert's prose, but he also employed rhyme as a way of structuring ideas within sentences. Typically, Osbert rhymed the last word of a clause with either the last word of the sentence or the last word of the subsequent clause within the sentence, and he avoids rhyming between sentences. Therefore rhyme complemented punctuation in separating out ideas:

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<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 37, p. 129.

<sup>49</sup> Osbert's use of trisyllabic rhyme in both his prose and verse appears to be simply incidental, the most frequent example of this is declensions of nouns ending in *-tio*, such as *correptionem: desperationem*.

<sup>50</sup> *Letters*, no. 4, p. 59.



*ecce* Herodias;  
per utramque enim operatus est Sathanas.  
Iezabel sanctum persecuta est Heliam;  
Herodias morti destinavit Iohannem Baptistam.<sup>54</sup>

Besides the consistent rhyme, Osbert created parallelism with the repeated use of ‘*ecce*’ throughout the passage. In the second and third sentences, where Osbert set up the principal comparisons of Jezabel’s conflict with Elijah and Herodias’ prompting of the murder of John the Baptist, he further reinforced the parallelism with the repetition of ‘*que*’ at the beginnings of the second clauses of each sentence. Osbert used this stylistic parallel to exemplify the literary parallel of Jezabel and Herodias to Offa’s queen, and this in turn parallels Ethelbert to Elijah and John the Baptist. This imagery is completed in the final sentence where the ‘*ecce*’ is completely dropped and each of the two independent clauses begin with the villain and end with the biblical hero.

### Osbert of Clare’s Verse Compositions

Although only a small number of verse compositions by Osbert are now known, they are notable for their considerable range of stylistic variation. Osbert’s corpus of poetry is limited to two hymns in honor of St Anne,<sup>55</sup> three short poems included in a letter to Abbot Geoffrey of St Albans<sup>56</sup> and one poem in honor of Henry of Anjou upon his arrival in England.<sup>57</sup> These take the forms of both metrical poetry, deriving from Classical Latin and consisting of combinations of long and short syllables, and rhythmical poetry, a medieval creation based upon the number of syllables and where the accent falls at the end of a line. Although throughout his

<sup>54</sup> *Vita S. Aethelbrichti*, fol. 34v.

<sup>55</sup> *St Anne*, pp. 276-280.

<sup>56</sup> *Letters*, no. 32, pp. 115-116.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 38, pp. 130-132.

poetry Osbert used disyllabic rhymes, which had become common in the tenth and eleventh centuries, these rhymes took form in many different patterns.<sup>58</sup>

The most common forms of metrical poetry in both Medieval and Classical Latin were dactylic hexameters, such as Vergil's *Aeneid*, or elegiac couplets, such as in Martial or Ovid's *Amores*. Osbert's three short metrical pieces, included in his letter to Abbot Geoffrey of St Albans, are all done in dactylic hexameters. Latin hexameters are made up of six metrical feet, which are in turn made up of either dactyls, consisting of one long syllable followed by two short syllables ( \_ ∪ ∪ ), or spondees, consisting of two long syllables ( \_ \_ ). The first four feet can be either dactyls or spondees, the fifth foot is almost always a dactyl, and the sixth foot is always a long syllable followed by either a short or a long syllable. There is also a regular break, called a caesura, in metrical lines. A strong caesura is a break after the first syllable of the third foot, while a weak caesura is a break after the second syllable of a dactylic third foot.<sup>59</sup>

Within the structure of the dactylic hexameter there were several common rhyme patterns in Medieval Latin. In his three short poems to Abbot Geoffrey shows three of the most common rhyme patterns. The first poem, twelve lines in length, uses a simple *aabb caudati*, or line-end rhyme:

\_ ∪ ∪ | \_ \_ | \_ ∪ ∪ | \_ ∪ ∪ | \_ ∪ ∪ | \_  
 Parva mihi commissa domus caret his alimentis,  
 \_ \_ | \_ ∪ ∪ | \_ \_ | \_ ∪ ∪ | \_ ∪ ∪ | \_ \_  
 est humana quibus natura fruens elementis;  
 \_ ∪ ∪ | \_ \_ | \_ \_ | \_ \_ | \_ ∪ ∪ | \_ \_  
 frugibus in terram pro consuetudine iactis,

<sup>58</sup> In all of Osbert's verse compositions he used a disyllabic rhyme that usually completely duplicated both vowels and consonants. In a few places Osbert used different, but similar, consonants to form the rhyme, such as in the lines from his poem to Henry of Anjou: "*Sol aeternus radix David / tuos actus illustravit*". *Letters*, no. 38, p. 131. Although the rhyme was almost always formed between two words, in one couplet in the poem to Prince Henry he created the rhyme with a prepositional phrase: "*Sed sicut processit a te, sic sequetur probitate*." *Ibid.*, no. 38, p. 132.

<sup>59</sup> In the examples below the distinctions between metrical feet are symbolized with a '|', while caesuras are marked by a '||'.

\_ \_ \_ | \_ \_ \_ | \_ \_ | \_ \_ | \_ \_ \_ | \_ \_  
 deficit alma Ceres, et pressi copia lactis;<sup>60</sup>

In the second and third poems in this set, Osbert incorporates a strong caesura in the rhyme pattern.<sup>61</sup> The second is a ten-line poem in Leonine rhyme. Leonine rhyme, which became common in the twelfth century, incorporates an internal rhyme between the two syllables before the caesura and the last two syllables of the line:

\_ \_ \_ | \_ \_ | \_ \_ || \_ \_ \_ | \_ \_ \_ | \_ \_ \_ | \_ \_  
 Magnificis clarus titulis prior est Ademar<sup>62</sup>

\_ \_ \_ | \_ \_ | \_ \_ || \_ \_ \_ | \_ \_ \_ | \_ \_ \_ | \_ \_  
 ingenuis natus virtutum dote beatus

\_ \_ | \_ \_ | \_ \_ || \_ \_ \_ | \_ \_ \_ | \_ \_ \_ | \_ \_  
 rhetor civilis, morum gravitate senilis;<sup>63</sup>

In the third poem, only six lines in length, Osbert employs a more complex rhyme scheme, called *collaterales*, where both the last two syllables before the strong caesura internally rhyme with last two syllables before the caesura in the following line and the line-endings rhyme:

\_ \_ | \_ \_ \_ | \_ \_ || \_ \_ \_ | \_ \_ \_ | \_ \_ \_ | \_ \_  
 Vincit religio,<sup>64</sup> vicit quia cardo Britannus

\_ \_ \_ | \_ \_ \_ | \_ \_ || \_ \_ \_ | \_ \_ \_ | \_ \_ \_ | \_ \_  
 in Christi gladio Jubilaeus cum redit annus.

\_ \_ | \_ \_ | \_ \_ || \_ \_ \_ | \_ \_ \_ | \_ \_ \_ | \_ \_  
 Frons libertatis rebus patet ecclesiarum

\_ \_ \_ | \_ \_ | \_ \_ || \_ \_ \_ | \_ \_ \_ | \_ \_ \_ | \_ \_  
 munere primatis cum ius renovatur earum.<sup>65</sup>

While none of these three poems are particularly distinctive, the successively more complex rhyme schemes perhaps indicates that Osbert wrote these at least partially to serve as an exemplum of metrical poetry.

<sup>60</sup> *Letters*, no. 32, p. 115.

<sup>61</sup> It is interesting and perhaps significant to note that when Osbert uses the caesura in the rhyme pattern he structures the meter to have a strong caesura. However when the caesura is not used for rhyme purposes then Osbert does not appear to have a real preference between strong and weak caesurae, as shown by the weak caesura of the first poem.

<sup>62</sup> Because much of our knowledge of Latin pronunciation derives from its use in metrical poetry, it is difficult to determine with certainty the pronunciation of uncommon proper names such as Ademar. However, the pronunciation given above seems justified by the metrical context.

<sup>63</sup> *Letters*, no. 32, p. 115.

Osbert of Clare's three extant metrical poems total a combined twenty-eight lines and all derive from one letter; his three rhythmical poems are each over a hundred lines long and derive from two very different sources. Because rhythmical poetry is based upon a consistent quantity and accent of its syllables rather than the quality of the syllables, it can be classified simply based upon the number of syllables in a line and whether it ends in a paroxytone (p) or proparoxytone (pp) word.

Therefore Osbert's poem to Henry of Anjou is an 8p rhythmical poem.<sup>66</sup>

Dux illustris Normannórum	et comes Andegavórum
Pictavorum dominátor,	Turonorum propugnátor,
Cuius nutu vibrant énses	populi Cenomannénses,
Anglorumque plebs turbáta	gratulatur pace dáta,
Tibi coetus caeli pláudit,	te victorem deus aúdit. <sup>67</sup>

Throughout the poem Osbert employed a simple *aabb* scheme of rhyming couplets. It is also interesting to note that Osbert only placed full-stops or long pauses at the end of couplets, whereas he used short pauses both at the end of couplets and after the first line of a couplet. He avoided placing even short breaks outside of these two positions, apparently so as not to disturb the flow of the poetry.<sup>68</sup>

Osbert's two other rhythmical verse compositions were hymns in honor of St Anne.<sup>69</sup> The first of these is stylistically very similar to Osbert's poem to Henry of Anjou. It uses an 8p rhythm pattern and has 128 lines of rhymed couplets in an *aabb* scheme:

O preclara mater mátris.	quae concepit verbum pátris
Non commixtione máris.	sed ut virgo singuláris.
Quem in utero portávit.	genitrix de styrpe Dávid. <sup>70</sup>

<sup>64</sup> Although '*religio*' would normally be pronounced with a short 'e', it was often lengthened even in Classical Latin for metrical purposes in poetry. Osbert uses it twice in these three poems, and both times he lengthened the 'e'.

<sup>65</sup> *Letters*, no. 32, pp. 115-116

<sup>66</sup> I have separated Osbert's poem into 196 lines of 8p rhyming couplets, but the Vitellius Manuscript actually has both parts of the couplet on the same line so there are only ninety-eight lines.

<sup>67</sup> *Letters*, no. 38, p. 130.

<sup>68</sup> Osbert only used internal short pauses in a couple of instances in his poem to Henry of Anjou to create repetition in lists, such as in: "*Tunc applaudent caeli cives, plaudet pauper, plaudet dives,*" *Ibid.*, no. 38, p. 131.

<sup>69</sup> *St Anne*, pp. 276-280.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 276.

The second hymn to St Anne incorporates multiple rhythm and rhyme patterns using 8p and 7pp lines. It begins with six sets of 8p + 7pp lines in an *abab* rhyme scheme:

O beata mater <i>Ánna</i> .	plene matris <i>grátiae</i> .
Quae mundo non parit <i>mánna</i> .	sed fructum <i>leticiae</i> .
Panem inquam <i>angelórum</i> .	sola virgo <i>párturit</i> .
Quae delicti nescit <i>thórum</i> .	mea quem mens <i>ésurit</i> . <sup>71</sup>

By repeating the 8p line, Osbert continues with thirty lines of the *Stabat mater*, or Victorine, stanza. This popular medieval stanza was formed in six line sets of 8p, 8p, 7pp, 8p, 8p, 7pp, with each of the two couplets of 8p lines and the two 7pp lines all rhymed to form an *aabccb* rhyme scheme:

Roga mater matrem <i>Christi</i> .	quae virago <i>genuísti</i>
	<i>incorruptam virginem</i> .
Ut haec sancta <i>genitúra</i> .	oret pro me <i>prece píra</i> .
	et deum et <i>hóminem</i> . <sup>72</sup>

The rest of Osbert's hymn is made up of alternating sections of various lengths of mono-rhythmical verse and the *Stabat mater* stanza. Besides using mono-rhythmical sections of 8p lines, Osbert also incorporated whole sections of 7pp lines. In effect, Osbert used the *Stabat mater* and broke it up into its individual parts. Throughout most of the hymn Osbert used an *abab* rhyme scheme in the mono-rhythmical sections, but in the second half of the poem he switched to an *aabb* rhyme scheme.

Although Osbert of Clare's corpus of extant poetry is neither large nor particularly innovative, it does show Osbert's competence and his willingness to experiment in verse composition. This experimental nature is perhaps the most interesting feature of Osbert's poetry. He very obviously was more competent and felt more comfortable writing in prose; nevertheless, in the three surviving sources in which he used verse he employed both metrical and rhythmical composition in a

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 278.

<sup>72</sup> St Anne, p. 278.

variety of rhythm and rhyme schemes. It is even perhaps his skill in wielding rhythmical *clausae* and rhyme within his prose that allowed Osbert to competently switch over to verse composition.

### Other Aspects of Style

Osbert of Clare's use of florid language, rhythm and rhyme are characteristic aspects of his writing style. In his hagiography, particularly his *Vita S. Eadwardi* and *Vita S. Aethelbrichti*, Osbert supplemented this rhetorical style with frequent and long monologues of direct speech. In both cases, after the prologues and descriptions of the kings' early lives, Osbert told their stories by tying monologues together with narration. Frequently his chapters consist of a section of narration, followed by a section of direct speech, and concluded with another section of narration, with the direct speech often constituting half or more of the chapter. This is somewhat less in sections dealing with the saints' miracles, although Osbert used direct speech when characters give interpretations of miracles.

Edward and Ethelbert, as the main protagonists, have the largest amount of direct discourse, but Osbert also gave monologues to lesser characters, both protagonists and antagonists. In the *Vita S. Aethelbrichti*, Ethelbert's adviser Oswald, his mother, King Offa, his queen, his daughter Alfrida, and Ethelbert's murderer Gwinbert all give speeches,<sup>73</sup> as do St Peter and a cripple named Gillomichael in the *Vita S. Eadwardi*.<sup>74</sup> Osbert also used direct speech to incorporate parts of his spurious

<sup>73</sup> *Vita S. Aethelbrichti*, fols. 32r-32v; 33r; 35r; 34v; 34r-34v; 35r (repectively).

<sup>74</sup> *Vita S. Eadwardi*, pp. 81 & 85; 82 (repectively).

charters of King Edward and popes Leo and Nicholas into the *Vita S. Eadwardi*.<sup>75</sup> In the *Miracula sancti Aedmundi* seven out of the thirteen miracles attributed to Osbert of Clare include extended direct speech. Interestingly, Osbert avoided using direct speech in his *Vita S. Eadburgae*, and where direct speech is used it is usually only in short quotations.<sup>76</sup>

It was noted above that Osbert's writing style was a Benedictine style, steeped in scriptural language and reference, but Osbert also showed the depth of his learning through the variety of sources he used throughout his writings, both hagiographic and epistolary. These sources varied somewhat depending on the subject that he was addressing, but in general the Bible, both New and Old Testaments, was the most used source, followed by classical and early Christian authors. Osbert used Bede as a source of early Anglo-Saxon history, which was important in his hagiography.<sup>77</sup> Osbert also clearly used more contemporary sources although he did not reference them directly.<sup>78</sup> The range of his knowledge of classical and early Christian authors was fairly wide, and he drew from authors such as Cicero, Ovid, Vergil, Boethius, Augustine and Ambrose. He also seemed to have a special fondness for Seneca, whose letters he drew from frequently.<sup>79</sup> Osbert made use of all of these sources as direct quotes, paraphrasing, and, in the case of the Bible, allusion.

Osbert of Clare's florid writing style had its critics, both medieval and modern, from Gerald of Wales to André Wilmart. He was perhaps an overly dramatic

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 77-80; 88-90.

<sup>76</sup> There is only one extended direct quotation in the life. *Vita S. Eadburgae*, pp. 287-288.

<sup>77</sup> *Vita S. Aethelbrichti*, fols. 31r-31v; *Letters*, no. 42, p. 177.

<sup>78</sup> He does however generally reference, or at least allude, to near contemporary sources in the prologues to his saints' lives. *Vita S. Eadwardi*, p. 66; *Letters*, nos. 14-15, pp. 83, 84; *Vita S. Eadburgae*, p. 259; *Miracula S. Aedmundi*, p. 152.

<sup>79</sup> Seneca's *Letters* became very popular in the twelfth century, and Osbert, like most twelfth-century authors, was apparently only familiar with letters one through eighty-eight, as he only quotes from these letters. For the use of Seneca's *Letters* by twelfth-century writers see L.D. Reynolds, *The*

writer in a time of dramatic *Kuntsprosa*. Although verbose, their criticisms of him, however, are unduly harsh. His technical uses of rhythm, rhyme and syntactical parallelism are noteworthy. The rhetorical nature of his prose instilled a liturgical feeling into his writings that mirrored the *lectio divina*, the daily offices of prayers and readings within the monastery. This not only reflected the Benedictine education of which he had received, but also the monastic audience that Osbert addressed.

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*Medieval Tradition of Seneca's Letters* (Oxford University Press, London, 1965), pp. 112-124. Also see Williamson's discussion of Osbert's use of Seneca in *Letters*, p. 228.

## Chapter Five

# The Immaculate Conception of Mary and the Theme of Virginit

Osbert of Clare's veneration of the Virgin Mary played a significant role in his life and in his writings. In the first half of the twelfth century the feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary began to be celebrated again in England after disappearing around the time of the Norman Conquest,<sup>1</sup> and Osbert was influential in the feast's early development. His devotion to Mary also came out in the recurring theme of virginity that runs throughout his writings. An examination of the controversy over the Immaculate Conception of Mary in twelfth-century England is therefore essential to an understanding of Osbert's writings. While the controversy over the celebration of Mary's conception started in England, it quickly spread to the continent, and continued to be a point of contention, especially between the Franciscans and Dominicans, throughout the Middle Ages and into the modern period. It was only in the nineteenth century that the issue was officially resolved when Pope Pius IX declared the Immaculate Conception of Mary catholic dogma.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For the origins of the feast and its celebration in Anglo-Norman England see Edmund Bishop, "On the Origins of the Feast of the Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary", in Edmund Bishop, *Liturgica historica* (Clarendon, Oxford, 1918), pp. 238-259; H. Francis Davis, "The Origins of the Devotion to our Lady's Immaculate Conception", *Dublin Review* 228 (1954), pp. 375-392; and S.J.P. van Dijk, "The Origin of the Latin Feast of the Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary", *Dublin Review* 228 (1954), pp. 251-267, 428-442.

<sup>2</sup> For general information on the cult of the Virgin Mary and the celebration of the Immaculate Conception in the Roman Church see Giovanni Miegge, *The Virgin Mary*, tr. Waldo Smith (Lutterworth, Ryerson, 1955), especially chapter six; and Jaroslav Pelikan, *Mary through the Centuries* (Yale University Press, New Haven, 1996), especially chapter fourteen. Marina Warner, *Alone of All Her Sex*

## The Feast of the Conception in Anglo-Saxon England

The source of the Feast of the Immaculate Conception in post-conquest England was the celebration of the feast of the Conception of Mary in Anglo-Saxon England, but how it came to be celebrated in Anglo-Saxon England is somewhat unclear.<sup>3</sup> There are three possible sources that have been suggested. The first is an Irish Marian feast that appears in the ninth and tenth centuries. This feast fell in the beginning of May, and actually appears to have been a corruption of the feast of the martyr Marianus.<sup>4</sup> The second suggestion is that the feast was an invention of the English to harmonize the fact that the Anglo-Saxon church widely celebrated the Conception of John the Baptist.<sup>5</sup> The third, and most plausible, explanation is that it came from the Eastern church. The first appearance of the feast of the Conception in England is in a Winchester calendar dating from c.1030.<sup>6</sup> Besides the feast of the Conception this calendar also includes the feast of the Presentation, the feast of St John Chrysostom, and the feast of St Catherine, all of which are Eastern feasts that had never occurred in England previously.<sup>7</sup>

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(Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, 1976), gives a reasonable overview of the cult of the Virgin Mary, and has a chapter on the Immaculate Conception, but is also confused about certain fine points.

<sup>3</sup> Calling the celebration the feast of the Immaculate Conception in Anglo-Saxon England is problematic. It was rather a celebration of the conception of Mary, without any apparent discussion about or belief in the Immaculate Conception. The most thorough examination of this topic is in Mary Clayton, *The Cult of the Virgin Mary in Anglo-Saxon England* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1990), pp. 42-51.

<sup>4</sup> Van Dijk, pp. 261-262. For an earlier, but more complete discussion about the Irish references to the conception of Mary see the supplement to Bishop's article, pp. 250-259.

<sup>5</sup> Richard Southern argues this point: "It seems quite possible that its original justification was simply the incongruity of giving to John the Baptist, whose Conception was widely celebrated in the Anglo-Saxon Church, a liturgical honour denied the Blessed Virgin." R.W. Southern, *Saint Anselm and his Biographer* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1963), p. 293. That the celebration of the conception of John the Baptist, which is depicted in the Gospel of Luke (Luke 2:57), was celebrated in Anglo-Saxon England probably predisposed the English to acceptance of the celebration of the conception of Mary, but it likely was not the cause.

<sup>6</sup> Edited in *English Kalendars Before A.D. 1100*, ed. Francis Wormald, HRS 72 (1934), pp. 113-125.

<sup>7</sup> These feasts do not appear in any of the calendars dated by Wormald as preceding the Winchester Calendar.

If the feast of the Conception of Mary in Anglo-Saxon England had Eastern roots, then there are two possibilities as to how it came to England. At the end of the nineteenth century Edmund Bishop suggested that the feast may have been brought to England by Anglo-Saxon pilgrims to Rome who learned about the feast from Greek monks in Southern Italy.<sup>8</sup> Another possibility is that it came from direct contact between Anglo-Saxon England and Byzantium.<sup>9</sup> In the eleventh century there were Anglo-Saxons in Constantinople,<sup>10</sup> and William of Malmesbury recorded that there was one Greek monk at Malmesbury c.1030.<sup>11</sup>

It is difficult to ascertain how widespread the celebration of the Conception of Mary was in Anglo-Saxon England. It appears in three calendars and in a prayer form in four manuscripts from the eleventh century.<sup>12</sup> Together there is evidence of the feast at four locations: Winchester, Canterbury, Exeter, and Worcester. Of these, Winchester seems to be the fountainhead for this dispersion, where, as noted above, it appeared around 1030. From Winchester it likely went to Christ Church, Canterbury, sometime in the first half of the eleventh century, as shown by a surviving benedictional.<sup>13</sup> The feast came to Exeter under Bishop Leofric between 1046 and 1072.<sup>14</sup> The only evidence of the feast at Worcester is an entry in one calendar,<sup>15</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Bishop, p. 258. This point was also argued by Van Dijk, pp. 264-267.

<sup>9</sup> Arguing against Van Dijk, this was suggested by Davis, 376-378.

<sup>10</sup> The major Anglo-Saxon migration to Byzantium occurred following the Norman Conquest but it has been argued that there was an English movement as early as c.1040. For a full treatment of the subject see A.A. Vasiliev, "The Opening Stage of the Anglo-Saxon Immigration to Byzantium in the Eleventh Century" in *Annales de l'Institut Kondakov*, ix (1937), pp. 39-70.

<sup>11</sup> William of Malmesbury, *Gesta pontificum Anglorum*, ed. N.E.S.A. Hamilton, RS 52 (1870), pp. 415-416.

<sup>12</sup> Clayton discusses these seven eleventh-century references in *The Cult of the Virgin Mary*, pp. 42-45. The calendars are edited in *English Kalendars before AD 1100*, nos. 9, 12, 17. Three of the prayers containing reference to the feast are edited in: *The Canterbury Benedictional*, ed. Reginald Woolley, HRS 51 (1917); *The New Minster Missal*, ed. D.H. Turner, HRS 93 (1962); *The Leofric Missal* (2 vols.), ed. Nicolas Orchard, HRS 113-114 (2002). The fourth prayer containing the feast has not been edited and is in London, BL, Add. 28188 (Clayton, p. 45).

<sup>13</sup> Woolley, pp. 118-119.

<sup>14</sup> Bishop, pp. 239-240.

<sup>15</sup> Wormald, pp. 211-223.

where interestingly it is not accompanied by the feast of the Presentation as it is in all of the other Anglo-Saxon instances. Ramsey can probably also be added to this list. Although the feast of the Conception was probably instituted just after the Norman Conquest, it was done so by the English abbot Aelfsige.<sup>16</sup> In all the feast of the Conception of Mary was apparently not widely celebrated in Anglo-Saxon England, and certainly not as much as later writers, such as Eadmer, claimed that it was.

### **The Norman Conquest and the Twelfth-Century Revival of the Feast**

The Norman Conquest in 1066 had a significant impact on the English church. By 1086, the year of the Domesday Inquest, there remained only one English bishop, Wulfstan of Worcester. A similar phenomenon occurred in the English monasteries, with the replacement of almost all English abbots during the first twenty years of Norman rule.<sup>17</sup> However, the majority of the monks in these monasteries continued to be English. Therefore, upward promotion to the position of abbot was nearly impossible for most of the monks. This frustration, combined with the fact that many English monks came from the Anglo-Saxon aristocracy, many of whose members had been killed and displaced, created tension between the English monks and their new ecclesiastical lords.

These monks gave life to their grievances in the chronicles and hagiography produced in the post-conquest period. David Knowles long ago noted that the monks

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<sup>16</sup> The evidence that Aelfsige brought the feast to Ramsey is in a miracle story in *Miracula sanctae Mariae*, ed. E.F. Dexter, University of Wisconsin Studies in Social Science and History 12 (1927), pp. 37-38. Southern examined the story and concluded that it probably was based on historic fact, see R.W. Southern, "The English Origins of the 'Miracles of the Virgin'", *Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 4 (1958), pp. 194-200.

<sup>17</sup> The installation of non-English abbots in English monasteries following the Conquest is discussed in David Knowles, *The Monastic Order in England*, second edition (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1963), pp. 111-113.

generally complained about three issues.<sup>18</sup> First, their new Norman abbots either robbed or allowed the robbing of the monasteries' lands and treasures, claims no doubt based on the lay intrusions on church lands following the conquest. Second, knight-service was imposed upon monastic lands. Finally, the Norman abbots showed disrespect to the old English saints. The feast of the Conception of Mary falls into this category as a feast specific to England. Whether or not the Normans were actually skeptical of Anglo-Saxon saints is both outside the scope of this work and has been sufficiently examined in recent scholarship.<sup>19</sup> It is perhaps sufficient to note here that while it does not appear that there was a widespread prejudice against English saints and feast days, there seems to have been a reexamination of their relevance by the outside and objective eyes of the Norman invaders. The Normans also brought with them, in men such as Lanfranc and Anselm, the questioning early strands of the Scholastic movement.<sup>20</sup> This is evident in the case of the feast of the Conception of Mary.

The effects Norman Conquest caused the eventual, although not immediate, disappearance of the feast of the Conception of Mary in England. At Ramsey, and possibly at Exeter, the feast may not have occurred until after the conquest. However, the gradual replacement of English abbots with Norman churchmen led to the feast not being celebrated. These Norman abbots apparently had little interest in continuing the unfamiliar feast of the Conception of Mary. Calendars show that by the end of the

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<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 117-119.

<sup>19</sup> Such as S.J. Ridyard, "Condigna veneratio: Post-Conquest Attitudes to the Saints of the Anglo-Saxons", *Anglo-Norman Studies* 9 (1986), pp. 179-206; Richard Plaff, "Lanfranc's Supposed Purge of the Anglo-Saxon Calendar" in *Liturgical Calendars, Saints and Services in Medieval England* (Ashgate, Aldershot, 1998), pp. 95-108; David Rollason, *Saints and Relics in Anglo-Saxon England* (Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1989), pp. 220-226; and Knowles, pp. 117-119.

<sup>20</sup> This is shown in the discussion over the sanctity of Archbishop Aelphege found in the *Vita S. Anselmi*. Lanfranc questioned whether Aelphege should be venerated as a martyr, and Anselm, through the use of reason, convinces Lanfranc that Aelphege was indeed a martyr. Eadmer, *The Life of St Anselm*, ed. R.W. Southern (Nelson and Sons, London, 1962), pp. 50-54.

eleventh century the feast was not celebrated at Winchester and Canterbury,<sup>21</sup> and there is no evidence that the feast was long lived at either Exeter or Ramsey. Eadmer of Canterbury, writing the early twelfth century, stated that the feast had been widely celebrated but had been suppressed by the Normans.<sup>22</sup> A claim in the Annals of Worcester stating that the feast was celebrated for the first time in England in 1125 also supports the assumption that by the early-twelfth century it was not celebrated in English churches.<sup>23</sup>

Although Eadmer's treatise on the conception of Mary was the most significant philosophical examination of why it should be celebrated,<sup>24</sup> Osbert of Clare provided the most complete extant narration of the events surrounding the twelfth-century controversy over the feast of the Immaculate Conception in England. According to Osbert, the feast of the Immaculate Conception's revival in the 1120s began at Bury St Edmunds, a monastery for which there is no evidence of the celebration of the feast in pre-Conquest England, by an abbot who was not English.<sup>25</sup> Abbot Anselm of Bury was an Italian by birth, and the nephew of Archbishop Anselm of Canterbury. If Bury was the first church in England to celebrate the feast in the 1120s, as Osbert claims, and if it was started by Anselm, then it was instigated between 1120/1121, when Anselm arrived in England, and 1125, when the Annals of Worcester recorded that the feast was celebrated. In the next year, 1126, the Annals of Winchcombe recorded that, "This year the solemnity of the Conception of St Mary

<sup>21</sup> The Winchester calendar is edited in Wormald, pp. 169-181. The Canterbury calendar is in the *Decreta Lanfranci*, ed. D. Knowles (Nelson and sons, London, 1951), pp. 55-67.

<sup>22</sup> Eadmer, *De conceptione sanctae Mariae*, eds. H. Thurston & T. Slater (Freiburg im Br., 1904); *PL* 159, cols. 301-318 (at col. 301).

<sup>23</sup> *Annales de Wigornia* in *Annales monastici*, iv, ed. H.R. Luard, RS 36 (1869), p. 377.

<sup>24</sup> See below, pp. 131-133.

<sup>25</sup> *Letters*, no. 7, p. 67

began first to be celebrated among us.”<sup>26</sup> Whether this meant that it was celebrated at Winchcombe or simply that the writer of the annals heard about the celebration of the feast is debatable. There is a similar statement in the history of St Peter’s, Gloucester, during the abbacy of William Godeman (1113- 31): “And about this time the solemnity of the Conception of the blessed Mother Mary began to be celebrated among us in England.”<sup>27</sup> At St Alban’s there is even more evidence that the feast was liturgically celebrated. The *Acts of the Abbots of St Alban’s Monastery* noted that Geoffrey, abbot from 1119-1146, ordered that the feast of the Immaculate Conception should be celebrated in copes.<sup>28</sup> The writings of Eadmer and Osbert of Clare show that the feast of the Conception of Mary also had its supporters at Christ Church, Canterbury, Westminster, and Reading. Even if it was not liturgically celebrated at all of these locations, the wide dispersion of references to the feast shows that monks across the country became aware of the feast in the 1120s and 30s.

Osbert in his letters considers Abbot Anselm one of his closest friends. In times of trouble he turned to Anselm for help, and in the case of the controversy over the celebration of the Immaculate Conception he saw Anselm as his special counsel and perhaps as a supervisor. For this reason he reported to Anselm his progress in promoting the feast and asked him about the Roman custom in regards to the feast.<sup>29</sup> Anselm also probably gave refuge to Osbert in his exile from Westminster Abbey in the 1120s, and perhaps in return Osbert wrote his *miracula* for Bury St Edmunds.<sup>30</sup> Abbot Anselm was a valuable friend, even if Osbert and Anselm were not as close as

<sup>26</sup> “*Ipsa anno primum cepit celebrari apud nos solemnitas conceptionis sancte Marie.*” *Winchcombe Annals in Early Medieval Miscellany for D.M. Stenton*, PRS 76 (1960), p. 125.

<sup>27</sup> “*Istius vero tempore coepit primum celebrari apud nos in Anglia solemnitas conceptionis beatae genitricis Mariae.*” *Historia et cartularium monasterii Gloucestriae*, i, ed. W.H. Hart, RS 33 (1863), p. 15.

<sup>28</sup> *Gesta abbatum monasterii sancti Albani*, i, ed. H.T. Riley, RS 28 (1867), p. 93.

<sup>29</sup> *Letters*, no. 67, pp. 65-68.

<sup>30</sup> See below, pp. 200-203.

Osbert portrayed in his letters. Anselm was on friendly terms with both the king and the pope, having been a papal envoy to England, and was one of the most powerful abbots in the late 1120s and early 1130s.<sup>31</sup>

The revival of the feast of the Immaculate Conception was not without its opposition. In a letter to Anselm of Bury, Osbert of Clare related how he tried to celebrate the feast, but was approached by bishops Roger of Salisbury and Bernard of St Davids, who ordered him stop the celebration. Osbert continued: “However, pressing on in the day’s office, which we had begun, we performed the glorious festivities with joy and solemn jubilation.”<sup>32</sup> Arguments came to a head in an ecclesiastical council held in London, probably between September 30<sup>th</sup> and October 19<sup>th</sup>, 1129. Bishops Roger and Bernard likely raised issue before King Henry I and William, the archbishop of Canterbury, but instead of the feast being condemned it was approved by papal authority through William’s position as legate to England.<sup>33</sup> In the aforesaid letter from Osbert to Anselm, Osbert also indicated that King Henry was also supportive of the celebration of the feast of the Immaculate Conception at his personal foundation of Reading.<sup>34</sup> This council seems to have established the black monks’ right in England to celebrate the feast of the Conception liturgically, but it did little to resolve theological debate that was just beginning.

This letter also contains Osbert’s most thorough surviving philosophical discussion on the Immaculate Conception of Mary. His arguments appear to be based on Eadmer’s treatise on the Immaculate Conception that was probably written in the 1120s. He argues three main points. First, if John the Baptist and Jeremiah were

<sup>31</sup> For Anselm of Bury’s life and political career see Williamson’s note in *Letters*, pp. 191-200.

<sup>32</sup> “*Nos tamen coepto diei insistentes officio cum gaudio gloriosam festivitatem exegimus et solemnii tripudio.*” *Ibid.*, no. 7, p. 65.

<sup>33</sup> *Councils and Synods with Other Documents Relating to the English Church*, i, part 2, ed. D. Whitelock, M. Brett & C.N.L. Brooke (Clarendon, Oxford, 1981), pp. 750-754.

sanctified while still in the womb, then Mary, as the mother of God, should have received this same sanctification only to a greater extent.<sup>35</sup> This would not have found many objectors in the twelfth century since it did not strictly imply an immaculate conception, but simply stated that Mary was sanctified while in the womb. His next two arguments directly apply to her conception. The second argument is one of possibility:

For just as it was possible that God could bestow the first woman on the man as a helper formed from the rib of Adam without sin, so we believe that it was not impossible for him to sanctify the holy virgin Mary in her conception without the contamination of sin from the mass of Adam's prevarication...<sup>36</sup>

Finally, Osbert argues that Mary, as God's tabernacle, ought to have been cleansed at the point of her conception so that there were no impurities in the flesh from which Christ was taken.<sup>37</sup>

Besides Osbert of Clare narrating the events of the revival of the feast of the Conception of Mary and defending the feast at his own church, he also helped promote it at other churches. On a visit to Worcester in 1136/1137 Bishop Simon urged him to write a series of lections and hymns on St Anne, Mary's mother.<sup>38</sup> This proved to be so popular that Osbert also composed a sermon on the Conception of Mary for Warin, the dean of Worcester.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> *Letters*, no. 7, p. 67.

<sup>35</sup> *Letters*, no. 7, p. 66. John the Baptist was interpreted by Osbert and other medieval churchmen as sanctified before birth because he leaped within Elizabeth's womb when she was greeted by Mary (Luke 1:41). Similarly, Jeremiah was told in a vision that God chose him as a prophet before he was born (Jeremiah 1:5).

<sup>36</sup> "*Sicut enim deo fuit possibile ut de costa Adae primam matrem sine peccato plasmatam adiutorium viro tribueret, ita ei non impossibile fuisse credimus ut ex massa praevaricationis Adae beatam virginem Mariam sine contagione peccati in ipsa conceptione sanctificaret...*" *Ibid.*, no. 7, p. 66.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 7, pp. 66-67.

<sup>38</sup> See below, p. 136. The service to St Anne is edited in "Les compositions d'Osbert de Clare en l'honneur de sainte Anne", ed. A. Wilmart in *Annales de Bretagne* 37 (1925-6), pp. 13-33.

<sup>39</sup> Osbert's sermon on the Conception is edited as an appendix in Eadmer, *De conceptione sanctae Mariae*, pp. 65-83.

The most significant composition regarding the Immaculate Conception from this period was Eadmer's treatise. There are no surviving theological tracts from the Anglo-Saxon period concerning the Conception of Mary, and there probably were none written. In Anglo-Saxon England the celebration of Mary's conception was a purely spiritual event, without concern over the theological implications of saying that her conception was holy. With the Norman Conquest and the coming of early scholasticism, this approach to religion could no longer be accepted. Eadmer provides the perfect link between these two approaches to faith. He was an Englishman by birth, but also the disciple and biographer of the theologian Anselm of Canterbury.<sup>40</sup> This link between simple English piety and the new philosophical schools of thought can be seen in the introduction to his treatise. He writes that he turned to:

Those former times when [the Feast of the Conception of St Mary, the Mother of God,] was more widely celebrated, particularly by those in whom a pure simplicity and humble devotion to God was strong. But afterwards greater knowledge and a more searching examination of things had puffed up the minds of some, so that the simplicity of the poor was despised, and the celebration of the Feast was done away and utterly abolished as being contrary to reason.<sup>41</sup>

Eadmer regretted that he even had to write his treatise. Although he saw simple piety as superior, he recognized that the religious environment of Anglo-Norman England required that piety be supported by academic theological arguments.

Although Anselm's personal veneration of the Virgin Mary comes across in his prayers and writings,<sup>42</sup> he did not believe that Mary had been born untainted by sin. In his *Cur Deus homo* Anselm writes that,

<sup>40</sup> For Eadmer and his relationship with Anselm, see Southern, *St Anselm and his Biographer*.

<sup>41</sup> "Et quidem priscis temporibus frequentiori usu celebrabatur, ab eis praecipue in quibus pura simplicitas et humilior in Deum vigeat devotio. At ubi et major scientia et praepollens examinatio rerum mentes quorundam imbuat et erexit, eandem solemnitatem, spreto pauperum simplicitate, de medio sustulit; et eam quasi ratione vacantem redegit in nihilum." Eadmer, *De conceptione sanctae Mariae*, col. 301. The translation is from Southern, *St Anselm and his Biographer*, p. 291.

<sup>42</sup> Anselm wrote three prayers to the Virgin Mary. They are edited in Anselm, *S. Anselmi opera omnia*, iii, ed. F.S. Schmitt (Rome, 1940), pp. 13-25; and discussed in R.W. Southern, *St Anselm: A Portrait in a Landscape* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1990), pp. 106-109.

... the Virgin from whom he [Christ] was taken was conceived amid iniquities and her mother conceived her in sin, and she was born with original sin since she sinned in Adam, in whom all have sinned.<sup>43</sup>

It follows that if Mary was born with original sin then her conception could not be holy. Anselm made this statement because for him, and for many theologians of the twelfth century, all of human redemption depended on the inescapable perpetuation of Original Sin, which was only broken in the virgin birth of Christ.

Eadmer probably wrote his treatise in the second half of the 1120s, when the feast was spreading through England.<sup>44</sup> While St Anselm might not have agreed with the idea of the Immaculate Conception of Mary, nevertheless his argument style is clearly present in Eadmer's treatise. In fact, the style of the treatise is so close to Anselm's that throughout the Middle Ages and until the early twentieth century it passed as Anselm's work.<sup>45</sup> The central argument of Eadmer's *De conceptione* is not far from Anselm's Ontological Argument. Eadmer argued that all that God does is done in the best possible way. Therefore Christ, the ultimate realization of God's mercy, ought to be brought into the world in the best possible way. That required that he came into the world not only in a sinless way, ie. the virgin birth, but also from a sinless woman. Therefore Mary would have to be free even of the Original Sin that is passed down through the act of conception. As Eadmer noted: "Clearly he could, and would; therefore if he would, he did."<sup>46</sup> He also argued that even if there were sin in Mary's conception that it was with her parents and was not passed on to her. In

<sup>43</sup> "... *Virgo tamen ipsa, unde assumptus est, est in iniquitatibus concepta, et in peccatis concepit eam mater eius, et cum originali peccato nata est, quoniam et ipsa in Adam peccavit, in quo omnes peccaverunt.*" Anselm of Canterbury, *Cur deus homo*, in *Sancti Anselmi opera omnia*, ii, ed. F.S. Schmitt (Rome, 1940), p. 116. The translation is from Anselm of Canterbury, *The Major Works*, trs. Brian Davies and G.R. Evans (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1998), p. 337.

<sup>44</sup> It is not entirely certain when Eadmer's treatise was written. Van Dijk argued a latter date of 1135-1139, but his arguments are unconvincing and Southern's date of c.1125, just shortly after the feast's arrival in England, is more probable. Van Dijk, pp. 440- 441; Southern, *St Anselm and his Biographer*, pp. 290- 291.

<sup>45</sup> This error was not corrected until Thurston and Slater's edition of the work in 1904.

Eadmer's words: "Consider the chestnut... all prickly without, but smooth and white as milk within...; could not God grant that though conceived among the spikes of sin, she likewise could be altogether free from their sting?"<sup>47</sup> Neither Eadmer's nor Osbert of Clare's tract was widely distributed in the twelfth century, although Eadmer's treatise spread enough in England so that Osbert of Clare had clearly seen it when he penned his in the 1130s. Nevertheless, Eadmer's tract seems to have laid dormant through the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, but by the fourteenth century it established a wide circulation throughout Europe under Anselm's name and became one of the main texts used in the debate over the Immaculate Conception in the later Middle Ages.<sup>48</sup>

### **The Spread of the Feast to the Continent and the Beginning of the Controversy in the Universal Church**

Sometime around 1140 the feast seems to have crossed over to the continent and caught the attention of Bernard of Clairvaux. The specific event that caused St Bernard to write against the celebration of the feast of the Immaculate Conception was its installation at Lyon. It is not certain how the feast came to be celebrated at Lyon, but because of the strong connections between France and England in the twelfth century it probably came from England. Bernard saw the feast as a novelty:

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<sup>46</sup> "Potuit plane, et voluit; si igitur voluit, fecit." Eadmer, *De conceptione sanctae Mariae*, col. 305.

<sup>47</sup> "Castaneam invicem attende: cum de sui videlicet generis arbore prodit nascitura, involucrium illius totum hispidum et densissimis aculeis undique septum apparet. Intus castanea concipitur, primo quidem nucleum lactei liquoris, nihil hispidum, nihil asperum, nec aliquibus aculeis noxium in se habens, sed si aliquatenus servans illic in summa lenitate nutritur, fovetur et alitur, ac forma in sui speciem et habitudinem jam adulta, rupto involucrio ab omni spinarum punitione et onere liberrima natura egreditur. Attendo. Si Deus castaneae confert ut inter spinas remota punitione concipiatur, alatur, formetur, non potuit haec dare humano quod ipse sibi parabat templo in quo corporaliter habitaret, et de quo in unitate suae personae perfectus homo fieret, ut licet inter spinas peccatorum conciperetur, ab ipsis tamen spinarum aculeis omnimode exors redderetur?" *Ibid.*, col. 305. The abbreviated translation comes from Southern, pp. 294-295.

<sup>48</sup> Southern, *St Anselm and his Biographer*, pp. 295-296.

“The Virgin has many true titles of honor, many real marks of dignity, and does not need any that are false.”<sup>49</sup> He even admits that Mary was sanctified while still in the womb, in much the same way as Jeremiah and John the Baptist are said to have been, only infinitely more so, but he could not go so far as to say that her conception was sanctified. In regard to the Immaculate Conception he said, “...reason cannot accept this, for how can anything be holy without the presence of the Sanctifying Spirit, and how can the Holy Spirit have any part in sin, and how can there not be sin where there is carnal lust?”<sup>50</sup> Clearly Bernard was not swayed by Eadmer's metaphor of the chestnut. Most of the Cistercian order followed Bernard's lead and opposed the feast, so that the debate somewhat became a contest between Benedictines and Cistercians. This was not a complete division; the notable Benedictine abbot Peter de Celle of St Remi was an opponent of the feast. Nevertheless, by the second half of the twelfth century most black monks who addressed the subject of the feast of the Immaculate Conception supported its celebration, while most white monks opposed it.

It was St Bernard's criticism of the feast of the Immaculate Conception that provoked Nicholas of St Albans to write his treatise on the Immaculate Conception of Mary, sometime in the 1140s or 50s. Nicholas repeated many of Eadmer's basic arguments, saying: “For if she had contracted sin from her parents, the old nature of Adam would have laid the foundations, not the new nature of Christ.”<sup>51</sup> He also argued against St Bernard's statement there cannot be conception without sin by noting that if conception was not possible without sin then God would not have

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<sup>49</sup> “*Virgo regia falso non eget honore, veris cumulata honorum titulis, infulis dignitatum.*” Bernhard of Clairvaux, *Epistolae*, PL 182, cols. 67-716 (at col. 333). The translation is from *The Letters of St Bernard of Clairvaux*, tr. Bruno Scott James (Burns Oates, London, 1953), no. 215, p. 290.

<sup>50</sup> “*Nec hoc quidem admittit ratio. Quomodo namque aut sanctitas absque Spiritu sanctificante, aut sancto societas cum peccato fuit? Aut certe peccatum quomodo non fuit, ubi libido non defuit?*” Bernard of Clairvaux, col. 335. The translation is from James, no. 215, p. 292.

commanded men to increase and multiply.<sup>52</sup> The one major theological advance that Nicholas made in his treatise was the idea of a separate sanctification of the soul. Nicholas argued that even if Mary's flesh was contaminated by sin it was before the arrival of her soul, and sin cannot exist in the body alone. Mary's soul came directly from God and was therefore sinless.

If the conception of the Blessed Virgin was in all respects like unto ours, she received in that conception only the cause of sin, not the sin itself, for the flesh alone comes from propagation; nor is it conscious of sin as long as it remains without a soul. She was not therefore conceived in sin, since her conception knew neither guilt nor the act of sin, but only that cause of sin. And the law proves that the cause of sin is not itself sin...<sup>53</sup>

This treatise, in turn, provoked two further sources in the discussion about the Immaculate Conception. The first was a treatise written by Walter Daniel, the biographer of Aelred of Rievaulx and a monk at that Cistercian monastery in Yorkshire.<sup>54</sup> Although Walter Daniel's treatise no longer exists it is evident that he was writing against Nicholas, and perhaps supporting the views of his fellow Cistercian, Bernard of Clairvaux. Nicholas of St Albans' treatise also instigated a series of letters between Nicholas and Peter de Celle, probably dating from 1162-1183.<sup>55</sup> In the series of four letters Nicholas argued the case for the Immaculate Conception, while Peter argued against it. These letters show an English monk

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<sup>51</sup> "Si enim ex parentibus peccatum traduxisset, vetustas quidem Ade non novitas Christi eam fundasset." Nicholas of St Albans, *De celebranda conceptione beate Marie*, ed. C.H. Talbot in *Revue Bénédictine* 64 (1954), p. 112. The translation is from Davis, p. 387.

<sup>52</sup> Nicholas of St Albans, p. 102.

<sup>53</sup> "Si beate virginis conceptio, nostre fuit per omnia similis, causam tantum culpe non culpam traduxit in conceptione, cum sola caro sit ex traduce, nec sit caro peccati conscia, quamdiu est inanimata. In peccato igitur concepta non fuit, cuius conceptio tam reatum quam actum peccati nescivit, sed tantum causam peccati. Et causam peccati non esse peccatum probat lex..." Nicholas of St Albans, p. 115. The translation is from Davis, p. 390.

<sup>54</sup> While it is not believed to still exist, Leland recorded seeing a copy of Walter Daniel's treatise at Rievaulx in the sixteenth century. John Leland, *Comentarii de scriptoribus Britannicis*, ed. A. Hall (Oxford, 1709), p. 201

<sup>55</sup> Peter of Celle, *The Letters of Peter of Celle*, ed. Julian Haseldine (Clarendon, Oxford, 2001), nos. 157-160, pp. 572-626.

defending the theological reasoning of the feast of the Immaculate Conception to one of the major figures in the late twelfth-century French church.<sup>56</sup>

**Osbert's *Sermon on the Conception of St Mary* and  
*Sermon, Hymns and Prayers on St Anne***

Following Osbert of Clare's letter to Abbot Anselm, c. 1128, in which he described his progress in promoting the celebration of the feast, nearly a decade passed before Osbert returned to the subject of the Conception of Mary in his writings. While his letter to Anselm concerned the political battle for the right to celebrate the feast, in the late 1130s Osbert set out liturgical texts relating to the Conception of Mary. This second set of writings was prompted by Bishop Simon of Worcester. In 1136/1137 both Simon and Osbert were at Pershore for the funeral of Abbot Wido. Just before going up to the altar Bishop Simon embraced Osbert and requested that he write a service for the feast of St Anne, Mary's mother.<sup>57</sup> What followed was Osbert of Clare's composition of a service in honor of St Anne and a sermon on the conception of St Mary for the monastic community at Worcester.

In his prefatory letter to the St Anne service, Osbert dedicated the work to Bishop Simon and described the circumstances involved in the writing of the service. This is followed by a sermon, two hymns and two prayers about St Anne. Interestingly, Osbert indicates that the feast of St Anne was already annually celebrated at Worcester, which makes it an early instance of a feast that was not widely celebrated in the West until the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Already in the prefatory letter Osbert laid out the main theme of the service: that Anne's sanctity

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<sup>56</sup> Peter de Celle, who was then abbot of Remi, later became the bishop of Chartres.

<sup>57</sup> *Letters*, no. 12, p. 77. Anne's feast day falls on July 26, and Osbert of Clare's service was likely used at Worcester on this day in 1137.

comes from her connection to Mary and Jesus. It describes her as the '*genitricis dei parens*', the parent of the mother of God.<sup>58</sup> Just as Osbert kept his discussion of the sanctity of Mary very christocentric, as is discussed below, so he kept his discussion of Anne's sanctity focused on her daughter and grandson. Osbert even asks for Mary's help in writing the service. He furthers this idea of a heredity of sanctity in the last line of the letter saying: "Thus the line of this holy family begins, and it will end in the praises of that one in whose honor it has its beginning."<sup>59</sup>

The idea of the sanctity of the holy family pervades the whole service. Osbert credited Anne as a strong and holy woman because, "Truly the strength of the columns supports the whole house...."<sup>60</sup> Nevertheless, his most common adjective to describe Anne is '*felix*', fortunate. Anne, in Osbert's view, was less blessed from her holy attributes than she was from her holy position. Anne's connection to both Mary and Christ even gives her a double right to holiness. Osbert describes how there are two roads to sanctity: chastity and martyrdom. In quoting Proverbs 31 he stated, "Her clothing is linen and purple. In the linen the beauty of virginity is expressed, and in the purple the death of holy passion is symbolized."<sup>61</sup> He then goes on to describe how Mary exemplifies the virgin and Christ the martyr, so Anne is sanctified through her association with both. Osbert also associates her with Mary in the language he uses to describe Anne. He calls her a '*mediator*', a title often given to Mary, and he compares Anne to Eve, who is usually compared with Mary.

Osbert's service for St Anne had a more lasting effect on English ecclesiastical writing, but his *Sermon on the Conception of St Mary* is more significant from a

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<sup>58</sup> *Letters*, no. 12, p. 77.

<sup>59</sup> "*Haec sanctae progeniei ita series incipit, et in illius laudibus desinit in cuius honore exordium sumit.*" *Ibid.*, no. 12, p. 79.

<sup>60</sup> "*Columnarum vero firmitas totam domum continet...*" *St Anne*, p. 273.

historical perspective because it deals directly with the controversy over the Immaculate Conception. Osbert wrote the *Sermo de conceptione* for Dean Warin of Worcester following the success of Osbert's service for St Anne.<sup>62</sup> Interestingly, the sermon itself does not talk about the theological or philosophical justification of Immaculate Conception.<sup>63</sup> Instead it is simply a sermon on Mary and her conception, although there was no need to celebrate the conception unless it was perceived as sacred. Osbert admitted in the prefatory letter to Dean Warin that he refrained from stating controversial theology in the sermons:

However I dare not say what I hold in my heart about this holy begetting; because it is not proper to cast heavenly pearls undisguised before the eyes of the masses... I do not wish that some enemy begin to gnaw at me with cynical teeth and attack, mutilating the integrity of my faith with perverse refutations.<sup>64</sup>

The first reason Osbert gives for holding back in the sermon is that it is such a precious truth that it should not be placed before the unlearned, but clearly he was concerned about the criticism that some churchmen were putting up against the Immaculate Conception. Osbert fought the churchmen opposed to the celebration of the feast a decade earlier, and he perhaps did not want to revisit the controversy when he wrote his sermon. Bitterness over the earlier struggle was evidently still on his mind, as shown later in the prefatory letter where he referred to those who opposed the feast as '*infideles et haeretici*'.<sup>65</sup> He may also have thought that he could not give anything further to the theological arguments that were developed in Eadmer's treatise

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<sup>61</sup> "*Byssus et purpura indumentum eius. In bysso autem candor virginitatis exprimitur, in purpura vero sacrae passionis mortificatio figuratur.*" *Ibid.*, p. 274.

<sup>62</sup> *Letters*, no. 13, pp. 79-80.

<sup>63</sup> It is interesting to note that Davis, who does an excellent job comparing Osbert's, Eadmer's, and Nicholas of St Albans' writings on the Immaculate Conception, only refers to Osbert's sermon once. Davis principally uses Osbert's letter to Abbot Anselm for his philosophical views on the conception of Mary.

<sup>64</sup> "*Dicere tamen non audeo quod de hac sancta generatione corde concipio; quoniam caelestes non licit palam margaritas coram multis spargere... Nolo tamen ut aliquis aemulus cynico me dente incipiat rodere et detractionibus perversis integritatem fidei meae lacerans infestare.*" *Letters*, no. 13, p. 79.

and that Osbert himself stated in his letter to Abbot Anselm. Osbert did not even mention the sanctifications in the womb of John the Baptist and Jeremiah, elements essential in any twelfth-century discussion about the Immaculate Conception.

Instead of focusing on the conception of St Mary as a holy event in itself, in his sermon Osbert focused on Mary's conception as the beginning of the salvation narrative: "Therefore this day is the beginning of the whole human redemption."<sup>66</sup> This focus makes Mary's conception christocentric to the extent that it is part of the same story as the feasts of the Annunciation, Christmas, Easter and the Ascension. Mary is predestined for the work of conceiving Christ, and so in her conception God was simply laying the foundations for the Incarnation. Osbert uses Old Testament metaphors throughout the *Sermo de conceptione* to describe Mary's relationship to God. Mary, and particularly her womb, is the 'house of faith' or the 'house built with seven columns' and she is compared to Solomon's temple in Jerusalem.<sup>67</sup> Osbert also calls her the '*gloriosa archa*' because like the Ark of the Covenant, Mary was created to house God,<sup>68</sup> and she is the 'jar of our hope.'<sup>69</sup> Quoting the Prophet Isaiah, Osbert states that Mary was the 'swift cloud' that the lord rode in upon and destroyed the idols of Egypt.<sup>70</sup>

Mary was also the flower that Christ developed from: "First he gives the flower and later the fruit."<sup>71</sup> For Osbert, the fruit of Christ needed Mary, the flower, for his physical realization. It was only through Mary that the *caro*, or flesh, of Christ could come to Earth. The reliance on Mary for the physical nature of Christ in turn

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<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 13, p. 80.

<sup>66</sup> "*Haec itaque dies totius est humanae redemptionis initium...*" *Sermo de conceptione*, p. 65.

<sup>67</sup> '*domus fidelis*'; '*domus illa septem columnis aedificata*' (quoting 1 Sam 2:35 and Prv 9:1), *Ibid.*, pp. 72-73; 80-81.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 82.

<sup>69</sup> '*olla spei nostrae*', *Ibid.*, p. 76; drawing from Psalm 59:10.

<sup>70</sup> '*nubis levis*', *Ibid.*, p. 77, quoting Is 19:1.

<sup>71</sup> "*Primum dedit florem et postea fructum.*" *Sermo de conceptione*, p. 78.

increases the importance of Mary's conception. He was the flesh of her flesh, and her conception was the beginning of that flesh. "When the holy virgin Mary was conceived into the world, then immediately the Lord was conceived in her through predestination."<sup>72</sup>

Like Osbert's service for the feast of St Anne, his *Sermo de conceptione sancte Marie* has a strong emphasis on lineage, although it takes a different form. Mary's sanctity rested not only on the fact that she was the mother of God, but also that she was the archetype virgin. Osbert uses lineage in his sermon on Mary's conception to show how Mary, and therefore Christ, were both of the line of David and part of God's promise to Abraham.<sup>73</sup> Playing on Mary's status as the archetype 'virgo', Osbert also compares her to the 'virga' of Aaron which miraculously grew overnight to show God's favor of the house of Levi.<sup>74</sup> Mary is the last link in the chain connecting the first key figure of faith to the incarnate God. Further, Osbert saw himself and his contemporaries as in this same lineage with Abraham and Mary *per adoptionem*.<sup>75</sup> Osbert also interpreted Mary's conception as a turning point in the human timeline between the sin that came out of the fall of Adam and Eve and the redemption from Christ. "God blessed the land which was cursed in the work of Adam, and averted our captivity through [Mary]. That land gave its fruit. That blessed land is the virgin Mary, from our lineage, from this clay, from this mud, from Adam."<sup>76</sup>

<sup>72</sup> "Quando vero beata virgo Maria concepta est in mundo, conceptus est statim in illa dominus per praescientiam." *Ibid.*, pp. 77-78.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 67-68, 73-74.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 71.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 68.

<sup>76</sup> "Terram quae maledicta est in opere Adam benedixit deus, et avertit per eam captivitatem nostram. Terra ista dedit fructum suum. Terra ista beata est virgo Maria de nostro semine, de hoc luto, de hoc limo, de Adam." *Sermo de conceptione*, p. 78.

Osbert's service for the feast of St Anne had a longer lasting impact than his *Sermon on the Conception of St Mary*. Although both only survive in one twelfth-century manuscript,<sup>77</sup> the Anne composition was also incorporated into later texts. Of the nine *lectiones* in the *Sarum Breviary* for the feast of St Anne, the first three are taken, with some omissions and additions, from Osbert's sermon, as is part of the seventh lesson.<sup>78</sup> In the fifteenth century the parts of Osbert's work that were incorporated into the *Sarum Breviary* were also translated into Middle English in a rhymed poem about St Anne.<sup>79</sup>

### The Theme of Virginitly in Osbert of Clare's Hagiography

While Mary and the Immaculate Conception do not play a direct role in Osbert of Clare's other hagiography, the theme of virginitly is quite significant. He described himself as a, "lover of virgin modesty in Christ and emulator of his holy behavior," to Abbess Adeliz of Barking.<sup>80</sup> His early controversy over the celebration of the Conception of Mary and his personal veneration of the Virgin Mary provided his principal, although not only model, for virginitly. Osbert was also a Benedictine monk, and chastity was part of the rule that he lived by. These two models of virginitly, the monastic and the Marian, permeate each other throughout his writings. Osbert saw the monastic life as the system of living out the virgin ideal shown by Mary.

<sup>77</sup> Both are incorporated into the only extant collection of Osbert's letters in BL Cotton MS Vit. A xlii. See below, pp. 194-195.

<sup>78</sup> *Breviarii ad usum insignis ecclesiae Sarum*, iii, eds. Francis Procter and Christopher Wordsworth (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1882), cols. 539-556.

<sup>79</sup> Albert Baugh, "Osbert of Clare, the Sarum Breviary, and the Middle-English *Saint Anne* in Rime Royal", *Speculum* 7 (1932), pp. 106-113. *The Middle English Stanzaic Versions of the Life of Saint Anne*, ed. Roscoe Parker, Early English Text Society, orig. ser., 174 (1928), pp. 90-109.

Of Osbert's three *vitae* two are of lay figures, St Ethelbert and St Edward the Confessor, and the third, St Edburga, is a nun. The *Vita S. Eadwardi* is the most interesting of these three concerning the celibate life due to the nature of Edward's life and the existence of a significantly different earlier *vita*.<sup>81</sup> Nevertheless, virginity also plays a strong role in both the *Vita S. Eadburgae* and the *Vita S. Ethelberti*. Edburga's principal saintly attribute throughout Osbert's *vita* is her virginity. Edburga was an Anglo-Saxon princess who gave up her wealth for the life of a nun. She is consistently referred to by Osbert as the '*virgo regia*' or '*virgo sacra*'. Osbert calls her the tabernacle and bride of God, words he also used to describe Mary.<sup>82</sup>

Ethelbert was an Anglo-Saxon king who wanted to live a life of virginal chastity, but unlike Edburga, Ethelbert was unable to because of his duty to his people. His nobles convinced him that he should marry for the purpose of producing an heir.<sup>83</sup> Ethelbert's desire to live a chaste life in Osbert's *vita* becomes more significant when compared to the later *Vita S. Ethelberti* by Gerald of Wales where Osbert's emphasis on virginity takes a subservient role to Gerald's misogyny. The principal reason that Gerald gives for Ethelbert not wanting to marry is not that he wanted preserve his virginity, but rather that he learned of the evils of marriage and of women.<sup>84</sup> Ethelbert, however, was murdered before he could marry, and was therefore blessed by his martyrdom and his intact virginity. Ethelbert's future bride, Alfrida,

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<sup>80</sup> "...*amator virgineae in Christo pudicitiae aemulatorque eius sanctimoniae.*" *Letters*, no. 42, pp. 153-154.

<sup>81</sup> Joanna Huntington compares the differences in the treatment of virginity between the eleventh-century anonymous life, Osbert of Clares's life and Aelred of Rievaulx's life in her article, "Virginity in the Construction of Edward the Confessor as a Saint", in *Medieval Virginites*, eds. Anke Bernau, Sarah Salih and Ruth Evans (University of Wales Press, Cardiff, 2003), pp. 119-139.

<sup>82</sup> *Vita S. Eadburgae*, p. 268.

<sup>83</sup> *Vita S. Aethelbrichti*, fols. 31v-32r.

<sup>84</sup> Robert Bartlett first made this comparison in his article, "Rewriting Saints' Lives: The Case of Gerald of Wales", in *Speculum* 58 (1983), pp. 602-603.

was even so impressed by his stature and his tragic death that she became a nun and dedicated herself to the chaste life.<sup>85</sup>

Like Ethelbert, Osbert's Edward the Confessor wished to live a chaste life, following the example of the Virgin Mary,<sup>86</sup> and also like Ethelbert, Edward's nobles pressured him into taking a wife. Unlike Ethelbert though, Edward was not killed before he married. Instead Edward remained chaste even in marriage, and Edith, his wife, lived with him like a daughter,<sup>87</sup> keeping their celibacy a secret from Edward's nobles.<sup>88</sup> Osbert's *Vita S. Eadwardi* has a much stronger emphasis on Edward's chastity than his principal source, the eleventh-century *Vita Aedwardi regis*.<sup>89</sup> Frank Barlow noted how the ambiguity of Edward's chastity in the earlier life changed to a central sign of his sanctity in Osbert's life.<sup>90</sup> It is problematic reading too much into Osbert's insertion of Edward's chastity since the portion of the earlier life involving Edward and Edith's marriage no longer survives.<sup>91</sup> Nevertheless, Osbert at least emphasized Edward's chastity more than the earlier anonymous author. When describing the first translation in 1102, Osbert linked Edward's uncorrupted body to his virginity; his body was intact in death because it had been intact in life.<sup>92</sup> Osbert

<sup>85</sup> *Vita S. Aethelbrichti*, fol. 36r.

<sup>86</sup> *Vita S. Eadwardi*, pp. 174-175. For Edward the Confessor's celibacy see Huntington, "Virginity in the Construction"; and Eric John, "Edward the Confessor and the Celibate Life", *AB* 97 (1979), pp. 171-178. Also for a general biography of King Edward see Frank Barlow, *Edward the Confessor* (University of California Press, Berkeley, 1970).

<sup>87</sup> *Vita S. Eadwardi*, p. 75, 110-111.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 75.

<sup>89</sup> The anonymous earlier life is edited in *The Life of King Edward*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., ed. & tr. Frank Barlow (Clarendon, Oxford, 1992).

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, p. lxxviii.

<sup>91</sup> Barlow argues that a portion of this missing section, consisting of about half of the lacuna, can be extracted from Richard of Cirencester *Speculum historiale*. *Ibid.*, pp. xxxix-xl, 22-24. This recovered section deals principally with Edward's wife and the anonymous author's patron, Edith. It also emphasizes Edith's, instead of Edward's, love of chastity. *Ibid.*, pp. 22-23.

<sup>92</sup> *Vita S. Eadwardi*, pp. 121-123. Osbert also links Edward's virginity to his uncorrupt body in the prefatory letter. *Ibid.*, p. 66.

also apparently added Edward's great devotion to Mary, who was his model for virginity.<sup>93</sup>

Virginity is essentially a passive virtue in all three of Osbert's saints' lives. Neither Ethelbert nor Edward is tempted by lust or has to struggle with his virginity like male saints in many *vitae*.<sup>94</sup> Only responsibility to their people and the urging of their magnates convinced them to marry at all. Rather than ascetics triumphing over conflict, Osbert's Ethelbert and Edward are almost asexual saintly ideals. Similarly, as a baby Edburga's father, King Edward, placed royal vestments on one side of her and a gospel book, chalice and plate on the other. Edburga went to the ecclesiastical items, thereby showing her desire to dedicate herself to religion.<sup>95</sup> Her sanctity was not something for which she strove, but was simply part of her.

Although virginity plays a key role in Osbert of Clare's hagiography, it is even more prominent in his letters to female recipients. The most poignant example of this is a treatise entitled *De armatura castitatis*, written in the form of a personal correspondence to Abbess Adeliz of Barking. The treatise principally consists of a series of exempla for the chaste life drawn from hagiographic, scriptural and classical texts.<sup>96</sup> Although Mary plays a relatively small direct role within the treatise, Osbert

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<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 74.

<sup>94</sup> The passive nature of Edward the Confessor's virginity and the strong connection that Osbert made between his virginity and his incorrupt body led Huntington to argue that, "... Osbert is quite simply not interested in Edward the man as virgin. Instead, his interest is in Edward the virgin corpse." Huntington, p. 125. For Huntington, Osbert's principal goal in writing his *vita* was to promote Edward's relics and his cult at Westminster, rather than extolling the virtues of Edward the Confessor. Although Osbert clearly tried to focus the cult around Edward's body at Westminster, her argument is perhaps overstated. Osbert gave a similarly passive role to Ethelbert's virginity, and Osbert's personal veneration of St Edward should also not be overlooked. Nevertheless, given that the *Vita S. Eadwardi* was written in conjunction with the Westminster forged charters, Huntington's argument has some credibility.

<sup>95</sup> *Vita S. Eadburgae*, p. 265.

<sup>96</sup> There was a large patristic tradition of treatises about virginity, included texts written by Augustine of Hippo, Basil of Caesarea and John Chrysostom. The most significant treatise on virginity from early medieval England is Aldhelm of Malmesbury's *Prosa de virginitate* (2 vols.), ed. Scott Gwara. *CCSL* 124 (2001). Although writing a much longer work, Aldhelm, like Osbert, used exempla as the foundation of his treatise.

clearly places Mary, with her special relationship to God, as the perfect virgin model by which his other examples are meant to be judged. Osbert began the *De armatura* with a reflection on the role of virginity in human salvation:

For virginity, deriving a heavenly origin from on high, attains a principal place amongst the first and distinguished citizens of the heavenly city, and it descended in its beauty in the coming to mankind of God and man in the Virgin Mother, the Queen of Chastity. This is that mistress of virtues and jewel of all good works, which God-man specifically joined to himself through his birth, and without which his worthy and immaculate mother would neither have conceived nor bore him. Without it, other women bring forth mortal flesh from their corruptible flesh. For I say, they produce what they conceive, sin from sin, and the following lives are bought at a cost to themselves. But those who bring forth spiritual fruits for God, do not risk childbirth at all, where the author of virginity and married virgin is he who generates, and she, whom he makes fruitful with grace and his holy seed, has the mind of a virgin and brings forth flesh. They are the imitators of the one who with her corporeal integrity carried the son of God, who has consecrated you as his spouse and virgin.<sup>97</sup>

For Osbert, virginity was a means of personal salvation and the method of the salvation of humanity through the annunciation and birth of Christ by the Virgin Mary. It involved more than simply an uncorrupted body, although this was important to Osbert. The holy virgin possessed the *mens virginis*, and the examples that Osbert chose to exemplify virgins in the *De armatura* all show this holy resolution.

Osbert begins the treatise with short examinations of Saints Cecilia and Etheldreda,<sup>98</sup> and ends the treatise with an exploration of St Ethelburga.<sup>99</sup> Both Cecilia and Etheldreda were women who were forced into marriage but were

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<sup>97</sup> “*Virginitas enim, apud superos caelestem contrahens ortum, inter primos et praecipuos supernae urbis cives principatum obtinuit, et in adventu ad homines dei et hominis in virgine matre, regina integritatis, formosa descendit. Haec est illa virtutum domina, omniumque bonorum operum gemma, quam sibi in nativitate sua specialiter deus homo copulavit, et sine qua mater eius digna et immaculata nec concepit nec peperit. Sine illa ceterae pariunt mulieres, quae de corruptibili carne carnem pariunt morituram; pariunt, inquam, quod concipiunt, peccatum de peccato, successumque sibi vitae nonnunquam mercantur impendio. Verum tali nequaquam periclitantur puerperio quae spirituales deo parturiunt fructus, ubi auctor virginitatis et virgo maritus est ille qui generat, et virginis mentem gestat et carnem parens illa quam gratia et semine sacro fecundat. Hae sunt imitatrices eius quae cum carnis integritate dei filium pertulit, qui te sibi sponsam et virginem consecravit.*” *Letters*, no. 42, pp. 154-155.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 42, pp. 155-157.

<sup>99</sup> *Letters*, no. 42, pp. 175-177.

nevertheless able to maintain their virginity. Cecilia was a third-century Roman martyr who was said to have refused to consummate her marriage with her husband Valerian. Her husband and her brother Tiburtius soon converted and all three were martyred. Drawing from Proverbs description of the ideal wife, a passage he also used to describe St Anne, Osbert noted of Cecilia that: “Her clothes are purple and of linen, because the pure virgin conserved her body without blemish.”<sup>100</sup>

Etheldreda was an Anglo-Saxon princess who remained a virgin through two marriages. Her first husband died and left her a widow while still young, and her second husband, King Esgfrith of Northumbria, agreed to not consummate their marriage. When, twelve years after into their marriage, King Esgfrith wanted to normalize their relationship, Etheldreda left him and became a nun. She founded a double monastery on the Isle of Ely and was buried there. In his descriptions of Cecilia and Etheldreda, Osbert emphasized the strength of conviction that both women had to maintain their virginity against the expectations of their societies. St Ethelburga, who Osbert ended his treatise with, was also a seventh-century Anglo-Saxon monastic saint. Osbert had personal ties to the cults of both Etheldreda and Ethelburga: Etheldreda was the patron saint of Ely, where Osbert found assistance during his exile from Westminster Abbey, and Ethelburga is the principal saint of Barking Abbey, where Osbert’s nieces were nuns and Adeliz, the recipient of the *De armatura*, was abbess.

Osbert also included a lengthy discussion of the vestal virgin Rhea Silvia taken from Ovid’s *Fasti*.<sup>101</sup> Silvia was raped by the god Mars, became pregnant and bore Romulus, who went on to found the city of Rome, and his twin brother Remus.

<sup>100</sup> “*Byssus et purpura indumentum eius, quia carnem suam virgo sine macula integra conservavit,...*” *Ibid.*, no. 42, p. 155; Proverbs 31:22.

<sup>101</sup> *Letters*, no. 42, pp. 157-161.

Osbert loosely tried to link Silvia to the Virgin Mary and Christ, but he principally used the story of Silvia's rape to show that even among pagans virginity was prized.<sup>102</sup> For Osbert, virginity was a natural virtue rather than simply a religious virtue, and therefore it extended beyond Christianity. It was through Adam's sin that human nature was corrupted, and through the virgin birth of Christ humanity was restored to the '*naturae libertas*'.<sup>103</sup> Just as Christ followed after Adam's fall, Romulus and the city of Rome came out of Mars' rape of Silvia. Osbert did not restrict himself to the story of Silvia in his reinterpretation of Roman mythology into a Christian natural order:

Cupid is the demon of fornication, and wings are depicted from each of his sides because nothing is found more agile or nimble to lovers. He is shaped as a bare youth because love is shown to be irrational and foolish. [Cupid] holds an arrow because he wounds, and he lights a torch because he inflames.<sup>104</sup>

Cupid, like the devil in scripture, is depicted as a deceiver, who tricks the unsuspecting with love into betraying their natural purity.

The greatest portion of the body of the *De armatura* is devoted to a discussion of the Old Testament story of Judith's slaying of Holofernes.<sup>105</sup> When the Jewish people were threatened by an Assyrian army, Judith, a beautiful woman, used her cunning to get close to Holofernes, the leader of the Assyrian army, and then killed

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<sup>102</sup> Osbert feebly links Mary and Jesus by arguing that Remus and Romulus were early representations of Julius Caesar and the emperor Augustus (respectively), and that Mary gave birth to Jesus during the reign of the latter. He also noted Augustus' name, Octavius, derives from the Latin word '*octavus*', meaning 'eighth'. This, according to Osbert, reflects Christian salvation because it represents an eschatological eighth day in the Judeo-Christian week. "On the sixth [day] we work, on the seventh we rest, however on the eighth day we will flourish again in the new splendor of the glorified flesh." ("*In sexta enim laboramus, in septima requiescimus, in octava autem glorificatae carnis novo splendore reflorebimus.*") *Letters*, no. 42, p. 160.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 42, p. 161.

<sup>104</sup> "*Cupido itaque daemon est fornicationis, et ex utroque latere alatus depingitur, quia nihil amantibus levius, nihil mobilius invenitur; puer et nudus effingitur quia amor irrationabilis et stultus indicatur; sagittam tenet quia vulnerat, et facem accendit quia inflammat.*" *Ibid.*, no. 42, p. 161.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 42, pp. 161-175.

him to save her own city of Bethulia and, in turn, Jerusalem. Osbert, however, transformed the story of Judith into an allegory of virginity conquering evil. Accordingly, to Osbert, “Holofernes portrayed the figure of that perverse angel who always lies in ambush of purity and chastity.”<sup>106</sup> Like other medieval ecclesiastical writers, Osbert overlooked Judith’s widowhood and portrayed her as an uncorrupt virgin. Osbert noted that the name of Judith’s city, Bethulia, is Hebrew for virgin.<sup>107</sup> The festive clothing which she wore when she killed Holofernes was her virginity and the sword she used was her spirituality.<sup>108</sup> Likewise, Osbert noted the significance of Judith’s refusal to eat any Assyrian food, “the foods of sin”, and only “spiritual foods” prepared by her servant.<sup>109</sup> Even Bagoas, although he was Holofernes’ servant, represented the priesthood because he was a eunuch and therefore exemplified male chastity.<sup>110</sup> For Osbert the story of Judith is the story of God saving Israel through the chastity of a ‘*mulier fortis*’, and as such he compares her to Mary, whose chastity was the vehicle by which God saved the human race.<sup>111</sup>

Osbert of Clare’s discussion of Judith within the *De armatura* is frequently interrupted by long digressions extolling virtues and giving practical advice to Abbess Adeliz. Throughout the treatise he emphasizes the association of corporeal and moral purity, as shown by his use of the same words (*mundus* or *munditia*) for both.

Anyone who fornicates, who performs adultery, who commits sacrilege, who perpetrates murder, who commits incest, who devotes themselves to lies and false oaths, who sinks to illicit works of perversity first in their heart and then in their body, all things are not clean to them even though they may have given alms at the Lord’s command.<sup>112</sup>

<sup>106</sup> “*Olofernes autem figuram illius perversi gerit angeli, qui munditiae semper insidiatur atque castitati.*” *Letters*, no. 42, p. 162.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 42, p. 165.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 42, pp. 167-168, 173-175.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 42, pp. 173-174.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 42, pp. 167-168.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 42, p. 165.

<sup>112</sup> “*Qui fornicatur, qui facit adulterium, qui sacrilegia committit, qui perpetrat homicidium, qui operatur incestum, qui mendaciis et periuriis vacat, qui ad illicita perversitatis opera prius cor et*

For Osbert, the corporeal purity obtained through chastity needed to be accompanied by acts of hospitality, the giving of alms and works of charity.<sup>113</sup> Osbert even acknowledged that those who were committed to pious virginity were also susceptible to arrogance. “If you are a virgin, then do not become haughty from your virginity. He who chose a humble mother requires a humble servant. If you have been humble then you will be blessed.”<sup>114</sup> Later in the treatise Osbert also noted the parallel dangers posed to an individual’s bodily and spiritual purity: “If the demon of fornication is not able to control you, then the spirit of greed, God forbid, will perhaps be able to control you!”<sup>115</sup> The moral discussions and the examples that Osbert gave in the *De armatura* reflect a much more complex and demanding notion of purity than a passive avoidance of sexual intercourse. The virgins in *De armatura*, unlike those in Osbert’s hagiography, struggled with the human body which had been deformed through Adam’s sin and would only be restored in Christ’s judgement, and the many moral sins which could befall them.<sup>116</sup>

Just as in the *De armatura castitatis*, virginity plays a central role in Osbert of Clare’s four other extant letters to female recipients. All four women were in monastic communities and therefore presumably lived lives of chastity, for which Osbert praised each of them. In separate letters to his nieces, Margaret and Cecilia, he compares each to their saintly virgin name-sakes,<sup>117</sup> and in the letter to Margaret he notes that her name means pearl (*margarita*) in Latin: “This is that pearl, namely

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*postea corpus inclinat, quamvis eleemosynam det iuxta praeceptum domini, non tamen omnia munda sunt ei.” Ibid., no. 42, pp. 172-173; ref. Lk 11:41.*

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 42, pp. 170-173.

<sup>114</sup> “*Si virgo es, de virginitate ne insolescas. Ancillam enim requirit humilem, qui humilem elegit genitricem. Si humilis fueris beata eris.*” *Letters*, p. 165.

<sup>115</sup> “*Si tibi fornicationis daemon imperare non poterit, spiritus avaritiae, quod absit, forsitan imperabit.*” *Ibid.*, no. 42, p. 169.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 42, p. 173.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, nos. 21, 22, pp. 90-91; 96.

precious virginity....”<sup>118</sup> When writing to a nun named Ida, perhaps of the community at Barking, Osbert praised her virginity and compares her to several saints.<sup>119</sup> In the same letter he also made an interesting comparison between the Virgin Mary and Ida: “Although not in the same way nor with the same reward, nevertheless in the same order you, o daughter, will be able to become the spouse and mother of God.”<sup>120</sup> Through her virginity Osbert not only likened Ida to Mary’s personal sanctity, but also linked her to Mary’s role in the salvation story.

The theme of virginity is equally significant in Osbert’s lengthy letter to Matilda of Darenth, which begins with a commendation of Matilda’s virginity and a discussion about the Virgin Mary. Over a third of the letter is dedicated to a discussion of the twelve precious stones that make up the foundation of the new Jerusalem in the biblical Apocalypse.<sup>121</sup> Each of the stones for Osbert, as well as for other medieval commentators, represented different virtues. Most of Osbert’s explanations of the stones are taken from Bede’s *Expositio Apocalypseos*; however, Osbert changes the meaning of the topaz, which both he and Bede describe as the most precious and royal of stones. While Bede claims that the topaz represented the contemplative life, Osbert changes it to represent virginity.<sup>122</sup> Like the Virgin Mary who is the *regina caelestis*, “glorious virginity is the queen and empress of all.”<sup>123</sup>

Osbert frequently makes direct comparisons of his female recipients and his female saints to the Virgin Mary, but he also links Mary to these other women through the language that he uses to describe them. Throughout his writings the most

<sup>118</sup> “*Haec est illa margarita, virginitas videlicet pretiosa,*” *Ibid.*, no. 21, p. 89.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 40, pp. 135-140.

<sup>120</sup> “*Sic et tu, o filia, quamvis non eodem modo nec eodem munere, eodem tamen ordine effici poteris sponsa dei et mater dei.*” *Letters*, no. 40, p. 137.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 41, pp. 148-153. Rev 21:19-20.

<sup>122</sup> Bede, *Expositio Apocalypseos*, ed. Roger Gryson, *CCSL* 121A (2001), pp. 531-559; *Letters*, no. 41, p. 151.

<sup>123</sup> “*...imperatrix omnium et regina est gloriosa virginitas,*” *Ibid.*, no. 41, p. 151.

frequent titles he gives Mary or female religious is simply *virgo*. Given Mary's special role as the archetype virgin, Osbert also noted in the *Sermo de conceptione* that she was a "*perpetua virgo*".<sup>124</sup> Similarly, while virgins are described as '*intacta*' in Osbert's writings, Mary is '*intacta post partem*'.<sup>125</sup> Osbert also often describes them as '*ancillae*' or '*sponsae*' to Christ, although Mary is usually listed as both '*genetrix*' and '*sponsa*'. Virgins are sometimes called '*mulieres fortes*' or '*mulieres honestae*', while Mary is the '*femina virtutis*'.

Osbert's focus on the theme of virginity within his letters to female recipients is a strong contrast to the absence of virginity in his letters to male recipients. The extent of the focus on virginity to different audiences reflects the different ways in which Osbert viewed the genders. Although he praised his female recipients for their chastity, Osbert also called females the weaker sex in his *Vita S. Eadwardi*.<sup>126</sup> This perceived physical weakness contrasts with the spiritual fortitude that Osbert described in women, often calling virgins '*mulieres fortes*'. Although there could be men blessed by their virginity, such as the male saints that he wrote about, nevertheless for Osbert virginity was fundamentally linked to the female gender. Female religious through their gender were inheritors of the role of Mary as the '*femina intacta*' who gave birth to God. In his *De armatura*, Osbert even attempts to reinterpret seemingly misogynistic passages in scripture and in Virgil's *Aeneid*.

Addressing Abbess Adeliz, Osbert notes:

Your spirit is masculine, although your sex is feminine. "I have found one man in a thousand," states Ecclesiastes, "but I have not found one among all women." A pure human meditation is

<sup>124</sup> Osbert refers to Eze 44:2 to prove Mary's perpetual virginity. *Sermo de conceptione*, p 67, 79.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 70.

<sup>126</sup> *Vita S. Eadwardi*, p. 93. Osbert's description of women as the '*inferior sexus*' follows the anonymous *Vita Aedwardi*'s description of women in the same place in the narrative as the '*infirmus sexus*'. *The Life of King Edward*, p. 92. Notably, Aelred of Rievaulx omitted any reference to the fragility of women when he rewrote Osbert's *Vita*. Aelred of Rievaulx, *Vita S. Edwardi regis*, PL 195,

described under the abstract name of man, while a weak thought is called by the title of woman. Thus we refer to good works as masculine, however we consider harmful acts as characteristic of the weaker sex.<sup>127</sup>

Derogatory references to femininity for Osbert were principally semantic, although he does go on to explain that the reason for this nomenclature is Eve's role in the Fall and, conversely, the masculine Christ's role in human redemption.<sup>128</sup>

By contrast to the spiritual fortitude in women, Osbert took a more jaded attitude towards his male recipients who are often malicious, jealous and tempted by the world. Even those churchmen whom Osbert admired were still benevolent power brokers, from whom Osbert sought assistance. Although the enforcement of sacerdotal celibacy was an important issue for reforming clergy in the early twelfth-century English church, discussions of virginity are entirely absent from Osbert's letters to male clergy. He perhaps saw his fellow male churchmen, like himself, as too involved in the trials of the world for the idealization he gave to female religious; or perhaps Osbert's virginal ideal was simply a feminine model, based on the model of Mary and principally accessible to the *'ancillae dei'*.

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cols. 761-762. Osbert also refers to women as the *'inferior sexus'* in the *De armatura*. *Letters*, no. 42, p. 170.

<sup>127</sup> *"Virilis itaque sit spiritus tuus, cum sit muliebris sexus tuus. Virum, inquit Ecclesiastes, de mille unum repperi, mulierem ex omnibus non inveni. Pura hominis meditatio sub viri nomine mystice describitur; infirma vero cogitatio mulieris titulo praenotatur. Bona vero opera ad masculum referimus; actus autem noxios sexus inferioris caractere figuramus."* *Ibid.*, no. 42, p. 170.

<sup>128</sup> *Letters*, no. 42, p. 170.

## Chapter Six

### Kings and Kingship

Kings and the theme of kingship were prevalent in Osbert of Clare's writings, although this is neither surprising nor particularly uncommon given the period when Osbert was writing. The first half of the twelfth century in England experienced a certain crisis of kingship. None of the three kings who reigned during Osbert's life ascended to the throne in a straightforward manner. Henry I, following the death of his brother William Rufus in a hunting accident, quickly had himself crowned king before his older brother Robert could make claim to the throne. Stephen, Henry's nephew, also rushed to have himself crowned king over the claims of his elder brother, Theobald, and Henry's daughter, Matilda, whom Henry had designated as his heir. Finally, Henry of Anjou, the son of Matilda and grandson of Henry I, after going to war against Stephen was designated as his heir, to the disadvantage of Stephen's own son William. Right in the heart of Osbert's career the civil war raged, the fiercest succession dispute of the twelfth century, and just as Osbert was writing his *vita* of the royal saint Edward the Confessor, Edward's great-great niece, the Empress Matilda, was landing in England to make her claim to the throne. The environment was ripe for thought on what kingship meant.

Osbert's interest in kingship was not unusual in the twelfth-century Anglo-Norman world he was writing for, but how he approached it was. In the twelfth century there was a tradition of political treatises on kingship, from the Norman Anonymous, writing c.1100, to Gerald of Wales' *De principis instructione*, written

and revised c.1190-1217.<sup>1</sup> The most extensive and influential of these was John of Salisbury's *Policraticus*, completed in 1159, around the end of Osbert's life.<sup>2</sup> Unlike these other writers, Osbert's writings about kings tended to deal less with historic or theoretical kingship, and more with saintly kings. Most of the hagiography of royal saints written in twelfth-century England was either written by Osbert or was a rewriting of his works. Every piece of pure hagiography that Osbert wrote was about royal saints,<sup>3</sup> including three *vitae* and one collection of *miracula*. Later in the twelfth century his *Vita S. Aethelbrichti* was rewritten by Gerald of Wales, and his *Vita S. Eadwardi* was rewritten by Aelred of Rievaulx, a project which likely would not have been undertaken without Osbert's efforts at Edward's canonization. Osbert also addressed the idea of what a king's duties were and what it meant to be a good king throughout his letters.

While Osbert of Clare wrote about temporal kings in the language of sanctity and royal saints in terms of kingship, it is nevertheless useful to separate out Osbert's secular writings about kings from his hagiography. When Osbert discussed kings in his letters he wrote with a different purpose from when he wrote about royal saints. In the former he was either writing to describe a historical event or to make a plea for assistance, while in the latter he was writing to show the sanctity of a individual. Therefore the emphasis on different kings' attributes changes between Osbert's epistolary and hagiographic writings. In his letters he portrays holy kings, while in his

<sup>1</sup> The majority of the Norman Anonymous (also known as the York Anonymous) tract is edited in Heinrich Böhmer, *Kirche und Staat in England und in der Normandie* (Neudruck der Ausgabe, Leipzig, 1899), pp. 436-498; also see Ernst Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies* (Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1957), pp. 42-61; Gerald of Wales, *De instructione principis*, ed. J.F. Dimock & E.A. Freeman, RS 21/8 (1891); also see Robert Bartlett, *Gerald of Wales* (Clarendon, Oxford, 1982), pp. 58-100.

<sup>2</sup> John of Salisbury, *Policraticus*, ed. K.S.B. Keats-Rohan, CCCM 118 (1993); also see John Dickinson, "The Medieval Conception of Kingship and Some of its Limitations, as Developed in the *Policraticus* of John of Salisbury", *Speculum* 1 (1926), pp. 308-337.

<sup>3</sup> Excluding the sermons relating to St Mary and St Anne, which are both hagiographical and liturgical.

hagiography he portrays royal saints. There is also a change in the temporality of the kings in Osbert's writings. In one he is looking at contemporary kings and in the other he is looking at past Anglo-Saxon kings. The one figure who works into both of these fields is Edward the Confessor. Besides being the protagonist in Osbert's *Vita S. Eadwardi*, Edward also plays the role of the secular king in a series of forged charters produced by Osbert and the Westminster scriptorium.<sup>4</sup>

### Kings and Kingship in Osbert's Letters

While kings play a key role in Osbert of Clare's writings, contemporary kings are not very prevalent within his letters. Out of thirty-nine surviving letters written by Osbert, only one mentions Henry I, one mentions King Stephen, and two, perhaps three, mention Henry II. Of these, most are short passing references to the king. The one major exception to this is a poem written by Osbert to Henry of Anjou, shortly before his consecration in 1154.<sup>5</sup> It is the clearest statement of Osbert of Clare's ideals of kingship because it lays out in ninety-seven lines of rhythmical verse his praise of Henry. Osbert's words of flattery display more about his idea of the perfect king than a realistic portrayal might have, because they lack the criticism that might have been included in an honest view of Henry as a man.

The emphasis that Osbert places on heredity and legitimacy in his letter to King Henry is perhaps not astonishing. Henry succeeded over Stephen's son William, and while his succession seems to have passed without problems, there still were

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<sup>4</sup> See above, ch. 2.

<sup>5</sup> *Letters*, no. 38, pp. 130-132. It is perhaps interesting to note that Osbert does not refer to him as King Henry. In the Angevin, and likely Norman, period the reign of a king was deemed to start at his coronation, while from Edward I on it started at the death of the previous king. C.R. Cheney, *Handbook of Dates* (RHS, London, originally published in 1945, reprinted with corrections by Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 12.

doubts in people's minds about his legitimacy.<sup>6</sup> Osbert acknowledges these doubts about legitimacy by linking Henry to his grandfather King Henry I.

Since you are the grandson of a great king through whom stood the pinnacle of the law,  
His fortune smiles on you who now bears his name.

Whether your enemies like it or not, you are able to be called his heir...<sup>7</sup>

There is no mention of Henry's controversial mother, the Empress Matilda. By linking Henry to his grandfather he is also linking him to the image of the lawmaker. "The eternal sun... remains with you everywhere because you cultivate law and justice."<sup>8</sup> Osbert creates the image of the true royal line passing from Henry to Henry and continuing on through Henry's son William, who is mentioned near the end of the poem.<sup>9</sup> Osbert also describes Eleanor of Aquitaine, Henry's wife, saying, "... she is so sensible and noble, so graceful and beautiful...",<sup>10</sup> but this praise is less designed to show her qualities as to show the high pedigree of Prince William:

... Who will rule after you and will triumph against enemies,  
He will not know how to degenerate from the lineage of this famous family  
Just as he proceeded from you, so he will follow in uprightness.<sup>11</sup>

It is not by chance that Osbert places his praise of Eleanor directly between praises of William.

Henry's did not just inherit his claim to legitimacy from his maternal grandfather, but also from his paternal grandfather, Fulk V. In 1129 Fulk V of Anjou arrived in the Holy Land and married Melisende, the daughter of King Baldwin II of

<sup>6</sup> For Stephen's reign and the peace made between Henry and Stephen, see Graeme White, "The End of Stephen's Reign", *History* 75 (1990), pp. 3-22; Jim Bradbury, *Stephen and Matilda* (Sutton, Phoenix Mill, Gloucestershire, 1998); R.H.C. Davis, *King Stephen* (Longman, London, 1967).

<sup>7</sup> "*Cum sis nepos magni regis per quem stetit summa legis/ Illius iam praefers nomen cuius tibi ridet omen./ Velint nolint inimici, heres eius potes dici...*" *Letters*, no. 38, p. 130.

<sup>8</sup> "*Sol aeternus... ubique manet tecum quia colis ius et aequum.*" *Ibid.*, no. 38, p. 131.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 38, p. 132. William, Henry's eldest son with Eleanor of Aquitaine, was born on 17 August, 1153.

<sup>10</sup> "*Tam prudens et generosa, tam est decens et formosa...*" *Ibid.*, no. 38, p. 132.

<sup>11</sup> "... *post te qui regnabit et ex hoste triumphabit./ Lineaque stirpis clarae nesciet degenerare/ Sed sicut processit a te, sic sequetur probitate,*" *Ibid.*, no. 38, p. 132.

Jerusalem. Upon Baldwin's death in 1131, Fulk was made king of Jerusalem.<sup>12</sup> By the time Osbert wrote his letter to Henry, Fulk's son and Henry's uncle, Baldwin III, had ascended to the throne of Jerusalem. Osbert links Henry to the honor of both his grandfather and uncle by mentioning the recent victory at Ascalon.<sup>13</sup> While Osbert was usually not interested in crusading ideals, he nevertheless saw them as a beneficial characteristic of a king. As a descendant of King Fulk, Henry was entitled to the glory of his crusading victories: "Christ the king thus preserves his land through your line."<sup>14</sup> Osbert then compared the conquest of the Holy Land with Henry's coming to power in England:

Through you is restored what the people mourned as lost.  
You found this new Jerusalem and cleanse this whole kingdom  
From the filth of those who are the slave of idols,  
And who, searching for money have killed many people.<sup>15</sup>

Just as Fulk and Baldwin freed Jerusalem from the wickedness of the Saracens, so Henry freed England, a metaphorical Jerusalem, from the wicked men of the Anarchy.

The most common way in which Osbert portrayed King Henry was as a peacemaker. While Osbert saw Henry as a cultivator of law and justice, it was by force that he kept peace.

Peace be with you, renowned conqueror, who knows how to triumph,  
So that the kingdom will be a kingdom of peace by the force of your menacing sword.<sup>16</sup>

This idea of Henry as the peacemaker is closely tied to Osbert's depiction of Stephen's reign. In this poem, Osbert depicts Stephen's reign as a time of lawlessness and anarchy. Interestingly, Osbert never mentions King Stephen by name. The picture

<sup>12</sup> Hans Mayer, *The Crusades*, tr. John Gillingham (Oxford University Press, London, 1972), pp. 86-87.

<sup>13</sup> *Letters*, no. 38, p. 131. Ascalon was captured by Baldwin's forces on 19 Aug 1153. Mayer, p. 115.

<sup>14</sup> "*Rex Christus per genus tuum sic conservat locum suum,...*" *Letters*, no. 38, p. 131.

<sup>15</sup> "*Per te iam sit restauratum quod lugebat plebs ablatum./ Ierusalem novam fundas hocque regnum totum mundas/ A spurcitiis eorum servi qui sunt idolorum./ Et argentum ambientes multas occiderunt gentes.*" *Ibid.*, no. 38, pp. 131-132.

<sup>16</sup> "*Pax sit tecum victor clare qui scis ita triumphare/ Ut sit regnum regnum pacis ensis tui vi minacis:...*" *Letters*, no. 38, p. 132.

that Osbert painted was of an era ruled by powerful men, seemingly without royal authority. One reason for this might be that Stephen, if he is perceived as a legitimate king, breaks the clear continuity of Henry's line, that is Henry I to Henry II to William. Another possible reason for Osbert's restraint is that he may not have thought it wise to condemn the recently deceased king who had made Henry his legal heir and whose son, Gervase, was abbot of Westminster Abbey. Whatever the reason, Osbert's poem lacks any mention of the idea of a tyrannical king that was such a prevalent theme in the twelfth-century writers on kingship, such as John of Salisbury. The one use of the word '*tyrannus*' is in the plural and refers to the wicked and powerful men of the Anarchy.<sup>17</sup> Osbert, writing in 1154, saw the lack of royal authority and not its misuse as the cause of the problems of Stephen's reign, and through military force Henry restored royal authority and law.

Earlier there were the hunters, of whose customs we know:  
Cattle did not roam at all, but people caught them.  
Redeeming them harshly, with neither law nor justice,  
Until God restored you through whom the new light was lit.  
Then freedom was praised and slavery overthrown.  
The jubilee year returned in which God gazed on the kingdom  
So that the innocent might be glorified and the guilty expelled.  
To the meek you are a mild lamb and to tyrants a great lion,  
And those who have shady hearts you terrify like a dragon.  
... Castles were destroyed so that the burning storm no longer rage on.<sup>18</sup>  
Thanks to you, many thieves that lurked have now been buried,  
And robbers are frightened so that the innocent may be gloried.  
Those who proudly raged and oppressed the poor  
Now lament, afflicted and conquered by fear of you.  
Your words cut the wicked and cleave them like a sword.  
Those who do not cultivate justice and who do not wish to bend voluntarily

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 38, p. 130.

<sup>18</sup> A reference to the 'adulterine' castles built up during Stephen's reign and destroyed after the ascension of Henry II. Osbert also complained about these castles in his letter to Abbot Silvester of StAustines, Canterbury. *Ibid.*, no. 34, p. 120. For a recent interpretation of these castles see Charles

From their pride are swayed by fear of you,  
 And in this way the powerful grow mild so that they do not ruin the poor.  
 Once the rich had all of the wealth but now he groans more than the poor,  
 And those who are accustomed to ruling are forced to plead.<sup>19</sup>

Like other twelfth century churchmen, Osbert saw the Old Testament as an essential model of kingship and God the giver of its authority. Osbert compared Henry's accession with the collapse of the walls of Jericho and the city's conquest by the Levites.<sup>20</sup> In both cases the 'cruel and the powerful' were overthrown by God.<sup>21</sup> Both the Levites and Henry were instruments through whom God did his work. "God conquers, and reigns in you, and my creator rules."<sup>22</sup> In an allusion to Christ, Osbert told Henry that, "...your actions are illuminated by the root of David."<sup>23</sup> This is a strongly Christocentric model of kingship. Besides describing Christ as 'Rex *Christus*', he also goes on to say:

Christ the maker of true peace through whom you made our peace,  
 Giving the celestial kingdom to you, may he preserve you forever.<sup>24</sup>

While God works through Henry, he also blesses him. Osbert states that Henry will be known as a '*beatus princeps*' and a '*sanctus rex*'.<sup>25</sup>

Coulson, "The Castles of the Anarchy", in *The Anarchy of King Stephen's Reign*, ed. Edmund King (Clarendon, Oxford, 1994), pp. 1-19.

<sup>19</sup> "Erant ante venatores quorum tales scimus mores:/ Pecudes haud ambiebant, homines at capiebant./ Redimentes eos dure, sine lege sine iure./ Donec deus te reduxit per quem nova lux illuxit./ Dum libertas celebratur servitusque profligatur./ Annus redit iubeleus quo respexit regnum deus/ Innocens ut gloriatur et reus exterminetur/ Mitibus es mitis agnus et tyrannis leo magnus./ Et qui corde sunt opaco eos terres quasi draco./... Corruerunt ut castella, saevit fervens haud procella:/ Grates tibi, fures multi delitescunt iam sepulti,/ Et praedones exterrantur ut insontes gloriantur:/ Qui superbi fremuerunt pauperesque depresserunt/ Ingemiscunt nunc afflicti et terrore tuo victi./ Sermo tuus pravos scindit et ut ensis illos findit:/ Qui iustitiam non colunt et qui sponte flecti nolunt/ Ab elatione sua, curvat hos formido tua./ Et mitescunt sic potentes ut disperdant haud egentes:/ Dives quondam gazis plenus nunc plus gemit quam egenus./ Et qui solet imperare cogitur nunc supplicare." *Letters*, no. 38, pp. 130-131.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 38, p. 131; Jos 6:20.

<sup>21</sup> "pollentes crudeles... gentes" *Ibid.*, no. 38, p. 131.

<sup>22</sup> "Vincit, regnat in te deus, imperatque plastes meus:" *Ibid.*, no. 38, p. 131.

<sup>23</sup> "...radix David tuos actus illustravit." *Ibid.*, no. 38, p. 131; Rev 5:5, 22:16.

<sup>24</sup> "Christus auctor verae pacis per quem nobis pacem facis/ Tibi regnum dans supernum te conservet in aeternum." *Ibid.*, no. 38, p. 132.

<sup>25</sup> *Letters*, no. 38, p. 131. Frank Barlow briefly discusses the uses of religious language to describe kings in his introduction to the *The Life of King Edward*, second edition, ed. & tr. Frank Barlow (Clarendon, Oxford, 1992), pp. lxxviii-lxix.

Osbert also saw the patronage of the Church and of scholarship as an important duty of a good king. Conjuring images of classical patronage, Osbert made a plea for his own church in his poem to Henry:

The man Mecenas loosened the reigns of love for Horace,  
Whom he loved in his time and promoted in many ways.  
And Virgil was dear to Augustus because of a beautiful poem,  
Taking glorious enough gifts for a good reward.  
Josephus, not with empty hope, in honoring Titus the son of Vespasian,  
Was set free from the servitude which oppressed him.  
Therefore, giving this hand to Osbert, make him rejoice,  
Make a certain end to his affliction with your protection  
Lest the church which he confesses to lead be oppressed,  
Which those who perversely do wrong undertake to suppress.<sup>26</sup>

Osbert uses completely standard models. The medieval ideal of patronage of the letters rested on classical, not ecclesiastical, models. This was shown later in the twelfth century by Gerald of Wales who, lamenting the absence of royal patrons, said,

For it is not literature that is lacking, but learned princes. ... Therefore give Pyrrhus, and you will have Homer. Give Pompey, and you will have Cicero. Give Caesar and Augustus, and you will also have Virgil and Horace.<sup>27</sup>

Instead of just seeking literary patronage Osbert uses these classical models to ask for ecclesiastical patronage for his community. Coming from Westminster Abbey, Osbert was keenly aware of royal patronage. Although all Norman kings were crowned at Westminster, different kings treated Westminster as a royal church in varying degrees.<sup>28</sup> Nevertheless, Westminster Abbey saw itself as a royal foundation.

<sup>26</sup> "*Vir Oratio Mecenas amoris laxans habenas/ Suo tempore dilexit et in multis hunc provexit:/ Et Virgilius venusto carmine carus Augusto/ Auctus est mercede bona ampla satis sumens dona:/ Iosephus spe non inani filium Vespasiani/ Titum colens liberatur servitute qua gravatur./ Ergo manum dans Osberto hunc gaudere fine certo/ In afflictione sua fac protectione tua/ Ne ecclesia gravetur cui praeesse se fatetur./ Quam deprimere conantur qui perverse malignantur.*" Letters, no. 38, p. 132.

<sup>27</sup> "*Non enim desunt literae, sed principes literati... Da igitur Pirrum; dabis Homerum. Da Pompeium; dabis et Tullium. Da Gaium, et Augustum; Virgilium quoque dabis et Flaccum.*" Gerald of Wales, *Topographia Hibernia*, RS 21/5 (1867), p. 4.

<sup>28</sup> Emma Mason noted the ambivalence of the Norman kings to Westminster Abbey in her article, "Westminster Abbey and the Monarchy", *JEH* 41 (1990), reprinted in Emma Mason, *Westminster Abbey and its People* (Boydell, Woodbridge, 1996), pp. 269-287. Also see the chapter in the same book, pp. 147-161.

This is clearly shown in the efforts of Osbert of Clare and the scribes working with him in the creation of forged charters.<sup>29</sup> With a few exceptions, these spurious charters produced by Osbert and his contemporaries are royal charters. Even the majority of forged papal charters are in the form of letters to kings, confirming the abbey's rights,<sup>30</sup> similarly a spurious charter of Dunstan confirms the rights of the First Charter of Edgar, also forged at this time.<sup>31</sup> In Osbert's eyes, the king was the prime patron of the Church, and specifically of Westminster Abbey. In one letter from Innocent II to King David I of Scotland, which was presumably written at the request of Osbert of Clare, Westminster is specifically referred to as a royal monastery.<sup>32</sup> In these charters there is also a strong link between the king and the faith, as shown by strong religious language. The major royal charters forged by Osbert all begin: '*In nomine sanctae et indiuiduae trinitatis*', and this phrase is then followed by either '*gratia dei Anglorum rex*' or '*dei gratia dux Normannorum*'.<sup>33</sup> This is even more evident in the comparison between contemporary authentic charters and spurious charters claiming to come from King Stephen.<sup>34</sup> The spurious charters contain the '*gratia dei Anglorum rex*' structure, while the authentic royal charters from his period use the more secular and simple '*rex Anglorum*' address.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>29</sup> See above, ch. 2.

<sup>30</sup> *Westminster Abbey Charters*, ed. Emma Mason et al., LRS 25 (1988), no. 152-154.

<sup>31</sup> P. Chaplais, "The Original Charters of Herbert and Gervase, abbots of Westminster" in *A Medieval Miscellany for D.M. Stenton*, PRS 36 (1960), pp. 92, 97.

<sup>32</sup> Calendared in *Westminster Abbey Charters*, no. 160, and edited in *Papsturkunden in England*, i, no. 25.

<sup>33</sup> This can be seen in the *First and Third Charters of King Edward* edited in H. Pierquin *Recueil général des chartes anglo-saxonnes* (Picard & Fils, Paris, 1912), no. 43.2, 43.3; the *Second Charter of King Edward*, edited in Bernhard Scholz, "Two Forged Charters from the Abbey of Westminster and their Relationship with St. Denis", *EHR* 76 (1961), pp. 474-475; and in the *First and Second Charters of King William*, edited in *Regesta regum Anglo-Normannorum: The Acta of William I*, ed. David Bates (Clarendon Oxford, 1998), nos. 290, 303.

<sup>34</sup> While authentic charters begin with a, "*Stephanus rex Anglorum*," incipit, those believed to be spurious tend to begin with a, "*Stephanus dei gratia rex Anglorum*," construction. One (#928) even includes an, "*In nomine sancte at individue Trinitatis*." *Regesta regum*, iii, pp. 337-346.

<sup>35</sup> The '*gratia dei rex*' address is not commonly used in royal charters until 1171.

While it is difficult to get a complete picture of Osbert's impressions of his contemporary kings because of a scarcity of references, a glimpse can be gained through his letters. Looking back from 1154 Osbert described Henry I as the supreme law-giver,<sup>36</sup> and in the one letter in which Osbert refers to Henry, he is watching over the English church. In this letter, written to Anselm of Bury and dating from 1128 or early 1129, Henry is portrayed as a patron of the church and a supporter of the Feast of the Immaculate Conception.<sup>37</sup> The reference itself is simply a passing note, but it is nevertheless important. Osbert asked Anselm to consult Hugh of Reading on the matter of the feast of the Immaculate Conception, "...who also solemnly celebrates this at the request of King Henry."<sup>38</sup> Although in other letters Osbert argued for a free church, he looked favorably on Henry's intrusion into liturgical politics in this case, and he surely also looked favorably on Henry's presiding over the Council of London in 1129 which approved this same feast. Two of Osbert's friends, Anselm of Bury and Athelwold of Carlisle, also appear to have been friends of Henry I.<sup>39</sup>

Osbert perhaps referred to King Stephen in one letter, where he complained to Prior Hugh of Lewes that the king had not supported his election and convinced him to go to Ely.<sup>40</sup> Although he was clearly disappointed, Osbert showed restraint in regards to the new king and did not describe Stephen in the adversarial language that he often used to describe those who opposed him and his reform efforts. This restraint was gone in his poem to Henry II, where Osbert describes Stephen's reign as a period of turmoil.<sup>41</sup> Writing to Henry in 1154 it was to Osbert's advantage to portray it thus.

<sup>36</sup> *Letters*, no. 38, p. 130.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 7, p. 67.

<sup>38</sup> "... qui hanc festivitatem prece etiam regis Henrici solemniter celebrat." *Ibid.*, no. 7, p. 67.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, nos. 5, 9, pp. 62-64, 72-74. Athelwold was even Henry's confessor. For short biographies on Anselm and Athelwold see Williamson's notes, pp. 191-200, 203-206.

<sup>40</sup> *Letters*, no. 1, p. 47. Although Osbert does not name the king, this letter was probably written early in Stephen's reign in 1136. For the dating of this letter see above, pp. 8-10.

<sup>41</sup> *Letters*, no. 38, p. 130.

Nevertheless, there is further evidence that Osbert saw Stephen's reign as a turbulent anarchy. In a letter to Silvester, abbot of St Augustine's, Canterbury, from late 1153, Osbert complained about five castles which vexed the small house that he oversaw at that time.<sup>42</sup> The next year he praised Henry for destroying just such castles.<sup>43</sup>

Surviving within the collection of Osbert's letters there is one letter from Stephen to Innocent II, where he refers to Osbert as, "...a senior in religion and reputation."<sup>44</sup> This was nothing more than a statement of Osbert's credentials and does not show an actual connection between Osbert and Stephen, especially since the letter was likely drafted by Osbert.<sup>45</sup>

Besides objecting to the turbulence of Stephen's reign, Osbert also probably disliked Stephen for his choice of Gervase as abbot. In 1138 Stephen appointed his son, Gervase of Blois, as the abbot of Westminster.<sup>46</sup> It is uncertain whether Osbert held ambitions for the abbacy in 1138, but he soon came into conflict with Gervase. When Osbert went to Rome for the canonization of Edward the Confessor he likely complained about Gervase, as shown by a letter from Innocent II to Abbot Gervase reprimanding the abbot.<sup>47</sup> Gervase shortly banished Osbert, presumably over his criticism of the abbot. It is unlikely that Osbert's perception of King Stephen was not negatively affected by his conflict with Stephen's son, Gervase.

Osbert had very high hopes for Henry of Anjou before he was actually crowned king, but there is very little documentation showing Osbert's impression of Henry as king. One reason for this is that Osbert likely did not live to see much of his

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<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 34, p. 120.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 38, p.131.

<sup>44</sup> "... *seniorem religionis et famae...*" *Ibid.*, no. 17, pp. 85-86.

<sup>45</sup> See Robinson's introduction in *Ibid.*, p. 18.

<sup>46</sup> John of Worcester, *The Chronicle of John of Worcester*, iii, ed. P. McGurk (Clarendon, Oxford, 1998), pp. 260-262.

<sup>47</sup> *Papsturkunden in England*, i, no. 24. This charter, however, was likely either forged or altered by Osbert. See above, pp. 26-27.

reign. If Gervase's appointment was a stain on King Stephen, then his deposition in 1157 likely endeared Henry to Osbert.<sup>48</sup> In his *De armatura castitatis*, dating from c.1160, Osbert mentioned that he was crossing the sea to see King Henry, perhaps for the purpose of obtaining Henry's support for the canonization of Edward the Confessor.<sup>49</sup> Clearly Henry's support helped Westminster finally obtain the papal canonization in 1161, a cause that Osbert had worked hard for in the 1130s. While Henry I provided for the success of the Feast of the Immaculate Conception through the 1129 Council of London, Henry II helped ensure the success of the canonization of the Edward the Confessor through his support.

### Kings in Osbert's Hagiography

While Osbert of Clare uses terms like '*beatus*' and '*sanctus*' to describe Prince Henry in 1154, he is not the '*beatus rex*' of Osbert's royal hagiography. The very idea of the royal saints is complicated, and the role of royal saints within medieval society has been the subject of much discussion. Much of the theoretical discussion of the nature of royal saints revolves around a claim by William Chaney that royal saints were the descendants of sacral kingship.<sup>50</sup> This in turn prompted a discourse in which historians evaluated his claim.<sup>51</sup> Chaney's argument has been rejected because it is a simplistic view of a complex relationship, and because there are real differences between a sacral-king and a saint-king. The most apparent of these differences is that

<sup>48</sup> Emma Mason, *Westminster Abbey and its People*, pp. 48-50.

<sup>49</sup> *Letters*, no. 42, p. 157. See above, pp. 89-90.

<sup>50</sup> William Chaney, *The Cult of Kingship in Anglo-Saxon England* (University of California Press, Berkeley, 1970), pp. 77-84. The most recent large examination of royal saints is Gábor Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers and Blessed Princesses*, tr. Éva Pálmai (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2002). Klaniczay also includes an excellent historiography of the ideas of royal saints over the last century. Klaniczay, pp. 2-16.

<sup>51</sup> Most notably Janet Nelson, who examines the idea of the royal saint and previous historiography on the subject in her article "Royal Saints and Early Medieval Kingship", in *Sanctity and Secularity* (Basil

kings are sacral in their lifetime, but sanctified only in the afterlife.<sup>52</sup> While the sacral-king's relationship to the divine is based on the office of kingship, the royal saint's relationship to the divine is based upon the merits of that individual. Therefore all kings are sacral, but only the elect few are saintly.

This has led historians such as J.M. Wallace-Hadrill, Janet Nelson and Susan Ridyard to the conclusion that royal saints were models of ideal kingship.<sup>53</sup> In this instance, these historians were principally discussing Anglo-Saxon royal saints, but for Osbert of Clare, writing in the twelfth century about some of these same saints, this premise does not strictly hold up. While Osbert's ideal king, as depicted in his letters, shares many qualities with the Anglo-Saxon royal saints that he wrote about, there are also distinct differences.

Chaney's basic argument does not hold up under scrutiny, but nevertheless there was a relationship between sacral kingship and royal sainthood. The king's perceived special relationship with the divine, as clearly shown in Osbert's letter to Prince Henry, likely at least predisposed people to be able to accept the possibility of a saint-king. This relationship is perhaps best seen in the phenomenon of the thaumaturgical powers attributed to kings. In both England and France the idea that a king could heal by the laying on of hands appears to have been preceded by an ancestral royal saint healing the sick.<sup>54</sup> The closeness of sacral kingship and royal sanctity is best seen in William of Malmesbury's complaint that some saw Edward the

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Blackwell, Oxford, 1973), pp. 39-44. Also Susan Ridyard, *The Royal Saints of Anglo-Saxon England* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1988), pp. 234-236.

<sup>52</sup> Nelson, p. 43.

<sup>53</sup> J.M. Wallace-Hadrill, *Early Germanic Kingship* (Clarendon, Oxford, 1971), ch. 4; Nelson, pp. 43-44; Ridyard, pp. 250-251.

<sup>54</sup> Marc Bloch, *The Royal Touch*, tr. J.E. Anderson (Dorset Press, New York, 1961), pp. 12-27.

Confessor's thaumaturgical power as deriving from his kingship rather than his sanctity.<sup>55</sup>

Although William's statement shows that even in the early twelfth century some held the belief that thaumaturgical powers descended from the office of the king, there is no evidence that Osbert of Clare in any way subscribed to this. Osbert's *Vita S. Aethelbrichti* contains no *in vita* curative miracles. While the *Vita S. Eadwardi* contains six *in vita* curative miracles, all but one of these probably originated from the anonymous *Vita*. Of these, only three involve the king actually coming into physical contact with the person cured; in the others it is his washing water that cures them. There is also no consistency in the ailments cured, as is the case with the later thaumaturgical power of kings to heal scrofula, or the King's Evil. Of the recipients actually healed by the touch of the king, one was cured of lameness<sup>56</sup>, one of scrofula and barrenness,<sup>57</sup> and one of blindness.<sup>58</sup> Following the example of the Anonymous, after Osbert relates the story of Edward healing the scrofulous and barren woman, he says how Edward performed many such acts while in exile in Normandy before he was king.<sup>59</sup> That Osbert saw these miracles strictly as saintly, rather than kingly powers, is also shown by his attribution to Edburga of an almost identical miracle, where a blind woman is cured by the saint's wash water.<sup>60</sup>

Anglo-Saxon royal saints can be divided into two groups: those who met a violent end and therefore were martyrs, and monk-kings who resigned or planned to resign their kingships. Anglo-Saxon female royal saints, such as Edburga, closely

<sup>55</sup> William of Malmesbury, *Historia regum anglorum*, i, ed. R.A.B. Mynors, et al. (Clarendon, Oxford, 1998), pp. 406-408.

<sup>56</sup> *Vita S. Eadwardi*, pp. 82-83.

<sup>57</sup> *Vita S. Eadwardi*, pp. 92-93.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 96-97.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 93.

<sup>60</sup> *Vita S. Eadburgae*, pp. 275-276.

resemble the later group in that they give up their inherited royal status for a religious life.<sup>61</sup> While there are many cases in Anglo-Saxon England of saintly kings giving up their thrones to become monks, there does not seem to have been much, if any, cult veneration.<sup>62</sup> While the monk-king represented the ultimate Christian resignation of worldly possessions, he also represented an abandonment of kingly duties. This provided neither a stable government, nor a stable environment for church affairs. Most of Osbert's hagiography fits into this model of Anglo-Saxon royal saints. Both Edmund and Ethelbert were killed, and therefore deemed martyrs, and Edburga left her royal surroundings for the cloister. The one exception to this is St Edward, who although living much like a monk, nevertheless remained on his throne.

Osbert of Clare's ideal of kingship and his image of the saint-king most clearly diverge when it comes to heredity and lineage. While there is still a strong emphasis placed on the lineage of the saint-king, there is no continuation of his line because all of Osbert's royal saints are celibate. Osbert's praise of Henry's son William, with the lineage that would continue through him, is antithetical to Osbert's saintly ideal, which is essentially a celibate image. Nevertheless, the concern over continued lineage is still an underlying theme within both the *Vita S. Aethelbrichti* and the *Vita S. Eadwardi*. The saintly Ethelbert, who is predisposed to celibacy, is convinced to take a wife by his nobles for the good of the kingdom.<sup>63</sup> When his desire for saintly chastity and his responsibility as king to produce an heir are at odds, Ethelbert chooses to take a wife. This act is seen as a form of sacrificial humility, where the king gives up his personal desire for the good of the kingdom. He is then

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<sup>61</sup> Ridyard, pp. 235-238.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 247-248.

<sup>63</sup> *Vita S. Aethelbrichti*, fol. 31v-32r.

martyred before he could marry, thus keeping his virginity intact, but still not betraying his kingly duties.

King Edward did not receive such a convenient martyrdom. Like Ethelbert, Edward is convinced to marry by his nobles:

When the whole government of the kingdom slept in peace, there was a discussion about the consort who should cleave to the royal side, and it was decided to seek a wife worthy of such a husband from among the daughters of the magnates.<sup>64</sup>

Osbert does not make reference to the need of the king to produce an heir in the *Vita S. Eadwardi*, unlike in the *Vita S. Aethelbrichti*. The simple explanation for this is that if Osbert made the production of an heir the primary reason for the king's matrimony, as was the case with Ethelbert, then an explanation of Edward's subsequent celibate marriage would have been necessitated. Instead Osbert, besides implying that the marriage was a ploy to corrupt the king's chastity, leaves the impression that those around Edward thought that marriage was the appropriate course of action for the king. It is therefore not surprising that Osbert makes little mention of the consequences of Edward's childlessness. In his interpretation of Edward's deathbed vision he blames the Norman Conquest on the wrongs of others, following in line from the early anonymous *Vita S. Eadwardi*, and not on Edward's lack of an heir.<sup>65</sup> When Edward proposed to go on pilgrimage to Rome, however, Osbert noted the English magnates' concern over Edward possibly dying without an heir.<sup>66</sup> According to Osbert, Edward and Edith even kept their virginity a secret from his nobles.<sup>67</sup> References like these betray the real conflict between the ideals of Edward as the virgin saint and Edward as the responsible king within the *Vita S. Eadwardi*.

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<sup>64</sup> "Universo itaque regni imperio in pace consopito, de secunda que lateri regis adhereat persona decernitur, ut sponsa tanto digna sponso inter filias principum requiratur." *Vita S. Eadwardi*, p. 74. The translation is Barlow's from *The Life of King Edward*, p. 22.

<sup>65</sup> *Vita S. Eadwardi*, pp. 108-109. *The Life of King Edward*, pp. 118-122.

<sup>66</sup> *Vita S. Eadwardi*, p. 78.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 75

Although Osbert's descriptions of Edward and Ethelbert differ from his description of Henry II in that each of their lines ended with them, they are similar to that of Henry II in terms of their ancestry. Like Osbert's description of Henry, his descriptions of Edward and Ethelbert both emphasize the prestigious lineage inherited from both of their parents.<sup>68</sup> For Ethelbert it sufficed simply to say that his mother was a queen, but Edward's mother was Emma, the daughter of Duke Richard II of Normandy, a relationship that was especially important in the post-conquest period when Osbert was writing. In both cases Osbert goes considerably more into the paternal ancestry, listing both kings and saints relating to the king-saint. Osbert's description of St Edburga's ancestry is considerably more restricted, mostly focusing on her grandfather, King Alfred, and his wife, Ealhswith.<sup>69</sup>

While Osbert praised Henry as a king who kept peace through the use of force, he saw his saintly kings quite differently. Ethelbert is often described as a '*Dei athleta*', giving the impression of one who could be a great soldier, but who never uses force. Rather than emphasize his military prowess, he is praised for his learning.<sup>70</sup> Instead of ruling through his own solid strength, Osbert's Ethelbert heeds the advice of his councilors: "For he knew what had been written through a certain wise man: 'Everything ought to be done through counsel, and after it is done you will not grieve'."<sup>71</sup>

Osbert's depiction of St Edmund contains more warrior imagery; although being just a *miracula* he gave no indication of how he believed Edmund ruled as king. In describing Edmund, Osbert employs mostly classical models. This imagery occurs

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 69-70. *Vita S. Aethelbrichti*, fols. 31r-31v.

<sup>69</sup> *Vita S. Eadburgae*, pp. 263-264.

<sup>70</sup> *Vita S. Aethelbrichti*, fol. 31v.

<sup>71</sup> "*Sciebat enim scriptum per quendam sapientem uirum: 'Omnia fac cum consilio et post factum non penitebis.'*" *Ibid.*, fol. 32r, quoting Sir 32: 24.

predominantly at the beginning and end of the surviving work, and in the main body of the *miracula* Edmund is simply described as ‘*rex et martyr*’. Osbert styles Edmund as a Roman emperor from the first sentence of the prologue, where he compares St Edmund to Augustus Caesar returning to Rome victorious.<sup>72</sup> He returns to this metaphor at the end of his work by noting that St Edmund’s glory was purer than that of the Roman emperors: “Commanding the army, Caesar oppressed his captives in chains; King Edmund of the East Angles, reconciling with grace, transmitted captives of sin to heaven.”<sup>73</sup> Further, Edmund is also seen as a member of the large court of God by one pilgrim who called upon the saint saying, “Senator Edmund of the court of God and of Heaven...”<sup>74</sup> In his prefatory letter Osbert also uses the Old Testament model of Aaron’s breastplate to describe Edmund’s virtues, thus casting Edmund as both a warrior and an intercessor of the people before God.<sup>75</sup> This warrior imagery is most clearly exemplified in one miracle where Edmund is described as ‘*Christi miles*’ holding a sword inscribed, “This is the victory with which Edmund conquered the world.”<sup>76</sup>

None of this warrior imagery comes into Osbert’s description of King Edward. The Godwin family, and Edward’s disputes with them, are almost entirely erased from Osbert’s record. Instead Edward is a peaceful king living in a peaceful time. Even Osbert’s description of Edward, drawn largely from the anonymous *Vita*, is not of a warrior king, but of an older dignified king.<sup>77</sup> Like Ethelbert, Edward listens to his nobles, such as in marrying Edith, Godwin’s daughter, but usually Osbert depicts

<sup>72</sup> *Miracula S. Aedmundi*, p. 152.

<sup>73</sup> “*Cesar suos vinculis onerat exercitu comitante captivos; Aedmundus rex Orientalis captivos peccatis gratia reconciliante transmittit ad superos.*” *Ibid.*, p. 207.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 206.

<sup>75</sup> *Miracula S. Aedmundi*, pp. 153-154. Exodus 228:15-13.

<sup>76</sup> “*Haec est victoria qua mundum vicit Aedmundus.*” *Ibid.*, p. 201.

<sup>77</sup> *Vita S. Eadwardi*, p. 74.

him as a more paternal ruler. Edward watches over the whole of his kingdom and appoints just and competent men to both ecclesiastical and secular positions.<sup>78</sup> Not surprisingly, patronage of the church, and specifically of Westminster abbey, also plays a significant role in Osbert's *Vita* and in Edward's sanctity.<sup>79</sup>

Osbert's image of queenship, quite different from that of kingship, is seen throughout his *Vita S. Eadburgae*. Osbert attributes Edburga's sanctity to her renunciation of the royal life for the religious life at Nunnaminster. Still, as Susan Ridyard has shown, Edburga's royal background is essential to her sanctity.<sup>80</sup> In describing her ancestry, Osbert emphasizes the role of the line of Wessex kings, from whom Edburga descended, in the patronage of the church.<sup>81</sup> This tradition of royal patronage was continued by Edburga through her father's, King Edward's, donation of All Cannings. Edward granted it to Nunnaminster because of his daughter's plea.<sup>82</sup> Osbert thought that this incident was significant enough to Edburga's sanctity to dedicate two chapters and considerable space to it. Furthermore, at her death she divided her personal belonging among her sisters,<sup>83</sup> and was renowned for giving to the poor in her lifetime.<sup>84</sup> In the case of Edburga, Osbert simultaneously holds up the sanctity of renunciation alongside the sanctity of royal patronage.

Two other incidents in Osbert's *Vita* show this tension between Edburga's royalty and her monastic renunciation. In the first of these, Edburga is discovered by her prioress reading alone.<sup>63</sup> The prioress, not realizing Edburga's identity, chastises her. She then realizes who she is and begs for forgiveness, presumably because of her

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<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 74.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 83-86.

<sup>80</sup> Ridyard, pp. 96-98.

<sup>81</sup> More specifically it focuses on her grandfather Alfred's patronage of New Minster in Winchester and the foundation of Nunnaminster by Ealhswith, Alfred's wife and Edburga's grandmother. This work was then completed by their son and Edburga's father, King Edward. *Vita S. Eadburgae*, pp. 263-266.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 270-274.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 281.

special status as royalty.<sup>85</sup> In the second incident Edburga was discovered cleaning the shoes of some of her fellow nuns. She was rebuked because it was not considered the proper behavior for a '*filia principis*'. Later, during a royal visit, the nuns were even frightened to admit Edburga's behavior to the king, fearing reprimand.<sup>86</sup> While her humble behavior might epitomize monastic renunciation, it was not the behavior of a royal princess.

Osbert of Clare's ideals of secular kingship and ideals of royal sainthood diverged because of the political realities of his time. Much of his writing was done during the reign of King Stephen, when the lack of a single ruling authority over the whole country caused many troubles for the church in England. Therefore Osbert's ideal of the celibate king, is replaced by his praise of lineal security of Prince Henry having a son and heir. His vision of a ruler consistently listening to his councilors and delegating out power wisely to just men is replaced by his praise of Henry's strength and ability to instill peace by force. There are also many similarities between these two ideals. In both instances Osbert used both classical and old testament models to describe his kings. He also saw hereditary links to both prominent secular kings and people significant to the church as important.

This reflects Osbert's overall view of the role of the king within the affairs of the church. While Osbert was a reforming monk, his views of the relationship between royalty and church belong to an early generation of reformers. From Edward's foundation of Westminster to Henry I's involvement in the controversy over the celebration of the Immaculate Conception, Osbert saw kings as essential to the governing of the church. This relationship between church and state is emphasized

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<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 274-275.

<sup>85</sup> Ridyard, pp. 98-99.

<sup>86</sup> *Vita S. Eadburgae*, pp. 268-269.

in his *Vita S. Eadburgae* through the conscious placement of the rise of Edburga's cult within the framework of the tenth-century reform movement.<sup>87</sup> The concord that Osbert sees between the *sacerdotium* and the *regnum* in the time of King Edgar is reflected in the dual praises that Osbert gives to Edward for his delegating of ecclesiastical responsibility to responsible churchmen and of secular responsibility to court officials and lawyers.<sup>88</sup> Therefore while there were differences between Osbert's secular and saintly king, he saw in each an intrinsic connection to both the ruling of the country and the governing of the church.

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<sup>87</sup> Ridyard, pp. 105-108; *Vita S. Eadburgae*, pp. 289-293.

<sup>88</sup> *Vita S. Eadwardi*, p. 74.

## Chapter Seven

### Exile and Friendship

The themes of exile and friendship are closely linked in Osbert of Clare's writings. This is perhaps because the occasions when he addressed the theme of exile were very pragmatic in nature. He principally used the theme and rhetoric of exile when he himself was in exile, seeking assistance from people whom he considered his friends.<sup>1</sup> Osbert spent much of his career away from Westminster Abbey in some form of exile, and it is therefore not surprising that both exile and friendship play a central role in many of his letters. When discussing his exile, Osbert had access to a range of historical examples, from classical models, such as Cicero or Boethius,<sup>2</sup> to biblical models, such as Exodus or the Babylonian Captivity.<sup>3</sup> He also had both ecclesiastical and secular models that had developed throughout the Middle Ages.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Recently, Thomas Haye wrote an article about exile in Osbert of Clare's letters entitled: 'Alte und neue Heimat: Die Exilliteratur des Osbert von Clare', in *Exil, Fremdheit und Ausgrenzung in Mittelalter und früher Neuzeit*, eds. Andreas Bührer, Sven Limbeck and Paul Gerhard Schmidt, Identitäten und Alteritäten 4 (Ergon Verlag, Würzburg, 2000), 247-57. Haye's article principally addresses Osbert of Clare's use of letters to try to improve his position and enable his return from exile. Osbert does this, Haye's argues, in two ways: by directly making his case in argumentation and by instilling his case with classical and biblical models of exile so that he appears the victim.

<sup>2</sup> For recent secondary examinations of exile in classical sources see John Nicholson, *Cicero's Return from Exile* (Peter Lang, New York, 1992), which looks at Cicero's *Post Reditum* Orations; and Gareth Williams, *Banished Voices* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1994), which looks at Ovid's exile poetry. It is interesting to note that the role of *amicitia* in these classical sources is just as important as it is in Osbert's exile letters.

<sup>3</sup> See James Scott (ed.), *Exile: Old Testament, Jewish, and Christian Conceptions* (Brill, Leiden, 1997), which consists of essays looking at exile in Jewish and Christian culture from the Babylonian period to the early Christian era. For a more theological approach see Thomas Raitt, *A Theology of Exile: Judgement/ Deliverance in Jeremiah and Ezekiel* (Fortress, Philadelphia, 1977).

<sup>4</sup> Exile in the medieval period is still a fairly unstudied subject, with the possible exception of the British Isles in the early Middle Ages and Italy in the late Middle Ages. For the theme of exile in Anglo-Saxon literature see Stanley Greenfield, *Hero and Exile* (Hambledon, London, 1989), especially chs. 17-21; and Patrick Cook, "Woriað þa Winsalo: The Bonds of Exile in 'The Wanderer'," in *Neophilologus* 80 (1996), pp. 127-137. There have been a significant number of case studies written that look at exile in late medieval and renaissance Italy, mostly written by Italian scholars. A more general look at the subject is given in Randolph Starn, *Contrary Commonwealth: the Theme of Exile in Medieval and Renaissance Italy* (University of California Press, Berkeley, 1982). A. Bartlett Giamatti

### The Exile of Ecclesiastical Figures in the Middle Ages

In the twelfth-century English church there were two principal forms of exile: a self-imposed ascetic exile in the form of a hermitage, and the forced, or perceived forced, exile of ecclesiastical figures at the hands of lay lords. Both of these types of exile have their origins in the early Christian church. The idea of the Christian hermit going into the 'desert', whether literally or metaphorically, developed out of Old and New Testament models, most significantly that of the life of John the Baptist and of Jesus' withdrawal to the desert for forty days before he entered Jerusalem. Starting in Egypt in the mid-third century, ascetic Christians began to withdraw from the world and sought meditative solitude in the desert; the most notable of these early hermits was Antony of Egypt (251-356).<sup>5</sup> In the Celtic church the idea of hermitage was fused with the *peregrinatio*, as shown in the *Life of St Columba*.<sup>6</sup> This idea of the religious journey had a significant impact on the English church from the conversion of northern Britain by missionaries from the Irish strand of Christianity. In the eleventh and twelfth centuries the movement towards the 'desert' took organized forms, such as the Carthusian order where a hybrid between Benedictine monasticism and the life of the hermit was formed, and unorganized forms, as can be seen in the activities of hermits such as Godric of Finchale (c.1069-1170).<sup>7</sup>

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looks at the theme in both Italian and English literature in his book, *Exile and Change in Renaissance Literature* (Yale University Press, New Haven, 1984).

<sup>5</sup> Athanasius, *Vitae duae antiquae sancti Athanasii Athonitae*, ed. Jacques Noret, CCSG 9 (1982). It is interesting to note that Athanasius, the patriarch of Alexandria, spent long periods of his career in exile and probably wrote his *Life of St Antony* while in exile. Carolinne White, *Early Christian Lives* (Penguin, London, 1998), p. 3.

<sup>6</sup> *Adomnan's Life of Columba*, second edition, ed. & tr. Alan Anderson & Marjorie Anderson (Clarendon, Oxford, 1991).

<sup>7</sup> Reginald of Durham, *Vita sancti Godrici*, ed. J. Stevenson, Surtees Society 20 (1847). Godric of Finchale attracted considerable attention during his life and Osbert would no doubt have known of him. Incidentally, Lawrence, the future abbot of Westminster Abbey, was among the many people of renown who visited Godric of Finchale.

There was also a strong tradition in the Latin Church of ecclesiastical leaders' being forced into exile through disputes with lay leaders. In the early church this was caused first by Roman persecution and later by Christological disputes and the political instability caused by the collapse of imperial authority. The principal authority on this subject in the Middle Ages is a letter written by Augustine of Hippo to Bishop Honoratus.<sup>8</sup> In a letter which no longer survives, Augustine had told Honoratus that it was the bishop's duty to stay with his congregation no matter how small, and to trust in God to protect them.<sup>9</sup> The surviving second letter, clarifies this position to reconcile it with Jesus' precept to his disciples: "When they persecute you in this city, flee to another."<sup>10</sup> Augustine notes that there are only two circumstances in which a bishop should flee persecution: when he has no flock to minister to, and when he can leave behind others who can minister to the congregation, but who do not have a similar reason for fleeing.<sup>11</sup> This second situation applies specifically to circumstances in which the persecution is directed at the *individual churchman* and not at the Christian congregation as a whole.

In the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the Investiture Conflict gave rise to regional conflicts between bishops and secular lords where high level churchmen felt that they needed to go into exile.<sup>12</sup> Osbert of Clare's career was flanked by the two

<sup>8</sup> Augustine's *epistola* 228 is printed in *PL* 33, cols. 1013-1019. For a more detailed discussion on the subject and its use in the Middle Ages see Michael Staunton, "Exile in Eadmer's *Historia novorum* and *Vita Anselmi*", in *Saint Anselm, Bishop & Thinker*, eds. Roman Majeran and Edward Ivo Zieliski (Lublin: University Press of the Catholic University of Lublin, 1999), pp. 47-59.

<sup>9</sup> Augustine, *Ep.* 228, col. 1014. Augustine wrote this letter to Bishop Quodvultdeus, but had passed a copy on the Honoratus.

<sup>10</sup> Mt 10:23

<sup>11</sup> Augustine, *Ep.* 228, cols. 1015-1016.

<sup>12</sup> There are some good recent case studies relating to these exiles, such as Michael Staunton's article, "Exile in Eadmer's *Historia novorum* and *Vita Anselmi*"; Sally Vaugn, "St Anselm and the English Investiture Conflict", *Journal of Medieval History* 6 (1980), pp. 61-86; Irven Resnick, "Odo of Cambrai and the Investiture Crisis in the Early Twelfth-Century," *Viator* 28 (1997), pp. 83-98. There is also considerable treatment of the subject in Richard Southern, *Saint Anselm: A portrait in a Landscape* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1990); and in Frank Barlow, *Thomas Becket* (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, 1986).

most famous of these episcopal exiles in England. The exile of Anselm of Canterbury shortly was shortly before Osbert's career, and the exile of Thomas Becket was shortly after. Archbishop Anselm of Canterbury's two exiles under the successive English kings, William II and Henry I, were perhaps especially influential on Osbert of Clare's perception of ecclesiastical exile. While Osbert only briefly refers to Anselm of Canterbury in his writings, he nevertheless would have been very familiar with his career.<sup>13</sup>

Osbert and Anselm's exiles were very different in nature. While Anselm was in exile because of conflicts between himself and kings from whom he claimed at least some degree of independence, Osbert was in exile because of conflicts between himself and his abbots and senior brethren at Westminster. Therefore Osbert, unlike Anselm, was involved in conflicts with people who were very clearly his superiors. Also Anselm's exiles were played on an international stage, while Osbert's was very much a local affair.

Nevertheless, Osbert saw at least his early periods of exile from Westminster as having a similar motivation to Anselm's exiles. "Because I desired for there to be a free council of the church and for ecclesiastical rights to prevail, I am damned like someone who has been shamed with a horrible crime,"<sup>14</sup> Osbert wrote to Abbot Herbert of Westminster. In a letter to Henry, a monk of Westminster, regarding the cause of his exile, Osbert states: "If you reproach me with a crime, it is the defense of the holy place and the faithfulness to and protection of the brothers: to have wished

<sup>13</sup> He only mentions Anselm of Canterbury in reference to Anselm of Bury being related to him (*Letters*, pp. 63-64), but the later Anselm appears to have been one of Osbert's closest friends. It can be assumed that Anselm of Bury would have discussed his uncle's career with Osbert. Osbert was also at least familiar with the treatise on the Conception of Mary by Eadmer, the biographer of Anselm of Canterbury, as shown by its influence on Osbert's later sermon on the subject.

<sup>14</sup> "Et quoniam salvum ecclesiae volui esse senatum et iura in omnibus ecclesiastica praevalere, damnatus sum tanquam flagitiosus crimine pessimo,..." *Letters*, no. 2, p. 51.

for the protection of the rights of the church is my disgrace and misfortune.”<sup>15</sup> In another letter to Bishop Athelwold of Carlisle in which Osbert asks for assistance while in exile, he relates his problems to the problems of the wider church: “...our cause, which is the cause of many....”<sup>16</sup> Osbert saw his exile not as a small local conflict, but in terms of a larger conflict over the protection of the Church’s rights.

### Osbert of Clare’s Models of the Exile

Many of Osbert of Clare’s letters have extensive discussions of and allusions to exile. These are very practical in nature. Over half of his letters were likely written while he was in exile and were written either to ask for assistance or to try to resolve the conflicts that sent him into exile. A picture of how Osbert perceived exile can be extrapolated from the language that he used to describe his exile and from the exilic models that he employed. These models were taken from three areas of writing: scripture, classical authors, and early Christian authors.<sup>17</sup> He did not use more contemporary examples of episcopal exile, such as that of Anselm of Canterbury, and did not use any sources regarding exile that are later than the sixth century in date.

These different sources of exilic models can even be seen in the language Osbert of Clare uses to describe his exile. Osbert occasionally used the simple and impartial Latin noun ‘*exilium*’ to describe his exile, but he uses the adjective ‘*proscriptus*’ more frequently. ‘*Proscriptus*’ carries much more of the classical sense of a political exile, of someone who has been officially exiled from his or her

<sup>15</sup> “*Si crimen obicis, sacri loci defensio et fratrum fidelitas et tuitio est: ecclesiae iura salva esse voluisse, opprobrium meum et incommodum est.*” *Ibid.*, no. 3, p. 54.

<sup>16</sup> “... *causam nostram, quae multorum est,...*” *Letters*, no. 9, p. 74.

<sup>17</sup> The early Christian authors that he employs are predominantly patristic writings, but also include later authors such as Boethius and Gregory the Great.

homeland.<sup>18</sup> Using biblical language, Osbert refers to himself in one letter as, “ a stranger and visitor in a foreign land.”<sup>19</sup> In the letter to Henry of Westminster, he also twice uses the noun ‘*expulsio*’ in an incriminating function.<sup>20</sup> Osbert considered Henry partially responsible for his expulsion from Westminster. In one of these instances he states: “Instead of a reward you rendered expulsion, outlawing and exile.” This might simply be Osbert adding emphasis with synonyms, but it is perhaps more likely that he is emphasizing slight differences in meaning. It appears that he is separating out the different acts of expelling, outlawing and being sent into a foreign land. In other places it appears that he uses these words as synonyms.

He sometimes used metaphors to describe his exile. These typically refer to the biblical exiles in Egypt and Babylon.<sup>21</sup> When asking that Abbot Herbert allow him to return to Westminster, Osbert argues: “Therefore I ought to be restored amongst those who were liberated from servitude in Egypt and counted in the fortune of those who numbered amongst the citizens of Jerusalem led out of Babylon.”<sup>22</sup> Osbert also used softer language to describe his exile, depending on the audience. In the salutation of his letter to Hugh of Lewes, Osbert describes himself as ‘*proscriptus*’, but in the body of the letter where he describes King Stephen’s involvement in his exile he merely states that the king urged him to, “ leave our church for some time and to visit

<sup>18</sup> Specifically, a ‘*proscriptus*’ was someone whose life and property were considered forfeit by official decree, such as happened to many Roman patricians under the dictatorship of Sulla and under the second triumvirate of Antony, Octavian and Lepidus. Cicero, who himself was proscribed and killed, described the proscriptions in several of his orations (e.g. *in Catil.* II 9:20; *de Domo* 17:43; *de Prov. Cons.* 19:45). Conversely, ‘*exilium*’ could incorporate a wide range of meanings, both voluntary and involuntary, within Roman law. Peter Garnsey, *Social Status and Legal Privilege in the Roman Empire* (Clarendon, Oxford, 1970), pp. 111-122.

<sup>19</sup> “... *in terra aliena peregrinus et hospes*,” *Ibid.*, no. 24, p. 99.

<sup>20</sup> “*Tu vero reddidisti vicem meritis expulsionem, proscriptionem, exilium.*” *Letters*, no. 3, p. 53. Note this is the only instance where Osbert uses the noun ‘*proscriptio*’, as opposed to the adjective ‘*proscriptus*’.

<sup>21</sup> It is perhaps interesting to note that Osbert uses Babylon principally as a metaphor for exile, but in a letter to Robert de Sigillo he uses it as a metaphor for the secular world of the court. *Ibid.*, no. 10, p. 75.

<sup>22</sup> “*Restitui proinde deberem et ego inter eos qui ab Aegyptia servitute liberantur, et in eorum sorte numerari qui inter cives Ierusalem de Babylone educti numerantur.*” *Ibid.*, no. 2, p. 51.

the church of Ely, to which I was sent.”<sup>23</sup> Osbert perhaps thought it was perhaps expedient not to criticize the new king.

The most frequently used source for models of exile within Osbert of Clare’s letters is the Bible, particularly the Old Testament. Osbert draws from a wide range of biblical exiles, from the general metaphors of Egypt and Babylon to smaller, more specific, examples such as David’s refuge from Saul.<sup>24</sup> He also makes more specific references to passages concerning the major Old Testament exiles such as Abraham’s wanderings<sup>25</sup> and the Babylonian captivity.<sup>26</sup> Osbert’s use of biblical exile could also be critical of others. By comparing himself to Joseph after being sold into slavery in Egypt, Osbert compared his own brethren at Westminster to Joseph’s jealous brothers.<sup>27</sup> When Osbert refers to New Testament passages in his exilic letters it is usually in the periphery, or it deals with the consequences of his exile, such as poverty. In a letter to Geoffrey, abbot of St Albans, Osbert complained that his poverty in exile had forced him to give up his studies for manual labor, changing him from a Mary to a Martha.<sup>28</sup>

Personal journeys away from one’s monastic community are not portrayed as exiles in Osbert of Clare’s *Letters*, although Osbert saw them both as physically and spiritually dangerous. In a letter to Abbot Anselm of Bury, Osbert expressed his hope that Raphael will watch over Anselm just as he watched over Tobiah during his

<sup>23</sup> “...ut aliquamdiu ecclesiae nostrae cederem et Eliensem ecclesiam ad quam missus sum visitarem.” *Ibid.*, no. 1, p. 47.

<sup>24</sup> *Letters*, no. 3, p. 53.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 1, p. 46.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 1, p. 44.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 4, p. 58, 60-61. Haye argued that even in cases where Osbert does not explicitly accuse individuals of betraying him, by simply placing himself within the context of biblical and classical models of exile he indirectly places those who sent him into exile in the role of historic oppressors. Haye, “Alte und neue Heimat”, p. 253.

<sup>28</sup> *Letters*, no. 32, pp. 114-115; Lk 10: 39-40.

'*peregrinatio*'.<sup>29</sup> Similarly, Osbert later sought St Etheldreda's protection for one of his own journeys abroad.<sup>30</sup> Osbert gives more explicit references to Old Testament exile in a letter to an unnamed monk. Through the monk's travels he was tempted to return to the secular world, in Osbert's words into the 'servitude of Egypt'.<sup>31</sup> Osbert does not portray these journeys like the Irish religious *peregrinationes*; they were a dangerous undertaking not to be taken lightly.

While biblical exile was Osbert's main source for his models of exile, he does support these models with a few references to classical and early Christian sources. These references tend to fall into two categories. The first is where Osbert appears to use early Christian authors' discussions of biblical exile, such as where he uses language from the letters of Jerome or Gregory the Great.<sup>32</sup> The second way in which Osbert uses classical or early Christian authors is in reference to peripheral aspects of his exile. When describing how he turned to studies for solace in his exile, Osbert uses a passage from Seneca saying, "Leisure without studies is death, and it is the tomb of a living man."<sup>33</sup> In a letter to Abbot Herbert of Westminster, Osbert complains that unfair treatment and slander has sent him into exile and uses examples from Gregory the Great's letters to argue that the abbot should judge him fairly.<sup>34</sup>

Similarly, Boethius' misfortunes in his *Consolation of Philosophy* are used by Osbert of Clare in one exilic letter not as a direct model of his own exile, but rather as a model for the cause of his exile. Osbert uses passages from the *Consolation of Philosophy* to describe how he only took offices out of his desire for the common

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 5, p. 63.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 42, p. 157.

<sup>31</sup> Osbert actually uses this phrase to say that the monk was brought out, "... of the servitude of Egypt through the blood of the immaculate lamb," (*per sanguinem agni immaculati de servitute Egypti*); thereby implying that the monk would be returning into servitude. *Ibid.*, no. 25, p. 101.

<sup>32</sup> For example, *Letters*, nos. 1, 32, pp. 47, 114-115.

<sup>33</sup> "*Otium sine litteris mors est, et vivi hominis sepultura.*" *Ibid.*, no. 30, p. 109; Seneca, *Epist.*, lxxxii, 3.

good,<sup>35</sup> and likewise how his reputation was ruined for doing good.<sup>36</sup> While Boethius was, "...accused of wishing for the safety of the Senate,"<sup>37</sup> Osbert, "...wished for the safety of the chapter (*senatus*) of the church."<sup>38</sup> Also like Boethius, who turned to philosophy while imprisoned and awaiting death, Osbert found his '*consolatio*' while in exile in philosophy.<sup>39</sup>

### Exile in the Hagiography of Osbert of Clare

While the theme of exile plays an important role in many of Osbert of Clare's letters, it is noticeably absent in his hagiography. This is even true in places where an expansion of the theme of exile within the narrative seems appropriate. Perhaps the most poignant example of this is the *Vita S. Eadwardi*. Even though Edward the Confessor spent two and a half decades during his youth in exile in Normandy, Osbert does not attempt to put a religious spin on Edward's exile. Like the earlier *Vita Aedwardi regis*, Osbert almost entirely ignores the exile, saying only, "When the hail storm of the Danes roared, the glorious boy was taken across to his grandparents in Normandy, lest he be more quickly engulfed by the immense storm of the raging waves."<sup>40</sup> Interestingly, Osbert employs an allusion to the biblical exile in Egypt when describing Edward's return and ascension to the throne. However, it is not Edward who was in exile, but rather the people of England who were in exile under Danish

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<sup>34</sup> *Letters*, no. 2, p. 50; Gregory I, *Epist.*, xiii, 44.

<sup>35</sup> *Letters*, no. 3, p. 56; Boethius, *Cons. Philo.*, bk. i, pros. iv (*ad init.*).

<sup>36</sup> *Letters*, no. 3, p. 56; Boethius, *Cons. Philo.*, bk. i, pros. iv (*ad fin.*).

<sup>37</sup> "*Senatum dicimur salvum esse voluisse.*" Boethius, *Cons. Philo.*, bk. i, pros. iv (*med.*).

<sup>38</sup> "... *senatum ecclesiae salvum esse voluimus.*" *Letters*, no. 3, p. 56.

<sup>39</sup> *Letters*, no. 30, p. 109.

<sup>40</sup> "*Cumque Danorum fremeret tam grandinosa tempestas, ad auos suos in Neustriam gloriosus puer transducitur, ne tam immani procella seuientium fluctuum citius absorberetur.*" *Vita S. Eadwardi*, p. 72.

rule.<sup>41</sup> The lack of details concerning Edward's exile in Normandy can be attributed to the lack of information in Osbert's sources concerning this period in Edward's life, but this does not account for the lack of religious rhetoric. Osbert may have seen Edward's exile strictly as a political exile and therefore outside the scope of a religious *vita*, although later within the text Osbert, following after the anonymous *vita*, mentions that Edward miraculously healed many people while in Normandy.<sup>42</sup>

There is a different form of exile present in the *Vita S. Aethelbrichti*, in which Ethelbert's journey to Mercia to seek the hand of Offa's daughter, Alfrida, carries strong undertones of the Celtic *peregrinatio*. It is portrayed as a religious journey culminating in his martyrdom. This is exemplified by two natural phenomena, an earthquake and a solar eclipse, that prefigured his death. Nevertheless, Osbert only discusses the importance of these signs as paralleling Ethelbert's martyrdom to that of Christ, and does not instill Ethelbert's journey with the imagery of exile.<sup>43</sup> Interestingly, in Osbert's principle source for the *Vita S. Aethelbrichti*, the earlier anonymous *Life*, there is a direct comparison between Ethelbert's departure from East Anglia and Abraham's departure from his home and family.<sup>44</sup> In Osbert's rewriting of the *Vita* he completely omits this comparison. Even Ethelbert's decision to take a wife shows him to be a king who is willing to give up his desire for the ascetic life for the good of his kingdom.<sup>45</sup> Far from being ready to turn away from his people and

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<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 73. Since Osbert in this passage describes the people of England as in exile in Egypt, it is possible that he did not perceive Edward as also being in exile. It was England that faced the hardships and danger, while Edward was safe in Normandy. There is a possible parallel to this in a letter by Osbert to Anselm of Bury. In it Osbert expresses the dismay of everyone at Bury while Abbot Anselm is away on a journey. *Letters*, no. 5, pp. 62-64.

<sup>42</sup> *Letters*, no. 22, p. 93.

<sup>43</sup> *Vita S. Aethelbrichti*, fols. 33r-34r.

<sup>44</sup> *Passio sancti Athelberhti*, ed. M.R. James, in "Two Lives of St Ethelbert, King and Martyr", *EHR* 32 (1917), p. 238.

<sup>45</sup> *Vita S. Aethelbrichti*, fols. 31v-32r. Osbert hints that Edward the Confessor was convinced in a similar manner to marry for the security of the kingdom, although he nevertheless still remains celibate. *Vita S. Eadwardi*, pp. 74-75.

country, this episode shows Osbert's Ethelbert as deeply concerned and involved with his kingdom. Osbert lengthened the narration of when Offa's daughter, Alfrida, decided to become an anchorite upon Ethelbert's death, but he did not add exilic rhetoric to this action.<sup>46</sup>

Like the Princess Alfrida in Osbert of Clare's *Vita S. Aethelbrichti*, the sanctity of his Edburga rests in her self-exile into the religious community of Nunnaminster in Winchester. Unlike Alfrida, however, Edburga was sent to Nunnaminster as an infant. Nevertheless, Osbert emphasizes that, "...by her example others learned to relinquish their people and their paternal home."<sup>47</sup> Susan Ridyard has noted the paradox within Osbert's Edburga between the saintly nun who supposedly turns away from her secular life and the princess who is still very much a royal figure.<sup>48</sup> Osbert does not disguise the fact that although Edburga withdraws from the world, she does so in the royal foundation of Nunnaminster in the royal city of Winchester. Not only is Edburga herself a patroness of the monastic community, but also her father, King Edward, patronized the community on her behalf.<sup>49</sup> Therefore while Osbert attributes Edburga's sanctity to her monastic virtue, he does not appear to have seen this form of self-exile as related to either biblical exile or Osbert's own exile from Westminster.

Although Osbert of Clare saw monastic asceticism, or the desire for it, as a prominent characteristic in saints, he did not associate notions of physical exile with

<sup>46</sup> *Vita S. Aethelbrichti*, fols. 36r-36v; *Passio sancti Athelberhti*, p. 240. The lengthening of this section is about typical of Osbert's treatment of the anonymous work as a whole. It should be noted, however, that Osbert does emphasize the advantages of the abandonment of the secular world in that Alfrida would be able to dedicate herself constantly to prayer and meditation.

<sup>47</sup> "... huius exemplo discunt et populum suum et paternam domum relinquere," *Vita S. Eadburgae*, p. 285. This is a reference to Psalm 44:11.

<sup>48</sup> Susan Ridyard, *Royal Saints in Anglo-Saxon England* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1988), pp. 102-103.

<sup>49</sup> As shown by the incident where Edward granted the estate of All Cannings to Nunnaminster. *Vita S. Eadburgae*, pp. 270-274.

sanctity. This is particularly surprising since many of Osbert's hagiographic works were probably either written while he was in exile, or written in appreciation for assistance given while he was in exile. Because of his own experiences, Osbert perhaps saw physical exile as too mundane for his saints. His own poverty and hardships in exile lacked the sanctified honor of Columba's self-imposed exile on Iona. For Osbert, exile was caused by real conflicts where the person sent into exile was not always in the right. Although typically in his exilic letters Osbert portrays himself as a victim, he does hint in a reconciliatory note that he too was at fault.<sup>50</sup> This idea of the fallible individual in exile is hardly the image Osbert wanted to use in the portrayal of his the saints. Even in many of the Old Testament examples of exile, which Osbert often referred to in his letters, God imposed exile as a form of punishment.<sup>51</sup>

### Friendship in Osbert's Writings

Like the theme of exile, discussions about the nature and responsibilities of friendship are common within Osbert of Clare's letters.<sup>52</sup> Not surprisingly, although in his non-exilic letters Osbert speaks very highly of individuals, it is only in his exilic letters that his hardships prompted him to ponder the nature of friendship and the qualifications of a true friend. It was in times of hardship and exile that the need for assistance from friends necessitated discussions of the subject. Therefore Osbert

<sup>50</sup> For example, in his letter to Abbot Herbert, he says that he is ready to respect him, implying a previous disobedience. *Letters*, no. 2, p. 52.

<sup>51</sup> This is particularly true of group exiles in the Old Testament such the forty years of wandering in the desert and the Babylonian Captivity.

<sup>52</sup> Recently there has been a fair amount written about friendship in the Middle Ages, including: Julian Haseldine (ed.), *Friendship in Medieval Europe* (Sutton, Stroud, 1999); Reginald Hyatte, *The Arts of Friendship* (Brill, Leiden, 1995); and Brian McGuire, *Friendship and Community* (Cistercian Publications, Kalamazoo, 1988), which trace notions of friendship in monastic communities. McGuire notes how friendship was a common theme for monastic writers in the twelfth century, and dubs the period as the 'age of friendship'. McGuire, p. 231.

typically followed his examinations of friendship with a plea for help.<sup>53</sup> Quoting Jerome, Osbert states, "If you have a friend then test him."<sup>54</sup> It is through adversity that true friendship is seen, and it is this sort of true friendship that can solace the exile. "In my expulsion I have discovered a thousand embraces, receptions and comforts from friends; exile has turned into a home."<sup>55</sup>

While Osbert principally uses examples of exile and his own exilic experiences in describing exile, he becomes much more theoretical in his discussions on friendship. Instead of just using examples of famous friendships, Osbert tries to look at the concept of friendship and the moral responsibilities attached to it. This is perhaps due to the nature of his sources. Unlike Osbert's models of exile, his discussions on friendship are principally based upon classical sources, some of whom, such as Cicero and Seneca, devoted significant time to the examination of the nature of friendship.

Reflections on what constitutes a true friend pervade most of Osbert's discussion of friendship in his letters. In Osbert's perception there was a large group of acquaintances and even those whom one loves (*amare*), who were not necessarily friends (*amicus*). Taking from Seneca, Osbert states that, "Not all who love you are friends, but all friends love you."<sup>56</sup> For Osbert true friendship could only be a union

<sup>53</sup> For example, in a letter to Hugh of Lewes, Osbert follows perhaps his most complete examination of the subject with a description of his exile and a request for Hugh's help and prayers. *Letters*, no. 1, pp. 39-48.

<sup>54</sup> "*Si habes amicum, in temptatione posside illum.*" *Ibid.*, no. 1, p. 47; Jerome, *In Mich. II*, 7, 5. Jerome is actually taking from a passage from Eccl 6:7, which in the Vulgate reads, "*Si possides amicum in temptatione posside eum.*" however as Osbert uses this same commentary elsewhere in his letters, it appears that he took the passage directly from it.

<sup>55</sup> "...*pro expulsione mille amplexus et receptiones et solatia amicorum repperi: exilium in patriam versum est.*" *Letters*, no. 3, p. 53.

<sup>56</sup> "*Non omnis qui amat amicus est, sed omnis amicus amat.*" *Ibid.*, no. 3, p. 54. Seneca has: "*Qui amicus est, amat; qui amat non utique amicus est.*" Seneca, *Epist.*, xxxv, 1.

between equals. "Where friendship is equal, all that you will have desired is granted; where one is superior he will disdain and look down on the inferior one."<sup>57</sup>

Because of this very selective view of friendship, the way in which one chooses his or her friends was important to Osbert. In a letter to Hugh of Lewes, Osbert repeats Seneca's advice on making friends:

Ponder for a long time whether you shall admit a given person to your friendship; but when you have decided to admit him, welcome him with all your heart and soul. Speak as boldly with him as with yourself. As to yourself, although you should live in such a way that you trust your own self with nothing which you could not entrust even to your enemy, yet, since certain matters occur which convention keeps secret, you should share with a friend all your worries and reflections. Regard him as loyal, and you will make him loyal.<sup>58</sup>

Besides showing the basic need of friends as confidant, Seneca, and Osbert through him, addresses the question of how liberal one should be with his or her friendship. There are two dangers in making imprudent friendships: that of confiding in too many and perhaps untrustworthy people, and that of confiding in no one and thereby going through life alone. Osbert returns to this theme in another letter where he draws from Seneca again, but continues with his own analysis:

'There is a class of men who communicate, to anyone whom they meet, matters which should be revealed to friends alone, and unload upon the chance listener whatever irks them. Others, again, fear to confide in their closest intimates; and if it were possible, they would not trust even themselves, burying their secrets deep in their hearts. But we should do neither. It is equally faulty to trust everyone and to trust no one.'<sup>59</sup> This is Seneca. However, I say:

<sup>57</sup> "*Amicitia ubi par est, quicquid volueris efficit: ubi superior est, inferiorem dedignatur ac despicit.*" *Letters*, no. 3, p. 55.

<sup>58</sup> "*Diu cogita an tibi aliquis in amicitiam recipiendus sit. Cum placuerit fieri, toto illum pectore admitte: tam audacter cum eo loquere quam tecum. Tu quidem ita vive ut nihil tibi committas nisi quod committere inimico tuo possis. Sed quia interveniunt quaedam quae consuetudo fecit arcana, cum amico omnes curas, omnes cogitationes tuas misce: fidelem, si putaveris, facies.*" *Letters*, no. 1, p. 39; Seneca, *Epist*, iii, 2-3. The translation is from Seneca, *Moral Epistles*, i, tr. Richard M. Gummere (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1917), p. 10.

<sup>59</sup> "*Quidam ea quae amicis committenda sunt obviis narrant, et in quaslibet aures quicquid illos urit exonerant: quidam rursus carissimorum etiam conscientiam reformidant, et, si possent qui ne sibi credituri, interius premunt omne secretum. Neutrum enim faciendum est. Utrumque enim vitium est, et omni credere et nulli.*" *Letters*, no. 3, p. 54; Seneca, *Epist*, iii, 4. The translation is from Seneca, *Moral Epistles*, i, p. 13.

Someone who entrusts himself to everybody leads himself gravely into error; someone who confides in no one never can rest his conscience.<sup>60</sup>

Not everything that Osbert wrote about friendship though was cynical or cautious. The selectiveness with which one should choose friends served to heighten the significance of those friendships. "Friendship is a rare bird on Earth because it is rare among people."<sup>61</sup> For Osbert a true friend was linked to the spirit of an individual. He praises Horace for praying for the safety of a friend by saying, "Save the other half of my soul."<sup>62</sup> Osbert saw this sort of idealistic friendship as deriving out of love (*ab amore*) rather than from selfish needs. Quoting Cicero's *De amicitia*, he argues that, "In friendship nothing is false, nothing is contrived, everything in friendship is true and voluntary. Therefore it seems more likely to me that friendship originates from nature rather than by need."<sup>63</sup> Nevertheless, for Osbert writing in exile, the responsibility of friends in need was very important. He again draws from *De amicitia* in another letter, saying that, "Friendship makes the things following from it more splendid, and lightens burdens by splitting and sharing them."<sup>64</sup> Thus assistance in times of trouble naturally emanates from friendship, but friendship does not originate out of the need for assistance.

Besides being interested in the nature of true friendship, Osbert was also interested in its antithesis, false friendship. The theme of false friendship is most thoroughly explored in two of Osbert of Clare's exilic letters to Westminster monks.

<sup>60</sup> "Haec Seneca. Ego autem dico: Qui omnibus credit seipsum graviter in errorem inducit; qui in nullo confidit, nunquam eius conscientia requiescit." *Letters*, no. 3, p. 54.

<sup>61</sup> "Amicitia rara avis in terra, quia rara in hominibus est." *Letters*, no. 3, p. 55. The phrase, "rara avis in terra," appears to have been taken from Juvenal, *Sat*, vi, 165.

<sup>62</sup> "Serves, inquit, animae dimidium meae." *Letters*, no. 3, p. 55; Horace, *Carm*, i, 3, 8.

<sup>63</sup> "In amicitia vera nihil est fictum, nihil simulatum, et quicquid est in amicitia verum, est et voluntarium; quapropter a natura mihi videtur potius quam ab indigentia orta amicitia." *Letters*, no. 9, p. 74; Cicero, *De amic*, xxvi-xxvii.

<sup>64</sup> "Secundas enim res, teste Tullio, splendidiore facit amicitia, et adversas partiens communicansque leviores." *Letters*, no. 30, p. 110; Cicero, *De amic*, xxi.

In the first, to the priest Henry, he expresses his dismay that although Henry was a blood relation of Osbert's, he nevertheless betrayed him. Osbert then juxtaposes this with the friends whom he has found while in exile.<sup>65</sup> In his home at Westminster, Osbert was betrayed by family members, but in exile he has found friends. After a lengthy discussion on friendship, Osbert returns to the subject of his betrayal. Quoting Boethius he states that, "There is no more efficient ruin than a friend turned enemy."<sup>66</sup> He takes a different tone in a letter to David, a monk of Westminster, which Osbert wrote to accept David's repentance.<sup>67</sup> Osbert compares his betrayal by his brethren at Westminster to Joseph being sold into exile, and near the end of the letter tells how he prays to God for the Westminster monks saying, "Forgive them father for they know not what they do."<sup>68</sup>

The language used by Osbert of Clare in his letters to describe friendship is typically fairly standard. The most frequent word for friend is '*amicus*' and the most common word that he uses for friendship is '*amicitia*'. Conversely he uses '*inimicus*' to describe enemies. Less frequently, Osbert uses the words '*anima*' and '*familiaris*' to describe friends and '*familiaritas*' to describe friendship. '*Amicus*', '*amicitia*', '*familiaris*' and '*familiaritas*' are all common classical Latin words meaning 'friend' or 'friendship', and he uses them all both in passages which he borrows and in passages which are his own prose. He uses '*amicus*' and '*familiaris*' indiscriminately to mean 'friend', just as '*amicitia*' and '*familiaris*' are used indiscriminately to mean 'friendship'. Osbert's use of '*anima*' for 'friend' is more interesting. Traditionally, in classical Latin '*anima*' was used to describe the soul or a breath. Horace, in a passage

<sup>65</sup> *Letters*, no. 3, p. 53.

<sup>66</sup> "*Nulla, inquit, efficacior pestis quam familiaris inimicus.*" *Letters*, no. 3, p. 55; Boethius, *Cons. philo.*, bk. iii, pros. v.

<sup>67</sup> *Letters*, pp. 58-62.

which Osbert quotes, perhaps comes closest to using ‘*anima*’ to designate a friend when he described his friend as the other half of his soul.<sup>69</sup> In many places Osbert uses ‘*anima*’ in a similar way to show the relationship between the soul and a true friend, although he does perhaps go further than Horace. While writing to Hugh of Lewes, Osbert refers to an individual named Roger as, ‘*altera anima mea*’.<sup>70</sup> While Horace used ‘*anima*’ to modify the central noun, Osbert places the ‘*anima*’ as the central noun, thereby Roger himself becomes the ‘*anima*’.

Like the theme of exile, friends and friendship do not play a significant role in Osbert of Clare’s hagiography. This perhaps is due to Osbert’s view of the relationship of friends. True friends had to be equals, and Osbert’s saints were equals only with other saints or great kings. This is emphasized by Osbert’s heavy additions to the genealogies of his saints, showing their saintly and royal lineage, while he portrays them as somewhat distant from their contemporaries. They are above those around them in sanctity, yet they often act as if they are below them because of their humility. Perhaps the one exception to this is Ethelbert’s head noble, Oswald, whom Osbert describes as Ethelbert’s friend (*familiaris*).<sup>71</sup> While most of the nobles in the *Vita S. Aethelbrichti* and the *Vita S. Eadwardi* are portrayed as mere witnesses to the saintly works of their lords, Oswald counsels him both in political matters, such as suggesting that he marry King Offa’s daughter, Alfrida,<sup>72</sup> and in spiritual matters, such as interpreting the significance of a dream.<sup>73</sup> Similarly, Edburga in Osbert’s *Vita*

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<sup>68</sup> “*Pater, ignosce illis, non enim sciunt quid faciunt.*” *Ibid.*, no. 4, p. 61. The Latin Vulgate has ‘*demitte*’ rather than ‘*ignosce*’. Lk 23:34.

<sup>69</sup> Horace, *Carm.*, i, 3, 8; *Letters*, no. 3, p. 55.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 1, p. 48.

<sup>71</sup> *Vita S. Aethelbrichti*, fol. 32r.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, fols. 32r-32v.

<sup>73</sup> This incident does not survive in the sole extant manuscript of Osbert’s *Vita S. Aethelbrichti*, but this is likely an omission in the manuscript and not in Osbert’s life. However it survives in Richard of Cirencester’s *Speculum historiale*, i, ed. John Mayor, RS 30 (1863), pp. 282-283. See below, pp. 208-209.

*S. Eadburgae* surpasses her fellow nuns, and even her prioress, both in her personal sanctity and in her royal birth.

It was the practical nature of Osbert's discussions of both friendship and exile that ensured them a central role in his letters and that ultimately ensured that they were left out of his hagiography. These themes were developed in Osbert's letters out of necessity: the necessity of coping with the trials that the exiled individual faced and attempting to put those trials into a larger context, and the necessity of having loyal friends to support him through hard times. Similarly, it was the lack of this necessity, and perhaps also Osbert's negative experiences in his own exile, that ensured that the themes of exile and friendships did not play a significant role in Osbert of Clare's hagiography. Even in the worst periods of his exile, however, Osbert still held onto hope and the belief that he, like the citizens of Jerusalem, would be brought out of Babylon.

## Conclusion

What is the importance of Osbert of Clare to the study of the medieval church? Was J. Armitage Robinson correct when he wrote that Osbert was a, “ forgotten worthy of the English Church of the twelfth century,” and that he, “left a deeper mark upon his time than others whose names are better known to-day”? The value of an individual’s historical worth is difficult to judge. Even the meaning of ‘historical worth’ is elusive. Is an individual’s historical worth marked by the effect they have on their society during their lifetime, by the continued effect they have on the historical record or by the ways that they exemplify their time? Simply because someone eight and a half centuries later decides to devote a book or a dissertation to an individual does not mean that that person was of greater historical worth. Nor can the worth of a work or a person be judged simply by the number of manuscripts that survive, otherwise we would have to judge works such as *Beowulf* as of little importance. Important works by many significant writers in the Middle Ages have not survived, for example the letter collection of Aelred of Rievaulx.

Osbert of Clare did not particularly excel beyond his contemporaries in any given area. Although his florid writing style exemplified an extravagant *Kunstprosa* with great competence, he cannot be counted amongst the greatest stylists of the twelfth century. In his writing he showed great intellect, but it is not comparable to the learning of Anselm, or even Anselm’s student Eadmer. On many occasions Osbert seems to have involved himself in ecclesiastical politics, but his impact was limited by the fact that he never obtained higher church office. Osbert was a significant

hagiographer, perhaps not of the importance as Goscelin of Canterbury, but important in the context of the Anglo-Norman hagiographic tradition. One area in which he may be counted as exceeding beyond his contemporaries is in the production of forged charters, although due to the nature of the work and his relative success it is difficult to accurately gauge what entirely was his work.

Where Osbert of Clare truly shines is in the diversity of his accomplishments. He left small imprints on many things that he touched, and large imprints in a few areas. He played a significant, although probably not pivotal, role in the early promotion of the feast of the Conception of Mary. Part of his office for the feast of St Anne was incorporated into the *Sarum Breviary* and then translated into Middle English, thereby providing it with a wide dispersion. Osbert's construction of the canonization of Edward the Confessor and his promotion and exaggeration of the rights of Westminster significantly affected the fortunes of Westminster for the rest of the Middle Ages and, through the increase in prestige of Westminster, affected the English church. Beyond the lasting effects of Osbert of Clare's works, he was also one of the most colorful characters of his time. His reformist spirit, his repeated conflicts with his abbots and his work as the most infamous forger of documents in twelfth-century England make him, if not the most historically important figure of his time, at least one of the most interesting.

## Appendix I:

### The Extant Manuscripts of the Writings of Osbert of Clare<sup>1</sup>

#### The Letters and Sermons

All of the extant letters and sermons of Osbert of Clare survive in one manuscript, BL Cotton MS Vitellius A. xvii.<sup>2</sup> The manuscript contains 2+166 folios and measures 5.75" x 8.37". The manuscript was damaged by fire in 1731 and so the vellum folios have been repaired with paper. Most of the manuscript concerns the writings of Osbert of Clare, but there are some insertions in different hands. The most significant of these are a short chronicle,<sup>3</sup> occupying folios 1r-16r, and the legend of Abbot Elsin's vow to St Mary,<sup>4</sup> occupying folios 99v-101v. These are both likely folio additions to the manuscript. The chronicle occupies the first two full gatherings and the legend of Abbot Elsin is probably a set of folios added to the center of a gathering. Other additions include small bits of prose and verse on a variety of topics written on pages of the manuscript that had originally been left blank.

<sup>1</sup> Williamson gives a summary of Osbert's writings and their manuscripts in the introduction to his edition of the *Letters*, pp. 21-37. While I have revised some of his conclusion below, in many cases I have come to the same conclusions.

<sup>2</sup> There is also a seventeenth-century transcription of the letters from this manuscript belonging to Gale in Trin. Coll. Cam. MS O. 10. 16. The transcription has many errors, but serves to supplement the Cotton manuscript where damaged by fire. It was also the basis for the first edition of the letters edited by Robert Anstruther, *Epistolae Herberti de Losinga... Osberti de Clara et Elmeri, priori Cantuariensis* (Caxton Society, Brussels, 1846). Besides Osbert of Clare's letters, the Gale manuscript also includes the letters of Alcuin, Lanfranc, Anselm, Prior Elmer of Canterbury and the *Symbolum electorum* of Gerald of Wales.

<sup>3</sup> Edited in F. Liebermann, *Ungedruckte Anglo-Normannische Geschichtsquellen* (Trubner, Strassburg, 1879), pp. 86-96.

<sup>4</sup> Edited in Eadmer, *De conceptione sanctae Mariae*, eds. H. Thurstan & T. Slater (Typographi Editoris Pontificii, Friburgi Brisgoviae, 1904), pp. 88-92.

With these exceptions the Cotton manuscript is completely dedicated to Osbert of Clare's letters and sermons. These are arranged partially topically and partially chronologically, although in a somewhat haphazard manner. The first seven letters, occupying folios 17v-23r, relate to the canonization of Edward the Confessor.<sup>5</sup> These are followed by seven letters relating principally to Osbert's early exiles from Westminster Abbey.<sup>6</sup> Next in the manuscript is a letter to Bishop Simon of Worcester concerning the feast of St Anne and a set of five hymns, prayers and sermons concerning the feast.<sup>7</sup> Then there are seven assorted letters,<sup>8</sup> followed by the letter to Warin, the prior of Worcester, and an accompanying sermon on the conception of Mary.<sup>9</sup> The letter to Warin ends on folio 99v, nine lines from the bottom. It appears that the sermon on the Conception of Mary was originally started in the remaining eight lines. In the twelfth or thirteenth century this was rubbed out and an interpolation concerning Abbot Elsin was begun in its place. This was then continued onto the two folios added to the center of the grouping. This interpolation ends shortly before the end of folio 101v, and the beginning of Osbert's sermon was copied onto the last seven lines of this page in the latter hand. On folio 102r, the original hand resumes Osbert's sermon. The manuscript is then completed with nineteen letters concerning a variety of topics, including Osbert's later exile.<sup>10</sup> Also included in these is Osbert's poem to Henry of Anjou, written just before his coronation as the king of England.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>5</sup> *Letters*, nos. 14-20.

<sup>6</sup> Vit. A xlii. fols. 24r-45r; *Letters*, no. 1-7, 11, 23.

<sup>7</sup> Vit. A xlii. fols. 45r-61v. Edited in "Les compositions d'Osbert de Clare en l'honneur de sainte Anne", ed. André Wilmart in *Annales de Bretagne* 37 (1926), pp. 1-33.

<sup>8</sup> Vit. A xlii. fols. 61v-99r; *Letters*, nos. 3, 9-10, 24-25, 39, 42.

<sup>9</sup> Vit. A xlii. fols. 99v, 101v-110r. The letter is also edited in *Letters*, no. 13.

<sup>10</sup> Vit. A xlii. fols. 110r-164v; *Letters*, nos. 4, 8, 21-22, 26-38, 40-41, 43.

<sup>11</sup> Vit. A xlii. fols. 144r-145v; *Letters*, no. 38.

The letters and sermons are written in a neat twelfth-century hand. There are somewhat ornate capitals in red, blue, green and gold at the beginning of most of the letters, and some letters have red titles.<sup>12</sup> The poems and hymns within the manuscript have small capitals of alternating colors. There is clear lineation with twenty-four lines on most pages. When letters end in the middle of a page, the scribe skipped two lines before starting the next letter.<sup>13</sup>

The chronicle preceding Osbert's letters provides the only textual insight into the time of the manuscript's production. The original hand that most of the chronicle is in ends with the entry for the year 1160.<sup>14</sup> It is then continued in another hand, thereby setting a *terminus ad quem* date of 1160 for this section of the manuscript. From the entries it appears that this chronicle is of Chichester origin,<sup>15</sup> but since it forms two separate groupings within the manuscript it is impossible to tell when and where the chronicle and Osbert's letters came together in the present manuscript.

In the sixteenth century, in his catalog entry for Osbert of Clare, John Bale lists two volumes of Osbert's letters. The first, *Epistolae ad diversos*, begins with, '*Innocentii summi pontificis et.*' The second, *Aliud volumen earundem*, begins with, '*Praeclaros, virtutum titulos.*'<sup>16</sup> Bale's source, Boston's *Catalogus*, also gives the *incipit* of volume one as, '*Innocentii Summi Pontificis.*'<sup>17</sup> This seems to match the

<sup>12</sup> Only three letters have rubrics, those edited by Williamson as nos. 14, 15 & 45 (2, 3 & 16 in the manuscript). Additionally, there is a rubric before the sermon on the Conception of Mary, and there is space left for rubrics before other letters.

<sup>13</sup> Starting on folio 144v, the scribe only left one line between letters.

<sup>14</sup> Vit. A xlii. fol. 16r.

<sup>15</sup> Neil Ker, *Medieval Libraries of Great Britain* (RHS, London, 1964), p. 50.

<sup>16</sup> John Bale, *Scriptorum illustrium maioris Britanniae catalogus* (Basel, 1557), pp. 188-189; John Bale, *Index Britanniae scriptorum*, ed. Reginald Poole (Clarendon, Oxford, 1902), p. 315.

<sup>17</sup> The catalogue traditionally attributed to Boston of Bury is now attributed to Henry Kirkstede, a late fourteenth-century prior of Bury St Edmunds. See R.H. Rouse, "Boston Buriensis and the Author of the *Catalogus scriptorum ecclesiae*", *Speculum* 41 (1966), pp. 471-499. However, for the purpose of this analysis I will continue to use the traditional attribution to refer to this work. Those entries relating to British authors, including Osbert of Clare, are printed in Wilkin's introduction to T. Tanner, *Bibliotheca Britannico-Hibernica*, ed. D. Wilkins (London, 1748), p. xxxv. It should be noted that while Bale only

*incipit* of the second letter in the Cotton manuscript, while the *incipit* of Cotton's first letter is, '*Innocentus episcopus*'.<sup>18</sup> Boston gives two *incipits* for the second volume of letters. He claims that the first letter of the second volume begins with, '*Praeclaros*', and the last letter of the second volume begins with, '*Opinionis*'.<sup>19</sup> Neither *incipit* appears in the Cotton manuscript, so it is not possible that the Cotton manuscript contains the material from both volumes described by Boston. In 1619 John Pits claimed that the volume with the *Praeclaros incipit*, which he called *Epistolarum religiosarum ad diversos*, was in the Lumley Library.<sup>20</sup> Pits did not give a location for the other volume of letters, which he called *Epistolarum familiarum ad diversos*. The catalogue of the Lumley library taken in 1609 lists one volume of Osbert of Clare's letters, which it calls *Epistolarum religiosarum ad diversos*.<sup>21</sup> However, this volume is generally taken to be the volume that found its way into the Cotton library, and survives today as Vit. A xvii.<sup>22</sup> It is likely that Pits either had his *incipits* or titles confused, in which case he did not know of the location of the *Praeclaros* text. The last person to reference the existence of a copy of this text is Tanner in the mid-seventeenth century who says that the, "...manuscript once in the Lumley Library, is now in Cotton Vitell. A. xv."<sup>23</sup> This is, however, problematic because Vit. A xv is the Beowulf Manuscript containing works in Old English.<sup>24</sup> A simple error of mistaking 'xv' for 'xvii' on the part of Tanner seems unlikely as he refers to Cotton MS Vit. A

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gives Boston as his source for his information on Osbert of Clare, he does extend Boston's *incipits* from another source in different ink. Bale, *Index*. p. 315. This could either be another catalog which no longer survives or from the manuscript itself.

<sup>18</sup> Vit. A xlii. fol. 17v.

<sup>19</sup> Tanner, p. xxxv.

<sup>20</sup> John Pits, *Relationum historicarum* (Paris, 1619), p. 205.

<sup>21</sup> *The Lumley Library: The Catalogue of 1609*, eds. Sears Jayne & Francis Johnson (British Museum, London, 1956), p. 100.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 100; *Letters*, p. 35.

<sup>23</sup> "*MS in bibl. Lumleiana, unde nunc in Cotton. Vitell. A. xv.*" Tanner, p. 564.

<sup>24</sup> A description of the history and contents of Cotton MS. Vit A. xv. can be found in Kevin Kiernan, *Beowulf and the Beowulf Manuscript* (Rudgers University Press, New Jersey, 1981), pp. 65-71.

xvii in regards to the surviving letter collection just a few lines below. It may be that both Tanner and Pits are confusing the *Praeclaros* volume with the surviving *Innocentii* volume, in which case the last firm reference to the existence of Osbert's second volume of letters comes from the c.1400 in Boston's *Catalogus*.<sup>25</sup>

### *Vita Aethelbrichti, regis et martyris*

Osbert of Clare's *Vita S. Aethelbrichti* is discussed in more detail below, therefore it suffices to simply give a very brief account of the manuscripts here. The *Vita S. Aethelbrichti* only survives complete, or near complete, in Gotha, Landesbibliothek, MS I. 81, fols. 30r-39r. The Gotha manuscript is a fourteenth-century English hagiographical collection.<sup>26</sup> It measures 9.05" x 12.32" and contains 230 folios.<sup>27</sup> A fragment of Osbert's *Vita S. Aethelbrichti* also survives in BL Cotton MS Nero E i, fols. 409v-410v. It does not contain Osbert's prefatory letter (ch. 1) and ends abruptly mid-sentence in chapter eight at the end of folio 410v due to missing folios. The Nero manuscript was written in a fine fourteenth-century hand with two columns of sixteen lines each, and measures 10.5" x 15.4".

### *Vita beatae virginis Eadburgae*

Osbert of Clare's *Vita S. Eadburgae* survives in one twelfth-century manuscript, Oxford Bodl. MS Laud 114, probably of Pershore origin.<sup>28</sup> The manuscript is numerated with 2+ 186 folios, but due to misnumeration there are

<sup>25</sup> Of course, Bale's longer *incipits* shows that he either saw the manuscript or had another source which saw the manuscript, but what his source was cannot be determined.

<sup>26</sup> The contents of the Gotha hagiographical manuscript are giving in Paul Grosjean, "*De codice hagiographico Gothano*," *AB* 58 (1940), pp. 90-103.

<sup>27</sup> There is a more thorough description of this manuscript below, p. 212.

actually only 170 folios.<sup>29</sup> It measures 7" x 10.125" and typically has thirty-one lines per page. The manuscript includes part of Augustine's *De doctrina Christiana* and eleven hagiographic pieces, including the *Vita S. Eadburgae*.<sup>30</sup> It was written in multiple twelfth-century hands, but the presence of a table of contents in a twelfth-century hand shows that by the end of the twelfth century the manuscript was in the format in which it now survives.<sup>31</sup> The *Vita S. Eadburgae* itself is done in a very fine hand. It has capitals in red, green, and blue, some of which are fairly elaborate. It also has red chapter heading up to chapter eleven,<sup>32</sup> after which only chapter seventeen is rubricated although space is left for further rubrication.<sup>33</sup>

Although Osbert's prefatory letter makes it certain that the MS Laud 114 is actually his work,<sup>34</sup> there are slight discrepancies between MS Laud 114 and the late medieval and early modern catalogs of writers. Boston gives the *incipit* for the prologue as '*Fidelibus*', the *incipit* for the life itself as '*Imperante*', and the *explicit* as '*omnium populorum*'.<sup>35</sup> The '*Fidelibus*' agrees with the Laud manuscript's *incipit* to the prefatory letter that precedes the prologue, but not the prologue itself.<sup>36</sup> Likewise, the '*Imperante*' agrees with the life itself,<sup>37</sup> but the *explicit* '*omnium populorum*' does not occur in the Laud manuscript. Further, Bale, and Pits probably from him, give the

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<sup>28</sup> A more thorough description of this manuscript is given by Susan Ridyard in her introduction to the *Vita S. Eadburgae*, pp. 255-258. For the Pershore attribution, see Neil Ker, "Sir John Prise", in *The Library*, ser. v, 10 (1955), pp. 14, 20; and Ker, *Medieval Libraries*, pp. 150.

<sup>29</sup> The scribe skipped numbers 99, 111-119, and 121-129, and doubled 23, 49, and 66.

<sup>30</sup> Ridyard gives a detailed list of the contents of MS Laud 114. *Vita S. Eadburgae*, p. 255. Ridyard also notes that are placed in calendar order, starting from St Andrews Day (30 November) to the feast of St Katherine (25 November) and placing the *Vita S. Eadburgae* in the correct position for the feast of her translation to Pershore (14 October). *Ibid.*, pp. 256-257.

<sup>31</sup> Laud 114, fol. 1r.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 95v.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 101r.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, fols. 85r-86v; *Vita S. Eadburgae*, pp. 259-262.

<sup>35</sup> Tanner, p. xxxv. The prologue *incipit* can actually be taken two ways. Wilkins does not italicize the '*Fidelibus*' like he italicizes other quotes from the text, thus implying that he took it as, "First is a prologue to the faithful." However it seems more probable that '*Fidelibus*' was actually meant to refer to the *incipit* of the prologue.

<sup>36</sup> Laud 114, fol. 85r; *Vita S. Eadburgae*, p. 259.

*incipit* of the prologue as ‘*Fidelibus in Christo sororibus*’,<sup>38</sup> whereas the *incipit* of MS Laud 114’s prefatory letter is ‘*Fidelibus sancte matris ecclesie filiis*’. These differences in *incipits* and *explicits* led Williamson to hypothesize that Osbert actually wrote two versions of the *Vita S. Eadburgae*. The first addressed more generally with a short book concerning Edburga’s miracles at Pershore at the end, and perhaps one addressed specifically to the nuns of Nunnaminster, Edburga’s principal home, and just containing material relating to Winchester.<sup>39</sup>

### *Miracula regis et martyris Aedmundi*

Osbert’s *Miracula S. Aedmundi* does not survive complete in any recognizable form. Boston gives an unusually long entry for this work, furnishing four *incipits* and stating that it was written at the request of ‘*A. abbas*’, presumably Osbert’s friend Anselm, abbot of Bury.<sup>40</sup> Boston has the *miracula* beginning with ‘*A. Abbas*’, the prefatory letter beginning with ‘*Sanctitate*’, the prologue beginning with ‘*Cum laureatus*’, and the miracles themselves beginning with ‘*In provincia et*’.<sup>41</sup> Bale just gives the prologue *incipit*, but extends it to ‘*Cum laureatus, dei Martyr*’,<sup>42</sup> and Pits gives ‘*Cum laureatus Dei martyr Edmundus*’.<sup>43</sup>

The first and most obvious place where elements of Osbert’s *miracula* can be found is in B.L. Cotton MS Titus A viii, in the *miracula* attributed to Abbot Samson.<sup>44</sup> The second book of this miracle collection begins with a prologue that

<sup>37</sup> Laud 114, fol. 87v; *Vita S. Eadburgae*, p. 263.

<sup>38</sup> Bale, *Index*, p. 315; Pits, p. 205.

<sup>39</sup> *Letters*, p. 25.

<sup>40</sup> “...ad rogatum A. abbatis.” Tanner, p. xxxv.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xxxv.

<sup>42</sup> Bale, *Index*, p. 315.

<sup>43</sup> Pits, p. 205.

<sup>44</sup> Edited in the *Memorials of St Edmunds Abbey*, i, ed. Thomas Arnold, RS 96 (1890), pp. 107-208. The attribution to Samson is uncertain. The general attribution is based upon attributions to Samson in Oxford MS Bodl. 240. Rodney Thomson suggested that, with the exception of the miracles attributed

begins: ‘*Cum laureatus urbem ingreditur...*’.<sup>45</sup> While this does not exactly match the *incipit* given by Bale and Pits, it does match that of Boston. Also in the margin there is an attribution to Osbert of Clare in a fourteenth-century hand.<sup>46</sup> This is followed by a letter, also attributed to Osbert of Clare in the margin, that begins, ‘*In Exodo legitur...*’.<sup>47</sup> While this letter does not match either of the first two *incipits* given by Boston, based upon style and the fourteenth-century attribution it still seems to be the work of Osbert of Clare. The letter appears to lack its dedication clause, which may account for the difference in *incipits*. The same fourteenth- or fifteenth-century hand then appears again opposite chapter eight stating, ‘*Incipiunt miracula scripta ab Osberto priore Westmonasterii.*’<sup>48</sup> The next twelve miracles are also each attributed to Osbert of Clare, the last stating in the margin next to its *explicit*: ‘*Expliciunt miracula scripta per Osbertum de Clare priorem Westmonasterii.*’<sup>49</sup> In the fourteenth-century manuscript Oxford MS Bodl. 240 these same thirteen miracles, in a shortened form, are again attributed to Osbert of Clare.<sup>50</sup> At least one of the miracles that occurs in both the Titus and the Bodliean manuscripts was written after 1168, and could not have been Osbert’s work.<sup>51</sup>

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to Osbert of Clare, Samson edited the miracles in the Titus manuscript and wrote the miracle of William of Curzun. Rodney Thomson, “Two Versions of a Saint’s Life from St Edmund’s Abbey”, *Revue Bénédictine* 84 (1974), pp. 389-390. Also see Arnold’s introduction to the *Memorials of St Edmunds Abbey*, p. xi; and Williamson’s discussion in *Letters*, pp. 27-28.

<sup>45</sup> Titus A viii, fol. 109r; *Miracula S. Aedmundi*, p. 152.

<sup>46</sup> It is the hand of the fourteenth-century prior Henry Kirkstede, the same monk who Rouse identified as the author of Boston. Rouse, p. 484. If these margin notes and the *Catalogus scriptorum ecclesiae* were written by Kirkstede then he must have been working from another, more complete, manuscript of Osbert’s *miracula* from which he drew his *incipits* and the attributions in the Titus manuscript.

<sup>47</sup> Titus A viii, fol. 110r; *Miracula S. Aedmundi*, p. 153. There is a rubric, apparently in Cotton’s hand (see Williamson’s note in *Letters*, p. 26), that says, “*Incipit epistola Osberti de Clara prioris Westmonasterii.*”

<sup>48</sup> Titus A viii, fol. 126r; *Miracula S. Aedmundi*, p. 178.

<sup>49</sup> Titus A viii, fol. 145r; *Miracula S. Aedmundi*, p. 207.

<sup>50</sup> Bodl. 240, pp. 655-659 (the manuscript is numerated by page rather than by folio). These attributions are also in Henry Kirkstede’s hand. Rouse, pp. 483-484.

<sup>51</sup> Titus A viii, fol. 108v-109r; *Memorial of St Edmunds Abbey*, i, pp. 148-151. This is the miracle of William de Curzun. In Williamson’s view it was written after the death of Henry II. *Letters*, p. 27. The writing style of this miracle is also notably different from Osbert’s Latin style.

The *miracula* in the Holford manuscript at the Morgan Library has also been attributed to Osbert of Clare.<sup>52</sup> It contains most of the miracles from the Titus manuscript's first book with some added material, but noticeably missing the William de Curzun miracle.<sup>53</sup> The Holford manuscript has a completely different prologue to book II and stops just short of the point where the miracles attributed to Osbert are in the Titus manuscript, although a later hand notes the absence of fourteen miracles.<sup>54</sup> The lack of *incipits* matching any of those given by Boston takes away considerable credibility from the theory that this is Osbert's *miracula*. Rodney Thomson dated the Holford manuscript to c.1123-1126,<sup>55</sup> by which time Osbert may have been in exile at Bury. However, Thomson also convincingly argued based upon stylistic considerations that the *miracula* in the Holborn manuscript (and in turn the first book of the Titus manuscript) were not Osbert's work, but instead were a reworking of St Edmund's miracles by a monk of Bury early in Anselm's abbacy.<sup>56</sup> Further, in his prologue, as it survives in the Titus manuscript, Osbert implies that he had been to Rome, presumably a reference to his mission in 1139 for the canonization of Edward the Confessor.<sup>57</sup> Osbert's *miracula* was therefore probably written sometime between 1139 and 1148 when Abbot Anselm died. Osbert's *Miracula S. Aedmundi* only survives in Bury collections and not as was described by Boston. However, given its structure with the extant manuscripts it was perhaps only an addition to the abbey's miracle collection and not a complete reworking, in which case most of Osbert's work probably still survives in those sections attributed to him in the Titus manuscript.

<sup>52</sup> New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, MS Morgan 736. Arnold attributed this *miracula* to Osbert of Clare. *Memorial of St Edmunds Abbey*, iii, p. xxxix. Williamson was much less certain, although he agreed that it might essentially be one version of Osbert's work. *Letters*, pp. 28-30.

<sup>53</sup> Morgan 736, fols. 23r-76r. The *miracula* in the Holford manuscript is also preceded by two letters relating to Abbot Anselm, whom Osbert's *miracula* was written at the request of. *Ibid.*, fols. 2r-3r.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 76r.

<sup>55</sup> Rodney Thomson, "Early Romanesque Book-Illustration in England", *Viator* 2 (1971), pp. 216-217.

<sup>56</sup> Thomson, "Two Versions...", pp. 391-393.

B.L. Cotton MS Titus A viii is a thirteenth-century volume measuring 15.5" x 20.5", and containing 145 folios. Besides the miracles of St Edmund, it also contains one of only two extant copies of Sulcard of Westminster's *Prologus*,<sup>58</sup> included in a Westminster cartulary that makes up the first half of the manuscript.<sup>59</sup> Oxford Bodleian MS 240 is an enormous manuscript of materials relating to Bury St Edmunds, measuring 15.125" x 9.625" and containing 450 folios. MS Morgan 736 measures 10.8" x 7.3" and contains 100 folios. It begins with a twelfth-century illustrated life of St Edmund.<sup>60</sup>

### *Vita beati Eadwardi regis Anglorum*

Osbert of Clare's *Vita S. Eadwardi* survives in one manuscript, B.L. Add. MS 36737, fols. 139v-157v, of the late twelfth or early thirteenth century.<sup>61</sup> The manuscript is from the Cistercian house of Himmerod in the diocese of Trier, as attested to by two fourteenth-century notes in the manuscript.<sup>62</sup> It measures 12.5" x 9.25", and contains 203 folios. The *Vita S. Eadwardi* is in a *passionale* that takes up the majority of the manuscript, including thirty-nine pieces of hagiography.<sup>63</sup> The *passionale* is preceded and followed by assorted pieces of hagiography and theology, including selections of Jerome, Bede, Julian of Toledo and Theoderic of Apolda's *Life of St Elizabeth of Hungary*.

<sup>57</sup> *Miracula S. Aedmundi*, p. 152.

<sup>58</sup> Titus A viii, fols. 2r-5v. Edited in Bernhard Scholz, "Sulcard of Westminster", *Traditio* 20 (1964), pp. 80-91.

<sup>59</sup> Titus A viii, fols. 1v-64v.

<sup>60</sup> Morgan 736, fols. 7r-22v.

<sup>61</sup> For a more thorough description of this volume, including a full list of its contents, see *Catalogue of Additions to the Manuscripts of the British Museum: 1900-1905* (British Museum, London, 1969), pp. 197-202. Also see Marc Bloch's discussion of the manuscript in *Vita S. Eadwardi*, pp. 56-57.

<sup>62</sup> "Liber monachorum in Hymmenroide," fol. 33r; "Liber monachorum S. Marie in Hymmerroide," fol. 35v.

<sup>63</sup> Fols. 34v-171v.

There is also an abbreviated version of Osbert's *Vita S. Eadwardi*, including an abbreviated version of Osbert's prefatory letter to Bishop Alberic, in Cambridge C.C.C. MS 161, fols. 138v-152r.<sup>64</sup> The Corpus Christi manuscript is a late twelfth- or early thirteenth-century English book of hagiography, apparently from Canterbury.<sup>65</sup> It measures 11.9" x 8.2", with 1+152 folios. The *Vita S. Eadwardi* contained in this manuscript is an abbreviation of the *vita* found in the B.L. Add. MS 36737, but it does contain some material that is not found in 36737. The most significant additions are the story of the ring which Edward gave to St John the Evangelist disguised as a beggar<sup>66</sup> and the story of the seamstress' servant who was struck with paralysis after denigrating the saint.<sup>67</sup> The first of these was probably not the work of Osbert of Clare and was added to the tradition sometime between 1140 and 1170, but the second miracle may have originally been in Osbert's *Vita*.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> This manuscript is described with a list of its contents in Montague James, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Library of Corpus Christi College Cambridge* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1912), pp. 358-363.

<sup>65</sup> The name "Twyne," is written on the flyleaf. John Twyne was a mayor and schoolmaster of Canterbury who gathered together a collection of manuscripts. James, p. 358. Further, the manuscript was written in several different hands, one of which James identified as a distinct Christ Church hand. James, p. 363.

<sup>66</sup> This became very important in Edward the Confessor's later hagiography and became an important iconographic image. Fols. 146r-152r. Edited as an appendix to Bloch edition of Osbert's *Vita S. Eadwardi*, pp. 124-128.

<sup>67</sup> Fols. 152r-152v; *Vita S. Eadwardi*, pp. 128-129.

<sup>68</sup> See above, pp. 76-77, 95-96. Also see Bloch's treatment of the subject in *Vita S. Eadwardi*, pp. 59-61.

## Appendix II:

### Osbert of Clare's *Life of St Ethelbert*

A great deal of confusion has surrounded Osbert of Clare's *Life of St Ethelbert*. In the mid-nineteenth century Thomas Hardy attributed the *vita* surviving in MS Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, 308 to Osbert of Clare.<sup>1</sup> This attribution remained unchallenged until 1917, when Montague James concluded that, on the grounds of the difference in the incipits between the Corpus Christi manuscript and the incipit given by Bale for Osbert's *Vita S. Aethelbrichti*,<sup>2</sup> Osbert's *Life* no longer existed. However it had been inserted *en bloc* into Richard of Cirencester's *Speculum historiale* up to the point of Ethelbert's death, where it abruptly cuts off. In 1940 the Bollandists published the description of the contents of the Gotha hagiographical manuscript, which included the sole surviving copy of Osbert's *Vita S.*<sup>3</sup> This has come to the attention of some historians, such as Robert Bartlett and Susan Ridyard, but has been entirely missed by many others, even very recently.<sup>4</sup> There is also a fragment of Osbert's *Life* in MS Cotton, Nero E. I, which contains chapters two

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Hardy, *Descriptive Catalogue of Materials Relating to the History of Great Britain and Ireland*, i, part ii, RS 26 (1862), pp. 494-495. Hardy also stated that Osbert's *vita* was in MS University College, Oxford, 135, which Montague James found was missing by 1917. M.R. James, "Two Lives of St. Ethelbert, King and Martyr", *EHR* 32 (1917), p. 215.

<sup>2</sup> James, pp. 215-216.

<sup>3</sup> Paul Grosjean, "De codice hagiographico Gothano", *AB* 58 (1940), pp. 90-103. The manuscript is Gotha, Landesbibliothek, MS I. 81, and Osbert's *Vita Aethelbrichti* is on folios 30-39.

<sup>4</sup> Robert Bartlett, who first pointed out the existence of the manuscript to me, makes heavy use of Osbert's *Vita* in his article, "Rewriting Saint's Lives", *Speculum* 58 (1983), pp. 598-613. Susan Ridyard just briefly mentions the *Vita*, but gives the correct manuscript, in her book, *The Royal Saints of Anglo-Saxon England* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1988), p. 21. Similarly, David Rollason described Osbert's *Vita* existing in the Gotha manuscript, and thanks Robert Bartlett for that information in, "The Cults of Murdered Royal Saints in Anglo-Saxon England", *Anglo-Saxon England* 11 (1983), p. 9. Even as recently as 1997, Richard Sharpe claimed that Osbert's *Vita* no longer existed in *A Handlist of the Latin Writers of Great Britain and Ireland* (Brepols, Belgium, 1997), p. 409. In the following year Edward Brooks translated the Corpus Christi *Vita*, claiming it to be Osbert's *Vita* in *The*

through seven and half of chapter eight.<sup>5</sup> Although the Gotha manuscript has been known of since 1940, it was relatively inaccessible to western scholars for half of a century due to the political atmosphere of East Germany.

Given that James in 1917 did not know of the surviving manuscript of the *Vita S. Aethelbrichti*, his analysis of the textual history of the *vitae* is surprisingly accurate. The Corpus Christi College anonymous *Passio* represents the oldest surviving, and oldest known, *vita*.<sup>6</sup> It is from the early part of the twelfth century, and likely the product of Hereford, where Ethelbert's body rested.<sup>7</sup> The *Passio* appears to have been the basis of Osbert's *Vita*, although Osbert completely reworked it and enlarged it to approximately double the size of the Corpus Christi text. Osbert's reworking of the Anonymous' *Passio Athelberti* was written within half a century of the early life.<sup>8</sup> Most of Osbert's additions are simply expansions of the basic events laid out in the Anonymous' *Passio*. For Ethelbert's genealogy the Anonymous only gives his parents and states that he was descended from Raedwald,<sup>9</sup> while Osbert gives a substantial list

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*Life of Ethelbert, King and Martyr* (Bury Clerical Society, Bury St Edmunds, 1998). Clearly the diffusion of the knowledge of the existence of the *Vita* has been slow, but is still continuing.

<sup>5</sup> Nero E. i. fols. 409v-410v. The fragment of Osbert's *Vita* ends mid-sentence at the bottom of folio 410v, and folio 411r begins mid-sentence in the middle of the *Vita Germani* in the same hand. Since folio 409 was the last folio in its grouping, then it appears that one complete grouping was lost from the manuscript. Assuming that only one grouping was lost and that the manuscript originally went straight from the *Vita Aethelberti* to the *Vita Germani*, then some tentative judgements can be made as to what the manuscript originally contained. The missing eight folios contained 1472 lines, and based upon the scribe's average words per line this would equate to approximately 8540 words missing from the text. The missing part of the *Vita Germani* was about 4460 words, thereby leaving approximately 4080 words in the *Vita Aethelberti*. If the Nero manuscript did not contain any of the sections absent in the Gotha manuscript but present in Richard of Cirencester, then the manuscript would have contained up through the conversion of Offa's daughter, Alfrida (ch. 20). However the manuscript probably contained those sections from Richard which appear to originate from Osbert (see below pp. 208-209) and ended with Ethelbert's *decollatio* (ch. 19). In either case, the Nero manuscript did not contain a complete version of Osbert's *Vita* and ended at or shortly after his murder, omitting his *inventio* and posthumous miracles.

<sup>6</sup> Edited in James, pp. 236-244, hereafter abbreviated as Anon.

<sup>7</sup> James, pp. 218-219.

<sup>8</sup> Due to the dedication to Gilbert Foliot as bishop of Hereford, Osbert's *Life* had to be written after September 5, 1148. *Vita Aethelbrichti*, fols. 30r-30v; *Handbook of British Chronology*, third edition, eds. E.B. Fryde, D.E. Greenway, S. Porter, and I. Roy (Royal Historical Society, London, 1986), p. 250.

<sup>9</sup> Anon. p. 236.

of kings and holy men from whom Ethelbert is descended.<sup>10</sup> Osbert's expansion of chapter four in the Anonymous' work into three chapters is fairly indicative of his treatment of the work as a whole.<sup>11</sup> Osbert also added to the narrative where the Anonymous left off. While the Anonymous ends with Ethelbert's burial at Hereford,<sup>12</sup> Osbert adds a digression from Asser's *Life of Alfred* and two miracles.<sup>13</sup> One tells how a spindly tree, growing next to where Ethelbert spent the night on his way to Mercia, grew to full size overnight. The second relates how a cross that had been removed from Ethelbert's basilica was miraculously restored. Stylistically, Osbert lessened the Anonymous' moralistic tone and injected periodic oratorical monologues.

The location of Ethelbert's head has also posed a problem for historians. Traditionally the presence of Ethelbert's head and an active cult at Westminster has been seen by historians as a significant impetus to Osbert for writing his narrative.<sup>14</sup> It was assumed the head made its way to Westminster following the sacking of Hereford cathedral by Earl Aelfgar and Gruffudd ap Llywelyn in 1055.<sup>15</sup> While this would be an opportune time for the relic to be moved, it is not substantiated by Westminster documents. The first mention of the presence of Ethelbert's head at Westminster occurs in *Speculum historiale* by Richard of Cirencester († 1401), a monk of Westminster.<sup>16</sup> Its presence is then confirmed by John Flete in the fifteenth century in

<sup>10</sup> *Vita Aethelbrichti*, fols. 31r-31v.

<sup>11</sup> Anon, p. 238; *Vita Aethelbrichti*, pp. 33r-33v.

<sup>12</sup> Anon, p. 244.

<sup>13</sup> *Vita Aethelbrichti*, fols. 38r-39r.

<sup>14</sup> James comments on the presence of Ethelbert's head at Westminster in Osbert of Clare's time, and most historians since have followed his lead. James, p. 219.

<sup>15</sup> *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, tr. Dorothy Whitelock (Eyre & Spottiswoode, London, 1961), pp. 130-131. See Simon Keynes, "Diocese and Cathedral before 1056", in *Hereford Cathedral*, ed. Gerald Aylmer and John Tiller (Hambleton, London, 2000), pp. 18-20; and Julia Barrow, "Athelstan to Aigueblanche, 1056-1268", in the same volume, pp. 22-23.

<sup>16</sup> Richard of Cirencester, *Speculum historiale*, i, ed. John Mayor, RS 30 (1863), p. 294, hereafter abbreviated as Ric. Cir..

his *History of Westminster Abbey*.<sup>17</sup> Further, the only surviving medieval Westminster calendar, from the second half of the fifteenth century, contains the feast of St Ethelbert.<sup>18</sup> Since Osbert and Gerald were both silent on the subject of the presence of Ethelbert's head at Westminster Abbey, it is unlikely that it arrived before the thirteenth century. For this reason, Osbert's impetus for writing the *Vita* was most likely as a favor to Bishop Gilbert and the Hereford community, perhaps for assistance in his period of exile, rather than a way of expounding Westminster's claims to St Ethelbert.

Osbert's *Vita S. Aethelbrichti* was the foundation of the later lives of Saint Ethelbert. These took form in two different manners. First there were those who either directly copied, or simply abbreviated Osbert's *Life*. The most significant of these was Richard of Cirencester's incorporation of a large portion of Osbert's *Vita* into his *Speculum historiale*. Richard omitted Osbert's prefatory letter and everything after Ethelbert's *decollatio*, but most of the portion of the *Vita* that he did incorporate only differs in language from the Gotha MS in occasional and relatively insignificant words.<sup>19</sup> Richard does include two additional sections which are not in the Gotha MS.<sup>20</sup> The first of these is a digression comparing the virtue of royal saints with the corruption of the priesthood. Its awkward placement, between the description of an eclipse and its interpretation, points to the digression being an addition by Richard of Cirencester. The second additional section is more difficult to judge. It consists of five parts: a denunciation of King Offa, a narrative of Ethelbert sending presents to Offa, a

<sup>17</sup> John Fleet, *Fleet's History of Westminster Abbey*, ed. J. Armitage Robinson (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1909), p. 75.

<sup>18</sup> *English Benedictine Kalendars after A.D. 1100*, ii, ed. Francis Wormald, HBS 89 (1946), p. 67.

<sup>19</sup> Richard incorporates chapters 2-18, and most of 19, of the text below. The differences between the Gotha MS and Richard of Cirencester have been noted in the footnotes to the text.

<sup>20</sup> These two sections are, "*Comparemus, si placet... suae claritatis illustravit.*" (pp. 276-277) and, "*Quid facies, Offa... arbitrio interpretanda relinquo.*" (pp. 279-286). For the present edition I have added both of these sections. Those sections which were probably additions by Richard of Cirencester are given in brackets.

vision, Oswald's interpretation of the vision, and a second interpretation of the vision. The vision, along with Oswald's interpretation, probably represents omissions in the Gotha MS because they are in both the Anonymous *Passio*<sup>21</sup> and in Gerald of Wales' *Vita*.<sup>22</sup> Therefore they were unlikely to have been omitted by Osbert in his original *Life*. The narrative of Ethelbert sending gifts to King Offa should also be considered the work of Osbert. Although it is short, it seems to be in Osbert's style and is also an unlikely addition by Richard. The denunciation of Offa is perhaps Richard's addition, as it does not occur in Gerald's *Vita*, and the strong first person narrative voice employed is unlike the third person narrative voice employed by Osbert throughout the rest of the work. The second interpretation of Ethelbert's vision also employs a first person voice, although it probably entered the hagiographic tradition before Richard's *Speculum historiale*.<sup>23</sup> In all, there are probably three paragraphs added to Osbert's *Vita*, all of which are commentary in nature and all of which are absent in both the Anonymous and in Gerald's *Vita*. In the fourteenth century, John of Tynemouth also used Osbert's *Life*, although in an abbreviated form, in his *Sanctilogium*. While he still left out the miracles from Osbert's work, he went further than Richard and included the *inventio* of Ethelbert's body.<sup>24</sup>

The second way Osbert's *Vita S. Aethelbrichti* influenced Ethelbert's hagiographical tradition was to serve as the basis for other rewritings of the story. This is evident in Gerald of Wales's *Vita S. Ethelberti*, as well as the life in the

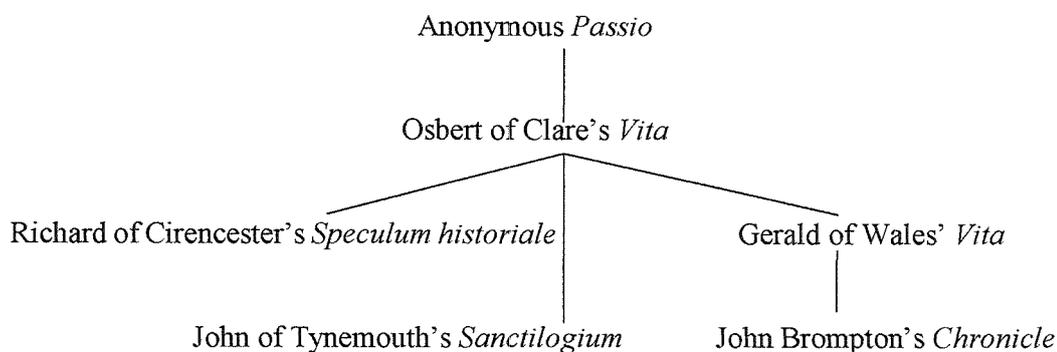
<sup>21</sup> Anon, pp. 238-239.

<sup>22</sup> Gerald's life is edited in James, pp. 222-236 (at p.226), hereafter abbreviated as Gerald.

<sup>23</sup> The *Life of Ethelbert* in the *Nova legenda Anglie* does not contain the comparison between Ethelbert and contemporary priests nor does it contain the vindication against King Offa. It does, however, contain the second interpretation of Edward's vision. Therefore either the second interpretation was Osbert's work, which stylistically is improbable or Richard and John of Tynemouth were working from the same source. *Nova legenda Anglie*, i, ed. Carl Horstman (Clarendon, Oxford, 1901), pp. 114-118.

<sup>24</sup> John of Tynemouth's *Sanctilogium* formed the base of the *Nova legenda Anglie*, printed in 1516 by Wynkyn de Worde, *Nova legenda Anglie*, i, pp. 411-419. It was formerly attributed to John Capgrave, but Peter Lucas has shown that Capgrave actually had nothing to do with the collection in his article, "John Capgrave and the *Nova legenda Anglie*", *The Library*, ser. v, 25 (1970), pp. 1-10.

*Chronicle of John Brompton*, which was taken from Gerald's *Vita*.<sup>25</sup> While Richard of Cirencester simply incorporated Osbert's *Vita*, Gerald completely rewrote it.<sup>26</sup> At the end of Gerald's *Vita* he explains his reason for composing it: "At the insistence of our canons we have explained more briefly and clearly the life of the St Ethelbert, along with the ancient miracles, than the earlier sermon, composed awkwardly and with long digressions."<sup>27</sup> By removing many of Osbert's oratorical monologues, Gerald created a less dramatic, but smoother narrative.<sup>28</sup> In all, his life is approximately one third shorter than Osbert's *Vita*. It was probably written at Hereford in the 1190's.<sup>29</sup> Apparently, Osbert's *Vita* supplanted the earlier *Passio* between the time it was written in the late 1140's or 1150's until Gerald's *Life* was written in the 1190's. Following its composition, Gerald's *Life* supplanted Osbert's at Hereford, but Osbert's still remained the dominant *vita* at Westminster, as shown by its use in Richard of Cirencester's *Speculum historiale*. Therefore the known medieval textual history of the lives of St Ethelbert is such:



<sup>25</sup> The life in the chronicle falsely attributed to John Brompton is edited by the Bollandists in the *AS* 20 May, pp. 241-246. The differences between Gerald and Brompton are examined by James, p. 217.

<sup>26</sup> Robert Bartlett addresses Gerald's reworking of Osbert's *Life of Ethelbert* and Rhygyfarch of Llanbadarn's *Life of David* in his article, "Rewriting Saints' Lives". In "Two Lives of St Ethelbert" James showed that Gerald must have used Osbert's *Life*, and that there is no evidence to suggest that he used the earlier life. James, pp. 217-218.

<sup>27</sup> "*Vitam sancti Aethelberti cum miraculis antiquis, longis ambagibus ante rudique sermone congestam concanonicorum nostrorum instantia brevius admodum et dilucidius explanavimus.*" Gerald, p. 236.

<sup>28</sup> Bartlett, p. 607.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 600.

Gerald's *Vita* also contains four miracles that are absent from the Gotha manuscript. The first concerns a certain Edwin who was healed of a mental ailment after spending the night at St Ethelbert's tomb.<sup>30</sup> It is placed between the digression from Asser and the miracle of the tree which grew to full size overnight. There is no reason to indicate that this miracle was in Osbert's original and omitted from the Gotha manuscript, and therefore should be seen as an addition by Gerald of Wales. The three remaining miracles were added at the end of the life. In one a thief's attempt at stealing a tapestry is thwarted by St Ethelbert; in the second St Ethelbert cures a blind man; and in the third St Ethelbert strikes down a knight for denigrating the saint. The presence of these four miracles seems to validate Gerald's statement that he added miracles which had recently occurred.<sup>31</sup> However, in the sixteenth century, John Leland took notes from a copy of Osbert's *Vita*. All of his notes match up to the Gotha manuscript, except for his last note, which states, "The knight Godiscalc, in whose territory the old church of the martyr Ethelbert stood."<sup>32</sup> This correlates to the last miracle in Gerald's *Vita*. There are three possible explanations for the difference between the Gotha manuscript and Leland's description. First, that the final three miracles were included in Osbert's *Vita*, and were just omitted from the Gotha manuscript. This also implies that while Gerald declared he added miracles, he in fact only added one new miracle. Second, that the miracles were Gerald's, but were then added to the end of a later version of Osbert's work, which Leland saw. Third, that the final miracle containing Godiscalc was Osbert's, but one or both of the other miracles were Gerald's. Due to Gerald's rewriting of the work, style cannot be used to determine the original author of the miracles. Therefore it seems unlikely that it will

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<sup>30</sup> Gerald, p. 232-233.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 236.

ever be resolved whether these three miracles were part of Osbert's original work. Nevertheless, they have been added to the end of the present edition in brackets.

Gotha, Forschungsbibliothek MS Memb. I 81, which contains the sole complete, or near complete, copy of Osbert of Clare's *Vita S. Aethelbrichti*, is a fourteenth-century English manuscript.<sup>33</sup> There are 230 vellum folios measuring 9.05 in. x 12.32 in. The text is written in a gothic book hand and is divided into two columns, usually with forty-eight lines each.<sup>34</sup> The front side of each folio has two page numbers, one in the medieval hand and one in a modern hand. The *Vita S. Aethelbrichti* is written in brown ink with alternating red and blue capitals at the beginning of each chapter. In the margins there are chapter titles in the same hand as the main text and notations in a later hand, although in places these are difficult to read because the folios were trimmed.

For the purpose of this edition the medieval spelling has been retained, except in a few instances where the scribe appears to have made a mistake. The most frequently occurring of these spelling alterations are the dropping of the 'a' in the classical 'ae' word ending and the interchange of 'c' and 't', as in '*tradicio*' for '*traditio*'. Punctuation and capitalization have been modernized. The chapter divisions and titles are from the manuscript, but the chapter numerations were added for easy reference. The sections taken from Richard of Cirencester and Gerald of Wales have kept the punctuation, spelling and paragraph divisions of Mayor's and James's editions. Osbert's obvious biblical or classical references are footnoted, as are

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<sup>32</sup> "*Godescaleus miles, in cuius territorio Ethelberti martyris eccl: fuerat antiqua fabricatione constructa.*" John Leland, *Itinerary in England*, ed. Lucy Toulmin Smith (G.Bell & Sons, London, 1910), p. 188.

<sup>33</sup> Grosjean, p. 90.

<sup>34</sup> Although there are clear lineation marks, the scribe does occasionally deviate from these, such as on folios 35v and 36r.

cross-references to the Anonymous *Vita*, Gerald's *Vita*, and Richard of Cirencester's *Speculum historiale*.

Biblical references are taken from *Biblia sacra vulgata*, fourth edition, eds. Roger Gryson, et al. Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, Stuttgart, 1994. Other references are given with both the standard chapter or verse and the correlating page numbers from the editions listed below. These editions are as follows: Bede, *Ecclesiastical History*, eds. Bertram Colgrave & R.A.B. Mynors (Clarendon, Oxford, 1969), abbreviated as Bede; Cicero, *De officiis*, ed. Walter Miller (William Heinemann, London, 1913), abbreviated as *De officiis*; Gregory I, *Epistulae Gregorii magni*, PL 77, cols. 441-1328, abbreviated as *Epist. Greg.*; Odilo of Cluny, *Epitaphium Adalheide imperatricis*, PL 142, cols. 963-992, abbreviated as Odilo of Cluny; and Virgil, *Aeneid*, in *Virgili opera*, ed. R.A.B. Mynors (Clarendon, Oxford, 196), pp. 103-422, abbreviated as *Aeneid*.

### Uita Aethelbrichti, Regis et Martiris<sup>35</sup>

1) (30r, 2) Celeberrimo domino suo et patri Gisleberto Dei gratia sancte Herefordensis ecclesie<sup>36</sup> (30v, 1) uenerando pontifici tante magestati debitam Osbertus de Clara cum summa deuocione reuerenciam et post uite presentis incerta iocunditatem cum angelis Dei sempiternam. De beatissimo martire et glorioso Rege Aethelberte quedam tibi, pater excelse, deliberavi fieri publica, que longis retro temporibus penes me diuina ut credo dispositione latuerunt occulta. Neminem enim ante hoc tempus reperisse me iudicabam idoneum; diu tam insignis gratie precium delegassem patere reseratum. Sic quia in lucem producti lapides preciosi clarius rutilant quam quos signatos in thesauris abdita non reuelant, ad publicum scientie multorum tua auctoritate prodire cupio beatissimi martiris et preciosissimi principis gesta que hactenus producta non coruscaverunt in mundo. In autenticis etiam literis legimus quod omne bonum in commune deductum pulcrius elucescit,<sup>37</sup> si plurimorum noticia comprobetur. Tam memorabilis igitur iudex esse operis tue persone uidetur excellencia ut prisca quondam tempora si te Rome per senatores prefecissent Capitolio tocuis urbis uiri spectabiles tuo ad nutum subderentur imperio. A primis namque cunabulis in te refulserunt elementi uirtutis et iocunda etas indolis gratie et docilis procedente agnorum tempore adepta est cumulum glorie triumphalis. Ingencium inde mihi auctor factus es gaudiorum eo quod me tua familiaritate decoratum intelligo et preclaris benefitorum titulis adornatus paternitatis tue uestigiis uernula cedulis adherebo. Tu namque uelut Anichius effectus es ac tempestate Boicius,<sup>38</sup> unde uelut odor balsami longe dispersus diffunditur odor tuus. In tuis itaque reperitur disciplinis quod Tullius dicit libro *De officiis*. "Optandum ut hii qui presunt rei publice, legum similes sint, que ad puniendum non iracundia, sed equitate ducuntur."<sup>39</sup> Omnis enim cogitatio motusque animi aut in conciliis capiendis de rebus honestis et pertinentibus ad bene beateque uiuendum aut in studiis scientie cognitionisque (30v, 2) uersabitur. Unum quia dispensante Domino publice rei presides illustrissimi martiris et Regis Aethelberti opto precordialiter, et supplicationi obsecro ut discrecionis tue cauterio

<sup>35</sup> There is no title in the MS.

<sup>36</sup> Gilbert Foliot, bishop of Hereford (1148-1163).

<sup>37</sup> cf. Remigius of Auxerre, *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, Ps 33, PL 133, col. 313.

<sup>38</sup> In his letter to Henry of Westminster, Osbert quotes Boethius in two different places. In the first he calls Boethius just 'Anicius' (*Letters*, no. 3, p. 55), and in the second he refers to him as 'Boethius' (*Ibid.*, no. 3, p. 56). However, in his *Vita Eadburgae*, Osbert uses both names. *Vita Eadburgae*, p. 271.

<sup>39</sup> *De officiis*, i, 25, p. 90.

resecuntur superflua, et si qua minus in opere presenti dicta sunt tua sint auctoritate suppleta. Scio namque quod te iustitia regit et equitas et quod per te detrahencium destruetur improbitas, ut enim quidam uir sapiens ait, si boni sit mentio modica gratia, si notabilium maxima offensa, satiricus itaque color sese scribentibus solet immiscere et cynicus odor suo distantes atramento respergere.<sup>40</sup> Sed noui quod apud te scribentis<sup>41</sup> inuenerit persona gratiam; causa subsequens historie consequetur uictoriam. Per principales namque diuulgatum est partes mundi quos omnes cogitationes tue et motus animi in tota consueuerint honestate uersari, religiosi preterea uiri quorum hoc atestacione didici et angligene gentis scripta ueracia que cognoui mihi sciuntur hec intimasse que de gestis regiis et martiris passione dictamus; miracula uero in prouincia qua rex apud Orientales Anglos imperauerat post eius triumphum facta diuinitus partim oculis meis uidi partim ab eorum qui hec conspexerunt traditione suscepta scripture memorie mandare non destiti. Hii sunt triumphales arcus quos beati martiris ueneracioni solemniter incidi, hii sepulcrales faces in ecclesia quas cum thure cordis deuoti eidem regi offerre prece cupio celebri uoto pariter et insigni. Dionisius siculorum<sup>42</sup> tyrannus<sup>43</sup> tantam in eadem gente fauorem non optinuit quantum apud suos Rex Aethelbritus honorem adquisiuit. Rex etiam Mida<sup>44</sup> qui peciit Apolinam ut quicquid tangeret auri uerteretur in rigorem escas sibi iuxta figmenta poetarum appositas cum deberet attingere auaricia cogente aliud quam aurum non potuit in ministracione sentire. Sanctus autem Aethelbritus (31r, 1) panem esuriuit uite haustum que salubrem sitiuit iusticie donec in azimis sinceritatis et ueritatis cum Christo epulaturus occubuit, et in sanguine paschalis agni rex et martir gloriosus sue sanctitatis et innocencie uestem lauit. Qui diademate coronatus eterno et sceptro decoratus superne beatitudinis te expectat in gloria preparans tibi premium perpetue retribucionis. Primo tamen ratione tibi dictante precipit ut eius magnalia hactenus abscondita ueneretur mundus, quem in sanctorum martirum collegio gloria et honore coronauit Deus. Et licet inter raucos magis inueniar anseres strepere quam inter continuos olores dulce melos personare exoratum te tamen esse uolo, ut inter frequentes modulos suauitatis organice fistulam in me qualem cumque laudis regie nolis reprobare. Nouas autem ferias exspectabis donec in prosis et canticis laudes

<sup>40</sup> cf. Sidonius Apollaris, *Epistolae* 4:22, *PL* 58, cols. 527.

<sup>41</sup> *si cribentis*, MS.

<sup>42</sup> *siderorum*, MS.

<sup>43</sup> The fourth/fifth-century ruler of the Sicilians.

<sup>44</sup> *munda*, MS.

suscipias regis et martiris et tunc per dominum et patrem meum Gislebertum eum propensius omne regnum uenerabitur Merciorum quod per nullum antea fieri uoluit Deus episcopum. Imperfectum igitur meum oculi tui uideant et celibes manus tue onus cui impar sancti caritate mediante sustineant ut in ferculo collocati Salomonis regis pacifici ualeamus ad gaudia pacis eterne beato Aethebrichto intercedente transferri.

2) Gloriosus<sup>45</sup> igitur Orientalium Anglorum Rex Aethelbrichtus secundum seculi dignitatem clarus extitit natalibus oriundus. Ex antiquorum Regum nobilitate conspicuus morum praefulsit honestate praeclarus, patre quidem Adelredo progenitus, matre uero Leoueroma natus. Uterque parens rex et regina fuit, uterque Christianissimus in catholica simplicitate refulsit. Qui cum hunc solum genuissent filium hunc omnium facultatum successorem et totius regni sui desiderabant heredem. Baptizatur itaque infans pretiosus et a parentibus et amicis Aethebrichtus (31r, 2) uocatur.

De quibus parentibus descenderit.<sup>46</sup>

3) Set paulo altius uertere libet articulum ut de quo genere pater eius prodierit breuiter intimetur, et linea religiose propaginis ad augmentum sanctitatis, intexta memoretur. Anna<sup>47</sup> filius enim in tempore suo rex Orientalium erat Anglorum uir bonus et iustus atque optime genitor sobolis illius uidelicet incorrupte et quasi adhuc uiuentis in carne regine gloriose et sancte ac perpetue uirginis Adelride.<sup>48</sup> Hic a beato Furseo<sup>49</sup> uiro Dei monasterium in regno suo edificatum augustioribus edificiis ac donariis adornauit possessionibusque ac copiis temporalium rerum Christo ibidem seruientibus augmentare non desiit. Qui postea in defensione Christiane religionis a quodam pagano Merciorum duce Penda<sup>50</sup> nomine occisus est a quo et duo predecessores sui reges uidelicet Orientalis Anglie Sigbertus pro Christo monachus effectus et Egricus cognatus eius interfecti sunt. Habuit idem sanctus rex duos fratres Adelredum et Adelwaldum qui uterque prior et posterior regnauit postquam per

<sup>45</sup> Ric. Cir., p. 262; Anon., p. 236; Gerald, p. 222.

<sup>46</sup> Ric. Cir., pp. 262-264; Gerald, pp. 222-223. The Anonymous ignores Ethelbert's ancestry except in saying that he descended from King Raedwald. Anon., pp. 236.

<sup>47</sup> Anna, king of East Anglia (†654).

<sup>48</sup> St Etheldreda, foundress and abbess of Ely (†679).

<sup>49</sup> St Fursey (†650).

<sup>50</sup> Penda, king of Mercia (c. 632-655).

passionem martirii ex hac uita sanctus Anna decessit. Adelherus<sup>51</sup> uero genuit de regina sua sancta Herewida sorore beate Hilde<sup>52</sup> uirginis et abbatisse insignis duos filios maxime industrie et summe strenuitatis uiros, Adulfum et Afwoldum. Peremptus est autem Adelherus Rex in bello ut Beda refert ab Oswio cum Penda Merciorum Duce ac tyranno cuius germanus suus Adelwaldus successit, assumpta tyrannide et potestate in regno.<sup>53</sup> Quo defuncto filius Adelheri maior natu Adulfus<sup>54</sup> nomine scepra moderanda suscepit et annis nonnullis regnauit. Cumque appositus esset et ipse ad patres suos et totius uite sue dies omnes consumpisset et annos, Alwoldus<sup>55</sup> frater eius habenas regni imperando temperauit et predecessores suos reges antiquos tam sapientia et moribus quam gloria et honore nobilitatis equauit. Et ut in *Chronicis Anglorum* antiquis scriptum (31v, 1) reperimus, quia longius ab illo Beda scribendo generacionem non extendit de sanguine eius exortus Bemo Orientalibus Anglis<sup>56</sup> imperauit. Hic quoque magnanimus princeps et rector populi Regem genuisse dicitur Adelredum patrem sancti martiris et Regis Adelberti. Hec breuiter de regali eius generacione fidelibus sancte dei ecclesie modo dicta sufficienter ne me attaus tanta uiri aut proauos negligenter indiscussos iam preterisse reprehendant. Intelligentque nonnumquam de bono semine non inmerito fructum mature messis exurgere, mater uero eius ex illustribus Merciorum regibus ac ducibus exorta cum ingenuitate et nobilitate carnis moribus quoque adornabat dignitatem mentis.

De eo quod litteris sacris et bonis moribus informatus sit.<sup>57</sup>

4) Educant itaque liberaliter infantem sibi donatum a Deo, infans autem crescebat et confortabatur quoniam gratia dei erat cum eo. Cum autem intelligibiles procesisset ad annos traditur sanctissime indolis puer sacris litteris erudiendus quem fonte scientie salutaris imbuere non desiit spiritus sanctis. Proficit in disciplina litterarum, crescit in moralibus uirtutum sanctarum, nec (ut assolet talis etas) illecebris uoluptatum implicari studuit, sed orationibus et elemosinis ceterisque operibus bonis tota sollicitudine insudauit. Coeui eius et coetanei exercebantur ad ludos et ad gignasia

<sup>51</sup> Aethelhere, king of East Anglia (654-655).

<sup>52</sup> St Hilda, abbess of Whitby (†680).

<sup>53</sup> Bede 3:24, pp. 288-290.

<sup>54</sup> Aldwulf, king of East Anglia (c. 663-713).

<sup>55</sup> Aelfwald, king of East Anglia (c. 713-749).

<sup>56</sup> East Anglia was split between Beorna (Beonna), Hun and Alberht in 749.

<sup>57</sup> Ric. Cir., p. 264; Anon., p. 236; Gerald, pp. 223. While the Anonymous discusses the young Ethelbert's stern religious focus, he does not discuss his education.

Aethelbrichtus puer gloriosus ad ecclesiastica tendebat instituta. Illi certabant appetere laudes hominum; iste regi placere gestiebat angelorum.

Quod patri defuncto in regnum successerit.<sup>58</sup>

5) Cum itaque hec et huiusmodi in Christo operaretur Aethelbrichtus et iam pueriles annos euaderet, adolescens effectus tandem patre orbatur et in regali solio per regni proceres maxima strenuitate sullimatur. Nacto uero principatus istius gubernaculo et moderamine tante potestatis assumpto quantus excreuerit in iusticia, quam perfectus extiterit in misericordia, si aliquibus uerbis explicari deberet, oporteret ut, “aut Uirgilius Maro reuocaretur ab inferis aut Ieronimus presbyter transmitteretur e superis.”<sup>59</sup> Attamen (31v, 2) quantumcumque nostri suppeditat uirtus ingenii quantumcumque surgit paupertas eloquii dignum de eo duximus ueram facere mencionem et simplicem fidelibus historie texere ueritatem. Confortatus in regno sanctus dei prouidus et prudens erat consilio, iustus et misericors semper in iudicio, uerax per omnia et mansuetus in uerbo. Concordia per eum ueritatis enituit et iusticia in regno summe pacis excreuit. Senex et maturus erat non tam etate quam sapientia sicut scriptum est, “Cani sunt autem sensus hominis et etas senectutis uita immaculata.”<sup>60</sup> Huic optima cura de salute patrie, de profectu<sup>61</sup> et statu rei publice fuit, de tuicione urbium, de ueneracione parentum, de uera fide et fixo amore in deum, de dilectione proximorum, de gubernacione ciuium, de circumspecta prouidentia in subiectos, de iusta liberalitate erga uniuersos. Bene siquidem nouit ut gentilis poeta ait: “Pascere<sup>62</sup> subiectis, et debellare superbos.”<sup>63</sup> Matrem suam diligebat ut dominam que se ei humilem exhibebat tanquam ancillam. Quecumque placebant matri non displicebant sibi. Nouerat illud in lege preceptum, “Honora patrem tuum matrem ut sis longeuus super terram.” Super quam terram? “Dominus Deus tuus,” inquit, “dabit tibi.”<sup>64</sup> Hec est terra uiuentium, non terra morientum. Alioquin si de hac terra miserie dictum est, in istam beatus Rex Aethelbrichtus longeuus non fuit sed consummatus in breui multa tempora cum Christo in eternum uicturus expleuit. Sicuti incepti operis consequens textus edocebit.

<sup>58</sup> Ric. Cir., pp. 265-266; Anon., p. 236; Gerald, pp. 223-224.

<sup>59</sup> Odilo of Cluny, col. 969. Odilo says ‘Caesar’ instead of ‘Virgil’.

<sup>60</sup> Wis 4:8-9.

<sup>61</sup> *pro defectu*, MS.

<sup>62</sup> *parcere*, Ric. Cir., p. 265 and *Aeneid*, vi, 853.

<sup>63</sup> *Aeneid*, vi, 853, p. 254.

<sup>64</sup> Ex 20:12.

Quod inducitur per consiliarios regni uxorem sortiri.<sup>65</sup>

6) Monetur ergo ab omnibus totius regni sui ducibus, immo ab optimatibus cogitur uniuersis ut uitam pro more et consuetudine antecessorum suorum instituat, uirginem quamdam nobilem uultu et elegancia corporis precessentem eligat de qua maritali sibi copulata coniugio heredem proprio suscitare possit in regno. Nec conuenire regem absque liberis esse, astruentes profecto cum regna omnia desolentur uastitate hostili, que restaurata non fuerint regii generis successione principali. (32r, 1) “Presertim,” inquit, “cum<sup>66</sup> et uirtus et fortitudo tibi que tuisque, o rex, augeatur nec aliquis tumultus insidiantis exercitus nostris in finibus formidabilis habeatur. Nunquid pater tuus uxorem sibi non duxit? Nonne et mater tua patri tuo nupsit? Quod factum et neutram partem ignominosum sed coram deo et hominibus fuit ualde gloriosum.” Adquieuit etiam rex huiuscemodi consilio et quamuis ei magis placeret pudicitia uirginalis quam castitas matrimonii siue copula coniugalis eligit tamen pro uoluntate principum aurem sibi benignam familiariter applicare et spe successionis hereditarie docile cor ad sponsam capescendam intendere. Sciebat enim scriptum per quendam sapientem uirum, “Omnia fac cum consilio et post factum non penitebis.”<sup>67</sup> Audierat etiam in prima creacione celi et terre quia masculum et feminam creauit deus et quod eis benedixit et ait, “Crescite et multiplicamini et replete terram et subicite eam et dominamini piscibus maris et uolatibus celi,” et cetera. Huius sacre conuencionis iugo non se denegat gloriosus Dei athleta uinciri quamuis incorrupte uirginitatis incorrupta sindone intemerata sue carnis gloria mallet absque detrimento premuniri. Querit iccirco diligenter ab eis cuius filiam regis aut ducis tanta sciant pulcritudine precliuem quam moribus et diuiciis dignam sibi iudicare uideantur uxorem.

Quod repudiat Egeonis filiam propter patris perfidiam.<sup>68</sup>

7) Laudat quidam consul Guerro nomine cuiusdam Egeonis filiam quam in australibus maioris Britannie partibus copia diuiciarum nouerat opulentam eamque in scriptis anglice gentis uocatam legimus Seledriam. Huic defuncto patre quia sine fratribus erat regnum remanserat omninio paternum eique consilium datur ut copuletur in coniugium diemque at tempus procurent nupciarum et sic suadetur fieri

<sup>65</sup> Ric. Cir., pp. 266-267; Anon., p. 237; Gerald, p. 224.

<sup>66</sup> *eum*, MS.

<sup>67</sup> Sir 32:24.

de duobus regnis unum. Repudiatur istud consilium tanquam inutile, affirmatque rex patrem uirginis nequaquam fuisse degenerem, uerumptamen ad omnem fraudem (32r, 2) et dolum eum semper extitisse procliuem. “Patri,” inquit, “meo graues tetendit insidias fraudesque ei non distulit moliri diuersas. Displicet ergo mihi ignobile in eodem genere sortiri contubernium quod hactenus a fide et ueritate extitisse denoscitur alienum. Ignobile icirco uocari debet quia fundamentum nullius stabilitatis habet. Egeon ille frequenter periuria erga benignitatem mei patris incurrit quia formidolosus et tocius nequicie artifex fuit, genitoremque meum toto mentis desiderio fefellisset, si eum quoquo prodicionis modo male fellere potuisset. Set uniuersorum conditor deus in quem bono animo confidimus et speramus ea nobis preuideat que sibi non displiceant ut per eius gratiam quecumque agenda utiliter agamus, et uiuentes in illo siue morientes ei uoluntatem in omnibus impleamus. Et uos qui uicem meam in profectibus uniuersis effere qui actibus et uisui<sup>69</sup> honoris mei inseruire debita ueneracione iudicamini, memorie uestre recordacionem ubi circumspecte dirigite et postquam huiusmodi opus requisitum iri condecet uestri mihi consilii operam date.”

Quod consilio Oswaldi disponit appetere filiam Offae tyranni.<sup>70</sup>

8) Ad hec Oswaldus consularis potencie uir honorandus qui et regis a secretis familiaris erat et ei fide bona consulere solebat, “Applicare,” inquit, “rex gloriose, animum tuum ne differas quin afinium principum diuicias perscruteris uniuersas. Et si cuiusquam regia tibi proles tam etate coeua quam pari iuuentutis elegancia ut bene placens arriserit inceptum persequi dignare propositum ut tibi coniugali copula, Deo disponente, coniuncta sit. Attamen de me iam si non diffidas, si dicta factis compensare non renuas, noui in regno Merciorum mirabilis glorie et potestatis maxime tyrannum longeuę uetustatis senio confectum cuius circumquaue tremendum adeo extenditur imperium, ut magestate feritatem transcendat omnium (32v, 1) antecessorum regum. Quis enim Offa Rege<sup>71</sup> potencior? Quis in Anglie ducibus hoc duce superbior? Quis in omnibus regibus illo robustior? Quis inter principes tanto principe forcior? Quis gazis et opibus innumeris dicior? Quis purpura et bisso sericis et cicladibus opulencior? Auro et argento et lapide precioso quis in regno uenustior? Huius ego quia consuetudines et mores experimento didici quia

<sup>68</sup> Ric. Cir., pp. 267-268; Anon., p. 237; Gerald, pp. 224-225.

<sup>69</sup> *usui*, Ric. Cir., p. 268.

<sup>70</sup> Ric. Cir., pp. 268-269; Anon., p. 237; Gerald, p. 225.

gloriam et honorem regni illius agnoui, filiam uirginem moribus insignem tibi cupio nubere quam mihi in patriis edibus fortuitu contigit aliquando uidere cuius forma et honestas tante est pulcritudinis ut filiabus regum superemineat uniuersis. Hanc si tibi acquirere possis in coniugium mortuo tyranno optinebis simul et regnum. Grandeuus utique rex in diebus processit iam iamque penes se fere emortua carne totus emarcuit. Adhibe itaque tibi consiliarios nobiles regni tui duces et prosperante Deo iter istud non inconsultus aggredere dum ita tenus absque dubio quod proposuisti reperies.”

De eo quod Dei fultus auxilio Offam adire disponit.<sup>72</sup>

9) Leniter igitur iuuenis gloriosus cuius mens in Christo fundata erat consulentis uiri uerba sustinuit et longa ex cordis intimo trahens suspiria ad magni consilii angelum orationem suam conuertit. “Aduua,” inquit, “me Domine Iehus Christe, uiuentis Dei Patris Unigenite qui cum eodem patre et spiritu sancto crederis ut confiteamur cuncta condidisse eandemque mihi digneris concedere uirginem si in filiabus regum aliquam mihi decreuisti sortiri uxorem. Aut enim in petitione mea postulata accipiam aut in gente illa ut presagit mens mea lucem uite amittam. Tu tamen quia perfecte pius perfecte bonus es committo totam curam meam ut in misericordia tua disponas et perficias eam.” Conuertit etiam se ad optimates et proceres regni aperiens eis desiderium cordis sui talique eos allocutus est sermonis exordio quorum se efflagitabat (32v, 2) roborari uirtutis auxilio. “Gaudeo de strenuitate et nobilitate uestra, commilitones egregii, quia uos suffultos fortitudine bone mentis agnoui. Quare premoneo ne ab incepta intencione retrorsum corda flectatis uerumptamen opus initium strenue mecum explere contendatis. Adeamus cum fiducia gratie Dei regiam magestatem tyranni quandoquidem nobis est sors huiusmodi appetenda consilii.” Fautent denique omnes reges uoluntati et se presto esse astruunt quacumque eos iubeat proficisci. Quid plura sole ruence dies clauditur, et rex in cubiculo nocte collocatur. Apponit quietis membra sopori, faciunt et idem obsecundantes uiri quiescunt per noctem et dormiunt ipsi. Transacto itaque medie noctis spacio et tempore quietis sue incunctanter emenso, rex religiosus ad faciendum opus dei maturat exurgere et in cordis iubilo faciem domini in confessione preuenire. Ingrediens autem ecclesiam omnipotentis dei misericordiam deprecatur, ut uia eius

<sup>71</sup> Offa, king of Mercia (757-796)

<sup>72</sup> Ric. Cir., pp. 269-271; Both the Anonymous and Gerald lack any equivalent prayer for help to God. Anon., p. 237. Gerald, p. 225.

ubique ab illo dirigatur, eumque sua gratia semper et preueniat et sequatur. In psalmis et ymnis et canticis offerrebat Deo sacrificium laudis et depromebat altissimo iocunda uota pii cordis. O quam gloriosa oratio, quam preclara uita regis et pura quando creatori sic seruire satagit creatura symphonie melodis concentibus matutina synaxis expletur et gloriosi Regis oratio sanctorum orationibus ammiscetur. Tandem tenebris aurora rutilans effugatis redit et post peracta matutinarum sollennia pulcro diluculo sol exortus incalescit. Altaris ministri sacris uestibus induuntur corpus et sanguis Christi in odorem suauitatis deo et patri offeruntur missa solempniter et festiue celebratur rex beatus in lacrimis et sanctarum precum uictimis altissimo humiliatur. Expleto quoque deuocionis tante (33r, 1) obsequio signaculo crucis Christi corpus suum ab omni parte muniuit et saluatori seculorum itineris sui curam commendans ualedicens clero et populo ostia ecclesie deinceps (pro dolor!) non rediturus exiuit.

De eo quod mater sua hoc ei negocium dissuadet.<sup>73</sup>

10) Preciosus Domini Aethelbrichtus<sup>74</sup> aulam ingrediens tante eius dignitati pro loco et tempore congruam uestimentis glorie regaliter adornatur et ad matrem suam licenciam eius et benedictionem postulans inclinatur. Apprehendentes mutuas manus ad inuicem sequestrauerunt se filius et mater ab uniuerso aliorum cetu seorsum uicissim colla sua alterutra pietate deosculantes, mutuisque lamentis et fletibus facies suas irrigantes absenciam sui egre utrinque pertulerunt et hinc inde graui cordis contricione doluerunt. Regina regem interpellare, mater filio improperare tyranni perfidiam, difficilem uiam, plebem peruersam, leuem mortis causam, patrie ruinam, hostis leticiam, desolacionem sui, depopulacionem populi, inuasionem regni, impetus inimicorum, depredaciones exercituum barbarorum. "Noli," inquit, "noli, fili mi unice amor et dulcedo anime mee, noli Regem Offam socerum tibi eligere ne studeas tam uersuto tyranno te generum efficere. Desiste incredulos Britones propinquos tibi coniungere ne disponas fidem tuam illorum fidei assignare. Frequenter studia eorum et exercitia circa prodiciones et dolos uersata sunt nec aliquando fidem aut sacramenta que custodirent inuiolata cum aliquo pepigerunt. Idem uero rex minister scelerum inueteratus dierum malorum iniquitatis predo impietatis laqueus auo tuo patri uidelicet mee lingue blandimenta simulauit et numquam promissionem fidei secundum uerba

<sup>73</sup> Ric. Cir., pp. 271-273; Anon., pp. 237-238. The objection of Ethelbert's mother is left out of Gerald's *Life*.

<sup>74</sup> *Pretiosus Dei athleta Aethelbertus*, Ric. Cir., p. 271.

iurata seruauit. Quare, fili mi, causa tante talisque perfidie iam suadet matrem tuam conqueri meque compellit regina tuam magestatem humiliter alloqui ut relicta intencione cui tanta sedulitate obstinatus inheres natale solum tui absenciam uiduare nolis dum te oportune uel inoportune<sup>75</sup> (33r, 2) ingeris nacionibus alienis.” Tum rex iocundo ut erat animo hilari uultu summissima uoce respondit, matrique sue alacriter aperta uoce dixit. “Ne prohibeas, domina mea, ne dissuadeas iter meum, genitrix gloriosa. Licet enim uitam meam in scrinio uel archa dicionis tue teneres inclusam eamque seris ac uectibus ferreis haberes obfirmatam, terminos meos pertransire non potero, quos mihi siquidem noui constitutos a Deo sicut presciuit et predestinauuit conditor glorie sempiternae expecto misericordiam aut iudicium quam reddet pro meritis iusticia dextre sue. Iccirco fidens in illum mandatis eius exequendis intendam et preduce gratia Dei Offam grandeuum regem Merciorum reuisam. Quod placet conditori meo ut perferam ipse preuideat. Si contigerit in pace cum salute reuerti illius erit omnipotentis auxilii; si uero me sicarius incautum occiderit redemptor mundi custos anime mee sit.” Hec et plura huiuscemodi prosequente Aethelbrichto filius et mater diuisi sunt ab alterutro. Et quis in tam amica diuisione non fletet, aut quis eos sine planctu et gemitu uideret? Tantam patrie desolacionem si nosset, a dolore et lacrimis quis temperare posset? Hec omnia in ciuitate regia facta sunt quam antiquitus Orientales Angli urbem Baderogi<sup>76</sup> uocauerunt.

Ubi Aethelbrichto proficiscente terrae motus factus est.<sup>77</sup>

11) Profectus ergo rex cum ducibus et tribunis et primis regni benedictione etiam roboratus episcopali non ultra uisurus generosam faciem dilecte genitricis sue nisi donante et annuente Deo in regeneratione sanctorum et gloria immortalitatis eterne, sed in ipso exordio profectionis sue antequam equum legatur astendisse mirabile signum a deo stupentibus cunctis euidenter innotuit, quod omnium audiencium corda maximo terrore concussit. Sub eo namque ascendente terra mota est imminensque periculum mortis eius tali euentu figuratum est. Quid mirum si eadem in morte sanctorum (33v, 1) Dominus ostendit, que in passione sua a Iudeis crucifixus exhibuit? Cum in ligno enim penderet clauis confixus terre motus factus est magnus subito. Quare ergo non faceret pro Aethelbrichto quod fecit Dominus pro se ipso, cum

<sup>75</sup> *iniportune*, MS.

<sup>76</sup> Bedrichesworth, later Bury St Edmunds.

<sup>77</sup> Ric. Cir., pp. 273-274; Anon., p. 238; Gerald, p. 225.

Christus capud sit Aethelbrichti, Aethelbrichtus autem membrum corporis Christi? Fragor itaque tam metuendi signi aures perculit tocius uulgi iam iamque presagiebat unusquisque causam eandem esse infortunii quam euenturam infausto auspicio tam glorioso uaticinati sunt regi. Cuius genitrix gloriosa plus omnibus laborauit in gemitu suo, in graui dolore singultuum in effusione lacrimarum, in dispersione elemosinarum, in assiduitate orationum sanctarum. Prosequitur rex Deo placens iter inceptum exeniaque plurima ac diuersa donaria dorsa substracta baiulant iumentorum insignia regalium ornamentorum odoriferas species aromatum multam suppellectilem preciosarum uestium que cesares et reges solent uehere secum. Quam triumphalem gloriam premitit uexillorum! Quanta uis eciam succedit armorum! Magis tamen uir beatus didicit in eo confidere per quem reges regnant quam in armata milicia exercitus sui qui eum tanta frequentia comitantes obambulabant.

De eo quod sol obscuratus est et orante Aethelbrichto dies reddita est.<sup>78</sup>

12) Aliud quoque signum mirabile sibi fertur accidisse quod nequaquam debemus pretermittere immo scribendo et legendo glorificare Deum qui et in uita et post deuictum triumphatumque seculum signis et miraculis coruscare facit beatum regem et martirem Aethelbrichtum. Tempore eodem cum claritas iocunda solis exorti peruium suo splendore regis illustraret exercitum, et diem in uirtute sua candore insolito redderet rutilum, ecce subito tota lux illa substracta disparuit, et quasi columpna nebulis hinc inde oppositus obducta sub nube erupitur que aliquamdui quadam tenui flamma eis uestigia lucis ministrare<sup>79</sup> non desiit. Que columpna longo temporis interuallo (33v, 2) peruianibus est agnita sed postmodum dispensante Deo rursum a nube suscepta. Deinde uisus est nigrescere sol et horridas tenebras tetre noctis ingerere, medioque diei spacio picea caligine inuolutos omnis pariter exterere. Cumque in societate beati uiri comites stupefacti mirarentur, et ex insperato quod accederat miraculo suspecti tenerentur, Aethelbrichtus homo Dei eis<sup>80</sup> blandam consolacionem intulit talique sermone seriem sue narrationis inceptit. "Nolite," inquit, "filii nolite," inquit, "turbari licet radiis occultatis nobis Phebus lucem negauerit diei, nulla mesticie grauitate afficiantur animi uestri. Cumque alter alterum uidere non possit, faciamus supplices id quod nobis expedit, mentes nostras et corpora

<sup>78</sup> Ric. Cir., pp. 274-276; Anon., p. 238; Gerald, p. 225.

<sup>79</sup> *ministare*, MS.

<sup>80</sup> *ex*, MS.

prosternamus humi gratias agentes Deo<sup>81</sup> Patri. Humiliemus illi animas nostras contritorum cordium immolantes uictimas quia 'sacrificium Deo spiritus contribulatus,'<sup>82</sup> et hoc est quod acceptare solet uniuersorum conditor deus. Adoramus<sup>83</sup> Iesum Christum uiuentis Dei Filium Unigenitum cum eodem patre et Spiritu Sancto in Trinitate perfecta unum uerum Deum orantes ut tenebras ammoueat et cordis et corporis nobisque lucem infundat inestimabilis sue claritatis, qui cum sumus princeps sit omnium dextera potencie sue sustentans et gubernans mundum tribuat sua gratia lucem diei tocius inclarescere quam nobis iam contigit aliquanto tempore non potuisse uidere." Hiis et huiusmodi gloriosi regis monitis omnes prebent assensum pariter cum illo corruentes in terra unanimes orationem suam emittunt ad Deum. Cumque omnipotentis Dei famulus Aethelbrichtus diucius orasset seque et exercitum suum surgens a loco orationis sancte crucis signaculo interius et exteriusque uallasset, ecce repente exortum est in tenebris lumen rectis<sup>84</sup> et splendor illuxit diuine claritatis, solque suos patefecit radios tenebrasque (34r, 1) profunde noctis disperit abyssos. Dies paulo ante absconditus prorumpit in lucem omnemque cohortem inuitat tantum reuereri et diligere principem. Uidentes uero qui affuerant sanctam regis sui orationem sic profecisse glorificauerunt Deum quam saluos facit sperantes in se.

Richard of Cirencester-<sup>85</sup>

[Comparatio sanctorum regum et nostri temporis sacerdotum.<sup>86</sup>

Comparemus, si placet, talibus regibus, dilectissimi, nostri temporis sacerdotes qui in sacrario Domini die noctuque deseruire uidentur, et ualde imperfecti in eorum aestimatione inuenientur. Qui enim deberent reges esse et sacerdotes, - reges uidelicet subiectos sibi in sanctitate uitae protegendo, sacerdotes autem seipsos Dei laudis sacrificium offerendo, - ipsi talentum a Domino acceptum in terra defodiunt<sup>87</sup> et pecuniam eius districte cum uenerit requirendam ad usuram non extendunt, in torporis sui negligentis dissoluti iacent, uixque de lecto aegritudinis suae aliquando exurgere ualent; sicque solliciti terrenis cupiditatibus inhiant, ut ad spiritualia lucra sanctarum animarum non intendant; fitque cum pastores supra custodiendos greges non exercentur, ut oves Christi per incuriam corruptae fame moriantur.

<sup>81</sup> *Deo* omitted from Ric. Cir., p. 275.

<sup>82</sup> Ps 50:19.

<sup>83</sup> *Adoremus*, Ric. Cir., p. 275.

<sup>84</sup> Ps 111:4.

<sup>85</sup> Ric. Cir., pp. 276-277.

<sup>86</sup> There are no similar comparisons in either Gerald or the Anonymous.

<sup>87</sup> cf. Matt 25.

Unde per prophetam dicitur: “Erit sicut populus, sic et sacerdos.”<sup>88</sup> Quod utique uerum est: Nam et sacerdotes ad praedicandum sunt desides, et populi ad audiendum negligentes. “Omnes declinauerunt; simul inutiles facti sunt; non est qui faciat bonum, non est usque ad unum.”<sup>89</sup> Si assit etiam qui uerbum Dei audiendum requirat, raro aut nunquam aliquis inuenitur qui populum ad amorem uitae coelestis accendat. Impleri quippe cotidie uideamus quod Ieremias ait: “Paruuli petierunt panem, et non erat qui frangeret eis.”<sup>90</sup> Subiecti cum cordis contritione misere mendicant, et dispensatores in superbia obstinati non ministrant. Sed ecce temporalis princeps iste beatus Aethelbertus et rex fuit et sacerdos Domini, quia ad fidem et amorem Dei inflammauit corda populi sui. Cuius caro niuea quia inuiolata fuit et tota sine macula, non immerito subsequuta sunt Diuina miracula, patuitque in fine gloriosae orationis suae, quanta ei coelestis lucis magnitudo fulsit in mente. Circumueniant igitur sacerdotes Dei uniuersa opera sua, ut, cum Unigenitus Filius Patris iudex aduenerit in maiestate sua, ne tunc pro iniquitate eorum a sanctis cogantur regibus iudicari, quorum dextera plena fuit iustitia in principatu temporali. De quibus sanctis regibus et sacerdotibus beatus Petrus apostolus ait: “Uos autem genus electum, regale sacerdotium, gens sancta, populus acquisitionis, ut uirtutes annuntietis eius qui de tenebris uos uocauit in admirabile lumen suum.”<sup>91</sup> Eduxit Dominus Deus noster de tenebris beatum regem Aethelbertum et uocauit in admirabile lumen suum, quando corporalibus eius oculis diem caligine tenebrarum temporaliter inuoluit, et postmodum orantem eum splendore suae claritatis illustrauit.]

#### Quid terremotus et sol absconditus significauerit.<sup>92</sup>

13) In hoc miraculo diligenter libet intueri mirabilia Dei, quoniam qui in morte redemptoris nostri a sexta hora usque in horam nonam lucem omnem effugauit<sup>93</sup> diei quando sol obscuratus est et uelum<sup>94</sup> templi scissum est ipse ostendere uoluit quod tanta cecitate corda Iudeorum caligauerunt, qui sub Poncio Pilato preside Dominum magestatis crucifixerunt.<sup>95</sup> Impletum uidemus in corpore quod precessit in capite, prius in rege postea in milite. Obscuratus est sol in morte Domini, obtenebratus est et ante mortem serui.<sup>96</sup> Terra mota est in passione Saluatoris tremuit et ipsa autem mortem principis temporalis. Duo signa terribilia que inter plurima operatus est Deus in passione unigeniti sui, legimus per eum declarata ante necem beati Regis Aethelbrichti: terre motus factus est et sol obscuratus est. Per terre motum dedit

<sup>88</sup> Hos 4:9.

<sup>89</sup> Ps 52:4.

<sup>90</sup> Lam 4:4.

<sup>91</sup> 1Pt 2:9.

<sup>92</sup> Ric. Cir., pp. 278-279; Anon., p. 238; Gerald, p. 225.

<sup>93</sup> *effugantur*, MS.

<sup>94</sup> *uelum*, omitted in MS, but present in Ric. Cir., p. 276.

<sup>95</sup> cf. Mt 27:51; Lk 23:45.

<sup>96</sup> “*Obtenebratur est sol in ortu...*” Is 13:10.

intelligi desolacionem regni, que statim subsecuta post interfectionem beati uiri quando de loco stabilitatis sue commota sunt corda subiectorum populorum cum eos affligeret grauis exterminacio perseuencium barbarorum. Hoc idem regno nouimus accidisse quod per annos plusquam sexaginta usque ad tempus quo regnare sanctus Eadmundus incepit sine regibus instabile per subregulos fuit. Et iccirco durus eos terre motus pertulit, quoniam in incerto peruagantes. Post se sine principe et rege reliquit. Per obscuritatem quoque solis conicere possimus cecitatem cordis quam Offa in se princeps impiissimus habuit cuius nefanda factione beatus rex et martir Aethelbrichtus occubuit. Et uere in tenebris cecus errauit qui (34r, 2) diem Domini pre oculis habere recusauit.<sup>97</sup> In illa die stabunt iusti in magna constancia aduersus eos qui se angustiauerunt.<sup>98</sup> Tunc erunt accusatores qui nunc fuerunt accusati, tunc erunt dampnatores qui nunc fuerunt dampnati.

Richard of Cirencester-<sup>99</sup>

[Invectio in Offam et male agendi correctio.<sup>100</sup>

Quid facies, Offa, quid facies, quando uidebis Aethelbertum iudicem uenire cum Christo et recepta carne gloriosa quam punisti per saecula saeculorum regnare cum illo? Tunc illuminabuntur abscondita tenebrarum et manifestabuntur consilia cordium. Fugere non poteris: latere nequibis. Si in uita tua dignam exegisti paenitentiam, ueram a Deo recipies indulgentiam: si autem non paenituisti in saeculo, paenitentia tua erit remedio. Quare, fratres mei, uerum est quod quidam philosophus ait, in hac uita delinquentes similes esse super aequale solum cadentibus, quibus denuo praesto sit surgere sine difficultate: animas uero ex hac uita cum delictorum sordibus recedentes aequandas his qui abruptum ex alto praecipitique delapsi sunt, unde facultas numquam sit resurgendi. Ideo ergo utendum concessis uitae spatiis, ut perfectae purgationis sit maior facultas. Utamur et nos, dilectissimi, temporis spatio nobis a Domino Deo nostro concesso, et quod Salomon ait unusquisque nostum retinere operando studeat in corde suo. "In omnibus operibus tuis memorare nouissima tua, et in aeternum non peccabis."<sup>101</sup> Et alibi nos ab iniquitate reuocare uolens, "Quodcunque" inquit, "potest manus tua facere, instanter operare, quia nec opus, nec scientia, nec ratio erunt apud inferos, quo tu properas."<sup>102</sup> Studeamus itaque hanc ammonitionem diligenter attendere, et intellectam bonis operibus adimplere, ne, cum uenerit incarnata Dei Sapientia in igne saeculum iudicare, nobis improperando incipiat dicere: "En proferam uobis Spiritum meum, et ostendam uerba mea. Uocaui uos, et renuistis; extendi manum meam, et non erat qui aspiceret. Despexistis omne

<sup>97</sup> cf. Jn 12:35

<sup>98</sup> Wis 5:1.

<sup>99</sup> Ric. Cir., pp. 279-286.

<sup>100</sup> This denunciation is absent in both Gerald's *Vita* and the Anonymous *Vita*.

<sup>101</sup> Sir 7:40.

consilium meum, et increpationes meas neglexistis. Ego quoque in interitu uestro ridebo, et subsannabo cum uobis quod non timebatis aduenerit.”

Quoniam tantisper de his ex quibus certi sumus ad aedificationem uestram aliquam digressionem fecimus, haec uobis modo dicta sufficiant; ceterum ad narrationis nostrae propositum coepto ordine redeamus.]

De eo quod Aethelbertus Merciam ingrediens tyranno munera praemisit.<sup>103</sup>

Sanctus igitur Aethelbertus ueniens in regno Merciorum ad quendam uicum regium, qui Uilla Australis a populo patriae dicebatur, in quadam ibi campestri planitie tentorium suum fixit, et maximo honoris gloriaeque tripudio in eodem territorio pernoctauit. Plurima autem regalium ornamentorum insignia infausto tyranno praemisit, quae idem princeps in praecipua ueneratione cum gratiarum actione suscepit. Ueruntamen in corde suo aduersus sanctum Dei fraudulenter egit, sicuti postea rei euentus approbavit.

De uisione quae ei nocte coelitus apparuit.<sup>104</sup>

Eadem uero nocte cum beatus uir sua membra sopori dedisset et intempestae noctis silentio in circuitu eius militia tota quiesceret, uisio pulcra sibi a Deo semiuigilanti apparuit, quam expergefactus a somno supra memorato familiari suo Oswaldo his uerbis referre curauit. “Uidebatur,” inquit, “mihi, dilecte mi, me in regno meo fore, consulesque ac tribunos regni mei pariter assistere. Ubi de nostra publica re multa percuntatus, multisque sermonibus cum meis ultro citroque habitis, ruit a summo culmine totum fastigium regiae domus meae, cornua quoque thalami mei, in quo recumbere soleo, micantibus hinc inde parietibus euulsa aforis excelsa cecidere. Mater mea praesens haec contemplantur et lamentans lacrimabatur. Lacrimae uero eius cadentes super sindonem suam erant quasi guttae sanguinis decurrentes in terram. Deinde aspiciebam arborem pulcherrimam in domicilio meo quandam excrescere, qua nulla procerior erat altera, foliorum uiridantibus comis in superficie latitudines extensa, frondibus in gyrum apporrectis ualde decora, nullius arboris similitudini pulcritudine comparanda. Cuius ad radices quidam ultro insistebant, qui hanc toto conamine suae feritatis incidebant. Ex qua succisione quidam torrens sanguinis effluxit, qui contra orientem magno impetu cursum suum extendere festinauit. In contemplatione uero eiusdem uisionis eximia columnam lucis ab austro sole splendidiorem uidebam exurgere, et mirantibus qui aderant atque stupentibus uniuersis ad coelum usque flammium radiis sequentibus ascendere. Ego autem eram singularis auis in terra, totaque extremitas alarum mearum erat aurea: aestimabamque me illam arborem leuiter posse circumplecti, si fortitudini meae uel potentiae aliqua occasio pateret amplectendi. Demum pennarum remige temperato celeri uolatu superiora columnae lucis ascendo. Cum autem in supremo culmine illius consedissem, et claris luminaribus, quae summus ille omnium Princeps Deus in firmamento collocauit, toto oculorum aspectu sedulus inhiarem, audiui uoces in sublime coelestis harmoniae miscere

<sup>102</sup> Eccl 9:10.

<sup>103</sup> Anon., pp. 238-239; Gerald, p. 225.

concentus, cuius nectarea suauitate delectatus, siue ad dulcedinem melodiae magis magisque intentus, somno solutus sum.”

De eo quod Oswaldus falso somnium interpretatus sit.<sup>105</sup>

Oswaldus ad haec hilaris et gaudens uerba gratanter regis exceperit, eique hac uoce interpretationem somnii patefacere attemptauit; sed se res eadem longe aliter habuit, quam Oswaldo interpretanti uisum fuit. “Cum itaque in petitione tua, rex bone, frustratus non fueris petitionis effectum optinueris, triumphum uictor egeris, et reuersus Orientalem uisitaueris Angliam, iterum absens princeps deligere, defunctoque tyranno proelium conficies maximum, Merciam, Bretoniam, septemque prouincias excindes: tribus uictis hostibus subiugabis. Sed hac prius eadem die temporis cum maximo tripudio in triclinium inuitatus et regis amicitii familiariter illectus per filiam principis legali tibi foedere copulatam, in te unum se toto prouincia conuertet, probitatem magnanimitatis tuae strenui quique loquentur, nomen tuum et famam omnes boni dilatabunt, te urbes et oppida ad sua praesidia uocabunt, ciuitates et suburbia te patricio exultabunt, seditionem patriae inferentes tantum uindicem formidabunt. Rempubicam per ueteres constitutam, per te uero in melius prouectam et sublimius auctam tuearis oportet, et diem exultationis et laetitiae tanto principe uictoriae de proelio redeunte finibus tuae natiuitatis inducas. Talis erit expressio somnii, quam a me, inuincibilis heros, audisti.” Reliqua his similia cum uir ingenuus cum suo principe contulisset, et coelestis contemplator uisionis uehementer ingemiseret, leniter, “Quaeso, uir egregie,” inquit, “ne me hac oppressione studeas efficere certum, quoniam reuelatio alterius interpretationis requirit effectum. Sed ades adhuc animo, taliterque disserere uisionem omitte, et quae tibi edicam commenda memoriae. Fides enim reuelationis aliud habebit experimentum, et maioris interpretationis longe altiozem pertinet ad actum. Facilis fortasse nobis hodie ad tyrannum patebit ingressus; uerum ignoratur, utrum optio proponatur libera reuertendi. Sententiam, quae super me praefinita est a Deo, animo non infrunito patienter expecto.”

[Interpretatio somnii beati martyris pro consideratione ueritatis.<sup>106</sup>

Haec athleta Domini Aethelbertus de se. Nos autem, adiuuante Spiritu ueritatis, quantumcunque de somnii ueritate poterimus conicere, huic operi interpretando non pigebit inserere. Uidetur itaque casus ille domus a summo fastigio corruentis desolationem regni significare, unde ruina grauis exorta est Orientalibus Anglis, tantae innocentiae uiro apud nefandas nationes fraudulenter extincto. Cornua uero thalami cadendo ad terram confracta, fortitudo est principatus eorum, per mortem principis sui conculcata ab inimicis et ad nihilum redacta. Unde per Abacuc prophetam de proeliatore nostro dictum est: “Cornua in manibus eius; ibi abscondita est fortitudo eius.”<sup>107</sup> Sanguinolentae lacrimae, quas beati Aethelberti mater eiulans effundebat, dolores cordis sunt et passiones intrinsecus, quos pro amissione filii

<sup>104</sup> Anon., p. 239; Gerald, p. 226.

<sup>105</sup> Anon., p. 239; Gerald, p. 226.

<sup>106</sup> This interpretation is absent in Gerald's *Vita* and the Anonymous *Vita*.

<sup>107</sup> Hb 3:4.

sui sine intermissione perferebat. Unde senex ille Simeon, qui in ulnis suis Dominum portauit infantem, “Ecce,” ait, “positus est hic in ruinam et resurrectionem multorum in Israel, et in signum cui contradicetur.”<sup>108</sup> “In ruinam,” uidelicet infidelibus, et “in resurrectionem” credentibus. Credere enim debemus quaecunque de eodem Deo et Domino nostro in euangelio scripta sunt, et catholice atque orthodoxe praedicare quae per eum in sanctis eius mirabiliter gesta sunt. “Et in signum cui contradicetur.” Cui signo contradictum est? Resurgentis gloriae duntaxat a mortuis et multa secum corpora mortuorum resuscitantis. Ad beatam uero Mariam, “Et tuam,” inquit, “ipsius animam pertransibit gladius.”<sup>109</sup> Gladius iste dolor est passionis Christi, qui in illa cotidie penetrauit usque ad diuisionem animae ac spiritus, compagum quoque ac medullarum, quo cordi eius infixio fons effluxit lacrimarum, donec mirantibus cunctis curiae coelestis praelectis ordinibus, gloriosa et felix aeternae maiestatis Dei thalamum introiuit, ubi super omnes angelorum dignitates assumpta, singulare miserorum solamen, Filium pro nobis interpellare non desinit. Ne contradicamus, dilectissimi, operibus sanctorum, quae in eis operatus est Christus Deus eorum. Arbor uero illa proceram et longa regis mihi uidetur significare personam, cuius summitas foliis et frondibus densa et in latum hinc inde circumquaque extensa latitudinem sanctorum portendit uirtutum per quam uita sanctorum adornatur uirorum. Uiri autem illi qui arborem succidebant, occisores beati martyris et gloriosi regis erant. Torrens quoque sanguinis de succisa arbore fluctuatim egredientis, sanguinis esse creditur Christi gloriosi militis, qui ad Orientem cursum suum direxit, quando innocentia mortis eius ad Deum in coelo ut uindictam acciperet clamauit. Testatur beatus Iohannes quod sub throno Dei sancti eius clamant: “Uindica sanguinem nostrum, Deus noster.”<sup>110</sup> Et Dauid: “Uindica sanguinem sanctorum tuorum qui effusus est.”<sup>111</sup> Nam et sanguis protomartyris Abel, qui innocenter occisus est, legitur ad Deum clamasse de terra: “Ecce,” inquit Dominus ad Cain, “uox sanguinis fratris tui Abel de terra clamat ad me.”<sup>112</sup> Ad illum uidelicet Orientem cursum suum dirigebat, de quo propheta ait, “Ecce uir, cuius est oriens nomen eius.”<sup>113</sup> Columna lucis, quae in coelum usque tendebatur, claritas bonorum operum illius exprimitur. Quod uidebat se esse aemulcritudine singularem, cuius alae in extremitate erant aureae, significat spiritum eius geminis alis uirtutum, dilectione uidelicet Dei et proximi, circumdatum, splendentem fulgore et luce bonorum operum, quibus in summo culmine lucidae columnae subleuari et pertingere posset ad gloriosam uisionem aeternae maiestatis Dei. Audiuit etiam uoces in coelo gloriae coelestis ad gaudia festiuitatis angelorum specialiter inuitantes.

Haec de beati uiri uisione significata considero: ceterum qui melius nouit exponere, exponentis arbitrio interpretanda relinquo.]

<sup>108</sup> Lk 2:34.

<sup>109</sup> Lk 2:35.

<sup>110</sup> Rev 6:10.

<sup>111</sup> Ps 78:10.

<sup>112</sup> Gn 4:10.

<sup>113</sup> Zec 6:12.

Quod Aethelbrichtus ab Alfrida<sup>114</sup> laudatur.<sup>115</sup>

14) Ad narrationis itaque nostre seriem reuertamur, et qualiter beatus martir ad Deum suum gloriosus ascenderit simplici relatu ueraciter exequamur. Collectis demum tentoriis et apparatus eorum generaliter expeditis mane ualde diluculo suis ad se diligenter euocatis huiusmodi uerba rex effudit coram eis. “Obsecro uos consortes et complices mee quoque dignitatis et glorie ut cum principis huius aulam ingressi fuerimus prudencie semitis iugiter innitatur, ne fatuitatis et insipientie stupidi sectatores esse merito arguamur. Tyrannus enim superbus est, et populi patrie contumaces ualde. Facite quod postulo, nec a bono proposito desistatis. Promiserunt se duces et tribuni rectoris sui edictum excipere et uoluntatem eius prout possent in omnibus specialiter adimplere. Sanctus igitur amicus Domini Aethelbrichtus de mansionis eiusdem loco profectus uenit ad curiam supra memorati tyranni ut rex cum rege loqueretur, et uterque cum alterutro gratanter exciperetur. In die illa stabat Alfrida Deo dilecta uirgo nobilis et gloriosa in excessu solio patris sui consideransque principem Orientalium Anglorum aduentantem cum populo exercitus sui ammirata est pulcritudinem illius et gloriam tanteque nouitatis antea incognitam uehementer gauisa est contemplari miliciam. “Pappe,” inquit, “genitrix mea, cuius est ista familia? Cui ascribuntur clipei et enses? Cuius sunt armis instructe tante phalanges? Cuius sunt equi tam uelociter precurrentes? Cui obsequuntur tot et tanti precursores? Sicine, mater, incedit ornatus Rex Aethelbrichtus tante nobilitatis (34v, 1) splendore refertus. Tanta ne est gloria cum eo milicie ut merito preferri iudicetur patri meo? uidesne quanta iuuentutis elegancia? Cernisne colla eius tanto candore uernancia? Nonne aspicias tam rubicundas genas tota benignitate et dilectione plenas, faciem uero tam iocundam, gracile manum, carnem antem mundam? Totus enim aureus uestibus incedit auratis, nec rex usquam maioris uidebitur auctoritatis. Auctoritatis dicam an potestatis? Sed ut melius concludam et auctoritatis et potestatis. Offa Merciorum inclementissimus Rex merito eum reuereri ut dominum et per omnia ipsius exequi deberet imperium. Nullus ita placuit in oculis meis, nullus ei similis inuenitur in nacionibus uniuersis. Neminem uidi quem adeo diligam, nullum preter eum amatorem admittam. Quis enim tam pulcre iuuentutis et gloria aut quis princeps tam electe extitit milicie. Neque fas fuit quandoque speculari tante industrie et feritatis exercitum militaribus rebus et earum instrumentis potenter suffultum. Intueor eos esse animis

<sup>114</sup> *Alfrida*, MS.

<sup>115</sup> Ric. Cir., pp. 286-287; Anon., p. 239; Gerald, p. 226.

ualides et exemplo antiquorum terribiliter armis instructos. Recognoscat ergo Rex Offa sese tanto uiro iure fore subditum dominumque sibi Regem faciat Aethelbrichtum.”

Ubi Aethelbrichtus a regina ad Offam tyrannum acusatur.<sup>116</sup>

15) Ut autem regina huiusmodi uerba ex ore uirginis processisse cognouit statim irreuerenter in animo suo deliberauit sanctum Regem et amicum Dei Aethelbrichtum uelocius morti tradere et regnum orientalis anglie tanti regis interitu uiduare. Que inuidie stimulis agitata ad Regem Offam introiuit et procidens in terram ante conspectum eius ingemuit suspirans et ait, “Adquiesce, princeps insignis, consiliis meis et ne tradas regnum tuum gentibus alienis qui super populum tuum constituent prelium et contra filios tuos suscitabunt bellum. Heredes tui laqueis eorum (34v, 2) capientur et captiui in maxima miseria interficientur, ad patres tuos cum appositus fueris, si aduenam nobis dominari permiseris absque liberis erunt uxores et uidue et uiri earum morientur morte. Ecce adest Aethelbrichtus Orientalibus Anglis princeps prelatus, Tyrio ostro et sericis atque sicladibus circumdatus argento et auro et lapidibus precioso oneratus. Petiturus hodie adest filiam tuam superbam facturus per te gentem suam si stabili conubio regi adolescenti coniunxeris eam. Fietque per eam rex idem ditior semper, tu uero ad omnia explenda pauperior. Aethelbrichtus forcior, Offa inpotencior. Ille superior, tu inferior. Ille robustior, tu deterior. Et quia prouecta est etas tua et iam uertitur ad senium, illum autem in iuuentutis gloria quasi leonem sciunt esse magnanimum, huic duces tui et consules familiariter obsequentur ut ab amore et timore imperii tui sua fortitudine roborentur. Fac ergo ut eius gloria fiat in ignominiam et superbia hominis uertatur in ruinam. Morte turpissima precipe ut moriatur et e medio opprobrium gentis nostre auferatur. Audisti, mi rex, que tibi necessaria sunt tu autem preuide que nobis et populo tuo profutura sunt.” Ecce, dilectissimi, inpudens et inproba mulier illa Iezabel antiqua sanctis prophetis Dei uehementer inimica. Ecce, in furore nimio sue impietatis iterum exardescit que beatum Heliam a finibus Israel exterminare precepit.<sup>117</sup> Ecce, altera Herodias in spiritu nequam item reuixit que caput Iohannis Baptiste Herode imperante in disco accepit.<sup>118</sup> Ecce Iezabel et ecce Herodias. Per utramque enim operatus est Sathanas.

<sup>116</sup> Ric. Cir., pp. 287-289; Anon., p. 239; Gerald, pp. 226-227.

<sup>117</sup> cf. 1Kgs 19:2.

<sup>118</sup> cf. Mk 6:24-28.

Iezabel sanctum persecuta est Heliam, Herodias morti destinavit Iohannem Baptistam. Et ecce tertia in numero earum accreuit que in morte beati Regis Aethelbrichti fraudulenter deseuit. Quid, inquam, uates uterque commisit? Aut in quo mortem rex gloriosus promeruit? Helias quoniam Achab et (35r, 1) Iezabel reprehendebat passus est exterminium. Iohannes capite plexus est quia Herodis et Herodiadis prohibebat incestum. Nec hoc dicimus ut aliquem inter natos mulierum beato uelimus quoequare Iohanni, sed ut in beato martire Aethelbrichto laudemus et glorificemus mirabilia. Non eum beato Helie conamur preferre quem in igne Deus legitur de mundo rapuisse, sed ut ostendamus quoniam qui Heliam adhuc in carne uiuentem tanto dignatus est circumuenire splendore ipse sanctum hodie Aethelbrichtum ad gaudia duxit festiuitatis eterne.

Quod Offa suggerente Gwinbertus facit homicidium.<sup>119</sup>

16) Offa uero omnibus consulibus et tribunis ducibus et optinantibus populi sui ad se euocatis. "Num," inquit, "mea detrimenta et dampna non consideratis? Nonne uidetis gentes aduenas regis adolescentis insipienter<sup>120</sup> huc aduenisse, iam iamque super nos exercere dominium firmo animo decreuisse? Qui hucusque mea magna potencia fuistis fortes et liberi, siccine nacionis alienis tollerabitis esse subiecti? Ne paciamini uiri fortes hanc uobis illatam contumeliose iniuriam opprobrio deputabitur eterno extranie gentis in uos excipere disciplinam. Qui uult uindicaturus omne genus accedat meque larga manu pecunias infinitas erogante premia meritis condigna que ad sua secum reportet accipiat. Incantum enim per manum apprehendat et prudenter in triclinium meum regem imprudentem ut amicus inducat, ingressusque cum fuerit domicilium mortis ex abrupto pacietur supplicium." Prosilit statim e medio Gwinbertus, homo malignitatis spiritu inflammatus, urgentibusque ardentis auaricie stimulis agitatus. "Assum," inquit, "rex gloriose, si uis facturus quod precipis accepturus autem quod promittis, quoniam in populo tocius regni tui neminem poteris reperire quem ad hoc (35r, 2) exequendum negocium liberius ad te queas assescere. In domo et enim patris sui per quindecim annorum tempora altus atque educatus moraliter extiti et post mortem regis Adelredi filio eius Aethelbrichto obsequio strenue probitatis adhesi. Nemo unquam ei familiarior, nemo amicior<sup>121</sup> fuit solusque.

<sup>119</sup> Ric. Cir., pp. 289-290; Anon., pp. 239-240; Gerald, pp. 227-228.

<sup>120</sup> *incipientur*, MS.

<sup>121</sup> *amicior*, MS.

Ego maxime uotis<sup>122</sup> illius concordauit, quo maioris erant precii regalium donorum insignia quo preclariora uidebantur consularis glorie ornamenta. Quanto magis appreciabantur cuiuscumque generis munera meliora: anuli armille lapides preciosi cerice uestes auro et argento radiantes enses et clipei et pleraque instrumenta militaris negotii, tanto michi instancius ab illo erant oblata tam et si animo plura appetentis recusata. Postremo factis et sedicione et homicidio in patria aufugi ad te in terra aliena. Et ecce quia magis confidit in me quam in ceteris fortibus uiris potencie tue propter aurum pro te mihi copiosa recompensatum [caput]<sup>123</sup> eius tibi cedit in premium.” Accepta autem pecunia proditor infaustus exiuit et iniquitatem quam conceperat expeditus egit.

Ubi Aethelbrichtus ad regis thalamum uocatur.<sup>124</sup>

17) Ut enim tuba uocis eius ad eum pertingere potuit, Gwinbertus Regem Aethelbrichtum clamore huiusmodi appellauit. “Optime aduenisti princeps desiderabilis. Prospera tibi cuncta sint adolescens spectabilis. Quicquid petiturus accessisti nequaquam difficulter optinebis, et quod animo deliberasti ad uotum gratanter explebis. Ea loquitur dominus meus, hoc pollicetur rex meus, eadem tibi delegari imperat princeps meus. In hac cubitu quippe suo Regem Offam inuenies et cum recederis coram eo quelibet postulata cum amore percipies. Perendie enim minuit sanguinem, nec audet diei amittere claritatem. Introeamus proinde ambo pariter ad aspectum tyranni aduentus tui causam illi quantocius exposituri, (35v, 1) sitque procul a nobis queque frequentia militaris ut tyranno representemur sine strepitu et armis.” Fecit fortis athleta Dei secundum consilium uiri sanguinis et dolosi atque equo desiliens proditorem suum brachiis et manibus festinauit amplecti, e conuerso ille pacis ei osculum familiariter tradidit, sed cordis perfidiam que post patuit non ostendit. Traditor autem ille ocius precessit, traditus uero subsequi properauit et post eos obseratur ianua que ceteris aduenientibus esse solet aperta. Cumque ad ostium thalami in quo rex erat cum maxima congratulatione accederent et uterque introire iam iamque alter alterum preuenire studerent proditor animi simplicitatem quam carebat sola lingue blandicia simulans et iniquitatem cordis dolosi nulla nota malignitatis ostentans. “Depone,” inquit, “queso, Rex Aethelbrichte, balteum milicie et gladium

<sup>122</sup> uotus, MS.

<sup>123</sup> Omitted in MS, Ric. Cir., p. 290.

<sup>124</sup> Ric. Cir., pp. 291-292; Anon., p. 240; Gerald, p. 228.

suppressum<sup>125</sup> lateri quolibet in loco reconde. Quoniam ad tyrannum nemo intrare ualet armatus nisi uelit ut hoc idem rex ulciscatur iratus.” Fecit uelociter amicus Dei quod inimicus eius consuluit ei. Ingressus est enim rex sanctus cum proditore suo, proditor uero deliberabat in animo suo innocentem uirum nocenter dampnare et se in loco Iude Scariocis infeliciter subrogare.

Ubi Aethbrichtus captus ligatur.<sup>126</sup>

18) Ut autem uir Domini Aethelbrichtus thalamum introiuit statim captus precipitur ligari et ante conspectum infausti<sup>127</sup> principis sine mora presentari. Hostia et ianue omnia recluduntur duces eius et consules intro non admittuntur, sola caro beati uiri ibi sine adiutorio morietur, sed beata anima Christo adiutore ad celestia subuehetur. Stat beatus Aethelbrichtus quasi agnus mansuetus uictimam ueram habens in humilitate patienciam. Commendat Domino Deo suo animam suam ut in misericordia sua suscipiat eam et per temporales (35v, 2) penas presentis uite dolores quead euadire infelicitatis eterne. Deinde uero palam omnibus ingemuit et huiusmodi uerba cum immensa utique pietate profudit. “Non est in homine uia eius, multaque ei ex insperato possunt accedere que sibi accidencia nequaquam frequenter solet estimare. Heri et nudiustertius eram securus et liber nec thalamus adhuc regius erat mihi carcer. Necdum eram manicis ferreis oneratus, nunc sto miserabiliter chatenis uincolatus. Tenebre que in tanta<sup>128</sup> caligine inuoluerunt hanc mihi mortis horam Deo terminante prodiderunt, sol dum suos radios retraxit huius uite lucem mihi subtractam esse signauit. Sperabam petitionis mee bonum prestolari euentum, et ecce in compedibus diris me ipsum considero crudeliter astrictum. Tanquam latro aut predator alicuius pecunie, expecto sententiam dampnacionis mee.” Dum hec et huiusmodi uir Domini intermisisset tyrannus non ferens diucius uiuere quem uellet iam olim in morte dormire. “Quid ministri,” inquit, “mei expectatis? Quid opus desideratum non acceleratis? Irruite uelociter in eum et crudeliter perficite imperium meum.” Cum hec sanctus martir audiret intimo cordis affectum cum magna deuocione orauit ad Deum et se ante iusticiam eius peccatorem esse se cognouit et reum. Et quod ore et labiis minus personare potuit defecate mentis pura intencione suppleuit.

<sup>125</sup> *supremum*, Ric. Cir. (MS), p. 292.

<sup>126</sup> Ric. Cir., pp. 292-293; Anon., p. 240; Gerald, p. 228.

<sup>127</sup> *fausti*, MS. In chapter twenty Osbert calls Ethelbert ‘*infaustus*’ again, and Richard of Circenster also has ‘*infausti*’, so ‘*fausti*’ is apparently a scribal error.

<sup>128</sup> *tanto*, MS and Ric. Cir. (MS), p. 292.

Ubi Aethelbrihtus a Gwinberto decollatur.<sup>129</sup>

19) Accurrens interdum Gwinbertus Diabolico Spiritu exacerbatus et auaricie funibus tocum circumligatus cum maximo furentis ardoris impetu in sanctum Dei irruit et suo ipsius gladio gloriosum capud amputauit. Sed benedictus Deus qui non derelinquit sperantes in se qui in sanctis (36r, 1) suis semper est mirabilis et uniuersis operibus suis gloriosus, atque laudabilis innocentem animam per sanctos angelos suos ad gaudia sempiterna subuexit, et inter sanctos innocentes innocencie ueste<sup>130</sup> in regno protexit.<sup>131</sup> Ad triumphales quoque tanti martiris exequias non defuerunt diuina miracula suis in locis prout competit plenius exponenda.

De prophecia<sup>132</sup> gloriose uirginis et de uoto quod deo uouit.<sup>133</sup>

20) Uidens autem uirgo gloriosa infausti scilicet principis filia quod ea que de beato martire pertractata nequiter fuerant iam consummata sunt omnia procidens ad terram genua flectere et deum casto corde cepit glorificare. “Gratias,” inquit, “ago tibi Domine Ihesu Christo quod seruum tuum Aethelbrihtum de carnis hodie ergastulo gloriosa morte eductum participem fieri uoluisti celestium gaudiorum, quoniam quidem anima sua tibi bene complacuit. Iccirco in conspectu tuo preciosus assistit et feliciter cum sanctis tuis in eternum exultabit.” Erigens deinde se uirgo gloriosa ad eos qui aduentum domini sui foris prestolabantur de solio paterno faciem suam conuertit et clamans uoce magna tali eos sermone uehementer increpauit. “Quid hic uiri fortes expectatis? Quid expectantes desideratis? Quid ad inuicem prudenter tractatis? An quid de Domino uestro actum sit ignoratis? Reuertimini ergo fratres ad terram natiuitatis uestre et ea que de rege eorum facta sunt Orientalibus Anglis nunciare properate. Ensis enim extenso collo perpessus est in gulum et amputato capite dignum coram deo compleuit martirium. Uerumptamen uiri mors et ignomina plurimorum populorum erit leticia acsi aperte dicat. Multi de gloria passionis eius exultabunt, quoniam apud deum pium per peccatis suis intercessorem habebunt. Dicite matri sue quod accidit. Referte populo patrie quod euenit. Mater eius (36r, 2)

<sup>129</sup> Ric. Cir., p. 293; Anon., p. 240; Gerald, pp. 228-229.

<sup>130</sup> *vestre*, MS.

<sup>131</sup> Richard of Cirencester’s account diverges from Osbert of Clare’s *Vita* here and ends with a short concluding paragraph. Ric. Cir., pp. 293-294.

<sup>132</sup> All that remains visible of the “*De prophecia*” is “*hia*” with an abbreviation line, but this agrees with Gerald’s text.

<sup>133</sup> Anon., pp. 240-241; Gerald, p. 229.

ultra eum non uidebit sub luce presentis uite, uidere autem deo auxiliante poterit in regno mortalitatis eterne.” Uiri igitur illi regem suum audientes mortis sententia transiari inpotentes in eadem gente tante malignitatis nefas ulcisci cum maxima sauciati cordis contritione, flentes ac dolentes ad propia sunt reuersi. Tunc beata Alfrida<sup>134</sup> Spiritu Sancto repleta pluraque matri sue Kinedride uaticinando futura predixit que sibi ita postmodum euenisse gestarum rerum exitus manifestissime docuit. “Nequiter,” inquit, “et misere egisti, mea genetrix, misera et iccirco magna tui donabitur in mundo miseria. Sanctum Regem Aethelbrihtum tradidisti ad mortem infelix infelicem expectabis mercedem. Uera attende uerba oris mei in te de celo descendet ira Dei. Triennio post hunc diem non uiuet filius tuus, non stabilietur regnum illius. Tu autem ipsa plus mensibus tribus in confusione non uiues et linguam tuam a demonio uexata corodens<sup>135</sup> morte pessima morieris, et omnem nequiciam tuam infausto omine consummabis. Ruet iuuentus<sup>136</sup> filii tui nec diu uiuet Egfridus<sup>137</sup> post mortem Aethelbrihti.” Quin etiam Alfrida regia uirgo uotum uouit Deo suo, quem admodum proposuerat in animo suo. “Ne accedant,” inquit, “proci ulterius corumpendam petitori uirginitatem meam, quoniam Domino et regi Anglorum sacrandam et conseruandam commendabo eam. Ipsum sponsum et ducem regem et imperatorem habere uolo cuius omnis multitudo milicie celestis deseruire congaudet imperio. Crolandi<sup>138</sup> paludes<sup>139</sup> Christo disponente reuisam eo que solitariam uitam emulari incipiam; conuentus hominum euitare discam et corruptores mentis mee. Precauens fugiam, semitis iustorum (36v, 1) prudenter inniti, uitam sanctorum aggrediar imitari, celestis patrie gaudia contemplari, in meditatione legis Dei nocte ac die diligenter immorari. In secula seculorum uiuentem Deum ex toto corde diligere et preceptis mandatorum eius absque obstaculo inseruire.” Que ut conicere possumus secundum promissa gloriose uirginis facta inueniuntur ut in sequenti suo in loco latius demonstrabitur.

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<sup>134</sup> *Alfrida*, MS.

<sup>135</sup> *corodes*, MS.

<sup>136</sup> crossed out in MS.

<sup>137</sup> Egfrith, king of Mercia (July, 796-Dec., 796).

<sup>138</sup> Crowland abbey.

<sup>139</sup> *plaudes*, MS.

Quid ignobili sepulture traditur.<sup>140</sup>

21) Hiis ita gestis ut cognouit Offa milites beati martiris ad propria reuersos fuisse precepit corpus truncum efferi cum capite et in ripa fluminis quod Luggo<sup>141</sup> dicitur ignobili tradere sepulture. Inuictum itaque sancti regis cadauer ministri feretro inponentes et elatum iuxta edictum tyranni ad tumulandum deferentes adeo lene factum est<sup>142</sup> pondus beati corporis, ac si res illa tota esset celestis mirabantur infelices tantam omnis lenitatem quoniam sancti martiris ignorabant dignitatem. Quidam sanctum capud seperatim gestabant quod ut maiori foret ludibrio ante alios precurrentes in terra uolutabant. Cumque beato martiri tantam insultantes iniuriam putabant ignominiosam sibi fieri contumeliam. Et cum beatus Paulus apostolus pronunciet: “Sanctos Dei ludibria perpressos et uerbera, Carceres et uincula, lapidaciones secationes, temptationes, gladiatorum occisiones,”<sup>143</sup> et cetera que sequuntur ilico adiecit, “quibus dignus non erat mundus.”<sup>144</sup> Et paucis interpositis, “Hii omnis,” inquit, “testimonio fidei probati,”<sup>145</sup> inuenti sunt. In quibus martir beatus Aethelbrichtus probatus inuentus est qui in innocentis uite puritate, gladii occisione neci datus est. Ignominiosum etiam est expertus ludibrium quando capiti suo tantum post mortem fecerunt opprobrium. Et uere tanto principe dignus non erat mundus quem de mundo ad celestia inuitauit deus, qui testimonio fidei probatus inuentus (36v, 2) fuit dum sacramenta ecclesie fideliter obseruauit et secundum decreta canonum iugali uinculo alligari postulauit. Neque hoc (ut in fine patuit) ex suo arbitrio aut deliberacione fecit cum candor uirginitatis in qua martir occubuit magis ei placuerit, sed ut Dei dispensacionem impleret que eum in testimonio fidei testem fieri probatum tali occasione preuidit. Nam cum ante Dei oculos omnipotentis non sit culpa. Aliqua fecunditas carnis qui legitimo uinculo seruant coniugium, fidei perfecto habent testimonium sed, “quia ipsa licita admixtio coniugis fieri non potest sine uoluntate carnis, oportet ut legitima copula causa sit prolis non uoluntatis et carnis comixtio creandorum sit gratia liberorum, non satisfactio uitiorum. Siquis igitur suam coniugem non cupidine uoluptatis illectus sed solummodo creandorum liberorum gratia utitur,”<sup>146</sup> sed in sanctarum uirtutum operacione perstiterit, iste in testimonio

<sup>140</sup> Anon., p. 241; Gerald, p. 229.

<sup>141</sup> Lugg River

<sup>142</sup> *eis*, MS.

<sup>143</sup> Heb 11:36-37.

<sup>144</sup> Heb 11:38.

<sup>145</sup> Heb 11:39.

<sup>146</sup> *Epist. Greg.*, xi, 64, cols. 1196-1197.

fidei probatus inuentus esse non inmerito indicatur. Implent cicius ministri edictum principis sui et beatum martirem Aethelbrichtum ubi preceptum erat faciunt sepeliri. Et putantes radicitus se de terris extirpasse et nomen eius et memoriam, ad tyrannum continuo sunt regressi nescientes que subsecuta est triumphalem uictoriam et gloriose mortis que euidenter innotuit inestimabilem gloriam.

De columpna lucis que ab sepulcro eius in celum usque erecta est.<sup>147</sup>

22) Set quid facies Ihesu Domine dominator celorum. Pacieris ne tantum occultari thessaurum si lucerna latens est sub modio que utilitas hiis qui sunt in domo. Exurge, exurge et lucernam accensam super candelabrum tuum pone ut familia domus tue illustretur tanti luminis claritate. “Nunc exurgam,” dicit Dominus, “nunc exaltabor, et nunc sullimabor.”<sup>148</sup> Exaltabo seruum meum et exaltabor ego per eum, sullimitatem celorum dedi ei et sullimabor in glorificatione (37r, 1) militis mei.” Exurrexit itaque eadem nocte magna gloria Domini super sanctum et gloriosum beati martiris Aethelbrichti sepulcrum immensi luminis splendore portendens quod perpetue uisionis Dei eum in regno uite feliciter lumen iam foueret eternum, uidebatur adeo flamma immensa ut tota igne regio putaretur accensa. Nam columpna lucis sole spendidior ab eius sepulcro in celum usque tendebatur quam uelut flamme omnia deuorantis in girum scintille et radii coruscantes sequebantur. Cuius nouitatis gratia a multis qui uiderunt coram tyranno exposita et quanta fuerit<sup>149</sup> pro beati martiris gloria nocte ad mausolium est uisa. Eumdem superbum principem grauiter exterruerunt eumque ut peniteret ad uiam humilitatis reducerunt. Qui decimam ecclesie Dei omnium rerum suarum tribuit agros etiam et rura et quecumque possederat decimauit. Solus Deus nouit si digna comissa refleuit et si tantum facinus digne penitendo deleuit. Ego autem illud prorsus ignoro et iccirco ad sequencia exprimenda festino.

Quid Brithfrido apparuit et corpus suum in alio loco transferri precepit.<sup>150</sup>

23) Tertia itaque nocte post triumphales sepulture sue exequias beatus martir Domini Aethelbrichtus cuidam prediuiti et simplici uiro quiescenti in stratu suo magna cum luce apparuit, et ante eum in habitu claro assistens ei ut uelociter surgeret imperauit. “Surge,” inquit, “Brithfride, surge et quod tibi iniunxo fideliter perface.

<sup>147</sup> Anon., pp. 241-242; Gerald, pp. 229-230.

<sup>148</sup> “*Nunc consurgam, dicit Dominus, nunc exaltabor, nunc sublevabor.*” Is 33:10.

<sup>149</sup> *fuerint.* MS.

Uade dilectissime ad sepulcrum meum ibique reuerenter accipies corpus meum in pace bone uoluntatis tue ad statum Waie fluminis.<sup>151</sup> Illud ferre satages diligenter que iuxta monasterium quod eo situm est cum honore recondes. Ego sum Orientalium Anglorum Rex Aethelbrichtus et hoc uerbum ut facias precipit tibi Deus. Si autem egeris uoluntatem Domini optima merces retribuetur tibi.” Expergefactus tandem a sompno probus uir oculos aperuit, et celesti claritate illustratam totam domum perspexit. Qui brachia sua ut sanctum Dei (37r, 2) apprehenderet studiose extendit. Sed beatus martir cum splendore claritatis abscondens non comparuit. Letus uero de hac uisione Brithfridus effectus de cubiculo suo uelociter surexit et cum deuocione cordis cadens in terram dominum magestatis et regem glorie sempiternae tali oratione collaudauit. “Gratias,” inquit, “ago tibi Domine Ihesu Christe quod beatum Aethelbrichtum de celo in terra prodigiis et signis reuelare uoluisti.” Et hec dicens de domicilio suo uberibus gaudiis profusus exiuit et ad cuiusdam uicini sui proximam mansionem diuertit. Benigna itaque uoce uir illustris illustrem exclamauit uirum Brithfridus Egmundum. “Euigila,” inquit, “et expergiscere, uir insignis Egmunde, et que tibi reuelanda sunt prudenter attende. Precepit mihi beatus rex et martir Aethelbrichtus ad ecclesiam que est secus Waie fluminis alueum Deo ita disponante cum spiritali tripudio perducere corpus suum. Teque huius laboris cupio esse participem ut in regno Dei merear retribucionis habere consortem.” Perrexere ambo pariter ad sancti regis sepulcrum et inuicti martiris Christi pariter leuauerunt cadauer inuictum. Leuauerunt ergo sanctum corpus manibus suis et in curru proximo posuerunt uestibus indutum nouis et albis.

De ceco qui ad sancti Aethelbrichti capud offendit et  
lumen oculorum recepit.<sup>152</sup>

24) Adhuc quoque capud sancti Aethelbrichti deerat nec locum in quo quererent sciebant. Ex inproviso tamen gratia Dei preemiter quesierunt et sancti uiri capud ubi idem non autumabant reconditum inuenerunt. Accepta siquidem aqua et illud lauerunt et capud corpori prout potuere coaptare studerunt, arripientesque duo insignes uiri iter inceptum secundum dispositionem Dei amiserunt capud martiris gloriosum. Dum per eandem uiam quidam XI annorum cecus aduenit qui ad sanctum capud pede in terram

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<sup>150</sup> Anon., p. 242-243; Gerald, p. 230.

<sup>151</sup> Wye River.

<sup>152</sup> Anon., p. 243; Gerald, pp. 230.

cadens offendit talique uoce nescius scienter exclamauit, “Adiuua me Aethelbrichte serue Dei excelsi quem sine preiudicio Offa puniuit abscisione capitali,” (37v, 1) statimque ut orationem consummauit, eadem hora, eodemque momento uisum oculorum recepit. Accipiensque gloriosum capud in manibus suis oculos sursum ad celos leuauit et Deo omnipotenti atque beato martiri Aethelbrichto pro accepta sanitate gratias egit. Deinde prosecutus est iter initum et beati uiri capud deportabat secum. Et cum aliquantulum progredere ulterius et ueniret ad locum in quo lassitudo itineris Brithfridum et Egmundum residere coegerat maximo repletus gaudio clare uoce alacriter clamat, “Exspecta Brithfride, exspecta et nimius quod baiulo suscipere delibera. Ecce adest capud sancti Aethelbrichti<sup>153</sup> quod a uobis amissum in uia offendi et cum per curricula undecim annorum usque ad hanc diem non uiderim ibi hodie dispensante Deo lumen oculorum et salutem inueni.” Glorificauerunt iidem Brithfridus et Egmundus omnipotentem Deum qui tot et tanta magnalia operari in terra non desinit per beatum Aethelbrichtum. Et baiulantes sanctum corpus ad locum sibi predestinatum a Deo sepulcrum beato martiri prout facultas suppetebat parauerunt in eo. Locus autem ille antiquitus Fernlega dicebatur, quod lingua Latina<sup>154</sup> saltus filicis interpretatur, nunc modo a comprouincialibus Herefordia nominatur.

Ubi translatus claritatis signa supra sepulcrum per multos annos ostendit.<sup>155</sup>

25) Translatum est hoc modo sanctum corpus a predicto loco cum celestium signorum fulgore et gloria ubi Christus usque in presentem diem plurima operatur in plebe miracula. Eademque tempestate per plura annorum spacia unaquaque nocte super sanctum beati uiri sepulcrum lux de celo emissa radiabat, que in colupna ignea gloriosum eius martirium Dei prouidentia reuelabat. Talibus signis et prodigiis ceteris que innumerabilibus nobis incognitis beatus Aethelbrichtus mundo innotuit, quoadusque Milefridus rex religiosus sanctitatem uiri Dei fama uulgante cognouit. Precepit (37v, 2) ergo cuidam episcopo suo mire simplicitatis et innocencie uiro beatum martirem Aethelbrichtum animo iocundo inuisere et Christum in operatione uirtutum suarum ad sepulcrum beati uiri fideliter adorare. Fecit episcopus quicquid illi iniunctum fuit, reuertensque ad propriam magnalia Dei que audiuit, sanitates

<sup>153</sup> *ad* crossed out, MS.

<sup>154</sup> *Latina* omitted, MS.

<sup>155</sup> Anon., pp. 243-244; Gerald, pp. 230-231.

infirmorum quos uidit, curaciones languorum quos oculis perspexit, innocentis regis interitum quem didicit principi suo nunciare properauit.

Quid Milefridus Britonum rex ecclesiam beato martiri fecerit et  
primus regum eidem loco episcopum substat.<sup>156</sup>

26) Milefridus igitur in remotis tunc regni partibus degens ad eundem locum pecunias infinitas delegauit, et ecclesiam miro lapideo opere ad laudem et honorem beati martiris a fundamentis incepit pique deuocione domino auxiliante perfecit. Primusque omnium regum eidem episcopum loco substituit, et terrarum possessionibus atque regalibus ornamentis ecclesiam beati Aethelbrichti quoad uixit decorauit. Sacratissima autem infausti principis filia et amica Domini Ihesum de qua prediximus Alfrida solitariam uitam agens in sancta uirginitate usque ad finem uite permansit donec ad complexum et nuptias sponsi celestis gloriosa uirgo et felix intrauit. Et secundum premissum misere sue genitrici presagium, postquam perfidus Offa Merciorum tyrannus postea penitens et Christianus occubuit filius eius Egfridus uno anno<sup>157</sup> et CXL diebus regnauit<sup>158</sup> sic que uerum est quod uirgo predixit, quia post necem sancti martiris Aethelbrichti tribus annis nequaquam Mercii prefuit, sed mortuus adolestens modico post patrem tempore uixit. Et quia de semine nequam prodeunt filii scelerati iure in peruersam generacionem<sup>159</sup> non iniusta ira Dei propter mortem innocentis crudeliter deseuit et in gladio furoris sui ulciscendam sanctorum iniuriam memoriam inique propaginis de terra deleuit. Unde huic operi placuit diligenter inserere quod Aser historicus ac (38r, 1) uerax relator gestorum Regis Aluerdi eiusque sapiencie uoluit de hac praua generacione referre.

De Aedburga regina ab Offa tyranno progenita.<sup>160</sup>

27) Fuit inquit in Mercia moderno tempore quidam strenus atque uniuersis circa se regibus et regionibus finitimis formidolosus Rex Offa nomine qui uallum magnum inter Merciam atque Britanniam a mari usque ad mare fieri imperauit. Cuius filiam Aedburgam nomine Berthricius Occidentalium Saxonum Rex<sup>161</sup> sibi in coniugium

<sup>156</sup> Anon., p. 244; Gerald, p. 231.

<sup>157</sup> anno inserted, MS.

<sup>158</sup> According to Richard of Cirencester, Egfrid died 141 days after his father. Ric. Cir., p. 295.

<sup>159</sup> cf. Lk 9:41.

<sup>160</sup> Gerald, pp. 231-232. Osbert apparently took this story from Asser's *Life of King Alfred*, ed. William Stevenson (Clarendon, Oxford, 1904), pp. 12-14.

<sup>161</sup> Beorhtric, king of the West Saxons (786-802).

accepit. Que confestim accepta regis amicitia et tocius regni potestate permaxima more paterno uiuere incepit, tyrannide tocius iniquitatis assumptus, quemcumque enim rex diligeret grauibus odiis insequabatur immo omnia Deo odibilia hominibus que contraria spiritu malignitatis facere cogebatur. Cunctos quos poterat ad regem accusabat et ita eos aut potestate aut uita per insidias priuabat. Et si aliud a rege non posset impetrare ueneno eos machinabatur extinguere. Quod de adolescente quondam regi dilecto eique familiarissimo fecit quem quia accusare coram rege non potuit uenifica potacione<sup>162</sup> necauit. De quo ueneno prefatus etiam princeps aliquid refertur inscienter gustasse neque enim regi sed iuueni uenenum proposuerat ministrare, attamen rex preoccupauit, indeque ambo periere. Defuncto igitur Rege Berthrico quoniam pro malicia et iniquitate sua inter Occidentales Saxones diucius manere et regnare non potuisset ultra mare nauigans cum innumerabilibus thesauris Karolum Magnum illum famosissimum Regem Francorum adiuit. Cui cum ante solarium multa eidem principi dona optulerit, imperator ait, “Elige ea Eadburga quem uelis de duobus unum, aut me aut filium meum.” Stabat uero iuxta patrem filius eius Lodowicus<sup>163</sup> spectabilis adolescens solario domus potenter innixus. At illa sine deliberacione stulte (38r, 2) repondens ait, “Si mihi,” inquit, “eleccionis huius tribuitur opcio filium tuum in quantum te iunior esse dinoscitur eligo.” Cui imperator respondit et arridens ait, “Si me eligeres filium haberes sed quia elegisti filium meum nec me nec illum habebis.” Dedit tamen illi Karolus Magnus quoddam monasterium sanctimonialium feminarum in quo deposito seculari habitu et solo sine iusticia uite aut mundicia indumento sanctitatis assumpto per paucis annorum spaciis ibi abbatisse functa est officio, sicut enim irrationabiliter in patrio regno uixisse refertur ita multo irrationabilius in aliena gente uiuere deprehenditur. Nam a quodam sue proprie gentis lenone constuprata et demum palam deprehensa imperio Karoli de monasterio est eiecta. Que postea in miseria et paupertate maxima sese quoad uixit miserabiliter habuit, ita ut ad ultimum uno seruulo comitata et cotidie in summa egestate mendicans turpiter et ignominiose in pappam ciuitate indignam uitam, condigna quidem mortis finierit. Ecce, dilectissimi, quomodo iudicia Dei abyssus multa. Ecce quam grauis et quam districta in sanctorum nece patet uindicta que in impiam generacionem peccatis exigentibus merito extenditur, per quam scelus illorum et ignorancia diuina animaduersione punitur. Et

<sup>162</sup> *neca* crossed out, MS.

<sup>163</sup> Louis the Pious (†840).

sicut Moyses ait, “Generacio enim peruersa est et infideles filii,”<sup>164</sup> iniquitas patrum sceleratorum in impia posteritate quasi ex traduce solet succedendo propagari. Unde infelix mulier ista de qua sermo predictus innotuit, paternam tyrannidem et martiris crudelitatem animo et moribus equans in reprobum sensum mundo detestabilis fuit uerumque ex hiis tantisper ut potuimus ista iam prelibauimus ad ea que secuntur noua subscripcione properare studeamus.

De uirga beati Aethelbrichti que in arborem creuit.<sup>165</sup>

28) Sicut Dominus et Saluator noster carissimum beatum martirem Aethelbrichtum ad sepulcrum eius miraculis et (38v, 1) prodigiis glorificauit, ita quoque in diuersis atque remotis mundi partibus eum signis coruscantibus euidenter manifestare non distulit. Unum quiddam memorabile quod ueredicorum testium catholica relacione didicimus huic operi inserere ad posteritatis memoriam dulci sudore laboramus. Est uicus in prouincia Orientalium Saxonum Bellus Campus<sup>166</sup> uera ethimologia uocatus, Orientalibus autem Anglis contiguus et conterminus, in cuius predio antiquitus olim lignea quedam est basilica fabricata et ad honorem beati martiris Aethelbrichti domino dispensante sacrata. In qua tot et tanta usque in presentem diem operatus est Christus magnalia quod nullo modo comprehendi aut discerni preualent ratione humana. Ex qua uero occasione idem sanctitatis locus primum inuentus atque electus sit paucis intimare onerosum non erit. Tradicione enim omni ab antiquis comprouincialium accepimus ab eiusdem temporis patribus in filios, a filiis autem filiorum in hanc in nostram etatem usque ad posteritatem et successiones eorum beatum Aethelbrichtum ad Offam Merciorum tyrannum tendentem in eadem pulcra planicie tentorium suum fixisse solo que noctis spacio inibi quietis sue domicilium eligisse. Erat in eodem loco arbor quedam gracilis et delicata in superficie ramorum et frondium ac solo tenuis radicibus ad modum teneraque facile, ut putabatur euelli et leuiter a quoquam posset dissipari. Cui quedam papilionis eiusdem cornua funibus<sup>167</sup> alligata, alia palis in terra defossis strenuo referuntur affixa. Summo autem diliculo tanta et talis est quercus inuenta, ac si tempore ducentorum annorum pleno suo robore arbor creuisset perfecta. Quid mirum, dilectissimi, si hanc arborem pro gloria militis sui sub unius noctis termino precepit

<sup>164</sup> Deut 32:20.

<sup>165</sup> Gerald, pp. 233-234.

<sup>166</sup> Probably Belchamp-Otton in Essex. James, p. 218.

dominus mirabiliter crescere, qui uirgam Moysi electi sui pro ostendenda potencia sua uoluit in colubrum conuertere, rursumque serpente in uirgam conuersa,<sup>168</sup> rubrum mare eadem (38v, 2) diuidere<sup>169</sup> an ut arbor cresceret sub tali spacio imperare non potuit qui sub unius noctis tempore uirgam Aaron frondere et florere et amigdala parere spirauit,<sup>170</sup> an alius deus Ebreorum, alius Christianorum. Quis hoc uel insanus credat? Quis hoc confiteatur et dicat? Absit tanta iniquitas, abcedat talis incredulitas. Immo qui populo Hebreorum per ministros suos dedit legem et in deserto preuidit eos in columpna nubis per diem, in splendore autem ignis flammantis per noctem ipse in carne nostra homo factus misericorditer apparens omnes ueterum historiarum figuras in redemptionis humane transtulit ueritatem. Et Hebreorum atque gentilium ut unius Dei populus fieret factus lapis Angularis<sup>171</sup> conectens utrumque parietem mirabilis consilii angelis operatus est communi ratione salutem, et iccirco dabit mirabilem Deum in sanctis suis predicat quam huius misteria nulla humana ratio adicit ut discernat. Non ergo incredibile debet uideri, quod pro amore militis sui uoluit in arbore tot et tanta prodigia Dominus Ihesus Christus operari, ut ex precedentibus rebus et signis agnoscerent quam integra fide et perfecta fideles ecclesie subsequencia credere firmiter et confirmare deberent.

De basilica sancti Aethelbrichti et cruce remota et loco suo denuo restituta.<sup>172</sup>

29) Cum uero audissent religiosi eiusdem regionis uiri beatum Regem Aethelbrichtum apud impias nationes iam martirio coronatum de predicta arbore in modum Dominice crucis instituerunt lignum salutare ac uenerandum. Ubi quam plures per fidem atque preciosa sancti martiris merita salutis optatum consequitur remedium. Figentesque illud in eodem loco quo gloriosi regis et in Christi militis fixum nouerant olim fuisse tentorium fecerunt et basilicam propter assistere, ut in ea cotidie laudarent Deum ac beatum martirem Aethelbrichtum sedula deuocione glorificarent. Sepulta sunt inibi succedente tempore multa corpora sanctorum qui in ea tempestate qua sanctus Edmundus passus est pro (39r, 1) Christo morte pertulerunt impia feritate barbarorum, nam ducentorum fere annorum spacio durauit hec clades atque persecutio. Quibus postea per gratiam Dei sedatis cum pacem ecclesie redditam

<sup>167</sup> *finibus*, MS.

<sup>168</sup> cf. Ex 4:3-4.

<sup>169</sup> cf. Ex 14:21.

<sup>170</sup> cf. Nm 17:8.

<sup>171</sup> Eph 2:20.

tota Britannia recepisset, et quidam uir prediues iure hereditario ruris eiusdem agros et predia possedisset, uisum est animo suo gloriose crucis salutiferum lignum de loco quo fixum erat delere<sup>173</sup>, quam tocuis extorqueri et in quadam uiridi placea que sibi decencior uidebatur ante ianuam suam sub festinatione constitui. Decreuerant enim basilicam de loco suo remouere, et iuxta crucem eo quod domui sue competencior haberetur, ad libitum suum magis quam ad licitum exstruere. Quod et factum est, nam imperio Domini sui ministri crucem apportauerunt et in loco quo eis preceptum fuerat absque dilacione cicius erexerunt. Sed quid facis immense Deus cui tam perfecto corde seruierat sanctus Aethelbrichtus? An militi tuo tanta inferetur iniuria et nulla a te capietur uindicta? Immo ecce uirtus diuina nocte eadem operari non distulit crucem que ad locum unde apportata fuerat cum triumpho reduxit. Quod ubi summo diluculo comperiens egre tulit ac denuo crucis lignum maxima plenus iracundia ad eundem locum repportari precepit. Sed fortitudo Domini secundo operari non desiit lignumque gloriosum in locum proprium sub hora eadem restaurauit. Mane autem facto homo diues ad planiciem rediit, sed crucem minime quam sperabat inuenit, unde superbie spiritu inflammatus ardentique malignitatis furore succensus ad idem salutare lignum ut id remoueret accessit. Uerum priusquam de terra posset extorqueri, ultimo eum diuina oculorum cecitate multauit. Cuius miserie languore grauatus facti sceleris toto corde penituit euocato que ad se presbytero peccata sua confiteri et indulgenciam sibi a Deo atque beato martire Aethelbrico postulare non erubuit. Promittens que deinceps ad tantum flagitium se (39r, 2) nullatenus prebere assensum eandemque ecclesiam ad crucem sanctam in summa ueneracione habiturum, extensoque corpore in terra prostratus non ante surexit quam per gratiam omnipotentis Dei lumen oculorum indulta sanitate recepit. Quod audientes urbani et cultores agrorum glorificauerunt Deum et beatum Regem Aethelbrichtum et martirem qui tantum flagicium relinquere noluit impunitum et per censuram atque correctionem tante uindictae talisque iusticie errantem reduxit misericorditer ad uiam uite. Testor Ihesum et sanctos angelos eius me nusquam tam suaue lignum tetigisse neque a Deo delectabile robur tamque iocundum sensisse. Non quod argento aut auro uel ebore et lapidibus preciosis decoratum sit neque picturis multi coloris et uariis adornatum. Sed more rustico incompositum simplex lignum in ecclesia ostenditur quod in nullo per tot annorum spacia alicuius putredinis uerniculosa corrupcione uiciatur. Quicumque igitur in

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<sup>172</sup> Gerald, pp. 234-235.

<sup>173</sup> *debere*, MS.

circumiacentibus prouinciis febribus tenentur astricti, illuc cum oblacionibus et elemosinis suis ueniunt et autem predictam crucem in fide uigilantes et orantes salutis dona suscipiunt. Infantes etiam in cunis ad beati martiris suffragia circumquaque deportantur et parentum fide atque deuocione a periculo liberantur. Quidamque mensuram longitudinis sue ceream efficientes et ad idem domicilium humiliter dirigentes Domini optatum sue petitionis consequuntur effectum. Centum et eo amplius infirmos grauari februm integere sanitati restitutos.

Gerald of Wales<sup>174</sup>

[De auleo furtim sublato et fure compresso, oculoque pauperis miraculose restituto.

Contigit in eadem ecclesia miraculum insigne, quod inter cetera sua nouitate non reticendum. Erat enim aulaeum quoddam olim ecclesiae fideliter oblatum; quod cum latro quidam nocte extrahere et exportare niteretur, perque foramen sub ostia factum ubi intrauit; cumque cum furto pariter exire pararet, capite, cum humeris iam exposito, parte residua intra iacente, se tanto paries ad corpus pondere pressit, ut nec extra ullatenus progredi nec interius regredi ualisset. Uxor autem, suspectam habens uiri moram, filium ad quaerendum patrem emisit: cui tantem ibidem inuento nullum penitus liberationis praesidium praestare preualuit. Parochiani uero cum ad ecclesiam in crastino mane solita deuotione conuenissent, latronem tam miraculose compressum et comprehensum uehementer admirantes, eumque extrahere uolentes, absque difficultate qualibet ipsum per se libere egredi, ut ingressus antea fuerat, obstupuerunt; sicque factum est ut beati Aethelberti merita prouincia tota laudaret, et a sacrilegis ausibus tam euidentis ultionis exemplo se prauorum temeritas refranaret.

In pago orientalium Anglorum cui Statesella uocabulum antiquitas dederat, cum dies passionis beati Aethelberti per singulos annos ualde celebrius haberetur, pauper quidam arte sutoria uitam agens (quoniam attritae frontis est egestas, nec quidquam pudet dummodo uiuat) solemnitate minime custodiens pro explenda necessitate miser operi solito sollicitus intendebat. Quem cum uxor sua super hoc excessu saepius argueret, ipse tandem erga illam iracundiae furore permotus, dum minus ob hoc operi, magisque intenderet obiurgationi, dextrum infeliciter oculum acu sutorio perforauit. Qui continuo sancti implorans auxilium, ad ecclesiam eiusdem quanta potuit festinatione properauit: ibique confessione correctus et compunctione fuis aliquamdiu coram altari deuotis orationibus, in ipsoque demum altari oblationibus expositis optatam cum multorum admiratione sanitatem recuperauit.

De milite sanctum Aethelbertum blasphemante diuinitus extincto.

Manebat in confinio loci eiusdem in quo martyris ecclesia constructa fuerat, uir quidam Uitalis nomine qui ex Normannica gente oriundus extiterat. Hic martyrem nostrum innato inter Anglos et Normannos odio quasi tanto indignum honore ac ueneratione reputans, uxorem suam die quodam purificationis suae ad aliam ecclesiam ire fecit, ibique solennes ritus

<sup>174</sup> Gerald, pp. 235-236

ad uictimam suae expiationis offerre. Quo completo remeando Uitalis cum domum militis cuiusdam probitatis eximiae cui nomen Godiscalcus forte intrasset, domina domus eiusdem, Lecelma uocata, quod ecclesiam sancti Aethelberti tam temerario contemptu declinare praesumpserat, instanter arguebat. Ille uero uesano spiritu toruus et quasi in amentiam uersus, "Prius," inquit, "uxorem meam preasepia boum meorum adorare compellerem quam illum quem tu praedicas Aethelbertum." Eoque dicto statim miserrimus ille repentino casu in terram corruit et coram omnibus miserabiliter expirauit.]

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