

## ST EADBURH OF LYMINGE AND HER HAGIOGRAPHER

The following article is concerned with the Latin *Vita* and *Miracula* of a seventh-century abbess called Eadburh, whose remains rested at Lyminge in Kent;<sup>1</sup> it argues that the earliest reconstructible version of these texts was composed at Canterbury, under the patronage of the then archbishop, around the year 1000, by a cleric who is otherwise known to us as the author of the earliest *Vita S. Dunstani* (*BHL* 2342). The *Vita* and *Miracula* are preserved in a twelfth-century legendary in Hereford, but there is another redaction of the *Vita* in a manuscript in Gotha, where it forms part of a longer dossier of interrelated texts. These Gotha texts bring in other saints of Kent (in particular Mildthryth) and recount the foundation of the monastery of Minster-in-Thanel in Kent: they are argued here to be the work of the same late tenth-century author. The original shape which the Lyminge hagiographical dossier took can be reconstructed by means of the indirect evidence of quotations in the writings of the eleventh-century hagiographer and monk of St Augustine's, Canterbury, Goscelin of Saint-Bertin, and thanks to two later compilations of abridgements and excerpts of earlier saints' Lives, by John of Tynemouth and Peter of Cornwall respectively. Editions and translations have been provided at the end of the article.

### I. The *Vita S. Eadburgae* in the Hereford legendary

The earliest witness to the *Vita S. Eadburgae* is a mid-twelfth-century manuscript now in Hereford Cathedral library (P.VII.6). This codex, possibly written at Hereford, is the only survivor of a multi-volume collection of saints' Lives or legendary. It covers feasts for November and December, including a few saints from Anglo-Saxon England: Edmund, king and martyr (the *Passio* by Abbo of Fleury, *BHL* 2392), Birinus of Dorchester (*BHL* 1360), Ecgwine of Evesham (the *Vita* by Dominic, *BHL* 2433)<sup>2</sup>. And tucked in next to St Lucy and

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<sup>1</sup> Some five saints with the name Eadburh are remembered at various places in England and in a range of texts, and some degree of confusion among them has inevitably arisen: for an attempt to list them all, see J. BLAIR, *A Handlist of Anglo-Saxon Saints, in Local Saints and Local Churches in the Early Medieval West*, ed. A. THACKER and R. SHARPE, Oxford, 2002, p. 495–565 at p. 525–7. Two Eadburhs are distinguished in the *Bibliotheca Sanctorum*, 13 vols., Rome, 1961–70, IV, c. 901–2, and three (as Edburga) in D. FARMER, *The Oxford Dictionary of Saints*, fifth revised edition, Oxford, 2011, p. 158. On the Lyminge / Thanet Eadburh, see also B. YORKE, *Eadburh [St Eadburh, Eadburga]*, in *The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, XVII (2004), p. 523.

<sup>2</sup> The contents of this volume have at their core the so-called “Cotton-Corpus Legendary”, an originally continental collection of saints' Lives organised in calendar order which probably reached England in the late

St Paul of Narbonne on 13 December, at fols. 189r to 191r, there is a *Vita Sanctae Eadburgae uirginis* and an account of ten posthumous miracles of the saint, hitherto unpublished in this form<sup>3</sup>.

The *Vita S. Eadburgae* begins thus<sup>4</sup>: *Virgo Dei Edburgis post beate Miltrudis obitum orbatam matre familiam causa regiminis subintrauit* (“God’s virgin, Eadburh, after the death of blessed Mildthryth, went to rule her community, bereft of its mother”) and goes on to identify the saint as *beate Miltrudis proauia, filia Ethelberti primi regis catholice legis atque rectoris anglice gentis* (“the blessed Mildthryth’s *proauia*, daughter of Æthelberht, first king under catholic law and ruler of the English race”), referring to Æthelberht, king of Kent (560–616), the ruler to whom Pope Gregory the Great sent the group of missionaries led by Augustine of Canterbury in 597. That opening — “after the death of Mildthryth...” — has rather the feel of entering *in medias res*, and the location of the community over which Eadburh starts to preside after Mildthryth goes unnamed and remains so throughout the *Vita*, giving the strong impression that the text is an excerpt from something longer. A reader well-informed about the saints of Kent would perhaps have recognised the name *Miltrudis*, or, to give the Old English form, Mildthryth (more usually Latinised as *Mildretha* or *Mildritha*), as an early abbess of Minster-in-Thamet, but in the present context that knowledge is only assumed<sup>5</sup>. There are other ways in which these opening statements make for uncomfortable reading: as we shall have cause to note shortly, King Æthelberht is known to have had one daughter, named Æthelburh, and there is no early record of another called Eadburh. We shall also return later to the further problem of the meaning of the word *proauia* and of Eadburh’s relation to Mildthryth<sup>6</sup>.

Having introduced the saint, without any word about her life or whereabouts before she succeeded Mildthryth, the author, after a few florid sentences about Eadburh’s prayerful longing for union with her Bridegroom, Christ, moves directly to recounting how Eadburh

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tenth century, and began to circulate thereafter; see P. JACKSON and M. LAPIDGE, *The Contents of the Cotton-Corpus Legendary*, in *Holy Men and Holy Women: Old English Prose Saints’ Lives and Their Contexts*, ed. P. SZARMACH, Albany, NY, 1996, p. 131–46. On the Hereford Legendary, see R. C. LOVE, ed. and trans., *Three Eleventh-Century Anglo-Latin Saints’ Lives* (= *Oxford Medieval Texts*), Oxford, 1996, p. xxvi–xxvii, and the list of its contents in R. A. B. MYNORS and R. M. THOMSON, *Catalogue of the Manuscripts of Hereford Cathedral Library*, Woodbridge, 1993, p. 110–12.

<sup>3</sup> See H. FROS, *Inédits non recensés dans la BHL*, in *Analecta Bollandiana*, 102 (1984), p. 163–96, 355–80 at p. 182.

<sup>4</sup> It is perhaps worth noting that the scribe in this manuscript seemed unsure of the spelling of the saint’s name, so that in the first rubric and the explicit we have EADBVRGE (genitive case), then EDBVRGIS in the opening sentence and thereafter for the nominative case; in the miracles we find both EDBVRGIS and once EDBVRGA for nominative, EDBVRGAM for accusative, EDBVRGE for genitive, including in the explicit.

<sup>5</sup> On the identity of Miltrudis/Mildthryth see p. 13–14 below.

<sup>6</sup> See p. 12 below.

built a new church and moved Mildthryth's incorrupt relics into it, but still there is no reference to where that church was, or where the relics had rested up to then. We learn only that Mildthryth's body was placed in a *templum ad plagam aquilonalem oratorii, ubi usque in presentem diem per orationes eius et merita fiunt diuina misteria et miracula* ("a chapel on the north side of the church, where until the present day by her prayers and merits divine mysteries and miracles take place"). There follows a passage describing Eadburh's rejection of material things, except where they could be used to beautify the church, and then the *Vita* ends with her death, but with no mention of her burial or its location. The hagiographer has thus been true to the genre in endowing his saint with a timeless, placeless quality, whether intentionally or not.

## II. The *Miracula S. Eadburgae* in the Hereford legendary

The *Vita S. Eadburgae* is immediately followed in the Hereford legendary by an account of the saint's posthumous miracles, marked off as a separate text with its own *incipit*, more than twice as long as the *Vita*, and apparently by the same author, to judge from the Latin prose style. In this context, the *Vita* has the appearance of being a justificatory preliminary to the main business at hand, the *Miracula*. These miracles focus on St Eadburh's shrine and holy well which, as the text makes abundantly plain, are at Lyminge: the first story involves a sick boy in Wessex who is told in a dream that he will be healed by water *de fonte sancte Edburgis*, "from St Eadburh's spring". His father recalls that he "had passed through the eastern part of Kent and had heard tell that there in the monastery of Lyminge rests St Eadburh"<sup>7</sup>. Subsequent miracles refer to the *sepulchrum beate uirginis* several times and to her altar. When *pagani* (the term usually used by hagiographers writing in England to refer to Vikings) ravage Kent, "all the clerics of Lyminge church" (*omnes Limbiensis ecclesie clerici*) confront them and are killed, save one priest who clings to Eadburh's tomb, but is snatched thence by the heathen, who are punished for their impiety by a bloody purging of the bowels, like the Philistines who stole the Ark of the Covenant (in 1 Samuel). Another time, two men sitting together in the privy start to chat, as is wont to happen, says the hagiographer, and one accuses the other of theft; the latter says, "may God and St Eadburh, whose place I can see now, never let me rise from this seat if I am guilty". Whereupon his guts fall out through his back passage and he dies. The author takes care to clarify that the church "in which the holy

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<sup>7</sup> *se meminit olim ex euentu itineris isse in orientales partes Cantuarie, ibique in Limbiensi monasterio audisse sanctam quiescere Edburgam* (*Miracula S. Eadburgae*, §2). All translations provided in this article are my own.

virgin rested” could be seen from the privy. Whereas the *Vita S. Eadburgae* makes no explicit mention of any place, and certainly not of Lyminge, by contrast, in the narrative frame of the miracles there is little doubt that Eadburh is taken as being powerfully present at her resting-place in Lyminge. A straight reading of the two texts together, with no prior knowledge, would convey the impression that Eadburh had succeeded Mildthryth as abbess at Lyminge. In reality, however, for readers or listeners familiar with St Mildthryth as abbess of Minster-in-Thanel, and not of Lyminge, the *Vita* would seem to sit a little oddly with the *Miracula*.

### *Lyminge and its saints*

Lyminge is 13 miles south of Canterbury. By the eleventh century it was claimed that a monastery had been founded there by Æthelburh, daughter of King Æthelberht of Kent, after her husband, Edwin, king of Northumbria, died in 633 and she fled south. The murder of Edwin and Æthelburh’s return to Kent with Bishop Paulinus are recounted by Bede in the *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum* (II.20), but for whatever reason — possibly lack of information about later events in Kent — he says nothing further about Æthelburh’s life as a widow<sup>8</sup>. The story of the foundation of Lyminge emerges for the first time, at least in surviving record, in the Old English text known as the *Kentish Royal Legend*, preserved in complete form in two eleventh-century manuscripts, with other fragmentary variant versions in two other manuscripts from that century<sup>9</sup>. This text’s focus on the descendants of King Æthelberht of Kent and its use of a term for measuring land which is distinctive to Kent suggest an origin in that area; a cautious view of its date would place its composition in the period between the last securely dateable event it mentions (King Wihtred’s death in 725) and an event it may not have originally mentioned, namely the translation of St Wihtburh to Ely in 974, which is only referred to in a way that suggests that it was a subsequent addition in the surviving copies. The editor of the *Kentish Royal Legend*, Liebermann, was inclined to suggest on linguistic grounds that it is most likely to have been written in the second half of the tenth century, and, on grounds of content and emphasis, at St Augustine’s, Canterbury<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> M. LAPIDGE, ed., and P. CHIESA, trans., *Beda. Storia degli Inglesi*, 2 voll., Rome, 2008–10, I.272–3.

<sup>9</sup> Ed. F. LIEBERMANN, *Die Heiligen Englands*, Hannover, 1889, p. 1–10, with details of the manuscripts at p. IV and XIV. See also D. W. ROLLASON, *The Mildrith Legend. A Study in Early Medieval Hagiography in England*, Leicester, 1982, p. 28–30, 83–4. On the fragmentary variants, see p. 14 and 44 below. The *Kentish Royal Legend* is also referred to in scholarship as *Pa halgan* (Old English for “The Saints”, a phrase that occurs at the start of the earliest manuscript copies) or the *Resting Place of the Saints*. The latter title is not an entirely accurate description of the text’s content and leads to confusion with the more comprehensive Old English list of saints’ resting-places which accompanies the *Kentish Royal Legend* in one of its manuscript witnesses.

<sup>10</sup> LIEBERMANN, *Heiligen*, p. VIII.

Since the exact circumstances in which this Old English text was composed remain uncertain and its location only a conjecture, it is therefore difficult to know how much authority and objectivity to accord it. That is a matter of some frustration since for many details about the saints of early Kent and East Anglia it is the first known record, and certainly it seems to stand in some significant relationship to the Latin texts under discussion here. After recording Æthelburh's marriage to Edwin, the *Kentish Royal Legend* states:

And heo þa æfter Eadwines dæge gesohte Cantwarabirig; and hire broðor Eadbald wæs Cantwara cyninge; and he hire þa forgeaf þæt land on Limene; and heo þa þæt mynster getymbrode, and þar nu resteð, and sancta Eadburh mid hyre<sup>11</sup>.

“And then after Edwin's days, she [Æthelburh] sought Canterbury, and her brother Eadbald was king of the *Cantwara*; and he gave her land in Lyminge; and there she built the minster, and rests there now, and St Eadburh with her”.

The story that Æthelburh founded Lyminge, and was buried there, along with an Eadburh of unspecified identity, then makes its way into eleventh-century Latin hagiography which was probably ultimately indebted to this vernacular source or to a Latin version of it<sup>12</sup>. While recent archaeological excavations have revealed the importance of Lyminge as a centre of royal power throughout the Anglo-Saxon period, and the likelihood that there was a monastic church there from early on, nonetheless Æthelburh's foundation of a monastery there is not regarded as certain because of the relatively late date of the records claiming that she did so<sup>13</sup>.

The fate of the monastic community at Lyminge in the eighth and ninth centuries can be reconstructed from Anglo-Saxon charters, mainly because its landed properties, and the records relating to them, had passed into the control and possession of Christ Church cathedral, Canterbury, at some point before the Norman Conquest, and the Lyminge charters

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<sup>11</sup> LIEBERMANN, *Heiligen*, p. 1.

<sup>12</sup> In particular, Lives of Mildburh and Wærburh, both probably the work of Goscelin of Saint-Bertin. See ROLLASON, *Mildrith Legend*, pp. 25–7 and 80–1, and R. C. LOVE, ed. and trans. *Goscelin of Saint-Bertin. The Hagiography of the Female Saints of Ely* (= *Oxford Medieval Texts*), Oxford, 2004, p. xxvi–xxx. A Latin translation of the *Kentish Royal Legend* seems to have been made in Canterbury (printed by LIEBERMANN, *Heiligen*, p. 2–10), and in the form now preserved (in four manuscripts dating from the twelfth century and later), it seems likely to derive from St Augustine's and at some point after 1035, since the translation's principal divergence from the Old English is to refer to the translation of Mildthryth from Thanet; LIEBERMANN, *Heiligen*, p. 6.

<sup>13</sup> Gabor THOMAS gave an interim report on the excavations at Lyminge in *Life before the minster: the social dynamics of monastic foundation at Anglo-Saxon Lyminge, Kent*, in *Antiquaries Journal* 93 (2013), p. 109–45, but see now also *Monasteries and places of power in pre-Viking England: trajectories, relationships and interactions*, in *Early Medieval Monasticism in the North Sea Zone. Proceedings of a Conference held to celebrate the conclusion of the Lyminge excavations 2008–15*, ed. G. THOMAS and A. KNOX, gen. ed. H. HAMEROW (= *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History*, 20), Oxford, 2017, p. 97–116. For the documentary perspective see S. KELLY, *Lyminge minster and its early charters*, in *The Anglo-Saxons. Studies Presented to Cyril Roy Hart*, ed. S. KEYNES and A. P. SMYTH, Dublin, 2006, p. 98–113.

became part of the cathedral's archive<sup>14</sup>. It seems that at some periods, Lyminge and Minster-in-Thanel were probably under one abbess<sup>15</sup>. In editing the charters, Nicholas Brooks and Susan Kelly noted that by the fifteenth century Christ Church's story was that King Edgar donated Lyminge to Archbishop Dunstan in 964, based on one particular document in the archive relating to that year, but they suggest that the archbishop may already have taken control of Lyminge in the ninth century<sup>16</sup>. Some of the Lyminge charters are genuine and early, but it is also clear that Christ Church sought to take control of Lyminge's history: two charters include a reference to Lyminge as being "where St Eadburh rests" or "where St Eadburh is buried", most unusual in such documents and in each case suspected by Brooks and Kelly to be a clause deliberately inserted into the text of an earlier document<sup>17</sup>.

It is of some interest, then, that the miracles of Eadburh in the Hereford legendary include a striking anecdote, a horror-story for scholars who care about Anglo-Saxon charters. The tale opens thus:

Tempore quodam contigit beate Dorobernensis ecclesie archiepiscopum quam plures habere superuacuas et inutiles terrarum cartulas, quas in unum colligens ut igne illas deleret, arripuit ignorans cum prefatis cartulis etiam cartulam circumcingentem beate EDBVRGE territorium, eamque simul cum aliis cuidam de astantibus ad comburendum dedit<sup>18</sup>.

Needless to say, the charter relating to Lyminge did not burn and the archbishop realised that the saint herself had kept it safe. What are we meant to conclude from this story? The narrative is, in essence, simply a variant of the well-known hagiographical topos that something belonging to a saint is miraculously preserved from fire, but this tale is surely about more than that. The hagiographer wishes to emphasise that the Lyminge charter survived men's neglect and must be venerable, and that the woman to whose lands it pertained is a powerful worker of miracles. One wonders what should be understood by *superuacuas et inutiles ... cartulas*: charters that have presumably been superseded in some

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<sup>14</sup> N. BROOKS and S. KELLY, *Charters of Christ Church, Canterbury*, 2 voll. (= *Anglo-Saxon Charters* 17–18), Oxford, 2013, I.28–35. See also S. FOOT, *Veiled Women II Female Religious Communities in England, 871–1066*, Aldershot, 2000, p. 111–15.

<sup>15</sup> KELLY, *Lyminge minster*, p. 112, and BROOKS and KELLY, *Charters of Christ Church*, I.465.

<sup>16</sup> BROOKS and KELLY, *Charters of Christ Church*, I.34.

<sup>17</sup> BROOKS and KELLY, *Charters of Christ Church*, I.465; see also KELLY, *Lyminge Minster and its Early Charters*, p. 102. It is perhaps worth noting that what may be the first appearance of the Lyminge Eadburh in a liturgical calendar in England is as a twelfth-century addition (*Edburgis uirg.*) to 13 December in the eleventh-century Christ Church, Canterbury, calendar in London, British Library Arundel 155, fol. 7v; see F. WORMALD, *English Kalendars before A.D. 1100* (= *Henry Bradshaw Society*), London, 1934, p. 181.

<sup>18</sup> "On one occasion, it so happened that the archbishop of the blessed church of Canterbury had several redundant and useless land-charters, and in gathering them up together to consign them to the flames, among those charters he also unknowingly took hold of one delimiting blessed Eadburh's land [i.e. a set of charter bounds] and handed it over to one of those who was attending him, for burning with the rest".

way, or which are for lands no longer in the archbishop's possession, unlike the Lyminge document, the hagiographer reminds us. We are given no explanation for the archbishop's possession of a charter relating to Eadburh's land, but the implication would be that the story relates to a time after Lyminge came under archiepiscopal control. The hagiographer thus not only highlights Eadburh's efficacy as a miracle-worker and posthumous protector of Lyminge, but also shows that the archbishop was duly cognisant of the power of a saint in whose church he had a direct interest.

One final point needs to be made about the way the *Miracula S. Eadburgae* refer to Eadburh's connection to Lyminge. In the story we have just looked at, it is noteworthy that the land to which the non-burning charter relates is called *beate EDBVRGE territorium*. Almost all the other references to the saint mention her tomb or altar, or the church "where she rests", but nowhere else is it explicitly stated that the monastery or the church was "of St Eadburh". What we do find is two references to "her" priest: the first is in the story of a priest punished for neglecting her "place or relics" (*locum uel reliquias*), which specifies that he is *prefati monasterii ac beate uirginis sacerdos* ("a priest of the aforementioned monastery and of the blessed virgin"). The final miracle, concerning a boy who finds lost keys, states that in later life he became "the priest of that same blessed Eadburh" (*eiusdem beate Edburge ... sacerdos*). The important point to establish is whether the author of the miracle-collection believed he was writing about the patroness of the church at Lyminge (and possibly therefore also its supposed foundress, Æthelburh): the references to "her" priests and "her" territory seem to imply that, but it is striking that the monastery or church are never said explicitly to be hers. This is a matter to which we shall need to return.

#### *The purpose of the Miracula S. Eadburgae*

A few themes emerge from these ten miracle-stories which are worth noting at this point, in the interests of gaining a better understanding of the hagiographer's purposes in recording them. Judged superficially the collection is rather commonplace: healings, visions, punishments, the like of which were produced ever more voluminously in England from the late tenth century onwards for English saints like Swithun, Edmund, Dunstan, and later for Augustine of Canterbury, Edith of Wilton and so on. Yet at the same time, several of these stories are framed in unusual ways. The author's introductory remarks strike an odd tone. He imagines someone asking why God allows certain saints to perform miracles in their life-time and not others. His answer is that God knows that some people would let miraculous powers

to go to their head and would thus lose the virtue of humility. So, He only grants in-life miracles to those whom He knows are strong enough: *sanctos suos quos firmos ac stabiles esse persenserit* (“those saints whom He has identified as dependable and steady”). Those He knows are weaker (*infirmiores*), He protects against pride, by granting only posthumous miracles. The author then immediately says: accordingly (*Ergo*), after her death God allowed Eadburh’s merit to be made public. We might immediately conclude that God regarded Eadburh as weaker: she is a woman, after all. Of course, arguments of this nature, about miracles, had been advanced by earlier writers, for example Gregory of Tours, who suggested that posthumous miracles are better because they lack the “stain” of anything earthly, one kind of earthly blemish being precisely vainglory at a miracle done by a saint during his life<sup>19</sup>. So perhaps these comments, though a little inept, were not meant deliberately to reflect poorly on Eadburh’s character. Rather, they cover up another truth, plain enough from the preceding *Vita*, that the author knows little about Eadburh and cannot recount any miracles that she did while alive.

The first miracle story proper also seems full of ambiguity. As already mentioned, it involves a sick boy in Wessex who dreams that he will be healed by drinking from St Eadburh’s well. Waking, he asks for such a drink, but his family have never heard of Eadburh; his father thinks through all the English saints he knows and cannot recall a saint of that name, not even female. Eventually, though, the father does remember hearing about a St Eadburh at Lyminge, on a trip through Kent. But, he says, it is too far to fetch water from there. The boy becomes desperate, so the family draw water from the local well and pass it off as being from St Eadburh’s. The lad says the Lord’s Prayer over the cup, signs it with the cross in the name of Christ and Eadburh, drinks and is healed. There is something faintly unsatisfactory about the family’s pragmatic approach, undercutting what one would think is the important point, that a trip to Lyminge is essential. We are to conclude, one supposes, that the very invocation of Eadburh’s name is enough: she has the power to work at a distance.

Next comes the unstopping of the dumb at the shrine, and then the strange story of a nun at prayer who sees Eadburh’s altar lift up and drop back down again, interpreted as a sort

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<sup>19</sup> Gregory of Tours, *Liber Vitae Patrum* 2.2, ed. B. KRUSCH, *Gregorii Episcopi Turonensis Miracula et Opera Minora* (= *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores Rerum Merovingicarum* 1.2), Hannover, 1885, p. 219: *magis proficit ad laudem uirtus egressa de tumulo, quam ea quae quisquam uiuens gessit in mundo; quia illa labem habere potuerunt per assidua mundanae occupationis impedimenta, haec uero omnem labem ad liquidum caruerunt* (“miraculous power emerging from the tomb is more useful for gaining praise than the things someone living has done in the world, because the latter could have the blemish of the constant hindrances of earthly preoccupation, but the latter clearly lacked any blemish”). *Labes* is elsewhere used of vainglory – at 2.10 a saint cuts down a tree that sprung up from a staff he planted, *ne uanae gloriae labe subrueret* (“lest he succumb to the blemish of vainglory”), KRUSCH, p. 258.



of divine pun about saintly *subvention* and the lifting of sin's burden. Then follows a miracle of retribution in which the priest of Lyminge pays for neglecting Eadburh's relics. Demonic figures are seen torturing him, yet the saint mercifully rescues him from his hellish fate, though he is left blinded. Neglect of the saints is a kind of blindness, but it is also foolish to ignore admonitory visions. Neglect also seems at first to be the theme of the story which comes at the mid-way point in the text: the focus shifts away from Lyminge again, to show the archbishop of Canterbury burning "redundant and useless" charters, as already mentioned. His carelessness is turned to recognition of the power of Eadburh to protect her own interests. There follow two further healings, one at Eadburh's shrine at Eastertide, and one from her holy water, this time genuine. Next comes the story of Lyminge and the Vikings, a cautionary tale about disrespecting the saint. The author's scatological train of thought then turns to the two men talking in the latrine, also a lesson about disrespecting the saint, this time by taking her name in vain, a common theme among miracle collections. Finally, we have another miracle worked at a distance: a boy somewhere in France loses some keys and after praying to Eadburh, finds them again, right at his feet; on the face of it this is stunningly trivial, and takes place in many a household every morning. The author ends with the standard claim that he could have said more, and notes that healings happen when wax in the shape of affected body parts is offered at Eadburh's shrine.

Thus, with admirable economy the author contrives to give the impression of a thriving cult: healings, at a distance and by incubation at the shrine, miracles associated with holy water, an example of the saint's power to help those in difficulty who call on her, punitive miracles that warn against taking the saint's name in vain or disrespecting her; and proof of the patroness's power to protect her territory at least indirectly, by protecting the document which defines it. Two men healed, two women. Yet, if there is a discernible subtext to the collection of stories, it is that the people at Lyminge — the idle priest, the man on the privy — were a little inclined to neglect or disrespect Eadburh and that she was not widely known (at any rate, they had not heard of her in Wessex), but that she was nonetheless powerfully miracle-working, to the extent that she could be invoked at a distance (witness the two miracles which begin and end the collection). The *Miracula* celebrate a saint whose historical identity might seem to have mattered less than her full repertoire of posthumous

patronage<sup>20</sup>. The story of the archbishop burning charters points towards the person and the institution most likely to have an interest in recording her miracles on behalf of Lyminge.

The Hereford *Vita* and *Miracula* do not refer to any named people or places — other than Eadburh, Mildthryth and Lyminge in Kent — or to any specific events which would help to date the text's original composition earlier than the twelfth-century production of the Hereford legendary. The reference to *pagani* devastating almost the whole of Kent doubtless refers to Viking attacks, but not in a way that allows for precision about the distance from which the author was viewing that event. Similarly, the scene with the archbishop and the charters suggests that the text post-dates the acquisition of Lyminge, but, unfortunately, there is no certainty about when that occurred, since the official Christ Church line, that the gift was made by King Edgar in 964, is only a late tradition, as mentioned above. The one certainty is that Eadburh is assumed still to be working miracles at the time of writing, with the further assumption, admittedly tacit, that she does so at Lyminge — it is an unspoken assumption simply because the author does not use any phrase such as “where she still lies today”. The Hereford *Vita* and *Miracula* make no reference to a translation of Eadburh's relics to, or from, Lyminge. For that, we need to turn to other sources.

### III. St Eadburh in Gotha, Forschungsbibliothek MS. I.81

While the Hereford legendary preserves the only complete and unabridged copy of the *Miracula S. Eadburgae*, there is another surviving copy of the *Vita*. It occurs in a fourteenth-century hagiographical compilation, Gotha, Forschungsbibliothek I.81, which was written somewhere in England<sup>21</sup>. At fols. 185v–188v there is a text with the overall title *Vita Sanctorum Aethelredi et Aethelberti martyrum et sanctarum uirginum Miltrudis et Edburgis Idus Decembris*, made up, in fact, of three distinct sections, of which the *Vita S. Eadburgae* is the second<sup>22</sup>. Since the other sections also touch upon Eadburh, there is some merit in

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<sup>20</sup> In *Flesh Made Word. Saints' Stories and the Western Imagination*, Cambridge, MA, 2008, Aviad KLEINBERG observed that the cult of relics does not necessarily need precision with regard to the holy person behind the miracles: “the consumers of holy powers do not need detailed knowledge about the *source* of power, just as in general we do not seek to learn the biography of our physician before seeking his advice .... The plate affixed to his door, the certificate on the wall of his office, and his reputation are all we need” (p. 192).

<sup>21</sup> For a catalogue of the contents of Gotha I.81, see P. GROSJEAN, *De codice hagiographico Gothano*, in *Analecta Bollandiana* 58 (1940), p. 90–103. A cluster of saints connected with Cornwall, Devon and Dorset might suggest that Gotha I.81 derives from South-West England, but in fact, the collection ranges much more widely from a geographical point of view, also covering East Anglia (Sts Edmund and Guthlac) and Northumbria (Sts Cuthbert, Oswald, Oswine) as well as the Midlands.

<sup>22</sup> The composite text was first discovered and printed by M. L. COLKER, *A Hagiographic Polemic*, in *Mediaeval Studies* 39 (1977), p. 60–108. The parts of the text are listed separately in *BHL* as nos. 2644ab and 5964b (where the account of the life of Mildthryth has been separated out from the martyrdom of Æthelred and

considering them in turn here; it will be argued in due course that all but the third section, recounting the translation of the relics of “Miltrudis” and “Eadburgis” in 1085, are by the same author. As an aside, it is interesting to note there was undoubtedly once another copy of this composite text in a now-lost portion of the twelfth-century legendary of St Werburgh’s, Chester: the only survivor of the original four volumes is London, Grays Inn, 3 which has, on inserted fly-leaves, a sixteenth-century alphabetical inventory of the contents of the whole legendary.<sup>23</sup> Recorded for fol. 51 of the lost volume 3 is ‘P. S. Eadelredi atque Eadalberti Milreidis et Eadburge, 12 Dec.’

*The Passion of Æthelred and Æthelberht, martyrs (BHL 2644b)*

The opening section of the composite text rolls together narratives which later came to have a separate circulation: of these the first is a short account of the murder of two *innocentes tirones* (“innocent young warriors”), Æthelred and Æthelberht, leading to the foundation of a monastic community on the island of Thanet by a woman whom the author calls the martyred saints’ sister, “Eormenburh, by another name Domneva”<sup>24</sup>. She finds the monastery on land given as an act of expiation by King Ecgberht of Kent (664–73), cousin to the two young men and the instigator of their murder<sup>25</sup>. The author’s fundamental concern with Eadburh is betrayed by the fact that after introducing the martyrs and Ecgberht’s desire for their death, he places them specifically in relation to her:

Fuerunt namque et ipsi ex beate Edburgis gloriose uirginis prosapia, que tunc temporis deifica in diuinis laudibus habebatur, nepotes quidem eiusdem uenerande Edburgis. Ipsa autem extitit illis proauia et uite felicis exemplum<sup>26</sup>.

The martyrs Æthelred and Æthelberht are mentioned for the first time, it would seem, in the Old English *Kentish Royal Legend* (see p. 4 above) where they are described as the sons of

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Æthelberht – the text itself does not truly distinguish the two), 2384a (Eadburh), and 5961a (the translation); hereafter the three parts will be referred to as *Vita S. Aethelredi et Aethelberti martyrum et S. Miltrudis* (=VAAM), *Vita S. Eadburgae* (VE), and *Translatio SS. Miltrudis et Eadburgis*. It is noteworthy that the text is assigned to 13 December, which later appears as the feast-day for Eadburh at Canterbury; see note 17 above. St Mildthryth’s feast-day is recorded in most early English calendars as 13 July.

<sup>23</sup> See N. R. KER, *Medieval Libraries of Great Britain. A List of Surviving Books*, 2nd edition, London, 1964, p. 49–50 and for a transcription of the inventory N. R. KER, *Medieval Manuscripts in British Libraries*, vols. I–III, and, with A. J. PIPER, vol. IV, Oxford, 1969–92, I, p. 52–5.

<sup>24</sup> *Ermenbergam, alio nomine Domneuum uocatam*. On the significance of her two names, see note 31 below.

<sup>25</sup> BHL 2644ab, ed. COLKER, *A Hagiographic Polemic*, p. 97–99, with a summary in English on p. 67. See also the discussion and summary by ROLLASON, *Mildrith Legend*, p. 21–5, 79–80.

<sup>26</sup> “For they were from the stock of the blessed Eadburh, glorious virgin, who at that time was regarded as godly in her divine praises; indeed, they were the *nepotes* of that same venerable Eadburh. She was their *proauia* and an example of blessed living”.

Eormenred, son of Eadbald (king of Kent, 616–40) and grandson of Æthelberht, king of Kent<sup>27</sup>. The relational term used of them in our Latin text – *nepotes* – can be interpreted variously as “grandson” or “nephew” or even just “kinsman” or “descendant”. How, then, is Eadburh made to fit into their family tree? The rare word *proauia*, applied to her, can mean great-grandmother, but grandfather’s sister is also an attested meaning. Our author is unlikely to have intended to place Eadburh as the martyrs’ great grandmother (who, at least on their father’s side, was King Æthelbert’s queen, Bertha), and some kind of aunt seems closer to the mark. In fact, Æthelburh, King Edwin’s queen and supposed foundress of Lyminge, would be the martyrs’ grandfather’s sister. The author thus seems to put his Eadburh on the same branch of the genealogy as Æthelburh, daughter of Æthelberht of Kent, without saying that they are one and the same woman.

*The Vita S. Miltrudis (BHL 5964b)*

Without even an enlarged capital letter to mark a new section of the text, the narrative in Gotha I.81 flows seamlessly from Domneva’s establishment of Minster-in-Thanel into a short Life of “Miltrudis” (*BHL 5964b*), that is, Mildthryth, Domneva’s daughter and the niece of the two martyrs. We will consider the *Vita* separately now, but for the remainder of the article it will be assumed that the lack of a break between the account of Mildthryth and the material preceding it was the author’s original intention. The *Vita* recounts Mildthryth’s visit to Gaul for the purposes of study, after which she returns home and takes the veil at the hand of Theodore, archbishop of Canterbury (668–90). Following her mother’s death, she succeeds her as abbess at Minster-in-Thanel. The author then describes a few miracles that occurred during her life, as evidence of Mildthryth’s holiness and virginal status, and then concludes with her death<sup>28</sup>. Again, during the course of the narrative he ensures that Eadburh retains prominence:

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<sup>27</sup> LIEBERMANN, *Heiligen*, p. 1. See the family tree in ROLLASON, *Mildrith Legend*, p. 45. Although Eormenred is sometimes referred to as a king of Kent, our earliest source for the rulers of the early Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, Bede’s *Historia ecclesiastica* (hereafter *HE*), does not mention him at all, reporting only that on Eadbald’s death in 640, he was succeeded by his son Earconberht, “who ruled most nobly for twenty-four years” (*HE* III.8.1; ed. LAPIDGE II.40) and was followed, upon his death in 664, by his son Ecgberht, “who occupied the throne for nine years” (*HE* IV.1.1; ed. LAPIDGE II.164); this is the Ecgberht described here as the martyrs’ cousin, who wished them dead. The *Kentish Royal Legend* refers to Earconberht as *cyningc* (“king”) of Kent, and to Eormenred his brother as *æthelingc* (“prince”).

<sup>28</sup> COLKER, *A Hagiographic Polemic*, p. 99–103; and cf. ROLLASON, *Mildrith Legend*, p. 79.

Maxime uero iam dicte uirginis uigor, postquam nota litora iterato reuisit, beate Edburgis, quantum estimatur a nobis, solidabatur hortatu uel exemplo<sup>29</sup>.

He does not state what the family relation of the two women was, or rather, does not restate it, since he has already established at the beginning of the dossier that Eadburh was the *proauia* of Mildthryth's martyred uncles. We are also not told why Eadburh should have been an especial encouragement to Mildthryth, or where she was at this time. Before we move on to look in detail at the version of the *Vita S. Eadburgae* in Gotha I.81, it seems appropriate now to turn aside briefly to set the *Vita* of Mildthryth and the story of the founding of Minster-in-Thanet in context.

### *St Mildthryth, Thanet, and St Augustine's, Canterbury*

Roughly the same distance as Lyminge lies south of Canterbury, to the north-east of it is Minster-in-Thanet, where the church also claimed early and royal origins. Somewhat more certainty surrounds the early history of Minster-in-Thanet than that of Lyminge, thanks to the survival of its early authentic charters, but its foundation legend occurs in the same sources as that of Lyminge, and in others more or less related to them<sup>30</sup>: the narrative we have just considered in Gotha I.81, the *Vita Sanctorum Aethelredi et Aethelberti martyrum*, is one such. Possibly the earliest reference to the foundation occurs within the *Kentish Royal Legend*, already mentioned. There we learn that one of the daughters of Eormenred (King Æthelbert's grandson), called Eormenburh and "by another name Domneua" (*oðer nama Domne Eue*), after the death of her husband Merewalh (king of the Magonsæte, a kingdom later subsumed into Mercia), returned home to Kent and established a monastery on the island of Thanet, on land given to her in recompense for the murder of her brothers, Æthelred and Æthelberht<sup>31</sup>.

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<sup>29</sup> "After she returned again to well-known shores, the vigour of the already-mentioned virgin was especially strengthened, as we may imagine, by the encouragement and example of blessed Eadburh."

<sup>30</sup> ROLLASON, *Mildrith Legend*, p. 33–51; see also S. KELLY, ed., *Charters of St Augustine's Abbey, Canterbury and Minster-in-Thanet* (= *Anglo-Saxon Charters*, 4), Oxford, 1995, p. xxv–xxx. For an extensive discussion, arguing that the foundation legend originated at Minster-in-Thanet with Abbess Eadburh, see S. HOLLIS, *The Minster-in-Thanet foundation story*, in *Anglo-Saxon England* 27 (1998), p. 41–64.

<sup>31</sup> LIEBERMANN, *Heiligen*, p. 1–2. Eormenburh's other name, here *Domne Eue* and in another Old English text *Domne Eafe*, Latinised to *Domneua*, seems to be the honorific *Dom(i)na* followed by a later development of the Old English name Æbbe, whom the genuine charters of Minster-in-Thanet name as an abbess in the late 680s and 690s: see KELLY, *Charters of St Augustine's Abbey*, p. xxv. It is not clear why Eormenburh was also called "Lady Æbbe": scholars have suggested that these were in reality two separate women, merged through confusion at an early stage; see ROLLASON, *Mildrith Legend*, p. 39–40 (and the family tree on p. 45), and also Kelly, *Charters of St Augustine's*, p. 42, who argues from the evidence of a charter which lists four abbesses as being present at a synod, of whom two are called *Aeaba* and *Irminburga*.

Eormenburh/Domneva was followed as abbess at Minster-in-Thanet by her daughter, Mildthryth, who was buried at Minster-in-Thanet and came to be venerated as a saint<sup>32</sup>.

We shall examine the details of this Old English narrative and its relationship to the composite text in Gotha I.81 in due course. For now, it is important to take note of what the *Kentish Royal Legend* reports next, after mentioning Mildthryth:

And sancte Eadburh þa to þam mynstre fengc æfter sancte Myldriðe and heo þa circan  
gesette, þe heora lichama nu on resteð<sup>33</sup>.

“And St Eadburh then took over the minster after St Mildthryth and she made the church in which her [Mildthryth’s] body now rests”.

Almost exactly the same statement is repeated in the first of two fragmentary variant versions of the *Kentish Royal Legend* preserved on leaves of an eleventh-century manuscript now in Lambeth Palace Library (hence called the “Lambeth Fragments”). These appear to expand on the core material in the *Kentish Royal Legend*, possibly reflecting the interests of yet another early monastic foundation in the area, Minster-in-Sheppey<sup>34</sup>. It should be noted that neither of these Old English texts says who Eadburh was or how she was related to Mildthryth. What does seem clear, though, from the surviving charters of Minster-in-Thanet which were absorbed into the archive of St Augustine’s, is that Mildthryth did indeed have a successor as abbess who was called Eadburh: she appears as the beneficiary of a charter from 748 which is accepted as authentic<sup>35</sup>. Stephanie Hollis has suggested that it was this Abbess Eadburh who made the very deliberate gesture of elevating Mildthryth’s body at Thanet, effectively a means of initiating her cult<sup>36</sup>; her actions would thus be a close parallel to the more famous translation of St Æthelthryth at Ely performed by her sister, Abbess Seaxburh, as recorded by Bede<sup>37</sup>.

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<sup>32</sup> ROLLASON, *Mildrith Legend*, p. 73–85.

<sup>33</sup> LIEBERMANN, *Heiligen*, p. 5.

<sup>34</sup> The Lambeth fragments were printed by M. J. SWANTON, *A fragmentary Life of St. Mildred and other Kentish Royal Saints*, in *Archaeologia Cantiana* 91 (1975), p. 15–27, at p. 26–7, with the reference to Eadburh on p. 27. See also ROLLASON, *Mildrith Legend*, p. 29–30.

<sup>35</sup> See KELLY, *The Charters of St Augustine’s*, p. 175–8, and also p. xxvi. The charter refers to Eadburh’s construction of a second minster on Thanet, dedicated to Peter and Paul, and also to her translation of Mildthryth’s body into that minster, clauses which Kelly suggests may have been a later interpolation (p. 177).

<sup>36</sup> HOLLIS, *The Minster-in-Thanet foundation story*, p. 45. It was long thought that this Abbess Eadburh was the woman of that name (also referred to as Bugga) with whom Wynfrith/Boniface corresponded before and after departing to the German mission fields; that is the identification made in the edition of the letters: see M. TANGL, ed., *S. Bonifatii et Lullii Epistolae* (= *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Epistolae Selectae* I), Berlin, 1916, p. 8 note 1 and discussion by C. FELL, *Some implications of the Bonifatian Correspondence*, in *New Readings on Women in Old English Literature*, ed. H. DAMICO and A. H. OLSEN, Bloomington, IN, 1990, p. 29–43. For doubts about the identification see KELLY, *Charters of St Augustine’s*, p. xxvi, and a categorical rejection of it by BLAIR, *A Handlist of Anglo-Saxon Saints*, p. 526.

<sup>37</sup> Bede, *HE* IV.17, ed. LAPIDGE, II.248–51.

The monks of St Augustine’s Abbey in Canterbury reckoned to have acquired Mildthryth’s relics from Minster-in-Thanel in 1035, thanks to the actions of the abbot at the time, Ælfstan. That part of Kent, including the vulnerable island of Thanet, had already been subjected to Viking attacks in the 990s, as recorded in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. It would, therefore, have seemed entirely reasonable to take the precious remains of a founding abbess into safe-keeping. The translation is described in Latin by the foremost hagiographer of eleventh-century England, Goscelin of Saint-Bertin, who wrote his *Translatio et miracula S. Mildrethae* in the early 1090s. With rich detail and rhetorical flourish Goscelin describes Abbot Ælfstan’s arrival at Thanet, the dramatic opening of the tomb, and the removal and transfer of the body<sup>38</sup>. Goscelin also composed a *Vita S. Mildrethae*, probably at about the same time<sup>39</sup>. St Augustine’s thereby became the jealous guardian of Mildthryth’s story and Goscelin its vigorous spokesman, as we shall see below. First, though, we should resume our examination of the component parts of the hagiographical dossier in Gotha I.81.

*The Vita S. Eadburgae (BHL 2384a)*

The *Vita S. Miltrudis* is followed in the Gotha manuscript by a *Vita* of Eadburh (*BHL* 2384a), not this time seamlessly, since the account of Mildthryth concludes with an ascription of glory and an Amen, though not an *explicit*<sup>40</sup>. The Eadburh *Vita* lacks any *incipit* and simply begins, heralded only by a large coloured initial P. The author’s opening statement is that Eadburh became abbess upon the death of Mildthryth, and he then describes Eadburh:

Fuit autem uirgo uenerabilis Eadburgis beate Miltrudis proauia, filia quidem Athelberti, primi regis catholice legis atque rectoris Anglice gentis et Berte regine<sup>41</sup>.

As one reads on, it becomes clear that we are looking at another recension of the text preserved in the Hereford legendary: the narrative content is identical (Eadburh succeeds Mildthryth as abbess, builds a new church into which she translates her predecessor’s incorrupt body, and after a prayerful life, she dies) and the great proportion of the text matches word-for-word. But it is not quite identical, prompting the question of how the two

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<sup>38</sup> Ed. D. W. ROLLASON, *Goscelin of Canterbury’s Account of the Translation and Miracles of St Mildrith (BHL 5961/4): an Edition with Notes*, in *Mediaeval Studies*, 48 (1986), p. 139–210 at p. 170–76.

<sup>39</sup> *BHL* 5960; ed. ROLLASON, *Mildrith Legend*, p. 108–43. It is interesting to note that an abbreviated version of Goscelin’s *Vita S. Mildrethae* is the text which immediately precedes the Lyminge dossier in Gotha I.81, at fos. 178v–185v.

<sup>40</sup> Gotha I.81, fol. 187r. COLKER, *A Hagiographic Polemic*, p. 103–7.

<sup>41</sup> “This venerable virgin Eadburh was the *proauia* of the blessed Mildthryth, indeed daughter of Æthelberht, first king under catholic law and ruler of the English race and of Queen Bertha”.

recensions are related: the seemingly contradictory evidence does not supply an instant answer.

As a first point, it is worth noting that the opening sentence of the Gotha version — *Post beati Miltrudis consummacionem et obitum beata uirgo Eadburgis orbatam matre familiam causa regiminis subintrauit* (“After the final union and death of blessed Mildthryth, the blessed virgin Eadburh went to rule her community, bereft of its mother”) — just like that of the Hereford version, lacks any reference to the place where Eadburh succeeds Mildthryth. The key difference, however, is that the *Vita* in Gotha I.81 immediately follows the *Vita* of Mildthryth and the story of the martyrs Æthelred and Æthelberht, which mentions Thanet, albeit just once, so that the clear assumption, as the story flows on from section to section, would be that Minster-in-Thalet is where Eadburh was abbess after Mildthryth and where she built a new church for her predecessor’s relics. The context in Gotha I.81 also means that the opening of the *Vita S. Eadburgae* reads as a much less abrupt way to begin than in the Hereford version. This suggests that the version in the Hereford manuscript was an excerpt from the longer form of the dossier, pulling out the section most obviously and explicitly about Eadburh. The Passion of the martyrs and the Life of Mildthryth may, of course, likewise have been excerpted separately in the other presumably lost volumes of the Hereford legendary covering July and October feasts. Another difference between the two recensions which might support this conclusion is the fact that one of the passages present in Gotha I.81 and not in Hereford P.VII.6 expands upon Mildthryth’s out-poured prayers as the reason why her body was found incorrupt when Eadburh exhumed it. One can easily imagine why that portion of text might have been deliberately omitted in the Hereford copy.

We can move from the wider context to consider the structure of the two recensions of the *Vita* in more detail. The version in Gotha is a little longer (by some 200 words), largely thanks to a handful of passages which do not contain extra, or substantially different, narrative content, only rhetorical padding. The two versions differ most significantly in the opening sections. Gotha I.81, after introducing the saint and her lineage in the same terms as Hereford P.VII.6, includes a section on the meaning of the names of Eadburh’s supposed parents, Æthelberht and Bertha (though oddly, not Eadburh’s own name), and then at more length on the righteousness of their many descendants. The Hereford version instead moves straight from introducing Eadburh to a conventional account, in somewhat florid language, of her baptism and longing for union with Christ, her Bridegroom. This passage, not paralleled in the Gotha version, includes an oblique reference to the meaning of Eadburh’s name in Old English: she sought baptism, “so that she might become God’s blessed city” (Old English *ead*



meaning “blessed” and *burh* meaning “city”), but conversely, says nothing about the meaning of her parents’ names. That section in the Hereford version concludes by quoting Matthew 11:28 (“Come unto me, all ye who are heavy laden...”) and the next paragraph begins, “The Blessed Virgin Eadburh heard the sound of this Gospel cry...” Here the Gotha version returns to running in close parallel, but opens the section “The Blessed Virgin Eadburh heard the sound of His cry”, omitting the reference to the Gospel, since the immediately preceding text in Gotha I.81 instead of quoting Matthew, refers to the holy descendants of King Æthelberht and Bertha: “they would deserve to look upon the glory and face of the eternal King, the power and majesty of the Lord God for everlasting ages”. Thus, the neat sequitur in the Hereford version becomes a slightly awkward near non-sequitur in the Gotha version, suggesting that the latter represents an attempt to rearrange something that was like the former. This conclusion might seem to run counter to our observation that the Hereford version looks like an excerpt from something longer. In fact, however, one could posit a common predecessor for the two redactions, namely a version with Eadburh in the setting of the Lyminge dossier as a whole, which was on the one hand expanded and lightly rewritten to create the Gotha version, and on the other quarried to produce Hereford’s version with its narrower focus on Eadburh alone. The portions of text unique to Gotha and Hereford are not in a style of Latin prose that is out of step with the rest of the text, so that we cannot exclude the possibility that alternative versions made by the same author.

*John of Tynemouth’s abridgement of the Vita S. Eadburgae*

In pondering the relationship between the two recensions of the *Vita* discussed so far, it is helpful to draw in evidence from another witness to the *Vita S. Eadburgae*, namely the abbreviated version which John of Tynemouth included in his ambitious national legendary, the *Sanctilogium Angliae, Walliae, Scotiae et Hiberniae*, compiled in the early fourteenth century<sup>42</sup>. When one compares John’s version of the *Vita* with the other two, it matches neither of them exactly, at times following one, at times the other, sharing material which is unique to each of them. Particularly noticeable is the treatment of Eadburh’s name, referred to only obliquely in the Hereford version and seemingly displaced by a play on her parents’ names in Gotha I.81. John of Tynemouth, immediately after introducing the text in a form nearly identical to the Gotha version (*Post sancte Mildrede consummationem virgo nobilis Edburga...*), has this, with no direct parallel in either of the other versions:

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<sup>42</sup> C. HORSTMAN, ed., *Nova Legenda Angliae*, 2 voll., Oxford, 1901, I.308–11; *BHL* 2384.

Nomen enim Edburge ex corrupto et integro compositum, “beata ciuitas” interpretatur. Beata quippe ciuitas est, in qua sibi dominus sedem habitationis preparans, armis sue potentie ab inimicorum impugnationibus defendit<sup>43</sup>.

John then passes on to mention Eadburh’s baptism in terms closely mirroring the portion of text that is only in the Hereford version. Either we are looking at John’s own conflation of more than one version of the *Vita*, or alternatively and more likely, the copy he saw was yet another recension, or perhaps, the earlier form of the text that I have suggested lay behind the Gotha and Hereford recensions. It is striking that John’s explicit statement about Eadburh’s name is only implicit in the Hereford version, suggesting that the latter had cut out some portion of text that was in their common source. We will have cause to return to John of Tynemouth shortly, but first the last part of the materials in Gotha I.81 claims our attention.

*The Translatio SS. Miltrudis et Edburgis (BHL 5961a)*

The *Vita* of Eadburh in the Gotha manuscript concludes with the same words as the version in the Hereford legendary, ending with a doxology. Where the miracles of Eadburh at Lyminge follow immediately in Hereford P.VII.6, in Gotha I.81 a red capital E marks the start of a short account of the translation of the bodies of “Miltrudis” and “Eadburgis”, stating that they were exhumed at Lyminge, upon the instructions of Lanfranc, archbishop of Canterbury (1070–89), and taken to Canterbury. This is the only section of the materials in Gotha I.81 which has a clearly stated date, 1085:

Anno igitur ab incarnatione domini nostri Ihesu Christi millesimo octogesimo quinto, indicione octaua, regnante in Anglia uictorioso rege Willelmo, presidente in magna gloria sancte Dorobernensis ecclesie uiro gloriosissimo ac per omnia sapientissimo Lanfranco archiepiscopo, eleuatae sunt reliquiae beatarum uirginum Miltrudis atque Eadburgis, ac de loco Lymminge [MS Lynminge] uocato, ubi diu conditae fuerant, cum magno prosequentis populi tripudio Cantuariam translatae.<sup>44</sup>

The text goes on to specify that the relics were installed in the church of St Gregory at Canterbury, “which Lanfranc had erected a short time previously for the benefit of the poor”

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<sup>43</sup> “For the name Eadburh, made up of that which has become corrupt and that which is whole, means “blessed city”. Indeed, it is a blessed city in which the Lord, in preparing for Himself the seat of His habitation, makes defence with the weapons of His might against the assaults of enemies”.

<sup>44</sup> “In the one thousand and eighty-fifth year from the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ, in the eighth indiction, in the reign in England of the victorious King William, with Archbishop Lanfranc presiding in great glory over the holy church of Canterbury, a man most glorious and wise in every regard, the relics of the virgins Mildthryth and Eadburh were raised up, and translated from the place called Lyminge, where they had been buried for a long time, to Canterbury, to the great rejoicing of the attending populace”.

(*quam Lanfrancus paulo ante ad pauperum solamen construxerat*). This refers to the community of secular canons which Archbishop Lanfranc had established in Canterbury, dedicated to St Gregory, in about 1084<sup>45</sup>. The account of the translation begins by justifying the moving of the relics. It is a passage which is of some importance for our purposes, since it very deliberately, not to say craftily, draws together the two monastic foundations on which our texts focus, namely Lyminge and Minster-in-Thanel. We learn from it that some time after Eadburh's death, the church which she had built to house Mildthryth's body was destroyed when Danes attacked and set fire to everything. There follows a crucial sentence:

Ex quo contigit ut nulle sanctimonialium feminarum, que olim cum beata Eadburga de insula Tanetos propter hostilem seuciam aufugerant et sedem sibi in Limmingis statuerant, ibidem remanerent, set sicut inde ita hinc quoque omnes, siue sole seu turmatim, quocumque eas casus rapiebat, deuolarent<sup>46</sup>.

This is a twist in the story not present in any of recensions of the *Vita S. Eadburgae* or the *Miracula*, that when Thanet was attacked, Eadburh and the nuns fled south to Lyminge. That statement has implications for the one immediately preceding it in the text, to which the phrase *ex quo* connects it directly, namely that the church Eadburh built to house Mildthryth was burnt down, a church which the logic of the text assumes was at Lyminge, not at Thanet. The author goes on to say that the buildings at Lyminge, rendered ruinous by the Danish attacks, passed into the hands of the archbishops of Canterbury, "and under their power" (*et sub eorum potestate*)<sup>47</sup>. Hence the final paragraph of the Gotha dossier can move straight on to mention of Archbishop Lanfranc and his instructions that the bodies of Eadburh and Mildthryth be taken from Lyminge to Canterbury and to St Gregory's in 1085<sup>48</sup>. We can now begin to consider how the materials in the Hereford legendary relate to those in Gotha, but first it will be useful to pause and examine the other main source we have for the translation to St Gregory's in 1085.

### *The Vain Usurpers of St Mildthryth*

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<sup>45</sup> See T. TATTON-BROWN, *The Beginnings of St Gregory's Priory and St John's Hospital in Canterbury in Canterbury and the Norman Conquest. Churches, Saints and Scholars, 1066–1109*, ed. R. EALES and R. SHARPE, London and Rio Grande, 1995, p. 41–52.

<sup>46</sup> COLKER, *A Hagiographic Polemic*, p. 107. See also ROLLASON, *Mildrith Legend*, p. 21–5. "Because of that, it came to pass that none of the holy women, who had once upon a time fled with blessed Eadburh from the island of Thanet on account of enemy savagery and had made a dwelling for themselves in Lyminge, remained there, but just as from there so likewise from here also they all took flight, either one by one or in groups, whithersoever chance took them".

<sup>47</sup> COLKER, *A Hagiographic Polemic*, p. 107.

<sup>48</sup> COLKER, *A Hagiographic Polemic*, p. 108.

It will be recalled that the monks of St Augustine's claimed to have acquired the relics of St Mildthryth from Minster-in-Thanel in 1035, and so, when Archbishop Lanfranc's newly-established community of canons at St Gregory's began some fifty years later to claim that they had fetched from Lyminge the relics of two saints called Miltrudis and Edburgis, the reaction from St Augustine's was, not surprisingly, vigorous. A dispute arose between the two institutions, which we know about from a treatise written by Goscelin, namely his *Libellus contra inanes sanctae uirginis Mildrethae usurpatores* ("Booklet against the vain usurpers of St Mildthryth the virgin")<sup>49</sup>. In it he firmly rejects St Gregory's claims and seeks to discredit two separate documents which he says that the canons produced to support their case. Writing sometime after Lanfranc's death in 1089, an event which he mentions in his *Libellus*, Goscelin quotes from the canons' documents several times as he sets about refuting them, even scoffing at the corrupt form of the two saints' names they use. As Marvin Colker revealed when he published the pugnacious *Libellus*, the brief passages Goscelin quoted can be matched word-for-word by sections of a text which, until Colker printed it in 1977, had been accorded little attention, namely the *Vita Sanctorum Aethelredi et Aethelberti martirum et sanctarum uirginum Miltrudis et Edburgis* in Gotha I.81. Furthermore, Goscelin's description of the contents of the canons' two documents confirms the notion that both of them are subsumed into the Gotha text<sup>50</sup>. Accordingly, despite its polemical nature, or perhaps because of it, Goscelin's comments in the *Libellus contra inanes usurpatores* will be useful to us in establishing the original form of the Lyminge hagiographical dossier and working out a date and context for its production. An obvious first point is that the materials which Goscelin saw must have come into existence before 1089, that is, significantly earlier than the two surviving manuscripts, Hereford P.VII.6 and Gotha I.81.

#### IV. The shape of the Lyminge hagiographical dossier

Let us begin by summarising what we have seen so far: both the Hereford Legendary and Gotha I.81 contain more or less the same *Vita* of Eadburh, the former using it to preface *miracula* connected with a shrine of Eadburh at Lyminge, the latter placing it with other Lives (of the martyrs Æthelred and Æthelberht, which constitutes the Minster-in-Thanel foundation story, and of Mildthryth) and with an account of how relics of Eadburh and Mildthryth ended up at Lyminge and could be claimed at St Gregory's in the later 1080s.

<sup>49</sup> BHL 5962, edited by COLKER, *A Hagiographic Polemic*, p. 68–96.

<sup>50</sup> COLKER, *A Hagiographic Polemic*, p. 63.

Various questions spring to mind: is the *Vita S. Eadburgae* the only point of contact between the two sets of material? What is the relationship of the Hereford *miracula* to the other texts in Gotha I.81? Could the *Miracula* have been composed and put with the *Vita S. Eadburgae* after 1085, to contradict the claims of St Gregory's and assert that Eadburh still lay at Lyminge? If so, by whom? As we have seen, St Augustine's was keen to assert a prior claim to Mildthryth's relics, but it is hard to imagine why Goscelin and his fellow monks would take the trouble to record miracles wrought at Lyminge by a saint Eadburh about whom they cared little. That would be more likely to be the business of someone interested in Lyminge itself. Yet, precisely the person with an interest in Lyminge in the 1080s — Archbishop Lanfranc — is the one described as specifically arranging for Eadburh to be translated to St Gregory's, diverting the saint's cult away from Lyminge. The other possibility, then, is that the *Miracula S. Eadburgae* were originally conceived to go with the composite *Vita sanctorum Aethelredi et Aethelberti martyrum et sanctarum Miltrudis et Edburgis*.

When he printed the text from Gotha I.81 in 1977, Colker left open the question of its origins. In 1982 the text was discussed again in print by David Rollason, as part of his exploration of the cult of St Mildthryth, and he suggested that the canons of St Gregory's may have created the composite form of that text as it is transmitted in Gotha I.81; moreover, his view was that they were probably using earlier material, which could have originated at Lyminge<sup>51</sup>. Rollason also made the crucial point that the account of Eadburh provided by John of Tynemouth in his *Sanctilogium*, which we have already begun to consider, concludes with a sequence of posthumous miracles relating to the "monastery of St Eadburh" and that these have no match in the Gotha dossier<sup>52</sup>. As it turns out, the miracle-stories John of Tynemouth placed at the end of his abridgement of the *Vita S. Eadburgae* provide a further witness to the *Miracula* in the Hereford legendary: John's text represents an abbreviated form of most of their content. Yet the match is not exact: John begins with a shortened form of the story of the mute boy (§ 3), then the neglectful priest (§ 5), the archbishop burning the charters (§ 6), the sick woman having the vision of a lamb (§ 7), the Viking attack (§ 9), and the two men in the privy (§ 10), but he has nothing corresponding to the preface or §§ 2, 4, 8, 11 and 12. Two of the chapters in the Hereford collection which he thus omitted make specific reference to the need for a visit to Lyminge (§§ 2 and 8). Moreover, John's version of the story of the Viking attack eliminates much of the detail found in the Hereford version

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<sup>51</sup> ROLLASON, *Mildrith Legend*, p. 23–4.

<sup>52</sup> ROLLASON, *Mildrith Legend*, p. 24, referring to HORSTMAN, *Nova Legenda*, I.309–10.

and omits the references in it to Kent and Lyminge. Indeed, there is no mention of Lyminge anywhere in John of Tynemouth's account of Eadburh. Furthermore, instead of the final section of the Hereford *Miracula* (§ 12) with its reference to multiple healings and wax images, John concludes with one last miracle, which has no parallel in the Hereford collection, and which is worth reporting in full here, for reasons that will become clear.

Mulier quedam annis multis infirmitatibus decocta, cum nocte quadam sopori membra dedisset, apparuit ei quedam mulier pulcherrima, dicens: "Surge et ad ecclesiam sancti Gregorii Cantuarie proficiscens, lumen tuum ad quietem sancte Edburge deferre cum deuotione propria, ut plena gaudere possis sanitate". Quo facto, optatam salutem, deo gratias agens, ad sua reportauit<sup>53</sup>.

In the context of John's account of Eadburh, this is the first reference to any named place, and it is not Lyminge. Wherever the miracle-collection that he saw began its life, this final miracle is a sign that it reached him in a form that had been adapted to suit the requirements of the canons of St Gregory. Indeed, that becomes obvious from John's remarks at the end of his chapter on Eadburh:

Cantuarie vero in cenobio sancti Gregorii scriptum repperi quod anno domini millesimo octuagesimo quinto ab archiepiscopo Lamfranco fuerunt de tumulis sanctarum Mildrede et Edburge in Thaneto insula eleuate reliquie, et cum maximo honore Cantuariam translate, et in ecclesia beati Gregorii, quam paulo ante ad pauperum solamen constructam ditauerat, collocatae. In monasterio tamen sancti Augustini Cantuarie scrinium sancte Mildrede ostenditur, et aliter quam premititur, sicut in eius vita ibidem exaratum est, et supra legentibus perpendi potest, habetur. Quorum in hac parte altercationem peritis discutiendam relinquens, que in utrisque locis exarata videre merui, edificationis et notitiae gratia literis mandare decreui<sup>54</sup>.

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<sup>53</sup> HORSTMAN, *Nova Legenda*, I.310. "When a certain woman, tortured for many years with ailments, had given over her limbs to sleep one night, there appeared to her a very beautiful woman, saying "Get up and set off for the church of St Gregory at Canterbury, and make haste to bring your candle to the resting-place of St Eadburh with due devotion, in order that you can enjoy complete healing." When she had done that, she took back home her longed-for health, giving thanks to God".

<sup>54</sup> HORSTMAN, *Nova Legenda*, I.310–11. "At Canterbury, in the community of St Gregory, I have found it written down that in the year of Our Lord 1085, the relics of Sts Mildthryth and Eadburh were lifted from their tombs on the island of Thanet by Archbishop Lanfranc and with especial honour translated to Canterbury, and placed in the church of blessed Gregory, which he had built and endowed shortly before, as a comfort for the poor. However, in the monastery of St Augustine the shrine of St Mildthryth is on display, and the situation is other than just described, as is set down in her *Vita* there and can be assessed by those reading it above. Leaving the disagreement between them in this case to be argued out by learned men, I have determined to commit to writing for the sake of instruction and record those things which I have been fortunate to see set down in both places". John makes a comparable statement at the end of his *Vita* of Mildthryth, see *Nova Legenda*, II.197.

In other words, John saw a version of the dossier which included the *Vita S. Eadburgae*, had miracles like the Hereford *Miracula* but adapted for St Gregory's, as well as the concluding section of the Gotha material recording the translation in 1085 (i.e. *BHL* 5961a). Parts of John's statement echo phrases from that final section but it is striking that even here, any reference to Lyminge has gone, and Thanet is instead named as the place whence Mildthryth and Eadburh were translated to St Gregory's, contrary to the assertions of the version in Gotha I.81. Unfortunately, there is no way to tell whether that was a change made by John as he went about the task of compilation, based on his knowledge of Goscelin's hagiography of Mildthryth, or whether it was in the source before him. At any rate, by John's time, there was a form of the dossier at St Gregory's which included the *Vitae* and the *Miracula* but also the translation narrative.

*The evidence of Peter of Cornwall's Liber reuelationum*

Corroborating evidence for the circulation of a version of the Lyminge dossier grouping the *Miracula* with the other texts comes from a remarkable work compiled in 1200 by Peter of Cornwall, prior of Holy Trinity, Aldgate, in London, namely his *Liber reuelationum*, preserved in a single copy, London, Lambeth Palace Library, MS 51, seemingly made for the author himself. For this collection of over a thousand excerpts from a great variety of sources Peter made use of the large compilations of saints' Lives that were in circulation by the time he was active. He included a copy of §§ 2, 4, 5 and 7 of the *Miracula S. Eadburgae*, selected because they involve visions or apparitions<sup>55</sup>; Peter's text matches that of Hereford P.VII.6 so closely that it can serve as a credible further witness, particularly where the Hereford copy is defective. Although we do not know where Peter encountered the *Miracula*, it is of considerable interest to note that the Eadburh stories are immediately preceded in the *Liber reuelationum* by three excerpts from the earlier parts of our dossier, labelled as *Qualiter lumen inmensum de celo resplenduit media nocte super locum ubi corpora sanctorum martir[i]um Ethelredi et Ethelberti latenter sepulta fuerunt* (VAAM §§ 3-4), *Qualiter sancte Mildride uirginis capiti orantis insedit spiritus sanctus in specie columbe* (VAAM § 14), and *Qualiter angelus Domini alis suis protexit corpus Mildrede dormientis*

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<sup>55</sup> R. EASTING and R. SHARPE, ed., *Peter of Cornwall's Book of Revelations* (=British Writers of the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Period, 5: Studies and Texts, 184), Toronto, 2013, p. 310–15, with discussion at p. 269, 277, and 502–3. I am grateful to Richard Sharpe for drawing my attention to Peter's inclusion of these miracles.

(VAAM §15)<sup>56</sup>. We may thus suspect that Peter had access to a form of the dossier similar to the text which John of Tynemouth saw at St Gregory's.

In fact, there are signs that Peter may have found the material in a legendary similar to Hereford's. Peter's Kent-focused group of visions is immediately preceded by stories from the hagiography of saints with December feast-days: Paul of Narbonne (10 December; *BHL* 6589), Lucy (13 Dec.; *BHL* 4992), Nicasius and companions (14 December; *BHL* 6076), Thomas (21 December; *BHL* 8140), Eugenia (25 December; *BHL* 2666), Anastasia (25 December; *BHL* 8093), Marinus (26 December; *BHL* 5538), and Ecgwine (Dominic of Evesham; 30 December)<sup>57</sup>. That sequence of saints offers a close match to the content of the Hereford legendary, and indeed some of the versions of their Lives are the same. It may be, then, that Peter provides evidence for a now-lost legendary similar to the Hereford legendary (and recall that we have evidence of a lost legendary from Chester with this text in it), but one which contained the Lyminge dossier in fuller form, and not subject to the pruning which appears to have happened in the compilation of the Hereford legendary or its exemplar, plucking the *Vita S. Eadburgae* from its original context.

## V. The evolution of the Lyminge dossier: when and where?

In moving towards assigning a date and context to the texts in the Hereford legendary and those in Gotha I.81, we are faced with two basic alternatives: that the dossier was written completely *de novo* at or for St Gregory's in the 1080s, or that it was constructed then from a mixture of older materials and specially-composed ones. Certainly, it seems safe to separate off the concluding section of the Gotha dossier, about the 1085 translation. It is written in a subtly different, more straightforward, style of Latin prose from the earlier parts. Further evidence comes from Goscelin's observations in his *Libellus contra inanes usurpatores* about his understanding of the way the canons' propaganda came together. Obviously, his own disputatious treatise is itself defensive propaganda, and we need to bear that in mind, nonetheless his account of the unfolding controversy is instructive. First of all, Goscelin states that the canons had the effrontery to put his Mildthryth and someone they were calling *Eadburgis* together in "one title and in the text of a new little book" composed to bolster their fictions<sup>58</sup>. His quotations from the offending new little book show that, as already established,

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<sup>56</sup> Inventoried and identified by EASTING and SHARPE, *Peter of Cornwall's Book of Revelations*, p. 502.

<sup>57</sup> EASTING and SHARPE, *Peter of Cornwall's Book of Revelations*, p. 501, 503–5.

<sup>58</sup> COLKER, *A Hagiographic Polemic*, p. 71: *simul etiam uno titulo et textu nouelli libelli ad roboranda figmenta sua componerent.*



it was very similar to the composite text in Gotha I.81<sup>59</sup>. However, Gotha I.81 does not include posthumous miracles like those in Hereford P.VII.6. So, were there some in the dossier that Goscelin saw? In his *Libellus* he refers, rather dismissively, to miracles attributed to Eadburh: “those same miracles which are recounted under this name, indeterminate as to author, dates, places, persons or names”<sup>60</sup>. Those words give the strong impression that he had before him a dossier containing not only Lives of Mildthryth and Eadburh, but also Eadburh’s miracles: nothing else in the Gotha I.81 dossier answers to Goscelin’s description. In other words, the grouping for which we have later evidence from John of Tynemouth and Peter of Cornwall probably existed already in the 1080s. When did it come together?

Goscelin goes on to suggest what he believes had happened: a woman who was claimed to be Eadburh lay buried at Lyminge, and when she was exhumed in 1085 for taking to St Gregory’s, another body was found next to her, with no indication of identity, and that too was transported<sup>61</sup>. The uncertainty about the identity of the second body is only Goscelin’s surmise, which suits his case, and is nowhere expressed in the translation narrative in Gotha I.81. Then, Goscelin continues, some three years went by, during which the canons of St Gregory’s gradually began to put about the story that the second body had turned out to be that of someone they ignorantly called “Miltrudis”, that is Mildthryth<sup>62</sup>. They preached in public and then claimed in writing (*publicis predicationibus ac demum scriptis*) that they had the relics of both Eadburh and Mildthryth: presumably the written materials Goscelin refers to are what he called the “new little book” (*novellus libellus*)<sup>63</sup>. Goscelin says that ordinary people laughed at these claims, since they had lived long enough to remember the earlier translation of Mildthryth from Thanet to St Augustine’s. Subsequently, so Goscelin reports, a visiting archdeacon called Bertram was asked to write up the canons’ false stories, but he refused, not believing their claims (*uestra deliramenta*)<sup>64</sup>. However, another man came

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<sup>59</sup> COLKER, *A Hagiographic Polemic*, p. 71–3, with discussion at p. 63. Goscelin’s quotations from the text show that he seen the section on Eadburh in a version like that in Gotha I.81, since he mentions the etymologies of the names of King Æthelbert and Queen Bertha.

<sup>60</sup> COLKER, *A Hagiographic Polemic*, p. 73: *ipsa ... signa, scriptore temporibus locis personis uocabulis ignota, quae sub hoc nomine recitantur.*

<sup>61</sup> COLKER, *A Hagiographic Polemic*, p. 73.

<sup>62</sup> It is interesting that Goscelin mocks the forms of the two names that the canons used, namely *Miltrudis* and *Eadburgis*: that is the form they take in Gotha I.81, which might have been assumed to be a 14<sup>th</sup>-century adaptation of earlier spellings, but clearly that is the form they already took when Goscelin saw the dossier in the 1080s. Both forms diverge from those which would be customary in Anglo-Latin, namely *Eadburga* and *Mildretha* or *Mildritha*. The scribe of the Hereford legendary betrays some confusion about whether Eadburh should be a 1<sup>st</sup> declension proper noun (*-a, -am, -ae*) or 3<sup>rd</sup> declension (*-is, -em, -is*); see note 4 above, and the version of the sections from the *Miracula* in Peter of Cornwall’s *Liber reuelationum* also includes the form *Eadburgem*, possibly original to the source Peter was copying.

<sup>63</sup> COLKER, *A Hagiographic Polemic*, p. 73.

<sup>64</sup> COLKER, *A Hagiographic Polemic*, p. 77.

forward unbidden (*nullo poscente*) and composed a new document, whose opening words, *Elapsis aliquibus annis*, Goscelin quotes, showing that it corresponds to the last section of the material in Gotha I.81<sup>65</sup>.

Even allowing for the polemical distortion of Goscelin's biased perspective, from this we may conjecture that whatever was first produced as supporting documentation for the relics from Lyminge — the “new little book” — was not felt sufficient once a concerted effort began to be made to claim in public that the bodies at St Gregory's were those of Eadburh and Mildthryth. Some of its content, as Goscelin is delighted to demonstrate, was too flawed to do anything other than undermine the whole enterprise. Most strikingly, without the last section of the Gotha materials, that is, the second author's translation narrative, the rest completely fails to explain how both Eadburh and Mildthryth could be claimed as resting at Lyminge. Moreover, if we accept that when Goscelin saw it, the “new little book” also included the *Miracula S. Eadburgae*, which lauds Eadburh but says nothing whatsoever of Mildthryth's posthumous powers, it would hardly have seemed fit for the purpose to which the canons of St Gregory's sought to bend it. All the remedial work had to be done by the second author: much hinges upon the first part of his *Translatio S. Miltrudis et Eadburgis* which, as we already noted, justifies the translation in 1085 and claims that Eadburh moved Mildthryth's relics from Thanet to Lyminge, because of Viking attack. The idea was, of course, hateful to the monks of St Augustine's and Goscelin pours scorn on that supposed motivation<sup>66</sup>:

... quomodo de Taneto hostilem manum fugientes in hostiles fauces ad Limmingam confugerent, ut uidelicet in Limminga patulis rictibus citius deuorarentur quam in Taneto caperentur? Nimirum hoc esset de lupo leonis patrocinium appetere<sup>67</sup>.

One wonders whether he was thinking of the story among the *Miracula S. Eadburgae*, describing the “pagan” attack on Lyminge (§ 9). The point he makes is also quite reasonable, since records show that in the early ninth century the abbess of Lyminge and her community were granted a house in Canterbury as a refuge from hostile Danish activity<sup>68</sup>. More relevant here, though, is Goscelin's further point that the second author was generally shrewder than

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<sup>65</sup> COLKER, *A Hagiographic Polemic*, p. 78.

<sup>66</sup> COLKER, *A Hagiographic Polemic*, p. 74.

<sup>67</sup> “why would those running from a hostile band on Thanet flee into hostile jaws at Lyminge, that is, to be devoured by gaping maws even more quickly at Lyminge than they would be captured on Thanet? Truly that would be to turn to the lion for protection from the wolf”.

<sup>68</sup> BROOKS and KELLY, *Charters of Christ Church*, I.32 and 463–6.

the first, albeit no more honest<sup>69</sup>. Of course, that judgement depends somewhat on one's view of what the first author was trying to achieve.

As we search for clues about when, where and why the Lyminge dossier was written, it is illuminating to note what Goscelin saw as problematic about it, albeit remaining mindful of his position as jealous guardian of the cult of Mildthryth<sup>70</sup>. The consummate hagiographer's critique of another's work tells us most about the former's own assumptions but may also shed light on the latter's purpose in writing. Goscelin lays the groundwork by setting out what he regards as the "facts": that Lyminge, which is under episcopal control, is renowned as the burial place of Æthelburh, *sed uulgo ibi nominabatur quaedam sancta Eadburga*. This last statement can be interpreted, it seems to me, in two ways, either "but a certain St Eadburh was commonly named there" or "but she was commonly named there as a certain St Eadburh"<sup>71</sup>. Goscelin goes on to say that there is no information about who the latter might be, of what family or date, which suggests, I would contend, along with his use of the word *quaedam* ("some", "a certain") that Goscelin was not saying that Æthelburh was commonly being called Eadburh, but rather that the latter is a different person. The word *uulgo* gives the impression that he means that the people at Lyminge talk of a St Eadburh, but it is possible that what Goscelin actually had in mind is the statements to be found in the Old English *Kentish Royal Legend*, already quoted above, that the foundress Æthelburh rests at Lyminge "and St Eadburh with her" (see p. 5 above). That is a text which Goscelin may have used as a source for his own hagiography, and he would probably have regarded it as deriving from the "common people" if he knew it in the Old English form.

Goscelin then continues his criticism "We would have kept as silent about Eadburh as we are ignorant of her", if Mildthryth had not been drawn in and put in the title of the "new little book"<sup>72</sup>. In other words, he only feels obliged to attack the canons' text because it links

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<sup>69</sup> COLKER, *A Hagiographic Polemic*, p. 79: *Cautius nimirum eoque nocentius hic mentitur quam prior scriptor qui dixit Eadburgam pro Aethelburga primi Anglorum regis Christiani filiam et Miltrudis auiam fuisse ipsamque auiam Miltrudi nepti successisse* ('Certainly this author lies more carefully and thus more harmfully than the previous author, who called the daughter of the first Christian king of the English Eadburh not Æthelburh and claimed that she was Mildthryth's great aunt and that the great-aunt succeeded to her great niece, Mildthryth').

<sup>70</sup> COLKER, *A Hagiographic Polemic*, p. 63, commended Goscelin for his "analytical, critical, questioning spirit" in the *Libellus contra inanes usurpatores*, particularly his view that lies are lies, however they are presented and whoever supports the tellers of those lies. Of course, though, Goscelin and his community had a significant investment in proving that St Gregory's, and indeed Lanfranc, were dealing in falsehoods.

<sup>71</sup> COLKER, *A Hagiographic Polemic*, p. 71. In his summary translation of the text, Colker assumes that Goscelin meant that Æthelburh "is commonly confused with some St Eadburga" (p. 65).

<sup>72</sup> It should be noted that some scholars have suggested that St Augustine's claimed to have the relics of Eadburh as well as Mildthryth: for example, in KELLY, *Lyminge minster and its early charters*, p. 103, and BROOKS and KELLY, *Charters of Christ Church*, I.29. Yet there is no sign in Goscelin's *Libellus contra inanes usurpatores* that St Augustine's believed they had Eadburh's remains as well as Mildthryth's.

Eadburh with Mildthryth. “Such a recent author, bereft of any proof, does not know what to construct concerning Eadburh’s earthly life, which is unknown, and he can only heap upon her the miracles common to all the other saints”<sup>73</sup>. Goscelin refers twice to *historiis cronicisque Anglicis*, of which he believes the unknown author is ignorant, but from which he, Goscelin, can provide the corrective information that Æthelberht and Bertha’s daughter was called Æthelburh, that she married Edwin, came back after his death to live at Lyminge, took the veil under Archbishop Honorius (627–31), died on 13 December and was buried at Lyminge. Some of this, as we have seen, comes from Bede, the rest — saving the reference to Honorius, and the date of her death — could have been drawn from the *Kentish Royal Legend*. Next, dismissing it as *uerba tam indocte quam furtiue inserta et plane temporum ac rerum rationi refragantia* (“words set down both unlearnedly and deceptively, and plainly contrary to reason with regard to dates and facts”), Goscelin begins to quote the offending St Gregory’s text (in a form matching the version of the *Vita S. Eadburgae* in Gotha I.81): *Post beatam Miltrudis consummationem...* Then he breaks off to exclaim indignantly<sup>74</sup>:

Quid his neniis immoramur? Ducenti fere anni computantur ab ipso primo Aethelberto rege usque ad Eadburgam, beatae Mildrethae succetricem<sup>75</sup>.

How could Æthelberht’s daughter have been abbess after his great great grand-daughter?

The unknown author has erred gravely in his attempt to insert Eadburh into the Kentish royal genealogy: Goscelin takes it as indisputable that these claims for the saint’s descent are plain wrong. He has a fair point, though we must recognise that exposing the text’s chronological improbability is Goscelin’s way to undermine the whole dossier and thus to discredit the crucial claim that Mildthryth’s body ended up at Lyminge, only made by the second author but ultimately the most troubling for St Augustine’s<sup>76</sup>. Goscelin is happy to acknowledge that there may have been an Eadburh who succeeded Mildthryth as abbess at Minster-in-Thanel, and for St Augustine’s there is nothing problematic about that fact; as we have seen, surviving charters show that it was indeed the case. But then Goscelin concludes:

Videant itaque quae sit haec Eadburgis qui hanc uendicant, cum hanc fuisse praememorati regis Aethelberti filiam repugnantibus temporibus et fallentibus sibi scriptoribus nullatenus probare queant. Quaerant, inquam, quos fallunt propria scripta, quae et unde sit ista. ... Siue

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<sup>73</sup> *Nescit adeo recens scriptor, omni probamento desertus, quid de eius uita terris ignota astruat, nisi quod illi communes aliorum sanctorum uirtutes aggerat*, ed. COLKER, *A Hagiographic Polemic*, p. 71.

<sup>74</sup> COLKER, *A Hagiographic Polemic*, p. 72.

<sup>75</sup> “Why are we wasting time with these trifles? Almost two hundred years may be reckoned from that first King Æthelberht down to Eadburh, blessed Mildthryth’s successor”.

<sup>76</sup> COLKER, *A Hagiographic Polemic*, p. 72–3.

ergo Eadburga pro Aethelburga uulgari errore uocitetur, sicut a Getulis Mauri pro Medis appellabantur, siue uera Eadburga inueniatur, bene sua iura seruent et ualeant, dummodo tam diuinis quam humanis testimoniis conuicti, nostram nobis Mildretham intemerate relinquant<sup>77</sup>.

Goscelin thus highlights the central problem of the *Vita S. Eadburgae* and the materials that accompany it, that of Eadburh's identity. Leaving Mildthryth aside — after all, the first author has no special claim upon her, in fact — what does the unknown hagiographer wish to tell us about Eadburh? To record that she works miracles is evidently not quite sufficient: she also needs to be given family connections, an origin. Has he called Queen Æthelburh Eadburh by mistake, because that is what the folk of Lyminge had begun to do, or is Eadburh meant to be someone different? Goscelin is ruthless in uncovering the error, but one would like to know what caused the unknown author to make it.

## VI. The authorship of the Lyminge dossier

The next step in our enquiry is to establish when and where the “new little book” — the martyr-story and Thanet foundation legend, the *Vitae* of Mildthryth and Eadburh, and the *Miracula* — came into being and whether its various sub-sections belonged together from the start. Fortunately, the author's very words come to our aid, because all these texts are written in a distinctive style of rhythmical Latin prose, characterised by a strong preference for polysyllabic texture, adorned by word-play, marked alliteration and occasionally hyperbaton, and a light scattering of unusual or freshly-coined vocabulary. There are also some peculiarities of usage in both diction and syntax. To cut a long story short, these features offer an extraordinarily compelling match with the Latin prose of one particular individual, namely the author who is known only by the first letter of his name, B., who dedicated a *Vita* of St Dunstan to Ælfric, archbishop of Canterbury (995–1005), and is thought to have been an Anglo-Saxon cleric in secular orders<sup>78</sup>. From his hand we also have two letters, one addressed to Æthelgar (who at the time of the letter was bishop of Selsey, a position he held from 980

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<sup>77</sup> COLKER, *A Hagiographic Polemic*, p. 73. “So, let those who lay claim to her see who this Eadburh is, since by no means can they prove that she is King Æthelberht's daughter, because the dates are against it and their authors have deceived them. Let those, I say, whose own writings deceive them, find out who and whence this woman is. ... Therefore, whether it be that Eadburh is being named instead of Æthelburh, by a common error, just as the Medes were called Moors by the North Africans, or, that the true Eadburh be discovered, let them mind their own business and be gone, so long as, contradicted by both divine and human testimonies, they leave our Mildthryth to us unharmed”.

<sup>78</sup> *BHL* 2342, ed. Michael WINTERBOTTOM and Michael LAPIDGE, *The Early Lives of St Dunstan* (= *Oxford Medieval Texts*), Oxford, 2012, p. 1–109, and on B.'s identity see p. lxiv–lxxviii.

until 988) and the other to Dunstan<sup>79</sup>. In editing his *Vita S. Dunstani*, Winterbottom and Lapidge provided a very detailed analysis of B.'s language and style, and the features they describe offer many points of contact with the texts under discussion here, as we shall see below.

To begin with, though, it may perhaps be simplest to come straight to the point and present some examples of very closely similar phrasing, shared between all parts of the Lyminge dossier and B.'s *Vita S. Dunstani*, which when taken together seem indicative of common authorship<sup>80</sup>. Consider these passages from the opening section of the *Vita S.*

*Eadburgae*:

Post beate Miltrudis consummacionem et obitum, *VE(G)* § 1.1

Post cuius consummationem elegere Byrhtelmum, *VSD* § 26.2

orbatam matre familiam causa regiminis subintrauit, *VE* § 1.1

orbatum patre pontificatum sub cura pastoralis ipse suscepisset, *VSD* § 19.2

(and note that the noun *regimen* occurs four times in the *VSD*). Then compare the way Æthelberht of Kent is referred to: *Athelberti primi regis catholice legis* (*VE* § 1) with B.'s reference to the building of a church at Glastonbury at the dawn of conversion in England by *primi catholicae legis neophitae* (*VSD* § 3.2). Finally, note the way in which the many descendants of Æthelberht are alluded to, alongside B.'s apology for not naming all the kings of the Anglo-Saxons before Athelstan:

multi, quorum nunc nomina difficultas non sinit rimari per singula, ortus sui duxerunt originem, *VE(G)* § 1.

multi reges, quorum nunc nomina difficultas non sinit rimari per singula, regnando predecerent, *VSD* § 3.1

It should be noted that these parallel phrases come from widely scattered sections of *VSD* and seem therefore unlikely to be signs of one author plundering ideas from the work of another. The opening section of *VE* also yields two other examples of parallel phrasing, but each of them admittedly rather commonplace observations:

copulati sunt coniugio, *VE* § 1

copularetur coniugio, *VSD* § 29.3

coniugio copulatam, *VSD* § 30.1

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<sup>79</sup> Ed. WINTERBOTTOM and LAPIDGE, *The Early Lives*, p. 151–61.

<sup>80</sup> In what follows here, *VAAM* = *Vita SS. Æthelredi et Æthelberti et S. Miltrudis*; *VE* = *Vita S. Edburge* and *VE(G)* distinguishes portions found only in Gotha and *VE(H)* portions found only in Hereford; *Mir.* = *Miracula S. Edburge*; *VSD* = B.'s *Vita S. Dunstani*. *Ep.1* = B.'s letter to Æthelgar and *Ep.2* his letter to Dunstan.

in mentis suae secretis ... laudes Deo referebat et grates, *VE(H)* § 1.2

laudes semper illi et gracis referens, *VAAM* § 9.1

Deo pro uitae suae restitutione gratias referebat et laudes, *VSD* § 14.1

Moving on into the next section we find the following parallels:

pro frequentancium populorum piaculo agnus qui mundi peccata tollere uenit, *VE* § 2.2

pro populorum piaculis crucis in patibulo affixus, *VSD* 30.3

The form *frequentancium* also finds an echo in B.'s phrase *inter frequentantes ministros* (*VSD* 33.1) and Winterbottom and Lapidge comment that he used *frequentantes* to mean just *frequentes*, which applies also to the use of that participle in *VE*<sup>81</sup>. Consider also the following:

sacrate uirginis exanimis decenter reconderet artus, *VE* § 2.2

ubi ipsa quoque exanimis, *VE* § 3

exanimis artus innocencium, *VAAM* § 2.2<sup>82</sup>

exanimis artus more mortalium sepeliendos, *VSD* § 20.5

uelut exanimis iacuisset ad ultima stratus, *VSD* § 4.3

This section of *VE* also includes a short phrase, *sub sollertia receptaculi* (*VE* § 2.1), which finds a match (admittedly this time with a modifying adjective rather than a noun in the genitive) in B.'s prose, *sub sollertia pastorali* (*VSD* § 25.2); the wider context in *VE* refers to Divine care (*qui sub sollertia receptaculi sui cuncta concludit*), literally “the One Who gathers all things under the care of his refuge”).

Turning back to the composite *Vita* of the two martyrs and their sister Mildthryth we find the following:

antiquo Anglorum uocabulo Thunor uocitatus, *VAAM* § 2.1 (*uocitata* also used one other time, *VAAM* § 15.3)

antiquo Anglorum uocabulo Glaestonia uocitata, *VSD* § 3.2

And then somewhat further on:

Non Dauitica decem cordarum psalmodia, *VAAM* § 2.2

in psalmodiis Dauiticis, *VAAM* § 12.1

dictis Dauiticis, *VE(G)* § 3

In Dauiticis decem chordarum psalmodiis, *VSD* § 37.1

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<sup>81</sup> WINTERBOTTOM and LAPIDGE, *The Early Lives*, p. cx.

<sup>82</sup> *exanimis artus* is a phrase that may derive from remembered reading of Classical verse: it occurs in Lucan's *Bellum ciuile (Pharsalia)*, 6.721 (*exanimis artus inuisaque claustra timentem*) and in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* 2.336 (*exanimisque artus primo mox osse requirens*).

Obviously, this alludes to Ps. 32:2 (*in psalterio decem cordarum psallite illi*) but the reference to “ten strings” is nowhere else attested with the plural noun *psalmodia*, nor yet the pairing of that noun with the adjective *Dauiticus*.

From a later section of *VAAM* compare the following with a similar reference to a miraculous portent in *VSD*:

cogitare ceperunt quid noui miraculi quidue iudicii quid recens portentum prefiguraret exempli, *VAAM* § 4.1

satis mirantes quid illud mirabile gestum noui prefiguraret exempli, *VSD* § 12.3

Winterbottom and Lapidge comment on B.’s frequent use of partitive genitive constructions of this kind, of which the passage in *VAAM* is a good example<sup>83</sup>.

Another pair is striking here for sharing a distinctive conflation of two biblical passages, Amos 2: 8 (*in domo Dei sui*) and Ps. 91 (92): 13 (*iustus ut palma florebit, ut cedrus Libani multiplicabitur*):

in domo Domini sicut cedrus Libani multiplicabatur ut floreret ante dominum, *VAAM* § 9.3  
iustus in domo Dei sui, sicut cedrus Libani, uigoribus uirtutum floruit, *VSD* § 5.1

At one point the author makes an observation about his inability to express Mildthryth’s spiritual strivings:

Non est enim nostrae possibilitatis per multorum flaminum ambages enarrare, qualem se sacra uirgo in dei obsequiis preparauit, *VAAM* § 12.1

Compare B.’s statement about Æthelflæd:

Non est autem nostrae possibilitatis enarrare per singula uerborum eloquia, qualem uel quantam se famula Dei iam dicta in diuinis praeparasset obsequiis, *VSD* § 10.2

Although the sentiments here are utterly commonplace in hagiography, the phrase *non est nostrae possibilitatis* is not, and what strikes here is the use of the same verb, *enarrare*, and then also the phrase that follows in both, *in dei/diuinis ... obsequiis*, used in each case with the same verb, *praeparare*. There are few shorter phrases also worth noting from this section of the Lyminge material. While learning about monasticism abroad, Mildthryth strives to hear and see only holy things and to attend to God’s *testimonia* and *mandata* in the Scriptures *quatinus non peccaret Domino* (*VAAM* § 8.1; this is a relatively rare use of the verb *peccare* transitively, with the dative of the one sinned against). Similarly, B. describes Dunstan’s desire to keep the *precepta* of Scripture hidden in his heart, *ne peccaret Domino* (*VSD* §

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<sup>83</sup> *Early Lives of Dunstan*, p. civ.



13.3)<sup>84</sup>. Mildthryth's journey back home across the sea can be put alongside Dunstan's voyage into exile: here, as with previous examples, what strikes is the use of the same verb (relatively rarely used in relation to passage across sea rather than land) in relation to similar nouns:

ueloci cursu aquas transiliuit marinas, *VAAM* § 9.2

aequoreas uias ponti caerulei rapido cursu transiliens, *VSD* § 23.2

Then Mildthryth's safe arrival is announced with the phrase *domino ducente peruenit* (*VAAM* § 9.2), which we can compare with Dunstan's arrival at Rome, *domino ducente peruenit* (*VSD* § 28.1, compare also *domino ducente incedam*, *VSD* § 11.6). As her death nears, the author recounts how Mildthryth's reputation spread, with words similar to B.'s account of the growth of Dunstan's reputation as a preacher:

omnibus pene circumquaque gentibus, *VAAM* § 13.1

omnium circumquaque prouinciarum templa, *Mir.* § 2

omnibus pene circumquaque fidelibus, *VSD* § 15.2

uniuersorum circumquaque fidelium frequentia, *VSD* § 3.3

At the end of the same section of *VAAM* the author reports Mildthryth's coming death much as B. heralds that of Dunstan:

dies aduocacionis et remuneracionis iminebat, *VAAM* § 16.2

Instat ... diesque aduocacionis ipsius, *VSD* § 38.2

A few short phrases stand out from the *Miracula* of Eadburh, the first from the preface, where the author is discussing the Divine assessment of which persons seem strong enough to be allowed miracles in their life, based on his knowledge of their *soliditates mentium*:

Quos uero sanctos suos firmos ac stabiles esse persenserit..., *Mir.* § 1

This is comparable to B.'s observations about Dunstan's careful reading of works by those whom he realized had gained their own solidity from the Fathers:

quos ab intimo cordis aspectu patrum sanctorum assertione solidatos esse persenserat (*VSD* § 5.4)

The verb *persentire* is relatively rare; Winterbottom and Lapidge note the striking number of verbs with the prefix *per-* in B.'s writing<sup>85</sup>. Further on, the account of a sick woman's incubation at Eadburh's shrine can be compared with a handful of B.'s phrases:

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<sup>84</sup> It is possible that B., in writing *in sinu cordis sui diligenter abscondidit ne peccaret Domino* was perhaps recalling, or quoting, a snippet from Ambrose's *Expositio psalmi cxviii*, littera 2.29, which refers to the need to keep the word of God: 'absconderit ea in corde suo, ne peccaret Deo', ed. M. PETSCHENIG (= *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*, 62), Vienna and Leipzig, 1913, p. 37 line 15.

<sup>85</sup> To match that, our author uses ten different verbs with the prefix *per-* of which *pertimeo*, not otherwise at all widely attested, is the most striking and a good parallel to B.'s use of *perterrere* at *VSD* 16.1.

in ipso uenture diei crepusculo suauiissimi soporis quies irruit super illam, *Mir.* § 7

in ipso finitae diei crepusculo, *VSD* § 11.1

factoque diei ipsius crepusculo, *VSD* § 33.1

suauiissimi soporis felicem obtexit pausatatio puerum, *VSD* 3.4

Later in the same miracle narrative, mass is said for Easter Day, and the author refers to Christ's Paschal sacrifice thus: *paterno parens precepto immolatus est* (*Mir.* § 7), which finds a parallel in the way B. refers to that same act of atonement: *se semel paterno parens precepto offerre non distulit* (*VSD* § 30.7). The miracle about the Viking attack describes the clergy who go out to meet them as *omnes Limbiensis ecclesie clerici congregata suorum phalange* (*Mir.* § 9), which is reminiscent of B.'s *abbatis fratrumque suorum fideli phalange* (*VSD* § 27.4). One of B.'s favourite ways to refer to death is to use the noun *nex, necis*, in origin denoting violent death or slaughter, but used four times in *VSD* to refer to natural death (*VSD* §§ 9.1, 15.3, 18.1 and 34.3): in the copy of *Mir.* 5 transmitted by Peter of Cornwall (see page 23 above), we find *usque in necis sue horam* where Hereford P.VII.6 offered the more ordinary *obitus sui diem*. One suspects that the former is what B. originally wrote.

Winterbottom and Lapidge analysed B.'s vocabulary, in order to identify what was distinctive, particularly his inclination to fashion new forms when needed. They noted his penchant for nouns derived from verbs, of various types, all of which can be matched from the Lyminge dossier (here I have followed Winterbottom and Lapidge in marking what appear to be neologisms with an asterisk, and noting in each case whether the noun also occurs in *VSD*):

#### Nouns in *-men* and *-amen*

certamen (*VAAM* § 16.1 and 2, cf. *VSD* §§ 11.1, 17.3); \*commendamen (*VAAM* § 2.2), conamen (*Mir.* § 8; cf. *VSD* prologue and § 30.1), famen (*VAAM* §§ 7.1 and 12.1; *VE* § 8.2; *Mir.* § 7, cf. *VSD* § 9.4 and *Ep.* § 1.2); \*iurgamen (*Mir.* § 11); luctamen (*VE* § 8.2, cf. *VSD* §§ 7.1 and 38.1); peccamen (*Mir.* § 9); regimen (*VAAM* § 1.1, *VE* § 1.1, cf. *VSD* §§ 8.2, 15.3, 24.1, 25.4); uelamen (*VAAM* § 10.1, cf. *VSD* §§ 11.3, 11.4, 29.1)

#### Nouns in *-mentum* and *-amentum*

detrimentum (*VAAM* § 1.1); iumentum (*VAAM* § 6.2 and *VE* § 4); instrumentum (*VAAM* § 9.2); odoramentum (*VE* § 3.2), temptamentum (*VE* § 8.1, cf. *VSD* §§ 7.1, 16.3).

#### Nouns in *-tio*

conquisitio (*Mir.* § 9; cf. *VSD* § 37.3), optio (*Mir.* § 10), quietio (*Mir.* § 5).

### Nouns in -atio

adulatio (*VAAM* § 7.2); aduocatio (*VAAM* § 16.2 and *VSD* §§ 35.2, 38.2, all referring to death); celebratio (*VE* § 4.1, cf. *VSD* §§ 10.5; 37.4; 38.4); consummatio (*VE* § 1.1; *Mir.* § 2, cf. *VSD* § 26.2, all of death, not a meaning attested in the *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources*); dedicatio (*VE(H)* § 2.3; cf. *VSD* § 8.2); destinatio (*VAAM* § 5.1); elatio (*Mir.* § 1); emendatio (*Mir.* § 5); exhortatio (*VAAM* § 12.1; cf. *VSD* § 38.3); exultatio (*VE* § 1.2 and *VAAM* § 10.2); generatio (*VE(G)* § 1); infestatio (*Mir.* § 9); iustificatio (*VAAM* §§ 9.1 and 13.1); modulatio (*VAAM* § 6); oratio (*VE* §§ 4.1 and 5.1; *Mir.* §§ 2 and 3; cf. *VSD* several times); pausatio (*Mir.* § 8; cf. *VSD* §§ 3.4; 9.4); potatio (*Mir.* § 2); purgatio (*Mir.* § 10); remuneratio (*VAAM* § 16.2); reseruatio (*Mir.* § 6); significatio (*VE(G)* § 1); statio (*Mir.* § 4); ueneratio (*VE* § 2.2; *Mir.* § 11); uisitatio (*Mir.* § 7; cf. *VSD* § 2.2)

### Nouns in -tudo

celsitudo (*VE(G)* § 1; cf. *VSD* § 23.3); egritudo (*VAAM* § 16.2; *Mir.* § 28); longitudo (*VE* § 2.2; *Mir.* § 2); rectitudo (*VAAM* § 4.1); penitudo (*VAAM* § 4.1; *Mir.* § 5)

### Nouns in -edo

nigredo (*VAAM* § 3.1); putredo (*VE* § 3.2); uredo (*Mir.* § 8)

### Nouns in -tus and -atus

auditus (*VE* § 2.1 in an odd plural, meaning ears); ornatus (*VAAM* § 8.2; ornatu *VE* § 2.3; cf. *VSD* § 5.2); \*dedicatus (*VE* § 2.3); hortatus (*VAAM* § 9.3); hiatus (*VE* § 3.2; cf. *VSD* § 17.2), obtentus (*Mir.* § 8).

### Nouns in -tas

auditas (*VE(G)* § 1); austeritas (*Mir.* § 9); calliditas (*VAAM* § 1.1); castitas (*VAAM* § 11.1); densitas (*Mir.* § 11); difficultas (*VE(G)* § 1.3; cf. *VSD* §§ 3.1; 34.1); humilitas (*VAAM* § 13.1; *Mir.* § 1); possibilitas (*VAAM* § 12.1; cf. *VSD* § 10.2); sanctitas (*VAAM* § 8.2 in a strange plural; § 11.1 singular); sanitas (*Mir.* § 2); soliditas (*VE* § 2.1; an odd plural *Mir.* § 1; cf. *VSD* § 37.3); sospitas (*Mir.* § 12; cf. *VSD* § 34.3); stabilitas (*Mir.* § 1, an odd plural); sullimitas (*Mir.* § 5; cf. *VSD* §§ 13.1, 19.1, 20.5, 24.3); summitas (*VAAM* § 3.2; *VE(H)* § 1.2); uarietas (*VAAM* § 7.1; cf. *VSD* § 5.2); uenustas (*VAAM* § 8.1 oddly plural; *Mir.* § 7; cf. *VSD* §§ 1.6, 15.2, 19.4 all singular); ueritas (*VAAM* § 3.2; cf. *VSD* § 28.2); uirginitas (*VE* § 2.2; cf. *VSD* § 30.3); uoluntas (*VAAM* § 8.2; *VE* § 3.1; cf. *VSD* several times)

Other kinds of noun discussed by Wintertbottom and Lapidge include agentive nouns or *nomina agentis*, of which the Lyminge dossier has a few examples:

adulator (*VE* § 7.1); auditor (*VE* § 2.1; cf. *VSD* § 6.4); conditor (*VAAM* § 16.2, *VE* § 2.2, *VE* § 5.1; cf. conditori Domino, *VSD* § 20.5); collectores (*Mir.* § 11; gatherers of the harvest); cultor (*Mir.* § 7); dator (*VE* § 8.3, describing God); doctor (*Mir.* § 11); genitor (*VAAM* § 7.2); inspector (*VAAM* § 8.1, *Mir.* § 10, cf. Dominus ... omnium inspector secretorum *VSD* § 10.2; supernus inspector, *VSD* § 38.1); \*medicator (*Mir.* § 12; invented, or at least exceedingly rare); proditor (*VAAM* § 2.1); rector (*VE* § 1.1; cf. *VSD* § 32.2); remunerator (*VAAM* § 16.1; *VE* § 5.1), sanator (*Mir.* 2).

This dossier yields one feminine agentive noun, *cohabitatrix* (*VE* § 9).

Another type of noun which B. used frequently is the diminutive, and again the Lyminge dossier has its own share:

agellulus (*VAAM* §§ 5.2 and 6.1); ancillula (*Mir.* § 8; cf. *VSD* §§ 11.3; 22.4); cartula (*Mir.* § 6; cf. *VSD* § 33.1); habitaculum (*VE* (H) § 8.3); iuuenculus (*Mir.* § 11; cf. *VSD* iuuencula § 7.2); muliercula (*Mir.* § 4); munusculum (*Mir.* § 8); operculum (*VE* § 3.2); paginula (*Mir.* § 6; cf. paginulas *VSD* § 1.7), uillula (*VAAM* § 3.1); umbracula (*VAAM* § 15.1).

One final point about nouns that is worth noting is our author's occasional use of plural forms that seem somewhat odd: a feature also of B.'s prose which his reviser sometimes sought to iron out<sup>86</sup>. Hence, we find *refrigeria ... possidebant eterna* (*VAAM* § 2.3, "everlasting refreshments", where the singular would seem much more natural); King Ecgberht confesses to Domneva that he is guilty of *homicidia* (*VAAM* § 5.1, though it is true that two persons died, nonetheless the plural of the abstract noun is uncomfortable); Mildthryth cleaves to *sanctitatum moribus* and *uenustatibus ... omnium diuinorum ... ornatuum* (*VAAM* § 8.2), the Lord recognises in his faithful *soliditates mentium et morum stabilitates* (*Mir.* § 1).

Winterbottom and Lapidge also surveyed B.'s use of adjectives, those formed from verbs and those from nouns, and found a moderate degree of innovation in his usage: given the difference in sample size, the profile of our author is not too far off matching that pattern.

### Adjectives in -bilis

\*conspectabilis (*VAAM* § 5.2; rare enough to be a coinage in reality); corruptibilis (*VAAM* § 12.2); durabilis (*VE* § 6.1); ineffabilis (*VAAM* § 15.2); intolerabilis (*Mir.* § 9; cf. *VSD* § 7.3); labilis (*VE* § 6.1), penetrabilis (*VE* § 3; used actively not passively); stabilis (*VE* § 6.1)

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<sup>86</sup> WINTERBOTTOM and LAPIDGE, *Early Lives*, p. xc.

### Adjectives in -alis

clericalis (*Mir.* § 11); \*iocalis (*Mir.* § 11); materialis (*VE* § 2.1 relatively rare); naualis (*VAAM* § 9.2); pastoralis (*VAAM* § 11.1; cf. *VSD* §§ 19.2, 19.2, 25.2); spiritualis (*VAAM* §§ 6.2, 12.1; *VE* § 1.2; cf. *VSD* often); temporalis (*VAAM* §§ 16.2; *VE* § 8.3; cf. *VSD* §§ 9.1, 18.1, all referring to death); uirginalis (*VAAM* §§ 12.2, 15.1; *Mir.* § 9).

In the Lyminge dossier there are also a few examples of denominative adjectives in *-eus* and in *-osus*, though there is no example of a coinage in these two classes.

### Adjectives in -eus and -osus

consentaneus (*VAAM* § 1); corporeus (*VAAM* § 7.2; cf. *VSD* § 15.3); momentaneus (*Mir.* § 7); uirgineus (*VE* § 5.1; *Mir.* §§ 9, 12; cf. *VSD* § 36.2)

famosus (*Mir.* § 11; cf. *VSD* §§ 5.1, 24.2); generosus (*VAAM* § 7.1); gloriosus (*VAAM* §§ 7.1, 101; *VE* § 8.1; cf. *VSD* several times) preciosus (*VE* § 6.2; cf. *VSD* § 3.3); religiosus (*VE(G)* § 1, *VAAM* § 7.1; three times in *VSD*).

Otherwise, our author is not especially adventurous in the range of adjectives he uses: perhaps worthy of note are *deifica* (*VAAM* § 1, used of Eadburh; cf *VSD* §§ 5.1 and 25.1 both referring to things), *Herodiana* (*VAAM* § 1), and *fluctiuagos* (*VE* § 5.1).

As regards adverbs, Winterbottom and Lapidge noted B.'s marked preference for adverbs in *-tenus* and *-im*. In the Lyminge texts, some of the latter find a match, namely *furtim* (*VAAM* § 2.2; cf. *VSD* § 30.6), *paulatim* (*VAAM* § 16.2; *Mir.* §§ 4 and 8; four times in *VSD*), *confestim* (*Mir.* § 2; three times in *VSD*), *statim* (*Mir.* §§ 5 and 9; many times in *VSD*). Of the former, there is only one example, but it does in fact seem to be one of the author's coinages, namely *tumulotenus* (*Mir.* § 9). One other adverb perhaps that should be mentioned is the relatively rare *iterato* used at *VAAM* § 9.3, and also in *VSD* §§ 14.5 and 24.3, each time simply standing for *iterum*, "again".

Another feature of B.'s prose which Winterbottom and Lapidge pick out for comment is the misuse of some conjunctions, or rather, their use without attention to the nuance of their meaning<sup>87</sup>. Almost all the cases they cited can be paralleled in the Lyminge texts: for example, we find *enim* used as if it were *ergo* (*VAAM* § 13.2, *ex hoc enim beatam illam*

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<sup>87</sup> *Early Lives*, p. cx–cxi.

*dixerunt omnes*), *etiam* used redundantly a couple of times with *uel* and once without (*VE* § 3.2, *Mir.* §§ 2 and 12), four instances of superfluous *itaque*, or perhaps slightly with the sense “and so” (*VAAM* § 1.1, *hic itaque...*); *VAAM* § 13.1 (*Quodam itaque tempore*), *Mir.* § 3 (*ante medie itaque noctis momentum*) and *Mir.* § 10 (*dixit itaque ad sontem sons*); *namque* used with a meaning closer to “also” than “for”, in *VAAM* § 1.2 and *Mir.* § 2, and *quoque* used rather awkwardly, indeed redundantly in *Athelbertus quoque Anglorum uocabulo interpretatur* (*VAAM* § 1.1), and twice in quick succession in *Duo quoque uiri ... Tunc quoque....* (*Mir.* § 10). Much the same applies to their comments on B.’s characteristically unorthodox uses of prepositions, of which some examples can be observed in the prose of our author, namely the use of *ex/e* as if it meant “by”, as in *nimia ex infirmitate esse innexam* (*Mir.* § 8) and *forte e flatibus uentorum ... lumen ... extinctum est* (*VAAM* § 13.2).

The search for unusual vocabulary by late tenth-century Anglo-Latin authors often led them to turn to Greek, and B. was no exception to that rule, although, as Winterbottom and Lapidge note, he was far less lavish than some others. In the Lyminge dossier, aside from the relatively common *basilica* used for church (*VAAM* § 6.1; *VSD* § 36.2), which hardly counts a graecism by this date, there is just one word that stands out as belonging in this category, namely *parthena* (based on Greek παρθένος, “virgin”). This appears to be a coinage by our author, used as an alternative to the standard Latin *uirgo* to refer to Mildthryth (*VAAM* § 13.2). Wherever the form was derived from, it is remarkable that one of the coinages in the first of B.’s letters, to Æthelgar, is the adjective *parthenalis*, which he uses to refer to Aldhelm’s treatise on virginity<sup>88</sup>.

In terms of innovation or unusual usage, there are only a handful of things to mention about the range of verbs in the Lyminge texts. Whereas B. uses *enodare* (“un-knot”, “untie”) a couple of times (*VSD* §§ 16.3 and 37.1), in the Lyminge dossier alongside the reasonably well-attested *innodare* (*VE* § 5.2) we find *annodare*, used simply to mean “tie” or “bind”, which seems likely to be a coinage (the only other retrievable attestation of it is as a specialist term in Columella’s *Res rustica* to describe pruning down to the growth-node of a vine). Also seemingly of the author’s own devising is *exsarcinare* (“unburden”), used in the past passive participle form to refer to the release from the burden of anxiety experienced by the boy who lost his father’s keys (*Mir.* § 11). B. used *sarcinare*, again in the passive past participle (*VSD* § 20.4). One final form derived from a verb that is worth noting here is the word *sodes* (*Mir.* § 10), which is an archaic colloquialism representing a contraction of *si audes/audies* (“if you

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<sup>88</sup> WINTERBOTTOM and LAPIDGE, *Early Lives*, p. 156, and cf. p. 152.

will”, “prithēe”), common in the early Roman comedies but relatively rarely used by later writers<sup>89</sup>.

B.’s prose displays some eccentricities in the seeming lack of control over the grammar of verbs. Winterbottom and Lapidge identify particular areas of weakness, several of which occur also across the Lyminge texts. There are a few examples of the use of pluperfect indicatives where the imperfect would have been more appropriate: *patefecerat tumulum et ... integrum corpus ... inuenit* (VE § 3.2), and *unus eorum cuiusdam fuerat furti obnoxius* (Mir. § 10)<sup>90</sup>. Also noticeable are occasions when the perfect infinitive is used when the present would have been more suitable: *sperans puerum Christum ... peremisse* (VAAM § 1.1), *iram ... incurrisse pertimuit* (VAAM § 4.1), *uiditque agnum Dei ... constitisse ac sese uisitasse* (Mir. § 7), *simile fuisse arbitror* (Mir. § 9)<sup>91</sup>. Along similar lines is an occasion where *fore* is used for *esse*: *quos infirmiores fore perspexerit* (Mir. § 1, cf. VSD §§ 3.3 and 34.3)<sup>92</sup>. More numerous are the places where we find a pluperfect subjunctive that ought to have been an imperfect<sup>93</sup>:

Admonita est ... quatenus ... studuisset (Mir. § 8)

cf. quatinus ... intulisset (VSD § 7.2)

quatenus ... ipse suscepisset (VSD § 19.2)

Ipse autem ocius, ne diem dedissent otio, secutus est eos (Mir. § 11)

dum mens beate uirginis funditus fuisset ... intenta (VAAM § 13.1)

dum uirgo beata se sopori dedisset (VAAM § 15.1);

cf. Dum... audisset (VSD § 10.6);

dum ... agnouisset (VSD § 11.4);

dum ... dedisset (VSD § 38.5.)

meditari non destitit qualiter ... corpus ad locum transferre potuisset preparatum ubi ipsa quoque exanimis diem cum pace prestolaretur extremum (VE § 3.1)

uiriliter agebat ... ut inter seculi fluctuagos turbines ... sustinere potuisset (VE § 5.1)

ne postmodum in regni sui detrimentum creuisset (VAAM § 1.1)

When we turn to consider intentional adornments to Latin prose, the texts in the Lyminge dossier also offer plenty of examples of features that Winterbottom and Lapidge identified as

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<sup>89</sup> Strikingly it occurs in two other places from around the same time as this text, firstly in Lantfred’s *Translatio et miracula S., Swithuni*, dated to the early 970s, at §2 (M. LAPIDGE, *The Cult of St Swithun (= Winchester Studies, 4.ii)*, Oxford, 2003, p. 270 line 64), similarly within direct speech. For the other occurrence, see below note 137.

<sup>90</sup> Cf. WINTERBOTTOM and LAPIDGE, *Early Lives*, p. xcii.

<sup>91</sup> Cf. WINTERBOTTOM and LAPIDGE, *Early Lives*, p. cxiii.

<sup>92</sup> WINTERBOTTOM and LAPIDGE, *Early Lives*, p. cxiii.

<sup>93</sup> WINTERBOTTOM and LAPIDGE, *Early Lives*, p. xcii–cxiii and cxiii.

characterising B.'s literary ambitions. Alliteration can be found in abundance, both that which adheres to the strict definition of three or more consecutive words which start with the same sound, and also clusters of the same sound with perhaps one other intervening (and very noticeable in these texts, are alliterating pairs of words, too many of them to list here)<sup>94</sup>.

Thus, we find alliteration on *m*:

modo mesticiam mitigaret (VAAM § 5.1)  
mirabilia sua minime manifestat (*Mir.* § 1)  
uirgo modesta mitissime monuit (*Mir.* § 5)  
dimittite, o infernales ministri, ministrum meum (*Mir.* § 5)  
morte mactauit amara (VAAM § 2.1)

on *c*:

caput illius collumque complexus est (VAAM § 14.1)  
castis Christicolarum corporibus custodes (VAAM § 15.3)  
commissas compedum claues (*Mir.* § 11)  
conditione condere curauit (VE § 2.2)  
bonum certamen certauit. Cursum beate uite consummauit (VAAM § 16.1)  
a quolibet candele candentis lumine (*Mir.* § 12, but possibly not permissible)

on *d*:

dominorum domino dominoque seruiantibus condonauit (VAAM § 6.2)  
dictis Dauticis dicens: Dirigatur oratio mea (VE(G) § 3)

on *p*:

prece penetrabili premisit (VE(G) § 3)  
paterno parens precepto (*Mir.* § 7)  
pro frequentantium populorum piaculo (VE § 2.2)  
ut coram prudentibus loqui potuisset et principibus (*Mir.* § 3)  
pro populorum eius peccamine depopulauit (*Mir.* § 9)

A few instances of simple wordplay can be found across these texts, such as *nocenter innocentes mactauit* (VAAM § 1.2), *uera ueritatis sententia uere sermocinaretur* (VAAM § 3.2) and *Dimittite, o infernales ministri, ministrum meum* (*Mir.* § 5). In the story of the martyrdom of Æthelred and Æthelberht, the author puns on the Latinised form of name of the place where they were murdered, Eastry, observing *Bene Estria uocatur quasi Astria eo quod*

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<sup>94</sup> WINTERBOTTOM and LAPIDGE, *Early Lives*, p. cxv.



*ab alto astrorum fastigio miri luminis splendor in ipsa uillula ad terram usque deductus est* (VAAM § 3.1). There is also one miracle story whose entire import seems to be an untranslatable play on words: a nun sees St Eadburh's altar mysteriously rise up in the air (*sulleuari*) and fall back down, and the hagiographer observes, *Quod quidem significare non dubium est ut omnes qui sub uirginitatis illius subsidia confugiunt a peccatorum suorum ponderibus sulleuentur* ("There is no doubt that this signifies that all who take cover under the support of her virginal state will be given relief under the burdens of their sins").

More prominent is the author's use of hyperbaton of nouns and adjectives, in singles or pairs. Winterbottom and Lapidge note B.'s use of relatively restrained hyperbaton wrapping noun and adjective around a verb or participle, and there are very many examples of this practice in the Lyminge texts, some very simple, some slightly more complex with other elements drawn into the pattern:

morte mactauit amara (VAAM § 2.1), inepta parauit sepulcra .... sub ipso sepeliuit aule regie triclinio ... ubi talium tantorumque nulle colebantur exequie (VAAM § 2.2), illicita ibi perstrepebant carnificum conuiuia (VAAM § 2.2), quamuis morte preoccuparentur iniqua, sepultura condirentur incongrua, refrigeria nichilominus possidebant eterna (VAAM § 2.3), uenustatibus eciam omnium diuinorum incumbebat ornatuum (VAAM § 8.2), quiescentem fedaret antiqui hostis fantasia uirginem (VAAM § 15.1), singulis illic libraretur diebus ... exanimis reconderet artus (VE § 2.2); ad locum transferre potuisset preparatum ... diem cum pace prestolaretur extremum (VE § 3.1), uelum fragili suspendit in stipite (VE § 5.2), ne humanis extollantur fauoribus, nec ullis demulceantur prosperis (*Mir.* § 1), iam dictum ambiebat fontem (*Mir.* § 2), iam dicte uirginis certis circumquaque uallabat terminis (*Mir.* § 6), diris undique angeretur langoribus (*Mir.* § 7), alicuius protulerat faminis (*Mir.* § 7).

Some variation is also observable, though, just the same as in B.'s prose, with the verb following a noun-adjective pair, for example *diuersa iumentorum genera multiplicauit* (VAAM § 6.2), *non surdis uanarum rerum auditibus audiuit* (VE § 2.1), *ternis sancte Trinitatis funibus firmiter innodauit* (VE § 5.2), *in torpenti adhuc negligentia persistebat* (*Mir.* § 5), *pro suorum purgatione uentrium sedebant*<sup>95</sup>. These texts also offer two examples of hyperbaton where the intervening feature is a preposition: *aliquo cum conamine* (*Mir.* § 8) and *nimia ex infirmitate* (*Mir.* § 8). Finally, like B.'s prose, the Lyminge texts appear to be rhythmical, in the sense that just under two thirds of all sentence-endings are marked by one

<sup>95</sup> Cf. WINTERBOTTOM and LAPIDGE, *Early Lives*, p. cxvii.

of the three commonest cursus rhythms, namely planus (the most frequent), tardus and velox<sup>96</sup>.

The sum of this evidence, although falling short of absolute proof, points compellingly towards B.'s composition of the Lyminge texts in the Hereford Legendary and Gotha I.81, and in what follows I shall simply refer to him as the author of those works.

## VII. B.'s context and sources

An important question which needs to be dealt with is how the composition of this constellation of texts fits with what has hitherto been established about B.'s career. Lapidge suggested that after a spell in the service of Dunstan, B. joined the community of canons at Saint-Martin in Liège under the patronage of Bishop Ebrachar, from about 960 and on after Ebrachar's death in 971. At some point in the 980s, he returned to England, first to Winchester and then Canterbury, where he certainly seems to have been by 988, possibly until his death, at a date after 1000<sup>97</sup>. From what has already been said about Lyminge and its estates, it should be evident that the person most likely to have commissioned the Eadburh texts is an archbishop of Canterbury. That would square well with B.'s other writings, in the sense that he is known to have sent a letter to Dunstan when he was archbishop (i.e. 959–88), referring to his previous generosity as patron, that he addressed another letter to the man who would become Dunstan's successor in 988, Æthelgar, seeking his patronage, during the latter's time as bishop of Selsey (980–988), and that the *Vita S. Dunstani* was dedicated to Archbishop Ælfric (995–1005), at some point in the years 997 to 1000<sup>98</sup>.

It is rather intriguing to note that in his letter to Æthelgar, B. mentioned his intention to go to Winchester "so that I might browse there through Aldhelm's little book in praise of virginity, and other things, my lord, which seem indispensable for my purposes" (*ut Ealdelmi ibidem percurram de parthenali laude libellum et caetera, domine mi, quae usui necessaria fore uidentur*)<sup>99</sup>. In VAAM § 15.3, the hagiographer describes the way in which Mildthryth was protected by angels, and observes

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<sup>96</sup> WINTERBOTTOM and LAPIDGE, *Early Lives*, p. cxvii–cxviii.

<sup>97</sup> WINTERBOTTOM and LAPIDGE, *Early Lives*, p. lxxvi–lxxviii.

<sup>98</sup> WINTERBOTTOM and LAPIDGE, *Early Lives*, p. lxiv on the dating of the *Vita S. Dunstani*, and p. 151–61 for the letters.

<sup>99</sup> WINTERBOTTOM and LAPIDGE, *Early Lives*, p. 156 and 158.

Iure autem angeli castis Christicolarum corporibus custodes deputantur quia castitas soror supernorum uocitata est angelorum<sup>100</sup>.

The statement about chastity being the angels' sister quotes a portion of the fourth-century *Passio* of Thomas Didymus which Aldhelm repeated verbatim in his account of Thomas in the prose *De uirginitate* § 23, *Virginitas soror est angelorum et omnium bonorum possessio*. In other words, B. would appear in VAAM to be alluding to precisely the work which he regarded as useful to him<sup>101</sup>. In a rather neat twist, as I have already noted, B. used a graecism to refer to Aldhelm's work, *parthenali*, which is very close to the most striking graecism in the Lyminge material, *parthene*, applied to Mildthryth (in fact at the start of the passage in which the quotation from Aldhelm comes). Perhaps we could conclude that this part of the Lyminge dossier was composed after the time when B. was able to peruse Aldhelm's treatise at Winchester. In reality, though, we cannot determine whether he already knew the work before that time. Therefore, we must find other ways to establish which of the three Canterbury archbishops whom B. knew — adding in also one from his era whom we have not yet mentioned, namely Sigeric (990–994) — could have been sufficiently interested in Eadburh and Lyminge to ask for a record of the saint and her miracle-working powers.

### *B. and the Kentish Royal Legend*

Before pursuing the question of B.'s patron, it seems appropriate first to move on from Aldhelm's *De uirginitate* to consider what narrative sources may have been available to B. at Canterbury for the task before him. One wonders, for example, why he chose to leave such a hostage to fortune in passing off Eadburh as a daughter of King Æthelberht when as eminent an authority as Bede gave no hint of her existence. Possibly the *Historia ecclesiastica* was displaced by more local records of the past. The story of the foundation of Minster-in-Thanel which B. recounts occurs in a somewhat lengthier form in the *Passio* of the martyrs Æthelred and Æthelberht composed by Byrhtferth at Ramsey (Huntingdonshire)

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<sup>100</sup> “Rightly are angels sent as guardians for the chaste bodies of Christ's followers, because chastity is called the sister of the angels in heaven”.

<sup>101</sup> Ed. R. EHWALD, ed., *Aldhelmi Opera* (= *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Auctores Antiquissimi*, 15), Berlin, 1919, p. 255, line 21. It is fascinating to notice that our author substitutes the noun *castitas* for Aldhelm's *uirginitas*, on the assumption that they are synonyms, since it is Mildthryth's virginity that is being praised here. In the heavily-annotated manuscripts of Aldhelm's work from later Anglo-Saxon England, in this passage it is noteworthy that this occurrence of *uirginitas* is glossed in two Canterbury copies of the tenth and early eleventh century (Oxford, Bodleian Library, Digby 146 and Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale 1650) as *castitas*; see S. GWARA, ed., *Aldhelmi Malmesbiriensis Prosa de uirginitate cum glosa Latina atque Anglosaxonica*, 2 voll. (= *Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina*, 124-124A), Turnhout, 2001, II.284.

probably not long after their relics were brought there in 991 from Wakering in Essex<sup>102</sup>. David Rollason concluded that Byrhtferth must have acquired the narrative from Wakering, along with the relics<sup>103</sup>, but more recent scholarship has questioned that hypothesis, suggesting instead that Byrhtferth's information should be traced back to Kent, to a now lost source shared by both Byrhtferth and the various Old English manifestations of the Minster-in-Thanet foundation legend referred to above. Hollis's conjecture is that all versions descend from an account originally produced at Minster-in-Thanet in Eadburh's own day<sup>104</sup>. The materials in Old English include not only the *Kentish Royal Legend* and the Lambeth Fragments, already mentioned, but also what appears to be a fragmentary Life of Mildthryth in London, British Library, Cotton Caligula A.xiv<sup>105</sup>. Hollis proposes that Byrhtferth's *Passio* is already a significant reworking of the original legend, and that its evolution continued in the eleventh century with the saints' Lives written by Goscelin<sup>106</sup>. The Life of Mildthryth in Caligula A.xiv is, in Hollis's view, the most accurate representation of the narrative as recorded at eighth-century Minster, and the *Kentish Royal Legend* would then be an abbreviated version of that account<sup>107</sup>. If B. had access to the same early Thanet source, then his text could, alongside Byrhtferth's work, be one of the first recoverable stages in its adaptation.

It is instructive, then, to compare B.'s account with those Old English texts, keeping an eye also on Byrhtferth's *Passio*: it becomes clear very quickly that B. probably only had something approximating to the least detailed form of the Minster-in-Thanet foundation legend found in the *Kentish Royal Legend*, not the fuller version in Caligula A.xiv. The section of the *Kentish Royal Legend* relating to the murder of the martyrs Æthelred and Æthelberht is told in a rather back-to-front way, because of the text's genealogical structure. Amidst a list of the descendants of Æthelberht, Domneva/Eormenburh and her holy offspring

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<sup>102</sup> BHL 2643, ed. T. ARNOLD, *Symeonis Monachi Opera Omnia*, 2 voll. (= *Rolls Series*), London, 1882–5, II.3–13. The identification of Byrhtferth as the author of this *Passio* was first argued in M. LAPIDGE, *Byrhtferth of Ramsey and the early sections of the Historia Regum attributed to Symeon of Durham*, in *Anglo-Saxon England*, 10 (1981), p. 97–122, and see now also LAPIDGE, ed. and trans., *Byrhtferth of Ramsey. The Lives of St Oswald and St Ecgwine* (= *Oxford Medieval Texts*), Oxford, 2009, p. xl–xli. It is important to be clear that B. cannot and should not be identified as Byrhtferth. Despite the suggestion by Jean Mabillon that Byrhtferth composed the *Vita S. Dunstani*, the two authors are quite distinct; see WINTERBOTTOM and LAPIDGE, *Early Lives*, p. cxxiv.

<sup>103</sup> ROLLASON, *Mildrith Legend*, p. 16–17.

<sup>104</sup> HOLLIS, *The Minster-in-Thanet Foundation Legend*, and especially p. 42 and note 6 on Kent rather than Wakering as the source of the story. Ultimately, ROLLASON also concluded that the legend originated at Minster-in-Thanet; see *Mildrith Legend*, p. 34–8.

<sup>105</sup> The Old English Life of Mildthryth in Caligula A.xiv was printed and discussed by SWANTON, *A fragmentary Life*, p. 24–6, with a translation at p. 17–22. See also ROLLASON, *Mildrith Legend*, p. 29–31 and 85–6 where the text is given the title *S. Mildryð*.

<sup>106</sup> HOLLIS, *The Minster-in-Thanet Foundation Legend*, p. 44, 52–53.

<sup>107</sup> HOLLIS, *The Minster-in-Thanet Foundation Legend*, p. 45–52.

are named, and then it is reported that Domneva came back to Kent *and hyre broðra wergildes onfengc innon Tænetlande æt Ecgbrihte þam cyninge þe hig ær acwellan het* (“and received the wergild of her brothers within Thanet from Ecgberht the king who had previously ordered them to be killed”). This reads as somewhat abrupt, without any explanation of the murder in question, but then immediately afterwards the story is unfolded from the start, until we come back again to the point where Domneva enters, and then her part in it is recapitulated with more detail. Thus, we learn that Thunor was the name of the king’s steward (*gerefa*) who had Æthelred and Æthelberht killed and then buried them under the king’s throne (*heahsetle*) at Eastry, within the royal hall. No motive for the murder is offered, in contrast to the account in Caligula A.xiv, which states that Ecgberht took the two boys into fosterage, and that Thunor, for fear that they would become dearer to the king than he was, tried to persuade Ecgberht that they would deprive his own offspring of the kingdom and needed to be killed. The king resisted the idea, out of love for his nephews, but Thunor went ahead with the plan secretly<sup>108</sup>. Unlike the *Kentish Royal Legend*, B. does offer a reason for the murder, namely that Ecgberht, goaded on by devilish envy, fears that his nephews will hamper his own rule or prevent the kingship passing to his sons. He casts Ecgberht in a more sinister light than the Caligula text does, making him a Herod-like figure, whose henchman Thunor does his dirty work. The latter feigns affection for the two martyrs with Judas’ kisses before dispatching them (B. passes over the murder itself rather quickly) and burying them under the throne, without any funeral rites. Thus B. adds Christian colour to what is in the *Kentish Royal Legend* but does not quite match the narrative detail of the Caligula text; it is interesting to note that he is content to cast King Ecgberht in the worst light, whereas Byrhtferth followed Caligula in putting the blame on to his advisor, Thunor, *filius ... perditionis, membrum diaboli, necnon domus zabuli*<sup>109</sup>.

Then the *Kentish Royal Legend* shows how the hidden bodies were wonderfully brought to light:

swa þæt þurh Godes mihte se leoma astod ymbe midderniht up þurh þære healle hrof, swilce þar sunne scine. And þæt se cyningc him silf geseah, and he wæs swiðe afyrht and he þa be þam wiste, þæt he hæfde þam hælende Gode abolgen<sup>110</sup>.

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<sup>108</sup> SWANTON, *A fragmentary Life*, p. 25 and translated at p. 18–19. Byrhtferth follows this version of events reasonably closely in his *Passio*: ARNOLD, *Symeonis monachi Opera omnia*, II. 6, and the summary in ROLLASON, *Mildrith Legend*, p. 74.

<sup>109</sup> ARNOLD, *Symeonis monachi Opera omnia*, II. 6, “son of damnation, limb of the devil, also dwelling-place of Satan”.

<sup>110</sup> LIEBERMANN, *Die Heiligen*, p. 3.

“so that through God’s power the ray of light shone at midnight up through the roof of the hall, as if the sun was shining there. And the king himself saw it and was very afraid and knew from it that he had angered God the Saviour”.

This B. follows closely, only adding word-play on the place-name Eastry. The Caligula text has a more detailed version of events, in which the King questions Thunor about what he has done, extracting the truth with difficulty and dismay (again Byrhtferth follows this closely). In what comes next, the *Kentish Royal Legend* and B. diverge even further from the narrative in Caligula A.xiv (and Byrhtferth’s *Passio*). The Caligula text describes how Ecgberht assembles his counsellors (the *witan*, in Old English) and decides, guided by Archbishop Deusdedit, to summon the martyrs’ sister and ask her what compensation for their murder she would choose. Her response is that it should be as much land on Thanet as her hind can dash around<sup>111</sup>. As the *Kentish Royal Legend* has it, much more simply, Ecgberht summons Domneva so that she can receive the wergild, in the form of eighty sulungs of land, on which she built the minster *þam sawlum to gebedrædenne þe hit heora wergild wæs; and se cyningc hire þarto wel filste* (“to secure prayer for the souls of those whose wergild it was; and the king helped her well”). Again B. follows this without changing anything: he has no meeting of the witan, no reference to a hind<sup>112</sup>. Either he was using a reduced version of narrative like the *Kentish Royal Legend* or he was cutting back on the fuller form of the story as in Caligula A.xiv<sup>113</sup>. It is difficult to see why B. would have excised good narrative material, being, overall, rather short of it, though of course Thanet was not the focus of his endeavour, but rather, Lyminge. Hollis suggested that B.’s version of the story (referring to the Gotha text which Colker had published in 1977) also avoids reference to wergild, because after the tenth century the concept of persons in orders receiving such a thing would have been frowned upon, indeed was explicitly prohibited by secular law<sup>114</sup>. One might wonder, though, whether B.’s reference to the land being given *pro sanguine interfectorum*, and his further statement that it was *sanguinis precio*, was in reality intended to render the *wergild* of his probable source<sup>115</sup>.

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<sup>111</sup> SWANTON, *A fragmentary Life*, p. 25–6 and p. 20. This Hollis describes as a type of “rash-promise” tale, suggesting also that it accords Domneva agency which subsequent versions of the legend revised away; *The Minster-in-Thanet foundation story*, p. 50.

<sup>112</sup> It is rather striking how similar B.’s first reference to Eormenburh is to that of the *Kentish Royal Legend*: compare his “Ermenbergam, alio nomine Domneuum uocatam” with the latter’s *Eormenburge oder nama Domne Eue* (“Eormenburh, by another name Domne Eafe”), LIEBERMANN, *Die Heiligen Englands*, p. 5.

<sup>113</sup> The latter is the conclusion drawn by HOLLIS, *The Minster-in-Thanet Foundation Legend*, p. 54.

<sup>114</sup> *The Minster-in-Thanet Foundation Legend*, p. 54.

<sup>115</sup> The *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources* offers a number of instances of *pretium* glossed as *wergild*; there is also a charter in the Abingdon archive for the year 835, probably a post-conquest fabrication

We can continue in the same vein with B.'s account of the Life of Mildthryth<sup>116</sup>. This is what the *Kentish Royal Legend* reports about her:

And heo þa sancte Mildriðe, hire dohtor, ofer sæ sænde, þæt heo þone wisdom þar geleornode, þe man on þam mynstre healdan scolde; and heo þa swa dide and þar micelne haligdom begeat, þe man nu git to dæg þær sceawian mæg. And heo þa, sancte Mildryð, eft to hyre medder ham com, and heo hire þa þæt mynster forgeaf, þa hit gestaðelod wæs; and heo þa, sancte Mildryð, halig rifte onfengc æt Theodore arcebiscope, and hundseofontig mædena mid hyre, þe se cyningc and hire modor begiten hæfdon and gelæred, þæt hig æt þære stowe nytte beon mihton. And heo þa þar Gode to willan geþeah and þæt ece life geearnode, and swa oft siððan heora mihta cuðe syndon<sup>117</sup>.

“And she then sent St Mildthryth, her daughter, over the sea, so that she might learn there the wisdom which one ought to hold fast to in the minster; and she did so and acquired there a great collection of relics which one now can still see there today. And she then, St Mildthryth, came back home to her mother, and she give the minster over to her, when it was built; and then St Mildthryth took the holy veil at the hand of Archbishop Theodore, and a hundred and seventy maidens with her, who the king and her mother had assembled and instructed, so that they could be of use at the place. And she then served God's will there and earned everlasting life, and so often afterwards her miraculous powers are known”.

This outline B. follows exactly, expanding with poetic imagery and rhetorical colour, and weaving in suitable biblical allusions. The only narrative content that he adds is the three miracles of divine protection (VAAM § 13–15)<sup>118</sup>. Finally, after recording the fact that Eormengyth, Domneva's sister and Mildthryth's aunt was with Mildthryth at Minster, the *Kentish Royal Legend* supplies the brief notice that we have already considered (page 5 above), namely that Eadburh succeeded Mildthryth at the minster and built the church there

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but incorporating some early material, which makes the explicit equation *pretium ... sanguinis id est weregeld*; see S. KELLY, ed., *Charters of Abingdon Abbey*, 2 voll. (= *Anglo-Saxon Charters* 7–8), Oxford, 2000, I.50.

<sup>116</sup> The text in Caligula A.xiv runs out before reaching Mildthryth; the first of the two Lambeth fragments, by chance, continues her story, presenting the scene of her veiling (SWANTON, *A fragmentary Life*, p. 26, translated at p. 22–3), which it does, like B., with several quotations from the Psalms, but quite different ones from those used by B.: I would suggest that the two are quite independent literary imaginings of the same event.

<sup>117</sup> LIEBERMANN, *Die Heiligen Englands*, p. 5.

<sup>118</sup> Byrhtferth ended his *Passio* of the two martyrs with a brief notice of Mildthryth which likewise follows the brief outline in the *Kentish Royal Legend*, but then concludes with just one miracle – that an angel, in the form of a dove, rested on her sleeping head, *ut eam tueretur a malignorum spirituum illusionem* (ARNOLD, *Symeonis monachi Opera omnia*, II. 13): this seems to collapse B.'s two stories of protecting angels together (§ 14–15). It also suggests that either both B. and Byrhtferth had found these miracle stories in a common source, now lost, or that Byrhtferth had access to B.'s text. Just one other feature of his *Passio* points to the latter, namely that when he describes the ignominious burial of the two martyrs, Byrhtferth writes *nullo decem cordarum reboante officio, non hymnorum pulcherrimo Ambrosiano titulo, nec Gregoriano potitis dulcis armoniae organo* (ARNOLD, *Symeonis monachi Opera omnia*, II. 8), which is strikingly similar to B.'s own words in VAAM § 2.2). As already noted, however, in other respects Byrhtferth tells the story of the martyrdom with quite different emphases from B.'s presentation of it.

in which the latter's body now rests: that is the chief, indeed only, narrative substance of B.'s *Vita S. Eadburgae*. Hence all B.'s main points are present in the Old English *Kentish Royal Legend* — Mildthryth went abroad, came back bringing relics, took the veil, became abbess when her mother died, and was succeeded by Eadburh — and there does not seem to be any obstacle to the hypothesis that it could have been his main source for the outline of his own texts. That conclusion holds good for every element of the information which B. provided apart from one crucial point, the identity of Eadburh, which so damaged the credibility of his text in Goscelin's eyes. Obviously, the other notable flaw in B.'s construction is omitting to explain how Eadburh's relics came to be at Lyminge, about which the *Kentish Royal Legend* is also silent.

As we have seen, the *Kentish Royal Legend* mentions Æthelberht's daughter, Æthelburh, and her establishment of Lyminge, and that she was then buried there "and St Eadburh with her". But it does not say who Eadburh was and, unlike B., most certainly makes no claim that she was a daughter of King Æthelberht. At this juncture, though, we need also to attend to what B. does not say: the *Miracula S. Eadburgae*, as we have observed, seem to assume that Lyminge belongs to Eadburh in some slightly vague way, and never refer to Æthelburh or her founding of the monastery there. The *Vita S. Eadburgae*, meanwhile, says that Eadburh was a daughter of Æthelberht and an abbess at Thanet, but it does not attribute the founding of Lyminge to her, or refer to a marriage to Edwin or give any impression that she is the same person as Queen Æthelburh. If B. were reading the *Kentish Royal Legend* attentively, he will have seen that that could not be the case, only that somehow an otherwise unidentified Eadburh ended up resting at Lyminge alongside Æthelburh, and that an Eadburh was also Mildthryth's successor at Thanet. He may, therefore, reasonably have concluded that it would be legitimate to consider these two women as one and the same. It does not now seem likely that we shall ever be able with any certainty to establish Abbess Eadburh's exact place among the descendants of King Æthelberht<sup>119</sup>, but evidently B. and his patron felt that she needed to be fitted into the royal genealogy somewhere. Calling her a daughter of Æthelberht, like Æthelburh alongside whom she was said to rest, was either a naïve gesture, given its chronological improbability, or, viewed from another perspective, a cunningly

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<sup>119</sup> There have been a few attempts to solve this problem, none of them supported by any real evidence: SWANTON, *A Fragmentary Life*, p. 23 note 34 suggested that Eadburh was a daughter of King Centwine of Wessex (676–85); this would be to connect her with the nun otherwise known as Bugga (see note 33 above). M. DOCKRAY-MILLER, *Motherhood and Mothering in Anglo-Saxon England*, Basingstoke, 2000, p. 31, proposes that the Æthelberht who is described as having been murdered along with his brother Æthelred at Ecgberht's behest was in fact the Æthelberht who fathered Eadburh, not the King Æthelberht who died in 616, as stated by B. That would make Eadburh her Mildthryth's first cousin.



evasive one, especially since B. seems specifically to avoid mentioning Æthelburh. If the stories being told at Lyminge connected the miracles with an Eadburh and not with Æthelburh, then maybe there was genuine confusion on the part of the residents: perhaps this is the subtext of B.'s theme of neglect in the miracle-collection. Or possibly, for whatever reason, a popular cult had attached itself to the virginal Eadburh, an abbess of Thanet whose body was believed to have ended up at Lyminge (entirely possible since the two houses seem often to have been under one abbess), rather than to the widowed — and definitely not virginal — Queen Æthelburh<sup>120</sup>. In the ecclesiastical climate of B.'s day, as will be noted below, it would not be so very surprising for there to be greater inclination to promote the popular cult of a virgin saint.

### *B.'s presentation of female sanctity*

The difference between a virgin and widow gains some pertinence when we turn to examine how B. chose to put hagiographical flesh upon the bare bones of the “facts” he may have gleaned from the *Kentish Royal Legend*. There is in any case considerable interest in focusing on B.'s depiction of female sanctity, because if the attribution suggested here is correct, then his account of Mildthryth and Eadburh will be the earliest surviving attempt in England since Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica* to write at any length in Latin about holy women, and about native female saints in particular. What then is the model of sanctity that B. presents, and to what extent is it influenced by Aldhelm's *De uirginitate* which he was so keen to study? And how much was it shaped by the assumptions and expectations of his probable patron or audience?

Whereas anyone setting out to write about male saints at this period had a clear set of earlier models and themes to follow, the path ahead was far less obvious for the would-be hagiographer of a female saint, particularly a saint who had not suffered martyrdom. The early biographies of holy women which did emerge in the Latin West, such as the gory *Vita S. Radegundis* by Venantius Fortunatus, were not so useful to work with, but texts of that nature, alongside the *Acta* of martyrs such as Agnes and Lucy, were quite likely to have been

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<sup>120</sup> That Eadburh displaced Æthelburh in popularity, rather than that Æthelburh was confused with, or misnamed as, Eadburh, is the conclusion reached by Robert BALDWIN in an article that was being written while I was working on the Hereford texts, *Antiquarians, Victorian Parsons, and re-writing the past: how Lyminge Parish Church acquired an invented dedication*, in *Archaeologia Cantiana*, 138 (2017), p. 201–226. I am grateful for his patience in waiting for me to make the Lyminge texts available to him and for sharing his ideas ahead of publication. The possibility that an Eadburh who was distinct from Æthelburh attracted veneration at Lyminge had already been mooted by KELLY, *Lyminge minster and its early charters*, p. 102–3.

all that B. would have encountered by way of models<sup>121</sup>. B.'s depictions of Mildthryth and Eadburh are brief sketches by comparison with his lengthy and detailed account of Dunstan, studded as it is with verses. Obviously, there is a great difference between writing the holy biography of a man you have known and worked for, recounting a life full of events and significance, and describing long-dead women about whom rather little is recorded.

B. opens his picture of Mildthryth with words drawn from one of the royal psalms, Psalm 44, verses 14–15, appropriate enough for her royal descent, and her mother's decision to send her abroad is voiced in terms of verse 11 of that psalm "Hear, my daughter, and see and incline your ear and forget your people and the house of your father". Mildthryth's desire to leave her homeland freely, following the eremitical impulse, is a yearning for union with the King who desires her form, echoing Psalm 44 again. Thus B. turns decisively to the bridal language that comes to be such a hallmark of hagiography of female saints from the eleventh century onwards, but which traces its origins all the way back to the late fifth- or early sixth-century pseudo-Ambrosian *Passio S. Agnetis* (BHL 156). He draws again upon the Psalms, this time the opening of 118, for another image, of those, the blessed and unstained, who walk in the Lord's ways and seek out His testimonies: this and Psalm 44 continue to be a theme running through both Mildthryth's Life and that of Eadburh.

According to B.'s narrative, when Mildthryth goes abroad, she embarks upon *litterarum studiis*, having taken on *uim uirilis ingenii*, "the vigour of manly intellect": the connection between holiness and manliness is a clearly identifiable theme in Aldhelm's *De uirginitate*<sup>122</sup>. But the concept of the *uirago*, the woman of masculine temperament, is by no means unique to Aldhelm's understanding of female sanctity, occurring repeatedly as a theme in literature for or about holy women from Jerome's letters onwards<sup>123</sup>. On returning home, Mildthryth's decision to take the veil is again expressed using the language of nuptial union, with a strongly scriptural flavour: *celesti sponso cupiens inherere et penitus ponere in domino deo spem suam seque uni uiro uirginem castam exhibere Christo* ("longing to cleave to the celestial Bridegroom and to place her hope completely in the Lord God, and to show herself a chaste virgin to her one Husband, Christ"). With seventy others, she is veiled by Archbishop Theodore, avoiding the fate of the foolish virgins of Matthew 25. Subsequently, Mildthryth's role as abbess is cast as firmly pastoral, caring for the *ouile dominici gregis*, but

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<sup>121</sup> See the excellent discussion of the challenges of writing the hagiography of women, by Julia SMITH, *The Problem of Female Sanctity in Carolingian Europe c. 780–920*, in *Past and Present*, 146 (1995), p. 3–37.

<sup>122</sup> Discussed by E. PETTIT, *Holiness and Masculinity in Aldhelm's Opus Geminatum De uirginitate*, in *Holiness and Masculinity in the Middle Ages*, ed. P. H. CULLUM and K. J. LEWIS, Cardiff, 2004, p. 8–23.

<sup>123</sup> SMITH, *The Problem of Female Sanctity*, p. 18–20.

it is also a virginal mothering as *mater multarum*, following Mary's chaste example. Notable throughout these texts is the prominence of Mary, who is named explicitly, but also considered an implicit model, through use of phrases from the Magnificat in Luke 1 (for example, after the miracle of the snuffed-out candle *ex hoc ...beatam illam dixerunt omnes*, echoing Luke 1:48). It was perhaps appropriate enough for the Lyminge context, since the early dedication of the church there was to Mary, as attested by the charters<sup>124</sup>, but it could just as easily reflect B.'s own devotional priorities.

Mildthryth bends herself to reading, continual prayer, *exhortacionibus sacris* (preaching to those under her?), psalmody and spiritual songs, alms, vigils and fasting, and all good works. She also chastises her tender body and brings it into servitude, but that is in the Pauline context of teaching or preaching to others. B. thus envisages Mildthryth's role as being far from passive: she attends to her own spiritual life, but as Mother of the community, must also teach those in her care. Like the virginal Mary, Mildthryth is the recipient of angelic visitation, in the form of a dove coming to rest on her head during prayer, embracing it in its wings with intimate affection, an emissary of her celestial Bridegroom, accepting the prayers of his bride. An angel also protects her from the devil's polluting influence. Miraculous happenings are thus confined to the private sphere of Mildthryth's own spiritual life, and this pattern has been noted as strongly characteristic of the way female sanctity was shaped in the Carolingian period<sup>125</sup>. When her tomb is opened up, she is found to be incorrupt, to match the immaculate nature of her life: "Who is she that goeth up by the air, as a pillar of smoke of aromatical spices, of myrrh and frankincense?" (Song of Songs 3: 6).

The same themes are present in B.'s depiction of Eadburh: her pastoral role, but also the use of bridal imagery, expressed through the language of the Psalms. B. makes a neat link from the sanctity of the body's temple (quoting 1 Cor. 3: 17 and 6: 19) to Eadburh's need to build a new "temple" on Thanet, to house Mildthryth's body. Having shown Mildthryth crossing the sea literally, for Eadburh he offers an extended nautical metaphor for her life tossed on the flood-tides of the world: "she did not hang the sail of her hope on a fragile mast but rather brandished it upwards in the air towards Christ ... tied her anchor firmly with the triple rope of the Holy Trinity". Within her virginal body beats a manly heart (*sub uirgineo corpore uiriliter agebat cor suum*), just as Mildthryth's turn to book-learning is the deployment of manly intellect. Eadburh too reads, prays, gives alms, summons the angels to

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<sup>124</sup> See BROOKS and KELLY, *Charters of Christ Church*, no. 5 (p. 286–7)

<sup>125</sup> SMITH, *The Problem of Female Sanctity*, p. 33–5.

her aid. Another prominent theme in this *Vita* is Eadburh's firm rejection of all the world's material things, scorned as the dust of the highway (*lutum platearum*) or stinking dung (*stercus olidum*), an image to which Aldhelm had frequent recourse in *De uirginitate* when referring to the garish gifts of suitors and even the rites of marriage itself<sup>126</sup>.

It is striking that while B. puts an emphasis on the two saints' virginal status and their longing for union with the heavenly Bridegroom, the tests that they face are not from any human agency or persecution, but only from beyond this world, from the devil. In the case of Mildthryth, that is a notable contrast with the way her story was subsequently given stronger emotional colour at the hands of Goscelin, with the development in his *Vita S. Mildrethae* of the theme of virginity preserved under persecution. Goscelin's narrative includes Wilcoma, abbess of Chelles, who hounds Mildthryth almost to death in the attempt to persuade her to an unwelcome marriage, and that vividly-told part of the story ends up dominating his *Vita S. Mildrethae* as a whole<sup>127</sup>. For B. the saintly life is primarily a battle fought with or in the presence of supernatural forces, both of good and evil. The same thinness of the division between this world and the other is perceptible in his account of Dunstan, who is harried by the devil in various animal forms just as St Antony was in his desert retreat, who sees devilish apparitions, but also has a guardian angel and is granted a vision of saints and angels singing in a church<sup>128</sup>.

Despite these interventions from beyond, B.'s sense of how sanctity may be attained seems nonetheless to involve active involvement on the part of the holy woman, through study and prayer, almsgiving, and ministry (including actively teaching the Word) to the flock entrusted to her. In Eadburh's case, it also includes stewarding the community's resources and using them to provide fit buildings for worship, and for the memorialisation of her predecessor. It may be that B. followed a standard line in considering female as synonymous with weakness, only able to achieve anything notable by taking on manliness, and that is certainly also a feature of Aldhelm's presentation of female sanctity. Yet B. nonetheless affords his women as much agency as the limited scope of these portraits will

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<sup>126</sup> For example, *De uirginitate* § 40, Caecilia scorns marriage like *spurca latrinarum purgamenta* (EHWALD, *Aldhelmi Opera*, p. 292, line 15), and at § 45, Agnes scorns her suitor's gifts as *lurida fetentis cloacae uolutabra* (EHWALD, *Aldhelmi Opera* p. 298, lines 16–17).

<sup>127</sup> ROLLASON, *Mildrith Legend*, p. 120–8. See LOVE, "Torture me, rend me, burn me, kill me!" Goscelin of Saint-Bertin and the Depiction of Female Sanctity, in *Writing Women Saints in Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. P. E. SZARMACH, Toronto, 2013, p. 274–306, especially p. 276–81.

<sup>128</sup> WINTERBOTTOM and LAPIDGE, *The Early Lives*, p. 54–7 (the devil attacks in various guises), p. 90–1 (a guardian angel), p. 92–3 (an apparition of the devil), and p. 100–1 (Dunstan sees bright figures singing in a church).

allow. An emphasis on study of the Word calls to mind the praise which Aldhelm heaped upon the nuns to whom he addressed his *De uirginitate*, whose intellectual endeavours caused him to liken them to striving athletes and to a busy beehive, and for whom study of the Scriptures was one pathway to the spiritual chastity which, unlike bodily virginity, is the property of few<sup>129</sup>.

The theme of chastity, alongside a lifestyle whose hallmarks are the rejection of material things, constant prayer and psalmody, and assiduous study of the Scriptures, chimes well with the nature of the person most likely to have asked B. to write about Eadburh and her cult. From the mid-tenth century onwards, Canterbury had a succession of archbishops who were Benedictine monks, and although B. himself was a secular canon, he was probably writing for a patron who considered reformed monasticism to be the highest calling. Virginal figures held a central role in the spirituality of the later tenth century, as exemplified by Æthelwold's notable veneration for Æthelthryth of Ely, who enjoyed a prominent place in his lavish Benedictional<sup>130</sup>. Does that mean that B. was writing simply to provide improving reading about exemplary figures? In truth, hagiography of this period very seldom looked towards that goal alone: what, then, was B. especially aiming to achieve with his composition, and whose purpose he was trying to serve?

A puzzling feature of the Lyminge dossier is the amount of space given to the foundation of Thanet and to Mildthryth, when the focus of interest was apparently the miracles associated with Eadburh's shrine and holy well at Lyminge. In fact, of all the saints commemorated in the dossier, posthumous miracles are attributed only with any detail to Eadburh, a clear sign that, ultimately, she is the centre of attention. In the medieval understanding of the cult of the saints, while virtues might make one an exemplary figure and lifetime miracles would establish holy status, the tangible harnessing of Divine power from beyond the grave was what the promoters and beneficiaries of a cult cared about most<sup>131</sup>. Thus, Eadburh's miracles must have been the starting-point for the Lyminge dossier, the narrative that really mattered. With a duty to record them appropriately and lend them

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<sup>129</sup> *De uirginitate* § 1 (and the salutation), ed. EHWALD, *Aldhelmi Opera*, p. 228–32.

<sup>130</sup> See M. LAPIDGE and M. WINTERBOTTOM, ed. and trans., *Wulfstan of Winchester. Life of St Æthelwold (= Oxford Medieval Texts)*, Oxford, 1991, p. lxxxii–lxxxiii, and on Æthelwold's interest in saints and their relics, see A. THACKER, *Æthelwold and Abingdon*, in *Bishop Æthelwold. His Career and Influence*, ed. B. YORKE, Woodbridge, 1988, p. 43–64, at p. 61–3.

<sup>131</sup> Cf. the comments on how local saints gained wider recognition, in C. CUBITT, *Universal and Local Saints in Anglo-Saxon England*, in *Local Saints and Local Churches in the Early Medieval West*, ed. A. THACKER and R. SHARPE, Oxford, 2002, p. 423–53, at p. 438. On the centrality for Christianity of the holy dead as 'sources of supernatural power' see also R. BARTLETT, *Why Can the Dead Do Such Great Things?* Princeton, NJ, 2013, p. 3 and p. 511–12.

authenticity, B. must at least provide some background to identify the saint who is working them, even though details about Eadburh were evidently in short supply. Perhaps it is a result of the limitations of his sources, but B. only tells us about two things that she did, namely to follow Mildthryth as abbess and to build a church into which her predecessor's relics could be translated. Because of that, it would then perhaps have seemed necessary to explain who Mildthryth is (and fortunately B. finds that the source to hand has a little more to say about her than about Eadburh), which leads inevitably backwards to an account of how the monastery over which they both presided came to be there. B. uses that account to establish that the Lyminge miracle-worker is the Thanet abbess and at the same time, albeit somewhat artificially and maladroitly, to knit Eadburh into the "holy cousinhood" of the royal families of Kent and East Anglia and embed her firmly within the story of the beginnings of monasticism in England<sup>132</sup>. It has been noted of Carolingian female hagiography that there is a strong tendency to emphasise the saint's family connections and obligations, far beyond what would seem necessary in the depiction of male saints, for whom the rejection of home and family and kindred was, after the pattern of Abraham, the primary impulse: in this regard B. follows what little that can be said to exist by way of previous hagiographical tradition<sup>133</sup>. All the time, however, it was most important of all for B. to ensure that the focus remained with the relic-cult of Eadburh and her posthumous miraculous powers, and so he said nothing of the resting-place or powers of the two martyrs, and attributes no wonder-working to Mildthryth's remains.

### VIII. Conclusions

Finally, then, is it possible to identify one particular archbishop of Canterbury as most likely to have commissioned B. to write about Eadburh and Lyminge? Earlier scholarship claimed that Dunstan rebuilt Lyminge church, which would have been a fitting moment to decide that its popularly-venerated patroness should be commemorated. Yet that rebuilding seems to be something of a conjecture only<sup>134</sup>. Perhaps more realistically, we might consider the same man to whom B. dedicated his *Vita S. Dunstani*, that is, Ælfric: it must be acknowledged that

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<sup>132</sup> On the transition from royal saint to patron saint in the context of these dynasties, and on the need to make a connection with the growth of monasticism, see S. RIDYARD, *The Royal Saints of Anglo-Saxon England. A Study of West Saxon and East Anglian Cults* (= *Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought*), Cambridge, 1988, p. 236–42.

<sup>133</sup> Cf. SMITH, *The Problem of Female Sanctity*, p. 25–8.

<sup>134</sup> R. C. JENKINS, *The Basilica of Lyminge: Roman, Saxon and Medieval*, in *Archaeologia Cantiana*, 9 (1859), p. 205–223, at p. 213 supported with architectural evidence by E. GILBERT, *The Church of S. Mary and S. Eadburg, Lyminge*, in *Archaeologia Cantiana* 79 (1964), p. 143–8 and accepted by H. M. TAYLOR, *Anglo-Saxon Architecture III*, Cambridge, 1978, p. 742, 1074 and 1082. But a more cautious note is sounded, for example, by KELLY, *Lyminge minster and its early charters*, p. 100–101.

the similar turns of phrase we have noted in the Eadburh material and the *Vita* of Dunstan are more likely to have come about between texts composed by one person around the same time than between works written as much as twenty years apart. Ælfric served as archbishop through a decade (995 to 1005) which saw devastating and increasingly concerted Viking attacks on England, and King Æthelred the Unready had come to see them as divine punishment upon him<sup>135</sup>. It has been noted that the 990s saw a significant burst of interest in saints and their fit commemoration in writing, as if to call the holy dead to arms in that bitter struggle against the forces of darkness. The capacity of the saints to intercede on behalf of those under their patronage was repeatedly emphasised in documents from this period<sup>136</sup>. Possibly also there was some feeling that past neglect of England's saints was blameworthy and needed remedying. In this context the miracle in which Eadburh ensures that swift divine vengeance smites the "hindermost parts" of the godless harriers of Lyminge's clergy comes into sharp focus. But so too does the story of the priest of St Eadburh who neglected her "place or relics" (*locum uel reliquias*), ignored the warnings sent in visions, and was punished bitterly, yet was also rescued from worse punishment by the merciful saint herself. Even the non-burning charter reminds the very archbishop himself of his carelessness about the property of a surprisingly powerful saint.

Archbishop Ælfric appears to have been deeply involved in the Church's various ways of responding to the desperate situation<sup>137</sup>. For example, it has been suggested that he may have been responsible for ordering the construction of a compilation of texts relating to the cult of St Cuthbert of Lindisfarne (London, British Library, Harley 1117, written at Canterbury in about 1000). That book is prefaced, on the first folio of the manuscript, by the record of a much more recent event, namely a Latin hexameter poem about the translation of the remains of Edward, king and martyr, the half-brother of King Æthelred the Unready, murdered in 978<sup>138</sup>. There Edward, *dira rex morte peremptus* (line 2, "slain by a dreadful

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<sup>135</sup> The desperate nature of the situation is set out in S. KEYNES, *Apocalypse Then: England A.D. 1000*, in *Europe Around the Year 1000*, ed. P. URBANCZYK, Warsaw, 2001, p. 247–70 and also S. KEYNES, *An abbot, an archbishop, and the viking raids of 1006–7 and 1009–12*, in *Anglo-Saxon England*, 36 (2007), p. 151–220.

<sup>136</sup> A point brought out clearly by C. CUBITT, *The Politics of Remorse: Penance and Royal Piety in the Reign of Æthelred the Unready*, in *Historical Research*, 85 (2012), p. 179–92 at p. 188.

<sup>137</sup> See S. KEYNES, *Ælfric*, in *The Wiley Blackwell Encyclopedia of Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. M. LAPIDGE, J. BLAIR, S. KEYNES, and D. SCRAGG, Oxford, 2014, p. 9, and S. KEYNES and R. NAISMITH, *The Agnus Dei Pennies of King Æthelred the Unready*, in *Anglo-Saxon England* 40 (2012 for 2011), p. 175–223, especially p. 183–4.

<sup>138</sup> S. KEYNES, *The Cult of King Edward the Martyr during the Reign of King Æthelred the Unready*, in *Gender and Historiography: Studies in the Earlier Middle Ages in Honour of Pauline Stafford*, ed. J. L. NELSON, S. REYNOLDS and S. M. JOHNS, London, 2012, p. 115–25, at p. 117–20. The poem has most recently been edited

death”), is presented as having met his end because of treacherous envy on the part of those closest to him: *Inuidia certum est propria quem gente necatum* (line 3, “it is certain that he died through envy, killed by his own people”). That the murder should be depicted as an act of betrayal is strongly reminiscent of the very story with which the Lyminge dossier begins, the killing of Æthelred and Æthelberht, brought about because of devilish envy in the form of Ecgberht’s fears that they posed a threat to his rule<sup>139</sup>. Suitably enough for the climate of the 990s, Ecgberht is shown choosing to atone for the murder by a gift of land to the Church, in the person of Domneva, who uses it to establish a monastery: his gesture foreshadows the restitutions of monastic property, and fresh donations of land to the church, by which from 993 onwards it seems that King Æthelred the Unready sought to go beyond mere contrition for the rapacious ways of his early reign to active gestures of penance<sup>140</sup>. This mirroring of events could be another reason why the Eadburh miracles were embedded within a longer narrative — that is, the Minster-in-Thanel foundation story — which brought with it powerfully significant resonances for the times. One wonders whether the tale of the archbishop burning useless charters is a half-truthful vignette of the moment when Ælfric had a moment’s insight into the power to be harnessed even from the cult of a relatively obscure local saint. She was, after all, an appealingly virginal and monastic one, who could also, admittedly by sleight of hand, be presented simultaneously as the relative of martyred royal saints and as having a connection with Christianity’s first beginnings in Kent.

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and discussed by D. N. Dumville, *The death of King Edward the Martyr – 18 March, 979?* in *Anglo-Saxon*, 1 (2007), p. 269–83, and was also printed by C. FELL, *Edward King and Martyr*, Leeds, 1971, p. 17.

<sup>139</sup> Although there is not the space here to set out the argument in detail, I would suggest that there is a very compelling case for attributing the poem on Edward to B.: the 26-line poem is striking for its use of four nouns in *-men* or *-amen* (one of them, *dubitamen*, probably a coinage), five graecisms (one of which, *archos*, B. uses in the opening address of the *Vita S. Dunstani*), and the archaic idiom *sodes* already noted above as occurring in the *Miracula S. Eadburgae* (p. 38 above). It includes two of B.’s favourite mis-directed verbs, *uocitare* (line 13) and *frequentare* (at line 15), uses the same verb to refer to Edward’s murder as we find to refer to the martyrdom of Æthelred and Æthelberht: *dira rex morte peremptus* (line 2; cf. VAAM 1.1 *sperans puerum Christum ... peremisse* and 2.2 *quibus peremptis*), and one example of the misuse of the pluperfect. As was noted with regard to B.’s verse in the *Vita S. Dunstani*, the poem on Edward does not use any poetic compound form; see WINTERBOTTOM and LAPIDGE, *Early Lives*, p. cxxii.

<sup>140</sup> Noted by S. KEYNES, *Wulfsgige, monk of Glastonbury, abbot of Westminster (c. 900–3), and bishop of Sherborne*, in *St Wulfsgige and Sherborne. Essays to Celebrate the Millennium of the Benedictine Abbey 998–1998*, ed. K. BARKER, D. A. HINTON and A. HUNT (Oxford, 2005), p. 53–94 at p. 67–8. See also CUBITT, *The Politics of Remorse*, p. 186–7.



## List of abbreviations

Bede, *HE* = Bede, *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum*, ed. M. LAPIDGE, ed., and P. CHIESA, trans., *Beda. Storia degli Inglesi*, 2 voll., Rome, 2008–10

*DMLBS* = *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources*, ed. R. E. LATHAM, D. R. HOWLETT, R. ASHDOWNE *et al.*, 17 fascicules, London, 1975–2014

*Ep.1* = B.'s letter to Æthelgar, ed. Michael WINTERBOTTOM and Michael LAPIDGE, *The Early Lives of St Dunstan* (= *Oxford Medieval Texts*), Oxford, 2012, p. 153–6

*Ep.2* = B.'s letter to Dunstan, ed. WINTERBOTTOM and LAPIDGE, *The Early Lives of St Dunstan*, p. 159–60

*Mir.* = *Miracula S. Eadburgae*

*VAAM* = *Vita S. Aethelredi et Aethelberti martyrum et S. Miltrudis* (*BHL* 2644ab and 5964b)

*VE* = *Vita S. Eadburgae* (*BHL* 2384a)

*VSD* = *Vita S. Dunstani*, ed. WINTERBOTTOM and LAPIDGE, *The Early Lives of St Dunstan* p. 2–109

## **Editorial procedure**

In the edition which follows, all abbreviations found in the manuscripts have been expanded silently. The spelling, including that of names, has not been normalised, so that e for ae/oe is retained, for example, as also -ci- for -ti- and final t for d. The punctuation and capitalisation is editorial, as is the division into chapters.

## **Manuscript witnesses**

*G* = Gotha I.81, fols. 185v–188v (s. XIV)

*H* = Hereford, Cathedral Library P.VII.6, 189r–191r (s. XII)

*P* = Peter of Cornwall, *Liber reuelationum*, in London, Lambeth Palace, 51 (1200) [for *Miracula* §§ 2, 4, 5, 7

INCIPIT VITA SANCTORUM AETHELREDI ET AETHELBERTI MARTIRUM ET SANCTARUM UIRGINUM MILTRUDIS ET EDBURGIS IDUS DECEMBRIS<sup>1</sup>.

§ 1.1 Erat quidam prediues rex nomine Eberthus, qui in regimine genti Anglorum prefuit<sup>2</sup>, nobilis quidem genere set ignobilis, pro dolor, peccato. Hic itaque antiqua diabolice fraudis inuidia suggestus, in patru sui filios manum inique pugne extendit et primam Christi persecucionem Herodiana calliditate innouauit, sperans puerum Christum cum iisdem simul peremisse ne postmodum in regni sui detrimentum creuisset. Ita igitur rex prefatus innocentes tirones, sanctum uidelicet Adelredum atque Adelbertum, ne in regni sui suorumque natorum perniciem adolerent, fraude uersuta interimere decreuit. 2. Quosque nouerat iure regni gubernacula suscepturos, regi Christo domino, pro quo predicto passi sunt innocentes pueri, eciam nocenter innocentes mactauit dignosque Dei martires effecit. Fuerunt namque et ipsi ex beate Edburgis gloriose uirginis prosapia, que tunc temporis deifica in diuinis laudibus habebatur, nepotes<sup>3</sup> quidem eiusdem uenerande Edburgis. Ipsa autem extitit illis proauia et uite felicitis exemplum.

§ 2.1 Erat quoque iniquissimus regis eiusdem consiliarius et omnis doli consentaneus antiquo Anglorum uocabulo Thunor uocitatus. Hic ergo quasi proditor turpissimus Iudas, qui agnum tradidit mitissimum Christum, simili ratione simulata amicitia et subdola tamdiu oscula inpressit quousque Dei pueros morte mactauit amara. 2. Quibus peremptis mox inepta parauit sepulcra. Nam furtim exanimes artus innocencium sub ipso sepeliuit aule regie triclinio, ubi talium tantorumque nulle colebantur exeque. Non laudum condigna cantica, non Dautica decem cordarum psalmodia, non clara lampadum lumina, non Gregoriana pro interemptorum requie commendamina sed illicita ibi perstrepebant carnificum conuiuia. 3 *Dominus* tamen, ut ait propheta, *custodiuit omnia ossa eorum ne unum ex eis contereretur*;<sup>4</sup> et iusti, quamuis morte preoccuparentur, iniqua sepultura condirentur incongrua, refrigeria nichilominus possidebant eterna.

§ 3.1 Nomen uero uillule illius, in qua id gestum esse narratur, Estria uocatur<sup>5</sup>. Bene Estria uocatur quasi Astria eo quod ab alto astrorum fastigio miri luminis splendor in ipsa uillula ad terram usque deductus est, significans quidem iustos ibidem esse occisos, quorum spiritu fulgebant sicut sol in regno patris eorum. 2. Ipse procul dubio splendor, sicut sol in meridie,

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<sup>1</sup> This text, down to page 64, is only preserved in *G*.

<sup>2</sup> Ecgberht, king of Kent (664–73), son of Eorcenberht, king of Kent (640–64) by Seaxburh.

<sup>3</sup> Both *nepotes* and *proauia* in the next sentence are ambiguous in terms of meaning, intentionally or otherwise; see p. 11–12 above.

<sup>4</sup> Ps. 33:21.

<sup>5</sup> Eastry lies some 15 miles east and a little south of Canterbury.

ita super summitatem regie aule, in qua beatorum corpora iacebant negligenter humata, splendebat in media noctis nigredine quatinus uera ueritatis sententia uere sermocinaretur dicens, *Nichil opertum quod non reueletur, nichilque tam absconditum quod non sciatur*<sup>6</sup>.

§ 4.1 Quod mirabile signum multi fidelium diu contemplantes, solliciti cogitare ceperunt quid noui miraculi quidue iudicii quid recens portentum prefiguraret exempli. Quo eciam signo ab ipso rege Ecberto per sedulum clamorem satellitum ac populorum conspecto, reminiscens ad ultimum criminis quod fecit, malum quod commisit condoluit, iram se superni iudicis incurrisse pertimuit. Anxius quoque nimium residebat. Quid ageret, cuius rectitudinis cuiusque penitudinis uiam arriperet curiose cogitauit.

§ 5.1 Tunc demum Dei nutu celeri destinacione misit et uocauit ad se Ermenbergam, alio nomine Domneum uocatam,<sup>7</sup> reginam uenerabilem, sororem uidelicet beatorum martirum, que se dudum a rege uiuente, scilicet marito suo, causa religionis seiunxit, et que commisit in fratribus ipsius homicidia confessus est. Huius igitur rei gracia tradidit illi iuris regii apud Tanetam insulam pro sanguine interfectorum octoginta aratrorum iugera ut uel sic meste germane aliquo modo mesticiam mitigaret. 2. Tunc uero uenerabilis regina Ermenberga, que et Domneua, accepto a rege iam dicto agellulo, fratrum scilicet suorum quasi sanguinis precio, non terrena ambitione eui conspectibilis lucra sibi in eo cumulare desiderans set amatis fratribus, quibus regnum demptum est terrenum, eodem eorum precio adipisci uisa est regna superna angelorum.

§ 6.1 Inito quippe saluberrimo consilio<sup>8</sup>, basilicam in prefato condidit agellulo, regio eciam bene adiuta suffragio. Quam quoque conditam Dei genitrici consecrauit Marie, et continuo consorcia digne Deo famulancia aggregauit, eisque materno affectu in omnibus prefuit. 2. Monastica parauit edificia, agros excoluit, diuersa iumentorum genera multiplicauit, destructa queque reparauit, omnibusque rite compositis, omnium dominorum domino dominoque seruiantibus condonauit, ea scilicet racione ut ibidem die noctuque summo regi suauius modulacione graciaram acciones redderentur in psalmis et ymnpnis et in omnibus spiritualibus canticis, seduloque essent cantantes in cordibus suis domino, et ut preces ac hostie pro

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<sup>6</sup> Luke 12:2.

<sup>7</sup> All of the earliest versions of this narrative state that Domneua and Eormenburh are the same woman, as here, but later texts separate them out, and other evidence, primarily from the charters of Minster-in-Thamet, suggests that the daughter of King Eormenred who was the first abbess of Minster-in-Thamet was called Æbba, and that Eormenburh was a different person, presumed to be her sister; see ROLLASON, *Mildrith Legend*, pp. 39–40 (and the family tree on p. 45), and also KELLY, *Charters of St Augustine's*, p. 42. In the *Kentish Royal Legend* she occurs as “Domne Eue” and in Caligula A.xiv as “Domne Eafe”.

<sup>8</sup> **consilio**] concilio G.

fideliū Christi Adelredi atque Adelberti animabus iugi oracionum instancia exhiberentur regi domino *qui in altis habitat* respiciens queque *humilia in celo et in terra*<sup>9</sup>.

§ 7.1 Habebat autem hec eadem regina filiam uenerandam ac religiosam nomine Miltrudem, que undique erat *fimbris aureis circumamicta*,<sup>10</sup> hoc est *uarietate* fidei roborata. Quam gloriosa genitrix ad Gallias usque destinauit ut ibi fame diuini uerbi et cultu sacro religionis imbueretur. At illa mox, ut audiuit generosam genitricem se uoce prophetica commonere dicentem (2.) “*Audi, filia, et uide et inclina aurem tuam et obliuiscere populum tuum et domum patris tui*” et cetera<sup>11</sup>, audiuit et uidit mente magis quam oculis corporeis, et aurem cordis ad religionis legem inclinauit obliuiscens quoque populum mundanis se pompantem adulationibus, et terram genitoris habitum domumque deseruit, atque ad eterni patris domum quamtocius properare desiderat *quoniam rex concupiuit speciem suam*<sup>12</sup>.

§ 8.1 Quapropter uirgo beata et immaculata Miltrudis *uias domini*<sup>13</sup> ambulare iam cepit ut scrutaretur *testimonia eius* et *ex toto corde exquireret eum*<sup>14</sup>. Et quoniam nouerat illum mandasse *mandata eius nimis custodiri*<sup>15</sup>, iccirco aptauit ut *dirigerentur uie eius*<sup>16</sup> ubi nichil audiret nisi sancta nichilque uideret nisi honesta quatinus non peccaret domino<sup>17</sup>. 2. Porro pius omnium iustarum inspector uoluntatum, considerans famule sue uoluntatem, benedixit *uias itineris illius* et ad locum perduxit optatum, ut eius reuelati sunt oculi ab errore uniuerso ad consideranda *mirabilia de lege sua*<sup>18</sup>. Virgo autem Christi uim uirilī ingenii ibidem complectens, litterarum studiis insistebat, oracionibus uacabat, sanctitatum moribus inherebat, uenustatibus eciam omnium diuinorum incumbibat ornatuum.

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<sup>9</sup> Ps. 112:5–6.

<sup>10</sup> Ps. 44:14–15, following the reading of the Romanum which has *uarietate* rather than *uarietatibus* in the Gallican. Here B. mis-reads, or intentionally reframes, the Psalmist’s image, since the sense-break comes at the end of verse 14 *omnis gloria eius filiae regis ab intus in fimbriis aureis* (“all the glory of the king’s daughter is within golden borders”) and then verse 15 follows *circumamicta uarietate* (“clothed round about with variety...”).

<sup>11</sup> Ps. 44:11.

<sup>12</sup> Ps. 44:12 (again in the Romanum version which has *speciem* against *decorem* in the Gallican Psalter).

<sup>13</sup> Ps. 17:22.

<sup>14</sup> Ps. 118:1–2 (*beati immaculati in uia qui ambulant in lege Domini, beati qui scrutantur testimonia eius in toto corde exquirent eum*).

<sup>15</sup> Ps. 118:4 (*tu mandasti mandata tua custodire nimis*).

<sup>16</sup> Ps. 118:5 (*utinam dirigantur uiae meae ad custodientes iustificationes tuas*).

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi* c. 3 (ed., MGH, SRM 7, page 118), *ubi nihil uideret nisi honesta, nihil audiret nisi sancta* (of Willibrord’s father’s decision to send him to be educated in *relegiosis studiis et sacris litteris* at Ripon), and cf. *Vita Herlindis et Reinulae*, c. 4 (ed. *Acta Sanctorum*, Martii, III, p. 387), the same but with plural verbs.

<sup>18</sup> Ps. 118:18 (*reuela oculos meos et considerabo mirabilia de lege tua*).

§ 9.1 Postea unice enutrita ac bene *in omnibus mandatis et iustificationibus*<sup>19</sup> edocta, patriam, de qua egressa est, repedauit inde reliquiis sanctorum allatis, unde laudes semper illi et gracias referens, qui uiam famule sue regredienti retribuit quique eam egredientem et regredientem ne confunderetur custodiuit<sup>20</sup>. Ideoque se spondit custodire sermones ipsius<sup>21</sup>. 2. Aptatis igitur naualibus instrumentis et libratis sursum in aere uelis, uentis quoque prosperis, ueloci cursu aquas transiliuit marinas, et gaudens et exultans, ad matrem iterum domino ducente peruenit. 3. Maxime uero iam dicte uirginis uigor, postquam nota litora iterato reuisit, beate Edburgis, quantum estimatur a nobis, solidabatur hortatu uel exemplo, quoniam ipsa cum palma iusticie germinauit sicut lilium<sup>22</sup>, et in domo domini sicut *cedrus Libani multiplicabitur*<sup>23</sup> ut floreret ante dominum in eternum.

§ 10.1 Non post multum autem tempus, beata et gloriosa uirgo Miltrudis, celesti sponso cupiens inherere et penitus ponere *in Domino Deo spem* suam<sup>24</sup> seque *uni uiro uirginem castam exhibere Christo*<sup>25</sup>, accepit a beato Theodoro, sancte Dorobernensis ecclesie archiepiscopo<sup>26</sup>, sacri ordinis uelamen una cum aliis septuaginta uirginibus; (2) et ita se cum *exultatione et leticia in templum*<sup>27</sup> regi domino offerebant quatinus in nouissimo iudicii die non cum fatuis uirginibus, quarum lampades superna luce priuantur<sup>28</sup>, set cum Dei genitrice Maria uirginum uirgine, prudentes uirgines *adducerentur regi*<sup>29</sup> Christo et sapientes.

§ 11.1 Post hec autem beate uirginis<sup>30</sup> Domneue uel Ermenburge instabat labentis seculi terminus et omnibus bene dispositis migravit ad Christum. Post decessum uero uenerande matris, beata uirgo Miltrudis in ouile dominici gregis cura pastoralis successit ut exemplo

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<sup>19</sup> Luke 1:6 (*incedentes in omnibus mandatis et iustificationibus Domini*), of Zacharias and Elizabeth. A paraphrase of a verse of Ps. 118.

<sup>20</sup> Ps. 118:31 (*adhesi testimoniis tuis Domine ne confundas me*); cf. also Ps. 24:2, 30:18.

<sup>21</sup> Ps. 118:17 (*uiuifica me et custodiam sermones tuos*).

<sup>22</sup> Hosea 14:6 (*germinabit quasi lilium*). But in fact, this is closer to *iustus germinabit sicut lilium et florebit in aeternum ante dominum*, the alleluia verse for the Mass of a confessor, of uncertain date in its origins (it occurs first among the liturgical chant materials of Ademar of Chabannes, who was active across the turn of the year 1000).

<sup>23</sup> Ps. 91:13–14.

<sup>24</sup> Ps. 72:28 (*posui in Domino Deo spem meam*).

<sup>25</sup> 2 Cor. 11:2.

<sup>26</sup> Theodore was archbishop of Canterbury from 668 until his death in 690.

<sup>27</sup> Ps. 44:15 (*adferentur in laetitia et exultatione adducentur in templum regis*).

<sup>28</sup> Matt. 25:3–12.

<sup>29</sup> Ps. 44:15. The description of Mary as *uirgo uirginum* seems to have entered liturgical language by the eleventh century.

<sup>30</sup> **uiraginis**] uoraginis G.

sanctitatis mater multarum existeret, que matrem domini saluatoris, uirginem in partu uirginemque post partum, exemplo sequebatur castitatis<sup>31</sup>.

§ 12.1 Non est enim nostre possibilitatis per multorum faminum ambages enarrare qualem se sacra uirgo in Dei obsequiis preparauit in assiduis leccionibus, in oracionibus continuis, in exhortacionibus sacris, in elemosinarum largicionibus, in psalmodiis Dauiticis, in ympnis spiritualibus, in uigiliis quoque et in ieiuniis, et in omnibus bonorum operum studiis. 2. Preterea ab omnibus uis uiciorum, quibus cursum suum impediri timebat, se prorsus abstinuit ut non *corruptibilem coronam*<sup>32</sup> set ut perhennis uite perciperet brauium. Tenerum corpus uirginalis castimonie castigauit et in Christi seruitutem secundum apostolum redegit ne forte, cum aliis uerbum uite intimaret, ipsa rebellis efficeretur et reproba<sup>33</sup>.

§ 13.1 *Respexit ergo dominus ancille sue humilitatem*<sup>34</sup>, omnibusque pene circumquaue gentibus cuius meriti esset declarauit. Quodam itaque tempore, dum mens beate uirginis funditus fuisset in omnes iustificaciones domini<sup>35</sup> intenta, sedebat ad legendum sancti canonis librum sollicita. 2. Et forte e flatibus uentorum uel quassancium ymbrium lumen legentis parthene extinctum est. Quod mox summi regis imperio in pristinum candorem reaccensum est ut *scrutanti mandata Dei*<sup>36</sup> sui maiorem ministraret luminis claritatem. *Ex hoc enim beatam* illam dixerunt *omnes*<sup>37</sup>.

§ 14.1 Alio quoque tempore, cum uirgo Dei casta mente oracioni incumbibat, subito de celo ueniens angelus domini in specie columbe, candidior niue, in beate uirginis consedit capite, alisque suis candidis diu familiari dilecione caput illius collumque complexus est. 2. Qui nimirum celestis sponsi nuncius uenit ut sponse Christi oracionem, pro sua suorumque omnium salute effusam, Christo domino presentaret.

§ 15.1 Quadam eciam nocte, dum uirgo beata se sopori dedisset, aderat ei iterum angelus preclarus domini, et castum corpus uirginalis pudicicie et templum electe Dei sedendo seruauit, atque preclaris eam micancium alarum umbraculis textit ne qua quiescentem fedaret antiqui hostis fantasia uirginem. 2. O inmensa Dei dileccio, O magna superni sponsi caritas,

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<sup>31</sup> Cf. Alcuin, *De fide sanctae Trinitatis et de incarnatione Christi* 3.14: (*uirgo ante partum, uirgo in partu, uirgo post partum; dignum enim erat ut Deo nascente meritum cresceret castitatis*), the earliest instance of this manner of describing Mary, which seems to gain in currency from the eleventh century onwards.

<sup>32</sup> 1 Cor. 9:25.

<sup>33</sup> 1 Cor. 9:27 (*castigo corpus meum et in seruitutem redigo ne forte cum aliis praedicauerim ipse reprobus efficiar*).

<sup>34</sup> Luke 1:48.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Ps. 104:45.

<sup>36</sup> Ps. 118:115 (*scrutabor mandata Dei mei*).

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Luke 1:48 (*ex hoc beatam me dicent omnes generationes*).

O ineffabilis clemencia Dei: de astrigeris polorum arcibus sanctum angelum suum destinare dignata est ad casti cordis ac puri corporis custodem. 3. Iure autem angeli castis Christicolarum corporibus custodes deputantur quia castitas soror supernorum uocitata est angelorum<sup>38</sup>.

§ 16.1 Omnibus itaque diebus felicis sue uite hiis et huiusmodi uirgo Dei *bonum certamen certauit. cursum beate uite consummauit, fidem sancte trinitatis seruauit*<sup>39</sup>. Ideoque iustus iudex, omnium certaminum pius remunerator, reposuit illi in celestibus *coronam iusticie, quam reddet unicuique persone pro spe salutis eterne certanti*<sup>40</sup>. 2. Porro beate Miltrudis dies aduocacionis et remuneracionis iminebat, et paulatim egritudine acta tercio idus Iulii<sup>41</sup> morte obiit temporali, tradens spiritum conditori domino, cui est honor et gloria in secula seculorum amen.

*In Gotha I.81 there follows a Life of Eadburh almost identical to that in Hereford P.VII.6.*

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<sup>38</sup> This is an allusion to the mid-4<sup>th</sup>-century Latin *Passio* of Thomas Didymus (BHL 8136), *Virginitas soror est angelorum*, but probably indirectly through the medium of Aldhelm's prose *De uirginitate* which, in describing Thomas's virginal state (c. 23; ed. Ehwald, p. 255), quotes this phrase verbatim from the *Passio*.

<sup>39</sup> 2 Tim. 4:7.

<sup>40</sup> 2 Tim. 4:8.

<sup>41</sup> 13 July.



## Gotha I.81

§ 1.1 Post beati Miltrudis consummacionem et obitum beata uirgo Eadburgis orbatam matre familiam causa regiminis subintrauit, ne forte *lupi rapaces*<sup>42</sup> gregem dominicum crudeliter inuaderent, et rabidis dentibus dilacerarent. Fuit autem uirgo uenerabilis Eadburgis beate Miltrudis proauia, filia quidem Athelberti, primi regis catholice legis<sup>43</sup> atque rectoris Anglice gentis et Berte regine. Athelbertus quoque Anglorum uocabulo interpretatur nobile lumen. Berta uero, sancte uirginis genitrix, clara interpretatur uel serena. 2. Que duo nomina felicitum parentum, in unum conglobata, unius significacionis unitatem efficiunt. Nichil ergo nobile lumen a clara luce neque clara lux a nobili lumine distat, set tales parentes eius congruis uocabulis ad hoc tantum Deo predestinante copulati sunt coniugio ut uirgo ueneranda ex illis ad profectum multorum ederetur in mundo. 3. Ex hac religiosorum parentum prosapia multi, quorum nunc nomina difficultas non sinit rimari per singula, ortus sui duxerunt originem, quorum tum omnium nomina in libro uite scripta non dubitamus, quoniam hec erat generacio *querencium* semper *faciem Dei Iacob*,<sup>44</sup> ideoque *benediccionem* acceperunt *a domino* et *misericordiam a Deo salutari suo*.<sup>45</sup> 4. Et quoniam in diebus suis tota cordis auditate operari iusticiam studuerunt, iccirco *montem domini*, id est celi celsitudinem, *ascendere* meruerunt et stare *in loco sancto eius*,<sup>46</sup> ubi regis eterni gloriam faciemque domini Dei uirtutem ac magestatem contueri per eterna secula mererentur.

<sup>42</sup> Matt. 7:5 (referring to false prophets).

<sup>43</sup> **legis**] om. G.

<sup>44</sup> Ps. 23:6.

## Hereford P.VII.6

INCIPIIT VITA SANCTE EADBURGE UIRGINIS IDU DECEMBRIS.

§ 1.1 VIRGO DEI EDBVRGBIS post beate Miltrudis obitum orbatam matre familiam causa regiminis subintrauit, ne forte *lupi rapaces* gregem dominicum crudeliter inuaderent, et rabidis dentibus dilacerarent. Fuit autem hec uirgo uenerabilis EDBVRGBIS beate Miltrudis proauia, filia Ethelberti primi regis catholice legis atque rectoris anglice gentis. 2. Hec ergo postquam fluminis impetus letificauit eam, hoc est fons sacri baptismatis, a uitiorum sordibus, ut fieret beata ciuitas Dei, mundauit, die noctuque in turrium suarum summitate, id est in mentis sue secretis et labiis exultationis laudes Deo referebat et grates, feruenti animo iugiter flagitando quatinus in superna ciuitate, celesti scilicet Ierusalem, conscribi, et ad gemmatum thorum sponsi Christi perduci mereretur, unaque cum beata puerpera regina, uidelicet MARIA, et reliquis regum filiabus ad honorem nominis sui in dextris assisteret Christo Domino, uestitu immortalitatis et ueritate spiritualium uirtutum *circumamicta*; ubi dulcissonam uocem Domini audiret dicentis, “*Venite ad me omnes qui laboratis et onerati estis, et ego reficiam uos*”.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>45</sup> Ps. 23:5.

<sup>46</sup> Ps. 23:3.

<sup>47</sup> Matt. 11:28.

§ 2.1 Cuius uocem beata uirgo Eadburgis, adhuc in terris posita, non surdis uanarum rerum auditibus audiuit, set fidei sue soliditatem supra lapidem angularem<sup>48</sup> qui facit *utraque unum*<sup>49</sup> collocauit, templumque ipsius omnimodis effici studuit. Qui sub solercia receptaculi sui cuncta concludit, sicut idem alibi auditoribus suis ait, “*Templum Domini sanctum, quod estis uos*”<sup>50</sup>, et “*Nescitis quia corpora uestra templa sunt Spiritus Sancti?*”<sup>51</sup> 2. Quin etiam uirgo uenerabilis aliud templum diuine uenerantie ac cultui materiali lapidum conditione condere curauit, in quo conditori Domino uota fidelium redderentur, et pro frequentantium populorum piaculo agnus, qui mundi peccata tollere uenit, singulis illic libaretur diebus, in quo etiam templo neptis sue beate Miltrudis, sacrate uirginis exanimes decenter reconderet artus, ut eius ibidem uirginitatis insignia per *dierum longitudinem*<sup>52</sup> a fidelibus uenerationi uenerarentur. 3. Quod postea templum sacrum per exemplum uirgo fidelis uiribus anelis ut mente tractauit, opere patrauit cum omni ornatu atque dedicatu. Hinc plebs agnouit quod pridem deuouit non credere uano in mentis archano hosti fallenti, set Deo uiuenti, dedicauit cui corporis<sup>53</sup> sui nobile templum ob mundi contemptum.

§ 3.1 Igitur postquam sanam sanctamque perfecerat uoluntatem, solerti studio meditari non destitit, qualiter digne Deo dignissime uirginis corpus, ad locum transferre potuisset preparatum, ubi ipsa quoque exanimis diem cum pace prestolaretur extremum. 2. Denique beate uirginis patefecerat tumulum et sublato operculo ex hiatu sarcophagi, integrum corpus totius lesionis immune uel etiam

<sup>48</sup> Eph. 2:20

<sup>49</sup> Eph. 2:14 (*pax nostra qui fecit utraque unum*).

<sup>50</sup> 1 Cor. 3:17.

<sup>51</sup> 1 Cor. 6:19.

§ 2.1 Hanc euangelici clangoris uocem beata uirgo EDBVRGBIS adhuc in terris posita non surdis uanarum rerum auditibus audiens, sed fidei sue soliditatem supra lapidem angularem *qui facit utraque unum* collocauit, templumque ipsius omnimodis effici studuit, qui sub sollertia receptaculi sui cuncta concludit, sicut idem alibi auditoribus suis ait, “*Templum Domini sanctum est, quod estis uos*”. Item apostolus inquit, “*Nescitis quia corpora uestra templa sunt Spiritus Sancti?*” 2. Quin etiam uirgo uenerabilis aliud templum diuine uenerantie ac cultui materiali lapidum conditione condere curauit, in quo conditori Domino uota fidelium redderentur, et pro frequentantium populorum piaculo agnus, qui peccata mundi tollere uenit, singulis illic libaretur diebus, in quo etiam templo neptis sue beate Miltrudis sacrate uirginis decenter exanimes reconderet artus, ut eius ibidem uirginitatis insignia per *dierum longitudinem* a fidelibus uenerationi haberentur. 3. Quod postea templum sacro exemplo uirgo fidelis anelis uiribus ut mente tractauit, opere patrauit cum omni ornatu atque dedicatione.

§ 3.1 Igitur postquam sanam sanctamque perfecerat uoluntatem, sollerti studio meditari non destitit, quam digne Deo dignissime uirginis corpus, ad locum transferre<sup>54</sup> potuisset preparatum, ubi ipsa quoque exanimis diem cum pace prestolaretur extremum. 2. Denique beate uirginis patefecerat tumulum et sublato operculo ex hiatu sarcophagi integrum corpus totius lesionis uel etiam

<sup>52</sup> Ps. 22:6 (also 92:5).

<sup>53</sup> **corporis]** corpori *G*.

<sup>54</sup> **transferre]** tranferre *H*.

putredinis, quasi ipsa die depositum fuisset, inuenit. Tanta autem redolebat odoris suauitas, acsi omnium illic odoramentorum aromata congesta haberentur. 3. In quo quidem corpore, dum mundi fluctibus undique quateretur, pauca contraxerat uicia et fere nulla, ideoque Deo dicante post mortem est integrum redolensque repertum. Singulis enim diebus dum uiueret odorem suauis incensi ad alta celorum prece penetrabili premisit orando, iugiter dictis Dauitidis dicens: “*Dirigatur oratio mea sicut boni odoris incensum in conspectu tuo, domine*”<sup>55</sup>. Oracionis uirtute ascendeat cotidie, fragili quamuis maneret in corpore, ut in Cantico Canticorum: “*Que est ista que ascendit per aerem nubila sicut uirgula fumi ex aromatibus mirre et thuris?*” Et iterum: “*Christi bonus odor sumus in omni loco*”<sup>56</sup>.

§ 4.1 Hiis ita gestis, mixta gaudia inter exultantium et merencium uoces audita sunt; ymnis tamen diuinis et celebrationibus beate uirginis corpus a loco sepulchri tollentes, et in nouo condientes sarcophago, posuerunt in templo honorifice constructo ad plagam aquilonarem oratorii, ubi usque in presentem diem per oraciones eius et merita fiunt diuina misteria et miracula, ad laudem et gloriam nominis eius qui unus in trinitate uiuit et dominatur Deus per infinita seculorum secula amen.

§ 5.1 Adhuc autem beata uirgo Eadburgis lassis lacertis quasi in mundi fluctibus nauigabat, set tamen sub uirgineo corpore uiriliter agebat cor suum diuinis studiis confortans, sacris eloquiis animum oblectans, precibus Deum deprecans, oracionibus animam decorans, corpus elemosinis purgans, angelos sibi in adiutorium inuitans ut inter seculi fluctiuagos turbines dominum conditorem

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<sup>55</sup> Ps. 140:2.

putredinis expers quasi ipsa die depositum fuisset inuenit. Tanta autem redolebat odoris suauitas, acsi omnium illic odoramentorum aromata succensa haberentur.

§ 4.1 Tunc mixta gaudia inter exultantium et merentium uoces audires. Ymnis itaque diuinis et celebrationibus beate uirginis corpus a loco sepulchri tollentes, et in nouo reponentes sarcophago, posuerunt in templo honorifice constructo ad plagam aquilonalem oratorii, ubi usque in presentem diem per oraciones eius et merita fiunt diuina misteria et miracula, ad laudem et gloriam nominis Christi.

§ 5.1 Adhuc autem beata uirgo EDBVRGBIS laxis mentis sue lacertis quasi in mundi fluctibus nauigabat, sed tamen sub uirgineo corpore uiriliter agebat cor suum diuinis studiis confortans, sacris eloquiis animum oblectans, precibus Deum deprecans, oracionibus animam decorans, corpus elemosinis purgans, angelos sibi in adiutorium inuitans, ut inter seculi huius fluctiuagos turbines dominum conditorem

<sup>56</sup> Song of Songs 3:6 and 2 Cor. 2:15.

omnium sustinere potuisset. 2. Non enim spei sue uelum fragilem suspendit in stipitem, sed sursum in aera librauit ad Christum, et anchoram sue fidei trinis sancte Trinitatis funibus firmiter innodauit, gaudensque et exultans *ibat de uirtute in uirtutem* ut unum omnium *deorum* se Deum remunerantem uidere mereretur *in Syon*.<sup>57</sup>

§ 6.1 Iamque uirgo beata omnes mundi huius delicias uigili mente labiles caducasque esse conspiciens, homines quoque puluerem esse<sup>58</sup> commemorans, nichilominus nichil apud seculum esse stabile, nichilque in hominibus durabile, omnia que uidentur transire, cuncta simul huius eui gaudia cunctaque ornamenta uelut *lutum platearum*<sup>59</sup> contempnebat: aurum uidelicet et argentum, nisi forte ad ecclesiastica ornamenta uel cetera diuina seruicia redegisset, sicut stercus olidum despiciebat: 2. similiter gemmas, margaritas, lapides preciosos, anulos, armillas, monilia, crepundia, uestes, seruos quoque et ancillas, oues et boues, equos et asinos, iumenta et pecora, agros et segetes, prata et predia, campos et siluas, omnemque presentis seculi gloriam; quoniam *que a solo Deo est gloriam* toto corde querebat.<sup>60</sup>

§ 7.1 Erat namque *omnis gloria filie regis*, uidelicet Eadburgis, *abintus*<sup>61</sup> et non exterius, quia fauorem humanum oleumque adulatorum quod uirgines fatue amasse leguntur, non amauit. De quo oleo propheta cecinit, dicens, "*Oleo autem peccatoris, non impinguet caput meum*"<sup>62</sup>. 2. Magis uirgo beata *solui* a seculo desiderabat et *esse cum Christo*<sup>63</sup>, metuens apostoli sententiam, dicentis, "*Quamdiu in corpore sumus peregrinamur a Deo*"<sup>64</sup>.

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<sup>57</sup> Ps. 83:8.

<sup>58</sup> Gen. 3:19.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. Ps. 17:43, Isaiah 10:6, 2 Sam 22:43, Micah 7:10, Zach. 9:3 (where there is also reference to gold and silver).

<sup>60</sup> John 5:44.

omnium sustinere potuisset. 2. Non enim spei sue uelum fragili suspendit in stipite, set sursum in aera librauit ad Christum, et anchoram sue fidei ternis sancte Trinitatis funibus firmiter innodauit. Vnde gaudens et exultans *ibat de uirtute in uirtutem* ut *Deum deorum* remunerantem se uidere mereretur *in Syon*.

§ 6.1 Iamque uirgo beata omnes mundi huius delicias, uigili mente labiles caducasque esse conspiciens, hominem quoque puluerem esse commemorans, nichil apud seculum esse stabile, nichilque in hominibus durabile, omnia que uidentur transire quia temporalia sunt, cuncta simul huius eui gaudia cunctaque ornamenta uelut *lutum platearum* contempsit, aurum uidelicet et argentum, nisi forte ad ecclesiastica ornamenta uel cetera diuina seruitia redegisset, sicut stercus olidum despexit. 2. Similiter gemmas, margaritas, lapides preciosos, anulos, armillas, monilia, crepundia, uestes quoque et ancillas, oues et boues, equos et asinos, iumenta et pecora, agros et segetes, prata et predia, campos et siluas, omnemque presentis seculi gloriam; quoniam *que a solo Deo est gloriam* toto corde quesiiuit.

§ 7.1 Eratque *omnis gloria eius ab intus* et non exterius, quia fauorem humanum oleumque adulatorum quod uirgines fatue amasse leguntur non amauit. De quo oleo propheta cecinit, dicens, "*Oleum autem peccatoris non impinguet caput meum*". 2. Magis ergo uirgo beata *solui* a seculo desiderauit et *esse cum Christo*, metuens apostoli sententiam, dicentis, "*Quamdiu in corpore sumus, peregrinamur a Domino*".

<sup>61</sup> Ps. 44:14.

<sup>62</sup> Ps. 140:5 in the LXX.

<sup>63</sup> Phil. 1:23.

<sup>64</sup> 2 Cor. 5:6. But in a version different from the text of the Vulgate, probably the Vetus Latina.

§ 8.1 Post multorum uero annorum curricula postque uaria et innumera uersuti hostis deuicta temptamenta, uirgo gloriosa *inuenta est sine macula*, quoniam, ut iam diximus, *post aurum non abiit nec in thesauris pecunie sperauit*<sup>65</sup> dicente domino “Qualem te inuenio talem te recipio”<sup>66</sup>. 2. Iustus itaque remunerator Dominus inuenit famulam suam dignis operibus inherentem et uocauit eam famine familiari ad superna polorum gaudia dicens, “Veni, electa mea, et ponam in te tronum meum, quoniam *rex iusticie concupiuit speciem tuam*<sup>67</sup>. Veni, electa mea uirgo sapientissima; oleum tui luctaminis et laboris in uase clare lampadis tue reconde, ut cum splendida luce bonorum operum tuorum uenienti Domino saluatori occurrere possis, quoniam *lucerna pedibus tuis erit uerbum Domini*<sup>68</sup>, et sponsus perhennis gaudii Christus lumen semitis tuis”. 3. Mox fine felici beatam uirginem mors preuenit temporalis, qua carnem actenus anime sue cohabitricem idus deposuit Decembris<sup>69</sup>, spiritumque datori Domino commendauit, qui cum eterno Domino Deo patre et spiritu sancto uiuit et regnat per eternorum secula seculorum, AMEN.

*In Gotha I.81 an account of the translation of 1085 follows here.*

<sup>65</sup> Eccus. 31:8.

<sup>66</sup> This is not biblical and has not so far come to light in any early source in this form. With a slight modification *Qualem te inuenio, talem te iudico* it is quoted in later collections of sermons and similar materials, for example in the collection of exemplary stories (*Promptuaria exemplorum*, printed Venice 1598) by the Dominican preacher Johann Herolt (d. 1468), within exemplum 61 recounting a miracle of Mary. There it is prefaced by words *dominus dixit*, but it has proved impossible to locate the saying even in that form in the Bible;

§ 8.1 Post multorum uero annorum curricula postque uaria et innumera uersuti hostis deuicta temptamenta, uirgo gloriosa *inuenta est sine macula*.

2. Quam remunerator Dominus inuenit, dignis operibus inherentem, et uocauit eam famine familiari ad superna polorum gaudia dicens, “Veni, electa mea, et ponam in te thronum meum, quoniam *rex iusticie concupiuit speciem tuam*. Veni, electa mea uirgo sapientissima, oleum tui luctaminis et laboris in uase clare lampadis tue reconde, ut cum splendida luce bonorum operum tuorum uenienti Domino saluatori occurrere possis, quoniam *lucerna pedibus tuis erit uerbum Domini*, et sponsus perhennis gaudii Christus lumen semitis tuis”. 3. Mox fine felici beatam uirginem mors preuenit temporalis, qua carnem hactenus anime sue habitaculum idus Decembris deposuit, spiritumque datori Domino commendauit, qui uiuit et regnat in secula seculorum, Amen. EXPLICIT VITA SANCTE EADBVRGE VIRGINIS.

*In Hereford P.VII.6 the Miracula of Eadburh follow here*<sup>70</sup>.

the closest seems to be Luke 19:22 *De ore tuo te iudico*.

<sup>67</sup> The second half of this is Ps. 44:12. But the whole sentence occurs in liturgical texts of the twelfth century and onwards, as an antiphon for the common of virgins (or Agatha). It does not seem possible to establish when the antiphon came into existence.

<sup>68</sup> Ps. 118:105.

<sup>69</sup> 13 December.

<sup>70</sup> A further witness to §§ 2, 4, 5 and 7 is provided by Peter of Cornwall (see page 23 above).

## INCIPIVNT MIRACVLA EIVSDEM

§ 1. QVERITVR cur Dominus per quosdam sanctos suos signa uirtutum in uita ipsorum ostendat, per quosdam autem dum omnes ei fideliter seruiant, non ostendat. Ad quod (quantum a nobis opinatur) est respondendum, Dominus nouit soliditates mentium et morum stabilitates agnoscit. Quos uero sanctos suos firmos ac stabiles esse persenserit, ita ut per signa uirtutum que per eos Dominus exercet, ab humilitatis uia non deuiant, ne humanis extollantur fauoribus, nec ullis demulceantur prosperis, sed eodem animo eodem humilitatis uultu eodemque studio in Dei seruitio perseuerent: per hos procul dubio signa sue potentie manifestat. Quos autem infirmiores fore perspexerit, ita ut si per eos signa sua declararet, a gradu humilitatis ad elationem iactantie diuertissent, per hos mirabilia sua minime manifestat, sed talibus parcit<sup>71</sup>, ut laborum suorum premia per superbie contumaciam non amittant, post mortem tamen cuius sint meriti manifestat. Ergo longe lateque post obitum beate uirginis cuius ipsa esset meriti patefecit.

§ 2. Quodam namque tempore cuiusdam patrisfamilias filius in Westsaxonum prouincia egrotare ceperet longa infirmitate adeo pregruari ut spem uite penitus non haberet, diemque meste consummationis sue tristis expectaret. Tunc nocte per uisum nuntiatum est ipsi quia si de fonte sancte EDBVRGIS biberet, mox conualesceret. Euigilans autem iuuenis qui egrotabat, potum sibi de fonte memorate uirginis postulabat. Sed responderunt ei sui sacram hanc uirginem quam nominauerat se nescire, neque fontem de quo ad gustandum petierat se posse inuenire. At uero pater ipsius omnium circumquaque prouinciarum templa multorumque sanctorum uel sanctarum nomina compensans, nullum sanctum excogitare potuit, uel etiam sanctam, qui tali nomine uocaretur, sed ad ultimum se meminit olim ex euentu itineris isse in orientales partes Cantuarie, ibique in Limbiensi monasterio audisse sanctam quiescere EDBVRGAM. Dixitque “Difficile nobis est ex tanta terrarum longitudine ad has patrias aquam potationis deferre”. Adolescens autem magis et magis ob sui sanitatem iam dictum ambiebat fontem. At illi uolentes eius desideriiis satisfacere, hauserunt uicini fontis aquam<sup>72</sup> quam cotidie in usum sui sumpserant, dicentes eam allatam esse e fonte de quo petierat aquam. Mox itaque se sulleuari rogauit, sumensque aquam quam ei dicebant de sacre uirginis fonte esse allatam, dominicam orationem super ipsam, prout premente egritudine potuit, cantauit, et

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<sup>71</sup> **parcit]** partit *H*.

<sup>72</sup> **aquam]** om. *H*; *supplied from P*.

in nomine sanatoris<sup>73</sup> Christi sancteque EDBVREGIS consignauit ac bibit, et confestim omnis infirmitas ab eo elapsa discessit, celeremque sanitatem meritis sancte uirginis consecutus est.

§ 3. Alio autem tempore, erat quidam iuuenis, uiginti fere annorum, mutus ab exordio natiuitatis sue persistens. Quem mater mesta ad sepulchrum beate uirginis usque perduxit, orationibusque ibidem et uigiliis incumbens pro nati sui facundia uirginem Dei precibus pulsabat. Ante medie itaque noctis momentum, meritis sancte uirginis locutus est mutus. Quem nonnulli postmodum ita disertum esse conspexere, ut coram prudentibus loqui potuisset et principibus.

§ 4. Item sanctimonialis quedam muliercula dum sacris orationibus in porticu memorate uirginis uacaret, uidit subito eiusdem sacre uirginis altare sulleuari prope unum cubitum a terris in aera, rursumque paulatim summitti in pristinum sue stationis locum. Quod quidem significare non dubium est ut omnes qui sub uirginitatis illius subsidia serena mente<sup>74</sup> confugiunt a peccatorum suorum ponderibus sulleuentur.

§ 5. Erat quidam prefati monasterii ac beate uirginis<sup>75</sup> sacerdos, qui propter multimodam presentis seculi sullimitatem locum uel reliquias eiusdem sacre uirginis nefande neglexerat. Quem ad penitudinis correctionem per multorum uisiones fidelium uirgo modesta mitissime monuit, in tantum ut fideles quos dixi ad familiares predicti sacerdotis uenirent, monita, que per uisum uiderant, indicarent. At ille nec sic ad emendationem se flectens, in torpenti adhuc negligentia persistebat. Nocte ergo quadam apparuerunt cuidam fideli duo nigerrimi uiri eundem sacerdotem ante ecclesie ostium strictis uinculis religatum tenentes, et oculos illius unguibus eruentes, multisque eum cruciatibus torquentes, quousque uirgo uenerabilis a loco quietionis sue surrexit et ipsum e manibus impiorum eruit dicens, “Dimittite, o infernales ministri, ministerium meum”. Statim autem ab ea die multorum testimonio limpido oculorum lumine priuatus est idem sacerdos, sed postmodum usque in necis sue horam<sup>76</sup> digne Deo sancteque uirgini seruiuit.

§ 6. Tempore quodam contigit beate Dorobernensis ecclesie archiepiscopum quam plures habere superuacuas et inutiles terrarum cartulas, quas in unum colligens ut igne illas deleret, arripuit ignorans cum prefatis cartulis etiam cartulam circumcingentem beate EDBVRGE territorium, eamque simul cum aliis cuidam de astantibus ad comburendum dedit. Qui cum implere quod sibi fuerat imperatum studuisset, nullo pacto beate uirginis cartula in ignis

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<sup>73</sup> **sanatoris]** *P (restored as lectio difficilior); saluatoris H.*

<sup>74</sup> **serena mente]** *om. H, supplied from P.*

<sup>75</sup> **uirginis]** *uriginis H.*

<sup>76</sup> **necis sue horam]** *P (preferred as lectio difficilior); obitus sui diem H.*

calore potuit consumi, reliquis in momento ad fauillam usque redactis. Ac ille reuersus relicta adhuc in incendio cartula, nuntiauit mirabile factum pontifici. Qui ait, “Festina ergo, et affer eam ad me”. Cucurrit itaque et inuenit illesam ab ignis ardore iacentem, sumensque attulit pontifici. Cognito autem pontifex hanc esse eandem que rura iam dicte uirginis certis circumquaque uallabat terminis, gratias omnitonanti sancteque uirgini de reseruatione<sup>77</sup> paginule retulit.

§ 7. Quedam prediues matrona dum tempore momentaneo diris undique angeretur langoribus dumque anxia quid ageret cogitaret, tamen inter ambigua uite sue suspiria ad sepulchrum sancte uirginis in quo iacebat lectulo secreto se subuehi iussit, ut illic a pio polorum medico per beate EDBVRGE interuentum medicari<sup>78</sup> mereretur. Et dum inibi pernoctaret, supernam uisitationem supplex opperiens<sup>79</sup>, ecce in ipso uenture diei crepusculo suauissimi soporis quies irruit super illam uiditque per somnium Agnum Dei de superis descendentem, niue candidiorem, lilio clariorem, omni uenustate pulchriorem, et super pectus ipsius leniter consituisse ac sese uisitasse. Tunc ipso tempore erat dies ille sabbati, sacre scilicet resurrectionis Domini Nostri Iesu Christi solennitas, in qua idem quem tunc per uisum uiderat agnus pro totius seculi salute paterno parens precepto immolatus est. Quid plura? Eodem die dum omnia templi signa ad missarum pulsarentur obsequia dumque ab uniuersis ecclesiarum Christi cultoribus “Gloria in excelsis Deo” caneretur, tunc hec eadem quam superius diximus matrona gloria pristinae sanitatis sue glorificata est, pariterque cum ceteris fidelibus gloriam Deo decantauit in excelsis, que uix pridem uocem alicuius protulerat faminis. Sicque omnis ab ea euulsa est lues, ut ipso die meritis sancte uirginis una cum suis letabunda Deo concinere laudem uideretur.

§ 8. Alia quedam erat ex locis maritimis mulier, quam nonnulli nouerant lectulo proprio nimia ex infirmitate esse innexam, quamque aliena uis diurnis diebus uertebat et uehebat. Cumque talia diutissime pateretur, admonita est in somnis quatinus elemosine sue munusculum ad sepulchrum sancte EDBVRGE aliquo cum conamine offerre studuisset. Succensa igitur memorata mulier amore sue sanitatis, ire quo in somnis iussa est, ut potuit, cepit. Et dum ad Limbias, ubi corpus sancte quiescit uirginis, usque peruentum est, sumpserunt sibi prefate mulieris socii apud quendam ciuium parue pausationis hospitium, usque dum luminaria uel cetera que offerenda essent prepararent. Interea mulier sitis uredine

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<sup>77</sup> **reseruatione]** reseuatione *H*.

<sup>78</sup> **medicari]** *lacking in H, supplied from P*.

<sup>79</sup> **opperiens]** operiens *HP*.



arescebat, forteque aspexit quandam astantem ancillulam, petiuitque ipsam ut ex fonte uirginis potum sibi afferret. Quod cum factum fuisset et bibisset, mox idem aquaticus liquor quem biberat corpus eius sanaturus subintrauit, et quasi concutientibus febribus paulatim tremere coegit, omnemque egritudinem per alme uirginis obtentum penitus aufugauit. At illa continuo oratorium sancte uirginis intrans, gratias et laudes saluatori Deo sancteque EDBVRGE pro sua inopinata sanitate referebat.

§ 9. Olim paganorum infesta seuitia totam ferme Cantiam pro populorum eius peccamine depopulauit, excepto prescripte uirginis loco, quem Deus sponse sue meritis ab omni furentium infestatione gubernando tutauit, quousque omnes Limbiensis ecclesie clerici congregata suorum phalange egredierentur, ultro se paganis obicientes, uiriliterque agere cupientes, ut postmodum probauit rei euentus. Occurrerunt enim illic ualida manu, et peremerunt ex eis mille ducentos quadraginta. Sed et ipsi omnes interempti perierunt, excepto predicti loci presbitero solo, qui solus fuga elapsus euasit, uiam qua uenerat repedauit et uirgineo se solatio tumultotenus annodauit. At illi mox hunc prepeti cursu insequentes adherentem sacre uirginis sepulchro reperientes et causam minime conquisitionis illius intelligentes, barbarica eum austeritate auertere conabantur, et diuersis subiugare tormentis. Quos statim et diuina et uirginalis pressit uindicta, ita ut uentris intolerabili resolutione uel sanguinis effusione, paruo momento nonnulli interirent, quemque causam sui alicuius lucri esse credebant, is sancte uirginis uirtute, cuius erat minister, quam diu una cum illis mansit, causa extitit doloris, usque adeo ut prompta uoluntate a se eum abire compellerent. Quod mirabile factum illi uetusto et preualido signo simile fuisse arbitror, in quo narratur quod dum Philistinorum Azotici in secretiore parte natium percuterentur, archam Dei quam captam detinebant coacti dolore remiserunt<sup>80</sup>.

§ 10. Duo quoque uiri in cloaca pro suorum purgatione uentrium sedebant. Et quidem unus eorum cuiusdam fuerat furti obnoxius. Tunc quoque ut assolet fieri, loqui de hoc incipiebant. Dixit itaque ad sontem insons, “Non equum, sodes, putaueris aliena furari, sed te precor recupera reddendo. Nam omnes te huius rei furem certissime putamus”. At ille inquit, “Dominus secretorum inspector neque uirgo beata EDBVRGA, cuius nunc locum inspicio, ex hoc unquam loco permittat uiuum uel incolumem exurgere<sup>81</sup>, si furti crimen quod mihi imputatis perpetraverim”. De loco enim in quo tunc causa necessitatis sedebant templum in quo sacra uirgo quiescebat contueri potuit. Ad hanc igitur miserrime optionis uocem, omnia

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<sup>80</sup> 1 Sam. 5:6-7, *et percussit in secretiori parte natium Azotum et fines eius, uidentes autem uiri azotii huiuscemodi plagam dixerunt non maneat arca Dei Israhel apud nos.*

<sup>81</sup> **exurgere]** exurgere *H.*

simul intestinorum uiscera per aluum<sup>82</sup> perfudit, et ut uoce petiuit, uiuus a loco non surrexit. Et qui pro suis piaculis inter stercorem squalores moriebatur, despiciabiliter iactabatur.

§ 11. Vir famosus in Gallie finibus fuit, qui mense messorio collectores ad metenda segetes emittebat. Ipse autem ocius, ne diem dedissent otio, secutus est eos una cum filio suo, adhuc iuuenulo, qui et ipse erat clericali assignatus titulo. Appropinquantes uero eiusdem messis operarii, uenerunt et descendendum susceperunt equos, depositis in uirecta sellis, equis quoque, ferreis inclusis compedibus, abstractis habenis et ad pastum usque permissis, clauas compedum ad seruandum prescripto commiserunt iuuenulo. Quos ille suscipiens in uaria stipularum densitate ac iocali negligentia incautus perdiderat. Erat enim, ut moris nonnullorum iuuenum est, nimium negligens, et hanc ob causam multociens eum pater ipsius acerrime obiurgauit. Hic ergo iuuenis filius, uidelicet prefati uiri, famam meritumque beate EDBVRGE a doctoribus suis audiens, contulit etiam sese intercessionibus ipsius et multis iam ab angustiis meritis memorate uirginis exsarcinatus est. Ad uesperum namque completo predicto metentium opere, cum iam domum redeundi tempus instaret, recognouit se idem iuuenis non habere commissas compedum clauas. Mox ergo humili mente animum ad sancte uirginis solatium expetendum flectit, ut eum de diro patris iurgamine liberaret. Et ecce circumspiciens, uidit subito easdem quas amiserat clauas ante pedes ipsius iacentes. Et assumens eas, condignas gratias in sancte uirginis ueneratione reddidit Christo. Ipse autem postea eiusdem beate EDBVRGE annis succedentibus effectus est sacerdos.

§ 12. Hec de multis pauca caritati uestre scribere studuimus, ne quis sacram uirginem scilicet EDBVRGAM plurimum posse apud altitonantem diffidat, sed magis perpendat dum huiusmodi uirtutibus declaratur, quam nimio sit honore amica Dei sponsaque immaculati agni honorificanda. Nam cetera uirtutum signa que nos ob inerciam narrantium latent uel olim gesta, uel etiam ea que per illam Dominus pene cotidie exercet, humana facundia enumerare non preualet. Quotiens enim aliquorum capita, oculi, dentes, brachia, manus, femora, renes, crura, pedes uel aliqua doluerunt, et ad sancte uirginis tumulum ex cera, uel a quolibet candele candentis lumine, effigiatum membrum in quo uim doloris patiebantur, de uirgineo fisi subsidio optulerunt, mox medicator animarum ac corporum meritis sue uirginis ad pristinam sospitatem reformare non renuit, Iesus Christus, Dominus Noster, qui cum Genitore et Spiritu Sancto uiuit dominaturque Deus, per infinita secula seculorum, Amen. EXPLICIUNT MIRACVLA SANCTE EDBVRGE VIRGINIS.

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<sup>82</sup> **aluum]** anum in *John of Tynemouth*

HERE BEGINS THE LIFE OF SAINTS ÆTHELRED AND ÆTHELBERHT MARTYRS AND THE VIRGIN  
SAINTS MILDTHRYTH AND EADBURH, ON THE IDES OF DECEMBER

§ 1.1 There was a very wealthy king by the name of Ecgberht, who ruled over the people of the Angles, noble indeed in descent, but ignoble – for shame! – in sin. And he, incited by the ancient envy of devilish deceit, reached out his hand in a wicked fist against the sons of his uncle and renewed that first persecution of Christ with Herod-like cunning, hoping that the infant Christ would die along with those boys, lest afterwards he would become an impediment to his own rule. Accordingly, the aforementioned king then decided with sly deceit to kill those innocent young men, namely St Æthelred and St Æthelberht, lest they should grow up a nuisance to his rule and that of his sons. 2. And those whom he knew were rightly destined to take up the reins of rule, he also harmfully offered up as a harmless sacrifice to the Christ, the Lord King, for whom they suffered as harmless boys,<sup>1</sup> and he made them into martyrs worthy of God. For they were from the stock of the blessed Eadburh, glorious virgin, who at that time was regarded as godly in her divine praises; indeed, they were the nephews of that same venerable Eadburh. She was their great aunt and an example of blessed living.

§ 2.1 Also, the king had a most wicked adviser and completely in agreement with his crime, called in the old language of the English Thunor. He, then, like the most shameful traitor Judas, who betrayed the gentlest Lamb, Christ, with similar reasoning and in feigned and crafty friendship pressed kisses upon God’s boys until the moment when he offered them up to bitter death. 2. After they had been killed, quickly he prepared hasty graves. For he secretly buried the lifeless limbs of the innocent children under the very dining room of the royal hall, where no last rites were celebrated for such great and remarkable young men. No worthy songs of praises, no psalms of David on ten strings, no bright lights of lamps, no Gregorian funeral chants for the rest of those who had been murdered, but rather the lawless banquets of butchers thundered out. 3. But *the Lord*, as the prophet said, *keepeth all their bones, so that not one of them shall be broken*; and the righteous, although overtaken by wicked death, buried in unfit graves, nevertheless possessed everlasting refreshment.

§ 3.1 The name of the village in which the deed is reported as having been done is called Eastry. And rightly is it Eastry, as if it were Astry, because from the astral heights a ray of miraculous light shone right down to the ground in that village, signifying indeed that righteous ones had been murdered there, whose spirit shone like the sun in their Father’s

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<sup>1</sup> In the Latin B. plays on the words *innocens* “innocent” or “harmless” and *nocenter* “harmfully”.

realm. 2. Doubtless that ray, like the sun at midday, thus shone over the roof of the royal hall, where the bodies of the blessed ones lay carelessly buried, in the black darkness of the middle of the night, so that the true sentiment of the truth could truly speak out, saying, “*There is nothing covered up that is not laid bare, nothing hidden that is not known*”.

§ 4.1 Many of the faithful, looking at that marvellous sign for a long time, anxiously began to think over what new miracle or what judgement, what recent portent of example it might prefigure. Also, when King Ecgberht himself saw the sign, alerted by the constant shouting of his attendants and the people, remembering at last the crime he had committed, regretted the evil he had done; he dreaded to have brought down upon himself the wrath of the heavenly judge. And so, he sat there very anxiously. With care he pondered what he should do, what path of correction or repentance he should take.

§ 5.1 Then at length by God’s assent with swift dispatch he sent and summoned to him Eormenburh, also known by the name Domneva, a venerable queen, namely the blessed martyrs’ sister, who some while back separated from the king, namely her husband, while he was still alive, for the sake of religion, and he [Ecgberht] confessed to her the homicide he had committed upon her brothers. Accordingly, for the sake of that deed, he gave her eighty hides of plough-land from the royal possession on the island of Thanet, for the blood of those who had been murdered, so as in some way to alleviate the grief of the grieving sister. 2. Then the venerable queen Eormenburh, or Domneva, having accepted from the king that piece of land just mentioned, as it were the blood-price of her brothers, not desiring to heap up for herself on it the gain of the tangible world with earthly ambition,<sup>2</sup> but instead by means of their blood-price she saw fit to acquire the heavenly realms of the angels for her beloved brothers, from whom earthly reign had been taken away.

§ 6.1 Having entered upon a most salutary plan, she built a church on that plot of land, well-supported also by royal assistance. When it was built, she consecrated it to Mary, Mother of God, and forthwith she assembled a host of women worthily serving God and presided over them in all matters with motherly affection. 2. She prepared monastic buildings, cultivated the fields, increased all kinds of animals, mended everything that was run-down, and with all things rightly set in order, gave it over to the Lord of all lords and those serving the Lord, on condition that in that place day and night thanks should sweetly be given in song to the Highest King, in psalms and hymns and all spiritual chants, and that there should be people singing constantly to the Lord in their hearts, and that intercessions

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<sup>2</sup> In the Latin this clause lacks a finite verb.

and offerings should be made for the souls of Christ's faithful Æthelred and Æthelberht, with constant attention to prayers to the Lord King, *who dwells in the heights, and looks down upon all humble things in heaven and upon earth.*

§ 7.1 That same queen had a venerable and devout daughter, Mildthryth by name, *who was clad all around in golden hems*, that is strengthened *in every varied form* of faith. Her glorious mother sent her all the way to Gaul, so that there she could be educated in the utterance of the divine word and the holy ritual of religion. As soon as she heard her noble mother advise her with prophetic voice and say (2.) "*Hear, my daughter, and see and incline your ear and forget your people and the house of your father*" and so on, she heard and saw with her mind more than with her bodily eyes, inclined the ear of her heart to the law of devotion, forgetting also the people, puffing themselves up with earth-bound adulation, and abandoned the land of her father, her dwelling and home, and yearns to hasten as quickly as possible towards the eternal Father's home, *since the King desired her form.*

§ 8.1 Wherefore the blessed and immaculate virgin Mildthryth then started to walk in the *Lord's ways*, so that she could search out *his testimonies* and *seek him with her whole heart.* And since she knew that He had commanded that *His commandments are to be kept beyond measure*, she therefore saw to it that *her ways should be directed* to where she could hear nothing except what is holy, and see nothing except what is true, so that she should not sin in the Lord. 2. Moreover, the loving Examiner of all righteous wishes, seeing the wish of His handmaid, blessed the paths of her journey and brought her to the place she desired, so that her eyes were opened, away from universal error towards considering *the wondrous things of his law.* Christ's virgin, taking hold of the vigour of manly intellect, pursued the study of letters, gave her time to prayers, cleaved to the ways of holiness, also leaned upon the charms of all divine accomplishments.

§ 9.1 Afterwards uniquely nurtured and well-educated *in all the commandments and justifications*, she returned to the homeland she had left, taking the relics of the saints with her from there, whence she ever gave praise and thanks to the One who made way for his returning handmaid and who guarded her going out and her coming in, so that she *should not be confounded.* And therefore, she vowed *to guard all His words.* 2. Accordingly, having fitted out all the equipment for a ship and having shaken out the sails up into the air, and also with favourable winds, she skipped across the ocean's waters on a swift course, and rejoicing and exultant came again to her mother, with the Lord as her guide. 3. After she returned again to well-known shores, the vigour of the already-mentioned virgin was especially strengthened, as far as we can guess, by the encouragement and example of blessed Eadburh,

since *she sprouted forth like a lily* with the palm of righteousness and *will be multiplied* in the house of the Lord, *like the cedar of Lebanon, so that she might blossom before the Lord forever.*

§ 10.1 Not much later on, the blessed and glorious virgin Mildthryth, longing to cleave to the celestial Bridegroom and *to place her hope completely in the Lord God*, and *to show herself a chaste virgin to her one Husband*, Christ, received at the hand of blessed Theodore, archbishop of the holy church of Canterbury, the veil of holy orders, along with seventy other virgins; (2) and thus *with exultation and joy they offered themselves as a temple for the Lord*, the King, in order that at the last, on the Day of Judgement, they would not be among the foolish virgins whose lamps lacked heavenly illumination, but would be brought *into the presence of Christ, the King*, as wise virgins, along with Mary, the Virgin of virgins and Mother of God.

§ 11.1 After this, the time to leave this fleeting world approached for the blessed heroine Domneva or Eormenburh and when she had set everything in order, she passed over to Christ. And after the death of her venerable mother, Mildthryth succeeded to pastoral care in the sheepfold of the Lord's flock, to be the mother of many in the exemplary nature of her holiness, she who in the example of chastity followed the Mother of the Lord Saviour, a virgin in her child-bearing and a virgin after her child-bearing.

§ 12.1 It is not within our capability to recount through the complicated twists and turns of many words how much the holy virgin prepared herself in service to God, in steadfast reading, in continual prayers, in holy exhortations, in the bestowing of alms, in singing the psalms of David, in spiritual hymns and also in watches and in fasts, in every zealous act of good works. 2. Moreover, she kept herself utterly distant from all the by-ways of the vices, which she feared would impede her course, so that she would receive *not a corruptible crown* but the goal of everlasting life. She chastised the tender body of her virginal chastity and turned it towards Christ's service, following the apostle, so that, while she was communicating the word of life to others, she might not perchance herself *become rebellious or wicked.*

§ 13.1 Therefore *the Lord regarded the low estate of his handmaiden* and made clearly known to all the peoples all around how highly he valued her. Accordingly, one day, while the blessed virgin's mind was completely intent upon *all the Lord's righteous ways*, she sat preoccupied with reading a book of the holy canon of Scripture. 2. And it chanced that by the gusts of wind or the violent beatings of stormy weather the maiden's light was blown out as she read. But soon, by the command of the High King it was re-lit to its former brightness, so

that it could administer greater brilliance of light for the one *scrutinising God's commandments. Because of this everyone called her blessed.*

§ 14.1. On another occasion, also, when God's virgin was with chaste mind bending low in prayer, suddenly coming down from the sky an angel of the Lord in the form of dove, whiter than snow, settled upon the blessed virgin's head, and for some long while clasped her head and neck in its white wings with intimate affection. 2. Doubtless that messenger of the heavenly Bridegroom came in order to present the bride of Christ's prayer, poured out for her own salvation and that of all her community, to the Lord Christ.

§ 15.1 Again one night, while the blessed virgin gave herself up to sleep, again a bright angel of the Lord came to her and preserved the chaste body of her virginal modesty and the temple of God's chosen one, by sitting next to her, and covered her with the gentle overshadowings of its glittering wings, lest any spectre of the old enemy should come to befoul the sleeping virgin. 2. Oh! the immense affection of God, Oh! the great love of the heavenly Bridegroom, Oh! the unspeakable mercy of God: He deigned to send from the starry citadels of the heavens his holy angel, as a guardian for her chaste heart and pure body. 3. Rightly are angels sent as guardians for the chaste bodies of Christ's followers, because chastity is called *the sister of the angels in heaven.*

§ 16.1 Therefore, all the days of her happy life the virgin of God in these ways and others like them *fought the good fight, finished the course of her blessed life, kept the faith* of the holy Trinity. And thus, the Just Judge, loving Rewarder of all struggles, placed upon her in heaven *the crown of righteousness*, which He will give to each and every person who strives for the hope of everlasting salvation. 2. Then the day of blessed Mildrith's calling away and reward came close, and gradually, pressed by illness, on the third Ides of July [13 July], she died her temporal death, giving over her spirit to the Lord, the Creator, to whom is all honour and glory, forever and ever, Amen.

## Gotha I.81

§ 1.1 After the end and death of blessed Mildthryth, the blessed virgin Eadburh went to rule her community, bereft of its mother, lest *voracious wolves* should cruelly chance to fall upon the Lord's flock and tear it with ravening teeth. The venerable virgin Eadburh was the great grandaunt of the blessed Mildthryth, indeed daughter of Æthelberht, first king under catholic law and ruler of the English race, and of Queen Bertha. Also, Æthelberht in the English language means 'noble illumination'. But Bertha, mother of the holy virgin, means 'bright', or 'clear'.

2. These two names of her fortunate parents, brought together in one, make a unity with one meaning. Therefore, there is no difference between noble illumination and clear light or between clear light and noble illumination, but such parents by their matching names were brought together in marriage by God's preordaining for this end alone that the venerable virgin should be brought into the world by them, for the benefit of many.

3. There are many, whose names it is too hard to search out individually, who took the origin of their beginnings from the stock of these two devout parents, and whose names thereafter we have no doubt are all written in the book of life, since this was the generation of those always *seeking the God of Jacob*, and they therefore *received a blessing from the Lord and mercy from the God of their salvation*. And since in their time with all their heart's eagerness they strove to act with righteousness, therefore, they earned the right *to ascend the Lord's mountain*, that is, the height of heaven, *and to stand in his holy place*, where they would deserve to look upon the glory and face of the eternal King, the power and majesty of the Lord God for everlasting ages.

## Hereford P.VII.6

HERE BEGINS THE LIFE OF ST EADBURH THE VIRGIN, ON THE IDES OF DECEMBER.

§ 1.1 God's virgin, Eadburh, after the death of blessed Mildthryth, went to rule her community, bereft of its mother, lest *voracious wolves* should cruelly chance to fall upon the Lord's flock and tear it with ravening teeth. This venerable virgin Eadburh was the great grandaunt of the blessed Mildthryth, indeed daughter of Æthelberht, first king under catholic law and ruler of the English race.

2. She, therefore, after the river's strong currents brought her joy, that is, the fount of holy baptism cleansed her of the pollutions of the vices, so that she might become God's blessed city, by day and by night upon the summit of her own towers, that is in the hidden places of her mind and on her lips, she gave praises of exultation to God and thanks, constantly beseeching with fervent spirit that she should earn the right to be enlisted among those in the city on high, that is the celestial Jerusalem, and be brought to the gem-studded couch of Christ the Bridegroom, and that together with the blessed queen, mother of God, namely Mary, and all the other king's daughters, she should stand that at the Lord Christ's right hand, to the honour of His name, clad in the robe of immortality and in the truth of the spiritual virtues; where she might hear the sweet-toned voice of the Lord saying "*Come unto me all you who labour and are burdened, and I will give you rest*".



§ 2.1 The Blessed Virgin Eadburh heard the sound of His cry while she was still on earth not in the dull way one listens to empty things, but she placed the firmness of her faith upon *the corner-stone* who *makes all things one*, and strove to become in every way the temple of the One Who gathers all things under the care of His refuge, just as elsewhere He said to His hearers “*The temple of the Lord is holy, which you are*”. Again, the apostle says: “*Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit?*” 2. Indeed also the venerable virgin took care to found another temple for divine veneration and worship on the material foundation of stones, where the prayers of the faithful might be offered up to the Lord and Founder of all, and where the Lamb, who came to take away the sins of the world, might be offered there every day in atonement for the sins of the crowds of people coming there, and in which temple also the lifeless limbs of her great grand-niece, blessed Mildthryth, sacred virgin, might fittingly be buried, so that the marks of her virginity could there be revered in veneration by the faithful *all the length of days*. 3. Afterward by holy example the faithful virgin with ardent strength completed in deed that temple which she had considered in thought, with every kind of adornment and dedication<sup>3</sup>. Hence the people acknowledged what it previously promised, not to believe in the deceitful enemy in the vain obscurity of the mind, but in the living God, to whom it dedicated the noble temple of its body, out of contempt for the world.

§ 3.1 Therefore, after she had completed her good and holy wish, she did not cease to ponder with skilful zeal how she could most worthily move to the body of the virgin worthy of God to the place she had prepared, when she herself also, close to death, awaited her last day in peace.

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<sup>3</sup> The rhyming of two Latin nouns here, *ornatu atque dedicatu*, is difficult to capture in English.

§ 2.1 The Blessed Virgin Eadburh heard the sound of this Gospel cry while she was still on earth not in the dull way one listens to empty things, but she placed the firmness of her faith upon *the corner-stone* who *makes all things one*, and strove to become in every way the temple of the One Who gathers all things under the care of His refuge, just as elsewhere He said to His hearers “*The temple of the Lord is holy, which you are*”. Again, the apostle says: “*Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit?*” 2. Indeed also the venerable virgin took care to found another temple for divine veneration and worship on the material foundation of stones, where the prayers of the faithful might be offered up to the Lord and Founder of all, and where the Lamb, who came to take away the sins of the world, might be offered there every day in atonement for the sins of the crowds of people coming there, and in which temple also the lifeless limbs of her great grand-niece, blessed Mildthryth, sacred virgin, might fittingly be buried, so that the marks of her virginity could there be held in veneration by the faithful *all the length of days*. 3. Afterward in a holy example the faithful virgin with ardent strength completed in deed that temple which she had considered in thought, with every kind of adornment and dedication.

§ 3.1 Therefore, after she had completed her good and holy wish, she did not cease to ponder with skilful zeal how she could most worthily move to the body of the virgin worthy of God to the place she had prepared, when she herself also, close to death, awaited her last day in peace.

2. Then she had opened the blessed virgin's tomb and having taken off the lid, in the hollow of the coffin found the body whole free from any mark or even decay, as if on the day she had been buried. Such a great odour of sweetness came forth, as if the scents of every perfume had been gathered together there. 3. Indeed, in that body, while she was shaken on every side by the world's floodtides, she had incurred few vices, or almost none, and therefore by God's ordaining after death she was found whole and fragrant. For every day while she was alive, by praying she sent up the odour of sweet incense by her prayer which could penetrate to the heights of heaven, constantly saying the words of David: *"Let my prayer be as the incense of a good odour in your sight Lord."* By the power of prayer, she ascended daily, although she remained in the frail body, as it says in the Song of Songs: *"Who is she that goeth up by the air, as a pillar of smoke of aromatical spices, of myrrh and frankincense?"* And again: *"We are Christ's good fragrance in every place."*

§ 4.1 When these things were done, shouts of joy of those exulting were heard mingled in with the cries of those who were grieving; but lifting the blessed virgin's body from its place in the coffin with hymns and divine prayers, and laying it down in a new sarcophagus, they placed it in the chapel honourably constructed on the north side of the church, where up until the present day by her prayers and merits divine mysteries and miracles come to pass, to the praise and glory of Christ's name, who, One in the Trinity, lives and reigns as God for ever and ever, Amen.

§ 5.1 The blessed virgin Eadburh still was tossed like a sailor on the world's high waves, with wearied sinews, yet nonetheless she continued to strive on manfully in her virginal body, strengthening her heart by divine study, soothing her mind with holy words,

2. Then she had opened the blessed virgin's tomb and having taken off the lid, in the hollow of the coffin found the body whole and lacking any mark or even decay, as if on the day she had been buried. Such a great odour of sweetness came forth, as if the scents of every perfume had been set alight there.

§ 4.1 Then you should have heard the shouts of joy of those exulting mingled in with the cries of those who were grieving! Therefore, lifting the blessed virgin's body from its place in the coffin with hymns and divine prayers, and putting it back in a new sarcophagus, they placed it in the chapel honourably constructed on the north side of the church, where up until the present day by her prayers and merits divine mysteries and miracles come to pass, to the praise and glory of Christ's name.

§ 5.1 The blessed virgin Eadburh still was tossed like a sailor on the world's high waves, the sinews of her mind freed, yet nonetheless she continued to strive on manfully in her virginal body, strengthening her heart by divine study, soothing her mind with holy words,

beseeking God in her intercessions, adorning her soul with prayers, cleansing her body with almsgiving, bidding the angels to come to her aid, so that she might be able to uphold the Lord, the Creator of All, amidst the storm-floods of this world. 2. For she did not hang the sail of her hope on to a fragile mast but rather brandished it upwards in the air towards Christ, and firmly fixed the anchor of her faith on the triple rope of the Holy Trinity, and rejoicing and exultant *went from strength to strength*, so that she could earn the right to see *the God of Gods* rewarding her *in Sion*.

§ 6.1 And now the blessed virgin seeing with watchful mind that all the pleasures of this world are fleeting and perishable, and calling to mind also that *man is but dust*, and that nothing in this age is immoveable and lasting among men, and that all things which can be seen will pass away because they are temporary, scorned like the dust of the streets at once all the joys and all the adornments of this age, namely she used to despise like stinking dung gold and silver, unless perchance she could reuse them for ecclesiastical ornaments or other kinds of divine service: 2. likewise gems, pearls, precious stones, rings, arm-bracelets, necklaces, baubles, clothing, men-servants and also maid-servants, sheep and cows, horses and asses, cattle and herds, fields and crops, meadows and farms, fields and forests, and all the glory of the present age; because with her whole heart she *was seeking the glory which is from God alone*.

§ 7.1 For *all that the king's daughter*, namely Eadburh, *gloried in was within* and not on the outside, because she had no love for human favour and the oiliness of admirers which we read that foolish virgins love. About this oil the prophet sang, saying, *Let not the oil of the sinner moisten my head*. 2. The blessed virgin yearned more strongly *to be released* from the world *and be with Christ*, fearing that saying of the Apostle,

beseeking God in her intercessions, adorning her soul with prayers, cleansing her body with almsgiving, bidding the angels to come to her aid, so that she might be able to uphold the Lord, the Creator of All, amidst the storm-floods of this world. 2. For she did not hang the sail of her hope on a fragile mast but rather brandished it upwards in the air towards Christ, and firmly fixed the anchor of her faith on the triple rope of the Holy Trinity. Hence rejoicing and exultant she *went from strength to strength*, so that she could earn the right to see *the God of Gods* rewarding her *in Sion*.

§ 6.1 And now the blessed virgin seeing with watchful mind that all the pleasures of this world are fleeting and perishable, and calling to mind also that *man is but dust*, and that nothing in this age is immoveable and lasting among men, and that all things which can be seen will pass away because they are temporary, scorned like the dust of the streets at once all the joys and all the adornments of this age, namely she despised like stinking dung gold and silver, unless perchance she could reuse them for ecclesiastical ornaments or other kinds of divine service. 2. Likewise gems, pearls, precious stones, rings, arm-bracelets, necklaces, baubles, clothing and also maid-servants, sheep and cows, horses and asses, cattle and herds, fields and crops, meadows and farms, fields and forests, and all the glory of the present age; because with her whole heart she *sought the glory which is from God alone*.

§ 7.1 And *all that she gloried in was within* and not on the outside, because she had no love for human favour and the oiliness of admirers which we read that foolish virgins love. About this oil the prophet sang, saying, *Let not the oil of the sinner moisten my head*. 2. Accordingly, the blessed virgin yearned more strongly *to be released* from the world *and be with Christ*, fearing that saying of the Apostle,

*for as long as we are in the body, we are exiled from the Lord.*

§ 8.1 But after the circlings of many years, and after varied and countless temptations of the sly enemy had been conquered, the glorious virgin *was found without stain since, as we have already said, she did not go after gold nor did she put her hope in the treasures of money; as the Lord says, “I take you as I find you”*. 2. Therefore, the Lord the righteous Giver of rewards found her embracing worthwhile works and called her away to the high joys of the heavens with an intimate call, saying, “Come, my chosen one, and I shall put my throne within you, *since the King of Righteousness desires your appearance*. Come, my chosen one, wisest virgin, put the oil of your striving and toil into the bright vessel of your lamp, so that by the brilliant light of your good works you can run to meet the Lord Saviour who is coming, *since the word of the Lord will be a lamp for your feet* and Christ, the Bridegroom of everlasting joy a light for your paths”. 3. Soon timely death overcame the blessed virgin with a happy end, in which she put aside the flesh, the co-inhabiter of her soul up to that point, on the Ides of December, and commended her spirit to the Lord the Giver, who lives and reigns for ever and ever. AMEN.

HERE BEGIN HER MIRACLES

§ 1. People ask why the Lord shows the signs of miraculous powers through some of His saints during their very lifetimes, but through some He does not, even though they may all serve Him faithfully. The answer to this, at least in our opinion, is that the Lord knows the minds that are firm and recognises the characters that are steady. Those of His saints whom He has identified as dependable and steady, so that by the signs of miraculous powers which the Lord works through them, they will not deviate from humility’s path, and be puffed up by men’s admiration, nor enticed by any good fortune, but persevere in the same spirit and

*for as long as we are in the body, we are exiled from the Lord.*

§ 8.1 But after the circlings of many years, and after varied and countless temptations of the sly enemy had been conquered, the glorious virgin *was found without stain*.

2. The Lord the Giver of rewards found her embracing worthwhile works and called her away to the high joys of the heavens with an intimate call, saying, “Come, my chosen one, and I shall put my throne within you, *since the King of Righteousness desires your appearance*. Come, my chosen one, wisest virgin, put the oil of your striving and toil into the bright vessel of your lamp, so that by the brilliant light of your good works you can run to meet the Lord Saviour who is coming, *since the word of the Lord will be a lamp for your feet* and Christ, the Bridegroom of everlasting joy a light for your paths”. 3. Soon timely death overcame the blessed virgin with a happy end, in which she put aside the flesh, the dwelling of her soul up to that point, on the Ides of December [13 Dec.], and commended her spirit to the Lord the Giver, who lives and reigns for ever and ever. AMEN. HERE ENDS THE LIFE OF ST EADBURH THE VIRGIN.

countenance of humility and the same zeal for God's service: through them without doubt He makes manifest the signs of His power. But those whom He has perceived to be weaker, so that if He were to show His signs through them, they would turn aside from the station of humility to the haughtiness of boasting, through them He does not at all make manifest His marvels; rather He spares such ones, so that they lose not the rewards for their labour through pride's obstinacy, but instead after death He makes their merit manifest. Accordingly, after the blessed virgin's death, He disclosed far and wide what her merit had been.

§ 2. For at one time the son of a certain householder in the province of the West Saxons began to fall sick and to be so burdened with a long-lasting illness that he had barely any hope of living, and sadly awaited the day of his sorry death. Then by night it was announced to him in a vision that if he drank from St Eadburh's well, he would quickly get better. When the sick boy woke up, he asked for a drink from the aforementioned virgin's well. But his parents replied to him that they did not know who that holy virgin he had named might be, nor could they find the well from which he was asking for a draught. And his father, thinking through the churches of all the kingdoms round about and the names of many male and female saints, could call to mind no male — or even female — saint who was called by that name, but finally he recollected that once by journey's chance he had passed through the eastern part of Kent and had heard tell that there in the monastery of Lyminge rests St EADBURH. And he said, "It's hard for us to bring to these parts drinking water from such a great distance away". But the youth because of his illness yearned more and more urgently for that well we have already mentioned. Wishing to satisfy his longing, they drew off from the neighbouring well which they used every day, telling him that it was water taken from the well he was asking for. And so he quickly asked to be lifted up, and taking the water which they told him had come from that holy virgin's well, chanted the Lord's prayer over it as best he could in the grip of his sickness, and in the name of Christ the Healer and St EADBURH made the sign of the cross over it and drank, and forthwith all his illness departed from him, and he quickly regained his health through the holy virgin's merits.

§ 3. On another occasion, there was a young man, about twenty years old, who had been dumb since the moment of birth. His grieving mother brought him to the tomb of the blessed virgin and betaking herself to prayers and vigils there for her son's powers of speech, she battered the virgin of God with beseechings. Accordingly, just before the stroke of midnight, by the holy virgin's merits the dumb man spoke. A good many people later observed that he was so eloquent that he could speak in the presence of wise men and princes.

§ 4. Again, while a certain young nun was occupied with holy prayers in the virgin's chapel she suddenly saw that same holy virgin's altar was lifted about a cubit from the ground up into the air, and again gradually lowered into its former position. There is no doubt that this signifies that all who take cover under the support of her virginal state with an untroubled mind will have the burdens of their sins lifted.<sup>4</sup>

§ 5. There was a priest of the aforesaid monastery and of the blessed virgin, who had wickedly neglected the place and the virgin's relics, because of every sort of worldly self-importance. The mild virgin very gently directed him towards the correction of repentance by means of apparitions granted to many of the faithful, to the extent that the faithful came to that priest's servants and told them the warning signs they had seen in visions. But he, even under these circumstances failing to turn towards better ways, still persisted in slack negligence. So, one night there appeared to one of the faithful two very black men, holding that same priest bound in tight chains before the church door, and tearing out his eyes with their nails, and racking him with many other tortures, until the venerable virgin rose up from her resting-place and rescued him from their evil hands, saying "Let my servant go, ye servants of hell". Forthwith from that very day by the testimony of many that same priest was deprived of clear eye-sight, but thereafter until the hour of his death served God and the holy virgin in a worthy manner.

§ 6. On one occasion, it so happened that the archbishop of the blessed church of Canterbury had very many redundant and useless land-charters, and in gathering them up together to consign them to the flames, among those charters he also unknowingly took hold of one delimiting blessed EADBURH's land and handed it over to one of those who was attending him, for burning with the rest. When that man had done his best to carry out what he had been instructed to do, by no means could the blessed virgin's charter be consumed in the heat of the fire, even though the rest had been reduced to ash in a trice. He went back, leaving the charter still in the fire, and reported the remarkable fact to the archbishop. The latter replied, "Hurry, then, and bring it to me". And so, he ran and found it lying unharmed by the fire's burning, and picking it up, he took it to the archbishop. When the archbishop recognised that this document was the very one which defined the virgin's estates with clear boundaries on all sides, he gave thanks to All-Thunderous God and to the holy virgin for the document's preservation.

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<sup>4</sup> In the Latin the verb for the lifting of the altar (*sulleuari*) is the same as the one used for the easing of sin's burden (*sulleuentur*) and the pun is continued by the fact that the Latin for "support" also has the *sub-* ("under") prefix.

§ 7. A certain wealthy woman once for a short spell was harassed by terrible pains all over and while she was thinking anxiously what to do, amidst her sighs in doubt over her life ordered that she be secretly carried to the holy virgin's tomb in the bed in which she lay, so that there she might deserve to be healed from the loving physician of the heavens through the intervention of the blessed Eadburh. And while she was spending the night there, awaiting a heavenly visitation as a suppliant, lo! In the very dawn of the coming day a rest of the sweetest sleep came over her and she saw in a dream the Lamb of God coming down from on high, whiter than snow, brighter than a lily, comelier than all beauty, and it gently stood on her chest and visited her. Then at that time the day was Holy Saturday, namely (the vigil of) the feast of the holy resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ, on which that same Lamb which she had seen in a vision was offered up for the salvation of the whole world in obedience to the Father's command. What more needs to be said? On that same day when all the church bells were being rung for the solemnities of mass, and while "Glory be to God on High" was being sung by all the worshippers in Christ's churches, then this same woman whom we have mentioned above was glorified by the glory of her former health, and sang out "Glory to God in the Highest" alongside all the other faithful, she who previously had scarcely been able to utter any sound. And thus, all the sickness was taken away from her, so that on that very day by the merits of the holy virgin together with her people she was seen singing praise to God with rejoicing.

§ 8. There was another woman from the coastal area whom some people knew to have been confined to her bed through extreme illness, and who had for many a long day been turned and moved about only by the hands of others. After she had suffered such things for a very long time, she was advised in a dream to make a strenuous effort to offer the mite of her alms at St Eadburh's tomb. And so that woman, inflamed with a passion for her health, began, as best she could, to go where she was bidden to in her dream. And when she got as far as Lyminge, where the holy virgin's body rests, that woman's companions took a brief rest at lodgings with one of the locals, until such time as the candles and the other offerings were ready. In the meantime, the woman began to burn with parching thirst, by chance saw a young serving-girl standing nearby and asked her to bring her something to drink from the virgin's spring. When this had been done, and she had taken a draught, immediately the watery liquid, which she had drunk, went down into her body to heal it, and gradually caused her to begin trembling as if stricken by fevers, and then completely drove out all her illness at the dear virgin's behest. She straightway entered the holy virgin's chapel, and gave thanks and praise to God the Saviour and to St EADBURH for her unexpected healing.

§ 9. Once upon a time the violent savagery of the pagans laid waste to virtually the whole of Kent because of the people's sins, apart from the above-named virgin's place, which for his Bride's merits God, in His good governance, protected from all the rampagers' harm, until all the clerics of Lyminge church, having gathered a band of men, came out, freely putting themselves in the heathens' path, wanting to act manfully, as the outcome of events later showed. For in that place they rushed forth in a mighty band and slew one thousand two hundred and forty of them. But also, they themselves were cut down and perished, excepting only the priest of that place, who alone taking flight got away, retraced the path by which he had come and pressed himself to the tomb to gain solace from the virgin. They soon came after him in swift pursuit and finding him clinging to the holy virgin's shrine and not in the least understanding his reason for seeking out that place, tried with barbaric cruelty to drag him away and to subject him to a variety of tortures. The vengeance of both God and the virgin rounded upon them immediately, such that by an unbearable loosening of the bowel or an outpouring of blood some of them died in a matter of seconds, and he whom they thought was going to bring them some profit, in fact, by the power of the holy virgin he served, for as long as he was with them, brought only agony, until with ready willing they drove him to depart. I believe that that remarkable event was like that old and mighty miracle, in which it is recounted that when the Philistine people of Ashdod were smitten in the private part of their buttocks, driven by the pain they released the ark of God which they had held captive.

§ 10. Also, two men were sitting on the privy for the emptying of their bowels. And one of them had committed a theft. Then, as is wont to happen, they began to talk about the matter. And the innocent man said to the guilty one "You weren't thinking fairly, mark you, when you went stealing other people's things, but put it right, I beg you, by giving things back. For we are all sure that you are the thief in this case". But the other man said, "May the Lord, examiner of all secrets, and the blessed virgin EADBURH, whose place I am now looking at, never let me rise from this spot alive and well if I have perpetrated the crime of theft of which you accuse me". For from the spot in which they were then seated for their bodily need, he could see the church in which the holy virgin lay at rest. And then upon voicing that most wretched of choices, he instantly poured out all the entrails of his guts through his back passage, and as his voice had requested, he did not rise up alive from that spot. And he who, because of his sins, died amidst the foulness of excrement, was tormented disgustingly.

§ 11. There was a well-known man in the confines of France, who sent out his harvesters to gather in the crops in the month of harvest. Just in case they should waste the day in idleness, he himself followed after them quite quickly, together with his son, still a quite a young man,



who himself had been assigned to a clerical calling. The workers at the harvest came up and took hold of the horses as they dismounted, put the saddles down on the grass, and having put the horses in iron fetters, took off the reins and let them graze, and gave the keys for the fetters to aforementioned lad to keep safe. He took them, but in his playful abandon among all the mass of straw had carelessly lost them. For, as is the way with some boys, he was extremely careless, and his father frequently scolded him very harshly for this reason. And so, this young lad, that is, the aforementioned man's son, hearing of the reputation and merits of blessed Eadburh from his teachers, had recourse also to her intercessions and had already got himself out of many scrapes through that virgin's merits. Thus, in the evening, when the work of the harvesters was done, as the time came for going home, the young man realised that he did not have the keys for the fetters, which had been entrusted to him. Accordingly, with humble mind he soon turned his spirit to seek out solace from the holy virgin, that she might deliver him from his father's severe telling-off. And lo! Looking about him, he suddenly saw the very keys he had lost, lying at his feet. Picking them up, he gave worthy thanks to Christ in veneration for the holy virgin. Later on, as the years passed by, he became the priest of blessed Eadburh.

§ 12. These few things chosen from the many we have taken care to write down for your affectionate attention, lest anybody doubt that the sacred virgin, to wit EADBURH, is of very great efficacy with the High-Thunderer, but rather that they may adjudge, so long as she is shown forth by miracles of this kind, with what exceeding honour this friend of God and bride of the unspotted Lamb is to be glorified. For human eloquence cannot run through all the other signs of miracles which escape us because of recorders' laziness, things which were done in the past, or even those which the Lord works through her almost every day. For whenever anyone is in pain in the head, eyes, teeth, arms, hands, thighs, loins, calves, feet, or any parts of the body, and at the holy virgin's tomb a likeness of the limb in which they suffer the most pain, made out of wax or from the light of a burning candle, is offered by those trusting in the virgin's aid, quickly the Healer of souls and bodies by the merits of His virgin, does not hesitate to restore them to former health, Jesus Christ, Our Lord, who with the Father and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, for infinite ages, Amen. HERE END THE MIRACLES OF ST EADBURH, VIRGIN.