



Gunn, Victoria A. (1999) *A study of Bede's historiae*. PhD thesis.

<http://theses.gla.ac.uk/1923/>

Copyright and moral rights for this thesis are retained by the author

A copy can be downloaded for personal non-commercial research or study, without prior permission or charge

This thesis cannot be reproduced or quoted extensively from without first obtaining permission in writing from the Author

The content must not be changed in any way or sold commercially in any format or medium without the formal permission of the Author

When referring to this work, full bibliographic details including the author, title, awarding institution and date of the thesis must be given

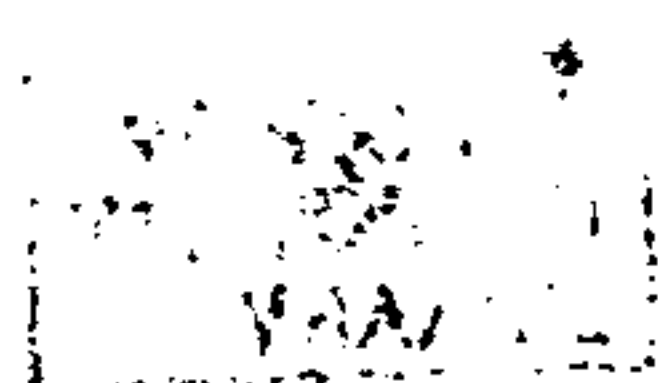
A Study of Bede's *Historiae*

Victoria A. Gunn

**A thesis presented in fulfilment of the requirements
of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

**University of Glasgow
Faculty of Arts**

January 1999



ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the *historia* works of Bede in the light of the influence of genre and rhetoric on the construction of their narratives. To do this it reflects upon the importance of understanding and differentiating between Bede's immediate monastic audience and the wider Anglo-Saxon one. It also proposes that the motivation behind Bede's writing was multifaceted and included monastic competition as well as a desire to present Late Antique and Patristic models in a manner readily accessible to his Northumbrian compatriots.

To show the extent of influence of genre boundaries and rhetorical devices this thesis examines his well known *historia* texts, such as the *Historia Ecclesiastica*, as well as those which have received relatively less attention from historians, particularly the *Historia Abbatum*, the *Chronica Maiora* and the *Martyrologium*.

The thesis also illustrates the extent of the use of rhetorical devices and textual constructions through the discussion of two case studies. The first looks at Bede's Northumbrian Saintly Kings; the second, at his Northumbrian Holy Women. The case studies indicate that historical accuracy was of secondary importance to Bede. Rather, they suggest that the dissemination of Christian convention (at the expense of historical accuracy) within an apparently Anglo-Saxon historical framework was Bede's primary aim.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis was only completed with the practical and emotional support of others and I am very conscious that the assistance of both the staff in the Medieval History Department at Glasgow University and my family and friends has been invaluable.

Of the latter group particular thanks must go to the Benedictine Sisters at Stanbrook Abbey, Worcester, and the Carmelite Nuns at Langside, Glasgow, who listened to my ideas with interest, challenged me gently and supported me with their prayers. Thanks are due also to Maggie Skinner for not only proof reading the early chapters but also reading Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica* and enjoying it! Huge gratitude goes to Dr. Rowena Murray who constantly reminded me that 'Doneness is all' even when I had threatened to give up, as well as to Melanie Walker and the staff at the Teaching and Learning Service who covered for me in the final months, allowing me to write up.

Of the former group especial thanks must go to my two supervisors: firstly to Dr. Stuart Airlie who stimulated my knowledge of the period, reminded me that there 'is always more' in the study of the medieval past and encouraged me in my endeavours; secondly, I am indebted to Professor David Bates whose support and guidance ensured that my completion moved from being a hope to an actuality.

I am also grateful to my examiners, Dr. Alan Thacker and Professor John Thomson for the care with which they read the text.

Finally, I dedicate this thesis to my close friends, Rosie Elliott and Senga b. Angelus, whose love and practical support kept me sane through many of the darkest moments of thesis production as well as the joyful ones! Without them I could not have finished.

ABBREVIATIONS

<i>AB</i>	<i>Analecta Bollandiana</i>
<i>ASE</i>	<i>Anglo-Saxon England</i>
<i>BAR</i>	<i>British Archaeological Reports</i>
<i>BJRL</i>	<i>Bulletin of the John Rylands Library</i>
<i>BLTW</i>	<i>Bede, His Life, Times and Writings: Essays in Commemoration of the Twelfth Century of his Death</i> , ed. A. Hamilton Thompson (Oxford, 1935).
Campbell, <i>Essays</i>	J. Campbell, <i>Essays in Anglo-Saxon History</i> (London, 1986)
<i>CCSL</i>	<i>Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina</i> (Turnhout).
<i>CSEL</i>	<i>Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum</i> (Vienna).
<i>Cuthbert, Cult & Comm.</i>	<i>St. Cuthbert, His Cult and His Community to A.D. 1200</i> , ed. G. Bonner, et al (Southampton, 1989)
<i>DTR</i>	<i>De Temporum Ratione</i>
<i>GAF</i>	<i>Gesta Abbatum Fontanellensis</i>
<i>HA</i>	<i>Historia Abbatum</i>
<i>HBS</i>	Henry Bradshaw Society
<i>HE</i>	<i>Historia Ecclesiastica</i>

<i>HE (P)</i>	<i>Baedae Opera Historica</i> , ed. C. Plummer 2 vols. (Oxford, 1896).
<i>JEH</i>	<i>Journal of Ecclesiastical History</i>
<i>LP</i>	<i>Liber Pontificalis</i>
<i>MGH : AA</i>	<i>Monumenta Germaniae Historica: Auctores Antiquissimi</i>
<i>MGH: SRM</i>	<i>Monumenta Germaniae Historica: Scriptores Rerum Merovingicarum</i>
OCT	Oxford Classical Texts
OMT	Oxford Medieval Texts
<i>PL</i>	<i>Patrologia Latina</i> , ed. J.-P. Migne.
Wallace-Hadrill, <i>Comm.</i>	J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, <i>Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People - A Historical Commentary</i> (Oxford, 1989).

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Abstract	
Acknowledgements	
Abbreviations	
Introduction	1
Chapter One	
Understanding Bede's Audience	13
Chapter Two	
The Context of the Northumbrian Hagiography and History Production	31
Chapter Three	
Bede's Agenda Revisited: Monastic Superiority within the <i>Historia Ecclesiastica</i>	79
Chapter Four	
Bede's Approach to the Genre of <i>Historia</i>	115
Chapter Five	
A Case of Generic Discomfort: Bede's <i>Historia Abbatum</i>	147
Chapter Six	
A Case of Innovation within Generic Boundaries: Bede's <i>Martyrology</i>	169
Chapter Seven	
Bede's Method of Saintly Image Construction within the Genre of <i>Historia Ecclesiastica</i> : 1	
Case Study: The Northumbrian Royal Male Saints	185
Chapter Eight	
Bede's Method of Saintly Image Construction within the Genre of <i>Historia Ecclesiastica</i> : 2	
Case Study: The Northumbrian Female Saints	231
Chapter Nine	
The Implication of Bede's Approach to and Methods of <i>Historia</i>	268
Footnotes	275
Bibliography	342

A Study in Bede's *Historiae*: Introduction

A decade ago Walter Goffart's writing on Bede as a narrator of Barbarian history forced historians to reconsider their understanding of Bede's *historiae*.¹ The comfort with which one might have read Bede's historiographical writings as those of a consummate and fastidious, if at times quaint, Anglo-Saxon historian was effectively stripped away. Goffart left us with evidence of a hidden agenda and a distinctly uncomfortable feeling that Bede was more of a historical manipulator than we wished to see. Subsequent attempts have been made to challenge parts of Goffart's hypothesis, but the overall assumption of innocence with which we may have approached and appreciated Bede's works has been all but lost.² The important contributions of James Campbell, Henry Mayr-Harting and Patrick Wormald are products of a learning environment quite different to the post-modern, sceptical University of the 1990's in which Goffart's thesis seems incredibly plausible.

If 1988 brought a fundamental reconsideration of Bede which effectively transformed the way that subsequent generations would read his *historiae*, then the year 1981 marked an equally important transformation in the study of the cult of saints. In this year the publication of Peter Brown's seminal interpretative work moved this critical source of understanding for Late Antique and Medieval society out of the relative obscurity it had been consigned to within the discipline of history.³ This obscurity was perhaps all the more astonishing when one considers the corpus of contemporary material that was available for historiographical scrutiny. Nevertheless, following the damning judgements of

authors such as the Bollandist, Hippolyte Delehaye, at the turn of this century it had become acceptable to assume that nothing of real value to the historian was to be found in hagiographical texts.⁴ Now, in large part thanks to Peter Brown, this neglect has been abandoned and since the 1980s publications on this subject have proliferated. Essentially what was once thought of as no more than evidence for the rather credulous state of the medieval populace is now embraced as a credible, if read correctly, source of social, cultural, economic and political history.

These two transformations have certainly influenced the approaches of academics re-examining Bede's writing. Thus Walter Goffart's revision of the motives behind the production of the *Historia Ecclesiastica* in particular has forcefully entered the historiographical arena, compelling observers to reconsider their images of Bede as somehow detached from the politics of his day. (Although it is debatable whether we ever really saw Bede as an out-of-touch academic!)⁵ Moreover, historians such as Alan Thacker, David Rollason, Susan Ridyard, Walter Goffart, David Kirby, and Stephanie Hollis have all made contributions and stimulated academic debate concerning Bede's images of saints and their cults in his *historiae* texts.⁶

Nonetheless, even allowing for these revisions it is possible to see that within current approaches to Bede there is a seeming polarization in the historiography between those such as Campbell, Wormald, and Thacker, who look to the role of Bede's life as a monk surrounded by sources, and those such as Goffart, Kirby and Ian Wood who prefer to see Bede predominantly as a skilful political

rhetorician. This thesis aims to show that within the two polarized groups of secondary sources there is a fundamental underestimation of the extent to which Bede's narratives were constructed within generic boundaries and rhetorical limits dependent on non-contemporary pre-existing frameworks and that such a method of composition may well have dramatically effected the 'historicity' of his portrayals. For example, the writings of the first group have done much to enhance our understanding of which Late Antique authors influenced Bede, but they have often not fully admitted the consequences of this debt in terms of historical reality. Thus, on the one hand, they note the textual influences on Bede, whilst on the other they still choose to focus on offering a more accurate description of events. This apparent paradox has perhaps occurred because the focus has been on attempting to get literal historical information out of texts which were constructed within the conventions of genre and rhetoric. This thesis endeavours to redress this imbalance and show that not only was Bede consistent in his method of the construction of narratives by drawing on authoritative non-contemporary predecessors (both directly and indirectly), but that the transmission of uniform conventions was actually a primary role of *historiae*.

The second group of studies within the polarization, apparently almost opposite and somewhat excluding of the first, stress the political motivation behind and political information within Bede's historical texts.⁷ Their approach, therefore, has been far less source comparison based. However, in doing this they too fail to examine the full extent of the impact of Bede's monastic training in terms of generic linking and rhetorical procedures. Nonetheless, Professor Goffart's

confidence concerning the historiography surrounding Bede has led him to conclude that Bede 'is just about mined out'.⁸

Essentially, this thesis seeks to prove that there is still much ground to be covered in our understanding of Bede's *historiae* in terms of the context in which they were produced, his agenda and his portrayal of saints. Indeed, it proposes that for Bede *historia* was a rhetorical exposition governed by rules of construction which differed hugely from modern understandings of history and was aimed at persuading individuals to imitate certain actions perceived as of worth. In this, *historia* perhaps responds to Gregory's exhortation that 'we ought to transform what we read into our very selves' by providing Bede's audience with something to read that contextualized non-contemporary accounts in a contemporary, chronological framework.⁹ It will be shown that experience of the Anglo-Saxon past was described by applying conventional images from Late Antique and Biblical texts, using rhetorical devices to build a narrative which exhibited actions worthy of imitation. Within this narrative there is also evidence for contemporary monastic rivalry (that shows Bede to be far from isolated) that extended further than just the abasement of Wilfrid and his confederation as focussed on by Goffart and that this, whilst important politically, was secondary to the major aim of *historia*. Moreover, in using the same techniques of information manipulation even the issue of intermonastic competition needs to be viewed with an acknowledgement of the highly constructed textual environment in which it is found.

Without identifying the textual authorities upon which Bede depended in his composition of *historia*, the historian is always faced with making assumptions about passages within his texts which in the end may reveal nothing more than the smooth integration of textual allusion. In a sense this thesis will be proposing that the application of authoritative sources in the construction of *historia* did indeed distance Bede from the world of his immediate experience, but that they also allowed him to 'read' that immediate experience in a manner similar to those early Church fathers he so respected.¹⁰ The implications of this for historicity are, of course, obvious.

From the outset, however, it needs to be acknowledged that this is not the first time rhetorical understandings have been applied to Bede. In a much neglected piece, Calvin Kendall suggested that Bede's study of rhetoric, particularly as outlined in his *De schematibus et tropis*, drew him to include within his *historiae* narrative devices that encouraged allegorical interpretations of some of the events.¹¹ Despite William McCready's recent criticism of Kendall's piece, where he challenges the notion that Bede expected the *Historia Ecclesiastica* to be read allegorically, there is still no getting away from the fact that within the text there do seem to be hints that Bede used words and structures open to allegorical, if not typological interpretation.¹² The text is divided into five books, comparing directly with the Pentateuch.¹³ As Campbell notes, the style of the *Historia Ecclesiastica* recalls that of the Gospels.¹⁴ There also appears to be an inferable comparison between his description of the building of the Temple in *De Templo* and the building of the Anglo-Saxon Church in Book I of the *HE*.¹⁵ Moreover, Judith McClure has indicated the importance of the Old Testament in Bede's

construction of images concerning certain kings.¹⁶ Such a choice of relevant biblical texts would certainly leave the constructed narrative open to the same allegorical interpretation applied to the original passages.

It is also important to take into account Bede's uses of numerology. Whilst Bede's knowledge in this area was established by Plummer, historians have avoided examining whether or not some of the dates Bede uses are not merely numbers with a more important meaning than just the literal; doubtless because of the highly subjective nature of doing so.¹⁷ An illustration of this could be found in Bede's narration of Hilda's entry into Whitby at the age of 33.¹⁸ There has been some discussion about whether or not this suggests she was a widow, for at 33 she was certainly old enough to be one.¹⁹ However, what if the age of 33 was placed in the text as no more than an offering of an allegorical sign: 33 representing the year of Christ's death and possibly used to signify Hilda's entry into a life 'with Christ' rather than making any literal statement about her age. It could of course be a typological sign.²⁰ Thus Bede would have chosen to include it in the narrative because he knew it to be a literal truth, with the potential for an interpretation other than the obvious literal one. Mayr-Harting has also suggested that Bede omitted Wulfhere from his list of the over-kings not only because of Northumbrian chauvinism, but because he wanted to use a number of allegorical significance.²¹

Moreover, a recognition of the impact of this approach on the Scriptural exegesis of Bede means that it is difficult to rule out the question of whether it significantly influenced his history writings. Julia Smith has certainly intimated that such a

method was employed by the Carolingian hagiographer, Hucbald of St. Amand. She argues persuasively that Hucbald had transferred this technique of argument common to theological controversy to hagiography.²² Surely, given Bede's own emphasis on his exegetical texts it is not impossible to suggest that he preceded Hucbald in this approach. If this can be proven, of course, it has implications for the historical accuracy of his works.

Furthermore, in *De Doctrina Christiana*, a text known to have been used by Bede, Augustine made it clear that being restricted to a literal reading of a sacred text was a form of captivity;²³ that choosing a discourse which did not allow for the interpretation of signs but focussed instead on them as things was 'a miserable servitude of the mind'.²⁴ This statement, however, does supply the observer with a potential caveat concerning the assumption that Bede intended alternative interpretations to be applied to his *historiae*. The *Historia Ecclesiastica*, for example, was not a sacred text and in his own Biblical commentary, *De Templo*, Bede noted that allegorical readings should be restricted to Scripture.²⁵ Arguably within the *Historia Ecclesiastica*, at least, Bede contradicted his own strictures and composed a text which he did intend to be subjected to allegorical interpretations. The signs in the text certainly suggest this.

Also of importance in terms of textual accuracy, arguably writing and interpreting allegorically allowed for an easy coexistence within a text of apparent asceticism and rampant materialism. Objects which the modern audience might essentially focus on as being indicative of a secular society could easily be accommodated within a text by disassociating the materials from their literal truth and seeing

them predominantly in terms of something deeper. Mayr-Harting provides an excellent example of this in his description of Gregory the Great's letter to bishop, Natalis of Salona. Here Gregory is seen reprimanding the bishop for his feasting (which the bishop justified by quoting literally from the Bible!). Gregory responded to this by explaining that things done in history had an allegorical significance.²⁶ In short, that seemingly literal events occurred for allegorical reasons, not merely as literal events to be taken and used in justification for all types of behaviour. By changing the emphasis of an event or an object from literal to allegorical the religious author could thereby manage a potential tension in a historical text - between religious and secular values - making it relevant to both a monastic and aristocratic audience. Moreover, by the time Bede was writing, it was a disassociation not only generally accepted within monastic communities in Anglo-Saxon England, but also sanctioned by the authority of Augustine and Gregory the Great.²⁷

However, this thesis does not seek to repeat the work of Kendall, rather it seeks to examine a different aspect of the application of rhetoric and genre, arguing that Bede's use of pre-existing written textual models to create images of Anglo-Saxon saints was less centred on allegory, as on a form of *inventio*, designed not just to prove his point but to also bring authority to the narrative.²⁸ To do this he not only placed an emphasis on generically identifying certain texts as *historia*, he also applied certain techniques of rhetoric which Diana Greenway has usefully identified (albeit for a twelfth century text) as authority (that which is directly copied from earlier authors), convention (that which is written to a literary

formula) and observation (eye-witness accounts themselves limited and controlled by rhetorical conventions).²⁹

This thesis will argue that by utilizing such tools of composition Bede created within the *Historia Ecclesiastica* a text which he did not expect to be received as primarily literally historically true by all members of his potential audience, but was intended to be a vehicle exhibiting the conformity of the history of the Anglo-Saxon Church by textually linking it to an earlier Christian period. In general then when beginning to analyse the *Historiae* texts the researcher needs to take into consideration the fact that monastic and rhetorical priorities may have been placed before the priorities of historical accuracy.³⁰ Thus, it can be argued that the history texts written by Bede (possibly excluding the Chronicles) were written to be read at many levels. A text could be read literally, allegorically (as a tool to reveal God), as a framework in which to interpret life and as a resource of behavioural modification showing the reader how one could be closer to sanctity and, therefore, God.

The texts upon which this thesis is centred are the *Historia Ecclesiastica*, *Historia Abbatum*, *Historiae Sanctorum*, *Chronica Minora*, *Chronica Maiora* and *Martyrologia*.³¹ Through this choice, it aims to broaden the balance of historiographical analysis which on the whole has centred on the *Historia Ecclesiastica* and the Lives of St. Cuthbert. Bede's Chronicles have been a much under-utilized resource, only recently receiving an incomplete translation for the more general perusal of students and mentioned only briefly (if at all) in secondary sources examining Bede's approach to history.³² The same can be said of the

Martyrology which still remains unedited.³³ Even the *Historia Abbatum*, though edited by Plummer and now available in many translations, does not appear to have received much attention from Anglo-Saxon historians.³⁴

The methodology of this thesis is essentially a comparative study of Bede's texts with generically similar writings from Patristic, Anglo-Saxon, Irish and Merovingian authors. The study is directed primarily at texts that are earlier or contemporary to those of Bede in an attempt to place Bede firmly within the discourse context of his own period. Other historians such as Ridyard have tried to build their arguments by placing Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica* (notably excluding any discussion of the Chronicles and the Martyrology) in the context of later Anglo-Saxon hagiographical texts. Whilst this undoubtedly may indicate the insular chronological developments within Anglo-Saxon understandings of the cult of saints it does not necessarily give us an accurate reproduction of Bede's concepts. Basically this thesis attempts to stress that such an approach can mislead the historian, who may have a tendency to view Bede's texts through hindsight informed by later, non- contemporary Anglo-Saxon authors. Indeed, a closer comparison of these later sources shows them to have far less in common with Bede's writings than with Bede's predecessors.

The themes of this thesis will be explored, firstly, through those texts that we believe Bede had access to either within the library at Monkwearmouth-Jarrow or from other monasteries, and secondly, through those texts which reflect similar concerns to the ones touched on by Bede but not necessarily known to him, which place him in the context of the wider discourse of Western Christendom. These

texts enable us to look at the levels of intertextuality and influence in Bede's works. Moreover, it is a concern of this thesis to show not only the influence of particular parts of sources upon Bede's writings but also the impact of generic expectations upon the historicity of his historical works. I also attempt to place Bede's historiographical works in the context of his other writings, including exegesis, grammar/rhetoric and his poetry. This approach is being taken in order to understand more fully how and why he constructed his images of sainthood in the way that he did and what implications this might have on the historicity of his texts.

The key areas of discussion in this thesis will be an examination of firstly, the nature of Bede's audience to stress that the reading and interpretation of his *historiae* texts would have been predominantly limited to a select group (chapter 1); secondly, the context in which the cult of saints and the textual material related to it developed within Northumbria (chapter 2); thirdly, the internal evidence in the text of the *Historia Ecclesiastica* that suggests Bede was intent in promoting his own monastery through his writings (chapter 3); fourthly, the role that genre played in Bede's development of his *historiae* texts (chapter 4); fifthly, how Bede effectively created a new sub-genre within the genre of *historia* in his production of the *Historia Abbatum* (chapter 5); sixthly, how Bede made innovations to the genre of historical martyrology whilst still depending upon Patristic texts as his models (chapter 6); seventhly, Bede's method of saintly image construction in the *Historia Ecclesiastica*, and the impact of inter-textuality (chapters 7 & 8); finishing with a comment concerning the implications of Bede's understanding of history as his methods (chapter 9). In broad terms, the thesis

will examine the extent to which generic placing and textual allusion has impacted on Bede's historicity. I will be arguing that hidden within his well chosen words and deliberately constructed narratives were subliminal and overt signs designed for the trained eye. Moreover, I shall be stating that the monastic context in which these texts were produced was one of competitiveness and that the exhibition of learning as well as the manipulation of monastic history was all part of such intermonastic rivalry.

Chapter 1:

Understanding Bede's Audience.

In recent years there has been a concerted move to understand the audiences of the hagiographical and historiographical literature of the Late Antique and early medieval period.¹ In the fifty years previous to this (following Dom Delehaye's assertions that the recipients of hagiography, in particular, were the lowest common denominator of intelligence who depended upon the credulous rather than the historical reality of an individual) there had been a notable degree of scepticism concerning the extent to which early medieval Christians understood the nuances of Church teaching. Interestingly, in relation to Bede there has been more of an assumption that reception of his historiographical texts, at least of the *Historia Ecclesiastica*, extended beyond the literate ecclesiastical community to that of the king, Ceolwulf.² Nonetheless, it will, throughout this thesis, become clear that Bede's methods of construction and the messages he wished to disseminate required an intensity of reading beyond the merely literal acceptance of his narrative. This opening chapter aims to examine the recipients of Bede's historiographical texts in an attempt to show that on occasion the content of the text might not have been as important as the artefact in which it was housed and that, also, whilst the transmission of the stories concerning saints may have been wide, it cannot be taken for granted that the reception of the nuances of Church teaching included within them extended beyond an elite and increasingly powerful group of individuals.

To begin this analysis it is worth turning to Peter Brown's *The Cult of Saints*. In it Brown has attempted to break down the division of the two-tiered model which differentiates between 'popular' and 'intellectual' belief in the cult of saints. He has emphasized that many historians have been pessimistic about the capabilities of the 'masses' to understand changes in religion and theology - i.e. their ability to assimilate new Christian ideas and distinguish them from surviving pagan ones.³ Thus the historiographical approach has been one of a search for continuity between pagan practices and Christian ones. Against this, Brown asserts that the modern assumption that popular religion represents a continuous tradition has restricted the historian's ability to look for change.⁴ Brown has tried to undermine the idea of a dichotomy between 'popular' and 'intellectual' religion by noting that rather than look for continuity, the observer should be looking for change. To exemplify this he indicates three main areas of importance: firstly that there is a change in burial practices;⁵ secondly, that there is a change in the way individuals perceived their relationship with the human and the divine, with the dead and the living;⁶ and, thirdly, that the reaction of the pagan world to Christianity was one of religious anger.⁷

In certain respects these themes are not entirely convincing. For example, in relation to burial practices Brown notes that frequently saints were placed in areas from which the dead had once been excluded. He goes on to indicate that contemporary Churchmen such as Ambrose and Augustine were aware of the problem of superstition around graves - for they attempted to restrict among their Christian congregations certain funerary customs such as feasting at the graves of the dead.⁸ He continues that the Patristic Fathers may have actually been

referring to practices, whatever their long term origin, which had been accepted as authentically Christian in all previous generations.⁹ At some point, however, a pagan custom did become a Christian one - surely this is continuity - change being a far more gradual aspect of Christian life, developing out of theological controversies of the third and fourth centuries.¹⁰ It is, after all, the highly intellectual elite such as Ambrose, Augustine and Jerome who introduce this change. For example, one of the more renowned stories of Augustine, from his *Confessions*, is that of his mother going to offer bread and wine at the shrines of the saints.¹¹ Augustine states that when she arrives at one of the shrines she is prevented by the door-keeper from taking food to the shrine. It is perhaps interesting that it is only when she is further informed that these orders have come from the holy prelate, Ambrose, that she is happy to agree to the condemnation of 'her own ancient custom and accept the present prohibition'. The change is, then, introduced by the clerical elite and the wording of this passage suggests that, without their authority, change would have occurred only slowly if at all. This is not trying to suggest that change failed to occur - merely that it was ushered in by the intellectual elite rather than the masses. If this is so, surely there is still at least some dichotomy between 'popular' religion and the religion of the intellectuals?

Brown's second point is concerned with the apparent transformation in the way individuals perceived their relationship with the human and the Divine, the dead and the living. He questions the idea that 'saint reverence' was merely polytheism and goes on to indicate that authors such as Paulinus and Sulpicius Severus in the fourth century express new forms of relationship between the ordinary man and his holy protector, his patron saint.¹² However, he subsequently notes that the

cult of the patron saint spread most quickly in ascetic circles.¹³ Whilst this implies that it spread elsewhere, the inference is also that the spread was adopted more slowly by those outside the elite circles. Initially at least the change occurred amongst only one section of the population for one cannot really comprehend ascetic circles as the 'norm' of the masses. In the context of the changing nature of the relationship between the human and the divine, Brown has also emphasized the differences between the ancient cult of heroes and the Christian cult of martyrs. Nevertheless, he himself notes that it is only a subtle change and, on the whole, the subtlety of change comes through only from the writings of the intellectual Patristic Fathers. Although they may have been able to differentiate between different relationships with the human and the divine, one cannot help feeling that their highly articulate and erudite theological tracts may have been inaccessible to the large majority of people.

This point is further emphasized when one examines Brown's subsequent articles on the slightly later writings of the bishop Gregory of Tours. Thus when analysing the topic of reverence of saints in Gregory's works Brown suggests that Gregory was not interested in credulity and its closely associated 'subjective capacity for religious emotion', rather Gregory wanted something precise: *reverentia*.¹⁴ Brown goes on to clarify that indeed such precisely defined *reverentia* was not witness to a growth of neo-paganism, rather it was highly structured and involved a conscious determination "on the part of articulate Christian leaders".¹⁵ Once more then the focus is placed upon the intellectual elite whilst assuming that their intellectualizing was more widely understood (and acted on). Essentially although the elite might have avoided vagueness it does not

necessarily follow that the general population universally maintained such specificity.

This is especially pertinent if one considers the issue of access to the documents in which the concepts were formulated. Brown appears to assume a universality of access in terms of audience reception to the ideas of the Patristic authors and their Merovingian successors. However, where the texts relating to the cult of saints are concerned one must take into account the role and extent of Latin literacy in the adoption of such refined and exact nuances. Who, fundamentally, were the audience for these works and how widespread was their transmission? One can perhaps accept that Augustine and his contemporaries did write within an educated milieu of secular literacy. However, even here their ideas might not have permeated much further than a fairly limited circle (as is suggested by the example of Augustine's own mother) who were themselves engaged in clarifying theological doctrine and therefore had a particular interest in each other's comments. Moreover, by the early Merovingian period the culture of secular education had been significantly eroded by the Christian elite who focused their literacy skills within a monastic environment.¹⁶ Whilst there is some evidence from saints' lives to suggest that basic literacy was taught to the children of lay aristocracy there is little evidence that this education went beyond practical literacy for administrative purposes.¹⁷ Is it advisable to conclude, then, that such functional literacy would enable even this audience to comprehend the finer points of theological discourse? Indeed, as Katrien Heene has pointed out, there is little to suggest that even those lay people listening to the readings of the hagiographical material in the Merovingian liturgy necessarily understood the

texts that were being recited.¹⁸ All of this material is hardly suggestive of a widespread ability to understand the Latin of these texts let alone have enough literacy skills to receive the sub-texts embedded within them.

On matters of this kind, Brown's desire to prove a more general understanding of theological nuances reads like a reaction to the provocative judgements made by writers such as Delehayne (who concentrated on the feebleness of the popular mind) rather than a convincing observation of the contemporary documents within their broader societal environment. Basically perhaps what both Brown and Delehayne have failed to take into consideration is that different groups and individuals have different ways of framing, defining, and understanding their spiritual, religious, ritual experience despite what the dominant discourse might say. The focus of an intellectual, 'conscious', articulate group of celibate men may determine what we now know about contemporary practice, but this does not mean that their ideas were necessarily universally accepted or understood by contemporaries. This in turn need not deny that the populace had a fairly sophisticated relationship with the supernatural in their interaction with the cult of saints. The point perhaps is that we should be extremely cautious when generalizing about one group's perceptions and experiences from another group's writings. As historians we are on firmer ground when we try to indicate what the writings show us about the experiences and perceptions of the authors that produced them.

In his approach Brown has been somewhat exclusive, trying to present evidence of a general change in the way individuals perceived their relationship with the

human and the divine from texts which were designed to negate any continuity with paganism. However, change and continuity need not necessarily be viewed as mutually exclusive. Instead, perhaps, the observer should be aware of the possibility that 'popular' religion (superstitious or not) could and did co-exist with that of the intellectual elite. This is particularly well shown by two ninth century sources: firstly, Alcuin's *Vita Richarii*, in which Heene has identified two distinguishable levels of writing, each with their own audience.¹⁹ And, secondly, in the Preface of the *Life of St. Remi* by Hincmar of Rheims. Here Gurevich has noted that although problematic as a source for the early period, it does give insight into how the Church itself perceived the difference between the belief of the populace and the belief of the educated clerics.²⁰ Thus in the preface Hincmar recommends that when it is read to the people on the feast of St. Remi, different parts should be used for different audiences. He clarifies this by stating that he had marked off passages for the *populus* or *simplices* and for the *illuminati*. In this sense, the distinction against which Brown argued is implicit in this early medieval source.

The third point, that the pagan world met Christianity with religious anger is clearer. The death of a martyr certainly lends weight to the argument that rather than the cult of Saints arising from paganism, it arose out of veneration of the dead precisely because they refused to compromise with the established Roman religion.²¹ In general, it cannot be denied, however, that the striking similarities between saints, Gods and pagan heroes (in terms of their respective cults, dates of festivals and sites of worship) tends to imply at least some continuity. What one is witnessing is an understanding on the part of those introducing the Christian

changes that the widespread adoption of new practices is best achieved by the maintenance of some of the previous traditions. If this is so it still implies that the specifics of Christian teachings were held firmly in the hands of an elite group. Even Augustine implied the variations in the ability to receive and understand Christian teachings when he stated: “What we teach is one thing, what we tolerate is another, and what we are obliged to put up with is yet another.”²²

In many ways these comments derived from Brown’s analysis are applicable to Bede. Whilst Bede’s Latin style in the *HE* is undoubtedly a straightforward one, like his Patristic forefathers, he was an intellectual, articulate and incredibly precise author. As has been implied by the recent research into Bede, there is much evidence of the subtle nuances in terms of political awareness, religious belief and, as this thesis will show, rhetorical convention, that lay hidden within the apparent simplicity of his language. These nuances arguably required a high degree of Latin literacy and erudition to perceive them and I would argue that the inferences we modern historians now make were visible to only a few of Bede’s audience.

Indeed, despite Campbell’s belief that Bede intended the *HE* for a fairly wide readership one must question to what extent this readership extended outwith a monastic environment.²³ To clarify this point it should be noted that I am not attempting to argue that Anglo-Saxon culture was illiterate; the evidence for vernacular literacy shows that this was not the case.²⁴ Rather I am attempting to stress that there was a distinction between monastic literacy with its focus on Latin and the interpretation of texts, ‘hearing literacy’ with its focus on the

transmission of narratives to listeners (with no expectation that these listeners would necessarily be versed in source analysis or rhetorical structures), and more functional literacy, used for administrative purposes.

To take the last of these groups first, even allowing for the problems of document preservation identified by Patrick Geary, the evidence for functional Latin literacy among the laity in Anglo-Saxon England appears to be far more scarce than for Merovingian Gaul.²⁵ If one takes, for example, the charter material to exemplify the level of literacy it becomes clear that even in terms of functional reading and writing the laity are limited. Thus, despite her expressed doubts concerning lay (and clerical) illiteracy, Susan Kelly notes that Anglo-Saxon charters have an absence of any outward mark of validation, that the lack of lay literacy was overcome by focusing on the ceremony around the charter rather than its actual content, and, that on one genuine charter she does discuss there is an explicit statement of King Wihtred of Kent's illiteracy.²⁶ Surely this evidence tends to imply a high degree of Latin illiteracy (as does the translation of the *HE* into Anglo-Saxon!) rather more than a general ability to comprehend the hidden messages embedded within Bede's historical works.

Furthermore the charters perhaps brings into question the actual audience for many of the letters addressed to kings, such as Aethelberht, Edwin and Oswiu, one finds in Bede's *HE*. After all, taken at face value, they seem to imply at least a degree of Latin literacy on the part of their recipients. Yet in the light of the charter evidence it seems more likely that the ceremony around the reception of the letters may well have been of at least equal if not more importance to the

kings than the words contained within them. Certainly they did not just land on the floor beside the royal letterbox and it seems fair to assume that their arrival would have been marked by an occasion of some formality. Gift giving in early medieval society was not without political significance. As Aaron Gurevich has noted the transference of possessions contributed to the acquisition of social prestige and respect.²⁷ Indeed, on occasion the giving of a gift could involve greater prestige than its retention.

It is of interest here to note that when Aethelberht received his letter from Pope Gregory, Bede says it came along with numerous other gifts.²⁸ This would make more sense if one viewed the letters as archaeological artefacts that served two fundamental purposes. Firstly, as gifts of persuasion from the Bishop of Rome (a purpose directly intimated in the wording of the texts). And, secondly, as objects which provided the focus for a ceremony designed to enhance the recipient's power and standing in his own community by marking him out as special. After all the *HE* suggests that only bishops, monks and kings received letters - not the general lay aristocracy. This is pertinent to the *HE*. Like the letters, it was dedicated to a king and it is hard not to ask whether Ceolwulf might have received it in some form of ceremony where the symbolism of the gift exchange was more important to Ceolwulf than the contents of the gift. If the text was completed in 731 this would certainly have been timely, coinciding with a period when Ceolwulf needed all the legitimization as king that he could get. The point, of course, is that if the manuscript had more symbolic than intrinsic value politically there is no need to assume that Ceolwulf could read it. (This is not to

say that it did not have any intrinsic value politically at all, merely that the text's own political value was not necessarily related directly to Ceolwulf.)

Professor McKitterick's point that the expense of book production and the status accorded to the possession of books would have made it unlikely an author would 'waste precious parchment and labour on a gift for someone who could not even read' contradicts this.²⁹ However, if the book was more important symbolically to the recipient than the actual words, the act of giving is what counted. The text need not have been wasted for the king could subsequently store it in an environment where it could be read - such as a monastery. When considering this one need only compare the gift of the *HE* with the gift of the book Adomnan made to Aldfrith.³⁰ If one takes this hypothesis into consideration it becomes plausible, if not probable, that Anglo-Saxon lay Latin literacy would have been negligible and consequently, one should be extremely circumspect about pronouncing a wide reading audience for the content of any of the historical narratives we now have at our disposal for this early period (at least in their Latin form).

With this point I am arguing that Latin literacy outside of the ecclesiastical groups was extremely limited and, literacy in general, may have been expressed more in the vernacular than necessarily Latin. Indeed, Michael Clanchy, expressing slightly more optimism concerning functional literacy among the laity than Susan Kelly, noted that by the time of Augustine's mission in 597 the practice of writing some form of English language is evident in the text of the laws of Aethelberht of Kent.³¹ What this implies to me is that when the laity required practical literacy it

wrote and read in a form of Old English rather than Latin. Thus, although functional literacy existed it occurred in the vernacular because of the lack of Latin literacy outside the monastic establishments. Even allowing then for practical vernacular literacy, the evidence still does not encourage the belief that Latin literacy was widespread nor, consequently, that substantial bodies of text such as *historia* were intended to be read outside of the ecclesiastical environment.

In fact, given this lack of literacy one should perhaps question whether or not Bede actually expected Ceolwulf to read and comment on his *HE*, as stated in its Preface, or if this was merely a rhetorical device.³² Certainly it would appear that many historians have assumed that it was safe to accept the Preface as literally true and that Bede did expect Ceolwulf to read and use the text whilst king. Thus, Wallace-Hadrill believed Ceolwulf to have read and approved the text. Additionally, Kirby has commented that Bede intended to take royal reaction to be taken into consideration in the editing of the *HE* and that Ceolwulf may even have been involved in censoring some of Bede's material.³³ This point he has reiterated more recently in his 1992 Jarrow Lecture.³⁴ Barbara Yorke has also intimated that Ceolwulf may have been expected to derive some 'practical assistance' in his reign from studying the text.³⁵ However, such an assumption is not without some problems, not only in terms of Latin literacy but also in terms of book ownership.

Firstly then, can one justify maintaining the assumption that Ceolwulf was literate in Latin? Except for the implication of literacy suggested by the Preface of the

HE (to which I'll return later), Bede is particularly vague about Ceolwulf's abilities and his comments in the letter to Egbert stress Ceolwulf's piety not his learning. This silence, however, perhaps acts as an indicator that Ceolwulf was not particularly well versed in Latin, for one cannot help thinking that such an ability would have been specifically commented upon by Bede. Essentially historians do not know the levels of royal literacy and consequently cannot make any definitive statements as to whether or not Ceolwulf could read (and more importantly, interpret) the *HE*. However, if one places the *HE* within the context of Latin literacy levels suggested by the charters and the need for Anglo-Saxon laws to be written in the vernacular, one cannot help thinking that it was improbable that Ceolwulf could read it. Moreover, even if he could read it literally, there seems absolutely no reason to think that before his entry into Lindisfarne he would have identified the political and rhetorical sub-texts that this thesis will be examining.

It is arguable that he could have heard this text, possibly in translation. Indeed, this is not implausible, after all Bede makes it clear that Oswald acted as a translator for Aidan. The precedent for translators from one language to another being present at court is therefore established, albeit Irish to Anglo-Saxon. However, the question still remains as to the extent to which an auditor would be aware of the nuances of the rhetorical manipulation and intertextuality; as does the issue of which sections of the text the translator would focus on for the king. Would Ceolwulf, for example, be viewed as among the *simplices* or the *illuminati*? The point is that Ceolwulf may have received some of the

information, but this may itself have been selective without any expectation that he would use the text as a tool for interpretation and analysis.

Secondly, even if he could read it, can one just accept that Ceolwulf did indeed have his own copy of the *HE*?³⁶ The Preface would certainly suggest that it is a possibility. In general terms, however, lay ownership of books in early Christian Anglo-Saxon England was exceptional.³⁷ Moreover, if one observes the example that seems to offer the direct possibility of a king possessing his own copy of the *HE*, that of Offa, identified by Susan Kelly, it is clear the evidence is inconclusive.³⁸ If one scrutinizes the text from which she has drawn her point one can see that it does not actually mention Offa having a copy of the *HE*, rather it reads as if Alcuin were using Bede as an authority to give credence to the argument he is putting forward:

*Quod perspicue inuenire potes in libro secundo Ecclesiasticae
Hystoriae, quem beatus presbiter Beda scripsit, capitulo xviii. et xvii.
Ibique inuenires, quod ad ordinationem beati Honorii pontificis
Doruuernensis ecclesiae sanctus Paulinus Lindocoloniam occurrit
ibique eum ordinauit archiepiscopum, quod idem beatissimus
Honorius papa in sua epistola confirmauit.*³⁹

In this letter there does not seem to be an expectation that Offa would refer to his own copy to check Alcuin's reference merely that quoting from Bede gave an argument weight. The observer, then, ought to question the validity of the assumption that Ceolwulf owned his own copy, for it would seem from the evidence that this would be extremely unusual in an Anglo-Saxon context.

Furthermore, if one looks at the actual words of the Preface in the context of a lay environment (as opposed to a monastic one) they seem even more improbable. Thus it is inferable that Bede had sent a copy before and, more pertinently, is sending it again, in Colgrave's words, "for copying and fuller study, as time may permit" (*et nunc ad transcribendum ac plenius ex tempore meditandum retransmitto*).⁴⁰ Whilst in translation these two activities seem fairly innocuous in a secular setting, if one actually looks at what is being asked of the reader it becomes clear that they are more suited to a monastic environment. Manuscript transcribing, after all, was the remit of a scriptorium. Are we to assume that Ceolwulf himself was to copy the text? Or that he had his own scriptorium? Or was it more likely that the text was going directly to a monastery associated with Ceolwulf and that, in fact, though Ceolwulf was named he was not expected to read it? Wallace-Hadrill perhaps implied some of the tension in this phrase in his commentary when he questioned if it would have been sent to Lindisfarne for copying.

This query becomes all the more pertinent when one takes the word *meditandum* into consideration. Although Colgrave's use of the word 'study' is a useful translation it is perhaps inadequate in the specific sense of the way in which Ceolwulf was expected to read the *Historia Ecclesiastica*. In essence, from Bede's use of this gerund the reader is not told the degree of literacy Ceolwulf exhibits, it merely implies that he might be able follow the stories. This does not automatically mean, however, that Ceolwulf's literacy extended to a point where he could either understand the symbolism and convention in the text or be learned

enough to recognise the inter-textual allusions within the narrative. Indeed, it does not even tell the observer whether or not Ceolwulf was to engage in the act of reading or whether he was to hear the stories through a translator. This is a critical point for it must be remembered that literacy *per se* does not necessarily mean that the audience is learned. As Dr. Bäuml has commented, “An educated reader need not be erudite, nor a reader who knows Latin know it well enough to approach the Vulgate without shuddering.”⁴¹ In other words, one cannot take for granted that the word *meditandum* in this context means anything other than a literal reception of the narrative, which could have occurred through hearing the stories.

Taken slightly further, this point also has relevance to Bede’s monastic audience. Again, whilst this group may have had the ability to read Latin, this does not equate with them being of a universal standard in terms of understanding or interpreting the texts. Indeed, Judith McClure has shown that learning within the clerical class was far from being of a uniform nature and the need for Bede himself to be engaged in translations shows that one needs to question even the extent of Latin ‘readability’.⁴² Thus though David Rollason has noted that the language and complex scriptural and literary allusions suggest a predominantly ecclesiastical readership for Bede’s work as well as other *vitae*, this elite group itself probably exhibited variable standards in terms of Latin literacy.⁴³ In the current climate of deconstruction then an element of caution needs to be raised. Whilst modern learning within the academic environment brings gifts of reading sub-texts and textual manipulations one cannot assume that these were extensively in place within the ecclesiastical circles in which Bede’s *historiae* were circulated.

Throughout the following chapters I am aware that what I may be showing is more the degree of Bede's own erudition rather than necessarily what the majority of his audience received.

This, of course, may have had its own importance. Within the wider monastic community of Northumbria Bede's ability to illustrate such learning may well have enhanced his own reputation and by association that of his monastery.⁴⁴ Such erudition in the immediate community of the monastic world (which itself placed an emphasis on the written and read word) would have been valued. As a skill of value, Latin literacy could also be used to enhance one's own monastery within a competitive environment.

In conclusion, I would suggest that contrary to Peter Brown, there was a gap between an educated elite and the non-literate majority, at least in the context of seventh and eighth century Britain. It is also important to acknowledge that there were different degrees of literacy within a community's audience and that one needs to differentiate between the information gleaned by this non-Latin literate group and that held and understood by the elite. Moreover, even within the monastic centres of learning one should beware of making assumptions about a wide transmission of the text of the *HE* (there are, after all, only 3 extant manuscripts of the text from before 900 CE). Furthermore, given the apparent variability of literacy one needs to see gifts of Latin texts given to secular authorities in the context of the symbolic ritual that might have surrounded such an exchange, as much as any information being transmitted to them. Indeed, such symbolism need not have been limited to gifts going from a monastery to a layman

but, as shall be shown in the next chapter, may also have played a part in the giving and receiving of gifts from one monastery to another.

Chapter 2:

The Historical and Contemporary Context of Northumbrian Hagiography and *Historiae* Production.

Arguably the potential audience for Bede's *historiae* was predominantly an elite group housed in monasteries. The historical context of the production of the texts themselves needs therefore to be placed within the fluctuating fortunes of seven of the institutions in which this elite group lived: Iona, Lindisfarne, Whitby, Ripon, Hexham, York and Monkwearmouth-Jarrow. Whilst other monastic houses such as Melrose, Gilling, Lastingham, Coldingham and Bardney clearly played a role it appears, in textual terms at least, that the seven former monasteries were the important ones. This pre-eminence was not solely a matter of the abilities of their scribes and calligraphers however. It was also dependent on the relationship they had with the secular authorities within Northumbria, primarily the king. Essentially the power of a particular monastery was determined by two critical and inter-related factors, their relationship to royalty and the success of any cult development programme. As will be shown the power of the kings was, in its turn, increasingly dependent on the acceptance of the monasteries established by royal predecessors. In short, the connection between the monasteries and the king provided a mutually beneficial situation which both parties could utilize to their advantage. In this sense, whilst I have argued that there might not have been a widespread audience for the Latin text of Bede's *Historiae*, it is nonetheless clear that the context in which such sources were produced was, in part, the symbiotic relationship between the most powerful

monasteries of the kingdom and the members of the ruling house.¹ As such one cannot deny that authors like Bede would have engaged (both unconsciously and consciously) with their contemporary environment and reflected issues of relevance to secular society within their texts. The extent to which this material would have been received outside the monastic and ecclesiastical community in its Latin form is what has been in question. Essentially I am suggesting that what one views within the Latin texts is a dialogue occurring between members of a particular textual community predominantly composed of monks and clergy. This dialogue may reflect issues of bearing outside those communities but it need not express them in a manner readily available to those not included within the communities.

To understand the context of the production of writings in the late seventh and early eighth centuries, then, one needs to examine the changing status of these textual communities, particularly the Ionan confederation and the 'Roman' monasteries, the subsequent need by incoming kings (especially ones acceding to the throne through bloodshed) to gain acceptance by the monastic establishments, and by the need of the monasteries themselves to improve their own standing within the ecclesiastical hierarchy.

THE DECLINE OF THE IONAN MONOPOLY.

The starting place for any attempt to understand the role that a monastery's status played in the production of texts which elevated the authority of their particular saint is not Northumbria but Iona. Iona certainly appears to have initiated an

insular hagiographic tradition during the abbacy of Segene.² There is some debate over the dating of the text that resulted from this initiative, known as the *Liber de Virtutibus Sancti Columbae*, but it would seem fairly safe to assume that it was written some time between 637 and 652.³ Herbert has suggested that this text was a response to ecclesiastical critics of Iona who questioned the monastery on its Easter practice and, given its admonition of retribution to monarchs, that it was also a caution to secular critics not to attack the kin of Columba.⁴ To take the latter point first, such a warning need not have been transmitted to a wide audience in its Latin form, but may have been subject to translation for those outside of the Latin literate communities. It need not therefore be evidence of lay Latin literacy. With regards to her first point, whilst the Easter question did become a real issue of contention following Pope John's letter commending change, other political events occurred in the period of the 640s onwards that need to be taken into consideration. These events might have affected the amount of influence and status that the Ionan confederation would have had within Northumbria and, in themselves, they may even have precipitated the finalization of a text designed to bolster its authority.

Firstly, the impact of the death of Oswald cannot be underestimated. His relationship with Iona is clearly shown through his close dependency on Aidan and his decision to ask Iona for assistance in preaching Christianity. This relationship established a monopolistic situation within Northumbria which allowed Iona through Lindisfarne to dominate both religious practices and ecclesiastical appointments made during Oswald's and, at the beginning of, Oswiu's reigns. By inviting Iona's support Oswald clearly established a degree of

autonomy for an Ionan daughter house within Northumbria directly attached to the ruling family, thereby, giving Lindisfarne a superior status to other foundations in the area, including, it would seem, the Rome established Church at York.

Nonetheless, on the death of Oswald in 642 the Lindisfarne community's status may have seemed more precarious than before as Aidan chose to support Oswine rather than the man who ultimately became the most powerful leader in Northumbria, Oswiu. The impact of this choice should not go unnoticed, for it may well have meant that Oswiu had some reason to be suspicious of the Ionan role in power brokering within Northumbria and in turn that Iona had cause to be cautious in its dealings with Oswiu. Indeed, Oswiu's relationship with the Irish was slightly more nuanced than Bede would have his readers believe. At the Synod of Whitby, Oswiu is portrayed by Bede as having been educated and baptized by the Irish, considering that nothing was better than what they taught: *quia nimirum Osuii a Scottis edoctus ac baptizatus, illorum etiam lingua optime inbutus, nil melius quam quod illi docuissent autumabat.*⁵ This statement could be seen as a literary embellishment to make the persuasion of the Roman party seem even more effective as the authority of the argument convinced even the most Irish oriented of kings.

In this context Oswiu's endowments following the battle of Winwaed are suggestive of the change in the relationship between the king and Lindisfarne. Thus rather than making gifts to Lindisfarne, Bede notes that Oswiu gave twelve small estates, six in Deira and six in Bernicia, on which monasteries were to be

founded in thanks of his victory over Penda: *donatis insuper XII possessiunculis terrarum, in quibus ablato studio militae terrestres ad exercendam militiam caelestem supplicandumque pro pace gentis eius aeterna deuotioni sedulae monarchorum locus facultasque suppeteret. E quibus uidelicet possessiunculis sex in prouincia Derorum, sex in Berniciorum dedit.*⁶ It is hard not to conclude from Bede's silence concerning which monks gained this land that they were not directly associated with Lindisfarne. Moreover, this was the period when Oswiu's son, Alhfrith, gave Ripon to Wilfrid, expelling the Irish monks to whom he had previously given it. If Oswiu's relationship with Iona was in any way problematic is it not possible that the production of the *Liber de Virtutibus Sanctae Columbae* and any associated attempt to boost to Columba's cult was in part to maintain Iona's status at a time when there had been a perceptible change in its standing?

Whilst the association of the production of the *Liber de Virtutibus Sanctae Columbae* with the reign of Oswiu is purely speculative, it is more than plausible that the status of Lindisfarne and to a certain degree of Iona was undermined following Oswald's death. While Aidan's stature as a holy man ensured that a degree of status was maintained for the confederation up until his death in 652, his successors are not portrayed by Bede as having had as close a connection with the Northumbrian kings. At this point, though, the Irish still had a monopoly in terms of ecclesiastical appointments in the north of England as is shown by Bede's list of the bishops of Lindsey: Diuma, Ceollach and the Irish educated, Trumhere.⁷ Whilst the relationship between the king and the Ionans was arguably weakening, the northern Anglo-Saxon church was still dependent on them for personnel in the 650s and 660s. The events at the Synod of Whitby may well have been a reaction

to such a dependency. Here the key issue for the secular authority may have been less Easter Observance *per se* as the supremacy of 'Columba' and, therefore, the Ionan confederacy in Northumbria. After it occurred non-Ionan trained men and members of the Anglo-Saxon born aristocracy dominated the episcopal appointments in Northumbria rather than Irishmen. Thus Tuda was southern Irish educated and Eata was of 'the English race'.⁸ In terms of text production the important issue to note is that Iona attempted to keep its authority within the ecclesiastical environment by stressing the continued contemporary power of Columba in the production of the *Liber*. This particular hagiographical initiative, like those which followed it, was designed to augment the position of the monastery.

The impact of the Synod of Whitby on the status of Lindisfarne is more complex than on Iona. It is hard not to assume, given Lindisfarne's close association with Iona, that Lindisfarne's authority was considerably weakened by the outcome of the Synod of Whitby. Indeed, some evidence certainly suggests that there was a reorientation on the part of the Northumbrian royal family away from Lindisfarne and its Ionan roots to York and more Roman ones. Thus, if one is to believe the *Vita Wilfridi*, both Oswiu and Alhfrith (with the unanimous support of their counsellors) elected Wilfrid to the see vacated by Colman: *Reges deinde consilium cum sapientibus suae gentis post spatium inierunt, quem eligerent in sedem uacantem*.⁹ At this point, however, Stephanus does not clarify exactly where that see is to be located and it is only subsequently (in the next chapter) that the reader learns of Wilfrid being sent back to the see of York after his consecration in Gaul. The implication of this then is that both Oswiu and Alhfrith

focused the see of the Northumbrians on York not Lindisfarne following the Synod of Whitby.

Bede, of course, makes it clear that the situation was not quite so simple. After the Synod, he states, that Tuda, following catholic customs, was consecrated bishop of the Northumbrians. He failed, however, to survive the outbreak of plague that year prompting Oswiu and Alhfrith to find another successor to Colman. In Book III:28 Bede seems to imply that rather than Wilfrid being a unanimous choice of these two kings - Alhfrith's support lay with Wilfrid and Oswiu's lay with Chad:

Interea rex Alchfrid misit Uilfridum presbyterum ad regem Galliarum, qui eum sibi suisque consecrari faceret episcopum.....imitatus industriam filii rex Osuii misit Cantiam uirum sanctum.....Erat autem presbyter uocabulo Ceadda.¹⁰

This apparent discrepancy between the *Vita Wilfridi* and the *HE* has been used by Wallace-Hadrill to suggest that Oswiu was acting aggressively towards his son.¹¹ In addition to this, Isenberg has stressed that there seems to be a difference of emphasis in Book V:19, where Bede appears to indicate that Oswiu was in full accordance with Alhfrith over his desire to consecrate Wilfrid.¹² This may of course be as a consequence of Bede using the *Vita Wilfridi* as a source in the later book. However, the apparent ambiguity surrounding this part of the text may also be due to an inaccurate reading of what Bede was actually saying.

In the two sections of the *HE* pertaining to Wilfrid, Chad and the see of York Bede (like Stephanus, in fact) is, in the first instance, noticeably reticent about

naming the site of the bishopric Ahlfrith sought for Wilfrid.¹³ Rather he comments that Alhfrith wanted Wilfrid consecrated as bishop “for himself and his people” (*que eum sibi suisque consecrari faceret episcopum*).¹⁴ In Book V:19 Bede is similarly vague about an actual episcopal centre for Wilfrid and again the focus is on Wilfrid being consecrated as Alhfrith’s bishop: “Alhfrith sent him to Gaul with the counsel and consent of his father Oswiu, requesting that he should be consecrated as *his* bishop..” (*cum consilio atque consensu patris sui Oswiu episcopum sibi rogauit ordinari*).¹⁵ As a result of subsequent events, it is possible observers have wrongly assumed that it was intended from the outset that Wilfrid should be consecrated as the bishop of York.¹⁶ Perhaps the actual plan was that he would be Alhfrith’s bishop, based at his foundation of Ripon. This is not implausible; after all Oethelwald asked Chad’s brother, Bishop Cedd, to found and administer the monastery of Lastingham, as a place where he (Oethelwald) might pray and be buried and there does not seem to be any assumption that this was an act of usurpation on Oethelwald’s part.¹⁷ Also, in Book V:19 Bede places Wilfrid’s consecration immediately after he has discussed his ordination to the priesthood at Ripon. Ripon, then, may have been seen as a monastery with a similar connection to its king as Lastingham with Oethelwald. Moreover, if one reads the passages this way there seems to be far less discrepancy between the two chapters than there at first seems. This need not deny that a power struggle occurred between Oswui and his son (although there is less reason to believe in this if Oswiu was indeed more reticent in his dealings with the Ionans than Bede would have us believe) but rather that it was initially neither Alhfrith’s or Oswui’s intention that Wilfrid should be bishop of York. Rather, it is more likely that Oswui’s appointment of Chad to York was as much about reorienting the

episcopal power base away from Lindisfarne for himself as an aggressive response to the perceived threat of his son and Wilfrid. It also made a symbolic statement that the ruling house of Northumbria was aligning itself to the 'original' Roman foundation of Paulinus and Edwin rather than maintaining any dependency on Iona that Oswald had established. The importance of all of this in terms of Lindisfarne is, of course, that Oswiu's focus on York meant that it acquired status at Lindisfarne's expense. Moreover, this shift in Lindisfarne's authority is further emphasized in Book III:29 of the *HE* where it is made clear that both Oswiu and Egbert of Kent, acting together, sent Wigheard to be consecrated as the archbishop of Canterbury in Rome.¹⁸ This is a critically symbolic statement by a Northumbrian king, bringing his church closer to Canterbury.

Despite this apparent lowering of Lindisfarne's status it does seem possible to suggest that until the reign of Ecgfrith there was not another monastic house able to compete for the king's favour in terms of resources and prestige within Northumbria. Although the reorientation to York occurred during Oswiu's reign it is perhaps arguable that the real impact of this was not felt until Ecgfrith's accession as king. Oswiu had nominated a man trained in Ireland and a disciple of Aidan as his bishop for this see, a break in terms of the nationality of the individual but not with the tradition. Furthermore, the *VW* implies Chad failed to adorn or repair the Church for which he was responsible - as Wilfrid acceded to a Church building that was badly neglected: *Nam culmina antiquata tecti distillantia fenestraqe apertae, auibz nidificantibus intro et foras uolitantibus, et parietes incultae omni spurcitia imbrium et auium horribiles manebant.*¹⁹ Even allowing for the partisan nature of the *Vita Wilfridi* the

implication would appear to be that Chad did not undertake any renovations at York and that, in practical terms at least, Oswiu's reorientation towards Rome was not thorough - after all the visual impact of such a 'derelict' building would hardly inspire a sense of York's importance. However, in terms of the appointment it is hardly surprising that Oswiu was forced to choose an individual connected with Lindisfarne. Except for Whitby, until the end of his reign, there was not an alternative centre upon which the Northumbrian king could focus his relationship or draw ecclesiastical appointees.

In fact, the *VW* suggests that a bishop, Wilfrid, rather than a Northumbrian king, was instrumental in the breaking of Lindisfarne's monopoly. Certainly, the impressiveness of Wilfrid's refurbishment of York and his subsequent building programmes at Ripon and at Hexham suggest that he would have been able to command the attention of the royal family. Indeed, if one is to believe the *Vita Wilfridi's* version of events in the early years of his reign, Ecgrith's successes were due to his obedience to Wilfrid. Thus in chapter 19, Stephanus alludes to their relationship being similar to that of Joash, King of Judah and Jehoiada in the Book of Kings.²⁰ In the Biblical text one can see that actually Joash is initially dependent upon Jehoiada to marshal the forces and to crown and anoint him king.²¹ If Stephanus meant for this allusion to be so identified it is hard not to think that he was stressing Ecgrith's dependence upon his 'Jehoiada'. He makes this allusion more literal when he continues by stating that: "so when king Ecgrith lived in peace with our bishop, the kingdom, as many bear witness, was increased on every hand by his glorious victories": *Ecgritho rege in concordia pontificis nostri uiuente, secundum multorum testimonium regnum undique per uictorias*

triumphales augebatur.²² How real this relationship was in practical terms is perhaps questionable. The *Vita Wilfridi* certainly does not imply that Ecgfrith used Wilfrid as an adviser, merely that by being obedient to him, Ecgfrith's good fortune was sustained.

A comparison of Ecgfrith's relationship with Wilfrid and his monasteries with that of Benedict Biscop and his foundations indicates that any closeness implied by the allusion to Joash and Jehoiada was insubstantial. Firstly, whilst Wilfrid was endowed with lands by Ecgfrith they did not come from his own lands but rather from lands deserted by British clergy at the fringes of the Northumbrian kingdom round Ribble and Yeadon.²³ At Monkwearmouth quite a different story is presented and Bede makes it clear that Ecgfrith, so impressed with Biscop, donated lands from his own personal property (*ut confestim ei terram*).²⁴ Indeed the quality of this grant is, as Plummer noted, further emphasized in Bede's Homily to Benedict: *reges saeculi, cognito uirtutum eius studio, locum ei monasterii construendi non ab aliqua minorum personarum ablatum, sed de suis propriis donatum dare curabant* ("secular rulers, having recognized the zeal of his virtues, were concerned to give him a place to construct a monastery, a place not taken away from some lesser persons, but granted from their own personal property").²⁵ Bede, of course, wanted to emphasize the superiority of the land gift to Monkwearmouth. However, even allowing for this, subsequent relations seem to concur with the closeness between Ecgfrith and Biscop, whereas they certainly do not for Wilfrid; Wilfrid's relationship with Ecgfrith in the early part of the reign seems to an extent determined by the support he gained from Ecgfrith's wife, Aethelthryth. Thus, it is clear that the one significant endowment

he got in Bernicia, Hexham, came not directly from the Northumbrian royal family but as a gift from the East Anglian, Aethelthryth (as Mayr-Harting so pertinently notes - hardly a pillar of the Northumbrian establishment).²⁶ Bede indeed concurs with the closeness of this particular friendship in his discussion of St. Aethelthryth, noting how Ecgfrith was said to have offered land and money if Wilfrid would persuade Aethelthryth to consummate their marriage, because he [Ecgfrith] “knew that she loved no man in the world more than him” (*quia sciebat illam nullum uirorum plus illo diligere*).²⁷

The subsequent veiling of Aethelthryth by Wilfrid suggests there is little reason to question the validity of this friendship. However, it may point to the reason why Wilfrid was less favoured by Ecgfrith and, also, his predecessor, Oswiu. It is clear from the relationship with Aethelthryth that Wilfrid’s loyalties did not lie directly with the king but rather with the king’s wife. This is true also in Wilfrid’s early relationship with Oswiu. At the beginning of the *Vita Wilfridi* Stephanus asserts that as a youth Wilfrid went, not directly to Oswiu for support, but to Eanflaed, his queen. He then served under her ‘counsel and protection’ (*consilio et munimine*).²⁸ It was then she who placed him with Cudda (the king’s companion) and she who sent him to King Erconberht in Kent.²⁹ Wilfrid was, therefore, far more ‘her man’ than he was Oswiu’s. Indeed on return to Northumbria it is perhaps relevant that Wilfrid went not to Oswiu’s court but rather to that of his son, Alhfrith.

The significance of this is perhaps only illuminated when one compares Wilfrid’s early career with that of Benedict Biscop. In the *Historia Abbatum*, Bede makes

Biscop's links with the Northumbrian kings (as opposed to their queens) explicit.

Thus, not only was he one of Oswiu's 'ministers', he, as a nobleman, also

received land directly from Oswiu: *Denique cum esset minister Oswiu regis, et possessionem terrae suo gradui competentem illo donante perciperet.*³⁰

Moreover, on his return to Northumbria from his third trip to Rome, hearing that

the King he was to visit (Cenwalh) was dead, he went to Northumbria, evidently

being welcome at the court of Ecgfrith.³¹ Biscop, unlike Wilfrid, had not needed

to rely upon the support of the queens in Northumbria and, undoubtedly, Biscop's

association with Ecgfrith remained notably more friendly than the relationship that

existed between Wilfrid and Ecgfrith.

In the case of Wilfrid, then, despite the wealth he had amassed (as evidenced with

the refurbishment of York, and the foundations at Ripon and Hexham) he still did

not command enough of Ecgfrith's attention to be as influential as has been

supposed. After all, as Kirby has noted, in the final analysis the king's power was

superior to that of the bishop.³² What perhaps cannot be in any doubt, however,

is that by refurbishing York and by founding Ripon and Hexham, Wilfrid provided

Lindisfarne with the first of its serious non-Irish connected contenders in terms of

competing for royal patronage and the consequential cult and text production that

was part of this.

ECGFRITH AND THE RISE OF THE 'ROMAN' MONASTERY

Although Wilfrid can be seen as a catalyst in the breaking of Lindisfarne's monopoly within Northumbria it is to Ecgfrith one must turn to witness an apparently systematic attempt to undermine Lindisfarne's authority. It could be argued that right from the outset of his reign the position Ecgfrith inherited concerning Lindisfarne was quite different to that of his predecessor. On his accession he was not faced with an Irish bishop based at Lindisfarne (as his predecessor had been), rather the present incumbent was the 'Rome' affiliated, Wilfrid. Whilst, as has been noted previously, the association between the two men was not close, Ecgfrith did not immediately expel Wilfrid, and the *VW* makes it clear that he did grant some land (albeit poor) to Wilfrid.

It is my contention, however, that the foundation of Monkwearmouth in 674 marked a critical juncture in Northumbrian ecclesiastical history, for it signalled a concerted attempt on the part of Ecgfrith to separate himself and his family from the previous direct royal association with Lindisfarne. Indeed it is clear that Ecgfrith had a special relationship with his own foundation. Firstly, he gave land from his own land: *ac terram tribuente uenerabili ac piissimo gentis illius rege Aecgfrido*;³³ secondly, Bede implies that it was through his 'desire and wish' that Monkwearmouth received the Papal privilege from Pope Agatho.³⁴ Thirdly, it is also indicated that Ecgfrith was involved directly in the foundation of Jarrow, a fact which is perhaps backed up in the anonymous *Vita Ceolfredi* which notes that Ecgfrith chose the location of the altar at Jarrow.³⁵ In fact, this chapter of the *Vita Ceolfredi* supplies further evidence that the relationship between Ecgfrith and

Biscop was more than just of a patron king and the abbot of his 'patronage'. It is clear from this *Vita* that Biscop, like great abbesses of royal monastic foundations such as Hilda, worked in an advisory capacity for the king.

There appear to be three main reasons why Ecgfrith chose to endow Monkwearmouth. Firstly, the wealth Biscop had accumulated on his initial trips to Rome was, if aligned to Ecgfrith, a potential source of status.³⁶ In chapter 4 of the *HA* Bede elucidates on the information supplied in the opening sentence of the *HA*, noting that on return from his trip to Rome Biscop went to Ecgfrith and told him all that he had done since leaving Northumbria as a young man. Bede describes Biscop's zeal and the objects with which he had returned. He continues with information about the king's donation of land. It is interesting that immediately following his statement concerning the quantity of holy books and relics of the blessed Apostles and martyrs of Christ that Biscop had brought back, Bede goes on to notice that it was at this point Biscop found the "gracious friendship" of the king, who gave seventy hides of his own royal land (*ei terram septuaginta familiarum*) for the foundation of the monastery.³⁷ One cannot help thinking that this donation was directly related less to Biscop's great wealth of ecclesiastical and monastic knowledge as to the real material wealth of the sacred objects he brought to the king. Furthermore, following chapter 6 (which functions, as will be shown in chapter 5, like an inventory of great objects) Bede again indicates that Ecgfrith's response to the extensive number of acquisitions was to donate land. Although Bede comments that King Ecgfrith was pleased by Biscop's virtue, industry and devotion, he also mentions the fact that the king could see the land which he had given to the monastery had 'borne fruit'. It is

immediately after this note that Bede indicates the next donation of land by Ecgfrith.³⁸ From this evidence it is hard not to infer that Ecgfrith's gifts of land to Biscop were directly related to the sacred objects and, therefore, status symbols Biscop was bringing to Ecgfrith's kingdom.

Secondly, as Wood has recently commented, one must consider also the possibility that he was deliberately donating land for a new royal monastery in order to directly benefit from the prayers of that community.³⁹ In the first instance this may seem a fairly typical move on Ecgfrith's part. It is clear after all that this was one of the motives behind Oethalwald's foundation at Lastingham.⁴⁰ This pattern was a common occurrence in Merovingia too. Thus kings such as Dagobert and Clovis II both gave land to individuals with the express purpose of establishing monasteries.⁴¹ What is of particular importance concerning the benefaction of Monkwearmouth, however, was the closeness of the relationship Ecgfrith was then to have with it. For example, Oswiu certainly founded monasteries rather than just focusing his benefaction on Lindisfarne. Thus, after the death of Oswine, on the instruction of his wife, he founded Gilling.⁴² Also, as was noted earlier, following the battle of Winwaed he gave a total of 120 hides of land in Northumbria upon which monasteries were to be founded. The difference, nonetheless, is clear - as far as one can tell there was no particular closeness between Oswiu and these foundations. There is certainly no intimation that these monasteries were founded upon the king's 'private land' - and as Bede specifies this in relation to Monkwearmouth it is more than possible that this had some significance.⁴³ In terms of the lands given after Winwaed, Bede does not even name the sites of the monasteries that were founded. Ecgfrith's relationship with

Monkwearmouth, on the other hand, is explicitly stated and seems far more reminiscent in type to that of Oethalwald at Lastingham.

Furthermore, previously in Northumbria when kings had founded other monastic establishments they usually depended upon Lindisfarne (either directly or indirectly through individuals who had trained there) to supply them with appropriate founders. At Lastingham Oethalwald used Cedd, and at Ripon Alhfrith initially invited Eata to run his monastery only later turning to Wilfrid, who himself had spent time training at Lindisfarne. Where founders were chosen from outwith Lindisfarne, they still tended to have a link with the Irish, such as Trumhere at Gilling. For Ecgfrith, Monkwearmouth was to be 'his' monastery and to ensure this he deliberately drew on an individual not only from outside the Lindisfarne enclave but also unlinked to the Irish. Ecgfrith's confidence in reorienting his ecclesiastical focus away from Lindisfarne is exceptionally clear in the case of Biscop.

Thirdly, this last point indicates that there was far more to the foundation at Monkwearmouth than just the power of its prayer for Ecgfrith's soul or the status afforded by the material wealth the association gave him. (After all, if all he wanted was the status from the material wealth, Wilfrid would surely have suited him as well as Benedict Biscop.) The wider significance of the individual to whom Ecgfrith gave the land is related to Biscop's unequivocal 'Roman' credentials. Thus at the beginning of Biscop's career, when he chose to enter monastic life, he left Northumbria directly for Rome. For him there was no apprenticeship in Lindisfarne, as there had been for Wilfrid. Moreover, on his

second trip to Rome the newly consecrated Archbishop of Canterbury, Theodore, was placed by the Pope into his care.⁴⁴ This relationship subsequently led to him becoming Theodore's abbot at the monastery of St. Peter in Canterbury. Biscop's trips to Rome and his connection to Theodore made him a perfect candidate for a king who wished to lessen the power of the Lindisfarne confederation within his kingdom. Biscop, unlike even Wilfrid, had no previous affiliation with this monastic conglomerate. Ecgfrith, also, enhanced his foundation's links with Rome by desiring and approving a papal privilege of liberty - given by Pope Agatho: *Ecgfridum regem uoluisse ac licentiam dedisse nouerat, quo concedente et possessionem terrae largiente ipsum monasterium fecerat.*⁴⁵ Ecgfrith's foundation of Monkwearmouth, then, was perhaps part of a larger initiative that involved the king firmly aligning the Northumbrian Church to Rome and bringing himself into a closer relationship with the archbishop of Canterbury.

One could of course challenge the proposition that Ecgfrith was in some way pursuing a deliberately Rome-centred approach to matters ecclesiastical. The conflict that arose between himself and the 'noted' Roman sympathizer Wilfrid is perhaps a perfect example of a seeming contradiction. Indeed, following the expulsion of Wilfrid, Ecgfrith had two men consecrated as bishops who had clear Lindisfarne connections. Nevertheless, in an unprecedented move he also had a priest from the monastery of Whitby, Bosa, consecrated. Despite Hilda's apparent Columban sympathies the monastery of Whitby did have its own peculiar Roman connections, most notably Hilda's baptism by Paulinus. Ecgfrith's subsequent appointees confirmed this trend not to depend on Lindisfarne, with Tunberht coming from Gilling, and Trumwine of unknown origin (who, despite

apparently knowing Cuthbert and being involved in his elevation to bishop, chose Whitby as his place of retirement rather than Lindisfarne).⁴⁶

Moreover, in one respect, Ecgfrith's quarrel fits into a pattern of support for a 'Roman' orientation - albeit one interpreted through the desires of Theodore. At the Synod of Hertford, early in Ecgfrith's reign, Theodore had made it clear that as the number of the faithful increased more bishops should be created: *Vt plures episcopi crescente numero fidelium augerentur*.⁴⁷ Whilst the Synod could not come to an agreement on this issue, Theodore obviously had the division of large episcopal sees in mind. Following Wilfrid's expulsion his own extensive bishopric was indeed divided and Ecgfrith's choice of successors, Eadhaed, Bosa and Eata were consecrated by Theodore at York.⁴⁸ In this case it is hard not to conclude that dissension between Ecgfrith and Wilfrid was to some degree stimulated by Theodore's desires.⁴⁹ In Theodore's and Ecgfrith's eyes a bishop's alignment to Rome was not enough to prevent them being deposed; nor, however, does the deposition of a Rome allied bishop mean that Ecgfrith had any less of an interest in maintaining his own orientation southward rather than Lindisfarne. It is after all, noticeable that although Pope Agatho wanted Wilfrid reinstated following this exile, he did agree with the creation of more bishops within Northumbria:

*Statuimus atque decernimus, ut Deo amabilis Wilfrithus episcopus episcopatum, quem nuper habuerat, recipiat, salua definitione superius ordinata; et quos cum consensu concilii ibidem congregandi elegerit sibi adiutores episcopos...secundum regulam superius constitutam a sanctissimo archiepiscopo promoti ordinentur episcopi.*⁵⁰

For the Pope, then, the fault in this case was not so much the apparent principle behind Ecgfrith's actions as the way he pursued his goal. It is of further relevance here that Ecgfrith's dealings with Wilfrid in 678 do not suggest that he viewed the opinions of the Pope as unimportant. It was perhaps no coincidence that Ecgfrith's advisor, Biscop happened to be in Rome (his fourth trip) at the same time Wilfrid was pleading his case; nor was it a coincidence that Jarrow was founded in 680 and a Ripon priest, Ceolfrith, given its abbacy. The Anonymous *Vita Ceolfridi* explains that Jarrow was to be for the redemption of Ecgfrith's soul: *pro redemptione animae suae*.⁵¹ In some regards this statement is reminiscent of Bede's note concerning the foundation of Gilling. Thus Bede records that the monks of Gilling were to pray for the redemption of both Oswiu and Oswine. The point is that Bede also makes it clear that Oswiu founded Gilling to atone for his crime of murder: *castigandi huius facinoris*.⁵² Further on in the *HE* Bede reiterates that Gilling was founded to expiate Oswine's unjust death and granted to one of his near relatives, Trumhere - appeasing a family grievance.⁵³ Is it possible that Jarrow was founded in similar circumstances, as an act of appeasement to the monastic community of Ripon following Ecgfrith's decision to ignore the Papal adjudication on Wilfrid? Of course, the statement, *pro redemptione animae suae*, may merely reflect a standard phrase applied in the literature to such foundations. It is, as Wood noticed, certainly used with regards to Ripon.⁵⁴ Yet, it is not used by Bede with regards to Lastingham and was clearly not uniformly assigned. In actuality, the evidence concerning the phrase is inconclusive and as Wood has posited may represent Jarrow being part of a special royal foundation.⁵⁵ Nonetheless, the timing of the endowment of Jarrow and the appointment of Ceolfrith, is suggestive. Even though Ecgfrith did both

expel Wilfrid and disregard the wishes of the Pope concerning Wilfrid's case, this action was not a pro-Lindisfarne, anti-Roman action. Following Wilfrid's ejection there was not return by the Northumbrian ruling house to a dependence on Lindisfarne for ecclesiastical personnel. Rather Ecgfrith augmented his own foundation by endowing Jarrow and he strengthened his ties with Theodore, allowing him (in the aftermath of Wilfrid's exclusion) to both consecrate two more bishops and possibly depose one in 684.⁵⁶

During Ecgfrith's reign there is also evidence to suggest that Whitby realigned itself, shifting away from an apparently pro-Ionan stance towards a more pro-Theodorian one, in an effort to be perceived as more 'Roman'. This is certainly suggested by the unified stance Theodore and Hilda took with regards to Wilfrid's expulsion in 678. The *Vita Wilfridi* indicates that both the archbishop and the abbess were represented in Rome at Wilfrid's hearing.⁵⁷ Moreover, Bede notes that one of Hilda's episcopal products, Otfar, not only devoted himself to his learning in both Whitby and Hartlepool, but also studied in Kent with Theodore and, then, Rome:

*De medio nunc dicamus quia, cum in utroque Hildae abbatissae monasterio lectioni et obseruationi scripturarum operam dedisset, tandem perfectiora desiderans uenit Cantiam ad archiepiscopum beatae recordationis Theodorum. Vbi postquam aliquandiu lectionibus sacris uacauit, etiam Romam adire curauit.*⁵⁸

Ecgfrith's choice of Bosa as bishop of York reflects this Romanizing process - drawing Whitby and Paulinus's foundation closer together, as well as Hilda and Ecgfrith. Such a change in orientation may have been precipitated by the entry of

the widowed Eanflaed, a notable member of the Roman party who had supposedly so resolutely refused to practice an Ionan Easter, and who, consequently, brought an official royal link with orthodoxy Whitby had hitherto been lacking.

Following Hilda's death Whitby's associations with the Rome Canterbury-oriented Anglo-Saxon Church became more obvious. Thus, Hilda's familial kinship to Edwin was emphasized. It is noticeable, for instance, that in Bede's chapter dealing with Hilda's life he introduces her as the daughter of Hereric, King Edwin's nephew, and as having been baptized by Paulinus in company with Edwin:

*hoc est filia nepotis Eduini regis, uocabulo Heririci, cum quo etiam rege ad praedicationem beatae memoriae Paulini primi Nordanhymbrorum episcopi fidem et sacramenta Christi suscepit, atque haec, usquedum ad eius uisionem peruenire meruit, intemerata seruauit.*⁵⁹

Such a direct association with the Roman mission seems to contradict Bede's earlier statement in Book III:25 where, in no uncertain terms, Bede recorded Hilda's Ionan affinities. As shall be shown in chapter 3, in his depiction of Hilda within the *HE*, Bede was pursuing his own agenda and, consequently, underplayed the 'Roman' elements of Hilda's life. The significance for this chapter, however, is that it would appear the source from which Bede derived his material in IV:23 was keen to emphasize that in some regards Hilda was an 'original' Roman baptized foundress whose inviolate faith was initiated by Paulinus not Lindisfarne or Iona.

It is also possible at this juncture that Ecgfrith encouraged his mother and sister to enhance Whitby's reputation as a centre of orthodoxy by tightening its association with Edwin. Recently, Alan Thacker has suggested that the translation of Edwin's relics occurred before Ecgfrith's death.⁶⁰ If they did so it is arguable that the movement of Edwin's bones into Whitby happened with Ecgfrith's agreement (if not at his instigation). Whilst the surviving Northumbrian sources do not hint at Ecgfrith's involvement in this event it should not be ruled out. However, this need not depend purely on the apparent closeness evidenced by Ecgfrith's choice of a Whitby monk as bishop or his desire to promote Roman sites at the expense of Lindisfarne. It is perhaps salient that in two Frankish sources dealing with women who wanted to translate relics comment is passed on the role of the king. Thus in Gregory of Tours' depiction of Radegund getting relics of the True Cross for Poitiers he notes that she had to gain King Sigibert's written permission to do this.⁶¹ In the later ninth-century Carolingian, *Life of St. Glodesind*, this is repeated. Thus when nuns wanted to translate Glodesind's relics from the cemetery at Saint Arnulf's to Glodesind's monastery at Subterius it was recorded that none of them dared to act without the king's order or license. Only after messengers had been sent and had received the king's concession could they undertake the translation.⁶² Although neither of these sources are Northumbrian they point to the possibility of the need for a women's monastery to have the king's approval in actions which would take them outside the monastery itself. In a sense, whilst the abbess had a degree of autonomy within her monastery she was still under the king's authority outside of it. Elevating Hilda was an internal affair - Edwin, on the other hand was lying in lands outside of the monastic site.

Consequently, it is hard not to assume Ecgfrith played a role. The importance of this elevation should not be understated for, as it will be shown, it represented the beginnings of the development of cults in Northumbria which led to the proliferation of cults and their associated texts.

In summation it appears that Ecgfrith pursued a calculated ecclesiastical policy of Romanization designed to erode further the remains of the monopoly of Lindisfarne and to enhance his own status through an association with Theodore and orthodoxy. Firstly, he granted some land to the most visible Roman supporter in Northumbria on his accession, Wilfrid. Secondly, he established a new monastery through a gift of land given to an individual with unequivocal Roman sympathies and associated with Theodore; thirdly, he drew upon the ideas Theodore outlined at the Synod of Hertford - breaking up the extensive see of Wilfrid, and looking not only to Lindisfarne but also Whitby for episcopal candidates which he then had Theodore ratify; fourthly, he extended the size of his own monastic foundation with the development of Jarrow. And, fifthly, he allowed for the Romanization of Whitby initially through Hilda and then under the auspices of his sister and mother. In these dealings Lindisfarne is noticeably inconspicuous.

It has, of course, been suggested that Ecgfrith's largesse in terms of land grants was not limited to Ripon and Monkwearmouth-Jarrow but included Lindisfarne as well. Thus the anonymous author of the *Historia de sancto Cuthberto* states:

*Et rex Ecgfridus et Theodorus archiepiscopus dederunt sancto
Cuthberto in Eboraca civitate totam terram quae jacet a muro*

*ecclesiae Sancti Petri usque ad magnam portam uersus occidentem,
et a muro...*⁶³

. If this were so, it would certainly bring into question the hypothesis being posed - that he deliberately ensured a growth in the status of Whitby and then Monkwearmouth-Jarrow at the expense of Lindisfarne, particularly in the first decade of his reign (with the intention of identifying himself as a distinctly Roman). However, the source itself is a highly problematic one. The *Historia de sancto Cuthberto* is not a contemporary document but one seemingly begun in the Cuthbertine Community in Chester-le-Street in the middle of the tenth century and compiled by Symeon of Durham in the early twelfth century.⁶⁴ Indeed, as Roper has noted the main difficulty in using this source is to distinguish between those possessions granted to Cuthbert in his lifetime and those made later to the monastic community.⁶⁵ Nevertheless, both he and Thacker believe that the grants mentioned in this passage accurately reflect land holdings donated by Ecgfrith.⁶⁶

However, if one inspects the text more closely the difficulties of accepting it as a credible source for the early period appear insurmountable. Firstly, before the text mentions Ecgfrith, it states that: *Tunc sanctus abbas Boisil statim notum fecit regi Osvingio sanctam uisionem beati Cuthberti, et quod plenus esset spiritu sancto. Tunc rex et omnes meliores Angli dederunt sancto Cuthberto omnem hanc terram quae jacet juxta fluvium Bolbenda, cum his uillis...*⁶⁷ As Arnold himself notes this is unhistorical.⁶⁸ The donation is made to follow Cuthbert's vision, a vision that was subsequent to the death of Aidan and, also, therefore after the death of Oswine. Arnold views this by suggesting that the story

probably arose out of a need for the tenth century monks at Chester-le-Street to 'invest the original grant of lands which they held with a peculiar sanctity'. In essence he supposes that the monks used Oswine's saintly status to lend authority to their claim. This sounds very plausible. However, it assumes that St. Oswine had the authoritative status of a saint in the mid-tenth century. This in itself is questionable, and as shall be argued later in this thesis there is actually very little evidence of Oswine being viewed as a saint before his rediscovery and translation at Tynemouth in 1065. In fact, it was not until his second translation in 1103, at which Ranulf Flambard, bishop of Durham was present, that a *Vita* was produced for him.⁶⁹ Given the early twelfth century dating of Symeon's writings at Durham it is hard not to assume that he knew of these events concerning Oswine. This then would suggest that the section immediately preceding the information on Ecgrith was more relevant to the late eleventh century than it was the mid-tenth, let alone the seventh century! Such a point hardly inspires confidence in the reliability of this source to reflect accurately land grants made in seventh century.

This problem of accuracy is further exacerbated by the chronological inconsistencies in the sections of the text that deal with Ecgrith. Thus it moves from the land holdings that Cuthbert received after he became bishop in 681, to mentioning another grant supposedly made by Ecgrith to Cuthbert in the period of 675-679 (Carrum).⁷⁰ The inconsistency itself creates doubt as to the accuracy of the information. This doubt is perhaps further enhanced by the fact that neither of the *Vitae* of Saint Cuthbert indicate a close relationship between Ecgrith and Cuthbert until his accession to the episcopate. Thus whilst there is evidence for the association of Cuthbert with some of the land holdings identified

in the texts of Cuthbert's Lives, such as Carlisle, there is certainly no indication that Ecgfrith had granted lands there. Indeed, as an example Carlisle itself presents specific difficulties when one notes that a charter by which Ecgfrith was said to have granted Carlisle to Cuthbert is an obvious forgery that probably dates to the late eleventh, early twelfth century.⁷¹ These sections of the *Historia de sancto Cuthberto* do not then, lend themselves to authenticity concerning the earlier period. Indeed, nor do they necessarily relate to the later sections of the text which Luisella Simpson has identified as of mid-tenth century origin. The possibility that Ecgfrith made donations of land to Cuthbert then must be questioned.

Having acknowledged this, however, one cannot deny the fact that Ecgfrith had an interest in Cuthbert. Cuthbert's consecration as bishop must have augmented Lindisfarne's status and it is clear that Ecgfrith was an active participant in the making of Cuthbert into a bishop. Indeed, the image of Ecgfrith sailing to the island of Farne with Bishop Trumwine and other powerful men to adjure Cuthbert to accept an episcopal see is one of the few direct links with Lindisfarne that can be found for Ecgfrith.⁷² Nonetheless, in the *HE* an inconsistency in Book IV:28 appears to intimate that in the first instance Cuthbert was to be consecrated as bishop of Hexham not Lindisfarne. Thus, when he first mentions the Synod at the River Aln, Bede follows the information as given in both his and the Anonymous *Vita Cuthberti* which states that there Cuthbert was elected to the bishopric of the church of Lindisfarne unanimously: *unanimo omnium consensu ad episcopatum ecclesiae Lindisfarnensis eligeretur*.⁷³ However, he subsequently diverges from his sources noting that Cuthbert's consecration took place at York and that he

was elected first to the see of Hexham. It was only subsequently that he was consecrated as bishop of Lindisfarne and then it appears to have been at Cuthbert's own request rather than Ecgfrith's desire:

*Electus est autem primo in episcopatum Hagustaldensis ecclesiae pro Tunbercto, qui ab episcopatu fuerat depositus; sed quoniam ipse plus Lindisfarnensi ecclesiae, in qua conuersatus fuerat, dilexit praefici, placuit ut Eata reuerso ad sedem ecclesiae Hagustaldensis, cui regendae primo fuerat ordinatus, Cudberct ecclesiae Lindisfarnensis gubernacula susciperet.*⁷⁴

If Ecgfrith's intention had been to have Cuthbert as his bishop at Hexham this would have taken the limelight off Lindisfarne and given it instead to a Rome associated Church. As to why Ecgfrith felt compelled to ask Cuthbert to be a bishop one can only assume that this particular holy man, despite his monastic origins, was just too saintly to be ignored.

By the end of Ecgfrith's reign therefore a monastic environment with the potential for competition had been well and truly established. Monkwearmouth-Jarrow had a particularly close relationship with the Northumbrian ruling house and Whitby also increasingly seems to have become a site of influence. Lindisfarne was once again being shown some favour, although arguably limited, and Wilfrid's confederation had the wealth to interfere in ecclesiastical matters if not political ones. In this context the critical point to consider is that each of these monasteries represented a collective of the aristocracy. Indeed, they may even have been focal points for particular kin groupings each of which had their own authority within the kingdom. This alone, however, does not necessarily answer

the question as to why so many cults and so much literature were produced merely that the conditions were established that made it more likely that with an unexpected change of regime there would be some vying for control.

ECGFRITH'S SUCCESSORS: MONASTIC APPROVAL AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEW KING.

In the previous sections of this chapter the extent to which Northumbrian monasteries were both dependent upon the king for support and influenced by the king's own ecclesiastical alignment has been shown. Despite the lack of lay Latin literacy, inherent within the sources produced by the Latin writers is the relationship between the king, particularly Ecgfrith, and specific members of the nobility, albeit those in monastic and ecclesiastical positions. In this relationship it appears to be Ecgfrith who held the balance of power, effectively determining the development of real competition for the collective nobility housed in Lindisfarne, and to a degree, Iona. The result of this is clear. Any pro-Ionan successor to the Northumbrian throne would find himself (with the support of Lindisfarne) in a position of needing to both appease and make himself legitimate in the eyes of the newly powerful groupings of his predecessor's nobility, especially those within Rome affiliated monasteries. This is particularly evident in the case of Aldfrith. The need to be seen as legitimate by the ecclesiastical nobility is hinted at in Book III, chapter 6 of the Anonymous *Vita Cuthberti*. Here, the author made it clear that Aelfflaed knew from Cuthbert that Aldfrith was to succeed following Ecgfrith's death: *Ipse etiam paululum tacens dixit, Illum autem non minus tibi*

*esse fratrem usurpaueris, quam alterum. Hoc quippe et incredibile uidebatur, diligentius tamen interrogauit, in quo loco esset. Ipse uero patienter sustinens eam ait, O serua Dei, quid miraris licet sit in aliqua insula super hoc mare? Illa iam cito rememorauit de Aldfrido qui nunc regnat pacifice fuisse dictum, qui tunc erat in insula quam Ii nominant.*⁷⁵

Such a prophetic pronunciation coming from the mouth of Cuthbert reads less like an image of things to come as a retrospective act of legitimization for a king whose accession had not been the outcome of peaceful events. Within the historical record at least it seems Aldfrith and the monastic house to which he was most closely associated wanted his accession to be remembered (by the ecclesiastical if not secular audience) as the fulfilment of a prophecy not as the usurpation by a half-Irish product of Iona. The implication of the need to state this, of course, is that Aldfrith was not initially viewed as a legitimate successor.

Such a need for acceptance may also explain the apparent delay in any augmentation of the status of Lindisfarne. Thus, although as Clare Stancliffe has noted, the period of Aldfrith's reign did witness rival church groupings attempting to get pre-eminence within Northumbria, the monastic focus of his reign does appear to be Lindisfarne and to an extent Iona.⁷⁶ Despite Aldfrith's brief reconciliation with Wilfrid and the consequential return of Hexham, Ripon and York to Wilfrid's authority, at least until Adomnan's adoption of Roman practices, there is little evidence to suggest that Aldfrith's allegiance was not centred upon the Ionan confederation. Yet, the elevation of the cult of Cuthbert under Bishop Eadberht, and the connected composition of the Anonymous *Vita*

Cuthberti as well as the production of the Lindisfarne Gospels under his successor Eadfrith, did not occur until a decade of Aldfrith's reign had passed.

This necessity for Northumbrian approval, particularly monastic, is illustrated by the fact that he and his councillors exchanged three hides of land to Biscop in return for two silk cloaks which had recently been brought back from Rome: *Adtulit inter alia, et pallia duo oloserica incomparandi operis, quibus postea ab Aldfrido rege eiusque consiliariis, namque Ecgfridum postquam rediit iam interfectum repperit, terram trium familiarum ad austrum Uuiri, iuxta ostium comparauit.*⁷⁷ As I noted in the first chapter, such an exchange had a highly symbolic nature indicating in this case an initiation of a relationship between the new king and the previous king's advisor, Biscop. It is additionally clear that at the beginning of his reign Aldfrith went further than this, arranging with Biscop that he was to receive a further eight hides of land for a copy of the *Cosmographia*, an agreement that finally came to fruition during the abbacy of Ceolfrith.⁷⁸ These actions were not meaningless but would have involved tangible ritual and served to function as a sign of acceptance.

Indeed, the acceptance of Monkwearmouth-Jarrow may also have been behind Adomnan's two visits there and his adoption of Roman practices. If Aldfrith wished to be viewed as a legitimate Northumbrian king what better way to do it than have the abbot of Iona influenced by one of the royal foundations of the previous king? This is not to deny the persuasiveness of the religious argument as put forward by Ceolfrith but to suggest that political expediency may have played at least some part in this decision. If this link between Aldfrith, Adomnan and the

acceptance of the Northumbrian aristocracy is accurate it would explain in part why Columba is portrayed in an overtly orthodox way. As Dr. Herbert has shown, as much as Adomnan wanted to justify his actions to his own monastery he also wished to convince the Northumbrian audience of the universal nature of Columba's sanctity.⁷⁹ Of course, the subsequent problem for Adomnan was that the monks at Iona refused to accept him - an outcome that clearly mattered less to Aldfrith than acceptance by his Northumbrian monasteries.

In the first few years of his reign Aldfrith's decision to receive Wilfrid back into the kingdom may also have been driven by his need to placate the nobility at Hexham. Thus, according to the *Vita Wilfridi* he initially gave the possessions of Hexham to Wilfrid: *et primum coenobium cum possessionibus adhaerentibus in Hagustaldesiae indulgens*.⁸⁰ Only after an interval of time (*et post interuallum*) did he return him to his see of York and monastery at Ripon.⁸¹ This subsequent act, which involved expelling Ecgrith's choice of incumbents, one of whom came from Lindisfarne, indicates the extent to which Aldfrith was prepared to be seen as pro-Canterbury. Indeed, by acceding to Theodore's conscience-led desires Aldfrith maintained the relationship with the archbishop of Canterbury that his half brother had instigated. He then went on to show himself to be acquiescing to the judgements of Pope Agatho - something even his Rome-friendly relative had not done. (This implies the degree of accomplishment Ecgrith had achieved in realigning the ecclesiastical policy of Northumbria southwards. His nobility had become inextricably reoriented and for Aldfrith to succeed it was a necessity that he maintained continuity.)

In fact, the nature of Aldfrith's accession may hold the key to the subsequent 'Romanization' of both Lindisfarne and Adomnan. One should note that whilst the Anonymous *Vita Cuthberti* implies a foregone conclusion for the Battle of Nechtansmere this cannot be taken for granted, nor it appears can the fact that the Northumbrian aristocracy (who had under the auspices of Ecgfrith so fully embraced the Canterbury-Rome Church) would accept the Ionan trained Aldfrith as their king. It is conceivable that to ensure his authority within Northumbria, Aldfrith had to prove to the nobles that he was a fully orthodox Northumbrian. To achieve this Lindisfarne needed to be seen as more Northumbrian than Ionan and St. Cuthbert needed to be marketed as an orthodox monk. Essentially what was left of Ionan culture visible to an external audience had to be integrated into mainstream Northumbrian aristocratic, monastic practices.

The first hint of this process of integration can be seen in the actions of Cuthbert's successor, Eadberht. It is clear, for example, that Eadberht undertook a programme of rebuilding at Lindisfarne, removing the reed thatch and covering both the walls and roof with lead: *Sed et episcopus loci ipsius Eadberct ablata harundine plumbi lamminis eam totam, hoc est et tectum et ipsos quoque parietes eius, cooperire curavit.*⁸² The important point here is that Eadberht's amendments to the building covered up an edifice that had been built using the 'Irish' (should one read Ionan?) method: *more Scottorum*, perhaps using lead made the walls look more like stone.

The second lies in the actual texts of the *Vita Columbae* and the Anonymous *Vita Cuthberti*. As has been commented elsewhere, these two texts exhibit close links in terms of resemblances in vocabulary and themes and it is surely possible that they were produced as part of a single initiative under the auspices of Adomnan and Eadfrith respectively.⁸³ In this context, what is pertinent, however, is that firstly, the Anonymous *Vita Cuthberti* doctors the image of Cuthbert to give him a Petrine tonsure at Ripon rather than the Ionan one at Melrose thereby assuring his audience of Cuthbert's Roman credentials.⁸⁴ Secondly, Marie Herbert has indicated that Adomnan kept his portrayal of St. Columba within the literary context of mainstream catholic sanctity.⁸⁵ Essentially, both these texts serve to offer images of orthodox saints (who on closer inspection would actually have followed at least some unorthodox practices.) There is a sense in which these saints' lives achieved in textual form what Eadberht had achieved with lead - the conscious covering over of Ionan forms to create an image more amenable to the 'Romanized' monastic aristocracy. Walter Goffart was right, then, to suggest that the Anonymous *Vita Cuthberti* originated to fulfil more than merely the spiritual needs of the community at Lindisfarne.⁸⁶ However, his assertion that this *Vita* deliberately made Cuthbert respectable in Wilfridian terms especially with regard to the Petrine tonsure and the Rule of Benedict requires modification.⁸⁷ It does appear that the Anonymous author has attempted to make Cuthbert more 'respectable' or more appropriately less Ionan, but this was for a much broader audience than just Wilfrid's confederation, Whitby and Monkwearmouth-Jarrow also had a claim to viewing these themes as important. Cuthbert especially, as Donald Bullough noted, could be seen as a great unifier of the two traditions, freeing Lindisfarne from the historical stigma of unorthodoxy, thereby giving it a

greater authority within the Northumbrian church.⁸⁸ Evidence, nonetheless, suggests that the actuality within the late seventh century Lindisfarne community itself, at least in terms of liturgical practice, was a continuation of usage related more to Iona than to the monastic houses of Roman foundation.⁸⁹

Arguably, as well as augmenting the status of Lindisfarne, the Anonymous *Vita Cuthberti* served as a record of the legitimacy of Aldfrith's position aimed at the ecclesiastical aristocracy. This alone implies a closeness between the monastery and the king. However, it was only after Aldfrith had secured his position that the status of Lindisfarne could be acceptably raised within Northumbria. Initially to ensure his position he had to appease the monastic houses which had held authority during the reign of Ecgfrith. Yet within seven years of his accession Aldfrith had the power to deprive Wilfrid's Church at Ripon of its territories and possessions and to subsequently expel Wilfrid - by this time acceptance of the nobility at Wilfrid's confederation seems not to have been so crucial.⁹⁰ Apart from Wilfrid Aldfrith's relations with the other Northumbrian royal monasteries appear to have remained good. The appointment of John of Beverly (and Whitby) to Hexham in 687 and the return of Bosa to the see of York (c.692) perhaps indicates that the fortunes of Whitby, of which noticeably little is said by Bede during Aldfrith's reign, were not significantly decreased. This is certainly suggested by the presence of Aelffleod at Aldfrith's deathbed.⁹¹ Moreover, the *Vita Wilfridi* presents the image of a king who linked his ecclesiastical policy, as Ecgfrith had done, closely with the archbishops of Canterbury. By Aldfrith's death Lindisfarne's standing within the Northumbrian monastic milieu had increased but it was not returned to the monopolistic position that it once had.

Basically, Ecgfrith's actions had ensured that for his successors to remain in power they would have to maintain a relationship all the royal monastic sites.

The need to maintain a relationship with the monasteries of one's predecessor was not limited only to Aldfrith. Indeed, one cannot help wondering if Eadwulf's decision to refuse to allow Wilfrid's return at the beginning of his reign is indicative of a singular lack of appreciation on Eadwulf's part of the necessity for gaining monastic approval from all the main monastic houses. Arguably he focused only on those closest to the councillors who on this occasion advised him and this ignorance, more than anything, may have resulted in his swift departure:

*Ad quem sanctus pontifex noster de exilio cum filio suo proprio ueniens, de Hrypis quasi ad amicum nuntios emisit, quibus austere et dure, persuasus a consiliariis suis, pro antiqua nequitia respondebat, dicens: "Per salutem meam iuro, nisi de regno meo in spatio sex dierum discesserit, de sodalibus eius quoscumque inuenero, morte peribunt." Ec post haec aspera uerba, coniuratione facta adversum eum, de regno quod duos menses habuit, expulsus est.*⁹²

The importance of the monastic groupings is again made visible in the *Vita Wilfridi's* account of the Synod of Nidd. Here the boy-king Osred is portrayed as gathering at the Synod with his chief men, his three bishops, their abbots and the Abbess Aefflead: *Nam in unum locum iuxta fluvium Nid ab oriente congregati rex cum principibus et tres episcopi eius cum abbatibus necnon et beata Aelfleda abbatissa.*⁹³ Although, Stephanus fails to identify these three bishops it is hard not assume they represent John of Beverly -Hexham, Eadfrith -Lindisfarne and, Bosa-

York. This line-up is interesting purely for the power dynamic that it indicates - that bishops trained at Whitby still held two of the key sees. Moreover, Aelfflead's presence shows the power base that her monastery clearly had at the beginning of Osred's reign. Lindisfarne is also represented but Monkwearmouth-Jarrow, lacking a bishop, is, as implied in the text, not. It is apparently upon these groupings that the decision to readmit Wilfrid ultimately falls and the impression one gets is of three powerful aristocratic groupings coming to an agreement about another group's leader. Berhtfrith is, however, also a notable player, noted as being second only to the king: *Berhtfrithus, secundus a rege princeps*, but his acceptance of Wilfrid as representative of the king is not enough to ensure Wilfrid's return.⁹⁴ The bishops and presumably their monastic communities too had to agree on it, indicating that in this case at least the wishes of the royal boy (Wilfrid's adopted son) were not enough to secure his return. Also of note in Stephanus' record is the fact that the final decision is recorded as being in terms of the Apostolic judgement and that Wilfrid's leading protagonist in this case is the archbishop of Canterbury, Berhtwald. Here, perhaps, is an indication of the degree to which the ecclesiastical nobility of Northumbria were allied to the 'Roman' Church.

Once again at the beginning of a reign there is evidence that it was not enough for the king just to make decisions. Without the acceptance of the other monastic groups, including Aelfflead's, these decisions had little authority. Moreover, despite the fact that Monkwearmouth-Jarrow does not seem to be represented at this Synod one cannot rule out the possibility that Ceolfrid played a role. Bede, in his *metrical Life of Saint Cuthbert*, welcomed Osred as a new Josiah, implying the

acceptance of this monastery too, if not the textual legitimization of a king, who like his father came to power through the defeat of his immediate successor, Eadwulf.⁹⁵ Pertinently, Ceolfrid gained land from Osred during his reign, exchanging the land donated by Aldfrith for twenty hides nearer the monastery, again showing the maintenance of connections between the king and this royal foundation.⁹⁶

Essentially, Aldfrith and Osred's (possibly even Eadwulf's) authority on accession depended upon the acceptance of the great monastic houses who in their turn played a role in legitimizing the position of the king. These monastic houses did not only represent individuals who wished to remove themselves from the secular world they were also intricately related to secular aristocratic kin groups. Consequently, assuring their acceptance on the out set of a new reign was important. Whilst, the historical record is noticeably bare concerning Osred's immediate successors, Cenred and Osric, this association with the monastic power groupings is the context in which Bede's gift of the *HE* to Ceolwulf should be seen. In 731, following his deposition and return to power, is it more than plausible that Ceolwulf looked to Monkwearmouth-Jarrow for such support. The support was made tangible in the form of a gift exchange, the highly symbolic action of giving the gift of a book to an individual, one which in its preface publicly acknowledged Ceolwulf as king. In this sense the text itself need not have been produced for a king but became the most appropriate gift to give. This, of course, explains the gift of the product itself but not the initiation or contents of the *HE*.

THE DESIRE FOR MONASTIC SUPERIORITY AS A STIMULATOR OF CULT DEVELOPMENT AND HAGIOGRAPHICAL WRITINGS.

It is clear that the narratives of texts such as the Anonymous *Vita Cuthberti* and the *Historia Ecclesiastica* do contain evidence for political, social and economic relationships that existed outside of the monastery. It is harder to state that the texts themselves played a role outside the monasteries, other than a predominantly symbolic one. However, hagiographies clearly did play a role in augmenting their monastery's own status within the ecclesiastical community and arguably the intermonastic rivalry established through the existence of several royal-affiliated centres resulted in an attempt to claim ultimate superiority. In this sense, the Anglo-Saxon Northumbrian monastic *vitae* and *historiae* are evidence for a well established textual community in which different types of information was being passed between monastic houses in texts produced ostensibly for spiritual purposes. Arguably, this intermonastic rivalry, established by Ecgrith and continued in the reigns of his successors, is the immediate context in which the sources were produced. The main method of achieving superiority was for a monastery to indicate that it had the closest associations with Rome, either directly or through Canterbury, within the body of its writings.

The author of the Anonymous *Vita Cuthberti* could only identify Cuthbert with the Roman church by giving him a Petrine tonsure. The Anonymous hagiographer at Whitby, however, could link her monastery directly with the earliest Roman evangelization under Paulinus. Professor Goffart has suggested

that the Whitby *Vita Gregorii* was produced in response to claims made by Wilfrid at the Synod of Austerfield contained within Stephanus' *Vita Wilfridi*.⁹⁷ However, the chronology of these two texts cannot be fixed, and whilst the first recension of the *Vita Wilfridi* may have been written soon after Wilfrid's death, it is equally feasible that the *Vita Gregorii* was produced before 710.⁹⁸ Indeed, given the obvious power that Aelfflead had at the 706 Synod of Nidd, and given also that the early years of Osred represented a minority period it is plausible that this period of time (706-709) would have been the best time for a monastery to produce a text which involved the king of a rival royal family, that is Edwin. As was noted earlier it is inconceivable that a monastery would be able to elevate a royal saint without the permission of the current king unless, of course, that king were a child. It is perhaps also unlikely that augmenting the status of a royal saint in textual form could occur without the king's permission. Possibly, in c 706, Aelfflead had enough influence politically to circumvent the approval of the boy-king. Indeed, if Alan Thacker is right concerning Hexham's interest in Oswald being as late as c.700 the *Vita Gregorii's* image of its own most Christian king could have been stimulated by this rather than any response to the claims of Wilfrid as written in the *Vita Wilfridi*.⁹⁹ Arguably, then, the *Vita Gregorii* came before the *Vita Wilfridi*, meaning that Wilfrid's claims need to be seen as a response to Whitby rather than the other way around.

Moreover, the appropriation of elements of the Anonymous *Vita Cuthberti* for use in the *Vita Wilfridi* can be seen as representing a deliberate act of rivalry toward Lindisfarne.¹⁰⁰ Indeed, Goffart went so far as to say that Lindisfarne felt their original *Vita* to have been 'soiled and devalued' through Stephanus'

actions.¹⁰¹ However, the Wilfridian confederation did not settle for merely usurping Lindisfarne and Whitby in terms of association with Rome and the Rule of Benedict, it also appears to have refreshed its interest in a royal cult all of its own, that of St. Oswald.¹⁰² By returning its attention to this saint it responded textually to Whitby's assertions of the sanctity of St. Edwin (which may, as has been stated, been instigated in response to Hexham's initial interest in Oswald c.700) and it also claimed ownership of a saint some of whose relics were associated with Lindisfarne - effectively cutting Lindisfarne out of this potential status raiser. The point is that one cannot prove conclusively whether or not the Whitby life responded to an earlier initiative on the part of Hexham concerning Oswald or whether Hexham adopted Oswald in response to Whitby. What is clear is that intermonastic rivalry did occur and focussed both on the ownership of cults and on the production of texts.

In fact, Wilfrid's claims at Austerfield do not appear merely to have provoked a textual reaction from Whitby. The Anonymous *Vita Ceolfredi* also needs to be seen in this context. Firstly, it is worth being reminded of Wilfrid's claims in chapter 47 of the *Vita Wilfridi*. He argued that he was the first (after the elders of St. Gregory) to have converted all Northumbria to the true Easter and the Petrine tonsure: *aduerumque pascha et ad tonsuram in modum coronae...secundum apostolicae sedis rationem totam Ultrahumbrensium gentem permutando conuerterem?*¹⁰³ He also stated that he instructed the Northumbrians in the appropriate choral rite: *Aut quomodo iuxta ritum primitivae ecclesiae assono vocis modulamine, binis adstantibus choris, persultare responsoriis antiphonisque reciprocis instruerem?*¹⁰⁴ And, finally, he pointed out that he was

responsible for arranging the life of the monks according to the Rule Of Benedict something which no one had previously introduced: *Uel quomodo uitam monachorum secundum regulam sancti Benedicti patris, quam nullus prior ibi inuexit, constitueram?*¹⁰⁵

The Anonymous writer of the *Vita Ceolfridi* was not in a position to counteract these claims, Ceolfrid had not been the originator of Roman practices in Northumbria. Yet, as Ian Wood has noticed there may have been considerable rivalry between Biscop's foundations and Wilfrid's over who was more accurately Benedictine.¹⁰⁶ Indeed, what the anonymous author could and did do was make Ceolfrid seem to be an even more effective proponent of the monastic life than Wilfrid. Thus the *Vita Ceolfridi* established Ceolfrid as the man who, in Northumbria, had been more knowledgeable than anyone else in matters monastic. For example, Ceolfrid is shown as travelling to Kent to satisfy his desire for the fullest possible understanding of the rules of monastic life: *Qui mox ordinatus ob studium discendi maxime uitae monasterialis et gradus, quem subierat, instituta, Cantiam petiit.*¹⁰⁷ Following his return from Kent and East Anglia to Ripon it is noted that there was no one of that day more learned in either the ecclesiastic or monastic rule, by inference not even Wilfrid: *adeo ut nemo per id temporis uel in aecclesiastica uel in monasteriali regula, doctior illo posset inueniri.*¹⁰⁸ The anonymous author then follows this statement with what looks like a slight on those who do not remain humble in their knowledge or nobility of name: *nec tamen uel gradus, uel eruditionis, uel etiam nobilitatis suae intuitu, ut quidam, ab humilitatis statu valuit reuocari.*¹⁰⁹ One cannot help thinking that this is a direct reference to what could be viewed as Wilfrid's lack of humility as

demonstrated in his speech at the Synod of Austerfield. Immediately after this statement the *Vita Ceolfridi* reiterates the extent to which Ceolfrid endeavoured to observe the monastic rule: *quin in omnibus regulari se satagebat mancipare custodiae*.¹¹⁰

Benedict Biscop, too, is portrayed as being second to none in his knowledge of monastic rules.¹¹¹ Yet even though he was most learned in matters of monastic discipline he called on Ceolfrid to strengthen further the observance at his monastery of Monkwearmouth: *sic nimirum, sic memorabilis abbas Benedictus, cum esset in omnibus monasterii disciplinis instructissimus, in construendo suo monasterio Ceolfridi quaesiuit auxilium, qui et regularis obseruantiam uitae pari doctrinae studio firmaret*.¹¹² The inference of their superiority is impossible to miss for even though Wilfrid is mentioned in the early chapters of the *Vita Ceolfridi* it at no times ascribes him with such a depth of knowledge concerning monastic life. The *Vita Ceolfridi* continues to emphasize the extent of the regularity of Ceolfrid's monastic observance, noting that it was so strict the monks at Monkwearmouth could not bear it: *Nam et inuidias quorundam nobilium, qui regularem eius disciplinam ferre nequibant insecutionesque patiebatur accerrimas*.¹¹³ He is also noted for his own observance of the monastic rule and the encouragement of others to do the same at Jarrow.¹¹⁴ Furthermore, the *Vita Ceolfridi* makes it clear that Ceolfrid's appointment as abbot over both monasteries was done in accordance with the Rule of Benedict (at least in terms of appointing an individual for his abilities rather than because he was a relative): *simul et regula sancti patris Benedicti, nunquam abbas eidem monasterio iuxta successionem generis, sed iuxta uitae modum et doctrinae*

*quereretur industriam, secundum quod ipse in praesenti Ceolfridum statuerat, qui magis sibi spiritali quam carnali erat cognatione conexus, cum haberet fratrem carnis quidem sibi consanguinitate proximum, sed inopia cordis a se longissime distantem.*¹¹⁵ The importance of Ceolfrid's regular observance is therefore a recurrent theme within the text and should be viewed as a direct response to Wilfrid's claims concerning the Rule of Benedict at the Synod of Austerfield.

The Anonymous author also made attempts to elucidate the Roman aspects of life at Monkwearmouth-Jarrow, such as Biscop's trips to Rome, the introduction of chant and the papal privileges (chapters 9, 10, 15, 20) but until Ceolfrid's final journey to Rome the overriding impression of the *Vita Ceolfridi* that one gets is that it was produced to augment the status of monastic observance at Monkwearmouth-Jarrow at the expense of Wilfrid's confederation.

For Walter Goffart the production of Bede's prose *Vita Cuthberti* also occurred as a hostile reaction to the *Vita Wilfridi*.¹¹⁶ Indeed, given Dr. Stancliffe's observations concerning Bede's reworking of the earlier text it does appear that Bede was trying to make Cuthbert a much more 'Roman' saint than the previous anonymous author had achieved. Thus as Dr. Stancliffe notes Bede depicted his Cuthbert by drawing upon images found in Augustine and Gregory, essentially viewing Cuthbert as a mix of active and contemplative in a manner associated more with the Roman monastic model than the Martinian one.¹¹⁷ Arguably Bede was much more successful in Romanizing Cuthbert than his anonymous predecessor and it is because of this that the author of the later *Vita Alcuini* could

falsely assert that Cuthbert was a man who formed a link in the chain of tradition that passed from Pope Gregory, through Augustine and Benedict.¹¹⁸

However, it is questionable to what extent this text raised Lindisfarne's status as much as it did Monkwearmouth-Jarrow's. For Professor Goffart, Lindisfarne's request to Bede and the subsequent production of the *Vita* represents a reorienting of priorities in terms of ecclesiastical affinities for Monkwearmouth-Jarrow. However, one needs to remember that throughout the 720s Bede continued to produce Biblical commentaries for Acca, suggesting that any orientation towards Lindisfarne was far from being mutually exclusive. In fact, Lindisfarne's request to Monkwearmouth-Jarrow should perhaps be seen as a reorientation of its ecclesiastical priorities. Firstly, one needs to remember that the status of Monkwearmouth-Jarrow would have increased dramatically following the association of Ceolfrith with Nechtan, king of the Picts and the subsequent conversion of the Picts to Roman traditions. Secondly, this monastery's status may have gained even greater heights because of Monkwearmouth-Jarrow's increasingly close relationship to Canterbury. Evidence suggests, for example, that Bede was receiving materials from Canterbury, if not Rome, during the late 710s and the 720s and that Nothelm's first visit (surely an honour) took place 716-25.¹¹⁹ Thirdly, David Kirby has alluded to the possibility that the episcopal succession at Lindisfarne following the death of Eadfrith was problematic.¹²⁰ This, plus Bede's own reputation may have led to Monkwearmouth-Jarrow being viewed as an important ally by Lindisfarne.¹²¹ In this sense, the gift of a representation of their own saint, Romanized by the esteemed Bede, produced in a monastery with unequivocal Roman credentials and

a direct link to the bishop of Hexham was a highly symbolic act, indicating Lindisfarne's movement towards Monkwearmouth-Jarrow rather than Monkwearmouth-Jarrow's inclination towards Lindisfarne.

Monkwearmouth-Jarrow's textual response to Stephanus' claims concerning Wilfrid in the *Vita Wilfridi* were not limited to the rewriting of the *Life of Cuthbert*, however. The focus on Roman and regular monastic observance in Bede's *Historia Abbatum* needs to be included in the list of texts aimed at raising the status of its monastery higher than those of the Wilfridian confederation. Whilst the *Vita Ceolfridi* focused on Ceolfrid's regular observance, Bede's text brought to life the extent to which Benedict Biscop was an unadulterated Roman and Monkwearmouth-Jarrow an incontestable Roman foundation. Indeed, within the *Historia Abbatum* Bede linked his monastery to Rome so conclusively that the reader would be left in no doubt of its orthodoxy. Therefore, he showed it to be founded by an individual with no apparent links to Iona whatsoever. In chapter 2 Bede recorded that Biscop (unlike Wilfrid) went straight to Rome in search of his spiritual learning, a trip that became a relatively regular feature of his life.¹²² In chapter 3, Biscop was associated directly with the Rome-chosen Archbishop, Theodore, having been placed by the Pope himself to act as a guide and, also, becoming abbot of the monastery of St. Peter at Canterbury.¹²³ In chapter 5 Biscop was recorded as having built a stone church in the Roman fashion at Monkwearmouth.¹²⁴ In chapter 6 he was shown returning from one of his sojourns to Rome accompanied by both the cantor John and a letter of monastic privileges from Pope Agatho.¹²⁵ From the outside Biscop and Monkwearmouth-Jarrow are seen to be affiliated to Rome. Indeed, the extent of this narrated

connection led Patrick Wormald to conclude that Bede's version of Biscop's horizons was considerably limited and overly stressed the perspective that it was only really Rome that counted in his making.¹²⁶ This was a deliberate attempt to edify his institution within an environment where a relationship with orthodoxy was viewed as highly meritorious. However, this preference on Bede's part should not be viewed in the context of the monasteries outside his own alone. Ian Wood has noted that in his *Historia Abbatum* Bede subtly changed the emphasis of the *Vita Ceolfridi* to present Biscop's Monkwearmouth in an even more favourable light than Ceolfrid's Jarrow, implying perhaps that the issue of monastic superiority, in textual form at least, extended into the relationship between Monkwearmouth and its sister house.¹²⁷

Within the hagiographical texts produced in eighth century Northumbria, there appears to be a common theme of association with Rome, with each monastery claiming a closer connection than the previous one. Essentially, an affinity with Rome either directly through travel or indirectly in the form of links to the first evangelists, regular monastic observance or portrayals using textual allusions to Roman-identified sources increased the standing of a particular monastery within the ecclesiastical community. Interestingly, this process of competition appears not to have been instigated primarily by the production of the *Vita Wilfridi*, as Professor Goffart believes, but may have had its origins in the founding of Monkwearmouth-Jarrow by Ecgrith and the elevation of Edwin by Whitby. The subsequent initiatives taken by Adomnan and Eadfrith to make Aldfrith, Columba and Lindisfarne acceptable to the Northumbrian aristocracy (as reorientated by

Ecgfrith) provided the first textual responses to Ecgfrith's activities. In their turn, these responses led to a production of hagiography, the extent of which was not witnessed elsewhere in eighth century Anglo-Saxon England, as each respective monastery attempted to maintain its profile and raise its status within the ecclesiastical hierarchy.

Chapter 3:

Bede's Agenda Revisited: Monastic Superiority within the *Historia Ecclesiastica*.

In the previous chapter an attempt has been made to indicate the reason why so many cults and related texts were developed in the late seventh and eighth centuries. As was seen, the desire for augmented status did not just manifest itself in the interactions between the kings and their monasteries, it is also evident in the internal construct of the narratives of the texts that were produced. This chapter aims to examine Bede's desire to enhance the status of Monkwearmouth-Jarrow within the text of the *HE* through a sophisticated method of textual manipulation, omission and apparent 'discretion'. To do this it will look at Bede's depictions of the monastic foundations and founders of Northumbria, particularly Iona/Lindisfarne- Columba and Aidan, Whitby - Hilda and Aelfflead, Ripon, Hexham and York- Wilfrid.

Alan Thacker has recently argued that in his *HE* Bede portrayed the Ionan Irish evangelists to Northumbrian in an essentially positive light, but that their error concerning Easter observance needed to be accounted for.¹ To do this, Thacker has stated Bede played down this error and stressed how similar their methods in general were to that of the orthodox Roman approaches. Thacker concludes that Bede's images of the Ionan missionaries and Iona itself were essentially defensive but favourable images. Goffart too has suggested that Bede was pro-Irish in

order to side against the power of Wilfrid.² However, text of the *HE*, indicates that these arguments are perhaps not as firmly founded as the authors have suggested. The first significant mention of Irish Christian practice occurs in Book II: 4 and the chapter itself places the Irish firmly within the context of heresy. Thus Bede notes that Archbishop Laurence “came to realise that in Ireland...the life and profession of the people was not in accordance with church practice” especially concerning Easter:

*Siquidem ubi Scottorum in praefata ipsorum patria, quomodo et
Brettonum in ipsa Brittania, uitam ac professionem minus
ecclesiasticam in multis esse cognouit, maxime quod paschae
sollemnitatem non suo tempore celebrarent sed...*³

Moreover, in this chapter Bede chooses to include Laurence’s letter to the Irish bishops and abbots, making it quite unequivocal that the Irish were no better than the British in their observances. Such a comparison hardly suggests that Bede was predisposed towards the Irish.

From the outset of his description of the Irish, then, Bede makes it quite clear that they were in error and chose to remain so. After all it is clear from subsequent episodes that Laurence’s letter fell on deaf ears. He continues this theme in chapter 19 of Book II, this time in the context of the epistles from Pope Honorius and pope-elect John. Thacker argues that Bede makes it clear that the Irish were not Quartodecimans and views this qualification and limiting of the heresy amongst the Irish as Bede playing down the error.⁴ Goffart takes this slightly further, commenting that Bede refuted the charge that the Irish were Quartodeciman schismatics in order to correct Stephanus’ accusation.⁵ To deal

with this latter point first, it is not necessary that Bede was reacting to the portrayal in the *Vita Wilfridi* in an attempt to abase the cult of Wilfrid in this chapter. Rather it could well be that Bede required his audience to have accurate information for its own sake. Secondly, whilst qualifying that the Irish were not Quartodecimans, his own text ensured that the Irish unorthodoxy was an indelible part of their ecclesiastical history and, furthermore, that when faced with the 'true practice' 'some of the Irish' resolutely refused to change. It is conspicuous that Bede does not leave his accusation crudely inaccurate (unlike his counterpart at Ripon) but by including these letters he left the reader in no doubt that those Irish who continued to follow a different Easter did so knowing that they were in error. As Cowdrey notes, these issues "carried deep and grave implications....a deliberate refusal amounted to a withholding of obedience that was due from all Christians to St. Peter".⁶

However, it is perhaps Bede's subsequent apparent lack of enthusiasm for St. Columba that should alert us to Bede's agenda. Thacker has stated that Bede's treatment of Iona was 'defensive'. Nevertheless, there is a clear tension in Bede's discussion in Book III:4. Firstly, although Bede opens by stressing Columba's monastic vocation, he gives him no superlative epithet and swiftly changes the focus from Columba to St. Ninian and the southern Picts:

*Namque ipsi australes Picti, qui intra eosdem montes habent sedes, multo ante tempore, ut perhibent, relicto errore idolatriae fidem ueritatis acceperant, praedicante eis Uerbum Nynia episcopo reuerentissimo et sanctissimo uiro de natione Brettonum, qui erat Romae regulariter fidem et mysteris ueritatis edoctus.*⁷

In this passage Bede is at pains to emphasize Ninian's orthodoxy. This emphasis, given Bede's predilection for stressing British inactivity on the missionary front, hardly engenders the idea that Bede was overwhelmed with respect for Columba. Rather, it suggests that by thoughtful and deliberate placing of his reference to Ninian in the vignette of St. Columba, Bede was throwing into stark contrast the unorthodoxy of Columba, Iona and the northern Picts.

Moreover, if one examines closely the epithets Bede uses to describe Columba there is a conspicuous absence of the usual superlatives that he gives to saints and a noticeable reticence on his part to give the impression of a saintly individual who lived a holy life. Thus, he writes of him as a 'priest and abbot' and a monk 'in life no less than habit' [*presbyter et abbas habitu et uita monachi insignis*] and as the 'first teacher of the Faith to the Picts' [*primus doctor fidei Christianae transmontanis Pictis*].⁸ It could be argued that this is evidence of Bede's lack of knowledge concerning Columba. However, Bede fails to bestow upon Columba the more usual superlative epithets he normally reserves for his saints whether he includes details of their lives in the text of the *HE* or not. For example, of the other two saints he mentions within the context of this chapter on Columba, Bede calls Ninian, 'that most reverend and holy man' [*reuerentissimo et sanctissimo uiro*] and of Egbert he says, 'that most reverend and holy father' [*reuerentissimo et sanctissimo patre*] and that he was 'most learned in the Scriptures' [*doctissimus in scripturis*].⁹ Nor is the absence of eulogistic epithets determined by Columba being Irish, for Bede is quick to note that St. Fursa was a 'holy man', 'renowned in word and deed'.¹⁰ Consequently one must question how likely it was that Bede knew so little about Columba that he failed even to designate his

sanctity through such simple laudatory phrases. It is true Bede himself seems to imply that his knowledge concerning Columba was limited: "Some written records of his life and teachings are said to have been preserved by his disciples. Whatever he was himself..." [*de cuius uita et uerbis nonnulla a discipulis eius feruntur scripta haberi. Uerum qualiscumque fuerit ipse*].¹¹ Indeed, Wallace-Hadrill has interpreted this as Bede stating that though he had heard of written records of Columba's life kept by Iona he had not seen them.¹² Colgrave also assumed that Bede did not know of Adomnan's *Vita*.¹³ One could infer from this that Bede really was unaware of information on Columba. Nevertheless, one needs to remember Bede was not dependent on Adomnan alone, after all there may have been an earlier copy of Columba's *Vita* held either at Melrose or Lindisfarne upon which he could have drawn had he wanted.¹⁴ Moreover, Bede's sources of information were not just literary and, given Adomnan's visit to Jarrow in 689, the appointment of bishops to the see of Lindisfarne from Iona, and the other links between Northumbria and Iona, it is rather hard to believe that Bede's knowledge of Columba was so limited, unless he specifically chose to remain ignorant (a fact which in itself would indicate Bede's prejudice). Furthermore, the sentence which begins: *Uerum qualiscumque fuerit ipse*, in the context of this paragraph, could easily be interpreted as a disdainful comment on Columba's authority. Thus Bede was insinuating that 'despite what Columba was' (ie a monk in error) his successors did maintain and were distinguished in their monastic life. He does, of course, go on to reiterate that they too persisted in an irregular observance of Easter.

In Bede's account of Columba, I would argue that there is a distinct lack of customary enthusiasm for his saintly attributes that seems to be less connected to Columba's Irishness, as to Columba himself. If this is so one needs to bear it in mind when analysing the passage on Columba for it implies that Bede intended (if not expected) a more negative reading of this episode than either Goffart or Thacker have intimated. Thus, it is possible that Bede's reasons for mentioning the unusual constitution of Iona were not entirely positive ones. He states:

*Habere autem solet ipsa insula rectorem semper abbatem
presbyterum, cuius iuri et omnis prouincia et ipsi etiam episcopi
ordine inusitato debeant esse subiecti, iuxta exemplum primi doctoris
illius...*¹⁵

It would seem that Bede perhaps included this information to throw further into relief the point that Columba and Iona stood outside the universal church and, that, for Bede this needed to be emphasized. Certainly, in this case, even Thacker has to concede that evidence from Adomnan's *Vita Columbae*, "prompts the suspicion that the constitution of Iona may have been less odd than Bede thought" (or perhaps more accurately, "would like his readers to believe").¹⁶ Again, given the inter-monastic contacts it is hard to maintain the thought that Bede was unaware of his over-exaggeration of the situation.¹⁷

From this, then, there can be no doubt that there is a tension within the text concerning Columba and the constitution of Iona, and it seems to be caused by Bede's disapproval of this saint. As Campbell noted, in his *Commentary on Samuel*, Bede made it explicit that it is wrong publicly to denounce priests (even evil ones).¹⁸ Yet he also knew that any post-Theodorian studying his text would

see the clear contradiction between Ionan practice and the Theodorian diocesan arrangements. In this case, Bede did not make an overt criticism but given his stance on denouncing clerics one would hardly expect him to. Nevertheless, the sheer mention of such an irregularity was a statement of an unfavourable judgement - which rather than doing 'the best' for Iona, actually merely enhanced the sense of Ionan error.

Bede qualifies this point in his depiction of events at the Synod of Whitby. When examining this narrative episode, Goffart has argued that Bede removed all trace of condescension on the part of Oswiu towards Columba, which, he argues Stephanus intimated in the *Vita Wilfridi*.¹⁹ He stresses that Bede shifted the focus of the condescension from Oswiu to Wilfrid thereby emphasizing Wilfrid's insolence rather than being a comment of direct disapproval of Columba. However, the above interpretation of Bede's portrayal of Columba and Iona hints that Bede's intention was actually to undermine Columba's authority rather than just to abase Wilfrid. Thus Bede has Wilfrid assert that the Lord would deny knowing Columba and his followers if they chose to remain in error. Also, he has Wilfrid say:

“do you think that a handful of people in one corner of the remotest of islands is to be preferred to the universal Church of Christ which is spread throughout the world? And *even if* that Columba of yours - yes, and ours too, *if* he belonged to Christ was a holy man of mighty works...”²⁰

I have deliberately italicized the 'ifs' to denote that they should be read with the implication that there was some question as to whether Columba actually

belonged to Christ and from this, whether or not he was universally accepted as a saint. The contempt in these words is Bede's. Basically, he used Wilfrid in this instance as an agent to air his own views on the subject. By moving the focus from the lips of Oswiu to those of a saintly-bishop (however much personal dislike for him Bede felt) the words gained authority - for the words of a saint carried far more spiritual weight than the words of a king. The words that Bede placed in Wilfrid's mouth epitomized his own scorn for the Ionans. In fact, in comparison, Stephanus' account is far less condescending concerning Iona and Columba than Bede's consistent slights which seem to pervade his narrative.

Throughout his discussion of Columba and Ionan religious practice there is an incongruence. He could not omit an individual and a monastery that played so crucial a role in the establishment of Northumbrian Christianity, nor could he encourage his readers to imitate Columba and Iona's unorthodoxy. But nor could he openly criticize a monk-priest-saint. What the reader is left with, upon closer inspection of the material, is a sense that within the limits of Bede's own 'discretion' he deliberately set out to undermine the spiritual authority of Iona.

Such an undermining of spiritual authority through a direct association with irregular practice can also be seen in Bede's portrayal of Aidan and his successors. Immediately following the chapter on St. Columba Bede opens the next narrative episode with the words:

Ab hac ergo insula, ab horum collegio monachorum, ad prouinciam

*Anglorum institundam in Christo missus est Aidan.*²¹

Standing alone one could read these words as an implication of the greatness of Iona. However, when taken in the context of the paragraphs that precede it (ie that an unorthodox reckoning of Easter persisted amongst the community of Iona for 150 years and was only relinquished in 715) this seemingly innocuous connective phrase appears to be much less innocent. The emphasis is surely not ‘*what a great monastery*’ Aidan came from, but rather that the community from which Aidan came was in error and stood outside the universal church. Essentially, this sentence continued to establish that Aidan was attached to a monastic background of dissension.

In actuality Bede goes to considerable lengths to ensure that his audience cannot forget this fact. Thus though Bede introduces Aidan as ‘a man of outstanding gentleness, piety and moderation’ [*summae mansuetudinis et pietatis ac moderaminis*], he hastily qualifies the point by noting that Aidan’s zeal for God was not entirely according to knowledge [*quamvis non plene secundum scientiam*].²² This sentence is then followed by a clarification that the issue of his fault was, of course, the celebration of Easter. Indeed, here Bede persists in expressing the inauspicious fact of apparent Ionan ignorance with the words: *Quod an uerum sit, peritus quisque facillime cognoscit*.²³ This sentence hardly reads as the words of an individual making excuses for a particular circumstances. Rather, given Bede’s oft-noted distinction for discretion, one cannot help concluding that from the quill of Bede this was the nearest to an insult that he could get.

Throughout the sections of the text where Bede elaborates about Aidan he constantly reminds the reader of his error. Accordingly, after four chapters on Aidan's miracles (Book III: 14, 15, 16, 17) the observer is again faced with exposition on Aidan's Easter custom. Indeed, here one cannot help thinking that Bede, having spent so much time on attributes worth imitating, felt it was absolutely imperative that his audience did not forget this Aidan's irregularity, emphasizing with some force that it was something he heartily detested: *immo hoc multum detestans*.²⁴ Again in Book III:25 Aidan is mentioned in the context of the Easter issue, and whilst Bede makes it clear that this particular unorthodoxy was "patiently tolerated" during Aidan's lifetime, he made it equally obvious that it was intolerable after his death.²⁵

Nevertheless, where Aidan is concerned, there does appear to be a discernible tension in the text because it is hard not to infer that despite this issue Bede respected him. Yet, when examining the text one should remember that Bede's construction of the positives in regard to Aidan are inherently safe images, attainable to his readers, qualities worth imitating.²⁶

Inasmuch as Bede appears subjectively biased towards Aidan, it should not be overlooked that his characterizations are textual constructs and, in fact, it is only after Bede has thoroughly established his point concerning Ionan religious observance that he chose to move onto this fairly innocuous narrative portrayal of Aidan. Such descriptions are not necessarily paradoxical. Rather they cover two different aims of Bede's writing. When dealing with the Easter controversy Bede sought to guarantee that it was remembered that an unacceptable transgression of

practice was persistently maintained at Iona and then, consequently, at Lindisfarne, thereby undermining the spiritual authority of the Ionan confederation. However, he also desired to provide his audience with appropriate models of behaviour worth aspiring to. As a result of Aidan's closeness with the Northumbrian ruling house and his local status as a saint, Bede would have found it difficult to omit any mention of him. Once he had secured his initial point (which he had done so effectively in Bk. III: 3,4,5) there was no reason for him to avoid returning to the task he had established for himself in the Preface. At the same time Bede's fairly constant reiteration served to maintain the link between Iona and Aidan and may have been intended to remind readers that the early community at Lindisfarne, though in some ways propitious, did not have the same orthodox authority as monasteries without the connection (especially perhaps Monkwearmouth-Jarrow).

It may be true that where Aidan was concerned Bede offered a positive image and even attempted to explain Aidan's obvious error, but such acceptance is not present when he discusses Aidan's successors. For example, it was noted earlier that in his portrayal of Aidan in III:25, it is clear 'patient toleration' of Aidan's practice was acceptable whilst he lived because he was a saint. However, the implication of this statement could well be that it was unacceptable in his successors who were not saints. Error could and had to be tolerated in those already known for their sanctity but this was not the same for those who followed them. In this sense it was not Aidan who was held accountable by Bede but individuals such as Finan and Colman who chose to maintain the error in full knowledge that they were doing so. Consequently, in his comments on Finan he

notes how controversy arose over Finan's intransigence when confronted by Ronan.²⁷ Of Colman's actions at the Synod of Whitby too, Bede notes that he refused to be persuaded by the arguments of the orthodox Wilfrid.²⁸ Aidan had avoided such controversy but his successors when faced with disputation refused to concede that they were in the wrong. When reading of Iona (and its confederate house of Lindisfarne before the Synod of Whitby) it appears that Bede was intentionally attempting to weaken its authority in terms of its historical past.

In fact, on closer inspection of the *HE* it is clear that the Ionan confederation were not the only monastic sites to be the recipients of the subtle undermining treatment of Bede. In one sense by so conclusively establishing the depths of the Ionan error Bede managed to taint any of the monasteries subsequently founded before the Synod of Whitby using personnel either from Iona or, in the Northumbrian context, Lindisfarne. Indeed, Bede is at pains to remind the reader of these contacts, noting, for example, that in instituting his monastery at Lastingham, Cedd introduced religious observances according to the usage of Lindisfarne where he had been educated: *quod nunc Laestingaen uscatur, et religiosus moribus iuxta ritus Lindisfarnensium, uti educatus erat, instituit.*²⁹ Given that Bede had clarified in no uncertain terms that these customs were questionable the implication of this statement is obvious. Again, however, Bede tempers his inherent criticism by showing Cedd to be an upright, holy and wise man, *uirum sanctum et sapientem probumque moribus*, who chose for his monastery a remote site, and who had intercessionary powers after his death.³⁰ From a cursory reading of this chapter, Cedd's spiritual authority and that of his

monastery seems to be in no doubt. The reader, however, is not to forget the association with Lindisfarne and by implication what that entails. A similar conclusion can perhaps be drawn of Gilling (cf. III:24) and any of the other monasteries founded from drawing upon Lindisfarne in Northumbria before 664. Of course, given Lindisfarne's monopoly before Ecgfrith Bede was not in a position to do otherwise than record the links but the way he does this ensures that the observer knows just how unorthodox some of the Religious Observances of the Ionan confederation were.

It is apparent from the narrative concerning Fursa that Bede's treatment of the Irish before 664 is not entirely uniform. In his portrayal of St. Fursa Bede offers an indisputably favourable image of an Irish missionary who, having come to East Anglia in the 630's, must still have been practising customs in error of the Roman tradition. Nonetheless, Bede does not hint of this. Rather he focuses his vignette on noticing Fursa's virtues and his missionary activities: *multos et exemplo uirtutis et incitamento sermonis uel incredulos ad Christum conuertit uel iam credentes amplius in fide atque amore Christi confirmauit*;³¹ on Fursa's learning (*modicam lectionibus sacris simul et monasticis exhibebat disciplinis*) and on his vision of the angels showing him the fires of falsehood, covetousness, discord and injustice, which consume the world.³² He appears equally praising of Fursa's monastery at Cnobheresburg, noting that it was pleasantly situated on land given to him by the saintly King Sigeberht and subsequently endowed with even finer buildings and gifts by Anna and his nobles.³³ The absence of any insinuation of Fursa's possible Irish unorthodoxy is particularly well illustrated if one compares him with Bede's image of Aidan. Aidan, like Fursa, was an Irish

missionary given land by a king on which to build a monastery and from which to evangelize. However, as has already been shown, from the outset Aidan is introduced within the context of his error and the reader is consistently reminded of it. (This contradicts Alan Thacker's image of Aidan and Fursa as models of orthodox holiness.³⁴ Aidan may well be holy, his virtues inculcated by the church fathers, but his is a sanctity not without its unorthodoxy. The picture of Fursa, on the other hand, is noticeable for its lack of any irregularities.)

One could argue that because Bede had shown the existence of this unorthodoxy he relied on his audience transferring through association such non-conformity to Fursa. He certainly appears to have engineered such an inference when discussing other houses linked to Lindisfarne. However, as Fursa's monastery was an independent foundation without any stated Columban connection, one cannot help thinking that Bede would not have left his point implicit and, had he wanted his audience to know of unorthodoxy, he would have reiterated Irish irregularities. His omission in this case could well be then deliberate. This notwithstanding one could also suggest that as Bede's source for Fursa, the *Life of Saint Fursa*, did not dwell upon any unorthodoxies he was just following his evidence.³⁵ However, Bede, having outlined Archbishop Laurence's concerns about Irish practice, cannot have failed to notice that by implication it was likely Fursa followed Irish customs and that at least some of these customs were contrary to Rome.

Perhaps the key to understanding this inconsistency is the geographical location of the saints and monasteries in question. Iona and, more particularly, Lindisfarne

were competitors for the patronage of the Northumbrian kings. Cnobheresburg in East Anglia was not. Within the *HE* Bede made a concerted attempt to remind his audience that the initial foundations of both Iona and Lindisfarne, rivals to his own monastery at Monkwearmouth in terms of patronage and spiritual authority in Northumbria, were fundamentally unorthodox (despite the apparent sanctity of their founders). This is in stark contrast to Bede's portrayal elsewhere of his own monastery, as I shall be showing later, which he shows to be conspicuously orthodox in all regards. Outside the geographical proximity of the Northumbrian kingdom Bede could afford to be more praising of other monasteries and their saints, so Fursa is glossed over as a model of holiness, his monastery (for as long as it existed) a model of a royal foundation. The implication of this argument is, of course, that in the text of the *HE* Bede appears to be motivated by monastic rivalry, subtly abasing the Ionan confederation as part of a broader attempt to increase the superiority of his own monastery. One of Bede's underlying agendas, therefore, may have been the desire to play down the status of other Northumbrian monasteries whilst, as an ecclesiastical historian, being bound to include their saints and some of their traditions. This is important when one considers recent attempts to elucidate the hidden agenda in Bede's *HE*. Goffart has argued that the *HE* was essentially a piece of ecclesiastical rhetoric produced as a direct response to Stephanus' *Vita Wilfridi*, relating in particular to the metropolitan status of York.³⁶ Kirby, on the other hand, places the initiation of the production of the *HE* far more amidst the aims of Albinus and Canterbury rather than Wilfrid and York.³⁷ What both have in common is a focus on episcopal rather than monastic authority. Though one cannot deny the extent of the influence of episcopal politics within Anglo-Saxon Northumbria one needs to

remember that the rise in the cult of the saints and the consequent textual production that accompanied it was predominantly a monastic affair and, as I have shown in the previous chapter, had far more to do with the relationship between the monasteries and their respective royal patrons than just with episcopal needs. A hidden monastic agenda within Bede's *historiae* texts is then more than likely.

If this is so one would expect to find such an undermining of other monastic houses within Northumbria in Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica*. In the preceding chapter I suggested that Whitby in the late 670's, early 680's was being established, under the direction of Ecgfrith, as a monastic royal centre with a conscious shift taking place towards a more 'Roman' image. The increasingly close relationship between Ecgfrith, Theodore and Hilda as evidenced by Ecgfrith's choice of Bosa as bishop of York in Wilfrid's place in 678, the emphasis within the hagiographical material of Hilda's relationship to Edwin and baptism by Paulinus, the revelation and subsequent translation of Edwin's relics under the auspices of Aelfflaed, and the later production of a *vita* concerning Gregory the Great, all intimate that Whitby's identification with the Ionan faction in 664 had been deemphasized and Whitby's loyalties reoriented. Nonetheless, within Bede's portrayal of Hilda and Whitby there are a number of inconsistencies that suggest Bede might have deliberately been leaving the reader with a sense of ambiguity concerning this change.

In his portrayal of Hilda Bede clearly creates a tension for the reader. Firstly, before one even reads the vignette of Hilda's life, Bede has identified her with the anti-Wilfridian, pro-Ionan faction of the Synod held in her monastery in 664:

*Hilda abbatissa cum suis in parte Scottorum.*³⁸ Secondly, in his sketch of Hilda's abbatial role at Hartlepool he makes an incontrovertible association between her and Aidan. Thus, it was bishop Aidan who called her from East Anglia (*Deinde ab Aidano episcopo patriam reuocata*) initially to a site on the Wear and then to Hartlepool.³⁹ Moreover, the rule she set about establishing there was *in all respects* like that which she had been taught by many learned men, particularly Aidan (*mox hoc regulari uita per omnia, prout a doctis uiris discere poterat ordinare curabat. Nam et episcopus Aidan...*).⁴⁰ Bede also records the rule Hilda subsequently established at Whitby was the same as at Hartlepool - by implication associating it with the Ionan/Lindisfarne tradition. Here again then would seem to be Bede's insinuation of unorthodoxy in the foundation of the way of life at Whitby with, one assume, the attendant undermining of its status. Yet at the same time links with Edwin and Paulinus are recorded at the beginning of this chapter, as is Hilda's desire to pursue her vocation in Frankia, and (as with Aidan) she is a model of virtuousness. The apparent ambiguities of loyalty in Bede's portrayal of Hilda led Wallace-Hadrill to conclude that this account was not consciously pro-Celtic.⁴¹ At one level he was correct in this observation - the account is not pro-Celtic. Arguably the references to Hilda's connections with the Synod of Whitby and Aidan are rather, a conscious effort on Bede's part to taint yet another great Northumbrian monastic house with a stigma he went to great lengths to show his own one did not have.

In this context Bede's reticence to indicate the apparently close relations between Theodore and Hilda in the late 670's is also pertinent. In his narrative concerning

Hilda one could only link Theodore indirectly to Hilda through the bishops her monastery produced. Thus Bede notes that Otfar, in his desire to reach greater heights of scriptural learning, went to Kent to join Archbishop Theodore.⁴² However, the implication of the *Vita Wilfridi's* chapter concerning Pope John's letter of judgement to Aethilred and Aldfrith concerning Wilfrid, was that Hilda and Theodore had a more direct relationship.⁴³ If Bede had made more of this shift in Whitby's orientation towards Canterbury's desires, its 'orthodox connection' would have been more visible and its apparent Ionan/Lindisfarne taint diminished. Of course, one could argue that Bede was merely being discreet to protect his image of Theodore who, after all, was judged against by the Pope on this occasion. Alternatively, one could posit the theory that had Bede mentioned these events it would have stressed rather than deemphasized Hilda's pro-Ionan sympathies connecting her emissaries to Rome with a vendetta begun because 'her side' was defeated at the Synod by Wilfrid in 664. Nonetheless, it is more plausible that in 678 Hilda had the vested interest of her newly consecrated bishop, Bosa, at heart and was, in fact, supporting Theodore's aims of dividing large episcopal sees rather than attacking the pro-Roman, Wilfrid. Essentially, by introducing apparent inconsistencies in terms of royal and episcopal connections into the description of Hilda, Bede, as he had done with Aidan, offered the reader an image of a virtuous saint with one small but important flaw. This flaw by association introduced an element of unorthodoxy into the history of the monastery that at the same time augmented the authority of any monastery that did not have it. Underneath Bede's models of virtuous behaviour lies a thinly-veiled theme of monastic hierarchies, with his own firmly placed at the top.⁴⁴

Bede's treatment of Whitby as a monastic competitor whose status, if compared with his own, needed to be played down was not limited purely to Hilda and her pro-Ionan connections. The absence of any acknowledgement on Bede's part of a cult of the saint-king Edwin at Whitby is also part of his tendency to minimize Whitby's authority. In making this statement I am inclined to agree with Goffart that Bede did know of the Whitby *Vita Gregorii* but chose, except for two stories contained within it, to ignore it.⁴⁵ It is arguable that anxieties concerning Bede's knowledge of this text, aroused by the omission of the English traditions surrounding Gregory the Great in the *HE* are easily calmed. Such omissions relate less to Bede's dearth of knowledge of the text and more to his desire to link his narrative concerning Gregory with the Roman sources at his command in the library of Monkwearmouth-Jarrow. In essence, the Whitby *Vita* lacked authority in terms of being a credible witness for Gregory, and credible, if not always accurate, witnesses were, as shall be shown in chapter 4, crucial to Bede's method of *historia* construction. Thus, rather than drawing on 'new' traditions about Gregory, Bede depended instead on the *Liber Pontificalis*, some of Gregory's own works, particularly his epistle to Leander of Seville which he prefixed to the *Moralia*, and also on the Prologue to Gregory's *Dialogues*.⁴⁶ However, whilst a Whitby author may not have seemed an authentic enough witness for Gregory, the same cannot be said of Edwin. This would suggest that Bede disregarded Edwin's sanctification for a reason.

To identify this reason one need only return to some of Goffart's observations concerning Edwin. As he commented, 'Edwin epitomized the earliest Roman

evangelization of Northumbria'.⁴⁷ As such, his cult at Whitby, if fostered within the *HE* would have overshadowed by priority, not so much Wilfrid's acts (as Goffart thought), as the deeds of Biscop and the status of the monastery Bede wished to be viewed as 'Northumbria's most Roman' house. Within this understanding of Bede's portrayal of the initial Northumbrian evangelists one can get a hint as to why James the Deacon's role in the Christianizing of Northumbria is understated in the *HE*. Goffart has intimated that James is of importance to Bede, who uses him to offer a 'gripping proof of continuity' of Roman practice in Northumbria.⁴⁸ However, in fact, there is nothing legendary about Bede's picture of James and Wallace-Hadrill was drawn to conclude that, for Bede, James merited no more than an affectionate reference.⁴⁹ Yet James had all of the qualities of a potential hero for the *HE*. He was, according to Bede, a man of industry and nobility in Christ and the Church (*uirum utique industrium ac nobilem in Christo et in ecclesia*), a saintly evangelist who remained at York following Edwin's death and Paulinus's return to Kent and an individual who kept the true Easter and was, for Bede, on the 'right side' at the Synod of Whitby.⁵⁰ Yet except for a few platitudes the reader is left knowing very little of James and on the one occasion where Bede could have elaborated on James's influence in Northumbria he actually understates it. Therefore in Book II:20 Bede does not emphasize that James was the inaugural singing master to bring the Roman form of Church music to Northumbria, preferring instead to seem to give this honour to Aeddi, the man invited to Northumbria by Wilfrid. Indeed, in IV:2 James is portrayed as an exception, with Aeddi clearly being singled out as the first singing master: *primusque, excepto Iacobo de quo supra diximus, cantandi magister Nordanhymbrorum ecclesiis Aeddi cognomento Stephanus fuit.*⁵¹ In the *HE*

James is an understated, almost incidental feature. One can perhaps say that he remained in relative obscurity because it did not suit Bede's purpose to give him prominence. For Bede, it was better to focus on Paulinus, the individual who did not stay in Northumbria following Edwin's death, and whose authority, consequently, posed no threat to Bede's attempt to emphasize the greatness of his own monastic foundation.

In fact, it would appear that where Whitby was concerned Bede further minimized the reader's knowledge of the extent of its authority by omitting any allusions within the *HE* to the influence Aelfflaed had following Hilda's death. Stephanie Hollis has suggested that Bede's omissions in regard to Aelfflaed are evidence of his considerable hostility to her particularly because he perceived her as not fitting within his rigidly orthodox view of women religious.⁵² However, a modification of this argument provides an equally plausible hypothesis. It is clear that Stephanus does indeed seem to give a more substantial glimpse of Aelfflaed's role in Northumbrian politics than Bede. In chapter 43 he indicates that in 686/7 she was of enough importance to merit Theodore urging her to make peace with Wilfrid.⁵³ Stephanus also implies that she was present at Aldfrith's deathbed, bearing witness to his desire for his successor to be at peace with Wilfrid.⁵⁴ What is of importance here is less the image of Aelfflaed as a witness which (as shall be shown later) could be a rhetorical device, as the fact that Aelfflaed is being associated with the court. This is further emphasized in his subsequent portrayal of Aelfflaed at the Synod of Nidd in 706. Here he depicts Aelfflaed as: *semper totius prouinciae consolatrix optimaque consiliatrix*, and has her give a speech witnessing Aldfrith's final wishes.⁵⁵ He further shows her as acting as counsel to

the bishops at this Synod.⁵⁶ It is clear from this evidence, as Thacker has observed, that after Hilda's death Whitby still played a role in the career of Wilfrid and that Aelfflaed had a powerful role in Northumbrian ecclesiastical events.⁵⁷ It is also clear from both the Anonymous *Vita Cuthberti* and Bede's as well, that Aelfflaed had sufficient autonomy to turn to Cuthbert rather than York in the 680s to dedicate her church at Osingdun.⁵⁸ From the hagiographical evidence the picture of Aelfflaed one gets is of an autonomous, royal abbess with a role outside the confines of her monastery. In this it is apparent that the monastery of Whitby in the c680's-710 was authoritative and closely linked with the royal family. Indeed, Thacker has even gone so far as to suggest that Whitby more than York seemed to be the focus of the diocese during this period.⁵⁹

If one depended purely on Bede's *HE*, however, it would be hard not to assume that apart from the production of bishops Bosa and Wilfrid II, following Hilda's death, the monastery settled into a much less public role. Aelfflaed is mentioned only twice in the *HE*. In Book III:24, where Bede relates her consecration as a nun and entrance into Hilda's monastery at Hartlepool and then Whitby.⁶⁰ And, in Book IV:26, where he notes that she and her mother presided over Whitby when Trumwine was forced to retire there following Ecgfrith's death at Nechtansmere.⁶¹ This latter reference hints at the continued importance of Whitby but Bede appears to have deliberately chosen to suppress any implication of Whitby's greatness during the abbatial rule of Aelfflaed. She certainly is not mentioned in connection with either Wilfrid or Aldfrith, and even the association with Cuthbert that Bede described in his *Vita Cuthberti* is absent. Nonetheless, I am inclined to disagree with Hollis that this was due to 'hostility' as much as a

desire to ensure that the audience's memory of Whitby was manipulated in such a way that it did not seem to have the same status as Monkwearmouth-Jarrow. By utilizing Hilda as a model, with the initial stigma from 664 attached to her, Bede kept the record of Whitby firmly in the period before it fully embraced a more 'Roman' image, connecting itself to Edwin, producing literature of Gregory the Great and housing Eanflaed (one of the Roman protagonists in the conflict of 664) as its joint president alongside Aelfflaed. Bede's portrayal then appears to be affected as much by the desire to augment his own monastery's status as out of a pseudo-anti-feminist reaction to a powerful woman.

If elevating the status of Monkwearmouth-Jarrow through a sophisticated manipulation of discretion, omission and insinuation on the one hand, and the exploitation of specific praise of his own monastery on the other, was feature of the *HE*, one would expect to find that Bede did not only limit his machinations to those individuals with the obvious stigma of unorthodox practice. One would expect to find that, in comparison with Biscop and Monkwearmouth-Jarrow even other 'Roman' identified saints and monasteries were subject to this treatment. James the Deacon is a perfect example of this, as apparently is Aelfflaed and the post-Hilda Whitby. Wilfrid, and his foundations at Hexham, Ripon and his restoration at York can also be viewed in a similar light.

Within the narrative of the *HE* the reader gains very little insight into the extent of status of Wilfrid's monasteries at Ripon and Hexham, either in their relation to royalty or as focal points for the cult of Wilfrid. The first mention of Ripon occurs within the chapter concerning the Synod of Whitby and here Bede is

content to note that Alhfrith gave Wilfrid forty hides of land which he had previously donated to monks following the Ionan tradition⁶². In his later, brief *vita* of Wilfrid in V:19 Bede is more specific about this grant, noting that Alhfrith gave Wilfrid ten hides at Stamford and thirty at Ripon.⁶³ Bede also, incidentally, records that Cuthbert's successor to the solitary life on the Farne, Oethilwald, was initially a monk at Ripon.⁶⁴ Yet, pertinently, in this chapter, though Bede commented of Oethilwald's worthy deeds whilst he was a monk at Ripon (*qui multis annis in monasterio, quod dicitur Inhrypum, acceptum presbyteratus officium condignis gradu ipse consecrabat actibus*), he fails to elaborate on these deeds, choosing instead to focus on the miraculous powers Oethilwald exhibited on the Farne.⁶⁵ Moreover, when it comes to mentioning Wilfrid's death and, subsequent burial at Ripon Bede passes swiftly over it. Firstly, he notes that he was carried from Oundle and buried at Ripon with the honour befitting so great a bishop and, secondly, he repeats this brief notice later in the same chapter only this time adding Wilfrid's epitaph.⁶⁶ In Bede's notice there is no mention, as there is in the *Vita Wilfridi*, of the miracles associated with Wilfrid's relics, nor of the white arc in the sky that started from the place of Wilfrid's burial.⁶⁷ Indeed, in Bede's account of Wilfrid the thaumaturgical features are manifestly absent.

A similar restraint can be viewed in Bede's references to Hexham. If one was to depend on the *HE* for information concerning Hexham during Wilfrid's lifetime, all one would glean would be that the Hexham monks annually held a vigil for Oswald's soul at Heavenfield, that one of their number, Bothelm had been cured through the intercession of Oswald, and that the episcopal see based there changed hands frequently.⁶⁸ Without the *Vita Wilfridi* the observer would be

completely unaware of the fact that Hexham was founded on land donated by Bede's epitome of virginal sainthood, Aethelthryth, and that the estate was 'extensive.'⁶⁹ Indeed, as with the omission of the secular founder of Whitby, one cannot help wondering if this was an act of deliberate literary suppression on Bede's part in order to underplay the initial status of Hexham.⁷⁰ Arguably, of course, one could suggest that if this was the impression Bede wanted to create he would have been more consistent, omitting the details of Ripon and Selsey's endowments. However, it is clear Bede had access to the *Vita Wilfridi* and, therefore, would have known about Aethelthryth's gift.⁷¹ Even so, in the passage where he specifically links Wilfrid with Aethelthryth's veiling there is no hint of any practical reciprocity of the friendship on her part.⁷² To understand Bede's silence here one needs to consider the geographical placing of Hexham. In many regards as the main Bernician monastic foundation other than Lindisfarne and Monkwearmouth, it was a definite contender for the king's patronage and, as such, as much competition as the other monasteries Bede had so carefully described. Acknowledging that it was initially endowed by so esteemed a saint would have guaranteed a social standing Bede perhaps did not want to emphasize. The author of the *Vita Wilfridi*, on the other hand, most certainly wanted it remembered. The grant of Ripon from Alhfrith also had its own status, although as a sub-king his gifts would not have carried as much weight as that of a royal saint. The endowment of Selsey by King Aethelwealh, moreover, was geographically distant enough not to be a cause of concern for Bede.

Indeed, this point endorses the observation that within the *HE* Wilfrid's actions are only unequivocally positive when he is discussed in relation to Sussex. In

other words, when Wilfrid's authority outside Northumbria was being examined it was acceptable to Bede to enhance it. Within Northumbria, however, despite appearing repetitively in the pages of the *HE*, Bede does understate Wilfrid's power - especially any related to sanctity - and by doing this minimizes the role of Ripon and Hexham. This is of importance for it is clear Bede recognized the extent of Wilfrid's influence - purely in quantitative terms. It is interesting that Wilfrid is mentioned far more than Cuthbert. Bede was well aware that Bishop Wilfrid had been an eminent prelate but he appears not to have accorded him any image of saintliness. Bede's *Vita Cuthberti* in *HE*, reads more like hagiography, whereas his obituary of Wilfrid is exactly that - an obituary - and reads merely like a catalogue of the major events in Wilfrid's life. Apart from one vision he is accredited with no miracles by Bede, nor is he spoken of in the same terms of reverence as, for example, Cuthbert. Thus, if one compares the terminology Bede uses for Wilfrid with that for Cuthbert the contrast is stark. Of Wilfrid, Bede uses terminology such as "the most reverend Bishop Wilfrid" (*reuerentissimum*); "the venerable Bishop Wilfrid" (*uenerabilis*); "Bishop Wilfrid of blessed memory" (*beatae memoriae*), or just plain bishop Wilfrid.⁷³ Of Cuthbert, Bede's terminology is much more personal. In the preface he refers to him as 'the most holy father Bishop Cuthbert' (*sanctissimo patre et antistite Cudbercto*); and also, 'Bishop of Lindisfarne the holy and venerable Cuthbert' (*uirum sanctum et uenerabilem*); Cuthbert the 'venerable servant of the Lord' (*uenerabilis Domini famulus*); 'the man of God' (*uiri Dei*); "blessed Cuthbert" (*beato*); 'most reverend Father' (*pater reuerentissimus*) and 'blessed Father Cuthbert' (*benedicti patris*).⁷⁴ Bede attributes the title, Father, only once to Wilfrid.⁷⁵ In Bede's depiction of Cuthbert there is no doubt of Cuthbert's sanctity, he is portrayed as holy, as are

his actions ('As bishop he followed the example of the blessed Apostles and enhanced his dignity by his holy actions..').⁷⁶ Wilfrid is not seen in such lofty terms - he may have been recognised as an eminent prelate by Bede but his portrayal does not convey any emphasis on his sanctity. In this sense it is not so much that he escapes any suspicion of greatness rather that any hint of saintliness eludes him. Indeed, had Cuthbert been present with the South Saxons during the drought and famine conditions noted by Bede in the context of Wilfrid's evangelization, one cannot help thinking that a miracle rather than practical measures would have brought abundance!

Bede's portrayal of Wilfrid, then, plays down his sanctity and his description of Hexham and Ripon during Wilfrid's lifetime is deliberately brief. From the *HE* the observer would not get a sense of the wealth or authority of Ripon or Hexham in the late seventh century. In this context it is also poignant that in Book V:19 Bede disregarded any recognition of Wilfrid's restoration programme at York, being content instead to record that Oswald finished building the church there.⁷⁷ Just as Bede abases the Ionan connected monasteries by association with unorthodox practice, just as he omits critical information concerning the extent of Whitby's influence, so he finds a way to ensure that, for his audience at least, the written memory of the foundations of Wilfrid was limited, his sanctity minimized.

Iona, Lindisfarne, Whitby, Hexham, Ripon, York and possibly Lastingham all play a role in Bede's *HE* but their authority is subtly noted to be deficient in some regard. All of these monasteries can be viewed as competitors in the desire for royal patronage and spiritual authority of Monkwearmouth. However, before this

chapter proceeds to examine how Bede characterized his own monastery as ‘best of the best’ one must acknowledge the exceptions to the rule. There are three Northumbrian bishops associated with monasteries where it is difficult to see Bede’s negative manipulations at work. The first of these is, of course, Cuthbert. Bede’s portrayal of Cuthbert in the *HE*, although limited, is unhesitatingly favourable. Indeed, in this context it is interesting that within the *HE* Bede omits mention of Cuthbert’s period at Ripon. As he had made it clear elsewhere that Ripon was initially a house founded on Ionan principles and that the monks, rather than amend their ways, had been forced to leave, pre-Wilfridian Ripon was a source of stigma, obviously one Bede at least in his portrayal of Cuthbert in the *HE*, did not want emphasized. As Wallace-Hadrill commented, in his *HE* image Bede’s Cuthbert was a Romanized product of the Ionan discipline.⁷⁸ The allusion to Sulpicius Severus’s *Life of St. Martin* and the setting of Lindisfarne in a Gregorian context all created an image of orthodoxy at Lindisfarne which Bede had previously eschewed.⁷⁹ One can postulate that having already ensured that Lindisfarne’s earliest foundations would be remembered for their irregular practice, Bede no longer felt it necessary to continue to imply Lindisfarne’s non-conformity. However, it is also worth considering that in the case of Cuthbert, his sanctity transcended even monastic competitiveness. Cuthbert’s uncorrupt status testified that his virtues were worthy of sanctity and on this occasion Cuthbert’s life was too impressive even to hint at unorthodoxy.

The same can perhaps be said of the second of Bede’s exceptions, John of Beverley, Bishop of Hexham. In Book V, chapters 2-7, Bede offered another image of unequivocal sanctity. John was noted as a *uir sanctus* with miraculous

powers of healing; helping a dumb youth speak, saving the nun, Cwenburh, at Watton from illness, curing both the wife of the *comes*, Puch, and the servant of the *comes* Addi as well as helping one of his clergy recover from an accident.⁸⁰ In his description of John, Bede brought status to Beverley in a form that he did not use unhesitatingly with other Northumbrian houses, and again one is faced with the possibility that his miraculous powers were just too great to be ignored. (Of course, it is also pertinent that having been bishop of Hexham until 721 memories of John were comparatively recent.)

The third individual who Bede avoided associating with stigma or abasing was Acca. Thus he is shown as a companion of St. Willibrord; as a source of information, and as a confidant of Wilfrid.⁸¹ However, it is in Book V:20 that one can see the extent to which Bede admired Acca. This chapter reads like a chapter from Bede's *Historia Abbatum*. Acca is credited with enriching the fabric of the Church at Hexham with all kinds of decoration and works of art (*aedificium multifario decore ac mirificis*), with gathering relics of the blessed apostles and martyrs (*adquisitis undecumque reliquiis beatorum apostolorum et martyrum*) and establishing chapels.⁸² He, also like Benedict Biscop in the *HA*, is commended for building up a large and noble library of histories of the martyrs as well as other ecclesiastical books (*Sed et historias passiones eorum, una cum ceteris ecclesiasticis uoluminibus, summa industria congregans, amplissimam ibi ac nobilissimam bibliothecam fecit*).⁸³ He, again like Biscop, is acknowledged by Bede for zealously providing sacred vessels, lamps and other objects of the same kind of adornment of the house of God (*necnon et uasa sancta et luminaria aliaque huiusmodi, quae ad ornatum domus Dei pertinent, studiosissime*

parauit).⁸⁴ Moreover, similarly to Biscop once more, he is noted for bringing a Gregorian chanter to Hexham and for going to Rome.⁸⁵ As I shall be showing in a following chapter the recording of the acquisitions gained by an abbot or bishop for their church was an exploitation of their resources in order to augment the status of that church. In the case of the *HE* Bede's depictions, whilst at times commenting on the building materials of a particular church, refrain from elaborating on the ecclesiastical fabric in the manner he does with Acca in this chapter, or in the *HA*. This association with the material wealth of Hexham does not underplay its authority, it emphasizes it and is in this sense atypical when compared with Bede's illustrations of Iona, Lindisfarne, Whitby, York, Ripon and Hexham during Wilfrid's episcopacy.

The reason for this difference is perhaps simple. Acca was Bede's bishop, patron and contemporary and, consequently, not an appropriate individual for any minimization. However, Bede perhaps gives a hint of why he favours Acca in the text of this chapter. Bede makes it clear that Acca was a learned theologian, as Colgrave says, untainted (most pure) in his confession of the catholic faith and thoroughly familiar with the rules of ecclesiastical custom (*Quomodo etiam in litteris sanctis doctissimus et in catholicae fidei confessione castissimus, in ecclesiasticae quoque institutiones regulis sollertissimus extiterat*).⁸⁶ Acca's purity of Catholicism surely refers to the fact he had no direct Lindisfarne/Iona connections (which, after all, even Wilfrid had, having spent his noviciate at Lindisfarne whilst its Easter practices would still have been in place). Bede elucidates that Acca was brought up by the Whitby 'product' of Bosa at York (*utpote qui a pueritia in clero sanctissimi ac Deo dilecti Bosa Eboracensis*

episcopi nutritus atque eruditus est), not, therefore, under the initial tutelage of the Irish or even Wilfrid.⁸⁷ Acca, like Biscop, is an unadulterated, orthodox clergyman and as such Bede has nothing but respect for him. Wallace-Hadrill commented that it was remarkable how closely Acca's achievements at Hexham seem to parallel those of Wilfrid.⁸⁸ In fact, what is remarkable, firstly, is that in terms of the depiction of Hexham in the *HE* at least, Acca's achievements seem greater than Wilfrid's (after all if the reader was dependent on Bede alone one would have no idea of Wilfrid's relic collecting and church embellishment). Secondly, that Bede creates an image of Acca, that actually corresponds closely with that of the founder of his own monastery.

Nevertheless, within the Northumbrian sections of the *HE* the depictions used in these three cases are exceptional in their unlimitedly positive portrayal. It is only when one turns to Bede's portrayal of Biscop, Ceolfrith and Monkwearmouth-Jarrow in the *HE* that the cause of his literary manipulations becomes evident. Whilst the pages of the *HE* are not overflowing with information concerning Monkwearmouth-Jarrow one needs to take two points into consideration. Firstly, having already completed the *Historia Abbatum* c.716 Bede did not need to reiterate what he had already established in text-form elsewhere. Secondly, a key theme in the *HE* appears to be the orthodoxy of the Anglo-Saxons, especially in terms of religious observances in Northumbria. Whilst Bede was clearly at pains to record the peculiar customs of the Ionan tradition in the *HE*, he went to equal lengths to show his own monastery as a champion of the Roman ones. His main reference to Biscop, for example, came in the context of those individuals who attended Theodore's Synod at Hatfield (itself a record of the freedom of the taint

of heresy in the English church). Thus, having noted the presence of the aforementioned Roman cantor, John, Bede elaborated that he had come to Britain at the command of the Pope and under the guidance of Biscop.⁸⁹ The connotation of closeness between Biscop and Pope Agatho is noticeable. Moreover, by staying at Monkwearmouth, John made this alliance tangibly visible. The effect of this and John's own reputation as a cantor in terms of the monastery's standing in the Northumbrian ecclesiastical community should not be understated. Bede, furthermore, enlarged this link between Biscop and the Pope by reiterating that the monastery had gained privileges from him. This part of the *HE*, however, is derived mainly from the *HA*, therefore restating what his audience could find in the earlier text. Nonetheless, Bede does add to the *HA* material in this chapter of the *HE*, informing his reader that John was not just sent to instruct in singing, he was also to inquire into the beliefs of the English church.⁹⁰ The point was that the Pope had seen fit to place his inquisitor not under the guidance of Wilfrid, nor Hilda, but to give the honour to the untainted catholic, Biscop, and his monastery.

Through his portrayal of Biscop in the *Historia Abbatum* and in the *Historia Ecclesiastica*, then, Bede augmented his monastery's standing by stressing its orthodox affiliations. Where the *HE* is concerned the same can be said of the information surrounding Ceolfrith. In the *HE* Bede's depiction of Ceolfrith's response to King Nechtan's request for assistance concerning both the Easter and tonsure issues acts like a continuation of the *HA*. In this chapter of Book V Bede picks up a theme he began in his narrative of Biscop's orthodoxy and shows how Ceolfrith took it to new heights. In V:21 the inclusion of Ceolfrith's letter

provides evidence for the influence of Monkwearmouth-Jarrow in enabling the Picts under Nechtan to fully accept the Roman customs.⁹¹ It also indicates that Monkwearmouth-Jarrow supplied builders to construct an ecclesiastical edifice in the Roman manner of stone.⁹² Moreover, it shows the role Ceolfrith played in persuading Adomnan to follow Roman practices.⁹³ By incorporating this letter into the *HE* Bede categorically illustrated that his monastery, rather than any other Northumbrian foundation, had successfully taken orthodoxy to the Picts and even to an abbot of Iona. By implication Bede's Ceolfrith had removed the Picts from the influence of Iona and brought them to submit not only to St. Peter in Rome but also to St. Peter's at Monkwearmouth. The triumphalism in this chapter is unmistakable.

Within the text of the *HE*, therefore, it is evident that Bede employed methods of narrative construction that deliberately favoured his own monastic institution at the expense of others in Northumbria. Arguably Bede reflected his own sense of Monkwearmouth's monastic superiority, utilizing material in a manner that would guarantee his audience would remember some points in Anglo-Saxon history more than others. This should perhaps not surprise the modern reader. Such a technique of memory manipulation was not something new to Bede. It is patent from his information concerning the apostate kings, Osric and Eanfrith, that there was already an established tradition of omission to ensure the abolition of the memory of individuals.⁹⁴ As far as is possible to tell, Bede just took this to rather more sophisticated heights than before.

Bede's desire to augment his own monastery within the text of the *HE* could in the first instance have been merely to meet the needs of his own community in terms of his audience. As was shown in chapter 1 the gift of the manuscript itself would have augmented Jarrow's status and the content may actually have been less important to secular recipients as to ecclesiastical ones. It could have also played its part in a long running attempt by the monasteries in Northumbria to augment their status by implying that they were more orthodox than any of the others. In his compilation of the *HE* it is clear that Bede brought his own monastery into closer association with Canterbury, and as Dr. Kirby has noted this relationship more than any other could have inspired the first 'edition' of the *HE*.⁹⁵

However, the desire to impress an external influence after the initial 'publication' should not be ruled out. Here I am referring to the second edition of the *HE*, represented by the c-group of manuscripts and possibly produced in 734.⁹⁶ It is plausible that this second recension should be seen as a text directly linked to the wishes upon which Bede elaborated in his letter to Egbert, bishop of York. Throughout the first chapters I have attempted to argue that the cult of saints and the literature that developed from it in Northumbria related in part to the augmentation of a monastery's status. In terms of orthodoxy and lack of conflict, Monkwearmouth could ostensibly show a standing second to none. It was linked neither with the Ionan schismatics, nor were its abbots remembered for their turbulent relationship with the ruling family. However, there was one office of prestige that Monkwearmouth-Jarrow did not have, that of a bishop. As I noted in chapter 2 at the Synod of Nidd the inference one seems to get from the *Vita*

Wilfridi is that only abbeys with bishops attended, except of course for Whitby, who was represented by the daughter of a previous king.⁹⁷ There is no record of Ceolfrid being present and it is hard not to conclude that on this occasion Monkwearmouth-Jarrow's lack of a directly associated bishop may have led to their exclusion. I realise that this is a highly speculative point, but given Bede's attachment to the creation of new bishoprics in his letter to Egbert is it inconceivable that the production of a subsequent edition of the *Historia Ecclesiastica*, with its focus on an orthodoxy Theodore would have been proud of, was actually designed to raise Monkwearmouth-Jarrow's profile to the extent that if a new diocese were to be created its focal point would be this monastery?

This would certainly make sense of Bede's comments in chapter 9 of his letter to Egbert in which he argued that the Church of Northumbria would be put into better condition with the consecration of new bishops: *Qua propter uelim sollerter illum admoneas, ut in diebus uestris statum nostrae gentis ecclesiasticum in melius, quam hactenus fuerat, instaurare curetis. Quod non alio magis, ut mihi uidetur, potest ordine perfici, quam si plures nostrae genti consecrentur antistites.*⁹⁸ This was not just a Gregorian or Theodoran desire being expressed, it was possibly also the wish of Bede's community. This is perhaps emphasized by Bede's subsequent proposal that the new See should be based at a monastery and that the monastery should be able to elect one of their own number to be bishop, who in turn would exercise episcopal authority over both the monastery and the locality: *Quapropter commodum duxerim, habito maiori concilio et consensu, pontificali simul et regali edicto prospiciatur locus aliquis monasteriorum, ubi sedes fiat episcopalis. Et ne forte abbas uel monachi*

*huic decreto contraire ac resistere temptauerint, detur illis licentia, ut de suis ipsi eligant eum, qui episcopus ordinetur, et adiacentium locorum, quotquot ad eandem diocesim pertineant, una cum ipso monasterio curam gerat episcopalem.*⁹⁹ Bede's assurance to Egbert that this would bring him metropolitan status should be read, therefore, less as a sign of any difficulty in Egbert's gaining of the pallium than as a subtle verbal incentive to encourage the bishop to undertake the aspirations of Bede's community.

Chapter 4:

Bede's Approach to the Genre of *Historia*

The preceding chapters establish interpretations of the *historiae* of late seventh and early eighth century Northumbria within the framework of analysis most common to modern empirical history. One uses evidence from the texts to recreate the overall historical context within which the writings were produced; the second, the possible political agenda that specifically motivated Bede as indicated by sub-text evident in the *Historia Ecclesiastica*. However, in many regards these interpretations suit the modern audience of history far more than they might Bede's. They claim objectivity, focus largely on 'secular' matters and principally avoid the question of whether or not we as non-monastic, lay people living in a thoroughly modern, post-enlightenment world can accurately represent and interpret events from texts written within quite a different political, social, and religious milieu.

This chapter aims to examine Bede's comprehension of genre in terms of how he classified *historia*, and consequently, what generic boundaries and traditions he worked within. By examining this the chapter will be seeking to establish both the extent to which Bede deliberately chose to cite his *historiae* texts within traditions established by Patristic forefathers and the extent of specificity Bede exhibits concerning boundaries, the insights this can offer to his material and the consequences this might have on both his audience's and our expectations of *historia*.

The influence on a text made by previous writings is a critical factor in the understanding of the nature of any text. Thus writings of the early medieval period should not be viewed in isolation, but rather should be seen in the light of preceding texts (especially Late Antique ones). In fact, from the apparent similarities of a chronological series of historiographical texts it has been possible for historians to comment on the definition and development of specific genres within this area of narrative.¹ However, although the definition of the genre of history is not new (as is seen in Isidore of Seville's *Etymologiae*²) it is important to note from the outset that such a mapping of generic development as found in *Typologie des Sources* is a modern approach. Bede, for example, did not directly discuss the pattern of a particular textual tradition in which he wrote nor did he explicitly define *historia* as had Isidore. Nonetheless, despite the absence in his writings of a specific definition of the genre of *historia* it is clear that the concept of genre was of interest to him. As Arthur Holder has commented Bede listed the products of his prodigious literary endeavours at the close of the *Historia Ecclesiastica* not in the order in which they were written, but by genre: firstly, exegesis, then history, then poetry and finally chronological and literary studies.³ Moreover, his interest in the concept of genre is particularly visible in relation to his Biblical exegesis. Thus, as Ray has observed, in *De arte metrica*, Bede used genre to explain the *historia* of the Book of Job.⁴ Understanding generic boundaries was of relevance to Bede as it could be applied to reading the Bible. Furthermore, although Bede made no attempt to classify generic boundaries of history, on occasion the observer can make inferences about such boundaries in

terms of both the concept of *historia* and the generic relationship between one text and another.

To rely on such inferences is obviously problematic as one is faced with the possibility of categorising boundaries where the author may not have intended them. Nevertheless, whilst acknowledging that mapping generic boundaries (and development) may have all the usual problems of classifying texts, many of Bede's writings have implied and, at times, obvious boundaries and links with particular generic traditions. The significance of this is two-fold: Firstly, by looking at a text's links with its generic tradition the historian may be able to comprehend certain limitations of such texts. For example, by choosing to place a text in a specific generic tradition the content, tone and form of this text may be restricted to remain within that genre.⁵ If one translates this to Bede's works, one immediately becomes aware of the need to understand textual restrictions and apparent omissions in the light of previous generically similar texts. Secondly, by observing generic boundaries between the actual texts produced by Bede the observer may come to a better understanding of Bede's methods as an historian and his perception of history. After all if we remain dependent on our own definition of *historia* our expectations of his texts will be coloured, perhaps creating in us unnecessary unease when a text does not conform to our expectations.⁶ Ultimately, the questions which all students of Bede need to constantly consider is what did *he* mean by *historia*?

Walter Goffart, has centred his researches on the political bias of a text, often making any discussion of the influence of a particular generic tradition in which

the text exists secondary to the apparent political motivations of an author.⁷ Nevertheless, it should be remembered that the explicit or implicit choice by an author to place a text within a specific genre will introduce a whole series of prescriptions, restrictions and expectations to the text.⁸ Moreover, by placing a work in a particular type of source tradition, the author may be communicating (consciously or unconsciously) information to his audience concerning how they should approach the text.⁹ Through the title, the preface or generic signals throughout the text the author may seek to influence his audience's reception of the text.

Arguably, the generic boundaries concerning Bede's *historia* are not just his creation but are also the result of the preceding generic tradition in which his texts are cited. For example, one can seemingly quite confidently state that the *HE* follows a generic tradition established by Eusebius.¹⁰ Indeed, Markus has firmly argued that, like Eusebius's model, within the *HE* Bede included extensive documentation, enumerated on many of the common themes one finds in Eusebius, and aimed to write a history of his Church from its beginnings.¹¹

Wallace-Hadrill, however, was not entirely satisfied with this identification and instead has also indicated that Bede's *HE* (despite its title) belongs far more to the historiographical genre of the so-called 'vulgar historians' such as Cassiodorus, Jordanes, Gregory of Tours, Isidore and the later, Paul the Deacon.¹² This association is not perhaps surprising when one looks at the features the texts by these writers have in common. Firstly, their obvious commitment to Christianity is all pervasive. (However, only Bede focuses his

information on ecclesiastical history.) Secondly, they attempt to narrate a history of a particular people or 'nation'.¹³ Indeed, it is this second link that seems to have been most influential in the subsequent compilation of monastic catalogues in the twelfth century. Walter Goffart has noticed that one particular catalogue, describing an eleventh century manuscript containing Jordanes, Bede and Paul the Deacon's history texts, lists these and other texts as 'the histories of the English, Trojans, Romans, Lombards and the Goths'.¹⁴ For the medieval compiler, as for Wallace-Hadrill perhaps, *gentes* were the defining feature of this historiographical genre. Nonetheless, this fails to take into account that Bede's *HE* is not an unqualified examination of the history of the Anglo-Saxons. His was a history that described ecclesiastical developments first and foremost. Whilst secular information is included, on the whole it relates to establishment and growth of the Church among the Anglo-Saxons rather than just offering a narrative of the Anglo-Saxons *per se*. This distinction, though lost on the subsequent compilers, was important to Bede as it definitely influenced the focus of his text.

One perhaps needs to note here that Wallace-Hadrill was identifying a generic tradition from both preceding and subsequent *historia* texts to that of Bede. For the purposes of genre in this chapter I am attempting to show how Bede's *HE* fits within a series of previously established texts. Obviously, this excludes the writings of Paul the Deacon, reducing Wallace-Hadrill's list to the three antecedents of Bede he mentions.

If one takes just one or two of these 'vulgar' historians and compares their *historia* with that of Bede the differences in primary aim and focus are quite

clear. Cassiodorus, for example, aimed to make Gothic history 'Roman'.¹⁵ His focus is far from being the development of the Church among that people. An examination of Isidore's *History of the Kings of the Goths*, shows a similar distinction between his work and that of Bede.¹⁶ One can see from its title and its contents that its purpose was not neither primarily or even, perhaps, secondarily ecclesiastical history. Out of 70 chapters only 8 deal specifically with ecclesiastical issues: chapter 6, Athanaric's persecution of the Christians; chapter 7, Athanaric's adoption of the Arian heresy; chapter 8, bishop Ulfilas and the Arian beliefs; chapter 45, the attack by Agila on the tomb of St. Acisclus; chapter 50, Leovigild's persecution against the orthodox Catholics; chapters 52-53 Recarred's conversion and convocation of a Synod of bishops; and chapter 60, Sisebut's forced conversion of the Jews. On the whole Isidore plays down ecclesiastical input into the rise of the Goths to their current status until he reaches the orthodox Reccared. This of course makes perfect sense, Isidore was not interested in increasing knowledge about Arianism. Nonetheless, it is perhaps noticeable that he allows the political focus of this text to cause him to avoid examining Hermangild's career. Hermangild had been marked out as a martyr saint in Gregory the Great's *Dialogues* and is also listed as such by Bede in his *Chronicle Maiora*.¹⁷ All Isidore says of him, however, is that Hermangild was defeated by his father whilst being in rebellion of him (chapter 49).¹⁸ If Isidore was aware of Hermangild's saintly status he ignored it in this text. Essentially, Isidore does not divert from his task of portraying the kings of the Goths - any information concerning the church is incidental in this context, it is there only to supply material relevant to the task.

Moreover, Isidore's history does not focus on a narration of personal action in Bede's manner as presented in his *Historia*, rather it generally reads more like a chronological sequence of events similar to a series of annals. It certainly does not function convincingly as a text offering models of individuals who are worth imitating for the greater good of the reader's soul. Instead, it reads like a catalogue of plundering and slaughter, with only a few brief pauses to indicate that on occasion their savagery could be restrained: *In reliquis autem etsi praeda hostium patuit, feriendi tamen inmanitas refrenata est.*¹⁹

In fact, it is in the chapters including these pauses that Isidore's focus seems to change, albeit briefly, to resemble that of Bede. Chapter 16, for example, indicates that during the 447 attack of Rome one particular plundering Goth (unnamed) came across a consecrated virgin and advised her in 'a decent manner' that if she had any gold or silver she should hand it over. As the virgin handed him the sacred objects she warned him that they belonged to the sanctuary of the apostle St. Peter. Upon hearing the apostle's name, the Goth, in terror, reported what had occurred to his king through a messenger who in turn immediately ordered everything be returned as he was waging war against the Romans not the Apostles.²⁰ It is hard, in the light of Bede's approach to *historia* not to read this as an example of Isidore using this well-bred Goth as a model to show would-be plunderers that they should think first before taking ecclesiastical plunder (however politely the might do it).

Additionally, and perhaps more pertinently, Isidore's portrayal of Reccared in chapters 52-56 does provide an image that might not be out of place in Bede's understanding of *historia*. Thus one is told of Reccared's piety: *hic fide pius et pace praeclarus*;²¹ his ability to preserve peace, administer with fairness and rule with moderation: *Prouincias autem, quas pater proelio conquisint, iste pace conseruauit, aequitate disposuit, moderamine rexit*.²²; his character traits: *Fuit autem placidus, mitis, egregiae bonitatis tantamque in uultu gratiam habuit et tantam in animo benignitatem gessit, ut in omnium mentibus influens etiam malos ad affectum amoris sui adtraheret* (chp.55);²³ his generosity: *adeo liberalis ut opes priuatorum et ecclesiarum praedia, 'quae paterna labes fisco adsociauerat', iuri proprio restauraret* (chp.55) and *Multos etiam ditauit rebus, plurimos sublimauit honoribus* (chp.56);²⁴ and Isidore gives him the epithet 'most religious prince': *religiossimus princeps* (chp.53).²⁵ For Isidore, Reccared seems to be a 'most Christian king', reminiscent of Bede's Oswald in all but the miraculous element.²⁶ King Sisebut also receives more than just the cursory annalistic narrative of the first two thirds of Isidore's text (chp.60). Whilst Isidore is not unequivocal in his picture (challenging Sisebut's forced conversion of the Jews), he notes that Sisebut was nonetheless, "eloquent in speech, informed in his opinions, and imbued with some knowledge of letters": *fuit autem eloquio nitidus, 'sententia doctus', scientia litterarum 'ex parte' indutus*.²⁷

The reason for this departure by Isidore from his annalistic style relates to his expansion of his general purpose. This text provided him with an instrument with which he could not only show how the Gothic kings got to be in a position of power, but at the same time emphasise that the real authority came only with their

conversion from Arianism to orthodox Christianity. Thus of Reccared Isidore records that with the help of the Faith he achieved a victory greater than any of the Goths in Spain: *nulla umquam in Spaniis Gotharum uictoria uel maior similis extitit.* (chp.54).²⁸ Perhaps of interest here though is that again there is a difference between Isidore and Bede, albeit a subtle one. It was mentioned earlier that Reccared is reminiscent of Bede's Oswald. This is a fair comment, however, one should note that as Oswald followed the Ionan tradition and, therefore, followed an irregular Easter practice, Bede's most Christian king can hardly be viewed as Bede's most orthodox king!

In fact, if one returns to the story of the well-bred Goth and the consecrated virgin one can see that Isidore's general purpose did in fact affect his use of his sources, at least in this tale. If one compares Isidore's text with that of his source, Orosius, one can see how the subsequent conversion of the Goths to orthodox Christianity required Isidore to change Orosius' original story. For Orosius, viewing Alaric as acting as an instrument of God in his attack on Rome, there is no mention of Alaric being a heretic. Of Alaric, Orosius states complementarily that he was a Christian and more like a Roman: *quorum unus Christianus propiorque Romano.*²⁹ To Isidore, however, Alaric though a Christian in name was a heretic in profession and needed to be remembered as such: *nomine quidem Christianus, sed professione haereticus* (chp.15).³⁰ Both are agreed that Alaric was restrained in his attack on Rome but again the difference of hindsight allows Isidore to omit some of Orosius information. In his narrative describing the well-bred Goth, Orosius notes not only his breeding but also the fact that he was a Christian. Isidore, on the other hand focuses his information on the fact the

man was of powerful status, omitting completely Orosius' statement concerning his Christianity. Essentially, in this story one can see that despite making truthfulness a central requirement of *historia* in his *Etymologiae*, Isidore was prepared to manipulate the facts to serve his purpose.³¹

These examples are exceptions within Isidore's text, however, and Isidore, of course, had made it quite clear in his *Etymologiae* that his view of *historia* was different from Bede's. One should not be surprised, therefore, to find that these two authors' works do not comfortably fit within the same genre. Isidore's task and his own concept of *historia* supplied him with different genre boundaries to those of Bede. This is all the more important when one considers Goffart's attempt to revise Levison's article: 'Bede as Historian'.³² Goffart has argued that Levison was quite wrong to view Bede's historiography as being created in an arid landscape. He suggests that the works of Cassiodorus, Jordanes and Isidore, as well as that of an unnamed Italian show that Bede "follows upon more than a century of self-assured activity".³³ Surely the point is, however, that Bede chose to do something different from previous late Antique and early medieval historiographers and, thus, in this case can still be viewed as fairly unique. (Moreover, such self-assured activity is only really relevant if Bede was aware of it - as Levison notes, and Goffart does not contradict, there is no evidence to suggest that Bede knew of the histories of Cassiodorus, Jordanes or Isidore.)³⁴ Cassiodorus, Jordanes and Isidore were all producing *historiae* about the Gothic *gens* not about the Gothic *gens'* church history. Both in aim and in focus their 'vulgar' histories differed from Bede. Perhaps the only link these texts have in

terms of a historiographical genre is that unlike Eusebius's *HE* they included secular affairs. One should be wary, then, of viewing them as part of one tradition.

In fact, one is perhaps forced to return to a qualified agreement with Markus, Bede wanted his *HE* to be viewed as part of the tradition established by Eusebius. It was important for him not to be standing alone in his written work but rather to be seen as directly linked with the Fathers of the Church. In a sense, by describing his text as an ecclesiastical history and by using some of Eusebius' techniques and themes he gave his text an authority, particularly within the monastic and ecclesiastical communities for whom he wrote. Having said this, however, it is clear that Bede's *HE* is a unique text, produced in circumstances quite different to Eusebius, integrating both the church and secular past in a way Eusebius did not. Essentially, Bede had established his own generic boundaries of *historia* - the title *HE* gave these boundaries some legitimacy.³⁵

It was stated at the beginning of this chapter that the study of genre boundaries can help observers understand apparent limitations of a text and enable them consequently to adapt their own expectations. Moreover, the classification of a text within a genre could determine the type of information selected for the narrative and the way that material was expressed within the narrative. It is to the issue of Bede's own understanding of the genre of *historia* that this thesis now turns. The main evidence that Bede clearly differentiated between his *historiae* can be found in the autobiographical note in his *Historia Ecclesiastica*, where *historia* is divided into three separate sub-groups, or sub-genres: *historiae sanctorum*; *historia abbatum* and *historia ecclesiastica*.³⁶ In this division he

shows a specificity of categorization not made, for example, by Gregory of Tours who merely listed them by title.³⁷ Such explicitness on the part of Bede is significant. By noting these three historiographical groups Bede, quite consciously, was classifying these texts by type. This has two main obvious implications: firstly, that Bede perceived that each of these categories contained distinctions important enough to warrant differentiation (to which this chapter will return later): and secondly, that Bede was using the term *historia* to note a common element in the three groups.

One common element is, of course, that Christian *historia* should be the record of a community and its path to salvation.³⁸ However, one needs to take Bede's understanding of *historia* further than this. Unfortunately, as has been commented, Bede did not offer a definition of *historia*, rather the observer is forced to rely on inferences drawn from statements made in works that are considered to be essentially historiographical. The Preface to the *HE*, indeed, has been studied on many an occasion with this in mind.³⁹ In the opening paragraph of this Preface Bede's focus is on the idea that history should record the deeds of good men rather than that it should offer an analysis of events, a focus which is critical to Bede's comprehension of the term *historia*.⁴⁰ In the actual text of the *HE* Bede further emphasizes this in his discussion of Aidan:

*sed quasi uerax historicus simpliciter ea, quae de illo siue per illum sunt gesta, describens et quae laude sunt digna in eius actibus laudans, atque ad utilitatem legentium memoriae commendans.*⁴¹

By implication this is Bede's clearest statement of the historian's task - to record and preserve for memory the actions of particular individuals, in order that the

audience might be influenced by them.⁴² (In this sense *historia* can be placed firmly within the remit of rhetorical exposition.)

The reason for such a focus is, at least from Bede's point of view, relatively straightforward. The individuals singled out in Christian *historia* function as ideals, offering Bede instruments with which he could illuminate those personal attributes most likely to lead to salvation.⁴³ This reasoning is not particular to Bede. Diana Greenway has noted that there was a tradition dating back to Gregory the Great of using historical persons and their vices and virtues as resources of moral examples within the rhetoric of sermons.⁴⁴

One of Bede's own sources, Gildas in his *De Excidio Britonum*, portrayed his country's past as a series of moral models, a fact which cannot have escaped Bede's attention.⁴⁵ The core of *De Excidio*, as Neil Wright notes, consists of direct attacks on the corruption of the kings and the clergy.⁴⁶ Gildas elaborately spells out the 'vices' of the first five tyrants: Constantine (parricide and adultery), Aurelius Caninus (parricide, fornication, adultery and hatred of peace), Vortipor (incest), Cuneglasus (hate of peace and adultery) and Maglocunus (murder and broken vows). He then stresses the potential punishments for their sins as indicated in the Old Testament, only briefly touching, at the end of this section, on those virtues a king should have. Even here though, his focus is more on the absence of these virtues than creating a model for imitation. Gildas is slightly less harsh in his treatment of the British clergy yet his underlying approach remains the same.⁴⁷

Unlike Gildas, though, Bede ensured that positive models were given more prominence than those with deplorable vices. This can be seen if one compares Gildas and Bede on the period from Roman times up to the arrival of the Saxons in Briton. Gildas opens his historical narrative with the statement: *Haec erecta ceruice et mente, ex quo inhabitata est, nunc deo, interdum ciuibus, nonnumquam etiam transmarinis regibus et subiectis ingrata consurgit.*⁴⁸ The bulk of the subsequent narrative concerning Roman Britain appears to prove this point drawing on the proverb that the British were viewed as cowards in war and faithless in peace (*ita ut in prouerbium et derisum longe lateque efferretur quod Britanni nec in bello fortes sint nec in pace fideles.*)⁴⁹ The inclusion of St. Alban provides some contrast to this, but such positive images do not form the basis of Gildas' record.⁵⁰ Bede omits his sweepingly negative statements, maintaining what seems to be a factual account in his opening chapters, as he narrates the Roman period of British history. Indeed, rather than drawing on Gildas Bede turned to Orosius' *Historiarum Adversum Paganos Libri VII* for less ambiguous chronological information concerning Roman Britain.⁵¹ Thus, Gildas' text may not fall within the genre of *historia*. A comparison of the *HE* does, however, assist the elucidation of Bede's emphases. Firstly, it is perhaps worth noting that Bede chose to depart from Gildas's record concerning St. Alban, instead using material from the Passion of St. Alban.⁵² Consequently, Bede offers a much more elaborate narrative about this saint. He mentions not only the story of Alban's exchange of clothes with the cleric to whom he was giving hospitality and his arrest, but also describes Alban's confrontation with the judge, his torture and his execution. In essence, Bede gives more weight to the story of Alban than did

Gildas. Though he does refer to the Britons up to this point it seems more ‘in passing’ than as any concerted effort to say what they were like. His initial chapters are more interested in Roman influences in Britain than they are with the British *per se*.

Moreover, Bede seems to soften some of Gildas’s judgements concerning the British. Thus in Book I, chapter 4, of the *HE*, Bede mentions Lucius’ request to become a Christian, stating that: *et mox effectum piae postulationis consecutus est, susceptamque fidem Brittani usque in tempora Diocletiani principis inuiolatam integramque quietam in pace seruabant.*⁵³ Gildas, however, is less equivocal about this particular conversion, noting a lack of enthusiasm on the part of the Britons: *Quae, licet ab incolis tepide suscepta sunt, apud quosdam tamen integre et alios minus usque ad persecutionem Diocletiani tyranni nouennem.*⁵⁴ Bede does not, it is true, ignore all of Gildas’s comments concerning the Britons and Book I chapters, 12, 14, 15 and 22 draw almost exclusively from *De Excidio*. Nonetheless, there are other examples of Bede’s modification of Gildas’s tirades. Firstly, when dealing with Aurelianus Bede omits Gildas’s statement concerning the inferiority of his current descendants.⁵⁵ Secondly, Bede introduces into the British narrative five chapters concerning St. Germanus of Auxerre.⁵⁶ In this case Bede not only moves the central theme of the narrative away from British vices to saintly virtues, he also plays down any failings on the part of the Britons. Hence he indicates that the British resisted the perverse teaching of Pelagius calling instead on the wisdom of the Gaulish bishops to help them uphold the Faith: *Uerum Brittanni, cum neque suscipere dogma peruersum gratiam Christi blasfemando ullatenus uellent neque uersutiam nefariae persuasionis refutare*

uerbis certando sufficerent.⁵⁷ His image of the Britons here, though implying a degree of ignorance on their part does not read as an insult, but rather suggests the Britons made a wise decision. In chapter 21 Bede again indicates that the British clergy took their responsibility to prevent the spread of the Pelagian heresy by calling on St. Germanus.

Walter Goffart has also noticed that Bede changed Gildas's emphasis concerning the building of the vallum from the incompetence of a 'leaderless British mob' to admiration for the building work that had been undertaken.⁵⁸ In these chapters concerning Germanus Bede presents an image of the Britons which is different to that of Gildas. This is not to say that Bede ignored all their failings. In chapter 22 he returns to Gildas (26) and seems to tell his readers that more information concerning the unspeakable crimes of the British can be found in his source's writings.⁵⁹ However, by alluding to these crimes only, Bede again modified Gildas, forcing his source's narrative to take second place behind the issue that Bede felt was key in terms of the British relationship with the Anglo-Saxons - that 'they never preached the faith to the Saxons or Angles who inhabited Britain with them' (*ut numquam genti Saxonum siue Anglorum, secem Brittaniam incolenti, uerbum fidei praedicando committerent*).⁶⁰ However, in Book I Bede even plays this crime down implying that God did not desert the British but instead had appointed worthier heralds to bring the Faith to the Anglo-Saxons. Bede's picture of the British in Book I is far from being totally negative and, as Wallace-Hadrill eloquently put it, Bede shows them as having "had their ups and downs, and for all their moral turpitude, they remained Christian and had responded positively to the threat of heresy".⁶¹

Walter Goffart has argued that actually Bede's text produces a far greater indictment against the British than that of Gildas.⁶² Agreeing with Hanning, he notes that by the deliberate placing of the narrative concerning Germanus near the end of the order of British events Bede was making a point.⁶³ Basically, by doing this, he suggests, Bede made a stark contrast between Germanus's willingness to answer the Britons call for help and the British refusal to evangelize the Saxons. This may well be true - although, if it is, it is hard not to question why Bede appears to have played down his narrative about their lack of preaching. It is perhaps pertinent that his statement noting that God was to send worthier heralds was immediately followed by the chapter introducing Augustine.⁶⁴ Perhaps Bede's intention here is quite simple - Augustine was orthodox and the British were not. In one sense the British refusal did the Saxons a favour, for it meant that their first conversion had a degree of spiritual superiority. Perhaps for Bede everything was as God intended for had the British converted the Anglo-Saxons their initial conversion would have been to a heresy not an orthodoxy. After all it certainly appears to be their heresy that Bede sees as the cause of God's vengeance in Book II, 2: *ut etiam temporalis interitus ultione sentirent perfidi, quod oblata sibi perpetuae salutis consilia spreuerant*, rather than just their refusal to evangelize.⁶⁵ In fact, perhaps what the reader is viewing is a tension in the text. On the one hand Bede believed that God had chosen worthier missionaries than the British to convert the Anglo-Saxons, thereby at some level making British reticence understandable (if not acceptable). On the other, however, their refusal to accept orthodoxy was neither understandable, acceptable or perhaps forgivable. The point is of course that in Book I it is clear that Bede

changes the emphasis of Gildas's text arguably towards one which seems to offer a more balanced appraisal of events and greater concern with presenting human virtue. The British are important to Bede, but of more significance are the deeds of good men; thus Alban, Germanus and Augustine are offered as models worthy of imitation. In some respects the British provide a useful context in which to highlight their excellence. It is clear that Bede's additions to and omissions from Gildas's text served a critical role for on the whole they acted to reverse the absence from *De Excidio* of role models. Whilst not ignoring vice completely (nor the punishment of God it incurred) Bede's primary interest was in those individuals who illustrated virtues most worthy of aspiring to rather than those vices most likely to invoke God's wrath. In this, it is perhaps possible to suggest that in his use of *historia* Bede's aim was to inspire through example rather than teach purely by threat or fear.⁶⁶ This orientation differed significantly to Gildas.

In this Bede not only distanced himself from the writing of Gildas, he also moved away from the emphasis of the narrative of another of his sources, Orosius.⁶⁷ In his *Historiarum Adversum Paganos Libri VII*, Orosius made it quite clear that a key theme of his *historia* was to show the *iusta punitio* of God when men misused the freedom He had given them. In his first chapter he notes that Man's changeable nature needs to be reprov'd with justice: *sicut pie gubernari egenum opis oportet ita iuste corripri immoderatum libertatis necesse*.⁶⁸ In his final chapter he commented further that he had written about the desires and punishments of sinful men, the struggles of the world and the judgements of God from the beginning of the world until the present day: *ab initio mundi usque in praesentem diem, hoc est per annos quinque milia sescentos decem et octo,*

*cupiditates et punitiones hominum peccatorum, conflictationes saeculi et iudicia Dei quam.*⁶⁹ Even a cursory glance at Orosius' seven books shows the reader the extent of his focus on God's just judgement (*iusto iudicio Dei*). Book VII, which provided Bede with some of his information for Book I of his *HE*, is no exception to this rule. Thus with some relish Orosius tells the reader that the emperor Licinius' insides rotted away because of God's anger at his behaviour;⁷⁰ concerning Valens (an emperor Bede himself mentions) Orosius makes it clear that his death in a burning house following being shot by an arrow whilst in battle was divine retribution (*iusto iudicio Dei*) for having sent an Arian bishop to convert the Goths (Bk VII: 33).⁷¹ In the chapter concerning Mascezel, brother of Count Gildo, Orosius elaborates on this theme by indicating how God's judgement is ever vigilant to the actions of an individual. Thus, while Mascezel had followed God he had been assisted but when he desecrated a Church God brought about his death: *ad utrumque semper diuinum uigilare iudicium, quando et, cum sperauit, adiutus et, cum contempsit, occisus est.*⁷² Time and time again Orosius repeats his message of divine judgement, in essence backing up Gildas' prophecies concerning the corruption of the British kings and clergy.

Within his concept of *historia* Bede does not seem to give this theme such importance -it certainly is not all pervasive in the text as it is with Orosius. Indeed, it is perhaps interesting to note that when he mentions Valens he omits the comments on the retributive nature of his death. In the context of his Book I they are unnecessary and can thus be left out. This is not to argue that Bede never used the judgement of God to make a point in his *HE*, after all in his own preface he stated the importance of recording the evil deeds of wicked men: *seu*

*mala commemorat de prauis, nihilominus religiosus ac pius auditor siue lector deuotando quod noxium est ac peruersum, ipse sollertius ad exsequenda ea quae bona ac Deo digna esse cognouerit, accenditur.*⁷³ Additionally, those parts of his text which examine the destruction of the Britons (Bk I, 15; Bk II, 2), the apostate Eadbald's afflictions (Bk. II, 5), the deaths of the two Northumbrian apostates, Eanfrith and Osric, at the hands of Cadwalla (Bk. III, 1), and the destruction of Coldingham Abbey (Bk. IV, 25) make it very clear that Bede does not ignore the role of God's 'justice'. Nonetheless, unlike Orosius, Bede did not use just any apparently appropriate incident to restate the explicit power of God's judgement. This can perhaps be particularly clearly seen in his treatment of Cadwalla's death at the hands of Oswald and Penda's at the Battle of Winwaed.⁷⁴ Arguably, both present excellent opportunities for commenting on how their behaviour brought about their deaths. However, Bede, far more sophisticated stylistically than Orosius, either did not want to repeat himself, as in the case of Cadwalla (he had already made his point concerning God's judgement in his discussion of the apostate kings), or shifted the focal point away from Penda's death to Oswiu's oath.

The subtlety of Bede's use of this theme can also be seen in his description of Cynegisl's son, Cenwealh, king of the West Saxons.⁷⁵ At the beginning of his narrative concerning Cenwealh Bede states that he refused to receive the Faith and not long afterwards lost his kingdom. In exile he then accepted the true Faith and subsequently regained his kingdom. However, at this point Bede does not draw the obvious conclusion. Instead, for dramatic effect, he waits until he has described how Cenwealh latterly suffered losses again after he had offended

bishop Agilbert and expelled bishop Wine from his kingdom. Only then does he show Cenwealh realizing that his unbelief had led to the loss of his kingdom and his conversion had led to his restoration. In doing this Bede allows Cenwealh to acknowledge that a kingdom without a bishop is deprived of divine protection without repeating his message of divine judgement more than once within the chapter. Nevertheless, even with Bede's stylistic subtleties the theme of retribution does not repetitively pervade his *historia* as it does Orosius' apologetic text. In essence, Bede was writing for a predominantly Christian audience and did not need to keep repeating the effect of God's justice. He perhaps could take for granted that his audience already knew this. In a sense, then, Bede's concept of *historia* is quite distinct from that of Gildas and Orosius. For Bede, the emphasis was not so much what to avoid doing as what *to* do. *Historia* should centre on the narration of the actions of individuals worthy of praise and imitation.

If one turns to the texts Bede classified as *historiae sanctorum*, one can see that a similar definition of *historia* can be inferred. Thus, for example, in the Preface of *Vita Felicis*, Bede notes how he is going to discuss the 'history of this holy confessor' (*sancti confessoris historiam*), thereby equating *historia* with the activities of Felix's life.⁷⁶ As one would expect, the *Vita Cuthberti* too concentrates on Cuthbert's actions. Unfortunately, the *Historia Abbatum* (HA) does not have a preface. Nevertheless, by his mere description of it as an *historia* and the narrative itself one can see that Bede is concentrating on the actions and acquisitions of the abbots of his monastery. The common link in Bede's designation *historia* then is that it should emphasize the role of individuals.

In essence *historia* should concern itself with the actions (both public and personal) of the individual rather than merely analysing the events that occurred on an impersonal level. Moreover, as I shall be showing in subsequent chapters these actions had a fundamentally conventional basis. If one accepts this, it is clear that Bede's perception of what 'history writing' is, and should do, is not only very different from that expected by historians today, but also very different to the one definition of the genre of *historia* to which Bede had access - that to be found in Isidore of Seville's *Etymologiae*. Isidore's opening line concerning *historia* is: *Historia est narratio rei gestae*.⁷⁷ He goes on to note that history is quite different to argument and fable, relying on true events that really happened. Essentially, Isidore appears to be outlining a definition suitable to the modern concept of history but not to Bede's method of construction of history nor to his understanding of its generic boundaries. (Of course, having said this, it is clear from the *History of the Goths* that Isidore's practice was not entirely confined within his own prescription.) For Bede the aim of Christian *historia* could clearly subordinate what a modern audience might consider a historical truth. Bede was not unique in this. As Giles Constable commented of the Middle Ages in general, Isidore's 'high flown sentiments' concerning *historia* were considered a *topos*.⁷⁸ The aim of *historia*, the method of selection and the presentation of facts within *historia* were as important as, if not more than, the facts themselves.

The common generic link in Bede's three *historia* texts is, then, the narration of personal action. Having acknowledged this, however, one now needs to question why Bede chose to divide them into sub-genres. In fact, on a general level, this is

fairly clear. The *HE* selectively focuses on those individuals and their relevant actions who led to the growth and establishment of the Christian Church in the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms; the *Historiae sanctorum* concentrates on the deeds of individual saints from birth until after death, and the *Historia Abbatum* illuminates the activities of the abbots in the monastery (that is not a full life as in *historiae sanctorum*). Indeed, if one accepts the interpretation with its emphasis on deeds rather than events, the use of hagiographical material in *historia* becomes more admissible. For instance, some historians of the past have found the miraculous element in Bede's *HE* unacceptable in relation to what they understand as history.⁷⁹ However, miracles as well as exhibiting the posthumous power of a saint are also merely the deeds of individuals after death and are, therefore, very much part of *historia*.⁸⁰ For Bede there was no tension or contradiction in including the miraculous element. In fact he no doubt thought that it played a vital role in *historia*.

The generic focus on the role of an individual (as opposed to an event) in *historia* becomes more evident when one compares these texts with other works by Bede which some historians are 'reclaiming' as historiographical. This is especially evident in Bede's Chronicles, especially the *Chronica Maiora*, in his *De Temporum Ratione*(*DTR*), written in 725;⁸¹ a text which has been relatively ignored by historians, having only recently been partly translated and published alongside Bede's *HE*.⁸² A universal chronicle which catalogues the Six Ages of the World, the *Chronica Maiora* forms Chapter 66 of the *DTR*. It is a composite text which draws from many of its generic predecessors, including the Chronicle of Jerome-Eusebius, the Chronicle of Prosper, and that of Isidore. It also selects

from the *Liber Pontificalis*, Orosius's *Historiae* and Gildas' *De Excidio*.⁸³ Jones has catalogued two-hundred and forty-five manuscripts of this text, some of which have been copied as part of the *DTR* and some which stand alone.⁸⁴ Interestingly, Jones has also indicated that great care appears to have been taken concerning its reproduction.⁸⁵ Consequently, variations are slight among these texts and the observer may accept, without too much anxiety, that the manuscripts represent Bede's words and not those of a particular scribe.

In the context of this paper the sections of this Chronicle concerned with events narrated in the *HE* are a valuable source of genre comparison and serve to illustrate the personal/individual bias of *historia*. As Hanning has already compared the British material found in the *Chronica* and *HE*, this chapter concentrates on those entries which relate to events in the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms.⁸⁶ It is important to note from the outset that Anglo-Saxon events are not particularly emphasized, rather they fall into a general pattern of interest in events elsewhere in Western Christendom. If, however, one compares the entry for 596 in the *Chronicle* with its relevant counterpart in the *HE* (I: 23) the generic differences become clear:

*Idem missis Brittaniam Augustino, Mellito et Iohanne et aliis pluribus cum eis monachis timentibus deum ad Christum Anglos conuertit. Et quidem Aedilberectus mox ad Christi gratiam conuersus cum gente Cantuariorum, cui praeerat, proximisque prouinciis etiam episcopum doctoremque suum Augustinum, sed et ceteros sacros antistites episcopali sede donabat. Porro gentes Anglorum ab aquilone Humbri fluminis sub regibus Aelle et Aedilfrido sitae necdum uerbum uitae audierant.*⁸⁷

Primarily, the tone and focus of the texts are different. In the *Chronicle* the tone is matter of fact. The focus concerns the point that this was the year the Anglo-Saxons in Kent converted and a bishopric was established (and that the people north of the Humber had not yet heard the Word of Life). Essentially, the event of conversion is of more importance to this text than the participants. In the *HE*, however, Bede focuses on Gregory's divine inspiration, the missionaries' obedience and terror, and Gregory's encouragement.⁸⁸ It then goes on to give a significant narrative of how these individuals established the Church.⁸⁹ In the *HE* Bede is not only concentrating on the event but on the emotions and interactions of those involved.

Moreover, in the *Chronicle* Bede makes no effort to separate the missions of Augustine and Mellitus even though in the *HE* he himself clearly demonstrates that they arrived on two dates. Blair has suggested that this may be evidence to suggest that in 725 Bede did not actually know that there were two missions.⁹⁰ Although this is possible, it is interesting that if one compares Bede's entry in the *Chronicle* with the source from which he was drawing, the *Liber Pontificalis* (*LP*), it is clear that he had changed the order of the names. The *LP* states:

*Eodem tempore beatissimus Gregorius misit seruos Dei Mellitum,
Augustinum et Iohannem*⁹¹

The *LP* lists Mellitus first, Bede places him after Augustine. This does seem significant. By placing Augustine first Bede may well have been correcting his source to suit the actual events. In other words, as Augustine arrived first Bede felt that he should be cited first. Another interpretation is, of course, that as

Augustine became archbishop Bede considered that he should have pre-eminence in the list.

Nevertheless, if one observes Blair's argument for Bede's ignorance of the mission events the former of the explanations rather than the latter seems more plausible. Blair notes that Bede was able to correct a previous chronological error that he had made concerning the conversion of the Saxons in his *De Temporum* because of new information he received after writing the *D.T.*⁹² This material included the *Libellus Responsionum*, Gregory's response to Augustine's questions. It has been accepted that Bede had access to this by 721 when he used it in his prose *Vita Cuthberti* (four years before he wrote the *Chronica Maiora*).⁹³ If he had acquired this it is more than likely that he also had Gregory's letter to Mellitus. This certainly seems evident in the Preface to the *HE*, where he implies that he received the letters of St. Gregory and other popes together:

*Qui uidelicet Nothelmus postea Romam ueniens, nonnullas ibi beati Gregorii papae simul et aliorum pontificum epistulas, perscrutato eiusdem sanctae ecclesiae Romanae scrinio, permissu eius, qui nunc ipsi ecclesiae praeest Gregorii pontificis, inuenit, reuersusque nobis nostrae historiae inserendas cum consilio praefati Albini reuerentissimi patris adtulit.*⁹⁴

The letter to Mellitus clearly indicates that he followed on after Augustine.⁹⁵ From this evidence it would seem probable that Bede altered the order of the information in the *L.P.* deliberately to follow the chronological sequence of events. One can only suggest that he chose not to tamper with the material further because he was directly quoting from a work held in esteem. Perhaps, as he had already been accused of heresy in his *De Temporibus* on computational

grounds, he felt it was prudent not to be seen questioning the authority of this document by amending it.⁹⁶ This suggestion, that the change was deliberate, is made stronger when one realises that to justify and prove such changes Bede might have been forced to quote the 'personal' material not relevant in the genre of Chronicles.

The generic variations between the Chronicle and the *HE* become even more stark when one observes the Chronicle's comment on the conversion of Northumbria:

*Anno Heracli regni XVI indictione XV Eduinus excellentissimus rex Anglorum in Brittaniam transumbranae gentis ad aquilonem predicante Paulino episcopo, quem miserat de Cantia uenerabilis archiepiscopus Iustus, uerbum salutis cum sua gente susceperat anno regni sui XI, aduentus autem Anglorum in Brittaniam plus minus anno CLXXX eique Paulino sedem episcopatus Eboraci donauit...*⁹⁷

Here the focus is obviously different. Unlike the *HE*'s account this entry concentrates only on relating to the reader that this was the year that Edwin and his people heard the Word of Salvation from Paulinus and that a bishopric was established at York. The *Chronicle* makes no attempt to discuss Edwin's decision to convert nor does it offer details of those individuals who did convert.⁹⁸ Indeed, it does not mention anything about Edwin and Paulinus other than their titles and names. For Bede, Chronicles focused on events, *historia* on the people in the events.

Chronicles, then, place episodes in time and concentrate on offering the observer brief factual information. Indeed, because Bede's *Chronica Maiora* does centre

on events in time it might be easy to feel it is of more historiographical relevance than *historia*. Nevertheless, in this text Bede is his usual highly selective self! The impression that one gets is that the Anglo-Saxon material included is only there by virtue of the fact that it exemplifies themes which run through the work; themes which themselves determine those events Bede chose to cover. It is significant, for example, that Bede mentions the conversions by Augustine and Paulinus, and the sending of Theodore, Hadrian and Vitalianus whilst studiously avoiding any mention of the British and Gallic influence.⁹⁹ This fits in with an overall theme of the Sixth Age, that is the conversion and establishment of Roman catholic orthodox Christianity. This can be seen in another of Bede's Anglo-Saxon entries into the Chronicle concerning Egbert. Once again the emphasis is on the fact that Egbert converted the Irish from their aberration of non-canonical Easter observance by preaching.¹⁰⁰ Nothing else is mentioned of his life. This conversion is merely placed in time. The importance of conversion to orthodoxy is further stressed if one looks at other entries unrelated to the Anglo-Saxons. For instance, in his discussion of Hermangild and Reccared, Bede's focus is on Hermangild's orthodoxy and martyrdom and Reccared's conversion to the catholic [*catholicam conuertit ad fidem*], as opposed to Arian, faith.¹⁰¹ Though clearly influenced by Gregory the Great's *Dialogues* here, Bede does not waste time detailing Leuvigild's actual attempts to persuade Hermangild to apostasize.¹⁰² The events to be placed in time were the martyrdom and the conversion. Bede is even more selective here than he is in the *HE*!

His selectivity, however, is surely a consequence of the purpose of a universal chronicle. Such a chronicle is essentially eschatological.¹⁰³ Indeed, the last five

chapters of the *De Temporum Ratione* are devoted to these eschatological ideas. The interest in placing the conversions and martyrdom in time basically relates to what will follow the Six Age. For Bede conversion and martyrdom were critical to the Second Coming and the Day of Judgement: the Eighth Age. Bede himself shows this when, in the chapter concerning the time of the AntiChrist, he notes that God at this time “will crown firstly those who have the love of the faith implanted already in their minds with the virtue of martyrdom, thereafter snatching up the rest of the faithful, making them either glorious martyrs or damned apostates”.¹⁰⁴ Ultimately, Bede was showing the importance of conversion and martyrdom in the Sixth Age. Such events concerned the salvation and judgement of mankind.

Indeed, the eschatological bias of the *Chronica Maiora* should not be underestimated. Fundamentally, the last six chapters of the *De Temporum Ratione* are a single unit which follow a sequential route. The Chronicle should not be observed out of the context of the Seventh and Eighth Ages, for it is these Ages which determine the choice of themes. This is excellently shown if one regards the other Anglo-Saxon events Bede has recorded. These concern Aethelthryth and Cuthbert. With the case of Aethelthryth Bede concentrates on noting who her father was, her marriage to Ecgfrith, her perpetual virginity, the construction of the monastery at Ely and her incorruptibility.¹⁰⁵ Her personal interactions are not noted and neither are the miracles. Of Cuthbert, Bede merely makes brief comments on the fact that Cuthbert was at Lindisfarne, that he, Bede, had written a prose and verse life, and that Cuthbert remained incorrupt after death.¹⁰⁶

The ultimate question is, of course, why are they included? If the entries concerning the Anglo-Saxons focus on the establishment of a Roman Church in England, why is that great champion of Romanism, Wilfrid, unmentioned? If I were Walter Goffart I might be tempted to suggest that once again Bede was illustrating his political prejudice with this omission. However, if one regards this Chronicle as merely part of the discussion of Eight Ages and not just six, the political bias may not have been a main factor.

In fact, one needs to examine the one element that both Aethelthryth and Cuthbert had in common to understand Bede's choice. Ultimately, they are included whilst others are not, for a specific reason: the incorruptibility of their bodies. In the Eighth Age, the age always to be loved and hoped for, Bede states, that "Christ will lead their souls [the faithful], gifted with *incorruptible bodies*, to the gathering of the heavenly kingdom, and the contemplation of His divine majesty".¹⁰⁷ Cuthbert and Aethelthryth are mentioned because their incorruptibility already assures them a place in the heavenly kingdom. To Bede this was an event very worthy of being placed in time.

In the context of this chapter these two entries are also interesting for their lack of miracle information. It was stated earlier that miracles were perfectly acceptable in *historia* because they concerned themselves with the actions of individuals, albeit dead ones. If this were so one would not expect to find them in a Chronicle, which it has been said, is less interested in the individual as the citing of an event in the scheme of 'God's' time. This is certainly reinforced by the

Chronicle which is notably lacking in miracle material.¹⁰⁸ In fact, Bede does not discuss either Aethelthryth or Cuthbert's miracles here. This is remarkable when one considered the descriptions in the *HE*. Essentially, Bede has made no attempt to add the 'personal' information so prevalent in his *historia* to the *Chronica*. In this sense, he did not cross genre boundaries.

In Bede's writing of *historia*, particularly the *Historia Ecclesiastica*, he worked within an understanding of history that focused on the actions of individuals worthy of imitation. To do this he significantly shifted the emphasis of *historia* away from that of some of his predecessors, moving from those acts one should not undertake to those which one should. As will be shown in subsequent chapters to elaborate on these actions Bede drew heavily on non-contemporary, Biblical and Late Antique images. However, his interest in the patristic authors was not limited to the models of deeds they could provide. This chapter has attempted to show that the study of generic boundaries and traditions can add valuable insights to the study of Bede's *historia* texts. In essence, Bede's generic boundaries were Roman ones. He chose to place his writings amongst traditions established by such authors as Eusebius and Jerome. Significantly he was not greatly interested in British, Irish or Gallic texts- perhaps he did not feel that they were of enough worth. By citing his works within genres instituted by Roman authors Bede confirmed his orthodoxy and his reverence for all things Roman. He also provided signposts to his own textual community as to how to read his text. What is perhaps of interest here, particularly in terms of the 'literacy' of his audience, is that whilst he may have intended for the *HE* in particular, to be read

as part of the Eusebian historiographical tradition, it is clear that this did not always happen.

Chapter 5:

A Case of Generic Discomfort: Bede's *Historia Abbatum*

The previous chapter illustrates that the *Historia Ecclesiastica* clearly fits within a particular genre of writing. However, it was also stated that if a text did not fit into a particular generic tradition it became a source of unease. This certainly seems to be the case with Bede's *Historia Abbatum*(HA).¹ This text is an anomaly to which surprisingly little attention has been given. Both Patrick Wormald and Alan Thacker (in greater detail) have offered evidence as to the sources which have influenced this text but very little has been done to discuss it in its wider context.² Even a superficial glance at the *HA* reveals elements of hagiography, history and biography which together make it a fairly complex book - and one that is especially difficult to categorise as its function is not immediately clear. The main objectives of the following part of this chapter, then, will be to assess the nature of the *HA* as a text and thereby suggest a possible motive for its production; to question certain comments made about its hagiographical content by authors such as Thacker, to show that the predominantly influential sources of this text were not necessarily only the Lerins texts which have been emphasized and, finally, to suggest that what Bede is attempting to do becomes clearer if a comparison is made with the Carolingian *Gesta Abbatum* texts.³

The first object of this analysis is, then, to look at the nature of the *HA* as a text.

The observer of the *HA* is faced with an immediate problem when attempting to

do this for this text has no preface and therefore no dedication to a patron or, and more important to this study, no statement of intent. As was noted earlier, Halporn has shown often a preface invites the reader to consider and read a text in a particular way.⁴ Consequently, one has certain expectations of the text and one can normally categorise the text as, for example, a piece of hagiography, or a history, or a biography. With the *HA* expectations are determined merely by the title and knowledge of other contemporary texts.

It is perhaps as a consequence of this that much of the academic discussion concerning the *HA* has concentrated on trying to explain it in the context of hagiography.⁵ Indeed, if one looks for information on the *HA* it is clear that it is the hagiographical elements that have sparked the most debate. Thus *HA* is usually spoken of in the context of other *Vitae*, especially the *Vita Ceolfredi*. In doing this historians have assembled a set of assumptions about the text which relate less to it and more to Saints' Lives.

It is clear even from a cursory glance at this text that it is not a *vita*. Nevertheless, historians such as Wormald have attempted to explain the apparent lack of hagiographical material in terms of the sources used in the production of the text.⁶ Both Thacker and Wormald focus on the influence of writings from Lerins, especially the *Life of Honoratus* (founder of Lerins) by Hilary, bishop of Arles, emphasizing that these sources focused less on biographical information than other *vitae* and showed sanctity to be confirmed less by signs and wonders as by personal virtues and affecting death bed scenes.⁷ Certainly if one looks at chapters 12-14 of the *HA* this does appear to be true. However, even with such

information historians are still ill at ease with the hagiographical aspect of the *HA*. For example, five years after Wormald and Thacker's pieces Donald Bullough stated quite clearly that the *HA* "is not hagiography in the normal sense of the word".⁸

The dilemma of the text then comes from two clear areas: firstly, the unfortunate lack of prologue and secondly, the text itself does not conform to the general discussion of the genre of hagiography.⁹ This is, of course, understandable for our criteria of what constitutes 'hagiography' comes from the study of *vitae* but as has been made clear this text is not a *vita*, it is in fact *historia*. Consequently, even acknowledging the possible sources, one would not perhaps expect to find the same kinds of general hagiographical details evident in a text such as the *Vita Wilfridi*, or the *Vita Cuthberti* or even the *Vita Ceolfridi*. As Thacker himself noted, "Bede treated the lives of his abbots very selectively. He made no attempt to show each of his subjects in the characteristic situations of a monastic saint".¹⁰ Thacker continues that Bede selected events from the subject's lives to illustrate the chosen themes and that he deliberately designated the text an 'historia' rather than a *vita*. He concludes that as *historia* the text was in the genre of the Christian history as established by Eusebius and continued by Gregory of Tours, and as such was a record of a community and its path to salvation.

However, this idea in some ways contradicts the reason Thacker gives for the absence of the miraculous element in the text (an element which is visible at the end of the *Vita Ceolfridi* but is not in the *HA*). Thacker notes that miracles are omitted from the *HA* because they were irrelevant to Bede's purpose.¹¹ Yet, if

this is *historia* in the same genre as Eusebius' *History* and that of Gregory of Tours - the direct intervention of God in the Life of the community in the form of miracles (which is, after all, so prevalent in Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica*), would surely have been an integral part of the text. Indeed, if one looks at Bede's own biographical information at the end of his *HE*, it is clear that he himself distinguishes between the 'Histories of the Saints', which are essentially *vitae*, the *Ecclesiastical History*, which seems more in the style of authors such as Eusebius, and the *History of the Abbots*, which seems to be in a category of its own. It would appear that contemporary definitions of history were more varied than just the Eusebian model.

In attempting to understand the nature of the *HA* one should perhaps concentrate on Bede's descriptions of the work. One could infer from Bede's own entitling of the book as *Historia Abbatum monasterii* that the text was to show exactly what the abbots did for the monastery in which it was Bede's joy to serve God. This suggests, therefore, that Bede's concentration was not on the abbot's lives *per se* but rather on what they brought to the monastery (either spiritually or materially). Book 1 opens not with a narration of Biscop's life (as one might expect from a *vita*) but with a direct statement concerning the foundation of the monastery of Wearmouth by Biscop: *Religiosus Christi famulus Biscopus cognomento Benedictus, aspirante superna gratia, monasterium construxit....*¹² From thence on with narrative details of certain events, the text shows how Biscop brought knowledge, books, stone masons, ornaments, a monastic privilege, pictures and images of saints and land to the monastery at Wearmouth-Jarrow.¹³ In short, Book 1 indicates the substantial material wealth Biscop gained or purchased for

his monastery - as Bede notes in chapter 6, Biscop was “tireless in providing for his church” [*..aecclesiae suae prouisor inpiger..*].¹⁴ This theme is continued in Book II’s discussion of Ceolfrith. In chapter 15 Bede is keen to emphasize what Ceolfrith had brought to the monastery. Thus he records that Ceolfrith built several oratories, increased the number of vessels of the church and altar, and vestments of every kind and the library of both monasteries, adding three complete editions of the new translations of the Bible, one of which was the great *Codex Amiatinus* (derived possibly from the *Codex Grandior*):¹⁵

*Siquidem inter cetera monasterii necessaria quae longo regendi tempore disponenda conperiit, etiam plura fecit oratoria; altaris et aecclesiae uasa, uel uestimenta omnis generis ampliavit; bibliothecam utriusque monasterii, quam Benedictus abbas magna caepit instantia, ipse non minori geminauit industria; ita ut tres pandectes nouae translationis.*¹⁶

Also in this chapter Bede comments on the land acquired by the monastery during Ceolfrith’s abbacy.¹⁷ Moreover, if one observes the albeit brief notice on Hwaertberht’s abbacy the text centres on privileges and translations.¹⁸ It would, in fact, be fair to say that essentially the *HA* shows less of the lives of Bede’s abbots and more of the establishment of Wearmouth-Jarrow and its growth into a site of no little status.

Indeed, though it appears that one of the functions of this text is to show the abbot’s contribution to the monastery’s development, the discussion in the *HA* often actually seems more focused upon the objects brought to the monastery than on the individual who brought them. Biographical information is minimal and in some cases only seems to be given to supply a narrative context to what, at

times, reads like a monastic inventory. Thus, in chapter 2 Biscop's first visit to Rome forms the context to explain how Biscop amassed knowledge concerning the forms of church life. In chapter 5 Bede's stress is not on Biscop's journey to Gaul (as it is in chapter 7 of the *Vita Ceolfridi*, where the emphasis is more on Biscop's relationship with the abbot Torthelm) rather it is on the masons themselves, and then on the glass-makers.¹⁹ Biscop's journey in the *HA* provides an immediate context for his descriptions of what was brought to the monastery, whereas the anonymous *Vita Ceolfridi* was more interested in recording Biscop's general biographical information. Chapters 6 and 9 also provide a context for Bede's extremely detailed accounts of objects gained by Biscop for the monastery. These chapters more than any other in the text appear to function primarily as narrated inventories.

The chapters relating to Ceolfrith and Hwaertberht exhibit a similar emphasis. Thus though chapter 15 begins with a characterization of Ceolfrith using established hagiographical *topoi*, it is kept noticeably short and Bede immediately follows by commenting in considerable details on the assets Ceolfrith gained during his abbacy.²⁰ This is also evident in Bede's description of Hwaertberth's term of office. In chapter 18 he gives only scant details with regard to Hwaertberth's life and in chapter 20, summarizing his abbacy, Bede is only interested in the privileges he recovered, and in particular the translations of the relics of Abbots Eosterwine and Sigfrid.²¹

As Jones noted "this emphasis on material fact is so exaggerated as to be the noteworthy characteristic of the work".²² Indeed, if one compares this text with

both the *Lerins* and other contemporary sources it soon becomes clear that Bede's descriptions were not typical either in the extent of the detail or in the immediate context of the description. For example, two of the texts which have been seen as influencing on the *HA*, the *Life of St. Honoratus* by St. Hilary and the *Life of Augustine* by Possidius, it is quite clear that there is actually little overall comparison.²³ These texts function as hagiography, following through the lives of individual saints until their death. The *Life of St. Honoratus* discusses Honoratus' childhood, baptism, his *peregrinatio* and his pastoral role and care. Essentially this text and the *Life of St. Augustine* are testimonies of the faith and sanctity in their lives.

It would be wrong to dismiss these texts as totally uninfluential on the *HA*. It is, for instance, interesting that Possidius notes, in the context of Augustine's death, that he "always ordered [that] the Church's library, with all the books, [was] to be carefully preserved for posterity", a parallel too close to Bede's note concerning Biscop's final wishes to be ignored: "The noble and extensive library....he ordered should be carefully preserved as a single collection and not allowed to decay through neglect or be split up".²⁴ However, in general these texts actually bear less general comparison with the *HA* in terms of the focus of the text than has perhaps been suggested. This is made especially clear if one compares St. Hilary's description of the foundation of the church at *Lerins* by Honoratus with that of Biscop's foundation at *Monkwearmouth*. St. Hilary merely notes that because of Honoratus's "industry a church was built there [*Lerins*] sufficient for the elect of the Church of God; shelters arose, fit dwellings for the monks..".²⁵ Indeed, rather than being interested in the fabric and furnishings of this church (as

Bede so clearly is with Monkwearmouth), Hilary concentrates on an allegorical discussion of Honoratus as a temple of Christ: "Whoever yearned for Christ sought Honoratus, and whoever sought Honoratus found Christ fully. For Christ reigned there supreme and dwell in the heart of Honoratus as in a lofty citadel and a shining temple".²⁶ When discussing Biscop's foundation at Monkwearmouth Bede is more interested in relating actual details of the building programme, noting that Biscop's zeal meant that within a year of the foundations having been laid the "gable ends of the Church were in place".²⁷ Bede continues to describe the glaziers and other furnishings.²⁸ As has been seen, such an interest in the actual material evidence of the church as opposed to the individuals founding the churches, can also be seen in Bede's description of Ceolfrith's additions to the monastery. Bede makes no attempt to allegorise his subjects as 'temples of Christ'. In the *HA* he is concerned with the describing of real objects not abstract concepts relating to them.

This emphasis on a description of land, buildings and furnishings of the monastery for their own sake by Bede becomes even clearer if one compares the *HA* with two contemporary *vitae*, the *Vita Wilfridi* by Stephanus and the Anonymous *Vita Ceolfridi*. For example, Stephanus' discussion of the gift of land by Alhfrith to Wilfrid and his dedication of the monastery at Ripon clearly differ, firstly, when Stephanus narrates the donation of the monastery at Ripon by Alhfrith, he places it firmly in a Biblical context and the attention is on Wilfrid rather than the monastery itself:

"he [Alhfrith] granted him [Wilfred] the monastery at Ripon together with thirty hides of land, and he was ordained abbot. And now, even as the door of this

world was being opened wide by the Lord and the holy Apostle Peter, so ever more widely opened the door for the giving of alms in the Lord's name...".²⁹

However, when Bede describes such donations they read like charters and are not placed in any biblical-related context.³⁰ Moreover, although the *Vita Wilfridi* does give some details concerning the buildings of the churches of Ripon and Hexham, Stephanus places much more emphasis on describing them allegorically:

"For as Moses built an earthly tabernacle made with hands, of diverse varied colours according to the pattern shown by God in the mount, to stir up the faith of the people of Israel for the worship of God, so the blessed Bishop Wilfrid wondrously adorned the bridal chamber of the true Bridegroom and Bride with gold and silver and varied purples..."³¹

Also, even where Stephanus comments on the adornment provided by Wilfrid for the house of God, all of these objects are placed in the context of being a witness to his blessed memory.³² The objects are not mentioned so much for the object's sake, as directly concerned with Wilfrid's piety. Such depictions do not read like the narrated inventory that the *HA* offers us, rather they form an integral part of and are directly related to eulogising Wilfrid.

In terms of depth of detail, sources such as the Anonymous *Vita Ceolfredi* are not meticulous in their reports, but instead prefer to offer general comments. Thus chapters 9-10 of the Anonymous *Vita Ceolfredi* are content merely to record in unspecific terms the objects Biscop brought back from Rome on his fourth trip. Indeed, this source concentrates more on the bringing back to Britain of the arch-chanter of the Roman Church (John), than on the other objects. Moreover, unlike the comprehensive list in the corresponding chapter of the *HA*, the *Vita Ceolfredi*

omits some of the items recorded by Bede including the papal privilege. If one looks at other contemporary Continental *vitae*, such as the *Vita Geretrudis*, one can see that though it is noted that sacred books were brought to Nivelles from Rome and elsewhere by Gertrude's mother, Itta; there is no in depth account and the objects are directly related in terms of Itta's holy life.³³

The fact that the detailed accounts found in the *HA* are unique is further emphasized by a comparison with Bede's other works. For example, Bede's homily to Benedict Biscop, depicts, perhaps more typically, Biscop's life, around his 'pilgrimage for Christ' and concentrates ultimately on placing the context of Biscop's life in that particular day's Biblical reading, Matthew 19: 27-29. As Wormald has noted, this is essentially a '*peregrinatio* text' concerning the abandonment/renunciation of one's kin group, social standing and gender expectations.³⁴ Though the text mentions the large library, the relics of the blessed martyrs and the church fabric, these are secondary to relating his spiritual life and the description is considerably briefer than that in the *HA*.³⁵ Essentially in the homily the material evidence is there only to augment the primary theme of Biscop's religious life, whereas in the *HA* it appears to exist in its own right.

A similar statement could be made of Bede's Biblical commentaries. Benedicta Ward has shown Bede's interest in the actual building material and furnishings of the church in his commentaries, such as *Libri Quatuor in Principium Genesis*, *In Cantica Canticorum Allegorica Expositio*, in *Ezram et Neemiam*, *De Tabernaculo*, and *De Templo*.³⁶ However, as with the other evidence cited here, these texts relate their information more in terms of the allegorical exegesis of the

Bible than mere details of the fabric and furnishings of a particular church, and in this sense do not compare with the *HA*. Thus when considering the building and furnishing of Solomon's Temple, as detailed in 1 Kings 6: 1-38 and 1 Kings 7: 13-51, Bede's main interest lies in emphasizing the allegorical relationship of the house of God in Jerusalem as an image of the holy universal Church which from its first election to its end is being built up by the grace of Christ's peace which is redemption: *Domus Dei quam aedificauit rex Salomon in Hierusalem in figuram facta est sanctae uniuersalis ecclesiae quae a primo electo usque ad ultimum ...per gratiam regis pacifici, sui uidelicet Redemptoris, aedificatur.*³⁷ For Bede the description of the Temple as given in the first book of Kings should be seen in the light of Christian truth. In this treatise his interest in the specific fabric and furnishings of the Temple is a purely allegorical one.³⁸

In terms of the extent of detail one needs to turn to the other works Bede classed as *historia* for a comparison. For example, although in his other *vitae*, such as the *Vita Felicis*, the rebuilding and furnishing of St. Felix's Church is commented on, it is only a brief notice, lacking in any great detail.³⁹ Predominantly the text is concerned with Felix's attributes as a saint. Moreover, the information on Church foundations and their growth in the *HE* are similarly undetailed notices. Thus concerning the churches of SS. Peter and Paul at Canterbury Bede does comment that it was endowed with various gifts, but unlike the *HA* he does not go onto to detail them; this is a pattern generally followed throughout the *HE*.⁴⁰ To summarize, two main points can be drawn for the comparisons offered here. Firstly, although some texts do show an interest in the 'material culture' of their Church, this is not often described to the extent that it is found in the *HA* and,

secondly, where contemporary texts do concentrate on describing the actual fabric they place it either in the context of the actual holiness of an individual or in allegorical expositions. Essentially Bede's focus on the objects in the *HA* seems unique when placed amongst other contemporary works.

If it is accepted that neither traditional hagiographical or historical works were the over-riding influence on the focus of the content of Bede's *HA*, then the model he used needs to be identified. To find a possible answer one needs to turn away from the hagiographical material of Lerins and the insular contemporary works of Northumbria to Bede's beloved Rome. I would argue that the *Liber Pontificalis* (*LP*) provided Bede with his model for concentrating on the material wealth of a church. The *LP* also gives biographical information second place to what the individual brought to the monastery.⁴¹ Indeed, the most recent translator has commented on what he calls the texts 'endowment catalogues'.⁴² Judith Herrin too has noted that "the notices of the *LP* usually record in great details the buildings and rich decorations endowed by Roman bishops, often to the exclusion of initiatives in other fields".⁴³

Two chapters of the *LP* exemplify the many parallels in emphasis of the *HA* and the *LP*. These are the chapters on Pope Silvester (314-335) and Gregory the Great (590-604).⁴⁴ First, there is no allegorical or Biblical contextualisation of the material culture. Secondly, the general construction of the chapters follows the pattern of very briefly describing biographical details on the relevant individuals and then going into long detailed endowment catalogues, decrees made and councils called. Thus with Silvester it is noted that he was born in Rome, son of

Rufinus, and that he held the see twenty-three years, ten months and eleven days. It then goes on to note when he was bishop, giving a brief historical context before turning to the extensive list of his church endowments and their ornamentation.⁴⁵ Following a notice on his decrees it further concentrates on church foundations and ornamentation but this time the text is concerned with Emperor Constantine's gifts during Silvester's pontificate.⁴⁶

Likewise, the chapter on Gregory the Great accentuates what Gregory did for the fabric of the Church. The chapter follows the pattern of birth, parentage and the length of time that he held the see.⁴⁷ Thence it goes straight into discussing the works he produced, the canopy he built for the altar at St. Peter's, the purple-dyed cloth (decorated in gold) to go above the apostle's body and finally his church dedications and death:

Hic exposuit omelias euangeliorum numero XL, Iob, Ezechielum, Pastoralem et Dialogorum et multa alia quae enumerare non possumus Hic fecit beato Petro apostolo cyburium cum columnis suis IIII, ex argento pro. Fecit autem uestem super corpus eius blattinio et exornauit auro purissimo, pens. lib. C. Eodem tempore dedicant ecclesiam Gothorum quae fuit in Subora, in nomine beatae Agathae martyris. Hic domum suam constituit monasterium. Qui mortuus est et sepultus in basilica beati Petri apostoli, ante secretarium [die XIII mensis martii].⁴⁸

In both of these examples, biographical information is kept to the minimum, whilst the fabric of the church is comprehensively stated.

Although the *HA* does not follow exactly the same pattern (it does for example generally give more narrative details about the characteristics of an individual) there are some clear similarities. Primarily, there is the focus on the material fact evident in Bede's text and the lack of allegorical contextualisation of the Church fabric. Indeed, chapters 6 and 15 could be 'endowment catalogues' from the *LP* in narrative form. Also, in chapter 20 one can see quite sharply the concentration on 'objects' gained for the church during an individual abbacy. The chapter which relates Hwaertberht's abbacy is, as has been said, devoid of comment on his 'spiritual' life and is merely recorded in terms of the restoration of privileges and the translations of relics.

I am not suggesting that Bede constructed the *HA* by copying directly from the *LP* - although it is interesting to note the correspondence in the fabric and ornamentation which is mentioned - but rather it provided him with a precedent from which to develop his own endowment catalogue. If this is accepted there is still a problem with the narrative elements of the text - which are more hagiographical. Perhaps Bede realized that long lists did not make for enjoyable reading and thus he placed his inventory in the context of a narrative using standard (if brief) hagiographical forms. Alternatively, perhaps he felt that the only way to ensure that this text was viewed as having legitimacy was to place it in the genre of Christian *historia*. By alluding to a hagiographical framework he effectively linked his text to orthodox predecessors. The point is that the hagiographical material was of secondary importance to the actual physical evidence of the church in this work. In fact, Bede's concentration on the wealth

of objects makes one wonder if Bede was primarily attempting to portray the status of the monastery rather than the lives of its abbots. (Indeed, such a relationship was to be found not only in the *LP*. One need only look to the autobiographical information concerning Gregory of Tours in his *Histories* to see a connection between the man and the fabric of the church.)⁴⁹

As Thacker has noticed the holy men of Monkwearmouth-Jarrow were neither royal warriors nor outstanding ascetics.⁵⁰ Is it possible that in the face of not having an outstanding saint with which to augment the position of the monastery Bede was forced to acclaim the status of the monastery through its great collection of sacred objects, art and great knowledge? If one looks at the other monasteries, such as Whitby, Ely, Lindisfarne, Iona, and Whithorn it is easy to see how they augmented their positions through the development of successful saints' cults. A fundamental aspect of the success of such a cult was the saint's *vita*. For example, there are 59 known manuscripts of the Cuthbertine lives, in this sense one is looking at a successful *vita*.⁵¹ There were only 2 of the *Vita Ceolfridi* - this was not a successful text. If one accepts that the anonymous Ceolfrith *vita* came first and that it was not a success, is it not just possible that the status of the monastery could be increased by stressing the wealth of other relics and holy objects that it had?⁵² Brown has noted that *De Gloria martyrum* by Gregory of Tours is a book about the tapping of the new resources; in this case, relics.⁵³ It is the contention of this author that Bede's *HA* is also about the tapping of new resources, but Bede was not restricted to relics alone. He focused on knowledge, relics, endowments from a king, religious ornaments and paintings, a papal privilege and the fact that whilst the monastery may not have had a great ascetic

or royal saint its first five abbots were all sanctified. Essentially the *HA* is a text that is not so much a witness to the status of a monastery's saintly abbots, as a record of the status of the saintly abbots' monastery.

Having acknowledged this point one way for the modern researcher to overcome the problems of expectations concerning the *HA* would be to suggest that we consider it by a different title. Bede himself singled it out as a separate or sub-genre of *historia*. He, too, appears to have been aware that it did not sit comfortably within the boundaries of either *historia ecclesiastica* nor *historiae sanctorum*. So, the question one must be what title should we now give this text?

The *HA* was not the only early medieval text to have the *Liber Pontificalis* as a fundamental source. It has been noted that the *LP* also had great influence on texts which are designated *Gesta*.⁵⁴ It is the contention of this author that the title *Gesta abbatum* may well be more fitting for Bede's *HA* than either *historia* or *vita*. Generically speaking *Gesta* was the title given by editors to narrative texts which were constituted of a series of notices concerning successive abbots of a particular monastery.⁵⁵ Moreover, this particular genre placed the emphasis on achievements and events rather than just on biographical details.⁵⁶ Such an outline could be a general reference to Bede's *HA*, where, it has been shown, biographical information does appear secondary to the achievements and objects brought to Monkwearmouth-Jarrow by its successive abbots. Indeed, Bede may have had his own dilemma in entitling and thus classifying this work for though it does touch on personal details, as *historia* should, it does not give them the same emphasis as his other *historia* texts.

If one compares Bede's *HA* with the ninth century *Gesta abbatum Fontanellensium* (*GAF*) one can see striking affinities.⁵⁷ Although the *GAF* is a composite text (composed of 4 parts, compiled and revised according to particular circumstances over a period of time) the similarities concerning focus of content strongly suggest that Bede's *HA* was at least as influential as the *Liber Pontificalis* in its construction.⁵⁸ Firstly, both texts have a preponderance of information concerning the acquisition of books and the consequent development of a monastic library. Thus, in the *HA* the collection of books is mentioned in chapters 4, 6, 9 and 15, with explicit statements being made about which books were being collected in Ceolfrid's abbacy (chapter 15).⁵⁹ The *GAF*'s author's also place an importance on the accumulation of books. Indeed, they appear to have taken far more delight even than Bede in cataloguing the additions to their library. For example, the chapter concerning the abbacy of Wando contains a specific list of the numerous books received by the monastery during his tenure. These included expositions on the three evangelists, John, Matthew and Luke, Rufinus's *Historia Ecclesiastica*, the Life and Passion of Felix of Nola, the Rule of St. Augustine, Letters from Augustine, Jordanes' History of the Goths, the rules of St. Benedict and Columbanus, to name but a few.⁶⁰ In the chapter concerning Gervold one finds another of these catalogues albeit shorter:

*Pentateucum Moysi codicem unum, minorum prophetarum codicem unum, expositio sancti Augustini in euangelio Iohannis codices duos, librum Enkiridian sancti Augustini codicem unum, omeliare diuersorum autorum uolumen unum.*⁶¹

This is followed by a more extensive lists of books associated with the priest Harduin, including books by Gregory the Great, Augustine and, perhaps more pertinently, Bede's *De naturis rerum ac temporibus*.⁶² Such an extensive catalogue is again present in the chapter concerning Ansigisus.⁶³

However, these texts do not just list the books, both the *HA* and the *GAF* place a focus on the degree of learning of their abbots. The *HA*, therefore, makes it quite clear that Biscop amassed a great deal of knowledge: *et non pauca scientiae salutaris quemadmodum et prius hausta dulcedine*.⁶⁴ Abbot Sigfrid was well versed in scriptural knowledge: *uirum scientia quidem scripturarum sufficienter instructum*.⁶⁵ Hwaertberht, too, was notable for his studies, having gone to Rome during the pontificate of Sergius to learn: *Romam quoque temporibus beatae memoriae Sergii papae accurrens, et non paruo ibidem temporis spatio demoratus, quaeque sibi necessaria iudicabat, didicit, descripsit, retulit*.⁶⁶ Not only this but a direct link was said to have been made between the collection of books and the improvement of Christian education by Biscop on his deathbed.⁶⁷ As Wood intimated, this premium placed on learning can also be see in the *GAF*.⁶⁸ Thus, St. Hugo is noted for his knowledge of the Scriptures and St. Gervold for his zest for teaching.⁶⁹ Indeed, the *GAF* attributes the foundation of a school to improve literacy at Fontanelle to St. Gervold: *Scolam in eodem coenobio esse instituit, quoniam pene omnes ignaros inuenit litterarum*.⁷⁰ Whilst it is clear from the *GAF*'s booklists that the Fontanelle author's supplied more in depth information concerning library acquisitions and learning than Bede, the focus on the accumulation of knowledge is the same, and to a certain extent the significance of this focus is the same. The acquisition of knowledge, particularly

in the tangible form of books, as well as the allusion to Christian learning associated with it brought the monastery status.

Also, both texts emphasize the building up of the fabric of the church in terms of donations and purchases of land, as well as the actual construction of the respective monasteries. Thus, Bede notes in detail Ecgfrith's donations of land to Biscop on which to found the two monasteries, Ceolfrith's purchases of land from Aldfrith, and also the gift of land received from Witmar at his consecration to the monastery of St. Peter.⁷¹ Wood, has observed a similar preoccupation with the details of land-holdings in the *GAF*, noting that it was an important repository of charter evidence for the Abbey.⁷² Like Bede, therefore, it mentions the initial grant of land given through the largesse of Echinoald: *Deinde hortatu praefati praesuis ac possessionem terrae largiente Echinoaldo ... hoc Fontanellense coenobium una cum uenerando nepote sue Godone nouo opere construxit.*⁷³ It then continues to list further gifts as well as restorations of previous gifts taken away from the monastery.⁷⁴ (A notable example of this latter occurrence is to be found in the abbacy of St. Gervold, where Charlemagne restored all the estates taken unjustly from the abbey or which had been conferred on the king's followers).⁷⁵

The accruing of the fabric in terms of sacred objects and ornaments is another area of parity found within both texts. Bede is at pains to note that Biscop collected not only books but relics, ornaments, pictures and everything necessary for the service of the church and altar: *Sed et cuncta quae ad altaris et aecclesiae ministerium competebant.*⁷⁶ Moreover, whilst he might not have

elaborated on the titles of the books Biscop collected, Bede did specify the pictures and where they were placed within the church.⁷⁷ The authors of the *GAF* also list the appropriation of ecclesiastical and other articles. Such lists can be found, for example, in the records of Hugo:

*Hic dimisit in hoc coenobio Fontenellensi calicem aureum et patenam auream pensantes libras quatuor et uncias duas, turiculum auream unam pensantem libras quinque, capsam auro et gemmis decoratam continentem pignora diuersorum sanctorum.*⁷⁸

Such lists are also evident in the chapters concerning the abbots Wido and Gervold.⁷⁹

Nonetheless, these are not the only similarities of focus to be found in both texts. The *HA* and the *GAF* additionally seem equally uninterested in any miraculous element concerning their respective abbots.⁸⁰ Both texts record the translations of previous abbots. Hence, just as Hwaertberht is remembered (and revered perhaps) for having translated the relics of Eosterwine and Sigfrid, so Abbot Bainus is noted as having translated the relics of Wandregisil, Ansbert and Wulfram.⁸¹ Both texts also comment on the monastic immunities their respective communities gained.⁸²

There are a few discrepancies between these texts which need, however, to be recognized. Firstly, as noted earlier, the *GAF* appears to be a composite text, reworked by different authors. The *HA*, on the other hand, appears only to have had one author. The *GAF* appears more interested in the particulars of family connections, often recording the actual parentage of its abbots, whereas Bede

appears content merely to record the 'nobility' of the abbots without elaborating on who their parents were.⁸³ And, of course, the bibliographic lists in the *GAF* are far more explicit than they are in the *HA*. Nevertheless, even these differences are relatively minor and the two texts are clearly similar in overall content and focus. Arguably whilst the *GAF*'s authors' penchant for detail may have come from their reading of the *Liber Pontificalis*, the structure and content-focus of the work appears to have been heavily influence by Bede's *HA*. Essentially, both texts illustrate how the status of the monastery was bound up in both the stature of its abbots and in the possessions accumulated for the fabric of the church during their abbacies.

In his *HA* Bede achieved a text which not only conformed to his understanding of *historia* (narration of personal actions often with the aim of inspiring imitation) - after all his abbots provide excellent examples of model abbatial behaviour, but also extended *historia*'s boundary to take into consideration that the abbot's life was inextricably linked to the fabric of the church. The reason for such a text is perhaps simple, not only the memory of the abbots but also the fabric of their churches were commodities of status worth exploiting.⁸⁴ If one considers the text from the this viewpoint, seeing it more as a *gesta abbatum* than a *historia* much of the unease concerning its generic placing is dissipated. Bede's *HA* is a prototype *GA* and one can only question whether he chose to call it *historia* rather than anything else to ensure that his text was viewed as having legitimacy amid a community where this was a critical issue.⁸⁵

Chapter 6:

A Case of Innovation within Generic Boundaries: Bede's *Martyrologium*

Throughout the previous discussion of Bede's understanding of *historia* I have stressed that the narration of personal actions performed a central role. Moreover, it has been noted that for reasons of authority and legitimacy many of Bede's *historiae* have obvious generic links with Patristic and Rome associated predecessors. At the same time they included deviations from these texts thereby making Bede's writings unique within the genre in which they are normally classified. Within this framework Bede's *Martyrology* is another of his works which deserves to be admitted, at least as a sub-genre, to the corpus of his history writings. Although Bede did not himself identify it as a *historia*, he did place it directly after his histories in the bibliographic note at the end of the *HE* and the importance of this text as the first of the 'historical' martyrologies has been noticed by Hippolyte Delehaye, Wilhelm Levison and Jacques Dubois.¹

Despite the undoubted originality of Bede's approach to his *martyrology* the text has been little considered by academics.² Quentin, Dubois and Renaud are the only authors to have really attempted any significant research and the results of their studies have remained largely confined to the writings of a handful of Bedan scholars.³ Indeed, there is no critical edition of the martyrology and for the

purposes of this chapter the 'practical' edition drawn up by Dubois and Renaud has been used.

This chapter aims to look at the innovations Bede introduced that led to his martyrology being called a 'historical martyrology'. However, whilst attempting to do this, one needs to be well aware that the source itself is problematic. At present it is difficult to determine the exact date for the production of this text by Bede, though Colgrave suggested that it was written sometime between 725-731.⁴ Furthermore, although Quentin did list a series of entries which appear to have comprised the original martyrology, these entries were derived from the fifteen manuscripts of the martyrology and there are obvious variations. Thus, the earliest surviving manuscript, is a ninth century manuscript of the Bibliothèque de Saint-Gall (no. 451) which appears to be incomplete.⁵ Moreover, many of the manuscripts, such as *Manuscript 833 du fonds Palatin* held by the Vatican, have later additions which appear to bear no relationship to Bede's original martyrology.⁶

Nonetheless, this is a text which merits observation. For example, it has been stated that Bede drew predominantly from Patristic and 'Rome' related sources. Never is this more evident than in the entries found in his martyrology. Quentin's work shows nearly all of the entries to have been compiled from non-literary hagiographic sources such as *the Martyrologium Hieronymianum Epternacensis* [*MHE*] (similar to the early eighth century manuscript: Codex Epternacensis lat. 10837), *Liber Pontificalis*, and hagiographical literary texts such as the *Vitae* written by Jerome and Augustine.⁷ The only exceptions to this rule come from

the entries which relate directly to the only Anglo-Saxon saints mentioned, Aethelthryth and the Hewalds. Noticeably, no martyrs or confessors associated with the Irish tradition are mentioned (including Cuthbert) and other important local Northumbrian Anglo-Saxon saints, such as Oswald are missing. Essentially, Bede focused his notices on 'Roman orthodox' texts, once again exhibiting his deep respect for all things 'Roman'.

It was suggested earlier that many of Bede's texts have an obvious generic link with Patristic and Roman associated sources. The *martyrology* is no exception to this rule. As has been noted by Dubois, Lapidge and Goffart, Bede's martyrology appears to have been based on an existing martyrology ascribed to Jerome.⁸ Indeed, Bede appears to have relied heavily on this text - if Bede's sources offered several dates for an individual, he gave preference to the date in the *MHE*.⁹ Nevertheless, despite this generic connection there are certain innovations introduced by Bede, which led to his martyrology (rather than *MHE*) becoming the generic prototype for later martyrologies. The first, most obvious distinction is the level of information that Bede offers. Bede noted in his *HE* that he had written "A Martyrology of the feast days of the holy martyrs: in which I have diligently tried to record all that I could find about them, not only on what day, but also by what kind of combat and under what judge they overcame the world".¹⁰ As McCulloh commented the form of Bede's notices often parallel this description closely.¹¹ Usually he did begin by stating a place and name, adding also the name of the reigning Emperor and persecuting judge and then finishing with a variety of gruesome tortures. This stands in stark contrast to the majority of the entries of the *MHE*. As Lapidge has stated the *MHE*, on the whole, offers

the observer only skeletal, telegraphic information'.¹² Normally, only a name and place is included. Bede's decision to extend the material, therefore, does not seem to relate to his reading of the *MHE*.

Nevertheless this generalism is not without its notable exceptions. For example, the first notice of Bede's martyrology (for KL IAN, 1st January) is that of St. Almachius. In this case Bede drew heavily on the *MHE* which appears to have offered all the material Bede required:

Bede:

Natale Alamachi qui, iubente Alympio urbis praefecto, cum diceret: Hodie octavae dominicae diei sunt: cessate a superstitionibus idolorum et a sacrificiis pollutis, a gladiatoribus hac de causa occisus est.

MH (Epternache Mss):

*natale coronae qui iubente asclepio urbis praefecto, cum diceret hodie octaviae dei caeli sunt cessate a superstitionibus idolorum et sacrificias pullutis a gladiatoribus hac de causa occisus est.*¹³

Bede's entry is almost a verbatim copy of the *MHE*. The same can be said of the listings for Macedonis (III ID MAR, 13th March) and Montanus (VII KL. APR, 26th March).¹⁴ Perhaps these fuller notices from the *MHE* actually formed the basis for Bede's idea of an extended narrative. The innovation in Bede's work was essentially that he introduced fuller comments for all of the notices. It is not difficult to suggest from this that by building from certain examples that he found

in the *MHE* Bede maintained a direct contact with the generic predecessor and thereby maintained the legitimacy of his text.

Bede's innovative approach is further exhibited in his preoccupation with the tortures that the martyrs suffered. This is clearly seen, for example, in the entry for Pope Alexander, and the two priests Eventus and Theodulus (3rd May). In this passage Bede focuses immediately on their imprisonment and tortures, continuing on to note their burning and Alexander's beheading. Only once this has been done does Bede note the 'judge' under which they died:

*V Non. Mai. Romae, sanctorum Alexandri papae et Eventii et Theoduli presbyterorum: quorum primus post uincula et carceres, equuleum, ungulas et ignes, punctes creberrimus per tota membra peremptus est: sequentes et ipsi post longam carceris sustinentiam, ignibus examinati et ad ultimum decollati sunt sub Aureliano iudice tempore Traiani principis.*¹⁵

Bede's seemingly morbid fascination with extreme torture is not restricted to this one entry however, but is, in varying degrees of detail, a feature of nearly all of his notations on the martyrs of the persecutions. Indeed, even in those cases where Bede comments on confessors rather than martyrs he is inclined to focus (although admittedly not always) on material which exhibited a torment that they were prepared to undergo. Thus when dealing with the feast-day of St. Felix of Nola (14th January) Bede centres the entry on the episode where Felix is thrown into prison and tortured rather than on his asceticism or posthumous miracles:

XIX KL. FEB. In Campania, natale sancti Felicis presbyteri et confessoris: de quo inter alia scribit Paulinus episcopus quia cum a

*persecutoribus in carcerem mitteretur, et cochleis ac testulis uinctus superpositus iaceret, per noctem ab Angelo solutus atque eductus sit.*¹⁶

This interest in detailing the macabre events leading to the eventual martyrdom of an individual or group of people is not found in the *MHE*. Indeed, when discussing Bede's *Martyrology* Plummer was prepared to imply that this preoccupation was a later addition to a much more sedate work: 'The *Martyrology* as we have it has been so added to, that it is impossible to tell what part, if any, is really due to Bede. And there is much in it that one would willingly believe not to be Bede's - too much ecclesiastical gloating over the physical horrors of martyrdom, and legends of the purely silly kind'.¹⁷

Nevertheless, to find a parallel of such an interest one, in fact, need look no further than Eusebius' *Historia Ecclesiastica*. Delehaye himself indicated the influence of Eusebius' writings about various martyrs on texts such as the *MHE*.¹⁸ It is my contention that these works had a direct impact on Bede's *Martyrology*. If, for instance, one reads Book 8 of Eusebius' *HE* one quickly sees how Eusebius also appears to have taken an inordinate delight in concentrating on the actual physical torments facing people who professed Christianity. Thus when discussing the results of the third edict of Diocletian's persecution, Eusebius notes how people endured various forms of torture (scourged, racked and burnt): *flagris alii discerpebantur, alii ungulis fodiebantur, alii ignitis lamminis urebantur....*¹⁹ Moreover, when detailing the martyrs of Egypt in chapter 8 the focus is almost entirely the tortures endured:

*quidam ex ipsis post uerbera, post ungulas, post flagella aliosque diuersi generis horribiles cruciatus flammis traditi sunt, alii in mare praecipitati, nonnulli etiam capite caesi, ita ut sponte ceruices suas securibus darent, nonnulli inedia consumpti, alii patibulis adfixi, in quibus quidam more peruerso capite deorsum presso et pedibus in sublime sublatis.*²⁰

Essentially, from chapters 3-13 Eusebius recounts with great relish the trials endured by the martyrs. From reading this text it is not difficult to suggest that Eusebius' interest influenced Bede's selection of material from the sources that he had at his disposal.

Another distinction which makes Bede's *Martyrology* stand out from the *MHE* and the historical martyrologies which were the successors of his text is the fact that Bede's martyrology follows the Julian calendar, beginning with the kalends of January, rather than the ecclesiastic one.²¹ This anomaly is problematic for it represents a significant break from the generic predecessor. As a liturgical text one might understandably expect to find such a martyrology following the ecclesiastical year (ie beginning on 25th December). Indeed, it would appear that this is the assumption that Goffart is making when he incorrectly states that Bede's martyrology, like its Hieronymian predecessor, did start on the 25th December. Thus he continues, it is unlike 'the annalistic framework normally used for chronicles'.²² In fact, by beginning his text on 1st January, Bede made his text far more like an annal than what one might understand as a liturgical martyrology. It is not clear, however, why Bede chose to do this.

One possible solution to the problem of why Bede chose the Julian calendar may be found in his *De temporum ratione* (*DTR*). Bede implies himself that a Julian calendar accompanied *DTR* in its codex.²³ The editor, C.W. Jones, has established that such essentially computistic calendars gave rise to the *martyrologium* of the calendar (ie the entries beside the Julian date of the names of the saints of local cult).²⁴ Further to this, he has shown how the commentator of the *DTR* describes this calendar as a *martyrologium*.²⁵ Nevertheless, Jones differentiates between this martyrology or calendar and Bede's historical martyrology. The former, he believes, was designed for computistical requirements, the latter for reference and meditation. Although Jones does concede that the historical martyrology may have been a consequence of *kalendarium*, he adamantly stresses their differences and emphasizes that the manuscript tradition of the two is 'wholly separate'.²⁶ In fact, whilst Jones may be right to differentiate between the two, Bede's decision to use the Julian calendar instead of the ecclesiastical one could have been influenced by the computistical martyrology which was an appendage to the *DTR*. If this is so, it surely implies a closer link between the two texts than Jones has been prepared to accept.

There is another link between the *Martyrology* and the *DTR*. As has already been commented, in the *Chronica maiora* (*CM*) Bede makes the importance of the martyrs of the Sixth Age very clear. In the *CM*, however, he is selective with those martyrs he singles out. The genre of the martyrology allows him much greater scope to convey details on the martyrs. Indeed, some of the martyrs he mentions in the *CM* also occur in the *Martyrology*. Common to both texts are

entries on Polycarp, Perpetua and Felicitas, Pope Alexander, Fabian, Cyprian, Pope Gaius, Pope Marcellinus, Alban, Gervase and Protase, Anastasius and Aethelthryth. A comparison of these entries confirms that in the *CM* Bede concentrated the material on brief, matter of fact notations which placed an episode in time. This is clearly shown, for example, if one views the respective accounts for Perpetua and Felicitas:

CM:

Perpetua et Felicitas apud Kartaginem Africae in castris bestiis deputatae pro Christo nonis Martiis.

Mart.:

Apud Cartaginem, Perpetuae et Felicitatis, quae bestii sunt deputatae, sub Severo principe, et cum Felicitas parturiret in carcere, omnium militum qui simul patiebantur precibus impetratum est octavo mense pareret.²⁷

In the *CM* the entry is a mere listing of when (in terms of chronology and day of death) and where they were martyred. In the *Martyrology* this information is extended to note, as Bede indicated himself, not only where, but also the judge and extent of their persecution. This is even more obvious if one compares the entries for Pope Alexander, Polycarp, and Alban.

Essentially, the primary focus of the *Martyrology* is toward the person represented rather than locating the event within a specified chronology. Thus, in the case of Pope Alexander as listed in the *CM*, Bede is interested in noting only when his beheading occurred and where:

*Traianus ann MVIII mens VI d. XV... Alexander quoque Romanae urbis episcopus martyrio coronatur et VII ab urbe miliario uia Numentana, ubi decollatus est, seppelitur.*²⁸

In the *Martyrology* one sees Bede's emphasis on what Alexander and his companions were prepared to endure and the notification of the beheading only follows after Bede has detailed a variety of tortures.²⁹ This difference in concentration is all the more evident with Alban. The *CM*'s entry is a mere sentence indicating when Alban crossed the ocean to Britain and was killed with his associates:

*IIIICCLVIII Nam et oceani limbum transgressa Albanum, Aaron et Iulium Britaniae cum aliis pluribus uiris ac feminis felici cruore damnauit.*³⁰

The *Martyrology* has a far more expanded narrative, focusing on Alban's torture and martyrdom:

*X Ki. JUL. In Brittania, sancti Albani martyris: qui tempore Diocletiani in Verolamio ciuitate, post uerbera et tormenta acerba, capite plexus est: sed illo terram cadente, oculi eius qui eum percussit pariter cedierunt. Passus est cum illo etiam unus de militibus, eo quod eum ferire iusses noluerit, diuino utique perterritus miraculo, quia uiderat beatum martyrem sibi, dum ad coronam martyrii properaret, alueum annis interpositi auando transmeabilem reddidisse.*³¹

To achieve this change in emphasis Bede selected information from different sources for each of these works. Thus, in the *CM* entry for Felicitas and Perpetua, Bede only used Prosper's *Chronicle*.³² However, in his *Martyrology* he supplements this source with material drawn from the *Passio* of Felicitas and Perpetua³³. In the *CM*'s entry for Alexander, Bede is content to rely on the

relevant information from the *Liber Pontificalis*.³⁴ In the *Martyrology* his main source is the *Passio sancti Alexandri*.³⁵ For Polycarp, his *CM* note comes from the *MHE*, whilst his martyrology's narrative is derived from St. Jerome's, *De viris illustribus*.³⁶ Finally, for St. Alban's entry in the *CM*, Bede depended on Gildas whilst using the *Passio Albani* as his main source for the *Martyrology*.³⁷ Within the context of the *CM* Bede was principally uninterested in the specifics of an individual's actions and could thus depend upon sources which offered only brief notices. However, his aim for the *Martyrology* was clearly different and by deriving his entries from a broader selection of hagiographical material he introduced an extended narrative with elements which resemble his *historia* writings into his *Martyrology*.

In this sense the *Martyrology* is more akin to the *historiae*, which focus on personal action, than the *CM* which appears to attempt to place an event in a chronology. This is excellently illustrated by the information Bede offers the reader about St. Marcellinus (26th April). In the *Martyrology* Bede specifically notes the pontificate of Marcellinus, his beheading, the people he was persecuted with and where he was buried:

*VI KAL. MAI Depositio sancti Marcellini papae; qui cum Ecclesiam IX ann. M. IIII rexisset, temporibus Diocletiani et Maximiani, ab eodem Diocletiano pro fide Christi cum Claudio et Cyrino et Antonino capite truncatus est, et post dies XXXV sepultus est uia Salaria, in cubiculo, a Marcello presbytero et diaconibus, cum hymnis VI Kal. Mai.*³⁸

The *CM* listing for this persecution omits his name. In fact, it does not single out any individual, aiming only to record when the persecution occurred and how many were martyred:

*IIIIXCCLVIII Secundo autem persecutionis anno Dioclitianus...Haec persecutio tam crudelis et crebra flagrabat, ut intra unum mensem XVII milia martyrum pro Christi passi inueniantur.*³⁹

This example does appear to confirm emphasis placed upon the event in time's framework in the *CM* rather than the actions of individuals.

Nevertheless, a comparison of the *CM* and the *Martyrology* shows that Bede was not entirely consistent in his approach to the *Chronica*. In at least two cases the opposite to what has been shown above can be seen. For instance, in his *CM* Bede writes more about Aethelthryth than he does in the *Martyrology*. The *Mart.* is essentially taken up with Aethelthryth's incorrupt status:

*IX KL. IUL. Sanctae Aethelthrydae uirginis et reginae, in Brittania: cuius corpus cum sedecim annis esset sepultum, incorruptum inuentum est.*⁴⁰

The *CM* does give more background detail:

*Sancta et perpetua uirgo Christi Edilthryda filia Annae regis Anglorum et primo alteri uiro permagnifico et post Ecfrido regi coniux data postquam XII annos thorum incorrupta seruauit maritalem, post reginam sumto uelamine sacro uirgo sanctimonialis efficitur, nec mora etiam uirginum mater et nutrix pia sanctarum, accepto in construendum monasterium loco, quem Eilge uocant, cuius merita testatur etiam mortua caro, quae post XVI annos sepulturae cum ueste, qua inuoluta est, incorrupta repperitur.*⁴¹

The lack of material on Aethelthryth in the *Mart.* is perhaps understandable as she was not a martyr through persecution. Rather it was her perpetual virginity, the truth of which was proved by her incorruptibility, that made her a martyr. Perhaps Bede felt that nothing more needed to be said than that in the *Martyrology*.

What cannot be so easily explained away, however, is the anomalous case of St. Anastasius. The relevant entry in the *CM* is a much more extended one than usual. The listing does, in fact, open by centring on placing the event of Anastasius' martyrdom in time: *IIIDXCI Heraclius an. XXVI..Anastasius Persa Monachus nobile pro Christo martyrium patitur.*⁴² However, it then proceeds into a more lengthened description which reads like a synopsis of Anastasius' life. Thus Bede talks of Anastasius' boyhood, his conversion and baptism, his entry into monastic life, his captivity and torture, his martyrdom, posthumous miracles and the translation of his relics from his monastery to the monastery of Aquas Savias.⁴³ The information in the *Martyrology*, on the other hand, remains firmly within the parameters that Bede appears to have set for it. He merely mentions the place, tortures, martyrdom and judge under which Anastasius' death occurred.⁴⁴ It is clear, in fact, that in the *Martyrology* Bede does consciously and consistently stick to the boundaries which he indicated in his resume of this text in the *HE*. When he does not do this it is often either because of a lack of sources or purely because it was unnecessary to do so (as in the cases of some non-martyr saints). What is not clear is why, when discussing Anastasius in the *CM*, Bede felt it necessary to break the generic limitations he appears to have otherwise generally followed

when compiling this text. Nevertheless, this exception does not alter the overall pattern seen in these two texts.

Whilst acknowledging that the primary focus of these two texts is essentially different, the comparison of the *CM* and the *Mart.* indicates that the variation of emphasis is very subtle. The extent of this subtlety becomes all the more apparent when one returns to comparing Bede's *Mart.* with the *MHE*. It has been shown that for Bede's *Mart.* to have been seen merely in the tradition of the *MHE* it would only have comprised of listings and that, for once, Bede was prepared to move away from generic boundaries established by 'Roman' predecessors. In fact, by extending the information he placed in his *Mart.* Bede significantly altered the nature of the martyrology, for its concentration was no longer purely to record the name, place and day of the martyr. Bede, however, did not just introduce anecdotal material, he also instilled an implicit element of linear time. It is this that makes the difference between the *CM* and the *Mart.* so subtle.

This suggested (though not specifically stated) element of time is illustrated in Bede's decision to note the judge under which a martyr met his or her fate. In a *Mart.* such as the *MHE* time is essentially cyclical - revolving around events in one year, which are repeated ad infinitum. In this sense, time within a martyrology is only a year in extent, until with the New Year, it begins again. In essence, the material recorded in a martyrology such as the *MHE* functions only within the time of the liturgical year. Usually any evidence that might suggest the chronology for a particular action is omitted. The absence of any chronological markers within the notations means that outwith this text the information is

timeless. By introducing into his *Martyrology* notification of the judge or emperor under which the martyr perished Bede, perhaps unconsciously, introduced an implied element of time, in a chronological sense, during which a martyrdom occurred. Thus, whilst the *MHE* only offers: *in sicilia ciuitate cateruas agathe uirginis* for St Agatha, Bede notes that her torture and martyrdom happened under the consul Quintianus, at the time of Diocletian, *tempore Diocletiani*.⁴⁵ The same can be said of St. Alexander. In the *MHE* the focus is on name and place. Bede, however adds 'the time' of the martyrdom - Alexander's beheading occurred under the judge Aurelianus, at the time of Trajan (*tempore Traiani*).⁴⁶ These are just two examples, but this insertion of an implied chronological time in the entries pervades many of the listings of the text and can be seen in the listings for: Theodota (under count Leocadius, at the time of Diocletian); Anastasia (*tempore Diocletiani*); Benignus (*tempore Aureliani*); SS. Speusippus, Eleusippus and Melasippus (*tempore Aureliani imperatoris*); Caesarius and Julian (*tempore Claudii*); Felix and Eusebius (*tempore Claudii imperatoris*); Euplus (*tempore Diocletiani et Maximiani*); SS. Felix, January, Fortunatianus and Septiminus (*temporibus Diocletiani*); Sosius (*tempore Diocletiani imperatoris*); Juliana (*tempore Maximiani imperatoris*); Lupus (*tempore Attilae*); Papias and Maurus (*tempore Diocletiani*); Marius and Martha (*tempore Claudii principis*); Fabian (*tempore Decii*) and Alban (*tempore Diocletiani*).⁴⁷ In those entries where *tempus* is not specifically mentioned, the naming of an Emperor alone will often imply the era when the torture and martyrdom occurred. By adding the judge Bede added an implied chronology. Basically, the time of the martyrs was a 'recurrent time'. By adding contextual information Bede introduced an element of linear time. Consequently he enabled

the martyrs to exist not only within this recurrent time but also within linear time, which in eschatological terms ran from the Creation to the Day of Judgement.⁴⁸

Bede's choice of information appears to have been influenced by his chronological work in the *CM*. In fact, if the *Mart.* was used in conjunction with the *CM* the reader would easily be able to place the martyrs' death in the period it occurred within the Sixth Age. Another of Bede's innovations then was to introduce a wider temporal context for each of the martyrs mentioned, thereby changing the *Mart.* from having only a cycle of 'annual time', to also having an implied chronology in the actual listings. It would be inaccurate to say, nevertheless, that this innovation meant that the *Mart.* should be termed a 'chronicle of saints'.⁴⁹ The framework of time is only implied in the *Mart.* and it is secondary to the details of the person noted. For it to be considered a chronicle this framework would need to be explicitly specified and be of primary importance.

In compiling his *Mart.* Bede was an innovator but even here he was not prepared to step out of the boundaries of the Patristic influences so prevalent elsewhere in his works. Thus working from the structure of the *MHE*, inspired by Eusebius' 'ecclesiastical gloating' on torture and influenced by his work on chronology Bede produced a text which became the generic prototype for succeeding martyrologies.

Chapter 7:

Bede's Methods of Saintly Image Construction within the Genre of *Historia Ecclesiastica*: 1

When approaching any historical analysis of the *HE* it is vital to be aware of how Bede constructed his models of saintly behaviour. It was shown in the previous chapters that Bede used directly and alluded to patristic and Roman texts to imbue the overall framework of his texts with a sense of authority. In so doing, most of his *historiae*, whilst unique in some aspect, can still be placed within genres which had gained their status through being products of the revered Fathers of the Church. However, it is clear Bede's inter-textual connections in the *HE* were not just limited to genre considerations. In terms of constructing actual characterizations there are signs of inter-textuality too which operate on three different levels, were a major part of his methodology and critical to his comprehension of the role of Christian history. In the following case studies I aim to show how Bede fashioned his models of the royal male and female saints of Northumbria through a process which utilized, firstly, direct inter-textuality, secondly, variations on Christian literary themes and conventions, and, thirdly, eye-witness experiences expressed through established literary frameworks.

Like Robert Markus I argue that Bede, like other readers within the early monastic milieu, saw himself as wholly subject to the texts he took as authoritative and, consequently, borrowed from them extensively.¹ Having acknowledged this it needs to be made clear that I do not believe Bede was solely

a prisoner of his texts, rather that he was a talented manipulator of rhetorical tools which he used to introduce textual models into the lives of the individuals he was portraying. Indeed, arguably the dissemination of these, often Late Antique, models in a form accessible to Anglo-Saxon society may, I'll suggest, have been a primary aim.

Throughout, this chapter I will be stressing that when Bede was dealing with individuals he was above all creating inter-textual images and that these images did not necessarily relate to the experience of the individuals on which he focused. This I believe, is a challenge to which medievalists are only now really beginning to rise. After all, although Mayr-Harting has repeatedly argued that Bede's world was essentially a textual one, we still search for evidence of where he depicts reliable factual accounts concerning individuals and places. Indeed, Timothy Reuter has recently drawn to our attention the point that whilst we can discern literary elements in our texts we tend to take the incidental features as reliable because the 'authors must have been concerned to present a realistic or plausible story to their audience'. The crux of his point is not this though, rather it is that our notions of plausibility are presentist and, therefore, not themselves always reliable guides as to the discerning of what did and did not occur.² I agree wholeheartedly with this and, in fact, would take it one step further to suggest that even incidental features which we have assumed are included for plausibility may themselves be textual allusions (an example of which I will indicate in this chapter) and that seeming textual plausibility may have been a greater consideration than the reflection of an actuality. Whilst I would not rule out the possibility that Bede does indicate some descriptions of what happened I am

essentially arguing that caution should draw us to look for literary parallels first before concluding actuality. I cannot deny that there may have been occasions when life really did seem to imitate literature or *vice versa*, but I will be showing that I am not convinced we can always determine this. To illuminate Bede's methodology in the *HE*, this and the following chapter aim to re-examine his approaches to his 'native' informants as well as his exploitation of sources found within the monastic libraries at his disposal. They also aim to analyze the conventional compositional techniques Bede applied in the *HE*. In this, I hope to raise to more prominence the issue of the inter-connectedness of Bede's textual authorities and his *historiae*, stressing that Bede's methodology has profound implications for the portrayal of apparently historical events.

APPROACHING BEDE'S NATIVE SOURCES FOR THE *HE*

In 1965-66 David Kirby aimed to set out Bede's native sources for the *HE*.³ In so doing Kirby noted the care with which Bede supplied the names of informants in both the Preface and text of the *HE*.⁴ Essentially, Kirby assumed that at least to a certain degree Bede's seeming dependence on eye-witness and oral accounts represented his desire to provide his readers with the most accurate renditions of previous events. Kirby, like most historians (except perhaps Walter Goffart), optimistically assumed that Bede's method of source selection was determined by the same wish for historical accuracy which modern historians claim to apply today. However, one must question this presupposition and ask whether Bede really believed that historical accuracy as opposed to convincing representation and inter-textual allusion was all important in the construction of his models.

It has already been noted that the Preface of the *HE* is a highly stylized, conventional piece of writing. I would like to extend this point further to argue that Bede's references to eye-witness and oral accounts are themselves rhetorical devices designed to encourage the reader to be convinced that what he stated had historical accuracy. His consistent naming of individuals who plausibly could have verified his narration gives the *HE* a feel of authenticity. Arguably, it is this sense of authenticity with which the modern reader can identify - after all if Bede is naming contemporaries he is hardly likely to falsify their statements, or so it seems if one believes historical accuracy is his ultimate goal. Such a sense of authenticity, however, perhaps belies the level of convention and construction contained within the text.

Before I go on to examine Kirby's points concerning the use of oral information it is worth acknowledging the recent work which considers the use of memory and 'remembering' the past. Patrick Geary, in particular, has added much to this debate, noting that early medieval historiographers were operating within a situation in which the collective had some impact on what was to be remembered and what was not.⁵ Indeed, Geary himself refers to an occasion where the hagiographer, Letaldus of Micy, appears to have circulated a draft of his *Miracula S. Maximini*, among the older monks of his community, who reminded him of what had been omitted, and recalled to his memory many things including a miracle he went on to add to his text. He then, Geary notes, went on to revise his text in accordance with the collective advice of his elders.⁶ Such an example seems to imply a close relationship between the author and his oral sources and

would suggest that Bede's account of oral witnesses at least reflected some collective memories relating to actual events. However, in his analysis of remembrance Geary tends to avoid examining the use of such information as a rhetorical device. After all we only know of the procedure of correction that Letaldus of Micy used from his own text. Surely such a statement was designed to bring greater weight to the miracle story he subsequently went on to narrate? I would not deny that collective memory may have been drawn upon, but I would argue that a stated reference to it in a text should arouse our suspicion as to the possible rhetorical nature of that particular reference. Essentially in my discussion of Bede's oral sources I am attempting to provoke discomfort in my reader in order to make him/her question their own belief in the reliability of Bede as a source drawing upon other reliable sources. As I indicated in the first chapter, I do believe that Bede was writing for a 'textual community', and will, to some degree, have reflected the needs of that community. However, I would argue that the needs of that community were as much the dissemination of the Biblical and Late Antique ideals in which they were submerged as an accurate rendition of individual lives from the Anglo-Saxon past. In this Bede does act as a transformer of the past, but he does this primarily by superimposing images from a different period on to that which he claims to be depicting. In this Bede is using some of the methods Geary identifies such as selecting what he believed (and his textual community believed) to be worthy of remembering about individuals, but this value was predicated on the texts far more than it necessarily was on any lived reality.⁷ Arguably, the textual sources of monasticism provided a new interpretative structure within which to understand memories of the past but they also provided models with which the past could be recreated so that it reflected

specifically Christian ideals.⁸ I realize that in arguing this I may seem one sided but it strikes me that for too long we have, at some level, taken Bede's trustworthiness for granted. It is this sense of 'taking for granted' which I wish to dispel, challenging my reader to view Bede's *historiae* from the perspective of the Christian rhetorician rather than as a discerning recorder of oral tradition.

Kirby did, himself, indicate a few problems with the oral accounts. Firstly, they were highly localized.⁹ Secondly, some of the so-called eye-witness accounts related to periods long before he completed the *HE*.¹⁰ Thus Bede implies that he has heard information from individuals who had known Aidan: *quantum ab eis qui illum nouere didicimus*.¹¹ This seems to be similar to the type of collective memory to which Geary refers. However, given that Aidan died in 652 such a claim should still raise some misgiving. It is true that Bede's informants in this case may have spoken to him about Aidan when they were old and he was young, but it is still hard not to question the accuracy of the transmission of such information from his sources to a text finalized nearly 80 years after the subject's death. As Kirby states the scope for error was wide.¹² Moreover, one needs to question how often Bede referred to such sources in order to bring authority to his narrative. Another example can be found in Bede's description of relations between Ecgfrith and Aethelthryth. Here Bede claims to have spoken with Wilfrid himself - what greater proof of authenticity?¹³ Yet again one must consider the effect of time on a conversation that would have occurred before Wilfrid's death in 710, about the period of the early 670s and which was written down in its final form c730. What is perhaps implied by Bede's choice of individuals in these cases is that the names of his sources were more important

than the verification of the material they supplied. Basically, the naming of sources provided a 'rhetorical' authority making the information seem authentic.

In the light of this proposal Bede's repeated efforts to note the trustworthiness of his sources reads as a rhetorical device designed to persuade the reader of the validity of his narrative. Given our acceptance of the basic outline of seventh and eighth century Anglo-Saxon history Bede presents, he was evidently successful.

The third problem Kirby isolated was that Bede could make a story which was considered doubtful by its original author appear an unquestioned part of tradition.¹⁴ To do this Bede merely removed any phraseology likely to imply caution concerning part of the narrative. This he does successfully, for example, with the tale of Edwin's vision whilst in exile in East Anglia. Thus, in the Anonymous Whitby *Vita Gregorii*, the author notes that he is retelling the story in a form he believes to be the truth, even though he had not heard it from those who knew Edwin most: *Quod non tam condenso quomodo audiuius uerbo, sed pro ueritate certantes, eo quod credimus factum breui replicamus et sensu, licet ab illis minime audiuius famatum qui eius plura pre ceteris sciebant.*¹⁵ He goes on to reassure his reader that even a tale that happened long before the days of any of those who are still alive, or in distant lands can be passed on by faithful witnesses: *Nec tamen quod tam spiritaliter a fidelibus traditur, tegi silentio per totum rectum rimamur, cum etiam sepe fama cuiusque rei, per longa tempora terrarumque spatia, post congesta, diuerso modo in aures diuersorum perueniet. Hoc igitur multo ante horum omnes qui nunc supersunt, gestum est dies.*¹⁶ His phraseology further implies actual uncertainties when he identifies the man in Edwin's vision as Paulinus. Thus he states not that it was, but that 'it is said' to

have been Bishop Paulinus: *Sub hac igitur specie dicunt illi Paulinum*.¹⁷

Throughout this chapter the author's concern to stress reliability actually encourages some misgivings about the certainty of the details. Bede avoids this impression entirely. Firstly, he does not intimate any anxiety as to the source of his information, rather he just moves straight into the narrative of the event.¹⁸ This is particularly relevant if one considers the Anonymous *Vita* to be one of the earliest of the Northumbrian *vitae*. After all, if an author writing in early eighth century implicitly expressed some doubt as to the veracity of the sources and noted that all the verifiable witnesses were dead, Bede writing several years later was in an even weaker position. Secondly, Bede avoids phrases such as 'it is said', preferring to retell the story directly as if he is the source, consequently enhancing the credibility. Whereas the Anonymous author emphasized the trustworthiness of his information and, thereby, to some extent introduced an element of doubt, Bede discussed this part of the narrative with assured confidence, offering his reader little room for misgivings.

Nonetheless, even acknowledging these difficulties, historians still leave Bede's list of native sources more or less intact, preferring to trust his reliability rather than question his methodology. If, however, one starts to argue that Bede's history works are at their core rhetorical and, that, in fact the method of constructing religious discourse fundamentally depended on textual precedents and other literary conventions as much as oral tradition or eye-witness accounts, such acceptance of Bede's reliability must be scrutinized. Although it is, for example, extremely difficult to be sceptical of Bede's named sources in the *HE*, especially individuals such as Acca who was after all a contemporary of Bede's,

one still, nevertheless, needs to treat such sources with a degree of circumspection. Since Acca, like Bede, was a product of a tradition that placed a premium on the immersion of the self into the textual reality of the Bible and Patristic Fathers, it is possible that Bede's oral informants themselves may have provided stories which accommodated signs and explanations of virtues (or their absence) already considered as having authority by the religious communities from which they came.¹⁹

The reader should be aware then that not only may Bede have been deliberately misleading his audience about the accuracy of his informants' descriptions, but of the extent to which any source or eye-witness account expressed their information using previous textual images and known literary conventions as their frames of reference. Even where the source could be an eye-witness the account they transmitted could conceivably be full of such conventions and literary reminiscences. In this it is not so much that the *HE* is a mosaic of personal memories but of 'conventional memories'. An example of this can perhaps be seen in *HE* V:1 where Bede records a miracle by Oethelwald related to him by one of the brothers for whom it was performed, Guthfrith.²⁰ The miracle involved Oethelwald praying to stop the raging tempest that was preventing Guthfrith and a group of fellow monks getting to Farne Island. The allusion to the New Testament here is perhaps obvious and the calming of the sea by a saint was a common hagiographical *topos*.²¹ However, within the text Colgrave has also noted both specific use of Ephesians (3:14) and an echo in one of the sentences to Vergil's *Aeneid*.²² Such conventions imply that either Bede or his informant transcribed their experience using a formula dependent on textual sources.

Indeed, this is even more pertinent when one examines the records which have been supplied to Bede by monasteries which held the memories of long dead saints. A useful illustration of this can be found in *HE* III:28. Here Bede depicts Chad's travelling on foot like the Apostles through the countryside.²³ Bede then gives a brief description of the scenery. As Neil Wright has commented, this has been viewed by some as an accurate representation of the contemporary English landscape.²⁴ In fact, Professor Whitelock suggested that Bede's use of the word *castella* in this case was a translation of the Old English *byrig* and could have referred to a nobleman's residence.²⁵ Nonetheless, Campbell noted that such a marked clustering of words for places usually occurred when Bede was following a written text - at least offering a hint that this was a textual construct.²⁶ In actuality Wright has shown that this geographical depiction was a direct allusion to Caelius Sedulius's *Carmen Paschale* - a poem which Bede quotes explicitly in his *De arte metrica*.²⁷ As Regis Boyer has commented such landscape depictions were included in narratives for the purposes of credibility.²⁸ However, credibility and factual accuracy need not be the same thing.

This case provides another question, was it Bede's informant or Bede himself that phrased the story? After all, while Bede is exceptionally upfront about the individuals and monasteries from whom he acquired information, he is notably reticent when it comes to the method of construction utilized for theirs or his narrative. Perhaps this actually brings the observer to the crux of the problem - Bede's Preface is very persuasive in the sense that it supplies a list of sources with which one can identify: learned men with written records and old traditions (*uel monimentis litterarum uel seniorum traditione*).²⁹ However, the efficacy of this

list, as of his other informants, is misleading. The naming of sources does not necessarily equate with the accuracy of the biographical or other information. It does, however, detract from the inter-textual and stylized elements of the text which, if left overt, would undermine the seeming 'historical reality' of what was being recorded. Behind these sources is a tradition of text construction which relies on direct and indirect references to previous texts which were considered to have their own authority. The point is that until we have collated and read all of these texts we are left with sections of the *HE* that might *seem* to relate to actualities but are, in fact, merely allusions to other sources used within the narrative to enhance the associations between historical events of the Anglo Saxons and the Christian literary past. I am not denying here that work has been done already by other historians to elucidate the key religious and literary texts used by Bede for the creation of some of his images, but I am suggesting that the implication of this in terms of historical accuracy is far more profound than the academic historical community is prepared to admit. The religious community in which Bede moved was highly text orientated and the texts he produced reflected such a predilection - in this sense his understanding of a historical truth, despite what it might seem, is quite different from that of most modern academic historians.

Case Study 1:

Northumbrian 'Saint' Kings: Edwin, Oswald and Oswine

The portrayal of Edwin, Oswald and Oswine presented Bede with a challenge. In his construction of images of episcopal and monastic sanctity he and his informants could and did for their models draw upon a wealth of hagiographic sources such as of Sulpicius Severus.³⁰ Saintly lay rulers, on the other hand, exhibiting in actuality all the vagaries of royal power were a relatively new topic for such an exercise. Nonetheless, Bede betrays signs within his depiction of these three individuals of similar techniques of construction to those of their saintly, religious counterparts. As I have noted earlier, however, these techniques depended more upon allusion and inference rather than direct inter-textuality. His use of documentary evidence reflected a manipulation of the Christian discourse available and showed the extent to which the textual world of his predecessors influenced his present understanding and representation of individuals from the recent and not so recent past. This case study aims to examine the textual sources and conventions which he did and did not use in relation to Edwin, Oswald and Oswine and the application of a composite method of image construction within the *HE*.

Wallace-Hadrill, Campbell, Mayr-Harting and McClure have all identified the key texts Bede alludes to in his portrayal of the 'saint-kings' of Northumbria.³¹ It is clear that Biblical, particularly Old Testament, and patristic sources supplied

exemplars. Rufinus' Eusebius can be seen to have particularly influenced Bede in his portrayal of Oswald as a pseudo-Constantine.³² Clemoes has commented that Oswald, like Constantine, was identified with devotion to the Cross.³³ Clemoes' point can perhaps be taken further by suggesting that Bede's discussion of Oswald's triumphant victory over the tyrant Cadwalla is reminiscent of Eusebius's discussion of Constantine's many victories, especially that over the tyrant Licinius.³⁴ To enhance the similarities between the two events Bede emphasizes Cadwalla's tyranny, saying that he was both a savage tyrant (*tyrannus saeuimens*) and outrageous in it (*uaesanam Brettonici regis tyrannidem*).³⁵ Oswald's victory, like that of Constantine before him, was depicted as being over tyranny. Moreover, Bede's image of Oswald holding under his sway all the peoples and kingdoms of Britain is perhaps an allusion to Eusebius' picture of Constantine reuniting the Roman Empire, "bringing it all under their [Constantine and his son Crispus] peaceful sway."³⁶ In fact, Bede was not the first to allude to Oswald's 'imperial' image; in Adomnan's *Vita Columbae* Oswald is referred to as *totius Britanniae imperator*.³⁷ The evidence here then suggests a significant influence of Eusebius on Bede's portrayal of Oswald.

Indeed, in terms of the imperial allusions it is pertinent that two of the characteristics that Bede associates with Oswald - his faith and his humility - are also traits attributed to the emperor Theodosius by his ecclesiastical panegyrists, Paulinus of Nola and Ambrose. Thus Paulinus praises Theodosius' faith and humility: *ut in Theodosio non tam imperatorem quam Christi seruum, non dominandi superbia sed humilitate famulandi potentem, nec regno sed fide principem praedicarem*.³⁸ Ambrose, too, in his obituary of Theodosius eulogizes

his piety (*imperatoris pii*), his compassion (*imperatoris misericordis*), his faith (*imperatoris fidelis*) and his humility.³⁹ As Judith George has commented these two ecclesiastical panegyrists were the initiators of a formulation of Christian kingly virtues which reflected the more general teaching of the church concerning the virtues to which it was worth aspiring.⁴⁰ Arguably, they also provided Bede with a framework of kingly virtues on which to develop his image of his most saintly king, Oswald.

Gregory the Great's *Pastoral Care* also supplied Bede with imagery appropriate to the Christian conduct of kings.⁴¹ Whilst Oswald's virtue of humility may well be traced back to Paulinus or Ambrose, it, like Oswine's, can additionally be linked to the *Pastoral Care*. Gregory made it clear that humility was a critically important virtue in ruling.⁴² Oswine's bounteousness to nobles and commons alike are also reminiscent of Gregory's admonitions that a ruler should be bounteous with his goods.⁴³

The depiction of Edwin's thoughtfulness may also have been an image crafted from a knowledge of the *Pastoral Care*. In this, Gregory notes the importance of a ruler giving equal attendance to both his inner (spiritual) and outer (worldly) lives.⁴⁴ In Bede's portrayal of Edwin there is a consistent repetition of the theme of Edwin's solitary consideration of religion. In *HE* Book II:9 he is portrayed as sitting alone for long periods in silence deliberating on what he ought to do concerning conversion to Christianity:

*Sed et ipse, cum esset uir natura sagacissimus, saepe diu solus
residens ore quidem tacito sed in intimis cordis multa secum*

*conloquens, quid sibi esset faciendum, quae religio seruanda, tractabat.*⁴⁵

. Again in Book II:12 he is portrayed as having remained outside, “in silent anguish of spirit and consumed with inward fire” (*cumque diu tacitis mentis angoribus et caeco carperetur igni*) following a faithful friend’s warning of Raedwald’s treachery.⁴⁶ This image is reiterated once more by Bede, who recorded that whilst Edwin hesitated to accept the Word of God from Paulinus, he used to sit alone (*solitarius sederet*) for hours at a time debating with himself.⁴⁷ In the midst of a representation of an Anglo-Saxon king this theme of solitary pensiveness is unusual. This feature is not attributed to Aethelberht, Oswald or Oswine, and, in fact, this image, within the context of kingship, appears to be unique within Bede’s *HE*. The *Pastoral Care*, however, provides an excellent model for such behaviour. As has been commented, in his *Pastoral Care*, Gregory placed great importance on the attendance by rulers to both inner and outer worlds. Bede’s depiction of Edwin perhaps represented an interpretation of this part of the *Pastoral Care* giving a secular king the virtue of discernment. If read in this light, Edwin was a man engrossed in both the external world and, in his solitary ponderings, in his internal one as well.

Clare Stancliffe has suggested that Edwin’s hesitancy was an example of royal pride, acting as a foil for Oswald’s whole-hearted commitment to Christianity.⁴⁸ However, viewed through the ‘window’ of Gregory’s *Pastoral Care* such hesitancy could actually be viewed as much as a virtue as a weakness. In actuality, Bede at no time accuses Edwin of pride, a vice to which Gregory had paid special attention, and one which if Bede had meant to emphasize, would

surely have merited explicit mention by him. Nor in his depiction of the post-converted king is there any question of Edwin's commitment to his faith. He is shown as having established the wooden church of St. Peter at York whilst still a catechumen and, soon after his baptism he is said to have initiated the building of a magnificent stone church.⁴⁹ In Book II:15 Edwin's great devotion was illustrated by his persuasion of King Eorpwald to abandon idolatry. Bede also gives him the epithet 'soldier in the kingdom of Christ' (*Christi regno militauit*) for the six years of his reign following his conversion.⁵⁰

By illustrating Edwin's thoughtfulness, Bede not only alluded to Gregory the Great, he also elaborately reiterated a theme which he first introduced in the narrative concerning Aethelberht of Kent. In Book I:26, Bede records that Aethelberht rejoiced in other people's conversions but compelled no-one to accept Christianity because he had learned from his teachers that converting to the Faith was a voluntary not compulsory act: *Didicerat enim a doctoribus auctoribuis que suae salutis seruitium Christi uoluntarium, non coactiuum esse debere.*⁵¹ Elsewhere, in the *HE* Bede implicitly restates this, showing Edwin persuading Eorpwold of East Anglia, and Alhfrith apparently verbally persuading Penda of the Middle Angles to.⁵² Arguably, the theme he is reiterating here is that kings should not enforce conversion. However, underneath this he is also intimating that the process of conversion must be an individual's choice whoever the 'missionary' is. Indeed, if one examines Bede's description of Oswiu's enticement of Sigeberht of East Anglia to accept Christianity, it is clear that Sigeberht's process of acceptance has similarities to that of Edwin.⁵³ Thus Bede portrays Sigeberht being persuaded by Oswiu's almost priest-like discussion of

the falseness of idols and the power of God, but only after gaining consent from his friends and taking counsel with his followers does he accept baptism. In this sense Sigebert, like Edwin, could be viewed as hesitating. Such hesitancy, however, was not an absence of humility or an act of royal pride, rather it was an indication that conversion was a serious act that required thought and a consequential voluntary acceptance.

In fact, it is in his depiction of another king, Ecgrith, that Bede seems to allude to Gregory the Great's discussion of pride in his *Pastoral Care*. In the *HE* IV:26 Bede portrays Ecgrith's death at the hands of the Picts as a punishment for his attack on the Irish and his subsequent sin of not listening to his friends, particularly Cuthbert concerning this attack and Egbert concerning the previous attack on the Irish: *multum prohibentibus amicis et maxime beatae memoriae Cudbercto.... Sed quoniam anno praecedente noluerat audire reuerentissimum patrem Ecgberctum,... datum est illi ex poena peccati illius, ne nunc eos, qui ipsum ab interitu reuocare cupiebant, audiret.*⁵⁴ The details of this particular account are not recorded elsewhere. In the Anonymous *Vita Cuthberti* and in Bede's, Ecgrith's death is used only to illustrate the efficacy of Cuthbert's prophetic capabilities and to show Cuthbert's awareness of an event without being present.⁵⁵ Only the Anonymous author implies that Ecgrith's death was 'in accordance with the predestined judgement of God': *postremo tamen secundum praedestinatum iudicium Dei.*⁵⁶ In his *HE* Bede added the reason for God's judgement by implying a relationship between Ecgrith's failure to listen to his friends and the outcome of the battle of Nechtansmere.

In Gregory's *Pastoral Care* he made it quite clear that a ruler who becomes conceited about his own authority and esteems himself to be wiser than any of those whom he sees he exceeds in power, will find "within himself the pit of his own downfall".⁵⁷ Ecgfrith's failure to listen to his friends, when viewed in the light of this, can be seen as the vice of pride, and Ecgfrith's pride came before his destruction. This particular part of Bede's narrative is highly instructive in illustrating the complexities of Bede's methods of construction. Firstly, it exhibits the Orosian tendency to associate adversity with the judgement of God. Secondly, it appears to develop one of Gregory the Great's themes concerning rulership. Finally, it warns the modern reader against taking accounts at face value without acknowledging the textual tradition in which they occurred. For a Christian historian the outcome of events required understanding in terms of God's intercession. Ecgfrith failed disastrously at Nechtansmere, leaving the kingdom to 'ebb and flow away'. (This later phrase is itself an echo of Vergil's *Aeneid*.⁵⁸) Bede selected for this outcome a convention which associated Ecgfrith's personal conduct with his failure. As Morse has noted in his discussion of historical fictions, such characterization preceding events is a rhetorical device.⁵⁹ The truthfulness of Bede's statement is, in this case, less important than the message and, given the allusions to Orosius, Gregory the Great and Vergil it is hard not to view his analysis as a textual construct.

Wallace-Hadrill noted that the Pseudo-Cyprian text *De duodecim abusivis saeculi* played a role in Bede's construction of the image of Oswald.⁶⁰ In fact, it is arguable that this text provided Bede with an underlying framework for Edwin

and Oswine as well. *De duodecim abusivis saeculi* is a Hiberno-Latin document, dated by Kenny to 630-650, which discusses public morals under twelve headings: a wise man without works, an old man without religion, an adolescent without obedience, a rich man without alms giving, a woman without modesty, a lord without virtue, the contentious Christian, a proud pauper, an unjust king, a neglectful bishop, a populace without discipline, a people without law.⁶¹ Two of these chapters, 'the lord without virtue' and the 'unjust king', in particular appear to contain sentiments with which Bede could identify and virtues he could ascribe to his model kings.

Of Edwin Bede notes that no-one dared to lay hands on the drinking places Edwin established because they feared the king greatly, nor did they wish to, because they loved him dearly: *continere prae magnitudine uel timoris eius auderet uel amoris uellet*.⁶² In 'a lord without virtue', Pseudo-Cyprian makes it clear that it is crucial for a lord to inspire both love and fear in his people, for unless he be both loved and feared his order will hardly stand: *nisi enim ametur dominus et metuatur, ordinatio illius constare minime poterit*.⁶³ The peace of Edwin's land which allowed for the freedom of movement of women and children, and the noting of Oswald's kindness and generosity to the poor and estranged (*pauperibus et peregrinis*) may also have been influenced by Pseudo-Cyprian's comments concerning kingly conduct. Thus he notes that the justice of the king includes being the defender of aliens, orphans and widows and giving alms to the poor: *aduenis et pupillis et uiduis defensorem; pauperes eleemosynis*.⁶⁴

Pseudo-Cyprian also makes it clear that a king needed to devote himself to prayers at certain hours: *certis horis orationibus insistere*.⁶⁵ Oswald is the epitome of this. In Book III:12 he is noted as praying diligently, often from matins until daybreak: *quia a tempore matutinae laudis saepius ad diem usque in orationibus persteterit*.⁶⁶ As a result of Bede's subsequent comment on Oswald's posture in prayer, this point has been viewed as coming from a popular source which had maintained pagan overtones. Indeed, Chaney has suggested that this was not "the customary posture for prayer but a ritual attitude perhaps used by his pagan predecessors".⁶⁷ Nonetheless, if one looks at the context in which Bede places his description of Oswald's method of prayer, it is hard to believe that Bede would have included it if it had pagan overtones. Firstly, as Rollason observed, it appears that other pagan elements associated with the cult of Oswald were suppressed by Bede.⁶⁸ Secondly, in general, Book III:12 is the record of a miracle at Bardney and the stress in the narrative is on how the diligence of Oswald's prayerfulness in life now led to his power of intercession after death: *Nec mirandum preces regis illius iam cum Domino regnantis multum ualere apud eum, qui temporalis regni quondam gubernacula tenens magis pro aeterno regno semper laborare ac deprecari solebat*.⁶⁹ This is hardly the most appropriate place in which to feature a traditional pagan element of worship.⁷⁰ More specifically, diligent prayer was a conduct necessary in a Christian king - as Pseudo-Cyprian had noted. To undermine this with a hint of continued pagan practice was not Bede's aim and for him to record the posture, whatever its provenance, suggests that it was an acceptable way for a king to pray. The point, of course, is that the emphasis on Oswald's prayerfulness may represent a construct influenced by Bede's textual sources.

Royal largesse particularly in giving alms to the poor also appears to be a critical virtue identified by Bede in his portrayal of Oswald. However, this too has a profoundly conventional basis. Bede proves Oswald's generosity to the poor in his narrative concerning the Easter day meal. On this occasion, when faced with a gathering of the poor, Oswald (using the appropriate minister) sent out food and ordered that the plate on which it was served was to be broken and distributed among them.⁷¹ The plausibility of this tale has been accepted most recently by Clare Stancliffe, who has suggested that because of the presence of an official, royal generosity was regarded as a regular activity but that Oswald's spontaneity was beyond the call of duty.⁷² However, this particular story is also a perfect candidate for essentially being derived from a series of text based sources. In general terms Gregory the Great outlined the importance of a ruler being bounteous in the giving of goods to others in his *Pastoral Care*.⁷³ More specifically, *De duodecim* listed alms-giving as a crucial act of a king.⁷⁴ These two texts alone, excluding the patristic homilies on alms-giving found in the writings of such individuals as St. John Chrysostom, could have supplied Bede with this particular characteristic of Christian kingship.⁷⁵

However, it is interesting to note at this juncture that royal largesse is also a feature of Isidore's portrayal of his most Christian king, Reccared. Reccared, Isidore narrates, "deposited his wealth among the wretched and his treasures among the impoverished".⁷⁶ Indeed, Isidore emphasizes that Reccared's generosity was a response to his knowledge that kingship had been conferred on him, so that he might enjoy it in a salutary manner, attaining a good end.⁷⁷ What

is perhaps most pertinent, in this context, is that Reccared's generosity is not depicted as being limited to alms-giving to the poor. He is also noted as restoring wealth to private citizens, enriching many with gifts and conferring honours - representing a slightly more 'secular' bound generosity than Oswald's.⁷⁸

In Bede's portrayal of Oswald it is possible that he deliberately focused on a virtue that was common to Church teaching and not just associated with being a king. The way Oswald was shown as expressing his alms-giving was obviously affected by his social standing but the virtue itself was crucial to Christian living in general (as were faith and humility). Alms-giving was a textually established virtue worth aspiring to and Oswald provided a perfect vehicle with which to emphasize it. Moreover, as Campbell observed, Bede's description of the minister ordered to dispense Oswald's alms is comparable to officials with a similar role called *consules* found in Merovingian texts.⁷⁹ This might, of course, be coincidental but the image Bede used could conceivably have been derived from some lost piece of continental hagiography. Additionally, this tale is completed with Aidan's blessing and prayer concerning the incorruptibility of Oswald's generous hand being fulfilled, surely a warning of the hagiographical nature of the story. This whole episode, with its respective conventions of alms-giving, the agents dispensing it and the fulfilment of Aidan's prayer (elaborated with a notable tool of rhetoric, direct speech) reads like a textual construct drawn together from a variety of sources.⁸⁰ Whilst it might reflect elements of historical truth what is more significant is Bede's ability to manipulate the available textual culture and the consequential effect this would have on any representation of actuality.

Oswald's miracle stories provide further evidence for the influence of the textual culture in which Bede moved. The standard discussion of these miracles can still be found in Colgrave's article in *Bede's Life, Times and Works* and, as he observed, there is not one detail in these miracles that cannot be found in *Acta Sanctorum* or elsewhere in the *HE* itself.⁸¹ Oswald's miracles are at their core stylised and conventional, influenced by common trends in contemporary hagiography. The point is, of course, that originality was far less important than the effective transmission of a message. Bede's miracle stories concerning Oswald were designed to convey the message that the depth of Oswald's faith during his life was exhibited after his death by signs, and as a consequence that Faith in one's lifetime rewarded the believer with power *post mortem*. This power after death is particularly well illustrated by the events of the translation of Oswald's relics to Bardney. Thus in III:11 the power of Oswald's sanctity brings about a heavenly light of revelation and ensures his acceptance by the monks there.⁸² Wallace-Hadrill has accepted Bede's intimation that the monks of Bardney did not want to receive Oswald's relics because he had conquered them.⁸³ In this, Wallace-Hadrill was accepting Patrick Wormald's suggestion that at the time of Oswald's translation Bardney was already a Mercian house and the prejudice being shown was provincial.⁸⁴ However, to illustrate provincial antagonism was not necessarily Bede's primary purpose in this narrative. Bede's focus was on the fact that whilst the monks were aware of Oswald's sanctity they still refused him entry and only a sign changed their mind. This is a hagiographical *topos* designed to emphasize that relics should be received with reverence by *all* the faithful: *Sed miraculi caelestis ostensio, quam reuerenter eae*

*suscipiendae fidelibus essent, patefecit.*⁸⁵ It is perhaps pertinent to note in this context that earlier in his description of Oswald Bede comments specifically on the fitting respect with which Oswald's relics at St. Peter's church, Bamburgh were venerated by all.⁸⁶ The issue of reverence was clearly of importance. Indeed the works of Gregory of Tours could easily have supplied Bede with an emphasis on this subject. As Brown has noted, Gregory was acutely aware that the tombs and relics of the holy might lack the reverence they deserved and, in his portrayal of the Bardney monks, Bede was expressing similar sentiments.⁸⁷

The fundamental question is whether these sentiments were purely textually based or if they reflected actual events. The truth is that we do not know. Arguably, this part of Bede's narrative is a construct. By stressing the monks' unwillingness to receive the relics Bede or his informant set the scene in which a miracle would be required to persuade them of their error. The miracle itself followed a standard convention of a revelation by a divine column of light, a common *topos* found elsewhere in Bede and in Merovingian hagiography.⁸⁸

The conventionality of Oswald's miracles may itself be significant as they placed a relatively unusual saint, whose sanctity did not fit into the categories of confessor or martyr, within established hagiographical tradition. In Bede's portrayal of Oswald it is his faith rather than retirement to the celibate monastic life or death at the hands of a pagan that ensures his sanctity. This is excellently shown in Bede's account of events following Denisesburn. In this record Bede makes it clear Oswald's faith caused the site where he erected the pre-battle cross to become a place of miracles. Therefore, Bede stated that innumerable miracles of healing

were known to have been wrought in the place where Oswald erected the cross “doubtless as a token and memorial of the king’s faith”: *ad indicium uidelicet ac memoriam fidei regis*.⁸⁹ Bede reiterates this message in his description of the period following Oswald’s death. Thus, Oswald’s great faith and devotion of heart were made clear by miracles.

Bede repeats the same message when discussing the miracles that occurred at the place where Oswald was slain. Here, rather than suggesting Oswald’s seeming martyrdom was the cause of miracles, he implies that they were a result of Oswald’s great faith in God and his devotion of heart: *Cuius quanta fides in Deum, quae deuotio mentis fuerit, etiam post mortem uirtutum miraculis clarit*.⁹⁰

Bede further associates Oswald’s care of the sick and the poor with the cures brought about by soil from the place Oswald fell, suggesting that his alms-giving and help whilst he was alive were important factors in his sanctity.⁹¹ Here Bede is implying that royal generosity rather than martyrdom brought about Oswald’s saintly status. In a later miracle Bede returns to the theme of Oswald’s faith as the cause of his sanctity. In Book III: chapter 12 following his narration of the cure of a boy’s fever at Bardney, he notes that it is not to be wondered that Oswald’s intercession should prevail, for while he ruled he was always accustomed to work and pray most diligently for the eternal kingdom: *qui temporalis regni quondam gubernacula tenens magis pro aeterno regno semper laborare ac deprecari solebat*.⁹² According to Bede, Oswald’s sanctity was established during his life and rested on his faith, his care of the poor and sick, his religious works and his prayer. This unique image of royal sanctity would fit neither into confessor, martyr or virgin categories. The conventionality of the

'proofs' of this sanctity, that is the miracles, may have made the unique nature of Oswald's sanctity easier to assimilate. The point one is always drawn back to is, of course, that whilst the nature of Oswald's sanctity is atypical, both the virtues on which his sanctity rested and the miracles which proved the efficacy of these virtues can be found, like the rest of Bede's characterizations, in texts such as the *Pastoral Care* and *De duodecim*.

Up to this point the discussion has focused on the textual models which Bede chose to use in his portrayal of Northumbrian royal saints. However, there is one image he avoided - that of martyrdom. Despite the fact that Bede never used any explicit signs of martyrdom for either Edwin or Oswald, there has been a prevailing tendency among historians to consider both of these individuals as martyr-saints. Folz has been a leading protagonist of this assumption, suggesting that both Edwin and Oswald were *Le Roi Martyr de la Foi*.⁹³ Colgrave, too, has emphasized the importance of the manner in which they died stating that Oswald had perished fighting against his foes as Edwin had, and the enemy in each case was the heathen Penda, "so that each was in a sense a martyr who died fighting for the Faith."⁹⁴

However, Bede's portrayal of Edwin's death makes it clear that it occurred at the hands of a pagan, but of a Christian albeit a barbarian at heart: *at uero Caedwalla, quamuis nomen et professionem haberet Christiani, adeo tamen erat animo ac moribus barbarus*.⁹⁵ As Bede notes Penda, the pagan, was merely Caedwalla's assistant: *auxilium praebente illi Penda*.⁹⁶ Edwin is not portrayed as a martyr by the anonymous Whitby author either. Rather he is called, most Christian king

(*regis nostri christianissimi*) and remembered for his wisdom (*sapientia*) as much as for his authority.⁹⁷ Of his death, hardly any information is given at all, certainly no intimation is made that it was at the hands of a pagan. In this case Folz's categorization is inaccurate. He is far more akin to *Le Roi Massacré* than he is to *Le Roi Martyr de la Foi*.⁹⁸

With regard to Oswald, Susan Ridyard has also accepted his classification as a martyr, stressing that sanctity was attained at the moment of death.⁹⁹ To illustrate this she compared Bede's depiction of Oswald to Abbo's portrayal of St. Edmund, emphasizing that in both cases sanctity was achieved through death at the hands of a pagan.¹⁰⁰ However, the hypothesis is problematic. Firstly, Ridyard's comparison of Oswald and Edmund does not accentuate the different circumstances which prevailed at each of these saints' deaths. Edmund, according to Abbo, had been defeated and was required to submit to the pagan leader Hinguar. Oswald's position, however, appears less that of the victim than Edmund's. The geographical location of Maserfelth, if the identification with Oswestry is correct, would suggest that Oswald did not fall at the hands of an invading pagan but was in fact the aggressor.¹⁰¹ Moreover, the location of Oswestry may suggest that Oswald was attempting to prevent a coalition between the Welsh and the Mercians - a coalition that was perhaps more a direct threat to his own power rather than the Faith of his 'nation'. Seen in these terms Ridyard's comparison of Oswald with Edmund and the consequent concentration on the act of death seems too simplistic. The apparent lack of acknowledgement of the complexities surrounding the deaths of Oswald and Edwin, found in both Ridyard and Colgrave's assumptions, perhaps relate to the inherent inconsistencies in

Bede's own narration of these events. For example, when discussing Edwin's death, as has been shown, Bede's emphasis is placed on the Christian Cadwalla. Yet, when noting Oswald's death, Bede appears adamant that he was killed by "the same heathen people and the same heathen Mercian king as his predecessor Edwin".¹⁰² These two statements essentially contradict one another. The latter allows for an interpretation such as that of Colgrave, centred on the idea that both died for a Christian cause at the hands of pagans. The former one, however, suggests that at least in Edwin's case this was not so.

Another point can be made from the location of Maserfelth. If the identification is correct and Oswald was essentially the aggressor rather than the defender at this battle, it is interesting that Bede clearly avoids giving his audience this impression. In fact, by centring his discussion on the fact that it was heathen peoples that killed Oswald, he gives the impression that they were the attackers, not Oswald. Indeed, this is further emphasised by Bede in Book IV, chapter 14, where he indicates once again that Oswald was slain in battle by the heathen. It could be easily inferred from this that Oswald was martyred and yet Bede stops short at explicitly saying this. As I stated at the outset, nowhere in the *Historia Ecclesiastica* does Bede specifically designate Oswald as a martyr. In essence, it would seem that Bede is attempting to generate the image of martyrdom whilst failing to bring it to its full conclusion. The inconsistencies of Bede's text, and the modern historian's reception of these complexities, may well lie behind the problem of over-simplification.

In actuality, a closer comparison with Abbo's Edmund reveals the distinct difference of emphasis in the two texts. In general Bede's reference centres on what Oswald achieved during his life and then the power he had following his death. Abbo's text, on the other hand, concentrated on the immediate events which led to Edmund's martyrdom.¹⁰³ Accordingly, though he gives a brief characterization of Edmund's kingship, the text moves on quickly to discuss: the slayers of Edmund; Edmund's consultation with his bishop as to how he should respond to Hinguar's demands and his decision to ignore the bishop's advice to submit - a decision which would ultimately lead to his martyrdom.¹⁰⁴ And in chapter 10 the martyrdom itself is concluded with an exact statement concerning Edmund's passion and entry into the heavenly court.¹⁰⁵ Essentially Edmund's sanctity was, as Ridyard noted, attained at the moment of death. Bede, however, offers far less information on the events which led to Oswald's death. Indeed, the passage directly referring to this reads more like an obit notice than a portrayal of martyrdom, as noticeably, does Edwin's. Bede merely notes that at the end of his nine year reign, Oswald was killed by the heathens at a great battle at Maserfelth on 5th August, in the thirty-eighth year of his life.¹⁰⁶ One could argue that the martyrdom is implied by the repetition of the word *paganus* in this notice. However, as has already been noted no explicit reference to martyrdom is made here or elsewhere in the text in relation to Oswald. Not only this but immediately after Bede has noted Oswald's death, he goes on to describe miracles that occurred at the place where he was slain. Bede had a perfect opportunity to associate these miracles with Oswald's 'martyrdom' - if that was what was believed to have occurred. However, Bede chose not to emphasize that the miracles were a result of his death. Rather, as I noted earlier, he stressed that the

miracles were a sign of Oswald's faith and devotion throughout his kingship, particularly in relation to care of the sick.

A comparison with texts which relate to the martyrdom of other kings can demonstrate just how unusual Bede's treatment of Oswald is. Thus, Abbo's Edmund is consistently referred to as a martyr, for example in the preface he is introduced as *Eadmundi regis et martyris*, and his entry into heaven is likewise as *rex et martyr*.¹⁰⁷ Following his death his body is referred to as *sacratissimum corpus martyris*.¹⁰⁸ In chapter 12 he is referred to as *beatissimum regem et martyrem <Eadmundum>*.¹⁰⁹ In other accounts of royal martyrdom, such as, for example, in Byrhtferth of Ramsey's *Vita Oswaldi*, it is specifically noted that Edward was predestined and foreordained by Christ to share a martyr's dignity.¹¹⁰ Following his death he was called "martyr of God".¹¹¹ Moreover, the concentration in this text again directly relates to the immediate events which led to Edward's death and a description of this death. In this sense it is more like Abbo's Edmund than Bede's Oswald. As one would expect the vocabulary of martyrdom is also found in Edward's *Passio*.¹¹² Essentially the death of a king by martyrdom was too important an event to go unmentioned without the rhetoric of martyrdom accompanying it.

The same emphasis on the phraseology of martyrdom can be seen in the opening paragraphs of Simeon of Durham's *Historia Regum*. Even though this text is twelfth century in date, it has been shown that this passage may derive from an eighth century text.¹¹³ In other words this may be a text which was contemporary with Bede. Here Simeon is concerned with recording the

martyrdom of the royal saints Aethelberht and Aethelred. Accordingly, he notes from the outset that it is fitting to commence his history with their lives and triumph of martyrdom, demonstrating the glory of their holiness.¹¹⁴ This alone perhaps emphasizes the status of such royal martyrdom. Simeon then continues to describe their lives in two main sections. The first centres on their lives and emphasises the type of characteristics associated with 'spiritual martyrdom' which is found described in such works as Gregory the Great's *Dialogues*.¹¹⁵ Thus they strove to live as virgins, had the distinction of unconquerable patience, and were adorned with the grace of unwearying prayer. Nevertheless, Simeon makes it clear that these virtues are offered merely to give a foretaste of those 'plants of virtue rooted within them'.¹¹⁶ The second longer section of the text concentrates, in detail, on the immediate events which led to their martyrdom.¹¹⁷ Once Simeon has introduced this the terminology of martyrdom abounds in relation to these two individuals.

One could, of course, argue that these texts bear little relationship to Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica* for they are not necessarily contemporary with his text. Nevertheless, the critical point pertains to the status of the martyr. From his reading of Eusebius, Augustine and Gregory the Great Bede could not have failed to see the importance of the martyr in the hierarchy of the saints, nor was he lacking in appropriate textual models. Indeed, in Gregory's *Dialogues* there is a model of a king who died for his faith: Hermangild.¹¹⁸ Interestingly, however, it was a model Bede did not use. In fact, like the Edmund and Edward texts, Gregory's emphasis is on the immediate events which led to Hermangild's death. Thus Gregory narrates Hermangild's resolution not to abandon his Christian faith

to Arianism; his consequent deposition as king by his Arian father, and finally details concerning his torture and death. Hermangild, too, is called “king and martyr”.¹¹⁹ The above evidence, hopefully, shows that, firstly, Bede’s omission of rhetoric relating to a martyrdom of Oswald was very unusual if he was considered a martyr. And, secondly, that the status of martyrdom was such that even a highly selective author such as Bede would have been unlikely to leave out the designation of martyrdom.

This is in fact shown clearly if one compares Bede’s description of Oswald with that of the cases of three martyr’s which he describes in his *Historia*. Thus in Book I, chapter 7, Bede discussed the ‘blessed martyr’ - St. Alban. St. Alban is consistently and specifically referred to as a martyr and, like the stories of Hermangild, Edmund and Edward, Bede concentrates on offering details of the immediate events which led to, and of, the martyrdom itself. Of the execution Bede noted that at the place where the valiant martyr was beheaded he received the crown of life which God has promised to those who love him.¹²⁰ Again in Book V, chapter 10, in describing Hewald the White and Hewald the Black, Bede speaks definitely of their martyrdom. He concentrates on the events which led to it and emphasises the torture of Hewald the Black before his death. Bede then goes on to show how “Heavenly miracles were not lacking at their martyrdom”.¹²¹ When portraying martyrs Bede follows the typical textually established conventions in his depiction so why is this not evident in his portrayal of Oswald?

Ultimately, the historian is perhaps wrong to look at Oswald’s sanctity solely in the terms of martyrdom. Indeed, it is time to accept that Bede did not consider

Oswald to be a martyr. Folz has queried whether the omission of the *topoi* and title of the martyr was merely a personal preference on Bede's part.¹²² In fact it may be possible to go further on this point and argue that at the time Bede wrote his *Historia* even the sources of information from which he drew were reserved about designating Oswald a martyr. The miracle stories Bede presents appear to come from a variety of sources including popular tradition, Bardney and Hexham - none of these sources seem to have given Bede the impression Oswald was a martyr.¹²³ In fact, monks at Hexham were crucial to the development of the cult, and this is especially true of one man who had connections with Hexham: Willibrord. Yet, although his Calendar mentions Oswald, the martyrology which appears to be closely connected to it does not. This is important for as Wilson has indicated the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum's* contents were probably related to the area from which Willibrord came.¹²⁴ If Hexham designated Oswald a martyr surely it would be fair to assume that either Willibrord or one of his assistants would have added him to this martyrology.

However, the *Martyrologium Hieronymianum* is not the only text which avoids introducing an idea of Oswald as a martyr. Both Wormald and Folz have commented on the fact that Oswald is absent from Bede's Martyrology.¹²⁵ Indeed, in his autobiographical note at the end of the *Historia* Bede stresses that he has written a martyrology of the Feast days of the Holy Martyrs - a martyrology in which he carefully tried to record everything he could learn "not only on what date, but also by what kind of combat and under what judge they overcame the world".¹²⁶ If one observes this statement the absence of Oswald, if Bede thought he was a martyr, seems unusual. This is made all the more poignant

when one realises that Bede does discuss the martyrdoms of St. Alban, the saints Hewald and St. Aethelthryth in his martyrology.¹²⁷ That is to say that even though the text is primarily concerned with martyrs and saints of the Persecution and Late Antique period, Bede did include those martyrs he had commented specifically on in his *Historia Ecclesiastica*.

Nevertheless, one ninth century manuscript of this martyrology does have certain later additions including, under August, an entry for the “holy king Oswald”.¹²⁸ The interesting point here is that Oswald is not accorded with the title ‘martyr’, whereas other martyrs, in general, are named and then classified with this title. This lack of categorization becomes more significant when one looks at other near contemporary martyrologies and calendars. For example, the next earliest prose Calendar from England after that of Willibrord’s, number 63 in the Digby Collection (a ninth century text assigned to the north of England), also only classifies Oswald as “Saint Oswald-king”.¹²⁹ A similar entry is recorded in the early ninth century *Irish Martyrology of Tallaght*.¹³⁰ Again Oswald is witnessed but not categorized.

The lack of classification is most stark, however, in three other texts. The first is the Irish *Martyrology of Oengus*. This martyrology, which is contemporary with that of Tallaght, makes the following ambiguous comment on Oswald’s death date:

“with holy Oswald whom we implore, the noble overking of the Saxons”.¹³¹

Clearly there is no inference of martyrdom to be drawn from this. The second and third of these texts are in fact related as, in the case of Oswald, one appears to

draw from the other. The *Martyrology of Usuard*, the source for which was the *Martyrology of Wandelbert*, mentions Oswald on the 5th August, stating that he was “Saint Oswald, king of the English, whose acts are commemorated by the venerable priest Bede in his history of his people”.¹³² In fact, the *Martyrology of Wandelbert* is even less specific in its statement, and focuses merely on mentioning Oswald as pious king of the English whose merit and virtue are remembered.¹³³ The point is that, on the whole, all three of these martyrologies stressed the individual suffering and martyrdom for Christ where it had occurred but such a notice is missing for Oswald. He is remembered for his acts, his miracles and his virtue - not for martyrdom. Essentially, the knowledge concerning Oswald of the authors of these texts gave them no reason to portray him as a martyr.

Further to this it is important to note that other near contemporary sources which discuss Oswald (and are often drawing from Bede’s description) also underplay an idea of martyrdom, if they imply it at all. Therefore, in his York Poem, Alcuin emphasizes the merits and sanctity of Oswald during his life and his outstanding virtue.¹³⁴ Indeed, Alcuin like Bede stresses that:

“The greatness of Oswald’s faith and the power of his merits gained added lustre after his death through his miracles.”¹³⁵

Fundamentally, his sanctity increased after his death but existed during his life and did not relate to the manner of his death. A similar emphasis can be seen in Aelfric’s depiction of Oswald in his *Lives of the Saints*.¹³⁶ These writers had been influenced by their reading of Bede’s work, from which they did not find reason to conclude that Oswald was a martyr. Essentially, Bede or his informants

had chosen not to draw from textual images of martyrdom in their portrayal of Oswald, and similarly in their portrayal of Edwin. The absence of textual analogies is important as one has seen simply because textual referents were a crucial part of the method of construction.

In composing his images, then, Bede applied a methodology that involved two main approaches. Firstly, direct inter-textual referencing, using *verbatim* sentences and phrases, and secondly, indirect associations made by producing variations on themes concerning kingship and sanctity, found in sources housed in his library. Further to this it is more than likely that the clerical informants he so carefully names also used a similar method of image construction. The reality of the lives of the individuals Bede depicted were profoundly framed in textual allusions that give his narrative authority via association, thereby guaranteeing the validity of his message. In this sense the characters of Anglo-Saxon church history were instruments through which Bede could transmit not only the virtues and vices outlined in Christian literature but also the effects of living by them. Recognizing this should immediately elicit caution in terms of focusing historical research purely on 'authentic' historical information and urge the reader to be constantly aware of the rhetorical nature of the *HE*.

Bede's portrayal of Oswine should also be viewed in this light. For information on this saint Bede potentially had several 'authentic' sources. He could have received material from his own abbot Ceolfrith, who had begun his monastic life at Gilling and, therefore, would surely have been able to pass on material concerning any established cult. It is also conceivable that Lindisfarne was a

source given that Bede's depiction is inextricably linked to his narrative concerning Aidan. Bede's choice of one example to prove Oswine's great humility (*et uno probare sat erit exemplo*) is, after all, directly associated with this bishop.¹³⁷ Tynemouth, too, could have been a source. For Oswine, then, Bede had several possible centres of authentic material about his life.

Yet, he says hardly anything about Oswine that is not conventional. His depiction of Oswine as a tall, handsome, bounteous, pleasantly spoken man whose royal dignity showed his in his character, appearance and actions reads like a stylized literary construction influenced by the Late Antique Christian writers as exemplary:

*Erat autem rex Osuini et aspectu uenustus et statura sublimis et affatu iucundus et moribus ciuilis et manu omnibus, id est nobilibus simul atque ignobilibus, largus; unde contigit ut ob regiam eius et animi et uultus et meritorum dignitatem ab omnibus diligeretur.*¹³⁸

In actuality Bede's depiction of Oswine is brief and offers the historian very little concerning the nature of his sanctity.

Despite the paucity of material in III:14 both Rollason and Folz have accepted from this passage that Oswine was venerated as a saint soon after his death. For Rollason, Bede's description of Oswine placed him at the beginning of "a consistent tradition of the veneration of murdered royal saints".¹³⁹ Folz preferred to place him in a category of royal martyrs: *Le Roi Massacré*.¹⁴⁰ Fundamentally, both historians have placed an emphasis on the continuity of the cult of St Oswine

(although Folz does concede that it was the period following the revelation of Oswine's relics in 1065 that assured his cult rather than the earlier).¹⁴¹

If one accepts the idea of an early cult for Oswine the question arises of why Bede did not say more. To attempt to answer this question one needs to assess that a cult was established - after all if the evidence for this is scarce, this alone might answer why the Oswine narrative is so brief.

Dating the origin of the veneration of Oswine is impossible. Unlike Edwin and Oswald there are no independent contemporary documents which mention him except for an obituary notice in the Calendar of Willibrord. Again unlike Edwin, there is no other surviving contemporary hagiographical information than in Bede's account. The main *vita* concerning Oswine, *Vita sanctissimi et gloriossimi Oswini*, dates from the post-conquest period and seems to relate predominantly to the events surrounding the second translation of Oswine on 23 August 1103.¹⁴² He is nowhere to be found in Anglo-Saxon martyrologies or pre-conquest litanies.¹⁴³ The mention of him in the Calendar of Willibrord may be merely an obit, or historical record of his death.¹⁴⁴ Nor does Alcuin mention him in his York Poem. Following the death of Oswald, Alcuin notes the succession of Oswiu and, apparently drawing from Bede, he comments on Oswiu's struggle to hold the throne. However, he talks only in general terms of Oswiu's "feuds with his *own* relatives", not mentioning their names, and most importantly ignoring the episode with Oswine completely.¹⁴⁵ Godman has noted that this omission may relate to the fact the Oswiu was one of Alcuin's heroes.¹⁴⁶ Nevertheless, if Oswine were a 'martyr-saint' or one of a consistent tradition of venerated

murdered saints, such an omission brings into question exactly what status did such murder related martyrdoms actually have. More pertinently perhaps it also possibly shows that Alcuin's reading of the Bede text did not lead him to conclude that Oswine was a saint.

In truth, the only nearly contemporary evidence that the observer has for Oswine is from Bede's *HE*. Rollason, whilst admitting some unease about this portrayal, has argued that Bede's almost hagiographical description of Oswine's character and humility in Bk. III chp. 14 suggests that he was venerated as a saint.¹⁴⁷ Nevertheless, this relies on Bede's portrayal being a hagiographical one. If one actually looks at the characterization Bede uses it becomes clear that there are several themes running through it and an image of sanctity was not necessarily what Bede had intended.

The dilemma posed by the depiction of Oswine relates to the ambiguity of Bede's own comments. There is no definite statement which clearly suggests that Oswine was considered a saint, rather it is implied that Oswine was a good king, unjustly killed. Nonetheless, Folz has argued that the recorded personality of a saintly-king was reconstructed around one fundamental characteristic (or sign).¹⁴⁸ Oswine's sign of sanctity, according to Folz, is essentially the humility attributed to him. However, Wallace-Hadrill's argument concerning royal humility and its relationship to Christian kingship, rather than sanctity, is still very persuasive.¹⁴⁹ This certainly corresponds with Bede's characterization of Oswine which relates directly to his royal position rather than any saintly qualities - thus he was "beloved by all" not because of any holiness but rather because of the "royal

dignity which showed itself in his character, his appearance, and his actions".¹⁵⁰

The story of the gift of the horse is not a simple hagiographic motif either. Rather it works like a metaphor for the relationship between the Church and a king. Thus one feels that Oswine's statement to Aidan *quia numquam...tribuas* relates more to the idea that kings should not interfere in how the Church and, especially the bishops, dispensed their gifts received from kings.¹⁵¹

Further to this, Kirby has commented that in this chapter Aidan's role is purely secondary. He argues that Bede's intention was less to illustrate the saintliness of Aidan than to extol that of Oswine.¹⁵² Is this true however? Firstly, there are only two main episodes concerning Oswine in this chapter. The first relates to the treachery which led to his death, and one cannot help feeling that this is one of the few examples where Bede seems to pander to the whims of the aristocratic, heroic tastes of his audience.¹⁵³ Indeed, the type of narrative Bede uses in this case suggests that he is drawing upon a saga source. This becomes particularly evident if one compares this passage with Mayr-Harting's comments on Bede's use of saga.¹⁵⁴ Thus, it contains the treachery of a *comes*, whom Oswine believed to be a friend, the personal loyalty of his *miles*, Tondhere (*sibio fidissimo*) and it concerns, as Mayr-Harting so eloquently puts it: 'life and politics dramatically affected by individual actions, men innocently caught up in malevolent forces and overpowering tragedy'.¹⁵⁵ Also, as with the example of saga used by Bede in relation to Edwin outlined by Mayr-Harting, there is a profusion of proper names - the *miles*, Tondhere, the *comes*, Nunwold and the murderous prefect, Aethelwine. What is perhaps interesting in this case is that Bede does not dwell on the tale. Indeed, he actively appears to have toned down its more heroic

elements. Unlike the saga account found in the Edwin narrative, there is no elaborate embellishment concerning how Oswine was killed, just that he was murdered. In this Bede had perhaps stripped the saga of its more dramatic elements and presented the information as historical fact.¹⁵⁶

The second incident to be described is associated directly with Aidan and immediately precedes Bede's discussion of Aidan's miracles.¹⁵⁷ Indeed, one cannot help feeling that the source of this information was the same as for the rest of the data on Aidan. If one looks at the text it does, indeed, appear to be Aidan's rather than Oswine's character which is shown here for the story provides Bede with an opportunity to elucidate many of the characteristics which he attributes to Aidan in Book III: 17. Thus in chapter 17 Bede notes that Aidan "relieved and protected the poor". In chapter 14 he shows him actively doing this by offering his horse to a beggar.¹⁵⁸ Bede also shows Aidan using his priestly authority to reprove Oswine. From this one could say that this whole chapter furnishes Bede with a literary vehicle with which to swing the narrative from a concentration on Oswald to one which looks more closely at the miracles of his bishop.

Essentially *HE* Book III: 14 does not contain within it evidence which constitutes information relating to the possible veneration, in the late seventh century, of Oswine as a saint.¹⁵⁹ It is perhaps pertinent in this case that when Bede recorded the establishment of a monastery at Gilling, the prayers that were to be said were for the redemption of the souls of both Oswine and Oswiu, not ones asking for Oswine's intercession: *in quo pro utriusque regis, et occisi uidelicet et eius qui*

*occidare iussit, animae redemptione cotidie Domino precis offeri deberent.*¹⁶⁰

Bede's Oswine, like Bede's Edwin and Oswald, is a textual construct composed from sources such as Gregory's *Pastoral Care* and sagas. Within the image he constructed he carefully avoided conventions that would prove Oswine's sanctity, focussing on royal dignity rather than saintly virtues.

When reading the pages of the *HE* concerning the Northumbrian kings, particularly the ones now considered to be saints, the observer needs to apply caution. Through sophisticated composition techniques Bede used conventions from sources he knew to have authority. He was able to do this in such a way that generally textual traits and rhetorical devices flow relatively smoothly in the narrative, leaving the reader with a secure sense of Bede's abilities as a historian rather than a skilful rhetorician.

This point is significant because it raises the issue of to what extent Bede's portrayals of these three kings related in any way to their historical reality. Wallace-Hadrill himself noted that Bede never intended his depictions of Edwin, Oswald and Oswine to "constitute a careful synthesis of all that was knowable about them".¹⁶¹ In the light of the above evidence it is likely that in some cases Bede was not only drawing on and adapting what was known about them, but actively creating what is now known about them. Clare Stancliffe too has recently remarked that Bede did not have one single stereotyped ideal of a Christian king, but used what he knew of the personalities and actions of the kings and utilized these as a basis for drawing a series of portraits in which sometimes one quality is uppermost, sometimes another.¹⁶² Yet what Bede knew of these personalities was

clearly informed by the textual milieu in which he moved, not by any first hand experience of them. The point I am trying to make here is that to a great extent the characterizations of Edwin, Oswald and Oswine in Bede are based on texts. Indeed, as Mayr-Harting has noted too that Bede focused each of his kingly accounts on a particular virtue as if he [Bede] “had in mind the way in which Anthony the Hermit, the most famous of all monks, had become acquainted with a number of ascetics and imitated each in the practice of the virtue for which that ascetic was outstanding.”¹⁶³ Given all that has been suggested about Bede’s heavy reliance on varying textual themes it is possible to see Mayr-Harting’s comment in slightly firmer terms than he himself does. Bede probably did use the *Life of St. Anthony* as a prototype for structuring his portrayal of individual virtues.

Essentially, what the observer is left with then is a composite image of the virtues of kingship: Edwin’s discernment and inner focus concerning religious matters, Oswald’s faith and devotion, Oswine’s humility. In addition to this Bede indicated an important vice of ruling, pride, using Ecgfrith as his vehicle. Such a composite image is a reminder that historians need to understand omissions and emphases in the light of the whole scheme of the *HE*. If an observer assumes access to biographical information concerning a king they are sure to be disappointed for theirs is an expectation which does not accord with Bede’s method of construction or aim. One also needs to take into account that the virtues on which Bede focuses may have been more important to him than accurate association with the individual to which he ascribes them. The success or failure of a king was viewed by Bede as relating directly to virtues or vices

outlined in texts such as Gregory's *Pastoral Care*. If a king succeeded he would be described in terms of virtues, if he failed, vices (or perhaps would be discretely under-represented).

If one adds, to the isolation of individual traits, the focus on Edwin as the epitome of a royal convert and Oswald as the personification of the ideal secular saint one can additionally suggest that the way Bede constructed his narrative was to avoid repetition. Essentially, Bede saw no point in repeating the same models twice. Certainly, if one examines the other convert kings in the *HE* it is clear that he does not give their conversion process quite as much space. Aethelberht's conversion narrative, whilst including listening to Augustine's words and allowing Augustine freedom of movement is summed up with the line (I:25) 'At last the king believed'.¹⁶⁴ There is no image of solitary wanderings or visions. Similarly brief notices can be found elsewhere in *HE*. With Oswald, Bede mentions he was converted and received baptism in Iona (III:3) but there is no elaboration of the persuasion process.¹⁶⁵ Even Sigeberht of the East Saxon's conversion at the exhortation of Oswiu reads more like an abridged version of events than that of Edwin.¹⁶⁶

This desire to avoid repetition could explain the absence in the *HE* of any hint by Bede of Edwin's sanctity. Arguably Bede only had space for one secular saint and that honour went to Oswald, whose cult (by the time Bede was completing the *HE*) had already achieved international fame. This sounds plausible. This is significant for the omission of the cult material relating to Edwin has received attention both earlier in this thesis and by other authors.¹⁶⁷ If compositional

constraints were behind the silence the possibility of monastic or even provincial politics as causal factors would be lessened. However, there is one caveat. Although Bede avoided repeating an embellishment of the process of conversion - he did briefly record the event for several individuals. In just a few words Bede could have noted Edwin's subsequent elevation as a saint - he chose not to offer even an abridged statement. In this case it is hard not to assume that Bede was deliberately omitting information.

The lives of Edwin, Oswald and Oswine, then, provided Bede with an opportunity to elaborate creatively on characteristics he knew from his monastic training to be of importance. By utilizing references to established authoritative texts Bede gave his Northumbrian kings a seeming continuity with the Late Antique, linking their kingship and, in some cases, their sanctity with earlier Christian predecessors. Moreover, by drawing upon texts which had status within the monastic community Bede both legitimized his own characterizations and disseminated early Christian ideals in a form that was perhaps more accessible to an Anglo-Saxon audience than the original sources. Additionally, Bede through careful deployment of rhetorical devices and the avoidance of overt repetition in the portrayal of individual traits, created a sense of credibility in his text that makes it seem as if he was writing historical fact. Nonetheless, the case study shows that the extent of textual construction places much of Bede's narrative concerning Edwin, Oswald and Oswine in the realm of historical fiction. Credible and well referenced on the surface level of reading Bede's images may appear to be, but in an early medieval context these seeming attributes do not in themselves mean that the narrative is historically accurate. Only after the identification of the devices

and textual allusions can one begin to get a hint of the historical (rather than inter-textual) record. Having done this, however, what may be left of the individual attributes portrayed in the *Historia Ecclesiastica* may be nothing more than a comprehensive set of literary references placed within annal-type information, disguised by Bede's undoubted rhetorical capabilities.

Chapter 8:

Bede's Method of Saintly Image Construction within the Genre of *Historia Ecclesiastica*: 2 - The Northumbrian Holy Women.

It is clear from the previous chapter that the historian's knowledge of the actuality of an individual's actions or even the reasons behind events in early Anglo-Saxon Northumbria is steeped in textual conventions that seem to make the historical person invisible. Nowhere is this truer than in the study of the women in Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica*. Indeed, where invisibility is concerned, Bede's Northumbrian holy women, like early medieval women in general, have remained firmly marginalized in historiographical literature until the last twenty years.¹ However, with the flowering of women's history initiated by the feminist movement one can, at long last, see sound, sustained academic research being undertaken to give these women a more significant place in our understanding of Anglo-Saxon history. Indeed, the work of Christine Fell, Susan Ridyard and most recently Stephanie Hollis has led to the production of secondary works partly or entirely devoted to Anglo-Saxon women in the church - and consequently an analysis of the female saints in early medieval England.²

In attempting to deal with the paucity of material concerning women scholars such as Dr. Ridyard have been forced to draw upon both contemporary and non-contemporary works to formulate conclusions - using sources that range from the seventh to the twelfth centuries. As I noted in the introduction, this methodology is, of course, problematic. I would not deny that in general terms a representation

composed from many inter-period sources may give a wider historical picture - but non-contemporary texts do not necessarily give insight into the understanding of the method of construction behind a particular text nor the motives that led to its production. To overcome the apparent lack of coexisting sources from one geographical location such as for example Anglo-Saxon England, this study attempts to understand Bede's images of Northumbrian holy women within the Continental milieu of his period. To this end Bede's portrayal of Aethelthryth, Hilda and Aelfflaed, in particular, have been compared with the texts of the two books of the *Vita Sanctae Radegundis*, the *Vita Sanctae Balthildis*, the *Vita Sanctae Geretrudis*, the *Vita Sanctae Genovefa* and the *Vita Rusticulae*.³

The reasons behind this choice of sources and individuals are simple. Firstly, there are similarities in the status of the individuals - they are all from the aristocracy - four queens: Radegund, Balthild, Eanflaed and Aethelthryth, and one woman distinguished for her royal birth, Aelfflaed, and three noble women: Gertrude, Rusticula and Hilda. Secondly, the Continental texts which have been chosen are all texts which are probably Merovingian in date and are, therefore, either earlier than or more contemporaneous with Bede's writing.⁴ In this context I am not suggesting that Bede would have known of these texts (although his knowledge of Eorcongota and Aethelburh does imply that he may have had access to *vitae* produced in Frankish Gaul), merely that this was the discourse environment in which the images of his Northumbrian women saints were constructed.

Nevertheless, I admit from the outset that this approach is not without certain weaknesses. It needs to be borne in mind, for example, that aims, intentions, purpose and even subject audience for these texts do differ and one would expect, therefore, to find specific differences in emphasis. Primarily, the Merovingian material that I have isolated for this study is hagiography, and, as has been argued elsewhere, this is not the same as *Historia*: its aim and function are different. Moreover, one needs to consider that the gender of the audiences differed. Thus, for instance, one can accept to a certain extent that the *HE* was written for a predominantly masculine monastic audience, whereas texts such as the *Vita Geretrudis* and those of Radegund appear to have been produced primarily for women. As a consequence of this one needs to consider that a difference of stress may actually be a result of a different gender expectation. Having acknowledged these problems, however, it still seems appropriate to undertake such a comparison, if only to draw out such issues as the difference of emphasis that the gender of the audience made.

The aims of the following discussion are to elucidate the textual models from which Bede drew his Northumbrian holy female images, to examine his concept of royal female sanctity, to illustrate his use of composite portrayals within the scheme of the *HE*, and to identify elements of conventionality in his characterizations.

BEDE'S 'NATIVE' SOURCES FOR THE NORTHUMBRIAN WOMEN.

As with the men looked at in the previous chapter, one cannot help but express a degree of caution concerning the local sources Bede utilized in his portrayals of Aethelthryth, Hilda, Aebbe, Eanflead and Aelfflead. For the last two one can assume he derived some knowledge from those still living at Whitby who had known Aelfflead at least as their abbess. Although Bede does not cite a source, Wallace-Hadrill assumed that Bede drew on a *vita* produced at Ely for his depiction of Aethelthryth.⁵ The East Anglian informant named in the Preface, Abbot Esi, whilst unknown outside of Bede's text, could have forwarded the information, but, it is equally possible that Bede constructed the image using the stories recounted by St Wilfrid and other texts found within his library at Monkwearmouth.⁶ It is clear that Wilfrid was a source of information on Aethelthryth, as Bede associates him with Ecgfrith's desire to persuade her to relinquish her virginity, her veiling at Coldingham and the uncorruption of her body.⁷ For potential models in the library at Monkwearmouth, one perhaps need look no further than patristic literature concerning virginity and the writings of Venantius Fortunatus; Wallace-Hadrill has already suggested a relationship, both linguistically and in approach, between Bede's elegiac poem to Aethelthryth's virginity and Venantius' *De Virginitate*.⁸ Perhaps, Venantius' *Vita Radegundis* also provided Bede with an image he used in the chapter preceding his poem.

It is noticeable that in his version of the *Vita Radegundis*, Venantius does not take an interest in those saintly functions particularly associated with her position as queen. In terms of this chapter this is most evident in the fact that he does not

mention her relationship with the court nor does he connect her with another common Merovingian hagiographical *topoi*, the freeing of captives. For her period as queen Venantius concentrates on her helping the poor, a *topos* associated with saints in general rather than those that are specifically queens.⁹ From then on Venantius concentrates on Radegund's ascetic extremes, for example, avoidance of the sexual side of her marriage so that she might serve Christ better, her fasting, her aid to lepers, her poor diet of lentils or vegetables.¹⁰ Pauline Stafford has commented on the similarity of the terms which Bede uses to describe Radegund and Aethelthryth, preferring to view them as evidence of actual religious practice rather than as linked textually.¹¹ However, given Bede's predilection for the use of previously established convention it is just, if not more, possible that he was in fact drawing on Venantius as a source. In an overall sense Bede's depiction of Aethelthryth reads like a summary of Venantius' *Vita Radegundis*. Bede, like Venantius, concentrates on Aethelthryth's sexuality, although Bede's model is one of the virgin rather than a married woman enduring sex, such as Radegund.¹² (This could of course be explained by the fact that whereas Aethelthryth remained childless Radegund did not and, consequently the *topos* of sexual renunciation was perhaps being manipulated to serve the individual.) Bede, also, mentioned Aethelthryth's eating habits and her steadfast approach to prayer.¹³

Bede, like Venantius, centres his account of Aethelthryth on her ascetic characteristics and one cannot help thinking that what Wallace-Hadrill said of Venantius' *Vita* could be quite easily transferred to Bede's Aethelthryth:

“He confines himself to the ascetic and miracle worker and reveals nothing of the person.”¹⁴

- In some respects, in his portrayal of Aethelthryth and Hilda Bede’s emphasis is again on the ascetic and monastic duties relevant to any abbess, be she royal or not. In this Bede, particularly where Aethelthryth is concerned, has perhaps exhibited some of the ‘class-less nature’ of female hagiography that Schulenberg has noticed.¹⁵ However, whilst the actions of Aethelthryth may be viewed as typically monastic rather than typically royal it should not be forgotten that her royal status was well established in both the narrative concerning her sanctity and, also in passing, twice elsewhere in the scheme of the *HE*. Thus, in depiction of Chad’s death, it is related that Owine, who heard the joyful singing of the summoning angels, had been the chief officer of her household (*eratque primus ministrorum et princeps domus eius*).¹⁶ Also, in IV:22 it is noted that Imma (a young man injured at the battle between Ecgrith and Aethelred at the river Trent, who subsequently remained unfettered thanks to the masses being celebrated on his behalf), was one of Aethelthryth’s ministers (*quia et ipse quondam eiusdam [Aedalthrydae] reginae minister fuerat*).¹⁷ Whilst her virtues may have had a universal quality, within the context of the *HE* her social status was left in no doubt. Nonetheless, it is important to note that within the context of the details of Aethelthryth’s holy life Bede says nothing of her pre-monastic, royal, secular duties (except by implication that of sex and childbearing). Indeed, if one compares the sanctity of Aethelthryth with that of Hilda, particularly in terms of her giving counsel to kings and princes, it almost appears that Hilda is being given more political importance.

THE CONSTRUCTION OF A COMPOSITE IMAGE OF FEMALE SANCTITY.

Recently, Christine Fell, when comparing Bede's Aethelthryth and Hilda, has suggested that they represent examples of Bede as hagiographer and Bede as historian respectively.¹⁸ Essentially she is suggesting that the description of Aethelthryth is hagiography whereas that of Hilda is more historical. To do this she has emphasized that Bede's picture of Aethelthryth focuses on her personal life style and death, whilst the images of Whitby centre far more on events within the community than just the actions of one abbess. However, when approaching Bede's *HE* one should arguably be wary of making such stark distinctions between Bede the hagiographer and Bede the historian. In the first place, such a distinction implies that Bede perceived history in a similar way to more modern conceptions of history - as an analytical narration of events. As has been shown in chapter 4, Bede concentrates on the idea that *historia* should record the conventional deeds of good men (*and by silent implication the odd good woman!*). Thus his personal characterisation of Aethelthryth's ascetic deeds are as much part of *historia* as the more apparently historical information (such as mentioning names, outlining the general activities of a community) offered concerning Hilda.¹⁹ Furthermore, Professor Fell's distinction may be somewhat anachronistic in this context when one considers that in his portrayal of Hilda, Bede also mentions the fulfilment of dreams and the occurrence of visions - hardly events one would today associate with 'history'.

The differences in portrayal may, however, relate more to the fact that in Book IV of the *HE* Bede was furnishing the reader with two different sets of attributes from which to draw a composite picture of the types of piety appropriate to female saints. Arguably, he did this in an effort to avoid repeating the same type of characteristics within the framework of the *HE*. Thus, Ridyard was right to note that Bede's account of Aethelthryth is an important interpretation of the sanctity of royal ladies - but it was by no means complete.²⁰ Only if one places chapters 19 and 23 together (Aethelthryth and Hilda respectively) is a more complete picture presented. From the two components of the lives of Aethelthryth and Hilda - a larger image of female sanctity can be drawn. Thus with Aethelthryth Bede emphasizes the more 'personal' aspects of female piety, focusing the reader's attention on her virginity, her humility in terms of her woollen garments, her bathing habits, her fasting, her prayer and her wishes to be buried "in a wooden coffin, in the ranks of the other nuns, as her turn came".²¹ With reference to Hilda, however, Bede appears more anxious to depict the public less 'personal' aspects of female piety. Consequently Bede concentrates more on her role as abbess, her establishment of a rule of life and her teaching at Hartlepool and then at Whitby.²² Arguably Bede was intentionally developing some characteristics in one and some in the other in a manner that would encourage the reader to draw a composite picture of female sanctity.

This distinction is seen particularly clearly in terms of the role of these two women as teachers within their communities. Thus, in relation to Aethelthryth, Bede notes that at Ely she "became, by example of her heavenly life and teaching,

the virgin mother of many virgins dedicated to God”.²³ Yet, in his following description Bede clearly concentrates on ‘her heavenly life’ rather than her teaching. With Hilda, however, the accentuation is exactly the opposite. Thus Bede describes in detail the instruction she gave:

“teaching them [members of her houses] to observe strictly the virtues of justice, devotion, chastity and other virtues too, but above all things to continue in peace and charity.”²⁴

Reges and *principes* “sought and received her counsel when in difficulties” and “she compelled those under her direction to devote so much time to the study of holy Scriptures and so much time to the performance of good works”.²⁵ Bede goes on to make passing comment on Hilda’s own ‘devotion and grace’ but does not elaborate it in the same way he does with Aethelthryth. In his depiction of Hilda his emphasis was on what she taught others to do, in his picture of Aethelthryth, it was on what she herself did.

Bede’s elaboration of their respective deaths may also point to the idea that Bede was drawing a composite picture. Thus although Bede writes in depth about Hilda’s death, he is, perhaps surprisingly, silent with regard to any elevation of her relics.²⁶ It seems unlikely that this silence is due to a paucity in Bede’s sources given his own evident contact with Hilda’s monastery at Whitby.²⁷ As with Bede’s description of the piety of Aethelthryth and Hilda, it is more plausible that Bede’s portrayal of these two saints needs to be considered in the context of the *Historia Ecclesiastica* as a whole. Therefore, with Aethelthryth the stress is on the translation of her relics and the events surrounding that, whereas with Hilda more concentration is placed on her actual death. For example, although Bede

notes that some believed Aethelthryth to have prophesied her own death, his account of death is brief: "When she died she was buried by her own command in a wooden coffin, in the ranks of the other nuns".²⁸ With Hilda, however, Bede writes in more depth, discussing her last day, her death and her 'ascension'.²⁹

In drawing such a composite picture Bede has reproduced, without repetition, different aspects of piety associated with abbesses. Indeed, the lack of repetition is perhaps a crucial key to understanding Bede's portrayal. A comparison of Aethelthryth and Hilda possibly shows an example of how the overall structure of the *HE* influenced the way it was written. For Bede's *HE* to be a thorough 'History of the English Church' [*Historia...Anglorum Ecclesiastica*] he could not ignore either of these undoubtedly important female saints. Nevertheless, to accommodate both of them without repeating similar models he was perhaps forced to divide the two components of a saintly life, namely personal and 'public' devotion, between Aethelthryth and Hilda. Bede's objective was not to present full lives for each of the saints he portrays - rather it was to depict and accentuate particular ideals in the context of specific individuals. The saints in *HE* need to be studied in the work both as individuals in their own right but also as people within the whole scheme of the work.

At this juncture it is worth considering Bede's portrayal of other saintly abbesses.³⁰ The paucity of information concerning the other major Northumbrian abbesses of the period, notably Eanflaëd, Aelfflaed and Aebbe, also suggests that Bede's stylistic objective was to avoid undesirable repetition. He does not go into in-depth studies of these individuals partially because he has nothing to add to the

models already focused on. Thus of Eanflaed, Bede only offers information concerning her baptism, her flight to Kent following Edwin's death, her return to Northumbria to be Oswiu's queen, her burial at Whitby, the detail that she presided over Whitby with her daughter, Aelfflaed, and her role in Wilfrid's decision to go on pilgrimage.³¹ Apart from this Bede tells us nothing of the details of Eanflaed's life. In his discussion of Wilfrid's life he implies that she had some influence, but he really offers nothing on her role as queen or co-abbess.³² Much the same can be said of Aelfflaed, whose appearances in the *HE* are even more scarce than those of her mother. Of her, Bede contents himself with merely mentioning her consecration to God when barely a year old, and the fact that as abbess of Whitby she received support in both the government of her monastery and in her life from the retired bishop Trumwine.³³ The audience learns nothing from Bede's *HE* about either the piety, sanctity, or even specific death days of these two individuals. Indeed, from a reading of Bede alone it would be difficult to conclude that either of these women played a critical role in Northumbrian church and secular politics.

Bede's silence concerning these two women has led Hollis to conclude that Bede deliberately chose to ignore elucidating images of them.³⁴ She has argued that essentially Bede felt 'considerable hostility' for the types of roles, Aelfflaed especially, played.³⁵ To show this she draws attention to the different picture Stephanus gives the observer of Aelfflaed's part in the proceedings at the council of Nidd.³⁶ Hollis has continued by stating that Bede's overriding influence in his imagery of women was his love of patristic material and that from his knowledge

of such reading he would not offer pictures other than the orthodox ones the reader finds in Aethelthryth and Hilda.³⁷

Whilst in general I believe that Hollis is quite right to point out that Bede wanted to produce 'rigidly orthodox' images of female sanctity for his readers, I am not so sure that I can accept many of the assumptions upon which Hollis has founded her conclusions. For example, Hollis talks of Bede's revisionist approach to Aelfflaed as a hostile rewriting of the relationship between her and Cuthbert.³⁸ Therefore, she notes both the silences in the *HE* concerning Aelfflaed and the changes Bede makes to the Anonymous *Vita Cuthberti*'s discussion of her meeting with Cuthbert. There can be no doubt that her absence in the *HE* is all too self-evident and it is hard, given Aelfflaed's apparent role as a 'counsellor', not to conclude that Bede was avoiding describing her.³⁹ Nevertheless, he had offered the image of the abbess as a counsellor in his portrayal of Hilda. Did he need to repeat the same role within the text of the *HE*?

Furthermore, one needs to question whether Bede's rewrite of the Anonymous *Vita*'s discussion actually shows hostility toward Aelfflaed. For instance, Hollis has argued that in the Anonymous *Vita Cuthberti* Aelfflaed appears as a confidential intimate of Cuthbert, citing as her evidence for this the fact that she alone is made privy to Cuthbert's future knowledge of his death.⁴⁰ She continues that Bede radically redraws this relationship and notes, to emphasise this point, that this is shown by the fact that no-one else appears to have been told of this tale.⁴¹ Bede, she states, however, changes the primary role Aelfflaed has by introducing the male witness Herefrith. Yet, from a reading of Bede's chapters on

the events concerning Cuthbert's prophetic words to Aelfflaed one cannot help but think that Bede only notes the fact that Aelfflaed discussed the matter with Herefrith because in Bede's usual obsessive way, he wished his audience to believe that he had received valid and accurate information from a reliable, named source. In this case, the mentioning of Herefrith is less something sinister, as merely the workings of a pedantic author who conformed all of his writings to certain rhetorical expectations.

I am not for one minute trying to deny that Bede does ignore Aelfflaed's obviously wider influence (as Hollis has shown) merely that this did not necessarily come out of a hostility towards the actual person, as a desire to produce models worthy of imitation. In fact, if one was purely to rely on the Anonymous *Vita Cuthberti* for information concerning the 'expected' activities of Aelfflaed as abbess, one would be severely limited. The Anonymous author tells the audience nothing of Aelfflaed other than her part in Cuthbert's prophecy. Indeed, it is Bede, who, in his Prose *Vita*, reiterates the conventional role of the abbess. There he implicitly portrays her as a wise and learned woman;⁴² shows her to be the recipient of instruction from Cuthbert and adds a new chapter to the Anonymous' information, where she receives a miraculous cure from Cuthbert's girdle.⁴³ Moreover, the titles Bede uses to describe Aelfflaed make it very difficult to conclude that he viewed her with considerable hostility. Thus he calls her the 'most venerable handmaiden of Christ' (*uenerabilis ancilla Christi*);⁴⁴ the 'most reverend virgin and mother of virgins' (*reuerentissima uirgo et mater uirginum*);⁴⁵ the 'most noble and holy virgin of Christ' (*nobilissima et sanctissima uirgine Christi*);⁴⁶ and eulogizes her, noting that she increased her own nobility by

the much more potent nobility of the highest virtue (*ac regalis stemata nobilitatis potiori nobilitate summae uirtutis accumulabat*).⁴⁷ Compared with the rather understated titles of the Anonymous *Vita Cuthberti*, who refers to her only as ‘virgin and royal abbess’ (*uirgo et regalis Aelfleda*) and ‘most faithful abbess’ (*fidelissima abbatissa Aelfleda*), Bede’s terminology is clearly not unfavourable.⁴⁸ To sum up then, in his portrayal of Aethelthryth and Hilda in the *HE* Bede covered the role of a saintly abbess and did not find it necessary to repeat such information with other abbesses - one composite model drawn from two individuals was enough.

BEDE’S PORTRAYAL OF QUEENLY NORTHUMBRIAN SAINTS

It has been argued that Bede’s Aethelthryth was “wholly typical of the royal ladies created by hagiographers”.⁴⁹ However, given the composite nature of Bede’s characterizations suggested above, this claim needs to be amended. Aethelthryth is, within Bede’s text, predominantly one of two Northumbrian vehicles through which to illustrate particular characteristics of sanctity. As a consequence of this we actually know far less about her than we might had he focused on her alone within his *HE*. Moreover, if one compares Aethelthryth with other contemporary Merovingian hagiography concerning royal female saints it becomes clear that in one important respect Bede’s royal Northumbrian holy woman is unique: He makes no attempt to identify her with anything that could be construed as specifically royal sanctity.

Janet Nelson has noted that the *Vita Balthildis* offers evidence of a new and remarkable “depiction of a specifically royal sanctity”.⁵⁰ To emphasize this she draws especial attention to Balthild’s relationships to men at the court and also in two specific examples of Balthild’s particularly royal actions: ie remission of capitation tax and the prohibition of the slave-trade in Christian captives. Taking her overall point first it should be noted that it is actually in the earlier *Vita Radegundis* by Baudonivia that a type of sanctity specifically ascribed to a royal female acting in a secular capacity is first encountered.⁵¹ Thus, it is related that whilst queen, “she conducted herself to serve Christ with greater devotion” - setting examples through actions such as the freeing of captives and the ordering that a temple built by the Franks be burnt down.⁵² In fact, Baudonivia uses the second episode to stress how the ‘holy queen’ showed her strength and self-possession. If one accepts Nelson’s comments concerning Balthild’s portrayal, this event surely exemplifies a holiness specifically associated with the power of queenship.

It is interesting, moreover, that Radegund, like Balthild, is also associated with freeing slaves. Unlike Balthild, however, she is not explicitly noted as prohibiting the slave-trade in Christian captives.⁵³ On this point it is perhaps worth noting that in the *Vita Geretrudis* Gertrude is also accredited with “ministering to captives” - whilst as a mere abbess she did not have it in her power to free captives, as a holy person she was expected to minister to them.⁵⁴ Indeed, the aiding of captives appears to be a *topos* common to Merovingian female *vitae*. It is, for example, also evident in the *Vita Genovefae*. Her hagiographer retells an

account of how Genovefa was involved in persuading King Childeric “not to behead his captives”.⁵⁵

One explanation may be that this is a model developed directly from patristic texts. The statements made in the *vitae* are certainly reminiscent of comments in two patristic sources, one by Eusebius, the other by Ambrose. For example, in Eusebius’s *Life of Constantine*, he provides a model of an early Christian female saint, Helen, and in his characterization of her he specifically notes that whilst she was travelling in the eastern provinces of Constantine’s empire she “bestowed abundant proofs of her liberality as well on the inhabitants of the several cities collectively, as on individuals who approached her” and one particular example of this liberality which is given by Eusebius is that “she liberated some from imprisonment”.⁵⁶ This whole concept of liberality is further approached by St. Ambrose in his tract *De officiis ministrorum*.⁵⁷ In this text Ambrose, using phraseology similar to that found in the *vitae*, directly refers to redeeming captives from their captivity, suggesting that one gains “the love of the people by liberality” and that “the highest kind of liberality is to redeem captives [*summa etiam liberalitas, captos redimere*] to save them from the hands of their enemies, to snatch men from death, and most of all women from shame”.⁵⁸ Like the *vitae*, Ambrose is referring specifically to the literal freedom of those in captivity rather than the redemption of their souls. Ambrose’s wording does resemble that of the *vitae* and Baudonivia’s comments on Helen and the finding of the True Cross suggest that either she had direct access to at least some of Ambrose’s writings or copies of them. From this it would seem plausible to suggest that she had access to *De officiis ministrorum*.

Nonetheless, the *vitae* authors did not slavishly copy the same phrase without adapting the *topos* to suit the individual. Thus to understand the variations in the description of this *topos* itself one needs to look again at the texts. It then seems that Radegund was portrayed as freeing captives because she had been one herself, that Balthild was described as prohibiting the slave-trade in Christian captives because this had happened to her and that as Gertrude was neither the victim of slave-trading nor captivity she was merely expected to minister to the needs of those who were such victims. Further to this one should perhaps pause for thought at the fact that only Radegund and Balthild, the two queens, are described as having been involved in freeing captives. Gertrude and Genovefa on the other hand are depicted only as ministering to them and saving them from execution respectively. One cannot help wondering if in fact the deviations in the *topos* are related to the social status of the individual. Only Radegund and Balthild as queens had it in their power to free individuals - this was perhaps not a power reserved for the noble women be they an abbess or a non-monastic holy woman.

However, if this is correct it would appear that such a hierarchical distinction is confined to the Merovingian material, for although this *topos* occurs elsewhere in medieval *vitae* it is without evidence of restrictions caused by the saints' social status. Thus C. Harrington has noted that in the *Lives* of the early medieval Irish saints noble women are specifically recorded as having been involved in the freeing of slaves.⁵⁹ In these cases it does not seem to be merely the prerogative of the queen. In terms of Anglo-Saxon women this *topos* is not to be found until the

twelfth century *vitae* of the half Anglo-Saxon queen, St. Margaret (and on this occasion it is hard not to assume her hagiographer was drawing on the Radegund material).⁶⁰ Overall, perhaps this *topos* points to a more hierarchical emphasis on the part of Merovingian hagiographers.

Interestingly, as this motif was related to men (Ambrose was writing for priests) and women, it is evidence of where convention has been allowed to overcome gender barriers and become associated not only with men in power but also women. As Nelson noticed in cases such as these societal position could transcend gender but social position could also limit.⁶¹ Whereas male priests were encouraged to free captives in the Merovingian hagiographies only women who were queens could do this. The point here is that for the Merovingian authors pre-monastic status may have determined the boundaries of power ascribed to the individual saint in their dealings with the earthly world. This is important for it indicates that equality did not exist even amongst female saints and that possibly a hierarchy of hagiographical convention existed.⁶² If this is true it would undermine further the idea of 'classless' female saints provided by Schulenberg.⁶³ Radegund and Balthild were queens before their entry into their monastic life and could be given attributes which reflected their holiness in their secular life. Gertrude's and Genovefa's social status was not, however, 'royal' but limited to their nobility. In essence, this chapter is suggesting that the aiding or liberation of captives was ultimately a conventional hagiographical *topos* adapted to suit the status of particular individuals and did not necessarily reflect actual events.⁶⁴

The implications of this evidence for royal sanctity on Bede's depiction of Aethelthryth is clear. It is apparent in both the Baudonivia text and Balthild's *vita* that there was a certain idea of behaviour appropriate to royal female saints before they entered their respective monasteries. This cannot be said of Bede's Aethelthryth. There is, unfortunately, practically no discussion by Bede of Aethelthryth's relationship with Ecgfrith's court and the two comments where one can infer her power at court in terms of her own household, Bede's notices are incidental and make no note of any of Aethelthryth's saintly qualities. He concentrates on her sexual status only - and her desire to enter a monastery. Thus in the terms of the criteria for specifically royal sanctity as offered by Nelson [that is a form of piety associated with one's secular situation] Aethelthryth does not meet this criteria. She has no specifically royal functions which in themselves could be interpreted as saintly functions.

As has been shown, then, Continental texts such as Baudonivia's *Vita Radegundis*, and the *Vita Balthildis* indicate an interest in the role these women played as queens before their entry into monastic life. The question to be asked is why is Bede different? Were his sources dissimilar or did his audience require an emphasis on non-secular attributes? It is possible that the gender of Bede's audience played a role in his portrayal of female images of sanctity. Thus, in assuming a male audience for the *HE*, Bede produced a more conventional image rather than reflecting the actuality of female monastic experience. This perhaps can be excellently seen in relation to the emphasis he places on virginity. Susan Ridyard has noted female sanctity was "founded on the preservation of *virginitas* and upon commitment to the monastic ideal".⁶⁵ Looking at Aethelthryth, Hilda,

Aelfflaed, Aebbe, Radegund, Balthild and Gertrude it is easy to see that the second half of this statement does appear valid - for all of them did indeed end their lives in the monastic life. However, if one admits that both Radegund and Balthild were ascribed saintly functions before they left the so-called 'secular world', one should also admit the possibility that there was, in fact, more to sanctity than a commitment to the monastic ideal. This was not, however, an image that interested Bede.

The preservation of *virginitas*, on the other hand, did interest Bede. His approach to virginity is uniformly explicit. Bede, drawing on his knowledge of patristic sources such as Augustine's *De Sanctae Virginitate*, knew virginity was of critical importance. However, also from that text he knew that for virginity to be 'holy virginity', virgins must abstain from vice, cultivate humility and not be corrupted with pride.⁶⁶ Bede's reading, therefore, would have shown him that *virginitas* was important but on its own not necessarily enough. This is perhaps evident in his portrayal of Aethelthryth in chapter 19 of Book IV. Thus although he concentrates on Aethelthryth's virginity initially, he goes into great detail when describing her virtuous manner of life. As was noted previously Bede offers the reader recognized features of the ascetic life. Nonetheless, in general Bede appears more interested in virginity than any of the other virtues. Thus he produced the elegiac hexameter hymn in honour of Aethelthryth's virginity. He also recounts at every opportunity the virgin status of his female saints. For example, he highlights the fact that Aelfflaed was dedicated to the Lord as "a holy virgin" when she was scarcely a year old, to live in "perpetual virginity" and that she was a "blessed virgin" when she died.⁶⁷ Elsewhere in the *HE* he refers to her

as the “royal virgin Aelfflaed (*regia uirgo Aelffled*)”.⁶⁸ In his *Vita Cuthberti*, Bede emphasizes her status as a virgin as he discusses the “joys of virginity” and calls her “most reverend Aelfflaed, virgin (*reuerentissima uirgo*)”, and “holy virgin of Christ (*sanctissima uirgine*)”.⁶⁹ Bede also accentuates the sexual status of other women in *HE* - thus he says explicitly that the nun Begu was “dedicated to the Lord in virginity (*dedicata Domino uirginitate*)”, and that Eorcengota (Sexburg’s daughter), likewise, was a “dedicated virgin”.⁷⁰ Indeed, from these examples, Faivre’s comment that it is difficult to avoid the impression that virginity was being presented as the only decisive value in female sanctity and of positive good in itself without any of the other virtues identified by Augustine seems accurate.⁷¹

That the gender of the audience may have played a role in the extent of emphasis on virginity is clear if one compares Bede’s *HE* entries, with texts written for a female readership. Thus, Aldhelm in his *De Virginitate* does refer to virginity as wielding the sceptre of the highest sovereignty among the virtues.⁷² However, he also notes that alongside it must be the virtue of humility.⁷³ Indeed, for Aldhelm it was better that one reached the port ‘battered’ (having been sexually active) than be an arrogant virgin. For Aldhelm there was, in this sense, more humility in giving up carnal knowledge than never having had it in the first place. To his audience Aldhelm made it quite clear that virgins without virtue ‘will be punished along with the foolish virgins carrying burned out lamps’.⁷⁴ This was an image that took into account that his audience of noble women turned nuns included at least some who had rejected their worldly marriages.⁷⁵ Aldhelm was producing virtuous stereotypes with which his female audience could relate. Bede, on the

other hand, was writing for an audience of men who, presumably, did not need to relate to their female counterparts (at least not textually).

.

CHARACTERIZATION AND CONVENTION

Despite the absence of any pre-monastic royal saintly attributes, the other traits upon which Bede focuses attention are also those common to Merovingian sources. They tend to be ones which, by their nature, can transcend class, such as, variations on the themes of fasting, the wearing of particularly coarse garments - either wool or goats' hair - responsibility for church studies, praying and vigils.⁷⁶

To understand such conventions it is necessary to look at one particular *topos* Bede did not ascribe to either Aethelthryth or Hilda but which is found in Merovingian texts - moderate or humble speech. Thus Balthild's hagiographer noted that she was "not harsh in eloquence, nor presumptuous in word (*Non levis in eliquio, non presumptuosa in uerba*)".⁷⁷ The author of the *Vita Geretrudis* indicates that Gertrude was also restrained in her speech, behaving as if she was wholly mature (*uerborum moderationem senilem antecessit aetatem*).⁷⁸ Other Merovingian female *vitae* also have this *topos*. For example, of St. Rusticula of Arles, "for she was strong in all things, prudent in speech".⁷⁹

In his chapter 'Concerning Characterization' of his *Etymologiae*, Isidore had made it quite clear that the representation of a person's speech should reflect the character of the individual portrayed.⁸⁰ Thus of the female saints one would expect to find a manner of speech which is moderate and full of humility - for this is surely what would be expected of the general character of a saint. The

hagiographical authors knew from their reading of the Bible and Patristics that a women's speech had been particularly singled out as being open to sin. Thus in St. John Chrysostom's *Homily IX on St. Paul's Epistle to Timothy*, John notes that, "the blessed Paul requires great modesty and decorum of women, and not only as regards their dress and appearance: he proceeds even to regulate their speech."⁸¹ Salisbury has also shown the extent to which Ambrose perceived silence as important for women, especially virgins. Consequently Salisbury quotes from Ambrose's *De Virginitate*, where he says, "...For in truth in much speaking there is abundance of sin..."⁸² In his rule for nuns, Caesarius of Arles also emphasizes the significance of quiet speech: "Let them [the nuns] never speak in a loud voice according to the Apostle's command: 'Let clamour be put away from you', such is not fitting or useful."⁸³

The point is that the inclusion of these *topoi* was directly related to the representation of the characters - they did not necessarily appertain to the actual individual but were attributes *one would expect* of a saintly person. These expectations were themselves informed by characteristics outlined in Biblical imagery and in patristic writings. For example, one need look no further than Jerome to find a reason why a female saint would have been portrayed, as Aethelthryth is, wearing coarse garments. He made it quite clear that fine clothes denoted corruption and that virginal ascetism was marked out by the neglect of personal attire.⁸⁴ Essentially, the type of clothes depicted on a saint acted as a sign for their inherent sanctity. As R. Morse has pointed out conventions were imbued with meaning.⁸⁵

These examples demonstrate the extent to which characterization has affected the text. Indeed, it would not be hard to argue here that these are the 'constructed elements' of a saint that Delooz has emphasized.⁸⁶ In fact if one takes these elements of the saint's character with their functions as described in the texts one is left questioning if there is anything with the texts, especially the *HE*, which bears a relationship to the 'real' people (as opposed to the constructed ones with which the reader of today is left).

In the light of the Merovingian hagiography the extent of convention that Bede deploys in his depiction of royal and noble female Northumbrian saints is obvious. Firstly, 'birth status' was of importance universally and normally made clear by the fact that parents or relatives of royalty were named at the beginning of the text - thus establishing the individual's societal position. Susan Ridyard has assumed that the naming of parentage was actually a genealogy which placed an individual in a historical context.⁸⁷ The *Vita Geretrudis* makes it quite clear that it does not have the space to insert Gertrude's genealogy: "But it is too long to insert in this sermon the order from which she traced her earthly genealogy from its origins" (*Sed quo ordine de terrena origine genealogiam adsumpseret, huic sermone inserere longum est*) and yet goes onto name both of Gertrude's parents.⁸⁸ This perhaps casts doubt on Ridyard's assumption that the naming of parents constituted a genealogy. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly the contemporary context the naming of an individual's parentage also gave a social context: one which emphasized an aristocratic birth. Thus Bede's initial statements concerning Aethelthryth and Hilda lay stress on their nobility of birth.

Aethelthryth was identified as the daughter of Anna, King of the East Angles.⁸⁹

Hilda is noted as the daughter of King Edwin's nephew, Hereric.⁹⁰ Such a

uniform approach to social status can be found in other contemporary Anglo-

Saxon texts. When commenting on Aelfflaed the anonymous Whitby author of

the *Vita* of Gregory the Great mentions that she is the daughter of Eanflaed and

Edwin.⁹¹ Felix's *Vita Guthlaci*, in the discussion of the abbess Ecgburh, notes she

is *reuerentissima uirgo uirginum Christi et sponsarum Ecgburh abbatiss, Adulfi*

regis filia.⁹² The same focus is clear in the Merovingian texts. Hence,

Radegund's 'high birth' is made clear from the outset by Venantius, who informs

the reader that she was the granddaughter of King Bessino and the daughter of

King Bertechario and continues to emphasise that she was born of kingly breed:

avo rege Bessino...patre rege Bertechario...regio de germine orta.⁹³ Baudonivia

also emphasizes her "royal origin and rank" (*regalis origo uel dignitas*) from the

start.⁹⁴ Gertrude's 'birth status' is also established at the beginning where she is

named as the daughter of Pepin of Landen and Itta.⁹⁵ A similar statement can be

seen concerning Genovefa.⁹⁶ In this case, of course, the convention of parent-

naming does indicate the actuality of the social class the of the individuals

involved. In this sense it is a convention that reflects reality.

The anomaly appears to be Balthild. Both Lawrence and Geary have spoken of

Balthild in the context of the marriage of Merovingian kings to women of lesser

social status, their basic assumption being, of course, that Balthild was of low

birth.⁹⁷ However, this presupposition needs to be observed closely as it relies on

the idea that Balthild's status as a slave purchased by Erchinoald meant that she

must have been of 'low birth'.⁹⁸ Yet one need only look to Radegund to see that

being taken captive was not only the prerogative of the lower levels of the societal hierarchy.⁹⁹ It could in fact affect both those of 'high' and 'low' birth.

In 1896 Eckenstein supposed that Balthild was descended from one of the noble families of Wessex - and one cannot help feeling that this is far more plausible than either Lawrence's or Geary's statements.¹⁰⁰ Firstly, the *Vita Balthildis* makes no comment on her social status from birthright, it merely notes that she was 'of Saxon birth' (*ex genere Saxonum*) not whether or not she was of 'low' birth.¹⁰¹ Indeed, unlike the other texts the *Vita Balthildis* does not make any claim that she was of noble or royal descent. However, in this context it is important to note that though the life does not specifically say she is of the nobility it certainly implies this in its depiction of her. Those of noble class are invariably portrayed as beautiful, elegant and, on the whole, intelligent.¹⁰² The text dealing with Balthild does indeed focus on her beauty:

"she was graceful in form with refined features, a most seemly woman with a smiling face and serious gait."¹⁰³

In the context of this point, it is perhaps important that the nearly contemporary source the *Liber Historiae Francorum* specifically states that Clovis II "took as his wife a girl from the *Saxon nobility* named Balthild".¹⁰⁴ Moreover, historians such as Wallace-Hadrill and Sims-Williams have almost taken it for granted that the connection between Corbie and Chelles with Anglo-Saxon England was through Balthild - but they have never defined the exact link.¹⁰⁵ Was it through connections between Anglo-Saxon royal houses and Merovingian royal houses (i.e. through Balthild's husband's family rather than herself) or was it through some noble or even royal connection directly related to Balthild? However one

approaches this question caution should be exercised before making the assumption that Balthild was of low birth.

In a more general sense, one should also be wary of arguing that sanctity provided a vehicle for the achievement of “celebrated public status regardless of birthright”.¹⁰⁶ The saints under observation here are representative of early medieval saints - most, if not all, of whom were of an aristocratic social class and birth and this was important to the audience for whom the texts were written.

Another standard hagiographical convention employed by Bede in his depiction of Aethelthryth is the rejection of her husband after marriage - a *topos* which is also found in both Venantius and Baudonivia’s *Vita Radegundis*. Firstly, it should be noticed that there was one essential difference between Radegund and Aethelthryth, namely that Radegund, unlike Aethelthryth, was not a virgin. Nevertheless both had a struggle to get their respective husbands to accept their desire to serve Christ by leaving them and entering a monastery.¹⁰⁷ Thus in chapters 4, 5, 6, and 7 Baudonivia describes how Radegund rejected her husband and through prayer and the help of the bishop of Paris (Germanus) how the king finally repented and allowed her to remain serving Christ. The parallels with Aethelthryth, Ecgrith and the support of Aethelthryth by the Bishop Wilfrid are obvious. The embellishment of Radegund’s story serves merely to emphasize the struggle that Radegund was prepared to go through to follow Christ. It was, in essence, a testimony of her faith. This struggle and the noted abandonment of “the throne of the country” or such things as her decorated felt cloak “encrusted with gold and fashioned with gems and pearls” were simply appropriate ways of

showing a life of self-denial for Christ and such evidence of self denial was seen as witness to a form of martyrdom.¹⁰⁸

Does this, then, cast any light on Bede's Aethelthryth? Like Radegund's husband, Ecgrith is portrayed as a threat to Aethelthryth following 'a path to Christ'. Indeed, Bede even depicted him as having attempted to bribe Wilfrid to get her to consummate their marriage and thereby forego the main testimony to her sanctity.¹⁰⁹ He also emphasizes that it is only "with difficulty" that she finally gains permission to enter the monastic life.¹¹⁰ If one compares Bede with the Merovingian texts it becomes clear that in many ways his depiction of the relationship between Ecgrith and Aethelthryth is just a standard convention. Indeed, the image of a woman, especially a virginal women being the object of male sexual desires had been well established by Ambrose in his treatise *De Virginitate*.¹¹¹ Here both Agnes and Pelagia are depicted in such a manner and by doing this Ambrose and his successors actually sexualized women's bodies in their texts to increase the significance of their choice to remain virgins.¹¹²

Nonetheless, recently Pauline Thompson has made a very spirited attempt to suggest that the depiction of Aethelthryth's refusal to consummate her marriages is far more than merely a construct designed to obscure a reality of sterility within her sexual relationships.¹¹³ To do this she has considered the possibility that Aethelthryth was highly influenced as a young woman in East Anglia by the Christian discourse concerning monastic life and the superiority of virginity and it was this that consequentially led to her choice not to consummate her marriage on two different occasions.¹¹⁴ However, as much as I am attracted to this idea, I am

not fully convinced. Whilst it is hard not to accept that some degree of transmission of the images of virginity was occurring outside the monastic enclaves it is not clear the extent of it nor does this address the issue of how an Anglo-Saxon *historia* text was constructed. As I commented in the previous chapter hindsight played a critical role in how events came to be narrated.¹¹⁵ Basically, it was noted that characterizations associated with events in *historia* narratives were rhetorical devices to explain the outcome of these events rather than descriptions of a lived experience. Where Aethelthryth was concerned the hagiographers (possibly Bede or a writer in East Anglia) had to explain the incorruption of her body. As Burrus commented a woman's body was an aspect of her religious integrity - incorruption was a sign of the extent of that integrity, and required explanation.¹¹⁶ The only conclusion to be drawn was that she had managed to get through two marriages without consummating either, which is exactly what Bede does: *Nam etiam signum diuini miraculi, quo eiusdem feminae sepulta caro corrumpi non potuit, indicio est quia a uirili contactu incorrupta durauerit.*¹¹⁷ The narrators had patristic precedents for arguing such a case and Aethelthryth provided a useful vehicle to carry the message of the superiority of virginity. Consider, for example, if her corpse had been corrupt. Would she then have been depicted more in the light of Radegund as having lived with the outward appearance of being a wife, *sub coniugis specie*?¹¹⁸ Indeed, if Thompson is correct and Aethelthryth had at least some knowledge of Radegund's life, surely the message that she would have gained from it would have been that one could fully participate in marriage and still become a holy woman. (The idea that virginity was alluded to in Radegund's case seems

misplaced. Virginity was a specific state and the title 'virgin' was not usually applied to one who was not. The distinction would have been clear).¹¹⁹

Moreover, it is clear that Christian images of female holiness were extended to include women who had been married by Anglo-Saxon authors such as Aldhelm when writing for female audiences. As was indicated earlier the extent of Aethelthryth's virginity is focused on by Bede for the benefit of his predominantly male audience. In fact, one cannot help but question whether or not there were so few Anglo-Saxon royal women who left their marriages unconsummated for religious reasons because the Church was giving a message outside of the monastic communities that stressed a variety of channels to holiness.

Despite the apparently textual nature of this narrative there has been a tendency on the part of some historians to view the depicted relationship between Aethelthryth and Wilfrid in this case as one of the causes of the rift between Wilfrid and Ecgfrith.¹²⁰ However, again one needs to remember that seemingly political events are often utilized by hagiographers as convenient vehicles for religious actions whether or not they were historical. Indeed, a glance at Merovingian *vitae* certainly suggests this. For example, chapter 1 of the *Vita Geretrudis* deals with Gertrude's rejection of the offer of marriage. From the text it might be easy to make assumptions about the relationship between the mayor of the palace, Pepin, and King Dagobert. For instance, the son of the *dux* who came wishing to marry Gertrude asked both the king and Gertrude's parents for her hand in marriage. This might suggest that the king had the right to refuse certain marriage alliances of his noblemen. However, the concern of this particular

passage was not to indicate either the politics influencing affairs between Dagobert and Pepin of Landen or the relationship between family and Lord with regard to marriage alliances. To emphasize this fact the author does not go into non-essential details, the son of the *dux* who wishes to marry Gertrude remains unnamed. His name is unimportant. By informing the reader that he was the son of a *dux* the hagiographer was merely indicating that he was of a social standing worthy of the marriage. Indeed, by depicting him as a wealthy man “ornamented with gold and dressed in silken garments (*auro fabricatum siuicis indutum*)” a picture is drawn of a very eligible man.¹²¹ This portrayal is fundamentally related to the point of the chapter - i.e. that Gertrude was prepared to reject marriage, even if it was to someone who could offer her material wealth so that she might follow a life dedicated to Christ. Essentially, this story appears to be just another hagiographical convention. It is true that the description of this possible marriage alliance is realistic and plausible but realism and the specific factual reality are not the same thing. The rejection of marriage is the theme being emphasized and it is a theme found throughout *vitae*. The description of plausible events for hagiographical purposes is not restricted to issues of marriage in sanctity.

At a first glance at chapter 16 of Baudonivia's *Vita Radegundis* one might think that they have a perfect example of the political tensions which arose between convents, monasteries and their local bishop. This chapter describes Radegund sending for and receiving a relic of the Holy Cross. However, Baudonivia notes that when the relic arrived in Poitiers,

“the bishop, enemy of mankind, was working through his satellites, so that they rejected the world's Treasure. They were unwilling to receive it in the

city....Each one refused it for different reasons, as if joining the ranks of the Jews. But it is not our place to discuss this.”¹²²

- This incident certainly suggests tension between the Bishop and Radegund and it is quite a remarkable event when one thinks that this bishop (whom Gregory of Tours names as Maroveus) was refusing to allow a relic as important as one supposedly from Christ’s own cross into the city.¹²³ However, if one looks more closely at the text it becomes clear that the main theme of this chapter is the power of Radegund’s prayer. Thus, to gain the relic in the first place rather than sending gifts to the emperor, “she occupied herself with prayer in the company of the saints” and “she obtained what she prayed for - the holy wood of God’s cross”.¹²⁴

Moreover, it was the influence of Radegund’s prayer and vigils which ultimately succeeded in overcoming the rejection of the True Cross by those unwilling to receive it at Poitiers. She and her entire congregation continued in prayer and vigils “until God looked down on the abjectness of his handmaid and put it into the king’s heart that he must bring judgement and justice to the populace”.¹²⁵ The likelihood that the main theme was the power of prayer over ‘evil’ is perhaps further emphasized by the fact that, unlike Gregory of Tours, Baudonivia does not go into any depth concerning the incident. She neither names the bishop nor the reasons behind the refusals by those in the city. It was not her place to discuss this because it was incidental information which did not highlight what she wished to emphasize.

The use of apparently political events to make a point about religious actions can be seen throughout hagiography, but one must always be careful of assuming the historical reality of these events. If one returns to Bede's discussion of Aethelthryth it is arguable that his audience would have thought the image of Ecgfrith attempting to bribe Wilfrid plausible if not to be expected. A queen's primary role, after all, was to produce an heir.¹²⁶ Nonetheless, when Bede wrote the *HE* Wilfrid was dead, his tale unverifiable. Moreover, as was noted concerning Bede's use of 'eye-witness' sources, using Wilfrid's name gave Bede's narrative authority. The observer must, therefore, consider the possibility that the whole story was a carefully developed rhetorical device designed to prove the degree of Aethelthryth's sanctity and to reassure the readers that despite two husbands and 12 years of marriage to Ecgfrith Aethelthryth *really* was a virgin - a reassurance that had been necessitated by Aethelthryth's incorruption.

Reassurance of the reader can also be found in Bede's depiction of Aethelthryth's translation. As one would expect in this portrayal Bede makes it clear that the cult instigators and promoters were both Aethelthryth's kin and certain powerful ecclesiastics. However, in this part of the narrative it is actually the testimony of the doctor, Cynefrid that Bede chooses to focus upon. Cynefrid's speech concerning her exhumation, stresses how he had removed a tumour from her throat and that when her body was raised there was no trace of the wound to be seen.¹²⁷ If one observes the context in which this information is given it is possible to conclude that Bede was not so interested in those participating at the elevation as with producing proof (he notes, after all, how most certain proof was given by Cynefrid: *sed certiori notitia medicus Cynefrid*) to convince disbelievers

of both Aethelthryth's incorruption and virginity.¹²⁸ Thus Cynefrid's testimony follows the detail concerning Bede's query to Wilfrid. Basically, Bede notes that certain people doubted Aethelthryth's virginity and then gives two witnesses as evidence that their doubts are unfounded. He further emphasizes his point by noting that his readers need not question if this could happen as there was evidence for it happening before: *Nec diffidendum est nostra etiam aetate fieri potuisse, quod aevo praecedente aliquoties factum fideles historiae narrant, donante uno eodemque Domino, qui se nobiscum usque in finem saeculi manere pollicetur.*¹²⁹ Bede's narrative in this case then seems primarily to have been determined by considerations of proof of sanctity.

Having acknowledged that Bede's portrayal of his Northumbrian holy women is, like that of his royal male saints, both inter-textually influenced and conventional, one can ask whether the conventions in particular tell the historian anything about the contemporary concept of female sanctity or whether as textual constructs the world Bede's presents is purely textual. It is possible that the repeated image of the apparent renunciation of social status whilst actually maintaining it through the listing of parents and relatives, and reference by title to noble or royal status indicates the tension in Bede's society to adopt the message of worldly renunciation within a hierarchical social structure. Thus Susan Ridyard has suggested that Aethelthryth's sanctity far from being a product of her royal status was conditioned upon the renunciation of that status.¹³⁰ Here, she has made the assumption that renunciation of sex was the same as renunciation of social, 'worldly' status. Firstly, the ascetic renunciation of the flesh was not a theme specifically associated with the renunciation of royal status. It was a renunciation

of a particular gender role expected to women (especially queens who were expected to have heirs), but it did not necessarily mean either renouncing one's 'worldly 'royal' status nor withdrawal as a whole from the claims of society.¹³¹

Secondly, even entry into a monastic life need not be perceived as a renunciation of a worldly status for as Janet Nelson has shown both court and convent were in a sense public spaces.¹³² Moreover, it is perhaps interesting that though the queens discussed here are said to "scorn" the throne of their country, hand over their abdicated authority, and despise the world's riches and avoid the world's rewards, it is noticeable that for the authors at least there was not renunciation of their worldly title - they remain Queen. Thus, though in his *Vita Venantius* almost seems to avoid calling Radegund 'regina', preferring to call her the "most holy lady (*sanctissima domina*)"; or "most blessed woman (*beatissima femina*)", he opens his poem to her "oh powerful Queen (*O regina potens*)".¹³³ And whereas Baudonivia's *Vita* begins the prologue by noting that it is the Life of the holy lady Radegund: *Vita Sanctae dominae Radegundis*, Venantius is more specific, stating "the beginning of the prologue of the Life of the holy Queen Radegundis (*sanctae Radegundis reginae*)".¹³⁴ In fact Baudonivia uses the titles 'blessed queen (*beatae reginae*)' and 'holy queen (*sancta regina*)' throughout her *Vita*. The prologue of the *Vita Balthildis* also makes it clear that she was a queen.¹³⁵

The point is that there was no real contradiction between social status and sanctity. Indeed, as one reads both Bede and the Merovingian texts one increasingly feels that sanctity was actually an exalted form of that social status and that it was expressed through literary convention. Thus Venantius notes of

Radegund that though she was born of a kingly breed and noble in origin, she was much more noble in her actions: *regio de germine orta, celsa licet origine, multo celsior actione*.¹³⁶ Baudonivia states of Radegund, “A noble sprig, she sprang from a royal race; what she inherited from her lineage she further ornamented with her faith”: *De regali progeniae nobile germen erupit, et quod sumpsit ex genere suo, plus ornavit ex fide*.¹³⁷ In the light of this, if one looks at Bede one can see that he too offered an image *not* of the renunciation of one’s worldly status but of an enhancement of it. Therefore, he says of Aethelthryth:

“Of royal blood she sprang, but nobler far God’s service found...”¹³⁸

And he comments that Hilda’s career fell equally into two parts: the first thirty-three years were spent “nobly in the secular habit” but that the second thirty-three years were dedicated “still more nobly to the Lord”.¹³⁹ Also in his prose *Vita Cuthberti* Bede stated that another queen: Aelfflaed, “increased the nobility of a royal pedigree by the much more potent nobility of the highest virtue”.¹⁴⁰ One can, of course, see from this comparison that this was another standard convention. However, it does appear to indicate that the authors perceived that rather than renouncing their social status these individuals elevated it. Essentially what one seems to be viewing is a sanctity perceived in terms of nobility. If this is so the renunciation of sex and the assumption of an ascetic life did not necessarily mean a renunciation of social status. (Indeed, if sanctity was perceived in terms of ‘nobility’ one could almost infer that nobility of birth was regarded as a crucial factor in the process of sanctification!)¹⁴¹

This chapter has shown then that a comparison of the Merovingian *vitae* with Bede’s portrayal of his Northumbrian holy women indicates how the methodology

of composition involved both the use of Late Antique texts, hagiographical conventions and the construction of composite images. In many regards what one is faced with on examination of any of these saints' lives is the process of image making. The characterizations available to the reader are stereotypes of ideal behaviour. Nonetheless, the use of particular stereotypical attributes did not occur on an *ad hoc* basis but may have been determined by both the gender of the audience and the social status of the individual being portrayed. In a more specific sense the evidence offered above has shown that whereas the Merovingian texts supplied examples of pre-monastic royal saintly functions for their females, in his *HE* Bede did not. Indeed, his concentration appears to be on ascetic behaviour which could transcend the class of individuals. Finally, however, this chapter has attempted to stress that while some of the female saintly actions appear 'classless', the perception of sanctity was one fundamentally rooted in contemporary concepts of nobility and that nobility in terms of social status was a crucial factor in the sanctification process.

Chapter 9:

The Implications of Bede's Approach and Methodology

The implications of Bede's approach and methods in terms of the study of Anglo-Saxon history seem stark. Firstly, as on-lookers of a period previous to our own we need to come to terms with the possibility that Bede's primary aim was not so much recording historical actuality as historical Christian convention, at least in the case of the personal and public actions of the individuals he identifies. Where the *Historia Ecclesiastica*, in particular, is concerned at some level one is dealing with no more than an embellished list of events expanded to meet the needs of a Church attempting to promote deeds worthy of aspiration. At times the embellishments may reflect an actuality but without corroborative contemporary evidence we are not in a position to prove this.

Having acknowledged this, it is of note that the chronology of Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica*, despite some minor inconsistencies, appears to be accurate - itself a factor in the rhetoric of persuasion. After all, if Bede was obsessive about chronology, surely he must have been equally obsessive about factual accuracy? Yet, an interest in time does not necessarily exclude the provision of models within that framework constructed from a textual rather than an actual basis. In many regards Bede's *Historiae* texts in general do not reflect reality but only other texts - they are in this sense a post-modernist's delight.

The consequence that this has for the study of the *Historiae* texts is that they demand of the historian a change in the questions applied to interpret the material, effectively shifting the boundaries of history into a wider discipline that involves the study of rhetoric and literary theory as well as the techniques for creating seemingly accurate reconstructions of the past. Indeed, where this later issue is concerned the *historiae* texts challenge the concept that one can reconstruct the Anglo-Saxon past from the evidence for one is always faced with the possibility that apart from the chronology Bede's images are fundamentally Late Antique in provenance. In some respects it is as if writers such as Jerome, Augustine and Gregory the Great are still determining the questions one asks of the texts, for it is their interests that pervade Bede's apparent interpretation of events. This is not to negate the continued work undertaken by those historians examining the possibility that Bede was reflecting a historical actuality in terms of the actions of his saints, kings, queens and noblemen, merely to recognize that in doing this the focus first should be the texts upon which Bede may have drawn.

However, I would also argue that textual manipulation does not mean that political considerations are completely absent from the text, merely that these considerations may be clothed in conventions not originating in the contemporary period with which Bede was dealing. The *Historiae* texts themselves, for example, do appear to yield some information concerning the central issue of monastic superiority within the Northumbrian kingdom. Thus as was shown in chapters 2 and 3 the composition of the text concerning the Irish, Easter and the Northumbrian monasteries implies that Bede was consciously rewriting the historical record to maintain the superiority of his own community.

When faced with the extent of Bede's reliance on generic association, a method of composition that included premeditated adaptation of the evidence to emphasize a particular agenda and dependence upon texts which related to a different time and place to create a history of his own people's Church, it is difficult to prevent scepticism invading our responses to his *historiae*. The impression one could derive from both Bede's aim and his methodology is that he deliberately set out to mislead his readers, implying a historical truth when in fact he was merely manipulating Late Antique Christian imagery to suit an ideological purpose with the intention of encouraging behavioural modification (imitation). This particular interpretation would perhaps view Bede as an ecclesiastical spin-doctor, spinning a narrative designed to promote a Christian uniformity in aspirations and practices.

Indeed, as Averil Cameron noted the aim of Christian rhetoric was to persuade individuals towards certain acts.¹ Throughout the *Historia Ecclesiastica* Bede can be seen to be employing rhetorical devices and themes to illustrate through narrative the personal actions worthy of Christian aspiration. Viewed in this light the virtues Bede illustrated were of more importance than historical accuracy. Bede merely uses seemingly historical episodes as vehicles to exhibit the principles at issue - a methodology not dissimilar to *Encomium*.²

However, Bede's machinations are only really sinister if one assumes that he knew his immediate audience would be ignorant both of his understanding of *historia* and of the methods he had applied - essentially, that he intended for the text to be

read by a large, unlearned group. Firstly, one needs to question whether or not Bede's monastic audience would have perceived history as a discipline in its own right rather than as a form of rhetoric and, therefore, governed by rhetorical rules of composition. As Roger Ray has observed both Jerome and Augustine viewed history as a major form of rhetorical exposition.³ Thus, one can perhaps assume that at least some of his monastic recipients would see nothing untoward in the structures of the *Historia Ecclesiastica*. Indeed, his placing of the narrative into the genre of *historiae* may have been a conscious attempt to remind his readers of how to approach his texts.

Arguably, then, those in Bede's audience with a knowledge of Jerome and Augustine would not have expected the historical truth for which modern historians search. In this, I am not arguing as McCready has that Bede believed from his reading of Cassian and Jerome that there were occasions that merited untruth or justified lying.⁴ Rather, I would suggest that Bede's sense of historical truth, where personal and public individual actions were concerned, was bound up in a belief that these actions could only be explained through connection to authoritative literature for this literature itself represented the truth - a point which he expected his audience to know and one which he emphasized by the generic placing of the text. In this sense Bede was not lying.

Moreover, whilst it is clear from Bede's own listing of his *historiae* texts that he viewed them as part of an individual genre it is also evident that the methods he applied in constructing his narrative were not restricted merely to *historia* but were used elsewhere. Indeed, his application of rhetorical methods, conventions

and references was not an approach unique to him, it was a standard part of monastic life, devolved from Scriptural studies and exegesis. One need only examine the literature concerning Bede's Biblical *Commentaries* or the research concerning hagiography to see that these methods were as much monastic as they were 'Bedan'. In this case a monastic audience would have been unlikely to be fooled into a credulous acceptance.

Of course, the size of Bede's initial audience for the *Historia Ecclesiastica* is unclear. It is fair to assume that the monks of his own monastery and those of Canterbury would have been expected to peruse the text and that subsequently, as other monasteries asked for copies, their inhabitants too would have read the work. However, there is no evidence to suggest, manuscript or otherwise, that (in Latin at least) it was produced for a mass audience. In this sense if the primary objective of the text was a widespread attempt to deliberately dupe people into activities and behaviours they had not up until then been following its immediate success would surely have been limited to those already attempting to live a Christian life.

Nonetheless, the apparent desire to provide readers with exemplars does imply that Bede intended for them at some point to be widely received. Perhaps Canterbury asked Bede to provide them with a text that could be used to ensure conformity and pass on the Christian message in a manner that was seen to be more relevant to Anglo-Saxon life. If so, the text was aimed at a future audience of people in which some would receive the narrative literally and, therefore, may have believed the authenticity of the history contained within it.

Yet, if the text was limited mainly to a monastic readership initially the probability of members of those communities not recognizing the textual allusions is surely slight. One caveat to this point of course is that, as was mentioned in chapter 1, literacy and erudition are not the same thing. The extent of Bede's textual knowledge as implied by the *Historia Ecclesiastica* does seem fairly unusual and whilst some of his allusions are obvious, many are not. Rather they are blended so effectively into the text that modern researchers often cannot discern them. Viewed from a rhetorical perspective Bede's brilliance lies in the fact that his *Historia Ecclesiastica* narrative is often so plausible that historians have for so long accepted much of it as authentic. Perhaps the same could be said of some of the monastic readers, especially where the extent of their libraries may have been limited.

Bede's understanding of the genre of *historia*, the methods he employed in his construction of *historiae* narratives and his desire to augment his own monastery within these texts all suggest that the historian should exhibit extreme caution when considering *historia* to be history. Historical episodes however plausibly framed within these texts, need not reflect contemporary political considerations nor need they represent actuality. It is no longer appropriate for the historian to maintain the incongruent stand of acknowledging literary influences but still accepting the basis of the narrative as historically accurate. Rather our search for the textual allusions should be placed foremost with the recognition that any historical gleanings we try to show may only be the result of our own assumptions concerning what we would expect to find in a text that calls itself a history.

Indeed, it is time for those of us in Bedan studies to take up Allen Frantzen's challenge and deconstruct the typologies we have created to order our analysis of Bede, particularly the bibliographical categorization of his *Historiae* texts as primary sources.⁵ They clearly are not.

In terms of Bede's desire to augment his own monastery there is perhaps one final point that needs to be taken into consideration. His ability to rework authoritative texts into an Anglo-Saxon context is unquestionable, as is his apparent depth of knowledge implied by the textual allusions within the *Historia Ecclesiastica*. Arguably, this exhibition of learning was in itself an act of augmentation for his monastery. Throughout both the *Historia Abbatum* and the *Historia Ecclesiastica* Bede mentioned books. The possession and knowledge of such books brought with it status. In the *Historia Ecclesiastica* in particular Bede 'showed off' both explicitly, by listing the books that individuals had written, and implicitly by textual allusion, his learning and by association the wealth of the community in which he learned. Bede was a product of a newly literate segment of aristocratic Anglo-Saxon society - one which placed great emphasis on the power of the Word. In such an environment the sophistication of the narrative of his *Historiae* was in its own right a form of status symbol. The power of it is shown by the fact that Bede's own sanctity came more from his own writing than the manner of his life, death or miracles.

FOOTNOTES: Introduction

1. W. Goffart, *The Narrators of Barbarian History AD 500-800* (Princeton, 1988).
2. Cf, for example, D. Kirby, *Bede's Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum: its Contemporary Setting* (Jarrow, 1992), 3.
3. P. Brown, *The Cult of Saints* (London, 1981).
4. P. Delehaye, *The Legends of the Saints: An Introduction to Hagiography*, trans. V.M. Crawford (London, 1907).
5. This refers to a comment made by Goffart and specifically related to his suggestion in *Narrators of Barbarian History*, that previous historians such as Patrick Wormald and James Campbell have assumed that Bede lived a fundamentally secluded monastic life, absorbed in a book-learned past and was the unconscious plaything of his circumstances and environment. Goffart's judgement then seems more harsh than is necessary. W. Goffart, 'The *Historia Ecclesiastica*: Bede's Agenda and Ours', *Haskins Society Journal*, 2 (1990), 32; Goffart, *Narrators*, 238, 325.
6. Cf, for example, A. Thacker, 'Lindisfarne and the Origins of the Cult of St. Cuthbert', in *Cuthbert, Cult & Comm.*, 103-122; 'Membra Disjecta: The Body and the Diffusion of the Cult of St. Oswald', in *Oswald: Northumbrian King to European Saint*, ed. C. Stancliffe, et al. (Stamford, 1995), 97-127; D. Rollason, *Saints and Relics in Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford, 1989); S.J. Ridyard, *The Royal Saints of Anglo-Saxon England* (Cambridge, 1988); D.P. Kirby, 'Bede, Eddius Stephanus and the 'Life of Wilfrid'', *English Historical Review*, 98 (1983), 101-114; S. Hollis, *Anglo-Saxon Women and the Church* (Woodbridge, 1992).

7. Goffart, *Narrators*; Kirby, *Bede's Historia Ecclesiastica*; I. Wood, 'The Mission of Augustine of Canterbury to the English', *Speculum*, 69 (1994), 1-17.
8. Goffart, 'Bede's Agenda and Ours', 29.
9. Gregory the Great, *Moralia in Job*, i. 33, *Patristica Latina*, 542, c. Translated by Diana Greenway, 'Authority, Convention and Observation in Henry of Huntingdon's *Historia Anglorum*', *Anglo Norman Studies*, xviii (1995), 106.
10. On the issue of 'reading' experience cf R. Markus, *Signs and Meanings: World and Text in Ancient Christianity* (Liverpool, 1996), 9, 47, 67.
11. C.B. Kendall, 'Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica*: The Rhetoric of Faith', *Medieval Eloquence: Studies in the Theory and Practice of Medieval Rhetoric*, ed. J.J. Murphy (Berkeley, 1978), 145-172.
12. W. McCready, *Miracles and the Venerable Bede* (Toronto, 1994), 49.
13. B. Ward, *The Venerable Bede* (London, 1990), 114.
14. J. Campbell, 'Bede I', in *Essays*, 2
15. J. O'Reilly, 'Introduction', *Bede: On the Temple*, trans. S. Connolly (Liverpool, 1995), xxxiii-xxxv.
16. J. McClure, 'Bede's Old Testament Kings', P. Wormald (et al), *Ideal and Reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Society* (Oxford, 1983), 76-98, 87.
17. *HE(P)*, I, lx.
18. *HE*, IV: 23, 406; Kendall, 'Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica*', 169.
19. C. Fell, 'Hild, Abbess of Streonaeshalch', *Hagiography and medieval Literature: A Symposium*, ed. H. Bekker-Nielsen et al. (Odense, 1981), 76ff; S. Hollis, *Anglo-Saxon Women and the Church*, 248.

20. For a clarification of the difference between allegory and typology cf. Markus, *Signs and Meanings*, 11.
21. Mayr-Harting, 'Bede's Patristic Thinking as an Historian', in *Historiographie im frühen Mittelalter*, ed. A. Scharer & G. Scheibelter (München, 1994), 371.
22. J. Smith, 'The Hagiography of Hucbald of St. Amand', *Studi Medievali*, 35 (3rd series, 1994), 517-542, 536.
23. H. Mayr-Harting, *The Coming of Christianity to Anglo-Saxon England*, 3rd ed. (London, 1991), 212. L.T. Martin (1989) 'Introduction', *The Venerable Bede: Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, Cistercian Studies Series: 117, Kalamazoo, xvi; for the reference to St. Augustine cf. Markus *Signs and Meanings*, 23.
24. Markus, *Signs and Meanings*, 23.
25. P. Meyvaert, 'Bede, Cassiodorus, and the Codex Amiatinus', *Speculum*, 71 (1996), 859.
26. Mayr-Harting, *Coming of Christianity*, 204.
27. Mayr-Harting makes it clear that although Theodore of Canterbury was a representative of the Antiochian literalist school of exegesis, in Anglo-Saxon England as far as the Bible was concerned, the tradition followed was that of the allegorists of the Alexandrian school. *Coming of Christianity*, 206.
28. For this understanding of *inventio*, cf. P. Ricoeur, 'History and Rhetoric', *The Social Responsibility of the Historian*, ed. F. Bedarida (Oxford, 1994), 10.
29. Greenway, 'Authority, Convention and Observation', 105 & 114.

30. These ideas were developed in response to Markus, *Signs and Meanings*, 49-69.
31. *HE; Historia Abbatum* in *HE(P)*, 364-387; *Vita Cuthberti; Vita S. Felicis* ed. J. A. Giles, *Venerabilis Bedae Opera* (London, 1843-4), IV, 173-201; *Chronica Maiora* in *De Temporum Ratione*, ed., C.W. Jones, *CCSL CXXIIIB* (Turnhout, 1978), 463-544; *Chronica Minora* in *De Temporibus*, ed., C. W. Jones, *CCSL CXXIIIA*, 585-611; J. Dubois & G. Renaud, *Édition pratique de Bède, d l'Anonyme lyonnais et de Florus* (Paris, 1976).
32. J. McClure, & R. Collins, trans. *The Greater Chronicle, Bede: The Ecclesiastical history of the English People*, B. Colgrave, ed. (Oxford, 1994), 307-340..
33. Cf. Dubois & Renaud, *Édition pratique*.
34. Translations in D. Farmer, ed. *The Age of Bede* (Harmondsworth, 1985), 285-308; J. N. Hillgarth, ed., *Christianity and Paganism, 350-750* (Philadelphia, 1986), 153-160; C. Albertson, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Saints and Heroes* (Fordham, 1967), 225-242.

Chapter 1

1. Cf in particular: F.H. Bauml, 'Scribe et Impera', Literacy in Medieval Germany', *Frankia*, 24/1 (1997), 123-32; R. McKitterick, 'The Audience for Latin Historiography in the Early Middle Ages: Text Transmission and Manuscript Dissemination', in *Historiographie im frühen Mittelalter*, ed. A. Scharer & G. Scheibelreiter (München, 1994), 96-114; M. Innes, 'Memory, Orality and Literacy in an Early Medieval Society', *Past and Present*, 158 5(1998), 1 - 36.
2. Cf, for example, J.N. Stephens, 'Bede's Ecclesiastical History', *History*, 62 (1977), 4.
3. Brown, *The Cult of Saints*, 13
4. Ibid., 20.
5. Ibid., 4.
6. Ibid., 5.
7. Ibid., 6.
8. Ibid., 26.
9. Ibid., 29.
10. See, for example, the African Councils in response to the Donatists in E.W. Kemp, *Canonization and Authority in the Western Church* (London, 1948), 13f.
11. Augustine, *Confessions*, vi, 2 in *The Confessions of Saint Augustine*, trans., T. Matthew (London, 1957), 137-38.
12. P. Brown, *The Cult of Saints*, 55f.
13. Ibid., 57.

14. P. Brown, 'Relics and Social Status in the Age of Gregory of Tours', in *Society and the Holy in Late Antiquity* (London, 1982), 230.
15. Ibid., 235.
16. cf R.A. Markus, *The End of Ancient Christianity* (Cambridge, 1990), 45f; *Signs and Meanings*, 214-22.
17. R. McKitterick, *The Carolingians and the Written Word* (Cambridge, 1989), 215-22.
18. K. Heene, 'Audire, Legere, Vulgo: An Attempt to Define Public Use and Comprehensibility of Carolingian Hagiography', in *Latin and the Romance Languages in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. R. Wright (Pennsylvania, 1991), 148, 146-63.
19. Ibid., 149.
20. A. Gurevich, *Medieval Popular Culture: Problems of Belief and Perception* (Cambridge, 1988), 51; Heene, 'Audire, Legere, Vulgo', 150.
21. S. Wilson (ed), *Saints and their Cults: Studies in Religious Sociology, Folklore and History* (Cambridge, 1983), 3.
22. Ibid., 2.
23. J. Campbell, 'Bede 1', in *Essays*, 20.
24. A clear example of this Anglo-Saxon vernacular literacy is evident in Cuthbert's letter on the death of Bede, where he makes it clear that Bede was familiar with Anglo-Saxon poetry and was translating the Book of John into their own tongue (*nostram linguam*). *HE*, 580-82.
25. P. J. Geary, *Phantoms of Remembrance: Memory and Oblivion at the End of the First Millenium* (Princeton, 1994), 15. P. Geary has suggested that the paucity of evidence for the early medieval period at our disposal today is partly

related to decisions made in the eleventh century about the utility of the masses of written material inherited from previous centuries. Whilst the validity of this claim is clear we are still unaware of the extent to which the documents that were destroyed were in the vernacular as much as in Latin. This is important because what the documentation might have shown is that even in the case of functional literacy Latin would not have been the prominent language used. If so one would view a functional literacy based in Old English, which would suggest a differentiation between literacy used for practical purposes in the secular world and literacy used for exegetical and interpretative purposes within monasteries. Moreover, as shall be argued, the probability that reading materials such as letters and history books were accompanied by other gifts given and received in some form of ceremony, suggests a culture focused more on the oral transmission of the information rather than one which read. This is of relevance as it may well indicate the dichotomy between those who were expected to interpret texts through a process of reading, recognition and reflection, and those who were to receive the narratives literally (or even just as physical gifts). Cf. B. Stock, *The Implications of Literacy: Written Language and Models of Interpretation in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Princeton, 1983), 14.

26. S. Kelly, 'Anglo-Saxon Lay Society and the Written Word', in *The Uses of Literacy in Early Medieval Europe*, ed. R. McKitterick (Cambridge, 1990), 42-46.

27. A. Gurevich, *Historical Anthropology of the Middle Ages*, ed. J. Howlett (Cambridge, 1992), 178.

28. *HE*, I: 32, 110.

29. McKitterick, *Carolingians and the Written Word*, 245.

30. *HE*, V:15, 508. Aldfrith is one of the few kings from this early period associated with learning (a sign perhaps of its uniqueness within the society), yet it is clear that Adomnan's gift was not just used personally by the recipient but rather was subject to copying.

31. M. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record: England 1066-1307* (Oxford, 1993, 2nd edn.), 18.

32. *HE*, preface, 52-6; Cf Kendall, 'Bede's *HE*: the Rhetoric of Faith', 150.

33. D. Kirby, 'King Ceowulf of Northumbria and the *Historia Ecclesiastica*' in *Studia Celtica*,. xiv/xv (1979/80), 170f.

34. Kirby, *Bede's Historia*, 5.

35. B. Yorke, *Kings and Kingdoms of Early Anglo-Saxon England* (London, 1990), 23.

36. This is intimated by P.H. Blair, *The Moore Bede, Early English Manuscripts in Facsimile*, vol. IX, (Copenhagen, 1959), 31.

37. McKitterick, *Carolingians and the Written Word*, 160.

38. Kelly, 'Anglo-Saxon Lay Soc. and the Written Word', 61.

39. Levison, *England and the Continent*, 245.

40. *HE*, preface, 4.

41. F.H. Bäuml, 'Scribe et Impera', 126.

42. J. McClure, 'Bede's *Notes on Genesis* and the Training of the Anglo-Saxon Clergy', *The Bible in the Medieval World: Essays in Memory of Beryl Smalley*, Studies in Church History, Subsidia 4 (Oxford, 1985), 17.

43. D. Rollason, 'Hagiography and Politics in Early Northumbria', in *Holy Men and Holy Women - Old English Prose Saints' Lives and their Contexts*, ed. P. E. Szarmach (New York, 1996), 96.
44. Fichtenau discusses the existence of a similar intellectual elite and the practical value of their scholarship in H. Fichtenau, *Living in the Tenth Century: Mentalities and Social Orders*, trans. P. J. Geary (London, 1991), 293.

Chapter 2

1. For similar discussion of the situation amongst the Irish monasteries cf: L. M. Bitel, *Isles of the Saints: Monastic Settlement and Christian Community in Early Ireland* (New York, 1990), 157-159.
2. M. Herbert, *Iona, Kells and Derry: The History and Hagiography of the Monastic Familia of Columba* (Oxford, 1988), 134.
3. Herbert, *Iona, Kells, Derry*, 135; R. Sharpe trans., *Adomnan of Iona - Life of St. Columba* ((Harmondsworth, 1995), 40.
4. Herbert, *Iona, Kells, Derry*, 136.
5. *HE*, III:25, 296.
6. *HE*, III: 24, 292.
7. *HE*, III:24, 292.
8. *HE*, III:26, 308.
9. *Vita Wilfridi*, 11: 23.
10. *HE*, III:28, 314-316.
11. Wallace-Hadrill, *Comm.*, 133.
12. Referred to by Wallace-Hadrill, *Comm.*, 237.
13. Mayr-Harting, *Coming of Christianity*, 130 - noted the controversial nature of this issue in passing.
14. *HE*, III: 28, 314.
15. *HE*, V: 19, 522.
16. cf. E. John, 'The Social and Political Problems of the Early English Church', *A.G.R.*, 18 (1970), 46-50; Also: McClure & Collins ed., *Bede-The Ecclesiastical History*, 398, fn. 163.

17. *HE*, III: 23, 286.
18. *HE*, III: 29, 318.
19. *Vita Wilfridi*, 16:34
20. *Vita Wilfridi*, 19:40.
21. 2 *Kings*, 11. This allusion is perhaps not the most positive Stephanus could have chosen for 2 *Kings*, 12 makes it obvious that Joash became displeased with his priests, including Jehoiada, for collecting treasure but not using it to repair the 'house of the Lord' and had to demand that they do so - was Stephanus actually alluding to the cause of the rift between Ecgfrith and Wilfrid?
22. *Vita Wilfridi*, 19: 40.
23. *Vita Wilfridi*, 17: 36. Mayr-Harting, *Coming of Christ.*, 157.
24. *HA*, 4: 367.
25. *HE(P)*, ii, 358; Translation from: L. T. Martin & D. Hurst, *Bede the Venerable: Homilies on the Gospels*, 1 (Kalamazoo, 1991), 129.
26. *Vita Wilfridi*, 22: 44: *Nam Inaegustaldesae, adepta regione a regina sancta Aethelthrithae*; Mayr-Harting, *Coming of Christianity*, 157.
27. *HE*, IV: 19, 392.
28. *Vita Wilfrid*, 2: 6.
29. *Ibid.*, 2:6 & 3: 8.
30. *HA*, 1:364.
31. *Ibid.*, 4:367.
32. D. P. Kirby, *The Earliest English Kings*, (London, 1991), 106.
33. *HA*, 1:364.
34. *Ibid*, 6:369.

35. Ibid, 7: 370; *Vita Ceolfredi*, 12: 392.

36. In fact, the wealth of Biscop's monastery leads to another query. As Campbell has noted the key to much of the success and nature of Monkwearmouth-Jarrow was that its founder was rich enough to make extensive purchases overseas. Indeed, Bede takes great delight in describing Biscop as a *religius emptor*, a religious tradesman (HA, 5). However, Bede notes in the first chapter that Biscop was one of king Oswiu's ministers: *esset minister Oswiu regis* (HA, 1). This is important for both Chadwick and Thacker have noted that Bede's use of the word *minister* usually implied a young landless bachelor of noble birth in the immediate entourage of the king. The question is, where did a man of no more standing than *minister*, who had rejected what land had been given to him, find either the money or the gifts to exchange for the objects he purchased? To answer the question a useful comparison can be made with another *vita*, albeit the slightly later, *Life of St. Willibrord*, by Alcuin. In chapter 6 of this text the mayor of the Palace, Pippin, is indicated as having set Willibrord to be consecrated bishop by Pope Sergius. Willibrord is dispatched to Rome, "with distinguished company, bearing gifts appropriate of the Pope" (*Et sic cum honorifica legatione et numeribus apostolicae auctoritatis condignis Romam directus est.*) Having received the pallium Willibrord was then given by the Pope, without hesitation, "whatever he desired or asked for in the way of relics of saints or liturgical vessels". The implication of gift exchange is clear. The point is, however, that one can infer from the text that Pippin supplied Willibrord's gifts. Is it not possible that the kings with whom Biscop had direct contact supplied him with similar gifts for exchange? It is interesting to note that on Biscop's first three trips to Rome, firstly and secondly from Britain, and thirdly from Lerins, the aspects which Bede emphasizes relate not to the collection of any

tangible objects but rather to the amassing of knowledge. Itself evidence perhaps that knowledge was in itself a precious commodity which brought prestige to its 'owner'. It is, in fact, not until the fourth trip that the great number of actual objects start to be described. In this context one should be aware that Bede notes Biscop was going to Cenwalh on returning from his fourth trip: *At ingressus Brittanniam, ad regem se Occidentalium Saxonum nomine Counualh conferendum patauit, cuius et ante non semel amicitiiis usus, et beneficiis erat adiutus* (HA, 4).

Did Cenwalh supply funds for this trip? Bede comments, after all, on the fact that Cenwalh had helped Biscop. What did he mean by this ambiguous statement? Also Biscop's fifth trip, undoubtedly his most profitable in terms of gains for the monastery occurred after Ecgfrith had given land to establish Monkwearmouth. It is conceivable that Ecgfrith was more than just a patron of land. Unfortunately, our sources remain silent on this and only inferences can be made from the scarce comments. Nevertheless, there would appear to be a thriving economy in terms of a sacred object gift exchange network. Indeed, religious objects are clearly a trading commodity. J. Campbell, 'Elements in the Background to the *Life of St. Cuthbert* and his Early Cult', *Cuthbert, Cult & Comm.*, 17; M. Chadwick, *Studies in Anglo-Saxon Institutions*, (Cambridge, 1905), 339; A. Thacker, 'Some Terms for Noblemen in Anglo-Saxon England, c. 650-900', *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History*, 2, ed. D. Brown, BAR, 92 (1981), 202; Alcuin, *The Life of St. Willibrord, The Anglo-Saxon Missionaries in Germany*, ed. C. H. Talbot, (London, 1954), 8; W. Levison, *MGH:SRM*, vii, 7-8, 121-122.

37. HA, 4:367.

38. HA, 7: 370.

39. I. Wood, *The Most Holy Abbot Ceolfrid* (Jarrow, 1995), 3 & 5.
40. *HE*, III: 23, 286.
41. I. Wood, *The Merovingian Kingdoms 450-751*, (Harlow, 1994), 192 ff.
42. *HE*, III:24, 292.
43. But cf. Wood's caution on this point, *Abbot Ceolfrid*, 3.
44. *HA*, 3: 366.
45. *HA*, 6: 369.
46. Anon. *Vita Cuthberti*, I: 3, 64; IV: 1, 11; Prose *Vita Cuthberti*, 24, 238.
47. *HE*, IV: 5, 352.
48. *HE*, IV: 12, 370.
49. cf. Rollason, 'Hagiography and Politics in Early Northumbria', 103.
50. *Vita Wilfridi*, 32: 64 & 172.
51. *Vita Ceolfridi*, 11: 391. In this context it is perhaps pertinent that Theodore's later letter to Aldfrith asking for a reconciliation between Wilfrid and Aldfith, requested he do it for the sake of the redemption of the soul of King Ecgfrith: *et pro redemptione animae Ecgfrithi regis: Vita Wilfridi*, 43: 88.
52. *HE*, III: 14, 256.
53. *HE*, III: 24, 293.
54. Wood, *Abbot Ceolfrid*, 3.
55. *Ibid.*
56. *HE*, IV: 28, 438; In the reign of Ecgfrith one sees the change in relations between sacred and civil power on which C. Cubitt has commented. Thus, the function of selecting and deposing bishops appears increasingly to be in the hands of Theodore. However, this hypothesis should not be accepted without caution as in the case of the Northumbrian, Tunberht, Bede does not specifically state that he was deposed

- by Theodore, merely that he was deposed. C. Cubitt, *Anglo-Saxon Church Councils, 650-850* (London, 1995), 11-12.
57. *Vita Wilfridi*, 54:116.
58. *HE*, IV: 23, 408.
59. *Ibid.*, 406.
60. A. Thacker, 'Membra Disjecta', 106.
61. Gregory of Tours, *Liber Historiarum X*, ed. B. Kauch and W. Levison, *MGH SRM*, 1/1 (1951), IX, 40.
62. *Quod nequaquam habitatores ipsius monasterii ansi sunt facere, nisi per licentiam atque jussionem regis. Vita Glodesinda: Vita Antiquior*, in *Acta Sanctorum*, July 25, 198-224, chp. 15: 205; McNamara, *Sainted Women*, 146.
63. *Historia de sancto Cuthberto*, Symeonis Monachi Opera Omnia, ed. T. Arnold, I (1885), 199.
64. G. Bonner, 'St. Cuthbert at Chester-le-Street', *Cuthbert, Cult & Comm.*, 388; L. Simpson, 'The King Alfred/Saint Cuthbert Episode in the *Historia sancto Cuthberto*: Its Significance for mid-tenth century English History', *Cuthbert, Cult & Comm.*, 397.
65. M. Roper, 'Wilfrid's Landholdings in Northumbria', *Saint Wilfrid at Hexham*, ed. D. Kirby, (Newcastle, 1974), 76.
66. Roper, 'Wilfrid's Landholdings', 76; Thacker, 'Lindisfarne and the Origins', 115.
67. *Historia de sancto Cuthberto*, 197.
68. *Ibid.*, 197, fn. A.
69. R. Folz, *Les saints rois du Moyen Âge en Occident (VIe-XIIIe siècles)* (Brussels, 1984), 29.

70. *Historia de sancto Cuthberto*, 199.
71. Roper, 'Wilfrid's Landholdings', 76, fn. 21.
72. *HE*, IV: 28, 436; Anon. *Vita Cuthberti*, IV: 1, 110; *Prose Vita Cuthberti*, 24, 238.
73. *HE*, IV: 28, 438.
74. Ibid.
75. Anon., *Vita Cuthberti*, III: 6, 104.
76. C. Stancliffe, 'Cuthbert and the Polarity between Pastor and Solitary', *Cuthbert, Cult & Comm.*, 22..
77. *HA*, 9: 373.
78. Ibid., 15: 381.
79. Herbert, *Iona, Derry, Kells*, 143-145.
80. *Vita Wilfridi*, 44: 90.
81. Ibid.
82. *HE*, III:25, 294.
83. Thacker, 'Lindisfarne and the Origins of the Cult of Saint Cuthbert', *Cuthbert, Cult & Comm.*, 112.
84. Stancliffe, 'The Polarity between Pastor and Solitary', 27.
85. Herbert, *Iona, Derry, Kells*, 138, restated 145.
86. Goffart, *Narrators*, 270.
87. Ibid. 296.
88. cf. Wood, *Abbot Ceolfrid*, 10; concerning Monkwearmouth-Jarrow and the Rule of St. Benedict see H. Mayr-Harting, *The Venerable Bede, the Rule of St. Benedict and Social Class* (Jarrow, 1976), 8; P. Hunter-Blair, *The World of Bede* (Cambridge, 1970), 199.

89. D. A. Bullough, 'The Missions to the English and the Picts and their Heritage (to c. 800)', *Die Iren und Europa im früheren Mittelalter*, ed. H. Lowe (Stuttgart, 1982), i., 87-88.
90. Ibid., 94.
91. *Vita Wilfridi*, 55:92.
92. Ibid., 59: 128.
93. Ibid., 60: 128.
94. Ibid., 60: 130.
95. Bede, *Vita Sancti Cuthberti metrica*, ed. W. Jaager, *Metrische Vita Sancti Cuthberti*, (Palaestra, 198; 1935), chp. 21, li. 582-585.
96. *HA*, 15: 380.
97. Goffart, *Narrators*, 264.
98. Ibid., 259.
99. Thacker, 'Membra Disjecta', 107-109.
100. Goffart, *Narrators*, 284; Rollason, *Saints and Relics*, 113.
101. Goffart, *Narrators*, 284.
102. Thacker, 'Membra Disjecta', 110.
103. *Vita Wilfridi*, 47: 99.
104. Ibid.
105. Ibid.
106. Wood, *Abbot Ceolfrid*, 10.
107. *Vita Ceolfridi*, 3:389.
108. Ibid., 4:389.
109. Ibid.

110. Ibid.
111. Ibid., 5: 389 & 6: 390.
112. Ibid., 6: 390.
113. Ibid., 8: 390.
114. Ibid., 11: 391-392.
115. Ibid., 16: 393.
116. Goffart, *Narrators*, 285.
117. Stancliffe, 'The Polarity between Pastor and Solitary', 28.
118. Bullough, 'The Missions to the English', 96.
119. Kirby, *Bede's Historia Ecclesiastica*, 4.
120. Ibid., 12.
121. Ibid., 4.
122. *HA*, 2: 365.
123. Ibid., 3: 367.
124. Ibid., 5: 368.
125. Ibid., 6: 369.
126. P. Wormald, 'Bede and Benedict Biscop', in *Famulus Christi*, ed. G. Bonner (London, 1976), 149.
127. Wood, *Abbot Ceolfrid*, 7.

Chapter 3

1. A. Thacker, 'Bede and the Irish', in *Beda Venerabilis: Historian, Monk and Northumbrian*, ed. L.A.J.R. Honwen & A.A. MacDonald (Groningen, 1996), 31-59, cf. 37-38.
2. Goffart, *Narrators*, 310.
3. *HE*, II: 4, 146.
4. Thacker, 'Bede and the Irish', 39 cf. Goffart, 'Bede's Agenda', 36.
5. Goffart, *Narrators*, 310.
6. H.E.J. Cowdrey, 'Bede and the "English People"', *Journal of Religious History*, 11 (1981), 501-523, 510.
7. *HE*, III: 14, 222.
8. *Ibid.*, 224.
9. *Ibid.*
10. *HE*, III: 18, 268.
11. *HE*, III: 4, 224.
12. Wallace-Hadrill, *Comm.*, 94.
13. *HE*, 225, fn. 2.
14. Thacker, 'Lindisfarne and the Origins', 112.
15. *HE*, III: 4, 222.
16. Thacker, 'Bede and the Irish', 54.
17. Indeed, one cannot help wondering if Bede's note on the size of the monastery's initial land holding (five hides) was in fact a snub rather than a compliment to a monastery apparently lacking in material wealth in terms of its original grant. After all, whilst Bede favoured individual poverty for monks, if one contemplates the celebratory depiction of wealth at Monkwearmouth-

Jarrow in his *Historia Abbatum*, it is clear that Bede did not necessarily favour corporate poverty.

18. J. Campbell, 'Bede I', in *Essays*, 19.

19. Goffart, *Narrators*, 313.

20. *HE*, III: 25, 306: *Esti enim patres tui sancti fuerunt, numquid uniuersali, quae per orbem est, ecclesiae christi eorum est paucitas uno de angulo extremae insulae praeferenda? Ei si sanctus erat ac potens uirtutibus ille Columba uester, immo et noster si Christi erat.*

21. *HE*, III: 5, 226.

22. *HE*, III: 3, 218.

23. *Ibid.*

24. *HE*, III: 17, 264.

25. *HE*, III: 25, 296.

26. For example, *HE*, III: 17, 266: *studium uidelicet pacis et caritatis, continentiae et humilitatis; animum irae et auaritae uictorem, superbiae simul et uanae gloriae contemptorem; industriam faciendi simul et docendi mandata caelestia; sollertiam lectionis et uigiliarum; auctoritatem sacerdote dignam redarguendi superbos ac potentes; pariter et infirmos consolandi ac paupares recreandi uel defendendi clementiam.*

27. *HE*, III: 25, 296.

28. *HE*, III: 26, 308.

29. *HE*, III: 23, 288.

30. *Ibid.*, 286-288.

31. *HE*, III: 19, 268.

32. Ibid., 272.
33. Ibid., 268.
34. A. Thacker, 'Bede's Ideal of Reform', in *Ideal and Reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Society: Studies presented to J.M. Wallace-Hadrill*, ed. P. Wormald et al (Oxford, 1983), 146.
35. *Vita Sancti Fursei*, ed. B. Krusch, *MGH: SRM*, iv (1902), 434-440.
36. Goffart, *Narrators*, 325-328.
37. D. Kirby, *Bede's Historia Ecclesiastica*, 7.
38. *HE*, III: 25, 298.
39. *HE*, IV: 23, 406.
40. Ibid.
41. Wallace-Hadrill, *Comm.*, 163.
42. *HE*, IV: 23, 408.
43. *Vita Wilfridi*, 54: 116.
44. The reason for the ambiguity surrounding the founding of Whitby is also questionable. In III: 24 Bede makes it clear that Hilda received a grant of ten hides at Whitby and built a monastery on that site: *conparata possessione X familiarum in loco, qui dicitur Streanaeshalch, ibi monasterium contruxit*. However, in IV: 23 Bede seems to imply some hesitancy in his knowledge, noting that Hilda either undertook to found or to set in order a monastery at Whitby - *contigit eam suscipere etiam construendum sine ordinandam monasterium in loco*. Such an alteration to his narrative raises one's suspicions as to motive and given Bede's predisposition for playing down a monastery's initial status it is hard not to connect this change with something less innocent than lack of knowledge. It is perhaps additionally worth noting

the indeterminateness concerning who gave this grant of land to Hilda. Colgrave and Rosemary Cramp have both assumed that the land grants for Hartlepool and Whitby came from Oswiu out of his package of endowments following the Battle of Winwaed. However, Bede does not explicitly state this. In fact, chronologically Hartlepool, at least according to IV: 23, was founded c.648, before the Battle of Winwaed. Whitby, according to III was founded two years after Aelfflaed's consecration as a nun in 655. A foundation date of c.657 is, therefore, feasible and whilst in the context of this chapter it seems likely Whitby was founded by Oswiu, Bede does not say so. Bede also notes that the monasteries founded immediately after Winwaed were for monks to wage heavenly warfare - and one must question if he included nuns in this. Such vagueness on Bede's part is perhaps a sign to the reader to proceed with caution and avoid making connections he does not make. *HE*, 290, n.1; R. Cramp, 'Monastic Sites', in *The Archaeology of Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. D. M. Wilson (Cambridge, 1976), 223.

45. Goffart, *Narrators*, 266 & 304ff.

46. *HE*, 122, fn. 1; P. Meyvaert, *Bede and Gregory the Great* (Jarrow, 1964), 5.

This point is further emphasized when one takes into account Alan Thacker's recent suggestions concerning the cult of Gregory the Great. Here Dr. Thacker notes that a textual version of Gregory's cult was brought to England but that the Whitby author garbled its contents as a result either of incompetence or because he was dependent on a third party report. Given Bede's fastidiousness about accuracy and perhaps given the less authoritative nature of this text because of its garbled state, it would not be surprising that Bede avoided it. A. Thacker, 'Memorializing Gregory the Great: the Origin

and Transmission of a Papal Cult in the Seventh and Early Eighth Centuries',
Early Medieval History, 7 (1998), 82.

47. Goffart, *Narrators*, 262.

48. *Ibid.*, 309.

49. Wallace-Hadrill, *Comm.*, 86.

50. *HE*, II, 16, 192; *HE*, II: 20, 206; *HE*, III: 25, 296 respectively.

51. *HE*, IV: 2, 334.

52. S. Hollis, *Anglo-Saxon Women*, 179 & 185ff.

53. *Vita Wilfridi*, 43: 88.

54. *Vita Wilfridi*, 59: 128.

55. *Ibid.*, 60: 128, 130.

56. *Ibid.*, 60: 132.

57. A. Thacker, 'Monks, Preaching and Pastoral Care in Early Anglo-Saxon England', in *Pastoral Care Before the Parish*, ed. J. Blair & R. Sharpe (Leicester, 1992), 149.

58. *Ibid.*, 150.

59. *Ibid.*, 149.

60. *HE*, III: 24, 293.

61. *HE*, IV: 26, 428.

62. *HE*, III: 25, 298.

63. *HE*, V: 19, 520.

64. *HE*, V: 1, 454.

65. *Ibid.*

66. *HE*, V: 19, 516.

67. *Vita Wilfridi*, 66: 142-143 & 68:146-148.

68. *HE*, III: 2, 216.

69. *Vita Wilfridi*, 22: 45; M. Roper, 'The Donation of Hexham', in *Saint Wilfrid at Hexham*, ed. D. Kirby, (Newcastle, 1974), 169-171, 169.

70. cf. Footnote 46.

71. Wallace-Hadrill, *Comm.*, 191.

72. *HE*, IV: 19, 392.

73. *HE*, IV: 12, 370; V: 3, 458; V: 11, 484; IV: 29, 442; IV: 19, 390.

74. *HE*, preface, 6; IV: 27, 430; IV: 27, 484; IV: 28, 434, IV: 29, 440; IV: 29, 440; IV: 29, 444.

75. *HE*, V: 20, 530.

76. *HE*, IV: 28 & 29.

77. cf *HE*, II: 14; *Vita Wilfridi*, 16: 32-34.

78. Wallace-Hadrill, *Comm.*, 170.

79. Wallace-Hadrill, *Comm.*, 170; A. Thacker, 'Bede's Ideal of Reform', 144.

80. *HE*, V: 2, 456.

81. *HE*, III: 13, 252; IV: 14, 376; V: 19, 526.

82. *HE*, V: 20, 530; *HA*, 5: 368.

83. *HE*, V: 20, 530; *HA*, 6: 369 & 4: 367.

84. *HE*, V: 20, 530; *HA*, 5: 368.

85. *HE*, V: 20, 530; *HA*, 6: 369.

86. *HE*, V: 20, 530.

87. *Ibid.*, 532.

88. Wallace-Hadrill, *Comm.*, 195.

89. *HE*, IV: 18, 388.

90. Ibid.

91. *HE*, V: 21, 534ff.

92. Ibid., 532.

93. Ibid., 550.

94. *HE*, III: 1, 214, *Unde cunctis placuit regum tempora computantibus ut, ablata de medio regum perfidorum memoria.*

95. Kirby, *Bede's Historia Ecclesiastica*, 5-6.

96. Ibid., 3

97. Chapter 2

98. *Epistolam ad Ecgberctum*, *HE(P)*, i, 412.

99. Ibid., 413.

Chapter 4

1. cf. For example R.C. Van Caenegem *Guide to the Sources of Medieval History* (Amsterdam 1978); *Typologie des Sources due Moyen Age Occidental*, ed L. Genicot (Turnhout).
2. *Isidori Hispalensis episcopi - Etymologiarum siue originum*, ed. W.M. Lindsay (O.C.T., 1911), Book I, chps. XLI - XLIV.
3. A.G. Holder, 'Allegory and History in Bede's Interpretation of Sacred Architecture', in *American Benedictine Review*, 40 (1989), 116.
4. R. Ray, 'What do we Know About Bede's Commentaries?', *Recherches de Théologie Ancienne et Médiévale*, 49 (1982), 15.
5. Heather Dubrow, *Genre* (London, 1982), 8-9.
6. J.W. Halporn, 'Literacy history and generic expectations, *Passio* and *Acta Perpetua*', *Vigilae Christianae*, 45 (1991), 223; Coats has also commented on the problems created by a unique text: G.W. Coats, (ed.) *Saga, Legend, Tale, Novella, Fable, Narrative forms in Old Testament Literature*, (Jnl. For Study of the Old Testament) Supplement series, 35 (1985), 20.
7. Goffart, *Narrators*.
8. Dubrow, *Genre*, 8.
9. Ibid., 31.
10. Wallace-Hadrill, *Comm.*, 2; Campbell, 'Bede I', in *Essays*, 5. R.A. Markus, *Bede and the Tradition of Ecclesiastical Historiography* (Jarrow, 1975), 3.
11. Markus, *Bede and the Tradition of Ecclesiastical Historiography*, 8.
12. J. Wallace-Hadrill, 'Gregory of Tours and Bede: Their views on the Personal Qualities of Kings', *Fruhmittelalterliche Studien*, 2 (1968), 31.

13. cf. Goffart, *Narrators*, 4.
14. Ibid.
15. B. Croke, and A.M. Emmett, ed., 'Historiography in Late Antiquity - An Overview', in *History and Historians in Late Antiquity* (Oxford, 1983), 9.
16. Isidore - *Historia Gothorum Vandalorum Sueborum*, T. Mommsen ed., *MGH: AA XI*, 267-303. K.B. Wolf, trans. Isidore of Seville, *History of the Kings of the Goths, Conquerors and Chronicles of Early Medieval Spain*, (Liverpool, 1990), 81-110.
17. Gregory the Great *Dialogues* Bk III:31, ed. A. De Vogue and P. Autin, vol. 2 (Paris, 1978-80), 388.
18. Isidore, *Historia Gothorum*, 287-288.
19. Ibid., 273.
20. Ibid., 273.
21. Ibid., 289.
22. Ibid., 290.
23. Ibid., 290.
24. Ibid., 290.
25. Ibid., 289.
26. The question one of course asks is whether or not in the context of this *historia*, Isidore, even if he had knowledge of Reccared performing miracles, would have included them. After all they would have been a deviation from his task.
27. Isidore, *Historia Gothorum*, 291.
28. Ibid., 289.

29. *Pauli Orosii Historiarum Aduersum Paganos libri VII*, ed., C. Zangemeister, CSEL, v (Vienna, 1882), 1-600, 539; R. J. Deferrari, trans., *Paul Orosius - The Seven Books of History Against the Pagans*, Fathers of the Church, 50 (Washington, 1964).
30. Isidore, *Historia Gothorum*, 273.
31. Isidore, *Etymologiae*, I, 41ff.
32. Goffart, *Narrators*, 243 ff.
33. Ibid., 245.
34. Levison, 'Bede as Historian', *BLTW*, 133.
35. On the process of legitimating a text through its identification with a particular genre, cf R. Morse, *Truth and Convention in the Middle Ages: Rhetoric, Representation and Reality*, (Cambridge, 1991), 6 and restated 238.
36. Bede: *HE*, Bk. V: 24, 568-570; further discussion of this cf: P Mayvaert, 'Bede the Scholar', *Famulus Christi*, ed. G. Bonner (London, 1976), 35.
37. Gregory of Tours, *Historiae*, X: 31.
38. For example, Wallace-Hadrill, *Comm.*, 2; A.T. Thacker, 'The Social and Continental Background', 186.
39. Wallace-Hadrill, *Comm.*, 2.
40. Wallace-Hadrill, *Comm.*, 3, "Equally important within the divine plan were the lives of holy men."
41. *HE*, III: 17, 264-266.
42. R. Ray, 'The triumph of Greco-Roman Rhetorical Assumptions in Pre-Carolingian Historiography' *The Inheritance of Historiography 350-200*,

- ed., C. Holdsworth and T.P. Wiseman (Exeter, 1986), 67-84, 78; J. Campbell, 'Bede I', in *Essays*, 10.
- 43. cf. A. Cameron *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire: The Developments of Christian Discourse* (Oxford, 1991), 144-146 and 185.
 - 44. D. Greenway, 'Authority, Convention and Observation', 114.
 - 45. N. Wright, Gildas - *De Excidio Britonum*, ed., and trans., M. Winterbottom, *Gildas: The Ruin of Britain and Other Works*, (London, 1978), 87-142.
 - 46. N. Wright, 'Gildas' Geographical Perspective: Some Problems', in *History and Literature in Late Antiquity and the Early Medieval West* (Aldershot, 1995), no. 1, 85.
 - 47. Gildas, *De Excidio*, 120.
 - 48. Gildas, *De Excidio*, 90.
 - 49. Gildas, *De Excidio*, 91.
 - 50. Gildas, *De Excidio*, 92.
 - 51. Orosius, *Historiarum Aduersum Paganos*, 1-600. Goffart, *Narrators*, 299.
 - 52. *HE*, I: 7, 28-35 and 28, n.2.
 - 53. *HE*, I: 4, 24.
 - 54. Gildas, *De Excidio*, 91.
 - 55. Gildas, *De Excidio*, 98: *cuius nunc temporibus nostris suboles magnopere avita bonitate degeneravit*; *HE*, I: 16, 52-54.
 - 56. *HE*, I: 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 54-66.
 - 57. *HE*, I: 17, 54.
 - 58. Goffart, *Narrators*, 299-301.
 - 59. *HE*, I: 22, 68.

60. Ibid.
61. Wallace-Hadrill, *Comm.*, 30.
62. Goffart, *Narrators*, 299-301.
63. R. W. Hanning, *The Vision of History in Early Britain: From Gildas to Geoffrey of Monmouth* (London, 1966), 78.
64. *HE*, I: 22, 68: *quin multo digniores genti memoratae praecones ueritas, per quos crederet, destinavit.*
65. *HE*, I: 22, 142.
66. cf., Ray, 'The Triumph of Greco-Roman Rhetorical Assumptions', 78.
67. McCready has suggested that Bede's writing was similar to that of these two writers. However, the evidence shows rather that Bede was changing the emphasis of their narratives. Cf., McCready, *Miracles and the Venerable Bede*, 48.
68. Orosius - *Historiarum Aduersum Paganos*, Prologue, 7.
69. Ibid., Bk VII: 43, 563.
70. Ibid., Bk VII: 43, 502.
71. Ibid., Bk VII: 43, 519.
72. Ibid., Bk VII: 43, 536.
73. *HE*, Preface, 2.
74. *HE*, III: I, 214; *HE*, III: 24, 290.
75. *HE*, III: 7, 232-236.
76. *Vita S. Felicis*, ed., J.A. Giles, *Venerabilis Bedae Opera*, (London, 1843-4), IV, 173-201, 173.
77. Isidore, *Etymologiae*, I: chp XLI, li. 18; cf. R. Ray, 'Bede's *vera lex historiae*', in *Speculum*, 55(1980), 15.

78. G. Constable, 'Past and Present in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries - Perceptions of Time and Change', in *Culture and Spirituality in Medieval Europe* (Aldershot, 1996), no. IV, 137.
79. For example, cf. B. Colgrave, 'Bede's Miracle Stones' *BLTW*, 202.
80. Meyvert, 'Bede the Scholar', 53.
81. *Chronica Maiora* in *De Temporum Ratione*, ed., C.W. Jones, *CCSL* CXXIIIB (Turnhout, 1978), 463-544. Also *Bedae: Chronica Maiora*, ed., T. Mommsen, *MGM: AA*, XIII (Berlin, 1898).
82. Moreover in analytical terms, only Jones, Hanning and Blair have attempted to examine the *Chronica* in terms of Bede's other historiographical works. C. W. Jones, *Saints Lives' and Chronicles in Early England* (New York, 1947); Hanning, *The Vision of History*; P. H. Blair, 'The Historical Writings of Bede', in *La Storiografia Altomedievale*, Settimane di Studio, XVII (Spoleto, 1970), 197-221.
83. A List of the sources can be found in: Mommsen, *Chronica Maiora*, 227-229.
84. Jones, *DTR*, 242.
85. *Ibid.*, 241.
86. Hanning, *Vision of History*, 71-78.
87. Mommsen, *Chronica Maiora*, 309, no 531.
88. *HE*, I: 23, 68-70.
89. *Ibid.*
90. Blair 'Historical Writings', 210.
91. *Liber Pontificalis*, ed., L. Duchesne and C. Vogel (3 vols; Paris, 1886-1956), 1: 66, 312.

92. Blair, 'Historical Writings', 209-210.
93. *HE*, 79, n.3.
94. *HE*, Preface, 4.
95. *HE*, I: 30, 106.
96. For details of this accusation cf. P.H. Blair, *The World of Bede*, (Cambridge, 1970), 266-268.
97. Mommsen, *Chronica Maiora*, 311, n. 541.
98. *HE*, II: 9, 162-166.
99. Mommsen, *Chronica Maiora*, 309, n. 531; 311, n. 541; 313, n. 534 - *Theodorus archiepiscopus et Hadrianus abbas uir aequae doctissimus a Vitaliano missi Britanniam plurima ecclesias Anglorum doctrinae ecclesiasticae fruge fecundarunt.*
100. Mommsen, *Chronica Maiora*, 319, n. 586.
101. *Ibid.*, 529.
102. Gregory the Great, *Dialogues*, ed., A. De Vogue and P. Antin (3 vols. SC 254, 260, 265; Paris, 1978-80), vol. 2, 388.
103. W. Levison, 'Bede as Historian', in *BLTW.*, 122.
104. *DTR*, Jones, 538, li. 14-17: *inprimis martyrii uirtute coronet, dein ceteros fideles corripiens uel martyres Christi gloriosissimos uel damnatos apostatas faciat.*
105. Mommsen, *Chronica Maiora*, 315, n. 562.
106. Mommsen, *Chronica Maiora*, 316, n. 570.
107. *DTR*, Jones, 542, li. 2-5: *Et haec est octaua illa aetas semper amanda, speranda, suspiranda fidelibus, quando eorum animas Christus*

*incompactibilium corporum munere donatus ad perceptionem regni caelestis
contemplationemque diuinae suae majestatis inducat...*

108. Jones, *Saints' Lives and Chronicles*, 22 - notes that less than a fifth goes to miracles. This is interesting for W. Goffart has suggested that miracles were historical events and that is why they were contained in history. However, if they were considered to be events they would be more likely to be found in Chronicles. They are placed in *Historia* because they are the deeds of a person rather than a historical event. Goffart, *Narrators*, 245.

Chapter 5

1. *Historia Abbatum*, in *HE(P)*, 364-87.
2. P. Wormald, 'Bede and Benedict Biscop', 151; Thacker, 'Social and Continental Background'.
3. Rollason, *Saints and Relics*, 76.
4. J.W. Halporn, 'Literacy History and Generic Expectations', 231.
5. P. Meyvaert, 'Bede the Scholar', *Famulus Christi*, 19-39, 53ff; P. Wormald, 'Bede and Benedict Biscop', 151; W. Levison, 'Bede as Historian', 129.
6. Wormald, 'Bede and Benedict Biscop', 151.
7. Ibid., Thacker, 'Social and Continental Background', 148.
8. D.A. Bullough, 'Hagiography as Patriotism: Alcuin's "York Poem" and the Early Northumbrian "Vitae Sanctorum"', *Hagiographie, cultures et societes iv^e-xii^e siecles*, (Etudes Augustiniennes; Paris, 1981), 345.
9. Morse, *Truth and Convention in the Middle Ages*, 138; on general discussion of hagiography cf., P.H. Delehaye, *The Legends of the Saints and Introduction to Hagiography*, (London, 1907), especially 2; 98; A.J. Gurevich, *Categories of Medieval Culture*, trans., G. Campbell (London, 1985), 43.
10. Thacker, 'Social and Continental Background', 184.
11. Ibid., 186.
12. *HA*, 1: 364.
13. Ibid., cf respectively, chps, 2, 4, 6, 9, 1, 7.
14. *HA*, 6: 368.
15. Meyvaert, 'Bede, Cassiodorus, and the Codex Amiatinus', 837.

16. Ibid., 15: 379.
17. Ibid..
18. Ibid., 20: 385.
19. Anonymous *Vita Sanctissima Ceolfridi*, C. Plummer (ex) *Venerabilis Baedae Opera Historica*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1896); Translated in C. Albertson *Anglo-Saxon Saints and Heroes*, (Fordham, 1967). Badly translated by D.S. Boutflower, *The Life of Ceolfrid*, (Lampeter, facsimile rep., 1991).
20. HA, 15: 379ff.
21. Ibid., 18: 382ff & 20: 385.
22. Jones, *Saints' Lives and Chronicles*, 28.
23. *Life of St. Honoratus*, by St. Hilary; *Life of St. Augustine*, by Possidus, *Early Christian Biographies*, ed. R. J. Deferrari, (Washington, 1957).
24. *Life of Augustine*, 31; HA, 11: 375: *Bibliothecam quam de Roma nobilissimam copiossimamque aduexerat... sollicite seruari integram, nec per incuriam foedari, aut passim dissipari praecepit.*
25. *Life of Honoratus*, chp. 3: 17, 374.
26. Ibid.
27. HA, 5: 368.
28. Ibid.
29. *Vita Wilfridi*, 8: 166ff.
30. cf., HA, chps. 1, 4, 7.
31. *Vita Wilfridi*, 17: 34.
32. Ibid., 36: *quae omnia et alia nonnulla in testimonium beatae memoriae eius in ecclesia nostra usque hodie reconduntur.*

33. *Vitae Sanctae Geretrudis*, version 'A', B. Krusch (ed.) *MGH: SRM*, ii (Hanover, 1888), chp.2.
34. Wormald, 'Bede and Benedict Biscop', 152.
35. *Baedae Opera Homilectica*, ed. D. Hurst, *CCSL CXXII* (Turnhout, 1955), 88-94, 93, 1.172ff.
36. B. Ward, *The Venerable Bede* (Guildford, 1990), 71ff.
37. *De Templo*, ed D. Hurst, *CCSL CXIX*, 143-234, 147, 1. 736ff.
38. cf. C. Jenkins, 'Bede as Exegete and Theologian', *BLTW*, 181.
39. *Vita S. Felicis*, 198: *Ablata autem omni foeditate rudium ac sordium earundum, perstabat beatus antistes Paulinus ecclesiam quam coeperat, ad perfectum deducere: cuius aedificium omne tribus annis perfecit, et in picturis atque omni ornatu.*
40. *HE*, cf. I: 33; II: 3, 6.
41. *Le Liber Pontificalis, Texte, introduction et commentire*, ed. L. Duchesne, 2 vols. 1886-92; Translation - *The Book of Pontiffs*, trans. R. Davis (Liverpool, 1989).
42. Davis, *Book of Pontiffs*, iii.
43. J. Herrin, *The Formation of Christendom*, (London, 1987), 162, cf. For example Ceolfrith's letter to the Picts: *HE*, Bk 5: 21.
44. *LP*, chps 34 and 66.
45. *LP*, chp. 34, 170.
46. *LP*, chp. 34, 172-187.
47. *LP*, chp. 66, 312.
48. *LP*, chp 66, 312.

49. Gregory of Tours, *Histories*, X: 3: 1.
50. Thacker, 'Social and Continental Background, 144.
51. Ibid., 140.
52. Ibid., 140ff, J. McClure, 'Bede and the Life of Ceolfrid', *Peritia*, 3 (1984), 71-84, esp. 82.
53. P. Brown, 'Relics and Social Status in the Age of Gregory of Tours', *Society and the Holy in Late Antiquity*, (London, 1982), 236.
54. Michel Sot, *Gesta Episcoporum, Gesta Abbatum: Typologie des Sources*, (Turnhout, 1981), 32-33; 'Annals and Chronicles', *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, (New York, 1966), 552.
55. Sot, *Gesta*, 13.
56. *New Cath. Encyc.*, 552.
57. *Gesta Sanctorum Patrum Fontanellensis Coenobii (GAF)*, ed. F. Lohier & R. P. J. Laporte (Paris, 1935). Also: *Gesta Abbatum Fontanellensium*, ed. S. Loewenfeld, (Hanover, 1886).
58. Concerning its composite nature cf. P. Grierson, 'Abbot Fulco and the Date of the *Gesta Abbatum Fontanellensium*', *English Historical Review*, lv (1940), 275; and more recently I. Wood, 'Saint Wandrille and its Hagiography', *Church and Chronicle in the Middle Ages - Essays Presented to John Taylor*, eds. I. Wood & G.A. Loud (London, 1991), 4. It is also of note that when the 1935 editors of *GAF* outlined its sources they failed to make any connection between it and the *HA*, indicating perhaps the extent to which the *HA* has been undervalued as a historiographical text. Cf Lohier & Laporte, *GAF*, xxxiii-xxxviii.

59. *HA*, 4: 367; 6: 369; 9: 373; 15: 379-380.
60. *GAF*, IX: 2, 66ff (Loewenfeld, 13: 38-39).
61. *GAF*, XII: 2, 88 (Loewenfeld, 16: 47).
62. *GAF*, XII: 3, 89ff (Loewenfeld, 16: 48).
63. *GAF*, XIII: 4, 103 (Loewenfeld, 17: 54).
64. *HA*, 2: 365.
65. *HA*, 10: 374.
66. *HA*, 18: 383.
67. *HA*, 11: 375.
68. Wood, 'Saint Wandrille', 7.
69. *Ibid.*, 7.
70. *GAF*, XII: 2, 88 (Loewenfeld, 16: 47).
71. *HA*, 1, 4, 7, 15.
72. Wood, 'Saint Wandrille', 9.
73. *GAF*, I: 4, 5 (Loewenfeld, 1: 13).
74. cf. Wood, 'Saint Wandrille', 8.
75. *GAF*, XII: 1, 84 (Loewenfeld, 16: 46); Wood, 'Saint Wandrille', 9.
76. *HA*, 5: 368.
77. *HA*, 6: 369-370.
78. *GAF*, IV: 3, 42 (Loewenfeld, 8: 28).
79. *GAF*, XI: 2, 80 & XII: 2, 88 (Loewenfeld, 15: 44 & 16: 47 respectively).
80. cf. Wood, 'Saint Wandrille', 7.
81. *HA*, 20: 385; *GAF*, II: 4, 20 (Loewenfeld, 2: 17-19).
82. *HA*, 6, 369; cf Wood, 'Saint Wandrille', 8.

83. For example *GAF* names Benignus' father as Maurino and his mother as Inga (III: 1, 22; Loewenfeld, 3: 20); Hugo's parents are named as Drogonis and Adeltrude (IV: 1, 37; Loewenfeld, 8: 26); Wando's father, Baldric is also noted (IX: 1, 63; Loewenfeld, 13: 47), as are Austrulfi's parents, Sindulfo and Wilberta, (X:1, 71; Loewenfeld, 14: 40), Witlaic's parents, Irmino and Witbolda (XI, 1: 78; Loewenfeld, 15: 440); Gervold's parents, Walchario and Walda (XII:1, 84; Loewenfeld, 16,: 45), Ansigisus' parents, Anastasio and Himilrada (XIII: 1, 92; Loewenfeld, 17: 49). Bede on the other hand made no attempt to name Biscop's parents, contenting himself instead merely to note that Biscop of noble lineage: *Nobile quidem stirpe gentis Anglorum progenitus*, *HA*, 1: 364.

84. cf. Wood, 'Saint Wandrille', 6.

85. Indeed, it is perhaps possible to state that though the Carolingians introduced the title *Gesta* it would seem that this particular sub genre of *historia* (which consequently became a genre in its own right) was isolated by Bede first! Cf. Sot, *Gesta*, "les *gesta* sont on genre historiographique carolingien", 35.

Chapter 6

1. H. Delehay, *Cinq Lecons sur la Methode Hagiographique*, Societe des Bollandistes, *Subsidia Hagiographica*, 21 (Brussels, 1934), 59. W. Levison, *England and the Continent in the Eighth Century* (Oxford, 1946), 169, J. Dubois, *Les martyrologes du Moyen Âge latin*, Typologie des sources du moyen age latin, fascimile 26 (Turnhout, 1978), 39.
2. One need only glance at its bibliographical entry in *Clavis Patrum Latinorum* to see how relatively untouched it has been: *Clavis Patrum Latinorum*, ed. E. Dekkers, (Brepols, 1995), no. 2032, 664.
3. H. Quentin, *Les martyrologes historiques du moyen age. Etude sur la formation du martyrologe romain*, (Paris, 1980); Dubois & Renaud, *Édition pratique*. Passing comments on Bede's *Martyrology* are made by Goffart, *Narrators*, 247-248; Blair, *The World of Bede*, 277.
4. *HE*, xxvi.
5. Quentin, *Les martyrologes historiques*, 18.
6. *Ibid.*, 20.
7. For the list of materials Bede drew on cf. Quentin, *Les martyrologes historiques*, 111.
8. Dubois, *Les martyrologes*, 31; Michael Lapidge, 'The Saintly Life in Anglo-Saxon England', *The Cambridge Companion to Old English Literature*, ed. Malcolm Godden and Michael Lapidge (Cambridge, 1991), 250; Goffart, *Narrators*, 247.
9. H. Delehay, *Cinq Lecons*, 60.

10. *HE*, 570: *Martyrologium de nataliciis sanctorum martyrum diebus, in quo annes, quos inuenire potui, non solum qua die uerum etiam quo genere certaminis uel sub quo indice mundum uicerint diligenter adnotare studui.*
11. J.M. McCulloh, 'Historical martyrologies in the Benedictine Cultural Tradition', *Benedictine Culture, 750-1050*, eds. W. Lourdaux & D. Verhelst, *Medievalia Lovansensia*, series 1/studia XI (Leuven, 1983), 127.
12. Lapidge, 'The Saintly Life', 250.
13. Quentin, *Les martyrologes historiques*, 110; cf. Also *Martyrologium Hieronymianum*, ed. H. Quentin & H. Delehaye, *Acta Sanctorum*, November, vol. II, part 2 (Brussels, 1931), 4; Dubois & Renaud, *Édition Pratique*, 5.
14. Quentin, *Les mart. historiques*, 110; Dubois & Renaud, *Édition Pratique*, 49 & 55.
15. Quentin, *Les mart. historiques*, 58; Dubois & Renaud, *Édition Pratique*, 49 & 55.
16. Quentin, *Les mart. historiques*, 104; for other details of Felix's life, cf *Vita S. Felicis*, 173-201; Dubois & Renaud, *Édition Pratique*, 13.
17. *HE(P)*, 1, clii.
18. Delehaye, *Cinq Lecons*, 49.
19. Rufinus-Eusebius, *Die Kirchengeschichte*, ed. E. Schwartz and T. Mommsen, *Eusebius Werke*, 2: 2, *Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller*, (Leipzig, 1903-1909), VIII:3, 743, li. 23ff.
20. *Ibid.*, VIII, 7, 755, li. 30ff - 757, li.4. Translated by H.J. Lawlor & J.E.L. Oulton, *Eusebius - The Ecclesiastical History and the Martyrs of Palestine*, vol. 1, (London, 1927), 5, 263: "Some of them were committed to the flames

after being torn and racked and grievously scourged, and suffering other manifold torments terrible to hear, while some were engulfed in the sea, others with a good courage stretched forth their heads to them that cut them off, or died in the midst of their tortures, or perished of hunger; and others again were crucified, some as malefactors usually are, and some, even more brutally, were nailed in the opposite manner, head downwards and kept alive until they should perish of hunger on the gibbet”.

21. Quentin, *Les mart. historiques*, 47; Lapidge, ‘The Saintly Life’, 251.
22. Goffart, *Narrators*, 247; this inaccuracy may have been caused by his use of the text by Dubois and Renaud which begins its entries on 24th December, *Édition Pratique*, 1.
23. *Kalendarium siue martyrologium*, ed. C.W. Jones, *CCSL*, CXXIIIC (Turnhout, 1980), 565.
24. *Bedae Opera Didascalica*, ed. C.W. Jones, *CCSL*, CXXIIIA (Turnhout, 1975), xiv, n.3.
25. Jones, *Kalendarium*, 565.
26. Ibid.
27. *Bedae: Chronica Maiora*, ed T. Mommsen, *MGH: AA XIII* (Berlin, 1898), 289, n. 346; Quentin, *Les mart. historiques*, 88.
28. *Chronica maiora*, 286, n.310.
29. cf. Quentin, *Les mart. historiques*, 58; Dubois & Renaud, *Édition Pratique*, 80.
30. *Chronica maiora*, 295, n.406.
31. Quentin, *Les mart. hisoriques.*, 105. Dubois & Renaud, *Édition Pratique*, 112.

32. *Chronica maiora*, 289.
33. Quentin, *Les mart. historiques*, 88.
34. *Chronica maiora*, 286.
35. Quentin, *Les mart. historiques*, 58.
36. *Chronica maiora*, 287; Quentin, *Les mart. historiques*, 100.
37. *Chronica maiora*, 295; Quentin, *Les mart. historiques*, 105.
38. Quentin, *Les mart. historiques*, 103; Dubois & Renaud, *Édition Pratique*, 72.
39. *Chronica maiora*, 295, n. 405.
40. Quentin, *Les mart. historiques*, 106.
41. *Chronica maiora*, 315, n. 562.
42. *Ibid.*, 310, n. 539.
43. *Ibid.*
44. Quentin, *Les mart. historiques*, 106.
45. *Ibid.*, 57.
46. *Ibid.*, 58.
47. *Ibid.*, respectively - 59, 60, 61, 62, 64, 65, 72, 74, 76, 77, 81, 83, 86, 103, 105.
48. For discussion of Christian concepts of time and their affect on the medieval mentality, cf. A.J. Gurevich, *Categories of Medieval Culture*, trans. G.L. Campbell, (London, 1985), 110ff.
49. Goffart, *Narrators*, 247.

Chapter 7

1. R. Markus, *Signs and Meanings*, 9.
2. T. Reuter, 'Pre-Gregorian Mentalities', *JEH*, 45 (1994), 472.
3. D. Kirby, 'Bede's Native Sources for the *Historia Ecclesiastica*', in *B.J.R.L.*, 48 (1965-66), 341-371.
4. *Ibid.*, 344.
5. Geary, *Phantoms of Remembrance*, 3-22.
6. *Ibid.*, 11.
7. *Ibid.*, 9.
8. *Ibid.*, 15; Matthew Innes makes the point that Notkar's concept of literary truth was centred around conformity of reported actions to remembered textual models. Applying such a hypothesis to Bede could mean that he only reiterated images of the individuals which seemed to match the textual model. Whilst I cannot rule this out, it is striking that the models Bede presents, once a corresponding text has been identified, are so obviously textual reminiscences. Essentially, we just cannot be sure. Innes, 'Memory, Orality and Literacy', 15.
9. Kirby, 'Bede's Native Sources', 345.
10. *Ibid.*, 346.
11. *HE*, III: 17, 266.
12. D. Kirby, 'Bede's Native Sources', 346.
13. *HE*, IV: 19, 390.
14. D. Kirby, 'Bede's Native Sources', 347.
15. *Vita Gregorii*, 16: 98.

16. Ibid.

17. Ibid., 100.

18. *HE*, II: 12, 174-183.

19. R. Markus, *Signs*, 9. For a useful parallel cf, Matthew Innes, who has recently noted that within Notkar's *Gesta Karoli*, oral traditions were being coloured by written models and were subject to literary interference.

20. *HE*, V: 1, 454-456.

21. Wallace-Hadrill, *Comm.*, 174.

22. *HE*, 455 n.4; Wallace-Hadrill, *Comm.*, 175.

23. *HE*, III: 28, 316.

24. N. Wright, *History and Literature in Late Antiquity and the Early Medieval West*, Variorum Reprints (Aldershot, 1995), ix.

25. *HE*, 317, n.3.

26. J. Campbell, 'Bede's Words for Places', in *Names, Words and Graves*, ed. P.H. Sawyer (Leeds, 1979), 39.

27. Wright, *History and Literature*, ix; M. Irvine, 'Bede the Grammarian and the Scope of Grammatical Studies in Eighth Century Northumbria', in *ASE*, 15 (1986), 33.

28. R. Boyer, 'An Attempt to Define the Typology of Medieval Hagiography', in *Hagiography and Medieval Literature - A Symposium*, ed. H. Bekker-Nielsen et al (Odense, 1981), 29

29. *HE*, Preface, 4.

30. cf Thacker, 'Social and Continental Background', 87-89. Cf also: Mayr-Harting, 'Bede's Patristic Thinking', 367-374.

31. J. Wallace -Hadrill, 'Gregory of Tours and Bede: Their Views on the Personal Qualities of Kings', *Fruhmittelalterliche Studien*, 2 (1968), 31-44, 37-38; J. Campbell, 'Bede's Reges and Principes', in *Essays*, 85-98, 97; J. Campbell, 'Bede I', in *Essays*, 4; Mayr-Harting, 'Bede's Patristic Thinking', 370-374; J. McClure, 'Bede's Old Testament Kings' in *Ideal & Reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Society*, ed. P. Wormald (Oxford, 1983), 76-98.
32. C. Stancliffe, 'Oswald, Most Holy and Most Victorious King of the Northumbrians', in *Oswald, Northumbrian King to European Saint*, ed. C. Stancliffe & E. Cambridge (Stamford, 1995), 63. Indeed, as Mayr-Harting notes, Bede says a distinctively Constantinian thing about Oswald, Edwin and Oswine; Mayr-Harting, 'Bede's Patristic Thinking', 370.
33. P. Clemoes, *The Cult of St. Oswald on the Continent* (Jarrow, 1983).
34. *HE*, III: 1, 212-214; Rufinus-Eusebius, *Die Kirchengeshichte*, X: 8, 895, li. 10 ff.
35. Ibid.
36. Rufinus-Eusebius, *Die Kirchengeshichte*, X: 9, 901, li. 4 ff.
37. Adomnan, *Life of Columba*, , Bk.i:1, 16.
38. Paulinus of Nola, *Epistle*, 28, 6. *CSEL*, 29, ed. J. Hartel (Vienna, 1894), 247.
39. Ambrose, *De Obitu Theodosii*, in *Sancti Ambrosii Opera*, *CSEL*, 73, ed. O. Faller (Vienna, 1955), chp. 12, 377; humility is covered by Ambrose, chp. 27, 384ff.
40. J.W. George, *Venantius Fortunatus - A Latin Poet in Merovingian Gaul* (Oxford, 1992), 39.

41. R.A. Markus, 'Gregory the Great on Kings, Rulers and Preachers in the Commentary on *I Mark*', in *The Church and Sovereignty c590-1918*, ed. D. Wood (Oxford, 1991), 7.
42. *Sancti Gregorii Magni, Regulae Pastoralis Liber*, in *PL* 77 (Paris, 1896), II:6, 34: *Seruanda itaque est et in corde humilitatis.*
43. Ibid., I: 10, 23: *Qui ad aliena cupienda non ducitur, sed propria largiter.*
44. Ibid., II:7, 38 ff: *Ut sit rector internorum curam in exteriorum occupatione non minuens, exteriorum prouidentiam in internorum sollicitudine non relinquens.*
45. *HE*, II: 9, 166.
46. *HE*, II: 12, 178.
47. Ibid., 180.
48. Stancliffe, 'Oswald', 62.
49. *HE*, II:14, 186.
50. *HE*, II: 20, 202.
51. *HE*, I: 26, 76.
52. *HE*, II: 15, 188; *HE*, III: 21, 278.
53. *HE*, III: 22, 380-282.
54. *HE*, IV: 26, 429.
55. Anonymous *Vita Cuthberti*, III: 6, 104 & Bede's *Vita Sancti Cuthberti*, chp. 24, 238; and Anon. *Vita Cuthberti*, IV: 8, 122; Bede's *Vita Sancti Cuthberti*, chp. 27, 242-244 respectively.
56. Anonymous *Vita Cuthberti*, IV: 8, 122.
57. *Regulae Pastoralis*, II:6, 35: *Miro ergo iudicio intus foueam dejectionis inuenit, dum foris in culmine potestatis extollit.*

58. Virgil, *Aeneid*, ii. 169 - as identified by Colgrave, *HE*, 428, n.3.
59. R. Morse, *Truth and Convention*, 104.
60. Wallace-Hadrill, *Comm.*, 88.
61. Pseudo-Cyprianus, *De duodecim abusivis saeculi*, ed. *CSEL*, iii, 3., 152ff; J. Kenney, *The Sources for the Early History of Ireland: Ecclesiastical*, (Dublin, 1966), 281-282.
62. *HE*, II: 16, 192.
63. *De duodecim*, 160.
64. *Ibid.*, 166.
65. *Ibid.*
66. *HE*, III: 12, 250.
67. W. Chaney, *The Cult of Kingship in Anglo-Saxon England* (Manchester, 1970), 116; cf also R. Folz, 'Saint Oswald Roi de Northumbrie -Etude d'Hagiographie Royale', *A.B.*, 98 (1980), 51.
68. D. Rollason, *Saints and Relics*, 127.
69. *HE*, III: 12, 250.
70. It is perhaps of relevance here to take into consideration the study of S. Lerer, who, using the case of Imma (*HE*, IV: 22, 400-401), extrapolates that Bede deliberately suppressed pagan modes of understanding rather than encouraging them to be remembered through textualization. It is surely unlikely that Bede would have wanted a specific model remembered in the context of Oswald. Cf. S. Lerer, 'The Releasing Letters: Literate Authority in Bede's Story of Imma', *Literacy and Power in Anglo-Saxon Literature* (London 1991), 33, 38, 39.

71. *HE*, III: 6, 280.

72. Stancliffe, 'Oswald', 65.

73. *Regularae Pastoralis*, I: 10, 23.

74. *De duodecim*, 166.

75. cf. For example, St. John Chrysostom, Homily 78 (John 16. 5-15). *Saint John Chrysostom - Commentary on St. John the Apostle and Evangelist*, Homilies, 48-88, trans. T. A. Goggin (Washington, 1959), 349.

76. Isidore - *Historia Gothorum*, 56:290: *thesauros suos in egenis recondens*.

77. Ibid.: *sciens ad hoc illi fuisse conlatum regnum, ut eo salubriter frueretur, bonis initiis bonum finem adeptus*.

78. Ibid., 55: 290: *aedo liberalis, ut opes priuatorum et ecclesiarum praedia*; 56: 290: *Multos etiam ditauit rebus, plurmos sublimauit honoribus*.

79. J. Campbell, 'The First Century of Christianity', in *Essays*, 54.

80. Cf. Morse, *Truth and Convention*, 47.

81. B. Colgrave, 'Bede's Miracle Stories,' in *BLTW*, 219.

82. *HE*, III: 11, 246.

83. Wallace-Hadrill, *Comm*, 104.

84. Ibid.

85. *HE*, III:11, 246.

86. *HE*, III: 6, 230.

87. P. Brown, 'Relics and Social Status in the Age of Gregory of Tours', in *Society and the Holy in Late Antiquity* (London 1982), 235.

88. See, for example, Gregory of Tours' description of the light over the relic of the True Cross at Poitiers: Gregory of Tours, *Liber in Gloria Martyrum*, ed. B. Krusch, *MGH: SRM*, I (Hanover, 1885), 484-561, 490.

89. *HE*, III: 2, 214.

90. *HE*, III: 9, 242.

91. *Ibid.*

92. *HE*, III: 12, 250.

93. R. Folz, *Les Saints Rois du moyen âge en occident vi^e-xii^e*, Societe des Bollandistes, *Subsidia Hagiographica*, 68, (Brussels, 1984) 46.

94. Anon., *Vita sancti Gregorii*, 43.

95. *HE*, II: 20, 202.

96. *Ibid.*

97. *Vita sancti Gregorii*, chp. 16, 99 & chp. 12, 94f respectively.

98. Folz, *Les Saints Rois*, 45.

99. S. Ridyard, *The Royal Saints of Anglo-Saxon England* (Cambridge, 1988), 240.

100. *Ibid.*, 93.

101. Wallace-Hadrill, *Comm*, 102. Claire Stancliffe has recently restated Oswestry as the most plausible location for Maserfelth, cf., C. Stancliffe, 'Where was Oswald Killed?', in *Oswald, Northumbrian King to European Saint*, ed. C. Stancliffe & E. Cambridge (Stamford, 1995), 84-96.

102. *HE*, III: 9, 242.

103. Abbo, *Passio sancti Eadmundi Regis et Martyris*, ed. M. Winterbottom, *Three Lives of English Saints* (Toronto, 1972), 67-87.

104. *Ibid.*, for characterization cf., 70-71; for the slayers cf., 71, 74.

105. *Ibid.*, 79.

106. *HE*, III: 9, 242.

107. *Passio Eadmundi*, 67, 79.
108. *Ibid.*, 80.
109. *Ibid.*, 81.
110. Byrthferth of Ramsey, *Vita Oswaldi*, ed., D. Whitelock *E.H.D.*, vol. 1, 2nd edn (London, 1979), 914.
111. *Ibid.*, 915.
112. *Passio et miracula sancti Eadwardi Regis et Martyris*, ed., C.E. Fell, *Edward King and Martyr*, Leeds Texts and Monographs, New Series 3 (Leeds, 1971), cf., for example, 11.
113. Rollason, 'Cults of murdered royal saints', 5.
114. Simeon of Durham, *Historia Regum*, ed., T. Arnold, *Symeonis Monachi Opera Omnia*, (London, 1885), 4.
115. cf., Carole Straw, *Gregory the Great Perfection in Imperfection* (London, 1988), 98; Gregory the Great, *Dialogues*, trans., O.J. Zimmerman, *The Dialogues of Gregory the Great* (New York, 1959), 160.
116. Simeon, *Historia Regum*, 5.
117. *Ibid.*
118. Gregory the Great, *Dialogues*, 166-168.
119. *Ibid.*, 167.
120. *HE*, I: 7, 32.
121. *HE*, V: 10, 482.
122. R. Folz, 'Saint Oswald roi de Northumbrie: étude d'hagiographie royale', *AB*, 98 (1980), 59.
123. cf., *HE* III: 2, 9, 10 (Popular tradition); *HE* III: 11, 12 (Bardney); *HE* III: 13 (Hexham). I am suggesting that one should no longer accept that Bede's

material on Oswald came predominantly from Hexham (Kirby, 'Bede's Native Sources', 350).

124. *The Calender of St. Willibrord*, ed., H.A. Wilson, HBS, 55 (London, 1918), xiv.
125. P. Wormald, 'Bede and Benedict Biscop', in G. Bonner ed., *Famulus Christi: Essays in Commemoration of the Thirteenth Centenary of the Birth of the Venerable Bede* (London, 1976), 151; Folz, 'Saint Oswald roi', 59.
126. *HE*, V: 24, 570.
127. H. Quentin, *Les martyrologes historiques du moyen age, Etude sur la formation du martyrologe romain* (Paris, 1908), 105-106.
128. Mss 833 due fonds Palatin, Vatican: *Ibid.*, 20-21.
129. *English kalenders before A.D. 1100*, ed., F. Wormald, HBS, 72 (London, 1934), 9; cf. David Rollason, *Saints and Relics*, 73.
130. *The Martyrology of Tallaght*, eds., R.I. Best and H.J. Lawlor, HBS, 68 (London, 1931), 60.
131. *Felire Oengusso celi de: The Martyrology of Oengus, the Culdee*, ed., W. Stokes, HBS, 29 (London, 1905), 174.
132. J. Dubois, 'Le Martyrologe metrique de Wandelbert', *AB*, 79 (1961), 257-293, 281-292; J. Dubois, *Le martyrologe d'Usuard: Texte et commentaire* (Societe des Bollandistes, Brussels, 1965), 279.
133. Dubois, *Le Martyrologe d'Usuard*, 278.
134. Alcuin, *Versus de Patribus Regibus et Sanctis Euboricensis Ecclesiae*, ed., Peter Godman, *Alcuin: The Bishops, Kings, and Saints of York* (OMT, 1982), 26, 28.

135. Ibid., 30.

136. Aelfric, *Lives of the Saints*, ed., W.W. Skeat, vol. 2 (London, 1900), cf., for example, 129.

137. *HE*, II: 14, 258.

138. Ibid., 256.

139. Rollason, 'Cults of murdered royal saints', 12.

140. Folz, *Les saints rois*, 28.

141. Ibid., 29.

142. Ibid.

143. See, for example, *English Kalenders Before AD 1100*, ed., F. Wormald, HBS, lxxii, (London, 1934), I - texts; *Anglo-Saxon Litanies of the Saints*, ed., M Lapidge, HBS, 106, (London, 1991).

144. *The Calender of Saint Willibrord*, ed., H.A. Wilson, HBS, lx, (London, 1918), xxii.

145. Alcuin, *Versus de Patribus Regibus*, 44, l. 505 ff.

146. Ibid., 1.

147. Rollason, 'Cults of Murdered Royal Saints', 3.

148. Folz, *Les saint rois*, 223.

149. J. Wallace-Hadrill, *Early Germanic Kingship in England and on the Continent*, (Oxford, 1971), 85.

150. *HE*, III: 14, 256; cf also A.J. Gurevich *Categories of Medieval Culture*, 161.

151. *HE*, III, 14, 258; Wallace-Hadrill, *Early Germanic Kingship*, 85-86.

152. Kirby, 'Bede's Native Sources', 351; restated in *Saint Wilfrid at Hexham*, ed., D.P. Kirby, (Newcastle, 1974), 14.

153. cf. P. Wormald, 'Bede, Beowulf, and the Conversion of the Anglo-Saxon Aristocracy,' in *Bede and Anglo-Saxon England*, ed., R.T. Farrell, BAR, Brit. Ser. 46 (Oxford, 1978).

154. H. Mayr-Harting, *The Coming of Christianity*, 223-224.

155. *HE*, III: 14, 256; Mayr-Harting, *The Coming of Christianity*, 224.

156. On this occasion giving the narrative the feel of historical authenticity may not have been Bede's only aim. Mayr-Harting has also commented on the relationship between this part of Oswine's story and the allegorical allusion to Luke, 14:31. Here is a perfect example of where Bede seems to be relying on an Anglo-Saxon source and yet manipulates the story to fit within Christian allegory. It is clear that there is some interface between the Anglo-Saxon past and Bede's *HE* but even these examples have been subjected to literary interference; Mayr-Harting, 'Bede's Patristic Thinking', 368.

157. *HE*, III: 15, 16, 17.

158. *Ibid.*, chp. 14, 258, compare with chp. 17, 266.

159. Indeed, both Wallace-Hadrill and Rollason have implied some unease concerning *HE* III: 14 being a hagiographical depiction: Wallace-Hadrill, *Comm.*, "Bede's treatment [of Oswine] does not follow a normal hagiographical pattern", 108; Rollason, 'Cult of Murdered Royal Saints', "Bede's *almost* hagiographical description of Oswine", 3. Such expressed unease possibly has its origins in the fact that this chapter was never intended to be viewed as hagiography! From this the validity of Rollason's hypothesis relating to the early veneration of murdered royal saints needs to be reassessed.

160. *HE*, III: 14, 256.

161. Wallace-Hadrill, 'Gregory of Tours and Bede', 43.

162. Stancliffe, 'Oswald', 62.

163. Mayr-Harting, *The Coming of Christianity*, 255. Mayr-Harting was not the only person to note this use of an individual to highlight a particular characteristic. D. Wilcox commented too that Bede subordinated individuals to abstract character traits and that this was at the expense of their own basic reality. Cf D. Wilcox, 'The Sense of Time in Western Historical Narratives from Eusebius to Machiavelli', in *Classical Rhetoric and Medieval Historiography*, ed. E. Breisach (Kalamazoo, 1985), 204-206.

164. *HE*, I: 26, 76.

165. *HE*, III: 3, 218.

166. *HE*, III: 22, 280-282.

167. Wallace-Hadrill conjectured that Bede perhaps disbelieved some part of the Whitby claim; Wallace-Hadrill, *Early Germanic Kingship*, 82

Chapter 8

1. Recently, Carol de Vegvar has commented that the royal women monastics (saints and otherwise) have not been neglected in the scholarship on early Anglo-Saxon England, noting that since the nineteenth century writers have focused on the individual accomplishments of these women. However, it is perhaps worth noting that apart from Lena Eckenstein's work, *Women Under Monasticism*, published in 1896 relatively little (at least when compared to the academic outpourings on men) was actually produced concerning women in history generally, let alone Anglo-Saxon ones, until the late 1970s. Carol Vegvar's optimism perhaps covers the discontinuity of publications in the field of Anglo-Saxon women's history until this last quarter of the twentieth century. cf C. N. de Vegvar, 'Saints and Companions to Saints: Anglo-Saxon Royal Women Monastics in Context', *Holy Men and Holy Women: Old English Prose Saints' Lives and Their Contexts*, ed. P. E. Szarmach, (New York, 1996), 51.
2. For example: C.E. Fell, 'Hilda, Abbess of Streonaeshalch,' in *Hagiography and Medieval Literature: A Symposium* ed., H. Bekker-Nielson *et al* (Odense, 1981), 76-99; C. Fell, *et al*, *Women in Anglo-Saxon England and the Impact of 1066* (Oxford, 1986); S. Ridyard, *The Royal Saints of Anglo-Saxon England: A Study of West Saxon and East Anglian Cults* (Cambridge, 1988); S. Hollis, *Anglo-Saxon Women and the Church: Sharing a Common Fate* (Woodbridge, 1992).
3. *Vita Sanctae Radegundis* Liber 1: Venantius Fortunatus, and *Vita Sanctae Radegundis* Liber 2: Baudonivia, in *MGH: SRM*, 2, ed., B. Krusch, (Hanover, 1888). Partial trans. of Baudonivia in M. Theibaux, *The Writings of Medieval*

- Women*, 13, series B, Garland Library of Medieval Literature (New York, 1987). Also trans. (as are the other Merovingian saints lives used in this study) in the excellent publication: J.A. McNamara, J. Halborg & E. Whatley, *Sainted Women of the Dark Ages* (London, 1992); *Vita Sanctae Balthildis* version A, in *MGH: SRM*, 2, ed., B. Krusch (Hanover, 1888); *Vita Sanctae Geretrudis* version A in *MGH: SRM*, 2, ed., B. Krusch (Hanover, 1888); *Vita Sanctae Genovefa* in *Acta sanctorum*, January 3, 137-53.
4. For the dating of these texts cf McNamara, *Sainted Women: Vita Balthildis*, 264; *Vita Geretrudis*, 220; *Vita Genovefa*, 17; *Vita Rusticula*, 119. Also see I. N. Wood, 'Forgery in Merovingian Hagiography' in *Fälschungen im Mittelalter*, V (1988), 396, 378.
 5. Wallace-Hadrill, *Comm.*, 159.
 6. *HE*, Preface, 7.
 7. *HE*, IV:19, 392.
 8. Wallace-Hadrill, *Comm.*, xxix
 9. Venantius, *Vita Rad.*, 3: 366.
 10. *Ibid.*, 5: 367; 6: 367; 19: 370; 21: 371.
 11. P. Stafford, *Queens, Concubines and Dowagers: The King's Wife in the Early Middle Ages* (London, 1983), 182.
 12. *HE*, IV:19, 390-392.
 13. *HE*, IV:19, 392.
 14. Wallace-Hadrill, *Frank. Church*, 86.
 15. J. T. Schulenberg, 'Saints' Lives as a Source for the History of Women', *Medieval Women and the Sources of Medieval History* (London, 1990), 287.

16. *HE*, IV:3, 338.

17. *HE*, IV:22, 405.

18. C. Fell, 'Saint Aeðelþryð: a Historical Hagiographical Dichotomy Revisited', *Nottingham Medieval Studies*, 38 (1994), 25-26.

19. Pauline Thompson has made a similar observation in relation to Aethelthryth noting a need to modify Fell's dichotomy. Cf. P. Thompson, 'St. Aethelthryth: The Making of History from Hagiography', *Studies in English Language and Literature: 'Doubt wisely' - Papers in Honour of E. G. Stanley*, ed. M. J. Toswell & E. M. Tyler (London, 1996), 477.

20. Susan Ridyard, *Royal Saints*, 82.

21. *HE*, IV:19, 392.

22. *HE*, IV: 23, 406-410.

23. *HE*, IV: 19, 392.

24. *HE*, IV: 23, 408.

25. *Ibid.*

26. *Ibid.*

27. Hollis, *Anglo-Saxon Women and the Church*, 248.

28. *HE*, IV: 19, 392.

29. *HE*, IV: 23, 410 ff.

30. The following points are a response to Hollis' comment that politically influential abbesses with powerful family connections are "conspicuously absent" from Bede's *HE* (*Anglo-Saxon Women and the Church*, 179). In this context, it is perhaps interesting to note that Rosenthal has argued the opposite case to Hollis concerning Bede. Instead she concentrates on the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* as being noteworthy for the 'total absence' of holy virgins and

saints. Rather than seeing Bede's works in misogynistic terms she views him as offering a more 'hospitable' image of women. The apparent contradiction between these two academics' perception is perhaps evidence that making comments which isolate one text from the universal silence of women at this time is anachronistic. Quantitatively women tend to be notable for their absence in general - but what else should we expect?

31. *HE*, II: 9, 165; II: 20, 204; III: 15, 260; III: 24, 292; III: 25, 296; IV: 26, 430; V: 19, 518.

32. *HE*, V: 19, 518

33. *HE*, III: 24, 290; IV: 26, 428.

34. Hollis, *Anglo-Saxon Women and the Church*, p179ff.

35. *Ibid.*, 179.

36. *Ibid.*, 180-181; one thing Hollis must be praised for is that she has clearly shown the importance of Aelffleah in Northumbria.

37. *Ibid.*, 189.

38. *Ibid.*, 187.

39. *Ibid.*, 184.

40. *Ibid.*, 185.

41. *Ibid.*, 187.

42. *Prose Vita Cuthberti*, XXIV, 234.

43. *Ibid.*, XXXIV, 262 & XXIII, 230.

44. *Prose Vita Cuthberti*, XXIII, 230.

45. *Ibid.*, XXIV, 234.

46. *Ibid.*, XXXIV, 262.

47. Ibid., XXIII, 230.
48. Anon. *Vita Cuthberti*, III: 4, 102 & IV: 10, 126. In fact if one compares Bede's epithets with those of the *Vita Wilfridi* they are clearly equally favourable. Thus the *Vita Wilfridi* calls her: *sancta uirgine et abbatissa* (*Vita Wilfridi*, 43: 88); *sapientissima uirgo* (*Vita Wilfridi*, 59: 128 & 60: 132); *beatissima Aelfleda abbatissa* (*Vita Wilfridi*, 60: 130).
49. Ridyard, *Royal Saints*, 83.
50. J. L. Nelson, 'Queens as Jezebels: The Careers of Brunhild and Balthild in Merovingian History', in *Medieval Women*, ed. D. Baker (Oxford, 1978), 60; and reiterated by G. Klaniczay, *The Uses of Super-natural Power*, trans. S. Singerman (Cambridge, 1990), 81.
51. Baud., *Vita*, 1: 380, Thiebaux, *Writings*, 45; McNamara, *Sainted Women*, 87.
52. Ibid.
53. *Vita Balt.*, 9: 494.
54. *Vita Gert.*, 3: 458.
55. *Vita Genovefa*, in *Acta Sanctorum*, January 3, 137-153: VI: 25, 140: *Sicque Regem consecuta, ne uinctorum capita amputarentur, obtinuit.* McNamara, *Sainted Women*, 28.
56. Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, in [A] *Select Lib. [of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers]*, trans. E.C. Richardson, vol. 1 (Oxford, 1890), 405-559.
57. Ambrose, *De Officiis Ministrorum*, 'On the Duties of the Clergy', in *Select Lib.*, trans., E.C. Richardson, vol. 1 (Oxford, 1890), 405-559, 351.
58. Ibid., 354. *D.O.M.*, in *PL*, 16, 129.
59. Dr. C. Harrington, U.C.L., personal Communication, 1993.

60. *Vita Margaritae Scotorum Reginae*, in *Pinkerton's Lives of the Scottish Saints*, rev. ed., W.M. Metcalfe (Paisley, 1889), II, 159-82, chapter 19.
(Trans. W.M. Metcalfe, *Lives of the Scottish Saints* (Llanerch, 1990), 60.
61. J. L. Nelson, 'Women and the Word [in the Earlier Middle Ages]', in *Women in the Church*, ed. W.J. Sheils & D. Wood (Oxford, 1990), 63.
62. E. McLaughlin, 'Women, Power and the Pursuit of Holiness in Medieval Christianity' in *Feminist Theology - A Reader*, ed., A. Loades (London, 1990), 99-120, 104. McLaughlin has argued that equality existed between male and female saints but if it did not exist between women one cannot help feeling that it definitely would not have existed between male and female.
63. Schulenberg, 'Saints' Lives as Sources', 287.
64. J. A. McNamara prefers to see this motif as evidence of a particular type of public intercession associated with women, enabling them to express the merciful side of power without softening the fierce warrior image of the king. Nonetheless, the presence of the *topos* in patristic texts and subsequent reoccurrence in hagiography suggests that it was, at least in the narratives, a purely textual convention. J. A. McNamara, 'The Need to Give: Suffering and Female Sanctity in the Middle Ages', *Images of Sainthood in Medieval Europe*, ed. R. Blumenfeld-Kosinski & T. Szell (New York, 1991), 200.
65. Ridyard, *Royal Saints*, 83.
66. M.L.W. Laistner, 'The Library of the Venerable Bede', *BLTW*, 263.
Augustine De Sancta Virginitate in Seventeen Short Treatises of St. Augustine
in *A Library of Fathers of the Holy Catholic Church* (Oxford, 1847), 313,
331, 334, 350.

67. *HE*, III:24, 290, 292.

68. *HE*, IV:26, 428.

69. *Prose Vita Cuthberti*, XXIII: 230 & XXIV: 262.

70. *HE*, IV:24, 412 & III:8, 238.

71. A. Faivre, *The Emergence of the Laity in the Early Church*, trans. D. Smith (New York, 1990), 188.

72. Aldhelm *De Virginitate* - 'The Prose *De Virginitate*', in *Aldhelm: The Prose Works*, trans. M. Lapidge, & M. Herren (Ipswich, 1979), 61.

73. Aldhelm, *De Virginitate*, 67.

74. *Ibid*, 71.

75. *Ibid*, 52.

76. For example: Baud., *Vita Rad*, 4; *Vita Gert.*, 2, 3; Bede *HE* IV: 19 on Aethelthryth's eating habits etc., eg: Baud., *Vita Rad*, 4; *Vita Gert.*, 7; Bede *HE*, IV: 19, eg: *Vita Gert.*, (of Itta) 2; Bede *HE* IV: 23, eg: *Vita Gert.*, 3; Baud., *Vita Rad*, 16, etc., Baud., *Vita Rad*, 5, Thiebaux, *Writings*, 48.

77. *Vita Balt.*, 2: 483.

78. *Vita Gert.*, 2: 456.

79. *Vita Rusticula*, 6: 343, ed. B. Krusch, *MGH: SRM*, 4: *Erat enim strenua in omnibus, prudens in uerbis*.

80. Isidore, *Etymologiae*, in *Isidorus Hispalensis: Etymologiae* II - Etymologies Book II : Rhetoric, ed. & trans. P.K. Marshall, *Auteurs Latins du Moyen Age*, <<Les Belles Lettres>> (Paris, 1983), 60.

81. A. Blamires, *Women Defamed and Defended - An Anthropology of Medieval Texts* (Oxford, 1992), 58.

82. J. Salisbury, *Church Fathers, Independent Virgins* (London, 1991), 36.
83. *Regulae sancti Caesarii episcopi ad virgines*, in *Cesaire D'Arles-Oeuvres Monastiques*, I, ed. A de Vogüé & J. Courreau (Paris, 1988), 170-273, 188: *Numquam altiori uoce loquantur, secundum illud apostoli: Omnis clamor tollatur a uobis*. E. Amt, ed. & trans., *Women's Lives in Medieval Europe - A Sourcebook* (London, 1993), 223.
84. Cameron, *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire*, 177.
85. Morse, *Truth and Convention*, 73.
86. P. Delooz, 'Towards a Sociological Study of Canonized Sainthood in the Catholic Church', *Saints and their Cults*, ed. S. Wilson (Cambridge, 1983), 195.
87. S. Ridyard, *Royal Saints*, 83.
88. *Vita Gert.*, Prologue, 454.
89. *HE*, IV: 19, 390.
90. *HE*, IV: 23, 406.
91. Anonymous, *Vita Gregorii*, 18: 102.
92. Felix, *Vita Guthlaci*, XLVIII: 146.
93. Venantius *Vita Rad.*, 2: 365.
94. Baud. *Vita*, 1: 379; Thiebaux, *Writings*, 44.
95. *Vita Gert.*, 1: 454.
96. *Vita Gen.*, I: 1, 138.
97. C.H. Lawrence, *Medieval Monasticism* (London, 1984), 44; P.J. Geary, *Before France and Germany: The Transformation of the Merovingian World* (Oxford, 1988), 186.

98. *Vita Balt.*, 2: 483.
99. Venantius, *Vita Rad.*, 2: 365.
100. L. Eckenstein, *Woman Under Monasticism*, (Cambridge, 1896), 74.
101. *Vita Balt.*, 2: 484.
102. cf., for an admittedly later period: Fichtenau, *Living in the Tenth Century*, 138; A. Gurevich, *Les Categories de la culture medievale*, trans. from Russian by H Courtin & N. Godneff (Paris, 1983), 164.5
103. *Vita Balt.*, 2: 484.
104. R.A. Gerberding, *The Rise of the Carolingians and the Liber Historiae Francorum* (Oxford, 1987), 175; Wallace-Hadrill, *Frankish Church*, 133, suggested that this text was produced at St. Denis c. AD 727.
105. Wallace-Hadrill, *Frank. Church*, 71; P. Sims-Williams, 'Continental Influence at Bath Monastery in the Seventh Century' in *ASE*, IV (1975), 1-11, 7 and reiterated in *Religion and Literature in Western England, 600-800* (Cambridge, 1990), 113.
106. T. Heffernan, *Sacred Biography: Saints and their Biographers in the Middle Ages*, (Oxford, 1988), 127.
107. cf. Heffernan, *Sacred Biog.*, 189.
108. Baud., *Vita*, 4: 381; On this point see also, M. Warner, *Alone of all her Sex: The Myth and the Cult of the Virgin Mary* (London, 1976), 68.
109. *HE*, IV:19, 392.
110. P. Thompson wonders why Ecgfrith was resistant to Aethelthryth's desire to enter monastic life implying that in political terms it did not make sense. As a convention designed to note exactly what Aethelthryth needed to overcome to

fulfil her religious desires, Ecgfrith's response is less puzzling, cf . Thompson, 'Saint Aethelthryth', 485.

111. V. Burrus, 'Word and Flesh - The Bodies and Sexuality of Ascetic Women in Christian Antiquity', *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*, 10 (1994), 29.
112. Ibid.; The preservation of virginity in marriage is found elsewhere in Late Antique Latin and Greek *vitae*. For example, in the Anonymous fifth century text, *The Life of Olympias*, it is noted that she was a bride for a few days to Nebridius "but in truth she did not grace the bed of anyone" and her body too remained uncorrupt, cf. E. A. Clark, *Women in the Early Church*, (Minnesota, 1983), 224.
113. Thompson, 'Saint Aethelthryth', 476.
114. Ibid, 480-484.
115. Cf Chapter 7.
116. Burrus, 'Word and Flesh', 30.
117. *HE*, IV:19, 392.
118. Baud., *Vita Rad.*, 1:380; 5: 381..
119. Thompson, 'Saint Aethelthryth', 483.
120. Ibid., 480.
121. *Vita Gert.*, 454.
122. Baud., *Vita Rad.*, 16: 338.
123. Gregory of Tours, *Historiae*, IX:40.
124. Baud., *Vita Rad.* 16: 338; McNamara, *Sainted Women*, 97.
125. Ibid.

126. Nelson, 'Queens as Jezebels', 37 ff. Whilst this was a primary role C. de Vegvar has noted that it was not the only one she played. C. de Vegvar, 'Saints and Companions to Saints', 54.
127. *HE*, IV:19, 394.
128. Ibid.
129. Ibid., 392.
130. Ridyard, *Royal Saints*, 83.
131. P. Brown, 'The Notion of Virginity in the Early Church', in *Christian Spirituality - Origins to the Twelfth Century*, ed. B McGinn et al. (London, 1989), 435.
132. Nelson, 'Women and the Word', 74.
133. Venantius Fortunatus, *Ad Dominan Radegundum*, in *Two millennia of Poetry in Latin*, ed. J. Oberg (London, 1987), 88.
134. Baud., *Vita*, prologue, 377; Venantius, *Vita Rad.*, 1: 364.
135. *Vita Balt.*, 482.
136. Venantius, *Vita Rad.*, 365.
137. Baud., *Vita*, 1: 380. Thiebaux, *Writings*, 45;
138. *HE*, IV: 20, 398.
139. Ibid., IV: 23, 406.
140. Prose *Vita Cuthberti*, XIII: 231.
141. Schulenberg, too, has noted that worldly power, status and social and economic prominence were prerequisites for candidates for sanctity, 'Female Sanctity: Public and Private Roles, c. 500-1100', *Women and Power in the Middle Ages*, ed. M. Erler & M. Kowaleski (London, 1988), 102.

Chapter 9

1. Cameron, *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire*, 120.
2. Morse, *Truth and Convention*, 90.
3. Ray, 'The Triumph of Greco-Rhetorical Assumptions', 67.
4. McCready, *Miracles and the Venerable Bede*, 225.
5. A. J. Frantzen, 'Literature, Archaeology, and Anglo-Saxon Studies: Reconstruction and Deconstruction', *Sutton Hoo: Fifty Years After*, ed. R. Farrell & C. Neuman de Vegvar, *American Early Medieval Studies*, 2 (1992), 25.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources:

Abbo, *Passio sancti Eadmundi Regis et Martyris*, ed. M. Winterbottom, *Three Lives of English Saints* (Toronto, 1972), 67-87.

Adomnan, *Vita Sancti Columbae*, ed. A. O. Anderson & M. O. Anderson, *Adomnan's Life of Saint Columba* (London, 1961); trans. R. Sharpe, *Adomnan of Iona - Life of Saint Columba* (Harmondsworth, 1995).

Aelfric, *Lives of the Saints*, ed. W. W. Skeat, 1, Early English Text Society (London, 1881).

Alcuin, *Vita Sancti Willibrordi*, ed. W. Levison, *MGH: SRM*, 7, 81-141; *The Life of St. Willibrord*, ed. C. H. Talbot, *The Anglo-Saxon Missionaries in Germany* (London, 1954), 3-22.

Alcuin, *Versus de Patribus Regibus et Sanctis Euboricensis Ecclesiae*, ed. P. Godman, *The Bishops, Kings and Saints of York* (Oxford, 1982).

Aldhelm, *The Prose Works*, ed. M. Lapidge & M. Herren (Ipswich, 1979).

Aldhelm, *The Poetic Works*, ed. M. Lapidge & J. L. Rosier (Cambridge, 1985).

Ambrose, *De Obitu Theodosii*, ed. O. Faller, *Sancti Ambrosii Opera*, CSEL, 73 (Vienna, 1955).

Ambrose, *De officiis ministrorum*, P.L., 16; 'On the Duties of the Clergy', trans. H. de Romestin, *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, X (Oxford, 1896), 1-89.

Anonymous, *Vita Sanctissima Ceolfredi Abbatis*, ed. C. Plummer, *HE(P)*, I, 388-404.

Anonymous, *Vita Sancti Cuthberti*, ed. B. Colgrave, *Two Lives of Saint Cuthbert* (Cambridge, 1940), 60-139.

Anonymous, *Vita Sancti Gregorii Magni*, ed. B. Colgrave, *The Earliest Life of Gregory the Great* (Cambridge, 1985).

Augustine, *De Sancta Virginitate*, in *Seventeen Short Treatises of St. Augustine* (Oxford, 1847), 308-352.

Baudonivia, *Vita Sanctae Radegundis*, liber 2, ed. B. Krusch, *MGH: SRM*, 2 (Hanover, 1888).

Bede, *Chronica Minora, Chronica Maiora*, ed. T. Mommsen, *MGH: AA*, xiii (Berlin, 1898), 231-327; trans. J. McClure & R. Collins, 'The Greater Chronicle', *Bede: The Ecclesiastical History of the English People* (Oxford, 1994), 307-340.

Bede, *De Locis Sanctis Libellus*, ed. J. A. Giles, *Venerabilis Bedae Opera*, 4 (London, 1843-44), 402-443.

Bede, *De Templo*, ed. D. Hurst, *CCSL CXIX* ((Turnhout, 1969), 143-234; trans. S. Connolly, *Bede: On the Temple* (Liverpool, 1995).

Bede, *De Temporum Ratione*, ed. C. W. Jones, *CCSL CXXIIIB* (Turnhout, 1978), 263-460.

Bede, *Epistolam ad Ecgberctum*, ed. C. Plummer, *HE(P)*, I, 405-423.

Bede, *Historia Abbatum*, ed. C. Plummer, *HE(P)*, I, 364-387.

Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, ed. Plummer, *HE(P)*, I, 5-360; Ed. B. Colgrave & R.A.B. Mynors, *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People* (Oxford, 1969).

Bede, *Kalendarium siue Martyrologia Quasi Bedae Cura et Opere*, ed. C. W. Jones, *CCSL CXXIIIC* (Turnhout, 1980), 567-78.

Bede, *Martyrologium*, ed. J. Dubois & G. Renaud, *Édition pratique de Bède, de l'Anonyme lyonnais et de Florus* (Paris, 1976).

Bede, *Opera Didascalica*, ed. C. W. Jones, *CCSL CXXIIIA* (Turnhout, 1975).

Bede, *Opera Homilectica*, ed. D. Hurst, *CCSL CXXII* (Turnhout, 1955), 1-378; trans. L. T. Martin & D. Hurst, *Bede the Venerable: Homilies on the Gospels*, 2 vols. (Kalamazoo, 1991).

Bede, *Vita Sanctae Cuthberti Metrica*, ed. W. Jaager, *Bedas metrische Vita Sancti Cuthberti* (Palaestra, 198; Leipzig, 1935).

Bede, *Vita Sanctae Cuthberti Prosaica*, ed. B. Colgrave, *Two Lives of Saint Cuthbert* (Cambridge, 1940), 142-307.

Bede, *Vita Sancti Felicis*, ed. J. A. Giles, *Venerabilis Bedae Opera*, 4 (London, 1843-44), 174-202.

Byrthferth of Ramsey, *Vita Oswaldi*, ed. J. Raine, *The Historians of the Church of York and its Archbishops*, I (London, 1879); trans. D. Whitelock, *The Life of St. Oswald*, *E. H. D.*, I (London, 1979).

Calendar of St. Willibrord, ed. H. A. Wilson, *HBS*, 55 (London, 1918).

Caesarius of Arles, *Regulae sancti Caesarii episcopi ad virgines*, ed. A. de Vogue & J. Courreau, *Césaire D'Arles: Oeuvres Monastiques*, 1 (Paris, 1988), 170-273.

Eddius Stephanus, *Vita Sancti Wilfridi*, ed. B. Colgrave, *The Life of Bishop Wilfrid by Eddius Stephanus* (Cambridge, 1927).

English kalendars before A.D. 1100, ed. F. Wormald, HBS, 72 (London, 1934).

Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, trans. E. C. Richardson, in *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* (Oxford, 1890).

Felire Oengussi celi de: The Martyrology of Oengus the Culdee, ed. W. Stokes, HBS, 29 (London, 1905).

Felix, *Vita Sancti Guthlaci*, ed. B. Colgrave, *Felix's Life of St. Guthlac* (Cambridge, 1956).

Gesta Sanctorum Patrum Fontanellensis Coenobii, ed. F. Lohier & R. P. J. Laporte (Paris, 1935); Also - *Gesta Abbatum Fontanellensium*, ed. S. Loewenfeld (Hanover, 1886).

Gildas, *De Excidio Britonum*, ed. M. Winterbottom, *Gildas: The Ruin of Britain and Other Works* (London, 1978).

Gregory the Great, *Dialogues*, ed. A. de Vogue & P. Autin, 3 vols. (Paris, 1978-80).

Gregory the Great, *Regulae Pastoralis Liber*, PL 77 (Paris, 1896), 13-128.

Gregory of Tours, *Liber Historiarum X*, ed. B. Krusch & W. Levison, *MGH: SRM*, VI (1951).

Hilary, *Vita Sancti Honorati*, PL, 50.

Isidore, *Etymologiarum siue originum*, ed. W. M. Lindsey (OCT, 1911); Also, *Isidorus Hispalensis: Etymologiae II*, ed. P. K. Marshall, *Etymologies Book II: Rhetoric* (Paris, 1983).

Isidore, *Historia Gothorum Vandalorum Sueborum*, ed. T. Mommsen, *MGH: AA XI* (1894), 267-303; trans. K. B. Wolf, *Isidore of Seville, History of the King of the Goths*, in *Conquerors and Chronicles of Early Medieval Spain* (Liverpool, 1990), 81-110.

Le Martyrology d'Usuard: Texte et Commentaire, ed. J. Dubois (Brussels, 1965).

Liber Pontificalis, ed. L. Duchesne & C. Vogel, *Le Liber Pontificalis, Texte, introduction et commentire*, 3 vols. (Paris, 1886-1892); trans. R. Davis, *The Book of the Pontiffs* (Liverpool, 1989).

Martyrologium Hieronymianum, ed. H. Quentin & H. Delehaye, *Acta Sanctorum*, November, II.2 (Brussels, 1931).

Martyrology of Tallaght, eds. R. I. Best & H. J. Lawlor, HBS, 68 (London, 1931).

Orosius, *Historiarum Aduersum Paganos libri VII*, ed. C. Zangemeister, *CSEL*, V (Vienna, 1882), 1-600; trans. R. J. Deferrari, *Paul Orosius-The Seven Books of History Against the Pagans*, Fathers of the Church, 50 (Washington, 1964).

Paulinus of Nola, *Epistolae*, ed. J. Hartel, *CSEL*, 29 (Vienna, 1894).

Passio et miracula sancti Eadwardi Regis et Martyris, ed. C. E. Fell, *Edward, King and Martyr*, Leeds Texts and Monographs, New Series 3 (Leeds, 1971).

Possidius, *Vita Augustini*, PL 32.

Pseudo Cyprianus, *De duodecim abusivis saeculi*, CSEL iii. 3 (Vienna).

Rufinus-Eusebius, *Die Kirchengeschichte*, ed. E. Schwartz & T. Mommsen, *Eusebius Werke*, 2.2, *Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller* (Leipzig, 1903-1909); trans. H. J. Lawlor & J. E. L. Oulton, *Eusebius - The Ecclesiastical History and the Martyrs of Palestine* (London, 1927).

Simeon of Durham, *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto*, ed. T. Arnold, *Symeonis Monachi Opera Omnia*, 1 (London, 1885).

Simeon of Durham, *Historia Regum*, ed. T. Arnold, *Symeonis Monachi Opera Omnia*, 2 (London, 1885).

Venantius Fortunatus, *Vita Sanctae Radegundis*, liber 1, ed. B. Krusch, *MGH: SRM*, 2 (Hanover, 1888).

Vita Glodesindae, Vita Antiquior, in *Acta Sanctorum*, July 25, 198-224.

Vita Margaritae Scotorum Reginae, ed. W. M. Metcalfe, *Pinkerton's Lives of the Scottish Saints* (Paisley, 1889).

Vita Rusticulae, ed. B. Krusch, *MGH: SRM*, 4 (Hanover, 1888).

Vita Sanctae Balthildis, version 'A', ed. B. Krusch, *MGH: SRM*, 2 (Hanover, 1888).

Vita Sancti Fursei, ed. B. Krusch, *MGH: SRM*, 4 (Hanover, 1902).

Vita Sanctae Genovifae, in *Acta Sanctorum*, January 3, 137-153.

Vita Sanctae Geretrudis, version 'A', ed. B. Krusch, *MGH: SRM*, 2 (Hanover, 1888).

Secondary Sources:

Albertson, C., *Anglo-Saxon Saints and Scholars* (Fordham, 1967).

Bauml, F. H., 'Scribe et Impera: Literacy in Medieval Germany', *Frankia*, 24/1 (1997), 123-32.

Blair, P.H., 'The Historical Writings of Bede', in *La Storiografia Altomedievale Settimane di Studio*, XVII (Spoleto, 1970), 197-221.

Blair, P.H., 'The *Moore Bede*' in *Early English Manuscripts in Facsimile*, IX (Copenhagen, 1959).

Blair, P. H., *The World of Bede* (Cambridge, 1970).

Bitel, L.M., *Isles of the Saints: Monastic Settlement and Christian Community in Early Ireland* (New York, 1990).

Bonner, G., 'St. Cuthbert at Chester-le-Street', *St Cuthbert, His Cult and His Community to AD1200*, ed. G. Bonner et al (Southampton, 1989).

Bonner, G., ed., *Famulus Christi : Essays in the Commemoration of the Thirteenth Centenary of the Birth of the Venerable Bede* (London, 1976).

Bonner, G., et al *St. Cuthbert, His Cult and His Community to A.D.1200* (Southampton, 1989).

Brooks, N., *The Early History of the Church of Canterbury* (Leicester, 1984).

Brown, P., *The Cult of Saints - Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (London, 1981).

Brown, P., 'The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity.' in *Society and the Holy in Late Antiquity* (London, 1982), 103-152.

Brown, P., 'Relics and Social Status in the Age of Gregory of Tours.' in *Society and the Holy in Late Antiquity* (London, 1982), 222-250.

Brown, P., *The Body and Society : Men, Women and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (London, 1988).

Brown, P., 'The Notion of Virginity in the Early Church' in *Christian Spirituality - Origins to the Twelfth Century* (London, 1989), 427-443.

Bullough, D.A., 'The Missions to the English and Picts and their Heritage (to c.800)', *Die Iren und Europa im Früheren Mittelalter*, ed. H. Lowe (Stuttgart, 1982), I.

Bullough, D.A., *Hagiographie, cultures et societes, iv^e - xii^e siecles Etudes Augustiniennes* (Paris, 1981), 339-359.

Burrus, V., 'Word and Flesh - The Bodies and Sexuality of Ascetic Women in Christian Antiquity', *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*, 10 (1994).

Cameron, A., *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire : The Development of Christian Discourse* (Oxford, 1991).

Campbell, J., *Essays in Anglo-Saxon History* (London, 1986).

Campbell, J., 'Elements in the Background to the Life of St. Cuthbert and His Early Cult' in *St. Cuthbert, His Cult and His Community to AD1200* (Southampton, 1989), 3-20.

Chadwick, H.M., *Studies in Anglo-Saxon Institutions* (Cambridge, 1905).

Chaney, W., *The Cult of Kingship in Anglo-Saxon England* (Manchester, 1970).

Clanchy, M., *From Memory to Written Record: England 1066-1307* (Oxford, 1993, 2nd edn.)

Clark, E. A., *Women in the Early Church* (Minnesota, 1983).

Clayton, M., *The Cult of the Virgin Mary in Anglo-Saxon England* (Cambridge, 1990).

Clemoes, P., *The Cult of St. Oswald on the Continent* (Jarrow, 1983).

Coats, G.W., (ed) *Saga, Legend, Tale, Novella, Fable : Narrative Forms in Old Testament Literature*, Journal for Study of the Old Testament, Supplement series, 35 (1985).

J. Coleman, *Ancient and Medieval Memories: Studies in the Reconstruction of the Past* (Cambridge, 1992).

Colgrave, B., 'Bede's Miracle Stories' in Hamilton Thompson, A. *Bede, His Life, Times and Writings* (London, 1935), 201-229.

Collins, R., *Early Medieval Europe 300-1000* (London, 1991).

Cowdrey, H.E.J., 'Bede and the "English People"', in *Journal of Religious History*, vol. II (1981), 501-523.

Croke, B. & A. M. Emmett, ed., *History and Historians in Late Antiquity* (Oxford, 1983).

Cubitt, C., *Anglo-Saxon Church Councils, 650-850* (London, 1995).

Deferrari, R. J., trans., *Early Christian Biographies* (Washington, 1952).

Delehaye, P.H., *The Legends of the Saints - An Introduction to Hagiography*, trans. Crawford, V.M. (London, 1907).

Delehaye, H., *Cinq Leçons sur la methode hagiographique*, Societe des Bollandistes, Subsidia Hagiographica, 21 (Brussels, 1934).

De Vegvar, C.N., 'Saints and Companions to Saints: Anglo-Saxon Royal Women Monastics in Context', *Holy Men and Holy Women: Old English Prose Saints' Lives and their Context*, ed. P.E. Szarmach (New York, 1996).

Dubois, J., 'Le martyrologe metrique de Wandelbert', in *AB*, 79 (1961), 257-293.

Dubois, J., *Les Martyrologes due Moyen Age Latin*, Typologie des Sources du Moyen Age Occidental (Turnhout, 1978).

Dubrow, Heather, *Genre* (London, 1982).

Eckenstein, L., *Woman Under Monasticism* (Cambridge, 1896).

Emmerson, R.K., *Antichrist in the Middle Ages:- A Study of Medieval Apocalypticism, Art, and Literature* (Manchester, 1981).

Faivre, A., *The Emergence of the Laity in the Early Church*. trans. D. Smith (New York, 1990).

Farmer, D., *The Age of Bede* (Harmondsworth, 1985).

Fell, C., 'Hild, Abbess of Streonashalch' in *Hagiography and Medieval Literature: A Symposium*, H. Bekker-Nielson, et al (Odense, 1981), 76-99.

Fell, C., 'Saint Aeðelpryð: a Historical Hagiographical Dichotomy Revisited', *Nottingham Medieval Studies*, 38 (1994), 19-34.

Fichtenau, H., *Living in the Tenth Century - Mentalities and Social Orders*, trans. P. Geary (London, 1991).

Folz, R., 'Tradition hagiographique et culte de Saint Dagobert, roi des Francs', *Le Moyen Age*, 69 (1963), 17-35.

Folz, R., 'Saint Oswald Roi de Northumbrie - Étude d'Hagiographie Royale', *AB*, 98 (1980), 49-74.

Folz, R., *Les Saints Rois du Moyen Âge en Occident (VI^e - XIII^e siècles)* (Brussels, 1984).

Fouracre, P., 'Merovingian History and Merovingian Hagiography', *Past & Present*, 127 (1990), 3-38.

Frantzen, A.J., 'Literature, Archaeology, and Anglo-Saxon Studies: Reconstruction and Deconstruction', *Sutton Hoo: Fifty Years After*, ed. R. Farrell & C. N. de Vegvar, *American Early Medieval Studies*, 2 (1992).

Geary, P.J., *Before France and Germany: the Transformation of the Merovingian World* (Oxford, 1988).

Geary, P. J., *Phantoms of Remembrance: Memory and Oblivion at the End of the First Millenium* ((Princeton, 1994).

Gerberding, R.A., *The Rise of the Carolingians and the Liber Historiae Francorum* (Oxford, 1987).

Gerberding, R.A., 'Review of Walter Goffart's, *The Narrators of Barbarian History (AD550-800)*', *Speculum*, 65 (1990), 674-676.

Genicot, L., ed. *Typologie des Sources du moyen âge Occidental* (Turnhout, 1972).

E. Gilbert, 'Saint Wilfrid's Church at Hexham', in *Saint Wilfrid at Hexham*, Kirby, 81-113.

Godfrey, J., 'The Place of the Double Monastery in the Anglo-Saxon Minster System', in *Famulus Christi: Essays in Commemoration of the Thirteenth Centenary of the Birth of the Venerable Bede*, ed. Bonner, G (London, 1976), 344-350.

Goffart, W., *The Narrators of Barbarian History, AD 500-800*. (Princeton, 1988).

Goffart, W., 'The *Historia Ecclesiastica*: Bede's Agenda and Ours,' in *Haskins Society Journal*, 2, (1990), 29-45.

Greenaway, D., 'Authority, Conversation and Observation in Henry of Huntingdon's *Historia Anglorum*', *Anglo-Norman Studies*, xviii (1995), 105-122.

Grierson, P., 'Abbot Fulco and the Date of the *Gesta abbatum Fontanellensium*', *English Historical Review*, lv (1940), 275-284.

Gurevich, A.J., *Categories of Medieval Culture*, trans. G.L. Campbell (London, 1985).

Gurevich, A., *Medieval Popular Culture: Problems of Belief and Perception*, trans. J.M. Bak, & P.A. Hollingsworth (Cambridge, 1988).

Gurevich, A., *A Historical Anthropology of the Middle Ages*, ed., J. Howlett (Cambridge, 1992).

Halporn, J.W., 'Literary History and Generic Expectations in the *Passio and Acta Perpetuae*', *Vigiliae Christianae*, 45 (1991), 223-241.

Hamilton Thompson, A., ed., *Bede : His Life, Times and Writings* (Oxford, 1935).

Hanning, R. W., *The Vision of History in Early Britain : From Gildas to Geoffrey of Monmouth* (London, 1966).

Harrison, K., *The Framework of Anglo-Saxon History to AD 900* (Cambridge, 1976).

Heene, K., 'Audire, Legere, Vulgo: An Attempt to Define Public Use and Comprehensibility of Carolingian Hagiography', in *Latin and the Romance Languages in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. R. Wright (Pennsylvania, 1991), 146-163.

Heffernan, T.J., *Sacred Biography : Saints and Their Biographers in the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1988).

Herbert, M., *Iona, Kells and Derry: The History and Hagiography of Columba* (Oxford, 1988).

Herrin, J., *The Formation of Christendom* (London, 1987).

Higgitt, J., 'The Dedication Inscription at Jarrow and its Context', *The Antiquaries Journal*, 59 (1979), 343-374.

Hillgarth, J. N., *Christianity and Paganism, 350-750* (Philadelphia, 1985).

Hollis, S., *Anglo-Saxon Women and the Church* (Woodbridge, 1992).

Hughes, K., *Early Christian Ireland : Introduction to the Sources* (London, 1972).

Innes, M., & R. McKitterick, 'The Writing of History', in *Carolingian Culture : Emulation and Innovation*, ed. R. McKitterick (Cambridge, 1994), 193-220.

Innes, M., 'Memory, Orality and Literacy in an Early Medieval Society', *Past & Present*, 158 (1998), 1-30.

Jenkins, C., 'Bede as Exegete and Theologian', in *BLTW*, 152-200.

John, E., 'The Social and Political Problems of the Early English Church,' in *Agricultural History Review*, 18 (1970), supplement, 39-63.

Jones, C.W., *Saints' Lives and Chronicles in Early England* (New York, 1947).

Jones, P.F., *A Concordance to the Historia Ecclesiastica of Bede* (Massachusetts, 1929).

Kelly, S., 'Anglo-Saxon Lay Society and the Written Word', in *The Uses of Literacy in Early Medieval Europe*, ed. R. McKitterick (Cambridge, 1990), 36-62.

Kemp, E.W., *Canonization and Authority in the Western Church* (London, 1948).

Kendall, C.B., 'Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica*: The Rhetoric of Faith', *Medieval Eloquence: Studies in the Theory and Practice of Medieval Rhetoric*, ed. J.J. Murphy (Berkeley, 1978), 145-172.

Kirby, D.P., 'Bede's Native Sources for the *Historia Ecclesiastica*', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, 48 (1965), 341-371.

Kirby, D.P. 'Northumbria in the Time of Wilfrid', in Kirby, D.P. (ed.) *Saint Wilfrid at Hexham* (Newcastle, 1974), 1-34.

Kirby, D.P., 'King Ceowulf of Northumbria and the *Historia Ecclesiastica*', in *Studia Celtica*, xiv/xv (1979/80), 168-173.

Kirby, D.P., 'Bede, Eddius Stephanus and the 'Life of Wilfrid'', *English Historical Review*, 98 (1983), 101-114.

Kirby, D.P., *The Earliest English Kings* (London, 1991).

Kirby, D.P., *Bede's Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum: Its Contemporary Setting* (Jarrow, 1992).

Klaniczay, G., *The Uses of Supernatural Power: The Transformation of Popular Religion in Medieval Early-Modern Europe*, trans. Singerman, S., ed. Margolis, K. (Cambridge, 1990).

Laistner, M.L.W., 'The Library of the Venerable Bede', in *BLTW*, 237-266.

Lapidge, M., 'The Saintly Life in Anglo-Saxon England', in *The Cambridge Companion to Old English Literature*, eds. Malcolm Godden & Michael Lapidge (Cambridge, 1991), 243-263.

Lawrence, C.M., *Medieval Monasticism* (London, 1984).

Leclercq, J., *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God*, trans. C. Misrahi, (London, 1978).

Lerner, G., *The Creation of Patriarchy* (Oxford, 1986).

Levison, W., *England and the Continent in the Eighth Century* (London, 1956).

Loyn, H.R., 'Bede's Kings : A Comment on the Attitude of Bede to the Nature of Secular Kingship', in *Eternal Values in Medieval Life*, ed. N. Crossley-Holland, *Trivium*, 26 (1991), 54-64.

Markus, R. A., *Bede and the Tradition of Ecclesiastical Historiography* (Jarrow, 1975).

Markus, R.A., 'Chronicle and Theology : Prosper of Aquitaine', in *The Inheritance of Historiography 350-900*, eds. Christopher Holdsworth & T. P. Wiseman (Exeter, 1986), 31-44.

Markus, R.A., *The End of Ancient Christianity* (Cambridge, 1990).

Markus, R.A., 'Gregory the Great on Kings : Rulers and Preachers in the Commentary on I Kings', in *The Church and Sovereignty c590-1918*, ed. D.Wood (Oxford, 1991), 7-22.

Markus, R.A., *Signs and Meanings: World and Text in Ancient Christianity* (Liverpool, 1996).

Mayr-Harting, H., *The Venerable Bede, the Rule of Saint Benedict, and Social Class* (Jarrow, 1976).

Mayr-Harting, H., *The Coming of Christianity to Anglo-Saxon England* (London, 3rd ed. 1991).

Mayr-Harting, H., 'Bede's Patristic Thinking as an Historian', in *Historiographie im frühen Mittelalter*, ed. A. Scharer & G. Scheibelreiter (Munich, 1994), 367-374.

McClure, J., 'Bede's Old Testament Kings', in *Ideal and Reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Society*, ed. Wormald, P. (Oxford, 1983), 76-98.

McClure, J., 'Bede and the Life of Ceolfrid', in *Peritia*, 3 (1984), 71-84.

McClure, J., 'Bede's *Notes on Genesis* and the Training of the Anglo-Saxon Clergy', in *The Bible in the Medieval World: Essays in Memory of Beryl Smalley*, Studies in Church History, Subsidia 4 (Oxford, 1985),

McCready, W., *Miracles and the Venerable Bede* (Toronto, 1994).

McCulloh, J.M., 'Historical Martyrologies in the Benedictine Cultural Tradition', in *Benedictine Culture 750-1050*, eds. W. Lourdaux & D. Verhelst, *Medievalia Lovansensia*, series 1/studio xi (Leuven, 1983), 114-131.

McKitterick, R., *The Carolingians and the Written Word* (Cambridge, 1989).

McKitterick, R., 'The Audience for Latin Historiography in the Early Middle Ages: Text Transmission and Manuscript Dissemination', in *Historiographie im frühen Mittelalter*, ed. A. Scharer & G. Scheibelreiter (Munich, 1994), 96-114.

McLaughlin, E., 'Women, Power and the Pursuit of Holiness in Medieval Christianity', in *Feminist Theology - A Reader*, ed. A. Loades (London, 199), 94-120.

McNamara, J.A., 'The Need to Give: Suffering and Female Sanctity in the Middle Ages', *Images of Sainthood in Medieval Europe*, ed. R. Blumenfeld-Kosinski & T. Szell (New York, 1991).

Meyendorff, J., *Imperial Unity and Christian Divisions - The Church 450-680AD* (New York, 1989).

Meyvaert, P., *Bede and Gregory the Great* (Jarrow, 1964).

Meyvaert, P., 'Bede the Scholar', in *Famulus Christi*, ed. G. Bonner (London, 1976), 40-69.

Mitchell, K., 'Saints and Public Christianity in the *Historiae* of Gregory of Tours', in *Religion, Culture and Society in the Early Middle Ages - Studies in Honour of Richard E. Sullivan*, eds, T.F.X. Noble & J.J. Contreni (Kalamazoo, 1987), 77-94.

Morse, R., *Truth and Convention in the Middle Ages : Rhetoric, Representation, and Reality* (Cambridge, 1991).

Nelson, J.L., 'Queens as Jezebels: The Careers of Brunhild and Balthild in Merovingian History', in *Medieval Women*, ed. D. Baker (Oxford, 1978), 31-77.

Nelson, J.L., 'Women and the Word in the Earlier Middle Ages' in *Women in the Church*, ed. W.J. Cheils & D. Wood, *Studies in Church History*, 27, (Oxford, 1990), 53-78.

Nicholson, J., '*Feminae Gloriosae*: Women in the Age of Bede', in *Medieval Women*, ed. D. Baker, (Oxford, 1978), 15-29.

O'Croinin, D., 'Rath Melsigi, Willibrord, and the Earliest Echternach Manuscripts', *Peritia*, 3 (1984), 17-49.

Petersen, J.M., 'Dead or Alive? The Holy Man as Healer in East and West in the Late Sixth Century', in *Journal of Medieval History*, 9 (1983), 91-98.

Ray, R., 'Bede's *Vera lex Historiae*', *Speculum*, 55(1980), 1-21.

Ray, R., 'What do we Know About Bede's Commentaries?', in *Recherches de Théologie ancienne et médiévale*, 49 (1982), 5-20.

Ray, R., 'The Triumph of Greco-Roman Rhetorical Assumptions in Pre-Carolingian Historiography', in *The Inheritance of Historiography 350-900*, ed. C. Holdsworth & T.P. Wiseman (Exeter, 1986), 67-84.

Richter, M., *Medieval Ireland - The Enduring Tradition* (London, 1988).

Ricoeur, P., 'History and Rhetoric', in *The Social Responsibility of the Historian*, ed. F. Bedarida (Oxford, 1994), 7-23.

Ridyard, S.J., *The Royal Saints of Anglo-Saxon England* (Cambridge, 1988).

Rollason, D.W., *The Mildrith Legend: A Study in Early Medieval Hagiography in England*, (Leicester, 1982).

Rollason, D.W., 'The Cults of Murdered Royal Saints in Anglo-Saxon England', in *ASE*, 11 (1983), 1-22.

Rollason, D.W., *Saints and Relics in Anglo-Saxon England*, (Oxford, 1989).

Rollason, D.W., 'Hagiography and Politics in Early Northumbria', *Holy Men and Holy Women - Old English Prose Saints' Lives and Their Context*, ed. P.E. Szarmach (New York, 1996), 96-114.

Roper, M., 'The Donation of Hexham', *Saint Wilfrid at Hexham*, ed D.P. Kirby (Newcastle, 1974), 169-171.

Roper, M., 'Wilfrid's Landholdings in Northumbria', in *Saint Wilfrid at Hexham*, ed. D.P. Kirby, 61-79.

Rosenthal, J., 'Anglo-Saxon Attitudes: Men's Sources, Women's History', *Medieval Women and the Sources of Medieval History*, ed. J. Rosenthal (London, 1990).

Salisbury, J.E., *Church Fathers, Independent Virgins* (London, 1991).

Schneider, D.B., *Anglo-Saxon Women in the Religious Life: A Study of the Status and Position of Women in an Early Medieval Society*, Unpublished PhD Thesis (Cambridge, 1985).

Schulenberg, J.T., 'Female Sanctity: Public and Private Roles, c.500-1100', *Women and Power in the Middle Ages*, ed. M. Erler & M Kowaleski (London, 1988), 102-25.

Schulenberg, J.T., 'Saints' Lives as a Source for the History of Women', *Medieval Women and the Sources of Medieval History*, ed. J. Rosenthal (London, 1990), 285-320.

Sharpe, R., 'Some Problems Concerning the Organization of the Church in Early Medieval Ireland', *Peritia*, 3 (1984), 230-70.

Simpson, L., 'The King Alfred/Cuthbert Episode in the *Historia sancto Cuthberto*: Its Significance for Mid-Tenth Century English History', in *St. Cuthbert, Cult & Comm.*, 397-411.

Sims-Williams, P., 'Continental Influence at Bath Monastery in the Seventh Century', *ASE*, IV (1975), 1-11.

Sims-Williams, P., *Religion and Literature in Western England, 600-800*, in *Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England*, 3 (Cambridge, 1990).

Smith, J., 'The Hagiography of Hucbald of St. Amand', *Studi Medievali*, 35 (1994), 517-542.

Smyth, A., *Warlords and Holy Men*, (London, 1984).

Sot, M., *Gesta Episcoporum, Gesta Abbatum*, Typologie des sources, (Turnhout, 1981).

Stancliffe, C., 'Kings Who Opted Out', in *Ideal and Reality*, ed. P. Wormald et al., 154-76.

Straw, C., *Gregory the Great: Perfection in Imperfection* (London, 1988).

Stock, B., *The Implications of Literacy: Written Language and Models of Interpretation in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Princeton, 1983).

Thacker, A.T., *The Social and Continental Background of Early Anglo-Saxon Hagiography*, D.Phil (Oxford, 1976).

Thacker, A.T., 'Some Terms for Noblemen in Anglo-Saxon England, c650-900', in *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History*, 2, ed., D. Brown et al., BAR British Series 92 (1981), 201-236.

Thacker, A.T., 'Bede's Ideal of Reform', in *Ideal and Reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Society*, ed. P. Wormald et al., (Oxford, 1983), 130-153.

Thacker, A.T., 'Lindisfarne and the Origins of the Cult of St. Cuthbert', in *St. Cuthbert, Cult & Comm.*, 103-122.

Thacker, A.T., 'Monks, Preaching and Pastoral Care in Early Anglo-Saxon England', *Pastoral Care Before the Parish*, ed. J. Blair & R. Sharpe (Leicester, 1992), 137-170.

Thacker, A.T., '*Membra Disjecta*: The Division of the Body and the Diffusion of the Cult', *Oswald-Northumbrian King to European Saint*, ed. C. Stancliffe & E. Cambridge (Stamford, 1995), 97-127.

Thacker, A.T., 'Bede and the Irish', in *Beda Venerabilis: Historian, Monk and Northumbrian*, ed. L.A.J.R. Houwen & A.A. McDonald (Groningen, 1996), 31-59.

Thacker, A. T., 'Memorializing Gregory the Great: the Origin and Transmission of a Papal Cult in the Seventh and Early Eighth Centuries', *Early Medieval Europe*, 7 (1998), 59-84.

Thiebaux, M., *The Writings of Medieval Women*, 13, series B (New York, 1987).

Thomas, C., *Bede, Archaeology and the Cult of Relics* (Jarrow, 1973).

Thompson, P., 'St. Aethelthryth: The Making of History from Hagiography', *Studies in English Language and Literature: 'Doubt wisely' - Papers in Honour of E.G. Stanley*, ed. M.J. Toswell & E.M. Tyler (London, 1996).

Van Caenegem, R.C., *Guide to the Sources of Medieval History* (Amsterdam, 1978).

Wallace-Hadrill, J. M., 'Gregory of Tours and Bede: Their Views on the personal Qualities of Kings', *Fruhmittelalterliche Studien*, 2 (1968), 31-44.

Wallace-Hadrill, J.M., *Early Germanic Kingship in England and on the Continent* (Oxford, 1971).

Wallace-Hadrill, J.M., *The Frankish Church* (Oxford, 1983).

Wallace-Hadrill, J.M., *The Barbarian West 400-1000* (Oxford, 1985).

Wallace-Hadrill, J.M., *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People - A Historical Commentary* (Oxford, 1988).

Wallace-Hadrill, J.M., 'Bede and Plummer', originally in *Early Medieval History*, (Oxford, 1975), reprinted in *Comm.*, (Oxford, 1988), xv-xxxv.

Ward, B., *Miracles and the Medieval Mind* (Aldershot, 1987).

Ward, B., *The Venerable Bede* (London, 1990).

Warner, M., *Alone of all her Sex: The Myth and the Cult of the Virgin Mary* (London, 1976).

Weinstein, D. & Bell, R.M., *Saints and Society: The Two Worlds of Western Christendom, 1000-1700*, (London, 1982).

Wilmart, A., 'Un Témain Anglo-Saxon du Calendrier Metrique d'York', *Revue Benedictine*, XLVI (1934),

Wilson, D., ed., *The Archaeology of Anglo-Saxon England* (Cambridge, 1976).

Wilson, S., ed. *Saints and their Cults: Studies in Religious Sociology, Folklore and History* (Cambridge, 1983).

Wood, I.N., 'Forgery in Merovingian Hagiography', *Fälschungen im Mittelalter*, V (1988), 369-384.

Wood, I. N., 'Saint Wandrille and its Hagiography', in *Church and Chronicle in the Middle Ages - Essays Presented to John Taylor*, eds. I. Wood & G. A. Loud (London, 1991), 1-14.

Wood, I.N., 'Ripon, Francia and the Franks Casket in the Early Middle Ages', *Northern History*, XXVI (1990), 1-19.

Wood, I.N., 'The Mission of Augustine of Canterbury to the English', *Speculum*, 69 (1994), 1-17.

Wood, I. N., *The Merovingian Kingdoms 450-751* (Harlow, 1994).

Wood, I.N., *The Most Holy Abbot Ceolfrid* (Jarrow, 1995).

Wormald, P., 'Bede and Benedict Biscop', in *Famulus Christi*, 141-169.

Wormald, P., 'Bede, Beowulf and the Conversion of the Anglo-Saxon Aristocracy', in R.T. Farrell (ed), *Bede and Anglo-Saxon England*, B.A.R. 46 (1978), 32-95.

Wormald, P., *Bede and the Conversion of England: The Charter Evidence* (Jarrow, 1984).

Yorke, B.A.E., 'The Vocabulary of Anglo-Saxon Overlordship', in D. Brown, et al (ed), *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History*, 2, BAR British Series 92 (1981), 171-200.

Wright, N., *History and Literature in Late Antiquity and the Early Medieval West* (Aldershot, 1995).

Yorke, B.A.E., 'Sisters Under the Skin? Anglo-Saxon Nuns and Nunneries in Southern England', in *Reading Medieval Studies*, XV (1989), 95-117.

Yorke, B.A.E., *Kings and Kingdoms of Early Anglo-Saxon England*, (London, 1990).

