

THE AUTHORITY OF SAINTS AND THEIR MAKERS IN
OLD ENGLISH HAGIOGRAPHY

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by

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Claire Louise Watson, 'The Authority of Saints and Their Makers in Old English Hagiography'.

Abstract.

The miracles performed by saints in Old English hagiography provide the starting point for this thesis, and serve as a route into exploration of wider issues within the saints' lives. The thesis is structured around a series of case-studies based on the classifications of sanctity found in the Anglo-Saxon Litanies, with chapters on Virgins, Confessors, Martyrs and Apostles, which explore the presentation of miracles in an Ælfrician and anonymous life of each type of saint. Each case-study assesses the manner in which the Latin biographies of established saintly figures are handled by their vernacular translators, and the potential agenda of Old English hagiographers suggested by this treatment.

The manipulation of Latin tradition in the lives is revelatory regarding perceptions of authorship and sanctity in the early medieval period, and questions of textual and divine authority are raised in the analysis of each hagiography. The exploration of miracles is framed by the assessment of these two interrelated concepts within the lives. Assessment of inscribed authority centres on the textual and personal authority advocated by the author of the saintly biography, investigating their claimed and actual adherence to tradition and attitudes to orthodoxy. Exploration of divine authority assesses the validation a saint is said to receive from the Lord in their biography, for which the performance of miracles can serve as a primary channel. The thesis explores the relationship between these kinds of authorization, and the different approaches to these notions found in the Ælfrician and anonymous corpora. It argues that suggestive differences exist between Ælfrician lives and the anonymous corpus in these areas, and suggests that Ælfric's treatment of saints' miracles was intended to further the spiritual wonders he envisaged himself to be enacting.

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List of Abbreviations

<i>ASE</i>	<i>Anglo-Saxon England</i>
ASPR	Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records
<i>BHL</i>	<i>Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina Antiquae et Mediae Aetatis</i> , ed. Socii Bollandiani, 2 vols (Brussels; Société des Bollandistes, 1893- 1901)
CSASE	Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England
CCCM	<i>Corpus Christianorum. Continuatio mediaevalis</i> (Turnhout: Brepols, 1966-)
CCSL	<i>Corpus Christianorum. Series Latina</i> (Turnhout: Brepols, 1953-)
CSEL	<i>Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum</i> (Vienna: Academy of Vienna, 1866-)
EETS	<i>Early English Text Society</i> - OS Original Series - SS Supplementary Series
<i>ELN</i>	<i>English Language Notes</i>

- FC* *The Fathers of the Church Series* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1947-)
- LCL* Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press and London: Heinemann, 1912-)
- LSE* *Leeds Studies in English*
- MHG* *Monumenta Germaniae Historica* (Berlin: Die Gessellschaft für Deutschlands altere Geshichtskunde, 1826-)
- SS. Scriptores
- NPNF* *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Series 2, ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace (New York: The Christian Literature Publishing Company, 1890-1900)
- OED* *Oxford English Dictionary*
- PG* *Patrologiae cursus completus. Series Graeca*, ed. J.-P. Migne, 161 vols in 166 (Paris: Garnier, 1857-99)
- PL* *Patrologiae cursus completus. Series Latina*, ed. J.-P. Migne, 221 vols in 222 (Paris: Garnier, 1844-1902)

PLS *Patrologia Latinae Supplementum*, ed. A. Hamman, 3 vols (Paris:
Garnier, 1958-63)

The Old English Hagiographic Corpus.

Hagiography is defined by the *Oxford English Dictionary* as ‘the writing of the lives of saints; saints’ lives as a branch of literature or legend’,¹ but in the Anglo-Saxon period, the creation of a saint was in part dependent on hagiography. The nature of medieval sanctity is summarized by Head:

saints were those persons who had been judged by God to be worthy of entrance to the kingdom of heaven immediately after death. The word used to designate a saint in Latin (*sanctus* or *sancta*) had as its root meaning a “holy person”. Over time the word slowly acquired the status of a title.²

As Lapidge notes, ‘in the Anglo-Saxon period there were no controls on the process of canonization of a saint’,³ and prior to the advent of papal canonization in the early thirteenth century,⁴ the question of which individuals merited this title lacked clarity. Delehaye has commented on the various means by which individuals attained sanctity, distinguishing between historical individuals sanctioned by ecclesiastical tradition; fictional characters eventually considered as saints; and individuals whose sanctity had its roots in local custom and devotion:

¹ *OED* s.v. ‘hagiography’ 2.

² Thomas F.X. Noble and Thomas Head, *Soldiers of Christ, Saints and Saints’ Lives from Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1995), p.xiv, hereafter Noble and Head 1995. For a corresponding definition, see Thomas Head, *Hagiography and the Cult of Saints – The Diocese of Orleans, 800-1200* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p.10, hereafter Head 1990.

³ Michael Lapidge, “The Saintly Life in Anglo-Saxon England”, in *The Cambridge Companion to Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. Malcolm Godden and Michael Lapidge (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991): 243-63, here p.245, hereafter Lapidge 1991b.

⁴ Head 1990, p.4.

Sometimes it happened that the discovery of a grave, or of a series of burials of which the identity was not certainly established, gave rise to a local devotion, which might attain a long popularity. Most of these saints of questionable authenticity (though in varying degrees) have found hagiographers ready to stand up for them.¹

As such, the attainment of sanctity often represented a local, social phenomenon. In such cases, a saint's supposed deeds and miracles would earn them their reputation, which would then be confirmed by their posthumous incorruption and miracles. In some cases, the writing of a *Life* of that saint would act as validation and recognition of their sanctity. Hagiography and sanctity were thus circular notions in the medieval period: the subject of a hagiography had to be a saint, whilst a saint was validated by a hagiography.

The main function of hagiography purported to be the edification of its readers or hearers:

Hagiography aims to educate and to edify: accordingly its subject must present an example of Christian virtue in such a way as to encourage emulation.²

However, as many scholars have noted, hagiography could serve a variety of functions, both pious and non-pious:

¹ Hippolyte Delehaye, *The Legends of the Saints*, trans. Donald Attwater, rev. Tom O'Loughlan (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1998), p.87, hereafter Delehaye 1998.

² Susan Ridyard, *The Royal Saints of Anglo-Saxon England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p.9, hereafter Ridyard 1988.

from the beginning, saints' lives have been intentionally propagandistic. Just as they reflected profound spiritual truths, they also sometimes manipulated those truths to generate monastic propaganda to encourage economic support for advancing the causes and ideology of the Christian faith.¹

The content of hagiography thus cannot be interpreted at face value, and as Rosemary Woolf points out, saints' lives do not represent the historical biographies suggested by their title, but rather a stylised literary genre:

The saint's life is a highly conventional form, and it must never be measured by the criteria which would be relevant to a modern biography. We should no more look to it for historical or psychological truth than we would to a medieval romance. In origins it is part panegyric, part epic, part romance, part sermon, and historical fact dissolves within the conventions of these forms.²

As Woolf's comments highlight, a marked feature of hagiography is its apparently formulaic nature: whilst a high proportion of saintly biographies depict subtly different portraits of their subject, the saint's life generally conforms to a conventional pattern, as outlined by Delehay:

¹ Leslie A. Donovan, ed., *Women Saints' Lives in Old English Prose* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1999), p.9, hereafter Donovan 1999.

² Rosemary Woolf, "Saints' Lives", in *Continuations and Beginnings; Studies in Old English Literature*, ed. Eric Gerald Stanley (London: Nelson, 1966): 37-65, here p.40.

If completeness is aimed at, the biography will fall into three parts. Before birth: the saint's nationality and parentage, his future greatness miraculously foretold; his lifetime: childhood and youth, the most important things he did, his virtues and miracles; after death: his cultus and miracles. In numberless lives of saints at least one of the points in this programme is supplied "from stock", and at times the whole of it is no more than a string of such commonplaces.¹

Replication of motifs within this recognized paradigm is common. The level of duplication between saints' lives, while providing testament to the working methods of hagiographers, also highlights a fundamental aspect of medieval perceptions of sanctity:

the lives of the just are more than similar: they are, in a sense, identical [...] Indeed, the notion that "the saints have all things in common" is a hagiographic commonplace. Gregory of Tours goes so far as to pose the question whether we should refer to "the lives of the saints," or simply "the life of the saints," and he chooses the latter.²

However, despite the rigid and formulaic nature of hagiography and the commonality which exists between all saints, the specific details of a given saint's life remain important resources for study of the society and culture in which they were produced:

¹ Delehay 1998, pp.72-3.

² James W. Earl, "Typology and Iconographic Style in Early Medieval Hagiography", in *Typology and English Medieval Literature*, ed. Hugh T. Keenan (New York: AMS Press, 1992): 89-120, here p.91, hereafter Earl 1992.

Composed of *topoi* as they are, they are nonetheless differentiated in the choice and arrangement of *topoi*; and while little can be learned from *vitae* in the way of specific factual data, changes in religious devotion and attitudes towards a great variety of activities can be inferred from differences in subject matter, types of miracles, and structure of *vitae* of different periods.¹

The value of hagiography as a resource for studying the society in which it was created has been recognised by recent scholarship:

Since the 1930s, social and economic historians also have recognized the value of hagiography for the study of daily life, material culture, and even commerce. There now exists a multiplicity of approaches to the study of hagiography, ranging from concentration on political uses of saintly biography to the search for gendered meanings in these allegorical texts.²

This thesis employs one such approach, exploring Old English saints' lives for what they reveal about authorial attitudes and perceptions of sanctity in the writings of vernacular hagiographers.

The genre of hagiography is extensive:

¹ Patrick J. Geary, *Furta Sacra, Thefts of Relics in the Central Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), p.11, hereafter Geary 1978. For a similar approach, see D.W. Rollason, *The Mildrith Legend: A Study in Early Medieval Hagiography in England* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1982), p.6, hereafter Rollason 1982.

² Lynda L. Coon, *Sacred Fictions: Holy Women and Hagiography in Late Antiquity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997), p.5, hereafter Coon 1997.

The *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina* alone lists more than eight thousand saints' lives, and in English there are hundreds of examples extant in verse and prose.¹

The Middle Ages witnessed a high point in the creation and dissemination of hagiographic texts, and the popularity of the genre within this period is well documented:

Although the narratives of saints' lives originated in late antiquity, as a literary genre such texts were most important to the culture of the Middle Ages. With over a thousand texts surviving in medieval manuscripts written either in Latin or in vernacular versions, saints' lives were possibly the most popular literary genre of medieval Europe.²

When the evident popularity of hagiographic narrative in the Middle Ages is considered, the attempts to provide saints' lives in the vernacular in Anglo-Saxon England are unsurprising. The educational reforms instituted by Alfred which advocated the translation of central theological works into the vernacular are likely to have influenced the trend for such undertakings,³ as the transmission of hagiographic texts into Old English ensured them a higher degree of accessibility. Additionally, the Benedictine Reform movement provided the occasion for a flourishing of religious literature during the Anglo-Saxon period. Ælfric was intimately connected with the

¹ Thomas J. Heffernan, *Sacred Biography, Saints and Their Biographers in the Middle Ages* (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p.13, hereafter Heffernan 1992. See *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina Antiquiae et Mediae Aetatis*, ed. Socii Bollandiani, 2 vols (Brussels: Société des Bollandistes, 1893-1901), hereafter BHL.

² Donovan 1999, p.5.

³ See F.M. Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England, The Oxford History of England*, ed. Sir George Clark (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), p.459, hereafter Stenton 1971.

reform movement, as his mentor, Æthelwold, was one of its key figures alongside Dunstan and Oswald.¹ As Stenton remarks, '[t]he outstanding feature of this phase was the development of a new religious literature in the English language',² a phenomenon amply displayed in the hagiography of the period.

The vernacular hagiography of Anglo-Saxon England is conventionally divided by scholars into two corpora: Ælfrician texts, and anonymous or 'Non-Ælfrician' works. The latter terminology, which essentially defines the anonymous corpus as what it is not, betrays the current scholarly prioritisation of Ælfrician works over those which have no known author, and Magennis recently commented on 'the variety of hagiographical material in circulation in late Anglo-Saxon England (material which scholarly preoccupation with Ælfric perhaps tends to overlook)'.³ The prominence of Ælfric is unsurprising, given that he composed around two-thirds of the extant hagiographic corpus,⁴ and Wilcox's comment that 'Ælfric was the most important

¹ For a brief discussion of the Benedictine Reform see Stenton 1971, pp.433-62; and Jonathan Wilcox, ed., *Ælfric's Prefaces* (Durham: Durham Medieval Texts, 1996), especially p.3, hereafter Wilcox 1996.

² Stenton 1971, p.457.

³ Hugh Magennis, "St. Mary of Egypt and Ælfric: Unlikely Bedfellows in Cotton Julius E.vii?" in *The Legend of Mary of Egypt in Medieval Insular Hagiography*, ed. Erich Poppe and Bianca Ross (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1996): 99-112, here p.111, hereafter Magennis 1996a. Despite this scholarly preoccupation with Ælfric, however, a significant body of scholarship on the anonymous corpus does exist. For some representative studies of individual lives, see Hugh Magennis, ed., *The Anonymous Old English Legend of the Seven Sleepers* (Durham: Durham Medieval Texts, 1994), hereafter Magennis 1994; Hugh Magennis, ed., *The Old English Life of St. Mary of Egypt* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2002), hereafter Magennis 2002; Mary Clayton and Hugh Magennis, eds., *The Old English Lives of St. Margaret*, CSASE 9 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), hereafter Clayton and Magennis 1994; Raymond J.S. Grant, ed., *Three Homilies from Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 41* (Ottawa: Techumseh Press, 1982), hereafter Grant 1982; Richard F. Johnson, "Archangel in the Margins: St. Michael in the Homilies of Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 41", *Traditio* 53 (1998): 63-91, hereafter Johnson 1998; Rollason 1982; and Joanna Proud, "The Old English Life of Saint Pantaleon and its Manuscript Context", *Bulletin of John Rylands University Library* 79, no. 3 (Autumn 1997), 'Anglo-Saxon Texts and Their Contexts', ed. Gale Owen-Crocker: 119-132.

⁴ The corpus of hagiographic texts employed in this study follows E. Gordon Whatley's 'List of Old English Saints' Lives'. See E. Gordon Whatley, "An Introduction to the Study of Old English Prose Hagiography: Sources and Resources", in *Holy Men and Holy Women: Old English Prose Saints' Lives and Their Contexts*, ed. Paul E. Szarmach (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996): 3-32, here pp.5-7, hereafter Whatley 1996 and Szarmach 1996. In addition to these saints' lives and remaining homiletic items in the *Catholic Homilies* and *Lives of Saints* collections, Ælfric composed a *Grammar*, *Colloquy*, Old Testament translations, letters and many other pieces. For an account of his work see P.A.M. Clemoes, "The Chronology of Ælfric's Works", in *The Anglo Saxons. Studies in Some Aspects of their History and Culture, Presented to B. Dickens*, ed. Peter Clemoes (London: Bowes and Bowes, 1959): 212-47, especially pp.244-5.

homilist in Anglo-Saxon England and the most prolific writer of Old English'¹ gives a fair impression of the standard and scope of his work.² The known facts of Ælfric's life are well documented: he lived c.945 to c.1010,³ and composed over sixty saints' lives,⁴ found predominantly in the two series of his *Catholic Homilies* and his *Lives of Saints* collection.⁵ The *Catholic Homilies* cannot be dated precisely, and according to Godden,

We can say that somewhere between 990 and 994 Ælfric completed CH I, added the preface and sent a copy to Sigeric at Canterbury [...] A year or so later he completed CH II (already 'in hand' when he despatched CH I), added the preface and admonition against drunkenness, and sent copies to Sigeric and presumably to Æthelweard and others who had been sent CH I.⁶

The date of the *Lives of Saints* must also remain uncertain, and as Joyce Hill summarizes:

¹ Wilcox 1996, p.1.

² Similar comments are found throughout Ælfrician scholarship, for instance Needham's assessment that 'Ælfric, so far as the surviving documents allow us to judge, was by far the most prolific, and by far the most popular, of the Anglo-Saxon homilists'. See G.I. Needham, ed., *Ælfric, Lives of Three English Saints* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1976), p.11.

³ The dates of Ælfric's life are given as c.950-1010 in Malcolm Godden, *Ælfric's Catholic Homilies, Introduction, Commentary and Glossary*, EETS SS 18 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p.xxi, hereafter Godden 2000; and c.945-1010 in Wilcox 1996, pp.6 and 14. Further details of Ælfric's life can be found in Godden 2000, p.xxi; Wilcox 1996, pp.2-15; and Caroline Louisa White, *Ælfric, A New Study of His Life and Writings* (Boston: Lamson, Wolfe and Co., 1898), repr. Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1974, pp.35-100.

⁴ See Whatley 1996, pp.5-7.

⁵ Ælfric's *Life of St. Vincent* was not originally issued as part of the *Lives of Saints* collection, but was composed after the other hagiographies, perhaps in response to a request from a patron as discussed in Susan E. Irvine, "Bones of Contention: The Context of Ælfric's Homily on St. Vincent", *ASE* 19 (1990): 117-32.

⁶ Godden 2000, p.xxxv.

Ælfric's Old English preface indicates that the *Lives of Saints* collection was worked on over a period of time; composition and completion is datable to the decade 992-1002.¹

Despite his prominence, Ælfric was not the first to have provided saints' lives in the vernacular. Whilst the dates of many anonymous saints' lives remain uncertain, items found in the Blickling and Vercelli Homilies certainly pre-date Ælfric.² Around thirty anonymous saints' lives are extant, although as Scragg comments in his discussion of pre-Ælfrician saints' lives, it is probable that the surviving material represents only a fraction of that written:

Accident of transmission is the most likely explanation for our lack of texts of saints' lives, since most of those that we have are in unique copies, many of them in fragments only.³

There is thus uncertainty surrounding the original extent of the anonymous hagiographic corpus in the Old English period, rendering it difficult to judge its original scope, variety, and purposes.

Whilst modern scholarship often draws a distinction between Ælfrician and anonymous hagiography, there is evidence that this was not the case in Anglo-Saxon England. In her examination of the dissemination of four Old English hagiographic items, Hill reveals,

¹ Joyce Hill, "The Dissemination of Ælfric's *Lives of Saints*: A Preliminary Survey", in Szarmach 1996, p.236, hereafter Hill 1996a.

² For the suggested dates and provenances of these collections, see below pp.164-6.

³ D.G. Scragg, "The Corpus of Vernacular Homilies and Prose Saints' Lives Before Ælfric", in *Old English Prose: Basic Readings*, ed. Paul E. Szarmach (New York; London: Garland Publishing Inc., 2000): 73-150, here p.115, hereafter Scragg 2000 and Szarmach 2000.

there is no distinction between Ælfrician and non-Ælfrician saints' lives, although it would be useful to extend the comparison beyond the four included here.¹

This lack of discrimination between Ælfrician and anonymous texts may result partly from ignorance on the part of later writers and manuscript compilers. In her analysis of the reuses of Ælfric's *In Dominica Palmarum* in twelfth-century manuscripts, Mary Swan suggests that these later writers would not have known the identity of the work's author:

It is unlikely that the compilers of these pieces knew that Ælfric was their source; the material which they reuse must have seemed to them to be simply a convenient and striking explication of the power of Christ over the devil, rather than an excerpt from a text with a known authorial identity.²

The desirability of studying Ælfrician and anonymous hagiographic texts in tandem is clear: firstly, such comparative study illuminates more precisely the trends within each body of literature, highlighting the similarities and differences between them. In addition, studying Ælfrician and anonymous texts in conjunction affords a more

¹ Hill 1996a, p.252. This is also discussed in Joyce Hill, "Ælfric, Authorial Identity and the Changing Text", in *The Editing of Old English: Papers from the 1990 Manchester Conference*, ed. D.G. Scragg and Paul E. Szarmach (Woodbridge: D.S. Brewer, 1994): 177-89, here p.82, hereafter Hill 1994; and Joyce Hill, "Reform and Resistance: Preaching Styles in Late Anglo-Saxon England", in *De l'homelie au sermon: Histoire de la predication médiévale*, ed. Jacqueline Hamesse and Xavier Hermond (Louvain-la-Neuve: Université Catholique de Louvain, 1993): 15-46, here pp.38-9, hereafter Hill 1993.

² Mary Swan, "Old English Made New: One Catholic Homily and its Reuses", *LSE* 28 (1997): 1-18, here p.12, hereafter Swan 1997.

balanced impression of the entire Old English hagiographic tradition which crosses boundaries of authorial identity, an approach which parallels the reception and dissemination of Old English hagiographic texts.

As has been outlined above, saints' lives were intended to inspire devotion and edify the faithful. However, the precise manner in which this was to be achieved varied from one text to another, and the intended function of some saints' lives remains unclear. Thomas D. Hill outlines the general uses of hagiographic literature as follows:

Hagiographic texts served two main functions – functions that were not mutually exclusive, but that in practice led to the development of two quite distinct modes of hagiographic literature. On the one hand, such texts could be read as Christian literature – texts to be read in public or private for pleasure and for instruction – and on the other, certain hagiographic texts served a specific quasi-liturgical function.¹

Saints' lives could be read on several occasions in the liturgy, including their use for the festival of the subject saint. The precise intended function of the hagiographies in Ælfric's *Catholic Homilies* and *Lives of Saints*' collections within this broad scope is debatable, and Godden comments that '[w]hat the *Catholic Homilies* were for is surprisingly difficult to say'.² In his analysis of preaching practices in Anglo-Saxon England, Gatch suggests multiple uses for the items in the *Catholic Homilies*:

Although the Prefaces, like the incipit, stress the fact that the pieces which make up the two series are to be recited publicly in church, it

¹ Thomas D. Hill, "Imago Dei: Genre, Symbolism, and Anglo-Saxon Hagiography", in Szarmach 1996: 35-50, here p.37, hereafter Hill, T., 1996.

² Godden 2000, pp.xxi-xxii.

needs to be observed, first, that Ælfric has other uses in mind for his work [....] These expressions suggest that, in addition to their primary use as books for public reading, Ælfric had it in mind that, like many of the Carolingian homiliaries Barré has studied, the *Sermones Catholici* could also be used for private, devotional reading.¹

The items in the *Catholic Homilies* perhaps served both a private and a liturgical function, and Gatch goes on to suggest a more specific context for the latter:

My present strong feeling is that Gg.3.28 was intended primarily for use in instructing the laity at the Prone, although there are moments when it is tempting to put the *Sermones* into the monastic tradition, from which they ultimately sprang and within which, in some ways, it would be easier to account for the existence of a collection so largely exegetical.²

The *Lives of Saints* collection differs in nature and intention from the *Catholic Homilies*, being a primarily hagiographic collection, and incorporating longer accounts than Ælfric's earlier work. According to Ælfric, the volume was composed at the request of his patron Æthelwerd and his son Æthelmær, and takes as its subject:

þæra halgena ðrowungum and life . gedihton þe mynster-menn mid
heora þenungum betwux him wurðiað.³

¹ Milton McC. Gatch, *Preaching and Theology in Anglo-Saxon England: Ælfric and Wulfstan* (Toronto; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1977), p.49, hereafter Gatch 1977.

² Gatch 1977, p.54.

³ Walter W. Skeat, ed. and trans., *Ælfric's Lives of Saints, A Set of Sermons on Saints' Days Formerly Observed by the English Church*, 2 vols, EETS OS 76 (London: Trench, Trübner and Co., 1891; 1900), 'Preface', ll.43-5: 'the sufferings and lives of the Saints who the monks honour among themselves in their

When considering that this collection was written at the request of Æthelwerd and Æthelmær, Gatch goes on to suggest a specific context for the work:

Æthelweard and Æthelmær are known to have commissioned the *Lives of Saints*, an augmented *Catholic Homilies* I, presumably also a version or copy of *Catholic Homilies* II, and portions of Genesis. Such a library – and one can be reasonably certain that these great lords had other books – would go a long way towards enabling Æthelweard and his son to follow in their own devotions the observance of monks.¹

As such, it may be that the hagiographies composed by Ælfric were intended to serve a variety of functions: they were suitable for the context of public preaching, and could be employed in the sphere of more personal devotion.

The precise purposes and audiences for which the hagiographic items in the anonymous corpus were intended is similarly difficult to define, and the range of manuscripts in which these pieces are found renders a survey of each individual life outside the scope of this thesis.² However, Gatch's exploration of evidence regarding the intended audience of the Blickling Homilies illustrates the uncertainty which often pervades this area:

offices', hereafter Skeat 1891 and 1900, followed by item no., item name, and line reference. All quotations from Ælfric's *Lives of Saints* collection are taken from this edition. The *Tironian Nota* appears as '7' and where the first line of an item is capitalized, lower case characters are substituted. All translations from the *Lives of Saints* are modified from Skeat. References to Old English hagiographic items are made using the short titles for the lives given by Whatley 1996 in order to obtain consistency with the Typology Database. References to non-hagiographic items within Old English hagiographic collections follow editorial titles.

¹ Gatch 1977, pp.48-9.

² The manuscripts in which the majority of anonymous lives discussed in this thesis are found are outlined in D.G. Scragg, "The Corpus of Anonymous Lives and Their Manuscript Context", in Szarmach 1996: 209-30, hereafter Scragg 1996.

Little sense of a specific congregation or reading audience prevails in this collection of ancient and commonplace materials for the instruction of Christian folk [...]. In the present state of knowledge, we have to accept that the audience for the Blickling sermons is ‘unknowable’, as in my title.¹

As such, whilst saints’ lives generally served as texts for either preaching or private reading, it is often difficult to isolate the precise usage or intended recipients of such material, especially given the longevity of the texts.

As the above overview highlights, the genre of hagiography enjoyed a high level of popularity across several centuries, a phenomenon amply witnessed in the Anglo-Saxon period with the extensive efforts to provide such material in the vernacular. This study explores a particular and central element of this genre: the depiction of miracles within Old English saints’ lives. To attempt an investigation of such a broad and complex genre requires careful consideration, and the methodology employed in this study, with its ensuing limitations, will now be outlined.

¹ Milton McC. Gatch, “The Unknowable Audience of the Blickling Homilies”, *ASE* 18 (1989): 99-115, here p.115, hereafter Gatch 1989.

Methodology.

Anglo-Saxon vernacular hagiography is an extensive genre, including as it does around one hundred extant saints' lives.¹ It is, then, difficult to envisage a study of the miracles in this genre which can be both comprehensive and detailed: to attempt simultaneous fulfilment of both these criteria would be outside the scope of a Ph.D. thesis. As such, this study approaches the nature of miracles from two perspectives, in the hope of providing a detailed and conclusive analysis while retaining an awareness of the corpus of Old English hagiography in its entirety.

Typology of Miracles.

Part of the thesis involves the construction of a 'Typology of Miracles in Old English Hagiography'. This typology, included as the database Appendix 2 in this work, catalogues the miracles found in the entire Anglo-Saxon vernacular hagiographical corpus, poetic as well as prose, and classifies these miracles according to type.² This is the sense in which the term 'typology' is employed in this thesis: to denote the grouping together of miraculous events on the grounds of similarity. The idea behind this typology is two-fold. Firstly, it is intended to serve as a point of reference for my own work, and means that intertextual and intratextual trends can be easily observed and analysed within the thesis. Thus while focusing on certain aspects of the Old English hagiographic corpus, the genre in its entirety can serve as a frame of reference for more detailed analysis. In addition to this, it is hoped that this typology can be employed as a research tool by anybody attempting to navigate the contents of this

¹ This statement is based on E. Gordon Whatley's 'List of Old English Prose Saints' Lives'. See Whatley 1996, pp.5-7.

² For a discussion of the categories employed in this typology, see 'Methodology', pp.19-23, below. The lives of Pantaleon, Machutus and Malchus are omitted from the Typology Database due to difficulty in obtaining printed editions.

genre, as it provides a clear and informative index to the miracles, and by association some of the themes and ideas, found in each *vita* and *passio*.

Employment of a suitable method of classification of miracles is crucial for the viability of this study: the model must permit in-depth discussion of the miracles; employ a consistent and rational methodology; provide a logical framework for organising the material under consideration; and require no information besides that found in the lives. For example, to attempt to classify miracles by the date of the composition of the lives in which they are found would be futile, as the dates of many anonymous narratives remain unknown or uncertain. Any method of classification must therefore be considered in terms of its suitability for this study.

The signification of miracles functions on two levels: their literal content, and their spiritual meaning. The spiritual signification of miracles was a central element in Anglo-Saxon perceptions of the miraculous and in his homily for Midlent Sunday, Ælfric asserts,

Nis na genoh þ[æt] ðu stafas scawie. buton þu hi eac ræde. 7 þ[æt]
andgit understande; swa is eac on ðam wundre þe god worhte mid þam
fif hlafum. ne bið na genoh þ[æt] we ðæs tacnes wundrian. oððe þurh
þ[æt] god herian buton we eac þ[æt] gastlice andgit understandon;¹

¹ Peter Clemoes, ed., *Ælfric's Catholic Homilies, The First Series, Text*, EETS SS 17 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 12, *Dominica in Media Quadragesima*, ll.69-73: 'It is not enough to look at characters without, at the same time, reading them, and understanding their meaning. It is also so with regard to the miracle which God performed with the five loaves: it is not enough that we wonder at the miracle, or praise God because of it, without also understanding its spiritual meaning', hereafter Clemoes 1997, followed by item no., item name and line reference. All quotations from the *Catholic Homilies* I are taken from this edition. For both series of *Catholic Homilies*, abbreviations for 'þæt' are expanded, with expansions indicated in square brackets. The *Tironian Nota* is indicated by '7', the *punctus versus* by a modern semi-colon, and the *punctus elevatus* by a modern colon. All translations from both series of *Catholic Homilies* are modified from Benjamin Thorpe, ed. and trans., *The Sermones Catholici, or Homilies of Ælfric*, 2 vols. (London: Ælfric Society, 1844; 1846).

Similarly, Ælfric outlines the spiritual significance of a miracle in his homily for Shrove Sunday:

ac hwæðre þær wæs oðer þincg digle. on ðam wundrum. æfter gastlicum
andgyte; þes án blinda mann getacnað eal mancynn: þe wearð ablend
þurh adames gylt 7 ascofen: of myrhðe neorxnawanges: 7 gebroht to
þisum life. þe is wiðmeten cwearterne;¹

Clearly, Ælfric perceives the spiritual signification of miracles as paramount, and taking this element of miracles into account is desirable. However, whilst Ælfric advocates the importance of this element of the miraculous, it is rare that the signification of a miracle is outlined in the Old English corpus, rendering any classification based on this criterion impossible.

Due to the difficulties presented by classification according to spiritual signification, classification based on the outward content of a miracle has been selected for use in this study.² The main criticism which could be levelled at this methodology is that it is innately unscientific, as the categories selected for classification are, to an extent, subjective. The overriding feature by which a miracle should be classified appears to be different for different people. This is perfectly illustrated by the comments of various scholars on the broad categorization of miracles. According to Raymond Abba: ‘There are three types of miracles described in the Gospels – miracles

¹ Clemons 1997, 10, *Dominica in Quinquagesima*, ll.37-41: ‘but there was yet another thing hidden in those miracles, in a spiritual sense. The one blind man signified all mankind, who were blinded through Adam’s sin, and driven out from the joy of Paradise, and brought to this life, which is compared to a prison’.

² This idea of classification by content is discussed in C.F.D. Moule, *Miracles: Cambridge Studies in Their Philosophy and History* (London: Mowbray, 1965), pp.239-43.

of healing, nature miracles and the raising of the dead'.¹ However, other interpretations of miracle types exist:

Three kinds of miracles (Gk. *dýnamis* "power," *érgon* "work") are attributed to Jesus and his disciples: healings, exorcisms, and what are usually called "nature miracles," the latter performed by Jesus only.²

Whilst both classification systems cited agree on 'healings' and 'nature miracles' as broad categories, they differ on the third. In a specifically hagiographic context, Stancliffe categorizes the miracles of Martin of Tours under the following headings: 'Nature Miracles', 'Healing Miracles', 'Demoniacs and Exorcisms', 'Encounters With Supernatural Beings', and 'Dreams, Vision, Predictions, Telepathy'.³ A variety of interpretations of miracle types thus exist, and miracles of all the above kinds can be found in hagiography and Scripture. All the categories mentioned by these writers are thus valid, and the precise groupings into which miracles fall remain open to individual interpretation. The typology employed in this study must also be the product of individual interpretation: however, providing that the nature of the categories is explained fully and the classification of miracles is consistent as far as possible, a typology constructed via these criteria should not be unrepresentative or misleading.

The Typology of Miracles which will be used as a framework in this study is outlined below. The *sigla* accompanying each type of miracle correspond to those used in the

¹ Raymond Abba, *The Nature and Authority of the Bible* (London; Edinburgh: James Clark, 1958), repr. Cambridge: James Clarke, 1992, p.150, hereafter Abba 1992.

² Allen C. Myers, ed., *The Eerdmans Bible Dictionary* (Michigan: W.B. Eerdmans, 1987), p.722, hereafter Myers 1987.

³ Clare Stancliffe, *St. Martin and His Hagiographer, History and Miracle in Sulpicius Severus* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), pp.364-71, hereafter Stancliffe 1983.

Typology Database: for instance, Aa refers to an Element Miracle and Cb to Heavenly Contact.

A: Nature Miracles.

This category refers to instances where physical objects, either animate or inanimate, do not behave in a way that accords with the known laws of nature. This is a very broad and varied category, as it can include anything from the increase of blessed oil to the stilling of a storm. Due to the breadth and variation within this category, it is subdivided further:

- **a: Element Miracles:** Miracles involving the elements, including fire, water, wind, earth and the weather.
- **b: Animal Miracles:** Miracles where animals do as they are commanded, show a high degree of understanding, or help individuals.
- **c: Movement Miracles:** Instances where any kind of motion, or lack of it, is involved. This motion may be of an animate thing, such as a person or animal, or an inanimate object, such as a door or chains.
- **d: Provision Miracles:** Instances where provision of any kind of substance, be it natural such as rain, or man-made such as clothing, occurs miraculously.
- **e: Transformation:** Miracles where one substance is changed into another, or an individual undergoes some form of miraculous transformation.

B: Healing Miracles.

This category concerns instances where people are healed in a manner that does not accord with the known laws of nature. As the Anglo-Saxons perceived mental illness or

spiritual affliction as resulting from possession by a devil, exorcism is categorized as a type of healing. The category is sub-divided as follows:

- **a: Healing:** Bodily illnesses are healed through miraculous power.
- **B: Exorcism:** Spiritual or mental illnesses are healed through miraculous power.

C: Defying Death Miracles.

This category encompasses instances where individuals exhibit some power over death, either by enabling the resurrection of a body, or by illustrating that the soul exists after death:

- **a: Resurrection:** The raising of individuals from the dead.
- **b: Soul:** Illustration of the posthumous existence of the soul.
- **c: Relic:** A miracle which demonstrates the active power of relics.
- **d: Power over Death:** Individuals defy earthly death.

D: Supernatural Contact Miracles.

This category includes instances of contact with a supernatural beings. It is sub-divided as follows:

- **a: Divine Contact:** God or Jesus contact an earthly individual in the form of a vision, physical visit, or through intervention in earthly affairs.
- **b: Heavenly Contact:** A heavenly being, usually a saint, contacts an earthly individual in the form of a vision, physical visit, or through intervention in earthly affairs.
- **c: Angelic Contact:** An angel contacts an earthly individual in the form of a vision, physical visit, or through intervention in earthly affairs.

- **e: Shining Light:** This involves the presence on earth of a shining light. It is included in Supernatural Contact Miracles as it generally signifies some kind of divine or heavenly presence.
- **f: Devil:** These miracles concern any visitation or action of the devil.

E: Mind Miracles.

Mind miracles do not involve an outward, physical change as other types of miracles do, and are sub-divided as follows:

- **a: Prophecy/ Knowledge/ Foreknowledge:** This category includes any kind of knowledge, be it past, present or future, which an individual possesses through miraculous means.
- **b: Dream:** This sub-category involves an individual having a dream in which they have some form of divine contact.
- **c: Mental Strength:** These are essentially miracles of mind over matter, and concern instances where individuals display a miraculous amount of mental strength despite being faced with physical or mental torture or temptation.
- **d: Mental Ability:** These miracles include instances where individuals show themselves to be of miraculous mental ability, for instance by behaving older than their years or speaking heavenly words.

In addition to these types of miracle, several recurrent motifs are evident within Old English hagiographic miracles. These will also be recorded in the database according to the following *sigla*:

M: Motifs which recur in the performance of miracles.

- a: cross
- b: dove
- c: intercession
- d: Judgement Day
- e: virginity
- f: victory in battle
- g: sorcery
- h: coincidence

The reason that a miracle occurs and its outcome are also crucial features of the miraculous, and some general trends in these areas are noted in the typology. Where relevant, these are recorded using the following *sigla*:

R: Reasons underlying the performance of miracles.

- a: prayer fulfilled
- b: punishment

O: Outcomes of the performance of miracles.

- a: awe
- b: conversion

In addition, statements are often made about miracles in general, or the way in which they are perceived, and comments in these areas are recorded as follows:

Z: General statements pertaining to the working of miracles.

a: general

b: perception

The above classifications cover the majority of miracles found in Anglo-Saxon vernacular hagiography, although there are a few exceptions which do not fit neatly into any of the above categories. These miracles will be treated as individual instances, and discussed where relevant. The idea behind the classification of miracles in the above categories is to provide a framework for the analysis of miracles which will form the main text of this study, and these categories will be used to organize the discussion of miracles in the case-studies which follow.

Use of Case-Study.

The Typology of Miracles employed in this study is descriptive rather than evaluative, and conclusions cannot be drawn from it alone. Discussion of the entire typology, which contains over two thousand records concerning Old English hagiographic miracles, remains outside the scope of this study and the material which forms the basis for discussion in this thesis must be limited in some way. There are many ways of achieving such limitation, which involve different approaches to the texts. For example, it would be possible to examine the miracles in a certain manuscript - such as Corpus Christi College 198, which contains twenty Ælfrician lives and two anonymous items¹ - and attempt to define trends within this manuscript's *vitae* and *passiones*, perhaps going on to draw conclusions as to the compiler's intention in bringing these lives together. Alternatively, a certain type of miracle could be examined, for instance Healings, in order to enable a detailed look at the way this phenomenon was viewed

¹ The two anonymous items are 'Mary Virgin: Assumption II' and 'Andrew: II'.

and presented by Anglo-Saxon hagiographers and its relationship to sanctity. However, both of these routes of inquiry, and others like them, would be limited in the scope of their results: the first method would lead to conclusions regarding only one manuscript, the second to observations about one type of miracle. This study aims to draw more wide-ranging conclusions regarding perceptions of authorship and presentations of sanctity in Old English hagiography, and as such a broader sample of material has been selected. The thesis will employ a series of case-studies of different saints: the *vitae* and *passiones* of these saints will include miracles of a variety of types, be found in a multitude of manuscripts, and be of varied authorship, thus allowing broad scope for conclusions. The typology will function as a frame of reference for these case-studies, facilitating comparison of the selected lives with other hagiographical works.

Selecting the subjects for these case-studies is a difficult task, as several approaches could be used to determine these. One method of selection would be to include figures of the same generic type, for example concentrating on the apostolic saints found in Anglo-Saxon vernacular hagiography.¹ However, this would limit conclusions to one group of saints. Instead, selection of subject saints is made according to their generic classifications, but from a different angle. Anglo-Saxon litanies provide a useful insight into the way saints were grouped in Anglo-Saxon England, firstly in terms of the classifications attributed to individuals, and secondly in terms of the perceived hierarchy of these types:

¹ The apostolic lives in the Old English hagiographic corpus are as follows. Clemoes 1997: *Peter and Paul, Andrew, Bartholomew, and John the Evangelist*. Malcolm Godden, ed., *Ælfric's Catholic Homilies, The Second Series, Text*, EETS SS 5 (London; New York; Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1979); *Philip and James the Less, James the Greater, Simon and Jude and Matthew*, hereafter Godden 1979, followed by item no., item name and line refs. Skeat 1900: *Thomas*. Anonymous lives: *Andrew, James the Greater and John the Baptist*.

As a result of the widespread influence and use of the litany of the saints, its hierarchical classification of saints became a commonplace, providing a convenient scheme for sorting the otherwise untractable numbers of saints.¹

The hierarchical classification in the litanies is as follows: the Virgin Mary, the archangels, the apostles, the martyrs, the confessors, and lastly the virgins. These classifications of sanctity are not exhaustive: as Mary-Ann Stouck points out, saints in the medieval period could be classified further via their various roles:

Though nominally divided into four categories (apostles, martyrs, confessors, and virgins), the saints assumed roles that ran the gamut of religious experience: they were prophets, reformers, and leaders; mystics and hermits; kings, queens, and popes; teachers; cloistered members of the religious orders; merchants, wives, and serving-girls; and not least, mythical creations who embodied some essential belief or fulfilled a particular spiritual need, like the dogheaded St Christopher who appears in stories of Christian conversion, or Mary/Marina, through whom the misogynist desert monks expressed their opinion that a woman must put aside her female nature if she were to become truly holy.²

¹ Michael Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Litanies of the Saints*, Publications of the Henry Bradshaw Society, Volume CVI (London: The Boydell Press, 1991), p.60, hereafter Lapidge 1991a.

² Mary-Ann Stouck, ed., *Medieval Saints, A Reader*, Readings in Medieval Civilizations and Cultures: IV (Ontario; New York: Broadview Press Ltd., 1999), p.xviii, hereafter Stouck 1999.

However, despite the variety which exists within each litanical type of sanctity, this system represents the most widespread and consistent method for grouping saints, and the surviving Anglo-Saxon litanies provide first-hand evidence of early medieval approaches to the classification of sanctity. In terms of selecting saints as subjects for case study, it is logical to use Anglo-Saxon perceptions of their generic classifications as a starting point, and this study will provide a case-study for each category in the litanies. This is with two exceptions: the Virgin Mary and the archangels. The Virgin Mary is distinguished from the other saints in the litanies and in a category of her own, whilst the large extent of hagiography surrounding the Virgin's cult would render a case-study on her too lengthy for this thesis.¹ This study originally included an analysis of archangels, but this has been omitted from the thesis due to constraints of length. The archangels are omitted because this category differs from the other types in the litanies, as its members are not mortal. Secondly, lives of only one archangel, Michael, appear in the Old English hagiographic corpus,² and a comparative study of his generic group as employed in the other case-studies is impossible. This thesis, then, focuses on case-studies of Virgins, Confessors, Martyrs and Apostles.

It is hoped that this choice of saints will allow varied and far-reaching conclusions to be drawn, crossing as it does boundaries in terms of manuscripts, generic types and miracles. In addition to this, the thesis will examine the differences in the portrayal of each type of saint with regard to the Ælfrician and the anonymous

¹ Whatley 1996, in his 'List of Old English Prose Saints' Lives', identifies eleven hagiographical texts on the Virgin Mary: an Annunciation, four Assumptions, three Nativities, two Purifications, and the Sermon of Ralph D'Escures. The nature and extent of the cult of the Virgin within Anglo-Saxon England and the accompanying Marian hagiographic tradition are discussed in Mary Clayton, *The Apocryphal Gospels of Mary in Anglo-Saxon England* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), hereafter Clayton 1998.

² Three Old English accounts of Michael are extant, and are found in the first series of Ælfric's *Catholic Homilies*; Princeton University Library, W. H. Scheide Collection 71, *The Blickling Homilies*; and Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, 41. For some studies of Michael's legend, see Grant 1982; Johnson 1998; and John Charles Arnold, "Arcadia Becomes Jerusalem: Angelic Caverns and Shrine Conversion at Monte Gargano", *Speculum* 75:3 (2000): 567-88.

corpora. As has been outlined above, the dissemination of Old English hagiographic texts suggests that the modern scholarly practice of grouping texts according to their authorship was not consistently observed in the medieval period, and a study which approaches the Old English hagiographic corpus in its entirety is therefore desirable. In addition, it is hoped that the comparison of different authorial approaches to hagiography will illuminate the variety of avenues open to Old English writers and examine whether real differences exist between Ælfric's works and those of his fellow vernacular hagiographers. To speak of the 'anonymous corpus' as one body of work requires clarification, as it is unlikely that any of the texts included by this definition are the work of a single author. In his analysis of the four anonymous lives found in Cotton Julius E.vii, Magennis concludes:

My own analysis of the style as well as the vocabulary of the four lives shows that not only are they distinctively different from the lives by Ælfric, but that they are also distinctively different from each other, leading to the conclusion that they are the work of four separate writers.¹

As the common authorship of any two or more anonymous hagiographic items remains uncertain and the group as a whole is certainly of varied authorship, to discuss anonymous saints' lives as a homogenous body of literature is misleading, and does not do them justice as distinct works. Each anonymous text must thus be approached individually, and whilst statements may be made to refer generally to trends in the anonymous corpus, these of course differ in nature to statements about the body of Ælfric's work.

¹ Hugh Magennis, "Contrasting Features in the Non-Ælfrician Lives in the Old English *Lives of Saints*", *Anglia* 104:3-4 (1986): 316-48, here p.319, hereafter Magennis 1986.

In looking at subjects from each category of sanctity from the perspective of both Ælfrician and anonymous lives, a further clarification regarding the choice of subject saints is necessary. The rationale for selecting which saint or saints should represent each genre will be based partly on necessity and partly on evidence for the popularity and dissemination of saints' lives. The ideal scenario for comparing and contrasting the different approaches to hagiography between Ælfric and an anonymous author involves cases where they create biographies of the same saint using largely the same source materials. In instances such as these, the different approaches of the Anglo-Saxon authors to their source material can be compared and contrasted most clearly, as the ways in which they respectively adapt these sources can reveal something of their own ideas and aims. However, there is only one saint for whom this is the case: Martin of Tours. Martin provides a perfect case study for a confessor saint, both for this reason and because his *vita* functioned as the model for almost all proceeding lives of confessors.

A slightly less straightforward case-study involves an Ælfrician and anonymous life of a saint which are based on different sources: whilst in this case the authors are not drawing on the same source, the contrasting ways in which the subject is presented can be illuminating. There is only one saint for whom this is the case, Andrew the apostle, and Andrew will function as the case-study for apostolic saints.¹ For the remaining categories of sanctity, the Martyrs and the Virgins, no Ælfrician and anonymous accounts of the same saint exist, and two lives were chosen, one from each

¹ Anonymous and Ælfrician biographies of Peter and Paul do exist, and both draw partly on an anonymous *Passio SS. Petri et Pauli*. They are analysed in Scott DeGregorio, "Ælfric, *Gedwyld*, and Vernacular Hagiography: Sanctity and Spirituality in the Old English Lives of SS Peter and Paul", *Old English Newsletter*, Subsidia, vol.30, *Ælfric's Lives of Canonized Popes*, ed. Donald Scragg (Western Michigan University: The Board of the Medieval Institute, 2001): 75-98, hereafter DeGregorio 2001. However, as these lives represents accounts of two saints rather than the solitary lives analysed elsewhere in this thesis, the solitary accounts of Andrew have been selected as preferable for comparison with the other case-studies.

corpus. Whilst this is slightly problematic in terms of comparing authorial approaches to the saint, it is hoped that differing attitudes to these types of saints will become apparent through comparison of distinct case-studies. For the lives of Virgin saints, Margaret of Antioch and Agnes of Rome have been selected, whilst George and Christopher represent the category of Martyrs. These figures were all popular saints in Anglo-Saxon England, and the precise reasons for the selection of each saint are outlined in their respective case-studies.

A further clarification must also be made regarding the approach to source study employed in this investigation. Anglo-Saxon vernacular hagiography is rarely wholly original in its creation. Rather, the vast majority, if not all of the texts which this study encompasses, are translations or adaptations of Latin material.¹ The question of source study is central to discussion of Old English literature: if an Old English author faithfully follows his source, is their work worthy of study in its own right? Is it only the points at which Old English hagiographers deviate from their Latin predecessors which are deserving of comment, or should the work - both in those instances where it represents a faithful translation and in those where the Anglo-Saxon author demonstrates an active role in the alteration of the text - be studied as a whole? Both of these approaches are valid and I will therefore examine hagiographical texts from this dual angle.

In translating Latin texts into the vernacular, Anglo-Saxon authors were essentially acting as transmitters through which the narrative could pass, and, as will be

¹ Source texts have not been discovered for the entire Old English hagiographic corpus. For instance, no extant source has been found for the anonymous *Life of Michael* found in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 41. However, elements of the life are paralleled in extant Old English, Greek and Irish texts, while many of the deeds ascribed to Michael are ultimately sourced in Scripture and apocrypha. For discussion of parallels to the Old English and suggestions on its probable source, see Grant 1982; J.E. Cross, "An Unrecorded Tradition of St. Michael in Old English Texts", *Notes and Queries* n.s. 28, 226:1 (1981): 11-13, especially pp.12-13; and Charles D. Wright, *The Irish Tradition in Old English Literature*, CSASE 6 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), especially p.262.

discussed in the succeeding chapter on inscribed authority, their participation in received tradition was crucial to their work. In many instances, both with regard to whole texts and portions of saints' *vitae*, Old English writers make negligible alterations to the content of the Latin biographies. Such examples of Old English hagiography could thus be seen as undeserving of study – if the Old English merely represents a vernacular redaction of a Latin text, this original would arguably be the one worthy of study for the attitudes of its author and the culture which surrounded it rather than the later translation. A twentieth-century translation of the works of Homer's *Odyssey* by Robert Fagles,¹ for example, would not be studied to glean information about Fagles' life and the twentieth century, but rather to examine the attitudes of Homer and the relevance of his work to Greece c.850 BC. However, this approach neglects an important factor in the production of hagiography. The texts were not translated to enable people to read of past cultures and history: rather, the intention was generally for them to be employed in contemporary Anglo-Saxon piety, be it as sermons preached in church or private texts for individual contemplation. These texts were not perceived as relics of past times: instead, they were documents of contemporary relevance, intended to instruct the faithful in the worship of Christ. Thus, even in cases where an entire *passio* is a faithful translation of its Latin source, it still merits study in its own right as testimony to Anglo-Saxon religious thought. Each Old English hagiographic document, whether it represents a drastic reworking of its Latin source or a word for word translation of this source, illustrates the Christian attitudes, values and ideas that its author deemed appropriate for the consumption of its Anglo-Saxon audience or readers. As Gatch comments:

¹ Homer, *The Odyssey*, trans. Robert Fagles (London: Penguin, 1997).

It has not always been understood by those who have commented on Anglo-Saxon theology that, derivative though it may be, any body of thought is unique by virtue of the historical moment in which it was produced and by which it was conditioned.¹

This perspective is as valid for hagiographical documents as for other religious literary artifacts, and the content of Old English hagiography, whether original or derivative, is worthy of study.

In addition to this, the reception of Old English hagiography must be considered. Whilst modern scholarship is able to trace the sources of individual lines and passages from *vitae* and *passiones*, in addition to illuminating the intertextual web of allusions found in hagiography to determine where various ideas originated from, the audiences for whom these texts were intended may not always have possessed this sophisticated level of knowledge. Whilst those in monastic circles may have been aware of the relationship of texts to their sources, it is possible that some of the audiences for hagiographic works would not, and would have listened to the text as a whole, unified sermon or read it as one entity. Thus, for those unaware of the textual history of the hagiography, Ælfric's *Life of St. Martin*, for example, would become *the Life of St. Martin* as they perceived it. From this perspective, whether a piece is a faithful translation of its Latin source or differs widely from this does not matter - both would be received in the same way by some of their audience or readers, and it is the presentation of the text as a whole, rather than as the sum of its parts and the source or sources of these, that is of importance.

¹ Gatch 1977, p.64.

However, there is no question that source study is important. Any alterations that an Anglo-Saxon author makes demonstrate an active desire on their part to manipulate the narrative with a particular agenda in mind, rather than a more passive approach of faithfully transmitting the Latin. As Whatley summarizes, in the majority of instances,

the Anglo-Saxon translators of Latin saints' lives, even where they ostensibly set out to provide full and faithful renderings of their sources, could not help providing something less, constrained as they were by a variety of cultural and textual factors that prompted them to mediate between their vernacular readers and their Latin exemplars.¹

The kind of mediation that Old English hagiographers undertook remains central to an understanding of their own concerns. However, determining the nature and level of their mediation is often problematic, as the chronological point at which alterations to sources were made is often uncertain. In many instances, discrepancies between an Anglo-Saxon text and its suggested source could have been made by the Old English author or by a Latin or vernacular writer before them, whose recension of the text they were directly copying. The non-extant nature of immediate sources for many Old English hagiographic texts, for instance the anonymous lives of Margaret and Christopher discussed in this study, renders it difficult to ascertain the extent of manipulation attributable to the Old English author.

Anglo-Saxon hagiography should thus be approached from a dual perspective. To disregard points at which Old English hagiography faithfully transmits Latin

¹ Whatley 1997, p.207.

tradition as unworthy of study would be naïve, as the content of this text still represents material which an Anglo-Saxon author saw fit to mediate to their audience and thus instruct their understanding, spirituality and piety. The alterations made to narratives by Anglo-Saxon authors are fundamentally important too. They perhaps reveal more specifically the ideas and values to which an individual author, or the society in which they wrote, ascribed. The desire seen in many of the succeeding vernacular hagiographical texts to present a saintly biography in a new light demonstrates an active agenda on the part of the hagiographer to use these texts as vehicles for the expression of specific ideas and values.

The use of sources within each saint's life will therefore serve as a point of reference within each case-study, in order to illuminate the nature of any possible active mediation between source and text on the part of the Old English author. However, these case-studies are not intended to be exhaustive in their discussion of textual sources. Each saint's life will be approached in its entirety as a piece of Old English religious literature, and deviations from source texts commented upon where relevant to the argument of each chapter.

Perceptions of the Miraculous in Old English Hagiography.

The primary route of enquiry in this thesis centres on depictions of miracles within the Old English hagiographic corpus. Despite the proliferation of miracle stories in Old English hagiography, the genre affords no comprehensive definition of a 'miracle'. Discussion of certain aspects of the phenomenon, such as the superiority of spiritual wonders over those of a physical nature and the debate over the continuance of miracles, are found in the Ælfrician corpus.¹ However, the lack of an actual definition of a miracle and its characteristics renders it necessary to look beyond the writings of Old English hagiographers themselves in order to ascertain how they are likely to have understood the phenomenon. In his analysis of miracles in Christian thought, Swinburne states, '[t]o start with we may say very generally that a miracle is an event of an extraordinary kind brought about by a god, and of religious significance'.² However, further classification is needed within this broad definition, and an obvious starting point when considering Anglo-Saxon perceptions of the miraculous is the comments on miracles found in Scripture and in the works of patristic authors, in particular Augustine, whose thought on miracles was highly influential in the Anglo-Saxon period and beyond.

Augustine's most clear and concise statement on the nature of miracles is found in *De Utilitate Credendi*:

¹ These are discussed in Clemoes 1997, 21, *In Ascensione Domini*, ll.161-4 and 174-80. For Ælfric's comments in these areas, see below pp.95-7.

² Richard Swinburne, *The Concept of Miracle* (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1970), p.1.

Miraculum voco, quidquid arduum aut insolitum supra spem vel
facultatem mirantis apparet.¹

The subtleties of this statement are paramount: Augustine is not advocating that miracles are difficult for God to enact or that their occurrence implies the inversion of natural laws. Rather, miracles appear to be this way to those who marvel at them, yet remain part of natural creation. The main point underlying Augustine's understanding of miracles concerns their place in the natural order. In his view, the greatest miracle of all is God's original creation:

Neque enim audiendi sunt qui Deum invisibilem visibilia miracula
operari negant, cum ipse etiam secundum ipsos fecerit mundum, quem
certe visibilem negare non possunt. Quidquid igitur mirabile fit in hoc
mundo profecto minus est quam totus hic mundus, id est caelum et terra
et omnia quae in eis sunt, quae certe Deus fecit.²

The inherent order within this natural creation is essential for an understanding of Augustine's view of miracles. As Benedicta Ward summarizes:

¹ Augustine, *De Utilitate Credendi*, XXXIV; PL 42.90: 'And I call a miracle anything which appears arduous or unusual, beyond the expectation or abilities of the one who marvels at it', trans. *The Fathers of the Church Series* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1947-), Vol.4, p.437. All Latin quotations are taken from J.-P. Migne, ed., *Patrologia Latina*, 221 vols (Paris: J.-P. Migne, 1844-64) unless otherwise stated, hereafter PL, followed by vol. no. and col. ref. For convenience, translations of Latin texts are taken from the *Fathers of the Church Series* where available, hereafter FC, followed by vol. no. and page reference. Any other translations are cited within the notes.

² Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, X.xii; LCL vol. 412, p.308: 'For again we must not give ear to those who say that no invisible God works visible miracles, since even in their view he himself created the universe, which they surely must admit is visible. Now any marvellous thing that is wrought in this universe is assuredly less than this whole universe, that is, heaven and earth and all things that in them are, which God assuredly created' (trans. LCL vol. 412, p.309).

Augustine argues that there is only one miracle, that of creation, with its corollary of re-creation by the resurrection of Christ. God, he held, created the world out of nothing in six days, and within that initial creation he planted all the possibilities for the future.¹

These future possibilities encompassed the working of miracles, and the potential for these existed within the natural order. Miracles are thus inherent in God's creation, as nothing accomplished by God's will can be contrary to the natural laws He created. Augustine's thought thus echoes Origen's assertion that 'quaecunque Deus facit, hæc licet incredibilia sint aut quibusdam incredibilia videantur, non sunt tamen contra naturam'.² In Augustinian terms, then, miracles are in harmony with natural laws, while their inherent wonder lies in their hidden causes:

Omnia quippe portenta contra naturam dicimus esse, sed non sunt. Quo modo est enim contra naturam quod Dei fit voluntate, cum voluntas tantumque conditoris conditæ rei cuiusque natura sit? Portentum ergo fit non contra naturam, sed contra quam est nota natura.³

¹ Benedicta Ward, *Miracles and the Medieval Mind* (Hants: Wildwood House Limited, 1987), p.3, hereafter Ward 1987.

² Origen, *Contra Celsum*, V.xxiii; PG 11.1218 (the Greek is printed at col.1217): 'for God's actions are not contrary to nature, even though they may be miraculous or may seem to some people to be so', trans. Henry Chadwick, ed. and trans., *Origen, Contra Celsum* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), p.282. All quotations from Greek writers are taken from J.-P. Migne, ed., *Patrologia Graeca* (Paris: J.-P. Migne, 1857-67) unless otherwise stated, hereafter PG, followed by vol. no. and col. ref.

³ Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, XXI.viii; LCL vol. 417, p.50: 'We commonly say, of course, that all portents are contrary to nature, but in fact they are not. For how can anything done by the will of God be contrary to nature, when the will of so great a creator constitutes the nature of each created thing? A portent therefore happens not contrary to nature, but contrary to what is known of nature' (trans. LCL vol. 417, p.51).

Miracles are therefore apparent wonders which defy expectation and natural laws as humankind knows them, but their workings are in accordance with the natural order despite this mystery of causation.

A further aspect of Augustine's thought on miracles concerns the question of their origin. Whilst miracles are sensory wonders, it does not follow that all sensory wonders are miracles in the strictest sense. Augustine comments on the difference between wonders wrought by magicians and those wrought by saints:

Cum ergo talia faciunt magi, qualia nonnunquam sancti faciunt, talia quidem visibiliter esse apparent, sed et diverso fine et diverso jure fiunt. Illi enim faciunt quærentes gloriam suam, isti quærentes gloriam Dei: et illi faciunt per quædam potestatibus concessa in ordine suo, quasi privata commercia vel veneficia; isti autem publica administratione, jussu ejus cui cuncta creatura subjecta est.¹

Differences in the purposes of and powers through which marvels are performed are testament to their divergent natures. Discussing the distinction between marvels and divine miracles, Augustine states:

Verum quia tanta et talia gerunter his artibus ut universum modum humane facultatis excedant, quid restat nisi ut ea quae mirifice tamquam divinitus prædici vel fieri videntur nec tamen ad unius Dei

¹ Augustine, *De Diversis Quæstionibus LXXXIII*, I.lxxix; PL 40.92: 'When, therefore, magicians do things of a kind which the saints sometimes do, indeed their deeds appear to the eye to be alike, but they are done both for a different purpose and under a different law. For the former act seeking their own glory; the latter, the glory of God. Again, the former act through certain things granted to the powers in their own sphere, as if through business arrangements and magic arts of a private nature; but the latter, by a public administration at the command of him to whom the entire creation is subject', trans. *FC*, vol.70, p.203.

cultum referuntur, cui simpliciter inhaerere fatentibus quoque Platonice et per multa testantibus solum beatificum bonum est, malignorum daemonum ludibria et seductoria impedimenta, quae vera pietate cavenda sunt, prudenter intelligantur? [XII] Porro autem quaecumque miracula sive per angelos sive quocumque modo ita divinitus fiunt ut Dei unius, in quo solo beata vita est, cultum religionemque commendent, ea vere ab eis vel per eos qui nos secundum veritatem pietatemque diligunt fieri ipso Deo in illis operante credendum est.¹

Sensory wonders therefore do not necessarily emanate from God, and Augustine's terminology distinguishes between wonders on the basis of their origin, as true 'miracula' can only be wrought by the Lord. In the strictest sense, then, miracles are of divine origin.

Augustine goes on to describe the multitude of channels through which miracles can be performed: the direct action of God; the employment of a saint as a channel either during their earthly lifetime or posthumously; and the use of an angel as a channel to perform miracles requested by the saints.² The key point remains that in all of these instances, the power of the miracle is God's, working either directly or indirectly, and is not ascribed to the agent of the miracle. The various methods by which saints can perform miracles are also commented upon by Gregory the Great,

¹ Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, X.xii; LCL vol. 413, pp.306 and 308: 'But the fact is that, with the help of these arts, marvels are wrought of a character and magnitude that go beyond all the limits of man's power. What conclusion remains save to understand wisely that such miracles as appear to be prophesied or actually accomplished by an act of God, but yet have no connection with worship of the one God – whole-hearted clinging to whom is the one good that brings happiness, as the Platonists too bear witness with many proofs in support of their belief – are but tricks played by malign demons and alluring traps which true piety must strive to avoid. On the other hand, whatever miracles are so wrought by God either through angels or by whatever means that they give support to the worship and religion of the one God, in whom alone is a blessed life to be found – these we must truly believe to be the work of those who love us in accord with religious truth, acting either on their own or as instruments, while God himself is active in them' (trans. LCL vol. 413, pp.307 and 309).

² Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, XXII.ix; LCL vol. 417, pp.250-51.

who distinguishes between those miracles performed through saints, and those performed at their request:

Qui devota mente Deo adhærent, cum rerum necessitas exposcit, exhibere signa modo utroque solent, ut mira quæque aliquando ex prece faciant, aliquando ex potestate. Cum enim Joannes dicat: *Quotquot autem receperunt eum, dedit eis potestatem filios Dei fieri* (Joan. 1,12), qui filii Dei ex potestate sunt, quid mirum si signa facere ex potestate valeant?¹

Whilst Gregory refers to miracles performed by a saint's own power, it is clear that the origin of this power is God. He thus distinguishes two routes for the working of miracles, prayer and direct action, whilst maintaining the divine power of the miracle. The New Testament provides ample precedent for this teaching on miracles, as it is stressed that the power of a miracle must always be recognized as divine, and that any human performing a miracle is acting as an agent for this power. This is clearly illustrated in Peter's response to the people after he has healed a lame man:

But Peter seeing them, made answer to the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel you at this, or why look you upon us, as though by our power or holiness we have made this man to walk? The God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our

¹ Gregory the Great, *Dialogorum*, II.xxx; PL 66.188: 'It is quite common for those who devoutly cling to God to work miracles in both of these ways, Peter, either through their prayers or by their own power, as circumstances dictate. Since we read in St. John that 'all those who did welcome him he empowered to become the children of God,' why should we be surprised if those who are the children of God use this power to work signs and wonders?', trans. *FC*, vol.39, pp.98-9.

fathers hath glorified his son Jesus, who you indeed delivered and denied before the face of Pilate, he judging him to be released.¹

Peter is quick to disclaim responsibility for the power of the miracle. Similarly, the wonders performed by Paul are said to emanate from God, as the New Testament asserts that ‘God wrought by the hand of Paul miracles not common’.² Another instance can be found in Luke 11.20, which refers to the power of God in Christ’s exorcism of devils:

But if I in the finger of God do cast out Devils, surely the kingdom of God is come upon you.³

Ælfric makes reference to this Scriptural notion in his homilies, for instance in *Dominica in Quadragessima*, where he asserts that ‘He worhte þa wundra soðlice þurh godcundre mihte’.⁴ The Biblical depiction of miraculous power emanating ultimately from the Lord applies regardless of the channel through which a miracle is performed, and the miracles of saints are likewise seen to represent the action of divine power. The importance of ascribing saints’ miracles to God’s power is apparent in early hagiography; for example, Athanasius’ *Life of Anthony*. Pelikan comments:

Athanasius took pains to point out many times over in this biography that Antony “healed not by giving out commands, but by praying and by

¹ Biblical quotations remain as they appear in context in cited Latin works. All other Bible quotations in Latin are taken from *Biblia sacra iuxta vulgata versionem*, ed. R. Weber et al., 3rd ed. (Stuttgart, 1983). All Bible quotations in English are taken from the Douay-Challoner translation of the Vulgate.

² Acts 19.11.

³ Luke 11.20.

⁴ Clemoes 1997, 10, *Dominica in Quinquagesima*, ll.35-36: ‘He [Jesus] truly performed these miracles through divine power’.

calling upon Christ's name, so that it was clear to all that it was not he who did this, but the Lord showing his loving-kindness to men and curing the sufferers through Antony".¹

This is exemplified in the description of Anthony's healings:

nec tamen ille ea de causa gloriabatur, nec si non exaudiretur murmurabat, sed semper gratiis Domino actis, afflictis auctor erat ut bono essent animo, nossentque nec sibi nec cuiquam hominum inesse medendi facultatem, sed soli Deo, qui, quo tempore quibusque libet, beneficia impertit.²

Similarly, in his description of a miracle performed by Sanctulus, Gregory the Great is keen to point out the divine origin of this event:

Nihil in hac re in Santulo mireris, sed pensa, si potes, quis ille spiritus fuerit, qui ejus tam simplicem mentem tenuit, atque in tanto virtutis culmine erexit.³

¹ Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition Vol. I, The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition* (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 1971), p.137. Citing Athanasius, *Vita Anthonii*, 56; PG 26.925.

² Athanasius, *Vita Anthonii*, 56; PG 26.926 (the Greek is given at PG 26.925): 'But he neither boasted when he was heard, nor did he complain when not heard. He always gave thanks to the Lord, and urged the sufferers to bear up and realize that healing was not his prerogative nor indeed any man's, but God's who performs it when He will and for whom He will', trans. Robert T. Meyer, trans., *St. Athanasius, The Life of Saint Antony*, in the *Ancient Christian Writers Series*, vol.10 (London: Longman's, Green and Co., 1950), p.68.

³ Gregory the Great, *Dialogorum*, III.xxxvii; PL 77.313: 'In this miracle you need not marvel at any power in Sanctulus himself. But realize, if you can, what spirit it was that possessed his simple mind and raised him to those heights of virtue', trans. *FC*, vol.39, p.183.

The power of the miracle thus emanates from God, not the saint. Parallel sentiments are expressed by Augustine as he advocates the recording of miracle stories:

Id nameque fiei volumus, cum videremus antiquis similia divinarum
signa virtutum etiam nostris temporibus frequentari, et ea non debere
multorum notitiae deperire.¹

These orthodox perceptions of the divine power of miracles find expression in the work of Old English hagiographers, and references to the divine origin of saints' wonders are made throughout the corpus, such as that in Ælfric's *Life of St. Benedict*:

Hwa mæg on worulde ealle ða undra gereccan. ðe se ælmihtiga
scyppend ðurh ðisne æðelan wer middanearde geswutelode;²

As such, whilst a variety of channels are open for the enactment of a miracle, the power of the miracle is ascribed to God rather than the immediate worker of the feat.

Augustine also comments upon the performance of miracles in his own time. Whilst in his earlier writings, such as *De Vera Religione*, he had doubted the continuance of miracles,³ in *De Civitate Dei* he responds to the challenge that miracles are no longer performed:

¹ Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, XXII.viii.20; LCL vol. 417, p.238: 'For this is a thing that I decided should be done when I saw that signs of the power of God, like those of antiquity, were often repeated in our time as well, and I thought that they ought not to be allowed to fade from the knowledge of so many people' (trans. LCL vol. 417, p.239).

² Godden 1979, 11, *Benedict*, ll.585-7: 'Who in the world may relate all the wonders that the Almighty Creator has shown to the earth through this noble man?'

³ Augustine, *De Vera Religione*, XXV.47; PL 34.142: 'nec miracula illa in nostra tempora durare permissa sunt, ne animus semper visibilia quæreret, et eorum consuetudine frigesceret genus humanum, quorum novitate flagravit'; trans: 'The miracles of earlier times are by divine disposition no longer permitted. This is to prevent the spirit from going on seeking after visible things. If miracles were to become an everyday occurrence they would cease to affect human beings, whereas in the early days they

Cur, inquiunt, nunc illa miracula, quae praedicatis facta esse non fiunt?

Possem quidem dicere necessaria fuisse, priusquam crederet mundus, ad hoc ut crederet mundus.¹

The need for miracles has diminished due to the spread of the Christian faith. However, Augustine goes on to assert that miracles do indeed occur in his own time, and endeavours to explain people's ignorance of these:

Nam etiam nunc fiunt miracula in eius nomine, sive per sacramenta eius sive per orationes vel memorias sanctorum eius. Sed non eadem claritate inlustrantur ut tanta quanta illa gloria diffamentur.²

The Augustinian corpus contains many instances of his own relation of miracles, including those which occurred at Hippo, for instance the curing of a brother and sister:

Unum est apud nos factum non maius quam illa quae dixi, sed tam clarum atque inlustre miraculum ut nullum arbitrer esse Hipponniensium

inspired them by their novelty' (F. Van der Meer, trans., *Augustine the Bishop* (London; New York: Sheed and Ward, 1961), p.540).

¹ Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, XXII.viii; LCL vol. 417, p.208: 'Why, our opponents ask, are not those miracles which you say were once performed being performed today? I could, of course, reply that before the world believed, they were necessary to establish faith, and that whoever still asks for wonders in order to be convinced is himself a great wonder, for refusing to believe though all the world believes' (trans. LCL vol. 417, p.209).

² Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, XXII.viii; LCL vol. 417, p.210: 'For miracles are still being performed in his name, both through his sacraments, through prayers, and through the relics of his saints. But these miracles do not have the same light of publicity, so as to be known with the same renown as the former' (trans. LCL vol. 417, p.211).

qui hoc non vel viderit vel didicerit, nullum qui oblivisci ulla ratione potuerit.¹

As such, the truth and continuance of miracles are expressed in Augustine's later work. Belief in the continuance of miracles is amply illustrated in the writings of other Church Fathers. The *Dialogues* of Gregory the Great, for example, abound with miraculous incidents, including posthumous wonders taking place in his own time:

Sed cur multa de ejus vita dicimus, cum nunc usque ad corpus illius tot virtutum documenta teneamus?²

A similar preoccupation with the miraculous can be observed in the writings of Bede, whose *Historia Ecclesiastica* incorporates a high frequency of miracle stories including the wonders seen at the death of Eorcengota,³ the healing of a boy by Germanus⁴ and the healings performed by Bishop John:

Miserat autem episcopus mulieri, quæ infirma iacebat, de aqua benedicta, quam in dedicationem ecclesiæ consecrauerat, per unum de his qui mecum uenerant fratribus, praecipiens ut gustandam illi daret et, ubicumque maximum ei dolorem inesse didicisset, de ipsa eam aqua

¹ Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, XXII.viii; LCL vol. 417, p.244: 'There is one miracle that has occurred among us, no greater than those I have mentioned, but so famous and illustrious that I think there is no one at Hippo who did not either see it or learn of it, and certainly no one could possibly forget it' (trans. LCL vol. 417, p.245).

² Gregory the Great, *Dialogorum*, I.x; PL 77.209C: 'But why relate all these miracles from the lifetime of Bishop Fortunatus, when even at the present numerous wonders are worked at the tomb where he lies buried?', trans. *FC*, vol.39, p.49.

³ Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, III.viii in Bertram Colgrave and R.A.B. Mynors, eds. and trans., *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), p.238, hereafter Colgrave and Mynors 1969. All translations are taken directly from this edition.

⁴ Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, I.xxi; Colgrave and Mynors 1969, pp.64 and 66.

lauaret. Quod ut factum est, surrexit statim mulier sana, et non solum se infirmitate longa carere, sed et perditas dudum vires recepisse sentiens.¹

The proliferation of miracle stories in the works of Gregory and Bede illustrate the importance they were accorded and the belief afforded them by influential, venerable figures.

In Scriptural and patristic writings, then, miracles are essentially sensory wonders, wonderful in the sense that they defy expectations regarding what is known of nature. Yet they are not contrary to nature, as God created the natural order and thus nothing He does can be in discord with this. In order for a sensory wonder to be a miracle, it must be of divine origin: this divine power can be expressed directly, either spontaneously or in response to prayer; through the channel of a saint either during their lifetime or posthumously; or through the channel of an angel. The writings of Augustine, Gregory and Bede all advocate the continuance of miracles in their own time, in spite of apparent criticisms by unbelievers, alluded to by Augustine, that the age of miracles has ceased.

As will be discussed in the succeeding chapter on inscribed authority, Old English writers, in particular Ælfric, relied on the authority of patristic sources such as Augustine, Gregory and Bede in their own writings.² The thought of these theologians on miracles is thus likely to have influenced Old English hagiographers, and the brief discussion of received tradition outlines some central features of the miraculous as Anglo-Saxon religious writers are likely to have perceived it. With these features in

¹ Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, V.iv; Colgrave and Mynors 1969, pp.462 and 463: 'Now the bishop had sent one of the brothers who had come with me to take some holy water, which he had consecrated for the dedication of the church, to the woman who lay ill. He told him to give her some to drink, also instructing him to wash the place where the pain was worst with the water. When this was done, the woman at once rose cured, realizing that she was not only free from her protracted illness but had also recovered her long-lost strength'.

² See below, pp.76-81.

mind, questions regarding the purpose of miracles remain. A key element of this thesis involves the relationship between miracles and divine authority, as it explores the ways in which a saint's miracles serve to illustrate God's validation of their virtue and sanctity.

Indeed, as has been demonstrated above, in order for a sensual wonder to be defined as a miracle it must be wrought through divine power, either directly or through the channel of a man or angel. In the sense that miracles come from God, they immediately attest to divine authority for the wondrous event itself: it is the work of God. This divine authority inherent in the performance of a miracle enables these wonders to act as confirmation of the truth of the Christian faith, and the notion of miracles as attestation of Biblical truth is found in Augustine, as he outlines the significance of Jesus' miracles in the establishment of Christian authority:

Quid enim aliud agunt tanta et tam multa miracula, ipso etiam dicente illa fieri non ob aliud, nisi ut sibi crederetur? [...] Ergo ille afferens medicinam quæ corruptissimos mores sanatura esset, miraculis conciliavit auctoritatem, auctoritate meruit fidem, fide contraxit multitudinem, multitudine obtinuit vetustatem, vetustate roboravit religionem.¹

Augustine goes on to assert the role of miracles in proving the authority of the Church and condemning heretics:

¹ Augustine, *De Utilitate Credendi*, XIV; PL 42.88: 'For what other purpose had His miracles, so numerous and stupendous? He Himself said that he worked them for no other reason than that He might be believed [...] Therefore, applying the medicine which was to heal the most corrupt customs, through His miracles He gained authority, through His authority He won faith, through faith He drew the multitude, through the multitude he got possession of antiquity, and through antiquity He strengthened religion', trans. *FC*, vol. 4, pp.434-5.

quæ usque ad confessionem generis humani ab apostolica Sede per
 successiones episcoporum, frustra hæreticis circumlatrantibus, et partim
 plebis ipsius iudicio, partim conciliorum gravitate, partim etiam
 miraculorum maiestate damnatis, culmen auctoritatis obtinuit?¹

In harmony with Augustine's teachings, Ælfric devotes a relatively large proportion of his work to the discussion of miracles as authority for the Christian faith. He comments upon the divine signs performed through Jesus as confirmation of the truth of His message:

He eac mid wundrum ða lare getrymde þæt ða gecorenan þe geleaffulran
 wæron. 7 þa wiðcorenan nane beladunge nabbað. for þan ðe hi. ne |
 þurh godcundum tacnum ne þurh liflice lare. þam soðfæstan hælende
 gelyfan noldon ...²

This statement remains unsourced, and the reference to miracles as 'godcundum tacnum' perhaps expresses Ælfric's own understanding of the nature and function of miracles. Drawing on Gregory, Ælfric also asserts the need for such miracles in the conversion of heathens, as he explains: 'ðas wundra wæron nydbehefe on anginne

¹ Augustine, *De Utilitate Credendi*, XVII; PL 42.91: 'For starting from the apostolic chair down through successions of bishops, even unto the open confession of all mankind, it [the Church] has possessed the crown of authority. And the heretics who lurked around her in vain were condemned, in part by the judgment of the people themselves, in part by the weighty decisions of the councils, and also in part, by majestic miracles', trans. *FC*, vol.4, p.440.

² Clemoes 1997, 28, *Dominica XI Post Pentecosten*, ll.102-105: 'He also confirmed his instruction with miracles, that the chosen might be the more believing; and the rejected will have no excuse, because they neither by divine signs, nor by vital teaching, would believe in the true Saviour'.

cristendomes. for þan ðurh ðam tacnum wearð ðæt hæðene folc gebiged to geleafan'.¹

However, Ælfric clearly does not perceive this aspect of the miraculous as a past phenomenon, but suggests that wonders are helpful in strengthening the faith of those to whom he preaches:

Mine gebroðru we wyllað eow gereccan sume cristes wundra. to
getrymmincge eoweres geleafan;²

That miracles are perceived to confirm belief is evidence of the authority they carry: the authority of Christ, in terms of the truth of His nature and His teachings, is established by His performance of miracles, as these are perceived to be evidence of the Divine working within and through Him.

This idea of miracles as evincing divine authorisation of an individual and their actions is also applicable to saints, and is illustrated in comments made by Ælfric and patristic writers on the relationship of miracles to sanctity. As McCready outlines, Gregory the Great views miracles as 'external signs of the grace possessed within',³ and in his *Dialogues*, Peter comments,

In expositione quippe qualiter invenienda atque tenenda sit virtus,
agnoscitur; in narratione vero signorum cognoscimus inventa ac retenta
qualiter declaretur.⁴

¹ Clemoes 1997, 21, *In Ascensione Domini*, ll.155-7: 'These wonders were necessary at the beginning of Christianity, because through these signs the heathen people were turned to faith'.

² Godden 1979, 23, *Dominica III Post Pentecosten*, ll.126-7: 'My brothers, we will relate to you some of Christ's miracles, to strengthen your faith'.

³ William D. McCready, *Signs of Sanctity, Miracles in the Thought of Gregory the Great* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1989), p.4.

⁴ Gregory the Great, *Dialogorum*, I.Preface; PL 77.153: 'An explanation of holy scripture teaches us how to attain virtue and persevere in it, whereas a description of miracles shows us how this acquired virtue reveals itself in those who persevere in it', trans. *FC*, vol.39, p.6.

Miracles not only provide evidence of an individual's virtue, but also show that the Spirit of God is at work within them:

Mens autem quæ divino spiritu impletur, habet evidentissime signa sua; virtutes scilicet et humilitatem, quæ si utraque perfecte in una mente conveniunt, liquet quod de præsentia sancti Spiritus testimonium ferunt.¹

Miracles are perceived to signify the inner workings of a divine presence: Gregory himself terms miracles and virtue as 'qui tantæ excellentiæ foris fuit',² and refers to miracles as 'bonæ vitæ testimonium fuerent'³ and a 'testimonio'⁴ or 'probationem'⁵ of sanctity. It must be noted here that Gregory sees both miracles and humility as signs of sanctity, and whilst he views each as conferring greatness upon an individual, he values the virtue of humility over the performance of miracles. In the *Dialogues*, Peter comes to realise that,

Ut agnosco, vir iste magnus foris fuit in miraculis, sed major intus in humilitate cordis.⁶

However, regardless of the superiority of humility over miracles, the testimony of miracles to an individual's sanctity and the presence of the Holy Spirit within them

¹ Gregory the Great, *Dialogorum*, I.i; PL 77.156: 'The soul that is really filled with the Spirit of God will easily be recognised by its miraculous power and humility. Where these two signs of holiness are found to perfection they show beyond a doubt that God is truly present', trans. *FC*, vol.39, p.8.

² Gregory the Great, *Dialogorum*, I.v; PL 77.180: 'external manifestations of holiness', trans. *FC*, vol.39, p.26.

³ Gregory the Great, *Dialogorum*, I.xii; PL 77.216: 'a testimony to holy life', trans. *FC*, vol.39, p.52.

⁴ Gregory the Great, *Dialogorum*, I.xi; PL 77.212: 'testimony'.

⁵ Gregory the Great, *Dialogorum*, III.xi; PL 77.237: 'proof'.

⁶ Gregory the Great, *Dialogorum*, I.vi; PL 77.181: 'This man was truly great because of his miracles, but I see now that he was even greater by reason of his humility', trans. *FC*, vol.39, p.27.

remain characteristic features of Gregory's thought. Gregory also comments upon the value of posthumous miracles for revealing the worthiness of a soul,¹ and statements of a similar nature are found in Bede, who also assumes a relationship between a saints' merits and their miracles. In a discussion of St. Aidan, he asserts:

Qui cuius meriti fuerit, etiam miraculorum signis internus arbiter
edocuit, e quibus tria memoriae causa ponere satis sit.²

The attitude expressed by Gregory and Bede is in keeping with later medieval approaches to sanctity, and Benedicta Ward summarizes the significance of miracles in medieval perceptions of the recognition of saints:

Virtue, then, was the basic requisite for sanctity, and this was to be established beyond all possible doubt by an account of the life of the saint. Without this account the case could not even begin [....] But what made it certain that a person could be proclaimed a saint was the evidence of God's approval of him in miracles.³

Miracles thus play a crucial role in determining the sanctity of an individual, and as Pelikan comments:

¹ Gregory the Great, *Dialogorum*, IV.xx; PL 77.352-353.

² Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, III.xv; Colgrave and Mynors 1969, pp.260 and 261: 'He who judges the heart showed by signs and miracles what Aidan's merits were, and of these miracles it will be enough to set down three, which deserve to be remembered'. This idea is also expressed in relation to Ethelburga, at IV.vi; Colgrave and Mynors 1969, pp.356 and 357.

³ Ward 1987, p.191.

miracles seemed to be the touchstone for distinguishing between who was a saint and who was not; as Scripture said in speaking of the “saint [beatus],” “He has done miraculous things [*mirabilia*] in his life”.¹

It must be remembered that whilst miracles were often seen as signs of sanctity, they were not superior to merits. The relationship between the two is expressed by Pelikan:

One could also speak of ‘miracles’ and ‘merits,’ sometimes citing the former as evidence for the presence of the latter, but sometimes pointing out that doing something great in ‘miracles’ was not the same as being something great in ‘merits’. As the Gospel noted, John the Baptist did not perform any overt miracles; neither, for that matter, did the Virgin Mary. Yet both of these saints merited the highest praise.²

However, despite the central importance of merits in the sanctity of an individual, miracles provide outward evidence of this inward virtue, and remain an indication of sanctity. This notion of miracles as attestation of sanctity finds ample expression in the Ælfrician corpus. He asserts that God works miracles ‘æt rihtgelyfedra manna byrgenum’,³ and makes specific references to individuals whose miracles show their merits. In his homily on Ash Wednesday, Ælfric gives the account of an innocent woman accused of adultery. The miracles performed in the account are seen as testament to her innocence, and Ælfric glorifies the Lord ‘se þe hyre unscaððignysse

¹ Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition Vol. 3, The Growth of Medieval Theology (600-1300)* (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 1978), p.179, hereafter Pelikan 1978. Biblical citation is from Ecclesiasticus 31.9: ‘Who is he, and we will praise him? for he hath done wonderful things in his life’.

² Pelikan 1978, p.181.

³ Clemoes 1997, 20, *Feria IIII De Fide Catholica*, 1.255: ‘at the tombs of orthodox men’.

swa geswutelode mid wundrum'.¹ In the *Life of St. Æthelthryth*, Ælfric also claims that the saint's miracles are proof of her virginity.² In his *vita* of St. Swithun, Ælfric illustrates the power of posthumous miracles to reveal an individual's greatness:

þa geswutelode god þone sanct swyðun mid manegum wundrum . þæt
he mære is .³

The idea of miracles glorifying the Lord's saints also recurs, as Ælfric asserts that the Lord 'his halgan mærsað mihtiglice mid wundrum',⁴ and that:

We hériað urne drihten. on his halgena geðincðum. se ðe hí mærsað. mid
micclum wundrum. on ðyssere worulde.⁵

Divine authorization of individuals through their performance of miracles is clear from the above references to the phenomenon. As miracles are of divine origin, the ability of a saint to enact a miracle demonstrates that the Lord has selected them as a channel for His power. The implications of this for the demonstration of sanctity are made clear by Gregory and those following him, as miracles come to be taken as a sign of saintly status. As such, miracles imply divine authorization of an individual, culminating in their recognition by the Lord as one of His chosen.

As miracles are perceived as an attestation of sanctity, the type and frequency of miracles performed by a particular saint reveal the precise manner in which divine

¹ Skeat 1891, 12, *De Capite Ieiunii*, 1.240: 'who had thus shown her integrity with miracles'.

² Skeat 1891, 20, *Æthelthryth*, ll.1-4.

³ Skeat 1891, 21, *Swithun*, ll.4-5: 'God, by many miracles revealed Saint Swithun, [showing] that he is glorious'.

⁴ Skeat 1891, 21, *Swithun*, 1.497: 'glorifies his saints mightily with miracles'.

⁵ Godden 1979, 38, *In Natale Unius Confessoris*, ll.241-3: 'We praise our Lord in the honour of his saints, who glorifies them with great wonders in this world'.

authorisation is bestowed upon them by the author of their hagiography. Differences in the miracles performed by different types of saints are suggestive of the paradigms of sanctity deemed desirable by Old English hagiographers: any relationships between certain types of miracles and categories of sanctity suggest that the divine authorisation of saints was not uniform, and that certain methods of authorisation were deemed more appropriate for certain individuals. On one level, the nature of the miracles performed by a saint remains unrelated to the divine authorisation bestowed upon them: selection of an individual as an agent for a miracle immediately demonstrates the workings of the Holy Spirit within them, and thus the performance of any miracle vouches for this and all saints are bestowed equal authority. However, certain statements by the Latin fathers are suggestive of a miracle hierarchy. This can be seen primarily in terms of resurrection miracles, which Gregory deems to be the greatest of all physical wonders:

Quid alii sentient ignoro: ego autem cunctis miraculis hoc potius existimo esse miraculum, quod ad vitam mortui redeunt, eorumque animæ ad carnem ex occulto revocantur. GREGOR. Si visibilia attendimus, ita necesse est ut credamus;¹

In referring to resurrection as ‘the mightiest of all miracles’, Gregory implies that there is a difference in the level of power exercised through the agent of such a miracle. In another telling passage, Gregory comments on the posthumous miracles of saints, performed at their shrines and elsewhere:

¹ Gregory the Great, *Dialogorum*, III.xvii; PL 77.264-265: ‘PETER: I do not know what others may think, but for me the mightiest of all miracles is that which causes the dead to live again by calling their souls back from the world of the unseen. GREGORY: If we judge from what is visible we cannot conclude otherwise’, trans. *FC*, vol.39, pp.146-7.

Ubi in suis corporibus sancti martyres jacent, dubium, Petre, non est quod multa valeant signa demonstrare, sicut et faciunt, et pura mente quærentibus innumera miracula ostendunt. Sed quia ab infirmis potest mentibus dubitari, utrumne ad exaudiendum ibi præsentibus sint, ubi constat quia in suis corporibus non sint; ibi necesse est eos majora signa ostendere, ubi de eorum præsentia potest men infirma dubitare.¹

Gregory does not qualify exactly what he means by the ‘majora signa’ performed outside the burial places of saints, but again his comments imply that some miracles are greater than others. Ælfric would doubtless have been familiar with Gregory’s *Dialogues*, which he employs as a source in several of his homilies, most extensively his *Life of St. Benedict*.² As such, the concept that some miracles demonstrated more greatness than others would probably not have been alien to him.

It is not only in relation to the different kinds of miracles that a saint’s magnificence can be judged. The frequency of a saint’s miracles is also suggestive of their greatness:

the viewpoint of the sixth-century poet Fortunatus that a saint’s prominence may be gauged by the number of his miracles has

¹ Gregory the Great, *Dialogorum*, II.xxxviii; PL 66.204: ‘There is no doubt, Peter, that the holy martyrs can perform countless miracles where their bodies rest. And they do so on behalf of all who pray there with a pure intention. In places where their bodies do not actually lie buried, however, there is danger that those whose faith is weak may doubt their presence and their power to answer prayers.

Consequently, it is in these places that they must perform still greater miracles’, trans. *FC*, vol.39, p.109.

² Godden 1979, 11, *Benedict*. For the sources of this homily, see M.R. Godden, ‘Catholic Homilies 2.11’, 1997, *Fontes Anglo-Saxonici: World Wide Web Register*, <http://fontes.english.ox.ac.uk/>, accessed June 2004.

commonly prevailed among the laity and is an underlying assumption of many writings by clerics.¹

Fortunatus' views are not explicitly stated by any of the patristic sources in the works examined here, but the above quotation focuses attention on the lay perception of miracles, and the immediate human reaction their narration would obtain. As such, while all miracles are testament to the Lord's authorisation of an individual, Gregory's comments suggest that some miracles were deemed inherently more powerful than others, while Fortunatus' view implies that a high number of miracles indicates greatness. The notion that a certain type or high frequency of miracles denotes greatness is not stated explicitly in the Old English hagiographic corpus, and this thesis seeks to assess whether such an idea had currency in the genre. It will evaluate the types of miracles ascribed to different saints within the Old English hagiographic corpus, and discuss the implications of these. If, as has been demonstrated, early medieval society perceived miracles as denoting divine authorisation of an individual, the precise manner of this authorisation is of primary significance. If different types of saints receive divine validation through varying types and frequencies of miracles, this has implications for authorial depictions and perceptions of sanctity within the Old English hagiographic corpus, and hence within Anglo-Saxon religious circles.

¹ Richard Keickhefer and George D. Bond, eds., *Sainthood, Its Manifestations in World Religions* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), pp.23-4.

Old English Hagiography and the Projection of Authority.

As a corollary to an exploration of divine authority ascribed to saints within Old English hagiography, this thesis examines the authority claimed by the authors of this hagiography. As a preface to a discussion of inscribed authority within the following case-studies, concepts of textual authority in Old English saints' lives will be explored. The means by which Old English hagiographic documents are portrayed as authoritative are numerous, and various methods for advocating the textual authority of a saint's life can be observed, often working together within the same piece. Writers can be seen to appeal to earlier, established patristic sources for confirmation of the validity of their statements: they also associate themselves with contemporary figures of authority; emphasize the gulf between their own writings and those which they deem unorthodox; create a distance between themselves and the audience through their use of personal pronouns; give direct quotations from Scripture; and, most importantly, present their work as resulting from the intervention of divine grace.

Many of these techniques are recognized methods found throughout the works of patristic authorities. However, the ways in which they are manipulated differ subtly in the Old English corpus, and are employed to varying levels within this body of work. The means by and extent to which Old English hagiography is validated by its authors in relation to the methods employed by patristic authorities will thus be examined, and it will be seen that, in Ælfric's case at least, the creation of such works is nothing short of a divine miracle, and his own role in the transmission of true doctrine a spiritual wonder.

In order to gain a sense of the authority asserted for Old English homiletic literature in a broader sense, this discussion will not be restricted to Old English hagiography. Rather, it will look at the five major homiletic collections in which Old

English hagiographic material occurs. These include the three lengthy Ælfrician collections, *Catholic Homilies* I and II and *Lives of Saints*. Much of the material discussed in this chapter is found in the *Prefaces* to these collections, and it must be noted that, in the case of the *Catholic Homilies*, only Cambridge, University Library Gg 3.28 retains these and they would thus not always have been received with the homilies.¹ However, as this chapter assesses the projected and self-perceived authority of Ælfric's work, any statements made by the author are revelatory regardless of their dissemination. The anonymous collections employed here are Vercelli, Biblioteca Capitolare, CXVII and Princeton, University Library, W.H. Scheide Collection 71, manuscripts containing the Blickling and Vercelli Homilies. Like Ælfric's collections, these have been approached in their entirety in an attempt to evaluate the hagiography within its wider manuscript and preaching context, and all the pieces within these manuscripts, whether or not they are of a hagiographic nature, have been considered. Anonymous hagiographies which do not occur in Blickling and Vercelli are also examined, but the other items in these manuscripts are omitted in order to attain a manageable selection of material. The entire corpus of anonymous prose hagiography is thus included, in addition to the non-hagiographic items found in Blickling and Vercelli. In addition, the influence of patristic writings is explored, but again limitations have to be drawn. Selected works by Augustine, Gregory, Bede and Jerome are considered, as these authors served as immediate or ultimate sources for a substantial amount of Old English homiletic literature and are named by Ælfric in the Latin *Preface* to the first series of *Catholic Homilies*.² These patristic authorities were often not Ælfric's immediate sources, and, as Joyce Hill has investigated, their work

¹ Joyce Hill, "Translating the Tradition: Manuscripts, Models and Methodologies in the Composition of Ælfric's *Catholic Homilies*", *Bulletin of John Rylands University* 79:1 (1997): 43-65, here p.44, hereafter Hill 1997.

² Clemoes 1997, *Latin Preface*, ll.15-16.

frequently came to him via the compilations of Carolingian intermediaries, particularly those of Smaragdus, Haymo and Paul the Deacon.¹ However, Ælfric remained familiar with the writings of the Fathers, both through these intermediaries and via the patristic works themselves, and it is fair to speculate that he, and some anonymous hagiographers, would have been aware of the authority motifs found in these writings and perhaps been influenced by these.

Ecclesiastical Authority

Ælfric is concerned to affiliate himself with contemporary religious authorities in his works, as can be clearly observed in his *Prefaces* to the *Catholic Homilies* and *Lives of Saints* collections. In the first series of *Catholic Homilies*, he describes his placement at Cernel ‘þurh æðelmæres bene ðæs þegenes. his gebyrd 7 goodnys sind gehwær cuðe’.² Immediately, Ælfric implies the esteem in which he is held by a person of prestigious birth and merit, who requests his services. In the Latin *Preface* to the same work, Ælfric further emphasizes his position by citing the merits of his teacher, beginning: ‘Ego ælfricus alumnus adelwoldi beneuoli et uenerabilis presulis’.³ Ælfric is again assuming authority by association: he has been taught by a person whom he asserts is held in great esteem, and Gatch comments on the effect this would have had:

He was, in the first place, *alumnus* Æðelwoldi or *Witoniensis alumnus*.

His alma mater was the great center of the new monasticism at

¹ This area has been investigated extensively by Joyce Hill. See, for example, Joyce Hill, “Ælfric’s Sources Reconsidered: Some Case Studies from the *Catholic Homilies*”, in *Studies in English Language and Literature, ‘Doubt Wisely’: Papers in Honour of Eric Stanley*, ed. M.J. Toswell and E.M. Tyler (London; New York: Routledge, 1996): 362-86, hereafter Hill 1996b; and Joyce Hill, “Ælfric and Smaragdus”, *ASE* 21 (1992): 203-37, hereafter Hill 1992.

² Clemoes 1997, *Old English Preface*, ll.47-8: ‘because of the prayer of Æthelmær the thane, whose birth and goodness are known everywhere’.

³ Clemoes 1997, *Latin Preface*, l.1: ‘I, Ælfric, a student of the benevolent and venerable prelate Æthelwold’.

Winchester, his teacher Æthelwold the great reforming monastic bishop.

His works, therefore, came highly recommended to those who did not otherwise know their author's reputation.¹

As such, in promoting his ecclesiastical connections, Ælfric advocated his own worth as a homilist and the ensuing authority of his work.

Ælfric not only implies his own status through reference to important contemporary figures, but also passes on the responsibility for his work's orthodoxy to them. In the first series of the *Catholic Homilies*, he begs that Archbishop Sigeric make any necessary corrections to the text and endorse the book's authority:

et adscribatur dehinc hic codicellus tuae auctoritati. non uilitati nostrae
despicabilis persone ...²

Similarly, the latter series of homilies is directed to Sigeric's authority for 'corrigendum',³ with the request that he judge 'si fidelibus catholicis habenda est. an abicienda'.⁴ The clever wording of this statement provides a means of ensuring the acceptance of the book's authority to all those who are aware of this *Preface*: had it not been deemed suitable to be 'habenda' by the Catholic faithful, a phrase which carries distinct canonical overtones, it would no longer be in circulation. Ælfric himself refers to the books received and rejected by the church when discussing apostolic writings in his passion of Mark the Evangelist:

¹ Gatch 1977, p.13.

² Clemoes 1997, *Latin Preface*, ll.40-42: 'and henceforth that this little codex be ascribed to your authority, not to the profit of our contemptible person'.

³ Godden 1979, *Latin Preface*, l.20.

⁴ Godden 1979, *Latin Preface*, ll.25-6: 'if it is to be received by the Catholic faithful or thrown away'.

and þas feower ana syndon to under-fonne . on geleaffulre gelaðunge .
 and forlætan þa oðre þe lease gesetnysse gesetton . ðurh hi sylfe . na
 þurh þone halgan gast . ne ðurh ðæs hælendes gecorennysse.¹

As Ælfric's reference to his own work is in Latin and the passage on the reception of authoritative works in Old English, it is impossible to discern whether he meant to imply the same kind of reception by the Latin and Old English words. However, the terminology employed by Ælfric in reference to his own work and canonical writings is similar, and signifies that he is seeking a high degree of authorization and acceptance for his work. Similarly, as Joyce Hill points out, the use of such a modesty *topos* as that employed in the Prefatory letter to Sigeric represents a recognised method of acquiring authority for a work:

as is the purpose of any modesty *topoi*, the writer implicitly elicits from the addressee and from the later, indirect audience the assent which paradoxically invests the work with a measure of the authority that the writer seems to disclaim.²

The Lives of Saints' Preface also includes an appeal for ecclesiastical authorization, as Ælfric again passes on the responsibility for the book to influential figures:

Non mihi inputetur quod diuinam scripturam nostrae lingue infero, quia
 arguet me praecatus multorum fidelium et maxime æpelwerdi ducis et

¹ Skeat 1891, 15, *Mark*, ll.222-5: 'and these four only are to be received in the orthodox church, and the others to be rejected, who wrote false writings, by themselves (only), not by the Holy Ghost, nor by the Saviour's choosing'.

² Hill 1997, p.46.

æðelmeri nostri, qui ardentissime nostras interpretationes Amplectuntur
lectitando;¹

Thus the authority of both Ælfric and his works are implied in the author's opening statements to his major hagiographic collections.

This means of authorizing a narrative is less evident in the Old English anonymous corpus, with only one instance in the texts examined here. In the *Life of St. Nicholas*, a similar statement is found, as the author asserts he has written the life at the request of an ecclesiastic:

Ne hæfst þu me ofte gebedon, leofe fæder Anastasi, þæt ic þe utarehte
mid Lædenlicre spræce þæs eadigestan Nicholaes gebyrtdida 7 his
arwurðe lif.²

However, this idea is derived from the Latin life of the saint,³ and the Old English author is making no personal claims regarding his own connections and standing. As such, Ælfric's evident concern to authorize himself and his work through ecclesiastic authorities is unparalleled in the remainder of the Old English hagiographic corpus.

¹ Skeat 1891, *Latin Preface*, ll.29-32: 'Let it not be charged against me alone that I turn divine scripture into our language, because the wish of many of the faithful clears me and especially that of ealdorman Æthelweard and of our friend Æthelmær, who most zealously favour our translations by often reading them'.

² Elaine M. Treharne, ed. and trans., *The Old English Life of St. Nicholas with the Old English Life of St. Giles* (Leeds: Leeds Texts and Monographs, n.s. 15, 1997): 83-100, ll.4-6: 'Now you have often asked me, dear father Anastasius, that I translate for you, into Latin, the birth and pious life of the most blessed Nicholas', modern translation at pp.101-117, ll.4-6, hereafter Treharne 1997.

³ Treharne 1997, 'B.L., Cotton Tiberius D.iv, Vita Sancti Nicholai', at pp.178-97, here ll.4-6.

Superiority Over Laity

The manner in which a homilist addresses their audience can be extremely telling, and a distinct difference can be observed between Ælfric and the majority of anonymous hagiographers regarding their use of personal pronouns. Throughout the Ælfrician corpus, a distance is maintained between the author and those whom he is addressing: Ælfric rarely associates himself with his audience by placing himself on the same level as them, and instead casts himself in the role of a redemptive teacher spreading God's word to the ignorant and sinful. Rather than using the pronoun 'we' to refer to mankind in general, himself included, Ælfric frequently employs 'we' to refer to either himself, or, potentially, to the series of orthodox writers whom he perceives himself to be following. His audience is referred to in the second person, and he thus draws a clear distinction between addresser and addressees. Selected examples from his homilies and saints' lives will illustrate this more clearly. In a narrative on the text of the Gospel, Ælfric begins: 'Mine gebroðru we wyllað eow gereccan sume cristes wundra. to getrymmincge eoweres geleafan',¹ and parallel instances of this use of pronouns can be found throughout the corpus. Ælfric asserts that 'We secgað eow godes riht';² 'we wyllað eow secgan nu ærest';³ 'Nu wille we eow gereccan þæs dægðerlican'⁴ and so on throughout his works, clearly differentiating himself from those at whom his texts are directed. Joyce Hill points out a similar phenomenon with reference to the tone of Ælfric's *Pastoral Letters*:

he maintains a sense of the Episcopal voice, and thus of Episcopal authority, by a range of rhetorical devices, notably successions of

¹ Godden 1979, 23, *Dominica III post Pentecosten*, ll.126-7: 'My brothers, we will relate to you some of Christ's miracles, to strengthen your faith'.

² Clemoes 1997, 3, *Stephen Protomartyr: I*, l.186: 'We tell you God's law'.

³ Clemoes 1997, 14, *Dominica Palmarum*, ll.1-2: 'now we will first say to you'.

⁴ Clemoes 1997, 15, *Sermo de Sacrificio in Die Pascae*, ll.72-3: 'We will now give you the explanation'.

impersonal declarative statements which establish an appropriate regulatory tone, the apt use of imperatives and plural address, and the occasional use of the superior “we”, reinforced in the Old English letters by direct identification in such phrases as “we biscepas” and “Vs bisceopum gedafenað”.¹

The superior tone employed in the homilies can thus be seen elsewhere in Ælfric’s work. However, it would be unfair to assert that Ælfric never identifies himself with his audience: occasionally he speaks of his audience and himself as one, saying ‘We sceolon ægðer gelyfan godes wundra’;² and ‘Uton beon eac gemyndige’.³ However, in the main, his use of personal pronouns separates himself or the preacher of the homilies and the audience, placing him in an immediately superior position: he is in possession of spiritual truths, his audience are in need of them.

This distinction between the ‘we’ or ‘Ic’ of the author and the ‘eow’ of the audience may seem like a natural and conventional method of address. However, examination of the anonymous hagiographic corpus reveals that it is not a tone employed by all. The Vercelli Homilies contain a multitude of statements in which homilists identify themselves with their audience, such as: ‘ac we sint nu þam geliccost fortruwode’;⁴ ‘Ac utan we beon gemyndige ussa sawla þearfe’;⁵ ‘Is us þonne mycel þearf, men þa leofestan, þæt we gegangen þæs hælendes scylde near’;⁶ and ‘For ðan we

¹ Hill 1994, pp.83-4.

² Godden 1979, I, *De Natale Domini*, ll.272-3: ‘we should both believe God’s wonders’.

³ Godden 1979, I, *De Natale Domini*, ll.292-3: ‘Let us also be mindful’.

⁴ D.G. Scragg, ed., *The Vercelli Homilies and Related Texts*, EETS OS 300 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), II, ll.5-6: ‘But we have most likely trusted presumptuously in that’, hereafter Scragg 1992, followed by item no. and line ref. All translations from the Vercelli Homilies are modified from Lewis E. Nicholson, *The Vercelli Book Homilies, Translations from the Anglo-Saxon* (Maryland: University Press of America, Inc., 1991).

⁵ Scragg 1992, II, l.69: ‘But let us be mindful of the need of our souls’.

⁶ Scragg 1992, IV, ll.343-4: ‘There is for us then great need, beloved men, that we go nearer to the Lord’s shield’.

sculon ure sawle georne tilian'.¹ The Blickling Homilies display a similar phenomenon, for instance: 'Gehyron we nu, men þa leofestan, hwæt awriten is on Godes bocum';² 'Nu we habbaþ myccle nedþearfe þæt he us gearwe finde';³ and 'Men þa leofestan, we gehyrdon oft secggan be þam æpelan tocyme ures Drihtnes'.⁴ All of these examples, and many others like them found scattered throughout the anonymous corpus, identify the homilist and audience as a unified body and place them on an equal level, in contrast to Ælfric's superior tone.

The method of address predominantly employed in Ælfric is found in some anonymous homilies, as in Vercelli IV, where the author entreats: 'Men þa leofestan, ic eow bidde 7 eaðmodlice lære þæt ge wepen 7 forhtien on þysse medmiclan tide for eowrum synnum';⁵ and in Blickling V, which reads 'forþon, men þa leofestan, ic eow bidde & halsige þæt ànra manna gehwylce sceawige hine sylfne on his heortan'.⁶ The tone differs from one homily to another, and the most 'Ælfrician' in its distinction between audience and homilist is Vercelli VII, where the writer instructs the audience: 'Ongitað nu hwæt ic eow secge';⁷ 'Eac ðu meaht þe bet ongytan þæt ic þe soð secge';⁸ 'Ne lære [ic] þæt',⁹ and so on. However, the overall tone of the Ælfrician and anonymous corpora differ, and the distinction between the 'ic' or 'we' of the author and the 'eow' of the audience is far more common in Ælfrician writings, instantly placing Ælfric in a position of superiority. Evidently, whilst Ælfric was the author of these

¹ Scragg 1992, IX, ll.59-60: 'Therefore, we must eagerly tend our souls'.

² R. Morris, ed., *The Blickling Homilies of the Tenth Century, from the Marquis of Lothian's Unique MS. A.D. 971*, EETS OS 58, 63, 73 (London: Trübner, 1874-1880), II, 21.31-2: 'Let us now hear, dearest men, what is written in God's books', hereafter Morris 1874, followed by item no., page no. and line ref. All translations from the Blickling Homilies are modified from Morris 1874.

³ Morris 1874, VI, 81.36-83.1: 'Now, it is very needful for us that he find us ready'.

⁴ Morris 1874, IX, 105.4-5: 'Dearest men, we have often heard tell of the noble advent of our Lord'.

⁵ Scragg 1992, IV, ll.1-2: 'Dearly beloved, I ask and humbly urge you that you weep and fear in this short time for your sins'.

⁶ Morris 1874, V, 57.31-3: 'Wherefore, dearest men, I pray and implore each of you to contemplate himself in his heart'.

⁷ Scragg 1992, VII, l.11: 'understand now, what I say to you'.

⁸ Scragg 1992, VII, l.60: 'Also you may understand the better that I speak the truth to you'.

⁹ Scragg 1992, VII, l.104: 'I do not teach that'.

homilies, he would not necessarily have been the one to perform them, designed as they may have been for more widespread preaching. As such, the tone of the homilies places not only Ælfric, but by extension the preacher of the works, in a position of authority over their congregation, creating an authoritative voice for the Anglo-Saxon Church in a more general sense.

This superior tone is paralleled in some qualifying statements made by Ælfric, in which he asserts that texts should be rendered simply for his audience:

Man sceal læwedum mannum secgan be heora andgites mæðe. swa þæt
 hí ne beon ðurh ða deopnysse æmode. ne ðurh ða langsumnysse
 geaðrytte.¹

The importance of presenting suitably intelligible narratives, then, is seen as paramount by Ælfric, again indicating that he views himself to be in a position of authority over some of his audience.

Combating Error

Ælfric also proclaims the authority of his own writing by placing it in stark contrast to other texts circulating in Anglo-Saxon England which he views as unorthodox, and as Hill comments, ‘Ælfric defines his position by association with patristic orthodoxy, and against the contemporary vernacular tradition’.² A multitude of statements in his

¹ Godden 1979, 30, *Dominica I in Mense Septembri quando legitur Job*, ll.4-6: ‘One should speak to laymen according to the measure of their understanding, so that they are not discouraged by the deepness, or wearied by the length’. Similar comments are found in Clemoes 1997, 11, *Dominica I in Quadragesima*, ll.2-5; and 30, *Mary Virgin: Assumption I*, ll.185-8.

² Hill 1993, p.32. This area has received extended comment in recent scholarship. See, for example, Malcolm Godden, “Experiments in Genre: The Saints’ Lives in Ælfric’s *Catholic Homilies*”, in Szarmach 1996: 261-87, especially p.263, hereafter Godden 1996; Mary Clayton, “Delivering the Damned: A Motif in OE Homiletic Prose”, *Medium Ævum* LV (1986): 92-102, here pp.92-3, hereafter Clayton 1986a; Gatch 1997, p.8; and Malcolm Godden, “Ælfric and the Vernacular Prose Tradition”, in

writings refer to erroneous works, to which his own material allegedly provides a counter. In the *Catholic Homilies I Preface*, Ælfric reveals part of his motivation in undertaking these translations:

ic geseah 7 gehyrde mycel gedwyld on manegum engliscum bocum. ðe
ungelærede menn ðurh heora bilewitnysse to micclum wisdom
tealdon.¹

Ælfric not only criticises false doctrine in general, but includes specific warnings regarding certain beliefs within individual homilies. In *Octabus et Circumcisio Domini*, he condemns the heathen divinations which many practice on this day;² whilst in *Epiphania Domini* he warns against erroneous belief in astrology.³ In *The Decollation of St. John the Baptist*, he rectifies the belief regarding Herodias:

Sume gedwolmen cwædon þæt ðæt heafod sceolde ablawan þæs
cyninges wif herodiaden þe he fore acweald wæs. swa þæt heo ferde mid
windum geond ealle woruld: ac hi dweledon mid þære sægne: for þan þe
heo leofode hire lif oð ende æfter iohannes slege;⁴

The Old English Homily and its Backgrounds, ed. Paul E. Szarmach and Bernard F. Huppé (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1978): 99-117, especially p.101, hereafter Godden 1978 and Szarmach and Huppé 1978.

¹ Clemoes 1997, *Old English Preface*, ll.50-51: 'I have seen and heard much error in many English books, which unlearned men, through their simplicity, have esteemed to be great wisdom'.

² Clemoes 1997, 6, *Octabus et Circumcisio Domini*, ll.162-4.

³ Clemoes 1997, 7, *Epiphania Domini*, ll.116-17.

⁴ Clemoes 1997, 32, *John the Baptist: Decollation*, ll.153-6: 'Some heretics said that the head blew the king's wife Herodias, who he had been killed for, so that she went with the winds all over the world; but they erred in that saying, because she lived to the end of her life after John's killing'.

This statement remains unsourced,¹ and is likely to represent an original insertion by Ælfric. Ælfric also retains the words of Jerome regarding the *Assumption of the Blessed Mary*, as Jerome asserts that the account he presents is an authoritative substitute for the false narrative in circulation, and says he has written the piece:

þy læs ðe eow on hand be|cume. seo lease gesetnyss. þe ðurh
gedwolmannum wide tosawen is. 7 ge ðonne gehiwedan leasunge for
soðre race underfoð;²

Ælfric's retention of Jerome's statement authorizes his work by presenting his narrative as the 'soðre' doctrine, whilst simultaneously investing it with the authority of the patristic tradition through the use of Jerome's name, a technique discussed below.³ Ælfric also explicitly asserts the orthodoxy of his work in two hagiographic pieces: the *Life of St. George* and the *Life of St. Thomas*. Ælfric prefaces the *Life of St. George* with the claim that his work stands in contrast to accounts of George written by heretics:

Gedwol-men awriton ge-dwyld on heora bocum . be ðam halgan were
ðe is gehaten georius ./ Nu wille we eow secgan þæt soð is be ðam . þæt
heora gedwyld ne derige digellice ænigum .⁴

¹ See M.R. Godden, 'The Sources of Catholic Homilies I.32', 2002, *Fontes Anglo-Saxonici: World Wide Web Register*, <http://fontes.english.ox.ac.uk/>, accessed July 2004.

² Clemoes 1997, 30, *Mary: Assumption I*, ll.25-7: 'lest the false account should come to your hand which has been widely disseminated by heretics, and you then accept the feigned falsehood for a true account'.

³ See below, pp.76-81.

⁴ Skeat 1891, 14, *George*, ll.1-4: 'Heretics have written falsehoods in their books about the holy man who is called George. Now we will tell you that which is true about him, so that their error may not secretly harm anyone'.

As Hill comments,¹ and as will be discussed in the chapter on martyrs in this thesis,² the reason for Ælfric's confidence in his own account is unclear, as the *Decretum Gelasianum* which condemns George's *passio* does not suggest that any orthodox version of this exists. Ælfric's statement here, whilst resulting from the proscription in the *Decretum Gelasianum*, is unsourced and represents his own personal claims regarding textual authority. Ælfric also asserts the orthodoxy of his *Life of St. Thomas*, despite the controversy surrounding this passion.³ Ælfric's condemnation of false doctrine throughout his works seeks to place his own compositions as the remedy to these: he is saving his audience from error, with the implication that his collection of material is unquestionably orthodox. Ælfric's discrimination between texts on the grounds of their orthodoxy can also be seen in his attitude to the Nativity of the Virgin Mary, where as Mary Clayton points out, he appears to employ his own judgement regarding what is suitable for relation on this day and does not conform to Reform practices.⁴ As such, Ælfric lays heavy claim to authoritative status: he asserts that his own works represent orthodox doctrine, and uses his own judgement to determine what is and is not suitable for transmission.

As will be discussed below,⁵ Ælfric asserts that the only existing Old English material suitable for the laity is the work of King Alfred, which suggests he was either unaware of the anonymous Old English homilies which circulated contemporaneously to him, or doubted their orthodoxy. Godden suggests that Ælfric's references to the error found in many English books refers to homilies such as those found in the Blickling and Vercelli collections:

¹ Joyce Hill, "Ælfric, Gelasius, and St. George", *Mediaevalia* 11 (1985): 1-17, here p.2, hereafter Hill 1985.

² See below, pp.244-6.

³ Skeat 1900, 36, *Thomas*, ll.1-12.

⁴ Mary Clayton, "Ælfric and the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary", *Anglia* 104:3-4 (1986): 286-315, here p.292.

⁵ See below, p.73.

the most natural interpretation of the passage is that it refers to earlier homilies, and it is possible to show that the early homilies still extant in the Blickling and Vercelli collections may well have been known to Ælfric and that they do contain material to which he objected.¹

Certainly the sources employed by the Vercelli and Blickling collections differed from those used by Ælfric, and as Hill recognises:

The sources are in fact very varied and many yet remain to be identified, but from what we know already, it is clear that apocryphal and Hiberno-Latin materials figure prominently, alongside more central authorities such as Caesarius of Arles.²

Specific condemnations made by Ælfric suggest that the Vercelli and Blickling collections may have been among those he objected to. One such illustration concerns Ælfric's comment on the belief that the Virgin Mary, Michael and Peter would each save a third of the sinful souls from hell on Judgment Day. Ælfric states,

Sume gedwolmen cwædon þæt seo halige Maria cristes modor. and sum
oðre halgan sceolon hergian æfter ðam dome ða synfullan of ðam

¹ Godden 1978, p.101. See also Gatch 1977, p.14, who states: 'It is tempting to see in the Blickling and Vercelli collections at least one type of error to which Ælfric objected: the uncritical acceptance of pseudepigraphic literature'; and Stanley B. Greenfield and Daniel G. Calder, *A New Critical History of Old English Literature* (New York; London: New York University Press, 1986), p.77, who state: 'Ælfric was undoubtedly here referring to many of the apocryphal selections in the *Blickling* and *Vercelli Homilies*', hereafter Greenfield and Calder 1986.

² Hill 1993, p.21. This is paralleled by Gatch 1977, p.121, who states: 'The composers of the Blickling and Vercelli homilies drew at liberty from documents which, as Ælfric recognized, had been proscribed as heterodox or pseudepigraphic'.

deofle. ælc his dæl. Ac þis gedwyld asprang of ðam mannum. þe on
heora flæsclicum lustum symle licgan woldon.¹

As Clayton points out, this belief ‘occurs in a developed form in two other OE texts, homily XV in the Vercelli Book and an Easter homily found in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MSS 41 and 303’.² Ælfric explicitly condemns a motif found in a Vercelli homily, thus his censure of erroneous writings may apply to a codex or set of materials such as this. However, despite the suspect orthodoxy of this motif, some anonymous homilists demonstrate an active concern with the orthodoxy of their work. Whilst unequivocal assertions of authority such as those in Ælfric are absent, some anonymous homiletic literature expresses the need for correct belief. Blickling Homily IV highlights the importance of the correct observance of God’s law:

Se biscop sceal, þe wile onfón Godes mildheortnesse & his synna
forgifnesse, þrafian þa mæsse-preostas, mid lufe ge mid lape, þæt hie
healdan Godes æwe on riht, & þone hired þe hie ofor beoð, & þa
læwedan men þe hie aldormen ofer beon sceolan,³

In the *Life of St. Mary of Egypt*, the author demonstrates an awareness of the importance of divine authority in religious writings, and asks,

¹ Godden 1979, 39, *In Natale Sanctarum Virginum*, ll.184-8: ‘Some heretics said that the holy Mary, the mother of Christ, and some other saints, should, after the judgement, harrow the sinful from the devil, each his part; but this heresy sprang up from those men who would always lie in fleshly lusts’.

² Clayton 1986, p.93. The occurrence of this motif in Blickling XV is also noted in Milton McC. Gatch, “Eschatology in the Anonymous Old English Homilies”, *Traditio* 21 (1965): 117-65, here p.155.

³ Morris 1874, IV, 45.6-10: ‘The bishop must, if he will obtain God’s mercy and forgiveness of his sins, urge the priests with love or with fear, to correctly observe God’s law, and (also) the community over whom they are [set], and the laity over whom they ought to be rulers’.

ne gewurðe hit þæt ic on þam halgum gerecednyssum wæge oþþe ic þa
spræce forsuwige.¹

However, whilst these statements demonstrate an awareness of the dangers of falling into error, neither text presents itself as the superior answer to unorthodox texts. In addition, these statements are carried through from the Latin lives of the saints: the statement from Blickling IV is sourced in the anonymous *Visio Pauli*, whilst that in Mary of Egypt is based on the *vita* by Paul the Deacon.² The technique of ascribing authority to a text by placing it in contrast with supposedly unorthodox accounts is thus unique to Ælfric in the Old English corpus.

Validity of Translation

Ælfric is clearly aware of the potential difficulties inherent in translating ecclesiastical doctrine from one language into another, and statements in the Latin *Preface* to his *Lives of Saints* collection suggest a slight defensiveness and sense of discomfort about such translation:

Nec tamen plura promitto me scripturum hac lingua, quia nec conuenit
huic sermocinationi plura inseri; ne forte despectui habeantur margarite
Christi.³

¹ Magennis 2002, *Mary of Egypt*, ll.20-23: 'and far be it from me that I should engage in falsification in the details of the holy narrative or that I should conceal the telling of it in silence', trans. Magennis 2002, pp.59-61.

² See M. Atherton, 'The Sources of Blickling Homily 4', 1997, *Fontes Anglo-Saxonici: World Wide Web Register*, <http://fontes.english.ox.ac.uk/>, accessed July 2004; and H. Magennis, 'The Sources of The Life of St. Mary of Egypt (Second Edition)', 2002, *Fontes Anglo-Saxonici: World Wide Web Register*, <http://fontes.english.ox.ac.uk/>, accessed July 2004.

³ Skeat 1891, *Latin Preface*, ll.9-12: 'Nevertheless, I promise not to write more in this language because it is not fitting to introduce more in this language, lest, perhaps, the pearls of Christ be held in disrespect'.

What exactly Ælfric means by ‘margarite Christi’ being ‘despectui habeantur’ is open to interpretation, but perhaps refers to the superiority and authority in which the Latin language was held in relation to the vernacular. Ælfric’s defensiveness of his actions is betrayed in his appeal that,

Non mihi inputetur quod diuinam scripturam nostrae lingue infero, quia
arguet me praecatus multorum fidelium et maxime æþelwerdi ducis et
æðelmeri nostri.¹

Ælfric selects the verb *inputetur*, from the Latin *imputo*, meaning ‘to bring into the reckoning, enter into the account; to reckon, charge’,² which carries negative connotations of accusation. His use of it to describe the act of translating ecclesiastical doctrine suggests he felt some contemporaries may perceive the act as problematic, presumably because sacred literature should not be altered in any way, and the act of translation would necessarily change some of the nuances of the original work. The recurrent idea in Ælfric’s homilies is that he does not always translate word for word, but retains the sense of the original narrative, as he suggests in *Dominica I in Quadragesima*, which reads: ‘We willað gyt ænne cwyde þære godspellican gereccednysse eow gereccan. on þisum ylcum andgit’.³ However, despite his claims to retain the sense of a narrative, Ælfric’s work is also characterized by the abbreviation of Latin sources. This technique is defended, as if in anticipation of criticism, in another homily:

¹ Skeat 1891, *Latin Preface*, ll.29-31: ‘Let it not be charged against me alone that I turn divine scripture into our language because the entreaty of many of the faithful clears me, and especially that of ealdorman Æthelweard and of our friend Æthelmær’.

² Charlton T. Lewis and Charles Short, *A Latin Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1879), p.911, hereafter Lewis and Short 1879.

³ Godden 1979, 7, *Dominica I in Quadragesima*, ll.129-30: ‘We will yet recount to you one sentence of the evangelical narrative in this same sense’.

Gif hwilc gelæred man þas race oferræde. oððe rædan gehyre. þonne
 bidde ic þæt he ðas scyrtinge ne tæle; Him mæg his agen andgyt secgan
 fullice be ðisum. and eow læwedum mannum is ðis genoh. ðeah ðe ge ða
 deopan digelnysse ðæron ne cunnon.¹

The act of translating religious doctrine was thus one fraught with difficulty, and perhaps in anticipation of criticism, Ælfric seeks to validate his act of translation in subtle comments throughout his works, such as his reference to Alfred in which he singles out the work of this great king as the only parallel to his own achievements in translating Latin into the vernacular.² This simultaneously authorizes Ælfric's own decision to translate religious doctrine into Old English, as Alfred had perceived this to be a necessary and valuable task; and raises Ælfric's profile by placing him alongside such a prominent and revered royal figure.

In addition to this comment about his own translation, Ælfric demonstrates a concern to authorize the act of translating in general. Whilst he often mentions patristic figures in his works, occasionally with some qualifying adjectives illustrating their greatness, he rarely provides details regarding their life or works. An exception to this is found in his description of Jerome:

ðes hieronimus wæs halig sacerð 7 getogen on hebreiscum gereorde. 7
 on greciscum. 7 on ledenum fulfremedlice 7 he awende ure bibliothecan
 of hebreiscum bocum to ledenspræce; He is se fyrmesta wealgstod

¹ Godden 1979, 30, *Dominica I in Mense Septembri quando legitur Job*, ll.227-31: 'If any learned man read over this narrative, or hear it read, then I pray him not to blame this abridgement: to him his own understanding may speak fully on the subject, and for you laymen it is enough, although you do not know the deep mystery therein'.

² Clemoes 1997, *Old English Preface*, ll.52-5.

betwux hebreiscum. 7 grecum. 7 ledenwarum. twa 7 hundseofontig |
 boca þære ealdan æ. 7 þære niwan he awende on leden to anre
 bibliothecan.¹

Ælfric here focuses on Jerome's role as a translator, a feature perhaps intended to authorize Ælfric's own act of translation. If Jerome was able to translate the Hebrew Bible, a document of absolute divine authority, into Latin, this subsequently authorizes the act of translating a religious text in the manner employed by Ælfric. Ælfric also makes further references to translations by Alfred,² Wærferth,³ and Eutropus and Africanus.⁴ As such, Ælfric alludes to translations made by other writers which are perceived as authoritative, perhaps in order to illustrate that the translation of a religious text from one language into another is a valid and orthodox action, undertaken throughout the centuries in order to continue the dissemination of religious doctrine and the spread of God's word.

The nature of Ælfric's task is further problematized when his method of translation is examined. Ælfric's own statements generally assert that he is involved in the act of translation rather than authorship; for instance, he claims that he will translate or interpret works from Latin into English.⁵ However, his style does not always adhere to such claims, and his works are characterised by brevity and the translation of a narrative 'sense for sense', as mentioned above. Whatley comments on this attitude, interpreting it as follows:

¹ Clemoes 1997, 30, *Assumptio Sanctae Mariae Virginis*, ll.9-16: 'This Jerome was a holy priest, and instructed in the Hebrew tongue, and in Greek and Latin perfectly; and he translated our library of Hebrew books into the Latin speech. He is the first interpreter between the Hebrews and the Greeks, and Latins. Seventy-two books of the old and of the new law he translated into Latin to one "Bibliotheca"'.
² Godden 1979, 9, *Gregory*, ll.6-11.

³ Godden 1979, 21, *Hortatorius Sermo de Efficacia Sanctae Missae*, ll.176-80.
⁴ Godden 1979, 33, *Simon and Jude*, ll.275-80.

⁵ Lt 'transtulimus', 'interpretare'; cf. Clemoes 1997, *Latin Preface*, l.5; and Godden 1979, *Latin Preface*, l.1.

Furthermore, Ælfric's art of *brevitas* seems to me not only a stylistic or aesthetic principle, or a pastoral ploy to avoid overtaxing his readers, but also an act of authorial self-assertion. Translating 'sense for sense' (*sensus ex sansu*) rather than word for word implies a continuing process of interpretation.¹

Whilst Ælfric bases his work on Latin sources, the actual words are his own and represent his personal, subjective understanding of his source. In addition to the brevity employed in his writings, Ælfric often rearranges episodes, for instance in the *Life of St. Martin* of the *Catholic Homilies*,² and occasionally makes additions to material. As would be expected, the majority of the material in the *Prefaces* is unsourced, and many of the statements discussed in this chapter which are found throughout the individual homilies are Ælfric's own. For example, the above quotations regarding translations by Jerome, Gregory and Alfred are unsourced, and represent Ælfric's insertion of his own words into these religious works. Whilst these additions are rarely substantial and at times add little to the content of a narrative, Ælfric's own words are still included within the texts. Ælfric's active mediation between Latin doctrine and his Old English works thus places him in a more authorial role than his self-portrait would suggest: he translates sense for sense, thus the words presented are selected at his own discretion and the content of the narrative represents his own interpretation of the Latin; he rearranges source material, sometimes excising entire episodes from a narrative; and often adds his own comments to a piece. Ælfric's acts of translation thus assume

¹ E. Gordon Whatley, "Lost in Translation: Omission of Episodes in Some Old English Prose Saints' Legends", *ASE* 26 (1997): 187-208, here p.188, hereafter Whatley 1997.

² See below, pp.169-83.

authority by their very nature: he perceives himself to be at liberty to manipulate religious tradition.

Although the Old English anonymous corpus engages with the same problematic business of translation, no parallel comments are found in the Blickling or Vercelli manuscripts or in the remaining hagiographies. This may be partly due to the freestanding nature of the individual homilies: many of the Ælfrician statements discussed above are found in prefatory material, and as the anonymous homilies generally lack prefaces, less direct insight into the author's supposed intentions is possible. However, Ælfric includes comments pertaining to translation within his homilies, and no equivalent emerges in analysis of the anonymous corpus. Thus, both the awareness of the difficulties of translating religious doctrine and the attempts to justify this are an Ælfrician phenomenon within Old English hagiography.

Textual Authority

Citation of patristic or Scriptural authorities as sources for his work is perhaps the most explicit means by which Ælfric authorizes his homiletic collections. Part of the weight of such writers lay in their identity as *auctores*: as Burrow points out, early writers held a great deal of authority due to the originality and value of their work:

Authority belongs to the *auctor* – an honorific title [...] To be an *auctor* is to augment the knowledge and wisdom of humanity (both words derive from Latin *augere* 'increase'); and few latter-day writers can

claim as much. The great *auctores* of the past, Christian and pagan, have already said almost everything there is to say.¹

The authors to which Ælfric refers were widely recognized orthodox writers; the theology, liturgy, and ecclesiastical regularisation of the Church were fundamentally based on many of their writings. As Gatch states, ‘Ælfric desired, above all, that the doctrine transmitted in his lucid English prose should be absolutely orthodox and firmly based in the theological tradition. Thus most of this work is a translation or adaptation of the works of the most reputable ecclesiastical fathers.’² The names of these writers thus carried with them the weight of tradition and orthodoxy, and in the Latin preface to the first series of *Catholic Homilies*, Ælfric is anxious to cite his sources:

Hós namque auctores in hac explanatione sumus secuti. uidelicet
Augustinum. ypponiensem. Hieronimum. Bedam. Gregorium.
Smaragdum, et aliquando Hægmonem; Horum denique auctoritas ab
omnibus catholicis. libentissime suscipitur;³

Ælfric also cites patristic figures throughout the individual homilies, although as Hill observes, he rarely employs the names of the Carolingian intermediaries – Smaragdus and Haymo – within the homiletic texts:

¹ J.A. Burrow, *Medieval Writers and Their Work* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), p.32.

² Gatch 1977, p.14.

³ Clemoes 1997, *Latin Preface*, ll.14-17: ‘For, indeed, we have followed these authors in this exposition: namely, Augustine of Hippo, Jerome, Bede, Gregory, Smaragdus, and sometimes Haymo, for the authority of these is most willingly acknowledged by all the orthodox’.

What Ælfric was identifying in the Latin preface to CH I, therefore, in listing a mixture of patristic and Frankish authors, were his immediate sources as he perceived them. Within the homilies, by contrast, his concern was more with ultimate sources, since it was the names of the Fathers rather than the Frankish intermediaries which were useful to him as a means of validating his interpretations and signalling his participation in the tradition of patristic orthodoxy.¹

In addition to this, Hill suggests that the order of the names given relates to their status rather than the frequency with which Ælfric employed their work:

In the letter to Sigeric, Augustine and Jerome stand first in the list. Ælfric's sense of their practical importance may have been increased by the recurrence of attributions in his *Smaragdus* manuscript, but in this context we must also allow for the fact that, in writing to Sigeric, Ælfric was claiming a position within a patristic tradition, in which Augustine and Jerome were names to be conjured with, even if, in practice, they were used less than the others.²

As such, the names of the Fathers are manipulated to increase the projected authority of Ælfric's writing, and as Grundy comments regarding his use of Augustine, 'his acceptance of the tradition and his use of pertinent illustration or embellishment from Augustine lend an air of authority to Ælfric's sermons'.³ This is echoed by Smetana,

¹ Hill 1992, p.205. See also Hill 1997, pp.50-51.

² Hill 1997, p.58.

³ Lynne Grundy, *Books and Grace: Ælfric's Theology* (London: King's College London, Centre for Late Antique and Medieval Studies, 1991), p.8, hereafter Grundy 1991.

who asserts, “‘Augustine’ was virtually a “brand name” during the Middle Ages. His name on a sermon was considered a guarantee of orthodoxy and high theology’.¹ Citation of patristic authority can be seen within the homilies as well as the *Prefaces*: the names of the Fathers referred to by Hill frequently punctuate Ælfric’s works, and selected examples will demonstrate the frequency with which Ælfric calls on their validation for his work. In the first series of the *Catholic Homilies*, Ælfric refers to Augustine, Bede, Gregory and Jerome.² In addition to these patristic references, Ælfric cites Haymo as the expositor of a gospel.³ The Second Series of *Catholic Homilies* also alludes to the authority of these central patristic authors, again naming Augustine, Bede, Gregory, and Jerome.⁴ The *Lives of Saints* collection again includes these four patristic figures, and additionally refers to Ambrose as the source of Agnes’ *passio* and Sulpicius Severus as the source of the Martinian *vita*.⁵ The authority held by such figures is stated directly by Ælfric, who, in his homily for the fifth Sunday in Lent, asserts,

We willað trahtnian ðis godspel æfter Augustines and Gregories dihte

...⁶

¹ Cyril L. Smetana, “Paul the Deacon’s Patristic Anthology”, in Szarmach and Huppé 1978: 75-97, here p.82.

² Augustine is cited in Clemoes 1997, 3, *Stephen Protomartyr: I*, 1.60; 18, *In Letania Maiore*, 1.61; 20, *Feria IIII De Fide Catholica*, 1.6; and 31, *Bartholomew*, 1.319. Bede is cited in Clemoes 1997, 6, *Octabas et Circumcisio Domini*, 1.157; and 33, *Dominica XVII post Pentecosten*, 1.16. Gregory is cited in Clemoes 1997, 15, *Dominica Pascae*, 1.143; 21, *In Ascensione Domini*, 1.110; and 24, *Dominica IIII post Pentecosten*, 1.147. Jerome is cited in Clemoes 1997, 30, *Mary: Assumption I*, 1.4.

³ Haymo is cited in Clemoes 1997, 8, *Dominica III post Epiphania Domini*, 1.15; and 34, *Michael: I*, 1.155.

⁴ For example, Augustine in Godden 1979, 2, *Stephen Protomartyr: II*, 1.1; Bede in 4, *Dominica II post Aepiphania Domini*, 1.25; Gregory in 6, *Dominica in Sexagesima*, 1.33; and Jerome in 18, *Cross: Invention I*, 1.51.

⁵ Examples of these references can be found at the following locations in Skeat 1891 and 1900. Augustine: 16, *De Memoria sanctorum*, 1.66. Bede: 20, *Æthelthryth*, ll.24 and 118-19; 26, *Oswald*, ll.33 and 272. Gregory: 32, *Edmund, King and Martyr*, ll.239-41. Jerome: 12, *De capite Ieiunii*, 1.182; 15, *Mark*, ll.104-8. Ambrose: 7, *Agnes*, ll.1-5. Severus: 31, *Martin*, ll.1-9, 774 and 1300-1302.

⁶ Godden 1979, 13, *Dominica V in Quadragesima*, ll.42-3: ‘We will expound this gospel according to the authority of Augustine and Gregory’.

Ælfric's employment of the names of the fathers to authorize his work is also used to deflect any questions regarding the truth of a text. In his treatment of the invention of the Cross, Ælfric appears to think that some may doubt the narrative, and summarizes,

Ðus wrát hieronimus. se wisa trahtnere be ðære halgan rode. hu heo
wearð gefunden; Gif hwa elles secge. we sceotað to him;¹

Jerome, rather than Ælfric, takes responsibility for the orthodoxy of this text, and Ælfric places his own critics in opposition to a greatly revered and authoritative figure.

The anonymous texts examined here betray far less concern with the naming of patristic sources than the Ælfrician corpus, and Jane Roberts comments on the difference between the two bodies of literature:

Most obviously, Ælfric has a concern for accuracy, and he looks to such authorities as Bede, Abbo of Fleury, and Lantfred for his materials. By comparison, the few English saints honoured in anonymous prose lives (well, so-called lives) are, from a literary point of view, less polished.²

The *topos* of naming authorities is found in anonymous hagiography, but on a more limited scale. Augustine is referred to in Vercelli III and Blickling IV, for example, with the Vercelli text reading: 'Be þære ælmessan lofe Agustinus cwæð'.³ Jerome is

¹ Godden 1979, 18, *Cross: Invention I*, ll.51-3: 'Thus wrote Jerome, the wise expositor, concerning the holy cross, how it was found. If anyone say otherwise, we refer to him'.

² Jane Roberts, "The English Saints Remembered in Old English Anonymous Homilies", in Szarmach 2000: 433-61, here p.434, hereafter Roberts 2000.

³ Scragg 1992, III, l.144-5: 'Concerning almsgiving, beloved Augustine says'. See also Scragg 1992, III, l.97; and Morris 1874, VIII, 99.12.

also named in Vercelli III, whilst Isidore of Seville and Pseudo-Methodius of Olympus also receive mention in anonymous homilies.¹ However, such references are far less frequent in the anonymous corpus when compared with Ælfric's writings, and anonymous material again demonstrates less preoccupation with creating an impression of orthodoxy and authority. This highlights the uniqueness of Ælfric's own depiction of textual authority: rather than being representative of the Old English hagiographic genre, his approach to inscribed authority represents an individual attitude.

The preoccupation with naming sources is not exclusive to Old English homilies, and can be observed in the writings of many patristic authorities themselves. In his *Historia Ecclesiastica*, Bede authorizes much of his narrative by reference to his sources, whose respectability he is keen to assert:

Hanc historiam, sicut a uenerabili antistite Pecthelmo didici, simpliciter
ob salutem legentium siue audientium narrandam esse putauī.²

Such statements are found throughout Bede's *History*, and a similar phenomenon can be observed in the *Dialogues* of Gregory the Great. In a revealing statement in the first book of the *Dialogi*, Gregory describes his practice in naming sources:

Ea quæ mihi sunt virorum venerabilium narratione comperta,
incunctanter narro sacræ auctoritatis exemplo, cum mihi luce clarius
constet quia Marcus et Lucas Evangelium quod scripserunt, non visu,
sed auditu didicerunt. Sed ut dubitationis occasionem legentibus

¹ Scragg 1992, III, ll.95, 116 and 152 for Jerome; Scragg 1992, XXII, ll.1, 20, 26 and 37 for Isidore of Seville; and Treharne 1997, *Nicholas*, ll.22-35 for Pseudo-Methodius of Olympus.

² Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, V.xiii; Colgrave and Mynors 1969, p.502: 'I thought I ought to tell this story simply, just as I learned it from the venerable Bishop Pethelm, for the benefit of those who read or hear it'.

subtraham, per singula quæ describo, quibus hæc auctoribus mihi
comperta sint manifesto.¹

True to his word, Gregory frequently names the sources of his narrative. As such, it was seen as important to qualify the sources of information, and the practice of Old English homilists of identifying their sources was by no means a new phenomenon. The main purpose of identifying textual sources in this manner is the same as that witnessed in Ælfric's work, as the names of previous authors or witnesses to events serve to lend a text authority. As a corollary to the naming of sources, Joyce Hill draws attention to the notion of a 'chain of authority' within the work of the Fathers:

Gregory the Great himself made extensive use of Augustine; Alcuin frequently used Gregory and Augustine, and was in turn used by Smaragdus, who was in turn used by Ælfric.²

Reliance on previous authority in the sphere of religious orthodoxy was therefore well-established in Ælfric's time. The interesting aspect of this chain of authority, however, concerns Ælfric's place within it. He evidently feels he is able to participate in this tradition alongside the Fathers, and his directives that his work be transmitted accurately indicate that he envisaged the chain of authority continuing on from his own works.

¹ Gregory the Great, *Dialogorum*, I.Preface; PL 77.153: 'I shall not hesitate to narrate what I have learned from worthy men. In this I am only following the consecrated practice of the Scriptures, where it is perfectly clear that Mark and Luke composed their gospels, not as eye-witnesses, but on the word of others. Nevertheless, to remove any grounds for doubt on the part of my readers, I am going to indicate on whose authority each account is based', trans. *FC*, vol.39, p.6.

² Hill 1996b, p.365.

In addition to the names of patristic authors, Old English homilies frequently cite the names of the Evangelists, and often present the Old English narrative as the words of the Biblical figure themselves. For instance, in the opening of the passion of SS. Peter and Paul, Ælfric writes:

Matheus se godspeller awrat on þære godspellican gesetnysse. þus
cweþende;¹

Similarly, the *Nativity of St. Matthew* reads:

Se godspellere matheus þe we todæg wurðiað awrát be him sylfum hu se
hælend hine geceas to his geferrædene þus cweðende;²

Such opening comments suggest that the accounts which follows are in Matthew's own words. However, Ælfric's 'sense for sense' translation technique and abbreviation of narratives means that the words represent Ælfric's own paraphrase of his source text. Unlike many of the other devices which convey textual authority, this phenomenon is amply illustrated in the anonymous corpus. Items in the Blickling Homilies demonstrate the same technique, with 'Geherað nu, men þa leofestan, hu Lucas se godspellere sægde',³ and 'Cwæþ se godspellere'.⁴ As such, it is a common device within Old English homilies to present passages as the direct words of Scripture. In addition, passages are designated as the direct speech of Biblical figures: for instance,

¹ Clemoes 1997, 26, *Peter and Paul: I*, ll.1-2: 'Matthew the Evangelist wrote in the evangelical Testament, thus saying'.

² Godden 1979, 32, *Matthew*, ll.1-3: 'The Evangelist Matthew, whom we today honour, wrote of himself how Jesus chose him to his fellowship, thus saying'.

³ Morris 1874, 15.1-2: 'hear now, dearest men, how Luke the evangelist spoke'.

⁴ Morris 1874, 77.7: 'the evangelist said'.

Vercelli I reads ‘7 he sylf cwæð, sanctus Iohannes’;¹ whilst Vercelli XIV asserts: ‘Cwæð se apostol be ðan, sanctus Paulus’.² Although the words of the Bible have been translated into the vernacular, and often condensed in the process, the impression created is that the Old English words emanate directly from Biblical figures, and thus from God.

The assertion of authority through the naming of patristic or Scriptural figures cannot be taken at face value, and whilst Ælfric demonstrates a concern for orthodoxy throughout his work, his use of sources is selective and at times manipulative. Statements by various scholars highlight the freedom with which Ælfric approaches his Latin sources, and Peter Jackson describes Ælfric as ‘a writer who is at once immediately aware of earlier authority, but subtle, selective, attentive and utterly individual in its use’.³ Clemoes comments that ‘[a]lways he omitted, transposed or added to his original to suit the audience for which his work was intended’,⁴ while Godden states,

He will freely omit and rearrange material to sharpen the moral structure, sometimes giving a different impression of what actually happened, especially when dealing with historical works which do not already show the requisite pattern.⁵

¹ Scragg 1992, I, ll.262-3: ‘And Saint John himself said’.

² Scragg 1992, XIV, ll.23-4: ‘The Apostle St. Paul said of that’.

³ Peter Jackson, “Ælfric and the Purpose of Christian Marriage: A Reconsideration of the *Life of Æthelthryth*, lines 120-30”, *ASE* 29 (2000): 235-60, here p.259, hereafter Jackson 2000.

⁴ Peter Clemoes, “Ælfric”, in *Continuations and Beginnings*, ed. E.G. Stanley (London; Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson, 1966): 176-209, here p.187.

⁵ Malcolm Godden, “Ælfric’s Saints’ Lives and the Problem of Miracles”, *LSE* 16 (1985): 83-100, here p.92.

This phenomenon is not limited to Ælfric, and Lees comments that the method of composing homilies in the Anglo-Saxon period represented ‘a combination of translation, interpretation, and compilation’.¹ As such, the Old English lives examined in this thesis do not always accurately transmit their Latin originals. This notion becomes problematic when issues of textual authority are in play: if a text derives its authority from its source, as many of Ælfric’s texts do, yet misrepresents this source, the authority of the resulting text is brought into question. In addition, there is evidence that Ælfric deliberately manipulates the authority of the Fathers to justify his own works. As Malcolm Godden discusses, Ælfric’s qualifying statements at the opening of his *Life of St. Thomas* misrepresent Augustine. Ælfric claims that Augustine’s condemnation of a specific episode in the *Life of St. Thomas* led him to desist from its translation, but that he has now provided a translation and omitted the offending section of the text in accordance with Augustine’s authority. However, as Godden points out,

Ælfric’s account of Augustine’s views is remarkably different from what the saint actually wrote. Augustine does not reject the single episode, indeed he is happy to draw a moral truth from it, but he does remark that it is permitted to doubt the work itself (“cui scripture licet nobis non credere”) because it is not in the canon. It is clear from the context, and from his other references to the episode, that he meant the whole work [...]. It looks suspiciously as if the citation of Augustine is a cover for a rather different mode of assessing legends and a very different conclusion.²

¹ Clare A. Lees, *Tradition and Belief: Religious Writing in Late Anglo-Saxon England*, Medieval Cultures, vol. 19 (London; Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), p.31.

² Godden 1985, p.90.

As such, the recasting of Latin narratives throughout the Old English hagiographic corpus and the above instance suggesting the explicit manipulation of patristic authority, mean that statements pertaining to the authority of these texts are not always wholly accurate.

The Action of God's Grace

The belief underpinning patristic authority was the notion that the words of the Fathers were divinely inspired, an idea frequently referred to by the authors themselves. As Pelikan outlines,

what made a church father such as Augustine great was that he was
“filled with the Spirit of the prophets and apostles”.¹

Statements pertaining to this kind of divine sanction proliferate in Augustinian writings, for instance at the opening of *De Civitate Dei*. Augustine sets out his self-imposed task, and states, ‘magnum opus et arduum, sed Deus adiutor noster est’.² The terminology applied here, of God providing assistance to the author, is used throughout the Augustinian corpus, for example in *De Civitate Dei*, *De Divinatione Dæmonum*, *De Doctrina Christiana*, and the *Retractionum*.³ The idea is also referred to using slightly different terminology, as Augustine asserts that he is able to write as he does through

¹ Pelikan 1978, p.223. Citation from Richard of Saint-Victor, *Sermones centum*, XCIX; PL 177.1205: ‘quod prophetarum et apostolorum plenus spiritu’.

² Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, I.Preface; LCL vol. 411, p.10: ‘The work is great and difficult, but God is my helper’ (trans. LCL vol. 411, p.412).

³ Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, XI.i; LCL vol. 413, p.426: ‘Sed huius sanctae civitatis inimicis decem superioribus libris, quantum potuimus, domino et rege nostro adiuvante, respondimus’; trans: ‘Well, we have answered the enemies of the holy city in the ten preceding books, as far as we could, with the help of our Lord and King’ (trans. LCL vol. 413, p.427). See also Augustine, *De Divinatione Dæmonum*, X.xiv, PL 40.592; Augustine, *De Doctrina Christiana*, Prologue, PL 34.15; and Augustine, *Retractionum*, Prologue, PL 32.583.

God's grace, and presents his work as a collaborative effort between himself and the Lord:

qui hoc ut verus Deus potest pro meo modulo in eius adiutorio
cooperantem igenia celeriora atque meliora.¹

Later in the same work, when advocating that God's angels do not desire homage for themselves, Augustine claims: 'adiuvante ipso in sequenti libro diligentius disseremus'.² Ambrose's references to divine authority for his work in *De Sacramentis* illustrate a similar notion, as God is seen to allow Ambrose to write in accordance with His wishes. These works include statements such as: 'Crastina die, si Dominus dederit loquendi potestatem vel copiam, plenius intimabo';³ and 'et crastina, die si Dominus placet'.⁴ Ambrose's work is validated by its mere existence: if the Lord had not wished to allow him to compose, he would not have been able to. Jerome also calls upon divine authority to assist his writing, for example in *De Viris Illustribus*.⁵ Again, in his treatise *De Perpetua Virginitate B. Mariæ, Adversus Helvidium*, he calls upon divine words to refute the beliefs set forward by Helvidius:

¹ Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, VII.Preface; LCL vol. 412, p.370: 'and as I co-operate, to the best of my small ability, with the grace of him, the true God, who is able to accomplish this task, while I hope to enjoy his help' (trans. LCL vol. 412, p.371).

² Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, IX.xxiii; LCL vol. 413, p.242: 'With the help of the same God, we shall discuss this point more thoroughly in the next book' (trans. LCL vol. 413, p.243).

³ Ambrose, *De Sacramentis*, I.vi.24; PL 16.442: 'On tomorrow, if the Lord grants the power of speaking or the opportunity', trans. FC, vol.44, p.276.

⁴ Ambrose, *De Sacramentis*, III.ii.15; PL 16.456: 'Tomorrow, if it pleases the Lord', trans. FC, vol.44, p.295.

⁵ Jerome, *De Viris Illustribus*, Prologue; PL 23.634.

Igitur sanctus mihi invocandus est Spiritus, ut beatæ Mariæ virginitatem
suo sensu, ore meo defendat.¹

These three writers thus claim divine inspiration in subtly different ways: Augustine writes with the help of the Lord; Ambrose with the permission of the Lord; and Jerome invokes God to assist him. The underlying point remains constant: each author is claiming that their work is authorized by God, and the work itself assumes orthodoxy and authority. Many of the writings of Augustine, Jerome and Ambrose would have been known to Ælfric, and he would thus be familiar with the *topos* of divine authority used within their works.

As has been discussed above, Ælfric employs the names of these authors in his writing, transmitting the divine authority with which their words are endowed into his own work. However, the more interesting aspect of Ælfric's approach is that he also claims this divine authority for himself: many unsourced statements in his major homiletic collections describe the divine inspiration he has received which has motivated and enabled him to complete his homiletic collections. This contrasts with the anonymous corpus examined here, where statements asserting the divine inspiration of the author are absent. In the anonymous *Life of St. Neot*, this notion does receive comment, as the Old English asserts that King Alfred translated books into the vernacular through the grace of God.² This statement shows that this author was familiar with the *topos* of divinely inspired composition, but the assertion that divine

¹ Jerome, *De Perpetua Virginitate B. Mariæ, Adversus Helvidium*, 2; PL 23.194: 'Therefore, we must invoke the Holy Spirit to defend through our lips and his understanding the virginity of the Blessed Mary', trans. FC, vol.53, p.12.

² Rubie D-N Warner, *Early English Homilies from the Twelfth Century MS. Vesp. D. XIV, Part 1, Text*, EETS OS 152 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1917), 'Neot', 133.21-2, hereafter Warner 1917, followed by item name, page no. and line ref.

grace is supplied to the authors of Old English saints' lives does not find expression in the anonymous corpus.

Like Augustine, Ælfric asserts that his work has been created through God's grace. Ælfric expresses the nature of God's grace thus:

þonne on urum moode bið acenned. sum þinc godes 7 we þ[æt] to
weorce awendað. þonne sceole we. þ[æt] tellan: to godes gyfe. 7 þ[æt]
gode betæcan;¹

In one sense the action of God's grace would seem a natural claim for a religious writer: the transmission of ecclesiastical literature would surely be a good and worthwhile act. However, the statement illustrates that claiming the action of God's grace in a piece of work immediately endows it with divine authority: for transmission of doctrine to be a 'þinc godes' in God's view, it would have to be orthodox and avoid leading people astray through error. Similarly, Ælfric's observation that 'Ne mæg nan man naht to góde gedón buton godes gife. swa swa se apostol paulus cwæð',² implies that God's grace demonstrates that something is of God, and thus authorized by Him. Claim to the action of God's grace, then, implies divine authority for the work.

Such claims to the action of God's grace are found throughout the Ælfrician corpus. In the opening *Preface* to the *Catholic Homilies* I, Ælfric describes the motivation for the work:

¹ Clemoes 1997, 9, *Mary: Purification I*, ll.65-7: 'When in our mind something good is brought forth and we turn it to action, then we should consider that as God's grace, and entrust it to God'.

² Godden 1979, 28, *Dominica XII Post Pentecosten*, ll.86-7: 'No man can do anything of God without God's grace, as the apostle Paul said'.

Ða beárn me on mode ic truwiges ðurh godes gife. þ[æt] ic ðas boc of
ledenum gereorde to engliscre spræce awende.¹

In the second series of this work, Ælfric's Latin *Preface* reads,

festinauimus hunc sequentem librum sicuti omnipotentis dei gratia nobis
dictauit interpretare.²

Similarly, *Sermo de Sacraficio in Die Pascae* states,

Nu wille we eow geopenian þurh godes gife be ðam halgan husle ðe ge
nú to gán sceolon. and gewissian eower andgit ymbe þære gerynu.³

The action of grace is thus claimed for the inspiration behind the work as a whole, and within the individual homilies. These statements are unsourced, and presumably represent additions made by Ælfric himself. He clearly claims the action of grace for himself rather than merely carrying such statements through from a Latin narrative.

Ælfric also comments upon his perceived duty to transmit the word of God. He cites a passage from Isaiah, concluding that he must not remain silent about God's word:

¹ Clemoes 1997, *Old English Preface*, ll.48-50: 'Then it occurred to my mind, I trust through God's grace, that I would translate this book from the Latin language into the English language'.

² Godden 1979, *Latin Preface*, ll.7-9: 'We have hastened to translate the following book just as the grace of Almighty God dictated it to us'.

³ Godden 1979, 15, *Sermo de Sacraficio in Die Pascae*, ll.3-5: 'We will now disclose to you, through the grace of God, concerning the holy housel which you are to go to now, and direct your understanding'.

Eft cwæð se ælmihtiga to þam witegan ISIAM; Clypa 7 ne geswic ðu.
 ahefe ðine stemne swa swa byme. 7 cyð minum folce heora leatras. 7
 Iacobes hirede heora synna; For swylcum bebodum wearð me geðuht
 þ[æt] ic nære unscyldig wið god. gif ic nolde oðrum mannum cyðan
 oppe þurh | gewritu ða godspellican soðfæstnysse þe he sylf gecwæð. 7
 eft halgum lareowum onwreah;¹

Ælfric takes the command given to a central and authoritative Biblical figure, who, as a prophet, was inspired by the word of God, and applies it to himself, viewing it as his duty to declare ‘ða godspellican soðfæstnysse’ to men. This idea is echoed in the *Life of Stephen, Protomartyr*, where Ælfric says of God’s law: ‘gif we hit forsuwiað ne bið us geboregen’.² As such, Ælfric portrays his creation of vernacular texts as a God-given duty.

Ælfric also presents himself as God’s mouthpiece, serving as a channel for His words to the people. This idea is explicitly stated by Ælfric in his homily, *Octabas et Circumcisio Domini*, where he writes defensively:

Hit þincð ungelæredum mannum dyslic to ge|hyrenne: ac gif hit him
 dyslic þince þonne cide he wið god þe hit gesette: na wið us þe hit
 secgað;³

¹ Clemoes 1997, *Old English Preface*, ll.116-22: ‘Again the Almighty spoke to the prophet Isaiah, “Cry and do not stop, raise your voice as a trumpet, and declare to my people their crimes, and to the family of Job their sins.” From such commands it appeared to me that I should not be innocent before God, if I would not declare to other men, or announce by writings, the evangelical truth, which he Himself spoke, and revealed afterwards to holy teachers’.

² Clemoes 1997, 3, *Stephen Protomartyr: I*, ll.186-7: ‘If we kept it in silence, we would not be secure’.

³ Clemoes 1997, 6, *Octabas et Circumcisio Domini*, ll.84-6: ‘To unlearned men it seems foolish to hear; but if it seems foolish to him, let him reproach God who established it, not us, who say it’.

Ælfric is diverting the responsibility for the content of his text to the Lord, for whom he is acting as a representative, and again implies divine authority for his work.

The authority of Ælfric's works is asserted with regard to their transmission, as Ælfric calls upon future copiers to produce accurate transcriptions of his works. In the *Preface* to the first series of *Catholic Homilies*, he asks:

Nu bydde ic 7 halsige on godes naman gif hwá þas bók awritan wylle
 þ[æt] hé hí geornlice gerihte be ðære bysene. þy læs ðe we ðurh
 gymelease writeras geleahtrode beon; Mycel yfel deð se ðe leas writ.
 buton he hit gerihte. swylce he gebringe þa soðan lare to leasum
 gedwyld. for ði sceal gehwa gerihtlæcan þ[æt] þ[æt] he ær to woge
 gebigde gif hé on godes dome unscyldig beon wile;¹

An almost identical passage is found in the *Preface* to the second series of homilies: the sense is the same, with minor differences in spelling between the two versions.² These passages include several routes to claiming divine authority: firstly, Ælfric makes the request 'on Godes naman', implying that the Lord supports his request. He also refers to the work involved, which presumably includes his own, as 'soðan lare' and says that God will judge those who alter the text into error. Divine authority is thus applied by Ælfric to his own writings by direct statements pertaining to God's grace and direction; the notion that Ælfric functions as a channel for the expression of divine lore; and the

¹ Clemoes 1997, *Old English Preface*, ll.128-34: 'Now I ask and beseech, in God's name, if anyone will transcribe this book, that he carefully correct it by the copy, lest we be blamed through careless writers. He does great evil who writes falsely, unless he correct it; it is as though he turn true doctrine to deceitful error; therefore everyone should make that straight which he before bent crooked, if he will be innocent at God's judgement'.

² Godden 1979, *Old English Preface*, ll.43-9.

idea that incorrect transmission of his works would result in error punishable by the Lord.

Such a level of divine authorization is absent in the majority of anonymous Old English literature examined here. As with the references to ecclesiastical authority, the *Life of St. Nicholas* contains a request for the Lord's assistance in writing the saint's life:

Nu forðan ic bidde þe, arwurðe fæder Anastasi, þæt þu 7 ealle þine
gebroðra biddan þan ælmihtige Gode þæt he untene mine tunge 7
anopenige min andget to þises mannes spæce, eal swa he geopeneð þæs
cilde tunga 7 hit wel sprecole macað.¹

However, this statement is carried through from the Latin life,² and does not represent a personal request by the Old English translator. The same is true for a later statement pertaining to God's help, which reads: 'Ic hit wille nu onginnen mid Godes fylste eallum þam mannum to wurðmente þe on him blissiað'.³ This statement is again derived from the Latin and it is not the Old English translator who claims divine assistance. Treharne comments on such a discrepancy, recognising the gulf between Ælfric's works and 'vernacular writings by contemporaries, who simply do not show the same level of self-authorisation, the same sureness that they are chosen to write on behalf of God'.⁴ As such, the Ælfrician and anonymous tradition differ widely in this

¹ Treharne 1997, *Nicholas*, ll.14-17: 'Therefore, I now ask you, worthy father Anastasius, that you and all your brothers pray to almighty God that he reveal the language to me and open my understanding to this man's language, just as he opens the tongue of the child and makes it very talkative', trans. Treharne 1997, 'Translation of the Life of St. Nicholas', ll.15-18.

² Treharne 1997, 'B.L., Cotton Tiberius D.iv, Vita Sancti Nicholai', ll.29-32.

³ Treharne 1997, *Nicholas*, ll.21-2: 'I will now begin it with God's help which he gives as an honour to all men who rejoice in him', trans. Treharne 1997, 'Translation of the Life of St. Nicholas', ll.22-3.

⁴ Elaine Treharne, "The Canonisation of Ælfric", International Medieval Congress, Leeds 2004, p.11.

respect, as the latter does not demonstrate a comparable preoccupation with divine authority.

Spiritual Miracles.

Throughout the four main homiletic collections discussed here, the belief in an impending Judgment Day and the need to be prepared for this can be observed. As Grundy observes, '[f]or Ælfric, the last days are not far away: in his view a number of the predicted signs have already been accomplished, and it is his responsibility to inform people about the end of the world, and to prepare them for it'.¹ This is illustrated in Ælfric's work as he states that the laity 'behofiað godre lare swiðost on þisum timan'.² This 'godre lare' comes in the form of religious doctrine, which Ælfric likens to food for the soul:

Swa swa þæs mannes lichama leofað be hlafe: swa sceal his sawul
lybban be godes wordum: þ[æt] is be godes lare.³

Ælfric perceives his own role to be a dispenser of such heavenly lore, and explains in his homily, *In Letania Maiore. Feria. IIII*, that,

Nu behófige ge ðæs þe swiðor þæs boclican frofres. þæt ge ðurh ða lare
eowere mod awendon of ðisum wræcfullum life to ðam ecum þe we
ymbe sprecað; [....] swa eac we wyllað eow þurh ðas bōclican lāre

¹ Grundy 1991, p.212.

² Clemoes 1997, *Old English Preface*, 1.58: 'have need of good instruction, especially at this time'.

³ Clemoes 1997, 11, *Dominica I in Quadragesima*, ll.52-3: 'Just as man's body lives by bread, so shall his soul live by God's words; that is, by God's doctrine'.

gefrefrian. for ðan ðe we geseoð þæt ðeos woruld is on micelre
earfoðnysse gelogod;¹

In this way, Ælfric sees himself as ministering to the needs of people's souls. The elevation of those in a teaching role is evident in Ælfric's works, for instance in his treatment of the Martha and Mary story. Mary Clayton points out that Ælfric includes the role of teacher as part of the superior, contemplative life rather than as an element of the inferior, active life as it was traditionally perceived:

Ælfric's argument becomes, therefore, one for the superiority of teachers. This new argument cannot be explained by the straightforward influence of the alternative exegetical tradition, as both feeding and teaching are aspects of the active life.²

As such, Ælfric clearly deems teaching others to be a superior activity, and his understanding of the wider implications of this role has huge consequences for the divine authority assumed in his writing. In a telling passage on the continuance of miracles, Ælfric comments that,

¹ Godden 1979, 22, *In Letania Maiore Feria IIII*, ll.196-201: 'Now you need the comfort of books so much more, so that, through their doctrine, you may turn your minds from this life of exile to the eternal one of which we are speaking [...] We desire to comfort you through this book doctrine, for we see that this world is placed in great trouble'.

² Mary Clayton, "Hermits and the Contemplative Life in Anglo-Saxon England", in Szarmach 1996: 147-75, here p.160.

Syððan se geleafa sprang geond ealne middaneard: syððan geswicon þa wundra; Ac ðeahhwæðere godes gelaðung wyrð | gyt dæghwomlice þa ylcan wundru gastlice þe ða apostoli ða worhton lichamlice;¹

Ælfric goes on to qualify what exactly he means by these ‘wundru gastlice’, and continues,

Gif hwa bið geuntrumod on his anginne. 7 ásolcen fram goddre drohtnunge: gif hine hwa þonne mid tihtinge 7 gebysnungum goddra weorca getrymð 7 arærð þonne bið hit swilce he sette his handa ofer untrumne. 7 hine gehæle;²

Not content to equate spiritual miracles with bodily ones, Ælfric goes on to claim that,

ðas gastlican wundra sind maran þonne ða lichamlice wæron: for þan ðe ðas wundra gehælað ðæs mannes sawle þe is ece. 7 þa ærran tacna gehældon ðone deadlican lichaman;³

These statements are all unsourced and may represent Ælfric’s personal understanding of the matter. As such, Ælfric presents himself in a redemptive role: his work is designed to exhort people to good works, for the salvation of their souls. As Ælfric sees

¹ Clemoes 1997, 21, *In Ascensione Domini*, ll.161-4: ‘When faith had sprung up all over the world, then miracles stopped. But nevertheless, God’s church still daily works the same miracles spiritually which the apostles worked bodily’.

² Clemoes 1997, 21, *In Ascensione Domini*, ll.174-7: ‘If anyone is weakened in his purpose, and lazy for good living, then if anyone, with exhortation and examples of good works, strengthen and lift him up, it will be as though he set his hand over the sick and heal him’.

³ Clemoes 1997, 21, *In Ascensione Domini*, ll.178-80: ‘The spiritual miracles are greater than the bodily ones were, because these miracles heal a man’s soul, which is eternal, but the former signs healed the mortal body’.

anyone who strengthens the faith of others with good works as a spiritual healer, he essentially casts himself in this role. The importance which he attaches to spiritual miracles, themselves greater than bodily ones, illustrates the authority and power inherent in this role: a spiritual healer is a miracle worker in the greatest sense of the term.

Ælfric's perception of himself as a miracle-worker is explicitly stated in the opening of the *Catholic Homilies*. When outlining his own suitability for the task of translating the homilies, he says,

Forwel fela ic wat on ðisum earde. gelæredran þonne ic sy. ac god
geswutelað his wundra ðurh ðone ðe he wile. swa swa ælmihtig wyrhta;
He wyrcoð his weorc þurh his gecorenan. na swylce he behofige ures
fultumes. ac þ[æt] we geearnion þ[æt] ece lif þurh his weorces
fremminge;¹

God has thus chosen Ælfric as a channel through which to work spiritual wonders, much as he selects saints as channels for physical miracles. This self-perceived divine authority within Ælfric's work supersedes all the other methods of inscribing authority into his work, as the presentation of his work as a divine miracle endows it with the highest authority of all.

Ælfric thus employs a variety of methods in order to present his work as authoritative and orthodox, a phenomenon seen far less in the anonymous corpus. The tone throughout Ælfrician hagiography suggests it is in a different league to anonymous

¹ Clemoes 1997, *Old English Preface*, ll.123-7: 'I know very many in this country more learned than I am, but God shows his wonders through who he will. As an almighty worker he works his work through his chosen, not because he has need of our help, but so that we may earn eternal life by the performance of his work'.

compositions, at least in its author's opinion. However, the subsequent dissemination of Old English hagiographic literature suggests that this view was not shared by others, and as has been noted, Ælfrician and anonymous works were mingled in later manuscripts.¹ Inscribed authority remains a central issue within the Old English hagiographic corpus, and the above discussion outlines some of the ways in which it functions, albeit not as successfully as Ælfric may have wished. With these general trends in mind, the following case studies will explore the place of inscribed authority within specific saints' lives, and the ensuing interplay between the authorization of saint, text, and author, in tandem with exploration of the divine authority ascribed to saints through their miracles.

¹ See Hill 1996a, p.252; Hill 1994, p.82; Hill 1993, pp.38-9; and Swan 1997, p.12. For discussion of this idea, see above, pp.9-11.

The Virgins: SS. Margaret of Antioch and Agnes of Rome.

Virgin saints were widely venerated in Anglo-Saxon England: the names of one hundred and fifty four virgins appear in the Anglo-Saxon *Litanies*; forty-eight virgin saints are included in the *Old English Martyrology*,¹ and around a tenth of the extant Old English hagiographic corpus catalogues the lives of these holy figures. Despite their prominence and relative popularity in early medieval hagiography, there is no instance of a virgin saint's biography occurring in both the Ælfrician and anonymous corpora. This may result from the loss of anonymous texts in transmission,² or may be an immediate indication of differing perceptions of paradigms of virginal sanctity. The majority of biographies in this generic group are Ælfrician, and relate the lives of SS. Agatha, Æthelthryth, Agnes, Cecilia, Eugenia, and Lucy. The accounts of SS. Euphrosyne and Margaret alongside the fragmentary lives of Mildred and possibly Sexburga make up the anonymous corpus.³ Notably, no virgin saint appears in both the Ælfrician and anonymous corpora: it would seem logical that the more widely venerated saints would merit the composition of hagiography. In the case of Ælfric's selection, this is largely the case. In Zettel's account of the most highly ranking festivals in Anglo-Saxon England based on the attribution of points in pre-Conquest calendars, five of Ælfric's six virgin saints appear, and no virgins are included who do not feature in Ælfric's collection. SS. Æthelthryth, Lucy, Agnes, Agatha and Cecilia all receive fifteen or more points according to Zettel's system, attesting to their

¹ For the lists of saints included in these two Old English texts, see Lapidge 1991a; and George Herzfeld, ed., *An Old English Martyrology*, EETS OS 116 (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner and Co., Ltd., 1900), hereafter Herzfeld 1900.

² See Scragg 2000, p.115.

³ See T.O. Cockayne, ed., *Leechdoms, Wortcunning and Starcraft of Early England*, Rolls Series 35, vol.3 (London: Longmans, Green, Reader and Dyer, 1866): 422-8, for editions of the Mildred and Sexburga fragments.

importance.¹ Similarly, in the litanies which provide the structure for this work, these saints are cited twenty-six, forty, forty-three, fifty, and forty-five times respectively.² Veneration of Æthelthryth in the litanies is less common than that of these other virgins, but the prominence of her cult at Winchester, a centre with which Ælfric was strongly connected, accounts for his inclusion of her *vita*. Eugenia, however, provides something of an anomaly: she is absent in Zettel's list and features on only twenty-three occasions in the litanies, her inclusion by Ælfric perhaps indicating idiosyncratic practice on his part.

None of the virgin saints in the anonymous corpus either ranks highly in the calendars examined by Zettel or receives notably frequent mention in the litanies. The litanical references to Euphrosyne, Margaret and Mildred stand at five, nineteen (or twenty-six if references to Marina are included) and twelve respectively.³ The choice of saints in the anonymous corpus does not accord with popular devotion to the same extent as Ælfric's selection, but as the original breadth of the anonymous corpus is uncertain, it is difficult to make statements regarding lives omitted from this. Conversely, it is possible to submit hypotheses regarding Ælfric's selection of material, whose body of work is more fully understood.

The lack of a saint who features in both the Ælfrician and anonymous corpus renders it necessary to choose two subject saints for investigation in order to compare different authorial treatment of this type of saint. Drawing a comparison between Ælfrician and anonymous works is instrumental in elucidating the different agenda and perceptions of sanctity which permeate the different bodies of literature, and Margaret of Antioch has been selected from the anonymous corpus and Agnes of Rome from the

¹ Patrick H. Zettel, "Ælfric's Hagiographic Sources and the Latin Legendary Preserved in B. L. MS Cotton Nero E I + CCCC MS 9 and Other Manuscripts", unpublished University of Oxford PhD Thesis, 1979, p.78, hereafter Zettel 1979.

² Lapidge 1991a. See pp.302-20 for the 'Index of Saints' venerated in the litanies.

³ Lapidge 1991a, pp.308, 313, 314 and 315.

Ælfrician. Margaret has been chosen for case study due to the prominence of her cult in late Anglo-Saxon England. As Clayton and Magennis point out, there is ‘plentiful evidence, especially from late Anglo-Saxon England, for the liturgical celebration of St. Margaret’, part of which includes the three prose hagiographies which we know were composed about the saint.¹ Agnes has been selected from the Ælfrician corpus as she is a prominent virgin saint, and her *passio* is one with a long Latin tradition. Her entry in Butler reads:

She is one of the most popular of Christian saints, and her name is commemorated every day in the canon of the Mass.²

Margaret and Agnes were both important, popular virgin saints in the Anglo-Saxon period, and form ideal subjects for studying perceptions of divine and inscribed authority in Old English hagiography.

Prior to a discussion of the divine authority inherent in the miracles of virgin saints, the authority and status accorded to virginity itself should be noted. The ideal of virginity was clearly highly prized by the early Christian church, and patristic writings concentrate on the merits and virtues of virginity to a high degree. As we have seen, patristic authorities were highly influential in Anglo-Saxon religious thought: their doctrine was deemed orthodox by Anglo-Saxon homilists, as the Old English references to patristic authority outlined in the previous chapter illustrate.³ The attitude of the Fathers to the state of virginity is thus essential to an understanding of its significance to Anglo-Saxon hagiographers. It would be impossible to give any kind of

¹ Clayton and Magennis 1994, p.72.

² Alban Butler, *Butler's Lives of the Saints*, ed., rev. and supp. Herbert Thurston and Donald Attwater, 4 vols. (London: Burns and Oates, 1956), vol.1, p.133, July 21, hereafter Butler 1956, followed by vol. no., page no. and date of saint's feast day.

³ See above, pp.76-81.

full account here: as Lapidge and Herren point out in their discussion of Aldhelm's discourse on the subject, the majority of the great fathers wrote a treatise on virginity, 'Tertullian, Cyprian, Jerome, Ambrose and Augustine in prose, and Alcimius Avitus and Venantius Fortunatus in verse'.¹ In addition to these treatises, references to the merits and nature of virginity are found throughout patristic literature. However, whilst the volume of thought on the subject is too large to discuss or even summarize here, some key ideas and statements will be briefly outlined.

Whilst careful not to condemn marriage, many of the fathers advocate the superiority of the virginal to the married state. The central Scriptural passage which serves as a basis for this thought is found in I Corinthians, where St. Paul states:

And as concerning virgins, a commandment of our Lord I have not: but counsel I give, as having obtained mercy of our Lord to be faithful. I think therefore that this is good for the present necessity, because it is good for a man so to be. Art thou tied to a wife? seek not to be loosed. Art thou loose from a wife? seek not a wife. But if thou take a wife, thou hast not sinned. And if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned [...]
Therefore, both he that joineth his virgin in matrimony, doeth well: and he that joineth not, doeth better.²

In his interpretation of this passage, Augustine also introduces the state of chastity, and sets forth the merits of the three as follows:

¹ Aldhelm, *Aldhelm, The Prose Works*, trans. Michael Lapidge and Michael Herren (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1979), p.52.

² I Corinthians 7.25-28 and 38. I Corinthians 7.25-40 deals with this subject.

Nos autem secundum Scripturarum sanctarum fidem sanamque doctrinam, nec peccatum esse dicimus nuptias, et earum tamen bonum non solum infra virginalem, verum etiam infra vidualem continentiam constituimus.¹

A descending hierarchical view of virginity, followed by chastity, followed by marriage can be discerned. Although he declines to comment on chastity, a similar relationship between marriage and virginity is found in Jerome, who states:

Non est detrahare nuptiis, cum illis virginitas antefertur. Nemo malum bono comparat. Glorientur et nuptæ, cum a virginibus sint secundæ.²

Later in the sixth century, Gregory the Great remained close to the Scriptural sense in his views on the status of virginity:

Sic incontinentibus laudetur conjugium, ut tamen jam continentes non revocentur ad luxum. Sic continentibus laudetur virginitas corporis, ut tamen in conjugibus despecta non fiat fecunditas carnis.³

¹ Augustine, *De Sancta Virginitate*, XXI; PL 40.407: 'We, however, according to the trustworthiness and sound teaching of the holy Scriptures, do not claim that marriage is sinful, yet we place its blessing not only beneath virginal continence, but even beneath that of widowhood', trans. *FC*, vol.27, p.166.

² Jerome, *Epistola XXII, Ad Eustocium*, 19; PL 22.405: 'It is not disparaging marriage when virginity is preferred to it. No one compares evil with good. Let married women glory too, since they come second to virgins', trans. *The Letters of St. Jerome I*, trans. Charles Christopher Mierow, Ancient Christian Writers, vol.33 (London: Longman's, Green and Co., 1963), p.150, hereafter Mierow 1963.

³ Gregory the Great, *Regulæ Pastoralis Liber*, III.xxxvi; PL 77.122: 'Wedlock is to be preached to the incontinent, but not so as to recall to lust those who have become continent. Physical virginity is to be commended to the continent, yet so as not to make the married despise the fecundity of the body', trans. *Gregory the Great, Pastoral Care*, trans. Henry Davis, Ancient Christian Writers, vol.11 (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1950), p.227.

Whilst marriage is not condemned, virginity is evidently deemed its superior, and in Augustine's thought, widowed continence stands between the two in terms of merit. Virginal purity, then, was advocated and prized by the Latin fathers.

Similar views are iterated by Ælfric in *Dominica in Sexagesima*:

Ða ðe clænlice on wydewan hade for godes lufon þurhwuniað. hí agyfað
sixtigfealdne wæstm; Hit is swiðe ungedafenlic and scandlic. þæt
forwerode menn and untymende gifta wilnian. ðonne gifta ne sind
gesette for nanum ðinge. buton for bearnteame; Ða ðe on clænum
mægðháde ðurhwuniað for gefean ðæs ecan lifes. hí bringað forð
hundfealdne wæstm ...¹

The patristic perception of virginity as superior to continence and marriage thus finds expression in Ælfric's writings, and gives an indication of how highly he prized this virtue. This prioritisation of the virtue of virginity, particularly amongst female saints, is evident in Ælfric's selection of subjects for hagiography. As Magennis notes:

For Ælfric, only virgins merit the highest reward of the "hundredfold fruit" in the next life, and in his lives of female saints he confines his attention exclusively to virgins. Ælfric lacks the representative range of female saints found, for example, in the ninth-century Old English

¹ Godden 1979, 6, *Dominica in Sexagesima*, ll.127-32: 'They who chastely continue in widowhood for love of God yield fruit sixtyfold. It is very unfitting and shameful that very old and impotent men desire marriage, while marriage is ordained for nothing but the procreation of children. They who continue in pure virginity, for the joy of everlasting life, bring forth fruit an hundredfold'.

Martyrology, in which a third of the fifty or so female saints are non-virgins.¹

The status of virginity is evident in a comparison drawn by several of the Fathers, who compare virginity to the angelic state. Ambrose and Jerome both comment directly on this idea, as in Jerome's treatise *Adversus Jovinianum*:

*In resurrectione mortuorum, non nubent neque nubentur, sed similes erunt angelis (Matt. XXII, 30), Quod alii postea in cœlis futuri sunt, hoc virgines in terra esse cœperunt.*²

Virginity thus elevates individuals above ordinary human nature, and leads an individual closer to angelic purity. Just as virginity represents the future life of the resurrection, Ambrose views it as a return to the flawless state of mankind before the Fall, as he expounds in *De Institutione Virginis*:

quod in virginibus sacris angelorum vitam videmus in terris, quam in paradiso quondam amiseramus.³

The virtue of virginity was highly prized, and as Woolf comments, this renunciation of worldliness was perceived as 'a lesser form of martyrdom'.¹ This statement indicates the subordination of virginity to martyrdom, and as Boniface Ramsey summarizes:

¹ Magennis 1996a, p.109.

² Jerome, *Adversus Jovinianum*, 36; PL 23.273: "In the resurrection of the dead they will not marry nor be married, but will resemble the angels." What others will be in heaven in the future, this virgins begin to be on earth', translation is my own.

³ Ambrose, *Liber De Institutione Virginis*, XVII.104; PL 16.345-6: 'who in sacred virginity seem to live like angels on earth, as was formerly lost in paradise', translation is my own.

Ambrose qualified the relationship between the two, martyrdom and virginity, when he remarks that ‘virginity is not praiseworthy because it is found in martyrs but because it itself makes martyrs’. Virginity is not seen to be like martyrdom simply because it involves a comparable struggle but also because it produces the same effect, death to self, expressed through the image of bodily death. Thus virginity, like monasticism, succeeds to the martyr’s mantle, even though, as Augustine says, no one would dare consider virginity greater than martyrdom.²

As Peter Brown states, for Augustine, ‘[t]o have triumphed over the bitter fear of death was a far greater sign of God’s grace than to have triumphed over the sexual urge’.³ The status, and by association the authority, which the possession of virginity gave to an individual must therefore be seen in relative terms. Whilst it was agreed that virginity was a superior state that associated individuals with a paradisaal or angelic state, it remained inferior to the crown of martyrdom.

¹ Woolf 1996, pp.60-61.

² Boniface Ramsey, *Beginning to Read the Fathers* (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1993), p.136, hereafter Ramsey 1993. Ambrose’s views are expressed in *De Virginibus* 1.3.10; PL 16.202: ‘Non enim ideo laudabilis virginitas, quia et in martyribus reperitur, sed quia ipsa martyres faciat. ‘Indeed by no means is virginity praiseworthy because it is discovered in martyrs, but because it makes martyrs’, translation is my own. Augustine’s comments are expressed in *De Virginitate*, 46.47; PL 40.424: ‘Sed ut dicere cœperam, sive centenus fructus sit Deo devota virginitas, sive alio aliquo modo, vel quem commemoravimus, vel quem non commemoravimus, sit illa fertilitatis intelligenda distantia; nemo tamen, quantum puto, ausus fuerit virginitatem præferre martyrio, ac nemo dubitaverit hoc donum occultum esse, si examinatrix desit tentatio’; trans: ‘But, as I began to say, whether the hundredfold fruit by virginity consecrated to God, or whether the distinction of fruitfulness is to be understood in some other way (either one which we have mentioned, or one which we have not mentioned), in any case, no one, in my opinion, could have dared to prefer virginity to martyrdom, and no one could have doubted that this gift is hidden if the cost of suffering is lacking’ (trans. *FC*, vol.27, p.202).

³ Peter Brown, *The Body and Society: Men, Women and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (London: Faber and Faber, 1989), p.397.

The lives of virgin saints were heavily influenced by the early ‘Passion of Perpetua and Felicitas’, written 200, which represents a first-person account of the martyrdom of Perpetua and her companions.¹ As Lapidge comments, the absence of a life of these saints in the Old English corpus, particularly within Ælfric’s writing, is surprising given their evident importance:

Among virgin martyrs, one might have expected Ælfric to include Perpetua and Felicitas, who were commemorated in the *Nobis quoque peccatoribus* of the mass and whose names headed the list of virgin martyrs in most Anglo-Saxon litanies of the saints.²

A *Passio SS martyrum Felicitatis et Perpetuæ* is included in Zettel’s reconstructed list of contents for the Cotton-Corpus Legendary,³ and the passion of these saints presumably circulated in Anglo-Saxon England. Whilst the account of these saints does not find expression in the Old English hagiographic corpus, the early date and widespread influence of the passion and the prominence of Perpetua and Felicitas in the litanies provide testament to the longevity of female saints’ lives and the importance of these early models. In her discussion of late medieval virgin martyr legends, Karen Winstead summarizes the main elements of these lives as follows:

¹ For editions of the *Passio SS. Perpetua and Felicitas*, see James Rendel Harris and Seth K. Gifford, *The Acts of the Martyrdom of Perpetua and Felicitas* (London: C.J. Clay and Sons, 1890); and Walter Hayward Shewring, ed. and trans., *The Passion of SS. Perpetua and Felicity* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1931). Shewring’s translation is also online in the *Internet Medieval Source Book*, “St. Perpetua: The Passion of Saints Perpetua and Felicity”, [<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/perpetua.html>].

² Michael Lapidge, “Ælfric’s Sanctorale”, in Szarmach 1996: 115-29, here p.120, hereafter Lapidge 1996.

³ Zettel 1979, p.18. For a more recent assessment of the legendary and its contents, see Peter Jackson and Michael Lapidge, “The Contents of the Cotton-Corpus Legendary”, in Szarmach 1996: 131-46, hereafter Jackson and Lapidge 1996.

The saint refuses to participate in pagan sacrifices, debates her antagonist, affirms the fundamental tenets of Christianity, destroys idols, performs miracles, and endures excruciating torments.¹

The lives of virgin martyrs are generally of a formulaic nature, although the variations on this theme outlined in the following case studies reveal that different portraits of female sanctity can be portrayed within this framework.

In discussing the category of 'Virgin Saints', the issue of gender is paramount and should be clarified. Evidently, virginity is considered meritorious in both sexes and is emphasized in both male and female saints' lives. The Old English hagiographies of St. Edmund and St. John the apostle, for example, highlight their virginal status.² However, in the model for classification of saints employed in this study – the lists found in Anglo-Saxon litanies³ – the category of *sancta uirgines* is essentially a female one, and *virgo* translates as 'a maid, maiden, virgin'.⁴ Whilst John the apostle's virginity is stressed in his *passio*, as 'he wæs on mægðhade gode gecoren . 7 he ón ecnysse on ungewemmedum mægðhade þurhwunade',⁵ he is classed as an apostle in the litanies.⁶ Similarly, St. Edmund, whose incorruption is said to bear witness to his virginity, is categorized as a martyr rather than a virgin.⁷ Five of the virgins discussed in this study, Agnes, Agatha, Cecilia, Eugenia, Lucy and Margaret, are martyred for their faith. Thus, whilst St. Agnes and St. Edmund are both virgin martyrs, the female saint is labelled with the former term, and the male saint with the latter. This is not

¹ Karen A. Winstead, *Virgin Martyrs, Legends of Sainthood in Late Medieval England* (Ithaca; London: Cornell University Press, 1997), p.5.

² Skeat 1900, 32, *Edmund*, ll.186-7; and Clemoes 1997, 4, *John the Evangelist, Assumption*, ll.7-8.

³ Lapidge 1991a.

⁴ Lewis and Short 1879, p.1995.

⁵ Clemoes 1997, 4, *John the Evangelist, Assumption*, ll.7-8: 'He was in chastity chosen to God, and he continued forever in unblemished chastity'.

⁶ See Lapidge 1991a, pp.93-301, for examples.

⁷ Skeat 1900, 32, *Edmund*, ll.186-7. For examples of litanies which demonstrate his trend, see Lapidge 1991a, pp.93-301.

merely an Anglo-Saxon phenomenon, but has its roots in patristic writings. As Ramsey points out, virginity was discussed by many writers in feminine terms:

In the course of the first few centuries it was natural that the virgin, with her marital relationship to Christ, should become a figure of the Church, and indeed so she appears, for example, in Ambrose's treatise *On Virgins*. It was natural too, that, precisely on account of this relationship, the virgin should have been thought of in increasingly feminine terms, although in the first few centuries virgins were spoken of as both masculine and feminine. Gregory of Nyssa is almost alone in emphasizing that the possibility of a spiritual marriage applied to both men and women, for "there is neither male nor female" (Galatians 3:28), but "Christ is all, and in all" (Colossians 3:11).¹

As such, the exclusively female genre of 'The Virgins' in the litanies can be seen as a development of earlier Christian trends.

An interesting feature of the Anglo-Saxon lists appears to be at odds with patristic doctrine. Female saints who have lost their virginal status, for example the reformed harlot St. Mary of Egypt and the chaste widows Sexburga and Judith, are also listed with the 'Virgins' in the litanies. Perpetua, who appears at the head of many of the lists of virgins, is also a mother. Augustine and Jerome both stress that virginity cannot be restored once it has been lost. Augustine talks of virginity 'quæ non rediret amissa',² while Jerome is adamant on the matter:

¹ Ramsey 1993, p.144. Quotation from Gregory of Nyssa, *De Virginitate*, 20; PG 46.399: 'Non est masculus, neque femina, sed omnes et in omnibus Christus'.

² Augustine, *De Sancta Virginitate*, 49; PL 40.425: 'once lost, does not return', trans. FC, vol.27, p.204.

Audenter loquar: Cum omnia possit Deus, suscitare virginem non potest
post ruinam.¹

Ælfric ascribes to this view in his homily on Judith, where he states:

Ac heo ne bið na eft mæden, gif heo hi æne forligð, nu heo næfð þa
mede þæs hundfealdan wæstmes.²

Thus as Magennis summarizes, ‘She who commits fornication once, says Ælfric, loses her virginity for ever.’³ Despite this, the litanies include non-virgins in the catalogue of virgins, and female saints are rarely included in any other categories. As such, the generic label ‘Virgin’ essentially means ‘female saint’ in the litanies, and when it is considered that these represent a hierarchy of sanctity rather than a mere list of names, the existence of a relationship between gender and status becomes clear. This chapter focuses on the power and authority miracles ascribe to female saints, in an attempt to determine whether the gender of the hagiographic subject has a bearing on the miracles they are said to perform. Other sources of saintly authority will also be examined, to assess whether the authority of Virgin saints differs in nature from that of saints discussed elsewhere in this work. The differences between the anonymous corpus and Ælfric’s work will be explored, to determine whether the Ælfrician corpus and anonymous lives exhibit the same trends in this area. Miracles enjoy a pivotal role in the depiction of models of sanctity, and their presentation in the lives of virgin saints

¹ Jerome, *Epistola XXII, Ad Eustochium*, 5; PL 22.397: ‘I speak audaciously: although God can do all things, He cannot raise up a virgin after she has fallen’, trans. Mierow 1963, p.138.

² Ælfric, *Homily on Judith*, in Bruno Assmann, ed., *Angelsächsische Homilien und Heiligenleben* (Kassel: Georg H. Wigand, 1889): 102-116, ll.432-3, hereafter Assmann 1889: ‘But she is not a virgin again if she lies with anyone, and she will not have the reward of the hundredfold fruit’, translation is my own.

³ Hugh Magennis, “Attitudes to Sexuality in Old English Prose and Poetry”, *LSE n.s.* 26 (1995): 1-27, here p.16, hereafter Magennis 1995.

can reveal a great deal about the paradigms of female sanctity that Old English hagiographers deemed appropriate and desirable.

St. Margaret.

The legend of Margaret of Antioch is arguably one of the most dramatic and memorable passions of a female, virgin saint found in Anglo-Saxon vernacular prose hagiography. Her *passio* is eventful and incredible, and involves a courageous, almost fiery protagonist. As Magennis comments, in the Latin hagiographies of the saint, ‘Margaret is superhumanly powerful, and she dominates events from start to finish’.¹ In this way, Margaret is reminiscent of the religious subjects of the Anglo-Saxon poetic corpus, such as Judith and Helena, and her *passio* bears a striking resemblance to the narrative recounted in *Juliana*.² Margaret thus provides a case study of a powerful and dominant female saint, and the account of her victory over devils yields interesting material for exploring the authority credited to the saint through her performance of miracles.

The daughter of a pagan priest, Margaret’s legend asserts that she lived in Antioch in Pisidia until her martyrdom, and she is celebrated in the Roman Martyrology on the twentieth of July.³ However, there is uncertainty surrounding the historical truth of her life, and in Farmer’s view, ‘Margaret probably never existed as a

¹ Hugh Magennis, “‘Listen Now All and Understand’: Adaptation of Hagiographical Material for Vernacular Audiences in the Old English Lives of St. Margaret”, *Speculum* 71 (1996): 27-42, here p.30, hereafter Magennis 1996b.

² For an edition of the Old English poem *Judith*, see *Beowulf and Judith*, ASPR 4, ed. Elliott van Kirk Dobbie (New York: Columbia University Press, 1953), hereafter Dobbie 1953; for *Elene*, see *The Vercelli Book*, ASPR 2, ed. George Philip Krapp (New York: Columbia University Press, 1932), hereafter Krapp 1932; and for *Juliana*, see *The Exeter Book*, ASPR 3, ed. George Philip Krapp and Elliott van Kirk Dobbie (New York: Columbia University Press, 1936), hereafter Krapp and Dobbie 1936.

³ Butler 1956, vol. 3, p.152, July 20.

historical person, but only as a character in pious fiction'.¹ The textual authority of Margaret's life, then, is evidently questionable. In addition to the mystery surrounding the historical truth of the legend, there was confusion in Anglo-Saxon England surrounding the identity of the saint.² This casts doubt over the veracity of her legend and adds to the potential for error in attempting a biography of the saint.

Three Old English lives of Margaret are known to have existed, but that found in London, British Library, Cotton Otho B.x, was badly burned in the fire at Ashburnham House in 1731, and now only the *incipit* and *explicit*, printed by Wanley, remain.³ As such, this life will not be included in discussion of the miracles in Margaret's biographies. The remaining extant lives, found in London, British Library, Cotton Tiberius A.iii and Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 303, differ widely, and according to Clayton and Magennis, the latter life is entirely independent of the former, as 'their respective sources represent different elements of the Latin textual tradition'.⁴ There is thus as much evidence for differing perceptions of female sanctity to be gleaned from the divergent presentations of Margaret's life by these two anonymous authors as from comparison between the anonymous and Ælfrician corpora.

Cotton Tiberius A.iii is dated by Ker to s.xi med,⁵ and the manuscript contains a variety of material:

¹ David Hugh Farmer, *The Oxford Dictionary of Saints* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), p.260, hereafter Farmer 1982.

² See J.E. Cross, "The Notice on Marina (7 July) and *Passiones S. Margaritae*", in Szarmach 2000: 419-32, here p.428.

³ Humphrey Wanley, *Librorum Veterum Septentrionalium*, in George Hickes, *Linguarum Veterum Septentrionalium Thesaurus Grammatico*, 2 vols. (Oxford: E. Theatro Sheldoniano, 1705), pp.192-3. For an edition and translation of the *incipit* and *explicit*, see Clayton and Magennis 1994, p.95.

⁴ Clayton and Magennis 1994, p.61.

⁵ N.R. Ker, *Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1957), p.240, hereafter Ker 1957.

Much of the manuscript is in Latin, with continuous Old English glossing, but there are also translations [...] some penitential texts, and a group of homiletic pieces, partly anonymous.¹

As Clayton and Magennis point out, Tiberius A. iii is thought to originate from Christ Church, Canterbury,² and interestingly, Margaret's *passio* is the only hagiographical item found in Tiberius A. iii. This begs the question as to why this particular saint was accorded such importance, an issue which is further heightened, as, 'the Tiberius litany is the only Anglo-Saxon litany in which her name is entered in capitals, according her the same status as the Canterbury saints Augustine and Dunstan'.³ The manuscript context of Margaret's *passio* is of prime importance, and provides evidence of the status afforded Margaret by the manuscript's compilers.

Cambridge, Corpus Christi 303 is a collection of homilies and saints' lives, the majority of which are Ælfrician. It is dated by Ker to s.xii¹,⁴ whilst Treharne states that 'a detailed comparative analysis of script demonstrates that CCCC 303 may be dated close to the mid twelfth century'.⁵ According to Treharne, the manuscript is likely to originate from Rochester:

Weighing up the evidence, there seems little doubt that CCCC 303 has its origins in the south-eastern area of England. Taken cumulatively, the palaeographical, linguistic, and contextual evidence points most convincingly to Rochester as the place of origin of CCCC 303.⁶

¹ Scragg 2000, p.97.

² Clayton and Magennis 1994, p.84.

³ Clayton and Magennis 1994, p.87.

⁴ Ker 1957, p.99.

⁵ Treharne 1997, p.20.

⁶ Treharne 1997, p.28.

As Treharne and Scragg point out, scribal errors in the item on Margaret indicate that it was copied into the manuscript rather than composed within it.¹ Margaret's *passio* is one of only four anonymous hagiographical items in the manuscript, and its inclusion in the compilation could be an attempt to fill the gap left by the absence of an Ælfrician biography of Margaret. The importance of Margaret in Anglo-Saxon England is debatable. As has been mentioned, there is evidence for liturgical celebration of the saint. This 'comes from a variety of sources: calendars, litanies, masses, relics, inclusion in collections of saints' lives as well as the vernacular evidence of the entry in the Old English Martyrology and the three lives'.² Such evidence points to Margaret's importance, and the two anonymous vernacular lives of the saint 'reflect the specific interest in this saint that appears to have developed in England in the late Anglo-Saxon period'.³ Ælfric's omission of Margaret's biography seems surprising when these factors are considered. However, the lack of an Ælfrician life of the saint is perhaps accounted for by consideration of Ælfric's working methods as discussed by Zettel. Margaret does not appear in Zettel's reconstructed list of the contents for the Cotton-Corpus Legendary,⁴ a recension of which is generally accepted to have been Ælfric's main source for the *Catholic Homilies* and *Lives of Saints* collections. Whilst Ælfric takes material from other sources and could reasonably have found a copy of Margaret's life elsewhere, for instance in the account of the saint featured in the *Old English Martyrology* where Margaret merits the 'longest account of a saint',⁵ she does not fit the general criteria for the additional saints he includes. Ælfric's additions to the

¹ D.G. Scragg and Elaine Treharne, "Appendix: The Three Anonymous Lives in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 303", in Szarmach 1996: 231-4.

² Clayton and Magennis 1994, p.72.

³ Magennis 1996b, p.27.

⁴ Zettel 1979, pp.15-34.

⁵ Clayton and Magennis 1994, p.51.

lives found in the legendary usually involve recent English and Irish saints, such as Æthelthryth, Edmund, Swithun, Cuthbert and Alban,¹ and Ælfric's omission of Margaret accords with his apparent system of selection. However, the inclusion of Margaret in a predominantly Ælfrician manuscript suggests that Ælfric's opinions regarding the selection of saints were not held by the compiler of the manuscript, who evidently deemed Margaret an important and popular saint who merited inclusion in a legendary alongside Ælfric's works. As the opening chapter on inscribed authority discusses, Ælfric's clear desire to authorize his saintly biographies would have had a direct consequence for the saints themselves: in promoting the orthodoxy and veracity of his work, Ælfric simultaneously authorized the saints therein, essentially creating a supposedly orthodox canon of saintly figures. Margaret evidently did not merit inclusion in this Ælfrician canon and warrant his authorization. Clearly, however, his hope that his own works would not be mingled with those of other, in his opinion lesser, authors, went unheeded, and his own selection of saints came to be supplemented with various other figures.

As has been noted above, the two lives of Margaret come from different strands of the Latin tradition, and their immediate sources differ.² No immediate source for either text is extant. In Clayton and Magennis' opinion the source for the Tiberius text 'either belonged to the Casinensis strand of the Latin transmission (BHL no. 5304) or, more likely, was a form of the common original from which both the Mombritius and

¹ The sources for these lives are outlined in *Fontes Anglo-Saxonici Project*, ed., *Fontes Anglo-Saxonici: World Wide Web Register*, <http://fontes.english.ox.ac.uk/>, accessed June 2004. The main sources for the lives of native saints are given by Fontes as follows: Æthelthryth, Oswald, and Alban: Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, in Colgrave and Mynors 1969; Edmund: Abbo of Fleury, *Passio S. Eadmundi*, in M. Winterbottom, ed., *Three Lives of English Saints* (Toronto: Centre for Medieval Studies, 1972): 65-87. Swithun: Lantfred of Winchester, *Translatio et miracula S. Swithuni*, in M. Lapidge, ed., *The Cult of St Swithun* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002). Cuthbert: Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, in Colgrave and Mynors 1969; Bede, *Vita S. Cuthberti* (verse), in W. Jaager, ed., *Bedas Metrische Vita Sancti Cuthberti* (Leipzig: Mayer and Müller, 1935); Bede, *Vita S. Cuthberti* (prose), in B. Colgrave, ed., *Two Lives of St. Cuthbert* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1940): 141-306, hereafter Colgrave 1940; anon, *Vita S. Cuthberti*, in Colgrave 1940, pp.60-138.

² See Clayton and Magennis 1994 for details of the Latin tradition of Margaret's legend.

Casinensis versions derive'.¹ Textual parallels with the Casinensis and Mombritius versions can be traced,² and certain elements of the text eliminated as original to the Old English writer. The majority of such similarities for the Tiberius version of the legend are found in the Casinensis version of the Latin, the Anonymous pseudo-Theotimus *Passio Beatae Marinae* [BHL no.5304],³ while additional similarities occur with the Mombritius version, the Anonymous pseudo-Theotimus *Passio S. Margaretae* [BHL no.5303].⁴ In terms of source study, then, the *Passio Marinae* and *Margaretae* can be used for comparison. However, it must be remembered that any rearrangement of or deviations from these sources in the Tiberius version are likely to result at least partly from the direct source used by the Anglo-Saxon author, which probably represents a descendent of the common original from which the diverging Casinensis and Mombritius traditions evolved.

The CCCC 303 version of Margaret's legend is independent of that found in Cotton Tiberius A. iii, as discussed by Clayton and Magennis.⁵ The closest extant source text is the Mombritius version, the anonymous pseudo-Theotimus *Passio S. Margaretae*, although there is a variety of differences between this Latin text and the Old English rendering, many of which are unparalleled in any other versions of the legend. Thus, as Clayton and Magennis conclude,

¹ Clayton and Magennis 1994, p.42.

² See H. Magennis, 'The Sources of The Life of St. Margaret (BL, MS Cotton Tiberius A. iii)', 2001, *Fontes Anglo-Saxonici: World Wide Web Register*, <http://fontes.english.ox.ac.uk/>, accessed August 2004.

³ *Passio Beatae Marinae*, edited in Clayton and Magennis, pp.224-34. This edition will be used throughout for source comparison, hereafter *Passio Marinae*, followed by chapter no. and line refs.

⁴ *Passio S. Margaretae*, edited in Clayton and Magennis, pp.194-218. This edition will be used throughout for source comparison, and all translations of the Latin taken from this edition, hereafter *Passio Marg.*, followed by chapter no. and line refs.

⁵ Clayton and Magennis 1994, p.61.

it is impossible to be certain whether some of the peculiarities of CCCC derive from an unknown variant of BHL no. 5303 or are the contribution of the Old English writer.¹

However, while no certain judgement can be made, Magennis has suggested that the nature of the alterations would be in keeping with mediation by the Old English author:

There are also changes, however, in the way the saint is presented, and in the imagery associated with her, and these are certainly consistent with a considered adaptation for a secular vernacular audience.²

The Mombritius version of the text can therefore be used for comparison with the Corpus Christi version of Margaret's acts, and whilst deviations from this may represent the active mediation of the Anglo-Saxon author, this cannot be certain.

St. Agnes.

Like Margaret, Agnes was an important and popular saint in the Middle Ages. According to tradition, St. Agnes underwent her persecution and martyrdom while still a young girl, and the *Old English Martyrology* asserts that,

On þone an ond twentigðan dæg bið sancta Agnan þrowung þære halgan
fæmnan; seo geþrowade martyrdom for criste þa heo wæs þreottene
geara.³

¹ Clayton and Magennis 1994, p.62.

² Magennis 1996b, p.32.

³ Herzfeld 1900, pp.26-8, here 26.20-22: 'On the twenty-first day is the passion of the holy virgin St. Agnes; she suffered martyrdom for Christ when she was thirteen years old'.

A variety of authoritative figures attest to the truth of Agnes' martyrdom: the opening of Prudentius' hymn in praise of the saint reads 'Agnes sepulcrum est Romulea in domo, fortis puellae, martyris inclytae',¹ whilst Augustine praises:

Beata Agnes sancta, cujus passionis hodiernus est dies [....] Agnes
latine agnam significat; græce, castam.²

Ambrose dedicates sizeable sections of his treatise on virginity to Agnes, and glorifies the saint's deeds and virtues:

Natalis est sanctæ Agnes, mirentur viri, non desperent parvuli; stupeant
nuptæ, imitentur innuptæ. Sed quid dignum de ea loqui possumus, cujus
ne nomen quidem vacuum luce laudis fuit?³

Ambrose's depiction of Agnes in his treatise on virginity also focuses on the saint's strength and courage, as he describes her fearlessness at the hands of her persecutors:

Hæc inter cruentas carnificum impavida manus, hæc stridentium
gravibus immobilis tractibus catenarum.⁴

¹ Prudentius, *Peristaphanon*, *Hymn 14*; LCL vol. 387, p.338: 'The grave of Agnes is in the home of Romulus; a brave lass she, and a glorious martyr' (trans. LCL vol. 387, p.339).

² Augustine, *Sermo CCLXIII*, VI, PL 38.1250: 'Blessed saint Agnes, the festival of whose passion is today [....] Agnes signifies lamb in Latin, chaste in Greek', translation is my own.

³ Ambrose, *De Virginibus*, I.ii.5; PL 16.200: 'It is the birthday of St. Agnes: let men marvel, let children not despair, let the married be amazed, let the unmarried imitate. But what can I say worthy of her whose very name was not devoid of the glow of praise?', trans. Boniface Ramsey, *Ambrose, The Early Church Fathers* (London; New York: Routledge, 1997), p.74, hereafter Ramsey 1997.

⁴ Ambrose, *De Virginibus*, I.II.7; PL 16.201: 'She was unafraid of the executioners' blood-stained hand, unmoved by the clumsy hauling of the clanking chains', trans. Ramsey 1997, p.75.

Ambrose clearly viewed Agnes as an authoritative female figure, and praise from such a venerable figure attests to the saint's status. The date on which the *Old English Martyrology* celebrates Agnes' feast, 21 January, is still observed by the Latin Church.

Ælfric's *Life of St. Agnes* is found in his *Lives of Saints* collection, composed between 992 and 1002.¹ As demonstrated by Zettel, it is likely that Ælfric's source for the majority of items in this collection resembled an earlier recension of the Cotton-Corpus Legendary, and this is probably the case for his *Life of St. Agnes*.² Ælfric's text draws on material from the anonymous *Passio S. Agnetis* and *Passio SS. Gallicani, Iohannis et Pauli*, items which are both found in the legendary.³ These texts can be used for comparison with Ælfric's work, although no single modern printed edition precisely resembles either piece.⁴ The closest editions, identified by *Fontes*, are the *Passio S. Agnetis* printed in the *Patrologia Latina* and the *Passio SS. Gallicani, Iohannis et Pauli* printed by Mombricitus, although these texts do not always precisely represent Ælfric's source.⁵ These texts will therefore be used for comparison with Ælfric's *Life of St. Agnes*.

Inscribed Authority in the Lives of SS. Margaret and Agnes.

The lives of Margaret and Agnes exhibit authorial attempts to authorize the biographies, although the nature and accuracy of these attempts differs widely. The

¹ Hill 1996a, p.236.

² Zettel 1979 and Jackson and Lapidge 1996.

³ See Zettel 1979, pp.213-15.

⁴ See R. Jayatilaka, 'Lives 7 (St. Agnes)', 1996, *Fontes Anglo-Saxonici: World Wide Web Register*, <http://fontes.english.ox.ac.uk/>, accessed February 2003.

⁵ The *Passio S. Agnetis* is printed in PL 17.735A-742D, hereafter *Passio S. Agnetis*, PL 17, followed by col. ref.; and the *Passio SS. Gallicani, Iohannis et Pauli* is printed in B. Mombricitus, *Sanctuarium Seu Vitæ Sanctorum*, 2nd ed., 2 vols. (Paris: Albertum Fontemoing, 1910), vol. 1, pp.569-72.

Corpus Christi account refers to Margaret's foster-father recording her legend,¹ while Cotton Tiberius A.iii asserts the identity of the work's author:

Ic þa, Ðeotimus, wilnode georne to witanne hu seo eadega Margareta
wæs wiþ þone deofol gefæht and hine oferswiðde and þone ece
wuldorbeh æt Gode onfengc.²

Unlike Ælfric's independent assertions of textual authority discussed previously, this reference is carried over from the Latin source of the text as the *Passio Marinae* reads:

Ego et Theotimus omnia caute agnoui quomodo pugnauit beatissima
Marina contra demonem tyrannum et uicit in hunc mundum.³

The inscribed authority of the life represents a carrying over of the Latin rather than personal validation on the part of the anonymous hagiographer. This contrasts with Ælfric's own comment on the *Life of Agnes*, which provides a perfect example of his validation of a narrative via patristic authority. Ælfric opens the narrative with an assertion of its authenticity, as he states:

¹ CCCC 303, 12.3. The 'Passio beate Margarete uirginis et martyris' found in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 303 is edited in Clayton and Magennis 1994, pp.152-70, and translated on pp.153-71. All quotations and translations from the life will be taken from this edition, hereafter CCCC 303, followed by chapter no. and line refs.

² Cotton Tiberius A.iii, 2.8-10: 'I, Theotimus, then desired earnestly to know how the blessed Margaret fought against the devil and overcame him and received the eternal crown of glory from God'. The *Life of Margaret* found in British Library, Cotton Tiberius A.iii is edited in Clayton and Magennis 1994, pp.112-38, and translated on pp.113-39. All quotations and translations from the life will be taken from this edition, hereafter Cotton Tiberius A.iii, followed by chapter no. and line refs.

³ *Passio Marinae*, 2.5-6: 'And I Theotimus carefully discerned everything regarding how the blessed Marina fought against the tyrant the devil and succeeded in this world', translation is my own.

Ambrosius bisceop . binnan mediolana afunde on ealdum bocum . be
 ðære eadigan agne . hú heo on rome byrig reðe ehtnysse acóm . and on
 mæðhade martyr-dóm ðrowode . Ða awrát ambrosius . be þam mædene
 ðus .¹

Ælfric's unsourced comment 'Ða awrat ambrosius . be þam mædene þus' implies that the account which follows accurately represents Ambrose's own version of the life rather than Ælfric's reworking of this. Whilst Ælfric's *Life of Agnes* represents a more faithful translation of the Latin than many of his other hagiographical pieces, he does make subtle alterations to the narrative. Furthermore, this citation of Ambrose's name misrepresents the source in itself, as it is only in the closing section of his *Life of Agnes* that Ambrose refers to himself by name as 'ego Ambrosius servus Christi'.² Ælfric transposes this information to the opening of his life of the saint and records Ambrose's name on two occasions, advocating the life's textual authority from the start. The textual authority of the anonymous and Ælfrician lives thus takes on a different aspect from the outset, as do the means by which these authors validate their saintly subjects. As has been discussed in the introduction to this work, miracles provide a clear means of denoting divine authorization of a saint. In this way, the frequency and type of miracles ascribed to a saint, in addition to the precise context in which these are presented, are revelatory regarding the kind of authority an author aims to give to a saint in this manner.

Miracles in the Lives of SS. Margaret and Agnes.

¹ Skeat 1891, 7, 'Agnes', ll.1-5: 'Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, found [written] in old books about the blessed Agnes, how she endured cruel persecution in the city of Rome, and in girlhood suffered martyrdom. Then Ambrose wrote about the maiden thus'.

² *Passio S. Agnetis*, PL 17.742: 'I Ambrose, servant of Christ', translation is my own.

The two versions of Margaret's life are relatively similar in their presentation of Healing Miracles. Neither relates any such feats performed by the saint during her lifetime: rather, both comment only on the posthumous healings which take place at her relics, a feature derived from the Latin account of the saint. Despite this similarity, the texts' presentations of this feature differ subtly, and more prominence is afforded to this phenomenon in the Tiberius text. Here, the healing powers of Margaret's relics twice receive extended comment. In a passage encouraging posthumous veneration of Margaret, the saint asks that those who venerate her be forgiven their sins and helped by the Lord. A heavenly dove flies down from heaven, and responds by granting her request with this additional information:

þin lichama biþ wurþful mid mannum, þæt swa hwa swa ahrineþ þine
reliquias, of þære tide fram swa hwylcre untrumnesse swa he hæfþ he
biþ gehæld.¹

Whilst in the Latin text a dove flies down from heaven to grant Margaret's request, here there is no specific mention of the healing power of the relics. Rather, the dove refers more generally to the benefits for anyone who venerates Margaret, saying 'sine dubio remissionem peccatorum inueniet'.² More emphasis on posthumous healings is thus found in the Tiberius *Life of Margaret*, as these are mentioned specifically. This promised power of Margaret's relics is shown to have substance in both the Old English and the Latin as,

¹ Cotton Tiberius A. iii, 20.9-11: 'your body will be honoured among men, so that whoever touches your relics will be healed from that moment on of whatever infirmity he has'.

² *Passio Marg.*, 20.12-13: 'without doubt he will find remission of his sins'.

ealle þa þe wannhale wæron, healtte and blinde, dumbe and deafe, and
 hi onhrinon þære halgan fæmnan lichaman, ealle hi wurdon gehælde.¹

The depiction of Margaret's posthumous healing powers remains close to the Latin *Passio S. Margaretæ* at this point,² and provides a clear illustration of the idea of saintly patronage in return for earthly veneration. In both of the instances mentioned above, it is not only healing that can be gained by veneration of Margaret. Rather, a multitude of rewards, such as forgiveness from sins, the blessing of locations, and freedom from unclean spirits are claimed to result from paying homage to the saint. Unlike many other saints, Margaret is not accorded the power to heal in her lifetime,³ and the posthumous healing powers afforded to her are not presented as distinct from the many other benefits saintly patronage is seen to provide. Whilst healings do feature in this *passio* and receive more specific mention than in the closest Latin analogue, they are not afforded prominence, and where mentioned function predominantly as an incentive for venerating Margaret.

The Corpus Christi text approaches healings in much the same way, although here they are accorded slightly less emphasis. Margaret makes a similar speech to that found in the Tiberius text asking for rewards for those who venerate her. However, neither she, nor the Lord who descends from heaven and grants her request, mention healing directly, in accordance with the *Passio S. Margaretæ*.⁴ The only reference to this kind of miracle occurs at the close of the text:

¹ Cotton Tiberius A. iii, 23.4-6: 'all who were ill, the lame and the blind, the dumb and the deaf, when they touched the body of the holy maiden, they were all healed'.

² *Passio Marg.*, 23.1-3.

³ For illustration of the high frequencies of healings performed in the Old English hagiographic corpus, see the Typology Database.

⁴ *Passio Marg.*, 20.1-15.

Ða hit geherdon ealle þa untruman þe wæron þær on lande, ealle hi hire
 lic gesohton and heora hæle þear gefetton: sume hi wæron blinde and
 deafa and sume crypeles and sume dumbe and sume ungewitfulle.¹

As in the Tiberius text, the function of Healing Miracles here is to encourage pilgrimage and veneration of Margaret's relics, rather than to emphasize the physical power she exercises during her lifetime. The absence of healings in both *passiones* probably results from the sources employed by the authors. The *Passio Marinae* and *Margaretæ* do not contain any healings and it is thus likely that the anonymous authors' sources did not either, although the non-existence of these sources renders the point uncertain. It is therefore unlikely that this trend represents a deliberate choice on the part of the Old English authors, but the omission of Healing Miracles is significant nonetheless, and shows that neither Anglo-Saxon author felt a need to ascribe this power to Margaret during her earthly lifetime. However, the unsourced addition in the Tiberius life illustrates a desire to emphasize Margaret's posthumous healing powers.

There are no Resurrection Miracles in either version of Margaret's *passio*, the only reference to this phenomenon occurring in the Tiberius redaction of the life, which recounts Jesus' resurrection of the dead, amongst His other miracles:

Blinde he onlihte, deafum he gesealde gehernysse and deade he awæhte
 to life, and ealle þa þe on hine trywlice gelæfaþ he gehærþ.²

¹ CCCC 303, 23.1-3: 'When all the infirm people who were in the country heard this, they all sought out her corpse and obtained their health there: some were blind and deaf and some cripples and some dumb and some mad'.

² Tiberius A. iii, 2.6-8: 'He made the blind to see and gave hearing to the deaf and he awakened the dead to life, and he hears all those who faithfully believe in him'.

There is evidently a desire in this *passio* to create an awareness of Jesus' miraculous powers, but no resurrection emanates from Margaret. Again, there is no evidence that Resurrection Miracles were recorded in the sources of either text. The absence of resurrections thus represents passive compliance with the source rather than active editing of the Latin, yet the fact remains that both anonymous writers deemed this presentation of Margaret appropriate.

Nature aids Margaret several times in both versions of her *passio*, although in the Tiberius text this is never the result of a direct command by the saint. Rather, the only such miracle she requests occurs as a result of her prayers:

Se eadega Margareta locade on heofonum and cwæp: 'Drihten, God
Ealmihtig, þu þe eardest on heofonum, geunne me þæt þis wæter sy me
to hælo and to lihnesse and to fulwihtes bæpe, þæt hit me aþwea to þam
eacan life.¹

Margaret's prayer is answered, and as she finishes praying there is a great earthquake. The other Nature Miracle in the Tiberius life does not actively involve Margaret, as here the earth swallows up the devil when Margaret commands him to be silent.² Although this miracle is clearly performed for the saint, she does not request or command it herself, and is passive in the episode. The presentation of Nature Miracles in the Tiberius text does little to stress Margaret's miraculous powers, as only one such wonder involves the saint directly.

¹ Tiberius A. iii, 18.4-7: 'The blessed Margaret looked to the heavens and said, 'Lord God Almighty, you who dwell in the heavens, grant to me that this water may be for me a healing and enlightening bath of baptism'.

² Tiberius A. iii, 16.7-9.

The Corpus Christi version of Margaret's legend demonstrates a subtle difference. Whilst the boiling cauldron is again turned into a bath of baptism through prayer, the remaining Nature Miracle demonstrates a different means of performance.¹

In the Tiberius text and Latin version the earth swallows the devil of its own accord:

Et consignavit eum in angulo carceris et dixit, 'Vade ex me, Satanas'. Et statim degluttivit eum terra.²

In the Corpus Christi text, however, Margaret issues a direct command to the earth:

Gewit þe heonan on weig and sea eorðe þe forswelge and þu þær wunige to Domesdæge!³

This subtle alteration immediately casts Margaret in an active, dominant and authoritative role. Whilst in the Latin and Tiberius narratives the miracle is enacted directly by God, in the Corpus Christi text this divine power is subject to her command. This miracle thus increases Margaret's status in terms of the power she is shown to wield.

Supernatural Contact miracles are by far the largest and most pivotal type found in both the Tiberius and Corpus Christi versions of Margaret's life. This category of miracles examines contact with supernatural beings of both heavenly and devilish natures, elements integral to the Margaret legend in which her relationship with God and her defeat of the devil form two major concerns. However, the precise treatment of

¹ CCCC 303, 18.3-9 and 16.17-18.

² *Passio Marg.*, 16.21-2: 'And she made the sign of the cross at him in the corner of the prison and said, 'Go from me, Satan'. And at once the earth swallowed him up'.

³ CCCC 303, 16.17-18: 'Depart from here and may the earth swallow you and may you remain there until Doomsday!'.

these themes differs between the two versions, as do the miracles which relate to these ideas. Margaret experiences several encounters with divine and heavenly beings in both Old English recensions of her legend, but the effect produced by these is very different in the two texts, and reveals the varying preoccupations of each *passio*. Margaret's relationship with the Lord provides the key to interpreting these episodes and exploring the ways in which this type of miracle functions in each biography. In the Tiberius text, Margaret has a relatively close relationship with God, a fact reflected in the divine encounters she experiences. A heavenly dove visits the saint on two occasions, firstly as she sits in her prison cell,¹ and later to say that her prayers have been answered:

Ða wæs stefn geworden of heofonum mid þunre, and an culfre com
berende rode and cwæþ: 'Aris, Margareta, eadig wæs se innop se þe þe
gebær, forþon þe þu gemyndest ealle þingc on þinum gebed.'²

Both elements are carried through from the Latin,³ and Margaret thus experiences divine encounters during her lifetime. The majority of Margaret's involvement with the divine centres around her death, as when she is about to be executed, Malchus expresses his reluctance to kill her as he sees Christ and His angels standing with her:

'Apene þinne sweora nu and onfoh min swurd and gemildsa me, forþon
þe ic her geseo Crist standand mid his englum mid þe.'⁴

¹ Tiberius A.iii, 15.3-12.

² Tiberius A. iii, 20.1-3: 'Then there was a sound from the heavens, accompanied by thunder, and a dove came bearing a cross and said, "Arise, Margaret, blessed was that womb that bore you, for you have been mindful of all things in your prayer."'

³ *Passio Marg.*, 15.2-4 and 20.2-15.

⁴ Tiberius A. iii, 19.5-7: "'Stretch out your neck now and receive my sword, and have mercy on me, for I see Christ standing here next to you with his angels.'"

This episode is again found in the Latin,¹ and it is unclear in both cases whether or not the divine is physically present or a vision of this is seen by Malchus. The physical presence of the divine is a rarer and more spectacular occurrence than a vision of this, and represents an important distinction which will be discussed in analysis of the Corpus Christi life. The other divine and heavenly encounters experienced by Margaret are posthumous: angels come to the saint's body and bless it, and take Margaret's head and place it in Paradise.² Thus, in the Tiberius text, whilst Margaret does experience a multitude of divine visits, she is never visited by the Lord Himself or by His angels during her lifetime. It is only at her death that Malchus sees Christ and His angels standing beside her, and it is only posthumously that Margaret is visited by angels. In addition, these heavenly visitations are found in the Latin sources of the text, and do not represent active mediation by the Tiberius author.

The Divine and Heavenly Contact Miracles in the Corpus Christi *Life of Margaret* are of a more direct, concrete and spectacular nature than those recounted in the Tiberius text. Where the Tiberius narrative has a dove visit Margaret in her prison cell, the Cotton Corpus biography recounts that an angel comes to the saint:

Ða hi þis gecwædon hæfde, þa þærinne com Drihtnes engel and þær
wearð inne swa mycel leoht, swa hit beoð on middæg, and he hæfde
Cristes rodentacen on hande.³

Whilst the dove of the Tiberius life signifies the Holy Spirit, the angel provides a more concrete and literal heavenly visitation. This feature is unsourced, as the *Passio S.*

¹ *Passio Marinae*, 19.6-8.

² Tiberius A.iii, 23.1-4.

³ CCCC 303, 15.1-3: 'When she had said this, the Lord's angel entered and there was a great light within just as there is at midday, and he had Christ's crucifix in his hand'.

Margaretæ depicts a dove.¹ An angel also comes to Margaret and leads her out of the cauldron, a feature not present in the Tiberius narrative or in the Latin where instead a dove places a crown on Margaret's head.² Unlike in the Tiberius narrative and Latin texts, then, angelic visits occur during Margaret's lifetime as well as posthumously.

Margaret also receives a divine visit from the Lord Himself. Whilst in the Tiberius text a dove comes to tell Margaret her prayers have been granted, the Corpus Christi narrative describes the Lord's visit to the saint:

And þa ure Drihten him self com of heofonum to eorþan astigan and hire
sona to cwæð: 'Ic þe geofa and behate, swa hwæt swa þu bidst and
gebeden hæfst. Eal hit is þe getyðed'.³

The phrase 'ure Drihten him self' is important: divine visits from the Lord are not afforded to the majority of saints, so it becomes clear that God's visit to Margaret is of great significance. In addition, the Latin *Passio S. Margaretæ*, identified as the closest source to this part of the text,⁴ depicts a dove as does the Tiberius life. The Lord's visit to Margaret is unparalleled, and may be a deliberate alteration intended to illustrate Margaret's relationship with God. Thus, in a text which foregrounds Margaret's personal relationship with God, the miracles included provide physical illustration of this, and illustrate its reciprocal nature.

Just as Margaret's relationship with God forms a major theme in both of her Old English lives, her relationship with the devil is a central concern. Both texts depict

¹ *Passio Marg.*, 15.2-4.

² CCCC 303, 18.6-9; and *Passio Marg.*, 18.11-13.

³ CCCC 303, 20.3-5: 'And then our Lord himself descended from the heavens to earth and immediately said to her, "I grant you and promise you whatever you ask for and have asked for. It is all granted to you."'

⁴ See H. Magennis, 'The Sources of The Life of St. Margaret (CCCC MS 303), 1998, *Fontes Anglo-Saxonici: World Wide Web Register*, <http://fontes.english.ox.ac.uk/>, accessed July 2004.

Margaret's struggle against evil, represented by the devil himself and embodied in the prefect Olibrius who persecutes the virgin. Notably, the two accounts relate these devilish encounters differently. The Tiberius version depicts Margaret as victorious yet her character retains an element of vulnerability, whilst the Corpus Christi text depicts a more powerful and less accessible heroine.

Tiberius sets the scene for Margaret's triumph over the devil and identifies it as a prevalent theme early in the *passio*:

Ic þa, ðeotimus, wilnode georne to witanne hu seo eadega Margareta
wæs wiþ þone deofol gefæht and hine oferswiþde and þone ece
wuldorbeh æt Gode onfengc.¹

Margaret's conflict with the devil is identified as the main focus of the narrative. The saint's encounters with the devil are later described, the first of which involves the devil Rufus, who attacks her in the appearance of a dragon. This monster is described in a detailed, vivid manner, and referred to as 'swiþe egeslic draca'.² Margaret's immediate response to his presence is one of fear: 'Seo halgæ fæmnæ wæs þa geworden swiþe fyrht',³ an element which parallels the fear experienced by Margaret in the Latin *Passio Marinae*.⁴ Margaret's vulnerability is recognised here, and her helplessness is further demonstrated when the dragon swallows her.⁵ It is only by making the sign of the cross that Margaret is able to overcome the dragon, as this splits him in two enabling her to come out unharmed. Whilst Margaret defeats Rufus, her

¹ Tiberius A. iii, 2.8-10: 'I, Theotimus, then desired earnestly to know how the blessed Margaret fought against the devil and overcame him and received the eternal crown of glory from God'.

² Tiberius A.iii, 12.4: 'a most terrifying dragon'.

³ Tiberius A.iii, 12.10-11: 'The holy maiden then became very afraid'.

⁴ *Passio Marinae*, 12.10.

⁵ Tiberius A. iii, 13.1-2.

first response of fear and his initial power over her demonstrate her humanity and vulnerability, and illustrate that it is only through the use of spiritual weaponry - the sign of the cross - that she can defeat him.

Margaret's second encounter with the devil depicts the virgin in a far more active, dominant role. A black devil appears in her cell, and requests that she does not beat him as she did his brother Rufus. Margaret's response is to attack the devil, an event described in graphic, physical detail:

Seo halga Margareta gegrap þane deofol þa be þæm locce and hine on
eorþan awarep and his swyþran ege utastang and ealle his ban heo
tobrysde and sette hire swiþran fott ofer his swyran.¹

The devil then obeys Margaret's command that he relate his past deeds, and at her request for him to be silent, the earth swallows him.² Margaret is clearly dominant in this encounter, and the narrative shows how her courage and strength develop as a result of her defeat of Rufus. In this way, although Margaret demonstrates miraculous powers and ably defeats devils, her original fear, evident vulnerability and growing confidence provide a pattern of human response that can be identified with by those who read or hear the *passio*. Thus, even at the point where Margaret is most dominant and wields most power, she still provides a possible object of imitation. That the character of Margaret is intended to function in this way in the Tiberius text, particularly as a paradigm for women to emulate, is suggested by a comment she herself makes to God, saying she hopes that she 'sy bysen and blæd a eallum fæmnum

¹ Tiberius A. iii, 14.8-10: 'The holy Margaret then grabbed the devil by the hair and threw him to the ground and she put out his right eye and shattered all his bones and she set her right foot over his neck'.

² Tiberius A. iii, 15.14-26 and 16.7-9.

þe on þe geleaut'.¹ The figure of Margaret in the Tiberius text is presented in a balanced role: on the one hand she is a victorious, powerful saint to be venerated and admired, on the other a vulnerable girl with whom the audience or readers of the *passio* are intended to identify and imitate.

The presentation of Margaret's encounters with devils in the Corpus Christi text does not offer the same balance of victorious saint and vulnerable human. Rather, in this version of Margaret's *passio* she is elevated far above ordinary human nature and demonstrates no weakness. The scene for Margaret's encounters with the devil is set, not through comment on her own personal victory, but via a more general statement at the opening of the *passio*:

After Drihtnes þrowunge and his æriste þæt he of deaðe aras Hælend
Crist, on þan dagum his halgan geprowodon for his þæra micclan leofan
lufan. Eac þa gewearð hit, þæt þa halga seagntes ofercomen þa deofla þe
wið heom gewunnon.²

The narrative is grounded early on in the theme of the victory of God's saints over devils, and Margaret's own encounter forms a major element of the narrative. The visits by Rufus and the black devil found in the Tiberius life are also described here, but are given a decidedly different emphasis. The fear experienced by Margaret in the Tiberius text is absent, and the saint's only reaction at the devil's appearance is to lie down in prayer. Additionally, rather than being able to swallow Margaret, Rufus is defeated before demonstrating any power over the saint:

¹ Tiberius A. iii, 10.9: 'may ever be an example and an inspiration to all women who believe in you'.

² CCCC 303, 1.1-4: 'In the days after the Lord's Passion and Resurrection, when Christ the Saviour arose from death, his saints suffered because of their great, dear love of him. It came about then also that the holy saints overcame the devils, who fought against them'.

And seo eadiga fæmne sona mid hir swiðre hand wið þonu sceocca wel
gebletsode and on hire forhæfde rodetacna mærcode and swa wið þone
draca wel generode.¹

The dragon bursts and Margaret remains unharmed, showing that he has no power whatsoever over her. Whilst this reading does not follow the *Passio Margaretae* in which the dragon swallows Margaret, according to Clayton and Magennis, at this point ‘the OE version follows a reading similar to that which appears in a late MS, Harley 2801 (s.xii)’.² It is thus possible that this detail was found in the author’s immediate source and is not an original creation. This detail elevates Margaret’s status: unlike the Tiberius Margaret, she is invulnerable to the dragon from the outset, and her subjection of the devil is presented more starkly than in the other anonymous life. There is no doubt, either in her own mind or that of the author, of her triumph. This victorious theme is continued in her dealings with the black devil when, as in the Tiberius text, she physically hurls him to the floor despite his protestations.³ Her dominance over the devil and mercilessness are further demonstrated as, after the devil has told her of his deeds, she commands the earth to swallow him.⁴ Whilst in the Tiberius text the earth swallows the devil spontaneously, here the decision is attributed to the saint and further illustrates her power over him. As Clayton and Magennis point out, this feature is a deviation from any known Latin sources, and may represent an attempt on the part of the Anglo-Saxon homilist to add to the impression of Margaret’s power, or result from

¹ CCCC 303, 13.2-4: ‘And the blessed maiden immediately blessed herself against the demon with her right hand and made the sign of the cross on her forehead and so protected herself thoroughly against the dragon’.

² See H. Magennis, ‘Life of St. Margaret (CCCC MS 303)’, 1998, *Fontes Anglo-Saxonici: World Wide Web Register*, <http://fontes.english.ox.ac.uk/>, accessed August 2004.

³ CCCC 303, 14.9-14.

⁴ CCCC 303, 16.17-18.

the non-extant source used by the writer.¹ The figure of Margaret depicted in the Corpus Christi narrative is a more active and powerful, but less human protagonist than the one met with in the Tiberius recension of the legend. This kind of elevation suggests that the Cotton Corpus Margaret is not intended to be imitated, but rather respected, venerated, and perhaps even feared.

As such, the miracles performed in both lives of Margaret are limited to certain areas, yet the Corpus Christi life in particular depicts a saint with divine power at her command. Healings and Resurrections are lacking in both lives, whilst Nature Miracles and Supernatural Contact Miracles function differently in the two *passiones*. In the Tiberius text, miracles are performed for Margaret, such as the earth swallowing the devil, and she experiences human fear prior to her miraculous defeat of the devil. Conversely, the Corpus Christi life depicts Margaret issuing direct commands for miracles and showing no hesitation in overcoming the devil. Thus whilst both lives demonstrate limitations in the type of miracles performed by Margaret, the Corpus Christi life conveys a sense of the magnificence of the divine power working through her.

The powerful and dominant characterization of Margaret in the Corpus Christi life contrasts strongly with Ælfric's depiction of Agnes in the *Lives of Saints* collection, which details few miracles performed through the saint and often presents her as a vulnerable and passive figure. As in the anonymous lives of St. Margaret, there are no healings performed during Agnes' lifetime in her *passio*. Those which are recounted occur at her tomb, which becomes a site of healing succeeding her death. The emperor Constantine's daughter, Constantia, has heard of Agnes' martyrdom and posthumous

¹ Clayton and Magennis 1994, p.63.

appearance, and goes to the saint's tomb to pray for her healing. Constantia falls asleep at the tomb, and Agnes speaks to her in a vision, saying,

Ongin anrædlice ðu æðele constantia . and gelyf ðæt se hælend þe gehælen mæge . ðurh þone þu scealt underfón . ðinra wunda hæle .¹

Constantia awakes and is healed, and she and all her household are converted to Christianity. This miracle becomes famous, and many sick people come to Agnes' tomb to obtain healing.² Thus, Agnes' posthumous healing powers are firmly established and pilgrimage to her tomb encouraged. In the presentation of healings, Ælfric closely follows his Latin source, which describes the same event.³ The Healing Miracles in this *passio* thus play a similar role to those in the anonymous lives of Margaret of Antioch. The absence of healings during the saints' lifetimes suggests that the authors are not concerned to stress the virgins' miraculous earthly abilities in this area, whilst the emphasis on posthumous healings in both lives can be seen as a propagandistic tool to encourage pilgrimage to and veneration of these saintly figures.

St. Agnes is involved in the performance of a resurrection, an unusual occurrence in the Old English lives of female virgins. As the Typology Database demonstrates, resurrections are more commonly ascribed to male figures in the genre. However, the occurrence of this miracle in Agnes' *passio* is less surprising when its context is considered. Unlike her male counterparts, such as Martin and Peter, Agnes does not perform the miracle herself.⁴ The Prefect's son has been killed as punishment

¹ Skeat 1891, 7, *Agnes*, ll.274-6: 'Begin resolutely, you, noble Constantia, and believe that the Saviour has the power to heal you, through Whom you will receive the healing of your wounds'.

² Skeat 1891, 7, *Agnes*, ll.290-2.

³ *Passio S. Agnetis*, PL 17.742-742.

⁴ Skeat 1891, 7, *Agnes*, ll.192-206. For some examples of resurrections performed through male saints, see Godden 1979, 34, *Martin*, ll.95-105, 105-9 and 145-52; Skeat 1900, 31, *Martin*, ll.217-26, 244-53

for attempting to defile Agnes, and the Prefect orders Agnes to raise him from the dead in order to prove the truth of her faith. The presentation of this miracle differs in the Latin source and Ælfric's version, as in the former Agnes stresses that only the boy was struck down as the all others present worshipped God at the arrival of the angel:

Videntes autem splendorem angelicum, adorabant omnes, et
abscedebant illaesi.¹

Ælfric omits this detail, moving straight from Agnes' assertion that she has been consecrated to Christ since birth to the prefect's son's attempt to defile her. The juxtaposition of Agnes' virtue and the youth's actions renders his actions more shameful than in the Latin, where they are divided by the additional information regarding the angel. Ælfric's rearrangement of the Latin here stresses Agnes' purity by contrasting her sinless nature with the youth's evil intent. In accordance with the prefect's wishes, Agnes prays for the boy's resurrection, and her prayer is answered:

þa æteowde þær cristes encgel . and þone cniht arærde . and he arn þær-
riht ut . þa he geedcucod wæs .²

This parallels the Latin, where, 'Orante autem illa, apparuit ei angelus Domini, et levavit eam flentem, et confortans animum ejus, juvenem suscitavit'.³ Significantly,

and 1027-30; and Clemoes 1997, 26, *Peter and Paul*, ll.124-34. All instances of resurrections are given in the Typology Database in Appendix 2.

¹ *Passio S. Agnetis*, PL 17.739: 'indeed then a magnificent angel was seen, and all worshipped, and departed uninjured', translation is my own.

² Skeat 1891, 7, *Agnes*, ll.201-2: 'Then Christ's Angel appeared there, and raised the young man, and he ran out immediately, when he was revived'.

³ *Passio S. Agnetis*, PL 17.740: 'While she worshipped, an angel of the Lord appeared, and consoled her cry, and strengthened her courage, and the young man awakened', translation is my own.

Agnes herself does not raise the boy, nor is the resurrection performed directly as a result of her prayers. Rather, her prayer results in the appearance of God's Angel who then performs the resurrection, and Agnes' role in the miracle demonstrates that she is able to ask miracles of God rather than act as a channel through which He performs these. Whilst this miracle evidently demonstrates the favour afforded to Agnes by God, it does not raise her prestige in terms of her performance of miracles. Ælfric follows his Latin source closely in the depiction of these miracles, but whilst this represents a more passive approach than seen elsewhere, Ælfric clearly deems this presentation of miracles suitable.

As has been suggested in the analysis of healings and resurrections in the *Life of St. Agnes*, there is little attempt to stress the saint's miraculous power to the extent found in many other hagiographies.¹ This trend can also be seen in the presentation of Nature Miracles in the text, despite the relative popularity of these. There are two Provision Miracles and one Element Miracle in the *passio*, but these do little to present Agnes as a powerful figure and, if anything, stress the vulnerability of the saint. The two Provision Miracles in the text involve God helping Agnes by maintaining her dignity. In the first such miracle, Sempronius orders Agnes' clothes to be removed, but as soon as this is done, her hair covers her body instead:

Hwæt ða godes miht mycclum wearð geswutelod . swá þæt þæs
mædenes fex . befeng hi eall abutan . sona swa þa cwelleras hire claðas
of abrudon . and þæt fex hi behelede on ælce healfe gelice .²

¹ For example the lives of Martin, Benedict and Cuthbert. See below, pp.200-201.

² Skeat 1891, 7, *Agnes*, ll.144-7: 'Behold then! God's power was mightily shown, so that the maiden's hair covered her all around as soon as the executioners tore off her clothes; and the hair covered her equally on each side'.

In this miracle, therefore, Agnes is not performing a wonderful act herself, nor asking the Lord for the performance of a miracle. Instead, the Lord spontaneously performs a miracle to help her, and she is the passive recipient of a miracle rather than its channel. This miracle relies closely on the Latin source, which presents the same phenomenon.¹ A similar idea is found slightly later in the *passio*, as Agnes prays to God who then sends her a shining tunic.² Here Agnes does ask for the miracle, but is nonetheless still the recipient of God's power. Like the resurrection described above, both miracles demonstrate the favour that Agnes holds with the Lord, as He acts both in response to her prayers and spontaneously to help her. In this sense, Agnes' authority is demonstrated as she is validated by the Lord's intervention on her behalf. However, these wonders do little to depict divine power working through Agnes: it is the saint's vulnerability and need that lead to the performance of these miracles by the Lord.

Similarly, the Element Miracle in the text presents Agnes in a passive rather than active role. Aspasius orders Agnes to be thrown into a fire in accordance with the people's wishes, but the fire instantly parts around the saint and burns Agnes' opposers:

Hit wearð þa swá gedón . swa se wælhreowa hét . ac se lig hine todælde
 . on twegen dælas sona . and for-swælde þa ðe þa ceaste macedon .³

Ælfric's rendering of this miracle abridges the account in the Latin, which provides a more detailed version of events:

¹ *Passio S. Agnetis*, PL 17.738.

² Skeat 1891, 7, *Agnes*, ll.154-5. See *Passio S. Agnetis*, PL 17, 738 for the Latin source of this miracle.

³ Skeat 1891, 7, *Agnes*, ll.220-22: 'Then it was done just as the cruel man commanded, but the flame instantly divided itself into two parts, and burned up those who had made the strife'.

Quod cum fuisset impletum, statim in duas partes divisae sunt flammae,
et hinc atque illinc seditiosos populos exurebant: ipsam autem penitus in
nullo contigebat incendium. Et magis non hoc virtutibus divinis, sed
maleficiis reputantes, dabant fremitus inter se populi, et infinitos
clamores ad coelum.¹

Ælfric fails to narrate specifically that Agnes remains unharmed, and the condensation of narrative here means that Agnes receives less prominence in the Old English than the Latin. An additional point about the miracle, both in the Old English and the Latin, is Agnes' passivity. She does not ask for the performance of the miracle, and is again its recipient, further illustrating the presentation of Agnes as a vulnerable virgin who holds favour with God and can ask for miracles, but who rarely acts as a channel for these herself.

Supernatural Contact Miracles are the only type of miracles in Agnes' *passio* that present the saint in a wholly active role. Rather than acting as the recipient of heavenly visits and visions, she appears in these herself. Succeeding her death, Agnes appears in a vision to her parents with a host of other virgins:

Þa on sumere nihte gesawon hí cumin mycel mædenlic werod . and
agnes tomiddes . Hi wæron ealle ge-glengede mid gyldenum gyrlum .
and mid ormætum leohte arwurðlice ferdon .²

¹ *Passio S. Agnetis*, PL 17.740: 'but inside the fire did not touch [Agnes] herself. And this was not magic but divine power; however, thinking it sorcery, the people gave endless shouting amongst themselves and endless clamour to the sky', translation is my own.

² Skeat 1891, 7, *Agnes*, ll.250-53: 'Then on a certain night they saw a great company of virgins come, and Agnes in the midst. They were all clothed with golden robes, and came forward with glorious light'.

The presentation of this miracle differs from the Latin, which addresses the error of Agnes' parents in grieving for the saint until she visits them in a vision:

Haec dum viderent parentes ejus, et qui simul erant, quasi stupore
mentis detenti sunt. Sed beata Agnes rogat sanctas virgines parumper
gradum figere.¹

The omission of this detail may represent Ælfric's desire to portray an idealised biography, in which it could be deemed undesirable that Agnes' parents would err in this manner. Agnes later forms the subject of Constantia's vision discussed above, where she instructs the girl to believe in God's power to heal her.² This type of miracle thus presents Agnes in her most active role, but concerns posthumous miracles. As in the Healing Miracles discussed at the opening of this chapter, Agnes' posthumous ability is more of a preoccupation in the narrative than her earthly performance of miracles.

As has been discussed above, Ælfric alters subtle details of Agnes' biography and omits certain episodes. Over forty lines of the Latin text as printed in the *Patrologia Latina* are entirely omitted in Ælfric's account. It could be argued that this abridgement was necessary for the inclusion of Agnes' *passio* in the *Lives of Saints* collection: Ælfric often condenses narratives in order to render them a suitable length for the work. However, this is not the case with Agnes: had Ælfric told the story in its entirety, it would have taken up a similar amount of space to that filled by his *passio* of Agnes and the story of Gallicanus he relates as an appendage to the narrative. These

¹ *Passio S. Agnetis*, PL 17.741: 'Until her parents saw this, they had erred together, as if detained by stupidity of mind. But blessed Agnes asks holy virgins [that they] take a firm stand for a little while', translation is my own.

² Skeat 1891, 7, *Agnes*, ll.272-6.

two pieces are unlikely to have occurred together in Ælfric's source, as in manuscripts of the Cotton-Corpus Legendary, the two pieces are not adjacent.¹ Evidently, Agnes features in the passion of Gallicanus, John and Paul, which may explain Ælfric's inclusion of it as an *item alia* to Agnes' *passio*. However, whilst providing additional information on Agnes, the inclusion of the item has a bearing on the reading of Agnes' life. In his study of Ælfric's *Life of St. Æthelthryth*, Jackson points out that the additional story at the close of this saint's *vita* regarding a thane and his wife means that, 'The final words the reader or auditor takes away are not the story of Æthelthryth's disturbingly unilateral act of renunciation, but a quiet reassertion of the Augustinian ideal of a Christian marriage'.² The addition to the piece alters the perspective of the whole text, and Jackson suggests that Ælfric's addition of the exemplar betrays his discomfort with the model of female sanctity offered by Æthelthryth:

Ælfric, in short, was (I would argue) unhappy about the story of this strong-willed, sexually autonomous woman.³

In a similar way, the appendix to Agnes' *passio* alters the tenor of the text, and may represent a similar desire on Ælfric's part to manipulate the effect of the piece without drastically altering his Latin source. The effect of the *item alia* is to limit the impact of Agnes' authority by juxtaposing her miraculous powers with those of another saint. In the story of Gallicanus, his performance of earthly miracles is stressed:

¹ Zettel 1979, pp.16 and 22. The 'Passio S. Agnetis virginis auct. Pseudo-Ambrosio' occurs on ff.114r-116v in London, British Library, Cotton Nero E I, Part 1 and on ff.93r-97r in Oxford, Bodleian Library, Fell 4, while the 'Passio SS. Martyrum Gallicani, Iohannis, et Pauli' is found in London, British Library, Cotton Nero E I, part 2 at ff.30v-32v and Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Fell 1 at ff.6v-9v.

² Jackson 2000, p.260.

³ Jackson 2000, p.257.

He wearð ða swa halig . þæt he gehælde untrume . and swa hraðe swá he
 beseah . on ða wit-seocan menn . swa wurdon hí aclænsode . fram þam
 unclænan gastum .¹

It is not necessarily the case that this addition was made with the express desire to counter Agnes' authority by placing her in contrast with a more powerful male saint: as Godden argues, Ælfric demonstrates a preference for texts which show Christians as victorious in battle such as this one,² and the relationship between the story of Gallicanus and the *Life of St. Agnes* may have merely been a convenient means of including the narrative. However, the effect of the appendix is to alter the reading of Agnes' *passio* by juxtaposing her with Gallicanus and inviting comparison between the two saintly figures, a comparison which reveals Agnes to be inferior to her male counterpart in the spheres of healing and exorcism.

The case study of Agnes provides evidence for the idea that the miracles performed by saints in Old English hagiography are partly dependent on their gender, as she remains passive in this sphere throughout her biography. The accounts of Margaret accord with this idea to an extent: whilst her biographies, particularly that in the Corpus Christi life, depict an authoritative and powerful female figure, the types of miracles performed in all three female lives are limited. No healings, exorcisms, or resurrection miracles, for example, are enacted by either of these female saints. However, having noted the relative passivity of the female hagiographic subject in

¹ Skeat 1891, 7, *Agnes*, ll.391-3: 'Then he grew so holy that he healed the sick, and as soon as he looked on possessed men, they were at once cleansed from the unclean spirits'.

² Malcolm Godden, "Apocalypse and Invasion in Late Anglo-Saxon England", in *From Anglo-Saxon to Early Middle English: Studies Presented to E.G. Stanley* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994): 130-62, hereafter Godden 1994; and Malcolm Godden, "Ælfric's Saints' Lives and the Problem of Miracles", in Szarmach 2000: 287-309, especially at p.303, hereafter Godden 2000b.

Ælfric's *Life of Agnes*, it must be remembered that miracles are not the only means of illustrating divine validation of an individual, which can be shown more broadly through their relationship with God. The extent to which this technique is employed to stress the authority of Margaret and Agnes in their respective biographies will be considered, and its implications for models of female sanctity briefly explored.

As has been mentioned above, the relationship between Margaret and her Lord is a central concern in both recensions of her *passio*. This relationship can be explored in two main ways: through the language used to describe the relationship and the discourse between the two figures. This discourse has been touched on in the above discussion of miracles, and incorporates Margaret's prayers to the Lord and the Divine Visits she receives in her *passio*. The previous discussion of Divine Visits in the Tiberius life of the saint illustrates that these are paramount in the *passio* but remain of a limited nature. This presentation of miracles in the *passio* reflects the depiction of Margaret's overall relationship with God: whilst Margaret is shown to fervently and constantly believe in her Lord, this relationship lacks an intense and personal dimension. Throughout the *passio*, Margaret proclaims her trust in the Lord to help her, for example in her supplications as she is tortured where she asserts 'On þe, Drihten, ic gelæfæ, þæt ic ne si gescend'.¹ This theme is implicit in the *passio*, and Margaret's dependence on and trust in her Lord are beyond question. However, there is little personal, emotional involvement between Margaret and her God. In her prayers to God, Margaret generally refers to Him as 'Drihten' or occasionally 'God'. A more personal address occurs four times in the text, as Margaret terms Him 'min Drihten',² and 'min God'.³ The language used to describe Margaret in relation to the Lord demonstrates

¹ Tiberius A. iii, 8.2-3: 'In you I trust, Lord, that I may not be confounded'.

² Tiberius A.iii, 5.15, 11.5, and 11.8.

³ Tiberius A.iii, 9.11, and 10.1.

similar restraint: she is ‘Gode swyðe leof’,¹ and is referred to as the ‘Cristes ðeowwe’² by the devil. God is thus Margaret’s caring protector and Lord, but the relationship is limited to these roles. This limitation is not present in the Corpus Christi life, in which the saint’s relationship with God is shown to have more personal and emotional depth.

As Clayton and Magennis point out, the theme of Margaret’s love for Christ is central to the Corpus Christi narrative:

It is introduced at the very beginning of the text in the reference to Christ’s martyrs, who suffered ‘for his þæra micclan leofan lufan’, and the insistence on Margaret’s love is apparent throughout the text. Almost every utterance of the saint gives expression to this love.³

Magennis also points out the unique nature of this personal devotion within the Old English hagiographical corpus:

the CCCC life, shows a development of imagery that is unparalleled in early-medieval analogues and that points to a particularly active kind of adaptation by its vernacular writer. There are several related strands in the imagery of the CCCC life, but they are unified by the overriding emphasis on the love that distinctively characterizes Margaret’s relationship to God in this version.⁴

¹ Tiberius A.iii, 3.7: ‘very dear to God’.

² Tiberius A.iii, 15.15: ‘servant of Christ’. For discussion of this image, see Hugh Magennis, “*Godes ðeow* and Related Expressions in Old English: Contexts and Uses of a Traditional Literary Figure”, *Anglia* 116 (1998): 139-70.

³ Clayton and Magennis 1994, p.69.

⁴ Magennis 1996b, p.36.

The personal, emotional nature of this love is nowhere more apparent than in the terms Margaret uses to describe God. The epithet ‘Drihten leof’ and variations of this are used sixteen times in the text, and other figures in the text describe Margaret’s relationship with God in similar terms: the attendants sent by Olibrius to Margaret return with the news that ‘hi lufað þone God þe þine eldran aheongan on rode’.¹ This language of love is not restricted to Margaret in the text: as the above quotation from Clayton and Magennis demonstrates, this love applies to all martyrs, an idea reiterated later in the *passio* as the believers who have suffered for their faith are said to have done this ‘for Godes deoran lufan’.² Such statements and terminology demonstrate the intensity of the love felt by Margaret, and this idea extended to encompass the love felt by all Christians for God. This aspect of Margaret’s devotion anticipates later twelfth century models of devotion, and as Magennis summarizes:

The one Old English text which looks forward to later devotional tendencies in its treatment of the love of the saint for God is the version of the life of St. Margaret preserved in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 303 (CCCC), a manuscript of the first half of the twelfth century.³

This unique relationship between Margaret and the Lord is shown to be a reciprocal one in the Corpus Christi text, a notion expressed by Margaret herself who asserts that her God ‘lufað ælc þære manna þe hine mid inwearde heortan lufiað’.⁴ As the above discussion of Divine Contact Miracles demonstrates, the Lord plays an extensive and

¹ CCCC 303, 6.2-3: ‘she loves the God whom your ancestors hanged on a cross’.

² CCCC 303, 4.19: ‘because of their dear love of God’.

³ Hugh Magennis, “Occurrences of Nuptial Imagery in Old English Hagiographic Texts”, *ELN* 33:4 (June 1996): 1-9, here p.5, hereafter Magennis 1996c.

⁴ CCCC 303, 17.8: ‘loves each person who loves him with a sincere heart’.

active role in the text, communicating with Margaret and visiting the saint Himself. In addition to this, the terms used to describe Margaret constantly reinforce the idea of her chosen status: she is referred to as ‘eadiga’ twenty-five times in the text.¹ The relationship between Margaret and God has several dimensions: she is His ‘þeowa clæna’;² she is ‘him beweddod’;³ and is His ‘goddohor’.⁴ Margaret is also seen to belong to God: she is ‘his fæmne’⁵ and He is with her.⁶ Such language points to the all-encompassing nature of the relationship, and the interrelation of the two figures blurs the distinction between Margaret’s acts and intentions and the will of God.

Margaret’s relationship with God is thus central to the text, and in Magennis’ view ‘[d]espite the prodigious power of this young girl, however, the language of love humanizes and softens Margaret’.⁷ Whilst this is certainly one consequence of such discourse, the closeness to the Lord evident in Margaret’s language has a simultaneous and slightly incongruous effect. Margaret’s association with the Lord intensifies her authority and dominance in the *passio*, as He is all powerful and clearly favours her, fulfilling her prayers and visiting her. This authority is strengthened by the presentation of the Lord in the text: His power is emphasized throughout the narrative, where His role as creator, His dominance over natural laws, and His everlasting nature are all iterated.⁸ In this sense, Margaret receives authority by association: God is all-powerful and her identity is intertwined with His, thus she partakes in His authority.

The authority of Margaret in both texts also stems largely from the phenomenon of prayer. In the Tiberius text, Margaret prays to the Lord nine times, and these prayers

¹ CCCC 303, 4.1, 4.13, 4.15, 4.23, 5.5, 6.5, 6.8, 7.18, 8.2, 9.7, 10.5, 10.10, 10.19, 13.2, 13.4, 14.9, 15.9, 16.1, 16.12, 16.16, 17.13, 18.3, 19.9, 21.1, and 22.12: ‘blessed’.

² CCCC 303 4.22: ‘pure servant’.

³ CCCC 303, 14.12-13: ‘betrothed to him’.

⁴ CCCC 303, 18.11: ‘goddaughter’.

⁵ CCCC 303, 22.5-6: ‘his maiden’.

⁶ CCCC 303, 15.13 and 16.12.

⁷ Magennis 1996b, pp.40-41.

⁸ CCCC 303, 4.8, 7.11-13, and 16.8.

are often lengthy.¹ Margaret's prayer serves as her weapon in the narrative: it is through prayer that Margaret finds the courage to defeat the dragon Rufus despite her original fear, and through prayer that she is able to escape the tortures of the cauldron. As has been discussed in *Healing Miracles*, the theme of prayer is also explored from the other side of the equation, as besides Margaret's prayers to God, prayer to Margaret herself is also advocated. In this way, Margaret shows by example the veneration which she requests for herself posthumously.

Margaret prays to the Lord on ten separate occasions in the *Corpus Christi* biography, and these prayers make up around twenty-five per-cent of the *passio*.² As in the Tiberius life, prayer is approached from a dual angle: Margaret prays fervently to the Lord throughout the text, and also asks for others to pray for her:

ic eow bidde þæt ge me on eowrum bedum gemunnen, forþan ic eam
swiðe synfull.³

Both texts lead simultaneously by instruction and example in their depiction of worship: Margaret finds her courage, her comfort, and in many cases the power to overcome her foes, in prayer. In this way, particularly in relation to the Tiberius text which perhaps presents a figure for imitation, Margaret's constant recourse to prayer may represent an attempt to lead by example. The phenomenon of prayer is approached from the opposite perspective by the instructions for Margaret's veneration and the benefits that purportedly result from this. Indeed, *Healing Miracles*, which often form a

¹ Tiberius A.iii, 5.8-17, 6.8-10, 8.2-6, 10.4-10, 11.3-9, 12.10-14, 13.7-13, 18.4-8, and 19.10-26.

² CCCC 303, 4.20-28, 5.11-22, 8.2-8, 10.10-16, 11.3-9, 12.8-17, 13.6-9, 18.3-6 and 19.10-20 relate Margaret's prayers to God, thus approximately 81 lines of the 329 line edition by Clayton and Magennis are concerned with Margaret's prayers.

³ CCCC 303, 21.5-6: 'I entreat you that you remember me in your prayers, because I am very sinful'.

major part of a saint's miraculous repertoire, are only ascribed to Margaret after her death and function mainly as an incentive for her veneration.

Margaret's authority as a saint is thus clearly demonstrated via several routes in both versions of her *passio*, although is given greater emphasis in the Corpus Christi version of the life. Whilst Margaret's performance of miracles remains limited in comparison with that of certain male saints, such as Martin and Andrew,¹ her wonder working renders her one of the most powerful virgin saints in the Old English hagiographic corpus, rivalled only by Mary of Egypt. Her authority is further heightened by her relationship with God: in both texts, her close association with Him serves to extend His power to her. This phenomenon has a more powerful and personal element in the Corpus Christi narrative, which centres around Margaret's loving relationship with God. Additionally, both narratives stress the power of Margaret's prayer, which serves as her comfort, her strength and her weapon in the *passiones*.

Agnes also enjoys a close relationship with God in her *passio*, although this is of a different nature to that experienced by either Margaret figure. Agnes is presented throughout the text as a *sponsa Christi*, as she herself asserts. Her love for Christ is mentioned seven times in the text, and is often couched in marital terms. Agnes informs her suitor that, 'His ansyn is wlitigre . and his lufu wynsumre . his bryd-bedd me is gearo . nu iú mid dreamum'.² Christ is also referred to as Agnes' 'bryd-guman',³ and she pledges to keep her 'truwan' to Him.⁴ As Magennis points out, *Ælfric's Life of Agnes* is unrepresentative of her generic group in its use of marital terminology, as the life 'contains his one sustained presentation of nuptial imagery'.⁵ Unlike the personal

¹ See below, pp.169-201 and 276-87.

² Skeat 1891, 7, *Agnes*, ll.42-3: 'His face is fairer and His love more pleasant [than yours], His bridal-bed has been prepared for me with joys for a long time now'.

³ Skeat 1891, 7, *Agnes*, l.72: 'bridegroom'.

⁴ Skeat 1891, 7, *Agnes*, l.56: 'troth'.

⁵ Magennis 1996c, p.4.

devotion of the Corpus Christi Margaret, Agnes' tone remains more reserved, and Magennis notes that 'there is curiously little sense of affection evident in Agnes's words'.¹ As in the anonymous lives of Margaret, particularly the Corpus Christi version, the relationship between Agnes and the Lord is shown to be reciprocal. Although the Divine Contact Miracles in the life are less dramatic than those in Margaret's biographies and the only visit Agnes receives is from God's angel, the terms used to describe Agnes illustrate God's care for her. She is 'eadige',² and says that the Lord 'myld-heort-lice' sent her clothes.³ The phenomenon of prayer receives less attention in Ælfric's *Life of Agnes* than in either of Margaret's *passiones*, as the narrative includes only one lengthy prayer from the saint.⁴ However, Agnes is given authority through the use of direct speech, and her speeches take up around a third of the narrative.⁵ Agnes is thus able to assert herself and her beliefs in the work, rendering her an active and dominant figure.

Whilst Agnes is portrayed in a passive role with regard to miracle working, she is nonetheless lent authority through her relationship with God and her lengthy speeches. Like Margaret, Agnes' main focus of power stems from her association with God, and whilst she is unable to dominate events alone, her closeness to God enables her to assert authority. The essential point about female hagiographic authority in the lives examined here is the idea of power by association. Whilst the relationship between God and His male saints is a prevalent concern in some biographies,⁶ they are nonetheless able to act alone, as will be demonstrated in some of the following case-

¹ Magennis 1996c, p.5.

² Skeat 1891, 7, *Agnes*, ll.19, 92, 195, 223, 273, and 288: 'blessed'.

³ Skeat 1891, 7, *Agnes*, l.186: 'compassionately'.

⁴ Skeat 1891, 7, *Agnes*, ll.225-39.

⁵ See Skeat 1891, 7, *Agnes*, ll.25-62, 103-6, 110-15, 123-40, 184-91, 196-8, 225-39, 255-8 and 274-6, for the saint's direct speech.

⁶ The relationship between Andrew and his Lord forms a focus in both the anonymous and Ælfrician lives of the saint. See below, pp.295-8.

studies. The authority of the female hagiographic subject thus lies largely in their association with God.

Based on the case-studies of Margaret and Agnes, it would appear that the performance of miracles is not employed as the primary means of illustrating the divine authority of a Virgin saint, although both of Margaret's biographies represent considerably more dominant and charismatic portraits of female sanctity than Agnes' *passio*. As has been discussed in the introduction to this thesis, the relationship of miracles to divine authority is an illustrative one: miracles are seen as evidence of the Lord's validation of an individual and their actions. This kind of validation is seen in the lives of Agnes and Margaret, but in a specific sense. Whilst rarely the channels of physical miracles during their lifetimes, the favour the saints hold with God is illustrated in the miracles performed for their benefit and posthumously. Essentially, they receive divine authorization, but in a far more passive manner than many of the other categories of sanctity discussed in this thesis. Their relationship with God forms a central focus of the narrative, and rather than devoting the majority of narrative space to discussion of their miracles as can be seen in the lives of some confessors, for instance Cuthbert and Martin,¹ much of the narrative focuses on their love for God and the reciprocal nature of this relationship.

The relative passivity in miracle working observed in Agnes' life is representative of Ælfric's lives of female saints. With an average of one miracle performed by each female saint in contrast to five by male saints,² females perform very low frequencies of miracles. In addition, their miracles are limited to certain areas. Whilst all of Ælfric's female saints demonstrate posthumous powers,³ only Eugenia

¹ See below, pp.200-201.

² For calculation of these statistics see Appendix 1.

³ Skeat 1891 and 1900, 2, *Eugenia*, ll.415-26; 7, *Agnes*, ll.250-51, 261-82 and 287-92; 8, *Agatha*, ll.221-35; 20, *Æthelthryth*, ll.115-18; 34, *Cecilia*, ll.360-61; and 9, *Lucy*, ll.136-8.

qualifies as an active miracle worker in her lifetime.¹ The majority of miracles in Ælfric's virgin lives are not performed through the protagonists, but rather by the Lord in order to protect the saints.² Ælfric's female saints are generally presented in a passive role in this sphere, a feature representative of his treatment of female sanctity in a broader sense. In her analysis of Ælfric's *Judith*, Clayton comments that 'Ælfric's Judith is, throughout, more decorous and less active than the biblical one',³ while Magennis asserts that:

Ælfric's writings reveal a discomfort at the idea of female Christian authority. In his lives of female saints, Ælfric is careful to avoid the suggestion of holy women infringing Christian male authority.⁴

The treatment of female activity in miracle working parallels Ælfric's approach to female authority elsewhere. Evidently, the passivity of female saints in miracle working is not applicable to all Old English hagiography: the case study of Margaret's *passiones* illustrates her dominance, whilst the anonymous *Life of Mary of Egypt* depicts a charismatically potent female who performs a plethora of miracles.⁵ Viewing the case studies in the context of their generic groups illuminates two notable trends: the passivity of Ælfric's Agnes corresponds with the limited role ascribed to his other female saints and is suggestive of a discomfort with female authority and autonomy, while the anonymous lives of Margaret and Mary of Egypt show that such female passivity did not apply across the anonymous corpus.

¹ Skeat 1891, 2, *Eugenia*, ll.128-30, 131-2, 133-9, 386-7 and 406-11.

² For example, see Skeat 1891 and 1900, 8, *Agatha*, ll.138-40 and 167-75; 9, *Lucy*, ll.97-8 and 116-23; 2, *Eugenia*, ll.396-8; and 34, *Cecilia*, ll.345-8.

³ Mary Clayton, "Ælfric's Judith: Manipulative or Manipulated?" *ASE* 23 (1994): 215-27, here p.224.

⁴ Magennis 1996a, p.107.

⁵ For Mary of Egypt's miracles see the Typology Database. See also Magennis 1996a, p.102.

The clear gender difference in wonder-working which emerges in the Ælfrician, although not in the anonymous corpus, is reminiscent of Biblical models:

Although the Hebrew and Christian Bibles provide brief references to female judges and prophets, there are no biblical women whose deeds can compare with the miraculous accomplishments of these charismatic men.¹

In addition, the comparison of Ælfric's *Life of Agnes* with the sources he is thought to have employed shows that the passivity of the saint in the Old English life corresponds with the Latin to a high degree. In this sense, the passivity of female wonder-working is seen to have a lengthy tradition, beginning with Scriptural models, being mediated through Latin *passiones*, and finding its place in Anglo-Saxon hagiography. However, the tradition behind this trend does not rob it of contemporary relevance for the Anglo-Saxon church: the models were clearly seen to be appropriate for imparting to a wide audience. The addition of a counter-narrative in the *Life of Agnes* alongside the depiction of more potent female wonder-workers in the anonymous Old English hagiographic corpus, for example Margaret and Mary of Egypt, suggests that Ælfric preferred texts which conformed most clearly to the paradigm of passive female sanctity, and aimed to cement the existing trends towards this which existed within the Latin tradition.

The presentation of female saints in Ælfric's work is suggestive of his own views and the perceived role of religious women in Anglo-Saxon society: the passive

¹ Coon 1997, p.xxi, citing Ezekiel 13.17-18: 'And thou, son of man, set thy face against the daughters of thy people that prophesy out of their own heart: and do thou prophesy against them, And say: Thus saith the Lord God: Woe to them that sew cushions under every elbow: and make pillows for the heads of persons of every age to catch souls: and when they caught the souls of my people, they gave life to their souls'.

role they play in miracle working may either reflect or be an attempt to influence perceptions of the earthly role of women. Whilst a survey of the likely position of women in Anglo-Saxon England is far outside the scope of this study,¹ some central observations on the subject can give an impression of the possible position of women in the period. Sarah Foot notes the decline in evidence for female monasticism in the later Anglo-Saxon period:

The picture of female monasticism that can be constructed from the sources for the period before 900 is one of a vibrant dynamic institution of economic and spiritual significance whose protagonists were evenly spread over most of the Anglo-Saxon areas of Britain. The contrast with the last Anglo-Saxon centuries is marked.²

Thus, in the monastic sphere, evidence for female activity in the Reform period is scarce. In her study of the rise and decline of female sanctity, Tibbetts Schulenberg notes a decline in the number of female saints created in the eleventh century, and suggests that this ‘abrupt shift, beginning in the second half of the preceding century with the Cluniac Reform, and that of St. Dunstan in England, seems to reflect a redefining of values and definitely a change in attitudes to women’.³ This suggestion is supported by historical records, and as R.W. Southern states,

¹ For surveys of the position of women in Anglo-Saxon England, see Sarah Foot, *Veiled Women I: The Disappearance of Nuns from Anglo-Saxon England*, Studies in Early Medieval Britain 1 (Aldershot; Vermont: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2000), hereafter Foot 2000; Stephanie Hollis, *Anglo-Saxon Women and the Church, Sharing a Common Fate* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1992), hereafter Hollis 1992; and for analysis from a literary perspective, see Helen Damico and Alexandra Henessey Olsen, eds., *New Readings on Women in Old English Literature* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), hereafter Damico and Olsen 1990.

² Foot 2000, p.26.

³ Jane Tibbetts Schulenburg, “Sexism and the Celestial *Gynaecium* – from 500-1200”, *Journal of Medieval History* 4 (1978): 117-133, here p.124, hereafter Tibbetts Schulenberg 1978.

In the great period of monastic foundation from the early tenth to the early twelfth century the position of women in the monastic life suffered a sharp decline.¹

It is likely that the position of religious women at the time Ælfric was writing was not a powerful one, and as two of the major figures of the late tenth century Benedictine Reform, Æthelwold and Oswald, were involved in Ælfric's education, it is likely that Ælfric would have been heavily influenced by the reform's ideas and outcomes.² The change in attitudes to women which led to lower numbers of female saints in the eleventh century may also have influenced Ælfric in terms of the model of female sanctity he presents and contributed to the passive role assigned to women in the performance of miracles.

When considering the depictions of female authority in their cultural context, it is important to note that the most powerful portrait of a female saint studied here is found in the Corpus Christi life of Margaret. This is likely to be the latest Old English life of a female saint, and the *passio* appears in a post-Conquest manuscript. The position of women in post-Conquest England has been perceived by some as inferior to that of their Anglo-Saxon counterparts. For instance, Doris Stenton compares the status of women in the Anglo-Saxon and post-Conquest period as follows:

The evidence which has survived from Anglo-Saxon England indicates that women were more nearly the equal companions of their husbands and brothers than at any other period before the modern age. In the higher ranges of society this rough and ready partnership was ended by

¹ R. W. Southern, *Western Society and the Church in the Middle Ages* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970), p.310.

² Stenton 1971, p.457.

the Norman Conquest, which introduced into England a military society relegating women to a position honourable but essentially unimportant.¹

This limitation of female importance is not paralleled in the Corpus Christi *Life of Margaret*, and as such the *passio* may offer an interesting comparison to evidence which points to the reduction of female power and importance after the Norman Conquest.

Whilst the relative positions of men and women in Anglo-Saxon religious life prior to the twelfth century were clearly unequal, this inequality ceased to exist after death. In this way, the reason for the prominence of posthumous miracles in the lives of female saints could relate to a Christian conception of posthumous sexual equality. As Tibbetts Schulenburg points out, the Christian Church believed all to be equal in death:

St. Paul in his famous statement, 'there is neither Jew nor Greek ... slave nor free ... male nor female ... for you are all one in Christ Jesus' (Galatians 3.28), formulated what would become the Christian position of spiritual egalitarianism. Although St. Paul and later Church policy were unable to accept a natural equality of men and women, the Church continually prided itself in its basic belief that there would be no discrimination in the celestial city. In life beyond the grave, men and women would at last be equal.²

Differences in the perception of gender roles that existed in earthly life would cease to exist posthumously, and this attitude may be reflected in the ascription of posthumous

¹ D.M. Stenton, *The English Woman in History* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1957), p.28.

² Tibbetts Schulenburg 1978, p.119.

miracles to female saints. Whilst during their earthly lifetimes female saints are ascribed a limited and passive role which perhaps reflects their earthly status, they are able to exhibit equal powers to men beyond the grave.

The absence of a life of Margaret in the Cotton-Corpus legendary is likely to have been a major factor influencing Ælfric's omission of this saint, but it is possible that the content of her biography also played a part here. As Mechthild Gretsch points out, the factors which influenced Ælfric's choice of subjects may have related to both his available sources and the content of the biographies.¹ For example, whilst Zettel demonstrates the relationship of Ælfric's work to the Cotton Corpus legendary and Gretsch argues the influence of the Benedictional of St. Æthelwold on Ælfric's choice of saints, there is evidence to suggest that the narrative content of the biographies was also paramount in Ælfric's selection.² Firstly, Ælfric exercises his own judgment regarding the authority of texts, for instance, originally refusing to provide a homily on Thomas the apostle on the grounds that he was unsure of its orthodoxy.³ It is also possible that Ælfric selected some texts because of their relevance to his own society. For instance, Godden suggests that the political resonances of certain narratives may have rendered them attractive to Ælfric.⁴ Magennis also notes Ælfric's reticence to include imagery relating to spiritual intoxication, perhaps due to discomfort with the connotations of drunkenness inherent in such a metaphor.⁵ As such, it is likely that Ælfric discriminated between texts and episodes within these on the grounds of their content, avoiding material he did not deem suitable and including that which he felt had

¹ Mechthild Gretsch, "Ælfric's Sanctorale and the Benedictional of Æthelwold", in *Early Medieval English Texts and Interpretations: Studies Presented to Donald G. Scragg*, ed. Elaine Treharne and Susan Rosser (Arizona: ACMRS, 2002): 31-50, hereafter Gretsch 2002 and Treharne and Rosser 2002.

² See Zettel 1979 and Gretsch 2002.

³ For discussion of Ælfric's views on the orthodoxy of Thomas' legend see above, pp.85-6.

⁴ See Godden 2000b, pp.94-7.

⁵ Hugh Magennis, "The Exegesis of Inebriation: Treading Carefully in Old English", *ELN* 23:3 (1986): 3-6; and Hugh Magennis, "Water-Wine Miracles in Anglo-Saxon Saints' Lives", *ELN* 23:3 (1986): 7-9.

relevance to his audience. This phenomenon could also apply to the models of sanctity he wished to present and may relate to his omission of St. Margaret, as he did not deem the paradigm of female sanctity she presents to be desirable. Similarly, the authority inherent in the miracles of St. Mary of Egypt renders her a dynamic and powerful female saint. Ælfric's omission of this unusual figure lends support to the notion that he preferred a certain, and limited, role to be ascribed to women. In addition, the likely availability of Mary of Egypt's life to Ælfric resulting from its presence in the Cotton-Corpus Legendary means that his omission of her from his collections was not due to his ignorance of her *vita*.¹

The above discussion shows that Ælfrician hagiography demonstrates a distinct trend in terms of the models of female sanctity it presents. Firstly, there is no example of a non-virgin female saint in either of his major collections.² This preference for female virginity perhaps also explains his omission of a life of Perpetua and Felicitas, which as Lapidge comments, might have been expected to appear in Ælfric's collection.³ This is not the case for male saints, as Eustace and the apostle Peter, for example, are not virgins.⁴ It is certainly not the case that non-virgin female saints did not exist: the anonymous *Life of St. Mary of Egypt* from the prose corpus and the poetic texts *Judith*, *Elene* and *Juliana* demonstrate that accounts of non-virgin female saints circulated in Anglo-Saxon England.⁵ Thus the model of female sanctity presented in

¹ The anonymous account of Mary of Egypt is likely to be based on a version of the text found in the Cotton-Corpus legendary. See Hugh Magennis, "On the Sources of Non-Ælfrician Lives in the Old English *Lives of Saints*, with reference to the Cotton-Corpus Legendary", *Notes and Queries* 230 (1985): 292-9, here p.296.

² The Ælfrician corpus does include an account of the *Book of Judith*, but this is not a strictly hagiographical piece. It is edited in Assmann 1889.

³ Lapidge 1996, p.120.

⁴ See Skeat 1891 and 1900, 30, *Eustace*; and 10, *Chair of St. Peter*, where the children of these saints figure in the narratives.

⁵ See Magennis 2002 for *Mary of Egypt*; Dobbie 1953 for *Judith*; Krapp 1932 for *Elene*; and Krapp and Dobbie 1936 for *Juliana*. The miracles performed by the female saints in the poetic corpus are catalogued in the Typology Database, but constraints of length prevented exposition of these in the main text of the thesis.

Ælfric's hagiography is limited to the role of 'Virgin' whilst anonymous hagiography covers a wider spectrum of female roles. In addition to this, the virgins Ælfric selects as subjects for his writing are all relatively vulnerable figures, and generally inferior to male saints in their performance of miracles: virgin saints rarely perform healings, exorcisms and resurrections, while they are often involved in miracles as passive recipients rather than active channels for wonders. This phenomenon is not limited to Ælfric, as the anonymous lives of Euphrosyne and Mildred demonstrate similar trends. However, the anonymous corpus is less rigid than the Ælfrician, including the biographies of Mary of Egypt and Margaret. As has been demonstrated, Margaret deviates from the conventional mould of virginal passivity to an extent, as she is a dominant, authoritative figure in her *passio*, and, particularly in the Corpus Christi narrative, wields a sizeable degree of power during her lifetime. This element of Margaret's *passio* could relate to the existence of two anonymous biographies of the saint and Ælfric's omission of a life of Margaret. The dramatic and supernatural elements of Margaret's legend may have added to the popular appeal of this inspirational female figure, and go some way to accounting for the two anonymous redactions of her life. However, these same elements result in a virgin saint who deviates from the more passive, rigid model of female sanctity presented in Ælfric's work, and account partly for the exclusion of herself and Mary of Egypt from his collections.

The Confessor: St. Martin of Tours.

Born around 316 in Sabaria, St. Martin of Tours was one of the first and most popular of bishop confessor saints.¹ According to Earl:

Saint Martin of Tours was the first saint not martyred in the old sense to be honoured in the liturgy. The development came about toward the end of the fourth century, and the hesitation with which this new form of 'witness' was officially embraced is recorded in the words of the celebration itself: 'O Holy soul, you were not stricken by the sword of the persecutor, yet did not lose the palm of martyrdom'.²

The sanctity of confessor saints was therefore less straightforward than that of martyrs, and the sanctity of all these individuals rested in their relationship with the Lord:

The central belief in all these developments was that the saint, through the merits of his/ her life (or death in the case of martyrs), had achieved an especially close relationship to God. From this relationship flowed the saint's supposed powers as described in hagiographical texts.³

The merits of Martin's life and his ensuing charismatic powers validate his veneration as a saint. The son of a pagan Roman soldier, Martin was drawn to Christianity at a

¹ Stancliffe 1983, p.1.

² Earl 1992, p.94.

³ David Rollason, *Saints and Relics in Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1989), p.9, hereafter Rollason 1989.

young age, and became a monk at Ligugé before ordination as bishop of Tours in 372.¹ Throughout his life, Martin executed a great many virtuous deeds, famously tearing his cloak to give half of it to a beggar. He is credited with the performance of a variety of miracles, including foreknowledge of his own death on November 8, 397, at Candes.²

The first biography of St. Martin was composed by his contemporary, Sulpicius Severus, who was ‘born about 360 into a distinguished Aquitanian family’.³ The biography was the product of Severus’ own research and his personal knowledge of Martin, as ‘Sulpicius had remained in close association with Martin up to his death and, later, with several of Martin’s disciples’.⁴ Severus’ biographical materials on Martin consist of the *Vita Martini*, completed *circa* 396; the three *Dialogues* which supplement this and date from around 404; and the three *Epistles* to Eusebius, Aurelius and Bassula.⁵ The life was to become hugely influential, becoming ‘a virtual mine of stereotypic phrases and themes’,⁶ and as Linda Coon states, Sulpicius Severus ‘creates the monk-bishop *topos* that was to become the primary model for early medieval male saints’.⁷ The *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina* records twenty-three Latin versions of the life, including the well known *De virtutibus sancti Martini* by Gregory of Tours.⁸ In addition to these, three Old English accounts of the bishop’s deeds and miracles are extant, and are found in both the Ælfrician and anonymous hagiographic corpora.

St. Martin’s life enjoyed extensive influence and wide dissemination, as the names of Sulpicius Severus and Gregory of Tours held a high degree of authority. Considering these factors, the reception of Martinian hagiography as authoritative by

¹ Farmer 1978, p.265.

² Butler 1956, vol.4, p.312, Nov. 8.

³ Bernard Peebles, trans., “Writings of Sulpicius Severus”, in *The Fathers of the Church, A New Translation, Vol. 7, Niceta of Remesiana, Sulpicius Severus, Prosper of Aquitaine, Vincent of Lerins* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1949), pp.79-98, here p.80, hereafter Peebles 1949.

⁴ Peebles 1949, p.82.

⁵ For the dates of these items, see Stancliffe 1983, p.72; and Peebles 1949, p.89.

⁶ Noble and Head 1995, p.xxxvi.

⁷ Coon 1997, p.23.

⁸ *BHL*, vol. 2, K-Z, pp.823-30.

Old English hagiographers seems in little doubt. However, the textual authority of the source material on Martin involves one problematic element:

In one matter the Dialogues ran afoul of censure. In the final chapter of the second Dialogue is a report of St. Martin's teaching about the coming end of the world. Various features of his doctrine, as Sulpicius reports Gallus stating it, were unacceptable to St. Jerome [...] Nor was St. Jerome alone in taking exception. A portion of a decree traditionally ascribed to Pope Gelasius I (492-496) is, in some sense, the first "Index of Prohibited Books". The writings there listed are to be "avoided by Catholics", and include *Opuscula Postumiani et Galli apocrypha* – surely, the *Dialogues* of Sulpicius, even if Postumianus and Gallus are apparently named as authors rather than as speakers in a conversation recorded by Sulpicius.¹

In her analysis of Ælfric's *Life of St. George*, Joyce Hill has shown that Ælfric took notice of the *Decretals* regarding issues of orthodoxy.² The problematic portion of Sulpicius Severus' *Dialogues* is absent in all three Old English lives of Martin, perhaps precisely due to its sensitive nature. However, the condemnation of any aspect of the *Dialogues* by such authorities renders Ælfric's use of these significant when his apparent concern to transmit only wholly orthodox doctrine is considered.

Two of Martin's Old English biographies are Ælfrician, and are found in his *Lives of Saints* collection and *Catholic Homilies* II. The Second Series of *Catholic Homilies*, completed sometime between 991 and 996, contains the shorter of Ælfric's

¹ Peebles 1949, pp.95-6.

² Hill 1985. For discussion of this see below, pp.245-6.

two Martinian lives.¹ The authoritative manuscript witness of this series, Cambridge University Library Gg. 3. 28, is 'a remarkably reliable manuscript, contemporary with the author and containing a collection built up by him',² and the life of Martin found here is also extant in two later manuscripts.³

According to Godden, Sulpicius Severus' *Vita Sancti Martini*, *Epistle to Bassula* and possibly the *Dialogi* were used by Ælfric as sources in the composition of his shorter *Life of St. Martin*.⁴ An excerpt from Gregory of Tours' *Historia Francorum* was used for the closing section on Martin's burial, while he 'also had available to him a summary of the life and death of St. Martin by Alcuin, based on the writings of Sulpicius and Gregory of Tours, and in matters of detail, phrasing and arrangement Ælfric is often closer to Alcuin'.⁵ Biggs has also argued for the extended use of Alcuin's work in the composition of the *Catholic Homilies* life, and suggested that 'Ælfric probably did not consult Sulpicius' *Dialogues* when he wrote the *Depositio*'.⁶ These writings are thus the most sensible starting point for comparison of Ælfric's work with his potential sources.⁷

¹ Godden 2000, p. xxxv. According to Godden, *Catholic Homilies I* was completed between 990 and 994, and *Catholic Homilies II* was completed a year or so later.

² Godden 1979, p. xxi.

³ The item also occurs in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 198, ff. 378-85v; and London, British Library, Cotton Vitellius D. xvii, ff. 58-60, 62, 61, 63. For the manuscript dissemination of items in the *Catholic Homilies* see Ker 1957, 'Table of Ælfric's *Sermones Catholici*', pp. 511-15. Cotton Vitellius D. xvii was damaged in the Cotton fire of 1731, and the foliation given here is Ker's suggestion of the probable number of each leaf as it was before the fire.

⁴ Godden 2000, p. lx.

⁵ Godden 2000, p. 622.

⁶ Frederick M. Biggs, 'Ælfric as Historian: His Use of Alcuin's *Laudationes* and Sulpicius's *Dialogues* in his Two Lives of Martin', in Szarmach 1996: 289-315, here p. 289, hereafter Biggs 1996.

⁷ The editions cited by M.R. Godden, 'Catholic Homilies 2.34', 1998, *Fontes Anglo-Saxonici: World Wide Web Register*, <http://fontes.english.ox.ac.uk/>, accessed June 2004 will be used for source comparison, as these represent the closest printed texts. The editions are as follows: Alcuin, *Vita S. Martini*, printed in PL 101, 657-62, hereafter Alcuin *VM*; Sulpicius Severus, *Dialogi*, printed in CSEL 1, pp. 152-216, hereafter Severus *Dialogi*; Sulpicius Severus, *Epistula tertia ad Basilium*, printed in CSEL 1, pp. 146-51, hereafter Severus, *Ep. Ad Basilium*; Sulpicius Severus, *Vita S. Martini*, printed in *Sulpice Sèvre, Vie de Saint Martin*, 3 vols., ed. J. Fontaine (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1967-9), vol. 1, pp. 248-344, hereafter Severus, *VM*; and Gregory of Tours, *Historia Francorum*, printed in MGH 1.1, hereafter Gregory of Tours, *HF*.

The *Lives of Saints* collection, composed between 992 and 1002,¹ is no longer extant in its original form. The closest witness to Ælfric's edition is London, British Library, Cotton Julius E. vii, which Ker dates to s. xi in.² The sources which Ælfric drew on for this life include all those utilized in *Catholic Homilies* II, plus Sulpicius' *Epistle to Eusebius* and I, 3-5 of *De Virtutibus Sancti Martini* by Gregory of Tours.³ As with the majority of items in the *Lives of Saints* collection, Ælfric's probable immediate source for St. Martin's *vita* was an earlier version of the Cotton-Corpus Legendary.⁴ These manuscripts contain all of the above sources, with the exception of Gregory's *De virtutibus* I 3. However, according to Zettel, the material attributed to this source is found in two other works in the manuscript, and all Ælfric's material could have this collection as its source.⁵ For source comparison, then, the material used for the *Catholic Homilies* life plus Sulpicius' *Epistle to Eusebius* and Gregory's *De Virtutibus* I 3-5 can be considered.⁶

Three copies of the anonymous *Life of St. Martin* are extant, and are found in Vercelli, Biblioteca Capitolare CXVII, The Vercelli Book; Princeton University Library, W.H. Scheide Collection 71, The Blickling Homilies; and Oxford, Bodleian Library, Junius 85 and 86. The two latter manuscripts are textually closer to one another than either is to the first,⁷ while The Vercelli Book preserves the fullest version

¹ Hill 1996a, p.236.

² Ker 1957, p.206. This item also occurs in London, British Library, Cotton Caligula A. xiv, ff. 93-103; and Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 340. For the dissemination of items in Ælfric's *Lives of Saints*, see Hill 1996a, pp.246-7, Table 2.

³ Patrick H. Zettel, "Saints' Lives in Old English: Latin Manuscripts and Vernacular Accounts: Ælfric", *Peritia* 1 (1982): 17-37, p.24, hereafter Zettel 1982.

⁴ Zettel 1982, p.22.

⁵ Zettel 1982, p.25.

⁶ The closest printed editions of these texts are as follows: Alcuin, *VM*, PL 101, 657-62; Gregory of Tours, *HF*; Severus, *Dialogi*; Severus, *Ep. Ad Basilium*; Severus, *VM*; Severus, *Epistula prima ad Eusebium*, printed in CSEL 1, pp.138-45, hereafter Severus, *Ep. Ad Eusebium*; and Gregory of Tours, *De Virtutibus Sancti Martini Episcopi*, printed in MGH 1.2, hereafter Gregory of Tours, *De Virtutibus*. See R. Jayatilaka, 'Lives 31 (St. Martin)' 1997, *Fontes Anglo-Saxonici: World Wide Web Register*, <http://fontes.english.ox.ac.uk/>, accessed June 2004.

⁷ Scragg 1992, p.289.

of the text.¹ Whilst there is slight textual variation between these manuscripts, all three preserve the same version of Martin's *vita*, and 'it seems probable that they were all descended from the same primary source'.² In order to avoid repetition the Vercelli version will be used for analysis while the other manuscripts will only be mentioned if their reading differs significantly from that in the Vercelli biography. Vercelli has been selected as the main text due to its relative completeness and the likelihood that it is the earliest of the three manuscripts.

The items in the Vercelli Book are of a varied nature, and the collection is 'a miscellany containing six Old English poems and twenty-three prose pieces commonly called "homilies"; the manuscript intersperses poetry with prose'.³ The date of the items found in the Vercelli Book is uncertain: 'Wulfgang Keller dated the manuscript on palaeographical grounds to 960-980, while Max Förster assigned it more generally to the second half of the tenth century. Neil Ker, Celia Sisam, and others follow Förster'.⁴ Ker thus assigns the collection to s.x²,⁵ whilst in Scragg's view, 'until we have greater understanding of the context for which the items were composed, the possibility of composition within a range from the later ninth to the later tenth centuries must remain open'.⁶ The authorship of the homilies remains similarly vague, as '[n]one of the homilies can be ascribed to any named author, and it is very unlikely that, with the few exceptions to be considered, more than one is the work of a single author'.⁷ In

¹ Scragg 1996, p.210.

² Judith Gates, "Ælfric's Longer *Life of St Martin* and its Latin Sources: A Study in Narrative Technique", *LSE* n.s. 13 (1982): 23-41, here p.36, hereafter Gates 1982.

³ Paul E. Szarmach, ed., *Vercelli Homilies IX-XXIII* (Toronto; Buffalo; London: University of Toronto Press, 1981), p.ix, hereafter Szarmach 1981.

⁴ Szarmach 1981, p.xx.

⁵ Ker 1957, p.460.

⁶ Scragg 1992, pp.xxxviii-ix.

⁷ Scragg 1992, p.xxxix.

Scragg's view, the Vercelli Book is based on three known and two or more unknown exemplars, and is a Kentish compilation.¹

The Blickling manuscript, which Scragg concludes to be of Mercian origin,² is likely to be later than Vercelli. Ker dates the collection to s. x/xi, but a passage in the manuscript itself suggests a more precise date.³ Part of the eleventh homily in the manuscript reads:

Ponne sceal þes middangeard endian & þisse is þonne se mǣsta dǣl
agangen, efne nigon hund wintra & lxxi. on þys geare.⁴

As Morris points out, this date 'does not necessarily mark the exact point of time in which the present Homilies were composed, but may be a later insertion of the transcriber'.⁵ The final manuscript which contains the anonymous *Life of Martin* is likely to be later still. Ker dates Junius 85 and 86 to s. xi med,⁶ and Scragg describes the manuscript as follows:

[Oxford, Bodleian Library, Junius 85 and 86] was perhaps once an ordered homiliary, but it is now very fragmentary. It was considerably adapted during the eleventh century and divided into two books in modern times. It contains, in whole or in part, six anonymous items.⁷

¹ D.G. Scragg, "The Compilation of the Vercelli Book", *ASE* 2 (1973): 189-207, here pp.205-7.

² D.G. Scragg, "The Homilies of the Blickling Manuscript", in *Learning and Literature in Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. Michael Lapidge and Helmut Gneuss (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985): 299-316, here p.316.

³ Ker 1957, p.451.

⁴ Morris 1874, XI, 117.34-119.2: 'Wherefore this world must come to an end, and of this the greatest part has gone by, even nine hundred and seventy-one years, in this year'.

⁵ Morris 1874, p.v.

⁶ Ker 1957, p.409.

⁷ Scragg 1996, p.211.

The literary evidence indicates the popularity of the anonymous Martinian *vita* in the tenth and eleventh centuries, as it is one of only three anonymous hagiographic items that are found in three manuscripts.¹ The scarcity of anonymous hagiography is likely to result largely from loss of texts in transmission,² and the dissemination of Martin's *vita* and the lives of other saints may have been more widespread than the remaining manuscripts show. However, the extant material does suggest that Martin's life was one of the more widely disseminated anonymous pieces.

The anonymous *Life of St. Martin* derives ultimately from Sulpicius Severus's *Vita Martini*, *Dialogues* and *Epistles*, although the immediate source of the Old English version remains uncertain:

There is slight evidence that the abstraction from the ultimate sources was in Latin: [the Blickling Homilies and Junius 85 and 86] preserve a number of Latin tags, most of which are from Sulpicius, but one is not to be found in Sulpicius, perhaps indicating that Sulpicius was already adapted in the version available to the Old English translator. Since all the quoted Latin is closely followed in the translation, it is possible that the Old English is, throughout, a literal translation of a lost Latin work.³

As the possible Latin intermediary proposed by Scragg is no longer extant, Sulpicius Severus' biography provides the most logical starting point in terms of source study for

¹ See Scragg 1996. The *Nativity of the Virgin Mary* (B3.3.18) is found in MS I, Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 343; MS O, Oxford, Bodleian Library, Junius 121 and Hatton 113 and 114; and MS fa, Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 367 according to Scragg's *sigla*; while *Mary of Egypt* occurs in MS W, British Library, Cotton Julius E.vii; MS fa, Gloucester, Cathedral Library 35; and MS fg, British Library, Cotton Otho B.x and Oxford, Bodleian Library, Rawlinson Q.e.20. All the other anonymous homiletic pieces examined by Scragg are either unique or found in two manuscripts.

² See above, p.9.

³ Scragg 1992, p.290.

the anonymous life. However, it cannot be certain whether differences between this and the anonymous *vita* have been made by the Anglo-Saxon translator or a Latin or vernacular writer before him.

Miracles in the Old English Lives of St. Martin.

The miracles recounted in Sulpicius Severus' Latin biography of Martin are numerous.

As Ramsey points out, the work,

seems little else than a catalogue of the wondrous things accomplished in the holy man. He raises the dead, controls the movement of a crowd from a distance and makes a tree that is about to fall on him turn in the opposite direction, to cite only some of his more extraordinary deeds.

Nothing appears to be beyond such a person's power.¹

Many of the miracles in the Latin *vita* are carried through into the Anglo-Saxon versions of the narrative. In order to organize the extensive number of miracles in the Martin's *vitae* for analysis, they have been grouped according to type.² A comprehensive discussion of these numerous miracles would be too lengthy, and the most popular and suggestive categories of miracles have been selected for discussion. The three Old English accounts of Martin's life will be discussed in turn, with reference to sources where relevant, to demonstrate the different ways in which the authors of Anglo-Saxon depictions of Martinian miracles have transmitted Sulpicius Severus' *vita* and additional Latin material concerning the saint's life.

¹ Ramsey 1993, p.160.

² For explanation of the categories within the typology, see 'Methodology', pp.19-23.

The existence of three lives of Martin, all derived ultimately from versions of Sulpicius Severus' writings, provides an excellent opportunity for investigating the Old English author's role as an adaptor as much as a translator of Latin material, although it must be recognized that the anonymous life may be a translation of a previously adapted text. Particularly in the case of the *Catholic Homilies* and anonymous *vitae*, which present very abridged versions of the Latin, the possible intentions of the hagiographers are illuminated. As Whatley comments, the act of selecting which episodes of a text to include and which to omit often represents a deliberate process:

Abbreviating a text, either by compressing its language or by omitting whole episodes, can be a means of controlling its meaning and averting possibly undesirable effects on the reader or listener.¹

As such, the hagiographies resulting from the brevity of these two texts are telling. The comparison between the two texts is rendered more pertinent when their length is considered: the *Catholic Homilies* text is only around twenty lines longer than the anonymous life in the current editions by Godden and Scragg. The two texts sketch very different portraits of Martin within *vitae* of a similar size, and show the difference that an Old English translator's decisions can make to a hagiography.

The discussion will focus on the ways in which the miracles in the Latin biography are manipulated by the authors, and suggest two main hypotheses. In both Ælfrician lives of Martin, there is evidence that miracles are used to validate and elevate the saint. Throughout both lives, Ælfric paints a portrait of Martin more aggrandized than that in Sulpicius Severus, and concentrates largely on the saint's

¹ Whatley 1997, p.189.

miracles rather than his deeds to emphasize Martin's greatness. As a confessor saint, Martin lacks the additional criteria for sanctity that the other figures in this study possess as a result of their generic types: the great esteem in which virginity is held, the unquestioned supremacy of the crown of martyrdom, and the absolute authority of the apostles are all testament to the worthiness of these individuals as saints. The claims to sanctity of confessors, however, lie solely in their earthly actions: their asceticism, their pious deeds, and their miracles. As a confessor, and the most important one at that, Ælfric may have felt that the miraculous elements in Martin's life should be emphasized in order to clearly validate his place among the saints. The miracles in the anonymous *Life of Martin* function in a very different way. This life displays as much concern with Martin's deeds as his miracles, and selects only a portion of the ultimate source's miracles for use in the Old English account. As such, Martin's deeds and virtues are prioritized in this life, presenting a paradigm of sanctity which encourages emulation.

The Catholic Homilies Biography.

In his first Martinian biography, Ælfric treats his source with considerable brevity, and depicts only a portion of the miracles found in Sulpicius Severus' extensive work. The Latin narrative credits the saint with a variety of Healing Miracles, found predominantly in the *Vita Martini* with additional instances recorded in the *Dialogues*. Ælfric describes eight of these, seven of which are performed by Martin and one which is performed for the saint. In five of these healings Martin is present: he heals a dumb maiden and a paralyzed girl with hallowed oil; a leprous man with a kiss; a boy bitten by an adder with his touch, and a woman suffering from a blood-flow problem is

healed by touching the saint's garment.¹ This final miracle is reminiscent of one attributed to the Saviour in the Synoptic gospels, where a woman is healed by touching the hem of Christ's clothing.² The inclusion of this miracle thus associates Martin with Christ, and elevates his status via the connection. The most significant healings performed by Martin, however, are those where the saint is not present and individuals are healed on his account. There are two instances of this, and in the first such miracle the daughter of a count is relieved from her illness by receiving a letter from Martin.³ Later, Martin is on his way to visit a sick man, Evantius, but the man is healed before Martin's arrival:

He wolde geneosian sumne adligne mannan æt sumon sæle. se hatte
 Euantius. ac he wearð gehæled. ær se halga come into his huse. þurh
 þæs hælendes gife;⁴

These miracles ascribe a greater degree of power to Martin than his other healings: his healing powers are not only channeled by his immediate presence, but can be exercised across great distances or through the presence of objects associated with him. Ælfric also makes a general statement that many were healed by Martin's garment.⁵ Evidently, stress is being placed on Martin's ability to heal without being physically present, and whilst many saints perform healings in their biographies, this strand of healing is uncommon. Relics, both primary and secondary, are often endowed with curative properties, but only Martin and St. Maur perform distance healing during their lifetimes

¹ Godden 1979, 34, *Martin*, ll.152-4, 196-8, 211-13, 245-8 and 264-6.

² Matt. 9.22; Mark 5.29; and Luke 8.46.

³ Godden 1979, 34, *Martin*, ll.214-16.

⁴ Godden 1979, 34, *Martin*, ll.243-5: 'He would visit a sick man, at a certain time, who was called Evantius, but he was healed before the saint came to his house, through the Saviour's grace'.

⁵ Godden 1979, 34, *Martin*, ll.213-14.

in Ælfric's collection.¹ This potent kind of healing is only ascribed to confessor saints in Ælfric's work, and Ælfric's selection of this miracle from his source demonstrates a concern to present the most powerful and unusual of Martin's miracles in his *Catholic Homilies* life: the rare nature of this miracle distinguishes Martin's thaumaturgic powers from those of other charismatic individuals.

Martin is also the subject of a healing in this *vita*. The saint falls on the steps of a holy altar and is hurt, but is healed in the night by God's holy angel.² In this way, the protection and favour which God extends to the saint are clearly demonstrated: whilst the main focus of the narrative is on the miraculous power which Martin is able to wield, this instance adds to the authority of the saint by demonstrating his relationship with God in a clear and direct manner.

None of the above miracles is original to Ælfric: each is ultimately found in Sulpicius Severus' *Vita Martini* and *Dialogues*, although in all but one of them Martin was following Alcuin's summary of Martin's life based on the writings of Sulpicius and Gregory the Great. The exception to this concerns the healing of a paralyzed maiden with hallowed oil, in which Ælfric expands Alcuin's account with details from Sulpicius Severus' lengthier version. He includes the detail, absent in Alcuin, that the maiden had 'langlice læg on legerbedde seoc'.³ Here, the assertion that the girl had been sick for a long time emphasizes the saint's power by demonstrating the seriousness of her illness and containing the implicit suggestion that no other remedy or person was able to heal her. This episode illustrates that Ælfric was not averse to making additions to Alcuin's summary from Sulpicius Severus' work in instances where these glorified the saint's acts to a greater degree than Alcuin's text. This begs

¹ See Skeat 1891, 6, *Maur*, ll.287-8.

² Godden 1979, 34, *Martin*, ll.216-19.

³ Godden 1979, 34, *Martin*, l.197: 'lain long in bed sick'. This parallels Severus, *VM*, Chaps. XVI and XVII.

the question as to why he only included the healings that he did in this *vita*, when Sulpicius Severus' account of Martin contains many more?

Sulpicius Severus' biography of Martin includes eleven healing miracles performed by the saint, in addition to four more general statements describing the saint's healing powers.¹ Whilst Ælfric does discuss more of these healings in his later *Lives of the Saints*' collection, he is forced to make selection in the *Catholic Homilies* for reasons of brevity, and Godden refers to '[t]he extensive abbreviation of the voluminous materials available on Martin which the homiletic form required'.² Due to this abbreviation, it is interesting to note which miracles he omits in his first Martinian *vita*. The omitted instances concern the curing of Licontius' household by prayer, the curing of Paulinus' eyes as Martin touches them with a paint-brush, and the healing of Martin himself when he eats a poisonous herb called hellebore.³ Evidently, Ælfric's selection of miracles would be largely dependent on the precise sources he was using for this first biography: as has been noted above, Ælfric may not have used Sulpicius Severus' *Dialogues* in this *Life of Martin*, but rather relied solely on Alcuin's redaction of the life for information ultimately derived from these.⁴ If this were the case, any miracles in the *Dialogues* which were not included in Alcuin's summary would be omitted from Ælfric's biography in turn. One of the omitted healings, that of Licontius' household, is found in the *Dialogues* and not Alcuin, which may explain the absence of this episode in the *Catholic Homilies*. However, the two remaining miracles occur in the *Vita Martini*, rendering it reasonable to assume that Ælfric knew of these miracles and that their exclusion was a deliberate choice. Judging from Ælfric's selection, it appears that he was trying to give an example of each type of healing in his *Catholic*

¹ See Severus, *VM*, Chaps. VI, VII, XVIII and XIX and Severus, *Dialogi*, II:ii, III:ii, III:ix and III:xiv for the healings; and Severus, *VM*, Chaps. XVI, XVIII and XIX and *Dialogi*, II:ii for the statements.

² Godden 1979, p.622.

³ Severus, *VM*, Chaps. VI and XIX; and Severus, *Dialogi*, III:xiv.

⁴ Biggs 1996, p.289.

Homilies' vita of Martin. The healing of Paulinus' eyes parallels the woman touching Martin's garment, as in both cases an object physically connected to the saint serves as the channel through which the healing power is transmitted. The healing of Martin himself is reminiscent of the episode where God's angel heals Martin's wounds and illustrates the same point: that saints are protected by God. The healing miracles selected by Ælfric in his first *Life of Martin* are thus not chosen at random, but illustrate the full range of the saint's healing powers.

Ælfric includes two accounts of Martin performing exorcisms. In the first of these, Martin exorcises a devil from Tetradius' servant by placing his hands upon the afflicted man:

Tetradius hatte sum hæðen þegen his ðeowcnapena án wearð þearle
awed. þa sette martinus his handa him onuppon. and se feond fleah forht
for ðam halgan.¹

The second exorcism is more spectacular, and illustrates Martin's elevated nature. Martin holds out his hand for a possessed boy to bite, but the boy turns away from Martin's hand, and the devil departs via the boy's genitals as it cannot come from the boy's mouth which the saint has touched.² Here, Martin is not simply credited with the power to exorcise devils, but devils cannot come into contact with something Martin has touched. Both of these miracles are found in Sulpicius Severus' Martinian life and, whilst the events are immediately drawn from Alcuin, Ælfric went to Sulpicius

¹ Godden 1979, 34, *Martin*, ll.198-200: 'There was a heathen thane called Tetradius. One of his servants became violently mad, then Martin placed his hand upon him, and the fiend flew frightened from the saint'.

² Godden 1979, 34, *Martin*, ll.204-11.

Severus' *vita* for more detail concerning the latter miracle.¹ The extra information from Sulpicius Severus' narrative renders the episode more dramatic and heightens Martin's authority over evil spirits, as it includes Martin's command to the devil: 'si habes, inquit, aliquid potestatis, hos deuora'.²

The third exorcism, in which a possessed man is cured of his madness by sitting in a seat which Martin had previously rested in and blessed, is found in Sulpicius Severus' *Dialogues*, but Ælfric's account is more similar to that found in Alcuin.³ This miracle differs from the others described as Martin is not present at its occurrence. It has similar connotations to the exorcism of the devil from the boy, as it demonstrates that devils cannot come into contact with things Martin has touched. Like the healings described above, it arguably ascribes more power to the saint, as exorcisms can be brought about by the mere association of objects with Martin and do not necessitate his presence. These two exorcisms are selected from five such instances in Sulpicius Severus' biography. As with Ælfric's choice of healings, it seems that the selection was not random: one of the other episodes involves a devil being exorcised by Martin's bedstraw and parallels the exorcism on the bench, whilst the others occur when Martin is present. Ælfric's selection of miracles demonstrates that Martin can exorcise devils both through his presence and via objects associated with him, thus the full range of the saint's powers in this area is outlined.

Unlike the healings and exorcisms selected, Ælfric describes all three of the resurrections performed in the Latin source. In the first of these, one of Martin's followers dies before receiving baptism. Martin resurrects the man by stretching himself over the body in prayer, and the man relates his experience of being taken to a dark place until two angels came for him due to Martin's prayers:

¹ Severus, *VM*, Chap. XVII; and Alcuin, *VM*, 7, PL 101, 660-1.

² Severus, *VM*, Chap. XVIII: 'If you possess any power, devour these', trans. *NPNF*, vol. 11, p. 12.

³ Severus, *Dialogi*, II:viii; Alcuin, *VM*, 9, PL 101, 661; Godden 1979, 34, *Martin*, II.256-9.

Da comon þær fleogende twegen fægre englas. and hine gelæddon
 ongean to life for martines bene. swa swa he bæd æt gode;¹

This miracle demonstrates Martin's power to resurrect the dead while simultaneously stressing the importance of baptism. In the second resurrection, Martin restores a man who has hanged himself, and in the third brings a widow's son back to life.² The ability to perform a resurrection is fairly rare, and one predominantly ascribed to confessors and apostolic saints. Indeed, when asked to perform a resurrection, St. Benedict insists that 'nis ðis na ure dæd. ac is ðæra halgena apostola'.³ Martin's powers of resurrection thus differentiate him from the majority of saints in Ælfric's work. As apostolic acts, and designated by Gregory of Tours as the mightiest of visible miracles,⁴ the repeated ascription of resurrections to Martin demonstrates his greatness.

Whilst a general statement is made regarding Martin's power of prophecy in the *Catholic Homilies* account of his life, there is no example of Martin prophesying and the instances given in Sulpicius Severus of this power are omitted.⁵ Martin does possess miraculous knowledge of the present, and is able to recognize the devil despite his disguise:

¹ Godden 1979, 34, *Martin*, ll.103-5: 'Then two beautiful angels came flying there, and led him again to life, at the request of Martin, as he had prayed of God'. This episode is also recounted in Severus, *VM*, Chap. VII; and Skeat 1900, 31, *Martin*, ll.217-26.

² Godden 1979, 34, *Martin*, ll.105-9 and 145-52. These miracles are found in the Latin sources at Severus, *VM*, Chap. VII and Severus, *Dialogi*, II:iv; and included in Skeat 1900, 31, *Martin*, ll.244-53 and 1027-30.

³ Godden 1979, 11, *Benedict*, ll.475-6: 'It is not our act, but is that of the holy apostles'.

⁴ Gregory the Great, *Dialogorum*, III.xvii; PL 77.264-265. See above, pp.53-4.

⁵ Godden 1979, 34, *Martin*, ll.239-41.

Hwilon com se deofol on anre digelnysse mid purpuran gescryd. and
 mid helme geglend to ðam halgan were þær hé hine gebæd. and cwæð
 þæt hé wære witodlice se hælend ...¹

Martin recognizes the devil and states that Jesus did not say He would come clothed in purple, and the devil vanishes,² illustrating Martin's knowledge and power over the devil.

Martin is the recipient of a divine dream which concerns the most famous of the saint's acts. Christ appears to the saint in the half-cloak he gave to a beggar, and tells Martin the significance of his deed:

se hælend sona his englum ðus sæde; Martinus me bewæfde efne mid
 ðyssere wæde. þeah ðe hé ungefullod gyt farende sy ...³

This dream powerfully illustrates the message that whatever you do to another individual, you do to God. Ælfric's inclusion of this dream in his abbreviated text is therefore unsurprising: not only does it illustrate Martin's relationship with God, but also it outlines a central tenet of Christian belief.

Martin has a variety of encounters with angels, which usually concern them giving him assistance. Three such episodes are selected for exposition in the *Catholic Homilies*. In the first of these, Martin wants to destroy a heathen temple but is unable to do so, due to its sturdy nature, and angels fly down from heaven and overthrow it for

¹ Godden 1979, 34, *Martin*, ll.229-31: 'Once the devil came, in a secret place, clothed with purple, and adorned with a crown, to the holy man, where he was praying, and said that he was truly Jesus'.

² Godden 1979, 34, *Martin*, ll.228-38.

³ Godden 1979, 34, *Martin*, ll.40-42: 'and the Saviour then said to his angels thus, "Behold, Martin clothed me with this garment, although he is yet going unbaptized"'.

him.¹ This episode is found in Sulpicius Severus, but Ælfric's details of the event differ significantly from his source. In Ælfric's version, the angels overthrow the temple for Martin, whilst in Severus' *vita*, Martin cannot overthrow the temple due to heathen opposition, and the angels merely control this opposition while Martin overthrows the temple.² In his depiction of this miracle, Ælfric may be attempting to merge Sulpicius' account of events here with another miracle in his sources, in which a temple is so strongly built that human power cannot destroy it, and it is destroyed by a storm in response to Martin's prayers.³ Whilst some of the phrasing comes from Alcuin, Ælfric's account is not taken directly from this version either, and it is reasonable to postulate that the differences here are of his own creation. The alterations made to the miracle by Ælfric add considerable drama to the narrative, and the angels are literally heavenly warriors who intervene in a physical sense in the battle between Christianity and paganism. Their active role demonstrates Martin's close relationship with these heavenly protectors, and highlights the close relationship he enjoys with heavenly figures.

The remaining angelic visitations are taken ultimately from Sulpicius Severus, but Ælfric follows Alcuin in his account.⁴ Angels often visited Martin and spoke with him,⁵ and when Martin falls on the steps of a holy altar, God's angel heals him during the night:

¹ Godden 1979, 34, *Martin*, ll. 184-9.

² Severus, *VM*, Chap. XIV.

³ Severus, *Dialogi*, III:viii.

⁴ Severus, *VM*, Chaps. XIX and XXI; and Alcuin, *VM*, 8, PL 101, 661.

⁵ Godden 1979, 34, *Martin*, ll. 219-21.

Eft æt sumum sæle ætslád se halga wer on ðam healicum gradum æt
þam halgum weofode. swa þæt he fornean eal wearð tocwysed. ac on
þære nihte hine gelacnode god ðurh his halgan engel to ansundre hæle;¹

In this miracle, Alcuin has altered Sulpicius Severus' narrative, as in the original biography Martin falls from an upper room, not on the steps of an altar. The discrepancy between Alcuin and Severus is likely to result from a misunderstanding in translation, but it is interesting here that Ælfric follows Alcuin rather than Severus.² This could simply be because he was using Alcuin's narrative as his source at this point and saw no reason to change it. However, it is possible that the idea of Martin falling at an altar served as yet another reminder of his godly nature and religious way of life, and was thus actively preferred by Ælfric.

Martin is the subject of heavenly visits in Sulpicius' *Dialogues*, which relate how Postumianus and Sulpicius hear a conversation in Martin's cell and are informed by the saint that he was conversing with Agnes, Thecla and Mary.³ At a slightly later stage in the narrative, Sulpicius Severus relates that Peter and Paul are also said to be seen frequently by Martin.⁴ Alcuin conflates these two elements of the Latin and lists all the heavenly figures together, a feature which Ælfric follows in the *Catholic Homilies*:

Seo halige MARIA eac swilce gecom to ðam halgan were on sumere
tide mid twám apostolum. Petre. and Paule. mid twám mædenum. Tecla.

¹ Godden 1979, 34, *Martin*, ll.216-19: 'Also, at one time, the holy man slid on the steps at the holy altar, so that he was almost completely bruised; but in the night God restored him, through His holy angel, to sound health'.

² Biggs 1996, pp.297-8.

³ Severus, *Dialogi*, II:xiii.

⁴ Severus, *Dialogi*, II:xiii.

and Agna. and mid hire geneosunge hine gearwurðode. and micclum
gehyrte. þurh hire andwerdnysse,¹

As Biggs suggests, Ælfric may have been unaware of the differences between Alcuin's presentation of these events and Sulpicius Severus' biography due to exclusive use of Alcuin at this point in the narrative.² However, the conflation of the two events gives more impact to the statement: the names of some of the most important figures in Biblical history are given in two lines of text, creating a powerful cumulative impression of the heavenly association Martin enjoys.

Martin also has a variety of encounters with the devil, and three of five such episodes in Sulpicius Severus are expounded in the *Catholic Homilies*.³ Martin meets the devil on a journey, who says he will be his adversary. Martin tells the devil he does not fear him, and the devil vanishes.⁴ Later, a devil comes to Martin claiming to be Christ, but Martin is not fooled, and the devil vanishes leaving a stench.⁵ The final miracle in this version concerns Martin's death. Here, a devil stands at Martin's death-bed, but Martin says he will find nothing punishable in him.⁶ In all of these miracles, Martin's might over the devil is clearly illustrated, as the devil is able to neither beguile the saint or thwart his actions.

Martin is also shown to have control over the elements in the *Catholic Homilies*. Martin prevents fire from spreading to a house by standing on the roof facing the fire;⁷ and at mass, men see a fiery circle above the saint's head:

¹ Godden 1979, 34, *Martin*, ll.221-5: 'The holy Mary also came at one time to the holy man, with the two apostles Peter and Paul, with two virgins, Thecla and Agnes, and honoured him with their visit, and cheered him by their presence'. This is found in Alcuin, *VM*, 8, PL 101, 661.

² Biggs 1996, p.294.

³ These episodes are found in Severus, *VM*, Chaps. XI and XXIV; and Severus, *Ep. Ad Bassulum*, XVI.

⁴ Godden 1979, 34, *Martin*, ll.74-9.

⁵ Godden 1979, 34, *Martin*, ll.228-38.

⁶ Godden 1979, 34, *Martin*, ll.300-305.

⁷ Godden 1979, 34, *Martin*, ll.178-83.

Hwilon æt his mæssan men gesawon scinan færlice æt his hnelle swilce
 fyren clywen. swa þæt se scinenda līg his locc up ateah;¹

These miracles illustrate different aspects of Martin's power: the first demonstrates his authority over the elements as he is able to control their behaviour, whilst in the second the fire symbolises Martin's greatness. Martin also has power over the laws of physics: he sees hounds pursuing a deer, and freezes them in order to save the animal.² In a similar type of wonder, he sees heathens bearing a corpse and thinks they may be bearing an idol or engaged in profane rites, so he freezes them until his suspicions are put aside.³ Whilst this miracle is derived from Sulpicius Severus, Ælfric makes a significant alteration to its details. In the Latin, the procession is halted as Martin thinks the people may be engaged in profane rites,⁴ but in the *Catholic Homilies* there is no mention of Martin's mistake, and the heathens are halted 'oð þæt se halga hí eft alsyde. and lét hi forðgán. for his gódnysse'.⁵ As Godden points out, Ælfric fails to explain 'that Martin spellbound the heathens not in a gratuitous display of power but in the mistaken belief that they were engaging in devil-worship rather than a funeral'.⁶ The key to Ælfric's alteration of this event may lie in Godden's terms 'mistaken belief'. In Sulpicius' narrative, Martin's performance of the miracle results from an error of judgement on his part, perhaps an undesirable trait in a saint who is elsewhere gifted with the ability to know men's thoughts. Ælfric's minor alteration to this miracle may

¹ Godden 1979, 34, *Martin*, ll.241-3: 'Once at his mass, men suddenly saw shining a fiery circle shining on his head, so that the shining flame drew up his hair'.

² Godden 1979, 34, *Martin*, ll.261-4.

³ Godden 1979, 34, *Martin*, ll.154-60

⁴ Severus, *IM*. Chap. XII.

⁵ Godden 1979, 34, *Martin*, ll.159-60: 'until the saint freed them again, and let them go forwards, through his goodness'.

⁶ Godden 2000, p.628.

be a deliberate attempt to remove any suggestion of Martin's fallibility from the narrative.

The *Catholic Homilies* life relates two motion miracles which demonstrate the protection afforded Martin by God. A heathen man tries to kill Martin with a sword, but as the saint stretches his neck under the weapon, the heathen man falls back in awe and prays for forgiveness.¹ In the second such instance, a man attempt to strike the saint on the head with an iron weapon, but this flies out of his hand:

Eac sum oðer arleas hine wolde slea on his halgan heafde mid heardum
isene. ac þæt wæpen wánd aweg mi þam slege of ðæs reðan handum þe
hine hynan wolde;²

Both of these miracles are found in Sulpicius Severus, although it appears that Ælfric was using Alcuin as his immediate source here.³ These instances illustrate that God is protecting Martin, and the known laws of motion are overcome in order to prevent harm coming to the saint. The wonders perform a two-fold function, both emphasizing Martin's might in a spectacular fashion, and demonstrating the saint's close relationship with God.

The most clear and overriding factor in Ælfric's selection of miracles is their variety. The above typological discussion of miracles enables the range of powers attributed to Martin in the *vita* to be clearly seen, and Ælfric describes at least one instance of each type of miracle found in Sulpicius Severus. Martin is not presented specifically as an exorcist or healer, for example, but rather as a charismatic and potent

¹ Godden 1979, 34, *Martin*, ll.189-93

² Godden 1979, 34, *Martin*, ll.193-6: 'Some other wicked man would also strike him on his holy head with hard iron, but the weapon turned away with the stroke out of the hand of the terrible man who would injure him'.

³ Severus, *VM*, Chap. XV; and Alcuin, *VM*, 7, PL 101, 660.

individual capable of performing wonders of any kind. However, although Ælfric describes miracles of all kinds, he is more comprehensive regarding the unusual and arguably more ‘powerful’ kinds of miracles found in the Latin. This is shown, for instance, in his preference for the healings and exorcisms Martin performs without being physically present, a phenomenon credited to very few saints in the Old English hagiographic corpus. Similarly, Ælfric describes all the resurrections performed by Martin, again a rare and extremely potent type of miracle. Ælfric’s selection of miracles is not proportionate to his source, and demonstrates an active bias for miracles which enable Martin to stand apart from other saints in his charismatic abilities. Additionally, Ælfric’s alteration to Sulpicius Severus’ miracle of the funeral procession is significant. Ælfric’s presentation of this event removes any suggestion of Martin’s fallibility from the narrative, and comes closer than Sulpicius Severus to presenting an idealized picture of the saint. In this way, the miracles in the text are manipulated to present Martin in the most positive and authoritative light which can be achieved in such a short biography.

In addition to this, the percentage of the *Catholic Homilies* life concerned with the relation of miracles demonstrates Ælfric’s concern with this aspect of Martin’s sanctity. Relation of Martin’s miracles accounts for over half the narrative content of the biography, in contrast with around a tenth which concentrates on the saint’s pious deeds.¹ Miracles form the core of this narrative, and certain sections of the text are merely a catalogue of these. As will be explored below, the anonymous life presents a balanced picture of Martin in terms of his deeds and miracles, including a similar proportion of each. This option would have been open to Ælfric, and his decision to

¹ Statistics are approximate, as the parameters of miraculous episodes are not always clearly drawn. This calculation counts ll.38-44, 50-58,74-9, 88-90, 95-109, 133-248, 253-67, 270-2, 275-82, 300-304, 305-10, 321-6 and 328-9 in Godden 1979 as miraculous episodes; and ll.22-38, 86-8, 116-32, and 249-53 as episodes relating Martin’s pious deeds.

focus on Martin's miracles to such a great extent in his abbreviated *passio* illustrates his desire to present a formidable and powerful picture of his subject.

The *Lives of Saints* Biography.

Ælfric's *Lives of Saints* collection contains a far longer *Life of Martin*, and includes all the healing miracles found in Sulpicius Severus' account of the saint.¹ The miracles in the *Catholic Homilies* life are related, alongside the curing of Licontius' household, the curing of Paulinus' eyes, and Martin's own healing after he eats a poisonous herb. The comprehensive nature of the text in this case is significant: the extensive volume of materials in Severus' biography of Martin would suggest abbreviation to be a concern, and Ælfric's inclusion of all Martin's Healing Miracles illustrates the importance which he places on the saint and on this type of miracle. Unlike the *Catholic Homilies* biography which avoids extensive repetition of similar miracles, the *Lives of Saints* text is concerned to stress Martin's ability to heal to the greatest extent possible. In addition, the detail included by Ælfric in one of these miracles adds to Martin's greatness. As Gates points out,

in relating Martin's healing of Paulinus' eyes (Skeat, 256/585-600), Ælfric incorporates a brief description of Paulinus drawn from a separate passage in the Vita (25/4). This adds to the interest of the miracle, for it emphasises Martin's holiness and adds to his authority when such a holy man as Paulinus is cured only by Martin's intervention.²

¹ Skeat 1900, 31, *Martin*, ll.196-200, 501-5, 562-8, 576-9, 589-91, 606-9, 946-8, 960-64, 1103-19, 1256-8 and 1277-84.

² Gates 1982, p.30.

The extra information incorporated into the biography supports the notion that Ælfric aims to glorify Martin through his depiction of the saint's Healing Miracles.

Ælfric's *Lives of Saints* collection details five exorcisms, which correspond with the five such miracles described in Sulpicius' *vita*.¹ These include the episodes concerning Tetradius and the boy described above, in addition to the expulsion of a devil via Martin's bedstraw, the healing of a possessed cow, and the dismissal of a devil sitting on Aviantus' back.² The episode concerning the bedstraw is perhaps the most striking as, like the final exorcism in the *Catholic Homilies*' *vita*, Martin is not present at the event, and the miracle is effected merely through an object associated with him. The comprehensive treatment of exorcism episodes demonstrates Ælfric's preoccupation with this kind of miracle, a concern which could be related to the connotations of exorcism miracles. As Peter Brown describes, the power of exorcism was one of the more authoritative forms of miracle working:

Late-antique and early-medieval men were not merely impressed by the melodramatic associations of exorcism: they felt that in such a drama they witnessed more clearly and with greater precision the manner in which God, through his lords the saints, could stretch forth into their midst the right hand of his healing power. The *medicabilis divinae potentiae dextera*, from whose touch all miracles sprang, was shown at its most "mysterious and terrifying" in the shouts of the demons speaking through the possessed at the shrines of the saints.³

¹ See Severus, *VM*, Chaps. XVII and XVIII, and Severus, *Dialogi*, II:viii and ix and III:viii for the exorcisms in Severus.

² Skeat 1900, 31, *Martin*, ll.519-521, 544-7, 572-3, 1046-9 and 1182-91.

³ Peter Brown, *The Cult of Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1981), p.107.

In addition to this, Lynda Coon points out that exorcisms are related to Christ's Passion, as in this He was seen to have exorcised evil from the world:

Late antique and early medieval Christians interpreted Christ's crucifixion as a kind of exorcism, initiating the expulsion of evil from the world. The great Egyptian male hermits thus reproduce the redemptive powers of the crucifixion by exorcising legions of demons who take the shapes of beasts, serpents, reptiles, crocodiles, bishops, and seductive women.¹

The stress placed on exorcism by Ælfric serves a variety of functions through the connotations of this kind of miracle. It provides a clear illustration of God's power working in the saint; serves as a reminder of Christ's Passion; and identifies Martin with the Saviour as the saint's miracles reflect His redemption of the world. Alongside these traditional associations of exorcism, it may also have held contemporary relevance. The power of exorcism was also related to the Anglo-Saxon Church:

Exorcism appears to have been used during the church service when incense, oil, and salt were cleansed of all evil spirits, for example.²

The performance of these miracles by Martin would therefore provide evidence of the occurrence of exorcisms and associate contemporary Anglo-Saxon church practice with this great figure. The comprehensive treatment of exorcisms in Ælfric's account

¹ Coon 1997, p.xvii.

² Elaine M. Treharne, "Exorcism", in *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. Michael Lapidge, with John Blair, Simon Keynes and Donald Scragg (Malden; Oxford; Melbourne; Berlin: Blackwell Publishers, 2003): 179-80, here p.179, hereafter Lapidge *et al*, 2003.

therefore both glorifies Martin and emphasizes his authority, whilst allying his powers with those in religious orders.

In addition to the actual instances of exorcism, general comments are made concerning Martin's power to perform such miracles. In the *Lives of Saints' vita*, Ælfric makes statements which glorify Martin. For example, when the saint sends away Aviantus' devil, it is said to be through Martin's might.¹ Later it is said that Martin is able to cast out devils so that the saying 'halige menn sceolon englum deman' may be fulfilled in him,² and that the devils in possessed men feared at Martin's coming:

Twa mila hæfde martinus fram his mynstre to turonian byrig þær se
bisceop-stol wæs . and swa oft swa he þyder ferde swa forhtodon þa
deofla on ge-wit-seocum mannum for-þan-ðe hi wiston his to-cyme .³

Similar statements are found in Sulpicius Severus, and in this sense Ælfric cannot be said to be altering the tone of his source.⁴ However, at one point in the *Dialogues* Sulpicius Severus does admit to the lessening of Martin's power to exorcise devils. Here, Martin is forced to mix with evil company through no fault of his own, but feels guilty about his actions. After this has happened, Martin cures the possessed more slowly than he did before, and says he feels that his power is slightly diminished:

Ceterum cum quosdam ex energumenis tardius quam solebat et gratia
minore curaret, subinde nobis cum lacrimis fatebatur, se propter

¹ Skeat 1900, 31, *Martin*, ll.1195-6.

² Skeat 1900, 31, *Martin*, l.1214: 'holy men will judge angels'.

³ Skeat 1900, 31, *Martin*, ll.1198-201: 'Martin had two miles to go from his monastery to the city of Tours in which his Episcopal see was; and as often as he went there the devils in possessed men were frightened, because they knew about his coming'.

⁴ Severus, *Dialogi*, III:viii and III:vi.

communione illius malum, cui se uel puncto temporis necessitate, non spiritu miscuisset, detrimentum sentire virtutis.¹

Martin's power is eventually restored, and by way of illustration, Sulpicius relates an instance of a possessed person being cured before even touching the threshold of the monastery.² Despite the fact that Martin is restored to his former greatness, there is no doubt that this story casts a slight shadow over Martin's sanctity and miraculous power, and it is significant that Ælfric does not include it in his depiction of the saint's miracles. This perhaps reflects a desire on Ælfric's part to glorify the saint to the greatest degree possible, and his inclusion of all of the exorcism stories found in Sulpicius' *vita* supports this idea. The depiction of exorcisms in the *Lives of Saints* version of Martin's biography therefore presents the saint in the best possible light: Ælfric describes all such miracles and omits Sulpicius' admission of the lessening of Martin's power in this area.

Unlike the *Catholic Homilies* text, the *Lives of Saints' vita* describes Martin's powers of prophecy and foreknowledge. Fishermen complain that they are unable to catch anything, but Martin correctly predicts that they will be successful if they try again.³ The second instance of Martin's ability in this area refers to the power of prophecy more specifically, as Martin correctly predicts that if Maximus goes into battle against Valentinian he will be successful at first but will be killed soon after:

¹ Severus, *Dialogi*, III:xiii.6: 'But when it happened that he cured some of the possessed more slowly and with less grace than usual, he at once confessed to us with tears that he felt a diminution of his power on account of the evil of that communion in which he had taken part for a moment, through necessity, and not with a cordial spirit', trans. *NPNF*, vol. 11, p. 52.

² Severus, *VM*, Chap. XIV.

³ Skeat 1900, 31, *Martin*, ll. 1268-76.

He sæde þa þam casere swa swa him becom siððan . þæt gif he ferde to
ge-feohte swa he gemynte ongear ualentinianum þe he aflymde ær of
his cyne-dom . þæt him come sige . ac æfter lytlum fyrst he sceolde
feallan ofslagan . and hit gewearð swa swa him gewitegode martinus .¹

These two instances of Martin's power of prophecy in the *Lives of Saints* text correspond with the two examples given in Sulpicius' account,² and Martin also demonstrates miraculous knowledge of present events on seven occasions.³ These include angels informing Martin of what has taken place in the synod, and a robe created by sorcery vanishing in front of the saint as the devil cannot hide his delusions from him.⁴ Martin is able to see through the devil's sorcery, and is given knowledge of events through divine help. Martin's divine knowledge is also demonstrated as he uncovers the truth about a supposed martyr. In the Latin, Sulpicius says that Martin is unsure of the identity of a person whose burial place is venerated by the people, and wishes to discover this:

Sed Martinus non temere adhibens incertis fidem, ad his, qui maiores
natu errant, presbyteris uel clericis flagitabat nomen sibi martyris,
tempus passionis ostendi.⁵

¹ Skeat 1900, 31, *Martin*, ll.639-44: 'Then he said to the emperor, just as it happened to him afterwards, that if he went to battle, as he intended, against Valentinian whom he had before banished from his kingdom, that victory would come to him, but after a little space he would be killed; and it happened to him just as Martin had prophesied to him'.

² Severus, *Dialogi*, III:x and Severus, *VM*, Chap. XX.

³ Skeat 1900, 31, *Martin*, ll.556-61, 682-7, 706-9, 762-9, 775-91, 825-7, 1007-10.

⁴ Skeat 1900, 31, *Martin*, ll.825-7.

⁵ Severus, *VM*, Chap. XI: 'But Martin, not inclined to give a hasty belief to things uncertain, often asked from those who were his elders, whether among the presbyters or clerics, that the name of the martyr, or the time when he had suffered, should be made known to him', trans. *NPNF*, vol.11, p.9.

It is eventually revealed to Martin that the individual was not a martyr, but a thief.¹ In his depiction of this miracle, Ælfric strays from Sulpicius Severus' account. Whilst in the Latin, Martin is merely curious to learn more about the individual before he believes, in the Old English, Martin instinctively knows that the people's belief is erroneous, and Ælfric's asserts that 'Martinus ða ne ge-lyfde þam leasum ge-dwimore'.² Gates suggests that this subtle alteration of the source shows that Ælfric saw the episode as problematic:

Ælfric may well have felt that there was some ambiguity in Martin's having doubts on the subject, for Sulpicius is often at pains to point out Martin's foresight (see, for example, *Vita*, 21/5). This aspect of Martin's saintliness is stressed still more by Ælfric, particularly since he is anxious that all issues should be clear and uncomplicated to suit the needs of his audience.³

This correlates with the high frequency of episodes concerning Martin's foreknowledge in the *Lives of Saints* text, and suggests that Ælfric was concerned to highlight this aspect of Martin's ability as there is only one instance of miraculous knowledge found in his sources that he does not include.⁴ The kind of higher knowledge displayed by Martin elevates the saint, as the power to know men's hearts is frequently ascribed to the divine. This concentration on Mind Miracles is continued in the *Lives of Saints*

¹ Severus, *VM*, Chap. XI.

² Skeat 1900, 31, *Martin*, 1.346: 'Martin did not believe the false delusion'.

³ Gates 1992, p.35.

⁴ Severus, *Dialogi*, III:xiv, where Martin knows about the troubles in Licontius' household.

collection, which is also comprehensive regarding the dreams sent to Martin by the Lord.¹

Martin has encounters with supernatural beings in the *Lives of Saints*' text, including contact with angels. The three episodes found in the *Catholic Homilies*, alongside two more instances of angelic intervention, are described in this collection.² These visits correspond with those in Sulpicius' *vita*,³ but there is one instance of an angelic visit that Ælfric does not describe.⁴ This involves the episode mentioned above, where Martin is forced to mix with unholy communion. After he has done this, an angel visits him and tells him that his guilt is appropriate although he was given no other option, and encourages him to renew his courage and virtue. As has been discussed, this event casts a slightly negative aspect over Martin's deeds, as he acted against his conscience, and its omission shows Ælfric's reluctance to admit to any fault, however debatable, in the saint.

The encounters with the devil found in the *Catholic Homilies* are included in the *Lives of Saints*' *vita*, alongside three more.⁵ The addition of one of these miracles is particularly notable, as it concerns an episode which was viewed by some of Sulpicius Severus' contemporaries as casting doubt over Martin's power. A fire breaks out in Martin's room, and his first reaction is to try and leave. However, he cannot open the door fast enough, and his clothes begin to burn. He eventually realizes that the way to overcome the fire is through prayer, and the flames then move away from him. Martin afterwards says that it was due to the devil's deception that he did not begin to pray at

¹ Skeat 1900, 31, *Martin*, ll.75-87 and 145-7. See Severus, *VM*, Chaps. III and V.

² Skeat 1900, 31, *Martin*, ll.455-8, 606-9, 659-70, 682-7 and 1151-68.

³ Severus, *VM*, Chaps. XIV, XIX and XXI; and Severus, *Dialogi*, II:v, II:xiii and III:iv. In his depiction of the angelic healing Martin follows Severus' account in this case.

⁴ Severus, *Dialogi*, III:xiii.

⁵ Skeat 1900, 31, *Martin*, ll.170-78, 762-73, 775-87, 870-94, 1073-6 and 1364-70.

once.¹ In his *Epistle to Eusebius*, Severus says that some question Martin's miraculous power as a result of his momentary subjection to fire,² and it is in answer to these critics that Sulpicius Severus explains the devil's role in the event. The episode calls into question Martin's power as he is momentarily beguiled by the devil and subjected to danger, but Sulpicius feels he has answered these criticisms as Martin overcame the devil's interference. Ælfric's inclusion of the event suggests that he did not feel that the incident cast any doubts over Martin's power, and this is a logical standpoint to take. To see the episode as problematic would imply that God's saints should be protected from all earthly hardships, and raise questions over the sufferings of the martyrs. In answer to such criticisms as those leveled at Sulpicius Severus regarding this episode, Augustine states that all Christians can claim,

ille cum me adversis rebus exagitat, aut merita examinat aut peccata
castigat mercedemque mihi aeternam pro toleratis pie malis
temporalibus servat.³

This statement evidently applies more to the *passiones* of martyrs, but the same principle governs both scenarios. The episode in Martin's life does not imply a diminishing of the saint's power as his loss of the power of exorcism does, but rather that Martin has been subjected to a trial by the devil which he succeeded in overcoming.

¹ Skeat 1900, 31, *Martin*, ll.860-94.

² Severus, *Ep. Ad Eusebium*, II-III.

³ Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, I.xxix; LCL vol. 411, p.124: 'When he exposes me to adversity, he is either testing my deserts or chastising my sins; he has in store for me an eternal reward in return for any misfortunes of this life, that have been borne in accordance with religious duty' (trans. LCL vol. 411, p.125).

The *Lives of Saints*' version of Martin's *vita* contains a larger number of element miracles than Ælfric's earlier account. In addition to the miracles described above, there are two more instances involving fire. One of these is carried out in order to terrify an emperor who opposes Martin, as when he sits on his throne, a fire hangs above his head until he is terrified and kisses the saint:

ac þær wearþ godes miht swa þæt heofonlic fyr hangode ofer his setl .
and þæt setl ontende . and hine syflne wolde gif he þe hraðor ne arise .
aworpenre reðnysse . and þone bisceop cyste . ablicged þurh god . þone
þe he ær geteohhode mid teonan to for-seonne.¹

This miracle is performed for the purpose of conversion, and illustrates the awe experienced by those who witness Martin's miracles. The remaining fire miracle involves the Lord's protection of Martin from the fire which breaks out in his room.² Two miracles involving water are also found in the *Lives of Saints vita*, both of which demonstrate the favour which Martin holds with God. In the first of these a man calms the sea in Martin's name, whilst in the second Martin's prayers prevent hail falling on a town until after this death.³ Both of these miracles show that pleas for help either by Martin or in his name are answered, and thus encourage requests for the saint's intercession. All of the above miracles have Sulpicius as their ultimate source.⁴

¹ Skeat 1900, 31, *Martin*, ll.672-7: 'but a miracle of God appeared there, so that heavenly fire hung over his throne, and set light to the throne, and would have done the same to him if he had not very quickly got up, his anger being cast aside; and, being divinely afraid, kissed the bishop who he had before determined to scorn with reproach'.

² Skeat 1900, 31, *Martin*, ll.870-94.

³ Skeat 1900, 31, *Martin*, ll.1135-42 and 1221-8.

⁴ Severus, *VM*, Chap. XIV; Severus, *Dialogi*, II:ii, II:v, III:vii, III:xiv; and Severus, *Ep. Ad Eusebium*, X-XV.

Martin's dominion over the animal kingdom is abundantly shown in Ælfric's later text. An episode in which cormorants obey the saint is described, alongside miracles in which a cow and water-snake are subject to Martin's dominion.¹ A notable Animal Miracle is found in this life paralleling one described above in *Element Miracles*, as a man silences a hound in Martin's name.² Martin is shown to have power over animals by his command and requests made in his name, and through the presentation of Animal Miracles, the *Lives of Saints* text encourages requests for Martin's intercession. Martin's incredible authority over creation elevates the saint through its associations: in his flawless state, mankind had dominion over the animal kingdom, and the restoration of this in Martin brings him closer to the perfection of mankind before the Fall:

Like reason and free will, dominion too existed only in a flawed state.

This explained the human's fear of wild beasts. Nevertheless there were exceptional persons in whom this lordship not only over domestic but even over wild animals had at least been temporarily restored.³

Martin is one such 'exceptional' individual, and this signification of Animal Miracles illustrates their importance in demonstrating Martin's authority.

Motion miracles of several kinds are included by Ælfric in this *vita*. The miraculous instances in which heathens are prevented from attacking Martin, described above in the *Catholic Homilies*, are also found in Ælfric's *Lives of Saints*.⁴ The life also describes motion miracles where animate objects are frozen: it describes how men who

¹ Skeat 1900, 31, *Martin*, ll.1322-7, 1054-5 and 1262-4.

² Skeat 1900, 31, *Martin*, ll.1130-34.

³ Ramsey 1993, p.70.

⁴ Skeat 1900, 31, *Martin*, ll.464-73 and 474-8.

beat Martin are prevented from going on their way as their horses are frozen to the spot and released in accordance with the saint's desire; and includes the two Motion Miracles found in the *Catholic Homilies*.¹ As has been discussed, the *Catholic Homilies* contains an inaccurate representation of one of these miracles, omitting the detail in Sulpicius Severus that Martin performed the miracle due to a mistake. However, in the *Lives of Saints* narrative, Martin's original misunderstanding of events is referred to:

Ac þa þa martinus oncneow þæt hí mid lice ferdon na mid deofol-gilde .

þa dyde he up his hand . and sealde him leafe to siþigenne forð .²

It is possible that the original misrepresentation of this episode was not deliberate, but equally that Ælfric later changed his mind regarding the episode and decided it was not problematic.

There is extensive evidence to indicate that Ælfric's texts were designed to elevate Martin. In both the *Catholic Homilies* and *Lives of Saints* texts, although to a greater extent in the latter, Martin is divinized rather than humanized. There are many factors which support this idea, beginning with the inclusion of such a high frequency of miracles: twenty-four wonders are performed by Martin in the *Catholic Homilies* biography and thirty-eight in the *Lives of Saints* text. When considered against the average number of miracles per life in Ælfric's hagiography, this is an incredibly high figure.³ In Gates' view, 'The *Dialogi* were used simply to augment the number of

¹ Skeat 1900, 31, *Martin*, ll.984-1006.

² Skeat 1900, 31, *Martin*, ll.382-4: 'But when Martin understood that they were traveling with a corpse, not with an idol, then he lifted up his hand, and gave them permission to travel forward'.

³ For the numbers of miracles included in other Old English saints' lives, see the Typology Database in Appendix 2 and the table of miracle frequencies in Appendix 1. The average number of miracles per life is five for male saints and one for female saints.

miracles in the *Lives of Saints*’ collection’,¹ and the additional illustrations of Martin’s charismatic abilities drawn from here illustrate Ælfric’s desire to emphasize Martin’s miraculous power. It is likely that Ælfric used the majority of materials available to him regarding Martin’s miracles. A lengthy catalogue of miracles by Gregory the Great which supplemented those in Sulpicius Severus did exist, and Gerould stated that:

The fact that Ælfric did not borrow from Gregory’s amazing collection of wonders indicates both his scholarly temper, which rejected the later for the earlier and soberer account, and his instinct to round out a biographical sketch without overloading it with extraneous matter.²

However, Zettel’s later analysis of the Cotton-Corpus Legendary suggested that Ælfric did not necessarily have access to this piece in its entirety. Whilst Ælfric employs parts of the text in his work, it is likely that he found the relevant sections of the texts excerpted in his source legendary which did not include the whole of *De Virtutibus*:

it can now be shown that all of the material hitherto attributed to the missing chapter, derived not from *De virtutibus* but from two other works, both of which find a place in the legendary.³

Zettel’s discovery suggests that Ælfric may not have had access to Gregory’s *De Virtutibus* in its entirety, and as such the omission of miracles recorded in this text is likely to be less an indication of his ‘scholarly temper’ and more a result of the

¹ Gates 1982, p.23.

² G.H. Gerould, “Ælfric’s Lives of St. Martin of Tours”, *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 24 (1925): 206-10, here p.209.

³ Zettel 1982, p.25.

resources available to him. In his *Lives of Saints* collection, then, Ælfric may have included the vast majority of Martinian miracles of which he was aware.

Ælfric's selection of miracles also supports the idea of Ælfric's elevation of Martin through the saint's miracles. In the *Catholic Homilies* biography, Ælfric's selection of miracles is concerned to illustrate the range of the saint's powers. Martin is credited with thaumaturgic healings and exorcisms, performs resurrections, is the recipient of heavenly visits, and verges on omniscience. In the *Lives of Saints* text Ælfric includes the vast majority of miracles from the Latin which glorify the saint, while omitting the only instance which casts any doubt over Martin's blameless and powerful nature. In this way, Ælfric is manipulating the miracles in his source to present Martin in the most favourable light possible. Such factors in the presentation of the miraculous in both texts show that Ælfric subtly alters his source in order to glorify the saint to a high degree, and suggests that his Martin is designed to function as an object to inspire awe and veneration rather than as a life to be imitated.

Ælfric's glorification of Martin could have several aims. Firstly, it may simply result from a desire to present any saintly individual in a positive light. As Delehaye comments, hagiographers throughout the ages display reluctance to depict a saint's shortcomings, for instance by omitting episodes such as Peter's denial of Christ:

there is a school of hagiographers who would gladly expunge St Peter's denial from the gospels, in order not to tarnish the halo of the leader of the apostles. They conform, more than we could wish, to the strict requirements of the kind of writing they are engaged on.¹

¹ Delehaye 1998, p.54.

Whilst Sulpicius Severus' biography of Martin can easily be said to represent an idealized picture, Ælfric may have exercised his own judgement in order to produce a more stark portrait of the saint and remove any possible doubts over Martin's perfection. Scott DeGregorio discusses Ælfric's editing of sources in the case of Peter and Paul, which similarly presents the saints in a more positive light than is found in the Latin. He suggests that,

Ælfric obviously felt that the passion of SS Peter and Paul should be recounted in a way that made the imperative of venerating them with an attitude of awe and reverence absolutely clear: to do any less, apparently, was to mislead and hence, so to speak, to flirt with 'gedwyld'.¹

Whatley also comments on Ælfric's apparent desire to remove any problematic details from his saints' lives, for instance in his editing of the *Life of Apollinaris*:

In short, Ælfric has not only made Apollinaris a more consistently resident bishop, apparently in control of his diocese for most of his tenure, but he has also eliminated all episodes in which the saint seems quite powerless and ineffectual and in which his physical sufferings and humiliations are not offset or avenged by divine or human actions of his behalf.²

¹ DeGregorio 2001, p.98.

² Whatley 1997, p.191.

A similar trend can be seen in Ælfric's treatment of Martin, and thus Ælfric's manipulation of his source can be seen as a form of literary *gedwyld* performed to prevent the spiritual error of believing any fault existed in Martin. That Ælfric would see such clarity as necessary is suggested by his own comments. Ælfric advocates that his translations must be rendered suitably simply for his audience, for instance asserting that he will not translate the *Vitae Patrum* because the work '*multa subtilia habentur quae non conueniunt aperiri laicis, nec nos ipsi ea quimus implere*'.¹ In short, the material presented in the works must be censored, and only that which is suitable for the understanding of his readers or listeners will be translated. Perhaps the doubt that the lessening of Martin's power casts over his immaculate persona was deemed unsuitable for his audience, as it may have led them to doubt the glory and sanctity of this great bishop confessor.

The presentation of such a powerful saint, and one who should be approached with an attitude of awe and veneration, also has practical implications. This kind of elevation promotes the notion of saints as intercessors: they are presented as something outside of the human realm, devoid of human flaws, and possessing supernatural powers. This approach would encourage prayer and gifts to the saints, beneficial to the monastic community in terms of its popularity, profile and funds. As Donovan points out, the idea of monastic propaganda was nothing unusual:

from the beginning, saints' lives have been intentionally propagandistic.

Just as they reflected profound spiritual truths, they also sometimes manipulated those truths to generate monastic propaganda to encourage

¹ Skeat 1891, *Preface*, ll.13-14: 'contained many subtle points which should not to be laid open to the laity, nor indeed are we ourselves able to fathom them'.

economic support for advancing the causes and ideology of the Christian faith.¹

In this way, it is possible that Ælfric's glorification of St. Martin could have been related to practical gain as well as the spiritual edification of his audience, a phenomenon that can be applied to a great deal of hagiography.

There is also evidence to suggest that Ælfric's biographies of Martin were designed to promote the religious orders in a specific sense. Notions of monastic propaganda are especially applicable to contemporary saints, the patrons of religious communities and the relics of these figures,² but the elevation of saints as a means of promoting the church can be witnessed across the hagiographic genre. Monastic saints such as Martin were the saintly equivalents of those in earthly ecclesiastical positions, and association with such powerful saints would raise the profile and compound the authority of those in religious orders. As Scott DeGregorio points out, whilst Anglo-Saxon monks may not have wielded a great deal of power, their association with the saints lent them authority:

while monks under poverty and stability may not have much power in this world, their intimately familiar patrons, the saints, had enough power to make the secular world quake.³

This comment applies to all saints, but those in religious orders would have a stronger connection with their Anglo-Saxon monastic counterparts. As such, Ælfric's

¹ Donovan 1999, p.9

² For discussion of the employment of saints in monastic propaganda, see, for example, Ridyard 1983 and Geary 1978.

³ DeGregorio 2001, p.96.

glorification of Martin through the presentation of his miracles may demonstrate a desire to promote the status of those in religious orders by stressing the incredible powers of their saintly predecessors. Study of the wider framework of Ælfrician hagiography provides further evidence for this hypothesis. All of the confessors Ælfric treats in his work hold religious office, as do the martyrs Alexander, Eventus and Theodolus, Apollinaris, and Stephen. Residence in an episcopal office provides a route to achieving sanctity, and remained the primary means of attaining this in medieval times, a notion which does account for the high frequency of saints who held religious offices. However, confessor saints did achieve sanctity through other means, and as Magennis comments,

in his saints' lives Ælfric avoids paying attention to eremitical saints. He has no lives of the desert fathers, and he ignores the English hermit Guthlac. He includes the life of St Cuthbert in his second series of *Catholic Homilies*, but diminishes the emphasis on Cuthbert's attachment to the contemplative life.¹

The eremitic life did not perhaps provide the most attractive paradigm of sanctity to Ælfric, but his concentration on episcopal saints may also reflect his desire to promote these offices. In addition, the types of miracles ascribed to episcopal saints are often rare and powerful in nature, and include resurrection and thaumaturgic healing. Resurrections are perceived as apostolic acts,² and outside the apostolic corpus only ecclesiastical saints perform resurrections,³ placing these figures on a par with the

¹ Magennis 1996a, p.105.

² Godden 1979, 11, *Benedict*, ll.475-6.

³ For instances of Resurrection in confessor lives, see Skeat 1891, 6, *Maur*, ll.186-213; and 22, *Apollinaris*, ll.116-18; and Godden 1979, 11, *Benedict*, ll.217-21 and 484-99.

twelve in the sphere of miracle working. Distance healing, another rare miracle, is ascribed solely to episcopal saints in Ælfric's work.¹ Ælfric's handling of the source biographies in confessor lives is also revealing, and in his treatment of Cuthbert and Benedict Ælfric actively edits his sources to stress their performance of miracles rather than other aspects of their lives.² As Godden comments of Benedict's *vita*, 'The whole story becomes a list of miracles'.³

A trend ascribing less common miracles predominantly to saints in religious orders can therefore be seen. In addition to this, the frequency of miracles in these lives is often high, with the average number of miracles performed by Ælfric's episcopal saints standing at eleven per life, while the average for the Ælfrician corpus as a whole is a markedly lower three.⁴ The miraculous powers of saints in religious orders thus differ to those found elsewhere, and particularly in the cases of Martin, Maur and Benedict, their wonder-working differentiates them from other saintly figures. Such glorification of episcopal saints would be beneficial for the monastic community: the authority and prestige of those in religious orders would be heightened through association with their saintly counterparts, and this kind of promotion would help to raise monastic profile and funds.

The Anonymous Biography.

The rarity of miracles in the anonymous *Life of Martin* is striking, particularly in the case of Healing Miracles. Unlike the *Lives of Saints' vita* which is comprehensive regarding these wonders, the anonymous life disregards much of the information in

¹ Skeat 1891, 6, *Maur*, ll.283-8; and Godden 1979, 11, *Benedict*, ll.403-5.

² Claire Watson, 'The Reworking of Tradition: Contemporary Concerns in Old English Hagiography', International Medieval Congress, Leeds 2004, pp.3-7.

³ Malcolm Godden, "Experiments in Genre: The Saints' Lives in Ælfric's *Catholic Homilies*", in Szarmach 1996: 261-87, here p.278, hereafter Godden 1996.

⁴ See Appendix 1 for calculations of these statistics.

Sulpicius Severus here, and not one Healing Miracle is described in this version of Martin's life. There are two general statements pertaining to healing, which describe the saint's might in healing and report that parts of his clothing are known to heal sick men:

7 he to þæs mihting wæs ælce untrumness to hælanne, 7 to þæs mycle
 gife he ðæs æt Gode onfeng, þætte/ ne wæs ænig man to þæs untrum þe
 hine gesohte þæt he sona hælo ne onfenge. Ge þæt oft gelamp þonne
 hwylc man his hrægles dæl to untumum menn brohte þæt he þonne þurh
 þæt wearð hal geworden.¹

Whilst this statement discusses Martin's healing power in a general sense and says that no-one seeks the saint without receiving their health, no concrete example of healing is given. The quotation appears to be a combination of two parts of Sulpicius Severus' *Vita Martini*: at one point Severus claims that hardly any sick people came to Martin without being cured, and later relates that threads from Martin's garment perform miracles on the sick by being tied around their fingers or necks.² The author of the anonymous Martinian *vita* thus presumably had access to Sulpicius' biography or an adapted version of this and possibly chose to omit all the examples of the saint's healing. It could be that the Old English represents a direct translation of a lost Latin source as Scragg suggests, but even then the popularity of Martin's legend renders it possible that the Old English translator would have been aware of healings performed by Martin and could have supplemented his source with these. It could be argued that

¹ Scragg 1992, Martin, ll.207-12: 'And he was so powerful in healing every sickness, and he had received so much grace from God that there was not any one so sick who looked for him that did not immediately receive health. Also, it often happened when someone brought a part of St. Martin's clothing to a sick man, the sick man through that would be healed'.

² Severus, *VM*, Chaps. XVI and XVIII.

examples of healings were unnecessary due to the general statement given regarding the saint's power, but Ælfric gives similar statements and still includes specific stories. In this way, healings are given less emphasis in the anonymous *Life of Martin* than in its Ælfrician counterparts.

The anonymous author's omission of all episodes of healing implies that the author was not only unconcerned with these episodes, but perhaps even uncomfortable in relating them. Indeed, as the discussion of miracles in this life will demonstrate, the anonymous author is more inclined to relate physical, concrete miracles which could not occur as a result of natural causes, and which have been witnessed by several people. The preference for these kinds of miracles perhaps presents a means of authorizing the narrative from within, as the miracles themselves assert the reliability of the account. Whilst healings do represent a physical phenomenon, they can occur naturally and often rely on the word of their subject, so the occurrence of a healing does not necessarily imply the occurrence of a miracle and leaves the wondrous nature of such an event open to question.

As with physical healings, the anonymous *Life of Martin* exhibits far less preoccupation with exorcisms than its Ælfrician counterparts. No exorcisms are described, although the Vercelli version of the text makes a reference to Martin's abilities in this area. Martin comes to a river where cormorants are diving for fish, and compares their insatiable appetite to that of devils. The cormorants fly away at Martin's command, and the author asserts that he put them to flight just as he does the devils in each place he visits.¹ Martin's ability to exorcise devils is thus implicit, but not dwelt upon. The Blickling and Junius versions of the anonymous life contain no such reference, however. They lack lines 230-42 of the Vercelli text, and Scragg presumes

¹ Scragg 1992, *Martin*, ll.236-42.

this to be ‘a deliberate excision in an ancestor since the lines deal with a single incident, Martin’s dismissal of a flock of fishing birds which represent the devil’.¹ The reason behind this excision, made either in an ancestor of the Blickling and Junius versions or in these texts themselves, could relate to the content of the episode. The fact that the omitted lines concern exorcisms, which are not commented on elsewhere in the anonymous life, may be significant. Exorcisms are clearly not seen as central in the anonymous life, and perhaps this accounts for the missing lines in the Blickling and Junius manuscripts. Exorcisms do not feature largely in the anonymous biography, a trend which could result from their subjective and abstract nature which renders the truth of their performance open to conjecture.

The resurrection of the hanged man and the unbaptised catechumen are both related in the anonymous *vita*, and only the episode concerning the widow’s son is omitted.² The folios on which these episodes would appear in the Vercelli text have been lost, but there is no reason to think it would not correspond with the Blickling and Junius versions in including these instances. Unlike the Healing Miracles where the anonymous author appears unconcerned with describing actual events and only refers to these miracles in a general sense, specific instances of resurrections are given. This suggests that the anonymous author places more importance on these kinds of miracles than on healings. Unlike physical and mental healings which could occur naturally, resurrections cannot occur as a result of natural causes. In addition to this, in all of the resurrection miracles described in Martin’s *vita*, the dead body is seen by the multitude before Martin’s arrival, and the living person is witnessed after the miracle:

¹ Scragg 1992, p.289.

² Scragg 1992, *Martin*, ll.110-19 and 124-38.

Ða gesawen hie wundorlice wyrd: ðone man lifgende þone þe hie ær
deadne forleton.¹

This statement, which derives from Sulpicius Severus' claim that the people 'uidebant uiuere quem mortuum reliquissent',² asserts the truth of this charismatic event by stressing its public performance. In this way, the truth of such miracles is hard to contest: the designation of these resurrections as miracles is assured by their deviation from the known laws of nature and their public occurrence.

The anonymous *Life of Martin* contains limited references to miracles of a psychological nature, and omits all the instances of prophecy in Sulpicius Severus' biography, alongside the episode in which Martin miraculously recognizes the devil. There are only two miracles of a psychological and abstract nature in the anonymous life, one of which concerns the dream in which Martin is visited by Christ:

7 þa wæs in þæ æfterfylgend[an] niht ða þes eadiga wer slepte, þa
geseah he Crist sylfne mid þy ilcan hrægle gegyredne þe he ær þam
þearfan sealde.³

The inclusion of a dream does not fit in with the idea of concentration on concrete, public miracles in the anonymous *vita*. However, its inclusion can be explained with regard to the general aspect of the anonymous life as a whole, which places more of an emphasis on the saint's virtues and deeds than its Ælfrician counterpart. Both of

¹ Scragg 1992, *Martin*, ll.117-18: 'Then they saw a wonderful event: that man living, who they had earlier left as dead'.

² Severus, *VM*, Chap. VII: 'beheld the man alive whom they had formerly left dead', trans. *NPNF*, vol.11, p.7.

³ Scragg 1992, *Martin*, ll.67-9: 'And then it was in the following night when this blessed man slept, that he saw Christ himself clothed in the same clothing which he had given beforehand to the beggar'.

Ælfric's *vitae* are predominantly concerned with miracles, relation of these taking up fifty-seven per cent of the *Catholic Homilies* biography and sixty-five per cent of the *Lives of Saints* text.¹ In contrast, the anonymous life is more balanced, with around forty per cent of the text concerned with episodes relating to miracles, and twenty-five per cent concerned with the saint's virtues.² This concentration on Martin's virtue is emphasized by a statement in the anonymous homily which declares its intention:

Men þa leofestan, magon we nu þara arfæstra dæda sume asecgan ðe ðes
eadiga wer sanctus Martinus sona in cnihtade gedýde, þeah [þe] þara
godra dæda ma wære þonne hit ænig man asecgan mæge.³

In this way, the anonymous text is perhaps designed more to promote imitation of Martin than Ælfric's biographies. Both the *Catholic Homilies* and *Lives of Saints* texts elevate the saint to the highest degree possible, and are intended to provoke responses of awe and veneration in their readers or listeners: Martin is an intercessory figure who commands the respect and adoration of the faithful. His extensive working of miracles places him above the ordinary human realm, and he provides a point of contact between the human and the Divine. In contrast, the less central role of miracles in the anonymous *vita* coupled with the emphasis on Martin's deeds and virtues render him a

¹ These statistics are approximate, as the boundaries drawn between episodes are subjective. Additionally, judgement as to which episodes pertain to miracles, which to deeds, and which to general narrative cannot be scientific. See p.186 for calculation of this statistic for the *Catholic Homilies* biography. Calculation for the *Lives of Saints* biography is based on consideration of ll.75-82, 118-27, 145-9, 165-83, 196-200, 207-36, 239-53, 267-85, 346-63, 369-87, 392-579, 585-91, 601-9, 639-49, 659-77, 682-844, 856-900, 935-64, 974-8, 984-1010, 1017-55, 1060-5, 1073-5, 1108-42, 1151-77, 1183-91, 1198-266, 1272-6, 1281-9, 1300-08, 1313-27, 1330-1, 1364-70, 1374-81, 1385-1405, 1408-34, 1437-40, 1454-61, 1472-4, 1485-8 and 1493-5 in Skeat's edition as being concerned with the relation of miracles.

² These statistics are based on the view that ll.24-60, 90-93, 142-8, 212-22, 226-30, 254-6, 260-62, 268-83, and 306-8 in Scragg 1992 are concerned with relation of Martin's deeds; whilst ll.67-74, 96-142, 155-212, 223-6, 230-42, and 290-94 relate miraculous episodes.

³ Scragg 1992, *Martin*, ll.44-6: 'Beloved men, we may now tell certain of those pious deeds which this blessed man Martin did. He immediately in boyhood performed (deeds), though there were more of these good deeds than any man can tell'.

more accessible figure for imitation. This aspect of the anonymous life perhaps explains the inclusion of the dream: the miracle occurs in order to expound the virtue of helping others, and as such is essential in stressing the importance of such acts.

Another such abstract miracle is related in the anonymous *vita*, and concerns Martin's knowledge of his own death. The Vercelli version describes the episode thus:

Swylce eac þes eadiga wer, sanctus Martinus, mycle ær beforan þone
dæg wisse his forðsiðe, 7 him dryhten gecyðed hæfde. 7 he þa his
broðrum sægde, þæt hit þa ætrihte wære þæt he of þisse worulde
sceolde.¹

The Lord has revealed Martin's forthcoming death to the saint, and the description of this episode in all three *vitae* reveals its importance. A saint's knowledge of their time of death is a common *topos*, and Colgrave outlines its significance:

The idea underlying this widespread tradition was that the saint was thus granted time to prepare himself for the great change and to be fortified by receiving the Communion. The dread of sudden death was very widely spread throughout the middle ages in Christian lands, so it was not unnatural that the saint should be granted this special grace.²

¹ Scragg 1992, *Martin*, ll.223-6: 'Likewise, also, this blessed man, St. Martin, knew the day of his departure long before. And the Lord had revealed (it) to him. And he then said to his brothers that it was then fittingly near that he was destined (to go) from this world'.

² B. Colgrave, "Bede's Miracle Stories", in *Bede, His Life, Times and Writings, Essays in Commemoration of the Twelfth Centenary of His Death*, ed. A Hamilton Thompson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1935): 201-29, here p.213, hereafter Colgrave 1935. This kind of knowledge is found in a variety of Anglo-Saxon hagiographic texts, for example in the Ælfrician lives of Basil and Thomas and the anonymous Euphrosyne and Mary of Egypt: Skeat 1891 and 1900, 33, *Euphrosyne*, ll.284-8; 3, *Basil*, ll.564-5; and 36, *Thomas*, ll.342-4; and Magennis 2002, *Mary of Egypt*, ll.891-907.

As such, it is important that this privilege was granted to Martin, and it is unsurprising that all three lives agree in their inclusion of this event.

Angelic visits are far less common in the anonymous *Life of Martin* than in Sulpicius Severus and Ælfric, with only one such episode recorded. This describes the first Angel Miracle described in the *Catholic Homilies*, where angels help to subdue the heathens and enable Martin to overthrow an idol in Librassa:

7 þa cwomon þær semninga twegen englas to him, gescildode 7
ges[per]ode 7 mid heregeatwum gegyrede, efne swa hie to campe feran
sceoldon, 7 cwædon þæt hie God sylfa to him sende, þæt hie sceoldan
þæt hæðene werod geflyman, 7 him, Martine, gefultumian þæt he þæt
diofulgild gebræce 7 gefylde.¹

As with all the other kinds of miracles discussed so far, the anonymous *vita* is far less concerned with this aspect of the miraculous than Ælfric's accounts. Again, this could relate to the possible motivations of the author. If one of Ælfric's motives in his depiction of Angel miracles was to highlight Martin's close relationship to spiritual beings and illustrate his position as an intermediary between the earthly and heavenly realms, the omission of such episodes in the anonymous *vita* suggests that this text is not attempting to elevate the saint and encourage their veneration as an intercessor to the same degree. This would support the idea that whilst Ælfric intends to provoke a response of awe and veneration, the anonymous author aims more at imitation. Another potential reason for the inclusion of only one Angel miracle is that the others related in

¹ Scragg 1992, *Martin*, ll.177-81: 'And then two angels came to him suddenly, equipped with shield and sword and clothed with war-gear just as if they would go to battle. And they said that God himself had sent them to him, that they must put to flight the heathen army, and they themselves help Martin so that he might destroy and break that devil-idol'.

Sulpicius Severus' *vita* take place when Martin is alone, and as such have no witnesses. Significantly, the only Angel miracle included in the anonymous *vita* is a public occurrence.

The Angel miracle found in the anonymous *vita* is also notable as it relates to one of the main themes of the anonymous life: that of the destruction of heathen idols and temples by Martin. A similar idea is found in the subsequent Movement Miracles, where heathens who attempt to hurt Martin are prevented from doing so. An episode in which a heathen is prevented from striking the saint with a sword is found in the *vita*,¹ alongside a description of the weapon flying from a pagan's hand:

Ða se hæðena man hine stigan wolde, þa nyste he færinga hwær þæt
seax cwom þæt he ær on handa hæfde.²

The Lord's protection of the saint is clearly demonstrated in these wonders. Whilst they do not demonstrate Martin's miraculous abilities, they provide a clear and concrete means of illustrating the favour afforded the saint by God, and powerfully illustrate the subjection of pagans to Martin's Lord. Six of the fourteen miracles in the anonymous *vita* are concerned with the triumph of Christianity over heathenism, and there are also general comments pertaining to the idea.³ The reason behind this stress on the subjection of heathens to the Christian faith could relate to the political situation of the time. As Godden points out, Anglo-Saxon England was under the threat of Viking invasion, which brought with it a threat to the Christian faith. Godden argues that the presentation of Christianity triumphing over heathenism in hagiographical texts could

¹ Scragg 1992, *Martin*, ll.190-9.

² Scragg 1992, *Martin*, ll.202-3: 'A certain one of the heathen men drew his sword, and when that heathen man wanted to stab him, then the man suddenly did not know where the sword went which he previously held in (his) hand'.

³ Scragg 1992, *Martin*, ll.93, 94-103, 103-18, 119-26, 127-9, 130-33.

illustrate a desire to encourage people to fight for their beliefs in the face of adversity.¹ Another potential reason for the concentration on this theme could be that the anonymous text aimed at confirmation of the Christian faith. It is possible that the text was intended to consolidate belief, and the stress on the triumph of Christianity over heathenism would have strengthened faith. This idea of confirmation of faith would fit in with the anonymous author's selection of physical, public miracles which has been demonstrated throughout this analysis. Such miracles would be harder to contest than those of an abstract or personal nature, and could be viewed as proof of the truth of Christianity.

As with many of the other types of miracle discussed, the anonymous *Life of Martin* makes little reference to the saint's encounters with devils. The only appearance of a devil is when Martin is about to die and the devil stands by him until he is told he will find nothing bad in the saint.² As has been suggested above with regard to Angel and Divine Contact Miracles, this could be a result of the way devil visitations take place. The two omitted episodes concern the devil visiting Martin when the saint is alone, whilst in the included episode the visit takes place in a room full of people. Thus again miracles of a public nature are prioritized over those which take place when Martin's word provides their only testimony.

Element miracles are not as prominent in the anonymous *vita* as in Ælfric's Martinian lives: only the episode concerning the fire being driven back from the house is described in this text.³ The concern to highlight Martin's greatness seen in the *Catholic Homilies* and the desire to stress Martin's powers of intercession found in the *Lives of Saints* text are not evident in this redaction of the life. Similarly, the presentation of Animal Miracles is limited: the episodes concerning Martin's influence

¹ Godden 1985, especially p.97.

² Scragg 1992, *Martin*, ll.290-9.

³ Scragg 1992, *Martin*, ll.157-67.

over the hound, cow and water-snake are omitted, and only that concerning the diver birds is included:

Ða bebead sanctus Martinus þam fugelum þæt hie þanon fram þam
wætere gewiten, 7 on westen 7 [d]rige land sohton.¹

As is the case with the Element Miracles, there is no attempt to glorify Martin through the presentation of this miracle, or extol the benefits of his intercession as in the Ælfrician lives.

The presentation of miracles in the anonymous *Life of Martin* provides an illuminating contrast to Ælfric's handling of the Latin biography. It places Martin in a very different role: rather than comprising a list of spectacular feats, the anonymous author's biography gives a more rounded picture of the saint. The life describes only a handful of actual miracles, recounted in conjunction with Martin's good deeds, and places almost equal emphases on these two elements of Martin's sanctity. As Szarmach summarizes,

The incidents selected by the Old English homilist portray Martin as a
saintly man of God, working miracles, converting unbelievers, and
teaching by word and deed.²

In this way, Martin is presented as a far more attainable role-model in the anonymous *vita* than in either of Ælfric's redactions of the text. Whilst Ælfric's texts aim to

¹ Scragg 1992, *Martin*, ll.236-8: 'Then St. Martin commanded those birds that they depart away from the water and from the waste(land), and they looked for dry land'.

² Paul E. Szarmach, "The Vercelli Homilies: Style and Structure", in Szarmach and Huppé 1978: 242-67, here p.259.

promote awe and veneration regarding Martin, the anonymous life is more concerned to present the saint as an example of how to live. This idea accounts for the only abstract miracle included in the life: that of Martin's dream in which Christ comes to him wearing his cloak. If the idea of concentration on the saint's deeds is considered, then the reason for the inclusion of this miracle becomes clear: it demonstrates the importance of helping those in need, and promotes the Christian idea that whatever you do to another individual, you do to Christ. The stress on Martin's deeds and virtues and the inclusion of a miracle which illustrates the importance of helping others, suggest that the anonymous Martin is designed more as a figure for imitation than veneration. This idea is further supported by the sparse amount of miracles in the text, as it is the stress on such feats that points to the saint's elevation in Ælfric's *Lives of Saints* account. That Martin is designed as a model for imitation is asserted in the text itself, in sections of the Old English which have no known source. Towards the beginning of the narrative, the author declares:

Men þa leofestan, magon we nu þara arfæstra dæda sume asecgan ðe ðes
 eadiga wer sanctus Martinus sona in cnihtade gedyde, þeah [þe] þara
 godra dæda ma wære þonne hit ænig man asecgan mæge.¹

This contrasts with Ælfric's own unsourced introduction to his *Lives of Saints' vita*, in which he pledges to 'ne writað na mare . buton his agene wundra'.² From the outset, the intentions of Ælfric and the anonymous hagiographer are seen to differ. The emphasis

¹ Scragg 1992, *Martin*, ll.44-6: 'Beloved men, we may now tell certain of those virtuous deeds which this blessed man St. Martin did. He immediately in boyhood performed (deeds), though there were more of these good deeds than any man can say'.

² Skeat 1900, 31, *Martin*, l.9: 'write nothing more than (Martin's) own miracles'.

on Martin's pious works is found again at the close of the narrative in another unsourced passage, which encourages the audience to imitate Martin's deeds:

Ac utan we la tilian, men þa leofestan, þæt we þæs halgan weres,
 sanctus Martinus, lif 7 his dæda onherien þæs þe ure gemet sie, 7 wuton
 hine biddan þæt he us sie in heofonum þingere wið urne dryhten, nu we
 her on eorðan hine geond middangeard wyrðiap.¹

The author's instruction harmonizes with his presentation of the miraculous, which does not render Martin an inaccessible, elevated figure as Ælfric's narrative does.

However, it may not be merely that the extensive lists of miracles in Sulpicius Severus were unnecessary for the model of sanctity the anonymous author wished to create, and other issues may have contributed to their selection. The anonymous author demonstrates a clear preference for miracles of a concrete or witnessed nature, and only two of the miracles in the life do not conform to this pattern. These are the dream in which Christ appears to the saint, and Martin's foreknowledge of his time of death. As has been suggested, there would be important reasons for including these miracles: the dream is inextricably linked to Martin's good deeds, and a saint's knowledge of their time of death was perceived as a special privilege afforded the most holy of individuals. As such, it is fair to say that no abstract or unwitnessed miracles are included in the text without an additional motive.

This notion of evidence for the miracles in the *vita* has extensive implications regarding perceptions of authority in Old English texts. Textual authority was

¹ Scragg 1992, *Martin*, ll.306-9: 'But let us now, indeed, endeavour, beloved men, that we imitate the life of the holy man St. Martin, and his deeds as our ability may be. And let us pray to him that he be an intercessor for us in the heavens with our Lord, now we honor him here on earth throughout middle-earth'.

imperative in religious literature, and Gail Ivy Berlin summarizes the conventional means of asserting this truth:

Evidence in Anglo-Saxon histories and hagiographies was generally a matter of affirming the truth of one's narrative by citing an authority.¹

The nature of this authority could vary, and Ælfric's notions of textual authority rely largely on received tradition.² A major validation for his texts comes from his claims to participation in the Latin tradition. As Godden puts it:

The criterion [for true stories] is authority rather than historicity. False stories come from the imagination of the unorthodox. True stories are inspired by God and authenticated by the same patristic figures whom Ælfric had earlier cited as guarantors for the ideas in his homiletic and exegetical writings: Jerome, Ambrose, Augustine, Gregory, Bede.³

Ælfric is less concerned with the credibility of his narrative than its orthodoxy according to tradition. This is not to suggest that Ælfric does not draw on eye-witness testimony in his accounts: the veracity of the *Life of St. Edmund*, for example, is attested by Ælfric's chronological explanation of the story's transmission.⁴ In addition, the *Life of Martin* found in the *Lives of Saints* retains many of the references to witnesses found in Sulpicius Severus, stating that Martin overthrew an idol 'mannum

¹ Gail Ivy Berlin, "Bede's Miracle Stories: Notions of Evidence and Authority in Old English History", *Neophilologus* 74 (1990): 434-43, here p.440, hereafter Berlin 1990.

² See above, pp.76-81.

³ Godden 1985, p.88.

⁴ Skeat 1900, 32, *Edmund*, ll.1-7.

onlocigendeum',¹ and that a paralysed maiden was healed, 'þam folc onlocigendum'.² However, whilst Ælfric does employ this means of authorization, it is by no means his sole or even central method of authenticating his narrative: in the *Lives of Saints* biography, there are six instances of Ælfric's allusion to his ultimate source,³ as in the opening lines of the narrative:

Sulpicius hatte sum [snoter] writere . Ðe wolde awritan þa wundra and
 mihta þe martinus se mæra mihtiglice gefremode on þisre worulde [...]
 and we þæt engisc nimað of þære ylcan gesetnysse . ac we ne writað na
 mare . buton his agene wundra .⁴

Whilst Ælfric incorporates eyewitness testimony to an extent, this is not his central technique of authorization, and he includes instances from Sulpicius Severus' biography which have no eyewitnesses to vouch for them. In the anonymous life, this kind of authority is perhaps paramount, and a notion which has more in common with Bede than Ælfric. Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica* contains a high miraculous content, and rather than citing mainly written sources as evidence as Ælfric does, Bede asserts that the authority of his history has several origins. He says that he has compiled his history based on facts 'prout uel ex litteris antiquorum uel ex traditione maiorum uel ex mea ipse cognitione scire potui'.⁵ The information from Bede's own knowledge seems

¹ Skeat 1900, 31, *Martin*, l.456: 'while men were looking on'.

² Skeat 1900, 31, *Martin*, l.505: 'the people being spectators of it'.

³ Skeat 1900, 31, *Martin*. Sulpicius is mentioned by name at ll.1, 689, 696 and 774; while at l.1131 Ælfric refers to 'se writere' of Martin's *vita*; and at l.1377 claims that he is following what is said in 'bocum'.

⁴ Skeat 1900, 31, *Martin*, ll.1-4 and 8-9: 'There was a certain wise writer, called Sulpicius, who wanted to write the miracles and mighty deeds which the great Martin powerfully performed in this world [...] and we take the English from the same account; but we will write nothing more except his own miracles'.

⁵ Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, V.24; Colgrave and Mynors 1969, p.566, ll.17-18: 'gleaned either from ancient documents or from tradition or from my own knowledge'.

largely to refer to information gleaned from the eye-witness accounts of people who were present at the occurrence of miracles: such authorization punctuates his narrative, and is generally given to counter the incredibility of an event. For instance, in describing the healing of a servant, Bede asserts,

Hoc autem miraculum memoratus abbas non se præsente factum, sed ab
his qui præsentes fuere sibi perhibet esse relatum.¹

Similar statements can be found throughout the work,² and Bede thus depends to a high degree on witnesses to confirm the truth of such portents. Berlin discusses this element of Bede's writing, and looks at the different criteria for those who could serve as an authority. She states that:

Most reliable of all was an account given by an eyewitness to the events,
or by someone who had had direct contact with such an eyewitness.³

In addition to this, a 'numerous group of eyewitnesses may also give an account considerable weight'.⁴ Evidently, for such information to exist, a miracle had to take place in public, and demonstrate an outward change observable by onlookers. As such, whilst the anonymous account of Martin does not advocate the authority of the account

¹ Bede, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, V.5; Colgrave and Mynors 1969, p.464, ll.24-6: 'The abbot recounted the miracle, though he was not himself present when it happened, but it was told him by some who were there'.

² See Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica*, where Bede asserts the authority of the following figures: his elders (III.9, p.242, ll.17-18), Bishop Acca (III.13, p.252, ll.7-8), an aged brother in Benedict's monastery (III.19, p.274, ll.22-9), Father Egbert (IV.3, p.344, ll.10-15), priest Eadgisl (IV.25, p.426, ll.13-14), a monk who was healed (IV.32, p.446, ll.31-3), and Bishop Pethelm (V.14, p.502, ll.18-20). All references are to Colgrave and Mynors 1969.

³ Berlin 1990, p.440.

⁴ Berlin 1990, p.440.

by naming witnesses, it ensures that these exist for the vast majority of miracles it includes.

Much of the textual authority of Ælfric's work thus stems from his citation of written sources, and the weight of Sulpicius Severus' name. With the authority of his account established at surface value, Ælfric then makes selection from his Latin materials as he chooses. As has been demonstrated, the freedom which he exercises betrays his concern to outline clearly divine authorization of Martin by emphasizing the saint's miracles, and faithfulness to the authority of Sulpicius Severus' account is sometimes compromised in his pursuit of this goal. In the anonymous life, however, the text is not authorized through citation of Sulpicius, and no reference to the source is made within the hagiography. Rather, it is possible that the content of the narrative, with its predominantly public and concrete miracles, seeks to validate the narrative from within. It is certainly true that depiction of Martin's miracles and the consequent elevation of the saint do not preoccupy the anonymous life as they do the two Ælfrician *vitae*: the anonymous biography depicts a far more accessible model of sanctity. In this case, then, the function of the miracles perhaps relates as much to the textual authority of the life as to the divine authorization of the subject saint.

The Martyrs: SS. Christopher and George.

In receiving the crown of martyrdom, a saint imitated Christ in a complete and dramatic fashion, and martyrs occupy a position of prestige and authority within Anglo-Saxon litanies. André Vauchez observes that the martyrs' 'constancy under persecution was enough to attest to their perfection',¹ and as Gatch comments:

This ultimate sacrifice earned for that special class immediate communion with the Godhead.²

In his discussion of the perception of martyr saints in the Latin world, Ramsey comments that from the perspective of the Church and the average Christian:

the martyr was a privileged individual indeed, for he bore witness to Christ by the most complete conformation to his suffering and death. In fact the restriction of the term "martyr" (meaning "witness") to those who died for Christ, or who were about to do so, indicates that they were considered to be his witnesses in an unqualified manner, par excellence.³

Of course, in order to be considered a martyr, an individual had to be killed for their faith in the Lord, and as Augustine states, 'Martyrem non facit poena, sed causa'.⁴ The tradition of martyrdom dates back to the Scriptures, where the account of Stephen

¹ André Vauchez, *Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages*, trans. Jean Birrell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p.15.

² Gatch 1977, p.67.

³ Ramsey 1993, p.123.

⁴ Augustine, *Sermo Morin XII*; PLS 2, 684: 'It is not suffering but the cause of it that makes the martyr', translation is my own.

Protomartyr, the first saint of this generic type, can be found in Acts 6.¹ As such, the crown of martyrdom possesses the authority of tradition and longevity, and as Coon comments:

The earliest humans to be venerated as superhuman Christians were the martyrs or “witnesses” of the faith.²

Of the four categories of sanctity discussed in this work, the list of martyrs who feature in the Old English hagiographic corpus is the most extensive. Eighteen *passiones* of male martyrs are found in the corpus, in both volumes of the *Catholic Homilies*, the *Lives of Saints* collection and anonymous hagiography.³ Strikingly, no saint classified as a martyr in the litanies features in both anonymous and Ælfrician hagiography, a phenomenon also observed regarding the Virgin saints discussed in this study. Only four anonymous lives are extant in this generic group, and as has been suggested, the lack of anonymous material may be due to loss of texts in transmission.⁴ It is thus possible that anonymous hagiographies of the martyrs included by Ælfric did circulate in Anglo-Saxon England but have since been lost. It is also plausible, however, that the disparity of extant material reflects different perceptions of sanctity within the Ælfrician and anonymous corpora, and that the desire to present a certain paradigm of sanctity influenced the selection of saints.

¹ Acts 6.8-15.

² Coon 1997, p.3.

³ Ælfric's martyr lives are distributed as follows: Skeat 1891 and 1900, 24, *Abdon and Sennes*; 19, *Alban*; 22, *Apollinaris*; 29, *Dionysius*; 32, *Edmund*; 14, *George*; 28, *Maurice and Companions*; 26, *Oswald*; 5, *Sebastian*; and 37, *Vincent*. Clemoes 1997, 37, *Clement*; 3, *Stephen Protomartyr*. Godden 1979, 18, *Alexander, Eventus and Theodolus* and 2, *Stephen Protomartyr*. There are also two mixed gender lives: Skeat 1891 and 1900, 35, *Chrysanthus and Daria*; and 4, *Julian and Basilissa*. The anonymous corpus features *Christopher*, *Eustace*, *Pantaleon* and *Quintin*.

⁴ See above, p.9, citing Scragg 1996.

Martyr lives are rare in the anonymous corpus, which includes lives of only Christopher, Quintin, Eustace and Pantaleon. Only a small fragment of Quintin's *passio* remains in London, British Library, Cotton Vitellius A.xv, rendering this life unsuitable for a case study.¹ The *Life of St. Eustace and His Companions* relates the *passio* of a group rather than an individual, and is therefore not representative of the more common solitary martyr.² This leaves the lives of SS. Christopher and Pantaleon as possible case-studies. Christopher has been selected due to his evident popularity in Anglo-Saxon England. He appears twenty-five times in the litanies edited by Lapidge which form the basis for saintly classification in this study, whilst Pantaleon is included on a mere six occasions.³ There is also evidence that Christopher's life was preserved in two manuscripts: British Library Cotton Vitellius A.xv, the *Beowulf* Manuscript; and British Library, Cotton Otho B.x., which was badly burnt in the Cotton fire of 1731. Whilst only the *explicit* of the latter life remains, it provides evidence of the dissemination and associated popularity of this anonymous life. In addition to these vernacular lives, an account of St. Christopher is found in the *Old English Martyrology*,⁴ although as Irvine points out when discussing St. Vincent, 'this source is so eclectic that no particular significance should be attached to his inclusion'.⁵ The *Life of Pantaleon*, found in British Library, Cotton Vitellius D.xvii,⁶ is unique, and there is no extant evidence of the dissemination of this *passio*. Similarly, Pantaleon does not appear in the *Old English Martyrology*, and as such there is less literary evidence for

¹ Quintin's *passio* is printed in Max Förster, "Zur Altenglische Quintinus-Legende", *Archiv für das Studium der Neuren Sprachen und Literaturen* 106 (1901): 258-9.

² Eustace's *passio* is printed in Skeat 1900, as item 30.

³ Lapidge 1991a. Christopher is listed in the following litanies according to Lapidge's numbering: I.49, V.44, VI.64, VII.ii.51, VIII.ii.46, IX.i.48; XIII.59, XVI.i.48, XVI.ii.98, XVII.52, XIX.42, XXIII.107, XXIV.101, XXVIII.92, XXIX.ii.72, XXXII.53, XXXIII.49, XXXVI.56, XXXVII.i.36, XXXIX.55, XLI.iii.47, XLIII.67, XLV.47; whilst Pantaleon appears in IX.i.72, XVI.ii.119, XXII.i.72, XXIII.106, XXVII.61, and XXXII.70.

⁴ Herzfeld 1900, pp.66-8.

⁵ Irvine 1990, p.123.

⁶ The *Life of St. Pantaleon* is printed in P.M. Matthews, "The Old English Life of Saint Pantaleon", unpublished University College London M.A. thesis, 1965-6.

the dissemination of his cult in Anglo-Saxon England than there is for Christopher. This brief overview of some of the extant literary evidence suggests that Christopher's popularity and cult were more established in Anglo-Saxon England than those of Pantaleon.

The Ælfrician corpus includes a far higher frequency of male martyrs than the anonymous, with Abdon and Sennes, Alban, Apollinaris, Dionysius, Edmund, George, Maurice, Oswald, Sebastian, and Vincent appearing in the *Lives of Saints* collection; and Alexander, Eventus and Theodolus, Clement, Laurence, and Stephen Protomartyr featuring in the *Catholic Homilies*. George has been selected as a case-study, principally because of his popularity in Anglo-Saxon England. The litanies illustrate this, recording his name on twenty-six occasions. Similarly, he appears in Zettel's list of the fifty most highly ranking festivals based on twelve pre-Conquest graded calendars.¹ As Matzke notes, George's cult was popular in the West throughout the early medieval period:

There can be no question that Saint George became early on one of the favorite saints of the Western Church. As early as the year 491 Clotilda, wife of Clovis, king of the Franks, dedicated to his memory the nunnery built by her at Chelles, not a great distance from Paris, while Clovis himself about the same time founded in his honor a cloister at Cambria. In the VI century Venantius Fortunatus sings the praises of the church of St. George at Mayence. In the same century Gregory of Tours speaks of

¹ Zettel 1979, p.76.

the relics of the saint, and builds a church in his honor in the neighborhood of Astoux in the diocese of Dax.¹

In addition to his importance in the medieval West, George provides an excellent case-study for perceptions of authority in Old English hagiography due to issues surrounding the orthodoxy of his *passio*. The condemnation of a *passio Georgii* in the *Gelasian Decretals*, which will be discussed below,² renders Ælfric's presentation of George in his *Lives of Saints* collection a sensitive issue in the spheres of divine and inscribed authority.

The Anonymous *Life of St. Christopher*.

The historical basis of Christopher's legend is shrouded in mystery, and few concrete facts are known about the saint's identity. According to Butler,

Except that there was a martyr Christopher, nothing is certainly known about him: the Roman Martyrology says that he suffered in Lycia under Decius, shot with arrows and beheaded after he had been preserved from the flames.³

However, Christopher's legend became far more complex than this, and William Caxton's account of his acts based on the famous thirteenth-century *Golden Legend* became the most widely known version of his passion.⁴ There is evidence that

¹ John E. Matzke, "Contributions to the History of the Legend of Saint George, with Special Reference to the Sources of the French, German and Anglo-Saxon Metrical Versions", *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* 19 (1903): 99-171, here p.147.

² See pp.248-50 below.

³ Butler 1956, Vol.3, p.187, July 25.

⁴ Butler 1956, Vol.3, pp.184-8, July 25.

Christopher's cult was widely disseminated in both the East and West from an early date:

The first traces of the cult are found near Constantinople in the fifth century. The extant manuscripts of a *Vita* proper are later, but the germ of the written records has been detected in the apocryphal Acts of Bartholomew, where the apostles are aided in their missionary work by a dog-headed creature called Christianus who himself suffers martyrdom.¹

The vernacular writings concerning the saint which survive from Anglo-Saxon England also attest to his popularity there.²

Christopher differs in nature from the other saints discussed in this work as he is a *cynocephalus*; that is, a dog-headed man. This renders the choice of Christopher as a subject for hagiography surprising: as Orchard points out, the very humanity of *cynocephali* 'had been doubted by Augustine (*De Civitate Dei* XVI.8) and Isidore (*Etymologiae* XI.iii.15 and XII.ii.32).³ Augustine writes: 'Quid dicam de Cynocephalis, quorum canina capita atque ipse latratus magis bestias quam homines confitetur?',⁴ while Isidore states '*Cynocephali* appellantur eo quod canina capita habeant, quosque ipse latratus magis bestias quam homines confitetur: hi in India

¹ John Drayton Pickles, "Studies in the Prose Texts of the *Beowulf* Manuscript", unpublished University of Cambridge PhD thesis, 1971, p.16, hereafter Pickles 1971.

² These are the two lives of the saint and the account of the saint in the *Old English Martyrology*, ed. Herzfeld 1900.

³ Andy Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies, Studies in the Monsters of the Beowulf-Manuscript* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1995), p.17, hereafter Orchard 1995.

⁴ Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, XVI.viii; LCL vol. 415, p.42: 'What am I to say of the Cynocephali, whose dogs' heads and actual barking are evidence that they are rather beasts than men?' (trans. LCL vol. 415, p.43).

nascuntur'.¹ Christopher's very suitability as a subject for hagiography is thus questionable due to Augustine and Isidore's comments, and as Ælfric relied heavily on patristic authority for guidance on issues of orthodoxy, it is unsurprising that he does not include Christopher in his hagiographic collections. In addition to this, Christopher's status does not render him an unusual omission from the Ælfrician corpus. As Lapidge points out, there are various noteworthy omissions from Ælfric's *sanctorale*, including Pantaleon, Quintin and Eustace, the other martyrs who feature in the anonymous corpus.² All three feature in the reconstructed list of contents of the Cotton-Corpus Legendary and it is likely that Ælfric would have had access to their Latin *passiones*.³ Christopher's status does not suggest him as such an obvious choice for Ælfrician hagiography: Lapidge does not view him as an unusual omission in the Ælfrician corpus; Zettel does not include him in the top fifty highest ranked saints in Anglo-Saxon England; he does not appear in the Cotton-Corpus Legendary; and although he features prominently in the litanies, he is never accorded special status like many other saints. In addition to this, Christopher is absent from some important calendars of the period. As Sisam points out:

Christopher does not appear in MS. Digby 63, a Northern calendar that reached Southern England about Alfred's time; or in the metrical calendar of martyrs in Athelstan's Psalter, thought to have been composed soon after the year 900; or in the late-tenth-century calendar of Glastonbury in the Leofric Missal.⁴

¹ Isidore, *Etymologiarum*, XI.iii.15; PL 82.421: 'They are called Cynocephali because they have dog-like heads, and resemble more animals than men: these live in India', translation is my own.

² Lapidge 1996, pp.119-22.

³ Zettel 1979.

⁴ Kenneth Sisam, *Studies in the History of Old English Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1953), p.71, hereafter Sisam 1953.

In addition to this, whilst devotion to Christopher in the early medieval West is attested, in Pickles' view this devotion had not reached its height in England at the time of the life's composition:

The cult of St. Christopher came into western Europe early in the seventh century and spread northwards during the next three centuries. His popularity rose in England to a remarkable height, but it was slow to do so, and we have no reason to think that it existed in the time of the translation or indeed for long afterwards.¹

There is later evidence for the popularity of Christopher's cult, particularly from the late tenth and early eleventh centuries. His name appears regularly in eleventh-century Winchester calendars, and its entry in the Bosworth Psalter 'prepared early in the same century, shows that the feast had been adopted at Canterbury Cathedral'.² In addition to this, relics of Christopher were said to be held at New Minster, Winchester, and Exeter.³ Christopher's cult clearly gained a level of popularity in Anglo-Saxon England, although this was not uniform throughout the period.

The only extant copy of the anonymous *Life of St. Christopher* is found in Cotton Vitellius A.xv, alongside *The Wonders of the East*, *The Letter of Alexander to Aristotle*, *Beowulf* and *Judith*.⁴ Sisam suggests that several of the pieces within this manuscript are thematically linked:

¹ Pickles 1971, p.27.

² Sisam 1953, p.71.

³ Sisam 1953, p.71.

⁴ Orchard 1995, p.2.

It cannot be an accident that the three Anglo-Saxon pieces which certainly mention the Healfhundingas are all together in one manuscript; and once it is established that the codex has been planned with some regard to subject-matter, *Beowulf*, the one Old English poem that deals with imagined monsters, may reasonably be associated with the same design.¹

Ker dates the manuscript to s. x/xi,² whilst David Dumville concludes that it was 'written later than the death of Æthelred the Unready (1016) or earlier than the mid-point of his reign (which fell in A.D 997)'.³ The early editor of the Christopher fragment remained dismissive of the text from a linguistic perspective, commenting:

Of the St. Christopher fragment little is here to be said. Its dialect, being plain West-Saxon of the post-Alfredian period, offers no such interesting features as the language of the texts already discussed.⁴

The *Life of St. Christopher* in the Vitellius manuscript is fragmentary, and 'begins mid-sentence approximately 300 lines into the text',⁵ whilst Rypins notes that,

¹ Sisam 1953, pp.66-7.

² Ker 1957, p.281.

³ David Dumville, "Beowulf Come Lately. Some Notes on the Paleography of the Nowell Codex", *Archiv für das Studium der Neuren Sprachen und Literaturen* 225 (1988): 49-63, here p.63.

⁴ Stanley Rypins, ed., *Three Old English Prose Texts in MS Cotton Vitellius A xv*, EETS OS 161 (London: Oxford University Press, 1924), p.xlix, hereafter Rypins 1924.

⁵ Jill Frederick, "'His Ansyn Wæs Swylce Rosan Blotsma": A Reading of the Old English *Life of St. Christopher*', in *Proceedings of the PMR Conference*, 12/13 (1987-1988): 137-148, here p.137, hereafter Frederick 1987-8.

Of our three texts it is decidedly the one most injured by fire, the margins of its pages offering such difficulties to an editor as are scarcely encountered on any but a few of the worst folios of *Beowulf*.¹

However, as the majority of action in the text still survives and the likely content of the missing opening can be surmised by comparison with other sources concerning the narrative, it is still useful for analysis. These sources include the account of Christopher in the *Old English Martyrology* and the other copy of the life that existed in Cotton Otho B.x, dated by Ker to s.xi.² This manuscript was badly damaged in the fire at Ashburnham House and ‘Wanley’s transcription of the *incipit* from fg is the sole witness to the opening of this life’.³ The version found in the Vitellius manuscript must thus be used for this case-study.

The exact source on which the Old English author drew is unclear:

The Old English St. Christopher is probably based on the Latin *Passio S. Christophori* (BHL 1766); the more precise text variant remains unidentified.⁴

According to Pulsiano, ‘Ker suggested that the version in the Vitellius manuscript seemed more closely related to BHL 1768 or 1769 than to the text of the *Acta Sanctorum*, BHL 1766’.⁵ Both BHL 1768 and 1769 remain unprinted however, so comparison will be made with BHL 1766. It must be remembered, though, that this

¹ Rypins 1924, p.xlvii.

² Ker 1957, p.224.

³ Scragg 1996, p.221.

⁴ C. Rauer, ‘The Sources of The Life of St. Christopher’, 2000, *Fontes Anglo-Saxonici: World Wide Web Register*, <http://fontes.english.ox.ac.uk/>, accessed August 2004.

⁵ Phillip Pulsiano, ‘*The Passion of St Christopher: An Edition*’, in Treharne and Rosser 2002: 167-200, here p.168, hereafter Pulsiano 2002, followed by page ref. or line refs. where appropriate.

particular version may not be the variant on which the author drew and discrepancies between the Old English and this Latin text cannot necessarily be attributed to the Old English hagiographer. However, where there is no evidence to suggest that the alterations made in the Old English text are not original to it, it is possible that they represent the mediation of the anonymous author.

The *Life of Christopher* found in Vitellius A.xv is acephalous, with a lacuna that presumably set the scene of the confrontation between the heathen king Dagnus and Christopher. The naming of Christopher as a *cynocephalus* generally occurs at the opening of parallel accounts, and the Old English text does not mention ‘that Christopher is a *cynocephalus* or *healfhunding*’.¹ However, in the extant Vitellius text ‘he is described as “twelve fathoms tall” (*twelf fæðma lang*) and “the worst of wild beasts” (*wyrresta wildeor*), and there seems little doubt that the same dog-headed saint is depicted’.² Miracles form the core of what remains of the Old English life, and the extant section of the saint’s *passio* centres on the tortures administered to Christopher by Dagnus, detailing the miraculous ways in which Christopher reacts to and is protected from these torments. However, this is not the only function of miracles in this life, which also concentrates on the posthumous powers of St. Christopher. The presentation of miracles in the Old English rendering of the *passio* differs slightly from the account in *BHL* 1766 as does the narrative as a whole, and points to a desire on the part of the Anglo-Saxon translator to highlight certain ideas and particular aspects of Christopher’s sanctity. There is evidence that the Old English life presents a more authoritative Christopher-figure than that found in the Latin, as the alterations to the source and unsourced additions in the Old English promote this element of Christopher’s character. This chapter argues that the spiritual authority ascribed to

¹ Joseph McGowan, “Notes on the OE Version of the *Vita Sancti Christophori*”, *Neophilologus* 75 (1991): 451-5, here p.451.

² Orchard 1995, p.14.

Christopher was a prevalent concern in the text, whilst the discrepancies between the Old English and the Latin suggest that textual authority was less of a concern.

There is one Healing Miracle in the *Life of St. Christopher*, which is central to the narrative and instrumental in exposing some of its main themes. As part of the tortures administered to Christopher, Dagnus orders arrows to be shot at the saint. Although these miraculously hang in the air around Christopher and do not harm the holy man, Dagnus does not realize this, and taunts Christopher, asking why his God does not come to his aid. In response to his words, the king is blinded by the arrows:

Hraðe þa myt ty þe he þas word gecwæð twa flana of þam strælum
scuton on þas cyninges eagan 7 he þurh þæt wæs ablend.¹

This episode represents a hagiographic commonplace, as '[a]rrows that never find their mark are common in saints' lives, and the punishment most usually inflicted on the persecutors is blindness'.² The notable element of this miracle concerns the number of arrows: whilst the Old English has two arrows blind the king, in the Latin only 'una de sagittis'³ hits Dagnus. This subtle difference renders the miracle more dramatic and increases its consequences, as Dagnus is totally blinded as punishment for his tormenting words to Christopher. When the saint sees what has happened, Christopher tells Dagnus of his own approaching martyrdom, and instructs the king to put earth from the site of his martyrdom on his eyes. Christopher pledges that if Dagnus believes

¹ Pulsiano 2002, *Christopher*, ll.74-6: 'Quickly after he had said these words two darts from the arrows shot into the king's eyes and he was blinded by that', all translations from this life are my own.

² Pickles 1971, p.31, n.5.

³ *BHL* 1766, printed in Pulsiano 2002, 185.14: 'one of the arrows', all translations from this life are my own, hereafter Pulsiano 2002, *BHL* 1766, followed by Pulsiano's page and line nos.

in God when he does this he will be healed.¹ After Christopher's death, Dagnus does as the saint has advised, and his sight is restored:

7 he genam | dæl þære eorðan þær þæs Cristes martyr wæs on
 þrowigende 7 medmicel þæs blodes 7 mengde tosomne 7 sette on his
 eagan 7 he cwæð: 'On naman Cristoforus Godes ic þis dó'; 7 hraðe on
 ðære ylcan tide his eagan wæron ontynde 7 gesihþe he onfeng.²

The healing of Dagnus is thus structured to emphasize his conversion, a phenomenon which permeates the entire *passio*. Other elements of the narrative, some carried through from the Latin together with additional unsourced passages, demonstrate the centrality of conversion to the text. In the midst of his tortures, Christopher tells Dagnus that many people already believe in God through him, and that Dagnus himself will be converted:

Nu git micel folces mænio þurh me gelyfað on minne Drihten Hælende
 Crist 7 æfter þon þu selfa.³

This aspect of the text is derived from the Latin, as is the later statement that many more believe in God due to the miracles surrounding Christopher's death. However, in the Old English the theme is reiterated in an unparalleled section of the text:

¹ Pulsiano 2002, *Christopher*, ll.82-6.

² Pulsiano 2002, *Christopher*, ll.117-22: 'And he took part of the earth where that martyr of Christ had suffered and a small amount of the blood and mingled them together and put this on his eyes and said: 'I do this in the name of God's Christopher'; and immediately at the same time his eyes were opened and he received sight'.

³ Pulsiano 2002, *Christopher*, ll.41-3: 'Now yet a great multitude of people believe in my Lord Saviour Christ through me and after this so will you yourself'.

And swa þa wæs geworden þurh Godes miht 7 þurh | geearnunga þæs
 eadigan Critoforus þætte se cyninge gelyfde se wæs ær deofles willan
 fulle þæs eadigan Cristoforus.¹

This is one of two major additions to the Latin, suggesting that the author saw Dagnus' conversion as a main emphasis of the hagiography. The physical healing performed by Christopher's relics demonstrates the saint's charismatic power, but his authority is illustrated to a higher degree by his conversion of Dagnus: he has not only healed his persecutor's body, but more crucially his soul. As previous chapters have shown,² spiritual miracles are seen as superior to physical ones. Ælfric advocates,

ðas gastlican wundra sind maran þonne ða lichamlice wæron: for þan ðe
 ðas wundra gehælað ðæs mannes sawle þe is ece. 7 þa ærran tacna
 gehældon ðone deadlican lichaman;³

Dagnus' conversion therefore represents a monumental event in Christopher's *passio*, and the episode receives greater emphasis in the Old English version when compared with the Latin. The healing miracle in the Old English carries through the theme of conversion from the Latin, whilst the unsourced addition identifies this as the pivotal element of the biography and highlights Christopher's salvific power.

The healing is also significant as it points to the Christlike aspect of Christopher's character. Just as Christ was put to death by the world in order to save it,

¹ Pulsiano 2002, *Christopher*, ll.133-6: 'And thus then it was through God's power and through favours of the blessed Christopher that the king believed that previously was full of the devil's desire, through the agency of the blessed Christopher'.

² See above, pp.95-8.

³ Clemoes 1997, 21, *In Ascensione Domini*, ll.178-80: 'The spiritual miracles are greater than the bodily ones were, because these miracles heal a man's soul, which is eternal, but the former signs healed the mortal body'.

Christopher is put to death by Dagnus in order to save him. This signification of the episode is pointed out by Frederick, who notes further aspects of the text which demonstrate parallels between Christopher and Christ:

First, Dagnus orders Christopher scourged; once the saint has been beaten, his punishment becomes, like Christ's, further public humiliation and pain.¹

In addition, Dagnus ties Christopher to a bench, recalling Christ's crucifixion; and then mocks the saint's suffering.² Dagnus' obliviousness to the events going on around him, such as the arrows not harming Christopher, is also reminiscent of Biblical figures, such as 'Pilate, Herod, and Caiphas, who denied the visible evidence, which they themselves had requested, of Christ's divinity'.³ In this way, the healing in the text adds to the parallels between Christ and Christopher, a prevalent idea in the Latin which is carried through to the Old English work. Whilst in some hagiographies, such as the lives of Margaret,⁴ it is the close relationship between a saint and their Lord which lends them authority by association, here Christopher lives in imitation of Christ. Christopher's martyrdom is, of course, the imitation of Christ *par excellence*, and the undercurrent of Christological allusions in the narrative fills out Christopher's role as a witness to Christ.

In a further element derived from the Latin, Christopher is shown to imitate his generic prototype as well as Christ. In the course of the saint's torments, Dagnus lights a fire underneath Christopher. The saint stands unharmed in the fire's midst, and the

¹ Frederick 1987-8, p.144.

² Frederick 1987-8, p.145. See Pulsiano 2002, *Christopher*, ll.56-61 and 71-4.

³ Frederick 1987-8, p.140.

⁴ See above, pp.143-8.

bench to which he is tied changes to wax whilst his face transforms to resemble rose-blossom:

Ða geseah Dagnus se cyningc þone halgan Cristoforus on middum þam
fyre standende 7 he geseah þæt his ansyn wæs swylce rosan blostma.¹

Christopher is not only unharmed by the fire, but both he and the bench undergo a kind of metamorphosis in the flames. This image of transformation recalls the depiction of Stephen's torments in *Acts*, where the saint's countenance undergoes an angelic transformation:

And all that sat in the Council beholding him, saw his face as it were the
face of an Angel.²

The image of transformation at the moment of martyrdom is firmly grounded in Scripture, and resonates with authority through this typological association. Additionally, the transformation has a special significance in the anonymous *Life of St. Christopher*. As has been suggested, a major concern in the narrative is conversion, and the outward transformation of Christopher's countenance from monstrous to that of a flower mirrors Dagnus' inner transformation from a monstrous persecutor to a Christian.

It is the effect of the miracle involving Christopher's immunity to the fire that indicates the interpretation of the Latin text by the Old English author. Dagnus is awed by the miracle, and falls to the ground in fear:

¹ Pulsiano 2002, *Christopher*, ll.29-32: 'Then Dagnus the king saw holy Christopher standing amidst the fire and he saw that his countenance was like rose-blossom'.

² Acts 6.15.

he wæs | swa abreged þæt he gefeol on eorðan 7 þær læg fram þære
ærestan tide þæs dæges oð ða nigopan tide.¹

In both the Latin and the Old English, Dagnus is shown to be in a position of inferiority due to his lack of belief and the miraculous powers demonstrated through Christopher. However, the Old English text expands this idea via an additional unsourced sentence, as ‘Þæt þa geseah se halga Cristoforus he hyne het uparisan’.² The selection of ‘het’ from ‘hátan’, defined as ‘to bid, order, command’,³ is perhaps significant here, as it carries distinct connotations of authority. Christopher issues a command to Dagnus in contrast to Dagnus giving the orders, which he does twelve times elsewhere in the piece, where ‘het’ is used consistently.⁴ The reversal of the power to issue commands shows the saint’s superiority here, and suggests that the Old English Christopher-figure is presented as possessing a higher degree of earthly authority than the Latin saint.

The other Laws of Physics Miracle in the text concerns the shooting of arrows at Christopher, which then hang in the air beside the saint. This episode deviates from the Latin, as ‘the archers are ordered to shoot *ternas sagittas* at the saint but the English has three soldiers, *ðry cempan ... mid hyra strælum*’, a discrepancy which Pickles views as a misunderstanding in the Old English translation.⁵ The Old English reads:

¹ Pulsiano 2002, *Christopher*, ll.33-5: ‘he was thus frightened so that he fell to the earth and lay there from the first hour of the day until the ninth hour’.

² Pulsiano 2002, *Christopher*, l.36: ‘Then when the holy Christopher saw this he commanded him to rise up’.

³ T. Northcote Toller, ed., *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, Based on the Manuscript Collections of Joseph Bosworth* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), p.511.

⁴ Pulsiano 2002, *Christopher*, ll.3, 4, 5, 14, 16, 17, 18, 20, 51, 57, 59, 60.

⁵ Pickles 1971, p.25.

ne furþon an his lichaman ne gehran, ac ðurh Godes mægen wæron on
ðam winde hangigende æt þæs halgan mannes swyðran healfe;¹

This miracle also diverges from the Latin regarding the position of the arrows. In the Latin, the arrows are suspended in the wind at both Christopher's right and left: 'Sagittae autem suspendebantur vento a dextris atque sinistris eius'.² The omission of a reference to the arrows on Christopher's left side is significant, and may be an attempt to further the Christlike parallels. An Anglo-Saxon depiction of Christ's Crucifixion in the Tiberius Psalter depicts Christ's right side being pierced.³ As such, the image of the arrows hanging on Christopher's right side provides a visual parallel with Christ's passion.

Throughout the text, Christopher is shown to be immune to the tortures inflicted upon him. In fact, rather than simply bearing his torments, Christopher proclaims their sweetness:

Gyf þu hwylce maran witu be me geþoht hæbbe hrædlice do ðu þa,
forðon þine tintegro me synt swettran þonne huniges beobread.⁴

The superiority of the spiritual over the physical state is emphasized in miracles of this kind, and the two instances of Christopher bearing his tortures in the Latin are carried through into the Old English. In the latter instance, however, the Old English expands

¹ Pulsiano 2002, *Christopher*, ll.64-7: 'not even one touched his body, but through God's power were hanging in the wind at the holy man's right hand side'.

² Pulsiano 2002, *BHL* 1766, 185.8.

³ See the manuscript illumination in London, British Library, Cotton Tiberius c.vi (Tiberius Psalter), 13r, reproduced in Barbara C. Raw, *Anglo-Saxon Crucifixion Iconography and the Art of the Monastic Revival* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), plate XIII.

⁴ Pulsiano 2002, *Christopher*, ll.12-14: 'If you have thought any greater torment concerning me then quickly do it, because your torments are sweeter to me than honey's bee-bread'.

on the scene. The Latin relates that when in the midst of the fire Christopher talks to Dagnus, phrasing this simply as: ‘Respondit Sanctus Dei in medio igne; et dixit’.¹ The Old English, however, specifies that Christopher ‘cigde to Drihtne beorhte stefne 7 he cwæð to ðam cyninge’.² That Christopher responds to the Lord with a ‘beorhte stefne’ provides this scene with a similar tone to that relating the sweetness of the tortures, as Christopher does not simply endure his torments, but apparently does so cheerfully. In this way, the Old English again expands on an idea found in the Latin, and in so doing, emphasizes Christopher’s superiority as Dagnus’ tortures have a positive rather than an adverse effect on the saint.

Christopher experiences contact with the Lord on two occasions in his *passio*. The Old English rendering of the earlier episode differs from the Latin source, with the effect of ascribing a more authoritative role to Christopher. In the Latin, Christopher says that the Lord has revealed to him that Christians will take his body to a place of prayer:

Et hoc mihi Dominus ostendere dignatus est. Veniunt multi Christiani, et accipiunt corpus meum, et ponunt illud locum orationis.³

Slightly later in the Latin, the third person narrator reveals that the time of Christopher’s martyrdom is approaching: ‘Et tunc adpropiauit hora, ut coronaretur

¹ Pulsiano 2002, *BHL* 1766, 184.13-14: ‘The holy man of God replied from the midst of the fire and said’.

² Pulsiano 2002, *Christopher*, ll.19-20: ‘called to the Lord with a bright voice and he said to the king’.

³ Pulsiano 2002, *BHL* 1766, 185.17-19: ‘And God has condescended to reveal this to me. Many Christians will come and receive my body and set it in a place of prayer’.

Sanctus Dei'.¹ In the Old English, however, Christopher's forthcoming martyrdom is explicitly described by the saint himself:

wite þu þæt ðis mergenlican dæge æt þære eahtoðan tide þæs dæges ic
onfó minne sigor 7 Dryhten sylf me wæs ætywed þæt cristene men
cumað 7 onfoð mines lichaman 7 hyne gesettaþ on ða stowe þe him fram
Drihtne ætywed wæs.²

The Lord's revelation to Christopher has provided the saint with foreknowledge of his own death, a common hagiographical motif found in many *passiones*, and an important honour granted to saints in order to enable them to prepare for their journey to heaven. This privilege is perhaps implicit in the Latin, but the Old English account makes explicit that Christopher not only knows of the events which will succeed his death, but also when he will be martyred. This element of the Old English narrative adds to Christopher's authority by crediting the saint with foreknowledge regarding his passing to the heavenly kingdom.

Immediately preceding Christopher's martyrdom, in a section where the Old English exercises a higher degree of alteration than that found in the majority of the piece, the Lord's voice is heard speaking to Christopher to grant his prayer. The precise content of this prayer differs between the Old English and *BHL* 1766. In the Latin, Christopher asks that, wherever his body lies, none of the following ills is endured:

¹ Pulsiano 2002, *BHL* 1766, 185.20-21: 'then the hour drew near for the holy man of God to receive his crown'.

² Pulsiano 2002, *Christopher*, ll.77-81: 'You should know that on the morrow of this day at the eighth hour of the day I will receive my victory and the Lord himself revealed to me that Christian men will come and receive my body and set it in the place that was revealed by the Lord'.

Non ibi ingrediatur grando, non ira flammae, non fames, non mortalis: et in civitate illa, et in illis locis, si fuerint ibi malefaci, aut daemoniaci, et veniunt et orant ex toto corde, et propter nomen tuum nominant nomen meum in suis orationibus salvi fiant.¹

This request is given a slightly different aspect in the Old English, and the comments regarding hail, evil and demons are omitted completely:

þær ne wædl ne fyres broga; 7 gif þær neah syn untrume men 7 hig cumon to þinum þam halgan temple 7 hig ðær gebiddon to þe of ealre heortan 7 for þinum naman hi ciggen minne naman gehæl þu Drihten fram swa hwylcere untrumnesse swá hie forhæfde.²

Sisam suggests that the inclusion of requests for the absence of hail and help for those who have been possessed by the devil in the Latin account suggest that the original ‘was composed in a hotter, vine-growing country like Italy’,³ and that the translation ‘makes Christopher’s name a protection against the common evils that touch everybody – poverty, fire (in an age of thatch), all kinds of sickness’.⁴ The healing of sickness at saints’ tombs is seen throughout Old English hagiography, particularly in the lives of recent saints: the Ælfrician lives of Swithun, Oswald, Æthelthryth and Edmund all

¹ Pulsiano 2002, *BHL* 1766, 185.24-7: ‘Let not hail strike there, nor the anger of fire, nor hunger, nor death, and if there are wrongdoers there, or demoniacs, in that city and in those places, and they come and pray with their whole heart, and call upon my name in their prayers on account of your name, let them be saved’.

² Pulsiano 2002, *Christopher*, ll.94-8: ‘there be not poverty or the terror of fire, and if there are sick men near and they come to your holy temple and pray to you there with all their heart and for you name they call my name you heal them Lord from whatever infirmity they are restrained’.

³ Sisam 1953, p.70.

⁴ Sisam 1953, p.70.

advocate the healing powers of saints' relics.¹ As such, a saint's posthumous healing powers were precious currency in the Anglo-Saxon religious world, and the alteration of events here raises Christopher's status by granting him miraculous powers relevant to an Anglo-Saxon audience. In response to Christopher's prayer, a voice is heard speaking from heaven, saying that regardless of the presence of Christopher's body, whoever prays in his name will receive salvation. The Latin reads:

Ubi est corpus tuum, et ubi non est; commemorantur autem in oratione
sua nomen tuum; quicquid petierint, accipiant, et salvi fiant.²

Whilst the Old English alters the minor details of the response, the basic message is the same. However, the Latin goes on to specify Christopher's feast day, recounting that: 'Compleps autem suum martyrum bonum, coronatur mense Iulio viii kal. Augustas'.³ The Old English omits this detail, and instead dwells on the glory of Christopher's death in an unparalleled addition to the text:

Mit ty þe þeos wuldorlice spræc of heofonum wæs gehyredu 7 gefylledu
hraðe fram þam cempum he wæs slegen 7 he on þære mæstan blisse 7
unasecgendlican wuldre he ferde to Criste.⁴

¹ See, for example, Skeat 1891 and 1900, 21, *Swithun*, ll.318-22; 32, *Edmund*, ll.202-10; 20, *Æthelthryth*, ll.113-14; and 26, *Oswald*, ll.200-203. For discussion of the centrality of relics in medieval religious devotion, see Geary 1978.

² Pulsiano 2002, *BHL* 1766, 185.28-30: 'let those who mention your name in their prayer receive whatever they ask, and be saved, where your body is and where it is not'.

³ Pulsiano 2002, *BHL* 1766, 185-30-31: 'Completing his fine martyrdom, he was crowned on 25 July'.

⁴ Pulsiano 2002, *Christopher*, ll.105-8: 'After this wonderful speech from heaven was heard and quickly fulfilled he (St. Christopher) was killed by the soldiers and in the greatest happiness and unimaginable glory he went to Christ'.

Evidently, the glory of Christopher's death was seen as more important for inclusion than the date of his martyrdom. It is possible that the date of Christopher's martyrdom was mentioned in the lost opening to the piece, but there is no evidence for this, and it is reasonable to suggest that the Old English omits this detail. One possible reason for this could be that the date given in the Latin did not correspond with the feast day allocated to the saint in Anglo-Saxon times. Whilst Christopher's martyrdom was celebrated on July 25 as specified in the Latin *passio*,¹ the *Old English Martyrology* places the saint's feastday on April 28.² This discrepancy perhaps led the Old English translator to omit the detail rather than include a possibly erroneous date or change it.³ Another possible reason for this alteration could be the intended function of the text. On the grounds of the closing lines of the Vitellius text as compared to the remaining explicit of Cotton Otho B.x, Pickles has suggested that the latter was intended to be a preaching text, whilst Vitellius may not have been.⁴ If the Vitellius text was not necessarily intended to be read on Christopher's feast day, the information regarding the date of Christopher's martyrdom would be unnecessary. The alteration also serves to glorify Christopher: the additional description of Christopher's journey to Christ is an unqualified statement of the saint's triumph in his martyrdom. Whereas in the Latin Christopher's death is not glorified to a great extent and the saint almost disappears from the narrative, the Old English is concerned to depict the great reward that Christopher has received for his faith.

Perhaps the most striking addition to the text comes towards its close, where in an unparalleled section of text, the Old English relates the posthumous wonders that are performed in Christopher's name:

¹ See Butler 1956, Vol.3, pp.184-8, July 25.

² Herzfeld 1900, April 28, pp.66-7.

³ This contrasts with Ælfric's practice of taking otherwise unparalleled feastdates from his source, as in the *Life of Eugenia*. See Lapidge 1996, p.123.

⁴ Pickles 1971, pp.23-4.

Wuldorgeworc synd nu lang to asecgane þe Dryhten þurh hyne
 geworhte to herennesse his naman 7 nu oð þyssne dæg wyrcð, forþon þe
 þær nu blowað 7 growað his þa halgan gebedu.¹

Posthumous wonders are commonly dwelt upon in Anglo-Saxon hagiography: the lives of sixty-four percent of Ælfrician and forty-five percent of anonymous *vitae* and *passiones* describe such occurrences.² In some cases these wonders are paralleled in the sources of the Old English texts, but here they are not. This addition demonstrates an active desire on the part of the Anglo-Saxon author to draw attention to this phenomenon, and divine authority is granted to Christopher posthumously as well as throughout his confrontation with Dagnus.

In the above discussion of the miracles in the Old English *Life of St. Christopher*, certain trends and themes have emerged. Many of these are carried through from the Latin, whilst in others the Old English draws out various points in its source and at times adds completely new ideas. The Old English is not merely a translation of the Latin, but rather exercises a certain degree of freedom with regard to this. The Old English *passio* presents a more prestigious saint than the Latin; emphasising elements of the source which illustrate Christopher's greatness and enhancing this powerful portrait.

In the Latin, Christopher's central role in Dagnus' conversion is outlined, but the later Old English life concentrates on this to a higher degree, including unsourced additions which highlight this aspect of the narrative. The description of Dagnus'

¹ Pulsiano 2002, *Christopher*, ll.136-9: 'Glorious works are now lengthy to relate that God performed through Christopher to praise his name and performs until this day, because now his holy prayers flourish and grow there'.

² For calculation of these statistics see Appendix 1.

conversion is also given a different aspect in the Old English life. In the Latin, Dagnus clearly proclaims his faith in Christ:

Tunc rex clamavit voce magna dicens: Gloria tibi, Deus Christianorum;
qui facis voluntatem timentibus te.¹

In the Old English, the king's announcement of his faith is given more impact, as the text reads:

he cigde micelre stemne 7 he cwæð beforan eallum þam folce:
'Wuldorfæst ys 7 micel cristenra manna God þæs wuldorgeworces nane
mennisce searwe ofercuman ne magon'.²

The subtle alterations to this speech have two main effects: firstly, they depict a different image of the Lord. Whilst in the Latin, the fear required by believers casts the Lord in a vengeful role and he is only said to grant the desires of believers, the Old English removes the element of fear in the Latin and advocates the Lord's power over all earthly creation. Secondly, the Old English draws attention to the public nature of Dagnus' speech, as his proclamation is made 'beforan eallum þam folc'. This renders Dagnus' final statement of his faith more dramatic and universal. Another alteration in the Old English text serves to propound this theme. Andy Orchard points out the series of examples 'in which the Old English translator goes beyond any putative source in making the conflict between Dagnus and Christopher a highly personalized affair for

¹ Pulsiano 2002, *BHL* 1766, 185.32-186.1: 'Then the king cried out in a great voice, saying, "Glory to you, God of the Christians, you who grant their desire to those who fear you."'

² Pulsiano 2002, *Christopher*, ll.122-5: 'he called with a great voice and he said before all the people: 'Glorious and great is the God of Christian men whose glorious works no human craft can overcome.'"

each; a contest, as the author repeatedly makes clear, between “my god(s)” and “your god(s)””.¹ This feeling of a personal contest makes Dagnus’ conversion even more momentous. In this way, the theme of conversion found in the Latin is drawn out further in the Old English text, and its importance in the narrative is highlighted by the summary given of Dagnus’ conversion and the public nature of his proclamation of faith. Additionally, in the Latin account of Christopher’s speech to Dagnus, Christopher expresses his dislike and disrespect for Dagnus’ god, saying ‘Ego diis tuis abominationem feci’.² This is slightly expanded in the Old English, as Christopher says: ‘Symle þine goda ic laðette 7 him teonan dó’.³ The figure of Christopher is therefore more vocal and threatening regarding his feelings towards Dagnus in the Old English text, adding to the inherent dominance and authority of his character.

The evidence illustrates that the Christopher figure of the Old English text is an altogether more dominant and authoritative character than that of the Latin, both in terms of his charismatic abilities and general speech and demeanour. As has been outlined throughout this thesis, it is difficult to know whether the differences between the Old English text and the Latin source employed here are the result of deliberate intervention by the anonymous Anglo-Saxon author, or stem from a non-extant immediate source. The discrepancies between *BHL* 1766 and the Old English generally serve two functions: firstly, to add to the authority of Christopher; and secondly to introduce specifically Anglo-Saxon details into the text. As such, it is possible that the Latin text was deliberately manipulated with these aims in mind. In this way, the authority of the text regarding its accuracy according to received tradition is subordinated to these overriding aims. If the Old English text in its current form is the

¹ Orchard 1995, p.18.

² Pulsiano 2002, *BHL* 1766, 184.32-3: ‘I have cursed your gods’.

³ Pulsiano 2002, *Christopher*, l.55: ‘I always abominate your pagan god and do him harm’.

original work of an anonymous Anglo-Saxon author, it seems that the divine authority of Christopher was deliberately emphasized at the expense of faithful translation.

Ælfric's *Life of St. George*.

St. George provides a far more typical example of sanctity than the *cynocephalus* Christopher, but little is known for certain about this famous martyr. George may have been martyred at the beginning of the fourth century,¹ and his legend accumulated various accretions over the centuries. As Riches points out, several different accounts of the saint's life have emerged:

St George's legend was very popular throughout the medieval period, but it was subject to a great deal of reinterpretation [....] It is readily apparent that there is a marked disparity between the different retellings. For example, the dragon episode, which is now generally assumed to be *the* legend, does not appear at all in Ælfric's version of the Life, and the tortures inflicted on St George vary a great deal.²

The dragon episode, perhaps the event most readily associated with the saint, is thus not a consistent element, and the historical truth of George's life was controversial. Indeed, as Joyce Hill discusses, the *Gelasian Decretals* which circulated in late Anglo-Saxon England contained a specific condemnation of George's *passio*:

A passio Sancti Georgii is not only listed among the prohibited works in V.8, but is also singled out, along with that of Cyricus and Julitta, as an

¹ Butler 1956, Vol.2, p.148, April 23.

² Samantha Riches, *St George: Hero, Martyr and Myth* (Gloucestershire: Sutton Publishing Limited, 2000), p.2, hereafter Riches 2000.

example of the worst of apocryphal passions, which are “ab hereticis

Compositiae” (IV.4).¹

Whilst, as Peebles point out, ‘[i]t is universally agreed [...] that Pope Gelasius is not the author of the decree that bears his name’,² Ælfric’s attitude to the document as an ‘arbiter of orthodoxy’³ reveals its authoritative status in Anglo-Saxon England. According to Hill, Ælfric would certainly have been familiar with the document:

There is no doubt that the Decretals were known to Ælfric because a copy exists in Boulogne-sur-Mer, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS 63, which is a witness to Ælfric’s commonplace book.⁴

It is likely to be the attitude expressed in the decretals towards George’s acts that prompted Ælfric to add his own qualifying statement at the opening of his account of the saint’s martyrdom, as he claims to relate only the truth about the saint and produces a relatively short *passio*:

Gedwol-men awriton ge-dwyld on heora bocum . be ðam halgan were
ðe is gehaten georius . Nu will we eow secgan þæt soð is be ðam . þæt
heora gedwyld ne derige digellice ænigum .⁵

¹ Hill 1985, p.4. The decretals are edited in Ernst von Dobschütz, *Das Decretum Gelasianum De Libris Recipiendis et Non Recipiendis*, Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der Altchristlichen Literatur 38, Band 8, Heft 4 (Liepzig: J.C. Hinrichs’sche Buchhandlung, 1912), see pp.9 and 13, hereafter Dobschütz 1912.

² Peebles 1949, p.96.

³ Hill 1985, p.10.

⁴ Hill 1993, p.33.

⁵ Skeat 1891, 14, *George*, ll.1-4: ‘Heretics have written in their books about the holy man who is called George. Now we will tell you that which is true about him, that their error may not secretly harm anyone’.

Ælfric immediately contrasts his version of the *passio* with these heretical writings, and sets himself up as an authority. As Hill discusses, the difficulty with Ælfric's claims to textual orthodoxy concerns his basis for these assertions. The *Decretals* do not condemn certain aspects or versions of George's *passio*, but refer to the legend in its entirety and 'the Roman church knew of no reliable *passio* in the sixth century, since nothing is recommended as an alternative to the condemned narrative'.¹ Hill suggests that Ælfric 'was influenced in favor of this version of St. George's passion in part because it was the standard version within reformed monasteries',² and that the text he employed represented a 'toned down' version of that which had been condemned.³ As such, Ælfric's handling of source material and the ideas and themes of the narrative are paramount: he advocates the worth and authority of the document he presents, but in rather ambiguous circumstances.

For his narrative, Ælfric drew primarily on the anonymous *Passio S. Georgii*, in addition to a short passage from Gelasius' *Decretum Gelasianum* at the opening of the text.⁴ According to Jayatilaka,

Ælfric probably consulted the *Passio* in his copy of the Cotton-Corpus legendary [...]. The closest printed version of this text is by Huber (1906), but variant or alternative readings closer to Ælfric are sometimes to be found in a manuscript of the C-C legendary, London, British Library MS Cotton Nero E.i, Part 1.⁵

¹ Hill 1985, p.5.

² Hill 1985, p.4.

³ Hill 1985, p.7.

⁴ R. Jayatilaka, 'The Sources of Ælfric's Life of St. George', 1997, *Fontes Anglo-Saxonici: World Wide Web Register*, <http://fontes.english.ox.ac.uk/>, accessed March 2003, hereafter *Fontes*, Jayatilaka 2003.

⁵ *Fontes*, Jayatilaka 2003.

Huber's edition of the Latin source will thus be used for comparison in this thesis.¹

Ælfric's version of the text remains close to his source, and as Cross summarizes:

Huber's comparison demonstrates that, despite the demands of his rhythmic and alliterative prose, Ælfric follows the version closely, with many verbal echoes, although with omissions of material.²

As the following analysis demonstrates, whilst Ælfric generally provides a fairly faithful translation of parts of the *Passio S. Georgii*, he rearranges this source and omits certain episodes, whilst making additions to his main source text.

The miracles in the *Life of St. George* are relatively limited in nature, covering only certain categories of the typology employed in this study, and totalling only eight throughout the *passio*. These miracles correspond roughly with those found in the Latin *Passio S. Georgii*, although some minor details are altered between the two texts. The limited nature of miracles in the Old English *Life of St. George* implies a preference for certain types of miracle in this life from the outset, and less of a preoccupation with the phenomenon than that seen in other Ælfrician saints' lives, for instance those concerning Martin, Cuthbert and Benedict which detail far higher numbers of miracles.³ As has been noted, there was doubt over many of the accretions to George's legend, such as the resurrections found in some acts of the saint, and the limited number of miracles in Ælfric's *passio* is likely to result at least partly from a caution to remain within the bounds of what was considered orthodox information on the saint. Certain themes prevail in the resulting narrative, which concentrates on God's

¹ The *Passio b. Georgii Martyris* is printed in M. Huber, "Zur Georgslegende", in *Festschrift zum XII. Allgemeinen Deutschen Neophilologentage in Muenchen*, ed. E. Stollreither (Erlangen: Verlag Von Fr. Junge, 1906): 175-235, hereafter Huber 1906, followed by chapter no. and line refs.

² J.E. Cross, "Ælfric's 'Life of St. George'", *Notes and Queries* 222 (1977): 195-6, here p.196.

³ See above, pp.200-201.

protection of His saints and His punishment of heathens, and is concerned to stress the dominance of the spiritual and heavenly realm over the earthly and physical.

Unusually, there are no Healing Miracles in George's passion. Whilst evidently viewed as paramount in the lives of many other saints, such as Martin, Maur and Swithun, no attempt is made to stress George's powers regarding either physical or spiritual healings. Healing miracles often function to stress a saint's earthly power or, if performed posthumously, the benefits of venerating a saint. The absence of Healing Miracles in George's life thus points to a *passio* that did not have these features as its primary agenda. This element of the Old English life is derived from the Latin, which has no healings, and shows that Ælfric deemed his source acceptable. The same can be said of Resurrection and Divine Contact Miracles, neither of which feature in the *passio*.

The main thrust of the narrative's miracles concerns George's immunity to torture. This is shown specifically in both the Latin and the Old English as the sorcerer Athanasius is ordered by Datian to put a stop to George's 'magic'. Athanasius mixes a noxious drink for the saint, but George remains unhurt by the poison:

Athanasius ða ardlice genam ænne mycelne bollan . mid bealuwe afylled
and deoflum betæhte ðone drenc ealne . and sealde him drincan ac hit
him ne derode .¹

Athanasius makes a further attempt to poison George, and again the saint remains unaffected by the drink.² In this way, the miracles involve George as their recipient

¹ Skeat 1891, 14, *George*, ll.67-70: 'Athanasius then quickly took a great bowl, filled with a poisonous drink, and dedicated all that drink to the devils, and gave it to him to drink, but it did not hurt him'.

² Skeat 1891, 14, *George*, ll.71-8. The Latin is found in Huber 1906, XIII, ll.5-12.

rather than their dispenser, and show that not only does God heal His saints, but also prevents them from enduring harm.

Likewise, two of the Laws of Physics Miracles in George's life function to help the saint overcome his tortures. In his persecution of the saint, the emperor Datian commands George to be placed in a cauldron filled with boiling lead. George prays to God and blesses the cauldron before entering it, and the lead cools:

And he bletsode þæt lead and læg him onuppan . and þæt lead wearð
acolod þurh godes mihte . and georius sæt gesund on ðam hwere .¹

This miracle emanates from God in response to George's prayer, and is performed to prevent any harm coming to the saint as a result of Datian's machinations. The Movement Miracle in the text has a similar purpose, as a wheel designed to torture George breaks in response to the saint's prayers:

Þa tyrndon þa hæðenan hetelice þæt hweowl . ac hit sona tobærst and
beah to eorðan . and se halga were wunode ungederod .²

The wheel bursts instantly, so again no harm comes to George. The two Movement Miracles reveal a narrative where the theme of God's protection of his saint against his heathen opposers predominates. Neither miracle emanates from the saint himself: rather, both occur in response to prayer. Here, at least, the miracles function not to demonstrate George's power, but to show God's ability to help His saints.

¹ Skeat 1891, 14, *George*, ll.114-16: 'And he blessed the cauldron, and laid himself upon it, and the lead was cooled by God's might, and George sat unhurt in the caldron'.

² Skeat 1891, 14, *George*, ll.93-5: 'Then the heathen men turned the wheel savagely, but it instantly burst and sunk to the earth, and the holy man remained uninjured'.

God's protection of George emerges through the depiction of two further Element Miracles in this text, as the saint's persecutors are punished. In response to a prayer from George, heavenly fire destroys a heathen temple, and the temple's gods, priests and followers sink into the earth.¹ Later in the narrative, Datian himself is punished by God, as he is killed by heavenly fire:

Hwæt ða datianus wearð færllice ofslagen mid heofonlicum fyre . and his
geferan samod²

These miracles do not function to display George's own charismatic power, but rather reveal the favour George holds with God, who protects the saint through miracles.

As such, a variety of miracles in the life illustrate God's protection of George, and all the examples above are transmitted from the Latin. However, Ælfric deviates from his source in omitting any references to the harm which comes to George as a result of his torments. In the Latin, the effect of George's tortures is depicted in a physical and vivid manner, as the saint's insides appear as a result of the torments he undergoes: 'Deinde praecepit lateribus eius lampades applicari, ita ut eius interiora viscerum apparerent'.³ The Latin narrative also stresses God's miraculous protection of the saint, as it later goes on to say that George remains unhurt throughout his tortures:

¹ Skeat 1891, 14, *George*, ll.141-4.

² Skeat 1891, 14, *George*, ll.179-80: 'Behold then, Datian was killed suddenly by fire from heaven, and his companions at the same time'.

³ Huber 1906, X, ll.3-4: 'Then he ordered flaming torches to be applied to his sides, so that his internal organs appeared', translation is my own.

Et in his omnibus poenis, quae in sancto Dei famulo Georgio exhibebantur, corpus eius manebat illaesum.¹

In the Old English, however, the comment regarding the appearance of George's internal organs as a result of his tortures is omitted, and Ælfric instead moves straight from discussion of the torments administered to the saint to a statement regarding George's immunity to these:

Hwæt ða datianus mid deofollicum gramam het ðone halgan wer on hencgene ahæbban . and mid isenum clawum clifrian his lima . and ontendan blysan æt bam his sidum. het hine þa siððan of ðære ceastre alædan and mid swinglum þreagen and mid sealte gnidan . ac se halga wer wunode unge-derod .²

As Alison Elliott comments regarding the persecutions faced by martyr saints, these have the effect of showing the saint's superiority over their adversary:

The elaborate tortures, which generally fail either to harm the saint or to persuade him to recant, only serve to show the powerlessness of the tyrant and the triumph of the martyr.³

¹ Huber 1906, XI, ll.1-2: 'And throughout all these punishments, which were presented to the servant of God saint George, his body remained uninjured', translation is my own.

² Skeat 1891, 14, *George*, ll.41-7: 'Thereupon Datian, with devilish anger, commanded the holy man to be hung up on a gallows, and his limbs to be torn with iron claws, and torches to be lit on both sides of him; after that, he commanded him to be led out of the city, and to be tortured with whips, and rubbed with salt; but the holy man remained unhurt'.

³ Alison Elliott, *Roads to Paradise: Readings in the Lives of the Early Saints* (Hanover; London: Brown University Press, 1987), p.14.

George is miraculously shielded from torments in both the Latin and the Old English, demonstrating his superiority as Elliott outlines. However, this idea is taken further in the Old English, where the possibility that the tortures have any physical effect on the saint is removed. The picture presented of George is therefore of an indestructible figure, and suggests that Ælfric was uncomfortable with the saint being affected by the torments in the gory and vivid manner depicted in the Latin. This idea is supported by another omission made in the Old English text. At the opening of the narrative, the Latin reads:

Tantas itaque ac tales martyrum laudes roseis cruorum passionibus
nullus potest et tantae virtutis agonem impensius enarare.¹

This opening is substituted in Ælfric's text with the assertion of the narrative's authority, and thus the reference to the 'roseis cruorum' of the passion is absent in the Old English. Hill, referring to the omission of the gruesome detail about George's organs, suggests that Ælfric's sober presentation of the text relates to the doubt over the life's authority:

No doubt Ælfric was prepared to believe it, given his respect for the text, but the omission of this detail, as also of the grim list of punishments threatened by Datianus at the outset (III), indicates not only a consistent adjustment to what he felt was edifying for his audience, but also an

¹ Huber 1906, I, II.1-3: 'Therefore may you praise a martyr of so great a kind, and consecrate the rose-coloured blood of his passion; and his virtue and acts are so great to relate', translation is my own.

underlying sympathy for the moderation of this version, a moderation that he was willing to take a little further.¹

This may well have provided Ælfric's motivation for the excisions, but these have a further consequence when considering George's authority: the reworking of the Latin is effected to stress George's immunity to persecution, a feature which may have broader implications for the model of sanctity Ælfric wished to create. As Riches points out, elements of George's legend overall have more in common with the stories of female martyrs. She identifies the major similarity between George's legend and those of female martyrs as the physical suffering the saint undergoes:

This element in the narratives of female virgin martyrs is so marked that one commentator has been moved to describe the written lives of these saints as pornography for the contemporary medieval sado-masochist. While the format of St George's legend is somewhat different – it would seem that his sexual status, chaste or unchaste, is never an issue – it is very clear that the construction of his legend, and particularly the emphasis on torture, is far closer to the model offered by these female virgin martyrs than that used in other male martyr legends.²

Clearly, this statement does not relate directly to the particular version of the *passio* used by Ælfric, as this does not dwell on George's sufferings to the same extent as other recensions of the legend. However, there is an element of this in the Latin, which is not employed by Ælfric in his own account. The omission of vivid description

¹ Hill 1985, pp.8-9.

² Riches 2000, p.61.

surrounding George's tortures removes any hint of the aspects of the legend which identify it so clearly with the lives of female martyrs. As has been discussed, the lives of virgin saints, particularly within the Ælfrician corpus, are marked by the limited number of miracles they include and the passivity of the protagonists. These features are evident in the Latin *Passio b. Georgii Martyris* employed by Ælfric, and as such, George fits the mould of Ælfric's female saints fairly accurately. Whilst Ælfric's work does demonstrate a trend to desensationalize his translations, for example in his *Life of St. Edmund* analysed by James W. Earl,¹ his female saints do bear the physical consequences of their tortures, albeit momentarily. In the *Life of St. Agatha*, the saint speaks of her 'laðum witum',² and her breast is cut off before being healed by the Lord.³ In Ælfric's *Life of St. Lucy*, he includes a gruesome image of the effects of her tortures: 'heo wearð þa gewundod . þæt hire wand se innoð út'.⁴ As such, whilst Ælfric's approach is often characterised by sobriety, he does include references to the effects of the torments undergone by Virgin saints. The omission of all references to George's physical harm differentiates him from the Virgins, and his apparent immunity to physical harm until the point of his death aggrandises his earthly life. In this way, the concern to remove all reference to George's physical suffering from the text perhaps reveals a desire in Ælfric's hagiography to avoid reference to George's physical vulnerability, and thus clearly separate him from the mould of the female virgin martyr.

In addition to the protection of George from harm, there is one miracle in the Old English life which portrays George in an active role. Here, George prays before his death that God send rain to the land, and after his martyrdom, the Lord answers his prayer:

¹ James W. Earl, "Violence and Non-Violence in Anglo-Saxon England: Ælfric's 'Passion of St. Edmund'", *Philological Quarterly* 78:1-2 (1999): 125-49.

² Skeat 1891, 8, *Agatha*, l.116: 'painful torments'.

³ Skeat 1891, 8, *Agatha*, ll.122-3.

⁴ Skeat 1891, 9, *Lucy*, l.127: 'Then was she wounded, so that her bowels fell out'.

ƿa asende [sona] drihten ren-scuras . and ƿa eorðan gewæterode ƿe ær
wæs for-burnen . swa swa georius bæd ærðan ƿe he abuge to slege .¹

This is the only miracle in the text which does not involve either the protection of George or the punishment of heathens, and is performed at George's request for his people. The miracle demonstrates George's value as an intercessor, but as this is the only miracle of this kind, it does not render his *passio* one which has the portrayal of the saint as intercessor as a main focus.

The role of miracles in the *Life of St. George* thus seems to be somewhat limited at first glance. Only eight are performed in his *passio*, and these are of certain types. Healings, Resurrections and Divine Contact Miracles do not appear in his life, and miracles do not form a large preoccupation in the narrative. One reason for this is likely to be the controversy surrounding George's legend, and Ælfric may well have endeavoured to produce a relatively conservative account of the saint and so keep within the bounds of the perceived truth about the saint. He follows the miracles in the *Passio b. Georgii Martyris* closely, exercising little freedom in this area in order to claim his authority almost entirely from the source. In addition to this, the limited number and types of miracles in both the Latin and Old English texts may relate to George's status as a martyr. In the lives of confessor saints discussed in this work, the saints' performance of miracles is central to their sanctity. As they have not undergone martyrdom as proof of their saintly status, their virtues and miracles function as evidence of this. However, martyr saints present a different scenario – their sanctity is ensured by their martyred status, and their performance of miracles is not as central to

¹ Skeat 1891, 14, *George*, ll.176-8: 'Then the Lord sent rain-showers, and watered the earth, which before was burned up, just as George had prayed, before he submitted to death'.

the qualification of their sanctity and is therefore less important in their depiction. This idea can certainly be seen in the *Life of St. George*, as the saint is often the receptor rather than dispenser of miracles, and there is only one instance of a miracle being performed to benefit others. The miracles in the *passio* are preoccupied with elements other than aggrandizing George: instead, they centre on God's power to help His saint overcome tortures and His punishment of heathens.

This trend of God's protection for his saint, observable to a lesser degree in the *Life of St. Christopher*, is largely applicable to the martyrs' generic group. The saints' immunity to torture through God's miraculous intervention, found in the Latin lives of both saints and emphasized by Ælfric and the anonymous author, can be seen in the majority of martyr lives across the Old English corpus. The lives of Alexander, Eventus and Theodolus; Chrysanthus and Daria, Dionysius; Eustace and his Companions, Laurence; Julian and Basilissa; and Sebastian all involve miracles performed by the Lord to shield his saints from torments. These range from Alexander and Eventus' immunity to fire when they are cast into a burning oven by Aurelian, to the rods used to beat Chrysanthus softening like feathers.¹ As the persecution of a saint is generally part and parcel of their martyrdom, this trend is not unexpected. However, there are exceptions to this pattern. One group of saints who are not shielded from harm in this way are the Anglo-Saxon martyrs Edmund and Oswald, a feature likely to result from their era. As Malcolm Godden points out, Ælfric's views on the continuance of miracles in his own time are ambiguous, and his method of dealing with this in his hagiography appears to be to describe the posthumous wonders of recent saints whilst avoiding the description of miracles during these saints' lifetimes.² The departure of the

¹ Godden 1979, 18, *Alexander, Eventus and Theodolus*, ll.60-66; and Skeat 1900, 35, *Chrysanthus and Daria*, ll.188-93.

² Godden 1985, p.85.

Anglo-Saxon martyrs from this trend is thus in keeping with their presentation in general, and Edmund and Oswald are instead celebrated for their posthumous miracles.

The trend of saints showing miraculous resistance to tortures is to some extent a generic one, although in this respect Christopher is perhaps a more typical example than George. In the majority of martyrdoms, miracles illustrating a saint's immunity to torture are performed, but generally alongside a variety of other feats. For example, just as Christopher is also involved in healings and posthumous miracles, a stream dries up at Alban's request and the saint performs posthumous miracles; a site of water is miraculously found by St. Clement; Dionysius possesses the gifts of healing and prophecy, while Apollinaris performs healings and resurrections.¹ The almost exclusive trend within the *Life of St. George*, where the majority of miracles involve the theme of the saint's preservation from harm, is unusual.

The martyr lives of Christopher and George, then, bear witness to divergent treatments of this generic type of sanctity and different attitudes to inscribed authority. In the anonymous *Life of Christopher*, the Latin text is reworked, with the effect of increasing Christopher's authority and dominance. The centrality of Dagnus' conversion, the Christlike parallels of the narrative, Christopher's posthumous and intercessory abilities, the glory of his martyrdom, and the saint's cheerful endurance of his tortures are all emphasized in the Old English. If such deviations from the Latin represent the mediation of the Anglo-Saxon translator, it seems that Christopher's authority, both in terms of the miracles performed in the text and the general demeanour of the saint, were emphasized at the expense of a faithful translation of the Latin. Thus, in a text whose orthodoxy is controversial from the outset due to

¹ Skeat 1891 and 1900, 19, *Alban*, ll.993-7 and 143-6; 29, *Dionysius*, ll.102-5 and 97-101; and 22, *Apollinaris*, ll.32-5 and 110-22. Clemoes 1997, 37, *Clement*, ll.70-80.

Christopher's status as a *cynocephalus*, textual authority is compromised in order to manipulate the depiction of Christopher.

A very different portrait of martyr sanctity can be observed in Ælfric's depiction of St. George. In accordance with the *Passio b. Georgii Martyris*, Ælfric presents a passive figure in terms of miracle working and, unlike the anonymous author, does not include unsourced references designed to increase George's authority. However, the omission of all references to the harm George suffers as a result of his torments suggests that Ælfric was not altogether comfortable with the portrait of the saint depicted in his source. The omission of such details, which serves to present George as indestructible prior to death and thereby clearly distinguished from the female virgin martyrs in Ælfric's collection, perhaps indicates that Ælfric intended to increase the authority of this martyr without making additions to a text, the orthodoxy of which was already questionable.

The Apostle: St. Andrew of Galilee.

Apart from the Blessed Virgin Mary, the highest ranking category of human saints in the Anglo-Saxon litanies is the apostles. The precise definition of an apostle is complex, and as Kee outlines:

Our English word ‘apostle’ is only a transliteration of the Greek word *apostolas*. No one can be certain what it meant to its first users in early Christianity, or even if it meant the same thing to all of them. On certain basic matters, of course, there was and is agreement: An apostle was someone commissioned by God, or more specifically by Jesus Christ, for a leading role in the spread of the message and the development of the covenant people.¹

The names of Christ’s twelve disciples, as listed in the *Gospel of Matthew*, were Simon Peter, Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, Thaddeus, Simon the Cananaean, and Judas Iscariot.² The apostleship of Paul is also asserted in Scripture by Paul himself as he says:

Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Christ Jesus our Lord?³

The Ælfrician corpus relates the lives of twelve of these figures, distributed as follows:

¹ Howard Clark Kee, *Understanding the New Testament*, 4th ed. (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1983), p.244.

² Matthew 10.2-4.

³ I Corinthians 9.1. Paul’s apostleship is also asserted in Galatians 1.1.

The “Catholic Homilies” include accounts of the passions of eleven apostles: In the First Series, Peter and Paul (in one text), Andrew, Bartholomew, and John the Evangelist; in the Second Series, Philip and James the Less (who shared one feast-day), James, brother of John, Simon and Jude (together), and Matthew. In the “Lives of Saints”, the Passion of Thomas is related.¹

Particularly in the two series of *Catholic Homilies*, Ælfric demonstrates a clear interest in and concern with the lives of Christ’s apostles. Apostolic *passiones* are far less common in the anonymous corpus, which contains the lives of James the Greater, Peter and Paul, and Andrew.² As has been discussed, the limitations of the material from the anonymous corpus may result from a loss of texts in transmission, and the anonymous tradition of apostolic lives may have represented a fuller body of material than is now extant.³ However, it is also possible that the authorial selection of saints reflects differing perceptions of apostolic sanctity.

A large volume of apostolic lives therefore exists within the Ælfrician corpus, but there is paucity of anonymous material. Andrew has been selected as a case-study for apostolic saints, predominantly because he features in both the Ælfrician and anonymous corpora and provides the best comparative text. Andrew and his brother

¹ Aileen O’Leary, “An Orthodox Old English Homiliary? Ælfric’s Views on the Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles”, *Neophilologische Mitteilungen* 100:1 (1999): 15-26, here p.16, hereafter O’Leary 1999.

² The anonymous *Life of James the Greater* is found in London, British Library, Cotton Vespasian D.xiv and is unique. It is edited in Rubie D-N Warner, *Early English Homilies from the Twelfth Century MS. Vesp. D. XIV, Part 1, Text*, EETS OS 152 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1917): 21-5. The anonymous *Life of Peter and Paul* occurs in Princeton University Library, W.H. Scheide Collection 71, *The Blickling Homilies*, ed. Morris 1874. The anonymous *Life of Andrew* also occurs in *The Blickling Homilies*, ed. Morris 1874; and Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 198. See Scragg 1996 for details of the manuscript contexts of these pieces.

³ See above, p.9.

Simon Peter were both fishermen from Bethsaida in Galilee, and their calling to Christ is described in the Gospel of Matthew:

And Jesus walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea (for they were fishers). And he saith to them, Come ye after me, and I will make you to be fishers of men.¹

As a disciple, Andrew devoted his life to preaching God's word, and although little is known for certain regarding his apostolate, sources suggest Scythia, and Epirus and Achaia in Greece, as some sites of his preaching.² Andrew's feast day is kept as 30 November, the day of his martyrdom, by both the Greek and Latin Churches, and is commemorated on this date in the *Old English Martyrology*.³

Andrew's identity immediately points to him as a saint of great authority. As the New Testament is largely reliant on the testimony of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, apostolic authority must be absolute. In *Enchiridion*, Augustine discusses St. Paul's words, and asserts that 'hæc apostolica manifestissima et apertissima testimonia falsa esse non possunt'.⁴ From the outset, therefore, apostolic saints possess a distinct superiority in terms of their perceived authority: it is partly this authority on which the Christian faith rests. There can therefore be no doubt about the holiness and status of the individuals themselves. Unlike popularly culted saints, such as Swithun from the Ælfrician corpus and Guthlac from the anonymous, whose earthly virtues and miracles manifested their sanctity, the sanctity of the apostles was assured. The authoritative

¹ Matthew 6.18. For Scriptural information on Andrew, see Mark 1.16 and 1.29; and John 1.43-51.

² Butler 1956, vol.4, p.226, Nov. 30.

³ Herzfeld 1900, p.215.

⁴ Augustine, *Enchiridion, Sive de Fide, Spe et Charitate*, 68: PL 40.264: 'these most plain and manifest witnesses of the apostles cannot be false', trans. FC, vol.2, p.426.

status of the apostles is reflected in hierarchical models of sanctity: Anglo-Saxon litanies consistently place the apostles above all the other categories of mortal saints they include.¹ As such, the prestige and authority of apostolic saints is ensured by their very nature.

Andrew's importance in relation to the other apostles is difficult to judge: he is certainly one of the more widely known of the Twelve, and is 'one of the small group of the Twelve who are more than mere names and was obviously regarded as a leader'.² In addition to this, he was the first apostle called by Christ and is always included within the first four apostles in New Testament lists.³ However, in terms of the importance granted to him in relation to other major biblical figures, it is hard to draw comparisons. As Von Campenhausen points out,

It is quite impossible to arrange the leading figures of primitive Christianity in any definite patterns, vertical or horizontal, which would allow us to delimit their mutual official rights and duties.⁴

In this sense, Andrew holds the importance and authority common to all such key New Testament figures, and although his fame and cult may be more developed than those of his peers, it is problematic to try and define his status in relation to other Scriptural figures.

¹ See Lapidge 1991a for an edition of litanies which demonstrate this trend.

² Butler 1956, Vol.4, p.226, Nov. 30.

³ Matthew 10.2-4; Mark 3.16-19; Luke 6.14-16; and Acts 1.13.

⁴ Hans Von Campenhausen, *Ecclesiastical Authority and Spiritual Power in the Church of the First Three Centuries*, trans. J.A. Baker (London: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997), p.28, hereafter Von Campenhausen 1997.

Andrew's evident prestige as one of the first called apostles goes some way to explaining the momentum his cult gathered after his death, and the veneration he received. Scott DeGregorio notes the status that Andrew merited:

The knowledge that Pope Gregory the Great had held this first-called of apostles and brother of St. Peter in high esteem, dedicating to him his monastery on Mount Coelius (from which no less than Augustine of Canterbury himself was dispatched to head up the English mission), must surely have fuelled Andrew's cult early on, and probably had something to do with the devotion that Bishop Wilfrid is known to have paid him.¹

Butler also comments on the popularity of Andrew's cult in the medieval West:

The feast of St Andrew was universal in the West from the sixth century, and from a very early date churches were dedicated to him, especially in France, Italy, and England, where Hexham and Rochester are the earliest. The popularity of the St Andrew legend is also indicated by the Anglo-Saxon poem *Andreas*, which is based on it.²

The legend which formed the basis for *Andreas* and the anonymous Old English account of the saint was a highly popular narrative, and according to Brookes, '[t]he legend of the adventures of Andrew and Matthew in the land of the *Anthropophagi* appears to have been from early times one of the most popular of all the apocryphal

¹ Scott DeGregorio, "*Pegenlic or flæsclic: The Old English Prose Legends of St. Andrew*", *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 102 (2003): 449-64, here p.450, hereafter DeGregorio 2003.

² Butler 1956, Vol.3, p.227, Nov. 25.

stories concerning the apostles'.¹ The poetic *Andreas*, and the *Fates of the Apostles* which includes reference to Andrew's works, indicates Andrew's popularity by attesting to his dominant presence in the extant Old English poetic corpus. The saint also receives notice in the *Old English Martyrology* and is mentioned on sixty occasions in the litanies.² Andrew's cult was thus well established in the early medieval era, a fact reflected in the surviving Anglo-Saxon vernacular hagiography concerning the saint. Two versions of his life are extant, one of which is found in the first series of Ælfric's *Catholic Homilies*, and the second of which comes from the anonymous corpus. These accounts deal with different episodes in Andrew's life: Ælfric's biography describes the saint's crucifixion, whilst the anonymous *passio* focuses on Andrew's apostolate.

The shorter of the two Anglo-Saxon biographies of Andrew is Ælfrician, appearing in the first series of his *Catholic Homilies*. The authoritative manuscript for this series is London, British Library, Royal 7 C.xii,³ dated by Ker to s. x ex.⁴ The version of Andrew's passion found in Royal 7.C.xii survives in a number of later manuscripts, namely Oxford, Bodleian Library, 343; Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 303; Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 340 and 342; London, British Library, Cotton Vitellius C.v; Cambridge, University Library Gg.3.28; Cambridge, University Library Ii.I.33; Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 188; Oxford, Bodleian Library, Hatton 116; and London, British Library, Cotton Vitellius D.xvii.⁵ The Ælfrician version of Andrew's *passio* thus enjoyed a relatively high degree of circulation over almost two hundred years.

¹ Kenneth R. Brookes, *Andreas and the Fates of the Apostles* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961), p.xv.

² Herzfeld 1900, p.214-216; and Lapidge 1991a, p.304.

³ Clemoes 1997, p.xxiii.

⁴ Ker 1957, p.324.

⁵ Clemoes 1997, p.xix. For the dissemination of Ælfric's homily on Andrew, see Ker 1957, 'Table of Ælfric's Sermones Catholici', pp.511-15.

According to Godden, the two parts of Andrew's *passio* - the first describing the choosing of some of the apostles and the second detailing Andrew's passion - were written separately:

A comment by Ælfric originally written as a conclusion to this homily, and erroneously preserved in the Royal MS [...] shows that the homily was in its earliest form just an exposition of the Gospel passage for the day, Matthew 4.18-22, on the choosing of Andrew, Peter, James and John as disciples. Subsequently, though before MS A was circulated, Ælfric added an account of the apostle's passion (lines 169-351), and some time later again added a brief alliterative linking sentence, preserved in the later versions of MS Q etc [...] to join the two parts.¹

As such, the narrative is in two distinct sections, each with a different focus and purpose. The sources of the two parts also differ. For the opening of the narrative, Ælfric relies primarily on Gregory the Great's *Homiliae xl in Evangelia*.² In addition to this main text, he uses from Haymo of Auxerre's *Homiliae de Sanctis* and Heiricus of Auxerre's *Homilia Andrei*. There are several instances of Scriptural allusions in the work, some of which have been transmitted through the work of Haymo and Gregory. There are, however, passages from Matthew, Jeremiah, Corinthians, Luke and Mark which are not derived from these intermediaries, and may have been taken directly

¹ Godden 2000, p.318. This view is also expressed in Godden 1996, p.273.

² See M.R. Godden, 'The Sources of Catholic Homilies I.38', 2002, *Fontes Anglo-Saxonici: World Wide Web Register*, <http://fontes.english.ox.ac.uk/>, accessed June 2004, for the sources of this life, hereafter *Fontes*, Godden 2002.

from the Vulgate.¹ Ælfric thus draws on patristic and Scriptural authority, in addition to the works of Carolingian intermediaries, for his opening gospel pericope.

Ælfric's main source for Andrew's succeeding passion was the anonymous *Passio Andreae*. According to Godden, the version used by Ælfric would probably have been closest to that edited by Bonnet:

The Latin text survives in a number of printed editions. Förster quoted from the version printed by Mombricitus, but the version edited by Bonnet is much closer. Ælfric probably found the source in his copy of the Cotton-Corpus legendary. MS F of this collection (Bodleian, MS Bodley 354) has a version similar to Mombricitus, but Zettel has shown that the later Hereford MS (Hereford, Cathedral Library, MS P.7.vi) has a different version which is very close to Ælfric; it is in fact virtually identical to that edited by Bonnet (though Zettel did not compare the two).²

It is this edition of the anonymous *Passio Andreae* which will be used for comparison with Ælfric's work.³ The *Passio Andreae* includes Scriptural allusions, which are carried through to Ælfric's text. Thus, whilst Ælfric may well have been aware of the antecedent Biblical source for these passages, it is likely that his immediate source here was the *Passio Andreae* and that he did not consult the Vulgate directly. Ælfric thus used the *Passio Andreae* alone in his *Life of Andrew*, and demonstrates no desire to add to this Latin text from other sources.

¹ *Fontes*, Godden 2002.

² Godden 2000, p.319.

³ R.A Lipsius and M. Bonnet, eds., *Acta Apostolorum Apocrypha*, vol. 1 (Leipzig: Hermann Mendelssohn, 1891-1903): 1-37.

Many versions of Andrew's *acta* exist: the majority are in Greek, but several Western texts are also extant. These include two distinct Latin texts both known as *Passio Sancti Andreae Apostoli*, and the *Liber de Miraculis Beati Andreae Apostoli* of Gregory of Tours.¹ Additionally, lives of Andrew and Matthew, and Andrew and Paul exist, but these are likely to be of a later date than the other Acts of Andrew.² A multitude of apocryphal *acta* thus surrounded Andrew's apostolate and passion. Ælfric's employs a version of the *Passio Sancti Andreae Apostoli*, and his choice of this source for Andrew's life is likely to result at least partly from the overall sources employed for his homilies. Ælfric drew the majority of his material for his *Catholic Homilies* and *Lives of Saints* collections from an earlier recension of what is now termed the Cotton-Corpus Legendary.³ According to Godden, Ælfric 'probably found the source [for his *Life of St. Andrew*] in his copy of the Cotton-Corpus legendary'.⁴ It is thus likely that Ælfric used this source rather than any other largely because it was the one most easily available to him. However, the existence of an alternative Latin legend, such as the *Acta Andreae et Matthiae* which recounts Andrew's deeds acts in Mermedonia, renders Ælfric's selection of this source paramount. In the case of two of Andrew's fellow apostles, the joint life of Peter and Paul, Ælfric departs from the texts in the Cotton-Corpus Legendary for his sources:

There is finally one other of Ælfric's hagiographic sources which is not provided by the Cotton-Corpus collection: namely, the Marcellus text of the Acts of Peter and Paul, a life which Ælfric employs for his first series homily *Passio Apostolorum Petri et Pauli* (CH I, xxvi). Ælfric's

¹ E. Hennecke, *New Testament Apocrypha*, ed. W. Schneemelcher, trans. R. McL. Wilson, vol. 2 (London: Lutterworth Press, 1965), p.391, hereafter Hennecke 1965.

² Hennecke 1965, p.397.

³ Zettel 1979; and Jackson and Lapidge 1996.

⁴ Godden 2000, p.319.

use of this text is interesting for, in so doing, he makes a clear choice between two well-established and conflicting forms of the Petrine and Pauline apocryphal Acts.¹

The precise location of Ælfric's source in this case is uncertain, and according to Godden, 'Somewhere he located an alternative, and orthodox, legend of the passion that describes the apostles' teaching and suffering together'.² It is likely that Ælfric had good reason to follow this legend, as there is evidence that the tradition that the apostles were martyred simultaneously rather than a year apart as in the Cotton-Corpus texts, was current in Anglo-Saxon England.³ As such, Ælfric did not hesitate to depart from the legend in his version of the Cotton-Corpus collection in order to employ a source he deemed more suitable. In addition, Ælfric often drew on sources outside the legendary for additional material, as in the lives of Alban, Æthlethryth, Swithun, Oswald, Cuthbert and Edmund. As Wilcox points out, he 'assembled the source material for four of these additional saints in a collection which has been considered as his hagiographical commonplace book, a copy of which survives in MS Paris, Bibliotheque Nationale, Lat. 5362'.⁴ Thus, whilst Ælfric finds the sources for the vast majority of his hagiographies in an earlier recension of the Cotton-Corpus Legendary, he evidently had access to and was not averse to using material from elsewhere. In the case of Andrew's *passio*, it is certainly possible that Ælfric would have had access to, or at least known of, the alternative legend of Andrew's deeds and miracles. As Godden states,

¹ Zettel 1979, p.94.

² Godden 1996, p.270.

³ See Godden 1996, p.270, who points out that Anglo-Saxon Calendars and the *Old English Martyrology* reflect the latter belief.

⁴ Wilcox 1996, p.48.

Whether Ælfric knew this story is hard to say. Neither in his remarks on Andrew nor in his discussion of Matthew does he ever refer to the Mermedonian experience, but he may well have considered it fallacious and deliberately remained silent about it.¹

Ælfric's use of the Cotton-Corpus legend does not represent a departure from his usual practice, then, but there is a possibility that he would have been aware of the alternative tradition surrounding Andrew. This alternative clearly enjoyed a certain degree of prominence featuring in both the prose and poetic Old English corpora, but Ælfric deemed the Cotton-Corpus version of the saint's acts more appropriate. As will be demonstrated, this issue is central to the presentation of Andrew's authority and to the authority of the text as a whole, as the legend which Ælfric used depicts Andrew in a very different manner to the legend employed in the Blickling Homilies, and the textual authority of the two sources also differs in nature.

The anonymous *Life of Andrew* survives in two copies. The principal manuscript for this life is Princeton University Library, W. H. Scheide Collection 71, known as the Blickling Homilies. However, the version found in this manuscript is incomplete, and a full version can be found in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 198. According to Scragg, the version found in Corpus 198 is a late addition to the manuscript, and the copies of Andrew's *passio* in this manuscript and the Blickling Homilies are 'derived from a common exemplar at no great distance'.² The life contained in the Blickling manuscript will be employed in the discussion of Andrew's *passio*, as the copy found in this manuscript is earlier than the eleventh-century addition in Corpus 198, and thus may represent a text closer to the original composition

¹ Godden 1996, pp.272-3.

² Scragg 1996, p.212.

than the latter manuscript. As has been outlined, the Blickling manuscript is dated by Ker to s. x/xi, whilst a passage in the manuscript suggests 971 as a likely date.¹ The other manuscript witness to this version of the anonymous *Life of St. Andrew* is dated by Ker to s. xi¹, xi².² All that can be said of the date of the anonymous *passio* is therefore that it was completed either in or prior to 971.

The sources employed by the anonymous author differ from those used by Ælfric, but the precise version of Andrew's *passio* upon which the anonymous author drew has not been identified:

The source is most likely to have been a Latin translation of the Greek *Acta* similar to that printed by Blatt (1930), although the Old English translator's source was clearly much closer to the Greek *Acta* than this Latin version is.³

In terms of source comparison, therefore, Blatt's edition of the anonymous Latin *Acta Andreae et Matthiae* represents the closest known text to that employed by the Old English author. However, at three points the Old English text is closer to the antecedent Greek *Praxeis Androus*, also printed by Blatt,⁴ than the Latin.⁵ There are also two instances of passages which are found in the Greek but not the Latin version.⁶ The Latin *Acta Andreae et Matthiae* will be used as the main point for source comparison,

¹ Ker 1957, p.451; and Morris 1874, 117.32-119.2. See above, p.165.

² Ker 1957, p.76.

³ See S. Rosser, 'The Sources of Blickling Homily 19 (St Andrew)', 2000, *Fontes Anglo-Saxonici: World Wide Web Register*, <http://fontes.english.ox.ac.uk/>, accessed June 2004, hereafter *Fontes*, Rosser 2000. The edition of the *Acta Andreae et Matthiae* used for source comparison is printed in F. Blatt, ed., *Die Lateinschen Bearbeitungen der Alta Andreae et Matthiae Apud Anthropophagos* (Giessen: Alfred Töpelmann, 1930): 33-95, hereafter Blatt 1930, *Acta Andreae et Matthiae*, followed by page and line number.

⁴ *Praxeis Androus*, in Blatt 1930, pp.32-94.

⁵ Morris 1874, at 229.10-12, 229.16-27 and 237.16-23. See *Fontes*, Rosser 2000.

⁶ Morris 1874, at 241.25-7 and 249.3-4. See *Fontes*, Rosser 2000.

whilst the points at which the Old English is closer to the Greek will be discussed where relevant. It must also be remembered that, as the version of Andrew's *passio* used by the Old English author is unknown and clearly differed from both of these sources, details unparalleled in both the Latin and Greek may represent faithful translation of the anonymous author's source.

In discussing the lives of apostolic saints, issues of textual authority are paramount due to the controversy surrounding the orthodoxy of apocryphal *acta*. The authenticity of writings supposedly by the apostles was questionable, and in *De Civitate Dei*, Augustine states that:

sicut multa sub nominibus et aliorum prophetarum et recentiora sub nominibus apostolorum ab haeticis proferuntur, quae omnia nomine apocryphum ab auctoritate canonica diligenti examinatione remota sunt.¹

As O'Leary points out, the general perception of Ælfric is of a strictly orthodox writer who railed against apocrypha:

The predominant view among scholars of Ælfric's writings has been that, particularly in the compilation of his "Catholic Homilies", he strongly disapproved of, and therefore rejected, sources not supported by the authority of the Bible, by Church teaching or earlier Fathers or writers, that is, sources such as New Testament apocrypha – texts

¹ Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, XV.xxiii; LCL vol. 414, p.558: 'In like manner, many writings are presented by heretics under the names of other prophets or, if they are later, under the names of the apostles, but all these too have been excluded after careful examination from canonical authority and go under the name of apocrypha' (trans. LCL vol. 414, p.559).

outside, but connected with, the New Testament - which he is thought to have seen as theologically suspect.¹

However, O'Leary demonstrates that Ælfric's attitude to the apocryphal Acts of the Apostles did not conform to this notion, and her analysis of his use of apocryphal *acta* concludes that:

Ælfric regarded apocryphal compositions about the closest followers of Jesus in a positive light and, for the most part, was by no means reluctant to utilise them.²

Ælfric's use of apocryphal texts in this area can be clearly seen throughout the *Catholic Homilies* and *Lives of Saints* collections, and as Thomas N. Hall summarizes,

Although wary of apocryphal texts that prompted heterodox teaching, Ælfric made frequent use of apocryphal acts of the apostles in composing his homilies and saints' lives [including the Passion of Thomas and the Passion of Philip]. Ælfric likewise translated excerpts from apocryphal passions of Andrew, Bartholomew, James the Greater, John, Mark, Matthew, Peter and Paul, and Simon and Jude.³

Ælfric thus makes extensive use of the apocryphal acts of the apostles, and statements in his Andrian biography show that, rather than attempting to disguise the origins of his narrative, he used the history of the text to lend it authority. In the closing passage of

¹ O'Leary 1999, p.15.

² O'Leary 1999, p.18.

³ Thomas N. Hall, "Apocrypha, Biblical", in Lapidge *et al*, 1999.

the hagiography, he employs a statement found at the opening of the Latin *passio* regarding the source of the narrative:

ðas þrowunge awriton. þære þeode preostas. 7 þa ylcan diaconas þe hit
eal gesawon: þi læs þe hwam twynige ðyssere gereccednysse;¹

Therefore, whilst Ælfric's statements warning of the dangers of apocryphal narratives might have suggested he would regard the *Passio Andreae* with suspicion, his use of several apocryphal acts of the apostles as source material and his statements on these writings illustrate that he viewed these writings as authoritative. Ælfric is not unique in his use of these apocryphal *acta*. In discussion of the uses of apostolic *passiones* in Anglo-Saxon England, O'Leary argues that,

It is very likely, from the evidence of apocryphal information in Aldhelm's works, that he used apocryphal passions in his apostolic accounts, though less systematically than did Isidore in *De ortu*.²

Ælfric is thus not alone in his use of the apostolic *acta*, as other revered and authoritative figures also employed these texts. In addition to this, Marie Walsh notes their use in the liturgy:

The orthodoxy of Ælfric's treatment of the apostles becomes less questionable when considered in the context of the liturgy. Anglo-Saxon

¹ Clemoes 1997, 38, *Andrew*, ll.347-8: 'This passion was written by the priests and the same deacons who saw it all, lest anyone should doubt about this narrative'.

² Aileen O'Leary, "Apostolic *Passiones* in Early Anglo-Saxon England", in *Apocryphal Texts and Traditions in Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. Kathryn Powell and Donald Scragg (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2003): 103-19, here p.112, hereafter O'Leary 2003.

liturgical usage offers several signs of apocryphal motifs in the treatment of Andrew.¹

However, condemnation of such apocryphal acts is also apparent. In the Muratorian Canon, the oldest New Testament canon, apocryphal *acta* are absent:

The Muratorian Canon calls the Acts of the Apostles “the Acts of all the Apostles”, and this phrase also carries important implications. At the time when the Muratorian Canon appeared, various apocryphal Acts of individual apostles were in circulation. The Canon excludes these, and in the case of the canonical book of Acts emphasizes the notion of completeness just as it had done in the case of the four gospels and the epistles.²

As Hennecke points out, Eusebius of Caesarea is the first to mention the Acts of Andrew by name,³ and condemns them as being among ‘the writings which are put forward by heretics’.⁴ The later *Decretum Gelasianum* lists ‘Actus nomine Andreae apostoli’ under the apocryphal writings composed by heretics or schismatics and which

¹ Marie M. Walsh, “St. Andrew in Anglo-Saxon England: The Evolution of an Apocryphal Hero”, *Annuaire Mediaevale* 20 (1980): 97-122, here p.101, hereafter Walsh 1980.

² Jean Daniélou, *The Origins of Latin Christianity, A History of Early Christian Doctrine Before the Council of Nicaea*, vol. 3 (London; Philadelphia: Darton, Longman and Todd; The Westminster Press, 1977), p.15.

³ Eusebius of Caesaria, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, III.xxv.6; PG 20.270B-271A: ‘tum alios sub apostolorum nomine ab hæreticis evulgatos, qui Petri, Thomae, Matthiae, et quorundam aliorum Evangelia, Andreae quoque, Joannis, aliorumque apostolorum Actus continent. Quos quidem libros nullus unquam, qui continuata ab apostolis successione in Ecclesia docuit, in scriptis suis commemorare dignatus est’; trans: ‘and the writings which are published by the heretics under the name of the apostles, including Gospels such as those of Peter and Thomas and Matthias, and some others besides these, or Acts such as those of Andrew and John and other apostles. To none of these has anyone belonging to the succession of the writers of the Church considered it right to refer in his writings’ (trans. *FC*, vol.19, pp.179-80).

⁴ Hennecke 1965, p.391.

‘nullatenus recipit catholica et apostolica Romana ecclesia’.¹ It is not only in canonical lists that the authority of apocryphal apostolic *passiones* is brought into question, as Bede also expressed doubts over their authenticity. According to O’Leary, Bede ‘took the opportunity to criticise the author of the *passiones*, which he had by that time found to be the basis of Isidore’s and others’ accounts and which he did not regard as authoritative or trustworthy’.² Ælfric’s evident ‘enthusiasm’,³ as O’Leary terms it, for apocryphal acts of the apostles thus seems to be at odds with the authorities which he elsewhere follows: in translating the *Life of Andrew* and those of his apostolic peers, Ælfric was dealing with texts of questionable orthodoxy.

The questions of orthodoxy raised by the use of apocryphal *acta* also apply to the anonymous Old English corpus, and the textual authority of the anonymous *Life of Andrew* remains ambiguous, perhaps even more so than in Ælfric’s *passio*. According to DeGregorio, a distinction is made between ‘the “primitive” or “primary” Acts, considered to be the older, more authoritative segment of the tradition’ and ‘the “secondary” Acts, which are held to belong to a later stage of interpolation and narrative adornment’.⁴ Marie Walsh comments on the strands of tradition represented by the Ælfrician and anonymous biographies:

In the Latin passion and in Ælfric’s derived homily are preserved parts of the primary acts of Andrew; in *Andreas* and in its anonymous homiletic counterpart lie offshoots of the secondary acts.⁵

¹ Dobschütz 1912, p.11: ‘in no way the Catholic and Apostolic Roman Church receives’, translation is my own.

² O’Leary 2003, p.113.

³ O’Leary 1999, p.20.

⁴ DeGregorio 2003, p.452.

⁵ Walsh 1980, p.109.

As such, whilst the authority of all apocryphal apostolic *passiones* remains ambiguous, the secondary acts which find expression in the anonymous prose life of Andrew represent the less authoritative strand of Andrew's tradition. Ælfric's source for Andrew's life belongs to the more authoritative tradition, a factor which perhaps influenced him in favour of this life rather than that employed in the anonymous biography.

In addition to questions of textual orthodoxy, a factor which may have influenced the authors' choice of source concerns the presentation of miracles within the two texts, and the associated depiction of Andrew's sanctity and authority. As will be demonstrated, the presentation of miracles varies greatly between the two lives, and the two texts present both their subject saint and the phenomenon of the miraculous in very different ways. In addition to this, the two texts appear to have different aims in mind in terms of the anticipated reaction of the audience.

Andrew as Saint in the Anonymous *Life of Andrew*.

The anonymous *Life of Andrew* contains a relatively large and varied amount of miracles: some of these are performed through Andrew himself, whilst others merely involve the saint. Miracles from each major category of the typology are performed in this *passio*, and will be discussed within this typological framework.

Of the five Element Miracles in the anonymous Old English biography, four involve Andrew exercising control over the elements. In the first such miracle, Andrew commands a stone image to pour a stream of water from its mouth in order to destroy the people of Mermedonia. The image obeys him, and water pours out, which later ceases to flow at Andrew's command after the people have been converted.¹ In the Old

¹ Morris 1874, *Andrew*, 245.16-26 and 247.5-9.

English version, this water is said to have ‘weox oþ mannes swuran, and swiþe hit æt hyra lichaman’,¹ a detail which has no identifiable source and may represent an addition of the Anglo-Saxon author. This detail adds to the drama and violence of the narrative, lending it a more spectacular character and illustrating the full, extreme effects of the miracle. As the water is flowing from the idol’s mouth, Andrew calls upon Jesus to send His angel in a fiery cloud and render the city unapproachable because of the fire. Andrew’s request is granted, illustrating that fire is also subject to his command:

And þus cweþende, fyren wolc astah of heofonum, and hit ymbsealde
ealle þa ceastre.²

Later in the *passio*, the earth opens up and swallows those killed by the water in response to Andrew’s prayer.³ The depiction of this miracle again differs from that in the author’s source, as in both the Latin and Greek texts the earth swallows the murderers, not the dead.⁴ This alteration renders the proceeding events, where those who have been killed in the water arise, slightly problematic, as they would need to come out of the earth in order to do this. It could be that this alteration is a mistake, or perhaps an attempt to illustrate the resurrection of individuals from the earth at Judgement Day. Whatever the reason for this alteration, however, it does not alter the main trend found with regard to element miracles here: fire, water and earth are all subject to Andrew’s command through God’s help, and in spectacular fashion.

¹ Morris 1874, *Andrew*, 245.33: ‘increased up to the height of a man’s neck and powerfully consumed their bodies’.

² Morris 1874, *Andrew*, 245.30-31: ‘And as he thus spoke, a fiery cloud descended from heaven, and it surrounded all the city’.

³ Morris 1874, *Andrew*, 247.13-15.

⁴ See *Fontes*, Rosser 2000.

In addition to this, in an episode reminiscent of Moses parting the Red Sea,¹ the water Andrew commanded to flow honours the saint as he leaves the prison:

Se haliga Andreas þa út-eode of þam carcerne, and þæt selfe wæter
þegnunge gearwode beforan his fotum.²

The text surrounding this episode is found in the *Acta Andreae et Matthiae*,³ but this particular detail is unsourced and it is certainly possible that it is an original addition in the Old English text. If this is the case, it demonstrates an active desire to emphasize Andrew's power over nature. Thus in the Old English text, the elements give respect to Andrew as well as obeying his commands. In addition to this, the anonymous author narrates the awe experienced by those who witness this miracle, again an unsourced detail, as they say 'Gemiltsa us God, and ne dó us swá swá we dydon on þisne ælpeodigan'.⁴ Andrew thus plays an active role in the performance of Element Miracles, which demonstrates both his control over nature and the respect it affords the saint. Whilst this aspect of the saint's miraculous power is present in the *Acta Andreae et Matthiae*, the unsourced additions to the narrative strengthen this element of Andrew's ability. The awe felt by those who witness Andrew's miraculous power is also commented upon, perhaps in another original addition, giving an insight into the response these miracles were intended to provoke.

¹ Exodus 14.21-22: 'And when Moses had stretched forth his hand over the sea, the Lord took it away by a strong and burning wind blowing all the night, and turned it into dry ground: and the water was divided. And the children of Israel went in through the midst of the sea dried up: for the water was as a wall on their right hand and on their left'.

² Morris 1874, *Andrew*, 247.9-11: 'Then the holy Andrew went out of the prison, and the water itself did him honour in front of his feet'.

³ Blatt 1930, *Acta Andreae et Matthiae*, 89.15-18 and 91.10-11.

⁴ Morris 1874, *Andrew*, 247.12-13: 'Pity us, O God, and do not to us as we did to this stranger'.

It is not only with regard to Element Miracles that Andrew illustrates the physical control he has over material objects. There are two Movement Miracles found in the *passio*, the first of which is performed through the saint. Here, Andrew arrives at the door of Matthew's prison in order to rescue his fellow disciple, and the prison doors open as he makes the sign of the cross:

Se halga Andreas þa eode to þa carcernes duru, and he worhte Cristes rode tacen, and rafa þa dura wáron ontynede, and he ineode on þæt carcern mid his discipulum, and he geaseah þone eadigan Matheus ænne sitton singende.¹

Andrew is again shown to have power over material objects, and can move these at will. In a slightly different kind of Movement Miracle, Andrew himself is transported by God to Mermedonia, first in a boat with the Lord and His angels, then flown by angels as he sleeps.² Andrew is thus both the channel and recipient of miracles of this type. The other major miracle in the text which demonstrates control over physical, earthly objects is a Transformation Miracle, in which the blood and hairs which Andrew has shed in his persecution become a tree bearing fruit:

Ðus gebiddende þam halgan Andrea Drihtnes stefn wæs geworden on Ebreisc, cwepende, 'Mín Andreas, heofon and eorðe mæg gewítan; min word næfre ne gewítaþ. Beheald æfter þe and geseoh þinne lichaman and loccas þines heafdes, hwæt hie syndon gewordene'. Se haliga

¹ Morris 1874, *Andrew*, 237.20-23: 'Then the holy Andrew went to the door of the prison, and he made the sign of Christ's cross, and immediately the doors were opened, and he entered into the prison with his disciples, and saw the blessed Matthew sitting alone singing'.

² Morris 1874, *Andrew*, 233.3-235.18.

Andreas þa lociende he gesah geblowen treow wæstm-berende; and he
cwæð, ‘Nú ic wat, Drihten, forþon þæt þu ne forlete mé’.¹

This miracle, rather than demonstrating Andrew’s control over nature, serves as an illustration of Andrew’s relationship with God, who will always protect and never forsake His servant. The Nature Miracles presented in the anonymous *Passio Andreae* therefore illustrate three main points. The first of these concerns Andrew’s power to perform miracles in a physical, active sense. There are five miracles of this kind, which are in many ways the most dramatic and spectacular type of miracles a hagiographer can relate: they are visual miracles which result in an obvious physical change, and thus demonstrate the saint’s power in a clear, concrete manner. Secondly, the response of awe and humility these miracles were intended to provoke in the audience is suggested by the anonymous author’s additional comments regarding those who witness the miracles. Thirdly, these miracles concern Andrew’s relationship with God: Andrew is often the recipient of miracles, a sign that God is protecting and helping His saint. The presentation of Nature Miracles in the anonymous *Life of Andrew*, then, provides a balanced view of its protagonist. On the one hand he is powerful and can control the world around him, an ability which leads to awe and humility in others; yet he is simultaneously vulnerable and dependent on his Lord for help and protection.

This dual perspective is again found in Healing Miracles, which are approached from two angles in the anonymous *Life of St. Andrew*: the apostle is both the active channel and passive recipient of this type of miracle. Whilst Andrew’s ability to heal is

¹ Morris 1874, *Andrew*, 245.3-9: ‘While he prayed thus, the Lord’s voice was heard speaking to Andrew in Hebrew, “My Andrew, heaven and earth may pass away; my words will never pass away. Look behind you and see your flesh and the hairs of your head, what has happened to them.” The holy Andrew looked and saw a flourishing tree bearing fruit, and he said, “now I know, Lord, that you have not abandoned me.”’

not dwelt upon in great detail in the narrative, the reference to this aspect of his power is a general one encompassing an unspecified amount of individuals:

Se halga Andreas þa and se halga Matheus gebædon to Drihtne, and
æfter þon gebede se haliga Andreas sette his hand ofer þara wera eagan
þe þær on lande wæron, and gesihþe hie onfengon. And eft he sette his
hand ofer hiora hortan, and heora andgeat him eft to-hwirfde.¹

This detail closely follows the Latin, which reads:

Et statim exurgens beatus andreas, unacum beatus matheus, oratione
facta, inposuerunt manus suas super oculos et corda eorum, qui ceci
fuerant, facti, continuo et oculi eorum aperti sunt, etiam et sensus eorum
reversus est in eirs, gratias deo agentes.²

As there is only one reference to Andrew's power to heal in the Old English life and this is derived from the Latin, it appears that the anonymous author is not preoccupied with this kind of miracle. However, Andrew's greatness is shown by the multitude of individuals cured in this one event.

¹ Morris 1874, *Andrew*, 237.35-239.5: 'Then the holy Andrew and the holy Matthew prayed to the Lord, and after the prayer the holy Andrew put his hand upon the men's eyes who had been blinded, and they received their sight; and afterwards he placed his hand upon their hearts, and their understanding returned to them again'.

² Blatt 1930, *Acta Andreae et Matthiae*, 71.26-9: 'At once rose the blessed Andrew and prayed together with the blessed Matthew, and they placed their hands over mens' eyes and hearts; and whoever was blind was immediately made whole and their understanding returned to them, and they delivered thanks to God', translation is my own.

Andrew is also the recipient of a healing while in prison. He has been tortured and dragged through the streets, but as he sits in his prison cell, the Lord appears to him and heals him in an event paralleled in the Latin:¹

Him æteowde Drihten Hælend Crist on þæm carcerne, and he aþenede his hánd and genam, and he cwæð, ‘Andreas, arís’. Mid þi þe he þæt gehyrde hraþe he þa arás gesúnd, and he hine gebæd, and he cwæð, ‘Pancas ic þe dó, mín Drihten Hælend Crist’.²

This miracle demonstrates God’s protection and care for his apostle, as does the other Healing Miracle in the text, where Matthew’s sight is restored by the Lord.³ Healing Miracles are used to emphasize the relationship of the apostles with God as much as to demonstrate their own miraculous powers in this text, and whilst Andrew is shown to be great through his performance of healings, his humanity is illustrated by the protection afforded to him and Matthew by God.

There is only one Resurrection Miracle in the anonymous *Life of Andrew*, but this miracle takes place on a large scale and continues the depiction of Andrew as a powerful saint in the anonymous *passio*. In this miracle, several men are killed by the floods which Andrew commanded to occur, and Andrew prays to the Lord to make them rise from the dead:

Se haliga Andreas þa gebæd to Drihtne and cwæð, ‘Mín Drihten Hælend Crist, send þinne þone Halgan Gast, þæt áwecce ealle þa þe on þisse

¹ Blatt 1930, *Acta Andreæ et Matthiæ*, 87.10-13.

² Morris 1874, *Andrew*, 245.12-16: ‘The Lord Jesus Christ appeared to him in the prison, and stretched out his hand and took him and said, “Andrew, arise.” When he heard that, he immediately arose healthy, and he prayed and said, “I give you thanks, my Lord Jesus Christ.”’

³ Morris 1874, *Andrew*, 229.21-231.4.

wætere syndon, þæt hie geliefon on þinne naman'. Drihten þa het ealle
 arisan þe on þam wætere wæron.¹

It is the Lord that performs the miracle at Andrew's request, and the episode simultaneously demonstrates Andrew's relationship with God and the power he commands as a result of this. Resurrections are very powerful miracles,² demonstrating power over death and hence over the devil. As such, Andrew's association with a Resurrection Miracle further demonstrates the great power of the saint.

One of the aspects which characterizes the anonymous *Life of Andrew* is the level of divine intervention in human affairs. For example, the above descriptions of the transport of Andrew and his disciples to Mermedonia; the transformation of the saint's hair and flesh into a tree; and the Lord's resurrection of a multitude at Andrew's request all point to an imminent and involved divinity in this text. As such, it is unsurprising that there are a large number of Divine Contact Miracles in the life. In addition to the presence of the Lord in the boat to Mermedonia and His visit to heal Andrew in prison, the Lord appears to Andrew on two further occasions,³ and comes to Matthew in prison:

& mid þy þe he þis gebed se eadiga Matheus gecweden hæfde, mycel
 leoht & frea beorht onlyhte þæt carcern; & Drihtnes stefn wæs geworden

¹ Morris 1874, *Andrew*, 247.23-7: 'Then the holy Andrew prayed to the Lord and said, 'My Lord Jesus Christ, send your Holy Spirit, that he may awaken all those who are in this water, so that they may believe in your name'. Then the Lord commanded all those who were in the water to *arise*'. This is paralleled in Blatt 1930, *Acta Andreae et Matthiae* at 91.27-31.

² For a discussion of the power of Resurrection Miracles see above, pp.53-4.

³ Morris 1874, *Andrew*, 241.12-14 and 249.1-11.

to him on þæm leohte cweþende, ‘Matheus, min se leofa, beheald on me’. Se eadiga Matheus þa lociende geseah Drihten Crist;¹

The last two lines of this quotation, from ‘Matheus’ to ‘Crist’ are unsourced, and may be an original Old English addition. Part of the motivation behind this addition could be improve the flow and clarity of the narrative: indeed, many of the minor additions to the *passio* appear to function in this way.² However, these additional lines highlight one of the emergent themes in the *passio*: that of the apostles’ close relationship with the Lord. Matthew is referred to as ‘min se leofa’,³ a personal, endearing term, and a detail which serves to confirm the closeness of the apostles to God. The addition also implies Christ’s appearance to Matthew: the saint is given the honour of a divine visit in this unsourced detail, clearly illustrating the favour he holds with the Lord.

God’s angels are also actively involved in the *passio*, transporting Andrew to Mermedonia and encompassing the city with a fiery cloud at Andrew’s request.⁴ In addition to these instances of angelic presence, the Lord also speaks to Andrew, as mentioned. Andrew begins to feel that the Lord has forsaken him as he is dragged through the streets, but a voice comes from heaven to reassure and strengthen the apostle.⁵ The speech is addressed to ‘Min Andreas’, reminiscent of the addition of ‘min se leofa’ as applied to Matthew, an idea perhaps linked to the high degree of divine intervention found in this *passio*. The Lord’s close relationship to His apostles is stressed, and His involvement in earthly affairs explained through this link.

¹ Morris 1874, *Andrew*, 229.24-231.1: ‘And when the blessed Matthew had spoken this prayer, a great and very bright light illuminated the prison, and the Lord’s voice was present in the light, saying, “Matthew, my beloved one, look upon me.” Then Matthew looking, saw the Lord Christ’.

² See for example the unsourced sections of text at 229.15, 231.15, 233.24, 233.34 and 243.4-5, which appear to have little purpose other than to improve the clarity and flow of the narrative.

³ Morris 1874, *Andrew*, 229.28: ‘my beloved one’.

⁴ Morris 1874, *Andrew*, 235.13-18 and 245.27-30.

⁵ Morris 1874, *Andrew*, 245.3-7. The text of this miracle is given above at p.284.

The Shining Light Miracles in the anonymous *Life of Andrew* function in a similar way. There are two miracles of this kind in the text, the first of which forms part of the Lord's visit to Matthew in prison, described above. The second miracle occurs as Andrew leaves Mermedonia with a multitude of people, and a light shines over their heads:

And þa ascán leoht ofer hieora heafod, mid þi se halga Andreas þanon
wæs farende.¹

This addition in the Old English indicates an intention to further highlight Andrew's closeness to God, and the concentration on the apostles' intimate relationship with the Lord is thus again emphasized.

The devil is also encountered at several points in the text, and one of the roles he plays is that of Andrew's tormentor. He appears to the people of Mermedonia in the likeness of a youth and tells them to look for Andrew, as it is he who released the prisoners, and suggests they kill him if they find him.² This passage is interesting, as in both the Latin and Greek sources the devil appears as an old rather than a young man. It is possible that this detail derives from an error in the immediate source for the text or made by the Old English author. Alternatively, the alteration could have been made for dramatic effect: the Lord appears to Andrew as a child in the text,³ and thus depicting the devil as a young rather than old man here juxtaposes the figures more strongly. Also, an old man would not appear particularly threatening, and thus portraying the

¹ Morris 1874, *Andrew*, 249.1-2: 'And a light shone over their heads, as the holy Andrew was travelling from that place'.

² Morris 1874, *Andrew*, 239.31-241.2.

³ Morris 1874, *Andrew*, 235.27-9.

devil as a younger, more able man emphasizes the evil that Andrew contends with. The devil later thinks up tortures for Andrew:

Þa wæs se deofol ingangende, and cwæð to þam folce, ‘Gif eow swá
licige uton sendon ráp on his swyran, and hine teon þurh þisse ceastre
lanan, and þis uton we don oþþæt he swelt. And mid þi þe he dead sie,
uton we dælan his lichaman urum burh-leodum’.¹

On the one hand, these tortures show the devil in a powerful role, able to influence people and hurt the saint. However, the tortures have been previously foretold to Andrew by the Lord:

‘Eno ic þe gecyþe, Andreas, forþon þe manega tintegra hie þe
onbringað, & þinne lichoman geond þisse ceastre lanan hie tostenceað,
swa þætte þin blód flewþ ofer eorðan swa swa wæter’.²

The Lord knows of the devil’s actions, and mentally prepares Andrew to face these. In these miracles, then, the devil is presented as an active threat to Andrew, but this is overcome by the Lord’s earlier forewarning to the saint of the devil’s actions. Whilst the devil is capable of wielding a certain amount of power, he is clearly inferior to Andrew’s Lord.

¹ Morris 1874, *Andrew*, 241.19-23: ‘Then the devil entered among them and said to the people, “If it pleases you, let us put a rope around his neck, and drag him through the streets of the city, and let us do this until he dies, and when he is dead, let us divide his body among our citizens.”’

² Morris 1874, *Andrew*, 237.4-6: ‘Only I make it known to you, Andrew, that they will bring many tortures upon you, and will scatter your body through the streets of the city, so that your blood will flow over the earth like water’.

The other role in which the devil appears shows his inferiority to God and Andrew in a far more concrete manner. As Andrew speaks to the devil it transpires that the devil cannot see him because he is one of God's holy ones.¹ Similarly, the devil and seven other devils stand near Andrew, but dare not approach the apostle:

Þa deofla þa blæstan hie ofer þone halgan Andreas, and hie gesawon
Cristes ródetácen on his onsiene; hi ne dorston hine genealæcan, ac
hraðe hie on weg flugon.²

Here, Andrew's encounters with the devil serve to show God's protection of His saint and the ensuing superiority of the apostle over the devil.

The presentation of miracles in the anonymous *Life of Andrew* demonstrates a concern to emphasize several aspects of Andrew's sanctity. The first of these involves the desire to present Andrew as a powerful, charismatic and hence authoritative saint, cataloguing a variety of the saint's miracles and including two unsourced additions in this list. Andrew and Matthew's close relationship with God is also stressed in unparalleled textual details, as is the awe and respect that should be felt for Andrew. The implications of these trends will be examined subsequently, following a discussion of the miracles found in the comparative Ælfrician *Life of Andrew*.

Andrew as Apostle: A Charismatic or Christocentric Text?

The later Ælfrician *Life of Andrew* differs greatly from its anonymous counterpart. This is largely a result of the sources which the two authors follow, as Ælfric employs the anonymous *Passio Andreae* for the majority of his text. Ælfric's translation is fairly

¹ Morris 1874, *Andrew*, 241.5-9.

² Morris 1874, *Andrew*, 243.11-14: 'Then the devils blew upon the holy Andrew, and they saw the sign of Christ's cross on his face and did not dare approach him, but they quickly fled away'.

faithful to his source throughout, and Davies asserts that '[i]n the "Natale" on Saint Andrew [Ælfric] follows his source closely, with few omissions',¹ while according to Godden, 'the Latin text is itself fairly brief and Ælfric follows it very closely'.² The presentation of miracles varies substantially in the two Old English texts as a result of the different sources used, and there is no instance of a miracle occurring in both *passiones*. Perhaps the most significant feature of Ælfric's presentation of miracles in this text is their rarity - only six actual miracles occur in the narrative of Andrew's life, although there are references to other miracles, such as those performed by Jesus and Old Testament figures, within the *passio*. As Godden points out, Ælfric's account of the legend represents a distinct interpretation of Andrew, as suggested by the opening Gospel exposition.³ Ælfric introduces etymological interpretations of the apostles' names in his Gospel, which are absent in the homily by Gregory employed as a source for this part of the piece. Ælfric interprets Andrew as 'ðegenlice', a standard etymology for the name according to Hill.⁴ This perception of Andrew's role harmonises with the following *passio*:

Ælfric is probably drawing in part here on Hericus (PL 95, 1460) who interprets the name as *virilis*, but his use of the term *ðegenlic* seems to relate to the subsequent legend's presentation of Andrew as the heroic follower of Christ.⁵

¹ Charles Rexford Davies, "Two New Sources for Ælfric's *Catholic Homilies*", *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 41 (1942): 510-13, here p.513.

² Godden 1996, p.274.

³ Godden 1996, pp.273-4.

⁴ Joyce Hill, "Ælfric's Use of Etymologies", in Szarmach 2000: 311-325, here p.321.

⁵ Godden 1996, p.274.

As such, the opening gospel text suggests a christocentric aspect to the piece from the outset, and the interplay between this element of the text and the presentation of miracles will be explored. Whilst there is relatively little to be said regarding the description of the miracles in this *passio*, there is a great deal to be gleaned regarding the implications of the christocentric focus and scarcity of miracles in this text.

Only one Nature Miracle occurs in the Ælfrician *Life of Andrew*, and concerns laws of motion. In this episode, Andrew is on the cross, and some of the people who had previously condemned him attempt to set him free. However, the hands of those that touch the cross stiffen, and they are unable to release the disciple:

Pa woldon hi hine alysan ac heora handa astifodon. swa hwa swa
hrepode þa rode mid handum;¹

This miracle is performed for Andrew rather than through the saint, as he is anxious to go to his Lord and the miracle enables him to do this. Interestingly, it is at Andrew's crucifixion, the point at which he is able to join Christ, that the majority of miracles in his *passio* are found. Godden comments on the paucity of miracles in the *passio*, and outlines the significance of this instance:

The miracle has its own doctrinal point, demonstrating that the martyrdom is not, as Egeas thinks, an act initiated and controlled by him but one ultimately willed by God and willingly accepted by the saint; it thus neatly symbolizes the earlier argument of Andrew in his debate

¹ Clemoes 1997, 38, *Andrew*, ll.331-2: 'Then they would release him, but their hands stiffened, whoever touched the cross with their hands'.

with Egeas that Christ willingly undertook death on the cross despite the apparent responsibility of the Jews and Romans.¹

Godden's observation shows that the miracle is not included merely to demonstrate the action of miraculous power, and illustrates Andrew's desire to journey to God. Miracles do not predominate in the *passio*, and Andrew's relationship to Christ is one of the central concerns of this life. The performance of a miracle to facilitate Andrew's death corresponds to this christocentric focus, as it concerns the point where Andrew is about to meet his Lord.

The notable aspect of Healing Miracles in the Ælfrician *Life of Andrew* is their absence, a phenomenon which is perhaps more revelatory than their inclusion in other lives. Healing Miracles are the most common type found in hagiography:

The largest number of miracles in the whole agenda of wonder-working falls into the category of cures.²

The account of Andrew is one of few Ælfrician lives which does not include any specific instance or general reference to the performance of such miracles. There are a variety of potential reasons for this, the first and most obvious one being the lack of healings in Ælfric's source. However, it is possible that Ælfric would have been aware of healings allegedly performed by Andrew: references to these are made in the anonymous Old English life, while the healing powers of the apostles are attested by the authority of the New Testament.³ It is possible that Ælfric felt there was no need to

¹ Godden 1996, p.274.

² Grant C. Loomis, "The Miracle Traditions of the Venerable Bede", *Speculum* 21 (1946): 404-18, here p.411.

³ The power of healing is referred to in Matthew 10.1, Mark 3.14 and 6.13, and Luke 9.2.

narrate Andrew's healings: as an apostle, his ability to heal is implicit, and references to this power could be deemed unnecessary. However, elsewhere in his work, Ælfric often details several miracles of the same type performed by a saint, recording miracles a saint has elsewhere proved themselves capable of enacting. Another, perhaps more likely reason for the lack of Healing Miracles in Ælfric's text is that he was more concerned with other aspects of Andrew's character and deeds, which took precedence over the saint's charismatic abilities, a theory which will be further developed with regard to the *passio* as a whole.

As with the Healing Miracles discussed above, there are no instances of resurrection in this *passio*. However, resurrection is referred to in Ælfric's *Life*, as Andrew tells Ægeus that Christ knew beforehand of His own passion and resurrection:

ic wæs samod mid him þa ða he fram his leorningcnihte belæwed wæs.
 7 he on ær his þrowunge us foresæde 7 þ[æt] he wolde on þam ðriddan
 dæge of deaðe | arisan: cwæð ðæt he hæfde mihte his sawle to syllene 7
 mihte hi eft to onfonne ...¹

Rather than stressing Andrew's ability to perform or request resurrections, Ælfric dwells on Christ's, and in this area, the *passio* is more concerned with Christ's miracles than Andrew's.

The Ælfrician life also makes little reference to Divine Contact Miracles: there are no divine or heavenly visits recorded in the *passio*, and the only reference to angels concerns Christ, as the narrative describes how heavenly angels were seen above Him at His birth:

¹ Clemoes 1997, 38, *Andrew*, ll.192-7: 'I was together with him when he was betrayed by his disciple, and before his passion he foretold it to us, and that on the third day he would arise from death: he said that he had the power to give his soul, and power to receive it again'.

We rædað on cristes acennednysse þ[æt] heofonlice englas wæron
gesewene bufon þam acennedan cilde.¹

As with the depiction of Resurrection Miracles, the main stress in this *passio* concerns the relation of these miracles to Christ rather than the subject of the life, Andrew.

The only point at which Andrew is the subject of a miracle involving heavenly contact is at his death. As Andrew is on the cross, a great light comes from heaven and Andrew eventually journeys to Christ with the beam:

Æfter þysum wordum wearð gesewen leoht micel of heofenum færlice
cumende to þam apostole: 7 hine ealne ymbsceán. swa þ[æt] mennisce
eagan hine ne mihton geseon for þam heofenlican leohte. þe hine
befeng; ðæt leoht þurhwunode swa. fornean ane tide: And andreas ageaf
his gast on þam leohte.²

As with the Nature Miracles discussed above, the only Shining Light Miracle involving Andrew concerns the point at which he goes to his Lord. Thus, even though Andrew is the recipient of a miracle here, the episode does nothing to detract from the emerging christocentric aspect of the text.

The devil features in the Ælfric's text, but, in keeping with the emergent trends of the *passio*, he is not involved in an episode with Andrew. Rather, as Andrew's persecutor Ægeus, the proconsul of Achaia, is on his way homeward after Andrew's

¹ Clemoes 1997, 38, *Andrew*, ll.111-12: 'We read that at Christ's birth heavenly angels were seen above the born child'.

² Clemoes 1997, 38, *Andrew*, ll.334-9: 'After these words a great light was seen suddenly coming from heaven to the apostle, and illuminated him all around, so that human eyes could not see him. The light continued for nearly an hour, and Andrew relinquished his spirit in that light'.

crucifixion, he is seized by the devil, as a result of which he becomes frantic and dies.¹ Although this is one of the more saint-centred miracles in the text, it does not involve Andrew directly, and serves to demonstrate the favour which Andrew holds with the Lord. It is implicitly due to his treatment of Andrew that Ægeus is punished in this way, and the miracle demonstrates God's wrath towards Andrew's persecutor rather than the apostle's own miraculous abilities.

There are three instances of prophecy or foreknowledge in this *Life of Andrew*, none of which emanates from the saint himself. The narrative relates the prophecy concerning the disciples fishing for the souls of men, and mentions Isaiah's prophecy concerning the apostles:

witodlice þas apostolas geseah se witega isaias towearde. þa ða he þurh
godes gaste cwæð; Hwæt sind þas þe her fleogað. swa swa wolcnu. 7
swa swa culfran to heora ehþyrlum?²

References to Old Testament figures thus dominate the references to prophecy in the text, and serve to ground the narrative in Biblical history. This reference to Isaiah illuminates a clear link between the apostles and Old Testament prophecy, and rather than illustrating Andrew's gift of prophecy, the Ælfrician text employs this type of miracle to show the continuity between the Old and New Testaments and the significance of the apostles. The only other prophecy in the text is described above, and concerns Christ's foreknowledge of His passion and resurrection. Thus in addition to Old Testament references, the christocentric theme is continued in the presentation of this type of miracle.

¹ Clemoes 1997, 38, *Andrew*, ll.341-2.

² Clemoes 1997, 38, *Andrew*, ll.137-9: 'Truly the prophet Isaiah saw the apostles to come, when he said through the Spirit of God, "Who are these that here fly like clouds, and like doves to their windows?"'

The Power of the Apostle.

The presentation of miracles in the Ælfrician *Life of Andrew* is therefore unusual,¹ concentrating as it does on miracles performed by Christ and other Biblical figures, with little reference to Andrew's own miraculous ability. The depiction of miracles in the two lives of Andrew varies greatly, and is suggestive of differing authorial attitudes to the subject saint. Whilst the anonymous author embellishes his saint with glorious miracles, performed both through and for him, Ælfric appears uncharacteristically unconcerned with narration of the saint's miracles. This could be largely due to the ways in which the two authors perceive their subject and their respective sources, together with the aspects of his sanctity they feel should be emphasized in a portrayal of his life.

The anonymous author is keen to stress Andrew's performance of miracles. The saint demonstrates miraculous power over the elements and laws of motion, performs healings, causes devils to depart, resurrects individuals, prophesises and has divine knowledge of God. These miracles, all performed either through Andrew or by the Lord at Andrew's request, demonstrate the apostle's power to work miracles in an active, dramatic fashion. Whilst the majority of these miraculous instances are derived from the Latin *Acta Andreae et Matthiae*, there is also a small number of unsourced alterations to the miracles found in the Latin and Greek sources, as the miracles of water giving honour to Andrew and a light appearing over the saint's head as he leaves Mermedonia are unparalleled. Unsourced details are also found in the depiction of other miracles, such as the dramatic description of water consuming men's bodies and the people's awe at witnessing Andrew's miracles. In this sense, the anonymous life

¹ See the Typology Database for demonstration of the multitude of miracles performed by other apostolic saints. These are discussed below at pp.307-8.

demonstrates Andrew's greatness in a recognized, conventional manner: through stressing his miraculous prowess. Whilst much of this material stems from the source, unsourced details strengthen this portrait of the saint. Andrew performs a relatively high number of miracles of varying types, and is exalted by his actions. In this way, the anonymous life demonstrates a desire to enhance its subject's greatness, and does so by emphasising his ability to perform miracles. The anticipated audience response resonates in the unsourced additions which record the awe and humility felt by those who witness Andrew's miracles. Thus, whilst there is no instruction to the audience or readers to venerate Andrew, his prestige is certainly promoted by the Old English homilist, who advocates that ordinary people should stand in awe of this great saint.

In addition to stressing his performance of miracles in general, the anonymous *passio* highlights certain aspects of Andrew's sanctity through the depiction of his status. For example, the Lord's speech to Matthew and the light which appears over Andrew's head serve to further illustrate the apostles' close relationship with God. Additionally, and in contrast to his role as an exalted individual able to wield power over the earthly realm, Andrew is presented at points as a vulnerable mortal who needs God's help and protection, again showing the close relationship he has with the Lord. In the anonymous *passio*, then, Andrew is presented as a powerful saint in terms of his performance of miracles, and also as an individual who has an especial closeness with God and should be accorded respect. Whilst these features are found in the source texts and a faithful translation of these would present a similar picture, the unsourced additions highlight these themes, suggesting that the anonymous author not only deemed this portrait of Andrew suitable for translation, but also wanted to confirm and strengthen it in the minds of the audience.

Whilst Andrew's vulnerability and humanity in this life can be viewed as positive aspects in the saint's depiction, portraying Andrew as a more accessible model of sanctity, they also have problematic implications. The Tiberius *Life of Margaret* depicts the saint's development from vulnerability to faith in her conflict with the dragon,¹ while the anonymous *Life of St. Eustace* describes how Eustace feels he is being tried more than Job, and worries that the Lord has forsaken him.² The anonymous *Life of Andrew* also describes the apostle's movement from doubt to faith as the apostle needs to be strengthened by the Lord.³ It is the original vulnerability and doubt inherent in these models of sanctity that remains potentially problematic in hagiography:

The development, from pain to despair to renewed faith, is a notably un-Ælfrician one. Ælfric's saints do not undergo change: they are portrayed as having already attained perfect holiness and faith; they remain unchanged and unchangeable, whatever their situation.⁴

The portrayal of Andrew in the anonymous life is thus not one of an eternally perfected saint. Whilst the balance of charismatic power and human frailty represent an authoritative portrait of sanctity with whom an audience or reader can simultaneously identify, it demonstrates a stark departure from Ælfrician models of sanctity, where any suggestion of fallibility is avoided. DeGregorio suggests that the model of apostleship presented in the Latin *Acta Andreae and Matthiae*, and the Old English prose and poetic lives which draw upon this source may not have been considered suitable by Ælfric, as

¹ See above, p.130.

² Skeat 1900, 30, *Eustace*, ll.196-212.

³ Morris 1874, *Andrew*, 245.3-7.

⁴ DeGregorio 2003, p.459, discussing the anonymous *Life of Andrew*.

the paradigm of sanctity they depict departs from his stark depictions of perfected sanctity.¹

The anonymous author thus presents a twofold picture of Andrew, as both powerful saint and vulnerable human being, an idea which has implications for the potential aims of his *passio*. In some cases, highlighting a saint's humanity can be interpreted as an author hoping to excite imitation of this saint in his audience or readers. For example, in the anonymous *Life of St. Martin*, the author is more concerned with Martin's deeds and humanity, which fits in with the idea of this text as a whole as one which presents Martin as a model for imitation. However, it is unlikely that this is the case here. The majority of the significant unsourced alterations in the Anglo-Saxon text are concerned with highlighting Andrew's miraculous prowess rather than his humanity. Similarly, the anonymous author does not give any instructions, as the anonymous author of Martin's *vita* does, to imitate the saint. It is more likely that Andrew's vulnerability in this text is intended to highlight God's role as the saint's protector. As a result of his humanity, Andrew has miracles performed to protect him. Thus, Andrew's humanity, an element of the text carried through from his source by the Old English author but not expanded upon in the Old English, perhaps aims to illustrate the necessary, important and immediate role that God plays in assisting Andrew and, by implication, other pious Christians.

With regard to saintly charisma, it would be reasonable to assume that Ælfric would demonstrate a similar attitude to the anonymous biographer in depicting Andrew's miraculous abilities: it is certainly the case that he often exalts his subjects through depiction of their miracles, and as Andrew is an apostolic saint of the highest mortal order, logic would suggest that Ælfric's redaction of his life would surpass

¹ DeGregorio 2003, esp. p.462.

many of his other biographies in terms of its miraculous content. However, almost the opposite is true: very few miracles are performed in the life, and none of those which does occur is performed through Andrew or at his request. On the cross Andrew says he can see the Lord and is then taken to heaven with a shining light, yet these are events in which he is more the recipient of the miracle than its active channel. The majority of references to miracles which do occur in the text concern either Christ or Old Testament figures. There are allusions to Christ's resurrection and His foreknowledge of this event, the heavenly angels seen above Christ at His birth, and Christ's ascension to heaven after his passion. Similarly, the *passio* incorporates several references to the prophecies of Old Testament figures, including Isaiah.

The implications of this unusual approach to miracles suggest that Ælfric's main concern in his depiction of Andrew did not lie in the apostle's miraculous ability. There are several possible reasons for this, all of which may have contributed to Ælfric's presentation of Andrew. The first of these concerns the idea of miracles as authenticating or authorizing a saint. Before the advent of papal canonization, the definition of a saint remained vague, and miracles were generally perceived as a sign of sanctity.¹ In this way, it would be important to include a saint's miracles in their biography: this would have a circular effect, simultaneously adding to the prestige of the saint by confirming their miraculous ability through hagiography, while illustrating the validity of that same hagiography by illustrating its subject's importance and worth. However, as an apostolic saint, there is no need to validate Andrew's sanctity via these means: as one of Christ's apostles, his sanctity is assured regardless of his performance of miracles. In addition to this, Scriptural allusions to the apostles' miraculous abilities may have rendered these an automatic assumption. This, perhaps, goes some way to

¹ See above, pp.46-55.

explaining Ælfric's lack of interest in the saint's miracles: they were unnecessary to authenticate his subject's sanctity, and thus perhaps seen as an unnecessary part of his biography.

Another possible motivation for Ælfric's presentation of Andrew concerns the saint's status as an apostle, as the *passio* emphasizes Andrew's place in Scripture and his closeness to Christ. The life incorporates frequent references to Biblical history, which serve to highlight Andrew's own role in this: the narration of the events of his own life is constantly placed within this wider scheme, and the presentation of miracles in the text emphasizes his Biblical role. Similarly, those miracles which do concern Andrew, for example his demonstration of superhuman knowledge, are attributes which result from his association with Christ. In addition to this, several of the miracles performed in the Andrean *Life* take place at the apostle's death on the cross: the point at which the saint is going to his Lord. Ælfric is primarily concerned to stress Andrew's role in Biblical history and his identity as Christ's *thegn* rather than his capacity to perform miracles, rendering miracles as subordinate to association with Christ. The secondary place of miracles in this text is unusual: in many cases, such as the lives of Martin and Swithun, for example, miracles provide the main vehicle for emphasising the power and grandeur of a saint. However, in the case of Andrew, Ælfric has a far greater tool at his disposal for illustrating the saint's greatness: his identity as an apostle and his resulting involvement in Biblical events and Christ's life.

The duality of Andrew's nature, and the way in which the two authors present their subject, is essentially summed up by his title: an apostolic saint. The anonymous author depicts Andrew within conventional paradigms of sanctity and treats him in much the same way as many of the saints in the Old English hagiographic corpus are approached, illustrating his greatness through depiction of his miracles, while

highlighting his closeness with God and his awe-inspiring nature. The humanity of the saint and God's resulting protection of Andrew serve to balance this depiction. Ælfric, on the other hand, places Andrew more specifically in the role of an apostle and thus of a different nature to the subjects of his other biographies. As such, it is Andrew's place in Biblical history and the relationship with Christ resulting from his apostolic status that form the focus of Ælfric's treatment of the saint, an idea which would account for the lack of emphasis on miracles in this *passio*.¹

In addition to the paradigm of sanctity he wished to create, issues of textual authority may have contributed to Ælfric's depiction of the *Life of Andrew*. As has been discussed above, Ælfric was certainly aware of the *Decretum Gelasianum*, a document which specifically condemns the acts of four apostles: Andrew, Peter, Philip and Thomas.² Ælfric's translation of the *Life of St. Thomas* acknowledges the orthodoxy of Thomas' biography as a contentious issue on the grounds that Augustine had voiced doubts over the narrative. His opening to the life reads:

Dubitabam div transferre anglice passionem sancti thome apostoli ex
quibusdam causis et maxime eo quod augustinus magnus abnegat de illo
pincerno (*sic*) cuius manum niger canis in conuiuium portare deberet .³

Ælfric goes on to assert that it is because of this episode, rather than the text in its entirety, that Augustine rejects the narrative, an argument which, as Godden notes,

¹ In this Ælfric's *Life of Andrew* is similar to his *Life of Paul* in CH I and his *Life of Peter* in CH II, both of which concentrate very little on the apostles' miraculous abilities and instead focus on Christ's miracles and Biblical events in the *passiones*.

² See Dobshütz 1912, p.11, where the *Actus nomine Andreae apostoli*, *Actus nomine Thomae apostoli*, *Actus nomine Petri apostoli*, and *Actus nomine Philippi apostoli* are listed as 'apocryphi'.

³ Skeat 1900, 36, *Thomas*, ll.1-4: 'I was for a long while in doubt as to translating into English the Passion of St. Thomas the apostle, for various reasons; and chiefly because the great Augustine denies the story concerning a cup-bearer whose hand a black dog is said to have carried to a feast'.

misrepresents Augustine's statements on the matter.¹ Godden goes on to draw attention to the specific condemnation of the *Acts of Thomas* and others in the *Gelasian Decretals*:

Ælfric had in fact independent evidence against the legend of St Thomas. The Gelasian decree (a copy of which occurs in a collection of material closely associated with Ælfric) lists the Acts of Thomas among the apocryphal books which are not accepted in the catholic canon. In the case of the Passion of St George, similarly excluded by the decree, Ælfric seems to have assumed that this referred to some other legend than the one he used [...] He may have done the same with St Thomas and with the legends of other saints (Peter, Andrew, Philip) excluded by the decree and used by him.²

As such, in his *Life of Thomas*, Ælfric acknowledges the ambiguity of the legend's orthodoxy, and advocates, albeit in a somewhat misleading manner, that his own version has taken these problematic elements of the passion into consideration. However, the Ælfrician *Life of Andrew*, together with his accounts of Peter and Philip condemned alongside Thomas' *passio* in the *Gelasian Decretals*, contain no such recognition of ambiguity regarding the legends' authenticity, and it is possible that the actual content of two of these pieces represents a justification in itself. The Ælfrician lives of Andrew and Peter differ markedly from those in the remainder of the Ælfrician apostolic corpus.³ Like Andrew, Peter performs very few miracles in Ælfric's *passio*,¹

¹ Godden 1985, p.90.

² Godden 1985, p.90.

³ For the trends observed within Ælfric's other apostolic lives, see p.307 below.

while the emphasis on Biblical narrative can be seen in the accounts of Jesus' miracles which dominate this *passio*.² This may be a mere coincidence, but it may also be that factors surrounding the orthodoxy of these texts are in play. In her analysis of Ælfric's *Life of St. George*, Hill suggests that the sober account of the Latin employed by Ælfric may represent an attempt to render the originally problematic legend more acceptable:

Clearly what Ælfric's source text provides is a toned-down version of the "first legend," which perhaps originated, as Delehaye supposed that the "second legend" did, in response to some of the objections of church authorities to what was already in circulation.³

In the case of St. George, then, a more sober and less spectacular version of the saint's legend was deemed desirable in view of the contentious authenticity of his acts. A similar phenomenon may be represented by Ælfric's selection of sources and depictions of sanctity in the cases of Andrew and Peter: it is possible that Ælfric presents more sober, less miraculous accounts of these apostolic saints in an attempt to render their biographies less open to criticism and avoid heretical content. That this rationale provided Ælfric's motivation is called into question by his treatment of Philip's acts, as he does employ an anonymous *Passio Philippi* in his joint life of Philip and James the Less,⁴ and includes a Resurrection Miracle found in this source.⁵ However, that both Andrew and Peter's lives present notable deviations from Ælfric's general treatment of apostolic saints remains significant when questions of textual orthodoxy are considered,

¹ For the two miracles performed by Peter, see Godden 1979, 24, *Peter*, ll.32-5 and 189-94. Both of these miracles are explicitly ascribed to God's power.

² Godden 1979, 24, *Peter*, ll.144-9, 139-44 and 230-48.

³ Hill 1985, p.7. For discussion of this idea see above, pp.244-6.

⁴ See M.R. Godden, 'The Sources of Catholic Homilies 2.17', 1998, *Fontes Anglo-Saxonici: World Wide Web Register*, <http://fontes.english.ox.ac.uk/>, accessed August 2004, for the sources of this life.

⁵ Godden 1979, *Philip and James the Less*, ll.23-5.

and it may be more than a coincidence that lives of contentious authority provide sober accounts of their subjects.

The remainder of Ælfric's apostolic corpus adopts the more conventional narration of saints' miracles as a means to glorifying its subjects, and the attribution of miracles in this group of lives exhibits some significant trends. As has been mentioned, the ascription of resurrections to saints is unusual, and only ten of the eighty or so saints discussed in this study perform such wonders. Strikingly, eight of these ten saints are from this second group of apostles: Thomas, Simon, Jude, Peter, Philip, Matthew, John the Evangelist and James the Greater are said to perform such wonders, and as has been noted in discussion of confessor saints, such miracles were deemed to be apostolic acts.¹ The miracles of these apostolic saints display common characteristics, then, and it is only in the *Life of Bartholomew* that Ælfric does not mention the apostle's abilities in this area. The rarity of resurrections means that they differentiate the saints who perform them from their counterparts. As the most highly ranking human saints, and individuals who had enjoyed a close earthly affiliation with Christ, it is fitting that apostolic saints should be credited with miracles of the highest order.

The authority of apostolic saints thus takes two main forms through the miracles in Ælfrician hagiography. Either the miracles in apostolic *passiones* pertain largely to Christ, with the saint's authority stemming largely from their relationship to the Saviour and place in Biblical history; or their performance of miracles is differentiated from that of other, lower ranking saints by their performance of resurrections, miracles which are predominantly apostolic territory. As such, Ælfric aggrandises apostolic saints via two techniques, reflecting different perceptions of apostolic sanctity. The first

¹ Skeat 1900, 36, *Thomas*, ll.317-20. Godden 1979, 33, *Simon and Jude*, ll.189-94; 17, *Philip and James the Less*, ll.4-25; 32, *Matthew*, ll.115-22 and 143-5; and 27, *James the Greater*, ll.14-26. Clemoes 1997, 26, *Peter and Paul*, ll.123-34 and 168-70; and 4, *John the Evangelist (Assumption)*, ll.42-5 and 131-56. For the idea of resurrections as apostolic acts see above, p.175.

group gains authority through association with Christ; the second through their charismatic abilities. The anonymous *Life of Andrew* exhibits more in common with Ælfric's second group apostolic saints, as the apostle's miraculous abilities are both carried through from the Latin life of this saint and exaggerated in the Old English biography, an approach which contrasts strongly with the christocentric Andrean text presented by Ælfric.

Perfected Saint and Hagiographer: Sanctity and Authority in Old English Hagiography.

The foregoing analysis of miracles in the genre has illuminated a variety of features within Old English saints' lives. Many of these issues have been recognised within previous scholarship,¹ whilst others represent original observations.² The central issues suggested by miracle analysis from the outset of this investigation concern perceptions of divine and inscribed authority within hagiography. Whilst the observations made in these areas are diverse, it is possible to isolate trends running throughout the Old English hagiographic corpus, particularly when contrasting Ælfrician saints' lives with their anonymous counterparts. As has been evinced within each chapter, Ælfrician approaches to sanctity, textual authority, and authorial promotion differ significantly from attitudes observed in the anonymous corpus. Evidence for trends within these three areas highlights some central features of the agenda observed in Ælfrician and anonymous works.

The idea that the subjects of Ælfrician hagiography must demonstrate perfection throughout their earthly lives has received comment from several scholars, and is effectively summarized by Magennis:

Ælfric's saints are unfailingly resolved and assured in their outlook. Even in suffering they remain calm, lacking all self-doubt. Rather than describing experiences of enlightenment or recognition on the part of his

¹ For instance, Scott DeGregorio's observations regarding perfected sanctity in Ælfrician hagiography, discussed in DeGregorio 2003, esp. p.459; and Joyce Hill's work on Ælfric's participation in the Patristic tradition, discussed in Hill 1992, esp. p.205.

² For instance, observations regarding the two types of apostolic sanctity within the Ælfrician corpus, see above, pp.300-304; the apparent correlation between a saint's gender and the miracles they perform, see above, pp.150-154, and the clear differences between Ælfrician and anonymous treatments of sanctity observed in each case study.

saints, Ælfric celebrates “achieved” sanctity, unchanging and unchangeable.¹

Many findings of this study support this idea, and elaborate upon it with two theories suggested by the foregoing analysis of miracles. Firstly, Ælfric’s perception of a ‘perfected saint’ appears to be heavily reliant on their miraculous abilities: thus saintly authority is given a concrete and tangible dimension through the earthly power saints are shown to wield. In some lives this concentration on the miraculous is achieved at the expense of omitting other details of the saint’s life; for instance their background, deeds and virtues, or the circumstantial facts of their life. The second theory suggested by this study, however, concerns cases where Ælfric’s desire to glorify his saints through the relation of spectacular feats is overridden by issues of orthodoxy. There seems to be a correlation in Ælfrician works between texts of questionable orthodoxy and those which demonstrate a sober and restrained approach to the miraculous.

Ælfric’s desire to depict eternally perfect saints is apparent in all of the case-studies examined here, although in some instances Ælfric’s manipulation of sources to achieve this end is slight and subtle. Ælfric’s two lives of Martin depict this agenda most clearly, as Ælfric manipulates the already aggrandised *vita* by Sulpicius Severus and edits this to produce a flawless portrait of the holy man. The omission of Martin’s mistake when halting heathens in the *Catholic Homilies* biography and the excision in both biographies of the diminishing of Martin’s powers provide clear evidence of this agenda. Martin’s mistake, his involvement in unholy works, the lessening of his power and the guilt he experiences as a result of acting against his conscience are all excised by Ælfric, who presents a less human and fallible figure than that in his Latin sources.

¹ Magennis 1996a, p.103.

Additionally, Ælfric's alteration of his sources to suggest that Martin knew of the heresy surrounding the supposed martyr portrays an aversion to questioning the saint's omniscience. The additions to Alcuin's text made in the *Catholic Homilies* biography regarding the length of the girl's illness and the greatness of Paulinus also serve to aggrandise the saint. In his Martinian lives, then, Ælfric demonstrates a clear desire to emphasize the saint's charismatic ability and avoid any reference to Martin's fallibility, a result he achieves through the manipulation of his source texts.

Perhaps also attributable to this desire to further depictions of perfected sanctity is Ælfric's adaptation of St. George's *passio*, where all references to the saint's suffering and physical vulnerability in the Latin source are omitted. George is presented as a more remote and elevated figure than in the source text, apparently immune to the effects of Datian's torments. Ælfric's Andrean life exhibits a similar agenda: as has been suggested by DeGregorio,¹ Ælfric's *Life of Andrew* employs the Latin Andrean *passio* which presents the saint as a loyal and unfailing believer in Christ, as opposed to the Latin *Passio Andreae et Matthiae* used by the anonymous translator of his life and the poem *Andreas* which depicts a more doubting apostle. Whilst Ælfric may have used this life simply as a result of its availability, it is also possible that he actively preferred a text which presented a less flawed figure of Andrew. Finally, in a minor excision to his generally fairly faithful translation of Agnes' *passio*, Ælfric omits the detail of Agnes' erring parents, perhaps wishing to distance this pure virgin from such unorthodox behaviour. As such, evidence in each case-study supports the idea that Ælfric selects and edits his sources in order to create clear and unequivocal portraits of perfected sanctity: grey areas such as the lessening of Martin's power or the physical vulnerability of George are often omitted to present saints in control of their life and

¹ DeGregorio 2003.

works throughout the texts, who never fail to provide faithful, unerring paradigms of godly conduct.

An extension of this Ælfrician desire for perfected sanctity concerns the elevation of saints through their miraculous portents, and it seems that the saints in Ælfric's lives are intended as paradigms for veneration rather than imitation, representing exalted, unattainable models. In the anonymous corpus, saints take on a far more human dimension than that witnessed in Ælfrician hagiography. This can be seen firstly in the employment of miracles within the lives, and is demonstrated effectively in the comparable Ælfrician and anonymous lives of Martin. Whilst both of Ælfric's *vitae* concentrate on Martin's miracles and relate only a handful of his virtuous deeds, the anonymous life of the saint provides a more balanced selection from its Latin sources, including miracles alongside description of Martin's patience, humility and piety. The portrait of Martin created in the anonymous biography thus presents a more attainable role model, and the author encourages readers or listeners to emulate Martin's deeds. The Ælfrician life, on the other hand, depicts an unattainable, highly elevated figure, and Martin's miracles are employed to depict him as a powerful, awe-inspiring saint.

This focus on miracles in the Ælfrician lives of St. Martin is paralleled in many of his other *vitae* and *passiones*, and generic trends also emerge in this respect. In general, the glorification of a saint via their miracles takes on a different aspect depending on the generic type of the saint. It is predominantly in the lives of confessor saints that miracles are employed extensively in order to elevate holy individuals. The comparative confessor lives of Benedict and Cuthbert illustrate that, when faced with copious source materials, Ælfric demonstrates a desire to encompass a high frequency of miracles in his lives, often prioritising these over relation of a saint's pious deeds

and virtues. Similarly, the frequency and types of miracles in the corpus of confessor lives are significant: each saint in this group is portrayed as charismatically potent, be it during their earthly life as in the cases of Maur and Basil, or posthumously, as seen in Swithun's *vita*. As has been discussed in the opening chapters of this thesis, miracles were perceived as testament to sanctity, demonstrating divine authorisation of an individual in a tangible manner.¹ As the sanctity of confessor saints remained dependent on their manner of life, the depiction of high frequencies of miracles perhaps functions as a witness to their sanctity: for the Lord to work through them in such a manner would demonstrate his approval of their life and therefore validate their veneration.

Similarly, the apostolic corpus presents a high preoccupation with the miraculous, as the subjects of nine of the twelve apostolic lives in the Ælfrician corpus perform resurrections, healings, exorcisms, or nature miracles. Unlike confessor saints, the sanctity of these individuals was assured, and the miracles in these lives are unnecessary as a testament to sanctity. Rather, in the majority of these lives, the miracles attributed to the saints are perhaps fitting given their apostolic status. The associated grandeur which apostolic saints receive as a result of their performance of resurrections, rare and powerful miracles which are themselves perceived as apostolic acts, befits their Scriptural basis. It is possible that exceptions to this trend within apostolic lives, namely the Ælfrician *Life of Andrew* discussed in this thesis and the solitary *Life of Peter*, may represent cases where additional factors of textual authority are in play.²

Ælfric's lives of martyr saints are less concerned with the relation of the miraculous, as might be expected in lives where the primary focus is on the saint's

¹ See above, pp.46-55.

² See below, pp.314-15.

witness to Christ. However, as has been shown, the majority of martyr saints have miracles performed for their aid and demonstrate charismatic abilities themselves. It is thus fair to say that, whilst there are no incontrovertible rules, Ælfric's presentation of sanctity often centres around the miraculous, creating elevated portraits of sanctity which function more as awe-inspiring objects of veneration than human models for imitation.

There is one type of sanctity for which this rationale does not apply, as the lives of virgin saints differ significantly from those of other holy figures within the Ælfrician corpus. That this difference in the ascription of miraculous powers relates to gender is almost certain, as the designation of 'virgin' essentially denotes female sanctity. The *Life of Agnes* depicts a fairly passive model of sanctity in the sphere of the miraculous, with the saint generally acting as the recipient of, rather than channel for, miracles. Agnes is representative of her generic group, and trends of female passivity in miracle working can be seen throughout the Ælfrician corpus. Whilst Ælfric clearly wishes to depict perfected saints, the criteria for this evidently differ when the subject involved is female. As the figures in the typology of miracles demonstrate, Ælfric relates high numbers of miracles in the lives of the majority of his confessor and apostolic saints, whilst the more limited miracles in martyr lives are often of an active nature. The concern to depict these miracles in most Ælfrician hagiographies suggests that Ælfric deemed the gift of supernatural power a central and important element of sanctity: the practical exclusion of females from active wonder-working indicates that he perceived such miracle working as an unnecessary or indeed undesirable aspect of female sanctity. Evidently, the central aspect of female sanctity in all of Ælfric's lives is their virginity, and it is often the Lord's protection of this that forms the focus of Ælfric's virgin lives. Parameters of female sanctity thus seem more narrow and rigid than those

of Ælfric's male saints: whilst virgin saints are elevated by their purity, steadfastness and closeness to God, these elements appear to be the essential, and perhaps only, criteria for female sanctity. This contrasts markedly with depictions of male sanctity, where male saints are depicted in a broader range of roles and with a broader range of attributes: Edmund's purity in virginity and Alban's constancy in persecution are merely elements of their sanctity, which is further attested by their plethora of miracles.

The posthumous powers of virgin saints are, however, drawn out by Ælfric, who comments on the posthumous powers of each female saint. As Malcolm Godden has demonstrated, Ælfric clearly saw a difference in the significance of miracles performed by saints during their lifetimes and their posthumous miracles, as he seems to advocate that the former type have ceased in his own time but that the latter kind continue to occur.¹ A distinction between the two kinds of miracles can also be observed in Ælfric's virgin lives: perhaps in his desire to depict flawless saints he felt some reference to their miracles was desirable in order to illustrate their divine sanction, yet remained uncomfortable with the autonomy and dominance associated with the performance of active, physical miracles in the context of their earthly lives.

As such, the idea of perfected sanctity can be observed in Ælfric's depiction of saints' miracles, although the nature of this differs with reference to a saint's generic group. Divine authorisation via charismatic power is explicitly used as a form of validation in the lives of confessor saints, while apostolic saints generally perform miracles which befit their elevated status. In the lives of martyr saints, their witness to Christ forms the focus of the narrative, but earthly miracles are also employed to attest to the saintly nature of the individuals. In the lives of Virgin saints, a clear avoidance of active miracles can be witnessed in the biographies. However, the emphasis on the

¹ Godden 1985, especially p.85.

posthumous wonders of each female saint demonstrate their favour with the Lord, and perhaps provide a sphere where Ælfric felt comfortable with the exercise of female power.

Notions of the aggrandisement of saints through their miracles can be witnessed in the anonymous corpus, although in this body of literature, trends regarding the ascription of certain types of miracles to certain types of saints seen in the Ælfrician corpus are less evident. The anonymous lives of Margaret, Christopher and Andrew all contain unsourced elements which seem designed to elevate the subjects of the lives through their miracles. In the CCC 303 *Life of Margaret*, the unsourced section of the text which depicts Margaret issuing a command to the earth to swallow the devil adds to her dominance and charismatic power in the Old English text. The *Life of Christopher* demonstrates a consistent desire to raise Christopher's status by presenting him as an authoritative figure: Christopher's positivity throughout his tortures, the explicit statement that the saint has foreknowledge of his own death, and the additional comments regarding Christopher's posthumous powers all elevate the saint through concentration on his supernatural abilities. In the anonymous *Life of St. Andrew*, various unparalleled sections of the Old English emphasize the saint's charismatic powers: the miracles of water doing reverence to Andrew and a light appearing over the saint's head as he leaves Mermedonia remain unsourced, and unparalleled details are found in the dramatic description of water consuming men's bodies and the people's awe at witnessing Andrew's miracles. As such, each of these three anonymous lives, particularly the *Life of St. Andrew*, depicts a powerful, charismatic portrait of its subject saint, and the unsourced details may represent an active desire on the part of an Old English hagiographer to cement the authoritative depictions of sanctity found in the Latin lives of these figures.

However, whilst the elevation of saints through their miracles has something in common with Ælfrician models, the ideal of perfected sanctity observed in the Ælfrician corpus is not evidenced to the same extent in the anonymous lives examined here. Rather, the anonymous corpus generally depicts saints in a more human manner, with the lives suggesting the development of their subject's perfection throughout the life rather than its constancy from the outset. Scott DeGregorio has pointed out that the doubts expressed by Andrew in the anonymous life of the saint have little in common with Ælfrician depictions of sanctity.¹ In addition, the pattern of response depicted in the Tiberius *Life of Margaret* would seem incongruous in an Ælfrician *passio*. When confronted with the devil, Margaret appears to be vulnerable and fearful, initially doubting her ability to overcome him. Whilst her faith and strength ultimately win out, the admission of her fear and doubt provides a human response and demonstrates vulnerability. These two case-studies illustrate a trend observable elsewhere in the anonymous corpus, for instance in the *Life of St. Mary of Egypt*, which depicts a saint whose previously sinful life illustrates that she has not always been a paradigm of virtue, and presents a model of developing rather than attained sanctity. Whilst Ælfrician saints are thus constant, unfailing, undoubting pillars of sanctity, the anonymous corpus has scope for notions of redemption, doubt and humanity within its depiction of saintly figures.

As such, the glorification of saints through their miracles can be seen in the anonymous as well as the Ælfrician corpus, although with some crucial differences. Firstly, the generic boundaries observable in Ælfric's work are not rigidly applicable in the anonymous corpus: the charismatic powers of Margaret and the unsourced addition to the CCCC 303 life of the saint which emphasizes her dominance are not in keeping

¹ DeGregorio 2003, p.459.

with the more passive models of female wonderworking present in Ælfric's work. The anonymous *Life of Mary of Egypt* also presents a stark departure from Ælfric's hagiography. In addition, the elevation of saints via their miracles does not necessarily indicate perfect, achieved sanctity in the anonymous corpus. The anonymous *Life of Andrew* and the Tiberius *Life of Margaret* both depict the saints' doubts and humanity in a stark contrast to the flawless figures presented in Ælfric's works. As such, whilst the charismatic powers of the saints are sometimes emphasized in their anonymous Old English lives, their humanity and accessibility remain important elements of their depiction.

Ælfric's elevation of saints through their miracles is not found in the lives of Andrew and George examined in this thesis. However, as has been suggested in the preceding chapters, George and Andrew represent anomalies when considered in the context of their generic groups: George's miraculous abilities do not equal those of the majority of Ælfric's martyr saints; whilst the relative avoidance of miracles in Andrew's biography contrasts with Ælfric's depiction of miracles in most apostolic lives. When the contexts of the lives of George and Andrew, and indeed of the apostle Peter whose life is also relatively sparse in the depiction of miracles are considered, another potential factor influencing Ælfric's treatment of these figures comes into play. There is evidence to suggest that questions of saintly authority were overridden by issues of textual authority in the composition of these lives.

As Joyce Hill has discussed, Ælfric's authorial comments at the opening of his *Life of St. George* illustrate that he was aware of the specific condemnation of George's *passio* in the *Gelasian Decretals*.¹ George's acts are not the only ones mentioned by name in the decretals that Ælfric subsequently includes, as the decretals condemn the

¹ Hill 1985.

acts of four of Ælfric's other subjects by name: Andrew, Thomas, Peter and Philip. Issues surrounding the orthodoxy of Thomas' life are discussed by Ælfric, although perhaps in a misleading manner, and he himself identifies this text as problematic based on an authority other than the decretals: that of Augustine. Aideen O'Leary has shown Ælfric's 'enthusiasm' for apocryphal *Acta*, and his pronounced use of this material illustrates that he deemed it suitable for transmission.¹ However, the condemnation of these specific texts in the decretals may have led Ælfric to treat them with a higher degree of caution than other apocryphal *acta*, and in turn affected the model of sanctity he felt at liberty to depict.

When the miracles in Ælfric's saints' lives are viewed as a whole,² the lives of George, Andrew and Peter stand out due to their sobriety in this regard. It may be a coincidence that three of the texts cited by name in the decretals exhibit a trend towards avoidance of the miraculous: however, it is also possible that doubts over the authenticity of the legends provoked Ælfric to present lives in what he perceived as an unproblematic manner. Perhaps he felt that the spectacular elements of these lives, such as the catalogue of miracles presented in the anonymous *Life of Andrew*, represented potentially problematic areas and thus adhered to the more credible elements of these saints' lives. It is clear that the lives of Andrew and George represent exceptions rather than standard depictions of their generic types of sanctity within the Ælfrician corpus. They are not necessarily evidence that Ælfric does not aggrandise his saints through concentration on their miracles; rather, they suggest that he avoids this method of elevation when overriding issues of orthodoxy are involved.

It is not merely in its presentations of sanctity that the Ælfrician corpus demonstrates tendencies towards aggrandisement, elevation and perfection: it is also in

¹ O'Leary 1999.

² See the catalogue of miracles in the Typology Database.

its presentation of textual authority. As the discussion of inscribed authority at the opening of this thesis illustrates, Ælfric employs a multitude of techniques to advocate the authority and orthodoxy of his work. The citation of authorities, the condemnation of unorthodox texts, the distancing of preacher and audience through the use of personal pronouns, and the assertion that his work is divinely inspired, to outline only a few of his methods, are all well evidenced. Such techniques can be amply witnessed in the texts discussed in this study: the citation of Sulpicius Severus on six occasions in Ælfric's longer *Life of Martin*; the claims that Andrew's *passio* was authored by the priests and deacons of Achaia; the assertion that the version of George's legend related in the *Lives of Saints* collection is the correct text in opposition to heretical writings about the saint; and the citation of Ambrose's authority for the *Life of Agnes*, all demonstrate Ælfric's concern to endow his works with a veneer of authority. However, in each of the above cases, the authority Ælfric advocates for the biographies is revealed to be problematic on further consideration.

Ælfric's active editing of his source materials on Martin has been discussed extensively in this study, and the resultant biographies he presents do not accurately represent Severus' account in all areas. In particular, as Biggs has shown,¹ Ælfric's reliance on Alcuin in his former Martinian life means that his account misrepresents Sulpicius Severus in several areas. The longer *Lives of Saints* version, whilst adhering to Sulpicius Severus to a greater degree, still demonstrates a high degree of rearrangement, omission and addition when compared with Ælfric's source materials. Therefore, whilst the well-known authorship of this most famous of confessor lives, and Ælfric's frequent citation of this in the *Lives of Saints* biography, would have led to the presentation of an authoritative account, Ælfric's alteration of his source materials

¹ Biggs 1996.

leads to the provision of ‘something less’.¹ Whilst Ælfric claims to be presenting Sulpicius Severus’ account, this claim is arguably inaccurate: he is presenting his own, edited version of what he feels is suitable for his audience, using materials by Sulpicius Severus, Alcuin and Gregory of Tours as a base for this narrative.

The difficulties inherent in providing biographies of George and Andrew have been briefly discussed above, as their specific mention in the *Gelasian Decretals* casts doubt over their orthodoxy. In his *Life of St. George* Ælfric claims that he is providing the true life of the saint, but as Joyce Hill recognises, Ælfric gives no explanation as to why this particular account is considered orthodox, and the wording of the decretals implies that no orthodox account of George’s passion existed.² Ælfric’s confidence in his source’s authenticity may stem from its inclusion in the Cotton-Corpus Legendary, but as he does not outline his reasoning, it is impossible to know if this was his authority for deeming this particular source orthodox. The plain facts are that Ælfric draws attention to the problematic nature of George’s legend, states that he is providing the correct version, but does not provide any evidence for this assertion.

The authority of Andrew’s legend is similarly problematic. Apocryphal in nature and avoided by Bede amongst others,³ the orthodoxy of apostolic *passiones* was by no means uncontested. The specific citation of the *Actus nomine Andreae apostoli* in the *Gelasian Decretals* cast further doubt over the orthodoxy of this life. Ælfric’s assertion regarding the authorship of Andrew’s life seeks to validate the text by appeal to authority, and neglects to mention the slightly grey area surrounding the orthodoxy of apocryphal acts. The authority of the *Life of Agnes* also raises issues of textual manipulation. Ælfric cites the authority of Ambrose in this life, and presents a fairly faithful translation of Ambrose’s work. However, despite this general adherence to his

¹ Terminology taken from Whatley 1997, p.207.

² Hill 1985, especially p.5.

³ O’Leary 2003, p.113.

source, he does rework parts of the text, and alters the impression of the narrative as a whole through the addition of Gallicanus' legend as an *item alia* to Agnes' life. Thus, even in a case where he remains fairly faithful to his source text, he manipulates its effects on the reader or listener by juxtaposing it with another item, unrelated in his source manuscripts. Whilst there is no doubt that the authority and orthodoxy of texts were central to Ælfric's approach, the problematic relationship between projected authority and actual authority observed in these texts suggests that he manipulates, as well as advocates, the authority and orthodoxy of his work.

Notions of textual authority differ significantly in the anonymous corpus. As the discussion of inscribed authority demonstrates, methods of inscribing textual authority are employed on occasion, such as the naming of sources, but the promotion of textual authority remains far from Ælfric's constant validation of his work. As has been suggested in the anonymous *Life of Martin*, textual validation can function on many levels, and the concentration on witnessed miracles in this particular *vita* may represent a method of validating textual authenticity without reference to previous authorities or overt claims regarding textual reliability. A potential alternative to the naming of sources is perhaps employed here, and whilst Ælfric employs eyewitness testimony in validating some of his lives, such as the chain of authority cited in Edmund's *passio*, the concentration on the concrete, visible events in a source text is unparalleled in the Ælfrician lives examined here.

The Tiberius *Life of Margaret* further demonstrates the differences between textual validation in the anonymous and Ælfrician corpora in the sphere of authorial presence. The notion that this Old English *Life of Margaret* is told in the first person by Theotimus is taken from the text's Latin source. As such, rather than assuming an active, mediatory role in naming sources as Ælfric does, this text instead transmits the

information found in the Latin. This approach concords with that noted in the opening chapter on inscribed authority, as exemplified in the *Life of Nicholas*. Here, the author claims that he has been asked to translate the text by Father Athanasius, but this comment derives from the text's Latin source and does not represent an original comment by the Old English translator. Authorial presence in the anonymous lives analysed here therefore differs significantly from that in the Ælfrician corpus: whilst Ælfric employs an active voice, mediating between the text and audience and including his own unsourced comments regarding the authority his texts supposedly embody, parallel comments in the anonymous corpus are generally carried over from their source texts. To judge from the examples analysed in the discussion of inscribed authority, the authorial presence observed in Ælfrician hagiography is unique within the corpus.

The notion of projected 'perfection' is thus attributable to Ælfric's presentation of both his subjects and his work, whilst the anonymous corpus does not consistently demonstrate this kind of aggrandisement in either area. Here, saints are often more human, accessible figures, and the authority of texts is not advocated in the same insistent, yet potentially misleading, manner. A natural extension to the perfect saints and texts presented by Ælfric concerns the author himself, and evidence for authorial self-promotion abounds within Ælfrician hagiography but is witnessed very little in the anonymous texts examined here. Evidently, authorial promotion is inextricably linked to textual authority: in depicting his work as authoritative, orthodox and worthwhile, Ælfric promotes his own role as author by association. However, Ælfric's self-promotion extends beyond this textual association, becoming a more personal form of self-aggrandisement.

The techniques which validate Ælfric's work also authorize him and his role in providing preaching materials in the vernacular. The references to his relationships with important figures such as Æthelwold and Æthelmær; the desire for Archbishop Sigeric to sanction his works and receive them into the Catholic faith; the superior tone of his homilies; his condemnation of heretical works; and his reference to the works of Alfred as the only comparable documents to his own achievements in the vernacular, all point to a desire that he himself, as well as his texts and the saints therein, be deemed authoritative. Essentially, he is citing his credentials as a fitting mouthpiece for the transmission of ecclesiastical lore. The highest authorisation for such a role, of course, takes the form of divine sanction, and Ælfric lays claim to God's grace with the assertion that the Lord dictated the works to him. Just as Ælfric presents his saints and his work as elevated, lofty and beyond reproach, he casts himself in the same mould.

It is plausible that, when composing his biographies of saintly individuals, Ælfric did not perceive there to be a huge gulf between their merits and his own. Ælfric asserts that physical, visible miracles have ended, and stresses the importance of spiritual miracles in his own time. These spiritual miracles include the exhortation and stimulation of individuals to the faith, precisely the kind of effect his own works might have had. Following Gregory, Ælfric advocates that spiritual miracles are superior to those of a visible nature. This stance seems slightly incongruous in the context of his saints' lives where, as the typology of miracles stands testament, visible miracles form a focus of the majority of narratives. However, if the function of these miracles in the context of hagiography is considered, it seems they are merely instrumental in a far larger aim. Saints are glorified and elevated through their miracles, and the primary function of these individuals is to serve as figures for veneration. The miracles of the saints thus provoke reactions of awe and reverence, precisely the kind of reactions

which would strengthen and stimulate faith. As such, the perfect and aggrandized portrait of sanctity created in the Ælfrician corpus functions as a means to an end: it inspires faith, thus enabling the author of the works himself to act as a channel for spiritual miracles.

APPENDIX 1: Statistical Calculations for Miracle Frequencies

It must be noted that all miracle statistics are subjective and approximate, as the boundaries of what constitutes one miracle are unscientific.

Miracle frequencies for items on the Cross and Virgin Mary have not been calculated, as these pieces do not concentrate on the deeds and miracles of one subject in the same way as the remaining hagiographies.

Key

AElfrician items appear in bold, while anonymous items are italicised.

Generic types of sanctity are indicated by colour:

- * virgin lives
- * confessor lives
- * martyr lives
- * Apostolic lives
- * Miscellaneous items

Miracles are divided into four categories for the calculation of these statistics:

- 1) Posthumous miracles: miracles performed posthumously by the subject of the life.
- 2) Active miracles: miracles performed for others by the subject of the life.
- 3) Passive miracles: miracles performed for the subject of the life, usually to help them.
- 4) Total: the total number of miracles in the life, performed by the subject saint or others. The total does not always correspond with the number of entries in the typology, as any comments pertaining to the working of miracles are included as records in the database, and do not always qualify as actual instances of the miraculous.

Miracle Frequencies in Old English Saints' Lives, Based on the Typology Database:

<u>Saint's Life</u>	<u>posthumous</u>	<u>active</u>	<u>passive</u>	<u>total</u>
Abdon and Sennes	0	0	1	7
Aethelthryth	3	4	2	7
Agatha	1	0	5	7
Agnes	3	0	6	15
Alban	1	2	2	7
Alexander, Eventus, and Theodolus	0	1	2	6
Andrew: I	0	2	2	11
<i>Andrew: II</i>	0	11	12	26
Apollinaris	0	12	1	14
<i>Augustine of Canterbury</i>	0	0	0	0
Bartholomew	0	5	0	14
Basil	0	9	4	22
Benedict	3	29	1	45
Cecilia	1	1	4	9
<i>Chad</i>	2	0	1	4
<i>Christopher</i>	1	4	3	11
Chrysanthus and Daria	1	0	14	19
Clement	2	1	0	18
Cross: Exaltation	0	0	0	0
<i>Cross: History</i>	n/a			
Cross: Invention I	n/a			
<i>Cross: Invention II</i>	n/a			
Cuthbert	2	16	7	30

Denis and Companions	2	7	3	18
Edmund: king and martyr	5	0	0	8
Eugenia	1	3	3	13
Euphrosyne	1	2	0	4
Eustace and Companions	0	0	7	12
Forty Soldiers	2	2	6	14
Fursey	1	1	3	9
George	0	2	5	9
Giles	1	17	2	24
Gregory	0	2	0	2
Guthlac	6	15	3	27
James the Greater: I	0	4	0	9
James the Greater: II	0	0	0	4
John the Baptist: Decollation	1	0	1	5
John the Baptist: Nativity I	0	0	0	4
John the Baptist: Nativity II	0	1	0	6
John the Evangelist: Assumption	2	7	4	17
Julian and Basilissa	0	4	12	21
Laurence	2	5	2	11
Lucy	1	0	4	5
Maccabees	0	0	8	16
Machutus	not in typology			
Malchus	not in typology			
Margaret: I	3	2	5	11
Margaret: II	non-extant			
Margaret: III	4	2	5	19
Mark	0	5	4	9
Martin: I	3	24	12	44
Martin: II	3	38	15	70
Martin: III	0	8	4	14
Mary of Egypt	0	12	8	25
Mary Virgin: Annunciation	n/a			
Mary Virgin: Assumption I	n/a			
Mary Virgin: Assumption II	n/a			
Mary Virgin: Assumption III	n/a			
Mary Virgin: Assumption IV	n/a			
Mary Virgin: Nativity I	n/a			
Mary Virgin: Nativity II	n/a			
Mary Virgin: Nativity III	n/a			
Mary Virgin: Purification I	n/a			
Mary Virgin: Purification II	n/a			
Mary Virgin: Sermon of Ralph D'Escures	n/a			
Matthew	1	4	1	9
Maur	1	11	3	19
Maurice and Companions	0	0	0	0
Michael: I	0	8	0	11
Michael: II	0	11	0	11
Michael: III	0	8	0	11
Mildred: I	2	0	0	5
Mildred: II/ Sexburga	1	0	0	4
Neot	6	5	2	17
Nicholas	0	5	3	13
Oswald	12	0	3	15
Pantaleon	not in typology			
Paul: Apostle	0	0	3	7
Paulinus	0	1	0	1

Peter	1	1	2	7
Peter and Paul: I	2	5	5	13
<i>Peter and Paul: II</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>10</i>
Peter: Chair of	0	9	2	14
Philip and James the Less	2	2	1	11
<i>Quintin</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>
Sebastian	1	3	2	12
Seven Sleepers: I	1	1	2	5
<i>Seven Sleepers: II</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>8</i>
Simon and Jude	2	10	4	18
Stephen Protomartyr: I	0	2	2	7
Stephen Protomartyr: II	13	0	0	14
Swithun	21	0	0	24
Thomas	1	11	5	19
<i>Veronica</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>2</i>
Vincent	2	0	4	6

Calculations

Average no. of miracles performed by virgins: AElfrician lives: $8/6 = 1.33$ per life

Average no. of miracles performed by virgins: Anonymous lives: $18/7 = 2.57$ per life

Average no. of miracles performed by confessors: AElfrician lives: $130/9 = 14.44$ per life

Average no. of miracles performed by confessors: Anonymous lives: $51/8 = 6.38$ per life

Average no. of miracles performed by martyrs: AElfrician lives: $35/15 = 2.33$ per life

Average no. of miracles performed by martyrs: Anonymous lives: $4/3 = 1.33$ per life

Average no. of miracles performed by Apostles: AElfrician lives: $65/15 = 4.33$ per life

Average no. of miracles performed by Apostles: Anonymous lives: $16/4 = 4$ per life

Average no. of miracles performed by male saints: AElfrician lives: $230/39 = 5.90$ per life

Average no. of miracles performed by male saints: Anonymous lives: $71/15 = 4.73$ per life

Average no. of miracles performed by Episcopal saints: AElfrician lives: $145/13 = 11.15$ per life

Average no. of miracles performed by non-Episcopal saints: AElfrician lives: $93/32 = 2.91$ per life

% of female saints who perform posthumous miracles: AElfrician lives: $6/6 \times 100 = 100\%$

% of female saints who perform posthumous miracles: Anonymous lives: $5/7 \times 100 = 71.42\%$

% of male saints who perform posthumous miracles: AElfrician lives: $23/39 \times 100 = 58.97\%$

% of male saints who perform posthumous miracles: Anonymous lives: $5/15 \times 100 = 33.33\%$

% of saints who perform posthumous miracles: AElfrician lives: $29/45 = 64.44\%$

% of saints who perform posthumous miracles: Anonymous lives: $10/22 = 45.45\%$

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