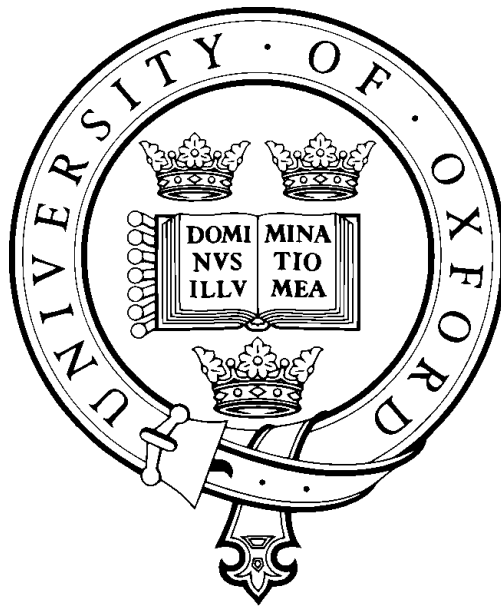


# Translating England and the Continent in Ælfric's *Lives of Saints*



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## ABSTRACT

This thesis argues that Ælfric of Eynsham deliberately adapted information from continental Latin sources in order to emphasise ideals of community, co-operation and collective identity to English audiences in his *Lives of Saints*, the most stylistically and narratively accomplished collection of hagiography composed in Early Medieval England. Moreover, it examines, for the first time, the *Lives* as a unified collection whose individual items comprise one thematic and didactic whole. Although the *Lives of Saints* is composed in Old English and was intended to educate English audiences, its *sanctorale* consists primarily of Frankish, Italian and Spanish saints rather than English ones, thus providing unique insight into the ways that “the continent” was represented in late tenth-century English literature. No previous study has considered Ælfric’s representation of European characters, geographies and narratives. Through close comparison between Ælfric’s *Lives* and their Latin sources this thesis demonstrates that Ælfric’s interest in community was both inward and outward looking: he sought on the one hand to situate England within the wider Christian world, and on the other hand to promote the internal unity of the English kingdom and the reformed monastic establishment. As such, it sheds new light on the ways that Ælfric wrote about the Christian world and England’s place within it, and further illuminates of the didactic praxis and ideology of one of the most influential and significant authors of the early medieval period.

The four thematic chapters each address a form of ‘translation’. Chapter One considers the literary translation of descriptions of continental geographies, and establishes that Ælfric conceived of a unified “continental” Christian community, roughly occupying the old territories of the Western Roman Empire and centred around Rome, which was distinct from the rest of the world. Whilst Ælfric presents locations such as Rome, Milan or

Sicily as enjoying unique topographical or historical features and as such being distinct from one another, he nonetheless largely homogenises the depictions of continental locations found in his sources, and in doing so suggests that disparate places might nonetheless share in a single sense of community with one another. Chapter Two turns to the translation of saints, arguing that Ælfric adapted the accounts of saintly burial found in his sources in order to minimise difference between geographic locations and to present an idealised vision of a homogeneous universal church. Whilst Ælfric's Latin sources consistently emphasise localised aspects of the saintly burial, Ælfric adapts these accounts to highlight the communion of saints, the universal church and the single community of praxis in which all the Christian faithful share. Chapter Three continues the idea of physical translation, and turns to Ælfric's missionary saints, who move between places. In these missionary lives, Ælfric consistently highlights the importance of cooperation between geographic locations and between the lay and monastic spheres, and thereby promotes unity as an ideological imperative for both secular and ecclesiastical success. Chapter Four considers Ælfric's presentation of Rome, the most culturally significant city of the Early Medieval imagination. Throughout the *Lives*, Ælfric diminishes Rome's physical reality whilst emphasising the city's symbolic importance, thereby emphasising commonality between Rome and England despite the considerable geographic and cultural lacuna between the two places. Rome serves as the heart of Ælfric's imagined continental Christian community, representing the idealised imperial, scholastic and ecclesiastical achievements that all of the universal church, and particularly England, might share in.

I conclude that Ælfric adapted continental characters, geographies and narratives in order to promote unity, a value that was both the heart of Benedictine ideology and a political necessity in the turbulent landscape of late tenth-century England. This thesis shows how Ælfric's continental characters and settings served not merely as a convenient

skeleton on which to frame his hagiographical narratives, but rather lay at the heart of his didactic praxis and pedagogic aims.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis highlights the ways that Ælfric extolled the benefits of community. It is with real joy that I get to thank here my own community of scholars, family, and friends, without whose wisdom and support this thesis could never have been written.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

|         |                                                                       |
|---------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| AB      | <i>Analecta Bollandiana</i>                                           |
| ANS     | <i>Anglo-Norman Studies</i>                                           |
| AS      | <i>Acta Sanctorum</i>                                                 |
| ASE     | <i>Anglo-Saxon England</i>                                            |
| BH      | <i>Blicking Homilies</i> , ed. Morris                                 |
| CCL     | Cotton-Corpus Legendary                                               |
| CHI     | <i>Ælfric's Catholic Homilies</i> , First Series, ed. Clemoes         |
| CH II   | <i>Ælfric's Catholic Homilies</i> , Second Series, ed. Godden         |
| DOE     | <i>Dictionary of Old English</i> , ed. Cameron <i>et al.</i>          |
| EETS    | Early English Text Society                                            |
| OS      | Original Series                                                       |
| SS      | Supplementary Series                                                  |
| ES      | <i>English Studies</i>                                                |
| Etym.   | <i>Isidori Hispalensis Episcopi Etymologiarum</i> , ed. Lindsay       |
| In Gen. | Bede, <i>Libri quatuor in principium Genesis</i> , ed. Jones          |
| JEGP    | <i>Journal of English and Germanic Philology</i>                      |
| JEH     | <i>Journal of Ecclesiastical History</i>                              |
| JMEMS   | <i>Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies</i>                   |
| JMH     | <i>Journal of Medieval History</i>                                    |
| JML     | <i>Journal of Medieval Latin</i>                                      |
| LME     | <i>Ælfric's Letter to the Monks of Eynsham</i> , ed. Jones            |
| LOS     | <i>Ælfric's Lives of Saints</i> , ed. Clayton and Mullins             |
| MÆ      | <i>Medium Ævum</i>                                                    |
| MGH SRM | <i>Monumenta Germaniae Historica: Scriptores rerum Merovingicarum</i> |

|                |                                                   |
|----------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| <i>N&amp;Q</i> | <i>Notes and Queries</i>                          |
| <i>OEO</i>     | Old English <i>Orosius</i> , ed. Godden           |
| <i>OEM</i>     | <i>Old English Martyrology</i> , ed. Rauer        |
| <i>OERB</i>    | Old English <i>Regula Benedicti</i> , ed. Schröer |
| <i>PL</i>      | <i>Patrologia Latina</i> , ed. Migne              |
| <i>PQ</i>      | <i>Philological Quarterly</i>                     |
| <i>RB</i>      | <i>Regula Benedicti</i> , ed. Venarde             |
| <i>RC</i>      | <i>Regularis Concordia</i> , ed. Symons           |
| <i>RevB</i>    | <i>Revue Bénédictine</i>                          |

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## INTRODUCTION: ÆLFRIC AND THE CONTINENT

Ælfric of Eynsham's *Lives of Saints* is one of the longest and most stylistically accomplished collections of early medieval hagiography, in which saints from all parts of the Christian world appear alongside one another in a cohesive, intertextual *sanctorale*. The text, which has widely been praised for representing the culmination of Ælfric's extraordinary vernacular prose style, is remarkable for its known single authorship, its lively narrative style and its synthesis of myriad Latin sources into a single vernacular text. Given its nature as an English didactic text, one particularly surprising feature of the *Lives* is its lack of emphasis on England: despite being an Old English text composed by an English monk, the *Lives* gives relatively little prominence to English saints.<sup>1</sup> The text, which dates to 993–998, contains more than thirty items, but only celebrates English saints in five of them.<sup>2</sup> By contrast, a far higher proportion of the text (thirteen items) is given to saints from Italy, Francia and Spain.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, the collection has continental origins: Ælfric translated the vast majority of the *Lives of Saints* into Old English from Latin sources found in a legendary of Frankish origin.<sup>4</sup> Despite this continental focus, and although there has been rising scholarly interest in insular-

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<sup>1</sup> Mechthild Gretsch notes that English saints feature far more prominently in anonymous Old English Lives than in Ælfric's *sanctorale*. Of the twelve extant lives of English saints written in Old English, only six of them are by Ælfric, a fact that is all the more remarkable given that his works account for sixty-six of the 106 extant pieces of vernacular hagiography. M. Gretsch, *Ælfric and the Cult of Saints in Anglo-Saxon England* (Cambridge, 2005), pp. 65–66. Robert Bartlett also notes the scarcity of English saints in Ælfric's *oeuvre*, but highlights the fact that Ælfric nonetheless demonstrated a regard for 'Englishness': *Why Can the Dead Do Such Great Things? Saints and Worshippers from the Martyrs to the Reformation* (Princeton, NJ, 2013), p. 581. Further, though James Hurt argues that Ælfric 'was particularly interested in providing his audience with accounts of British saints', he nonetheless concedes that Roman saints constitute the 'largest single group of lives': *Ælfric* (New York, 1972), p. 62.

<sup>2</sup> These saints are Edmund, Oswald, Æthelthryth, Alban, and Swithun.

<sup>3</sup> Eugenia (Rome); Sebastian (Rome); Maur (Francia); Agnes (Rome); Agatha (Sicily); Lucy (Syracuse); Apollinaris (Rome); Maurice (Francia); Dionysius (Athens / Rome / Francia); Martin (Italy / Francia); Cecilia (Rome); Chrysanthus and Daria (Rome); and Vincent (Spain).

<sup>4</sup> P. Zettel, 'Ælfric's Hagiographic Sources and the Latin Legendary Preserved in B.L. MS Cotton Nero E I + CCC MS 9 and other manuscripts' (unpubl. DPhil thesis, Univ. Oxford, 1980). I discuss the sources of the individual *Lives of Saints* and their association with the continent in greater detail below.

continental relations in the early-medieval period since Wilhelm Levison's seminal *England and the Continent in the Eighth Century* (1946), there has to date been no study that considers 'Ælfric and the continent'.<sup>5</sup> This thesis addresses this gap in scholarship, by examining the representation of continental peoples, places and histories within the *Lives of Saints*.

Indeed, the *Lives of Saints* itself has received surprisingly little dedicated scholarly attention: to date there has only been one monograph published on the *Lives* in its entirety.<sup>6</sup> Despite the fact that both the manuscript witnesses and Ælfric's own prefaces suggest that the *Lives of Saints* is a coherent, unified work, it is rarely read as a single text by modern scholars. Instead, it has tended to be examined piecemeal, with studies considering either single items in isolation, or else examining selections of hagiographic pieces by paradigm, such as warrior saints, virgin martyrs or apostles.<sup>7</sup> The present study considers, for the first time, the ways in which the *Lives of Saints* functions as a unified collection, by comparing the individual items not only to their Latin sources but also to each other. In doing so, it both illuminates Ælfric's methods as a teacher, scholar and translator, and establishes a new comparative methodology for further studies of the *Lives of Saints*.

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<sup>5</sup> W. Levison, *England and the Continent in the Eighth Century* (Oxford, 1946). Various studies have since considered 'England and the Continent' in the vein of Levison: V. Ortenberg, *The English Church and the Continent in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries: Cultural, Spiritual and Artistic Exchanges* (Oxford, 1992); R. McKitterick, 'England and the Continent', in *The New Cambridge Medieval History 2: c.700–900*, ed. R. McKitterick (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 64–84; J. L. Nelson, 'England and the Continent in the Ninth Century I: Ends and Beginnings', *Transactions of the RHS* 12 (2002), 1–21; J. Story, *Carolingian Connections: Anglo-Saxon England and Carolingian Francia, c. 750–870* (Aldershot, 2003); D. Rollason, C. Leyser, and H. Williams, eds, *England and the Continent in the Tenth Century: Studies in Honour of Wilhelm Levison (1876–1947)* (Turnhout, 2010); H. Sauer and J. Story, eds, *Anglo-Saxon England and the Continent* (Tempe, AZ, 2011). Though Ælfric's presentation specifically of the Anglo-Roman relationship has previously been examined by Yann Coz (*Rome en Angleterre: l'image de la Rome antique dans l'Angleterre anglo-saxonne, du VIIe siècle à 1066* (Paris, 2011); 'The Image of Rome in Anglo-Saxon England', in Rollason *et al.*, eds (2010), pp. 545–58) and Kathy Lavezzo (*Angels on the Edge of the World: Geography, Literature, and English Community, 1000–1534* (Ithaca, NY, 2006), pp. 27–45), his use of the continent more broadly has not yet been subjected to scholarly analysis.

<sup>6</sup> R. McDaniel, *The Third Gender and Ælfric's Lives of Saints* (Kalamazoo, 2018).

<sup>7</sup> Exceptions to this are Rhonda McDaniel's *The Third Gender* and Gabriella Corona's 'Ælfric's Schemes and Tropes: *Amplificatio* and the Portrayal of Prosecutors', in *A Companion to Ælfric*, ed. H. Magennis and M. Swan, Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition 18 (Leiden, 2009), pp. 297–320. However, as discussed in greater detail below, McDaniel's methodology of individual case-studies does not consider the way that the items of the *Lives of Saints* function as a coherent whole, and Corona considers only a small number of the items alongside others from the *Catholic Homilies*.

## I: WHAT IS THE *LIVES OF SAINTS*?

Ælfric of Eynsham (c. 950–1010) was a monk, mass-priest, teacher and the most prolific Old English and Anglo-Latin writer of the late-tenth century.<sup>8</sup> In c. 987, after his education at Winchester under the auspices of Æthelwold, Ælfric was sent to Cerne Abbas, a small, newly founded or possibly refounded monastic establishment.<sup>9</sup> It was here, at Cerne, under the patronage of ealdorman Æthelweard and his son Æthelmær, that Ælfric composed what is now known as the *Lives of Saints*.<sup>10</sup> The text, which dates to 993–998, is an unparalleled collection of more than thirty items, whose genres include hagiography, homily and biblical translation, all translated from Latin sources into Old English.<sup>11</sup> Though the *Lives of Saints*

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<sup>8</sup> Jonathan Wilcox, using data from *The Dictionary of Old English: Old English Corpus*, notes that Ælfric's works 'make up almost 15% of all surviving Old English': 'The Use of Ælfric's Homilies: MSS Oxford, Bodleian Library, Junius 85 and 86 in the Field', in Magennis and Swan, eds (2009), pp. 345–68.

<sup>9</sup> Ælfric describes himself as 'Wintoniensis alumnus' ('a student of Winchester', *Vita S. Æthelwoldi*, ch. 1) and 'alumnus Æðelwoldi' ('a student of Æthelwold', *CH I*, pref.); he also writes that he learned about monastic customs 'in scola eius [scil. Æthelwold] degens multis annis' ('abiding for many years in Æthelwold's school', *Letter to the Monks of Eynsham*, c. 1) and similarly describes his education as 'sicut didicimus in scola Æðelwoldi' ('just as we were taught in the school of Æthelwold', *Grammar*, pref.). For Ælfric at Winchester, see J. Hill, 'Ælfric: His Life and Works', in Magennis and Swan, eds (2009), pp. 35–65, at pp. 44–51; M. Lapidge, 'Æthelwold as Scholar and Teacher', in *Bishop Æthelwold: His Career and Influence*, ed. B. A. E. Yorke (Woodbridge, 1998), pp. 89–117, esp. pp. 107–110. Ælfric's education before he arrived at Winchester has been the subject of some speculation — see, for example, C. A. Jones, "'Meatim Sed et Rustica": Ælfric of Eynsham as Medieval Latin Author', *JML* 8 (1998), 1–57; R. Stephenson, 'Ælfric of Eynsham and Hermeneutic Latin: "Meatim Sed et Rustica" Reconsidered', *JML* 16 (2006), 111–41; J. Hill, 'Life', pp. 45–47. Ælfric states in the preface to his *Catholic Homilies* that he was sent to Cerne by Bishop Ælfleah, at the request of Æthelmær (*CH I*, Old English pref. ll. 44–48). For Ælfric's time at Cerne, see J. Hill, 'Life', pp. 51–60; J. Wilcox, 'Ælfric in Dorset and the Landscape of Pastoral Care', in *Pastoral Care in Late Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. F. Tinti (Woodbridge, 2005), pp. 52–62.

<sup>10</sup> Both men were closely involved at the court of Æthelred. Æthelweard was ealdormen of the Western Provinces, and Æthelmær took up this role on his father's death. For their respective careers and lives, see C. Cubitt, 'Ælfric's Lay Patrons', in Magennis and Swan, eds (2009), pp. 165–92.

<sup>11</sup> Though the *Lives* was previously dated as 993–1002 by Clemoes, it is now widely accepted that the *terminus ante quem* for the completion of the collection was 998. This dating is made on the basis that the preface of the work addresses Æthelweard, who disappears from the record in that same year: 'non mihi imputetur quod divinam scripturam nostrae linguae infero, quia arguet me praecatus multorum fidelium, et maxime Æþelwerdi ducis et Æðelmeri nostri, qui ardentissime nostra interpretationes amplectuntur lectitando' ('let it not be held against me that I translate divine scripture into our language, because the entreaty of many of the faithful convicts me, and especially of Ealdorman Æthelweard and of our friend Æthelmær, who most eagerly esteem our translations by being in the habit of reading them', Latin Pref. c.4). For the dating of the *Lives*, see A. J. Kleist, *The Chronology and Canon of Ælfric of Eynsham* (Cambridge, 2019), pp. 135–44. Clemoes' later date was based on the suggestion that Æthelweard died in 1002. This assumption was predicated on the identification of Æthelweard, who is named alongside bishop Buruhwold of Cornwall in a St Petroc's manumission dated to the eleventh century, as the same ealdorman who was the patron of Ælfric's works. P. Clemoes, 'The Chronology of Ælfric's Works', in *The Anglo-Saxons: Studies in some Aspects of their History and Culture presented to Bruce Dickens*, ed. P. Clemoes (London, 1959), pp. 212–47, at p. 244. However, Simon Keynes

was ostensibly translated for Ælfric's aristocratic lay patrons, it has long been acknowledged that he envisioned a much wider audience, and that the text was used in both lay and monastic contexts well into the twelfth century.<sup>12</sup>

The main source for the *Lives of Saints* is a large collection of Latin hagiography, thought to have originated in northern France or Flanders owing to the fact that it contains a large number of lives of saints originating from that area.<sup>13</sup> The earliest English version of this legendary is the 'Cotton-Corpus Legendary', so called because it survives as two separate manuscripts: British Library, MS Cotton Nero E. i., vols i and ii, and Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 9.<sup>14</sup> The Cotton-Corpus Legendary is a collection of prodigious size, numbering some 165 items — Ælfric's *Lives of Saints*, by comparison, is considerably shorter. Ælfric was a man of considerable learning, a fact that is manifested in the range of sources that he drew on. Whilst the bulk of the hagiographical material that Ælfric adapted for the *Lives of Saints* originally came from the Cotton-Corpus Legendary, he also combines this with material taken from other patristic and medieval sources, including Jerome,

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has demonstrated that the Æthelweard of the manumission cannot have been the same man as Ealdorman Æthelweard: *The Diplomas of King Æthelred 'The Unready', 978–1016: A Study in Their Use and Historical Significance* (Cambridge, 1980), p. 192 n. 139. The number of items varies according to whether we consider the lives of *Agatha* and *Lucy* to be two separate items or one, and whether the *Life of Vincent* is considered a part of the collection. Clayton and Mullins print *The Lives of Agatha and Lucy* as a single item, whilst Skeat prints the two *Lives* separately. Some *Lives* also contain a second part or related text, signalled in the manuscript with a heading, usually 'Item alia'. These secondary items build upon and reinforce the teaching of the main item. These second parts are traditionally counted with the main item which they accompany, rather than as separate items, owing to their thematic links with their respective main items and also their manuscript contexts, in which they appear under the same date.

<sup>12</sup> J. Hill, 'The Preservation and Transmission of Ælfric's Saints' Lives: Reader-Reception and Reader-Response in the Early Middle Ages', in *The Preservation and Transmission of Anglo-Saxon Culture: Selected Papers from the 1991 Meeting of the International Society of Anglo-Saxonists*, ed. P. E. Szarmach and J. Rosenthal (Kalamazoo, 1997), pp. 405–30; J. Wilcox, 'The Audience of Ælfric's *Lives of Saints* and the Face of Cotton Caligula A. xiv, fols 93–130', in *Beatus Vir: Studies in Early English and Norse Manuscripts in Memory of Phillip Pulsiano*, ed. A. N. Doane and K. Wolf (Tempe, AZ, 2006), pp. 229–64, at pp. 247–49; J. Wilcox, ed., *Ælfric's Prefaces*, Durham Medieval Texts 9 (Durham, 1994), p. 50. See also Alison Gulley on the potential female audiences of the *Lives of Saints*, both lay and monastic: A. Gulley, *The Displacement of the Body in Ælfric's Virgin Martyr Lives* (Farnham, 2014), pp. 5–10.

<sup>13</sup> P. Jackson and M. Lapidge, 'The Contents of the Cotton-Corpus Legendary', in *Holy Men and Holy Women: Old English Prose Saints' Lives and Their Contexts*, ed. P. E. Szarmach (Albany, 1996), pp. 131–146, at pp. 133–34; Zettel, 'Sources', p. 9. See also R. C. Love, *Three Eleventh-Century Anglo-Latin Saints' Lives*, pp. xviii–xxiii.

<sup>14</sup> Ker §29, Gneuss and Lapidge §344 and §36 respectively.

Augustine, Isidore, Bede and the Vulgate.<sup>15</sup> A study of Ælfric's translation methods, then, involves not only analysis of the omissions and alterations that he made to his sources, but also attention to the ways that he synthesised a plethora of different materials into a single, coherent Old English text.

The standard edition of the *Lives of Saints* remained, until very recently, the nineteenth-century edition by Walter W. Skeat.<sup>16</sup> However, in 2019, a new edition, edited by Mary Clayton and Juliet Mullins, was published.<sup>17</sup> The welcome publication of this new edition of the *Lives*, and also of a new edition of the anonymous Old English *Lives*, will no doubt foster renewed interest in Old English hagiography. Both editions print the *Lives* as verse, and quotations in this thesis are accordingly presented with verse lineation.

The main manuscript witness to the *Lives of Saints*, on which both modern editions of the text are based, is London, British Library, Cotton Julius E. vii.<sup>18</sup> This manuscript represents the most contemporary version of the *Lives of Saints* (having been compiled in the early-eleventh century, probably within a decade of Ælfric composing the *Lives of Saints*) and also the most complete one, owing to the fact that it is the only extant manuscript to contain the collection in its entirety. Despite its contemporary date, Julius E. vii. does show signs of compilatorial intervention — most notably the inclusion of four non-Ælfrician *Lives* interspersed with the *Lives of Saints*.<sup>19</sup> These interloping items are not necessarily the only

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<sup>15</sup> These sources are catalogued by the *Fontes Anglo-Saxonici* database.

<sup>16</sup> W. W. Skeat, ed., *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, EETS OS 76, 82, 94, and 114 (London, 1881–1900). Skeat was aided by the work of 'Miss Gunning, of Cambridge' and 'Miss Wilkinson, formerly of Dorking', who provided the majority of the modern English translations (p. vii).

<sup>17</sup> M. Clayton and J. Mullins, ed., *Ælfric: Old English Lives of Saints*, 3 vols (London, 2019). All quotations in this thesis are taken from this new edition. Line numbers have also been taken from the Clayton and Mullins edition, save for instances where sections of the text have been printed by the editors as prose, with no line numbers. In these instances, references are to chapter number, as printed by Clayton and Mullins. All translations of the *Lives of Saints* are my own, although I have consulted the existing translations provided in both of the full editions and in the partial editions by Robert Upchurch, Jonathan Wilcox and Gabriella Corona. Wilcox, *Prefaces*; R. Upchurch, ed., *Ælfric's Lives of the Virgin Spouses* (Exeter, 2007); G. Corona, ed., *Ælfric's Life of Saint Basil the Great: Background and Context* (Cambridge, 2006).

<sup>18</sup> Ker §162, Gneuss and Lapidge §339, Kleist MS W. For the contents of the manuscript, see Kleist, *Chronology*, pp. 235–36. The manuscript has been digitised and is available at <http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts>.

<sup>19</sup> The four anonymous *Lives* (The Seven Sleepers, Mary of Egypt, Eustace and Euphrosyne) have been distinguished from Ælfric's work on the basis of their style, which is markedly different from his: H. Magennis,

changes made to the collection by the manuscript's compiler.<sup>20</sup> However, it is now largely agreed that the mixture of homily and hagiography contained within Julius E. vii. was of Ælfric's own design, and that the version of the text represented by the manuscript, whilst problematic, is probably close to the collection as Ælfric originally conceived of it.<sup>21</sup>

Though Julius E. vii. is generally considered to contain the *Lives of Saints* in its entirety, there is one item, the *Life of Vincent*, which is missing from the manuscript. Whilst the alliterative style of the life leaves little room for doubt over whether it was authored by Ælfric, the question of whether or not it ought to be considered part of the *Lives of Saints* has been debated. *Vincent* has been included in both printed editions of the *Lives*, but does not appear in MS Julius E. vii. The text as it is printed is constructed from two separate pieces of twelfth-century manuscript evidence: a *passio*, which survives only in Cambridge University Library li. 1.33, and an exposition of John XII.24–6, which similarly only survives in a single manuscript, Bodley 343.<sup>22</sup> Clemoes considered these two items to have originally constituted one homily.<sup>23</sup> Based on this, Susan Irvine has argued convincingly that the text was originally not considered part of Ælfric's *sanctorale*, but rather was a piece specially commissioned by the monks of Abingdon.<sup>24</sup> Joyce Hill, in agreement with Irvine, suggests that 'it is clear that Ælfric did not select [Vincent] for his major collections'.<sup>25</sup> However, Alex Nicholls argues that, whilst the work may indeed have been a private commission, there is little that links the

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'Contrasting Features in the Non-Ælfrician Lives in the Old English *Lives of Saints*', *Anglia* 104 (1986), 336–42. See also R. Norris, ed., *Anonymous Interpolations in Ælfric's 'Lives of Saints'* (Kalamazoo, 2011); and H. Magennis, 'Ælfric's *Lives of Saints* and Cotton Julius E.vii: Adaptation, Appropriation and the Disappearing Book', in *Imagining the Book*, ed. S. Kelly and J. J. Thompson (Turnhout, 2005), pp. 99–109, at pp. 107–09.

<sup>20</sup> M. McC. Gatch, *Preaching and Theology in Anglo-Saxon England: Ælfric and Wulfstan* (Toronto, 1977), p. 181 n. 49; Magennis, 'Cotton Julius E.vii'; Clayton and Mullins, *Lives*, pp. xii–xiv.

<sup>21</sup> Magennis, 'Cotton Julius E.vii'; Clemoes, 'Chronology', p. 221; T. H. Leinbaugh, 'Ælfric's *Lives of Saints* I and the Boulogne Sermons: Editorial, Authorial and Textual Problems', in *The Editing of Old English: Papers from the 1990 Manchester Conference*, ed. D. G. Scragg and P. E. Szarmach (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 191–211, esp. p. 211.

<sup>22</sup> Ker §18 and §310, respectively.

<sup>23</sup> Clemoes, 'Chronology', p. 236.

<sup>24</sup> S. E. Irvine, 'Bones of Contention: the Context of Ælfric's Homily on St Vincent', *ASE* 19 (1990), 117–32.

<sup>25</sup> J. Hill, 'The Context of Ælfric's Saints' Lives', in *Hagiography in Anglo-Saxon England: Adopting and Adapting Saints' Lives into Old English Prose (c. 950–1150)* (Turnhout, 2014), pp. 1–27, at pp. 5–6.

text of the *passio* to the exposition on John, either textually or thematically.<sup>26</sup> Further, he notes that the Cotton-Corpus Legendary contains source material for the *passio*, but not the exposition. He concludes that it is more likely that the *passio* was originally composed as part of the *Lives of Saints*, but was not included within MS Julius E. vii. on the basis of an overabundance of January saints. I argue that, whilst it is impossible to ascertain whether the *Life of Vincent* was originally considered to be part of the *Lives of Saints*, it is irrefutable that the *passio* was considered alongside other pieces of the collection in at least one instance. Our only surviving copy of the *Life of Vincent* is found in a manuscript containing sixteen other pieces from the *Lives of Saints*, including the lives of *Denis*, *Oswald*, *George* and *Æthelthryth*.<sup>27</sup> Moreover, as Nicholls points out, it is stylistically and thematically in accordance with the rest of the texts that we now consider under the title *Lives of Saints*.<sup>28</sup> As such, the reading of the *passio* half of *Vincent* in Cambridge University Library li. 1.33 would have informed and been informed by some of the other *Lives* in the collection. It thus seems prudent to include discussion of at least the hagiographical part in this thesis, owing to the fact that its form and manuscript context align it with what we now consider to be the *Lives of Saints*.

## II: THE *LIVES OF SAINTS* AS UNIFIED COLLECTION

Ælfric seems to have conceived of the *Lives of Saints* as a unified ‘book’. The sense that the text is a complete and coherent collection is supported by the extratextual trappings of Julius E. vii., which comprise Ælfric’s Latin and Old English prefaces to the work followed by an itemised table of contents in which the individual texts are arranged in order by date. Each

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<sup>26</sup> A. Nicholls, ‘Ælfric’s ‘Life of St Vincent’: The Question of Form and Function’, *N&Q* 38 (1991), 445–50.

<sup>27</sup> For a full description of the Ælfrician contents of the manuscript, see Kleist, *Chronology*, pp. 222–23.

<sup>28</sup> Nicholls, ‘Vincent’, p. 446.

individual life is given a title in majuscule rubrics, along with the date of the respective saint's festival or liturgical occasion. Further, in the *Memory of the Saints*, which Clemoes and Hurt argue originally stood as an introduction to the *Lives*, Ælfric extols the didactic virtues of hagiography, and gestures to the communion of saints, writing that various paradigms of sainthood 'synd nu *ealle* on þam ecan wuldre' ('are now *all* in eternal glory', l. 182, my italics).<sup>29</sup> This presentation of the saints as a unified collection accords with the contents of the *Lives of Saints* as it is presented in Julius E. vii, and suggests that Ælfric saw the interrelation of saints as a matter of both theological and literary importance.

Indeed, Ælfric's own prefaces also suggest the various items contained in the *Lives* were intended to be both read and transmitted together. He describes the work as a 'codex' ('book'), 'codicellus' ('little book') and a 'volumen' ('volume') in the Latin preface.<sup>30</sup> Similarly, in the Old English preface, he refers to the text as 'þas boc' ('this book') five times, and as 'þissere gesetnysse' ('this work') once.<sup>31</sup> Moreover, in the Old English preface he entreats that any scribe who makes a copy of the *Lives of Saints* 'þær na mær betwux ne sette þonne we awendon' ('include no more in it than we have translated', OE pref. 5). It is clear, then, that he conceptualised the *Lives of Saints* as a complete text, whose items comprised a unified whole that could be disrupted by the addition of further material.

Ælfric's representation of the *Lives of Saints* as a single text is markedly different from his treatment of the *Catholic Homilies*. Though he also describes the first series of the *Catholic Homilies* as a 'codex' (l. 3), 'libro' ('book') and a 'libello' ('little book'), he also states that it is comprised of separate items: 'quadraginta sententias in isto libro posuimus' ('we have placed forty pieces in this book', l. 18).<sup>32</sup> He also restates the idea of multiple items in the preface to the *Catholic Homilies*' second series, where he writes that 'igitur in anteriore

<sup>29</sup> Clemoes, 'Chronology', p. 222; Hurt, *Ælfric*, pp. 65–69.

<sup>30</sup> *LOS*, Lat. pref. 1.1, 2.

<sup>31</sup> *LOS*, OE pref. 1, 3, 4 and 5; 2.

<sup>32</sup> Text and trans. Wilcox, *Prefaces*, pp. 107–08, 127–28.

opera ordinavimus xl sermones, in isto vero non minor numerus sententiarum invenitur' ('in the former work we had arranged forty homilies and in this one truly no less a number of pieces is found', ll. 15–16).<sup>33</sup> Moreover, though he asks that nobody 'pervertat nostram interpretationem' ('pervert our interpretation', l. 33) of the texts, he acknowledges that his collections of homilies may be used in different ways by different audiences:

Duos libros in ista translatione facimus, persuadentes ut legatur unus per annum in ecclesia Dei et alter anno sequenti, ut non fiat tedium auscultantibus; tamen damus licentiam, si alicui melius placet, ad unum librum ambos ordinare.

(Ælfric, *CH I, Latin Preface*, ll. 25–28)

[We have made this translation in two books intending that one be read through one year in the church of God and the other in the following year so that it does not become tedious for the listeners; nevertheless, we give licence, if it pleases anyone better, to arrange both into one book.]<sup>34</sup>

In stating that the two books may be 'arranged' ('ordinare') either together or separately according to the taste of the user ('si alicui melius placet'), Ælfric suggests that the relation of the individual items to each other is malleable. According to his statement, he has no qualms with the idea that, for example, one audience may hear the *Passion of the Apostles Peter and Paul* (June 29) days after hearing *The Nativity of St John the Baptist* (June 24), whilst another audience might receive these two texts a year apart. As such, the way that the texts function as a collection may be different for different audiences. By contrast, Ælfric seems to have conceived of the order and interrelation of the contents of the *Lives of Saints* more strictly.

Moreover, though the order and unity of the collection was not preserved by later scribes, the manuscript transmission of the *Lives of Saints* nonetheless emphasises the

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<sup>33</sup> Wilcox, pp. 111, 128–29.

<sup>34</sup> Wilcox, p. 128.

importance of reading the items contained within the text as a group. Though there is no other extant manuscript witness to the entire, unified collection, items from the *Lives of Saints* occur in twenty-eight other extant manuscripts, dating from the eleventh to fourteenth centuries.<sup>35</sup>

Through examining the distribution of items from the *Lives of Saints* in these manuscripts, it becomes clear that the individual hagiographical pieces were never received in isolation.<sup>36</sup> When items are occasionally found in manuscripts unaccompanied by any of the other parts of the *Lives of Saints*, these items are, without exception, homiletic in nature — that is to say, they are preaching texts comprising combinations of patristic, biblical, medieval and authorial thought, rather than narratives about the lives or passions of the saints.<sup>37</sup> By contrast, the hagiographical texts always circulate in groups, demonstrating that scribes and compilers considered the individual saints' lives to function together.

### III: WHAT MAKES THE *LIVES OF SAINTS* UNIQUE?

The *Lives of Saints* is exceptional within the Old English corpus for its known authorship, its ornamental prose style and its length. Though there are various pieces of anonymous Old English hagiography in poetry or prose, there are few works that might be deemed

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<sup>35</sup> These manuscripts and the parts of the *Lives of Saints* contained in them are detailed in Kleist, *Chronology*, pp. 138–41.

<sup>36</sup> Kleist's table of manuscript witnesses to the *Lives of Saints* demonstrates the distribution of texts: *Chronology* pp. 140–41. Note that whilst LS 3 (the *Life of Basil*) is listed as the sole *Lives of Saints* content in MS f<sup>i</sup>(2), it was bound with f<sup>i</sup>(1) (which contains various items from the *Lives*) until 1731: Kleist, *Chronology*, p. 245.

<sup>37</sup> I am here following Mary Clayton in using the term 'homily' as a blanket term encompassing exegetical texts or pericope ('homilies') and texts providing instruction in Christian doctrine ('sermons'). Clayton notes that the early medieval English did not make a distinction between these two modes: 'Preaching and Teaching', in *The Cambridge Companion to Old English Literature*, ed. M. Godden and M. Lapidge, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn (Cambridge, 2013), pp. 159–79, at p. 162. An extract from the homily on 'The Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ' is found in British Library, Cotton Otho C. I, vol. 2; the homily 'On the Memory of Saints' appears in British Library, Cotton Vespasian D. xiv with some other Ælfrician homilies; the 'Exaltation of the Holy Cross' homily is the only part of *Lives of Saints* in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 367; and part of the homily 'On the Prayer of Moses, for Mid-Lent Sunday' appears as the only item from the *Lives* in Cambridge, University Library, Gg. 3. 28.

hagiographical collections. Aside from Wærferth's *Dialogues* (an Old English translation of Gregory the Great's *Dialogi*) there is no other work that constitutes an intertextual *sanctorale*, composed by a single author, in which the individual saints form part of a greater didactic and stylistic whole.<sup>38</sup> Though the *Dialogues*, like the *Lives*, translate stories of the continental saints into the vernacular, Wærferth translated his Latin material very closely, providing a very literal and syntactically close rendering, and did not intervene in his text as Ælfric does.<sup>39</sup> Aside from the *Dialogues*, the only other early medieval English<sup>40</sup> hagiographical compilation of comparable length or ambition to the *Lives of Saints* is the *Old English Martyrology*, thought to have originated in Mercia in the ninth century.<sup>41</sup> Indeed, the *Old English Martyrology* shares several similarities with the *Lives*, including: single authorship (although this is contested for the *Martyrology*, and Christine Rauer notes the possibility that the text was composed by a committee); educational impetus; combination of multiple Latin sources to create a single English text; engagement with continental models; and an extensive *sanctorale* that appears to bear no relation to any particular geographic location or religious house.<sup>42</sup> However, the two texts vary greatly in terms of composition and purpose. Whilst the calendrical nature of the *Martyrology* (whereby each item opens with the date of the saints' death) suggests reading throughout the year, the *Lives of Saints* does not mention the saints' days within its text, and as such was suitable for reading at any time.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> For an edition of the *Dialogues*, see *Bischof Waerferths von Worcester Uebersetzung der Dialoge Gregors des Grossen*, ed. H. Hecht (Darmstadt, 1900–07).

<sup>39</sup> On Wærferth as a translator, see M. Godden, 'Wærferth and King Alfred: the Fate of the Old English *Dialogues*', in *Alfred the Wise: Studies in Honour of Janet Bately on the Occasion of her Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, ed. J. Roberts, J. L. Nelson and M. Godden (Woodbridge, 1997), pp. 35–53, esp. pp. 47–49.

<sup>40</sup> The terms 'early medieval England' and 'early medieval English' are used throughout this thesis to refer broadly to the parts of Britain in which Old English was spoken and in which its speakers held cultural hegemony, during the period c. 600–c.1066 CE.

<sup>41</sup> McC. Gatch argues that the martyrology genre and tradition was separate from the *Lives of Saints*, but the *Old English Martyrology* often exceeds the bounds of its antecedents, and includes narrative details, such as direct speech, which are more commonly associated with hagiography: McC. Gatch, *Preaching*, pp. 16–17. See also C. Rauer, ed., *The Old English Martyrology: Edition, Text and Commentary* (Cambridge, 2013), esp. pp. 16–17.

<sup>42</sup> Rauer, *Martyrology*, pp. 11–15.

<sup>43</sup> McC. Gatch, *Preaching*, p. 17. Though the rubrics in Julius E. vii include dates, the texts themselves never mention dates of birth, death, translation or veneration.

Moreover, whilst the *Old English Martyrology* is encyclopaedic in nature and contains around two hundred and forty brief, narratively succinct entries, the thirty items in the *Lives of Saints* are longer, with more attention to narrative detail, and written in a consciously ornamental style.

#### THE RHYTHM OF THE SAINTS

This ornamental style, which is both characteristic of and unique to Ælfric's works, has been the subject of much scholarly interest. In particular, there has been considerable debate regarding the classification of Ælfric's writing: whether it ought to be considered verse, prose, or a hybrid form, 'rhythmical prose'.<sup>44</sup> Indeed, although Andy Orchard stated in 1995 that the question of whether Ælfric was a poet is 'no longer seriously posed by scholars', the last two decades of scholarship have seen the issue of Ælfric's 'poetic' prose frequently revisited.<sup>45</sup> The idea that Ælfric was writing poetry was put forward most recently by Thomas Bredehoft, who argued, on the basis of a newly developed metrical theory, that Ælfric was writing in verse, and controversially described him as 'Anglo-Saxon England's most prolific poet'.<sup>46</sup> This argument, however, has generally not found favour.<sup>47</sup> As such, there is broad consensus that Ælfric's work constitutes a deliberate, ornamented prose style, relying on

<sup>44</sup> G. H. Gerould, 'Abbot Ælfric's Rhythmic Prose', *Modern Philology* 22 (1925), 353–66; D. Bethurum, 'The Form of Ælfric's "Lives of Saints"', *Studies in Philology* 29 (1932), 515–33; O. Funke, 'Studien zur alliterierenden und rhythmisierenden Prosa in der älteren altenglischen Homiletik', *Anglia* 80 (1962), 9–36; J. C. Pope, ed., *Homilies of Ælfric: A Supplementary Collection*, 2 vols, EETS OS 259–60 (London, 1967 and 1968), vol. I pp. 105–36; S. Kuhn, 'Was Ælfric a Poet?', *PQ* 52 (1973), 643–62; A. McIntosh, 'Early Middle English Alliterative Verse', in *Middle English Alliterative Poetry and its Literary Background: Seven Essays*, ed. D. A. Lawton (Woodbridge, 1982), pp. 20–33.

<sup>45</sup> A. Orchard, 'Artful Alliteration in Anglo-Saxon Song and Story', *Anglia* 113 (1995), 429–63, at p. 458 n. 96.

<sup>46</sup> T. Bredehoft, 'Ælfric and Late Old English Verse', *ASE* 33 (2004), 77–107. See also T. Bredehoft, *Early English Metre* (Toronto, 2005).

<sup>47</sup> Rafael Pascual demonstrates that the looseness of Bredehoft's metrical system allows almost any Old English text to be scanned as poetry, and Eric Weiskott similarly finds the allowances made by this system to be 'too accommodating': R. J. Pascual, 'Ælfric's Rhythmical Prose and the Study of Old English Metre', *ES* 95 (2014), 803–23; E. Weiskott, 'Lawman, the Last Old English Poet and the First Middle English Poet', in *Lazamon's Brut and Other Medieval Chronicles: 14 Essays*, ed. M. Alamichel (Paris, 2013), pp. 11–58, at pp. 14–15.

principles of alliteration, rhythm and repetition.<sup>48</sup> The question of who or what influenced this ‘rhythmic prose’ form has also been the subject of much interest, and a range of possible vernacular and Latin sources have been suggested, including Latin rhythmical cursus, the Old English *sceopas* and the didactic character of the Benedictine Reform.<sup>49</sup>

However, the question of *why* Ælfric developed such an experimental style has yet to be fully examined and warrants closer inquiry. Peter Clemoes compellingly argued that Ælfric employed rhythm to reflect Christian cosmic order, but the implications of this suggestion have yet to be fully explored.<sup>50</sup> Similarly, the ways that Ælfric’s use of rhythm, diction and rhetoric contributed to the meaning of his didactic texts have begun to be investigated, but still merit further consideration.<sup>51</sup> If we are to understand the function of literary style in Old English preaching and teaching, and the characteristics that differentiated English Christianity from its continental counterparts, we must consider Ælfric’s style not only for its aesthetic value, but also as an embodiment and expression of vernacular Christian thought. The *Lives of Saints* in particular, as one of Ælfric’s latest works, represents the culmination of his stylistic development over the course of his career. As such, the text provides a particularly fruitful point of enquiry into Ælfric’s literary accomplishment and into tenth-century English Christianity.

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<sup>48</sup> P. Clemoes, ‘Ælfric’, *Continuations and Beginnings: Essays in Old English Literature*, ed. E. G. Stanley (London, 1966), pp. 176–209; Pope, *CH I*, pp. 105–36; P. Clemoes, *Rhythm and Cosmic Order in Old English Christian Literature* (Cambridge, 1970), p. 17; B. Mitchell, ‘The Relation between Old English Alliterative Verse and Ælfric’s Alliterative Prose’, in *Latin Learning and Old English Lore: Studies in Anglo-Saxon Literature for Michael Lapidge*, ed. K. O’Brien O’Keeffe and A. Orchard, 2 vols (Toronto, 2005), II, pp. 349–62; H. Momma, ‘Rhythm and Alliteration: Styles of Ælfric’s Prose up to the *Lives of Saints*’, in *Anglo-Saxon Styles*, ed. C. Karkov and G. Hardin Brown (Albany, 2006), pp. 253–70.

<sup>49</sup> Gordon Hall Gerould suggests that the alliterative style of the *Lives of Saints* was informed by an awareness of Latin rhymed prose models, whilst Frances Lipp and Gabriella Corona argue that Ælfric was drawing upon vernacular poetic tradition. Meanwhile, Rafael Pascual contests that Ælfric was stylistically informed by a Benedictine desire to present devotional texts in a manner that suited lay audiences: Gerould, ‘Abbot’, at p. 365; F. R. Lipp, ‘Ælfric’s Old English Prose Style’, *Studies in Philology* 66 (1969), 689–718; G. Corona, ‘Ælfric’s (Un)Changing Style: Continuity of Patterns from the *Catholic Homilies* to the *Lives of Saints*’, *JEGP* 107 (2008), 169–89; Pascual, ‘Rhythmical Prose’.

<sup>50</sup> Clemoes, *Rhythm*.

<sup>51</sup> See, for example, Corona, *Basil*, pp. 95–126; Gretsche, *Ælfric*, pp. 113–16; Orchard, ‘Artful Alliteration’ 459–63.

## A UNIFIED TEXT

As well as representing the climax of Ælfric's stylistic achievement, the *Lives of Saints* is distinctive even within the Ælfrician corpus for its cohesion and subject matter. Though the *Lives* is often considered alongside the *Catholic Homilies* in existing scholarship, and both works contain pieces of hagiography, the former is, in the words of McC. Gatch, a more 'specialised' collection.<sup>52</sup> As discussed above, the order of the *Lives of Saints* is more fixed than that of the *Catholic Homilies*, and as such allows for and invites closer consideration of how the individual saints' lives worked intertextually with one another. In addition, Ælfric's Latin preface to the *Lives* states that the work is fundamentally different from his previous collections, since it contains saints venerated in monastic rather than lay contexts.<sup>53</sup> The two texts also had different uses: unlike the *Catholic Homilies*, the *Lives* is more often narrative than homiletic, and was intended for individual or communal reflection rather than preaching in the secular church.<sup>54</sup> Further, Ælfric often rewrote or reworked his homilies, but he rarely did the same for his saints' lives.<sup>55</sup> Most pertinently for this thesis, the *Catholic Homilies*, like Ælfric's other homiletic works and his biblical translations, engages primarily with biblical

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<sup>52</sup> McC. Gatch, *Preaching*, p. 16. Works that have considered the *Catholic Homilies* and *Lives of Saints* together include M. Gretsch, *Ælfric*, which takes a selection of hagiographical pieces from the two collections; Corona, 'Ælfric's Schemes', pp. 297–320, which uses evidence from both collections; N. Kehoe, 'Humour in Vernacular Hagiography from the Tenth to the Thirteenth Century in England' (unpubl. PhD thesis, Univ. College Cork, 2018), pp. 38–105, which considers the *Life of Laurence* from *CH* I alongside the lives of *Cecilia*, *Vincent* and *Agnes* from the *Lives of Saints*.

<sup>53</sup> 'nam memini me in duobus anterioribus libris posuisse passiones vel vitas sanctorum ipsorum quos gens ista celebre colit cum veneratione festi diei, et placuit nobis in isto codicello ordinare passiones etiam vel vitas sanctorum illorum quos non vulgus sed coenobite officiis venerantur' ('for I remember having set down in two previous books the passions or lives of those saints who this people frequently worship with the veneration of feast days, and it pleases me to set out in this book the lives of those saints who not the laypeople, but rather the monks honour with offices', *Lat. Pref.* c. 1)

<sup>54</sup> Clemons, 'Chronology', p. 221; Hill, 'Context', pp. 2–3.

<sup>55</sup> An exception to this is perhaps the life of St Martin, which Ælfric wrote about once in his *Catholic Homilies* and once in his *Lives of Saints*. For the *Life of Martin* as a revision to Ælfric's *Martinmas Homily*, see P. E. Szarmach, 'Ælfric Revises: The Lives of Martin and the Idea of the Author', in *Unlocking the Wordhord: Anglo-Saxon Studies in Memory of Edward B. Irving, Jr.*, ed. M. Amodio and K. O'Brien O'Keeffe (Toronto, 2003), pp. 38–61. For the revisions that Ælfric made to his *Catholic Homilies*, see Kleist, *Chronology*, pp. 20–65.

materials set in the Middle East. The *Lives of Saints*, which predominantly draws from continental Latin sources, offers a more useful point of enquiry into Ælfric's representation of the continent. Further, the text's clear separation from the *Catholic Homilies* in terms of purpose suggest that it can be considered as a distinct collection. As such, discussion of the hagiographical contents of the *Catholic Homilies* lies outside the scope of this thesis.

The *Lives of Saints*, then, has several key qualities that distinguish it from the rest of the extant Old English corpus. The literary form of the text, which employs distinctive and ornamental prose to translate from known Latin sources, provides unique insight into the ways that Ælfric vernacularised foreign (often continental) material. The number of continental saints and amount of narrative detail represented by a single author allows for a more nuanced, comprehensive investigation of Anglo-continental relations than might be permitted by individual pieces of anonymous hagiography or *the Old English Martyrology*. Further, the precise dating and identified author of the *Lives* allows for its depictions of the continent to be read against historical, monastic and socio-political contexts in ways that can only be speculative when considering undated hagiographies. These qualities make the text uniquely suited to examination of the continent and Ælfric's teaching methods.

#### IV: CRITICAL RECEPTION OF THE *LIVES OF SAINTS*

The *Lives of Saints* has, paradoxically, been both frequently celebrated and largely understudied.<sup>56</sup> Whilst the stylistic accomplishment, efficiently streamlined didacticism and narrative appeal of the collection has often been highlighted, there are still very few

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<sup>56</sup> Andrew Scheil notes this incongruity in Ælfric scholarship generally, in 'Ælfric of Eynsham', *Oxford Handbooks Online* (2014), <https://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199935338.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199935338-e-54>.

monographs that take the *Lives* as their sole subject, and currently (remarkably) only a single work devoted to the work as a whole.<sup>57</sup> Indeed, this conundrum is illustrated by the Brill *Companion to Ælfric*, the only edited collection devoted solely to Ælfric's lives and works, which refers frequently to the *Lives of Saints* yet has no chapter devoted to it (although Ælfric's prefaces and *Catholic Homilies* both receive dedicated chapters).<sup>58</sup> Existing work on the *Lives* has largely been focussed on four main areas of enquiry: 1) sources for the texts; 2) Ælfric's approach to hagiographic translation; 3) the degree of orthodoxy found in Ælfric's teachings; and 4) Ælfric's response to the political situation of his day. Investigation into Ælfric's sources has identified the Latin *vitae* and *passiones* that he made use of and the legendary that provided his access to these texts (the Cotton-Corpus Legendary, described above), and has culminated in the *Fontes Anglo-Saxonici* database, which details Ælfric's sources passage by passage.<sup>59</sup> This work laid the foundation for investigations into Ælfric's translation style in the *Lives*, and it is broadly agreed that he aspired to *brevitas*, aiming to achieve clarity of expression and of content by streamlining his Latin sources both stylistically and narratively.<sup>60</sup> It has also been noted that Ælfric adapted his sources in ways that reveal his personal interests and ideologies, and the degree to which these personal

<sup>57</sup> The qualities of the *Lives* are extolled in, for example, M. Lapidge, 'The Saintly Life in Anglo-Saxon England', in *The Cambridge Companion to Old English Literature*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn, ed. M. Godden and M. Lapidge (Cambridge, 2013), pp. 251–72, esp. p. 266; Hurt, *Ælfric*, pp. 82–83; J. D. Niles, *Old English Literature: A Guide to Criticism with Selected Readings* (Chichester, 2016), pp. 268–69; Magennis, 'Contrasting', pp. 319–20.

<sup>58</sup> Though there are two chapters which address Ælfric's hagiography, these are not focused on the *Lives of Saints* — Clare Lees examines the *Life of Gregory*, which is part of the *Catholic Homilies*, and Gabriella Corona's chapter on *amplificatio* turns more often to material found in the *Catholic Homilies* than that from the *Lives of Saints*. C. A. Lees, 'In Ælfric's Words: Conversion, Vigilance and the Nation in Ælfric's *Life of Gregory the Great*', in Magennis and Swan, eds (2009), pp. 271–96; Corona, 'Schemes'.

<sup>59</sup> J. H. Ott, 'Über die Quellen der Heiligenleben in Ælfrics *Lives of Saints* I' (unpubl. PhD diss., Halle-Wittenberg, 1892); G. Loomis, 'Further Sources of Ælfric's Saints' Lives', *Harvard Studies and Notes in Philology and Literature* 13 (1931) 1–8; Zettel, 'Sources'. For the *Lives of Saints* in the *Fontes Anglo-Saxonici* database, see M.R. Godden, 'Lives 1 and 17', 2002; P. Jackson, 'Lives 20', 18/10/1996; S. D. Lee, 'Lives 25', 27/05/1998; R. Jayatilaka, 'Lives 2–16, 18–19, 21–24 and 26–36', 1996–1997; and S. E. Irvine, 'Irvine 4, lines 1–283 (St Vincent's Day) (C.B.1.3.35)', 08/10/1997, all at *Fontes Anglo-Saxonici: World Wide Web Register*.

<sup>60</sup> See, for example, E. G. Whatley, 'Lost in Translation: Omission of Episodes in Some Old English Prose Saints' Legends', *ASE* 26 (1997), 187–208; R. Stanton, *The Culture of Translation in Anglo-Saxon England* (Woodbridge, 2002), pp. 144–71, esp. 163–66; A. E. Nichols, 'Ælfric and the Brief Style', *JEGP* 70 (1971), 1–12.

interests were idiosyncratic for his time and cultural milieu have been the subject of some speculation.<sup>61</sup> Finally, it has been revealed that, whilst Ælfric's *Lives* say little explicitly concerning his attitude to the reign of Æthelred, the 'anti-monastic reaction' or the Viking raids of the late 990s, he often lamented the political turmoil that he found himself in and was particularly keen to present models of good leadership and collective resistance.<sup>62</sup>

Whilst the *Lives* is presented as a unified text in Ælfric's prefaces and in its manuscript contexts, it has almost never been read as such by modern scholars. Instead, previous scholarship has often focussed on the individual items from the *Lives* in isolation from each other.<sup>63</sup> Other studies group the saints according to paradigm — most notably the virgin martyrs (with regard to Ælfric's presentation of gender and the body), the warrior saints (with regard to Ælfric's attitude to military culture) and the royal saints (with regard to Ælfric's depiction of kingship).<sup>64</sup> However, as has been demonstrated above, Ælfric

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<sup>61</sup> See, for example, McDaniel, *Gender*; D. Fleming, 'A Demilitarized Saint: Ælfric's Life of St. Sebastian', *Anglia* 127 (2009), 1–21; E. G. Whatley, 'Pearls Before Swine: Ælfric, Vernacular Hagiography, and the Lay Reader', in *Via Crucis: Essays on Early Medieval Sources and Ideas in Memory of J. E. Cross*, ed. T. N. Hall (Morgantown, 2002), pp. 158–84; M. Pareles, 'Men as Meat: Exploiting Jewish Law in Ælfric's Translation of Maccabees', *Exemplaria* 27 (2015), 185–204.

<sup>62</sup> S. Keynes, 'An Abbot, an Archbishop, and the Viking Raids of 1006–7 and 1009–12', *ASE* 36 (2007), 151–220; J. E. Damon, *Soldier Saints and Holy Warriors: Warfare and Sanctity in the Literature of Early England* (Aldershot, 2003), pp. 192–246; R. Anderson, 'Ælfric's Kings: Political Hagiography in Anglo-Saxon England' (unpubl. PhD thesis, Indiana Univ., 2004).

<sup>63</sup> The lives of *Basil* and *Agatha* have each received a full-length study examining their style and the relation of the respective Old English texts to their Latin sources: Corona, *Basil*; C. Morini, *La passione di S. Agata di Ælfric di Eynsham* (Alessandria, 1993). Other parts of the *Lives* have been the subject of multiple investigations. See, for example, Fleming, 'Demilitarized'; K. Olsen, 'Beggars' Saint but no Beggar: Martin of Tours in Ælfric's *Lives of Saints*', *Neophilologus* 88 (2004), 461–75; J. Hewish, 'Living on the Edge: A Study of the Translations of the Life of St Martin into Old English, Middle Irish and Old-Norse Icelandic' (unpubl. PhD thesis, Univ. College Dublin, 2005); A. Jorgensen, 'Historicizing Emotion: The Shame-Rage Spiral in Ælfric's *Life of St Agatha*', *ES* 93 (2012), 529–38; N. Kehoe, 'The Importance of Being Foolish: Reconstruction of the Pagan and the Saint in Ælfric's *Life of St Cecilia*', *SELIM, Journal of the Spanish Society for Medieval English Language and Literature* 28 (2018), 1–26. The English saints in particular have drawn much scholarly interest, particularly the Life of Edmund: see, for example, J. Earl, 'Violence and Non-Violence in Anglo-Saxon England: Ælfric's "Passion of St Edmund"', *PQ* 78 (1999), 125–49; C. Arthur, 'Giving the Head's Up in Ælfric's *Passio Sancti Eadmundi*: Postural Representations of the Old English Saint', *PQ* 92 (2013), 315–33; M. Faulkner, 'Ælfric, St Edmund, and St Edwold of Cerne', *MÆ* 77 (2008), 1–9; C. Phelpstead, 'King, Martyr and Virgin: *Imitatio Christi* in Ælfric's *Life of St Edmund*', in *St Edmund, King and Martyr: Changing Images of a Medieval Saint*, ed. A. P. Bale (Cambridge, 2009), pp. 27–44.

<sup>64</sup> For the virgin martyrs, see Gulley, *Displacement*; R. R. Trilling, 'Heavenly Bodies: Paradoxes of Female Martyrdom in Ælfric's *Lives of Saints*', in *Writing Women Saints in Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. P. E. Szarmach (Toronto, 2013), pp. 249–73; P. Scott, 'Symbolic Illness and the Construction of Virginities in Ælfric's *Lives of Saints*', *ES* 100 (2019), 959–79. Andrew Rabin extends the examination of the virgin martyr saints to legal matters, considering what Ælfric's portrayal of the saintly body reveals regarding royal law in the late-tenth

conceived of the *Lives of Saints* as an entire and unified collection. As Hurt has noted, the individual items that comprise the *Lives* are ‘unified by a large design’ — it is only in examining the collection as a whole that this large design can be made apparent.<sup>65</sup> Moreover, Susan Irvine, studying formulaic vocabulary, demonstrates that the thematic resonances of Ælfric’s work are more fully revealed through the study of moments of linguistic or narrative intersection between hagiographical items.<sup>66</sup> Whilst previous studies of themes (rather than of saintly paradigms) have tended to view the *Lives* as a collection, and have begun to offer consideration of Ælfric’s teaching across the text as a whole, there has never been a book-length study of this nature, and the full extent of the intertextuality of the *Lives* has yet to be explored.<sup>67</sup> It is this prominent gap in scholarship that this thesis addresses.

## V: LITERARY TRANSLATION IN THE *LIVES OF SAINTS*

Central to this thesis is the idea of translation. Old English translations provided instruction, widened participation in worship and legitimised the vernacular as an interpretative

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century, in ‘Holy Bodies, Legal Matters: Reaction and Reform in Ælfric’s *Eugenia* and the Ely Privilege’, *Studies in Philology* 110 (2013), 220–65. For the warrior saints, see H. Magennis, ‘Warrior Saints, Warfare and the Hagiography of Ælfric of Eynsham’, *Traditio* 56 (2001), 27–51; E. G. Whatley, ‘Hagiography and Violence: Military Men in Ælfric’s *Lives of Saints*’, in *Source of Wisdom: Old English and Early Medieval Latin Studies in Honour of Thomas D. Hill*, ed. C. D. Wright, F. M. Biggs and T. N. Hall (Toronto, 2009), pp. 217–30; G. Cahilly-Bretzin, ‘Soldiering for Christ: The Role of the *Miles Christi* in Four Old English Saints’ *Lives*’ (unpubl. DPhil thesis, Univ. Oxford, 2020), esp. pp. 26–37, 191–94; Fleming, ‘Demilitarized’; Damon, *Soldier*, pp. 192–246. For the royal saints, see Anderson, ‘Ælfric’s Kings’; Phelpstead, ‘King’; L. Lazzari, ‘Kingship and Sainthood in Ælfric: Oswald (634–642) and Edmund (840–69)’, in *Hagiography in Anglo-Saxon England: Adopting and Adapting Saints’ Lives into Old English Prose (c. 950–1150)*, ed. L. Lazzari, P. Lendinara and C. Di Sciacca (Turnhout, 2014), pp. 29–66.

<sup>65</sup> Hurt, *Ælfric*, p. 82.

<sup>66</sup> S. E. Irvine, ‘Hanging by a Thread: Ælfric’s Saints Lives and the *Hengen*’, in *Hagiography in Anglo-Saxon England: Adopting and Adapting Saints’ Lives into Old English Prose (c. 950–1150)*, ed. L. Lazzari, P. Lendinara and C. Di Sciacca (Turnhout, 2014), pp. 67–94.

<sup>67</sup> Both Scheil (considering Anti-Judaism) and Damon (considering the relationship between sanctity and warfare) consider Ælfric’s cumulative teaching across the various items in the *Lives*: A. Scheil, ‘Anti-Judaism in Ælfric’s *Lives of Saints*’, *ASE* 28 (1999), 65–86; Damon, *Soldier Saints*.

language.<sup>68</sup> Glosses, which were used in England from the seventh century and thus constitute the earliest form of Old English ‘translation’, not only enabled English engagement with scholarly and sacred Latin texts, but also contributed to the development of English vocabulary and authorised the use of the vernacular for scholastic purposes.<sup>69</sup> From this foundation, a rich tradition of Old English literary translation emerged. For example, Bede promoted the translation of the Lord’s prayer and the Apostles’ Creed into English so that those who only knew English might better participate in the liturgy, and the *Old English Martyrology* provided vernacular readers with access to Latin hagiography.<sup>70</sup> This burgeoning tradition reached its apex in the ninth century, when King Alfred and his scholars embarked upon a translation programme that sought to educate the kingdom with English versions of canonical Latin texts.<sup>71</sup> Though Alfred’s ambitious education project did not spring *ex nihilo*, it nonetheless represented something of a ‘golden age’ in English translation history, and embedded the idea of translation in English literature and culture.

Ælfric’s accomplishments as a translator can hardly be overstated, and he has been considered, alongside Alfred, to be one of the greatest figures in the history of English translation.<sup>72</sup> Indeed, Malcolm Godden has argued that Ælfric’s role in promoting vernacular

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<sup>68</sup> Wulfstan of Winchester, in his *Vita Æthelwoldi*, records that his teacher Æthelwold translated Latin texts into English for his students: ‘Dulce namque erat ei adolescents et iuuenes semper docere, et Latinos libros Anglice soluere’ (‘It was always agreeable to him to teach young men and the more mature students, translating Latin texts into English for them’, c. 30): text and trans. in *The Life of Æthelwold*, ed. M. Lapidge and M. Winterbottom (Oxford, 1991).

<sup>69</sup> Stanton, *Translation*, pp. 9–54. On early medieval English glosses more generally, see P. Lendinara, *Anglo-Saxon Glosses and Glossaries* (Ashgate, 1999), esp. pp. 1–26.

<sup>70</sup> ‘Epistola ad Ecgbertum Episcopum’, in *Venerabilis Baedae Opera Historica*, ed. C. Plummer, vol. 1 (Oxford, 1896), pp. 405–23, at p. 409; C. Rauer, ed., *The Old English Martyrology: Edition, Text and Commentary* (Cambridge, 2013), esp. pp. 16–17.

<sup>71</sup> Alfred wished to educate his kingdom by providing wider access to the works ‘ðe niedbeðearfosta sien eallum monnum to wiotonne’ (‘which are most necessary for all men to know’, 7.6). *King Alfred’s West-Saxon Version of Gregory’s Pastoral Care*, ed. H. Sweet, EETS OS 45, 50 (London, 1871). For Alfred’s role in the history of English translation, see Stanton, *Translation*, pp. 55–100; D. Anlezark, ‘Which Books are “Most Necessary” to Know? The Old English Pastoral Care Preface and King Alfred’s Educational Reform’, *ES* 98 (2017), 759–80; A. P. Smyth, *King Alfred the Great* (Oxford, 1995), pp. 527–66.

<sup>72</sup> Stanton, *Translation*, pp. 144–71, esp. pp. 144–45.

education can be seen as a direct continuation of the Alfredian project.<sup>73</sup> Ælfric's translations served his pedagogic aims by disseminating Latin learning to the English, and the *Lives of Saints* comprises a significant part of this endeavour.<sup>74</sup> An analysis of translation style and practice in the *Lives of Saints*, then, not only reveals how Ælfric depicted the continent in his work, but also why he did so, demonstrating which aspects of the continent he considered to be salient for the education of the faithful and elucidating the ways in which he utilised style and language to make continental content relevant and edifying.

A survey of the terms that Ælfric uses to describe translation in the *Lives of Saints* demonstrates that he considered the work of the translator to be that of a cultural mediator. In both Latin and Old English he frequently uses verbs for translation that suggest the idea of physical movement from one place to another. In Latin he uses the verbs *transfero* and *infero*, both of which are compounds of *fero* ('to carry, to bring').<sup>75</sup> The verb *transfero*, which literally indicates 'to carry over or across', had meanings ranging from 'to copy out writing' to 'to transform' or 'to transplant'.<sup>76</sup> Similarly, whilst *infero* can mean 'to translate literature', it can also connote 'to import' or 'to bring in'.<sup>77</sup> He also uses the Latin *translatio*, the abstract noun form of *transfero*, which can refer to literary translation but also to a physical 'change of venue' or a 'transportation'.<sup>78</sup> In Old English, too, he describes his work in terms of movement, using the verb *awendan* ('to turn, to move, to change, to translate').<sup>79</sup> The other

<sup>73</sup> M. Godden, 'Ælfric and the Vernacular Prose Tradition', in *The Old English Homily and its Backgrounds*, ed. P. E. Szarmach and B. F. Huppé (Albany, 1978), pp. 99–117. See also M. Godden, 'Ælfric and the Alfredian Precedents', in Magennis and Swan, eds (2009), pp. 139–64.

<sup>74</sup> For Ælfric as a teacher, see T. N. Hall, 'Ælfric as Pedagogue', in Magennis and Swan, eds (2009), pp. 193–216.

<sup>75</sup> '*transtulimus* de Latinitate ad usitatam Anglicam sermocinationem' ('we have translated from Latin into usual English language', *Lat. pref.* c. 1); 'non potuimus [...] semper verbum ex verbo *transferre*' ('we have not always been able to translate word for word', *Lat. pref.* c. 3); 'olim haec *transtuli*' ('I translated this once', *Life of Martin* l. 1496); 'dubitam diu *transferre*' ('I hesitated for a long time to translate', *Thomas* c. 1); 'non mihi imputetur quod divinam scripturam nostrae linguae *infero*' ('let me not be blamed because I translate divine scripture into our language', *Lat. pref.* c. 4).

<sup>76</sup> Lewis and Short: **transfero**.

<sup>77</sup> Lewis and Short: **infero**.

<sup>78</sup> Lewis and Short: **translatio**. 'in ista translatione' ('in this translation', c. 3).

<sup>79</sup> DOE: **a-wendan**. 'we *awendon* on þam twam ærrum bocum' ('we translated in two previous books', *OE pref.* 'awende we hit on Englisc' ('we translated it into English', *Edmund* c. 1)

verb that he employs is *niman* ('to take, to seize'), a word which, like compounds of *fero*, evokes the image of physically transferring something from one place to another.<sup>80</sup> The remaining term that Ælfric uses connotes movement, albeit cultural rather than physical. The verb *interpreto* ('to interpret, to explain, to translate') and its abstract noun form *interpretatio* ('interpretation, meaning'), present the act of translation as one of cultural negotiation, in which the translator makes foreign material meaningful to his vernacular audience.<sup>81</sup> The foreignness of this imported material is made explicit when Ælfric writes that he has translated 'de Latinitate ad usitatam Anglicam sermocinationem' ('from Latin into usual English language', c. 1). By using the term 'usitatus' — which can connote 'usual' both in the sense of 'common' and 'familiar' — Ælfric emphasises that the Latin material is, by contrast, unfamiliar.<sup>82</sup>

In the *Lives of Saints*, then, the translator becomes a sort of trader, who benefits his English audience by bringing foreign things to them. In Ælfric's *Colloquy*, the merchant describes his work as 'cype mine þingc, ond bicge þincg dyrwyrðe þa on þisum lande ne beoþ acennede' ('I sell my things and buy precious things that cannot be made in this land'), and says that through this work he is useful to 'cingce ond ealdormannum ond weligum ond eallum follce' ('kings and ealdormen and rich men and all people').<sup>83</sup> It is tempting to wonder if Ælfric saw something of himself in the merchant — in the *Lives of Saints*, he presents himself carrying over precious, edifying material from foreign cultures, to the benefit of all. This sense of the translator as a negotiator between cultures is at the heart of this thesis.

<sup>80</sup> 'we þæt Englisc nimað of þære ylcan gesetnysse' ('we translate the English from that same narrative', *Martin* l. 8).

<sup>81</sup> 'volo [...] interpretari' ('I want to translate', *Life of Thomas*, c.1); 'nostras interpretationes' ('our translations', Lat. pref. c.4)

<sup>82</sup> *Lewis and Short: usitatus*. Stanton suggests that Ælfric was inspired by Alcuin's *Dialogus de rhetorica*, which considers 'usitatus' amongst the most important features of *elocutio*, or else by Isidore's *Etymologiae*, which emphasised the importance of words which 'nec a sermone atque cultu praesentis temporis discrepat' (do not differ from the diction and style of the present time): Stanton, *Translation*, pp. 147–49.

<sup>83</sup> *Ælfric's Colloquy*, ed. G. N. Garmonsway (London, 1939), p. 33.

Studying the alterations, omissions and insertions that Ælfric made to his Latin source materials has already yielded fruitful results, both in studies of the *Lives of Saints* and the *Catholic Homilies*, and several key trends have emerged. The first of these trends is Ælfric's tendency to omit material from his sources that he considered to be unbelievable, owing to its dubious authenticity or sensational nature.<sup>84</sup> Another related, oft-noted feature of Ælfric's translations is their relative brevity in comparison with their Latin sources, and Ælfric's tendency to strip extraneous material in order to provide a more concise narrative.<sup>85</sup> The final characteristic aspect of Ælfric's hagiographic translation style is that he makes the teaching of his Latin sources clearer, both through polarising pious and impious characters and through removing any behaviour of the saints that might be deemed questionable or puzzling.<sup>86</sup> The broad sense, therefore, is that Ælfric's translation practice was driven by a desire to educate and to entertain without confusion.

However, whilst these broad trends have already been considered, there is future work still to do on the nuances of Ælfric's translation style in order to reveal how, exactly, he made culturally unfamiliar material legible to his vernacular readers and listeners. Further, previous work has always focussed on individual lives, meaning that the effect of Ælfric's cumulative decisions throughout the collection have yet to be illuminated. This thesis, then, compares the *Lives* to its Latin sources, with particular attention to Ælfric's narrative and stylistic adaptations. I do not purport to offer an exhaustive survey of linguistic or syntactical alterations made by Ælfric, but rather to highlight the aspects that he repeatedly omitted or altered from his source material. This analysis is facilitated by the *Fontes Anglo-Saxonici*

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<sup>84</sup> M. Godden, 'Ælfric's Saints' Lives and the Problem of Miracles', *Leeds Studies in English* 16 (1985), 83–100; Bethurum, 'Form', pp. 522–23; Wilcox, *Prefaces*, p. 48.

<sup>85</sup> Whatley, 'Lost'; Stanton, *Translation*, pp. 163–66; Nichols, 'Brief'; Bethurum, 'Form', pp. 519–21.

<sup>86</sup> R. Waterhouse, 'Ælfric's Use of Discourse in Some Saints' Lives', *ASE* 5 (1976), 83–103; Fleming, 'Demilitarized'; R. Stanton, 'Translation and Anglo-Saxon Hagiography: Abbo of Fleury's Passion of St Edmund and Ælfric's Old English Translation' (unpubl. PhD thesis, Univ. Toronto, 1994), p. 172; Corona, *Basil*, pp. 115–26.

database, which identifies the sources of Ælfric's work, and the manuscripts of the Cotton-Corpus Legendary, which presents the closest manuscript witness to these sources as they were received by Ælfric.<sup>87</sup>

## VI: PHYSICAL 'TRANSLATIONS' BETWEEN ENGLAND AND THE CONTINENT

As well as providing the methodological framework, the idea of 'translation' in a broad sense also acts as the organisational principle of this thesis. The word 'translation' can be used to discuss physical or cultural transfer as well as literary acts. We speak, for example, of the 'translation of saints', meaning the movement of a saint's relics from one place to another, or of clergy being 'translated' from one diocese to another.<sup>88</sup> This is not a modern phenomenon: the vocabulary that Ælfric uses to describe his translation practice in the *Lives of Saints* also suggests physical transference from one place or state of being to another. Translation in this sense of 'transfer' or 'movement' provides a fruitful framework for the study of the continent in Ælfric's works because relations between England and the continent in the early medieval period so often hinged on physical movement between places. The following survey does not claim to be an exhaustive account of the rich tapestry of insular-continental relations, but rather a brief overview of its various threads, and of how those threads were all characterised by a sense of 'translation'.

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<sup>87</sup> To date, there is no complete printed edition of the Cotton-Corpus Legendary. Though many of the texts contained within it have received modern editions, these texts are often extant in numerous manuscripts, and as such may include readings that vary from the text as Ælfric would have received it. In order to consider, as closely as possible, the ways in which Ælfric adapted his source material, I have sought to compare his translations to those found in the Cotton-Corpus Legendary. Throughout this thesis, the readings of the Latin Sources found in printed editions have been compared against those in the Cotton-Corpus Legendary. Where there is significant discrepancy between the printed and manuscript versions (variant lexical or syntactical readings, or the presence or absence of additional narrative content), I have drawn attention to this in the footnotes. I have not noted orthographical differences or standardisations of the Latin word forms.

<sup>88</sup> OED: **translation**.

The movement of goods between England and the continent via trade networks constituted a major point of cultural interaction.<sup>89</sup> As discussed above, Ælfric acknowledges this important facet of insular-continental relations in his *Colloquy* when he describes the merchant who sails ‘over the sea’ (‘ofer sae’ / ‘ultra marinas’) to exchange ‘precious’ (‘dyrwyrðe’ / ‘preciosas’) items.<sup>90</sup> Though Ælfric’s merchant does not list books amongst his list of trade objects, the movement of manuscripts across the sea facilitated insular-continental networks of learning throughout the early medieval period. Libraries on both sides of the channel were enriched by books copied by migrants, sent as gifts and carried with travellers.<sup>91</sup> However, it was not only goods that moved between England and its neighbours — sea voyages also carried people. The number of English pilgrims to the continent grew steadily over the early medieval period, not only to Rome, but also to Francia and Southern Italy.<sup>92</sup> In the ninth and tenth centuries, travel also begun to play a particularly important role in dynastic affairs, and both continental and English royals travelled abroad to form marital alliances. The power of the West Saxon royal house was strengthened by a series of such marriages, most notably the union of Æthelwulf of Wessex and Judith of Francia.<sup>93</sup> In Ælfric’s day, the marriage of Æthelred II to Emma of Normandy forged a new alliance to

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<sup>89</sup> S. Lebecq and A. Gautier, ‘Routeways Between England and the Continent in the Tenth Century’, in Rollason *et al.*, eds (2010), pp. 17–34; M. D. Costen and N. P. Costen, ‘Trade and Exchange in Anglo-Saxon Wessex, c. AD 600–780’, *Medieval Archaeology* 60 (2016), 1–26; E. Campbell, *Continental and Mediterranean Imports to Atlantic Britain and Ireland, AD 400–800* (York, 2007).

<sup>90</sup> *Colloquy*, p. 33.

<sup>91</sup> R. McKitterick, ‘Exchanges between the British Isles and the Continent, c. 450–c.900’, in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain: Volume 1, c. 400–1100*, ed. R. Gameson (Cambridge, 2011), pp. 313–37; R. Gameson, ‘The Circulation of Books Between England and the Continent, c. 871–c.1100’, in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain: Volume 1, c. 400–1100*, ed. R. Gameson (Cambridge, 2011), pp. 344–72; Levison, *Continental*, pp. 139–48; R. Marsden, ‘Amiatinus in Italy: The Afterlife of an Anglo-Saxon Book’, in *Anglo-Saxon England and the Continent*, ed. H. Sauer and J. Story (Tempe, AZ, 2011), pp. 217–44; D. Banham, ‘England Joins the Medieval Mainstream: New Texts in Eleventh-Century Manuscripts’, in *Anglo-Saxon England and the Continent*, ed. H. Sauer and J. Story (Tempe, AZ, 2011), pp. 341–52.

<sup>92</sup> Levison, *Continental*, pp. 36–44; L. Sinisi, ‘Beyond Rome: The Cult of the Archangel Michael and the Pilgrimage to Apulia’, in *England and Rome in the Early Middle Ages: Pilgrimage, Art, and Politics*, ed. F. Tinti (Turnhout, 2014), pp. 43–68; Ortenberg, *Church*, pp. 148–53, 234–39.

<sup>93</sup> S. Foot, ‘Dynastic Strategies: The West Saxon Royal Family in Europe’, in Rollason *et al.*, eds (2010), pp. 237–53; M. J. Enright, ‘Charles the Bald and Æthelwulf of Wessex: The Alliance of 856 and Strategies of Royal Succession’, *JMH* 5 (1979), 291–302.

smooth the increasing tension between England and Normandy in the face of the renewed Viking raids.<sup>94</sup> Royal journeys from England to the continent also served to cement royal power symbolically, and Alfred's contemporary biographers claimed that he travelled to Rome as a boy in 853 and was anointed to kingship there by Pope Leo IV.<sup>95</sup> Transfer between places, then, not only brought physical goods, but also symbolic power.

Another form of insular-continental relations was missionary activity. Southern England received its Christianity from Augustine's Roman mission in the sixth century, and later had its religious practices confirmed in 786 by missionary legates, led by Bishop George of Ostia and Amiens.<sup>96</sup> In turn, the English sent several missions to the continent in the seventh and eighth centuries, most notably those headed by Willibrord and Boniface.<sup>97</sup> In later centuries, monks moved between England and the continent to exchange knowledge, to the extent that Bishop Æthelwold acknowledged his debt to continental monks in the *Regularis Concordia*.<sup>98</sup> Æthelwold's fellow reformers similarly found inspiration on the continent: Oswald travelled to Fleury in search of monastic betterment, whilst Dunstan drew

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<sup>94</sup> S. Keynes, 'Introduction to the 1998 Reprint', in *Encomium Emmae Reginae*, ed. A. Campbell (Cambridge, 1998), pp. xiv–lxxxviii, at pp. xvi–xxii.

<sup>95</sup> Alfred's royal anointing is presented in both the ASC for 853 and Asser's *Life of King Alfred*. See Story, *Connections*, pp. 234–40; O. Pongelley, 'Rome in Ninth-Century Anglo-Saxon England' (unpubl. DPhil dissertation, Univ. Oxford, 2010), pp. 134–53. Alfred's anointing has not been accepted without debate: see J. L. Nelson, 'The Problem of King Alfred's Royal Anointing', *JEH* 18 (1967), 145–63.

<sup>96</sup> For Gregory the Great and the Augustinian mission to England, see M. Dunn, *The Christianization of the Anglo-Saxons c. 597–c.700: Discourses of Life, Death and Afterlife* (London, 2009), pp. 43–56; R. Meens, 'A Background to Augustine's Mission to Anglo-Saxon England', *ASE* 23 (1994), 5–17. For the legate's mission, see Story, *Connections*, pp. 55–92.

<sup>97</sup> A. Scharer, *Changing Perspectives on England and the Continent in the Early Middle Ages* (Farnham, 2014), pp. 55–62; J. T. Palmer, *Anglo-Saxons in a Frankish World, 690–900* (Turnhout, 2009); M. Adan Jones, 'A Chosen Missionary People? Willibrord, Boniface, and the Election of the Angli', *Medieval Worlds* 3 (2016), 98–115; D. Parsons, 'Some Churches of the Anglo-Saxon Missionaries in Southern Germany: A Review of the Evidence', *Early Medieval Europe* 8 (1999), 31–67; Levison, *Continents*, pp. 70–93; B. A. E. Yorke, 'Rudolf of Fulda's *Vita S. Leobae*: Hagiography and Historical Reality', in *Anglo-Saxon England and the Continent*, ed. H. Sauer and J. Story (Tempe, AZ, 2011), pp. 199–216.

<sup>98</sup> For Æthelwold's continental colleagues, see M. Lapidge, 'Æthelwold as Scholar and Teacher', in Yorke, ed. (1988), pp. 89–115, at pp. 98–99. For an account of an English monk on the continent, see M. Hare, 'Abbot Leofsige of Mettlach: an English monk in Flanders and Upper Lotharingia in the Late Tenth Century', *ASE* 33 (2004), 109–44.

from his experiences as an exile in the monastery at Ghent.<sup>99</sup> Monks also shared their knowledge across the channel via letter, and the rich extant correspondences of Boniface and his successor Lullus serve as testament to the networks of communication between England and the continent.<sup>100</sup> Letters written by Flemish abbots to the Archbishop of Canterbury in the late-tenth century demonstrate that monastic institutions were keen to foster and maintain international networks, and that these networks were both financially and socio-politically beneficial.<sup>101</sup> Knowledge exchange also occurred in the secular sphere, and the presence of continental scholars at the courts of Alfred and Æthelstan is well recorded.<sup>102</sup> Here, too, correspondence played a role: letters from Alcuin illuminated newsworthy continental events to his insular circle.<sup>103</sup> As such, learning was transferred between England and the continent through the ongoing movement of people and letters.

As this brief survey has indicated, the term ‘translation’, in its physical sense of transfer, can be used to describe insular-continental relations throughout the early medieval period. This thesis examines translation, in this broad sense, as well as literary translation. The four chapters are each structured around a particular type of transfer: that of people between places; of saints from one resting place to another; of foreign ideas to vernacular audiences; and of Roman cultural capital into English literature.

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<sup>99</sup> J. Nightingale ‘Oswald, Fleury and Continental Reform’, in *Saint Oswald of Worcester: Life and Influence*, ed. N. Brooks and C. Cubitt (London, 1996), pp. 23–45; N. Brooks, ‘The Career of St Dunstan’, in *St Dunstan: His Life, Times and Cult*, ed. N. Ramsay, M. Sparks and T. Tatton-Brown (Woodbridge, 1992), pp. 1–23.

<sup>100</sup> S. Bonifatii et Lulli epistolae: *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Epistolae Selectae I*, ed. M. Tangl (Berlin, 1916); Levison, *Continents*, pp. 280–90.

<sup>101</sup> S. Vanderputten, ‘Canterbury and Flanders in the Late Tenth Century’, *ASE* 35 (2006), 219–44; S. Vanderputten, ‘Flemish Monasticism, Comital Power, and the Archbishops of Canterbury: A Written Legacy from the Late Tenth Century’, in Rollason *et al.*, eds (2010), pp. 67–86.

<sup>102</sup> S. Keynes ‘Alfred the Great and the Kingdom of the Anglo-Saxons’, in *A Companion to Alfred the Great*, ed. N. G. Discenza and P. E. Szarmach (Leiden, 2015), pp. 13–47, at p. 29; M. Wood, ‘A Carolingian Scholar in the Court of King Æthelstan’ in Rollason *et al.*, eds (2010), pp. 135–62; S. Foot, *Æthelstan: The First King of England* (New Haven, 2011), pp. 91–93.

<sup>103</sup> Story, *Connections*, pp. 93–133, esp. pp. 93–94.

## VII: WHICH PLACES CONSTITUTED EUROPA IN EARLY MEDIEVAL ENGLAND?

Before examining Ælfric's literary depictions of the continent, it is necessary to consider briefly which geographies he and his audiences may have considered 'continental'. Since Levison's now classic study of the early medieval insular-continental relationship, a wealth of scholars has followed in his footsteps to explore the topic of 'England and the continent' in the middle ages. Yet 'the continent' means different things in almost all of these works. In *England and the Continent*, Levison primarily discusses Germany and Gaul.<sup>104</sup> Rosamund McKitterick's 1995 chapter in *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, also titled 'England and the Continent', similarly has a Frankish focus.<sup>105</sup> However, as Janet Nelson remarked in her 2002 Presidential Address for the Royal Historical Society: "'England and the Continent" no longer means (if it ever did) just England and Francia'.<sup>106</sup> Indeed, a recent edited collection on *England and the Continent in the Tenth Century* contains chapters considering a wide range of places including Germany, Sweden and Spain.<sup>107</sup> Veronica Ortenberg's *The English Church and the Continent* goes even further in its range, featuring a chapter on 'Byzantium and the East'.<sup>108</sup>

The concept of 'the continent' is in some ways anachronistic when discussing tenth-century England. Nicole Discenza points out, for example, that 'the Anglo-Saxons did not have a name for non-Mediterranean Europe', and that it was generally presented as different from Greece, Rome and the Holy Land.<sup>109</sup> However, the concept of 'Europe' as a singular

<sup>104</sup> W. Levison, *England and the Continent in the Eighth Century* (Oxford, 1946).

<sup>105</sup> R. McKitterick, 'England and the Continent', in *The New Cambridge Medieval History 2: c.700–900*, ed. R. McKitterick (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 64–84.

<sup>106</sup> J. L. Nelson, 'England and the Continent in the Ninth Century I: Ends and Beginnings', *Transactions of the RHS* 12 (2002), 1–21, at p. 11.

<sup>107</sup> Rollason, Leyser and Williams, eds, *England and the Continent*.

<sup>108</sup> Ortenberg, *Church*, pp. 197–218.

<sup>109</sup> N. G. Discenza, *Inhabited Spaces: Anglo-Saxon Constructions of Place* (Toronto, 2017), p. 177.

entity was not unknown to Ælfric and his contemporaries. T-O maps, which stemmed from the Isidorean worldview, divided the world into three continents, divided by the Don, Nile and Mediterranean, with Asia to the top, Europe to the bottom left, and Africa to the bottom right.<sup>110</sup> There is evidence that a triplet set of ‘Byrhtferthian’ *mappae mundi* found in *computus* manuscripts (Oxford, St John’s College MS 17; London, British Library Harley MS 3667; and an unfinished version in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 265) depict ‘Europe’ overlapping into Asia and Africa.<sup>111</sup> Further, as Helen Appleton and Marcia Kupfer demonstrate, extant early medieval English *mappae mundi* have revealed a tendency to centralise Europe, particularly Northern Europe, in a way that their Classical and Late Antique antecedents did not.<sup>112</sup> As such, the early medieval English view of Europe was not simply inherited from existing models, but rather was a developed vernacular construct. It is, therefore, necessary to outline exactly how English writers used the term ‘Europe’, and which places they considered ‘the continent’ to include. To this end, I will now briefly survey uses of the word ‘Europa’ in Old English literature.

The word ‘Europa’ appears in four extant Old English texts, two of which are by Ælfric, and three of which are Old English translations of Latin texts.<sup>113</sup> There is a notable difference in Ælfric’s uses of the term, which gesture towards continental homogeny, compared to the two non-Ælfrician texts, which use the word in contexts that emphasise cultural difference and diversity. The first non-Ælfrician text, the Old English version of

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<sup>110</sup> For the history of medieval maps, see D. Woodward, ‘Medieval *Mappaemundi*’, in *The History of Cartography*, vol. 1, ed. J. B. Harley and D. Woodward (Chicago, 1987), pp. 286–370.

<sup>111</sup> For description of these maps, and their contested status as ‘Byrhtferthian’, see M. K. Foys, ‘An Unfinished *mappa mundi* from Late-Eleventh-Century Worcester’, *ASE* 35 (2006), 271–84; M. Kupfer, ‘The Noachide Dispersion in English *Mappae Mundi* c.960–c.1130’, *Peregrinations: Journal of Medieval Art and Architecture* 4 (2013), 81–106; F. E. Wallis, ‘MS Oxford St John’s College 17: A Medieval Manuscript in its Context’ (unpubl. PhD thesis, Univ. Toronto, 1985).

<sup>112</sup> H. Appleton, ‘The Northern World of the Anglo-Saxon *mappa mundi*’, *ASE* 47 (2018), 275–305; Kupfer, ‘Noachide’, esp. p. 94.

<sup>113</sup> Data taken from the *DOEC*. Variant versions of the same text have been considered as a single text.

Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*, opens with information about Britain's position in relation to the continent:

Breoton ist garsecges ealond, ðæt wæs iu geara Albion haten: is  
geseted betwĥ norðdæl and westdæle, Germanie 7 Gallie 7 Hispanie  
þam mæstum dælum Europe mycclæ fæce ongegen

(Bede, *OEHE*, i.1)

[Britain is an island of the sea, that was formerly called Albion. It is  
placed in the north-west, opposite Germany, Gaul and Spain, the  
greatest portions of Europe, at a great distance [from them]]<sup>114</sup>

This passage replicates the Latin *Historia Ecclesiastica* very closely in terms of syntax, with no alterations or omissions.<sup>115</sup> Patrizia Lendinara sees this as an overemphasised depiction of great distance between England and the continent, whilst Margaret Bridges has suggested a more ambiguous reading, in which Britain is at once a part of the continent that it is described in relation to, and detached from it.<sup>116</sup> Regardless, the phrase 'mycclæ fæce' (translating the Latin 'multo interuallo') connotes division. In stating not only that there is a distance between England and the landmass lying over the sea from it, but that the distance is a great one, the *Ecclesiastical History* highlights Britain's difference from its neighbours. Europe is used as a means by which the audience may place Britain, both spatially and imaginatively.

The other non-Ælfrician text to include the word 'Europa' is the Old English *Orosius*, which follows its popular Latin source in dividing the world into three parts — Asia, Europe

<sup>114</sup> *The Old English Version of Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, ed. T. Miller, EETS 95 (Oxford, 1890), i.1.

<sup>115</sup> 'Brittania Oceani insula, cui quondam Albion nomen fuit, inter septentrionem et occidentem locata est, Germaniae Galliae Hispaniae, maximis Europae partibus, multo interuallo aduersa' (Britain, which was once named Albion, is an island of the Ocean placed between the North and the West, opposite Germany, Gaul and Spain, the greater part of Europe, but at considerable distance from them), i.1.

<sup>116</sup> P. Lendinara, 'The World of Anglo-Saxon Learning', in *The Cambridge Companion to Old English Literature*, 2nd edn (Cambridge, 2013), pp. 295–312; M. Bridges, 'Of Myths and Maps: The Anglo-Saxon Cosmographer's Europe', *Swiss Papers in English Language and Literature* 6 (1992), 69–84, at p. 73.

and Africa. It delineates the Eastern border of Europe as being the river Don, the Western boundary as ‘Scotland’ (‘Ireland’) and the south-western border as the coast of Spain, ‘and mæst æt þæm iglande þætte Gaðes hatte’ (‘and specifically at the island of Cadiz’).<sup>117</sup> As Michelet has noted, the Old English version of the text significantly alters the geography of its classical Latin source when describing continental Europe.<sup>118</sup> The result is that a much wider range of places is represented. Moreover, whilst Book I of Orosius’ *Historia* describes lands, the Old English version also describes peoples, particularly in the voyages of Ohthere and Wulfstan.<sup>119</sup> In the reports of their travels, the two men describe the inhabitants of northern Europe, noting for example that in the land of the Sami ‘æghwylc gylt be hys gebyrdum’ (‘everyone pays according to his rank’, I.19), and in Estland ‘se cyning and þa ricostan men drincað myran meolc, and þa unspedigan and þa þeowan drincað medo’ (‘the king and the most important people drink mare’s milk, and the less well-off and the slaves drink mead’, I.24). The idea of Europe in the Old English *Orosius*, then, is one that encapsulates diversity and heterogeneity rather than a single, collected identity, mirroring the cosmopolitan Alfredian court that produced it.<sup>120</sup>

This is in stark contrast to the Europe presented by Ælfric. He uses the word ‘Europa’ twice in his extant corpus, both times referencing how the world was divided between Noah’s kin after the flood.<sup>121</sup> In his *Letter to Sigeward*, he describes how ‘þæt norðerne mennisc be þære norðsæ’ (‘the northern people near the north sea’) are descended from from Noah’s

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<sup>117</sup> *The Old English History of the World: An Anglo-Saxon Rewriting of Orosius*, ed. and trans. M. Godden (Cambridge, MA, 2016), I.1.

<sup>118</sup> F. Michelet, *Creation, Migration, and Conquest: Imaginary Geography and Sense of Space in Old English Literature* (Oxford, 2006), pp. 134–35; see also J. Bately, *The Old English Orosius*, EETS ss. 6 (Oxford, 1980), p. lxvii; B. Allport, ‘Home Thoughts of Abroad: *Ohthere’s Voyage* in its Anglo-Saxon context’, *Early Medieval Europe* 28 (2020), 256–88.

<sup>119</sup> Discenza has previously identified this highlighting of peoples rather than places: *Inhabited*, p. 119.

<sup>120</sup> For the European nature of Alfred’s court, see Foot, *Æthelstan: The First King of England*, pp. 91–93.

<sup>121</sup> For the myth of Noah’s sons and the role it played in medieval conceptions of the world and its peoples, see B. Braude, ‘The Sons of Noah and the Construction of Ethnic and Geographical Identities in the Medieval and Early Modern Periods’, *The William and Mary Quarterly* 54 (1997), 103–42; and Bridges, ‘Myths’, pp. 77–80. For Japheth’s particular role, see T. Major, *Undoing Babel: the Tower of Babel in Anglo-Saxon Literature* (Toronto, 2018), pp. 112–14.

youngest son, Japheth, since his progeny were assigned ‘Europa on norðdæl’ (‘Europe in the northern part [of the world]’).<sup>122</sup> In doing so, he was almost certainly drawing upon his own Old English version of Alcuin’s *Interrogationes Sigewulfi in Genesin*, in which he writes:<sup>123</sup>

Se yldsta Noes sunu Sem gestrynde mid his sunum seofon and twentig suna, and hi gebogodon þone eastdæl middaneardes þe is gehaten Asia. Se oþer Noes sunu Cham gestrynde mid his sunum þrittig suna, and hi gebogodon þone suðdæl þe is gehaten. Affrica. Se þridda Noes sunu Iafeth gestrynde mid his sunum fiftyne suna, and þa gebogodon norðdæl þe is gehaten Europa. Þas ealle tog-ædere syndon twa and hunseofontig þeoda.

(Ælfric, *Interrogationes Sigwulfi*, ll. 405–12)

[The eldest son of Noah, Shem, begot twenty-seven sons including their sons, and they inhabited the eastern part of the world that is called Asia. The second son of Noah, Ham, begot thirty sons including their sons, and they inhabited the southern part that is called Africa. The third son of Noah, Japheth, begot fifteen sons including their sons, and they inhabited the Northern part, that is called Europe: those were seventy-two nations all together.]<sup>124</sup>

Daniel Anlezark has identified that this passage departs slightly from Alcuin’s version, in that Ælfric adds the direction of the sons’ territories.<sup>125</sup> Ælfric’s ‘Europe’ may be seen to constitute an ideological as well as geographical space, that concentrates on similarity rather than difference. Whilst Bede and the Old English *Orosius* seek to define the different physical landmasses and peoples that constitute the continent, Ælfric’s texts are concerned with the dissemination of a single origin myth for Europe, and in distinguishing Europe from Africa and Asia.

<sup>122</sup> L. Swain, ‘Ælfric of Eynsham’s Letter to Sigeward: An Edition, Commentary, and Translation’, ebook (Witan, 2017).

<sup>123</sup> ‘A Critical Edition of Ælfric’s Translation of Alcuin’s *Interrogationes Sigwulfi Presbiteri* and of the Related Texts *De Creatore et Creatura* and *De Sex Etatibus Huius Seculi*’, ed. W. P. Stoneman (unpubl. PhD dissertation, Univ. Toronto, 1983)

<sup>124</sup> *Int. Sig.* LVI. W. P. Stoneman, ‘A Critical Edition of Ælfric’s Translation of Alcuin’s *Interrogationes Sigwulfi Presbiteri* and of the Related Texts *De Creatore et Creatura* and *De Sex Etatibus Huius Seculi* (Translation’ (unpubl. PhD dissertation, Univ. of Toronto, 1983).

<sup>125</sup> D. Anlezark, *Water and Fire: The Myth of the Flood in Anglo-Saxon England* (Manchester, 2006), p. 277

Moreover, whilst Ælfric mentions the fifteen sons of Japheth, he never specifies how Europe was split between them. His approach is clearly different from the description of the world's division in the Vulgate, which includes the names of the three sons' sons and of the various nations that they individually built and inhabited.<sup>126</sup> Conversely, Ælfric encapsulates the territory belonging to Japheth's descendants with a single direction, 'norðdæl', and uses a single third-person verb, 'gebogodan', for their collective action. This differs notably from the way that other medieval and patristic writers dealt with the 'Noah's sons' myth. Compare Ælfric's description to Isidore's treatment of the same subject matter in his *Etymologiae* — a text with which Ælfric was certainly familiar. Isidore first extensively notes the various names and nations of Japheth's sons, before concluding: 'Haec sunt gentes de stirpe Iaphet, quae a Tauro monte ad aquilonem mediam partem Asiae et omnem Europam usque ad Oceanum Britannicum possident, nomina et locis et gentibus relinquentes' ('These are the nations of Japheth's stock, which occupy the middle part of Asia from Mount Taurus to the north, and all of Europe up to the British ocean, bequeathing their names to peoples and places').<sup>127</sup> Bede, in his commentary on Genesis, followed Isidore, describing the diverse names and places occupied by Japheth and his progeny, and also added some further names to the list.<sup>128</sup>

By contrast, Ælfric's account stresses Japheth's family line and their territory, Europe, as much more homogenous. He does not name the various partitions of Europe, nor does he suggest that Japheth's sons also inhabited part of Asia. Instead, his account suggests a common origin point for all of Europe's peoples. Anlezark, noting Ælfric's omission of this material from his works, suggests that Ælfric may have considered the inclusion of multiple nations too confusing for his audiences, and may have wished to correct what he perceived to

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<sup>126</sup> Gen 10:2–32.

<sup>127</sup> *Etym.* 9.2.25–37.

<sup>128</sup> Bede, *In Gen.* 3.12–14.

be an ‘error’ in the myth of Noah’s ark-born son, Scaef.<sup>129</sup> The omission may perhaps also be accounted for by the fact that Ælfric was following Alcuin’s example, which did not mention the multiple nations. However, with the inclusion of the cardinal directions to the text, Ælfric’s text also serves to present the three nations of the world as being different from one another rather than containing diversity within themselves. This presents a vastly different image of the continent from that found in the Old English *Orosius*, with its descriptions of varying customs and peoples, or in the *Ecclesiastical History* with its emphasis on the distance between Britain and its neighbours. Though the difference in emphasis between Ælfric’s usage of the term ‘Europa’ can be attributed partially to the vastly differing genres and purposes of these texts, Ælfric is unique in using this word to denote continental unity rather than difference. As this study will argue, this sense of unity was characteristic of Ælfric’s presentation of the continent.

## VIII: THE ARGUMENT AND STRUCTURE OF THIS THESIS

This thesis argues that Ælfric translated the continental narratives, characters and settings from his sources in ways that consistently emphasised ideals of community and collaboration. It does so through the analysis of four major subjects of ‘translation’: the continent, saints, people and Rome.

Chapter One explores how Ælfric translated continental settings. This chapter considers ‘translation’ in the sense of literary translations, concentrating on examination of how Ælfric adapted his sources to depict continental places and their relationships to one another. I first lay the groundwork for the rest of the thesis by establishing which geographies

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<sup>129</sup> Anlezark, *Water*, p. 279.

Ælfric considered to be ‘continental’. I then explore how Ælfric depicted the geography and culture of specific places, such as Greece, Ravenna and Francia. This chapter demonstrates that Ælfric homogenised his continental settings in order to highlight a didactic message of unity.

This emphasis on unity is further explored in Chapter Two, which focuses on the translation of saints. In this chapter, I analyse Ælfric’s descriptions of the saintly body’s transfer from one place to another, and demonstrate that he consistently adapted his source materials in order to better highlight the principles of unity and community. In particular, this chapter considers the ways in which Ælfric’s presentation of saintly burials drew upon the ideology of the communion of saints in order to gesture to the universal nature of the Christian church. In this, we detect Ælfric drawing on the teachings of Æthelwold regarding the salvific power of unity, and of Bede regarding the universal church centred on Rome.

Chapter Three develops the theme of movement between places, analysing the translation of people, both in the sense of transfer from one place to another and transition from paganism to Christianity. As such, this chapter focuses on Ælfric’s lives of missionary saints, who are often continental in origin, and whose narratives focus on ideas of travel and conversion. In the depiction of these missionaries and their journeys, we see Ælfric continually highlighting the importance of collaboration and of unified praxis across geographical and social boundaries. This chapter considers how Ælfric’s presentations of missionary activity focus around the idea of *annes* — that is, unity on both a secular and ecclesiastical level.

The final chapter addresses the translation of Rome. I establish four aspects of Rome that coexisted in the early medieval English imagination, and then demonstrate that Ælfric’s particular interest in Rome lay more in the city’s symbolic potential than in its geographic reality. My analysis considers not only the literary translation of Rome, but also the ways in

which Rome is ‘translated’ into other places through material and textual culture, such as a Roman palace built in India or a Roman saint emulated in early medieval England. This chapter argues that Ælfric presents Rome not as an individual city, but rather as the heart of a Christian network, whose practices spread out to the rest of the continent.

In exploring connections between England and the continent in the *Lives of Saints*, the present study also offers insight into the connections between the individual items that form the *Lives* as a text. Community was implicit not only in the text’s narrative content, but also in its style and form. In highlighting the ways in which the individual items pre-empt, reference and inform one another, I demonstrate that adopting a comparative methodology for the *Lives* reveals both the text’s didactic richness and artistic achievement.

## CHAPTER ONE: TRANSLATING THE CONTINENT

### INTRODUCTION

A significant number of the *Lives of Saints* are set in continental Europe. Of the thirty-four items that Ælfric includes, thirteen of them take place in continental settings, representing more than half of the hagiographic (as opposed to biblical or homiletic) content of the collection.<sup>1</sup> Patrick Wormald has argued that the continent was ‘not just an agreeable backcloth’ for late tenth-century English history but rather constitutes ‘an important part of the picture’.<sup>2</sup> Wormald’s metaphor becomes particularly significant when considering the part that the continent played in the *Lives of Saints*, since much of the literary scenery presented in the *Lives* is continental. The landscapes that serve as a backdrop for Ælfric’s continental saints range from the shores of Spain to the fields of Montigny; from Rome to Amiens; from the river Loire to Mount Etna. Yet the importance of these settings to Ælfric’s didactic aims has yet to be explored. In this chapter I argue that Ælfric’s continental locations are ‘not just an agreeable backcloth’, but in fact constitute a vital part of Ælfric’s teachings within the *Lives of Saints*.

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<sup>1</sup> This count includes the *Life of Vincent*. However, as noted in the introduction to this thesis, *Vincent*’s inclusion in the *Lives of Saints* is contested. The lives with continental settings are: *Eugenia* (Rome); *Sebastian* (Rome); *Maur* (Francia); *Agnes* (Rome); *Agatha* (Sicily); *Lucy* (Syracuse); *Apollinaris* (Rome); *Maurice* (Francia); *Dionysius* (Athens / Rome / Francia); *Martin* (Italy / Francia); *Cecilia* (Rome); *Chrysanthus and Daria* (Rome); and *Vincent* (Spain). I have not included *Abdon and Sennes* on the basis that, whilst their hagiography traditionally takes place in Rome, Ælfric’s version does not acknowledge this. It should be noted that other *Lives* feature short descriptions of continental settings: lines 10–31 of the *Life of Basil*, for example, take place in Athens, and *The Chair of Peter* references Peter’s life in Rome in ll. 8–15. However, these are short sections of lives that predominantly take place in the Middle East, and as such cannot be considered to be set on the continent in the same way that the life of a Frankish or Roman saint can.

<sup>2</sup> P. Wormald, ‘Æthelwold and his Continental Counterparts’, in B. A. E. Yorke, ed. (1988), pp. 13–42, at p. 14.

Describing continental places for an English audience required Ælfric to translate them in more ways than one. Ælfric noted on several occasions that he translated sense for sense rather than word for word, writing that ‘nec ubique transtulimus verbum ex verbo, sed sensum ex sensu’.<sup>3</sup> However, many of his sources held particular local interest, and hagiography was often concerned with extolling local areas and practices through its saints.<sup>4</sup> Catherine Cubitt has noted that there is not a clear-cut dichotomy between ‘universal’ and ‘local’ saints, as even those venerated the most widely could also function as local patrons.<sup>5</sup> As such, the *sensus* of a Frankish or Italian saint’s life could include, sometimes explicitly, elevation of the locale that the saint lived, died or was buried in, in ways that may not have been relevant or even intelligible to an audience at a significant geographic, temporal and cultural remove from it. To a ninth-century Parisian, for example, Hilduin of Saint-Denis’ description of how the ‘Mons Mercurii’ became the ‘Mons Martyrum’ is a regional conversion myth, a ratification of local sanctity: to an English layman in the tenth century, it is simply topographical information.<sup>6</sup> Accordingly, Ælfric completely omits this information when he translates Hilduin’s work into Old English. However, as discussed in this chapter, Ælfric did not remove all of the localised aspects of his continental source texts, and instead adjusted or rewrote them in ways that made them both intelligible and useful to his audiences.

Just as the *sensus* required adaptation to be legible to a tenth-century English audience, so did the *verba*: in order to present continental geographies in the *Lives of Saints*,

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<sup>3</sup> *CHI: Preface*, ll. 9–10. The dichotomy between *sensum e sensu* and *verbum e verbo* originates in Jerome’s statement that he would translate from the Greek scriptures ‘non verbum e verbo, sed sensum exprimere de sensu’. Jerome, *Liber de optimo genere interpretandi* (Epistula 57), ed. G. J. M. Bartelink (Leiden, 1980), V:2. For Ælfric’s use of this formula, see J. Hill, ‘Translating the Tradition: Manuscripts, Models and Methodologies in the Composition of Ælfric’s *Catholic Homilies*’, in *Textual and Material Culture in Anglo-Saxon England: Thomas Northcote Toller and the Toller Memorial Lectures*, ed. D. G. Scragg (Woodbridge, 2003), pp. 241–60.

<sup>4</sup> On the local interest of *translatio* hagiography, see Chapter Two of this thesis.

<sup>5</sup> C. Cubitt, ‘Universal and Local Saints in Anglo-Saxon England’, in *Local Saints and Local Churches in the Early Medieval West*, ed. A. Thacker and R. Sharpe (Oxford, 2002), pp. 423–54, at p. 423; Stanton, ‘Translation and Anglo-Saxon Hagiography’, pp. 137–43.

<sup>6</sup> Hilduin of Saint-Denis, *The Passio S. Dionysii in Prose and Verse*, ed. M. Lapidge (Leiden, 2017), pp. 300–01, ll. 25–29.

Ælfric necessarily needed to address the linguistic issues of translating toponyms into Old English. Old English writers were not necessarily consistent in the methods they employed for this task. To convey the Latin ‘Rhodanus’ in the *Life of Maurice*, for example, Ælfric removes the Latin ending to provide ‘Rodan’ (possibly following the example of the Old English *Orosius*) but the author of the Old English *Giles* opted to retain the Latin form ‘Rodanus’.<sup>7</sup> The scribes responsible for the copying of the *Old English Martyrology* take different approaches, with the copyists of the B text producing ‘Rodena mere’, and those of the C text writing ‘Rodenan mere’.<sup>8</sup>

A cultural form of translation was also at play in the *Lives of Saints*. In order to present a vernacular audience with a range of continental characters and places, Ælfric had to address the fact that in these places there were varying norms of education, religious observance and systems of government. He acknowledges one example of this in the Latin preface to the work, when he states that he has deliberately avoided mentioning two emperors at the same time, as his Latin sources do, since ‘gens nostra uni regi subditur, et usitata est de uno rege non de duobus loqui’ (‘our nation is subject to one king, and is accustomed to speak of one king, not of two’, 2).<sup>9</sup> This declaration has been understood as pertaining to historical differences: Davis argues that it represents Ælfric’s desire to simplify time to a single past and single present, whilst Wolpers cites the passage in relation to Ælfric’s presentation of ‘des historischen Materials’.<sup>10</sup> However, whilst elsewhere in the *Lives of Saints* Ælfric refers to ‘urum dagum’ (‘our days’, *Æthelthryth* l. 26), here there is no temporal deixis. His use of

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<sup>7</sup> *OEO*, 1.1.30; *The Old English Life of St. Nicholas with the Old English Life of St. Giles*, ed. E. Treharne, Leeds Texts and Monographs New Series 15 (Leeds, 1997), l. 176.

<sup>8</sup> *OEM*, 212: Genesius. On the representation of Latin *ā* in Old English, see A. Campbell, *Old English Grammar* (Oxford, 1959), p. 203.

<sup>9</sup> I have silently emended *una* to *uni*.

<sup>10</sup> K. Davis, ‘Boredom, Brevity, and Last Things: Ælfric’s Style and the Politics of Time’, in Magennis and Swan, eds (2009), pp. 321–44, at p. 327; T. Wolpers, *Die englische Heiligenlegende des Mittelalters: Eine Formgeschichte des Legendenerzählens von der spätantiken lateinischen Tradition bis zur Mitte des 16. Jahrhunderts* (Tübingen, 1964), pp. 134–35.

‘gens nostra’ (‘our nation / race / people’) rather than ‘in diebus nostris’ or ‘nostra aetate’ presents the difference between systems of rulership as the product of cultural or national (rather than temporal) distance. The implication here is that continental practice deviates, sometimes significantly, from that which was familiar to an English audience.

Translating such cultural differences involved both linguistic and ideological factors. How, for example, ought an Old English writer to translate continental systems of government in a way that made sense to his audience? Francesca Chiusaroli sees the ‘two emperors’ statement as a moment in which it was necessary for Ælfric to utilise English ‘socio-cultural’ concepts to make his Latin material understandable.<sup>11</sup> However, translating socio-cultural categories was not always simple. Roman hagiography abounds with *duces* and *praesides*, *vicarii* and *praefecti*, who not only have no direct linguistic counterpart in the vernacular but also no direct social parallel. The difference between Roman and English government is evidenced by the definitions that Ælfric himself provided for the Latin terms in his *Glossary*, which often gives multiple translations for the same lemma. The Latin *consul* and *iudex* are both translated to the Old English *dema*; *princeps* and *comes* can both be *ealdormann*, but *comes* may also be *gerefa*; and *dux* is rendered as either *heretoga* or *lateow*.<sup>12</sup> Stanton has noted that Old English glossators often provided multiple Old English words for a single Latin one.<sup>13</sup> However, in Ælfric’s treatment of societal ranks, we also see the use of a single Old English word to gloss multiple Latin ones, emphasising the lack of direct equivalence between the two systems of government, and Ælfric’s desire to familiarise his source for his English audience.

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<sup>11</sup> F. Chiusaroli, ‘Utraque lingua. Teoria della traduzione e letteratura vernacolare nel medioevo germanico occidentale’, *Incontri Linguistici* 22 (1999), 113–28, at p. 124.

<sup>12</sup> *Ælfrics Grammatik und Glossar*, ed. J. Zupitza (Berlin, 1880), p. 300.

<sup>13</sup> Stanton, *Culture*, p. 47.

Further, presenting continental saints' lives in the vernacular represented a form of translation in and of itself. As noted in the introduction, the Latin term *translatio*, which Ælfric sometimes uses to describe his translation practice, stems from *transferre*, literally indicating the idea of 'carrying over'. The Benedictine Reform saw a flourishing of both local and universal saints' cults, and the veneration of various continental saints increased in England following the import of their relics, cults and hagiographies during the late-tenth century.<sup>14</sup> The *Lives of Saints* similarly 'carries over' knowledge of continental saints to a vernacular audience. As previously noted by Mechthild Gretsch and Patrick Zettel, some of the saints that Ælfric chose to include in his *sanctorale* did not have widespread cults in England, and as such may have been little-known to his lay audiences.<sup>15</sup>

In creating the *Lives of Saints*, then, Ælfric was not simply translating Latin words into Old English, but also translating foreign places, ideas and characters — many of them continental — into more mainstream English sanctity. This chapter examines how he did so, by considering the stylistic choices, omissions and additions that he made to his sources when discussing places outside England. I first briefly outline how the continent informed Ælfric's education and his position as a second-generation reformer, and consider which places Ælfric

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<sup>14</sup> J. Blair, *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society* (Oxford, 2005), p. 353; D. Rollason, 'The Shrines of Saints in Later Anglo-Saxon England: Distribution and Significance', in *The Anglo-Saxon Church: Papers on History, Architecture, and Archaeology in Honour of Dr H. M. Taylor*, ed. L. A. S. Butler and R. K. Morris, CBA Research Report 60 (London, 1986), pp. 32–50; A. Thacker, 'Saint-Making and Relic Collecting by Oswald and his Communities', in *Saint Oswald of Worcester: Life and Influence*, ed. N. Brooks and C. Cubitt (London, 1996), pp. 244–68; A. Thacker, 'Cults at Canterbury: Relics and Reform under Dunstan and his Successors', in *St Dunstan: His Life, Times and Cult*, ed. N. Ramsay, M. Sparks and T. Tatton-Brown (Woodbridge, 1992), pp. 221–45. Ortenberg, *English*, pp. 11–12 and 33–35. In particular, the close association between the English reformers and their Frankish counterparts saw the import (or 'carrying over') of a great number of Frankish saints' cults: M. Lapidge, 'Ælfric's Sanctorale', in Szarmach, ed. (1996), pp. 115–30, at pp. 120–21. Similarly, the cult of the Spanish St Vincent was translated to England, accompanied by relics claiming to be his, and rose to particular prominence at Winchester and Glastonbury: Irvine, 'Bones'.

<sup>15</sup> Gretsch identifies, for example, the choice to include SS Julian and Basilissa as an 'eccentric one', given that their commemoration is only included in three extant calendars: Ælfric, p. 9. Zettel compares a list of the thirty most popular saints in early medieval England, based upon extant liturgical calendars, to those saints in Ælfric's *sanctorale*, and finds that not only were many of those in the *Lives of Saints* towards the end of the list, but nine items in the *LOS* are not among the list of most popular saints: 'Sources', pp. 74–82. Whilst Joyce Hill notes the limitations of this evidence, she nonetheless notes that, in the *Lives of Saints*, Ælfric shows interest in saints less commonly venerated, based on both continental and monastic models: 'Context', pp. 19–22.

considered to be ‘continental’. Following this, I examine the way that Ælfric depicted particular continental locations in the *Lives of Saints*, by surveying the qualities and associations that he represented those places as having. The final part of the chapter considers how these disparate places were presented as enjoying a collective identity, and how Ælfric used the continent to express the ideal of a single cohesive Christian community in the *Lives of Saints*. To that end, this chapter examines descriptions of setting, both in terms of physical location and of social milieu. In doing so, I demonstrate that Ælfric rewrote his sources in order to highlight ideas of commonality across the continent whilst still retaining a sense of distinct local identity.

## I: THE CONTINENTAL BACKGROUND OF THE *LIVES OF SAINTS*

As a second-generation reformer and student of Æthelwold, Ælfric’s education and ideology were undoubtedly influenced by the continent. It has long been acknowledged that the English Benedictine Reform was indebted to its continental counterparts.<sup>16</sup> The continental desire for a united customary was predicated upon the Carolingian example of Benedict of Aniane, and the ideal of ‘nulla varietas’ that he, together with Louis the Pious, strove for during the early ninth century.<sup>17</sup> This precedent inspired the reforms at various centres, such as Cluny and Gorze, which in turn influenced the English Benedictine Reform.<sup>18</sup> There has

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<sup>16</sup> See, for example, D. Bullough, ‘The Continental Background of the Reform’, *Tenth-Century Studies: Essays in Commemoration of the Millennium of the Council of Winchester and Regularis Concordia* (London, 1975), pp. 20–36.

<sup>17</sup> Wormald, ‘Æthelwold’, pp. 15–19.

<sup>18</sup> For an overview of the continental background and its influence on the English reform, see J. G. Clark, *The Benedictines in the Middle Ages* (Woodbridge, 2014), pp. 39–47; C. A. Jones, ‘Ælfric and the Limits of “Benedictine Reform”’, in Magennis and Swan, eds (2009), pp. 67–108, at pp. 76–8; Bullough, ‘Continental Background’, pp. 20–36; M. Mensah, ‘L’Angleterre et le Continent — Xe et début XIe siècles’, *Caliban* 29 (2011), 31–44. See also M. Mostert, ‘Relations Between Fleury and England’, in Rollason *et al.*, eds (2010), pp. 185–210.

been much work on the continental contacts, experiences and ideology of all three reformers, detailed discussion of which lies beyond the scope of this thesis.<sup>19</sup> At Winchester specifically, Æthelwold states that monks from Ghent and Fleury were involved in the creation of the *Regularis Concordia*.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, during Æthelwold's episcopacy, Winchester received various continental monks, such as Womar of Ghent, who was recorded fondly in the *Liber Vitae* of the New Minster, and the Frankish monk Lantfred.<sup>21</sup> These continental contacts made their mark not only on the office, customs and liturgy of Winchester, but also on its literary output.<sup>22</sup>

Though Christopher Jones has argued that Ælfric displayed 'remarkably little interest' in either contemporary continental monasticism, the backgrounds of the reform, or its Anianian origins, it is nonetheless clear that the Winchester milieu in which he so proudly received his education was one in which continental ideas and peoples were ever-present.<sup>23</sup> These influences can be observed throughout his work, and the *Lives of Saints* is particularly indebted to continental models. The Cotton-Corpus Legendary, which Ælfric took as one of his major sources for the collection, is posited to have originated in Northern France, based

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<sup>19</sup> See, for example, Nightingale, 'Oswald'; Brooks, 'Career'; Wormald, 'Æthelwold'. There has also been some work placing Edgar and Ælfthryth against their continental contemporaries: S. MacLean, 'Monastic Reform and Royal Ideology in the Late Tenth Century: Ælfthryth and Edgar in Continental Perspective', in Rollason *et al.*, eds (2010), pp. 255–74.

<sup>20</sup> 'Accitis Florensis beati Benedicti necnon praecipui coenobii quod celebri Gent nuncupatur uocabulo monachis' ('they summoned monks from St Benedict's monastery at Fleury and from that eminent monastery which is known by the renowned name of Ghent'), *RC* pro. 5. Text and trans. in *Regularis Concordia*, ed. and trans. D. T. Symons (London, 1953).

<sup>21</sup> 'Domnus abba Wuomarus qui olim coenobio Gent praelatus hanc devotus adiit gentem huiusque se familiae precibus humillime commendavit.' ('The ecclesiastic Father Womar, who was formerly bishop to the monastery of Ghent. The devout [man] visited this monastic *familia*. And of this the *familia* (religious community) by prayers most humbly praises him'). *Liber Vitae: Register and Martyrology of New Minster and Hyde Abbey, Winchester*, ed. W. de G. Birch (London and Winchester, 1892), p. 24. See also Lapidge, 'Æthelwold', pp. 98–99; and M. Lapidge, *The Cult of Swithun*, Winchester Studies 4.ii (Oxford, 2003), p. 12 (for the translation of *gens* as 'monastic *familia*', see p. 219 n. 13).

<sup>22</sup> For example, as discussed in the first chapter of this thesis, the task of writing a hagiography celebrating St Swithun's translation fell to a foreign monk, Lantfred. Michael Lapidge has demonstrated that the hermeneutic style of Latin which so characterised Wintonian Anglo-Latin monastic literature was indebted to continental models, particularly from Francia: 'The Hermeneutic Style in Tenth-century Anglo-Latin Literature', *ASE* 4 (1975), 67–111, at p. 73.

<sup>23</sup> Jones, 'Limits', p. 78.

upon the number of Flemish and Frankish saints which it commemorates.<sup>24</sup> Ælfric explicitly referenced the continental nature of some of his sources, such as when he wrote that his source for his life of Agnes was ‘Ambrosius bisceop binnan Mediolana’ (‘Bishop Ambrose in Milan’, *Agnes*, l. 1), or when he refers to Lantfred, whose *Vita S. Swithuni* was the source for Ælfric’s own life of Swithun, as ‘Landferð se ofersæwisca’ (‘Lantfred the foreigner’, *Swithun* l. 403). Cubitt has suggested that universal saints, unlike local ones, permitted the early medieval English faithful to ‘unite with Rome in their imitation of its churches and liturgical practices, and to belong to the learned culture of the Fathers and Popes’.<sup>25</sup> As I argue in this chapter, the *Lives of Saints*, through its inclusion of a large number of continental saints, enabled its audiences to unite not only with Rome but also a more widespread continental Christian community, and fostered the same image of a singular community of observance that the Benedictine Reform so idealised in theory if not in practice.

It is impossible, then, to divorce the *Lives of Saints* from the idea of the continent and its influence. The collection was one of the most significant extant products of the continentally-inspired Winchester school, chiefly described the lives of continental saints and reworked Frankish and Italian models. Yet, to date, there has been very little work that considers the continental settings of the *Lives of Saints*. Whilst Yann Coz has explored Ælfric’s use of Roman history and imagery, there is no similar study that considers his extensive use of Francia, Spain, Sicily, or the continent as a whole.<sup>26</sup> It is this gap in the scholarship that this chapter aims to address.

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<sup>24</sup> Jackson and Lapidge, ‘Contents’, pp. 133–34; Zettel, ‘Sources’, p. 9. See also R. C. Love, ‘Eleventh-Century Anglo-Latin Hagiography and the Rise of the Legendary’, in *Three Eleventh-Century Anglo-Latin Saints’ Lives*, ed. and trans. R. C. Love (Oxford, 1996), pp. xi–xlvi, at pp. xviii–xxiii.

<sup>25</sup> Cubitt, ‘Universal’, p. 452.

<sup>26</sup> Coz, *Rome*; Coz, ‘Image’, pp. 555–56.

## II: WHERE IS THE CONTINENT IN THE *LIVES OF SAINTS*?

In the *Lives of Saints*, Ælfric never uses the word ‘Europa’ nor refers to the continent directly. However, he nonetheless consistently outlines a European geographical and cultural community that can be termed ‘the continent’. This community largely occupies Western Europe, in accordance with the schemae of Bede and Orosius discussed in the introduction to this thesis. Though scholars have noted that the early medieval English were increasingly interested in Northern Europe from the age of Alfred, Ælfric does not share this interest.<sup>27</sup> Indeed, Ælfric makes no mention of Scandinavia in the collection, save for descriptions of *hæðen* enemies and pagan *Norðmenn*.<sup>28</sup> Similarly, Ireland and the Irish church more generally are both conspicuously absent from most of the *Lives*. Indeed, the only text within the collection that references Ireland is the *Life of Oswald*, where Ælfric makes passing references to Irish language and Irish Christianity but omits Bede’s references to the Irish Easter reckoning, the arrival of Irish people in Oswald’s kingdom, Columba’s mission to the Picts, Agilbert’s mission to the West Saxons and the geography of Iona.<sup>29</sup> In general, therefore, the ‘continent’ in the *Lives of Saints* aligns with the old territories of the Western Roman empire, and participates in Roman Christianity.

It is important to state that ‘the continent’ does not simply mean ‘Christian’ in the *Lives of Saints*. It is true that sometimes, when Ælfric describes how people in the wider world are different to those who live in Europe, he focuses on the idea of religious difference.

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<sup>27</sup> See Appleton, ‘Northern World’; Michelet, *Creation*, pp. 131–57.

<sup>28</sup> This is perhaps unsurprising given the renewed threat of Viking invasion during the period that Ælfric was composing the *Lives of Saints*. After Æthelred’s peace treaty of 994, England enjoyed a brief period of respite from Scandinavian raids. However, in 997, these raids resumed: ASC 994 and 997 CDE. See also Keynes, ‘Abbot’; L. Roach, *Æthelred the Unready* (London, 2016), pp. 175–77.

<sup>29</sup> Bede, *HE*, iii.3–4, 7. Ælfric states that Aidan, an Irish missionary, spoke ‘Scyttisc’ (‘Irish’, l. 67), and that Oswald’s fame spread ‘to Irlande’ (l. 240), where a learned man asks for the saint’s relics. The episode of the Irishman who wishes for Aidan’s relics is discussed in Chapter Two of this thesis; Aidan’s mission is discussed in Chapter Three.

However, in the *Lives of Saints*, Ælfric also frequently acknowledges non-European Christianity, and also the presence of European pagans. The hagiographic genre often revolves around the idea of conversion, meaning that even sites such as Rome, Ravenna and England are occupied by ‘hæðenan’ for sections of the *Lives of Saints*. Meanwhile, John the Evangelist writes his gospel ‘on Asia’ (‘in Asia’, *Mark*, l. 170), a fact which is reiterated to Ælfric’s audiences later in the collection when Dionysius comforts John and reassures him that he will return ‘to Asian lande [...] and þær god-spel awritan’ (‘to Asia [...] and he would write the Gospel there’, *Dionysius*, ll. 100–01). King Seleucus, too, sends gifts ‘to þam Godes temple of Asian lande’ (‘to God’s temple from Asia’, *Maccabees*, ll. 752–53). Indeed, Jacqueline Elkouz argues that the collection includes an unusually high number of saints from what she terms ‘the Orient’, and suggests, based on this, that Ælfric had a keen interest in Eastern Christianity.<sup>30</sup> As such, the ‘continent’ in the *Lives of Saints* is not synonymous with ‘the Christian world’, but rather denotes a specific, geographical part of it.

In the *Lives of Saints*, Ælfric differentiated the continent from the wider world through three main methods: 1) the depiction of Greece as a borderland; 2) the exoticisation of non-continental peoples; and 3) retaining unusual or confusing material in his non-continental lives whilst removing similar material from continental ones. The result of these cumulative approaches across the collection is that a sense of ‘the continent’ as a place distinct from the rest of the world emerges, despite it never being directly named or invoked.

#### *GREECE AS A BORDERLAND*

In geographical terms, Ælfric defines the continent in opposition to what he terms ‘the

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<sup>30</sup> J. Elkouz, ‘Ælfric and the Orient’ (unpubl. PhD dissertation, Univ. of Nevada, 2010).

East’.<sup>31</sup> In his works, he depicts Shem’s descendants occupying ‘eastdæl middaneardes’, and describes Asia as ‘þæs easternan rices’ (‘Asia, the eastern kingdom’, *Maccabees* l. 753). As noted in the introduction to this thesis, Ælfric simplified the tripartite division of the world according to the sons-of-Noah myth, and suggested that Japhet’s family occupied only Europe, rather than also inhabiting parts of Asia as in the accounts of Isidore and the Vulgate. As such, Ælfric depicts Asia and Europe as both culturally and geographically different from one another.

In the *Life of Basil*, Ælfric addresses the border between Europe and the East. Michelet argues that spatial ‘frontiers’ were of particular interest to Old English writers, who wished to establish ‘secure boundaries’.<sup>32</sup> For Ælfric, Greece represents such a frontier between the continent and the wider world.<sup>33</sup> In the *Life of Basil*, he makes an addition to his source material, in which he states that Europe and the East observe different types of Christianity and highlights Greece as the boundary between the two places:

Witodlice Basilius, gebyld þurh his Drihten,  
 be ende-byrdnysse awrat ealle ða þenunga  
 þæra halgan mæssan, swa swa hit healdað Grecas.  
 He awrat eac munuc-regol mid mycelre gehealdsumnysse,

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<sup>31</sup> Ælfric uses the word ‘East’ to mean the part of the world that lies outside Europe in several instances across his extant corpus. As with Europe, he often presents a simplified image of this place, suggesting that it is homogenous rather than a collection of diverse peoples, places and cultures. He often uses the word ‘easternum’ to present all of the occupants of this space as a single, accordant group: for example, in his homily *Dominica I in Mense Septembri*, he writes that Job ‘wæs swiðe mære betwux eallum Easternum’ (‘was very renowned amongst all the eastern peoples’), *CHI*, XXXV, l. 12. The collocation of ‘eall’ and ‘easterne’, which plays upon phonetic harmony of ‘ea’ to emphasise the harmonic accord between this group of peoples, is also used in the *Temporibus Anni*, when Ælfric writes that the spring equinox is calculated differently by ‘ealle ðe Easternan 7 Ægyptiscan, þe selost cunnon on gerimcræfte’ (‘all of the Eastern peoples and Egyptians, who are most knowledgeable about computus’, ll. 239–40). In the same way, he describes all non-western Christians as ‘ða easternan’ (‘those in the East’, *Basil*, l. 145 and *Admonitio Ad Filium Spiritualem*, l. 5). In his *Life of Maurice*, he removed information from his Latin sources, resulting in a depiction of this ‘east’ as more culturally unified than it ever was in his Latin sources. He does not describe the saints as being a ‘legionem Thebaeam ex orientalibus’ (‘Theban legion from the East’, *Passio S. Mauricii*, l. 6) as his source does, but rather calls them an ‘eorod of easternum leodum’ (‘legion of eastern peoples’, l. 9), depicting them as being part of a wider, culturally homogenous group rather than of any specific cultural identity. My use of the term ‘the East’ in this chapter refers specifically to its use in Ælfric’s work.

<sup>32</sup> Michelet, *Creation*, p. 30.

<sup>33</sup> The Old English *Orosius* also places Greece at the boundary of Europe and Asia. Note that the borders of Greece extended as far as Constantinople, considerably further East than present day Greece: the *Orosius* states that the Greek border is the Propontic and Euxine Seas (*OEO*, 1.I.28).

þone þe ða easternan and eac swylce Grecas  
 an-modlice healdað, þeah þe hefegra sy  
 þonne se ðe Benedictus siþþan us gebysnode,  
 swylce to anginne agenre gecyrrednysse.  
 Ac he tihte us on æfterweardan þæs ylcan regoles  
 to geðungenra lareowa lifes drohtnungum  
 and tymde to þam regole þe Basilus gesette.

(Ælfric, *Basil*, ll. 141–50)

[Indeed Basil, encouraged by his Lord, wrote down in order all of the service of the holy Mass, just as it is observed by the Greeks. He also wrote a monastic rule with great emphasis on abstinence, that those in the East and also the Greeks observe unanimously, though it is possibly stricter than the one that Benedict gave us afterward as an example, at the beginning of his own conversion. But at the end of that same rule he urged us to the ways of life of distinguished teachers and referred to that rule that Basil had established.]

At eleven lines long, this constitutes the longest insertion of material that Ælfric made to his source, the *Vita Basilii*.<sup>34</sup> Corona suggests that Ælfric's rationale for this addition was a desire to justify the inclusion of 'a distant eastern saint' within his collection, and to demonstrate the significance of Basil's *Life* to his English audience.<sup>35</sup> However, Ælfric includes the lives of several other non-western saints in the collection, and does not try to justify any of them with similar statements.<sup>36</sup> Therefore, I argue that Ælfric was not attempting to render his *Life of Basil* meaningful to his audience in the narrow sense suggested by Corona, but rather to outline the borders of the continental Christian community, and to suggest a uniformity of practice that stretched across the majority of Western Europe but ended at Greece.

<sup>34</sup> Zettel and Corona agree that the *Vita Basilii* (BHL 1023) was Ælfric's source, but there is currently no complete edition of the text. A 'heavily modified' form of it is printed in L. Surius, ed. *De Probatis Sanctorum Historiis*, 6 vols (Cologne, 1570–75), I, pp. 4–19. However, Surius edited the text considerably, owing to his impression of it as being 'unclassical', and as a result, it differs significantly from the one which Ælfric would have used in terms of its phrasing, although not in terms of structure. Corona, *Basil*, pp. 9–25, 74–8; see also Zettel, 'Sources', pp. 198–201.

<sup>35</sup> Corona, *Basil*, p. 91.

<sup>36</sup> See, for example, the *Letter of Christ to Abgar* and *Julian and Basilissa*.

In Ælfric's comments on the rule of Basil, he suggests that there is a difference between the parts of the world that lie in Europe and those that lie beyond. By describing how the Rule of Basil is 'hefegra' than the Benedictine one, and associating this rule with the East, Ælfric suggests that though there were certainly Christians outside Europe, they were differentiated from their European counterparts. The foreignness of Eastern Church customs to European Christians is further emphasised by Ælfric's portrayal of Western Christianity as a single, homogeneous entity. The use of first-person plural pronouns ('Benedictus sibban us gebysnode', 'ac he tihte us', my italics) links all of the observers of the Rule of Benedict under a single identity and reflects the idealised monastic uniformity of the Benedictine Reform, despite the fact that Benedictines occupied various locations across Western Europe and certainly varied in adherence to the Rule and its customs.<sup>37</sup> Ælfric differentiates Greece from this unified Western Christianity on the basis that the Greeks adhere to different monastic rule. However, the phrase 'and eac swylce Grecas' (my italics) implies that the Greeks are also separate from the true 'easternan'. As such, Greece represents the frontier between the familiar space of the continent and the foreign space of the East.

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<sup>37</sup> For the spread of the *RB*, see C. Lawrence, *Medieval Monasticism: Forms of Religious Life in Western Europe in the Middle Ages*, 4th edn (Abingdon, 2015), pp. 81–94; Clark, *Benedictines*, pp. 5–59. For the *Rule* in England, and the Old English translation (referred to in this thesis as *OERB*), see R. Jayatilaka, 'The Old English Benedictine Rule: Writing for Women and Men', *ASE* 32 (2003), 147–87. The *Rule* itself recognised that it was not possible to apply one standard to a geographically widespread community, when discussing the proper clothing for monks, that it is impossible to set a single standard because 'in frigidis regionibus amplius indiget, in calidis vero minus' ('in cold places more [clothing] is needed, and in hot ones less', *RB* LV). Moreover, the stipulations of the rule were subject to the interpretation of its followers, which could vary. This was testified even by its earliest commentators. Hildemar of Corbie, writing in the ninth century, mentioned, for example, that there were differing opinions on the correct portions for the fasts that *RB* XXX suggests should be administered as punishment to young boys: 'in hoc enim loco, ubi dicit *nimiis jejuniis*, varie intelligitur. Sunt enim multi, quo *nimum jejunium* intelligunt mediam libram panis solummodo et unum staupponem aquae in hieme, in aestivo vero tempore duos. Et sunt iterum alii, qui intelligunt quartam partem librae panis et aquam sicut superiores. Sed isti, qui quartam partem librae panis dicunt, non bene discerunt' ('Regarding this point, where it says 'rigorous fasting', it is understood variously. There are many who understand by 'rigorous fasting' only one half-*libra* of bread and one measure of water in winter, and two measures of water in the summertime. There are again others, who understand [it to mean] a quarter-*libra* of bread and the same amount of water as above. But these, who say a quarter-*libra* of bread, do not discern rightly', *Expositio*, c. XXX). Ælfric himself also acknowledged the potential for variation when he declared that English observance is permitted to vary from Italian ones in his *LME*, c. 57.

## EXOTICISATION OF FOREIGN PEOPLES

Ælfric represents the world that lies beyond Greece as more foreign to his audiences than continental places which lay at less of a geographic remove. Throughout the collection, Ælfric downplays the foreignness of European saints, but exaggerates or emphasises the foreignness of foreigners living on the geographic periphery. Peoples who live at a considerable distance from Europe are exoticised, made monstrous and entirely different from the English.<sup>38</sup> Though the extreme foreignisation of distant, non-Christian peoples was not uncommon in early medieval works circulated in England, such as the *Wonders of the East* and the *Liber Monstrorum*, within the *Lives of Saints* depictions of monstrous foreigners are juxtaposed with depictions of foreigners who look more familiar, thereby emphasising the relative closeness of continental peoples to an English audience.<sup>39</sup> For example, in his *Life of Julian and Basilissa*, Ælfric depicts Ethiopians as monstrous and strange. Notably, whilst his Latin source emphasises the strangeness of the men through a list of similes, comparing them to lions and eagles and their eyes to furnaces, Ælfric mostly focusses on the men themselves:<sup>40</sup>

‘Me coman to Silhearwan,  
atelices hiwes, swa heage swa entes,  
mid byrnendum eagum and egeslicum toðum.

<sup>38</sup> There was a long tradition of associating peripheral geographies with monstrosity in early medieval England. Texts such as the *Wonders of the East* and *Alexander's Letter to Aristotle* established the Easternmost parts of the known world as being full of strange creatures. On this phenomenon, see M. Bradshaw Busbee, ‘A Paradise Full of Monsters: India in the Old English Imagination’, *LATCH: A Journal for the Study of the Literary Artifact in Theory, Culture, or History* 1 (2008) 51–72; S. Thomson, ‘Otherwheres in the Prose Texts of the Nowell Codex’, in *Ideas of the World in Early Medieval England* (Turnhout, forthcoming); A. Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies: Studies in the Monsters of the Beowulf Manuscript* (Toronto, 1995).

<sup>39</sup> On the definition of home via the presentation of elsewhere in early medieval English literature, see N. Howe, *Writing the Map of Anglo-Saxon England: Essays in Cultural Geography* (New Haven, 2008), pp. 151–94.

<sup>40</sup> *Passio Iuliani et Basilisse* c. 40: ‘ducebar a nescio quibus Æthiopibus, quorum status erat ut gigas, aspectus horridus, oculi ut fornacis ignis ardentis, dentes euorum ut dentes leonum, brachia sicut trabes, ungues ut aquilarum in quibus nulla misericordia est’ [‘I was being led away by some black men or other who were as tall as giants, whose appearances were horrible, whose eyes were like flaming fiery furnaces, whose teeth were like those of lions, whose arms were like tree trunks, whose nails were like eagles in which there is no mercy’]. Text and trans. in R. Upchurch, ed., *Ælfric's Lives of the Virgin Spouses* (Exeter, 2007), pp. 150–51.

Heora earmes wæron swylce ormæte beames,  
 heora clawa scearpe, and hi sylfa unmild-heorta.  
 Þas þyllice me tugon to þære sweartan helle.’

(Ælfric, *Julian and Basilissa*, ll. 286–91)

[‘Ethiopians came to me, of a horrifying appearance, as tall as giants, with burning eyes and terrifying teeth. Their arms were like immense beams, their talons were sharp, and they themselves were merciless. They dragged me into the darkness of hell.’]

It has been frequently noted that, in Classical and Medieval European sources, ‘Ethiopian’ did not connote a precise nationality, but rather was a general term utilised for all Black, non-European peoples.<sup>41</sup> Ælfric was not an exception to this rule. For him, ‘Silhearwena lande’ was not a particular country so much as an imagined space on the edge of the known world, which he used to express the idea of extreme periphery to his audience.<sup>42</sup> In *Julian and Basilissa*, the term ‘silhearwa’ represents an exaggerated and essentialised idea of otherness rather than describing a particular geographical region. What is important to Ælfric (and the

<sup>41</sup> F. M. Snowden, *Blacks in Antiquity: Ethiopians in the Greco-Roman Experience* (Cambridge, MA, 1970); J. Kilburn, ‘The Contrasted ‘Other’ in the Old English Apocryphal Acts of Matthew, Simon and Jude’, *Neophilologus* 87 (2003), 137–151, at pp. 137–38; J. J. Cohen, ‘On Saracen Enjoyment: Some Fantasies of Race in Late Medieval France and England’, *JMEMS* 31 (2001), 113–46. In *The Wonders of the East*, *silhearwa* is used without geographic specificity: ‘ðær mankynn is þæt syndan swertes hiwes on ansyne, þa man hateð silhearwan’ (‘there is another race of people there of black colour to look at, who are called Ethiopians’, 32) (ed. and trans. Orchard, *Pride*, pp. 202–03). The *Liber Monstrorum* similarly describes Ethiopians as peoples living broadly in Africa (the third zone of the world) rather than in a particular country: ‘toto copore nigri, quos sol flagrans nimio ardore semper adurit, quia sub tertio zonarum feruentissimo et torrido mundi circulo demorantur’ (‘black in their whole body, whom the flaming sun continually burns with excessive heat, because they dwell under the third, most seething and torrid circle of the world’s zones’, I.9) (ed. and trans. Orchard, *Pride*, pp. 262–63).

<sup>42</sup> Whilst Ælfric sometimes uses geographical terms to describe Ethiopia, his sense of its geography is not consistent. In his translation of the biblical Esther, for example, he writes that King Asuerus ‘hæfde cynerice east fram Indian oð Eþiopian lande; þæt is fram eastewardan þissere worulde and suþwardan oð to þam Silhearwum’ (‘had authority in the east, from India to the land of the Ethiopians: that is, from eastward of this world and southward as far as the Ethiopians’, *Esther*, c.1). Here, Ælfric shows a sense of Ethiopia as a geographically specific place, adding directions and clarity to the Vulgate, which simply gives ‘regnauit ab India usque Aethiopiam’ (‘he reigned from India to Ethiopia’, Est. 1:1). However, in his homily on Bartholomew, Ethiopia’s relation to India is presented differently: ‘seo forme India lið to þære silhearwena rice’ (‘the first India lies towards the Ethiopian kingdom’, CH I XXXVII, l. 4). Similarly in his *De Temporibus Anni*, Ælfric uses quantitative information to represent Ethiopia as a real place, but conveys little sense of its actual geography: when talking about the differing lengths of the day, he writes that ‘Meroe hatte an igland, þæt is ðæra Silhearwena eard; on ðam iglande hæfð se lengsta dæg on geare twelf tida 7 lytle mare ðone ane healfe tide’ (‘there is an island called Meroe, that is in the Ethiopians’ land, and on that island the longest day of the year has a little more than twelve and a half hours’, l. 265).

anonymous Latin author whose work he is translating) is not the idea of precise location, or a sense of the Ethiopians as real people. Rather, Ælfric draws upon the audience's awareness of the 'Silhearwan' as people from a place that is geographically distant. This extreme physical distance is then equated to extreme cultural and physical difference.<sup>43</sup> Since the Ethiopians represent the ultimate periphery in terms of geography, they also represent extremes of physicality, with giant-like height and limbs so large that they are compared to 'beames'. Unlike in the Latin source, where the Ethiopians are frightening because they look like wild animals, in Ælfric's account their monstrosity stems from the fact that their human physiognomy is extremified. Ælfric therefore presents his audience with the idea that peoples further away are different, whilst those closer are more similar. In doing so, he begins to outline an idea of 'the continent', as a space that is relatively geographically close and culturally similar to England.

Ælfric further highlights the sense that the Ethiopians are foreign by changing the main verb used by his Latin source. In the anonymous *vita*, the man describes how 'ducebar' ('I was led away', l. 613) by the Ethiopian men, whereas in Ælfric's version, the Ethiopians 'coman' ('came'). Ælfric highlights the foreignness of the Ethiopians, since 'coman to' necessarily implies an elsewhere that they must have come *from*. Here, Ælfric highlights not only the foreignness of the Ethiopians, but also aligns this foreignness with malignancy, playing upon the invasion fears of his audiences who, after a brief respite from Viking attacks in 995–997, were once again facing renewed raids. Ælfric's styling of the passage further contributes to his portrayal of the Ethiopians as foreign: he ornaments the text with phonic repetition of 'ea' / 'eo' and sustained alliteration of 'entes' / 'eagum' / 'egeslicum' / 'earmes'. These stylistic flourishes create a passage that is as remarkable phonically as it is in terms of

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<sup>43</sup> On the equation of extreme distance with extreme difference in patristic and medieval thought, see Cohen, 'Saracen', pp. 118–19.

content, and thereby draws further attention to the strangeness of the vision. For a writer so concerned with ensuring he did not present his audiences with any *ungeleaflic* material, Ælfric's rhetorical heightening of this section is particularly remarkable.<sup>44</sup> It should be noted that the life in which this episode takes place, *Julian and Basilissa*, is set outside the continent, in 'Egypta lande, on Antiochian þære byrig' ('Egypt, in the city of Antioch', l. 2). A very similar passage, in the life of the Roman saint Sebastian, is omitted by Ælfric. When describing hell in the *Lives of Sebastian*, he preserves the statement that 'dracon and næddrean mid deofollicum toðum / þære hæðenra breost biterlice ceowað' ('dragons and snakes with devilish teeth cruelly chew the breasts of heathens', l. 75), but removes the longer reference to the denizens of hell with various animalistic characteristics.<sup>45</sup> Therefore, he reserves more radical content for more peripheral geographies, since the more extreme and extended vision is only present in a non-continental life. In doing so, he suggests a difference between the wider world and the more local European community.

Similarly, the Chaldeans, another non-continental people, are always represented as fearsome and violent within the *Lives of Saints*.<sup>46</sup> In the *Memory of Saints*, Ælfric describes how Sidrach, Misach and Abednego were persecuted for their faith 'on Chaldea lande' (l. 36), and immediately follows this by narrating that Daniel was 'twa aworpen þurh ða woda Chaldeiscan / into leona seaðum' ('thrown twice into pits of lions by the furious Chaldeans', ll. 45–46). In choosing to place these two episodes next to each other (the Vulgate places

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<sup>44</sup> On Ælfric's fear of unbelievable materials, see for example, his comment in his *Catholic Homilies* that he avoided translating the life of St Thomas owing to Augustine's description of it as 'ungeleaflic' (*CH II XXXIV*, *Excusatio Dictantis*, ll. 9–10). See also Godden, 'Problem of Miracles'.

<sup>45</sup> Describing hell, Saint Sebastian says that it is a place: 'in qua atroces angeli commorantur, quorum brachia capita draconum sunt, quorum oculi ex se igneas sagittas iaculantur, quorum dentes sicut elephantis prominent, et stimulant ad tormentum veluti caudae scorpionum, quorum voces veluti leonum fremitus sonant' ('in which dreadful agents are present, whose arms are dragon heads, whose eyes throw out fiery arrows, whose teeth jut out like an elephant's, and who sting by torture as if the tails of scorpions, whose voices sound like the roar of lions'). *Passio Sebastiani*, c. 19. Text in 'Passio Sebastiani', in *Acta Sanctorum*, Ian, 2 (Antwerp, 1643), pp. 265–78.

<sup>46</sup> Chaldea was assimilated into Babylonia. The Old English 'Chaldea' / 'Chaldeisc' translates both the Latin names 'Babylon' and 'Chaldea'.

Sidrach, Misach and Abednego in Daniel 3, whilst the lion's den episode is in Daniel 6), Ælfric increases the sense that the Chaldeans are villainous. Later in the collection, in the *Life of Chrysanthus and Daria*, Claudius says that he has always managed to subdue acts of witchcraft, including 'þa Chaldeiscan wigleras, and þa wurmgaleras' ('the Chaldean magicians and snake-charmers', l. 176). The Latin source text is different, giving: 'Chaldeos et ariolos et incantatores' ('Chaldeans and diviners and enchanters', l. 328). Translating 'incantatores' to 'wurmgaleras' adds a bestial dimension to the depiction of the Chaldeans, heightened through alliteration with 'wigleras': whilst 'wurmgalera' can simply mean 'sorcerer', its root, 'wurm' ('lizard, serpent'), associates these men with danger and wild animals.<sup>47</sup> Ælfric's portrayal of the Chaldeans (a peripheral people) as dangerous and strange not only demarcates the strangeness of distant places, but also conversely highlights the familiarity of closer ones, tying England more closely to Europe.

#### CONFUSING HAPPENINGS OUTSIDE THE CONTINENT

Ælfric further distinguishes continental lives from those set outside the continent by minimising foreign occurrences found in European *vitae* but emphasising similar incidents in lives set outside the continent. In particular, material that might be deemed more 'questionable' or 'strange' by Ælfric is found almost exclusively in non-continental contexts. Hence, in the *Maccabees*, a text set in the Middle East, Ælfric describes elephants, explaining that 'sumum men wile þincan syllic þis to gehyrenne / forþan þe ylþas ne comon næfre on Englalande' ('some people will think that this is strange to hear, because elephants have

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<sup>47</sup> In the Old English glosses to Aldhelm's *De laude virginitatis*, 'wurmgalera' is used to gloss the Latin 'marsorum' and 'incantatores' (*The Old English Glosses of MS. Brussels, Royal Library 1650*, ed. L. Goossens (Brussels, 1974)).

never come to England’, ll. 565–66). Similarly, in the *Passio Georgii*, George prays for rain: ‘Dominus vero omnipotens aperiens cataractas coeli omnem aridam terram pluviarum nimbis inebriavit iugiter’ (‘then the all-powerful Lord, opening the watergates of heavens, drenched all the dry earth unendingly with torrents of rain’, c. XX).<sup>48</sup> In his translation, Ælfric adds that this request was made ‘forþan ðe se hæða þa hynde ða eorðan’ (‘because the heat was laying waste to the earth at that time’, l. 168), suggesting that Ælfric considered it too strange to otherwise make sense to his audience (who, living in England, would perhaps not have felt so inclined to pray for rain). Yet another admission of foreign strangeness occurs in the *Life of Thomas*, set in India, where Ælfric tells his audience that it is impossible to describe the Roman palace properly, since ‘swylc weorc nis gewunelic to wyrccenne on Englalande, / and forþy we ne secgað swutellice heora naman’ (‘it is not customary to make such buildings in England, and therefore we will not say their names clearly’, ll. 88–89).<sup>49</sup>

Whilst it has been previously noted that Ælfric frequently comments on the action throughout his homilies and hagiography, the above instances all suggest that Ælfric felt that the material presented might have been hard to understand correctly if he did not intervene.<sup>50</sup> The terms *syllic* and *gewunelic* emphasise the unintelligible nature of Ælfric’s source material to an English audience, and the conjunction *forþan* suggests that George’s prayer requires a clear explanation. More importantly, Ælfric highlights this potential for confusion to his audience, rather than silently guiding their understanding. The cumulative effect of these multiple admissions of potential misreading creates the sense, across the collection, that misunderstanding and strangeness are endemic to distant geographies. Ælfric therefore encourages the perception not only that places which are geographically far-away are

<sup>48</sup> ‘Passio Georgii’, in M. Huber, ‘Zur Georglegende’, in *Festschrift zum XII. Allgemeinen Deutschen Neuphilologentage in München, Pfingsten 1906*, ed. E. Stollreither (Erlangen, 1906), pp. 194–203.

<sup>49</sup> The Roman palace episode is discussed in detail in Chapter Four of this thesis.

<sup>50</sup> For Ælfric’s tendency for narratorial commentary see J. Wilcox, ‘A Reluctant Translator in the Late Anglo-Saxon England: Ælfric and the Maccabees’, *Enarratio* 2 (1993), 1–18, at pp. 5–6.

confusing, but also, necessarily, by comparison, the sense that closer geographies are more comprehensible and familiar.

As well as only suggesting the potential for misinterpretation in non-continental saints' lives, Ælfric also restricts comments on problematic source material to these texts. The *Life of Thomas* also includes a Latin preface, in which Ælfric notes his discomfort with translating the text and complains of an episode in the source involving a 'pincerno cuius manum niger canis in convivium portare deberet' ('a cupbearer whose hand a black dog is said to have carried to a feast'), which he claims that Augustine has deemed 'non [...] in Catholico canone' ('not in the Catholic Canon'). He also laments his source material in the *Life of George*, a Cappadocian saint, complaining that:

Gedwol-men awriton gedwyld on heora bocum  
be ðam halgan were ðe is gehaten Georgius.  
Nu wille we eow secgan þæt soð is be ðam,  
þæt heora gedwyld ne derige digellice ænigum.

(Ælfric, *George*, ll. 1–4)

[‘Heretics have written heresy in their books about the holy man who is called George. We wish now to tell you the truth about him, so that their heresy may not secretly harm anyone.’]

Joyce Hill has noted that this comment regarding the heretical nature of George's *passio* is not found in any versions of Ælfric's source, and as such must have been his own.<sup>51</sup> The repetition of 'gedwol/gedwyld' (an important Ælfrician word), highlights the idea of heretical material, and its interlace with words pertaining to knowledge and schooling (*awriton*, *bocum*) suggests the insidious nature of heresy to permeate teaching.<sup>52</sup> This is only further stressed by the alliteration of 'gedwyld', 'derige' and 'digellice', emphasising the harmful

<sup>51</sup> J. Hill, 'Ælfric, Gelasius, and St George', *Mediaevalia* 11 (1989), 1–17, at p. 2.

<sup>52</sup> On Ælfric's use of the term *gedwyld*, see N. O. Halvorson, *Doctrinal Terms in Ælfric's Homilies* (Iowa City, 1932), p. 40; Godden, 'Vernacular Prose Tradition', p. 102; S. DeGregorio, "'Pegenlic" or "flæsclic": The Old English Prose Legends of St Andrew', *JEGP* 102 (2003), 449–64, at pp. 461–62.

nature of erroneous material. Similarly, in the *Life of Thomas*, the fact that the preface is written in Latin, not the vernacular, emphasises the perceived danger of apocryphal texts, since Ælfric denies access even to his arguments against the *Passio Thomae* to anybody without Latin literacy (and by extension, a monastic education). These comments about problematic sources are uniquely found in the *Lives* of non-European saints. Over the course of the whole collection, then, once again, audiences are presented with the idea that far-away places are more likely to be linked to damaging material.

Whilst some *Lives* set in *Europa* do include additional notes or information included by Ælfric, these tend not to suggest the possibility of misinterpretation. For example, in the *Life of Agatha*, he adds a section describing Etna:<sup>53</sup>

On þære ylcan scire Sicilian landes  
is an byrnende munt, þone men hatað Ethna,  
onæled mid *sulphore*, þæt is swæfel on Englisc.

(Ælfric, *Agatha*, ll. 217–19)

[In that same province in the land of Sicily is a burning mountain,  
which people call ‘Etna’, burning with *sulphore*, which is sulfur in  
English.]

Compared to the previous examples, Ælfric’s handling of this material is markedly different. He does not address the idea of disbelief or falsity suggested by *syllic* and *gedwyld*, nor the potential for misunderstanding expressed by ‘we ne secgað swutellice heora naman’. Neither does he suggest that this material might otherwise be dangerous or harmful. This, therefore, represents a very different kind of intervention than those seen above in non-continental saints’ lives.

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<sup>53</sup> Etna is also described in *The Wonders of the East*: ‘in Sicilia, ubi Aetnae montis incendium legitur’ (‘in Sicily, where the flame of Mount Etna is read about’, I.11) (text and trans. Orchard, pp. 265–66).

The supposition that this distinction is based on Ælfric's perception of the continent is supported by two instances at the beginning of the collection, involving the *Life of Eugenia*, a Roman saint. Firstly, Ælfric makes an explicatory comment, stating that the reason Philip is heathen is 'forþan þe cristendom næs þa gyt geond eall cuð' ('because Christianity was not yet known to all', l. 12). However, he juxtaposes this with the names of distant, non-European places: 'ofer Alexandrian and Ægypto lande' ('over Alexandria and Egypt', l. 10). In doing so, he provides his audience with an explanation of Philip's heathenism and difference of culture whilst they still have the idea of distant places fresh in their minds. He achieves this by delaying the information: despite the fact that the explanation about heathenism relates to Philip, Ælfric does not note Philip's lack of Christianity when he introduces the character: 'sum æpel-boren þægn wæs Philippus gehaten' ('a high-born nobleman was called Philip', l. 5). Rather, he withholds this information until after he has described Philip's allocation to Alexandria. As such, Ælfric can be seen consciously retaining admissions of cultural difference for specific geographies. In doing so, he subtly suggests to his audiences that places in Europe are more culturally similar to each other than to those places further afield.

Secondly, Ælfric does not discuss the cultural strangeness of Eugenia's secular upbringing to a vernacular audience in her own *Life*, but rather waits until the *Life of Basil*, an Eastern saint whose narrative is primarily set in Antioch. When discussing Basil's education, Ælfric chooses to tell his audiences that:

On þam timan ne teah nan aðel-borennysse  
 nænne man to wurðscype butan he wisdom  
 ær ðam lange leornode æt gelæredum uðwytum.  
 Þa wunode se cnæplingc on Cappadoniscre byrig  
 fif gear on lare and ferde to Grecum.

(Ælfric, *Basil*, ll. 6–8)

[At that time nobility of birth did not bring a man honour unless he had learned wisdom for a long time from learned philosophers. Then the boy lived in a Cappadocian city five years, learning, and went to the Greeks.]

The fact that this statement occurs in the *Life of Basil* not the *Life of Eugenia* — which occurs before *Basil* in Ælfric's *sanctorale*, and similarly features noble, secular education — may indicate Ælfric's desire to emphasise difference in non-continental contexts rather than continental ones. Corona argues that 'just as in [the *Life of Basil*], in *Eugenia* Ælfric feels compelled to reiterate the notion that in those ancient times no man or woman was worthy unless he or she knew about *woruldwisdom*'.<sup>54</sup> However, Ælfric does not intervene in the *Life of Eugenia* to give a narratorial note stating that this practice happened 'on þam timan' or explaining cultural differences. Though he attaches this variance of education to time period rather than to place, it is nonetheless evident that he only highlights this difference in a non-continental *Life*. Whilst Basil's *Life* does mention Greece shortly after this, as previously discussed, Ælfric presents Greece as a cultural borderland. Moreover, the invocation of the 'Cappadoniscre byrig' places the life outside Europe. Ælfric is here choosing to restrict the kind of information he provides his audiences with based on the geographical location involved, consolidating the sense, across the *Lives of Saints*, of 'the continent'.

There is, then, in the *Lives of Saints*, a specific geographical space which is represented as having a shared culture distinct from the rest of the world. This space is located in Europe as understood by Orosius and Bede, with Greece at its Eastern border, and is largely defined by its opposite, with places further away being presented as more strange, heretical or even monstrous to Ælfric's audience. Thus far I have largely spoken about places outside the continent, and how they contribute to its definition. Now that this space has been established,

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<sup>54</sup> Corona, *Basil*, p. 105.

however, I will turn to those places *inside* the continent, and the ways in which Ælfric presents them to his audiences.

### III: THE CHARACTERISATION OF CONTINENTAL PLACES

Though Francia, Sicily or Greece might have been portrayed as being close to England compared to India or the Middle East, continental places were nonetheless foreign to some of Ælfric's vernacular milieu. In Ælfric's *sanctorale*, the Frankish St Maurus stands alongside the Roman martyr St Sebastian; and the *passio* of the almost-contemporary native saint Edmund is found between the lives of two much earlier continental saints, Martin and Cecilia. Though some of the continental geographies that feature as settings for the *Lives* may have been known to members of his audience, others would be less familiar, with many perhaps encountered for the first time. As such, how Ælfric chose to translate descriptions of these places — which geographical or cultural details he kept from his sources, which he left out, and which he altered — affected how his audiences perceived the world outside England. How, then, did Ælfric represent continental locations to people who might never have seen or imagined them before?

In Michelet's 2006 study of Old English poetic hagiography, she notes the importance of place and travel to the project of saints' lives, and suggests that examination of the prose corpus may further 'illuminate' the ways in which space, land and territory function in these texts.<sup>55</sup> Despite this, there has been no work done on the representation of places in the *Lives of Saints*. There is perhaps a practical reason for this: Ælfric's references to specific places within the *Lives of Saints* are often fleeting, rarely occupying more than a couple of lines.

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<sup>55</sup> Michelet, *Creation*, pp. 163–97.

Most descriptions of continental places outside Rome do not run any further than the inclusion of a toponym, reference to a single topographical feature, or brief mention of the weather typical of a certain place. For example, Aquileia, an Italian city, is referred to only in relation to the events that happen there: Valentinian ‘beferde Maximum / binnan anre byrig Aquileiam gehaten, / and hine þær ohsloh’ (‘surrounded Maximus in a city named Aquileia, and killed him there’, *Martin*, ll. 647–49). Similarly, in his *Life of Oswald*, Ælfric refers to ‘sancte Petres mynstre / binnan Bebbanbyrig, be þære sæ strande’ (‘Saint Peter’s Minster in Bamburgh, by the seashore’, ll. 173–74) to inform his audience that a relic of the saint was housed there. These descriptions give little sense of place, and do not lend themselves to the study of setting.

However, places are often encountered multiple times across the collection, in multiple *vitae*, and it is possible to build a mental image of the locations that the saints lived, suffered and died in over the course of the *sanctorale*. Accordingly, continental cities and countries begin to take on individual features — Greece, for example, stands out as a place of secular learning, Francia as an environment of secular and monastic cooperation and Milan as the home of great Christian thinkers of the past. Discenza has suggested that ‘over the course of his homilies, Ælfric’s audience built a sense of the history of Egypt’.<sup>56</sup> I argue that in the *Lives of Saints* Ælfric similarly builds a sense of place over the course of the work, and that it is only in considering the collection as a whole that a sense of individual place can come to the fore.

Through his presentation of a range of individual places that are nonetheless part of one community of ideas and practice, Ælfric uses the continental settings of his *Lives of Saints* to underpin his didactic message. From its very earliest iterations on the continent, the

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<sup>56</sup> Discenza, *Space*, p. 88.

Benedictine Reform was driven largely by the desire to unify a range of disparate Christian groups.<sup>57</sup> This same ideal certainly lay at the heart of the English Benedictine effort, with Æthelwold lamenting that even amongst those who had adopted the Benedictine Rule, differing observances might harm monastic practice.<sup>58</sup> However, as a second-generation reformer, Ælfric's interest in unity was perhaps more complex than that held by his forebears. The short-lived but vicious 'anti-monastic' reaction of the 970s, whilst understood to have been primarily motivated by political alliances rather than religious ones, had nonetheless demonstrated that the monastic landscape was easily damaged by political unrest.<sup>59</sup> The lack of a coherent English approach to the Viking raids was certainly the source of much lamentation in the 990s. The Chronicle records, for example, how Ealdorman Ælfric of Hampshire betrayed his own English force, leading to their defeat in 992, and Fræna, Godwine and Frithugist deserted their forces in 993.<sup>60</sup> The Peterborough Chronicle also complains that the Kentish forces were defeated by Danes in 995 'forþam þe hi næfdon fultum þe hi habban sceoldan' ('because they did not have the support that they should have had').<sup>61</sup> The promulgation of unity, both monastic and national, was therefore of even more interest to Ælfric than it was to his predecessors.

In terms of religious unity, Ælfric also had to contend with a landscape that was far less regular than the one Æthelwold aspired to. He seems to have been acutely aware of this. Robert Upchurch has demonstrated that the sacerdotal vocabulary used by Ælfric in

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<sup>57</sup> Wormald, 'Æthelwold', pp. 18–19.

<sup>58</sup> Æthelwold complains of monks and nuns who tried to pursue sanctity 'certatim' ('with rivalry / in competition') with one another, and states that the reason for the Winchester Synodal Council was to ensure one use: 'ne impar ac uarius unius regulæ ac unius patriæ usus probrose uituperium sanctæ conuersationi irrogaret' ('lest differing ways of observing the customs of one Rule and one country should bring their holy conversation into disrepute'), *RC*, pro. 4.

<sup>59</sup> Blair, *Church*, pp. 354–55.

<sup>60</sup> *ASC* EF 992, 993.

<sup>61</sup> *ASC* E 999. This is unique to the Peterborough manuscript, and is not found in any other version of the Chronicle. David Dumville suggests that this comment was perhaps the result of a later partisan chronicler: 'Some Aspects of Annalistic Writing at Canterbury in the Eleventh and Early Twelfth Centuries', *Peritia* 2 (1983), 23–57, at p. 30.

manuscript K (containing a range of materials suitable for pastoral care) rarely distinguishes between monastic and secular clergy.<sup>62</sup> Ælfric's notes in the Old English preface to the *Lives* regarding proper copying suggest he envisions the text having a wider audience, and it is inevitable that this would also include secular clergy.<sup>63</sup> Gretsich has previously highlighted the way that Ælfric's choice of saints whose lives celebrated collective resistance, such as the Forty Soldiers and Maurice, reveals his particular interest in communal action and unified practice across a group of individuals.<sup>64</sup> Christopher Jones has also noted Ælfric's apparent desire to suppress the sense of holy space as being purely monastic, in recognition of the mixed landscape that he was writing into, which encompassed both secular and regular observers.<sup>65</sup> In examining the way that continental locations are represented across the collection, it becomes clear that place also played a key part in Ælfric's edification of his audience, since his various continental settings enabled him to present disparate locations as being part of a single, coherent whole.

The following survey examines Ælfric's representations of continental places across the *Lives of Saints*. The exception to this is Rome, the most frequently mentioned place in the collection: because Rome occupies such a special position not only in the *Lives*, but also in the early medieval English imagination, it is covered separately in the final chapter of this thesis. This survey does not aim to consider every place mentioned by Ælfric, but rather to draw attention to those to which he gave sustained attention, either through repeated reference in a single *Life* or mention across multiple *Lives*. When Ælfric's depictions of these places are examined, it becomes clear that he presented some locations as having specific,

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<sup>62</sup> R. Upchurch, 'Shepherding the Shepherds in the Ways of Pastoral Care: Ælfric and Cambridge University Library, MS Gg.3.28', in *Saints and Scholars: New Perspectives on Anglo-Saxon Literature and Culture in Honour of Hugh Magennis*, ed. S. McWilliams (Cambridge, 2012), pp. 54–74, at pp. 72–73.

<sup>63</sup> *LOS OE pref.* 5.

<sup>64</sup> Gretsich, *Ælfric*, p. 4.

<sup>65</sup> Jones, 'Limits', pp. 99–103.

individual characteristics. For Ælfric and his audiences, the continent was not simply one homogenous entity, but rather encompassed a range of distinct cities and countries with their own identities. It is the diversity of these places that allowed their unity within the *Lives of Saints* to provide edification, since it demonstrated that they could be part of one geographical and cultural community whilst still acknowledging their inherent differences. As such, Ælfric was able to use continental settings to demonstrate one of the core tenets of the Benedictine Reform: unity.

### GREECE

As discussed above, the *Life of Basil* depicts Greece as a place on the border of *Europa*, whose monastic customs differ from those used by its Western neighbours. The portrayal of Greece throughout the collection similarly emphasises the country's liminal position. Greece is at once continental and a gateway to the eastern parts of the world, and learned but also secular.

Within the *Lives of Saints*, Greece is depicted as a place of secular wisdom, learning and achievement. The difference between Latin and Greek learning is established in the very first hagiographical item in the collection, the *Life of Eugenia*, when Ælfric writes that the saint received her education 'æfter Greciscre uðwytegunge and Lædenre getingnysse' ('following Greek philosophy and Latin eloquence', l. 21). In this, Ælfric departs from his source, which describes Eugenia's education as: 'tam latino eam quam greco eloquio instruxisset' ('she had been so well instructed in Latin and Greek eloquence').<sup>66</sup> Not only

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<sup>66</sup> *Vita Eugeniae* c. 3. The closest printed version to the text found in the Cotton-Corpus Legendary is found in Á. Fábrega Grau, ed., *Pasionario Hispánico* (Madrid, 1953–55), pp. 83–98.

does he add a sense of separation between Greek and Latin schooling that is not found in the Latin texts, but also rearranges the Latin to place Greek learning first. Right from the beginning of the collection, the exceptionalism of Greek education is made apparent, but also the cultural distance between the Greek and Latin worlds.

Immediately following from the *Life of Eugenia* is the *Life of Basil*, which similarly highlights Greek wisdom. Athens is described as a city ‘seo wæs þa bremost on lære’ (‘which was most renowned for wisdom’, l. 11), in which Basil meets Eubolus, ‘þe þær yldost wæs on wysdome’ (‘who was the most advanced in wisdom, l. 12). The idea of Athens as a place of great secular learning is also found in Ælfric’s source, the *Vita Basilii*, which describes Athens as ‘matrem uerborum’ (‘the motherland of words’, l. 9).<sup>67</sup> The Latin text also depicts Eubolus as a wise man by designating him as ‘praeceptor’ (‘teacher’, l. 11). However, Ælfric’s styling of this information pairs the syntax of the two descriptions, using a superlative with ‘on’ (‘bremost on’, ‘yldost on’), followed by a noun pertaining to the idea of knowledge (‘lære’, ‘wysdome’). The resulting text is one that emphasises the exceptionalism of Greek learning more than the Latin source text. Whilst Corona has demonstrated that in the *Life of Basil*, Ælfric emphasises Basil’s dissatisfaction with secular schooling and the importance of his shift from heathen to Christian knowledge more so than his Latin source did, I argue that the description of his early education nonetheless highlights Greece as a place associated with great wisdom.<sup>68</sup>

Moreover, the word *uðwita* (‘philosopher, scholar’) occurs overwhelmingly in Greek contexts within the *Lives of Saints*, suggesting that Greece is a place associated with secular knowledge.<sup>69</sup> Across the Old English corpus, *uðwita* frequently references secular learning,

<sup>67</sup> The *Vita Basilii* is printed in Corona, *Basil*, pp. 224–47.

<sup>68</sup> Corona, *Basil*, pp. 99–102.

<sup>69</sup> In the *Lives*, the term is found in non-Greek contexts three times: once in the *Life of Basil* to refer to education more generally (l. 209), once in the *Life of Julian and Basilissa* (l. 186) and twice in the *Life of Chrysanthus and Daria* (ll. 9 and 83). However, it occurs twice in the *Life of Eugenia* in connection with the saint’s Greek

particularly the Classical knowledge of Greek and Roman scholars.<sup>70</sup> Indeed, the association of Greeks with knowledge was by no means unique to Ælfric. In studying collocations associated with terms for Greeks and Greece, Olga Timofeeva has demonstrated that words for Greek people are most often found alongside verbs of speech or writing in Old English and Anglo-Latin sources.<sup>71</sup> However, in *Solomon and Saturn I*, Greek knowledge is represented as being secular. Saturn boasts that he has ‘larcraeftas onlocen Libia and Greca / swylce eac istoriam Indea rices’ (‘unlocked the sciences of the Libyans and the Greeks, likewise also the history of the empire of the Indians’, ll. 4–5), yet this wealth of learning is proven to be insufficient since it has not taught Saturn the Pater Noster.<sup>72</sup>

The emphasis on the secular nature of Greek learning is similarly found in the *Lives of Saints*. Athens is also referenced later in the collection, in the *Life of Dionysius*. Here, once again, Greece is associated with learning and achievement. However, the country is also closely linked to heathenism and secularity. Ælfric writes that the apostle Paul came:

to sumere mæran byrig  
 Athenas gehaten, healic and mære,  
 þære Greciscra heafod-burh, on hæðenscipe wunigende.  
 Þær wæs Dionisius, se deor-wurða martyr,  
 þæra hæpenra lareow on heora geleafleaste.

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learning (ll. 21 and 23); five times in the *Life of Basil* to refer to Eubolus, Basil’s Greek teacher (ll. 12, 15, 41, 45 and 131); and once in the *Life of Dionysius* to refer to the other philosophers with whom the Greek saint studied in Egypt (l. 9). To this list may perhaps be added one usage which, although it describes Basil’s secular education more generally, is narratively linked to Greece through collocation (*Basil*, l. 8).

<sup>70</sup> The noun *uðwita* is relatively uncommon. It is used to describe classical scholars in several Old English texts: in the Old English *Boethius*, Plato, Cato, Aristotle, Epicurus and Seneca are all described as *uðwita*; similarly in the *Meters of Boethius* the term is used to describe Cato and Plato; Ælfric also describes Plato as *uðwita* in his *Letter to Sigeward*. In other contexts, the term is associated with classical learning: in the Old English *Soliloquies*, *uðwita* is used to define the Greek loanword *Achapemicos*, and Byrhtferth introduces several Latin astrological terms by stating that ‘uðwitan hatað [Latin lemma]’. The term is associated with age in *Precepts*, *Meters*, *Brunanburh*, *Menologium* and *Byrhtferth’s Enchiridion*, where it is collocated with *eald*. See J. Bately, ‘Upwita / Philosophus Revisited: A Reflection on Usage’, in *Essays on Anglo-Saxon and Related Themes in Memory of Lynne Grundy*, ed. J. Roberts and J. L. Nelson (London, 2000), pp. 15–36. Donald G. Scragg suggests that *uðwita* was associated particularly with Alfred and Winchester: ‘A Reading of *Brunanburh*’, in *Unlocking the Wordhord: Anglo-Saxon Studies in Memory of Edward B. Irving, Jr*, ed. M. C. Amodio and K. O’Brien O’Keeffe (Toronto, 2003), pp. 109–22, at pp. 118–19.

<sup>71</sup> O. Timofeeva, ‘“Bide Nu Æt Bæt Ic Grecisc Cunne”: Attitudes to Greek and the Greeks in the Anglo-Saxon Period’, *Studia Anglica Posnaniensia* 51 (2016), 5–29, at pp. 19–22.

<sup>72</sup> Text and trans. in ‘Solomon and Saturn I’, *The Old English Dialogues of Solomon and Saturn*, ed. and trans. D. Anlezark (Woodbridge, 2009), pp. 60–71.

(Ælfric, *Dionysius*, ll. 3–7)

[to a great city called Athens, glorious and illustrious, the capital city of the Greeks, who were living in heathenism. There Dionysius, the worthy martyr, was the teacher of the heathens in their disbelief.]

This description of Athens, which is discussed in greater detail in Chapter Three, is reduced considerably from Ælfric's Latin source material: Hilduin stresses Athens' numerous achievements, and includes a list of its famous kings and philosophers.<sup>73</sup> However, whilst Hilduin greatly abbreviates the details of Greek secular achievement, Ælfric nonetheless portrays the city as a glorious one through heightened diction. For example, Ælfric's repetition of 'mære' and assonance between 'healic' and 'heafod-burh' stress the achievement of the city. Ælfric also collocates 'healic' and 'heafodburh' in his *Life of Eugenia* to describe how the saint's brothers were assigned to different posts. Here, the alliteration of 'healic' and 'heafodburh' emphasises the prestige of this appointment: 'twam heafod-burgum on healicum wurð-mynte,/ ænne on Affrican and oðerne on Cartagine' ('two capital cities with high honour, one in Africa and the other in Carthage', ll. 321–22). However, in the *Life of Dionysius*, *heafod-burh* is also alliterated with *hæðen*, indicating that, whilst Athens has a glorious reputation, this reputation is based upon secular rather than Christian achievement. Here, Ælfric's style mirrors the content of his argument: just as the alliteration of the passage sees 'healic' end with 'hæðen', so too does pagan learning have an unsatisfactory end point without the addition of Christian knowledge.

All of the saints who receive Greek education in the *Lives of Saints* are shown converting their secular achievements into pious ones — like Saturn in *Solomon and Saturn I*, they must receive knowledge of Christian doctrine in order to truly become learned. Eugenia's

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<sup>73</sup> Hilduin, *Passio S Dionysii*, c. 2:16–20.

education in ‘Greciscre uðwytegunge’ is transformed when she encounters ‘þæs halgan apostoles lar’ (‘the teaching of the holy apostle’, l. 24); Dionysius, despite being an accomplished secular thinker, is unable to truly make use of this learning until ‘him com þæt leoht to þurh Paules lare syððan’ (‘the light came to him later through Paul’s teaching’, l. 18). The necessity for the saint to move from secular to religious knowledge serves to explain Ælfric’s conspicuous removal of a passage in the *Vita Basilii* in which Basil translates a passage from Homer for the students of Libanius the sophist.<sup>74</sup> Corona has suggested that Ælfric omitted this section because it showed Basil’s failure to convert Libanius, and also because it was ‘long and convoluted’.<sup>75</sup> However, another possible reason for his omission lies in its relation to specifically secular knowledge. By this point in the *Life*, Basil has already converted: his pagan education has come to fruition through his turn to Christ. A description of Greek schooling, philosophy and literature at this point in the text would thus complicate Ælfric’s presentation of Basil’s shift from secular to saintly. Greek learning, for Ælfric, specifically represents the secular world of nobility, which the saint is supposed to have forsaken in his route to sainthood.

Whilst the Greek language is also referred to later in the *Life*, when Ephrem the Syrian wishes to learn it, this is in a specifically miraculous context, in which his education is facilitated by prayer, and cannot be compared to the classroom education received by Basil and Eugenia.<sup>76</sup> Moreover, Ephrem does not wish to have access to Greek *lar*, but the ‘Greciscum gereorde’ (‘Greek tongue’, l. 522): the emphasis of the miracle is specifically on speech and language, rather than on philosophy or knowledge. Moreover, unlike his Latin source, Ælfric only mentions Ephrem’s interpreter (‘wealh-stod’, l. 526) at the end of the episode, rather than when the two men first meet. This alteration allows the miracle itself to

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<sup>74</sup> *Vita Basilii*, c. 1, ll. 96–105.

<sup>75</sup> Corona, *Basil*, pp. 191–92.

<sup>76</sup> *Basil*, ll. 510–25.

be framed by the idea of translation and language, and also serves to remind the audience of the value of the miracle, which is that Ephrem no longer requires an interpreter.<sup>77</sup> The miracle itself is described with words pertaining to speech: ‘hi cneowdon þa æft and Æffrem þa spræc / mid Greciscum gereorde, God herigende’ (‘then they knelt again, and Ephrem then spoke with the Greek tongue, praising God’, ll. 521–22). The subtle phonic echoes between ‘gereorde’ (‘speech/language/tongue’) and ‘herigende’ (‘praise’) suggests that Ephrem’s language skill is uniquely suited to the service of God. As such, this miracle, and the Greek language, is clearly distinct from the ‘Greciscre uðwytegunge’ acquired by Basil and Eugenia in their youth.

By emphasising both its renown and its heathenism, Ælfric uses Greece as a means to explore both the importance of education and the need for secular learning to be supplemented with Christian knowledge in order to reach its full potential. Moreover, he presents his audience with the sense that Greece is on the periphery of the continent. He characterises Greek learning as distinct from Latin learning, and moreover, highlights Greece’s association with secularity throughout the *Lives of Saints*. In this way, Greece functions as a sort of borderland in the *Lives of Saints*, between the Christian and heathen worlds, and between East and West.

## MILAN

Milan is mentioned in three items within the *Lives of Saints*, and like Athens, is always presented as a place of learning. However, in contrast to Athens, Milan is envisioned as a

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<sup>77</sup> When Ephrem first speaks to Basil in the *Vita Basilii*, it is ‘per interpretem’ (‘through a translator’, c. 15, l. 25)

specifically Christian site, home to saints, monks and church Fathers. For Ælfric, Milan was particularly associated with the church father Ambrose: of the eight uses of the name ‘Mediolana’ in his corpus, three of them are collocated with ‘Ambrosius’.<sup>78</sup> In the *Life of Martin*, Ælfric refers to ‘Ambrosius, se bisceop / on Mediolana byrig’ (‘Ambrose, the bishop of Milan’, ll. 1412–13). Here, he was following his Latin source: Gregory of Tours, in his *De virtutibus sancti Martini episcopi*, alerts his audiences to the fact that ‘Mediolanensi civitati praeerat episcopus’ (‘he was the bishop in charge of the city of Milan’, 1.5).<sup>79</sup> However, in other instances, Ælfric adds the collocation in himself. As discussed above, in the *Life of Agnes* he names Ambrose as his source, and links him to Milan: ‘Ambrosius bisceop binnan Mediolana / afunde on ealdum bocum be ðære eadigan Agne’ (‘Bishop Ambrose in Milan, found out about the blessed Agnes in old books’, ll. 1–2). The envelope pattern of alliteration (‘bisceop, binnan, bocum’) framing the name ‘Mediolana’ surrounds it syntactically and conceptually with ideas of Christian accomplishment and learning. Moreover, the association of Milan with ‘ealdum bocum’ presents it as a place with a history of Christian learning.

It has been argued that this addition to the *Life of Agnes* represents a desire on Ælfric’s part to imbue his text with authority and gravitas. Christine Phillips notes that Ælfric seems to have been the first writer to attach the city of Milan to the *Passio Agnetis*, and suggests that he did so ‘in order to make it clear that the work was penned by one of the four great Fathers of the Western Church’.<sup>80</sup> Mary-Kate Hurley similarly argues that Ælfric wished to tie his text to a ‘textual community’.<sup>81</sup> However, Ælfric’s statement that he is translating from a text originating in Milan also allows him to explore the idea of

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<sup>78</sup> Data taken from the *DOEC*.

<sup>79</sup> Gregory of Tours, ‘De virtutibus sancti Martini episcopi’, in *Gregorii episcopi Turonensis miracula et opera minora*, MGH SRM 1.2, ed. B. Krusch (Hanover, 1969), pp. 584–661.

<sup>80</sup> C. Phillips, ‘Materials for the Study of the Cult of Saint Agnes of Rome in Anglo-Saxon England: Texts and Interpretations’ (unpubl. PhD dissertation, Univ. of York, 2008), pp. 106–07, n. 28.

<sup>81</sup> M. K. Hurley, ‘Communities in Translation: History and Identity in Medieval England’ (unpubl. PhD dissertation, Columbia Univ., 2013), pp. 66–67.

*geographical* community. Moreover, Ælfric's interest in presenting Milan as a particularly learned space must not be overlooked, since this is also witnessed in his other items in the *Lives of Saints* and the *Catholic Homilies*. In an addition made to his homily *Dominica XII Post Pentecosten*, Ælfric writes: 'ða wæs sum mære biscop, ambrosius gehaten, on mediolanabyrig, swiðe breme lareow and swiðe anræde mann' ('there was a great bishop, called Ambrosius, in Milan, very renowned for learning, and a very steadfast man', ll. 38–40).<sup>82</sup> Here, Ælfric follows his Latin source in naming both Ambrose and Milan, but adds the description of Ambrose's learned nature.<sup>83</sup> Moreover, whilst his source uses the word 'Mediolani' in association with the 'princeps' ('leader') of Milan, Ælfric instead takes the opportunity to link Milan to Ambrose. As such, his presentation of Milan in the *Life of Agnes* ought not to be thought of as simply part of Ælfric's desire to justify his text, but as part of his wider desire to highlight Milan as a site of Christian learning. As such, his invocation of the city at the beginning of the text was a moment in which he was providing his audience not only with a textual tradition, but with a sense of the Christian world around them.

However, Ambrose was not the only person with whom Milan was linked within the collection. The city is also referenced in the opening to the *Life of Sebastian*, which sees Ælfric write that the saint 'wæs lange on lare on Mediolana byrig' ('he studied for a long time in the city of Milan', l. 2). Ælfric's Latin source also gives Sebastian's place of birth, Narbonne.<sup>84</sup> By contrast, Ælfric does not reference Narbonne at all — potentially because it is never referenced in any other lives in the collection, whilst Milan is named six times, and was

<sup>82</sup> 'Theodosius and Ambrose', *Homilies of Ælfric: A Supplementary Collection*, ed. J. Pope, 2 vols, EETS o.s. 259 and 260 (London, 1967–1968), vol. 2, pp. 762–69.

<sup>83</sup> *Hist. Eccl. Tripartita*, IX. 30. 'Ambrosius, cum princeps Mediolani venisset' ('Ambrose, when the leader of the Milanese might have come').

<sup>84</sup> The Cotton-Corpus version emphasises Sebastian's birth as well as his education: 'Sebastianus vir Christianissimus Mediolanensium eruditus cuius vero Narbonensis oriundus' ('Sebastian, a most Christian man, was instructed in Milan, but was born a citizen of Narbonne', f. 102r). The print edition gives 'Sebastianus vir Christianissimus Mediolanensium partibus eruditus cuius vero Narbonensis' ('Sebastian, a most Christian man, was instructed in the region of Milan but was a citizen of Narbonne', *Passio Sebastiani*, I.1)

evidently seen as a prestigious place by Ælfric owing to its connection with Ambrose. In linking Sebastian to Milan, Ælfric was not only able to provide his audience with a reference to a city that they had already built some knowledge of but was also able to heighten Sebastian's noble origins by tying his pre-saintly life to a city of Christian learning. Once again, this adds to the audience's awareness of Milan, and emphasises the city's venerable history.

Later in the collection, Milan's heritage is further celebrated: in the *Life of Martin*, the eponymous saint himself establishes a monastery there. Ælfric writes that Martin 'ferde þa on gear to Italian lande / and on Mediolana him mynster arærde' ('went back to Italy then, and he established a monastery in Milan', ll. 188–89). This information is then repeated at the end of the *Life*, when the people of Tours and the people of Poitiers argue over the body of the saint: the people of Tours point out that 'he on Mediolana ærest mynster hæfde' ('he had a monastery in Milan first', l. 1467). Though these instances are both taken from Ælfric's Latin sources, Sulpicius Severus' *Vita Martini* and Gregory of Tours' *Historia Francorum*, and the combination of these two sources is not unique to Ælfric (they occur together in the Cotton-Corpus Legendary), the repeated alliteration of 'Mediolana' with 'mynster' in the Old English text emphasises the city's Christian credentials.

In the *Lives of Saints*, Milan is therefore depicted as an important site of Christian accomplishment throughout the ages. The invocation of this important Christian centre in various texts across Ælfric's *sanctorale* aids the sense of the city's continued accomplishment, since it is reencountered throughout the year. Ælfric made alterations and additions to his sources in order to present Milan repeatedly as a place of Christian learning, and to associate it with saintliness.

## RAVENNA

Ravenna is mentioned five times during the *Lives of Saints*, all of them within the *Life of Apollinaris*. Ravenna may have already been known to some of Ælfric's vernacular audiences through the *Dialogues* of Gregory the Great, which refer to the city four times by name.<sup>85</sup> Each of the references in the *Dialogues* is brief, and gives an Old English audience little knowledge of the city's geography or character. However, as Discenza has argued, repetition of place names in Old English literature established a sense of familiarity for audiences.<sup>86</sup> In Ælfric's invocation of the name 'Ravenna' five times within a short *Life* of only 253 lines, we see him utilising this sense of repetition to increase his audience's recognition of the city.

Though the Latin version of the text as it is found in the Cotton-Corpus Legendary also insistently repeated the city's name, Ælfric did not always slavishly follow his sources, and in many cases removed toponyms. Indeed, it is very unusual for him to repeat a toponym so many times in a single *Life*. In the *Forty Soldiers*, for example, Sebaste is referenced only once (l. 9); in the *Life of Maurice*, Octodorus (Martigny), the place that serves as setting for almost the entire text, is similarly only named a single time (l. 30). Even when names were repeated by Ælfric, they were rarely repeated often: in the *Life of Agatha*, Sicily is named twice (ll. 1 and 217), and even in the life of a British saint, *Alban*, England is only mentioned by name three times (ll. 1, 16 and 133). The only other place to receive such insistent named reference is Rome, which is mentioned five times in the *Life of Eugenia* (ll. 5, 295, 314, 322 and 326) and four times in the *Life of Dionysius* (ll. 109, 115, 124 and 198). Further, it does not seem that Ælfric used 'Rauenna' for purely stylistic purposes. The toponym is never

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<sup>85</sup> *Bischof Waerferths von Worcester Uebersetzung der Dialoge Gregors des Grossen*, pp. 14–90. Strikingly, whilst the Latin *De consolatione* states that the narrator of the text is imprisoned in Ravenna, the Old English *Boethius* does not mention Ravenna by name: Discenza, *Inhabited*, pp. 72, 87. The Old English *Orosius* does not mention Ravenna.

<sup>86</sup> Discenza, *Inhabited*, pp. 73–82.

alliterated — any alliteration happens on the word ‘byrig’, not ‘Ravenna’. It also seems unlikely that ‘Rauenna’ was used simply out of a desire for lexical variation, since it almost always occurs alongside ‘byrig’, the same word that is used to refer to it elsewhere in the *Life*.<sup>87</sup> Ælfric’s insistence upon the name ‘Rauenna’, then, is unusual, and suggests a desire to ensure that his audiences were familiar with the city.

Ælfric never states explicitly where Ravenna is located. Indeed, there is very little geographic information in the Old English *Life*, and the only use of specific locational detail is a reference to the distance between Ravenna and the estate that Apollinaris takes refuge in to avoid exile.<sup>88</sup> However, Ælfric establishes the estate’s ties to Rome through the opening lines of the *Life*, in which ‘com se eadiga Petrus fram Antiochan byrig / into Romebyrig’ (‘the blessed Peter came from the city of Antioch into the city of Rome’, ll. 2–3). This link is re-established towards the end of the end of the *Life*, when the saint declares that ‘Sanctus Petrus me lærde / and he me hider asende to þissere gesæligan byrig’ (‘Saint Peter taught me, and he sent me here to this blessed city’, ll. 208–09). Saint Peter’s close connection to Rome both throughout the *Lives of Saints* and in the early medieval English imagination serves to tie ‘þissere gesæligan byrig’ not only to the apostle, but also to Rome itself.<sup>89</sup> Within the *Lives*, then, the story of Ravenna is enveloped by Rome and St Peter, with references both at the beginning and end of the narrative, presenting it as a place with a strong Christian heritage.

Moreover, Ravenna is depicted not only as a place of saintly excellence, but also of secular nobility. The *Life of Apollinaris* contains numerous references to noblemen,

<sup>87</sup> Ravenna is referred to as ‘byrig / burh’ (‘city’, ll. 33, 67, 72, 99 and 200), ‘ðære fore-sædan byrig’ (‘the aforementioned city’, ll. 32 and 38), and ‘þissere gesæligan byrig’ (‘this fortunate/blessed city’, l. 209).

<sup>88</sup> ‘Taurus þa brohte þone bisceop [...] to sumum his land [...] syx mila fram Rauenna’ (‘Taurus then brought the bishop to one of his estates, six miles from Ravenna’, *Apollinaris*, ll. 186–89).

<sup>89</sup> For the association between Rome and St Peter, see Coz, *Rome*, pp. 396–97. The representation of this connection in Ælfric’s works specifically is discussed in the next chapter of this thesis.

particularly of the *bellatores* class. The Ravenna presented by Ælfric's text is a place filled with high-ranking citizens: the saint meets a 'forð-þegn' (l. 38); a 'burh-ealdor' (l. 203); a 'mund-bora' (l. 98); and two 'þegns' (ll. 54 and 72). Even Apollinaris' would-be executioner appears to be a landowner, since he is able to take the saint into hiding 'to sumum his lande' ('to one of his estates', l. 187). Ælfric presents this as a kind of nobility that is legible but foreign to his audiences. The word *forð-þegn* ('retainer of high rank') is attested only twice in the extant Old English corpus: once in the *Life of Apollinaris* and once in the *Life of Maurus*.<sup>90</sup> Similarly, the word *burhealdor* ('governor, mayor') only occurs in the *Life of Apollinaris* and in Ælfric's *Grammar*, where it is used to gloss the Latin *municeps* and *praefectus urbis*.<sup>91</sup> The use of these words then, which build upon familiar roots (*burh*, *ealdor* and *þegn*), portray a kind of governance that is unusual to Ælfric's audiences, but nonetheless comprehensible. Through the use of these terms, and restriction of them to continental saints' lives, Ælfric is able to convey the difference of continental governmental systems to English ones, whilst also making them seem familiar in the vernacular. Further, this abundance of words pertaining to high social status works to portray Ravenna as a place of wealth and aristocracy. The emphasis on noble characters within the *Life of Apollinaris* was previously noted by John Damon, who suggested that the high number of references to pious laymen in Ælfric's *Lives of Apollinaris and Maurus* was intended to appeal to and edify Æthelweard and Æthelmær.<sup>92</sup> However, it also serves to present Ravenna as a distinguished place to a wider vernacular audience.

<sup>90</sup> DOE: **forð-þegn**. 'Sum forðþegn wæs ða welig on þam lande, Florus gehaten' ('there was a certain wealthy high-ranking retainer in the country at that time, called Florus', *Maurus* ll. 125–26); 'þær wæs sum forðþegen on þære foresædan byrig' ('there was a certain high-ranking retainer in the previously-mentioned city', *Apollinaris*, l. 38).

<sup>91</sup> *Gram.* pp. 67, 76 and 88.

<sup>92</sup> Damon, *Soldier*, pp. 231–32.

This link between Ravenna and nobility is further emphasised in Ælfric's translation through his invocation of the city in clauses referring to noblemen. In his depiction of Ravenna, we see Ælfric creating a sense of place that appeals to a specifically noble lay audience, as a city with noble roots that then allows sanctity to flourish. As such, Ravenna becomes a model for contemporary England to follow. Ælfric often references the city alongside descriptions of noblemen, and frequently in places that his source does not. For example, he writes that 'þær wæs sum forð-þegen on þære fore-sæden byrig' ('there was a high-ranking officer in that aforementioned city', l. 38). The Latin *passio* does not mention the city at this point.<sup>93</sup> Presumably this is because the setting for this episode is made apparent by the surrounding narrative: Apollinaris has just baptised people 'non longe ab urbe Ravenna' ('not far from the city of Ravenna', c. 3), and he addresses Tecla when 'ingressus fuisset urbem Ravennam' ('he entered the city of Ravenna', c. 4). In the Latin text, there is no doubt that the episode with Tecla occurs in Ravenna, despite the fact he is not described as being in the city. However, Ælfric's text similarly makes it clear that Tecla must be in Ravenna — the city is referenced three times in the preceding six lines, including once by name. As such, it seems superfluous to mention that the 'forð-þegen' is in 'þære fore-sæden byrig'. The same reminder of setting happens again later in the *Life*, when Ælfric writes 'on ðære byrig wæs sum þegn Bonifacius gehaten' ('in that city there was a nobleman named Boniface', l. 72), despite the fact that the *passio* makes no mention of setting at this point.<sup>94</sup> In these instances, Ælfric highlights the association between nobility and Ravenna, by insistently linking references to the city to high-class citizens. Moreover, the fact that these

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<sup>93</sup> 'Matrona vero cuiusdam tribune militum nomine Tecla per annos plurimos gravissima tenebatur infirmitate, quam nullus medicorum poterat erigere' ('The wife of a certain soldier's tribune named Tecla had, for many years, been held down by most serious illness, which no physician was able to alleviate', *Passio Apollinaris*, c. 4). Text in AS, Iul, 5 (Antwerp, 1727), pp. 344–50. The *Passio Apollinaris* is identified as Ælfric's source by R. Jayatilaka, 'Lives 22 (St Apollinaris) (C.B.1.3.23)', 12/04/1997, *Fontes Anglo-Saxonici: World Wide Web Register*, <https://arts.st-andrews.ac.uk/fontes/>.

<sup>94</sup> 'Et post menses sex nobilissimus vir, nomine Bonifacius, civis Classis subito obmutuit' ('And after six months, a most noble man, named Boniface, a citizen of the *Classis* rank, suddenly became dumb', *Passio Apollinaris*, c. 10).

are additions to Ælfric's source suggest that he was interested in reminding his audience about the setting of the *Life*. Ravenna is an important part of the narrative for Ælfric, and the city serves to explore the power of conversion just as much as do the human characters. Moreover, in representing the potential for a site of secular nobility to be transformed into one of sanctity, we see Ælfric using setting to appeal to a wider lay audience. The importance of lay patronage to monastic foundations was well established by the English Benedictine Reform, which (uniquely, compared to its continental counterparts) emphasised the role of the king.<sup>95</sup>

For all of its nobility and connections to Rome, Ravenna is nonetheless a site of saintly suffering. This duality is encapsulated in the collocations associated with it in the *Life of Apollinaris*. The phrase 'Rauenna byrig' is first encountered alongside the idea of heathenism and the necessity for conversion, when Peter describes it as a place where "þær wunað micel folc on fulum hæðenscipe; / boda him be þam hælende" ("many people live there in foul heathenism: preach to them about the saviour" ll. 20–21). The phrase 'fulum hæðenscipe' is an Ælfrician coinage, painting a much grimmer picture than the Latin *passio*, which gives a much more euphemistic 'multitudo enim populi illic moratur' ('for a great number of people stay there', *Passio Apollinaris*, c. 2). The sorry state of Ravenna before Apollinaris' mission there is only further highlighted by Ælfric's ornamental style, which pairs 'folc' with 'fulum' to suggest that the people themselves are somehow terrible or foul, and uses assonance between 'hæðenscipe' and 'hælende' to stress the city's distance from Christ. When Peter tells Apollinaris 'ne beo ðu afyrht' ('do not be afraid', l. 21), the audience of the Old English text has more genuine reason to believe that the saint might be fearful of venturing to Ravenna than those consulting the Latin original.

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<sup>95</sup> Blair, *Church*, pp. 350–51.

Upon the saint's arrival to the city, this association is quickly remedied, through the collocation of the city's name with words pertaining to faith and healing instead of heathenism: 'he com ða to Rauenna and hraðe þær geswutelode / þæs hælendes mihte on wann-halum mannum' ('he came then to Ravenna and there he quickly demonstrated the saviour's power on sick people', ll. 36–37). Healing and faith surround Ravenna once again in Ælfric's next reference to the city: 'Apollonaris þa ðær wunode mid him / on Rauenna byrig and bodode geleafan / and manega gefullode ðæs folces meniue' ('Apollinaris then lived there with him in the city of Ravenna, and preached the faith and baptised many of the multitude of people', ll. 61–63). Both instances see Ælfric abbreviating and condensing episodes of his Latin source, providing a summary of events rather than the detailed narratives found in the *passio*. This allows him to link Ravenna to saintly behaviour for his audience through rhetorical styling. The alliteration of 'byrig' with 'bodode', for example, emphasises Ravenna as a site of conversion. Ravenna and its people ('wann-halum mannum') form an envelope around 'þæs hælendes mihte', placing the power of God textually at the centre of the city. Indeed, Ælfric associates the city's name with terms pertaining to Christian behaviour ('hælendes mihte', 'bodode geleafan', 'gefullode'). In doing so, he presents Ravenna as a place that, like early medieval England, is changed by conversion.

By the end of the *Life*, Ravenna has once again become a place of persecution, where the saint is harrowed by pagan opponents before dying a martyr. Here, however, Apollinaris and the city are united stylistically and narratively. Through Ælfric's stylistic emphases, Ravenna is no longer presented as a source of suffering, but rather as a fellow sufferer:

Hit gelamp þa æfter fyrste þæt þa ungeleaffullan hæðenan  
gebundon þone bisceop and to ðære byrig Rauenna  
geleddon on bendum and beoton hine wodlice.

(Ælfric, *Apollinaris*, ll. 154–56)

[Then it happened after a time that the unbelieving heathens bound the bishop and led him to the city of Ravenna in fetters, and beat him furiously.]

This is a highly stylised passage, in which Ælfric uses a wealth of rhetorical techniques to unite the saint and the city. They alliterate with one another, ‘bisceop’ and ‘byrig’. Ravenna is bound linguistically by alliterating ideas of suffering (‘gebundon’, ‘bendum’, ‘beoton’), just as Apollinaris is narratively bound in fetters. The association between them is further emphasised by the word order, in which the verb ‘geledan’ is delayed until after the prepositional phrase ‘to ðære byrig Rauenna’, allowing Ravenna and Apollinaris to be juxtaposed.

The city, then, is able to encompass all parts of the saintly experience. It encapsulates high secular and saintly accomplishments, and yet also Christian suffering. It has previously been argued that Ælfric translates his sources in ways that polarise the opposition between ‘good’ and ‘evil’ characters.<sup>96</sup> Here, however, we see this same method being applied not to human characters, but to a place. As such, we see Ælfric consciously attempting to characterise Ravenna itself. The city is not simply a toponym attached to an event, or a ‘convenient backdrop’ but rather a place with specific qualities and history that Ælfric can use to demonstrate the power that Christians can have over the places that they inhabit. Conversion in the *Life of Apollinaris* does not just happen to people, but also to the city itself.

## SICILY

Various locations within Sicily feature in the *Lives of Saints*. These locations are presented as interconnected with one another, largely because they feature in a pair of interconnected

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<sup>96</sup> Waterhouse, ‘Discourse’.

lives: *Agatha* and *Lucy*.<sup>97</sup> Ælfric describes the island itself as a ‘scire’, from the Latin ‘provincia’ (‘province’, *Agatha*, ll. 2 and 217). There is almost no description of Sicily’s topography in either of the Latin *passiones*, and Ælfric’s accounts are similarly sparse. He does preserve the named reference to the ‘Semithetum’ (‘[river] Symaethus’, l. 208) found in the *Passio Agathae*, his source for his *Life of Agatha*.<sup>98</sup> However, whilst audiences must have recognised this as being a body of water owing to the fact that it was traversed ‘on scipe’ (‘in a ship’, *Agatha*, l. 208), Ælfric never specifies that it is a river, despite the fact that his source repeatedly used the word ‘flumen’.<sup>99</sup> The Symaethus is not mentioned in any other extant Old English text, so this removal makes it difficult for audiences to construct any sense of the geographical reality of Sicily.<sup>100</sup> As such, we see Ælfric including toponyms simply to add to the sense that Sicily was a unique place, distinct from other places, rather than through any desire for his audiences to have practical knowledge of the island’s real topography. Paul Zumthor has argued that the listing of toponyms in travel narratives serves as a means of appropriating territory.<sup>101</sup> In Ælfric’s *Agatha*, we may see ‘Semithetum’ used for this same purpose, emphasising the extent of the continent by adding another toponym to the list of already named places within the collection. However, the naming of the river also functions to aid the image of Sicily as a real, distinct place in the minds of the audience, since the inclusion of a toponym is more specific than if Ælfric had simply written that Quintianus travelled ‘on ea’. Naming the river also allows for Ælfric to link the Symaethus to other Sicilian places, such as ‘Ethna’, which follows twelve lines later in the life. In doing so,

<sup>97</sup> Clayton and Mullins print the two items under one heading as the *Life of Agatha*, which is reflected in the line references. However, I refer to the texts separately in this thesis for the sake of clarity.

<sup>98</sup> ‘Passio Agathae’, in AS, Feb, 1 (Antwerp, 1663), pp. 344–50.

<sup>99</sup> ‘Passio Agathae’, ll. 235, 236 and 238.

<sup>100</sup> Data from DOEC.

<sup>101</sup> P. Zumthor, *Le Mesure du Monde: représentation de l'espace au Moyen Âge* (Paris, 1993), p. 302.

Ælfric allows appropriation of a different kind, encouraging the perception of a wide and varied Christian world, in which various places are connected with one another.

The sense of linked places is greatly facilitated by Ælfric's juxtaposition of two pieces of Sicilian hagiography. The *Life of Lucy* follows immediately from the *Life of Agatha* both narratively and in terms of its manuscript placement. Indeed, the two *Lives* are so closely linked that Clayton and Mullins print them as a single item in their edition of the *Lives of Saints*. The pairing of the two texts, and the likelihood that Ælfric intended them to be read as a single item, has attracted much scholarly interest.<sup>102</sup> However, the way in which Ælfric utilises this link to reflect upon place has yet to be explored. The *Life of Lucy* opens by establishing the link to Agatha in geographical terms, stating that pilgrims travelled 'ofer fiftig mila' ('from a distance of fifty miles', l. 239) between Syracuse and Catania. This is not an Ælfrician invention — his source states that 'Syracusanus populus per millia prope quinquaginta ad urbem Catanensium sitienter pergeret' ('the Syracusan people were eagerly going almost fifty miles to the city of Catania').<sup>103</sup> However, because Ælfric juxtaposes the two *Lives* in his collection, and because all of the toponyms in the *Life of Agatha* occur within the final thirty lines, the sense of a geographical link found in the Latin text is greatly expanded in the *Lives of Saints*. Ælfric's audiences are thereby encouraged to link Syracuse not only to Catania, but also to Etna and Symaethus. Therefore, Ælfric highlights the way that places within the continent are linked, and the idea that networks of Christianity connect places at a geographical remove from one another.

This sense of connection also extends outside Sicily. Syracuse is also used to demonstrate the power of Rome, and to highlight the way that the Roman empire was a network of different places. Hence Ælfric writes that Paschius, who attempts to woo Lucy,

<sup>102</sup> See, for example, Gulley, *Displacement*, pp. 51–52; Gretsche, *Ælfric*, p. 10; Morini, *Agata*, pp. 46–47.

<sup>103</sup> 'Passio Luciae', *De Probatiss Sanctorum Historiis*, ed. L. Surius, 6 vols (Cologne, 1576–81), VI, pp. 892–94.

‘wæs ær gewreged for his wæl-hreowum dædum / to Romaniscre leode, þe ða ealle land geweolden’ (‘had previously been accused, on account of his cruel deeds, to the Roman people, who governed all that land’, *Lucy*, ll. 377–78). This passage varies considerably from Ælfric’s source, which never mentions that Sicily is governed by Roman rule. Moreover, Ælfric’s use of the phrase ‘ealle land’ to present this information emphasises the totality of Rome’s power. As such, Ælfric reminds his audiences of the power of the Roman empire at its height, and stresses the centrality of Rome even to a *Life* set outside Rome.<sup>104</sup> In doing so, he also demonstrates the importance of networks of Christianity. Catania is tied to Syracuse, which is tied to Rome. This sense of connection is only further emphasised through Ælfric’s positioning of the two saints next to one another in the collection.

Ælfric also emphasises this link between places by repeating the fact that the *Life* is set in Sicily at the point when Etna is introduced to the narrative: ‘on þære ylcan scire Sicilian landes / is an byrnende munt, þone menn hatað Ethna’ (‘in the same province of Sicily there is a burning mountain, which people call Etna’, ll. 217–19). The desire to highlight Etna as a key part of Sicily was not unique to Ælfric, and Discenza has detected the same emphasis in other Old English texts.<sup>105</sup> In naming Etna twice in only five lines, we may then detect Ælfric playing on an association that was already familiar to some of his audience. However, this repetition also serves to draw further attention to Sicily as a site of natural disasters. Indeed, one of the most notable aspects of the landscape in the *Life of Agatha* is its volatility. Ælfric places greater emphasis on these than his Latin sources, particularly through the use of repetition. The repetition of ‘Etna’ is not found in the Latin *passio*. Ælfric also adds a section in which he describes the volcano, which sees him describing it as a ‘byrnende munt’ (‘burning mountain’, l. 218) and then saying that ‘se munt

<sup>104</sup> The representation of the power of the Roman empire in the *Lives of Saints* is discussed in detail in the final chapter of this thesis.

<sup>105</sup> Discenza, *Space*, p. 76.

byrnð æfre’ (‘the mountain burns always’, l. 220). He also repeats the word ‘earð-styrung’ (‘earthquake’) three times in only eleven lines (ll. 170, 176 and 180) — by contrast the Latin *passio* as it appears in the Cotton-Corpus Legendary only uses the word ‘terraemotus’ twice (ll. 195 and 199). Similarly, Ælfric repeats the name ‘Ethna’ twice (ll. 219 and 222), when it only occurs once in his source. All of these repetitions serve to place greater emphasis on the natural disasters.

Within the *Lives of Saints*, Sicily is a place characterised by its natural disasters that set it apart from other locations within the collection. However, alongside that individuality, it is also presented as a site of interconnections, in which various locations and toponyms are linked together into one Christian narrative. Through this depiction of Sicily, Ælfric instructs and reassures his English audience, who were similarly beleaguered by disaster (in the form of renewed Viking attacks). In the *Lives*, Sicily represents the salvatory potential of faith in the saints, and of interconnected Christian community at a time when England was politically and ecclesiastically fragmented.

## SPAIN

Spain appears in several items in the *Lives of Saints*, usually only briefly. The only item within the *Lives of Saints* to have its primary setting in Spain is the *Life of Vincent*. Strangely, at the beginning of the *Life*, Ælfric alerts his audience to the fact that Spain is the home of the Spanish. He writes ‘on Ispanian, lande þære Speoniscan leode’ (‘in Spain, in the land of the Spanish people’, l. 1). This is not in Ælfric’s source, and so was presumably his own invention. Nowhere else in the *Lives of Saints* does he follow a toponym with a nationality adjective. Moreover, in the extant Old English corpus, the word *Speonisc* is uniquely attested

in the *Life of Vincent*.<sup>106</sup> The inclusion of this term, then, presumably did not illuminate the word ‘Ispania’ (which was much more common, with 67 attestations) for his audience. The inclusion of ‘speonisc’ in this *Life* but not the other two that reference Spain (Dionysius and Martin) makes more sense if the *Life of Vincent* was indeed intended to be part of the *Lives of Saints*, since the date of Vincent’s veneration, January 22<sup>nd</sup>, would place his *Life* before the other two, and as such would provide the audience with knowledge that they could use when subsequently re-encountering Spain in the other *Lives*. Alternatively, the reference to the Spanish was perhaps included simply for rhetorical emphasis, since the assonance of ‘Ispania’ and ‘Speonisc’ together with the phonic echoes between ‘lande’ and ‘leode’ make for a heightened line that draws attention at the very opening of the *Life*. However, if this is the case, it is interesting that Ælfric chooses to highlight the place where the *Life* is set, rather than the name of the martyr himself. Further, he has altered this from his Latin text, which gives the specific place names ‘Valentia’ and ‘Caesaraugusta’, but never ‘Hispania’.<sup>107</sup> As a result, we see Ælfric deliberately and emphatically presenting his audience with the idea that Vincent’s *passio* is associated with an entire country. Even when he does mention that the *Life* takes place in a particular location, he does not name it, but rather describes it as ‘anre heafod-byrig on þam for-sæden lande’ (‘a major city in that aforementioned country’, l. 23). In doing so, Ælfric makes the *Life of Vincent* less localised, and more widely applicable.

Like Greece and Milan, Spain is also presented in the *Lives of the Saints* as a place of learning. Ælfric writes that, at the time of Vincent’s martyrdom, the saint was working ‘mid þam mæran bisceope Ualerium / se wæs þa mære lareow on Ispanian lande’ (‘with the renowned bishop Valerius, who was a famous teacher in the Spanish land at that time’, *Vincent*, ll. 7–8). Despite Ælfric’s claim that this information is ‘swa swa seo gereccednysse

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<sup>106</sup> Data from *DOEC*.

<sup>107</sup> *Passio Vincentii*, 1.2, 3.1 and 4.3. Text in ‘*Passio Vincentii*’, in *Pasionario Hispánico*, ed. Á. Fábrega Grau (Madrid, 1953–1955), pp. 187–96.

us segð on Ledenum gereorde’ (‘just as the history tells us in the Latin language’, l. 9), Ælfric’s Latin source never describes Valerius as a ‘famous teacher’. By invoking the idea of a source material ‘on Ledenum gereorde’, Ælfric brings the image of learnedness to the forefront, and heightens the sense of Spain as a place of knowledge. In this way, Spain is presented as similar to the other continental places within the collection.

Ælfric also highlights Spain’s topography, namely its coastal nature. At the end of the *Life of Vincent*, for example, the martyr’s corpse is thrown into the sea, in the hope of denying any glory to the Christians. In Ælfric’s translation of this episode, he insistently repeats the word ‘sæ’. Datian commands that the saint be ‘besenced on sælicum yðum’ (‘sunk in the sea’s waves’, l. 256), that he be ‘bediglod on þære deopen sæ’ (‘hidden in the deep sea’, l. 259) and that he be food for fish in ‘þære wid-gillan sæ’ (‘the deep sea’, l. 261). Executioners then take the body to ‘þære wid-gillan sæ’ (l. 264), and sink it with stones, so that it ‘ne sceolde þære sæ aberstan’ (‘might not escape from the sea’, l. 266). Finally, Vincent’s body is washed up by ‘þa sælicum yþa’ (‘the sea’s waves’, l. 274). This accounts for six uses of the word ‘sæ’ within less than twenty lines. Ælfric achieves this insistence both by adding in the word where it was not found in his Latin source and by heavily abbreviating the text, resulting in these instances all occurring closer together. The phrase ‘ne sceolde þære sæ aberstan’, for example, has no direct equivalent in the *Passio Vicentii*, and represents an addition by Ælfric. Similarly, when translating the Latin ‘corpus reciprocum lenior fluctus iam molli arena tumulaverat’ (‘the body, having been moved backwards and forwards, the gentler tide had by now covered with a burial mound of soft sand’, *Vicentii*, c. 25, ll. 15–16), Ælfric adds in the word ‘sæ’, stating: ‘se halga lic-hama læg on þam strande, / beworpen mid þam ceosole þurh þa sælican yþa’ (‘the holy flesh-home lay on the beach,

covered with shingle by the sea's waves', ll. 274–75).<sup>108</sup> Moreover, these twenty lines of Old English represent three chapters of Latin material: Ælfric has greatly condensed Datian's speech and the description of the executioners, and in doing so, focuses his audience's attention on the image of the sea. This, combined with Ælfric's insistence on the word 'Ispania' at the beginning of the text, presents the audiences of the *Life of Vincent* with the image of Spain as a place closely connected to the sea. The importance of the sea to English literature and identity throughout the medieval period has been discussed at length by scholars, and it has been frequently acknowledged that English identity was uniquely shaped by its sea border.<sup>109</sup> Because of this, Ælfric's close attention to the sea may be seen as a way to draw a link between England and Spain in the minds of his audience, encouraging the perception of not only a shared spiritual landscape but also a physical one.

Though the most extended treatment of Spain is found in the *Life of Vincent*, there are also two mentions of Spain in other *Lives*: one in the *Life of Dionysius*, and one in the *Life of Martin*. Though these references are short and undetailed, they nonetheless warrant examination: not least because one of them suggests that Ælfric had a particular interest in Spain. In the *Life of Dionysius*, Ælfric writes that 'he sende his geferan sume to Ispaniam / and to oðrum landum Godes lare to sawenne' ('he sent some of his companions to Spain, and to other places, to sow God's teaching, ll. 162–63). The link between Dionysius and Spain was clearly important to Ælfric, since he had already referenced this in his *Catholic Homilies*. In his homily on St Clement, he adds a reference to Dionysius, stating that 'he eac sume his

<sup>108</sup> This passage represents one of Ælfric's rare uses of poetic vocabulary — Orchard notes that the term *lic-hama* is poetic: A. Orchard, *Word-Hord: A Lexicon of Old English Verse* (Oxford, 2020), p. 153. For Ælfric's uses of poetic vocabulary, see M. Godden, 'Ælfric's Changing Vocabulary', *ES* 61 (1980), 206–23; and R. Frank, 'Poetic Words in Late Old English Prose', in *From Anglo-Saxon to Early Middle English: Studies Presented to E. G. Stanley*, ed. M. Godden, D. Gray and T. Hoad (Oxford, 1994), pp. 87–107.

<sup>109</sup> See, for example, W. Rudolf, 'The Spiritual Islescape of the Anglo-Saxons', in *The Sea and Englishness in the Middle Ages: Maritime Narratives, Identity and Culture*, ed. S. Sobecki (Cambridge, 2011), pp. 31–57; S. Klein, W. V. Schipper and S. Lewis-Simpson, eds, *The Maritime World of the Anglo-Saxons*, *Essays in Anglo-Saxon Studies* 5 (Tempe, AZ, 2014); S. Sobecki, *The Sea and Medieval English Literature* (Cambridge, 2008).

geferan to Ispanian gesende þæt hi þan leodscipe lifes word gecyddon' ('he also sent some of his companions to Spain so that they might proclaim the word of life to that people').<sup>110</sup> As Godden notes, there is no mention of Spain in Hilduin's *Passio Dionysii*, which Ælfric presumably took as his main source for his descriptions of Dionysius' life.<sup>111</sup> Instead, Ælfric seems to have combined Hilduin's version with a passage from a second, anonymous Latin version of the *Passio Dionysii* that described the Spanish mission.<sup>112</sup> This combination of

<sup>110</sup> CH I, XXXVII, ll. 49–50. Malcom Godden, in his commentary on the *Catholic Homilies*, notes that Dionysius is not mentioned in any of the extant versions of the *Passio Clementis* that served as Ælfric's source for the homily, and must have been an Ælfrician addition: *Ælfric's Catholic Homilies: Introduction, Commentary and Glossary*, EETS SS. 18 (Oxford, 2000), pp. 310–11.

<sup>111</sup> Godden, *Introduction*, p. 311. Jayatilaka identifies Hilduin's *Passio* 19–20 as a direct, certain source ('Lives 29 (Passion of St Denis and his Companions) (C.B.1.3.29)', 19/03/1997, *Fontes Anglo-Saxonici: World Wide Web Register*, <https://arts.st-andrews.ac.uk/fontes/>): 'Et dans pacem omnibus ita hanc uerae fraternitatis societatem soluit abire. Qui simul properantes et circumcirca Dominum praedicantes, appulerunt portum Arelatensium ciuitatis. Et exinde quibusdam in partes necessarias, prout ei uisum fuerat, destinatis...' ('And giving (the kiss) of peace to them all, he allowed these companions of true brotherhood thus to depart. Setting off together and preaching the Lord at every turn, they landed at the port of Arles. And from there, having resolved various matters in the necessary areas, as had seemed best to him...'). There are several problems with this attestation. Not least is that of the major details of Ælfric's account: Spain, the separation of the companions and Dionysius' decision to remain in Francia, are all unmentioned. Secondly, this relies on Ælfric hugely rearranging the order of his source text: this section in the Old English text is bookended by pieces from Hilduin's *Passio* 22, and such an attestation suggests that Ælfric jumped back several chapters to Hilduin's *Passio* 19 to insert this short piece. Whilst such translation practice is not necessarily unusual for Ælfric (see, for example, his pronounced restructuring of Bede's *Oswald*, detailed in Chapter Three of this thesis), it should not be assumed that Ælfric's translation practices were consistent for all sources. Indeed, his translation methodology varies widely from life to life. Such a restructuring, then, while normal within the context of material sourced from Bede, seems very unusual within the context of the *Life of Dionysius*, which otherwise adheres strictly to the narrative order found in Hilduin.

<sup>112</sup> The mention of a companion sent to Spain is absent from Hilduin's *Passio* (BHL 2175), but is found in the anonymous *Passio S. Dionysii* (BHL 2178): 'tunc sanctus Dionysius Marcellum in Hispaniam destinauit, ut uerbum uitae Christi ecclesiae ministraret' ('then St. Dionysius sent Marcellus to Spain, so that he could administer to the church there the gospel of the life of Christ'). Marcellus, and his mission to Spain, are otherwise unattested in extant lives of Dionysius. Further, the anonymous *passio* continues: 'Aquitaniae namque partibus sancto Saturnino directo, ipse cum sancto Luciano, sancto Rustico et sancto Eleutherio Parisius adierat. Sanctum namque Lucianum presbyterii honore perfunctum ad Beluacensum dirigit urbem, ut ipse par modo incredulis populis euangelium ueritatis inferret; ipse uero sanctus Dionysius Parisius remanebat' ('When St Saturninus had been sent to the regions of Aquitaine, he himself went to Paris with SS. Lucianus, Rusticus and Eleutherius. He then sent Lucianus, promoted to the distinction of the priesthood, to the city of Beauvais, so that in a similar way he could take the gospel of truth to unbelieving peoples; St Dionysius himself remained in Paris') (text and trans. M. Lapidge, 'The "Anonymous Passio S. Dionysii"', *AB* 134 (2016), 20–65, pp. 44, 59). Whereas Hilduin's account contains nothing comparable to Ælfric's text, this section from the anonymous *Passio* is remarkably close to Ælfric's Old English. The narrative structure (Spain, other places, Dionysius remaining in Paris) is identical. It is possible that this passage of the anonymous life circulated alongside Hilduin's text as a composite version or as marginalia (though, the *CCL* features no such marginalia or notes). The inclusion of this passage, then, might also be an interpolation from the anonymous *Passio* itself. For Ælfric to make an insertion from another version of the same saint's hagiography is not unknown. For example, he combines the accounts of Sulpicius Severus, Alcuin and Gregory of Tours in his *Life of Martin*, despite the fact that these texts are presented separately in the *CCL*. Similarly, he inserts a short section from Bede's prose *Vita S. Cuthberti* regarding Bishop Aidan's ascension to heaven in the *Life of Oswald*, which is otherwise sourced from Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica*. Thus, while there is no evidence that the anonymous *Passio* circulated in Early Medieval England (Lapidge describes the transmission of the anonymous *passio* as 'an Italian

sources demonstrates his particular interest in Spain. Indeed, we see Ælfric give special importance to the companion who went ‘to Ispanian’ in his *Catholic Homilies*, making sure to include this detail even in a highly condensed summary of Dionysius’ mission in an unrelated saints’ life. Ælfric shows a conscious interest, therefore, in making his audiences aware of Spain, not only as a place, but also as the recipient of mission. Once again, he may be playing here on the similarity between England — as the benefactor of mission — and its continental neighbours.

In the *Life of Martin*, Spain is also the recipient of a rather less pious person — a false prophet. Ælfric narrates:

sum wæs on Hispania, þe forspeon þæt land-folc  
and mid manegum gedwimorum hi bedydrode lange,  
and cwæð þæt he wære Helias se witega.

(Ælfric, *Martin*, ll. 833–35)

[There was one in Spain, who seduced the people there, and deceived them for a long time with many falsehoods, and said that he was the prophet Elijah.]

Though the narrative content of this episode is taken from Sulpicius Severus, Ælfric’s styling of it in Old English places greater emphasis on Spain through the assonance between ‘Hispania’ and ‘forspeon’. This sound patterning is not found in the Latin text, which states: ‘fuisse in Hispania iuvenem, qui cum sibi multis signis auctoritatem paravisset, eo usque elatus est, ut se Heliam profiteretur’ (‘there was a young man in Spain, who, when he had obtained influence for himself through many signs, was so puffed up by himself that he declared himself to be Elijah’, 24:1–2). Ælfric also highlights the ideas of wickedness and trickery through his choice of vocabulary, using the terms ‘forspanon’ (‘to entice / seduce’),

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phenomenon’ (‘Anonymous’, p. 40)), Ælfric’s inclusion of the Spanish mission in his depictions of Dionysius and his companions suggest that he deliberately inserted a short passage from a second source in order to include this detail about Spain.

‘bedydrian’ (‘to deceive’) and ‘gedwimor’, which can imply both false ideas and magic.<sup>113</sup>

The Latin source focusses on the egocentricity of the young man, repeatedly using pronouns (‘sibi’, ‘eo’, ‘se’) to reflect his self-absorption, and the lack of prudence that saw Bishop Rufus believing these lies. Ælfric’s Old English *Life*, on the other hand, removes Rufus’ name, and shows more interest in the false prophet himself. Ælfric highlights the malignancy of the man’s actions, and ties them closely to the name ‘Hispania’. Moreover, because Ælfric has already introduced Spain as a place of knowledge and saintly inheritance previously in the collection, and because he has encouraged the perception of Spain and England as being similar, this malicious act arguably becomes more shocking. The false Elijah is not just a ‘puffed up’ person foolishly seeking glory, but a deceiver who drags his previously well-established country into ruin. Ælfric was clearly concerned about such deceptions happening closer to home, since he adds an episode to his *Life of Swithun* about a ‘dysig’ (‘foolish’, l. 291) man who claims to be Saint Swithun.<sup>114</sup> For Ælfric’s noble patrons, this deception is evocative of the more secular deceit of traitors and false ealdormen recorded during the 990s in the *Chronicle*.<sup>115</sup> The story of the deception, then, becomes not just a means of suggesting the geographical range of false prophets, as it is in Sulpicius Severus’ *Vita Martinii*, but also a warning to a vernacular audience about the dangers of falsity for their own country.

#### FRANCIA

There are four pieces in Ælfric’s *Lives of Saints* that feature Frankish settings: *Maurus*, *Maurice*, *Dionysius* and *Martin*.<sup>116</sup> The last three of these occur together as a group, owing to

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<sup>113</sup> DOE: **gedwimor**.

<sup>114</sup> *Swithun*, ll. 290–306.

<sup>115</sup> ASC 992–93 CDEF, 999 E.

<sup>116</sup> Morini lists four ‘sancti francesi’ in the collection: Maur, Abdon and Sennes, Dionysius and Martin. However, Ælfric’s *Abdon and Sennes* makes no reference to its setting, so cannot be considered to contribute to

their dates of veneration. Over the course of the collection, Francia is represented as a place of nobility and order, with close links to England and Italy. However, it also has unique geographies, which Ælfric preserves in some detail from his sources. This, combined with an abundance of Frankish toponyms, works to convey Francia as a place of considerable political and ecclesiastical importance.

Several of the Frankish *Lives* contain descriptions of unusual topography. Although these descriptions are unusually long compared to those for other places in the *Lives of Saints*, Ælfric abbreviates them substantially from his Latin sources. In considering the material that he chose to preserve for his audience, it becomes clear that he wished to present some sense of Francia as a real and wide-ranging territory, but was not concerned with depicting the specifics of its landscape. In this way, he enables its representation as a distinct location whilst also emphasising its participation in a single, unified Christian community that spans across the continent. The main setting for the *Life of Maurice* is an unusual valley that lies over the mountains. Ælfric stresses the mountainous aspect of this through repetition of ‘munt’ twice within two lines (ll. 24–25). Whilst his Latin source also includes repetition of the word ‘Alpium’, Ælfric wraps this into an extended pattern of alliteration on ‘m’, drawing further attention to the landscape. However, the valley itself is less closely described. Ælfric keeps some geographical information, but removes a great deal of the more aesthetic depiction from his Latin source:

Ac ridon ofer twelf mila to Rodan þa ea,  
and þær gelihton sona for ðam langsumum færelde.  
And se casere wicode mid þam oþrum werode  
wiþ ane litle burh Octodorum gehaten [...].

(Ælfric, *Maurice*, ll. 35–38)

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its audience’s sense of Francia. Moreover, whilst Morini lists the passion of Maurice and his companions under ‘martiri romani’, their narrative occurs in Francia (*Agata*, p. 89).

[But they rode over twelve miles to the river Rhone, and there they straight away dismounted, because of the long journey. And the emperor made camp with the other legion near a little town called Octodorus.]

In the Latin source, the anonymous *Passio S. Mauritii et sociorum eius*, the valley is described at length.<sup>117</sup> The ‘arduam et horridam’ (‘arduous and grim’) Alpine crossing is contrasted to the ‘aequalis loci campestris [...] et grata planities’ (‘a level place of flat ground and an agreeable plateau’) surrounding Octodorus.<sup>118</sup> There is much attention paid to the sense of promise offered by the location, with its ‘agrorum fertilis cultura’ (‘field of fertile soils’), and proximity to the river.<sup>119</sup> By contrast, Ælfric characteristically preserves very little of his source’s information about the topography and appearance of the valley, focusing instead on quantitative information, such as the length of distance (‘mila’), and the size of the town (‘litle’). The latter of these terms is an Ælfrician addition. The Latin text describes Octodorus as being an ‘oppidum’ (‘town’) but makes no reference to its size. The adjective ‘litle’ does not seem to have been the result of Ælfric’s interpretation of the Latin term: in his grammar, he translates the word ‘oppidum’ as ‘fæsten’ (‘a strong place, a fortified town or city’).<sup>120</sup> Rather, Ælfric seems to be adding ‘litle’ to the toponym to create a more specific sense of setting. He thus presents the Frankish landscape in a way that generalises it for a vernacular audience whilst retaining a sense of individual place.

Further, as with his treatment of the river Symaethus in Sicily, here we see Ælfric prioritising toponyms over topography, since he omits most of the material about the valley itself but retains the names ‘Rodan’ and ‘Octodorum’. The sound-play between ‘ridon’ and ‘Rodan’ — partially facilitated by Ælfric’s decision to translate the Latin ‘Rhodanus’ into a

<sup>117</sup> The closest printed version to the one found in the Cotton-Corpus Legendary is: ‘Passio S. Mauritii’, in *De Probatis Sanctorum Historiis*, ed. L. Surius, 6 vols (Cologne, 1570–5), V, pp. 325–30.

<sup>118</sup> ‘Passio S. Mauritii’, p. 325.

<sup>119</sup> ‘Passio S. Mauritii’, p. 325.

<sup>120</sup> *Gram.*, p. 318.

weak Old English noun, *Roda* — brings place to the forefront of the narrative.<sup>121</sup> Whilst the Rhone features in several other texts in the Old English corpus, *Octodorus* (Martigny) is only ever mentioned in the *Life of Maurice*, and as such was potentially unknown to a vernacular audience. By including place names, and drawing attention to them through rhetorical heightening or the addition of information ('litle burh'), Ælfric grants his audiences some sense of the geography of Francia without having to describe its vagaries in detail. This same technique is also seen in his *Life of Martin*, where he retains some information about the fact that the monastery is bordered by an 'ormæte clif' ('enormous cliff', l. 833) and a 'deope ea / Liger gehaten' ('deep river called the Loire', ll. 834–35) while omitting the fact that 'reliquam planitiem Liger fluvius reducto paululum sinu clauserat' ('the river Loire had closed in the rest of the plain with a bay set back by a little distance'). Here, once again, we see Ælfric's characteristic preference for retaining a named feature over the more aesthetic description found in his source, highlighting Francia as an important global power with numerous named territories.

Ælfric does not always preserve Frankish toponyms. He does not, for example, translate the phrase 'tetrīs Sequanae profundisque' ('the deep and murky waters of the Seine', 33) in his *Life of Dionysius*, writing simply that 'bæron þa hæðenan cwelleras þæra halgena lic / sona to scipe' ('the heathen killers took the holy bodies to a ship', ll. 322–23). He also removes the name 'Vaugiones', where Sulpicius Severus writes that Martin asks to be dismissed from the army, from his *Life of Martin*.<sup>122</sup> However, Ælfric does nevertheless retain a great number of Frankish place names, including 'Ambianis' ('Amiens', *Martin*, l. 59); 'Treveris' ('Trier', *Martin* l. 487); and 'Carnotina' ('Chartres', *Martin*, l. 1103). Some places are also mentioned numerous times: Paris is mentioned by name twice in the collection

<sup>121</sup> As noted earlier in this chapter, this was not the case amongst all Old English translators, and Latin toponyms could be translated a number of different ways.

<sup>122</sup> *Vita Martini*, 4.

(*Dionysius*, l. 146, and *Martin*, l. 563); Poitiers and its people are referenced six times (*Martin* ll. 134, 206, 1443, 1445, 1470 and 1473), whilst Tours and its peoples have ten mentions (*Martin*, ll. 254, 263, 1145, 1181, 1199, 1408, 1443, 1453, 1475 and 1480). The abundance of these names suggests the considerable geographical range of Francia, and also its great political power, since in presenting a large number of toponyms, Ælfric presents a large number of Frankish territories. In examining the explication of toponyms in his *Catholic Homilies*, Pearce argues that Ælfric utilised etymologies of place names to make them further serve his homiletic teachings.<sup>123</sup> Here we may see him similarly using toponyms to fulfil his didactic purpose. The inclusion of so many names establishes the individuality and distinct geography of Francia, but without providing specific detail that would emphasise this difference too explicitly. As such, Ælfric is able to present his audiences with a place that is distinct from others, but easily assimilated into a sense of one unified, Christian continent.

As well as toponyms, Ælfric also shows a distinct tendency to preserve distances when translating texts about Frankish saints. In fact, four of his six uses of the word ‘mila’ in the *Lives of Saints* are found in Frankish contexts.<sup>124</sup> In the *Life of Martin*, he twice states that Martin’s monastery is two miles from Tours, saying that ‘he gestaðelode him / mynster twa mila of þære byrig’ (‘he founded a monastery for himself two miles from the city’, ll. 312–13), and then later reiterating this information: ‘twa mila hæfde Martinus fram his mynstre to Turonian byrig þær se bisceopstol wæs’ (‘Martin had two miles from his monastery to the city of Tours, where the seat of his bishopric was’, ll. 1198–99). Though his Latin source material did include this information, the repetition is the result of Ælfric’s combination of sources. His *Life of Martin* is a combination of Sulpicius Severus’ *Vita Martini* and *Dialogi*,

<sup>123</sup> T. Pearce, ‘Name Patterns in Ælfric’s *Catholic Homilies*’, *Names* 13 (1965), 150–56.

<sup>124</sup> The other two are found in the *Life of Lucy* (l. 239) and the *Life of Apollinaris* (l. 189).

each of which mention the ‘two miles’ distance once.<sup>125</sup> As such, in presenting his audience with the same information twice, Ælfric is emphasising it, presenting Francia as a real geographical place that his audiences might traverse physically for pilgrimage as well as narratively.<sup>126</sup> Similarly, when he tells his audience that the Theban legion rode ‘twelf mila’, Ælfric’s removal of all of the more aesthetic landscape description brings the quantitative distance to the forefront. In the *Life of Dionysius*, Ælfric writes that the saint ‘nam his agen heafod, þe ofaheawan wæs / uppan ðære dune, and eode him forð þanon / ofer twa mila’ (‘took his own head, that was cut off on the hill, and he went forth from there for two miles’, ll. 293–95). This is translated precisely from Hilduin’s Latin account, with no detail removed. In preserving so many of these descriptions of quantifiable, physical space in Frankish *Lives*, Ælfric encourages the conception of Francia as not only a conceptual, narrative space, but also as a real, physical one in the minds of his audience. Like the inclusion of toponyms, this contributes to the representation of Francia as a specific place that can be clearly distinguished from others, whilst presenting this in a way that was not so foreignising as to detract from the sense of continental community throughout the *Lives of Saints*.

The sense of community is also represented within Francia. In the *Lives of Saints*, the country is frequently presented as a place of unity and order, both in secular and monastic terms. Ælfric often adapts his sources to emphasise this. For example, in the *Life of Maurus*, the request for mission is focussed on the sense of united practice:

On ðam timan asende sum gesælig biscop  
of Francena rice to ðam halgan fæder  
mænigfealde lac and hine micclum bæd  
þæt he him sendan sceolde, gif him swa geþuht wære,  
sume eawfæste munecas þe him mynster-lif astealdon

<sup>125</sup> *Gallus: Dialogues sur les «vertus» de saint Martin*, Sources chrétiennes 150, ed. J. Fontaine et N. Dupré (Paris, 2006); *Vita Martini*, ed. Philip Burton (Oxford, 2017).

<sup>126</sup> On English pilgrims to Francia in the early middle ages, see Ortenberg, *English*, pp. 23, 234–37. Pilgrims travelling from England to Rome would also have travelled through Francia. *The Annals of St-Bertin* record that king Æthelwulf asked Charlemagne’s permission travel through Francia whilst on a pilgrimage to Rome in 839. Æthelwulf’s journey is recorded in ASC 855.

forðan þe he wolde aræran on his biscop-rice  
munuclicne regol be Benedictes ræde

(Ælfric, *Maurus*, ll. 53–59)

[At that time a blessed bishop from the Frankish realm sent to the holy father abundant gifts and he entreated him greatly that he might send him, if he was so inclined, some pious monks, who would found a monastic community for him, because he wished to establish in his bishopric the monastic rule according to Benedict's example.]

Ælfric's version of this passage utilises repetition and mirroring to linguistically enforce the idea of unity proposed by the narrative content. This is a densely patterned passage full of repeated words ('sendan', 'biscop', 'rice' and 'munuc'), sounds (fæder/mænigfealde/eawfæste, munecas/mynster-lif, aræran/regol/ræde) and ideas (gesælig/halgan, mænigfealde/micclum, astellan/aræran), representing, on a rhetorical level, the kind of unification and accord that was at the centre of Benedictine Reform.<sup>127</sup> Here, then, we see place being used not only as a backdrop, but also as a means of expressing the key tenets of tenth-century Benedictinism that Ælfric was extolling through the *Lives of Saints*.

Further, Ælfric associates monastic unity with 'Francena rice' — something his Latin source does not do explicitly. Odo's account describes the bishop as being 'Cenomanicae civitatis Episcopo' ('Bishop of Le Mans', III.16), which is both more specific and more localised. By rendering this phrase as simply 'Francena rice', Ælfric is able to suggest a sense of unity both across different *Lives* set in the same place, and across Francia, which is made to seem more homogenous through removal of Le Mans. Ælfric uses this same tactic in the *Life of Dionysius*, where he translates 'ad partes occidentalium regionum' ('to the regions of the western provinces'), where Sissinus sends agents to kill the saint, as 'to þæra Francena rice' ('to the Frankish realm', l. 205). Meanwhile in his *Life of Oswald*, Ælfric turns Bede's

<sup>127</sup> Æthelwold states that Edgar 'monuit ut concordēs aequali consuetudinis usu' ('urged all to be of one mind as regard monastic usage', RC pro.4).

‘Germania’ (iii.12) into ‘Franclande’ (l. 240), despite the fact that the term ‘Germania’ also existed in the vernacular.<sup>128</sup> He also adds the name ‘Franclande / Francena rice’ several times across the collection. In his *Life of Dionysius*, Ælfric’s statement that ‘he sylf unforht mid þam Francum wunode’ (‘he himself remained, unafraid, with the Frankish people’, l. 164) has no equivalent in Hilduin’s Latin. Similarly, neither does Odo’s account of St Maurus state that the saint ‘ferde mid mycelre blisse, and his geferan samod, to Francena rice’ (‘went with great joy, along with his companions, to the Frankish realm’, ll. 90–91). These additions not only highlight Francia’s importance as a place, but also serve to present a homogenous ‘Frankena rice’ that is repeatedly returned to throughout the collection. In highlighting the importance of the Frankish realm, Ælfric was no doubt considering the Carolingian and Ottoman empires, and the role of Frankish kings in governing *regnum Europae* and, consequently, the universal Church.<sup>129</sup> Though the *Lives* take place in very different times and parts of Francia, these parts are all tied together through the national adjective. By reiterating this same adjective, even in places where it did not occur in his source material, Ælfric brings setting to his audiences’ awareness, and allows more sense of continuity across the *Lives of Saints*. The culmination of this can be seen in the way that Ælfric presents Francia in his *Life of Dionysius*, when he writes that the saint was called to convert ‘eall Francena rice’ (‘all of the Frankish realm’, l. 137). Whilst in this instance, Ælfric is simply being faithful to his Latin source, which says that Dionysius is called to ‘omnem [...] Galliam’ (‘all of Gaul’, 19), the fact that the Old English *Life* is framed by other descriptions of Francia that paint it as homogenous give this statement new meaning. Dionysius’ mission does not just connect him

<sup>128</sup> Indeed, the Old English translator of the *Historia Ecclesiastica* used the term ‘Germania’: ‘ac swylce eac bi suðan sæ in Germania & eac somod þa dælas Hibernia Scotta ealondes se hlisa his wundra bicwoom’. It is possible that Ælfric had some familiarity with the Old English version, since he also mentions the idea that Oswald’s renown travelled ‘suð’ (l. 240) — a detail that is not found in the Latin version.

<sup>129</sup> W. Ullman, *The Growth of Papal Government in the Middle Ages: A Study in the Ideological Relation of Clerical to Lay Power* (London, 1955), pp. 106–107.

to a wide-ranging geographical area, but also to the other Frankish saints depicted in the *Lives of Saints*.

Ælfric also depicts connections between Francia and its neighbours. Throughout the collection, Francia is represented as having an especially close relationship to Italy. Dionysius travels between Rome and Francia, and ‘þa wunode [...] binnan Romebyrig, / mid Clemente papan’ (‘then lived for a while in the city of Rome with Pope Clement’, *Dionysius*, ll. 124–25) before he is sent to be a missionary to the Franks. Similarly, Martin is described as being born in ‘Italian landes’. The saint ‘ferde þa ongean to Italian lande’ (‘went back to Italy then’, l. 188) before returning to Francia, and has monasteries in both Milan and Tours. Maurus, too, travels from Benedict’s monastery at Monte-Cassino to Francia. In the *Life of Maurus*, Ælfric further cements the image of a special connection between Italy and Francia through rewriting a passage. Odo’s Latin text sees Florus call the saint ‘discipule sancti viri Benedicti, cuius honor et nomen, quod in sancta emeruit seruitute, paene iam omni seculo innotuit’ (‘disciple of the holy man Benedict, whose renown and name, which he earned by divine servitude, are known now almost everywhere’, 39). Ælfric reworks this to state that Florus:

hæfde gemynt  
mynster to arærenne and mid munecum gesettan,  
gif he ænige geaxode þe æwfæste wæron,  
forðan þe Benedictus hlisa on þæt land becuman wæs.

(Ælfric, *Maurus*, ll. 126–29)

[Had resolved to build a monastery and fill it with monks, if he could find any who were pious, because Benedict’s fame had reached that country.]

This is a considerable reworking of the Latin material. Not only does Ælfric turn the information about Benedict into a reason clause, suggesting that the saint’s renown has

actively contributed to the creation of Frankish monasteries, but he also suggests that this fame has spread specifically to Francia. By introducing the demonstrative pronoun ‘þæt’, he presents a relationship between the ‘land’ that Florus lives in (Francia) and the one that Benedict’s ‘hlisa’ came from. Whilst Monte-Cassino is not named in the *Lives of Saints*, and it is never stated that Benedict’s monastery was in Italy, this information was likely already familiar to Ælfric’s audiences. Benedict was extensively culted in England long before the reform, and his *Life* was recorded in the Old English version of Gregory the Great’s *Dialogues* alongside other Italian saints.<sup>130</sup> As such, the alterations Ælfric made to his source conveyed a closer relationship between Italy and Francia than did the Latin text. Though individually these instances are brief, their cumulative effect across the collection is the depiction of Francia and Italy as having a particularly close relationship.<sup>131</sup> This both solidifies the sense that ‘Europa’ enjoys a shared community, and represents the value of such contacts, since they always result in the establishment of monasteries and sainthood within the *Lives of Saints*.

Francia is also notable for its people: the state of nobility in ‘Francena rice’ is emphasised several times by Ælfric. Hence, when he introduces the nobleman Florus, Ælfric describes him as being ‘ðā fyrrest þæra Francena þegna / and ðam cyninge leofest þe on þæra leode rixode’ (‘the foremost of the Frankish noblemen, and the dearest to the king who ruled that people’, ll. 140–41). Whilst his source states that Florus was ‘primus inter primos totius regni Francorum Proceres’ (‘first amongst the chief nobles in the whole realm of the Franks’, 37), and that he was ‘carissimus in omnibus’ (‘most beloved amongst all’, 38) to King Theudebert, Ælfric rearranges his material quite substantially to allow these two descriptions

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<sup>130</sup> Gretsche, *Ælfric*, pp. 129–33.

<sup>131</sup> This is unsurprising, given the central role of Francia in the survival of the Western Church after the fall of Rome, and given the Frankish involvement in the Roman missions to early medieval England (discussed in Chapter Three of this thesis).

to be juxtaposed. As a result, the Old English text highlights Florus' nobility by presenting two superlatives in quick succession. The character of Florus, a nobleman invested in monastic interests, would certainly have appealed to Ælfric's lay patrons at Cerne.<sup>132</sup> Yet Ælfric is also here celebrating the state of Francia itself. The alliteration sees these superlatives tied not to Florus himself, but to the country and its people (fyrmost/Francena, leofest/leode). Further, the combination of these two clauses in Ælfric's version allows the juxtaposition of 'þegna' and 'cyninge' just after 'Francena', presenting the Frankish realm as one associated with noble rank. This sense is reiterated in the other Frankish *Lives* later in the collection, which contain various noble figures. These noblemen are often associated with the word *geleafull*, associating their secular rank with Christian accomplishment. For example, Arborius is 'sum heah-þegen on þam lande, / swiðe geleafull man' ('a prefect in that land, a very pious man', *Martin*, ll. 575–76) and Licontius is 'sum geleafull þegen' ('a pious nobleman', *Martin*, l. 1277). In the *Life of Dionysius*, too, the saint 'gebohte þa land æt anum geleafullan men' ('bought land then from a pious man', l. 150), suggesting the presence of Frankish nobility in a more subtle way. The use of the same adjective for these men throughout various *Lives* further grants a sense of unity and coherence, despite the fact that the stories are temporally, narratively and geographically separate from one another. Across the course of the *sanctorale*, then, Francia is portrayed as having a significant noble population, notable not only for their rank but also for their piety, from whom Ælfric's lay audience might be expected to learn.

That Ælfric is clearly not interested in the aesthetic qualities of the places he described is perhaps unsurprising, given that the concept of 'landscape' as a thing to be admired for its

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<sup>132</sup> On Florus, and the presentation of noble laymen working with monks in the *Lives* more generally, see Chapter Three of this thesis.

own sake is largely absent from Old English literature.<sup>133</sup> However, his retention of toponyms, particularly unusual ones unattested in other Old English texts, and of descriptions of distance, suggests that he was not uninterested in the idea of place itself. Rather, examination of the various Frankish settings within the *Lives of Saints* unveils a desire to present Francia as a major Christian locale, spanning a considerable geographical range, and linking Rome to the rest of Europe.

#### IV: CONTINENTAL COMMUNITY

As we have seen, Ælfric presents the continent as consisting of a variety of different, distinct locations. Ravenna is a specific place, with different qualities from Athens or Milan, and Francia possesses different landscapes than Spain or Sicily. However, within the *Lives of Saints*, these places are all experienced by Ælfric's English readers together, as part of one *sanctorale*. Ælfric also translated his sources in ways that allowed these places to be more easily viewed as a single community, which his English readers were to feel a part of — removing specific historical circumstances, domesticating foreign terms and gesturing to the link between places. Though hagiography is often remarked upon for its tendency to unify saints, drawing upon repeated narrative tropes, paradigms of sainthood and collective *imitatio Christi*, Ælfric's flattening of difference between continental locations should not be understood as simply part of this impulse.<sup>134</sup> Nor should this be seen as a lack of interest in place. Ælfric's distinction between different continental places, inclusion of a large number

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<sup>133</sup> Zumthor, *Mesure*, pp. 86–90. Michelet notes that the term *landscape* occurs only once in the Old English corpus, and that 'vernacular authors do not speak of the landscape as a vista to be enjoyed. Rather, they mention salient topographic features when these relate to the unfolding of the events of adventures recounted' (*Creation*, pp. 7–8).

<sup>134</sup> For the nature of hagiography as a genre, see R. Woolf, 'Saints' Lives', in *Continuations and Beginnings: Essays in Old English Literature*, ed. E. G. Stanley (London, 1966), pp. 37–67.

of toponyms and addition of material that highlighted individuality of place, as surveyed above, demonstrates that he had a keen interest in presenting distinct territories. The removal of material that highlighted difference, then, can be understood as a desire to present an effective community of continental Christianity, which connects diverse groups. By connecting these places within the collection, Ælfric brought them into one space, and in doing so, reflected the key underlying principle of the Benedictine Reform, both in England and the continent: unity despite diversity. Here, we witness him utilising the continent not only as a backdrop, but in fact as a subtle yet key part of his programme of edification.

In general, Ælfric tends to remove or heavily abbreviate information about historical and political background from his translations. This results in texts that are not only more comprehensible in the vernacular, but also present the continent as more politically homogenous. For example, in his *Life of Martin*, Ælfric removes almost all the details pertaining to the fighting between Ithacius and Priscillian, and Martin's involvement in the case. This episode is a significant one, occupying three chapters in Sulpicius Severus' *Dialogi*, which served as one of the main sources for Ælfric's Old English *Martin*.<sup>135</sup> The Old English *Life* is thus less attached to a particular cultural moment, and more broadly applicable. Moreover, it is less distinguishable from other continental *Lives*.

Detail about the Arian heresy on the continent is similarly minimised. Elkouz suggests that the Arian heresy is the one 'most often named by Ælfric'.<sup>136</sup> However, within the *Life of Saint Martin* — a continental life — Ælfric removes most of the particulars about the heresy that are found in his Latin source. He uses the term 'Arrianes gedwyld', but most of the specific details about it are omitted. For example, Sulpicius Severus' *Vita Martini* explains that the 'haeresis Arriana per totum orbem et maxime intra Illyricum pullulasset'

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<sup>135</sup> *Dialogi*, 3.11–14.

<sup>136</sup> Elkouz, 'Orient', p. 123.

(‘the Arian heresy had spread through the whole world, and particularly in Illyricum’, 6), and that the saint was persecuted by ‘Auxentius, auctor et princeps Arrianorum’ (‘Auxentius, the originator and leader of the Arians’, 6). Ælfric, by comparison, simply writes that ‘asprang geond ealle woruld Arrianes gedwyld’ (‘the Arian heresy spread through the whole world’, l. 184), and removes the information about Illyricum and Auxentius. He also reiterates the heretical nature of this through the use of the words ‘gedwylde’ (l. 191) and ‘gedwol-men’ (l. 192). Gretsich has noted that Ælfric removed information about Arianism in his depiction of St Benedict in the *Catholic Homilies*, and suggests this was through a desire to make the text accessible for a tenth-century vernacular audience.<sup>137</sup> However, in the *Lives of Saints*, he does not entirely remove Arianism: rather, he generalises it, and makes it less culturally specific. Indeed, the Arian heresy is addressed right at the beginning of the collection, when Ælfric tells his audience that:

sume gedwol-menn wæron þuruh deoful beswicane swa þæt hi  
cwædon þæt Crist, Godes Sunu, nære æfre mid þam halgan Fæder  
wuniende, ac wære sum tima ær þan þe he acenned wære

(Ælfric, *Nativity*, c. 2)

[some heretics were so deceived by the devil that they said that Christ,  
the son of God, had not been living eternally with the holy Father, but  
that there was some time before he was born]

Ælfric also makes mention of Arius in his *Memory of the Saints*, where he warns his audience against heretics: ‘an ðæra wæs Arrius, þe þæt yfel ongann / ac him eode se innoð ut æt his forð-gange’ (‘one of them was Arius, who began that evil, but his innards came out through his rear end’, ll. 171–72). As such, the removal of detail in the *Life of Martin* should not be seen as an attempt to remove the Arian heresy from the collection to aid vernacular understanding. Rather, the flattening and generalising of this episode means that it can be

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<sup>137</sup> Gretsich, *Ælfric*, p. 147.

considered alongside other instances of ‘gedwyld’ across the collection, such as the heathens in Paris who ‘awurpon heora gedwyld’ (‘cast aside their false belief’, *Dionysius*, l. 302) upon seeing Dionysius’ miraculous cephalophory, or the machine in Rome that can predict the future, but ‘wæs swa gehiwod æfter hæðenum gedwylde’ (‘was made as such in accordance with heathen error’, *Sebastian*, l. 253). Whilst instances of the term *gedwyld* are found across the collection, in both continental and non-continental *Lives*, as has been previously demonstrated, the continent existed as a specific space for Ælfric. As such, his more simplified presentation of the Arian heresy in Francia can be seen as an attempt to homogenise the continent, and present it as a single community blighted by a common enemy.

Further, Ælfric omits much of the specific detail found in the Latin sources for his *Lives* about battles, and in doing so further reduces the sense of continental difference. In the *Life of Maurice*, for example, Ælfric’s Latin source describes the political situation of Amandus and Aelianus and the Bagaudian revolt — Ælfric reduces this to ‘þa leoda / þe wīper-ræde wæron and his rice forsawon’ (‘the peoples who were rebellious and rejected his rule’, ll. 3–4). Similarly, in his piece on Constantia and Gallicanus, he greatly reduces the information in his Latin source about military conquests. In the *passio*, Gallicanus’s victories are described as follows: ‘persarum gens quae syriam inuaserat uicta est et utiliter subiugata’ (‘the Persian people, who had taken possession of Syria, were defeated, and effectively subjugated’).<sup>138</sup> However, Ælfric writes simply that Gallicanus was ‘sigefæst on feohtan, and ful leof þam casere / for his micclan sige’ (‘victorious in battles, and beloved by the emperor on account of his great victory’, *Constantia and Gallicanus* ll. 297–98). In the same text,

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<sup>138</sup> The narrative of Constantia and Gallicanus is appended to the end of the *Life of Agnes* as *Alia sententia quam scripsit Terrentianus*. Clayton and Mullins print the text as a single piece with *Agnes*. In this thesis I refer to the text as *Constantia and Gallicanus* to avoid confusion, but line numbers are taken from Clayton and Mullins, *Agnes*.

Ælfric also greatly simplifies the depiction of Gallicanus' war against the Scythians by not including the information that the Scythians 'Daciam et Thracias occupauerat' ('had occupied Dacia and Thrace'), and by translating 'cum scytharum me gens in Thraciarum philipolim urbem conclusisset' ('when the Scythians had trapped me in the city of Philippopolis in Thrace') as 'ic wearð belocen on anre lytlan byrig' ('I was trapped in a little town', l. 346). As such, he makes these texts more applicable to his English audience, who were also facing military threat from Viking invasions.

In the *Life of Martin*, too, the invading barbarians are generalised. In a narrative episode where Martin reveals that news of an invasion is false rumour, Ælfric writes that 'þa cydde man geond þa burh þæt þær cuman wolde to / onsigendan here and hergian þa burh' ('then people said throughout the city that an army would come to attack and to plunder the city', *Martin*, ll. 549–50). This translates the Latin 'cum de motu atque impetu barbarorum subita civitatem fama turbasset' ('when a sudden rumour regarding the movement and attack of the barbarians had agitated the city', *Vita Martini*, 18). By translating 'barbarus' as 'here', Ælfric renders it more generalised. Whereas earlier in the same *Life* he translates this same term as 'fyrleinan leodscipes', highlighting the sense of foreign invasion, here he uses a term that could apply to any group of armed peoples, and in particular evokes the Viking armies of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, who are also described with the term *here*. In removing toponyms and details when discussing battles, Ælfric further presents the continent as a single, cohesive entity. By taking focus away from the political specifics of war, the *Lives of Saints* presents a more homogenised continental landscape. Whereas depicting wars fought in 'Dacia and Thrace' or against the Bagaudians highlights local events, those fought against rebellious peoples and described simply as 'feohtan' are applicable to the entire continent. As such, Ælfric presents the various continental locations and saints as having more in common than his Latin sources do. Moreover, by giving a more general sense of Christians fighting

against pagans rather than focusing on specific national or localised conflicts, Ælfric portrays different continental locations as taking part in a common European project against heathenism. This presents a sense of communal action, in the same way that the *Life of Maurice* or *Forty Soldiers* do, allowing the settings across the collection to expound upon the ideals celebrated in individual saints' lives on a wider scale.

As well as removing narrative material to present the continent as a cohesive community, Ælfric also domesticates various specific continental terms. In doing so, he not only makes the texts more accessible to a vernacular audience, but also minimises the sense of difference between places. In the *Life of Agatha*, for example, the descriptions of the bribes offered to the saint are made more applicable to an English audience. In Ælfric's Latin source, Aphrodisia offers 'praedia suburbana' ('estates situated close to the city').<sup>139</sup> When he translates this into Old English, Ælfric renders this as 'hamas' ('estates', l. 35).<sup>140</sup> The idea of *praedia suburbana*, which had specific economic value to a Roman audience, has no relevance to Ælfric's tenth-century English milieu.<sup>141</sup> Yet by translating the Latin term this way, Ælfric also allows a link to be drawn between *Lives*. The term 'hamas' is also inserted into the *Life of Maurus* ('gedreohlæcan his hamas', 'to put his estates in order', l. 121) and the *Life of Thomas* ('rad geond his hamas swa swa his rice læg', 'he went riding throughout his estates as far as his kingdom extended', l.94). In both these instances, the term is added in with no parallel term in the Latin text. Moreover, both describe the actions of men who are opponents of the saints: the bishop of Le Mans does not wish to receive Maurus' mission, and King Gundophorus places Thomas in prison after returning to find him converting the Indian people. By translating Aphrodisia's offering as 'hamas', then, rather than a calque or

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<sup>139</sup> *Passio Agathae*, c. 4.

<sup>140</sup> The Old English term *ham* carried a range of meanings, and could carry specific technical and economic implications: DOE: **ham**.

<sup>141</sup> For the significance and value of *praedia suburbana*, see J. Kolendo, 'Praedia Suburbana e loro Redditività', in *Landuse in the Roman Empire*, ed. J. Carlsen, P. Ørsted and J. E. Skydsgaard (Rome, 1994), pp. 59–72.

approximation of *praedia suburbana*, Ælfric ties it into a practice of opposition to saintly purpose that runs across the *Lives of Saints*, across a range of geographies. As such, Ælfric consistently makes the continental setting seem less specific and more familiar.

The same translation of localised detail can be observed in the *Life of Sebastian*, where the ‘gradus Heliogabali’ (‘steps of Elagabus’) becomes ‘þære stægre þe stod wið þæs caseres botl’ (‘the stairs that stood by the emperor’s palace’, l. 437).<sup>142</sup> Here, Ælfric translates ‘Heliogabalus’, a specific place, to the much vaguer ‘caseres botl’, and in doing so, presents it as something that could be encountered anywhere, not just in Rome. Similarly, in the *Life of Vincent*, the order to put Vincent’s corpse into a ‘fiscinulae quasi in culleum parricide, immo in eronis angustiis cum gravissimo lapidum’ (‘a *fiscina* (wicker basket) as if into the leather sack of a traitor, nay more: into the narrow place of an *aero* (reed basket), with the heaviest of stones’, *Vincentii*, 23) becomes an order to have him placed in ‘anum sæcce mid hefegum stanum’ (‘a sack with heavy stones’, l. 260). In doing so, Ælfric removes the particular connotations of disrespect attached to the *fiscina* and *aero*, which were associated primarily with manual labour and tax collectors.<sup>143</sup> Ælfric could have translated this using ‘fæt’ — *fiscina* is glossed as ‘cysefæt’ in Cotton Otho E.i, and *fæt* was used with qualifiers to describe vessels of particular material.<sup>144</sup> By translating this Latin term as ‘sæcce’, Ælfric altered the type of vessel containing the saints’ corpse, and made it more widely applicable.

The removal of specific continental terms was no doubt partially for the sake of intelligibility. Ælfric’s vocabulary choices were often informed by a desire for clarity, both in

<sup>142</sup> The ‘gradus Heliogabali’ are mentioned in two medieval documents, and are thought to have been on the north-east of the Palatine, where the temple of Elagabus was sited. S. Platner and T. Ashby, *A Topographical Dictionary of Ancient Rome* (London, 1929), pp. 199 and 248.

<sup>143</sup> *Lewis and Short: aëro, fiscina*. Isidore’s etymologies state that *fiscina* is a derivative of *fiscus*, a money bag carried by tax collectors: *Etym.* XX.ix.7. Anthony Rich, in surveying uses of the term *fiscina*, writes that these baskets were used ‘in all kinds of out-door work’: *A Dictionary of Roman and Greek Antiquities*, 5<sup>th</sup> edn (London, 1884), p. 287.

<sup>144</sup> M. Voss, ‘Altenglische Glossen aus MS. British Library, Cotton Otho E.i’, *Arbeiten aus Anglistik und Amerikanistik* 21 (1996), 179–203, at p. 186; *DOE*: *fæt*.

Latin and in Old English. It has been noted that when writing in Latin, he preferred words without multivalence.<sup>145</sup> Similarly, the ‘Winchester words’ used and promulgated by Ælfric and his contemporaries seem to have aimed to produce more specific, accurate religious texts, with less room for misinterpretation.<sup>146</sup> Just as when dealing with the situation of the two emperors, Ælfric altered the vocabulary of his material to reflect a situation that was more ‘usitatus’, and in doing so, translates the continent into something more easily understood and familiar. However, Ælfric did not entirely remove localised or specific terms, and did occasionally use Latin words within his *Lives of Saints* to describe foreign concepts. In his *Life of Maur*, for example, he writes that Florus drew up a ‘*privilegium*’ (‘deed’, l. 148), and does not provide a vernacular translation. In the *Life of Basil*, Christians ‘clypienne Kyrrieleyson’ (‘cry out *Kyrie eleison*’, l. 344), and in the *Life of Agatha* the volcano spews ‘*sulphore*, þæt is swæfel on Englisc’ (‘*sulphore*, that is sulfur in English’, l. 219). In the *Life of Thomas*, set in India, he utilises a range of technical vocabulary to discuss the Roman palace.<sup>147</sup> As such, his simplification of precise terms in continental *Lives* should be seen not just as a means to avoid confusion, but also as a way to present the continent as more homogenous. As a result of Ælfric’s generalisation of Latin terms, continental places in the *Lives of Saints* rarely contain vocabulary that is historically or geographically specific. This enables continental places to be presented as a collection of places with a shared culture. In doing so, Ælfric is able to use the settings of the *Lives* to serve his educational purposes.

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<sup>145</sup> Stephenson, ‘Hermeneutic Latin’.

<sup>146</sup> M. Gretsche, ‘Winchester Vocabulary and Standard Old English: The Vernacular in Late Anglo-Saxon England’, *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester* 83 (2001), 41–87; R. Stephenson, *The Politics of Language: Byrhtferth, Ælfric, and the Multilingual Identity of the Benedictine Reform* (Toronto, 2015), pp. 29–30.

<sup>147</sup> This is discussed fully in Chapter Four of this thesis.

## CONCLUSION

Though Ælfric had no word for ‘the continent’, and never referred to *Europa* by name in his *Lives of Saints*, the concept of a geographical space roughly comprising the modern region of Western Europe in which there is some kind of perceived cultural or social homogeneity is very much present in the collection. Ælfric largely defined this space by its opposites, contrasting it to places further away, in which strange material, dangerous peoples and unfamiliar practices may be found. The representation of Greece in the *Life of Basil* shows that Ælfric clearly viewed this as a borderland, a frontier between the continent and the wider world that lay East of it.

The didactic potential of the continent, for Ælfric, lay in its ability to demonstrate the idea that disparate individual places could be united under a single identity. Ælfric’s desire for homogeneity was informed by both Æthelwold’s school of the Benedictine Reform, which called for ‘concordes aequali’ (‘one mind’) with regard to monastic practice, and the turbulent political situation of the late 990s, in which England was threatened not only by Viking raids but by a lack of unified action against those raids. Continental locations, which Ælfric carefully depicted as being individual and different from one another, and yet part of one narrative, cultural and geographic whole, served to edify vernacular audiences about the importance of unity. Just as his teacher Æthelwold had used the metaphor of ‘apes fauum nectaris diuersis pratorum floribus in uno alueario’ (‘honey is gathered by bees from all manner of wild flowers and collected into one hive’, *RC* pro.5), Ælfric suggested within the *Lives of Saints* that saints from ‘all manner’ of backgrounds could be brought together into a single coherent Christian identity.

To this end, Ælfric retained and heightened certain aspects of individual places. He presented distinguishing aspects of landscape (such as mountains or the sea) and history (such as association with Ambrose or secular learning) in order to give various places a sense of individuality. He often achieved this through toponyms and quantifiable information such as the number of miles between locations, presumably owing to the fact that these details worked to evoke instantly a sense of unique place without emphasising difference too heavily. However, he also removed a lot of information pertaining to specific political or historical moments. Particulars of battles, heresies and localised vocabulary were all minimised in the *Lives of Saints*. This enabled the presentation of the continent as containing diversity, whilst also emphasising its coherence as a united community.

Through its representation as a single community, Ælfric's continent embodies the values promulgated by various individual saints' lives — collective resistance to a common enemy; unified practice across socially and geographically removed groups; and idealised homogeneity. These continental settings, then, are not just 'an agreeable backdrop'. Rather, depictions of the continent and its geography constitute a valuable part of Ælfric's didactic project, and he translated his sources in ways that heightened the educational potential of the lives' settings.

## CHAPTER TWO: TRANSLATING THE SAINTLY BODY

### INTRODUCTION

The ‘translation of saints’ — that is, the relocation of the saintly body or its relics to new housing — constituted a major part of both the cult of saints and the English Benedictine Reform. A translation involved the movement of a saint’s remains (or associated contact relics), usually accompanied by performative aspects such as processions or elaborate public ceremonies, and was often memorialised or justified with a literary account known as a *translatio*.<sup>1</sup> The rationales for this process were numerous, but translations largely occurred for three primary reasons: 1) to receive that saint’s divine aid through intercession; 2) to grant authority or prestige to the relevant church or monastic community; and 3) to promote the cult of the saint in question.<sup>2</sup> In England, these translations became increasingly common in the late tenth and early eleventh centuries, spurred by rising anxieties surrounding Viking attacks and the Day of Judgement and by the Benedictine reformers’ desire to grant prestige to their churches.<sup>3</sup> In particular, the re-housing of saintly remains was associated with the Æthelwold, of whose school Ælfric describes himself as an *alumnus*.<sup>4</sup> Ælfric almost certainly

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<sup>1</sup> For the history of the translation of saints and its continental origins, see Bartlett, *Dead*, pp. 10–13, 285–303; J. Crook, *English Medieval Shrines* (Woodbridge, 2011), pp. 26–31; P. Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago, 1981), pp. 88–104. For the *translatio* genre and its origins, see M. Heinzlmann, *Translationsberichte und andere Quellen des Reliquienkultes* (Turnhout, 1979), esp. pp. 43–101; P. J. Geary, *Furta Sacra: Thefts of Relics in the Central Middle Ages*, rev. edn (Princeton, 1978), pp. 10–15; Lapidge, *Cult*, p. 11.

<sup>2</sup> D. Rollason, *Saints and Relics in Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford, 1989), pp. 177–83; A. Thacker, ‘Æthelwold and Abingdon’, in Yorke, ed. (1988), pp. 43–64, at pp. 60–63; Blair, *Church*, p. 353; Lapidge, ‘Saintly Life’, pp. 251–54.

<sup>3</sup> Rollason, ‘Shrines’; T. Cooper, *Monk Bishops and the English Benedictine Reform Movement: Reading London, BL Cotton Tiberius A. iii in its Manuscript Context* (Toronto, 2015), pp. 70–72.

<sup>4</sup> For Æthelwold’s particular interest in the translation of saints, see M. Lapidge and M. Winterbottom, eds, *Wulfstan of Winchester: The Life of St Æthelwold* (Oxford, 1991), pp. l–li; Blair, *Church*, p. 353; D. J. Sheerin, ‘The Dedication of the Old Minster, Winchester, in 980’, *RevB* 88 (1978), 261–73; S. J. Ridyard, *The Royal Saints of Anglo-Saxon England: A Study of West Saxon and East Saxon Cults* (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 106–114.

witnessed Æthelwold's translation of Saint Swithun's remains to the Old Minster of Winchester in 971, and as such would have been intimately familiar with the ways in which the saintly body elevated and in turn was elevated by the place in which it was housed.<sup>5</sup>

The desirability of the saintly body stemmed chiefly from the idea of saintly intercession, belief in which was popular throughout the early medieval period. Christine Rauer has described the *Old English Martyrology* as 'a telephone directory of the saintly world', and Catherine Karkov has noted that intercession to Mary, Michael and Peter occurs as a 'motif' in many Anglo-Saxon manuscripts, particularly those associated with reform centres.<sup>6</sup> Ælfric himself states that intercession is one of the primary reasons for venerating saints, and in the face of renewed Viking attacks in the late 990s, such intercession took on renewed importance for the English faithful.<sup>7</sup> Owning the saintly body, and by extension its intercessory aid, was therefore a matter of particular consequence in late tenth-century England. Significantly, this promise of saintly aid inspired lay participation in the cult of saints.<sup>8</sup> The ritual celebrations associated with relic acquisition or translation represented key points of contact between the lay and monastic spheres, as did the use of portable reliquaries in penitential processions.<sup>9</sup> Further, relics attracted members of the laity from all social

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It has been speculated that Æthelwold's particular interest in translation stemmed from his dealings with continental monks: Lapidge, *Cult* (Oxford, 2003), p. 12; P. Wormald, 'Æthelwold' pp. 38–39; Cooper, *Monk Bishops*, pp. 70–71.

<sup>5</sup> The translation of Swithun is described by Lantfred of Fleury in *Translatio et Miracula S. Swithuni*, ed. and trans. in Lapidge, *Cult*, pp. 372–551. Ælfric made a Latin epitome of this text before translating it into Old English in the *Lives of Saints* as the *Life of Swithun*. See Stephenson, *Politics*, pp. 3–19.

<sup>6</sup> C. Rauer, 'Direct Speech, Intercession, and Prayer in the Old English Martyrology', *ES*, 93 (2012), 563–71; C. E. Karkov, 'Judgement and Salvation in the New Minster Liber Vitae', in *Apocryphal Texts and Traditions in Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. K. Powell and D. Scragg, eds (Woodbridge, 2003), pp. 151–64.

<sup>7</sup> 'us sylfum fremað þæt þæt we secað be him: / ærest to gebysnunge þæt we þe beteran beon, / and eft to þing-rædene þonne us þearf bið' ('what we say about them benefits us ourselves: firstly as an example through which we may be better people, and secondly for intercession when we are in need', *Chrysanthus and Daria* ll. 343–45). For the Viking attacks see Keynes, 'Abbot'; for the rising role of local saints as aid against these attacks, see Rollason, *Saints*, p. 11.

<sup>8</sup> G. Rosser, 'The Cure of Souls in English Towns Before 1000', in *Pastoral Care Before the Parish*, ed. J. Blair and R. Sharpe (Leicester, 1992), pp. 267–84, at pp. 276–77.

<sup>9</sup> Rollason, *Saints*, p. 194.

standings, and as such offered monasteries political and financial advantages alongside more ecclesiastical ones.<sup>10</sup>

Depictions of the translation of saints in the *Lives of Saints* constitute a fruitful point of enquiry for the study of England and the continent because the translation of saints is so necessarily local in its focus, revolving around the promotion or authority of a particular church and its community. In particular, ceremonial re-housings of the saintly body and texts written about those rehouings served vital roles in announcing the superiority of the saint's new resting place over the churches and communities in which they were originally buried.<sup>11</sup> These accounts were necessarily localised, owing to the fact that they centred on a specific church or monastery.<sup>12</sup> To present the translation of foreign saints in the vernacular required Ælfric to navigate this localised material in a way that made it more meaningful for an English audience.

<sup>10</sup> Rollason, *Saints*, pp. 180–81, 191–94; F. Tinti, 'Introduction', in *Pastoral Care in Late Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. F. Tinti (Woodbridge, 2005), pp. 1–16, at pp. 10–12; A. Thacker, 'Monks, Preaching and Pastoral Care in Early Anglo-Saxon England', in *Pastoral Care Before the Parish*, ed. J. Blair and R. Sharpe (Leicester, 1992), pp. 137–70, at pp. 168–69; Ridyard, *Royal Saints*, p. 227.

<sup>11</sup> For example, Æthelwold's translation of the relics of St Thancred and St Torhtred is justified in a *translatio* account by the fact that their bodies were 'in destructis et neglectis tunc locis' ('then in a ruined and neglected place'): 'Lives of Saint Thancred and Saint Torhtred', in *Liber Vitae: Register and Martyrology of New Minster and Hyde Abbey, Winchester*, ed. W. de G. Birch (London, 1892), pp. 284–90, at p. 286. See also Goscelin of Saint-Bertin's account of the translation of Wihtburh of Ely, whose remains were removed from Dereham, owing to the church's ruin 'irruptione paganorum ac tempestate bellorum' ('through the incursion of pagans and the storm of wars'): *Goscelin of Saint-Bertin: The Hagiography of the Female Saints of Ely*, ed. R. C. Love (Oxford, 2004), p. 67. Literary *translationes* often depicted the saintly body being moved at the saint's own request, granting the new owners divine authority over those from whom they had taken the body. Swithun, for example appears in a vision to a smith, whom he informs of his desire to be moved to the Old Minster, *Translatio et Miracula* c.1. In much the same way, the spirit of Æthelwold appears to a blind man and express the bishop's wishes that his remains be translated, *Vita Æthelwoldi* c. 42; Rumwold asks for his body to be translated to Brackley after one year, and then Buckingham after a further two years, *Vita Sancti Rumwoldi*, c. 12. A variation on this trope is found in *inventio* narratives, in which relics are 'found' by God's will. See, for example, in Byrhtferth's *Vita S. Oswaldi*: 'inunit autem presulis beata membra pius pater, cui pro meritis summorum actuum gubernatrix uite sue sancta Dei trinitas talia concessit inuenire munera' ('for the holy father discovered the blessed remains of Bishop Wilfrid; because of the merit of Oswald's exalted life, the guiding force of his life, the Holy Trinity of God, granted it to him to discover this treasure', V.9), ed and trans. M. Lapidge, *Byrhtferth of Ramsey: The Lives of St Oswald and St Ecgbwine* (Oxford, 2009), pp. 170–71.

<sup>11</sup> Geary, *Furta*, p. 11.

<sup>12</sup> Geary, *Furta*, p. 11.

Within the *Lives of Saints*, Ælfric acknowledges the way that saints elevate their place of burial by frequently retaining the toponyms from his Latin sources when he describes saints' translations, even when these toponyms would have been unusual or unfamiliar to his audience.<sup>13</sup> As a result, depictions of saints' translations are one of the primary means through which he introduced his audience to new places in the *Lives of Saints*. Within the *Lives of Saints*, there are multiple descriptions of saintly bodies being relocated, both from the place of death to the place of burial and from one place of burial to another. However, whilst the Latin source texts frequently embellish translation narratives with local flavour or detail, in Ælfric's versions these accounts are often indistinguishable from one another, to the extent that a translation looks much the same in England as it does in Italy, Francia or Spain. Moreover, the translation of saints in the *Lives* does not extol any particular local or national saint above the others, but rather uses the movement of their bodies to emphasise their similarity to one another.

This chapter argues that Ælfric presents the translation of saints as a way for England and its saints to join an international (and predominantly continental) network of Christianity. Within the *Lives*, the relocation of saints and the corresponding literary narratives enable participants to join in the communion of saints, an international Christian community and a textual tradition. Ælfric facilitates this sense of community and commonality through his omission of specific local material, use of formulaic vocabulary and addition of material describing the communion of saints. In doing so, he subverts the traditionally local focus of saintly translation narratives to highlight ideals of unity and uniformity to his vernacular audiences, and suggests that the elevation of individual communities confirmed rather than contradicted the idealised vision of a universal church, centred around Rome, that Bede put

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<sup>13</sup> The toponyms in the *Lives of Saints* are discussed in greater detail in Chapters One and Three of this thesis.

forward in his *Historia Ecclesiastica*.<sup>14</sup> The *Lives of Saints* thereby presents an idealised view of England and the continent being united by unified practice.

## I: TRANSLATION AS A WAY TO JOIN THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS

In the *Lives of Saints*, Ælfric reworks his sources to use the translation of saints as a means to gesture to the communion of saints. The term ‘communion of saints’ is generally used to refer to the fellowship of all the faithful, both on earth and in heaven.<sup>15</sup> This doctrine is expressed in 1 Corinthians 12:12, where it is dictated that all Christians form one body in Christ.<sup>16</sup>

Ælfric expresses the idea that the saints form a collective body in the *Memory of Saints*:

Ða wæron halige bisceopas, gehealtsum on þeawum,  
and wise mæsse-preostas þe wunodon on clænnysse  
and manega munecas on mycelre drohtnunge  
and clæne mædenu þe Criste þeowodon  
on gastlicre drohtnunge for heora Drihtnes lufan.  
And ða synd ealle on þam ecan wuldre  
for heora clænnysse, mid Criste wunigende.

(Ælfric, *Memory of Saints*, ll. 177–83)

<sup>14</sup> Andrew Brown argues that the reality of the early medieval English church was not ‘universal’ in the same way as it was in later centuries, and that it was characterised by diversity rather than unity: *Church and Society in England, 1000–1500* (Basingstoke, 2003), p. 20. However, the *ideal* of a universal church persisted in early medieval literature, and the idea that early medieval England belonged to a Universal church with pre-Incarnation origins is established by Bede in his *Historia Ecclesiastica* and *De Tabernaculo*. See C. O’Brien, ‘Bede on the Jewish Church’, *Studies in Church History* 49 (2013), 63–73; H. Kleinschmidt, *Understanding the Middle Ages: The Transformation of Ideas and Attitudes in the Medieval World* (Woodbridge, 2000), pp. 247–51; W. McKinney, ‘Creating a *gens Anglorum*: Social and Ethnic Identity in Anglo-Saxon England through the Lens of Bede’s *Historia Ecclesiastica*’ (unpubl. PhD thesis, Univ. York, 2011), pp. 34–40; H. Mayr-Harting, *The Coming of Christianity to Anglo-Saxon England*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn (London, 1991), pp. 42–44; H. E. J. Cowdrey, ‘Bede and the “English People”’, *Journal of Religious History* 11 (1981), 503–23.

<sup>15</sup> For the term ‘communion of saints’ and its use in the medieval period, see B. P. McGuire, ‘Purgatory, the Communion of Saints, and Medieval Change’, *Viator* 20 (1989), 61–84, esp. 67; for how the communion of saints informed early medieval English practice more specifically, see H. Foxhall-Forbes, *Heaven and Earth in Anglo-Saxon England: Theology and Society in an Age of Faith* (Farnham, 2013), pp. 201–64.

<sup>16</sup> ‘Sicut enim corpus unum est, et membra habet multa, omnia autem membra corporis cum sint multa, unum tamen corpus sunt: ita et Christus’ (For just as the body is one and yet has many parts, and all the parts of the body, though many, form a single body, so it is with Christ).

[Then there were holy bishops, modest in their customs, and wise mass-priests who lived in purity, and many monks who lived in an excellent way of life, and pure virgins who served Christ in a spiritual way of life for the love of their Lord. And they are all in eternal glory because of their purity, dwelling with Christ.]

The concluding statement, in which the various martyrs are referred to collectively as ‘ealle’ (‘all’), depicts the apex of sainthood as one in which individual saints are rendered into spiritual one-ness. Ælfric masterfully emphasises this harmonic unity of all saints through his style, creating a web of repetition in which the differing classifications of martyr are unified through form as well as content.<sup>17</sup> The paradigms of monks, priests and virgin martyrs are linked through a single, extended pattern of alliteration on *m*, and the bishops are linked to priests and virgins by a more subtle repetition of *wu/wo*. The different types of saint are also united through the repeated use of ‘clæne’ and ‘drohtnung’, which suggests continuity and congruity across patterns of saintly behaviour. It is this commonality that Ælfric highlights in his presentation of the translation of saints. By making additions to his Latin sources across the collection, he repeatedly draws attention to the importance of heavenly unity during descriptions of saintly death and burial. Though these pieces of additional material are often short, cumulatively they serve as a frequent reminder that saints function as a collective as well as individually.

#### *JOINT BURIAL*

The first way that Ælfric emphasises the doctrine of the community of saints is by adding material that highlights the fact that saintly remains are moved in order that a saint may be

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<sup>17</sup> The description of Ælfric’s style as a ‘web’ originates in Clemoes, ‘Ælfric’, and is further discussed in S. B. Greenfield and D. G. Calder, *A New Critical History of Old English Literature* (New York, 1986), pp. 68–106.

buried with or alongside other saints. Sebastian requests that his body be taken from its unsuitable resting place in a sewer ‘to catacumbas, þær Cristes apostolas, / Petrus and Paulus, ærest bebyrgede wæron / and lecgan his lic æt heora fot-læstum’ (‘to the catacombs, where Christ’s apostles Peter and Paul were buried first, and to lay his body at their feet’, ll. 464–66). Here, Ælfric is adding to his source, the *Acta S. Sebastiani* of pseudo-Ambrose, in which Sebastian asks to be translated ‘ad catacumbas et sepelies me in initio cryptae iuxta vestigia Apostolorum’ (‘to the catacombs, and bury me at the entrance to the crypt, next to the remains of the Apostles’).<sup>18</sup> In specifying not only the names of apostles, but also that they were buried ‘ærest’ (‘first, previously’), Ælfric creates a stronger link between Sebastian and his saintly predecessors, and suggests that in being rehoused, Sebastian is becoming part of a collection of saints.

This idea that translating saints allows them to be part of a fellowship is also explored in the *Life of Dionysius*. When the bodies of Dionysius and his companions are translated to a new minster, Ælfric adds a line to his source, Hilduin’s *Passio Dionysii*, stating that ‘þær hi ealle ðry licgað on ænlicum wurð-mynte’ (‘there they all three lie in singular honour’, l. 333). The synthesis of the ‘ðry’ martyrs into ‘ænlicum wurð-mynte’ recalls the Augustinian ideal of the perfect unity of the trinity, in which three parts form one harmonic whole.<sup>19</sup> Ælfric depicts Sebastian and Dionysius’ translations not as a means to emphasise the saints’ personal achievements, but rather as a way of understanding their piety as part of a larger, universal project.

Similarly, in Ælfric’s *Life of Maur*, ‘æfter Maures forð-siðe, [...] he wæs bebyrged binnan Martines cyrcan’ (‘after Maur’s death, [...] he was buried in Martin’s church’, ll. 353–

<sup>18</sup> Print ed. has ‘in initio’ where CCL has ‘me in initio’.

<sup>19</sup> *De Trinitate* XV.xiii.43 ll. 1–23. For Ælfric’s usage of Augustine’s theology of the trinity, see L. Grundy, *Books and Grace: Ælfric’s Theology* (London, 1991), pp. 25–45.

54). The Latin account that Ælfric used as his source (Odo of Glanfeuil's *Vita Mauri*) records that Maur lay ill 'ante altare B. Martini' ('in front of the altar to Saint Martin') and describes the saint's death before stating that he 'sepultusque est in eadem basilica' ('was buried in that same church').<sup>20</sup> However, by naming Martin and Maur in close collocation with each other, Ælfric highlights the link between the two saints, and demonstrates that, just as with Sebastian (whose *Life* immediately precedes Maur's in the *Lives of Saints*), Maur is joined to other saints by his burial. In much the same way, Swithun is translated 'into cyrcan, Sancte Petres huse' ('into the church, Saint Peter's house', l. 141). The appellation 'Peter's house' refers to the fact that the Old Minster of Winchester was originally dedicated to Saints Peter and Paul.<sup>21</sup> Once again, this is an Ælfrician addition — his source, Lantfred's *translatio et miracula Swithuni*, simply describes the saint's remains being placed 'decentissime in basilica [...] superius commemorata' ('with honour in the above mentioned minister', 3.147–8).<sup>22</sup> In adding St Peter's name to the account of Swithun's translation, Ælfric once again encourages his audiences to see the translation of saints as a moment of communion, in which saints are joined to others. In the *Life of Agnes*, Constantia asks to be buried with Agnes: 'Ða bæd Constantia Constantinum hire fæder / þæt he þære eadigan Agne ane cyrcan arærde / and hire sylfre ane ðruh þær het gesettan' ('then Constantia beseeched her father, Constantine, to erect a church to the blessed Agnes, and ordered a coffin to be placed there for herself', ll. 287–89). Ælfric makes the link between the two saintly women more explicit than his source does by

<sup>20</sup> 'Vita Mauri', AS Jan. I, pp. 1039–50, at p. 1050. Though the *Vita Mauri* is not present in the Cotton-Corpus Legendary, Zettel argued, based on the appearance of the text in Oxford MS Bodley 354, that it was included in the original legendary ('Sources', p. 179); see also F. M. Biggs, T. D. Hill, P. E. Szarmach and E. G. Whatley, *Sources of Anglo-Saxon Literary Culture*, vol. I (Kalamazoo, 2001), pp. 338–39. For the identification of the *Vita Mauri* with Odo of Glanfeuil, see J. B. Wickstrom, 'Creativity and History in the Life of Saint Maurus', *RevB* 126 (2016), 271–86; and J. B. Wickstrom, *The Life and Miracles of Saint Maurus, Disciple of Benedict, Apostle to France* (Collegeville, 2008), pp. 11–34.

<sup>21</sup> Lapidge, *Cult*, pp. 42 and 252 n. 3. In his prefatory letter to the *Translatio et miracula Swithuni*, Lantfred describes the minster as 'sancti Petri coenobio quod nuncupatur Vestustissimum' ('in the monastery of St Peter which is called the Old Minster', l. 1).

<sup>22</sup> Text and trans. in Lapidge, *Cult*, pp. 252–333. Lantfred does name St Peter in the prefatory letter to the monks of the Old Minster (see n. 13 above), but this is detached from the account of the translation itself by several hundred lines of material.

stating Constantia's name — something that the Latin *Passio Agnetis* does not do at this point.<sup>23</sup> Across the collection, then, Ælfric adds names of saints to his Latin sources in order to emphasise that saints are brought together both physically and ideologically by their burials. Translation, therefore, is not simply about the individual saint, but rather about that saint's participation in a fellowship of sainthood.

The sense that these saints are joining a communion of holy men and women is only heightened by the repetition of this motif across the collection. The repetitive nature of hagiography, as a literary genre which tends to reuse existing narrative arcs, tropes and motifs, has often been acknowledged.<sup>24</sup> Thomas Heffernan, Michael Lapidge and Hugh Magennis suggest that these repetitions worked to authenticate the saints' sanctity, and to justify their position in the communion of saints.<sup>25</sup> We certainly see this authenticating urge in Ælfric's presentation of saints being buried together. However, the fact that these descriptions are repeated across the *Lives of Saints* as a collection gives the motif new resonance. Ælfric's continued depiction of saints laid to rest with other saints serves as a textual embodiment of the unity that he extols narratively. The crux of Ælfric's literary art is his ability to reflect cosmic order not only through style, as suggested by Peter Clemoes, but also through form, adapting his Latin sources in ways that emphasised their congruity with one another.<sup>26</sup>

Moreover, the various saints that Ælfric depicts as being buried alongside others come from a range of different national backgrounds: Sebastian is Roman, Dionysius and Maur are

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<sup>23</sup> 'Interea patrem et fratres Augustos rogat, ut basilicam beatae Agnae construerent, et sibi illic mansionem collocari praecepit' ('in the meantime she asked her noble father and brothers that they might build a church of the holy Agnes, and commanded a tomb to be placed for herself [i.e. Constantia] in that same place). Text in *PL* 17, cols 735–42, at col. 742. *CCL* has 'locare praecepit' for 'collocari praecepit'.

<sup>24</sup> T. J. Heffernan, *Sacred Biography: Saints and Their Biographers in the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1988), p. 6, 15; Lapidge, 'Saintly Life', p. 262; C. J. Hahn, *Portrayed on the Heart: Narrative Effect in Pictorial Lives of Saints from the Tenth Through the Thirteenth Century* (Berkeley, 2001), pp. 41–44; R. Woolf, *Art and Doctrine: Essays on Medieval Literature* (London, 1986), p. 222; M. W. Dickie, 'Narrative-patterns in Christian Hagiography', *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies*, 40 (1999), 83–98.

<sup>25</sup> Heffernan, *Sacred*, p. 6; Lapidge, 'Saintly Life', p. 262; H. Magennis, 'Approaches to Saints' Lives', in *The Christian Tradition in Anglo-Saxon England: Approaches to Current Scholarship and Teaching*, ed. P. Cavill (Cambridge, 2004), pp. 163–84.

<sup>26</sup> Clemoes, *Rhythm*, pp. 16–24.

Frankish, Swithun is English and Agnes is Italian. That they all share in one burial practice suggests continuity across the Christian community, particularly the continental one.

#### SAINTLY COMPANIONS

Ælfric also highlights the union of the saints by describing saints as part of a collective group of companions. He adapts his Latin sources by adding references to the saintly communion and its importance, and in doing so, further emphasises the idea that saints join a unified community upon death. After St Eugenia is buried, her mother weeps at her tomb until she is comforted by the sight of her daughter ‘on gastlicre gesiðhe, mid golde gefrætwoðe, / mid ðam heofonlicum werode’ (‘in a spiritual vision, adorned with gold, with a heavenly host’, ll. 418–19). Ælfric’s Latin source describes Eugenia’s saintly companions as ‘multa virginum turba’ (‘a great crowd of virgins’), presenting a specific image of the virgin martyrs as a collective.<sup>27</sup> In translating this phrase as ‘heofonlicum werode’, Ælfric generalises the accompanying host, presenting the communion of saints as a unified and harmonious multitude. He also subtly alters his source in a very similar episode in the *Life of Agnes*, which describes the saint appearing to her parents surrounded by ‘mycel mædenlic werod [...] / ealle geglengede mid gyldenum gyrlum’ (‘a great host of virgins [...] all adorned with golden garments’, ll. 251–52). Agnes tells her mother and father not to weep, because ‘Ic eom þysum mædenum geferlæht / and ic mid him underfeng swiðe fægere wununga’ (‘I am together with these virgins, and with them I have received very wonderful dwellings’, ll. 256–57). By contrast, in the Latin account, Agnes simply says ‘cum his virginibus lucidas

<sup>27</sup> The Latin text here is not represented by the print edition or by the CCL, but is found in Hereford Cathedral Library MS P.7.vi, f. 213r. See Zettel, ‘Sources’, pp. 249–51.

sedes accipi' ('with these virgins I have received beautiful dwellings').<sup>28</sup> In adding the phrase 'þysum mædenum geferlæht' and placing it at the opening of Agnes' direct speech, Ælfric presents the act of joining the communion of saints as a major aspect of Agnes' triumph.

The parallels between Agnes and Eugenia, who both appear to their grieving parents accompanied by a 'werod' dressed in 'gyld', creates a unity between the saints — they are part of a communion not only narratively, but also intertextually. Further, the similarities between Ælfric's description of Agnes surrounded by virgins dressed in gold and the depiction of the queen of Heaven dressed in gold found in Psalm 44.10 links these descriptions not only to each other, but also to a wider textual and saintly community.<sup>29</sup> In these two lives, then, Ælfric's alterations to his sources stress the burial place as a site of saintly community rather than just individual memory. At the tombs of the martyrs, one is able to encounter not just the saint themselves, but also their accompanying host: according to this understanding, the ownership of saintly relics connects a monastic establishment or church not only to one saint, but to the entire saintly collective. As such, we see Ælfric supporting and encouraging the relic fervor of Æthelwold's reform at a time when the idea of saintly aid was becoming ever more appealing to both lay and monastic communities.<sup>30</sup> By adapting his sources in ways that emphasise that the saints function as a fellowship not just as individuals, Ælfric grants local saints and their relics even more power than they already held in the early medieval English imagination.

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<sup>28</sup> *PL* 17, col. 741.

<sup>29</sup> The similarities between Psalm 44.10 ('adstetit regina a dextris tuis in vestitu deaurato circumdata varietate' ('the queen stands at your right hand in golden garments, surrounded by variety')) and Ælfric's *Agnes* are noted in Phillips, 'Materials', pp. 130–31. Phillips argues that Æthelweard and Æthelmær were likely familiar with the psalms, and as such may have recognised this reference.

<sup>30</sup> On Æthelwold's particular interest in relics, see Thacker, 'Æthelwold', p. 61; Rollason, *Saints*, pp. 178–79.

## COMMUNITY AS SAINTLY IDEAL

Moreover, Ælfric presents the communion of saints as being the crux of saintly achievement, and celebrates it as the ultimate expression of piety. In the *Life of Julian and Basilissa*, Ælfric follows Julian's death with a catalogue of martyrs:

Iulianus þa and se geonga cniht,  
 Martianes sunu, and his modor samod,  
 Antonius se preost, and se geed-cucode man,  
 wurdon tosomne ofslægene for Criste  
 and ferdon mid wuldre to þam wel-willendan hælende  
 and to heora geferum þe him forestopon,  
 þæt is Basilissa, mid hyre beorhtum mædenum,  
 and se halga heap þe on ðam huse forbarn  
 and þa twentig weard-menn þe se wæl-hreowa beheafdode  
 and þa seofan gebroðra þe he forbernann het.  
 And hi ealle nu mid Gode on ecnysse blyssiað.

(Ælfric, *Julian and Basilissa*, ll. 412–22)

[Then Julian and the young boy, Martianus' son, and also his mother, Antonius the priest and the resurrected man, were together killed for Christ, and went with glory to the benevolent saviour and to their companions who preceded them, that is, Basilissa with her radiant virgins and the holy multitude that was burned alive in that building, and the twenty guards that the tyrant had beheaded, and the seven brothers who he had commanded to be burned to death. And they all now rejoice with God in eternity.]

This passage is a considerable addition to the anonymous *Passio Iuliani et Basilissae*, which provides only a cursory account of the execution. The Latin text simply states 'tunc Martianus [...] iussit eos decollari' ('then Martianus [...] ordered them to be beheaded', c. 60), before quickly moving on to other events with 'cumque factum fuisset' ('when that had been done', c. 61).<sup>31</sup> Robert Upchurch, noting this addition, suggests that Ælfric wished to restructure the

<sup>31</sup> Text and trans. in R. Upchurch, *Ælfric's Lives of the Virgin Spouses with Modern English Parallel-Text Translations* (Exeter, 2007), pp. 114–71.

‘hasty, colourless ending’ of his source into a celebration of good prevailing over evil that was evocative of Judgement Day.<sup>32</sup> I argue that this catalogue, when considered as part of Ælfric’s tendency to invoke the communion of saints when describing saintly death and burial, emphasises not only the victory of the martyrs, but also their function as a collective unit. The catalogue of martyrs presents a large and diverse group of people, lay and religious alike, who despite their differences are nonetheless finally brought into a single fellowship through their deaths.<sup>33</sup> A sense of collectivity is woven throughout the passage, with the words ‘samod’, ‘tosomne’, ‘heora geferum’, ‘mid’ and ‘halga heap’ repeatedly gesturing towards the saints as a group and presenting their final, divine unity as the logical endpoint of the work that they had already begun on earth. The passage builds saint upon saint in a crescendo of polysyndeton before reaching its climax in the internal rhyme of ‘ecnyssse blyssiað’, signifying the internal unity of the saintly collective through phonic harmony. Ælfric’s style here not only reflects the divinely ordered nature of the universe, as suggested by Clemoes, but also the perfect unity of the communion of saints, in which all of the faithful both living and dead are joined in one fellowship.<sup>34</sup>

For Ælfric, this community of the faithful is important not only because it links the saints to their worshippers, but also because it links the idealised saintly past to a tenth-century present. Just as saints buried together belong to different geographical locations, so too do they come from different historical time periods. When Swithun is buried in the Church of Peter, for example, a medieval saint is brought alongside an apostle of biblical antiquity. Further, phrases such as ‘heora geferum þe him forestopon’ (‘their companions who preceded them’, *Julian and Basilissa* l. 417) and ‘Petrus and Paulus, ærest bebyrgede wæron’

<sup>32</sup> R. Upchurch, ‘Virgin Spouses as Model Christians: The Legend of Julian and Basilissa in Ælfric’s *Lives of Saints*’, *ASE* 34 (2005), 197–217, at pp. 212–13.

<sup>33</sup> The fact that the ‘beorhtum mædenum’ and ‘halga heap’ represent religious communities of nuns and monks is noted by Upchurch, ‘Virgin’, 213.

<sup>34</sup> Clemoes, *Rhythm*, pp. 16–24.

(‘[where] Peter and Paul were buried first’, *Sebastian* l. 465) present the moment of saintly death as one that creates temporal continuity by linking the past and the present. The desire to connect the distant saintly past to the Christian present was a key driver in the English Benedictine Reform, and Æthelwold in particular looked to the saints and authority of the past in order to recreate a ‘golden age’ of monasticism in tenth-century England.<sup>35</sup> Whilst continental reformers looked towards the examples of the desert fathers, Æthelwold turned instead to the examples provided by Bede’s *Historia ecclesiastica*, bridging England’s monastic past to its present.<sup>36</sup>

At the heart of this historicisation was the idea of recreating or returning to a more ideal state of English monasticism. In the *Lives of Saints*, Ælfric laments that Christian behaviour has lapsed in lay circles as well as monastic ones, and compares his day unfavourably to the saintly past:

Wel we magon geðencan hu wel hit ferde mid us  
 þa ða þis ig-land wæs wunigende on sibbe  
 and munuc-lif wæron mid wurðscipe gehealdene  
 and ða woruld-menn wæron wære wið heora fynd,  
 swa þæt ure word sprang wide geond þas eorðan.  
 Hu wæs ða siððan ða þa man towearp munuc-lif  
 and Godes biggengas to bysmore hæfde,  
 buton þæt us com to cwealm and hunger,  
 and siððan hæðen here us hæfde to byssmre?

(Ælfric, *On the Prayer of Moses*, ll. 147–55)

[We would do well to think how well it went for us when this island was living in peace, and monasteries were honourably preserved, and lay-men were vigilant against the enemies [of the monasteries], so that our fame spread widely across this earth. Afterwards, when men flung aside the monasteries, and God’s worship was held in contempt, what happened but that destruction and famine came to us, and then a heathen army held us in contempt?]

<sup>35</sup> C. Cubitt, ‘Review Article: The Tenth-Century Benedictine Reform in England’, *Early Medieval Europe* 6 (1997), 77–94, at 88.

<sup>36</sup> Wormald, ‘Continental’, pp. 38–40; Jones, ‘Limits’, pp. 71–73.

England's monastic past here represents an example to which the faithful of the present should aspire. Ælfric's continued alliteration on *w* stylistically mirrors the contextual harmony of England in its golden age, in contrast with the more discordant present, in which the glory of 'biggengas' is alliterated with the disgrace of 'bysmore', and repetition of 'bysmore hæfde' emphasises the total destruction that has come to 'þis ig-land'. For Ælfric, the past represents the idealised unity that he considers to be lacking from the present. The importance that Ælfric afforded to this unity no doubt stemmed from the ideals of the Benedictine Reform, a movement that, from its first inception on the continent, prioritised *nulla varietas* and congruity between monastic houses.<sup>37</sup> In his depictions of the translation of saints, Ælfric finds a way to bridge this idealised, unified past with the unfortunate present.

Ælfric unites the saints by bringing the names of other saints into burial accounts, employing common motifs across his collection, and placing greater emphasis on saintly fellowship than do his Latin sources. He depicts the saints as sharing in a single fellowship that spans across time, space and the *Lives of Saints* as a collection. Through the invocation of the communion of saints, the *Lives of Saints* repeatedly celebrates the saintly death not only as a moment of individual glory, but also as a realisation of cosmic unity. In doing so, Ælfric draws upon the examples of Æthelwold and the continental Benedictines, who used the translation of saints as a means to grant prestige to their reformed monastic establishments, but subtly reshapes this into an expression of the power of the Universal church.

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<sup>37</sup> For the idea of *nulla varietas* and the Carolingian origins of the Benedictine Reform, see Wormald, 'Æthelwold', pp. 15–19. In the *Regularis Concordia*, Æthelwold underlines the importance of unified monastic practice by suggesting that deviation from a single observance may lead England's monasteries into 'vituperium' ('disrepute', *RC* pro.4). He also closes the *prohemium* to the *RC* by citing Psalm 67.7, on the importance of unification, describing God as '*qui facit unanimes, id est unius moris, habitare in domo*' ('He who makes all of one mind, that is, of one custom, to live in that house', *RC* pro.12).

## II: TRANSLATION AND THE GLOBAL CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

Rehousing the saintly body, then, joins the saints to one another in a communion. Yet it also unites the Christian faithful who take part in and benefit from these translations. Ownership of relics served to elevate the individual stature of particular locations and communities, but also, paradoxically, made these places part of a wider Christian network. In the *Lives of Saints*, Ælfric highlights the way that relics link disparate geographic communities together by standardising the narratives found in his various sources. Though descriptions of translations vary widely between Latin sources, within the *Lives of Saints* they are formulaic, suggesting that saints are buried and translated in much the same way everywhere. Moreover, Ælfric's representation of saintly burial sites as places that attract pilgrims suggests that the translation of saints allows networks of Christianity to be built between geographical locales.

### *FORMULAIC DESCRIPTIONS*

Ælfric almost always describes saintly bodies being translated to new resting places with a formulaic phrase: '(mycelre) ar-wurðnyssse' ('(great) honour'), or its close alternative, '(mycelre) wurð-mynte' ('(great) reverence'). Within the *Lives of Saints*, these two phrases translate a wide range of Latin clauses and terms. Sometimes, Ælfric utilises 'wið ar-wurðnyssse' to directly replace a Latin ablative of manner suggesting that the saint was translated honourably or carefully, such as in the *Life of Sebastian*, where the saint is translated 'cum omnia diligentia' ('with every diligence'), or in the *Life of Thomas*, when the

body is carried ‘cum honore’ (‘with honour’).<sup>38</sup> Similarly, in his *Life of Agatha*, Ælfric writes that the saint was buried ‘mid mycelre ar-wurðnyse’ to translate ‘veneranter omnique honorificentia’ (‘reverently, and with every honour’).<sup>39</sup> In much the same way, in the *Life of Swithun*, Ælfric translates Lantfred’s adverb ‘decentissime’ (‘most appropriately / decently’) as ‘wurðlice’.<sup>40</sup> In these instances, Ælfric is standardising his Latin texts, translating a range of terms with a single Old English equivalent. Ælfric’s tendency to standardise vocabulary and to use so-called ‘Winchester words’ has been previously noted by several scholars.<sup>41</sup> Whilst *wurðlice* and *wurðmynte* cannot truly be described as Winchester words, and do not render specific Latin lemmata, Ælfric nonetheless employs them to similar ends.<sup>42</sup> With these terms, he creates consistent, regulated renderings of Latin terms into Old English, and in doing so, presents accounts of translation that seem more similar to one another than they did in their Latin versions.

However, in multiple instances, the Latin source Ælfric is translating has no equivalent phrase to ‘wið ar-wurðnyse’. As such, we see Ælfric adding in this formulaic phrase in order to standardise his depictions of saintly burial across the collection. When translating the Latin *Passio Ceciliae*, Ælfric adds the term into his version:

<sup>38</sup> ‘His lic funde and ferede mid wurð-mynte / to þære ylcan stowe þe he sylf bebead’ (She found his body and carried it with honour to that same place that he himself had commanded, *Sebastian*, ll. 469–70); ‘Godes apostol / wearð syððan geferod to Syrian lande / mid micelre ar-wurðnyse’ (‘afterwards, God’s apostle was brought to Syria with great honour’, *Thomas*, ll. 409–11).

<sup>39</sup> ‘Pa com seo burh-warū and bebyrigde hire lic / mid mycelre ar-wurðnyse’ (‘Then the citizens came and buried her body with great honour’, ll. 196–97). Although this phrase is not found in the CCL version of *Agatha* (BHL 133), Morini has demonstrated that the version of the *Passio Agathae* that Ælfric worked from was probably a ninth-century Spanish text (BHL 135) which had been combined with aspects of BHL 133. For the history of this hybrid text, which she names the ‘Cistercian Recension’, and its relation to Ælfric’s version, see Morini, *Agata*, pp. 61–76, 95–124; for the print edition of this text, see *ibid* pp. 182–236.

<sup>40</sup> ‘Pa se biseop Aðelwold, mid abbodum and munecum, / dyde up þone sanct mid sange wurðlice’ (‘Then the bishop Æthelwold, with the abbots and the monks, exhumed the saint honourably, with singing’, ll. 139–40).

<sup>41</sup> See H. Gneuss, ‘The Origin of Standard Old English and Æthelwold’s School at Winchester’, *ASE* 1 (1972), 63–83; W. Hofstetter, ‘Winchester and the Standardization of Old English Vocabulary’, *ASE* 17 (1988), 139–61; M. Gretsch, ‘Vocabulary’; M. Gretsch, ‘Ælfric, Language and Winchester’, in Magennis and Swan, eds (2009), pp. 109–37.

<sup>42</sup> For the assessment criteria of Winchester words, see Gretsch, ‘Language’, pp. 124–25.

Tunc sanctus Urbanus corpus eius auferens cum diaconibus nocte  
sepeliuit eam [...].<sup>43</sup>

[Then saint Urban buried her, carrying her body with the deacons  
during the night, *Passio Ceciliae*, c. 32.]

And Urbanus se papa bebyrigde hi ar-wurðlice [...].

[And Pope Urban buried her with honour, *Cecilia*, l. 362.]

The *Life of George* also sees Ælfric add this formulaic term to his Latin source: he writes that the body was translated ‘mid mycelre ar-wurðnysse’ (l. 175) despite the fact that the *Passio Georgii* contains no equivalent phrase.<sup>44</sup> Similarly, in the *Life of Apollinaris*, Ælfric translates the description of the saint’s burial, ‘sepultus est foris muros Classis in arca saxeaa discipulis suis’ (‘he was buried by his disciples outside the city walls of Classe in a stone coffin, c. 35), as being conducted ‘ar-wurðlice’ (l. 248). Moreover, Ælfric also uses this formula in relation to biblical saints: in *Saint Mark and the Four Evangelists*, he writes that Mark’s followers ‘aweg feredon / þæs god-spelleres lic and ledon on anre þryh / and mid ar-wurðnysse bebyrigdon’ (‘carried away the apostle’s body and laid it in a coffin and buried it with honour’, ll. 98–100). Here, he is once again adding to his source, the anonymous *Passio S. Marci Evangelistae*, which states simply that ‘tunc religiosi venientes Iusti corpus collegerunt, et detulerunt ubi orationes sollicite erant domino sine cessatione fundere’ (‘then, the pious men having come, they collected the body of the apostle, and carried it to where they were anxiously pouring out prayers to the Lord without ceasing’, c. 10).<sup>45</sup> In all of these

<sup>43</sup> ‘Passio Ceciliae’, in *Ælfric’s Lives of the Virgin Spouses*, ed. and trans. R. Upchurch (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2007), pp. 172–217.

<sup>44</sup> ‘Tunc venientes Cappadociae regionis qui in agone certaminis eius aderant viri excellentissimi et primi civitatis christiani corpus eius nocturno silentio abstulerunt diversis nectariis odoribus et aromatibus in eadem civitate, in qua passionem martyria consumavit, reconditus est’ (Then, coming from the Cappadocian region, those who were present at the display of the most excellent man’s struggle and the Christian chiefs of the city stole his body by nocturnal silence, with diverse nectars, scents and sweet odors, and he was buried in that same city in which the suffering of the martyr took place, *Passio Georgii*, c. 21).

<sup>45</sup> CCL gives ‘celebrate’ (sic.) for ‘fundere’.

instances Ælfric is making a conscious addition to his source material, and creating a sense of continuity between saints, times and places that was not found in the Latin texts.

Further, these additions suggest consistent praxis between the various geographic locales that the saints belong to. Notably, this creates a bridge between England and the continent. Patrick Geary has demonstrated that the periodic renewal and ‘repetition’ inherent in the movement or elevation of saints’ bodies was an essential tool for ensuring the survival of their cults.<sup>46</sup> In the *Lives of Saints*, Ælfric similarly draws upon the idea of repetition to authorise tenth-century English piety. When translating Bede’s account of Æthelthryth’s reburial from the *Historia Ecclesiastica*, Ælfric reworks the Latin text to bring the English saint’s burial in line with the continental saints in the collection. Bede writes that the saint’s body ‘usque hodie in magna ueneratione habetur’ (‘is held in great veneration to this day’); Ælfric translates this as ‘ðær heo lið oð þis / on mycelre ar-wurðnysse’ (‘she lies there to this day in great honour’, ll. 100–01). Similarly, Bede’s depiction of Oswald’s relic translations makes no reference to the idea that these movements were conducted ‘with honour’:

Quo post annum deueniens cum exercitu successor regni eius Osuii  
abstulit ea, et caput quidem in cimiterio Lindisfarnensis ecclesie, in  
regia uero ciuitate manus cum brachiis condidit.

(Bede, *HE*, iii.12)

[A year afterwards, his successor Oswiu came thither with an army  
and took them [i.e. the relics] away. He buried the head in a burial  
place in the church at Lindisfarne, but the hands and arms he buried in  
the royal city of Bamburgh.]

By contrast, in his *Life of Oswald*, Ælfric describes both the translation of the head and arm using *wurðlice* / *wurðnysse*, writing that Oswig found the relics and ‘mid ar-wurðnysse

<sup>46</sup> P. J. Geary, ‘Sacred Commodities: The Circulation of Medieval Relics’, in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities of Cultural Perspective*, ed. A. Appadurai (Cambridge, 1988), pp. 169–92, at pp. 187–88.

ferode to Lindisfarnea cyrcan' ('brought them to the church at Lindisfarne with honour' *Oswald*, l. 168), and that 'se earm wearþ geled ar-wurðlice on scrine' ('the arm was laid honourably in a shrine', l. 172). That these two instances occur so closely together in the text further highlights the repetitive, formulaic nature of saintly translation. As such, Ælfric depicts English saints in the *Lives of Saints* being buried in the same way as their continental and biblical predecessors. Thus, he authorises tenth-century English translations of saints by demonstrating that the reformers were repeating existing models of Christian praxis, and emphasises that England was part of the 'universal church'.<sup>47</sup>

Ælfric further emphasises the sense of continuity between saints with other repeated terms and descriptions. One such repetition is the idea of *bliss* ('joy', 'rejoicing'), which Ælfric inserts into several of his translations of saintly burial. In *Julian and Basilissa*, Ælfric describes the burial of both of these saints 'mid blisse':

Iulianus mid blisse hi bebyrgde mid his munecum  
[Julian and his monks buried her, rejoicing', l. 101]

Þæra halgan lic þurh geleaffulle men  
wurdon gebyrigde sona mid blisse binnan Godes cyrcan

[The saints' bodies [including Julian's] were quickly buried with joy in  
God's church by faithful people, ll. 433–34 ]

The Latin *Passio* that Ælfric took as his source contains no sense that these burials were carried out joyfully or with rejoicing. Further, the Latin text uses different verbs to describe the burials: when Basilissa dies, 'tradidit sanctus Iulianus sepultrae dignissime' ('Saint Julian handed her over with a most fitting burial ceremony', l. 224), whilst Julian and his companions 'sepulti sunt' ('were buried', c. 922–23). Ælfric's version, which uses the terms *be-byrgan* and *bliss* for both saints, creates continuity between the deaths of the holy

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<sup>47</sup> For Bede and the universal church, see above, n. 11.

spouses, and suggests that the divine unity of their chaste marriage extends beyond death. Further, the uniformity of the two burials reflects the Benedictine Reform ideal of standardised religious observance across the Christian community.<sup>48</sup> Ælfric reworks his source material to depict cohesion, both between the saints and between the religious communities that bury them.

This sense of cohesion also extends to other saints in the collection, who are similarly described as having ‘joyful’ burials. For example, Ælfric describes how Agnes’ parents ‘mid mycelre blysse, / gelæhton hyre lic’ (‘carried her body with great joy’, ll. 246–47). There is no equivalent to this in the Latin *Passio*, marking it as an Ælfrician addition. Moreover, in the *Life of Martin*, the saint’s body is taken by the men of Tours, who ‘to scipe bæron mid swiðlicre blisse’ (‘carry [the body] to a ship with great rejoicing’, l. 1476), translating the Latin ‘cum magnis laudibus’ (‘with great praises’, *Historia Francorum* I.48). As with *wurðnyssse*, Ælfric uses *bliss* to suggest continuity between English praxis and the global Christian community. Æthelthryth is translated to her new burial place ‘blyssigende mid sangam’ (‘joyfully, with song’, l. 99). Bede’s account mentions that there was singing, but not that the translation was conducted ‘joyfully’.<sup>49</sup> With this addition, Ælfric subtly ties Æthelthryth’s reburial to that of the continental saints Agnes and Martin, and the Middle-Eastern saints Julian and Basilissa, and suggests that the geographically wide-ranging Christian church nonetheless adheres to a single form of observance. In doing so, he reflects Bede’s idea of the universal church, and demonstrates that England is part of a wider Christian community.

<sup>48</sup> For unified practice as a Benedictine ideal see Wormald, ‘Æthelwold’, pp. 15–19.

<sup>49</sup> *HE*, iv.19: ‘Omnis congregatio, hinc fratrum inde sororum, psallens circumstaret’ (‘The whole congregation stood around singing, the brothers on one side and the sisters on the other’).

Another formulaic aspect of accounts of translation in the *Lives of Saints* is the depiction of the community coming together to bury the saint. The frequent occurrence of this motif both heightens the similarity between lives in the collection and gestures to the saintly body as a focal point of Christian community. The idea of a saint's translation or burial by a group of followers was an existing trope in hagiography, and there are many occasions in the *Lives of Saints* where Ælfric's depiction of such activity was simply a faithful rendition of his source material.<sup>50</sup> However, he further emphasises the role that community played in this practice by making stylistic and narrative alterations to the Latin accounts.

For example, in the *Life of Edmund*, Ælfric subtly adapts Abbo's Latin *Passio* to place greater emphasis on the saintly translation as a communal endeavour that unifies the faithful. Abbo, whose *Passio Eadmundi* was the source of Ælfric's Old English version, describes how Edmund's countrymen gather in council to discuss how to retrieve their lord's remains for burial. Though the men are described agreeing to the plan 'omnes pari affectu' ('all with equal feeling', 12.21), the severed head is not discovered by all of them: Abbo describes those who find the head as 'pluribus' ('several'/'many').<sup>51</sup> By contrast, Ælfric emphasises the communal nature of the hunting party, writing that 'hi eodon þa ealle endemes to þam wudu' ('then they all went together into the woods', l. 130). Here, Ælfric's

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<sup>50</sup> Jennifer Key includes 'burial of body by followers' and 'finding of body by followers' in her index of motifs in early medieval English hagiography: 'Death in Anglo-Saxon Hagiography: Approaches, Attitudes, Aesthetics' (unpubl. PhD thesis, Univ. St Andrews, 2014), pp. 232–33, 239. For Ælfric's depiction of followers burying the saint, see for example the *Life of Sebastian*, whereby Lucina buries the saint 'mid hire mannun' / 'cum servuis suis' ('with her servants', *Life of Sebastian*, l. 468 / *Passio Sebastiani*, c. 89); *The Chair of Peter* whereby Petronilla is buried by 'þa wif' / 'turba matronarum' ('the women', *Chair of Peter*, l. 268 / 'a crowd of women', *Fratres Nerei et Achillem* c. 15); and *The Forty Soldiers*, where the martyrs' remains are found by the bishop with 'his preostum' / 'quosdam ex Clericis suis et viros religiosos' ('his priests', *Forty Soldiers*, l. 268 / 'some of his priests and pious men', *Passio XL Martyrum*, c. 13). Text in 'Passio XL Martyrum', in AS, Mart, 2 (Antwerp, 1668), pp. 29–21.

<sup>51</sup> 'vispillonum sane more pluribus pedetentim inuia perlustrantibus' ('when many [of them] cautiously wandered through the impassable [parts of the wood] in the manner of undertakers', *Passio Eadmundi*, 12.29–30).

alliterative style highlights the congruity of the hunting party. Similarly, when describing Edmund's reburial, he centres the idea of unity through both style and content:

Eft þa on fyrste, æfter fela gearum,  
 þa seo hergung geswac and sibb wearð forgifen  
 þam geswenctan folce, þa fengon hi togædere  
 and worhton ane cyrcan wurðlice þam halgan,  
 forþan ðe gelome wundra wurdon æt his byrgene,  
 æt þam gebæd-huse þær he bebyrged wæs.

(Ælfric, *Edmund*, ll. 156–59)

[Some time afterwards, after many years, when the raiding had ceased, and peace was returned to the oppressed people, they then joined together and built a church magnificently for the saint, in the chapel where he was buried, because miracles often happened at his tomb.]

The aural harmony of this passage, with continued alliteration on *f* and *w*, and verbal echoes between 'geswac'/'geswencan' and 'byrgene'/'bebyrged', serves to stylistically embody the unification of the Christian people as they come together to re-bury Edmund. Further, the idea that the Englishmen 'fengon hi togædere', which presents Edmund's reburial as the impetus for Christian unification, is unique to Ælfric's version. Ælfric's particular emphasis on unity is no doubt indebted to his Winchester education, since the idealised unification of the English faithful was of particular importance to Æthelwold. In the prologue to the *Regularis Concordia*, Æthelwold criticises the idea that monks may act individually, suggesting that to do so would compromise their monastic obedience.<sup>52</sup> In his prologue to the *Old English Rule*, he similarly criticises disunity in the secular sphere, lamenting that King Eadwig 'þurh his cildhades nytenness þis rice tostencte ond his annesse todælde' ('through his childhood's ignorance destroyed the integrity of this kingdom and divided its unity').<sup>53</sup> In depicting the

<sup>52</sup> 'Ne igitur singuli, si suam, quod absit, adinventionem suapte praesumptuosi eligerent, excellentissimum sanctae oboedientiae fructum [...] miserabiliter amitterent' ('Lest therefore they should all, which God forbid, prefer to act according to their own devices and thus wretchedly lose the most excellent fruit of holy obedience', c. 6). Text and trans. in *Regularis Concordia*, ed. and trans. D. T. Symons (London, 1953).

<sup>53</sup> Text in D. Whitelock, M. Brett and C. Brooke, eds, *Councils & Synods with Other Documents Relating to the English Church: Volume I A.D. 871–1204* (Oxford, 1981), pp. 142–154, at p. 146.

translation of Edmund's relics as a unanimous community effort, Ælfric centres the idealised unity that Æthelwold prized so highly, and encourages his English audiences to mimic these practices.

Ælfric also foregrounded the idea of community by inserting references to 'crowds' attending the saint's burial. In the lives of the *Basil* and *Martin*, Ælfric describes the way that people come together to bury the saint with the alliterative phrase 'mycel meniu' ('a great crowd').<sup>54</sup> In the *Life of Basil*, Ælfric is translating this from his Latin source, which records that 'crastino autem congregata est multitudo' ('in the morning, then, a crowd assembled', 16.72). In the *Life of Martin*, however, there is no comparable statement in the Latin account. Ælfric is therefore adding the 'great crowd' to the narrative. In doing so, he makes Martin's translation more similar to Basil's. Ælfric also adds the phrase 'mycel meniu' to his *Life of Lucy* to describe crowds of people attending the tomb of St Agatha. Whilst his source states that 'Syracusanus populus' ('Syracusan people', 892) flock to see Agatha's burial-place, Ælfric describes the pilgrims as 'fram Siracusa [...] mycel meniu' ('a great multitude from Syracuse', l. 2). By using the same phrase across multiple items to describe the phenomenon of people gathering around the saintly body, Ælfric creates a link between them, and makes the saints' burials seem more homogenous than in the Latin texts. This homogenization of burials reflects Benedictine sensibilities, in that it suggests that religious observance is the same throughout the Christian world.<sup>55</sup>

In several instances, the communities that bury the saint are specifically monastic rather than lay. In his *Life of Julian and Basilissa*, Ælfric writes that Basilissa was buried by 'Iulianus [...] mid his munecum' ('Julian, with his monks', l. 101), whereas in the Latin

<sup>54</sup> 'Þa com mycel meniu on mergen to ðam lice' ('Then, in the morning, a great crowd came to the body', *Basil*, l. 628); 'Ða þa þæs halgan weres lic læg inne þa git, / þa com micel meniu of manegum burgum' ('Then, while the holy man's corpse still lay inside, a great crowd came from many cities', *Martin*, ll. 1441–42).

<sup>55</sup> Wormald, 'Æthelwold', pp. 15–19.

source, Julian buries his wife alone.<sup>56</sup> Here, Ælfric creates a parallel between Julian and bishop Æthelwold, who similarly undertakes to translate a saint's relics 'mid [...] munecum' (*Swithun*, l. 139).<sup>57</sup> The role played by monks in the translation of saints is also referenced in *The Life of Oswald*, where Ælfric states that the saint's arm is preserved 'on sancta Petres mynstre / binnan Bebbanbyrig' ('in Saint Peter's minster in Bamburgh', l. 173). Bede relates that the arm and hand are buried 'in regia [...] ciuitate' ('in the royal city', *HE*, iii.12) and 'in ecclesia sancti Petri' ('in St Peter's church', *HE*, iii.6), but does not state that the relics are held by a minster specifically. In adding this detail, Ælfric highlights the role of monks in preserving the saintly remains. By making minor alterations to the lives of *Julian and Basilissa* and *Oswald*, then, Ælfric gestures to the way that *monasteria* functioned as caretakers of relics in late tenth-century England.<sup>58</sup> This reminder of monasterial importance no doubt served a practical purpose: as Richard Gameson notes, the reformers condemned secular authority over monastic establishments, but nonetheless benefitted considerably from aristocratic patronage.<sup>59</sup> In drawing subtle but clear attention to the role of monks in preserving the saintly body, Ælfric perhaps hoped to inspire laymen, particular those of noble standing like his patrons Æthelweard and Æthelmær, to support monastic establishments.<sup>60</sup>

As we have seen, Ælfric describes saintly burials in a consistent manner across the collection. In order to do so, he not only translates Latin terms with standardised Old English vocabulary, but also adds in formulaic phrases and motifs that had no equivalent in his Latin sources. As such, he creates a sense of continuity and similarity between the accounts. When the *Lives of Saints* is read as a collection, the cumulative effect of these repeated phrases and

<sup>56</sup> *Passio Iuliani et Basilissae* l. 224.

<sup>57</sup> Here Ælfric is translating Lantfred's 'fratribus' (*Translatio Swithuni*, 3.146).

<sup>58</sup> On the role of *monasteria* as guardians of relics, see Thacker, 'Monks', pp. 164–69.

<sup>59</sup> R. Gameson, *The Role of Art in the Late Anglo-Saxon Church* (Oxford, 1995), pp. 248–50.

<sup>60</sup> For Ælfric's lay patrons, see Cubitt, 'Ælfric's Lay Patrons'; for lay patronage of monastic institutions, see B. A. E. Yorke, 'Æthelmær: The Foundation of the Abbey at Cerne and the Politics of the Tenth Century', in *The Cerne Abbey Millenium Lectures*, ed. K. Barker (Cerne, 1988), pp. 15–26; B. A. E. Yorke, 'Æthelwold and the Politics of the Tenth Century', in Yorke, ed. (1988), pp. 65–88.

tropes suggests that saints are buried in much the same way everywhere, since saints from a range of geographic backgrounds are all translated in the same way. Ælfric's work thereby expresses the idealised unity of the Benedictine Reform and of Bede's universal church. Whilst the reality of the tenth-century religious landscape was undeniably diverse, its depiction in the translation narratives of the *Lives of Saints* is perfectly unified.<sup>61</sup>

#### *REDUCED DETAIL*

Ælfric further draws upon the universal church by reducing much of the specific detail about saintly translations found in his Latin sources. The aspects of saints' burials that tie them to temporal and geographical points far away from early medieval England are minimised, leaving guidelines for religious observance that could be conceptually transferred to more local saints. Consequently, the *Lives of Saints* presents the translation of saints as a largely homogenous event across the world, and suggests that the ritual behaviours of Christian observance unite the faithful into a singular universal community.

The Latin *Passio Agathae* and *Vita Basilii* both describe saints' burials, but do so in very different ways, since they belong to different local and temporal traditions. Agatha's body is embalmed in preparation for burial:

Quod pii populi audientes, cum nimia celeritate uenerunt, et auferentes corpus eius, ueneranter omnique honorificentia sepultrae tradere curauerunt. Factum est autem dum aromatibus ac pigmentis uariis corpus sanctae uirginis condiretur et cum nimia diligentia nouo sarcofago locaretur [...].<sup>62</sup>

<sup>61</sup> For the diverse reality of the English Benedictine reform, see Jones, 'Limits', pp. 67–108; J. D. Billett, *The Divine Office in Anglo-Saxon England, 597–c. 1000* (London, 2014), pp. 186–96; A. Gransden, 'Traditionalism and Continuity During the Last Century of Anglo-Saxon Monasticism', *JEH* 40 (1989), 159–207.

<sup>62</sup> The CCL version of the *Passio Agathae* (BHL 133) does not mention 'pigmentis uariis', but does reference the body being preserved 'cum aromatibus'. As Morini has noted, the version that Ælfric used as a source was probably closer to BHL 135, quoted here. See n. 39, above.

(*Passio Agathae*, ll. 244–49)

[When the pious citizens heard this, they came with incredible haste, and, carrying her body, reverently and with every honour undertook to hand her over to the tomb. Moreover, it happened that while the body of the holy virgin was being preserved with aromatics and various ingredients, and was being placed in a new coffin with extreme diligence [...].]

Conversely, the *Vita Basilii* depicts a very different burial tradition, whereby the body is taken to church with great ceremony:

Crastino autem congregata est multitudo et duxit honorificum corpus eius qui uicit materiale in stationem in sanctam ecclesiam cum omni oblatione aromatum et timiamatum sepelientium. Audiens autem et Gregorius Nazianzi episcopus currens et ipse aduenit et uidens honorificum corpus procidit super illud et lamentans multum adorationem hortabatur populum in hymnis et canticis spiritalibus cum decenti honore gloriosam memoriam magni sacerdotis facere. Simulque concurrentibus duodecim episcopis et multitudine ciuitatis deposuerunt eum in archaismum marmoerum in templo sancti et gloriosi martyris Ischii ubi et Leontius ante eum episcopus cum ceteris dormit.

(*Vita Basilii*, 16.72–81)

[In the morning a crowd assembled and led the honourable body of he who conquered the material life into the holy church with every offering of burial spices and incense. Meanwhile, bishop Gregory of Naszianus himself, hearing this and hurrying, arrived, and seeing the honourable body fell prostate before it and lamenting greatly, he urged people to worship the memory of the great priest in hymns and spiritual songs, with appropriate honour. And at the same time, twelve assembled priests and a great multitude of citizens lay Basil down in marble tomb in the church of the holy and glorious martyr Hesychius, where Leontius, the bishop before him, sleeps with the others.]

These two Latin texts present saints being buried according to local custom. Whilst Agatha is embalmed, Basil is buried to the sound of hymns and offerings of incense. Basil's burial is further localised by the fact that he is buried alongside Hesyschius and Leontius of Caesarea,

men who were probably obscure or unknown to Ælfric and his audiences.<sup>63</sup> Though the two accounts describe the same type of event, they clearly belong to different traditions.

However, this cultural difference is almost completely erased by Ælfric when he translates the texts, and in the *Lives of Saints* the two saints' burials are almost indistinguishable from one another. Ælfric omits most of the specific detail when translating Agatha's burial:

**Þa com** seo burh-warū and bebyrigde **hire lic**  
**mid** mycelre ar-wurðnysse **on eall-niwere þryh.**

(Ælfric, *Agatha*, ll. 196–97)

[Then the citizens came and buried her body with great honour in an entirely new tomb.]

Similarly, Basil's burial is greatly condensed from its Latin source:

**Þa com** mycel meniu on mergen to **ðam lice**,  
 and Gregorius bisceop, þe mid Basilie leornode,  
 and oðre fela bisceopas, and gebrohten þæt lic  
**mid** gastlicum sangum **into Godes cyrcean** [...].

(Ælfric, *Basil*, ll. 628–31)

[Then in the morning a great crowd came to the body, and bishop Gregory, who had studied with Basil, and many other bishops, and brought that body with holy songs into God's church.]

In these two descriptions, Ælfric removes the ritual burial practices recorded in his Latin sources. He makes no reference to incense, embalming or burial offerings — practices that differentiated the accounts from each other, and (perhaps more importantly) from the

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<sup>63</sup> The two saints are not attested in any extant early medieval English calendars, nor in hagiographical sources. See R. Rushforth, *Saints in English Kalendars Before A. D. 1100* (London, 2008); Biggs *et al.*, *Sources*.

practices of their English audiences.<sup>64</sup> Moreover, Ælfric presents these burials formulaically. Each text first states who arrived to bury the saint (using ‘þa com’); then references the saintly body (‘lic’); then uses a subordinate clause of manner, introduced by ‘mid’; and finally states the place of burial. This same formula can also be witnessed elsewhere in the collection, albeit with some variation, such as ‘þa ferde’ instead of ‘þa com’ (*Sebastian*, l. 467) or description of the community after the mention of the holy body rather than before (‘þæra halgan lic þurh geleaffulle men’, ‘the holy body, by faithful men’ *Julian and Basilissa*, l. 433). As a result, Ælfric’s burial descriptions are more syntactically similar to one another than the versions in his Latin sources are. The consciously unified styling of these passages suggests that Ælfric did not omit material from them solely through desire for *brevitas*.<sup>65</sup> Rather, he sought to rework his sources in order that they better reflected the divine unity of the saints and of the global Church.

Indeed, the aspects of the translation of saints that Ælfric omits from his sources are frequently those which depict localised customs or events. In particular, he generalises descriptions of the churches that contain saints’ relics. As a result, he depicts an idealised and homogenous global Christianity. In the Latin *Passio Iuliani et Basilissae*, Julian and his followers are buried:

In ecclesia sub sacro altare ex quo loco Dominus fontem  
indeficientem prodere precepit, ex quo sanctum baptisterium  
inundetur.

(*Passio Iuliani et Basilissae*, ll. 922–24)

[Beneath the sacred altar in a church where the Lord commanded an  
ever-flowing spring to bubble up, from which a sacred font is filled.]

<sup>64</sup> For early medieval English burial practices, see J. Buckberry and A. Cherryson, eds, *Burial in Later Anglo-Saxon England c. 650–1100 A.D.* (Oxford, 2010).

<sup>65</sup> For Ælfric’s *brevitas*, see Whatley, ‘Lost’; Stanton, *Translation*, pp. 144–71; Nichols, ‘Brief Style’, pp. 1–12.

However, in Ælfric's account, the saints are simply laid to rest in 'Godes cyrcan' ('God's church', l. 434). In much the same way, Ælfric does not translate the description of St Maurus being buried 'ad dexteram partem altaris' ('to the right-hand side of the altar', *Vita Mauri*, c. 67), and thereby depicts the church that holds the saint's remains in less detail. Ælfric is not uninterested in foreign piety, but rather is unwilling to describe specific churches in ways that emphasised their difference from others. This is highlighted by the fact that he also removes local detail in the lives of English saints. In Abbo's *Passio Eadmundi*, the saint's body is translated to 'construxit permaximam miro ligneo tabulatu aecclesiam' ('a church of immense size, with stories admirably constructed of wood' 13.25–26). By contrast, Ælfric's account is sparse, stating only that the church Edmund was translated to was built 'wurðlice' ('honourably', 'magnificently', *Edmund*, l. 159). As a result, his version of the *Life* places less emphasis on the particular location of Edmund's remains, and instead highlights the fact that Edmund's translation is similar to those happening across the Christian world depicted in the *Lives of Saints*. Indeed, across the collection, Ælfric depicts relic ownership as being important not because it brings prestige to particular places, but rather because it allows those places to join a network of Christianity.

Ælfric's interest in relics as a locus of global Christianity rather than just local authority is made clear in the *Life of Vincent*. Here, Ælfric writes that the saint's 'halgan ban wurdon wide todælde, / and mid mycelre lufe hi man wyrðað gehwær' ('holy bones were widely distributed, and people honour them everywhere with great love', ll. 278–79). Here, Ælfric is translating a section added to the *Passio Vicentii* in the Cotton-Corpus Legendary which describes the distribution of Vincent's relics:<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> On Ælfric's use of the CCL version of Vincent's *Passio*, see P. Zettel, 'Saint's Lives in Old English: Latin Manuscripts and Vernacular Accounts: Ælfric', *Peritia* 1 (1982), 17–37, at 27–31.

Tantum autem gratiam beato martyri Uincentio pro triumphos post coronam uictoriae contulit ut reliquiae eius non solum apud Hispanias sed etiam apud Galliarum prouincias miro excolantur affectu. Denique Cabillonensium, Uiuarensium et Gratianopolitane urbis senioris aecclesiae eius nomine sunt dedicatae. Lugduni quoque Clauati haud procul a muro urbis eius nominis basilica a Brunihilde quondam regina ut ferunt est aedificata.

[Moreover, the blessed martyr Vincent had such great esteem on behalf of his triumphs after he gained the crown of victory that his relics are honoured with wonderful devotion, not only among Spanish provinces but also amongst those of Gaul. Indeed, the churches of Châlon-sur-Saône, Vivarais and of the elder city of Grenoble are dedicated to him by name. In Laon too, not far from the city wall, there is a church dedicated to his name, previously dedicated to queen Brunhilda.]<sup>67</sup>

The Latin account not only highlights the wide-ranging fame of the saint, but does so in specific terms, using a wealth of Frankish toponyms.<sup>68</sup> Ælfric generalises this information, writing simply that the saint and his relics are venerated ‘wide’ (‘widely’) and ‘gehwær’ (‘everywhere’). Interestingly, he does not mention Vincent’s English cult, nor the presence of Vincent’s relics in England.<sup>69</sup> Susan Irvine speculates that Ælfric was reluctant to specify a particular location for Vincent’s relics because he was uncertain of how they came to be in England, or was ‘unwilling to commit himself’ given that several monasteries had conflicting reports of ownership.<sup>70</sup> However, I suggest that his silence regarding Vincent’s relics constitutes part of his tendency to generalise accounts of relic translation across the *Lives of Saints*. Rather than placing emphasis on the specific communities that own Vincent’s relics, Ælfric highlights the breadth of the saint’s global cult. As a result, the *Life of Vincent* both

<sup>67</sup> Transcribed from Cotton MS Nero E. i, f. 121v. I have silently capitalised proper nouns and rendered *e-caudata* as *ae*.

<sup>68</sup> The Frankish emphasis can be attributed to the fact that the *CCL* originated in Francia, as discussed in the introduction to this thesis.

<sup>69</sup> D. Rollason, ‘List of Saints’ Resting-Places in Anglo-Saxon England’, *ASE* 7 (1978), 61–93, at 90; Irvine, ‘Bones’, 125–29; Thacker, ‘Æthelwold’, pp. 60–61.

<sup>70</sup> Irvine, ‘Bones’, 129–30.

demonstrates the fact that saints' relics unite a global Christian community, and provides a generalised model of relic ownership that is applicable to other saints.

Whereas *translatio* narratives in the early medieval period traditionally focused on highlighting the superiority of a particular community, translations in the *Lives of Saints* are globalising. Ælfric minimises the localised aspects of his sources in order to suggest that Christian practice is the same across the Christian world. In his accounts, he was more interested in the potential for the saintly body to unite the Christian world than in the elevation of individual places or communities.

#### *PILGRIMAGE*

However, whilst Ælfric minimises the local aspects of translation, and highlights the universal aspects of relic ownership, his accounts do not entirely disregard the importance of individual communities. Saints' translations within the *Lives of Saints* often feature toponyms, drawing attention to key places in the Christian world. These places are particularly important because they represent potential sites of pilgrimage. Peter Brown considers translation to be the opposite of pilgrimage: translations, he says, are 'the movement of relics to people', as opposed to pilgrimage, which is 'the movement of people to relics'.<sup>71</sup> However, in Ælfric's texts, pilgrimage and translation are inextricably linked. In the *Lives of Saints*, relics grant prestige to the communities that own them, and encourage pilgrims to move towards these important centres. These pilgrimages unite Christians from across the world, particularly

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<sup>71</sup> Brown, *Cult*, p. 88.

those from England and the continent. Ælfric thereby depicts the translation of saints as a means to unite the continental Christian world and to foster dialogue between communities.

In his lives of *Agatha* and *Lucy*, Ælfric demonstrates that relic ownership allows places to be both individually exemplary and part of a wider global tradition.<sup>72</sup> He appends the *Life of Lucy* to the *Life of Agatha*, linking the texts more closely than in other contemporary hagiographical collections.<sup>73</sup> The *Life of Agatha* closes with a description of the saint's veil used to save Catania from a volcanic eruption. Immediately following this, the *Life of Lucy* opens with pilgrims flocking to Agatha's tomb:

Da asprang Agathen hlisa ofer land and sæ,  
swa þæt fram Siracusa sohte mycel meniu,  
ofer fiftig mila, þæs mædenes byrgene  
on Catanensciscre byrig, mid mycelre onbryrdnysse.

(Ælfric, *Agatha*, ll. 237–40)

[Then Agatha's fame spread over land and sea, so that a great crowd from Syracuse, over a distance of fifty miles, sought out the virgin's tomb in the city of Catania, with great excitement.]

Ælfric emphasises the link between relics and place through subtle wordplay between 'byrgen' and 'byrig', highlighting the fact that the city is associated with the saint by virtue of her *burial* rather than her life. This was particularly pertinent to the kind of translations enacted by Æthelwold, in which reformed communities used relics to lay claim to saints who

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<sup>72</sup> Clayton and Mullins print the two items under one heading as the *Life of Agatha*, which is reflected in the line references. However, I refer to the texts separately in this thesis for the sake of clarity.

<sup>73</sup> Gretsch, *Ælfric*, pp. 9–10. See also Gulley, *Displacement*, p. 51. Though lives of Saint Lucy do often make reference to Agatha, the two saints' feast days occur far apart in the calendar (5 February and 13 December, respectively). Gretsch observes that the two lives are separated in twenty-eight litanies and the Cotton-Corpus Legendary, and by contrast only appear together in twelve (*Ælfric*, p. 10). Manuscript evidence suggests that the two Ælfrician lives were transmitted as a pair: see Kleist, *Chronology*, pp. 140–41; J. Hill, 'The Dissemination of Ælfric's *Lives of Saints*: A Preliminary Survey', in Szarmach, ed. (1996), pp. 235–60.

had lived their lives in other, more ‘obscure’ minsters or hermitages.<sup>74</sup> It is clear that Agatha magnifies the reputation of her burial place.

Indeed, within the *Lives of Saints*, the saintly body makes places meaningful. The *Passio Agathae* states in its opening lines that Agatha was born ‘in urbe Cathanensium’ (‘in the city of Catania’, l. 4), but Ælfric only invokes the city’s name when narrating that it was visited by Syracusan pilgrims. Morini speculates that Ælfric omitted the name Catania throughout the *Life of Agatha* in order to better facilitate his alliterative prose style.<sup>75</sup> However, this omission has didactic as well as stylistic implications, since it suggests that Catania is important specifically for its location as a pilgrimage site. Similarly, in his *Life of Basil*, Ælfric uses the moment of Basil’s burial to educate his audience about Cappadocia. Earlier in the *Life of Basil*, Ælfric describes Cappadocia simply as a ‘byrig’ (‘city’, l. 9), but at the end of the text, he adds an unsourced passage elucidating the geographic and administrative position of the saint’s burial place:<sup>76</sup>

His lic wearð bebyrged on Cessariam byrig,  
Cappadoniscre scyre, þær þær he sylf biscop wæs,  
manegum fremiende mid mycelre lare.

(Ælfric, *Basil*, ll. 663–65)

[His body was buried in the city of Caesaria, in the province of Cappadocia, where he himself had been bishop, benefiting many people with his great teaching.]

Just as in the *Life of Lucy*, Ælfric collocates ‘byrgen’ and ‘byrig’, highlighting the ability of the saintly body to bestow importance upon the location it is buried in. Moreover, by waiting until the point of Basil’s burial to provide specific information about Cappadocia, Ælfric

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<sup>74</sup> Blair, *Church*, p. 353.

<sup>75</sup> Morini, *Agata*, pp. 133–35.

<sup>76</sup> For Ælfric’s depictions of Cappadocia throughout his works, see Corona, *Basil*, pp. 55–56.

suggests that the presence of the saintly body makes foreign geographies relevant and didactically significant.

A further example of the saintly body making a foreign place ‘famous’ for an English audience is found in the *Life of Martin*. Ælfric describes the saintly body being taken to Tours, a major pilgrimage destination in the early medieval period.<sup>77</sup> In doing so, he retains all three of the toponyms found in his Latin source:

and efston mid reowte on þære ea Uigenna,  
and swa forð on Liger, swyðe hlude singende,  
oðþæt hi becomon to þære byrig Turonia.

(Ælfric, *Martin*, ll. 1478–80)

[and they made haste by rowing on the river Vienne, and then  
onwards into the Loire, singing very loudly, until they came to the city  
of Tours.]

Here, the geography of Francia becomes significant to an English audience because it can be associated with St Martin’s body. Whilst Ælfric is translating this passage directly from his source, he often removed toponyms from his texts, and the fact that he retains them here is noteworthy.<sup>78</sup> Though the Loire and Tours are mentioned elsewhere within the *Life of Martin*, it is only at the point of Martin’s translation that Ælfric makes their geographic relation to one another clear.<sup>79</sup> Disenza suggests that the early medieval English were more interested in the history of places than of the geographic locations of those places in relation to one another.<sup>80</sup> However, here Ælfric draws attention to places precisely because of their geographic locations: together, the Vienne, Loire and Tours create a complete route for the body.

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<sup>77</sup> For the importance of Tours as a pilgrimage site, see Ortenburg, *Church*, pp. 224.

<sup>78</sup> This is discussed in greater detail in Chapters 1 and 3 of this thesis.

<sup>79</sup> The Loire is named as the site of Martin’s monastery in l. 317. The saint’s episcopacy at Tours is described in ll. 254–66, and again by his followers at ll. 1453–67.

<sup>80</sup> Disenza, *Inhabited*, pp. 88–89.

Frankish geography is considered worthwhile for Ælfric's audiences to learn owing to its relation not to the saint's life, but to his body.

The saintly body, then, creates fame for its resting place. However, the purpose of this fame is not simply to elevate an individual location, but to unite that location to other Christian places through the spread of its reputation. In the *Life of Lucy*, Ælfric places particular emphasis on the geographical spread of Agatha's fame by translating the phrase 'per uniuersam prouinciam Siciliae' ('through the whole province of Sicily', *Passio Luciae*, p. 892) to the more general 'ofer land and sæ' ('over land and sea', *Agatha*, l. 237). With this alteration, he not only extends the reach of Agatha's fame, but also quietly suggests that this fame also spread to England, a place that, unlike the rest of the continent, was geographically detached from Catania by the sea.<sup>81</sup> Fame, in this context, serves to unify the Christian church.

Moreover, the phrase that Ælfric uses to describe Agatha's reputation, 'hlisa asprang' ('fame spread'), specifically describes fame that extends across vast physical geographies, and unites places into a single network of veneration. The phrase occurs seven times in Ælfric's *Lives of Saints*, often in collocation with place names, such as in the *Memory of the Saints*, where Christ's 'hlisa þa asprang þa to Syrian lande' ('fame then spread to Syria', l. 102).<sup>82</sup> Within the Old English corpus, this phrase exclusively occurs in hagiographic and homiletic contexts, and specifically describes fame that stems from piety rather than from secular

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<sup>81</sup> As discussed in Chapter One of this thesis, the sea was a defining feature of early medieval English identity. Ælfric himself acknowledges the sea border when he describes England as 'þis ig-land' ('this island', *On the Prayer of Moses*, l. 148). He also describes how Abbo travelled 'ofer sæ fram sancte Benedictes stowe' ('over the sea, from St Benedict's monastery', *Edmund*, c. 1, my italics). On the early medieval English concept of the sea, and its role in English culture of the period, see, for example, Rudolf, 'Spiritual Islescape'; Klein, Schipper and Lewis-Simpson, eds, *Maritime*; Sobiecki, *Sea*.

<sup>82</sup> See *Agnes*, l. 290, *Lucy*, l. 1, *Memory of Saints*, l. 137, *Maccabees*, l. 286, *Oswald*, l. 239, *Martin*, l. 237, and *Thomas*, l. 196.

achievement.<sup>83</sup> In the life of *Oswald*, Ælfric adapts Bede's account of the saint to write that the saint's relics drew fame from abroad:

Ða asprang his hlisa geond þæt land wide,  
and eac swilce to Irlande and eac suþ to Franclande.

(Ælfric, *Oswald*, ll. 240–41)

[Then his fame spread widely throughout that country, and also  
likewise to Ireland, and also South, to Francia.]

The cardinal direction *suþ*, which is not found in Bede's account, emphasises the geographical spread of Oswald's fame. Similarly, the anaphora of 'and eac [...] and eac', which is unique to Ælfric's version, heightens the sense that Oswald's fame continued to spread outwards. The phrase 'geond þæt land wide' ('widely throughout the land') is formulaic, and is found alongside 'hlisa asprang' in Ælfric's lives of *Thomas* and *Martin*. A variation on this phrase is also found in *On the Prayer of Moses*, when Ælfric describes how the golden age of English monasticism was so great that 'ure word sprang wide geond þas eorðan' ('our fame spread widely throughout the world', l. 151). This kind of fame, then, is important to Ælfric because it allows places to be worthy to stand as part of a global network of Christianity.

Ælfric, then, demonstrates that the translation of saints allows communities to be joined to the global Christian church. He presents the saintly body, and the act of translating that body, as a focal point that unites Christians from around the world through common practice and networks of fame. Within the *Lives of Saints*, the saintly body unifies geographically and historically distant communities, and thereby promotes an idealised sense of one universal Christian church in which the saints were consistently venerated in the same way. Ælfric's emphasis on unity was no doubt informed by Benedictine Reform teachings,

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<sup>83</sup> Outside the *Lives of Saints*, the phrase occurs in Ælfric's *Dominica XII post octavas Pentecosten*, l. 11; the anonymous *Life of Euphrosyne*, l. 29; the anonymous *Life of Eustace*, l. 384; and the Old English *Matthew*, 9:26. See also DOE: **aspringan**, 7a: 'of fame, report, etc.: to go forth, spread abroad'.

but his particular desire to minimise difference speaks to his position as a second-generation reformer, writing into an admittedly diverse English monastic landscape. In presenting the translation of saints as perfectly unified across a range of locations and times, Ælfric suggests the potential for idealistic (if not actual) coherence between diverse centres of practice.

## CONCLUSION

This chapter has demonstrated that, throughout the *Lives of Saints*, Ælfric depicted the translation of saints in ways that emphasised unity and uniformity. In his accounts, he frequently adds material which foregrounds the communion of saints, and highlights the fact that saints function as a unified community, not simply as superlative individuals. He reworks the diverse depictions found in his various source materials, employing formulaic phrases, repeating motifs and minimising localised detail. As a result, his collection presents the translation of saints as a phenomenon that looked much the same throughout the various geographies and cultures that composed the Christian world. Consequently, England and the continent are depicted as sharing in a single, unified observance, despite the fact that in reality their practices varied from one another.<sup>84</sup> Ælfric thereby authorises English sanctity, demonstrating that it follows in the footsteps of a long-established continental tradition.

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<sup>84</sup> Ælfric himself was aware that there were differences between English and Continental practices. In *On the Prayer of Moses* he describes England as being ‘on utweardan þære eorðan bradnyssse’ (at the extremity of the earth’s surface, l. 107), and suggests that consequently, the English cannot fast as easily as those who live ‘tomiddes, on mægenfæstum eardum’ (in the middle [of the earth], in strong countries, l. 108). Similarly, in his *Letter to the monks of Eynsham*, he states that monks may adjust their psalm recitals from the continental model in the summer, since the nights are shorter than in Italy: ‘nos in Bryttannia degentes, breuiiores noctes habentes estate Beneuentanis dicimus sufficere nobis pro interuallo quattuor psalmos quos canimus pro rege, duos post nocturnam et duos post matutinales laudes, et insuper matutinales laudes quas de omnibus sanctis canimus’ (we who dwell in Britain, having shorter nights in the summer than those in Benevento, say that the four psalms we sing for the king — two after Nocturns and two after Lauds — together with Lauds of All Saints are for us a sufficient substitute for the [prescribed] interval, c. 57): text and trans. in Jones, *Letter*.

In demonstrating idealised unity between saintly burials, Ælfric was consistently looking outwards to the wider Christian world. However, the unity of the saints, and of their burials, also had important repercussions closer to home. Recent scholarship on the English Benedictine Reform has consistently emphasised the fact that the religious landscape in late-tenth century England was far less unified than the reformers would have liked to suggest.<sup>85</sup> As a second-generation reformer, Ælfric was forced to contend with this diverse reality, whilst simultaneously being indebted to Æthelwold's teachings, which centred on the pursuit of unity in both secular and spiritual matters. The way that he reworks the translation of saints — a traditionally localised phenomenon hinging on the prestige and elevation of a particular community — into a celebration of the universality of the Christian church responds to this tension between Benedictine ideology and reality. By depicting a diverse range of communities united by their shared participation in the translation of saint's relics, Ælfric suggests that the various monastic and pastoral communities in England can similarly be ideologically united despite the differences between them.

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<sup>85</sup> See, for example, Jones, 'Limits'; Gransden, 'Traditionalism'; Billett, *Divine*; Wilcox, 'Ælfric in Dorset'.

## CHAPTER THREE: TRANSLATING PEOPLE

### INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter discussed the physical translation of saintly relics from one location to another. This chapter now turns to another form of physical translation in the *Lives of Saints*: that of missionary saints, who move between towns and countries in order to convert pagan places to Christianity. The ways in which conversion (the aim of mission) is related to translation have received much scholarly attention and lie outside the scope of this chapter.<sup>1</sup> However, the missionary journey, whereby a missionary saint finds him or herself relocated from his homeland or culture to an unfamiliar one, is also a form of ‘translation’. Missionary travel is a movement between two cultures, in which the subject (the missionary) must adapt to the demands of the new culture and in doing so reassert their own cultural values and ideals. In considering missionary journeys as a form of translation, this chapter explores ways in which Ælfric represents relationships between places in his collection.

It is necessary here to briefly address terminology. The term ‘mission’ is problematic. As Ian Wood notes, ‘there is no classical or medieval Latin word *missionarius*: the category of ‘missionary’ is not an early medieval one, but rather a modern catch-all, in which religious figures of various kinds have been enshrined’.<sup>2</sup> ‘Mission’ can denote acts of evangelisation conducted overseas or locally; large-scale projects or individual conversions; planned ventures or incidental results of other events. For the purposes of this chapter, I take

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, J. Derrida and L. Venuti, ‘What Is a “Relevant” Translation?’, *Critical Inquiry* 27 (2001), 174–200, at 176; B. Prince and B. Kikon, ‘Mission as Translation: A Fusion of Three Horizons’, *Transformation* 35 (2018), 251–63; R. Szpiech, *Conversion and Narrative: Reading and Religious Authority in Medieval Polemic* (Philadelphia, 2013), pp. 121–142.

<sup>2</sup> I. N. Wood, *The Missionary Life: Saints and the Evangelisation of Europe 400–1050* (Harlow, 2001), p. 247.

‘missionary’ activity to mean planned projects in which the saint aims to evangelise a pagan society that is geographically removed from their own.<sup>3</sup> This is not to suggest that localised or unplanned conversion projects do not appear in the *Lives of Saints*. Descriptions of localised conversion are in fact much more common than extended mission: Ælfric’s collection abounds with descriptions of small scale, local incidents of conversion or Christianisation, from Agnes’ drastic reformation of a brothel to Zoe’s and Nicodramus’ sudden conversions at the hands of Sebastian.<sup>4</sup> However, it is in the long-distance missions that we are most able to detect Ælfric exploring relationships between places, since these are accounts that necessitate descriptions of journeys, arrivals, and experiencing locations foreign to one’s own. As such, these long-distance missions will be the focus of this chapter.

Mission constituted a major point of interaction between England and the continent in the early medieval period, and England itself received several missions from the continent, as well as from Ireland. The most famous of these continental missions was that of Augustine and his companions, who were sent to Canterbury in 597 at the behest of Gregory the Great.<sup>5</sup> This endeavour linked England not only to Rome, but also to Francia, which provided financial, political and religious support for the mission.<sup>6</sup> A further mission, in c. 634, was

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<sup>3</sup> This definition builds upon that of Ian Wood, who bases his own definition on the call to mission at the end of the Gospel of Matthew, and considers primarily ‘mission to the pagan’. Wood also writes that: ‘mission implies a plan and individuals to carry it out’. Wood, *Missionary Life*, pp. 3–4.

<sup>4</sup> *Agnes*, ll. 160–62, and *Sebastian*, ll. 111–19.

<sup>5</sup> The Augustinian mission has been the subject of a wealth of scholarship: see, for example, Dunn, *Christianization*, pp. 43–56; Means, ‘Background’, 5–17; R. Gameson, ed., *St Augustine and the Conversion of England* (Stroud, 1999); J. Godfrey, *The Church in Anglo-Saxon England* (Cambridge, 1962), pp. 67–92; H. Chadwick, ‘Gregory the Great and the mission to the Anglo-Saxons’, in *Gregorio Magno e il suo tempo*, 2 vols (Rome, 1991), vol. I, pp. 199–212; R. E. Sullivan, ‘The Papacy and Missionary Activity in the Early Middle Ages’, *Mediaeval Studies* 17 (1955), 46–106, at 47–58. Gretsch notes that both Ælfric and Æthelwold were more interested in Gregory himself than in Augustine: ‘Ælfric’s *Sanctorale* and the Benedictional of Æthelwold’, in *Early Medieval Texts and Interpretations: Studies Presented to Donald G. Scragg*, ed. E. Treharne and S. Rosser (Tempe, AZ, 2002), pp. 31–50; *Cult*, pp. 21–64, esp. pp. 43–46.

<sup>6</sup> For the Frankish dimension of the mission, see I. N. Wood, ‘The Mission of Augustine of Canterbury to the English’, *Speculum* 1 (1994), 1–17; R. Gameson, ‘Augustine of Canterbury: Context and Achievement’, in Gameson, ed. (1999), pp. 1–40.

sent to the West Saxons by Pope Honorius I.<sup>7</sup> Around the same time as the mission to the West Saxons, East Anglia also received continental missionaries, including Felix of Burgundy.<sup>8</sup> Some two centuries later, in 786, papal legates journeyed to Northumbria and Mercia to confirm that the groundwork laid by Augustine was bearing fruit, and to correct any remaining error or misunderstanding of the faith.<sup>9</sup> These missions and legations altered England not only spiritually but also culturally, and they have been credited with re-laying the foundation for the perceived ‘special relationship’ between England and Rome, importing Carolingian social mores into English society and redefining England’s relation to its continental neighbours.<sup>10</sup>

Within a century of the conversion, it was the English themselves who became missionaries to the continent. During the seventh and eighth centuries, various English missions were sent to the Germanic regions of the Frankish empire, most notably those led by Boniface, Leoba and Willibrord.<sup>11</sup> By Ælfric’s day, these missionary efforts were turning further North, to Scandinavia, and English missionaries were recorded in Norway, Sweden and Denmark.<sup>12</sup> Strikingly, there is little evidence that these Scandinavian missions were connected to the Benedictine Reform, and reference to mission is conspicuously absent from

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<sup>7</sup> Bede, *HE*, iii.7. Relatively little is known about Birinus’ mission: D. P. Kirby, *The Earliest English Kings*, rev. edn (London, 2000), pp. 38–49; Godfrey, *Church*, p. 100; T. S. Holmes, ‘The Conversion of Wessex’, *The English Historical Review* 27 (1982), 437–43. Ælfric’s depiction of Birinus is discussed below.

<sup>8</sup> These missionaries are recorded in Bede, *HE*, ii. 15, iii. 18 and iii. 19, and in ASC 653.

<sup>9</sup> As with the earlier Augustinian mission, the Legatine mission was associated with Francia as well as Rome: J. Story, ‘Carolingian Northumbria and the Legatine Mission of 786’, in *Conversion and Christianity in the North Sea World*, ed. B. E. Crawford (St Andrews, 1998), pp. 93–108; Story, *Connections*, pp. 55–92.

<sup>10</sup> Gameson, ‘Augustine’, p. 1; Blair, *Church*, pp. 10–43; Story, ‘Carolingian Northumbria’.

<sup>11</sup> Scharer, *Perspectives*, pp. 55–62; Palmer, *Anglo-Saxons*; Adan Jones, ‘Chosen’; Parsons, ‘Churches’; Levison, *Continent*, pp. 70–93; Yorke, ‘Rudolf’; C. H. Talbot, ed. and trans., *The Anglo-Saxon Missionaries in Germany* (London, 1954). For the role of English women specifically in this missionary impetus, see J. R. Norris, ‘Anglo-Saxon Women Religious Who Went to the Continent: A Group Study’ (unpubl. PhD Dissertation, Binghamton Univ., 2003), pp. 224–75.

<sup>12</sup> For English missionaries to Scandinavia, see L. Abrams, ‘The Anglo-Saxons and the Christianization of Scandinavia’, *ASE* 24 (1995), 213–49; T. M. Andersson, ‘The Viking Policy of Ethelred the Unready’, *Scandinavian Studies* 59 (1987), 284–95; D. Knowles, *The Monastic Order in England: A History of its Development from the Times of St Dunstan to the Fourth Lateran Council, 940–1216* (Cambridge, 1963), pp. 67–69.

the biographies of the three key reformers.<sup>13</sup> Indeed, although the Rule makes provision for monks who journey outside the monastery, mission is not presented as an essential part of the Benedictine monastic life.<sup>14</sup> Nonetheless, missionary work, in its broadest sense of travel for the sake of providing spiritual education, does not necessarily contradict the Benedictine ideal of *stabilitas*.<sup>15</sup> The early medieval English interpretation of *stabilitas* emphasises the importance of the fixed dwelling of the monastery, but movement between reformed monasteries was clearly accepted.<sup>16</sup> Ælfric, who himself moved successively to Winchester, Cerne Abbas and Eynsham to further his monastic learning and teaching, was certainly no stranger to the idea that a monk might relocate.<sup>17</sup> However, as this chapter will discuss, he downplays the geographic realities of missionary travel, and focuses instead on the educational and spiritual aspects of the journey, demonstrating his sensitivity to the guidance of the Benedictine Rule regarding monastic travelling.

<sup>13</sup> Abrams, 'Anglo-Saxons', p. 245; Knowles, *Monastic*, p. 68.

<sup>14</sup> Provisions for monks who journey away from the monastery are recorded in *RB* L, LV and LXVII. See also Æthelwold's guidance for brethren on a journey in the *prohemium* to the *RC*, c. 11. The lack of emphasis on mission in the Benedictine Rule is noted by Talbot, *Missionaries*, p. xi.

<sup>15</sup> The ideal of *stabilitas* is perhaps best represented by the Rule's description of the four types of monks, which praises Coenobites (enclosed monks, under an abbot, following a rule), and condemns the Gyrovagues, who are 'æfre unstapolfæste and woriende, agenum lustum and heora gitsunge unalyfedlice fyliað and hyrsumiað' ('always unsettled and wandering, following and obeying their own desires and their unlawful greed', *OERB* I). However, Phyllis Gwen Jestice notes that many of the early medieval English missionaries to the continent were connected to Benedictinism, and that the *Vita Leobae* demonstrates that Leoba's mission to the continent was not considered to contradict her strict enclosure in the convent: 'Holiness and Society in Medieval Europe, 800–1000' (unpubl. PhD diss., Univ. Stanford, 1989), pp. 349–52. On the tensions between missionary work and *stabilitas*, see B. A. Shinn, 'Christian Mission in the Early Middle Ages: An Examination of Mission, Baptism, Conversion, and Saints' Lives from the Perspective of Missiology' (unpubl. PhD thesis, Univ. Edinburgh, 2010), pp. 152–73.

<sup>16</sup> Michael D. C. Drout notes that the Old English translation of the term *stabilitas* in the *OERB* specifically emphasises the monastic dwelling: *How Tradition Works: A Meme-Based Cultural Poetics of the Anglo-Saxon Tenth Century* (Tempe, AZ, 2006), pp. 91–92. Yet despite enforcing a vow of *stabilitas*, the *RB* allows for monks to travel (see above). Moreover, each of the three reformers moved between monasteries: Thacker, 'Æthelwold'; D. Bullough, 'St Oswald: Monk, Bishop and Archbishop', in *Saint Oswald of Worcester: Life and Influence*, ed. N. Brooks and C. Cubbitt (London, 1996), pp. 1–22, esp. p. 7; Brooks, 'Career', pp. 1–23. Indeed, Ælfric himself moved between the monasteries of Winchester, Cerne and Eynsham (Hill, 'Life').

<sup>17</sup> Hill, 'Life'. Ælfric himself refers to the Rule's guidance for monastic travel in his *Catholic Homilies*, where he adds the phrase 'tobraecon ðone regol' ('broke the rule') to the tale of two Benedictine Monks who ate outside the monastery despite only venturing out for one day (*CH II*, XI, l. 225); for discussion of this passage, see Gretsche, *Ælfric*, p. 144.

## I: THE CONCEPT OF ANNES

Mission, then, like the translation of saints, created cultural and spiritual links between England and its continental neighbours. This chapter argues that in the *Lives of Saints*, Ælfric translated his missionary lives in ways that emphasised the ideal of *annes* ('unity'). I use the term *annes* owing to its concurrent connotations of spiritual unity (of the trinity or the Christian community) and unity or integrity of the kingdom, and also the use of this term by Æthelwold's school to describe the aims of the Benedictine Reform.<sup>18</sup> As previously noted, the importance of unity on both the spiritual and secular levels was at the centre of Bede's presentation of the English church.<sup>19</sup> Æthelwold, who was greatly inspired by Bede, picked up this thread.<sup>20</sup> In the prologue to the *Regularis Concordia*, Æthelwold describes Edgar's reign as bringing about an idealised 'annesse' of the English kingdoms, both politically and ecclesiastically.<sup>21</sup> In the first series of his Catholic Homilies, Ælfric similarly uses the term *annes* to highlight the importance of Christian unity:

Ne cwyð na on ðam gebede. min fæder. þu ðe eart on heofonum. ac  
cwyþ ure Fæder. & swa forð ealle ða word ðe ðæræfter filigað.  
sprecað gemænelice be eallum cristenum mannum. On þam is  
geswutelod hu swiðe god lufað annysse. & geþwærnyse on his folce.  
Æfter godes gesetnyse ealle cristene men sceoldon beon swa  
geþwære. swilce hit an man wære. for þi wa þam men þe ða annysse  
tobrecð.

(Ælfric, *CHI*, XIX, ll. 215–19)

[He does not say in that prayer, 'My Father, who art in heaven', but says, 'Our Father': and so forth all the words that follow after speak universally of all Christian men. In this it is revealed how greatly God

<sup>18</sup> DOE: *annes*. On unity as a key concern during the tenth-century, see N. Banton, 'Monastic Reform and the Unification of Tenth-Century England', *Studies in Church History* 19 (1982), 71–82.

<sup>19</sup> O'Brien, 'Bede'; Kleinschmidt, *Understanding*, pp. 247–51.

<sup>20</sup> On Æthelwold's particular debt to Bede, see Wormald, 'Æthelwold', pp. 37–41; D. T. Symons, 'Regularis Concordia: History and Derivation', in *Tenth-Century Studies: Essays in Commemoration of the Millennium of the Council of Winchester and Regularis Concordia*, ed. D. Parsons (London, 1975), pp. 37–59, 214–17.

<sup>21</sup> *Councils & Synods*, p. 146.

loves unity and concord among his people. According to God's decree, all Christian men should be united as though they were one man; woe, therefore, to the man who breaks apart that unity.]

Stephanie Clark has suggested that this passage sees Ælfric encouraging kinship bonds across social divisions, making 'a statement that all Christians need each other; the rich especially need the poor'.<sup>22</sup> Conversely, Stanley Greenfield and Daniel Calder see Ælfric spurred by a more abstract impetus, the transformation from earthliness to godliness: 'sin is division, and redemption, therefore, is the process by which this division is made perfect unity'.<sup>23</sup> However, I suggest that this call for 'annysse', whilst encompassing both social and doctrinal teaching, is also a statement of political necessity.

Whilst Æthelwold composed his celebration of *annes* around 970, from a position of relative stability, Ælfric, some two decades later, was writing against a backdrop of political turmoil. The governmental crises sparked by Edgar's death in 975, the ensuing dispute over succession known as the 'anti-monastic reaction' and the murder of Edgar's son Edward in 978 greatly destabilised the 'unity' that Æthelwold so praised.<sup>24</sup> This instability was only furthered by rising discontent with Æthelred's rule, renewed Viking raids and financial subjugation to Danish attackers in the 990s.<sup>25</sup> As such, the idea of unity was not only a theological proposition for Ælfric, but also a vital political one.

In his presentations of missionary saints, Ælfric consistently emphasises *annes*. Firstly, he highlights the productive nature of imported and exported education, thereby promoting the role of a united insular-continental network of Christian knowledge. In doing so, he reflects the presence of continental monks at Winchester, Æthelwold's debt to foreign

<sup>22</sup> S. Clark, *Compelling God: Theories of Prayer in Anglo-Saxon England* (Toronto, 2018), pp. 245–6.

<sup>23</sup> Greenfield and Calder, *New*, pp. 79–82.

<sup>24</sup> For an overview of the political turmoil of the tenth century, see Anderson, 'Ælfric's Kings' pp. 4–20. For the anti-monastic reaction, see D. J. V. Fisher, 'The Anti-Monastic Reaction in the Reign of Edward the Martyr', *Cambridge Historical Journal* 10 (1953), 254–70.

<sup>25</sup> For the political instability of the 990s, see Keynes, 'Abbot'.

monks and his own role as a teacher at Cerne. Moreover, just as we saw with the translation of saints in the previous chapter, he draws attention to the similarities between continental and English missions. In particular, he depicts lay cooperation with monastic missionaries occurring in similar ways in Francia and in England. Through the presentation of harmonic unity between noblemen and monks, he instructs men like Æthelweard and Æthelmær in behavioural ideals that would benefit the late tenth-century monastic establishment and the English secular kingdom equally.<sup>26</sup> A final form of *annes* is found in Ælfric's presentation of the geographies of mission. Comparison of the various missionary lives across the text reveals that Ælfric homogenises the diverse material found in his sources. Consequently, he presents a more unified Christian world, in which England and the continent are part of a consolidated, cooperative community.

## II: ANNES OF KNOWLEDGE

Within the *Lives of Saints*, saints travel primarily for educational purposes: either to gain knowledge or to teach others. Ælfric, who consciously styled himself as a teacher throughout his works, and left Winchester in order to provide education for the newly (re)founded monastic establishment at Cerne, was no doubt keenly invested in the idea that knowledge could be imported or exported. This personal interest is evident throughout the *Lives*, where he highlights the importance of movement between places for personal and spiritual development. In emphasising the importance of knowledge acquired outside one's own immediate geographic community, he gestures to the importance of shared learning across

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<sup>26</sup> Ælfric similarly sought to instruct his noble lay patrons for both monastic and secular benefit in his *Twelve Abuses* and *Vices and Virtues*. For Ælfric's wish to appeal to noblemen specifically, see M. Clayton, ed., *Two Ælfric Texts: 'The Twelve Abuses' and 'The Vices and Virtues'* (Cambridge, 2013), esp. pp. 70–71.

the Christian world, particularly between England and the continent. As such, he presents an idealised vision of a unified community of knowledge.

#### *THE 'TRAVEL-FOR-EDUCATION' MOTIF*

Throughout the collection, Ælfric places emphasis on the link between travel and knowledge by frequently opening his individual lives with a motif that I term 'travel-for-education', whereby the saint journeys for the purpose of secular or spiritual teaching. In doing so, he demonstrates the importance of knowledge acquired outside one's immediate geographical community, and promotes the value of visiting scholars and teachers like himself.

Consequently, he gestures towards the role that continental monks and knowledge played in forming the late tenth-century English church. Reformed Winchester, where Ælfric was a student, regularly received continental monks, such as Lantfred (most likely of Fleury) and Womar (of Ghent), and Æthelwold himself states his debt to continental knowledge exchange in the *prohemium* of his *Regularis Concordia*.<sup>27</sup> The *Historia ecclesiae Abbdonensis* similarly records that during Æthelwold's time at Abingdon, he sent Osgar to be educated at Fleury, and requested continental monks from Corbie to provide instruction in reading and chanting.<sup>28</sup> Moreover, the ecclesiastical and political landscape of the Benedictine Reform saw a great deal of contact between monasteries, and monks often travelled to become abbots of abbeys other than those where they had received their own education.<sup>29</sup> In presenting Dionysius' foreign education as the foundation of his saintly life, and demonstrating the

<sup>27</sup> M. Lapidge, 'Æthelwold', pp. 98–9. For a summary of continental contacts in the early reform, see Billett, *Divine*, pp. 164–69.

<sup>28</sup> *Historia Ecclesie Abbdonensis*, c. 31. For discussion of this text, see Billet, *Divine*, pp. 167–69.

<sup>29</sup> Ortenberg, *English*, p. 19.

venerable apostolic history of travel-for-education, Ælfric extols both Æthelwold's use of foreign knowledge and his own role in disseminating this to communities across England.

In his *Life of Dionysius*, Ælfric highlights the importance of education received abroad by preserving information about the Greek saint's Egyptian schooling whilst omitting almost the entirety of the rest of the biographical material found in his Latin source. Ælfric's source material, Hilduin's *Passio S. Dionysii*, notes the saint's biography in great detail.<sup>30</sup> As the abbot of the monastery of Saint-Denis, Hilduin had a strong personal investment in the presentation of Dionysius as an impressive figure, both in his secular and Christian contexts. As such, he depicts a rich background for Dionysius, noting his age, his patronymic nickname, his title, *theosophus*, his training in 'cunctis paene artibus' ('nearly all the arts'), his genealogy and finally his education in Egypt.<sup>31</sup> By contrast, Ælfric's introduction of the saint is sparse, and focuses entirely on the idea of education. The only information that remains from Hilduin's text is the fact that Dionysius, like Ælfric himself, is a teacher, and that he has studied in Egypt:<sup>32</sup>

þær wæs Dionisius, se deor-wurða martyr,  
þæra hæþenra lareow on heora geleafleaste,  
oþþæt Paulus hine awende of woge to rihte.  
Se Dyonisius geseah, mid sumum oþrum uðwitan  
on Egypta lande þær hi æt lare wæron [...].

(Ælfric, *Dionysius*, ll. 6–10)

[There Dionysius, the noble martyr, was the teacher of the heathens in their unbelief, until Paul converted him from wrong to right. This

<sup>30</sup> *Passio Dionysii*, ed. and trans. M. Lapidge (Leiden, 2017), pp. 238–239. Hilduin's account (*BHL* 2175) is largely based upon two earlier lives of S. Dionysius: the ancient *passio* (*BHL* 2171) and the anonymous *Passio S. Dionysii* (*BHL* 2178). The most substantial change from the earlier accounts is that Hilduin identifies Saint Dionysius (whose myth already combined the lives of Saint Dionysius, bishop of Paris, and Saint Dionysius the Areopagite) with pseudo-Dionysius, the author of the *Corpus Dionysiacum*: see M. Lapidge, 'Anonymous'.

<sup>31</sup> *Passio Dionysii*, c. 5.

<sup>32</sup> Egypt would have been familiar to Ælfric's audiences, notably for its biblical associations: Discenza notes that Egypt appears over fifty times in Ælfric's works, and suggests that he encouraged his audience to build an awareness of Egypt and its history across his body of work: *Inhabited*, p. 88.

Dionysius, with some other philosophers, in the land of the Egyptians where they were studying, had seen [...].]

For Ælfric, the most important part of Dionysius' pre-conversion life is the fact that he has already undergone a geographical journey to obtain knowledge, anticipating his later mission. Moreover, he does not describe what the saint studied, but only that he received his education abroad. By omitting all of the other details of Dionysius' early life, Ælfric centres the saint's Egyptian education as a virtuous quality, and extols the value of foreign knowledge to those seeking to live a pious life.<sup>33</sup>

Dionysius' journey to Egypt is further heightened by its juxtaposition with the apostle Paul's missionary journey, which occupies the first four lines of the Old English life. By invoking Paul, and depicting his journey as being similar to Dionysius', Ælfric reminds his audiences that travel-for-education has biblical precedent tracing back to the apostles, and stemming from Christ's command to his disciples 'euntes ergo docete omnes gentes':<sup>34</sup>

Paulus, ðeoda lareow, þa ða he geond land ferde  
bodigende geleafan swa swa him bebead se hælend  
þa becom he on sumum dæge to sumere mæran byrig  
Athenas gehaten, healic and mære

(Ælfric, *Dionysius*, ll. 1–4)

[Paul, the teacher of the people, as he journeyed through the land, preaching the faith just as the Saviour had commanded him, came on a certain day to a great city called Athens, illustrious and glorious.]

<sup>33</sup> Ælfric is perhaps extolling the virtues of his own collection, since the *Lives of Saints* is itself a collection of foreign knowledge: see Ælfric's comments that he has translated the text 'de Latinitate ad usitatam Anglicam sermocinationem' ('from Latin into the familiar English language', *Lat. pref.*, c. 1).

<sup>34</sup> Matthew 28:19. On Ælfric's use of this verse in his work, see F. M. Biggs, 'Ælfric's Andrew and the Apocrypha', *JEGP* 104 (2005), 473–94, at 482. On the biblical precedent for mission, and mission as an overarching metanarrative throughout the Bible, see C. J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative* (Nottingham, 2006).

The two journey descriptions are linked through similar vocabulary: both Dionysius and Paul are introduced with the noun *lareow* ('teacher, preacher'), and are depicted providing instruction in *geleafa* ('faith, belief'), although notably this word appears in the compound *geleafleaste* when describing Dionysius' teaching, emphasising the difference between the two men and their respective communities. In Hilduin's Latin text, Paul's mission is followed by an extended description of Athens, its socio-economic background and its geography.<sup>35</sup> Ælfric omits all of these details, and in doing so, places the two journeys alongside one another. In doing so, he establishes a link between journeying and education that has apostolic precedent, and depicts not only Dionysius but also the reformers as following in a venerable biblical tradition.<sup>36</sup>

Several of the other pieces in the *Lives of Saints* similarly open with the travel-for-education motif, confirming the importance of foreign education to the saintly life. At the beginning of his *Life of Basil*, the eponymous saint goes to Greece: 'ferde to Grecum, / to Atheniscre byrig, seo wæs þa bremost on lare' ('he went to the Greeks, to the city of Athens, which was then the most renowned for learning', ll. 10–11). *Sebastian* opens with mention of the saint's education: 'se wæs lange on lare on Mediolana byrig' ('who studied for a long time in the city of Milan', l. 2). Conversely, some lives open with journeys for the purpose of educating others, such as the *Life of Mark*, which opens with the saint travelling to Christianise the Egyptians: 'Marcus se god-spellere be Godes dihte gefor / to Ægipta lande and ðær lærde þæt folc / and to fulluhte gebigde fram þam fulan hæþenscype' ('Mark the Evangelist journeyed to the land of the Egyptians by God's direction, and taught the people

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<sup>35</sup> *Passio Dionysii*, c. 2–5.

<sup>36</sup> Æthelwold similarly depicts English monks following the tradition of the apostles. He writes that Gregory instructed that Augustine 'tæhte ond gesette þe þa apostolas mid heora geferrædene on þam anginne ures Cristendomes heoldon' ('teach and establish that which the apostles with their companions did in the beginning of our Christianity'), *Councils and Synods*, p. 145. See C. T. Riedel, 'Monastic Reform and Lay Religion in Æthelwold's Winchester' (unpubl. PhD thesis, Boston College, 2015), pp. 112–13.

there and converted them to baptism from foul heathenism', ll. 1–3). *Apollinaris* opens similarly, with Peter travelling 'fram Antiochian byrig / into Romebyrig mid manegum gebroðum / and bodode geleafan bealdlice þam folce' ('from the city of Antioch into the city of Rome with many brethren, and boldly preached the faith to the people', ll. 2–4). A final, more symbiotic form of travel for education can be observed in the opening to Ælfric's *Life of Edmund*, where Abbo's travel to England and ensuing discussions with Dunstan are described.<sup>37</sup> These six instances of the travel-for-education motif represent almost a quarter of the hagiographical pieces in the *Lives of Saints*.

That these instances of the travel-for-education motif all occur within the first ten lines of individual lives further indicates that this kind of educational journey represents an important *beginning* for Ælfric. Almost all of these descriptions feature either the noun *lar*, or the verb *læran* and its derivatives, tying the movements of saints to the acquisition or dissemination of knowledge.<sup>38</sup> Moreover, Ælfric's particular insistence on movement as a beginning is distinct and unique. The highly formulaic nature of the *Old English Martyrology*, as perhaps the most immediately comparable vernacular hagiographical collection, does not allow for travel to be placed at the head of the saint's life: that position is already occupied by the dating of the saint's feast day.<sup>39</sup> Ælfric, meanwhile, goes so far as to omit or add to source texts in order to place movement within the first lines of several lives. In perhaps the most striking example, he opens his *Life of Oswald* with a description of mission: 'æfter ðan ðe Augustinus to Englalande becom' ('after Augustine came to England',

<sup>37</sup> *Edmund*, c. 1.

<sup>38</sup> The verb *læran* is also used in connection with journeying in the Old English gloss of Matthew 28:19: 'gaað forðon lærað alle cynno / hædno' ('go therefore to teach all peoples / heathens'): J. M. Kemble and C. Hardwick, ed., *The Gospel According to Saint Matthew in Anglo-Saxon and Northumbrian Versions Synoptically Arranged with Collations of the Best Manuscripts* (Cambridge, 1858), p. 231.

<sup>39</sup> Compare, for example, the entry for Dionysius and his companions: 'on ðone eahtopan dæg þæs monðes bið tid ond þæs halgan martires Sancti Dionisi, ond his diacona twega þara noman wæron Rusticus ond Eleutherius; ða wæron in ðære ceastre ðe Parisius is nemned' ('On the eighth day of the month is the feast of the bishop and the holy martyr St Dionysius, and of his two deacons whose names were Rusticus and Eleutherius; they lived in the city which is called Parisius') (ed. and trans. Rauer, *Martyrology*, pp. 196–97).

l. 1). This is an addition to his source: Bede covers Augustine's mission earlier in the *Historia Ecclesiastica*, and therefore begins his account of Oswald's life with a much more contemporary and secular event, the death of King Edwin: 'at interfecto in pugna Eduino' ('after Edwin had been killed in battle'). Considering Ælfric's frequent use of travel as an opening for the lives of continental saints, this addition represents a concerted attempt to bring his *Life of Oswald* more in line with continental models. Moreover, it serves as a reminder that movement and exchange of knowledge is a natural beginning for future saintly behaviour. Ælfric does not state that Augustine came to England for missionary purposes — instead, Augustine's journey itself is the important aspect.

By placing the travel-for-education motif at the opening of so many items in the *Lives of Saints*, Ælfric suggests that foreign knowledge is a starting point: a foundation upon which the saintly life can be built. Knowledge, for Ælfric's missionary saints, is something that is acquired by travelling outside one's own immediate local vicinity. Those who wish to acquire knowledge do so by journeying out to receive it, or else by having a foreigner bring it to them. This reflected the realities of late tenth-century English monasticism, where local practice was often supplemented or guided by imported knowledge. Indeed, the exchange of knowledge and customs between England and the continent is rationalised in the *Regularis Concordia* through the invocation of Gregory's directions to Augustine that continental practices should be employed in England if they serve to better English Christianity.<sup>40</sup> In the *Lives of Saints*, Ælfric gestures to England's debt to continental teachings, and frames the education of the English within the apostolic tradition. Further, he gestures to his own role in furthering this education, following his own movement to Cerne Abbas.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Billett, *Divine*, p. 184.

<sup>41</sup> For Ælfric's teacher role at Cerne, see Wilcox, 'Dorset'; Hill, 'Life', pp. 51–60.

KNOWLEDGE ACROSS A WIDE GEOGRAPHICAL COMMUNITY

For Ælfric, the importance of foreign teaching lies in its ability to unite geographically disparate communities in a single network of Christian knowledge. Throughout the *Lives*, he places emphasis on the geographically wide range of mission in order to demonstrate the idea that disparate places can be united by one teaching. In this, he reflects the biblical mandate to teach ‘omnes gentes’, creating *annes* in the Christian world through education.

In the *Life of Dionysius*, Ælfric adapts his source material to place greater emphasis on the geographical range of the saint’s mission, highlighting the way that Dionysius’ teachings unite disparate communities. Dionysius’ journeys take him ‘geond fela burga gehwider’ (‘through many cities in every direction’, l. 102), ‘fram Greclande mid geferum to Rome / ofer langne wæg, æfre geleafan bodigende’ (‘from Greece to Rome by a long road, with companions, ever preaching the faith’, ll. 113–14), and on a ‘langsuman fære’ (‘long journey’, l. 115). The repetition of ‘lang’ / ‘langsum’ further stresses the great distance that Dionysius covers. Dionysius’ mission is more geographically wide-ranging in Ælfric’s version than in Hilduin’s, where Dionysius instead ventures through cities ‘near and far’ (‘uicinas et longe’), and his travel to Rome is described without any mention of distance: ‘sicque Achiuae alumnus fortunae et doctus architectus ecclesiae se Romanae amplitudini contulit’ (‘and thus the foster-son of Greek culture and the learned architect of the Church took himself off to the grandeur of Rome’).<sup>42</sup> Consequently, Ælfric’s account stresses Dionysius’ teaching as a means of unifying geographically distant locations under one teaching.

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<sup>42</sup> Hilduin, *Passio Dionysii*, pp. 270–71.

Additionally, Ælfric recasts the results of Dionysius' mission in terms of physical distance, with idols destroyed 'wide geond þæt land' ('widely throughout the land, l. 179) — a description that does not appear in the Latin source text. When the devil is compelled to act against the 'micclan Cristendom' ('great Christianity', l. 187), the adjective *micel* could perhaps suggest metaphorical greatness, as in the Latin, which reads: 'assidua populorum conuersione' ('through the relentless conversion of peoples').<sup>43</sup> However, owing to Ælfric's insistence on geographic range elsewhere in the *Life*, it is not improbable that this describes the physical greatness and geographical range of the mission.<sup>44</sup> The distances covered by the project are further highlighted when Ælfric writes that even the 'fyrleinan Norðmenn' ('distant Northmen', l. 177) are Christianised by Dionysius and his companions. Here we see Ælfric subtly adjusting his source text as he translates: Hilduin's Latin provides the phrase 'Germanica ceruicositas' ('Germanic obstinacy').<sup>45</sup> Ælfric could have used the Old English word 'Germania', but instead chooses to translate as 'Norðmenn', a term which may here connote 'Normans' (Germanic peoples living in Francia) but was more often used to refer to Scandinavians.<sup>46</sup> In doing so, he was perhaps referencing the tenth-century English missionaries to Scandinavia, and highlighting England's participation in the saintly tradition of mission.<sup>47</sup> However, he was no doubt also conveying concern about the renewed threat of Viking raids under the reign of Æthelred, and intending to cast the triumph of Christianity against the pagans as more directly applicable to his late tenth-century audiences.<sup>48</sup> By casting Dionysius' mission not only as geographically wide-ranging, but also as a cornerstone

<sup>43</sup> Hilduin, *Passio Dionysii*, pp. 278–79.

<sup>44</sup> Skeat here suggests 'wide-ranging Christianity'.

<sup>45</sup> Hilduin, *Passio Dionysii*, pp. 278–79.

<sup>46</sup> The term *Norðmandisc* refers to Normans in, for example, William I, Lad: 'gif se Englisca forsæcð þæt ornest, þe Frencisca, þe se Englisca beclypað, ladige hine mid aþe ongean hine mid his gewitnesse æfter Norðmandiscere lage' ['if the Englishman declines the duel, the Frenchman who the Englishman accused may clear himself against him with his testimony according to Norman law']. Text in F. Liebermann, ed., *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen* (Halle, 1960), p. 483.

<sup>47</sup> Abrams, 'Anglo-Saxons'; Andersson, 'Viking'; Knowles, *Monastic*, pp. 67–69.

<sup>48</sup> For the Viking threat of the late 990s, see Keynes, 'Abbot'.

of resistance against a well-known threat, Ælfric paints missionary work as following Æthelwold's pursuit of *annes*, seeking to forge greater unity in both the spiritual and secular spheres.<sup>49</sup>

Ælfric's *Life of Oswald* similarly highlights the ways in which foreign knowledge simultaneously unifies the secular kingdom and the Christian community. In the *Life*, Ælfric describes the conversion efforts of King Oswald, who wishes to 'gebigan / his leoda to geleafan and to þam lifigendan Gode' ('convert his people to the faith and to the living God', ll. 46–7). Accordingly, Aidan, an Irish bishop and missionary, arrives at the will of the king and begins the task of Christianising Northumbria. When describing Aidan's behaviour as a missionary, Ælfric reshapes Bede's account to emphasise book learning and formal instruction as a model for monastic education. For Ælfric, the most important aspect of Aidan's mission is his love of teaching, and the knowledge that he brings:

He lufode forhæfednysse and halige **rædinge**  
and iunge men teah georne mid *lare*,  
swa þæt ealle his geferan þe him mid eodon  
sceoldon sealmas *leornian* oððe sume **rædinge**  
swa hwider swa hi ferdon þam folce bodigende.

(Ælfric, *Oswald*, ll. 75–79)

[He loved restraint and holy reading, and earnestly taught young men with his knowledge, so that all of his companions who went with him would learn the Psalms, or some lesson, wherever they went, preaching to the people.]

Bassi notes that in comparison to Bede's generalised vision of learning, Ælfric demonstrates specific examples of praxis, with particular emphasis on preaching.<sup>50</sup> Similarly, McCrea

<sup>49</sup> For Æthelwold's connection of the secular and spiritual, see the *prohemium* to the *RC*, where he states the importance of unity 'ne impar ac uarius unius regulæ ac unius patriæ usus probrose uituperium sanctæ conuersationi irrogaret' ('lest differing ways of observing the customs of one Rule and one country should bring their holy conversation in disrepute', c. 5). See also Banton, 'Monastic'.

<sup>50</sup> R. Bassi, 'Saints' Lives and Miracle Stories in Bede, The *Old English Bede* and Ælfric: Between Translation and Rewriting' (unpubl. PhD dissertation, Univ. of Bergamo, 2011), pp. 137–9.

suggests that the repetition of ‘rædinge’ is part of an attempt by Ælfric to demonstrate ‘incremental growth of preachers and preaching’.<sup>51</sup> Indeed, in this passage we see Ælfric’s ornamental style become particularly pronounced, and Ælfric’s rhythmic style reflects congruity and cosmic harmony in the manner identified by Clemoes.<sup>52</sup> Alliterative repetition of key ideas such as ‘rædinge’, ‘lare/leornian’ and ‘geferan/ferdon’ conveys a sense of balance and harmony, and reflects the way that Aidan’s teaching efforts bring order to the previously struggling Northumbrian kingdom. Assonance of ‘eodon sceoldon sealmas’ further promotes the sense that education provides unity to the kingdom, and centres this newfound harmony on the Psalms and monastic learning.<sup>53</sup>

Moreover, Ælfric depicts Aidan’s teaching as unifying geographically varied communities. He highlights the geographical range of the mission by describing Aidan’s companions using the noun *gefera*, which stems from *faran*, a verb expressing travel or movement.<sup>54</sup> Travel is further highlighted by the word ‘ferdon’ some two lines later. In this way, Ælfric links the education of these men with the idea of journeying. The phrase ‘swa hwider swa hi ferdon’ echoes Ælfric’s description of Dionysius training with Saint Paul ‘swa hider swa he siðode’ (‘wherever he went’, l. 75), establishing *annes* of practice between English and continental missionary efforts, and linking England to the apostolic tradition. Further, the phrase ‘iunge men’ deviates substantially from Bede’s account, where Aidan teaches ‘omnes qui cum eo incedebant, siue adtonsi seu laici’ (‘all who accompanied him, whether tonsured or laymen’).<sup>55</sup> Bede makes no distinction of age, or of previous education, and implies simply that a range of men were instructed by Aidan.<sup>56</sup> By contrast, Ælfric’s text

<sup>51</sup> C. M. McCrea, ‘Ælfric: His Sources and Style in the Lives of Æthelthryth, Oswald and Edmund’ (unpubl. PhD dissertation, Fordham Univ., 1976), pp. 79–80.

<sup>52</sup> Clemoes, *Rhythm*, pp. 16–21.

<sup>53</sup> For Ælfric and the Psalms, see M. J. Toswell, *The Anglo-Saxon Psalter* (Turnhout, 2014), pp. 82–92.

<sup>54</sup> The *DOE* gives ‘travelling-companion’.

<sup>55</sup> *HE*, iii.5.

<sup>56</sup> McKinney describes Bede’s Aidan as a man who is ‘seen painstakingly administering the faith to all’ (*Gens Anglorum*, p. 24).

provides a much more specific image of the kind of men that Aidan instructs, and stresses the importance of monastic communities in supporting secular development. In his second Old English letter to Wulfstan, Ælfric similarly calls for priests with no assistance to educate the young.<sup>57</sup> The image of Aidan leading young men in preaching is reminiscent of this call for clerical education.

Moreover, Rebecca Stephenson has noted that Ælfric's contemporary, Byrhtferth of Ramsey, used the phrase 'iunge men' to specifically refer to young monks.<sup>58</sup> As such, contrary to Bede, Ælfric depicts Oswald's successful kingship as built upon a foundation of specifically monastic or clerical education, and in doing so emphasises the importance of the monastic communities that he was a part of, and of the royal sponsorship that enabled these institutions to flourish — particularly Edgar's 'golden age' and Æthelred's renewed patronage of monastic establishments during the 990s.<sup>59</sup> Moreover, the phrase 'iunge men' highlights the mission as a starting point for a greater future. Winfried Rudolf notes that in Old English homilies, the figure of the child is sometimes employed as a rhetorical device in order to manipulate and provoke the audience to improve their own behaviour.<sup>60</sup> Here, we detect Ælfric similarly employing the idea of youth to rhetorical effect. 'Iunge men' as synecdochic for 'all men' presents Northumbria as an undeveloped and inexperienced region, and thereby depicts Aidan's mission, and the knowledge that he brings as part of it, as all the more vital. Here we see Ælfric emphasising the productive nature of inter-place relations, and of imported knowledge in the context of royal-sponsored monastic education.

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<sup>57</sup> 'Ge sceolan læran cnapan and geonge men eow to fultume, þæt hig æfter eow don þa ylcan þenunga' (you must teach boys and young men to help you, so that they might do the same good office after you): *Die Hirtenbriefe Ælfrics in altenglischer und lateinischer Fassung*, ed. B. Fehr, Bibliothek der angelsächsischen Prosa 9 (Hamburg, 1914), pp. 146–221.

<sup>58</sup> Stephenson, *Politics*, pp. 83–5.

<sup>59</sup> Though Æthelred's early reign was compared unfavourably to Edgar's, in the 990s he began to redress this through sponsoring various religious houses, many of which were reform establishments: Roach, *Æthelred*, pp. 153–67.

<sup>60</sup> W. Rudolf, 'Anglo-Saxon Preaching on Children', in *Childhood & Adolescence in Anglo-Saxon Literary Culture*, ed. S. Irvine and W. Rudolf (Toronto, 2018), pp. 48–70.

KNOWLEDGE AS A MEANS TO UNITE THE ENGLISH KINGDOM

In both *Dionysius* and *Oswald*, education is shown to unify geographically wide-ranging communities. In the two *Lives*, pursuit of *annes* is shown to bring greater stability not only to the ecclesiastical world, but also to the secular one. This two-pronged unity is further highlighted by Ælfric's emphasis on mission as a force that unites the secular kingdom.

In his *Life of Saint Oswald*, Ælfric restructures the mission of Bishop Aidan to Northumbria in order to foreground the ways that foreign Christian knowledge promotes good kingship and secular life as well as monastic practice. It is necessary here to briefly highlight the different structures of Bede's and Ælfric's narratives. In Bede's account, the tales of the two men are intertwined, and Aidan's teaching is interspersed with descriptions of Oswald's beneficence and goodness. After Aidan's arrival, Bede describes how Oswald happily receives the bishop, gives him the episcopal see at Lindisfarne, and acts as a translator for him. More monks arrive in Britain from Ireland to preach, a proliferation of churches are built, and Bede gives a brief political history of Iona.<sup>61</sup> Bede then relates the story of Columba's mission to the Northern Picts, the foundation of Dearmach, and Ebgerth's correction of Iona's Easter reckoning.<sup>62</sup> After this, Aidan's pious qualities are described: his generosity and lack of regard for worldly possessions ('huius mundi'); his abstinence and teaching by example; and his good life in contrast to 'nostri temporis segnitia' ('modern slothfulness'). Bede then describes the missionary initially sent to Oswald, whose harsh disposition renders his efforts unsuccessful, and demonstrates that the situation is remedied by Aidan when he recognises this harshness and shows himself to be a more suitable candidate.<sup>63</sup> Finally, Bede describes Oswald's piety and his good relationship with Aidan,

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<sup>61</sup> Bede, *HE*, iii.3.

<sup>62</sup> Bede, *HE*, iii.4.

<sup>63</sup> Bede, *HE*, iii.5.

culminating in the tale of the king's generosity at the Easter feast and the bishop's declaration that his hand will never decay.<sup>64</sup>

By contrast, Ælfric's translation is brief. He omits all information not directly relating to Aidan's mission — hence Columba's mission and the history of Iona are absent from his account. These omissions may be seen as part of Ælfric's broader downplaying of the Irish contribution to English Christianity in order to emphasise continental connections. Moreover, Ælfric rearranges the information in his source about Aidan's mission. Aidan arrives, and his good character is established by the description of his generosity and disregard for 'woruld-cara' ('worldly cares', l. 55). Following this, Ælfric describes Oswald's joy at the bishop's arrival and the king's work as a translator (but notably, not the fact that he gave Aidan a place for his see on the island of Lindisfarne), before further explaining Aidan's goodness and teaching by example. Oswald's beneficence and the establishment of monasteries and churches are then described. The story of the Easter meal is related, and, finally, Oswald's kingship is celebrated.

This restructuring of Latin source material places Oswald's sanctity and the development of churches as the teleological endpoint of Aidan's mission, thereby emphasising the unifying nature of foreign knowledge. In Bede's account, Oswald's generosity and good character are highlighted immediately after Aidan arrives, when the king grants the bishop space for his episcopal see, and Oswald's keenness to learn is emphasised.<sup>65</sup> Ælfric, however, moves the section relating to Aidan's generosity, placing it before Oswald's welcoming of the bishop:

Swa hwæt swa him becom of þæs cyninges gifum  
oððe ricra manna, þæt he hraðe dælde

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<sup>64</sup> Bede, *HE*, iii.6.

<sup>65</sup> Oswald 'eius admonitionibus humiliter ac libenter in omnibus ascultens, ecclesiam Christi in regno suo multum diligenter aedificare ac dilatare curauit' ('humbly and gladly listened to the bishop's admonitions in all matters, diligently seeking to build up and extend the Church of Christ in his kingdom', *HE*, iii.3).

þearfum and wædlum mid wel-willendum mode.  
 Hwæt ða Oswold cyning his cymes fægnode  
 and hine ar-wurðlice underfeng his folce to ðearfe  
 þæt heora geleafa wurde awend eft to Gode  
 fram þam wiper-sæce þe hi to gewende wæron.

(Ælfric, *Oswald*, ll. 57–63)

[Whatever gifts came to him from the king or rich men he quickly distributed to the poor and needy with a benevolent mind. Oh! Then King Oswald rejoiced at his coming, and honourably received him to help his people, so that their faith might be converted back to God from the apostasy to which they had been turned.]

Bede's description of Oswald giving Aidan an episcopal see in Lindisfarne is omitted, rendering the king less initially generous than Bede's account suggests. Andreas Lemke describes Oswald as 'a king who leads a pious and celibate life' and suggests that Ælfric emphasises Oswald's piety and Christian behaviour rather than his military prowess.<sup>66</sup> However, Ælfric's initial depiction of Oswald is not as exemplary as might be expected. When Ælfric narrates Oswald's welcoming of Aidan, the juxtaposition with Aidan's own generosity renders it less remarkable. Further, the description of the king receiving the bishop is reminiscent of an earlier instance of missionary work in the *Lives of Saints*: in the *Life of Maurus*, which occurs much earlier in the collection, the nobleman Florus receives Maurus' missionary party: 'and mid micelre ar-wurðnyse þa æðelan Godes menn / underfeng to him' ('and with great honour he received the noble men of God to him', ll. 136–37). The collocation of 'arwurð' and 'underfeng', as well as the contextual similarity of a noble host welcoming a foreign mission, ties these two descriptions together. In this, we perhaps see Ælfric diminishing Oswald's saintly qualities, since Oswald's behaviour here is not as extraordinary or exemplary as that of Aidan.

<sup>66</sup> A. Lemke, "'Ealle þas ungesælða us gelumpon þuruh unrædas": Voices from the Reign of Æthelred II', in *Von Æthelred zum Mann im Mond: Forschungsarbeiten aus der englischen Mediävistik*, ed. J. Müller and F. Reitemeier (Göttingen, 2010), pp. 13–120, at p. 84.

Indeed, Ælfric's descriptions of Oswald and Florus receiving holy visitors are formulaic, and the collocation of *arwurð* and *underfeng* also appears in the *Life of Dionysius* and the *Life of Martin*. In the *Life of Dionysius*, Pope Clement receives Dionysius: 'se underfeng mid arwurðnysse þone æþelan bisceop' ('he received the noble bishop with honour', l. 122). In the *Life of Martin*, the collocation occurs twice. In the first instance, Martin receives bishop Hilary after the latter's exile: 'and he mid arwurðnysse hine eft under-feng' ('and he received him again with honour', l. 204), whilst in the second, a sick man is healed before Martin's arrival: 'and eode him togeanes, and hine arwurðlice underfeng' ('and went to meet him and received him with honour', l. 948). Importantly, these examples display a range of subjects: this behaviour is not specific to kings, or to saints. Notably, within the *Lives of Saints* this formula is only used in the lives of saints connected with mission, further suggesting that Ælfric's Oswald is here fitting into an established pattern rather than displaying any particular individual brilliance. The reception of guests is specifically highlighted in the *Rule of St Benedict*, which states: 'ealle cuman þe to mynstre cumað, syn hy onfangenne, swylce hit Crist sylf sy' ('All who come to the monastery should be received as though they were Christ himself', *OERB* LIII). In his *Letter to the Monks of Eynsham*, Ælfric draws attention to the *Rule*'s guidelines on welcoming guests, and to the fact that this behaviour should be observed by all, regardless of social or clerical status.<sup>67</sup> Oswald's reception of Aidan, then, should not be seen as the exemplary behaviour of a saint, but rather a demonstration of established hospitality praxis.

It might seem odd to suggest that Ælfric attempts to diminish saint Oswald. However, in doing so, he emphasises the change that Aidan's mission provokes, and creates a text that more greatly highlights the link between foreign knowledge and unity of the kingdom.

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<sup>67</sup> 'Cui obedientiae adsit ipse abbas quotienscumque ei uacuerit, nam de susceptione hospitum regula docet' ('Even the abbot shall take part in this work of service as often as he has leisure to do so, for the *Rule* provides instruction concerning the treatment of guests'). Text and trans. Jones, *Letter*, pp. 140–41.

McCrea notes that in Ælfric's account, Aidan's and Oswald's goodness are more strongly linked than in Bede, and that Ælfric depicts Aidan as the reason for Oswald's increase in virtue.<sup>68</sup> However, by initially diminishing Oswald, Ælfric also highlights the way that the mission affects the entire community. Aidan's effect on the population is described, as is his effect on the king himself:

þa wearð se cynincg Oswold swiðe ælmes-georn  
and ead-mod on þeawum and on eallum þingum cystig,  
and man ahrærde cyrcan on his rice geond eall  
and mynsterlice gesetnyssa mid micelre geornfulnysse

(Ælfric, *Oswald*, ll. 83–6)

[King Oswald became very charitable and humble in manners, and in all things bountiful, and they reared churches everywhere in his kingdom, and monastic foundations with great zeal.]

The use of polysyndeton ('and eadmod [...] and on eallum [...] and man ahræde [...] and mynsterlice') both emphasises the number of changes that occurred and serves to tie Oswald's personal development to that of his kingdom. This link is an Ælfrician one, created by rearranging the Latin text. Bede mentions King Oswald's generosity only in iii.6, several chapters after he describes the building of churches in iii.3.<sup>69</sup> Ælfric rearranges the material he found in his source in order to produce a text that displays Aidan's mission as the source of both Oswald's personal growth and the growth of his kingdom, thereby suggesting that foreign knowledge creates the *annes* that Æthelwold sought for the English.

In restructuring the *vita*, Ælfric presents the success of both king and country as reliant upon Aidan's mission. By invoking the 'wipersæc' ('apostasy', l. 63) of the people,

<sup>68</sup> McCrea, 'Ælfric', pp. 79–81.

<sup>69</sup> Bassi, arguing that Ælfric omits all information about Iona and further church-building found in Bede's account, concludes that '[Ælfric's] interest in Oswald lies more in the sanctity of this royal figure than in the dynamics of conversion connected to him' ('Saint's Lives', p. 136). However, as can be seen in the above passage, the further church-building in Ælfric's text is simply delayed until a much later point than it appears in Bede's account.

Ælfric paints a much more destitute image of Oswald's kingdom prior to Aidan's arrival than Bede does. Ælfric further highlights the sense that the kingdom is in disarray before Aidan's mission through alliteration: 'wīpersæce þe hi to gewende wæron'. Ælfric thereby creates a text that underscores the redemptive potential of foreign knowledge to a kingdom in peril, and so highlights the importance of continental learning to tenth-century England at a time of renewed Viking raids and political instability.<sup>70</sup> The *Life of Oswald* thereby promotes Æthelwold's school of reform and Ælfric's provision of continental texts in the vernacular as redemptive forces in England's time of need.

The sense that Aidan's journey promotes the unity of the English kingdom is further underscored by another of Ælfric's restructurings. Following the church building episode, Ælfric translates a miraculous story about Aidan and Oswald at Easter dinner. Whilst Bede includes significant narrative detail about Aidan's miracles and character following Oswald's death, this is the final mention of Aidan in Ælfric's text save for the note, at the end of the *Life*, that Cuthbert saw Aidan's soul carried to heaven.<sup>71</sup> The description of the Easter dinner is immediately followed by the declaration that 'Oswoldes cynerice wearð geryme þa swyðe / swa þæt feower þeoda hine underfengon to hlaforde' ('Oswald's kingdom became greatly enlarged then, so that four peoples accepted him as lord', ll. 104–05). Here, Ælfric once again alters the order of his source: Bede's version places this celebration of Oswald's kingship before the Easter story, not after it. In rearranging his source material in this way, Ælfric depicts the expansion of Oswald's kingdom as the endpoint of Aidan's monastic journey.

<sup>70</sup> For political instability and the Viking threat, see Keynes, 'Abbot', esp. 160–70.

<sup>71</sup> Bede, *HE*, iii.14–8. The final mention of Aidan in Ælfric's *Oswald* is as follows: 'Eft se halga Cuðberht, þa þa he git cnapa wæs / geseah hu Godes ænglas feredon Aidanes sawle, / þæs halgan bisceopes, bliðe to heofunum, / to þam ecan wuldre þe he on worulde gearnode.' ('Afterwards the holy Cuthbert, when he was still a boy, saw how God's angels carried the soul of Aidan, the holy bishop, joyfully to heaven, to the eternal glory which he had earned on earth', ll. 279–82).

The same emphasis is also present in Ælfric's *Life of Dionysius*, where he depicts Paris as less impressive than in Hilduin's account. Hilduin extols the city before the saint's arrival, describing its rich agriculture and trade industry at length, and presenting it as flourishing and successful: 'tunc memorata Parisiorum ciuitas, ut sedes regia, et conuentu Gallorum ac Germanorum et nobilitate pollebat' ('at that time the aforementioned city of the Parisians, like a seat of royalty, was thriving as a result of the combined settlement and outstanding qualities of the Gauls and Germans', 20:28–9).<sup>72</sup> Further, Hilduin actively suggests that the glory of the city attracts Dionysius to it: 'hunc ergo locum Dei famulus elegit expetendum' ('the servant of God therefore chose to seek out this place', 21:4).<sup>73</sup> Ælfric, by contrast, simply writes that Dionysius journeyed 'oðþæt he com to anre byrig / Parisius gehaten þam hæðenum tomiddes / on þære Francena rice' ('until he came to a city called Paris, in the midst of the heathens, in the kingdom of the Franks', ll. 145–47). His only description of Paris, 'þam hæðenum to-middes', depicts the city as a destitute place, far from the glorious city that Hilduin describes. In diminishing Paris, Ælfric presents Dionysius' mission as a foundation upon which the city's future glory is built. This emphasises the importance of the missionary journey, and depicts the foreign knowledge that Dionysius imports as being vital to the success of the country after a period of degradation.

In this presentation of mission laying the foundation for secular triumph, we see echoes of Æthelwold's reform ideology, which represented an attempt to restore Bedan monastic standards, and achieved this with no small debt to travelling continental monks, particularly of Fleury, visiting Winchester.<sup>74</sup> Further, Ælfric himself occupied a role similar to that of his missionary saints, having himself moved to Cerne in the late 980s. Though the

<sup>72</sup> Hilduin, *Passio S. Dionysii*, pp. 274–7.

<sup>73</sup> Hilduin, *Passio S. Dionysii*, pp. 276–7.

<sup>74</sup> For the return to the image of Bede's monastic ideals, see Wormald, 'Æthelwold', p. 40. For the importance of visiting monks, see V. Ortenberg, *English*, p. 237, and Lapidge 'Æthelwold', pp. 98–99.

exact origins of the abbey at Cerne are unknown, it was possibly a refoundation of an existing establishment, in line with reform ideals that prioritised this kind of action over the creation of new monasteries.<sup>75</sup> The small, relatively rural nature of the (re)foundation has led Malcolm Godden to suggest that Ælfric perhaps brought copies of choice texts with him.<sup>76</sup> The tantalising image of Ælfric, travelling nearly seventy miles to Cerne, equipped with books from Winchester, embodies the very same principles that he celebrates in the lives of missionary saints in the *Lives of Saints*.

### III: ANNES OF COMMUNITY

As we have seen, journeys in Ælfric's *Lives of Saints* forge relationships between geographical communities. However, these missionary journeys also allow relationships to be formed between people. Examining the kinds of relationships shown in these texts provides us with a greater understanding of Ælfric's audiences, and of his vision of a widespread and uniform Christian community reliant upon bonds of kinship.

#### COOPERATION BETWEEN COMPANIONS

In a short interpolation to the *Life of Dionysius*, Ælfric links the companionship between individuals to the companionship of the global Christian community. During Dionysius'

<sup>75</sup> Yorke, 'Æthelmær', pp. 20–23. Æthelmær's Charter (Sawyer 1217) places Cerne's foundation as 987, but its accuracy has been called into question. Napier and Stevenson described it as 'clearly spurious': A. S. Napier and W. H. Stevenson, *The Crawford Collection of Early Charters and Documents Now in the Bodleian Library* (Oxford, 1895), p. 88. G. D. Squibb argues that the charter is genuine, but that the monastery itself was potentially founded some time beforehand, perhaps even before 975: G. D. Squibb, 'The Foundation of Cerne Abbey', in *The Cerne Abbey Millennium Lectures*, ed. K. Barker (Cerne Abbas, 1988), pp. 11–14.

<sup>76</sup> M. R. Godden, 'Ælfric's Library', in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain: Volume I, c.400–1100*, ed. R. Gameson (Cambridge, 2011), pp. 679–84, at p. 684.

mission, Ælfric writes that ‘he sende his geferan sume to ispaniam / and to oðrum landum godes lare to sawenne / and he sylf unforht mid þam francium wunode’ (‘he sent some of his companions to Spain, and to other lands, to sow God’s teaching, and he himself fearlessly remained with the Franks’, ll. 162–64). As noted in Chapter One of this thesis, the Spanish mission has no source in Hilduin’s Latin text, and its presence in Ælfric’s *Life* is a testament to his particular interest in this aspect of Dionysius’ biography. The inclusion of place names (‘ispaniam’ and ‘francium’) and the phrase ‘oðrum landum’ (‘other lands’) once again highlights Ælfric’s interest in presenting a geographically wide-ranging Christianity. Further, this passage emphasises the link between individual companionship and relations between diverse geographical locations. A wide range of places are united in one Christian community by the missionary efforts of Dionysius and his companions. The microcosm of Dionysius’ companions comes to represent the macrocosm of the widespread Christian community. As such, we see Ælfric endorsing a community of practice that encourages cooperation, between both places and individuals.

Elsewhere in the collection, Ælfric highlights the importance of cooperation between lay and monastic companions. It is clear, for example, that Ælfric is concerned just as much with Aidan as with Oswald, and with the productive relationship between them. Indeed, Ælfric portrays the relationship between the lay and monastic worlds as a key reason for missionary journeys. His *Life of Maurus*, like his *Life of Oswald*, highlights the importance of the relationship between the secular and the clerical. The *Life* achieves this both through its narrative content and Ælfric’s translation methods.

Maurus represents the most monastic example in Ælfric’s collection of missionary saints. Based primarily on a late ninth-century forgery by Abbot Odo of Glanfeuil, Ælfric’s

*Life of Maurus* depicts the missionary attempts of one of Saint Benedict's own disciples.<sup>77</sup>

Maurus' career as a missionary sees him leaving the security of the Benedictine monastery and, in doing so, encountering various laymen, mostly nobles. Ælfric reshapes his Latin source in numerous ways, rearranging narrative episodes, altering emphases, and summarising information. In doing so, he offers an account of Maurus' life that balances the lay and monastic aspects of mission, and portrays the importance of collaboration between these two groups. Moreover, he consciously crafts a translation that was accessible to both monastic and noble audiences, and in doing so, embodies the very principles of cooperation that the text extols. Further, in the close similarities between Ælfric's *Oswald* and *Maurus*, Ælfric draws upon continental models in order to depict English piety as part of a greater historical and geographical network.

Ælfric's presentation of Maurus' mission depicts various forms of cooperation: between brotherhoods of coenobitic monks; monks and high-ranking nobles; and between kings and subjects. Yet one particular relationship clearly stands out above the rest: the cooperation between Maurus, the monk, and the nobleman Florus. Ælfric accomplishes this emphasis primarily through omission of other characters and details. Ælfric's use of *brevitas* to remove inappropriate material has often been noted.<sup>78</sup> Yet in the *Life of Maurus*, he uses omission not to remove problematic aspects of the source text, but rather to greater highlight those which he considered most important.<sup>79</sup> Odo's text abounds with named characters, a varied and colourful cast of noblemen (Harderadus, Hademarus, Florus, Bertulf, Caecilia, Landramus), monks (Simplicius, Anthony, Constantinianus, Placidus), bishops (Benedict, Bertigranus, Duomnolus), kings (Theudebert, Theodebald, Chlothar) and beneficiaries of

<sup>77</sup> For the history of Odo's *Life of Maurus*, see Wickstrom, 'Creativity'; and Wickstrom, *Life*, pp. 11–34.

<sup>78</sup> Whatley, 'Lost'; Stanton, *Translation*, pp. 144–71; Nichols, 'Brief Style', pp. 1–12.

<sup>79</sup> Whatley suggests that the abbreviation of *Maurus* was due to concerns about length, not problematic content ('Pearls', p. 181).

Maurus' miraculous healing (Sergius, Remeia, Langsius, Flodegisus). The result is a busy and vibrant piece of hagiography, populated with a large number of distinctive characters, each with their own specific contribution to the narrative. Some of the named figures appear only briefly, but many have a significant presence throughout the *vita* and are portrayed with emotional sensitivity. Harderadius' fortunes rise and fall, from legate to fatally injured patient to saviour of a mission under administrative threat. King Theudebert is portrayed affectively, weeping at the sight of his beloved friend Florus' conversion: 'rex vero gaudio lacrymas effundebat' ('the king truly shed tears of joy', VIII.51). Linus transforms from a blind, uncouth beggar into an elderly paragon of devotion. These, and other stories, grant flavour and no doubt a sense of authenticity to Odo's (forged) narrative. The Latin *Vita S. Mauri* places Maurus within a community, a specific historical moment, and a clearly defined socio-economic hierarchy, weaving the saint's story around the numerous stories of those who encounter and work with him. By contrast, Ælfric's *Life of Maurus* almost entirely lacks these background stories and characters. Many are minimised to depictions of the bare narrative events, whilst others are completely removed from the text.

For example, Odo's depiction of Harderadius' near-fatal fall, his resulting injuries, and the deep sorrow it causes his companion Flodegard (IV.21–3), and the Alpine horse-riding accident that nearly destroys the servant Sergius' foot (IV.24), are reduced by Ælfric to the scarcest of details:

ac twegen his geferan feollon be wege,  
an of anum stypele, oþer on anne stan,  
 swa þæt hi wurdon to **cwysede** and **cwylmiende** lagon,  
 ac Maurus hi gehealde on þæs hælendes naman.

(Ælfric, *Maurus*, ll. 92–95)

[But two of his companions fell along the way: one from off a tower,  
 the other on a stone, so that they were injured badly, and lay suffering,  
 but Maurus healed them in the Saviour's name.]

Compared to Odo's account, this is a significantly less dramatic text, and it is perhaps owing to this that the *Life of Maurus* has received very little previous scholarly attention.<sup>80</sup> Gone are the emotive descriptions of Flodegard's sorrow, and the arresting image of Sergius' injured foot, which is so badly crushed that the bones 'non jam speciem pedis, sed similitudinem alienjus præfigurarent teretis' ('no longer resembled the form of a foot, but the image of a foreign, smooth thing', VI.24).<sup>81</sup> However, where Odo's account is memorable for its wealth of emotion and character detail, Ælfric dramatises the events through heightened rhetoric. Indeed, this is a highly stylised passage. The repetition of 'an', 'anum', 'anne' and the phonic echoes of 'tocwysede' and 'cwylmiende' highlight the miracle. Further, we can observe Ælfric utilising unusual and specifically religious vocabulary. Whilst there is, for the most part, scholarly agreement that Ælfric's experimentations with poetic vocabulary were both sporadic and largely restricted to his earlier career, his *Lives of Saints* in fact frequently draws attention to key moments in a similar way through specifically homiletic or biblical register.<sup>82</sup> The words *stypel*, *tocwisan* and *cwilmian* are all examples of rare vocabulary that appear almost exclusively in religious contexts: psalters, gospel translations, hagiography and homilies. The abundance of these words, two of which alliterate with one another, marks this miraculous healing episode as important and worthy of remembrance.

If this narrative, and similar incidents, were important enough for Ælfric to highlight them stylistically, why does he strip almost all of the personal details from his Latin source? This kind of large-scale omission should not be mistaken for the *brevitas* that characterises so

<sup>80</sup> At the time of writing, the only sustained discussions of Ælfric's *Life of Maurus* are Anderson, 'Kings', pp. 129–32; Damon, *Soldier*, pp. 232, 242; Whatley, 'Pearls', pp. 176–81.

<sup>81</sup> Flodegard's sorrow is described: 'oratorium, in quo B. Maurus orationi vacabat, concitus irrupit; pedesque ejus utraque constringens manu, ac lacrymis ubertim perfundens, osculaque figens frequentia, deprecari eum et obtestari coepit' ('he burst headlong into the oratory, where the Blessed Maurus was at liberty for prayer; and tightly embracing his legs with both of his hands, and copiously flooding them with tears and fastening them with an abundance of kisses, he began to beg and entreat him', VI.22).

<sup>82</sup> For Ælfric's poetic vocabulary, see Godden, 'Changing Vocabulary'; Frank, 'Poetic Words'.

much of his translation practice.<sup>83</sup> Nor should it be considered a normal aspect of his hagiographic style, since many of the other lives in the collection demonstrate a considerable number of secondary character names.<sup>84</sup> Rather, in his *Life of Maurus*, Ælfric used omission in order to place greater emphasis on the three people that he considered most vital, and the relationships between them. The only named figures in Ælfric's text are Benedict, Maurus and Florus. Florus is mentioned by name some eighteen times, almost as many times as Benedict, who is named on twenty-one occasions.<sup>85</sup> The resulting text places specific stress on the importance of the relationship between noblemen and monks. Florus plays a fundamental role in the missionary effort, and is often depicted as working closely with Maurus himself. The saint and the noblemen often appear in balanced or chiasmic syntactic structures within Ælfric's text:

Hwæt ða on sumum dæge sæton him ætgædere,  
 Florus and Maurus, to middan þam wyrhtum,  
 and Maurus rædde and rehte hit Flore.

(Ælfric, *Maurus*, ll. 160–62)

[Oh! Then on a certain day they sat together, Florus and Maurus, in the middle of the workmen, and Maurus was reading, and relating it to Florus.]

As with the *Life of Dionysius* and the *Life of Oswald*, we again see Ælfric extolling the importance of imported knowledge, with focus on reading and interpreting. The balancing of 'Florus and Maurus' with 'Maurus [...] Flore' places the men as equals, since neither comes syntactically before the other. This reflects the styling of the Latin text, which balances a clause with the unnamed, nominative 'Florus' and the named, accusative 'Maurus', with a

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<sup>83</sup> For Ælfric's *brevitas*, see Whatley, 'Lost'; Stanton, *Translation*, pp. 144–71; Nichols, 'Brief Style', pp. 1–12.

<sup>84</sup> See, for example, *Eugenius*, *Sebastian* or *Thomas*.

<sup>85</sup> Whatley notes that 'Florus is almost as important as Maurus himself' ('Pearls', 177).

clause in which their syntactic roles are reversed.<sup>86</sup> However, Ælfric draws particular attention to the two men by opening the passage with the exclamatory *hwæt* and by repeating their names. The same kind of stylistic balancing occurs in the phrase ‘and arærde þæt mynster eall be Maures ræde’ (‘and he [Florus] built the monastery entirely by Maurus’ direction’, l. 158), where the verb *aræran* and noun *ræde* create a phonic echo, linking the actions of the two men. In these descriptions, Ælfric emphasises monastic-lay cooperation.

Further, the image of the monk and the noble sitting together is repeated almost verbatim later in the collection, in the *Life of Oswald*. Ælfric describes Oswald and Aidan in almost exactly the same way: ‘hit gelamp on sumne sæl þæt hi sæton ætgædere, / Oswald and Aidan’ (‘it happened on a certain occasion that they sat together, Oswald and Aidan’, ll. 87–8). This similarity between the two lives, paired with the similar phrasing of Florus and Oswald’s reception of their missionary guests previously discussed, casts Florus and Maurus as a model for English behaviour. It seems particularly notable that, within Ælfric’s *Lives of Saints*, Oswald’s reconversion of Northumbria is modelled upon the specifically Benedictine missionary practices observed in the *Life of Maurus*, painting English Benedictine monasticism within a longstanding tradition. Moreover, Maurus is not only a continental saint, but a Frankish one: in the movement of a missionary model from Francia to England, the *Lives of Saints* depicts a sort of *translatio studii*, in which Christian knowledge and practice moves across space and time, from Rome to sixth-century Francia to seventh-century England.<sup>87</sup> Ælfric’s emphasis on journeying and travel-for-education only serves to emphasise the idea of a *translatio studii*, and the westward movement of knowledge with

<sup>86</sup> ‘Cumque die quadam cum Beato Mauro operarios inspiciens resideret, et vir Domini lectioni de contra operam daret, ac interdum ea quæ legebat ipsi Floro exponeret’ (‘On a certain day, he [Florus] was sitting with the Blessed Maurus, inspecting the workmen, and the man of God was given to reading away from the work, and he [Maurus] was now and then explaining what he was reading to Florus’, VII.43).

<sup>87</sup> For description of this concept, see J. Verger, ‘Translatio Studii’, in *Lexikon des Mittelalters*, ed. R. Auty, vol. 8 (Munich, 1997), pp. 946–47.

England as its final inheritor. Within the collection, then, the *Life of Maurus* not only provides a model for monastic-lay cooperation, but specifically for English sanctity.

#### COMMUNITY AND ÆLFRIC'S LAY PATRONS

In the presentation of lay piety predicated upon continental models, and of lay-monastic cooperation, Ælfric was no doubt appealing to his lay patrons. The figure of Florus, who desires 'mynster to arærenne and mid munecum gesettan' ('to build a monastery, and to settle it with monks', l. 127), closely echoes Ælfric's own lay patrons, Æthelweard and his son Æthelmær.<sup>88</sup> Florus' position as a high-ranking nobleman is established repeatedly by Ælfric — he is 'forð-þegn [...] welig' ('a wealthy retainer of high rank', l. 125); 'fyrrest þæra francena þegna' ('first amongst the Frankish nobles' l. 140), and 'ðam cyninge leofest' ('the dearest to the king', l. 141). Moreover, Florus' close relationship with the king is further emphasised later in the text, when he is described as the king's 'swa leofne freond' ('such dear friend', l. 226). The nobleman is therefore reminiscent of Ælfric's patrons, since the two men were not only of royal descent, but seem to have enjoyed particular success as advisors to Æthelred in the 990s.<sup>89</sup> The *Life of Maurus*, with its description of a wealthy noble patron investing in the foundation of a Benedictine monastery must have resonated with Ælfric and his patrons as an image of the (re)foundation of their own monastery at Cerne. Gretsch posits that Ælfric's inclusion of Maurus in his *sanctorale* was due to the saint's status as a pupil of Benedict, since '[Maurus'] *vita* relates many incidents pertaining to a biography of St.

<sup>88</sup> Damon sees Florus as representative of the order of *bellatores* (*Soldier*, p. 232), and suggests that this made him relevant to Ælfric's patrons.

<sup>89</sup> Æthelweard and Æthelmær enjoyed particular success from 993, when Æthelweard was a senior ealdorman and *ðiscþegn* until the time of his death c.998: Keynes, *Diplomas*, pp. 157, 175, 192 and 197; M. Gretsch, 'Historiography and Literary Patronage in Late Anglo-Saxon England: The Evidence of Æthelweard's *Chronicon*', *ASE* 41 (2012), 205–48; and Yorke, 'Æthelmær', pp. 15–25.

Benedict'.<sup>90</sup> However, when compared to its Latin source, Ælfric's text contains very little information about Benedict's life (and death).<sup>91</sup> Whilst the Benedictine connection was no doubt appealing to Ælfric, it is more likely that his interest in St Maurus stemmed from his legend's potential as a model for lay behaviour. The similarities between Maurus' mission to Francia and Ælfric's own travel to Cerne, and between the *Life of Maurus* and the *Life of Oswald*, allow Ælfric to extol a long history of Benedictine praxis centring upon lay-monastic cooperation. The *Life of Maurus*, with its celebration of appropriate noble conduct, represented an ideal vessel for honouring his lay patrons whilst also providing them with guidelines for their expected relationship with the monastery.

Ælfric presents the missionary effort specifically as requiring cooperation between social spheres. In his account, the missionary party sent by Benedict at the request of Bishop Bertigranus consists of both laymen and monks. After agreeing to send Maurus to Francia, Benedict 'funde him eac geferan feower oðre munecas / and sume læwede menn to ðam lande mid him' ('also found for him four other monks as companions, and some laymen to go to that land with them', *Maurus*, ll. 64–65). Odo's text does not mention this selection of laymen. Instead, Benedict's assembly of the missionary party is described as follows: 'Legatis supradicti Antistitis tam beatissimum Maurum, quam nos quatuor, quorum nomina proœmio inseruimus, assignavit' ('to the aforementioned envoys of the bishop he then assigned the blessed Maurus, as he did us four, whose names we put in the prologue', III.16). Ælfric's alteration suggests that, from its very conception, the mission requires lay and monastic cooperation. Ælfric was perhaps referencing the nobleman Harderadus, the bishop's legate and 'Vicedominum suum' ('his *vicedominus*', III.16), who is named in Odo's account

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<sup>90</sup> Gretsche, *Ælfric*, p. 4.

<sup>91</sup> Odo's account includes reference to Gregory's *Dialogues* and Benedict's miracles (I.7); Benedict's miraculous restoration of a broken sickle (I.9); Benedict's prediction of his own death and his thoughts on mission as charity (III.17); and Maurus' conduct surrounding Benedict's death and the ensuing miraculous vision (V.30–1). Ælfric omits all of these episodes.

and described as being ‘secularus’ (‘secular / a layman’, IV.22).<sup>92</sup> However, this does not explain Ælfric’s presentation of Benedict’s selection of both lay and monastic men for the mission: in the Latin text, Harderardus is clearly an envoy of Bishop Bertigranus, not a man chosen by Benedict. Ælfric here reflects a monastic community in contact with the lay public, in line with the Winchester practice of the Benedictine Rule. Of the three reformers, it was Ælfric’s tutor Æthelwold who demonstrated the most pronounced interest in lay religion, and as a result, it has been suggested that monks at Winchester enjoyed a particularly close, if idiosyncratic, relationship with the laity.<sup>93</sup>

However, Ælfric seems keen to portray this relationship within strict boundaries. Whilst he includes lay individuals in his description of Maurus’ companions, his depiction of lay involvement in missionary activity is often reduced from that found in Odo’s account. In Odo’s *Life*, monastic cooperation with the laity is essential for the success of the mission. When the death of Bishop Bertigranus threatens the mission, Harderardus acts as an envoy to the new bishop:

tunc nobilissimus vir Harderardus cum ad latus Beati resideret Mauri, ita exorsus talia proferre cœpit: Dignum mihi atque conveniens, Pater sancte ac religiosi Fratres, esse videtur, ut nos, qui legatione hujus rei functi sumus, propter quam tot ac tanta perlustrantes terrarum spatia, laborem hunc jussu nostri Pontificis assumpsimus, istum novum atque incognitum nobis adeamus Antistitem; et causam itineris nostri notam illi ex ordine facientes, voluntatem ejus super tali negotio rescire valeamus.

(*Vita S. Mauri* VI.34)

<sup>92</sup> The office of *vicedominus* was administrative in nature. These men were sometimes clerical, but could often be laymen, usually noble, selected by the bishop and charged with the protection of both the estates and rights of his see. They might also be involved in the enactment of criminal justice. *Vicedomini* became increasingly necessary from the ninth century, when increasing demands upon bishops required the delegation of administrative tasks. See M. C. Miller, *The Formation of a Medieval Church: Ecclesiastical Change in Verona, 950–1150* (Ithaca, 1993), pp. 148–9; J. H. Pinches, *European Nobility and Heraldry: A Comparative Study of the Titles of Nobility and Their Heraldic Exterior Ornaments for Each Country, with Historical Notes* (Ramsbury, 1994), p. 27; and A. Daresté de la Chavanne, *Histoire de l’administration en France et des progrès du pouvoir royal*, 10 vols (Paris, 1848), I, pp. 110–11.

<sup>93</sup> C. T. Riedel, ‘Debating the Role of the Laity in the Hagiography of the Tenth-Century Anglo-Saxon Benedictine Reform’, *RevB* 127 (2017), 315–46.

[Then the most noble man Harderadus sat down beside the Blessed Maurus, and thus began to suggest the following: ‘it seems to me to be suitable and appropriate, holy Father and pious brothers, that we, who have been engaged in the legation of this business, because of which we have wandered over so many and such great expanses of land, taking up this work by the order of our bishop: we should approach that new and unknown bishop. And we can make the motive of our journey known in turn, and moreover by this activity we might manage to understand his will in return.]

Harderadus and the other legates thereby consult the new bishop of Le-Mans on behalf of Maurus and the monks. This passage represents a key moment of Odo’s portrayal of lay activity in mission. In his role as *vicedominus*, Harderadus takes on the administrative duties of the missionary party, allowing Maurus and the other monks to focus on more strictly clerical and miraculous pursuits. This is only furthered when Harderadus rescues the struggling mission by suggesting his nephew Florus be its new patron (VI.37). As such, lay action is presented as essential to monastic success.

Ælfric’s text drastically changes this portrayal by removing Harderadus’ work as an envoy. Unlike Odo’s account, which presents sending a lay envoy as the most suitable course of action (‘*dignum mihi atque conveniens*’), Ælfric’s *Life of Maurus* has the entire missionary party travel to the new bishop: ‘hi wurdon þa unrote, and eoden swaþeah / to ðam niwan bisceope. Bædon his rædes’ (‘then they were sorrowful, but went nevertheless / to the new bishop. They asked for his counsel’, ll. 115–16). There is no sense here that this is the result of lay action. As such, Ælfric presents Maurus’ mission as less reliant upon lay work that takes place separately from monks. Odo’s Florus receives news of the mission via an envoy from his uncle: ‘*relatu nuntii, quem ei Harderadus direxerat*’ (‘by the narration of an envoy, who Harderadus sent to him’, VII.38). By contrast, Ælfric’s Florus does not hear from his uncle Harderadus, but from unnamed sources: ‘him wearð eac gecydd be Maures tocyme’ (‘Maurus’ arrival was also made known to him’, l. 130). Ælfric presents lay-

monastic cooperation as vital, but lay activity that takes place without monastic oversight as less so: the success of the mission and the resulting piety rests firmly on the Benedictine monks rather than on their lay patrons.

In altering his text in this way, Ælfric reflects the uneasy relationship between lay sponsorship and monastic establishments in the late tenth century. Secular-monastic relations after Edgar's death in 975 were often strained, and the rise and fall of individual monasteries could be dictated by secular allegiances or disputes, particularly during the so-called 'anti-monastic reaction'.<sup>94</sup> Moreover, in the years following Edgar's death, the divisive politics surrounding the royal succession saw many reformed monasteries fall victim to plundering, or lose their lands.<sup>95</sup> This was felt acutely by Ælfric — in his *Letter to the Monks of Eynsham*, written several years after the *Lives of Saints*, he includes a clause that warns against lay 'tyranny' against monasteries.<sup>96</sup> As such, Ælfric's *Life of Maurus* attempts to navigate the vital importance of lay patronage on the one hand, and the potential for an overabundance of lay involvement to damage monastic landholdings and practice on the other.

#### APPEALING TO A MIXED AUDIENCE

The systematic removal of detail pertaining to specifically lay activity also indicates a desire

<sup>94</sup> See Yorke, 'Æthelwold', pp. 84–6; S. Jayakumar, 'Reform and Retribution: the 'Anti-Monastic Reaction' in the Reign of Edward the Martyr', in *Early Medieval Studies in Memory of Patrick Wormald*, ed. S. Baxter, C. E. Karkov, J. L. Nelson, and D. Pelteret (Farnham, 2009), pp. 337–52; G. Molyneaux, *The Formation of the English Kingdom in the Tenth Century* (Oxford, 2015), p. 34; Fisher, 'Anti-Monastic'.

<sup>95</sup> T. Pestell, *Landscapes of Monastic Foundation: The Establishment of Religious Houses in East Anglia, c.650–1200* (Woodbridge, 2004), pp. 102–03.

<sup>96</sup> 'Monet etiam consuetudo ut nullus laicorum habeat dominium super monasterium ubi regula sancta tenetur, nisi rex solus ad munimen loci, non ad tyrannidem' ('the customary also warns that no layman shall have dominion over [any] monastery where the holy *Rule* is observed, save the king alone — and even he for the protection of the place, not the exercise of tyranny over it', 63). Text and trans. in Jones, *Letter*.

to appeal to a mixed audience of both monks and laymen, embodying the sense of cooperation within the very texts themselves. Whilst the preface to the *Lives of Saints* specifically addresses Æthelweard and Æthelmær, it has long been suggested that the collection enjoyed a wide audience. Ælfric himself seems to have assumed that this would be the case, as evidenced by his instruction to scribes in the Old English preface:

Ic bidde nu on Godes naman, gif hwa þas boc awritan wille, þæt he hi wel gerihte be þære bysne, and þær na mare betwux ne sette þonne we awendon

(Ælfric, *Old English Preface*, c. 5)

[I ask now, in God's name, that if any man desires to transcribe this book, he correct it well according to the exemplar, and set down no more in it than we have translated.]

Jonathan Wilcox envisages not only a wide-ranging lay audience of Æthelweard's household and kinsmen, but also a monastic audience.<sup>97</sup> The lives of missionary saints, which often include moments of contact between the secular and monastic spheres, are in many ways uniquely suited to educate a mixed audience, and yet also hold the potential to alienate through their specific engagement with their description of lay proceedings or monastic observances. Ælfric often removes information that would have been confusing for this mixed audience. For example, he is surprisingly silent about monastic practices in the *Life of Maurus*, omitting most of the detail about the happenings inside of the Benedictine monastery that Maurus is educated in, and also the monastic observances for the death of Benedict that take place at Font-Rouge, including fasting, a vigil, recital of psalms, and praying. Similarly, he removes Bede's descriptions of monastic life and rulership on Iona in his *Life of Oswald*. Ælfric streamlines his text for a lay audience, removing large amounts of

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<sup>97</sup> J. Wilcox, 'Audience', at pp. 247–49; Wilcox, *Prefaces*, p. 50. On the potential female audiences of the *Lives of Saints*, both lay and monastic, see also Gulley, *Displacement*, pp. 5–10.

specifically monastic detail in order to ensure a text that was accessible and that focused on the more general ideas of sanctity and belief than on the particulars of monastic practice.

In this same manner, Ælfric also removes information about lay practices in his lives of missionary saints. In particular, he systematically removes the role of noblemen in monastic land acquisition in his missionary saints lives, despite such episodes occurring frequently in his Latin sources. In his *Life of Dionysius* he almost entirely omits the complex transaction process that takes place when Dionysius wishes to procure land from the newly converted nobleman Lisbius for a baptistry. Hilduin's *Passio*, building upon the *Conscriptio Visbii*, describes how Lisbius, who is 'uirum honoratissimum ciuitatis Parisiacae' ('a distinguished man of the city of Paris'), wishes to donate the land for free: 'gratis [...] eum pater beatissime, offeram per sanctitatem tuam Domino Iesu Christo' ('Blessed father, I shall offer it to the Lord Jesus Christ free of charge, through your holiness').<sup>98</sup> Dionysius refuses, on the complex (and somewhat cryptic) basis that Jesus himself was born in rented accommodation ('in locato est diuersorio natus'), and as such the land must be purchased for a price ('pretium'). A price is finally agreed upon, alongside the bequest of a cemetery for slaves ('captiui'). Ælfric renders this entire interaction simply as 'he gebohte þa land æt anum geleaffullan men' ('then he bought land from a faithful man', l. 150). Lisbius' name, his status as a new convert and his identity as a Parisian nobleman are never mentioned. Instead, Ælfric provides the nonspecific term 'geleafful man'. Consequently, Ælfric generalises the account, making it more accessible to monastic audiences.

Ælfric similarly omits the details of land transfer in his *Life of Maurus*. Odo's account gives a detailed description of how the king transfers secular lands to the monastic foundation:

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<sup>98</sup> Hilduin, *Passio Dionysii*, pp. 276–77.

ingressus iterum ecclesiam S. Petri, dedit ad ipsum locum fiscum regium, qui Boscus vocatur, cum omnibus villis et redditibus, qui ad eum petinebant.<sup>99</sup> Vocansque ad eum Ansealdum, qui scriptoribus testamentorum regalium præerat, præcepit ei, ut antequam de ipso monasterio egrederetur, testamentum de eisdem scriberet rebus, ac de annulo ejus regali firmaret more.

(*Vita S. Mauri*, VIII.50)

[He entered the church of St Peter again, and at that place he bestowed [to the monastery] a royal fisc, which was called LeBois, with all its estates and incomes, which belonged to him. And he summoned to him Ansealdus, who was in charge of the scribes of royal deeds, and ordered him that, before he himself left the monastery, a deed for these properties might be composed, and with his royal signet he might confirm it, as was customary.]

Ælfric simply writes that the king ‘forgeaf sumne ham to þære halgan stowe’ (‘gave certain property to the holy place’, l. 232). This could be considered a means of localising these texts, whose descriptions of continental land exchange varied from those of early medieval England.<sup>100</sup> However, Ælfric also removes the more local, and distinctly less detailed description of land donating in the life of a native saint, in his *Life of Oswald*. Ælfric carefully omits Bede’s description of royal land donation: ‘donabantur munere regio possessiones et territoria ad instituenda monasteria’ (‘lands and property of other kinds were given by royal bounty to establish monasteries’, iii.3). Ælfric consistently removes information about lay practices in order to make his translation more suitable for a mixed audience, and thereby embodies the ideal of lay-monastic *annes* on a textual level.

In an age when the church benefitted from various payments, foundations, and endowments from the lay community, and particularly from land donations from wealthy patrons, Ælfric’s removal of episodes where laymen gift land to the church seems contrary to

<sup>99</sup> Read *pertinebat*.

<sup>100</sup> The use of written deed in Odo’s Frankish hagiography, for example, does not match up to the more oral tradition of land exchange that Ann Williams has identified as being customary in Early Medieval England: ‘Thegnly Piety and Ecclesiastical Patronage in the Late Old English Kingdom’, *ANS* 24 (2002), 1–24, at 4.

his purposes to educate laymen.<sup>101</sup> Through these omissions, and those of monastic practices, Ælfric simplifies his text in ways that make it accessible to a wide range of audiences. In doing so, he creates a collection that exemplifies the sense of cooperation visible in his treatment of relationships between places and between peoples of differing social standing.

#### IV: *ANNES OF GEOGRAPHY*

The final type of *annes* found in Ælfric's lives of missionary saints is that of geography, whereby he presents a range of countries as a single, homogenised Christian community. His missionary lives represent an array of locations: Northumbria in *Oswald*, Athens and Paris in *Dionysius*, Francia in *Maurus* and India in *Thomas*.<sup>102</sup> Yet Ælfric minimises the wealth of geographic detail found in his sources, and as a result these varied landscapes are often portrayed with few distinguishing features. Significantly, within the lives of missionary saints, the continent is largely represented as indistinguishable from England. Through this downplaying of continental geography, we see Ælfric reconcile the spread of Christianity to disparate places with the reform ideal of uniformity and a network of homogenous practice.

##### *OMISSION OF GEOGRAPHICAL DETAILS*

Within Ælfric's lives of missionary saints, details about the locations are minimised in a number of ways. Firstly, place names and specifically geographical detail are often omitted.

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<sup>101</sup> For the contribution of the gentry to local churches, see Cubitt, 'Lay Patrons', pp. 184–86. For the various lay payments to the church, see Blair, *Church*, pp. 407–10, 433–50.

<sup>102</sup> The *Life of Thomas* is discussed in greater detail in Chapter Four.

This type of omission is particularly notable in the lives of the continental saints, *Dionysius* and *Maurus*. For example, while Hilduin describes Athens as ‘una urbium magnarum metropolis in confinio Thraciae prospiciens Lacedaemoniae terminus posita, media inter Achaia et Macedoniam iacet’ (‘one of the great cities, a metropolis in the vicinity of Thrace, looking out over the boundaries of Sparta, situated midway between Achaia and Macedonia’), Ælfric simply supplies ‘athenas [...] þære greciscra heafod-burh’ (‘Athens, the capital city of the Greeks’, ll. 4–5).<sup>103</sup> In the same manner, Ælfric’s *Life of Maurus* entirely omits a section that describes the original site of the mission: ‘nam ex ipso nomine, quo Rupiacus vocabatur, deformis a nobis et scabrosus aestimabatur’ (‘for from the name itself, which was called Rupiacus [Rocky], it seemed loathsome and rough to us’, VI.35). These omissions constitute part of Ælfric’s sustained effort to generalise the locations of missionary travel, and in doing so, to present the Christian world as more unified.

Ælfric almost entirely omits toponyms of places encountered on missionary journeys. Whilst Hilduin’s *Passio* describes how the companions ‘appulerunt portum Arelatensium ciuitatis’ (‘landed at the port of Arles’), Ælfric removes this detail. He also simplifies Hilduin’s depiction of Paul’s journey:

non solum ab Hierosolymis usque in Illyricum uerum et ‘usque ad terminos’ [...] peragrans superiores et uicinas ciuitates tempore quo princeps Claudius agebat in sceptris deuenit Athenas

(Hilduin, *Passio Dionysii*, c.1)

[not only from Jerusalem as far as Dalmatia, but ‘even as far as the ends’ of the earth [...] passing through remote as well as nearby cities at the time when Claudius wielded the sceptre of authority, he came to Athens.]

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<sup>103</sup> Hilduin, *Passio Dionysii*, pp. 234–35.

When he translates this passage, Ælfric retains the sense that Paul ‘geond land ferde’ (‘journeyed through the land’, l. 1), and that he arrived in Athens, but removes the toponyms that describe Paul’s journey. Similarly, he removes the names of all the stopping places along Maurus’ journey (Vercelli, Jura, Auxerre and Font-Rouge). When translating the Latin *Passio Thomae*, he once again removes the names of the place where Thomas lands in India (‘civitas andropolis’), and the place where he meets the Indian king Gundaphorus (‘Hieroforus [...] Indiae civitas’). As a result, he allows these missionary journeys to more closely resemble one another, since they are less geographically specific. This creates a sense of geographic *annes* across the collection, whereby the Christian world is portrayed as idealistically homogenised and unified.

This homogenised worldview also extends to *Life of Oswald*, where Ælfric omits the description of Iona, from where Aidan sets out on his mission.<sup>104</sup> Similarly, in the *Life of Apollinaris*, Ælfric describes the endpoint of the saint’s mission, but not its starting point. In the Latin account, Apollinaris is asked about his journey by the tribune of Ravenna: ‘Ait ei tribunus: “et hic unde advenit?” Qui respondit: “ab urbe Roma”’ (‘The tribune said to him: “and where have you come from?”’. He replied, “from the city of Rome”’, l.4). Whilst Ælfric implies that Apollinaris leaves from Rome, he never emphasises the city as the starting point of the saint’s mission in the same way that the Latin text does.<sup>105</sup> In omitting these depictions of missionary starting points, Ælfric depicts their journeys less as real, geographical travels across known landscapes, and more as idealistic movements across the Christian world.

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<sup>104</sup> Bede writes about Aidan’s origins: ‘utpote de insula quae uocatur Hii destinatus, cuius monasterium in cunctis pene septentrionalium Scottorum et omnium Pictorum monasteriis non paruo tempore arcem tenebat’ (‘He was sent from the island known as Iona, whose monastery was for a very long time chief among all the monasteries of the northern Irish and the Picts’, *HE*, iii.3).

<sup>105</sup> The opening of the *Life* sees Peter travel ‘fram Antiochian byrig in to Rome byrig’ (‘from the city of Antioch into the city of Rome’, ll. 2–3), and as such it is implied that Apollinaris sets off from the same city.

The sense of unified geography also extends to the apostolic missions. Ælfric's Latin source text for his *Life of Mark*, the anonymous *Passio S. Marci Evangelistae*, provides a list of places that Mark travels through and preaches in.<sup>106</sup> Ælfric removes these toponyms, and describes Mark's mission more generally:

Marcus se god-spellere be Godes dihte gefor  
to Ægipta land and ðær lærde þæt folc  
and to fulluhte gebigde fram þam fulan hæþenscype.  
He ferde þa geond eall ðæt Aegiptisce land  
sawende godes sæd and ða seocan gehælde.

(Ælfric, *Saint Mark*, ll. 1–5)

[Mark the Evangelist journeyed by God's direction to the land of the Egyptians, and taught the people there, and turned them from foul heathenism to baptism. He journeyed then through all the Egyptian land, sowing God's seed, and healed the sick.]

Ælfric's simplification of the mission's geography creates a greater sense of continuity and cohesion between the world of the apostles and the world of the later saints.

As such, mission is depicted as geographically wide-ranging, but not as geographically specific. In isolation, Ælfric's omission of toponyms in missionary narratives are subtle, but collectively, they form a pattern of praxis throughout the *Lives of Saints*. Across the collection, he depicts journeys through the world in general terms, and thereby creates an impression that there is *annes* between Christian places.

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<sup>106</sup> 'Propter quod primus in tota Ægypti regione, in Lybia, Marmarica, Ammoniaca et Pentapoli prædicavit Euangelium' ('because he first preached the gospel in the entire region of Egypt: in Lybia, Marmarica, Ammoniaca and the Pentapolis', c. 1): 'De S. Marco Evangelista, apostolatus alexandrinus martyrium', in AS Apr, 3, pp. 350–52. References are to the chapter numbers as found in the AS.

ABBREVIATION AND OMISSION OF JOURNEYS

As well as removing toponyms, Ælfric consistently abbreviates and omits details about travel in his missionary lives. In doing so, he reflects the concerns of the Benedictine Rule regarding the distracting nature of journeying. Æthelwold's Old English *Regula Benedicti* is open to the possibility of travel outside the monastery, but warns of the distractions that the outside world represents. A monk who is called to leave the monastery may do so, but upon returning he must not speak of the things that he encountered:

Ne hyra nan ne dyrstlæce, þæt he oðrum recce, oðþe mid wordum  
gecyðe, hwæt he butan mynstre geseah, oðþe gehyrde; hit is micel  
mægena tostencennes, gif hit hwa deð.

(OERB, LXVII)

[Nor should he dare narrate to others, or relate with words, what he  
saw outside the minster, or heard; if he does so, it is a greatly powerful  
disturbance.]

The sense here is that what is seen outside the monastery may be strange, or different — so much so, that even to speak of it may unsettle the *stabilitas* of the monastic establishment. Indeed, Æthelwold's Old English version of the *Rule* stresses the potential damage that such acts are capable of more so than in the Latin *Regula Benedicti*, which simply states that talking about journeys 'plurima destructio est' ('is a great destruction').<sup>107</sup> Throughout the *Lives*, Ælfric condenses his sources in order to minimise any distracting aspects of journeying.

In the *Life of Apollinaris*, Ælfric removes almost all the specific detail of the missionary journey:

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<sup>107</sup> *The Rule of Saint Benedict*, ed. and trans. B. Venarde (Cambridge, 2011), p. 216.

Appollonaris ða ferde **to ðære fore-sædan byrig**  
 and sumne blindne mann gehælde ær þan þe he **to ðære byrig** become  
 and manega gelyfdon þurh ðæs mannes hælpe  
 on ðone soðan God, and swa wurdon gefullode.  
 He com ða **to Rauenna ðære byrig** [...].

(Ælfric, *Apollinaris*, ll. 32–6)

[Then Apollinaris journeyed to the aforementioned city, and healed a certain blind man before he came to the city, and through that man's cure many believed in the true God, and so were baptised. Then he came into the city Ravenna [...].]

The insistent repetition of 'to ðære byrig' stresses the importance of movement and travel.

However, the actual detail of the missionary journey is minimal: we learn only that an unnamed blind man is healed, and that this provokes a large conversion. Ælfric's Latin source, the anonymous *Passio S. Apollinaris*, describes various encounters that the saint has on his path to Ravenna, but Ælfric omits all of these details, and in doing so presents very little of the experience of journeying.<sup>108</sup> In doing so, he depicts the missionary journey in a manner that does not threaten monastic *stabilitas*.

Similarly, in his *Life of Maurus* Ælfric condenses the sections of Odo's account describing the missionary journey, and the miracles that take place on the way — accounting for almost a third of the Latin text — into just thirty-five lines (ll. 90–124), less than one tenth of the Old English *Life*. Similarly, in the *Life of Thomas*, translated from the anonymous Latin *Passio Thomae*, Ælfric entirely removes the travels of Thomas through India and the miracles that the eponymous saint conducts on the way.<sup>109</sup> Instead, he simply writes:

Hi seglodon þa forð seofon niht on an,  
 and on land eodon. Ac hit bið langsum to secganne

<sup>108</sup> The incident with the blind man, for example, is described as occurring when Apollinaris 'mansit apud militem Astaticum, nomine Herenæum' ('he stayed with a certain Asiatic soldier, named Irenæus', I.3), and the soldier appeals to the saint to heal his blinded son. Following this, the baptism takes place 'in fluvio non longe ab urbe Ravenna' ('in a river not far from the city Ravenna', *Passio Apollinaris*, I.3).

<sup>109</sup> The edition of the 'Passio Thomae' closest to the version found in the *CCL* is printed in *Sanctuarium seu vitae sanctorum*, ed. B. Mombritius, vol. II (Paris, 1910), pp. 606–14.

ealle þa wundra þe he worhte on þam lande,  
forðan þe we onettað to his awurðan þrowunge.

(Ælfric, *Thomas*, ll. 72–75)

[Then they sailed forth seven nights together, and went to land. But it would take a long time to say all the wonders that he worked in that land, because we must hasten to his noble passion.]

As will be discussed in Chapter Four of this thesis, Ælfric's condensing of Thomas' missionary travel allows for greater emphasis to be placed on the Roman palace that he builds. However, Ælfric's omission of several narrative episodes also serves to render the journey in a way that appealed to Benedictine monastic sensibilities, and which emphasised the educational aspect of the missionary life rather than missionary wanderings.

As we have seen, Ælfric's treatment of missionary journeys in his *Lives of Saints* displays an aversion to the details of travelling in accordance with the guidance for monks found in the *Regula Benedicti*. Howe has noted that, particularly with regard to the presentation of Rome and the Holy Land, early medieval English writers demonstrated a desire to negate and minimise their distance from the places so central to them on the one hand and so physically intangible on the other.<sup>110</sup> In Ælfric's treatment of journeys in missionary hagiography, we similarly detect a desire to negate distance by omitting the strange and different geographies encountered. In reducing the details of these many and varying voyages, Ælfric creates a more homogenous image of mission. Within the *Lives of Saints*, missionary journeys take place in a wealth of different locations, but they look much the same whether they occur within England or India, Francia or Egypt. The result is a collection that is more universally accessible than his varied sources, which idealises unified practice whilst simultaneously acknowledging the importance of a widespread Christian

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<sup>110</sup> Howe, *Map*, pp. 79–80.

community. Through this, Ælfric navigates England's place within a longstanding continental tradition of Christian practice.

The unification of disparate places also serves as a didactic tool for Ælfric in an age where Benedictine homogeny was an ideal, but not always a reality. It has long been acknowledged that the three key reformers of the 970s, Æthelwold, Dunstan and Oswald, had varying ideas on the implementation of the reform.<sup>111</sup> While the Benedictine *cursus* was upheld as an ideal, there is no evidence that it was actually imposed uniformly.<sup>112</sup> Further, despite the seeming totalitarianism of Æthelwold's dramatic eviction of secular clergy from the Old Minster at Winchester, several clerical institutions are known to have remained in late tenth-century England alongside reformed communities.<sup>113</sup> Considering the mixed monastic and lay audiences of the *Lives of Saints*, and Ælfric's awareness of the potential that his work would be used widely, the presentation of wide-ranging geographies as a single community of practice may be seen as a means of appealing to and attempting to rationalise an English community that may often have been diverse in its practices and localised interests. In presenting missionaries located in hugely disparate temporal and physical locations as nonetheless enjoying a sort of unity within the folios of the *Lives of Saints*, Ælfric suggests the potential for unified Christian identity amongst his varied audiences. In this way the continent and beyond are used as a means of creating forms of English Christian identity centred around the principle of theoretical unity. He therefore strikes a balance between giving sufficient detail to emphasise how far away these places are, and eliminating enough specific detail to render them unified and homogenous.

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<sup>111</sup> Cubbitt, 'Tenth-Century'.

<sup>112</sup> Billett, *Divine*, pp. 186–96.

<sup>113</sup> Gransden, 'Traditionalism'.

ANNES *BETWEEN ENGLAND AND ROME*

Though we might expect Ælfric to treat Rome differently to other places, it too is homogenised in his depictions of missionary travel within the *Lives*. Despite Rome's centrality to England's own Christianity, and England's history as a place subject to Roman conversion, the city is not described in geographical detail.<sup>114</sup> In the context of missionary saints, the idea of Rome is more important to Ælfric than the city's geographic reality. As previously discussed, Ælfric inserts a description of Augustine's mission to England into the opening of the *Life of Oswald*: 'æfter ðan ðe Augustinus to Englalande becom' ('After Augustine came to England', l. 1). Here, Ælfric does not name Rome as the starting point of Augustine's mission. His audiences would no doubt be aware that Augustine arrived from Rome, and as such would not necessarily require this information. However, this does not warrant Rome's absence from this passage: Discenza notes that, elsewhere in the Old English corpus, Rome was so familiar to audiences that it would sometimes even be mentioned in texts 'without historical justification or need for citation'.<sup>115</sup> Moreover, Rome's absence is not unique to the *Life of Oswald*. At the end of his *Life of Alban*, Ælfric breaks from his source, Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica*, to add:

Dis wæs geworden ær ðæt gewinn come  
 ðurh Hengest and Horsa þe hyndon ða Bryttas  
 and se Cristendom wearð geunwurðod syððan  
 oðþæt Agustinus hine eft astealde  
 be Gregories lare, þæs geleaffullan papan.

(Ælfric, *Alban*, ll. 147–51)

[This happened before that strife came through Hengest and Horsa,  
 who conquered the Britons, and Christianity was dishonoured again,

<sup>114</sup> The Anglo-Roman relationship and Ælfric's depictions of Rome within the *Lives of Saints* are both explored in greater detail in Chapter Four.

<sup>115</sup> Discenza, *Inhabited*, p. 85.

until Augustine re-established it by the instruction of Gregory, the faithful pope.]

Once again, the toponym ‘Rome’ is entirely absent here. Ælfric’s addition of this passage suggests a particular interest in Augustine’s mission, but equally a desire to present this mission as part of the unified missionary effort across the collection. The mission is located not in terms of place, but in terms of time, with the reference to the historical figures of Hengest and Horsa. As such, the idea of conversion is more important to Ælfric than the specifics of place.

Whilst journeys from Rome are indistinguishable from other journeys within the *Lives of Saints*, Rome is nonetheless made exceptional through its relationship to England via missionary activity in the *Life of Oswald*. Here, Ælfric draws particular attention to the perceived *annes* between England and Rome. In his description of Bishop Birinus’ mission to the West Saxons, Ælfric emphasises the link between the two places through repetition:

On þam ylcan timan, com eac sum bisceop  
fram Romebyrig Birinus gehaten  
to West-sexena kyninge, Cynegyls gehaten,  
se wæs ða git hæðen, and eall West-sexena land.  
Birinus witodlice gewende fram Rome  
be ðæs papan ræde þe ða on Rome wæs,  
and behet þæt he wolde Godes willan gefremman  
and bodian þam hæþenum þæs hælendes naman  
and þone soðan geleafan on fyrlnum landum.  
Þa becom he to West-seaxan, þe wæs ða gyt hæþen.

(Ælfric, *Oswald*, ll. 119–28)

[At that same time, there also came a certain bishop from the city of Rome, called Birinus, to the king of the West Saxons, called Cynegils, who was then still a heathen, as was all of the land of the West Saxons. Birinus indeed came from Rome, by order of the Pope, who was then in Rome, and promised that he would perform God’s will and preach to the heathens in far lands the Saviour’s name and the true faith. Then he came to Wessex, which was still heathen.]

Bede's account, which Ælfric took as a source, is subtly different in emphasis. Not only is the repetition of Rome an Ælfrician addition, but also Bede's depiction of the West Saxons is altogether different from Ælfric's. Bede writes that Birinus

cum consilio papae Honorii uenerat Britanniam, promittens quidem se  
illo praesente in intimis ultra Anglorum partibus, quo nullus doctor  
praecessisset, sanctae fidei semina esse sparsurum

(Bede, *HE*, iii.7)

[had come to Britain on the advice of Pope Honorius, having promised  
in the pope's presence that he would scatter the seeds of the holy faith  
in the remotest regions of England, where no teacher had been before.]

Notably, Ælfric removes Bede's somewhat derogatory description of the West Saxon kingdom as being 'in intimis ultra Anglorum partibus, quo nullus doctor praecessisset', perhaps owing to his personal ties and interest in Wessex, as a student of the Winchester school.

The idea of a privileged relationship between Wessex and Rome is evidenced in earlier texts — such as late ninth and early tenth-century annals and the Chronicle — as a means of extolling the political and imperial power of Wessex.<sup>116</sup> Here, however, we see this relationship viewed less in terms of kingship or imperial power, and more in terms of Winchestrian Benedictinism. Ælfric, like many of his fellow Winchestrians, no doubt felt conscious of his ties to Æthelwold.<sup>117</sup> In the *Life of Oswald*, we detect this allegiance manifesting itself as an attachment not only to person, but to place, in Ælfric's conscious emphasis on the South-West when describing Birinus' mission. This personal interest is further evident in the use of geographical terms: Bede's text uses more variation than

<sup>116</sup> For this relationship in annals, see S. Irvine, 'The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* and the Idea of Rome in Alfredian Literature', in *Alfred the Great: Papers from the Eleventh-Centenary Conferences*, ed. T. Reuter (Aldershot, 2003), pp. 63–78. For the concept more generally, and its manifestation in the ASC, see F. Leneghan, 'Translatio Imperii: The Old English *Orosius* and the Rise of Wessex', *Anglia* 133 (2015), 656–705, at 664–66.

<sup>117</sup> Cubbitt notes that 'Æthelwold's followers were conscious of their allegiance to him': 'Tenth-Century', p. 90.

Ælfric's does. Where Bede uses the terms 'Brittania' and 'Anglos' alongside 'Occidentalius Saxonus' and 'Geuissa', Ælfric repeatedly and exclusively uses the term 'West-sexena'. In this insistence on 'West-sexena', we may note a desire to qualify his own community at Winchester, with its West Saxon origins, as enjoying a particularly close relationship with Rome. Further, the envelope pattern created by Ælfric's repetition of 'fram rome' sees the Roman mission surrounding Wessex within the text. The West Saxon king ('West-sexena kynninge') and the whole West Saxon land ('eall West-sexena land') are bookended by the mission to Rome, suggesting the close relationship between the two places, and depicting a Christianity that, whilst ostensibly Roman, still has English history at its centre. Yet once again, the geographical realities of Rome, and its missionary efforts, are absent. Instead, Ælfric utilises the Rome of the early medieval English imagination: the Rome of imperial power, papal authority and ancient history. Similarly, the named places encountered on missionary journeys throughout the *Lives of Saints* rely upon a simplified idea rather than a geographical reality. Rome, Spain, India, Ravenna: to Ælfric, these are important only in name. Places, in the missionary journeys of the *Lives of Saints*, are meant to represent the idea of heterogeneity and geographical range without representing their actual differences or individualities. In doing so, Ælfric uses depictions of missionary journeying as a didactic tool to emphasise unity, whether real or idealised.

## CONCLUSION

The Benedictine ideal of *annes* presides over Ælfric's missionary journeys. The main impetus for travelling in these texts is to build a community where knowledge is given or gained, and in which a network of Christian practice can be established. Imported or exported learning is

celebrated as a source of greater political and ecclesiastical stability, emphasising the importance of continental monks and the movement of abbots to newly founded centres. Relationships fostered during missionary journeys in the *Lives of Saints* also appeal to the idea of unity. The depiction of lay-monastic cooperation establishes the need for a symbiotic relationship between these two spheres, whilst also carefully guarding against lay ownership of monastic property or lay over-involvement in monastic matters. This is a kind of alliance that clearly requires nuance and temperance. Finally, Ælfric depicts the landscapes of missionary travel as homogenised and uniform. The continent is largely indistinguishable from India or England in Ælfric's missionary narratives. Where they do appear, toponyms are important for their ability to convey difference without actually embodying it. This lack of distinction between locales allows English sanctity to be comfortably situated within a global Christian community despite its physical distance.

This chapter has explored the way that Ælfric reflected on the need for unity in his missionary narratives within the *Lives of Saints*. In doing so, it has also noted some of the underlying contexts of the collection. It is clear, for example, that the *Lives of Saints* was not only envisioned as being for both monks and laypeople, but that the expectation of such an eclectic audience actively shaped the way that Ælfric translated Latin texts. In his balancing of monastic and lay features, Ælfric shows an awareness that his hagiography must appeal to distinctly separate audiences. Moreover, his representation of homogeneity despite difference demonstrates a desire to appeal to a range of diverse monastic audiences at a time when there was not necessarily uniform observance of a single *cursus*. His texts are also informed by the movement of ideas and people so central to the English Benedictine Reform, and actively celebrate this aspect of Æthelwold's reform policy. The idealised portrayal of community is a response to an English landscape that was often divided by political difference, lay-monastic relations, and diverse liturgical practices. The continent, and places beyond it, are thereby

utilised as a didactic tool for Ælfric, in order to disseminate the importance of cooperation, collaboration and collective identity.

## CHAPTER FOUR: TRANSLATING ROME

### INTRODUCTION

For Ælfric and his contemporaries in the late tenth century, Rome was continually subject to ‘translation’ within the English geographic and cultural landscape. In textual culture, the Roman recension of the Psalter, the *Psalterium Romanum* (which remained popular in England long after it lost favour on the continent), was translated into Old English with glosses, prose and verse translations.<sup>1</sup> ‘Translations’ of a more physical nature were also taking place: in the tenth century, the journey to receive the pallium from Rome and bring it back to England was undertaken by archbishops with increasing frequency.<sup>2</sup> Those who undertook the journey (and many did), carried back with them not only a woolen garment, but also the authority of the Roman papacy and the image of the Roman empire.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, the legacy of Rome was visible on a daily basis: many walled towns in Southern England, such as Winchester, were built upon the foundation of Roman cities, surrounded by Roman walls and connected via Roman roads, ‘translating’ the image and organisation of the Roman

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<sup>1</sup> There are four extant manuscripts in which the *Psalterium Romanum* is accompanied by a complete Old English gloss: London, British Library MS. Cotton Vespasian A. i (Ker §203); Oxford, Bodleian Library MS. Junius 27 (Ker §641); Cambridge, University Library MS. Ff. 1. 23 (Ker §13); and London, British Library MS. Royal 2. B. V (Ker §451). On the interlinear gloss as a form of translation or ‘proto-translation’, see Stanton, *Culture*, pp. 9–54. For the *Romanum* recension and the distinctively English tradition surrounding its use in the Middle Ages, which has been attributed to an English sense of *romanitas*, see Toswell, *Anglo-Saxon Psalter*, p. 172; and M. Gretsch, *The Intellectual Foundations of the English Benedictine Reform* (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 187–96.

<sup>2</sup> In his survey of known journeys between England and Italy, Stephen Matthews notes nine instances of Englishmen travelling to receive the pallium in the tenth century: *The Road to Rome: Travel and Travellers Between England and Rome in the Anglo-Saxon Centuries* (Oxford, 2007), pp. 67–69.

<sup>3</sup> F. Tinti, ‘The Archiepiscopal Pallium in Late Anglo-Saxon England’, in *England and Rome in the Early Middle Ages: Pilgrimage, Art and Politics*, ed. F. Tinti (Turnhout, 2014), pp. 307–42.

empire into the contemporary English landscape.<sup>4</sup> The influence of Rome upon early England is undeniable: Nicholas Howe suggests that Roman history and ideas were a keystone in the construction of English identity before the conquest, going so far as to dub Rome the ‘capital of Anglo-Saxon England’.<sup>5</sup> Rome, above all other places, stood out in the early medieval English imagination. But what influence did the city have on Ælfric’s hagiography? Is Rome markedly different from other places within the *Lives of Saints*? How did Ælfric translate, for his vernacular audience, a city that most had imagined, but few had seen? In this chapter, I will consider the ways in which Ælfric translated Rome, and also the ways in which he portrayed its ‘translation’, in order to consider the ways that the city was represented, reconsidered and used for didactic purposes.

The special relationship between early medieval England and Rome has already been the subject of numerous studies.<sup>6</sup> Journeys made between England and Rome during the period have also attracted much interest.<sup>7</sup> However, this wealth of previous work on the subject of Anglo-Roman relations has largely been historicist in nature. Whilst travel routes, coinage, art, liturgical offices and travel itineraries have all received attention, the literary evidence remains largely unstudied.<sup>8</sup> The *Lives of Saints*, as a text that translates many

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<sup>4</sup> M. Atherton, *The Making of England: A New History of the Anglo-Saxon World* (London, 2017), p. 40; M. D. J. Bintley, *Settlements and Strongholds in Early Medieval England: Texts, Landscapes, and Material Culture* (Turnhout, 2020), esp. pp. 29–74.

<sup>5</sup> N. Howe, ‘Rome: Capital of Anglo-Saxon England’, *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 34 (2004), 147–72.

<sup>6</sup> Levison has demonstrated that the attachment to *romanitas* was widespread in eighth-century England, and that the Rome of ancient empire played just as important a part in the foundation of early medieval English identity as the Rome of ecclesiastical power (*England*, pp. 15–44); Pengelley also notes the extensive impact of Rome on ninth-century English culture, particularly with regard to its increased influence upon English kingship (‘Rome’); Ortenberg traces the ecclesiastical contacts between early medieval England and Rome, particularly the importation of Roman saints’ cults, relics and material culture into England via pilgrimage (*English*, pp. 127–97).

<sup>7</sup> Matthews, *Road*; D. Pelteret, ‘Not All Roads Lead to Rome’, in Tinti, ed. (2014), pp. 17–41; A. Thacker, ‘Rome: The Pilgrim’s City in the Seventh Century’, in Tinti, ed. (2014), pp. 89–139.

<sup>8</sup> Notable exceptions to this are Kathy Lavezzo’s study of the representation of England through Ælfric’s account of Gregory the Great viewing the Anglian boys (*Angels*, pp. 27–45), and Yann Coz’s study on the representation of ancient Rome in early medieval England, which is largely based upon literary sources (*Rome*, pp. 403–12).

Roman saints into the vernacular, while also ‘translating’ the image of Rome to a distant audience and standing as a product of translated Roman cultural values and ideas, is a rich source for analysing and complicating the way that Rome was represented and translated in medieval England. Furthermore, previous studies’ reliance upon historical evidence has meant that their conclusions have centred Rome’s impact upon the social elite: the *Lives of Saints*, with its wide-ranging audience, allows consideration of the way that Rome, and the idea of Rome, figured in the imagination of wider society in the late tenth century.

It is here necessary to outline the several ‘Romes’ that permeated the tenth-century English imagination, since they could operate in distinct ways. Hollie Thomas has previously suggested that there was no singular, homogenous image of Rome in early medieval England, but rather that the city held several different cultural significances that operated alongside one another.<sup>9</sup> Coz similarly notes that in Ælfric’s works, particularly his *Lives of Saints*, an image emerges of a Rome of ‘nombreuses interprétations’.<sup>10</sup> Nicholas Howe proposes two coexisting ideas of Rome after the conversion: the ‘center of Western Christendom’ and ‘the capital city of an empire that had once had Britannia as one of its distant provinces’.<sup>11</sup> Clare Lees has similarly noted that within Ælfric’s *Life of Gregory the Great* in his *Catholic Homilies*, ‘there is no single “Rome”’, and to this end, she identifies three Romes: ‘old imperial Rome, apostolic Rome and the Rome of trade and of plague’.<sup>12</sup> Within the *Lives of Saints*, a considerably longer, more diverse and wider-ranging text than the *Life of Gregory*, more uses of Rome can be observed. As such, in the following brief survey, I aim to revise the taxonomies proposed by Howe and Lees into four Romes: ecclesiastical Rome, imperial Rome, geographic Rome and hagiolatric Rome (that is, the Rome pertaining to the veneration

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<sup>9</sup> H. Thomas, ‘Bishops, Giants, and Ideas about Rome in Early Anglo-Saxon Literature, 597–c.800’ (unpubl. PhD dissertation, Univ. Queensland, 2014).

<sup>10</sup> Coz, *Rome*, p. 403.

<sup>11</sup> N. Howe, *Map*, p. 77.

<sup>12</sup> Lees, ‘In Ælfric’s Words’, pp. 286–88.

of the saints). I by no means purport to offer an exhaustive analysis of all the ways in which Rome was manifested in early medieval English thought and culture. Rather, through considering a range of key modes in which Rome was popularly envisioned by Ælfric and his contemporaries, I seek to demonstrate that there was not a single, monolithic idea or value attached to Rome, but rather many different ones that could overlap, work alongside or contradict one another. Being able to identify which images of Rome are used by Ælfric, and why, is key to better understanding how he conceived of the Anglo-Roman relationship and how he presented it to his audience.

### **I: THE FOUR ROMES OF THE *LIVES OF SAINTS***

Firstly, and perhaps most obviously, there is the Rome of ecclesiastical significance. This is the Rome of papal decrees, the pallium and missionary activity, seated at centre of the Christian church. The early medieval English enjoyed a special relationship with this Rome, owing to fact that their own Christianity stemmed directly from it, via Saint Augustine's mission, overseen by Gregory the Great, in 597. This fact pervaded the view of Rome held by many people in early medieval England.<sup>13</sup> Ælfric, as a monk, was keenly aware of this Rome: in his *Life of Gregory* in the *Catholic Homilies*, Gregory, the Roman pope, is referred to as 'Engliscre ðeode apostol' (apostle to the English nation', l. 1). Rome was rooted in the conception of the English church, but also in its tenth-century workings. Though papal involvement in the English Benedictine Reform seems to have been minimal, and McC. Gatch has noted that the English Benedictine reformers rarely focused on the Petrine sees for

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<sup>13</sup> Francesca Tinti has described the Anglo-Saxons as having 'a clear awareness of Rome as the source of their own Christianity': 'Introduction: Anglo-Saxon England and Rome', in *England and Rome in the Early Middle Ages: Pilgrimage, Art and Politics*, ed. F. Tinti (Turnhout, 2014), pp. 1–15, at p. 1.

protection, Rome nonetheless played a key part in one of the most iconic aspects of Æthelwold's reform of Winchester.<sup>14</sup> A letter from a Pope John to King Edgar suggests that papal permission, from Rome, was sought in order to eject the secular canons from the Old Minster. Whilst there are issues with the chronology of the letter (not least whether it was sent by Pope John XII or XIII), and some doubts have been raised regarding its authenticity, it nonetheless suggests the perceived importance of papal backing, even in issues of specifically English practice.<sup>15</sup> The sign of archiepiscopal authority in tenth-century England was the pallium: a woolen garment bestowed by the Pope. During the tenth and eleventh centuries, it became customary for the archbishop to travel in person to receive his pallium in Rome.<sup>16</sup> The importance of the pallium in constructing authority in early medieval Winchester can be observed in the portrayal of St Benedict in the 'Choir of Confessors' in the Benedictional of Æthelwold: Benedict is depicted dressed in a pallium, despite being referred to as *abbas*, a role that would not have granted him the right to wear one.<sup>17</sup> The garment, which was implicitly connected to ecclesiastical Rome, functions here as a means of visually bestowing high authority upon the leading figure of the Reform — despite the fact that Benedict would never have actually received it. Rome's ecclesiastical influence, then, is seen woven throughout tenth-century Winchester's praxis, and doubtless was central to Ælfric's conception of the ancient city.

Secondly, there is the Rome of imperial power. This is the classical Rome, celebrated for its cultural and political achievements, rooted in the idea of empire and linked to England

<sup>14</sup> M. Deanesly, 'The Anglo-Saxon Church and the Papacy', in *The English Church and the Papacy in the Middle Ages*, ed. C. H. Lawrence (London, 1965), pp. 29–62, at pp. 53–54; McC. Gatch, *Preaching*, p. 10.

<sup>15</sup> For the letter of John to Edgar, see F. Tinti, 'England and the Papacy in the Tenth Century', in Rollason *et al.*, eds (2010), pp. 163–84, at pp. 173–80.

<sup>16</sup> S. A. Schoenig, *Bonds of Wool: The Pallium and Papal Power in the Middle Ages*, Studies in Medieval and Early Modern Canon Law 16 (Washington, 2016), pp. 243–46.

<sup>17</sup> On Benedict's depiction in the Benediction of Æthelwold, see Gretsche, *Ælfric*, pp. 151–52.

through *translatio imperii* and *translatio studii*.<sup>18</sup> Howe suggests that this Rome was primarily encountered via the mode of literature and history, from Classical, patristic and Anglo-Latin sources.<sup>19</sup> Though this image of Rome relied upon the prestige bestowed by its antiquity, the reality of the city's actual historical past and its events were not well known by early English audiences and carried relatively little importance.<sup>20</sup> Whilst historical Rome undoubtedly captured the imagination of much of the early medieval West, it was particularly resonant in England owing to Britain's status as a previous territory of the Roman Empire and the profusion of traces of Roman architecture throughout the English landscape.<sup>21</sup> In many ways, the Winchester that Ælfric knew and studied in represented a physical translation of this historical Rome. The city was organised in a Roman grid layout, developed not by the Roman empire, but by Alfred in the ninth century, translating the image of classical Rome and, along with it, its associations of power and empire.<sup>22</sup> Alfred also restored the Roman walls, which once served a simply defensive purpose, but no doubt became imbued with symbolic resonance of imperial power following the Carolingian Renaissance.<sup>23</sup> Indeed, the very name that Ælfric called his city by, *Wince(a)ster*, has Roman origins. The vernacular name stemmed from the earlier Romano-British settlement, *Venta Belgarum*, which had become *civitate Venta* in Latin or *Wintanceaster* in the vernacular by the time Bede came to write about the city.<sup>24</sup> Further, the utilisation of the word *ceaster*, derived from the Latin

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<sup>18</sup> For *translatio imperii* and *studii*, see E. R. Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, trans. W. R. Trask, new edn (Princeton, 2013), pp. 28–29. For the resonances of these concepts in early medieval England, see Irvine, 'Anglo-Saxon Chronicle'. For *translatio imperii* in the ASC, see Leneghan, 'Translatio Imperii', pp. 664–66.

<sup>19</sup> Howe, *Writing*, p. 77.

<sup>20</sup> M. Hunter, 'Germanic and Roman Antiquity and the Sense of the Past in Anglo-Saxon England', *ASE* 3 (1974), 29–50.

<sup>21</sup> N. Howe, 'Anglo-Saxon England and the Postcolonial Void', in *Postcolonial Approaches to the European Middle Ages: Translating Cultures*, ed. A. J. Kabir and D. Williams (Cambridge, 2005), pp. 25–47.

<sup>22</sup> D. Rollason, *The Power of Place: Rulers and Their Palaces, Landscapes, Cities and Holy Places* (Princeton, 2016), pp. 187–88.

<sup>23</sup> B. A. E. Yorke, *Wessex in the Early Middle Ages* (London, 1995), p. 310.

<sup>24</sup> M. Gelling, 'The Place-Name "Winchester"', in *The Winchester Mint: Coins and Related Finds from the Excavations of 1961–71*, ed. M. Biddle, Winchester Studies 8 (Oxford, 2012), pp. 79–85, esp. pp. 79–81.

*castra*, would have held specifically Roman resonances, even for vernacular speakers with no knowledge of Latin.<sup>25</sup>

There was also some awareness of geographical Rome in early medieval England. This version of the city was grounded not in ancient history or in conceptualisations of ecclesiastical superiority, but in the practical, topographical details of the city as it stood in the tenth century. Vitally, this model of Rome is different from the other three for its emphasis on distance: the geographical Rome cannot be close to England in the same way that other, more symbolic ideas of Rome can. The realities of travelling to, from and around Rome would have been known to Ælfric and his contemporaries particularly through travel records and itineraries. The only extant itinerary from the tenth century is that of Archbishop Sigeric of Canterbury, who ventured to Rome to receive his pallium in 990 and visited various churches and monuments during his journey.<sup>26</sup> This is the same Sigeric to whom Ælfric dedicates his *Catholic Homilies* in the Latin preface.<sup>27</sup> Whilst the address to Sigeric does not necessarily indicate that the two men were well acquainted, Hill suggests that we can reasonably speculate that Ælfric and Sigeric at least knew of each other.<sup>28</sup> As such, it is possible that Ælfric held at least a passing awareness of Sigeric's journey to collect his pallium, and therefore possessed at least a basic image of geographical, tenth-century Rome. The image of a 'physical' Rome could also be combined with the symbolic significance of ecclesiastical, imperial or hagiolatric Rome. For example, in his *Catholic Homilies* Ælfric

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<sup>25</sup> Howe, 'Postcolonial', pp. 25–47, at p. 32. For the use of '-ceaster' in English toponyms, see also Atherton, *Making*, p. 40.

<sup>26</sup> The most recent edition of Sigeric's itinerary can be found in *An Eleventh-Century Anglo-Saxon Illustrated Miscellany (British Library Cotton Tiberius B. V. part I)*, ed. P. McGurk, D. Dumville, M. Godden and A. Knock, EEMF 21 (Copenhagen, 1983), pp. 74–75. For examination of the itinerary, see V. Ortenberg, 'Archbishop Sigeric's Journey to Rome', *ASE* 19 (1990), 197–246.

<sup>27</sup> Ælfric addresses Sigeric as his patron in both series of his *Catholic Homilies*: 'Ego Ælfricus, alumnus Adelwoldi, benevoli et venerabilie Presulis, salute exopto Domno Archiepiscopo Sigerico in Domino' ('I Ælfric, student of the benevolent and venerable Bishop Athelwold, wishes for the good health of the Lord Archbishop Sigeric, through God', *CH I*, p. 1); 'Ælfricus, humilis servulus Christi, honorabili et amando Archiepiscopo Sigerico perpetuam sospitatem optat in Domino' ('Ælfric, a humble servant of Christ, wishes eternal good health to the honourable and beloved Archbishop Sigeric, through God', *CH II*, p. 1).

<sup>28</sup> Hill, 'Life', p. 42.

says that the sun ‘scinð on Hierusalem, and on Romebyrig, and on ðisum earde, and on eallum eardum ætgædere’ (‘shines on Jerusalem, and on the City of Rome, and on this country, and on all countries together’, *On the Catholic Faith*).<sup>29</sup> Rome’s physical existence as a geographical location, separate from both ‘Hierusalem’ and ‘ðisum earde’, is utilised here, but imbued with ecclesiastical relevance that positions it alongside Jerusalem as the two most prominent cities of the Christian world.

Perhaps less studied — and unnoted by both Howes and Lees — but particularly pertinent to Ælfric’s *Lives of Saints* is the Rome of the saints. I have termed this the ‘hagiolatric’ Rome, for its involvement in the veneration of saints. Various saints’ cults were imported from Rome into England during the early middle ages, most notably St Agnes and St Laurence, both of whom received Ælfric’s attention (Agnes in the *Lives of Saints*, Laurence in the *Catholic Homilies*).<sup>30</sup> Indeed, Michael Lapidge asserts that Roman hagiography was so central to early medieval spirituality that ‘if we wish to understand the spirituality of Anglo-Saxon England, and before it that of sixth-century Rome, there is no more informative vehicle than the *passiones* of the Roman martyrs’.<sup>31</sup> Six of the items that Ælfric includes within his collection are lives of Roman saints (Eugenia, Sebastian, Agnes, Apollinaris, Cecilia, and Chrysanthus and Daria), and Rome is encountered in a further eight items (Chair of Saint Peter, Swithun, Maccabees, Oswald, Dionysius, Martin, Edmund and Thomas). The forms of saintly devotion in early medieval England were also inflected by Roman observance: for example, David Rollason has noted the particular influence of the *Notitia regionum et civitatum, quibus sanctorum apostolorum et evangelistarum venerabilia corpora requiescunt*, a ‘specifically Roman’ resting-place list, on the formation of the *Secgan*

<sup>29</sup> *CHI*, p. 286.

<sup>30</sup> Ortenberg, ‘Archbishop’, pp. 226–27.

<sup>31</sup> M. Lapidge, ‘Roman Martyrs and their Miracles in Anglo-Saxon England’, in *Miracles and the Miraculous in Medieval Germanic and Latin Literature*, ed. K. E. Olsen, A. Harbus, and T. Hofstra (Leuven, 2004), pp. 95–120, at p. 115.

*be þam Godes sanctum þe on Engla lande ærost reston*, the only extant English list of saintly resting places.<sup>32</sup> Saints' relics from Rome were also prevalent in England from the time of the conversion in 597, making the Roman martyrs visibly and spiritually present in English worship.<sup>33</sup>

These four 'Romes' (ecclesiastical, imperial, geographic and hagiolatric) are interwoven throughout Ælfric's *Lives of Saints*. In literature, Rome is directly mentioned more times than any other geographical location in the Old English corpus, with over 1200 incidences in prose literature and more than two dozen in poetry.<sup>34</sup> Within the *Lives of Saints*, Rome similarly enjoyed a great deal of attention: Ælfric directly refers to it fifty-one times in the collection — by comparison, England is directly referred to only nine times. The ways in which Rome is translated are varied, but overall we can observe a great degree of consistency in the way that Ælfric handles the city that held so many different meanings for his audiences. The following chapter will consider several forms of 'translation' of Rome that can be witnessed in Ælfric's *Lives of Saints*. It will first examine the way that Ælfric 'translated' the image of Rome throughout the various lives, and the ways in which he presented the realities of a geographically distant — but mentally ever-present — city. Then it will turn to the ways in which Roman values and authority are conveyed, or 'translated'. Finally, it will interrogate the ways that Ælfric depicted the physical reconstruction of Rome (or, its 'translation') in spaces outside Rome. Through these investigations, it will consider how Ælfric used and repurposed the idea of Rome to convey specific teachings and imagery to his audiences.

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<sup>32</sup> D. Rollason, 'Lists'.

<sup>33</sup> Rollason, *Saints*, pp. 23–25.

<sup>34</sup> Disenza, *Inhabited*, p. 77.

## II: REPRESENTING ROMAN GEOGRAPHY

The city of Rome serves as a backdrop for many of Ælfric's hagiographies within the *Lives of Saints*. Saints are born, educated, converted, killed, buried and venerated in the city; in its churches, its streets, its graveyards and its buildings. Many of Ælfric's Latin sources found in the Cotton-Corpus Legendary are Roman in origin and so had settings that would have been familiar to their original, Roman, audiences.<sup>35</sup> However, for Ælfric and his tenth-century milieu, specific descriptions of ancient Rome were distant not only temporally, but also spatially. Despite this, Rome was perhaps more 'familiar' to laymen than most other places outside England, through virtue of both its cultural significance and its common occurrence in literature. Though laymen did not travel to receive the pallium as archbishops did, or partake in papal correspondence, they nonetheless engaged with Rome regularly. It was embedded in the texts that they learned from: Nicole Discenza has suggested that frequent invocation of the same places served to increase early English audiences' familiarity with places outside their local sphere, and that Rome was mentioned more frequently in vernacular texts than any other place.<sup>36</sup> Further, lay pilgrimage to Rome was well established in England by the late tenth century, and it is not implausible that some members of Ælfric's audiences had undertaken this journey themselves, or had encountered others who had.<sup>37</sup> On a more practical level, II Edgar, a mid-tenth century royal pronouncement concerning *heorðpæning*

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<sup>35</sup> The settings of Roman lives were familiar spatially if not temporally: some *vitae* were set in the past. Arnobius' Latin life of Cecilia, for example, though set in the third century, has been dated to c. 450: M. Lapidge, *The Roman Martyrs: Introduction, Translations, and Commentary* (Oxford, 2017), p. 143. Lapidge's date of c.450 is based upon the findings of Cécile Lanéry, who demonstrated both that the *Passio S. Caeciliae* was the work of Arnobius the Younger, and that it must have been composed after his *Passio S. Sebastiani*: 'Nouvelles recherches d'hagiographie arnobienne: la Passion de Cécile (BHL 1495)', in *Parva pro magnis munera: Etudes de littérature latine tardo-antique et médiévale offertes à François Dolbeau par ses élèves*, ed. M. Goullet (Turnhout, 2009), pp. 533–59.

<sup>36</sup> Discenza, *Inhabited*, pp. 73–85.

<sup>37</sup> J. F. Champ, *The English Pilgrimage to Rome: A Dwelling for the Soul* (Leominster, 2000), pp. 13–39; Ortenberg, 'Archbishop', pp. 202–03.

(the antecedent of Peter's Pence), saw every household legally obliged to pay dues to Rome each year.<sup>38</sup> As such, Ælfric's audiences, lay and monastic alike, likely had some conception of the physical city of Rome.

Ælfric's portrayal of the city, then, had to engage with a place that was ideologically close, but physically distant. I will argue that in examining how he describes the city's geography, it becomes apparent that he negated this distance largely by omitting close descriptions of Rome's physical qualities and focusing instead on conveying a more abstract sense of its ideological importance. In this way, the geographical differences between Rome and other places, particularly England, can be minimised, in favour of presenting an idealised Christian landscape of unified practice and behaviour. This minimising of difference is reflective of Ælfric's need to create texts that extolled Christian community across diverse landscapes—both in and outside England. As noted throughout this thesis, Ælfric, a second-generation Benedictine reformer, was invested in presenting an image of a homogenous Christian landscape both for political and ecclesiastical reasons. In Chapter Three we saw how Ælfric represented missionary travel in ways that highlighted *annes*. In his almost wholesale omission of Rome's geography throughout the *Lives of Saints*, I argue that we similarly see him depicting *annes*, on a geographical level as well as an ideological one. Ælfric homogenises the landscape to such a degree that even Rome, a city of such symbolic and historic renown, the centre of the early medieval English church, the city of saints and sanctity, has no distinguishing physical features within the *Lives*. In doing so, he utilises a continental city to demonstrate the tenets necessary for a successful English Christian landscape in the late tenth century.

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<sup>38</sup> R. Naismith and F. Tinti, 'The Origins of Peter's Pence', *The English Historical Review* 134 (2019), 521–52, at pp. 533–34.

In treating Ælfric's presentation of Roman geography, it is perhaps more apt to discuss his lack of presentation, since it quickly becomes apparent that he downplays almost all references to the real, physical space of Rome. Despite a large number of lives referencing Rome, the *Lives of Saints* is almost completely devoid of details of the city's landscape. Damian Fleming has noted that Ælfric removes various aspects of Roman military culture from his Latin source in his *Life of Sebastian*, positing that this serves to make the narrative more suitable for the education of laymen.<sup>39</sup> I argue that the same omission of Roman detail in order to streamline his didactic message can also be observed in Ælfric's treatment of the city's physical space throughout the *Lives* more generally. This is most clear in passages pertaining to saintly burial, since these are often the most geographically precise moments of the Latin texts, owing to the early medieval Roman interest in localised devotion, and in the veneration of the saintly body at its place of burial.<sup>40</sup> Ælfric, by contrast, displays little interest in presenting the geography of Rome, and moreover seems invested in removing such details wherever possible so as to foster a sense of Christian unity both within his collection and amongst his audiences. We have already seen how Ælfric made English saints more like continental ones in the *Lives*: in Ælfric's downplaying of Roman geography, we observe him making England more like Rome.

#### OMISSION OF ROMAN GEOGRAPHY IN BURIAL DESCRIPTIONS

In his *Life of Cecilia*, for example, Ælfric systematically omits almost all geographical and topographical details found in his Latin source, Arnobius the younger's *Passio S. Caeciliae*,

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<sup>39</sup> Fleming, 'Demilitarized'.

<sup>40</sup> For this trend in Roman Christianity from the fourth century onwards, see A. Thacker, 'Loca Sanctorum: The Significance of Place in the Study of the Saints', in *Local Saints and Local Churches in the Early Medieval West*, ed. A. Thacker and R. Sharpe (Oxford, 2002), pp. 1–43.

in order to emphasise the message of community. A particularly prominent omission is that of the site of the martyrdom of Cecilia's virgin spouse, Valerian, and his brother Tiburtius. Ælfric writes only that the two men are condemned to death, and 'hi lædde þa maximus swa se manfulla het /mid oþrum cwellerum to þære cwealm-stowe' ('so Maximus led them, as the evil man commanded, with the other executioners, to the place of execution', ll. 225–26). The term *cwealmstow* conveys the general sense of the place, but does not make any attempt to locate it geographically. The Latin account, by comparison, gives extensive description of the place where the execution occurs:

Locus igitur qui uocabatur pagus quarto miliario ab urbe positus erat, in quo per templi ianuam transitus erat, ut omnes qui ingrederentur si Ioui thura non imponent, punirentur.

(*Passio S. Caeciliae*, ll. 505–07)

[Then situated four miles from the city was the place called 'pagus' (country district), into which there was a passage through the door of the temple, so that all who entered were punished if they did not offer incense to Jupiter.]

This is one of the most geographically specific moments of the Latin text. The use of numerical detail ('quartum miliarium'), a toponym ('pagus') and close description ('in quo per templi ianuam transitus erat') grants a sense of verisimilitude and authenticity to the text and, by extension, its saints. The fictional nature of the Latin *Passio* has long been noted in modern scholarship.<sup>41</sup> Moreover, Michael Lapidge has noted that SS. Tiburtius, Valerian and Maximus 'had no known connection with St Caecilia, but were familiar to [Arnobius] from the church and cemetery of Praetextus', and has speculated that their addition was an attempt by the author to heighten and strengthen his *Passio*.<sup>42</sup> As such, the inclusion of such close

<sup>41</sup> See, for example, D. Elliott, *Spiritual Marriage: Sexual Abstinence in Medieval Wedlock* (Princeton, 1993), pp. 64–65; T. Connolly, *Mourning into Joy: Music, Raphael, and Saint Cecilia* (New Haven, 1994), pp. 23–38; R. Upchurch, 'Introduction', in *Ælfric's Lives of the Virgin Spouses*, ed. R. Upchurch (Exeter, 2007), p. 3.

<sup>42</sup> Lapidge, *Roman Martyrs*, pp. 142–43.

geographical detail may be seen as a means of imbuing the fictional text with authority by rooting it in the author's local landscape.

By stripping these details away, Ælfric makes the text vaguer, less located in a particular geographical or historical moment. Instead, he focuses on emphasising the martyrs' suffering, through repetition words related to *cwealm* ('death, slaughter, destruction') in his collocation of 'cwellere' and 'cwealm-stow'. *Cwealm* usually carries connotations of violent death and of suffering.<sup>43</sup> The term is found in collocation with *ece* in several homilies, referring to Christ saving mankind from 'eternal torment', and as such is also linked to redemption from suffering.<sup>44</sup> This repetition, then, highlights the violent nature of the saintly death, whilst also gesturing to the salvific qualities of martyrdom. Further, Ælfric reworks the description of the site of martyrdom in order to suggest that it unites the victims with other saints. The word *cwealm-stow* is relatively uncommon, with only fifteen extant instances, two of which are in the *Lives of Saints*. Aside from the *Life of Cecilia*, Ælfric only uses this term in the *Life of George*, where he writes that the saint was dragged: 'oðþæt hi comon to ðære cwealm-stowe' ('until they came to the place of execution', l. 160). However, Ælfric renders this unusual word more familiar to his audience through linking it to *cwellere*, which is encountered in various other saints' lives both within and outside the *Lives of Saints*. *Cwellere*, unlike *cwealm-stow*, is a common word. It occurs around one hundred and fifty times in the extant corpus, mainly in Ælfrician contexts, including seventy times in the *Lives of Saints* alone, in twenty separate items. By linking 'cwealm-stowe' to the familiar word 'cwellere', Ælfric brings it into an existing convention of derivatives of *cwealm* used in relation to saintly martyrdom. In doing so, he makes the description of the burial place feel

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<sup>43</sup> DOE: *cwealm*.

<sup>44</sup> See, for example, the homily for Quinquagesima Sunday in *The Blickling Homilies*: 'biddan we georne urne Drihten þæt he us generige from þon ecan cwealme' [we eagerly pray to our Lord that he deliver us from the eternal torments]. Text in: *The Blickling Homilies*, ed. R. Morris, EETS OS 58, 63, 73 (London, 1874–80), vol. 1, pp. 15–25.

familiar to his audience, and gestures to the common experience of saints. The death that Tiburtius and Valerian suffer unites them to a community of saints through the use of terms based upon ‘cwealm’, which are also found in multiple other saints’ lives.

The removal of the geographic detail, then, allows him to simplify the text in order to emphasise the suffering of the martyrs and the communal aspect of their martyrdom. Gretsch has previously noted that Ælfric’s keenness for paradigms of sainthood that emphasise companionship and collective action against a pagan threat is demonstrated by his selection of several saints belonging to this archetype for his *sanctorale*.<sup>45</sup> Here, however, we see him actively altering his Latin source material in order to stress this model within the life of a saint belonging to a different paradigm (the virgin martyr). Whereas the description of the burial place in the Latin text emphasises the specific and individual aspects of their death, Ælfric’s Old English translation uses this scene as a means to highlight the communal aspects of it and to emphasise the *annes* of Christian peoples that both he and Æthelwold promoted. As a result, Roman geography is omitted in order to allow Ælfric to better illuminate the teachings that he wished the saint’s life to convey.

The same downplaying of Roman geographic detail is also seen in Ælfric’s *Life of Sebastian*, where the resting places of the martyrs Marcellianus and Marcus are removed. Once again, this omission places emphasis on community rather than location. It also serves to highlight the difference between the saints and their oppressors. The Latin *Passio Sebastiani*, which Ælfric took as his source, carefully details the place where the two martyrs are buried: ‘in via Appia, milliario secundo ab Urbe, in loco qui vocatur Ad Arenas, quia cryptae arenarum illic erant, ex quibus Urbis moenia struebantur’ (‘on the Appian way, two miles from the city, in a place that is called “the sand pits”, because the crypts there are of

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<sup>45</sup> Gretsch, *Ælfric*, pp. 4, 9.

sand, from which the city walls were built'). Similar to the description in the *Passio S. Cecilie*, this description utilises quantitative information and toponyms in order to create an account imbued with authority. Ælfric removes all of this, and the resulting account is one less grounded in a specific geographic location. The asterisk marks the place where the burial place material occurs in his source:

þa het Fabianus mid fullum graman  
 þæt hi man begen ofstunge, þær ðær hi on gebedum stodon,  
 and hi swa mid wuldre gewendon to Criste. [\*]  
 Hwæt þa Fabianus mid facne gewregde  
 þone æðelan Sebastianum to ðam arleasan casere  
 Dioclitiane

(Ælfric, *Sebastian*, ll. 404–09)

[Then Fabianus, with exceeding rage, commanded that they should both be stabbed where they stood in prayer, and in that way they went to Christ with glory. Then Fabianus deceitfully accused the noble Sebastian to the wicked emperor Diocletian]

In the same way as Ælfric streamlines his emphasis of communal martyrdom in his *Life of Cecilia*, here he draws his audience to Fabianus' impiety and tyranny. He closely parallels the phrase 'fabianus mid fullum graman' with 'fabianus mid facne gewregde', through alliteration and parallel syntax. This serves to emphasise the cruelty of Fabianus and, as a result, the contrast between the saint and his opponent, the 'noble' ('æðelan') Sebastian. Ruth Waterhouse has previously suggested that Ælfric utilises direct speech in the *Lives of Saints* in order to polarise the 'good' and 'bad' characters.<sup>46</sup> Here we see omission of geographical detail used to the same end: removal of the section describing the martyr's burial place facilitates the emphasis upon Fabianus' wickedness. In the Latin account, the two instances of Fabianus' treachery are separated by the section describing the burial of Marcellianus and Marcus, and as such cannot be so closely juxtaposed. By contrast, Ælfric is able to place the

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<sup>46</sup> Waterhouse, 'Discourse'.

two descriptions alongside one another, and in doing so is able to highlight for his audiences the contrast between Fabianus and Sebastian. Moreover, this juxtaposition emphasises the collective nature of Christian suffering: Marcellianus, Marcus and Sebastian are all united in their suffering at the hands of Fabianus, and in their resistance to his paganism. Here, then, we once again see Ælfric omitting geographic information in order to highlight the universal aspects of the hagiography that he wishes to convey for didactic purposes. The idea of imperial Rome is invoked by the reference to the ‘casere Dioclitiane’, and the Roman name ‘Fabianus’, but the city’s physical reality is absent. The result is a narrative that uses Rome as its backdrop but displays no interest in crafting a realistic sense of the city and its geography. Ælfric’s text, then, displays no interest in geographic Rome.

Though Ælfric’s translation and styling can vary widely between lives, his treatment of geographic Rome remains consistent. The geographical reality of Rome is repeatedly removed throughout the *Lives of Saints*, reflecting Ælfric’s desire to minimise physical description of the city. In the *Life of Chrysanthus and Daria*, Ælfric once again removes geographical information found in his source, the anonymous *Passio Chrysanti et Dariae*, in order to facilitate a message of community and unified Christianity.<sup>47</sup> After Claudius’ soldiers convert to Christianity, they are beheaded by the emperor Numerian:

He het beheafdian siððan þa hundseofontig cempa  
 butan heora hwilc wolde awegan his geleafan,  
 ac hi ealle efston an-rædlice to slæge,  
 and Claudies twegen suna cwædon þæt hi wæron  
 on Ciste gefullode and underfon woldon deað  
 mid þam cempum for Cristes geleafan.  
 Hi wurdon þa ofslagene samod for Ciste,  
 and Hilaria se eadiga eac wearð gelæht  
 to þam martyrdome fram þam manfullan.

(Ælfric, *Chrysanthus and Daria*, ll. 227–35)

<sup>47</sup> ‘Passio Chrysanti et Dariae’, in *Ælfric’s Lives of the Virgin Spouses*, ed. and trans. R. Upchurch (Exeter, 2007), pp. 218–49.

[He ordered afterwards that the seventy soldiers be beheaded, unless any wanted to renounce his faith, but they all hastened to death without hesitation, and Claudius' two sons said that they were baptised in Christ and intended to receive death with the soldiers for faith in Christ. They were then killed together for Christ, and the blessed Hilaria was also taken to martyrdom by the wicked one.]

Ælfric's translation emphasises the large-scale nature of the martyrdom. The large number of deaths is emphasised through his insertion of the number, *hundseofontig*, where it does not appear in the Latin text. As a result of his *brevitas* and abbreviation of his sources, this means that the word *hundseofontig* is repeated — the term also occurs fourteen lines before the martyrdom, when the soldiers are converted and baptised: 'þa hundseofontig ceman þe Claudius bewiste / wurdon gefullode' ('the seventy soldiers that Claudius commanded were baptised', ll. 214–15). Moreover, the grouping of the soldiers, Claudius' sons and Hilaria depicts the martyrdom as widespread, affecting a diverse group of victims. Here, once again, the emphasis is on collective practice — the martyrs, though belonging to various social casts and orders, are united by their treatment at the hands of the pagans and by their refusal to submit to Numerian by renouncing Christ.

However, in the Latin text, the beheading episode is separated from Hilaria's murder by a description of the burial place of the soldiers, which provides a large amount of geographical information:

Erat autem in loco ubi decollati sunt cuniculus antiquus; hunc emundantes per noctem Christiani simul in unum omnia corpora sepelierunt non longe ab urbe uia quae Salaria nuncupatur.

(*Passio Chrysanti et Dariae*, ll. 386–88)

[Now in the place where they were beheaded, there was an old underground tunnel; after the Christians had thoroughly cleaned it during the night, they buried all the bodies together in one group, not far from the city, on a road which is called the 'Salarian Way'.]

Here, we learn of the burial site's location in relation to Rome ('non longe ab urbe'), its physical form ('cuniculus antiquus') and its name ('quae Salaria nuncupatur'). The result is a text firmly grounded in *realia*. The Latin text is invested in conveying the real places of Rome, and their history, to its audiences. Ælfric's account, by contrast, conveys no interest in portraying a localised view of Rome. Instead, he emphasises those aspects of the text that he considers most useful for the edification of his audience. By omitting this passage, Ælfric directly juxtaposes the martyrdom of the soldiers with the martyrdom of Hilaria. In doing so, he allows his text to highlight communal opposition to a pagan threat, and also to highlight the cruelty of Diocletian, who slaughters so many martyrs within so few lines. However, this chance removes the sense of geographic Rome from Ælfric's text. The landscape in which the martyrs die is nondescript: it has no name, no physicality. Hugh Magennis has suggested Ælfric's hagiography takes place in 'a world carefully abstracted from "real life"', in which the conflicts and problems of Christian life can be minimised for didactic purposes.<sup>48</sup> Magennis is particularly concerned with the lack of realism in Ælfric's depiction of warfare and soldiery. However, we see a similarly 'abstract' world in the depiction of Roman burials, in which the realities of Rome and its geography are blurred.

Moreover, whilst the removal of Rome's geography portrays a city detached from the reality of geographic Rome, Ælfric's text should not be taken as a vision of an abstract otherworld, but rather as an active tool designed to encourage Christian unity. In presenting Rome as geographically indistinct from other places in the *Lives of Saints*, Ælfric promotes a vision of a unified Christian landscape in which unavoidable differences are negated and minimised. John Blair laments that the reformers 'used their considerable powers of communication and dissemination to form a homogenous national religious culture' and that 'a lasting consequence of reform polemic has been to make the Anglo-Saxon Church seem

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<sup>48</sup> Magennis, 'Warrior Saints', p. 29.

more uniform, hierarchical, and centralised than it ever really was'.<sup>49</sup> In his omission of Roman geography, we see Ælfric seeking to impose this idealised sense of homogeneity not only upon his local landscape, but upon the whole Christian world. In doing so, he enacts and encourages the kind of unity that Bede expresses in his creation of a *gens Anglorum*, or that Æthelwold describes in the *Regularis Concordia*. In his removal of localised detail, Ælfric enacts this same idea of unity upon the Roman landscape itself. Stripping the geographical specifics found in his Latin sources means that Ælfric is able to remove 'impar ac varius' (diverse and various) accounts of Roman martyr burial from his collection; by doing so, he presents Rome as artificially homogeneous and as largely physically indistinguishable from the other places encountered in the *Lives of Saints*.<sup>50</sup> This presentation of concord throughout saint's lives in turn permits him to endorse a unified Christian landscape at a time when political tensions were threatening the stability of the English kingdom.

Notably all three of these instances of the removal of geographic detail pertain to the burials of more minor saints rather than the titular saint. However, this should not suggest that Ælfric removed geographic detail through a desire to treat these saints with less attention than the preeminent Chrysanthus, Daria, Cecilia or Sebastian. In his *Life of Cecilia*, he omits the description of the saint's burial found in Arnobius' account. Arnobius writes that, after Cecilia's death, 'sanctus Urbanus corpus eius auferens cum diaconibus nocte sepeliuit eam inter collegas suos episcopos ubi omnes sunt confessores et martyres collecti' ('during the night Saint Urban, carrying her body with the deacons, buried here among her fellow bishops where all the confessors and martyrs had been placed', ll. 666–68). Lapidge has noted that this is a reference to the Papal Crypt on the Via Appia.<sup>51</sup> If Ælfric himself identified this as a

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<sup>49</sup> Blair, *Church*, p. 351.

<sup>50</sup> *RC* pro., 4.

<sup>51</sup> Lapidge, *Martyrs*, pp. 142–43.

geographic reference, this may explain its removal from his work. As such, we may see the same treatment of geographical detail here as in his narratives of the minor saints.

Similarly, in his *Life of Sebastian* Ælfric specifies that Sebastian himself was taken to be buried ‘to catacumbas þær Cristes apostolas, Petrus and Paulus, ærest bebyrgede wæron, and lecgan his lic æt heora fot-læstum’ (‘to the catacombs, where Christ’s apostles Peter and Paul had been buried first, and to lay his body at the soles of their feet’, ll. 465–67). Here, just as with the minor saints, Ælfric alters the Latin text for his English audience, but in a more complex manner than simple omission. In the source text, Sebastian describes his wish for his body as follows: ‘perduces ad catacumbas et sepelies in initio cryptae iuxta vestigia Apostolorum’ (‘you will lead [my body] to the catacombs, and you will bury [it] at the entrance to the crypt, close to the remains of the Apostles’). In his translation, Ælfric removes the reference to where exactly in the catacombs the saint should be buried, omitting the reference to ‘in initio cryptae’ found in the Latin account. In doing so, he simplifies the account by removing detail pertaining to geographic Rome, as he does in his treatment of the minor saints.

However, Ælfric also makes some additions. These additions demonstrate an interest in Rome’s symbolic importance more than its geography. Firstly, as noted in Chapter Two, he adds the names Peter and Paul, elucidating the reference to the apostles for his lay audience. Moreover, he further explicates the reference to where Sebastian should be placed in relation to the apostles (‘æt heora fot-læstum’). In practice this is perhaps the antithesis of the ‘abridgement’ and *brevitas* that Gordon Whatley notes in Ælfric’s translation praxis: here we see additions rather than omissions, expansions rather than contractions of the information found in the Latin source text.<sup>52</sup> Yet it nonetheless functions in the same way: altering the text

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<sup>52</sup> Whatley, ‘Lost’.

in order to convey it in the way that Ælfric considers to be the most suitable for his audience's needs. For Ælfric, the important aspect of Sebastian's burial is not its precise location, but rather its honourable quality. By invoking Peter and Paul by name, Ælfric emphasises the final glory of Sebastian's martyrdom: he ends his earthly life, and his *vita*, in the company of the apostles. This is in stark contrast to the 'sæde' ('sewer', l. 461) in which Sebastian's executioners leave his body. In the Old English text, the saint's burial is positioned according to the apostolic bodies rather than according to Roman geography. As such, even in the description of a major Roman saint's burial, we see Ælfric removing geographical details, and choosing instead to focus on emphasising those areas of the Latin texts that he considers most important for his didactic purposes. The omission of information about Roman topography does not represent a lack of interest in saintly burial, but rather a prioritising of didactic symbolism over historic or geographic detail.

The omission of specific details of Rome's physical reality should also not be taken to mean that Ælfric was simply uninterested in the burial practices of Roman martyrs. As explored in Chapter Two, Ælfric often makes reference to the form that a saint's burial took. Descriptions of specific geography are usually lacking, but description alluding to the type of place where the saint was buried, such as a grave, a tomb or a cave, are common.<sup>53</sup> Clearly the idea and manner of burial is important to Ælfric. Local detail and geographical *realia*, however, are often downplayed in order to highlight the symbolic importance of saintly burial rather than localised qualities which may have been unintelligible to Ælfric's audience.

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<sup>53</sup> Saints are buried in, for example, 'catacumbas' ('catacombs', *Sebastian*, l. 465), 'micclan scref' ('a great cave', *Chrysanthus and Daria*, 334) and 'ane stænene þruh' ('a stone coffin', *Apollinaris*, l. 249).

## OTHER OMISSIONS

Ælfric also alters and removes information about Rome's geography in a number of other instances within the *Lives of Saints*, demonstrating a general lack of interest in the presentation of geographic Rome. In the *Life of Chrysanthus and Daria*, for example, Ælfric states that Carpofores, a priest, is discovered 'on fyrlenum wunigende' ('living far away', l. 25). His Latin source, however, describes Carpofores as living 'in quodam montis speleo' ('in a certain mountain cave', ll. 60–61). This demonstrates the same desire to convey a sense of distance rather than precise topography that I have previously noted in Ælfric's treatment of missionary journeys. Similarly, in the *Life of Eugenia*, various toponyms and landmarks are removed from the Ælfric's Latin source, the *Vita Eugeniae*. When Eugenia is tortured, the Latin text narrates that the prefect Decius orders her to be thrown 'in Tiberim' ('into the Tiber', 97.41), and into the furnaces of the 'thermarum Severianarum' ('the Baths of Severus', 97.41). Ælfric, by contrast, writes that she is ordered to be thrown 'on ða ea' ('into the river', l. 391), and 'on byrnende ofen, þær þær hate baðu wæron' ('into a burning oven, where there were hot baths', l. 398). Further, the few accounts of Roman geography that Ælfric does preserve from his Latin sources are brief. For example, in his vernacular translation of the Latin *Passio SS. Gallicani, Iohannis et Pauli*, appended to his *Life of Agnes*, he retains the description of the shrine to St Peter, translating 'sacra Petri apostoli limina' ('the shrine to the holy apostle Peter', l. 34) as 'þæs halgan Petres stowe þe stent binnan Rome' ('the shrine of Saint Peter that stands in Rome', l. 348).

As well as being a means of depicting an idealised landscape, devoid of difference, Ælfric's downplaying of geographical specificity in Roman saints' lives serves to stress the commonality of saintly experience. The conventional nature of saints in medieval hagiography has often been noted. Malcolm Godden has detected a lack of individuality in

Ælfric's presentation of saints in the *Catholic Homilies*, and notes that 'many of the [gospel] passages appointed for saints' days are applicable to any saint, or at least to any confessor, martyr, or apostle'.<sup>54</sup> Similarly, Michael Lapidge and Michael Winterbottom suggest that all saints 'perform similar miracles; they are born, live, and die in the same way'.<sup>55</sup> Various scholars have proposed didactic and practical rationales for this homogeneity. Niamh Kehoe, for example, argues that established patterns of hagiography allow for the manipulation of audience expectation to create humour or memorable passages.<sup>56</sup> Lapidge and Winterbottom argue that the highly formulaic nature of hagiography was necessary in order to appeal to potential supplicants: 'no supplicant would wish to think that the saint to whom he was appealing was an eccentric who had nothing in common with other saints'.<sup>57</sup> I argue that for Ælfric, this desire for commonality extends beyond the events of the saints' life and into his depiction of the environment that they operate within. This is unusual, because hagiography is often rich in local detail: saints are often rooted in specific landscapes, attached to particular communities or given authority by the narrative specificity of the accounts that celebrate them. Conversely, within the *Lives of Saints*, places can enjoy the same kind of homogeneity with one another as the saints that live and die in them. In doing so, Ælfric is better able to represent a widespread, universal Christian community and communal piety.

Ælfric's selection of lives draws upon saints from a wide range of geographic and temporal locations. This not only mirrors the Christian world of the tenth century, but more specifically the landscape of Benedictine England that Ælfric was writing into and, ostensibly, for. As stated throughout this thesis, it is now generally accepted that the idea of Benedictine

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<sup>54</sup> M. Godden, 'Experiments in Genre: The Saints' Lives in Ælfric's *Catholic Homilies*', in Szarmach, ed. (1996), pp. 261–87.

<sup>55</sup> M. Lapidge and M. Winterbottom, 'Introduction', in *Wulfstan of Winchester: Life of St Æthelwold*, ed. and trans. M. Lapidge and M. Winterbottom (Oxford, 1991), pp. xiii–clxxxviii, at p. cii.

<sup>56</sup> Kehoe, 'Humour', pp. 40–41.

<sup>57</sup> Lapidge and Winterbottom, 'Introduction', p. cii.

unity across the entirety of England was more of an ideal than a reality.<sup>58</sup> Further, there is evidence that unreformed communities, such as those at Bury and Chester-le-Street, still flourished, despite the fact that they did not take up Benedictine practice.<sup>59</sup> When Ælfric writes in his Old English preface that he wishes for the *Lives of Saints* to be copied down ‘gerihtē be þære bysne’ (‘rightly according to the exemplar’, *OE pref.* c. 5), he expresses the knowledge that his work will be widely copied. As a teacher, he was no doubt aware that not all of his monastic copiers and audiences would be Benedictines. Some would not have been monastic at all: despite Æthelwold’s dramatic expulsion of the secular clergy from the Old Minster of Winchester, a great number of secular clerics remained in England during the late tenth century.<sup>60</sup> Indeed, despite the prevalence of disparaging portrayals of secular clergy in Benedictine monastic literature, they were nevertheless an important audience for Ælfric’s *Catholic Homilies* — as Rebecca Stephenson notes, Ælfric never directly mentions secular clerics as a perceived audience, but their role in reading the English *Catholic Homilies* to laymen is an implicit, vital part of his educational ideal.<sup>61</sup> As such, the English pastoral landscape consisted of a range of practitioners, including Benedictine monks, non-Benedictines, nuns and secular clergy. Ælfric was keenly aware that he was writing for the edification of a diverse audience. Hence, his removal of specific geographical difference reflects his desire to portray an idealised vision of unity across his saints’ lives, and, by extension, across the English pastoral landscape.

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<sup>58</sup> John Blair, for example, estimates that ‘it is unlikely that reformed communities ever comprised much more than 10 per cent of the total’ (*Church*, p. 351).

<sup>59</sup> Gransden, ‘Traditionalism’.

<sup>60</sup> For the abundance of secular clergy in the late tenth century, see J. Barrow, ‘The Clergy in English Dioceses c. 900–c. 1066’, in *Pastoral Care in Late Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. F. Tinti (Woodbridge, 2005), pp. 17–26.

<sup>61</sup> For the derogatory portrayal of secular clerics, see R. Stephenson, ‘Scapegoating the Secular Clergy: The Hermeneutic Style as a Form of Monastic Self-Definition’, *ASE* 38 (2009), 101–35. For secular clerics as necessary audiences, see Stephenson, *Politics*, p. 143. See also M. Godden, who argues that the second series of the *CH* demonstrates a growing concern with the education of the secular clergy themselves: ‘The Development of Ælfric’s Second Series of *Catholic Homilies*’, *ES* 54 (1973), 209–16.

Ælfric's consistent removal of references to Rome's geographical reality is, in many ways, characteristic of his style and translation approach in the *Lives of Saints*. I have previously noted that Ælfric systematically removes geographical detail from many of his Latin sources. For example, he removes Hilduin's elaborate descriptions of Athens and Paris in his *Life of Dionysius*, and omits all toponyms from the lives of *Agatha*, *Maurus* and *Thomas*. In his *Life of Æthelthryth*, he removes the toponym 'Coldingham' from his account of the saint's entry to the convent, despite the fact that his Latin source, Bede, describes the nunnery as being 'positum in loco quem Coludi urbem nominant' ('located in the place they name the town of Coludum').<sup>62</sup> As such, it is by no means unusual for Ælfric to reduce geographical detail, and to that end his treatment of Rome is in accordance with his general translation practice. However, the fact that Rome is subject to the same treatment as all other places is in itself unusual. Ælfric's removal of geographic detail generally results in hagiographies more focused on the didactic value of saintly life, but the removal of Rome also holds more complex implications, since Rome occupied a crucial space in the early medieval English worldview and was key to the development of English identity.<sup>63</sup> The minimising of its geography, then, is a testament to Ælfric's desire to convey a unified Christian landscape. Even Rome, the most exceptional of cities, is not marked by its physical distinction from other places.

### III: USING AND REPURPOSING ROMAN AUTHORITY

However, this lack of geographical detail should not be considered a straightforward and

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<sup>62</sup> Bede, *HE*, iv.19. The *OEM* also makes reference to Coldingham in the life of Æthelthryth: 'þa onfeng heo haligryfte on ðæm mynstre ðe is nemned Colodesburh' ('She then took the veil in the monastery which is called Colodesburh'). Text and trans. Rauer, *Old English Martyrology*, pp. 122–23.

<sup>63</sup> For Rome's centrality in early medieval England, see Howe, *Writing*, pp. 101–24.

wholesale omission of Rome from the *Lives of Saints*. By invoking both the apostles and the catacombs in the *Life of Sebastian*, Ælfric creates a text that is firmly Roman in its imagery, despite the lack of geographic detail. The word *catacumbe* is only ever used in relation to Rome in Old English literature. Including the *Life of Sebastian*, there are four attestations. The term is also found in Ælfric's 'De Passione Apostolorum Petri et Pauli' in the first series of his *Catholic Homilies* to describe the burial place of Saints Peter and Paul: 'and þæt Romanisce folc ðyder onette, and ða lic ahreddan, on ðære stowe ðe is gehaten Catacumbas' ('and the Roman people hurried there, and rescued the bodies, in the place that is called "Catacombs"').<sup>64</sup> *Catacumbe* also describes Peter and Paul's burial in the *Blickling Homilies*: 'and eal folc Romwara befeng þa lichoman on þære stowe Catacumbe þy wege þe hate Appia, þrim milum fram Rome byrig' ('and all the Roman people took the bodies to the place of the Catacombs, by the way called 'Appia', three miles from the city of Rome').<sup>65</sup> The level of detail in this anonymous description of the catacombs contrasts quite markedly with Ælfric's, and highlights Ælfric's particular interest in minimising Rome's geography. The final instance is in the *Old English Martyrology*, and relates to the burial of Saint Sebastian: 'ond his lichoma wæs gebyrged æt Rome on ðære stowe Catacumbe' ('and his body was buried at Rome in the place [called] "Catacombs"').<sup>66</sup> Notably, aside from Ælfric's *Life of Sebastian*, all of these uses are collocated with explicit reference to Rome. Further, the Roman connotations of Peter and Paul would doubtless have been clear to lay and monastic audiences alike, owing partially to the popularity of the apocryphal passion of the apostles. This apocryphal text was influential in early medieval England, and indeed was repeated in several vernacular homilies, including the *Blickling Homilies* and Ælfric's own *Catholic*

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<sup>64</sup> *CH* I XXVI, p. 384.

<sup>65</sup> *BH* XV, p. 193.

<sup>66</sup> *OEM* 27, p. 52.

*Homilies*.<sup>67</sup> As such, Ælfric roots the description of Sebastian's burial in the idea of hagiolatric Rome whilst removing the image of physical Rome.

#### ROME AND ENGLAND: SHARED PERSECUTION

Ælfric's interest in Rome as a symbolic entity can also be seen in the way that he refers to the city by name in multiple instances where his Latin sources do not. This demonstrates that he wishes to invoke the idea of the city, if not its geographical reality, to his audiences. Discenza notes the frequency with which Ælfric refers to Rome.<sup>68</sup> However, the reasons for Ælfric's insistence on the eternal city remain unexamined. Instances where Ælfric adds reference to Rome demonstrates that he desired to emphasise Rome at its greatest and darkest moments, in order to use its known authority to foster hope and resilience for the English faithful during the turbulence of the late tenth century. In the *Life of Sebastian*, for example, he names Rome twice where his Latin source does not: Pope Gaius orders Polycarp, a priest, 'þæt he gewende of Rome mid þam rumgyfolan þegne' ('that he depart from Rome with the generous nobleman [Chromatius]', l. 329); and the saints 'belifon on Rome on þære reðan ehtnysse' ('remained in Rome during the cruel persecution', l. 343). These additions see Rome invoked three times over only twenty-four lines: Ælfric also names Rome when describing Pope Gaius ('sum wis papa on Rome', 'a certain wise pope in Rome', l. 320). The constant repetition of Rome's name during a passage that describes 'ehtnysse' ('persecution') demonstrates to English audiences that even in Rome, the centre of Christendom, Christians endured great suffering. Rome alliterates with 'reðan' ('fierce, cruel, savage'), linking the city to the torment that will occur there. Further, the city is invoked here in a passage that

<sup>67</sup> Coz, *Rome*, pp. 396–97. On the apocryphal passion, see also Whatley, 'Pearls'.

<sup>68</sup> Discenza, *Inhabited*, pp. 77–78.

states the necessity to flee from it, since ‘ure hælend lyfde þæt mann his life gebeorge’ (‘our Lord permitted that a man could save his own life’, l. 331). This is far from the glorious image of the imperial city that might be expected of Rome that Howe describes as ‘the center of western Christendom’.<sup>69</sup> Yet Rome’s ability to be at once a current ecclesiastical centre and an image of past Christian suffering allows the city itself to demonstrate the importance of piety. For Ælfric, the resilience of the city’s martyrs in the face of extreme suffering in the past are the foundation of its present glory.

I suggest that Ælfric highlights Roman suffering in order to link Rome to England. During the 990s, when Ælfric was writing the *Lives*, England faced renewed Viking attacks. Ælfric himself expresses the concern that raids have caused him in his preface to *Catholic Homilies II*:

Et licet multis iniuriis infestum piratarum concutiebamur postquam  
praefatum libellum tuae sanctitati transmisimus, tamen nolentes  
repperiri falsidici promissores dolente animo hoc opus perfecimus.

(Ælfric, *CH II*, pref. c. 1)

[And though we have been harassed by many injuries of hostile  
pirates since we sent the aforementioned book to your holiness, yet  
not wishing to be found to be a false promiser, with pained heart we  
have finished this work.]

Whilst Simon Keynes has suggested that it is unlikely that Ælfric himself experienced much of the Viking raids first-hand in the 980s and 990s at Cerne Abbas, his preface nonetheless demonstrates that such attacks caused him significant distress.<sup>70</sup> Godden suggests that by the time Ælfric composed the *Lives of Saints*, these concerns had only grown.<sup>71</sup> Moreover, Ælfric’s concerns about the English kingdom were also concerns about the English church. In

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<sup>69</sup> Howe, *Writing*, p. 77.

<sup>70</sup> Keynes, ‘Abbot’, p. 160.

<sup>71</sup> Godden, ‘Problem of Miracles’, p. 95.

*On the Prayer of Moses*, he links the ‘hæðen here’ to the destruction of monasteries.<sup>72</sup> In this light, Ælfric’s alteration of his Latin sources to align Rome with Christian suffering has a political purpose. In encouraging his audiences to view Rome’s past and its present simultaneously, Ælfric implies that strife eventually leads to great glory. Though stories of Christian persecution and suffering abound in the *Lives of Saints*, this close linking of a specific place name to the idea of that suffering is unique to Rome. This suggests that Ælfric was repurposing Rome’s established authority and familiarity to his audiences in order to encourage hope and resilience. Since the martyrs that suffer in Rome both receive heavenly reward and are embedded in the city’s power, Ælfric suggests that their piety benefits not only a Christian cause, but also a localised one — their dedication to their faith results in the city’s prominent position as a hagiolatric and ecclesiastical centre in the Christian worldview. In this way, he suggests to his vernacular audiences the importance of persisting in faith despite suffering, and of looking to the promise of future glory after such trials are endured.

The invocation of Rome alongside suffering is also witnessed in several other places in the *Lives of Saints*. Ælfric inserts named reference to the city in his *Life of Chrysanthus and Daria*, where he describes the virgin spouses as being accused before a judge ‘þe on þone timan geweold þære wid-gillan Romebyrig’ (‘who at that time governed the vast city of Rome’, ll. 134–35). This statement has no counterpart in the Latin source text, and occurs just before the saints are condemned to death. Similarly, in his *Life of Agnes* Ælfric adds a brief introduction to the Latin life, in which he writes that the saint ‘on Romebyrig reðe ehtnysse acom’ (‘endured ruthless persecution in the city of Rome’, l. 3). This reference to Rome is didactically unnecessary, since it is almost immediately followed by the opening of the narrative, which states: ‘On þære tide wæs sum æðel-boren mæden, / Agnes gehaten, on ðone hælend gelyfed, / binnan Romebyrig’ (‘At that time there was a certain nobly born maiden,

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<sup>72</sup> *On the Prayer of Moses*, ll. 147–55.

named Agnes, believing in the saviour, in the city of Rome', ll. 6–8). As such, the reference to 'Rome' in the short introduction does not render the narrative clearer for Ælfric's audiences, nor does it serve to correct a potential misunderstanding. Rather, it serves purely to link the city of Rome to the suffering that occurs in the *Life of Agnes*, and to closely link the 'ehtnysse' that she will endure with the idea of the city itself. Just as in the *Life of Sebastian*, Ælfric here alliterates Rome with 'reðe', syntactically linking the idea of suffering with the city's name. Yet another instance of this collocation occurs in the *Life of Eugenia*, where Ælfric writes:

Ða æfter twelf monðum gemunde se casere  
hwæt him gesæd wæs and sænde fram Rome  
oðerne gerefan mid reðum bebode,  
swa þæt he het acwellan þonne Christenan Philippum.

(Ælfric, *Eugenia*, ll. 296–99)

[Then after twelve months, the emperor remembered what had been said to him, and sent another prefect from Rome, with a savage command, such that he ordered the Christian Phillip to be killed.]

In order to juxtapose 'reðum' with 'Rome', Ælfric completely rewrites his source material. He also inserts the word *casere*, which was usually used specifically for Roman emperors in the Old English corpus.<sup>73</sup> The Latin text that Ælfric is translating here, the anonymous *Vita Eugeniae*, mentions neither Rome nor the emperor: 'mittitur Philippo successor Perennius in praeceptis qui acceperat: ut Philippum interficeret' ('As the successor to Philip, Perennius is sent, who had received this in command: that he should kill Philip', c. 15). We see here, then, Ælfric deliberately altering his text in order to associate the persecution of Christians with the image of Rome. The sense of political and spiritual authority usually associated with the words *casere* and *Rome* is used here to grant a sort of double vision, in which Christian

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<sup>73</sup> K. McCann, *Anglo-Saxon Kingship and Political Power: Rex gratia Dei* (Cardiff, 2018), pp. 63–64.

oppression and Christian power are united in a single geographical and textual place. Ælfric no doubt considered this as a means of granting hope of salvation to his audiences, who may well have feared the ‘cruel’ or ‘savage’ attacks by invading Viking forces.

#### ROME AND ENGLAND: SHARED GLORY

However, Ælfric adds Rome’s name to celebrate the city’s moments of Christian glory as much as he does its moments of persecution. In his *Life of Eugenia*, he inserts several references to Rome, weaving the name of the city throughout the narrative:

And hi sippan ealle endemes færdon,  
 seo modor and seo dohtor, to ðære mæran Romebyrig,  
 and ða gebroðru samod, Særgius and Auitus.  
 And þa Romaniscan wytan hi wel underfængon  
 and for þære ealdan cyððe þæs æðelan Philippes  
 þe gesætton þa wytan sona þa cnihtas  
 on twam heafod-burgum on healicum wurð-mynte,  
 ænne on Affrican and oðerne on Cartagine.  
 Eugenia þa wunode on Rome  
 and hire coman to gehwylce mædenu  
 and heo hi gebegde mid hyre gebysnunge to Criste  
 þa wæs on Romebyrig sum cyne-boren mæden.

(Ælfric, *Eugenia*, ll. 315–26)

[And they all journeyed together, the mother and the daughter, to the great city of Rome, and the brothers likewise, Sergius and Avitus. And the Roman senators received them well, and owing to their old acquaintance with the noble Philip, the senators soon appointed the young men to the two chief cities with high honour, one in Africa and the other in Carthage. Eugenia then remained in Rome, and many virgins came to her, and she converted them to Christ with her example of good works. There was then in the city of Rome a certain virgin of royal birth.]

This repeated reference to the city by name is an Ælfrician styling — the Latin *Vita* only invokes Rome twice:

Ipsa autem cum Abito et Sergio, filiis suis, et cum beata Eugenia, remeant Romam. Igitur filios Filippi cum omni gaudio senatus suscepit romanorum, ita ut unum proconsulem Cartagini, alium vicarium Africae destinarent. Ad beatam vero Eugeniam dum multae matronae convenirent, et paene omnis quascumque virgines potuisset notas aut amicas efficere faceret eas et iam in Christo credere, et in virginitate dominica permanerent. Interea quaedam virgo ex genere regali Basilla cupiebat ad eam pertingere.<sup>74</sup>

(*Vita Eugeniae*, c. 31–32)

[And so [Claudia], and her sons, Avitus and Sergius, and the blessed Eugenia, return to Rome. Then the Roman senate received Philip's sons, and resultingly they sent one as proconsul to Carthage, the other as deputy to Africa. Meanwhile, many women were flocking to the blessed Eugenia, and she was able to know or make friends with almost every virgin, and now to make them believe in Christ, and they were remaining in the virginity of their mistress. Meanwhile a certain virgin of noble birth, Basilla, desired to approach [Eugenia].]

Ælfric drastically restyles this episode in his translation, creating a text in which Rome is invoked frequently, almost obsessively. As I have previously noted, it is not uncommon for Ælfric to redact toponyms when he translates from Latin. To insert so many, then, suggests a deliberate and sustained effort to draw attention to Rome.

Ælfric presents Rome as a site of great importance, associating the rise of pious behaviour and Christianity with imperial glory. Alongside the toponyms, he also inserts a variety of words pertaining to wealth, importance or nobility. The words 'mære' ('great, distinguished, famous'), 'æðele' ('noble'), 'heafod-byrig' ('chief cities') and 'healic wurð-mynd' ('high honour') have no parallel in the Latin account. He also describes Basilla using the rare compound 'cyne-boren' ('of royal birth'), emphasising her nobility.<sup>75</sup> The fact that so

<sup>74</sup> The print edition of the text departs significantly from the *CCL* version, and as such I here transcribe the text from MS Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 9, f. 211r. I have silently capitalised proper nouns and rendered *e-caudata* as *ae*. I provide the chapter reference to the print edition for ease of consultation. There is an additional mention of Rome in the print version, which records 'multae romanae matronae' for the *CCL* 'multae matronae'.

<sup>75</sup> *cyne-boren* only occurs four times in the extant Old English corpus, two of which are in the *Life of Eugenia*. The names Basilla and Eugenia also signal the nobility of the two characters: Basilla means 'kingly one' and Eugenia means 'well-born one'. The interpretation of Hebrew and Greek names in the eighth-century Latin-Old

many of these inserted words are compounds grants an almost poetic air to the text, and the styling of this passage is in many ways at odds with Ælfric's more usual *brevitas*. Here we observe a moment when Ælfric significantly adds to his source material in order to reshape it and alter its significance for his audience. In the *Life of Eugenia* specifically, Alison Gulley suggests that 'most of the differences [between Ælfric's translation and his Latin source] arise from his omission of scenes or details, and the opening lines may be the only true addition to the standard versions'.<sup>76</sup> Yet here, he clearly makes numerous additions to his Latin source, albeit stylistic rather than strictly narrative ones. I suggest that this major reworking of the text shows Ælfric attempting to link hagiolatric and ecclesiastical Rome with a sense of secular victory and power for his audiences. Owing to Ælfric's restyling of his Latin source material in this passage, the Rome of saintly miracles and Christian authority, filled with chaste women ('mædenu'), laudable Christian behaviour ('gebysnunge') and the blossoming presence of Christ ('hi gebegde [...] to Criste'), is interwoven with the Rome of political power. As a result, this moment in the *Life of Eugenia* suggests that a place's secular prosperity and its Christian excellence operate symbiotically. Hence, Ælfric aligns the text with the ideals of the English Benedictine Reform, which placed the King as protector of monastic establishments whilst reformed monasteries encouraged both improvements in the secular church and renewed cultural achievement.<sup>77</sup> Rome is an ideal vehicle for this teaching, owing to its familiarity to a wide range of audiences, both lay and monastic.

Ælfric similarly inserts the name of Rome and its achievement to link the power of secular Rome to ecclesiastical Rome in his *Chair of St Peter*. Moreover, here he collocates Rome's achievement with its suffering. As such, here we see him employing two didactic

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English *Corpus Glossary* (MS Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 144) translates 'Eugenēs' as 'nobiles'; 'Eugenia' as 'nobilitas'; and 'Basilla' as 'regina': *An Eighth-Century Latin-Anglo-Saxon Glossary*, ed. J. H. Hessel (Cambridge, 1890), pp. 43 and 50.

<sup>76</sup> Gulley, *Displacement*, p. 68.

<sup>77</sup> McC. Gatch, *Preaching*, pp. 9–10.

possibilities of Rome at the same time and, in doing so, using the city to present models of behaviour for English piety. The *Chair of St Peter* is not strictly a hagiographical piece, seeming more suitable for preaching in its combination of saint's life and homiletic material.<sup>78</sup> Ælfric's main source is the *Rescriptum Marcelli*, which details the miracles and travels of Peter.<sup>79</sup> However, before he begins to describe the apostle's acts, he gives a short summary of Peter's life. This summary draws upon, in the words of Zettel, 'a standard ecclesiastical reference work', which may be the *Liber Pontificalis*, Jerome's *Liber de Viris Illustribus* or the *De Ortu et Obitu Patrum* of Pseudo-Isidore.<sup>80</sup> However, Ælfric seems to alter his source material once again in order to use Rome as a didactic tool. The summary of Peter's life directly mentions Rome three times, twice as a toponym and once as a demonym:

and siððan gewende, be Godes wissunge,  
to þære mæran Romebyrig and þær-binnan wunode  
fif and twentig geara, and fela wundra æteowde  
þære Romaniscan leode oðþæt he hi to geleafan gebigde.  
He ferde fram Antiochian forþan þe he wæs apostol  
and sceolde gehwær gecuman and Cristendom aræran.  
Þa gesæt he on Rome oðer bisceop-setl,  
oðþæt se arleasa Nero hine ahencg on rode.

(Ælfric, *Chair of Peter*, ll. 8–15)

[and afterwards he went, by God's guidance, to the famous city of Rome, and remained there for twenty-five years, and caused many miracles to be seen by the Roman people, until he converted them to the faith. He journeyed from Antioch because he was an apostle, and had to go to many places and establish Christianity. Then he occupied a second bishop's throne in Rome, until the wicked Nero hanged him on a cross.]

By repeatedly naming Rome, Ælfric links the city inextricably with Peter, highlighting the close relationship between saints and the places associated with them. Catherine Cubitt's

<sup>78</sup> For the genre of *Chair of St Peter*, see Hill, 'Dissemination', pp. 248–49.

<sup>79</sup> R. Jayatilaka, 'Lives 15 (St Mark, the Evangelist) (C.B.1.3.16)', 30/04/1997, *Fontes Anglo-Saxonici: World Wide Web Register*, <https://arts.st-andrews.ac.uk/fontes/>.

<sup>80</sup> Zettel 'Sources', p. 217. See also Ott, *Über die Quellen*, pp. 34–36.

suggestion that ‘Peter’s cult is integrally bound up with the city of his martyrdom’ is here presented on a stylistic as well as contextual level.<sup>81</sup> Ælfric creates a text where sanctity and Rome are intertwined, both ideologically and textually. None of Ælfric’s possible sources name Rome repeatedly as he does. The *Liber Pontificalis* describes how ‘Petrus ingressus in urbe Roma’ (‘Peter enters into the city of Rome’, ll. 2–3), and that he appoints Linus and Cletus as bishops to fulfil ‘omne ministerium sacerdotale in urbe Roma’ (‘all of the priestly work in the city of Rome’, ll. 8–9). The *Liber de Viris Inlustribus* and *De Ortu et Obitu Patrum* both mention that Peter ‘romam pergit’ (‘continued to Rome’, l. 3 and LXVII.116), and that he was buried ‘Romae in Vaticano’ (‘in Rome’s Vatican Hill’, l. 16 and LXVII.117). The *De Ortu et Obitu Patrum* is perhaps stylistically closest to Ælfric’s text, as it is the only text of the three possible sources to refer to Rome twice in relatively quick succession.

However, none of the three possible sources demonstrate the same insistent repetition of Rome that Ælfric’s text does, suggesting that this emphasis is Ælfric’s own. I suggest that this reworking of his source material sees Ælfric repurposing Rome as a model for English Christianity, highlighting the importance of saints and piety in elevating the status of a place. As with his *Life of Eugenia*, here he insistently refers to Rome at a moment of Christian triumph, evidenced by ‘fela wundra’ and the conversion ‘to geleafan’. Also, in line with his translation style in *Eugenia*, he inserts the adjective ‘mære’, which has no parallel in any of the potential Latin source texts. The word ‘mære’ seems to draw not only on Rome’s fame and excellence as a Christian centre, but also on its historical, imperial past, linking Peter’s spiritual achievements in the city to Rome’s political power. Ælfric usually uses *mære* in the *Lives of Saints* to describe spiritual greatness, but the term can also embody secular accomplishment. *Mære* can highlight excellent kingship, such as the description of Alfred in

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<sup>81</sup> C. Cubitt, ‘Images of St Peter: The Clergy and the Religious Life in Anglo-Saxon England’, in *The Christian Tradition in Anglo-Saxon England: Approaches to Current Scholarship and Teaching*, ed. P. Cavill (Cambridge, 2004), pp. 41–54, at p. 44.

the *Life of Edmund* as ‘se þe West-Sexena cynincg siþþan wearð mære’ (‘who afterwards would become the distinguished king of the West Saxons’, l. 26). The term is also used to denote military power, such as the description of Apollonius’ sword in *The Maccabees* as ‘þæt wæs mærlīc wæpn’ (‘that was an excellent weapon’, l. 297). Ælfric’s description of Rome as ‘mære’, then, depicts Rome as enjoying both secular and spiritual success.

Ælfric links this success to Peter, stressing the importance of individual piety in creating a strong Christian community. The centrality of the apostles to early medieval English Christianity has long been acknowledged, particularly the veneration of Peter. Hugh Magennis has highlighted the great significance that the apostles and their deeds held for Ælfric, and Cubitt has described Peter as a saint of such renown as to be ‘the most popular saint of early Anglo-Saxon England’.<sup>82</sup> However, it is not Peter’s name or his role as ‘apostol’ that Ælfric repeats at the beginning of the *Chair of Peter*, but rather the saint’s association with ‘Rome’. This suggests that Ælfric specifically wished to emphasise not Peter’s individual excellence, but rather his contribution to the success of the place that he is associated with. Ortenberg attributes Peter’s widespread veneration in England to his association with Rome, stating that his English cult was ‘originally initiated and later fueled by England’s privileged links with Rome’.<sup>83</sup> However, a more symbiotic relationship is clearly witnessed in Ælfric’s summary of Peter’s life: Peter’s Christianity is made to seem greater through its association with Rome, but so too is Rome is made to seem greater through its association with Peter’s Christianity. Peter’s success as an individual manifests itself in the glorification of the Roman community that he is a part of. Ælfric, then, uses Rome as a means to instruct his audiences in the importance of individual piety for collective good. Here, Ælfric no doubt relies upon his

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<sup>82</sup> H. Magennis, ‘*Cristes leorningcnihtas*: Traditions of the Apostles in Old English Literature’, in *Aspects of Knowledge: Preserving and Reinventing Traditions of Learning in the Middle Ages*, ed. M. Cesario and H. Magennis (Manchester, 2018), pp. 97–115; Cubitt, ‘Images of St Peter’, p. 41.

<sup>83</sup> Ortenberg, *English*, p. 163.

audience's existing familiarity with Rome in order to convey his teaching as concisely as possible to lay audiences. As Discenza notes, 'even less-educated churchgoers must have heard of [Rome] often'.<sup>84</sup> In using a city that the lay community already associated with imperial, saintly and papal authority, Ælfric is able to convey his teaching in his typical brief style, without need for explanations or passages detailing Rome's specific qualities. Rome is repurposed as a kind of shorthand for authority, whereby its value as an easily legible symbol is more valuable to Ælfric than the details of its historic or geographic actuality.

In this passage, Ælfric also inserts the city's name in close proximity to suffering. The repetition of Rome throughout the summary of Peter's life is ended by the half-rhyme 'rode', creating a verbal echo and encouraging the linking of Christian persecution to the city's name. Ælfric places 'rode' emphatically at the very end of the summary of Peter's life, highlighting the central importance of suffering to the Christian project. In this way, Ælfric reminds his audience that the greatness of 'mæran Romebyrig' is built upon Peter's persecution and death, just as the promise of Christian salvation is built upon Christ's sacrifice. In the introduction to the *Chair of Peter*, then, Ælfric uses Rome to demonstrate that endurance of persecution contributes not only to personal salvation, but also to an entire community's renown and ecclesiastical power. This more explicitly emphasises the link between individual and community found in Ælfric's teachings on the importance of suffering in the *Catholic Homilies*. In his homily for Shrove Sunday, he draws upon the teachings of St Peter to explain that 'we sceolon sum ðing þrowian for Cristes lufon, and for urum synnum. Wel ðrowað se man, and Gode gecwemlice, se ðe winð on gean leahtras, and godnysse gefremað, swa swa he fyrrest mæg' ('we should suffer something for the love of Christ, and for our sins. Well suffers the man, and pleasingly to God, who fights against sin and accomplishes

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<sup>84</sup> Discenza, *Inhabited*, p. 78.

goodness, as best he can').<sup>85</sup> Suffering is painted here as both an individualised experience, in which each person must act according to their own ability ('swa swa he fyrrest mæg'), and as a collective one, with the use of first person plural pronouns ('we', 'urum') suggesting a communal project. In the *Chair of Peter*, Ælfric styles the text in ways that emphasise that Peter's earthly suffering grants prestige to the community of Rome. Rome is used here by Ælfric as a teaching tool for English audiences, owing to its existing symbolic associations with imperial and ecclesiastical prestige.

#### ROMAN POLITICAL POWER

In referencing Rome repeatedly and establishing its symbolic importance from the beginning of his collection, Ælfric is able to draw upon the city as a didactic tool, using it to convey authority in both ecclesiastical and political matters. For example, he uses Roman emperors as a means to provide political commentary on English kingship. Coz has already detected a tendency to use Roman models of rulership in Ælfric's works.<sup>86</sup> However, as I will demonstrate, Ælfric also uses the idea of imperial Rome to criticise what he perceives to be poor kingship in tenth-century England. Coz describes Ælfric as 'le seul auteur' to use this strategy. Yet using ancient Roman models to guide English leadership is underpinned by historical precedent. In the tenth century, Roman titles were used to confer great authority upon English kings in charters, leading to the styling of Edgar as 'totius Albionis imperator Augustus' ('august emperor of the whole of Albion'), and Æthelred as 'Anglorum basileus caeterumque gentium triviatim persistentium gubernator et rector' ('emperor of the English

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<sup>85</sup> *CH I*, p. 164.

<sup>86</sup> Coz, *Rome*, p. 462.

and governor and ruler of the other nations around there’).<sup>87</sup> Lemke describes Æthelred’s use of such titles as being ‘a vigorous claim to authority in combination with the almost obligate invocation of divine favour and genealogical descent’.<sup>88</sup> However, the use of the Roman titles of *basileus* and *gubernator* (derived from Greek), and of *imperator*, also demonstrate a claim to authority based upon *translatio imperii* and upon the invocation of imperial Roman power.

Ælfric himself describes imperial Rome as a site of political power in his translation of *The Maccabees* — Judas seeks friendship from Rome ‘forðan þe Romanisce witan wæron ða mihtige / and rædfæste on weorcum and oferwunnan heora fynd’ (‘because the Roman senators were powerful then, and firmly counselled in works, and conquered their enemies’, ll. 646–47). Particularly in light of Æthelred’s depiction as a Roman imperial figure in charters, Ælfric’s statement may be seen as political commentary. With this description, Ælfric draws an unfavourable parallel between the perceived glory of the ‘Romanisce witan’ and the turbulence of Æthelred’s reign. Further, the description of how the Romans ‘oferwunnan heora fynd’ (‘conquered their enemies’) contrasts with Æthelred’s inability to defeat his Viking enemies and his resorts to pecuniary bribery with *gafol*.<sup>89</sup> The sense of good leadership is further emphasised by the highly stylised nature of the passage, with extended alliteration of ‘witan’, ‘wæron’, ‘weorcum’ and ‘oferwunnan’, and the alliteration of ‘Romanisce’ with ‘rædfæste’ creating a strictly ordered piece of text. Drawing upon imperial Rome specifically invokes the idea of *translatio imperii*, and highlights Æthelred’s perceived inadequacy to receive this heritage. Here, then, we see Ælfric invoking Roman authority as a means of political commentary, by inviting comparison between the Roman empire and England under Æthelred.

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<sup>87</sup> S 775 (B), S 882.

<sup>88</sup> Lemke, ‘Voices’, p. 63.

<sup>89</sup> For these payments, see R. Cohen, ‘Danegeld: The Land Tax in England, 991–1162’ (unpubl. DPhil dissertation, Univ. Oxford, 2018), pp. 19–35.

#### IV: RECREATING THE IMAGE OF ROME

I have so far discussed lives that take place in Rome and in England. However, perhaps the item that engages most closely with the idea of translating Rome within the *Lives of Saints* takes place far away from either. The *Life of Saint Thomas*, set in India, sees the image of Rome translated to a distant land through the construction of a palace ‘in the Roman style’ (‘on Romanisce wisan’, l. 39 and l. 79). Through this episode, Ælfric engages with the idea of recreating the image of imperial and ecclesiastical Rome in a space that is geographically distant from it. In doing so, he encourages his audiences to consider the relationship between Rome and England, and on the didactic power of Rome’s image.

##### *THE DISTANCE BETWEEN ENGLAND AND ROME*

In his works, Ælfric often remarked on England’s position at the geographic periphery, and on the fact that this peripheral location made it difficult for the English to replicate the practices of their continental Christian counterparts. In *On the Prayer of Moses* he describes England as being ‘on utewardan þære eorðan bradnysse’ (‘at the extremity of the earth’s surface’, l. 107), and suggests that consequently, the English cannot fast as easily as those who live ‘tomiddes, on mægenfæstum eardum’ (‘in the middle [of the earth], in strong countries’, l. 108). Similarly, in his *Letter to the Monks of Eynsham*, he mentions that monks may adjust their psalm recitals from the continental model in the summer, since the nights are shorter than in Italy.<sup>90</sup> For Ælfric, England’s geographical location not only positions the

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<sup>90</sup> ‘Nos in Bryttannia degentes, breuiiores noctes habentes estate Beneuentanis’ (‘we who dwell in Britain, having shorter nights in the summer than those in Benevento’) (text and trans. Jones, *Letter*, p. 138). Ælfric also refers to the difference in night length in his *De Temporibus Anni*, where he notes that ‘on Italia, þæt is Romana rice, hæfð se dæg fiftyne tida. On Engla lande hæfð se lengsta dæg seofontyne tida’ (‘in Italy, which is the

country at a physical remove from Rome, but also at a cultural distance, since certain aspects of Christian praxis were observed differently between the two places. These differences between English and Roman Christianity were clearly a source of some anxiety for Ælfric, and he is keen to assure his vernacular audiences that England and its Christianity are deserving of a place on the world stage. He reassures his readers and listeners that their history is a venerable one, telling them that ‘nis Angel-cynn bedæled Drihtnes halgena’ (‘the English people are not deprived of the Lord’s saints’, *Edmund*, l. 247), and that ‘þa ða þis ig-land wæs wunigende on sibbe [...] ure word sprang wide geond þas eorðan’ (‘when this island was living in peace [...] our fame sprang widely across this earth’, *On the Prayer of Moses*, ll. 148–51).<sup>91</sup> Yet even these assurances acknowledge that England, as an *ig-land*, exists on the periphery, and that, therefore the country might not be expected to benefit from the same relationship with the saints as places closer to the centre.

In his *Life of Thomas* Ælfric confronts the challenged relationship between centre and periphery when the apostle Thomas builds a Roman palace in India, a place on the distant periphery of the early medieval English worldview.<sup>92</sup> Through alterations that he made to his source material, Ælfric encourages his audiences to view India as a marginal and extremely foreign place, and as such emphasises the country’s distance from the Roman Christianity that Thomas is seeking to recreate there. By showing that the Roman palace has the power to transform the Indian landscape into a place of devout Christian sanctity, Ælfric demonstrates that the values and cultural heritage of places at the centre can be shared and replicated even

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kingdom of the Romans, that [longest] day has fifteen hours. In England the longest day has seventeen hours’, ll. 268–69) (text and trans. Blake, *De Temporibus Anni*, pp. 86–88).

<sup>91</sup> The phrase ‘nis [...] bedæled’ (‘not deprived’) has been subject to widely varying interpretations in recent scholarship. See, for example, C. Fell, ‘Saint Æðelþryð: A Historical-Hagiographical Dichotomy Revisited’, *Nottingham Medieval Studies*, 38 (1994), 18–34, p. 18; McKinney, ‘*Gens Anglorum*’, pp. 209–10; Hurley, ‘Communities’, pp. 60–61.

<sup>92</sup> For the perception of India as peripheral, see M. Bradshaw Busbee, ‘The Idea of India in Early Medieval England’, in *India in the World*, ed. C. M. Gámez-Fernández and A. Navarro-Tejero (Newcastle, 2011), pp. 1–16.

on the edges of the world. In doing so, he uses India to explore the difficulties of mimicking Rome's practices in England.

The parallel that Ælfric draws between England and India relies on the sense that both were 'on uteweardan'. To some extent, the view of India as a place on the extreme geographic and cultural periphery already existed within the early medieval English textual tradition.<sup>93</sup> Texts such as the *Wonders of the East* and *Alexander's Letter to Aristotle* established the Easternmost parts of the known world as being full of strange creatures and exoticised wealth. Such extreme strangeness, however, would have been contrary to Ælfric's purposes. He states in the Latin preface to the *Lives of Saints* that he wishes to present the text in a manner that is easily understood and that aligns the clarity of the text with its usefulness and instructiveness to its audience: 'diligenter curavimus vertere simplici et aperta locutione quatinus proficiat audientibus' ('we have taken care to translate in a simple and clear style so that it will benefit listeners', *Lat. pref.*, c. 1). Though he is here referring to legibility of vernacular language and style, he was also concerned with clarity of content, and anything open to misinterpretation would have rendered a text un-useful in Ælfric's eyes in the same way that unclear language might have. As Malcolm Godden and Scott DeGregorio have noted, Ælfric was concerned with the ideas of believability and authenticity, and consistently sought to combat the idea of *gedwyld* ('error').<sup>94</sup> Within this framework, it would not have been suitable for Ælfric to include the strange monsters and miraculous happenings found in other Old English texts about distant places.

Instead, Ælfric utilises subtle methods in order to convey the sense that the *Life of Thomas* exists on the edge of the world. To this end, there are three main ways that he makes India seem foreign or strange to his audience: 1) the Latin preface; 2) the use of rare or

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<sup>93</sup> See Busbee, 'The Idea of India'.

<sup>94</sup> Godden, 'Problem of Miracles'; S. DeGregorio, 'Ælfric, Gedwyld, and Vernacular Hagiography: Sanctity and Spirituality in the Old English Lives of SS Peter and Paul', in *Ælfric's Lives of Canonised Popes*, ed. D. Scragg (Kalamazoo, 2011), pp. 75–98.

unusual vocabulary; and 3) the admission of untranslatability. This chapter will demonstrate how each of these three aspects worked to highlight India's marginality, before exploring how Ælfric represented Thomas' productive recreation of Rome in such a peripheral place and suggesting that this episode seeks to assure an early medieval English audience that their distance from Rome did not render their relationship with Roman Christianity any less powerful.

#### *INDIA AS A PLACE ON THE PERIPHERY*

Ælfric first alerts his audiences to the foreignness of the *Thomas*' setting through the text's preface, which not only represents a Latin disruption in an otherwise vernacular text, but also invokes the world of monsters through referencing a dog carrying a human hand. In this preface, Ælfric bemoans the fact that his patron, Æthelweard, has requested a vernacular version of the Latin Saint Thomas, and states his reasons for hesitating to translate this text in the past: namely that Augustine has renounced the text as apocryphal on the basis of an episode concerning 'niger canis' ('a black dog'). Though there is a Latin preface to the *Lives of Saints* as a whole, the prefaces to individual items are always in the vernacular, and there are no other sustained pieces of Latin within the collection. The length and style of this preface set it apart from the rest of the *Lives of Saints* and merit its quotation here in full:

Dubitabam diu transferre anglice passionem sancti Thomae apostoli ex quibusdam causis, et maxime eo quod Augustinus magnus abnegat de illo pincerno cuius manum niger canis in convivium portare deberet. Cui narrationi, ipse Augustinus his verbis contradicens scripsit: "Cui scripturae licet nobis non credere, non enim est in Catholico canone. Illi, tamen, eam et legunt et tamquam incorruptissimam uerissimamque honorant qui adversus corporales vindictas quae sunt in Veteri Testamento, nescio qua cecitate, acerrime saeviunt quo animo et qua distributione temporum factae sint omnino nescientes." Et, ideo, volo hoc praetermittere et caetera

interpretari quae in eius passione habentur, sicut Æþelwerdus,  
venerabilis dux, obnixe nos praecatus est.

(Ælfric, *Thomas*, c. 1)

[For a long while I was in doubt about translating the Passion of St. Thomas the apostle into English, for various reasons, particularly because the great Augustine rejects the story concerning a cupbearer whose hand a black dog is said to have carried to a feast. In contradicting this story, Augustine himself wrote, in these words: ‘we are allowed to disbelieve this narrative, for it is not in the Catholic canon. Nevertheless, there are those who both read and respect it as being most uncorrupted and true, and are very bitterly opposed to the bodily punishments described in the Old Testament — owing to I know not what kind of blindness — because they are wholly ignorant of the spirit in which these were inflicted, and of the dispensations of different times.’ And therefore I wish to pass over that part, and to translate the other matters which are contained in his Passion, just as the venerable lord Æthelweard persistently requested me to.]

When *Thomas* is considered in isolation, it is easy to consider this prologue as simply a characteristic feature of Ælfric’s translation practice. Many of his other works have prefaces, often centred on discussions of translation.<sup>95</sup> Yet within the context of the *Lives of Saints*, only four of the other lives (*Agnes*, *George*, *Martin* and *Edmund*) include any kind of text that might be considered a ‘preface’. These are usually very short and discuss the sources of the text in some way. For example, the Life of George contains a four-line preface in which Ælfric complains of apocryphal tales of the saint, and announces that ‘nu wille we eow secgan þæt soð is be ðam / þæt heora gedwyld ne derige digellice ænigum’ (‘now we will tell you what is true about him, so that their error may not secretly harm anyone’, ll. 3–4). Further, whilst these other prefaces occasionally reference Ælfric’s translation practice, they never mention specific episodes that will be omitted in the way that the preface to *Thomas* does. Within the *Lives of Saints* Ælfric frequently removes aspects of his Latin texts that he deems problematic, but he usually does so silently. When he does alert his audience to his

<sup>95</sup> Ælfric’s discussions of translation are explored in R. Stanton, ‘Rhetoric and Translation in Ælfric’s Prefaces’, *Translation and Literature* 6 (1997), 135–48.

shortening of the text, he does so vaguely, usually by suggesting that he is removing information for the sake of brevity.<sup>96</sup>

By contrast, in the prologue to the *Life of Thomas*, Ælfric specifies that the problematic aspect was the incident in which a dog brought a cupbearer's hand to a wedding feast. Further, he misrepresents Augustine in order to do so: though Ælfric claims to be quoting Augustine, he is in fact misrepresenting his argument, which is that the entire life of Thomas, not only the dog episode, is apocryphal.<sup>97</sup> The 'niger canis' carrying the severed hand evokes the same kind of strange horror and danger found in the wild animals and monstrous races of the *Liber Monstrorum*, *Alexander's Letter to Aristotle* and the *Wonders of the East*. The reference to 'corporales vindictas' (bodily punishments), is also evocative of these texts, whose focus is often on the (in)human body and its potential for monstrosity.<sup>98</sup> Moreover, by quoting Augustine's statement that the passion of Thomas 'non [...] est in Catholico canone' ('is not in the Catholic canon'), Ælfric aligns the *Life of Thomas* with ideas of textual marginality and distance from the Christian centre. The preface, then, works as a sort of apophasis, in which, by specifically mentioning the episode that he disagrees with and refuses to translate, and emphasising its apocryphal nature, Ælfric alerts his audience to the potential for strange happenings within the Indian landscape that they are about to experience.

Once the narrative begins, Ælfric continues to suggest that the *Life of Thomas* is one concerned with foreign or strange material through the use of rare vocabulary, much of which is concentrated at the beginning of the text. When Thomas is called to go to India, Christ

<sup>96</sup> See, for example, his *Life of Maurus*, in which he alerts his audience to his abbreviation of the text by declaring of the saints' miracles that 'sume þære we secgað her sume we forsuwiað' ('some of these [miracles] we will tell here, some we will pass over silently', l. 50).

<sup>97</sup> For Ælfric's (mis)interpretation of Augustine, see F. M. Biggs, 'Ælfric's Comments About the Passio Thomae', *N&Q* 250 (2005), 5–8; Godden, 'Problem of Miracles', pp. 88–90.

<sup>98</sup> For the bodily focus of *Wonders of the East*, see D. Oswald, *Monsters, Gender, and Sexuality in Medieval English Literature* (Woodbridge, 2010), pp. 27–65.

promises the apostle the ‘wuldor-beage martyrdomes’ (‘the glorious crown of martyrdom’, l. 14), translating the Latin term *corona*, which Ælfric more usually translates as *cynehelm*.<sup>99</sup> Milfull and Gretsche suggest that *cynehelm* and *wuldorbeah*, both ‘Winchester words’, held different connotations: *cynehelm* denoted physical crowns, whilst *wuldorbeah* was used for more metaphorical ones. However, in the *Lives of Saints*, Ælfric frequently uses *cynehelm* to describe the spiritual crown of martyrdom, and uses *wuldorbeah* only three times.<sup>100</sup> As such, his choice of *wuldorbeah* in *Thomas* and elsewhere ought to be considered a stylistic choice as much as a connotative one. The infrequent usage of *wuldorbeah* throughout the *Lives of Saints* makes it unfamiliar to Ælfric’s audiences, and so further encourages the sense that Thomas will experience unusual things in India. Similarly, when the Indian steward, Abbanes, asks Thomas to come to India to build a palace, Ælfric uses the rare compound *cyne-botl* (‘palace’, l. 80) to translate the Latin word *palatium*. The term *cyne-botl* only appears twice in the Old English corpus: once in the *Life of Thomas* and once in Ælfric’s *Glossary*. Ælfric more usually translates *palatium* as *gebytl* (which is the term he uses in all eight of the other instances within the *Life of Thomas*), or as *botl*.<sup>101</sup> Ælfric places this rare word emphatically at the very end of Abbanes’ address to Thomas, which comprises the first piece of direct speech made by an Indian person in the entirety of the *Lives of Saints*. This speech also includes the rare adjective *gecwemlic*, which occurs only fourteen times across the extant corpus, predominantly in glosses.<sup>102</sup> By including rare terms in Abbanes’ direct speech, Ælfric presents Indian speech as foreign and unusual to an English audience. Though the effect of these rare terms is minimal in isolation, together they contribute to a pattern of

<sup>99</sup> The other two instances are in *The Forty Soldiers*, ll. 127–28, and the *Life of Cecilia*, l. 264.

<sup>100</sup> See, for example, ‘kyne-helm martirdomes’ (‘glorious crown of martyrdom’, *Thomas*, l. 279) or ‘wuldorfullan cyne-helm heora martyrdomes’ (the glorious crown of their martyrdom, *Vincent*, l. 43).

<sup>101</sup> Ælfric translates *palatium* as *gebytl* in the *Life of Thomas* ll. 60, 80, 84, 126, 129, 163, 174 and 176. For Ælfric’s translations of *botl* for *palatium*, see for example ‘ðæs cynincges botl’ (‘the king’s palace’, *Book of Kings*, l. 172) or ‘þam heofenlican botle’ (‘the heavenly palace’, l. 162) in his homily for the Assumption, *CH* I.

<sup>102</sup> ‘On stane cunnon and gecwemlice on treowe’ (‘skilful with stone and pleasing with wood’, l. 26). The adverbial form, *gecwemlice*, is also rare, recorded in only twelve extant instances. Data taken from *DOEC*.

unusual diction at the opening of the text and heighten the sense that the *Life of Thomas* is set apart from the rest of the collection.

Moreover, the Roman palace itself is also described with an abundance of rare vocabulary, highlighting the strangeness of the building to an English audience. It has previously been noted that Ælfric rarely uses poetic vocabulary and compounds.<sup>103</sup> Godden describes Ælfric's vocabulary in the *Catholic Homilies* as employing 'a sprinkling of poetic or other unusual diction'.<sup>104</sup> Whilst Godden does not categorise specific types of 'unusual' diction, in the *Life of Thomas* the 'unusual' vocabulary can be classified as technical vocabulary, in that these terms describe specific architectural feats and equipment. Ælfric uses a wealth of terms that are found in three or fewer instances across the extant corpus: *mete-gyrde* (measuring stick); *sumor-hus* (summer house); *winter-hus* (winter house); and *bæð-hus* (bath-house). The word *bigels* (arch) is also unusual — it is attested in eighteen extant instances, but fourteen of these are in glossaries, where it is used to gloss the Latin *arcus*, *fornix* and *curvo*. The remaining four attestations are exclusively Ælfrician, suggesting that this was another of the 'unusual' pieces of Ælfric's vocabulary. As such, whilst these words can hardly be described as poetic, they are nonetheless highly 'unusual diction'. The inclusion of these technical terms, then, serves to highlight the foreignness of the palace and its setting to an English audience.

Ælfric draws attention to the unfamiliarity of his vocabulary choices with his statement that the Roman palace is untranslatable: 'swylc weorc nis gewunelic to wyrccenne on Englalande, / and forþy we ne secgað swutellice heora naman' ('it is not customary to make such buildings in England, and therefore we will not say their names clearly', ll. 88–89). This admission of translation difficulty is unusual within the *Lives of Saints*. It is in stark

<sup>103</sup> J. Davis-Secord, *Compound Words in Old English Literature* (Toronto, 2016), pp. 192–98.

<sup>104</sup> Godden, *Introduction*, p. xxxvii.

contrast, for example, to Ælfric's translation of the *Chair of Saint Peter*, where he states that 'nu synd sume men þe nyton hwæt se nama getacnað: / *cathedra* is gereht "bisceop-stol" on Englisc' ('now, since there are some men who do not know what the name signifies: *cathedra* means "bishop's throne" in English', ll. 3–4). Similarly, in his *Life of Agatha*, Ælfric writes that the volcano is full of 'sulphore, þæt is swæfel on Englisc' ('*sulphore*, that is "sulphur" in English', l. 219). The only other instance when he references an untranslatable concept within the *Lives of Saints* is the description of an elephant in *The Maccabees*, where he notes that 'sumum men wile þincan syllic þis to gehyrenne / forþan þe ylpas ne comon næfre on Engalande' ('some men will think this strange to hear, because elephants have never come to England', ll. 565–66). However, this is immediately followed by an explanation, drawing upon Ambrose's *Hexameron* and Isidore's *Etymologiae*.<sup>105</sup> Indeed, Ælfric explains what an elephant is in great detail: how it is 'ormæte nyten, mare þonne sum hus' ('an enormous animal, larger than a house', l. 567), that it 'næfre ne lið' ('never lies down', l. 569), and that it lives 'þreo hund geara' ('three hundred years', l. 571). Indeed, the explanation is so detailed that Ælfric even informs his audiences of the gestation period for an elephant, 'feower and twentig monða gæð seo modor mid folan' ('the mother is with foal for twenty-four months', l. 570). He ensures that his audience knows what he is referring to, even though it is likely to be foreign to them. Further, as Edward Christie notes, Ælfric removes all of the more fantastic lore that his sources contain and expresses only the material that he considers will be believable to his audience.<sup>106</sup> By contrast, the Roman-style buildings of Saint Thomas are left a mystery, and Ælfric's comment that 'swylc weorc nis gewunelic to wyrccenne on Engalande' increases rather than diminishes the strangeness of these buildings to an English audience. In emphasising the untranslatability of the palace and describing it with rare

<sup>105</sup> These sources are identified in J. E. Cross, 'The Elephant to Alfred, Ælfric, Aldhelm and Others', *Studia Neophilologica* 37 (1965), 367–73.

<sup>106</sup> E. J. Christie, 'The Idea of an Elephant: Ælfric of Eynsham, Epistemology, and the Absent Animal of Anglo-Saxon England', *Neophilologus* 98 (2014), 465–79.

vocabulary, Ælfric reflects upon the fact that Roman practices could be deeply foreign to English audiences.

#### *BRINGING ROME TO THE PERIPHERY*

Ælfric's Latin preface to the *Life of Thomas*, the abundance of unusual vocabulary that he uses, and his admission of untranslatability, then, all work to present India as a foreign, peripheral place, distinct from other locations within the *Lives of Saints*. Yet despite this extreme geographical distance from the Western Christian centre, in the *Life of Thomas*, India becomes the home of a Roman-style palace. This building serves as the focal point for Thomas' missionary activity: it is through the palace that the Indian king is converted, that his brother is resurrected from the dead and that his people turn to Christianity. Through this episode, Ælfric shows that the power of Rome could successfully be recreated even in the most remote parts of the world. In doing so, he encouraged reflection on England's relationship with Rome, suggesting that despite the distance between the two places, England could nonetheless share Rome's imperial and Christian achievements.

The depiction of Roman architecture in the *Life of Thomas* celebrates Roman cultural achievement and demonstrates its power to enhance Christian faith. The description of the palace clearly held great significance for Ælfric, since he removes the entire preceding episode about the chaste marriage of Dionysius and Pelagia, found in his Latin source.<sup>107</sup> This is particularly striking given Ælfric's usual reformist interest in chaste marriage on display elsewhere in the *Lives of Saints* and the *Catholic Homilies*.<sup>108</sup> Through the removal of the Dionysius and Pelagia episode, Ælfric's account places greater emphasis on the episode of

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<sup>107</sup> *Passio Thomae*, 606.48–608.9.

<sup>108</sup> This interest has been noted by R. Upchurch, 'For Pastoral Care and Political Gain: Ælfric of Eynsham's Preaching on Marital Celibacy', *Traditio* 59 (2004), 39–78; and Gretsch, *Ælfric*, pp. 4, 9.

the Roman-style building — planning and erecting the palace becomes Thomas' first narrated act once he reaches India, and as such represents the first moment of his missionary effort.

Ælfric describes the Roman palace at great length:

and Thomas eode metende mid anre mete-gyrde þone stede  
and cwæð þæt he wolde wyrcean þa healle  
ærest on eastdæle and þa oþre gebytlu  
bæftan þære healle bæðhus and kycenan  
and winterhus and sumorhus and wynsume buras  
twelf hus togædere mid godum bigelsum  
ac swylc weorc nis gewunelic to wyrccenne on englande  
and for-þy we ne secgað swutellice heora naman  
(Ælfric, *Thomas*, ll. 82–89)

[And Thomas went about measuring the site with a measuring rod, and said that he intended to build the hall first on the east side, and the other buildings behind the hall: the bath-house and kitchen, and winter house and summer house, and beautiful chambers, twelve buildings altogether, with good arches. But it is not customary to make such buildings in England, and therefore we will not say their names clearly.]

The anonymous *Passio S. Thomae*, which Ælfric used as his source, includes the names of each of the twelve buildings, including the *epicaustoria*, the *hippodromos* and the *gymnasium*.<sup>109</sup> Whilst Ælfric omits some of these buildings from his account, he nonetheless retains a significant amount of information about the construction of the palace. Patrizia Lendinara describes this passage as ‘quite simplified’ from the Latin, particularly owing to the repetition of *gebytle*.<sup>110</sup> However, this description is unusually extensive for Ælfric: elsewhere in the *Lives of Saints*, he omits almost all the information about Roman geography and buildings found in his sources, whilst here he depicts Roman architecture closely. Ælfric generally aspired to *brevitas* in his translations and aimed to present clear teaching material by streamlining his Latin sources both stylistically and narratively.<sup>111</sup> This retention of detail, then, indicates not only an interest in Roman architecture but also a desire to describe it to his

<sup>109</sup> *Passio Thomae*, 608.14–17.

<sup>110</sup> P. Lendinara, ‘Minimal Collections of Glosses: The Twelve Rooms of Thomas’ Palace’, in *Anglo-Saxon Micro-Texts*, ed. U. Lenker and L. Kornexl (Berlin, 2019), pp. 175–202, at p. 196.

<sup>111</sup> Whatley, ‘Lost’; Stanton, *Translation*, pp. 144–71; Nichols, ‘Brief Style’, pp. 1–12.

audiences, and suggests that Ælfric considered the stylistic aspects of Rome to carry didactic value.

Indeed, Ælfric uses the palace to demonstrate the value of replicating Roman practices in places on the periphery. A key force in Gad and Gundophorus' conversions is a heavenly vision of Thomas' palace. Ælfric's account emphasises the important role played by this image of Rome:

Min sawl wæs gelæd soplice to heofonum  
 þurh Godes englas, and ic þær geseah  
 þa mæran gebytlū þe Thomas þe worhte  
 on þære gelicnysse þe he hit gelogode her,  
 mid gym-stanum gefrætewod, fægere geond eall.  
 Mid þam þe ic sceawode þa scinendan gebytlū.  
 þa sædon me þa englas: 'Þis synd þa gebytlā  
 þe Thomas getimbrode þinum breðer on eorðan'

(Ælfric, *Thomas*, ll. 124–31)

[My soul was truly led to heaven by God's angels, and I saw there the glorious buildings that Thomas made for you, in the likeness of how he made it here, adorned with gemstones, beautiful everywhere. While I was examining the shining buildings, the angels said to me: 'These are the buildings which Thomas built for your brother on earth']

Upon hearing about this vision, Gad's brother Gundoforus is also converted: 'þa gesohte Gundoforus þone Godes apostol / biddende miltsunge his misdæda georne' ('then Gundoforus sought God's apostle, asking earnestly for mercy for his sins', ll. 152–53).

Owing to Ælfric's omission of the previous episodes in the Latin *passio*, the conversion of India more generally also seems to hinge on the Roman palace. When rumour of Thomas spreads 'geond þæt land wide', it is claimed that the apostle 'mihte gehælan mid his handa hrepunge / deafe and blinde and þa deadan aræran' ('could, with the touch of his hands, heal the deaf and the blind and raise the dead', ll. 186–87). However, in Ælfric's account, the apostle has performed none of these miracles — his only recorded act in India is the construction of Gundophorus' palace. In the vernacular translation, then, Roman material

culture takes centre-stage in Thomas' conversion efforts and prompts widespread Christianity across India.

Ælfric presents the palace's materiality as central to its power as a tool of conversion. The wonder of the material palace is highlighted through Ælfric's ornamental prose style, in which the chiasmic alliteration of 'gym-stanum gefrætewod, fægere geond eall' and insistent repetition of *gebytlū* centres the physical aspect of the palace. In Ælfric's account, this physicality is shared between the angelic version of the palace and its real counterpart. The Latin text revels in the description of the palace's gemstones, but clearly demarcates the difference between the vision and the reality. Gad describes how he saw a palace just like the one built by Thomas, 'sed tota fabrica ex lapidibus smaragdinis et hiacynthinis et prasinis et albis instructa est intus et foris' ('but it was totally made from emerald jewels and jacinths and onyxes and white precious stones inside and out', 608.39–40). Though Ælfric removes the reference to specific jewels, he does not translate the word *sed* ('but'), suggesting that the real palace is also 'mid gym-stanum gefrætewod', and thereby representing Roman material culture as being equally wonderful as Gad's dream vision.

Moreover, Ælfric does not criticise the material wealth conveyed by the 'scinendan gebytlū'. Writing in context of the late-tenth century, in which the landowning aristocracy aided the establishment and maintenance of monastic communities, and working under the patronage of two such wealthy men, Æthelweard and Æthelmær, Ælfric did not always entirely condemn wealth.<sup>112</sup> However, he was keen to distinguish between riches used for spiritual betterment and those used for personal greed.<sup>113</sup> Within the *Lives of Saints*, the word *gymstan* is often linked to the sense of individual greed, and to the unfavourable aspects of materialism. In the *Life of Æthelthryth*, for example, the saint decries the toxic nature of her

<sup>112</sup> M. Godden, 'Money, Power and Morality in Late Anglo-Saxon England', *ASE* 19 (1990), 41–65.

<sup>113</sup> Gulley, *Displacement*, pp. 55–57.

previously materialistic life: ‘þonne me nu þis geswel scynð for golde / and þæs hata bryne for healicum gym-stanum’ (‘when this tumour now shines for me in the place of gold, and this hot burning for precious gem-stones’, ll. 59–60). Ælfric also warns against the harmful nature of riches in the *Life of Chrysanthus and Daria*, where Ælfric describes Daria attempting to lure Chrysanthus to heathenism. She appears ‘geglenged mid golde, to þam cnihte, / and scinendum gym-stanum swilce sun-beam færlíce’ (‘to the young man, adored with gold and brightly shining gemstones like a sun-beam’, ll. 89–90). In both these instances, Ælfric denounces physical wealth, suggesting that it is inferior to spiritual wealth and actively harmful to both the body and soul. However, in the *Life of Thomas*, Ælfric does not attach negative connotations to the dream vision of Thomas’ palace. Thomas encourages Gundophorus and Gad to donate their material goods to the poor, and states that ‘magon eowre æhta yrnan eow ætforan, / and hi ne magon folgian on forð-siðe eow’ (‘your possessions can go before you, and they will not follow you after death’, ll. 179–80), but the gemstone embellished palace itself is never subject to direct criticism. Rather, the palace’s materiality is presented as a reflection of its spiritual glory, and the wonder that it evokes allows it to become an effective tool of conversion.

Ælfric perhaps presents the palace in such material terms not only because the building led to spiritual ends, but also because the *Life of Thomas* occurred in India. India was a place that a vernacular audience already associated with exoticised wealth through texts like *Wonders of the East*, which portrays distant places as being filled with rich material resources such as gold and jewels. This trope was specifically linked to India on the so-called Cotton map, where India has within its boundaries the ‘mons aureus’ (‘mountain of gold’).<sup>114</sup> In India, then, such things are expected for an early medieval English audience. The gemstone-studded palace of the *Life of Thomas* is part of an existing textual tradition, and so

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<sup>114</sup> BL, Cotton Tiberius B. v., f. 56<sup>v</sup>.

does not seem as out of place or questionable as it might have been in the *Life* of an insular or continental saint. In having the most extensive description of Roman material culture in the whole *Lives of Saints* in a life set in India, Ælfric was able to foster a sense of wonder at Rome's rich heritage without contradicting his teaching regarding materialistic and spiritual wealth.

Further, Ælfric's interest in the material aspect of the palace is entrenched in the idea of imperial Rome. Earl Anderson has read Ælfric's architectural descriptions in the *Life of Thomas* as primarily symbolic, writing that 'Thomas's architectural skill symbolizes his mission to build "cristes getimbrunge" in India'.<sup>115</sup> However, when compared with its Latin source, it becomes clear that Ælfric's text also demonstrates a particular interest in the workmanship itself, and in the idea of Roman authority. This is visible in the way that he shifts the emphasis of the Latin source in his translation. For example, in the Latin text, the palace's orientation takes on symbolic significance, with Thomas saying that 'ianuas in isto loco disponam ab ortu solis ingressum' ('in this place I will place doors according to the entry of the rising sun', 608.14). The *passio* conveys a symbolic importance of the palace's orientation that relies upon the rising sun, reflecting the entry of the risen Christ, and the light of Christianity, to India through the palace. This reflects the juxtaposition of mission and craftsmanship in Thomas' earlier statement that 'facio exhedras et fenestras ut domus lumen numquam deficiat' ('I make halls and windows so that the light of the house never diminishes', 606.38), translated by Ælfric as 'þa egðyrle macige þe ælteowe beoð / þæt þam huse ne bið wana þæs healican leohtes' ('I will make windows that will be well-finished, so that the house will not lack the heavenly light', ll. 57–58).

By contrast, the phrase that Ælfric uses to describe the palace's orientation, 'he wolde wyrcean þa healle ærest on eastdæle' ('he intended to build the hall first on the east side'),

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<sup>115</sup> E. R. Anderson, 'The Uncarpentered World of Old English Poetry', *ASE* 20 (1991), 65–80, at p. 70.

suggests precise workmanship and the importance of correct placement. The symbolic meaning is no longer explicit here. Instead, Ælfric's text seems to celebrate the orderly nature of the Roman construction, made with a 'mete-gyrde', with all of its buildings set in their correct place ('on eastdæle') and order ('ærest', 'bæftan'). The careful manner of Thomas' work is further highlighted by the repetition of the verb *metan* ('to measure') in the collocation of 'metende' with 'mete-gyrde', which emphasises the importance of measurement and precise construction. This styling is absent from the Latin text, which gives: 'Thomas autem appraehendens harundinem coepit metiri' ('Thomas then, grasping a rod, began to measure', 608.13). Here we see Ælfric's style reflecting cosmic order, as suggested by Clemoes: not only in Ælfric's use of alliteration or rhythmical prose, but also in his translation practice, in his choice of omissions and in his reworking and re-emphasis of a Latin text.<sup>116</sup>

The most extensive description of Roman architecture in the entire *Lives of Saints*, then, is one that presents it as a cultural achievement because of its well-ordered craftsmanship. This draws upon the image of imperial Rome, a political and cultural power against whose authority the rest of Christendom can be ordered. In the Old English *Orosius*, time is ordered by Rome, with each chapter opening by setting the year it concerns against either 'ær ðam þe Romeburh getimbred wæs' ('before the city of Rome was built') or 'æfter ðam þe Romeburh getimbred wæs' ('after the city of Rome was built'). Rome is used as a structuring device, in order to make sense of the chronology of the rest of Christendom. Ælfric's presentation of the Roman method of construction may be seen to operate in a similar way, in that it uses Rome as an authoritative means of creating order. In Ælfric's *Thomas*, Rome's power, its ability to seem wondrous to its audience and to convey authority, stem from its orderliness of craftsmanship. To a Benedictine such as Ælfric, this orderly

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<sup>116</sup> Clemoes, *Rhythm*, pp. 16–21.

construction no doubt granted a sense of prestige to the Roman palace, since the *Regula Benedicti* stresses the importance of orderliness within the monastery — ‘ælc endebyrdnes on mynstre sceal beon gehealden and gefadod be heora gecyrrednesse and be lifes geearnunge’ (‘every rank in the minster must be observed and arranged by their [time of] turning [to the monastic life] and by their life’s merit’, LXIII) — and the correct layout of the monastery itself — ‘se sylfa geatweard sceal cytan habban wið þæt geat, þæt þa cuman, þe mynster geseceað, simle gearone hæbban and andwyrde þæra ærenda underfo’ (‘this porter himself must have a cell close to the gate, so that those who come seeking the minster may always find someone ready, and receive answers to their questions’, LXVI). As such, Ælfric’s presentation of the careful organisation of Thomas’ palace may be seen as a sort of model for Christian architecture and lifestyle more generally. By focusing on the craftsmanship rather than the symbolic potential of the passage, he employs the image of imperial Rome to teach the importance of order to his English vernacular audiences, both monastic and lay.

That this episode occurs in India allows Ælfric to demonstrate the didactic potential of Rome and its culture, whilst also acknowledging its potential foreignness to an English Christian milieu. Though the palace is a source of great conversion and a testament to imperial achievement, it is nonetheless acknowledged by Ælfric as ‘nis gewunelic’ (‘not customary’). The palace is as untranslatable and strange to an English audience as it is to the Indian landscape in which it finds itself reconstructed. Yet because this episode takes place in India, a place whose foreignness Ælfric is at pains to stress through his vocabulary and preface, this untranslatability does not emphasise England itself as a place of periphery. In the *Life of Thomas*, then, India becomes a place where Ælfric can acknowledge the difficulties of following Roman customs in a far-away place, without distancing his readers from the city that was so foundational to English religious practice and political ambitions.

When compared to other descriptions of India in the Old English corpus, the markers of strangeness used by Ælfric in his *Life of Thomas* are admittedly subtle. There are no monstrous races, and the fetishised wealth presented in the Latin *Passio* is largely minimised. However, this speaks to Ælfric's desire to create a text that was ultimately believable for his English readers. Adam Miyashiro suggests that the *Wonders of the East*, with its array of depictions of monstrosity according to the Plinian model, 'establishes a template for imagining peripheral communities in Africa and India'.<sup>117</sup> The India of Ælfric's *Life of Thomas* belongs to a very different genre, and so expresses this sense of the 'peripheral' in a different way. Within the *Lives of Saints*, marvels are saintly miracles, not monstrous races or strange sights.<sup>118</sup> However, India's distance from early medieval England and from the Christian centre are nonetheless made apparent. Ælfric packs the beginning of the tale with subtle linguistic 'strangenesses', and in doing so, establishes an expectation of India as somehow esoteric, without compromising the didactic power of the text.

Through this foreignisation of India, we see Ælfric reflecting on England's similarly peripheral position. In the palace-building episode, Ælfric suggests to his audiences that just as Rome can be physically recreated on Indian soil, so too can the city's authority and practices be recreated in tenth-century England. In Ælfric's version of the *Life of Thomas*, the Roman palace episode may be seen as a parable about reconciling England's physical and temporal distance from Rome with a religious practice that takes Rome as its centre. Busbee sees the *Life of Thomas* as a text which 'offers particular insights into Anglo-Saxon anxieties about India'.<sup>119</sup> However, as this chapter has argued, Ælfric uses the palace-building narrative as a place to express and assuage anxieties not only about India, but also about Rome and his

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<sup>117</sup> A. Miyashiro, 'Monstrosity and Ethnography in Medieval Europe: Britain, France, Iceland' (unpublished PhD diss., Pennsylvania State Univ., 2006), pp. 41–44.

<sup>118</sup> Even the saintly miracles themselves sometimes provide a problem: as Malcolm Godden has demonstrated, Ælfric shows a clear concern that his hagiography should distinguish between true and false stories, and that he should include nothing too spectacular. Godden, 'Problem of Miracles', pp. 87–88.

<sup>119</sup> Busbee, 'Paradise', p. 60.

native England. By presenting India as distant, esoteric, and yet still very much part of a community of Christianity, strongly linked to Rome, Ælfric encourages his audience to celebrate and reflect upon their own Roman past whilst also acknowledging their separation from it. Through this, he demonstrates the potential for peripheral places to enjoy a close relationship with central ones. That the Roman building is so untranslatable is in many ways an open acknowledgement that England is set aside from Rome: it might still follow the Roman psalter, or enjoy the hagiography of Roman martyrs, but it is *not* Rome.

The *Life of Thomas* is the final item in the *Lives of Saints* as it stands in its main manuscript witness, Cotton Julius E. vii. Indeed, the date of Saint Thomas' death, December 21<sup>st</sup>, marks his feast as the last major feast before Christmas in the Western *sanctorale*. The *Life of Thomas* stands, then, on the periphery of the collection. Its position on the edge, in placement and content, made it an ideal vessel for Ælfric to reflect on England's own perceived peripheral position in the world, and to close his collection with the reminder that tenth-century England was not the remote island portrayed by classical sources, but a part of a global Christian community with Rome at its centre.

## CONCLUSION

Throughout the *Lives of Saints*, Ælfric reworks and repurposes the Rome that he found in his Latin sources. Overwhelmingly, the principle that guides this decision seems to be unity. Ælfric translates Rome in ways that largely diminish its difference from England, and instead highlights the ways in which the two places are part of one ideological, if not geographical Christian community.

To this end, physical Rome is rarely represented in detail. The geographical realities of the city are all but absent from the *Lives of Saints*, allowing the differences between England and Rome to be minimised. Ælfric's Latin sources often use detailed references to physical Rome as a means of localising their saints and of creating authenticity and authority. Ælfric, by contrast, demonstrates no interest in the reality of the city, and omits almost all of the information found in his sources that describes the city's streets, its layout and its burial places. By removing these descriptions of Rome's geography, Ælfric repurposes Rome in these texts, highlighting it as the heart of a unified Christian community rather than as a distinctive individual city.

By contrast, hagiolatric Rome is most clearly seen in Ælfric's descriptions of saintly burials. Here he uses the city as a way of establishing a history of sanctity, and of expressing the importance of the communion of saints. Roman saints are buried in ways that link them to other saints, either physically or through textual similarities. By refocusing these descriptions of burial on the commonality of burial practices rather than on their localised aspects, Ælfric consistently reframes his texts to emphasise unity rather than difference.

Similarly, we often see Ælfric making the idea of imperial Rome more visible to his audience through the addition of the city's name or through associating it with secular achievement. None of these references include detailed description of the city, but rather are brief, consistent reminders of its prominence. Ælfric invokes the city in order that his audiences may use it as a symbolic image of power, but he does so in a way that avoids lingering on the differences between England and Rome. Rome becomes a shorthand for authority, a sign of both pain and triumph, and a means of providing political commentary on the turbulent landscape of late tenth-century England. The city also becomes a means of extolling English sanctity, both through celebrating the cultural achievements of the English Benedictine Reform, and reflecting on the special relationship between the two places.

Unsurprisingly, Ælfric's interest in ecclesiastical Rome is seen throughout his *Lives of Saints*. Rome is the centre of the English Church, the city of the apostles, and the site of idealised Christian praxis. In the *Life of Thomas* in particular, we see Ælfric attempting to reconcile the city's centrality to English worship with its geographical distance from England. In doing so, he represents the possibility and value of recreating Rome in spaces outside Rome itself. On the far-flung shores of India, Rome's spiritual power is able to be recreated effectively, despite the fact that its physical and material aspects hold the potential to be foreign or untranslatable.

I began this chapter by suggesting that 'Rome' incorporated a variety of meanings and significances for tenth-century English people. This chapter has demonstrated that Ælfric's use of Rome in his *Lives of Saints* is similarly multivalent, and that he employs the city for varying and often contradictory aims. However, Rome's ability to represent so many different kinds of authority seems to have made it the perfect didactic tool for Ælfric. Throughout the *Lives of Saints*, the city is consistently repurposed as a model, reflecting both promise for England's spiritual future and relevant instruction for its tenth-century political present.

## CONCLUSION

This thesis has argued that throughout the *Lives of Saints*, Ælfric translated and adapted the continental characters, places and histories from his Latin sources in ways that emphasised ideals of community, cooperation and collective identity. In doing so, he reflected both the ideal of unity promoted by the English Benedictine Reform and the reality of considerable heterogeneity that characterised the late tenth-century English monastic landscape despite the reformers' best efforts. Ælfric achieves this emphasis on unity through adapting his Latin sources in subtle but consistent ways. Further, this thesis has demonstrated that it is only when we look at the *Lives of Saints* as a unified whole that the cumulative effect of these stylistic and narrative alterations becomes clear.

Chapter One considered the literary translation of continental settings across the *Lives of Saints*. In this chapter, we saw that Ælfric depicted a Christian space, centred around the Roman Church and occupying much of the old Western Roman Empire, that might be termed 'the continent'. This space is demarcated via Ælfric's presentation of Greece as a borderland between Europe and 'the East'; his emphasised foreignisation of non-continental foreigners compared to continental ones; and his tendency to omit material that his audiences might find strange from his continental lives. In a survey of continental settings from the *Lives*, this chapter demonstrated that Ælfric altered his source material in order to present a more unified view of Europe, in which individual places were distinguishable from one another but were largely homogenised. By presenting the continent as a unified and coherent Christian landscape, Ælfric educates his audiences about unity, suggesting that collective identity was possible even amongst places that were geographically or culturally removed from one another.

Chapter Two, which examined the translation of saints' remains from one burial place to another, similarly revealed that Ælfric emphasised collective identity in his *Lives*. This chapter demonstrated that Ælfric used narratives depicting the translation of saints to demonstrate the importance of participation in a global Christian community. In Ælfric's emphasis on the communion of saints and the universal Church, I demonstrated the influence of both Bede and the English Benedictine Reform. Throughout the *Lives of Saints*, saints' burials are presented in ways that downplay cultural difference and highlight Christian community. The movement of the saintly body, then, becomes a didactic moment for Ælfric, in which he extols the benefits of unity and England's participation in a unified continental Christian Church.

Chapter Three further considered the idea of movement, concentrating on the idea of translating people from one place to another. To this end, I examined Ælfric's depictions of mission in the *Lives*, and argued that Ælfric translates his missionary saints in ways that highlight the principle of *annes*, the idealised unity that Æthelwold had advocated for both monastic institutions and secular factions. Across the collection, Ælfric consistently highlights the importance of collaboration and contact between geographical locations, reflecting English Christianity's debt to continental teachers, both in the past and in his own time. Moreover, in depicting collaboration between monks and noblemen, he presented continental saints as a model for his English patrons Æthelweard and Æthelmær, and so highlighted the importance of unity of secular-monastic intention.

Finally, Chapter Four turned to the translation of Rome. This chapter argued that Ælfric was more interested in Rome's symbolic value as an image of imperial power and Christian achievement than in the geographical reality of the city. I demonstrated that Ælfric consistently minimised his sources' depictions of Rome's physical reality and localised cultural practices in order to highlight the special relationship between early medieval

England and Rome. Ælfric demonstrates that Rome's geographic and cultural remove from England is not insurmountable, and suggests that England and the continent constituted a unified Christian community of the *geleafful*, with Rome at its heart.

This thesis demonstrates that Ælfric's sense of community in the *Lives of Saints* is both inward and outward looking: it at once seeks to site England within the wider Christian world, and also to consider the relation between communities within England. In doing so, Ælfric reflected both the political and ecclesiastical concerns of the late tenth century, which called for a greater sense of unity. The core principle of Benedictinism, *nulla varietas*, sought to create uniformity of monastic practice, not only within nations, but also throughout an international Christian community.<sup>1</sup> The Benedictine *cursus* was used across the continent, creating an idealistic if not actual sense that practice across Christian monasticism was unified. It is therefore no surprise that we find Ælfric comparing English and continental saints in his *Life of Edmund* and *Life of Swithun*, nor that he consistently stresses the link between England and Rome in his Roman *Lives*. The same desire for a sense of international community underpinned Æthelwold's consultation with continental monks, the exchange of knowledge between Winchester and its continental neighbours, and the English adoption of the Benedictine rule, which had already enjoyed a long history on the continent by the time Æthelwold, Dunstan and Oswald sought to establish it in England.

Such a sense of community is inherently outward-looking, and is predicated on the idea of links between England and the continent, and is largely idealistic as opposed to practical: the link between St Thomas' Roman palace and Winchester's Roman buildings, or between Edmund's death and that of Sebastian, relies on a largely *imagined* sense of association between England and the continent, or between past and present, that does not necessarily require actual cultural uniformity to be effective. This imagined unity works by

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<sup>1</sup> For the Benedictine desire for *nulla varietas* see Wormald, 'Æthelwold', pp. 15–19.

fostering a sense of homogeneity that was almost certainly less total in its political, monastic and cultural reality than in its literary representation. Through the literary representation of links between England and the continent, saints from different backgrounds and monks and laypeople, Ælfric's audiences — lay and monastic, reformed and unreformed, monks and nuns, monastic and secular — could all feel a sense of connection to each other and to a wider Christian group, despite the fact that they were, in reality, very different from one another in terms of language, geography and monastic practice. We have seen this sense of imagined unity present in Ælfric's depictions of travel and missionary work; his depiction of saintly burial as being similar in all places; his sense of the continent as a singular community; and his highlighting of the Anglo-Roman relationship. In isolation, each of these depictions of unity are slight, but cumulatively, their didactic potential gathers force, resulting in a collection that consistently highlights the importance of an imagined Christian community.

However, as we have seen, Ælfric's sense of community was also more inward-looking, preaching the importance of cooperation within the nation or monastic community as well as outside it. In this, we have seen more practical concerns rather than idealist ones: that is to say, concerns about actual wealth, property and legislation, rather than ideological ones about cultural similarity and shared history. Ælfric had good reasons to want to engage his audience with such concerns. The latter half of the tenth century saw England continually divided by political unrest — within his lifetime, Ælfric witnessed the 'anti-monastic reaction', the crisis of succession after Edgar's death in 975, the instability of Æthelred's reign, and renewed Viking raids.<sup>2</sup> As demonstrated throughout this thesis, these events all left their mark on Ælfric's teaching, and his adaptation of his Latin sources often shows him

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<sup>2</sup> Keynes, 'Abbot'; M. Clayton, 'Ælfric and Æthelred', in *Essays on Anglo-Saxon and Related Themes in Memory of Lynne Grundy*, ed. J. Roberts and J. L. Nelson (London, 2000), pp. 65–88; Rabin, 'Holy Bodies'; Fisher, 'Anti-Monastic Reaction'; Jayakumar, 'Reform and Retribution'; Blair, *Church*, pp. 354–55.

responding to these events to make the texts more relevant to his tenth-century vernacular audiences. Against this background, his persistent celebration of communal resistance, unification between diverse groups and cooperation between peoples from geographically separate communities no doubt served a practical purpose. In-fighting and disagreements had devastating effects on England's monasteries, who suffered the seizure of their property, and Ælfric's cry for greater cooperation must be seen not simply as following a monastic ideal, but also as a desire to preserve the physical property and assets of the monasteries and return to the golden-age of English monasticism under the reign of Edgar. Moreover, in the eyes of contemporary commentators, such as the poet of *The Battle of Maldon* and the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, the English response to the Viking attacks was hindered by poor leadership and the disloyalty of ealdormen and their thegns.<sup>3</sup> Ælfric, who expressed anxiety regarding the increasingly frequent raids several times in his corpus, was no stranger to the idea that disunity was a source of great peril. When he repeatedly highlighted community in his *Lives of Saints*, then, he was providing education in matters of great national and political urgency as well as ideological instruction. Whilst it has often been suggested that the *Lives of Saints* addresses issues of kingship, this thesis has demonstrated that in the collection Ælfric also addressed lay behaviour more generally, by extolling the ideas of cooperation and collaboration. In highlighting fruitful relationships between laypeople and monks, depicting collective resistance to threats and making the idea of unity both a thematic and stylistic principle of the collection he presented community as a means of achieving not only monastic but also national cohesion.

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<sup>3</sup> ASC, 992 EF; 993 EF. *The Battle of Maldon* describes the battle between Viking invaders and English forces. In the poem, the ealdorman Byrhtnoth is killed, and the Englishman Godric, along with his brothers, flees the battle on Byrhtnoth's horse. The resulting confusion leads to mass desertion of Byrhtnoth's forces, leaving the remaining men to die at the hands of the Viking invaders. On *Maldon*, see M. Atherton, *The Battle of Maldon: War and Peace in Tenth-Century England* (London, 2021).

In examining the depiction of community, I have also sought to consider how Ælfric, as a second-generation reformer, was influenced by the ideals of the Benedictine Reform, particularly the school of Æthelwold. Though it is undeniable that the reform and its tenets influenced Ælfric's work, there is still much work to be done on the extent to which he was 'typical' amongst its proponents, the degree to which we can generalise 'reform ideals', and the differences between the movement's teachings and its realities in the English landscape.<sup>4</sup> This thesis has demonstrated that Ælfric often balanced the ideals of his teachers with the realities of the late 990s. The *Lives of Saints*, written three decades after Æthelwold's famous expulsion of the secular clergy from the Old Minster, had to address a monastic landscape far less homogenous than that which the original English reformers had hoped for.

Ælfric celebrates the idea of unity throughout the collection, from his teachings on the trinity, to his choice of saints who embody collective resistance, to the translation of sources in ways that minimised differences between peoples and places. However, this idealisation is balanced with a particular interest in demonstrating cooperation between diverse groups of peoples. Saints from a wealth of different historical and geographical backgrounds are represented as sharing in a single community; missionary work unites places at a geographical remove from one another; and lay and monastic subjects are shown cooperating towards a singular goal. Ælfric's translation methods see him continually smoothing over moments of cultural difference in order to portray an idealised sense of unity, whilst also retaining and emphasising ideas of travel, the importance of place and the differences between monastic and lay life. In doing so, he addresses the fact that England's monastic landscape was by no means solely or uniformly Benedictine. His audiences likely consisted not only of 'reformed' monks, but also of the 'unreformed' and secular clergy.<sup>5</sup> By

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<sup>4</sup> Jones, for example, questions the degree to which the generalised label 'Benedictine reform' can be used to encompass the wide range of ideas and practices held by late tenth-century monastic thinkers: 'Limits'.

<sup>5</sup> For the reading of the *Lives of Saints* in monastic centres, see Wilcox, 'Audience'; for the likelihood that late tenth-century monasteries were not all unreformed centres, see Grandsen, 'Traditionalism'. For the diversity of

demonstrating that geographically and culturally separate groups might nonetheless participate in a single Christian community, Ælfric was suggesting that his audiences could embody the spirit of the reform if not its actual praxis. Further work on Ælfric's interaction with reform ideals may reveal not only his specific uptake of the tenets of the Benedictine Reform, but also how the realities of the second-generation reformers varied from the aspirations of their predecessors. In doing so, it may continue to contribute to our understanding of the Benedictine Reform in England as a movement far more diverse than previously imagined.

Throughout the *Lives of Saints*, Ælfric's teachings on unity are supported by his rhythmic prose style. Unity, for Ælfric, was not only a cosmological ideal, as proposed by Clemoes, but a political necessity and monastic imperative.<sup>6</sup> Ælfric's use of Winchester words, rhythm, alliteration and repetition reflect Æthelwold's principle of *annes* on a literary as well as ideological level, highlighting the harmony of order through phonic and stylistic harmony. Hence, this thesis has demonstrated that in *Lives of Saints*, the apex of Ælfric's stylistic achievement, he used style not only to enhance his teachings, but indeed to embody them in a literary form.

Moreover, this thesis has aimed to consider ideas of community and collectivity not only in its subject matter, but also in its methodology. As has been noted throughout, previous scholarship on the *Lives of Saints* has consistently treated the individual lives separately, or else grouped by paradigms of sainthood.<sup>7</sup> Yet when the *Lives of Saints* is considered as a single, cohesive text, rather than as a collection of distinct individual pieces,

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observance in the tenth century and the coexistence of monks and secular clergy, see Billet, *Divine*. Ælfric does not address the secular clergy directly, their work was an implicit necessity to his educational goals: see Stephenson, *Politics*, p. 143. See also Godden, 'Development'.

<sup>6</sup> Clemoes, *Rhythm*, pp. 16–24.

<sup>7</sup> Recent work has examined, for example, Ælfric's virgin martyr *Lives* (Gulley, *Displacement*); Ælfric's *Lives* of the apostles (H. Magennis, 'Ælfric's Apostles', *ASE* 44 (2015), 181–99); and Ælfric's king saints (Anderson, 'Ælfric's kings').

the complexity of Ælfric's didactic practice become fully apparent, and seemingly minor adaptations to sources cumulatively become more significant. If considered only within the context of the *Life of Sebastian*, for example, Ælfric may seem to be omitting the description of Marcellianus and Marcus' burial place simply for the sake of brevity. However, once this omission is examined alongside the rest of the *Lives of Saints*, it can be seen as part of a consistent pattern: it is clear that Ælfric was not just removing a singular piece of geographical material that he considered unimportant, but was in fact doing this repeatedly across his translations of continental *Lives* in an attempt to minimise the sense of difference between England and the continent for his vernacular audiences. Similarly, if we were to examine only the *Life of Dionysius*, that way that Ælfric rearranges his source to discuss missionary travel at the beginning of the narrative may be considered a means of streamlining the story. However, if we view this within the wider contexts of the collection, in which Ælfric frequently moves descriptions of place to the opening of his *Lives*, this textual alteration becomes part of a sustained effort to demonstrate the importance of place to saintly identity.

Further, as this thesis has demonstrated, Ælfric instructed his audiences not only through the examples of individual saints, but also through the repetition of ideas, phrases or tropes over the course of the year. This thesis has revealed that his didactic practice in the *Lives of Saints* relies on repetition, cumulative effect and intertextuality between *Lives*, and that he revisits themes and ideas subtly but consistently throughout the course of the collection. The idea of the continent as a single community, for example, is not encountered in any one *Life*; nor does any single item in the *Lives of Saints* overtly instruct its audiences that links between communities foster better Christian praxis. Instead, Ælfric disseminates these ideas to his audiences gradually as they read the collection across the year, by consistently omitting certain aspects of his sources, by employing the same phrases or

vocabulary across *Lives*, or by encouraging comparison between saints. Hagiography, with its myriad conventions, tropes and paradigms, is perhaps uniquely suited for this kind of teaching method. Some of the key principles of sainthood, namely *imitatio Christi* and the communion of saints, revolve around the ideas of repetition and of similarity between saints.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, the repetitive, highly conventional literary style of hagiographic texts further encourages audiences to compare saints to one another.<sup>9</sup> The death of Edmund reflects that of Sebastian; the secular education of the noble Eugenia mirrors that of Basil and Dionysius; and the paradigms of the chaste spouse, virgin martyr or missionary saint tie together all of the saints who adhere to each type. The repetition and imitation that underpin the cult and literary representation of the saints allows for themes to be revisited and built upon during the church year, and for the reiteration of key didactic and theological ideas. The full extent of the ways in which the repetitive nature of hagiography allowed it to serve as such a poignant vehicle for instruction can only ever become fully apparent through studying the *Lives of Saints* as a coherent and cohesive text, which builds up its themes and teaching as the collection progresses.

This methodology has also facilitated analysis of Ælfric's use of his Latin sources. Whilst it has long been established that Ælfric's main source for the *Lives of Saints* was the Cotton-Corpus Legendary, the actual copy that he used does not survive.<sup>10</sup> As such, the comparison of Ælfric's Old English *Lives* to their Latin sources presents, in the words of

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<sup>8</sup> For *imitatio Christi* in hagiography, see Heffernan, *Sacred Biography*; A. G. Elliot, *Roads to Paradise: Reading the Lives of the Early Saints* (Hanover, 1987). For the communion of saints, see J. Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine, Volume 3: The Growth of Medieval Theology (600-1300)* (Chicago, 1978), pp. 174–78.

<sup>9</sup> For the repetitive nature of hagiography as a literary genre, see A. Hennessey Olsen, “‘De historiis sanctorum’: A Generic Study of Hagiography”, *Genre* 13 (1980), 407–29; T. D. Hill, ‘Imago Dei: Genre, Symbolism, and Anglo-Saxon Hagiography’, in Szarmach, ed. (1996), pp. 35–50; C. Sanok, ‘Hagiography’, in *Medieval Historical Writing: Britain and Ireland, 500–1500*, ed. J. Jahner, E. Steiner and E. M. Tyler (Cambridge, 2019), pp. 420–36, esp. p. 424; Woolf, *Art and Doctrine*, pp. 219–44.

<sup>10</sup> Zettel notes, for example, that several items used by Ælfric vary from the versions found in the CCL (‘Sources’). See also Jackson and Lapidge, ‘Contents’.

Gabriella Corona, ‘obvious peril’.<sup>11</sup> Without access to the Cotton-Corpus Legendary exactly as Ælfric received it, it is impossible for us to establish whether lexical or syntactical divergences are truly Ælfric’s intervention in a text, or whether he was following a different textual tradition to which we no longer have access. The matter is further complicated by the fact that even our most contemporary manuscript of the *Lives of Saints*, Cotton MS Junius E. vii., has been subject to the intervention of a compiler, and may not represent the text as it was envisaged by Ælfric himself. However, the perils caused by possible variant manuscript readings can be — whilst by no means eliminated — somewhat mitigated by considering the adaptations that Ælfric made across the collection as a whole. Single instances of lexical variation between Latin sources and Ælfric’s Old English may be potentially discounted as a matter of manuscript tradition or scribal error; continued instances of the same variation suggest a pattern. As such, considering the *Lives of Saints* in its entirety in future scholarship will facilitate richer, more nuanced understandings of Ælfric’s work as a translator, a teacher and a second-generation Benedictine reformer. Considering the links between saints’ *Lives* will also enable further consideration of Ælfric’s choice of saints and days of veneration in his *sanctorale*, not all of which are easily explicable or common for the period.

In concluding, it seems suitable to return to the beginning of the *Lives of Saints*. In the opening item, the *Nativity of Christ*, Ælfric wrote on the soul and the trinity, expressing the idea that diverse parts may be perfectly unified: ‘an sawul is and an lif and an edwist þe þas ðreo þing hæfð on hire, and þas ðreo þing na synd na ðreo lif ac an, ne þreo ædwiste ac an’ (‘it is one soul and one life and one substance that has these three things within it, and these three things are not three lives but one, nor three substances but one’, c.12). Just as the Trinity unites three individual parts in a single, coherent whole, so too does Ælfric translate the diverse peoples and places within the *Lives of Saints* into a unified Christian identity. This

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<sup>11</sup> Corona, *Basil*, p. 78.

identity is established and emphasised throughout the year as different communities, saints and geographies are shown to mirror one another. Through Ælfric's alteration to his sources, then, both the Christian community and the *Lives of Saints* become unified, single wholes which signify far more than the sum of their parts.

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