Soldier saints and holy warriors: Warfare and sanctity in Anglo-Saxon England

SOLDIER SAINTS AND HOLY WARRIORS:

WARFARE AND SANCTITY IN ANGLO-SAXON ENGLAND

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SIGNED: _____

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ABSTRACT

It is common but too simplistic to say that Old English literature shows the unconscious blending of the traditional Germanic heroic ethos and the early Christian aversion to war. The matter is more complex. Throughout the Latin West, Christian perceptions of a tension between sanctity and warfare changed over the period from the arrival of Roman Christianity in England (AD 597) to the period following the Norman Conquest of 1066. Christian disdain for and rejection of warfare (at times no more than nominal) gave way eventually to active participation in wars considered "just" or "holy." Anglo-Saxon literature, in both Latin and Old English, documented this changing ethos and also played a significant role in its development. The earliest extant Anglo-Saxon hagiographic texts featured a new type of holy man, the martyred warrior king, whose role in spreading Christianity in England culminated in a dramatic death in battle fighting enemies portrayed by hagiographers as bloodthirsty pagans. During the same period, other Anglo-Saxon writers depicted warriors who transformed themselves into soldiers of Christ, armed only with the weapons of faith. These and later Anglo-Saxon literary works explored the intersection of violence and the sacred in often conflicting ways, in some instances helping to lead Christian spirituality toward the more martial spirit that would eventually culminate in Pope Urban II's preaching of the First Crusade in 1095, but in other cases preserving intact many early Christians' radical opposition to war. Aspects of crusading ideology existed alongside Christian opposition to war throughout the Anglo-Saxon period.

This study examines hagiographers' changing literary tropes as subtle but important reflections of medieval Christianity's evolution from rejecting the sword to tolerating and even wielding it. Hagiographers used various narrative *topoi* to recount the lives of warrior saints, and, as the ambient Christian ethos changed, so did their employment of these themes. The tension between forbearance and militancy, even in the earliest English lives of saints, is more profound and more culturally complex than what is generally understood as merely the Germanic heroic trappings of Anglo-Saxon Christian literature.

Chapter I: Sulpicius's *Vita Sancti Martini* and Anglo-Saxon Hagiography

I

Anglo-Saxon writers inherited a highly developed continental tradition of hagiography that presented a complex and multi-faceted approach to the relationship between warfare and sanctity. Late antique hagiographers had written cautiously when dealing with unmartyred saints who had served in earthly armies, and this caution was passed on, in varying degrees, to Anglo-Saxon writers after the conversion of England. The origins of this cautious approach lay in a perceived tension, even in an antithesis or antagonism, between the shedding of blood and a life of sanctity.[1] Carl Erdmann is one scholar who has examined closely early Christians' approach to this issue, and he presents it as a polar opposition: "The Catholic Church was initially adamant on the point that heavenly warfare was purely spiritual and that military service in the world stood at the opposite pole from the Christian ideal." Individuals involved in the establishment and

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[1] Scholarship on the early church's opposition to war and Christian participation in the army is too extensive to cite fully, but important articles dealing with this subject include: R. H. Bainton, *Christian Attitudes toward War and Peace*; R. H. Bainton, "The Early Church and War"; C. J. Cadoux, *The Early Christian Attitude to War*; A. Harnack, *Militia Christi: The Christian Religion and the Military*; J. Helgeland, "Christians and the Roman Army"; J. Helgeland, R. J. Daly, and J. P. Burns, *Christians and the Military*; J.-M. Hornus, *It Is Not Lawful for Me to Fight*; R. G. Musto, *The Catholic Peace Tradition*; R. G. Musto, *Catholic Peacemakers*; R. G. Musto, *The Peace Tradition in the Catholic Church*; F. Stratmann, *The Church and War*; and S. Windass, *Christianity versus Violence*.

spread of Christianity were spiritual soldiers, only metaphorically called soldiers of Christ, *milites Christi*, or members of God's army. Erdmann adds that "an obvious corollary to such thinking was that the real military life, the *militia saecularis*, epitomized a life distant from God, dangerous to the welfare of the soul."[2] Thus a like-minded hagiographer of a saint who had been a soldier often took pains to distance his subject from the profane life of warfare and violence. To this end he might employ scenes that presented the saint as pacifistic or even anti-war, such as his subject's unwilling participation in warfare; his exemplary Christian behavior even while nominally a soldier; his sudden, radical change of heart, in which he rejected earthly combat and took up a new way of life; or his victories achieved without bloodshed. However, once the saint had firmly rejected the soldier's life in favor of a religious vocation, his hagiographer often used imagery of spiritual warfare to present the saint as a soldier of Christ. These concepts became standard elements or *topoi* in the *vitæ* of soldier saints.[3] Many of these *topoi* originated or were fully developed for the first time in a single, highly influential text: the life of St. Martin, Bishop of Tours, written circa 397 by his contemporary, Sulpicius Severus.[4]

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[2] C. Erdmann, *The Origin of the Idea of Crusade*, pp. 13-14.

[3] Ernst Robert Curtius discusses the Latin tradition of *topoi* in E. R. Curtius, *European Literature in the Latin Middle Ages*, pp. 79-105. Hagiographic topoi are discussed in C. W. Jones, *Saints' Lives and Chronicles*, pp. 51-79; and H. Delehaye, *Les Légendes hagiographiques*, pp. 85-100. For the use of *topoi* by Sulpicius Severus in his *Vita Martini* see B. H. Rosenwein, "St. Odo's St. Martin."

[4] J. Fontaine, ed. and trans., *Sulpice Sévère: Vie de saint Martin.*

Martin's biography appears to have been the first hagiographic text to portray a holy man who had previously been a soldier but who was not martyred. Jacques Fontaine, recent editor of the *Vita Sancti Martini*, has argued that Sulpicius made use of prior hagiographic traditions, including the passions of military martyrs, in creating his portrait of Martin.[5] A number of the early martyrs had been soldiers, exemplary victims of pagan persecution who refused to carry out orders they considered contrary to their religious beliefs or who refused to apostatize. Yet Sulpicius is unlikely to have borrowed any of the pertinent anti-war *topoi* from such a source, since a hagiographer detailing the *passio* of such a military martyr would not have needed to employ tropes like the saint's unwilling participation in warfare or his sudden rejection of earthly combat. Martyrdom itself crowned the victim with what came to be known as the martyr's diadem of virtue, and hagiographers often gave little, if any, attention to the circumstances of the martyr's life. From this inherent difference of focus grew the distinction between the martyrs' *passiones* and the *vitæ* of unmartyred saints.

If Sulpicius did not borrow the relevant tropes from the passions of military martyrs for Martin's *vita*, it does not necessarily follow that he created them in order to make Martin an "anti-war" saint. The degree to which early Christians were intrinsically anti-war has been and remains a matter heatedly debated by scholars.[6] It is very likely

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[5] J. Fontaine, "Sulpice Sévère: A-t-il travesti Saint Martin de Tours en martyr militaire?"

[6] The intensity with which the question of a widespread pacifism in the early Church has been debated is attested by the large number of works cited in n. 1 above. This dissertation cannot hope to resolve that complex question. For the purposes of this study, it will be assumed that anti-war tropes were employed for certain rhetorical purposes

that, in portraying Martin as an unwilling soldier, Sulpicius was attempting to counter potential criticism of Martin's lower class origins. In Martin's day, soldiers occupied a fairly low rank in Roman society, and Martin himself was forced by law to serve only because his father was a veteran. It is also possible that Sulpicius was merely recording Martin's own attitudes toward his period of army service. In the end, it is immaterial whether Sulpicius consciously employed *topoi* such as the unwilling warrior or saintly soldier to present his subject in the best light, or whether the saint himself, in desiring to distance themselves from activities they deemed unholy, actually expressed an unwillingness to fight or a desire to live like a saint even while employed as a soldier. Whatever their origins, such depictions came to be accepted parts of the *vitæ* of soldier saints. Specific ways of presenting a saint's earthly warfare drawn from the *Vita Sancti Martini* came over time to be inserted into a *vita* even if the historical evidence might not supply the necessary facts.[7]

A study of the hagiographic *topoi* associated with warfare and sanctity in Anglo-Saxon literature must therefore begin with Sulpicius's *Vita Martini*. Its influence on early

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within late antique texts, whatever their relationship may have been to the authors' or their subjects' views on the morality of war. However, as these tropes began to be interpreted in Anglo-Saxon England, the responses of hagiographers to them will be assumed to reveal Anglo-Saxon writers' views on the morality of war.

[7] See J. Fontaine, "Sulpice Sévère: A-t-il travesti Saint Martin de Tours en martyr militaire?"; J. Fontaine, "Vérité et fiction"; and J. Fontaine, ed. and trans., *Sulpice Sévère: Vie de saint Martin*, vol. ii, pp. 513 ff. This and all subsequent references to Fontaine's commentary are identified by editor's name, volume and page number, references to Sulpicius's text by author's name, chapter and verse. See also C. Lelong, *Vie et culte de Saint Martin*.

Anglo-Saxon literature was immense, even though written almost exactly two hundred years before the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons began. The *Vita Martini* preserves attitudes toward the relationship between warfare and sanctity that by 597 had become somewhat archaic.[8] The articulation of a theory of just war by St. Augustine crystallized a process of Christian accommodation of warfare already well under way when Sulpicius was writing in 397.[9] By the time of the conversion, Pope Gregory the Great, who sent the first Christian mission to the Anglo-Saxons, supported the use of war as a means of conversion.[10] Had there been no other forces at work in determining the nature of Anglo-Saxon Christianity, these influences on their own would undoubtedly have served to

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[8] In F. H. Russell, *The Just War in the Middle Ages*, Russell examines the development of pro-war attitudes in the medieval church. Other studies of medieval attitudes toward war include K. Haines, "Attitudes and Impediments to Pacifism"; J. Kelsay and J. T. Johnson, ed., *Just War and Jihad*; J. LeClercq, "Saint Bernard's Attitude toward War"; R. A. Markus, "Saint Augustine's View on the 'Just War'"; H. Pissard, *La Guerre sainte en pays chrétien*; T. Renna, "The Idea of Peace in the West"; W. R. Stevenson, Jr. *Christian Love and Just War*; and J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, "War and Peace." The seminal article on Anglo-Saxon attitudes toward war is J. E. Cross, "The Ethic of War in Old English." The most recent treatment of the development of war attitudes in Anglo-Saxon England is K. G. Hare, "Religion, Warfare, and the *Gens Anglorum*." Christian accommodation of warfare cannot, however, be equated with the growth of the crusading ideal. Christian acceptance of war, and even support for its use against enemies of the Church, does not presuppose active involvement in war by the Church or the belief that war might be holy. Although justified by Christian doctrine when undertaken on behalf of the Church, war was nonetheless a secular activity forbidden to clerics and generally until the era of the Crusades considered antithetical to sainthood. Since sanctity consisted of a rejection of and separation from the secular, a total renunciation of the world, the saint could not be associated with war until war itself was to some degree sanctified. This study outlines the process of sanctification of warfare, not its accommodation.

[9] See F. H. Russell, *The Just War in the Middle Ages*, pp. 16-26.

[10] See F. H. Russell, *The Just War in the Middle Ages*, pp. 27-28.

establish a non-pacifist form of Christianity among the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms. However, when Northumbrian or Mercian hagiographers came to write the lives of their own local saints, Sulpicius's *Life of Martin* was one of the major models available to them. Although not the only continental hagiographic model that represented a saint who had been a warrior, it was the most influential, and this influence was compounded by the fact that the Anglo-Saxon aristocracy all carried arms, there being no separate group within the aristocratic class whose responsibility it was to wage war for the larger society. Thus the earliest Anglo-Saxon saints all were either warriors themselves or at least were the products of a warrior culture.[11] The *Life of Martin* served as a primary model for Anglo-Saxon hagiographers, but at the same time Sulpicius's approach to war represented a distinct challenge to Anglo-Saxon cultural values. The question of how this dynamic played itself out in the many portraits of saints who had, at some point, also been soldiers is the central concern of this study. In a study published in 1981, Colin Chase addressed this question, although from a significantly different angle, observing that, "[l]eaving out of account works of doubtful date and examining lives of saints or kings during the roughly four centuries of Old English literary culture, one is impressed by the absence or

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[11] One of the only pieces of evidence suggesting that a significant group within the Anglo-Saxon did not carry weapons comes in Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*, in the chapters covering the conversion of King Edwin. See Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. i, pp. 283-87. Most scholars seem to have accepted without question that pagan priests did not carry weapons, based on the portrayal of the high priest Coifi in Bede. For further discussion of this point, see below, p. 57, and Chapter Four. The other important hagiographic model for a saint who had once been a warrior was the *Life of Germanus of Auxerre* by Constantius of Lyon, in T. F. X. Noble and T. Head, ed., *Soldiers of Christ*, pp. 75-106, a work which Bede made use of in writing his *Historia Ecclesiastica*. See Chapter Three below.

avoidance of explicit and positive references to heroic values in the early period and by the increasing intrusion of such secular norms on later hagiographic tradition."[12] Chase's concept informed my initial inquiries into this subject, but as subsequent chapters will demonstrate, such a schema represents a convenient but ultimately overly determined account of the material. Some early hagiographic works did avoid "explicit and positive references to heroic values," but some reflected and even celebrated warlike aspects of their subjects. Similarly, some later hagiographers continued to use tropes inherited directly or indirectly from the *Vita Martini* to distance their subjects from martial values. The influence of Sulpicius's work on Anglo-Saxon hagiographers was therefore profound, and an analysis of the attitudes toward war in that text will have substantial bearing on any study of the development of Anglo-Saxon hagiography concerning soldier saints.

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[12] C. Chase, "Saints' Lives, Royal Lives, and the Date of *Beowulf*," p. 168.

II

The *Vita Sancti Martini Turonensis* presents a vivid picture of Martin's transformation from Roman soldier to bishop of Tours and founder of one of the Latin West's first monasteries. From it one receives the impression of a humble man devoted to God, charitable to the poor and the afflicted, honest in his dealings with others, and frugal to the point of asceticism; yet more than anything else, Martin appears as a brave man, willing to face violence without flinching and to wage an active struggle against Satan and the enemies of Christianity. In presenting Martin as deserving of the same respect as those who had died for the faith, Sulpicius employed the literary convention of the soldier of Christ, the active fighter for the faith.[13] In the *Vita Sancti Martini*, Christian-soldier imagery takes on a highly developed form. Because of Martin's actual participation in an earthly army, Sulpicius uses the image of Christ's soldier not merely as ornamentation but as a major theme of the *Life*.

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[13] Though closely related to the subject of this study, analysis of the use of martial imagery, including but not limited to portrayal of the saint as a "soldier of Christ," represents a separate area of inquiry. Any saint may be associated with warfare through use of the military metaphor; this study concerns those saints who actually participated in war. The best general studies of the use of martial imagery in Anglo-Saxon literature are M.L. Del Mastro, "The Military Analogy in Anglo-Latin Saints' Lives"; J. Harris, "Soldiers of Christ: Cynewulfian Poetry"; and J. Hill, "The Soldier of Christ in Old English Prose and Poetry."

However, before portraying Martin as a warlike saint, Sulpicius first presents him as a saintly soldier. Forced against his will to join the army, he acts more like a monk than a warrior. After serving for five years, he makes a dramatic break with warfare, rejecting earthly in favor of spiritual strife.[14] His only recorded military victory comes at the end of his career and is achieved without bloodshed.

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[14] How long Martin actually served in the army remains a matter of considerable debate. Some scholars argue that Sulpicius intentionally falsified the length of time Martin spent as a soldier in order to sanitize a potentially embarrassing aspect of Martin's career. This line of reasoning ("la chronologie longue") places Martin in the army for some twenty-five years and characterizes Sulpicius's account as basically fabricated, since a long period spent in unwilling service as a soldier is much less believable than the five years Sulpicius claims. Rosenwein accepts the arguments of earlier scholars concerning the length of time Martin spent in the army, saying Sulpicius "no doubt knew that the historical Martin had spent twenty-five years in the army, but he deliberately reduced the term to a five-year stint" (B. H. Rosenwein, "St. Odo's St. Martin," p. 319). Rosenwein's argument implies that the portrayal of Martin as an unwilling warrior is a conscious *topos* when employed by Sulpicius. This argument, however, begs the question. If Martin was born in 316-17, as Gregory of Tours asserts in his *History of the Franks*, then Sulpicius would have been forced to falsify the evidence if he wished to realistically portray Martin's military service as involuntary servitude, but if Martin was born twenty years later, as Sulpicius actually claims, no falsification was needed. It seems unlikely that Sulpicius would have misrepresented the age of his subject at a time when Martin was still alive. Contemporaries would have recognized a discrepancy of twenty years; the events described in the book were all within living memory. To trust Gregory writing nearly two centuries later more than Sulpicius, Martin's contemporary, requires solid evidence, and "la chronologie courte" presented by Clare Stancliffe, Lelong and others is no less believable than the longer chronology.

Confusion between the names of two Roman emperors seems more likely as a source of the discrepancy than misstatement of a contemporary's age by twenty years. According to C. Lelong, *Vie et culte de Saint Martin*, pp. 7, 19-25, and 89-95, scribes have confused Constantine I, emperor from 307-337, with Constantius II, 337-361. Although the long chronology, associating Martin's induction into the army with the reign of Constantine the Great, implies that Sulpicius deliberately falsified the length of Martin's service as part of the *topos* of the unwilling soldier, the short chronology places his first service under Constantius.

For a discussion of what Charles Lelong calls "la chronologie longue" (C. Lelong, *Vie et culte de Saint Martin*, p. 19), see J. Fontaine, "Vérité et fiction"; J. Fontaine. ed.

These four ideas -- the unwilling soldier, the saintly soldier, the formal rejection of war, and the bloodless victory -- are the primary anti-war tropes Sulpicius passed on to later writers. Although seemingly inseparable in Sulpicius's text, these *topoi* each came to have a life of its own, and as such are crucial to the argument of this dissertation. First there is the *topos* of the unwilling warrior, forced to fight. The second presents the saint as a soldier in name only who behaves more like a saint than a soldier. The third Barbara H. Rosenwein describes as "the bloodless victory," achieved not by combat but by some form of supernatural intervention.[15] Finally, there is "Martin's repudiation of military life as incompatible with his religious vocation," which serves as the central or over-arching *topos* and which, "[s]ix hundred years later...was still part of the hagiographers' stock-in-trade."[16] These tropes reappear in various forms in Anglo-Saxon hagiography of soldier saints. In the *Vita Sancti Martini*, this multi-faceted portrayal serves two purposes: it

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and trans., *Sulpice Sévère: Vie de saint Martin*, vol. ii, pp. 188-91; and B. Peebles, ed. and trans., *Sulpicius Severus: Writings*, pp. 91-92. For what Lelong terms "la chronologie courte" (C. Lelong, *Vie et culte de Saint Martin*, p. 20), see C. Stancliffe, *St. Martin and His Hagiographer*, pp. 111-33. See also L. Piétri, Introduction, *Saint Martin: Textes de Sulpice Sévère*, pp. 5-7.

[15] B. H. Rosenwein, "St. Odo's St. Martin," p. 324. Fontaine refers to these first two tropes as the "double thèse" of the second chapter of the *Vita Martini*. The former he summarizes as, "Martin est entré au service contre son gré" and the latter, "une fois soldat, il s'est comporté sous les armes en chrétien exemplaire" (Fontaine, *Vie de Saint Martin*, ii, 441). Fontaine examines instances of borrowing by Sulpicius, but does not identify these images as standard *topoi* of later hagiographers familiar with Sulpicius's work.

[16] B. H. Rosenwein, "St. Odo's St. Martin," pp. 317-331, at p. 317. Rosenwein treats tropes involved with sanctity and warfare derived from Sulpicius's *Life of Martin*, although she develops only two of the four tropes I examine and she limits her study to their use in the works of Odo of Cluny, his contemporaries. and imitators.

prepares the reader for Martin's role as *miles Christi*; and it also neutralizes potential criticism of Martin's participation in earthly warfare. As already mentioned, if Martin had died for the faith, Sulpicius could have used the tradition of the military martyr whose death imitates Christ's passion to defer any negative judgment against him.[17] But Martin outlived his warrior past, and in presenting his life Sulpicius created these four primary *topoi* in order to vindicate the period of soldiering.

From beginning to end, Martin's military service is undertaken unwillingly. He comes from a soldiering family, and as the son of a soldier, Martin is not only forced to associate with those involved in earthly combat but must himself become a soldier at a very young age: [18]

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[17] As noted above, n. 4, Fontaine has developed at length the idea that Sulpicius imitates the passions of military martyrs in the *Vita* Sulpicius's description of Martin in chains can be interpreted as supporting this view, and Rosenwein links the various *topoi* of resistance to war in Sulpicius to the tradition of the military martyr, saying, "In part...it was [Sulpicius's] intention to assimilate his new model to the old and hallowed figure of the military martyr, the Christian who found serving Caesar in the army incompatible with his religious vocation" (B. H. Rosenwein, "St. Odo's St. Martin," pp. 319). Yet as Martin's period of tribulation is terminal and relatively short, and his struggle against Satan and the enemies of Christ is ongoing and extended, it is more as an unwilling soldier than specifically as a soldier-martyr that he is being portrayed. The special sign of God's favor, the peaceful solution to the battle at Worms (Rosenwein's "bloodless victory"), is what saves him from martyrdom. He is a hero preserved for future battles, not the soldier-martyr whose greatest role is to die for the faith. While Martin may at times take on certain characteristics of martyrdom, his life as a whole is instrumental in creating the early medieval image of the unmartyred soldier-saint.

[18] J. Fontaine, ed. and trans., *Sulpice Sévère: Vie de saint Martin*, vol. ii, p. 429, says, "Les années d'enfance et de jeunesse sont dominées, dans le récit de Sulpice, par le contrepoint d'un débat intérieur: entre la fidélité aux obligations du soldat et la vocation à la vie de perfection du chrétien, entre le monde et la retraite, entre César et Dieu."

> Pater eius miles primum, post tribunus militum fuit. Ipse, armatam militiam in adulescentia secutus, inter scholares alas sub rege Constantio, deinde sub Iuliano Caesare militauit; non tamen sponte, quia a primis fere annis diuinam potius seruitutem sacra inlustris pueri spirauit infantia. (Sulpicius ii.2) [19]

He serves unwillingly, *non tamen sponte*, desiring, even as a youth, to give up the *armata militia* for service to Christ; he wishes to trade an earthly master, whether the Christian King Constantius II or Julian the Apostate, for a celestial king.[20] Sulpicius repeats and further develops the trope of the unwilling soldier in depicting Martin's induction into the army. From the age of ten his desire was, "in Dei opere conuersus" (Sulpicius ii.4); nonetheless, he was forced by the law and by his father to serve the earthly emperor instead of the King of Heaven: "Sed cum edictum esset a regibus ut ueteranorum filii ad militiam scriberentur, prodente patre qui felicibus eius actibus inuidebat, cum esset annorum quindecim, captus et catenatus sacramentis militaribus inplicatus est" (Sulpicius ii.5).[21] This image of Martin captive and in chains is central to Sulpicius's trope of the unwilling soldier, emphasizing dramatically that Martin's years spent in the Roman army

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[19] "His father was first a simple soldier and afterwards military tribune. Martin himself, entering the military service in his youth, served in the cavalry of the imperial guard under Emperor Constantius, and subsequently under Emperor Julian. Yet, this was not of his own accord, for, from almost his first years, he aspired rather to the service of God, his saintly childhood foreshadowing the nobility of his youth" (from B. Peebles, ed. and trans., *Sulpicius Severus: Writings*, p. 105).

[20] See note 13 above.

[21] "But, when an imperial edict was issued, requiring sons of veterans to be enrolled for military service, he was handed over by his father, who was hostile toward his spiritual actions. Martin was fifteen years old when, arrested and in chains, he was subjected to the military oath" (B. Peebles, ed. and trans., *Sulpicius Severus: Writings*, p. 105).

was a period of involuntary servitude.[22] Sulpicius returns to the image of Martin as unwilling warrior one final time at the end of his military career. Just before the Battle of Wurms (the only battle mentioned in the *Vita Martini*), Martin asks the Caesar Julian to allow him to give up earthly for spiritual warfare. Julian accuses him of cowardice, and Martin responds by offering to go into battle armed only with the cross. Julian agrees, and Martin is led away under guard. Thus Martin both begins and ends his military service as a captive, a conscript participating in earthly combat unwillingly, not because of fear but through rejection of earthly warfare. In the later sections of the *Life of Martin*, Sulpicius focuses on Martin's militant form of spirituality, but at this stage the opposition between soldier and saint is of greatest importance.

In addition to portraying Martin as an unwilling soldier, Sulpicius also presents him as a saintly soldier who lives an exemplary life even while in the army. Nowhere does Martin actually fight. Except for the final scene described above, Sulpicius mentions no other battles but instead describes routine details of Martin's military life. In the process, Sulpicius creates the new trope, the saintly soldier, by combining in Martin the martial virtues most acceptable to Christianity, such as loyalty and hardiness, with more exclusively Christian virtues like charity and humility.

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[22] Fontaine, *Vie de Saint Martin*, ii, 444, elaborates this point: "Le mot de *seruitus* ne désigne pas ici les actes concrets du culte, mais le culte intérieur que rend celui qui mène la vie parfaite; il a pris au temps de Sulpice la valeur d'un terme technique de l'ascétisme. Il semble avoir été choisi ici pour introduire le thème du partage entre le service de Dieu et celui de César. Dès l'abord, l'accent est mis ainsi sur le caractère *militant* qui caractérisera tout au long de sa vie la spiritualité de Martin enfin devenu soldat de Christ."

Sulpicius points out repeatedly that Martin is not behaving like a typical soldier but like a true Christian. During the three years spent as a soldier before his baptism, Martin shows none of the faults of a soldier: "Triennium fere ante baptismum in armis fuit, integer tamen ab his uitiis quibus illud hominum genus inplicari solet" (Sulpicius ii.6).[23] Yet despite the fact that he lives more like a monk than a soldier, he fits very well into army life, accepting the harshness of military service with grace, kindness, and humility:

> Multa illius circa commilitones benignitas, mira caritas, patientia uero atque humilitas ultra humanum modum. Nam frugalitatem in eo laudari non est necesse, qua ita usus est, ut iam illo tempore non miles, sed monachus putaretur. Pro quibus rebus ita sibi omnes commilitones deuinxerat ut eum miro adfectu uenerarentur. (Sulpicius ii.7) [24]

His relationship with his fellow soldiers is not an antagonistic one, yet his actions develop the contrast between earthly and celestial soldier. Already he behaves like an exemplary Christian: "iam illo tempore non miles, sed monachus putaretur." The combining of a good soldier's virtues with the virtues of a good Christian marks Martin as a special type of warrior: a saintly soldier.

Martin's anomalous relationship with his single servant displays one aspect of his Christianity, the humility with which the master serves: "uno tantum seruo comite

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[23] "He was three years under arms before his baptism, yet free from those vices in which such men are commonly involved" (B. Peebles, ed. and trans., *Sulpicius Severus: Writings*, p. 106).

[24] "His kindness toward his fellow soldiers was great, his charity remarkable, and his patience and humility surpassed human measure. There is no need to praise his temperance; it was such that even then he was considered not a soldier, but a monk. These traits served so to attach his fellows to him that their remarkable affection for him amounted to veneration" (B. Peebles, ed. and trans., *Sulpicius Severus: Writings*, p. 106).

contentus, cui tamen uersa uice dominus seruiebat, adeo ut plerumque ei et calciamenta ipse detraheret et ipse detergeret, cibum una caparent, hic tamen saepius ministraret" (Sulpicius ii.5).[25] Unlike the earthly army, God's service accords the officer no luxuries and no exemption from hardship. Sulpicius adds to Martin's subservient relationship with his servant a description of the exemplary treatment he accords his fellow soldiers, so that he seems like a beloved military commander, joining in with his soldiers and sharing the common hardships.[26] Rather than leaving *miles* and *monachus* as contrasting terms, in Martin's case Sulpicius blends the traits of monk and soldier, making him an exemplary figure in both the secular and the spiritual realms.

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[25] "He satisfied himself with the service of a single slave. Yet, by a reversal of roles, it was the master who was the servant. This went so far that Martin generally took off the other's boots, and cleaned them himself. They would take their meals together, Martin, however, usually doing the serving" (B. Peebles, ed. and trans., *Sulpicius Severus: Writings*, pp. 105-06).

[26] Many have seen in this a preparation for Martin's role as bishop and as leader of his communities at Ligugé and at Marmoutier. It is the development of these traits of humility, frugality, kindness etc. within the context of the life of a soldier which makes our reading of the later scenes of monastic discipline as "soldierly" possible. It is Sulpicius's use of the period of Martin's army service as a framing device which makes this association viable. For more on this, see Fontaine, *Vie de Saint Martin*, ii. 461-63; and Christopher Donaldson, *Martin of Tours* (London, 1980), pp. 29-30 and 81-82. Fontaine, *Vie de Saint Martin*, ii. 462, says, "Il a beau présenter comme la manifestation d'une perfection exceptionnelle la conduite de Martin, il montre implicitement que la vie chrétienne et le métier des armes sont parfaitement compatibles, mais encore, et surtout, que l'ascèse monastique trouve réunies, dans ce métier des armes, certaines conditions de vie qui en font comme une image profane de la profession cénobitique", and he says that Sulpicius portrays Martin as "l'ancêstre spirituel d'Ignace de Loyola ou d'Ernest Psichari." Although Sulpicius's trope may imply the compatibility of the Christian life and specific aspects of the soldier, as Fontaine argues, one key aspect of the soldier's profession is not shown to be compatible with Christianity: fighting itself. Sulpicius avoids any direct mention of Martin actually fighting.

Yet nowhere does Martin demonstrate the most exemplary trait of the earthly soldier: bravery in battle. Martin will show his courage not by fighting without fear but by rejecting warfare, because to Sulpicius Martin demonstrates not merely the contrast between the earthly and the spiritual but more specifically that between warfare and sanctity.

The single event from Martin's life most often remembered even today occurs during his period of earthly soldiering: the sharing of his cloak with the freezing beggar outside the gates of Amiens. A memorable scene, illustrating exemplary Christian action, it is also an important part of Sulpicius's treatment of Martin as a saintly soldier. In this scene Martin is already following God's commandments fully, turning the role of soldier on its head. His military service becomes part of Martin's path to sainthood.

The scene begins with a reiteration of Martin's austere way of life. Despite the weather, Martin is himself poorly dressed when he meets the naked beggar:

> Quodam itaque tempore, cum iam nihil praeter arma et simplicem militiae uestem haberet, media hieme quae solito asperior inhorruerat, adeo ut plerosque uis algoris extingueret, obuium habet in porta Ambianensium ciuitatis pauperem nudum. (Sulpicius iii.1) [27]

The stress Sulpicius places on Martin's own sparse dress, "nihil praeter arma et simplicem militiae uestum haberet," builds on an earlier statement describing how Martin gave everything he had to the poor, "nihil sibi ex militiae stipendiis praeter cotidianum uictum

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[27] "One day, at the gate of the city of Amiens, Martin met a poor man who was naked. Martin's clothing was reduced to his armor and his simple military cloak. It was the middle of a winter which had been more severe than usual, and, indeed, many had perished from the extreme cold" (B. Peebles, ed. and trans., *Sulpicius Severus: Writings*, pp. 106-07).

reseruare" (Sulpicius ii.8).[28] In both phrases Martin is said to have *nihil praeter* -- nothing except -- the barest of a soldier's necessities. The contrast between *miles* and *monachus* is repeated, and again the two opposing types merge into one image through Sulpicius's stressing of traits common to both, in the first case loyalty and frugality, in this a life of hardship and deprivation. Fontaine says, "Non seulement l'armée offre à Martin les moyens de se préparer d'une manière exemplaire à son baptême, mais elle lui permet de mener déjà sous les armes le vie de soldat du Christ, -- au sens que les contemporains de Sulpice donnent à cette image: la vie du moine."[29] Martin humbly accepts a life of hardship brought on by his own generosity.

In his willingness to accept the burden of suffering for others, Martin is already an example of the Christian hero to those around him. Others dressed more warmly than he pass by, but Martin, already down to "nihil praeter chlamydem" (Sulpicius iii.2),[30] gives the man half of what remains, cutting it in two with his sword: "arrepto itaque ferro quo accinctus erat, mediam diuidit partemque eius pauperi tribuit, reliqua rursus induitur" (Sulpicius iii.2).[31] The use of his military weapon for such a pious purpose underscores

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[28] "[R]eserving nothing from his army pay beyond his daily sustenance" (B. Peebles, ed. and trans., *Sulpicius Severus: Writings*, p. 106).

[29] J. Fontaine, ed. and trans., *Sulpice Sévère: Vie de saint Martin*, vol. ii, p. 461).

[30] "[N]othing except the cloak" (B. Peebles, ed. and trans., *Sulpicius Severus: Writings*, p. 107).

[31] "Then, drawing the sword which he was wearing, he cut the cloak in two; one part he gave to the pauper; in the other he again dressed himself" (B. Peebles, ed. and trans., *Sulpicius Severus: Writings*, p. 107).

the complexity of the scene, the mundane soldier acting like a soldier of Christ, using a tool made for bloodshed as a means of relieving the suffering of an unfortunate. Some of those who accompany Martin laugh at his gesture, but others react with greater circumspection and understanding.

> Interea de circumstantibus ridere nonnulli, quia deformis esse truncatus habitu uideretur; multi tamen, quibus erat mens sanior, altius gemere, quod nihil simile fecissent, cum utique plus habentes uestire pauperem sine sua nuditate potuissent. (Sulpicius iii.2) [32]

Already leading men to examine their behavior, Martin provides them with a model of Christ-like behavior, turning swords to peaceful, charitable use.

The soldier sharing half of his cloak with a beggar has remained the central image associated with Martin.[33] Stancliffe describes the persistence of the portrait of Martin dividing his soldier's cloak:

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[32] "Meanwhile, some of the bystanders began to laugh, for it was an inelegant figure Martin cut, dressed in half a garment. Yet, many, of saner mind, sighed deeply. When they, who had more to give, might have clothed the pauper without making themselves naked, they had done nothing of the sort" (B. Peebles, ed. and trans., *Sulpicius Severus: Writings*, p. 107).

[33] For a long time a piece of clothing believed to be this cape was retained among the royal treasures of the Merovingians and Carolingians, although there has been some disagreement about whether the relic was this particular cloak, that Martin split with his sword, or another associated with Martin's later life. See J. van den Bosch, *Capa, Basilica, Monasterium*, pp. 8-9. That Martin was associated with war and soldiering is confirmed by this garment's use in wartime by "les armées merovingiennes et carolingiennes," when, according to early accounts reported by van den Bosch, it was carried into battle and was thought to ensure victory: "*En temps de guerre*, elle conduisait les armées françaises au combat; sa présence était à la fois la sauvegarde des Français et la terreur des ennemis; elle assurait la victoire dans les combats" (J. van den Bosch, *Capa, Basilica, Monasterium*, p. 24). The belief that Martin's war-cloak could provide victory in battle shows that, even at an early stage in his cult, the Franks considered Martin a soldier-saint in the sense of functioning as a patron of warriors. The development of this almost

> Today [Martin] is remembered largely for one particular deed which is familiar from medieval carvings and stained-glass windows. In these, Martin the soldier is portrayed in the act of cutting his cloak in half so as to share it with a shivering beggar; ... Martin may there be depicted as an armored knight, mounted on horseback. [34]

Fontaine also comments on the persistence of this image of Martin:

> La recontre de Martin et du pauvre d'Amiens est demeurée la scène la plus universellement célèbre de la *Vita*. Dans la miniature et la statuare, le vitrail et l'estampe, elle allait devenir et rester l'un des thèmes de prédilection de l'art occidental, en particulier dans ses formes populaires. [35]

The scene at Amiens helped Sulpicius portray Martin as a warrior in name only, a saintly soldier already living more like a soldier of Christ than the emperor's soldier, and its persistence as the primary image associated with Martin attests to its effectiveness.

Chapter Three of the *Vita Sancti Martini* ends with another reflection of Martin as saintly soldier. Martin has a vision of Christ appearing before his angelic host dressed in Martin's divided tunic. This is the first sign of God's favor to Martin, showing that Martin

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ironic reversal of roles, from unwilling, saintly soldier to the soldier's patron saint, although pertinent to this study is beyond its scope. The first instance of Martin playing the role of patron saint of soldiers in English culture came in William the Conqueror's dedication of the religious institution commemorating his victory over the Anglo-Saxons at Hastings, Battle Abbey, to St. Martin, an event examined in the final pages of this study.

[34] C. Stancliffe, *St. Martin and His Hagiographer*, p. 1. While the image she describes of Martin "as an armed knight, mounted on horseback" reflects later developments in the veneration of Martin, the source of the image is clearly Sulpicius's *Life*. There is no indication that he is riding a horse in the original, except that he is a member of the *scholares*, a mounted branch of the emperor's guard. The association of Martin with knighthood is connected to this image, and it aided in the development of the popular conception of Martin as God's chosen knight.

[35] J. Fontaine, ed. and trans., *Sulpice Sévère: Vie de saint Martin*, vol. ii, p. 473.

is ready to enter the ranks of the celestial army. Yet Martin does not immediately abandon his earthly military service. He delays his escape from worldly service out of a desire to aid in the conversion of his officer, a man with whom he is closely connected.

> Nec tamen statim militiae renuntiauit, tribuni sui precibus euictus, cui contubernium familiare praestabat : etenim transacto tribunatus sui tempore renuntiaturum se saeculo pollicebatur. Qua Martinus expectatione suspensus per biennium fere posteaquam est baptismum consecutus solo licet nomine militauit. (Sulpicius iii.5-6) [36]

In addition to showing his loyalty and concern for others, Martin's willingness to continue to suffer in a role he longs to reject reveals his willingness for self-sacrifice. The unwilling soldier endures his unwanted role for the good of others in a unique form of the *imitatio christi*, the central topos of all Christian hagiography. The statement that Martin remained a soldier "solo licet nomine" -- in name only -- introduces the final stage in Martin's career as a soldier of the worldly realm when in the pre-battle confrontation with the caesar mentioned earlier in this chapter, Martin renames himself, not a saintly *miles Caesari* but a true *miles Christi*.

If the scene between Martin and the beggar is the best remembered image of Martin as saintly soldier, the confrontation in Chapter Four between Martin and the Caesar Julian the Apostate is the one which most firmly fixes in the text the contrast

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[36] "But he did not immediately renounce military service, won over by the prayers of his tribune, whom Martin accompanied on terms of intimate friendship. This officer promised that he would renounce the world upon the completion of the term of his tribunate. Held in suspense by this expectation, Martin, for about two years after his baptism, remained a soldier, though only in name" (B. Peebles, ed. and trans., *Sulpicius Severus: Writings*, p. 108).

between warfare and sanctity, between the earthly and spiritual soldier. Questions about the historicity of the event, its function in establishing an accurate chronology of Martin's life, and the extent of its borrowings from the *Life of Typasius*, a soldier-martyr, have overshadowed recognition of its significance to the text.[37] Although the scene may present elements of martyrdom, it is an introductory scene not a concluding one. Martin is not martyred; instead he takes the final action that will transform him from saintly soldier into a militant soldier of Christ.

The setting is established quickly and with considerable drama. Barbarians are invading Gaul, and the Caesar Julian is going to issue special pay to his troops in preparation for an impending battle. The men go in front of him one at a time, and Martin, on the spur of the moment, decides to use the meeting between soldier and caesar to ask for release from military service. "Tum uero oportunum tempus existimans, quo peteret missionem -- neque enim integrum sibi fore arbitrabatur, si donatiuum non militaturus acciperet" (Sulpicius iv.2).[38] Martin's intentions, as always, are the best: he cannot accept money on false pretenses. In contrast to the dream of Chapter Three, in which Martin saw his heavenly King face to face, here he faces his earthly ruler and will receive condemnation instead of praise. The encounter itself will be a considerable act of bravery.

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[37] See, for example, C. Lelong, *Vie et culte de Saint Martin*, pp. 23-25.

[38] "He recognized that moment as a suitable time to ask for his discharge, and he did not think it would be honest for him to accept the bonus when he did not intend to fight" (B. Peebles. ed. and trans., *Sulpicius Severus: Writings*, p. 108).

Martin speaks up forthrightly to Julian, establishing clearly his resolution to terminate the conflict of duties he has been facing. "...hactenus, inquit ad Caesarem, militaui tibi; patere ut nunc militem Deo. Donatiuum tuum pugnaturus accipiat; Christi ego miles sum : pugnare mihi non licet" (Sulpicius iv.3).[39] In order to interpret this key passage, which is central to an understanding of Martin's (or at least Sulpicius's) approach to war, one must consider the context carefully. As this dissertation will show, later writers interpreted this scene as a young man embarking on a religious vocation, stating forthrightly his intention to join that special part of the Church who were not allowed to shed blood or carry weapons. It is not at all certain that this is what Sulpicius intended. In a study of St. Maximillian, a young man put to death in 295 for refusing military service, Peter Brock compares Maximilian's stance to Martin's:

> Perhaps even more than in the case of Martin of Tours ... , the inspiration for Maximilian's protest against the military lay in the army's association with bloodshed. For him, the taking of a human life contradicted the Sermon on the Mount. It was this rather than idolatry or immorality which figured as the major 'sin' in military service. His unwillingness to shed blood resulted from a desire to carry out Jesus' commandment to love, which Maximilian regarded as part of the Christian way of life -- and not merely as a counsel of perfection incumbent on a chosen few. [40]

Brock identifies Maximilian's point of view with "the beliefs of a significant section of at least the African church," saying that "Maximilian ... suffered martyrdom as a soldier of

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[39] "'I have fought for you up to this point,' he said to Caesar. 'Now let me fight for God. As for your bonus, let someone who is going to join the battle receive it. I am a soldier of Christ: combat is not permitted me'" (B. Peebles, ed. and trans., *Sulpicius Severus: Writings*, pp. 108-09).

[40] P. Brock, "Why Did St. Maximilian Refuse to Serve in the Roman Army?" p. 209.

Christ, but at the same time he died as a war resister."[41] Martin had been baptized, but he would not enter into any specialized body within the Church for many years to come. Roland Bainton argues that Christians accepted service in the military during the period of Martin's youth, but that fighting itself was forbidden: "This interpretation is strengthened by the example of Martin of Tours, who on conversion remained in the army for two years until an actual battle was imminent, and only then declined to serve."[42] Clare Stancliffe follows this same line of reasoning, pointing out that "given the church's ambivalent attitude to the shedding of blood (even by soldiers in the course of duty), ... a youthful Martin, who had so far escaped fighting since his baptism two years previously, could well have been brought to a moment of decision by, probably, his first taste of war." [43] However, this passage seems to indicate that Martin had previously fought, although Sulpicius mentions no other battles. There is no vagueness about his use of the verb *militare* here (*militaui*) and in the passage quoted above (*militaturus*). Martin is categorically rejecting bloodshed as incompatible with the life of a Christian, but his words tell us more about Sulpicius's intentions than Martin's. Nowhere else does Sulpicius allow the rhetorical stance he has been taking to become so transparent, revealing behind the tale the reality he has been shaping. If Sulpicius had shown Martin actually fighting in a battle it would have undercut the image, so carefully maintained, of Martin as saintly

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[41] P. Brock, "Why Did St. Maximilian Refuse to Serve in the Roman Army?" p. 209.

[42] R. H. Bainton, "The Early Church and War," p. 200. Bainton dates Martin's confrontation 336, thereby placing Martin's military service under Constantine.

[43] C. Stancliffe. *St. Martin and His Hagiographer*. pp. 124-29, at 124.

soldier. It isn't necessary that one accept the "chronologie longue" favored by Fontaine and others to believe that Sulpicius has altered facts to make his subject seem as saintly as possible, even while employed as a soldier.[44] At the same time, the literary quality of the work underscores that Sulpicius is distancing his subject as much as possible from the "sordidness" of warfare. The scene before the battle plays a crucial role in the book as a whole, for in it the theme of the first section of Sulpicius's book has reached its climax. Martin, the unwilling and saintly soldier, has at last formally rejected the role into which he had been unwillingly forced and joined irrevocably the army of God. By directly confronting Julian, Martin risks his life in the same way that Maximillian had in 295, proving his courage and heroism. Only one thing remains: a miracle is needed to prove Martin's acceptance into the heavenly host, while at the same time proving that it is faith, not cowardice, that motivates him.

Sulpicius uses the concept of a bloodless victory to show God providing the final confirmation of Martin's sanctity. Accused of cowardice, Martin declares his willingness to face the barbarian army armed only with the cross. Martin's words to Julian show his warlike courage:

> si hoc, inquit, ignauiae adscribitur, non fidei, crastina die ante aciem inermis adstabo et in nomine Domini Iesu, signo crucis, non clipeo protectus aut galea, hostium cuneos penetrabo securus. (Sulpicius iv.5) [45]

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[44] See note 13 above.

[45] "'If my act is set down to cowardice rather than to faith,' he said, 'I shall stand unarmed tomorrow before our lines. In the name of the Lord Jesus and protected only by the sign of the cross, without shield or helmet, I shall penetrate the enemy's ranks and not be afraid'" (B. Peebles, ed. and trans., *Sulpicius Severus: Writings*, p. 109).

Martin is willing to face battle armed only with the *signo crucis*. Julian accepts, ordering him placed under guard until the battle: "Retrudi ergo in custodiam iubetur, facturus fidem dictis, ut inermis barbaris obiceretur" (Sulpicius iv.6).[46] Not only does this help to present Martin's entire military career as a period of involuntary servitude, as argued earlier, but it also concludes the treatment of Martin as saintly soldier, while at the same time introducing the fourth "anti-war" trope often used in later hagiography: God's granting of a bloodless victory to the saint.

The confrontation is resolved overnight, when the barbarians miraculously sue for peace. Martin has shown his bravery, and by granting a bloodless victory God has shown His acceptance of Martin as His chosen soldier. Sulpicius concludes the chapter with an explanation of the appropriateness of God's action. God could have preserved Martin in the battle as well, but the bloodless and peaceful resolution was more in keeping with Christ's teachings, and more indicative of Martin's status.

> Vnde quis dubitet hanc uere beati uiri fuisse uictoriam, cui praestitum sit ne inermis ad proelium mitteretur. Et quamuis pius Dominus seruare militem suum licet inter hostium gladios et tela potuisset, tamen, ne uel aliorum mortibus sancti uiolarentur obtutus, exemit pugnae necessitatem. Neque enim aliam pro milite suo Christus debuit praestare uictoriam, quam ut, subactis sine sanguine hostibus, nemo moreretur. (Sulpicius iv. 7-9) [47]

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[46] "The order was given that he should be put under guard: he was to make good his promise to be exposed, unarmed, to the barbarians" (B. Peebles, ed. and trans., *Sulpicius Severus: Writings*, p. 109).

[47] "From this can anyone doubt that the victory was due to the blessed man--a grace granted to prevent his being sent unarmed into combat? True, the Lord, in His goodness, could have preserved His soldier even among swords and spears. Yet, to prevent the gaze of the saint from being outraged even by the death of others, He removed the need of

This divine intervention on behalf of "His soldier" foreshadows the innumerable instances of Martin facing violence unscathed; God could, and does, save him from "gladios et tela" throughout his life as Christ's loyal soldier. Sulpicius presents Martin attacked by ax (v.4), felled tree (xiii.6-8), fire (xiv.2), sword (xv.1-2), knife (xv.3-4), and even teeth (xvii.6-7). Christ never abandons his soldier, and Martin never stops fighting for his Lord, overthrowing temples, casting out demons, and marshaling his legions for the great spiritual battle.

The intensity of Sulpicius's portrayal of Martin as a soldier of Christ does fade a bit as the book proceeds. He is never called *miles Christi* again.[48] Yet the opening chapters establish a pattern that the actions of the later scenes confirm: Martin is the perfect model of God's chosen warrior, because his career as soldier, taken on unwillingly, was spent acting like a saint; he eventually rejected the soldier's life, in the process risking his own life; and the only victory he achieves comes through divinely-inspired peace rather than human combat.

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battle. This was exactly the kind of victory Christ ought to have granted for His soldier's sake--a capitulation of the enemy in which no one died and no blood was shed" (B. Peebles, ed. and trans., *Sulpicius Severus: Writings*, p. 109).

[48] He is never called soldier of Christ again in the *vita*, but Sulpicius uses the image of Martin as a soldier fighting for the Lord in a number of scenes in the letters and dialogues. See for example the 24th chapter of the Dialogue with Postumianus, in which Martin's struggles as a bishop are contrasted with the anchorites and desert fathers fighting free of entanglements and the soldier of Christ image is used to explain Martin's glorified role.

III

Despite the importance to Sulpicius's work of the four topoi analyzed above (namely, the unwilling soldier, the saintly soldier, the saint's formal rejection of warfare, and the bloodless victory), the earliest Anglo-Saxon translations or adaptations of the *Vita Sancti Martini* downplay or leave out these aspects of Sulpicius's image of Martin. Only in the Old English lives of St. Martin written by Ælfric around the year 1000, in a shorter version included in his *Sermones Catholici* and in a longer version appearing in the *Lives of Saints*, do these tropes come through clearly, being most faithfully reproduced in the longer work. No other Anglo-Saxon treatment of Martin's life fully incorporates Sulpicius's image of Martin as the unwilling, saintly soldier who formally rejects warfare and is therefore granted a bloodless victory. Carl Erdmann's study of a gradual shift away from the anti-war conception of Christianity (displayed in Sulpicius's work) toward an ever-increasing sanctification of war by the papacy and other forces within continental Christianity would lead one to expect the earliest Anglo-Saxon translations and adaptations of the *Vita Sancti Martini* to preserve the tropes of the unwilling warrior best, and those closest to the eleventh-century preaching of the Crusades to have altered those same tropes the most.[49] However, the Anglo-Saxon Martin materials seem to present the

[49] C. Erdmann, *The Origin of the Idea of Crusade*, is mostly based on continental sources, although he includes a few references to English texts and historical events, most notably Bede's account of the life, death, and cult of St. Oswald, king of Northumbria (see Chapter Two below), and the *Passio Sancti Eadmundi* of Abbo of Fluery, written for the English church during the author's sojourn in England, (and discussed in detail in Chapter

reverse pattern: although the earliest works do not preserve the tropes, or distort them, the latest works preserve them most accurately.

The coherence of this pattern is, however, illusory. The first major Anglo-Saxon work devoted to Martin, Alcuin's "Scriptum de Vita S. Martini Turonensis," is a work of the late eighth century or early ninth century, and therefore not representative of the earliest Anglo-Saxon period, the end of which can be conveniently associated with Bede's death in 735. The earliest Anglo-Saxon lives of saints show a mixture of approaches to warfare and sanctity, but in general hagiographers only portrayed royal saints actually engaging in warfare, as will become increasingly evident over the course of this study. Men of Martin's station in life (that is, common soldiers or warriors of non-kingly status) achieved sainthood by rejecting earthly conflicts in favor of the role of soldier of Christ. The accuracy of Ælfric's translations of Sulpicius reflect the specific conditions of the late tenth and early eleventh centuries, as well as the scholarly and spiritual concerns of the translator himself. In fact, in the earlier of Ælfric's two translations he actually increases the anti-war tone of Sulpicius's tropes while in his last work he modified that tone.[50] What is most significant about the variations evident in the Anglo-Saxon lives of Martin is the record they provide of individual writers responding to the issues presented in the *Vita Martini*. Different writers responded to Sulpicius's tropes in different ways, reflecting

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Five below). Erdmann's inclusion of Anglo-Saxon materials within a study of continental historical trends distorts the significance of these texts.

[50] Reasons for this change of tone will be examined more fully in Chapter Six.

personal idiosyncrasies as well as the changing conditions of Anglo-Saxon society over its five centuries of existence.

Anglo-Saxon treatments of Martin's life include two brief passages in Aldhelm's seventh-century, compendious *De Virginitate*; the Latin version of Martin's life written by Alcuin in the late eighth century; a brief account of Martin's life which appears in the *Old English Martyrology* written sometime before 900; an anonymous Old English life of Martin, probably written around the middle of the tenth century, extant in three versions, in the Vercelli Book, the Blickling Homiliary, and in one of the Junius manuscripts; and the two full-length lives of Martin written by Ælfric around the year 1000.

IV

The earliest extant treatments of St. Martin's life in Anglo-Saxon literature are Aldhelm's paired prose and poetic versions of *De Virginitate*. Since the organizing principle of this work is virginity, Aldhelm presents Martin as more a virgin than a militant soldier of Christ, and the image of Martin as unwilling, saintly soldier is altogether absent.

Aldhelm does not mention Martin's youthful soldiering at all in the earlier, prose version of his work. The angels who come to Martin's aid in destroying a pagan temple are the only figures who bear arms, "qui hastati et scutati famulo Dei praesidium laturi venisse leguntur,"[51] and in the crucial scene before the gates of Amiens, Aldhelm identifies Martin as a catechumen and not a soldier: "in catacuminorum gradu et competentium statu." [52] Martin is presented as an active servant of Christ, but not even an echo remains of Sulpicius's image of Martin as unwilling, saintly soldier.

In the later, poetic version of *De Virginitate* Aldhelm again makes no mention of the time Martin spent as a soldier. However, here Aldhelm does echo certain concerns identified as motivating Sulpicius's portrait of Martin. The passage reads:

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[51] Aldhelm, *Aldhelmi Opera*, p. 262. "[W]ho are said to have come armed with spears and shields to bring aid to the servant of God" (M. Lapidge and M. Herren, trans., *Aldhelm: The Prose Works*, p. 85).

[52] Aldhelm, *Aldhelmi Opera*, p. 260. "[I]n the grade of a catechumen and with the status of those suitable to be baptized)" (M. Lapidge and M. Herren, trans., *Aldhelm: The Prose Works*, p. 85).

Quamlibet expertus non esset vulnera ferri
Umquam nec rubro roraret sanguine martyr
Aut etiam diris arsisset torribus ignis,
Attamen illustrem meruit confessio palmam,
Dum mens parta fuit mortis discrimina ferre.
Hic praesul iugitur permansit virgo perennis,
Donec aetheream miles migraret in aulam
Angelicis vectus caeli ad convexa catervis. [53]

This passage confirms the problem an unmartyred soldier posed for hagiographers like Sulpicius. Not only does Aldhelm describe Martin as deserving of sainthood despite his never having suffered martyrdom, he calls him *miles* in the final lines, presumably meaning *miles christi*, as Lapidge and Rosier indicate in their translation of this passage ["he, a soldier (of Christ), departed"],[54] but perhaps also in recognition that, despite Aldhelm's apparent exclusion of the subject, a well-read audience in Aldhelm's day would have recognized in Martin both soldier of Christ and also earthly soldier, albeit a saintly soldier who had neither shed his own or anyone else's blood. This is, however, only the faintest of echoes. Striving for compression in both the prose and poetic versions of *De Virginitate* and having as his subject virginity as a specific form of saintliness, Aldhelm did not develop the images of Martin with which we are concerned.

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[53] Aldhelm, *Aldhelmi Opera*, p. 382. "Although Martin was never known to have experienced the wounds of a sword nor as a martyr to have shed red blood nor even to have been burned with hideous firebrands, nevertheless his confession (of Christ) merited the illustrious palm-branch, since his spirit was prepared to endure the dangers of death. This bishop continually remained an unfailing virgin, until he, a soldier (of Christ), departed to the heavenly court, borne aloft by angelic hosts to the vault of heaven" (M. Lapidge and J. L. Rosier, trans., *Aldhelm: The Poetic Works*, p. 118).

[54] M. Lapidge and J. L. Rosier, trans., *Aldhelm: The Poetic Works*, p. 118.

V

The earliest detailed Anglo-Saxon retelling of Martin's life-story is Alcuin's "Scriptum de Vita S. Martini Turonensis."[55] In this late-eighth or early ninth-century work, Alcuin eliminates the tropes Sulpicius developed in his *Vita* and replaces them with images of Martin more in keeping with the views of Carolingian society. Research into Alcuin's life and works has produced very little commentary on this text, perhaps because it seems to be a mere reworking of Sulpicius's longer *Life*, but as the following brief study will show, Alcuin's *Vita* is an original work in many ways.[56] Presumably written while he was abbot of Tours between 796 and his death in 804, the "Scriptum" would have served to reinterpret Martin for Alcuin's contemporaries in Tours.

Alcuin alters the image of Martin as an unwilling warrior. Martin joins the army not because of a law requiring the sons of veterans to follow in their father's footsteps, as

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[55] Alcuin, "Scriptum de Vita S. Martini Turonensis." All translations of this text are my own.

[56] Recent work on Alcuin's Life of Martin includes F. M. Biggs, "Alcuin: *Vita S. Martini*"; and F. M. Biggs, "Ælfric as Historian." In this latter study, which came into my hands after this chapter had been written, Biggs provides an edition of a version of Alcuin's work (which he calls the *Laudationes*) drawn from Pembroke College, Cambridge, MS 25 that is longer, and in places radically different, than that analyzed in the present study. If this is a more accurate version of Alcuin's original work (which is not certain), some points of contrast between Sulpicius's and Alcuin's works made in this chapter would be significantly altered. Time does not allow me to analyze differences between the text studied in the body of this dissertation and that printed in Biggs's edition.

in Sulpicius, but rather because his noble birth requires it, and instead of chains he is bound by the swordbelt of military service: "militæque cingulo, a præside Juliano ... juxta parentum suorum nobilitatem, est addictus."[57] Martin is a noble youth pledged to join the retinue or comitatus of a war-leader, rather than the son of an army veteran ignominiously conscripted into the caesar's army.[58] The trope of the unwilling warrior has been replaced by a new trope: the frustrated call to a spiritual vocation. The nature of warfare and the

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[57] Alcuin, "Scriptum de Vita S. Martini Turonensis," p. 657. "And he was pledged to the military belt by the ruler Julian because of the nobility of his parents."

[58] The status of Martin's father is a complicated question. Sulpicius calls him "tribunus" during the later part of his career, but, as Jacques Fontaine has pointed out, this term did not mean the same thing during the time of Martin as it had during earlier stages in Roman history.

Officiers supérieurs dans les légions de l'époque républicaine, les tribuns militaires ont sans doute été recrutés, sous le Haut Empire, parmi les fils de famille qui commençaient une carrière sénatoriale ou équestre. Mais peu à peu, ce recrutement s'est beaucoup plus largement ouvert à des catégories sociales plus modestes: affranchis, pérégrins, employés subalternes, noblesse des municipes, enfin--comme Sulpice l'assure ici pour le père de Martin --simple soldats. En même temps, le titre s'était etendu à tous les chefs de corps de l'armée active, fût-ce d'un simple détachement. (J. Fontaine, ed. and trans., *Sulpice Sévère: Vie de saint Martin*, vol. ii, pp. 436-37). Later works follow Alcuin in elevating the status of Martin's father. See for example S. Farmer, *Communities of St. Martin*, pp. 167-173, esp. 169, n. 34.

Martin's own status certainly resembled the role of a thane in the comitatus of an Anglo-Saxon king only in the broadest sense. His service is in the *scholae*, "Ipse armatam militiam in adulescentia secutus, inter scholares alas sub rege Constantio, deinde sub Iuliano Caesare militauit" (Sulpicius ii.2). According to Fontaine:

> Avec les "comitatenses" qui escortaient l'empereur, les "palatini" qui étaient une sorte de "garde impériale" au sens napoléonien, les *scholares*, cavalerie d'élite, surtout, mais non exclusivement, recrutée parmi les Germains, appartenaient aux troupes de cavalerie à la disposition personnelle de l'empereur. Ces "alae", -- fortes d'abord de 1000, puis de 500 hommes --, des "scholae palatinae", ètaient une création de Constantin. Garde personelle de l'empereur, à la cour comme sur le champ de bataille elle suivait partout sa personne. (J. Fontaine, ed. and trans., *Sulpice Sévère: Vie de saint Martin*, vol. ii, p. 441)

constitution of the "imperial" army had changed fundamentally between the fourth-century Late Antique world of Martin and Sulpicius and the eighth-century Anglo-Saxon/Carolingian world of Alcuin. Alcuin's and Sulpicius's texts also reflect different attitudes toward the relationship between warfare and sanctity.

Not only does Alcuin shift the induction of Martin into the army away from Sulpicius's image of Martin as unwilling warrior, he also eliminates almost all other references to Martin's life as a soldier. As in Aldhelm, it is as a catechumen, not as a soldier, that Martin performs his first act of Christian heroism before the gates of Amiens.[59] Also like Aldhelm, Alcuin provides one oblique reminder that Martin is still a soldier in the way he describes angels, in this case the angelic host seen in Martin's dream: it is an army, "exercitus," of angels, in contrast to Julian's earthly army. Alcuin significantly reduces the war-related tropes employed by Sulpicius.

In Alcuin's text, the primary contrast is not between the sordid, sinful life of the soldier and the pure and sinless life of the saint, but rather between the duties and allegiances of an imperial soldier and those of a soldier of Christ:

> Sed vir sanctus magis elegit Deo coelesti servire, quam sub imperatore militare terreno; qui specialiter electus est, ut vexillum sanctæ crucis occiduas orbis portaret in partes, ex militiæ sacramenta evangelicis mutaret edictis: non pro regno armis sæcularibus certare Romano, sed specialibus doctrinis Christianum dilatare imperium; nec dura Romanorum lege populos subjicere feroces, sed leve Christi jugum plurimarum collo injicere gentium.[60]

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[59] "[C]um adhuc catechumenus esset" (Alcuin, "Scriptum de Vita S. Martini Turonensis," p. 659): "when he still was a catechumen."

[60] Alcuin, "Scriptum de Vita S. Martini Turonensis," p. 659. "But the holy man chose rather to serve the God of heaven than to fight under an earthly emperor. He was expressly chosen to carry the sign of the holy cross into the western parts of the world that

Alcuin doesn't contrast the violent and headstrong soldier with the peaceful and patient saint, but the kingdom of Christ with the Roman empire. Although this contrast has interesting implications for an understanding of Alcuin as a member of Charlemagne's court, it sidesteps the question of the legitimacy of Christian warfare. That a scholar like Alcuin should have missed the point of Sulpicius's anti-war rhetoric seems highly unlikely; rather he chose to produce a work more in keeping with his own Anglo-Saxon training and Carolingian patronage.[61]

Most conspicuously absent is Martin's confrontation with Julian before the Battle of Worms and the miraculous peace that followed. Martin's renunciation of arms with the words, "Christi ego miles sum; pugnare mihi non licet" (Sulpicius iv.3), does not appear in Alcuin's "Scriptum," nor does the achievement of a bloodless victory. Neither image of Martin would have reflected the ideology Charlemagne's court.

Alcuin also went much further than Sulpicius in developing the martial qualities of Martin's sainthood. After leaving Julian's army without repudiating warfare in any way, Alcuin's Martin trades in his symbolic military belt for a suit of spiritual armor.[62] Martin then joins Bishop Hilary as an active fighter for Christ:

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he might change from the oaths of armies to those of the apostles. Not to fight with secular arms on behalf of the kingdom of the Romans, but to enlarge the domain of the beautiful doctrine of Christ, nor to subdue barbarian peoples with the unyielding law of the Romans but to coax the neck of many nations into the mild yoke of Christ."

[61] For examination of the relatively pro-war stance held by Alcuin in other works, see Chapter Five below.

[62] Ephesians 6. 11-17; Jerome. *Vita Sancti Pauli* 8 .

> cujus disciplinis se sanctus Martinus, post relictum militiæ cingulum, sociavit, ut tanti viri eruditus exemplis Christianam fortior processisset ad pugnam, fidei armatus galea, et lorica justitiæ accinctus, gladio verbi Dei armatus, intrepidus contra omnia tela maligni bellator muniretur. [63]

Alcuin also adds a description of Martin fighting vigorously against the heresy of Arianism:

> Hic vir florem adolescentiæ suæ Mediolana transegit in urbe, quam tunc temporis Ariana...multum maculavit perfidia; cui sanctus Martinus ut fortis athleta Christi viriliter restitit.... [64]

In these passages Alcuin boosts Martin's heroic stature by associating him with the strength and fortitude of the soldier, presenting a Martin who chooses a higher form of heroism rather than one who rejects the sordidness and impiety of the secular soldier's profession of arms.

Thus, of the four tropes associated with Martin's soldiering in the *Vita Sancti Martini*, Alcuin employs only one: his Martin is reluctant to be a soldier. Yet his reluctance to serve is motivated not by his opposition to warfare, but by his frustrated call

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[63] Alcuin, "Scriptum de Vita S. Martini Turonensis," p. 659. "Whose disciplines the holy man joined after having surrendered the military belt, so that, enlightened by the learned examples of many men, he might more mightily advance into the Christian struggle, and as a warrior be armored with the helmet of faith, girded with the breastplate of justice, and armed with the sword of the word of God, intrepid against all the weapons of the Evil One."

[64] Alcuin, "Scriptum de Vita S. Martini Turonensis," p. 659. "This man spent the flower of his youth in the city of Milan, which in those times Arian treacheries severely stained, and which the holy Martin as a strong athlete of Christ resisted manfully." For a discussion of Martin's association with anti-Arianism, see R. Van Dam, "Images of Saint Martin," esp. pp. 13-14.

to a spiritual vocation, a conflict no more particular to the warrior than to any other member of society. He is not shown acting like a saint while still in the army, and he neither rejects warfare nor gains a bloodless victory.

In his study of the growth of Christian theological support for war, *The Just War in the Middle Ages*, Frederick Russell stresses the important role played by Charlemagne's court circle in the justification of war: "Charlemagne's far-reaching imperial program of religious, moral and political authority was celebrated by his court scholars, who linked the expansion of Christianity and the interests of the clergy to Charlemagne's various wars." [65] Alcuin's revision of the life of Martin would have played a part in muting criticism of wars undertaken by Christian kings on behalf of the growth and stability of Christendom. According to I Deug-Su, author of the most comprehensive study of Alcuin's hagiographic works, *L'Opera Agiografica di Alcuino*, Alcuin's "Scriptum" gives no indication of having been written for any specific audience, disputing a claim by Jean Chélini that it shows signs of having been aimed at powerful laymen and foreign priests. [66] To what extent Alcuin brought to the international coterie of intellectuals responsible for the Carolingian Renaissance an already fully developed Anglo-Saxon ideology of support for wars "justified by [a Christian king's] authority and ecclesiastical purposes" will be

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[65] F. H. Russell, *The Just War in the Middle Ages*, pp. 28-29.

[66] I Deug-su, *L'Opera agiografica di Alcuino*, p. 174, and n. 21. I Deug-su cites J. Chélini, "Alcuin, Charlemagne et Saint-Martin de Tours," p. 39. See also J. Chélini, "Des laïcs dans la société ecclésiastique carolingienne"; J. Chélini, *La Vie religieuse des laïcs dans l'Europe carolingienne*.

explored in greater depth in the following chapters.[67]

[67] F. H. Russell, *The Just War in the Middle Ages*, p. 29.

VI

A typically Anglo-Saxon account of Martin's life appears in the *Old English Martyrology*, a calendar of saints-days with short readings.[68] As in Aldhelm's work, the nature of this text dictated compression. The longest entries are between two hundred and three hundred words, the shortest twenty words or less. Martin is covered in an entry of moderate length, just over one hundred and fifty words, with a few points highlighted, none of them directly related to his years as a soldier. The martyrologist features the splitting of the cloak at Amiens, but he leaves out all the details identifying Martin as a soldier:

> On þone endlyftan dæg þæs monðes bið sancti Martines gewytenys þæs halgan byceopes, þæs lichama resteð on þære mægðe þe is nemned Gallia ond on þære ceastre Tornonice þa we nemnad Turnum. sancti Martynes æryste wundor wæs þæt him com ongean an þearfende man nacod on cealdum wyntra; þa tocearf he hys scyccel on twa ond þa hyne gesealde healfne pam þearfendum men, ond myd healfum hr hyne sylfne eft gegyrede. ond þa þære ylcan nyht ætywde ure dryhten hyne hym on þam ylcan gegyrlan þe he þam þearfendum men ær gesealde ond cwæd: ongit nu þysne gegyrlan.[69]

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[68] *An Old English Martyrology*, from which quotations and translations are taken.

[69] "On the eleventh day of the month is the departure of St. Martin, the holy bishop, whose body rests in the country called Gaul in *castra Turonica*, which we call Tours. St. Martin's first miracle was that when he met a needy man naked in a cold winter, he cut his cloak into two parts, gave one half to the poor man, and with the other he clothed himself again. In the same night, our Lord appeared to him in the same garment that he had given the poor man before and said: 'Now look at this garment'" (*An Old English Martyrology*, pp. 204-05).

Like Aldhelm and Alcuin, the Old English martyrologist ignores Martin's worldly status, not even mentioning that Martin was a catechumen.

The anonymous martyrologist's exclusion of details related to Martin's life in the army does not reflect any general reluctance to refer to the worldly careers of unmartyred saints. Many other saints he included in the *Martyrology* had also been soldiers, and he often includes details about their military service. An example is the entry immediately following Martin's, another observance for the 11th of November:

> On þone ylcan dæg byð twegra haligra wera tyd þa wæron nemnede sanctus Minas ond sanctus Eliodorus. þa wæron ærest caseres cempan, on hyg gelyfdon eft on Crist ond for hym martyrdom þrowedon on Dioclitianus dagum þæs caseres; ond se heretoga wæs nemned Pyrrus, he het hig beheafdian for Cristes geleafan. [70]

Like Martin, Mennas and Heliodorus served as imperial soldiers -- *caseres cempan* -- but unlike Martin they were military martyrs. The martyrologist honors many other military martyrs. For example, the March 4 entry for St. Adrian says, "se wæs þæs caseres þegnscipes ealdorman, þe Maximianus wæs nemned."[71] The entry for March 9 describes how the Forty Soldiers "wæron strange weras ond sigefæste on woroldgefeohtum, ond hwæðre arwyrdlice gode herdon."[72] St. Vitalis, whose feastday was April 28, "wæs ærest

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[70] "On the same day [November 11] is the festival of two holy men who were called St. Mennas and St. Heliodorus. They were first soldiers of the emperor, and afterwards they believed in Christ and suffered martyrdom for his sake in the days of the emperor Diocletian. The commander who ordered them to be beheaded for the faith of Christ was named Pyrrhus" (*An Old English Martyrology*, pp. 204-05).

[71] "[H]e was commander of the troops of the emperor Maximianus" (*An Old English Martyrology*, pp. 33-36.

caseres cæmpa under Paulino þæm deman on Rauenna þære ceastre, ac he gelyfde on Crist ond oðre men lærde to Cristes geleafan."[73] In all, twelve entries refer to saints as soldiers, although in some cases the word *cempa* may be metaphoric, as *miles* appears to have been in the Aldhelm passage on Martin.

The martyrologist does not refer to a period of earthly warfare in the entries on other soldier saints besides Martin. For example, he does not mention St. Sebastian's role as commander in the army of Diocletian, nor does he identify St. George as a military leader. He provides numerous entries of English provenance, but only in the case of Eastorwine does he describe his subject as a former soldier, although more than one of the others had been warriors. However, not enough is known about the origins of each entry in this collection to make any generalizations based on these contrasts.

The martyrologist's source for the Martin entry cannot be clearly established. Günter Kotzor argues that the *OEM*, rather than being a direct translation of some Latin narrative martyrology, "is a work of more independence and originality than the Latin martyrologies derived from Bede, and a work quite distinct from Bede's text in its style and presentation of detail."[74] The Martin entry does differ markedly from Bede's brief

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[72] "[W]ere strong men and victorious in worldly battles, and yet they followed God reverently" (*An Old English Martyrology*, pp. 36-37).

[73] "[W]as first a soldier of the emperor under the consul Paulinus in the town of Ravenna, but then he believed in Christ and converted other people to the Christian faith" (*An Old English Martyrology*, pp. 66-67).

[74] G. Kotzor, "The Latin Tradition of Martyrologies," p. 322.

entry, "Natale Sancti Martini episcopi, Turonis."[75] The incidents chosen for inclusion in the *OEM* entry therefore appear to reflect the interests of the anonymous Anglo-Saxon martyrologist himself. It may be that the martyrologist knew so much more about Martin than other soldier saints that the period of time he spent as a soldier seemed unimportant. The entry does not merely recount the most important facts of Martin's life, however. The last scene included in the entry is not taken from Sulpicius's *Vita Sancti Martini*:

> ond an scyp wæs syncende on sæ for anum myclum storme : þa genemde þæra scipmanna an sanctus Martinus ond hyne bæd hylpes. þa stylde se storm sona, ond seo sæ wearð eft smylte, ond hig comon gesunde to hyðe. [76]

This account is not a part of Martin's *vita* proper, but rather a miracle illustrating Martin's continuing power to intercede in the lives of men. It seems to be taken from the fourteenth chapter of Sulpicius's *Third Dialogue*, or it may be a much abridged version of the story in Gregory of Tours' *Libri de virtutubus sancti Martini episcopi* I.9, concerning Baudinus, Bishop of Tours (546-552). It is also similar to another account by Gregory in his *Historia Francorum* in which a ship is saved from sinking by Gregory's possession of unidentified relics of Martin and other unnamed saints and is a familiar hagiographic topos ultimately derived from the biblical account of Jesus calming the waters. [77] Its inclusion in the highly compressed form of the narrative martyrology emphasizes Martin's ongoing

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[75] H. Quentin, *Les Martyrologes historiques du Moyen Age*, p. 55.

[76] "A ship was sinking at sea in a great storm; then one of the shipmen named St. Martin and prayed for his help. Then the storm soon abated, and the sea became calm again, and they came to the port in safety" (*An Old English Martyrology*, pp. 204-05).

power to work wonders, and the choice of a miracle involving a boat in a storm is consistent with the concerns of a sea-going people like the Anglo-Saxons. It seems likely that the Martin entry is the original creation of the Old English Martyrologist, or, if a translation from Latin, that the translated text was of English provenance. Whatever the source of the *OEM* entry on Martin, it reflects none of the concerns about the relationship between warfare and sanctity developed at length by Sulpicius.

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[77] See Van Dam, Raymond, trans., "The Miracles of the Bishop St. Martin," pp. 210-11; L. Thorpe, trans., *The History of the Franks*, viii.14, p. 444.

VII

The anonymous tenth-century homily on the life of Martin that appears in the Vercelli, Blickling, and Junius homily collections follows the pattern of Alcuin's *Scriptum* in some ways, reducing or eliminating the conflict between warfare and sanctity and substituting instead an opposition between the secular and the spiritual.[78] However, the anonymous homilist does present Martin as an reluctant warrior living more like a monk than a soldier, albeit in muted tones. Like Alcuin, he shifts the trope of the unwilling warrior toward that of a frustrated spiritual vocation, and he eliminates Martin's rejection of warfare and God's granting of a bloodless victory.

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[78] All quotations from the homily are taken from D. G. Scragg's "Homily XVIII," unless otherwise indicated. This is the most recent and most authoritative edition of the homily, although I have consistently compared Scragg's version with the edition of the Vercelli homily in Paul E. Szarmach's "Homily XVIII: De Sancto Martino Confessore," and editions of the Blickling version in J. H. Hamilton, ed. "A Critical Edition of the Blickling Homily on St. Martin of Tours," and in R. Morris's "To Sancte Martines Maessan." I have found no edition of the Junius version of the homily, but it can be reconstructed from the notes in the editions above and in A. S. Napier, "Notes on the Blickling Homilies." According to Scragg, the existence of "a number of Latin tags" preserved in the Blickling and Junius manuscripts represents "slight evidence that the abstraction [in VBJ] from the ultimate sources [Sulpicius's *Vita Martini* and *Dialogi*] was in Latin," since all the Latin tags are translated in the text and one such tag is not to be found in the works of Sulpicius, and therefore "it is possible that the Old English is, throughout, a literal translation of a lost Latin work" ("Homily XVIII," p. 290). There are substantive differences between the texts (see note 89 below). While these facts undercut a concept of unitary authorship, since the Old English versions may be scribal variants at some remove from an original translation from Latin, they are treated in this analysis as a single text, except when variants present significant differences in meaning.

The homily *De Sancto Martino Confessore* (hereafter VBJ= Vercelli/ Blickling/ Junius) presents Martin first as a youth torn between secular and spiritual vocations. After explaining that Martin was of noble birth, although his parents were not Christians, the anonymous homilist says that Martin therefore associated while still a youth with the king's thanes:[79] "Þa sceolde he, sanctus Martinus, nyde beon sona on his giogoðhade on geferræddenne cyninges þegna, 7 he wæs on Co[n]stantines dæge 7 þa eft on Juliannus dæge, þæs caseres."[80] Like Alcuin, the anonymous homilist places Martin in a familiar context.[81] Lacking a standing army like that of imperial Rome, Anglo-Saxon society

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[79] The assumption underlying this version of Martin's background differs markedly from the "facts" presented by Sulpicius. Sulpicius does not state that Martin's parents were nobility, but rather that he comes from "parentibus secundum saeculi dignitatem non infimis, gentilibus tamen" (Sulpicius ii.1). In his commentary, Jacques Fontaine argues that Sulpicius employs this convoluted description of Martin's social status in response to, and in competition with, the claims for the Christianity and nobility of Saint Anthony in Athanasius's *Vita Antonii*. Since Sulpicius's hero comes from a pagan family of the military class: "Double infériorité pour Martin: double avantage marqué par Antoine! Au 'nobilibus religiosisque' sereinement noté par Athanase, Sulpice ne peut répondre que par une litote et une antithèse contournées, en appréciant 'sub specie aeternitatis' la relative modestie de leur rang social" (J. Fontaine, ed. and trans., *Sulpice Sévère: Vie de saint Martin*, vol. ii. p. 436). Fontaine's argument does not imply a conscious distortion when later readers presumed a noble background for Martin; if Fontaine is right, Sulpicius intended readers to infer nobility while he stopped short of making a claim he knew to be false.

[80] "Homily XVIII," p. 292. "Then he, St. Martin, had to be in his youth, by necessity, directly in fellowship with the thanes of the king. And he became (such) in the days of Constantine...., and then, again, in the days of the emperor Julian" (L. Edman, trans., "Vercelli Homily XVIII," p. 117).

[81] Marcia Dalbey comments on the use of the word "thane" here and elsewhere in VBJ, contrasting it with Ælfric's use of the word *cempa* in his own works on the life of Martin (on which see below), saying, "Although no great difference exists, denotatively, between *cempa* and *þegn*, the meaning of *cempa* is far more limited. *Cempa* is simply "soldier";

expected military service in the king's *fyrd* of all free men in times of need, with the exception of those who had chosen the spiritual path. When not on campaign, members of the *fyrd* would return to their own occupations. Martin's association with the king's thanes would be an Anglo-Saxon context plausibly supporting the plot of the *Vita*: as a thane he would serve more or less continually, rather than periodically, and familial pressure on an elder son of the thanely class to remain in the king's service would seem natural. Thus we can trace many of the differences between the accounts of Sulpicius and the anonymous Anglo-Saxon homilist in regard to Martin's military service to cultural and societal changes in the nature of warfare itself.

There is a noticeable difference in the underlying dichotomies Sulpicius and the anonymous homilist develop. In VBJ, Martin does not wish to take up any worldly or secular occupation, "Nalles þæt he his willan on þam woruldfolgode wære."[82] Instead he prefers service to God, "Godes þeowdom mycle swiðor lufode."[83] So far this author is faithfully following Sulpicius; however, in Sulpicius Martin prefers service to God over military service, but in VBJ he prefers service to God over the joys and riches of this

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þegn refers to any kind of service, including, but not limited to, military service" (M. Dalbey, "The Good Shepherd and the Soldier of God," p. 424). This contrast agrees with the analysis presented here, that the author or authors of VBJ shifted emphasis away from the military nature of Martin's youthful career toward the broader sense of secular employment.

[82] "Homily XVIII," p. 292. "Not at all would his desire be in worldly occupations" (L. Edman, trans., "Vercelli Homily XVIII," p. 117).

[83] "Homily XVIII," p. 292. "[H]e [loved]...the service of God...very much more" (L. Edman. trans., "Vercelli Homily XVIII," p. 117).

world, "þonne þa dreamas 7 þa welan þysse worulde."[84] This additional phrase reflects a shift away from Sulpicius's anti-martial focus, in which it is violence itself that the saint is rejecting, toward a more general resistance to "woruldfolgode" (worldly employment). The homilist uses this term again in describing how Martin "þa he wæs .x. wintre, þa tihton hine his yldran to woruldfolgode" in response to which "fleah he to Godes circian 7 bæd þæt hine man þær gecristnode."[85] The idea that Martin fled to the church because his parents wished him to take up a worldly profession has no support in Sulpicius, who says merely, "Nam cum esset annorum decem, inuitis parentibus ad ecclesiam confugit seque catechumenum fieri postulauit" (Sulpicius ii.3).[86] The anonymous homilist, or some no longer extant source on which he was relying, has supplied a motive for Martin's flight to the church at the age of ten: his opposition to taking up a secular calling. It may be that in tenth-century England a youth destined for service as a king's thane would normally begin the process with some particular step at this age, as in the later medieval elevation of a youth to the role of squire. If so, this may be another instance of cultural and social differences causing changes in the two texts, but whatever the reason, the opposition

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[84] "Homily XVIII," p. 292. "[T]han the joys and riches of this world" (L. Edman, trans., "Vercelli Homily XVIII," p. 117).

[85] "Homily XVIII," p. 292. "And when he was ten ... , his parents intended him for a worldly occupation. He then fled to the Church of God and there prayed that one should christen him" (L. Edman, trans., "Vercelli Homily XVIII," p. 117).

[86] "When he was ten years old, against the wish of his parents, he took refuge in a church and demanded to be made a catechumen" (B. Peebles, ed. and trans., *Sulpicius Severus: Writings*, p. 105).

presented is thus, as in Alcuin, between the spiritual and the secular, rather than between warfare and sanctity. The trope of the unwilling warrior has so far been replaced by the frustrated call to a spiritual vocation.

Martin's induction into the army follows Sulpicius's portrait of the unwilling warrior, except that the key image of Martin dragged off to service in chains is gone. The passage also strongly reflects its Anglo-Saxon context:

> Þa he wæs xv. wintra, þa genyddon hie hine, his yldran, to þon þæt he sceolde wæpnum onfon, 7 on cyninges þegna geferræddenne beon. Ða wæron þreo gear ær his fulwihte þæt he woruldlicu wæpen wæg. [87]

Once again, the role of Germanic thane replaces that of Roman soldier. There is also a strong resonance between the phrase "woruldlicu wæpen" used here and the earlier repetitions of the phrase "woruldfolgode." In the Blickling version of this passage, the echo is even stronger, since the first mention of weapons is there expanded to "woruldlicum wæpnum" and the second supplies the word "woroldwæpno."[88] The emphasis on the worldliness of the weapons serves to reinforce the contrast between secular and spiritual, while the repeated stress on the weapons themselves implies at least a rudimentary conception of a conflict between warfare and sanctity. Though not fully developed, the trope of the unwilling warrior does come through in the homily.

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[87] "Homily XVIII," p. 292. "When he was fifteen ... , his parents compelled him to take up weapons and be in the fellowship of the king's thanes. It was (during the) three years before his baptism that he bore worldly weapons" (L. Edman, trans., "Vercelli Homily XVIII," p. 117).

[88] "Homily XVIII," p. 292. nn. 22 and 24.

Once he is a soldier, the Martin of VBJ acts more like a saint than a warrior, although the topos of the saintly soldier is not fully developed. The many examples and elaborations of Martin's exemplary behavior as a soldier are reproduced in VBJ, and of the four tropes we have identified in Sulpicius, this is the one most faithfully repeated in *De Sancto Martino Confessore*. Yet there is still a shift in emphasis. For example, the homilist says, "7 þeah þe he þa gyt on læwedum hade beon sceolde, 7 hwæðre he to þæs mycle forhæfdnesse hæfde on eallum þingum þæt he munuclif 7 git swiðo[r] lifde þonne sume gehadode men."[89] This characterization preserves elements of the topos of the saintly soldier, but the Old English phrase *læwedes mannes*, used to translate the Latin *miles*, once again changes the emphasis from a contrast between soldier and saint to one between secular and spiritual occupations, producing again the idea of a frustrated call to a spiritual vocation. His numerous good deeds are appreciated not by his fellow soldiers, his *commilitones* in the Latin, but by his *geferum*, his comrades. Another difference is that, in the Vercelli version, Martin resists the deadly sins of the secular life, "7 he hine hwæðre wið eallum þam healicum synnum geheold, þa ðe woruldmen fremmiað in missenlicum þingum."[90] In Sulpicius's account, "Triennium fere ante baptismum in armis

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[89] "Homily XVIII," p. 293. "And though he, then, had to [remain] in the character of a layman, nevertheless, he had great continence in all things to the degree that he lived more the monastic life than certain ordained men" (L. Edman, trans., "Vercelli Homily XVIII," p. 118).

[90] "Homily XVIII," p. 292. "But, nevertheless, he held fast against all those egregious sins, those which benefit worldly men in diverse affairs" (L. Edman, trans., "Vercelli Homily XVIII," pp. 117-18).

fuit, integer tamen ab his uitiis quibus illud hominum genus inplicari solet" (Sulpicius ii.6), the phrase "illud hominum genus" refers back to "in armis," meaning the particular sins of men who bear arms. *Woruldmen* and *missenlicum þingum* both also have a much more general meaning. In the Blickling and Junius versions of the homily, however, Martin does not abstain from deadly sins but deadly weapons, "þam healicum wæpnum," which worldly men use in worldly matters, "in menniscum þingum."[91] Although less accurate as a translation of Sulpicius's Latin, the Blickling/Junius version is more faithful than Vercelli to the original tropes of Martin as unwilling, saintly soldier and reflects more accurately the original Anglo-Saxon version. The Vercelli text innovates, and in the process shifts the emphasis toward the frustrated call to a spiritual vocation

The dividing of the cloak presents a special problem. Although in Sulpicius it is clear that Martin is a soldier, and in Aldhelm and Alcuin he is a catechumen, in VBJ the miracle occurs, "sona in cnihthade."[92] Morris, in his EETS edition of the Blickling Homilies, translates the phrase as "early in his military career,"[93] and Joseph H. Hamilton,

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[91] "Homily XVIII," p. 292, n. 25. These variants may indicate that B and J are closer to the original form of the homily. The extremely rare phrase "healicum wæpnum" found only in Blickling and Junius seems, on the basis of the editor's rule of *lectio dificilior*, to indicate that B and J are closer to a posited original version of the homily, at least in this instance. The phrase "healicum synnum" is much more familiar, appearing in a number of similar contexts and referring to deadly sins. The inference is that the original author (or adapter and translator) of the homily reproduced the anti-martial emphasis of Sulpicius's text but the Vercelli scribe or the scribe of some earlier exemplar altered it to a more familiar but less accurate equivalent.

[92] "Homily XVIII," p. 293.

[93] "To Sancte Martines Maessan," p. 212.

in his unpublished "A Critical Edition of the Blickling Homily on St. Martin of Tours," concurs.[94] Edman alone translates "forthwith in boyhood."[95] Morris and Hamilton's translation is attractive, since it agrees with Sulpicius's account, but it is unlikely that *cnihthad* had already taken on the meaning "knighthood" when the common exemplar of VBJ was being written. *A Concise Anglo-Saxon Dictionary* lists "warrior" among the possible meanings of *cniht*, as does Bosworth-Toller, but the *OED* lists the earliest use of the base noun with its later meaning in the Laud manuscript of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, circa 1100, and reserves the full term *cnihthad* with its military connotation to the 14th century.[96] There are three instances of the term *cniht* used in the sense of "knight" given in Bosworth-Toller from charters of the tenth century, and in the Supplement other instances are cited, including one from Ælfric's *Grammar* in which he uses the phrase "Byrð se cniht his swurd" to translate the Latin "portat miles gladium."[97] Scholars place the homilies of Vercelli and Blickling a generation or so before Ælfric, so the evidence supporting the use of *cnihthad* to mean "military service" is not strong.

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[94] J. H. Hamilton, ed. "A Critical Edition of the Blickling Homily on St. Martin of Tours," p. 72.

[95] L. Edman, trans., "Vercelli Homily XVIII," p. 118.

[96] T. N. Toller, *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*, p. 130; J. R. Clark Hall, *A Concise Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*, p. 72; "Knight," and "Knighthood," *The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary*, 1971 ed., i. 1546-1547.

[97] T. N. Toller. *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*, p. 130.

One documented context for the word *cnihthad* has great importance for its interpretation in VBJ. The exact phrase used in the Blickling and Junius versions of VBJ, "sona on his cnihthade," is a favorite locution of the Old English Martyrologist, where *cnihthad* means "youth" or "childhood."[98] In the *Old English Martyrology*, St. Julian of Antioch, "se sona on his cnihthade þeowade gode on clænesse."[99] Benedict of Nursia as well, "sona on his cnihthade he wilnade þæt he gode anum licade,"[100] and the holiness of St. Athanasius "was sona foretacnod on his cnihthade."[101] In addition to these confessors, St. Procopius, a martyr of Caesarea, "sona on his cnihthade he swencte his lichoman...swiðe for godes egsan,"[102] and the Egyptian ascetic St. Hilarion "wæs sona on his cnihthade on gewritum gelæred."[103] Finally, the parents of the learned youth St. Chrysanthus gave him "on his cnyhthade to Alexandrea ceastre sumum woruldwysan men."[104] The word *cnihthad* in any of its forms appears only some thirty-five times in all

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[98] In Vercelli the phrase is "sona in cnihthade" ("Homily XVIII," p. 243).

[99] "Even in his childhood he served God in purity" (*An Old English Martyrology*, pp. 14-15).

[100] "[F]orthwith in his childhood he endeavoured to please God alone" (*An Old English Martyrology*, pp. 44-45).

[101] "[W]as at once foreshown in his childhood" (*An Old English Martyrology*, pp. 70-71).

[102] "[E]arly in his youth he mortified his body...much through fear of God" (*An Old English Martyrology*, pp. 114-15).

[103] "[E]arly in his childhood he was educated in scripture" (*An Old English Martyrology*, pp. 192-93).

[104] "[I]n his youth to a certain philosopher at Alexandria" (*An Old English Martyrology*, pp. 212-13).

of the corpus of Old English literature,[105] so the few instances of the exact phrase "sona on his cnihthade" in the *OEM* and VBJ represent some 20% of the total.[106] Since all of the uses of this exact phrase are confined to hagiographic texts, and all but one come from the same author (assuming the *OEM* to be the work of a single scholar, as most critics do), the likelihood that the phrase means the same thing in all six instances is high.[107]

If indeed the use of *cnihthad* in VBJ did imply a military career, and not merely youth, this would not only be the first instance in Anglo-Saxon literature in which this highly influential scene is associated with Martin as a soldier but also the first verifiable instance of the word used in this way. It is much more likely that it means "on his youth" and reflects a continuing replacement of the trope of the saintly soldier. Of all the Anglo-Saxon versions of Martin's life analyzed to this point, the VBJ homily comes the closest to reproducing the first two major tropes concerning warfare and sanctity in Sulpicius,

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[105] According to a count of entries in the microfiche version of the Old English Dictionary, 109-111.

[106] This may imply a direct connection of some kind between the *OEM* and the VBJ Martin homily. Familiarity to the author of VBJ of the phrase in the *OEM* is the most likely possibility, although coincidence, common authorship of OEM and VBJ, or translation of a specific Latin phrase from common sources of both texts cannot be ruled out.

[107] The use of the phrase "sona on his cnihthade" in the *OEM* and the Blickling/Junius Martin homily may also indicate a closer relationship between these two texts than has previously been assumed. The date of neither work is so firmly established to preclude common authorship.

although it does so unevenly and with a considerable shift of emphasis toward Alcuin's trope of the frustrated call to a spiritual vocation.

Sulpicius's other tropes do not fare as well. As in Alcuin's *Scriptum*, in VBJ Martin abandons earthly arms without a confrontation with Julian the Apostate, and without the miracle of the bloodless victory. Instead, he gives up all worldly occupations without any conflict:

> Ða he ða hæfde eahtatyne wintra, ðe gefullade hine man æfter cirican endebyrdnesse. Wæs he ær beforan þa þreo gear gecristnod, swa ic ær sægde. Ða forlet he ealne þone woruldfoloð an, [7 ða gewat he] to sancte Ilario þam bisceope, þe in Pictaue þære byrig wæs bisceop.[108]

The use of the word *woruldfolgoð* here at the end of Martin's period of military service completes the pattern of emphasis on the opposition between the secular and the spiritual, worldliness and otherworldliness, which both the anonymous homilist and Alcuin seemed to find more appropriate to their hero than Sulpicius's conflict between warfare and sanctity.

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[108] "Homily XVIII," p. 296. "When he had (completed his) eighteenth of winters, then one baptized him according to the rule of the church. He had been christened three years before, as I said earlier. Then he forsook all that worldly occupation and went alone to Saint Hilary the bishop, who was bishop in the city of Pictavi" (L. Edman, trans., "Vercelli Homily XVIII," p. 119).

VIII

Ælfric, Abbot of Eynsham around the year 1000 and one of the leading intellectual and literary figures of the late Anglo-Saxon period, produced two versions of Martin's life, a shorter one appearing in the *Catholic Homilies*, and therefore datable to the period 989-992, and a longer one in the *Lives of Saints*, from the later end of the period 992-1002.[109] In both of these works, Ælfric returned to the tropes from Sulpicius that earlier Anglo-Saxon authors had reduced or eliminated. In comparing Ælfric's two versions of the story of Martin's life with the VBJ homily, Marcia Dalbey argues that "Ælfric shows Martin as the militant Christian soldier whose prime duty is to overthrow the forces of the devil and establish Christianity in the world; the anonymous writers [of VBJ] characterize Martin as a shepherd who shelters the flock of the faithful and by his example leads them."[110] Dalbey's identification of the Ælfrician Martin as "the militant Christian soldier" reflects the degree to which Sulpicius's image of Martin, introduced by the tropes of the unwilling saintly soldier and continued in the concept of the militant spiritual soldier, is faithfully preserved in Ælfric's works. By preserving both of these aspects of Sulpicius's *Vita*, Ælfric presents a Martin who is paradoxically both more pacifistic and more militant in his pacifism than the VBJ Martin.

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[109] See P. Clemoes, "The Chronology of Ælfric's Works," pp. 244-245.

[110] Dalbey, "The Good Shepherd and the Soldier of God," pp. 422-425.

In the earlier and shorter homily, Ælfric not only reproduces Sulpicius's treatment of Martin as unwilling warrior but adds supporting flourishes of his own. First he introduces Martin's father as "ærest cempa. and siððan cempena ealdor," as in Sulpicius, but he then adds a detail to contrast his father, the earthly soldier, and Martin, the heavenly soldier: "Ða gestryndon hí þone gecorenan godes cempan martinum. and hé mærlice geðeah"[111] Ælfric is making the question of competing forms of combat, physical/ secular vs. spiritual/ sacred, a major aspect of the homily's opening lines, a detail not part of Sulpicius's account in the *Vita*: Martin's father is an earthly soldier, but Martin will be a soldier of Christ. Ælfric added the reference to Martin as "þone gecorenan godes cempan martinum" to his discussion of Martin's birth in the homily, but he would later eliminate it in his longer, hagiographic version.

In the homily, Ælfric follows up his introduction of the trope by describing Martin as an unwilling conscript brought to the army in chains. He also adds words and phrases that subtly alter the trope, making the anti-war sentiment stronger, not weaker:

> Þa aspráng þæs caseres gebán, þæt ðæra cempena bearn, þa forealdode wæron. wurdon genamode to ðam ylcan gewinne þe heora fæderas on wæron; Hwæt ða Martinus wearð ameldod fram his agenum fæder. ðe on his weorcum andode; and he wearð þa gelæht to þam laðum gecampe. and on racenteagum gelæd. þa ða he fyftene geara wæs. [112]

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[111] Ælfric, "Depositio Sancti Martini," p. 288, "[F]irst a soldier, and afterwards a chief of soldiers" (Ælfric, "Depositio Sancti Martini Episcopi," p. 499); Ælfric, "Depositio Sancti Martini," p, 228, "They then begat the chosen soldier of God, Martin, and he eminently throve" (Ælfric, "Depositio Sancti Martini Episcopi," p. 499). Translations are from Benjamin Thorpe, ed. and trans., "Depositio Sancti Martini Episcopi." Quotations from Ælfric's Martin homily are from Godden's edition, "Depositio Sancti Martini."

Here we see, for the first time in Anglo-Saxon literature, the image of Martin brought as a youth not merely to an unwanted role as a soldier but "to þam laðum gecampe," and not only against his will but as a prisoner, "on racenteagum gelæd." As noted earlier, the use of the term *cempa* for the Latin *miles*, rather than the word *þegn* employed in VBJ, establishes from the outset that Ælfric is contrasting not secular and spiritual occupations in general but specifically warfare and sanctity. The term *lað* is defined by Clark Hall as "hated, hateful, hostile, malignant, evil;... loathsome, noxious, unpleasant."[113] No comparable term is used in Sulpicius, and its insertion by Ælfric indicates not just a preference for spiritual occupations as in Alcuin and VBJ, but a rejection of earthly warfare itself as "hateful,...malignant, evil." However, just as Ælfric magnified in his homily the contrast between earthly and spiritual soldier at Martin's birth but later returned to a more precise representation of Sulpicius's text, he also softened somewhat his evident distaste for the soldier's occupation in his longer version:

> Þa wæs þære casere (*sic*) bebod þæt þæra cempena suna þe wæron forealdode wurdon genamod to þam ylcan camp-dome þe heora fæderas on wæron. and martinus þa wearð ameldod fram his fæder. þe on his worcum andode. and he wearð geracenteagod þa þe he on fiftyne wintre wæs. betæht to þam gewinne. [114]

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[112] Ælfric, "Depositio Sancti Martini," p. 288, "Then came forth the emperor's edict, that the children of those soldiers that were grown old, should be nominated to the same warfare in which their fathers were. Whereupon Martin was denounced by his own father, who felt envy at his works; and he was seized for the hateful strife, and led in chains, when he was fifteen years old" ("Depositio Sancti Martini Episcopi," p. 501).

[113] J. R. Clark Hall, *A Concise Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*, p. 212.

[114] "Then was the emperor's command that the sons of the soldiers who were superannuated should be nominated to the same military service in which their father had been, and Martin was thereupon denounced by his father, who was envious of his works,

The phrase "to þam laðum gecampe" is not repeated here. The elimination of the highly charged termed *lað* ("hateful") in describing all earthly warfare, by implication even that waged by Anglo-Saxon thanes, is the only substantive difference between the two passages, pointing up again its anomalous insertion into the first translation.

There are three main possibilities that could account for these changes between the earlier and later texts. The two phrases in question -- the characterization of Martin as *þone gecorenan godes cempan* and the phrase *þam laðum gecampe* -- are not found in Ælfric's source, and this may suggest that he dropped these phrases because he wished to be more exact in his translation.[115] Another possible reason for these small details to appear in the earlier but not the later text might be that Ælfric was relying on a different Latin text for each translation. A third possibility is that a change in audience, from monks alone in the homily to a broader audience, including laymen, in the hagiography, may have dictated a softening of his criticism of earthly warfare, since the reaction of the thanes and ealdormen for whom he was writing the *Lives of Saints* would have been very different from that of his fellow-monks, who might have agreed with a sweeping indictment of all earthly warfare. Finally, it is possible that his view of earthly warfare had changed

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and he was bound when he was fifteen winters old, being sent to war" (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. ii, pp. 220-23). Translations and quotations are both from Skeat's edition, by volume and page number to "Vita Sancti Martini Episcopi et Confessoris," in Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. ii, pp. 218-313. The page layouts of both translations and quotations reflect the current consensus that the *Lives of Saints* is not poetry but rhythmical prose.

[115] This possibility is explored in detail by F. M. Biggs, "Ælfric as Historian."

between the time he wrote the earlier and later versions, a period when the violence of the invading Danes was a major fact of life.

Choosing among these alternatives is difficult. More than one may be at work at the same time. That the elimination of the phrases "to þam laðum gecampe" and "þone gecorenan godes cempan martinum" make the later version more exact a translation than the earlier is a simple fact. However, Ælfric did not hesitate to add details to the later text not found in Sulpicius. For example, in the longer version Ælfric outdoes Sulpicius in asserting Martin's unwillingness to fight, claiming that for "three years [Martin] marched with the common soldiers without weapons before he was baptized": "þreo gear he ferde mid þam folclicum cempum *buton gewæpnunge* ærþan þa he were gefullod."[116] No such claim appears in Sulpicius, although it may have some connection to the phrase appearing in the Blickling and Junius versions of the anonymous Martin homily, "þam healicum wæpnum," from which Martin is said to have abstained. This raises the question of other versions of the story of Martin's life on which Ælfric may have been drawing in writing his first text. According to Biggs, Patrick Zettel "first noted Ælfric's use of [Alcuin's] work in his first life of St. Martin, identifying the four major passages previously thought to have come from Sulpicius's *Dialogues* as deriving more directly from Alcuin's redaction."[117] However, as this present study has shown, Alcuin's text is no mere

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[116] Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. ii, pp. 222-23, emphasis added.

[117] F. M. Biggs, "Alcuin: *Vita S. Martini*," pp. 21-22. Biggs explores this possibility more fully in F. M. Biggs, "Ælfric as Historian." Biggs again follows Zettel in demonstrating that Ælfric used Alcuin's "Scriptum" in his homily, but he shows that Ælfric returned to Sulpicius for his longer translation.

redaction of Sulpicius, but a unique portrait of Martin significantly different from its source. In addition, Alcuin cannot be the source of the details present in the homily and absent in the hagiography: Alcuin did not present military service as "hateful strife," nor did he call Martin "God's chosen soldier" when discussing his birth. Unless a source is identified, we must assume that these are details added by Ælfric himself. As will be explored more fully in Chapter Six, there is considerable evidence that Ælfric was struggling with the issue of whether warfare is incompatible with Christianity, and that he modified his discussion of this subject as he turned to and began to understand the needs of a new secular audience. Although subtle, the differences noted here suggest that Ælfric shifted his views between the time he wrote the Second Series of Catholic Homilies and the time he composed the longer *Life of Martin* as the war with the Danes worsened and as he came more and more often to be addressing his works to the very men charged with prosecuting the war. From a strong opponent of war, Ælfric would appear to have become a proponent of defensive or "just" war.

Whatever changes Ælfric may have gone through between writing his first and second versions of Martin's *vita*, both of Ælfric's versions of Martin's life story present a much clearer representation of Sulpicius's trope of the unwilling warrior than either Alcuin or the anonymous VBJ homilist. In creating the two versions, Ælfric adds details to stress Martin's unwillingness to fight, in the first emphasizing Martin as a different kind of warrior and earthly combat as inherently evil, in the second stressing instead that Martin

refused to carry weapons even while he was a soldier. Despite these slight differences, both versions clearly reproduce the trope of Martin as unwilling warrior.

Ælfric also developed fully the trope of Martin as saintly soldier in both homily and longer hagiography. The account in the homily is short and to the point.

> and he on ðam folgoðe ealle fulnysse forbeah. lybbende swa swa munuc. na swa swa modig cempa; He æteowode ða soðan lufe symle his geferum. and ormæte eadmodnysse mid ealle geðylde. and his efencempan ða hine endemes wurðodon; He wæs swiðe geswæs eallum swincendum. and næs ðeah ða gyt gefullod. [118]

The phrase "lybbende swa swa munuc. ne swa swa modig cempa" encapsulates the trope. In the use of the adjective *modig*, which often carried a pejorative connotation, "proud, haughty, insolent," Ælfric reiterates his own rejection of earthly combat expressed earlier in the phrase "þam laðum gecampe." To Ælfric at this point, as to Sulpicius, the underlying question is not just whether a man who wishes to serve God should be forced to enter a secular occupation, but rather whether physical warfare is appropriate to a Christian. Ælfric contrasts "haughty" soldiers following an earthly lord and engaged in "hateful strife" to humble Christian soldiers engaged in spiritual struggle, the "gastlicum gecampe."[119] In this trope, as in the trope of the unwilling warrior, Ælfric adds details to emphasize the unsuitability of the warrior's life for a Christian. In the longer *Vita*, Ælfric

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[118] Ælfric, "Depositio Sancti Martini," p. 288, "[A]nd in that service he eschewed all foulness, living as a monk, not as an insolent soldier. He ever manifested true love for his companions, and boundless humility with all patience, and his fellow-soldiers at last honoured him. He was very kind to all afflicted, and helped men under diverse miseries, the poor and ill-clothed, and, nevertheless, was not yet baptized" (Ælfric, "Depositio Sancti Martini Episcopi," vol. ii, p. 501).

[119] Ælfric, "Depositio Sancti Martini," p. 289.

again presents the trope, but without emphasizing the faults of the soldier's life. He does not repeat the term *modig* and instead contrasts the eating habits of monks and soldiers: "Swa micele forhæfednysse he hæfde on his bigleofan. swilce he munuc wære swiðor þonne cempa." [120]

Ælfric also presents a more positive image of Martin's fellow soldiers, his "geferum"or "efen-cempan," in the longer version than he does in the shorter. Martin's "efen-cempan ... hine arwurðodon mid wundor-licre lufe" for his "æðelum þeawum."[121] Later, after the dividing of his cloak to clothe the naked beggar, some of his "geferum" laughed at him, but "sume eac besargodon þæt hi swilces naht ne dydon þonne hi buton nacednysse him bet mihton tiðian."[122] Both of these passages reflect comments by Sulpicius, again emphasizing Ælfric's greater fidelity to his source in the later version. They also serve to present a less critical view of earthly warfare and the men who wage it.

In both versions, Ælfric retains Martin's direct confrontation with the Caesar Julian. In the homily, the account is presented in a much abbreviated form. Julian again decides to have Martin thrown into battle weaponless, a move countered, as in Sulpicius,

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[120] "He had as great temperance in his food, as if he had been a monk rather than a soldier" (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. ii, pp. 222-23).

[121] "[F]or his noble qualities all his fellow-soldiers reverenced him with a marvelous love" (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. ii, pp. 222-23).

[122] "[C]omrades...some were sorry they had not done something like it, since they, without nakedness, might have helped him better" (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. ii, p. 224-25).

by divine intervention: the barbarians sue for peace, and the saintly Martin is saved from involvement in unholy battle.

> Æfter ðisum gelamp on ðære leode gewinn. þæt Iulianus se casere gecwæð to gefeohte. and dælde his cempum cynelice sylene. þæt hí on ðam gewinne werlice ongunnon; Ða nolde martinus geniman his gife. ne on ðam gefeohte his handa afylan. ac cwæð þæt he wolde criste ðeowian. on gastlicum gecampe æfter his cristendome; Ða cwæð se wælhreowa þæt he wære afyrht for ðan toweardan gefeohte. na for Criste eawfæst; Ða andwyrde martinus unforht ðam casere; Ic wille ðurhgán orsorh ðone here mid rodetacne gewæpnod. na mid readum scylde. oððe mid héfegum helme. oþþe heardre byrnan; Ða het se hæðena cyning healdan martinum þæt hé wurde aworpen ungewæpnod ðam here; Þa nolde se hælend his ðegen forlætan. ac gesibbode þæt folc sona on merien. þæt hí to ðæs caseres cynegyrde gebugon. [123]

An interesting detail in this passage is that Ælfric seems to misidentify the battle as being "on ðære leode gewinn," if one accepts Thorpe's translation of "in the civil war."[124] If correct, this translation calls into question Ælfric's reliance on Sulpicius's original text for his source, since there it is clearly stated that the battle occurred when barbarians invaded Gaul: "inruentibus intra Gallias barbaris" (Sulpicius iv.1). It is more likely that the phrase

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[123] Ælfric, "Depositio Sancti Martini," p. 502, "After this it happened, in the civil war, that the emperor Julian gave order for a battle, and distributed a royal donation to his soldiers, and they conducted themselves manfully in that conflict. But Martin would not take his gift, nor defile his hand in the battle, but said that he would serve Christ in ghostly warfare [in accord with] his christianity. Then the tyrant said that he was afraid because of the battle ahead, not pious for Christ. Martin then boldly answered the emperor, "I will fearlessly go through the host, armed with the sign of the rood, not with red shield or with heavy helm, or hard corselet." Then the heathen king commanded Martin to be held, that he might be cast unarmed amid the army. But Jesus would not forsake his servant, but reconciled the folk forthwith on the morrow, so that they all submitted to the emperor's sceptre" (Ælfric, "Depositio Sancti Martini Episcopi," vol. ii, p. 503).

[124] Ælfric, "Depositio Sancti Martini Episcopi," vol. ii, p. 503.

leod gewinn has a more general meaning, "people-strife" or "war between peoples." The phrase appears nowhere else in the corpus of Old English literature, although the term *leodgewinn* appears once, in the poem *Juliana*, and is defined by Clark Hall as merely "strife."[125] When in another text Ælfric directly translates the term *bellum civile* when discussing the four types of war (just war, unjust war, civil war, and kin-strife) he uses the phrase "betwux ceaster-gewarum."[126] Whether Ælfric was presenting the battle within a context of civil war or of war between peoples, it is significant that he does not present it explicitly as a war against barbarian invaders, especially since at the time he was writing the Vikings were occupying part of England. He thus passes over an opportunity to justify the use of arms to repel invaders. Instead Ælfric calls the caesar both "se wælhreowa" and "se hæðena cyning," "the cruel or bloodthirsty one" and the "heathen king," neither of which finds parallels in his sources. By typifying Julian, who was indeed a pagan but was not a king, in this way Ælfric identifies the warfare Martin is rejecting as essentially "heathen." In the process he links warfare to what may be termed the "heroic code" of life, reinforcing this impression by using a series of adjective-plus-noun phrases to describe the arms Martin refuses to bear into battle: "na mid readum scylde. oððe mid héfegum helme. oþþe heardre byrnan."[127] Ælfric adds the adjectives "red" and "heavy"

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[125] J. R. Clark Hall, *A Concise Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*, p. 215.

[126] Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, ed. Skeat, vol. ii, pp. 112-15.

[127] The "heroic code" as a concept intrinsic to Old English literature is the subject of many studies, including C. Albertson, trans., *Anglo-Saxon Saints and Heroes*; C. Chase, "Saints' Lives, Royal Lives, and the Date of *Beowulf*"; M. D. Cherniss, *Ingeld and Christ*; E. B. Irving, Jr., "Heroic Role-Models"; and C. Schneider, "Cynewulf's Devaluation of Heroic

and the whole phrase "hard helm"; Sulpicius used only the unmodified terms *clipeo* and *galea* (Sulpicius iv.5). Although not alliterative formulas, which would directly link them to Old English poetic techniques, these images call to mind the heroic language Anglo-Saxon poets used to glorify and, in a sense, romanticize battle. By rejecting the objects in these terms Martin is also rejecting an ethos: the heroic life of warfare and glory. This pattern is drawn together when, for the first time, Ælfric refers to Martin as God's "ðegen." As in Sulpicius, Ælfric uses the story to invest the Christian with some of the manly courage and heroism normally reserved for the earthly warrior.

The single most important detail in Sulpicius's account and absent in Ælfric's shorter homily is Martin's categorical rejection of warfare with the words "Christi ego miles sum; pugnare mihi non licet" (Sulpicius iv.3). Brevity alone seems not to account for its absence, since Ælfric expanded some of Martin's other speeches. It would seem that, having presented warfare as inherently "lað" earlier, in this final scene he avoids the blanket condemnation of war in favor of criticizing the bloodthirsty, heathen glorification of war embodied in Julian the Apostate.

The longer Life is the first Anglo-Saxon account of Martin's career in which Martin's words to Julian are translated: "ic eom godes cempa, ne mot ic na foehtan" : "I am God's soldier; I may not fight." Ælfric presents a much more detailed and fuller account of the confrontation with the caesar than he presented in the homily.

> Hwæt ða færlice wearð þæs fyrlenan leodscipes onræs into gallias. and Iulianus se casere gegaderode his here. and began to gefinne. ælcum his cempum cynelice

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Tradition in *Juliana*." Although frequently discussed, the "heroic code" is a slippery and multi-valent term that can be difficult to define.

> sylene. swa swa hit ge-wunelic wæs. Þa wende martinus þæt he þa wel mihte wilnian æt þam casere þæt he of þam campdome þa cuman moste. him ne ðuhte na fremfullic þæt he fenge to þære gife. and syððan ne campode mid þam casere forð. He cwæð þa to þam arlesan. oð þis ic campode þe. ge-þafa nu þæt ic gode campige heonon-forð. and under-fó þine gife. se ðe feohte mid ðe ic eom godes cempa ne mot ic na feohtan. Ða gebealh hine se casere. and cwæð þæt he for yrhðe þæs to-weardan gefeohtes. na for eawfæst-nysse hine sylfne æt-brude swa þam campdome. Ac martinus unforht to þam manfullan cwæð. Gif ðu to yrhðe þis telst. and na to ge-leafan. nu to mergen ic stande on mines drihtnes naman ætforan þam truman. and ic fare orsorh mid rode-tacne gescyld. na mid readum scylde. oððe mid helme þurh þæs heres werod. [128]

Many of the significant details added in the shorter version to present a specific impression have been removed or altered. The vague term *leod gewinn* has been replaced by the longer, more explicit description of a sudden attack by a foreign people, who are specifically referred to as "þa hæðenan." The caesar is neither a *wælhreowa* nor a *hæðena cyning*, but "se manfulla" and "se arlease," thus identifying him less with battle and paganism than with impiousness and wickedness. Martin still speaks of a red shield, but the helm is left unmodified and the "heardre byrnan" is gone.

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[128] "Well then, there suddenly took place an invasion of Gaul by a foreign nation. And Julian the emperor gathered his army, and began to give to each of his soldiers a royal donation, even as was usual. Then Martin thought that he might well request from the emperor leave to depart from military service. It seemed not profitable to him to receive the donation, and afterwards not to go forth with the emperor to battle. He said to the impious one: 'till now I have fought for thee; suffer me henceforth to fight for God, and let him who fights for thee receive thy gift. I am God's champion; I must not fight.' Then the emperor grew angry, and said that for cowardice, because of the imminent battle, and not for piety, he would thus withdraw himself from fighting. But Martin said fearlessly to the evil man: 'If thou countest this as cowardice, and not true faith, now, tomorrow, I will stand, in my Lord's name, before the cohort, and I will march, without heed, protected by the sign of the cross, and by no red shield, nor with any helmet, through the host of this army" (*Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. ii, pp. 226-27).

It seems that Ælfric has shifted his views subtly between the time that he wrote the earlier, shorter homily and his production of the longer, more detailed hagiographic account. Both fuller and more detailed, and containing the core idea that Martin may not fight, the longer version also shifts emphasis away from a portrayal of war as inherently evil. It is harder to define what Ælfric now wishes to present as the problem Martin is facing in his conflict with the caesar. If war itself is not the problem to be rejected, then what is?

The answer may lie outside of this text itself. Elsewhere in the corpus of his works, Ælfric uses Martin's words to Julian to remind priests that they were forbidden to carry weapons, despite the consequences, and he uses Julian as an example of an impious ruler who forced clerics to join the army.[129] This implies that Ælfric understood

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[129] J. E. Cross points out that Ælfric seems to have considered Martin a cleric in this scene:

> The interesting case of St. Martin both recalls a strong belief that physical war was wrong for Christians and emphasizes the power of the orthodox view [that just war lead by a prince was permissible]. On the eve of the battle of Worms he had disobeyed the command of the emperor Julian with the bold words *Christi miles sum; pugnare mihi non licet*. When he said this he was a lay conscientious objector, but when Ælfric wrote a pastoral letter in answer to priests who said that they 'must wear a weapon when needed' the homilist cited excerpts of Pseudo-Ecgbert from canon law, quoted Christ's command to Peter 'Put up thy sword' (Matthew xxvi. 52 and John xviii. 11), and added the story and the words of Martin. By now, and well before, Martin was joined to the ranks of the *oratores* in the threefold division of society. (J. E. Cross, "The Ethic of War in Old English," p. 280)

In the same article, Cross points out that Augustine used the example of Julian the Apostate to argue that Christians serving in the military were obliged to follow even an impious leader (J. E. Cross, "The Ethic of War in Old English," p. 278). Augustine's use of the term *infidelis* to describe Julian is remarkably similar to Ælfric's use of the term *arlease* in his *Life of Martin*; yet if Augustine was a source for Ælfric, he followed only

Sulpicius's position within the context of the medieval theory of the "Three Orders." In calling himself a soldier of God, Martin may have seemed, to Ælfric, to have been defining himself not merely as a Christian, but as a cleric. Thus Julian is impious and wicked in his insistence that Martin fight, despite his desire to be a soldier of Christ. The principle is not that Christians in general may not fight, as Sulpicius appears to have been saying, but that fighting is appropriate only to those who have chosen (or whom God has "called" to) a secular career. A holy man like Martin who wishes to serve as God's "þegn" should not be forced -- indeed, must not be allowed -- to fight.

The conclusion to this crucial scene, which was, as we have seen, avoided by both Alcuin and the anonymous VBJ homilist, confirms Ælfric's position on the problem. In his wickedness, Julian attempts to force the unwilling Martin into battle, but peace is achieved by the barbarians submitting to the caesar.

> Þa het se arlease healdan þone halgan þæt he wurde wæpen-læs aworpen þam hæðenum. On þam æftran dæg dydon þa hæðenan þæt he budon sybbe. and hi sylfe þam casere. and ealle heora ðing to his anwealde.[130]

Augustine's words and not his idea. One other source for Ælfric's concept of Julian comes in Ælfric's treatise, "Qui sunt Oratores, Laboratores, Bellatores" in Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. ii, pp. 120-25, in which he discusses the theory of the Three Orders. There he says, "Iulianus se wiðersaca and se wælhreowa casere wolde neadian preostas to woruldlicum gecampe. and eac þa halgan munecas . and het hi on cwearterne gebringan" (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. ii, p. 122); however, he refers there to Apollonius of Egypt, not Martin of Tours, alongside Peter.

[130] "Then the impious man bade them seize the saint, that he might be thrown, all weaponless, among the heathen. On the next day the heathen so did that they proffered peace, and themselves too, to the emperor and put all their property at his disposal" (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. ii, pp. 226-27).

Here it is the foes of Julian, not Julian himself, who are described as heathens, calling to mind the struggles of the Anglo-Saxons of Ælfric's own day to defeat invading armies of pagan Danes. Whether Ælfric may have considered his own ruler, Æthelred, "se arlease" will be explored more fully in the sixth chapter of this book. I should suffice to note here that in addition to the rather neutral term *caesar* or *caser* employed by both Sulpicius and Ælfric, the loaded but non-specific term *tyrannus* also employed by Sulpicius, or the pejorative terms *wælhreowa* or *hæðena cyning* which Ælfric used in his shorter version, are replaced by a repetition of the term *arlease*, "the impious one." Not a tyrant, a heathen king, or a bloodthirsty man, Julian is instead a ruler who lacks the proper reverence for God.

Also in the longer version, Ælfric preserves the explicit moral Sulpicius provided for the miracle, identifying a peaceful victory as appropriate to God and to Martin, his saint.

> Hwam twynað lá forði þæt þæs geleaffullan weres wære. se sige. þa þa him wæs getiþod þæt he wæpenleas nære aworpen þam here. þeah þe se arfæsta drihten eaþe mihte gehealdan and-sundne his cempan. He æt-bræd þæt gefeoht. þæt furðon næron ge-wemmede martines gesihþa on oðra manna deaðe. Hwilcne oþerne sige sceolde ure drihten syllan for his cempan selran þonne þone. þæt nan man ne swulte. ac þæt hí to sibbe fengon.[131]

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[131] "Lo! who can doubt that it was because of this believing man that the victory was gained, since to him it was granted, that he might not be cast, all weaponless, to the army? Although, indeed, the beneficent Lord might easily have preserved His champion safe and sound, He prevented that battle, that Martin's eyes might in no way be stained by other men's death. What other victory could our Lord have given for His champion's sake better than that, that no man should die, but that they should come to peace?" (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. ii, pp. 228-29).

Here Ælfric reaffirms the special role of Martin the saint. "Se arfæsta drihten" (as contrasted to Julian, "se arlease"), He could easily have preserved "his cempan" from harm in the midst of battle, but he provides an even more appropriate sign of his special relationship to his champion: he arranges that no man should die, but that they should all come to peace. Almost the only differences between this passage and Sulpicius's original are the characterization of the Lord as "arfæsta," and a change in the final phrase from a repetition of two negative results avoided, "subactis sine sanguine hostibus, nemo moreretur" (Sulpicius iv.9), to a negative avoided and a positive gained, "þæt nan man ne swulte. ac þæt hí to sibbe fengon." Even while he reproduces faithfully the moral stated by Sulpicius, Ælfric subtly shifts emphasis away from criticism of warfare itself toward the gaining of peace through Christ.

IX

Looking back over the various accounts of Martin's life produced in Anglo-Saxon England, it is remarkable that the last two extant reworkings of the story are the ones which most accurately preserve the tropes concerned with warfare and sanctity introduced by Sulpicius in his original *Vita*. Thus, as mentioned earlier, a comparison of the lives of Martin written in England between the arrival of Christianity in England in 597 and the end of the Anglo-Saxon era shows an unexpected pattern: instead of a progressive shift away from a pacifist Christianity toward the acceptance of warfare for Christ, such as that outlined by Erdmann in *The Origin of the Idea of Crusade*, Anglo-Saxon hagiographers seem rather to have grown increasingly close to the attitudes toward warfare that Sulpicius presented in his work.

This pattern seems to reflect, in part, the theory recently elaborated by James C. Russell that missionaries at first actively accommodated Germanic values and customs, including attitudes toward war, in their attempts to Christianize the Germanic world, of which Anglo-Saxon England was a part.[132] However, contrary to Russell's development of this idea, the evidence implies that the Church, at least in England, may have been increasingly successful at Christianizing, or perhaps, more accurately, at de-Germanizing the faith of the Anglo-Saxons. Although the idea that Roman culture was less war-like

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[132] J. C. Russell, *The Germanization of Early Medieval Christianity*.

than Germanic culture is completely untenable, nonetheless there are fundamental differences between the attitudes toward war imbedded in these two vast cultural amalgams.

War was a more intrinsic and fundamental part of the life of the average German in the late antique and early medieval period than it was for the Roman citizen or his descendant over the same period. Warfare, however necessary, was not the chosen profession of a citizen of Rome. Men were conscripted into the Roman army, and throughout the late antique period the numbers of ethnic Romans serving in the army dwindled. Martin's own life is evidence of this trend: he was conscripted because he was the son of a veteran. Warfare, although an intrinsic part of the Roman society and a pillar of the Roman state, had become restricted, compartmentalized, and in the process reduced and devalued, so that far from being the birthright and responsibility of every Roman citizen, membership in the army was restricted to those members of society on the fringes of respectability. A. H. M. Jones identifies veterans as among "the lowest classes automatically ranking as *honestiores*," adding that as early as the second century, "a high proportion of the intake [in the recruiting system] had been sons of serving soldiers, born in the camp (*castris*), and sons of veterans, and the remainder was usually drawn mainly from the district in which the unit was stationed. Soldiers thus tended to form a separate caste."[133] Anti-war or pacifist attitudes among early Christians could be integrated fairly easily into a society in which only a distinct class, on the fringes of respectability, would be

[133] A. H. M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire*, pp. 17, 22.

thereby marked out. Brock's study of the martyrdom of Maximillian reinforces the often challenged claim that significant segments of Christian society in the late antique period opposed membership in the army; although not condemning men converted while serving in the armed forces, they rejected the enrollment of Christians even during peacetime, and actively opposed Christians' participation in warfare. [134]

In Anglo-Saxon England, however, in the period of the conversions and even afterward, only the lowest classes were not trained for warfare. Every respectable member of Anglo-Saxon society was expected to bear weapons; the only exception may have been priests. As mentioned above, Bede says of the high priest Coifi, a member of King Edwin of Northumbria's *witan*, "Non enim licuerat pontificem sacrorum vel arma ferre, vel praeter in equa equitare."[135] If indeed this was true, and there is no independent corroboration of Bede's claim, it would have made the Christian prohibition against clerics bearing arms much more palatable to the Anglo-Saxons. However, an outright rejection of war or of Christians bearing arms would have alienated the very classes among the Anglo-Saxons most capable of effecting a widespread conversion.

It should therefore come as no surprise that the earliest Anglo-Saxon treatments of St. Martin's life did not emphasize his rejection of war and army service. What is more interesting is that the last lives of Martin written in Anglo-Saxon England before the

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[134] P. Brock, "Why Did St. Maximilian Refuse to Serve in the Roman Army?"

[135] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. i, p. 286. "[H]itherto it had not been lawful for the Chief Priest to carry arms or to ride anything but a mare" (L. Sherley-Price, trans., *A History of the English Church and People*, p. 128). See p. 5 and note 10 above.

Norman Conquest *did* faithfully represent Martin's rejection of warfare, expressed in the tropes of the unwilling warrior, the soldier who lived more like a monk, and the bloodless victory. Even more significant are the subtle signs that the author of those last two *vitæ* may have changed his attitudes toward warfare over the period 992-1002, a time when England was being overrun by Viking invaders. Anglo-Saxons in Ælfric's youth lived in an increasingly unified kingdom ruled by King Edgar, often called the Peaceful and at least at Glastonbury culted as a saint, and led by a church recently revitalized by the Benedictine Reform. Some of them may have come to hold attitudes toward warfare and sanctity compatible with those professed by Sulpicius Severus six hundred years earlier, but if so, were they among the first Anglo-Saxons to do so?

What follows is a study of the conflict over the values of warfare and sanctity in Anglo-Saxon literature about soldier saints other than Martin, especially the ways in which Sulpicius's tropes and similar images were used in representing the lives of saints who had been warriors. This study will shed some light on the changes going on in Anglo-Saxon society that made Ælfric willing to show what none of his predecessors since Sulpicius had: a Christian boldly stating, "ic eom godes cempa, ne mot ic na feohtan" : "I am God's soldier; I may not fight."

Chapter Two: Holy Kingship: Anglo-Saxon Sanctification of Warfare

I

Sulpicius Severus created a new model of sainthood in his *Life of Martin*. His subject was an unmartyred saint who had once been a soldier, and, as the previous chapter demonstrated, in glorifying him Sulpicius presented warfare and sanctity as fundamentally incompatible. Whether his attitudes reflected a tradition of Christian pacifism, as some have argued, or merely a personal desire to elevate his saintly subject above the sordidness of warfare and bloodshed, his anti-war tropes influenced later representations of soldier saints. In the first centuries of Christianity in England, Anglo-Saxon hagiographers also created new models of sainthood in which they revealed attitudes toward war far different from Sulpicius's. Early Anglo-Saxon writers presented violence and sanctity as compatible in certain circumstances: the Anglo-Saxon saints who wielded swords and fought bloody battles all belonged to the special sub-class of martyred warrior-kings. This hagiographic tradition, which had no direct continental models, countered to a certain extent the influence of Sulpicius's *Vita Sancti Martini Turonensis* on Anglo-Saxon literature.[1] Just as late antique hagiographers considered the fact of martyrdom more

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[1] The major works on the relationship between royalty and sanctity in Anglo-Saxon England are W. A. Chaney, *The Cult of Kingship*; J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *Early Germanic Kingship*; J. L. Nelson, "Royal Saints and Early Medieval Kingship"; S. J. Ridyard, *The Royal Saints of Anglo-Saxon England*; and D. W. Rollason, "The Cults of Murdered Royal Saints";," pp. 95-114. Other pertinent works by Rollason include D. W. Rollason,

important than the question of whether the military martyrs had ever fought and killed in battle, the fact of martyrdom played a significant role in the creation of the special category of king and martyr. The royal element, however, was the category's true determiner. No Anglo-Saxons below the rank of king, whether martyred or not, were regarded as holy without first renouncing earthly weapons as Martin of Tours had done. Yet from the very beginning, Anglo-Saxon Christian kings could become saints without forswearing arms.

It is probable that the cult of the martyred warrior-king originated among the Anglo-Saxons, although the question is still open to debate. A thorough study of all the cult's possible sources and antecedents is beyond the scope of this study. They include the tradition of Old Testament kingship, the deification of Roman emperors, the Christian tradition of the *rex iustus*, Merovingian royal saints,[2] and the Germanic tradition of sacral kingship. Biblical and traditional Germanic ideas of kingship underlie the cult of the martyred warrior-king, but so do Constantine, the model of Christian kingship in Eusebius's *Ecclesiastical History*, and even Clovis in Gregory of Tours's *Historiae*. Although all of these seem to have played a role in the development of the martyr-king tradition, none alone provides a complete model for that tradition. Gábor Klaniczay, who has studied the tradition of royal sainthood from an eastern European perspective, calls the

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"Hagiography and Politics"; D. W. Rollason, "Lists of Saints' Resting-places"; D. W. Rollason, *The Mildrith Legend*; and D. W. Rollason, *Saints and Relics*.

[2] For Merovingian royal saints, see F. Graus, *Volk, Herrscher und Heiliger im Reich derMerowinger*.

Anglo-Saxons "the forgers of the new religious model of holy kings." [3] Klaniczay sees no single source for this "new religious model," claiming instead that it is an original synthesis of diverse traditions:

> Alongside the significant instances in Anglo-Saxon royal sainthood of the 'Merovingian' model of holy kings who abdicated and became monks ... the cults of Anglo-Saxon kings from the seventh to the tenth centuries were able to combine the pagan cult of Woden-descendant kings... with the new model of Christian saints, uniting martyrdom with the idea of the perfect Christian ruler. [4]

His identification of "the idea of the perfect Christian ruler" as one antecedent of the tradition itself implies even earlier antecedents, including the Old Testament tradition of divinely anointed kings and the Roman glorification of a Christian emperor like Constantine. From whatever diverse sources it sprang, the Christian cult of the martyred king first appeared in early Anglo-Saxon hagiography. In this chapter, an analysis of the earliest Anglo-Saxon martyr-king cults will reveal that the saintly warrior-king evolved out of what was essentially a non-hagiographic tradition of the veneration of royalty. The first account of the life and death of the earliest martyred king, Edwin of Northumbria, appears in a hagiographic text, but its anonymous author makes no claim for Edwin's sanctity. Yet when tropes developed in that text appear later in the story of Oswald of Northumbria, they form part of the hagiographic image that would make Oswald the first true King and Martyr. Edwin would later be regarded as a martyred saint as well.

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[3] G. Klaniczay, "From Sacral Kingship to Self-Representation," p. 82.

[4] G. Klaniczay, "From Sacral Kingship to Self-Representation," p. 81.

A key element in the martyr-king tradition is the acceptance of war as a natural part of the divine mission of kings. Divine or holy war played a major part in both the Old Testament and the cult of Constantine as embodied in the tradition of the Invention of the True Cross.[5] Gregory the Great presented to Æthelberht of Kent, and through him all other Anglo-Saxon Christians, "the example of the Emperor Constantine" as a model for Christian kingship, saying, in Wallace-Hadrill's paraphrase, "help Augustine ... and Augustine will help you with God."[6] John Helgeland identifies the treatment of Constantine in Eusebius's *Ecclesiastical History* as an early example of Christian adoption of the cult of the divine king:

> To turn to the theme of the divine king, we see Eusebius at all points fitting Constantine into this framework. In classical views, it was the emperor who made the connection between heaven and earth. In so doing, the king or emperor brought salvation, interpreted as a series of material and social blessings, into the empire. Eusebius elaborates this theme by viewing the emperor as the ensoulment of the cosmic order: the emperor is to the state as God is to the world. [7]

Helgeland further points out that "Eusebius used biblical imagery to augment the understanding of the Roman divine king," including the imagery of the divinely-anointed

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[5] Studies of the ethic of war in the Old Testament are S.-M. Kang, *Divine War*; S. Niditch, *War in the Hebrew Bible*; and G. von Rad, *Holy War*. For Anglo-Saxon treatments of the cult of Constantine see *The Old English Finding of the True Cross*, and Cynewulf, *Elene*.

[6] J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *Early Germanic Kingship*, p. 30.

[7] J. Helgeland, R. J. Daly, and J. P. Burns, *Christians and the Military*, p. 70. The Foreword identifies Helgeland as "primarily responsible for" Chapter Ten, from which this quotation is taken (p. ix, n. 2).

ruler and the concept of holy war in the Old Testament.[8] The glorification of Christian rulers may have grown from such roots, yet even the combination of holy war, anointed kingship, and the Roman divine king cannot be a direct model for the cult of the royal martyr, since as a group they celebrate not martyrs but victorious warrior-kings.

The cult of the royal-martyr developed within a culture that linked royalty and sainthood in a number of ways. Kings and their immediate families made up an unusually large percentage of native Anglo-Saxon saints. The first Anglo-Saxon king later considered a saint was King Edwin, who converted to Christianity in 627 and was killed in 632 at the battle of Hatfield Chase, defeated by the Welsh Christian king Cadwallon and the pagan king Penda of Mercia.[9] Other saintly kings included Oswald of Northumbria, Oswine of Deira, Æthelberht of East Anglia,[10] and the boy-king Kenelm of Mercia.[11] One of the most famous of Anglo-Saxon royal saints was St. Edmund, King and Martyr, an East Anglian monarch killed in 870 by the Vikings.[12] King Edward the Martyr, whose assassination in 978 or 979 catapulted his half-brother Æthelred "the Unready" to the

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[8] J. Helgeland, R. J. Daly, and J. P. Burns, *Christians and the Military*, p. 70

[9] The two major sources for the conversion and death of King Edwin are Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. i., pp. 244-320; and *The Earliest Life of Gregory the Great.*

[10] For two Latin versions of the *Life* see M. R. James, ed., "Two Lives of St. Ethelbert."

[11] The *Vita et Miracula S. Kenelmi* has recently been edited and translated in R. C. Love, ed., *Three Eleventh-Century Anglo-Latin Saints' Lives*, pp. 49-89.

[12] For the original Latin *Vita*, see Abbo of Fleury, *Life of St. Edmund*, in M. Winterbottom, ed., *Three Lives of English Saints*, pp. 65-87; the Old English version with Modern English translation appears in Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. ii, pp. 314-35. See also Chapter Four below.

throne, was among the last Anglo-Saxon royal martyrs.[13] By at least one account, in the thirteenth-century *Vita Haraldi*, Harold Godwinson, the last Anglo-Saxon ruler, rather than dying at the Battle of Hastings in 1066 as all other historical records assert, ended his life as a very pious and un-warlike hermit long after the Norman Conquest. [14] Harold's predecessor on the throne was also a saint: Edward the Confessor, canonized in 1161.[15]

Kings did not comprise the only group of royal saints. The wife of King Edwin, Queen Æthelburg, was also venerated as a saint. So also Æthelthryth, wife of King Ecgfrith of Northumbria, and her sister Seaxburga, married to King Eorcenberht of Kent. The sons and daughters of Anglo-Saxon kings also often became saints, as did other close members of royal families. Unlike the martyr-kings, most of the queens, princes, and other royal family members achieved sainthood after renouncing secular life and becoming prominent leaders of monastic communities or high church officials. The elevation to sainthood of royal family members who held important positions in the church provides at least a partial explanation for the phenomenon of royal sainthood, reflecting royalty's power in spiritual as well as secular affairs. Most royal saints achieved sainthood in ways basically consistent with continental Christian practice, usually through renunciation of the

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[13] See C. E. Fell, *Edward King and Martyr*.

[14] See *The Life of King Harold Godwinson* in M. Swanton, ed. and trans., *Three Lives of the Last Englishmen*, pp. 1-40. See also M. Ashdown, "An Icelandic Account of the Survival of Harold Godwinson."

[15] For a modern biography, see F. Barlow, *Edward the Confessor*; on Edward's canonization, see esp. 280-81.

world and a life spent as a monk, nun, bishop, archbishop, abbot, abbess, or anchorite. The royal warrior-saint is more distinctively Anglo-Saxon.

There were royal saints who had little or no earthly power on which to found their reputations for sanctity. One of the strangest is baby Rumwold, who is supposed to have declared at the moment of his birth, "Christianus sum," and who gave a sermon on the Trinity before his death at the age of three days.[16] The personal political power of such a figure was certainly minimal, although powerful family members undoubtedly supported his cult. There are also the numerous royal murder victims, a group studied by David Rollason and Susan Ridyard.[17] Such saints, by dying at the hands of powerful enemies, would become symbols of earthly weakness not strength, and therefore would not be examples of the personal power of royalty leading directly to their sanctification. Yet like Rumwold, they also must have had powerful relatives who supported their cults. The same can also be said of that small group of kings who died with sword in hand, defeated by earthly forces greater than their own. This last group is the most significant to a study a Anglo-Saxon attitudes about warfare and sanctity.

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[16] The *Vita Rumwoldi* is printed in the *Acta Sanctorum* for Nov. 3 (1887), 682-90. It has recently been edited and translated in R. C. Love, *Three Eleventh-Century Anglo-Latin Saints' Lives*, pp. 91-115.

[17] Rollason defined a unique type of Anglo-Saxon royal saint in his study, "Cults of Murdered Royal Saints," pp. 1-22. He associates the royal martyr with attempts to limit or abolish regicide among the Anglo-Saxons. Ridyard concurs, noting with approval Rollason's assertion that "the cults of the murdered royal saints may have been connected with an ecclesiastically directed -- and surely also royally supported -- campaign to condemn, and to limit the consequences of, royal murder" (S. J. Ridyard, *The Royal Saints of Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 247).

The specific *topoi* hagiographers used in representing the lives of saintly kings who died in battle indicate how they resolved the tension between warfare and sanctity.[18] The earliest Anglo-Saxon texts concerned with the royal martyrs are mostly in Latin and represent a wide range of literary types. Histories, poems, homilies, chronicles, liturgical calendars, as well as strictly hagiographic texts all dealt with the lives of this special group of saints. Since this study is concerned with the narrative *topoi* used in representing soldier saints, only texts presenting a narrative account of the life of one or more of the martyred warrior-kings will be considered. This group includes the anonymous *Life of Gregory the Great*, Bede's *Ecclesiastical History* and its Old English translation, Alcuin's *Versus de Patribus Regibus et Sanctis Euboricensis Ecclesiae*, the different versions of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, the *Old English Martyrology*, and various of Ælfric's saints' lives and homilies. The two early kings whose death in battle played an important part in their sanctification were Edwin and Oswald of Northumbria, and it is primarily on them that this chapter will focus. This chapter will not include those kings whose lives involved combat and warfare but whose deaths came after renunciation of kingship's secular duties (including war). These will be considered in Chapter Three. Nor will this chapter consider those kings whose deaths came at the hands of enemies outside of the context of battle. Murdered royal martyrs have been thoroughly studied, and the accounts of their lives add

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[18] No previous study has focused on the martial aspect of Anglo-Saxon royal sainthood, but a number of scholars have attempted to account for the high incidence of royal saints in Anglo-Saxon Christian culture. Chaney, Nelson, Ridyard, and Rollason have all grouped together warrior-kings with other types of royal saints, including queen-saints, martyred princes, and other members of royal families who achieved sanctity.

nothing to the study of war-related tropes in Anglo-Saxon literature. The only exceptions are Ealhmund (Alkmund), who was probably a royal murder victim but who came in later accounts to be regarded as a saint who died in battle,[19] and Edmund of East Anglia, whose death at the hands of Viking marauders was represented as voluntary martyrdom not directly related to combat. Ealhmund and Edmund will both be analyzed in Chapter Four.

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[19] See Rollason, "Cults of Murdered Royal Saints," pp. 3-5.

II

The earliest martyred warrior-king to eventually become the object of a saint's cult was King Edwin of Northumbria. The primary sources for his life are two nearly contemporaneous, but slightly contradictory sources.[20] The earliest is a *Life of Gregory the Great*, a Latin prose work of the eighth century.[21] Bede also tells the story of Edwin's conversion in the *Ecclesiastical History*, yet he does not call Edwin a saint.[22] The Whitby *Life* would therefore represent the earliest evidence we have for the Anglo-Saxon

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[20] Although initially there was some disagreement about the Whitby work's date of composition and its relationship to Bede's portrayal of Edwin in the *Ecclesiastical History*, Bertram Colgrave assigns the anonymous text to the first decade of the eighth century, some years before Bede finished his work, and discounts any relationship between the two accounts.

[21] *Earliest Life of Gregory the Great.*

[22] According to J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *Early Germanic Kingship*, pp. 82-83, "Bede knew nothing of any cultus....[I]t is from the Whitby writer, not from Bede, that we learn that the relics of the martyr-kings worked miracles and were the object of a local cult." A. Thacker, "Bede's Ideal of Reform," pp. 130-53, agrees that Bede does not treat Edwin as the object of a cult although the anonymous Whitby author does. Yet both Wallace-Hadrill and Thacker have found the lack of agreement between the two texts in regard to Edwin's cultic veneration remarkable. Wallace-Hadrill says, "It seems extraordinary that Bede should not have known of the cult of Edwin at Whitby, or, if he knew it, should not have reported it--unless, of course, he disbelieved some part of the Whitby claim" (J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *Early Germanic Kingship*, p. 82). Thacker argues that "Bede suppressed all reference to Edwin's cult, although he probably knew the Whitby *Life* which records it and was certainly in touch with the Whitby community" (A. Thacker, "Bede's Ideal of Reform," p. 148). Nonetheless, neither scholar examines closely whether Edwin is actually portrayed as a saint in the Whitby text.

sanctification of a Christian warrior-king, if indeed it presented Edwin as a saint. It does not. A close examination of both accounts of Edwin's life indicates that neither Bede nor the Whitby anonymous directly asserts that Edwin was a saint, and neither source describes a saint's cult devoted to the martyred king. Edwin is honored and revered, and the story of his life is filled with supernatural, even divinely-inspired events, but he is not the object of a saint's cult.

In the Whitby *Life*, Edwin is actually more a divine king, anointed by God and honored by his people, than a royal saint. Rather than present a full-fledged *vita* of Edwin, the author subordinates Edwin's story to the larger purpose of recording the life of Pope Gregory. He begins the account of Edwin's life without making any claim for Edwin's sanctity. After having mentioned him in regard to Pope Gregory's decision to send the mission to England and Paulinus's role in bringing about the conversion of Northumbria, he goes on tell the story of Edwin's life.

> Sed quia regis nostri christianissimi facimus Eduini mentionem, dignum fuit etiam et eius conversionis facere, quomodo antiquitus traditur, illi fuisse premonstrata. Quod non tam condenso quomodo audivimus verbo, sed pro veritate certantes, eo quod credimus factum brevi replicamus et sensu, licet ab illis minime audivimus famatum qui eius plura pre ceteris sciebant. Nec tamen quod tam spiritaliter a fidelibus traditur, tegi silentio per totum rectum rimamur, cum etiam sepe fama cuiusque rei, per longa tempora terrarumque spatia, post congesta, diverso modo in aures diversorum perveniet. Hoc igitur multo ante horum omnes qui nunc supersunt, gestum est dies. [23]

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[23] "Since we are mentioning Edwin, our most Christian king, it would be proper to tell of his conversion and how, according to ancient tradition, it was revealed to him beforehand. We will tell the story, not in the condensed form in which we heard it, but we will seek to tell the truth and briefly relate what we believe to have happened, even though we have not heard it from those who knew him better than most. However, we do not hold it to be entirely right to hide in silence what is related so sincerely by faithful witnesses, for often

The author speaks of Edwin as "regis nostri christianissimi" rather than "sancti nostri," and he puts forward no claim for his sanctity. Edwin's conversion and the miraculous events associated with his life and death are merely one result of Gregory's pious deeds. Although the anonymous author records many supernatural elements in his treatment of Edwin, the account is not hagiographic. It emphasizes Edwin's royalty, not his saintliness. Edwin is a divinely appointed ruler whose reign is foretold and inspired by God, but he is not a saint.

The different supernatural events presented in *The Earliest Life of Gregory the Great* are not all related to sainthood. The author thoroughly develops the idea of Gregory's sainthood. Hagiographic traditions and even specific theological concepts inform most of the miraculous events associated with Gregory.[24] Yet the supernatural events surrounding Edwin are less easy to characterize. Edwin is a powerful figure, chosen or ordained by God to play a part in bringing the people of Northumbria to Christianity. That the author regards him as a saint is less clear. He frequently uses phrases like *vir Dei* or *vir sanctus* when discussing Gregory but in referring to Edwin.[25]

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the account of any event which happened long ago and in distant lands and which was put into shape in later times, reaches the ears of different people in different forms. For this happened long before the days of any of those who are still alive" (*Earliest Life of Gregory the Great*, pp. 98-99).

[24] The appearance of a bloody finger on the altar, for example, illustrates concretely the doctrine of transubstantiation (*Earliest Life of Gregory the Great*, pp. 104-09).

[25] For example, "Incipit liber beati et laudabilis Gregorii"; "qualiter doctor noster sanctus Gregorius vir ceteris incomparabilis sit"; "ille sanctus vir"; "[i]nter quos apostolicum

Instead he calls Edwin *vir regalis*, "the royal man," or *rex Eduinus*. Perhaps most significantly, the Whitby monk does not use the term *miracula*, "miracles," to refer to the supernatural events associated with Edwin, but rather speaks of signs, "signorum," by which his "merita" are revealed.[26]

Distinctions between different types of supernatural events were important to the author. He devoted an entire chapter to a discussion of signs and miracles, acknowledging the importance of miracles to popular conceptions of sanctity, and in the process he distinguished between the two types of supernatural event. The topic is first introduced in Chapter Three: "Multi...a miraculis vitam quidem sanctorum solent considerare, atque a signis sancta illorum merita metiri, et hoc nec inmerito."[27] In order to prove that Gregory deserves the status of saint, the monk of Whitby points not merely to holy signs but to miracles associated with the pope: "Unde nostrorum nonnulli mirabilem virum sanctum Gregorium papam Romanum,... signis divinis apte suspicantur, que et mira dicuntur merito fulsisse" (76-8).[28] This passage points to a hierarchy in which "divine signs" rank below "miracles."

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nostrum sanctum Gregorium virum prefatum adnumeratus" (*Earliest Life of Gregory the Great*, pp. 72, 76, 78, 80-2). There are many more comparable examples.

[26] *Earliest Life of Gregory the Great*, pp. 94-102.

[27] "[M]any are accustomed to judge the lives of saints by their miracles and to measure their merits and holiness by the signs they perform; nor is this unreasonable" (*Earliest Life of Gregory the Great*, pp. 76-77).

[28] "Therefore some of our people rightly suppose that this wonderful man St. Gregory, the Pope of Rome..., deservedly gained renown by holy signs which can even be called miracles" (*Earliest Life of Gregory the Great*, pp. 76-79).

The purpose of miracles, according to the Whitby anonymous, is to encourage conversion. Those whose role does not involve pastoral duties may not reveal any supernatural powers. Miracles are granted for specific purposes:

> etiam ad idola distruenda infidelium paganorum, vel fidelium aliquando fidem infirmam confirmandam concessa sunt; illorum maxime doctoribus, unde et ibi eo sepius mirabiliusque declarantur, quo fiunt ipsi doctores meliores. Hinc igitur quidam heremite viri maxime latentes, nullis declarantur miraculis, at contra minores in urbibus multa sepe fecere miracula.[29]

In saying that some saints might have performed few miracles known to men, or, conceivably, none at all, the author seems to be defending Gregory against claims of unworthiness based on a paucity of recorded miracles. Yet if the Whitby hagiographer felt he had to excuse the dearth of miracles associated with Gregory, he would have been even more reluctant to argue for Edwin's sanctity, since he records no true miracles associated with the king, but rather a handful of what he terms "signis divinis," signs of divine favor.

Although the treatment of Edwin in the *Life of Gregory the Great* does not imply that Edwin is a saint, it is clear that he was regarded as holy in some sense. Gregory, and to a lesser extent Paulinus, are the true saints in the *Life of Gregory the Great*, but Edwin is something slightly different, a holy king rather than a man of God. Judith McClure sees in Bede's treatment of Edwin echoes of divinely ordained Hebrew kings like David, while

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[29] "Miracles are granted for the destruction of the idols of unbelieving pagans, or sometimes to confirm the weak faith of believers; most of all, they are granted to those who instruct the pagans, and so, the more gloriously and frequently they are manifested in those lands, the more convincing they become as teachers. Hence some hermits, though very great men, living obscure lives, are not revealed by any miracles, but, on the contrary, lesser men living in cities have often performed many miracles" (*Earliest Life of Gregory the Great*, pp. 78-79).

Chaney identifies the king-cults with pagan traditions.[30] Both suggestions provide means of interpreting the supernatural events surrounding Edwin, and they are not necessarily mutually exclusive. The Whitby author's portrayal of Edwin merges the biblical holy king with some kind of sacred king rooted in the Germanic tradition of sacral kingship.

Scholarly opinion has been divided about the role of pre-Christian attitudes toward royalty in the phenomenon of royal sainthood. Chaney argues that the sanctification of kings was a holdover from pagan ritual and that the Christian veneration of royal saints was a direct outgrowth of a tradition of sacral kingship in pagan Germanic society.[31] Certainly there are elements in the cults of royal saints that seem to imply a connection between pagan religious practices and the veneration of sainted kings. Chaney points to particular features of the cult of St. Oswald, the Northumbrian martyr-king:

> I do not think...that one can understand King Oswald, 'the most holy and very victorious king of Northumberland', as Bede calls him, without considering the relation of the cross which he erected at Rowley Water and northern pillar cult, the hand and knee as sacral objects, Germanic tree cult and its connections with Heimdall and Christ, pillars of light above Anglo-Saxon royal saints, royal protection against pestilence, division of the king's body after the battle of *Maserfelth* with dismemberment of kings to protect their realm, the hanging of sacrifices to Woden, King Oswald as a Bavarian and Tyrolean lord of the weather, and the raven of Woden and Oswald as a sacral bird.[32]

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[30] J. McClure, "Bede's Old Testament Kings," pp. 76-98; W. A. Chaney, *The Cult of Kingship*.

[31] Chaney, *The Cult of Kingship*.

[32] Chaney, *The Cult of Kingship*, pp. 5-6.

Like Oswald, Edwin also was venerated in ways which may show a connection to pre-Christian cultural practices. He is a revered figure with supernatural associations whose relics are preserved and venerated. Although this does not mean that he was regarded as a Christian saint, whether it reflects traditions that pre-date the introduction of Christianity to England cannot be determined without a careful examination of the evidence presented in the earliest texts relating his life.

One thing is certain: no matter how convincing one finds arguments like Chaney's, one cannot accept pagan sacral kingship as responsible for all the manifestations of royal sainthood in Anglo-Saxon England. Logic leans against the sacral nature of kings as the cause of royal veneration since, large as the list of Anglo-Saxon royal saints may seem, still only a small percentage of the many kings, queens, princes, and princesses of the Anglo- Saxons ever achieved saintly status. For most of the Anglo-Saxon period England was divided into smaller kingdoms, so that at any time before the unification of England in the tenth century, there might have been eight or more kings within the area we now call England, each with his own family circle, and the Anglo-Saxon Christian era stretched from around 600 until 1066, more than four and a half centuries. If sainthood grew directly out of the sacral nature of kingship, there would be many hundreds, perhaps thousands of royal saints, rather than the fifty or so documented cults.

Despite numerous elements that would come to be associated with sainted martyr-kings, the Whitby account of Edwin's life reflects only faintly the Christian hagiographic tradition. From our perspective in the twentieth century, we may find it difficult to distinguish between sainthood itself and other, related varieties of respect. As Thomas F.

X. Noble and Thomas Head have pointed out, "While many Christians were considered 'holy,' only a limited number came to be regarded as 'saints'." [33] If the *Life of Gregory* provides the primary evidence for Edwin's status in the community of Whitby and some of Northumbria, then it is unlikely that a full-fledged saint's cult existed during this period.[34] Only in relationship to the growth of a new category of Anglo-Saxon saints, the group codified in the honorific "King and Martyr," can Edwin be definitively seen as a saint. Whatever the exact nature of his original veneration, he became the prototype of a new type of holy man.

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[33] T. F. X. Noble and T. Head, Introduction, *Soldiers of Christ*, p. xiv.

[34] Corroborating evidence that Edwin was venerated as a saint is scarce. He is not mentioned in the *Secgan be þam Godes sanctum þe on Engla lande ærost reston*, which Rollason discusses in "Lists of Saints' Resting-places." He appears but is not referred to as a saint in the related text, *Her cyð ymbe þa halgan þe on Angelcynne_restað* (Rollason, *Mildrith*, pp. 83-84). His name does not appear in Anglo-Saxon litanies of the saints; see M. Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Litanies of the Saints*. A single church is dedicated to Edwin, St. Edwin's at Coniscliffe, Durham, according to F. Arnold-Forster, *Studies in Church Dedications*, vol. ii. p. 301, vol. iii, pp. 13, 360. Chaney points out that Edwin's name appears in the early eighth-century calendar edited by H. A. Wilson for the Henry Bradshaw Society as *The Calendar of Willibrord from MS Paris. Lat. 10837* (W. A. Chaney, *The Cult of Kingship*, p. 77, n. 146). Bede, Alcuin, and the anonymous Whitby hagiographer all treat Edwin in what can be termed a semi-hagiographic fashion, although Wallace-Hadrill points out that in a post-Conquest text, the *Vita Oswaldi* of Symeon of Durham, Edwin is referred to as having achieved the martyr's crown (J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *Early Germanic Kingship*, pp. 81-2).

III

In his brief treatment of the life of Edwin, the Whitby monk developed *topoi* that would come to be associated with new royal soldier saints, but which owe little to the model of the *Vita Sancti Martini*. The Whitby author seems to have known Sulpicius's work, although Colgrave expresses some doubt on this point.[35] If he was familiar with the *Vita Sancti Martini*, the *topoi* related to Martin's career as a soldier would have been at odds with the tradition he inherited of Edwin's career as king. There is no evidence that Edwin was unwilling to serve as a king or to lead his people into battle because of his conversion to Christianity.[36] He converted late in life, so the entire concept of an early period of youthful soldiering followed by a renunciation of violence in favor of service to God would make no sense in the context of his life. A bloodless victory would have been

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[35] In his edition of *The Life of Gregory the Great*, Colgrave says that "whereas the anonymous writer at Lindisfarne who wrote a Life of St. Cuthbert at the turn of the seventh and eighth centuries knew the works of Athanasius, Sulpicius, Isidore, and Ambrose, our writer seems to know none of them" (*Earliest Life of Gregory the Great*, p. 37). Yet he later identifies a passage in the third chapter where "the writer seems to be echoing a phrase from the letter...with which Sulpicius Severus prefaces his Life of St. Martin" (*Earliest Life of Gregory the Great*, p. 141, n. 11). Using rather circular logic, Colgrave dismisses the verbal parallel because "there is no evidence at all that our writer was familiar" with Sulpicius' work (*Earliest Life of Gregory the Great*, p. 142, n. 11). It is just as likely that this single example of borrowing from the *Vita Sancti Martini* indicates that the author knew it but did not choose to borrow heavily from it.

[36] There are many accounts of Anglo-Saxon kings who wished to abdicate for religious reasons, including many who actually did. See C. Stancliffe, "Kings Who Opted Out," pp. 154-176.

appropriate to the life of a warrior-king, but none occurs in the Whitby account.[37] The author only mentions Edwin's battles to name the site where Edwin and a number of other people were killed, relying on his audience's prior knowledge of the events surrounding Edwin's death.[38] The battle itself is peripheral to the Whitby author's concept of Edwin's holiness, although the king's death is central to his concerns.

Only one of the *topoi* used by Sulpicius to represent Martin's youthful soldiering is reflected in the treatment of Edwin in the *Life of Gregory the Great*. Of the four *topoi* analyzed in Chapter One, only the idea of living like a saint while still a soldier (or in Edwin's case, a king) is faintly echoed in the story of Edwin's life. In fact, there is surprisingly little emphasis on Edwin's saintly behavior. The author refers to Edwin's piety and wisdom, but gives no concrete examples. Instead he develops other *topoi* he considers more appropriate to his subject. These include signs of predestination to sanctity, including the religious symbolism of Edwin's name and his royal lineage; a time of trial, spent out of favor with temporal authority and in great physical danger, through which God preserves him for future greatness; the breadth of his rule as a sign of his blessedness; and the miraculous discovery of his body after death in battle.[39] The

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[37] The Whitby *Life* ascribes a bloodless victory, though, to Gregory when he convinces the Lombard king Agilulf to stop his planned destruction of Rome (114-16 and 154, n. 94).

[38] *Earliest Life of Gregory the Great*, pp. 102-04.

[39] Often unusual imagery, including an association with light and, most peculiarly, with crows, recurs in various accounts of the lives of martyred warrior-kings. These may have important symbolic value to traditional Germanic religion, as has been argued by Chaney

relationship of some of these elements to the tension between warfare and sanctity is tenuous. As they are developed in the Whitby *Life* and in later works by Bede, Alcuin, and others, they represent the elements of a significant hagiographic tradition related to warrior-kings, yet since they do not bear directly on the subject of this study, they will not be dealt with in detail here. Only the *topoi* of providential preservation through adversity and providential expansion of a king's realm bear directly on the issues of warfare and sanctity, as warfare usually represented the only means by which an Anglo-Saxon king could survive adversity and extend his realm. In addition, the discovery of the king's body after his death in battle raises important issues concerning the nature of royal sainthood and its relationship to martyrdom. Far from being a pacifistic ruler noted for saintly behavior, Edwin was an aggressive ruler who came to power at the point of a sword and whose wars extended the sway of the Northumbrian kings for generations to come, but whose death in battle came to be regarded as a form of martyrdom.

Edwin's story begins in the rivalry between the Northumbrian kingdoms of Deira and Bernicia. Edwin, the heir of King Ælle of Deira, had been driven into exile by King Æthelfrith of Bernicia. Although according to Stenton Deira was the "more ancient" of the two kingdoms, it was also the smaller and usually the weaker of the two.[40] Edwin found refuge with King Rædwald of East Anglia south of the Humber, but Æthelfrith

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and others, but as they do not directly relate to the tension between warfare and sanctity in Anglo-Saxon literature, they are outside the scope of this analysis.

[40] F. M. Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, pp. 74-76.

demanded that his southern neighbor turn the exiled ætheling over to him. Through the intercession of his wife (and, according to the Whitby author, by God's plan), Rædwald decided to resist the demand, and instead attacked the Northumbrian monarch and overthrew him. Edwin became a powerful ruler of the united northern kingdom, miraculously avoided an assassination attempt, and finally converted to Christianity under the guidance of Bishop Paulinus, emissary of Augustine to the Northumbrians. He was eventually defeated by the combined forces of a Welsh Christian, King Cadwallon of Gwynedd, and Penda, a Mercian noble who would later become king of Mercia. During his rule, Edwin expanded the Northumbrian kingdom, becoming one of the first northern overlords of the southern English. According to Stenton, "Edwin was a typical king of the Heroic Age":

> [I]n character and environment he belonged to the world depicted in Old English heroic poetry. Like other heroes, he had traveled far as an exile, and had known his life to depend on the conflict between honour and interest in the mind of a protector. He secured his father's kingdom through the help of a stronger king, and made himself in time the lord of other kings. He moved over the country surrounded by retainers ready to give their lives for him. [41]

Only his conversion to Christianity marked Edwin as anything more than a powerful Northumbrian warrior-king.

The anonymous Whitby hagiographer uses the *topos* of the saintly king (the equivalent of Sulpicius' trope of the saintly soldier) sparingly. He offers no evidence of Edwin's saintly behavior, merely referring to him as "pious," "most Christian," and "wise."

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[41] F. M. Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 79.

He first mentions Edwin in conjunction with Æthelberht of Kent, the "first of all the kings of England to be led to faith in Christ" by the missionaries to the Anglo-Saxons sent by Pope Gregory -- "Per hos igitur regum omnium primus Angulorum Editbertus rex Cantuariorum ad fidem Christi correctus."[42] Edwin is renowned "tam sapientia singularis quam etiam sceptro dicionis regie, a tempore quo gens Angulorum hanc ingreditur insulam."[43] The author's first mention of Edwin's singular qualities thus emphasizes two virtues not uniquely Christian. Like an Old Testament king, Edwin is pre-eminently wise and, in another Old Testament *topos*, the breadth of his rule is a sign of his favor with God.[44] The Whitby writer also speaks of "regis nostri christianissimi ... Eduini" and "religiosi regis prefati Eduini."[45] These faint echoes may reflect Sulpicius's trope of the saintly soldier, but if so their faintness also reflects the degree to which other claims are

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[42] *Earliest Life of Gregory the Great*, pp. 94-95.

[43] "From the time when the English race first came to this island, ...as much for the wisdom as for the extent of his royal and single-handed rule" (*Earliest Life of Gregory the Great*, pp. 94-95).

[44] As Judith McClure points out, the idea of extension of kingship to many peoples has its origins for Bede, and most likely for the Whitby hagiographer as well, in the Old Testament.

> [H]e would have seen the way in which powerful kings like Saul and David extended their territories, and multiplied the peoples under their control; how the authority of a great king like Solomon depended upon the acceptance of his rule over a wide area inhabited by diverse peoples under minor rulers. (J. McClure, "Bede's Old Testament Kings," p. 87)

The influence of such ideas on accounts of Edwin's dominion is obvious, and it points up again the ambiguity inherent in an analysis of Edwin as a saint.

[45] "Edwin, our most Christian king"; "[T]hat same pious king, Edwin" (*Earliest Life of Gregory the Great*, pp. 98-99, 102-03).

much more important in the case of the martyred warrior-king. Edwin's success as a ruler is as important a sign of God's favor as are his Christianity, wisdom and piety.

Rather than being earned by pious acts, Edwin's greatness is predestined. Unlike St. Martin, whose act of Christian compassion toward the naked beggar is rewarded by a vision of Christ as the first sign of future holiness, Edwin is promised kingship by a supernatural visitor who appears to him before he rises to power or accepts Christianity. In developing the trope of predestination, however, the hagiographer also introduces another narrative pattern which will become associated with martyred warrior-kings: his providential preservation through adversity. "Verum itaque omnes fuisse scimus quia idem rex fuit exul sub rege Uuestanglorum[46] Redualdo, quem emulus suus sic passim persecutus est, qui eum ex patria pulsit tirannus Edilfridus, ut eum pecunia sua emere occidendum querebat."[47] That so great a king as Edwin had spent time prey to the machinations of his enemies makes his rise to power seem miraculous. The prediction of future earthly power is predicated on Edwin's later, eventual baptism and submission to God. Unlike Martin, who starts on the path of sanctity through his pious acts while still a

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[46] This misidentification of Rædwald as king not of East Anglia but of the "West Angles" Colgrave attributes "to a mistake on the part of the Continental scribe who made the copy which has survived, rather than to a mistake of the author" (*Earliest Life of Gregory the Great*, pp. 149-50, n. 65). The actual manuscript reading is even more distorted: "uuestranglorum" (*Earliest Life of Gregory the Great*, p. 98, n.5).

[47] "We all know that it is true that King Edwin was an exile at the court of Rædwald, King of the East Angles. The tyrant Æthelfrith, his rival, drove him hither and thither, seeking to bring about his death by paying out sums of money" (*Earliest Life of Gregory the Great*, pp. 98-101).

soldier and through his renunciation of violence, Edwin gains a broad realm in expectation of his future acceptance of Christianity.[48]

The main anomaly involved in the Anglo-Saxon cults of warrior-kings is that, despite earthly rewards for ruling as a Christian king, the ruler must still die in battle to gain sainthood. His role in converting the Northumbrians to Christianity represents his only claim to holiness before his death in battle. As a figure instrumental in spreading the Faith, Edwin resembles, albeit slightly, the hagiographic figure of the confessor played by Martin. But it is as a martyr that he comes to be venerated. There is a limit to the happy reign as a sign of sanctity; of the early kings who first converted to Christianity, only those like Edwin and, later, Oswald who were killed fighting pagan enemies came to be considered holy. For example, there is little evidence that Æthelberht of Kent, the first Anglo-Saxon Christian king, was ever regarded as a saint, although many of his family who renounced secular life and retired to monasteries did achieve that distinction, including his daughter, Edwin's queen Æthelburg.[49] It is through death in battle that Edwin gains a special degree of veneration.

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[48] Edwin became king before he accepted Christianity, but according to the Whitby hagiographer and later writers, his good fortune was prophesied, based on foreknowledge of his conversion, and thus was dependent on his future acceptance of the faith.

[49] Wallace-Hadrill, says of Æthelberht, "[T]here is nothing to suggest that the Church of Canterbury attempted to make him the object of a cult, and there is no evidence of a popular cult, either." To this he adds, "There is, however, some evidence of belated recognition by Canterbury of the potentialities of the Kentish royal family" (J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *Early Germanic Kingship*, p. 80 and n. 34). Rollason's study of the cult of St. Mildrith provides ample evidence of these potentialities. He describes how the "extraordinary plan of [St. Augustine's Abbey at Canterbury] by the fifteenth-century

Although the Whitby hagiographer largely ignores the final battle of Edwin's life, which later writers will link to the trope of the evil and merciless pagan enemy, he does develop one other important *topos* meant to demonstrate Edwin's sanctity, the miraculous discovery of his body after the battle.

The tradition of the discovery and translation of a martyr's bones is ancient. Sulpicius describes Martin's ability to tell the relics of a true Christian martyr from other, less holy old bones (Sulpicius xi.1-5), and in Paulinus of Nola's *Vita Ambrosii*, Bishop Ambrose of Milan discovers the remains of two martyrs, Gervasius and Protasius.[50] An important aspect of the miraculous discovery of the warrior-king's remains will eventually be this link to the cult of martyrs.[51]

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historian Thomas of Elmham shows...the relics of the first Christian king of Kent, Æthelberht, and those of the his queen's chaplain Liudhard on a raised structure behind the high altar" (D. W. Rollason, *Saints and Relics*, p. 231), but he does not identify Æthelberht as a saint in his genealogy of the royal house of Kent (D. W. Rollason, *The Mildrith Legend*, p.45), nor does Ridyard (S. J. Ridyard, *The Royal Saints of Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 75). Andrew Phillips lists Æthelberht among the saints culted at Canterbury and assigns him the feast-day of February 25 (A. Phillips, *The Hallowing of England*, 33, 79). Bede gives no indication of regarding Æthelberht as a saint in the account of his conversion (Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. i, pp. 112-14).

[50] As Van Dam has pointed out, these same relics came to be associated with St. Martin (R. Van Dam, *Saints and Their Miracles*, p. 17 and n. 32).

[51] Another connection between the discovery of Edwin's bones and martyrs' relic-cults comes in one of Gregory's miracles related immediately after the section on Edwin in which "sanctis diversorum Dei martirum reliquas" play a central role (*Earliest Life of Gregory the Great*, p.108).

The Whitby hagiographer presents the story of the uncovering and translation of Edwin's bones in great detail. Although not yet linked to a martyr-cult, their discovery is presented as one of the signs of his holiness:

> Sed ut propositum persequar, qualibet Christi lucerna de hoc rege Eduino signorum lucescit floribus dico, ut apertius merita clarescant. Huius itaque regalis vere viri ossium reliquie qualiter Domino revelante sunt reperte, dignum est memorie commendare.[52]

Here as elsewhere Edwin's sanctity is revealed through signs, *signorum*, which indicate God's approval, rather than through miracles that would directly reflect his own purity or sanctity.[53]

Edwin's bones are discovered following a series of dreams. As frequently occurs in folklore and fairy tales, it is only on the third try that the supernatural event succeeds. In each dream, a disturbingly unidentifiable supernatural visitant appears to a priest named Trimma and gives him specific instructions about how to find Edwin's bones and where to

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[52] "But to continue our theme, I go on to describe how the light of Christ shines from this King Edwin in the glory of his miracles in order that his merits may blaze forth more brightly. So it is proper to record how the relics, consisting of the royal man's bones, were found through the revelation of God" (*Earliest Life of Gregory the Great*, pp. 100-103).

[53] The use of light imagery in this passage is part of the pattern of unusual symbolism referred to in note 38 above. In the only other scene involving Edwin, "a crow ("cornix") set up a hoarse croaking from an unpropitious quarter of the sky" while Edwin is on his way to receive instruction in the faith. Paulinus has a man shoot the crow, and uses it to show the failure of pagan divination (*Earliest Life of Gregory the Great*, p. 97). Ravens or crows and beams of light, often in the form of a pillar, are significant parts of the "pagan" trappings Chaney identifies with Germanic sacral kingship in *Cult of Kingship*, pp. 5-6, 22, 118-119, 132-35.

take them. In a hagiographic context, one would expect the dream figure to be Edwin's shade, some other saint, or an angel or archangel, yet he is merely "vir quidam," "a certain man."[54] Trimma is reluctant to follow this vague apparition's instructions, and only in the third dream does the dream-visitant succeed by threatening violence against Trimma.

> His itaque peractis tertio adhuc vir suus eodem presbitero apparuit eumque flagello satis redargutione correxit, sicque increpans ait, 'Nonne bis indicavi tibi quid debes facere et neglexisti? Proba modo si adhuc inoboediens an oboediens mihi esse volueris.' [55]

The ambiguous supernatural figure's threatened use of violence to achieve spiritual ends makes a sharp contrast to the trope of the bloodless victory which accompanied Martin's transformation from soldier of the emperor to soldier of Christ. [56]

There are other instances of supernatural violence in the *Life of Gregory the Great*. In one scene, a bloody finger appears on the altar to show that the host is truly the body of Christ; blood runs from a piece of cloth, which is the relic of a martyr, when the cloth is cut with a knife; Gregory binds a living man in Hell because he withheld three

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[54] *Earliest Life of Gregory the Great*, pp. 102-03.

[55] "After this the man appeared for the third time to the priest; he corrected him and reproved him violently, even using a whip, at the same time rebuking him with such words as these, 'Have I not twice shown you what you must do and you have taken no notice? Now show me whether you intend to obey me or disobey me'" (*Earliest Life of Gregory the Great*, pp. 102-05).

[56] Colgrave notes a number of similar scenes of scourging by dream visitants (151, n. 74). Yet this scene differs from those he lists since in all of them the figure scourged is a saint and the scourging is carried out by another saint or by angels. Here the priest Trimma is not a saint, and the supernatural figure is identified only as "a certain man," not as a saint or an angel.

coins from the Church; and, most interesting of all, Gregory himself appears after his death and kicks his papal successor, Sabinianus, in the head, killing him.[57] Of this last event Colgrave comments,

> Nowhere in the *Life* does the Whitby author reveal more clearly the crudeness of his times. In fact the dead saint's violent behaviour is reminiscent of northern tales told later on in the Norse sagas of the frightful havoc wrought by offended ghosts upon the living as in the *Grettissaga* or the *Eyrbyggja Saga*.[58]

The attitudes toward violence expressed in the *Earliest Life of Gregory the Great* are clearly very different from those in Sulpicius Severus' *Vita Sancti Martini*, just as Edwin is a very different kind of holy man from Martin of Tours.

Even in the account of the subsequent treatment of Edwin's bones, the Whitby hagiographer does not present Edwin as a saint, despite scholarly claims to the contrary. Working backwards from later knowledge of Edwin's veneration, it is tempting to see in the supernatural events recounted about Edwin the beginnings of a cult, and indeed a veneration of Edwin may have begun with Trimma's purportedly miraculous discovery of the dead king's bones. Nonetheless, the Whitby hagiographer makes no claims for Edwin's sanctity. He describes how the bones were brought to the monastery at Whitby, and how they were reburied within the church, but there is no mention of posthumous miracles or any of the other expected trappings of a saint's cult:

> inventumque thesaurum desiderabile ad hoc nostrum secum asportavit coenobium. In quo nunc honorifice in sancti Petri apostolorum principis ecclesia hec eadem sancta ossa cum ceteris conduntur regibus nostris ad austrum altaris illius, quod

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[57] *Earliest Life of Gregory the Great*, pp. 104-09, 108-11, 122-27.

[58] *Earliest Life of Gregory the Great*, p. 161, n. 121.

> beatissimi Petri apostoli est nomine sanctificatum, et ab oriente illius quod in hac ipsa sancto Gregorio est consecrata eclesia. [59]

Edwin's remains are "sancta ossa" ("holy bones"), "thesaurus" (treasure), and, in an earlier passage, "reliquias" ("relics"), yet they are placed not in the altar itself, as saints' relics would be, but "ad austrum altaris" ("on the south side of the altar") and "ab oriente illius" ("east of the altar"), "cum ceteris...regibus nostris," "together with other of our kings," not with the bones of other saints.[60] In discussing this passage, Wallace-Hadrill says, "The 'kings' were: Oswiu and Edwin, apart from the royal abbesses 'and many other noble persons' according to Bede."[61] Whether only two kings or many were buried there, the tradition involved the entombment of royalty and nobility within the church, rather than the placing of saints' relics within the altars.[62]

The Whitby Anonymous ends the section of his book concerned with Edwin's life without any of the miracles expected of a saint. This absence of direct evidence of sanctity

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[59] "[and] he found the treasure he desired and brought it with him to our monastery here. And now the holy bones are honourably buried in the Church of Saint Peter, the chief of the Apostles, together with other of our kings, on the south side of the altar which is dedicated in the name of the blessed Apostle Peter and east of the altar dedicated to St. Gregory, which is in the same church" (*Earliest Life of Gregory the Great*, pp. 104-05).

[60] *Earliest Life of Gregory the Great*, pp. 104-05.

[61] J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *Bede's 'Ecclesiastical History'*, p. 82, n. 45, citing Bede, *HE* iii. 24.

[62] For a discussion of the processes by which burial, both of martyrs and of members of the upper classes, came to occur within church precincts, see Peter Brown, *Cult of the Saints*. Brown's linkage of the *patronus* to the rise of the cult of saints may have bearing on the importance of royal sainthood in Anglo-Saxon England.

is consistent with the treatment of Edwin throughout the text; but various forms are mentioned in which the story of Edwin's life appeared. As Colgrave says, "The author was evidently familiar with more than one form of the story."[63] It seems unlikely that any prior account of Edwin's life was specifically hagiographic. If, as Colgrave and others argue, the veneration of Edwin's bones at Whitby was intended to rival the cult of St. Oswald growing at Bardney, and Edwin's daughter Eanflæd "perhaps hoped that Edwin's relics might provide Whitby with a shrine and a cult as Oswald's were already doing," then the Whitby *Life* may represent one of the first steps toward creation of a cult.[64] If so, then Oswald's cult would actually represent the earliest martyr-saint tradition, upon which the Whitby account would in large part be based, even though Edwin preceded Oswald in life.

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[63] *Earliest Life of Gregory the Great*, p. 149, n. 63.

[64] *Earliest Life of Gregory the Great*, p. 43.

IV

In presenting Edwin in the *Historia Ecclesiastica*, Bede uses many of the same *topoi* the Whitby hagiographer employed, though Bede, too, abstains from calling Edwin a saint or using hagiographic *topoi* to enhance his reputation. Bertram Colgrave's analysis of the Whitby *Life*'s date of composition rules out Bede's work as one of its sources, but the Whitby text could have been among Bede's sources. Colgrave discounts any direct influence on Bede, however, saying, "[I]t is not difficult to show that it is very unlikely that Bede had ever seen the Whitby *Life*." For evidence he cites a number of events in the lives of Gregory and Edwin of which Bede makes no mention, including the miraculous discovery of Edwin's bones.[65] This argument by omission is not completely convincing. Other factors could have influenced Bede's decision to leave out these scenes, among them a desire to minimize the importance of Whitby as a cultic center. Although the question of direct dependence isn't crucial for this study, the independence of the two works would provide a convenient means of evaluating the degree to which the ideas about warfare and sanctity expressed and implied in the Whitby hagiographer's work were common among the Anglo-Saxons. If Bede knew the Whitby author's work, he incorporated many of its key tropes. If he didn't, the fact that those tropes appear in both works reflects the centrality of certain core ideas about the sanctity of kings, and about the

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[65] *Earliest Life of Gregory the Great*, pp. 57-59.

relationship between warfare and sanctity, to the Anglo-Saxons of the seventh and eighth centuries.

Of the warfare-related tropes in the Whitby hagiographer's account of Edwin's life, one (providential extension of his realm) receives greater emphasis in Bede than it did in the earlier work. Another trope, the king's providential preservation through adversity, was not related to warfare in the Whitby account but is in Bede. In addition, the trope of the saintly king, which parallels the saintly soldier trope from Sulpicius, is much more fully developed by Bede than by the Whitby author. There is no miraculous discovery of Edwin's bones, but Bede provides more information than his predecessor did about the burial of his remains.

Bede also makes use of two new war-related tropes in his accounts of Edwin's life and death which become important parts of the tradition of martyred warrior-saints among the Anglo-Saxons. The first of these is Edwin's God-granted victory in battle (and this is definitely *not* a bloodless victory like Martin's). In the other, Bede emphasizes Edwin's evil and merciless pagan enemies. These tropes, taken together with those also used in the Whitby *Life*, form the core elements of the Anglo-Saxon hagiographic tradition of the martyred warrior-king. They work together to portray Edwin as the anointed king of a Christian realm, if not the martyred saint Oswald will become.

Bede introduces Edwin with an impressive account of the extent of his rule. In making a list of the powerful Anglo-Saxon overlords, the *bretwaldas*, Bede praises Edwin more highly than any of his predecessors, stressing especially the breadth of Edwin's rule

in England.[66] Edwin comes fifth in Bede's list, followed by the brothers Oswald and Oswy.

> quintus Aeduini rex Nordanhymbrorum gentis, id est, eius quae ad borealem Humbrae fluminis plagam inhabitat, maiore potentia cunctis qui Brittaniam incolunt, Anglorum pariter et Brettonum populis praefuit, praeter Cantuariis tantum; necnon et Mevanias Brettonum insulas, quae inter Hiberniam et Brittaniam sitae sunt, Anglorum subiecit imperio. [67]

In praising Edwin for the breadth of his realm, Bede does not directly link the extent of Edwin's rule with God's favor. In this he does not differ markedly from the Whitby hagiographer. Both merely describe with approval his extensive rule, although Bede provides many more concrete details. Yet unlike the earlier writer, Bede returns to this theme as he begins the story of Edwin's life, and there explicitly develops its spiritual significance.

> Quo tempore etiam gens Nordanhymbrorum...cum rege suo Aeduino, verbum fidei praedicante Paulino...suscepit. Cui videlicet regi in auspicium suscipiendae fidei et regni caelestis, potestas etiam terreni creverat imperii: ita ut, quod nemo Anglorum ante eum, omnes Brittaniae fines, qua vel ipsorum vel Brettonum provinciae habitabant, sub ditione acciperet. [68]

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[66] For a discussion of the use of this term and its connection to Bede's account of the powerful Anglo-Saxon kings, see P. Wormald, "Bede, the *Bretwaldas*, and the Origins of the *Gens Anglorum*"; J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *Bede's 'Ecclesiastical History'*, pp. 57-58.

[67] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. i, pp. 224-26. "The fifth was Edwin, King of the Northumbrians, that is, the people living north of the Humber, who was a powerful king, and ruled all the peoples of Britain, both Angles and Britons, with the exception of the Kentish folk. He also brought under English rule the Mevanian Isles [Man and Anglesey], which lie between Ireland and Britain" (L. Sherley-Price, trans., *A History of the English Church and People*, pp. 107-108).

[68] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. i, p. 244. "At this time, the people of the Northumbrians...under Edwin their king received the faith through the ministry of Paulinus....As a sign that [Edwin] would come to the Faith and the heavenly kingdom,

Here extensive rule is a sign of divine approval, an "auspicium" both of his future acceptance of the faith and of his eventual acceptance into heaven. Bede falls short of directly linking sainthood and warfare in the creation of Edwin's earthly realm, neither calling Edwin a victorious battle-king nor using a phrase like "the crown of martyrdom" to make Edwin not just a devout Christian acceptable to God but an actual member of that elect body, the "communion of saints." Nonetheless, when Bede goes on to describe in detail the acquisition of Anglesey and Man, the conquest of new lands expresses not merely Edwin's exceptional power and pre-eminence, but divine approval as well. Although warfare is not yet a holy activity, here it meets with divine approval.

There is a tension here between *topos* and historical fact. Just as it was difficult to identify deliberate tropes in Sulpicius's otherwise historically accurate account of Martin's life, it is unclear whether Bede emphasized Edwin's piety in order to validate his extensive rule (and certainly Bede, as a Northumbrian and a monk, had reasons to feel pride in Edwin's achievements), or if sanctity came to be associated with Edwin because of Anglo-Saxon beliefs (not implausibly shared by Bede) that extensive rule was a sign of divine approval. Wallace-Hadrill suggests that "Bede may have been concerned that Edwin's power increased before conversion. That it was an augury, on account so to say, was a neat way out of the difficulty."[69] That Edwin was actually a great and powerful king is

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King Edwin received wide additions to his earthly realm, and brought under his sway all the territories inhabited either by English or by Britons, an achievement unmatched by any previous English king" (L. Sherley-Price, trans., *A History of the English Church and People*, p. 114).

certain, and that Bede linked earthly power to spiritual pre-eminence in Edwin's case is indisputable. The exact relationship between the two for Bede and his contemporaries is a much more complex question. According to Judith McClure, Bede found his model of ideal kingship in the Old Testament.

> Bede would have learned from his scriptural reading the overriding significance of the military strength of kings, and their need to serve as effective warleaders in maintaining and extending the position of their people against the encroachments of surrounding tribes with their own hostile and aggressive. [70]

The influence of the Old Testament on Bede's account of Edwin points up again the ambiguity inherent in an analysis of Edwin as a saint. Bede never calls Edwin a saint, and scholars argue that he is unaware of or repressing knowledge of a cult venerating him.[71] Although certain Old Testament figures did come to be regarded as saints in the later Middle Ages,[72] Bede would not have regarded figures like David, Saul, or Solomon as saints. Rather, as McClure points out, Bede would have seen "that each king has a special place in the divine plan, and that moral judgments could and must be passed on all his actions."[73] Edwin is a quasi-biblical figure who engages in earthly conquest with divine approval, but he is not a saint. In a sense, Edwin is a holy warrior but not truly a soldier saint.

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[69] Wallace-Hadrill, *Historical Commentary*, 65-66.

[70] J. McClure, "Bede's Old Testament Kings," p. 87.

[71] See n. 18 above.

[72] See for example the discussion of Ælfric's "Passio Machabeorum" in Chapter 4 below.

[73] J. McClure, "Bede's Old Testament Kings," p. 90.

Although the Whitby author treated Edwin's providential preservation through adversity as an indication of God's concern for his future role, he did not directly relate it to warfare. Bede does, and he also adds a second instance of providential preservation. The first instance is a repetition, with significant changes, of Edwin's meeting while in exile with the supernatural visitant described in the Whitby *Life*.

Bede makes the religious elements of the first event more explicit. He describes the event as "oraculum caeleste quod illi quondam exulanti apud Redualdum regem Anglorum pietas divina revelare dignata est."[74] Edwin makes a promise as a reciprocal exchange: if he is saved from death now he will agree to follow in the future whoever it is who has preserved him. He has his wish granted ("temporis illius aerumnis exemptus, ad regni fastigia perveniret"), yet the fulfillment of the reciprocal promise is delayed.[75] Paulinus later uses the vision to pressure Edwin to convert. Bede emphasizes the vision as an oracle presaging Edwin's ascension to power by describing how Bishop Paulinus, having heard of the vision and its resultant vow, uses it as a means of encouraging Edwin to convert:

> [T]andem, ut verisimile videtur, didicit in spiritu, quod vel quale esset oraculum regi quondam caelitus ostensum. Nec exinde distulit quin continuo regem ammoneret explere votum, quod in oraculo sibi exhibito se facturum promiserat.... (*HE* ii.12, 270) [76]

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[74] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. i, p. 270. "[A] heavenly vision which God in his mercy had once [deigned to grant] the king when he was an exile at the court of Redwald, King of the Angles" (L. Sherley-Price, trans., *A History of the English Church and People*, p. 122).

[75] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. i, p. 270.

As Wallace-Hadrill comments, Bede's "mind is fixed on...God's use of a vision as an aid in the conversion of a king," yet he also portrays divine support for war as a means to earthly power.[77] His purpose is not to glorify Edwin himself as a saint, but to show how God was actively involved in both the conversion of the Northumbrians and in their rise to pre-eminence among the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms. Edwin's preservation is part of God's plan for the conversion of the English and the glorification of the Northumbrians, not part of his election to sanctity.

Bede stresses the harshness of the predicaments that Edwin faces. He is alone in a foreign land and his only ally, the king, has decided to betray him to his enemy. The contrast between deadly dangers and a sudden and unexpected rescue again implies divine agency, since Edwin's rise from obscurity and exile to earthly power and prominence seems miraculous. The vision and prophecy heralding Edwin's future conversion are not directly based on Old Testament parallels. Although the assurance of future reward reflects such biblical prophecies as God's covenant to Abraham or the divine promise to Moses, conversion is essentially a New Testament concept that links Edwin to the apostles, martyrs, and confessors. Bede fuses in Edwin the images of the anointed king and the idea of the saint who dies in furthering the spread of Christianity. By granting the

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[76] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. i, p. 270. "It seems most likely that Paulinus finally learnt in the spirit the nature of the vision previously vouchsafed to the king. Whereupon he lost no time in urging the king to implement the promise that he had made at the time of the vision" (L. Sherley-Price, trans., *A History of the English Church and People*, p. 123).

[77] J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *Bede's 'Ecclesiastical History'*, p. 71.

vision to Edwin, God is preserving him for his future role in the conversion of Northumbria.

The first stage of the prophecy's fulfillment takes the form of an ancient trope, God-granted victory in battle. Following Edwin's vision, Rædwald not only rescinds his decision to turn Edwin over to his enemies but also aids him in coming to power: "nec solum exulem nuntiis hostilibus non tradidit, sed etiam eum ut in regnum perveniret, adiuvit."[78] As promised in the vision, God guides Rædwald to kill all Edwin's enemies ("exstinctis hostibus") and place him on the Northumbrian throne.

> Nam mox redeuntibus domum nuntiis, exercitum ad debellandum Aedilfridum collegit copiosum, eumque sibi occurrentem cum exercitu multum impari (non enim dederat illi spatium quo totum suum congregaret atque adunaret exercitum), occidit.... [79]

The divinely granted victory marks Edwin's rise to power, but precedes by many years his conversion.[80] The contrast between St. Martin's bloodless victory and Edwin's bloody one is marked. The former is already a Christian who is now ready to forsake worldly

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[78] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. i, p. 278. "[Rædwald] not only refused to surrender the exiled prince to the envoys of his enemy but assisted him to recover his kingdom" (L. Sherley-Price, trans., *A History of the English Church and People*, p. 125).

[79] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. i, p. 278. "As soon as the envoys had gone home, he raised a great army to make war on Ethelfrid and allowing him no time to summon his full strength, encountered him with a great preponderance of force and killed him" (L. Sherley-Price, trans., *A History of the English Church and People*, p. 125).

[80] Wallace-Hadrill calls this episode, "God's use of a vision as an aid in the conversion of a king whose earthly power was won as a pagan; or rather, whose pagan victory was as much God's doing as was his subsequent conversion" (J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *Bede's 'Ecclesiastical History'*, p. 71).

pursuits to follow Christ, the latter is a pagan who will convert after receiving many more signs of God's favor. As D. H. Green points out, "[S]uccess or failure in warfare is explained by Bede with *reference* to religious devotion, the Christian faith being a guarantee of victory and its rejection a sure prelude to defeat"), noting that Edwin "is won over to christianity in circumstances very reminiscent of those in which Constantine and Clovis were finally convinced of the power of the new God"). [81] In its Anglo-Saxon context, the victory that brings Edwin to power reflects what Wallace-Hadrill calls "the transitional nature of seventh-century Christianity" in which "converted kings accept with caution a new God who can be useful to them in a variety of ways."[82] Events that Bede considers the first sign of God's assistance is sweep Edwin into power, but further signs will be needed before he will accept the new religion.

The next sign of God's "usefulness" to Edwin, and the second instance of providential preservation through adversity, involves the as yet unconverted king narrowly escaping being killed by an assassin.[83] Taken together, the two events show Edwin preserved from death at the hands of powerful enemies both before and after his rise to

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[81] D. H. Green, *The Carolingian Lord*, pp. 297-98.

[82] J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *Early Germanic Kingship*, p. 71.

[83] Bede actually inverts the order of these events, describing the assassination attempt while Edwin is in power before presenting the scene at Rædwald's court. Bede tells the story of the assassination attempt shortly after he introduces Edwin and before he describes the earlier vision and prophecy.

power. Both instances involve religious aspects that indicate divine providence, and both result in a victory in battle.

> Anno autem sequente venit in provinciam quidam sicarius, vocabulo Eumer, missus a rege Occidentalium Saxonum, nomine Cuichelmo, sperans se regem Aeduinum regno simul et vita privaturum: qui habebat sicam bicipitem toxicatam; ut si ferri vulnus minus ad mortem regis sufficeret, peste iuvaretur veneni. [84]

Bede points out that the assassin arrives on Easter, linking Edwin's trials with those of Christ, yet unlike Jesus, Edwin is saved from death by the quick action of a loyal follower.

> Pervenit autem ad regem primo die paschae, iuxta amnem Deruventionem, ubi tunc erat villa regalis, intravitque quasi nuntium domini sui referens: et cum simulatam legationem ore astuto volveret, exsurrexit repente, et evaginata sub veste sica, impetum fecit in regem. Quod cum videret Lilla minister regi amicissimus, non habens scutum ad manum quo regem a nece defenderet, mox interposuit corpus suum ante ictum pungentis: sed tanta vi hostis ferrum infixit, ut per corpus militis occisi etiam regem vulneraret. Qui cum mox undique gladiis impeteretur, in ipso tumultu etiam alium de militibus, cui nomen erat Fordheri, sica nefanda peremit. [85]

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[84] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. i, p. 248. "During the following year, an assassin named Eumer was sent into the province by Cuichelm, King of the West Saxons, in order to rob Edwin both of his kingdom and his life. The man had a double-edged, poisoned dagger, to ensure that if the wound itself was not mortal, the poison would complete its work" (L. Sherley-Price, trans., *A History of the English Church and People*, p. 116).

[85] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. i, pp. 248-50. "On Easter Day Eumer arrived at the royal residence by the Derwent, and was admitted into the king's presence on the pretext of delivering a message from his master. And while he was artfully delivering his pretended message, he suddenly sprang up, and drawing the dagger from beneath his clothes, attacked the king. Swift to see the king's peril, Lilla, his counselor and best friend, having no shield to protect the king, interposed his own body to receive the blow; but even so, it was delivered with such force that it wounded the king through the body of his warrior. The assassin was immediately attacked on all sides, but killed yet another of the king's men named Fordhere in the ensuing struggle" (L. Sherley-Price, trans., *A History of the English Church and People*, p. 116).

Although Bede says nothing further to explicitly link Edwin's trials with Christ's, the fact that it occurs during Easter links Edwin's preservation to the concept of Christ's redemptive salvation. Bede goes on to describe how a series of further events taking place on Easter lead Edwin to make a vow to accept Christianity.

> Eadem autem nocte sacrosancta Dominici paschae pepererat regina filiam regi, cui nomen Aeanfled. Cumque idem rex praesente Paulino episcopo gratias ageret diis suis pro nata sibi filia, e contra episcopus gratias coupit agere Domino Christo, regique adstruere, quod ipse precibus suis apud illum obtinuerit, et regina sospes et absque dolore gravi sobolem procrearet. Cuius verbis delectatus rex, promisit se abrenunciatis idolis Christo serviturum, si vitam sibi et victoriam donaret pugnanti adversus regem, a quo homicida ille, qui eum vulneraverat, missus est: et in pignus promissionis implendae, eandem filiam suam Christo consecrandam Paulino episcopo adsignavit; quae baptizata est die sancto pentecostes, prima de gente Nordanhymbrorum, cum undecim aliis de familia eius. [86]

Bede develops the concept of divine intervention fully in this passage, making it clear that the king is being preserved from harm because of the important role he will play in converting the Northumbrians. However, Edwin requires yet another sign before he will convert: only if he is granted victory in battle over the enemy who sent the assassin will he abandon his pagan practices.

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[86] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. i, pp. 250-52. "On the same holy night of Easter Day, the queen was delivered of a daughter, to be named Eanfled; and as the king thanked his gods in the presence of Bishop Paulinus for the birth of his daughter, the bishop gave thanks to Christ, and told the king that it was Christ who had given the queen a safe and painless delivery in response to his prayers. The king was greatly pleased at his words, and promised that if God would grant him life and victory over the king his enemy who had sent the assassin, he would renounce his idols and serve Christ; and as a pledge that he would keep his word he gave his infant daughter to Paulinus to be consecrated to Christ. Accordingly, on the Feast of Pentecost this infant, together with twelve others of her household, was the first of the Northumbrians to receive Baptism" (L. Sherley-Price, trans.. *A History of the English Church and People*, p. 116).

Edwin once again achieves a stunning victory. The first conquest had actually been Rædwald's, although it brought Edwin to power. This battle and victory are Edwin's own: "Quo tempore curatus a vulnere sibi pridem inflicto, rex collecto exercitu venit adversus gentem Occidentalium Saxonum, ac bello inito, universos quos in necem suam conspirasse didicerat, aut occidit, aut in deditionem recepit." [87] This is the second token of God's power that Edwin has received, and it has major political repercussions. D. P. Kirby points out that "[a]ccording to the *Chronicle* D (*s.a.* 626), five kings perished when Eadwine [Edwin] invaded [the West Saxons] in response to the abortive attempt on his life."[88] Edwin's encroachment on the territory of the West Saxons may have led to the attempt on his life, and the victory he achieved played an important role in his gaining lordship over the Southumbrian kings.[89] However, despite the importance of his victory, Edwin still holds off from converting. "Sicque victor in patriam reversus, non statim et inconsulte sacramenta fidei Christianae percipere voluit: quamvis nec idolis ultra servivit, ex quo se Christo serviturum esse promiserat."[90] Following a repeating triadic pattern

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[87] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. i, p. 252. "When the king had recovered from the assassin's wound, he summoned his forces, marched against the West Saxons, and in the ensuing campaign either slew or forced to surrender all those who had plotted his murder" (L. Sherley-Price, trans., *A History of the English Church and People*, pp. 116-17).

[88] D. P. Kirby, *The Earliest English Kings*, p. 49.

[89] D. P. Kirby, *The Earliest English Kings*, p. 57.

[90] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. i, p. 252. "Returning victorious, the king would not receive the Sacrament of Christian Baptism at once or without due consideration, although he had already abandoned idol-worship when he promised that he would serve

evident in both the Whitby account and Bede's treatment, Edwin will only convert after the third sign.[91]

Bede uses Edwin's delay in conversion to stress Edwin's wisdom, a trait which he makes a major part of his portrait. Just as the Whitby author developed the trope of the saintly king, analogous to the saintly soldier trope from Sulpicius, by stressing Edwin's sagacity, Bede focuses on Edwin's prudence. Rather than presenting the hesitation as a negative thing, Bede uses the delay to emphasize Edwin's circumspection, the thought and concern he gives to the question of the true or right religion. The decision is not an easy one, and Edwin weighs carefully his responsibilities to his people in making it.

> Verum primo diligentibus ex tempore, et ab ipso venerabili viro Paulino rationem fidei ediscere, et cum suis primatibus quos sapientores noverat, curavit conferre, quid de his agendum arbitrarentur. Sed et ipse cum esset vir natura sagacissimus, saepe diu solus residens, ore quidem tacito, sed in intimis cordis multa secum conloquens, quid sibi esset faciendum, quae religio servanda tractabat. [92]

Christ" (L. Sherley-Price, trans., *A History of the English Church and People*, pp. 116-17).

[91] The repeating triads include the three visions of Trimma, three requests made to Rædwald by Edwin's enemy Ethelfrid, three questions posed to Edwin by the supernatural visitant, and the three signs of God's favor and power (two victories in battle and the use of the prefigured sign by Paulinus). Less evident triads include three periods of deep contemplation by Edwin and Edwin's death in the third war described by Bede.

[92] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. i, p. 252. "But he wished first to receive a full course of instruction in the Faith from the venerable Paulinus, and to discuss his proper course with those of his counselors on whose wisdom he placed most reliance. For the king was by nature a wise and prudent man, and often sat alone in silent converse with himself for long periods, turning over in his inmost heart what he should do and which religion he should follow" (L. Sherley-Price, trans., *A History of the English Church and People*, p. 117).

Each of the three tokens of God's favor is followed by a period of wise reflection, not hasty conversion. Edwin shows himself to be most wise ("sagacissimus") not by converting immediately but rather by making the decision to convert only after instruction, advice, and deep thought. Bede's most famous scene concerning Edwin's conversion, when he sits with his counselors in debate in the hall, fits this pattern as well.[93] Bede shows Edwin's choice to be both divinely inspired and also deliberate.

Bishop Paulinus provides the third sign of God's power. Having somehow learned about Edwin's vision, Paulinus comes to him as he sits in thought, contemplating what he should do.

> [I]ngrediens ad eum quadam die vir Dei, imposuit dexteram capiti eius, et an hoc signum agnosceret requisivit. Qui cum tremens ad pedes eius procidere vellet, levavit eum, et quasi familiari voce affatus: 'Ecce,' inquit, 'hostium manus quos timuisti, Domino donante, evasisti; ecce, regnum quod desiderasti, ipso largiente percepisti. Momento ut tertium quod permisisti, facere ne differas, suscipindo fidem eius, et praecepta servando, qui te et a temporalibus adversis eripiens, temporalis regni honore sublimavit.'[94]

If Bede had intended to portray Edwin as a saint, the parallelism between "temporalibus adversis" and "temporalis regni" would more likely have been a contrast between earthly

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[93] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. i, pp. 281-87.

[94] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. i, p. 280. "On one of these occasions, the man of God came to him and, laying his right hand on his head, inquired whether he remembered this sign. The king trembled and would have fallen at his feet; but Paulinus raised him and said in a friendly voice: 'God has helped you to escape from the hands of the enemies whom you feared, and it is through His bounty that you have received the kingdom that you desired. Remember the third promise that you made, and hesitate no longer. Accept the Faith and keep the commands of Him who had delivered you from all your earthly troubles and raised you to the glory of an earthly kingdom" (L. Sherley-Price, trans., *A History of the English Church and People*, pp. 125-26).

enemies and heavenly reward. From Bede's perspective, God chooses Edwin as the earthly means for the conversion of Northumbria and Paulinus as the saintly agent who reveals God's power. Once he has become convinced of God's ability to reward those who follow him, Edwin shows his wisdom by accepting Christianity.

Wisdom is not the only admirable trait with which Bede endows Edwin. In a complement to the providential expansion of a king's realm, the peace and security of his reign reflect both God's blessing and the king's virtue, thus becoming another aspect of the trope of the saintly king. Bede presents a vivid image of Edwin's peaceable kingdom, using three concrete elements to focus on. The first involves the personal safety of Edwin's subjects.

> Tanta autem eo tempore pax in Britania, quaquaversum imperium regis Aeduini pervenerat, fuisse perhibetur, ut, sicut usque hodie in proverbio dicitur, etiam si mulier una cum recens nato parvulo vellet totam perambulare insulam a mari ad mare, nullo se laedente valeret. [95]

The peace was so great in Edwin's days that it has become proverbial, a Northumbrian golden age, and though Bede makes no claim for Edwin's sanctity, he clearly portrays him as the best of kings. The image of the mother walking unscathed through his kingdom bearing the newborn child presents a marked contrast to the biblical image of Mary fleeing from Bethlehem carrying the new-born Jesus. Edwin, Northumbria's first Christian ruler,

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[95] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. i, p. 298. "So peaceful was it in those parts of Britain under King Edwin's jurisdiction that the proverb still runs that a woman could carry her new-born babe across the island from sea to sea without any fear of harm" (L. Sherley-Price, trans., *A History of the English Church and People*, p. 132).

is a new kind of king benignly ruling a peaceable kingdom. Bede next shifts his emphasis to the people's respect for Edwin's rule and the resulting inviolability of his property.

> Tantum rex idem utilitati suae gentis consuluit, ut plerisque in locis ubi fontes lucidos iuxta publicos viarum transitus conspexit, ibi ob refrigerium viantium, erectis stipitibus aereos caucos suspendi iuberet, neque hos quisquam, nisi ad usum necessarium, contingere prae magnitudine vel timoris eius auderet, vel amoris vellet. [96]

These brass bowls, objects of considerable value, can be placed beside the road and no one would dare to steal them because of the force of Edwin's own personal authority. The Christian king rules not only by inspiring love in the hearts of his subjects but also by inducing fear in those who would disrupt his realm or break his laws. In the same sense, the mother can walk unharmed not only because Edwin's subjects choose the right way of life, but because those who would wish to disrupt the peace are afraid to. Bede turns finally to the interconnectedness of peace and war. The people honor Edwin by carrying standards before him not only in war, but in peace as well.

> Tantum vero in regno excellentiae habuit, ut non solum in pugna ante illum vexilla gestarentur, sed et tempore pacis equitantem inter civitates sive villas aut provincias suas cum ministris, semper antecedere signifer consuesset; necnon et incendente illo ubilibet per plateas, illud genus vexilli, quod Romani "Tufam," Angli vero appellant "Tuuf," ante eum ferri solebat. [97]

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[96] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. i, p. 298. "Such was the king's concern for the welfare of his people that in a number of places where he had noticed clear springs adjacent to the highway he ordered posts to be erected with brass bowls hanging from them, so that travelers could drink and refresh themselves. And so great was the people's affection for him, and so great the awe in which he was held, that no one wished or ventured to use these bowls for any other purpose" (L. Sherley-Price, trans., *A History of the English Church and People*, p. 132).

[97] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. i, p. 298. "So royally was the king's dignity maintained throughout his realm that whether in battle or on a peaceful progress on

In this passage, Edwin's rule is linked to the Roman idea of *imperium*. That the Anglo-Saxons had adopted a symbol of royal power based on Roman practice shows shared elements between Roman and Anglo-Saxon Christian concepts of kingship. Bede claims Edwin as a model Christian king.

As the most admirable of kings, and one who rules in a Christian manner, both wisely and firmly, Edwin defeats not his own enemies but the foes of Northumbrian Christianity itself, and therefore, ultimately, of God. Just as Sulpicius Severus may have omitted references to battles in which Martin participated, the Whitby Anonymous mentioned none of Edwin's battles and conquests; Bede shows no such scruples. Battles and warfare are central to his portrait of the king. Because he was Northumbria's first Christian ruler, Edwin's conquests represented to Bede more than just the competition for power characteristic of most Anglo-Saxon warfare, they were fought to secure and maintain Christianity in the North and Northumbria's dominance once it had been converted. Bede justifies Edwin's wars by emphasizing his evil and merciless pagan enemies. We have already seen that his enemies plot against him. Æthelfrith bribes Rædwald to betray and kill Edwin, and Cwichelm sends his envoy to assassinate him.[98]

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horseback through city, town, and countryside in the company of his thanes, the royal standard was always borne before him. Even when he passed through the streets on foot, the standard known to the Romans as a *Tufa*, and to the English as a *Tuf*, was carried in front of him" (L. Sherley-Price, trans., *A History of the English Church and People*, p. 132).

[98] For saints' cults as a reflection of ecclesiastical opposition to regicide, see D. W. Rollason, "The Cults of Murdered Royal Saints."

Edwin fights numerous battles but he never employs murder to gain power. His victories punish wrongdoers. Yet it is in the aftermath of Edwin's final defeat that Bede develops most fully the image of Edwin's foes as bloodthirsty heathens. Edwin is preserved from regicide only to fall in battle, killed by men who are adversaries of Northumbria, the king, and Christ. In the initial description of Edwin's death, Bede stresses not only the fierceness of the battle but the faithless nature of his foes:

> At vero Aeduini cum decem et septem annis genti Anglorum simul et Brittonum gloriosissime praecesset, e quibus sex etiam ipse, ut diximus, Christi regno militavit, rebellavit adversus eum Caedualla rex Brettonum, auxillium praebente illi Penda vero strenuissimo de regio genere Merciorum, qui et ipse ex eo tempore gentis eiusdem regno annis viginti et duobus varia sorte praefuit: et conserto gravi praelio in campo qui vocatur Haethfelth, occisus est Aeduini ... eiusque totus vet interemptus vel dispersus est exercitus. In quo etiam bello ante illum unus filius eius Osfrid iuvenis bellicosus cecidit, alter Eadfrid necessitate cogente ad Pendam regem transfugit, et ab eo postmodum regnante Osualdo contra fidem iurisiurandi peremptus est. [99]

After reigning gloriously for six years as a Christian king, Edwin dies in a fierce battle ["gravi praelio"] against a pair of unscrupulous enemies. Bede portrays the Welsh Christian Cadwallon as a rebel and the pagan Penda as an oath-breaker, and he undercuts the apparent providence in Penda's lengthy reign, saying that he ruled long but only with

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[99] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. i, p. 314. "The glorious reign of Edwin over the English and Britons alike lasted seventeen years, during the last six of which, as I have said, he laboured for the kingdom of Christ. Then the British King [Cadwallon] rebelled against him, supported by Penda, a warrior of the Mercian royal house, who from then onwards ruled that nation with varying success for twenty-two years. In a fierce battle on the field called Haethfelth...Edwin was killed, and his entire army destroyed or scattered. In the same battle, Osfrid, a gallant warrior, one of Edwin's sons, was killed before his father. Another son, Eadfrid, was compelled to submit to Penda, who subsequently in breach of a solemn promise put him to death during the reign of Oswald" (L. Sherley-Price, trans., *A History of the English Church and People*, p. 138).

mixed success. These accusations merely repeat the unsavory image Bede has projected of all Edwin's enemies. But he then goes further, linking their faithlessness to paganism and unrestrained violence:

> Quo tempore maxima est facta strages in ecclesia vel gente Nordanhymbrorum, maxime quod unus ex ducibus a quibus acta est paganus, alter quis barbarus erat pagano saevior. Siquidem Penda cum omni Merciorum gente idolis deditus, et Christiani erat nominis ignarus: at vero Caedualla, quamvis nomen et professionem haberet Christiani, adeo tamen erat animo ac moribus barbarus, ut ne sexui quidem muliebri, vel innocuae parvulorum parceret aetati, quin universos atrocitate ferina morti per tormenta contraderet, multo tempore totas eorum provincias debacchando pervagatus, ac totum genus Anglorum Brittaniae finibus erasurum se esse deliberans. Sed nec religioni Christianae, quae apud eos exorta erat, aliquid inpendebat honoris. [100]

When Edwin defeated Cwichelm, he killed only soldiers and those who had plotted against him ("universos quos in necem suam conspirasse"), and even among those who had conspired against him, he spared those who surrendered ("aut occidit, aut in deditionem recepit"). Not so Penda and Cadwallon. They commit a massacre ("strages") of the Northumbrian people and church, and Bede links this bloody act to Penda's paganism and Cadwallon's un-Christian (and notably Celtic) brand of Christianity. If Edwin was to be

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[100] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. i, p. 316. "At this time a terrible slaughter took place among the Northumbrian church and nation, the more horrible because it was carried out by two commanders, one of whom was a pagan and the other a barbarian more savage than any pagan. For Penda and all his Mercians were idol-worshippers ignorant of the name of Christ; but [Cadwallon], although he professed to call himself a Christian, was utterly barbarous in temperament and behaviour. He was set upon exterminating the entire English race in Britain, and spared neither women nor innocent children, putting them all to horrible deaths with ruthless savagery, and continuously ravaging their whole country. He had no respect for the newly established religion of Christ" (L. Sherley-Price, trans., *A History of the English Church and People*, p. 138).

considered a saint after his death, these facts would become the keys to his veneration. Having made no claim for his sanctity in life, Bede makes no claim for Edwin's death as a martyrdom, yet he supplies the necessary material on which such a claim could be made. His death was not just a personal tragedy but a disaster for the faithful in Northumbria and the Church in England, and therefore his action in resisting his enemies, albeit unsuccessful, was as much for God and religion as it was for his own personal power.

The purpose of this study is not to verify the historicity of the events surrounding the veneration of saints nor to cast doubt on the appropriateness of their veneration, but it seems salutary to remember that other sources convey different impressions. In assessing the historical materials left by his enemies, D. P. Kirby says that "set into the earliest surviving Welsh tradition is the memory of armed conflict between Eadwine and Cadwallon," and what emerges from his analysis of that tradition is an image of Edwin as an aggressive war-leader not unlike the men who finally defeated him:

> The Welsh annals (*s.a.* 629) refer to the besieging of Cadwallon on the island of Ynys Lannog (Priestholm) and Bede says that Eadwine brought under Anglian rule the Mevanian Islands, by which Môn (Anglesey) and Man are meant (*HE* II, 5), making it clear that the northern Anglian king must have established an impressive naval and military presence in the Irish Sea. Welsh bardic tradition was that he carried his offensive into the heartland of Gwynedd. [101]

Far from being an innocent victim of Welsh aggression, Edwin had waged a war of expansion deep into the territory of the Welsh Christian Cadwallon at a time when Edwin was still a pagan. The Welsh perspective on Edwin is far from flattering.

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[101] D. P. Kirby, *The Earliest English Kings*, p. 85.

> A ... poem *Moliant Cadwallon* ('In Praise of Cadwallon'), possibly by Cadwallon's bard, Afan Ferddig, celebrates Cadwallon's victorious progress against Eadwine 'the deceitful'....Cadwallon has gathered a victorious host and appears to have been encamped on Môn (Anglesey) with a fleet nearby. He refuses to treat with the men of Bernicia, for Eadwine is too deceitful a leader. In the face of Cadwallon's army, Eadwine is depicted as retreating, if not fleeing, many of his army being slain as the Britons pursued them across the salt sea, and Cadwallon advances to *Caer Caradog*, even setting York ablaze. The poem makes no reference to the slaying of Eadwine. If it is to be regarded as a genuine composition from the court of Cadwallon, it would seem to belong to the very eve of Hatfield. [102]

If accurate (and there is no guarantee that the Welsh preserved a more truthful account than the Anglo-Saxons), this account would identify Edwin as a defeated aggressor, not a martyred defender, and would justify Cadwallon's actions as a response to a Northumbrian invasion of his own land. Bede may not have known about this angle on the events surrounding his hero's death, or perhaps the Welsh account telescopes events, linking the triumphant advance of Cadwallon and Penda to an aggression that occurred at an earlier stage in Edwin's career. There is no indication in either account, however, that Edwin's behavior became less warlike or less aggressive following his conversion to Christianity. Indeed Bede reveals his nationalistic and even tribal perspective when he uses the attack by Cadwallon to generalize about the antagonism of the British Christians toward their English co-religionists: "Quippe cum usque hodie moris sit Brettonum, fidem religionemque Anglorum pro nihilo habere, neque in aliquo eis magis communicare quam paganis." [103] His earlier statement that Cadwallon "totum genus Anglorum Brittaniae

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[102] D. P. Kirby, *The Earliest English Kings*, p. 86.

[103] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. i, p. 316. "Indeed even in our own days the Britons pay no respect to the faith and religion of the English and have no more dealings

finibus erasurum se esse deliberans. Sed nec religioni Christianae, quae apud eos exorta erat, aliquid inpendebat honoris" rings hollow when one considers that Cadwallon was allied with Penda, a Mercian and presumably a member of the *genus Anglorum*, and that Edwin in his wars of expansion appears to have given no consideration to the ancient Christian religion practiced by the Celtic peoples of England.[104] Long-standing hostility between the two major peoples of the British Isles seems not to have been tempered at all by the fact that they shared in a religion that, many argue, at an earlier stage in its development was committed to the principle of non-violence. Certainly there is marked difference between Edwin, who died with a sword in his hand after conquering many neighboring peoples, later to be revered as a royal martyr, and Martin, whom J. E. Cross calls a "lay conscientious objector." [105] On the evidence examined so far in this chapter, one would be tempted to conclude that non-violence played no role at all in early Anglo-Saxon Christianity.

Taken as a whole, Bede's treatment of Edwin is not hagiographic. He records no miracles associated with Edwin's body, although he does mention the final disposition of his severed head at York: "Adlatum est autem caput Aeduini regis Eburacum, et inlatum postea in ecclesiam beati apostoli Petri, quam ipse coepit, sed successor eius Osualdus perfecit, ut supra docuimus, positum est in porticu sancti papae Gregorii, a cuius ipse

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with them than with the heathen" (L. Sherley-Price, trans., *A History of the English Church and People*, p. 138).

[104] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. i, p. 316.

[105] J. E. Cross, "The Ethic of War in Old English," p. 280.

discipulis verbum vitae susceperat." [106] As we have seen, the Whitby Anonymous recorded the burial of Edwin's body in the church at Whitby, a fact which Bede corroborated.[107] This means that there were two potential centers for the growth of an Edwin cult, but York was also a center for the cult of Oswald. There may be in the somewhat tangential remark about Oswald's completion of the task of church-building begun by Edwin an implied contrast between the two men's sanctity as well, in which Oswald completed the progression toward royal sanctity begun by Edwin. Bede recorded many miracles in his account of Edwin's successor. The reference to Gregory the Great's role in Edwin's conversion may also refer obliquely to the cults of Gregory and Edwin at Whitby, although there is no way of independently confirming this possibility. As Wallace-Hadrill says, "Dr. Colgrave may have been right to suggest that the two royal princesses, Eanflaed and Ælfflaed, joint abbesses of Whitby, hoped that the remains of their relative [Edwin] would do for Whitby what King Oswald's relics were doing for the not far-distant house of Bardney" where Oswald's body was buried.[108] If so, then the placement of the head of Edwin in the porch dedicated to Gregory at York might reflect

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[106] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. i, p. 316. "The head of King Edwin was carried to York and subsequently placed in the church of the blessed Apostle Peter, which he had begun to build, but which his successor Oswald completed, as I have related above. It rested in the porch dedicated to the holy Pope Gregory, from whose disciples he had received the word of life" (L. Sherley-Price, trans., *A History of the English Church and People*, pp. 138-39).

[107] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. i, p. 452.

[108] J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *Early Germanic Kingship*, p. 82.

another aspect of a competition between religious institutions for the growing cultus of holy kingship connected to Pope Gregory and embodied in the *Earliest Life of Gregory the Great*. The connection between pope and king at York could assist the strengthening of Bardney's position by downplaying Whitby as a cult-site. Whether through ignorance of the existence of an Edwin-cult at Whitby, a desire to suppress knowledge of such a cult's existence, or perhaps because in his day there was no true saint's cult of Edwin (merely a veneration at two sites of the dismembered bones of a king regarded as particularly holy by his former subjects and his prominent descendants), Bede for whatever reason stops short of presenting Edwin as a Christian saint. McClure's suggestion that an Old Testament view of divinely guided kingship, rather than a Christian hagiographic concept of martyrdom and sainthood, informed Bede's portrayal of Edwin seems particularly apt.[109] Yet no matter how much Bede may have used an Old Testament, rather than a strictly hagiographic model for the life of Edwin, the images and ideas he associates with Edwin he also applies to Oswald, and through the widespread cult of St. Oswald, these images came to be associated in England and on the Continent with a hagiographic tradition of martyred kingship.[110]

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[109] J. McClure, "Bede's Old Testament Kings."

[110] See P. Clemoes, *The Cult of St. Oswald on the Continent*.

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Bede's treatment of King Oswald in the *Historia Ecclesiastica* is the seminal work on this important figure. In it he presents a fully developed portrait of a saintly warrior-king, incorporating the war-related tropes applied by both the Whitby hagiographer and Bede to Edwin's life. These include the providential expansion of Oswald's realm and his providential preservation through adversity, as well as the trope of the saintly king, parallel to the saintly soldier. The discovery of this warrior-king's bones is not miraculous, but Bede presents many miracles involving his death site, the soil where he died, and his corporeal remains. Bede also repeats and extensively elaborates on the two new battle-related tropes he employed in his account of Edwin: God-granted victory in battle and Oswald's evil and merciless pagan enemy. To these tropes he adds the cross as a sign of victory, an idea probably borrowed from accounts of the life of Constantine but presented not as a sign in the heavens or a banner but a physical cross raised before battle that acquires healing powers after the subsequent victory. Finally, Bede describes a pillar or shaft of light over Oswald's body that identifies him as a saint. Bede combines these elements so thoroughly as to leave no doubt that Oswald is to be regarded as a full-fledged saint.

Bede begins his account of Oswald by linking Oswald directly to Edwin by means of their common enemy, Cadwallon, through the old trope of the evil and merciless pagan

enemy. Following Edwin's death, Cadwallon defeats two of the dead king's successors, Eanfrid and Osric, much to Bede's evident pleasure, since both had subsequently abandoned the faith. Yet even if Cadwallon obtains the victory "impia manu, sed iusta ultione" (*HE* iii.1, 326), his own rule is so barbaric that he will be overthrown in his turn. Cadwallon acts as an agent of God when he defeats the two apostate kings, but he is does not rule as a Christian should: "Dein cum anno integro provincias Nordanhymbrorum non ut rex victor possideret sed quasi tyrannus saeviens disperderet, ac tragica caede dilaceraret."[111] Bede's contrast between a *rex victor* and a *tyrannus saeviens* indicates his approach to the question of war's morality and the propriety of a Christian king waging war. A king victorious in battle can be an image of Christ or the Devil, depending on how he acts and his intentions behind the war, as in the just war theory articulated by Augustine. Edwin is a *rex victor* after punishing Cwichelm's treachery, reflecting the king's responsibility to end injustice. The two apostate kings are justly defeated because they are pagans and backsliders; such deserve defeat. Cadwallon in his own turn acted particularly treacherously when, after slaying Osric, he slaughtered Eanfrith in the very act of suing for peace: "tandem Eanfridum inconsulte ad se cum duodecim lectis militibus, postulandae pacis gratia venientem simili sorte damnavit."[112] Despite the possible

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[111] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. i, p. 326. "After this, for a full year, [Cadwallon] ruled the Northumbrian provinces, not as a victorious king but as a savage tyrant, ravaging them with ghastly slaughter" (L. Sherley-Price, trans., *A History of the English Church and People*, pp. 141-42).

Christian symbolism in Eanfrith going to sue for peace accompanied by twelve thanes, Bede groups the two defeated Northumbrian kings with Cadwallon when he says that chroniclers have omitted mention of the reigns of these three men, assigning instead the entire year to the next ruler, Oswald:

> Infaustus ille annus et propter apostasiam regum Anglorum qua se fidei sacramentis exuerant, quam propter vesanam Bretonici regis tyrannidem. Unde cunctis placuit regum tempora computantibus, ut ablata de medio regum perfidorum memoria, idem annus sequentis regis, id est, Osualdi, viri Deo dilecti regno adsignaratur: quo, post occisionem fratris Eanfridi, superveniente cum parvo exercitu, sed fide Christi munito, infandus Brettonum dux cum immensis illis copiis quibus nihil resistere posse iactabat, interemptus est.... [113]

Just as the combination of Penda and Cadwallon presented two different foes defeated by Edwin (a pagan Anglo-Saxon on the one hand and a bloodthirsty, untrustworthy British Christian on the other), so also the grouping together of Cadwallon, Osric, and Eanfrith provides Oswald with enemies reflective of both objects of Bede's two-pronged attack. Unlike the faithless Celts, Christian in name only, or pagan, backsliding Northumbrians, Oswald is both Northumbrian and Christian. God abandons Eanfrith, although he is

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[112] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. i, p. 326. "[H]e also destroyed Eanfrid, who had unwisely visited him to negotiate peace accompanied only by twelve picked soldiers" (L. Sherley-Price, trans., *A History of the English Church and People*, p. 142).

[113] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. i, pp. 326-28. "This year remains accursed and hateful to all good men, not only on account of the apostasy of the English kings, by which they divested themselves of the sacraments of the Faith, but also because of the savage tyranny of the British king. Hence all those calculating the reigns of kings have agreed to expunge the memory of these apostate kings and to assign this year to the reign of their successor King Oswald, a man beloved of God. This king, after the death of his brother Eanfrid, mustered an army small in numbers but strong in the faith of Christ; and despite [Cadwallon's] vast forces, which he boasted of as irresistible, the infamous British leader was killed" (L. Sherley-Price, trans., *A History of the English Church and People*, p. 142).

Oswald's brother, because he has abandoned the faith; Oswald is victorious because he remains true. The tropes of God-granted victory in battle and the evil and merciless pagan enemy become two sides of the same coin. Oswald is more than just a good king or an agent of God. He becomes the *rex victor* because he is both a Christian and fighting in a just cause against Cadwallon, a Christian but a *tyrannus saeviens*. This is the difference between war as an instrument of God's will and holy war. A pagan may fight a just war, but only a Christian fighting in a just cause can be a holy warrior.

Oswald also conquers because, as a sign of his role as holy warrior, he venerates the cross. The cross as a sign of victory in battle further elevates the battle from a just cause to a nascent form of holy war. After describing briefly Oswald's miraculous defeat of Cadwallon, Bede returns to the moments before the battle to show with what piety and resolve the future king dedicated his warlike acts to Christ.

> Ostenditur autem usque hodie et in magna veneratione habetur locus ille, ubi venturus ad hanc pugnam Osuald signum sanctae crucis erexit, ac flexis genibus Dominum deprecatus est, ut in tanta rerum necessitate suis cultoribus caelesti succurreret auxilio. [114]

In facing the superior army of Cadwallon, Oswald is in deadly peril, and his only hope lies in divine aid. Like Edwin, Oswald goes from a position of great danger to the heights of power because of heavenly assistance, but unlike his predecessor Oswald consciously and

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[114] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. i, p. 328. "When King Oswald was about to give battle to the heathen, he set up the sign of the holy cross and, kneeling down, asked God that He would grant his heavenly aid to those who trusted in Him in their dire need. The place is pointed out to this day and held in great veneration" (L. Sherley-Price, trans., *A History of the English Church and People*, p. 142).

actively seeks out divine support. The victory in battle is a miracle, and the cross and the place where it was raised become cult sites. This scene is clearly derived from the sign of the cross in the sky which heralded victory for Constantine, and to his institution of the cross as a military emblem.[115] To Bede, Edwin was an example of a ruler who, like Constantine or Clovis, accepted the Christian faith once he recognized its superior power on the battlefield, but Oswald goes further. Oswald is not, like Edwin before him, impelled on his way toward conversion after a victory reveals to him God's power, but he is rather a holy warrior embarking on combat for Christ.[116] Victory in battle aided Edwin in deciding to convert. Oswald, as a Christian already, gained the greater victory and received the greater reward. Bede's Oswald was, in a real way, the first English "holy warrior," fighting under the banner of Christ.

The vivid scene Bede presents is worth quoting extensively, since it shows not just the king but his followers as well behaving as holy warriors. First the king and his soldiers work together to plant the cross: "Denique fertur quia facta citato opere cruce, ac fovea praeparata in qua statui deberet, ipse fide fervens hanc arripuerit, ac foveae imposuerit, atque utraque manu erectam tenuerit, donec adgesto a militibus pulvere terrae figeretur."[117] The king works humbly side-by-side with his followers in erecting the cross,

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[115] On Eusebius and Bede, see J. Dahmus, *Seven Medieval Historians*, p. 45; J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *Early Germanic Kingship*, p. 72.

[116] On Oswald and Constantine, see P. Clemoes, *The Cult of St. Oswald on the Continent*, p. 3; and J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *Bede's 'Ecclesiastical History'*, p. 88.

holding it in place himself until the common soldiers pack the earth around it to make it firm. Here Oswald combines aspects of the ideal ruler, not too proud to work alongside his men, with the missionary, leading men to stand firm for the faith. The scene also recalls Sulpicius's trope of the saintly soldier, especially Martin's relationship to his servant and his fellow-soldiers. Oswald then exhorts the crowd before leading them into battle:

> Et hoc facto, elata in altum voce cuncto exercitui proclamaverit: "Flectamus omnes commune deprecemur, ut nos ab hoste superbo ac feroce sua miseratione defendat: scit enim ipse quia iusta pro salute gentis nostrae bella suscepimus." Fecerunt omnes ut iusserat, et sic incipiente diluculo in hostem progressi, iuxta meritum suae fidei victoria potiti sunt. [118]

Oswald's speech directly invokes the idea of a just war ("iusta ... bella") undertaken for the safety/ salvation of his people ("pro salute gentis nostrae"). [119] He does not justify his

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[117] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. i, p. 328. "It is told that, when the cross had been hurriedly made and a hole dug to receive it, the devout king with ardent faith took the cross and placed it in position, holding it upright with his own hands until the soldiers had thrown in the earth and it stood firm" (L. Sherley-Price, trans., *A History of the English Church and People*, p. 142).

[118] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. i, pp. 328-30. "This done he summoned his army with a loud shout, crying, 'Let us all kneel together, and ask the true and living God Almighty of His mercy to protect us from the arrogant savagery of our enemies, since He knows that we fight in a just [war] to save our [people].' The whole army did as he ordered and, advancing against the enemy at the first light of dawn, won the victory that their faith deserved" (L. Sherley-Price, trans., *A History of the English Church and People*, pp. 142-43).

[119] Wallace-Hadrill points out that the last phrase of Oswald's speech "is unlikely to mean that 'we are fighting in a just cause for the preservation of our whole race,'" but rather should be translated, "'we fight a just war for the salvation of our people'" since their "cause is religious, and victory is won through faith" (J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *Bede's 'Ecclesiastical History'*, p. 89). The passage supports both possibilities, and as such is richly ambiguous.

own purposes alone, but the righteousness of the Northumbrian cause as a whole. However, Oswald's is not only just but holy war, fought not only in a righteous cause but for the faith itself. In the Sulpician model of soldier sainthood, warfare and holiness represented separate and inimical fields of action; in Bede's account of Oswald, war is a concrete manifestation of the spiritual struggle. As a king Oswald led his soldiers into battle and thereby became a saint, just as a bishop who led his followers into faith would become a holy confessor. [120]

If Bede used Constantine as his primary model of Christian rulership in developing Oswald, he is unlikely to have regarded Constantine as a model for Oswald's sainthood as well. Certainly Bede never refers to Constantine as a saint. Neither Eusebius nor Gregory of Tours, two of Bede's primary models, portrayed him as saintly, despite his role in bringing Christianity to the Roman Empire and his connection to St. Helen, his mother, who discovered ("invented") the true cross. Oswald's raising of the cross before battle is related to, but significantly different from, Constantine's recognition of the cross in the sky as a sign of victory. As John P. Hermann points out, in discussing Cynewulf's representation of Constantine in the Old English poem *Elene*, "At the time of the battle, Constantine himself was a *hæðen*.... so heathen, indeed, that after the victory he had to ask

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[120] Others have commented on this aspect of the cult of Oswald, most notably Erdmann in C. Erdmann, *The Origin of the Idea of Crusade*, pp. 306-54. However, Erdmann argues that "King Oswald ranked as a saint...primarily for having led a holy life and having spread Christianity among his people" (C. Erdmann, *The Origin of the Idea of Crusade*, pp. 236-237). As the remainder of this chapter will show, what distinguished Oswald from other types of royal saints was not his actions on behalf of Christianity or his saint-like behavior but his martyrdom.

the Roman citizens if they knew what the cross stood for."[121] Oswald is well aware of the significance of the cross when he raises it before the battle, and Bede goes on to link the raising of the cross to Oswald's posthumous miracles, and therefore to Oswald's status is not just an exemplary ruler but a saint.

The cross raised before the battle gained healing power, and thus became the first sign that Oswald was not just a *rex victor* or an exemplary Christian king, but a saint. It is axiomatic that the works of a saint truly begin after his or her death; the anniversary not of the individual's birth but of his or her death becomes the saint's day. Posthumous miracles were the main aspect of *cultus* missing from accounts of the life of Edwin, but not so with Oswald. Both the place of Oswald's victory and the physical remnants of the cross gain healing force.

> In cuius loco orationis innumerae virtutes sanitatum noscuntur esse patratae, ad indicium videlicet ac memoriam fidei regis. Nam et usque hodie multi de ipso ligno sacrosanctae crucis astulas excidere solent, quas cum in aquas miserint eisque languentes homines aut pecudes potaverint sive asperserint, mox sanitati restituuntur. [122]

Whether veneration of Oswald began before his death is not evident from this passage, although the veneration of an object and location associated with his life, rather than his

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[121] J. P. Hermann, *Allegories of War*, p. 91.

[122] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. i, p. 330. "At this spot where the king prayed , innumerable miracles of healing are known to have been performed, which serve as a reminder and a proof of the King's faith. Even to this day many folk take splinters of wood from this holy cross, which they put into water, and when any sick men or beasts drink of it or are sprinkled with it, they are at once restored to health" (L. Sherley-Price, trans., *A History of the English Church and People*, p. 143).

death, might indicate that aspects of the cult began with his victory over Cadwallon. Bede tells us that the church of Hexham was at least partly responsible for the site's veneration, and that they held services there "consuetidinem multo iam tempore fecerant,"[123] but the fact that the services customarily took place on the day before the one on which the king was killed ("pridie quam postea idem rex Oswuald occisus est") probably indicates that this aspect of his veneration was dependent not primarily on his victory but on his martyrdom, as the remainder of his cult certainly was. It cannot be stressed enough that the Anglo-Saxon cult of holy kingship was closely tied to martyrdom; just, victorious, pious kings who died of illness or old age were not sanctified.[124] Oswald was a holy warrior when he fought the battle of Heavenfield, but he became a saint only after his defeat by the pagan Penda at Maserfelth.

Just as Oswald's role as holy warrior distinguishes him from Edwin, he also fit more closely the trope of the saintly king, at least in Bede's exposition of his reign. The first of his saintly acts was to send for a religious leader to guide his kingdom and his people. Rather than being a target of the evangelical work in his kingdom, Oswald promotes and even instigates the apostleship of the sainted bishop Aidan. The king

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[123] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. i, p. 330.

[124] The primary exception to the general pattern is Edward the Confessor, on whom see F. Barlow, *Edward the Confessor*. Edward came at the very end of the period, however, and his cult may have been primarily Anglo-Norman rather than Anglo-Saxon. See Chapter Seven below. One other possible exception from the very earliest times was Æthelred of Mercia, but Susan Ridyard says that he "seems to have become a monk and abbot" at Bardney, which might indicate that he qualified as a saint not so much for his kingship as for his life after renouncing the throne (S. J. Ridyard, *The Royal Saints of Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 243).

thereby moves from the periphery to the center of the hagiographic stage, taking the active role heretofore reserved for men like Gregory, Paulinus, and Augustine.

> Idem ergo Osuald, mox ubi regnum suscepit, desiderans totam cui praeesse coepit gentem fidei Christianae gratia imbui, cuius experimenta permaxima in expugnandis barbaris iam ceperat, misit ad maiores natu Scottorum...; petens ut sibi mitteretur antistes, cuius doctrina ac ministerio gens quam regebat Anglorum, Dominicae fidei et dona disceret, et susciperet sacramenta. [125]

Although there is some unintended irony in Bede referring to the army of the Celtic Christian Cadwallon as "barbarians" in the same sentence that he describes Oswald sending to the Scottish branch of the Celtic church for a bishop, the main effect of this passage is to develop Oswald as *rex pius* as well as *rex victor*. Not only does Oswald send for Aidan and provide him with a see at Lindisfarne, he aids him in every way he can, obeys his dictates, and even interprets for him at need:

> atque eius admonitionibus humiliter ac libenter in omnibus auscultans, ecclesiam Christi regno suo multum diligenter aedificare ac dilatare curavit. Ubi pulcherrimo saepe spectaculo contigit, ut evangelizante antistite qui Anglorum linguam perfecte non noverat, ipse rex suis ducibus ac ministris interpres verbi existeret caelestis....[126]

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[125] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. i, p. 334. "As soon as he became king, Oswald greatly wished that all the people whom he ruled should be imbued with the grace of the Christian faith, of which he had received such signal proof in his victory over the heathen. So he sent to the Scottish elders..., asking them to send him a bishop by whose teaching and ministry the English people over whom he ruled might receive the blessings of the Christian Faith and the sacraments" (L. Sherley-Price, trans., *A History of the English Church and People*, p. 144).

[126] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. i, p. 336. "The King always listened humbly and readily to Aidan's advice and diligently set himself to establish and extend the Church of Christ throughout his kingdom. And while the bishop, who was not fluent in the English language, preached the Gospel, it was most delightful to see the king himself interpreting the word of God to his ealdorman and thanes" (L. Sherley-Price, trans., *A History of the English Church and People*, p. 145).

The king is behaving more like a saint than a ruler, just as Martin behaved more like a saint than a soldier. His particular virtue is humility. Not too proud to help his soldiers raise the cross before battle, he is also willing to work side-by-side with his bishop in proselytizing and to obey the prelate's admonitions. Wallace-Hadrill comments that "[p]iety and humility were the qualities that Bede's reading had taught him were most to be sought for in a king; they made kings more kingly," yet it is not merely as a king Bede is portraying Oswald but as a saint. Piety and humility made a king more saintly. Unless we are to suppose that *all* Anglo-Saxon kings were expected to be, in Wallace-Hadrill's words, "beloved of God, affable and generous, pious and humble," Bede is not merely describing ideal kingship but sainthood.[127] It seems evident from the Whitby account of Edwin (and, to a lesser extent, Bede's as well) that a good king could expect special reverence and even veneration after his death. Edwin's bones were placed "cum ceteris...regibus nostris" in a place of special honor in the church at Whitby. Yet only Oswald continued to perform acts after his death; only Oswald became a saint.

Bede records Oswald's saintly behavior in life as a prelude to his continuing power after death. He entitles one chapter "de religione ac pietate miranda Osualdi regis,"[128] although he includes in that section an extended exposition on a trope familiar from the accounts of Edwin: the providential expansion of a king's realm. Bede's

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[127] J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *Early Germanic Kingship*, p. 83.

[128] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. i, p. 350.

treatment of the extent of Oswald's kingdom in a chapter devoted to the king's piety is itself an indication that he regarded wide-rulership as a religious issue. He begins the chapter by linking Oswald's gaining a heavenly kingdom to his conquest of vast earthly territories.

> Huius igitur antistitis doctrina rex Osuald cum ea cui praeerat gente Anglorum institutus, non solum incognita pregenitoribus suis regna caelorum sperare didicit; sed et regna terrarum plusquam ulli maiorum suorum, ab eodem uno Deo qui fecit caelum et terram, consecutus est. Denique omnes nationes et provincias Brittaniae, quae in quattuor linguas, id est Brettonum, Pictorum, Scottorum et Anglorum divisae sunt, in ditione accepit. [129]

Such extended rule could not have been achieved peacefully. Wallace-Hadrill points out that "Oswald's conquests had the effect of spreading Christianity; he could be represented as a missionary king" but adds that "[b]etween Bede's lines, and occasionally in them, one can glimpse a reign a good deal devoted to the traditional Germanic pursuits of war." [130] Kirby sees some hyperbole in Bede's claims:

> Oswald's achievement was certainly magnified. Bede represents Oswald as bringing under his sway all the peoples of Britain, divided by language into Angles, Britons, Picts, and Irish (*HE* III, 6), but elsewhere writes that it was his brother and successor, Oswiu, who made tributary the Picts and Scots who inhabited the northern parts of Britain (*HE* II, 5). He seems to have allowed his awareness of

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[129] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. i, p. 350. "Such then was the bishop who brought knowledge of the Faith to King Oswald and the English people under his rule. Thus instructed, Oswald not only learned to hope for the kingdom of heaven, which had been unknown to his ancestors, but was also granted by Almighty God, Creator of heaven and earth, an earthly kingdom greater than they enjoyed. For at length he brought under his sceptre all the peoples and provinces of Britain speaking the four languages, British, Pictish, Scottish, and English" (L. Sherley-Price, trans., *A History of the English Church and People*, p. 150).

[130] J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *Early Germanic Kingship*, p. 83.

> the different native languages of Britain to lead him into defining Oswald's Anglo-British *imperium* in excessive terms. [131]

Although Bede's knowledge of native languages may have played a role in his extravagant claims for Oswald's overlordship, I find it more likely that his desire to present his holiest king as the most powerful ruler motivated his overstatements. That Oswald's realm should be smaller than those of his less pious relatives was a possibility Bede seems unwilling to entertain.

In one way Bede does try to present Oswald's conquests as a form of peacemaking. In describing the unified kingdom over which Oswald ruled, he asserts, "Huius industria regis, Deirorum et Berniciorum provinciae, quae eatenus ab invicem discordabant, in unam sunt pacem, et velut unum compaginatae in populum." [132] There are faint echoes here of Sulpicius's trope of the bloodless victory, especially when we consider that following Oswald's death the kingdoms were again divided, and that Oswald's brother Oswiu only succeeded in reuniting them by treacherously murdering the pious Oswine.[133] The peaceful joining of the two Northumbrian kingdoms, like his bringing under Northumbrian sway of the four linguistic groups of Britain, was a sign to

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[131] D. P. Kirby, *The Earliest English Kings*, p. 84.

[132] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. i, p. 352. "Through King Oswald's diplomacy the provinces of Deira and Bernicia, formerly hostile to each other, were peacefully united and became one people" (L. Sherley-Price, trans., *A History of the English Church and People*, p. 150).

[133] According to Wallace-Hadrill, although "Oswald's claim to rule outside Bernicia was questionable," Bede was less concerned with his "legitimacy" than with "the divine assistance he attracted" (J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *Early Germanic Kingship*, pp. 83-84).

Bede of divine approval and even direct support. Yet in the end it was more for his martyr-like death as for his successful reign that Bede considered Oswald a saint.

In the chapter on Oswald's piety Bede includes the first evidence of his posthumous miracles. In a memorable scene between the king and Bishop Aidan, Bede joins the king's saintly acts in life to a prophecy of his continuing power after death. The two men, while sharing an Easter feast, learn that "multitudo pauperum undecumque adveniens maxima perplateas sederet, postulans aliquid eleemosynae a rege." [134] Oswald then commanded that a silver dish and the food within it should be divided up among them. "Quo viso pontifex qui adsidebat delectatus tali facto pietatis, adprehendit dextram eius, et ait: 'Nunquam inveterascat haec manus'." [135] This blessing was considered a prophecy when the king's hands and arms became "uncorrupted" relics preserved at the church of St. Peter at Bamburgh. Bede adds that "in urba regia ... loculo inclusae argenteo in ecclesia sancti Petri servantur, ac digno a cunctis honore venerantur."[136] The

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[134] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. i, p. 352. "[A] great crowd of needy folk were sitting in the road outside begging alms of the king" (L. Sherley-Price, trans., *A History of the English Church and People*, p. 150).

[135] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. i, p. 352. "The bishop, who was sitting beside him, was deeply moved to see such generosity, and taking hold of the king's right hand, exclaimed, 'May this hand never wither with age'" (L. Sherley-Price, trans., *A History of the English Church and People*, p. 150).

[136] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. i, p. 352. "They are preserved as venerated relics in a silver casket at the church of St. Peter in the royal city" (L. Sherley-Price, trans., *A History of the English Church and People*, p. 150).

hands would become highly appropriate objects of veneration because of their use for distributing alms.

Bede later offers a second explanation for the healing power in Oswald's arm and hand, again linking it to the *topos* of the saintly king. After recounting a miracle in which a boy prayed at Oswald's tomb and was healed, Bede says that the efficacy of prayers to Oswald was not surprising: "Nec mirandum preces regis illius iam cum Domino regnantis multum valere apud eum, qui temporalis regni quondam gubernacula tenens, magis pro aeterno regno semper laborare ac deprecari solebat." [137] He then links such prayer's effectiveness to the hands and arms of the king because of the king's customary positioning of them in prayer: "Denique ferunt quia a tempore matutinae laudis saepius ad diem usque in orationibus perstiterit, atque ob crebrum morem orandi, sive gratias agendi Domino semper ubicumque sedens, supinas super genua sua manus habere solitus sit." [138] William Chaney sees evidence of pagan customs in this account, arguing that "the praying position of sitting with the palms of his hands turned upward on his knees suggests not the customary Christian posture for prayer but a ritual attitude perhaps used by his pagan

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[137] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. i, p. 384. "But it need cause no surprise that the prayers of this king, who now reigns with God, should be acceptable to him, since when he was a king on earth he always used to work and pray fervently for the eternal kingdom" (L. Sherley-Price, trans., *A History of the English Church and People*, p. 161).

[138] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. i, p. 384. "It is said that Oswald often remained in prayer from the early hour of Lauds until dawn, and that through his practice of constant prayer and thanksgiving to God he always sat with his hands palm upwards on his knees" (L. Sherley-Price, trans., *A History of the English Church and People*, p. 161).

predecessors in offering intercessions for the folk, particularly in view of the hand and knee as sacral objects associated with fertility." [139] The strangest element in this account, however, may not be that the body of the king should be venerated after his death, nor that Oswald should use an unusual posture in prayer, but that the hand and arm should be separated from the remainder of the body to lie encased in silver at Bamburgh while the remainder of the body lay elsewhere. Although the division of saints' relics came to be expected in the later Middle Ages, in early England it was not accepted practice.

Christian practice in the seventh and eighth centuries prohibited the division of a saint's remains, yet the dismemberment of Oswald's body and its veneration at multiple sites is one non-hagiographic element which links the stories of Edwin and Oswald. David Rollason finds noteworthy "the English church's adherence to the practices of Rome in avoiding the fragmentation of saints' corpses or skeletons," and he calls the few instances of the breaking up of the body of a saint "exceptional." Of the three instances he cites from this period in England, two are the martyr-kings Edwin and Oswald.[140] By comparing the accounts by Bede and the Whitby Anonymous, we can gather that, after Edwin's death in battle, his body was preserved at the abbey of Whitby while his head was enshrined at the cathedral in York. Similarly, Oswald's head was enshrined at Lindisfarne, his body at Bardney, and his right arm at Bamburgh.[141] The dismemberment does not

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[139] W. A. Chaney, *The Cult of Kingship*, p. 116.

[140] The third example Rollason cites involves the bones of Aidan, taken back to Ireland after the Celtic defeat at the Synod of Whitby (D. W. Rollason, *Saints and Relics*, pp. 27-28).

seem at first to have been a hagiographic *topos*, since the fact that the bodies were divided is presented casually, not as a coordinated or cohesive part of the narrative. In the case of Edwin, the fact that the body was divided must be inferred, while in Oswald's case, Bede delays the explanation of the body's dismemberment, supplying bits of information in more than one point in his narrative. William Chaney connects the dismemberment of both kings to pagan religious practices, and there is indeed evidence that it was the enemies who defeated the two kings, and not their followers in the Northumbrian church, who fragmented the bodies. D. P. Kirby cites a Welsh poetic fragment which "alludes to the bringing of Eadwine's severed head to Aberffraw (principal residence of the kings of Gwynedd on Môn (Anglesey))."[142] This would, however, identify not Edwin's pagan but his Christian enemies as respnsible for the dismemberment. Nevertheless, the Welsh account provides a perfectly logical context for the division of Edwin's body, since the severing of the head and its removal to Cadwallon's royal seat as a trophy of his victory over his enemy could account for the headless body being discovered at the battlefield by Trimma.

A king's body appears to have been an important symbolic item for both sides of a battle. Neither the Whitby Anonymous nor Bede explains how Edwin's head arrived at York, but Bede does provide an account of how Oswald's body came to be dismembered and then recovered:

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[141] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. i, p. 314-20, 448-56; *Earliest Life of Gregory the Great*, pp. 104-05.

[142] D. P. Kirby, *The Earliest English Kings*, p. 86.

> Ossa igitur illius translata et condita sunt in monasterio...: porro caput et manus cum brachiis a corpore praecisas, iussit rex qui occiderat, in stipitibus suspendi. Quo post annum veniens cum exercitu successor regni eius Osuiu, abstulit ea, et caput quidem in coemeterio Lindisfarnensis ecclesiae: in regia vero civitate manus cum brachiis condidit. [143]

This account identifies the dismemberer as Penda, *rex qui occiderat*, who was a pagan. It also provides firm evidence that the bodies of kings were treated in a very special fashion by both pagans and Christians. Consider the repeating sequences: Edwin's body is decapitated and the severed head is taken to the royal city of Cadwallon; the same head is recovered, and ends up enshrined at York; Penda dismembers the body of Oswald and displays the parts (at his own royal city?); Oswiu recovers the arms and hands of Oswald and takes them to his royal city; Oswald's head, also recovered, is carried elsewhere; the bodies of both kings are "discovered" and similarly enshrined. Saints' bodies were not routinely treated this way in the early Anglo-Saxon era, but kings' bodies evidently were.

The defilement of a king's body by those who vanquished him appears to have been merely the reverse of its enshrinement in a royal church, just as the paganism of a king's enemies became the obverse of the coin proclaiming the victor to be God's annointed.[144] The primary significance of the paganism or Christianity of a combatant lay

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[143] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. i, p. 386. "[H]is bones were taken up and buried in the Abbey of Bardney; but the king who slew him ordered that his head and hands with the forearms be hacked off and fixed on stakes. The following year, Oswald's successor Oswy came to the place with his army and removed them, placing the head in the church at Lindisfarne, and the hands and arms in his own royal city of Bamburgh" (L. Sherley-Price, trans., *A History of the English Church and People*, p. 161).

[144] Wallace-Hadrill says of the religion of a king's foe, "[T]he paganism of Penda was important to the Church, both...when he was subordinate to Penda and later when he was

in the belief that victory in war reflected divine approval. The equation was a simple one for Bede and his contemporaries when a Christian king defeated a pagan enemy. Belief in God brought victory in battle. It was also fairly clearcut when an apostate like Eanfrid, even by a *tyrannus saeviens* like Cadwallon. It was not so simple when a Christian king was himself defeated. When the king was victorious in battle, no special cult was needed to provide evidence of God's approval. The king was *rex victor* and, as Wallace-Hadrill says, "was *victoriosissimus* because he was *sanctissimus*."[145] If he died victorious he could be enshrined as Æthelberht of Kent was at Winchester, or like Edwin's kin, "cum ceteris...regibus nostris. " If, however, he died defeated, and if his enemies were pagans, then the equalibrium was disrupted. Was he unholy now because defeated? Was his enemy now *sanctissimus* because he was *victoriosissimus*? Was the Christian God "useful" anymore if the king who led his men into battle under the sign of the cross ended up as fragmented trophies decorating another king's hall? Ludwig Bieler describes the problems that Penda's victories in battle posed for Chrsitianity:

> When ... Oswald became king in 633, one of the first things he did was to convert (as far as Deira was concerned, to re-convert) his people. The significance of the king's decision is brought into relief by the fact that the thirties and forties of the seventh century witnessed a revival of paganism in England, especially among the East Angles and the West Saxons after the victories over their kingdoms ... by the champion of the old order, Penda of Mercia. This pagan reaction did not come to

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not. His role in Church historiography was negative but vital" (J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *Early Germanic Kingship*, p. 81). In this observation Wallace-Hadrill is following Graus, who says "Dieser *heidnische* König ist in der englischen Hagiographie eine ähnlich rein negative Persönlichkeit, wie Ebroin in der merowingischen" (F. Graus, *Volk, Herrscher und Heiliger im Reich derMerowinger*, p. 417, n. 689).

[145] J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *Early Germanic Kingship*, p. 84.

> an end until Penda was defeated by Oswald's brother Oswiu in 654 ... and died in battle. [146]

Penda not only interrupted the progress of conversion, he disrupted the carefully maintained balance of warfare and sanctity by providing a glaring counterpoint to the hagiographic tropes of the martyr-king. Penda's unrepentant paganism, the breadth of his realm, his victories in battle, his fragmentation and defilement of the bodies of Christian kings, all of these shook the underpinnings of the faith of Anglo-Saxon Christians.[147] Only Oswiu's defeat of Penda and his triumphal return of his predecessor's fragmented remains to be enshrined as relics in various sites throughout the North could restore the balance and reinvigorate the process of conversion. There is no record of what was done with the body of Penda, but if I could hazard a guess it would be that his head adorned a wooden stake somewhere near the royal seat of Bamburgh, not far from where Oswald's hands and arms were enshrined in silver.

The Anglo-Saxon cult of the martyred warrior-king represented a means of reasserting the balance in a delicate equation involving warfare and sanctity in a society in which combat was a common, almost continual, occurrence. Over time the defilement of

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[146] L. Bieler, "Ireland's Contribution to the Culture of Northumbria," pp. 211-12.

[147] Wallace-Hadrill cautions that the wars between the Northumbrians and the allied Welsh and Mercians were fought "for reasons which, whatever they were, were not religious.... Towards the end of his life, Penda was not ill-disposed towards Christianity. He cannot have fought his wars to eradicate it" (J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *Early Germanic Kingship*, p. 81). Whatever the real reasons for the wars, however, to Bede and men like him the significance of the struggles was religious.

the defeated king's body could be made to serve the interests of those who revered him, just as, paradoxically, the victorious enemy's paganism could be used to reverse the image of failure. Bede's quotation of a proverbial saying associated with Oswald's death serves this purpose admirably:

> Vulgatum est autem, et in consuetudinem proverbii versum, quod etiam inter verba orationis vitam finierit. Nam cum armis et hostibus circumseptus, iamiamque videret se esse perimendum, ravit pro animabus exercitus sui. Unde dicunt in proverbio: "Deus miserere animabus, dixit Osuald candens in terram." [148]

It was a sin to kill such a pious and Christ-like king, who was clearly God's anointed, and the pagans who killed him became vital parts of the rebalancing of the equation. They could be vilified. They provoked revulsion. Bede refers again to the despised grouping of Cadwallon, Eanfrid and Osric in establishing the length of Oswald's reign, "Regnavit autem Osuald Christianissimus rex Nordanhymbrorum novem annis, adnumerato etiam illo anno, quem et feralis impietas regis Brettonum, et apostasia demens regum Anglorum detestabilem fecerat," and then stresses repeatedly Penda's paganism, "Quo completo annorum curriculo occisus est commisso gravi praelio, ab eadem pagana gente paganoque rege Merciorun, a quo et praedecessor eius Aeduini peremptus fuerat." [149] Those who

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[148] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. i, pp. 384-86. "It is also said, and has become proverbial, that his life even closed in prayer; for when he saw the enemy forces surrounding him and knew that his end was near, he prayed for the souls of his soldiers. 'God have mercy on their souls, said Oswald as he fell' is now a proverb" (L. Sherley-Price, trans., *A History of the English Church and People*, p. 161).

[149] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. i, p. 368. "Oswald, the most Christian king of the Northumbrians, reigned for nine years, if we include the fatal year made abhorrent by the callous impiety of the British king [Cadwallon] and the insane apostasy of the English kings (Osric and Eanfrid)....At the end of this period Oswald fell in a fierce battle...against

defeated God's anointed and defiled his body sealed their own doom, however. The grouping of Penda with the three reviled and defeated kings implies that, in the end, God's will would be done, and those who warred against God's anointed would themselves be defeated. The defeated Christian monarch thus became not a failure but a victim. Only the Christian king could be victorious in defeat as well as in victory.

Just as paradoxically, the enshrinement and the defiling dismemberment of the king's body alike reflect the symbolic, indeed the ritual significance of royal remains. In the processes of "invention" (the discovery of holy relics) and "translation" (the removal of relics from one site to another), martyrs could be shown to be more powerful than the forces that killed them. A pagan's dismemberment of the king's body could be made to fit neatly into the pattern of invention and translation previously applied to the martyrs, and in the process a new type of saint could be created.

The entry on St. Oswald in the *Old English Martyrology* focuses on the story of Oswald's death and the enshrinement of his dismembered body at multiple sites, although it also employs other tropes associated with cults of martyred warrior kings. The first lines introduce the idea of divine granting of a wide realm:

> On þone fitan dæg þæs monðes [August] bið sancti Oswaldes tid, þæs cristenan kyninges, se ricsode nigon gear in Bretene, ond him sealde god mare rice þonne ænigum his foregengum. him wæron underþeodde þa feower þeoda þe syndon on Bretene, þæt syndon Brytwalas ond Peohtas ond Sceottas ond Ongle. [150]

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the same heathen Mercians and their heathen king, who had also slain his predecessor Edwin" (L. Sherley-Price, trans., *A History of the English Church and People*, pp. 155-6).

[150] "On the fifth day of the month is the festival of St. Oswald, the Christian king, who reigned nine years in Britain, and God gave him greater power than any of his predecessors. Subject to him were the four tribes that are in Britain: these are the British

This passage is certainly drawn from Bede's account, and provides excellent evidence that Oswald was firmly established as a saint by the late ninth century when the *Old English Martyrology* was probably written. No other sainted king appears in this martyrology, indicating that Edwin's cult (to whatever degree it ever existed) had not become a significant aspect of Anglo-Saxon observance.[151] The account of Oswald's death and posthumous miracles drawn from Bede show the importance of martyrdom for the cult of a warrior-king:

> Oswald endade his lif in gebedes wordum þa hine mon sloh, ond þa he feol on eorðan, þa cwæð he: "*deus miserere animabus*;" he cwæð: "god, miltsa þu saulum." his handa siondan ungebrosnode in þære cynelican ceastre seo ys nemned Bebbanburh, ond his heafod wæs gelæded to Lindesfearne ea, ond se lichoma ys elles in Lindesse mædðe æt Beardanegge, ond his wundor wæron miclo ge beheonan sæ ge begeondan. [152]

The entry doesn't mention how the body became dismembered, but there is a symmetry between the idea of the extent of the king's realm in life and the far-flung sites of his veneration after death. That idea is forcefully reiterated by the statement that his miracles

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Celts, the Picts, the Scots, and the English" (*An Old English Martyrology*, ed. and trans. G Herzfeld, pp. 138-39).

[151] Abdo (or Abden) and Sennes, two saints whom Ælfric later calls kings (see Chapter Five,) are called "cristene ealdormenn" in the *OEM* (*An Old English Martyrology*, ed. and trans. George Herzfeld, p. 132).

[152] "Oswald ended his life with words of prayer when they slew him, and as he fell down upon the ground, he said: '*deus miserere animabus*.' He said: 'God, have mercy on the souls.' His hands are undecayed in the royal town called Bamborough, and his head was brought to the isle of Lindisfarne, the rest of the body is at Bardney in the district of Lindsey, and his miracles were great on this side as well as beyond the sea" (*An Old English Martyrology*, ed. and trans. George Herzfeld , pp. 138-39).

have been many *beheonan sæ ge begeondan*. Dying with a prayer for others on his lips, the royal saint is given wide reaching powers by God after death just as he was in life.

Bede provides extensive evidence for the power of the king's dismembered body, and thereby indicates his own belief that Oswald was a saint. He devotes four complete chapters to his miracles. The site where he died, dust onto which he bled, the bones, the water in which the bones were washed all had efficacy. The last miracle recounted by Bede is especially interesting, and the most significant for this study, for it involves a famous man, Willibrord the Anglo-Saxon missionary to the Continent, himself considered a saint, who is quoted at length telling how he worked miracles with "quidem de ligno, in quo caput eius occisi a paganis infixum est."[153] Like the cross Oswald raised before his victory in battle against Cadwallon, and like the cross of Christ, the stake on which the severed head of Oswald had been impaled was said to work miracles, and through Willibrord the breadth of his spiritual realm grows even greater than his earthly realm had been. The importance placed on this object directly connected to the king's dismemberment reinforces the connection between the physical and symbolic victory claimed by the pagans and its reversal by the physical recovery of the remains and the resultant relic cult. The fragments of the stake take their place beside the fragmented body as symbols of ultimate victory, as the martyred warrior king's power spreads out over the world.

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[153] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. i, p. 390. "[A] portion of the stake to which the king's head was fixed by the heathen after his death" (L. Sherley-Price, trans., *A History of the English Church and People*, p. 162.)

VI

Following Oswald's death, Bede tells the story of another Northumbrian monarch who deserves mention in this section on the development of the cult of the martyred warrior-king. King Oswine of Deira does not fit into the same sub-class of sainthood as Edwin and Oswald; he represents instead an example of the class of royal saints murdered by their fellow Christians analyzed in detail by David Rollason.[154] Rather than dying while leading his troops in battle, Oswine was betrayed by a disloyal thane to his enemy, Oswiu of Bernicia, and executed. However, he is the third king whom Bede regarded as particularly holy, and the treatment Bede accords him has similarities to his handling of Oswald and Edwin. In addition, the process by which not Oswine but his murderer, King Oswiu, came to be venerated by certain later writers reinforces the idea that the martyred warrior-king cult grew out of the blending of the Anglo-Saxon approach to the question of warfare and sanctity with the Christian cult of the saints. Oswine shares with Edwin and Oswald certain traits of saintly kingship, and he is treacherously killed, but his somewhat pacifistic actions lead not to victory in battle and a widespread realm as signs of divine approval but to ignominious defeat at the hands of a more powerful Christian king. That he came to be venerated as a saint is less important to the analysis developed in this

[154] D. W. Rollason, "The Cults of Murdered Royal Saints," p. 3.

chapter than that his victorious enemy came close to being regarded as a saint as a well. The case of Oswiu will be dealt with in more detail in Chapter Five.

Oswine and Oswiu both came to power on the death of Oswald, the former in Deira and the latter in Bernicia. There is no record how, exactly, the recently united kingdom was once again divided, but it is clear from subsequent events that the division was opposed by the larger and stronger half of the union, Bernicia. Oswiu and Oswald were brothers, the sons of the Northumbrian King Æthelfrith (Edwin's enemy defeated by the combined forces of Edwin and Rædwald in 616/617), while Oswine was the son of the apostate King Osric. Both Oswiu and Oswine were related to Edwin, the former on his mother's side, the latter on his father's, and therefore both were related to Oswald as well.[155] Both were Christian. The main distinguishing characteristics between them were their relative power and their contrasting personal qualities.

As king of the smaller realm of Deira, Oswine was weaker than his Bernician relative and rival, although he seems to have been the "better man" in other respects. Richard Abels points out that the personal retinue of a king during this period was less important than his *duguth* or landed retainers.[156] The former might be a sign of a king's personal popularity, since the ability to attract many followers into his personal retinue was a result of the king's charisma and personal power, but the ability to sustain a large

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[155] For genealogies of the royal houses of Deira and Mercia, see D. Whitelock, ed. and trans., *English Historical Documents: c. 500-1042*, Tables 4 and 5.

[156] R. P. Abels. *Lordship and Military Obligation*, *passim*.

number of landed retainers grew out of the king's extended power base, the wealth and extent of his realm. Thus a king with great personal attributes could be defeated by one with weaker personal power by with a stronger power base. Abel uses Bede's account of Oswine's life to highlight this fact.

> The career of Oswine of Deira, one of Bede's model rulers, points up this...lesson. Because of his generosity and personal qualities, Oswine had attracted a large household retinue from the nobility of "almost every province." The resources of his kingdom, however, were no match for those of his hostile northern neighbor, Bernicia. When he faced Oswiu of Bernicia in battle, Oswine found that his troops were greatly outnumbered. Rather than risk a disastrous engagement, "he disbanded the army that he had assembled at *Wilfaresdun*, and ordered all his men to return home." He himself went into hiding in the house of a noble supporter, who promptly betrayed him to Oswiu. [157]

Oswine's generosity and loyalty (the latter evidenced by his unwillingness to lead his men into a seemingly unwinnable battle) did not translate into victory in war or an ever-broadening realm. Instead his lack of an extensive realm proved decisive in a conflict with his kinsman, although his lack of courage (or at least his dislike of risk) also played a major part in his defeat. Rather than being "*victoriosissimus* because he was *sanctissimus*," Oswine proved *victoriosissimus* because he was *potentissimus*. The extent of a king's realm and his success in battle were not separate aspects but two parts of one whole. As Abels says, "Victory, after all, meant tribute and land, and these meant in turn that a king could attract more warriors into his service."[158] A king unable to win battles

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[157] R. P. Abels, *Lordship and Military Obligation*, p. 33.

[158] R. P. Abels, *Lordship and Military Obligation*, p. 34.

because of the inferiority of his land base might lose the support of those retainers he did have, as in this case of Oswine and his disloyal "noble supporter."

None of this meant that Oswine could not come to be regarded as a saint. The evidence that he did is much stronger than in the case of Edwin. What it meant was that he became a different kind of saint. Lacking a heathen enemy and the material signs of divine approval accorded to Edwin and Oswald, Oswine could not be made to fit into the major *topoi* of the martyred warrior-kings. Bede does his best by Oswine, recording a memorable scene with Bishop Aidan illustrating his saintly qualities and reminiscent of Oswald's breaking up of the silver dish, but the ending of the scene and the prophecy which Aidan subsequently declared point up the differences between Oswine and his predecessor, Oswald.[159] Oswine had given a splendid mare to the bishop, who had in turn given it to a poor man, and at first the king was angry that his gift was treated so casually. He upbraided the bishop, saying, "Quid voluisti, domine antistes, equum regium, quem te coveniebat proprium habere, pauperi dare? Numquid non habuimus equos viliores plurimos, vel alias species quae ad pauperum dona sufficerent, quamvis illum eis equum non dares, quem tibi specialiter possidendum elegi?" [160] To which Aidan replied, "Quid loqueris...rex? Numquid tibi carior est ille filius equae, quam ille filius Dei?" [161] So far,

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[159] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. i, pp. 396-398.

[160] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. i, p. 396. "My lord bishop, why did you give away the royal horse which was necessary for your own use? Have we not many less valuable horses or other belongings which would have been good enough for beggars, without giving away a horse that I had specially selected for your personal use?" (L. Sherley-Price, trans., *A History of the English Church and People*, p. 165).

Oswine had proven himself to be less holy than Oswald, balking at giving his own rich goods to the poor when the latter had given the food from his table and the silver of his own personal vessels to be distributed to beggars. However, the humility he showed in the ensuing scene, which is worth quoting at length, provided a contrast of a different sort:

> Quibus dictis intrabant ad prandendum. Et episcopus quidem residebat in suo loco. Porro rex, venerat enim de venatu, coepit consistens ad focum calefieri cum ministris: et repente inter calefaciendum recordansverbum quod dixerat illi antistes, discinxit se gladio suo, et dedit illum ministro, festinusque accedends ante pedes episcopi conruit, postulans ut sibi placatus esset, "Quia nunquam," inquit, "deinceps aliquid loquar de hoc, aut indicabo quid vel quantum de pecunia nostra filiis Dei tribuas." Quod videns episcopus, multum pertimuit, ac statim exsurgens levavit eum, promittens se multum illi esse placatum, dummodo ille residens ad epulas tristitiam deponeret. Dumque rex, iubente ac postulante episcopo, laetitiam reciperet, coepit e contra episcopus tristis usque ad lacrymarum profusionem effici. Quem dum presbyter suus lingua sua patria, quam rex et domestici eius non noverant, quare lacrymaretur interrogasset: "Scio," inquit, "quia non multo tempore victurus est rex: nunquam enim ante haec vidi humilem regem. Unde animadverto illum citius ex hac vita rapiendum: non enim digna est haec gens talem habere rectorem." Nec multo post, dira antistis praesagia tristi regis funere...impleta sunt. [162]

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[161] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. i, pp. 396-98. "What are you saying, Your Majesty? Is this child of a mare more valuable to you than this child of God?" (L. Sherley-Price, trans., *A History of the English Church and People*, p. 165).

[162] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. i, p. 398. "At this they went in to dinner, and the bishop sat down in his place; but the king, who had come in from hunting, stood warming himself by the fire with his attendants. As he stood by the fire, the king turned over in his mind what the bishop had said; then suddenly unbuckling his sword and handing it to a servant, he impulsively knelt at the bishop's feet and begged his forgiveness, saying: 'I will not refer to this matter again, nor will I inquire how much of our bounty you give away to God's children.' The bishop was deeply moved, and immediately stood up and raised him to his feet, assuring him of his high regard and begging him to sit down to his food without regrets. At the bishop's urgent request, the king sat down and began to be merry; but Aidan on the contrary grew so sad that he began to shed tears. His chaplain asked him in his own language, which the king did not understand, why he wept. Aidan replied: 'I know that the king will not live very long; for I never before have seen a humble king. I feel that he will soon be taken from us, because this nation is not worthy of such a king.' Not very long afterwards, ...the bishop's foreboding was borne out by the

The tension in this scene lies not only in the contrasting reactions of the two principal actors (the bishop sitting down to eat while the king stands, the king falling at the feet of the bishop, the king becoming merry as the bishop weeps) but also in the contrast the entire scene makes to the scene of the earlier meal of Oswald and Aidan. There king and bishop sit comfortably together without conflict, and the bishop foresees triumphantly the king's death before old age can wither his arm; here the king and bishop continually switch places and roles, and the prophecy is a tearful one. The *rex victor* distributes largesse without losing his regal stature and will remain victorious even in death, but the *rex humilissimus* lowers himself below his own bishop and will be neither victorious nor long for this world. Wallace-Hadrill sees approval in Bede's handling of the story, saying that Bede favored "a more thorough-going submission to the Church" than that exhibited by Edwin, and that Oswine in contrast possessed "the moral qualities the Church held proper to the office of the king." He argues further that "[r]oyal humility is obedience to the Church," although the "political consequences" of royal subservience to Church "could have been alarming."[163] In fact, the political consequences for Deira were alarming. Despite Oswine's obvious virtues, his failure to prosecute successfully the war against Bernicia ended forever the independence of that realm. After all, Oswine's fate provoked not a sense of victorious assurance in his bishop but a surfeit of tears. Such a

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king's death" (L. Sherley-Price, trans., *A History of the English Church and People*, pp. 165-66).

[163] J. M. Wallace-Hadrill. *Early Germanic Kingship*, pp. 83-86.

king might be venerated as a martyr to bloodthirsty treachery, but he is not the *rex victoriosissimus et sanctissimus* that Oswald was for Bede.

Oswine's death and subsequent veneration began a new period in Anglo-Saxon hagiography. A brief era of victorious saintly kings riding to war against pagan enemies was passing, to be replaced by a longer period in which political wrangling between Christian rulers would provide martyrs of a different kind, murder victims who became examples not so much of model kingship but reverse images: their murderers demonstrating behavior to be avoided. As Rollason has argued, in the veneration of murdered royalty, "we may be seeing royal cults used in reverse, not to increase the prestige of particular rulers but to diminish it by recalling their own or their families' past crimes."[164] The trope of providential expansion of a king's realm could not be used as easily to celebrate a Christian king whose realm expanded at the expense of his Christian neighbors as a king whose broadening realm reflected contracting pagan influence. Even supporters of Oswald's cult found some difficulties in this area, as Osthryth, the dead king's niece, found when she brought his body to Bardney in Lindsey. As Wallace-Hadrill points out, "Lindsey was repeatedly and alternately dominated by Northumbrians and Mercians, for neither of whom can the inhabitants have had much love."[165] It should come as no surprise then that, as Bede reports, the Bardney monks refused to accept the dead king's body, since he was a Northumbrian king being buried by the Northumbrian queen

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[164] D. W. Rollason, "The Cults of Murdered Royal Saints," p. 21.

[165] J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *Bede's 'Ecclesiastical History'*, p. 104.

of a Mercian king, Æthelred. Invaders tend to be disliked whether they are one's co-religionists or not. The appearance of a miraculous pillar of light above the royal corpse helped to convince the monks to put aside regional prejudices and to accept the dead king's relics. In other cases, powerful individuals found their own reasons to accept or even promote the cults of their former enemies. Support for the cult of Oswine came from two sides: on one hand, his kin within the Deiran royal house secured the land where he died and set up Gilling there, over which they would preside; but it was Oswiu, the man responsible for Oswine's murder, who provided the land and material support for the abbey. Rollason speculates that, in presenting themselves as benefactors of their victims' cults, [Oswiu and others like him] were seeking to diminish some of the effectiveness of those cults for focusing the forces of social tension and political opposition."[166] In this way sanctity could be used to ease the tensions caused by inter-tribal warfare, and the political maneuvering could invert once again the equation by making the powerless saint seem powerful while at the same time bolstering support for those originally guilty of the dead man's murder.

[166] D. W. Rollason, "The Cults of Murdered Royal Saints," p. 21.

VII

Bede's account of the "holy kings" Edwin, Oswald, and Oswine presents attitudes towards war diametrically opposed to those of Sulpicius in the *Vita Sancti Martini*. Others have noted that Bede's views contrast sharply with early Christian attitudes towards violence. D. H. Green compares the "pacifistic christianity" of Bishop Wulfila, missionary to the Goths, who reportedly declined "to translate the Book of Kings for fear that the result would be still further to inflame the warlike passions of the Goths," to Bede's glorification of the victories of these kings, arguing that Bede's accounts of the martyred warrior-kings "possess more than just an objective, historical importance as evidence of the progress of the conversion in [England], for they also have subjective value in telling us something of Bede's own attitude to the events which he is reporting." In Bede's attitude Green finds "the absolute antithesis" of Wulfila's, since "[f]or the Gothic bishop war and christianity are irreconcilable, whereas for Bede victory in the one is a reliable reflection of the other." [167] Yet Green's argument ignores one complicating factor: it was not victory in battle, but defeat at the hands of pagan enemies that secured for Oswald at least, and to a lesser extent Edwin, not just the reputation as a devout Christian but as a saint. Victory in battle could and would be granted to a Christian king, but martyrdom was the means by which the same king could be elevated into the ranks of

[167] D. H. Green, *The Carolingian Lord*, pp. 278-98.

God's chosen saints. It is this paradox that distinguishes the accounts of Constantine and Clovis from those of Edwin and Oswald. The former indicate Christian tolerance of war, but the latter take an important further step by sanctifying it. To Bede and (based on the tropological similarities between his accounts and those of the Whitby Anonymous) many of his fellow Anglo-Saxons, if victory in battle could be seen as a carrying out of God's will, then defeat in battle could be seen as martyrdom. Indeed, martyrdom became an important means by which those who saw in battle a reflection of the divine will could turn even defeat in battle to their purposes.

For the first time, long before the radical changes brought on by the preaching of the Crusades and the movement that it engendered, and yet foreshadowing them, a saint won his way into heaven by wielding a sword and not by setting it aside. As Christopher Tyerman comments in his study of England and the Crusades, "[M]any of the images and ideas which later found expression in crusading rhetoric ... were available to an English audience well before the year 1000."[168] When Ælfric included the Life of Oswald among his *Lives of Saints*, which was written within a century of the initial preaching of the Crusades and which will form a major focus of the sixth chapter of this study, he brought certain of those images and ideas, in particular the tropes of the cult of the martyred warrior-saint, into play; but he also made use of other traditions and image patterns which will be examined in the intervening chapters.

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[168] C. Tyerman, *England and the Crusades*, p. 11.

Chapter Three: Earthly Combat and Spiritual Transformation

I

The last chapter examined a special sub-class of Anglo-Saxon saint whose *vitae* revealed attitudes towards violence in which the domains of warfare and sanctity overlapped. The cults of these saints represented a major step toward the sanctification of war. The Anglo-Saxons still imposed a limit on that sanctification, however. War was the sacred duty of a king, who played a special role in bringing about conversions and in protecting the Church, but it was still a secular duty for the soldiers who fought under him, whether *thegn* or *ceorl*. Oswald and, to a lesser extent, Edwin achieved sainthood by dying while fighting God's battles, but no one who followed them into combat could expect the same reward. Significant as the cults of martyred warrior-kings may have been in the history of Anglo-Saxon hagiography, they are overshadowed numerically by warriors who took a very different route to sainthood. The present chapter is concerned with that more common path.

Instead of dying as a holy warrior with sword in hand, many early Anglo-Saxon warriors came to sainthood by following the model of Martin of Tours: abandoning their

secular careers to embark on new lives as monks, bishops, abbots, or religious ascetics. All of these men (including Benedict Biscop, Eosterwine, Guthlac, Wilfrid, and perhaps even Cuthbert) had borne weapons, and many of them had actually fought in wars before committing themselves to the service of God. Unlike their royal counterparts, Edwin and Oswald, these men became saints in the opinion of their fellow Anglo-Saxons only after they renounced their secular responsibilities and took up a life devoted to religion. As discussed in Chapter Two, no Anglo-Saxon commoner (that is, no one who was neither a member of some religious order nor a high-ranking member of a royal family) came to be regarded as a saint, whether by dying in battle, by being murdered for the faith, or by living a life of Christian sanctity. For the non-royal Anglo-Saxon, a spiritual transformation was necessary before a life of sanctity could begin. In the earliest periods, before the model of the martyred warrior-kings had been established, even many kings chose to undergo a conversion from wielder of secular power to seeker after spiritual peace. This chapter will examine renunciation of secular duties in general, and warfare in particular, as a path to sanctity for Anglo-Saxon saints, whether royal or not. Although the dating of many Anglo-Saxon texts remains conjectural, still a pattern emerges when the various works dealing with soldier saints are considered in roughly chronological order: one trend in particular became increasingly significant over the course of the eighth and ninth centuries. During this period, extending roughly from the "Age of Bede" to the "Age of Alfred," hagiographers wrote about many saints who had formerly been warriors, and in the process they developed a new, third route, neither the outright rejection of war

nor its presentation as part of a holy mission, but the individual saint's transformation from earthly to spiritual warrior.

This path of spiritual transformation became a dominant trope in Anglo-Saxon literature. It involved the renunciation of secular life, and thus reflected the influence of the model of Martin of Tours on Anglo-Saxon society, although that influence was often indirect. No single Anglo-Saxon *Life* reproduced in any complete way Sulpicius Severus's *topoi* of renunciation of warfare (the unwilling warrior, the saintly soldier, the bloodless victory, and the formal rejection of warfare), but elements of Sulpicius's treatment of Martin were incorporated into various Anglo-Saxon *vitae* and other forms of hagiological narrative. In some cases, verbal echoes point to Sulpicius as a direct source, while in others the connection to the Martinian model is less obvious. The similarity of situation writers faced in handling the earthly careers of men later sanctified may have led them to employ similar strategies in texts which otherwise show no direct relation to each other. Tropes used by Sulpicius were employed by Anglo-Saxon writers, whether under his direct influence or not.

The Martinian model was not the only important influence on Anglo-Saxon saints and their hagiographers as they developed the new trope of spiritual transformation.[1] In

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[1] One other important influence not examined in this study is that of St Germanus of Auxerre. See F. R. Hoare, tr., "Constantius of Lyon: The Life of Saint Germanus of Auxerre," in T. F. X. Noble and T. Head, ed., *Soldiers of Christ*, pp. 75-106. According to Noble and Head, "Germanus (375-446), a Gallic aristocrat, served in the imperial administration and as a soldier before entering the clergy....He traveled twice to Britain to combat heresy and on one occasion used his military skills to help the British repel a barbarian attack" (76). Bede knew Constantius's *Life* and incorporated elements from it into his *Ecclesiastical History*. The careers of Martin and Germanus show a certain

addition to employing themes related to the Martinian model of sainthood, hagiographers at times incorporated topical elements related to the cults of the martyred warrior-kings, such as providential preservation through adversity, the providential expansion of a realm, the evil and merciless pagan enemy, God-granted victory in battle, or the cross as a sign of victory. Although combined in the trope of spiritual transformation, the two sets of tropes (inherited from Sulpicius on the one hand or exemplified by Bede on the other) reflect radically different approaches to the relationship between warfare and the sacred: in one model warfare and holiness represented separate and inimical fields of action, while in the other war became a concrete manifestation of the spiritual struggle. Anglo-Saxon writers who presented former soldiers as having achieved sainthood could choose to separate their subject completely from the taint of war, as Sulpicius had done, or to present warfare as an aspect of the saint's holy mission, as Bede had done. In fact, few Anglo-Saxon hagiographers chose an outright rejection of warfare in line with the Sulpician model, but most also avoided an open glorification of war. Instead, they often employed elements of both approaches, combining and synthesizing the two sets of tropes into the new trope of spiritual transformation.

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similarity, and echoes of the Martinian tropes examined in this study appear in Constantius's *Life*, but Constantius's approach to the relationship between warfare and sanctity is very different from Sulpicius's. As Noble and Head point out, "It was [Germanus's] class of people who found the likes of Martin of Tours uncouth" (76). Differing attitudes toward warfare in the two *vitae* may reflect class or cultural differences within early continental Christian society, but that possibility lies outside the scope of this study.

As demonstrated in regard to the various Anglo-Saxon versions of the *Life of Martin*, English writers showed an increasing uneasiness about directly combining warfare and holiness. The models of Oswald and Edwin were not repeated during succeeding generations. No other saints died in holy warfare against pagan enemies, but many former warriors did become saints. The trope of spiritual transformation provided them with a means of separating the two spheres without unduly condemning warfare and its practitioners. It was a compromise between rejection and glorification of war.

The new trope of spiritual transformation actually represented an outgrowth or extension of the idea contained in Martin's speech to Julian, "Hactenus ... militaui tibi; patere ut nunc militem Deo."[2] The anti-war attitude embodied in its corollary, "Christi ego miles sum: pugnare mihi non licet," still carried weight, but it had come to mean something different from what it had to Sulpicius writing in the fourth century. By the eighth century the idea that followers of Christ could not be soldiers (a concept that even in Sulpicius's day was not universal among Christians) had been reduced to an injunction (universally held but not universally observed) against clerical involvement in war, so that the rejection of warfare applied not to Christian laymen but only to those pursuing a

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[2] Sulpicius, iv.3. "I have fought for you up to this point... Now let me fight for God" (B. Peebles, ed. and trans., *Sulpicius Severus: Writings*, p. 108). A similar approach was taken by Constantius of Lyon in his *Life of Saint Germanus of Auxerre*: "Thus [Germanus] received the fullness of the priesthood under compulsion, as a conscript; but, this done, immediately he made the change complete. He deserted the earthly militia to be enrolled in the heavenly" (79-80). Note, however, that Martin was an unwilling conscript in warfare but a willing convert to the religious life, while Germanus was a willing warrior but an unwilling conscript (at least initially) to the priesthood.

religious vocation.[3] Early in their careers, many saints would decisively reject their former lives as laymen and soldiers and embark on new lives dedicated to Christ. In doing so, these future saints would also be moving from one sphere -- to use the medieval terminology, from one *order* -- to another.

According to many writers and thinkers during the Middle Ages, medieval society was divided into three distinct classes or *orders*: the order of workers, the order of prayers, and the order of fighters.[4] J. E. Cross first pointed to this "threefold division of society" as central to the ethic of war in Anglo-Saxon England when he argued that, by the time of Ælfric, "and well before, Martin was joined to the ranks of the *oratores*," those who prayed.[5] This concept of the division of society into three orders has important ramifications for a study of warfare and sanctity in Anglo-Saxon literature since a soldier-saint would seem to be, by definition, a member of two distinct societal groupings.

The earliest recorded use of the concept of society's division into three classes or orders appears in the late ninth century writings of King Alfred, but the concept probably

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[3] On clerical involvement in war, see J. L. Nelson, "The Church's Military Service in the Ninth Century"; T. Powell, "Clerical Involvement in Warfare"; and T. Powell, "The 'Three Orders' of Society."

[4] For discussion of this concept, see G. Duby, *The Three Orders*. See also G. Constable, "The Orders of Society," who demonstrates that medieval thinkers had many different schemas for dividing society, many of them non-tripartite. Most of Constable's evidence is not specifically Anglo-Saxon. On Anglo-Saxon approaches to the question, see T. Powell, "The 'Three Orders' of Society."

[5] J. E. Cross, "The Ethic of War in Old English," p. 280.

was in use in England long before Alfred articulated it.[6] This concept's pertinence to the issues of warfare and sanctity is indicated by the peculiar fact that kings (and kings-to-be) alone could become saints without first becoming clerics. According to Alfred's formulation, the king alone stood above society's tripartite division, thus the king's role, standing above both warrior and cleric, combined elements of both. In a sense, only a king could truly be both soldier and saint without undermining the concept of the three orders. The idea of separate societal spheres for the cleric and the warrior is linked to the fact that saints no longer came from among all the ranks of the faithful, as they had in early Roman Christianity, but only from among clerics and those who, by virtue of their special royal status, stood outside the normal division of society.[7] Like Martin, sainthood itself had become "joined to the ranks of the *oratores*." An individual had to move from the ranks of the *bellatores* into the realm of the *oratores* before he could join the communion of the saints.[8] This change of status was accomplished through a kind of conversion: a spiritual transformation.

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[6] G. Duby, *The Three Orders*, pp. 99-109; T. Powell, "The 'Three Orders' of Society," pp. 103-09.

[7] A list of all of the late antique lay saints would be very lengthy. Most of the early women saints were laypeople, as were the soldier saints. Martyrdom, not clerical status, determined early sainthood. Whether the process of exclusion of laymen from the realm of sanctity occurred in all of Latin Christendom or only in Anglo-Saxon England, and whether the idea of the three orders originated in England or elsewhere are issues beyond the scope of this study.

[8] This pattern applies to women as well as men, although the term *bellator* and the Anglo-Saxon concept of the three orders did not include women. A woman also had to move from secular to religious status to be aligible for sainthood. That the conception of the three orders (and the king's special role outside that tripartite division) was merely nascent

II

Bede is the major source for those early Anglo-Saxon saints who abandoned secular careers. In his *Historia Ecclesiastica*, he portrayed the wars of his holy kings as integral parts of their divine mission, yet he also recorded instances of Anglo-Saxon kings who chose to abandon their thrones for religious reasons. In his *Lives of the Abbots of Wearmouth and Jarrow*, Bede depicted laymen who also underwent a spiritual transformation, rejecting earthly for spiritual struggle, when they changed orders to pursue a spiritual calling. Among the kings and laymen who followed this pattern, some eventually were regarded as saints.

In the first wave of conversions, commoner and king alike were caught up in the desire for the spiritual realm, but the spiritual transformations of kings were most frequently recorded. Clare Stancliffe, in her article on "Kings who Opted Out," comments on "the sheer number of Anglo-Saxon kings taking this decision [to 'opt out'] in the

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within the culture, and not yet laid out as a formula or an ideology, is reflected in the materials examined in this chapter. At the earliest stage, spiritual transformation appealed to, and was applied to, not just lay warriors but kings as well, and, according to Abels, "[o]ne would have difficulty distinguishing between the 'royal armies' of this period and the war bands of [exiled] æthelings" (R. P. Abels, *Lordship and Military Obligation*, p. 36). By the "Age of Alfred," there are no instances of kings abdicating in order to pursue a religious vocation, although in other ways rulers still resembled the warrior-kings of the past. By the "Age of Ælfric," the king's administrative duties had largely superseded his role as leader of a *comitatus*. See M. R. Godden, "Ælfric and Anglo-Saxon Kingship."

seventh and eighth centuries."[9] She names "six kings who opted into a monastery," to which she adds "five who resigned to go to Rome on lifelong pilgrimages, together with two others who intended the journey."[10] Bede provides us with the outlines of the careers of many of these kings, including Sigebert, the East Anglian king; Æthelred, king of Mercia; Sebbi, king of the East Saxons; Oswiu, the Northumbrian king discussed in Chapter Two, as well as his son Alchfrith; Cadwalla of Wessex; the "joint pilgrims" Cenred of Mercia and Offa of the East Saxons; and Ine, the West Saxon king.[11] Bede's attitude towards these men varies, but in general he approved most strongly of kings or laymen who retired to a monastery or went on a pilgrimage after long and successful periods of service in the secular realm.

The first king reported to undergo the spiritual transformation from king to monk was King Sigebert of East Anglia. His case is significant not only as the earliest example of a king choosing to change his status (circa 630), but also as an instance in which the tolerance of Bede and his fellow Anglo-Saxons for a king's abdication was put to a crucial test. King Sigebert not only renounced his throne mid-career for the monastic life, he was later forced to abandon the monastery when his former subjects, facing an invading army, forced him to abandon retirement in order to rally their forces. The account in the *Historia Ecclesiastica* of King Sigebert's life and death reveals that Bede had mixed

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[9] C. Stancliffe, "Kings Who Opted Out," p. 154.

[10] C. Stancliffe, "Kings Who Opted Out," p. 156.

[11] C. Stancliffe, "Kings Who Opted Out," pp. 156-57.

feelings about the Sigebert's decision. He introduces him first in a chapter placed in correct chronology between the account of Edwin's conversion and the description of that king's death, during the period of the early conversions when the wave of martyred warrior-kings had not yet begun to crest. There he calls him, "Sigberct, vir per omnia Christianissimus atque doctissimus, qui vivente adhuc fratre cum exularet in Gallia, fidei sacramentis imbutus est, quorum participem, mox ubi regnare coepit, totam suam provinciam facere curavit." [12] Bede saves the remainder of Sigebert's story, however, for a chapter immediately following the death of Oswine, the last of Bede's "holy kings." The order is of interest here, since Sigebert died in 635, only two years after Edwin, but Oswald died in 641 and Oswine in 651. Bede therefore places the account of Sigebert's death some fifteen years out of chronological order. By breaking the sequence of his narrative, Bede appears to be employing a topical rather than a chronological order.

What links Sigebert to Oswine (rather than his nearer contemporaries Edwin and Oswald) is that they both were very holy and humble kings, but neither died fighting valiantly for his country. Oswine, as we have seen, chose to disband his army rather than face a numerically superior force. Sigebert only joined his army in its final battle against his will, and he refused to carry weapons or fight. That Bede delayed his account of Sigebert's death until after the wave of the martyr-kings had broken placed this king not in

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[12] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. i, p. 294. "Sigbert was a devout Christian and a man of learning, who had been an exile in Gaul during his brother's lifetime, and was there converted to the Christian Faith, so that when he began his reign, he laboured to bring about the conversion of his whole realm" (L. Sherley-Price, trans., *A History of the English Church and People*, p. 131).

the sequence of Edwin and Oswald, although he died in battle and led a life of great sanctity, but with Oswine who was, as Aidan's prophecy revealed, too good for this world. As Peter Hunter Blair asserts, "Bede knew well enough that if society needed regiments of men and women to wage spiritual warfare within their monasteries, it had no less a need for those who could draw their swords on the battlefields of this world in defense of their own kingdom."[13] If Bede believed the individual warrior was necessary for the defense of the church and nation, how could he look favorably on kings who shirked both their martial and their leadership responsibilities, no matter how lofty their motives?

Bede held back from any overt criticism, however. In the full chapter devoted to Sigebert, Bede reintroduced him as "homo bonus ac religiosus," and he described with approval how he set up schools along the Frankish model he had observed while in exile. He then narrated the story of Sigebert's abdication:

> Tantumque rex ille caelestis regni amator factus est, ut ad ultimum relictis regni negotiis, et cognato suo Ecgrice commendatis, qui et antea partem eiusdem regni tenebat, intraret monasterium quod sibi fecerat, atque accepta tonsura pro aeterno magis regno militare curaret. [14]

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[13] P. Hunter Blair, "From Bede to Alcuin," p. 240.

[14] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. i, p. 412. "King Sigbert became so ardent in his love for the kingdom of heaven that he abandoned the affairs of his earthly kingdom, and entrusted them to his kinsman Egric, who had already governed part of the kingdom. He then entered a monastery that he had founded and, after receiving the tonsure, devoted his energies to winning an everlasting kingdom" (L. Sherley-Price, trans., *A History of the English Church and People*, p. 170).

The repetition of forms of the word *regnum* in the phrases "caelestis regni," "relictis regni negotiis," "antea partem eiusdem regni," and "pro aeterno... regno militare" establishes a parallel between earthly and heavenly "realms." This comparison between the kingdoms of the earth and the kingdom of heaven is a commonplace in hagiography, part of the military analogy, employed by many Anglo-Saxon writers even outside of hagiographic texts.[15] Normally this comparison would signal approval, the struggle for the eternal kingdom taking precedence over the affairs of any earthly kingdom, and Bede used similar phrases in describing favorably others who abandoned secular for spiritual duties. In this instance, however, an interpretation of these phrases must take into account the context--not only what will come after them (Sigebert's defeat and death in battle) but also what has come before them.

In the chapters preceding this one, Bede demonstrated his belief that Oswald (and to a lesser extent Edwin) earned himself a place in the eternal kingdom by furthering the reign of Christ on earth. Would Oswald have earned a more secure place in heaven by abandoning Northumbria to his pagan enemies and joining a monastery? If Sigebert's decision had been placed in proper chronological order, no such questions would be raised in the reader's mind. Edwin's death in 633 was not accompanied by miracles like those Bede recorded after Oswald's death. In 635 there would have been no sure sign that a king could earn a place in heaven by holding his throne to the death against pagan

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[15] See M.L. Del Mastro, "The Military Analogy in Anglo-Latin Saints' Lives"; J. Harris, "Soldiers of Christ: Cynewulfian Poetry"; and J. Hill, "The Soldier of Christ in Old English Prose and Poetry."

enemies. But in the years following Oswald's death (and certainly in Bede's own time), the sanctity of a king's earthly mission was becoming a firmly established part of Anglo-Saxon Christian thinking. Oswald's veneration as a saint represents the most concrete evidence for this new ethos. By placing the account of Sigebert's death after that of Oswald, Bede raises the question of which realm should be a king's primary sphere of concern. Should a king abandon his earthly responsibilities to seek personal holiness in the eternal realm? Or should he use his power as king to promote and secure Christianity for all of his earthly kingdom? As Richard Abels argues, "[S]ince the king was the Church's lord, his fall could also prove calamitous to the men of God."[16] Although both Oswald and Sigebert were defeated and died in battle, Oswald never gave up the fight to preserve Northumbria from pagan invasion, while Sigebert did. Bede's use of the word *militare* to describe Sigebert's struggle "pro aeterno...regno" subtly contrasts Sigebert's decision to reject earthly warfare with Oswald's choice to die fighting "pro patria dimicans." [17] Both Oswald and Sigebert chose to fight (*militare*) for the heavenly kingdom, but in sharply contrasting ways and with different results.

Bede presents Sigebert's death without criticizing him directly, though there are indications that he does not fully approve of Sigebert's actions. He says that long after Sigebert had retired to the monastery, Penda, the pagan king of Mercia, came against them: "Quod dum multo tempore faceret, contigit gentem Merciorum duce rege Penda

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[16] R. P. Abels, *Lordship and Military Obligation*, p. 45.

[17] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. i, p. 368.

adversus Orientales Anglos in bellum." [18] The fact that he stresses the length of time (*multo tempore*) Sigebert spent in the monastery implies a criticism of Sigebert's decision to abdicate while still at the height of his powers, mid-career, rather than at the end of his life. He goes on to say that the East Angles felt unable to withstand their enemy: "dum se inferiores in bello hostibus conspicerent, rogaverunt Sigberctum ad confirmandum militem secum venire in praelium."[19] Bede's use of *confirmare* to express the aid the soldiers of East Anglia hoped to receive from Sigebert is interesting, both in what it says and in its possible connotations. *Confirmare* can have both religious and secular associations: a bishop can confirm or strengthen a believer's faith in the same way that a warleader could bolster a warrior's confidence. The military analogy links Sigebert's two roles, but it also contrasts them. Sigebert is not being asked to fight, but to strengthen his people, to encourage them in their struggle. If, as Bede later asserts, Sigebert was a powerful and successful warleader before his retirement, the request one would expect would be to lead them into battle, rather than merely to bolster their resolve. Perhaps the petitioners understood and respected his resolve. Wallace-Hadrill argues that "Bede does not conceal the reason why his former warriors compelled Sigebert to join them against Penda: he had been himself a distinguished warrior and leader before entering his monastery. It was not

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[18] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. i, p. 412. "A considerable while later, the Mercians led by King Penda attacked the East Angles" (L. Sherley-Price, trans., *A History of the English Church and People*, p. 170).

[19] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. i, pp. 412-14. "[F]inding themselves less experienced in warfare than their enemies, [they] asked Sigbert to go into battle with them and foster the morale of the fighting men" (L. Sherley-Price, trans., *A History of the English Church and People*, pp. 170-71).

his piety that moved them, " but Bede seems vague not so much on why they forced him to join them as on what they asked him to do.[20] Bede's monastic training would dictate that he should defend Sigebert's refusal, as he later does, by stressing that what they had asked of him would break his monastic vows. Yet as an Anglo-Saxon living in what Abels terms "an age of endemic warfare and in a society that measured a king's greatness by his success in battle," Bede also had reason to reject a king's decision to abandon secular for spiritual duties.[21] Thus he describes, virtually without comment, how Sigebert refused to join them and how they would not accept his refusal:

> Illo nolente ac contradicente, invitum monasterio eruentes duxerunt in certamen, sperantes minus animos militum trepidare, minus praesente duce quondam strenuissimo et eximo posse fugam meditari. Sed ipse professionis suae non immemor, dum optimo esset vallatus exercitu, nonnisi virgam tantum habere in manu voluit: occisusque est una cum rege ecgrice, et cunctus eorum, insistentibus paganis, caesus sive dispersus exercitus. [22]

Bede seems to echo Sulpicius's description of Martin here, although in an unusual way. Sigebert is definitely an unwilling soldier, and the decision to go into battle carrying only

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[20] J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *Bede's 'Ecclesiastical History'*, p. 112.

[21] R. P. Abels, *Lordship and Military Obligation*, p. 45.

[22] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. i, p. 414. "When he refused, they dragged him out of the monastery regardless of his protests, and took him into battle with them in the hope that their men would be less likely to panic or think of flight if they were under the eye of one who had once been a gallant and distinguished commander. But, mindful of his monastic vows, Sigbert, surrounded by a well-armed host, refused to carry anything more than a stick, and when the heathen charged, both he and King Egric were killed and the army scattered" (L. Sherley-Price, trans., *A History of the English Church and People*, p. 171).

his *virgam* ("rod," predecessor of a scepter) is reminiscent of Martin's decision to go into battle armed only with the cross. There are no verbal correspondences, and the similarities may reflect not only Bede's reading of Sulpicius but also Sigebert's, who may, Stancliffe suggests, have been "inspired by St. Martin's boast."[23] Sigebert was a learned man himself, and if not directly imitating Martin's example, he certainly seems to have been motivated by a similar conception of the Christian message.

It is Bede's literary construct that is of central importance, however. Scholars disagree on two main points regarding his treatment of Sigebert and similar "monk-kings": some question whether they actually abdicated of their own free will, or were forced (like many of their Frankish counterparts and even some of their Anglo-Saxon peers) to take the tonsure against their will; others disagree on the tone Bede adopted toward kings who abdicated, some seeing praise in his words, others (like myself) veiled censure. These two points are actually part of a single problem: the accuracy of Bede's accounts. Although this dissertation is primarily concerned with how hagiographers presented soldier saints, and not with the accuracy of those representations, still a careful reading of the texts may shed light on the reality behind the literary representations. Rollason, in questioning Stancliffe's main assertion that the kings she analyzes "opted out," says: "Stancliffe ... recognizes the difficulty of proving that the withdrawals really were voluntary and attempts to prove it. Whether or not she carries conviction will depend on the reader's

[23] C. Stancliffe, "Kings Who Opted Out," 154, n. 1.

willingness to accept the ecclesiastical accounts at face value."[24] Rollason and others present cogent reasons to doubt Bede's accuracy in portraying them as voluntary abdications. Kirby implies that Sigebert was forced to resign when he argues that his "position was possibly insecure because he was only Eorpwald's maternal brother--that is, he was Raedwald's step-son--and before long he abdicated to enter a monastery, and Ecgric ruled alone."[25] Rollason says, "The difficulty is to determine whether they left their thrones voluntarily and out of piety or because they were forced to abdicate by their political enemies. On the face of it, the latter seems the most likely."[26] If one agrees with Wallace-Hadrill that "[f]or Bede ... [Sigebert] gains added merit by appearing in battle with 'nonnisi uirgam tantum'," and that Bede's account of Sigebert "illustrates Bede's indifference to the secular obligations of kingship," then the entire claim that he and other kings resigned voluntarily may seem suspect, a pious fraud perpetrated by Bede or his sources.[27]

Others, however, have noted the lack of enthusiasm Bede shows for his "monk-kings." Thacker comments that although Bede recounts the stories of kings who laid down their scepters, "above all he held up admiration for those who, although they

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[24] D. W. Rollason, *Saints and Relics*, p. 124, n. 85.

[25] D. P. Kirby, *The Earliest English Kings*, p. 81.

[26] D. W. Rollason, *Saints and Relics*, p. 124.

[27] J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *Bede's 'Ecclesiastical History'*, pp. 111-12.

submitted to the teachings of the Church, retained their power and prospered."[28] Ridyard goes further. She feels that "Bede's reaction to rulers of this type was ambivalent," and that his account of Sigebert "provides some insight into the tensions created by kingly withdrawal from the world." She goes on to argue that Bede was not particularly enthusiastic about Sigebert's voluntary abdication: "Bede's praise of Sigebert is muted. He is not described as a saint, and there is at least a hint that the withdrawal so praised in...royal ladies was perhaps deemed inappropriate in a king--that Sigebert, although a good and religious man, was ultimately rather misguided."[29] Nor, according to Ridyard, is Sigebert the only king to inspire mixed feelings in Bede:

> Bede seems to have regarded with similar ambivalence the monastic aspirations of the East Saxon Sebbi. Such actions, he seems to suggest, although laudable, were not quite kingly: 'multi uisum et saepe dictum est, quia talis animi uirum episcopum magis quam regem ordinari deceret.' [30]

Bede does not state the sources of his knowledge of Sigebert, and it is possible that they were hagiographic, as his source for the death of Sebbi certainly was.[31] Advocates of

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[28] A. Thacker, "Bede's Ideal of Reform," p. 146.

[29] C. Stancliffe, "Kings Who Opted Out," p. 92.

[30] *HE* iv, 11: "[M]any people thought and often said that a man of such disposition should have been a bishop rather than a king" (223-24); C. Stancliffe, "Kings Who Opted Out," p. 92, n. 79.. Even Wallace-Hadrill, who generally regards Bede as encouraging the abandonment of secular duties, says in the case of Sebbi, "I infer that Bede was clear in his mind that a king whose behavior approximated to that of a bishop was not necessarily doing his job properly" (J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *Early Germanic Kingship*, p. 89).

[31] Bede identifies the source of his stories of Sebbi and St Aethelburg of Barking as "ipso libro de quo haec excerpsimus quisque legerit" (iv.10, 58). All of the events taken from "idem libellus" are hagiographic in nature.

Sigebert's sainthood might have presented a forced abdication as voluntary, but it is unlikely that Bede himself was responsible for any such misconstruction. His positioning of the tale after the accounts of Oswald and Oswine and his failure to present any evidence for a claim to sainthood belie an active role in promoting Sigebert's sanctity. Bede only presented one "holy king" as unequivocally a saint, and that was Oswald.[32] Sigebert is not so much a model of Anglo-Saxon sainthood as he is an example of the effect Sulpicius's Martinian model of sainthood had on Anglo-Saxon society. Although Ridyard argues that "Bede's account of Sigebert's unfortunate end makes it quite clear that not everybody had come to terms with the new religion and its social and political implications," the reverse is also true: it shows just how seriously some Anglo-Saxons took the new religion and its hagiographic tropes, with all the resultant disruptions to Anglo-Saxon social and political institutions.[33]

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[32] As Ridyard says, "In the figure of Oswald...Bede found a model of kingly sanctity which was more to his liking" (S. J. Ridyard, *The Royal Saints of Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 92).

[33] S. J. Ridyard, *The Royal Saints of Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 176.

III

The desire of many noblemen below the level of king to give up a life of warfare for one of sanctity would seem to pose fewer problems for Anglo-Saxon society, and here Bede shows less ambivalence. Among his greatest heroes are a number of men who laid down the sword for the prayerbook. In the opening chapter of his *Lives of the Abbots of Wearmouth and Jarrow*, he describes how Benedict Biscop gave up one way of life for another:

> Nobili quidem stirpe gentis Anglorum progenitus, sed non minori nobilitate mentis ad promerenda semper angelorum consortia suspensus. Denique cum esset minister Osvii regis et possessionem terrae suo gradui competentem illo donante perciperet, annos natus circiter viginti et quinque fastidivit possessionem caducam, ut adquirere posset aeternam: despexit militiam cum corruptibili donativo terrestrem, ut vero Regi militaret, regnum in superna civitate mereretur habere in perpetuum....[34]

[34] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. ii, p. 394. "He came of noble Angle lineage and his mind -- no less noble than his birth -- was constantly fixed on the life of Heaven. He was about twenty-five and one of King Oswiu's thanes when the king gave him possession of the amount of land due to his rank; when he put behind him the things that perish so that he might gain those that last forever, despising earthly warfare with its corruptible rewards so that he might fight for the true king and win his crown in the heavenly city" (J.F. Webb and D. H. Farmer, trans., *The Age of Bede*, p. 185). Quotations are from *Vita Sanctorum Abbatum*, in Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. ii, pp. 392-444; translated passages are from *Lives of the Abbots of Wearmouth and Jarrow*, in J.F. Webb and D. H. Farmer, trans., *The Age of Bede*, pp. 183-208; Farmer points out that this passage is heavily indebted to the prologue of the *Rule of St Benedict* (p. 185, n. 2).

Bede's use of the phrase *militiam cum corruptibili donativo terrestrem* appears to be a direct reference to Martin's rejection of Julian's donative, but it refers to an objective reality quite different from the pay given by the Caesar Julian to his soldiers before battle, as indicated by the phrase *possessionem terrae suo gradui competentem*.[35] Richard Abels reconstructs the relationships between a king and his thegns in place during the seventh and eighth centuries:

> In Bede's day, the following of a great noble was divided into his *geoguth* and his *duguth*. The former were young, unmarried warriors who, having as yet no land of their own, resided with their lord....When a retainer of this sort had proved himself to his lord's satisfaction, he received from him a suitable endowment, perhaps even the land that his father had held from the lord. This made him into a duguth....He ceased to dwell in his lord's household, although he still attended his councils; rather he lived upon the donative, married, raised a family, and maintained a household of his own. [36]

Benedict's decision to enter a monastery is therefore placed at that moment in his career (*possessionem terrae suo gradui competentem illo donante perciperet*) when he would

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[35] There is some disagreement among scholars about how directly Bede knew, and how extensively he used, Sulpicius's *Vita Sancti Martini*. Wallace-Hadrill says, "Bede is respectful to St Martin's memory, but one would not guess from his pages the immense influence of the saint's career on western Christianity" (J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *Bede's 'Ecclesiastical History'* p. 159), and he cites only a single verbal parallel to Sulpicius's work in the *Historia Ecclesiastica* (J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *Bede's 'Ecclesiastical History'* p. 72). On the other hand, Thacker sees a strong indebtedness by Bede to Sulpicius in the *Vita Cuthberti*, pointing out that "Sulpicius Severus's account of St Martin...supplied two lengthy passages, including the important *topos* of the saint maintaining his monastic and ascetic way of life without neglecting his episcopal post," and "that the parallel was conscious and deliberate is clear from a number of verbal and structural similarities between these episodes and comparable ones in the Sulpician *oeuvre*" (A. Thacker, "Bede's Ideal of Reform," pp. 136-37).

[36] R. P. Abels, *Lordship and Military Obligation*, p. 32.

move from *geoguth* to *duguth*, from member of the king's immediate retinue to part of the king's more extended body of followers. Bede identifies this as an appropriate moment for a thegn to undergo a transformation from secular to spiritual life.[37] Benedict would continue to serve Northumbria, but in a new way. In describing Benedict's change from soldier to monk, Bede thus places the cessation of earthly warfare within a series of oppositions (including the pairs "Anglorum" / "angelorum," "militiam cum corruptibili donativo terrestrem" / "vero Regi militaret," and "possessionem aeternam"/ "possessionem caducam"), and he goes on to identify many more things of the world Benedict was rejecting: home, kindred, country, marriage, and children.[38] Sulpicius did not present Martin's rejection of warfare as part of a more broad-based rejection of secularity, nor did he make extensive use of the martial metaphor in describing Martin's spiritual career. For Bede, the rejection of warfare was only one part of a more comprehensive rejection of the secular world in favor of the spiritual, and he did not link the trope of the rejection of earthly warfare to an unwillingness to serve as a warrior or to saintly behavior while still carrying arms as Sulpicius did. Bede used a different trope (albeit one that had its origins in Sulpicius's *Life of Martin*), since instead of a final

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[37] Note that Bede found it appropriate for a thegn to undergo spiritual transformation mid-career, but considered it inappropriate for King Sigebert to do the same.

[38] There may be direct echoes of Constantius's *Life of Saint Germanus* here: "He deserted the earthly militia to be enrolled in the heavenly; the pomps of this world were trodden underfoot; a lowly way of life was adopted, his wife was turned into a sister, his riches were distributed among the poor, and poverty became his ambition" (T. F. X. Noble and T. Head, ed., *Soldiers of Christ*, p. 80).

rejection of warfare which extended or completed the trope of the unwilling, saintly warrior, Bede presented a turning away from the secular in favor of the spiritual. The saint did not reject his former role but put it aside in choosing a new one, and through the use of martial metaphors, employed here by Bede and by Alcuin to Martin, the new life was made to represent not a rejection of the old life but its extension into a higher, spiritual plane. As I demonstrated in Chapter Two, Bede did not condemn earthly warfare, which he considered part of a saintly king's mission, but he espoused a transformation from earthly to spiritual struggle, at least for certain members of the thegnly class.

Although not his own creation, Bede used the trope of spiritual transformation extensively. He imparted to it a lasting effect on Anglo-Saxon literature (as evidenced by its appearance in Alcuin's and the VBJ homilist's images of Martin presented in Chapter One).[39] The trope was more than just a literary conceit, however; it accurately described a prominent approach to sanctity in Anglo-Saxon society. Bede articulated a shared concept, and in the process fostered the ideal it embodied. Although today it is easy to gloss over his words, they represented a challenge posed by the new religion to established institutions.

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[39] A thorough examination of all possible antecedents for this trope is beyond the scope of this study. As revealed in the notes above, one probable antecedent was Constantius of Lyon's *Life of Saint Germanus of Auxerre*.

IV

The call to abandon the battles and rewards of the flesh for those of the spirit seems to have taken England by storm. Benedict Biscop's cousin Eosterwine was among those who joined him in renouncing the weapons of the world: "Et quidem cum fuisset minister Ecgfridi regis, relictis semel negotiis secularibus, depositis armis, assumpta militia spirituali."[40] Nor did the new ideas appeal only to those who had already served society in secular careers; mature kings and experienced thegns weren't the only ones who were swept away by the desire to serve God. Athelings, youthful kings-to-be, followed the same path as a king like Sigebert, and young men of the thegnly class who had not yet served in a lord's *geoguth* followed Benedict's lead.

One interesting case concerns St. Cuthbert, the subject of two *vitae* by two hagiographers writing in close succession.[41] The first of them remains anonymous, but the second was Bede.[42] If we had only Bede's version of Cuthbert's life, there would be no

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[40] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. ii, p. 410. "[W]hen he ... turned his back once and for all on the life of the world and ... ceased to be King Egfrid's thane by laying down his arms and girding himself for spiritual warfare" (J.F. Webb and D. H. Farmer, trans., *The Age of Bede*, p. 192).

[41] B. Colgrave, ed. and trans., *Two Lives of St. Cuthbert*.

[42] Bede's reasons for creating his own *Life of St Cuthbert* when a relatively reliable recent work was already available are obscure. Rollason points out subtle differences between

reason to include the sainted bishop among the group of former soldiers. However, the anonymous author, who was a monk in Cuthbert's monastery at Lindisfarne and provided much of the information Bede included in his later *vita*, reports that the saint had been a warrior before entering the religious life:

> Cetera uero opera floride pullulantia, silentio pretereo, ne fastidium lectori ingerem, anhelans perfecte aetatis pacatissimum fructum in uirtutibus Christi sub seruitio Dei singulariter intimare. Omitto namque quomodo in castris contra hostem cum exercitu sedens, ibique habente stipendio paruo, tamen omne spatium habundanter uiuens diuinae auctus est sicut Danihel et tres pueri cibo regali non contenti, seruili tamen et eo paruissimo mire saginti sunt. [43]

Bede does not mention any time Cuthbert spent in arms during his youth, and this brief passage seems to suggest a possible reason. The phrase "ne fastidium lectori ingerem" could be taken to imply a contrast between the "opera floride pullulantia" and the "aetatis pacatissimum fructum": might the miracles which took place while Cuthbert was a soldier, "in castris contra hostem cum exercitu sedens," be potentially distasteful to those looking forward to and expecting to hear about the miracles of his peaceful life as a monk? Bede never recounts any warlike actions by the group of former soldiers he describes

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the two works in regard to the question of Celtic versus Roman practices (D. W. Rollason, "Hagiography and Politics," p. 100-01).

[43] "The rest of the abundant works of the flower of his youth, I pass over in silence, lest I should engender a distaste in the reader, for I am eager to describe, one by one, the peaceable fruits of his maturity, manifesting the power of Christ in the service of God. I omit, therefore, how when dwelling in camp with the army, in the face of the enemy, and having only meager rations, he yet lived abundantly at the time and was strengthened by divine aid, just as Daniel and the three children, refusing the royal food, flourished wonderfully on slaves' food and that, too, very small in amount" (B. Colgrave, ed. and trans., *Two Lives of St. Cuthbert*, 72-73).

entering monastic life. Given the Sulpician model of Martin, in which the period of time the saint spent in the army included no mention of actual participation in warfare, it seems likely that the anonymous monk of Lindisfarne downplayed, and Bede subsequently eliminated, miracles that took place while Cuthbert was involved in combat. Certainly the issue of the spiritual transformation of warriors into monks or other religious was a potentially touchy one.

In some cases, the desire to undergo spiritual transformation did have a destabilizing effect on Anglo-Saxon society. The allure of the higher, spiritual struggle encouraged Alchfrid, the son of King Oswiu, to abandon his responsibilities to king, country and father, and to ask Benedict Biscop to accompany him on a trip to Rome.

> Quo tempore Alchfridus supradicti regis Osvii filius et ipse propter adoranda apostolorum limina Romam venire disponens, comitem eum eiusdem itineris accepit. Quem cum pater suus ab intentione memorati itineris revocaret, atque in patria ac regno suo faceret residere.... [44]

The conflict between secular and spiritual duty ended Alchfrid's pilgrimage to Rome before it began, providing further evidence that the concept of renunciation of the world was not accepted by and for everyone. Kirby goes so far as to say that "the differences on ecclesiastical matters between father and son ...probably reflected a crisis of serious dimensions." Alchfrid never did become king, and Kirby goes on to conjecture:

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[44] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. ii, pp. 394-96. "Then Alchfrid, King Oswiu's son, determined to make the journey to Rome to worship at the tombs of the apostles and decided to take Benedict with him. But Alchfrid's visit was countermanded by his father who made him stay at home in his own country and kingdom" (J.F. Webb and D. H. Farmer, trans., *The Age of Bede*, p. 187).

> The conclusion might have been that [he] abdicated in a voluntary acceptance of the religious life were it not for Bede's silence on the matter and his statement that Oswiu was attacked in the course of his reign...by his own son, Ealhfrith (*HE* iii.14). There is a possibility, therefore, that Ealhfrith lost his life in a rebellion against his father.[45]

The exact relationship between the son's youthful desire to experience spiritual transformation and his eventual rebellion against his father cannot be determined from existing records, but it is possible that arguments about the appropriateness of such a change of status seem to have played a disruptive role in familial and social relations.

Oswiu followed a less disruptive approach when he considered making the pilgrimage to Rome himself in the last year of his long reign: "Qui in tantum eo tempore tenebatur amore Romanae et apostolicae institutionis, ut si ab infirmitate salvaretur, etiam Romam venire, ibique ad loca sancta vitam finire disponeret."[46] An old king might renounce his throne at the end of his life, but a young man often had no such leeway.

In some instances, individuals persisted in pursuing the change from secular to spiritual struggle despite considerable opposition. There is the example of King Sebbi, whose wife opposed his plans to abdicate until he was too old and sick to continue in his secular responsibilities; in the end he underwent spiritual transformation and came to be regarded as a saint.[47] One young man, Offa, King of the East Saxons, succeeded in

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[45] D. P. Kirby, *The Earliest English Kings*, p. 103.

[46] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. ii, pp. 32-34. "At this time the King held the apostolic Roman see in such high esteem that, had he recovered from his illness, it was his intention to travel to Rome and end his life among the holy place" (L. Sherley-Price, trans., *A History of the English Church and People*, p. 214).

[47] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. ii, pp. 60-66.

following Sigebert's lead and abandoned his kingdom for the monastic life while still quite young; this was in 709, and Bede expresses the regrets of the East Saxons at the latter's decision to abandon "uxorem, agros, cognatos, et patriam propter Christum, et propter Evangelium," saying he was "iuvenis amantissimae aetatis et venustatis, totaeque suae genti ad tenenda servandaque regni sceptra exoptatissimus."[48] Bede holds back from direct condemnation of Offa's decision, but reports with clarity and understanding the regrets others expressed openly.

Spiritual transformation could also serve as a kind of relief valve for tensions built up in society. Some laymen chose the monastic life to avoid problems caused by service under an unjust or tyrannical lord, while others seem to have been forced to retire because of such conflicts. In the poem *De Abbatibus*, Æthelwulf portrays King Osred I of Northumbria as a tyrannical ruler: "hic igitur multos miseranda morte peremit,/ ast alios cogit summo seruire parenti,/ inque monasterii attonsos consistere septis."[49] Ealdorman Eanmund, Æthelwulf's protagonist, is numbered among those whom he "forced ... to serve their parent above, and to live in monastic enclosures after receiving tonsure."[50]

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[48] Bede. *Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. ii, p. 298. "[W]ife, lands, family, and country for the sake of Christ and his Gospel ... a very handsome and lovable young man who the entire nation greatly hoped would inherit and uphold the sceptre of the kingdom" (L. Sherley-Price, trans., *A History of the English Church and People*, p. 305).

[49] Quotations and translations are from Æthelwulf, *De Abbatibus*. "Being a man of this type, he destroyed many by a pitiable death, but forced others to serve their parent above, and to live in monastic enclosures after receiving tonsure" (Æthelwulf, *De Abbatibus*, pp. 6-7).

[50] Æthelwulf, *De Abbatibus*, p. 6.

ex his ergo fuit uenerandus nomine pastor
Eanmund....
nobilis hic nimium, proceri de sanguinis ortu,
exstitit, in populis summo celebratus honore.
....
militiam sterilem magno deuotus amore
deseruit, famulans cuncte per tempora uitae
rectori magno, moderat qui secula cuncta. [51]

Æthelwulf completes the trope of spiritual transformation by judicious use of martial metaphors in his description of Eanmund's life in the monastery. He calls him "miles" and uses warrior imagery when describing how others followed his example: "Anglorum proceres nimium trucidante tyranno/ ....nec solus meruit parmam captasse supernam,/ quin plures lecti patrem comitantur eundem,/ inque monasterio domino se subdere temptant."[52] This poem, written between 803 and 821, shows that the trope of spiritual transformation continued to be used into the next century, and that the conflict between secular and spiritual duties, and more specifically between earthly warfare and the life of spiritual struggle, was not merely a literary trope, but a social and political whirlwind shaking up Anglo-Saxon society.

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[51] "Now one of these was Eanmund, a pastor revered in reputation....He was very noble, springing from the blood of chieftains, and was extolled with high honour among the people.... Dedicating himself with great love, he left his fruitless military career, and served through his entire life-time the great ruler, who controls the universe" (Æthelwulf, *De Abbatibus*, pp. 6-7).

[52] Æthelwulf, *De Abbatibus*, pp. 7, 9.

V

As Æthelwulf's poem demonstrates, Bede was not the only writer to employ the trope of spiritual transformation, nor did all those whom writers described as abandoning their secular posts do so willingly or out of a desire to serve God. We have an exceptionally large number of literary accounts of King Cadwalla of Wessex, who abdicated after only two years in office; these include sections of the *Vita Sancti Wilfridi, Episcopi Eboracencis* of Eddius Stephanus; a poem by Aldhelm, "In Ecclesia Mariae a Bugge Exstructa"; a Latin tomb inscription recorded by Bede and others; Bede's own account of Cadwalla's career (as well as the Old English translation of the *Historia Ecclesiastica*); and the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. Although Cadwalla was never venerated as a saint, his death in Rome following a hazardous journey is an excellent example of the Anglo-Saxon tradition of pilgrimage as a form of spiritual transformation, and the details of his life preserved in these disparate works of literature provide a rare opportunity to see the various ways authors could handle the pull between secular responsibilities and spiritual concerns, between warfare and kingship on the one hand and on the other the renunciation of the world through the new heroism of spiritual struggle. Patrick Wormald uses Cadwalla as an example of kings who followed a peaceful route to transcend their secular responsibilities:

> That the spread of Christianity has not spread 'peace on earth' is a truism. Some kings went [that] way, among them Cædwalla, the ferocious conqueror of Wight who abdicated to go on pilgrimage to Rome (*HE* V.7); but not many. [53]

One might ask how many kings would have needed to abandon their secular responsibilities in favor of a spiritual transformation for Wormald to call them "many." Certainly Cadwalla is one well-documented example of a much larger group, as Clare Stancliffe has clearly shown.[54] Yet from the diverse and often contradictory accounts of Cadwalla's life can be pieced together a possible variation on the trope of spiritual transformation: the king who may have abdicated not out of personal religious zeal, extending a righteous secular career into a new and higher realm, but in expiation of a lifetime of sins.

Before examining the various accounts of Cadwalla's life, however, we should look closely at the earliest source for Cadwalla's career, Eddius Stephanus's *Life of Bishop Wilfrid*.[55] This eighth-century *vita* of a controversial bishop was probably written before 720, by an otherwise unknown priest usually identified as a certain "Aeddi cognomen Stephanus" mentioned by Bede as the first "cantandi magister Nordanhymbrorum ecclesiis...invitatus de Cantia a reverentissimo viro Vilfrido." [56]

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[53] P. Wormald, "Anglo-Saxon Society and Its Literature," p. 7.

[54] C. Stancliffe, "Kings Who Opted Out."

[55] Eddius Stephanus, *The Life of Bishop Wilfrid*; all quotations and translations are from this edition, except as indicated.

[56] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. 2, p. 12. "Eddi, known as Stephan ... singing-master in the Northumbrian churches ... invited from Kent by the most reverend Wilfrid"

Wilfrid himself is relevant to a discussion of spiritual conversion since Eddius in his second chapter shows the future bishop setting out from his father's house like a typical youth of the warrior aristocracy, armed and escorted by loyal retainers:

> Postremo tamen quarto decimo anno in corde suo cogitabat paterna rura deserere, iura celestia quaerere. Privigna enim sibi, matre sua mortua, molesta et immitis erat; tamen arma et equos vestimentaque sibi et pueris eius adeptus est, in quibus ante regalibus conspectibus apte stare posset. [57]

Wilfrid left home in the manner of a young warrior but his goal, according to Eddius, was already to pursue a spiritual calling (*iura celestia quaerere*), so he cannot be said to have undergone a spiritual conversion. Instead, he continued to exhibit many aspects of his youthful martial role even after becoming a bishop, engaging in feuds with kings and his fellow clerics and involving himself in numerous political struggles.[58] The secular and the spiritual are not fully separated in the *Life of Wilfrid*.

Wilfrid even engaged pagans in a pitched battle, although he did not himself join the fighting. Eddius's account of that conflict illustrates the overlapping of the spiritual and martial spheres in Wilfrid's life. Still only a man of thirty, Wilfrid had already been

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(L. Sherley-Price, trans., *A History of the English Church and People*, 206). D. P. Kirby, "Bede, Eddius Stephanus and the 'Life of Wilfrid'."

[57] "At last, however, when fourteen years of age, he meditated in his heart leaving his father's fields to seek the Kingdom of Heaven. For his step-mother (his own mother being dead) was harsh and cruel; but he obtained arms and horses and garments for himself and his servants in which he could fitly stand before the royal presence" (Eddius Stephanus, *The Life of Bishop Wilfrid*, pp. 6-7).

[58] Eddius seems to be following the example of Constantius of Lyon in his *Life of Saint Germanus* (in which the saint leads battles after becoming a bishop); yet Germanus wins bloodless victories. while Wilfrid directs actual physical combat.

ordained a priest, had been made abbot of the monastery of Ripon, had scored a momentous victory for the Roman Church at the Synod of Whitby, and had consequently been elected Bishop of York. Returning from Gaul, where he had been consecrated, to England, Wilfrid and his men, "sicut discipulis Iesu in mare Galileae," encounter a violent storm.[59] It tosses them up on the shore, "in regionem Australium Saxonum, quam non noverant," where a band of pagans who wish to loot the ship and to dispatch its occupants attacks them: "Gentiles autem cum ingenti exercitu venientes, navem arripere, praedam sibi pecuniae dividere, captivos subiugatos deducere resistentesque gladio occidere incunctanter proposuerunt."[60] Evidently uninterested in the path of martyrdom, Wilfrid, tries first to bargain with them, but they refuse to let Wilfrid and his companions go free: "[q]uibus sanctus pontifex noster copiosam pecuniam promittens, animas redimere cupiens

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[59] "[J]ust as ... the disciples of Jesus on the sea of Galilee" (Eddius Stephanus, *The Life of Bishop Wilfrid*, p. 27). The followers of Wilfrid in this scene remain unidentified, but subsequent events make clear that they are not all, or even primarily, clerics. Abels points out that Eddius described Wilfrid's followers when he set out from home as *pueri*, a term which "implies their humble origin," but could also be used to "connote a military retainer," and that he "referred to Wilfrid's later 'regal' following as his *sodales*, 'companions,' rather than as his pueri" (R. P. Abels, *Lordship and Military Obligation*, pp. 26-27). The implication seems to be that Wilfrid as bishop acted like a lord accompanied by *þegns*. Evidence for later bishops' military role is extensive (R. P. Abels, *Lordship and Military Obligation*, pp. 153, 156, 180-83; see also T. Powell, "Clerical Involvement in Warfare"; T. Powell, "The 'Three Orders' of Society."

[60] "[O]n to the land of the South Saxons which they did not know .... Forthwith a huge army of pagans arrived intending to seize the ship, divide the money as booty for themselves, carry off the captives whom they vanquished and incontinently put to the sword all who resisted them" (Eddius Stephanus, *The Life of Bishop Wilfrid*, pp. 26-27).

leniter pacificesque loquebatur."[61] Eddius uses biblical images to typify the opposing groups: the band of raiders is like the Egyptians, "feroces et indurato corde cum Pharaone," and Wilfrid and his companions are the "populum Dei."[62] The shift Eddius makes from a New Testament allusion to Christ on the sea of Galilee to the story of the Israelites' flight from Egypt reflects his need to place Wilfrid's martial spirit in the most compatible biblical context: the warlike actions of Wilfrid and his followers would not fare well in an extended comparison with Christ and the apostles. Eddius instead laces the description of the fight with Old Testament imagery, as he couches the struggle in terms of a miraculous victory of God's anointed against the pagans.

> Stans quoque princeps sacerdotum idolatriae coram paganis in tumulo excelso, sicut Balaam, maledicere populum Dei et suis magicis artibus manus eorum alligare nitebatur. Tunc vero unus ex sodalibus pontificis nostri lapidem ab omni populo Dei benedictum more Davidico de funda emittens, fronte perforata usque ad cerebrum magi exprobrantis illisit; quem, retrorsum exanimato cadavere cadente, sicut Goliad in harenosis locis mors incerta praevenit. [63]

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[61] "The holy bishop spoke to them soothingly and peaceably, and sought to purchase the lives of his companions by the promise of a large sum of money" (Eddius Stephanus, *The Life of Bishop Wilfrid*, pp. 26-27).

[62] "[F]ierce, and, hardening their hearts like Pharoah," "the people of God" (Eddius Stephanus, *The Life of Bishop Wilfrid*, pp. 26-27).

[63] "The chief priest of their idolatrous worship also took up his stand in front of the pagans, on a high mound, and like Balaam, attempted to curse the people of God, and to bind their hands by means of his magical arts. Thereupon one of the companions of our bishop took a stone which had been blessed by all the people of God and hurled it from his sling after the manner of David. It pierced the wizard's forehead and penetrated to his brain as he stood cursing; death took him unawares as it did Goliath, and his lifeless body fell backwards on to the sand" (Eddius Stephanus, *The Life of Bishop Wilfrid*, pp. 28-29).

The rock sent crashing through the skull of the "princeps sacerdotum idolatriae" brought on a major battle.

> Ad bellum ergo se prae parantes pagani, aciem frustra in populum Dei direxerunt. Dominus enim pro paucis pugnavit; sicut iam Gedeon Domini iussi cum CCC viris bellatorum Madianitum CXX milia uno impetu occidit, ita et isti sodales sancti pontificis nostri bene armati, viriles animo, pauci numero--erant enim CXX viri in numero Mosaicae aetatis--inito consilio et pacto, ut nullus ab alio in fugam terga verteret, sed aut mortem cum laude aut vitam cum triumpho, quod Deo utrumque facile est, habere mererentur. [64]

The size of Wilfrid's band indicates that the bishop traveled with a significant body of retainers. In the following passages, which describe the Christians' victory, Eddius also mentions a group of clergy ("cum clero suo") who pray for victory alongside Wilfrid, indicating that this is not a case of clerical vow-breaking; the hundred and twenty men fighting the South Saxons must have been military retainers traveling with the bishop (although some might have belonged to the ship's crew and not Wilfrid's entourage). Their victory comes "strage non modica," involves turning back three successive attacks (that cause only five deaths on the Christian side), and culminates in a miraculous return of the tide that refloats their ship.[65] Eddius thus makes ample use of the tropes of the evil

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[64] "The pagans then got ready for battle, but in vain did they draw up their array against the people of God. For the Lord fought for the few, even as when Gideon with his 300 warriors at the bidding of the Lord slew 120,000 Midianite warriors at one onslaught. In the same way these companions of our holy bishop being well-armed and brave in heart though but few in number (there were 120 of them, equal in number to the years of the age of Moses), formed a plan and made a compact that none should turn his back upon another in flight, but that they would either win death with honour or life with victory, God being able with equal ease to bring either event to pass" (Eddius Stephanus, *The Life of Bishop Wilfrid*, pp. 28-29).

[65] "[W]ith no little slaughter" (Eddius Stephanus, *The Life of Bishop Wilfrid*, pp. 28-29).

and merciless pagan enemy and God-granted victory in battle, two of the major tropes of the cult of martyred warrior-kings. Wilfrid himself did not fight in the battle, but he led it, and Eddius appropriated it as the saintly bishop's victory.

Wilfrid thus combines the traits of secular lordship and sanctity, and in this combination he is not alone. In a study of the *Life of Wilfrid,* William Trent Foley discusses the interconnectedness of the secular and spiritual realms in Wilfrid's world.[66] Foley argues against those who emphasize "Wilfrid's likeness to a Germanic warrior-hero,"[67] but he himself points out that "although Stephen's *Life* is a work written by a monk and almost certainly for monks, it refuses to exalt the monastic life as the exclusive path toward virtue. In its modest way it displays the Christ type to its monastic audience more in the form of obedient kings like...Caedwalla [and others] than in the form of virtuous monks." [68] Foley stresses the religious and spiritual nature of Eddius's book and of Wilfrid, but Charles W. Jones probably speaks more for the majority of scholars when he states that "Eddius...chose an unusual subject for hagiography." [69] He argues that, "[d]espite the clouded evidence, some traits of Wilfrid are clear enough. All parties stand agreed that his life was devoted in good share to acquiring material gains, that his missionary days were largely spent in royal palaces, and that more stone than soul

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[66] W. T. Foley, *Images of Sanctity*.

[67] W. T. Foley, *Images of Sanctity*, p. 22, n. 1.

[68] W. T. Foley, *Images of Sanctity*, p. 70.

[69] C. W. Jones, *Saints' Lives and Chronicles*, p. 70.

remained behind him."[70] In Eddius's work, "persons of high temporal status [also] bear the marks of human fallennesss most dramatically," but just as Wilfrid appears as an idealized portrait of a bishop, Cadwalla becomes one of only two or three examples "of the good, obedient king."[71] To Eddius Stephanus, Wilfrid is a lordly bishop, and Cadwalla is a virtuous, almost saintly king.

From this unabashedly partisan book aspects of Cadwalla's life before his pilgrimage, including his rise to power as King of Wessex, can be pieced together (although the writer's purpose was not to inform his readers about the king but to make use of him to glorify Wilfrid). Eddius devoted a whole chapter to the subject, "De Ceadwalla rege facto."[72] In it Cadwalla appears first as an outcast, "quidam exul nobili genere de desertis Ciltine et Ondred nomine Cedwalla," in a version of the trope of an exiled prince's providential preservation through adversity that we have seen employed extensively by both the Whitby Anonymous and Bede.[73] Like Edwin and Oswald,

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[70] C. W. Jones, *Saints' Lives and Chronicles*, p. 70.

[71] W. T. Foley, *Images of Sanctity*, pp. 114-15.

[72] Eddius Stephanus, *The Life of Bishop Wilfrid*, p. 84.

[73] The trope of the young king's preservation through a time of earthly adversity before attaining the crown may be an example of a hagiographic commonplace that develops less by literary imitation than by various authors handling similar events in similar ways. Given the appearance of the trope in multiple texts of uncertain date but written within the same half century, any attempt to identify a genetic relationship among them seems problematic if not futile. It is just as likely that Eddius Stephanus, Bede, the Whitby Anonymous, and Felix (author of the *Vita Sancti Guthlaci*, for which see Chapter Four below) all encountered subjects who had come through periods of adversity before finally achieving a throne because of the material conditions of succession in seventh and eighth-century England, and each independently decided that such a process reflected divine approval, as

Cadwalla comes to power against all odds, presumably through divine intervention. In this instance, however, the exile's success is not linked to God-granted victory in battle but to the wise leadership and guidance of Bishop Wilfrid:

> Sancti parentis nostri amicitiam diligenter poscens, ut ei esset in doctrina et auxilio pater fidelis et ille ei filius oboediens, voto vovens promisit; quo pacto inito, teste Deo, veraciter compleverunt. Nam sanctus antistes Christi in nonnullis auxiliis et adiumentis saepe anxiatum exulem adiuvavit et confirmavit, usquedum corroboratus, spernens inimicos, regnum adeptus est. [74]

God does not directly grant victory to Cadwalla, but merely attests the paternal bond between the young exile and Wilfrid. Wilfrid's help is practical and concrete, not miraculous, and with his aid Cadwalla defeats his enemies and gains the throne. Eddius makes clear that his rise to power depended on force, "occisis et superatis inimicis eius," but he mentions the conflicts only in passing.[75] In this case, Eddius could not use the tropes of God-granted victory in battle against an evil and merciless pagan enemy, because the enemies Cadwalla defeated to obtain the throne included a number of

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that they borrowed the idea as a literary trope from each other. In other words, the trope is more a common way of thinking about a recurring situation than a literary device.

[74] "He earnestly asked for the friendship of our holy father, praying Wilfrid to be his true father, to teach and help him, while he, on his side, promised him with a vow that he would be an obedient son. This compact, which they undertook with God as their witness, was faithfully fulfilled. For the holy bishop of Christ helped the exile, who was often in difficulties, assisting and supporting him in various ways, and strengthened him until he was powerful enough to overcome his enemies and to get the kingdom" (Eddius Stephanus, *The Life of Bishop Wilfrid*, pp. 84-85).

[75] "[A]fter slaying or subduing his foes" (Eddius Stephanus, *The Life of Bishop Wilfrid*, pp. 84-85), or, more accurately, "his foes having been slain or subdued." The passive construction avoids the placing of responsibility: were they defeated by divine agency or Cadwalla's own action?

Christians, and, more significantly, because Cadwalla himself appears to have remained a pagan even after gaining the throne. Kirby describes him at this stage in his career as "in his mid-twenties in 685, still a pagan and the leader of what was evidently a powerful fighting force....[t]he single most dynamic individual in southern England,...who both frustrated southern Saxon expansion and furthered the creation of a new overkingship of the western Saxons which was the foundation of the West Saxon kingdom of King Ine"[76] From Eddius we learn nothing of his forays into the south Saxon realm (except for the shipwreck and battle quoted earlier). Eddius even passes by his overthrow of the Christian king Æthelwalh, although in the previous chapter Eddius told how Wilfrid himself had fled "ad illos paganos Australios Saxones" and had converted and formed a pact of friendship with Æthelwalh.[77] Wilfrid's pre-existing relations with Æthelwalh raise questions about the propriety of the pact the exiled bishop subsequently made with the exiled prince:

> Invento itaque rege eorum, cuius nomen erat Aethelwalch, totius exilii sui austeritatem per ordinem enarravit. Cui statim rex sub foedere pacis talem amicitiam promisit, ut nullus inimicorum eius aut minaci hostis gladio belligerantis sibi terrorem incuteret aut munerum et donorum magnitudine pactum initum foederis secum irritaret. [78]

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[76] D. P. Kirby, *The Earliest English Kings*, p. 119.

[77] Eddius Stephanus, *The Life of Bishop Wilfrid*, p. 82.

[78] "When he had found their king, whose name was Aethilwalh, he told him the whole story of his sufferings and exile. Forthwith the king made a treaty of peace with him and promised such friendship that none of his enemies should strike terror into him by the sword of any warlike foe, or make void the treaty thus inaugurated between them by the offer of rewards and gifts, however great" (Eddius Stephanus, *The Life of Bishop Wilfrid*, pp. 82-83).

Wilfrid's decision to support Cadwalla despite the bishop's close relationship with Cadwalla's Christian enemy remains, at best, questionable. Kirby excuses Wilfrid's role, saying, "It is not necessary to suppose that Wilfrid behaved treacherously to Aethelwealh in associating with Caedwalla; the warfare between the two was probably outside his control."[79] Others are less sanguine. Colgrave says, "Wilfrid, perhaps unwittingly, was laying up trouble for his friend Aethilwalh, for Ceadwalla gathered round him a crowd of adventurers and outcasts, and slew Wilfrid's friend, gaining therefore [briefly] the throne of Sussex," and later he notes that "it is clear from Bede that Wilfrid's spiritual son [Cadwalla] was not only the murderer of Wilfrid's own patron, but not even a Christian."[80] Eddius either consciously avoided mentioning the defeat of Aethelwealh, or his primary sources had already done the censoring for him.

Whatever Wilfrid's role in this sordid story was, certainly Cadwalla emerges from the historical record as the antithesis of Oswald, resembling more closely his namesake, the Welsh king Cadwallon, or the ravaging Penda than the victorious royal saint. Eddius applies a pious veneer to cover the apparently rapacious actions of the young exile. The final lines of the chapter summarize Cadwalla's reign in glowing terms: "regnum suum, aut acie gladii victor aut foedere indultor pacis, illaesum audaci animo tuebatur."[81] Just as

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[79] D. P. Kirby, *The Earliest English Kings*, p. 120.

[80] Eddius Stephanus, *The Life of Bishop Wilfrid*, pp. 176-77.

[81] Eddius Stephanus, *The Life of Bishop Wilfrid*, p. 84.

he easily joined warfare and sanctity in portraying Wilfrid, Eddius combines war and peace without any evident tension in his description of Cadwalla's reign.

Aldhelm is another early writer who glosses over any potentially damning aspects of Cadwalla's career. His poem "In Ecclesia Mariae a Bugge Exstructa" records the story of Cadwalla's renunciation of his kingship and journey to Rome in strictly heroic terms.

> Post hunc successit bello famosus et armis
> Rex Cadvvalla, potens regni possessor et heres;
> Sed mox imperium mundi sceptrumque relinquens
> Turgida cum ratibus sulcabat caeula curvis
> Et maris aequoreos lustrabat remige campos.
> Algida ventosis crepitabant carbasa flabris,
> Donec barca rudi pulsabat litora rostro;
> Exin nimbosas transcendit passibus Alpes
> Aggeribus niveis et montis vertice saeptas. [82]

Aldhelm extols Cadwalla's fame and warlike virtues, which are corroborated by the historical record and the wealth of literary materials extant on his life, and also the legitimacy of his rule, about which we are less well informed. Through use of the verb form *successit*, Aldhelm implies, although he does not directly assert, that Cadwalla came to the throne in a peaceful transfer of power from Centwine, his predecessor. More significant is Aldhelm's inclusion of Cadwalla at all in a poem dedicated to Bugga,

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[82] "In Ecclesia Mariae a Bugge Exstructa," in Aldhelm, *Aldhelmi Opera*, pp. 14-18, at p. 15. "After him King Cædwalla, renowned in war and arms, succeeded to the kingdom, a powerful occupant of the throne and its rightful heir. But, abandoning soon afterwards the sceptre and government of this world, he furrowed the swelling waters [*scil.* of the English Channel] with the curved heel (of his boat) and traversed the briny expanses of the sea by oar. The frozen sails crackled in the windy blasts until the ship touched the shore with its untried prow; thereafter he crossed on foot the stormy Alps, closed in by massed glaciers and mountain peaks" (M. Lapidge and J. L. Rosier, trans., *Aldhelm: The Poetic Works*, p. 48).

explicitly identified as "Centvvini filia regis."[83] Stancliffe finds, after a careful assessment of this and other evidence, that Centwine probably was among those kings who abdicated willingly.[84] Eddius undercuts this argument somewhat, as we have seen, when he reports Cadwalla's advancement to kingship, "spernens inimicos" and "occisis et superatis inimicis eius." However, the evidence (although somewhat obscure) appears to indicate that before Cadwalla's ascendancy, the West Saxons were ruled by "a multiplicity of kings," a situation that seems to have ended either with Centwine or Cadwalla.[85] If indeed Cadwalla had more than one West Saxon king to contend against, he could easily have come to the throne after considerable bloodshed without having directly fought against the monk-king Centwine, whom Aldhelm treats as holy and who may have been poem regarded as a saint:

> Inde petit superas meritis splendentibus acres
> Angelicis turmis ad caeli culmina ductus;
> Caelicolis iunctus laetatur sorte superna.[86]

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[83] Aldhelm, *Aldhelmi Opera*, p. 14. Lapidge and Rosier present the brief outlines of an argument that Aldhelm himself might have been the brother of Bugga, and therefore a son of Centwine (M. Lapidge and J. L. Rosier, trans., *Aldhelm: The Poetic Works*, pp. 40-41; 233, n. 10; 234, n. 12). Their argument, if correct, would virtually eliminate any possibility that Cadwalla came to power in opposition to Centwine.

[84] C. Stancliffe, "Kings Who Opted Out," pp. 154-55.

[85] D. P. Kirby, *The Earliest English Kings*, p. 49; see pp. 48-52 for the tangled relations of the early West Saxon kings.

[86] Aldhelm, *Aldhelmi Opera*, p. 15. "Thereafter he sought the heavenly citadels by virtue of his resplendent merits, and was led by angelic throngs to the summits of heaven; united with the [residents] of heaven he now rejoices in his celestial [destiny]" (M. Lapidge and J. L. Rosier, trans., *Aldhelm: The Poetic Works*, p. 48).

Aldhelm is known for his florid rhetoric, but the soul's accompaniment by angels to heaven and its immediate joining in with the celestial throngs were hagiographic commonplaces. Aldhelm's description of Cadwalla's entrance into Rome and his subsequent death is somewhat subdued in contrast:

> Cuius in adventu gaudet clementia Romae
> Et simul ecclesia laetatur clerus in urbe,
> Dum mergi meruit baptismi gurgite felix.
> Post albas igitur morbo correptus egrescit,
> Donec mortalis clausit spiracula vitae
> Alta supernorum conquirens regna polorum,
> Clarum stelligeri conscendens culmen Olimpi. [87]

Kirby speculates that Cadwalla was already ill when he began his journey, and that he "abdicated in the knowledge that his health was failing."[88] That he resigned in his prime, after only two or three years on the throne, makes him unusual, since, as we have seen, there was considerable societal pressure against such a move. Wallace-Hadrill feels that people "may well have considered that he deserted his post," although, as he points out, "Bede did not say so."[89] Certainly Aldhelm's heroic account gives no impression that Cadwalla's abdication and pilgrimage was in any way connected to the brutality of his life

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[87] Aldhelm, *Aldhelmi Opera*, p. 15. "The clemency of Rome [*scil.* the papacy] rejoiced in Cædwalla's arrival; and at the same time the clergy of the church in Rome rejoiced as the blessed man was found worthy to be immersed in the waters of baptism. Consumed with illness, then, he began to sicken after he had taken the baptismal chrisom, until at last he ceased to draw breath in this mortal life--seeking the lofty realms of the celestial kingdom, ascending to the shining summit of ... starry [Olympus]" (M. Lapidge and J. L. Rosier, trans., *Aldhelm: The Poetic Works*, p. 48).

[88] D. P. Kirby, *The Earliest English Kings*, p. 122.

[89] J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *Early Germanic Kingship*, p. 89.

or any desire to expiate sins. The hazardous trip and his welcome in Rome are presented as the culmination of, not in opposition to, his remarkable rise to power.

Cadwalla's tomb inscription, purportedly written by Benedict Crispus, Archbishop of Milan (681-725), was recorded by Bede in the *Historia Ecclesiastica* and by Paul the Deacon in his *Historia Langobardorum*. The short poem presents Cadwalla and his journey from the Roman perspective.[90] He is heroic, but the heroism comes less from his warrior past than from his decision to renounce the world.

> Culmen, opes, subolem, pollentia regna, triumphos,
> Exuvias, proceres, moenia, castra, lares;
> Quaeque patrum virtus, et quae congesserat ipse
> Caedual armipotens, liquit amore Dei,
> Ut Petrum, sedemque Petri rex cerneret hospes,
> Cuius fonte meras sumeret almus aquas.
> Splendificumque iubar radianti carperet haustu,
> Ex quo vivificus fulgor ubique fluit. [91]

Crispus's emphasis on the glory of Cadwalla's position provides a strong contrast with the former king's self-effacing renunciation. The opening lines resemble the list Bede applied to Offa's abdication ("uxorem, agros, cognatos, et patriam") in general outline, although not in specific detail. According to Wallace-Hadrill, G. H. Wheeler first raised the

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[90] See F. J. E. Raby, *History of Secular Latin Poetry*, vol. I, pp. 158-59; Paulus Diaconus, *Pauli Historia Langobardorum*, pp. 217-18.

[91] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. ii, p. 226. "High rank and wealth, offspring, and mighty realms,/ Triumph and spoils, great nobles, cities, halls,/ Won by his forbears' prowess and his own--/ All these great Cadwal left for love of God./ This royal pilgrim then sought Peter's Chair/ To slake his thirst at Peter's vital spring,/ And in his splendid, glowing light to bathe/ From whom life-giving radiance ever streams" (L. Sherley-Price, trans., *A History of the English Church and People*, p. 280).

possibility that Bede was using "a Roman Life of Cædwalla" in developing his account, although the idea seems not to have found much support.[92] Michael Lapidge and James L. Rosier also note "some striking verbal similarities between Bede's account of Cædwalla's baptism...and Aldhelm's," on the basis of which they hypothesize "that Bede and Aldhelm shared a common written source, now lost." [93] Such a source would not necessarily have been a Roman hagiographic text; in fact, it seems just as likely that an English follower of Cadwalla wrote an account of the king's pilgrimage and death.[94] As we will see later, Bede included a number of details about Cadwalla's life which are unlikely to have come from a hagiographic source.

Cadwalla's epitaph, for all its praise of his pilgrimage and baptism, presents him as a barbaric figure, and in the process presents the first suggestion that his journey involved a spiritual renewal.

> Percipiensque alacer redivivae praemia vitae,
> Barbaricam rabiem, nomen et inde suum
> Conversus convertit ovans; Petrumque vocari
> Sergius antistes iussit, ut ipse pater
> Fonte renascentis, quem Christi gratia purgans
> Protinus albatum vexit in arce poli. [95]

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[92] J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *Bede's 'Ecclesiastical History'*, p. 149; he refers to G. H. Wheeler, "The Genealogy of the Early West Saxon Kings," *EHR* 36 (1921), 161-71, at 164, n. 3.

[93] M. Lapidge and J. L. Rosier, trans., *Aldhelm: The Poetic Works*, p. 235, n. 20.

[94] Wallace-Hadrill also discusses the possibility that Cadwalla's and "[o]ther sepulchral inscriptions that Bede records" are "evidence that Bede may have had access to a corpus of Roman inscriptions" J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *Bede's 'Ecclesiastical History'*, pp. 51, 218.

The inscription indicates that Cadwalla did not just delay baptism (as, for example, Sulpicius describes Martin doing), but he underwent a conversion, an idea repeated in Paul the Deacon's brief account: "Cedoal rex Anglorum Saxonum, qui multa in sua patria bella gesserat, ad Christum conversus Romam properavit." [96] Wallace-Hadrill doubts that he had been pagan up until that point: "It is not known why his baptism had been delayed so long but it need not imply that he had ever been a practicing pagan. It does seem to be implied by the epitaph ... but the author may simply have been following convention."[97] Bede briefly confirms that Cadwalla became king while still unbaptized ("quamvis necdum regeneratus, ut ferunt, in Christo" [*HE* iv.16, 88], and the Old English translation of Bede repeats the claim: "þeah þe he ða gena in Criste ne wære eft acenned þurh fulwihtes bæð."[98] As discussed in Chapter Two, Bede ascribed Edwin's similar delay in converting to his wisdom and desire to know and do what was right. We can only conjecture about

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[95] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. ii, p. 226. "Eager to win the prize of life renewed,/ Converted, he converts his barbarous ways/ And then his name itself to Peter's own/ At father Sergius' word, that at the font/ Christ's grace may wash him from all taint of sin/ And bring him clothed in white to heaven's gate" (L. Sherley-Price, trans., *A History of the English Church and People*, p. 280).

[96] Paulus Diaconus, *Pauli Historia Langobardorum*, p. 217. "Cadwal king of the Anglo-Saxons, who in his country carried on many wars, converted to Christ hastened to Rome," translation my own.

[97] J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *Bede's 'Ecclesiastical History'*, pp. 178-79.

[98] *The Old English Version of Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, iv. 18, p. 307. The Old English translator usually adheres faithfully to the Latin; therefore, I have only cited the Old English translation in passages that differ substantively from the original, or in which it provides evidence for understanding the original.

Cadwalla's motives; however, it is not hard to imagine that a violent and powerful man like Cadwalla would have resisted (perhaps indefinitely) the more temperate and pacific aspects of Christianity, if he had remained healthy and strong into middle age and beyond, but it is easy to see such a man trying desperately to propitiate God if he was struck down with a deadly disease only three years into his reign.

Wallace-Hadrill may be right that Cadwalla no longer practiced traditional Germanic religious customs during his rise to power and his subjection of neighboring countries, but that does not rule out a sudden conversion. Although nominally a Christian, he might well have felt the need to undergo a radical transformation in the face of what seemed to be unmistakable signs of divine displeasure. His epitaph lauds his decision:

> Mira fides regis! clementia maxima Christi,
> Cuius consilium nullus adire potest!
> Sospes enim veniens supremo ex orbe Brittani,
> Per varias gentes, per freta, perque vias,
> Urbem Romuleam vidit, templumque verendum
> Aspexit, Petri mystica dona gerens.
> Candidus inter oves Christi sociabilis ibit:
> Corpore nam tumulum, mente superna tenet.
> Commutasse magis sceptrorum insignia credas,
> Quem regnum Christi promeruisse vides. [99]

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[99] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. ii, pp. 226-28. "Great was his faith; Christ's mercy greater still/ Whose secret purpose mortals may not know./ Safely he came from Britain's utmost shores,/ Through many peoples, over land and sea,/ Bearing his mystic gifts, to visit Rome/ And in the shrine of Peter lay them down./ Now, robed in white, he moves among Christ's sheep:/ His body lies entombed, his soul on high./ Wise king, his earthly sceptre to resign,/ And win from Christ in heaven His promised crown" (L. Sherley-Price, trans., *A History of the English Church and People*, p. 280).

The pilgrimage did nothing to lengthen his life or prolong his earthly rule, but as the inscription on his tomb indicates, his decision to undertake the trip to Rome (and perhaps to convert) before his death was viewed by those around him as a wise one. More than one of his successors chose to follow in his footsteps.

In his account of Cadwalla in the *Ecclesiastical History,* Bede breaks the pattern established by Eddius Stephanus, Aldhelm, and Crispus, presenting not a unified, rhetorically shaped image of Cadwalla, but instead supplying both positive and negative aspects of his life. From these contradictory materials, one can begin to reconstruct an image of Cadwalla as a man who may have been seeking absolution for a violent and bloodthirsty life through a dramatic spiritual transformation. Bede first mentions Cadwalla's rise to power in neutral terms: "devictis atque amotis subregulis, Caedualla suscepit imperium: et cum duobus annis hoc tenuisset, tandem superni regni amore compumctus reliquit...; ac Romam abiens, ibi vitam finivit, ut in sequentibus latius dicendum est."[100] Compare the phrase "devictis atque amotis subregulis," with its dry, almost technical terminology, to Eddius's more vivid "spernens inimicos" and "occisis et superatis inimicis eius." Bede neutralizes the violence involved in Cadwalla's rise to

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[100] Bede. *Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. ii, p. 66. "Cadwalla defeated and deposed [the] underkings and assumed control himself; but after a reign of two years, ... desire for the kingdom of heaven moved the king to resign his powers, and, as I shall record more fully later, he went away to end his days in Rome" (L. Sherley-Price, trans., *A History of the English Church and People*, p. 225). A better translation might be, "The underkings having been defeated and deposed, Cadwalla assumed control himself."

power by talking about it in bland, neutral terms, yet unlike other authors he presents information in other chapters that radically alters readers' perceptions of him.

In turning to the exiled prince's adventuring in Kent a few chapters later, Bede shifts from neutrality to condemnation. The chapter is headed, "Ut Caedualla rex Geuissorum, interfecto rege Aedilualch, provinciam illam saeva caede ac depopulatione attriverit." [101] The chapter elaborates fully on this grim image.

> Interea superveniens cum exercitu Caedualla, iuvenis strenuissimus de regio genere Geuissorum, cum exularet a patria sua, interfecit regem Aedilualch, ac provinciam illam saeva caede ac depopulatione attrivit; sed mox expulsus est a ducibus regis, Bercthuno et Andhuno, qui deinceps regnum provinciae tenuerunt: quorum prior postea ab eodem Caeduallan regnavit, simili provinciam illam adflictione plurimo annorum tempore mancipavit. [102]

Bede shifts his tone when he changes topic. Cadwalla's consolidation of power within a formerly disunited kingdom was good politics, and his reverence for Rome was also good religion. But when, as a young pagan exile from a neighboring realm, he killed a Christian

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[101] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. ii, p. 86. "King Cadwalla of the Gewissae kills King Ethelwalh and devastates his province with plundering and slaughter" (L. Sherley-Price, trans., *A History of the English Church and People*, p. 232).

[102] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. ii, p. 86. "Meanwhile Cadwalla, a daring young man of the royal house of the Gewissae, exiled from his own country, came with an army and killed King Ethelwalh, wasting the province with slaughtering and plunder. But the last king's ealdormen Berthun and Andhun soon drove him out, and administered the country from then on. The former was subsequently killed by Cadwalla when he had become king of the Gewissae, and the province was reduced to a worse state of subjection" (L. Sherley-Price, trans., *A History of the English Church and People*, p. 232).

king and devastated a formerly unified and increasingly Christian kingdom it was both bad politics and bad religion.

Scholars disagree about Bede's sources for this account, in part because he presents a more critical view of Cadwalla and a more sympathetic view of the plight of the South Saxons than Eddius did. Yet, as Wallace-Hadrill says, "However Bede obtained his information, he and Eddius had widely different interests"[103] Eddius used Cadwalla to glorify Wilfrid; Bede was reporting Cadwalla's role in the history of the English Church. Whatever he later became, at this stage in Cadwalla's career he was no model king, but rather an impediment to the process of conversion. Bede condemned harshly the ravaging of a kingdom recently converted to Christianity in his account of Edwin's defeat by the earlier Cadwallon, he criticized Oswiu's annexation of Deira and murder of Oswine, and he censured the West Saxon king as well.

As in the case of Sigebert, the context in which Bede placed information about Cadwalla is important. He juxtaposed his account of Cadwalla's rapacious behavior among the South Saxons and a miracle of healing in a Sussex monastery performed on St. Oswald's day and involving a vision of the martyred warrior-king, placing the miracle involving the Northumbrian saint between his introduction of Cadwalla and the description of his ravaging of the South Saxons.[104] Thus the reader learns that, on account of the

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[103] J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *Bede's 'Ecclesiastical History'*, p. 155.

[104] There is convincing evidence that Bede added the account of the Sussex miracle in a final revision of the *Historia Ecclesiastica*. See J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *Bede's 'Ecclesiastical History'*, pp. 153-54. The material is missing in *The Old English Version of Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People.*

miracle, Oswald began to be honored there: "ex eo tempore non solum in eodem monasterio, sed et in plerisque lociis aliis, coepit annuatim eiusdem regis ac militis Chisti natalitius dies missarum celebratione venerari."[105] Then Bede describes how Cadwalla devastated that same region. Bede also includes, immediately after the introduction of Cadwalla (and before the chapter on his attacks in Sussex), another tale of a king behaving heinously who was otherwise regarded as quite devout and even considered a saint in some circles: "Anno autem Dominicae incarnationis sexcentisimo septuagesimo sexto, cum Aedilred rex Merciorum, adducto maligno exercitu, Cantiam vastaret, et ecclesias ac monasteria sine respectu pietatis vel divini timoris foedaret."[106] This same King Æthelred played a key role in the development of Oswald's cult at Bardney and ended his life there as a monk. Just as Sigebert's abdication took on a worse aspect by placement after the accounts of Oswald and Oswine, Cadwalla's attacks on Sussex look more sinister when placed in the context of Oswald's miracles and resulting cult in the region, and his journey to Rome is undercut by linkage with the seemingly inexplicable crimes of Æthelred, especially for an audience already familiar with Cadwalla's similar ravaging in Sussex.."[107]

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[105] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. ii, p. 84. "[F]rom that time the heavenly birthday of Christ's warrior King Oswald was commemorated each year by the offering of Masses, not only in this monastery but in many other places as well" (L. Sherley-Price, trans., *A History of the English Church and People*, p. 232).

[106] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. ii, p. 68.

[107] Wallace-Hadrill accounts for the contrast between Æthelred's piety and his brutal attacks on Kent by reference to conflicts within the Church, saying, "Æthelred's otherwise pious reputation and the special attention he paid to the destruction of churches and monasteries suggests particular anger with the Church of Canterbury" (J. M. Wallace-

From out of this tangled web of political maneuvering, regional loyalties, warfare, and intrigue emerge the contradictory images of those kings who underwent some form of spiritual transformation, ending their lives on a pious, religious note. If all that had remained of Cadwalla's story was what was recorded in Eddius Stephanus, Aldhelm, and the epitaph by Crispus, Cadwalla would appear today to have been no worse a king than even the saintly Oswald. Bede's chronicle shatters those illusions.

One of the most memorable (and to modern sensibilities among the most gruesome) stories Bede records involves Cadwalla's violent brand of religious observance and his attempted genocide against the islanders of Wight. As in other instances regarding Cadwalla, Bede's tone is complex and ambiguous, combining both praise and blame. The chapter title encapsulates the grim outlines of the story, at the same time masking the enormity of the event: "Ut Vecta insula Christianos incolas susceperit, cuius regii duo pueri statim post acceptum baptisma sint interempti."[108] Hagiography includes many tales

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Hadrill, *Bede's 'Ecclesiastical History'*, pp. 149-50), but Rollason links the raids to the murders of the saintly princes Æthelred and Æthelberht, since the Mercian king "was related by marriage to the murdered princes (D. W. Rollason, *The Mildrith Legend*, p. 39). One could also argue that Bede recorded unflattering stories about any claimants to royal sanctity from outside Northumbria, thereby increasing the reputation of his own chosen saint, Oswald, although Wallace-Hadrill warns that "Wilfrid, not Bede in *HE*, was the propagator of the cult" of Oswald, since a "missionary would see in such a king a natural protector of, and Christian model for, peoples in the early stages of conversion" (J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *Bede's 'Ecclesiastical History'*, p. 155). Even if Bede was not the main proponent of Oswald's cult, he reserved his highest praise and the label of saint for the Northumbrian monarch alone.

[108] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. ii, p. 86. "The Isle of Wight receives Christian settlers. Two young princes of the island are killed immediately after Baptism" (L. Sherley-Price, trans., *A History of the English Church and People*, p. 232).

of young Christians put to death for the faith, but in this case the king whom Eddius, Aldhelm and Crispus all treated as almost saintlike causes rather than suffers death. If Bede took some of this material from a hagiographic text, as some have argued, it would have been a highly unusual *vita*. Yet Bede's story of Cadwalla's slaughter of two young princes contains certain hagiographic elements. The invasion of the Isle of Wight is, in Bede's history, the last phase in the conversion of all Britain: "postquam omnes Brittaniarum provinciae fidem Christi susceperant, suscepit insula Vecta."[109] Then Bede adds that the conversion was not yet complete, because "in quam tamen ob aerumnam externae subiectionis, nemo gradum ministerii ac sedis episcopalis...accepit."[110] Christianity came to the Isle of Wight; however, because Cadwalla imposed it as a foreign power, the people did not establish regular episcopal structures. This construction begs the core question of what exactly constitutes conversion, since Cadwalla came not to save but to exterminate the island's inhabitants:

> Postquam ergo Caedualla regno potitus est Geuissorum, cepit et insulam Vectam, quae eatenus erat tota idolatriae dedita; ac stragica caede omnes indigenas exterminare, ac suae provinciae homines pro his substituere contendit, voto se obligans, quamvis necdum regeneratus, ut ferunt, in Christo, quia, si cepisset insulam, quartem partem eius, simul et praedae, Domino daret. [111]

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[109] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. ii, p. 90. "So last of all the provinces of Britain, the Isle of Wight accepted the Faith of Christ" (L. Sherley-Price, trans., *A History of the English Church and People*, p. 233).

[110] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. ii, p. 90. "[B]ut owing to its subjection to an alien rule, it had no bishop or see of its own" (L. Sherley-Price, trans., *A History of the English Church and People*, pp. 233-34).

[111] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. ii, pp. 86-88. "After Cadwalla became king of the Gewissae, he captured the Isle of Wight, which was still entirely devoted to idolatry and strove to exterminate all the natives and replace them by settlers from his own province.

In this passage the interaction between old and new faiths, between an undefined Germanic paganism and a familiar yet nonetheless ill-defined Anglo-Saxon Christianity, presents itself as an almost insoluble riddle. Bede considers Cadwalla's invasion of Wight as a step in the conversion process, yet Cadwalla himself was not yet baptized, and may not have been a Christian. The anonymous translator of Bede's account into Old English adds one significant detail in this passage: the comparison of Cadwalla's action to the destruction of Troy: "Ond he gelice þy troiscan wæle ealle þa londbigengan wolde ut amærian 7 his agendra leoda monnum gesettan."[112] Coupled with the statement that he was not yet baptized, the reference to Troy helps to explain Cadwalla's violence by placing it within a context recognizable to an audience who might find his decision to exterminate the inhabitants otherwise inexplicable.

To understand Cadwalla, one must make sense of his actions on Wight. Like Edwin and Oswiu, he promised to make an offering to God for victory, but it is hard to compare the punishment of those complicit in attempted murder or the defeat of invaders to the extermination of an entire population. As Wallace-Hadrill says, "Bede is clear that the slaughter went far beyond the native royal *genus*," but there has been little scholarly

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Although not yet baptized, he is said to have bound himself by an oath to dedicate a quarter of the land and spoils to the Lord if he conquered the isalnd" (L. Sherley-Price, trans., *A History of the English Church and People*, pp. 232-33).

[112] "And he desired to wipe out all the natives as in the Trojan war and settle men of his own people [there]"; *The Old English Version of Bede's Ecclesiastical History*, iv.18, p. 306, translation my own.

comment on the precise nature of Cadwalla's alleged offering.[113] The phrase *quartem partem eius, simul et praedae* is somewhat ambiguous. That Cadwalla intended to give a quarter of the island to the Church is clear, but what precisely is meant by *praedae*? Leo Sherley-Price translates "spoils," J. E. King says "prey," and Judith McClure and Roger Collins indicate "booty"; the Old English translator uses "herehyðe" (booty, prey, plunder) in translating the passage above and in another reference employs "eahta," (possessions, goods, land, wealth, cattle, or, in some contexts, serf or bondsman).[114] Livestock, moveable property, or wealth in general may be meant, but when an entire population is being routinely slaughtered a more grim interpretation remains possible: that Cadwalla intended to sacrifice or dedicate a portion of the slain to God.[115]

There is some evidence that Germanic pagans at times vowed or dedicated war-victims, including prisoners, to the gods in exchange for victory, and the practice may have extended to Anglo-Saxon England. Chaney, despite his quest for paganism in the roles of Anglo-Saxon kingship, does not comment directly on the story of Cadwalla's

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[113] J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *Bede's 'Ecclesiastical History'*, p. 156.

[114] L. Sherley-Price, trans., *A History of the English Church and People*, p. 233; Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. ii, p. 89; J. McClure and R. Collins, ed. and trans., *Bede: The Ecclesiastical History, The Greater Chronicle, Bede's Letter to Egbert*, p. 197; *The Old English Version of Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, p. 306.

[115] Stancliffe connects Cadwalla's actions to a pagan-influenced approach to Christianity: "After winning control of Wessex Caedwalla subjugated Sussex and then turned to the Isle of Wight, intending to exterminate all its inhabitants. Though still unbaptized he vowed that, if successful, he would give a quarter of the island to God--all of which suggests that he saw the God of the Christians as a powerful God of battles, along the lines of Woden (though much in the Old Testament also lends itself to this interpretation)" (C. Stancliffe, "Kings Who Opted Out," p. 156).

decimation of Wight, but he does assert that a "form of sacrifice to Woden for which evidence may be found in England is the dedication to him of the war-dead."[116] As evidence for Anglo-Saxon participation in this practice he quotes a line from the *Chronicle* of Æthelweard, a tenth-century Latin work based on the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, in which the writer, an ealdorman and member of the West Saxon royal house, refers to Woden as "regis barbarorum, quem post infanda dignitate ut deum honorantes, sacrificium obtulerunt pagani, victoriae causa sive virtutis, diuictusque."[117] In addition, Chaney cites the slaughter of all the inhabitants of a British town during the invasion of the British Isles by the Anglo-Saxons:

> In England, the slaughter at Anderida in A.D. 491, when Ælle and his son Cissa captured this fortress-town and slew everyone within its walls--*ne weard þær forþen an Brit to lafe*--has overtones of a religious vow of dedication upon one of the first landings in Sussex. As King Eirek the Victorious dedicated the army of his enemy Styrbiörn to Othin prior to battle c. A.D. 960-970, so Ælle may have offered the god this human sacrifice before his onslaught against the British. [118]

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[116] W. A. Chaney, *The Cult of Kingship*, p. 39.

[117] W. A. Chaney, *The Cult of Kingship*, p. 39. Chaney cites J. Stevenson, ed., *The Church Historians of England* (London, 1954), 411; I take my translation from the more recent edition of Æthelweard's work, Æthelweard, *Chronicon Æthelweardi*, p. 7: "a king of the barbarians. After his death the pagans, honouring him as a god with respect not fit to be mentioned, offered [him] sacrifice in order to have victory or be courageous, and so did the conquered man."

[118] W. A. Chaney, *The Cult of Kingship*, p. 39. Chaney here cites *Two of the Saxon Chronicles Parallel*, 2 vols, ed. Charles Plummer and John Earle (Oxford, 1892), I, 14-15; *Styrbiarnar Þattr*, c. 2; and H. M. Chadwick, *The Cult of Othin* (London, 1899), 7. He also credits the idea of a connection between Ælle's genocide and sacrifice to Woden to Chadwick, *Cult of Othin*, 31; and E. A. Philippson, *Die Genealogie der Götter in Germanischer Religion, Mythologie, und Theologie* (Urbana, IL, 1953), 151.

This annihilation of an entire city rivals Cadwalla's attempted genocide on Wight, but the evidence for either action having religious or sacrificial significance is slim. Chaney's final piece of evidence has greater bearing on the passage from Bede, because of a striking verbal echo. Chaney quotes from a translation of *The Gothic War* by Procopius a reference to "the human sacrifice of Goths by the Frankish King Theudebert in A.D. 539 as 'the first-fruits of the war. For these barbarians, though they have become Christians, preserve the greater part of their ancient religion'."[119] Bede echoes this concept of victims in battle serving as "first-fruits" when he shifts from the story of the conquest of the Isle of Wight as a whole to the deaths of the last two athelings of the royal house:

> Ubi silentio praetereundum non esse reor, quod *in primitias* eorum qui de eadem insula credendo salvati sunt, duo regii pueri fratres videlicet Arualdi regis insulae, speciali sunt Dei gratia coronati. [120]

It is not unusual for Christians to connect martyrdom and sacrifice, but the application of the term "first-fruits" to these two young boys resonates two contrasting meanings: on one hand, they are the first martyrs of the Isle of Wight, and therefore could be regarded as the "first-fruits" of conversion, but the point may also be that they were vowed as sacrifices by Cadwalla to a very blood-thirsty version of God. As I argued in the last

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[119] W. A. Chaney, *The Cult of Kingship*, p. 39. Procopius, *The Gothic War*, in *The History of the Wars*, 6 vols, ed. and trans. H. B. Dewing (London, 1919), II (VI of the *History*), c. 25; IV, 86-87.

[120] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. ii, p. 88, (emphasis added). "It would not be right to omit mention of two young princes, brothers of Arwald, king of the island, who were especially favoured by God's grace, and became the first natives of the island to believe and be saved" (L. Sherley-Price, trans., *A History of the English Church and People*, p. 233). The translation obscures the meaning of the phrase *in primitias*: "as first-fruits." The term has important biblical antecedents, especially Corinithians I, xv. 20.

chapter in regard to Bede's subtle word-play in describing the death of Penda, *desecto capite perfido*, Bede seems to be using and at the same time inverting a pagan concept; if Cadwalla meant the two boys to die as "first-fruits," an offering of victims to a bloodthirsty God of Battles, Bede is showing that they became instead the "first-fruits" of true faith as the Isle of Wight's proto-martyrs.

The idea that Cadwalla was offering the prisoners as sacrifices to the Christian God, in imitation of sacrifices to Woden, remains highly speculative, founded as it is on interpretation of highly ambiguous evidence. Bede uses the phrase *in primitias* no where else, and he certainly avoids making any definitive statements about Cadwalla's behavior. Cadwalla's destruction of the populace is grim slaughter ("stragica caede"), but otherwise his actions are presented without pejorative comment. Raymond St.-Jacques has analyzed the differences between the Latin and Old English versions of the *Ecclesiastical History* and identifies "the addition of some detail or other to the Latin description of a character, more often than not making the character a little more saintly, more evil, or simply more human than the original description" as an "important type of alteration" made by the Old English translator.[121] Two of St.-Jacques's examples are drawn from the chapter on the conquest of Wight:

> When Cadwall overruns the Isle of Wight, two young princes, brothers of the defeated king Arwald, conceal themselves from the face of the victorious king in the Latin ("a facie regis victoris," iv.16) but from the sight of the cruel king in the Old English ("from onsyne þæs unholdan cyninges," iv.18). Captured and condemned to death, the princes are converted to the true faith and baptized. Thus

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[121] R. C. St-Jacques, "Hwilum Word be Worde," p. 97.

> assured of salvation, they face their executioner not only gladly ("bliðe") as in the Latin but fearlessly ("unforhte") as well. [122]

One effect of these additions is to emphasize the saintliness of the young princes, which is already present (although less forcefully developed) in the original. Cadwalla's evil qualities are also heightened, but these are only latent in the original. The Old English translator alters the text subtly, and the changes, taken together, point up the anomalous nature of this tale, since the central figure plays the role usually reserved for pagan tyrants, while the minor characters take on the central role of martyrs. It seems highly unlikely that Bede took these images or ideas from "a Roman Life of Cædwalla," unless the hagiographic model that underlay it involved the conversion of the wicked king Cadwalla who subsequently became a saint (a model which, although theoretically possible, is extremely unusual in hagiography). If Bede indeed drew this account from a hagiographic text, it was more likely one devoted to the murdered royal princes (a major English genre of sainthood) than to the invader who allowed them to be converted before he put them to death.

Thus in Bede's account, the heroic Christian king of Eddius Stephanus and Aldhelm has vanished, replaced by a violent and bloodthirsty man acting out the role of a pagan tyrant. The only twist on the typical hagiographic situation lies in the fact that Cadwalla agrees to let the boys be catechized and baptized before he puts them to death, unlike the usual pattern in which the tyrant kills the martyrs because they profess themselves Christians. Although it is dangerous to ascribe irony to a serious historian like

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[122] R. C. St-Jacques, "Hwilum Word be Worde," p. 97.

Bede, I read this account as highly ironic. It inverts a series of hagiographic commonplaces, and even, through Bede's use of *in primitias*, employs a subtle brand of verbal irony in which a pagan's attempted sacrilege is reversed (by divine power?) into a means of glorifying God. Bede implies that the sacrifice of the two princes, if indeed intended by Cadwalla to be an offering to the God of Battles, became a true first step in conversion by the ritual acts performed. However, one can easily imagine a man like Cadwalla agreeing to the forced conversion as part of, rather than in subversion of, his intended sacrifice. Bede presents the event from the perspective of a true believer; there is no evidence to indicate that Cadwalla's actions came from the same perspective.

When Bede finally turns to Cadwalla's abdication and pilgrimage, he makes no connections between the king's earlier actions and his decision to undergo a spiritual transformation. His reign and his rationale for the journey are characterized briefly in bland and generic terms:

> Caedualla rex Occidentalium Saxonum, cum genti suae duobus annis strenuissime praeesset, relicto imperio propter Dominum regnumque perpetuum, venit Romam, hoc sibi gloriae singularis desiderans adipisci, ut ad limina beatorum apostolorum fonte baptismatis ablueretur, in quo solo didicerat generi humano patere vitae caelestis introitum. [123]

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[123] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. ii, p. 224. "Cadwalla, King of the West Saxons, who had governed his people most ably for two years, abdicated from his throne for the sake of our Lord and his eternal kingdom and traveled to Rome. For, having learned that the road to heaven lies open to mankind only through baptism, he wished to obtain the particular privilege of receiving the cleansing of baptism at the shrine of the blessed Apostles" (L. Sherley-Price, trans., *A History of the English Church and People*, p. 279).

Once again, Bede's ordering of scenes may have bearing on his tone. Immediately before this chapter, Bede placed an account of a miracle involving improper or ineffective baptism. A young clergyman in the retinue of the saintly Bishop John of Beverley disobeys the bishop's commands, takes part in a horse race, and falls from his horse and is nearly killed. His healing is only effected once John discovers the young man had been improperly baptized and has him recatechized and undergo the proper procedures. The young man, whose name is Herebald, says, "[N]ec multo post plene curatus, vitali etiam unda perfusus est." [124] The emphasis on the importance of the cleansing power of baptism in these two adjacent chapters indicates that Bede felt Cadwalla sought a renewal, a transformation that would wash away the sins of the old life and usher in a new life in Christ. Despite whatever incomplete or improper commitment he had formerly had to Christianity, Cadwalla chose to undergo a spectacular and permanent absolution, acting out the trope of spiritual transformation through the most spectacular means available to him: the arduous -- and fashionable -- pilgrimage to the "holy places." Bede goes so far as to say that Cadwalla hoped it would be a permanent step: "[S]imul etiam sperans quia mox baptizatus, carne solutus ad aeterna gaudia iam mundus transiret: quos utrumque ut mente disposuerat, Domino iuvante completum est." The cleansing takes on an almost suicidal force in Bede's account, and Cadwalla is struck down by illness while still wearing his baptismal clothes: "et in albis adhuc positus, languore correptus, duodecimo

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[124] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. ii, p. 222. "I was soon completely recovered , and was then cleansed in the life-giving waters of Baptism" (L. Sherley-Price, trans., *A History of the English Church and People*, pp. 178-79).

kalendarum Maiarum die solutus a carne, et beatorum est regno sociatus in caelis."[125] Bede presents the pilgrimage as a spiritual transformation, not from secular to religious life, but from a sinful life in the flesh to eternal life in heaven, with pilgrimage and baptism serving as signs of an internal change. Kirby connects Cadwalla's death with wounds he received in the invasion of the Isle of Wight[126] Barbara Yorke, on the other hand, connects it to Rome being "a notoriously unhealthy place" and she adds that Cadwalla, "the last West Saxon king to whom any taint of paganism can be attached," died after baptism and "before he could commit any more sins"[127] Like Bede, Yorke avoids directly stating what seems to be the obvious implication of Cadwalla's final journey: that his violent and bloody actions before his pilgrimage, some even supposedly undertaken in the name of Christianity, violated the basic tenets of the new religion to which he was converting.

Just as in Bede's account, the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*'s brief record also presents Cadwalla's violent deeds and acts of piety strangely intermingled. Successive entries over the years 685-688 support the idea that his motivation for taking the journey to Rome may have been expiation of sins. The entries begin in 685, when "ongan Ceadwala winnan

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[125] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. ii, p. 224. "At the same time, he hoped to die shortly after his baptism, and pass from this world to everlasting happiness. By God's grace, both of these hopes were realized.... he fell ill and while still wearing his white robes departed this life on the twentieth of April and joined the company of the blessed in heaven" (L. Sherley-Price, trans., *A History of the English Church and People*, p. 279).

[126] D. P. Kirby, *The Making of Early England*, p. 67.

[127] B. Yorke, *Wessex in the Early Middle Ages*, pp. 98, 173.

æfter rice."[128] In 686, "Caedwala 7 Mul his broðor forhergodan Cent 7 Wiht," although in the same year, "Þæs Cædwala gef into sancte Petres minstre Medeshamstede Hoge."[129] In the next year, after Mull was burned alive by the Kentishmen along with twelve of his companions, "Ceadwala eft forhergode Cent" [130] Yet in 688:

> Her for Ceadwalla cining to Rome. 7 onfeng fulluht æt Sergium þam papan. 7 he him scop Petrum to name. 7 he syððan ymbe .vii. niht forðferde....under Cristes claðum. 7 he wæs gebyred innan Sancte Petres cyrican. [131]

Even if Cadwalla's rise to power and his violent reign were not models of Christian kingship, all sources endeavor to present his final actions as a spiritual transformation undertaken in order that he could die like a model Christian.

There were undoubtedly as many individual motivations as there were Anglo-Saxons setting aside their secular careers for new monastic vocations or pilgrimages to the

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[128] C. Plummer and J. Earle, *Two of the Saxon Chronicles Parallel*, p. 39. Quotations are drawn from the 'E' text unless otherwise indicated. Translations are from G. N. Garmonsway, ed. and trans., *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*: "Cædwalla began to contend for the kingdom" (G. N. Garmonsway, ed. and trans., *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, p. 39).

[129] C. Plummer and J. Earle, *Two of the Saxon Chronicles Parallel*, p. 39. "Cædwalla and Mul, his brother, laid waste Kent and the Isle of Wight. This Cædwalla gave to St Peter's monastery of *Medeshamstede* the place Hoo" (G. N. Garmonsway, ed. and trans., *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, p. 39).

[130] C. Plummer and J. Earle, *Two of the Saxon Chronicles Parallel*, p. 39. "Cædwalla again laid waste Kent" (G. N. Garmonsway, ed. and trans., *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, p. 39).

[131] C. Plummer and J. Earle, *Two of the Saxon Chronicles Parallel*, p. 41. "In this year King Cædwalla went to Rome, and received baptism at the hands of Sergius the pope, who gave him the name Peter. But seven days afterwards,... he passed away in his baptismal robes, and was buried within St. Peter's church" (G. N. Garmonsway, ed. and trans., *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, p. 41).

holy places. In regard to the decision by King Ine of Wessex, Cadwalla's successor, to follow in his predecessor's footsteps, Bede reports, "quod his temporibus plures de gente Anglorum, nobilies, ignobiles, laeci, clerici, viri ac feminae certatim facere consuerunt."[132] Even when so many people are reported as following a similar path, there are still inevitably great variations of motivation and execution. However, whatever may have motivated the various Anglo-Saxons who supposedly underwent some form of spiritual transformation, what remains constant is the hagiographic trope applied to them almost uniformly. The trope of spiritual transformation was one aspect of the underlying cultural ethos of Anglo-Saxon Christianity: the belief that the spiritual life was superior to the mundane affairs of the world, and that to be a true Christian, the person engaged in earthly struggles should abandon them for the purified warfare of the spirit, even if the transformation should occur on death's door.

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[132] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. ii, p. 228. "At this period, many English people vied with one another in following this custom, both noble and simple, layfolk and clergy, men and women alike" (L. Sherley-Price, trans., *A History of the English Church and People*, p. 281).

VI

Bede looms large in a study of the ethos of spiritual transformation in Anglo-Saxon society, but it is salutary to notice that Bede himself expressed considerable doubts about the long-term effects of that tradition. He ended his masterwork, the *Historia Ecclesiastica*, with words of caution about the state of peace Northumbria was then experiencing:

> Qua adridente pace ac serenitate temporum, plures in gente Nordanhymbrorum, tam nobiles quam privati, se suosque liberos depositis armis satagunt magis accepta tonsura monasterialibus adscribere votis, quam bellicis execere studiis. Quae res quem sit habitura finem, posterior aetas videbit. [133]

The deep concern he expresses in this passage should warn readers that Bede did not always interject his thoughts directly into his narrative. Throughout his numerous accounts of Anglo-Saxons, "tam nobiles quam privati," who followed the path of spiritual transformation, not once did Bede record any judgments he might have formed on the wisdom of their actions. As we have seen, only in his reporting of the opinions of others, or in subtle, indirect ways did he express the concern he evidently felt. He explains his

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[133] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. ii, p. 372. "As such peace and prosperity prevail in these days, many of the Northumbrians, both noble and simple, together with their children, have laid aside their weapons, preferring to receive the tonsure and take monastic vows rather than study the arts of war. What the result of this will be the future will show" (L. Sherley-Price, trans., *A History of the English Church and People*, p. 332).

perspective more fully in a letter to Bishop Egbert, in which he describes the creation of many monasteries-in-name-only, false institutions which weakened the kingdom militarily while providing no real spiritual enlightenment or benefit. [134] Only in these two cautionary passages did he show the degree to which the laying down of arms and the picking up of prayerbooks was a phenomenon he reported, but did not always endorse. Yet Richard Abels argues that the phenomenon Bede described, in which land that should have been available to the king's thegns was instead permanently "booked" to monastic (or pseudo-monastic) institutions, was responsible for fundamental changes in Anglo-Saxon society. He claims that the military relationship between a lord and his two groups of thegns, the *geoguth* and *duguth*, as a "military system...did not long survive Bede":

> The *Epistola ad Ecgberctum* sounds the death-knell of the early fyrd arrangement. As Bede saw it, the proliferation of spurious monasteries had so depleted the stock of land used to reward the king's retainers that the young warriors could no longer look to the king for the land necessary for marriage and social advancement. They were forced to seek service in foreign courts, leaving their homeland vulnerable to the attacks of its enemies. [135]

Yet however urgent the problem may have been, Bede's underlying judgment that some Anglo-Saxons choosing the spiritual path were not genuinely motivated by a desire to serve God should be accepted with caution. Bede himself had presented a man like Cadwalla, whose behavior as a king was so far from exemplary, as motivated by a genuine

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[134] "Venerabilis Bedae Epistola ad Ecgberctum Antistitem," in Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. ii, pp. 446-89, esp. pp. 466-74.

[135] R. P. Abels, *Lordship and Military Obligation*, p. 43. For a full elaboration of Abels's perspective, see pp. 28-30, 45, 47, and 52.

desire to obtain God's forgiveness. A reader of Bede's own writings, in which he employed the trope of spiritual transformation repeatedly, might easily be filled with a sudden zeal to emulate so many saintly men in taking up the holy warfare of the saints.

Chapter Four: Saint Guthlac, Spiritual Warrior

I

St. Guthlac, an East Anglian hermit who spent his youth, like Cadwalla, as the leader of a roving warband, best exemplifies the Anglo-Saxon warrior filled with a sudden zeal to take up the holy warfare of the saints.[1] The author of the earliest account of his life, Felix of Croyland, presents the most comprehensive and effective example of the trope of spiritual transformation to be found in an original work of Anglo-Saxon literature.[2] The *Vita Sancti Guthlaci* is a Latin prose work probably written in the 730s or 740s.[3] Another, unknown Anglo-Saxon writer translated the *Vita* into Old English

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[1] Colgrave's analysis of date has not been refuted: "The latest date is provided by the fact that Felix addressed his prologue to Ælfwald, king of the East Angles who died in 749. Bede nowhere mentions Guthlac in his *Ecclesiastical History*. In view of Bede's interest in East Anglian and Mercian affairs, it would be surprising if he had not come across Felix's Life, supposing it to have been written before his *Ecclesiastical History* which appeared in 731. Bearing all these facts in mind, one might suggest a date somewhere between 730 and 740" (19). For comparisons to Cadwalla, see, for example, Abels, *Lordship and Military Obligation*, pp. 35-36, 44; Stancliffe, "Kings Who Opted Out," pp. 167, 170; and T. Charles-Edwards, "Early Medieval Kingships," p. 37.

[2] The *Vita* is extant, in whole or in part, in 13 manuscripts., ranging from the late eighth or early ninth century through the end of the Middle Ages. The standard edition is Felix of Croyland, *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, from which all quotations and translations of the text are taken.

[3] See Felix of Croyland, *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, pp. 26-44.

during or after the reign of Alfred, perhaps as part of that king's program of translations.[4] Two chapters of the Old English version of the *Vita* also appear separately, in a slightly altered form, as an Old English homily in the Vercelli manuscript, in close proximity to the Vercelli version of the VBJ homily on the life of St. Martin.[5] Two anonymous poets incorporated material from the tradition represented by these Latin and Old English *vitae* of Guthlac into Old English poems, known as *Guthlac A* and *B*, that appear uniquely in the tenth-century Exeter Book but that may have been written considerably earlier.[6] This abundance of Guthlac material (which also includes short entries in the list of saints' resting-places called the *Secgan* and in the *Old English Martyrology*) offers evidence of continuing interest throughout the Anglo-Saxon period in the story of Guthlac's abandonment of warfare in favor of a life devoted to Christ, and variations in content and presentation show how the trope of spiritual transformation was received and modified by successive generations of Anglo-Saxons.

In analyzing Felix's original Latin *Vita*, the four major vernacular works based to a greater or lesser degree on it, and the entry in the *Old English Martyrology*, I find a

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[4] The translation is extant only in British Library MS Cotton Vespasian D xxi, a manuscript of the eleventh century. For a discussion of the origin and date of the Old English translation, see J. Roberts, "The Old English Prose Translation."

[5] See "Homily XXIII [St Guthlac]"; "Homily XXIII." The Martin homily is XVIII.

[6] J. Roberts, ed., *The Guthlac Poems*. They are treated as a single poem, *Guthlac*, in *The Exeter Book*, pp. 49-88. Despite numerous arguments to the contrary, the identification of two distinct and quite different poems is supported by a careful reading of the material, as Roberts argues (J. Roberts, ed., *The Guthlac Poems*, pp. 48-50).

pattern similar to the sequence of Anglo-Saxon versions of Sulpicius's *Vita Sancti Martini* examined in Chapter One. Felix presents a clear and coherent synthesis of the traditions represented on one hand by the *Life of Martin* and on the other by Bede's account of St. Oswald in his *Ecclesiastical History*, creating a work whose dominant trope is spiritual transformation; yet those derivative works nearest in time to the original preserve the trope less clearly than do texts from the end of the Anglo-Saxon era. This observation is limited by continuing uncertainty about the chronology of the various Guthlac texts, a subject still very much open to debate. As a result, questions concerning the original date of composition for each text will play an important role in the argument that follows.

The last chapter introduced the trope of spiritual transformation as various writers used it in describing the lives of Anglo-Saxons, both royal and common. Felix is the first Anglo-Saxon writer to fully develop the trope of spiritual transformation in a major text about the life of a single saint. Bede and Æthelwulf both used the trope to describe the passage of men like Eanmund, Benedict Biscop, and Eosterwine from king's thegn to monk, but it played a minor role in their works as a whole. Eddius Stephanus presented in his *Life of Wilfrid* a characteristic Anglo-Saxon perspective on the relationship of warfare and sanctity, but none of his major characters underwent a spiritual transformation. Even the various works concerned with Cadwalla that made use of the trope of spiritual transformation did not fully develop it, since none of those texts ever made an explicit claim for Cadwalla's sanctity.

Felix alone tackled the problems created by two contradictory impulses within Anglo-Saxon Christianity: the rejection of warfare, along with other secular responsibilities, as exemplified by St. Martin's confrontation with the emperor Julian; and the glorification of warfare not just as a central concern of Christian kings but as their sacred duty, embodied in the victorious wars and martyrdom of St. Oswald. Felix blended these two approaches by building a text around the images of two exiles who undergo related and yet fundamentally different transformations. The first is Guthlac, who for many years leads a band of warriors from various tribes in a nomadic life of raiding and warfare, and who eventually undergoes a radical transformation that leads him initially to become a monk at Ripon and finally to go alone into the fens of East Anglia where he sets up an isolated hermitage. The second exile is Æthelbald, a young atheling of the ruling family of Mercia who seeks Guthlac's guidance both before and after the hermit's death, and who, at the time Felix was writing, had been transformed from lonely exile into a powerful Mercian king and the overlord of all the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms south of the Humber.[7] Guthlac does not reject war, as Martin had done, but he transcends it, passing onward to a higher plane of struggle. In addition, Æthelbald does not die a martyr's death (in fact, his reign reportedly lasted forty-one years), and like Cadwalla, Æthelbald is not a saint. Nonetheless, in Guthlac Felix redefines the concept of the soldier saint (the holy man who had formerly been a soldier, based on Anglo-Saxon societal ideals and way of

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[7] In the final chapter of the *Historia Ecclesiastica* Bede says that, at that time (circa 731), "All [the] provinces ... south of the river Humber and their kings... are subject to Ethelbald, King of the Mercians" (*H.E.* V.23). {Insert Latin passage to replace this!}

life; and in Æthelbald, Felix delineates and concretizes the concept of the holy king, guided by a saint and ordained by God to a long and prosperous reign. In the process, Felix clearly presents the former warrior who had taken on the higher spiritual struggle as superior to the divinely-inspired king pursuing his earthly responsibilities. In the *Vita Sancti Guthlaci*, spiritual transformation is the highest path a Christian can take, although only the rare, extraordinary individual like Guthlac is predestined to follow its harsh regimen to its ultimate goal: sainthood.

Together the Latin and vernacular works inspired by Guthlac's life show how the trope of spiritual transformation developed over the course of the Anglo-Saxon period. Working roughly within ten years of Bede's publication of the *Historia Ecclesiastica*, Felix first combined the themes employed by Sulpicius with the concept of spiritual transformation used by Bede, Æthelwulf, and other writers. He also incorporated key elements from the tradition of the martyred warrior-kings Edwin and Oswald both in his treatment of Guthlac himself, as a member of a royal family, and in his portrait of the youthful Æthelbald, destined to become the great Mercian overlord. The result is a trope of spiritual transformation that informs his entire work. Later writers drew selectively from Felix's seminal work on Guthlac, some watering down or even eliminating key elements of the trope in their portrayals of the hermit, and others returning to the trope, developing and augmenting it in their own works. Each of the anonymous writers who followed Felix demonstrates in a unique way the ebb and flow of the influence of the ideas about warfare he embedded in his influential *Vita*.

II

Sulpicius's major tropes are either absent or significantly modified in Felix's *Vita Sancti Guthlaci*, although Felix's approach to the relationship between warfare and sanctity shows greater reliance on Sulpicius than a study of the inherited tropes alone would indicate. Felix had a detailed knowledge of the *Life of Martin* and used it in writing his own story, yet the image of the unwilling, saintly soldier is not Felix's focus. Guthlac is not an unwilling warrior, although he is in certain, limited ways a saintly soldier. Guthlac expresses a formal rejection of warfare; however, unlike Martin's rejection of warfare, which completed or realized the saintliness already evident in his life as a soldier, Guthlac undergoes a dramatic change of heart, not so much rejecting war as transforming himself spiritually. Felix presents this transformation as a change more sudden and more profound than Martin's, Benedict Biscop's, or Æthelwulf's. Guthlac decisively rejects the life he has been living in favor of a life serving God, changing himself overnight from warleader to solitary soldier of Christ. In certain ways, Guthlac's transformation most resembles Cadwalla's as presented by Crispus the warrior-king's epitaph in the speed of the change and its far-reaching results. Guthlac does not die shortly afterward, however, but instead goes on to live a long and saintly life .

Felix makes the soldier of Christ image an important part of the *topos* of spiritual transformation. He describes Guthlac's spiritual struggles in his hermitage in the East

Anglian fens in terms of a militant struggle similar to, but qualitatively different from the nine years he spent as the leader of a warband. The saint makes frequent use of his warrior skills in fighting against demons set on testing his spiritual resolve, and Felix describes him repeatedly as a spiritual soldier. In the interaction between dramatic change from earthly to spiritual warrior in the opening chapters and martial imagery throughout the text, the *topos* of spiritual transformation functions as a major trope in the *Vita* as a whole. One aspect of Felix's use of spiritual transformation as his major trope is to present St. Guthlac as a warrior-hero or champion of Christ, a concept more implied than directly employed by Sulpicius in the *Vita Sancti Martini*. Although Martin's career was filled with heroic deeds, Sulpicius only rarely associated the images (shield, sword, spear, armor) and language ("soldier," "battle," "combat," "foes") of warfare with Martin after his renunciation of earthly warfare at the Battle of Worms. Felix, on the other hand, continues to emphasize the martial character of Guthlac's life long after he has abandoned earthly for spiritual warfare. The martial metaphors extend the external trappings (swords, armor, fortifications, rings) and personal qualities (courage, loyalty to lord, stoic acceptance of hardship, and energetic zeal) that Anglo-Saxon society highly valued into the newly entered spiritual realm. When at the age of twenty-four Guthlac decides to change his field of operations from the secular to the spiritual arena, he carries with him the aura and ethos of the earthly hero. He applies himself with the same bravery and zeal to combat using the "spiritual weapons" of faith, prayer, and song that he used when fighting physical enemies with real swords and spears. Guthlac transforms himself from

secular to spiritual warrior, but the transformation cannot really be considered a conversion, since, like Martin, he was already a Christian before undergoing the change.[8] The martial metaphors extend on both sides of the line of transformation, just as monastic imagery extends on both sides of the line of transformation in Sulpicius's account of Martin.[9] Felix gives up war but he does not lose his martial qualities.

In the person of the hermit saint, Felix also combines traits of Martin, the model for renunciation of violence, with aspects of Edwin and Oswald, the models for violence's sanctification. If we presume Felix to have been working with at least legendary, if not historical, material, certain aspects of the life of Guthlac made the use of images associated with the royal martyrs particularly appropriate. Guthlac had been a warrior before deciding to commit himself to the ascetic life, but unlike Martin, who was the son of a military veteran, Guthlac had multiple associations with royalty. According to Felix,

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[8] This is not to say that Guthlac was an unwilling warrior like Martin. Guthlac, as I have already stated, does not reject but instead transcends physical combat. Felix considered the wars Guthlac fought in, if not holy, at least just.

[9] Martial metaphors do not, in and of themselves, constitute the trope of spiritual transformation. When Felix uses martial imagery and metaphoric language, they form part of the theme of spiritual transformation that he employs as his major trope, because Guthlac spent years as a warrior before becoming a monk and later a hermit., just as martial metaphors augmented Sulpicius's core concept of the unwilling , saintly soldier. When martial imagery and metaphors appear in the vernacular works, I consider them part of the trope of spiritual transformation only when they actually function as part of the trope in the vernacular context. When martial metaphors appear isolatedly, in the absence of other elements drawn from the *topos* of spiritual transformation, they may stem from the incomplete incorporation of that trope, or they may instead have come to the literature from the independent tradition of martial metaphors. See M.L. Del Mastro, "The Military Analogy in Anglo-Latin Saints' Lives"; J. Harris, "Soldiers of Christ: Cynewulfian Poetry"; J. Hill, "The Soldier of Christ in Old English Prose and Poetry."

Guthlac was the close confidant of a man destined to be the king of Mercia and, as Graham Caie points out, Guthlac himself descends from "the royal house of Mercia, and therefore possesses the royal *mana*." [10] Although not a king himself, Guthlac's royal blood and association with a king-to-be combined with his period of youthful soldiering to make him a perfect vessel for the fusion of two seemingly contradictory traditions.

Up to the point when Guthlac abandons his role as leader of a nomadic warband, Guthlac might just as easily have been destined to follow the path of Oswald as that of Martin. Some modern historians suggest that he may actually have been trying to seize power in Mercia. As mentioned earlier, the individual to whom he is most often compared is Cadwalla of Wessex. Abels first describes how a "West Saxon nobleman, Cædwalla, was able to defeat the fyrds of two kingdoms with his war band, a war band large enough to be called an 'army' (*exercitus*) by Bede."[11] He then compares Cadwalla's actions to those of a "seventh-century Mercian ætheling, the future saint Guthlac, [who] also gathered about him a band of followers and for nine years 'laid waste the towns and residences, villages and fortresses, of his opponents with fire and sword'." He goes on to suggest that "[o]ne would have difficulty distinguishing between the 'royal armies' of this period and the war bands of æthelings such as the exiled Cædwalla or the young St.

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[10] G. D. Caie, "Christ as Warrior in Old English Poetry," p. 20.

[11] R. P. Abels, *Lordship and Military Obligation*, p. 35. See S. S. Evans, *The Lords of Battle*, pp. 26-34, for a discussion of the size of warbands in the seventh and eighth centuries. He cites, in particular, the law code of Ine, King of Wessex in Guthlac's period, which terms a band of up to seven men as thieves, from seven to thirty-five men a warband, and more than thirty-five an army (27).

Guthlac." [12] Thomas Charles-Edwards also interprets Guthlac's period of soldiering as directly analogous to Cadwalla's:

> St. Guthlac is a good example of a member of a royal kindred of Mercia, an Icling, who tried but failed to gain kingship. The method was to recruit a warband or *comitatus* and use it to raid neighbouring kingdoms. For some, such as the West Saxon Cædwalla or the Mercian Penda, this was the way to royal power. Guthlac was less successful and turned to the life of a hermit. [13]

Whether or not the historical Guthlac was actually striving for power in Mercia, Felix presents in his opening chapters a Guthlac who could have been destined to follow the path Edwin and Oswald took, rising from exile on the margins of society to power as a holy king. Since, as we have seen, Anglo-Saxon kings were fundamentally warlords, Guthlac's abandonment of earthly struggle and even of human society in favor of a life of solitude and spiritual struggle is accentuated by his royal heritage. The image of a warrior son of a family of warrior-kings becoming, not a warrior himself, but rather a *miles Christi*, would have been a particularly potent image, inverting Anglo-Saxon heroic culture and at the same time subtly linking it to the new Christian ideals.

Once Guthlac turns aside from secular concerns, the tropes of holy kingship do not disappear; instead, they are redirected toward one of the men whom, according to Felix,

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[12] R. P. Abels, *Lordship and Military Obligation*, pp. 35-36. Abels's identification of Guthlac as an ætheling is in keeping with current understanding of that term, discussed in detail by D. N. Dumville, "The Ætheling," esp. p. 12, where he says, "The ætheling was in theory eligible for the kingship. Although he might be the only ætheling, this would be an extraordinarily rare occurrence, for normally he would have brothers, uncles, and first cousins, all of whom were also æthelings."

[13] T. Charles-Edwards, "Early Medieval Kingships in the British Isles," p. 37.

Guthlac most profoundly affected, a man who was indeed destined to become an Anglo-Saxon warrior-king, Æthelbald of Mercia. The relationship between Guthlac and Æthelbald is used by Felix to create a double-transformation structure, by paralleling the youthful raiding of Guthlac with the period of exile of the future king and by connecting earthly and spiritual power in the images of Guthlac as warrior of Christ and Æthelbald as holy king.

Almost all of the tropes associated with the martyred warrior-saints Edwin and Oswald appear in Felix's *Vita Sancti Guthlaci*. Only the miraculous discovery of the saint's bones is entirely absent, since Guthlac, having abandoned warfare for the life of a hermit, neither dies in battle nor is buried in an unmarked grave, and Æthelbald is still alive when Felix is writing. Guthlac never becomes a king; therefore, Felix could not directly carry over the trope of the providential expansion of a king's realm to his presentation of Guthlac, but he does make use of it in the form of the multinational character of Guthlac's warband and the breadth of his renown as a saint.[14] Guthlac's lineage and the religious significance of his name are both important elements in Felix's work, along with other signs of his predestined saintliness. Felix shows both Guthlac and Æthelbald undergoing periods of earthly travail through which God preserves them for future greatness: the trope of providential preservation through adversity. Victory in battle is briefly touched

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[14] The providential expansion of a king's rule could have been applied to Æthelbald, whose lengthy rule inaugurated a period of Mercian dominance over much of England. Felix may have relied on his contemporary readers' awareness of this fact, but he does not directly mention it.

on as a sign of God's approval, and the bloodthirsty-pagan-enemies trope also finds expression in Felix's text.

Felix is unique in combining tropes associated with different traditions, producing in his *Vita Sancti Guthlaci* an original Anglo-Saxon archetype of the soldier-saint who undergoes a spiritual transformation. At the same time his enthusiastic career as a warrior and chosen champion of Christ, who in turn acts as a conduit for God's grace to a divinely appointed Christian king, make of Guthlac a warlike and heroic saint closely associated with core values of Anglo-Saxon society, as evidenced by the wealth of literary material devoted to his story. Like Ælfric, who reproduced faithfully the anti-war tropes of Sulpicius in his translations of the *Life of Martin* and (as we will see in Chapter Five) the strongly pro-war tropes of Bede in his *Life of Oswald*, Felix makes use of both traditions, but unlike Ælfric who keeps the two traditions separate (reproducing one set of tropes in his Lives of Martin and a different set in his *Vita Oswaldi*), Felix fuses the two traditions in the life of a single man, combining the continental tradition of rejection of earthly combat with the Anglo-Saxon sanctification of royal warrior-kings into a major trope of spiritual transformation.

Felix first prepares readers to see Guthlac as *miles Christi* by describing his royal heritage.[15] After a prologue and list of contents by chapter, Felix opens the story of

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[15] Despite the obvious appeal of the trope of a saint's illustrious heritage, Felix's *Vita* is, according to Rollason, "unique among the free-standing saints' lives of this period in [detailing] the saint's lineage" (D. W. Rollason, *Saints and Relics*, p. 90), although this is actually one of a number of traits that it shares with the Whitby monk's *Life of Gregory the Great*, though he applies it to Edwin and not Gregory. Felix could have been familiar with the earlier work, but it is just as likely that Anglo-Saxon veneration of royalty and

Guthlac's life with his parents still unmarried. His father was "quidam vir de egregia stirpe Merciorum cognomine Penwalh."[16] Felix goes on to link Penwalh to an ancient kingly family: "Huius etiam viri progenies per nobilissima inlustrium regum nomina antiqua ab origine Icles digesto ordine cucurrit."[17] As Colgrave explains, Felix was tracing Guthlac's heritage back to "that Icel who was the great-grandson of Offa I ... whose name appears in the Mercian genealogies, five generations above Penda."[18] Descent from Icel made Guthlac a possible heir to the Mercian throne. David Dumville says that "eligibility for kingship in the pre-Viking period depended, in theory and generally in practice, on descent from the founder of the dynasty," citing, among others, "Icel, from whom the Mercian dynasty took its collective name of Iclingas."[19] Æthelbald also is an Icling, descended from Penda's brother, Eawa, thus making the future saint and the future king relatives.[20]

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interest in royal genealogies inspired both authors to identify their noble Anglo-Saxon subjects with ancient and illustrious royal lines. Although Bertram Colgrave edited both Felix's *Vita sancti Guthlaci* and the anonymous *Life of Gregory the Great*, he makes no comment on the potential relationship between the two texts. From an analysis of the tropes used in both works, it seems at least possible that Felix knew the Whitby *vita*.

[16] "[A] certain man of distinguished Mercian stock named Penwalh" (Felix of Croyland, *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, pp. 72-73).

[17] "Moreover the descent of this man was traced in set order through the most noble names of famous kings, back to Icel in whom it began in days of old" (Felix of Croyland, *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, pp. 74-75).

[18] Felix of Croyland, *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, pp. 2-3.

[19] D. N. Dumville, "The Ætheling," pp. 16-17.

[20] See C. Hart, "The Kingdom of Mercia," esp. pp. 54-55. According to Hart, "When [King] Ceolred [of Mercia] died in 716 there appears to have been no eligible descendant of Penda ready to take the throne, and Æthelbald, an exile descended from a collateral branch took over," to which Hart adds, "To establish his right, Æthelbald had to go back

This linking of Guthlac to Anglo-Saxon kingship is typical of early Anglo-Saxon Christianity, as we have seen. According to Graham Caie, "Most early saints were from the royal houses and therefore possessed the royal 'luck'." [21] Rollason, taking a more materialist view, associates royalty with sainthood through aristocratic control of both the spiritual and secular spheres, arguing that "the ecclesiastical world was less distantly removed from the lay world than [hagiographic] writers would have us believe," adding that "[b]oth worlds appear to have been dominated by kings and aristocrats."[22] Despite the prevalence of royalty among early Anglo-Saxon saints, Guthlac must have been breaking with a tradition of even longer standing by choosing a religious career. As a member of an Anglo-Saxon royal family, Guthlac would have been expected to devote his life to his society's defense as the thegn of his earthly lord (as Bede plainly made clear in his admonition at the end of the *Ecclesiastical History* and in his *Letter to Ecgbert*); as a Christian hermit, Guthlac would become instead the loyal thegn of Christ.

Felix employs the imagery of Guthlac as Christ's thegn for the first time shortly after the description of his royal heritage. Chapters I-III culminate in Penwalh's choice of Guthlac's mother Tette, "coaetanea virgine inter nobilium puellarum agmina."[23]

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for four generations along his family tree" (C. Hart, "The Kingdom of Mercia," p. 54). Guthlac's own position within the royal family is unclear.

[21] G. D. Caie, "Christ as Warrior in Old English Poetry," p. 14. The concept of royal 'luck' and its relationship to sacral kingship in Germanic culture is examined at length in W. A. Chaney, *The Cult of Kingship*, esp. pp. 12-17.

[22] D. W. Rollason, *Saints and Relics*, p. 93.

Immediately following this, in chapter IV, the pregnancy is heralded by a divine portent: "Nam pius omnitenens, futurorum praescius, cui omnia praesentia persistunt, sigillum manifestandi *militis sui* internae memorationis indicium praemisit." [24] Thus Felix identifies the future saint, even before he is born, as a soldier--"militis sui"--of the ruler of heaven. The reference to Guthlac as God's soldier on its own would be unremarkable, of course, since it is a hagiographic commonplace; however, when we consider that Guthlac will be both earthly and spiritual soldier at different stages in his career, a potential for ambiguity appears in this otherwise conventional trope.[25]

Felix points up this ambiguity by a kind of pun on Guthlac's name. He associates Guthlac's naming with his role as a soldier of God and, as in the Whitby account of King Edwin, with his holy destiny. He was given the name "Guthlac" after a tribe called the *Guthlacingas* "velut ex caelesti consilio...quia ex qualitatis compositione adsequentibus

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[23] "[A] damsel of like age from among the ranks of noble maidens" (Felix of Croyland, *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, pp. 74-75).

[24] "For the Holy One Who rules all things and knows the future, to Whom all things are perpetually present, sent a sign to make His soldier known and as a token that He remembered him in His heart" (Felix of Croyland, *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, pp. 74-75, emphasis added). Felix's inclusion of this phrase at Guthlac's birth is conceptually similar to Ælfric's addition to his shorter homily, "Ða gestryndon hí þone gecorenan godes cempan martinum. and hé mærlice geðeah": "They then begat the chosen soldier of God, Martin, and he eminently throve" (Ælfric, "Depositio Sancti Martini Episcopi," p. 499). See above, p. 64 and n. 111.

[25] Since warfare was itself an aristocratic pursuit in Anglo-Saxon England, identification of Guthlac as *miles* would reinforce his royal heritage. The societal differences between the late antique, continental world of Martin and Guthlac's Anglo-Saxon England find concrete form in the differing significances of the concept *miles*. Martin's soldiering was a lower class occupation into which he was conscripted; Guthlac's was an aristocratic vocation which, according to Felix, he chose willingly.

meritis conveniebat."[26] Felix explains that the name is made up of two distinct components, "hoc est 'Guth' et 'lac', quod Romani sermonis nitore personat 'belli munus'." [27] Felix explains the appropriateness of this name by explaining that "ille cum vitiis bellando munera aeternae beatitudinis cum triumphali infula perennis vitae percepisset."[28] Thus Guthlac's name, which in traditional Anglo-Saxon society would have been associated with earthly conquest and its rewards, is linked by Felix with the spiritual struggle and its "victor's diadem of everlasting life." [29] In analyzing the name *Guthlac*, W. F. Bolton points to parallels between Felix's explanation of the name and similar use of etymological punning in the *Earliest Life of Gregory the Great*, in the "famous pun on *angel* / *Angel*" as well as Gregory's linking of the name of Ælle with *alleluia* and the Trinity, and the anonymous Whitby monk's similar association of Edwin's name with the Trinity. [30] Bolton stresses how "Felix...cites two connotations for Guthlac's name: the tribe of Guthlacingas, and the spiritual warfare which led the saint to

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[26] "[A]s though by divine plan, because by virtue of its formation, it fitted and matched his qualities" (Felix of Croyland, *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, pp. 76-77).

[27] "[W]hich in the elegant Latin tongue is 'Belli munus' (the reward of war)" (Felix of Croyland, *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, pp. 78-79).

[28] "[B]y warring against vices he was to receive the reward of eternal bliss, together with the victor's diadem of everlasting life" (Felix of Croyland, *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, pp. 78-79).

[29] Felix of Croyland, *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, p. 79.

[30] W. F. Bolton, "The Background and Meaning of *Guthlac*," p. 596. See also F. C. Robinson, "The Significance of Names in Old English Literature," pp. 43-50.

his eternal reward"; therefore, "[w]hen Guthlac turned away from the worldly combat to the spiritual, he turned, it might be said, from the literal meaning of his name to the ethical."[31] Since the name is composed of two elements and has two, contrasting meanings, the concept of duality is repeatedly imbedded in Guthlac's identity, "velut ex caelesti consilio...quia ex qualitatis compositione adsequentibus meritis conveniebat." The contrast between earthly and spiritual warfare is intrinsic to who Guthlac is and what he represents. Felix's pointed etymology suggests a new meaning for an old concept, substituting for earthly warfare's rewards of plunder and fame the less tangible rewards of spiritual strife: implicitly Felix contrasts the hollowness of mundane wealth and fame to the eternal reward of heaven. A name that initially would have suggested to an Anglo-Saxon audience the material rewards of warfare waged for an earthly lord is used to indicate instead the reward that is gained by "warring against vices," resisting the temptations of the world. During the next stage in Guthlac's life, however, he seems to give in to those earthly temptations.

Felix's treatment of Guthlac's years as a warrior is central to his development of the theme of the saint as *miles Christi*. First he says Guthlac's decision to take up arms grew out of his noble status, his adherence to heroic ideals, and a natural desire for dominance. Trained from youth in ancient wisdom, "nobilibus antiquorum disciplinis aulis in paternis," Guthlac exhibited in infancy and youth an almost Christ-like perfection.[32]

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[31] W. F. Bolton, "The Background and Meaning of *Guthlac*," pp. 595, 599-600.

[32] "[I]n the noble learning of the ancients in his father's halls" (Felix of Croyland, *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, pp. 78-79).

Then, when older, "cum adolescentiae vires increvissent, et iuvenili in pectore egregius dominandi amor fervesceret, tunc valida pristinorum heroum facta reminiscens."[33] The exact relationship between his early training, "nobilibus antiquorum disciplinis," and his decision to take up arms is unclear. Is "the noble learning of the ancients" Christian in character, or is it the source of and equivalent to the "valida pristinorum heroum facta" that he suddenly remembers "veluti ex sopore evigilatus" ?[34] Felix leaves this question unanswered. What he does make clear is that Guthlac is not at all an unwilling warrior. Felix instead considers him inspired in his sudden decision to become a warrior, although inspired not by God but by the stories of "the valiant deeds of heroes of old." [35] This is the first of two transformations that Guthlac undergoes in his youth that contrast the path of the warrior with that of the saint and underscore the duality inherent in Guthlac's identity. In the first transformation, he awakens to the glory of heroic deeds of war. This odd epiphany, "as though awaking from sleep," justifies in part his decision to pursue the heroic military life, but in doing so it also continues the ambiguity set up in earlier

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[33] "[W]hen his youthful strength had increased, and a noble desire for command burned in his young breast, he remembered the valiant deeds of heroes of old" (Felix of Croyland, *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, pp. 80-81).

[34] "[A]s though awaking from sleep" (Felix of Croyland, *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, pp. 80-81).

[35] Felix of Croyland, *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, p. 81. While this phrase may at first seem unequivocally to refer to the Germanic heroic tradition, it is possible that the "valiant deeds of the heroes of old" could conceivably include such biblical war-heroes as Joshua, Samson, and Judas Macchabeus. It is only when he has his second epiphany that the identification of the heroes with his own ancestors, the Guthlacingas, is made explicit.

passages. In the context of Guthlac's divine calling, is this transformation a normal and acceptable part of Anglo-Saxon manhood, a youthful falling into misdeeds, or even a part of his fulfillment of God's plan for "militis sui"? Is it a transformation in reverse, a sudden awakening to old Germanic traditions of warfare and heroism that seem to require an abandonment of the wisdom of the (presumably) Christian ancients, or is it the fulfillment of God's plan for "his soldier"?

Guthlac's decision to become involved in combat gives us a glimpse of a world far different from that in which Sulpicius was writing. If one is looking for cultural reflexes of the Germanic heroic tradition in Anglo-Saxon Christian literature, surely this sudden transformation, "as though awaking from sleep," to a life of heroic combat is a prime example.[36] There is considerable difference between the image of Martin dragged into the army in chains and that of Guthlac burning with "a noble desire for command ... gathering bands of followers" and going to war. Yet Felix indicates in small ways that, even for an eighth-century Anglo-Saxon, there was a growing Christian reticence about, although not an outright opposition to, war.

Felix doesn't give the sense that Guthlac's engagement in earthly warfare is a total abandonment of his predestined role as thegn or soldier of Christ. While it is true that Guthlac has begun a way of life leading to personal power and self-aggrandizement, in which he himself is the leader, the warlord, rather than being the soldier of God, Felix does not present the period of earthly warfare as entirely negative. It is a "noble desire for

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[36] Felix of Croyland, *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, p. 81.

command" that flames up in his heart, and he recalls "the valiant deeds of the heroes of old."[37] Felix then goes on to use the trope of the saintly soldier, albeit in a very limited way, and the *topoi* of the breadth of a leader's realm, his victory in battle, and the bloodthirsty nature of his opponents to imply that Guthlac is not forsaking God by engaging in warfare.

First, Felix makes it clear that Guthlac is not just a soldier but a successful warleader. His transformation causes a change in personality, but it also makes him a leader of men: "mutata mente, adgregatis satellitum turmis, sese in arma convertit."[38] Like Oswald and Edwin, who united many peoples under their rule, Guthlac achieves his victories by uniting many different men into one fighting force: "conrasis undique diversarum gentium sociis." [39] Colgrave points out that "it is clear that he must have gained some fame as a leader, for we are told that his followers came from various races and from all directions, a true indication of his military prowess."[40] Felix never directly states that Guthlac's success in uniting disparate peoples is a sign of divine favor, yet it cannot have helped but increase Guthlac's prestige in the eyes of Felix's Anglo-Saxon audience, and it is a trait Guthlac shares with the holy kings Edwin and Oswald.

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[37] Felix of Croyland, *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, p. 81.

[38] "[H]e changed his disposition and gathering bands of followers took up arms" (Felix of Croyland, *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, pp. 80-81).

[39] "[G]athering together companions from various races and from all directions" (Felix of Croyland, *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, pp. 80-81).

[40] Felix of Croyland, *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, p. 3.

In his brief treatment of Guthlac's war years, Felix supplies only a single, faint echo of the trope of the saintly soldier. This small detail undercuts to some degree the glorification of warfare, helping to communicate the idea that, in the end, the life of the warrior is not appropriate to a Christian saint. As a leader of warriors, Guthlac gains the material "guth-lac," the "belli munus" for which he was named, but, in another subtle play on the name, he doesn't keep all the rewards of war for himself: "Et cum adversantium sibi urbes et villas, villas et castella igne ferroque vastaret...inmensas praedas gregasset, tunc velut ex divino consilio edoctus tertiam partem adgregatae gazae possidentibus remittebat." [41] This is a far cry from Martin's numerous pious and charitable acts performed while still a soldier. Martin gave away all but the barest essentials to help those in need, dividing his cloak in two to share with a beggar; Guthlac divides the "immense booty" he has gathered as a result of his conquests, returning not half but "a third part of the treasure collected" to those he has plundered.[42] Faint as it may be, Felix is developing the trope of the saintly soldier here, for after all, who but a saint would return anything at all to defeated enemies? Felix's inclusion of so unlikely an act by a warleader and his insistence that it is performed "as if by divine counsel" provide a dim echo of Sulpicius's trope of the saintly soldier who behaves like an exemplary Christian even while serving as

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[41] "[B]ut when he had devastated the towns and residences of his foes, their villages and fortresses with fire and sword and...had amassed immense booty, then as if by divine counsel, he would return to the owners a third part of the treasure collected" (Felix of Croyland, *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, pp. 80-81).

[42] Felix of Croyland, *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, p. 81.

a warrior.[43] Moreover, just as a saint uses the rewards given to him by God to help others no matter how sinful and disobedient they may have been, Guthlac distributes the rewards of his earthly warfare even to his enemies. This detail gains emphasis from the summary provided for the chapter covering Guthlac's warfare, in which Felix mentions only the returning of plunder and not the warfare itself: "XVII. Quomodo tertiam partem predatae gazae possidentibus remittebat." [44] The uneasy balance of warfare and sanctity in the opening scenes of Felix's text begins to be stabilized by such pointed details.

Felix continues to resolve temporarily the sense of ambiguity he has so carefully created by emphasizing Guthlac's fame and the victories he achieves. Felix describes the period of warfare without censure. Not only does he return the rewards of war to their former owners, he achieves victories described in extravagant terms: "persecutorum suorum adversantiumque sibi hostium famosum excidium."[45] Although the word "famosus" can conceivably have a pejorative sense, the implications of "persecutorum" are not at all ambiguous. We are never told exactly whom he is fighting, but the sense is that

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[43] Felix of Croyland, *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, p. 81.

[44] "How he used to restore a third part of the pillaged treasure to the owners" (Felix of Croyland, *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, pp. 66-67). Presumably Felix himself wrote the chapter summaries that appear as a table of contents in most copies of the *Vita Sancti Guthlaci*. If not, then the emphasis given to Guthlac's returning a third of his booty in the chapter summary is evidence of the importance an early reader who copied the *Vita* found in that detail.

[45] "[G]lorious overthrow of his persecutors, foes and adversaries" (Felix of Croyland, *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, pp. 80-81). Colgrave's translation resolves the ambiguity of "famosum"; a better translation might be, "Well known overthrow of those hostile to him, of his persecutors and adversaries."

Guthlac acts as a legitimate defender against aggressors, a just warrior if not quite a holy one. Felix says that these "persecutors, foes and adversaries" had begun the fight and through Guthlac were brought to peace: "tandem defessis viribus post tot praedas, caedes rapinasque quas arma triverunt, lassi quieverunt."[46] This is not a bloodless victory, like that achieved by God's intervention on Martin's behalf, but it combines elements of the tropes of the bloodthirsty nature of a martyred warrior-king's foes and of divine approval (if not outright support) of his victories. Although he "devastated the towns and residences of his foes" and "amassed immense booty," Guthlac acts "as if by divine counsel" in his redistribution of the rewards of war. His defeat of his "persecutors" is "glorious," and through it they are brought to peace. Inspired by the "heroes of old," quick to return plundered booty to those he robs, achieving "the glorious overthrow" of enemies who in the end are forced to stop their "pillage, slaughter and rapine," Guthlac is clearly not being condemned for having engaged in these traditional Germanic acts of heroism. Instead, Felix will portray Guthlac's transformation to militant, active Christianity in much the same terms he used in describing the sudden awakening to "the valiant deeds of heroes of old."

It is instructive to see what modern historians have made of Guthlac's military career. One area of disagreement concerns the identity of Guthlac's enemies. According to Alan Thacker, Guthlac was traditionally "[a]ssociated...with hostility to the British,"

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[46] "[A]t length their strength was exhausted after all the pillage, slaughter and rapine which their arms had wrought, and, being worn out, they kept the peace" (Felix of Croyland, *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, pp. 80-81).

making him "a suitable saint for Hereford, with its situation in an area central to Æthelbald's campaigns against the Welsh."[47] Colgrave says his fighting "was presumably against the Britons,...though our knowledge of Mercian history in the latter part of the seventh century is so limited that it is not possible to say if he fought elsewhere."[48] The primary evidence connecting Guthlac with wars against Celtic enemies appears in Chapter XXXIV of the *Vita*, where, according to Colgrave, we learn "that Guthlac had been an exile among [the Britons] and had learned their language."[49] Colgrave suggests "that at some time he may have been a hostage among them, perhaps in his early youth," and goes on to note that, as "Dr. Whitelock suggests," "Guthlac's exile might, like Æthelbald's [or Edwin's, Oswald's, or Cadwalla's], be connected with his royal descent and the fear of the reigning house that he might strive for the throne."[50] The parallels to Cadwalla, discussed earlier, present interesting possibilities, nor are they immaterial to an understanding of Felix's text. It seems likely that the phrase *persecutorum suorum adversantiumque* would refer to persons in power in his own country whose persecution forced him into exile rather than "foreign" enemies. Charles-Edwards goes so far as to claim that "Guthlac's ambition does not seem to have been directed at becoming a Middle Anglian *subregulus*

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[47] A. Thacker, "Kings, Saints, and Monasteries," p. 6.

[48] Felix of Croyland, *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, p. 178.

[49] Felix of Croyland, *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, p. 3.

[50] Felix of Croyland, *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, p. 3 and n. 5.

or *princeps*, but rather king of the Mercians."[51] However accurate these suggestions may be, they cannot be substantiated by Felix's *Vita*. If Guthlac was striving for the throne of Mercia and his failure to gain it played a part in his decision to embark on a spiritual career, Felix gives us no sign.

It is meditation on his own death and its consequences, not failure to achieve his goals (or, for that matter, a sense of any sin attached to the shedding of blood), that finally motivates Guthlac to repudiate earthly combat. Nonetheless, Felix presents most fully his doubts about the appropriateness of Christian participation in warfare in Guthlac's second "awakening," this time from a pursuit of earthly glory on the battlefield to the more glorious spiritual struggle. Guthlac's transformation to a more explicitly Christian perspective, although sharing some of the broad outlines of St. Martin's renunciation of war, operates very differently from Sulpicius's trope of the unwilling, saintly soldier. Martin didn't need to be converted, since he was already living a saintly life as a soldier; Guthlac, on the other hand, must radically change his life in order to become a saint. Despite his basically positive portrait of Guthlac's soldiering, Felix describes him at the end of his nine years spent as a war leader as a man not enjoying his life of earthly conquest: "inter dubios volventis temporis eventus et atras caliginosae vitae nebulas, fluctuantes inter saeculi gurgites iacteretur."[52] Stancliffe uses Felix's description of

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[51] T. Charles-Edwards, "Early Medieval Kingships," p. 37.

[52] "[S]torm-tossed amid the uncertain events of passing years, amid the gloomy clouds of life's darkness, and amid the whirling waves of the world" (Felix of Croyland, *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, pp. 80-81).

Guthlac's state of mind to explain those of her kings who "opted out" not because they "were 'monkish' by disposition, and unsuited for the role of king" but who instead took the more sudden and "dramatic step" of "conversion to the religious life":

> Felix's *Life of St. Guthlac* may throw some light here. True, Guthlac was never a king; but he was a potential king, a man of royal blood who gathered a warband about him and lived by pillage, much as Caedwalla had done before he seized power in Wessex. For nine years Guthlac immersed himself in "the glorious overthrow of his adversaries...by frequent blows and devastations." Then one night he saw his life differently. [53]

Stancliffe is right in emphasizing the sudden transformation Guthlac must make, even if she makes no mention of the ambiguity Felix has developed. Beset by doubts, Guthlac undergoes an epiphany in which he sees the insignificance of earthly warfare's rewards beside the glory of a life in Christ:

> Itaque cum...Guthlac..., quadam nocte, dum fessa membra solitae quieti dimitteret et adsueto more vagabunda mente sollicitus curas mortales intenta meditatione cogitaret, mirum dictu! extimplo velut perculsus pectore, spiritalis flamma omnia praecordia supra memorati viri incendere coepit. Nam cum antiquorum regum stirpis suae per transacta retro saecula miserabiles exitus flagitioso viate termino contemplaretur, necnon et caducas mundi divitias contemtibilemque temporalis vitae gloriam pervigili mente consideraret, tunc sibi proprii obitus sui imaginata forma ostentatur, et finem inevitabilem brevis vitae curiosa mente horrescens, cursum cotidiae ad finem cogitabat ... subito instigante divino numine se ipsum famulum Christi venturum fore, si in crastinum vitam servasset, devovit. [54]

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[53] C. Stancliffe, "Kings Who Opted Out," pp. 166-67.

[54] "And so when ... Guthlac ... abandoned his weary limbs one night to their accustomed rest; his wandering thoughts were as usual anxiously contemplating mortal affairs in earnest meditation, when suddenly, marvellous to tell, a spiritual flame, as though it had pierced his breast, began to burn in this man's heart. For when, with wakeful mind, he contemplated the wretched deaths and the shameful ends of the ancient kings of his race in the course of the past ages, and also the fleeting riches of this world and the contemptible glory of this temporal life, then in imagination the form of his own death revealed itself to him; and, trembling with anxiety at the inevitable finish of this brief life, he perceived that its course daily moved to that end.... [S]uddenly by the prompting of the divine majesty,

This second "awakening" Guthlac experiences includes a spiritual flame ("spiritalis flamma") that acts as the Holy Spirit or the Hand of God, causing him abruptly to change his mind once again, perhaps returning to the path he seemed to have been on before embarking on his military career. Yet the question remains unanswered: was he following God's plan for him even before this second transformation? Was he perhaps a soldier of Christ in training, learning the skills necessary for successful struggle against the spiritual foes he would eventually face?

Felix appears unable to decide between two contrasting perspectives on Guthlac's earthly combat: is it reprehensible or "glorious"? Is his desire to follow the "heroes of old" admirable, or is it part of the same misguided heroism as "the wretched deaths and the shameful ends of the ancient kings of his race in the course of the past ages" and "the fleeting riches of this world and the contemptible glory of this temporal life"?[55] The answer may be: both. The carefully constructed duality depends for its force on the obvious heroism of earthly combat and the transitory, ephemeral value of earthly rewards. Bolton argues that, "In his conversion, Guthlac completed the illustration of the moral polarity which was suggested in the first appearance of his name and the attendant discussion."[56] Yet Guthlac's decision to undergo a spiritual transformation would be

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he vowed that, if he lived until the next day, he himself would become a servant of Christ" (Felix of Croyland, *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, pp. 80-83).

[55] Felix of Croyland, *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, p. 83.

[56] W. F. Bolton, "The Background and Meaning of *Guthlac*," p. 600.

undercut by any condemnation of the choice he is rejecting. Felix instead glorified the earthly combat of Guthlac, perhaps seeing in it echoes of the *Aeneid*, the main classical source with which he supplemented his patristic learning.[57] Instead of a simplistic dualism between good and evil, Felix presents the more complex and nuanced contrast between two forms of *munus* or *lac*, one having obvious and immediate value while the other hides its value behind much that is unattractive and undesirable. Rather than an inept and unsophisticated blending of "Germanic" and Christian elements, Felix's *Vita* is a masterful excursus on the relationship between earthly and spiritual warfare. Only a man as loyal, courageous, bold, and resourceful as a warrior could hope to survive the hardships the lonely hermit would face.

The conflict between earthly and eternal rewards, and between physical and spiritual combat, is at last resolved when Guthlac abandons the role of military leader and embarks on a new spiritual career, first as a monk at Repton, and later as a lone hermit on an island in the East Anglian fens. In abandoning aspects of the life he has been leading, Guthlac is not rejecting the actions themselves, the heroic deeds of arms, but is now recognizing that success amounts to nothing if it does not save your soul. He is thus, in Michael Swanton's words, a man "who wearied of the warrior life" but who was able to "carry [his] warfare into another, no less real, dimension in which conflict may still be physically perceived.."[58] Yet to do so he has to accept the role of subordinate, as a mere servant to his lord, going from leader of men to a "famulus Christi," a servant and

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[57] For evidence of Felix's reliance on Virgil, see Colgrave 17 and 204.

follower. As a loyal thegn follows his leader, a "miles Christi" follows his Lord. Unlike Edwin and Oswald, whose divine destiny led them to earthly rule, Guthlac faces a life of continual hardship, far from the centers of civilization and power in Anglo-Saxon England. Yet a powerful king, destined to a long and successful reign, will appear repeatedly in the chapters that follow, allowing Felix to show the superiority of his own saintly hero to a man like Edwin, or even, perhaps, to another saint like Oswald. To Felix, Guthlac's life of renunciation and deprivation is an example of true heroism.

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[58] M. Swanton, *English Literature before Chaucer*, p. 14.

III

Felix uses the term *miles Christi* and its counterparts (*miles Dei*, etc.) sparingly in the remainder of the text. Having shown Guthlac to be a valiant warrior in earthly combat, he needs merely to remind the reader of that aspect of Guthlac's image from time to time in order to reactivate the cognitive schema provided by the opening chapters. Once Guthlac has taken up his new role as hermit, Felix portrays his daily struggles against temptations and mental and physical hardships in military terms, as heroic conflicts with warrior demons, wielding weapons of spiritual warfare. It is tempting to see in these details, as others have, a reflexive glorification of war in keeping with the Germanic warrior code; yet such a reading ignores the contrast between earthly and spiritual warfare that Felix has so carefully established in the opening chapters. Guthlac has renounced earthly warfare forever, but he has not lost those attributes--courage, hardiness, zeal--that made him an outstanding warrior. He is finally putting those manly attributes to sacred use.

The first use of the concept of the soldier of God, when the divine portent is described in Chapter IV, has already been examined. The next instance involves a specialized scene of the "arming of the hero" that combines the epic *topos* from classical literature with St. Paul's description of the armor of God from Ephesians 6, 10-17 (by way of Jerome's *Vita Pauli*, as demonstrated by Gernot Wieland).[59]

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[59] G. Wieland, "The Arming of Guthlac."

> Erat ergo annorum circiter viginti sex, cum se inter nubilosos remotioris heremi lucos cum caelesti adiutorio veri Dei militem esse proposuit. Deinde praecinctus spiritalibus armis adversus teterrimi hostis insidias scutum fidei, loricam spei, galeam castitatis, arcum patientiae, sagittas psalmodiae, sese in aciem firmams, arripuit. Tantae enim fiduciae erat, inter torridas tartari turmas sese contemto hoste iniecerit. [60]

Numerous pieces of martial imagery combine to create the effect of this passage, including the arming itself (which is longer and more elaborate than Alcuin's similar description in his "Scriptum de Vita S. Martini Turonensis" discussed in Chapter One), the epithet *veri Dei militem*, and the repeated characterization of Satan and his demons as foes (*hostis, hoste)* and troops (*turmas*).[61] Similar passages occur elsewhere in Anglo-Saxon literature, most notably in Bede's *Vita Cuthberti*, but here it is precisely the interaction between martial metaphor and abandoned martial career that gives the images force (just as the comparable passage in Alcuin's "Scriptum" harks back to Martin's military life). Felix demonstrated Guthlac's courage as a warrior in earthly combat, and here he reveals similar fortitude in facing the warfare of the spirit. In subsequent chapters, Felix describes

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[60] "He was ... about twenty-six years of age, when he determined with heavenly aid to be a soldier of the true God amid the gloomy thickets of that remote desert. Then girding himself with spiritual arms against the wiles of the foul foe, he took the shield of faith, the breastplate of hope, the helmet of chastity, the bow of patience, the arrows of psalmody, making himself strong for the fight. So great in fact was his confidence that, despising the foe, he hurled himself against the torrid troops of Tartarus" (Felix of Croyland, *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, pp. 90-91).

[61] Compare Alcuin: "[S]anctus Martinus, post relictum militiæ cingulum, sociavit, ut tanti viri eruditus exemplis Christianam fortior processisset ad pugnam, fidei armatus galea, et lorica justitiæ accinctus, gladio verbi Dei armatus, intrepidus contra omnia tela maligni bellator muniretur" (Alcuin, "Scriptum de Vita S. Martini Turonensis," p. 659).

Guthlac's struggles with temptation as battles against different weapons wielded by Satan, against which the well-armed warrior-saint must defend himself.

The first such scene occurs in Chapter XXIX, after Guthlac has established his hermitage in the fens. The chapter is entitled, "Quomodo primam tentationem disperationis a Satana pertulerit." [62]

> Sub eodem denique tempore,...cum quodam die adsueta consuetudine psalmis canticisque incumberet, tunc antiquus hostis prolis humanae, ceu leo rugiens, per vasti aetheris spatia tetra numina commutans novas artes novo pectore versat. Cum enim omnes nequitiae suae vires versuta mente temptaret, tum veluti ab extenso arcu venenifluam desperationis sagittam totis viribus iaculavit, quousque in Christi militis mentis umbone defixa pependit. Interea cum telum toxicum atri veneni sucum infunderet, tum miles Christi totis sensibus turbatus de eo, quod incoeperat, desperare coepit.... [63]

This first struggle between Guthlac and temptation, in the form of despair, is portrayed as a battle between Satan, "the ancient foe of the human race," and the soldier of Christ. According to John Hermann, "The missiles of the devil constitute a frequently recurring motif for the warfare between good and evil within the soul of man."[64] Felix employs the

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[62] "How he endured the first temptation, namely that of despair, sent by Satan" (Felix of Croyland, *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, pp. 94-95).

[63] "And so about [that] time..., he was engaged one day upon his usual task of singing psalms and hymns, while the ancient foe of the human race, like a lion roaring through the spaces of the limitless sky, was ever varying his foul demonic might and pondering anew fresh designs. So, testing all his wicked powers, with crafty mind he shot, as from a bow fully drawn, a poisoned arrow of despair with all his might, so that it stuck fast in the very centre of the mind of the soldier of Christ. Now when meanwhile the poisoned weapon had poured in its potion of black venom, then every feeling of the soldier of Christ was disturbed by it, and he began to despair about what he had undertaken..." (Felix of Croyland, *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, pp. 94-97).

[64] J. P. Hermann, *Allegories of War*, p. 41.

allegorical image as a physical combat fought against real enemies. The arrow of despair is poisoned, "arcu veninifluam...telum toxicum atri veneni," yet the saint, like a true soldier, resists valiantly.[65] Felix repeats the phrase *miles Christi*, not only the two times above but again when he describes how Saint Bartholomew comes to him and relieves his mood of despair: "[d]ie autem tertio sequenti nocte, cum validissimus miles Christi robusta mente pestiferis meditationibus resisteret." [66] Later Guthlac is "veluti miles inter densas acies dimicans," and he reveals typical warrior virtues, "indissolum eximiae valitudinis fidem," gaining a victory that inspires hope of future success, "ex primi certaminis triumphali successu spem futurae gloriae et victoriae robusto pectore firmabat."[67] After this defeat, Satan must turn to new weapons: "Ex illo enim tempore numquam zabulus adversus illum desperationis arma arripuit, quia ab illo semel infracta contra illum ultra praevalere nequiverunt."[68] As a true warrior of Christ, Guthlac will turn aside every weapon raised against him.

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[65] Felix of Croyland, *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, pp. 94-96.

[66] "[O]n the third day at nightfall, while the most valiant soldier of Christ, still stout of heart, was resisting these baleful thoughts" (Felix of Croyland, *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, pp. 96-97).

[67] "[L]ike a soldier fighting in the serried ranks...with constancy and uncommon strength....[F]rom the triumphant success of his first battle, the hope of future glory and victory grew strong in his robust heart" (Felix of Croyland, *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, pp. 96-99).

[68] "From that time never indeed did the devil seize the weapon of despair to use against him, because once Guthlac had broken it, it could never prevail against him" (Felix of Croyland, *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, pp. 98-99).

His spiritual foes find ingenious ways to attack him. In the next chapter, two devils use a much subtler device to tempt him. They urge him to inflict wounds on himself through seemingly acceptable practices: fasting and mortification of the flesh. They say to him:

> "Nos experti sumus te, et fidei tuae valitudinem conperimus, perseverantiamque patientiae tuae invincibilem probantes, variarum artium adversus te arma suscepimus. Propterea insultare tibi ultra desistere conamur, et non solum propositi tui ortonomias disrumpere nolumnus, sed te antiquorum heremitarum conversationes erudiemus." [69]

Even a passage like this, concerned with self-sacrifice, is replete with the language of heroism and conflict: *valitudinem*, *invincibilem*, *arma*, *insultare*. The demons pretend to abandon their hostile attitude, but a well-placed military metaphor signals their true intention (as if any such signal was needed) when they suggest to him that "famosi illi monachi habitantes Aegytptum humanae infirmitatis vitia abstinentiae framea interimebant." [70] Yet against this temptation to break the moderation of his regimen through more extreme practices, Guthlac again conquers, and "[e]xin vir Dei inmundorum

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[69] "We have tried you ... and have tested the power of your faith: we have tried your unconquerable perseverance and patience: we have taken up against you weapons and wiles of various kinds. Therefore we intend to desist from assaulting you further; and not only are we unwilling to destroy the rules of your undertaking, but we will instruct you in the lives of the ancient hermits" (Felix of Croyland, *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, pp. 98-99).

[70] "[T]hose famous monks who inhabited Egypt destroyed the vices of human weakness with the sword of abstinence" (Felix of Croyland, *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, pp. 98-99). The *framea*, translated by Colgrave as "sword," is actually a kind of German spear.

spirituum fantasmata, percepto ubique certandi bravio, contempsit."[71] Felix presents Guthlac as a victorious hero in the spiritual battle.

The next major scene involving images of warfare comes when Guthlac, in a vision, sees a band of the Anglo-Saxons' earthly enemies. It is a time of conflict between Britons and Saxons: "Brittones, infesti hostes Saxonici generis, bellis, praedis, publicisque vastationibus Anglorum gentem deturbarent."[72] Colgrave dismisses historians' speculations about Felix preserving evidence of Celtic remnants hiding in the fens, instead analyzing the conflict within its hagiographic context: "These Britons are obviously devils in disguise. The story forms one of a series...intended to show Guthlac's power over devils."[73] Despite its historical importance in highlighting the ongoing struggles between Anglo-Saxon and British societies, this scene functions within the text to show how Guthlac extends the heroic values of earthly warfare into the spiritual realm:

> [V]isum est sibi tumultuantis turbae audisse clamores. Tunc dicto citius levi somno expergefactus, extra cellulam, qua sedebat, egressus est, et arrectis auribus adstans, verba loquentis vulgi Brittannicaque agmina tectis succedere agnoscit; nam ille aliorum temporum praeteritis voluminibus inter illos exulabat, quoadusque eorum strimulentas loquelas intelligere valuit. Nec mora; per palustria tectis subvenire certantes, eodem paene momento omnes domus suas flamma superante

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[71] "Thereafter the man of God ... , having obtained everywhere the prize in the fight ...[,] despised the phantoms and foul spirits" (Felix of Croyland, *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, pp. 100-01).

[72] "[T]he Britons the implacable enemies of the Saxon race, [who] were troubling the English with their attacks, their pillaging, and their devastations of the people" (Felix of Croyland, *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, pp. 108-09).

[73] Felix of Croyland, *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, p. 185.

> ardere conspicit; illum quoque intercipientes acutis hastarum spiculis in auras levare coeperunt. [74]

The fact that Guthlac had been an exile among the British, mentioned here only in passing to explain his ability to understand their speech, links Guthlac's period of soldiering with the time of exile and tribulation that we saw in the accounts of Edwin and Cadwalla (and that we will see again in the *Vita Guthlaci* in regard to Æthelbald). The emphasis is not so much on a period of earthly hardship as on the parallel between temporal and spiritual conflict. Just as a warleader would know how to repulse such an enemy attack, Guthlac understands the nature of the spiritual assault: "Tum vero vir Dei tandem hostis pellacis millenis artibus millenas formas persentiens, velut prophetico ore sexagesimi septimi psalmi primum versum psallebat...; quo audito, dicto velocius eodem momento omnes daemoniorum turmae velut fumus a facie eius evanuerunt."[75] Guthlac's weapons have changed, but his success in battle remains constant.

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[74] "[I]t seemed to him that he heard the shouts of a tumultous crowd. Then, quicker than words, he was aroused from his light sleep and went out of the cell in which he was sitting; standing, with ears alert, he recognized the words that the crowd were saying, and realized that British hosts were approaching his dwelling: for in years gone by he had been an exile among them, so that he was able to understand their sibilant speech. Straightway they strove to approach his dwelling through the marshes, and at almost the same moment he saw all his buildings burning, the flames mounting upwards: indeed they caught him too and began to lift him into the air on the sharp points of their spears" (Felix of Croyland, *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, pp. 110-11).

[75] "Then at length the man of God, perceiving the thousand-fold forms of this insidious foe and his thousand-fold tricks, sang the first verse of the sixty-seventh psalm as if prophetically....: when they had heard this, at the same moment, quicker than words, all the hosts of demons vanished like smoke" (Felix of Croyland, *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, pp. 110-11).

In the next chapter, a cleric named Beccel who has begun to take on the role of Guthlac's follower becomes possessed by demons and attempts to stab Guthlac to death:

> Cuius praecordia malignus spiritus ingressus, pestiferis vanae gloriae fastibus illum inflare coepit ac deinde, postquam tumidis inanis fasti flatibus illum seduxit, admonere ipsum quoque exorsus est, ut dominum suum, sub cuius disciplinis Deo vivere initiavit, arrepta letali machera necaret, hoc ipsius animo proponens, ut, et, si ipsum interimere potuisset, locum ipsius postea, cum maxima regum principumque venerantia, habiturus foret. [76]

The emotional motivation (*vanae gloriae*), weapon (*letali machera*), proposed action (*necaret*), and ultimate goal (*maxima regum principumque venerantia*) all recall earthly warfare and its motive forces. The description of his mood as he acts reinforces the martial imagery of the event--"ingenti dementia vexatus, viri Dei immenso desiderio sanguinem sitiens, indubius illum occidere successit."[77] Like Martin before him, who disarmed assailants without striking a blow, Guthlac achieves a bloodless victory, dissuading Beccel from carrying out his intentions. Beccel subsequently becomes Guthlac's most loyal follower, a kind of saintly thegn.

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[76] "But an evil spirit entered his heart and began to puff him up with pestiferous arrogance and vainglory; then after his swollen and empty pride had seduced him with its vanity, he also began to urge him to take a death-dealing sword and slay the master under whose teaching he had begun to live in the service of God. The devil suggested to him that if he could slay him, he would afterwards live in Guthlac's dwelling and also enjoy the [highest] veneration of kings and princes" (Felix of Croyland, *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, pp. 112-13). In the final phrase Felix looks ahead to the end of the *Vita*, when a prince soon to become a king will be shown kneeling at Guthlac's tomb.

[77] "[H]e was seized with a violent madness, and thirsting with an overwhelming lust for the blood of the man of God, without hesitation he approached to slay him" (Felix of Croyland, *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, pp. 112-13).

Finally, in Chapter XXXVI, a band of demons disguised as animals assaults "veri Dei verum militem."[78] The use of this martial epithet links the threat from wild beasts to the military theme developed throughout this section. Just as Beowulf in the famous Anglo-Saxon poem displays his strength and bravery when he fights non-human enemies, Guthlac draws on his heroic qualities to face down a host of demonic monsters: "leo rugiens dentibus sanguineis..., taurus vero mugitans, unguibus terram defodiens,... ursus denique infrendens, validis ictibus brachia commutans."[79] Thus Guthlac successfully faces down the arrows, spears, swords, teeth and claws of his spiritual adversaries, "contra insidias lubrici hostis saepe certando triumphabat." [80] The intensity of martial imagery lessens from this point on, but Guthlac's projection of his heroic qualities into the new spiritual struggles has been clearly established.

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[78] "[T]he true soldier of the true God" (Felix of Croyland, *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, pp. 114-15).

[79] "[A] roaring lion...with its bloody teeth,...a bellowing bull [digging] up the up the earth with its hoofs...; a bear, gnashing its teeth and striking violently with either paw alternately" (Felix of Croyland, *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, pp. 114-15). Other beasts described include the snake, wolf, raven, horse, ox, and boar.

[80] "[F]requently triumphing in the fight against the snares of the deceitful foe" (Felix of Croyland, *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, pp. 110-11).

IV

There are a few other points in the remainder of the *Vita* in which Felix uses military images or the term *miles Christi* and its equivalents, but he shifts his focus away from the image of the soldier of Christ toward the hagiographic tradition of martyred warrior-kings through the close association of Guthlac with a future Anglo-Saxon king, Æthelbald of Mercia. Like Paulinus and King Edwin, Aidan and King Oswald, or Wilfrid and the future-king Cadwalla, Guthlac becomes Æthelbald's spiritual advisor, but in this story the holy man will guide his secular counterpart toward a transformation of his own.[81] Guthlac remains Felix's main concern, but the saint now performs miracles of a more peaceful type. Instead of fighting off the attacks of demons, he heals the sick in body or mind, befriends and controls animals, and reveals supernatural knowledge of events far off in place or time. Guthlac has already been transformed into a saint, but Æthelbald is still waiting for his own transformation.

Felix first mentions Æthelbald in Chapter XL. There he accompanies a friend of Guthlac, a cleric named Wilfrid, to Croyland:

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[81] Guthlac's relationship to Æthelbald most closely resembles that of Wilfrid and Cadwalla, since both relationships are formed in the period before the kings achieve their crowns, but it is fundamentally different in that, unlike Cadwalla, Æthelbald is already a Christian. Felix also presents Guthlac as directly responsible for Æthelbald's ascendancy through the saint's intercession with God on the ætheling's behalf; Eddius makes no claim for Wilfrid's direct intervention in Cadwalla's rise to power.

> Neque tacendum quoque esse arbitror quoddam praefati viri providentiae miraculum. Erat itaque, sub eodem tempore, quidam exul de inclita Merciorum prole, vocabulo Æðelbald, qui quadam die, ut adsolebat, virum Dei visitare malens, comite praefato Wilfrith, adepta rate, usque insulam praedictam pervenit. [82]

Felix combines a number of elements in this passage that recall the trope of providential preservation through adversity. First, he describes the miracle as one of prescience or foreknowledge (*providentiae miraculum*), a type of miracle often associated with the trope (as, for example, in the case of the prophecies made by Edwin's mysterious visitant). Felix's description of the event seems slightly overblown, since the specific miracle about to be described merely involves the knowledge, mysteriously obtained, that a pair of ravens had stolen Wilfrid's gloves, as well as the saint's cheerful assurance that God would provide for their return.[83] The incident itself has a playful tone, but through it Felix associates Æthelbald from the first with divine providence, an important element in the trope of providential preservation through adversity. Felix also associates Æthelbald with exile (*quidam exul*) and royalty (*de inclita Merciorum prole*), but he does not explicitly identify him as the future king. The delay in identifying the exile will accentuate the

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[82] "Nor do I think that one ought to be silent either about a miracle of foresight wrought by the same man. Now there was at that time a certain Æthelbald of famous Mercian stock who on one occasion, when wishing according to his wont to visit the man of God accompanied by the aforesaid Wilfrid, took a boat and came to this same island" (Felix of Croyland, *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, pp. 124-25).

[83] As noted in Chapter Two, ravens appear frequently in hagiographic accounts involving royal or noble persons. There is a biblical connection to the raven (especially Elijah being fed by ravens), but there is also a pagan Germanic association of the raven with Woden and, perhaps, to Woden-descended kings. See W. A. Chaney, *The Cult of Kingship*, pp. 5-6, 22, 118-19, 132-35. (Check which references are to pillars of light, which to crows or ravens!!!) Felix includes numerous incidents involving Guthlac's ravens.

sudden change that will transform him into a king, and the minor miracle will foreshadow two much more important examples of Guthlac's prescience in regard to Æthelbald.

The next series of references to the exiled Mercian nobleman serve to keep Æthelbald in the reader's mind without clarifying his significance to the *Vita* as a whole, just as continuing references to violence and warfare subtly keep alive the image of Guthlac as *miles Christi*. For example, before mentioning Æthelbald a second time, Felix presents an intervening chapter in which a young man, who like Æthelbald and Guthlac is from a noble family, murders a number of men with an ax in a fit of madness. Guthlac subsequently cures him. Guthlac's ability to turn the young man away from senseless acts of violence is consistent with his role as a former warrior who has undergone a spiritual transformation, and it foreshadows Guthlac's role in leading the exiled Æthelbald to be transformed into a holy king. When in the following chapter Æthelbald is again mentioned, he is once more identified only as an exile, although this time his relationship to one of his followers is highlighted: "Alio quoque tempore, cum praefati exulis Æðelbaldi comes quidam, vocabulo Ecga, ab inmundi spiritus validissima vexatione miserabiliter grassaretur, ita ut quid esset vel quo sederet vel quid parabat facere nesciret."[84] The fact that Felix identifies Æthelbald's follower as a *comes* might have served to clarify in part the exile's status for his Anglo-Saxon readers. The Latin word

[84] "At another time too a certain *gesith* of the before-mentioned exile Æthelbald, named Ecga, was miserably attacked by the extreme violence of an unclean spirit, so that he did not know what he was or where he dwelt or what he was about to do" (Felix of Croyland, *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, pp. 131-33).

comes originally meant simply a companion, but according to Colgrave it had taken on a more specific meaning in Anglo-Saxon society:

> The word is perhaps best translated by the Old English word *gesith* though the O. E. translation always uses *gefera* as an equivalent, which simply means companion. *Gesith*, which also meant companion, came to mean companion of the king, and so a member of the upper classes. In the Old English translation of Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*, *comes* is nearly always rendered *gesith*. [85]

Albertson also comments on Felix's use of the word *comes*: The earliest ordinary Anglo-Saxon noble ... seems to have been a "companion" of the king (Latin: *comes*; Anglo-Saxon: *gesiđ*) a young man serving in the personal entourage (Latin: *comitatus*) of a king." He goes on to say that "*comes* seems to have long remained as a general term for noble; though in Bede, and in Northumbrian writing generally, it is reserved for a *gesiđ*-with-property." [86] Here, in an East Anglian text written not long after Bede's death, the term seems to connote not a nobleman in general, a "*gesiđ*-with-property," or "a young man serving in the personal entourage ... of a king," but the equivalent follower of a lord below the rank of king. This use would agree with Richard Abels's analysis that lordship, not kingship, was the basic bond of the Anglo-Saxon social order.[87] Rather than identifying Æthelbald as royal, Felix would seem to be saying that Æthelbald was a warleader and that Ecgga was his *gesiđ*, a member of his *comitatus*. As an exile, Æthelbald would not have had land to give a follower, but according to Abels:

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[85] Felix of Croyland, *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, p. 189.

[86] C. Albertson, trans., *Anglo-Saxon Saints and Heroes*, p. 10, n. 24.

[87] R. P. Abels, *Lordship and Military Obligation*.

> The retainers of a nobleman were duty-bound to follow him into exile if he fell from the king's favor.... One was morally obliged to follow one's lord into exile, enduring all the hardships that he was forced to bear. If, moreover, a nobleman did not accept meekly but waged war against the king, as happened so often in the turbulent seventh and eighth centuries, his men were expected to fight at his side.[88]

A man followed by a *comes* would at least be a nobleman, and perhaps even an atheling. Certainly he would be of elevated status. Whether this would be enough to identify him as a potential ruler is less certain. Abels says that the "ætheling's noble descent gave him the right to gather about him a war band," but whether a nobleman below the level of atheling, a mere *gesith*, could also gather together such a band is less clear.[89] How far downward through the social ranks did the standard relationship of lord to follower go? The reference to Æthelbald's *comes* carries overtones of the bonds between men in battle, whether physical or spiritual, and concentrates the reader's attention on the exile's status.

Another such reference comes in Chapter XLV, in which Felix describes how widely Guthlac's fame had spread. Felix insists that all ranks of life ("multi diversorum

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[88] R. P. Abels, *Lordship and Military Obligation*, pp. 16-17.

[89] R. P. Abels, *Lordship and Military Obligation*, p. 18. It is possible that an Anglo-Saxon audience already would have identified Æthelbald as an ætheling and the leader of a warband based on Felix's identification of him as *quidam exul ... de inclita Merciorum prole* in Chapter XL. The evidence from hagiographic sources seems to indicate that the exile of potential heirs to the throne was common during this period. Perhaps men of lower ranks would have been exiled for other reasons and would have taken followers along with them into exile, although I know of no documentary evidence supporting this possibility. Abels cites Aldhelm's admonishment to St Wilfrid's monastic followers to accompany him into exile from Northumbria (pp. 16-17).

ordinum gradus, abbates, fratres, comites, divites, vexati, pauperes"), and people from all parts of Britain ("non solum de proximis Merciorum finibus, verum etiam de remotis Brittaniae partibus") seek out Guthlac's aid.[90] This image, although a commonplace in hagiography, faintly parallels the providential expansion of rule trope in the tradition of martyred warrior-kings.[91] It is interesting, however, that Felix gives no examples of pilgrims from other regions seeking Guthlac's aid, but instead turns again to another of Æthelbald's followers: "veniebat inter alios quidam comes praedicti exulis Æthelbaldi Oba nomine ad verbocinium beati viri Guthlaci."[92] Oba comes to Guthlac after a thorn becomes imbedded in his foot and the infection endangers his life. After Guthlac's healing treatment, involving the binding of the wound with Guthlac's rough clothing, the thorn

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[90] "[M]any people of various ranks ... abbots, brethern, *gesithas*, rich men, the afflicted and the poor ... not only from the neighboring land of the Mercians, but also even from the remote parts of Britain" (Felix of Croyland, *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, pp. 138-139). Note that Felix here uses the term *comes* (*comites*) as a rank of society, a *gradus*, and not merely as a type of relationship. See *The Anglo-Saxon Version of the Life of St. Guthlac*, p. 66, where the translator uses the term *ealdormen* to translate *comites*. For more discussion of the translation of this passage, see the discussion of the *Old English Life of St Guthlac* below.

[91] Colgrave identifies this passage as being based "on Bede's descriptions of the crowds who flock to St Cuthbert" in Bede's *Vita Cuthberti*, but points out that both authors were drawing from Evagrius's Latin translation of the 28th chapter of Athanasius's *Vita Antonii* (Felix of Croyland, *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, pp. 17, 189).

[92] " [T]here came amongst others a retainer of this same exile Æthelbad, named Ofa, to speak with the blessed Guthlac" (Felix of Croyland, *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, pp. 138-39). Both Albertson and Colgrave point out that a man named Ofa appears in the charters of Æthelbald first as a *minister* and later as an *ealdorman*; Albertson commenting that he was thus "rewarded for staying with his lord in exile" (Albertson C. Albertson, trans., *Anglo-Saxon Saints and Heroes*, p. 204, n. 48; Felix of Croyland, *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, p. 190).

shoots out of the wound like an arrow from a bow: "velut sagitta ab arcu dimissa." [93] Felix asserts that people of all walks of life from all over Britain came to receive Guthlac's healing powers, but he continues to emphasize the loyal retainers of the exiled Æthelbald.

Felix presents Æthelbald's own most important meeting with Guthlac in Chapter XLIX, just before Guthlac's death. Æthelbald is described again as an exile, but now Felix adds information that makes it clear that Æthelbald (like Edwin, Cadwalla, or even Guthlac himself in his youth) was living a life of hardship on the margins of society through the enmity of a king:

> Quodam enim tempore, cum exul ille,...Æthelbald, huc illucque, persequente illum Ceolredo rege, in diversis nationibus iactaretur, alia die, deficiente virium ipsius valitudine suorumque inter dubia pericula, postquam exinanitae vires defecere, tandem ad colloquium sancti viri Guthlaci, ut adsolebat, pervenit, ut, quando humanum consilium defecisset, divinum adesset. [94]

There are clear parallels between Guthlac's own period of exile among the Britons and Æthelbald's time spent "in diversis nationibus"; between Guthlac's band of followers and those who follow Æthelbald (*suorumque*); and between the state of mental collapse Guthlac experienced before his "conversion" and the mood of trouble and despair in which the young exile comes to see the hermit. Yet Guthlac does not preach as he practices; he does not advise Æthelbald to follow in his footsteps and abandon the hopes and cares of

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[93] Felix of Croyland, *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, p. 140.

[94] "Now at a certain time when the exile Æthelbald ... was being driven hither and thither by King Coelred and tossed about by divers peoples, one day amid doubts and dangers when his endurance and that of his followers was failing, and when his strength was utterly exhausted, he came at last to speak with the holy man Guthlac, as was his custom, in order that, when human counsels had failed, he might seek divine counsel" (Felix of Croyland, *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, pp. 148-49).

the world for the promises and trials of the spirit. Instead he foretells future worldly success for the atheling, in the spirit (and perhaps even in imitation) of the mysterious visitant to Edwin in a similar moment of despair:

> "O mi puer, laborum tuorum non sum expers, miseriarum tuarum ab exordio vitae tuae non sum inscius; propterea misertus calamitatis tuae rogavi Dominum, ut subveniret tibi in miseratione sua, et ... tribuit tibi dominationem gentis tuae et posuit te principem populorum, et cervices inimicorum tuorum subtus calcaneum tuum rediget, et possessiones eorum possidebis, et fugient a facie tua qui te oderunt, et terga eorum videbis, et gladius tuus vincet adversarios tuos." [95]

Like Edwin and Oswald, Æthelbald is destined to rise from his position of insecurity and exile to rule over his people, and like them his victories will be granted by God. The biblical echoes in this passage are strong, as Colgrave documents, and Felix clearly associates Guthlac with Old Testament prophets, blessing the chosen agent of God's will for an earthly kingdom. Through Guthlac's words, Felix blesses and sanctifies the warfare Æthelbald will engage in as a king, yet Felix also presents significant limitations on the warlike acts of the future king: "'Non in praeda nec in rapina regnum tibi dabitur, sed de manu Domini obtinebis; exspecta eum, cuius defecerunt, quia manus Domini opprimit illum, cuius spes in maligno posita est, et dies illius velut umbra petransibunt'."[96] God will

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[95] "'O, my child, I am not without knowledge of your afflictions: I am not ignorant of your miseries from the beginning of your life: therefore, having had pity on your calamities, I have asked the Lord to help you in His pitifulness; and He has...granted you to rule over your race and has made you chief over the peoples; and He will bow down the necks of your enemies beneath your heel and you shall own their possessions; those who hate you shall flee from your face and you shall see their backs; and your sword shall overcome your foes" (Felix of Croyland, *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, pp. 148-51).

[96] "'Not as booty nor as spoil shall the kingdom be granted you, but you shall obtain it from the hand of God; wait for him whose life has been shortened, because the hand of

grant Æthelbald victory in battle against his enemies once he is a king, but he will come to the throne peacefully, because God has already foreshortened the days of the present ruler. Felix implies that the warfare waged by a king has the blessing of God, but not the *praeda* and *rapina* of many a young atheling. Thus Felix links the ascension of Æthelbald to the Mercian throne with the period of Guthlac's leadership of the warband, repeating the same words used in earlier passages to designate both the actions of Guthlac's enemies (*post tot praedas, caedes rapinasque*) and, most significantly, Guthlac's own victories (*inmensas praedas gregasset*). The trope of spiritual transformation, as developed here by Felix, shows two parallel elements: the warrior chosen by God to be a *miles Christi* will be transformed from soldier to saint, but the warrior chosen by God to be a holy king will be transformed from a persecuted exile into a widespread and powerful ruler. Felix ends this chapter asserting the veracity of Guthlac's prophecy, calling on the readers' own knowledge of Æthelbald's rise to power as confirmation:

> ex illo tempore Æthelbald spem suam in Domino posuit, nec vana spes illum fefellit, nam eodem modo, ordine positioneque omnia, quae de illo vir Dei praedixerat, et non aliter contigerunt, sicut praesentis rei praesens effectus conprobat. [97]

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the Lord oppresses him whose hope lies in wickedness, and whose days shall pass away like a shadow'" (Felix of Croyland, *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, pp. 150-51).

[97] "[F]rom that time Æthelbald placed his hope in the Lord. Nor did an idle hope deceive him; for all these things which the man of God had prophesied about him happened in this very way, in this very order and setting, and not otherwise, as the actual outcome of present events proves" (Felix of Croyland, *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, pp. 150-51).

We know that some elements in this purported prophecy did come true, since Ceolred died and Æthelbald came to the throne, becoming the most powerful Anglo-Saxon king of his generation. Felix seems confident that readers of his own time would consider all of the elements to have been borne out in fact, so we can assume that Æthelbald did indeed come to power *non in praeda nec in rapina*. The historical record has left us no account of the processes by which this young man, distantly related to King Ceolred, followed him to the throne.[98] Just as few contemporary observers would have imagined that the youthful Guthlac, leader of a pillaging warband, would become a saint, it would take miraculous foresight to imagine that this young exile would someday sit on the Mercian throne.

Felix reinforces the importance of Æthelbald in the double-transformation structure of the *Vita Sancti Guthlaci* by bringing the Mercian nobleman back to Guthlac's island after the saint's death. The situation itself is quite unremarkable: miracles performed for a pilgrim at the site of the saint's tomb were essential for establishing the continuing power he or she wielded from beyond the grave. However, the appearance of a character in this role who was mentioned repeatedly before the saint's death indicates

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[98] For a brief account of Æthelbald's reign, see D. P. Kirby, *The Earliest English Kings*, pp. 129-136. According to Kirby, "[I]t must have been from congenial company hostile to Penda's descendants that Aethelbald emerged to establish himself as king in Mercia, if not when Ceolred died (*ASC* A, *s.a.* 716) then certainly when an otherwise unknown Ceolwald, who may have succeeded Ceolred, died or was driven out" (p. 129). He goes on to say, "Absence of record material obscures Aethelbald's earliest years as king" (p. 130).

that the scene serves other purposes as well. Felix first tells us that Æthelbald provided the saint with a magnificent tomb, into which the saint's sister Pega translated his remains:

> sed et sarcofagum non humo terrae condidit, immo etiam in memoriale quoddam posuit, quod nunc ab Æðelbaldo rege miris ornamentorum structuris in venerantiam divinae potentiae aedificium conspicimus, ubi triumphale corpus tanti viri usque in hodierni temporis cursum feliciter pausat." [99]

Here, for the first time outside of inspired prophecy , Felix identifies Æthelbald as king and, at the time he is writing, the powerful patron of Guthlac's growing cult; he does not yet link, however, the king and patron to the former exile.[100] The king's patronage provides one strong motive for Felix's focus on Æthelbald in the final chapters of the *Vita*, but the material incentives of royal favor should not completely obscure other, less tangible results Felix seems to have been trying in this fashion to achieve. When later he shows Æthelbald coming to pray at Guthlac's tomb, the image communicates the standard hagiographic reversal of the traditional hierarchy of patronage. In the *Vita* as a whole, and especially in the final scene at the tomb, Æthelbald is not Guthlac's patron, so much as Guthlac is the patron of Æthelbald. After acknowledging both the identity of the young

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[99] "[H]owever, [Pege] did not hide the coffin in the ground, but placed it instead in a certain monument; and now, built around it, we behold wonderful structures and ornamentations put up by King Aethelbald in honour of the divine power: here the triumphant body of the great man rests in blessedness until this present time" (Felix of Croyland, *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, pp. 162-63).

[100] Felix's frequent use elsewhere of phrases like *prefatus exul*, *praefati exulis*, and even *exul ille* point up the absence of such identification here. Felix does not refer to King Æthelbald as previously mentioned.

exile who had appeared so often at Guthlac's hermitage and the powerful role he would play in Guthlac's *cultus*, Felix returns us to a point in time before Æthelbald's accession:

> Postquam ergo prefatus exul Æðelbald longinquis regionibus habitans obitum beati patris Guthlaci audivit, qui ante solus refugium et consolatio laborum illius erat, subita arreptus maestitia ad corpus ipsius pervenit, sperans in Domino daturum sibi refocillationem aliquam laboris sui per intercessionem tanti viri Guthlaci. [101]

It is interesting that Felix refers to Æthelbald as the previously mentioned exile (*prefatus exul Æðelbald*) rather than as king, even though his most recent mention was to the ruler and not the exile. Felix seems, even here, to be holding the absolute identification of exiled suppliant with powerful ruler in doubt, forcing his readers themselves to make the discovery of the two figures' identity, and thereby emphasizing the devout exile's transformation from the margins of society to the seat of power. Nowhere in the stories of Edwin or Oswald is such an extreme example of the providential preservation through adversity trope to be found. The two royal martyrs were exiles, but neither of them sought out divine assistance in the way that Felix shows Æthelbald doing. Felix even provides tearful prayer [*lacrimans*] he offers up for the saint's intercession:

> Pater mi, tu scis miserias meas, tu semper adiutor mei fuisti, te vivente non desperabam in angustiis, adfuisti mihi in periculis multis; per te invocabam Dominum, et liberavit me; modo quo vertam faciem meam, unde erit auxilium mihi, aut quis consiliabitur mecum, pater optime, si me dereliqueris, quis me consolabitur? in te sperabam, nec me spes fefellit. [102]

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[101] "Now when the same exile Aethelbald, dwelling in distant parts, heard of the death of the blessed father Guthlac, who alone had been his refuge and consolation in his affliction, he was seized with sudden grief and came to the saint's body, hoping in the Lord that he would grant him some respite from his affliction by the intercession of [so great a man as] Guthlac" (Felix of Croyland, *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, pp. 164-65).

[102] "'My father, you know my wretchedness, you have always been my helper; while you were alive, I did not despair when in trouble, and you stood by me in many dangers:

Felix follows this impassioned speech by a description of the future king on the ground in complete subservience to the saint: "Haec et alia multa proloquens, sese solo sternebat, et supplex orans crebris lacrimarum fluentis totum vultum rigabat." [103] Æthelbald submits more completely to Guthlac than any of Bede's holy kings did to their spiritual advisors, with the possible exception of Oswine, Bede's *rex humilissimus*, the last in his group and the only one not destined to be *rex victor* as well as *rex pius*. Felix presents the royal figure in his text as a humble and penitent man, abject before the power of the saint.

Felix ends the chapter with a final prophetic vision of the exile's transformation into a king . Æthelbald falls asleep in the little room he used to stay in when Guthlac was alive, only to be awakened by a miraculous vision:

> Nocturnis autem adpropiantibus umbris, cum in quadam casula, qua ante, vivente Guthlaco, hospitari solebat, pernoctans maestem mentem huc illucque iactabat, parumpter nocturnis orationibus transmissis cum lumina levi somno dimitteret, subito expergefactus, totam cellulam in qua quiescebat inmensi luminis splendore circumfulgescere vidit; et cum ab ignota visione terreretur, extimplo beatum Guthlacum coram adstantem angelico splendore amictum prospicit dicentem ei... [104]

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through you I called upon the Lord, and he freed me. But now whither shall I turn my face? Whence shall come help, and who, most excellent father, will give me counsel; who will console me if you leave me? In you have I hoped and the hope has not failed me'" (Felix of Croyland, *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, pp. 164-65).

[103] "With these and many other such words he stretched himself on the ground in humble prayer, and bedewed his whole face with continual floods of tears" (Felix of Croyland, *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, pp. 164-65).

[104] "When the shades of evening fell, he spent the night in a certain hut in which he used to stay when Guthlac was alive, his sorrowing mind tossing hither and thither. Shortly after, when his nightly prayers were finished and he had closed his eyes in light slumbers, he was suddenly aroused , and saw the whole cell in which he was resting lit up with the splendor of a mighty light. As he lay terrified by this [inscrutable] vision, he suddenly saw the

The image of the future overlord of all the Southumbrian kingdoms falling asleep in dejection after evening prayers in one of the buildings (described as a *casula* or *cellula*) on Guthlac's island almost makes a monk of Æthelbald. The words Guthlac's apparition addresses to him make it clear, however, that he is not destined for the monastery or hermitage, but for the power of an earthly throne:

> "Noli timore, robustus esto, quia Deus adiutor tuus est; propterea veni ad te, quia Dominus per intercessionem meam exaudivit preces tuas. Noli tristari, dies enim miseriarum tuarum praeterierunt, et finis laborum tuorum adest; nam priusquam sol bis senis voluminibus annilem circumvolverit orbem, sceptris regni donaberis."[105]

This prediction completes the trope of providential preservation through adversity, showing that Æthelbald will not only weather his period of trial but will do so precisely because God, through Guthlac's intercession, has willed it. The obvious meaning of this scene to the *Vita* as a whole, and to the cult of St. Guthlac, is that the saint can and will intercede for those who come to his shrine to pray. Less obvious is the implication that spiritual transformation is possible for all who seek it, but it comes to each in different

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blessed Guthlac standing before him robed in angelic splendour, while he said to him ..." (Felix of Croyland, *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, pp. 164-65).

[105] "'Fear not, be strong, for God is your helper. I have come to you because the Lord has heard your prayers through my intercession. Do not be sad, for the days of your miseries have passed away, and the end of your afflictions is at hand: for before the sun has passed through its yearly course in twelve [months] you shall be given the sceptre of your kingdom'" (Felix of Croyland, *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, pp. 164-67). The phrase *sol bis senis voluminibus annalem circumvolverit orbem* is unclear, although the number twelve probably indicates a single year, and that is how the Old English translator rendered it: "ær sunne twelf monða hringc utan ymbgan hæbbe" (*The Anglo-Saxon Version of the Life of St. Guthlac*, p. 96). According to the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, Guthlac died in 714 and Æthelbald came to the throne in 716.

ways. In the earlier scene when Guthlac wrestled with despair and doubt at night, he was touched by the holy flame and, following his predestined path, was changed from warrior into saint. Æthelbald, in his own parallel scene, will be led by the saintly Guthlac to follow his own fate and be transformed from exile into king.

Felix attempts to confirm the veracity of Guthlac's prophecy in two ways. First Æthelbald asks the saint for a sign, and in due course he is given one: Guthlac tells him that before the third hour of the next day the inhabitants of the island will receive an unexpected delivery of food, and this event indeed comes to pass. However, the more significant confirmation comes through Æthelbald himself: "Exin ipse, omnia quae sibi dicta erant recordans, indubitata spe futura fore credebat fidemque inseducibilem in vaticiniis viri Dei defixit; nec illum fides fefellit. Ex illo enim tempore usque in hodiernum diem infulata regni ipsius felicitas per tempora consequentia de die in diem crescebat."[106] Earlier Felix stated that Guthlac told Æthelbald not only that he would become king, but all the details of his life (*non solum autem ut fertur regnum sibi prophetavit, sed et longitudinem dierum suorum et finem vitae suae sibi in ordine manifestavit*), but he remains conspicuously quiet about these other details, intending King Æthelbald's present-day status to imply the fulfillment of not only the main outline of Guthlac's prophecy but also of many unstated predictions revealed to the future ruler. In the long run, this

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[106] "[When] all the things ... had been said to him, [Aethelbald] believed with unwavering faith that they would happen, and placed unshakable confidence in the prophecies of the man of God: nor did his faith deceive him. For from that time until the present day, his happiness as king over his realm has grown in succeeding years from day to day" (Felix of Croyland, *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, pp. 166-67).

discretion has served Felix and his influential *Vita* well. Æthelbald ruled forty-six years and consolidated greater power than any Mercian king before him, but before he died Æthelbald Boniface rebuked him for improprieties and impious crimes, and he died at the hands of his own followers. As Albertson points out, "It is hard to believe Guthlac revealed to Aethelbald that he would actually be murdered by his own bodyguard."[107] More to the point, it is hard to imagine that Felix would have portrayed Æthelbald responding to Guthlac's predictions so positively if Felix had known what life actually held in store for the Mercian king. The final chapter of the *Vita* describes a miracle performed at Guthlac's shrine, the healing of a blind man, as evidence of how the saint's power continued "ad usque diem," "right up to the present day."[108]

Felix presents a sharply defined approach to the issues of warfare and sanctity that combines Martin's rejection of war with Edwin's and Oswald's God-given victories. Royal victory in battle is granted by God, and war itself can be a righteous enterprise when waged by a king against his enemies; however, the higher path of sanctity involves the abandonment of earthly for spiritual strife. Æthelbald will fulfill his own destiny by peacefully waiting for God's blessing to be passed to him, yet once in power he will be transformed into a victorious warrior-king. Guthlac, not destined for earthly sovereignty, abandons warfare for the path of sanctity. Most notably missing is any implication that Æthelbald will achieve sainthood along with his scepter. Warfare is not holy; it is an

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[107] C. Albertson, trans., *Anglo-Saxon Saints and Heroes*, p. 217, n. 62.

[108] Felix of Croyland, *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, pp. 168-69.

aspect of earthly reality over which God has command, but it is part of the world and therefore is by nature secular and transitory. Although apparently unknown to Felix, Æthelbald's own death conformed to Guthlac's earlier image of "the wretched deaths and the shameful ends of the ancient kings of his race in the course of the past ages." A king follows a path to earthly glory, but Guthlac's path is the eternal journey to a lasting, heavenly reward. The king, the soldier, and the saint all fulfill strikingly different roles in the world Felix is representing.

V

The influence of Felix's *Vita* can be directly measured by its numerous reflections in vernacular literature. However, as indicated earlier, this study of the body of Old English Guthlac materials must first consider their chronology. Although Felix's *Life* is datable to the reign of Ælfwald of East Anglia and localizable to the abbey of Croyland, the five main Old English Guthlac works are all of unknown date and provenance.[109] Certain facts are clear: first, the Old English version of Guthlac's *Vita* must have been translated after Felix finished the original work in the 730's or 740's; and second, the Vercelli Guthlac homily must have been excerpted from the full translation of the *Vita* at some point after the translation was completed. In addition, manuscript contexts provide a *terminus ad quem* for four of the five works, since they appear in unique manuscripts. The passage on Guthlac in the *Old English Martyrology* is in three of its five extant manuscripts, and evidence for the work as a whole indicates that it was probably written between 850 and 900.[110] Both *Guthlac A* and *Guthlac B* appear in the Exeter Book, compiled in the latter part of the tenth century. The homily had to have been excerpted from the full translation before the Vercelli Book was compiled c. 975, and this inference

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[109] The passage on Guthlac in the *Secgan* is too brief to be pertinent to this study, since it mentions only where his body could be found; the *Old English Martyrology* is longer and contains material concerning Guthlac's image as soldier saint.

[110] See J. Roberts, "An Inventory of Early Guthlac Materials," pp. 203-04.

provides a terminus ad quem for the *Old English Life* as well, although its own manuscript, Cotton Vespasian D.xxi, dates from the late eleventh century. This narrows the production of the five Old English Guthlac works to the period between c. 750 when Felix finished his text and c. 1000 when both the Vercelli and Exeter manuscripts had been completed.

This wide span of time, can, however, be narrowed somewhat. The *Vita* was probably translated somewhere between 890 and 920 or a little later, and the homily exerpted not long afterward. Jane Roberts argued in 1970 that "the original translation from which [the Old English prose Life and the homily] both stem was made in the ninth century, perhaps at a time when Alfred was encouraging scholars to translate Latin writings into English." [111] More recently, she has revised that estimate, saying that "it is...tempting to extend speculation forward even to the period of Athelstan 'Half-King'," the East Anglian ealdorman during the 930's to 950's.[112] The Vercelli homily, as an excerpt from the longer Old English translation, has often been regarded as the last of the Old English Guthlac works, although (as Roberts has convincingly demonstrated) it retains more early linguistic features than the extant copy of the translation, which underwent significant regularizing and revision.[113] There is a strong possibility that the

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[111] J. Roberts, "An Inventory of Early Guthlac Materials," p. 203.

[112] J. Roberts, "The Old English Prose Translation," p. 376; see also C. R. Hart, "Athelstan 'Half-King' and his Family," pp. 120-28.

[113] J. Roberts, "The Old English Prose Translation," pp. 367-69.

original translation of Felix's *Vita* came before the main thrust of King Alfred's program of translation, since Roberts argues that it is "to be aligned with the *Dialogues* and the *Bede* translations rather than with the Alfredian West-Saxon prose."[114] Janet Bately, in assessing the possible existence of a Mercian school of translation that pre-dated Alfred's West-Saxon program of translations, concludes that, although "there was already by the 890s a tradition of prose writing with well developed mannerisms," there is no evidence that it was primarily or exclusively Mercian.[115] The dates 890-920 are therefore a conservative estimate for the translation and 930-950 for the excerpted homily.[116] This argument narrows the probable date of production for the three prose works to the period from c. 850, the *terminus a quo* of the *Martyrology*, and the middle of the tenth century, the *terminus ad quem* for the excerpting of the homily from the *Old English Life*. However, the relative chronology of the entire group of vernacular texts has yet to be firmly established.

Most difficult to fix are the relative chronological positions of the two vernacular *Guthlac* poems. Scholars have traditionally seen *Guthlac A* as earlier than *Guthlac B* on the basis of linguistic, metrical, and source studies, especially the two poems' differing relationships to Felix's original *Vita*. Roberts rejects these arguments, however, since the

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[114] J. Roberts, "The Old English Prose Translation," pp. 367-69.

[115] J. M. Bately, "Old English Prose before and during the Reign of Alfred," p. 138.

[116] These dates remain fairly arbitrary, especially considering Jane Roberts' comment that a date considerably later for the original translation, including "the period of Athelstan 'Half-King'," cannot be completely ruled out (J. Roberts, "The Old English Prose Translation," p. 376).

differences between the texts "need reflect nothing more than the use of different conventions by men working in the same period," and, although "it might be comforting to argue that *Guthlac A*, because of its apparent independence from the *Vita sancti Guthlaci*, must have been written before *c.* 730 and the *B* poem after that date, the suggestion lacks any firm support."[117] She has also raised the possibility of a relationship between the Vercelli Guthlac homily and *Guthlac A*, since both works focus on the same chapters of the *Vita* and neither one includes the traditional death-scene, instead focusing on the journey of Guthlac's soul to heaven (unlike the *Vita*, the Old English translation of the *Vita*, and *Guthlac B*, all of which show Guthlac dying at his hermitage). Roberts says, "Only the first of the Guthlac poems of the Exeter Book shares with the *Homily* its lack of interest in *Vita* material outside the chapters dominated by [Bartholomew] Guthlac's patron saint," and she notes "the possibility that the Vercelli *Homily* could have served to focus the poet's attention on just these episodes from the *Vita*."[118] Although elsewhere she warns that "the Vercelli homily itself cannot be thought of as anything like an immediate source for *Guthlac A*," still her suggestion, though tentative, has merit.[119] One way to account for the similarity between the two works without positing a more exact,

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[117] J. Roberts, ed., *The Guthlac Poems*, pp. 70-71.

[118] J. Roberts, "The Old English Prose Translation," pp. 373-74, 377, and 379, n. 48. Roberts credits Thomas Hill for suggesting "the Old English poet was familiar with Chapters 29, 30 and 31 of the *Vita Guthlaci* and chose to rework them for his own poem" (T. D. Hill, "The Middle Way," qtd. in J. Roberts, "Old English Prose Translation," p. 379, n. 48).

[119] J. Roberts, "*Guthlac A*: Sources and Source Hunting," p. 8.

literary correspondence is to hypothesize that the poet of *Guthlac A* composed his poem from memory after hearing the homily used in a liturgical or quasi-liturgical setting.

Evidence for a relatively late date for *Guthlac A* appears to be mounting, independently of Roberts's hypothesis concerning the poem's genesis. Patrick Conner has argued for a much later date, during the Benedictine Reform of the second half of the tenth century, since he feels it shares the ideas and theological concerns of the major prose works associated with the Reform movement in England.[120] Although I don't find his evidence wholly convincing, since the similarities between the various texts he analyses are general rather than specific and the dating of the first appearance of those texts in England is not firm, still linguistic and conceptual evidence I will present in this study supports a later rather than an earlier date for the poem, with the most likely date being during the first half of the tenth century. This date would be consistent with the hypothesis that *Guthlac A* was written after the *Vita* had been translated into Old English and the Vercelli homily had been excerpted from it, and would make *Guthlac A* last in the sequence of five major vernacular Guthlac works.

A tentative chronology for at least four of the five vernacular works would therefore be the entry in the *Martyrology* first and the full translation of the *Vita* second (both before 900 or shortly thereafter), followed by the homily excerpted after 900, that in turn inspired the composition of *Guthlac A* at some point during the reigns of Alfred's immediate descendants. The current study follows that order. *Guthlac B* does not figure

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[120] P. W. Conner, "Source Studies."

into Roberts's hypothesis and the resulting relative chronology, since no direct relationship to any of the other vernacular texts can be established (except, of course, its manuscript affiliation with *Guthlac A*).[121] Based on its "Cynewulfian" features, and its close relationship to the original *Vita Sancti Guthlaci*, I place it earliest in the vernacular sequence, as a work of the ninth century that probably preceded the royally-mandated push for translation of major Latin works. It is a poetic reshaping of Felix's Latin prose, and shows no evidence of influence from an Anglo-Saxon prose tradition.

[121] In the past, studies of the two works have concluded that it was written later than its companion poem, *Guthlac A*, yet that relative chronology remains open to question. There has been less recent work on the dating of *Guthlac B*, and there have been no claims for a date later than the ninth century.

VI

There are only five extant Anglo-Saxon poems that can be accurately described as verse saints' lives; these include two poems in the Vercelli Book (Cynewulf's *Elene* and the anonymous *Andreas*), and three in the Exeter Book (the *Juliana* of Cynewulf and the two anonymous Guthlac poems).[122] There is no way of knowing how many similar works have been lost, but the extant material shows Guthlac to have been uniquely favored among native English saints. Even Oswald is not known to have been similarly honored, although his veneration spread well beyond the British Isles.[123] It is possible, as Bjork suggests, that there may originally have been "a saint's life cycle, comparable to the late medieval cycle plays," but, as he notes, "we simply do not have a sufficient number of lives nor sufficient corroborative evidence to support such a conclusion, attractive and provocative as it may be."[124] Whether or not Guthlac was unique among native saints by

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[122] I follow R. E. Bjork, *The Old English Verse Saints' Lives*, in defining the genre so narrowly. There are poems commemorating Old Testament figures (*Judith*, *Daniel*, *Azarias*), recounting biblical narratives (*Genesis A* and *B*, *Exodus*, *Fates of the Apostles)*, or presenting religious subjects (*Christ and Satan*, *Christ I*, *II*, and *III*, *Judgment Day I* and *II*) that share certain affinities with the verse saints' lives, but none of these present material that would be regarded as saints' lives if translated into prose. Although Ælfric included the *Passio Machabeorum* among his *Lives of Saints*, he indicates in an aside within the text that he recognized a distinction between heroic figures from before the Incarnation and those after it. See Chapter 6 below.

[123] See P. Clemoes, *The Cult of St Oswald on the Continent*.

being memorialized in Old English verse, the existence of two very different vernacular poems concerning his life must surely indicate that Guthlac's story was popular in Anglo-Saxon England.

As argued above, *Guthlac B* was probably the earliest vernacular reworking of Guthlac's story. *Guthlac B* 's dependence on Felix's *Vita Sancti Guthlaci* is evident, yet it does not preserve any of the major tropes concerning warfare and sanctity with which this study is concerned. Only in his use of martial imagery does the anonymous Anglo-Saxon poet preserve elements of the *topos* of spiritual transformation, but he does not directly connect it to Guthlac's period of youthful soldiering.[125] Nonetheless, thematic use of heroic vocabulary that presents Guthlac as a soldier of Christ indicates that the poet was aware of and was to an extent drawing on the trope of spiritual transformation in Felix's *Vita*.

The *Guthlac B*-poet never mentions the saint's youth, concentrating instead on the last days of Guthlac's life, although the poem does not begin there. It opens instead at the beginning of the world, with Adam and Eve in Paradise. By the time it wends its way to Guthlac, some sixty lines later, the poet has already considered man's fall and is moving

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[124] R. E. Bjork, *The Old English Verse Saints' Lives*, p. x. A closer fit to the existing evidence might be a cycle of lives analogous to the early Middle English verse legendaries, such as the *South English Legendary*.

[125] I use the personal pronoun "he" (here and elsewhere) for convenience only, without intending to imply any certain knowledge of the poet's gender. Nothing is known about the *Guthlac B*-poet that would indicate even such a basic fact as whether "s/he" was male or female.

on to the subjects of renewal and redemption. Therefore, the first time Guthlac appears he is already a saint:

> Us secgað bec
> hu Guðlac wearð þurh Godes willan
> eadig on Engle --he him ece geceas
> meaht 7 mundbyrd, mære wurdon
> his wundra geweorc wide 7 side,
> breme æfter burgum geond Bryten innan,
> hu he monge oft þurh meaht Godes
> gehælde hygegeomre hefigra wita
> þe hine unsofte adle gebundne
> sarge gesohtun of sidwegum
> freorigmode. [126]

Thus the poem contrasts Guthlac's sanctity not to his youthful soldiering but to Adam and Eve's original sin. Perhaps the poet did not consider leading a warband an example of human failing. Felix's treatment of Guthlac's role as warrior was, as we have seen, complex and built on ambiguity, but he did not condemn it. Like Felix, the poet may not have thought the saint's early career sinful but may rather have seen it as a glorious but ultimately useless endeavor when viewed from the perspective of eternity and therefore may have found it less appropriate to his poetic purposes than the Fall of Man. It is also possible that he did not wish to connect Guthlac in any way with the sinful state of fallen

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[126] "Books tell us how, through God's will, Guthlac achieved perfection among the English. He chose for himself eternal strength and support. His working of miracles became famous far and wide, renowned through cities throughout Britain -- how, through the might of God, he often healed many unhappy people of serious afflictions, anxious, sad people who, shackled by disease, with difficulty came seeking him from far-flung ways" (271). This and all subsequent translations are from S. A. J. Bradley, ed. and trans., *Guthlac B*. Old English passages are from J. Roberts, ed., *The Guthlac Poems of the Exeter Book*, pp. 108-24.

humankind, and so avoids any mention of his youthful soldiering.[127] Conversely, he may have expected his audience to know already about the period of warfare in his hero's past and to link it to the images of fallen man with which the poem opens. He certainly does not avoid martial imagery in describing Guthlac. The next five and a half lines, with which the introductory fitt ends, are packed with heroic terminology:

> Symle frofre þær
> æt þam Godes cempan gearwe fundon,
> helpe 7 hælo. Nænig hæleþa is
> þe areccan mæge oþþe rim wite
> ealra þara wundra þe he in worulde her
> þurh dryhtnes giefe dugeþum gefremede. [128]

The poet's use of heroic vocabulary in this passage (e.g. *cempan*, *hæleþa*, *dugeþum*) and throughout the poem might indicate that he recognized Guthlac's connections to earthly combat but chose not to refer to them directly.[129] The density of heroic language in the

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[127] The early Middle English Guthlac poem associated with the *South English Legendary* (which, unlike *Guthlac B*, is a straight narrative of the saint's life) also makes no mention of Guthlac's youthful soldiering but jumps instead from childhood directly to his entry into monastic life at the age of twenty-four. See W. F. Bolton, "The Middle English and Latin Poems of Saint Guthlac."

[128] "Always they found comfort there at hand, help and healing from the soldier of God. There is no man who can recount or who knows the tally of all those miracles which, through the Lord's grace, he achieved for the people here in the world" (271). Bradley's translation obscures the poet's use of the word *dugeþum* in the last half-line. Roberts translates *duguþ* as "men" (J. Roberts, *The Guthlac Poems*, p. 192), but its original meaning, as we have seen, was a body of noble retainers.

[129] Cherniss considers that the poet "seldom" uses "heroic concepts and motifs, even as metaphors" (235), and says that "[t]he *Guthlac B*-poet describes his hero as 'God's warrior', but he scarcely develops his metaphor at all in terms of 'spiritual warfare' or a heavenly *comitatus*, and so one finds little suggestion of the heroic concept of loyalty and the relationship of lord and thane" (M. D. Cherniss, *Ingeld and Christ*, pp. 240-41). It is

passage above, and the position of the passage at the end of the introductory fitt, appear to indicate that the martial metaphors were important to the poet's conception of his poem. To understand the lord/ thegn imagery in the poem we should first consider the social realities to which the images refer. What is known of the structure of Anglo-Saxon society in the period before the first Viking invasions would tend to suggest that the lord-thegn relationship was not static and univalent, but rather fluid and multivalent. Abels makes this point clearly when he describes the early English *fyrd*:

> The fyrds of early Wessex, Mercia, and Northumbria...were...merely a king's retainers, his comites and milites, and their own armed followers, many of whom may have been drawn from the ceorlisc class. Lordship, not 'kingship,' cemented a seventh-century fyrd. One would probably have had difficulty distinguishing between the 'royal armies' of this period and the warbands of æthelings such as the exiled Cædwalla or the young St. Guthlac. [130]

A thegn was both follower and leader, the warrior of his king and the lord of his own warriors. It is in this context that we can understand the imagery of lordship in *Guthlac B*. The use of the terms *Godes cempa, hæleð*, and *duguð* in the final lines of the opening fitt establishes that one major theme of the poem will be the rewards that the loyal retainer, the *cempa*, of God can pass on to his own followers on earth. Like the youthful Guthlac, who gathered about him warriors from many different peoples, presumably by sharing with

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unlikely that the terms *Godes cempa, hæleð*, and *duguð* had already lost their associations with battle and the relationship of thegn and lord by the time the poem was written, and such a semantic shift cannot be assumed without careful consideration of the evidence. My own analysis of these metaphors in the poem leads me to conclude that they were integral to the poem and still carried secular associations.

[130] R. P. Abels, *Lordship and Military Obligation*, p. 36.

them the wealth he obtained from his enemies in combat, the mature Guthlac will come to be known "wide 7 side," and he will pass on gifts to people "þe hine... gesohtun of sidwegum." Cherniss argues that the imagery of lordship in the poem is "vestigial in the same way that *dryhtnes cempa* is vestigial in this poem: it is a conventional formula that the poet uses with little or no regard for its suitability to its context."[131] He develops the point at some length:

> A more striking example...occurs when the poet applies the epithet *duguþa hleo* to Guthlac (1061). In heroic poetry this epithet means 'protector of (tested) warriors', and is synonymous with 'lord', but this meaning makes no sense in *Guthlac B*, for Guthlac is obviously not the leader of a *comitatus* of any sort. Indeed, in neither the poem nor the *Vita* does he have a permanent group of followers. [132]

Cherniss does not mention the fact that Guthlac was *duguþa hleo* before he became a saint. Although the poet never mentions directly Guthlac's youthful role as leader of a warband, he makes use of the concept of lordship to develop his theme. Writing as an historian, and not as a scholar of literature, Richard Abels has defined the concept that I take to be a central theme of *Guthlac B* when he says, "The parallel between divine and earthly lordship permeates the sources."[133] Abels examines the concept in terms of the relationship of king to God in the dispensing of gifts. "Just as a king's ealdorman owed his jurisdiction ... to the king ..., and a king's gesith held his royal donative at the king's

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[131] M. D. Cherniss, *Ingeld and Christ*, p. 242.

[132] M. D. Cherniss, *Ingeld and Christ*, p. 241.

[133] R. P. Abels, *Lordship and Military Obligation*, p. 48.

pleasure, the king himself is represented in the charters as owing his rank and lands to God, from whom all goods come."[134] The same equation is true of the saint, but in a more metaphoric sense. The saint, like an earthly king, receives from the Lord gifts that he then passes on to those who follow him. "Nænig hæleþa is/ þe areccan mæge oþþe rim wite/ ealra þara wundra þe he in worulde her/ þurh dryhtnes giefe dugeþum gefremede." There is no warrior [*hæleþa*] who can tell or knows the number of all the wonders that Guthlac through the gift ["grace," *giefe*] of the Lord brought about for the band of men [*dugeþum*] here on earth. The gifts that the saint passes on from God to man are healing and the hope of eternal life.

More than one critic has noted that the relationship between Guthlac and his follower, Beccel, is central to the poem. Robert Bjork examines the poet's focus on the bond between saint and follower, saying, "Guthlac's relationship with his servant is a major concern and functions as an integral part of the overriding theme."[135] He points out how readers' "attention shifts...strongly towards a human character, so that while we perceive the saint's spiritual victory, we simultaneously fix our attention on Beccel's real agony" at the death of his "master."[136] Cherniss also devotes a good deal of space to analyzing the relationship between Guthlac and Beccel, but having argued that Guthlac is

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[134] R. P. Abels, *Lordship and Military Obligation*, p. 48.

[135] R E. Bjork, "The Artist of the Beautiful: Immutable Discourse in *Guthlac B*," in *The Old English Verse Saints' Lives*, pp. 90-109, quotation p. 90. Bjork's study iforms much of my analysis of *Guthlac B*.

[136] R E. Bjork, *The Old English Verse Saints' Lives*, p. 90.

in no sense the leader of a *duguð*, he goes on to argue that Beccel is not analogous to a thegn of the saint. He points out the poet's frequent use of the vocabulary of lordship in describing Beccel's relationship to Guthlac, but discounts its significance:

> The poet's use of the vocabulary of heroic poetry suggests that the relationship between Guthlac and the man who attends him in his last hours is that of a Germanic lord and his retainer. Thus Guthlac is called, either by this man or the poet, *mondryhten* (1007, 1051, 1151, 1337), *winedryhten* (1011, 1202), *freodryhten* (1021), *sigedryhten* (1375), *þeoden* (1014, 1198), *hlaford* (1053, 1357), *frean* (1200) and *sincgiefan* (1352). The only justification for such titles in the *Vita* is that...there...Beccel...twice addresses Guthlac as *domine*. In the poem, Beccel is in fact Guthlac's pupil and servant (*ombehtþegn*--1000, 1199, etc.) who dwells nearby and visits the saint daily for spiritual guidance (999f.). Aside from the heroic epithets, the poet offers no information which suggests that Beccel is Guthlac's retainer, even though the two men seem devoted to the welfare of one another. Nor is there any overt indication whatever that the heroic vocabulary is being used figuratively, and that Guthlac is Beccel's 'lord' in some spiritual sense. Here again, the heroic vocabulary has either lost its connotations of loyalty in battle, vengeance, and the exchange of treasure, in which case the various epithets mean little more than 'leader', or it is being used by the poet with little or no regard for inherent heroic meanings. [137]

The core problem with Cherniss's analysis lies in the limitations he imposes on the concept of lordship. The relationship depicted in the poem between Guthlac and Beccel is not that between lord and thegn, but it is like such a relationship, despite the unheroic nature of their interactions. The use of a martial metaphor does not require that the two parts of the symbolic equation be equal but that they be similar. A saint is not a physical warrior but he is like a physical warrior in certain ways: his steadfastness, courage, hardiness, fortitude, loyalty, self-sacrifice. Despite his attempts to explain the observation away, Cherniss is accurate when he says that "[t]he poet's use of the vocabulary of heroic poetry

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[137] M. D. Cherniss, *Ingeld and Christ*, p. 242.

suggests that the relationship between Guthlac and [Beccel] is that of a Germanic lord and his retainer." Guthlac has chosen "ece...meaht 7 mundbyrd," everlasting power and patronage, rather than the normal relations between lord and follower.

One final aspect of the lord/retainer relationship emphasized in the poem is the exile suffered by the newly "lordless" Beccel after Guthlac's death. Cherniss concurs with Stanley Greenfield's analysis of how "[t]he lord-thane relationship ... is developed gradually as the poem proceeds, culminating in the end (though the last few lines are missing in the manuscript) as the servant flees to his ship to seek the saint's sister and reports to her in exile-elegiac fashion."[138] The loyal servant stays with his master until he dies, and then crosses the fens in a boat to bring news of the event to Pega, Guthlac's sister, who was considered a saint in her own right. Both Cherniss and Bjork comment on Beccel's important role in the last section of the poem as we have it. Cherniss admits that the poet expands Felix's brief mention of Beccel's journey by boat to Pega "at some length...and in so doing he relies heavily upon the diction of heroic poetry," but rather than analyzing the effect of these images, he takes the position that "the poet's use of the diction of the theme of exile ... does not imply the heroic concept which such diction was originally intended to express, " and that "the diction seems to be intended to describe

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[138] S. B. Greenfield and D. G. Calder, *A New Critical History of Old English Literature*, p. 122; M. D. Cherniss, *Ingeld and Christ*, p. 245. Greenfield's term "exile-elegiac fashion" refers to the tradition in Old English elegies of exiled speakers lamenting their lordless status. For a recent discussion of the genre, see C. E. Fell, "Perceptions of Transience."

Beccel's sea-journey and to express his grief and nothing more."[139] Bjork stresses the contrast the poet develops between Guthlac's ability to "disengage himself from the world and its pains and direct his thoughts to the heavenly realms" and Beccel's "state of uncontrollable grief."[140] Bjork points out the incongruity of Beccel's unrelieved despair in a poem commemorating the *ece mundbyrd* Guthlac chose in following the path of sainthood. He argues that although the intensity of Beccel's grief "has caused critics to conclude that he would remain so even in the lost ending of the poem," it is likely that in its original form the poem ended, like *The Wanderer*, "with an eschatological vision that bespeaks an absolute hope".[141] The thematic "parallel between divine and earthly lordship" would imply just such an ending, perhaps in consoling words spoken by Pega to reassure Guthlac's exiled servant of his master's immortality. In the hour of his death, an earthly leader will leave his followers bereft, wandering the world in a state of inconsolable grief, but the saint who follows the eternal Lord, even after death, will offer gifts to his followers here on earth.

Whatever the original form of the poem may have been, we are left with a poem that incorporates the martial imagery and the concept of the soldier of Christ found in the original *vita* without directly linking it to Guthlac's original status as earthly soldier. The

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[139] M. D. Cherniss, *Ingeld and Christ*, pp. 242-44.

[140] R E. Bjork, *The Old English Verse Saints' Lives*, pp. 99, 109.

[141] R E. Bjork, *The Old English Verse Saints' Lives*, p. 109. Scholars disagree on how much of the poem is missing. Estimates range from a few lines to some portion of an entire missing gathering. See J. Roberts, *The Guthlac Poems*, pp. 13-14, and "*Guðlac* A, B, and C?" pp. 43-46; R. T. Farrell, "Some Remarks on the Exeter Book *Azarias*," p. 5.

poet makes use of the imagery and language of secular combat to increase the drama and heroism of the saint's spiritual struggles without at the same time commenting on warfare's moral qualities or directly contrasting it to spiritual strife. For example, the second fitt opens with a description of the demons attacking Guthlac in his cell and the saint's stout defense against them:

> OFT to þam wicum weorude cwomun
> deofla deaðmægen, duguþa byscyrede,
> hloþum þringan þær se halga þeow,
> elnes anhydig, eard weardade;
> þær hy mislice mongum reordum
> on þam westenne woðe hofun,
> hludne herecirm, hiwes binotene,
> dreamum bidrorene. Dryhtnes cempa,
> from folctoga, feonda þeatum
> wiðstod stronglice. [142]

Within the poem, these lines serve not only to glorify Guthlac's lonely existence in the fens, they also contrast the privileged position of those who follow God to the outcast, comfortless existence of the *duguþ* who follow Satan. Similar use of martial epithets and imagery in poems concerning saints whose careers lacked any connection to earthly warfare is common in Anglo-Saxon hagiography, but in the case of *Guthlac B* the remarkable aspect is that the saint had extensive experience of warfare that is completely ignored. This disjunction between the poem's metaphoric language and the concrete

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[142] "Often multitudes of devils, lethal troops shorn of privileges, would come in throngs to invade the dwelling-places where this saintly servant, single-minded in courage, kept his abode. There in that wilderness, robbed of their beauty, despoiled of their pleasures, they would randomly raise a hubbub with their many voices, a loud warlike clamour. The Lord's soldier, the energetic leader of men, would sturdily withstand the devils' harassments" (272).

forms and ideas to which they would naturally refer accentuates the seeming hollowness of the imagery, its quality as mere window-dressing. Cherniss sees the martial concepts as essentially atrophied in *Guthlac B*, "the merest vestiges of heroic themes which...have been employed by other poets to express the most common and basic ideas inherent in Germanic heroic tradition." [143] Nonetheless, the image of lordship presented in the poem as it stands values the clerical over the martial, subordinating the traditional, secular relationships between thegn and lord to the more powerful, eternal bonds between saint and Lord, and between follower and saint. Far from being "vestigial, a verbal remnant of a complex of ideas which does not inform the poem in which we find it,"[144] the remnants of the trope of spiritual transformation that the poet employs in *Guthlac B* continue to serve the purpose of contrasting the earthly and the divine, preserving in diluted form the image of Guthlac as warrior of Christ.

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[143] M. D. Cherniss, *Ingeld and Christ*, p. 235.

[144] M. D. Cherniss, *Ingeld and Christ*, p. 245.

VII

The author of the *Old English Martyrology* and the translator of the *Old English Life of Saint Guthlac* also preserve to varying degrees the image of the saint as a soldier of Christ, although like the *Guthlac B*-poet they both significantly reduce its importance. The entry in the *Martyrology* is brief, referring only to the meaning of Guthlac's name among the many parts of Felix's major trope of spiritual transformation, and even the full-length translation of the *Vita* downplays and de-emphasizes the *topos*.[145] The shorter work is probably older than the *Old English Life*, although their relative chronology cannot be firmly fixed. Janet Bately, in her study of the earliest Old English prose, places the *Martyrology* in the small group of texts firmly dated before 900 on the basis of direct paleographic evidence, but the two versions of the text dating from the ninth or early tenth century are fragmentary and do not contain the Guthlac entry.[146] The three manuscripts of the *Martyrology* that do contain the Guthlac entry all date from the late tenth century or

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[145] Charles Wycliffe Goodwin's edition of the Old English translation, *The Anglo-Saxon Version of the Life of St. Guthlac*, is cited throughout. For the Guthlac passage in the *Martyrology*, see *An Old English Martyrology*, p. 56.

[146] J. M. Bately, "Old English Prose before and during the Reign of Alfred." The two earliest manuscipts are London, British Library MSS Add. 23211 and 40165, the former dated to the end of the ninth century and the latter to the late ninth or early tenth century. See N.R. Ker, *Catalogue of Manuscripts*, p. xv.

later.[147] There is no evidence, however, that the material on Guthlac did not form part of the original work, and my own comparison of the entry with related entries shows it to be consistent in style with the others. In contrast, the folios containing the only extant version of the entire *Old English Guthlac* were originally part of a manuscript of the eleventh century.[148] The *Martyrology* as a whole can therefore be securely dated to the period of Alfred, while the *Old English Guthlac*, although very likely to have originated during that period as well, could be a somewhat later work.

The only element associated with Felix's trope of spiritual transformation that appears in the Guthlac entry in the *Martyrology* is the meaning of the saint's name. The martyrologist briefly summarizes Guthlac's life and accomplishments under April 11, the date of the saint's death. There he mentions that "his nama is on læden bellimunus," without explanation.[149] Only a reader with some knowledge of Latin would be able to link Guthlac with warfare or with the image of the soldier of Christ on the basis of this obscure reference. The martyrologist recounts the miracle of a hand appearing before Guthlac's

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[147] Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 41 (first half of the eleventh century) and 196 (third quarter of the eleventh century), and London, British Library MS Cotton Julius A.x (late tenth or early eleventh century). See N.R. Ker, *Catalogue of Manuscripts*, pp. xvi-xvii.

[148] They now form part of London, British Library MS Cotton Vespasian D.xxi (and are therefore often referred to as the "Vespasian *Life*"), but originally formed part of Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Laud 509, dated by Ker to the second half of the eleventh century (N.R. Ker, *Catalogue of Manuscripts*, p. xviii). As noted earlier, the *Vercelli Guthlac Homily*, a small portion of the whole text revised as a homily, appears in a late tenth-century manuscript.

[149] "His name is in Latin *belli munus*," (*An Old English Martyrology*, pp. 56-57).

birth, but without Felix's declaration that Guthlac would become God's soldier. As shown in Chapter One, the martyrologist was not unwilling to mention the military careers of other soldier-saints, although among native saints he identifies only Eosterwine as a soldier before embarking on a religious career. One can merely conclude that Guthlac's youthful warfare was either unknown or relatively unimportant to the Old English Martyrologist. Considering that the details contained in the entry are all ultimately drawn from Felix's *Vita*, the latter conclusion is more likely than the former.

The *Old English Life* preserves some elements of the trope of spiritual transformation from the Latin original, but the translator placed much less emphasis on the trope than Felix did. Martial images and terms appear from time to time in the translation, but for the most part the translator simply avoids them, and he also alters in subtle ways the presentation of Guthlac's tenure as an earthly warleader, producing an assessment of the value and morality of his military career that is more censorious. The result is a version of Guthlac's life in which the trope of spiritual transformation, the earthly warrior becoming warrior of Christ, is weakened in favor of a simple conversion from a sinful secular life as a soldier to a pious career as lonely hermit, in much the same way that Alcuin and the VBJ homilist altered Sulpicius's tropes of the unwilling, saintly soldier into the frustrated call to a spiritual vocation.

The first way in which the translator reduces the image of Guthlac as warrior of Christ is through eliminating Felix's frequent martial metaphors. For example, Felix's first use of the term *miles*, in conjunction with the portent before Guthlac's birth, does not

appear in the translation, just as it was also missing in the *Martyrology*.[150] Goodwin accounts for many of the differences between the Latin original and its Old English translation by arguing, "The florid rhetoric of Felix is much pruned and cropped ...; the writer often paraphrases rather than translates."[151] Given the translator's tendency to condense and simplify throughout, it could be argued that here and elsewhere the martial metaphors are eliminated as unnecessary rhetorical flourishes; however, the pattern of changes indicates that the exclusion or diminution of martial imagery is not a chance occurrence, and that more than just a method of shortening and simplifying is involved.

An example of the translator's elimination of martial language even where the metaphor is central to Felix's ideas comes in the treatment of the warlike meaning of Guthlac's name. In the Old English version, the key martial terms that Felix used to develop the dual senses of the saint's name are replaced by more general terms, unrelated to warfare: "Guðlac se nama ys on romanisc, Belli munus: forþon þeah he mid woruldlice geswince menige earfoðnysse adreah, and þeah mid gecyrrednysse þa gife þære ecan eadignysse mid sige eces lifes onfenge."[152] Felix emphasized the warlike qualities of

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[150] As noted earlier, there is no reason to believe that the two texts are related in any way, except that both may be products of the Alfredian program of translations. I have found no substantial verbal echoes between the two.

[151] *The Anglo-Saxon Version of the Life of St. Guthlac*, p. iv.

[152] Goodwin translates, "[T]he name Guthlac is in Latin, Belli munus; for that he not only endured many troubles with worldly labour, but also by conversion received the gift of eternal bliss with victory of eternal life" (*The Anglo-Saxon Version of the Life of St. Guthlac*, pp. 10-13). A better translation of the explanatory phrase would be, "because, even though he suffered a host of troubles through earthly strife, he still through conversion received the gift of eternal bliss with the triumph of eternal life."

fighting against temptation through his use of the verb *bellare* in the phrase *cum vitiis bellando* ("by warring against vices"), thus linking the name to Guthlac's life as a warrior (at first earthly and later spiritually). The Old English translator eliminates this concept. More significantly, he replaces Felix's idea of winning eternal reward through warring against vices with a new concept: suffering a host of troubles (*menige earfoðnysse*) through involvement in earthly strife (*woruldlice geswince*). The phrase *woruldlice geswince* stresses toil and labor, not warfare and strife, and the verb *adreogan* (*adreah*), "to suffer, endure" has no parallel in Felix, where he says that "ille cum vitiis bellando munera aeternae beatitudinis cum triumphali infula perennis vitae percepisset."[153] Even if the differences between the Latin and the Old English are the result of changes in the exemplar available to the translator (a possibility that cannot be ruled out), still the idea has shifted. The Old English involves a pair of parallel oppositions. First *mid woruldlice geswince* is opposed to *mid gecyrrednysse*; then *menige earfoðnysse adreah* is contrasted to *þa gife þære ecan eadignysse mid sige eces lifes onfenge*. Through earthly struggle or strife he suffers a host of troubles; through conversion he receives the twin rewards of eternal bliss and eternal life. Felix unites earthly and celestial struggle; the translator presents a starker contrast in Guthlac's life. Yet the translator's focus is not so much on the evils of warfare as it is on worldly things in general, that bring with them trouble. The term *geswince* has no martial connotation, and only in the term *sige* is any warlike image retained. The key idea in the trope of spiritual transformation is retained: the translator's

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[153] Felix of Croyland, *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, p. 78.

use of the word *cierrednes* (*gecyrrednysse*), "conversion," which highlights the contrast between *earfoðnysse* and *eadignysse*, does not mirror exactly the central trope of Felix's work, but it reflects the general thematic concept within which Felix was working. Conversion is the means by which hardship and trouble become happiness and prosperity. Rather than conceiving of the blessed life as an equally strife-filled path to a surer reward, the translator presents earthly strife as giving way to a more glorious life after the key step of conversion. So far the vernacular account makes no use of the heroism and glory of earthly warfare to magnify the role of the hermit-saint.

The translator also distinctly de-glorifies Guthlac's period of earthly warfare. Words and phrases similar to those in Felix's text appear, but the tone is very different. Felix carefully maintained an ambivalence toward Guthlac's fighting; the translator's generally avoids the issues connecting warfare and sanctity.

> Ða wæs æfter siðfate þæt mægen on him weox and gestiþode on his geogoðe, þa gemunde he þa strangan dæda þara unmanna and þæra woruld-frumena; he þa, swa he of slæpe onwoce, wearð his mod oncyrred, and he gesomnode miccle scole and wered his geþoftena and hys efen-hæfdlingas, and him sylf to wæpnum feng.[154]

The phrase "gestiþode on his geogoðe" translates fairly accurately "cum adolescentiae vires increvissent," but "mægen on him weox" contains none of the laudatory praise found in "iuvenili in pectore egregius dominandi amor fervesceret"--"a noble desire for command

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[154] "After a time, when his strength waxed and he grew up to manhood, then thought he on the strong deeds of the heroes, and of the men of yore. Then, as though he had woke from sleep, his disposition was changed and he collected a great troop and host of his companions and equals, and himself took weapons" (*The Anglo-Saxon Version of the Life of St. Guthlac*, pp. 12-15).

burned in his breast."[155] In addition, the terms for the men of the past whose deeds he feels the desire to imitate are problematic. Goodwin translates *strangan* as "strong," and that certainly is one of the word's meanings, but other possibilities listed by Clark Hall from texts of the Alfredian period include "severe" and "violent." The word *unmann* (*unmanna*) is very rare, occurring only in Ælfric's second set of homilies and Wulfstan's *Institutes of Polity* where it means "wicked man," "sinner," or, in one case, "inhuman being" (i.e. devil, demon, monster).[156] Goodwin translates *unmanna* as "heroes," presumably because it corresponds structurally to Felix's "pristinorum heroum." However, Mitchell and Robinson list only negative senses for the prefix *un*.[157] The meaning "hero" is not impossible for a word normally having such a pejorative sense (witness the use of *aglæca* and *scaþa* for both hero and monster in *Beowulf*). It could perhaps mean "immortals" or "more-than-men" in the sense of the classical demi-gods, since Felix's Latin word *heros* itself was originally used to designate those who descended from the gods as well as earthly heroes, but in this context, a translation like "wicked men" would seem closer to the word's form and its documented uses. After all, rather than preparing readers for a parallel between earthly strife and the spiritual struggle against temptation, the translator has previously contrasted the *earfoðnysse* of his early life with his later *eadignysse*. An over-reliance on the original can often distort interpretation

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[155] Felix of Croyland, *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, pp. 80-81.

[156] J. R. Clark Hall, *A Concise Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*, p. 382.

[157] Mitchell, Bruce, and Fred C. Robinson, *A Guide to Old English*, p. 138.

of a translated passage. The translator's second word, "woruld-frumena," comes closer to translating Felix, although it also is very rare. Looking at both terms working together, and using the least negative sense of *unmann*, we could translate the entire phrase "þa gemunde he þa strangan dæda þara unmanna and þæra woruld-frumena," "Then he remembered the bold deeds of the immortals and those first in the world."[158] Rather than presenting Guthlac's change of mind as inspired by tales of heroic men of the more immediate past (kings, tribal heroes, or perhaps even Old Testament kings and patriarchs), the translator associates the change with accounts of the mythological and pagan past. In an explicitly Christian genre like the saint's life, the moral valence of the legends of antiquity is usually negative. Recall the often-cited words of Alcuin questioning what Ingeld has to do with Christ. In Felix's account of Guthlac's taking up arms, the heroic past still has glory and force separable from the labels "Christian" and "pagan." As Cherniss says, "[A] seventh- or eighth-century English [writer] might easily have heard and added stories of Alexander and of the Israelites to the Germanic stories" with which he was more familiar.[159] To the Old English translator, most likely a monk or a man in orders writing at least a century later, the heroic tales of the past were firmly isolated from the Christian framework of his story of a saint and his sanctity. Were we to have access

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[158] For "woruld-frumena," see J. R. Clark Hall, *A Concise Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*, p. 419. A slightly more speculative translation, but one giving greater emphasis to other uses of the words than to the meaning of the passage being translated, would be: "Then he remembered the violent deeds of wicked men and of men long ago."

[159] M. D. Cherniss, *Ingeld and Christ*, p. 13.

only to the translation, and not Felix's original Latin work, we would so far have no basis for a supportive reading of Guthlac's sudden desire to emulate the larger-than-life figures of the past. Despite signs of future sanctity, Guthlac has at this stage fallen into a life of earthly *guth* with its host of troubles; a conversion will be necessary before he can receive the *lac* of eternal bliss and eternal life.

The translator also tones down or eliminates Felix's justifications for Guthlac's warfare in the lines that follow, stressing instead the destructive and willful side to Guthlac's actions: "Þa wræc he his æfþancas on his feondum, and heora burh bærnde and heora tunas oferhergode; and he wide geond eorþan menigfeald wæl felde and sloh and of mannum heora æhta nam."[160] The concept of *his æfþancas*--his insults, offenses, grudges, displeasures or angers--that he *wræc*--wreaked, fulfilled, or delivered--upon his enemies may originate in Felix's *sibi hostium famosum excidium*, and it may possibly mean that he "avenged insults," but the remainder of the passage supplies little context for that reading. Even if we accept such a speculative interpretation as "avenged insults," the translator is showing less support for Guthlac's actions than Felix, who described the actions and provided justification for them. Instead Guthlac and his followers alone "wæl felde and sloh and of mannum heora æhta nam"-- "carried out slaughter, slew, and took from men their possessions." The reader is left with little doubt that Guthlac is on the wrong track and in need of *gecyrrednysse*, conversion.

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[160] "Then wreaked he his grudges on his enemies, and burned their city, and ravaged their towns, and widely through the land he made much slaughter, and slew and took from men their goods" (*The Anglo-Saxon Version of the Life of St. Guthlac*, pp. 14-15).

In keeping with his emphasis on a necessary conversion, the translator presents Guthlac's decision to return a part of the goods he has stolen as sparked not by divine counsel but by divine chastisement. "Þa wæs he semninga innan manod godcundlice and læred þæt he þa word hete, ealle þa he swa [genam] he het þriddan dæl agifan þam mannum þe he hit ær ongenæmde."[161] Instead of being "velut ex divino consilio edoctus," "instructed as if by divine counsel," [162] he is divinely admonished and taught to return a third share of the things he's previously taken (*ongenæmde*). The verb *edocere* (*edoctus*) is translated by two Old English words, *manod*, "admonished," and *læred*, "taught," giving extra stress to the idea of divine admonishment, although the absence of the noun *consilio* somewhat lessens the added force.[163] The translator in the Old English version does much less to justify Guthlac's actions and implies a harsher judgment.

Guthlac's second sudden change of heart, when he decides to give up earthly warfare to become a servant of Christ, appears at first glance relatively unchanged in the *Old English Guthlac*. Yet there are significant differences. First the translator summarizes his nine years spent as a warleader: "Ða wæs ymbe nigon winter þæs þe he þa ehtnysse begangende wæs se eadiga Guthlac, and he hine sylfne betweox þises andweardan

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[161] "Then was he on a sudden admonished of God, and taught that he should thus give command; of all things which he had so taken he bade give back the third part to those from whom he had taken it" (*The Anglo-Saxon Version of the Life of St. Guthlac*, pp. 14-15).

[162] Felix of Croyland, *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, pp. 80-81.

[163] J. R. Clark Hall, *A Concise Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*, pp. 209, 229.

middaneardes wealcan dwelode."[164] What is missing here is Felix's "famosum excidium" carried out against "persecutorum suorum." The word *ehtnysse* means "persecutions."[165] The translator uses it somehow for Felix's *persecutorum*, perhaps misunderstanding the Latin word as "persecutions," rather than "persecutors," and, by combining it with *suorum*, understands Felix to be referring to persecutions carried out by Guthlac. For whatever reason, what the translator says is that for about nine years he carried out his persecutions (Goodwin says "hostile raids"). There is also no mention of how his opponents, "post tot praedas, caedes rapinasque," were at last forced to keep the peace. Instead, the translator goes on immediately to Felix's extended description of the earthly turmoils Guthlac is caught up in, summarizing them in a brief phrase, *betweox þises andweardan middaneardes wealcan dwelode*. The Old English verb *dwelian* means "to go astray."[166] The passage means: he went astray among the rolling waves of this world. Without Felix's carefully established ambivalence, praising and justifying even while he shows Guthlac lost in worldly pursuits, the translator presents the young Guthlac as sorely misguided and in need of a radical change of perspective. He reinforces the fate toward which Guthlac is headed in his description of the meditations that turn the young man around:

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[164] "It was about nine years that he was thus engaged in hostile raids, the blessed Guthlac, and he thus wandered amidst the tumult of this present world" (*The Anglo-Saxon Version of the Life of St. Guthlac*, pp. 14-15).

[165] J. R. Clark Hall, *A Concise Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*, p. 103.

[166] J. R. Clark Hall, *A Concise Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*, p. 91.

> Þa gelamp sume nihte mid þam þe he com of farendum wege, and he hys þwerigan lima reste, and he menig þing mid his mode þohte; ða wæs he færinga mid Godes ege onbryrd, and mid gastlicre lufan his heorte innan gefylled: and mid þy he awoc he geþohte þa ealdan kyningas þa iu wæron, þurh earmlicne deað and þurh sarlicne utgang þæs manfullan lifes, þe þas woruld forleton; and þa micclan welan þe hig ær-hwilon ahton he geseh on hrædlicnysse ealle gewitan; and he geseah his agen lif dæghwamlice to þam ende efstan and scyndan. Ða wæs he sæmninga mid þam godcundan egesan innan swa swyþe onbryrded, þæt he andette Gode gif he him þæs mergen-dæges geunnan wolde, þæt he his þeow beon wolde. [167]

Instead of a "spiritual flame" that "pierced his breast," Guthlac's heart here is "filled with spiritual love" (*gastlicre lufan his heorte innan gefylled*). The translator emphasizes the "sinful life" (*þæs manfullan lifes*) the ancient kings had lived, a concept perhaps underlying Felix's account but not directly stated anywhere there. The translator also stresses the "divine awe" and "godly fear" Guthlac feels (*Godes ege*; *godcundan egesan*), and includes in his decision to become a servant of God his vow to do so if God "would spare him till the morrow." The result is an experience less ennobling than frightening, an

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[167] "It happened on one night when he had come from an expedition, and he rested his weary limbs, and thought over many things in his mind, that he was suddenly inspired with divine awe, and his heart within was filled with spiritual love; and when he awoke he thought on the old kings who were of yore, who thinking on miserable death, and the wretched end of sinful life, forsook this world; and the great wealth which they once possessed, he saw all on a sudden vanish; and he saw his own life daily hasten and hurry to an end. Then was he suddenly so excited inwardly with godly fear, that he vowed to God, if he would spare him till the morrow, that he would be his servant" (*The Anglo-Saxon Version of the Life of St. Guthlac*, pp. 14-16). There is some problem with the syntax of the original manuscript: Goodwin emended it by placing the phrase *he awoc* before *he geþohte þa ealdan kyningas þa iu wæron* rather than after it, as it actually appears in the manuscript. The manuscript reading would say that he awoke when he thought of the old kings of past times, stressing perhaps a spiritual or metaphorical awakening, but, assuming this transposition, the syntax of the following phrases would not make sense. Felix says, "pervigili mente consideraret," "with wakeful mind, he contemplated" (Felix of Croyland, *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, pp. 81-83).

experience at the same time more intimate and more terrifying than Felix's account. The trope of spiritual transformation, as developed in Chapter Three, involved transforming the transitory glory of mundane conflict that always ends in wretchedness and despair into a higher level of glory that is eternal. The trope has been subtly changed into a conversion, a change of heart that erases past sins, more in line with Crispus's account of Cadwalla's conversion than with any of the Anglo-Saxon instances of the spiritual transformation trope.

The translator's relatively condemnatory attitude toward Guthlac's period of earthly warfare seems related to the noticeable absence of "soldier of Christ" imagery throughout the remainder of the text. Only three actual instances of the term "Godes cempa" or "cristes cempa" remain in the Old English. The "arming of the hero" is retained, although in compressed form. It may be that the direct scriptural source for this image pattern gave it acceptability in the translator's eyes:

> Hæfde he þa on ylde six and twentig wintra þa he ærest se Godes cempa on þam westene mid heofenlicre gife geweorðod gesæt. Þa sona wið þam scotungum þara werigra gasta þæt he hine mid gastlicum wæpnum gescylde, he nam þone scyld þæs Halgan Gastes geleafan; and hyne on þære byrnan gegearowode þæs heofonlican hihtes; and he him dyde heolm on heofod clænera geþanca; and mid þam strælum þæs halgan sealm-sanges a singallice wið þam awerigedum gastum sceotode and campode. [168]

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[168] "He was six and twenty years of age when, endowed with heavenly grace, God's soldier first settled in the wilderness. Then straightway, that he might arm himself against the attacks of the wicked spirits with spiritual weapons, he took the shield of the Holy Spirit, faith; and clothed himself in the armour of heavenly hope; and put on his head the helmet of chaste thoughts; and with the arrows of holy psalmody he ever continually shot and fought against the accursed spirits" (*The Anglo-Saxon Version of the Life of St. Guthlac*, pp. 24-25).

There are differences between this description and Felix's. In the Latin version there is an aggressive sense of purpose in Guthlac's decision--*proposuit*--to become a warrior in dangerous territory, while the Old English life merely shows him, as a soldier of Christ, settling in the wilderness (*on þam westene ... gesæt*). The sense of the Old English is subtly more defensive than offensive. He must defend himself against the attacks, the *scotungum*, of the fiends, while in Latin he fears their *insidias*, their plots or ambushes. The warrior's aggressive seeking out of conflict, stressed in the phrase "inter torridas tartari turmas sese contemto hoste iniecerit," is reduced more to a role of resistance; The translator clearly states that it is only with psalms, "mid þam strælum þæs halgan sealm-sanges" that he shoots and fights. The Old English Guthlac arms himself for defense alone.

Felix's next use of martial imagery is also retained, with slight differences. The only warrior images are the description of the devil's attack and the naming of Guthlac as soldier of Christ:

> Sona þæs þe he westen eardigan ongan, þa gelamp hit sume dæge mid [þy he] þan gewunelican þeawe his sealm sang and his gebedum befeal, þa se ealda feond man-cynnes (efne swa grymetigende leo, þæt he his costunga attor wide todæleð,) mid þy he þa his yfelnysse mægen and grymnysse attor [todælde] þæt he mid þan þa menniscan heortan wundode, þa semninga swa he of gebendum bogan his costunge streale on þam mode gefæstnode þæs Cristes cempan. [169]

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[169] "Soon after he began to dwell in the wilderness, it happened one day, when he had, after his wonted custom, sung a psalm and fell to his prayers, that the old enemy of mankind (who, even as a roaring lion, scatters wide the venom of his temptations), whilst he [was scattering abroad] the might of his wickedness and the venom of his cruelty, that he might wound the hearts of men therewith, suddenly, as from a bended bow, he fixed the dart of his temptation in the soul of Christ's soldier" (*The Anglo-Saxon Version of the Life of St. Guthlac*, pp. 26-29).

Goodwin' s observation that the "florid rhetoric of Felix is much pruned and cropped" is shown here to be only selectively correct.[170] The Old English retains the "florid rhetoric" of the lion, "ceu leo rugiens, per vasti aetheris spatia," in his "efne swa grymetigende leo, þæt he his costunga attor wide todæleð." Yet the martial imagery, Fekix's guiding metaphor in the chapter, is greatly reduced. There is no talk, as there is in Felix, of Guthlac as a "soldier fighting in the serried ranks" nor is there any subsequent repetition of the phrase "soldier of Christ" in the passage. The martial imagery seems more a rhetorical flourish in the Old English version than the shaping central image it is in the Latin.

Finally there is the vision in which Guthlac sees a band of his earthly enemies, "Brittones, infesti hostes Saxonici generis, bellis, praedis, publicisque vastationibus Anglorum gentem deturbarent."[171] The British are described in similar, although less "florid" terms, in the Old English version: "Ðæt gelomp ... þæt Brytta-þeod Angol-cynnes feond þæt hi mid manigum gewinnum and mid missenlicum gefeohtum þæt hi Angel-cynne geswencton."[172] The substitution of "missenlicum gefeohtum" for "praedis, publicisque vastationibus" is typical of the translator's stylistic compression. The attack itself is handled very similarly in both Latin and Old English texts:

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[170] *The Anglo-Saxon Version of the Life of St. Guthlac*, p. iv.

[171] Felix of Croyland, *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, p. 108.

[172] "It happened ... that the British nation, the enemy of the Angle race, with many battles and various contests annoyed the English" (*The Anglo-Saxon Version of the Life of St. Guthlac*, pp. 42-43).

> Nec mora; per palustria tectis subvenire certantes, eodem paene momento omnes domus suas flamma superante ardere conspicit; illum quoque intercipientes acutis hastarum spiculis in auras levare coeperunt. [173]
>
> Ða sona æfter þon he geseah eall his hus mid fyre afylled, and hi hine æfter þon ealne mid spera ordum afyldon, and hi hine on þam sperum up on þa lyft ahengon.[174]

The most obvious difference between these two passages lies in the change from "intercipientes" to the more extended phrase "hi hine æfter þon ealne mid spera ordum afyldon." Where the Latin stresses Guthlac's defensive role and his vulnerability, the Old English retains most of the martial sense. Indeed, the translator actually changes Felix's description of Guthlac as "vir Dei" to "se stranga Cristes cempa."[175] It seems significant that when Guthlac faces devils disguised as his former foes in a situation where earthly combat would be useless (one man facing an army of enemies, tossed into the air on their spears), here alone does the Old English version increase, rather than diminish, the martial imagery. Perhaps, to this anonymous Old English translator, when Guthlac is least like a heroic earthly warrior, he is most like a soldier of Christ.

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[173] "Straightway they strove to approach his dwelling through the marshes, and at almost the same moment he saw all his buildings burning, the flames mounting upwards: indeed they caught him too and began to lift him into the air on the sharp points of their spears" (Felix of Croyland, *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, pp. 110-11).

[174] "Soon after that he saw all his house filled with fire, and they next struck him quite down with the points of spears, and hung him up in the air on the spears" (*The Anglo-Saxon Version of the Life of St. Guthlac*, pp. 42-43).

[175] Felix of Croyland, *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, p. 110; "The powerful soldier of Christ" (*The Anglo-Saxon Version of the Life of St. Guthlac*, pp. 42-43). The translator's use of *strang* here links this martial metaphor to the earlier description of *þa strangan dæda þara unmanna*.

As I have argued, many Anglo-Saxon authors used martial metaphors to extend into the spiritual domain the physical accouterments (shields, arrows, armor, rings) and personal qualities (bravery, loyalty, steadfastness, zeal) that Anglo-Saxon society valued highly. In the case of the Old English prose *Guthlac*, the translator rarely connects martial objects and emotions with the spiritual life, and he depicts the saint's period of actual warfare almost exclusively as misguided and Guthlac himself as in need of a radical change. The martial metaphors only partially incorporate the trope of spiritual transformation from the original source; they also show the influence of other tropes and image-patterns. In this work Guthlac is not an unwilling warrior like Martin, but neither is he an earthly hero who transforms himself into a saint, idealized in the trope of spiritual transformation. As the prose *Guthlac* presents him, the saint's change from earthly to spiritual warrior involves a rejection of his former life, a real conversion, and not just a transformation from one type of exemplary soldier to another.

The translator also makes some changes in the sections of the *Vita* devoted to Æthelbald, but here the changes involve both amplification and reduction. The translator retains all of Felix's references to Æthelbald, and he also adds one new reference. Changes the translator makes give less emphasis to Æthelbald's role as exile, but they increase his role as patron and leader. Felix's delay in identifying the exile as the future king of Mercia is significantly shortened, thereby weakening the force of the *Vita*'s double-transformation structure, yet at the same time the Old English *Life* retains and even augments the emphasis Felix gave Æthelbald.

The first mention of the exiled atheling, concerning his visit to Guthlac in the company of Wilfrid, shows considerable amplification. Compare the two passages:

> Neque tacendum quoque esse arbitror quoddam praefati viri providentiae miraculum. Erat itaque, sub eodem tempore, quidam exul de inclita Merciorum prole, vocabulo Æðelbald, qui quadam die, ut adsolebat, virum Dei visitare malens, comite praefato Wilfrith, adepta rate, usque insulam praedictam pervenit. [176]

> Swylce eac gelamp sume siþe witedomlic wundor be þisum halgan were. Wæs sum for-mæra man æþelan kyne-kynnes on Myrcna-rice, þæs nama wæs Æþelbald. Þa wolde he to þæs halgan weres spræce cuman: beget þa æt Wilfriðe þæt he hine to þam Godes were gelædde; and hi þa sona on scipe eodon, and ferdon to þam yglande þær se halga wer Guthlac on wæs. [177]

In the Latin version, Æthelbald is in the habit of visiting Guthlac (*ut adsolebat*), but the Old English translator presents the event as the first time Æthelbald visited there, enhancing the narrative's immediacy. He also adds details showing the atheling's desire to speak with Guthlac (*wolde he to þæs halgan weres spræce cuman*), rather than just to visit him (*visitare malens*), and his entreaty to Wilfrid (*beget þa æt Wilfriðe*). Most significant of all is the change in the way he introduces Æthelbald. He is now a distinguished man (*sum for-mæra man*) rather than an exile (*quidam exul*). The introduction of this

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[176] "Nor do I think that one ought to be silent either about a miracle of foresight wrought by the same man. Now there was at that time a certain exile named Aethelbald of famous Mercian stock who on one occasion, when wishing according to his wont to visit the man of God accompanied by the aforesaid Wilfrid, took a boat and came to this island" (Felix of Croyland, *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, pp. 124-25).

[177] "Also there happened on a time a prophetic miracle to this holy man. There was a distinguished man of noble king's kindred in Mercia, whose name was Athelbald. He wished to come to converse with the holy man. He prevailed upon [Wilfrid] that he should bring him to the man of God; and they went into a boat, and journeyed to the island whereon the holy man Guthlac was" (*The Anglo-Saxon Version of the Life of St. Guthlac*, pp. 54-55).

important character has thus been subtly altered, bringing him more firmly into the foreground and stressing his illustrious background not his present status as exile.

Æthelbald appears next in two chapters both of which are headed "Be Aþelbaldes gefere," "Concerning Athelbald's follower," and in both he is described as "the aforesaid exile," "þæs foresprecenan wræccan Aþelbaldes."[178] These descriptions result in a noticeable inconsistency, since he has not been previously identified as an exile. Roberts has suggested that the "original translation must have been rather longer than the Vespasian descendant," and it may be that this and other differences between Felix's original and the extant Old English text stem not from the original translation but from its subsequent copying.[179] Nevertheless, at some stage in the transmission of the *Old English Guthlac* as it appears in Cotton Vespasian D.xxi, the information that Æthelbald was an exile dropped out of the account of his first appearance, although it was retained in later scenes.

The Old English translator presents the scene involving Æthelbald's visit to Guthlac shortly before the saint's death in a chapter entitled "Be Aðelbale þam kyninge," "Concerning Athelbald the king."[180] Through this chapter heading the translator clearly identifies the exiled nobleman as the famous king of Mercia, and in conjunction with the earlier description of Æthelbald as *sum for-mæra man* instead of *quidam exul*, this change

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[178] *The Anglo-Saxon Version of the Life of St. Guthlac*, pp. 60-61, 66-67.

[179] J. Roberts, "Old English Prose Translation," p. 369.

[180] *The Anglo-Saxon Version of the Life of St. Guthlac*, pp. 76-77.

strengthens the sense of the king as Guthlac's patron, thereby lessening the reversed image of saint as patron of the king and the idea of the parallel transformations that saint and king experience.

From the first, Æthelbald is a distinguished man, not an exile, and he is prominently identified as a king, but the body of the main chapter about him makes clear that he is an exile. Here the narrative is simplified, but in the process Æthelbald's own story comes through more clearly.

> Wæs on sumre tide þæt com se foresprecena wræcca to him Aþelbald; and hine Ceolred se kyning hider and þider wide aflymde, and he his ehtnysse and his hatunge fleah and scunode. Ða com he to þære spæce þæs halgan weres Guðlaces; þaþa se mennisca fultum him beswac, hine þeah hwæþere se godcunda fultum gefrefrode. [181]

The translation removes a number of elements from Felix's original, but it adds elements as well. The translator does not mention Æthelbald wandering among other tribes or peoples (*in diversis nationibus iactaretur*), nor does he refer to Æthelbald's followers (*suorum*).[182] Again he does not translate the phrase *ut adsolebat*, and he has cut the extensive description of Æthelbald's state of mind (*deficiente virium ipsius valitudine* ...

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[181] "It happened on a time that the before-mentioned exile Athelbald came to him; and Ceolred the king hunted him hither and thither, far and wide, and he fled from and shunned his persecutions and malice. He had recourse then to the conversation of the holy man Guthlac; for when human help had failed him, notwithstanding[,] divine help comforted him" (*The Anglo-Saxon Version of the Life of St. Guthlac*, pp. 76-77).

[182] In two of the manuscripts of Felix's *Vita* (Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, 389 and British Library, Cotton Nero E.i), the word *suorum* is replaced by the phrase *suorum sociorum* (149, n. 30).

postquam exinanitae vires defecere). However, he adds a clarifying phrase about the relationship between Æthelbald and Ceolred: *he his ehtnysse and his hatunge fleah and scunode*; "he fled from and shunned his persecutions and malice." Perhaps the idea of the young atheling in exile persecuted by the reigning king, so familiar from the stories and tales of the sixth and seventh centuries we have been examining, was less familiar in the translator's late ninth or early tenth-century context.[183] This lack of familiarity could explain why the translator has shifted attention from the results of Æthelbald's exile, the state of exhaustion and despair felt by the exile and his followers, to a cause, the malice of the king. He goes on to describe the interaction between exiled atheling and saint: "Mid þy he þa to þam Godes were com, and he him his earfoða rehte, þa cwæð Guðlac þus to him ..."[184] This is a clear case of simplification of Felix's much more elaborate description: "Illo vero cum beato viro Guthlac loquente, vir Dei, velut divini oraculi interpres, pandere quae ventura esset sibi, ex ordine coepit dicens ..." [185] Yet again the translator shifts the

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[183] R. P. Abels, *Lordship and Military Obligation*, p. 44, says that the gathering of war bands and raiding "were not exceptional [activities] for a seventh- or eighth-century prince," citing Guthlac, Cadwalla, and Æthelbald, but he makes no such comment about the ninth and tenth century. He does cite one example of a rebellious atheling from the period before Alfred's reign (Æthelbald, Alfred's older brother, the eldest son of Æthelwulf, who rebelled against his father upon his return from Rome) and one from after his death (Æthelwold, the son of Alfred's brother, Æthelred I, who in 899 contested Edward the Elder's accession) (59 and 189, n. 18), but there is little evidence for the routine exiling of potential claimants to the throne during the later periods.

[184] "When he came to the man of God, and related to him his troubles, Guthlac spake thus to him" (*The Anglo-Saxon Version of the Life of St. Guthlac*, pp. 76-77).

[185] "While he was conversing with the blessed Guthlac, the man of God, as if interpreting a divine oracle, began to reveal to him his future in detail, saying ..." (Felix of Croyland, *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, pp. 148-49).

emphasis, stressing Æthelbald's explanation of his troubles instead of Guthlac's prophesying. Guthlac seems more like a spiritual advisor than a holy prophet, and Æthelbald is more a man in personal trouble than a representative of the class of royal exiles. Finally, in Guthlac's speech, the translator develops Felix's ideas, but in a more streamlined and simplified fashion:

> Eala min cniht þinra gewinna and earfoða ic eom unforgitende; ic forþon þe gemiltsode, and for þinum earfoðum ic bæd God þæt he þe gemiltsode and þe gefultomode; and he þa mine bene gehyrde, and he þe syleþ rice and anweald þinre þeode, and þa ealle fleoð beforan þe þa þe hatiað, and þin sweord fornymeð ealle þine þa wiþerweardan, forþon Drihten þe bið on fultume. Ac be þu geþyldig, forþon ne bigitest þu na þæt rice on gerisne woruldlicra þinga, ac mid Drihtnes fultume þu þin rice begytest; forþon Drihten þa genyþerað þe þe nu hatiað, and Drihten afyrreð þæt rice fram him and hæfð þe gemynt and geteohhod. [186]

Again the translator focuses more on the personal enmity of Æthelbald's enemies (*þa þe hatiað*; *ealle þine þa wiþerweardan*; *þe þe mi hatiað*) than Felix did (*inimicorum tuorum*; *qui te oderunt*; *adversarios tuos*). More significantly, where Felix echoed Guthlac's raiding when he specified how Æthelbald would not gain the throne (*non in praeda nec in rapina*), the Old English translator says merely that he would not gain the throne through

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[186] "O! my son, I am not forgetful of thy conflicts and thy troubles; for this cause I took pity on thee, and for thy troubles I prayed God that he would have pity on thee, and support thee; and he has heard my prayer, and he will give thee kingdom and rule over thy people, and they shall flee before thee who hate thee; and thy sword shall destroy all thy adversaries, for the Lord is thy support. But be thou patient, for thou shalt not get the kingdom by means of worldly things, but with the Lord's help thou shalt get thy kingdom. For the Lord shall bring down those who now hate thee, and the Lord shall remove the kingdom from them, and hath remembered and appointed thee" (*The Anglo-Saxon Version of the Life of St. Guthlac*, pp. 78-79).

"the seizure of worldly things" (*on gerisne woruldlicra þinga*).[187] Once again, connections between the roles of Guthlac and Æthelbald, which Felix used to create the *Vita's* double-transformation structure, are absent in the *Old English Guthlac*.

Following Guthlac's death, Æthelbald appears frequently in the *Old English Guthlac*. As in Felix's *Vita*, he is described as the patron responsible for architectural improvements at the saint's tomb. He again comes to the island on hearing of Guthlac's death and has a vision of the saint promising him future success. Unlike the original Latin account, however, the Old English *Guthlac* also identifies the blind man who is cured at Guthlac's tomb in the *Vita's* final chapter as a follower of Æthelbald. These three references to the Mercian king intensify the sense of the king as the primary patron of the new shrine. First the translator mentions the physical improvements Æthelbald effected at the tomb: "Seo stow nu eft fram Aðelbalde þam kyninge mid manigfealdum getimbrum ys arwurðlice gewurþod, þær se sigefæsta lichama þæs halgan weres gastlice resteþ."[188] Then the king's visit to the shrine, while he is still in exile, is presented in another chapter entitled "Be Aþelbalde kyningce."[189] The account, although severely reduced, is still very similar in all its details to Felix's version, except that to Guthlac's prophecy that in a year's

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[187] J. R. Clark Hall, *A Concise Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*, p. 283, cites only this particular use of the word *gerisen*, with the definition "seizure."

[188] "The place has now [moreover] been honorably distinguished by King Athelbald with manifold buildings, where the victorious body of the holy man spiritually rests" (*The Anglo-Saxon Version of the Life of St. Guthlac*, pp. 92-93).

[189] *The Anglo-Saxon Version of the Life of St. Guthlac*, p. 94.

time Æthelbald will rule his kingdom the translator adds, "þe þu hwile æfter wunne," "that you once contended for."[190] This idea, that Æthelbald had previously been striving to gain the throne, does not originate from Felix. It seems to imply, however, that Æthelbald will now obtain the kingdom since he has followed Guthlac's advice and stopped struggling for it. Wherever it originates from (whether the translator's own imagination, some prior clerical emendation or addition, or some independent account of Æthelbald's career), the detail reinforces Guthlac's role in the exile's rise to power. By following the advice of Guthlac, Æthelbald gains the kingdom.

Many factors may have influenced the evident differences between the Latin and Old English texts of the *Life of St. Guthlac*, among them the always vexing problem of manuscript traditions; that is, did the copy of Felix's life from which the translator was working differ at all from those extant today, and did changes in the extant version of the translation stem from processes of manuscript transmission of that text? As noted earlier, Roberts has shown that differences between the full translation and the homily excerpted from it indicate that the existing version of the full translation underwent significant regularizing and revision.[191] The translator's knowledge of Latin may also have been a factor. Were there words or concepts employed by Felix that the translator didn't recognize or misunderstood? There is also the chance that he had other sources besides Felix's text from which he was also working: the *Old English Martyrology*, for example,

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[190] *The Anglo-Saxon Version of the Life of St. Guthlac*, pp. 96-97.

[191] J. Roberts, "The Old English Prose Translation," pp. 367-69.

or *Guthlac B* (perhaps with its missing ending intact?), or some lost version of Guthlac's life-story. The last mention of Æthelbald in the *Old English Guthlac* would seem to suggest either an intentional altering of the facts presented by Felix or a source of information available to the translator (or the scribe of some lost version of Felix's *Life*) separate from and in addition to the *Vita sancti Guthlaci*. According to Felix, the blind man healed by Guthlac in the final posthumous miracle was "a certain father of a family in the province of Wissa": "quidam vir paterfamilias in provincia Wissa."[192] The translator instead identifies him as "sum his scipes-man þæs foresprecenan wræccan Aþelbaldes on þære mægða Wissa."[193] Having compared the vocabulary of the *Old English Guthlac* and the *Vercelli Guthlac Homily*, Roberts has confirmed numerous earlier speculations that the original translation of Felix's *Vita*, from which both the homily and the translation extant in Cotton Vespasian D.xxi descend, was Anglian in origin, rather than West Saxon.[194] If so, the original translator may have had Mercian or East Anglian sources or traditions to draw on as he worked. Does the identification of the unnamed *paterfamilias* as Æthelbald's boatman preserve fenland traditions elsewhere lost, or is it a final rhetorical

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[192] *The Anglo-Saxon Version of the Life of St. Guthlac*, pp. 168-69. Colgrave identifies the province of Wissa as a "group of people who, in the eighth century, probably dwelt among the lower reaches of the River Wissey and the River Nene" (195), citing, in particular, O. K. Schram, "Fenland Place Names," p. 436.

[193] "[A] boatman of the aforesaid exile Athelbald" (*The Anglo-Saxon Version of the Life of St. Guthlac*, pp. 96-97).

[194] J. Roberts, "The Old English Prose Translation," pp. 366-69.

flourish to suggest the continuing influence of powerful patrons on Guthlac's cult? These are questions of importance, but they tend to be all but unanswerable.

Another important question concerns the translator's overall approach to the text. The act of translation he undertook can be viewed as an extension (or a precursor) of the Alfredian project of rendering major Latin texts into Old English, yet unlike Alfred or Ælfric, this anonymous translator gives us no preface explaining his motives in producing an Old English version of Felix's work. The method of translation throughout cannot be described as a careful, "word be worde" rendering of the original, but rather is largely undertaken "andgit of andgiete," as King Alfred described his own translation method.[195] Unlike the texts that Alfred chose to translate, the *Vita Guthlaci* is an Anglo-Saxon work written in England by an Englishman about an Englishman. In this it resembles Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*, the only other major Anglo-Latin prose work known to have been translated into the vernacular. It may be that, as an English work, it held a different status from the other works chosen for translation, and the translator may have felt less constrained to render this less-canonical work exactly than would Alfred with the writings of Boethius or Augustine or Gregory, or certainly than Ælfric with the Bible.

Finally, there is the question of audience. Alfred's Preface to the *Pastoral Care* indicates that he was translating for "eall seo gioguð ðe nu is on Angelcynne friora

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[195] "[W]ord for word ... sense for sense." Text is from Alfred, *King Alfred's Old English Version of Boethius De Consolatione Philosophiae*, p. 7. Translation is from S. Keynes and M. Lapidge, trans., *Alfred the Great*, p. 131.

manna."[196] Felix must have been writing almost exclusively for ecclesiastics, for even in his day few laymen would have known Latin. Do some of the changes in the Old English version of his work reflect the potential effect of the text on a less educated, lay audience? In his Preface to *Genesis*, Ælfric, writing a hundred years after Alfred, says that he considers the translation of the Bible dangerous:

> swiðe pleolic me oððe ænigum men to underbiginnenne, for þan þe ic ondræde, gif sum dysig man þis boc ræt oððe rædan gehyrd, þæt he wille wenan þæt he mote lybban no on þære niwan æ swa þa ealdan fæderas leofodon þa on þære tide ær þan þe seo ealde æ gesett wære, oþþe swa swa men leofodon under Moyses ær. [197]

The Old English translator of the *Vita Sancti Guthlaci* may have found Felix's presentation of Guthlac's earthly heroics "swiðe pleolic" for much the same reason. The conditions of Anglo-Saxon society had changed significantly between the early eighth century, the time of Felix, to the late ninth or early tenth century when the translator must have lived. The exiling of young athelings, so characteristic of the early period, appears to have virtually disappeared by Alfred's day. Æthelbald's transformation from exile to king, which mirrors the stories of Edwin, Oswald, and Cadwalla, seems to have become a somewhat unusual phenomenon by the late ninth century. In between the two periods also lay the long struggle against Viking marauders. The images of Guthlac's leadership of a war band -- *adgregatis satellitum turmis, sese in arma convertit-- cum adversantium sibi*

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[196] Alfred, *King Alfred's West-Saxon Version of Gregory's Pastoral Care*, p. 6.

[197] "[V]ery dangerous for me or any men to undertake, because I dread if some foolish man read this book or heard it read, that he will think that he may live now under the new law as the patriarchs [old fathers] lived in their time before the old law was set down, or as men lived under Moses' law." Text is from Ælfric, "Ælfric's Preface to Genesis," p. 76. Translation is my own.

urbes et villas, villas et castella igne ferroque vastaret -- inmensas praedas gregasset -- may have called to the minds of Anglo-Saxons of Alfred's day not the heroic strife of an exiled atheling leading forces in noble conquest, but the devastation and destruction carried out on their own cities and towns by bands of pillaging and ravaging invaders. Also, as Chase and Cherniss both have argued, the heroic culture of the Anglo-Saxons underwent significant modification as the Christianization of England deepened and lengthened.[198] What the evidence here and in the case of the various *vitae* of Martin seems to indicate is that the concept of a rejection of a warrior's life and warrior culture in general in favor of a life of spiritual struggle was vital in the earliest periods of Anglo-Saxon literature, when men and women of many ranks and stations in life were making the difficult and yet exciting decision to abandon their old lives. Over time, as monastic culture became more fully established, the process of choosing between a secular and a spiritual career became relatively fixed, occurring (as in the lives of Bede, Alcuin, and Ælfric, among others) early in life. The Viking invasions of the eighth century disrupted this process, and the re-establishment of monastic culture after Alfred's decisive victory appears to have been a difficult process. The Guthlac texts examined up to this point all probably pre-date the Alfredian period, or were written at the earliest stage of the "Age of Alfred." The remaining texts will illustrate later developments.

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[198] C. Chase, "Saints' Lives, Royal Lives, and the Date of *Beowulf*"; M. D. Cherniss, *Ingeld and Christ*.

VIII

Whoever chose to excerpt portions of the Old English version of the *Vita Guthlaci* for use as a homily chose a section of that work that did not include the period of youthful soldiering, although the relationship between warfare and sanctity may not have played any role in the homilist's decision. Donald Scragg identifies the portion chosen by the homilist as a sensible adaptation of the material:

> The extract from the *Vita* found in [Vercelli] homily XXIII consists of chapters xxviii-xxxii of the original. The preceding twenty-seven chapters form what their editor has called 'a kind of prologue to the *Vita* proper' [Colgrave 182], so that their exclusion is not surprising. [199]

The Vercelli homilist was not the only reworker of the Guthlac material to exclude any mention of Guthlac's leadership of a warband. We have already seen that *Guthlac B* omits any reference to that period of Guthlac's life. In addition, W. F. Bolton has itemized the distribution of the incidents in the Guthlac story in an appendix to his dissertation on Guthlac; in it he lists only eleven texts (out of the twenty-three he analyzes) that contain an account of Guthlac's military career. In contrast, fifteen contain Guthlac's "origin and pedigree," fifteen include "the appearance of a bright hand from Heaven, which touches the house where Guthlac is born," and fifteen describe or refer to Guthlac's entrance into Ripon; yet all three of these incidents also occur in the initial twenty-seven chapters of the

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[199] "Homily XXIII," p. 381. All quotations are taken from this edition, but see also "Homily XXIII [St Guthlac]."

Vita.[200] The importance Felix gave to Guthlac's military service in developing his *Life of Guthlac* was clearly not shared by all those who subsequently wrote about the saint.

The Vercelli Guthlac homily does include a few of the martial metaphors that were retained in the complete Old English translation on the *Vita*, but in the absence of any references to Guthlac's earthly combat they function in much the same way that military imagery is used in accounts of non-soldier saints. The homily opens, without introduction of any kind, at Guthlac's arrival on the island in the fens. It then recounts the attack by the devil using arrows of despair, during which Guthlac is called "þæs Cristes cempan."[201] This and the subsequent attacks on the solitary saint show him applying martial heroism to his spiritual struggles, but there is nothing to distinguish such rhetoric from treatment of the apostle Andrew as a warlike thegn of Christ in *Andreas*, for example, or Alfred's reference to Pope Gregory the Great as "dryhtnes cempa" in "The Metrical Preface to the Pastoral Care."[202] If we lacked any information on Guthlac's youth, we would not know from the homily that the martial imagery originated in his carrying over into the spiritual life of the heroic qualities he exhibited as a warrior. In fact, images of warfare play less of a role in this homily than they do in a poem like Cynewulf's *The Fates of the Apostles*, in which St. Bartholomew is "beadocræftig beorn," Simeon and Thaddeus are "beornas

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[200] W. F. Bolton, ""The Middle English and Latin Poems of Saint Guthlac," pp. 245-46.

[201] "Homily XXIII," p. 384. "Of the soldier of Christ." Translations are from F. M. Clough, trans., "Vercelli Homily XXIII."

[202] *Andreas*; Alfred. "The Metrical Preface to the *Pastoral Care* "

beadorofe," and all twelve apostles die heroic deaths.[203] Guthlac's struggles with demons seem mild compared with Thomas's martyrdom in India, when "sweordes fornam þurh hæðene hand, þær se halga gerang, wund for weorudum, þonon wuldres leoht swale gesohte sigores to leane."[204] In contrast to this war-like end, Guthlac is transported directly to heaven. As Scragg describes it, the author of the Vercelli homily, "in reporting Guthlac's delivery from hell, ...abandons the *Vita* and reports simply that [Guthlac] was *þa æfterþam* transported by Bartholomew to heaven where he was received by Christ."[205] Thus the Vercelli Guthlac never even dies, unless we are to understand that the original trip to Hell was not, as in the *Vita*, a trial of the saint's courage and faith but rather the first stage of a struggle over the saint's soul after death. This final scene not only highlights the non-martial nature of Guthlac's life and death in the homily but also represents the only major deviation from the *Vita*.

There are numerous differences between the homily and the Old English *Life*, but they form no coherent pattern. In a sense, the differences between them are linguistic not conceptual, since Roberts has shown that the Vespasian *Life* had been subjected to a

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[203] Cynewulf, *Fates of the Apostles*, pp. 52-53. "[A] soldier strong in the strife." "soldiers strong in the strife." Translations are from S. A. J. Bradley, ed. and trans., *Anglo-Saxon Poetry*, pp. 155-56.

[204] "A sword-assault by a heathen hand dispatched him where the saint fell wounded in front of the multitudes. From there his soul sought out the light of heaven in reward for his victory" (156).

[205] "Homily XVIII," p. 382.

higher degree of purely linguistic revision than the *Homily*, eliminating vocabulary and altering grammar to bring the Anglian text into line with late West-Saxon conventions. One sample will suffice. The homily and the Vespasian *Life* present the devil's first attack on Guthlac in much the same way, and both include military metaphors. A passage concerning Guthlac's diet that immediately precedes this one is missing in the homily, and the opening phrase of this passage is also missing there. Here is a line by line comparison of the two passages:

Ver.: Þa gelamp hit sume dæge, mid þy þe he
Vsp.: Sona þæs þe he westen ongan, þa gelamp hit sume dæge, mid þy he

Ver.: þy gewunelican þeowdome his sealmas sang and his gebedum ætfealh,
Vsp.:þan gewunelican þeawe his sealm sang and his gebedum befeal,

Ver.: þa se ealda feond mancynnes gengde geond þæt græswang swa
Vsp.: þa se ealda feond mancynnes gengde geond þæt græswang efne swa

Ver.: grymetende leo, þæt he his costunga attor wide todæleð.
Vsp.: grymetigende leo, þæt he his costunga attor wide geond stregde.

Ver.: Mid þy he þa his yfelnesse mægen and his grimnesse attor teldað,
Vsp.: Mid þy he þa his yfelnesse mægen and grimnysse attor teldode,

Ver.: þæt he mid þy atre þa menniscean heortan wundað, þa semninga
Vsp.: þæt he mid þan þe menniscan heortan wundode, þa semninga

Ver.: swa he of gebendum bogan, ða he ða his costunge stræle on þam mode
Vsp.: swa he of gebendum bogan his costunge streale on þam mode

Ver.: gefæstnode þæs Cristes cempan.
Vsp.: gefæstnode þæs Cristes cempan.

Although the few differences evident between the two versions may be significant for linguistic, grammatical, or stylistic studies, they reveal no discernible conceptual shift.

There is one place later in the homily where a martial metaphor appears that was missing in the complete *Life:* "Syððan seo tid wæs, þæt næfre þæt deoful eft þære ormodnesse wæpnum on hine sceotode."[206] However, the use of this single metaphor does not substantially heighten the image of Guthlac as warrior saint, although it does illustrate how such imagery might disappear accidentally through scribal error or some other relatively unmotivated process. It is through the homilist's choice of material, and not through the treatment of the material included, that the trope of spiritual transformation virtually disappears. Without the account of Guthlac's war years, the trope of spiritual transformation is reduced to occasional military metaphors serving no coherent purpose.

Up to this point, the only discernible pattern to emerge from the various Anglo-Saxon versions of Guthlac's life story is the steady diminution of spiritual transformation as the major trope associated with the hermit-saint. The martial imagery employed by Felix remains in the later texts, but the trope of which it was a part either has been reduced (as in *Guthlac B* and the Old English translation of the *Vita*) or has almost entirely vanished (as in the *Old English Martyrology* and the Vercelli homily). However, the last remaining Guthlac work, which probably originated from the later Anglo-Saxon period, makes significant use of the spiritual transformation *topos*.

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[206] "Homily XVIII," p. 122.

IX

The importance to the Anglo-Saxon cult of Guthlac of the saint's transformation from soldier to Christ's servant may be inferred by its reappearance in the Exeter Book poem *Guthlac A*. This poem, which seems to have been the last vernacular Anglo-Saxon Guthlac work, emphasizes again the saint's decision to abandon a life of warfare for the superior life of an anchorite, making the contrast between warfare and sanctity a major theme of the poem.[207] Using a simple envelope pattern, the poet sets the story of Guthlac and his battle against demons between balancing definitions of the saintly warrior, who is repeatedly contrasted in the body of the poem to the typical hero. At the same time, the poet contrasts the life of a settled ecclesiastic, secure in his cathedral or monastery, to the hermit who battles alone against demons in the wilderness. The result is a poem in which the saint's decision to live not as an ecclesiastic but as an anchorite gains glory and honor through its similarity to the abandoned role of earthly warrior. Alexandra Hennessey Olsen suggests that "*Guthlac A* ... shows that it is better to be a saint than a warrior because a saint can earn life after death," but she doesn't fully explore the ways in which this poetic version of the saint's life presents the anchorite's spiritual vocation as an alternative to and yet fundamentally like the life of the warrior.[208] The poet accepts fierce

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[207] There are a number of post-Conquest Guthlac works, but these lie outside the range of this study.

[208] A. H. Olsen, *Guthlac of* Croyland, p. 46.

and warlike struggle as natural to both realms of endeavor and indicates this by transferring martial language into the spiritual domain. The result does involve an accommodation by Christianity to the warlike spirit of Anglo-Saxon society, as critics from B. J. Kurtz [209] to Michael Swanton [210] have pointed out, but the martial and material means are still ultimately subordinated to spiritual ends. Although not yet a thorough-

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[209] B. J. Kurtz, "From St. Anthony to St. Guthlac," pp. 144-45, contrasts the image of the anchorite in Athanasius's *Vita Antonii*, Felix's *Vita Sancti Guthlaci*, and *Guthlac A*:

> The difference in spirit is striking .... A militant mind, of a sort, stands behind *Guthlac A*. No Felix or Athanasius, trained to the Church ideal of humility and long-suffering, praises a patient, much enduring saint as a model for the Christian anchorite. But a mind that delights in epics of conflict and in the heroic ideal of the fighting champion, has converted Guthlac into a mighty man of action, a protagonist ... in the supreme war of the ages .... *Guthlac A* is not another document in the realization of the Antonian tradition of biography. It is a poetic vision, new and northern, of the saintly anchorite as a greatly performing, never hesitating champion of the Almighty Over-Lord.

Although the poem does emphasize the war-like qualities of Guthlac, contrary to Kurtz's assertion, it represents an extension of the trope of the soldier of Christ already present in the Latin lives of Martin and Guthlac, two of the major hagiographic models influencing Old English Christian poetry on the saints. In addition, the incorporation of language and imagery reminiscent of the pagan Germanic past is quite similar to the appearance of a centaur, part of the Greco-Roman pagan cultural complex, to Paul the Hermit in Jerome's *Vita Sancti Pauli Primi Eremitae*, a work directly influenced by, and even, in some ways, a response to Athanasius's *Vita Antonii*. In stressing the mind of the poet, Kurtz does not mention the degree to which the poet may have been casting Guthlac in the role of warrior-saint to appeal to his audience's expectations. Just as the centaur represents a subordination of pagan mythology to the new Christian cult of saints, so also the pagan warrior ethos is subordinated to Christian concepts and ideals in *Guthlac A*.

[210] M. Swanton, *English Literature before Chaucer*, p. 147, says of *Guthlac A*, "The tone of tranquillity one might expect of a saintly life is entirely absent, and replaced by a martial note more suited to heroic epic than hagiography" (147). Unlike Kurtz, Swanton recognizes and appropriately stresses the Christian intention underlying the martial imagery, pointing out that, "However martial the imagery, the conflict is clearly conceived as an interior struggle taking place within the confines of the hermit's soul, Guthlac a 'warrior fighting for God in his heart' (ll. 344-45)" (150).

going glorification of war, *Guthlac A* fully develops the military motifs and imagery of the soldier saint and moves strongly in the direction of the idea of the saint as holy warrior. The poet rejects a soldier's earthly combat in favor of what he regards as the equally courageous spiritual strife waged by the saint.

The opening of the poem establishes a contrast between the secular and sacred paths. Early scholars often considered the first few lines separate from the poem, treating them as part of *Christ III*, which precedes it in the Exeter Book. Guthlac is not mentioned there, but the poet presents instead the meeting of the blessed soul with its accompanying angel on the journey to heaven after death. Yet as recent critics have pointed out (among them Joyce Hill, Alexandra Hennessey Olsen, and Jane Roberts), the opening passages establish the subject of the poem as the reward of heaven granted to the person devotedly following Christ, while the poem itself goes on to discuss the many different types or orders of human beings who seek to receive those rewards. Guthlac will be the model of the order of souls that actual reach heaven. As the poet says,

> Monge sindon geond middangeard
> hadas under heofonum þa þe in haligra
> rim arisað; we þæs ryht magun
> æt æghwylcum anra gehyran
> gif we halig bebodu healdan willað. [211]

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[211] All quotations are from J. Roberts, ed., *The Guthlac Poems*. Translations are my own: "Throughout Middle Earth there are many orders under heaven of those who arise into the number of holy ones; we may rightly belong to any one of these if we are willing to keep the holy commandments" (J. Roberts, *The Guthlac Poems*, ll. 30-34).

The word *hadas,* which I would translate "orders," can also mean "grades, ranks, degrees, or kinds." The poet uses various forms of the word *had* in a number of different senses. He first employs the word to distinguish between the two "orders" of soul and angel (the angel being of the older, and therefore higher, order), and later, as often has been observed, to distinguish between the orders of monks and of hermits. Most important to this study, and not sufficiently noted in the past, is the poet's use of the term *had* to develop the division between the secular and religious orders. The use of *had* in this last sense is important not only to an understanding of the poet's view of the relationship between warfare and sanctity but also to the poem's dating. Specialized use of the term to refer only to the religious orders would date the poem as late; the word used only in a broader and more general way, or refer to different ranks and statuses, would indicate an earlier date for the poem.

Some recent readings of the poem have tended to limit the word *had* to its religious connotations. In discussing the passage above, P. W. Conner argues, "The sense of the word *hadas* is delimited by *þa þe in haligra rim arisað*; the subject is not any and all ranks of men, but only those considered to be in the ranks of the holy--only those in religious orders."[212] Conner translates the delimiting phrase, "[who] are counted in the number of the holy."[213] Clark Hall gives a very different set of meanings for the verb

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[212] P. W. Conner, "Source Studies," p. 389.

[213] P. W. Conner, "Source Studies," p. 389.

arisan, however, including "to arise, get up," "to spring from, originate," or "spring up, ascend."[214] Roberts concurs, translating, "rise, arise."[215] The poet is not saying that there are many "orders" that make up the reckoning of the saints in heaven, but that there are many orders *under heofonum* from which men enter into the number of the saints. Roberts argues that the opening phrase echoes "a passage from the opening of the tenth chapter of Gregory's *Vitae Patrum*" and a similar passage in Lactanius's *De ira dei*"; Conner cites the passages in the *Benedictine Rule* describing the four types of monks. Both suggestions have merit, and certainly the treatment of anchorites in the *Rule of St. Benedict* may represent one of what Conner terms the poet's "collaborative sources, a part of the poet's reading which he may even have consulted as he wrote."[216] There are, however, other possible "collaborative sources" for the concept of *hadas* as developed in *Guthlac A*.

The use of the word *had* or its derivatives in Old English texts can aid the interpretation of the word's use by the *Guthlac A* poet. The first is another poem in the Exeter Book, *Christ I*, that includes a passage with closely parallel wording to lines 30-32 of *Guthlac A*:

> Swylce þa hyhstan on heofonum eac,
> Cristes þegnas, cweþað ond singað
> þæt þu sie hlæfdige halgum meahtum
> wuldorweorudes, ond worldcundra

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[214] J. R. Clark Hall, *A Concise Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*, p. 24.

[215] J. Roberts, *The Guthlac Poems*, p. 185.

[216] J. Roberts, "*Guthlac A*: Sources and Source Hunting," pp. 3-4; P. W. Conner, "Source Studies," p. 390.

hada under heofonum, ond helwara. [217]

The two virtually identical half-lines, "hadas under heofonum" from *Guthlac A* and "hada under heofonum" in *Christ I*, share an emphasis on earthly or worldly orders, an idea stressed in both poems by the phrase *under heofonum*, and further accentuated by the *Christ I* poet's use of the adjective *worldcundra*. Both lines are echoed when, only a few lines later in *Guthlac A*, the poet describes the order of the world as established by God:

....Forþon se mon ne þearf
to þisse worulde wyrpe gehycgan
þæt he us fægran gefean bringe
ofer þa niþas þe we nú dreogað
ær þon endien ealle gesceafte
ða he gesette on siex dagum,
ða nu under heofonum hadas cennað
micle 7 mæte. [218]

Here the alliterative pair *hada*[*s*] and *heofonum* is broken up into two different half-lines, and the meaning of the word *had* has shifted slightly to include, through the mention of the six days of creation, not just people but the orders of animals as well. These three echoing lines point to a poetic formula used to describe the orders of creation. Both poets refer to many kinds, ranks, grades, steps, or orders *under heaven*, reaching upward to the

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[217] "Likewise, those servants of Christ most exalted in the heavens also proclaim and sing, that you with your holy virtues are Lady of the heavenly host and of the earthly orders below the heavens and of the dwellers in hell" (S. A. J. Bradley, *Anglo-Saxon Poetry*, p. 212). Quotations are from *Christ I*.

[218] "Therefore a man need not hope for a change in this world, that it might bring us a fairer joy than the griefs that we now endure, until an end comes to all creation, that He established in six days and that now brings forth orders, great and small, under heaven" (J. Roberts. *The Guthlac Poems*, ll. 46b-53a).

blessed saints and the angels and reaching downward as well to the beasts and, at least in the case of *Christ I*, the dwellers in hell. The assumption that, within this ordered creation, saints could only be drawn from among the religious orders is not confirmed by a study of hagiography. In the early church, martyrs came from all walks of society (although, as this study has repeatedly shown, no Anglo-Saxon below the level of *atheling* had been so honored in England without first abandoning his or her secular station for a role within the religious orders). Certainly at least one king, Oswald of Northumbria, rose into the ranks of the holy without first becoming a monk, priest, or hermit, and it is this idea of multiple pathways to sanctity that the poet stresses.

The translator of the *Old English Guthlac* also used *had* to refer to people of many different walks of life. In the section of the *Vita* where Felix describes Guthlac's widespread influence, drawing pilgrims from all walks of life, the translator uses the term *had*: "Wæs on þa sylfan tid þæt þone foresprecenan wer missenlices hades men sohton, ægðer þara ge ealdormen ge bisceopas, and abbodas, and ælces hades heane and rice."[219] The translator employs the term *had* in two ways, first to distinguish between various stations in life, both secular and clerical, and then to refer to conditions of life, wealth and poverty. When the *Old English Guthlac* was originally translated, probably in the period of Alfred or a little after, *had* did not have a narrow meaning: it could include a wide variety of distinctions among men. Also, the version of the *Old English Guthlac* now in

[219] "It came to pass at that same time, that men of divers conditions sought the holy man, as well nobles as bishops and abbots, and men of every condition, rich and poor" (*The Anglo-Saxon Version of the Life of St. Guthlac*, p. 66-67).

the Vespasian manuscript had been subjected to revision bringing it into line with Late West Saxon usage. Clearly *had* could still be understood to include various statuses and conditions even late in the eleventh century when that revision was most likely undertaken.

Another text bearing on the *Guthlac A* poet's concept of the relationship between earthly orders and sainthood also comes not from poetry but from prose. Alfred's translation of Gregory the Great's *Cura Pastoralis* contains a passage commenting on the relative merits of laymen and clerics:

> Eac sint to manienne ða ðe ungefandod habbað ðissa flæsclicena scylda, ðæt hie ne wenen for hira clænnesse þæt hie sien beforan ðæm hirrym **hadum**, forðæmðe on ðæm dome ðæs ryhtwisan Deman onwent sio geearnung ðone **had** & ða geðyncðo....Swa bið on ðisse menniscan gecynde manige on beteran **hade** & on beteran endebyrdnesse wyrsan, & [on] wyrsan **hade** & on wyrsan endebyrdnesse beteran; swa ðætte [oft] on læwedum **hade** & on læwedum girelan mid godum weorcum & mid ryhte life man oferðihð ðone munuc**had**, & ða oðre, ðe ðone hierran **had** habbað, ðonne hi nyllað ðæm ðeawum & ðæm geearningum folgian, ðone gewaniað hie ðone **had** & gewemmað. [220]

The *Guthlac A* poet follows Alfred in employing the word *had* to refer both to secular and to clerical orders, and he follows Alfred's interpretation of Gregory's line of thinking in

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[220] "Those who have not tried the sins of the flesh are also to be admonished not to think that because of their purity they are before the higher orders, for they do not know whether they are behind those who are of less rank, while they think that they ought to be before them; because in the judgment of the righteous Judge merit annuls rank and distinction.... So there are among mankind many of better order and better rank, who are worse, and of worse order and rank, better; so that often a man of lay order and garb surpasses those of monastic order by the goodness of his works and the righteousness of his life, while the others, who are of higher order, by not striving to follow morality and a meritorious life, degrade and defile their order." Both text and translation are from Alfred, *King Alfred's West-Saxon Version of Gregory's Pastoral Care*, pp. 410-13 (emphasis added).

saying that a person may follow any walk of life and still be counted among the ranks of the holy as long as the desire is there to follow holy precepts. The man in secular orders (*on læwedum hade*) and wearing secular apparel (*on læwedum girelan*) might outstrip those in monastic order (*munuchad*) through good works and a righteous life (*mid godum weorcum & mid ryhte life*).[221] In this passage, as in the others before it, the term *had* proved useful in distinguishing between many different orders of men, not just those in holy orders.

The opening lines of *Guthlac A* describe both how some people rise into the ranks of the holy, and also how some fail to progress toward heaven. Following the description of the creation of the world, the poet reinforces the idea that on earth people are divided into many order, ranks, and grades: "Is þes middangeard / dalum gedæled."[222] All this physical world (*þes middangeard*) is broken up into different portions. Just as the alliterative formula *hadas under heofonum* stressed the divided nature of life in the middle realm, under heaven, this passage points out the divisions within "this middle-earth." The

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[221] Note that Alfred first speaks about those "who have not tried the sins of the flesh" (*ðe ungefandod habbað ðissa flæsclicena scylda*), that is, those in holy orders. He then refers to another group as being above these people (*ðæm hirrym hadum*), presumably those in the secular orders who have not had to renounce "the sins of the flesh."

[222] J. Roberts, *The Guthlac Poems*, ll. 53b-54a. P. W. Conner, "Source Studies," p. 393, translates: "This middle-earth is fragmented into its parts." The noun *dæl* and the verb *dælan* are so closely related semantically that it is difficult to capture the interplay of their meanings; "... is portioned out into its portions" might be closer to the sense of *dalum gedæled*.

poet then develops the idea that God observes how many seek the path of holiness in different ways, but few actually achieve it:

> Dryhten sceawað
> hwær þa eardien þe his æ healden;
> gesihð he þa domas dogra gehwylce
> wonian ond wendan of woruldryhte
> ða he gesette þurh his sylfes word.
> He fela findeð, fea beoð gecorene. [223]

The final word, *gecorene*, "chosen," will play a significant thematic role in the poem.

So far, the poet has commented on the many divisions of mankind, has said that one may rise from any group into the communion of saint, and has asserted that God sees and is aware of where those dwell who keep his commandments. Next he begins to look at those who wish to have the appearance/ reputation/ fame/ glory of holiness but do not live up to their responsibilities.

> Sume him þæs hades hlisan willað
> wegan on wordum 7 þa weorc ne doð:
> bið him eorðwela ofer þæt ece lif
> hyhta hyhst se gehwylcum sceal
> foldbuendra fremde geweorþan.
> Forþon hy nú hyrwað haligra mod
> ða þe him to heofonum hyge staþeliað. [224]

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[223] "The Lord observes where those may dwell who keep his law; he sees the commandments for the governing of this world, which He established by means of His own word, daily dwindle and change. He meets with many, [but] few are chosen," (J. Roberts, *The Guthlac Poems*, ll. 53b-59b). The final line translates *Matthew* 20.16 (J. Roberts, "*Guthlac A*: Sources and Source Hunting," p. 5; P. W. Conner, "Source Studies," p. 393).

[224] "Some wish to take upon themselves this order's appearance, to carry it out with words but not in actions. For them not eternal life but earthly wealth, from which each earth dweller will become estranged, is the highest of hopes. Therefore they now deride the *mod* [heart, spirit, courage] of the saint who fixes his mind on heaven" (J. Roberts, *The Guthlac Poems*, ll. 60-66).

The use of the word *had* here is interesting. Conner interprets it throughout the poem as referring to "those in holy orders and not the ranks of men generally," yet the present passage points to a much more select group than just monks or "those in holy orders."[225] The use of the demonstrative *þæs* limits the term *hades* to refer not to ecclesiastics in general but to the group referred to in the passage immediately before this one: that select group chosen (*gecorene*) by God to rise into the ranks of the holy.[226] In the present passage the word *had* is thus used once again in a generalized way, referring not to any one group within the many different walks of life, but to the status of sainthood itself.

Had originally had a very broad meaning, shown clearly in the poetic formula *hadas under heofonum*, but it had begun to take on a more specialized meaning in the late ninth century, as exemplified by its use by Alfred and the translator of the *Old English Guthlac* to designate the different orders or ranks within society. The highly specialized use of the word to refer primarily or exclusively to the religious orders, which Conner chooses as the main sense of the word in *Guthlac A*, was a late development in Old English. The significance of the word *had* to a dating of *Guthlac A* necessitates the somewhat lengthy digression that follows.

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[225] P. W. Conner, "Source Studies," pp. 389-91.

[226] The poet does develop a contrast later in the poem between two specific branches of the "holy orders," the anchorite and the monk: Guthlac, in a major test of his faith, is carried into the air by demons and shown monks in their cells following their own desires rather than the will of God, and the temptations faced by young monks are discussed in some detail (J. Roberts, *The Guthlac Poems*, ll. 404-26).

As we have seen, the translator of the *Old English Guthlac* used the term *had* to refer to the many different types of men, *missenlices hades men*, among which he included both secular and clerical status, *ægðer þara ge ealdormen ge bisceopas, and abbodas, and ælces hades heane and rice*. There are many other examples of this relatively broad usage, and they tend to be concentrated within the period of King Alfred and his immediate descendants, and some of them have direct bearing on the themes developed in *Guthlac A* . Alfred himself, in the letter to Bishop Waerferth that opens his translation of the *Cura Pastoralis*, speaks of two *hadas*, the *godcundra had* and the *woruldcundra had*, a secular order and an ecclesiastical, in deploring the state of learning in England in his day:

> Ælfred kyning hateð gretan Wærferth biscep his wordum luflice & freondlice; & ðe cyðan hate ðæt me com swiðe oft ón gemynd, hwelce wiotan iu wæron giond Angelcynn, ægðer ge godcundra hada ge worul[d]cundra.[227]

In discussing this passage, Paul Szarmach points out that "a distinction between the secular and sacerdotal orders...informs the entire Preface."[228] Scholars have generally accepted this underlying dichotomy without commenting on what exactly is meant by "the secular...orders." Alfred is deploring the state of learning among the clergy, but his program of translations would increase not just clerical but secular learning as well. The

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[227] "King Alfred bids greet bishop Wærferth with his words lovingly and with friendship; and I let it be known to thee that it has very often come into my mind , what wise men there formerly were throughout England, both of sacred and secular orders" (Alfred, *King Alfred's West-Saxon Version of Gregory's Pastoral Care*, pp. 2-3).

[228] P. E. Szarmach, "The Meaning of Alfred's *Preface* to the *Pastoral Care*," p. 58.

kings before him, supported by these two orders, succeeded "mid wige ge mid wisdom", with war or with wisdom. He specifically states that the *godcundran hadas*, the sacred orders, were responsible for education. The implication is that the other *had*, the *woruldcundra had*, was responsible for the kings' success in war.

There are conceptual similarities between Alfred's use of the word *had* and the *Guthlac A* the poet's phrases "Sume him þæs hades hlisan willað/ wegan on wordum 7 þa weorc ne doð." Alfred similarly stresses that "ðone naman anne we lufodon ðætte we Cristne wæren, and swiðe feawe ða ðeawas."[229] Taking upon oneself the reputation of *þæs hades* -- the order of God's chosen -- is related to and yet different from taking on the name of a Christian, but the poet may be playing on two levels of meaning embodied in two senses of *had*, as status or rank and also as condition. Those who are chosen by God are not concentrated within any earthly order, but rather they are chosen from among those ranks to a new and higher condition. What unites the poet's concept with Alfred's is that all Christians, not just those in monasteries or in religious orders, are expected to match the naming of themselves as followers of Christ with Christian behavior. Certainly a Christian king like Alfred expected his thegns and ealdormen to be Christians no less than his bishops and abbots and priests. J. E. Cross traces Alfred's phrases through Isidore and Augustine back to the Bible, so the contrast of words vs. works undoubtedly comes to both poem and preface through shared patristic and biblical learning.[230] What

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[229] Alfred. *King Alfred's West-Saxon Version of Gregory's Pastoral Care*, p. 5.

resonates most strongly between poem and preface is the conjunction of the idea of the king's two *hadas* or orders with the idea that *we*, king and layman and clergyman, have not lived up to the high moral status that we claimed for ourselves. Similar ideas about the division of society appear in the translation of Boethius's *De Consolatione Philosophiae*, also attributed to Alfred, in which he speaks of three groups, "gebedmen and fyrdmen and weorcmen" upon whom the king must rely. This passage is often cited as the earliest known discussion of the medieval idea of the three orders of society.[231]

It would be anachronistic to identify the phrase *woruldcundra had* with the idea of an order of knighthood. Certainly the term *knighthood* (*cnihthad*) itself is a development of the late tenth century at the earliest, as we saw in the discussion of the Vercelli homily on Martin in Chapter One; however, Karl Leyser has provided considerable evidence in Carolingian canon law to show that, from as early as the ninth century, the "bearing of arms was a dignity which imposed obligations and therefore was incompatible with certain forms of reprehensible, sinful conduct, particularly grave and almost inexpiable crimes."[232] The key phrase for Leyser's analysis is *cingulum militare*, the belt indicative of the status of noble warrior: "If any one piece of equipment became emblematic and summed up

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[230] J. E. Cross, "The Name and Not the Deeds." Cross cites Augustine, "Tractatus 5 in epistolam Joannis ad Parthos," § 12; Isidore, *Etymologiae*, Lib. VIII, Cap. XIV, § 3; James I. 22-25.

[231] G. Constable, "The Orders of Society," p. 279.

[232] K. Leyser, "Early Medieval Canon Law," p. 566.

aristocratic military status it was a warrior's belt, the *cingulum militare.*"[233] Alcuin used the phrase in describing how Martin gave up the role of earthly soldier for that of soldier of Christ, and Leyser cites Anglo-Saxon evidence from the reign of Edward the Elder (899-925) to indicate that the possession of a stolen belt carried with it implications of legal status. Military belts do not appear in literary works relevant to *Guthlac A*, but in legal documents from the second half of the ninth through the first half of the tenth century, the term *had* appears repeatedly in phrases that combine and thereby equate religious and secular statuses. For example, in a legal document of the 880's entitled by F. E. Harmer "Record of Negotiations Between AEthelred, Earl of the Mercians, and Berkeley Abbey" (Harmer 12), Alfred's phrase "godcundra hada ge woroldcundra" is used twice, once to describe the members of the Mercian *witan* and once to refer in an inclusive way to the people of Mercia.[234] The same phrase also appears in Harmer 14, "Record of Negotiations Between Werferth, Bishop of Worcester, and the Priest Aethelwald; With Confirmation by Earl Aethelred and the Mercian Council."[235] The evidence seems to indicate that the idea of two types of *had*, *godcundra ge woroldcundra*, was a Mercian idea of the late ninth century that came to be adopted by Alfred and his West Saxon descendants. In a study of the suffix *-cund*, Walter Hofstetter argues that, "of the twenty-four adjectival formations with *-cund* in the corpus of Old English texts...,[f]ifteen

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[233] K. Leyser, "Early Medieval Canon Law," p. 553.

[234] F. E. Harmer, *Select English Historical Documents of the Ninth and Tenth Centuries*, p. 21.

formations occur exclusively, or with few exceptions, in prose or glosses of Anglian or early West Saxon origin, or in poetry, the language of which is strongly influenced by Anglian."[236] Setting aside six formations with insufficient or inconclusive patterns of usage, Hofstetter goes on to identify only three formations with *-cund* that extended, "to some extent," into late West Saxon usage, among which are *godcund* ("which is the sole word for the concept 'divine' in all the dialects throughout the Old English period") and *woruldcund*.[237] Linguistic evidence therefore indicates that the phrase *godcundra ge woruldcundra hadas*, used repeatedly in West Saxon documents and literary texts, is of probable Anglian/ Mercian origin. Alfred employs the term *had* only once in his own laws, and there it designates secular status alone:

> Swa we eac settað be eallum hadum, ge ceorle ge eorle: se ðe ymb his hlafordes fiorh sierwe, sie he wið ðone his feores scyldig & ealles ðæs ðe he age. oððe be his hlafordes were hine getriowe. [238]

Concerning this passage, Dorothy Whitelock comments, "An old rhyming formula, *ge ceorle ge eorle*, is used, in which *eorl* retains its otherwise obsolete sense of nobleman."[239]

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[235] F. E. Harmer, *Select English Historical Documents of the Ninth and Tenth Centuries*, p. 24.

[236] W. Hofstetter, "The Old English Adjectival Suffix '-cund'," p. 344.

[237] W. Hofstetter, "The Old English Adjectival Suffix '-cund'," p. 345.

[238] "Thus we also determine concerning all ranks, both *ceorl* and noble: he who plots against his lord's life is to liable to forfeit his life and all that he owns, or to clear himself by his lord's wergild" (D. Whitelock, ed. and trans., *English Historical Documents: c. 500-1042*, p. 410).

[239] D. Whitelock, ed. and trans., *English Historical Documents: c. 500-1042*, p. 410.

Alfred's use of *had* to describe the ranks of laymen indicates the origins of the word in descriptions of societal ranks, and reminds us that the term was adapted for use with the religious orders, rather than vice versa. Over time the religious sense of the term became predominant over the secular. The laws of King Edmund (939-46) known as *I Edmund*, written not earlier than 942, open, "Eadmund cyngc gesamnode micelne sinoð to Lundenbirig on ða halgan easterlican tíd ægðer ge godcundra háda ge worldcundra."[240] *II Edmund* opens similarly: "Eadmund cyning cyð eallum folce, ge yldrum ge gingrum, ðe on his anwealde syn, ðæt ic smeade mid minra witena geðeahte, ge god[cund]ra hada ge læwedra, ærest, hu ic mæhte Cristendomes mest aræran."[241] In this last document, however, the formula shows signs of breaking down. Instead of the usual pairing of *godcundra ge worldcundra*, the second term is replaced by *læwedra* while the first term appears in two of the extant manuscripts as "godra" and in one manuscript is replaced by the term "hadedra."[242] In the laws of Æthelred and Canute, the construction "gehadode ge læwede" replaces the earlier phrasing, indicating that *had* and its derivative forms had by that time come to be associated only or primarily with religious status.

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[240] A. J. Robertson, ed. and trans., *The Laws of the Kings of England*, pp. 6-7; "King Edmund has convened at London, during the holy season of Easter, a great assembly both of the ecclesiastical and secular estates."

[241] "I, King Edmund, inform all people, both high and low, who are under my authority, that I have been considering, with the advice of my councillors both ecclesiastical and lay, first of all how I could best promote Christianity" (A. J. Robertson, ed. and trans., *The Laws of the Kings of England*, pp. 8-9).

[242] A. J. Robertson, ed. and trans., *The Laws of the Kings of England*, p. 8, n. 2.

The poet's use of the word *had* thus may have considerable bearing on the dating of the poem. It is inconsistent to assume, as some have, that the poem is an early work, and yet to read the word *had* as primarily referring to religious orders. Conner's argument is more persuasive, since he stresses the religious meaning of *had* and therefore locates the poem within the period of the Benedictine Reform when that meaning was increasingly dominant. Even the latest suggested dates for *Guthlac A* end at a *terminus ad quem* of the making of the Exeter Book in the second half of the tenth century. Roberts lists the word *had* among the "specialized vocabulary" of the church appearing in *Guthlac A*, and she comments that it is one of the "[n]ative words and phrases reflecting extensions of meaning under Christian influence."[243] The word would be equally appropriate, however, to her other list of specialized legal terms. A term useful to both law and religion would be particularly useful in a poem that combines legal and religious language, and the use of the term in both senses is consistent with the evidence for the period of Alfred and his immediate descendants, extending into but not much beyond the reign of Edmund.

The author of *Guthlac A* used the term *had* in more than one way. As demonstrated earlier, it first indicates the orders of soul and angel, next refers to the many different statuses from which individuals can rise into the ranks of the holy, and then indicates the multiplicity of ranks and orders *under heofonum*. Its fourth occurrence, where it refers to the order of saints, thus raises a question: who are those (*sume*) that *him þæs hades hlisan willað,* wish to take upon themselves the reputation of this order?

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[243] J. Roberts, *The Guthlac Poems*, p. 51.

The poet's answer lies in his stress on works and not just words. What differentiates the saint's *had* from other statuses is not what one says but what one does. It is a condition resulting from behavior and not status. The different orders within the secular and ecclesiastical estates may include individuals who "wish to take upon themselves the reputation of this order," but they value "earthly wealth, from which each earth dweller will be estranged," more than eternal life. The lines, quoted earlier, read, "Forþon hy nú hyrwað haligra mod/ ða þe him to heofonum hyge staþeliað": "Therefore they now deride the *mod* of the saint who fixes his mind on heaven." Those who take upon themselves the reputation of the order of sainthood mock the true saint's *mod*, which can mean "spirit" or "heart" but in some contexts also means "courage" or "bravery." Monks need not be the only group who question the true saint's *mod*. A monk might question the anchorite's decision to live outside of any rule or order, but considering the life of the saint whose virtues the poet has chosen to extol, and the careful antithesis set up by the major extant source for his life, it seems likely that the spirit of the holy man is being questioned, not only by the monk, but also by the secular Christian. The worldly warrior also might call himself a follower of Christ and might consider his own status in life a *had* equal to the *godcundran hadas*, the holy orders, and certainly some Anglo-Saxons considered their kings as in some sense holy. Alfred's passage on the true holy man not only asserts that those in secular orders might be holier than those in religious orders, he also refers to the secular orders as the *hirrym hadum*. Proud of his warlike courage, the earthly soldier might question the spirit and bravery of a figure like Guthlac who

abandoned the dangers of secular society to join the *godcundra hadas*, those in religious orders, even while he himself might continue to pursue earthly wealth, power, and fame. The poem goes on to show the spiritual courage of the soldier of Christ. The poet is thus separating Guthlac both from the secular warrior and also from those raised from youth within the monastery. The poem carves out a space between the monastic institutions on one side and the secular orders on the other for an independent holy man, an anchoritic ascetic who laid down his arms and took up the solitary struggle of the spirit.

The *Guthlac A* poet emphasizes the warlike and heroic aspects of Guthlac's life, and compares them to the actions of an worldly soldier. Guthlac is superior to others in the ways he combines the attributes of soldier and saint. He lives like a soldier but follows the higher spiritual path like the monk. The poet continues to describe the ideal holy man's deeds and accomplishments, and ends the introduction by naming this perfect order of saints the "gecostan cempan," the chosen champions:

> þæt synd þa gecostan cempan þa þam cyninge þeowað
> se næfre þa lean alegeð þam þe his lufan adreogeð. [244]

That God/ Christ is *þam cyninge...se næfre þa lean alegeð*, "the king who never withholds reward," solidifies the contrast between secular and sacred warrior, between earthly soldiers who follow untrustworthy lords offering only transitory riches and the warrior whose spiritual King offers eternal rewards. The earthly king gathers around him proven

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[244] "Those are the the tried [or proven] warriors, who follow the king who never withholds reward from those who endure in his love" (J. Roberts, *The Guthlac Poems*, ll. 91-92)

warriors and holds their allegiance through the dispensing of gifts, but not all kings live up to their end of the bargain. The rewards of the *woruldcundra had* are never completely secure; an earthly king can withhold rewards and the rewards themselves are transitory.

Guthlac has experienced both *hadas*, both conditions or orders of life. Like Felix, the *Guthlac A*-poet mentions Guthlac's youthful soldiering, but in an allusive manner, as though expecting an audience to know already the story of Guthlac's life:

> Hwæt we hyrdon oft þæt se halga wer
> in þa ærestan ældu gelufade
> frecnessa fela; fyrst wæs swa þeana
> in Godes dome hwonne Guðlace
> on his ondgietan engel sealde
> þæt him sweðraden synna lustas. [245]

This passage calls to mind the second of Felix's twin epiphanies or conversions, when Guthlac, over the course of a single night and through the intervention of the spiritual flame (*spiritalis flamma*), changes from an earthly soldier who leads plundering warbands to a servant of Christ. However, unlike Felix, the poet conceives of Guthlac's emulation of the heroes of the past as a love of dangerous things (*frecnessa fela*). The image of Guthlac's life as a warrior in *Guthlac A* resembles more closely the approach taken in the Old English translation of Felix's *Vita* than that in the *Vita* itself, although there are no evident verbal echoes between the two vernacular texts. Both translator and poet consider the leadership of a warband bent on pillaging and raiding a sinful career, and this similarity

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[245] "Lo, we have often heard that the holy man in his youth delighted in many perilous things; nevertheless a time came, through God's decree, when an angel granted to Guthlac that the joys in his mind for sins melted away" (J. Roberts, *The Guthlac Poems*, ll. 108-113).

of perspective also reinforces the argument that the poem, like the translation, is a work of the late ninth or, more likely, the first half of the tenth century.

Next the poet describes two contradictory promptings within Guthlac's heart, one given to him by a guardian angel, the other placed there by a tempting devil. The former urges him to renounce the transitory things of this world in favor of the lasting rewards of heaven; the latter gives him different advice:

> ....hyne scyhte þæt he sceaðena gemot
> nihtes sohte 7 þurh neþinge
> wunne æfter worulde swa doð wræcmæcgas
> þa þe ne bimurnað monnes feore
> þæs þe him to honda huþe gelædeð
> butan hy þy reafe rædan motan. [246]

These references to plunderers in search of booty and to exiled men (*wræcmæcgas*) again imply that the poem's audience is already familiar with accounts of Guthlac's youth, and the poet does not leave the moral valence of his youthful escapades in doubt. The angel prompts Guthlac to follow Christ, the demon encourages him to bear arms and ravage his enemies. The poet once again contrasts Guthlac's youth and his later choice of the sacred path, and in the process contrasts the two *hadas*, *ge godcundra ge woruldcundra*.

Although not a chronologically ordered narrative of Guthlac's life, the poem moves from these references to Guthlac's youth to an account of his being led to heaven by St. Bartholomew. Jane Roberts suggests, as we have seen, that the direct movement in

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[246] "[The demon] urged him to seek out a band of raiders by night and through daring to strive for the world, as do outcasts, those who show no concern for the life of a man who brings plunder into their hands except that they might thereby possess booty" (J. Roberts, *The Guthlac Poems*, ll.127-132).

the poem from the gates of hell to the gates of heaven links *Guthlac A* in some way to the Vercelli homily, in which the journey to heaven escorted by Bartholomew is the one major deviation from Felix's *Vita*, its complete Old English translation, and *Guthlac B*. The poet might have heard the homily being read aloud, either at mass or at refectory (depending on one's sense of the role of vernacular homilies and the extent of Latin literacy in Anglo-Saxon England, one suggestion or the other might seem more likely). Already familiar with the story of Guthlac, the poet might have been inspired to compose a poem on the life of the saint independent of all the major sources and yet conceptually linked to the full Guthlac story in Felix and the revised ending of Guthlac's life in the Vercelli homily. A speculative reconstruction like this one can suggest the type of relationship between poem and tradition that the evidence of the poem itself would support. It stands furthest outside the literary tradition surrounding Guthlac, yet it presents broad conceptual similarities to Felix's original *Vita* and the tradition of spiritual transformation.

Along the way between youthful plundering and journey to heavenly reward, the poet portrays Guthlac as he appears in the *Vita Sancti Guthlaci*: as an active fighter for the faith. His battles with demons, described in elaborate military metaphors, make up the body of the poem. In one particularly striking scene, Guthlac tells his demonic enemies:

> ....No ic eow sweord ongean
> mid gebolgne hond oðberan þence,
> worulde wæpen, ne sceal þes wong Gode
> þurh blodgyte gebuen weorðan
> ac ic minum Criste cweman þence
> leofran lace.... [247]

In this speech the poet makes use of the technique of envelope or ring patterning that he employs on a larger scale in the introduction and conclusion of the poem. The passage begins in the second half-line of 302 and ends in the first half-line of 307, and the verb *þence* is repeated at the ends of the first and last full lines of this speech, creating a balanced passage in which similar terms at either end enclose a core idea within its envelope. The last word is a well-chosen one, since it repeats the second element in Guthlac's own name -- *lac* in its dative form.[248] The use may be coincidental, but considering Felix's etymology for the name -- the reward of war -- and the implied contrast, almost a pun, that it implies, the play on words may have been intentional. Rather than conquest through bloodshed, Guthlac is offering to his spiritual lord a greater gift -- the victory over sin in the heart of the saint committed to Christ. Through the exchange of offerings between soldier and lord, he will gain eternal life in heaven as a reward for victory in the spiritual struggle. This idea of reciprocal exchange is centered within the envelope formed by the statement of contrasting intentions.... "I do not intend...but I intend"... "No ic...þence....ac ic þence."

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[247] "I do not intend to bring forth against you with enraged hand a sword, a worldly weapon, nor shall this place be conquered for God through bloodshed, but I intend to please my Christ with a more beloved *lac* [gift, offering, reward]" (J. Roberts, *The Guthlac Poems*, ll. 302b-307a).

[248] For the liklihood that the poet and his audience would have been familiar with the "auspicious significance of Guthlac's name," see F. C. Robinson, "The Significance of Names in Old English Literature," p. 44.

The poem as a whole ends by closing the neatly constructed envelope pattern begun in the introduction. The opening section introduced the subject of the poem, the exemplary saint as the tried and trusted spiritual warrior of the eternal lord, and the poem ends on the same note. Guthlac, carried to heaven by ministering angels, becomes a model for the highest order of God's earthly followers:

> ....þæt beoð husulweras,
> cempan gecorene Criste leofe;
> berað in bresotum beorhtne geleafan,
> haligne hyht, heortan clæne. [249]

In the appositive terms *husulweras*, "men of the sacrament," and "chosen warriors," *cempan gecorene*, appears again the implied contrast, developed throughout the poem, between the secular order of warriors, the *bellatores*, and the religious orders, the *oratores*. Men of the sacrament are the warriors who, as a reward for their successful "warring against vices," are chosen to form the retinue of the king of heaven, while men of the sword, chosen by an earthly king, will receive only the transitory rewards of life on earth.

A poem developing this theme would have encouraged a clerical audience (whether of monks or of anchorites or of the "secular" clergy) to consider themselves able to emulate the manly and heroic attributes of the traditional Anglo-Saxon hero, who served in an earthly lord's war-band, by actively engaging in spiritual struggle. At the

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[249] "These are the *husulweras* [the men of the sacrament], the chosen warriors beloved of Christ; they bear in their breasts bright belief, holy hope, clean hearts" (J. Roberts, *The Guthlac Poems*, ll. 796b-798).

same time, a poem like *Guthlac A* could encourage laymen to follow Guthlac's lead and exchange the role of earthly warrior for that of the soldier of Christ. Finally, the poet identifies a type of spiritual warrior, the anchorite, who exists outside of the two more established bodies of society, the monastery and the warlord's *comitatus*, and in the person of Guthlac presents a man who has risen from earthly orders, to spiritual orders, and finally to the ranks of the saints. *Guthlac A* epitomizes a tendency in Anglo-Saxon culture to unite aspects of sainthood and military prowess. Rather than leaving the concepts of saint and warrior as essentially opposed, the poet unites them in a new construct: the spiritual warrior.

X

None of the works derived from Felix's *Vita Sancti Guthlaci* retained the unique view of the relationship between warfare and sanctity presented in that text. Felix was writing in a time when Christianity was still a new force in Anglo-Saxon life, and the values and ideals of Anglo-Saxon Christian society were still being shaped by the culture that preceded it. In Guthlac, Felix found a hero for his time: a man who, in his youth, embodied the heroic ideals of his culture but whose mature life as a hermit expressed the new cultural values of Christianity. To this portrait of an Anglo-Saxon soldier-saint, Felix added the portrait of an ideal king: a man whose devotion and deference while an exile was transformed into generous patronage once he gained his throne. In the pages of the *Vita Sancti Guthlaci*, the earthly hero was transformed into a soldier of Christ, and the exiled atheling and his loyal warband, struggling to stay alive on the margins of society, became a holy king whom the heavenly King has ordained "chief over the peoples" and the noble þegns whose swords would help him "overcome [his] foes."[250] Vernacular reflections of Felix's text reduced or altered these images, typically substituting a conversion from a sinful life as a soldier for Felix's portrait of Guthlac's transformation from earthly to divine heroism, and often eliminating the image of the holy king altogether. This pattern mirrors the evidence for Sulpicius's anti-war tropes discussed in Chapter One.

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[250] Felix of Croyland, *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, pp. 149-51

Certain aspects of the period following Felix's composition of the *Vita sancti Guthlaci* may account for the diminishing vitality of Felix's tropes. Later writers tended to present the relationship between Guthlac's youthful status as warrior and his later role as saint as either entirely opposed or essentially unrelated. Christianity changed in the aftermath of the Age of Bede from a new faith, uprooting and supplanting old ways of life and thought, to the established religion of society. Bede himself expressed concern about too thorough a transformation of Anglo-Saxon society based on a rejection of the warrior's role. In society as a whole, the division between secular and ecclesiastical affairs began to be replaced by increasing intermingling and blending of religious and lay authority.[251] The interdependency of church and state was reinforced by the waves of Viking invasions that swept England from 793 until the end of the ninth century. The invaders represented both a concrete manifestation of the evils of unchecked violence and a reason for the continued importance of the warrior in Anglo-Saxon culture. Writers during this period seem not to have considered a rejection of warfare as a central aspect of sanctity.

Only in what was probably the last vernacular work devoted to Guthlac, the Exeter *Guthlac A*, did one of the later writers renew and revitalize Felix's basic tropes. There the poet condemned Guthlac's youthful warfare as *frecnessa fela*, many dangerous things, and condemned the life of the exile, referring to an exile's warband as *sceaðena gemot*, a gathering of criminals, and speaking of the exiles themselves as *wræcmæcgas/ þa þe ne*

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[251] F. M. Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, 236-38.

bimurnað monnes feore/ ... butan hy þy reafe rædan motan: exiled men who take no account of a man's life except that through him they might possess plunder. Yet like Felix, the poet relied on an inherent parallelism -- earthly heroism transformed into heavenly, the leader of a band of exiles elevated to follower of a heavenly king -- to show not just a contrast between the sordidness of earthly raiding and the pious life of a blessed saint, but the underlying unity between earthly hero and soldier of the faith. In the joining of apparent opposites the image of Guthlac in this poem is linked in fundamental ways to the other Anglo-Saxon innovation, the holy king.

Despite Guthlac's continuing popularity throughout the Anglo-Saxon era, he was not one of the soldier-saints Ælfric chose for his monumental *Lives of Saints*. We have already examined Ælfric's lives of Martin, and we will see in the sixth chapter of this study how he handled the stories of Oswald and many other soldier saints, but Guthlac will not be among them. Although any argument by omission can at best remain wholly speculative, one cannot help but wonder if, for the Anglo-Saxon era's greatest hagiographer, Felix's tale of a youthful saint who *urbes et villas, villas et castella igne ferroque vastaret* -- wasted towns and villages, villages and castles with fire and with sword -- was *frenessa fela*, and therefore inappropriate for a member of the company of God's chosen saints.

Chapter Five: Alcuin and Abbo

Cultural Cross-Pollination and the Anglo-Saxon Cult of Kings

I

The glorification of martyred warrior-kings analyzed in Chapter Two represented the "new religious model of holy kings" that Gábor Klaniczay and others attribute to the Anglo-Saxons.[1] This "new religious model" had a direct influence on Anglo-Saxon culture, yet the evidence presented in Chapters Three and Four showed that the Martinian model of rejection of warfare also continued to provide an influential model for the presentation of soldier saints in Anglo-Saxon hagiography. Among the limited group of native soldier-saints, Guthlac, whose *vita* combined elements of both the Martinian and Oswaldian models of sainthood, exerted greater popular appeal on Anglo-Saxon culture than did Oswald, Edwin, or any of the other royal saints, if the number of extant literary works honoring them can be used as a measure. Bede's accounts of the two sainted warrior-kings in the *Historia Ecclesiastica* were translated into Old English during the time of Alfred, as part of *The Old English Bede*, but there are no other extant vernacular

[1] G. Klaniczay, "From Sacral Kingship to Self-Representation," p. 8.

works derived from that tradition until the time of Ælfric.[2] For whatever reason, the two soldier-saints who received the most extensive treatment in Anglo-Saxon literature were Martin, a continental saint (analyzed in Chapter One) who decisively rejected warfare, and Guthlac, a native saint whose *vita* (examined in Chapter Three) was strongly influenced by the Martinian model.[3] The full effect of the "the new religious model of holy kings" on

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[2] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, i, pp. 245-318, 324-90; *The Old English Version of Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, i, pp. 118-52, 154-92.

[3] The relative popularity of the various soldier saints in Anglo-Saxon England can also be measured by reference to M. Lapidge, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Litanies of the Saints*. Among native soldier saints, Guthlac appears in twenty of the extant litanies, Edmund in nineteen, Oswald in sixteen, and Edwin in none. Murdered royal saints listed in litanies include Edward the Martyr (nineteen entries), Kenelm (fourteen), Æthelberht of East Anglia (seven), and Ealhmund (one). St Ælfheah, martyred by the Danes in the early eleventh century, appears in sixteen. St Martin heads the list of non-native soldier saints honored in Anglo-Saxon litanies with forty-eight entries, George follows with twenty-six, Maurice appears in twenty-five, Sebastian in twenty-three, Eustace in fifteen, and Theodore is honored in only seven. Cuthberht would appear to have been the most honored of all native Anglo-Saxon saints, appearing in twenty-seven of the extant litanies. Evidence from church dedications presents a somewhat different picture: F. Arnold-Forster, *Studies in Church Dedications*, lists sixty-two churches dedicated to Oswald, sixty-one to Edmund, fifteen to Æthelberht, four to Ealhmund, three to Edward the Martyr, and one apiece to Edwin and Oswine. According to Arnold-Forster, Martin received well over 150 church dedications, while Guthlac received only eight. These statistics are misleading, however, since dedications from all periods are included, medieval and modern alike, and Arnold-Forster does not distinguish between dedications to St Oswald of Northumbria, King and Martyr, and St Oswald of Worcester (Archbishop of York 972-92), assigning all churches dedicated to a St Oswald to the former. More relevant to a study of Anglo-Saxon reverence for these saints is the research done by A. Binns, *Dedications of Monastic Houses*. Binns gives separate statistics for dedications before and after the Conquest, showing that in the seventh and eighth centuries, six monasteries were dedicated to Martin and one was dedicated to Oswald and Cuthbert jointly (19-20). Of all monasteries founded before the Conquest which were still in existance in 1066, one was dedicated to Guthlac, one to Edmund, and none to Oswald (21; statistics for Martin are obscured as Binns listed Michael twice, with first three and then two dedications, one of which undoubtedly refers to Martin, who is not listed). Oswald and Martin both received four dedications between the Conquest and 1216, Edmund received three, Guthlac two,

Anglo-Saxon literature was delayed until the very end of the period, in texts that will be examined in the final chapters of this study. In the present chapter ongoing, reciprocal influences between the Continent and England will be examined to show how the Anglo-Saxon ideal of martyred kingship was transplanted to the Continent around the year 800 and returned to England in the late tenth century altered but at the same time strengthened and renewed.

The first half of this chapter will examine how the cult of martyred warrior-kings was transplanted into Carolingian culture by Alcuin, a schoolmaster from York who became one of the most influential figures at the court of Charlemagne. The second half will look at the contribution to Anglo-Saxon hagiography made by Abbo, a tenth-century monk from the monastery of Fleury who spent some years in England before returning to France to become the abbot of his house. But these were far being from the first significant hagiographic contacts between England and the Continent. In Chapter Three we saw how, according to Eddius Stephanus, St. Wilfrid faced a bloodthirsty army of South Saxon pagans bent on plundering his men and his ship on his return journey from the Continent where he had been consecrated bishop. We saw also how he first "sought to purchase the lives of his companions by the promise of a large sum of money," and how, failing to make any headway in this fashion, his followers, with Wilfrid's blessing, "formed a plan and made a compact that none should turn his back upon another in flight,

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and Oswine one (18-19). The increasing reverence for Oswald and other soldier saints immediately before and after the Conquest will be discussed in more detail in the final chapter.

but that they would either win death with honour or life with victory."[4] This was one point at which the movement of religious figures across the English Channel made its mark, however incidentally, on hagiography. Another, and more significant, influence came with the waves of Anglo-Saxon missionaries who migrated across the English Channel in the seventh and eighth century. Often they met with considerable resistance from their pagan Germanic kinsmen. As Noble and Head comment, "The Saxons destroyed some thirty missionary churches in 752 alone," adding that "[o]pportunities for heroism and even martyrdom were easily found by this new generation of soldiers of Christ."[5] Before turning to the contributions made by Alcuin and Abbo, we should look a moment at a significant cross-cultural influence on hagiographic tradition that grew out of the Anglo-Saxon missionary movement, Willibald's *Life of Boniface*.[6]

Boniface was not a soldier-saint, but his *Vita* is relevant to this study because, in discussing figures like Oswald, Eosterwine, Wilfrid, and Guthlac, it is easy to lose sight of the fact that the more traditional hagiographic model of the willing martyr did not die out completely under the weight of these various new models of sanctity. A number of the Anglo-Saxon missionaries to the Continent became martyrs of a very traditional type,

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[4] Eddius Stephanus, *The Life of Bishop Wilfrid*, pp. 27, 29. As noted in Chapter Three, this scene is reminiscent of, and may have been strongly influenced by a scene in Constantius of Lyons's *Life of Germanus of Auxerre* in which, on one of his two voyages to England, Germanus achieved a bloodless victory against a pagan army. Germanus's journeys are also an example of earlier contacts between England and the Continent.

[5] T. F. X. Noble and T. Head, ed., *Soldiers of Christ*, p. xxxv.

[6] Willibald, "Vita Bonifatii," from which all quotations are taken.

dying for the faith without resistance at the hands of violent pagans. Bede devotes three chapters of the last book of the *Historia Ecclesiastica* to the beginnings of the Anglo-Saxon missionary work on the Continent, telling how Bishop Egbert first was inspired to preach to the pagan tribes of Frisia and Saxony, and how, although Egbert himself was dissuaded from his plan by portentous dreams, Wictbert carried out the first mission.[7] Bede also records how Willibrord (whose *vita* by Alcuin will be discussed briefly later in this chapter) followed Wictbert's lead, and how he and another Anglo-Saxon named Swidbert were consecrated at different times to be bishops of the Frisians.[8] Willibrord was still alive when Bede was writing, and of him Bede says, "Ipse autem Vilbrord ... adhuc superest longa iam venerabilis aetate, utpote tricesimum et sextum in episcopatu habens annum, et post multiplices militiae caelestis agones ad praemia remunerationis supernae tota mente suspirans."[9] Bede includes only a single account of missionaries who died for their cause: the two Hewalds whose death at the hands of pagan Saxons led to their veneration as saints and martyrs:

> Horum secuti exempla duo quidam presbyteri de natione Anglorum, qui in Hibernia multo tempose pro aeterna patria exulaverant, venerunt ad provinciam Antiquorum Saxonum, si forte aliquos ibidem praedicando Christo adquirere possent. Erant autem unius ambo, sicut devotionis, sic etiam vocabuli : nam uterque eorum appellabatur Heuuald ; ea autem distinctione, ut pro diversa

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[7] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, ii, pp. 234-40.

[8] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, ii, pp. 240-42, 247-52.

[9] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, ii, pp. 250-52. "[B]ut Wilbrord himself ... is still living, and is much revered for his great age. He has been thirty-six years a bishop, and after the countless spiritual battles he has fought, longs with all his heart for the prize of a heavenly reward" (L. Sherley-Price, trans., *A History of the English Church and People*, p. 288).

> capillorum specie unus Niger Heuuald, alter Albus Heuuald diceretur : quorum uterque pietate religionis imbutus, sed Niger Heuuald magic sacrarum literarum erat scientia, institutus.... Qui cum cogniti essent a barbaris quod essent alterius religionis ... suspecti sunt habiti, quia si pervenirent ad satrapam et loquerentur cum illo, averterent illum a diis suis et ad novam Christianae fidei religionem transferrent, sicque paulatim omnis eorum provincia veterem cogeretur nova multare culturam. Itaque rapuerunt eos subito, et interemerunt: Album quidem Heuualdum veloci occisione gladii, Nigellum autem longo suppliciorum cruciatu et horrenda membrorum omnium discerptione : quos interemptos in Rheno proiecerunt. [10]

The two men's bodies were miraculously discovered by "cuidam de sociis suis, cui nomen erat Tilmon, viro illustri, et ad saeculum quoque nobili, qui de milite factus fuerat monachus."[11] The deaths of these two Anglo-Saxons provides evidence of the continued veneration of traditional martyrs (and, incidentally, the continuing process of spiritual transformation as embodied in Tilmon, soldier turned monk), but the death of St.

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[10] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, ii, pp. 242-44. "Two other priests of the English race, who had long lived as exiles in Ireland for the sake of the eternal kingdom, followed [Willibrord's and his companions'] lead and went to the province of the Old Saxons in order to try and win them for Christ by their teaching. They shared the same name and the same zeal, but with the distinction that, since their hair was of different colour, one was known as Hewald the Black, and the other was Hewald the White. Both men were devout and religious, but Hewald the Black was learned in scriptures.... And when the barbarous people realized that they belonged to a different religion, they began to distrust them, fearing that if they went to their lord and spoke to him, they might turn him from his gods and convert him to the new practice of the Christian Faith, so that the whole province would gradually be compelled to change its old religion for the new. So they suddenly seized them and put them to death: Hewald the White was killed outright with a sword, and Hewald the Black was put to lingering torture and torn agonizingly limb from limb. Then they flung the murdered men into the Rhine" (L. Sherley-Price, trans., *A History of the English Church and People*, pp. 285-86).

[11] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, ii, pp. 244-46. "[O]one of their companions, a distinguished man of noble family named Tilmon, a soldier turned monk" (L. Sherley-Price. trans., *A History of the English Church and People*, p. 286).

Boniface, as described by Willibald, shows more clearly how the ideals of the early Church still led martyrs to die bravely, without offering resistance of any kind except the proclaiming of their belief in Christ. [12]

Boniface and Willibald, his hagiographer, were both Anglo-Saxons who crossed the Channel to carry out religious missions on the Continent. Little is known about Willibald, but through his *Vita* we are able learn a great deal about Boniface, who played a very important role in the history of the Church. As Albertson describes him, Boniface was "important as a missionary *peregrinus* (pilgrim-exile), from the Rome-oriented Anglo-Saxon Church, working in the ancient Germanic land of his fathers, and as an ecclesiastical statesman helping the Frankish rulers reorganize Merovingian chaos."[13] According to his hagiographer, he also died an exemplary martyr. Willibald begins the story of Boniface's martyrdom with the saint's foreknowledge of his impending death, despite which Boniface set forth on his final missionary journey into Frisia. Willibald names the group of men who accompanied Boniface on this fatal trip, then describes how they, like their leader Boniface, were destined for the crown of martyrdom: "Qui etiam in tantum vitae aeternae semen cum sancto Bonifatio late per populum devulgantes, domino Deo patrocinate, diffamaverunt, ut quibus iuxta apostolicae institutionis normam *cor erat unum et anima*

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[12] Boniface also strongly opposed clerical participation in warfare. See F. E. Prinz, "King, Clergy and War at the Time of the Carolingians," pp. 305-07, 313-15.

[13] C. Albertson, trans., *Anglo-Saxon Saints and Heroes*, p. 297.

una, una eademque et palma esset marteri et remuneratio triumphi." [14] At first, when they are attacked by the usual band of bloodthirsty pagans, Boniface's "attendants" begin to arm themselves to protect themselves and the band of missionaries, but the saint dissuades them:

> "Cessate, pueri, a conflictu pugnaeque deponite bellum, quoniam scripturae testimonio veraciter arudimur, et ne malum pro malo, sed etiam bonum pro malis reddamus. Iam enim diu optatus adest dies et spontaneum resolutionis nostrae tempus inminet. Confortamini igitur Domino et permissionis suae gratiam gratanter sufferte; sperate in eum, et liberavit animas vestras." [15]

After a similar speech to his clerical followers, the entire group is killed. However, lest the image of non-violent, willing martyrdom presented here give a false impression of Willibald's overall conception of the relationship between warfare and sanctity, it is important to add that the pagans who committed this crime were duly punished, first in a odd variant of the bloodless victory, and afterward by a victory of a quite different sort. The murderers initially kill each other off without a Christian having to raise a hand,

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[14] Willibald, "Vita Bonifatii," p. 48. "These in company with Saint Boniface preached the Word of God far and wide with great success and were so united in spirit that, in accordance with the teaching of apostolic practice, they were 'of one heart and soul' (Acts 4.32). Thus they deserved to share in the same crown of Martyrdom and the same final and eternal reward" (134-35). Translations are from C. H. Talbot, trans., Willibald, *The Life of Saint Boniface*, in T. F. X. Noble and T. Head, ed., *Soldiers of Christ*, pp. 107-140.

[15] Willibald, "Vita Bonifatii," pp. 49-50. "Sons, cease fighting. Lay down your arms, for we are told in Scripture not to render evil for [evil] but to overcome evil by good. The hour to which we have long looked forward is near and the day of our release is at hand. Take comfort in the Lord and endure with gladness the suffering he has mercifully ordained. Put your trust in Him and He will grant deliverance to your souls" (T. F. X. Noble and T. Head, ed., *Soldiers of Christ*, p. 135).

squabbling and fighting over the spoils obtained from the murdered Christians. Then, after the few still alive discover that Boniface's chests contain books instead of the wealth they had anticipated, an army of Christians gathers and slaughters the remaining villagers:

> Cumque inprovisa sanctorum martyrum temporalis interemptio exitii per pagos ac vicos omnemque provinciam volitaret, repente christiani, coporali conperto martyrum morte, maximam congregantes expeditionem exercitus, confinium terminos prumpti postmodum futurae ultionis bellatores expetunt et, revoluta supradicta dierum supputatione, infidelium sospites sed indevoti hospites adgrediunt terram ac paganos eis e diverso obbiantes ingenti strage prostraverunt. Sed quia pagani primi populi christiani impetu obsistere non valebant, in fugam siquidem versi, magna etiam clade corruerunt, et terga vertentes, vitam simul cum intestina eorum suppellectili et heredibus perdiderunt. Sicque saltim christiani, superstitiosorum tam uxoribus quam etiam filiis necnon servis et ancillis depraedatis, ad propria redierunt. [16]

Willibald presents the saint's decision to face violence without resistance as a holy path, ensuring him the crown of martyrdom, but for the mass of everyday Christians, not destined for sainthood, he considered their own avenging swords extensions of God's justice. The results of Boniface's martyrdom were, according to Willibald, a resounding success, although perhaps not in keeping with Boniface's original conception: "Fitque modo mirabili, ut superstites gentilium accolae, praesentibus confracti malis, aeterna potius tormenta, fidei fulgore inluminati, devitarunt et praefati antestitus doctrinae

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[16] Willibald, "Vita Bonifatii," p. 52. "As the unhappy tidings of the martyr's death spread rapidly from village to village throughout the whole province and the Christians learned of their fate, a large avenging force, composed of warriors ready to make speedy retribution, was gathered together and rushed swiftly to their neighbors' frontiers. The pagans, unable to withstand the onslaught of the Christians, immediately took to flight and were slaughtered in great numbers. In their flight they lost their lives, their household goods, and their children. So the Christians, after taking as their spoil the wives and children, men and maid-servants of the pagan worshipers, returned to their homes" (T. F. X. Noble and T. Head, ed., *Soldiers of Christ*, p. 137).

documentum, quod eo vivente rennuerunt, etiam moriente, divinae increpationis moderamine perterriti, susciperunt."[17] On the Continent, the tradition of conversion at the point of the sword began early, but at the same time the trope of willing martyrdom linked saints to the formal renunciation of warfare. Christians participated in war, but saints abstained.[18]

The missionaries who left England for the Continent had a profound effect on the societies they encountered there, but they also continued to influence Anglo-Saxon culture, even in their self-imposed exile, through their ongoing contacts across the Channel. It is through a letter written by Boniface and signed by seven other bishops that we learn that, by about 746, Felix's holy king Æthelbald had begun to fall away from his purportedly pious youth and his generous patronage by "leading a dissolute life and

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[17] Willibald, "Vita Bonifatii," p. 52. "As a result, the pagans round about, dismayed at their recent misfortune and seeking to avoid everlasting punishment, opened their minds and hearts to the glory of the faith. Struck with terror at the visitation of God's vengeance, they embraced after Boniface's death the teaching they had rejected while he still lived" (T. F. X. Noble and T. Head, ed., *Soldiers of Christ*, p. 137).

[18] F. E. Prinz, "King, Clergy and War at the Time of the Carolingians," shows that this generalization was only selectively true. Prinz says, "Saintliness and military prowess are not mutually exclusive, rather the latter appears as a natural prerequisite for the former," but he qualifies this statement in two ways: first, he says, "[A]s far back as the seventh century martial virtues are incorporated positively and accepted in a system of coordinates of Christian ways of behaviour." This specifies, and his examples reflect, acceptance of martial virtues but not necessarily martial actions. He adds, "Military prowess is mentioned during this period as a positive aspect in the secular past of a saint; however it is not yet placed intoimmediate connection with his characteristics as a saint" (F. E. Prinz, "King, Clergy and War at the Time of the Carolingians," p. 309. These observations indicate that Anglo-Saxon and Frankish society shared a common perspective in general, but they also point again to the anomolous nature of the Anglo-Saxon cult of martyred warrior-kings.

making attacks on the privileges and possessions of the monasteries"[19] In addition to their continuing to influence directly events back home in England, they would indirectly affect their homeland over the next two centuries, as the revitalized continental Church would send men to rebuild the Anglo-Saxon Church after the Viking invasions or, like Abbo of Fleury, to help in the Benedictine Reform.

Like the Anglo-Saxon missionaries, the tradition of holy warrior-kings also influenced Anglo-Saxon literary culture in both a direct and an indirect way. Through Alcuin the cult of the martyred warrior-king and the attitudes toward warfare and sanctity it embodied became part of Carolingian society. This cult helped to establish war as a natural part of the divine mission of kings, encouraged the view that a Christian fighting in a just cause can be a holy warrior, and presented war as a concrete manifestation of the spiritual struggle. Carolingian society and its descendants in turn exerted a powerful influence on later developments in English hagiography, revitalizing the cult of the martyred king by linking it more concretely to martyrdom's archetypal trope, the willing sacrifice of Christ, but in the process reasserting the formal renunciation of warfare as a key hagiographic trope, even in the cults of martyred kings. Influential members of the two cultures, insular Anglo-Saxon society first in the person of Alcuin and later the broader continental culture represented by Abbo of Fleury, crossed the Channel and through a process of cultural cross-pollination contributed to the course and development of hagiography in England. The effects of Alcuin's thought on Frankish society are

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[19] Felix of Croyland, *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, pp. 5-7.

somewhat peripheral to this study; however, developments by Abbo of Fleury in continental hagiography, which were influenced by Alcuin but in some ways reversed his approach to war, powerfully affected the late Anglo-Saxon hagiography of soldier saints.

II

Alcuin is one of the great literary figures of Anglo-Saxon England, but his contribution to hagiographic tradition, although significant, has not been sufficiently studied.[20] Included within his diverse body of work are a handful of prose saints' lives, including the short *Scriptum de S. Martini Turonensis* discussed in Chapter One, and lives of Willibrord, the Anglo-Saxon missionary to the Continent mentioned earlier, and Vedast, a Merovingian bishop closely connected to the conversion of King Clovis. It is in a poem, however, the *Versus de Patribus Regibus et Sanctis Euboricensis Ecclesiae*, that he takes the *tropes* about holy martyred kings employed by Bede and the Whitby Anonymous and develops them most fully.[21]

It is difficult to assign the poem to a single point of origin. According to Peter Godman, its modern editor, "The specific audience of the poem...is the studious youth trained at York by [Archbishop] Ælberht and his successors."[22] Despite this intended

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[20] The only major study of Alcuin's hagiographic works is I Deug-su, *L'Opera agiografica di Alcuino*.

[21] Alcuin, *Bishops, Kings, and Saints*.

[22] Alcuin, *Bishops, Kings, and Saints*, p. 9, n. 61. Godman bases his assertion on his reading of lines 1409 ff.: "De quo versifico paulo plus pergere gressu/ Euboricae mecum libeat tibi, quaeso, iuventus,/ hic quia saepe tuos perfudit nectare sensus/ mellifluo dulces eructans pectore succos"; "I ask you, please, to walk a little further with me,/ keeping step with my poem, young men of York, for he [Ælberht] often steeped your senses in nectar,/ pouring sweet draughts from his honeyed soul" (Alcuin, *Bishops, Kings, and Saints*, p. 111). For more on the subject of the poem's audience, especially its intended

audience, the poem did not circulate in England alone and may not have been written while Alcuin was still residing in England. Godman acknowledges that "[t]he poem is generally attributed to the period before [Alcuin's] departure for Charlemagne's court, and is often assigned, more specifically, to the years 780-2," but he argues instead for "a date of final composition and 'publication' after Alcuin had left England in 781/2, perhaps as late as 792/3."[23] Godman bases this dating on philological, stylistic, and historical grounds, including its similarities to Alcuin's metrical *Life of Willibrord* and its praise of the Mercian king Offa. Godman's analysis places the work firmly as a product of Alcuin's unique role as both an Anglo-Saxon and a Carolingian, although its intended audience seems to have been insular.

Even though it may have been written for an English audience, the poem's influence was greater on the Continent where it appears to have been written. Godman calls the poem's influence on Carolingian literature "both greater and more durable" than its impact on Anglo-Saxon culture.[24] There are no extant manuscripts of English provenance containing Alcuin's poem. Twentieth-century readers of the poem depend exclusively on continental sources, especially from the area of Reims, for the text; however, Alcuin's poem is not unique in this regard, since its "exclusively continental

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influence on Northumbrian laymen in general and kings in particular, see S. Coates, "The Bishop as Benefactor and Civic Patron."

[23] Alcuin, *Bishops, Kings, and Saints*, pp. xlii-xlvii.

[24] Alcuin, *Bishops, Kings, and Saints*, p. xcii.

tradition...corresponds to the pattern of transmission of several other works of Anglo-Saxon authorship from the eighth and ninth centuries, the survival of which also depends on manuscripts produced on the Continent."[25] The poem's impact on continental Latin literature was, however, significant. Its influence is most evident in a variety of poetic accounts of the deeds of Charlemagne, where it represents "a point of transition from the dominantly moral-didactic and hagiographic traditions of large-scale Latin narrative poetry written between the sixth and eighth centuries to the increasingly secular character of epic in the early Carolingian period."[26] Alcuin may have intended to provide a work of historical and political significance for Anglo-Saxon readers, but the poem had a much more profound effect on the culture into which he and his work were transplanted.

Godman's division of Latin poetic traditions into separate hagiographic and secular veins obscures one important character of Alcuin's poem: the way in which it combines secular history and hagiography, uniting the two in his portrayal of the "holy kings" of Northumbria, much as Bede did in his *Ecclesiastical History* (Alcuin's primary model and source). In the *Versus* Alcuin employs the tropes of each king's royal heritage, his providential preservation through adversity, and the providential expansion of his realm. Once his heroes succeed in gaining the throne, Alcuin displays each king's saintly behavior, his God-granted victory in battle, his evil and merciless pagan enemy, and such important cultic elements as the king's death in a holy war, the dismemberment of his

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[25] Alcuin, *Bishops, Kings, and Saints*, p. cxxviii.

[26] Alcuin, *Bishops, Kings, and Saints*, p. lxxxix.

body, the enshrinement of his relics, and his posthumous miracles. Through Alcuin, these hagiographic elements in the Anglo-Saxon cult of kingship were passed on to Carolingian society.[27]

The first of the holy kings of Northumbria for Alcuin, as for Bede, was Edwin. After presenting the Roman origins of British history, including material from both Gildas and Bede, Alcuin claims the Anglo-Saxons as a divinely chosen people. Godman points out that, "[l]ike Gildas, Alcuin employs the language of Scripture to censure the Britons; but he goes beyond both Gildas and Bede in [his] panegyric of the Saxons as God's people." [28] As he sets the stage, Alcuin introduces the idea of victorious and powerful kings as agents of God's will: "Quod fuit affatim factum, donante Tonante/ iam nova dum crebris viguerunt sceptra triumphis/ et reges ex se iam coepit habere potentes/ gens ventura Dei" (ll. 75-78).[29] His application to Jehovah of the classical epithet *Tonans*,

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[27] These tropes may not have been entirely new to continental hagiographic traditions. Careful research into Merovingian and Carolingian hagiographic traditions might turn up similar image patterns associated with a variety of models of sanctity, but such research is beyond the reach of the current study. The unique quality of the Anglo-Saxon tradition of the martyred warrior-kings was discussed in the beginning of Chapter Two. One small piece of evidence supporting the unique quality of this Anglo-Saxon tradition comes in the *Life of St Gerald of Aurillac* by Odo of Cluny, a text of the tenth century which will be examined in more detail in Chapter Seven. In the *Life* Odo mentions "King Oswald of the English" as his only example of a "mighty and warlike" man "in this age who took care to glorify Him by keeping His commandments, and whom God honors with miracles" (Gerald Sitwell, trans., Odo of Cluny, *The Life of Saint Gerald of Aurillac*, in T. F. X. Noble and T. Head, ed., *Soldiers of Christ*, p. 325).

[28] Alcuin, *Bishops, Kings, and Saints*, p. 10, nn. 71-79.

[29] "God's will was abundantly fulfilled: for, by His grace, through/ repeated victories a new power came into the ascendant/ and God's destined race began to produce/ from its own ranks powerful kings" (Alcuin, *Bishops, Kings, and Saints*, pp. 10-11).

"The Thunderer," usually applied to Jupiter, points up the role of a Christianized classical paganism in his work and underlines the image of God as the all-powerful ruler of Heaven, whose counterpart is the earthly warrior-king. Next Alcuin turns to Gregory the Great's mission to the Anglo-Saxons and then to Edwin, the most important convert in all of England from Alcuin's Northumbrian royalist perspective.

> ....Rexit tunc temporis almus
> Gregorius praesul, toto venerabilis orbi,
> ecclesiae sedem Romanae maximus, atque
> agrorum Christi cultor devotus ubique
> plurima perpetuae dispersit semina vitae.
> ....Eduin interea veterum de germine regum,
> Euborica genitus, dominus per cuncta futurus,
> pulsus in exsilium fugit puer invida regna
> oroma gentilis qua viderat ipse supernum
> nocte soporata.... (ll. 78-82, 90-94) [30]

The close association between Gregory and Edwin recalls the Whitby *Vita Gregorii Magni*, and in the five lines introducing Edwin, Alcuin presents a number of the key tropes developed in the earlier work (although this congruence may be coincidental, since he was clearly working directly from Bede in other areas). He stresses Edwin's royal heritage (*veterum de germine regum*), the breadth of his future realm (*dominus per cuncta futurus*), the hardships he faces in his youth (*pulsus in exsilium fugit puer invida regna*), and he begins the process of describing Edwin's miraculous rise to power. A number of

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[30] "At that time the blessed Gregory, universally revered,/ ruled as supreme pontiff the see of Rome./ A thoroughly ardent tiller of the fields for Christ,/ he scattered abroad manifold seeds of everlasting life./...Meanwhile Edwin, the descendant of ancient kings,/ a native of York and the future lord of all the land,/ was driven into exile as a boy and fled the realms of his foes./ There, while still a pagan, he witnessed in the depths of night/ a vision sent from on high" (Alcuin, *Bishops, Kings, and Saints*, pp. 10-13).

elements from the Whitby *Life* are absent here, however, especially the story of Edwin's father and the mystical meaning of the names Ælle and Edwin. Alcuin presents the details of Edwin's vision in straight chronological order, as they appear in the Whitby work, rather than through a flashback as in Bede, and the sense of divine intervention in Edwin's rise to power is thereby heightened, especially as Alcuin eliminates most of the material showing the king's indecision about accepting the new faith.

Alcuin seems, therefore, to be drawing elements from both Bede and the Whitby Anonymous for his story of Edwin's conversion, but through his judicious reshaping of the tale he creates a more unified vision of Edwin as agent of God's will than appears in either of the earlier works. He sets the scene dramatically:

> ....solus dum tempore quodam
> anxia corda gerens curis loca congrua adivit
> et tacitus sedit sublustri lumine lunae.
> Vir stetit ignotus habitu vultuque repente
> ante occulis iuvenis, verbisque affatur amicis.... (ll. 94-98) [31]

Alcuin explicitly links Edwin's cares, bordering on despair, to the external setting of lonely, moonlit silence. This scene recalls Felix's image of Guthlac in the depths of night wrestling with the knowledge of earthly power's tragic evanescence; however, Edwin's vision gives him signs of God's blessings that Guthlac never experienced in his second epiphany. In fact, the scene recalls much more closely Æthelbald's message presaging

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[31] "Once, lonely and careworn,/ he came to a spot which suited his mood, and sat in silence/ by the glimmering light of the moon. Suddenly before/ the young man's eyes appeared a man, strangely dressed and of/ unfamiliar appearance, who addressed him in friendly words" (Alcuin, *Bishops, Kings, and Saints*, p. 12-13).

future glory than Guthlac's experience of the "spiritual flame." The mysterious man before Edwin, a figure of unknown qualities and supernatural aspect, could be an object of fear, but the manner of his speech and his reassuring words quickly convince him of the fortuitous nature of the vision. Alcuin reduces the three speeches and three promises in the *Life of Gregory* and the *Ecclesiastical History* to a single speech, and subtly shifts the content as well. Instead of asking Edwin to make a promise to convert in exchange for earthly power, the mysterious visitant promises him future glory and foretells his acceptance of the faith:

> 'Quae te dura coquit, iuvenum fortissime, cura?
> Rex Deus aeternus caeli qui sidera fecit.
> quae tu pulchra vides, solatia dat tibi certa.
> Ecce tuam vitam quaerenti servat ab hoste;
> insuper imperium latum tibi terminat undis:
> rex Deus ille tibi totum sit semper in aevum!'
> Imponensque suo capiti pro foedere dextram:
> 'Haec tibi', dixit, 'erunt nostri signacula pacti.' (ll. 99-106) [32]

Twice in this speech God is called *rex* as well as *deus*, reinforcing the central idea of the cult of kingship: that the earthly Christian king mirrors the kingship of God on high. The king of heaven will make Edwin his agent on earth. Edwin is praised (*iuvenum fortissime*) and reassured (*solatia dat tibi certa*), and his safety in battle (*tuam vitam quaerenti servat*

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[32] "What care torments you so, brave young man?/ God the everlasting king, who made the stars in Heaven,/ that you see in their beauty, grants you certainty and support./ Lo, he will save you from the enemy who seeks to take your life,/ and limit your wide empire only by the waves:/ Let him be your God and king for all time!'/ Placing his right hand on Edwin's head in token of a promise:/ 'Let this', he said, 'be a sign of our bond' (Alcuin, *Bishops, Kings, and Saints*, pp. 12-13).

ab hoste) and the breadth of his rule (*insuper imperium latum tibi terminat undis*) are guaranteed without Edwin having to make any reciprocal promise or even speak a word. Instead, as Godman says, "The entire events of Edwin's reign are made to proceed from this prophetic vision."[33] Unlike Guthlac, who waits through the night hoping to live until dawn and the beginning of his new life, Edwin is immediately reinvigorated: "Cui vigor affatim venas discurrit in omnes,/ pulsa procul fugiens et desperatio fibras/ liquerat" (ll. 108-10).[34] Edwin will not have to win reward from on high; it has already been assured him.

The peace, prosperity, and stability of Edwin's reign are all signs of his role as God's agent, even though during most of his reign he is still a pagan. He returns to Northumbria victorious, his enemies defeated, and the promises of the vision already in the process of being fulfilled:

> ....Eventus venientis dicta probavit
> hospitis: occubuit statim rex ense nefando
> invidus imperii vitae simul illius atque.
> Tunc iuvenis rediens intravit amabilis urbes
> iam patrias, populi procerumque favore receptus. (ll. 110-14).[35]

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[33] Alcuin, *Bishops, Kings, and Saints*, p. 13, nn. 92-3ff..

[34] "Strength coursed through his veins/ and despair, put to rout, fled his being" (Alcuin, *Bishops, Kings, and Saints*, pp. 12-13).

[35] "The outcome proved the stranger's words: for/ the king, who coveted Edwin's kingdom and menaced his life,/ soon perished by the murderous sword./ Then the young man returned once more to his ancestral cities,/ popular and acclaimed by the people and nobles alike" (Alcuin, *Bishops, Kings, and Saints*, pp. 12-13).

This triumphant return to his homeland begins a long section devoted to Edwin's success as a ruler. As in the early accounts of Edwin's life, here Edwin's role as king is intrinsic to his piety. Just as in the *Vita Gregorii Magni* the Whitby Anonymous presented Edwin's successful and prosperous reign as an important sign of God's favor, and in the *Historia Ecclesiastica* Bede considered Edwin's success as a ruler as the outward sign of his role as God's agent in the conversion of the English, so also to Alcuin Edwin is an ideal king not because of any pious acts he performs, but because he fulfills his predestined role as ruler of a powerful Christian kingdom in Northumbria.

Alcuin does present Edwin as a king with many virtues, however. Among these are both inherently Christian values (e.g. mercy, generosity, piety) and more secular virtues (e.g. success in battle, breadth of rule, firmness of justice). Godman remarks on how Alcuin extends and magnifies the image he inherited of Edwin's successful reign:

> For Bede, Edwin was an excellent ruler. For Alcuin, he was the supreme example of Anglo-Saxon kingship .... Predictably, the *Versus de ... Sanctis Euboricensis Ecclesiae* emphasize the importance of Edwin's conversion. But they lay stress too on his generosity, his mercy, his justice ... and, rhetorically, on the extent of his hegemony .... Edwin, in Alcuin's poem, emerges as a model of warrior-kingship.[36]

Alcuin devotes sixteen lines to Edwin's ideal qualities as a king before describing how he finally came to accept Christianity; a mere four lines describe his rule after the conversion. The lines devoted to his pre-conversion rule are worth quoting in full:

> Qui mox accipiens sceptri regalis honorem
> quaesivit propriae genti bona, largus in omnes,
> nec per sceptra ferox, sed de pietate benignus,
> factus amor populi, patriae pater, et decus aulae,

[36] Alcuin. *Bishops, Kings, and Saints*, pp. xlix-l.

assiduis superans hostilia castra triumphis,
imperioque suo gentes superaddidit omnes,
finibus atque plagis qua tenditur insula longa.
Iamque iugum regis prona service subibant
Saxonum populus, Pictus Scotusque, Britannus.
Interea placida regni dum pace tribunal
rexerat armipotens, sopitis undique bellis,
iustitiae validis populos frenabat habenis.
Nec rapit arma furor, legum sub pondere pressus
ultrices timuit capiti quia quisque secures,
provida ni toto servaret pectore scita,
quae posuit populis rector servanda subactis. (ll. 115-30) [37]

This passage provides a portrait of the Anglo-Saxon ideal of kingship. No authenticating details are provided; this is an idealized image, not an account of one man's personal attributes. To Alcuin the fact of Edwin's continued paganism is beside the point. The ideal ruler is successful in battle, rules a wide realm through subduing neighboring peoples, and wields firm and swift justice. Like Martin, Edwin already reveals ideal traits before actually becoming a Christian, but there the similarity ends. In his youth, Martin behaves less like a soldier than a monk, while the youthful Edwin already is the perfect ruler before he ever decides to accept the new religion. To Sulpicius, the values of secular

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[37] "Readily accepting the royal office of king, he sought/ the best interests of his people; generous to all, not harsh/ in the exercise of power, but gentle and kindly, he became the/ nation's idol, father of his country, the paragon of the court./ Ever victorious over the camps of the foe,/ he annexed to his own empire all the peoples/ that this long island holds within its farflung bounds./ And now in total submission there came under his kingly yoke/ the Saxon peoples, the Picts, Irish, and Britons./ In the calm of peace throughout his realm,/ this warrior-king ruled as a judge, with war at a lull,/ holding his peoples in check with firm reins of justice./ Under the weight of law, men's anger turned not to violence,/ since everyone feared the axe of vengeance on his own head,/ if he failed wholeheartedly to observe the wise decrees/ which the leader had determined his subjects should uphold" (Alcuin, *Bishops, Kings, and Saints*, pp. 14-15).

society were opposed to the new Christian way of life, but to Alcuin Christianity brings to fruition the best aspects of the society that preceded it. Edwin's acceptance of the new faith is almost an anti-climax; he merely adds firm support for the Church through the power of coercion and the building of churches to his already luminous traits:

> .... bis ternis ... annis
> rex, quibus egregius regnaverat Eduinus idem,
> disposuitque suas iusto moderamine leges,
> inlicitans servare Fidem donisque minisque,
> ecclesiasque suis fundavit in urbibus amplas. (ll. 215-19) [38]

The sixteen lines extolling the virtues of Edwin's rule before his conversion need only this brief supplement afterwards. The implication of this imbalance is clear: Edwin did not become a great king because of the beneficent results of Christian doctrine, learning through the new faith to rule more wisely and well. Rather he was chosen by God to be a great and powerful ruler who would bring Christianity to the North.

In between the two passages praising Edwin's rule, Alcuin presents the story of the king's conversion using many of the same elements employed by the Whitby Anonymous and Bede. Some of the differences between his telling of the story and the accounts that preceded his may stem from the change of medium: the exigencies of poetry and the varying rhetorical purposes of the texts account for the most obvious changes in presentation. Other changes, however, seem to stem from a different conception of

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[38] "For six years,/ .....reigned Edwin, the excellent king,/ whose laws were ordered with justice and fairness./ By gifts and by threats he incited men to cherish the Faith,/ and founded spacious churches in the cities of his realm" (Alcuin, *Bishops, Kings, and Saints*, pp. 22-23).

Edwin's significance to Christian history. One element Alcuin eliminates is the failed assassination attempt. Godman says, "Alcuin departs from Bede's narrative in two chief respects: he omits Æthelfrith's attempt to have Edwin assassinated (*HE* ii. 12) and he places the account of Edwin's *imperium*, marriage, and reception of Paulinus (*HE* ii. 9) ... after the vision described at *HE* ii. 12."[39] Both changes again bring Alcuin's account more in line with that of the Whitby Anonymous than with Bede. One other difference between Bede and Alcuin lies in the events immediately surrounding Edwin's final decision to convert. In Bede this occurs after a long period of soul-searching and deliberation, including the often-quoted scene of Edwin meeting with his *witan*, but Alcuin moves directly from Paulinus placing his hands on Edwin's head in imitation of the dream visitant to the interactions between Edwin and his chief priest, Coefi. As Godman comments, "In omitting Bede's account of Edwin's hesitation before his conversion and of the council that preceded it, Alcuin's poem excludes perhaps the most poetic simile in Bede: the likeness of human life to a sparrow's flight through a mead-hall (*HE* ii. 13)."[40] It is symptomatic of Alcuin's approach to his story that he eliminates this "most poetic simile" while expanding the incident involving Coefi into a major part of the narrative. Rather than follow Bede in emphasizing the wisdom and hopefulness of the Christian message, reflected in the debate before the *witan* and the image of the sparrow, Alcuin presents a more heroic and martial Christianity, in which Christians revile and destroy the outward

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[39] Alcuin, *Bishops, Kings, and Saints*, p. 13, n. 92-3 ff.

[40] Alcuin, *Bishops, Kings, and Saints*, p. 17, n. 149 ff.

trappings of the pagan religion, while they still retain unchanged much of the pre-Christian worldview. Like Edwin, who needs only to alter his mode of worship to become the model of Christian kingship, the high priest rejects the physical reflections of his former religion in what Godman terms "the first of three passages, modeled partly or chiefly on Virgil, which lend epic colouring to Alcuin's poem."[41] There is an inherent contradiction in Alcuin's use of a classical pagan model to describe a converted pagan destroying the edifice of his former religion, and yet at the same time it is very apt. Alcuin employs the literary techniques of pagan authors to build his own Christian literary construct. Still Alcuin's work, despite its religious subject matter, takes on qualities inherent in the classical epic. Much more than in Bede, Christianity is a mode of action for Alcuin rather than a way of thinking, a behavioral pattern rather than a set of accepted propositions. He welds elements of classical mythology and the Roman national epic onto a story that, in Bede's hands, was staunchly Christian and, indeed, apocalyptic.

Alcuin combines violence and sanctity in the scenes involving Coefi, although the priest wages a militant attack on the material infrastructure of the pagan religion and not on the pagans themselves. The outlines of the story are present in Bede, but Alcuin's development of them is strikingly original. The scene is set up by the words of Paulinus to Edwin in response to the king's request that the bishop tell him how God should be worshipped:

> 'Foeda procul fugiat primum cultura deorum,
> nec pecorum sanguis falsis plus fumet in aris,
> nec calidis omen fibris perquirat aruspex,

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[41] Alcuin, *Bishops, Kings, and Saints*, p. 19, n. 178 ff.

nec cantus volucrum servet vanissimus augur:
omnia sternantur fundo simulacra deorum!' (ll. 158-61) [42]

Only the last phrase in this attack on pagan rituals has its source in Bede, but there the words are Coefi's, not Paulinus's: "'Unde suggero, rex, ut templa et altaria quae sine fructu utilitatis sacravimus, ocius anathemati et igni contradamus"'[43] In Bede's account of the conversion of England, Pope Gregory specifically ruled out the destruction of temples, suggesting instead that the idols alone be destroyed and the temples preserved and rededicated to Christian use.[44] In Bede's story of Edwin's conversion, the destruction of the temple is proposed not by Gregory's emissary, Paulinus, but by the pagan high priest himself. King Edwin subsequently asks who will be the first to profane (*profanare*) the altars, but he does not order them to be destroyed. Forced conversions, the burning of temples and overthrowing of idols, play little part in Bede's account of the English conversion, which he presents instead as a largely peaceful process of personal soul-searching and deep thought. In this, he may have been inspired by Sulpicius's account of Martin, since, as Stancliffe points out, "Sulpicius tells us that Martin usually preached to the pagans so successfully that they demolished their temples themselves," although she

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[42] "'First banish afar the foul worship of idols,/ on their profane altars let the blood of animals smoke no more,/ nor the soothsayer look for omens in the warm entrails,/ nor the meaningless augur attend to the songs of birds: let all images of the gods be smashed to the ground!'" (Alcuin, *Bishops, Kings, and Saints*, pp. 16-17).

[43] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, i. p. 285. "Therefore, Your Majesty, I submit that the temples and altars that we have dedicated to no advantage be immediately desecrated and burned" (L. Sherley-Price, trans., *A History of the English Church and People*, p. 127).

[44] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, i. pp. 162-64.

also adds that "there are four specified cases where he met fierce resistance"[45] Martin's martial brand of conversion was in keeping with his image as soldier of Christ, as I argued in Chapter One, but there are no instances of conversion at the point of the sword in either Sulpicius or Bede, unless we consider Cadwalla's genocide on the Isle of Wight part of Bede's story of the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons. On the other hand, in the words of G. Ronald Murphy, "In the thousand-year history of Christianity's missionary efforts in Europe, I doubt if there is any page as brutal as that of Charlemagne's thirty-three-year war of conversion and conquest of the Saxons of northern Germany."[46] Begun in 772, the conquest of Saxony was not completed until 804, making it one of the major political and social contexts of Alcuin's account of the conversion of England. In his poem, Alcuin uses the word *Saxones* to refer both to his own people and to the Old Saxons, who are described brutally murdering the sainted Anglo-Saxon missionaries, the Two Hewalds (ll. 1044-71). It is in this context that his more militant image of the conversion of Northumbria should be understood. As Wallace-Hadrill comments, "Bede is clear that the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons had been mainly a matter of persuasion and teaching, not compulsion.... It had been Coifi, not Paulinus, who had desecrated the pagan shrine ...; by contrast it was Willibrord and Boniface, not renegade high-priests, who went for the pagan shrines of the continental Germans"[47] By shifting the decision to destroy the temple

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[45] C. Stancliffe, *St. Martin and His Hagiographer*, p. 328.

[46] G. R. Murphy, *The Saxon Savior*, p. 11.

[47] J. M. Wallace-Hadrill. "Bede and Plummer," p. 372.

from the high priest himself to a general directive of bishop and king, Alcuin reflects continental conditions, in which the conversion of the Saxons occurred as part of a protracted struggle of great violence.

Not only does Alcuin shift the responsibility for the violence in the scene, but he also emphasizes elements which present a sharp contrast to the trope of spiritual conversion. Coefi, we learn, had never before wielded a sword or spear, because of a purported prohibition against pagan priests handling weapons. As part of his acceptance of Christianity, he takes up arms, inverting the idea of the earthly warrior setting aside his weapons to take up the spiritual struggle. In this case, becoming a Christian was signaled by taking up, rather than laying down arms. The reversal of the trope of spiritual conversion comes from Bede, who explains the situation and recounts the story in some detail:

> Statimque abiecta superstitione vanitatis, rogavit sibi regem arma dare et equum emissarium, quem ascendens ad idola destruenda veniret. Non enim licuerat pontificem sacrorum vel arma ferre, vel praeter in equa equitare. Accinctus ergo gladio accepit lanceam in manu, et ascendens emissarium regis, pergebat ad idola. Quod aspiciens vulgus, aestimabat eum insanire. Nec distulit ille, mox ut adpropiabat ad fanum, profanare illud, iniecta in eo lancea quam tenebat: multumque gavisus de agnitione veri Dei cultus, iussit sociis destruere ac succendere fanum cum omnibus septis suis .... [P]ontifex ipse inspirante Deo vero polluit ac destruxit eas quas ipse sacraverat aras. [48]

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[48] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, i. p. 286. "So he formally renounced his empty superstitions and asked the king to give him arms and a stallion--for hitherto it had not been lawful for the Chief Priest to carry arms or to ride anything but a mare--and, thus equipped, he set out to destroy the idols. When the crowd saw him, they thought he had gone mad; but without hesitation, as soon as he reached the temple, he cast into it the spear he carried and thus profaned it. Then, full of joy at his knowledge of the worship of the true God, he told his companions to set fire to the temple and its enclosures and destroy them.... [T]he Chief Priest, inspired by the true God, desecrated and destroyed the

There has been remarkably little commentary on Bede's assertion that "non enim licuerat pontificem sacrorum vel arma ferre, vel praeter in equa equitare." Rosalind Hill assumes the accuracy of Bede's knowledge of pagan religious customs when she says, "The Northumbrian priest Coifi may have signalized his conversion to Christianity by the public and spectacular breaking of his two chief taboos--that against riding a stallion and that against bearing arms."[49] Chaney also accepts Bede's claim, arguing that "[j]udging from the evidence, the pagan Anglo-Saxon priesthood was thus not allowed to carry weapons, and arms brought into the temple defiled it," citing parallels from the *Germania*, *Landnamabok*, and the *Law of the Northumbrian Priests.*[50] The correspondences between Bede's claim and Chaney's parallels are far from exact , however, since none of them speaks specifically of a general prohibition against pagan priests bearing arms, referring instead to prohibitions against the carrying of arms into a temple or before the image of a deity. There are reasons to question Bede's assertion. If indeed the pagan priesthood were forbidden arms, that prohibition would represent a remarkable parallel to the Christian tradition of an unarmed clergy. He may have provided an explanation based on his own experience of Christian prohibitions, seeing in the image of a priest picking up arms a familiar form of rule-breaking consistent with the larger story of ritual desecration.

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altars he had himself dedicated" (L. Sherley-Price, trans., *A History of the English Church and People*, p. 128).

[49] R. Hill, "Bede and the Boors," p. 98.

[50] W. A. Chaney, *The Cult of Kingship*, pp. 62, 76, 107, 216.

Without corroboration, Bede's claim must be taken as an assertion and nothing more. Alcuin provides a shortened version of Bede's explanation:

> Ecce sacerdotum Coefi tunc temporis auctor
> errorumque caput fuerat. Cui rex ait: 'Eia,
> arripe tela tibi prius inconsueta, sacerdos,
> et iaculo celsum primus tu pollue fanum!
> Qui fueras scelerum doctor, nunc esto salutis!' (ll. 167-71) [51]

Alcuin stresses that in attacking the shrine Coefi is becoming "doctor...salutis," implying that the former priest's actions should be a guide for those around him. From a personal decision stemming from anger at having been so long deceived, Alcuin transforms Coefi's actions into a model of proper Christian behavior not just sanctioned, but ordered by religious and civic leaders alike. The throwing of the spear into the shrine and the burning of the building and its enclosure take on the trappings of epic battle in Alcuin's version:

> His rapuit dextra dictis hastile minaci
> atque marem conscendit equum non more sueto,
> cui per colla iubae volitant, tumet ardua cervix,
> pectore sublato velox fodit ungula terram,
> impatiensque morae quatiebat morsibus aurum.
> Terribilis qualis curvo fit Parthus in arcu,
> vel si longa levis vibrat hastilia Maurus,
> talis et ipse petit iaculo fastigia fani.
> O nimium tanti felix audacua facti!
> Polluit ante alios quas ipse sacraverat aras.
> Plena fides patuit, nec adhuc in fonte lavatus
> explevit virtutis opus pietate fideli. (ll. 178-89) [52]

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[51] "At that time Coefi was the chief priest/ and fountain-head of error. To him the king said: 'Go,/ priest, seize weapons that you have not handled before,/ and be the first to defile the lofty shrine with a spear!/ Once you were a teacher of sin: now be a guide to salvation!'" (Alcuin, *Bishops, Kings, and Saints*, pp. 18-19).

[52] "With these words, brandishing a spear in gesture of threat,/ he flouted custom by mounting a stallion/ whose mane flowed over a neck arched high in pride./ The steed

The profanation of the temple, although undertaken before baptism, demonstrates Coefi's piety and virtue, just as many of Edwin's acts performed before his full acceptance of the faith demonstrate his most laudable traits. In Alcuin's hands, Coefi becomes not just the prime example of the converted pagan vigorously rejecting his former error, but also the model of a warlike and heroic form of Christianity. Following his lead, the people of Northumbria destroy the temple:

> Turba salutiferum sequitur mox tota magistrum,
> viribus unanimis sternunt caeduntque sacellum.
> Tunc erecta ruit fani structura profani,
> funditus in cineres etiam destructa fatescit. (ll. 190-93) [53]

Bede localizes the destruction of the temple in Coefi, saying he commanded (*iussit)* his companions (*sociis*) to burn it,[54] but Alcuin continues to make the obliteration of the physical signs of the pagan religion a crucial step in the path of salvation. King, bishop, priest, and layman join in the violent destruction of the old way of life.

Alcuin links Edwin's death in battle to the divine will, but he stops short of representing Edwin as a saint. In this, he follows Bede and, to a lesser extent, the Whitby

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reared up, its eager hoof pawed the ground;/ impatient with delay, it chafed the bit of gold./ Just as the dread Parthian pulls taut the curved bow/ or the nimble Moor lets fly his long spear,/ so the priest aimed his dart at the lofty temple./ O great deed! Happy boldness! Before others/ he defiled the very altars he had consecrated./ Revealed before baptism in the fullness of his faith,/ with unwavering piety he performed the virtuous deed" (Alcuin, *Bishops, Kings, and Saints*, pp. 18-21).

[53] "Soon the entire crowd followed his guide to salvation;/ in strength united, they leveled and destroyed the shrine./ Then that building erected as a heathen temple/ crashed to the ground, collapsed, scattered in ashes" (Alcuin, *Bishops, Kings, and Saints*, pp. 20-21).

[54] Bede. *Baedae Opera Historica*, i. p. 286.

Anonymous. As discussed in Chapter Two, Edwin may have been regarded in some circles as a martyred saint, but the major accounts of his life and death leave his status indeterminate and claims for his sanctity muted. Alcuin employs none of the tropes associated with the death of a martyred warrior-king in his treatment of Edwin: not divine assistance in battle (except during his rise to power), his fighting in a just or holy war, nor his enemies' pagan bloodthirstiness (except in the scenes following Edwin's death when Oswald avenges him). Alcuin does not present the dismemberment of the king's body, the miraculous discovery of his relics, their subsequent enshrinement, or performance of any posthumous miracles. His death, however, is part of the divine plan:

> Illi quapropter clemens meliora parabat
> tradere regna Deus, luci sociata perenni;
> nam sibi praescriptae mortis dum venerat hora,
> belliger occubuit subito socialibus armis. (ll. 224-27) [55]

The warlike king dies at the appointed hour, betrayed by those he had trusted, and so ascends to the better realm God has prepared for him. Although nothing here requires a hagiographic reading, still Godman documents a number of verbal echoes in the passage, including one from the *Vita Sancti Martini* of Venantius Fortunatus, that link the king's death to images of sanctity.[56] If not a saint in the strictest sense of the word, Edwin was certainly a holy man to Alcuin, an agent of God's will, who was received into heaven. Yet

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[55] "And so God in His mercy prepared for that king/ finer dominions, realms joined to eternal light;/ for when the appointed hour of his death arrived,/ the warrior-king was suddenly murdered by his allies" (Alcuin, *Bishops, Kings, and Saints*, pp. 22-23).

[56] Alcuin, *Bishops, Kings, and Saints*, p. 22, n. 224-227. See Fortunatus, *Vita Sancti Martini*, iv. 4. 3.

Alcuin appends to the account of Edwin's death a meditation on the transience of earthly power:

> O res caeca nimis terreno fidere regno,
> quos praeceps Fortuna rotat, fatisque malignis
> vertitur et variis semper mutatur in horis!
> Ecce decem et septem postquam regnaverit annis,
> Eduinus occubuit regum clarissimus ille,
> post quem non habuit praeclara Britannia talem. (ll. 228-33) [57]

Alcuin here warns not kings but their subjects that no earthly power lasts forever. Edwin ruled long and well, but no earthly king can rule eternally. A nation cannot put its trust in any one ruler but must acknowledge instead the High King who rules for all time. If Alcuin had regarded Edwin as a saint, such a message would not have been necessary, since the saint would continue to act on behalf of his people after death, as Alcuin describes Oswald doing after his death, when he passes on his rule to his brother.[58] Edwin is the greatest of kings, but he is not a saint. One other important aspect of this passage is Alcuin's final statement: "post quem non habuit praeclara Britannia talem." How can this statement be reconciled with the knowledge that Edwin's reign was followed by Oswald's? Was Oswald less a king than Edwin? Perhaps the answer lies again in Alcuin's perspective. Oswald may have been the greater man, the more saintly king, and in the end the most blessed king of Northumbria, but his rule would last only nine years, and Edwin

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[57] "What blindness it is to put much trust in worldly power,/ which giddy fortune wheels about, with cruel strokes of fate/ changing, ever mutable with each passing hour!/ Edwin, the finest of kings, was slain/ after a reign of seventeen years,/ and fair Britain has not had such a ruler again" (Alcuin, *Bishops, Kings, and Saints*, pp. 21-24).

[58] Alcuin, *Bishops, Kings, and Saints*, p. 44: "Osui germano terrestria sceptra relinquens."

ruled almost twice as long. Alcuin looked back on Edwin's reign as a golden age of Northumbria. For the people of that kingdom his reign was a time of unparalleled peace and prosperity. Edwin may not have been a saint, but he was a powerful, pious, and effective ruler, and to Alcuin there had been no such ruler since.

III

When Alcuin turns to Oswald, any doubts about the sanctity of his subject vanish. His treatment of Oswald is fully hagiographic. He considers the martyred warrior-king as more than just an agent of the divine will; Oswald is a holy king fighting holy wars against the enemies of Christ while he is alive, and he continues to work wonders after his death. Alcuin follows Bede in devoting a large portion of his work to Oswald's life, death, and posthumous miracles; in Bede's case, eleven of 140 chapters, in Alcuin's some 270 lines out of a total of 1658. Each writer clearly considered Oswald an important part of the history he was recounting. There is a close correspondence between the two versions of Oswald's life, but Alcuin expands and subtly alters each of the tropes employed by Bede.

First he reinforces the connection between Edwin's defeat and Oswald's victory, ignoring completely the intervening reigns of Osric in Deira and Eanfrith in Bernicia: "Hoc tamen Omnipotens fieri non passus inultum est,/ sed dedit Osuualdum regis regnare nepotem" (ll. 234-35).[59] Individual kings pass away, but the High King passes on the divinely granted mantle to a new ruler. Alcuin passes briefly over Oswald's status as exile, a constituent part of the trope of a king's youthful travail, and then describes the

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[59] "Omnipotent God did not allow this [Edwin's defeat] to go unavenged,/ but granted the kingdom to Oswald, nephew of Edwin" (Alcuin, *Bishops, Kings, and Saints*, pp. 24-25). Note that Oswald himself passes his kingdom on to his brother, but God transfers Edwin's kingdom to his cousin.

devastation of Northumbria by Cadwallon and Penda without directly mentioning the latter's paganism or the former's status as "degenerate" Celtic Christian:

> Qui subito veniens externis exsul ab oris,
> firmiter invictae Fidei confisus in armis,
> agmina parva rapit properans et pergit in hostem
> vastantem patriam ferro flammisque cremantem
> milibus innumeris, spoliis nimiumque superbum. (ll. 236-40) [60]

Alcuin concentrates on the size and ferocity of the enemy, preparing for the idea of Oswald's divinely-granted victory, with only a brief mention of the bloodthirstiness of the enemy *(vastantem patriam ferro flammisque cremantem)* and not even a word given to their paganness or impiety. Victory comes more from divine favor than from any inherent difference in behavior between victor and vanquished. Oswald goes on to speak to his men, exhorting them with Christian zeal:

> Sed pius Oswuualdus numero non territus ullo
> alloquitur propriam constanti pectore turmam:
> 'O quibus est semper bellorum vivida virtus,
> nunc, precor, invictas animis adsumite vires,
> auxiliumque Dei cunctis praestantius armis
> poscite corde pio; precibus prosternite vestros
> vultus ante crucem, quam vertice montis in isto
> erexi, rutilat Christi quae clara trophaeo,
> quae quoque nunc nobis praestabit ab hoste triumpham.'
> Tunc clamor populi fertur super astra precantis
> et cruce sic coram Dominumque Deumque potentem
> poplitibus flexis exercitus omnis adorat. (ll. 241-52) [61]

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[60] "Returning immediately from exile in foreign lands,/ with firm trust in the weapons of invincible Faith, Oswald/ assembled in haste a small army and advanced on the foe/ as they ravaged and razed the fatherland, by sword and by fire,/ their number countless in thousands, their pride overweening/ in their spoils...." (Alcuin, *Bishops, Kings, and Saints*, pp. 24-25).

Alcuin makes Oswald's speech much longer than that reported by Bede. There Oswald merely said, "'Flectamus omnes genua, et Deum omnipotentem vivum ac verum in commune deprecemur, ut nos ab hoste superbo ac feroce sua miseratione defendat: scit enim ipse quia iusta pro salute gentis nostrae bella suscepimus.'"[62] Bede stresses the need for defense (*nos defendat*), the enemies' savagery (*ab hoste superbo ac feroce*), God's mercy (*sua miseratione*), and the righteousness of their cause (*iusta pro salute gentis nostrae bella suscepimus*); Alcuin stresses instead the heroic courage of Oswald's men (*semper bellorum vivida virtus*), their invincibility in war (*invictas animis adsumite vires*), God's power (*auxiliumque Dei cunctis praestantius armis*), and the cross as a sign of victory (*nobis praestabit ab hoste triumpham*). Bede's Oswald prays humbly for aid, Alcuin's shows pride in an assured victory.

The greatest dissimilarity between Bede and Alcuin appears in the account of the battle itself. In Chapter Two we saw how Bede portrayed Oswald as *rex victor*, a

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[61] "....Undaunted by numbers, the devout Oswald/ addressed his warband with unwavering heart:/ 'O staunch and courageous champions in battle,/ resolve now, I pray, to be valiant and invincible;/ with pious heart implore God's aid, that is/ more mighty than any weapon. Prostrate yourselves in prayer/ before the cross I have set up on the mountain-top,/ where it shines brightly as a sign of Christ's triumph ,/ and even now will ensure our victory over the foe.' The din of the host's prayers was carried beyond the stars,/ and so, before the cross, the entire army/ worshipped its Lord God on bended knee" (Alcuin, *Bishops, Kings, and Saints*, pp. 24-25).

[62] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, i. p. 328. "'Let us all kneel together, and ask the true and living God Almighty of His mercy to protect us from the arrogant savagery of our enemies, since He knows that we fight in a just cause to save our nation'" (L. Sherley-Price, trans., *A History of the English Church and People*, pp. 142-43).

Christian king fighting in a just cause against a *tyrannus saeviens*, and how his raising of the cross before battle elevated Oswald's cause from a just war to a form of holy war. Yet Bede scarcely described the battle itself at all: "Fecerunt omnes ut iusserat, et sic incipiente diluculo in hostem progressi, iuxta meritum suae fidei victoria potiti sunt."[63] No matter how great a victory it was, no matter how strongly Bede represented the battle as a holy war, still he left the fighting itself to the reader's imagination. The victory won and the peace thereby obtained were important to Bede; the violent conflict through which they were achieved was not. Alcuin, on the other hand, develops in bloody detail the battle itself.

> His etiam gestis, promptus processit in hostem
> caedibus inrumpens hostilia castra cruentis.
> Ut leo cum catulis crudelis ovilia vastat
> et pecus omne ferus mactat manditque roditque,
> haud secus Osuualdus rex stravit ubique phalanges
> barbaricas. Victor gaudiens per tela, per hostes,
> caedit et inculcat, fugientesque atterit alas.
> Opprimit Osuualdi sternando exercitus hostes,
> sanguineos campis rivos post terga relinquens,
> donec ipse luens cecidit Caduuala nefandus
> perfidiae poenas, moriens in strage suorum,
> claraque magnifico cessit victoria regi. (ll. 253-64) [64]

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[63] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, i. pp. 328-30. "The whole army did as he ordered and, advancing against the enemy at the first light of dawn, won the victory that their faith deserved" (L. Sherley-Price, trans., *A History of the English Church and People*, p. 143).

[64] "This done, they marched directly on the enemy,/ bursting in bloody slaughter upon his camp./ Just as the cruel lion and its cubs ravage the sheepfolds,/ killing in its fury, devouring and tearing at the flock,/ so king Oswald laid low the barbarian hosts on every side./ Advancing in triumph through the armed battalions of the foe,/ cutting and trampling, he crushed their fleeing ranks./ So Oswald's army overpowered and annihilated its enemy,/ leaving the battlefield behind it in rivers of blood/ until the wicked Cadwallon himself fell, paying the price/ for his treachery, dying amid the massacre of his men, and

The imagery of warfare Alcuin associates with Oswald in this passage marks a significant step away from the Martinian tradition of divorcing soldier saints from the glorification of violence. Sulpicius's strategy of presenting Martin as an unwilling warrior (including the tropes of the soldier behaving like a monk, the bloodless victory, and the rejection of combat) is replaced by the idea of sainthood gained through earthly heroism in a just cause. Even though Bede and the Whitby Anonymous linked warfare and sanctity in the lives of Edwin and Oswald, they produced no purple passages extolling the saintly kings' ferocity in battle. Christian saints could engage in warfare for pious ends, but the violent conflict was unfortunate even though necessary. In contrast, Alcuin proudly portrays the saint as like a lion (*ut leo*) ravaging the sheepfold (*ovilia vastat*), who leaves rivers of blood (*sanguineos rivos*) in his wake. Anglo-Saxon literature had come to this unabashed blending of warfare and sanctity in the poetry of Aldhelm and Eddius Stephanus's prose in praise of Cadwalla of Wessex, but as we have seen any claims for that king's sanctity rested on his rejection of his former role, his pilgrimage to Rome, and his pious death, not his victories in battle. Only in Felix's account of the youthful Guthlac have we seen similar glorification of battle in a hagiographic context, and even in the *Vita Guthlaci* Æthelbald is divinely cautioned to avoid such tactics in his rise to power, even if, once enthroned, his sword would subdue his enemies. Oswald might not yet technically be a king, but Alcuin represents his actions in these scenes as those of a king and not a saint.

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yielding a brilliant victory to that splendid king" (Alcuin, *Bishops, Kings, and Saints*, pp. 24-27).

Alcuin calls him *Osuualdus rex*, not *sanctus Osuualdus*, but he does not hesitate to associate the future saint with violent images of bloodshed.[65] Such associations clearly do not diminish for him his subject's sanctity. God is more powerful than any earthly weapon and brings victory to his saints.

Once on the throne, Oswald is the most saintly of kings, yet even in recounting his saintly traits, Alcuin mixes images of warlike power with those of piety and peace. He develops a pattern of point and counterpoint, a pairing of opposites or contraries, in which secular warlike virtues are paired with more explicitly religious or Christian values:

> vir virtute potens, patriae tutator, amator,
> moribus egregius, Christi mandata secutus (ll. 267-68) [66]

In this first couplet, Alcuin establishes the pattern of joining seemingly antithetical elements into a complex whole. Both lines break into contrasting half-lines of varying length. The first half-line of the four exhibits within itself the pattern of the whole: the phrase "vir virtute potens" joins power and virtue, and in the wordplay between *vir* and *virtute* Alcuin plays on the fact that, etymologically, virtue and manliness were indissolubly combined. Rather than power and virtue contrasting each other, they complement each other. So also with the second half-line: "patriae tutator, amator." Oswald is both the

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[65] The conjunction of piety and bloodshed in Alcuin's treatment of Oswald has significant similarities to the image of Charlemagne in his two extant medieval biographies. See L. Thorpe, trans., *Two Lives of Charlemagne*, pp. 59-69, 84, 93-94, 137. See also F. E. Prinz, "King, Clergy and War at the Time of the Carolingians."

[66] "[A] man of mighty virtue, guardian and lover of the fatherland,/ following Christ's commands with outstanding character" (Alcuin, *Bishops, Kings, and Saints*, pp. 26-27).

tutator, the guardian or protector, and also the *amator*, the lover, of the fatherland. To call these terms antithetical may be too extreme, yet there is an underlying contrast between them: the *tutator* stands in a markedly different relation to the *patria* from the *amator*, and yet once joined they make sense as paired opposites, two contrasting aspects of a single relationship. In the interaction between these two half-lines, Alcuin links morality and patriotism, two values not automatically joined in early Christian thinking. Unlike Martin, who abandoned his arms, his companions, and his leader in the face of an enemy invasion, considering his religious duties of greater importance than his duty to his country, Oswald is powerful in virtue and also a powerful lover and protector of his *patriae*. The second pair of half-lines continues the comparison and contrast, linking Edwin's social polish (*moribus egregius*) with the potentially conflicting path of following Christ (*Christi mandata secutus*). The pattern of linking contrasting values continues in the remaining lines devoted to Oswald's character:

> pauperibus largus, parcus sibi, dives in omnes,
> iudiciis verax, animi pietate benignus,
> excelsus meritis, summissus mente sed ipsa,
> hostibus horribilis, cunctis iocundus amicis:
> ut bello indomitus, sic pacta in pace fidelis. (ll. 269-73) [67]

The last two lines, devoted to contrasting and yet compatible attitudes toward enemies and friends, war and peace, tie together the thrust of the entire portrait. In Oswald the

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[67] ""[G]enerous to the poor, self-denying, but unstinting to all,/ true in his judgments, kindly and pious of spirit,/ of signal distinction but humbly tempered, terrible/ to his enemies but genial to each of his friends, as invincible/ in war as he was scrupulous to maintain peace treaties" (Alcuin, *Bishops, Kings, and Saints*, pp. 26-27).

social values of kingship and the spiritual values of sainthood are admirably joined. The melding of warfare and sanctity is complete in Alcuin's portrayal of Oswald.

The great problem for the hagiographer of the martyred warrior-kings, as discussed in Chapter Two, lay in the underlying contrast between God's granting of earthly victory, power, and success and the final moment of defeat, weakness, and death in martyrdom. The victories augment the image of the sainted king, but it is the defeat portrayed as martyrdom from which the status of sainthood emerges. Nonetheless, like Bede, Alcuin gives more attention to Oswald's victory at Heavenfield than he does to his defeat and death at Maserfelth. It is part of the anomalous nature of the early Anglo-Saxon cult of warrior-kings that the stories of their lives are much more important than the accounts of their deaths. This situation is typical of many types of hagiography, in which a lifetime of piety or chastity culminated in an exemplary death, but it is extremely atypical of the *passio* of a martyr. Little is known of the lives of the early military martyrs, including England's proto-martyr, Alban, and its patron-saint-to-be George. Their hagiographers gave all their attention to the moment of defeat and death, because it was in death that their subjects gained the martyr's crown of everlasting life. Oswald and Edwin had been granted a special status in life that their bellicose form of martyrdom merely confirmed. Bede records the event with some precision: "Quo completo annorum curriculo occisus est commisso gravi praelio, ab eadem pagana gente paganoque rege Merciorum, a quo et praedecessor eius Aeduini peremptus fuerat, in loco qui lingua Anglorum nuncupator Maserfelth, anno aetatis suae trigesimo octavo, die quinto mensis

Augusti."[68] Alcuin's first mention of Oswald's death is considerably briefer, mentioning it in the context of Aidan's prophecy that his hand would never decay:

> Quod fuit et factum; sancto nam rege perempto,
> gentili gladio praecisam a corpore dextram
> stipite suspendunt. (ll. 301-3) [69]

Alcuin emphasizes the dismemberment of the king's body, not his death in battle. Here Oswald is called a holy king (*sancto rege*) for the first time, and his enemies are described as pagans (*gentili gladio*).[70] Nonetheless, it is not Oswald's death but his life which seems to have made him holy. As Alcuin adds later, "Cuius quanta fides fuerat vel vis meritorum,/ post mortem nituit magis ac magis undique signis" (ll. 310-11).[71] The dead king's faith and his powerful virtues continue after death, adding power to power. In recounting the posthumous miracles, Alcuin repeatedly returns to Oswald's status as holy

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[68] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, p. 368. "At the end of this period Oswald fell in a fierce battle fought at the place called Maserfelth against the same heathen Mercians and their heathen king, who had also slain his predecessor Edwin. He died on the fifth of August 642, when he was thirty-eight years of age" (L. Sherley-Price, trans., *A History of the English Church and People*, p. 156).

[69] "And so it came about: for after that holy king was slain,/ they hung his right hand, severed by a pagan's sword,/ upon a stake" (Alcuin, *Bishops, Kings, and Saints*, pp. 28-29).

[70] Bede and the Whitby Anonymous used comparable phrases, such as *rex christianissimus, religiosus rex, rex pius, rex iustus, rex humilissimus, rex victor* etc., but despite the frequent use of the term "holy king" in the secondary literature concerned with the texts examined in this study, Bede alone uses the actual phrase *rex sanctus* and then only to refer once to Oswald after his death (*HE* iii. 13), just as Alcuin reserves it for use here, after Oswald's death.

[71] "The greatness of Oswald's faith and the power of his merits / gained added lustre after his death through his miracles" (Alcuin, *Bishops, Kings, and Saints*, pp. 30-31).

king and saint, and, less often, his death fighting pagans: "Namque ubi pro patria pugnans a gente peremptus/ pagana cecidit...." (ll. 312-13), "...quo rex pius Osuuald/ occubuit quondam...." (ll. 319-20), "pulvis erat sacro regis cum sanguine mixtus/ Osuualdi...." (ll. 354-55), "Osuualdi sancti iam filia fratris" (l. 359), "sancti sacris inducere tectis/ reliquias patrui dignoque recondere honore" (ll. 360-61).[72] Alcuin also carries over the trope of the breadth of the king's realm into the recounting of posthumous miracles:

> Inclyta fama viri non solum iure Britannos
> inlustrat populos, trans insuper aequora ponti
> aspersit radios, quibus et Germania fulsit,
> e quibus et quaedam populosa Hibernia sensit. (ll. 455-58) [73]

Unlike other kings, whose death ends the inexorable spread of their rule, Oswald's kingdom continues to grow.[74] The king's death itself is not the point of importance for Alcuin. Oswald is a holy king and a martyr not so much because he died defending the faith but because he was its powerful defender in life and his power continued after his

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[72] "[F]rom the spot where he had fallen in battle for the fatherland,/ slain by a pagan people .... where once had fallen/ pious king Oswald .... the dust was mixed with king Oswald's holy blood .... the daughter of sainted king Oswald's brother .... the remains of her holy uncle were brought into/ that hallowed building and laid to rest again with due honour" (Alcuin, *Bishops, Kings, and Saints*, pp. 30-33).

[73] "This saint's splendid fame not only cast proper lustre/ upon the peoples of Britain but also spread its rays/ over the ocean, enlightening even the peoples of Germany/ and touching also upon populous Ireland" (Alcuin, *Bishops, Kings, and Saints*, pp. 40-41).

[74] The accuracy of Alcuin's claims have been substantiated by Folz and Clemoes. See R. Folz, "Saint Oswald roi de Northumbrie"; and P. Clemoes, *The Cult of St Oswald on the Continent*.

unfortunate death. The emphasis quickly shifts to the next powerful king who will secure his relics and avenge his death.

> ....Veniens rex illius heres,
> Osuui germanus germani et sanguinis ultor,
> arripuit dextram Bebbamque ferebat in urbem,
> argenti condens loculo sub culmine templo,
> quod prius ipse Deo statuit sub nomine Petri. (ll. 303-7) [75]

Just as Oswald avenged his kinsman's death, Oswald's own death will be avenged by a kinsman.

As shown in Chapter Two, Bede grouped Edwin, Oswald, and Oswine as a trio of holy martyrs. Alcuin's poem on the bishops, kings, and saints of York, heavily indebted as it is to Bede's work, incorporates Bede's triadic pattern of holy Northumbrian kings, but with one major difference: he places Oswiu, Oswine's murderer, in the position Bede reserved for that king's victim. As Wallace-Hadrill puts it, with considerable understatement, "Alcuin also...thought it natural to make a little group of the great Northumbrian kings in his poem on the Church of York. But he thinks more highly of Oswiu than Bede did."[76] Certainly Bede had found some good things to say about Oswiu. He mentioned with approval, as Alcuin does, Oswiu's recovery of Oswald's remains and his role in their veneration. He included him among the group of powerful overlords

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[75] "King Oswiu his heir,/ his brother, and the avenger of his blood came,/ seized that hand, and carried it off into the city of Bamburgh,/ where he placed it in a silver casket within the lofty temple,/ which he had dedicated to God in the name of St Peter" (Alcuin, *Bishops, Kings, and Saints*, pp. 28-31).

[76] J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *Early Germanic Kingship*, p. 87.

along with Edwin and Oswald (a group from which, needless to say, Oswine was excluded). He recorded Oswald's role in the conversion of the Middle Angles, Mercians, and East Saxons, calling him "Osuiu rex Christianus."[77] He even devoted the twenty-fourth chapter of Book Three to Oswiu's victory over Penda at the battle of Winwæd, presenting it in ways strongly reminiscent of Edwin's and Oswald's victories over their pagan enemies, including a vow to devote a daughter and a portion of his wealth to God if he could secure victory in battle, and portraying Penda once again as a bloodthirsty heathen (despite some softening toward the Mercian king in an intervening chapter as a result of his acceptance of proselytizing efforts in his realm).[78] Oswiu's role at the Synod of Whitby and his desire to journey to Rome just before his death also were presented favorably by Bede, but given the many opportunities he had to praise Oswiu, Bede's presentation overall is somewhat subdued. The early characterization of his role in Oswine's death seems to stand between Bede and an open glorification of a king otherwise clearly an example of *rex victor et christianus*:

> Habuit autem Osuiu primis regni sui temporibus consortem regiae dignitatis, vacabulo Osuini, de stirpe regis Aeduini, hoc est, filium Osrici,...virum eximiae pietatis et religionis: qui provinciae Derorum septem annis in maxima omnium rerum affluentia, et ipse amabilis omnibus praefuit. Sed nec cum eo ille qui ceteram Transhumbranae gentis partem ab aquilone, id est, Berniciorum provinciam regebat, habere pacem potuit; quin potius ingravescentibus causis dissensionum miserrima hunc caede peremit.[79]

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[77] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, i, p. 432.

[78] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, i, pp. 432, 448-56, esp. 448-50.

[79] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, i, p. 394. "During the first part of his reign, [Oswiu] shared the royal dignity with [Oswine], who came of Edwin's royal line and was son of ...

There were limits to how far Bede would go in sanctifying war. If a Christian king could not keep the peace with his Christian neighbors, Bede would not praise him. He would record that king's good works and give his approval to signs of change, as when he said of Oswiu's setting up of religious houses after the Battle of Winwæd, "donatis insuper duodecim possessiunculis terrarum, in quibus ablato studio militiae terrestris, ad exercendam militiam caelestem, supplicandumque pro pace gentis eius aeterna, devotioni sedulae monachorum locus facultasque suppeteret"[80] It takes no twisting of the text to hear criticism implied, however, both in the typifying of the parcels of land as *possessiunculis terrarum* and in the contrast between *studio militiae terrestris* and *exercendam militiam caelestem*. These subtle reproaches are cemented into a veiled reference to Oswiu's past crimes when Bede pointedly declares, "E quibus videlicet possessiunculis, sex in provincia Derorum, sex in Berniciorum dedit."[81] When it came to

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Osric. This prince, who was a man of great holiness and piety, ruled the province of Deira most prosperously for seven years and was deeply loved by all. But even with him Oswy, who ruled the province of Bernicia, could not live peaceably; and when their differences grew more acute, he most treacherously murdered him" (L. Sherley-Price, trans., *A History of the English Church and People*, pp. 163-64).

[80] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, i, p. 452. "He also gave twelve small grants of land, where heavenly warfare was to take the place of earthly, and to provide for the needs of monks to make constant intercession for the perpetual peace of his nation" (L. Sherley-Price, trans., *A History of the English Church and People*, pp. 183-84).

[81] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, i, p. 452. "Six of these [small grants of land] lay in the province of Deira, and six in Bernicia" (L. Sherley-Price, trans., *A History of the English Church and People*, pp. 184).

crimes of violence against fellow Anglo-Saxon Christians, Bede had a long and unforgiving memory.[82]

Alcuin, by contrast, ignores the murder of Oswine in his panegyric on Oswiu. After having developed at length the admirable qualities of his predecessors, Edwin and Oswald, Alcuin describes Oswiu as inheritor not only of their kingdom but of their noble qualities as well. Alcuin ends his fulsome praise of Oswald, describing him once again in no uncertain terms as a saint, and then he reintroduces the sainted king's brother Oswiu:

> Sanctus ter ternis Osuuald feliciter annis
> imperio postquam regnorum rexit habenas--
> in se quod retinet famosa Britannia gentes
> divisas linguis, populis per nomina patrum--
> atque annos postquam ter denos vixit et octo,
> Augustas sacra Nonas iam morte dicavit,
> ascendit meritis caelestia regna coruscis,
> Osui germano terrestria sceptra relinquens. (ll. 499-506) [83]

Alcuin calls the area that Oswald ruled not Northumbria but Britannia, an *imperium* to which he passes on the *terrestria sceptra* to his brother. There is no mention of separate kingdoms of Deira and Bernicia either. As Peter Godman points out, "local and factional rivalries are largely eliminated by Alcuin, who consistently treats Northumbria as a unified

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[82] Another example of Bede's condemnation of war among Christians is his harsh criticism of King Ecgfrith's invasion of Ireland, which he links to that king's defeat by the Picts at the Battle of Nechtansmere (Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, i, pp. 160-62).

[83] "Saint Oswald ruled prosperously for nine years/ and after holding in his sway the empire--for famed/ Britain holds within her bounds peoples divided by language/ and separated by race according to their ancestors' names--/ after a lifetime of thirty-eight years, he made/ the fifth of August a calendar-day by his holy death, ascending/ through his brilliant virtues into the realms of Heaven, leaving his earthly kingdom to his brother Oswiu" (Alcuin, *Bishops, Kings, and Saints*, pp. 42-45).

kingdom."[84] He only refers to Oswine obliquely in the passage that follows, and he reverses Bede's account, making Oswiu, not Oswine, the victim of unnamed relatives' cruelty:

> Interea tenuit multo iam sceptra labore
> principio propriae rector novus Osui gentis:
> impugnatus enim fuerat hinc inde vicissim
> saepius externis praedantibus undique fines.
> Insuper a propriis perpessus bella propinquis,
> qui crudele manu lacerabant viscera regni
> cognato implentes sceleratas sanguine dextras,
> nec metuunt patrias gentilia castra per urbes
> invidia cogente fera deducere, vel sic
> viribus externis conantes sternere regem. (ll. 507-16) [85]

The phrase "propriis propinquis" could refer to both Oswine and his son Æthelwald, who, according to Godman, "placed himself under the protection of Penda," especially since "Penda in turn attacked Oswiu in 654."[86] The phrase "gentilia castra" establishes Æthelwald as the primary referent, as only he, not Oswine his father, could be accused of bringing pagan troops into the kingdom.

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[84] Alcuin, *Bishops, Kings, and Saints*, p. 45, n. 506 ff.

[85] "Oswiu, the new leader of his people,/ had to struggle at first to hold the throne,/ for time and again he was attacked on all sides/ by foreigners pillaging every part of his realm./ He suffered too from feuds with his own relatives,/ who cruelly rent the heart of his kingdom,/ covering their criminal hands with kinsmen's blood,/ not hesitating to bring pagan troops into the cities/ of their homeland, spurred by pitiless envy, and so/ attempted to overthrow the king by foreign force" (Alcuin, *Bishops, Kings, and Saints*, pp. 44-45).

[86] Alcuin, *Bishops, Kings, and Saints*, p. 45, n. 506 ff.

Alcuin's concept of the relationship between warfare and sanctity differs markedly from Bede's in these passages. Rather than viewing the individual acts of a king as central to his assessment of the man, and hence his claim to act for Christ, Alcuin bypasses the personal act of dishonor and sin to stress instead the central importance of the security and sanctity of the kingdom, a perspective that he undoubtedly applied to Charlemagne as well. The idea that Oswine and his son Æthelwald "crudele manu lacerabant viscera regni/ cognato implentes sceleratas sanguine dextras" weighs more heavily with Alcuin than the murder of Oswine. Alcuin's personification of the realm in the phrase "viscera regni" displaces Bede's condemnation of the literal murder onto a symbolic murder of the kingdom, and Oswiu becomes the defender of the nation against those who would shed kinsmen's blood. Oswiu, like Edwin, is not a saint, but he is nonetheless a holy king.

Alcuin makes lavish use of the tropes of the evil and mercilessness (but not the pagan nature) of the king's enemies, God-granted victory in battle, and the providential expansion of the king's realm in his account of Oswiu. First he devotes a long section to Penda, beginning with a brief description:

> Cui fuit ante alios primis infestus ab annis
> hostes rex Pendan fortis virtute doloque,
> occisor fratris, regni et vastator acerbus. (ll. 517-19) [87]

Although the earlier reference to pagan troops brought into Northumbria would probably signal to an observant reader that Penda wasn't a Christian, Alcuin does not emphasize the

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[87] "From his earliest years on the throne Oswiu's deadliest enemy/ was Penda, a king mighty in strength and in guile, the/ murderer of Oswiu's brother and cruel ravager of his kingdom" (Alcuin, *Bishops, Kings, and Saints*, pp. 44-45).

fact. Instead he stresses the Mercian's strength and guile, and he links the struggle with Oswiu back to the death of Oswald and the earlier ravaging of Northumbria. Then Alcuin describes Penda's new ravaging of the kingdom:

> Qui ter dena sibi conduxit milia bello,
> ter denosque duces totidem deducere turmas
> disposuit, quorum certus fuit usus in armis.
> Hac vastare manu veniensque evertere regnum,
> moenia destruxit, homines mucrone peremit.
> Imbribus exudans torrens ceu montibus altis
> sternit agros segetesque rapit silvasque recidit,
> sic dux ipse ferox devastans omnia pressit,
> dans simul in pessum pueros iuvenesque senesque.
> Nullus eum sexus vel nulla retraxerat aetas
> ad pietatis opus, nullo qui iure pepercit. (ll. 520-30) [88]

Penda is a bloodthirsty barbarian, no respecter of persons and without restraint. His army is massive, experienced, well trained, and bent on destruction. Oswiu thereby fights for both justice and mercy; he is a righter of wrongs and protector of the weak and defenseless:

> Sed rector, cui cara fuit defendere gentem,
> seque suosque simul Christi tutarier armis,
> legit et ipse viros fortes, atque agmina tanta
> venerat haud trepido contra rex pectore promptus
> milite cum raro, primo sed numen Olympi
> fletibus et votis constanti corde poposcit. (ll. 531-36) [89]

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[88] "Penda raised thirty thousand troops for battle,/ appointing thirty captains for as many divisions,/ whose experience in arms was tested and proven./ With this force he came to ravage and overturn the kingdom,/ smashing down walls, putting men to the sword./ As a torrent, brimming over with rain from the high mountains,/ covers the fields, destroys the crops, lays low the woods,/ so that barbarian chieftain ravaged and crushed all beneath him,/ slaying children, youths, and the old alike./ Neither age nor sex held him to observe/ the obligation of mercy; he spared no law" (Alcuin, *Bishops, Kings, and Saints*, pp. 44-45).

The ethos of holy war is clearly expressed in Alcuin's use of the phrase "Christi...armis," "the weapons of Christ." Not only does Alcuin present warfare as completely consistent with Christianity, as it is in the concept of the just war, he goes further and declares the use of arms the way of Christ. Alcuin identifies Christ himself, the source of sanctity, with the weapons of war. The metaphorical use of "Christi armis" and similar phrases, in which abstract qualities like faith, hope, and righteousness become the weapons of the Christian, has given way to a direct, literal equation of the weapons of the soldier with the weapons of Christ and the goals of the right-thinking or faithful king with the aims of heaven.

Alcuin employs again two major *topoi* associated with Oswald's victory at Heavenfield: the dedication of troops to God before battle and the smaller army overthrowing the greater with God's assistance. He repeats the latter trope, emphasizing the miraculous victory possible to the warrior for Christ:

> His actis etiam hostiles ut vidit ubique
> innumeras acies latis discurrere campis,
> has contra opposuit parvum licet impiger agmen,
> milia trina ciens tantum, sed prompta duello. (ll. 537-40) [90]

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[89] "But king [Oswiu], anxious to defend his people,/ to protect himself and his followers with the weapons of Christ,/ chose stalwart men and advanced/ against those mighty forces with an unflinching spirit/ but with a small company invoking first/ God in Heaven with tears, vows, and trusting heart" (Alcuin, *Bishops, Kings, and Saints*, pp. 46-47).

[90] "The prayer ended, he saw their ranks racing back and forth/ on every side, spread, countless in number, over the broad field./ Against them he valiantly pitted his small force--calling/ up only three thousand men, but they were ready to fight" (Alcuin, *Bishops, Kings, and Saints*, pp. 46-47).

The heroic image of the outnumbered force facing with confidence their more numerous enemies is welded to the assured victory of the warrior of Christ. Oswiu may not be a soldier saint, as Oswald clearly was, but he is certainly a holy warrior, and this role makes the hagiographic tropes appropriate to him as well.

Once again, the battle itself receives most of Alcuin's attention. He bypasses both Oswiu's attempts to buy peace and, as Godman notes, "Oswiu's pledge that, if he won the battle, he would dedicate twelve estates to religious uses and his infant daughter to God's service," although the latter may have been covered already by the earlier phrase, "numen Olympi...votis constanti corde poposcit."[91] Alcuin describes the battle in vivid, heroic images:

> Nec mora quin mediis se immiserat hostibus audax,
> proturbans acies Christi testudine fretus.
> Mox timor impactas populorum dispulit alas,
> qui pugnae immemores, armis telisque relictis,
> tuta fugae petiere loca et sua signa revellunt.
> Palantum cuneos victor rex cedit ubique,
> horrisona increpitans fugientes voce phalanges.
> Arma cruore natant, mutantur sanguine fontes.... (ll. 541-48) [92]

Third person singular verb forms (*immiserat*, *cedit*) and associated present participles (*proturbans*, *increpitans*) personalize the battle. The king himself, *victor rex*, wages war,

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[91] Alcuin, *Bishops, Kings, and Saints*, p. 46, n. 531 ff.

[92] "Into the enemy's midst he charged with speed and bravado,/ relying on Christ's protection, throwing them into turmoil./ Fear soon scattered the thronged battalions of that host/ which, forgetting the battle, abandoned all its weapons,/ uprooted its standards, and sought safety in flight./ The king cut down on all sides the stragglers' ranks,/ taunting their retreating battle-lines in dread tones./ Weapons ran with gore, streams were turned to blood..." (Alcuin, *Bishops, Kings, and Saints*, pp. 46-47).

not the impersonal masses who follow him. Nothing stands between the holy king and the images of weapons dripping with blood and rivers running red. He also personally dispatches his opponent, the enemy leader:

> ...fugit et ipse simul, tanta vix clade coactus,
> dux Pendan cernens caedes stragesque suorum.
> Nec tamen evaluit fugiens evadere mortem,
> sed gladio cecidit victrici occisus et ille. (ll. 549-52) [93]

The death of Penda, treated by Bede as the severing of the infidel head of the enemy, becomes in Alcuin's hands the victory of the *victor rex* over his personal opponent, and the explicit details of the battle glorify the holy warrior-king.

Alcuin brought to the Continent and to the court of Charlemagne the ideas of holy kingship he inherited from his predecessors, but what he carried with him from England was already a mixed inheritance. He drew as much or more from Aldhelm and Eddius Stephanus, who accepted the heroic and warlike values of their society and did not hesitate to mix them in with more explicitly Christian ideas and images, than he did from Bede and the Whitby Anonymous. The idealistic image of holy kingship that Bede and the Whitby monk presented had been sanitized and ritually purged of the grosser, less spiritual aspects of early English life. Their heroes stood above or outside the fray, even though they died with sword in hand. Rollason comments about the function of king-cults,

> Since the alleged virtues constituting the king or prince's claim to sanctity could be implicitly contrasted with the alleged lack of such virtues in the living, the cult of the royal saint could enable the church to bring pressure to bear on the behaviour

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[93] "...Penda, their leader, unwilling, but forced to yield/ before his defeat, took flight on seeing the massacre of his men./ Nor did he contrive to avoid death by fleeing,/ but perished at the victor's sword" (Alcuin, *Bishops, Kings, and Saints*, pp. 46-47).

> of living kings and to propagate an 'ideal of kingship'.... Bede in writing of kings such as Oswald was representing his own ideal of the Christian warrior-king -- anticipating in fact philosophy of the developed 'mirrors of princes' of the Carolingian age. The sanctification of Oswald was a means for the church publicly to set its seal of endorsement on such virtues and to present the model king widely through the commemoration of his feast. [94]

Alcuin provided a potential contrast to the Anglo-Saxon kings of his own time in his portraits of Edwin, Oswald, and Oswiu, but he also provided ideological support for a reigning king who, from his perspective, must have resembled them: Charlemagne. In his *Versus* Alcuin merged the pious ideal of kingship he inherited from Bede with the primal hero-worship and patriotic reverence for power Aldhelm and Eddius Stephanus applied to their own examples of good kings. The Carolingian ideal of kingship drew on this composite Anglo-Saxon model of holy kings in its exaltation of Charlemagne and his descendants.

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[94] D. W. Rollason, *Saints and Relics*, pp. 127-28.

IV

The hagiographic tradition of holy kingship was renewed and, at the same time, subtly changed when, in the late tenth century, Abbo of Fleury wrote a highly influential hagiographic text: the *vita* of Edmund, a king of East Anglia whom the Anglo-Saxons regarded as a saint after he was killed by Viking invaders of England in 869.[95] There are significant parallels between Alcuin and Abbo, although there are equally significant differences as well. Both men were schoolmasters who left their own, long-established religious foundations to aid in the development of newer institutions across the Channel. Both men later became abbots of prestigious monasteries, both played major roles in important cultural and intellectual movements (the Carolingian Renaissance and the tenth-century Benedictine Reform), and both left behind major literary works, including hagiographic texts and a significant body of correspondence. There the similarities end, however. Unlike Alcuin, who responded to a request by Charlemagne to lead the Palace School at Aachen, Abbo came to England at the request of a delegation from the priory of Ramsey to help that small and relatively unimportant religious institution. As Marco Mostert puts it, "The English desire to obtain a Fleury teacher is easily understood;

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[95] For discussion of the date of Edmund's death, see S. J. Ridyard, *The Royal Saints of Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 61, n. 214, where she argues that, although the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* dates his death 870, its "compiler...for the Alfredian period began his year on 24 September; thus Edmund's death...in reality took place in the autumn of 869."

curiously, Abbo himself, one of the most learned monks of the age, accepted to go and teach in a place of such slight intellectual standing as Ramsey certainly was."[96] Alcuin left England never to return, except as a visitor, and followed his tenure at Charlemagne's own school with the abbacy of St. Martin's at Tours. Abbo's stay in England lasted only two years, after which he returned to his own monastery of Fleury. After his death, Abbo was considered a saint, in part because of his death in a religious conflict; Alcuin never was similarly venerated.[97]

There are also profound differences in the two men's perspectives. There is no modern study of Alcuin's thought comparable to Marco Mostert's *The Political Theology of Abbo of Fleury*, but Alcuin's close relations with Charlemagne and his position close to the center of power and influence during the Carolingian Renaissance point to an aristocratic, lay context that differed markedly from Abbo's exclusively monastic environment. Alcuin lived and worked at a time in which Charlemagne's powerful central authority was unifying and expanding its sway in France; in Abbo's day England had been largely unified under a powerful central authority, but by then France had seen royal power and authority wane. Both men wrote influential works on holy kingship, but their disparate relationships to royalty and the radically different political contexts in which they worked influenced their views. Alcuin saw in his holy kings the powerful, stabilizing force

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[96] M. Mostert, *The Political Theology of Abbo of Fleury*, p. 40.

[97] For discussion of Abbo's sainthood, see T. Head, *Hagiography and the Cult of Saints*, pp. 238-55, esp. 251-54.

that Charlemagne represented for France, but Abbo saw in Edmund an idealized, powerful and yet self-sacrificing leader that must have seemed a perfect antidote to the corrupt, weak and self-interested kings of his own day.

Like Alcuin's poem on the Church of York, Abbo's *Passio Sancti Eadmundi* combines many different earlier traditions, contributing again to the blending of insular and continental hagiography. In the dedicatory epistle to Dunstan, archbishop of Canterbury, a leader of the Benedictine reform movement in England (and himself later recognized as a saint), Abbo tells how he learned the facts of Edmund's life: he heard the story from Dunstan's own lips. Having heard that Abbo had the story on such good authority, they had asked him to write it down:

> Audierunt enim quod eam pluribus ignotam, a nemine scriptam, tua sanctitas ex antiquitatis memoria collectam historialiter me praesente retulisset domno Rofensis aecclesiae episcopo et abbati monesterii quod dicitur Mealmesbyri ac aliis circum assentibus. sicut tuus mos est, fratribus quos pabulo diuini uerbi Latina et patria lingua pascere non desinis.[98]

Abbo explicitly states his source, adding enough detail to attest the story's impeachable source. One small detail may allow for a gap of some size between the story as told by his

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[98] Abbo's Latin text is quoted from "Abbo: *Life of St. Edmund*," in M. Winterbottom, ed., *Three Lives of English Saints*, pp. 65-87; the quote above is from p. 67. Translations are from Abbo of Fleury, *Abbonis Floriacensis Passio Sancti Eadmundi*, in F. Hervey, *Corolla Sancti Eadmundi*, pp. 6-59. "They had heard, indeed, that the story of this Passion, which is unknown to most people, and has been committed to writing by none, had been related by your Holiness [Dunstan], as collected from ancient tradition, in my presence, to the Lord Bishop of Rochester, and to the Abbot of the monastery which is called Malmesbury, and to other brethren then assembled in accordance with your practice, whom you cease not to nourish with the food of God's word, alike in the Latin and in the mother tongue" (F. Hervey, *Corolla Sancti Eadmundi*, pp. 7-9).

source and the *passio* as he wrote it down: this is the question of language. Abbo states that Dunstan was in the habit of instructing his flock in "Latina et patria lingua." That Abbo includes this detail at all raises the possibility that at least parts of the tale might have been related in English, a language Abbo may have understood imperfectly (or not at all). Moreover, he explains that Dunstan heard the story while a youth at the court of King Athelstan, Alfred's grandson, from an old warrior who devoutly swore that he had been Edmund's armor-bearer on the day the king was killed by the Danes.

> Quibus fatebaris, oculos suffusus lacrimis, quod eam iunior didicisses a quodam sene decrepito, qui eam simpliciter et plena fide referebat gloriosissimo regi Anglorum Aethelstano, iureiurando asserans quod eadem die fuisset armiger beati uiri qua pro Christo matyr occubuit. [99]

The tale had thus passed from the lips of one aged man, claiming to have seen the events first-hand in his youth, to a youth who, years later when he himself was also an aged man, repeated it to the writer. Whether true or not, this genealogy for the legend clearly places it within Anglo-Saxon tradition, and scholars have tended to regard the tale of Edmund's martyrdom as essentially Anglo-Saxon modified only slightly, if at all, by Abbo's continental perspective and a possible foreign language filter. But Abbo's Edmund represents a unique type of saint within Anglo-Saxon hagiography. Theodor Wolpers

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[99] M. Winterbottom, ed., *Three Lives of English Saints*, p. 67. "To them you averred, while the tears ran from your eyes, that you had in your youth learned the history from a broken-down veteran, who in relating it, simply and in good faith, to the most glorious English king, Athelstan, declared on his oath that, on the very day on which the martyr laid down his life for Christ's sake, he had been armour-bearer to the saintly hero" (F. Hervey, *Corolla Sancti Eadmundi*, p. 9).

mentions Martin and Guthlac as hagiographic models for Abbo.[100] Unlike Martin and Guthlac, however, Edmund was a king before giving up his weapons, and unlike them as well he died a martyr. Edmund's death also differed markedly from the deaths of martyred warrior-kings like Edwin and Oswald in one chief respect: he did not die fighting against pagan invaders, but instead imitated Christ and the more traditional martyr by laying down his arms and being killed, unresisting, by the invaders. In many ways his case resembles most closely the murdered royal saints studied by David Rollason, except that, unlike them, he was murdered by foreign pagans rather than by elements within his own society, and he accepted death willingly and openly, rather than being murdered in secret.[101]

There are only two Anglo-Saxon royal saints whose hagiographic tradition resembles Edmund's. The first is Oswine, king of Deira, who disbanded his army and sought refuge with a thegn before being murdered on the orders of his cousin, Oswiu, as discussed earlier. Like Edmund he was a king who purportedly chose not to use violence to resolve a conflict he found he couldn't win. He differs from Edmund, however, in that, like other murdered royal saints, he "was murdered for political reasons by fellow-Christians."[102] Ealhmund (Alkmund) resembles Edmund even more closely in the dual traditions which have been preserved concerning his death, except that the changes that took place over time in the story of his "passion" occurred in reverse. He was probably a

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[100] T. Wolpers, *Die englische Heiligenlegende*, p. 143 and n. 55.

[101] D. W. Rollason, "The Cults of Murdered Royal Saints."

[102] S. J. Ridyard, *The Royal Saints of Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 244.

royal murder victim but he came in later accounts to be regarded as a saint who died in battle. Edmund was a royal saint who, based on nearly contemporaneous historical accounts, probably died in battle, but who came (in Abbo's account and those that followed his) to be regarded as an unresisting victim of murder.

As we saw in Chapter Three, the rejection of violence was not a route by which kings in general came to sainthood. Those few kings who are known to have opposed violence with passive resistance (Sigeberht, for example) did not come to be widely regarded by the Anglo-Saxons as saints, and those like Oswine who chose non-engagement as a tactical decision similarly failed to capture the Anglo-Saxon imagination. Gábor Klaniczay's "new religious model of holy kings" did not promote royal pacifism, but rather honored with the status of saint Christian kings who died in performance of their duties.[103] Considering this tradition, it seems likely that Abbo played some role in transforming Edmund from an unusual type of saint (when considered from a continental perspective), the martyred warrior-king, into a type of saint more familiar to continental hagiography, the willing martyr.

To understand how a saint might be transformed from an unusual to a more familiar and therefore acceptable type of saint, we can look briefly at the accounts of the death of Ealhmund. According to Rollason, the earliest account of Ealhmund's death presents a strikingly different picture from later hagiographic accounts: "As for Ealhmund, the *Historia Regum* annals state that King Eardwulf...ordered his *tutores* to kill

[103] G. Klaniczay, "From Sacral Kingship to Self-Representation," p. 82.

him."[104] Yet a late *passio* records that he was "actually a king of the Northumbrians who was killed at the Battle of Kempsford [A.D. 800], in which he took the side of the men of Wiltshire against the Mercians."[105] Rollason and Ridyard explain this transformation as resulting from a simple misreading of an entry in the *Worcester Chronicle*: "The author of the *Vita* seems, by misreading a crucial passage in the Worcester Chronicle, to have believed that he was dealing with a king killed in battle; he went on to interpret that king's sanctity in the conventional way."[106] As Rollason says, "All that would then have remained for him to do was to add the account of Ealhmund's wish to mediate before the battle, and pious motives in taking the side of the Wiltshire men during it, which is found in the *passio*."[107] As we have seen, hagiography is a highly traditional artform, in which familiar tropes and patterns are used and reused, yet at the same time hagiographers exercised a certain freedom of amplification, of invention. Occasionally a hagiographer created a radically new story about a new type of saint, perhaps in response to a popular cult forming or already in place around a dead man or woman whose life was extraordinary even by hagiographic standards, as Bede seems to have done with Oswald (although he clearly was working from some form of model, as evidenced by the *topoi* common to the cults of Oswald and Edwin). More often a familiar template is used to

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[104] D. W. Rollason, "The Cults of Murdered Royal Saints," p. 4.

[105] D. W. Rollason, "The Cults of Murdered Royal Saints," p. 4, n. 13.

[106] S. J. Ridyard, *The Royal Saints of Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 245.

[107] D. W. Rollason, "The Cults of Murdered Royal Saints," p. 4, n. 13.

shape the cult of the new saint. Ealhmund's hagiographers found two different templates at two stages in his career onto which he could be placed.

A similar process seems to have been at work in the case of Edmund. Extant accounts of his life do not agree on certain crucial points. Through comparison of the non-hagiographic accounts of Edmund's death with Abbo's account, one can see how a hagiographer (and a saint's devoted followers relating oral tradition) could create a conventional *Vita* out of the raw materials of history. While often brief and sometimes contradictory, the historical records present a significantly different view of the events which led up to Edmund's death from that given by Abbo, his first hagiographer. At the center of this difference lies the conflict about the relationship between the shedding of blood and sanctity which, as this study documents, pervaded Christian society from at least the late antique period up to the period just before the preaching of the Crusades. How hagiographers and historians presented the facts of Edmund's death reflects, in part, the differing ways in which laymen and clerics resolved the underlying tension between holiness and warfare in early medieval society.

According to the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, Edmund's death occurred in the fourth year of a Danish invasion of East Anglia, Mercia and Northumbria which began in 865. It thus represents an early milestone in a war which would not end until the Danes were decisively defeated by King Alfred of Wessex at Edington in 878. One main element of the peace treaty subsequently worked out between Alfred and the Danes required the Viking leader to accept the Christian faith: "7 þa salde se here him foregislas 7 micle aþas.

þæt hie of his rice uuoldon, 7 him eac geheton þæt hiera kyning fulwihte onfon wolde."[108] The treaty held, giving Alfred and Wessex the opportunity to regroup and rebuild, but the defeated army, led by their recently baptized leader Guthrum, returned to East Anglia to settle. East Anglia, an early casualty in the struggle, would be one of the last Anglo-Saxon regions to break free from Danish control. It would be many years before an Anglo-Saxon would once again rule East Anglia, and then the new monarch would be a descendant not of Edmund but of Alfred.

The first *Chronicle* entry gives little hint of the long and protracted struggle that was to come: "cuom micel here on Angel cynnes lond, 7 winter setl namon on East Englum, 7 þær gehorsude wurdon, 7 hie him friþ [wiþ] namon."[109] Rather than returning to Scandinavia after a successful round of pillaging, as previous Viking groups had done, this force moved on from East Anglia to Northumbria, sacking York in 866, invading Mercia in 867, and returning to York in 868. The pattern from 866 on seems to have been a battle in which the Anglo-Saxons were defeated followed by a "peace" that at least

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[108] C. Plummer and J. Earle, ed., *Two of the Saxon Chronicles Parallel*, p. 76. "...and then the host gave him preliminary hostages and solemn oaths that they would leave his kingdom, and promised him in addition that their king would receive baptism" (G. N. Garmonsway, ed. and trans., *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, p. 76). As in previous chapters, all passages are taken from the Parker Chronicle, designated Ä, unless otherwise noted. For details of the treaty of Alfred and Guthrum, see R. P. Abels, "King Alfred's Peace-Making Strategies"; and "The Treaty of Alfred and Guthrum," in D. N. Dumville, *Wessex and England from Alfred to Edgar*, pp. 1-27.

[109] C. Plummer and J. Earle, ed., *Two of the Saxon Chronicles Parallel*, p. 68. "[There] came a great host to England and took winter-quarters in East Anglia, and there were provided horses, and they made peace with them" (G. N. Garmonsway, ed. and trans., *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, p. 92).

involved a cessation of further conquest. Only in East Anglia in 866 was peace declared without any record of a preliminary testing of relative strengths. Perhaps East Anglia, already under Edmund's control, was caught completely unprepared. [110] Abbo leaves out this earlier invasion altogether, concentrating exclusively on the return of the Vikings in 870, but a second source, Asser's *Life of Alfred*, agrees with the *Chronicle*: "Anno Dominicae Incarnationis DCCCLXVI.,...magna paganorum classis de Danubia Britanniam advenit, et in regno Orientalium Saxonum quod Saxonice 'East Engle' dicitur, hiemavit; ibique ille exercitus maxima ex parte equester factus est."[111] It is tempting to read backwards from Edmund's reputation as a king who gave up his weapons to surmise that he was not a particularly aggressive warleader, perhaps even a king disposed to prefer negotiations and peace-making to war, and that the lack of a military response to the initial invasion grew out of Edmund's non-military orientation, but such a conjecture lacks support, and there is evidence that Edmund later fought at least one major battle against the invading Danes.

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[110] S. J. Ridyard, *The Royal Saints of Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 61, n. 213, says, Edmund was born c. 841/2, succeeded c. 855."

[111] F. Hervey, *Corolla Sancti Eadmundi*, p. 4. "In the year of the Lord's Incarnation 866.... a great Viking fleet arrived in Britain from the Danube, and spent the winter in the kingdom of the East Saxons (which in English is called East Anglia), where almost the whole army was supplied with horses" (S. Keynes and M. Lapidge, trans., *Alfred the Great*, p. 74). Quotations are from "Asseribus de Rebus Gestis Alfredi," in F. Hervey, *Corolla Sancti Eadmundi*, although Stevenson's edition, Asser, *Life of King Alfred*, was also consulted.

A number of studies have analyzed the development of the legends around Edmund, but the "peaceful" solution of the first invasion has aroused little interest.[112] Dorothy Whitelock ascribes the differences between Abbo's account and that recorded in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* to the former's method of transmission.

> It is not uncommon for events to be telescoped when handed down by oral tradition, and it is possible that Abbo's version has done so with the two historical attacks on East Anglia, that in the autumn of 865, by sea, and that in the autumn of 869, by land. The destruction of a town and some negotiations with the king [details appearing in Abbo's account] could belong to the earlier year, when the East Anglian surrender may have been preceded by ravaging and when negotiations must have taken place before peace was made. The position described by Abbo in which Edmund was unable to assemble an army may have been true of 865. [113]

This argument has been accepted by most scholars, and its accuracy is confirmed, although also somewhat modified, by a careful consideration of Abbo's purported source. The old armor-bearer, if he was the genuine article, might have told an inaccurate story through the vagaries of human memory or through a desire to achieve an intended effect. That he was an impostor also cannot be ruled out, and if so, the story he told would already have been the product of a process of oral transmission. Yet his account could have been distorted by processes of oral transmission even if his status as eyewitness is accepted. An eyewitness can produce a tainted version of events after repeated

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[112] The main articles are G. Loomis, "The Growth of the Saint Edmund Legend," and "St. Edmund and the Lodbrok (Lothbrok) Legend"; and D. Whitelock, "Fact and Fiction." A more recent summary of the pertinent scholarship appears in J. Grant, ed., *La Passiun de seint Edmund*.

[113] D. Whitelock, "Fact and Fiction," pp. 220-21.

recountings; points of confusion are eliminated as the memory passes from mental to oral construct, and successive retellings can refer increasingly to past tellings rather than to the memory of the events themselves. The tale told King Athelstan could not have been freshly remembered, since the events occurred before 870 but Athelstan did not come to the throne until 924 and Dunstan was born in 909. Pinpoint accuracy cannot be expected from events recalled from memory more than fifty years after their occurrence. According to Abbo, Archbishop Dunstan heard the story in his youth from the old warrior, and another fifty years then passed before Abbo heard the tale from Dunstan. Similar processes of revision and distortion can be expected from Dunstan's stage in the story's preservation. Processes of telescoping in memorial transmission and the tendency of even an eyewitness to alter a story over the course of repeated recountings play as much a role as Whitelock's construct of a story "handed down by oral tradition."[114] Finally, Abbo himself received the tale in oral form which he would surely alter, however slightly, through the process of remembering and retelling it. Ridyard argues that the story of willing sacrifice should be considered equally, if not more likely than the story of death in battle.

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[114] The extent to which much of Anglo-Saxon literature is the product of an oral tradition remains a major problem in Anglo-Saxon literary studies. Donald Scragg gives a short summary of the issue in D. G. Scragg, "The Nature of Old English Verse," pp. 55-56. The issues involved in the oral transmission of the story of Edmund's death have little to do with oral formulaic theory, however, since there is no evidence that the original account was poetic in nature. More pertinent to this problem are studies of the role of memory in transmission of literature in a manuscript culture, such as M. Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*.

> It is, I believe, at least possible that Abbo's narrative is a more reliable source for the death of St. Edmund than either the *Chronicle* or Asser .... Perhaps in the case of St. Edmund a combination of ignorance and lack of interest led the compiler of the *Chronicle*, and Asser alike, to place too great a reliance upon an assumed connection between the deaths of kings and the outcomes of battles. Perhaps, as Abbo claims, the martyrdom of St. Edmund followed upon his defeat not in battle but in diplomacy. [115]

In the end, it is far safer to trust the record in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, written within twenty years of the events, than the product of a long and questionable process of memorial and oral transfer. For whatever reason, the East Anglians did not mount a major defensive action against the invaders in 865, instead they sued for peace and provided the Vikings with horses to facilitate their passage northwards.

When the invading force finally found its way back to East Anglia in 870, conditions seem to have changed. This time an army confronted them:

> Her for se here ofer Myrce innon East Ængle. 7 winter setle naman æt Ðeodforda. 7 on þam geare *san*cte Ædmund cining him wið gefeaht. 7 þa Deniscan sige naman. 7 þone cining ofslogon. 7 *þæt* land eall geeodon. 7 fordiden ealle þa mynstre þa hi to comen. on þa ilcan tima þa comon hi to Medeshamstede, beorndon 7 bræcon. slogon abbot 7 munecas. 7 eall *þæt* hi þær fundon. macedon hit þa *þæt* ær wæs ful rice. þa hit wearð to nan þing. [116]

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[115] S. J. Ridyard, *The Royal Saints of Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 67.

[116] C. Plummer and J. Earle, ed., *Two of the Saxon Chronicles Parallel*, p. 71. "870. In this year the host went across Mercia into East Anglia, and took winter-quarters at Thetford; and the same winter St Edmund the king fought against them, and the Danes won the victory, and they slew the king and overran the entire kingdom, and destroyed all the monasteries to which they came. At the same time they came to the monastery at *Medeshamstede* [Peterborough] and burned and demolished it, and slew the abbot and monks and all that they found there, reducing to nothing what had once been a very rich foundation" (G. N. Garmonsway, ed. and trans., *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, p. 92). Here I quote from the Laud Chronicle, E.

Brief as it is, this account provides a few concrete details: the place-name Thetford, that Edmund led the battle, that he was killed. In this version, specific details of an attack on the monastery at Peterborough are attached to the story of the battle, indicating that records of the events were preserved there. That he is styled "St. Edmund" even here, in the annals, indicates that too strict a division into hagiographic and historical sources is unwise. However, the earliest version of the *Chronicle*, that in the 'Parker' manuscript, does not use the title *Sancte*, and those that do all date from the eleventh and twelfth centuries.[117] The elaboration which follows the king's death, with its stress on the destruction of monasteries and the slaying of "abbot and monks," certainly would have served to reinforce the idea that the struggle was a religious one, and thereby justify the role of Edmund as king and martyr, but it also is a later addition. Examining the most contemporary accounts, Ridyard finds "no indication that his death was regarded as a martyrdom; the *rex sanctissimus* of later hagiographic tradition appears here simply as one among many leaders and rulers of the Anglo-Saxons who lost both their kingdoms and their lives in the years preceding the 'Alfredian revival' of the late ninth century."[118] In the annal dated 867 (for 866), two such kings, Osberht and Ælla, are reported killed, and they have vanished from memory. But not so Edmund. Accounts of his life continued to be written to the end of the Middle Ages and on up to the present day. [119] For reasons

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[117] See S. J. Ridyard, *The Royal Saints of Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 62, n. 216.

[118] S. J. Ridyard, *The Royal Saints of Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 62.

[119] For a late medieval life of Edmund, differing enormously from the Anglo-Saxon works studied here, see John Lydgate, *St Edmund and St Fremund*, in F. Hervey, *Corolla Sancti*

not yet fully reconstructed, this obscure East Anglian king was to become one of England's most venerated saints.

Edmund's continuing fame cannot have been due to promotion by his relatives within an East Anglian dynasty, as he was the last king of his line and after him the country itself, as an independent nation, ceased to exist.[120] There is no record of who ruled East Anglia on Edmund's death, but as described earlier the Viking army returned there in 880, after being defeated by Alfred, " 7 ge sæt *þæt* land 7 ge dælde."[121] Edmund's kingdom would remain in Danish hands for many generations to come, forming the heartland of the Eastern Danelaw, which would only slowly be reabsorbed into the emerging unified English nation.

Edmund seems to have been regarded as a saint almost at once, perhaps from the moment of his death, but the growth of a hagiographic tradition about him took some time to spread beyond East Anglia. In the 890's, Asser records in his *Life of King Alfred* a slightly expanded version of the events of 870:

> Anno Dominicae Incarnationis DCCCLXX.,... supra memoratus paganorum exercitus per Merciam in Orientales Anglos transivit, et ibi in loco, qui dicitur Theodford, hiemavit. Eodem anno Eadmund, Orientalium Anglorum rex, contra ipsum exercitum atrociter pugnavit. Sed, proh dolor! paganis minimum

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Eadmundi, pp. 409-524. For modern "biographies," see F. Hervey, *The History of King Eadmund the Martyr*; and B. Houghton, *Saint Edmund–King and Martyr*.

[120] There are traditions that make Edmund's brother a saint as well. See D. H. Farmer, *The Oxford Dictionary of Saints*, p. 153.

[121] C. Plummer and J. Earle, ed., *Two of the Saxon Chronicles Parallel*, p. 77, Laud Chronicle: "occupied the land and shared it out" (G. N. Garmonsway, ed. and trans., *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, p. 97).

> gloriantibus, ipso cum magna suorum parte ibidem occiso, inimici loco funeris dominati sunt, et totam illam regionem suo dominio subdiderunt. [122]

Asser intensifies the battle, stressing its fierceness and the number of men killed, and agrees for the most part with the Chronicle account, but he adds no evidence for the emergence of a saint's cult connected with Edmund. The earliest evidence of Edmund's veneration as a saint is numismatic. Ridyard reports that sometime "within little more than twenty-five years of his death," a memorial coin was struck in the area under Danish control. It shows "a central A, surrounded by the legend *Sce Eadmund Rex*, within two circles."[123] More than two thousand of these coins have been uncovered, mostly in East Anglia and the Danelaw. Both Rollason and Ridyard point out the significance of coins honoring the dead king being struck within the territory held by the Danes. Dorothy Whitelock stresses the significance of the St. Edmund coinage in assessing the progress of conversion in East Anglia after the Danish invasion, arguing that the available evidence "points to a wide acceptance of the new faith already by the end of the ninth century."[124]

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[122] F. Hervey, *Corolla Sancti Eadmundi*, p. 4. "In the year of the Lord's Incarnation 870..., the Viking army mentioned above passed through Mercia to East Anglia, and spent the winter there at a place called Thetford. In the same year, Edmund, king of the East Angles, fought fiercely against that army. But alas, he was killed there with a large number of his men, and the Vikings rejoiced triumphantly; the enemy were masters of the battlefield, and they subjected that entire province to their authority" (S. Keynes and M. Lapidge, trans., *Alfred the Great*, p. 78).

[123] S. J. Ridyard, *The Royal Saints of Anglo-Saxon England*, pp. 214-16.

[124] D. Whitelock, "The Conversion of the Eastern Danelaw," p. 175. D. W. Rollason, *Saints and Relics*, p. 157, discusses some of the possible political implications of Edmund's cult.

Yet Christianization itself is inadequate in explaining how and why the cult emerged. Abbo's image of Edmund, although written a century after his death, represents the closest approximation available to us of the legend forming around Edmund during the period immediately following his death, and from it some of the political overtones of Edmund's cult emerge.

According to Abbo, Edmund chose to die rather than to reach some form of accommodation with the Danes. A messenger came to him from the Viking leader Hinguar offering him a truce based on Edmund's acknowledgment of the Dane as his overlord. After some debate with his bishop about what answer to give, Edmund finally sent back a message rejecting the offer. He stated he would not want to outlive his faithful followers, whom the Danes had already slain. He chose to die as an unarmed victim in imitation of Christ rather than to submit. Hinguar then came himself and reiterated his demand. Edmund again refused, stating that he could not serve under the Danish leader unless Hinguar would convert to Christianity. Hinguar in turn rejected Edmund's offer. He has the king beaten, tied to a tree, and used by Hinguar's men for target practice. Edmund nonetheless remained alive, continually calling on Christ. Finally Hinguar had Edmund decapitated. Hinguar's men carried off the head and threw it into a nearby woods. Edmund's people searched for the head, when it was found to be missing. The head miraculously cried out to the searchers, and it was found between the paws of a wolf, who was guarding it. Abbo's story differs in almost all respects from that preserved in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* and Asser's *Life of Alfred*. Setting aside the miraculous

elements, it is still impossible to determine which is the more accurate account, although, as argued earlier, the more contemporary witnesses should probably be given priority.

One source of the discrepancy may lie with the West Saxon sources, since there are ways in which Abbo's story might better serve the interests of those (both East Anglian and Danish) who came to revere him as a saint, such as the East Anglians and the Danes. The greatest contradiction within the tradition of the martyr-king concerned divine assistance in battle, and this case is no different. If the Christian king had God fighting on his side, how could it be that he was eventually defeated? Alcuin stressed the finite life of any ruler, resulting from the transitory nature of all life on earth, as a means of understanding how God's chosen warrior can at last be defeated. To Alcuin and Bede alike, the conquest of the enemy was never final, however, since God always raised up another holy warrior to avenge the fallen leader. Oswald avenged Edwin and was in turn avenged by Oswiu. Yet Edmund's kingdom was overthrown and he left behind him no new East Anglian hero to right the wrongs.[125] To the remnants of East Anglian society, Edmund's defeat would have had a finality that the deaths of Edwin and Oswald did not share. In the years that followed his death it must have become increasingly obvious to

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[125] West Saxon participation in the early stages of the cult of Edmund might indicate that the Alfredian dynasty of Wessex wished to present themselves as inheritors of Edmund's mantle, but according to Ridyard and Rollason, "recent research has made it impossible to accept that the St Edmund coins bearing also the name of King Alfred were produced at Canterbury for that king. Rather they are Danish imitations of Alfred's coinage" D. W. Rollason, *Saints and Relics*, p. 157 n. 89, citing S. J. Ridyard, *The Royal Saints of Anglo-Saxon England*, and C. E. Blunt, "The St Edmund Memorial Coinage," pp. 242 and 252-53).

the East Anglians that no new, divinely assisted leader would right the wrongs and restore the former dynasty to power, thus emphasizing the inherent contradiction in the idea of holy kingship. Good Christian kings do die, they are defeated by impious pagans, and God does not immediately and directly avenge all wrongs. If Edmund was remembered as a pious, moral, Christian king, how could his followers reconcile themselves to his complete and utter defeat? For this situation the tradition of Oswald and Edwin, although it supplied some of the necessary images and ideas in its cult of martyred warrior-kings, would not be enough. And so the legend of the king's willing sacrifice might have come to attach itself to the king's death. Edmund was not defeated, not *truly* defeated by a greater force whom the God of Battles favored and upon whom He smiled, because Edmund had chosen to die like Christ, had put aside his power to become a victim and thereby a martyr and a symbol of the ultimate conquest of good over evil. The unlucky, unavenged final defeat in battle would be replaced by a powerful act of a different kind: the victory of the holy martyred king's self-sacrifice. The idea would have had appeal for both East Anglian and Dane, because it stressed not a military defeat needing to be righted by a military victory, but a symbolic defeat able to be righted by the widespread conversion of those who had put the holy king to death and their descendants.

This hypothesis may account not only for the growth of the story of Edmund's willing martyrdom but also for the West Saxon resistance to that story. Asser's biography and the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* may have been written too soon after the events for the story of the martyrdom, evolving in the lands under Danish rule. to reach them. But what

of a later West Saxon source like *The Chronicle of Æthelweard*?[126] Writing long after the growth of the Edmund cult, the reconquest of the Danelaw, and the reunification of England under the Alfredian dynasty of Wessex, Æthelweard repeats the account of the great battle passed over by Abbo, omits the saint's willing sacrifice, and supplies instead an element of divine retribution against the Danes:

> Iterum post annum migrantur, trans regnumque Merciorum itinera cedunt ad orientalem partem Anglorum, ibique castra metantur tempore hiemali in loco Theotforda. Aduersus quos optauit bellum rex Eadmundus, breui spatio a quibus et interimitur ibi. Cuius corpus iacet mausoleatum in loco qui Beadoricesuuyrthe nuncupatur, obtinueruntque tum barbari uictoriae numen, mox defuncto rege, nam et eorum rex anno in eodem obiit Iuuar [Hinguar]. [127]

Æthelweard, ealdorman of Wessex and a descendant of King Alfred's brother and predecessor Æthelred, was one of that extremely rare breed of literate Anglo-Saxon layman, and his Latin is notoriously clumsy and difficult to follow, but in the phrase "uictoriae numen" can clearly be seen the concept of the divine power as expressed through victory in battle, and in the pairing of the deaths of Edmund and Hinguar can be seen the idea of divine retribution. The West Saxon rulers would have had solid political

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[126] Æthelweard, *Chronicon Æthelweardi*.

[127] Æthelweard, *Chronicon Æthelweardi*, p. 36. "After a year [the Danes] moved again, and struck across the kingdom of the Mercians to East Anglia, and there laid out a camp in the winter season at Thetford. And King Eadmund decided on war against them, and after a brief interval he was killed by them there. And his body lies entombed in the place called Bury St Edmund's. And then the barbarians had the blessing of victory as the death of their king grew near, for their king, Ingwær, also died in the same year" (Æthelweard, *Chronicon Æthelweardi*, p. 36). The name of the Viking leader is variously given as Hinguar, Hingwar, Ingwar, Ingwær, Ivarr, Ivar, or Iuuar. For a discussion of his identity, see A. P. Smyth, *Scandinavian Kings in the British Isles*, pp. 224-39.

reasons for emphasizing the military nature of Edmund's defeat and therefore the need for military counteraction, since their own conquest of the Danelaw could thus be seen as the righting of old wrongs. This perspective is expressed quite clearly in the short alliterative poem known as "The Capture of the Five Boroughs" which appears in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* under the date 942:

> Dæne wæran æror
> under Norðmannum nyde gebegde
> on hæþenra hæfteclommum
> lange þrage, oþ hie alysde eft
> for his weoþscipe wiggendra hleo,
> afera Eadweardes, Eadmund cyning. [128]

The martial victory of the West Saxon King Edmund represented one way that the Viking successes could be reversed and, in the process, England could become unified. The West Saxons might easily have leaned toward such physical, military retributions when an East Anglian might stress the symbolic nature of the defeat and favor coexistence and widespread conversion of the Danes as symbolic, spiritual means of redressing the balance.

Another means of solving the problem of a Christian king's defeat in battle against pagans would be the marauders' acceptance of Christianity and their joining with their former foes in revering a saint like Edmund. The concept of the martyred king's willing self-sacrifice would make it easier for the foes to join together in honoring his cult, while

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[128] "Long had the Danes under the Norsemen/ Been subjected by force to heathen bondage,/ Until finally liberated by the valour of Edward's son,/ King Edmund, protector of warriors" (S. A. J. Bradley, *Anglo-Saxon Poetry*, p. 110). Quotations of the alliterative poems from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* are taken from "The Poems of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle," pp. 16-26, here at p. 21.

the idea of the king cut down in battle against bloodthirsty heathens would encourage continuing warfare. Former enemies united in their reverence for a unifying saint abound in Anglo-Saxon England. The arrival of Oswald's bones at the abbey of Bardney was initially resisted by the monks because of long-standing enmity between Lindsey and Bernicia and because Oswald had once conquered them, until a miracle convinced them of the error of their ways.[129] This is an example of a different sort, however, since Oswald was not a victim of conflict between Lindsey and Bernicia, and represented instead, in Rollason's words, one means of extending "political dominance by a particular royal house over a recently conquered area"[130] Edmund was the appropriate saint of the conquered, not the conquerors. Rollason suggests that competing national loyalties between Bernicia and Deira, which played such a dramatic role in the conflict between Oswine and Oswiu, may have led to the growth of competing cults of Edwin and Oswald, but he also mentions a better-known saint who served instead to unify the two provinces into a single kingdom of Northumbria:

> The affinity between Lindsey and Deira may have created a common interest between the Bernician and Mercian kings, the former in crushing Deiran independence, the latter in crushing Lindsey's independence. The cult of Oswald at Bardney may have reflected that common interest--the veneration of a Bernician royal saint in Lindsey, promoted by a Mercian king and his Bernician queen. Across the River Humber, the cult of King Edwin at Whitby may have fitted into this pattern. Edwin was of the Deiran royal house and his cult could well have been a focus for Deiran separatism. Maybe the establishment of Oswald's cult at Bardney was a direct challenge to it. The tension latent in the unification of Deira and Bernicia probably also had a bearing on royal participation in the cult of

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[129] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, i, p. 376-78.

[130] D. W. Rollason, *Saints and Relics*, p. 120.

> Cuthbert, who in the eighth century was being presented as a patron saint of the united kingdom of Northumbria, a saint whose cult transcended the boundary of Deira and Bernicia. [131]

Cuthbert's role as unifier made him an ideal symbol of Northumbria. Political concerns such as these could have played a part in the altering of the Edmund cult to make it acceptable to both East Anglian and Dane.

An Anglo-Saxon tradition in which parties guilty of a royal murder participated in that individual's sanctification has direct relevance to Edmund's veneration by Anglo-Saxon and Dane alike. Rollason points out that Oswine's cult was supported by Oswiu's queen Eanflæd (who was also Oswine's relative), when she encouraged her husband to establish a monastery in Deira in his memory, probably because of rather than despite Oswiu's role in the murder.[132] Among the group of early murdered royal saints, many owed the site of their veneration to cooperation between their murderers and their own closest kin. This practice was in keeping with a venerable Anglo-Saxon tradition of compensation for murder. According to Rollason, in many cases "it appears that the foundations were made by the guilty parties by way of expiation for the killings. They were in effect *wergilds* and this word is actually used in an Old English account of" two Kentish murdered princes, Æthelberht and Æthelred.[133] In the tenth century, Æthelred Unræd actively supported the cult of his murdered half-brother, Edward the Martyr,

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[131] D. W. Rollason, *Saints and Relics*, p. 121.

[132] D. W. Rollason, *Saints and Relics*, pp. 121-22.

[133] D. W. Rollason, "The Cults of Murdered Royal Saints," p. 13.

although, as he had gained the throne as a result of the murder, he was accused of being complicitous in it. Ridyard presents cogent reasons for the newly converted Danes' participation in the cult of Edmund, including similarities to Æthelred's involvement in Edward's cult. Her conclusions bear repeating:

> The cult of St. Edmund seems ... to have originated among the East Angles, very probably in the years between Edmund's martyrdom and the establishment of Danish rule [after 878]. Subsequently recognized by the Danes in their production of the St. Edmund coins, it seems to have formed in the late ninth and early tenth centuries a focus for the working out of political relations between the East Angles and their Danish conquerors. [134]

In this way the cult of Edmund drew on and formed a part of the tradition of murdered royal saints, although in other ways Edmund's story shows greater similarity to the tradition of the martyred warrior-kings Oswald and Edwin. Just as the cult of Guthlac drew on divergent traditions to form a new model of sainthood, partly based on Sulpicius's unwilling warrior Martin and partly inspired by the accommodation and even glorification of warfare associated with the holy royal martyrs, so also Edmund's cult combined the traditions of the royal battle-martyr and the royal murder-victim. According to Mostert, the combining of the two genres was part of the legend as it had evolved in England.

> In the Edmund legend, two earlier types of royal martyr which had been current in the English religious conscience, i.e. the king who fell in battle, for instance against the pagans, and the murdered or betrayed king, who was killed innocently, had grown together. Abbo simply added his own ideas on kingship to the treatment of the royal martyr which the story as told by Dunstan must already have implied. [135]

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[134] S. J. Ridyard, *The Royal Saints of Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 223.

[135] M. Mostert, *The Political Theology of Abbo of Fleury*, p. 44.

The king's willing self-sacrifice is the key to the joining of the two genres, and, despite Ridyard's argument to the contrary, the defeat and death of Edmund in battle is more likely to have been the historical event, and the king laying down his weapons and taking on the role of martyr is more likely to have been the hagiographic fiction. Although Ridyard argues that it is not "easy to find a hagiographic purpose behind [the] omission [of 'all reference to a well-attested battle'] from Abbo's account,"[136] an examination of Anglo-Saxon and continental hagiography suggests a reason: the extreme rarity of a saint who led troops into battle. The sanctification of Oswald by Bede may suggest that "there was little reason to invent a 'peace king' when 'To die fighting the heathen was an adequate claim to sanctity'" but Oswald's case is actually far from normative.[137] Carl Erdmann points to the cult of Oswald as unusual and therefore highly significant in the growth of the crusading ideal.[138] Even in Anglo-Saxon England, where the type of the martyred warrior-king appears to have originated, it remained a very narrow group compared with other types of saints. As we have seen, only Edwin and Oswald really fit

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[136] S. J. Ridyard, *The Royal Saints of Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 66.

[137] D. Whitelock, "Fact and Fiction," pp. 217-218; quoted by S. J. Ridyard, *The Royal Saints of Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 66-67.

[138] Erdmann actually discounts Oswald's death in battle as intrinsic to his sanctity, but the examination of Oswald's cult in Chapter Two indicates that death in battle, not "having led a holy life and having spread Christianity among his people" (C. Erdmann, *The Origin of the Idea of Crusade*, pp. 236-37), appears to have been the key component making Oswald alone of the many pious and holy Anglo-Saxon kings a saint. For another view of Oswald's uniqueness and the contribution of his cult to the growth of the crusading ideology, see C. Tyerman, *England and the Crusades*, p. 11.

the type (and, in later traditions, Ealhmund), yet examples of the other categories of royal saints abound. Rollason names twelve royal murder victims, and there are more than twelve royal saints who laid down their arms and underwent what I have termed a spiritual conversion, either by entering a monastery or going on pilgrimage. Many Anglo-Saxon royal women entered into religious lives and came to be regarded as saints. Only one type of royal saint is less prevalent than the martyred warrior-kings: those whose lives of piety and chastity made them eligible for sainthood. Only Edward the Confessor, the penultimate Anglo-Saxon king, truly fits this category, since the others, like Sebbi or Sigeberht, who lived extremely pious lives eventually abdicated and became monks, joining the much more numerous group of spiritual converts. As Ridyard says, for whatever reason, "Monk-kings were not popular among the Anglo-Saxons."[139]

Abbo, however, was not an Anglo-Saxon. The tradition of royal saints was considerably thinner in Frankish society than among the Anglo-Saxons. Ridyard lists a few names of Frankish royal saints and Wallace-Hadrill adds a few more, but there would have been none in Abbo's experience to rival Oswald and Edmund. Also, unlike Anglo-Saxon England, tenth-century France produced a notable example of the sainted aristocrat, a type unheard of across the Channel. St. Gerald of Aurillac (855-909) gained sainthood by pursuing his secular duties as lay magnate of the crown. Anglo-Saxon men and women of many stations achieved sainthood by a life of piety; however, kings alone did so by dying in the right way. As Ridyard points out, "The Anglo-Saxons did not, to

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[139] S. J. Ridyard, *The Royal Saints of Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 247.

my knowledge, create a single martyred aristocrat."[140] More importantly, Anglo-Saxon society did not create a single aristocratic, non-royal saint who did not first abandon secular duties for the religious life. Non-royal saints in England gave up their earthly responsibilities for a life devoted exclusively to God. Only English royal saints continued to serve both God and man, leaders in both the secular and sacred realms.

The Frankish and Anglo-Saxon traditions were not completely distinct, however. Both cultures reveal an internal conflict between the sanctification and the rejection of warfare. Even a lay saint like Gerald could not be portrayed leading armies into battle without some acknowledgment of the tradition of strict separation between warfare and sanctity. According to his hagiographer, Odo of Cluny, Gerald instructed his men to charge upon the enemy in battle with their weapons reversed:

> ...when the unavoidable necessity of fighting lay on him, he commanded his men in imperious tones, to fight with the backs of their swords and with their spears reversed. This would have been ridiculous to the enemy if Gerald, strengthened by divine power, had not been invincible to them. And it would have seemed useless to his men, if they had not learned by experience that Gerald, who was carried away by his piety in the very moment of battle, had not always been invincible. When therefore they saw that he triumphed by a new kind of fighting that was mingled with piety, they changed their scorn to admiration, and sure of victory they readily fulfilled his commands. For it was a thing unheard of that he or the soldiers who fought under him were not victorious. But this also is certain, that he himself never wounded anybody, nor was he wounded by anyone. [141]

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[140] S. J. Ridyard, *The Royal Saints of Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 249.

[141] Odo of Cluny, "The Life of Saint Gerald of Aurillac," trans. Gerard Sitwell, O.S.B., in T. F. X. Noble and T. Head, ed., *Soldiers of Christ*, pp. 295-362, at p. 302.

This was the context within which Abbo was writing his *Life of Edmund*, a literary tradition in which events as improbable as Gerald's army of men fighting with their weapons reversed could be presented as fact in deference to hagiographic tradition. A "peace king" would be more in keeping with such a hagiographic tradition than a martyred warrior-king like Oswald.[142] Alcuin brought the Anglo-Saxon cult of warrior-kings to the continent, but the tradition of the saint who resisted the call to arms continued to play just as significant a role there as it did in England.

Ridyard raises and summarily dismisses the idea that Abbo might have meant "to present Edmund as a peace king, or as an unresisting victim," pointing out that "he makes quite clear his belief that Edmund had a considerable reputation as a warrior. And having done so, he had little reason to cheat his audience of its anticipated battle scene -- unless, as was the whole point of his narrative, there was no battle."[143] Ridyard thus believes that Abbo, writing a hundred years later and under the influence of a lengthy tradition of strict separation between warfare and sanctity in hagiography, is correct in asserting that Edmund did not fight a battle against the Danes (just as she argues that the account of Edmund's death as a martyr is probably accurate), although the writer of the *Anglo-Saxon*

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[142] Although Peter Clemoes cites many instances of Oswald's veneration on the Continent in P. Clemoes, *The Cult of St Oswald on the Continent*, most are concentrated in the Germanic rather than Frankish areas, and there is little solid evidence of his veneration on the continent as early as the tenth century.

[143] S. J. Ridyard, *The Royal Saints of Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 67.

Chronicle and Asser, who were writing about events within their own lifetimes, were wrong.

> Quite possibly Edmund made some preparations for war, and quite possibly there was some sporadic fighting, but equally possibly there was never a battle worthy of the name: there is no inherent improbability in Abbo's statement that the king was finally captured not on a battlefield but *in palatio*, bearing arms but hopelessly unprepared for war. [144]

It is far more likely that Abbo rejected as inappropriate the facts contained in contemporaneous historical accounts (if he was even aware of them), and emphasized instead Edmund's death in imitation of Christ. It is no more improbable that Abbo would ignore the evidence presented by historical annals, and perhaps even the tales of heroism in battle shared by Edmund's aged retainer, than that Odo would claim what undoubtedly many hundreds of men knew to be false: that St. Gerald's soldiers all fought with the backs of their swords. Hagiographers were, after all, writing literature, moral and didactic in purpose, while Asser and the anonymous Anglo-Saxon chronicler were closer to attempting to record the facts as they knew them, although they also would have provided their own spin.

This is not to say that all of the events described by Abbo were invented to suit his hagiographic purpose. Abbo's account probably reflects the tradition passed on orally by East Anglian devotees of Edmund. Edmund may actually have died not as a king slain in battle but as a martyr tied to a tree and pierced by innumerable arrows, yet Abbo's account is also in keeping with an old and venerable tradition. It combines many of the

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[144] S. J. Ridyard, *The Royal Saints of Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 68.

tropes examined in earlier works in this study, drawn from the Martinian tradition of the unwilling soldier, the widespread tradition of rejection of war through spiritual transformation, and the multi-faceted Anglo-Saxon martyr-king tradition. Yet as Abbo developed the story, the Anglo-Saxon hagiographic traditions which undoubtedly underlay Edmund's cult blended and merged with continental traditions, themselves influenced by Alcuin's imported imagery of the sword-wielding, war-waging holy king.

One of the major war-related tropes drawn from the Martinian unwilling-warrior complex to appear in the *Passio Sancti Eadmundi* is the *topos* of the king acting more like a saint than a soldier. Abbo asserts Edmund's saintly behavior from the very outset of his *Passio*. In the dedicatory epistle he says that the monks of Ramsey had asked him to record the story: "ut mirabilium patratoris Eadmundi regis et matyris passionem litteris digererem."[145] At this stage, Abbo has not made it clear whether Edmund was a worker of miracles in life or only after death, but the label *rex et martyr* emphasizes his dual nature as king and saint. In Sulpicius's account, Martin's fellow-soldiers considered him more a monk than a soldier (*non miles, sed monachus putaretur*); Abbo makes Edmund king *and* saint, joining the two types into one master-type: the saintly king. This is much more in keeping with both Bede's and Alcuin's approaches to Oswald than Sulpicius's attitude toward Martin. The types of saint and soldier are not juxtaposed, as in the *Vita Sancti Martini*, but united and combined. Already in his introductory epistle, Abbo

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[145] M. Winterbottom, ed., *Three Lives of English Saints*, p. 67. "...that I would reduce to writing the Passion of the miracle-worker, Eadmund, king and martyr" (F. Hervey, *Corolla Sancti Eadmundi*, p. 7).

develops further his image of Edmund as king and saint. He tells how he set out to record Edmund's saintly character in response to the petitions of his hosts at Ramsey:

> Quorum petitioni cum pro sui reverentia nollem contradicere, posthabitis aliquantulum secularium litterarum studiis quasi ad interiorem animae phylosophiam me contuli dum eius qui uere phylosophatus est in throno regni uirtutes scribere proposui: maxime tamen eas quae post eius obitum saeculis inauditae factae sunt." [146]

The philosopher-king Abbo briefly describes here likely owes more to his preconceptions of the ideal king than to the story of Edmund he received from Dunstan, a fact he tacitly acknowledges when he stresses that he will record the king's posthumous abilities more than those he evidenced in his life. As Mostert says, "In the *Passio,* lack of knowledge about the historical Edmund inspired Abbo to insert [a] description of the royal virtues which Edmund ought to have possessed. In the prefatory letter he had already hinted at what we would find in the characterization of Edmund: the king was called--like others before him--a philosopher on the royal throne."[147] Abbo ends his introduction by referring to the acts of Edmund as those of a holy king, "sancti regis gesta," an epithet which, as noted earlier, is familiar from the secondary literature concerning the works of the Whitby Anonymous, Bede, and Alcuin, but which was actually used only by the latter two writers

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[146] M. Winterbottom, ed., *Three Lives of English Saints*, pp. 67-68. "I felt that I could not with due self-respect refuse their request, and therefore, postponing for the moment the study of secular literature, I betook myself as it were to the esoteric wisdom of the spirit, and undertook to describe the good deeds of the king, who addicted himself on the throne of his kingdom to the truest philosophy, but especially those which, unparalleled in the world's history, were wrought after his death" (F. Hervey, *Corolla Sancti Eadmundi*, p. 9).

[147] M. Mostert, *The Political Theology of Abbo of Fleury*, pp. 165-66.

and then only in referring to their subject after his death.[148] The concept of the holy king appears to have advanced since the Carolingian period, so that Abbo could use it to refer to Edmund both in life and after death. Abbo also uses the phrase in introducing Edmund within the body of the narrative, showing again that a king's holiness has now been extended to the period of his earthly reign: "huic prouinciae tam feraci ... praefuit sanctissimus deoque acceptus Eadmundus."[149] Edmund is most holy in life as well as in death. Abbo describes him in glowing terms, revealing the many elements of ideal kingship examined in detail by Mostert in *The Political Theology of Abbo of Fleury*. Saintly elements abound, but presented always as equally reflective of kingship as of sanctity:

> Nam erat ei species digna imperio, quam serenissimi cordis iugiter uenustabat tranquilla deuotio. Erat omnibus blando eloquio affabilis, humilitatis gratia precluis, et inter suos coaeuos mirabili mansuetudine residebat dominus absque ullo fastu superbiae. Iamque uir sanctus praeferebat in uultu quod postea manifestatum est diuino nutu: quoniam puer toto conamine uirtutis arripuit gradum, quem diuina pietas praesciebat martyrio finiendum. [150]

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[148] M. Winterbottom, ed., *Three Lives of English Saints*, p. 68. See note 70 above.

[149] M. Winterbottom, ed., *Three Lives of English Saints*, p. 70. "[O]ver this fertile province reigned the most holy, and, in God's sight, acceptable Prince Edmund" (F. Hervey, *Corolla Sancti Eadmundi*, p. 15).

[150] M. Winterbottom, ed., *Three Lives of English Saints*, p. 70. "He was in truth of a comely aspect, apt for sovereignty; and his countenance continually developed fresh beauty through the tranquil devotion of his most serene spirit. To all he was affable and winning in speech, and distinguished by a captivating modesty; and he dwelt among his contemporaries with admirable kindness, though he was their lord, and without any touch of haughtiness or pride. The holy [man] did indeed already carry in his countenance what afterwards was made manifest by God's will; since even as a boy he grasped with whole-hearted endeavour the ladder of virtue, the summit of which he was destined by God's mercy to reach by martyrdom" (F. Hervey, *Corolla Sancti Eadmundi*, p. 15-17).

In this description Abbo returns to a saintly trait, humility, that Bede associated with Oswine and Oswald but not with Edwin. Regal humility was a sign for Bishop Aidan that Oswine was not long for the world, although Bede also noted Oswald's humble respect for the Bishop: "eius admonitionibus humiliter ac libenter in omnibus auscultans."[151] As argued in Chapter Two, by displaying humility the king is behaving more like a saint than a king, just as Martin was more saint than soldier. To Bede, the holy king's particular virtue was humility. Piety and humility made a king saintly, but in Oswine's case the humility he showed was excessive. Oswald, the *rex victor*, joined his men in planting the cross before battle, listened humbly to the missionary bishop and translated for him to his assembled people, and freely distributed largesse, all without losing his regal stature, but the *rex humilissimus* lowered himself too greatly, not only by his too humble responses to his bishop but also by placing himself into the hands of a thegn who would eventually betray him. Like Bede, Abbo praises his holy king's humility, but he stresses it more fully, making Edmund truly *rex humilissimus* and not *rex victor*.

Abbo's method and the image of a holy king he presents differ markedly from Alcuin's treatment of his holy kings. Unlike Alcuin, who did not include humility among the major virtues of Edwin, Oswald, and Oswiu, Abbo presents Edmund's humility as a major sign of his saintliness. Alcuin also showed in detail Edwin's virtues before his

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[151] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, p. 336. "The king always listened humbly and readily to Aidan's advice" (L. Sherley-Price, trans., *A History of the English Church and People*, p. 145).

conversion and then added a second, less detailed description afterwards; Abbo in contrast provides a fuller description of Edmund's saintly qualities after he is crowned. The passage is interesting enough to be quoted in full:

> Nactus uero culmen regiminis, quantae fuerit in subiectos benignitatis, quante in peruersos districtionis non est nostrae facultatis euoluere qui eius minima quo conueniret sermone non possumus expedire. Siquidem ita columbinae simplicitatis mansuetudine temperauit serpentinae calliditatis astutiam ut nec antiqui hostis deciperetur simulatione fraudulenta, nec malignorum hominum reciperet contra iustitiam sententias, rem quam nesciebat diligentissime inuestigans; gradiensque uia regia nec declinabat ad dexteram, extollendo se de meritis, nec ad simistram, succumbendo uitiis humanae fragilitatis. Erat quoque egentibus dapsilis liberaliter, pupillis et uiduis clementissimus pater, semper habens prae oculis dictum illius sapientis: 'Principem te constituerunt? Noli extolli, sed esto in illis quasi unus ex illis.' [152]

The balance between antithetical concepts is familiar from Alcuin's portrait of Oswald, but Abbo carries the idea further. The combining of the contradictory traits of the dove and the serpent is, in Abbo's words, the *uia regia*, the king's way, a path of restraint.[153] The

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[152] M. Winterbottom, ed., *Three Lives of English Saints*, pp. 70-71. "How beneficent he was in relation to his subjects, when he had been raised to the throne, and how strict in dealing with wrong-doers, it is beyond my abilities to describe; indeed I could not in suitable language set forth even the least of his merits. It may be said that he so combined the gentleness and simplicity of the dove with the wariness and sagacity of the serpent, that he was neither deceived by the fraudulent pretenses of the old enemy of mankind, nor sanctioned the iniquitous sophisms of evilly-minded men. Any matter of which he was ignorant he would investigate with the utmost industry; and proceeding along the royal road, he deviated neither to the right with too exalted a notion of his own merits, nor to the left by falling a victim to the faults of human frailty. In addition, he was liberal in his bounty to those in want, and like a benignant father to the orphan and the widow. He ever kept in view the dictum of the wise man: 'Have they made you a prince? be not exalted, but be among them as one of them'" (F. Hervey, *Corolla Sancti Eadmundi*, p. 17).

[153] For discussion of Abbo's use of this phrase and use of the phrase in Abbo's own *Vita*, see Head, *Hagiography and the Cult of Saints*, 242 and n. 37; 253 and n. 88.

social values of kingship and the spiritual values of sainthood were admirably joined in Alcuin's Oswald, but for Abbo the stress instead lies with what he rejects: on the right hand the pride and haughtiness of the overbearing ruler, on the left the vices and shortcomings of the common man.[154] Mostert argues that, in this description, the "'royal' aspect of the royal virtues seems to concern itself rather with the avoidance of those vices to which those in power would be more prone than ordinary Christians, than with the furthering of positive virtues," but the failings of the left hand, "ad sinistram, succumbendo uitiis humanae fragilitatis," represent the vices to which ordinary Christians are prone.[155] Kings, in short, should avoid both the vices particular to their station and also those they share with common humanity. In this pairing of opposites Abbo creates a Christ-like role for the ruler, who must be above the failings of the common man but must as well lay down the majesty and glory of his high station to suffer indignity and death. Edmund should imitate the King of kings not just in glory but also in humility.

Edmund's discussion with his bishop about how to respond to the message from the Danish king Hinguar echoes scenes in Sulpicius's *Vita sancti Martini* and in Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica* sections on Oswald and Oswine. A comparison of the four similar

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[154] What connection there may be between this identification of the right hand of the ruler with royal virtues and vices and the fact that Bede, in portraying the death of Oswald, specifically identified the king's right hand as the appropriate trophy to be displayed as a symbol of victory alongside the king's head is not clear. Perhaps Abbo and Bede were drawing on a common tradition, or Abbo may have picked up the image from broader, popular Anglo-Saxon beliefs.

[155] M. Mostert, *The Political Theology of Abbo of Fleury*, p. 166.

encounters between a ruler and a bishop reveals a pattern of a steadily elevating spiritual status for the secular leader that culminates in Abbo's portrait of a king much holier than his bishop. This is one place in the *Passio Sancti Eadmundi* in which the topical echoes of Sulpcius's text are particularly evident. [156] As examined in Chapter One, Sulpicius showed the holy bishop Martin as a young soldier arguing with the Caesar Julian, his ruler, about the Christian's responsibilities in a combat situation. In a later scene not discussed earlier, he showed Martin as a bishop attending a feast with the emperor Maximus. Martin agrees to eat with him only after Maximus had assured him that he had never acted improperly in his rise to power and his defeat of his rivals. In response, Martin predicts dire consequences for the ruler if he should continue his war against his rival, Valentinian (Sulpicius xx.1-9). This passage, which reveals Martin's continuing opposition to war (or at least civil war) after his elevation to bishop, is reflected in Bede's scenes in which Bishop Aidan and the two kings, first Oswald and then Oswine, sit down together to eat, talk together about a king's proper behavior, after which the bishop makes a prophecy about the king's future, including comments about each ruler's sanctity. The changing relationships between bishop and king in these scenes is interesting. In Sulpicius's original scene, Bishop Martin represented saintly morality in contrast to Maximus's worldly pragmatism, and Martin's prophecy predicted defeat and death if Maximus continued in

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[156] Winterbottom cites only two verbal echoes from the *Vita Sancti Martini* (M. Winterbottom, ed., *Three Lives of English Saints*, pp. p. 70, n. 2/18; 71, n. 4/3), and none of these occur in the scene in question, but I refer to the larger situational or tropological similarities.

his present course. In Bede's first version of this scene, Bishop Aidan shared the position of saintly moralist with Oswald, for whom he predicted immortal life as a saint. In Bede's second version of a king's feast with the saintly bishop, Oswine at first represents pragmatic, earthly values when he chastises Aidan for giving away to a poor man the mare Oswine had given Aidan. Aidan, playing the part of saintly moralist, questions the king's view, criticizing him for placing more value on the horse than on the poor man in need. Yet by the end of the scene, after Oswine has humbled himself in front of the bishop, Aidan now takes the more pragmatic view and tearfully predicts that such a humble king would be too good for this world. In the final stage of this shifting hagiographic trope, Abbo shows King Edmund as the saintly moralist, rejecting the pragmatic advice and tearful prediction of his more-worldly bishop. First he describes the reactions of the king and bishop to the messenger's demand that Edmund submit:

> Quo audito, rex sanctissimus alto cordis dolore ingemuit, et ascito uno ex suis episcopis, qui ei erat a secretis, quid super his respondere deberet consulit. Cunque ille timudus pro vita regis ad consentiendum plurimis hortaretur exemplis, rex obstippo capite defigens lumine terras paululum conticuit.... [157]

Edmund shows his humility and an appropriate regard for the guidance of the Church in asking the bishop for his advice, but he is stunned by the concern the cleric expresses over

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[157] M. Winterbottom, ed., *Three Lives of English Saints*, pp. 74-75. "On hearing this, the saintly king groaned in profound grief of mind, and hailing one of his bishops, who was his confidential adviser, consulted with him as to the answer which was proper to be returned to the demands preferred. The bishop, alarmed for the safety of the king, used a number of arguments in favor of compliance; but the king, staggered by such advice, and fixing his eyes on the ground, was silent for a little while" (F. Hervey, *Corolla Sancti Eadmundi*, p. 25).

the preservation of the king's own life. To follow the path of Christ, Edmund feels he must abandon his concern for his own well-being. Abbo makes the king more saintly, more closely attuned to the model and message of Christ, than his bishop is.

Abbo also presents Edmund as acting more like a saint than an earthly ruler through the trope of the holy king's formal rejection of warfare. He first articulates his decision to lay down his arms when he tells his bishop that he wishes he could trade his own life for the lives of his people: "Et utinam impraesentiarum uiuendo quique gemerent ne cruenta cede perirent, quatinus patriae dulcibus aruis, etiam me occumbente, superstites fierent et ad pristinae felicitatis gloriam postmodum redirent!"[158] The bishop reminds him that such thoughts are vain, since those whom he would like to save are already dead. Instead he advises flight or, if that is impossible, surrender: "Habetatis securibus tuorum cadaveribus, te destitutum milite ueniunt loris constringere. Quapropter, rex, dimidium animae meae, nisi fugae presidio aut deditionis infausto patrocino praecaueas, hic statim aderunt tortores quorum nefando obsequio poenas lues."[159] The bishop calls on his king

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[158] M. Winterbottom, ed., *Three Lives of English Saints*, p. 75. "Would that those who now live in dread of perishing by a bloody death might be spared to survive amid the beloved fields of their country, even though I should fall, and that they might in course of time be restored to the brightness of their [original] prosperity" (F. Hervey, *Corolla Sancti Eadmundi*, p. 27).

[159] M. Winterbottom, ed., *Three Lives of English Saints*, p. 75. "Their axes are blunted with the slaughter of your subjects; you are left without a guard, and they will bind you fast with thongs. And therefore, my sovereign, dear to me as my soul, unless you seek safety in flight, or have recourse to the ill-omened alternative of surrender, I fear the tormentors will soon arrive, [for the consequences of whose commands you will pay the penalty]" (F. Hervey, *Corolla Sancti Eadmundi*, p. 27).

to avoid the fate that awaits him, predicting accurately Edmund's death, but in his prediction of Edmund's torture and murder he echoes the details of Christ's passion, who also was bound, tormented, and killed. Edmund decisively rejects the bishop's cautionary advice, comparing his choice of martyrdom to his former willingness to die in battle for his country: "[N]umquam relictae militiae probra sustinui, eo quod honestum michi esset pro patria mori; et nunc ero mei voluntarius proditor, cui pro amissione carorum ipsa lux fastidio."[160] Here Abbo presents Edmund's rejection of war as situational, not categorical, but even in this detail it resembles Martin's formal rejection of warfare, both in its similarity to Martin's statement, "[H]actenus ... militaui tibi, patere ut nunc militem Deo," and in Edward's willingness to show his courage by going into battle unarmed.[161] Motivated neither by fear or by a thorough-going pacifism, Edmund chooses to move upward on the scale of holiness, accepting death as a symbolic sacrifice for his people in imitation of Christ. He first tells the messenger, "Madefactus ... cruore meorum mortis supplico dignus extiteras; sed, plane Christi mei exemplum secutus, nolo puras commaculare manus, qui pro eius nomine, si ita contigerit. libenter paratus sum uestris telis occumbere"[162] At the end of his speech to the messenger, Edmund reiterates this intentional parallel between his own sacrifice and Christ's:

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[160] M. Winterbottom, ed., *Three Lives of English Saints*, p. 75. "Never have I earned the opprobrium of fleeing from the battlefield, realizing how glorious it would be for me to die for my country; and nowI will of my own free will surrender myself, for the loss of those dear to me has made light itself hateful" (F. Hervey, *Corolla Sancti Eadmundi*, p. 27).

[161] "'I have fought for you up to this point .... Now let me fight for God" (B. Peebles, ed. and trans., *Sulpicius Severus: Writings*, p. 108.

> "Sollicitas me spe regni, interfectis omnibus meis, ac si michi tam dira sit cupido regnandi ut uelim praeesse domnibus uacuis habitatore nobili et pretiosa supellectili. Vt coepit tua saeua feritas, post famulos regem solio diripiat, trahat, expuat, colaphis caedat, ad ultimum iugulet. Rex regum ista miserans uidet, et secum, ut credo, regnaturum ad aeternam uitam transferet. Vnde noueris quod pro amore vitae temporalis Christianus rex Eadmundus non se subdet pagano duci, nisi pius effectus fueris compos nostrae religionis, malens esse signifer in castris aeterni regis." [163]

Abbo develops the parallel between Edmund's death and Christ's through the description of the fate Edmund will share with his people (*post famulos regem solio diripiat, trahat, expuat, colaphis caedat, ad ultimum iugulet*). Edmund will become a *famulus* himself as *signifer in castris aeterni regis*, so that the servant (Edmund) will share the same fate as his Lord (Christ), just as Edmund the king will share the fate of his own followers.[164] It is

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[162] M. Winterbottom, ed., *Three Lives of English Saints*, p. 76. "Reeking as you are with the blood of my countrymen, you might justly be doomed to death; but to speak plainly, I would follow the example of Christ my Lord, and refrain from staining my pure hands; and for his name's sake, if the need arise, I am willing and glad to perish by your weapons" (F. Hervey, *Corolla Sancti Eadmundi*, p. 29).

[163] M. Winterbottom, ed., *Three Lives of English Saints*, p. 77-78. "You ply me with expectations of a continued reign, after the slaughter of all my people, as if I were possessed by so mad a lust of rule, that I could have the heart to reign over houses emptied of their noble inhabitants: their precious garniture. Let your savage ferocity go on as it has begun: after the subjects let the king be snatched from his throne, dragged away, spat upon, struck and buffeted, and finally butchered. The King of kings sees all that with compassion, and will, I am confident, translate the victim to reign with him in life eternal. Know, therefore, that for the love of this earthly life Eadmund, the Christian king, will not submit to a heathen chief, unless you first become a convert to our religion; he would rather be a standard-bearer in the camp of the Eternal King" (F. Hervey, *Corolla Sancti Eadmundi*, p. 31-33).

[164] The motif of reciprocal loyalty between a warrior and his lord, intrinsic to the Anglo-Saxon warrior code, and first articulated in the *Germania* of Tacitus, underlies this passage. Tacitus says, "On the field of battle it is a disgrace to chief to to be surpassed in courage by his followers, and to the followers not to equal the courage of their chief. And to leave a battle alive after their chief has fallen means lifelong infamy and shame" (H.

significant that Abbo presents Edmund holding out conversion to the Danish king as the only condition under which he would turn aside from his sacrificial resolve and submit to the invader. Whatever else Abbo may have added in his own development of the story, this idea is likely to have been a part of the received tradition, since it mirrors the historical Anglo-Saxon reliance on the conversion of Danish leaders as a strategy in peace-making (exemplified by Alfred's treaty with Guthrum after the Battle of Edington and Æthelred's attempt at a peaceful solution to the Viking invasion after the Battle of Maldon).[165] It is also consistent with the interests of the Christianized Danes of East Anglia whose veneration of Edmund could therefore be made to mesh with their own status as descendants of his murderers. Guthrum and others like him could represent themselves as correcting the tragic and sacrilegious mistakes of their predecessors by converting and honoring Edmund as a saint.

Abbo's description of Edmund's torture and death links him once again to Christ. First Abbo illustrates the king's "arrest" and interrogation:

> Tunc sanctus rex Eadmundus in palatio, ut membrum Christi proiectis armis capitur, et uinculis artioribus artatus constringitur, atque innocens sistitur ante impium ducem, quasi Christus ante Pilatum praesidem, cupiens eius sequi uestigia qui pro nobis immolatus est hostia. Uinctus itaque multis modis illuditur, ac tandem, fustigatus acri instantia perducitur ad quandam arborem uicinam. Ad

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Mattingly and S. A. Handford, trans., *The Agricola and the Germania*, p. 113). In this case, the leader is unwilling to outlive his dead followers, although Edmund, as a follower of Christ, is also stating his willingness to fall in the "same battle" as his Lord, resisting unbelievers and sacrificing himself for the faith.

[165] See Abels, "King Alfred's Peace-Making Strategies," for discussion of the former. I discuss the latter in an as yet unpublished article, "Advisors for Peace in the Reign of Æthelred Unræd "

> quam religatus flagris dirissimis diutissime uexatur, nec uincitur, semper Christum inuocando flebilibus uocibus. [166]

Abbo crystallizes the core trope of martyrdom in this passage: Edmund is one of Christ's members (*ut membrum Christi*), his weapons having been cast away (*proiectis armis*). The true follower of Christ does not win an earthly battle for his lord, but wins a spiritual battle by truly following Christ through self-sacrifice. Mostert and Wolpers discuss Abbo's placement of Edmund within the Carolingian tradition of the *corpus mysticum* in which king joined with priest, prophet and martyr as members of a greater body.[167] In one sense he is now a member of the body of Christ's servants, yet more importantly he has also become the arm or hand of Christ (unarmed, a hand carrying no weapon). Abbo's Edmund stands in stark contrast to Alcuin's Oswald, who *ut leo cum catulis crudelis ovilia vastat / et pecus omne ferus mactat manditque roditque* and leaves behind him *sanguineos campis rivos*. Alcuin and Bede modified the traditional *passio* by focusing more on Saint Oswald's life than on his death, giving more emphasis to his defeat of Cadwallon than his defeat by Penda; Abbo returns to the old style. Having summarized

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[166] M. Winterbottom, ed., *Three Lives of English Saints*, p. 78. "Then the holy King Eadmund was taken in his palace, as a member of Christ, his weapons thrown aside, and was pinioned and tightly bound with chains, and in his innocence was made to stand before the impious general, like Christ before the governor Pilate, and eager to follow in the footsteps of Him who was sacrificed as a victim for us. And so in chains he was mocked in many ways, and at length, after being savagely beaten, he was brought to a certain tree in the neighbourhood, tied to it, and for a long while tortured with terrible lashes. But his constancy was unbroken, while without ceasing he called on Christ with broken voice" (F. Hervey, *Corolla Sancti Eadmundi*, p. 33-35).

[167] T. Wolpers, *Die englische Heiligenlegende*, p. 145; M. Mostert, *The Political Theology of Abbo of Fleury*, p. 153.

briefly Edmund's life, he lingers long over his hero's death because it is there that the young king not only imitates but becomes mystically joined to Christ when, having past away his arms, he willingly dies as a sacrifice for his people. Alcuin can pass over the deaths of Oswald and Edwin because both will be followed by Christian kings who right the wrongs Northumbria suffered at pagan hands. To East Anglians and Christianized Danes alike, not further bloodshed but their unified faith in the cult of the martyred Edmund restored the balance upset by the violent actions of Hinguar and his followers.

Abbo was among the earliest continental writers to articulate the concept of the three orders of society, employed earlier by King Alfred in describing the component parts of a king's society and previously discussed in Chapter Two, but for Abbo the three orders were not peasants, warriors, and clerics, but laymen, clergy, and monks. He further divided the laymen into farmers and fighters, producing a four-fold rather than three-fold societal division.[168] Noticeably absent in his conception (and in those of other Frankish writers who discussed the orders of society) is the placement of the king above and outside the ordered hierarchy. As Powell aptly states in regard to the concept of the three orders of society, "Of particular significance is [Alfred's] introduction of the figure of the king--a role above and beyond those of the three orders."[169] In Abbo's conception, a king

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[168] See G. Duby, *The Three Orders*, p. 87-92; M. Mostert, *The Political Theology of Abbo of Fleury*, p. 88-107; Constable recently has refuted the exclusivity of a tripartite system, and as argued here, Abbo himself used a four-sided model, but Anglo-Saxon social theory seems to have been largely if not exclusively three-sided. See G. Constable, "The Orders of Society."

[169] T. Powell, "The 'Three Orders' of Society," p. 109.

like Edmund became a member of the highest order when he mirrored the purity of the monk by refusing to defend himself with arms, but more importantly Edmund and monk both became members of Christ by mirroring the self-sacrifice of the Lord. By accepting the role of passive victim, while at the same time professing actively the Christian method (*semper Christum inuocanda*), Edmund fulfilled Abbo's earlier description of the young prince's progression upward to the highest rank of virtue: "quoniam puer toto conamine uirtutis arripuit gradum, quem diuina pietas praesciebat martyrio finiendum."[170] Abbo closely links the rejection of arms to a spiritual progression very much like St. Martin's movement from more-monk-than-soldier to monk in truth, rather than to a spiritual transformation like Guthlac's that serves as a form of conversion. Since he had struck out on a new pathway to royal holiness, he naturally rejected the use of arms in favor of death in imitation of Christ.

Abbo also borrowed a *topos* from the *passio* of one of the major military saints of the early Church: Sebastian. The linking of his holy king not only to Christ but also to the soldier-martyr Sebastian reflects again the originality of Abbo's approach to warfare and sanctity developed in the tale of Edmund's martyrdom.[171] Abbo compares Edmund to

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[170] M. Winterbottom, ed., *Three Lives of English Saints*, p. 70. "[S]ince even as a boy he grasped with whole-hearted endeavour the ladder of virtue, the summit of which he was destined by God's mercy to reach by martyrdom" (F. Hervey, *Corolla Sancti Eadmundi*, p. 15-17).

[171] Sebastian was one of the best known military martyrs. Ælfric included the Passion of St Sebastian among his *Lives of Saints* (see the following chapter), and Sebastian appears in the *Old English Martyrology* as well.

Sebastian in regard to the manner of Edmund's execution, when he is tied to a tree and shot so full of arrows that he appears to be a hedgehog or pincushion:

> Quare aduersarii in furorem uersi quasi ludendo ad signum eum toto corpore sagittarum telis confodiunt, multiplicantes acerbitatem cruciatus crebris telorum iactibus, quoniam uulnera uulneribus imprimebant dum iacula iaculis locum dabant. Sicque factum est ut spiculorum terebratis aculeis circumfossus palpitans horreret, uelut asper herecius aut spinis hirtus carduus, in passione Sebastiano egregio martyri. [172]

Here is an instance where one would wish to know which parts of the account originate with Abbo, which with Dunstan, and which were already part of the tale told by the old retainer or of the early hagiographic tradition. Dorothy Whitelock says, "Abbo did not fail to comment on the similarity with St. Sebastian," implying that the comparison with Sebastian is Abbo's addition, but that need not be the case. [173] Certainly Dunstan would have known the story of Sebastian and could easily have made the connection himself. The underlying question concerns the accuracy of the description of Edmund's death. Did someone (whether Abbo, Dunstan, or some anonymous oral-hagiographer during the tale's period of oral transmission) alter the facts to fit the tradition of the soldier-saint, or did the two men die in a similar fashion, thereby causing hagiographers to link them?

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[172] M. Winterbottom, ed., *Three Lives of English Saints*, p. 78. "This roused the fury of his enemies, who, as if practicing at a target, pierced his whole body with arrow-spikes, augmenting the severity of his torment by frequent discharges of their weapons, and inflicting wound upon wound, while one javelin made room for another. And thus, all haggled over by the sharp points of their darts, and scarce able to draw breath, he actually bristled with them, like a prickly hedgehog or a thistle fretted with spines, resembling in his agony the illustrious martyr Sebastian" (F. Hervey, *Corolla Sancti Eadmundi*, p. 35).

[173] D. Whitelock, "Fact and Fiction," p. 220.

Whitelock says that she does not find "the account of the martyrdom incredible. The slaying of a prisoner by the Danes, using him as a target, can be paralleled by the martyrdom of St. Ælfheah in 1012."[174] Although Abbo mentions only the similar torments the two saints undergo, there are a number of other ways that the two martyrs are similar. Like Edmund, Sebastian had enjoyed high social status before his martyrdom, was renowned as a soldier but did not fight to save himself, desired to use his exalted position to help those beneath him, and also like Edmund he refused to use his high status to escape death. Most important to this study is that both men had been warriors before their deaths. According to Farmer, Sebastian purportedly "was a soldier who enlisted c. 283 at Rome, ... and was created a captain of the praetorian guards by Diocletian." [175] There is no way to know whether the comparison to Sebastian was part of the received tradition about Edmund, or whether Abbo, seeing similarities between them of status and position, interjected the comparison himself. Sebastian certainly was familiar to Anglo-Saxons. The image of Sebastian as full of arrows as a prickly hedgehog was available to Anglo-Saxons, both in the Latin originals and in this Old English translation, from around the time of Edmund's death onward. He appears in the *Old English Martyrology*:

> On þone twentigðan dæg þæs monðes [January] bið sancte Sebastianes tid þæs æðelan martyres, þone Dioclitianus se casere--he wæs hæðen --he het hine mid

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[174] D. Whitelock, "Fact and Fiction," p. 222. Smyth also accepts the manner of Edmund's death as essentially accurate (A. P. Smyth, *Scandinavian Kings in the British Isles*, pp. 201-13. Frank documents the hagiographic tropes, including specific verbal formulas, Abbo used to describe Edmund's death (R. Frank, "Viking Atrocity and Skaldic Verse," pp. 341-43).

[175] D. H. Farmer, *The Oxford Dictionary of Saints*, p. 429.

> strælum ofscotian, þæt he wæs þara swa full swa igl þæt deor bið byrsta, ond mid þy he hine ne mihte swa acwellan. þa het he hine mid strengum þyrscan oð þæt he his gast onsende; ond his lichoma wæs gebyrged æt Rome on þære stowe Catacumbe. [176]

Ælfric also translates the Latin *Passio* in his *Lives of Saints*. We will never know for certain if the images came to be attached to Edmund because of the way he was tortured or whether perceived similarities between the two saints caused this imagery to be attached to Edmund irrespective of the actual manner of his death. Just as similarities between Sulpicius's depiction of Martin refusing the donative of Julian can be traced to the tradition of military martyrs, the manner of Edmund's death connects him to the same tradition. Aspects of his death may also link him to other traditions related to the defeat and death of kings.

The specific details of Edmund's torment and death constituted parts of a ritual sacrifice to Oðinn, according to some scholars. After being pierced by innumerable arrows, Edmund is cut down and the *coup de grace* is administered in the form of beheading. Abbo's actual words have been construed in a number of different ways:

> Ille seminecum, cui adhuc uitalis calor palpitabat in tepido pectore, ut uix posset subsistere, auellit cruento stipiti festinus, auulsumque retectis costarum latebris praepunctionibus crebris ac si raptum equuleo aut seuis tortum ungulis iubet caput extendere, quod semper fuerat insigne regali diademate. [177]

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[176] "On the twentieth day of the month is the festival of the noble martyr St. Sebastian, whom the emperor Diocletianus--he was a heathen--ordered to be shot with arrows, that he was as full of them as a hedgehog is of bristles, and he could not kill him thereby. Then he ordered him to be beaten with sticks, until he gave up his ghost; and his body was buried at Rome in the place called the Catacombs" (*An Old English Martyrology*, pp. 26-27).

[177] M. Winterbottom, ed., *Three Lives of English Saints*, p. 79. "The king was by this time almost lifeless, though the warm lifestream still throbbed in his breast, and he was scarcely

Some scholars have taken this to be a description of a savage Viking torture known as the "Blood-Eagle" in which the image of an eagle was carved into the flesh of the back and/ or the lungs were actually pulled out of the victim's back through holes cut between divided ribs in order to form a crude semblance of wings, after or before which salt was rubbed into the wounds to cause added pain. The idea was most clearly formulated by Smyth, who argued that the ritual was intended to turn the victim into an offering to Oðinn.[178] Other examples from the same period are more reliably attested, especially the case of King Ælla of Northumbria, mentioned earlier in this chapter as one of two other kings killed during the same Viking invasion, who seems to have been tortured in this way by the same Hinguar (Ivarr) who oversaw Edmund's death. According to Roberta Frank, however, the idea is largely an invention of modern scholars:

> By the beginning of the nineteenth century, ... various saga motifs -- eagle sketch, rib division, lung surgery, and 'saline stimulant' -- were combined in inventive sequences designed for maximum horror. The past decade [1970s], apparently in order to include Kings Edmund and Maelguala [of Munster] among the blood-eagled, had expanded the basic torture to include fore-play (initial piercing with javelins or arrows), positioning (the victim lies face-downwards over a stone), and climax (beheading and death). The ceremony swells, accumulating preludes and

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able to stand erect. In this plight he was hastily wrenched from the blood-stained stem, his ribs laid bare by numberless gashes, as if he had been put to the torture of the rack, or had been torn by savage claws, and was bidden to stretch forth the head which had ever been adorned by the royal diadem" (F. Hervey, *Corolla Sancti Eadmundi*, p. 35).

[178] A. P. Smyth, *Scandinavian Kings in the British Isles 850-880*, esp. pp. 209-13. S. J. Ridyard, *The Royal Saints of Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 69, n. 250, provides a brief summary of Smyth's position and its counterarguments.

> sequels. History begins to acquire the narrative inclusiveness and brachiate structure of cyclic romance. [179]

Focus on this somewhat dubious claim for a bizarre torture ritual has obscured evidence of another, less speculative sacrificial pattern evident in Abbo's account of Edmund's death. The one element that Edmund's death most conspicuously shares with the hagiographic traditions of both Edwin and Oswald is the fragmentation of the king's body through decapitation, a subject discussed in detail in Chapter Two. If, as argued there, a king's severed head was an important symbol for both victor and vanquished, the choice of decapitation for Edmund's death might indeed be a ritual act:

> Cumque staret, mitissimus, ut aries de toto grege electus, uolens felici commertio mutare uitam saeculo, diuinis intentus beneficiis, iam recreabatur uisione internae lucis, qua in agone positus satiari cupiebat attentius: unde inter uerba orationis eum arrepto pugione spiculator uno ictu decapitando hac luce priuauit. [180]

Abbo reinforces the concept of Edmund's death as a sacrifice through the image of the "aries de toto grege electus." The beheadings of Edwin and Oswald appear to have occurred after the kings had fallen in battle, but it remains remarkable that all three were

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[179] R. Frank, "Viking Atrocity and Skaldic Verse," p. 334. Other articles by Frank on the subject include R. Frank, "The Blood-Eagle Again," and R. Frank, "Ornithology and the Interpretation of Skaldic Verse." Her views are partially rebutted in two articles by B. Einarsson, "Blóðörn--An Observation on the Ornithological Aspect," and B. Einarsson, "De Normannorum Atrocitate."

[180] M. Winterbottom, ed., *Three Lives of English Saints*, p. 79. "Then, as he stood in all meekness, like a ram chosen out of the whole flock, and desirous of hastening by a happy exchange this life for eternity, absorbed as he was in the mercies of God, he was refreshed by the vision of the light within, for the satisfaction of which he earnestly yearned in his hour of agony. Thus, while the words of prayer were still on his lips, the executioner, sword in hand, deprived the king of his life, striking off his head with a single blow" (F. Hervey, *Corolla Sancti Eadmundi*, p. 35-37).

purportedly subjected to such a similar ritual practice. The odd element in Edmund's case, however, is the fact that the head was discarded in the woods, rather than being taken and used as a trophy as the heads of Edwin and Oswald (and perhaps Penda as well) appear to have been. Abbo provides a rationale for the disposal of the head:

> Cuius corpus ita truncum et aculeis hirsutum relinquentes, cum suo auctore Dani, ministri diaboli, illud caput sanctum, quod non impinguauerat peccatoris oleum sed certi mysterii sacramentum, in siluam cui uocabulum est Haeglesdun recedentes asportauerunt, ac inter densa ueprium frutecta longius proiectum occuluerunt, id omni sagacitate elaborantes ne a Christianis, quos vix paucos reliquerant, sacratissimum corpus martyris cum capite pro tumulantium modulo honestae traderetur sepulturae. [181]

The idea that the Danes hid the head in the woods in order to frustrate the desire of the few remaining Christians to reunite the holy head (*illud caput sanctum*) with the body (*sacratissimum corpus martyris*) seems to imply either that the Danes understood already that Edmund would become holy through his death or that they knew that the East Anglians would consider the head of their king particularly sacred. The Danes are shown to be acting as the agents of the Devil (*ministri diaboli*), so Abbo may have felt that Edmund's sanctity was in a sense already known to them. If we take the story as a

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[181] M. Winterbottom, ed., *Three Lives of English Saints*, pp. 79-80. "The Danes, with their instigator, instruments of the devil, left his body mutilated, as has been described, and transfixed with javelins, while the sacred head, which had been anointed not with the oil of sinners, but with the sacramental chrism of mystery, was carried by them as they retired into a wood , the name of which is Haglesdun, and was thrown as far as possible among the dense thickets of brambles, and so hidden; the Danes contriving this with the greatest cunning, so that the Christians, but few of whom were left alive, should not be able to commit to such decent burial as their limited means of interment would allow, the sanctified body of the martyr conjoined with the head" (F. Hervey, *Corolla Sancti Eadmundi*, p. 37-39).

traditional tale told by East Anglians and Danes (rather than a literary construct by Abbo), the idea that the king's head would normally have a certain symbolic importance both to victor and vanquished becomes likely. Because the severing of the king's head would be expected to lead to its prominent display as a trophy, its absence when the king's body was discovered would take on great significance. The Danes' victory would appear more complete if the head of the king remained missing. The miraculous discovery of the head between the jaws of a wolf ends the sequence of parallels between Edmund and the earlier martyred kings. Not only is the wolf guarding the head, but the head itself is heard to call out, "Here, here," as the loyal retainers search for the missing member. This is a highly original form of the familiar trope of the miraculous discovery of the warrior-king's remains.

In addition to the fragmentation of the king's body, a number of other tropes from the martyred warrior-king tradition are employed by Abbo. One is the king's royal lineage, which he proudly declares, calling him "ex antiquorum Saxonum nobili prosapia oriundus" and "atavis regibus editus" (70).[182] Yet for Abbo noble birth does not alone create a king. The anointing of a ruler with chrism outweighed mere birth in sanctifying the holy king. A few tropes common to the tradition of holy kings do not appear in the *Passio Sancti Eadmundi*. Among these are the king's providential preservation through adversity and the providential expansion of the king's realm, neither of which is employed

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[182] M. Winterbottom, ed., *Three Lives of English Saints*, p. 70. "...sprung from the noble stock of the Old Saxons....[d]escended from a line of kings" (F. Hervey, *Corolla Sancti Eadmundi*, p. 15).

by Abbo, but a point-by-point examination of all possible similarities and differences between Abbo's treatment of his holy king and the tradition associated with Edwin and Oswald is not necessary. The most significant similarity between the cults of Edwin and Oswald and that of Edmund is the king's decapitation by his enemies, but in this case the head and body are rejoined so completely that the signs of separation miraculously vanish. The main trope related to the hagiographic tradition of spiritual transformation is the laying down of earthly arms itself, which, in keeping with that tradition, Abbo develops as not only a formal rejection of war but also as a change of status or a movement toward higher spiritual achievement. Yet, as Mostert and Head have previously discussed, Abbo presents a new rationale for Edmund's rejection of war which is consistent both with an ideal of kingship based on a reciprocal relation between ruler and ruled and with the central trope of martyrdom, the *imitatio christi*. The blending of the various Anglo-Saxon hagiographic traditions reaches a new level in Abbo's *Passio Sancti Eadmundi*.

The development of the tradition of Edmund's martyrdom in the years immediately following his death holds great interest, but the fact remains that the first detailed account of the life and death of Edmund was not written down until 985-987 and is therefore a hybrid, an Anglo-Saxon legend recorded by a Frankish monk which reflects both Anglo-Saxon and continental traditions of hagiography. Since Abbo was writing the *Passio* for Dunstan, to whom he attributes the story, we cannot doubt that it reflects, at least in broad outline, what he understood Dunstan to have told him. But Abbo's work is not a simple retelling of a tale; he brings to it, in the words of Michael Winterbottom, "the wider

horizons of the continent," employing all the rhetoric and style of a polished and educated Frank, quoting not only from important hagiographic models, but from classical authors like Virgil, Horace, and Persius. [183] In it he joined an Anglo-Saxon cult-story with important political overtones to a continental view of hagiographic tradition and the nature of kingship. Between the time that Alcuin wrote his poem on the saints of York and Abbo's day, the exaltation of kings by churchmen had been replaced by a profound distrust and a concern that kings were neither moral enough nor powerful enough to play the part of church protector and force for moral rectitude that Alcuin and his contemporaries saw (however misguidedly) in Charlemagne. In the life of Edmund, Abbo saw a higher form of kingship than that of his own day, and through his literary skills he created a unique and influential portrait of the king as Christ-like martyr for his people.

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[183] M. Winterbottom, ed., *Three Lives of English Saints*, p. 6.

Chapter Six: Ælfric and the Anglo-Saxon Holy Warrior

I

Not long after Abbo completed his *Passio Sancti Eadmundi*, the various Anglo-Saxon hagiographic traditions relating to soldier-saints and their royal counterparts, the martyr-kings, were drawn together, along with their sometimes contradictory messages about the relationship between warfare and sanctity, not in any single *Vita*, but in Abbot Ælfric of Eynsham's collection of saints' lives, Old Testament narratives, and homiletic works that is known today as the *Lives of Saints*.[1] Ælfric contributed more to Anglo-Saxon literature than any other writer of his own time, and he ranks with Bede as one of the most prolific writers of the Anglo-Saxon era as a whole. Like Bede, Ælfric wrote works of many types, although his main contribution lay not in history but in pastoral texts. He often used Latin (most notably in his *Life of St. Æthelwold*, one of the major

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[1] All quotations from the *Lives of Saints* (hereafter *LoS)* will be cited by volume and page number to Skeat's two volume edition, Ælfric, *Ælfric's LoS*. Translations are also Skeat's, except as indicated. Quotations and translations are usually presented as prose, in keeping with modern understanding of Ælfric's work as rhythmical prose and not poetry. For discussions of this issue see J. Hurt, *Ælfric*, pp. 125-37; G. H. Gerould, "Abbot Ælfric's Rhythmical Prose"; D. Bethurum, "The Form of Ælfric's *Lives of Saints*"; O. Funke, "Studien zur alliterierenden und rhythmischen Prosa"; A. McIntosh, "Early Middle English Alliterative Verse."

figures in the Benedictine Reform Movement in England), but the majority of his works are in Old English, indicating their popular, rather than primarily monastic, audience and their pastoral purpose. Alongside works on almost every significant aspect of religious life, Ælfric also wrote a wealth of hagiographic literature. Today the study of saints may seem a somewhat abstruse field, appealing only to the specialist, yet in Ælfric's day saints were considered a vital part of everyday life, and they represented one of the main foci for the common person's interaction with religion and religious institutions. The *Lives of Saints* is primarily a legendary, a collection of saint's legends. Through its narration of the lives of men and women whose exemplary conduct caused them to be entered into the communion of saints, the *Lives of Saints* presents a series of concrete lessons in the conduct of life for Christians of all ranks and stations of society. Written at a time when Anglo-Saxon society faced a devastating and seemingly unbeatable invasion by Viking marauders, Ælfric's vernacular legendary has much to say about violence and bloodshed and the proper Christian response to them.

This is not the first time that Ælfric's works have appeared in this study. In Chapter One, Ælfric's two lives of St. Martin culminated a study of that saint's varied representations in Anglo-Saxon literature. As argued there, although both of Ælfric's versions of Martin's *vita* represented accurately the original conceptions, tropes, and images in Sulpicius's *Vita Sancti Martini*, close analysis of the two texts showed that in the earlier of the two, the shorter life of Martin in the *Catholic Homilies*, Ælfric took a somewhat strident anti-militarist stance from which he drew back in the longer piece

contained in the *Lives of Saints*. Without an examination of the other, divergent threads in Anglo-Saxon hagiography to which Ælfric had access in writing his two Lives of Martin, it was impossible to explain except in very general terms what might have motivated Ælfric to write about the life of a single saint two stories that presented subtly different views of the relationship between warfare and sanctity. In this chapter it will now be possible to examine the *Lives of Saints* as a whole in light of the four hagiographic traditions analyzed in the preceding chapters: 1) the trope of the unwilling warrior's rejection of war; 2) the trope of the holy warrior-king's battlefield martyrdom; 3) the trope of spiritual transformation (both in its simple form of a warrior's transformation into a soldier of Christ and in its highly developed form of parallel transformations of earthly to spiritual warrior and of exile to holy king); and 4) the trope of the holy king's willing acceptance of non-violent martyrdom. The purpose of this chapter is to show how one man took elements from these diverse traditions and created from them and with them a composite work that responds to each of these tropes and creates a new synthesis. In the process, it will also be possible to explain more clearly the differences of perspective between Ælfric's earlier and later lives of Martin.

In the *Lives of Saints*, Ælfric achieves a complex fusion that has not always been fully appreciated. At its simplest level, the legendary presents a series of readings based on the Sanctorale, the yearly cycle of commemorations of the saints, particular to English monastic devotion. But unlike his two earlier projects, the first and second series of sermons known as the *Catholic Homilies*, this, his third major work, is more a

compendium for personal meditation than it is a public document intended for preaching. To present a parallel that may be useful to those already familiar with the major works of Anglo-Saxon literature, the two volumes of *Catholic Homilies* are similar in purpose and scope to the anonymous collection known as the Blickling Homilies: all three are cycles that present readings keyed to specific days in the church calendar. They are practical books for the priest concerned with his pastoral function, the care of souls. Somewhat coincidentally, the anonymous compiler of the Blickling Homilies and Ælfric both included short lives of St. Martin in their sermon cycles. The *Lives of Saints* is not quite as useful or practical a book. Although it also contains a yearly cycle of readings based on the church calendar, it shows a greater resemblance to the Vercelli Book than it does to the Blickling Homilies. In the Vercelli Book, an unknown scribe combined sermons like those found in the purely homiletic collections (such as some of the same works that appeared among the Blickling Homilies, including the anonymous Life of Martin, discussed in Chapter One, and the Guthlac homily analyzed in Chapter Four) with what we would term works of pure literature: poems like the *Dream of the Rood*, *Andreas*, and Cynewulf's *Elene*. What unifies the Vercelli Book (in so far as it can be termed a unity and not a random compilation of diverse elements) is the compiler's own theological concerns and interests. As Greenfield and Calder describe it, in contrast to the Blickling Homilies, the Vercelli texts do not "serve a liturgical purpose, but seem to have been collected by someone in a monastic setting to illustrate his personal interest in penitential

and eschatological themes and to glorify the ascetic life."[2] Ælfric's hagiographic cycle does not combine works of as great a diversity as the Vercelli Book (although it is, as we shall see, a much more diverse work than its modern name implies), but like it Ælfric's collection is a work for reading and meditation rather than for public liturgical performance, and its diverse contents reflect Ælfric's personal interests and concerns. It contains sermons useful for preaching, and it might be a valued and practical addition to the library of an individual or institution with pastoral duties, but the work as a whole is not primarily intended for use in a formal liturgical context.

The dedications of Ælfric's works reflect their differences of purpose: Ælfric dedicated both volumes of the *Catholic Homilies* to Archbishop Sigeric, indicating that he hoped that they would be used throughout the English church as an aid to preaching; the *Lives of Saints* he dedicated to two powerful ealdormen, Æthelweard of Wessex and his son Æthelmær, who would have used them for personal reading and meditation. As Peter Clemoes says, these are "not homilies for saints' days (although doubtless they were often used as such), but narrative pieces, each telling the story of some saint and intended for private or public reading at any time."[3] Based on his reading of the preface to the *Lives of Saints*, James Hurt has even suggested "that Ælfric had been giving single lives to

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[2] S. B. Greenfield and D. G. Calder, *A New Critical History of Old English Literature*, p. 74.

[3] P. Clemoes, "Ælfric," p. 181; in fact, not all the constituent texts in *LoS* are hagiographic narratives.

Æthelweard to read for some time before he gathered them into a set."[4] Just as Ælfric intended the collections of sermons to be used to instruct the laity in the Christian faith, he gathered these narrative pieces together for the edification and education of those of his fellow Anglo-Saxons who were not able to read them in their original Latin. The legendary is a cycle of texts based on the year, but at the same time it is a personal work with a definite pastoral purpose. It is of the utmost importance that the men to whom he wrote the Preface and for whom he translated its constituent texts were the lay leaders of a society at war. In the Latin preface he justifies his translation of Latin works in the vernacular by saying,

> Non mihi inputatur quod diuinam scripturam nostrae linguo infero, quia arguet me praecatus multorum fidelium et maxime æþelwerdi ducis et æþelmeri nostri, qui ardentissime nostras interpretationes Amplectuntur lectitando. [5]

The Old English preface addresses the lay members of his audience directly:

> Ælfric gret eadmodlice Æðelwerd ealdorman an ic secge þe leof . þæt ic hæbbe nu gegaderod on þyssere bec þæra halgena þrowunga þe me to onhagode on englisc to awendene . for þan þe ðu leof swiðost and æðelmær swylcera gewrita me bædon . and of handum gelæhton eowerne geleafan to getrymmenne . mid þære gerecednysse . þe eg on eowrum gereorde næfdon ær.[6]

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[4] J. Hurt, *Ælfric*, p. 60.

[5] "Let it not be considered a fault in me that I turn sacred narrative into our own tongue, since the request of many of the faithful shall clear me in this matter, particularly that of the governor [*ducis*] Æthelweard, and of my friend [*nostri*] Æthelmær, who most highly honour my translations by their perusal of them" (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. i, p. 5).

[6] "Ælfric humbly greeteth alderman Æthelweard, and I tell thee, beloved, that I have now collected in this book such Passions of the Saints as I have had leisure to translate into English, because that thou, beloved [*leof swiðost*], and Æthelmær earnestly prayed me for such writings, and received them at my hands for the confirmation of your faith by means

A major purpose of the *Lives of Saints* was to reassure these men that war was not forbidden to them, and that their actions on behalf of their kingdom and society were acceptable to God. To this end, Ælfric included the passions of military martyrs, the lives of two martyred warrior-kings, and frequent images of lay people achieving various degrees of holiness. In the process he distinguishes clearly between what he regarded the lawful, just use of force by Christians carrying out their functions as members of a Christian society, and the unlawful, unjust violence against which Christian soldiers could righteously defend.

Written over the period 992-1002, *Lives of Saints* was created during some of the darkest days of the second Viking invasion.[7] The disastrous Battle of Maldon, in which one of King Æthelred II's ealdormen was killed, took place in 991, and the records in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* for the next ten years reveal one such disaster after another. Christopher Brooke describes in a brief but cogent overview the problem the Anglo-Saxons faced during this period:

> The second wave of Danish attacks began, like the first, with plundering raids. But the attacks of the period 980-1016 differed fundamentally from those of the ninth century. From the early nine-nineties they became large-scale, highly organized raids, planned by the leading figures of the Scandinavian world, conducted by highly professional armies ... The first of the great leaders of the Vikings in the nine-nineties was Olaf Tryggvason, who came in the raid of 991

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of this history, which ye never had in your language before" (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. i, pp. 4-5).

[7] For the date of composition, see J. Hill, "The Dissemination of Ælfric's *Lives of Saints*," pp. 236, and 253, n. 9. See also P. Clemoes, "The Chronology of Ælfric's Works," p. 244.

> which led to the battle of Maldon ... Olaf shortly after became the first Christian King of Norway; but he never ceased to be a Viking adventurer. In 994 he came accompanied by Swein, heir to the throne of Denmark, at the head of a formidable host ... In most years after this, down to 1006, a Danish host attacked England and levied plunder or tribute -- the 'Dane-geld' -- or both. [8]

It should not surprise us to find that one major concern of a book written by a leader of the Church during this period would be the proper Christian attitude to warfare, the legitimate use of force, and illegitimate violence. More directly, more explicitly, and more completely than any of the other works presented in this study, *Lives of Saints* is a book about the relationship between warfare and sanctity.

Twice before in this study, we have seen how writers gathered together a set of narrative images, of repeating and repeatable tropes, into a single guiding idea, a central or main trope. Sulpicius Severus presented the period of Martin's youthful warfare using the trope of the unwilling, saintly warrior, although this guiding idea was not carried over fully into the *Vita* as a whole. There were echoes throughout the *Vita S. Martini* of the trope, but it remained particular to the author's treatment of the first panel in his three-part narrative of the saint's life. In the *Vita S. Guthlaci*, Felix also created a central trope, in this case of spiritual transformation, but Felix extended it beyond the borders of his introductory chapters through the use of a parallel transformation of the exiled Æthelbald into a holy king. A much greater portion of the elements in Felix's text grew out of this trope than in Sulpicius's. However, in neither case can every single detail of the *Vita* be explained by reference to its central trope. Abbo also used one major trope, of the holy

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[8] C. Brooke, *From Alfred to Henry III*, p. 59.

and saintly king, in his *Passion of St. Edmund*, that guiding the entire work. In the current instance, Ælfric drew together the works of many authors, adding, pruning, detailing, revising, and in the process he developed a guiding idea, a main, central trope of spiritual fulfillment. Yet here again, not every element in the text relates to Ælfric's primary trope. Since Ælfric's work is not a single narrative, but rather a collection of component texts of varying types, the guiding trope appears more strongly in some sections than in others. At times it appears within the component narratives as a series of repeating scenes, yet it also appears in direct statement within the homiletic texts. There also aspects of *Lives of Saints* as a whole that are not part of the central trope. In addition, there is strong evidence that Ælfric himself changed his attitude toward the question of warfare and a Christian's proper role in and response to it over the course of writing *Lives of Saints* and its various composite parts.

Like Sulpicius and Felix, Ælfric creates a guiding idea to serve as his main trope, and like Felix's use of the trope of spiritual transformation in two slightly different ways, Ælfric's trope also has two facets. In part it is a rejection of key aspects of the tropes of the unwilling, saintly warrior and of spiritual transformation, in what can be called a countertrope of spiritual fulfillment. Far from suggesting that the proper Christian approach to warfare was its rejection, or that earthly warriors in general should undergo a spiritual transformation into soldiers of Christ, Ælfric uses the idea of the division of society into different spheres, each necessary to the other, to present the warrior as equally capable as the cleric of achieving true Christian sainthood. Looked at in another way,

however, Ælfric's central trope is an embodiment of one of the most basic tenets of Christianity, the concept of the Trinity, of unity in tripartite diversity, as he applied it to society through the ideal images of sainthood. Sainthood came not through the rejection of the world and its earthly concerns but through the spiritual fulfillment of duty based on a three-fold division of society.[9] In this view, individual Christians are no longer called upon to go through a personal spiritual transformation in response to Christ's teaching: they are called instead to fulfill the roles into which God has placed them. This conception of society may be familiar to those who have studied the later Middle Ages, but in Ælfric's day it had a new, innovative quality to it.

In Ælfric's exposition of the trope of spiritual fulfillment, Christians will have varied responses to the dangers of the world because the world in which they lived was being torn apart by the violence of the Millennium, of the endtimes. The millennial context of *Lives of Saints* is clearly articulated in the Memory of the Saints, a non-narrative piece that many scholars believe served as an introduction to the book as it was originally structured:

> Nu on urum dagum on ende þyssere worulde . swicað se deofol digollice embe us ..... He wet nu swiðe and wynð on ða cristenan . forðan þe wat geare þæt þysre worulde geendung is swyðe gehende . and he on-et forði . [10]

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[9] Ælfric, like Alfred before him, divided society into three classes: laborers, fighters, and clerics. However, like Alfred he also considered the king to play a unique role, above the other three classes. The result is a nominally three-fold division that is actually more accurately described as four-fold. *LoS* is much more concerned with the proper duties of kings than it is with the responsibilities of the common, laboring classes.

[10] "Now in our days, in the end of this world, the devil secretly layeth snares about us ... Now he rageth furiously, and warreth on Christians, because he knows full well that this

Because of the dangers of the endtimes, Christians should act with special caution. They should identify and fulfill those destinies God has prepared for them: those in holy orders (the monks, nuns, clerics, abbots, abbesses, bishops, archbishops, etc.) have a set of appointed tasks they must fulfill; those in secular orders (warriors, thegns, judges, ealdormen, reeves, etc.) have their own set of tasks appointed; and the common, laboring classes (churls, serfs, the farm laborer or the workman, the cook or the servant girl) have their own proper spheres and concerns. In expounding his theory of the three orders, Ælfric states that there is a third "order" who also have their own tasks to complete, the "laboratores" whose physical labor was intended to support the other two groups, but in his working out of his ideas (in the *Lives of Saints* and elsewhere throughout his works) he actually identifies another order (or, in a special sense, another group of *individuals*) whose duties concern Ælfric very much: the exclusive category of kings. The result is a three-part division of society capped by a fourth "order' at its head.[11] Considered in terms of its intended audience, Ælfric's *Lives of Saints* is directed more toward the upper than the lower ends of this social order, despite the almost egalitarian quality of the three orders in the idea's verbal expression. Ælfric provides guidance for the "common man" in

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world's ending is very nigh at hand, and therefore he maketh haste" (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. i, pp. 352-53).

[11] In this four-sided social theory, Ælfric comes closer to the multitude of different numerical structures discussed by Giles Constable in G. Constable, "The Orders of Society." However, the formulation Ælfric actually articulates in *LoS* is the specific tri-partite structure examined in G. Duby, *The Three Orders*.

the *Lives of Saints* (mostly in the form of the general homilies on moral issues, but also in the exempla and vignettes involving common people that he included in many of the *vitae*, and even occasionally in the deaths of common people in the *passiones*), but he wrote his book for three groups of people: for Anglo-Saxon warriors, the ealdormen and thegns who make up the "secular orders"; for the monks and bishops and abbots, the "clerical orders"; and, whether directly or indirectly, for that unique class of men, the kings ... or, in particular, for his own king, Æthelred II. This audience orientation differs markedly from that of the *Catholic Homilies* which, as texts intended for pastoral use, would specify a wider societal spectrum as its audience, including the broad base of Anglo-Saxon society.

Few scholars have previously attempted a reading of the *Lives of Saints* as a single whole, and there are three very good reasons why this has been so. The first is a problem concerning the act of interpretation itself. Simply stated, the work is altogether too large and too diffuse to be easily interpreted in a single, unified reading. Any attempt to find a unifying idea in so thick and varied a book would itself require a book of interpretation. This problem is actually more apparent than real, however, since any single reading, even of the simplest work, risks overgeneralization. This reading will present an interpretation of one major aspect of *Lives of Saints*. The idea of a single, definitive, unified reading of a text, able to account for all of its details, is by nature a fiction, an impossibility. Secondly, there is the problem of source criticism and the nature of translation. Ælfric drew the many components of the *Lives of Saints* from a wide variety of sources, and his literary

task involved less composition than it did translation. However, the work as a whole cannot in any sense be regarded as a simple translation of any one text or even as a composite of many different, discrete translations. Ælfric varied his method in creating the *Lives of Saints*. Like the Vercelli Book, it combines elements of many different types; he is translating some segments directly from a single Latin work, compiling others from a variety of Latin texts, here summarizing, there cutting, and always revising, recasting, refiguring. The work is, in short, a source critic's fondest dream and worst nightmare: in one sense a quagmire of early medieval lore, filled with bits and pieces of the wisdom of the early church and society; and, in another sense, a limitless treasure drawn from a wealth of varied sources. The danger here lies in the critic's assumption of authorial purpose: since every phrase and idea may be drawn from some other source, no phrase can be assumed to be Ælfric's own, no matter how closely it may seem to express personal views, and despite the fact that every element contained in the text was placed there in its chosen form by Ælfric. Yet here again the problem is somewhat illusory. Ælfric chose the texts to translate, he performed personal acts of interpretation in translating and adapting them, and much of *Lives of Saints* is creative work, original to Ælfric. Ælfric borrowed from a host of other authors in creating *Lives of Saints*, but the resultant synthesis is his own. As if these two concerns were not daunting enough, there is finally the overriding problem of the text itself. Unlike the two volumes of *Catholic Homilies*, which are extant in copies very close to Ælfric's original, we simply do not have a version of the text that clearly represents the author's complete form. The manuscript closest to such an authorial

exemplar, British Library MS Cotton Julius E. vii, although probably transcribed during his lifetime, contains works not by Ælfric, and there is reason to believe that some elements contained in that manuscript are not in their originally intended order.[12] In addition, there are parts of the book that seem to be the author's own work but that may not have been part of the original plan, and there are other pieces by Ælfric not appearing in Julius E. vii that scholars have suggested as possible or even likely components of the original work [13] Here the problem is not at all illusory: the lack of a definitive text of *Lives of Saints* makes the task of interpreting it very difficult indeed. Questions about the collection's original or final form will guide much of the analysis that follows.

How then can someone hope to interpret a work of such size and diversity, a work created by means of such a varied methodology, and one that exists today in no clearly

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[12] For the date of Julius E. vii, see J. Hill, "The Dissemination of Ælfric's *Lives of Saints*," pp. 236 and 253-53, n. 10. See H. Magennis, "Contrasting Features," for the history of scholarship determining that four of the texts in Julius E. vii were not written by Ælfric. The most often cited example of items out of order in the manuscript is the placement of the Memory of the Saints in the midst of the manuscript, despite general scholarly agreement that its purpose seems to have introductory, for which see, for example, D. G. Scragg, "The Corpus of Anonymous Lives," p. 217; J. Hill, "The Dissemination of Ælfric's *Lives of Saints*," pp. 236, and 253, n. 9; P. Clemoes, "The Chronology of Ælfric's Works," p. 222 and n. 2; and P. Clemoes, "Ælfric," p. 205. For evidence tending to support its position in Julius E. vii as that of Ælfric's exemplar, see below p. 19.

[13] Skeat did not print the three items at the end of Julius E. vii (Twelve Abuses, False Gods, and a translation of Alcuin's *Interrogationes Sigewulfi presbyteri*) with *LoS*, because, in his words, they "do not form a necessary part of the Homilies on the Saints' Lives," although he acknowledges that "they were probably written by Ælfric, and at the same time, being added as an Appendix" (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. ii, p. ix and n. 1). The Life of St Vincent was included by Skeat in his edition of the *LoS*. See also A. A. Prins, "Some Remarks on Ælfric's *Lives of Saints*," for suggestions of other texts that may have formed part of Ælfric's exemplar of *LoS*.

defined form? The problem seems absolutely insurmountable. Is it any wonder that studies in the past have generally focused on only one or two of the collection's component texts at a time, or, when they have looked at the collection as a whole, have done so only in general terms or in regard to some relatively quantifiable element such as Ælfric's language, style, or his use of sources? Yet despite the severity of the problem, one can reasonably attempt a reading of the *Lives of Saints*. There is an underlying unity within the diversity of the text, and there is a discernible form and purpose guiding it. Ælfric's major trope of spiritual fulfillment does not permeate every line, every nuance, or even every major element in the work as a whole. The trope is evident, however, in what he includes in his book, and also, to an extent, in what he does not include. The trope underlies the work as a whole even though he joined together in his collection *vitae* that reflected radically differing conceptions of the relationship between warfare and sanctity, because Ælfric's concept of sainthood was itself eclectic. Ælfric drew together in uneasy combination the traditions of the "martyr-king" Oswald; the "peace king" Edmund; the "lay pacifist" Martin; traditional continental soldier-saints like Sebastian and the Forty Soldiers, Martyrs; and the non-Christian holy warrior Judas Machabeus, to name only a few. In a similar way Anglo-Saxon society as a whole was drawing together the disparate trends of rising lay sanctity among the aristocratic warrior class, belief in the justness of war against invading Norsemen, increasing clerical involvement in war, a sanctification of the role of kingship, and the growing ideal of the holy warrior-champion of Christ, somewhat uncomfortably yoked together with the continuing ideal of the holy martyrs and

their non-violent responses to violence and evil. From these contrary and often conflicting elements Ælfric evolved an ethos that might have become a new dominant Anglo-Saxon cultural norm, if Anglo-Saxon society itself had not been cut short by the Norman Conquest.

Ælfric presents a uniquely English concept of society, despite his inclusion of materials from many different periods and places within the collective body of the Latin West's hagiographic traditions. During the last century of the Anglo-Saxon era, there was a flowering of work of many kinds in the field of hagiography, including a number of the texts studied in the last five chapters. Under the influence of continental authors like Abbo of Fleury, English hagiography no longer diverged widely from continental values and tastes.[14] Most literary works of the last years of the tenth century and the beginning of the eleventh, both in Latin and Old English, continued to reflect the traditional, even, to a degree, orthodox split between warfare and sanctity, even though that division was belied by the widespread institutional accommodation of war by the church. Many clerics, both

[14] Other continental hagiographers who created works for an Anglo-Saxon audience include Lantfred, another monk from Fleury who taught at Winchester and wrote a Latin prose life of St Swithun, which Ælfric translated for his Life of St Swithun. Furthermore, as Michael Lapidge notes, "[I]n the tenth century, ... an Anglo-Saxon living abroad wrote a life of Archbishop Dunstan (d. 988), and the foreign scholar Abbo ... composed a *passio* of King Edmund of East Anglia ...; in turn, Abbo's English pupil Byrhtferth composed *vitae* of Bishop Oswald of Worcester and York (d. 992) and St Ecgwine, an early eighth-century bishop of Worcester who was founder of Evesham Abbey." This continental influence continued after Ælfric's time, when "the later eleventh century is characterized by the activities of professional hagiographers such as Goscelin and Folcard, both Flemish monks from Saint-Bertin, who went around England composing saints' lives on commission for various religious houses" (M. Lapidge, "The Saintly Life in Anglo-Saxon England," p. 254).

in England and on the Continent, had responsibilities that required them to be involved in war. In Ælfric's own time, bishops and abbots were members of the king's *witan*, and participated in the war effort.[15] In Anglo-Saxon England tension was growing between a system of values that held warfare and sanctity as utterly incompatible and the reality of secular and ecclesiastical cooperation in the waging of war. The *Lives of Saints* is Ælfric's attempt to reconcile the opposition to war reflected in the Martinian hagiographic tradition and the acceptance (and even glorification) of war expressed in the Oswaldian tradition.

As mentioned in previous chapters, English hagiography differed in two major ways from continental hagiographic traditions. The Anglo-Saxons never honored a native saint of the new type most clearly represented by Gerald of Aurillac: the holy lay nobleman, neither king nor martyr, who could wage war successfully and never renounce his secular responsibilities, and yet still could join the ranks of the sanctified. The Anglo-Saxons also continued to produce and venerate various types of holy kings not familiar to continental hagiographic traditions. In his *Lives of Saints*, Ælfric reflected on and modified both of these unique Anglo-Saxon traditions in his attempt to reconcile the contradictory traditions he had inherited. In the process, he made what might have been a significant contribution to the course of the history of ideas not just in England but throughout the Latin West, if the Anglo-Saxon society that produced him (and in whose

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[15] On clerical involvement in war, see in particular J. L. Nelson, "The Church's Military Service in the Ninth Century"; T. Powell, "Clerical Involvement in Warfare"; T. Powell, "The 'Three Orders' of Society," pp. 121-30; F. E. Prinz, "King, Clergy and War at the Time of the Carolingians." The role of clerics in Æthelred's war against the Danes is discussed in my unpublished, "Advisors for Peace in the Reign of Æthelred Unræd."

language his work was written) itself had not fallen victim to the organized violence of war. After the Norman Conquest his works continued to be read for awhile by a dwindling group of literate Anglo-Saxons, but it would be centuries before English would once again be the language of power, culture, and learning in its native land, and by then the language itself had changed so radically that only antiquarian scholars would have been able to read *Lives of Saints*.[16]

[16] *LoS* and Ælfric's other works continued to be copied, in whole or in part, in centers like Worcester, well into the twelfth century, but not beyond. J. Hill, "The Dissemination of Ælfric's *Lives of Saints*," pp. 243-45, lists eight twelfth-century manuscripts containing items from *LoS*, the latest being Cambridge, University Library MS Ii. 1. 33 (s. xii ^{2}) and Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Bodley 340 (s. xii^{2}).

II

To understand Ælfric's *Lives of Saints*, one must first consider its form. Most of the forty or so component texts of *Lives of Saints* are *vitae* or *passiones* of saints and martyrs. Ælfric included saints of many different types and from many different contexts. He combined native English saints like Æthelthryth and Swithun with the major figures of continental Christianity. In Martin he chose a major continental saint whose life he had already translated into Old English and whose Latin *vita* had produced a profound effect on Anglo-Saxon hagiography.[17] In translating the life of Oswald from Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica*, he reintroduced to his English-speaking audience a story previously available only as part of the longer work, whether in the original Latin or in the Old English translation produced during the period of Alfred's program of translations. In his translation of Abbo's *Passio Sancti Eadmundi* Ælfric broadened the audience for a brand new work, only recently written and newly disseminated in England. In addition to these works familiar from earlier chapters, he produced an Old English version of another Life drawn from Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica*, that of St. Alban, England's proto-martyr, who

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[17] As discussed in Chapter One, recent research by F. M. Biggs, "Alcuin: *Vita S. Martini*," and F. M. Biggs, "Ælfric as Historian," has shown that Ælfric relied heavily on Alcuin's "Scriptum de Vita S. Martini Turonensis," in his earlier Life of Martin, but turned to Sulpicius Severus's *Vita Sancti Martini Episcopi* for this longer Life in *LoS*. Biggs has also shown, however, that two different forms of Alcuin's work exist; unfortunately, this article appeared too recently for me to fully incorperate his findings into my analysis of Ælfric's two versions of the life of Martin.

would be regarded as a major soldier-saint during the later Middle Ages, and whose *Vita* has direct bearing on the issue of the relationship between warfare and sanctity. Ælfric also wrote three Old English Lives devoted to major continental soldier-saints, including St. Sebastian, Martyr; the Forty Soldiers, Martyrs; and St. Maurice and his Companions in the Theban Legion.[18] These texts all deal with men who once were soldiers but came to be regarded after their deaths as saints. There are aspects of many other works, including a Life of the royal saints Abdon and Sennes, a text on the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, an original composition on the division of society into warriors and clerics called the Prayer of Moses, and a translation of part of the Book of Kings, that have bearing on the issues under consideration in this study. Finally, the *Lives of Saints* also includes a long and very interesting text called the Passio Sanctorum Machabeorum, in which Ælfric recounts the wars of the Maccabees and treats Judas Machabeus and his relatives as holy warriors and

[18] Another important soldier-saint, St Mercurius, appears in the Life of Saint Basil, and Ælfric also provided a *vita* of St George, Martyr, but this future patron saint of England is not yet a soldier-saint in Ælfric's exposition. The transformation of the peaceful martyr George into the sword-wielding, dragon-slaying figure of later legends would make an interesting tale, but it is beyond the scope of this study. For a discussion of the version of the George legend Ælfric chose to translate, see J. Hill, "Ælfric, Gelasius, and St George." Although Hill shows that Ælfric deleted "circumstantial information introducing St George" that would have identified him as a "military commander," it would be unwise to suppose that Ælfric meant to suppress the fact that George had been a soldier, even though he does begin his Life of St George by saying that he had rejected the "gedwyld" (falsehoods) which others had written about him. In the *vitae* of Maurice, Sebastian, and others Ælfric never hesitates to state that they were soldiers or military leaders. He most likely had rhetorical and stylistic reasons not to begin the tale with background information but instead "to move quickly to the confrontation" with the emperor (J. Hill, "Ælfric, Gelasius, and St George," pp. 4-8).

martyrs. Taken as a group, these represent more than a third of the work as a whole.[19] In addition to the texts concerned with soldier-saints, holy warriors, and martyred kings, many of the other lives recount the passions of non-royal, non-soldier martyrs that display the responses of exemplary women and men to anti-Christian violence. There are also many shorter passages within the collection that relate to the issues raised in this study. Each of these sections contributes to Ælfric's articulation of his approach to the relationship between warfare and sanctity, and taken together these diverse segments reveal a guiding mind actively involved in the question of how individual Christians in various stations within society led lives devoted to God in a world filled with warfare and bloodshed.

The manuscript record must be carefully examined in order fully to understand the form of *Lives of Saints*. As mentioned earlier, the manuscript that comes closest to Ælfric's exemplar is Cotton Julius E. vii, which Skeat used as his copy text in creating the only modern edition of *Lives of Saints*. Without this single manuscript, the existence of a third series of Ælfric's works would be no more than an hypothesis, because Julius E. vii alone preserves Ælfric's Latin and vernacular prefaces to the collection. Ælfric had provided a pair of prefaces, the first in Latin and the second in Old English, for each of the volumes of *Catholic Homilies*, and he repeated this procedure in his new collection. He mentions the two earlier series, saying, "nam memini me in duobus anterioribus libris

[19] These statistics do not include the four non-Ælfrician texts in Skeat, nor do they consider the relative lengths of the various texts.

posuisse passiones uel uitas sanctorum ipsorum, quos gens ista caelebre colit cum uneratione festi diei."[20] Ælfric goes on to explain that in this book he will be presenting "passiones etiam uel uitas sanctorum illorum quos non uulgas sed coenobite officiis uenerantur."[21] Since these prefaces provide the sole evidence for the existence of a third book of Ælfric's work, a great deal of consideration must be given to these statements of the book's contents. Julius E. vii does indeed contain a wide selection of *passiones uel uitas*, and many of these honor relatively obscure saints whose feast-days would be celebrated by monks but not by the common people of England in the tenth and eleventh century. However, as noted above, *Lives of Saints* (or at least Julius E. vii) also contains a number of items that concern exemplary figures but are not, strictly speaking, saints' lives or the passions of martyrs, in particular a translation of part of the biblical Book of Kings, the Memory of the Saints, and the Prayer of Moses. Indeed some of the works in Julius E. vii are neither narratives nor concerned with saints at all, for example a sermon for Ash Wednesday, another on Auguries, and the last three items in the manuscript, concerning the Twelve Abuses, False Gods, and the Questions of Sigewulf (a series of questions and answers on the Book of Genesis by Alcuin).[22] To complicate the problem,

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[20] "For I call to mind that, in two former books, I have set forth the Passions or Lives of those saints whom that illustrious nation [England] celebrates by honouring their festival" (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. i, pp. 2-3).

[21] "[T]he Passions as well as the Lives of those saints whom not the vulgar, but the monks, honour by special services" (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. i, pp. 2-3).

[22] As noted above, n. 10, Skeat did not consider the last three items to be part of *LoS* and therefore did not print them in his edition.

four non-Ælfrician items were attached to *Lives of Saints* at some point in its transmission: accounts of the saints Eustace, Euphrosyne, Mary of Egypt, and the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus. [23] Scholars are therefore presented with a problem: should the author's preface be used as the primary guide in determining the form of Ælfric's exemplar? If so, quite a few of the items in Julius E. vii would seem not to fit within the definition of *passiones etiam uel uitas sanctorum illorum quos non uulgas sed coenobite officiis uenerantur*. Or should the existing manuscript be given primary weight in reconstructing Ælfric's exemplar? If so, the three items excluded by Skeat (Twelve Abuses, False Gods, and Questions of Sigewulf) would be returned to the corpus. There is also the related matter of Ælfric's main source. Patrick Zettel first discovered, and scholars since have confirmed, that Ælfric translated almost all of his *passiones uel uitas* from a Latin hagiographic collection closely related to an existing pair of manuscripts called the Cotton-Corpus legendary.[24] Was his original intention to provide a vernacular version of this collection? If so, a number of items in Julius E. vii would appear to be out of place there. Hill has highlighted the problem:

> By contrast with some of Ælfric's own items, the four items not by Ælfric harmonize with the collection's hagiographic intent particularly well, in being outright saints' lives. Furthermore, even though the surviving recensions of the Cotton-Corpus legendary do not suggest that their authors used this legendary's narratives as their immediate sources, recensions of the sources of the Seven Sleepers, Mary of Egypt, and Eustace are in the collection as we know it and could have been in the collection as Ælfric knew it. Thus, although their presence in Julius E. vii flies in the face of Ælfric's desire to have only his own work included,

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[23] See note 10 above.

[24] P. H. Zettel, "Ælfric's Hagiographic Sources."

> one can argue that, in terms of subject matter and for three of them in terms of hagiographic context, they do not disturb the fundamental nature of the collection as much as some of Ælfric's texts do. [25]

Few scholars would take the radical stance of eliminating items from *Lives of Saints* based on a strict reading of Ælfric's preface, nor would any be likely to argue for including instead the four non-Ælfrician items, but Hill goes along tacitly with Skeat's decision that the Twelve Abuses, False Gods, and the Questions of Sigewulf were not part of the original collection. The contents of *Lives of Saints* definitely remain open to question.

Even the exact number of items within the extant version of *Lives of Saints* remains unsettled. Both Skeat and the scribe of Julius E. vii numbered them 1-39; however, the two numbering systems are not identical. [26] Wanley in his description of the manuscript numbered the parts of Julius E.vii, including each separate item as a separate text, 1- 48, leaving unnumbered the final text, *De xii. Abusiuis*, indicated in the list of contents but no longer extant in the manuscript, which would make a total of forty-nine texts in contrast to Skeat's and the scribe's counts of thirty-nine.[27] In addition, research has conclusively shown that four texts in Julius E.vii are not by Ælfric: Mary of Egypt, the Seven Sleepers, St. Eustace, and St. Eufrasia.[28] This would result in somewhere

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[25] J. Hill, "The Dissemination of Ælfric's *Lives of Saints*," p. 242.

[26] See J. Hill, "The Dissemination of Ælfric's *Lives of Saints*," p. 241, Table 1.

[27] Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. ii, pp. viii-ix.

[28] See note 9 above for the history of scholarship determining that these four texts were not written by Ælfric.

between thirty-five and forty-five Ælfrician texts within *Lives of Saints* as a whole.[29] Scholars have also at various times argued for the inclusion of more than one extant saint's life known to be Ælfric's in the original legendary.[30] There is some sense to the idea that, based on the forty-text form of the first two series of Ælfric's work, *Catholic Homilies I & II*, the intended number of items in *Lives of Saints* was also forty, but this remains no more than a strong possibility given the state of scholarship on the work today.

Despite the problems posed by its contents, Julius E. vii remains the best evidence for the intended form of *Lives of Saints*, but it is not the only evidence available. Twenty-five manuscripts preserve parts of Ælfric's collection, although none approaches the authority of Julius E. vii. Of these, seven contain only a single item from *Lives of Saints* and therefore provide no information about the ordering of items in Ælfric's original collection. In most of the manuscripts, pieces from *Lives of Saints* are interspersed with other works by Ælfric or anonymous works, but Hill's study of the dissemination of the pieces in *Lives of Saints* reveals that certain groups of texts circulated in identical order to their appearance in Julius E. vii, thus confirming that these circulated as a group and validating the Julius E. vii order.[31] A set of binding fragments now preserved in

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[29] For a recent discussion of the composition of *LoS* see J. Hill, "The Dissemination of Ælfric's *Lives of Saints*," pp. 236-242.

[30] See note 10 above.

[31] In addition to the items detailed above, the order of the following pairs or groups are confirmed by one or more manuscripts in addition to Julius E. Vii:

SS Julian and Basilissa - St Sebastian
St Agnes - alia sententia (Gallicanus) - St Agatha - St Lucy - Chair of St Peter
Ash Wednesday - Prayer of Moses

Bloomington, Indiana, and Queens' College, Cambridge, provides particularly important evidence to support the ordering of items in Julius E. vii as that of the author's exemplar. Based on the existing strips, the original manuscript of which they formed a part preserved the order in Julius E. vii from St. Apollinaris to the *Passio Machabeorum* without the two Non-Ælfrician lives of the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus and St. Mary of Egypt. This evidence confirms what should already be obvious: that Ælfric originally circulated the series without the interpolated texts. Hill describes the importance of these fragmentary strips: "The fragments come from the *Catholic Homilies* and from the *Lives of Saints*, but it seems likely that the homilies and saints' lives were written out in two ordered sets and were kept separate, and that the surviving strips showing lives of saints were once part of a very early, whole set"[32] From such small clues the form of *Lives of Saints* must be reconstructed. One other interesting point that can be gleaned from Hill's study of the dissemination of material from *Lives of Saints* concerns the Memory of the Saints, the work most often considered out of order in Julius E. vii.[33] The positioning of the Memory of the Saints in Julius E. vii is actually exceptionally well documented in other

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St Mark - item alia (Four Evangelists) - Memory of Saints - On Auguries
St Alban - item alia (Ahitophel) - St Æthelthryth
St Apollinaris - SS Abdon and Sennes - item alia (Abgarus) - [non-Ælfrician Seven Sleepers and Mary of Egypt missing] - Ist Maccabees - item (2nd Maccabees) - item alia (Four Orders of Society)
St Maurice and the Theban Legion - St Dionysius

[32] J. Hill, "The Dissemination of Ælfric's *Lives of Saints*," p. 245.

[33] See note10 above.

manuscripts. It appears after St. Mark and the piece appended to it on the Four Evangelists in two manuscripts (Julius E. vii and Cambridge, University Library MS Ii. 1. 33) and before On Auguries in three manuscripts (Julius E. vii, University Library Ii. 1. 33, and Oxford, Bodleian Library MS, Hatton 116). Thus two other extant manuscripts testify to its position in Julius E. vii, and nowhere does it appear in an initial position. One other piece of evidence tends to support the order of items in Julius E. vii as authorial (excluding the non-Ælfrician pieces), but to understand it one must turn to evidence not collected by Hill, since in her study she does not include the items from the end of Julius E. vii that Skeat also rejected for his edition of *Lives of Saints*. For data on the positioning of those three items (Twelve Abuses, False Gods, and the Questions of Sigewulf), one must turn to John Pope's supplemental collection of Ælfric's homilies, among which he includes False Gods.[34] In his study of the dissemination of these items, Pope describes a manuscript (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 303) in which a large section of *Lives of Saints* items appears:

> The end of the volume, articles 62-73, is dominated by selections from the *Lives of Saints*, including the appendix partly preserved by Skeat's manuscript, Cotton Julius E. vii .... [A]rticles 62, 67, 68, 70-72 are all represented in Skeat's edition. Articles 63, *De Duodecim Abusivis*; 65, *De Falsis Diis* ... ; and 66, *Interrogationes Sigewulfi*, are all listed in the table of contents of Julius E. vii, though only the *Interrogationes* and part of *De Falsis Diis* remain and Skeat did not include any of them. Two other articles, readily associated with these, are by Ælfric: his homily on Judith, ... and *De Doctrina Apostolica* .... The remaining article, not by Ælfric and different in kind from the rest, consists of Latin and OE forms of excommunication. [35]

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[34] Ælfric, "De Falsis Diis," in Ælfric, *Homilies of Ælfric: A Supplementary Collection*, vol. ii, pp. 667-724.

[35] Ælfric, *Homilies of Ælfric: A Supplementary Collection*, vol. i, p. 19.

Combining this information with Hill's itemization of the other *Lives of Saints* items in CCCC 303 provides the following order of *Lives of Saints* and related items:

Item #	Work (items marked * non-Ælfrician; + indicates items not in Julius E. vii)
47	On Auguries
*	
62	Memory of the Saints
63	Twelve Abuses
64	Apostolic Doctrine+
65	False Gods
66	Questions of Sigewulf
67	Ash Wednesday
68	Prayer of Moses
*	
70	*item alia* to St. Alban (Absalom and Achitophel)
71	Holy Maccabees (Parts 1 & 2)
72	*item alia* to Holy Maccabees (Three Orders of Society)
73	Judith+

Three sections follow the exact order of Julius E. vii (False Gods - Questions of Sigewulf; Ash Wednesday - Prayer of Moses; Holy Maccabees 1 - Holy Maccabees 2 - Three Orders of Society). More importantly, this grouping as a whole associates a number of the non-hagiographic items from Julius E. vii.

An hypothesis concerning the original form of *Lives of Saints* can therefore be articulated based on the evidence presented above (and confirmed by material to be presented below): Ælfric's exemplar of *Lives of Saints* consisted of all of the items in Julius E. vii (except, of course, the non-Ælfrician items), including the three "appended" items rejected by Skeat. In addition, the authorial text probably included one or more of

the items marked + above, all of which are associated with a group of non-hagiographic works that Ælfric added to *Lives of Saints* late, as his conception of his third book changed from a purely hagiographic collection to a book of mixed items intended for the moral instruction of the laity and having as its special concern the question of Christian duty in a time of violence and warfare.

It is somewhat difficult to give a straight statistical analysis of the proportion of constituent texts within *Lives of Saints* dedicated to saints who came from the class of *bellatores*, because, as discussed above, the total number of units within the book as a whole is open to debate. Forty is as logical a number to use as a probable base as any other number between thirty-five and forty-five, and can be conveniently used as a relatively neutral, round number. The texts within these forty specifically devoted to the sainthood of one or more members of the order of *bellatores* include:

1) SS Julian and Basilissa [36]
2) St. Sebastian [37]
3) Forty Soldiers [38]
4) Prayer of Moses [39]

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[36] Julian is called *þegn* and *æþelan cnihte* (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. i, p. 90). Julian later becomes an abbot, but, like Martin, he is originally a *bellator*.

[37] Sebastian is a *ðegn* and *ealdre ofer an werod* (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. i, p. 116).

[38] They are called collectively *cempena* (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. i, p. 238).

[39] Ælfric calls Moses a *heretoga* (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. i, p. 282), but shows him acting like an *orator*, going up on the mountain to pray while Joshua goes to fight against Amalek, acting as the *bellator*. Ælfric tells the same story in the fragmentary text known as *Wyrdwriteras us secgað ða ðe awritan be cyningum* in Ælfric, *Homilies of Ælfric: A Supplementary Collection*, pp. 725-33. The roles of Moses and Joshua correspond to those of David and his *heretoga* Ioab, Constantinus and his heretoga

5) St. George [40]
6) St. Alban [41]
7) Maccabees [42]
8) Maurice and the Theban Legion [43]
9) St. Martin [44]
10) Chrysanthus and Daria [45]

Gallicanus, Gratianus and his heretoga Theodosius, and Theodosius the Younger and his unnamed *heretogan*, although he does not use the term *heretoga* in the lines concerning Moses and Joshua. Perhaps the term *heretoga* as it appears in *LoS* Prayer of Moses indicates for Ælfric the beginning of a division of leaders into two types, Moses the type of the clerical *orator* and Joshua the type of the warrior *bellator*. A careful reading of the Old Testament might indicate the division of the leadership of the Israelites into clerics and warleaders at this point in the Exodus, just as the first king Saul appears in *I Samuel 10.1*. In *Exodus* Chapter 28: 1 Moses's brother Aaron is named the first of the priestly class. Before that division, the three orders of society could not have existed, therefore both Moses and Joshua would be heretogas, divided into two classes by their actions during the battles against Amalek.

[40] George is called *rice ealdorman* (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. i, p. 320).

[41] Alban is never labeled by a class, but he was never baptized, and puts on the cloak of a cleric to hide the priest the soldiers have come to find and kill, and, as described above, pp. , Alban's executioner, the *soðfæstan cempan*, is sanctified with Alban at the time of his death.

[42] Mattathias is *þægn* (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. ii, p. 81) and Judas is an *ealdor* (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. ii, p. 84). Ælfric specifically explains that at that time Israel had no king.

[43] They are called an *eorod* (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. ii, p. 158), *þegn* (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. ii, p. 162), and *þægnas* (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. ii, p. 162).

[44] Ælfric calls Martin's father a *cempa* and cempena ealdor (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. ii, p. 220), and identifies Martin with common soldiers: mid þam folclicum cempum (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. ii, p. 222), efen-cempan (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. ii, p. 222), folclican campdom (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. ii, p. 226), and cempum (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. ii, p. 226).

By this count, a quarter of the texts (eight of a postulated forty) specifically focus on members of the class of *bellatores*.[46] Ælfric identifies three of the main figures in these narratives (Julian, Martin, and, less clearly, Moses) as becoming *oratores*, although he represents their change of status not so much a transformation as a fulfillment of God's plan for His chosen saints.[47] This overlapping of the categories *bellator* and *orator* in a few cases does not diminish the substantial proportion of *Lives of Saints* devoted to members of the order of *bellatores* who achieved sainthood without changing status. Members of the order of warriors could clearly reach sanctity, in Ælfric's view, whether through fulfillment of the duties of a *bellator* or through following God's plan in advancing into the ranks of the *oratores*.

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[45] Chrysanthus is an *æðelboran man* (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. ii, p. 378) and a *cristenen cniht* (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. ii, p. 386).

[46] Another major segment of the *LoS* that features a bellator in a saintly role but which is not assigned to a date and is not counted as a separate item by either the Julius scribe or Skeat, is the *alia sententia* that follows Agnes. In it Gallicanus, a *heretoga*, is converted by the apostles John and Paul and, after a life spent fulfilling his duties as Christian and *bellator*, is banished by Julian the Apostate and "wende siððan to westene and wæs ðær ancra oð þæt sum hæðen-gylda hine ðær ofsloh for þan þe he nolde þam fulum godum geoffrian and he swa sige siþode to criste" (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. ii, p. 192).

[47] None of Ælfric's *bellatores* exhibits the characteristic turbulence, fear, and rejection of past life evident in Guthlac's personal choice to undergo spiritual transformation. The question of whether an Old Testament figure like Moses can be regarded as a saint is somewhat clarified in *LoS* by Ælfric's presentation of the Maccabees as saints. Surely if the deaths of Eleazar the *boccere* and the mother and her seven sons in the first section of Maccabees can be commemorated by a date just like other martyred saints, Moses would be a chosen follower of God, a confessor, and a sort of Old Testament saint.

Other groups are also systematically included in the *Lives of Saints*.[48] More texts show oratores (in which group I include the apostles) who become saints than *bellatores*: some 30%, including Basil, Julian and Basilissa, Maur, Chair of St. Peter, Mark, Swithun, Æthelthryth, Apollinaris, Denis, Martin, Thomas, and Vincent.[49] Kings appear in saintly roles in five texts (Edmund, Oswald, Book of Kings, Exaltation of the Cross, and Abdon and Sennes). There are no saintly *laboratores* in *Lives of Saints*, although there are non-hagiographic works describing proper Christian attitudes for men and women of all stations that could be taken as aimed at this third "order." These include the Nativity of Christ, Ash Wednesday, Memory of the Saints, Auguries, Twelve Abuses, False Gods, and the Questions of Sigewulf. To exclude these non-hagiographic texts from the hypothesized original plan of *Lives of Saints* would be to presuppose a given purpose to the book and then to crop the evidence to fit it. Their presence in the Julius manuscript provides concrete evidence that Ælfric intended his work as a guide for holy living for people of all stations, including the common women and men at the bottom rungs of society as well as the thegns, ealdormen, and kings in the upper levels. Although it may never be possible to establish anything near a definitive version of the *Lives of Saints* as its author originally constituted it, the evidence supports a reconstruction that includes

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[48] Although immaterial to the present study, Ælfric dedicates some 18% (7 of the hypothetical 40 constituent texts) of *LoS* to virgins (Eugenia, Julian and Basilissa, Agnes, Agatha and Lucy, Æthelthryth, Cecilia, Chrysanthus and Daria), although this number also reflects some overlap with the group of soldier-saints, since Chrysanthus and Julian both qualify as both *bellatores* and virgins.

[49] I include Vincent, following the hypothetical inclusion of that text in Ælfric's original legendary, although, as noted above, it does not appear in Julius E. vii.

hagiographic and non-hagiographic items in a collection not so much of the lives of saints as of models for living aimed at all the varied component parts of Anglo-Saxon society, with special attention to the highest ranks.[50] Eric John argues, "The *Lives* were for a more select audience [than *Catholic Homilies*] because it was not fitting that many should be translated into English, 'lest the pearls of Christ be held in disrespect' [I. 3]. This does not mean that Ælfric had a purely monastic audience in mind. He was writing for an elite that would not include all monks, and would include Aethelweard and Aethelmaer."[51] Ælfric kept his focus sufficiently broad that he could include moral instruction for Christians of all stations, but his main concern was for the three highest orders: clerics, kings, and warriors.

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[50] Hill argues, "Notwithstanding the mixture of items that we have in Julius E., vii, there is no mistaking Ælfric's fundamental intention, since he carefully explains in the Old English preface that, having included in the *Catholic Homilies* "þæra halgena þrowunga and lif þe angel-cynn mid freols-dagum wurþað," the present book is to be "be þære halgena ðrowungum and life ... þe mynster-menn mid heora þenungum betwux him wurðiað"("Dissemination," 242). I read the Preface slightly differently, since the earlier books did not exclusively present the lives of those holy men and women whom the English people honor, the present book is not necessarily limited to the lives of those saints honored by "mynster-menn." There can be no doubt that the majority of what we call the *Lives of Saints* did concern the stories of holy men and women; that it contained nothing else is a conclusion based on a very thin line of support. I strongly disagree with Hill's line of reasoning that the four non-Ælfrician items, "although their presence in Julius E. vii flies in the face of Ælfric's desire to have only his own work included, ... in terms of subject matter and for three of them in terms of hagiographic context, they do not in fact disturb the fundamental nature of the collection as much as some of Ælfric's texts do" (242).

[51] E. John, "The World of Abbot Ælfric," p. 302.

There is evidence in Ælfric's Latin preface that he may have been working on another book at the time he was translating and compiling items for *Lives of Saints*. After mentioning his first two books, and discussing his intentions in compiling *Lives of Saints*, Ælfric goes on to explain his plans for future work:

> Non mihi inputetur quod diuinam scripturam nostrae lingue infero, quia arguet me praecatus multorum fidelium et maxime æþelwerdi ducis et æþelmeri nostri, qui ardentissime nostras interpretationes Amplectuntur lectitando; sed decreui modo quiescere post quartum librum A tali studio, ne superfluus iudicer. [52]

The mention here of a fourth book (*quartum librum*) presents an intriguing problem, for a number of reasons. It could mean that Ælfric regarded *Lives of Saints* as his fourth book, with some unidentified book intervening between it and the two volumes of *Catholic Homilies*. It could also mean that he was working on or was planning a fourth book that included translations of sacred text (*diuinam scripturam nostrae lingue infero*). A. Prins has given attention to the problem, especially from the perspective of whether Ælfric went on to break his word again not to continue translating biblical texts, since he had already stated once before at the end of *Catholic Homilies II* his intention to stop the practice.[53] Prins's solution to the problem is to suppose that, "in saying 'sed decrevi modo quiescere post quarum libro a tali studio', Ælfric refers to a work he had promised already

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[52] "Let it not be considered as a fault in me that I turn sacred narrative into our own tongue, since the request of many of the faithful shall clear me in this matter, particularly that of the governor [ealdorman] Æthelweard, and of my friend Æthelmer, who most highly honour my translations by their perusal of them; nevertheless I have resolved at last to desist from such labour after completing the fourth book, that I may not be regarded as too tedious" (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. i, pp. 4-5).

[53] A. A. Prins, "Some Remarks on Ælfric's *Lives of Saints*."

beforehand and had actually in hand at the moment."[54] Prins identifies this fourth book as "*Translations from the Old Testament*," meaning the Ælfrician material printed by Crawford in *The Old English Version of the Heptateuch*, in the preface of which he also stated his intention not to continue translating divine texts.[55] This evidence still leaves a group of Old Testament translations unaccounted for, however, if we assume the contents of *The Heptateuch* as edited by Crawford and of *Lives of Saints* as printed by Skeat to be complete and authoritative. The two items left over after the third and fourth books would be homilies on Esther and Judith (the latter appearing in CCCC 303, as discussed above), both of which would seem to belie his intentions to stop biblical translation. Ælfric apparently did originally intend to write two distinct books, one of saints' lives and passions, the other of Old Testament narratives. However, as the two projects evolved, he appears to have found that certain Old Testament items fit better into the first collection, as sermons on Old Testament subjects, rather than straight translations like those in *Translations from the Old Testament* (*Translations from the Old Testament*).[56] Prins goes on to identify three items that might originally have formed part of *Lives of Saints* but became detached from it: Book of Judges (which appears in Crawford's *The*

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[54] A. A. Prins, "Some Remarks on Ælfric's *Lives of Saints*," p. 119.

[55] A. A. Prins, "Some Remarks on Ælfric's *Lives of Saints*," p. 80.

[56] Prins's title seems more appropriate for Ælfric's fourth book than *The Heptateuch*, since Ælfric clearly states that he translated only up to the story of Isaac. A better title than *Lives of Saints* for the third book might be *On Moral Living*, since much of the core material is not hagiography.

Heptateuch), Esther, and Judith. Prins presents as evidence certain features of Judges that distinguish it from the remainder of *Translations from the Old Testament*, such as its absence from "the earliest complete manuscript of Ælfric's version of the Old Testament," its distinct treatment by the scribe of the manuscript in which it was included, and the prologue and doxology to the piece, which are typical of *Lives of Saints* and not of *Translations from the Old Testament*. He concludes, "*The Book of Judges* might well have been translated by Ælfric in close connection with his translation of the Book of Kings contained in the *Lives of Saints*."[57] For Esther, Prins cites its doxology, and for Judith he points to its appearance with *Lives of Saints* material in CCCC 303 and its introductory words and its epilogue, which is incomplete (121). He concludes:

> All this would seem to point to a very close connection of these three works (*Judges*, *Esther*, and *Judith*) with the *Saints' Lives*, which might lead us to inquire whether, perhaps, we ought to see in (two of) these sermons the (two) articles which would be required to bring the number of *Saints' Lives* up to 40 (or more), for like the *Catholic Homilies*, the *Lives* may have contained additional items. [58]

Although the attempt to match or exceed a count of forty seems doomed to failure, since so many items are grouped together and may or may not have been separate in the original form, the argument for including one or more of these items in *Lives of Saints* deserves some further investigation.

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[57] A. A. Prins, "Some Remarks on Ælfric's *Lives of Saints*," p. 120.

[58] He also quotes similar conclusions reached by the unnamed author of an imprecisely identified "Cambridge History of English Literature" (A. A. Prins, "Some Remarks on Ælfric's *Lives of Saints*," p. 121. and n. 2).

The hypothesis followed in the remainder of this chapter will be that Ælfric was indeed working on two books at once, and that, in mid-course (perhaps even after issuing a first version of *Lives of Saints*), he changed his plan for the two books and radically revised the structure of *Lives of Saints*, blending into it a variety of works pertinent to his thematic concerns but not to his original conception of a book of *passiones etiam uel uitas sanctorum illorum quos non uulgas sed coenobite officiis uenerantur*.

Evidence for stages of revision in *Lives of Saints* abound.[59] The scribe's table of contents in Julius E. vii does not list a number of items that form part of the collection because they are attached, often under the rubric *item alia*, to other texts, and there are other indications that items were added to texts or that texts were expanded after they were initially written. For example, a passion of St. Lucy, Virgin, follows a similar text on St. Agatha. Since the collection as a whole follows the cycle of the year (except for those items not associated with any specific date), the position of these two texts indicates that St. Agatha's *passio* (proper to Feb. 5) belongs at this spot, while Lucy's *passio* (appropriate to Dec. 13) would belong at the end of the volume if chronology were the only or primary organizing principle of the collection. Ælfric begins St. Lucy with a direct link to the end of St. Agatha, so it is clear that the two texts were intended to follow one another. It may be, as Michael Lapidge has suggested, that Ælfric left intentional gaps in his yearly calendar of saints' lives because of the potential overlap of such feasts with the

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[59] Some scholars see evidence of a revision of Ælfric's other works. See, for example, M. R. Godden's comments in Ælfric, *Ælfric's Catholic Homilies: The Second Series*, vol. i, pp. xx-xxi; and P. Clemoes, "The Chronology of Ælfric's Works," pp. 227-33.

major feasts of the *temporale*, and therefore that Lucy's position in December would conflict with the feasts of Advent:

> These gaps are readily explicable in liturgical terms. The gap in April is explained by the fact that Easter with all its attendant feasts normally falls at that time (the outer termini being March 22 x April 18);[60] that in late May and early June by the fact that Ascension and Pentecost normally fell then, with the latest possible limit being June 13; and the feasts of Advent fall in early December. In other words, these apparent gaps in Ælfric's *sanctorale* are explicable in terms of feasts of the interconnected *temporale*. [61]

Lucy's feast breaks the pattern of omissions Lapidge identified for the period of Advent, in which there is "no feast in early December, the earliest being that of St. Thomas on the 21."[62] This could account for his inclusion of the story of Lucy's death in a position other than its normal place in the cycle. Nonetheless, Ælfric's inclusion of the story at all implies that liturgical considerations, although important, were not his only concern. As M. R. Godden has pointed out, the nature of a saint's life or passion bears a different relationship to doctrine than does a homily or sermon:

> Saints' lives ... are essentially narratives, and their engagement with doctrine, if any, is necessarily more oblique [than the *Catholic Homilies*]. Purely as narratives their characteristic kind of "meaning" is exemplary: at a literal or symbolic level,

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[60] In a private communication, Sigmund Eisner disagrees with Lapidge's calculations. According to Eisner, the range of Easter is March 22 to April 25, and during the ninth and tenth centuries Easter fell on April 19 in 968 and 1047; on April 20 in 979 and 990; on April 21 in 995, 1000, and 1017; on April 22 in 960 and 1033; on April 23 in 976; on April 24 in 967; and on April 25 in 1014. Eisner adds, "According to the Council of Nicaea in 325, Easter was fixed as falling on the first Sunday after the first full moon after the equinox, which was March 21 in 325," citing Ulrico Hoepl, *Chronologia* (Milan, 1969).

[61] M. Lapidge, "Ælfric's *Sanctorale*," p. 119.

[62] M. Lapidge, "Ælfric's *Sanctorale*," p. 119.

> the saint represents a pattern of life that reflects on the lives of others. That is the kind of reading that Ælfric suggests in his later [than the *Catholic Homilies*] homily on the commemoration of the saints, and a passing comment in a still later homily shows him drawing parallels between the sufferings of the saints in the time of the early persecutions and the resistance to Viking pressures in his own time. [63]

Ælfric selected saints' lives for inclusion in *Lives of Saints* for the examples they provided, more than for their role in Christian theology and liturgy. His desire to include Lucy's passion, which features a young woman valiantly resisting violent oppressors, overrode his concern to keep the period of Advent open for the feasts of the *temporale*, yet his liturgical concerns appear to have dictated that he place it out of its normal yearly cycle. Other additions are less easy to explain.

Additions to texts in *Lives of Saints* are of many different types. Of least significance is a short piece on St. Macarius that appears attached as an *item alia* to Ælfric's account of the miracles of St. Swithun. The purpose of the added section is to warn that visions and dreams can often be caused by devils and sorcerers. Lapidge briefly examines the liturgical questions raised by its position, but then reverts to Pope's view that "the piece about Macarius was added to the Swithun life simply as a caution against trusting in false illusions created by magicians." [64] Hill points out that in the manuscript the Macarius section follows a "formal homiletic conclusion" to the Swithun text that "an

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[63] M. R. Godden, "Experiments in Genre," p. 265. The first reference is to Memory of the Saints in *LoS*. For the second reference, Godden cites Ælfric, *Homilies of Ælfric: A Supplementary Collection*, vol. 2, pp. 528-43. This is Homily xiv, for the sixth Sunday after Pentecost. **[Still must add specific reference to lines and text!]**

[64] M. R. Godden, "Experiments in Genre," p. 128, n. 23; Ælfric, *Homilies of Ælfric: A Supplementary Collection*, vol. 2, pp. 786-98.

eleventh-century corrector marked ... for transposition to the end of the Macarius narrative," and she adds that "in this, as also in other instances, Skeat follows the corrector."[65] It seems likely that Skeat and the "eleventh-century corrector" were following Ælfric's intentions, and that the Macarius item should actually appear as a part of the Life of St. Swithun. The corrector may have been following a corrected version of *Lives of Saints* when he made his transposition marks. A more significant example of additions to texts in *Lives of Saints* is the pairing of a Passion of St. Alban with an Old Testament narrative concerning David's son Absalom and his evil counselor Achitophel. Ælfric created the passion of Alban, England's proto-martyr, from Bede's account of Alban's death in the *Historia Ecclesiastica.* The *item alia* retells the story of David's rebellious son, but it is not so much an Old Testament translation as a homily on the dangers of thieves and traitors using the story of Absalom and Achitophel as its primary exemplum. The main item seems to have nothing to do with the text attached to it: the story of St. Alban includes no thematic link with the attached material like that shared by Swithun's many dream visions and Macarius's warning against false visions, and they share no obvious situational or structural similarities like those linking Agatha and Lucy. Here it would seem is a clear sign of authorial expansion of a collection of saints' lives and passions into a collection of exemplary pieces on the proper Christian life. Looked at in the broadest sense, there is some rationale behind linking the two accounts. Alban, although not baptized, showed such loyalty to a persecuted priest he had taken into his

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[65] J. Hill, "The Dissemination of Ælfric's *Lives of Saints*," p. 240.

home that he donned the priest's clerical robes, took on his identity, and died nobly in his place, and he was joined in death by a man who was supposed to execute him but who chose instead to be martyred with him. Absalom the atheling coveted his father's place as king and chose to rebel against him, and the councilor Achitophel betrayed his lord and became advisor to the rebellious prince, so that by such treason and covetousness both gained ignominious deaths. The first item contains positive examples of loyalty and a spiritual transformation; the second shows negative examples of disloyalty and a fall from grace and position. Again, thematic connections emerge when the additions are considered, and the character of the collection as a series of exemplary texts and items of moral instruction is highlighted.

The most significant example of this phenomenon involves the *Passio Sanctorum Machabeorum*, a text rubricated for August 1 and included in its proper position in the yearly cycle. Although stemming from what are today known as the apocrypha, and technically involving Jewish martyrs rather than Christians, this *passio* appeared in the *Old English Martyrology* as a feast for August 1, and therefore could be considered a traditional, if somewhat idiosyncratic, passion. Hill identifies features that make it unusual within the collection:

> Its characteristic title of *Passio Sanctorum Machabeorum* suggests that it could be read as if it were a hagiographic narrative .... Yet it is something of an oddity: it is an Old Testament paraphrase, there is no source for it in the Cotton-Corpus legendary [Ælfric's primary source], and it is long -- far too long to be adopted as a preaching text as it stands and too long perhaps even for reading at one time, as Ælfric seems to have acknowledged in writing in the opportunity for a break at Skeat XXV, 204/205. [66]

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[66] J. Hill, "The Dissemination of Ælfric's *Lives of Saints*," p. 250.

The break Hill indicates is highly significant for an understanding of the text and its role in *Lives of Saints*. The first section (to Skeat l. 204), concerns the Maccabean martyrs Eleazar and the unnamed mother and seven sons from II Maccabees, vii. Only this part of the text was normally called the *Passio Sanctorum Machabeorum*., this section alone is covered by the *OEM* entry, and it alone pertains to August 1. The second, and considerably longer section (Skeat ll. 205-811) is given the rubric *item*, and the end of the first section and the beginning of the second show signs of a tentative conclusion and a subsequent resumption of writing. Ælfric concludes the story of the Maccabean martyrs proper saying, "Þyssera martyra gemynd is on hlaf-mæssan dæg . swa wide swa godes þeowas godes þenunge gemað . Manega halgan wæron under moyses . æ . ac we nabbað heora gemynd mid nanum mæsse-dæge butan þyssera gebroðra þe swa bealdlice ðrowodon."[67] This ending places the material within the context of the original conception of *Lives of Saints* as a collection of *passiones uel uitas*, but what follows after the rubric *item* clearly steps beyond that format: "We wyllað eac awritan hu þæt gewinn ge-endode . and hu se ælmihtiga go þa arleasan affligde mid mylcre sceame . swa swa us

[67] "The commemoration of these martyrs is on Lammas day, as far and wide as God's servants pay heed to God's service. Many saints were (there) under Moses' law, but we hold not their commemoration on any mass-day, except of these brethren, that so boldly suffered" (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol.ii, p. 78-81). This passage confirms that Ælfric distinguished between Christian saints and the exemplary figures of the Old Testament.

sægð seo racu" (II. 80).[68] He then introduces the central characters of the second section and their relationship to what had gone before:

> Mathathias wæs gehaten sum heah godes þægn , se hæfde fif suna ful cene mid him . an hatte iohannes . oðer symon . ðridda Iudas . feorða eleazarus . fifta ionathas . binnan hierusalem ; þæs bemændan sarlice mid swyðlicre heofunge . þæt hi swylce yrmðe gesawon on heora lif . and noldon abugan to ðam bysmorfullan hæðen-scipe. [69]

This section provides a lesson applicable to the high king's thegn Æthelweard and his son Æthelmær on the proper response to violent oppression by heathen enemies, but it would be out of place in a book of those passions and lives of saints celebrated by monastic communities. In one of the few studies of the significance of the Maccabees to writers and their audiences during the period of Ælfric, Jean Dunbabin describes how, for Wipo, chaplain of the court of Henry III, writing in the year 1046, "the Maccabees were the archetypes of heroic warriors, and ... he expected his audience to be as familiar with their exploits as he was himself." [70] To Ælfric also the Maccabees were heroic, even holy

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[68] "We will also write how that contest ended, and how the Almighty God put to flight the impious ones with mickle shame, even as the narrative tells us" (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. ii, p. 81).

[69] "A certain high servant [þegn] of God was named Mattathias, who had five sons, full bold one, with him. One was named John; ascend Simon; a third -- Judas; a fourth -- Eleazar, a fifth -- Jonathan, within Jerusalem, who bemoaned sorely with vehement mourning that they saw such distress in their life, and would not submit to the reproachful heathendom" (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. ii, pp. 80-81).

[70] J. Dunbabin, "The Maccabees as Exemplars," p. 31. Dunbabin notes that "Wipo was clearly concerned with Mattathias and his sons, not with the Maccabean martyrs, whose fate was described in *II Maccabees*, vii, and whose feast was kept on 1 August" (p. 31, n. 1).

warriors, but he seems not to have expected his own audience to know their story. Dunbabin discusses both the debate over the canonicity of the two books of Maccabees, and the Carolingian interest in them which was reflected in "an extensive and influential commentary" by Rabanus Maurus. The three levels of meaning Rabanus elaborated for the Maccabees included the allegorical, in which their story became "a parable of the Christian Church's struggles against its enemies." [71] Dunbabin comments:

> By his contemporaries, Rabanus' commentary was perhaps more admired than understood. But it certainly popularized a story which had, for readers of the later ninth and tenth centuries, all the elements of a topical best-seller. How Matthias and his five sons faced oppression, led Israel through massacres, sieges, and battles, and finally triumphed, the very stuff of high adventure, was easily transposed into the world they knew. So, when Rabanus had endorsed it as morally improving, its currency in the more educated circles of later Carolingian society was assured. [72]

Whether Ælfric became aware of the potential of this story through the commentaries of Rabanus or his pupil Wahlafrid Strabo, or whether he independently saw their significance to his own society at war and the men charged with fighting it, there can be no doubt that he included their story, at great length and after repeated additions and addenda which will be described later, as part of a program for the "moral improvement" and enlightenment of his audience.

Almost as significant as what Ælfric included in his collection is what he chose not to include. The one major native soldier-saint that Ælfric did not include in his legendary

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[71] J. Dunbabin, "The Maccabees as Exemplars," pp. 30-31.

[72] J. Dunbabin. "The Maccabees as Exemplars," p. 32.

was saint Guthlac, a fact that provoked comment in my study of that saint's *vitae* in Chapter Four. Many other readers have noted and commented on Guthlac's absence from the *Lives of Saints*. For example, Zettel in his dissertation on Ælfric's saints' lives and the Cotton-Corpus legendary performed a detailed analysis of the relative gradation of the saints appearing in twelve Pre-Conquest graded English calendars, assigning each feast ten points for an appearance at first class in a specific calendar and five for an appearance at second class dignity.[73] The result was a number between one hundred twenty (first class in all twelve calendars) and fifteen (the lowest score he records), with a high score indicating high likelihood for inclusion among Ælfric's saints' lives if relative importance was the primary motivating factor for inclusion. His results show that, for feasts with high rankings, Ælfric did provide lives within *Lives of Saints, Catholic Homilies I, Catholic Homilies II*, or among the unassigned Ælfrician homilies, with only a few prominent exceptions. Within the ranks of the top forty, only five saints do not appear in Ælfric's corpus: Mattathias, scoring 110; Augustine of Canterbury, scoring 80; Edward King and Martyr, scoring 65; and Dunstan and Guthlac, both scoring 35. In his own analysis of noteworthy omissions to Ælfric's corpus, Lapidge notes the absence of Mattathias (among many others), and finds "the omission ... striking."[74] Lapidge also argues, "Possibly St.

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[73] P. H. Zettel, "Ælfric's Hagiographic Sources," pp. 73-79. Zettel explains in detail the system for the grading of feasts. Various markers were used at different times and in different places, but the concepts of first, to a lesser degree second, and only in the later periods third class dignities remained fairly stable over time. Particular saints would be more highly honored in certain churches than in others, reflecting local cultic practices.

[74] M. Lapidge, "Ælfric's *Sanctorale*," p. 120.

Dunstan (who died in 988) and King Edward (who was killed in 978) were omitted because their status as saints was too recent a phenomenon, and their cults were not yet established nationally at the time Ælfric was writing."[75] Lapidge comments on the remaining two saints on Zettel's list as a pair, saying, "[Ælfric's] omissions of Augustine, the first arch-bishop of the English (whose role as leader of the successful Gregorian mission to convert the English will have been known to Ælfric from the pages of Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica*) and Guthlac (whose saintly life was well known from Felix's *Vita S. Guthlaci*) are [not] easily explicable." [76] Mary Clayton also discusses the absence of Guthlac from among Ælfric's saints' lives:

> The eremetic saints are not accorded great prominence in the English calendars, but even in Zettel's count we should expect Guthlac to figure in the *Lives of Saints*. There is no *vita* of Guthlac in the Cotton-Corpus legendary, Ælfric's principal hagiographic source collection, but the work was certainly available in late Anglo-Saxon England, and vernacular versions of it circulated as well as the Latin text: while we cannot be sure whether or not Ælfric knew the *vita*, he had plainly read more than was available in the Cotton-Corpus collection and his knowledge of the Guthlac text seems reasonably probable. [77]

Clayton's own conclusion to the mystery of Guthlac's exclusion is based on her reading of Ælfric's views on the active and contemplative ways of life. According to Clayton, Ælfric broke with tradition in not according higher honor to the contemplative life than to the active. Guthlac's choice of the life of the hermit would therefore account (at least in part)

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[75] M. Lapidge, "Ælfric's *Sanctorale*," p. 121.

[76] M. Lapidge, "Ælfric's *Sanctorale*," p. 121.

[77] M. Clayton, "Hermits and the Contemplative Life," p. 162.

for his exclusion from Ælfric's corpus.[78] Clayton's argument is an interesting one and accords well with my own hypothesis (stated at the end of Chapter Four) that Ælfric, like the *Guthlac A*-poet, might have found Guthlac's life as an exile *frecnessa fela* and inappropriate in a book of readings for laymen. Ælfric repeatedly states in his prefaces his concern that some ideas, however orthodox and biblically-based, might nonetheless become a source of error when encountered by untutored laymen. Zettel, Lapidge, and Clayton state very well the case for viewing Guthlac's exclusion from Ælfric's works as an anomaly; however, there is one way in which Clayton actually understates the anomalous case of Guthlac: the *vita* of Guthlac does indeed appear in the Cotton-Corpus Legendary, although it is missing from the table of contents.[79] This does not necessarily imply that Ælfric had read the story of Guthlac's life in the Cotton-Corpus Legendary and rejected it; the extant manuscript dates, as Jackson and Lapidge note, from "the third quarter of the eleventh century" and cannot therefore have served as the actual manuscript from which Ælfric was working.[80] What it does indicate is the importance of Felix's *vita* in eleventh-

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[78] M. Clayton, "Hermits and the Contemplative Life," pp. 158-67.

[79] According to Jackson and Lapidge, Felix's *Vita S. Guthlaci* is on fols. 185r-96r, making Guthlac the only English saint so included (P. Jackson and M. Lapidge, "The Contents of the Cotton-Corpus Legendary," pp. 134-35).

[80] Jackson and Lapidge also comment, "The exception [to the complete absence of English saints in Cotton-Corpus] is St Guthlac .... However, the *Vita S. Guthlaci* does not appear in the scribe's list of contents (Nero E. I, pt I, fol. 55r), and was therefore possibly an ad hoc scribal addition" (P. Jackson and M. Lapidge, "The Contents of the Cotton-Corpus Legendary," p. 146, n. 18).

century England, since Neil Ker has identified its provenance as.[81] Guthlac's absence from Ælfric's legendary is truly an omission asking for an explanation, and Clayton's method of explaining it deserves serious consideration.

Scholars have suggested a variety of different rationales for Ælfric's selection of texts in the *Lives of Saints*. Zettel's approach suggests that Ælfric mirrored the importance given to each saint in English calendars, but, as we have seen, Guthlac stands out among the prominent exceptions. Lapidge explored the importance of Winchester commemorations in Ælfric's choices, but his study shows that the cults of Winchester are not particularly favored by Ælfric, despite the fact that Ælfric spent much of his life there, and he also concludes that "Ælfric's use of the Cotton-Corpus legendary will not account for all the eccentric commemorations in Ælfric's *sanctorale*," suggesting instead an alternate theory:

> In creating his great corpus of devotional writings, whether for preaching or for private meditation, Ælfric had constantly in mind the overall shape of the liturgical year, and in selecting texts for inclusion in this corpus, he will have been guided in the first instance by liturgical considerations – the universality of the individual feast, its appropriateness to lay persons' devotions – rather than by questions of stylistic preference. Accordingly, it is pertinent to consider first what place a particular text, whether homily or saint's life, occupied in Ælfric's overall liturgical design, before turning to questions of source, style or lexis. [82]

Following Lapidge's suggestion, one might look for three initial signs to account for a particular feast's absence from Ælfric's legendary: placement within the liturgical year;

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[81] P. Jackson and M. Lapidge, "The Contents of the Cotton-Corpus Legendary," p. 133.

[82] M. Lapidge, "Ælfric's *Sanctorale*," p. 124.

importance or "universality" of the feast; and, most importantly for this study, "appropriateness to lay persons' devotions." Zettel has already shown that, in the case of Guthlac, this feast's importance highlights rather than explains its absence. Nor will the feast's position in the year account for the absence of Guthlac's *vita* from Ælfric's plan, since there are no lives from the beginning of April through the twenty-third of that month, when the Feast of St. George appears. Guthlac's feast, on the eleventh, would fill this gap nicely. In this regard, Lapidge comments, "The gap in April is explained by the fact that Easter with all its attendant feasts normally falls at that time (the outer dating termini being March 22 x April 18)," just as the period of early December into which St. Lucy's *passio* would have been placed was left blank for the Advent feasts.[83] However, Lapidge's own reconstruction of Ælfric's *sanctorale* provides one exception to this argument: the Annunciation of the Virgin on March 25 falls within the proscribed period defined by Lapidge. The case of St. Lucy also indicates that, when Ælfric wished to include a story, he would find a way to get around the constraints of the calendar. Perhaps the absence of St. Guthlac's feast can be explained by his feast's celebration during the period of Easter, but Mary Clayton's conclusion (and my own hypothesis) would focus instead on the last method of excluding a feast: its "appropriateness to lay persons' devotions." Guthlac's conspicuous exclusion might stem from a question of balance: Ælfric's distrust of the lifestyle of the hermit (the rejection of the active life being

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[83] M. Lapidge, "Ælfric's *Sanctorale*," p. 119. See n. 28 above for Eisner's emendation of the latter date to April 25.

particularly inappropriate for laymen whose secular duties included warfare against invading Danes) on one hand and on the other his concern that laymen should not be exposed to Felix's celebration of the lifestyle of the exiled leader of a warband bent on pillage and the amassing of booty. Neither model of behavior, the ascetic life of worldly renunciation nor the heroic but violent deeds of the reckless exile, would fit within the shape of Ælfric's guide for moral living aimed at the ealdormen and thegns of his own day.

One other example will serve to illustrate that the appropriateness of a particular saint's life to the devotion of laymen must have been a major consideration for Ælfric. Lapidge identifies another text that presents somewhat of an anomaly, this time because of its inclusion in, not its exclusion from Ælfric's *sanctorale*:

> Ælfric includes in his *Lives of Saints* an account of the Forty Soldiers of Sebaste in Armenia (*Quadraginta milites*), specified for March 9. This feast is included in a large number of Anglo-Saxon calendars from various parts of England. However, it is conspicuously omitted from all four calendars of certain Winchester origin.... This omission can scarcely be a matter of chance and must represent some liturgical policy decision at late tenth-century Winchester. In any event, the fact that the feast of the Forty Martyrs was commemorated by Ælfric indicates fairly clearly that he was not following Winchester use consistently. [84]

We have already seen that Ælfric would include texts of relative liturgical obscurity, like the *Passio Sanctorum Machabeorum*, when they served his larger purpose. Zettel's study also points to the Forty Soldiers as anomalous, since he notes that it (along with Eugenia and Julian and Basilissa) is a feast of lower rank, and he suggests equal spacing in the year

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[84] M. Lapidge, "Ælfric's *Sanctorale*," p. 122.

or some specific aspect of each life that attracted Ælfric's attention.[85] Following this idea through leads to some interesting discoveries. The feast of the Forty Soldiers comes on the ninth of March.. Lapidge reconstructs the following list for March in Ælfric's own personal *sanctorale*:

9 SS Quadraginta militum
12 S. Gregorii pape
20 S. Cuthberti
21 S. Benedicti
25 Adnuntiatio S. Mariae [86]

This list is somewhat deceptive in discussing *Lives of Saints* in particular, however, because in fact Ælfric included only one life for March in *Lives of Saints*: the Forty Soldiers. The others all appear in *Catholic Homilies I* (Annunciation of the Virgin) or *Catholic Homilies II* (Gregory, Cuthbert, Benedict). One might facilely assume that, having covered four major dates for March in his earlier works, Ælfric included the Forty Soldiers in *Lives of Saints* to maintain a balance of text throughout the year. But does this really account for the inclusion of the Forty Soldiers in *Lives of Saints*? Ælfric had other lives to choose from in "filling in" March. In the course of his study of Ælfric's *sanctorale*, Lapidge identifies three other likely candidates: two English saints, Ceadde for the second of March and Edward King and Martyr for the eighteenth; and one pair of

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[85] P. H. Zettel, "Ælfric's Hagiographic Sources," p. 82. Zettel does not include the feast of the holy Maccabees in his study, presumably because it is an Old Testament, not a true Christian martyrdom.

[86] "Appendix: Ælfric's (Reconstructed) Calendar," in M. Lapidge,"Ælfric's Sanctorale," p. 125.

saints of universal veneration commemorated jointly, Perpetua and Felicitas on the seventh.[87] Looked at from the perspective of the source question, the Cotton-Corpus legendary includes three other texts from March not previously translated by Ælfric: the *Vita S. Albini* of Fortunatus [March 1], the *Passio SS Perpetuae et Felicitatis* [March 7], and St. Patrick's *Confessio* and *Epistola ad Coroticum* [March 17], as well as an unidentified "erased entry in the contents list between St. Patrick" and the first text for April. [88] Thus the one March text clearly available to Ælfric as an alternative to the Forty Soldiers, appearing in his primary source-book and identified by Lapidge as appropriately universal in commemoration, is the Passion of the virgins Perpetua and Felicitas. Lapidge comments, "Among virgin martyrs, one might have expected Ælfric to include Perpetua and Felicitas, who were commemorated in the *Nobis quoque peccatoribus* of the mass and whose names headed the list of virgin martyrs in most Anglo-Saxon litanies of the saints."[89] Having a clear choice between the feast of the Forty Soldiers and Perpetua and Felicitas, both positioned within the first ten days of March, Ælfric chose to include the feast conspicuously absent from Winchester's calendars; such a decision, to paraphrase Lapidge, "can scarcely be a matter of chance and must represent some policy decision" by Ælfric himself.

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[87] M. Lapidge,"Ælfric's Sanctorale," pp. 119, 122.

[88] P. Jackson and M. Lapidge, "The Contents of the Cotton-Corpus Legendary," pp. 136-137.

[89] M. Lapidge,"Ælfric's Sanctorale," p. 120.

Ælfric's inclusion of the Forty Soldiers, saints central to the trope of spiritual fulfillment in the *Lives of Saints*, and the exclusion of Guthlac, the exemplar of the countertrope of spiritual transformation, can hardly have been accidental. *Lives of Saints* expresses Ælfric's concern that the warriors to whom the Anglo-Saxon king, church, and people looked for their collective defense should not imitate Guthlac, either by pillaging and burning towns in independent warbands (as their enemies the Vikings were doing) or by abandoning their arms in favor of a life of eremetic contemplation (especially not, like Guthlac, at the age of nineteen). *Lives of Saints* also articulates Ælfric's desire for warriors to imitate the Forty Soldiers, whom God led not to pillage and burn nor to lay down their arms out of fear for their immortal souls but instead to die fulfilling their own particular Christian duties. The Forty Soldiers will be a key text in the analysis that follows.

III

Having identified something about Ælfric's method in compiling the *Lives of Saints*, there can be no doubt that the *Lives of Saints* is a book about violence -- it is one of the collection's controlling images. A small sampling of scenes of violence from the book should suffice to make this point clearly:

1) Ða eoden to cyrcean mid swiðlicum facne . and ðone mæran biscop . on his gebædum ofslogan.[90]

2) Þa com mercurius . to ðære mæran cwene . mid his ge-wæpnunge . and wearð sona asend . fram cristes meder . to þæs caseres slæge. [91]

3) Iulianus þa and se geonga cniht martianes sunu . and his modor samod . antonius se preost . and se ge-edcucode man . wurdon to-somne . of-slagene for criste . and ferdon mid wuldre . to þam wellwillendan hælende and to heora geferum þe him fore-stopon . þæt is basilissa . mid hyre beorhtum mædenum . and se halga heap . þe on ðam huse for-barn . and þa twentig weard-menn . þe se wælhreowa be-heafdode . and þa seofan gebroðra . þe he for-bernan het . and hi ealle nu mid gode on ecnysse blissiað. [92]

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[90] "Then went these men to church with great deceit and slew the illustrious bishop at his prayers" (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. i, pp. 42-43).

[91] "Then came Mercurius to the illustrious queen with his armour and was sent immediately by Christ's Mother to kill the emperor" (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. i, pp. 64-65).

[92] "Julianus then and the young knight, Martianus' son, and his mother also, Antonius the priest, and the resuscitated man, were all slain together for Christ's sake, and went with glory to the kind Saviour, and to their companions who preceded them, that is, Basilissa, with her bright maidens, and the holy company that were burnt in the house, and the twenty warders, whom the cruel one beheaded, and the seven brethren, who he commanded to be burnt; and they all now rejoice before God forever" (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. i, pp. 114-15).

4) Fabianus þa þæs feondes þen het beheafdian þone halgan tiburtium and siððan acwealde þonehalgan castolum þe hæfde ge-innod ealle þas halgan . He gehæfte eft siððan tranquillines suna . marcellianus and marcus . on anum stocce . and mid isenum pilum . heora ilas gefæstnode . and cwæð þæt hi sceoldon swa standan on þam pilum oðþæt hi geoffrodon heora lac þam godum. [93]

5) þa wurdon afyllede . mid ðam fulan gaste . þry þæra wyrhtena . and hi weddon þearle . swa þæt hyra an . ge-endode sona . and þa oðre twegen to-tæron hi sylfe . mid heora agenum toðum . and eges-lice grymetedon. [94]

6) Ða ne mihte Aspasius þa micclan ceaste acuman . ac het hi acwellan . mid cwealm-bærum swurde . and crist hi ða underfeng . for his naman gemartyrode.[95]

7) Hwæt ða terrentianus . het þa twægen gebroðra digellice beheafdian . and on heora huse bebyrigan.[96]

8) Þa gebealh hine se wælhreowa and het hi gewriðan on ðam breoste mid þære hencgene and het siððan ofaceorfan .[97]

9) Þa wearð se wælhreowa wodlice geancsumod . þæt his magas ne mihton his mod-leaste acuman . Ac heton acwellan þæt clæne mæden mid swurde . heo wearð þa gewundod . þæt hire wand se innoð ut. [98]

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[93] "Wherefore Fabianus, the servant of the devil, commanded the holy Tiburtius to be beheaded. And afterwards killed the holy Castulus, who had hospitably entertained all these saints. Again therefore he put the sons of Tranquillinus, Marcellianus and Marcus, in a great pillory, and made fast the soles of their feet with iron nails, until they offered their sacrifice to the gods." (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. i, pp. 140-41).

[94] "[T]hen were filled with the evil spirit three of the workmen, and they became exceedingly mad, so that one of them died immediately, and the other twain tare themselves severely with their own teeth, and roared fearfully" (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. i, pp. 158-59).

[95] "The Aspasius could not withstand the great tumult, but bade kill her with death-bearing sword, and Christ then received her, martyred for His Name"(Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. i, pp. 184-85).

[96] "Lo then! Terentianus commanded men to behead secretly the two brothers, and to bury them in their house" (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. i, pp. 194-95).

[97] "Then raged the cruel one, and bade men to torture her on the breast in the rack, and bade it afterward to be cut off" (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. i, pp. 202-03).

10) Þa het se arleasa flaccus . þa fæmnan gebringan on þyster-fullum cwearterne . and cwæð . þæt man ne sceolde ænigne bigleofan hire don binnon seofon nihton . Heo wunode þa swa seofon niht meteleas . and syððan wearð getintregod for þan soðan geleafan and for hyre mægð-hade oðþæt heo wearð gemartyrod . and hire gast ferde freoh to heofonum. [99]

This is a sample of some of the images of violence contained in the texts in the first quarter of the book's yearly cycle.[100] There is only one text within this period that contains no acts of violence (Nativity of Christ). Most contained many examples, from which one passage was selected. The examples show a wide range of types of violence, including self-inflicted wounds or assisted suicide (5, 6), torture (4, 8), starvation (10), and murder in various forms (1,2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9). Most of the violence is directed toward Christians, but one instance (#2, from the Life of St. Basil) features the incorporeal saint Mercury

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[98] "Then the impious one madly vexed, so that his friends could not assuage his madness; but they bade men kill the pure maid with the sword. Then she was wounded so that her bowels fell out"(Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. i, pp. 216-17).

[99] "Then commanded the wicked Flaccus to bring the maiden into a very dark prison, and said, that no man was to give her any sustenance for seven nights. Then she remained seven nights meatless, and was afterwards tortured for the sake of the true faith, and for the sake of her virginity, until she was martyred, and her free soul departed to Heaven" (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. i, pp. 238-39).

[100] These examples were drawn more or less at random from the first 240 pages of the first volume of Skeat's edition, from the Nativity of Christ to the Chair of St Peter, covering the period from Dec. 13 to Feb. 22. The Skeat edition follows exactly the order of Julius E. vii, so the sample runs through fol. 57 of the closest approximation of Ælfric's original work now extant. As discussed earlier, the Passion of St Lucy is out of order for the cycle of the year, since Lucy's feast is Dec. 13, and her *vita* appears at the end of the Life of Agnes, for the fifth of Feb. Thus the period from which these examples were drawn ostensibly covers Dec. 25 to Feb. 5, although the constituent texts would be appropriate to dates from Dec. 13 to Feb. 5.

being sent by the Virgin Mary to kill the Caesar Julian the Apostate.[101] All of the examples were selected for their description of violence against individuals, rather than in war, although violence in many forms permeates the *Lives of Saints*.

One reason violence appears so repeatedly in *Lives of Saints* is that many of its constituent texts feature martyrs. Not all of the sample above involved martyrdoms, however, and although martyrdom does account for much of the violence in the book, other types of violence also play a significant role. Less evident than the violence against individuals featured in the preceding sample is the high number of scenes of organized inter-group violence, that is, of battle and warfare. The following sample is drawn from the middle half of the liturgical year (March - August):

1) Eala ge gebroðra uton beon gehyrte . swa oft swa we clypodon to criste on gefeohte we wurdon sige-fæste sona þurh his fultum . and we eac ofer-swiðdon þone onsigendon here . Hwilom we wæron on micclum gewinne . and eall ure folc mid fleame æt-wand buton we feowertig þe on ðam feohte stadon . biddende georne ures drihtnes fultum . and sume we afligdon sume feollan ætforan us . and ure an næs gæderod fram ealre þæra meniu. [102]

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[101] The inclusion of this scene featuring one of the great Byzantine soldier-saints in a role as divine avenger caps a multitude of references to Julian the Apostate, who was, for Ælfric, the pre-eminent type of the wicked Caesar. Julian's role in the Life of St Martin forms one part of that pattern.

[102] "'Oh brothers, let us be encouraged; as often as we have cried to Christ in the fight, we were victorious straightway through His succour, and we likewise overcame the approaching army. Once we were in a great conflict, and all our people escaped by flight, except we forty who stood to the fight, earnestly entreating our Lord's assistance, and some we put to flight, others fell before us, and not one of us was harmed by all that multitude" (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. i, pp. 242-43).

2) þa wan him on swiðe amalech se cynincg mid his leode feohtend . Þa cwæð moyses to þam cenan iosue . Geceos ðe nu wæras . and gewend tomergen togeanes amaleh [sic] . and win him on swyðe. [103]

3) He wet nu swiðe and wynð on ða cristenan . forðan þe he wat geare þæt þysre worulde geendung in swyðe gehende . and he on-et forði.[104]

4) Hwæt ða æfter fyrste ferde achab se cyning togeanes syrian cynincge mid swyðlicre fyrdinge . wolde mid gewinne wanian his rice . þahet syrian cyning sona his cepan . þæt he ana feolle of eallum his folce . Þa gebende an scytta sona his bogan . and ascet ana flan swylce on ungewis . and atæsde ðone cyning betwux þære lungene . þæt he feallende sweolt on ðam gefeohte ærest. [105]

5) Þis wæs geworden ær ðæt gewinn come ðurh hengest . and horsan þe hyndon ða bryttas . and se cristen-dom wearð ge-unworðod syððan . oðþæt agustinus hine eft astealde . be gregories lare þæs geleaffullan papan . Sy wuldor and lof þam welwillendan scyppende se ðe ure fæderas feondum æt-bræd. [106]

6) Sum woruld-wita wæs swyðe wis on ræde acitofel gehaten . mid dauide þam cynincge þe gode wæs gecweme . on ðam timan þe absolon his agen sunu

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[103] "[T]here warred mightily against them Amalek the king, fighting with his people. Then said Moses to the brave Joshua, `Choose thee now men, and go to-morrow against Amalek, and fight valiantly against him" (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. i, pp. 282-85).

[104] "Now he rageth furiously, and warreth on Christians, because he knoweth well that this world's ending is very nigh at hand, and therefore he maketh haste" (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. i, pp. 352-53).

[105] "So then after some time Ahab the king marched against the king of Syria with a very great army, desiring by conquest to diminish his kingdom. Then the king of Syria straightway bade his men take heed that he [Ahab] alone should fall of all his people. Then an archer presently bent his bow and shot an arrow as if uncertainly, and smote the king between the lungs, and he died, being the first that fell in the fight" (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. i, pp. 396-97).

[106] "This was done before that strife came through Hengest and Horsa who defeated the Britons, and Christianity was again dishonored, until Augustine re-established it, according to the instruction of Gregory, the faithful pope. Be glory and praise to the benevolent Creator, who delivered our fathers from their foes" (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. i, pp. 422-25).

ongan winnan wið þone fæder . and wolde hine adræfan of his cyne-dome and acwellan gif he mihte.[107]

7) We habbað nu gesæd be swiðune þus sceortilice . and we secgað to soðan þæt se tima wæs gesælig and wynsum on angel-cynne . þaða eadgar cynincg þone cristen-dom ge-fyrðrode . and fela munuclifa arærde . and his cynerice wæs wunigende on sibbe . swa þæt man ne gehyrde gif ænig scyp-here wære buton agenre leode þe ðis land heoldon. [108]

8) Hi fengon þa togeadre fæstlice mid wæpnum . and nicanor æt fruman feoll þær ofslagen . and his here awearp heora wæpna and flugon . ac iudas him folgode fæstlice mid wæpnum and bicnode gehwanon mid blawunge him fultum . oð þæt hi man gynde ongean eft to iudan . and hi ealle ofslogon þæt þær an ne belaf. [109]

9) *bellatores* synd þa ðe ure burga healdað . and urne eard be-weriað wið onwinnende here. [110]

10) Oswold him com to . and him cenlice wiðfeaht mid lytlum werode . ac his geleafa hine getrymde . and crist him geflylste to his feonda slege. [111]

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[107] "There was a certain councilor, wise in speech, hight Ahitophel, with David the king who was pleasing to God, at the time when Absalom, his own son, began to war against his father, desiring to drive him out of his kingdom, and kill him, if he could" (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. i, pp. 426-27).

[108] "We have now spoken thus briefly of Swithhun, and we say of a truth that the time was blessed and winsome in England, when King Eadgar furthered Christianity, and built many monasteries, and his kingdom still continued in peace, so that no fleet was heard of, save that of the people themselves who held this land" (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. i, pp. 468-69). This passage does not describe war itself, but through its reference to a *scyp-here* it would call to mind for Ælfric's audience the invading Viking fleets of their own days.

[109] "They then joined battle together quickly with weapons, and Nicanor at the first fell there slain, and his host cast away their weapons, and fled. But Judas followed them quickly with weapons, and summoned on all sides with blowing [of trumpets] assistance to him, until they drove them back again to Judas, and slew them all, that there remained not one" (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. ii, pp. 108-09).

[110] "Soldiers are they who protect our towns, and defend our soil against an invading army" (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. ii, pp. 122-23).

This sample of scenes of warfare in *Lives of Saints* is drawn more from Old Testament narratives (2, 4, 6, 8) than from the passions of the martyrs (1, 10). These Old Testament narratives, which form a major part of the items in the book as a whole, are nonetheless often considered somehow subsidiary, a mere adjunct to the hagiographic items. Yet in the Memory of the Saints, which functions as a guide to the collection as a whole and which some think may have originally served as the introductory piece in the series, Ælfric devotes considerably more space to the tales of Old Testament figures than he does to the martyrs.[112] His treatment of Old Testament figures there provides good evidence for his conception of certain figures "under the Old Law" who were saints in essentially the same way that the apostles, martyrs, confessors, etc. were "under the New Law," as has already been seen in Ælfric's discussion of the Maccabean martyrs. This conception of Old Testament saints helps to account for the emphasis on Old Testament narrative throughout *Lives of Saints*. The other battle scenes (with one exception) are all taken from English

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[111] "Oswald came to him and fought boldly against him, and Christ helped him to the slaughter of his enemies" (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. ii, pp. 126-27).

[112] Using the number of lines in Skeat's printed edition as a guide, the section of Memory of the Saints specifically devoted to the martyrs would be 14/384, or less than 4%. Ælfric's exposition of Old Testament history in the Memory of the Saints, on the other hand, represents 74/384, or nearly 20%. On the introductory nature of the Memory of the Saints, see note 10 above. Hill's study of the dissemination of Ælfric's lives also supports the integral nature of the Old Testament narratives (as well as the four more general, homiletic works) to *LoS*, although, as she points out, the "prefaces imply a 'purer' version than we have in Julius E. vii" (J. Hill, "The Dissemination of Ælfric's *Lives of Saints*," pp. 37, 240, 242, and 254 n. 17). The disjunction between prefaces and text may be a sign, like those identified in this study, that Ælfric's views and intentions went through a shift during the period of the Viking invasions as *LoS* was taking form, creating the layers of meaning most distinctly evident in the series of addenda to the Maccabees.

history or contemporary events in England during Ælfric's own time (3, 5, 7, 9, 10). These include references to conflict between the Anglo-Saxons and the Celts (5, 9) and the invasions of England by the Vikings (7, 10). The one exception to the pattern of appearance of scenes of warfare in Old Testament and English historical narrative is #1, drawn from the passion of a group of martyrs. This scene of warfare from a martyr-text is taken, not coincidentally, from the work discussed earlier for its anomalous inclusion in *Lives of Saints*: the Forty Soldiers, Martyrs. Although the Forty Soldiers die as martyrs, killed, like many other early Christians in *Lives of Saints*, for refusing to sacrifice to the pagan gods, in the speech quoted above the unnamed martyr clearly shows the view that warfare is a legitimate activity, sanctioned by God, a view intrinsic to *Lives of Saints* as a whole. The violence of warfare is, in many of these scenes, exemplary violence, action undertaken by those "chosen by God." In *Lives of Saints* the individual violence inflicted on the martyrs is evil, even though it is instituted by legal systems, rulers, and governments;[113] the collective violence of warfare may be good or evil depending on who undertakes it and why it is undertaken.

To sum up, violence in general and warfare in particular form a unifying element in Ælfric's text as a whole, although the two have different shades of meaning, different moral valences, and different narrative sources for Ælfric. The Forty Soldiers, Martyrs, and its companion piece, Maurice and the Theban Legion, form the link between these

[113] Note that the one example of individual violence above that is undertaken by a holy figure occurs directly under the command of the Queen of Heaven, the Virgin Mary.

two otherwise somewhat disconnected aspects of Ælfric's book. Violence could be illustrated at length from the lives of saints, but the forms of violence appearing in these texts were not particularly pertinent to conditions in late Anglo-Saxon England. There were no persecutions against Christians in Ælfric's time; random acts of violence and unjust actions by authorities do appear in some of the texts, but otherwise the forms of violence described in the passions of the martyrs tended to have only a tenuous connection to the lives of the members of Ælfric's audience. Warfare, on the other hand, played a major role in the lives of men like Æthelweard and Æthelmær. Yet where could Ælfric find texts that addressed the moral questions raised by war, raiding, invasions, and the defense of society against raisers and invaders? As shown above, two main sources for scenes of warfare's particular forms of violence and its distinctive issues and concerns are strongly represented in Ælfric's collection: Old Testament narrative and native English history. The former provided a wealth of material, but the use of Old Testament narrative for moral instruction was problematic: the figures in such texts operated "under the Old Law." English history was very appropriate, but it also raised vexing issues. If we look again at the passage about Hengest and Horsa Ælfric attached to his Life of St. Alban (#5 above), we will see that at first the Britons represent Christianity against the paganism of Hengest and Horsa: "Þis wæs geworden ær ðæt gewinn come ðurh hengest . and horsan þe hyndon ða bryttas . and se cristen-dom wearð ge-unworðod syððan."[114] The poles

[114] "This was done before that strife came through Hengest and Horsa who defeated the Britons, and Christianity was again dishonored" (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. i, p. 423).

quickly reverse, however: "oðþæt agustinus hine eft astealde . be gregories lare þæs geleaffullan papan . Sy wuldor and lof þam welwillendan scyppende se ðe ure fæderas feondum æt-bræd."[115] God should be thanked for defeating the enemies of our fathers, but the enemies of Ælfric's own "fathers" had been the very Christian Britons who suffered the invasion: "ðæt gewinn ... ðurh hengest . and horsan."[116] Neither Old Testament narrative nor secular English history could be used unproblematically to instruct lay readers in the proper discharge of their duties.

Ælfric found a way around this problem, in the synthesis that follows. The narratives of the lives of the English saints Edmund and Oswald provided perfect material to link the problems of violence with the values of Christianity. The problems inherent in earlier battles in England, in which the Anglo-Saxons' ancestors played the role of godless invaders, were resolved with the coming of Augustine. Christian Anglo-Saxons thanked God for their historic good fortune; in Anglo-Saxon Christian terms, articulated by Gildas and Bede, the sins of the British gave England to the Anglo-Saxons. Yet now it was the sins of the Anglo-Saxons that appeared to be bringing good fortune to the Vikings.

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[115] "[U]ntil Augustine re-established it, according to the instruction of Gregory, the faithful pope. Be glory and praise to the benevolent Creator, who delivered our fathers from their foes" (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. i, p. 423-25).

[116] R. Waterhouse, "Discourse and Hypersignification," p. 336, shows in her analysis of the Life of Oswald that Ælfric downplays the divisions between Celtic and Roman Christianity, and that he indicates "that 'geleafa' ... in God overrides factional boundaries, and Oswald's saintliness derives from belief, not from any particular practice of it." The national and cultural pride of Anglo-Saxons also would be challenged by a too careful examination of their people's own behavior during the period of the Anglo-Saxon invasions.

Models for living were needed, exemplars to revive the sagging spirits of Christian England. Edmund and Oswald provided crucial images, but so did St. Alban; the Forty Soldiers, Martyrs; Maurice and the Theban Legion, and St. Sebastian, among others. Loyal Christian soldiers populate Ælfric's text, staking claim to a moral authority absolutely necessary to the continued good fortune of a people facing daily signs that all was not well.

IV

Two of the exemplary texts for understanding Ælfric's portrayal of the model Christian soldier are the passions of Saints Alban and Edmund. He derived both *passiones* from works previously examined in this study, the first from the pages of Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica*, the latter from Abbo of Fleury's *Passio Sancti Eadmundi*. Ælfric's translation of Abbo is an example of his use of the existing *vitae* of soldier-saints. His work follows Abbo closely, and yet presents the entire narrative in his own distinctive way. His St. Alban is an example of Ælfric's creation of a *vita* from a text that was not expressly hagiographic. In its original Latin form, Bede's story of the death of Alban had only peripheral bearing on issues of warfare and sanctity, but Ælfric imbued it with a significance beyond the text's original parameters.

St. Alban was regarded as England's "proto-martyr," the first person known to have died for the faith in England. He belonged to the era of Roman Britain, but he became one of the favored English saints in the Middle English period, when he was considered a soldier-saint, as evidenced by David Hugh Farmer's statement in *The Oxford Dictionary of Saints* that he was "soldier and proto-martyr of Britain" and that "[t]he legendary Acts, followed by Bede, say that Alban [was a] pagan soldier." [117] In fact, neither Bede nor Ælfric directly called Alban a soldier. Nonetheless, in the Passion of St.

[117] D. H. Farmer, *The Oxford Dictionary of Saints*, pp. 10-11.

Alban, Ælfric presents a portrait of a willing martyr that has significant bearing on the study of Anglo-Saxon soldier saints, both in his development of the issue of non-violent resistance to persecution and in his portrait of a soldier ordered to kill Alban who instead puts down his weapons and becomes a willing martyr.

Ælfric's "Passio Sancti Albani Martyris" sets up a strong thematic contrast between the violence of the bloodthirsty pagans and the peaceful, spiritual nature of Alban and his fellow Christians. The text opens, not with Alban, but with his persecutor, Diocletian:

> SVM HÆÐEN CASERE WÆS GE-HATEN DIOCLITIANVS se wæs to casere gecoren þeahðe he cwealm-bære wære . æfter cristes acennednysse twam hund gearum . and syx and hund-eahtigum ofer ealne middan-eard . and he rixode twentig geara reðe cwellere . swa þæt he acwealde and acwellan hét ealle ða cristenan þe he of-axian mihte . and forbærnde cyrcan. and berypte ða unscæððigan. [118]

The use of the word *gecoren* ("chosen, elect") is significant, for it was frequently used in hagiographic literature to signify those "chosen" by God to be His saints.[119] Thus an

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[118] "There was a heathen emperor named Diocletian, who was chosen to be emperor over all the earth, though he was a destroyer of men, two hundred and eighty-six years after Christ's incarnation; and he reigned twenty years, a cruel murderer, so that he killed, and bade kill, all the Christians whom he could find out, and burned churches, and robbed the innocent" (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. i, pp. 414-15). For the decision to lay this and other of Ælfric's texts out as prose, despite Skeat's decision to print them as poetry, see n. 1 above.

[119] For the significant use of the word *gecoren* in *Guthlac A*, see Chapter Four above. The idea of the emperor being chosen to rule conforms with Ælfric's views on kingship, although choice alone does not account for Ælfric's understanding of the nature of a king, according to M. R. Godden, "Ælfric and Anglo-Saxon Kingship." That Ælfric considered the Roman emperors as directly analogous to Anglo-Saxon kings is evidenced by his comment in the preface to *LoS*, "unum cupio sciri hoc uolumen legentibus, quod nollem alicubi ponere duos imperatores siue cesares in hac narratione simul, sicut in latinitate

opposition between *casere gecoren* and *cwealm-bære* ("blood-thirsty, murderous"), linked by the conjunction *þeahðe* and highlighted by alliteration, develops the first term of a contrast between Diocletian, chosen to earthly power, and Alban, Christ's chosen saint. The use of the words *cwellere*, *acwealde*, and *acwellan* in the lines following reinforce through the rhetorical technique of *etymologica figura* the connection between paganism and a life of violence introduced by *cwealm-baere*. The images of the persecution, the murdering of innocent Christians, the burning of churches, and wholesale theft call to mind Ælfric's own time, when Vikings were killing, burning, and stealing throughout much of England. Alban appears against this backdrop of widespread violence to show another, superior way of life.

Ælfric, following his source, supplies no information about Alban's origins. We are merely told that, after ten years of anti-Christian violence "ofer ealne middan-eard," the persecution reached England, where "fela acwealde ða þe on criste gelyfdon."[120] Among them was Alban, "se æþela martyr . seðe on þære ehtnysse eac wearð acweald for cristes geleafan."[121] Whether the term *æþela* is meant to signify a status of earthly nobility, or an inward nobility of character, is not clear. Later he is asked by the heathen judge to

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legimus; sed unum imperatorem in persecutione martyrum ponimus ubique; Sicut gens nostra uni regi subditur, et usitata est de uno rege non duobus loqui" (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. i, pp. 2-4).

[120] "[O]ver all the earth ... killed many who believed in Christ" (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. i, pp. 414-15).

[121] "[T]he noble martyr, who was likewise killed in that persecution for Christ's faith" (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. i, pp. 414-15).

identify himself: "Þa axode se dema ardlice and cwæð . Hwylcere maegðe eart þu. oððe hwylcere manna . Ða andwyrde albanus þam arleasan þus . Hwæt belympð to þe hwylcere mægðe ic sy . ac gif ðu soð wylt gehyran ic þe secge hraðe . þæt ic cristen eom and crist æfre wurðige." [122] In this passage, Ælfric opposes the pagans' earthly power within the social system to the Christians' abandonment of that status in favor of a spiritual power which they believe flows from God. This change of status is symbolized by Alban's taking on of the robes and the identity of the priest being sought by the authorities. In a sense, this change of identities mirrors the trope of spiritual transformation, since Alban will take on the role of a priest, even though he never actually changes his status. From a nobleman, and therefore presumably a warrior, he becomes temporarily a cleric. But Alban sacrifices himself for the cleric, taking his place in a symbolic rather than a literal way; unlike the trope of spiritual transformation, in which soldier becomes priest, here the soldier only takes the priest's place in facing torment and death. Yet in doing so, he would be truer to the Christian ideals of martyrdom and self-sacrifice than many priests.

Alban behaves like a spiritual warrior whose death will be a victory over the temporal power of the pagans. He "næs afyrht for his feondlicum þeow-racan. forðan þe

[122] "Then asked the judge immediately, and said, 'Of what family art thou, or of what rank among men?' Then Alban answered the wicked man thus: 'What concerneth it thee, of what family I may be? but if thou desire to hear the truth, I tell thee quickly that I am a Christian, and will ever worship Christ" (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. i, pp. 416-17).

he wæs ymb-gyrd mid godes wæpnum to þam gastlicum gecampe."[123] Unlike the pagans' earthly weapons, the *godes wæpnum* employed by Alban will not save his body from death, but they will save his soul. When the judge orders him scourged, "se eadiga wer wearð þurh god gestrangod . and ða swingle orbær swyðe geþyldiglice." [124] Through the strengthening of God, Alban successfully resists temptation and suffers torture patiently.

Alban is not the only one to choose the path of non-violence. The soldier who has been ordered to execute Alban likewise undergoes a conversion and throws away his sword:

> Þa wearð se cwellere þe hine acwellan sceolde þurh þæt wundor abryrd . and awearp his swurd arn ða ardlice þaða hi ofer ða ea comon . and feoll to his fotum mid fullum geleafan . wolde mid him sweltan ærðan þe he hine sloge . He wearð þa gean-læht mid anrædum geleafan to ðam halgan were þe he beheafdian sceolde . and þæt swurd læg þær scynende him ætforan . and heora nan nolde naht eaðe hine slean. [125]

The terms *cwellere* and *acwellan* are again used to stress the violence of the pagans. Ælfric establishes a contrast between the atmosphere of violence and the *cwellere*

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[123] "[W]as not affrighted by his fiendish threats, because he was girded about with God's weapons unto the ghostly [spiritual] fight" (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. i, pp. 416-17).

[124] "the blessed man was strengthened by God, and bore the scourging exceeding patiently" (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. i, pp. 418-19).

[125] "Then the executioner, who was to kill him, was touched by that miracle, and threw away his sword, and ran quickly, as soon as they had come over the stream, and fell at his feet with full faith, desiring to die with him rather than to slay him. He was then united, with resolute faith, to the holy man whom he was to have beheaded; and the sword lay there shining before them, and not one of them would readily slay him" (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. i, pp. 420-21).

throwing away his sword. The image of the sword that "læg þær scynende" (one of the details Ælfric added to Bede's Latin) becomes a metaphor for renunciation of violence. Both men have changed stations to die in another's place, and both Alban and "þone soðfæstan cempan þe nolde beheafdian ðone halgan wer" are beheaded, but their death is a victory, for they "ferdon sige-fæste to þam soðan life." [126] Death is not the ending but the beginning of the saint's conquest over his enemies.

In the end, the persecution fails and the Christians come out of hiding, "of wudum and of wæstenum þær hi wæron behydde. and comon to mannum and cristen-dom ge-edniwodon. and gebetton, cyrcan þe to-brocene wæron." [127] Although Ælfric translated this passage from Bede, following his source fairly closely, still the images of the Christians coming out of hiding and rebuilding the ruined churches calls to mind the Anglo-Saxons' own efforts to rebuild after the devastating Viking raids of Alfred's time. Out of the ruins they begin to establish a world based on peace, "wunodon ða on sybbe mid soðum geleafan." [128] Ælfric affirms that the way of "sybbe" ("peace") will win out over the blood-thirstiness of the *cwealm-baere*.

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[126] "[T]he faithful soldier who would not behead the holy man ... departed victoriously to the true life" (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. i, pp. 422-23).

[127] "[O]ut of the woods, and out of the wastes, where they had been hidden, and went amongst men, and restored Christianity, and repaired churches that were wholly ruined" (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. i, pp. 422-23).

[128] "[A]nd dwelt there in peace with true faith" (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. i, pp. 422-23).

The Passion of St. Edmund did not require Ælfric's stylistic enhancements to become a treatise on the rejection of violence. As in Abbo's Latin work, in Ælfric's version of the "Passio Sancti Eadmundi Regis" Edmund does not fight in any battles. Like Alban, he faces a cruel and bloodthirsty foe without resorting to violence. The Danes "aweston þæt land . and þa leoda ofslogon" and achieve their victory "mid wælhreownysse."[129] Their leader Hingwar is particularly violent and cruel: "swa swa wulf on lande bestalcode . and þa leode sloh weras and wif . and þa ungewittigan cild . and to bysmore tucode þa bilewitan cristenan."[130] Edmund considers fighting back against Hingwar, saying, "and me nu leofre wære þæt ic on feohte feolle . wið þam þe min folc moste heora eardes brucan," but his bishop attempts to dissuade him.[131] He tells the bishop, who has advised flight or submission, that he would rather die than submit to his enemies: "Þæs ic gewilnige and gewisce mid mode . þæt ic ana ne belife æfter minum leofum þegnum þe on heora bedde wurdon mid bearnum . and wifum . færlice ofslægene fram þysum flot-mannum . Næs me næfre gewunelic þæt ic worhte fleames . ac ic wolde swiðor sweltan gif ic þorfte for minum agenum earde."[132] Then he announces to the

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[129] " [W]asted the land and slew the people.... by means of cruelty" (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. ii, pp. 316-17).

[130] "[L]ike a wolf, stalked over the land and slew the people, men and women, and witless children, and shamefully tormented the Christians" (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. ii, pp. 316-17).

[131] "[A]nd it were now dearer to me that I should fall in fight against him who would posses my people's inheritance" (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. ii, pp. 318-19).

[132] "'This I desire and wish in my mind, that I should not be left alone after my dear thanes, who even in their beds, with their bairns and their wives, have by these seamen

messenger from Hingwar that he will follow Christ's example rather than to stain his hands with the Vikings' blood: "ic nelle afylan on þinum fulum blode mine clænan handa . forðan-þe ic criste folgie þe us swa ge-bysnode . and ic bliðelice wille beon ofslagen þurh eow gif hit swa god fore-sceawað."[133] Edmund will fulfill his destiny, doing as he perceives that God wills, even if he must die. This is the key idea of the trope of spiritual fulfillment, the importance of following the path God has set out for you. Edmund doesn't swerve from his purpose, even when he finally faces Hingwar himself:

> Hwæt þa eadmund cynincg mid þam þe hingwar com . stod innan his healle þæs hælendes gemyndig . and awearp his wæpna wolde geæfen-læcan cristes gebysnungum . þe for-bead petre mid wæpnum to winnenne wið þa wælhreowan iudeiscan.[134]

Desiring to follow Christ's example, and directly citing Christ's injunction to Peter in the Garden of Gethsemene, Edmund refuses to fight. His reward is a long and painful death and the crown of martyrdom. As Christopher Tyerman says, Ælfric "retains the hagiography of the passive Christian martyr in St. Edmund, who deliberately throws away his weapons before facing his pagan tormentors," although "the passivity of Edmund is

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been suddenly slain. It was never my custom to take to flight, but I would rather die, if I must, for my own land'" (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. ii, pp. 318-21).

[133] "I will not defile my clean hands with thy foul blood, because I follow Christ, who hath so given us an example, and I will blithely be slain by you, if God hath so ordained" (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. ii, pp. 320-21).

[134] "Then Edmund the king, when Hingwar came, stood within his hall mindful of the Saviour, and [having thrown away his weapons, he desired] to imitate Christ's example, who forbade Peter to fight with weapons against the bloodthirsty Jews" (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. ii, pp. 320-23).

balanced by the martyr's determination , against the advice of his bishop, to resist the heathen Danes whatever the odds."[135] Resistance to the Vikings isn't wrong, but the saint chooses a non-violent resistance.[136]

In his life of Edmund, Ælfric also presents his view that clerics should not be involved in the taking of life, another aspect of the question of the relationship between sainthood and violence. In recounting one of Edmund's posthumous miracles, Ælfric describes how eight men trying to steal the treasures of the saint's shrine were paralyzed in the act of hammering, prying, etc. However, when the bishop "het hi hon on heagum gealgum ealle," Ælfric points out his error, saying, "þa halgan canones gehadodum forbeodað ge bisceopum ge preostum . to beonne embe þeofas . for-þan-þe hit ne gebyraþ þam þe beoð gecorene gode to þegnigenne þæt hi geþwærlæcan sceolon . on æniges mannes deaðe . gif hi beoð drihtnes þenas."[137] For Ælfric, it would seem, those who chose to be Christ's soldiers had to completely forswear the taking of life.

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[135] C. Tyerman, *England and the Crusades*, p. 11.

[136] In calling Edmund's willing martyrdom a path of resistance, I follow the distinction made by advocates of pacifism, that acquiescence in the face of persecution is different from a resistance that continues to oppose the oppression, despite the consequences. Neither Abbo's nor Ælfric's Edmund acquiesces in Hinguar's conquest, even though they do not choose to fight. This position is consistent with, for example, Martin's willingness to go into battle unarmed or Sigeberht's agreement to lead his troops carrying only a rod symbolic of kingly status.

[137] "[T]he holy canons forbid clerics, both bishops and priests, to be concerned about thieves, because it becometh not them that are chosen to serve God, that they should consent to any man's death, if they be the Lord's servants [þegns]" (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. ii, pp. 328-31).

Yet Ælfric also included among the saints in his legendary Oswald, the holy king who died fighting with a sword in his hand, and in doing so he took a radical step away from the non-violent ethos that underlay Abbo's conception of Edmund -- and, it appears, the values that Ælfric himself had held not long before. If it were possible to identify the exact order in which the pieces within the *Lives of Saints* were written, we could confirm some very interesting, indeed arresting observations drawn from a careful reading of the different texts within *Lives of Saints*. For example, which of the two contrasting pieces, the *vitae* of Edmund and Oswald, did he write first? The one portrays a king who set down his weapons and died a willing martyr, the other a king who died fighting, sword in hand. In this study we have examined the two kings in chronological order, but Ælfric need not have translated them in that order. In *Lives of Saints* the reader also encounters Oswald before Edmund, since Oswald's commemoration is the third of August and Edmund's is November twentieth. But Ælfric himself need not have considered Oswald before Edmund in his own creation of *Lives of Saints*. Which conception of kingship preceded the other for Ælfric? In both cases he is adapting and translating the ideas of another – Bede on the one hand, Abbo on the other – but whose ideas did he respond to first?

Although we may not be able to establish without a doubt which of the two works Ælfric translated first, we can make some logical inferences based on what evidence is available to us. Clemoes suggests that Ælfric's Edmund "must be among the early *Lives*, for in a preface, written not when the piece was composed but when it was included in the

set, Ælfric implies he wrote his *Life* 'within a few years' of 985 (the year, 'three years before Dunstan died,' in which Abbo and the archbishop met)."[138] If we look at what Ælfric actually said, however, the date of composition becomes less easy to assess:

> þa gesette se munuc ealle þa reccednysse on anre bec . and eft ða þa seo boc com to us binnan feawum gearum þa awende we hit on englisc. [139]

Ælfric translated it within a few years ["binnan feawum gearum"] after the book came to him ["eft ða þa seo boc com to us"]. This tells us very little about the relative chronology of the Oswald and Edmund texts, but it does make one thing clear: Ælfric translated the Life of Edmund shortly after he first read it. He must have translated Oswald's story long after he first read the *Historia Ecclesiastica* – it is hard to imagine that Bede's masterwork did not form a major part of the education of any literate, well-educated English monk throughout the Anglo-Saxon era, but Ælfric was probably in his thirties when he began work on *Lives of Saints*.[140] In short, the Passion of St. Edmund was hot-off-the-press translation; but for Oswald's Life Ælfric returned to a familiar, classical source to create a discrete, self-contained *Via Sancti Oswaldi*, as he also did with the

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[138] P. Clemoes, "The Chronology of Ælfric's Works," p. 222; Hunt cites Clemoes's assessment with approval (J. Hurt, *Ælfric*, p. 132).

[139] "Then the monk set down all the story in one book, and after the book came to us within a few years then we translated it into English" (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. ii, pp. 314-15).

[140] Clemoes suggests 1010 as a possible date for Ælfric's death, and says, "If he died then, he was fifty-three or a little more" (P. Clemoes, "The Chronology of Ælfric's Works," p. 245). As noted earlier, Clemoes dates the writing of *LoS* to the period 992-1002, when he would have been about thirty-five to forty-five.

Passion of Alban. Godden cites with approval Bethurum's view that "'the story of Oswald told by Bede against the background of the stirring events in Northumbria in the seventh century ... becomes in Ælfric's account merely the Acta Sancti Oswaldi,'" to which he adds "that in doing so the story acquires a curious and surely not accidental resemblance to the legend of Constantine, the archetype of Christian emperors. The movement from moral discourse to narrative of event is accompanied by an interest in making event symbolic rather than individual." [141] No *vita* existed for Oswald before Ælfric, and he, like Bede before him, was taking a somewhat radical step in promoting the sanctity of Oswald of Northumbria, King and Martyr. Constantine would be the logical, primary precedent for the concept, but as argued in Chapters Two and Five, the cult of the martyred warrior king was, in Klaniczay's terminology, a "new religious model." Ælfric is often considered a hide-bound traditionalist, but, as Eric John has argued, "There is another side to Ælfric's theology that, though derivative all right and dependent on other, more original, thinkers, exhibits radical discontinuity ... and in which Ælfric treated themes unfamiliar and very unwelcome to many of his contemporaries." He goes on to note, "Ælfric was himself aware of this to some extent. In the preface to *Saints' Lives* ll. 43-8, he disclaims the intention of saying anything new, but admits that laymen will find some of it unfamiliar." [142] In *Lives of Saints* Ælfric built on the synthesizing work done by Abbo

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[141] M. R. Godden, "Experiments in Genre," p. 281, 284; D. Bethurum, "The Form of Ælfric's *Lives of Saints*," p. 520.

[142] E. John, "The World of Abbot Ælfric," pp. 301 and n. 7.

in writing the *Passio Sancti Eadmundi*, but he went even further in the same direction his mentor from Fleury had gone. Abbo had innumerable saints to use as precedent for a martyr who dies meekly, like a lamb; where else but in the Whitby Anonymous, Bede, and Alcuin could a saint who dies with sword in hand be found?

By abstracting the "Acta Oswaldi" from the *Historia Ecclesiastica*, Ælfric was following his own pattern evidenced in his accounts of SS. Alban and Æthelthryth, so it was not a radical step in the formal sense (unless, of course, the *Vita Oswaldi* was the first such attempt, in which case it would have established the pattern). Perhaps someday careful manuscript studies will establish a relative chronology for the works in *Lives of Saints*; we must make do now with conjectures. The main evidence from which it is possible to conjecture about the order of composition at this stage in scholarly research is conceptual. The conceptual step involved in accepting both Edmund's and Oswald's martyrdoms as equally valid paths to sanctity would fit most sensibly into what we know of Ælfric's own life in the order: Edmund translated first, then Oswald. Raised in a monastery, dedicated from a young age to the worldview and lifestyle of the monk, Ælfric surely encountered the model of sainthood on which Abbo's *Life of Edmund* was based -- that of non-violent self-sacrifice -- while still a youth, and only came in later life (after having written his first but not his second translation of the Life of Martin) to reach an understanding that although warfare was forbidden to clerics it was not forbidden to other Christians, and that kings, standing above the division of society into clerics and warriors, could follow either path as they perceived God to be leading them. He came to believe, and embody in his writings, that although most saints achieved their sainthood by

renouncing the sword, a very few others achieved it by wielding one.

V

For Ælfric, the discovery -- if discovery it indeed was -- that kings could die either renouncing or participating in violence and still achieve martyrdom was rooted in his understanding of the nature of society as well as of God and sainthood. According to the social theory to which Ælfric subscribed, society contained three orders or classes. He shared this system of social thought with King Alfred of Wessex, from whom he may have inherited it as well.[143] In Chapter Four Alfred's concept of the three orders was identified as germane to the poem *Guthlac A*. Alfred articulated it (as we saw there) in the preface to his translation of the *Cura Pastoralis* and in his translation of Boethius's *De Consolatione Philosophiae*. Ælfric states his concept in *Lives of Saints* -- or at least in a passage attached to and circulating with *Lives of Saints*.[144] It is used to explain the *Passio Sanctorum Machabeorum*, where it appears as an addendum -- *item alia* -- to the tale of Judas Machabeus that, as we have seen, was itself added to the more conventional hagiographic story of the Maccabean martyrs. In this text and its accompanying

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[143] For the source and transmission of the idea of the three orders with particular attention to the Anglo-Saxon evidence, see T. Powell, "The 'Three Orders' of Society."

[144] It is conceivable a scribe copying *LoS* added the addendum to the text, but there is apparently universal agreement among scholars that the short text is Ælfric's own work, since no one I am aware of has ever suggested that it is not his. If added to the text by a later copyist, it is still likely to have been Ælfric's work and evidence of changes in his position on the issue of Christian atttitudes toward war.

addendum Ælfric presents with the utmost clarity, care, and precision his views of the relationship between warfare and sanctity.

Ælfric's ideas on the three orders appear in his retelling in Old English of the story of Judas Machabeus and his wars against the Romans. He clearly admires the man he was writing about, and recounts his exploits with approval. Yet suddenly, in the midst of the text, he halts his narrative, and turns from the reporting of events to their interpretation: "Menig-fealde wæron his micclan gefeoht. and he is eall swa halig on ðære ealdan gecyðnysse. swa swa godes gecorenan on ðære godspel-bodunge. forðan þe he æfre wan for willan þæs ælmihtigan." [145] He insists on the equality of the Old Testament warrior and the New Testament apostle since both were God's agents. However, Ælfric goes on to distinguish between what was right action before Christ's incarnation, and what was right action in his own day. Judas Machabeus fought earthly battles with physical weapons, but the saints of the New Testament era use spiritual weapons in a struggle against unseen enemies:

> On þam dagum wæs alyfed to alecgenne his fynd. and swiþost ða hæðenan þe him hetole wæron. and se wæs godes ðegen þe ða swiðost feaht wið heora onwinnendan to ware heora [leoda]. ac crist on his tocyme us cydde oðre ðincg. and het us healdan sibbe. and soðfæstnysse æfre. and we sceolon winnan wið þa wælhreowan fynd. þæt synd ða ungesewenlican. and þa swicolan deofla þe willað ofslean ure sawla mid leahtrum. wið ða we sceolon winnan mid gastlicum wæpnum. and biddan us gescyldnysse simle æt criste. þæt we moton ofer-winnan

[145] "[Innumerable] were [Judas's] great battles; and he is as holy, in the Old Testament, as God's elect ones, in the Gospel-preaching; because ... he ever [fought in accordance with] the will of the Almighty" (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. ii, pp. 112-13).

> þa wælhreowan leahtras. and þæs deofles tihtinge. þæt he us derian mæge. Þonne beoð we godes cempan on ðam gastlican gefeohte. [146]

To make sense of these words, we must think about his audience of monks. He advises them to address themselves to their appointed tasks, prayers and the worship of God through the Daily Office, and not to concern themselves with worldly battles. So far the message is not particularly radical, since monks were forbidden to fight or carry weapons, although there were clerics whose duties took them into the center of the war effort. Two of the men entrusted with the building of a fleet to entrap the Viking ships in 994 were bishops, and they may have been expected to participate in the battle as well.[147] Timothy Powell argues that Anglo-Saxon concept of the holy king encouraged clerics to participate in war under their king's direction:

> It cannot be stressed enough that heightening the role of the king within a Christian society was not just a matter of words; it had practical consequences. If the king was presented as God's vicar, his deputy on earth, a sacral figure, it became more difficult to place limits on what sort of service was due to him .... It

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[146] "In those days [Judas Machabeus] was permitted to defeat his enemies, and especially the heathen, that were angry against him; and he was God's thane, that most often fought against their conquerors, in defense of their people. But Christ, at His coming, taught us another thing, and bade us hold peace [love/friendship] and truthfulness ever; and we ought to strive against the cruel enemies, that is, the invisible ones, and the deceitful devils, that wish to slay our souls with vices. Against them we should fight with ghostly [spiritual] weapons, and pray for protection for us, continually, of Christ, that we may overcome the cruel iniquities, and the devil's enticement, that he may not harm us; Then shall we be God's champions in the spiritual battle" (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. ii, pp. 112-13).

[147] C. Plummer and J. Earle, ed., *Two of the Saxon Chronicles Parallel*, p. 127.

> is entirely understandable that some clergy should have taken this to mean that bearing arms for their king was acceptable, even commendable. [148]

In part it was to such men that Ælfric was speaking, and for them his views would have represented a challenge. Duty to God and duty to king were not, in Ælfric's argument, always synonymous, if the king should ask things of them that God had forbidden.

Clerics were not Ælfric's primary audience, however. As discussed earlier, *Lives of Saints* begins with two prefaces, the first in Latin, the second in Old English, and both refer directly to his main audience: Ealdorman Æthelweard, one of the main advisors for the policy of tribute and conversion in Æthelred's *witan*, and his son Æthelmær.[149] Laymen like Æthelmær and Æthelweard, for whom Ælfric was expressly writing, would certainly have taken the ideas appended to the "Passio Sanctorum Machabeorum" as a challenge to their values and their way of life. Æthelweard and his son would certainly have taken the passage concerning right action after the Incarnation to be an injunction against fighting the Danes. Ælfric was very specific: *crist on his tocyme us cydde oðre ðincg. and het us healdan sibbe.*[150] His use of first person plural pronouns broadens

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[148] T. Powell, "The 'Three Orders' of Society," p. 128. For Ælfric's views on the king as God's vicar, see M. R. Godden, "Ælfric and Anglo-Saxon Kingship." See also Pope's comments in Ælfric, *Homilies of Ælfric: A Supplementary Collection*, pp. 372-77.

[149] The role of Æthelweard and his son in promoting a policy of peace and reconciliation is the subject of my unpublished paper, "Advisors for Peace in the Reign of Æthelred Unræd."

[150] "But Christ, at His coming, taught us another thing, and bade us hold peace [love/friendship] and truthfulness ever" (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. ii, pp. 112-13).

the injunction from clerics to all Christians, *us*. He states directly the trope of spiritual transformation: *Þonne beoð we godes cempan on ðam gastlican gefeohte*.[151] It would appear that Ælfric either wrote this passage with an audience of monks alone in mind, perhaps before he had decided to combine Old Testament narratives with the passions and saints' lives in *Lives of Saints*, or else he believed (at least at the time he was writing) that all Christians should *healdan sibbe* and *winnan wið þa wælhreowan fynd*. *þæt synd ða ungesewenlican*.[152] A layman inspired by such opinions would fear the loss of his immortal soul by carrying out his duties as his king's minister of war.

As if in answer to just such a response, Ælfric adds one more passage, what may be termed an addendum to his digression from the "Passio Sanctorum Machabeorum":

> Secgað swa-þeah lareowas þæt synd feower cynna gefeoht . *iustum* . þæt is rihtlic . *iniustum* . unrihtlic . *ciuile* . betwux ceaster-gewarum . *Plusquam ciuile* . betwux siblingum . *Iustum bellum* . is rihtlic gefeoht wið ða reðan flot-menn . oþþe wið oðre þeoda þe eard willað fordon . Unrihtlic gefeoht is þe of geflite cymð . Þæt þridde gefeoht þe of geflite cymð betwux ceasterwarum is swyðe pleolic . and þæt feorðe gefeoht þe betwux freondum bið . is swiðe earmlic and endeleas sorh.[153]

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[151] "Then shall we be God's champions in the spiritual battle" (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. ii, pp. 112-13).

[152] "[H]old peace ... [and] to strive against the cruel enemies, that is, the invisible ones" (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. ii, pp. 112-13).

[153] "Nevertheless teachers say that there are four kinds of war; *justum*, that is, just; *injustum*, that is, unjust; *civile*, between citizens; *plusquam civile*, between relatives. *Justum bellum* is just war against the cruel seamen, or against other peoples that wish to destroy (our) land. Unjust war is that which comes of anger. The third war, which comes of contention between citizens, is very dangerous; and the fourth war, that is between friends, is very miserable, and endless sorrow" (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. ii, pp. 112-15).

This is a restatement of the classical just war theory, articulated by St. Augustine and probably derived by Ælfric from Isidore of Seville.[154] To ealdormen like Æthelweard or Æthelmær, this would be very pertinent information. It would directly answer doubts they might have about their duty as Christians, and provide them with a rationale for prosecuting the war with the Danes, the "cruel seamen" against whom a just war could be waged. A war fought to defend the kingdom against invaders is a just war, approved by king, Church, and God.

One small but telling point indicating a connection between Ælfric's retelling of the holy wars of the Maccabees and the tradition of holy kingship also reinforces the assurance Ælfric offers his lay readers that their warfare against the Danes is not only just but holy. It appears in one of the few details Ælfric adds to the tale of Judas Machabeus. Christopher Tyerman first pointed out the addition: "Just as in Ælfric's poem on Oswald, Penda dismembers the saint's corpse by cutting off the head and right arm, so in identical fashion Judas mutilates his fallen enemy Nicanor -- a detail not in the Apocrypha." [155] In

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[154] J. E. Cross discusses Ælfric's reliance in this passage on Augustine and Isidore in "The Ethic of War in Old English," *England before the Conquest: Studies in Primary Sources Presented to Dorothy Whitelock*, ed. Peter Clemoes and Kathleen Hughes (Cambridge, 1971), 269-82, at 271-73. For the theory of just war itself, see R. A. Markus, "Saint Augustine's View on the 'Just War'," *The Church and War*, Studies in Church History 20, ed. W. J. Sheils (Oxford, 1983), 1-13; Frederick H. Russell, *The Just War in the Middle Ages*, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought, 3rd ser., 8, ed. Walter Ullmann (Cambridge and New York, 1975); William R. Stevenson, Jr., *Christian Love and Just War: Moral Paradox and Political Life in St Augustine and His Modern Interpreters* (Macon, GA, 1987); and John Kelsay and James Turner Johnson, ed., *Just War and Jihad: Historical and Theoretical Perspectives on War and Peace in Western and Islamic Traditions* (New York, 1991).

[155] C. Tyerman, *England and the Crusades*, p. 12.

Chapter Two the veneration of a sainted king's bones and the desecration of a defeated king's body were shown to be two sides of a single coin, their interconnectedness confirmed when Bede exulted over the retribution inflicted by Oswiu on Penda, saying that, *desecto capite perfido*, the people of Mercia were then brought to belief in Christ. So here Ælfric links the Anglo-Saxon/ Celtic tradition of dismembering a defeated ruler's body to the holiness of the wars of Judas Machabeus. Judas not only defeats Nicanor and dismembers him, he also sets up the severed parts as trophies honoring God's aid in victory against His enemies: "Namon þa heora wæpna and heora gewæda mid heom . and nicanores heafod and his swyðran hand . and setton þa to tacne for his teon-rædene . and þancdom þa gode þearle mid wurðmynde."[156] The reciprocal nature of this image, trophy set up for trophy, becomes evident when it is compared to Ælfric's corresponding image in St. Oswald: "Þa het se hæþena cynincg his heafod of-aslean . and his swiðran earm . and settan hi to myrcelse." [157] Just as Oswald's severed head and hand first become symbols of the pagans' victory, and then become signs of God's favor, so also the head and hand of Nicanor symbolize divine reward and divine punishment. Ælfric assures his audience that when a war is just, the actions of the warrior are pleasing to God, even when

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[156] "They took then their weapons and their garments with them, and Nicanor's head and his right hand, and set them for a token, for his injury (to them), and thanked God then exceedingly with worship" (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. ii, pp. 108-09).

[157] "Then the heathen king commanded to strike off his head and his right arm, and to set them up as a mark [trophy]" (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. ii, pp. 136-37).

they might appear to go beyond the necessary and even charitable defensive war Augustine hypothesized.

Yet this sense of assurance would not be complete, nor would it apply equally to all readers. To a monk, these passages could present confusing information, since to them wars of all types were forbidden, even just wars. So also to the bishops called upon by Æthelred to lead the war effort; they might wonder which rule applied to them, the first statement that "we ought to strive against the cruel enemies, that is, the invisible ones, and the deceitful devils .... with ghostly weapons" or the addendum, that "war against the cruel seamen" is just war? Even the laymen might still be in doubt. Which is it better to be, "God's champions in the spiritual battle" or leaders of a physical battle "against the cruel seamen, or against other peoples that wish to destroy (our) land"?[158] The ideological waters still seem murky.

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[158] Mary Clayton finds a very similar problem in Ælfric's treatment of the story of Judith and Holofernes in M. Clayton, "Ælfric's *Judith*." She finds it "very hard to doubt that the comments on Judith and Maccabees [by Ælfric in his *Letter to Sigeweard*] are intended to be complementary and to encourage armed resistance to the Vikings" (M. Clayton, "Ælfric's *Judith*," pp. 217-218), but she examines apparent contradictions between this intention and an equally forcefully asserted exegesis that turns the physical actions of Judith into significations of Christian spiritual duties. She also examines the differing messages as reflecting differing audiences, the spiritual message for women religious, the "rousing, patriotic exhortation to his countrymen" for "an audience like the nobleman Sigeweard" (M. Clayton, "Ælfric's *Judith*," p. 215). Yet her main point is that Ælfric's attempts at exegesis reveal "a deep-seated anxiety with regard to women using their bodies in ways which had been firmly repressed by centuries of church prescriptions" (M. Clayton, "Ælfric's *Judith*," p. 225). Clayton finds the use of Judith as a call to lay nobles to defend the fatherland less problematic. I would argue that Ælfric can more easily condone male violence than female sexuality, but that his repeated attempts to explain the tales of Judith and Judas Macchabeus in contradictory ways show "a deep seated anxiety" about both. This latter point, concerning Ælfric's anxiety about warfare, is developed in James W. Earl's article "Violence and Non-Violence in Anglo-Saxon England: Ælfric's

Ælfric himself seems not to be satisfied with his own explanation, for he returns to the subject in still another addendum that follows the "Passio Machabeorum." This postscript, which addresses the "three orders" of society, entitled by Skeat on the basis of one of the secondary manuscripts, "Qui sunt oratores, laboratores, bellatores," appears in at least four manuscripts following the section on the Maccabees, at least three times it appears by itself, and at least once the piece on the Maccabees appears without the addendum.[159] Its uneven distribution may indicate that it was an actual postscript, written as an attachment to the "Passio Sanctorum Machabeorum" or possibly written independently and subsequently attached. In it Ælfric outlines the idea of the three orders, establishing what duties the three "classes" should perform, and thereby clarifying the division of labor in regard to war briefly outlined in the earlier insertion into the text of the Maccabees. Yet Ælfric goes beyond merely establishing the duties of the three groups, engaging in a further refinement of what he himself understood, and wished others to understand, about the Christian approach to war, and in the process attempts to modify the reactions of his two primary audiences, noble laymen and the different orders of

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'Passion of St Edmund'," as yet unpublished but which he graciously allowed me to read in manuscript. In the article, which is forthcoming in *Philological Quarterly*, Earl presents a subtle and nuanced reading from a Freudian perspective of the issues and many of the same texts examined in this chapter. Earl's ideas contributed greatly to the development of my argument, despite our fundamental difference of perspective and our very different conclusions.

[159] See Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. ii, p. lxii; and Ælfric, *Homilies of Ælfric: A Supplementary Collection*, vol. i, pp. 55, 66. For the origin of the title, see J. Hill, "The Dissemination of Ælfric's *Lives of Saints*," p. 242.

clerics, to his account of the Christian view of war. The text declares that "on þysre woruld synt þreo endebyrdnysse on annysse gesette. þæt synt laboratores. oratores. bellatores." The key phrase for understanding Ælfric's idea of the three orders is "on annysse gesette": "joined in unity." The three groups are divided and yet joined, like the three parts of the Trinity. He proceeds to define these three parts: "*laboratores* synd þa þe urne bigleafan beswincað . *oratores* synd þa ðe us to gode geðingiað . *bellatores* synd þa ðe ure burga healdað. and urne eard be-weriað wið onwinnendne here."[160] The theory of the three orders locks each group into prescribed though reciprocally beneficial roles: clerics praying, fighters fighting, peasants tilling the soil. They are equal in utility but unequal in dignity while in this world, yet the equality of the three orders in eternity is strongly implied. An important corollary of Ælfric's comments is the necessity that the *bellatores* not force the *oratores* to follow them into battle.

> Nu swincð se yrðlincg embe urne bigleofan . and se woruld-cempa sceall winnan wið ure fynd and se godes þeowa sceall symle for us gebiddan . and feohtan gastlice . wið þa ungesewenlican fynd . Is nu for-þy mare þæra muneca gewinn wið þa ungesewenlican deofla þe syrwiað embe us . þonne sy þæra woruld-manna þe winnað wiþ ða flæsclican . and wið þa gesewenlican feohtað . Nu ne sceolon þa woruld-cempan to þam woruld-licum gefeohte þa godes þeowan neadian fram þam gastlican gewinne . forðan þe him fremað swiðor þæt þa ungesewenlican fynd beon ofer-swyðde þonne ða gesewenlican . and hit bið swyðe derigendlic þæt hui drihtnes þeowdom forlætan . and to woruld-gewinne bugan . þe him naht to ne gebyriað. [161]

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[160] Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. ii, pp. 120-22). "In this world there are three orders joined in unity. These are *laboratores, oratores,* and *bellatores*. Laboratores are those who labor for our nourishment, *oratores* are those who intercede for us with God, *bellatores* are those who guard our cities, and defend our country against an invading army."

[161] "Now toils the field-labourer for our subsistence, and the worldly warrior must fight against our enemies, and the servant of God must always pray for us, and fight spiritually

This message is directed at a clerical audience, whom he terms throughout the "servants of God" (*þa godes þeowan*), encouraging them not to be drawn into earthly combat, even though it might be *iustum bellum* fought against the heathen *flot-menn*. It is also aimed at those, whether king, cleric, or laymen, who might pressure a cleric, perhaps even Ælfric himself, to participate in the war effort. Ælfric wants to maintain the division between these two orders. Yet this passage fails to address a pressing question: what of a warrior who desired to give up the fight against the visible enemy and join the monks and other clerics battling the invisible enemy? In this part of the *Lives of Saints* Ælfric still does not have a clear answer to give such a warrior, but by the end of reading all of *Lives of Saints* and related works by Ælfric, his own answer becomes unmistakable. He advances the idea that members of the order of *bellatores* can also, by following their own appointed path, fulfill God's will and achieve the reward of eternal life.

Yet at this stage, Ælfric still conceptualizes the problems and tasks of Christians primarily from his own perspective as an *orator*. Throughout the complex passage above, he reserves the highest praise, and the highest reward, for those who fight invisible foes. He follows this passage by recounting how Julian the Apostate forced clerics to fight, and

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against invisible enemies. Greater therefore is now the struggle of the monks against the invisible devils that lay snares around us, than may be that of the worldly men that struggle against fleshly (foes), and visibly fight against the visible (enemies). Then the worldly soldiers ought not to the worldly battle compel the servants of God, away from the spiritual struggle; because it will profit them more that the invisible enemies may be overcome than the visible ones; and it will be very harmful that they leave their service of the Lord, and incline to the worldly struggle, that in no way concerns them" Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. ii, pp. 122-23).

how Christ commanded Peter to put up his sword, themes seen elsewhere in *Lives of Saints*. He ends the passage stressing the point that the cleric's role is the most exalted because most saintlike:

> Se godes þeowa ne mæg mid woruld-mannum feohtan . gif he on þam gastlican gefeohte . forð-gang habban sceall . Næs nan halig godes þeowa æfter þæs hælendes þrowunga . þe æfre on gefeohte his hande wolde afylan . ac hi for-bæron ehtnysse arleasra cwellera . and heora lif sealdon mid unscæþþignysse . for godes geleafan . and hi mid gode nu lybbað . forðan þe hi furþon noldon . ænne fugel acwellan. [162]

Here Ælfric makes clear that it is not merely by celibacy, prayer and fasting that the "servant of God" gains eternal bliss, but also by imitating Christ in turning the other cheek and by loving even his enemies. In the phrase "þe æfre on gefeohte his hande wolde afylan" there is a strong echo of Edmund's: *ic nelle afylan on þinum fulum blode mine clænan handa*. Ælfric is clearly asserting the superiority of an imitation of Christ by a complete and willing pacifism, although we are left once again to infer that the phrase "servant of God" (*gode þeowa*) is only meant to include the *oratores* and not their Christian brothers hoping to serve God among the lay nobility.

If one imagines the reader of this passage to be Ealdorman Æthelweard or his son Æthelmær, it is not surprising that the younger man resigned his post as minister to

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[162] "The servant of God may not fight along with worldly men if he is to have success in the spiritual combat. There was no holy servant of God after the Saviour's passion, that would ever defile his hands with fighting, but they bore the persecution of impious tormentors, and gave up their lives with harmlessness for God's belief, and they now live with God, because they would not even put to death a bird" (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. ii, pp. 124-25).

Æthelred in 1005 to lead a religious life at Eynsham, under Abbot Ælfric himself. [163] Although Ælfric's commentaries support the defense of the kingdom against the Danes, many of them also hold out a higher and surer reward to those who renounce warfare. Such ideas were not new in Ælfric's day, as evidenced by the many texts examined in Chapter Three, nor was Æthelmær the first lay nobleman to abandon king and sword for the "spiritual weapons" of the holy life. Despite his piety and power, it was not King Alfred, the conqueror of the Danes and savior of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms from obliteration under the earlier tide of Viking invasions, that tenth- and eleventh-century Anglo-Saxons believed was, to borrow Ælfric's words, "the holy servant of God [who] now live[s] with God," but rather St. Edmund, King and Martyr, who died at the Vikings' hands, and of whom Ælfric says, following Abbo, "Then Edmund the King ... stood within his hall mindful of the Saviour, and [having thrown away his weapons, he desired] to imitate Christ's example, who forbade Peter to fight with weapons against the bloodthirsty Jews."[164] Certainly it was lawful to fight, says Ælfric, since war against the cruel seamen is just war. But at the same time he holds up to his readers, including both members of the king's *witan* like Æthelweard and Æthelmær and also his fellow-clerics, the model of men

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[163] S. Keynes, *The Diplomas of King Æthelred 'The Unready'*, p. 209.

[164] Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. ii, pp. 321-323. The action Edmund takes in Ælfric's account is subtly different from Abbo's original idea. According to Abbo, having cast aside his weapons (*proiectis armis*), Edmund becomes one of Christ's members (*ut membrum Christi*). Ælfric says instead that mindful of the lord (*þæs hælendes gemyndig*) and his weapons having been cast aside (*and awearp his wæpna*) he wished to imitate Christ's example (*wolde geæfen-læcan cristes gebysmungum*) of non-violence. Abbo stresses Edmund's mystical union with Christ, while Ælfric concentrates on Edmund's desire to obey Christ's commands.

"that would [n]ever defile [their] hands with fighting, but [who] bore the persecution of impious tormentors, and gave up their lives with harmlessness for God's belief, and [who] now live with God, because they would not even put to death a bird."[165]

Powell has argued persuasively for clerical involvement in warfare as one major context of Ælfric's writings, but surely, given the growing crisis of the late tenth early eleventh centuries, another was the doubt of laymen about war.[166] When Ælfric returns to the question of the three orders in his *Letter to Sigweard*, he again insists on clarifying what the duties of the different orders of Christians are, but he does so from a new perspective.[167] The effect of the ideas contained in Ælfric's earlier writings on this subject might have been to an earthly warrior, faced in mortal combat by seemingly endless visible foes, to abandon the earthly struggle for the purer, invisible warfare of the saints. This may be why, when he restates the theory of the three orders in his treatise on the Old and New Testaments, he shifts his emphasis:

> Witan sceoldon smeagan mid wislicum geþeahte, þonne on mancinne to micel yfel bið, hwilc þæra stelenna þæs cinestole wære tobrocen, 7 betan þone sona. se cinestol stynt on þisum þrim stelum: *laboratores*, *bellatores*, *oratores*. *Laboratores* sind þe us bigleofan tiliað, yrdlingas 7 aehte men to þam anum betæhte. *Oratores* syndon þe us þingiað to Gode 7 cristendom fyrdriað on cristenum folcum on Godes þeowdome to ðam gastlicam gewinne, to þam anum betæhte us eallum to þearfe. *Bellatores* sindon þe ure burga healdað 7 eac urne eard, wið þone sigendne here feohtende mid waemnum. swa swa Paulus sæde, se

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[165] Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. ii, p. 125.

[166] T. Powell, "Clerical Involvement in Warfare"; and T. Powell, "The 'Three Orders' of Society," pp. 120-29.

[167] *The Old English Version of the Heptateuch*, pp. 71-72.

> þeoda lareow, on his lareowdome. *Non sine causa portat miles gladium*, 7 cetera, "Ne byrð na se cniht butan intingan his swurd. He ys Godes þen þe sylfum to þearfe on ðam yfelum wyrcendum to wæce gesett." On þissum þrim stelum stynt se cynestol, 7 gif an bid forud, he fyld adun sona pam odrum stelum to unpearfe gewiss. Ac hwæt gebyrad us embe pis to smeagenne? Þis sceolon smeagan þe þæs giman sceolon. [168]

Ælfric makes it clear here, without directly stating it, which of the legs of the throne is broken (that is, which the three orders is not functioning properly). By asking what profit there is in considering it himself he eliminates his own order as the "pedestal of the throne" that he feels needs to mend itself. By adding the biblical text *Non sine causa portat miles gladium* (one of the key texts used traditionally to counter a pacifist interpretation of Christianity), Ælfric specifies both which of the orders is not functioning properly and also what remedy he recommends: the order of *bellatores* needs to recognize that "Ne byrð na se cniht butan intingan his swurd. He ys Godes þen þe sylfum to þearfe on ðam yfelum wyrcendum to wæce gesett": "The knight does not bear his sword without cause. He is God's thegn himself set up as is necessary to punish evil-doers." More directly here than

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[168] *The Old English Version of the Heptateuch*, pp. 71-72. "The *witan* should consider with wise thought when too great evil exists in mankind, which of the pedestals of the throne may be broken, and repair it immediately. The king's throne stands on these three pedestals: *laboratores, bellatores, oratores*. *Laboratores* are those [who] provide nourishment for us, farmers and husbandmen, to that alone appointed. *Oratores* are those [who] intercede for us with God and further Christianity among Christian folk in God's service in the spiritual struggle, to that alone appointed for the benefit of all. *Bellatores* are those [who] guard our cities and also our land, fighting against the encroaching army with weapons. Paul the apostle said in his preaching: '*Non sine causa portat miles gladium*, etc. The knight does not bear his sword without cause. He is God's thegn himself set up as is necessary to punish evil-doers.' On these three pedestals stands the king's throne, and if one become decayed, the other pedestal certainly will fall down in ruin. But what does it profit us to deliberate on this? This those should consider who must take responsibility for it."

anywhere else among his writings Ælfric states the problem that motivated him in assembling the *Lives of Saints* in its final form: the men on whom the king, the *laboratores*, and the *oratores* of England depended for its safety were wavering in their resolve to prosecute the war with the necessary vigor. Yet concerned as he is about this issue, he deflects responsibility for solving the problem to those at the highest levels of power in the state. It is the concern of the *witan*, he says unmistakably. His direct audience in this text is also clearly stated: a thegn named Sigeweard, of whom Skeat says, "[T]he person here named was probably one of the two thegns named Siward who signed the Eynsham charter in 1005 ... in which the names of Æthelweard and Æthelmær are so conspicuous." [169] Although he might wish to tell a thegn these things, it is the members of the *witan*, including the very men for whom he wrote the *Lives of Saints*, who are responsible for the state of the realm in evil times.[170] John C. Pope, in his "Supplementary Collection" of Ælfric's homilies, points to Ælfric's passages concerning warfare and the

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[169] Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. ii, p. xxxiv.

[170] In another passage from this same source, Ælfric directs his reader, the thegn named Sigeweard, to his translation of the Maccabees (discussed earlier), saying, "ic awende hig on Englisc 7 on rædon gif ge wyllað eow sylfum to raede" (*The Old English Version of the Heptateuch*, p. 51): "I translated them into English, and they are to be read, if you are willing to counsel yourself" or "if you are willing to take their advice." This confirms one of the abbot's intentions in writing these passages of socio-political commentary: he wishes to reach laymen and invigorate them with the martial spirit of the Maccabees, while at the same time encouraging clerics to act like Christ. Ælfric of Eynsham does not appear among the abbots in the witness lists of the diplomas of Æthelred, confirming that he was not a member of the king's witan. This assumes that Keynes is correct in concluding in his study of the king's diplomas that they were "the product of a writing office that acted on the occasion of the *witenagemot* [gathering of the witan] where the transactions were completed" (S. Keynes, *The Diplomas of King Æthelred 'The Unready'*, p. 229).

three orders discussed above and others in a similar vein as signs "of Ælfric's concern for the political and military troubles of his day." He assigns the passages in question to the period "from perhaps the mid-nineties to some year after 1005," the period of the Danish invasions and the paying of danegeld.[171] From this evidence emerges Ælfric's belief that the troubles in the realm were military troubles, and as such the result of a problem not with the *oratores* but with the *bellatores*. His repeated insistence that warfare can be just and within Christian teaching points to a probable cause for the weakness of this pedestal of the king's throne: some (if not many at least important or influential) men to whom the defense of the realm was entrusted doubted the wisdom and morality of a military solution to the problems of the invasions.

It may seem hopelessly anachronistic to ascribe pacifist, anti-war attitudes to an Anglo-Saxon nobleman of the years on either side of 1000. Some scholars discount the potential for such opinions in men and women of the Middle Ages.[172] Yet there is evidence of a deep and profound pacifist vein among early medieval Christians. Ian Pringle, in discussing Anglo-Saxon attitudes toward non-Christians, detects two distinct

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[171] Ælfric, *Homilies of Ælfric: A Supplementary Collection*, p. 373.

[172] See, for example, J. E. Cross, "The Ethic of War in Old English"; J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, "War and Peace"; T. Renna, "The Idea of Peace in the West"; and K. Haines, "Attitudes and Impediments to Pacifism." Renna's assertion that "no self-respecting Christian could be opposed to killing Vikings, Magyars, or Saracens" is representative of the extremes to whichsome scholars go in discounting the possibility of a medieval form of pacisifism (T. Renna, "The Idea of Peace in the West," p. 155.)

approaches to the problem to men like Ælfric, Æthelweard, and Æthelmær by the Viking invasions:

> There seem to have been basically only two attitudes toward pagans in early Christianity .... Sometimes they were regarded as noble unfortunates, denied the chance of salvation by their ignorance of the Divine revelations .... The other attitude saw pagans not as benighted yet noble savages, but as the enemies of God in human form, examples, demonstrations, even realizations of the evil that lurks everywhere in the world, trying to turn Christians from the straight and narrow path that leads to salvation. [173]

Essentially, the pagan enemy were either blind or devils. Pringle's division relates closely to Ælfric's concerns in *Lives of Saints*. Rather than ascribing to Anglo-Saxons like Æthelweard and Æthelmær an anachronistic pacifism, or accepting without examination the assumption that no medieval Christian would doubt the moral value of war, it would seem most sensible to explore how Ælfric's views reflected in *Lives of Saints* relate to these differing views of the war with the Danes. The belief that the Danes were "noble unfortunates, denied the chance of salvation by their ignorance of the Divine revelations" would have been especially appealing to men who could see the descendants of an earlier generation of Vikings living and even ruling side-by-side with them under one king, one church, and one Christian law.

Pringle provides evidence of ambivalence in the responses of Anglo-Saxons to the first wave of Danish invasions, beginning in the late eighth and continuing through the ninth century:

> Both attitudes can be found in the work of Englishmen at the time of the first Viking raids: in his letter to the Bishop of Bremen in 789, Alcuin is still solicitous

[173] I. Pringle, "'Judith': The Homily and the Poem," p. 87.

> for the conversion of the Danes, Wilts, and Wends; four years later, in his letter to Higbald and the monks at Lindisfarne, he switched to the topos of the evil pagan, and in the letters of his last years of his life he returns to the same theme again and again. [174]

Attitudes change with time and experience, and if a distinguished scholar like Alcuin could vacillate between two approaches to the problem of the Vikings, certainly Ælfric could have similar ambivalence about how to handle the problem. Alcuin had experienced only the destructive invasion of the first Viking raiders; men of the late tenth-century had seen the re-emergence of a unified nation of Danes and Anglo-Saxons. It would be harder for such men to demonize the new wave of invaders, yet at the same time they could not consider them ignorant of revelation. Ælfric needed to reiterate to his audience of thegns, ealdormen, and ministers that it was indeed "lawful" and just to kill the "cruel seamen" because some among them still held out the hope that conversion was superior to extermination as a solution to the Danish problem.[175]

Ælfric did not finally believe that only he and his fellow clerics would gain heavenly life and be numbered among the saints. The Lives of Edmund and Oswald indicate that kings also could be saints, but kings, as we have seen, were a special case, above the other three orders, at the pinnacle of society (and therefore closest to God, the King of kings and therefore pinnacle of pinnacles). But *bellatores* also, like their clerical

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[174] I. Pringle, "'Judith': The Homily and the Poem," p. 87.

[175] That King Æthelred vacillated between these two positions is evident in his relatively successful attempt to convert King Olaf Trygvason during the 990s and his attempt in the St Brice's Day masacre of 1002 to exterminate the population of Danes living in England.

counterparts and royal superiors, could gain sanctity and eternal life. The theory of the three orders as Ælfric articulated it in the *Lives of Saints* implies that *bellatores* could follow another, although equally legitimate path as the *oratores*. There had been no Anglo-Saxon native, non-royal saints who died still carrying out their role as warriors, nor did continental hagiography provide any examples of warriors martyred in the carrying out of their professional duties; however, Ælfric includes many members of this social group in the *Lives of Saints*.[176] One of the central themes elements in the compilation is the sanction it provides for *bellatores* as seekers of heaven.

In Anglo-Saxon society the order of warriors or *bellatores* took a number of forms, reflecting various levels of society. Based on the terms used in *Lives of Saints*, Ælfric's own hierarchy can be established. At the top was the *ealdorman*, also sometimes called simply an *ealdor* or, in more general terms, a *heretoga* (approximately the equivalent of a warleader or general); below this elite group came the *þegn*, who might also be called *æþelboran* (noble-born) *man*, or whose specific status could be identified further by added terms like *cyninges*, *heah*, *rice*, or *æþele*; at the lowest level was the simple *cempa*, who might also be termed a *cniht* (which, as was seen in Chapter One, originally meant "youth" and continued to have that meaning in the late tenth and early eleventh century but which Ælfric used also as a substitute for the Latin term *miles*).

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[176] The one tenth century example discussed above of a *bellator* who became a saint without either martyrdom or spiritual transformation into an *orator* is St Gerald of Aurillac, a Frankish nobleman whose *vita* by Odo of Cluny presents the model of a layman who reached sainthood by fulfilling his duty. It would appear that Ælfric did not know this *vita*, since its core ideas would have been very appropriate to his audience for *LoS*.

Ælfric described many of the saints in *Lives of Saints* using *ealdorman*, *þegn*, *cempa* and related terms.

Not only do *bellatores* appear as the main characters in many of the constituent narratives of *Lives of Saints*, Ælfric also scatters innumerable converted and usually subsequently martyred soldiers throughout the full range of the texts. A few examples will illustrate this fact. In the Life of Apollinaris, a text concerned with one of the paths by which an *orator* reached sainthood, includes a number of *bellatores* as minor characters. Among those Apollinaris heals is the wife of "sum forð þegen":

> þa wundrode se þegn his wifes hælðe . and his ealle sædon þæt se is soð god þe swilce wundra macað . and se mæg on ge-feohte þam sige forgifan . þe hine soðlice lufiað. [177]

This passage not only illustrates the appearance of *bellatores* in texts not directly focused on that class of men, but also articulates a central concern of the *bellator*: God's ability to grant victory in battle.[178] Also in the Life of Apollinaris are a thegn named Bonifacius and a "mund-bora þe ða burh bewiste" (a "prefect" who presided over a city) named Rufus.[179]

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[177] "A certain highly placed thegn." "Then wondered the nobleman at his wife's health, and they all said that He is true God, Who doeth such marvels, and Who hath power in battle to give the victory to those who truly love Him" (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. i, pp. 474-47).

[178] An interesting question, but beyond the scope of the present study, is whether Ælfric was translating details such as the þegn's interest in the God of Battles, or whether he added them himself. In this case, the character's motivation in ascribing victory in battle to the range of God's miracles is lacking: no prior instance of such victory appears in Ælfric's version of the text.

[179] Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. i, pp. 476, 478.

When the emperor eventually has Apollinaris arrested and taken away to be tortured, "Þa wolde þa cristenan bewerian þone halgan . and ofslogon þæra hæðenra sume twa hund manna."[180] There is surely a connection between the density of characters Ælfric identifies as *bellatores*, the conversion of the first thegn partly on the basis of God as Lord of Victory, and the violent reaction of the Christians to the arrest of Apollinaris. A reader such as Æthelweard the ealdorman surely would have connected the three identified military figures to the military move by the Christians. In a society guarded by Christian soldiers, violence against members of the Faith could and would be met with force. Ælfric also includes a question pertinent to *bellatores* to the end of his Life of Æthelthryth:

> Oft woruld-menn eac heoldon swa swa us bec secgað heora clænnysse on synscipe for cristes lufe swa swa we mihton reccan gif ge rohton hit to gehyrenne . We secgað swa-ðeah be sumum ðegne . se wæs þryttig geara mis his wife on clænnysse . þry suna he gestrynde . and hi siððan buta ðrittig geara wæron wunigende butan hæmede . and fela ælmyssan worhton . oð þæt se wer ferde to munuclicere drohtnunge . and drihtnes englas comon eft on his forð-siðe . and feredon his sawle mid sange to heofonum . [181]

The pertinence of this passage to an audience of ealdormen and thegns is evident, but the almost apologetic way in which Ælfric introduces and develops his topic may reflect the sensitive nature of the information; not only would sex be a topic a monk might find

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[180] Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. i, pp. 480-81.

[181] "In like manner have laymen also, as books tell us, preserved often their chastity in the marriage-state, for the love of Christ, as we might relate if you cared to hear it. However, we will tell you of a certain thane, who lived thirty years with his wife in continence; he begat three sons, and thenceforward they both lived for thirty years without cohabitation, giving much alms, until the husband entered the monastic life, and God's angels came just as his death, and carried his soul with song to heaven" (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. i, pp. 440-41).

difficult to discuss, but lay chastity would be a topic a layman might find unattractive and even repulsive. Another very pertinent example comes from the Life of St. Maur, the Frankish abbot.[182] Ælfric devotes considerable space to the story of a man named Florus, "ða fyrmest þæra francena þegna . and ðam cyninge leofest . þe on þæra leode rixode . forðan þe he wæs æwfest æfre fram his geogoðe . and eall þæs cyninges ræd eode be his dihte." [183] Ælfric supplies numerous details about Florus, including that he was "wunigende butan wifes neawiste . forðan þe his gebedda gefaren wæs of life . and læfde him ænne sunu."[184] Florus decides to build a monastery, and after obtaining the king's permission, oversees the foundation's establishment and construction. The story ends with Florus himself entering the monastery.

There are also many lists of converted or martyred Christians that specifically include members of the class of *bellatores*. The numerous small yet sharply pointed

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[182] Eric John points out that Ælfric's inclusion of the Life of Maur in *LoS* is indicative of the special connections between Abbo's monastery of Fleury and Ælfric's reform-minded peers, arguing further that there was a Frankish-orientation to Ælfric's theology and ideology: "[T]he foundation of Fleury, in the shape of a *Life* of St Maur, gets more than three times as much space as Æthelthryth" (E. John, "The World of Abbot Ælfric," p. 306). Although the *Life* of St Maur Ælfric translated has no direct connection to Abbo, Abbo played a role in developing Ælfric's views on war and the three orders of society through his *Life of Edmund*, and it is possible that there were direct contacts between the two men as well.

[183] "[T]hen the first of the Frankish nobles, and dearest to the king who reigned over that people, because he had ever been pious from his youth, and all the king's counsel went by his advice" (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. i, pp. 156-57).

[184] Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. i, p. 156. "Living without the companionship of a wife, because his spouse [bedfellow] had died and left him a single son."

additions and insertions portraying ideal portraits of warriors into the narratives (of which these two sections have merely been examples) reveal the concerns of the book as a whole, as a guide to moral living for all stations of life in Anglo-Saxon England, yet focused strongly on the lay audience identified in its Preface.

As a guide for moral living, the *Lives of Saints* also includes negative examples, and many of these are directed toward the class of *bellatores*. Just as evil emperors like Diocletian and Julian or wicked kings like Penda and Hingwar present a counterpoint to the holy kings Abdon and Sennes, Edmund, and Oswald, many of the characters who torment, torture, and kill the saints present a counterpoint to Maurice, the Theban Legion, the Forty Soldiers, and the many loyal Christian warriors described in the passages above. One prominent example of the wicked *bellator* is Achitophel, the advisor of King David who plots against his lord with the king's traitorous son, Absalom. The description of his treason and death, although an Old Testament narrative, would provide very topical moral instruction for men like Æthelweard and his son, the advisors of king Æthelred:

> Sum woruld-wita wæs swyðe wis on ræde acitofel gehaten . mid dauide þam cynincge þe gode wæs gecweme . on ðam timan þe absolon his agen sunu ongan winnan wið þone fæder . and wolde hine adræfan of his cyne-dome and acwellan gif he mihte . þa wæs se acitofel mid absalone on ræde . and rædde him sona hu he beswican mihte his agenne fæder þær he on fleame wæs . ac sum oðer þægn wiðcwæð his geðeahte wislice . and tæhte Absalone oðerne ræd wyrsan to his willan . forðan þe hit god wolde swa þæt dauid wurde fram heora wodnysse ahræd . Þa gebealh hine acitofel and mid bealwe wearð afylled . forðan þe his ræd ne moste þam reðan gelician . for ðæs oðres ræde and rad him ham sona . becwæð þa his ðincg , and acwealde hine sylfne on healicum grine þæt he hangigende sweolt . Swa geendode se wita his wæl-hreowe geþeaht . seðe wolde berædan his rihtwisan hlaford. [185]

[185] "There was a certain councilor, wise in speech, hight Ahitophel, with David the king who was pleasing to God, at the time when Absalom, his own son, began to war against

The disloyal *wita* and the *oðer þægn* compete for position as advisor to the rebellious *ætheling*: God works through their competition to overthrow the rebellious son's plotting and to preserve the life of the holy king.[186] The death of the disloyal son also provides a pertinent moral example:

> Absalon ða ferde forð mid his unræde . and wolde his agenum fæder feores benæman . and habban his anweald . ac hit nolde god . He rad ða on his mule mid mycelre fyrde þurh ænne heahne holt mid hetelicum geþance . þa gefeng hine an treow be ðam fexe sona . forðan þe he wæs sidfæxede and he swa hangode . and se mul arn forð fram þam arleasan hlaforde . and dauides þegnas hine þurh-ðydon . Swa geendode se fæder-swica mid feore his unræd. [187]

The role of the loyal thegns in killing the wicked, traitorous son points up Ælfric's underlying moral message: that men and women should fulfill the duties of their station,

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his father, desiring to drive him out of his kingdom, and kill him, if he could. Then this Ahitophel was with Absalom in council, and advised him straightway how he might ensnare his own father, while he was in flight; but another thane wisely opposed his design, and showed Absalom a different counsel, worse to his [Ahitophel's] liking, because God thus intended that David should be delivered from their madness. Then Ahitophel was angry, and became filled with wickedness, because his counsel might not please the cruel man, by reason of the other's rede, and straightway rode him home, bequeathed his property, and killed himself by hanging. So the councilor ended his cruel design, who sought to advise wrongly his true lord" (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. i, pp. 426-29).

[186] Ælfric's use of terms like *þægn* and *ætheling* in describing figures from ancient history, although distinctly anachronistic, reflects his translation of unfamiliar concepts into terms familiar to him and his audience.

[187] "Absalom then fared forth with his evil counsel, desiring to deprive his own father of life and posses his dominion, but God willed it not. Then he rode on his mule with a great army through a high wood, with hostile intention: then speedily a tree caught him by the hair, because he was long-haired, and he hanged so, and the mule ran forward from the wicked lord, and David's thanes pierced him through. [And so the traitor to his father ended for eternity his treason" (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. i, pp. 428-29).

living up to the model not of some abstract Christian way of life but of a concrete path of duty within Ælfric's three-fold construct of human society. The son desires to become king without waiting for his father's death and despite his station as son and follower. Although a king's son, he is a *bellator* still, until raised by anointing to the kingship, the one position above the three-fold path. Ælfric uses the term *hlaford* to describe Absalom, and this may seem to contradict the identification of atheling as *bellator*, but as Richard Abels has shown in his study *Lordship and Military Obligation*, lordship was a fundamental role performed by men at various levels. Kingship stood above and apart from the normal role of the *hlaford*, though mirroring lordship at other, less exalted levels. Ælfric's conspicuous use of the term *unræd* at the end of the passage to describe the treason of David's son also should have a deep resonance for modern readers of this book familiar with the history of Ælfric's own times and possibly for Ælfric's contemporary readers, since Æthelred "Unræd" was the unlucky king whose failure to repulse the invading Danes resulted in Danish kings sitting on the throne of England. Whether or not the term *unræd* already had been attached to Æthelred at the time Ælfric wrote his account of Absalom and Achitophel, the state of England under the leadership of "Noble-Counsel the Ill-Counseled" is a major context for Ælfric's *Lives of Saints*.

In his youth, Ælfric lived under the rule of a king whom he later held up to the world as an example of good rule: King Edgar the Peaceable. In *Lives of Saints* Ælfric refers to Edgar's time more than once. Part of the longest passage specifically describing Edgar's day was quoted above, but the entire passage is worth examining in detail:

> We habbað nu gesæd be swiðune þus sceortilice . and we secgað to soðan þæt se tima wæs gesælig and wynsum on angel-cynne . þaða eadgar cynincg þone cristendom ge-fyrðrode . and fela munuclifa arærde . and his cynerice wæs wunigende on sibbe . swa þæt man ne gehyrde gif ænig scyp-here wære buton agenre leode þe ðis land heoldon . and ealle ða cyningas þe on þysum iglande wæron . cmera . and scotta . comon to eadgare . hwilon anes dæges eahta cycningas . and hi ealle gebugon to eadgares wissunge . Þær-to-eacan wæron swilce wundra gefremode þurh þone halgan swyðun . swa swa we sædon ær . and swa lange swa we leofodon þær wurdon gelome wundra . On ðam timan wæron eac wurð-fulle bisceopas . dunstan se anræda æt ðam erce-stole . and aþelwold se arwurða . and oðre gehwylce . ac dunstan and aþelwold wæron drihtne gecorene . and hi swyðost manodon menn to godes willan . and æalc god arærdon gode to cwemednysse . þæt geswuteliaðþa wundra þe god wyrcð þurh hi. [188]

This passage presents key themes for understanding *Lives of Saints* as a whole. Edgar's time was a time of peace (*sibbe*) when no foreign fleet disturbed the nation's security. All the kings of the region bowed to Edgar as the one high-king, mirroring the theme of providential expansion of a king's realm developed in the cult of the martyred warrior-kings Edwin and Oswald.[189] At that time bishops chosen by the Lord (*drihtne gecorene*)

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[188] "We have now spoken thus briefly of Swithhun, and we say of a truth that the time was blessed and winsome in England, when King Eadgar furthered Christianity, and built many monasteries, and his kingdom still continued in peace, so that no fleet was heard of, save that of the people themselves who held this land; and all the kings of the Cymry and Scots that were in this island, came to Eadgar once upon a day, being eight kings, and they all bowed themselves to Eadgar's rule. Then moreover were such wonders wrought through Saint Swithhun, as we said before, and as long as we have lived frequent miracles were done there. At that time there were also worthy bishops, Dunstan, the resolute, in the archbishopric, and Æthelwold the venerable, and others like them; but Dunstan and Æthelwold were chosen of God, and they, most of all, exhorted men to [do] God's will, and advanced everything good, to the pleasure of God, as the miracles testify which God worketh through them" (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. i, pp. 468-71).

[189] Ælfric repeats the trope of providential expansion of a king's rule in his life of Oswald, with the added message that the many peoples Oswald brought under his power were gathered together by God to honor his saint: "Oswoldes cyneriche wearð gerymed þa swyðe . swa þæt feower þeoda hine underfengon to hlaforde . þeottas . and bryttas . Scottas and angle . swa swa se ælmihtiga god hi geanlæhte to ðam. For oswoldes

taught men, above all else, to follow God's will (*hi swyðost manodon menn to godes willan*). Under such conditions, when the men chosen by God led men in general to follow the path of Christian duty, the kingdom was at peace and wonders were possible, miracles occurred. This was Edgar's time. But on the death of King Edgar in 975, a young atheling came to the throne who would, in 1008, be declared a saint: St. Edward King and Martyr. The ill-counseled Æthelred came to power out of order, against the will of the Lord, after his half-brother was murdered and under a cloud of suspicion, or so the records of the martyred royal saint would indicate.[190] Ælfric's world fell from grace to disorder, from peace to war, from goodness and order to evil and disorder, from self-rule to occupation: this is another underlying message of his works in general and *Lives of Saints* in particular. Another passage from *Lives of Saints* emphasizes this transition; it is taken from the Prayer of Moses and therefore is connected to Moses's prayers that were needed to defeat the heathen enemies of the Israelites and to the beginnings of a differentiation of society into separate orders of *bellator* and *orator*:

> Wel we magon geðencan hu wel hit ferde mid us . þaða þis igland wæs wunigende on sibbe . and munuc-lif wæron mid wurð-scipe gehealdene . and ða woruld-menn wæron wære wið heora fynd . swa þæt ure word sprang wide geond þas eorðan . Hu wæs hit ða siððan ða þa man towearp munuc-lif . and godes biggendas to

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geearnungum þe hine æfre wurðode": "Oswald's kingdom became so greatly enlarged that four peoples accepted him as their ruler, Picts and Britains, Scots and Angles, just as the Almighty God wished them to be united so that for Oswald's merit they always honored him" (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. ii, pp. 132-33).

[190] See C. E. Fell, *Edward King and Martyr*.

> bysmore hæfde . buton þæt us com to cwealm and hunger . and siððan hæðan here us hæfde to bysmore. [191]

The heathens were, in Ælfric's studied opinion and in his passionate belief, a punishment inflicted on the people of England by God. The parallel use of the word *bysmore*, first to indicate the contempt in which the church was held by the English and then the contempt with which the English were held by the heathen, indicates clearly the reciprocal nature of the affliction. The end of the Passion of the Forty Soldiers, Martyrs, elaborates at length on the spiritual meaning of the heathen who were ravaging England:

> God gesceop ða hæþenan þeah þe hi hine ne cunnon . ac hi ne beoðswa-þeah butan witum eft . forþan þe hi eaðlice mihton þone ælmihtigan under-gitan ðurh ða gesceafta . þe hi ge-seoð on worulde . Heofen and eorðe . and oþre ge-sceafta . sunne . and mona mæsiað heora scyppend . and men magon tocnawan . þæt se is mære god ana ælmihtig þe hi ealle gesceop . Nu beoð þa hæðenan buton beladunge rihtlice fordemede mid deofle on helle . forðan þ hi ne oncneowan crist mid geleafan þe him lif sealde and and-lyfene fore-sceawode . An gecyndelic . æ . is eallum mancynne gesett. Þæt nan man ne gedo dare oðrum menn . swa swa sw hælend cwæð on his halgan godspelle , Þæt þæt ðu þe sylfum nelt on þinum life becuman . ne do ðu þæt oþrum menn . þis cwæð drihten sylf . Ac þa hæðenan hynað and hergiað þa cristenan and mid wælhreowum dædum urne drihten gremiað . ac hi habbað þæs edlean on þam ecum witum . [192]

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[191] " Well may we think how well it fared with us when this island was dwelling in peace, and the monastic orders were held in honour, and the laity were ready against their foes, so that our report spread widely throughout the earth. How was it then afterward when men rejected monastic life and held God's services in contempt, but that pestilence and hunger came to us, and afterward the heathen army had us in reproach?" (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. i, pp. 294-95).

[192] "God created the heathen, though they know him not, but nevertheless they will not be without punishment hereafter, because they might easily understand the Almighty by means of the creature which they see in the world. Heaven and earth, and other creatures, sun and moon, magnify their Creator, and men may discern that He is the great God alone Almighty, Who created them all. Now are the heathen, without excuse, rightly condemned with the devil in hell, because they did not acknowledge Christ by faith, Who gave them life, and provided them with sustenance. One natural law is appointed to all mankind, that no man may do harm to another man, even as the Saviour said in His holy

Ælfric establishes in this passage the groundwork for justifying war against unbelievers. The heathen, he says, are responsible for their own damnation. The Vikings invading England (not directly named but unmistakably identified) have broken the one basic law (*An gecyndelic æ ... eallum mancynne gesett*): they have done grievous harm to other men, pillaging and plundering the Christians (*hynað and hergiað þa cristenan*). They will receive just reward in eternity through eternal punishment, but earthly punishment for such sinful behavior is also possible. This passage alone does not specify that physical defense against such malefactors is lawful and just, but the entire exposition is attached to the end of the Passion of the Forty Soldiers, and so provides unmistakable warrant for the successful prosecution of the war against the Danes.

As we saw earlier, God granted victory in battle to the Forty Soldiers long before their martyrdom. In another key passage, when these holy warriors are first introduced, the issue of warfare's relationship to sanctity is examined in probing detail:

> Þa wæron on þam camp-dome cappadonisce cempan . feowertig cristenra unforhte on mode . æw-fæstlice libbende ætergodes lare . Þas gelæhte se dema and gelædde hi to þam deofolgyldum . and cwæð mid olecunge . þæt hi æþele cempan wæron . and on ælcum gefeohte fæst-ræde him betwynan . and symle sige-fæste on swiþlicum gewinne . æt-eowiað nu forði eowre anrædnysse . and eow sylfe under-þeodað þæra cyninga gesetnyssum . and geoffriað þam godum ærþam þe gebeon getintregode . Þa cwædon þa cristenan . to ðam cwellere þus . Oft we oferswiðdon swa swa ðu sylf wistest ure wiðer-winnan on gehwylcum gewinne . þa þa we

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gospel; 'That which thou desirest not to befall thyself in thy life, that do not to another man.' This said the Lord Himself. But the heathen vex and plunder the Christians, and cruel deeds anger our Lord; but they shall have their reward for this in the eternal punishments" (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. i, pp. 258-61).

> fuhton for ðam deadlicum kyninсge . ac us gedafenað swyðor mid geswince to campigenne . for þam undead-licum cyninсge and þe ofer-swiðan. [193]

Fighting for the mortal king (*deadlicum kyninсge*) and for the immortal king (*undead-licum cyninсge*) are not counterposed but consonant. Victory in earthly warfare is a sign that victory in the eternal struggle is also possible. Loyalty, perseverance, bravery, strength – all the same traits needed to be victorious in earthly warfare will be needed when the soldiers face martyrdom for the immortal king. Their opponent assumes that he can appeal to their noble status as victorious warriors to make them follow the instructions of the wicked ruler, but as holy warriors they will not be fooled. In the scene of their martyrdom, the forty Christian soldiers are placed naked in a freezing lake. Guards encircle them to keep them from escaping, but a hot water bath is also provided on shore as a temptation for them to apostatize. All but one of the forty soldiers stands firm and constant, despite cold of such intensity "þæt heora flæsce for ðam forste tobærst." [194] One of the pagan soldiers, however, breaks ranks and runs to the shore and the hot water's temptation:

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[193] "There were in the army (warfare) Cappadocian soldiers, forty Christians, unfearful in mind, living piously after the doctrine of God; these the judge seized and led them to the idol-sacrifice, and said with flattery that they were noble soldiers, and in every conflict constant to each other, and ever victorious in sharp conflict. 'Show now therefore your constancy and subject yourselves to the king's commands, and sacrifice to the gods before ye be tormented.' Then spake the Christians to the murderer thus; 'Often we have overcome, even as thou thyself knowest, our adversaries in every battle, when we fought for the mortal king; but then it becometh us even more with toil to fight for the immortal and withstand thee" (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. i, pp. 240-41).

[194] "[T]hat their flesh cracked by reason of the frost" (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. i, pp. 248-49).

> Þa eargode heora an for þam ormætum cyle . awearp his geleafan and wolde hine baðian on ðam wlacum wætere and wende fram his geferum . ac he gewat sona swa he þæt wæter hrepode . and wearð seo wearmnys him awend to deaðe . forþan þe his geleafa ne geleaste oð ende .[195]

Despite the unfaithfulness of the fortieth soldier, the remaining thirty-nine are miraculously preserved by a bright light from heaven that melts the ice. One of the guards, the only one able to stay awake through the night, sees the fortieth soldier die and the miracle of the heavenly light, and he sees also that angels come down from heaven bearing one less than forty crowns:

> Þa under-geat he sona þæt se an næs geteald to þam cyne-helmum cristes þegna . forþan þe he nolde þa earfoðnyssa forberan . Ða awrehte se an þa oðre weardas . and unscrydde hine sylfne and scæt into ðam mere clypigende and cweðende . ic eom eac cristen.[196]

The fortieth soldier plays a crucial role in the story of the Forty Soldiers, first as a negative example when the original fortieth soldier abandons his duty and suffers immediate punishment for doing so, and then as a positive example in the form of the guardsman who takes the place of the disloyal *cempa* as the second fortieth soldier.

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[195] " Then one of them turned coward on account of the exceeding chill, cast away his faith, and desired to bathe himself in the luke water, and turned from his companions; but he died as soon as he touched the water, and the warmness was turned into death to him, because his faith did not last until the end" (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. i, pp. 248-49).

[196] "Then immediately he perceived that the one was not accounted (worthy) of the crowns of the servants of Christ, because he would not endure the hardness. Then that one aroused the other warders, unclothed himself and plunged into the mere, crying out and saying, `I am also a Christian" (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. i, pp. 250-51).

Ælfric states a detailed moral based on the example of the fortieth soldier. The passage is anomalous, however, because it follows what appears to have been the original end of the text of the Forty Soldiers, Martyrs. Like the appendix to the Maccabees on the three orders, the moral of the fortieth soldier appears to represent a final stratum aimed specifically at ealdormen that Ælfric added late in the process of composition of *Lives of Saints*.

The main story concludes with a typical closing: "Þa gebrohte se bisceop ealle þa halgan ban on gelimplican scrynum . and gelogode hi up on geleaf-fulre cyrcan to lofe þam ælmihtigan . ðam sy wuldor . and wurðmynt on ealra wuldra woruld . AMEN." [197] The appearance of *amen* here should indicate the end of the text, as it does in almost all other cases within *Lives of Saints* . The presence of an Amen before the end of an item in *Lives of Saints* is extremely rare. All of the constituent texts in *Lives of Saints* as printed by Skeat end with a doxology and *amen* (including the four non-Ælfrician items in Julius E. vii) with only these very few exceptions:

1) St. Sebastian has a concluding tag but no *amen*;
2) the Four Evangelists has no *amen*, but it is an appendix – *item alia* – to St. Mark, which does close with an *amen*;
3) St. Swithun does not close with *amen*, but a short piece on Macarius appended to it does close with *amen*;
4) Abdon and Sennes also has no *amen* but the Letter of Abgarus appended to it does close with *amen*;

[197] "Then the bishop brought all the holy bones into a seemly shrine, and laid them up in the orthodox Church to the praise of the Almighty to Whom be glory and worship to all the ages of ages. Amen" (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. i, pp. 254-55).

5) the two parts of the Maccabees, separated by the rubric *item*, do not have an intervening *amen*;

6) the appendix to the Maccabees concerning the three orders of society does not end with an *amen*.

Thus all of the items lacking an *amen*, except St. Sebastian, have matter added to them or are themselves additions to the end of a text. Only two other texts, besides the Forty Soldiers, have two *amens*, and both of them are a text with an appendix added. St. Alban ends with an *amen* and is followed by an *item alia* that also ends with *amen*, and so also with St. Agatha followed by St. Lucy, which, as mentioned earlier, appears out of chronological order (although it is rubricated as if it were a regular text, with title and date).[198] The stopping and starting of these texts consistently points to additions of new or appended material, and the same must certainly be true of the Forty Soldiers.

After the first, anomalous *amen* in the Passion of the Forty Soldiers, Ælfric states a detailed moral based on the example of the fortieth soldier:

> Hwæt we losað æfre ðam ælmihtigan gode . Gif Hwylc ungesælig mann his scyppende bid un ge hyrsum . and nele þurh-wunian on wel-dædum oð ende . ac forlæt his geleafan and þone leofan drihten . þonne bið oðer gecoren to þam kyne-helme þe se oðer nolde geearnian þurh geswinc . swa swa ge gehyrdon on þissere rædinge . þæt an þæra weard-manna wearðþam halgum geðeod . and gelæhte þone kyne-helm þe se oðer forleas. [199]

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[198] J. Hill, "The Dissemination of Ælfric's *Lives of Saints*," p. 238.

[199] "What is ever lost to Almighty God? If any unhappy man be disobedient to his Creator, and will not continue in well-doing unto the end, but forsaketh his faith and the dear Lord, then another shall be chosen for the crown which the other would not earn by labour, even as ye have heard in the lection, that one of the warders become associated with the saints and received the crown which the other lost" (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. i, pp. 254-257).

After identifying the fortieth soldier as indicative of God's ability to replace the disloyal servant with a loyal one, Ælfric discusses the fulfillment of Christian duty, using the apostle Mattathias, who replaced Judas Iscariot, to reinforce the idea of the false follower replaced by the true.[200] He then discusses the fortieth soldier's unbaptized state, saying that although "Nyte we hweþer se weardmann wære æfre gefullod," still "Wise lareowas sædan . þæt ælc ðæra þe bið acweald for cristes geleafan bið soðlice gefullod þone he swealt for gode . and on his blode aðwægen fram synna horwum."[201] Next Ælfric discusses the importance of good works to salvation:

> Nis gode nan neod þæt we god wyrcan . ne he nan þing ne hæt for his agenre neode . ac hit fremað us sylfum swa hwæt swa he us bebyd . and we beoð gesælige gif we urum scyppende gehersumiað . and gif we hine ænne ofer ealle þincg lufiað . seðe hine forlæt he losað witodlice . Þeah hwæþere gelicaðþam leofan drihtne . þæt we his willan mid weorcum gefremman . and þurh þæt ge-earnian þæt ece lif mid him. [202]

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[200] This passage highlights the absence, noted earlier, of a Life of Mattathias from Ælfric's works. A Life of Mattathias would have served the thematic construct of *LoS* very well.

[201] "We do not know if the warder were ever baptized ... wise doctors have said, that every one of those who are killed for the faith of Christ is truly baptized when he dieth for God" (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. i, pp. 256-57). These ideas also appear in St Alban, when the soldier who refused to execute Alban is martyred "mid his blode gefullod," "baptized with his [own] blood" (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. i, p. 422).

[202] "God hath no need that we should do great works, neither commandeth He anything for His own need, but it profiteth ourselves, whatsoever he biddeth us, and we are happy if we obey our Creator, and if we love Him alone above all things. He who forsaketh Him, verily he shall perish; nevertheless it liketh our dear Lord that we should perform His will by our works, and thereby merit eternal life with him" (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. i, pp. 256-57).

The performance of God's specific will -- what I have termed spiritual fulfillment -- involves correct action in a particular time and place. The fortieth soldier joins the ranks of the holy by seeing the role God had created left unfilled. By filling God's intended role the fortieth soldier gains eternal life, even though he immediately gains a gruesome martyrdom. Ælfric then cites Paul First Letter to the Corinthians: "Se apostol paulus sette on his pistole þæt we soðlice synd ures scyppendes gefylstan . swa þæt ure drihten deð þurh his gecorenan fela þincg on worulde."[203] Performing one's duty in this world is acting on God's behalf, and through people's good works God's ends are served. Ælfric goes on to say that the evil actions of people also can, miraculously, be turned to good. The crucifixion of Christ was, he says, an evil that worked to the good of Christians, although he says (displaying typical medieval anti-Semitism) that the Jews whom he considers responsible "bið gedemed be ðam þe hi dydon . þeah þe ure drihten þa dæda him geþafode." [204] And so, as quoted earlier, he concludes that the heathen who persecuted the Christian martyrs and those who, in Ælfric's own time, "hynað and hergiað þa cristenan," are allowed by God to work evil. However, if his audience will follow God's will in fulfilling their duties, he assures them, good will miraculously flow from the evil deeds of the Viking invaders.

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[203] "The Apostle Paul set down in his Epistle (I. Cor. Iii. 9) that we are verily our Creator's helpers, so that our Lord doth, through his chosen (ones)many things in the world" (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. i, pp. 256-57).

[204] "[I]s adjudged according to what they did, though our Lord permitted them (to do) the deeds" (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. i, pp. 258-59).

The false closing of the Forty Soldiers, with its double Amens, appears to be evidence that Ælfric originally ended his text without an apostrophe on the meaning of the fortieth soldier and its accompanying development of the idea of spiritual fulfillment. Since, as we have seen, the inclusion of the Forty Soldiers itself in *Lives of Saints* is somewhat anomalous, this distinctly anomalous double ending points to Ælfric's desire to include the story of the Forty Soldiers for thematic reasons and – as in the case of the special appendix on the three orders of society attached to the Maccabees – his last-minute decision to add a clarifying comment developing his point more fully. There is also some evidence that the Forty Soldiers itself might have been a late arrival, added to the collection at a final stage of its construction. Hill's study of the dissemination of items in *Lives of Saints* has led her to comment that some items in the most complete extant manuscript, Julius E. vii, were " not all originally part of the *Lives of Saints* collection" (248).[205] She applies her comment only to the "non-hagiographical items," mentioning specifically Ash Wednesday, the Prayer of Moses, Kings, and the brief appendix to St. Swithun on St. Macarius. However, she goes on to say, "The only other items that do not appear in the first two groups of manuscripts [her criterion for conjecturing that certain works were not component parts of *Lives of Saints*] are the Forty Soldiers, and Chrysanthus and Daria, but these occur nowhere else at all, beyond Julius E. vii." Here

[205] J. Hill, "The Dissemination of Ælfric's *Lives of Saints*," p. 248. Hill's assumption seems to be that Ælfric's original plan for *LoS* should be the guide in establishing the text of the collection. I tend to favor discovering, if possible, Ælfric's final thoughts on the collection as a finished work as most indicative of the guiding idea behind the collection's "true" form.

again the Forty Soldiers stands out from the remainder of the collection, one of only two items extant only in the single manuscript that comes closest to approximating the author's exemplar.[206] The internal evidence for a last minute addition to the Forty Soldiers, focusing on the significance of the fortieth soldier, may thus be supplemented by manuscript evidence that could suggest that the Forty Soldiers itself was attached to the entire collection late, since one possible reason for the text's absence from other manuscripts containing most of the *Lives of Saints* pieces would be that a version of the collection circulated without the Forty Soldiers. Hill cautions that, "given the loss of manuscripts, it is unwise to put too much weight on this negative evidence," and so suggests that, in the case of the Forty Soldiers and Chrysanthus and Daria, "we must attribute their non-appearance either to relative unpopularity or, more probably, to accident of survival."[207] Given the nature of Ælfric's text as a whole, the pertinence of the Forty Soldiers to his central theme, .and the multiple anomalies surrounding his inclusion of the text, it seems more likely that, as I have been demonstrating, *Lives of Saints* appeared in two forms, one more consistent with the prefaces' focus on the saints' lives

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[206] Chrysanthus and Daria shares only its limited distribution with the various anomalies marking the Forty Soldiers. It is also important to keep in mind that, given the obvious mixed character of Julius E. vii, items not contained in it may have been in the exemplar of *LoS*, taking the place of the non-Ælfrician items and helping to fill out the probable item count of forty. For example, St Vincent, the Nativity of the Virgin Mary, and the homily on Judith might all have been parts of the *LoS*, and they are also, like the Forty Soldiers, works that appear uniquely in a single manuscript.

[207] J. Hill, "The Dissemination of Ælfric's *Lives of Saints*," p. 248.

particular to monastic devotion, containing only saints' lives, lacking the Forty Soldiers and Chrysanthus and Daria, and perhaps containing none or few of the appendices -- the texts marked *item* or *item alia*; and a second, final version very close to the collection in Julius E. vii, although perhaps ordered differently, not containing the works not by Ælfric, and including one or more texts not now considered part of the collection (St. Vincent, the Nativity of the Virgin, and, as Prins has suggested, one or more additional Old Testament narratives: Judges, Esther, or Judith[208]).

Whether or not the Forty Soldiers was added to *Lives of Saints* late, as part of a revision of the collection based on thematic concerns and consonant with a rhetorical purpose of instruction of the laity in a time of war, violence, and social disintegration, the second ending to the Forty Soldiers encapsulates with particular clarity the trope of spiritual transformation. In contrast to Sulpicius's trope of the unwilling, saintly soldier, spiritual fulfillment does not call on soldiers to lay down their weapons, pick up their beads and prayerbooks, and forswear earthly struggles. Yet the second fortieth soldier, by undergoing a spiritual transformation, fills the missing piece in an exposition of spiritual fulfillment by taking the place of the failed, first fortieth soldier. In its recognition of a different path for different men, spiritual fulfillment resembles Felix's trope of spiritual transformation, but unlike it Ælfric's trope calls on all Christians to find God's will for themselves, based on their station, order, and rank, and to fulfill the duties intended for

[208] Judith seems the most likely for inclusion given that text's pertinence to the themes of warfare and violence so evident in *LoS* as a whole.

them. Only if, like the fortieth soldier, his audience should find that a needed role in God's plan was not being fulfilled, that (in the terms of the Forty Soldiers) a crown is going unclaimed, then they should transform themselves and claim it. Therefore, in *Lives of Saints* certain characters do undergo a transformation (Martin, Julian and Basilissa, Moses and Joshua, Alban's anonymous executioner), but it takes place within the orderly processes of Christian society. As James Cross long ago noted, by Ælfric's time Martin had been securely attached to the *oratores*: the initiating role he played in the development of Western monasticism and in the ecclesiastical structure of Gaul confirmed the rightness, the orderliness, of his transformation. So also the thegn Florus in St. Maur must take his transformation from king's closest advisor to monk carefully, only after fulfilling his secular duties and asking his lord's permission:

> Hwæt ða florus gemunde hwæt he gemynte æt fruman . and hwæt he gode behet . þa ða he began þæt mynster . and bæd him þa leafe . æt his kyne-hlaforde . þæt he moste gecyrran . fram þam swicolum welum . and wunian on ðam mynstre þe he ge-worht hæfde . and be maures dihte adreogan his lif . and on godes þeow-dome gastlice libban . and swa ge-earnian . ða ecan myrhþe. [209]

The king reluctantly agrees, and the former thegn undergoes a solemn ceremony that transforms him, through the cutting of his hair, into an *orator*. Such exceptional situations do occur, when Christians shift from one order to another. But in general, like the thirty-nine other soldiers (and, less obviously, like the other guardsmen on the shore), Ælfric's

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[209] "Then Florus remembered what he had at first intended, and what he had vowed to God when he began [that] monastery, and besought leave for himself from his royal master, that he might turn from deceitful riches, and dwell in the monastery which he had wrought, and spend his life according to Maurus' direction, and live holily in God's service, and so merit the bliss eternal" (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. i, pp. 160-61).

audience should be prepared to continue in the duties to which they have already been assigned by birth and conditions of life, even if continuance in duty should lead to death, for by carrying out their duties they will be fulfilling the role intended for them and they may thereby gain the intended crown.

In order to fully understand the importance of the fulfillment of duty as a theme of *Lives of Saints*, one last text within *Lives of Saints* needs to be considered. The Prayer of Moses is among the texts identified by Hill as likely later additions based on their pattern of dissemination, and earlier passages from the Prayer of Moses were quoted here as evidence for the thematic concern with war in *Lives of Saints* and the author's use of English historical conditions. The central theme of this text is the importance of each individual carrying out correctly the task assigned to him by God. The story concerns the division of labor between Moses and Joshua in fighting against King Amalech. Joshua takes a band of chosen men and engages the king in battle, while Moses goes up on the mountain to pray with two companions, Hur and Aaron (the latter being the future father of the priestly class of Hebrew society). When Moses raises his hands in prayer, Joshua wins, successfully slaying his enemies, but when, out of weariness, he lets his hands fall, Joshua begins to lose. Only with the help of his two companions can he keep his hands raised and secure the Israelite victory. The incident plainly symbolizes for him the division of society into *bellatores* and *oratores*, and therefore represents a text of major importance to Ælfric's of spiritual fulfillment, because it provides biblical warrant for the division of society into classes. The division is emphasized by the emergence, not long

afterward (in I Samuel, 10.1), of the first king, Saul. The elaboration of the core ideas of the trope of spiritual fulfillment within the body of the Prayer of Moses is therefore consistent with that text's possible role as an addition to the legendary that carried heavy thematic weight in Ælfric's final conception of the collection as a whole. Following the exposition of the his narrative, Ælfric begins to develop the idea of the importance of prayer. He relates the war against Amalech to the contemporary war being waged against the English by the Vikings.

> Nu habbe we gewinn wið þone hatelan deofol . and he winð on us forðan þe he wælhreowa is . hu bið þonne gif we nellað to þam hælende clypian . þonne moyses werignyss ne mihte beon beladod. [210]

The importance of prayer in Ælfric's time is not exclusively clerical, but seems to be very general. The focus is not so much on monastic prayer as on prayer in church by the congregation and the proper behavior during worship. The Prayer of Moses is rubricated for Mid-Lent Sunday, and the focus on the prayers of the common people would certainly match that context. The audience Ælfric is writing for necessitates this focus on common prayer, despite the obvious opportunity it gives him to praise the monk's value to society, an idea he does present, although with less emphasis than might be expected from an ardent champion of the monastic life. Because the text is intended for Mid-Lent, Ælfric then expounds on proper fasting, but he ends this section with a shift of thought to the greater importance of right-living in general than fasting on specific days:

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[210] "Now have we warfare against the fierce devil, and he fighteth against us, because he is cruel; how will it be then if we will not cry to the Saviour, since the weariness of Moses might not be excused?" (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. i, pp. 286-87).

> Nis nan fæsten swa god ne gode swa ge-cweme . swa swa þæt fæsten is þæt man fulnysse onscunige . and leahtras forbuge . and forlæte sace . and mid godum biggencgum . gode ge-cweme . and mid gesceade libbe swa swa we sædon ær. [211]

It is unclear exactly where Ælfric means when he says, "swa swa we sædon ær,' since he has communicated these basic ideas repeatedly. Right living is the duty of the Christian. But then he begins a long list of the specific attributes expected of each class of persons, and the specific faults also most inappropriate for that class. It echoes dramatically Anglo-Saxon gnomic literature, and in doing so shows how, for Ælfric, this idea of the social orders is traditional English wisdom:[212]

> Ne sceal se wise mann beon butan godum weorcum .
> ne se ealde ne beo buton æwfæstnysse .
> ne se iunga ne beo butan gehyrsumnysse .
> ne se welega ne beo butan ælmes-dædum .
> ne wifmen ne beon butan sidefulnusse .
> ne se hlafors ne beo leas on wordum .
> ne nan cristen man ne sceal sceandlice flitan .
> Eft bið swiðe þwyrlic . þæt ðearfa beo modig .
> and forcuðlic hit bið þæt cyning beo unrihtwis .
> eac bið swyþe derigendlic þæt bisceop beo gemeleas .
> and un-fremful . bið þæt folc beo sutan steora .
> oððe butan . æ . him eallum to hearme. [213]

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[211] "There is no fasting so good, nor so pleasing to God, as is this fasting, that a man shun foulness, and avoid sins, and leave off contentions, and please God with good services, and live discreetly, even as we said before" (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. i, pp. 290-91).

[212] The similarity to gnomic wisdom poetry is accentuated when the text is laid out as poetry, as it is here. For the issue of Ælfric's rhythmical prose, see n. 1 above.

[213] "The wise man must not be without good works, nor the old be without piety, nor the young be without obedience, nor the wealthy be without almsdeeds, nor women be without modesty, nor the lord be false in words, nor must any Christian man shamefully strive. Again, it is very contrary that the poor be proud, and it is odious that a king be unrighteous; and it is very hurtful that a bishop be careless, and it is unprofitable that the folk be without a governor, or without law, for the harm of them all" (Ælfric, *Ælfric's*

The list outlines the parameters not only of Ælfric's view of a properly functioning Christian society, but also sheds considerable light on the range of texts included in *Lives of Saints*. Even more than the list of types of saints in the Memory of the Saints, this list of types of persons, both good and evil, accounts for the full range of vignettes and narratives in the collection as a whole, including the Old Testament and non-hagiographic items. Overly proud common people who laugh in church, unrighteous kings who condemn the martyrs, trustworthy lords who rule their people wisely, modest women, careful bishops -- these are the inhabitants of Ælfric's world of moral example. But the passage that follows this one returns again to the idea of the specific orders, and indicates that, more than anything else, *Lives of Saints* concerns the division between *orator* and *bellator*. Given the audience for whom he was writing, and his own perspective as a writer, the idea of the three orders and the two "leading" orders in particular is his central concern:

> Gif ða gehadodan menn healdað godes ðeowdom on gesættan timan . and syferlice libbað and gif ða læwedan menn libbað æfter rihte . þonne wite we to gewissan . þæt god wile fore-sceawian ure gesunfulnuysse . and sibbe mid us . and ðærto-ecan us syllan ða ecan myrhðe mid him . Gif þonne þa heafod-menn . and ða gehadodan lareowas þyses ne gymað . ac þencað embe woruld-þincg . and godes beboda ne his biggencga ne gymað . þonne wile god geswutelian his forewennysse on him . oððe mid hungre oþþe mid cwealme. [214]

Lives of Saints, vol. i, pp. 292-93). This passage appears in expanded form in the Twelve Abuses.

[214] "If cowl-wearing men observe God's service at set times, and live soberly, and if the laity live according to right, then know we for certain that God will provide for our prosperity, and peace among us, and in addition give us the eternal mirth with Him. If then the bead-men, and their cowl-wearing teachers, will not take care for this, but think of

The proper ordering of society will bring peace and prosperity, and the confusion of the orders will bring only death and destruction. It is here that Ælfric attaches the description of how England was well-ruled in Edgar's day, affirming that the state of the world in their own day is the result of the confusion of the three orders. Men of all stations should study and understand their appointed roles so that they can restore peace and plenty or, if it be God's will, die in the flesh to be reborn in eternal life.

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worldly things, and care neither for God's commands, nor for His worship, then will God manifest in them (their) contempt of Him, either by hunger or by [slaughter]" (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. i, p. 292-93). Skeat translates *mid cwealme* as "by pestilence," but the word can also mean murder or slaughter, as evidenced by Ælfric's use of it in the Passion of St Alban.

VI

Ælfric formulated a new approach to the relationship between warfare and sanctity. In the introduction to the *Lives of Saints*, he insists on the point that he will say nothing new, claiming that nothing he had to say was original:

> Ne secge we nan þincg niwes on þyssere gesetnysse . forþan ðe hit stod gefyren awriten on ledebbocum þeah þe þa læwedom men þæt nyston . Nelle we eac mid leasungum þyllic liccetan forþan þe geleaffulle fæderas and halige lareowas hit awriton on leden-spræce to langum gemynde and to trimmincge þam towerdum mannum. [215]

But he has selected and orchestrated it so that the already recorded views of many prior writers should come together, by their accumulative force, and through their point and counterpoint, to say something never quite said before, or at least not so explicitly, passionately, and pointedly: that each man may come to God by accepting the duty appropriate to his rank, status, and order, even if that task might include dying wielding a sword, rather than by rejecting his personal duties in favor of some uniform, abstract Christian duty.

As articulated above, Ælfric's theme comes closest not to any of the concepts recorded in the great Latin works analyzed in this study -- the ideas of Sulpicius and

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[215] "We say nothing new in this book, because it has stood written down long since in Latin books, though lay-men knew it not. Neither will we feign such things by means of falsehoods, because devout fathers and holy doctors wrote it in the Latin tongue, for a lasting memorial, and to confirm the faith of future generations" (Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. i, pp. 6-7).

Abbo, Bede and Alcuin (and certainly not Felix's *Vita Sancti Guthlaci*, which Ælfric conspicuously leaves out of his *Lives of Saints*, as we have seen) -- but instead the ideas embodied in a vernacular work analyzed at length in Chapter Four:

> Monge sindon geond middangeard
> hadas under heofonum þa þe in haligra
> rim arisað; we þæs ryht magun
> æt æghwylcum anra gehyran
> gif we halig bebodu healdan willað. [216]

The unwilling, saintly warrior called by God to the priesthood, to monkhood, to bishophood, must put down his sword. The holy king, called to a throne and a martyrdom on the field of battle, must instead pick up his sword -- if duty calls him to fight -- or put it down, if duty calls him to die, unresisting. The decision for Ælfric is not violence or non-violence. It is a question of who should use force and shed blood, how force should properly be used, and when bloodshed and warfare are the appropriate Christian path of duty. This is true in part because the hagiographic tradition Ælfric inherited, modified, and synthesized was not a single Christian tradition of non-violence. Nor was it a unified tradition of justified force used for the ends of family, country, and church. What Ælfric saw was a tradition of diversity within unity, a tradition that featured a tri-partite structure

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[216] J. Roberts, ed., *The Guthlac Poems*, ll. 30-34. In my own translation, "Throughout Middle Earth there are many orders under heaven of those who arise into the ranks of the holy; we may rightly belong to any one of these if we are willing to keep the holy commandments."

that mirrored the Trinity.[217] Ælfric asserted firmly that what he communicated was a truth both ancient and new, true for the past, present, and future.

Nonetheless, Ælfric's work did break new ground. Since the earliest days of the Church, Christian writers had been working to resolve the apparent conflict between warfare and holiness, between violence considered necessary for the defense of society (or, just as often, for the spreading of the faith), and the spiritual imperative of a quest for sanctity. Anglo-Saxon hagiographers played a crucial role in evolving a theoretical construct that could reconcile the division between the ideal of non-violent resistance to evil, exemplified by the image and words of Jesus in the gospel narratives, and the reality of a world wracked by warfare, bloodshed, and violence. The soldier-saints, martyred kings, and holy warriors (some native to England and others inherited from other cultural traditions) honored by the Anglo-Saxons provided Ælfric with the raw material from which to construct his own carefully reasoned synthesis. The origin of the idea of the three orders has not yet been identified conclusively identified, but its earliest expression comes in the works of King Alfred, an Englishman and one of Ælfric's literary precursors. That social theory was the necessary organizing principle upon which Ælfric could build his construct. If Anglo-Saxon society had survived intact for the century following Ælfric's compilation of his treatise on the tripartite (and, at the same time, multifaceted) paths of Christian duty, this new Anglo-Saxon synthesis of the perceived contradiction

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[217] Under this trinitarian concept, the king's position above or outside the tri-partite structure would be analogous to that of God, composed of three parts but also integral.

between warfare and sanctity might have played a key role in justifying the Crusades. Indeed, as Christopher Tyerman has pointed out, Ælfric's *Lives of Saints* forms an important part of the prehistory of crusading ideology.[218] That Ælfric's role in this intellectual endeavor has not previously been fully recognized may derive in large part from the radical disjunction brought to England not long after Ælfric's death by the inundating tidal wave of the Norman Conquest.

[218] C. Tyerman, *England and the Crusades*, pp. 11-13.

Chapter Seven: Lay Sanctity and Era's End

I

This study has documented how the literary culture of England underwent a profound evolution over the during the Anglo-Saxon period, developing new patterns while at the same time preserving ancient traditions. In particular, it has concerned five types of sainthood prominent in Anglo-Saxon literature: the unwilling, saintly soldier; the martyred warrior king; the soldier who, through spiritual transformation, became a saint; the holy king who died as a sacrifice for his people; and the holy warrior who died fulfilling his Christian duty. In developing these five saintly paths, Anglo-Saxon poets, hagiographers, and scholars welded tropes inherited from early Christian hagiography to new images and ideas rooted in their own way of life. The earliest of these writers glorified Christian kings who died in battle against pagans, a uniquely Anglo-Saxon version of sanctity, but others praised more traditional saints, including the unwilling, saintly soldier and those saints who transformed themselves from actual soldiers into spiritual warriors of Christ. These three hagiographic norms endured throughout most of the Anglo-Saxon era, even as the last two forms of sanctity, the sacrificial king and the holy warrior, were being formed and developed.

This study has also shown how cultural emissaries like Boniface and Alcuin spread both the traditional hagiographic images and the new Anglo-Saxon ideas about sainthood across the Channel into Frankish society, where they influenced the Carolingians and their descendants. As discussed in Chapter Five, when Abbo of Fleury brought these hagiographic tropes back to England, to honor a martyred East Anglian king already venerated in England as a saint, they had been blended with continental traditions, synthesized into a new image of holy kingship. This was not the last stage in this process, however. During the last century of the Anglo-Saxon era, two final Anglo-Saxon kings, both named Edward, achieved the distinction of sainthood: Edward the Martyr and Edward the Confessor. Despite their similarities of status and name, these two honored rulers followed radically divergent paths to sanctity. Edward the Martyr's short and undistinguished reign (975 - 978/9) ended in a brutal assassination, most probably through the instigation of close relatives vying with him for power, and thus he joined the numerous ranks of saintly murdered princes and kings, a sixth type of saint often mentioned in this study but essentially peripheral to its major concerns. Edward the Confessor alone among Anglo-Saxon royal saints was honored for a life of purported sanctity, rather than for his martyr's death or his renunciation of secular for spiritual life, creating a new siantly archetype. He achieved what both Alfred the Great and Edgar the Peaceful did not: he became a saint simply by fulfilling his duties as king.[1] He also has the

[1] In his biography of Edward, Frank Barlow mentions that "Edward's grandfather, King Edgar, had a cult at Glastonbury," but this was no more than a localized phenomenon (F. Barlow, *Edward the Confessor*, pp. 256-57). Edgar is another of the "near-saints" of the late Anglo-Saxon period.

distinction of being the first Anglo-Saxon whose saint's cult developed under the new Norman political and ecclesiastical regime.

The concept of holy kingship developed in Abbo's *Life of Edmund* came to fuller form in this Edward. Martrydom finally had become unnecessary to holy kingship, although it had proved crucial to the cults of Edwin, Oswald, Edmund, and the long train of murdered royalty that culminated in that other Edward. In his modern biography of Edward the Confessor, Frank Barlow points to "indications in the *Vita Ædwardi Regis* that the French, probably Normans, led the way in attributing thaumaturgical powers to Edward." [2] He also discusses how the idea that kings -- all kings -- could cure illness with their touch was a continental, and specifically a Capetian, invention, and he identifies the belief in Edward's curative powers as part of a reciprocal relationship between the development of the Norman-Angevin claims to royal healing powers and the growth of Edward's cult:

> By Henry II's reign probably all strands had joined, imitation of the Capetians, the precedent of Edward, the theories of historians and theologians, the encouragement of sycophants, the basic reverance for the anointed king, and the reaction against the 'Gregorian' attempt to secularize kingship; and the coming together of some, or all, of these threads produced a custom which became a lasting tradition. And if Edward's miracles had an influence on English kingship in the twelfth century, so, conversely, the changed nature of the monarchy may have helped Edward's reputation. [3]

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[2] F. Barlow, *Edward the Confessor*, p. 257.

[3] F. Barlow, *Edward the Confessor*, p. 271.

In a real sense, Edward was more a Norman than an Anglo-Saxon saint, despite his English blood. His cult served the political, social, and spiritual demands of the new Norman dynasty.

There were, however, a number of Anglo-Saxons who could be termed "near-saints" of the old, superseded culture: men who in one way or another came close to being revered as saints and who represented the Anglo-Saxon traditions that gradually vanished after the watershed of 1066. These "near-saints" are laymen whose path to sanctity reflected not the tradition of the sacrificial king characterized by Abbo but the new ideal of holy warriors developed by that other great synthesizer, Ælfric of Eynsham. As discussed in the previous chapter, Ælfric's compendium of saints' lives and homilies glorified not only the martyred kings and purified former-soldiers of Anglo-Saxon tradition but also a nascent new breed of martyred warriors, *bellatores* like Judas Maccabeus whose mission was to live and die fighting for God.

The older, traditional Anglo-Saxon hagiographic norms had long contributed to a cultural fault-line which became increasingly evident in tenth- and eleventh-century piety. Trained to fight, encouraged by the Church to use their arms to protect society, laymen nonetheless lacked unambiguous models affirming the sanctity of their endeavors. Early medieval hagiographers sometimes used the earthly warfare of a saint who had been a soldier to invest the spiritual struggle with the manliness, heroism, and drama of physical combat, but they showed the saint definitively rejecting the warlike life he had led (except, as noted, in the exceptional cases of royal saints like Oswald and Edwin). As models for

living, these texts provided no moral support for the warriors upon whose martial prowess Christian society depended, unless they should subsequently renounce their earthly responsibilities. One often-quoted statement of the problem comes from the *vita* of a famous warrior: the crusader Tancred. Ralph of Caen, writing the *Gesta Tancredi*, records a depth of concern worth considering very seriously:

> Frequently he burned with anxiety because the warfare he engaged in as a knight seemed to be contrary to the Lord's commands. The Lord, in fact, ordered him to offer the cheek that had been struck together with the other cheek to the striker; but secular knighthood did not spare the blood of relatives. The Lord urged him to give his tunic and his cloak as well to the man who would take them away; the needs of war impelled him to take from a man already despoiled of both whatever remained to him. And so, if ever that wise man could give himself up to repose, these contradictions deprived him of courage. But after the judgement of Pope Urban granted remission of all their sins to all Christians going out to fight the gentiles, then at last, as if previously asleep, his vigour was aroused, his powers grew, his eyes opened, his courage was born. For before ... his mind was divided, uncertain whether to follow in the footsteps of the Gospel or the world. [4]

For Ralph's Tancred, the call to Crusade resolved the crisis of faith brought on by conflicting responsibilities to God and king. There is less evidence for a crisis of faith like Tancred's among the Anglo-Saxon warrior elite, but a careful examination of literary texts by or about them reveals that they may have shared similar concerns to those Ralph attributed to Tancred. The very men on whom society (and in particular, the institutions of the Church) relied for defense had not been given unequivocal assurances that their path in life was equally pleasing to God as that of their clerical counterparts.

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[4] Quoted in and translated by J. Riley-Smith, *The First Crusade and the Idea of Crusading*, p. 36

Certain qualifications must be made to this statement of the situation. As shown repeatedly in the preceding chapters, English hagiographers had long offered the hope of immediate resurrection to royalty, in particular to kings. The path to sainthood of Edwin, Oswald, and Edmund lay not in renunciation of the world but in the performance of their royal duties. One benefit of such cults must have lain in the reassurance they gave to kings that their actions were uniquely pleasing to God. The benefits of these royal cults did not, however, extend downward to a king's lay followers.

The other major exception often cited by scholars is the *Life of St. Gerald of Aurillac* by Odo of Cluny, also discussed more than once in earlier chapters. Yet even this *vita* of a lay noble whose society and times required him to take up arms frequently didi not sanctify violence itself. As quoted earlier, Odo describes battles miraculously won by armies who bore their weapons reversed.

> But sometimes when the unavoidable necessity of fighting lay on him, he commanded his men in imperious tones, to fight with the backs of their swords and with their spears reversed. This would have been ridiculous to the enemy if Gerald, strengthened by divine power, had not been invincible to them. And it would have seemed useless to his own men, if they had not learned by experience that Gerald, who was carried away by his piety in the very moment of battle, had not always been invincible. When therefore they saw that he triumphed by a new kind of fighting that was mingled with piety, they changed their scorn to admiration, and sure of victory they readily fulfilled his commands. For it was a thing unheard of that he or the soldiers who fought under him were not victorious.[5]

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[5] Odo of Cluny, "The Life of Saint Gerald of Aurillac," trans. Gerald Sitwell, O.S.B., in T. F. X. Noble and T. Head, ed., *Soldiers of Christ*, p. 302.

Anglo-Saxon ealdormen would have been justifiably reluctant to see such accounts as models for their own behavior, especially when their struggles against the Vikings led more often to defeat than to victory.

Odo also undecuts his support for the secular leader forced to wage defensive war with extravagant claims about Gerald's own behavior that implied that fighting, although necessary, was still not sacred. Gerald himself never engaged in bloodshed: "But this also is certain, that he himself never wounded anybody." [6] Odo proceeds carefully in his claims for Gerald's saintliness. He acknowledges that some people might think that his involvement in warfare would disqualify him from the communion of the saints: "Let no one be worried because a just man sometimes made use of fighting, which seems incompatible with religion. No one who has judged his cause impartially will be able to show that the glory of Gerald is clouded by this." [7] He then uses Old Testament examples to argue that "[i]t was lawful ... for a layman to carry the sword in battle that he might protect defenseless people," saying that "some of the fathers, and of these the most holy and most patient, when the cause of justice demanded, valiently took up arms against their adversaries." As examples he cites, "Abraham, who destroyed a great multitude to rescue his nephew" and "King David who sent his forces even against his own son." [8] These examples, remarkably similar to those employed by Ælfric in his study of holy warriors,

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[6] T. F. X. Noble and T. Head, ed., *Soldiers of Christ*, p. 302.

[7] T. F. X. Noble and T. Head, ed., *Soldiers of Christ*, p. 302.

[8] T. F. X. Noble and T. Head, ed., *Soldiers of Christ*, p. 303.

coexist uneasily with Odo's image of Gerald refraining from bloodshed himself and exhorting his men to fight with weapons reversed. He cannot have felt complete confidence in his own argument if he found it necessary to claim that Gerald "triumphed by a new kind of fighting."

Odo's argument demonstrates clearly that in the tenth century warfare was not yet a sacred activity, however essential it may have been for the security and stability of both church and state. He goes on to assert that Gerald further manifested his saintliness in his method of waging war:

> It does not darken his glory, then, that he fought for the cause of God, for whom the whole world fights against the unwise. Rather is it to his praise that he always won openly without the help of deceit or ambushes, and nevertheless was so protected by God, that, as I said before, he never stained his sword with human blood. Hereafter, let him who by his example shall take up arms against his enemies, seek also by his example not his own but the common good. For you may see some who for love of praise or gain boldly put themselves in danger, gladly sustain the evils of the world for the sake of the world, and while they encounter its bitterness lose the joys, so to speak, which they were seeking. [9]

One result of such an argument might have been to leave those very men on whom the Church depended for its physical safety without a reciprocal sense that their struggles on behalf of the Church were acceptable in the eyes of God. If they were unable, like Gerald, to win victories "by a new kind of fighting," did that mean that their struggles were not supported by God? What steps should a powerful layman take to secure for himself an appropriately lofty position in the life hereafter? Must he refrain from any personal

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[9] T. F. X. Noble and T. Head, ed., *Soldiers of Christ*, p. 303.

shedding of blood? Should he actually instruct his followers to fight with weapons reversed? How could he be certain that his motives and actions were pure?

During the tenth and eleventh centuries, steps were taken by or on behalf of Anglo-Saxon ealdormen to reassure them that their actions on behalf of the Church and society could gain them a place in heaven. Like the earlier waves of Norsemen, the Viking invasions of the late tenth and eleventh centuries sorely tested Anglo-Saxon churchmen's ideals of non-engagement in earthly warfare. Faced with a bitterly violent foe, churchmen like Ælfric must have considered a tendency toward abandonment of earthly heroism among the Anglo-Saxon nobility as a threat to the continuity of the established Church in England. To combat such a threat, religious leaders instituted prayers for the success of arms and the defense of country, and they also encouraged powerful ealdormen to align themselves with the Church: to support and defend religion, to heed the advice of scripture and other sacred writings, to found monastic institutions, and in general to identify themselves with the monastic cause. In response, ealdormen themselves took concrete steps (including, in at least one case, learning Latin) that aligned their lives with the spiritual ideals of the Church. It was for such men that Ælfric of Eynsham created his *Lives of the Saints*, and he was not alone. The writers of texts like the *Visio Leofrici* and the *Battle of Maldon* also suggested that warrior noblemen might hope for the same direct, unmediated salvation through sainthood that kings enjoyed. This new form of sainthood would offer men like Athelstan of East Anglia, Byrhtnoth of Essex, Æthelweard and his son Æthemær of Wessex, and Leofric of Mercia the hope of immediate transport to heaven after death as a result of exemplary performance of their earthly duties.

II

The group of influential tenth and eleventh-century ealdormen whose lives and, in some cases, deaths appear to have been touched by the call of lay sainthood represent an elite closely analogous to Ælfric's image of the holy *bellator*. Powerful men in Anglo-Saxon society, these ealdormen stand out from many similar figures of the period because their lives were in some ways translated into literature. In the literary traces they left behind, whether in works of their own or works about them--poems, visions, chronicles, testimonials, even in one case a full-fledged *vita*--we can see a sanctifying urge; some works reveal the ealdormen's desires to sanctify their own lives, following paths normally reserved for clerics, and in other instances the works express a desire by their contemporaries to sanctify them.

There was a marked tendency among certain families of late-Anglo-Saxon laymen to identify themselves closely with the Church, appearing alongside (or even, at times, in place of) royalty as founders, supporters, and defenders of ecclesiastical institutions. Two of the earliest men that the extant records allow us to identify as having followed this path of association with and support of the Church were the powerful noblemen known as Athelstan 'Half King' and his son, Athelwine, 'Dei amicus.' According to Cyril Hart, "The 'Half King' was a constant and powerful friend of the English church, both in England at large and within his own ealdordom of East Anglia, where the conversion of

the Danes was zealously consolidated and a diocesan framework reconstituted."[10] It is to the eldormancy of Athelstan that Jane Roberts refers when she extends the possible date of translation of the *Vita sancti Guthlaci* into the mid-tenth century.[11] Athelstan might well have played an important role in the development of the cults of both Guthlac and Edmund, two major soldier saints whose veneration was centered within his East Anglian ealdordom. In assessing the process of conversion of the Eastern Danelaw, Dorothy Whitelock says:

> The appointment of the Englishman Æthelstan 'Half-King,' by about 932, to be ealdorman of East Anglia, would lead to a more thorough Christianising of the province, for he was a religious-minded man, who later retired to become a monk of Glastonbury, and his family, especially his sons Æthelwine and Ælfwold, became great supporters of monastic reform. [12]

Hart comments that it "is a measure of Athelstan's achievement that the eastern Danelaw remained in subjection to the West Saxon royal line, its inhabitants loyal and quiescent, throughout the period of his rule," adding that we "hear of no revolts, no collaboration with the Danes of northern England in subversive movements, no encouragement of Viking raiders along the eastern coastline."[13] Like the East Anglian saints Edmund and Guthlac, Athelstan combined piety and martial prowess. As Hart indicates:

> While Athelstan kept his earldom under such control, Kings Edmund and Eadred were enabled to recover during the years 942 x 946 first the northern Danelaw,

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[10] C. Hart, "Athelstan "Half King' and His Family," p. 122.

[11] J. Roberts, "The Old English Prose Translation," p. 376.

[12] D. Whitelock, "The Conversion of the Eastern Danelaw," p. 172.

[13] C. Hart, "Athelstan "Half King' and His Family," p. 121.

> then Northumbria, and finally to conquer Strathclyde. One cannot doubt that Athelstan should be credited with a major share in the planning and execution of these highly successful campaigns. [14]

Hart does not specify Athelstan's precise role in the reconquest, and it cannot in fact be determined. *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* focuses on the conquering kings, Edmund and Eadred, and not on those who fought under him.

Most of what is known about Athelstan and his sons comes from legal documents, writs, and charters, occasionally supplemented by the Latin chronicles of various religious houses and the *vitae* of prominent ecclesiastical figures. Hart documents the close ties between Athelstan's family and the Anglo-Saxon royal family, based on those sources available and drawing logical inferences:

> By his first wife Ælfgifu, King Edmund had two sons, Eadwig and Edgar, and a fundamentally important but rarely quoted passage in the *Ramsey Chronicle* reveals that after Ælfgifu's death in 944, the infant ætheling Edgar did not remain with his step-mother Æthelflæd, Edmund's second wife, but was fostered instead by Ælfwyn, the wife of the 'HalfKing'. Of the four sons of the 'Half King', Æthelwine the youngest was perhaps three or four years older than Edgar, and so they would have been brought up together. Reared in such a household, Edgar became steeped in the ideals underlying the great movement for monastic reform of which his fodter brother Æthelwine was to become the principal lay patron in England. One cannot doubt that that in their childhood both Edgar and Æthelwine came under the influence of Abbot Dunstan of Glastonbury, who was a close personal friend of Ealdorman Athelstan and his brothers as early as 946. Edgar's later education took place under Abbot Æthelwold of Abingdon, of which house Athelstan 'Half King' was one of the earliest benefactors. Athelstan's fostering of the ætheling Edgar was therefore profoundly significant. Edgar became the most Christian monarch of the Anglo-Saxon era, and the repercussions of his upbringing were to shape the course of English history throughout the next century. [15]

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[14] C. Hart, "Athelstan "Half King' and His Family," p. 122.

[15] C. Hart, "Athelstan "Half King' and His Family," pp. 123-24.

Edgar, that "most Christian monarch," and the father and son who were "the earliest benefactors" and "principal lay patron[s]" of the Benedictine reform in England represent a group of "near-saints" whose lives point up the limits still restricting lay sainthood to martyrs during the tenth century. Edgar's death was commemorated in two poems inserted into different recensions of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, but neither work presents the dead ruler as a saint. If even Edgar 'The Peaceful' lacked honor as a saint, despite the advantages kingship conferredin that direction, it should be no surprise that Athelstan and Æthelwine also failed to receive such honors.[16] All three men contributed significantly to the growth and regularization of the church in the tenth century, yet none of them died a martyr. Nearly a century later, Edward the Confessor would become the first Anglo-Saxon king to become a saint without following the martyr's path, and no Anglo-Saxon layman below the level of king would ever become a saint on the model of Gerald of Aurillac.

[16] According to Barlow, Edgar did, in fact, have "a cult at Glastonbury," although the claim seems somewhat overstated (F. Barlow, *Edward the Confessor*, p. 257).

III

One tenth century ealdorman did die a kind of martyr's death, however, and the famous account of his defeat in battle reveals quite a bit about Anglo-Saxon views of the intersection of warfare and sanctity. The *Battle of Maldon* depicts the heroism and death of Byrhtnoth, ealdorman of Essex, who died defending the region under his care from Viking invasion. The poem is unique among extant Old English historical poems for its focus on a battle fought not by a king but by an ealdorman, a powerful nobleman but nonetheless an underling. There are poems that honor the exploits of warriors like Beowulf and Waldere who were not yet kings, but they look back to a distant past and their heroes went on to become powerful rulers. Others commemorate contemporary events, for example the *Battle of Brunanburh* or the two versions of the *Death of Edgar*, but these focus on the lives and deaths of kings or their immediate families. If there was a genre of poetry immortalizing the deeds of contemporary non-royal heroes, no other example of it survives. [17]

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[17] Many Old Norse poems appear to have commemorated the acts of non-royal heroes, just as the later sagas did. It is possible that such a genre of Old English poetry did exist but that, due to the various factors limiting the survival of Anglo-Saxon literary works into the modern era, no other examples of it were preserved. The survival of other texts mentioned in this concluding chapter may also reflect a larger pool of similar works no longer extant, of which these examples may be only chance survivals.

The most remarkable feature of the *Battle of Maldon* is the poem's concern with a defeat rather than a victory. Heroic poems like *Beowulf* and *The Fight at Finnsburg* contain tragic elements, but the glorification of a defeated army shows more similarity to Christian tales of martyrdoms than to the sagas of secular heroes. In fact, the event which the poem immortalizes has the greatest affinity with accounts of the heroic defeats of Saints Oswald, Edwin, and Edmund, the three Anglo-Saxon kings who, as discussed in earlier chapters, came to be regarded as "kings and martyrs." In all of Anglo-Saxon literature, *The Battle of Maldon* comes closer than any previous work to extending the idea of martyrdom to a non-royal warrior cut down in battle while defending his homeland against pagan invaders.

This is not to say that the *Maldon*-poet's intentions were explicitly hagiographic. In 1965, J. E. Cross published a study contrasting Oswald, King of Northumbria, and Byrhtnoth, Ealdorman of Essex whom Professor Cross aptly described as "a hero who is Christian."[18] In his essay, Cross clearly stated his hope that, by showing "relevant contrasts and comparisons from [their] own age," he could return Byrhtnoth and the poem commemorating his death from the rarefied atmosphere of hagiography (where some critics wished to place them) to a more secure and lasting resting place among the Germanic heroes and heroic works of the Anglo-Saxon era. As Prof. Cross has successfully shown, the poem cannot be taken as evidence that Byrhtnoth was ever

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[18] J. E. Cross, "Oswald and Byrhtnoth," p. 93. Others have noted similarities between Byrhtnoth and the martyred warrior saints, especially Edmund. See, for example, N. F. Blake, "*The Battle of Maldon.*"

regarded as a saint. "Of course," as Prof. Cross readily admits, "Byrhtnoth *could* have become a martyr-saint and warranted his *passio*, since the circumstances of his death fulfill the essential qualification for sainthood for those in the life active in this period of history."[19] One caveat needs to be added, however. Byrhtnoth's saintly credentials were deficient in one area: Byrhtnoth was not saintly material because of his secular status in life. If he had been honored as a saint, he would have been the first Anglo-Saxon to follow in St Gerald of Aurillac's path to non-royal, lay sainthood. Moreover, the account of his death makes clear that he neither admonished his men to fight with their swords reversed nor abstained personally from the shedding of blood. If he had been a saint, it would have been more in the manner of St Oswald of Northumbria than of St Gerald of Aurillac.

The poem does present death in battle as a kind of martyrdom, although it falls short of claiming saintly status for its hero. More than once the poet links Byrhtnoth with religious imagery and ideas that mark him out as both exemplary Christian and heroic leader, and thereby associate his death with the performance of Christian duty. The first comes when Byrhtnoth comments that God alone knows what the outcome of the battle will be, rather than bragging that he will win through his own personal prowess. He says to the Vikings, after pulling back his forces to allow them across the narrow causeway:

> 'Nu eow is gerymed: gað ricene to us
> guman to guþe. God ana wat

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[19] J. E. Cross, "Oswald and Byrhtnoth," p. 93.

hwa þære wælstowe wealdan mote.' (ll. 93-95) [20]

As N.F. Blake points out, Byrhtnoth "places the outcome firmly in God's hands." Rather than an overweening pride, he exhibits "humility and deference to God," and although his decision to allow the enemy to cross over to his side of the river "may have been foolish in military terms, ... he did not do it because he necessarily thought he was going to win; he did not suffer from overconfidence."[21] The contradiction implied by viewing death in battle as martyrdom, which dominated discussion of the "martyrdoms" of Edwin and Oswald, comes forcefully into play here as well. If the poet, and presumably Byrhtnoth as well, believed that "God ana wat" the outcome of the battle, did they not also believe that God determined who would win? And if so, how could the poet reconcile the defeat of an exemplary Christian at the hands of a pagan foe with God's role as "Lord of Battles"? Herein lay the primary power of the trope of the defeated Christian leader as saint: the power that extended beyond the grave righted the upset balance.

The *Maldon*-poet again emphasizes God's role in determining the outcome of battle immediately after the ealdorman has expertly killed two vikings:

Gegremod wearð se guðrinc: he mid gare stang
wlancne wicing þe him þa wunde forgeaf.
Frod wæs se fyrdrinc; he let his francan wadan
þurh ðæs hysses hals; hand wisode
þæt he on þam færsceaðan feorh geræhte.
Ða he oþerne ofstlice sceat

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[20] This and all subsequent quotations and translations are from Donald Scragg's *The Battle of Maldon*. "'Now a path is opened for you: come quickly to us,/ men at war. God alone knows/ who will control the battlefield'" (*The Battle of Maldon*, pp. 22-23).

[21] N. F. Blake, "*The Battle of Maldon*," pp. 338-39.

> þæt seo byrne robræst: he wæs on breostum wund
> þurh ða hringlocan; him æt heortan stod
> ætterne ord. Se eorl wæs þe bliþra:
> hloh þa modi man, sæde Metode þanc
> ðæs dægweorces þe him Drihten forgeaf. (ll. 138-48) [22]

The poet shows none of Odo's scruples in portraying Gerald of Aurillac's army fighting with weapons reversed: not only does Byrhtnoth fight with his weapons aimed with deadly accuracy at his foes, he exults in the battle, laughing as he thanks God for giving him victory. The poet calls killing "ðæs dægweorces þe him Drihten forgeaf," "the day's work that the Lord had given him," sanctifying combat as the appointed role given to the Christian soldier by God. Some critics have argued that the poet criticizes Byrhtnoth for displaying *ofermod*, an excess of pride, and the characterization of Byrhtnoth as *þa modi man* could be taken to undercut the ealdorman's actions by characterizing his state of mind as arrogant when he laughs and thanks God for his ability to kill his enemies; however, *modig* more often means "spirited, daring, bold, brave, high-souled, magnanimous" than it does "impetuous, headstrong" or "arrogant, or proud." [23] A more subtle reading of these lines might argue away the poem's glorification of Byrhtnoth role

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[22] "The man of battle was furious: with a javelin he stabbed/ the proud viking who had given him the wound./ The military man was experienced; he made his spear pass/ through the younger man's neck; his hand guided it/ so that he wrenched life from the wicked thief.

Then he quickly despatched another,/ so that the body armour shattered: he was wounded in the breast/ through the ringmail; at his heart stood/ the deadly point. The earl was the more exultant:/ the proud man roared with laughter, gave thanks to his Maker/ for the day's work that the Lord had given him" (*Battle of Maldon*, pp. 22-25).

[23] J. R. Clark Hall, *A Concise Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*, p. 239.

as brave warleader, but most readers will agree that the poet is praising not criticizing the ealdorman's spirited defense against the Danes, despite its failure.

The poet again links death in battle to martyrdom in a final speech Byrhtnoth gives before he is cut down. Like the traditional Christian martyr, he commends his soul to God just before he dies:

> '[Ic] geþance þe, ðeoda Waldend,
> ealra þæra wynna þe ic on worulde gebad.
> Nu ic ah, milde Metod, mæste þearfe
> þæt þu minum gaste godes geunne,
> þæt min sawul to ðe siðian mote,
> on þin geweald, þeoden engla,
> mid friþe ferian. Ic eom frymdi to þe
> þæt hi helsceaðan hynan ne moton.'
> Ða hine heowon hæðene scealcas,
> and begen þa beornas þe him big stodon. (ll. 173-182) [24]

The close juxtaposition of the term "helsceaðan" and the doubly alliterating phrase "hæðene scealcas" connects the concept of devils, "thieves from hell," with the marauding pirates. In regard to this passage, Blake argues that the poem operates figuratively as well as literally:

> The devil tries to destroy man's soul; his body in unimportant. Man can protect his soul by fighting resolutely for the Christian faith. *Maldon* portrays a battle in which the Christians are defending their faith and their souls' salvation by fighting resolutely against the heathen who are emissaries of the devil. [25]

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[24] "'Thank you, O Lord of Hosts,/ for all the joys which I have experienced in this world./ Now, merciful God, I have the greatest need/ that you should grant grace to my spirit,/ so that my soul might journey to you,/ into your dominion, Lord of angels,/ travel with your protection. I entreat you/ that thieves from hell should not drag it down.'/ Then heathen slaves hacked him/ and both the men who stood behind him" (*Battle of Maldon*, pp. 24-25).

[25] N. F. Blake, "*The Battle of Maldon*," p. 339.

The appropriate culmination of such a line of reason lies in the sanctification of the central figure.

The extant version of the poem lacks a conclusion, so we cannot know how the poet treated the battle's aftermath, but details preserved in the *Liber Eliensis* present one possible ending. First the writer states that the Danes severed Byrhtnoth's head and carried it off with them, in much the same way that the bodies of Oswald and Edmund were dismembered. He then presents the recovery of the body and its burial:

> Abbas vero, audito belli eventu, cum quibusdam monachis ad locum pugne profectus, corpus ipsius inventum ad hanc ecclesiam reportavit et cum honore sepelivit. In loco autem capitis massam cere rotundam apposuit, quo signo diu postea in temporibus nostris recognitus honorifice inter alios est locatus. [26]

It is certainly possible that the poem originally ended similarly, with some signs that Byrhtnoth's final prayer had been answered. Blake presents the Ely account as confirmatory evidence that "his supporters would have liked to see him canonized."[27] If so, they were not successful.

Many aspects of Byrhtnoth's life could, however, have qualified him for sainthood. He was a deeply religious man who became a major benefactor of religious institutions, two of which (Ely and Ramsey) added appreciably to his dossier by recording the heroic

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[26] "The abbot, hearing of the battle, went with some monks to the place of the fighting and found the body. He brought it back to the church and buried it with honour. In place of the head he put a round mass of wax. Recognized by this sign for long afterwards in our times, it was placed with honour among the others" (A. Kennedy, ed. and trans., "Byrhtnoth's Obits," pp. 65, 68).

[27] N. F. Blake, "*The Battle of Maldon*," p. 343.

actions they associated with his munificent bequests. In the *Liber Eliensis* he is praised as "viro singulari et glorioso" who was "militie et bellis contra hostes regni assiduus" and who "sanctam ecclesiam et Dei ministros ubique honorabat et in eorum usus totum patrimonium suum conferebat." [28] Moreover, according to the monks:

> Murum quoque pro religiosis conventibus semper se contra eos opponebat qui loca sancta inquietare conabantur. Nam avaritie et vesanie quorundam primatum, monachos eicere ..., vir iste religiosus in sinodo constitutus cum magna constantia restitit. [29]

Byrhtnoth was clearly the model of a layman devoted to religion. He also shared one key trait with the saintly King Edward the Confessor. Like Edward, Byrhtnoth left behind no heir, making him eligible for claims to sanctity based on pious chastity.[30] And there was, finally, the matter of his death. He died under conditions which had elevated more than one Anglo-Saxon to the ranks of the holy, defending Essex and by extension all England

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[28] "the outstanding and glorious man..... indefatigable in warfare and battles against the enemies of the kingdom ... honoured the Holy Church and the servants of God everywhere and devoted the whole of his inheritance to their use" (A. Kennedy, ed. and trans., "Byrhtnoth's Obits," pp. 64, 66-67).

[29] "He also placed himself as a wall on behalf of religious houses against those who attempted to disturb the holy places. For that religious man, taking his place in council, resisted with great firmness the greed and madness of certain leading men, who wanted to expel the monks...." (A. Kennedy, ed. and trans., "Byrhtnoth's Obits," pp. 64, 67).

[30] Although Byrhtnoth's marriage was childless and he left behind no heir, he appears to have had a daughter who may have been illegitimate. See M. A. L. Locherbie-Cameron, "Byrhtnoth and his Family."

from an invasion by men whom the *Maldon*-poet described as "heathen" (ll. 55, 181).[31] In what way then was Byrhtnoth deficient as a candidate for sanctity?

His deficiency lay precisely in his status as ealdorman. He was neither royal enough on one hand to join Oswald, Edwin, Edward, and Edmund as a "king and martyr," nor on the other hand pious enough to have abandoned his secular duties and earned sainthood by joining the host of confessors. A careful examination of native Anglo-Saxon saints has yielded no instance of a secular leader neither a king nor a prince who came to be regarded as a saint without first abandoning his secular role in favor of the religious life, and even kings had to die in battle to be sanctified before the time of Edward the Confessor. Ealdorman Byrhtnoth, like Edgar the Peaceful, slipped between the cracks of contemporary sainthood.

This position may seem to counter much contemporary wisdom on the question of sanctity. Most scholars working in the field of hagiography today seem to accept power

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[31] "hæþene ... hæðene" (*Battle of Maldon*, pp. 20-21, 24-25). Cross argues forcefully and at some length that the *Maldon*-poet does not use especially derogatory language for the Vikings, concluding that *hæþen* "is another term for the enemy and, in view of this, and of the other words for the Scandinavians, *hæþen* need have no other connotation in the poet's comment at Byrhtnoth's death" (J. E. Cross, "Oswald and Byrhtnoth," p. 109). Nonetheless, the term does contrast sharply with the explicitly Christian language Byrhtnoth himself employs immediately before the poet refers to them as heathen the second time, as quoted above: "'Geþancie þe, ðeoda waldend,/ ealfra þæra wynna þe ic on worulde gebad./ Nu ic ah, milde metod, mæste þearfe/ þæt þu minum gaste godes geunne,/ þæt min sawul to ðe siðian mote/ on þin geweald, þeoden engla,/ mid friþe ferian. Ic eom frymdi to þe/ þæt hi helsceaðan hynan moton" (ll. 174-180, *Battle of Maldon*, pp. 11-12). The identification of the heathen who kill him with the hellspawn whom he prays may not deter his soul from reaching heaven is emphasized by the continuation of alliteration on *h* into a second line, making *hæþen* and *helsceaðan* parts of a two-line alliterative pattern.

dynamics as the operative model of the path to sainthood. As Professor Cross cogently argued, "[I]f [Byrhtnoth's] case for sainthood had obtained influential backing his violent death in a just Christian cause would have been sufficient reason for a martyr's crown." [32] If the difference in power and lineage between king and ealdorman did underlie the hagiographic pattern established so far in the cases of Athelstan "Half King," Æthelwine "Dei Amicus," and Byrhtnoth of Maldon, how are we to account for the related case of Edgar the Peaceful? Byrhtnoth's near-canonization and Edgar's limited cult at Glastonbury point out two key lines of demarcation within the edifice of sanctity in Anglo-Saxon England: the only non-clerical saints in England before the Conquest were martyrs, and only kings could be admitted into the ranks of lay martyrs.

There is considerable evidence for a resulting crisis of faith among the Anglo-Saxon warrior elite. As quoted at the end of Chapter Three, Bede in the early eighth century wound up his sweeping account of the ecclesiastical history of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms with expressions of concern that the ideals of Christianity he valued so highly had nonetheless begun to have a corrosive effect on Anglo-Saxon war-preparedness.[33]

As Hunter Blair argues, "Bede knew well enough that if society needed regiments of men and women to wage spiritual warfare within their monasteries, it had no less a need for those who could draw their swords on the battlefields of this world in defense of their

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[32] J. E. Cross, "Oswald and Byrhtnoth," p. 93.

[33] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. ii, p. 372, vol. ii, pp. 466-74.

own kingdom." [34] Bede spoke on this issue from a somewhat privileged position, however; he himself would not have been expected to defend the nation against invading armies. That was someone else's job. Bede wanted men to man the battlements of Anglo-Saxon hill forts, but he would not have joined them. As later thinkers codified the problem, there were two separate classes of men involved: those who fought, the *bellatores*, and those who prayed, the *oratores*.[35] Bede did not want the *bellatores* to quit their appointed tasks and become *oratores*. Contradictory as it may sound, Bede did not want the whole nation to follow his own example.

The "problem" as Bede defined it-- *bellatores* abandoning their duties for the more "rewarding" tasks of the *oratores*, and thereby leaving society ill-defended--undoubtedly declined over time. The first wave of Viking invasions probably put an end to it, at least for awhile. Monasteries were juicy targets for the raiders, and pacifism often becomes less attractive when one's own life is on the line. However, a careful examination of literary texts by or about tenth and eleventh-century Anglo-Saxon ealdormen reveals that they had concerns similar to those that motivated the laymen of Bede's time. Had he come to be regarded as a saint, Byrhtnoth's story could have provided some measure of assurance that God appointed warfare as the Christian duty of the *bellatores* of all ranks. However,

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[34] P. Hunter Blair, "From Bede to Alcuin," p. 240.

[35] As noted earlier, for analysis of the tripartite division of society see G. Duby, *The Three Orders*; G. Constable, "The Orders of Society"; and T. Powell, "The 'Three Orders' of Society." The terminology of the three orders was employed by three major Anglo-Saxon writers: King Alfred, Ælfric, and Wulfstan.

history clearly shows that Byrhtnoth did not come to be regarded as a saint. It's true that his headless body was taken by the monks of Ely and entombed with honor in their monastery. We know that his bones were later translated, along with those of the pious abbots of Ely, to a new place of honor under the common heading *Confessores Christi*, Confessors of Christ.[36] Yet despite all this, there never was a St Byrhtnoth. As an insufficiently powerful leader in both secular and spiritual realms, he will forever remain an almost-saint, one who slipped between the cracks of sainthood.

Lay sanctity represented one means of closing those cracks, and during the tenth and eleventh centuries other tentative steps were taken by or on behalf of Anglo-Saxon ealdormen to bridge the gap, to reassure powerful laymen that their actions on behalf of the Church and society were as pleasing in the eyes of God as those of clerics and kings and could gain them just as secure a place in heaven. Signs of a possible turning away from secular responsibilities to spiritual concerns are shown most clearly in the lives of Ealdorman Æthelweard of Wessex and his son Æthelmær.

Like Byrhtnoth, Æthelweard aligned himself strongly with the Church and its values, but unlike Byrhtnoth he is not remembered for his prowess in battle or his embodiment of secular heroic values. His first literary traces appear in a treaty signed between King Æthelred and the invading Viking army in 994, not long after Byrhtnoth's death, in which he is credited with having provided the model on which the peace accord

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[36] See A. Kennedy, ed. and trans., "Byrhtnoth's Obits," pp. 65-68; E. Coatsworth, "Byrhtnoth's Tomb."

was drawn up: the truce was to be "in accordance with the terms which Archbishop Sigeric and Ealdorman Æthelweard...made, when they obtained permission from the king to purchase peace for the districts which they had rule over."[37] By purchasing peace, Æthelweard responded very differently to the Viking invasion than Byrhtnoth, his counterpart in Essex, who, according to the *Maldon*-poet, rejected forcefully the idea of buying a truce when the invading Danes suggested it to him.

Æthelweard next appears in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* as one of those entrusted with bringing Olaf Tryggvason, leader of the Vikings and later king of Norway, to a meeting with King Æthelred at which Olaf accepted Christianity and swore never to return as an invader to England. Olaf abided by the agreement, converting Norway on his return there, and never again raising arms against the English. Unfortunately for the Anglo-Saxons, however, Olaf was only one leader among many, and the peace policies promoted by Æthelweard came to be regarded as disastrous when viewed from the perspective of a history which included four Viking kings of England.

Æthelweard left behind other records. In addition to his involvement in such unheroic pursuits as buying peace and promoting the conversion of Viking leaders, he is remembered for his scholarship, as mentioned in Chapter Six. He learned to read and write Latin and translated one version of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, leaving to posterity the text known as *Æthelweard's Chronicle*.[38] As we have seen, he also became the patron

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[37] Quoted in S. Keynes, "The Historical Context of the Battle of Maldon," p. 92.

[38] Æthelweard, *Chronicon Æthelweardi*.

of that most prolific writer of his day, Ælfric of Eynsham, who dedicated to Æthelweard and his son Æthelmær his compendious translation into Old English of Latin accounts of the *Lives of Saints*, saying that he had completed the work at their request and for their benefit.[39] As discussed in Chapter Six, Ælfric included the lives of a number of Roman and Greek military martyrs, men like "The Forty Soldiers, Martyrs," "St. Maurice and His Companions" in the Theban Legion, and St Sebastian, all of whom were laymen when they died for the faith, and none of whom were royalty. Despite Ælfric's attempts to reassure the two secular leaders that their actions on behalf of society and the Church were pleasing to God, Æthelweard's son Æthelmær, after becoming an ealdorman himself during the late days of the Viking invasions, eventually resigned his secular post to become a monk in Ælfric's monastery at Eynsham, an institution Æthelmær himself founded. [40] Displeased with the course of secular affairs, Æthelmær chose the more secure path of monastic piety.

In the case of Leofric, Earl of Mercia, who served under King Edward the Confessor and died in 1057, nine years before the Battle of Hastings, there is convincing evidence of active support for his elevation to sainthood. As literary traces, he left behind a remarkable document known as the *Visio Leofrici*, "The Old English Vision of Leofric,

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[39] Ælfric, *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, vol. i, pp. 4-6.

[40] See F. M. Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 458. Keynes, on the other hand, argues, "[I]t appears that Æthelmær son of Æthelweard subsequently came out of retirement. for he occurs as an ealdorman in the South-west in the last years of Æthelred's reign" (S. Keynes, *The Diplomas of King Æthelred 'The Unready'*, pp. 209-10).

Earl of Mercia."[41] Its unknown author, presumably a cleric (although the text is written in Old English, not Latin), recorded a series of miraculous visions seen by the powerful Anglo-Saxon nobleman. The first vision involves the crossing of a bridge, a motif associated with the passage to the afterlife in other medieval vision narratives.[42] In Leofric's vision, a voice assures him that he will successfully cross the bridge, as he does:

> Him þuhte to soðan on healf-slapendon lichaman, na eallinga swylce on swefne, ac gyt gewisslicor, þ[æt] he sceolde nede ofer ane swiðe smale bricge, 7 seo wæs swiþe lang, 7 þær arn swiðe feorr beneoðan egelisc wæter, swylce hit ea wære. Ða þa he mid þam gedræht wæs, þa cwæð him stefn to, "Ne forhta þu. Eaðe þu þa bricge oferferest." Mid þam þa wearð he sona ofere, nyste he hu. [43]

The easy crossing of the bridge seems to indicate Byrhtnoth's easy acceptance into heaven, a concept reinforced by later events in the vision. He is led by a guide to "anum swyðe wlitigan felde 7 swyðe fægeran, mid swetan stence afylled."[44] The field is filled with a great crowd of people dressed in "snawhwitum réafe" in front of whom a figure

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[41] A. S. Napier, ed. and trans., of "An Old English Vision of Leofric, Earl of Mercia." Studies of this work include P. Pulsiano, "Hortatory Purpose in the OE *Visio Leofrici*"; M. McC. Gatch, "Miracles in Architectural Settings"; and M. McC. Gatch, "Piety and Liturgy in the Old English *Vision of Leofric*."

[42] See C. Zaleski, *Otherworld Journeys*.

[43] "It seemed to him truly, in half-sleeping condition, not altogether as in a dream, but still more clearly, that he must needs cross a very narrow bridge, and it was very long, and there ran far below it a terrible water, as though it were a river. When he was troubled about this a voice said to him, "Do not be afraid. Thou wilt easily cross the bridge." With that he was forthwith across, he knew not how" ("An Old English Vision of Leofric, Earl of Mercia," pp. 182-83).

[44] "[A] very beautiful and very fair field filled with a sweet odour" ("An Old English Vision of Leofric, Earl of Mercia," pp. 182-83).

dressed as a priest and identified as St Paul is peforming the mass. These elements identify the field as heaven, reached by the safe passage across the bridge. So far the images reflect standard elements in medieval otherworld journeys, and many of them may have been derived, directly or indirectly, from Gregory the Great's *Dialogues*, especially what Carol Zaleski's refers to as the "most influential of Gregory's anecdotes of return from death": the account of a soldier's death and and return. According to Zaleski, "It was thanks largely to this widely read account that the bridge -- as the setting for a *psychomachia* or symbolic confrontation with deeds -- became such a prominent feature of the medieval otherworld landscape." Zaleski's list of the archetypal elements in that narrative could just as easily be applied to Leofric's vision: "the river of hell, the flowery meadows of paradise, the white-clothed throngs in heaven, the test-bridge." [45] The only image missing is what Zaleski terms "the externalization of deeds," in which vivid, material representations of good and evil deeds vie for the dead person's soul. Leofric's easy passage of the bridge thus seems to suggest a very pure state of the ealdorman's soul. Yet Leofric is led further, to a select group who challenge his presence among them:

> Ða lædde he hine furðor þæt hi coman þær þær sæton six arwurðlice menn, swiðe wurðlice gefrætewod. Ða cwæð heora an, "Hwæt sceall þæs fula mann on ure færræddene. Þa 7swarode him oþer 7 cwæð, "He mot beon mid us, he is niwan gefullod þurh dædbote, 7 he cymð to us on þære þriddan gebyrtide." [46]

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[45] C. Zaleski, *Otherworld Journeys*, 30.

[46] "Then [the guide] led him further, till they came to where six venerable men were sitting, very worthily clad. Then one of them said, "What is this foul man doing in our company?" Then another answered him, "He may be with us, for he has been baptized afresh by penitence, and he will to us on the third 'gebyrd-tid'" ("An Old English Vision of Leofric, Earl of Mercia," pp. 182-83). The last term is obscure, but Pulsiano has interpreted it as

It is tempting to associate of the group of *arwurðlice menn, swiðe wurðlice gefrætewod*, with the company of the saints, but such an identification remains highly speculative. Just as in the case of Byrhtnoth, this unique document does not prove that Leofric was regarded as a saint. It does, however, indicate that someone wished to promote the image of Leofric, an exceptionally pious laymen, as a possible candidate for sainthood.[47] This vision, in conjunction with the three other visions presented in the *Visio Leofrici*, would have played an important role in establishing its subject's sanctity.

The writers of texts like the *Visio Leofrici* and the *Battle of Maldon*, and a translator of the *vitæ* of lay saints like Ælfric, were all taking steps, however tentative, toward offering to warrior noblemen hope of the same direct, unmediated salvation through sainthood which kings and clerics enjoyed. At the same time, ealdormen like Æthelweard and Æthelmær, Byrhtnoth and Leofric, Athelstan 'Half King' and Athelwine 'Dei amicus' were all taking steps to align their lives with the spiritual ideals of the Church. Milton Gatch comments on this phenomenon in connection with Leofric of Mercia:

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referring to the third of three "birth-days": Baptism, penitence, and "resurrection from death -- a birth which recalls the original 'newness' of life in Baptism" (P. Pulsiano, "Hortatory Purpose in the OE *Visio Leofrici*," p. 112).

[47] According to Gatch, there "may have been an effort to develop a cult for Leofric, perhaps at Coventry where he and his wife had made magnificent contributions to the facric of the church and were buried, perhaps more generally in Mercia, as survival of [the manuscript containing the *Visio Leofrici*] at Worcester may suggest" (M. McC. Gatch, "Piety and Liturgy in the Old English *Vision of Leofric*," pp. 161-62).

> In the tenth and eleventh centuries, on the Continent and also in England, a number of laymen are described as exemplary not only for their devotion to the public duties with which birth had invested them but also for their efforts to support the religious order and to incorporate in their own lives the disciplines of monasticism. St Gerald of Aurillac (865-909) is a notable example, championed by Odo of Cluny. Ælfric of Eynsham's patrons, the ealdorman Æthelweard and his son Æthelmær, seem to have gathered a number of English books that would allow them to model the monastic office and, thus, to have modelled themselves to this ideal of a noble *vita mixta*. To that number the *Visio Leofrici* clearly attempts to elevate the earl of Mercia. [48]

If lay sanctity, the obvious goal of this "noble *vita mixta*," had ever truly flowered, it could have offered the descendants of these ealdormen the hope of immediate transport to heaven after death through exemplary performance of their worldly and religious duties.

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[48] M. McC. Gatch, "Piety and Liturgy in the Old English *Vision of Leofric*," p. 162.

IV

We will never know where this tendency in Anglo-Saxon society would have led if the events of 1066 had not ended the Anglo-Saxon era. The nascent cults of pious laymen like Leofric and Byrhtnoth, in so far as they ever really existed, would have withered on the vine under the new Norman political and ecclesiastical power. The call to crusade also provided one avenue of relief for laymen like those I have described who desired a surer and more secure status in the afterlife. In the Norman era, warrior-sainthood would become synonymous with the wearing of the crusader's cross. Fundamental changes disrupted the developing pattern. There is, however, the remaining evidence of one last ealdorman. For, in fact, one Anglo-Saxon nobleman holding the status of ealdorman or earl (the latter a term more often used in the last century of the Anglo-Saxon era, following the reigns of Cnut and the other Viking kings of England) did come to have a full-fledged *vita*, promoting in no uncertain terms its subject's sanctity, written for him following his death. Earl Waltheof of Northumbria was the last Anglo-Saxon noble to serve under the new regime of William the Conqueror.[49] According to Forrest S. Scott, Waltheof, like other ealdormen whose careers approached lay sanctity, was an active supporter of the church:

> Waltheof was a generous patron of the church and made grants to Lincoln, Durham and St Edmunds as well as Crowland; and although among many other

[49] *Vita et Passio Waldevi Comitis.*

> motives he may have been impelled by the common one of wanting to improve his position in the next world, there seems no reason to doubt that his interest in assisting monastic life was genuine. Beneficiaries are, it is true, inclined to speak well of their benefactors and the praises of the Crowland historians [responsible for his *vita*] must be read with much reserve, but the more modest opinion of the Thorney tradition, that he was 'a saintly man and a lover of all justice', can be more readily accepted. [50]

The author or authors of Waltheof's *vita* had more than just his pious reputation to support a claim for their subject's sanctity, for this last Anglo-Saxon ealdorman was beheaded in 1075 for acts of treason against his new Norman overlords, a death that they characterized as the passion of a martyr, including the claim that his beheading interrupted Waltheof's final prayer, which was subsequently completed by the severed head (2).

One interesting detail that emerges from a study of the *vita* and cult of Waltheof is the connection to one of England's most renowned soldier saints, Guthlac of Croyland. According to the author of the *Vita et Passio*, Waltheof was buried at Croyland shortly after his death: "Post quindecim autem dies, Juditha uxore ejus petente regeque permittente, Ulketelus abbas Croilandiæ corpus sancti comitis adhuc integrum et ita cruentatum ac si eadem die vir Dei interemptus est, Croilandium deferri fecit, ipsumque in capitulo monachorum reverenter sepelivit." [51] A later abbot of Croyland, Ingulf, inspected the body, and after finding signs of miraculous preservation, had the body translated to a

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[50] F. S. Scott, "Earl Waltheof of Northumbria," pp. 211-12..

[51] *Vita et Passio Waldevi Comitis*, p. 2. After fifteen days, however, after the king had granted his wife Judith's request, Ulfketel, abbot of Croyland, had the holy earl's body carried to Croyland, still fresh and even bloody as if on the day the man of God had been killed, and entombed with reverence in the chapel of the monks.

place of higher honor, after which a vision revealed that both Guthlac and his own patron saint, Bartholomew, accepted Waltheof's presence among the holy dead:

> Sequenti vero nocte, quum idem abbas de his et aliis quæ miraculose acciderant in lecto suo devota mente tractaret, tandem, somno obrepente, vidit in visione sanctos Dei Bartholomæum apostulum et Guthlacum confessorem, albis sacerdotalibus indutos, secum ad sancti comitis tumulum assistentes. Apostolus vero, ut videbatur, caput comitis corpori redintegratum accipiens, dicebat, "Acephalus non est." Cui santus Guthlacus, qui ad pedes stabat, respondit, "Comes hic fuit." Apostolus autem inceptum versum metricum perfecit, dicens: "At modo rex est." [52]

The dialogue between the apostle and the soldier saint presents the elevation of the earl to sainthood as also an elevation to kingship, so that Waltheof who had been merely a *comes*, an earl and the follower of a lord, is now a king himself. This passage underscores the connection between regal status and sainthood, and the corresponding denigration of laymen, even of a pious layman who followed what Gatch calls the *vita mixta*. Of all the Anglo-Saxon *bellatores* who approached sainthood, clearly Waltheof came the closest to being venerated as a saint. Needless to say, the anonymous *Vita et Passio Waldevi Comitis*, the "Life and Passion of Earl Waltheof," and the cult it attempted to inaugurate found few (if any) adherents among England's new Norman elite.

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[52] *Vita et Passio Waldevi Comitis*, pp. 3-4. Truly the next night, when in his own bed the same abbot was turning over with troubled mind these and other things that miraculously had taken place, at last, sleep having crept up on him, he saw in a vision the holy men of God the apostle Bartholomew and the confessor Guthlac, dressed in priests' white garments, standing by themselves near the tomb of the holy earl. The apostle truly, as it seemed to him, the earl's head rejoining in wholeness with the body, said, "He is not headless." Saint Guthlac, who was standing at the feet, to him responded, "The earl has gone." The apostle, however, finished the metrical verse already begun, saying, "But now he is a king."

After the death of Waltheof, at the very end of the Anglo-Saxon era, a certain anonymous Anglo-Saxon also sought to commemorate the defeat at Hastings, and in the process he showed how the traditional Anglo-Saxon approach to warfare and sanctity still struggled to stay alive under the overwhelming tide of Norman culture. According to an anonymous *Vita Haroldi*, the last Anglo-Saxon king did not die in the Battle of Hastings, but instead went on to renounce warfare and become a saintly hermit.[53] Harold could not be presented as a martyred king since his enemies had as much, if not greater, claim to Christian orthodoxy.[54] Nonetheless, religious Anglo-Saxons would have searched for some means of redressing the sense of spiritual imbalance the Norman Conquest occasioned, since they would have considered it a sign of God's displeasure. This is the context within which the author of the *Vita Haroldi Regis* wrote when he portrayed Harold responding to and meditating on his defeat. At first Harold tries to convince the continental Saxons and the Danes to help him overthrow William, but at last he concludes that such plans are futile:

> Tandem vero in se reversus Haroldus, et quasi fantastico quo diutius somnio sibi redditus, ad cor suum totus convertitur. Intelligit vel sero obsistentem sibi in via hac qua inaniter ambulabat Deum, suique fuisse angeli quem intus exteriusque in se

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[53] Quotations are from *Vita Haroldi Regis*, pp. 38-95; translations are from *The Life of King Harold Godwinson*, in M. Swanton, ed. and trans., *Three Lives of the Last Englishmen*, pp. 1-40. For another, very different view of Harold's survival, see M. Ashdown, "An Icelandic Account of the Survival of Harold Godwinson."

[54] Erdmann documents aspects of William's conquest of England, especially the carrying of a papal banner into battle, that link his invasion to holy war and an incipient crusading ideology. See C. Erdmann, *The Origin of the Idea of Crusade.*, pp. 197-99.

> suæ tam pertinaciter cedentem pertulisset gladium; apertisque mentis suæ oculis, aliud de cætero sibi genus eligendum videt præliorum, alia requirenda præsidia. [55]

Like the former soldiers sprritually transformed into soldiers of Christ examined in Chapters Three and Four of this study, Harold decides to pursue a different form of warfare and a new method of defense. This sudden change of heart recalls in its outlines Guthlac's awakening from his dream, although there are no obvious verbal echoes between the two passages. The anonymous author of Harold's *vita* clearly knew well the trope of a sudden awakening to spiritual transformation.

The hagiographer also develops at length the trope of the arming of the soldier of Christ for spiritual battle. The former king and warrior is completely transformed:

> Mutatur itaque in Haroldo hominis repente exterioris habitus et interioris affectus. Fulcit quam armare consuevit manum, curtata in baculum hasta; pro clipeo pera collo appenditur; filtro vertex adumbratur, quem munire galea, ornare disdema solebat. Pedes et tibiæ, pro sandaliis et ocreis, vel nudantur funditus vel semicinciis obvolvuntur. [56]

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[55] *Vita Haroldi Regis*, pp. 59-60. "Eventually coming to himself and returning from his fantastic dream, as it were, Harold had a complete change of heart. He realized, albeit belatedly, that it was God who was opposing him in the way he was so profitlessly going, and that it was His angel's sword which had been carried against him in his obstinate efforts. And the eyes of his understanding being opened, he saw that he must choose another kind of warfare, and that other kinds of defences would be required" (M. Swanton, ed. and trans., *Three Lives of the Last Englishmen*, p. 14).

[56] *Vita Haroldi Regis*, p. 61. "Thus Harold's outward appearance and inward disposition are both suddenly changed. The hand which was accustomed to bear weapons he supports with a spear cut down to form a staff. Instead of a shield, a pilgrim's wallet hangs from his neck. His head, which he was accustomed to equip with a helmet and adorn with a crown, is shaded with a cowl. In place of boots and greaves, his feet and legs are either completely bare or wrapped in thin leggings" (M. Swanton, ed. and trans., *Three Lives of the Last Englishmen*, p. 15).

The image presented is both traditional and, in some ways, new: Harold is transformed neither into a monk nor a hermit but into a pilgrim, perhaps reflecting the trope of the pilgrim-king analyzed by Clare Stancliffe, but at the same time looking forward to the pilgrim knight that was already emerging as a new norm in the era of the Crusades.[57] Harold does not give up his body armor, but wears it close to the skin as a physical penance:

> Nam humeris, lacertis, lumbis et lateri lorica solum solita non adimitur, sed propius admovetur; abstracta siquidem et abjecta interula, nudæ carni chalibis durities copulatur. Sic vigilans, non armatus sed incarceratus incedit ferro; sic dormientem non thorus excipit, sed thorax includit. [58]

The author uses plays on words to emphasize his points, pairing *adimitur / admovetur*, *abstracta / abjecta*, *armatus / incarceratus*, and *thorus excipit / thorax includit*. There is also significant wordplay in the conjunction of *nudæ carni* with *copulatur*. The plays on words continue in the following passage, which encapsulates in purest form the interactions between various ideas of kingship, warfare, and rule:

> Sic, sic operante dextera Excelsi, rex transit in militem et militem quidem Christi, plus jam contempto quam prius cupito regno mundi. Transit rex in militem,

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[57] C. Stancliffe, "Kings Who Opted Out," pp. 154-76. The *Vita Haroldi* was written around 1205, well into the period of the Crusades (M. Swanton, ed. and trans., *Three Lives of the Last Englishmen*, p. xxvi). Harold Godwinson's brother Swein died on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem undertaken in expiation of a crime; see F. M. Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 568; S. Runciman, *The First Crusade*, p. 20.

[58] *Vita Haroldi Regis*, p. 61. "The coat of mail is not thrown off from his shoulders, arms, loins and sides; but it is brought closerto the body; for the underclothes being taken off and cast aside, the roughness of the metal comes next to the bare flesh. Thus while awake he marched not armed but imprisoned in iron. Thus when asleep he did not lie supported by a bed but enclosed in a breastplate" (M. Swanton, ed. and trans., *Three Lives of the Last Englishmen*, p. 16).

> efficitur rex miles, ut ita efficiatur miles rex, et rex simul ac miles transeat in regem. Illi enim militare aggreditur miles iste cui militare regnare est, et regnare quidem in præsenti, in futuro conregnare. Illud vero conregnare multo felicius quam istud regnare est, quod tamen regnare mundo et mundi regno sublimius et majus est. Militando quidem regnat et regnando militat, donec mutet mansuris mutabilia miles Christi, et absorbeatur mors in victoriam, et bellum vertatur in tropæum. Tunc rex transibit in regem, militans in triumphantem, sollicitus in securum, moribundus in semper victurum. [59]

The defeated king becomes the victorious soldier of Christ, and through the inversion of standard, worldly values defeat itself becomes victory.

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[59] *Vita Haroldi Regis*, p. 62. "In this way through the work of the right hand of the Most High, the king was transformed into a soldier -- the soldier of Christ, the kingdom of the world now being scorned more than formerly it was desired. The king becomes a soldier in order that the soldier may become a king, and that he who is both king and soldier may be transformed into a ruler. The soldier begins to act the part of a soldier on the side of Him for whom to fight is to be a king -- indeed, to reign in the present and to reign with Him hereafter. For that latter joint reign is far more blessed than this present reigning, for it is a far higher and greater thing than reigning in the world and over a worldly kingdom. So in becoming a soldier in fact he reigns, and by reigning becomes a soldier, until the soldier of Christ changes all that is mutable into things which endure, and death is engulfed in victory and battle is a sign of triumph. Then the king shall receive his kingdom, the soldier his triumph, the troubled man [his] safety and the mortal [man his] immortal life" (M. Swanton, ed. and trans., *Three Lives of the Last Englishmen*, p. 16).

V

As a last expression of the Anglo-Saxon hagiographic tradition of soldier saints, holy warriors, and martyred kings, the *Vita Haroldi Regis* expresses the crux of that tradition even while marking the passing of the culture that had nurtured and sustained it. The central paradox of the intersection of sanctity and warfare, in which the defeated are the victors and the victors the eternally defeated, echoes resoundingly from the text. In hagiographic texts from the time of Martin of Tours, and even from before it in the tales of the military martyrs, the laying down of weapons led to a greater victory.

Writing in the late fourth century, Sulpicius established the original forms for the *vita* of a soldier saint in his *Vita sancti Martini*: the unwilling, saintly soldier formally renounced warfare and God granted him a bloodless victory on earth and greater victory in eternal life. Yet when Martin's story had been transplanted into Anglo-Saxon society, Aldhelm in the seventh century and Alcuin in the eighth both found other tropes to stress in retelling the story of his life. Aldhelm included him among his catalogue of virgins, and Alcuin developed Martin's youthful struggle as a frustrated call to a spiritual vocation, an idea picked up by the anonymous VBJ homilist writing sometime before the end of the tenth century. Only Ælfric, first in his homily on Martin in the *Catholic Homilies* and again in a longer version for his *Lives of Saints*, reproduced the core ideas of the unwilling soldier whose formal rejection of war was rewarded with a bloodless victory and immortal

life as a saint. Yet in the end, Ælfric also would new uses for the old story in developing his idea of a different form spiritual fulfillment for the different classes or orders of society.

The anonymous Whitby monk and Bede reversed Sulpicius's pattern in their treatments of the martyred warrior kings, Edwin and Oswald. Bede radically altered the trope of the saintly soldier when he showed King Oswald, already regarded as in some sense holy because of his royal status, joining his men in erecting a cross before battle and praying, "Flectamus omnes commune deprecemur, ut nos ab hoste superbo ac feroce sua miseratione defendat: scit enim ipse quia iusta pro salute gentis nostrae bella suscepimus."[60] His was a God-granted victory in battle against an evil and merciless pagan enemy, yet when he finally met defeat, in the midst of battle praying as he fell, the vanquishment reversed itself into victory. The defeated king's fragmented body would itself become an eternal emblem of that great reversal, and even the pole on which the saint's head had been impaled emitted healing power and worked miracles.

The seed planted by Bede in the early eigth century through his account of the life, death, and posthumous miracles of Oswald, King and Martyr, would take a long time to come to maturity. The significant step he took in that text toward the ideology of holy war would become an early stage in the pre-history of crusading ideology. But Bede and his seventh and eighth-century contemporaries developed another important trope that had

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[60] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. i, pp. 328-30. "Let us all kneel together, and ask the true and living God Almighty of His mercy to protect us from the arrogant savagery of our enemies, since He knows that we fight in a just [war] to save our [people]" (L. Sherley-Price, trans., *A History of the English Church and People*, pp. 142-43).

a much more immediate flowering when they portrayed Anglo-Saxons, royal and lay alike, undergoing a spiritual transformation that also inverted cultural norms. These men transformed themselves from kings, ealdormen, and thegns into spiritual warriors, soldiers of Christ. By setting aside the material wealth and power their secular status in an aristocratic, warrior society had offered them, they earned a surer reward in heaven. Aldhelm could present even a bloody follower of the God of Battles like King Cadwalla of Wessex, who had sought to exterminate the entire population of the Isle of Wight, being carried up to heaven after his abdication and expiatory journey to Rome: "Alta supernorum conquirens regna polorum,/ Clarum stelligeri conscendens culmen Olimpi."[61] Bede reported how Cadwalla offered a portion of the land and goods he received as an offering to God, although he himself was not yet baptized: "voto se obligans, quamvis necdum regeneratus, ut ferunt, in Christo, quia, si cepisset insulam, quartem partem eius, simul et praedae, Domino daret."[62] Included in his offering were two young princes of the island's royal house who were administered catechism and baptism before being killed. Even after reporting these and other horrific deeds Cadwalla had performed, Bede still praised his journey to Rome, telling how he died dressed in the white robes of baptism: "et

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[61] Aldhelm, *Aldhelmi Opera*, p. 15. "[S]eeking the lofty realms of the celestial kingdom, ascending to the shining summit of ... starry Olympus" (M. Lapidge and J. L. Rosier, trans., *Aldhelm: The Poetic Works*, p. 48).

[62] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. ii, pp. 86-88. "After Cadwalla became king of the Gewissae, he captured the Isle of Wight, which was still entirely devoted to idolatry and strove to exterminate all the natives and replace them by settlers from his own province. Although not yet baptized, he is said to have bound himself by an oath to dedicate a

beatorum est regno sociatus in caelis." [63] In a particularly rich and detailed hagiographic treatment of the trope of spiritual transformation, Felix's Guthlac traded the leadership of a warrior band for the solitary struggle against demons in his lonely cell, but in the end through a double-layered spiritual transformation, the lonely hermit joined the army of heaven and his follower, the exiled prince Æthelbald, was crowned a warrior king.

When Alcuin carried the story of his holy martyred kings to the court of Charlemagne at the end of the eighth century, it found fertile ground there for the flowering of an ideal. The seeds of the new concept that had been hesitantly and intermittantly germinating root throughout the Anglo-Saxon era -- the ideal of the holy warrior to whom both earthly conquest and eternal, spiritual victory could be promised at the same time by a Christian God of Battles -- would be firmly established, at least for a while, in its new Carolingian soil. Abbo brought it back to England subtly transformed into a strange hybrid, a warrior king who, as a part of the body of Christ, having cast away his weapons -- "ut membrum Christi proiectis armis" -- makes himself a sacrifice for his people. The old trope of the formal renunciation of violence refused to die, constantly being reborn in new and unusual forms. When at last Ælfric, that great organizer and synthesizer, began to gather together these many divergent forms, he seemed to try out

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quarter of the land and spoils to the Lord if he conquered the isalnd" (L. Sherley-Price, trans.. *A History of the English Church and People*, pp. 232-33).

[63] Bede, *Baedae Opera Historica*, vol. ii, p. 224. "[A]nd joined the company of the blessed in heaven" (L. Sherley-Price, trans., *A History of the English Church and People*, p. 279).

first one way of looking at the problem and then another. First, in his earlier *Life of Martin* and his Old English translation of Abbo's *Passion of St Edmund*, he categorically rejected violence and espoused peace, observing the world from the security of abbey walls and the stability of Edgar the Peaceful's reign. But as the world outside grew ever more hostile, and he found himself thrust into the role of mentor and advisor to the laymen fighting a losing battle against implacable enemies under the banner of a faltering kingship, he shifted and, in his longer *Life of Martin*, in his Passion of St Oswald, his story of the Forty Soldiers, Martyrs, and, eventually, in his Passion of the Holy Maccabees, he tested out other ways of reconciling the need for defensive war and the desire for a life of holiness. The evolution in Ælfric's thinking mirrored the changes that had taken place in Anglo-Saxon society, and in the process his new image of the holy warrior, the *bellator* who fulfilled God's will by following the commands of his earthly king.

Hagiographers of the early Middle English period rarely displayed the scrupulous division of spiritual and earthly warfare that had been a continuing, albeit unsteadily and unevenly diminishing, feature of insular hagiography. Rather than distancing a soldier saint from the potentially damaging images of his shedding of blood using the tropes inherited from the *Life of Martin*, they tended to invest the earthly combat of a soldier saint with the mantle of spiritual purity, thus elevating what might have been perceived as sordid or unchristian aspects of a saint's life to the same level as his spiritual struggle. Tied up with this new paradigm was the sanctification and glorification of knighthood itself, so that a Christian could finally achieve a form of sainthood not by rejecting violence

but rather by engaging in sanctified, church-sponsored combat. This phenomenon coincided with a rise in the social status accorded to *milites* or *bellatores* in sociological or political commentaries of the period.[64] The later Middle Ages witnessed the emergence of the holy warrior, the earthly fighter elevated to the status of spiritual figure through incorporation of the trappings of spiritual struggle into accounts of physical combat. Thus, as this dissertation has shown, the investiture of the spiritual struggles of Christian heroes with the aura of martial heroism witnessed in early saints' lives eventually furthered the sanctification of war. What had begun as a means of turning men aside from physical combat would eventually be used in the era of the Crusades to glorify and justify warfare in the name of Christ.

One final, ironic sign of the circular movement of hagiography over the course of the Anglo-Saxon era came in an action taken by William of Normandy, England's Norman conqueror, in commemoration of his victory over the Anglo-Saxon forces at the Battle of

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[64] See G. Constable, "The Orders of Society," pp. 332-33. Constable says that "the elevation in status of the *miles* dated back to at least the ninth century," but he argues that the emergence of a distinct knightly class came later than that, citing the twelfth century as a point at which the process was complete, although he concedes that the change "took place at different times in different parts of Europe" (G. Constable, "The Orders of Society," pp. 331, 332, n. 337). Unfortunately, he does not give any specifically English evidence in his discussion. Evidence presented in Chapter Four of this dissertation would indicate that the process had begun in England by Alfred's time, and discussion of the word *cniht* in Chapter One seems to indicate that the process was well advanced by Ælfric's time. It is also instructive to recall that Harold Godwinson, the last Anglo-Saxon to hold the throne of England, was himself a lay magnate, a *bellator* albeit of high rank, elevated to kingly status on the death of the childless Edward the Confessor.

Hastings. In a study of medieval England's monastic institutions, Colin Platt comments on the founding of Battle Abbey:

> [E]ven the most important of the post-Conquest foundations -- the Conqueror's Battle Abbey being prominent among them -- have usually to be recognized less as instruments of reform than as the conscientious paying-off of debts. William, in dedicating the site of his major feat of arms to God, had marked as the position of the high altar of his new church the exact spot where Harold had been observed to fall. There were many objections to this ruling. Hastings had been fought on a dry sandy ridge, exposed and inhospitable, among scrublands of little use to man or beast. The first monk-colonizers, alarmed principally by the lack of water, established a base elsewhere. But William dismissed their complaints. His abbey, dedicated to the former soldier St Martin, was to be built on the battlefield and nowhere else. Once he had finished with it, William promised, wine would flow as freely at Battle as water at abbeysless fortunate. [65]

St Martin, the soldier saint who was once reported to have said, "Christi ego miles sum; pugnare mihi non licet," "I am a soldier of Christ; I am forbidden to fight," now had come to be invoked by a Christian king to honor a bloody military victory. As Platt says, "The Conqueror's purpose was plain. The church of St Martin de Bello, otherwise known as Battle Abbey, was to be a war memorial first, a house of religion only second. William's endowment, whatever it cost, would serve to keep a memory alive."[66] The connection between war memorial / abbey and St Martin was not incidental: William went so far as to settle at his newly created institution monks from Marmoutier, St Martin's own church. The lay conscientious objector had become a principal patron saint of soldiers, and the defeat of the Anglo-Saxons at Hastings would be forever memorialized by this physical sign of the new ethos and the new era.

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[65] C. Platt, *The Abbeys and Priories of Medieval England*, p. 7.

[66] C. Platt, *The Abbeys and Priories of Medieval England*, p. 8.

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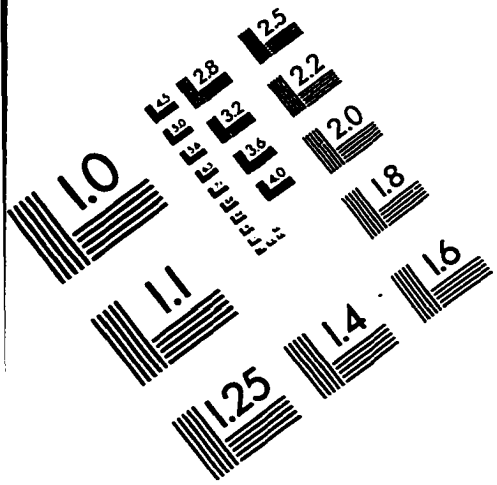
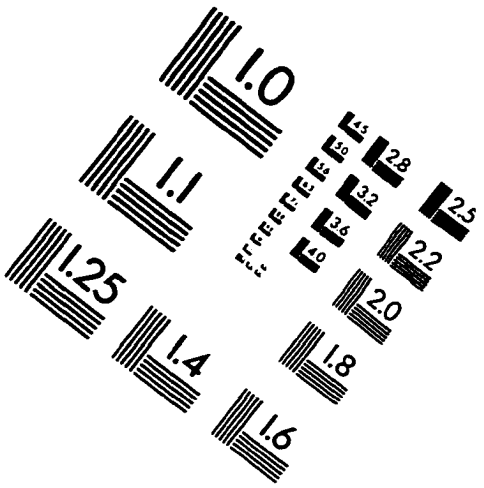
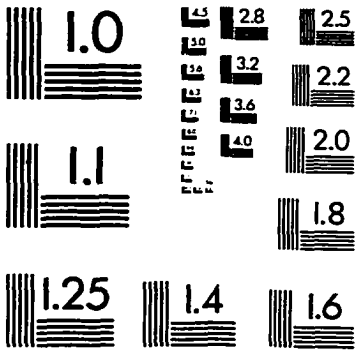
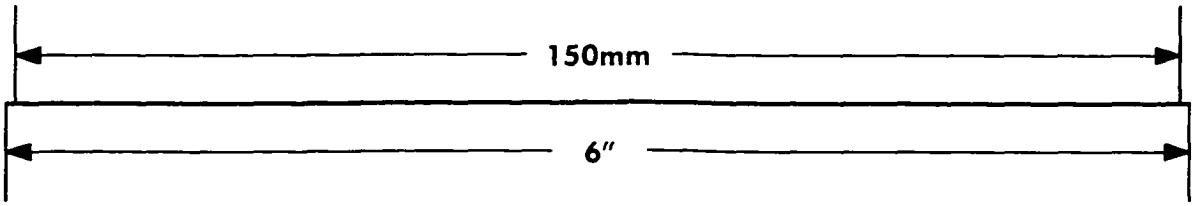
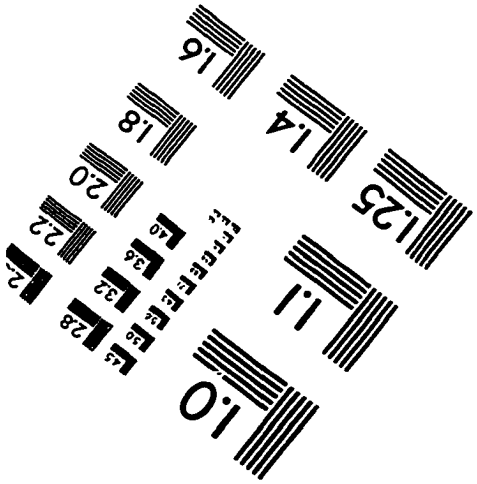
IMAGE EVALUATION TEST TARGET (QA-3)

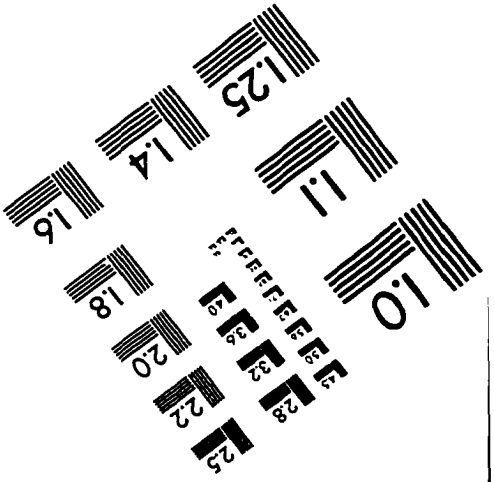












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