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Sanctity, Reform and Conquest at Barking Abbey c. 950 – 1100

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This thesis offers a study of the female monastic house at Barking in Essex during the tenth and eleventh centuries. The survival of a large body of hagiographical literature produced for the nunnery at the end of the eleventh century which includes an account of the translation of the saints Æthelburg, Hildelith and Wulfhild, a Life of St Æthelburg, Lessons of St Hildelith and a Life and translation account of St Wulfhild, here enables an in-depth examination of Barking's experience of the most disruptive century in England's medieval history.

Indications in the texts that the nunnery was subject to unwelcome intervention by a new Norman episcopacy are discussed in relation to the historiographical debate on Norman treatment of Anglo-Saxon saints and their communities. A theme of resistance to outside interference in the Barking hagiographies is also explored in relation to charter and Domesday evidence which suggest that the house had experienced depletion of their landed resources. But while the Barking hagiographies were produced in the eleventh century, there are elements of them which do not appear to respond to the contexts of that time. For that reason, the thesis will also explore earlier contexts at the nunnery, specifically those of Danish invasion, conquest and rule in the earlier eleventh century. There is also reason to examine the relationship between Barking and the queen, as one of the most striking tales in the Life of Wulfhild explicitly condemns the queen's interference at the nunnery. Barking's relationships with other female houses also requires consideration due to assertions in the Life of Wulfhild that Barking formed part of a wider group of royal nunneries. Barking's links to the nunnery of Horton appear to have been particularly strong, and may indicate a context of relic appropriation in the earlier eleventh century. The form and function of the Barking saints, alongside a consideration of authorship and audience, is also undertaken here in an effort to improve our understanding of the various uses of saints' cults and hagiography in the late Anglo-Saxon and early Anglo-Norman periods. Ultimately, the texts which celebrate the Barking saints reveal the nunnery's resistance to outside authority, especially at times of political regime change and church reform. This thesis will demonstrate that the saints of the female monastic house at Barking were employed at various points in the eleventh century to protect the community from encroachment of its resources, interference in its management, and threats to its most valuable assets, that is, the saints Æthelburg, Hildelith and Wulfhild.

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Abbreviations

ASC – Anglo-Saxon Chronicle

ECEE – The Early Charters of Eastern England

EHD – English Historical Documents, I c. 500-1042

GPA – Gesta Pontificum Anglorum

GRA – Gesta Regum Anglorum

GDB – Great Domesday Book

HE – Ecclesiastical History of the English People

LC – Liber Confortatorius

LDB – Little Domesday Book

S – Sawyer Catalogue Number

TRE – Tempore Regis Eadwardi

TRW – Tempore Regis Willelmi

Chapter One: Introduction

Sanctity, Reform and Conquest at Barking Abbey

c. 950-1100

By the time of the Norman Conquest, Barking Abbey was one of the oldest monasteries in England, and one of the richest and most prosperous of the English nunneries. It was founded in the second half of the seventh century by Bishop Eorcenwald of London, apparently with the support of various Anglo-Saxon royal houses, and continued throughout the Anglo-Saxon period to attract patronage from the royal house and local aristocracy. The history of the abbey was not without disruption however: Viking invasions, Church reform, Danish rule and Norman Conquest all played a role in shaping the experience of the Barking community, and, by proxy, the nunnery's reaction to events, involvement in politics, and documentary record. The dynastic shifts of the eleventh century must surely have had an impact on a nunnery which was closely associated with the royal house. Similarly, the various reform movements of the tenth and eleventh centuries could not fail to affect a monastic institution with strong ties to the local episcopacy. One way in which the effects of these events and movements can be seen is through the nunnery's cultivation of saints' cults.

The cults at Barking celebrate three Anglo-Saxon abbesses of the house. The earliest, and possibly most successful in terms of cult veneration, was that of St Æthelburg. Æthelburg was the first abbess of Barking and the sister of its founder Eorcenwald. Æthelburg's successor as abbess, Hildelith, was also the object of a cult, though its success is more difficult to determine. Hildelith is renowned as the abbess to which Aldhelm dedicated his treatise on virginity in the late seventh or early eighth century.¹ The third saint of Barking was Wulfhild, a figure of the later Anglo-Saxon period and, possibly, the first abbess at Barking following a re-foundation in the tenth century. These three abbess saints, dubbed 'a trinity' by the author of the Barking hagiographies, were the subjects of a concerted programme of cult promotion which took place at Barking in the years following the Norman Conquest. This involved significant reorganisation at the nunnery, including the construction of a new church, a series of translations of saints' relics, and, most importantly for our purposes, the production of a number of hagiographical texts. These texts, collectively known as the Barking Cycle, record the lives, miracles and translations of the nunnery's three saints.

¹ Aldhelm, *De Virginitate* in M. Lapidge and M. Herren ed., *Aldhelm The Prose Works* (Ipswich, 1979), p. 59.

All of these texts bear witness to active cults at Barking, some of a longstanding nature, and all originating in the pre-Conquest period. These hagiographical records represent a rich source of information on the monastic community at Barking from its inception up to the point at which the texts were produced, that is, the late eleventh century.

The Barking Cycle has been employed to varying degrees in the historiography which deals with tenth and eleventh century English nunneries. Barking abbey itself has been the subject of various studies. The relative wealth of source material for this religious house, which includes charter and will evidence as well as hagiography, has enabled historical study of the nunnery in numerous directions. Antiquarian sources on Barking include those of William Dugdale,² Smart Lethieullier,³ Morant,⁴ and Lysons.⁵ Barking abbey was also discussed in the *Victoria County Histories*.⁶ The earliest complete study of the nunnery was produced in 1954 by Loftus and Chettle. Their *History of Barking Abbey* takes an economic perspective, and discusses land transactions and administration of estates from its foundation in the seventh century until the Dissolution.⁷ Sturman's doctoral thesis of 1961 similarly considers the economic history of the abbey through its management of estates, though her focus is after 1066 and, more properly, on the late medieval period.⁸ None of these works make more than passing reference to the Barking Cycle however.

Following Sturman's thesis, discussion of Barking abbey has been included in various studies of Anglo-Saxon nunneries, most notably those of Barbara Yorke, Pauline Stafford, Sarah Foot and Julia Crick.⁹ In each case, the Barking Cycle forms an important part of their discussions of the nunnery of Barking, though in no case is the focus solely on these texts, rather, they are utilised in conjunction with charter and other documentary evidence. The broader nature of these works on nunneries, while providing important comparisons and

² W. Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum: a history of the abbies and other monasteries, hospitals, frieries, and cathedral and colligate churches, with their dependancies, in England and Wales* (London, 1817-1830).

³ Smart Lethieullier, *History of Barking and the Abbey* (Essex Record Office, c.1759).

⁴ P. Morant, *The History and Antiquities of the County of Essex*, 2 volumes (1763- 1768), volume 1.

⁵ D. Lysons, *The Environs of London: volume four Counties of Herts, Essex & Kent* (1796).

⁶ W.R. Powell ed., *Victoria County Histories: A History of the County of Essex: Volume Five* (1966).

⁷ E. A. Loftus & H. F. Chettle, *A History of Barking Abbey* (London, 1954).

⁸ W. Sturman, 'Barking Abbey. A study in its external and internal administration from the Conquest to the Dissolution' (unpublished Ph.D thesis, University of London, 1961).

⁹ B. Yorke, *Nunneries and the Anglo-Saxon Royal Houses* (London, 2003); P. Stafford, 'Queens, Nunneries and Reforming Churchmen: Gender, Religious Status and reform in Tenth- and Eleventh- Century England', *Past and Present*, 163 (May, 1999), pp. 3-35; S. Foot, *Veiled Women I: The Disappearance of Nuns from Anglo-Saxon England* (Aldershot, 2000), and her *Veiled Women II: Female Religious Communities in England, 871-1066* (Aldershot, 2000); J. Crick, 'The Wealth, Patronage and Connections of Women's Houses in Late Anglo-Saxon England', *Revue Benedictine*, 109 (1999), pp. 154-185.

contextualisation, also means that Barking Abbey, and indeed, the Barking Cycle, are not the central focus of them.

Emily Mitchell's 2004 doctoral thesis, 'Patronage and Politics at Barking Abbey *ca.* 950 – *c.* 1200' represents the latest full-length study of Barking Abbey.¹⁰ Mitchell explores both the political and socio-economic aspects of Barking's history, including its relationship with its benefactors and the activities of its abbesses in the political sphere. Mitchell utilises the Barking Cycle to some extent, though her main focus is on the documentary evidence relating to the nunnery. There is also a heavier emphasis on the twelfth century as opposed to the tenth and eleventh in her work.

This study of Barking Abbey differs from those which have preceded it by focusing on the hagiographical texts produced for the nunnery at the end of the eleventh century as a coherent group, or cycle, of hagiographical literature. In this way, the thesis takes into account the intentions of the author, and the experience of the audience, by considering the composite texts in the form in which they were constructed and presented. Through thorough textual analysis, inter-comparison, and contrast with other surviving sources which relate to the abbey, it is possible to explore both the history of the community at Barking, and the use and function of hagiography by this female monastic institution. By examining the Barking evidence in a wider context of English monasticism and hagiographical production in the tenth and eleventh centuries, we are further able to explore the female monastic experience of tenth-century reform, Danish invasion and rule, and the Norman Conquest, as well as the development of hagiography, hagiographical production, and cult promotion through the late Anglo-Saxon and early Anglo-Norman periods. The thesis therefore addresses a series of questions raised by existing historiographies which deal with nunneries and hagiography, and hagiography and its uses more generally, in the late Anglo-Saxon and early Anglo-Norman periods.

Much of the historiography that deals in any depth with late Anglo-Saxon female monasticism dates from the late 1970s. In response to a former lack of scholarly attention, and undoubtedly influenced by the increased interest in women's history, historians writing in the last two decades of the 20th century and beyond have produced a wide range of discussions on the female monastic experience in England in both the Anglo-Saxon and

¹⁰ E. Mitchell, 'Patronage and Politics at Barking Abbey c.950-c.1200', unpublished PhD thesis (Cambridge, 2004).

Anglo-Norman periods. In many cases, the historiography that emerged from this period responded to a long-held assumption that standards of, and opportunities for, female monasticism had declined following the Viking invasions of the eighth and ninth centuries. Frank Stenton, for instance, claimed that nunneries of the tenth century were, unlike their earlier models, mainly of only local significance, and that their abbesses were 'shadowy figures in comparison with those...of the seventh and eighth centuries'.¹¹ Knowles and Hadcock, in a survey of medieval religious houses which offers a rather cursory examination of nunneries, claimed that it was due to the Danish invasions that 'monastic life in England was almost wholly extinct' at the beginning of the tenth-century. Christopher Brooke, in his 1974 monograph *The monastic world* argued that it was a decline in patronage which resulted in the loss of nunneries in England through the tenth and eleventh centuries.

This view of the English nunneries' demise was, however, challenged by Marc Meyer in his 1977 article 'Women and the tenth-century monastic reform'. Meyer's examination of legal sources such as wills and land grants revealed the development of an alternative form of female religious expression in the tenth century, that of widows' patronage of religious houses and churchmen. Meyer was able to demonstrate a close connection between royal and aristocratic widows, reforming monasteries and the reformers themselves; he therefore argued for a revitalisation of women's monasticism during the tenth century.¹² Meyer also noted, in a follow-up article of 1981, a connection between royal (as opposed to aristocratic) patronage and the success of a nunnery in Anglo-Saxon England. The lack of evidence for non-royal female houses Meyer attributed to their demise in the later Anglo-Saxon period, itself a direct consequence of the success of royal institutions for whom much more evidence has survived.¹³ Sally Thompson, in an article which questions the scarcity of source material for post-Conquest nunneries, also demonstrated a correlation between the wealth of a house and its level of surviving documentation. Thompson suggested that the dearth of records pertaining to smaller, non-royal female monastic houses may indicate the existence of diverse forms of provision for female religious.¹⁴ In 1994, Patricia Halpin suggested that past studies had exaggerated the post-Viking Age decline in standards of and provision for female monasticism. Halpin, like Thompson, believed that religious life for women continued to

¹¹ F. Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford, 1943), p. 439.

¹² M.A. Meyer, 'Women and the Tenth Century English Monastic Reform', *Revue Benedictine* 87 (1977), pp. 34-61, at pp. 34-5.

¹³ M.A. Meyer, 'Patronage of West Saxon Royal Nunneries in Late Anglo-Saxon England', *Revue Benedictine* 91: 3-4 (1981), pp. 332-358, at p. 337.

¹⁴ S. Thompson, 'Why English Nunneries Had No History: a study of the problems of the English nunneries after the Conquest', in *Distant Echoes: Medieval Religious Women*, vol.1 (1984), pp. 131-149, at p. 144.

thrive in the post-Viking period, though perhaps in 'more eremitic and less regular' forms.¹⁵ Sarah Foot, in her survey of female religious in pre-Conquest England, has similarly argued for the development of female monasticism along less regular lines in the Anglo-Saxon period.¹⁶

Julia Crick's article of 1999 challenged Meyer's view that the reform movement resulted in a demise of patronage for non-royal houses. Crick suggested that a lack of documentary record of such patronage may have given rise to this misapprehension. Her article also challenged Meyer's categorisation of the royal or non-royal status of the nunneries looked at. Crick explored the 'royalness' of late Anglo-Saxon nunneries against criteria such as levels of royal patronage, use of the house as a burial site for royal family members, and the imposition of royals as abbesses over a community. One outcome of this study was her declassification of Barking Abbey as a royal house due to its lack of royal burial, abbess, or significant patronage by the royal family.¹⁷

Barbara Yorke's *Nunneries and the Anglo-Saxon Royal Houses* used a number of documentary and legal sources to build up a picture of nunneries in the Anglo-Saxon period with a particular focus on their connections with the royal families of Anglo-Saxon England. Though acknowledging the existence of alternative styles of female religious expression, Yorke's study restored the focus of enquiry to royal nunneries, which, after all, are the 'major female religious institutions of the pre-Conquest period.'¹⁸ Yorke has examined the interrelationship of nunneries with the dynasties which endowed them, both before and after the suggested watershed of the ninth century. Yorke has also considered the evidence for English nunneries' experience of monastic reform in the tenth century. While it is clear that the female religious houses were represented in the initial workings-out of reform, the only house for which there is explicit record of involvement in actual reform is the Nunnaminster at Winchester. Yorke has argued, however, that the reform movement, and especially its focus on the separation of lay and religious spheres, enabled the royal nunneries to establish greater independence from the royal house.¹⁹ Pauline Stafford, in a study of 'Queens, Nunneries and Reforming Churchmen' has also argued that the wealthier female houses such as Wilton and Shaftesbury exploited the opportunities of reform to distance themselves from

¹⁵ P. Halpin, 'Women Religious in Late Anglo-Saxon England', *The Haskins Society Journal*, 6 (1994), pp. 97-111.

¹⁶ Foot, *Veiled Women I*.

¹⁷ Crick, 'The Wealth, Patronage and Connections of Women's Houses', pp. 154-181.

¹⁸ Yorke, *Nunneries*, p. 8.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, pp. 85-89.

lay control and to extend their own endowments. Stafford has also highlighted the tensions between the queen and these nunneries which were generated by the reformers' allocation of power over nunneries to Queen Ælfthryth.²⁰

The longstanding nature of both Barking abbey and the cults of saints at the nunnery allow an exploration of the points raised by Meyer, Thompson, Halpin, Foot and Crick. The theory that female religious expression had suffered a decline by the tenth century as an effect of the Viking raids and settlement can be challenged by the continuation of Barking as a female religious community. While there is a possibility that the house was re-founded in the tenth century under the auspices of the West Saxon kings, the promotion of its early Anglo-Saxon saints there argues for some degree of continuity and preservation of house traditions. The emergence of less regular forms of female religious in the later Anglo-Saxon period is not at question here; however, the assumption that these less regular forms of monasticism took the place of traditional monasticism for women is. In line with Meyer's argument, here I would argue that at Barking at least, there was a revitalisation of the house in the tenth century. Indeed, revitalisation of the nunnery in the tenth century forms one of the major themes of the *Life of Wulfhild*, which also demonstrates renewal of its saints' cults in the early eleventh century, and therefore at a time of Danish invasion and settlement. Crick's assertion that Barking was not a royal house needs to be explored not only through the documentary records which form the focus of her study, but also with reference to the traditions contained in the Barking Cycle. There are certainly indications in the Barking Cycle that the nunnery was aligned to the West Saxon royal house; a study of the historical figures celebrated in the texts may also reveal connections between the nunnery and Anglo-Saxon royal houses. The impact and negotiation of reform at Barking can also be questioned, with reference to both the hagiographical texts produced by the nunnery and literature which links the queen with reform measures at female houses.

Barbara Yorke has also explored the effect of the Norman Conquest upon English nunneries, and has suggested that the biggest impact on royal Anglo-Saxon nunneries as a result of the Norman Conquest was their failure to gain any significant patronage from the new regime. Yorke's study also highlights the issue of Norman encroachment of monastic, specifically female monastic, land. In her view, royal nunneries which had been sustained by grants of royal estates were particularly vulnerable to the reclaiming of land by subsequent royal

²⁰ Stafford, 'Queens, Nunneries and Reforming Churchmen', pp. 3-35.

regimes. However, it was also, according to Yorke, those nunneries which had amassed substantial land in the pre-Conquest period, and which cultivated a successful saint's cult, that managed to survive the Conquest period.²¹

Ann Williams's *The English and the Norman Conquest*, places the nunneries' experiences, as highlighted by Yorke, in a wider context of threats to monastic houses in the immediate post-Conquest period in terms of loss of lands and moveable wealth, and the consequent need for institutions to organise or create written records which protected wealth and privileges.²²

Hugh Thomas's *The English and the Normans* similarly explores the effects of the Conquest on the church as a whole, and has argued that the written works produced by the English church, and monasteries in particular, in the aftermath of Conquest, were responsible for the preservation of English traditions and the defence of English honour.²³ One of the genres which Thomas explores in relation to this theory is hagiographical writing. His examination of hagiographies written after the Conquest reveals a definite trend of linking saints and their cults with England, English identity and history, and the defence of English tradition and land.²⁴

A central theme in the historiography concerning the English church and its experience of the Norman Conquest is the interrelationship of English saints and Norman invaders. A huge increase in the production of hagiographical texts in the late eleventh century has often been seen as one effect of the Norman invasion, and specifically due to Norman scepticism towards English saints and their cults.²⁵ This view has been challenged, however, by historians such as Susan Ridyard, who has argued that hagiographies produced after the Conquest were not contrived to recommend English saints to Norman churchmen, rather, that

²¹ Yorke, *Nunneries*, pp. 91-2.

²² A. Williams, *The English and the Norman Conquest* (Woodbridge, 1995), pp. 140-5.

²³ H.M. Thomas, *The English and the Normans Ethnic Hostility, Assimilation and Identity 1066-c.1220* (Oxford, 2003), p.201.

²⁴ *Ibid*, pp. 287-295.

²⁵ See, for instance, D. Knowles, *The Monastic Order in England: a History of its Development from the Times of St Dunstan to the Fourth Lateran Council 943-1216* (Cambridge, 1940), p. 118, who claimed that there was widespread outrage amongst the English monks at the 'disrespectful attitude' of their Norman abbots towards the old English saints; E. O. Blake, ed., *Liber Eliensis* (London, 1962), p. xlix, suggested that 'the production of a Life and miracles of St Etheldreda [in c. 1135] are testimony less of a lively cult of the saint than of the doubts and disrespect of the generations of monks and laymen in the century after the Norman Conquest'; R. Southern, *Saint Anselm and His Biographer: a Study of Monastic Life and Thought 1059- c. 1130* (Cambridge, 1963), p. 249, discusses the 'contempt in which these [English] saints were held by the Norman conquerors'; F. Barlow, *The English Church 1066-1154* (London, 1979), p. 191, talks, without question, of the scepticism of the Norman abbots towards English saints; and D. Rollason, *The Mildrith Legend: a study in early medieval hagiography in England* (Leicester, 1982), p. 59, writes about 'the scepticism of certain late eleventh-century churchmen to the genuineness of the Anglo-Saxon saints', though it should be noted that Rollason revises this view in his later work *Saints and Relics in Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford, 1989).

it was the Norman churchmen themselves who were actively promoting the saints of their new English institutions.²⁶ This highlights the use of hagiography for economic purposes in the early stages of Norman establishment of authority. Paul Hayward, on the other hand, has suggested that hagiographies, and specifically, translation narratives produced in the late eleventh century, were produced by English communities in response to possible threats to their saints' cults. An important development in the translation accounts identified by Hayward is the increased use of authority figures such as kings and bishops to validate the cults of English saints, a factor which Hayward sees as a reflection of the English perception of Norman hostility towards their saints.²⁷ Hayward also suggests that these texts, which record the continuing success of an institution's cult, and therefore the continuing success of a monastery under English leadership, were designed to safeguard the positions held by English incumbents of English monasteries.²⁸

The Barking Cycle is an excellent starting point for examination of these theories on English monastics' reaction to the events of 1066. Indeed, its very production in the late eleventh century argues for the nunnery's attempts to preserve their Anglo-Saxon traditions in the face of a new Norman political and religious leadership. Barking seems not only to have commissioned a series of texts at this time, but to have built a new church, undertaken a translation of its three saints and possibly, produced some useful charter material in the years following the Norman Conquest. And, while Barking was one of the top three nunneries at 1066 in terms of wealth, patronage of it in the early post-Conquest period is not documented, and may therefore have been one of the reasons for its promotion of saints' cults at that time. Indeed, Emily Mitchell, in her thesis on Barking, argues that certain aspects of the Barking Cycle reveal attempts by the nunnery to gain patronage from a new Norman audience through cultivation of its saints' cults.²⁹ There may also have been a loss of monastic lands at Barking as one effect of the Conquest. Both the Barking Cycle and the nunnery's charter and Domesday evidence display signs of disruption to landholding, and will be utilised here to explore this theme further.

A full reading of the Cycle, however, may reveal that attempts to gain patronage were not the only, or even the most important, aim of the nunnery in promoting the cults of Barking saints

²⁶ S. Ridyard, 'Condigna Veneratio; Post-Conquest Attitudes to the Saints of the Anglo-Saxons', *Anglo-Norman Studies* 9 (1986), pp. 179-206, at p. 205.

²⁷ P. Hayward, 'Translation-Narratives in Post-Conquest Hagiography and English resistance to the Norman Conquest', *Anglo-Norman Studies*, 21 (1998), pp. 67-93, at p. 69.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 89-93.

²⁹ Mitchell, 'Patronage and Politics at Barking Abbey c.950-c.1200', pp. 208-11.

and producing the texts which commemorated them. There are, for instance, signs of Norman episcopal intervention into the nunnery's affairs in the early post-Conquest period. Ridyard's point that it was Norman churchmen who were most active in the promotion of English saints cults may have a bearing on this, as it appears that Barking may have been promoting their saints in competition with other, nearby cults which were similarly being promoted at this time. Similarly, Hayward's theory that the translation of saints was an act of defence can be explored in more depth at Barking due to the preservation in the Barking Cycle of translation and vision accounts which document the ceremonies which took place there in the last decades of the eleventh century. The Barking Lives also display use of authority figures which may have been intended to appeal to a Norman audience. There may, however, have been other reasons for the inclusion of figures such as Kings Edgar and Alfred, and Saints Edmund and Æthelwold, in the Barking Cycle. Hayward's thesis does not, for example, take into account the possibility that the Barking texts were rewritten, or updated, in the late eleventh century, and that the authority figures cited within may have relevance to other times and contexts.

The work of Thomas, Ridyard and Hayward represents a blend of hagiological practices of exploring authorial intent and contexts of composition, and the reception of texts and their intended audiences. The importance of both author and context in the interpretation of hagiographical sources has been highlighted from at least the 1960s, when František Graus's study of Merovingian hagiographies employed this methodological approach. Graus argued that hagiography was an important source for not only religion, but also society, and that the social functions of hagiographic texts could be best explored through consideration of the attitude of hagiographers toward people and their rulers.³⁰ The importance of understanding the contexts of production has more recently been highlighted by Patrick Geary, who has argued that such contexts must be the starting point for understanding the meaning of hagiography in medieval society. Geary also suggests that hagiographies are best understood when considered in the form in which they were produced, and in relation to the other texts with which they were associated, read or gathered.³¹

This study of the Barking hagiographies similarly takes as its starting point the importance of context and author's intent. One of the aims of the thesis is to explore not only the contexts

³⁰ F. Graus, *Volk, Herrscher und Heiliger im Reich der Merowinger: Studien zur Hagiographie der Merowingerzeit* (Prague, 1965), p. 11.

³¹ P. Geary, *Living with the Dead in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, 1994), pp. 19-20.

which shaped the texts at the point of production, but also those aspects of the texts which seem to record earlier stages of the cults which they commemorate, and therefore possible earlier contexts which affected the cults' traditions and records. This line of approach works on the basis that hagiographies were often rewritten to suit the changing needs of a monastic community, and especially at times of disruption and threats to the status quo. This method is seen in the work of, for example, Thomas Head on *Hagiography and the Cult of Saints*, which explores the construction and manipulation of sanctity by religious communities for their own benefit.³² David Rollason has also argued persuasively that the cults of saints played an important role in the preservation and recovery of a monastic community's land and privileges.³³ Rollason draws a link between the re-organisation and forgery of charters at a monastic house, and the production of hagiography, especially when that hagiography contained defence and retribution miracles, activities which Rollason describes as 'closely associated'.³⁴ Julia Smith has also shown that hagiographical texts which display signs of having been rewritten are particularly useful in understanding both the working methods and motivations of hagiographers and the fluidity and malleability of the hagiographical genre.³⁵

While this focus on author and context is important, it clearly needs to be undertaken alongside consideration of audience and reception. Patrick Geary, in a study of relic theft, has noted that the propagandistic function of hagiographic texts, and of translation accounts in particular, demanded that they reflect values and attitudes espoused by their audiences. This enables the hagiologist to determine the consensus of social groups whether in terms of reality or ideal.³⁶ David Rollason, in his *Saints and Relics in Anglo-Saxon England*, has argued that knowledge of the reception and audience of hagiographies is imperative in understanding the place of saints' cults in the wider social and political structures.³⁷ As well as looking at manuscript provenance and dedications of the texts, Rollason recommends thorough examination of the content, particularly of the miracle stories within them, as a way to determine the didactic purposes of hagiographies.

There are well-known difficulties in undertaking such readings of hagiographic literature. The production of hagiographies as an interconnected feature of the promotion of saints' cults

³² T. Head, *Hagiography and the Cult of Saints: the Diocese of Orléans 800-1200* (Cambridge, 1990), p. 14.

³³ Rollason, *Saints and Relics in Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford, 1989), pp. 197, 207.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 206-8.

³⁵ J. Smith, 'Review article: Early Medieval Hagiography in the Late Twentieth Century— a Survey of Research', *Early Medieval Europe*, 1 (1992), pp. 69-76, at p. 71.

³⁶ P. Geary, *Furta Sacra: Thefts of Relics in the Central Middle Ages* (Princeton, 1991), p. 9.

³⁷ Rollason, *Saints and Relics*, p. 83.

by their ecclesiastical communities and their consequent edifying nature obscures any features of the subject's life which were considered discordant with the accepted norms of sanctity or community. The standardised construction of saints' Lives and translation accounts along traditional lines is another obstruction to our understanding of the subject. Hagiography of the medieval period was often based on the conventions of earlier hagiographical writing, and followed standard formulae which demonstrated the subject's right to claim a place within the ranks of Christian saints. Miracle accounts in particular are often extremely standardised and repetitive. Mircea Eliade has argued that such repetition was a stylistic device which, alongside parallelism with the miracles of Christ and early saints, served to emphasise the unified nature of saintly beings.³⁸ The incorporation of saintly archetypes based on earlier saints who, in turn, emulated biblical figures, also makes it difficult for the historian to uncover the real nature of the individual being written about. The educational purposes of texts, which were often read aloud to church congregations, and which were intended to provide an exemplar of Christian virtue, also inhibited an accurate representation of the subject. The retrospective writing of hagiographical accounts, along with the associated problems of recording oral tradition, also serves to distort our image of the subject. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the often active involvement of the communities which claimed the relics of the saint in the production of such texts undoubtedly affected the representation of the saint, the monastic community, and the wider political and social events that are described within them.

Despite such difficulties, it has long been recognised that hagiographies can in fact constitute excellent historical source material on a variety of themes. Indeed, some of the 'problems' with hagiographical sources can be put to productive use. Firstly, hagiographic texts provide an understanding of the concepts of sanctity at the time and place of writing.³⁹ Secondly, the concerns and attitudes of both those producing the texts and the intended audience of them can often be discerned from the chosen themes and presentation of them in the hagiographies.⁴⁰ Thirdly, close reading of saints' Lives', miracles and translation accounts may highlight the propagation of materialistic and jurisdictional claims put forward by the commissioning communities or the hagiographers themselves.⁴¹ Finally, and despite the

³⁸ M. Eliade, *The Myth of the Eternal Return* (London, 1955), as cited in M. Carrasco, 'Sanctity and Experience in Pictorial Hagiography' in R. Blumenfeld-Kosinski and T. Szell, eds., *Images of Sainthood in Medieval Europe* (Ithaca, 1991), p. 37.

³⁹ Geary, *Furta Sacra*, p. 10.

⁴⁰ B. Cazelles, 'Introduction', in ed., Blumenfeld-Kosinski and Szell, *Images of Sainthood*, pp. 1-17.

⁴¹ Rollason, *The Mildrith Legend*, pp. 3-8.

conventions utilised by medieval hagiographers, it is sometimes possible to discern a degree of social and personal detail on the historical figure depicted as a saint.⁴²

This study of the Barking Cycle as an homogenous group of texts which are preserved as such in a manuscript collection can therefore be seen as informed by Geary's hagiological recommendations. It is also influenced by David Rollason's approach to the study of saints' cults and Lives which explores the dedications and content of hagiographies in an effort to determine both the intended audience and intended teachings of a text. This is particularly important in analysing texts which were produced, as the Barking texts were, in response to social shifts which included the takeover of power and subjugation of the former ruling classes to a new political regime. Ultimately, the aim here is to examine, through the hagiographical medium, the motivations of the Barking community in both their promotion of cults at the nunnery and in their production of the Barking Cycle at the end of the eleventh century.

This study will therefore begin by considering the provenance and authorship of the Barking Cycle. This will include discussion of the author, Goscelin of Saint-Bertin, his working methods and the sources used by him in the compilation of the Barking texts. A brief comparison with Goscelin's other known works will also be undertaken; this will respond to questions about Goscelin's motives and loyalties, which is particularly important in a study of texts produced for an English monastic house in an environment of subjugation by a new Norman political and religious regime.

The thesis itself is divided into three main parts, the first of which examines the contexts of production of the Barking Cycle in the late eleventh century. This includes a consideration of both the hagiographical trends of the time, and the political or religious occurrences which relate to English monastic houses following the Norman Conquest. This part will also consider the relationship between the Barking community and the local episcopacy. Here in particular, I will question the role of Maurice, bishop of London, who appears in the Barking Cycle both as a dedicatee of the Lives of Æthelburg and Wulfhild, and as an obstruction to the community's plans for saint promotion in the translation accounts. Maurice's role is particularly interesting given the historic links between the nunnery and the bishopric of

⁴² J. Tibbets-Schulenburg, 'Female Sanctity and Public and Private Roles ca. 500-1100' in *Women and Power in the Middle Ages* (London, 1988), pp. 102-125, at p. 103.

London, and it is perhaps not coincidental that some of the nunnery's land losses appear to have benefitted the community at St Paul's.

The following section of the thesis represents a reading of the Barking Cycle. This has the specific intent of considering themes in the texts in the light of the Anglo-Norman contexts highlighted in the first section. The texts are considered in their three composite parts, that is: the translation and vision accounts, both of which record nearly-contemporary events at the nunnery and therefore the contexts of production; the texts on the Bedan saints, Æthelburg and Hildelith, both of which record the early history of the nunnery, but also, show signs of updating, certainly in the late-eleventh century, but also possibly at an earlier point; and the Life and translation account of Wulfhild which records not only the nunnery's fortunes in the later Anglo-Saxon period, but also, a translation of relics at Barking in the early eleventh century. The different functions of the texts will be considered, as will the possible contexts for promoting saints' cults and producing Lives and translation accounts.

The final part of the thesis explores the possibility that some of the Barking Cycle, or rather, some parts of the texts which form the Barking Cycle, respond to, or reflect, earlier contexts at the nunnery. This is suggested by Goscelin's reference to an earlier translation of St Wulfhild which seems to have taken place in the 1020s or 1030s, and therefore during the reign of Cnut or his successor, Harald Harefoot. This also raises questions as to the existence of earlier hagiographical material which may have been used by Goscelin in his compilation of the Barking texts. This section will also consider the connections between Barking and the West Saxon royal house, and specifically, the queen. There are also questions here about Barking's experience of reform in the tenth century and the possible effects of this movement upon the nunnery and ultimately, upon its production and use of hagiographic texts.

The themes which are raised within these sections derive from the content of the Barking texts, for example, the piece on Barking's landholdings both before and after the Conquest is designed to clarify the suggestions in the translation accounts and Life of Æthelburg, that the nunnery had experienced threats to their resources; the chapter on the nunnery of Horton is intended to explain the frequent references to this house in the Life of Wulfhild. This study will therefore remain concentrated throughout on the reading of Barking's hagiographical records of the late eleventh century, and on the elucidation of the political and cultural impact of Church reform, Danish invasion and rule, and Norman Conquest upon the female religious house at Barking.

Chapter Two

The Barking Cycle – provenance and authorship

The Barking cycle consists of six distinct hagiographical writings. These include the vitae of two former abbesses of Barking: Æthelburg, the founding mother of the nunnery and a saint of the Bedan era; and Wulfhild, an abbess of the tenth century with close links to the West Saxon dynasty.⁴³ A third abbess of Barking, Hildelith, also a Bedan saint, is celebrated in a series of *lecciones*.⁴⁴ There are two accounts of the translations of these three abbess saints, and a written account of a vision relating to this three-fold translation. This range of texts allows us to explore in-depth the nunnery's use of their saints' cults, especially when they are considered alongside each other. Before undertaking a reading of the Cycle however, it is important to first assess the provenance, authorship, date and typicality of these texts.

Five of the texts which constitute the Barking cycle are preserved in a manuscript codex which contains no other historical or hagiographical works.⁴⁵ For this reason, Colker has suggested that this book probably belonged at one time to Barking abbey itself.⁴⁶ The first two items, the *Vita Æthelburgae* and the *Vita Wulfhildae*, are written in an English hand of the second half of the eleventh century. The translation and vision accounts date from the first half of the twelfth century and are also written in an English hand.⁴⁷ There are a number of inscriptions on folios 41v and 42 which date from the 13th and 15th centuries, none of which, however, help to determine the whereabouts of the manuscript at these times.⁴⁸ The phrase '*sum Cotton*', written in pencil on folio two seems to indicate that the manuscript

⁴³ Goscelin, *Vita Æthelburgae* and *Vita Wulfhildae* in M.L. Colker, ed., 'Texts of Jocelyn of Canterbury which relate to the History of Barking Abbey', *Studia Monastica* 7.2 (1965), pp. 383-460, at pp. 398-417, 418-434.

⁴⁴ Goscelin, *Lecciones de Sancta Hildelitha* in Colker, ed., 'Texts of Jocelyn of Canterbury', pp. 455-458.

Lecciones, or lessons, were drawn from vitae, translation accounts and miracle collections, and were constructed in a way suitable for reading out on feast days.

⁴⁵ Trinity College Dublin MS 176 (E. 5. 28).

⁴⁶ Colker, 'Texts of Jocelyn of Canterbury', p. 393.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, p. 393.

⁴⁸ On f.41v, in a hand of about 1200, is written the prayer 'O adonay domine dues mangne et mirabilis, qui dedisti salute in manu sanctae marie virginis, et per uterum et vicera dulcissime matris tue et per illud sanctissimum corpus quod ex illa sumpsisti, exaudi preces meas et inple desiderium meum in bonum et libera me de omni tribulacione et angustia et ab insidiis omnium michi nocere cupiencium et a linguis dolosis et ab omnibus malis. Amen.' Another hand of the same period wrote on f. 42 'decet quemque clericorum oneste viuere'. Also on f. 42, in a hand of the fifteenth century, are written the following verses: 'Linco coax ranis coruis uanaque uanis, Ad stadium pergo quod mortis non timet ergo'; 'Quater millenis ter centum quatuor annos, nexus in inferis fuit Adam crimine primo'; 'Non est ubina nisi Christus vera sophia'; 'Egris ac sanis sana fit refection panis, Sed Christi panis non est panis nisi sanis'; 'Anatole dedit A disis D contulit artos, A mesembrinos M, collige, fiet Adam'.

belonged at one time to a member of the Cotton family.⁴⁹ By c.1606, however, the manuscript belonged to James Usher,⁵⁰ a professor of divinity, and one of the first scholars in Trinity College. He was also an acquaintance of both Sir Thomas Bodley and Sir Robert Cotton,⁵¹ and it appears that the Barking manuscript, now preserved at Trinity College Dublin, passed at some time from Robert Cotton to James Usher.

The *Lecciones de Sancta Hildelitha* is preserved in a Cardiff codex of hagiographical texts in various hands of the twelfth century.⁵² The *Lecciones Hildelitha* is the third article in the codex, following the *Vita et actus beati Wingualei abbatis* [ff.1-78] and the *Vita Æthelburge* [ff.81-94]. The *Vita Wingualei* is written in a single hand of the mid-twelfth century; the *Vita Æthelburge* and the *Lecciones de Hildelitha* are written in a different hand to that of the *Vita Wingualei*, and are apparently of a somewhat earlier date.⁵³ The *Lecciones de Hildelitha* are followed by the *Vita beati Ædwardi regis et martyris* [ff.97-102] and the *Vita beate Ædgithe virginis* [ff. 102b-120] written in a third hand of about the same date as the Life of Æthelburg and lessons of Hildelith.⁵⁴ These texts are followed by a Life of St David [ff.121-129], written in another mid-twelfth century hand, the Life of St Mary of Egypt [ff.130-135], written in more than one hand, each distinct from any of the preceding texts, and a Life of St Evroul [ff.136-146], in another hand of the beginning of the twelfth century. The first item in the collection, the Life of St Winwaloi, can be identified as belonging to St Martin's Priory in Dover in 1389 due to a classification mark on the text.⁵⁵ Colker has suggested that it is 'not unlikely' that the entire codex once belonged to St. Martin's in Dover.⁵⁶ Susan Ridyard, however, argues that the composite manuscript was put together while in the possession of Sir Robert Cotton.⁵⁷ It is true that, by 1601, the codex seems to have been in the possession of Sir Robert Cotton. It came into the possession of Cardiff Library in 1924, following its

⁴⁹ Colker, 'Texts of Jocelyn of Canterbury', p. 394. Barking was pulled down in 1541 as part of the Dissolution of the Monasteries; Sir Robert Bruce Cotton assembled a private collection of manuscripts from various monasteries following the Dissolution. Some of these manuscripts were given by Cotton to the Bodleian Library in 1602, the rest passed to his son and grandson; the latter donated the collection 'to the nation'. Many of these texts now belong to the British Library.

⁵⁰ Colker, 'Texts of Jocelyn of Canterbury', p. 394.

⁵¹ Alan Ford, 'Usher, James (1581–1656)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/28034>, accessed 21 May 2010].

⁵² MS. 381, Cardiff Public Libraries.

⁵³ Cardiff Public Libraries, *Catalogue of Manuscripts, Books, Engravings, References etc., Relating to St David, St David's day, St David in Romance and the Cathedral Church of St David's Pembrokeshire* (Cardiff, 1927), pp. 1-2.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁵⁵ N. Ker, *Medieval Manuscripts in British Libraries* (Oxford, 1969 – 1983), p. 348.

⁵⁶ Colker, 'Texts of Jocelyn of Canterbury', p. 394.

⁵⁷ Ridyard, *The Royal Saints of Anglo-Saxon England* (Cambridge, 1989), p. 38, n. 105.

purchase at a Sotheby sale from the estate of Sir George Wombwell of Newburgh priory, Yorkshire (d. 1913).⁵⁸ It is important to note that in the Cardiff codex, the Barking material seems to have been associated with Lives of two other tenth-century English saints, Edward the Martyr and St. Edith. Whether this association was made by Cotton in the seventeenth century, or represents an earlier, perhaps eleventh-century, stage of development is not clear, and cannot now be determined. Colker has examined both the Dublin and Cardiff versions of the *Vita Æthelburgae* and claims that there are relatively few differences between the texts; certainly such divergences as there are do not allow us to determine the relationship between them.⁵⁹

Only two of the texts in the Barking Cycle explicitly bear the name of their author. The *Vita Æthelburgae* contains this information in its dedication: *Mauricio summo sacrat hec Goscelinus ab imo*.⁶⁰ The dedication of the *Vita Wulfhildae* also provides us with the name of its author: *Quae pia sunt fidis capiat pietatis amicus; Mauricus ivgi vivat calamo Gocelini*.⁶¹ Colker claims that there can be little doubt that the same author was responsible for writing the other texts in the Barking cycle due to the very similar display of style in each work.⁶² T. J. Hamilton, in his doctoral thesis on Goscelin's writings, has subjected the Barking cycle to a rigorous analysis in order to examine Colker's claim. Hamilton's cross referencing of the Barking texts reveals similarities in both information and descriptive style between the Lives of Æthelburg and Wulfhild, texts known to be written by Goscelin, and the translation and vision accounts also included in the Barking cycle. Furthermore, as Hamilton argues, all of the Barking texts appear to have the same purpose – that is, to justify the destruction of the old church of Barking and the translation of the saints' relics in the aftermath of the Norman Conquest. The lessons of St Hildelith contains an account of a miracle which is remarkably similar to one found in Goscelin's Life of Æthelburg, and is therefore also identified by Hamilton as an authentic work of Goscelin.⁶³

Goscelin, a Flemish monk educated at the monastery of Saint-Bertin, came to England under the patronage of Bishop Herman of Wiltshire. It is likely that Goscelin was influenced by

⁵⁸ Cardiff Public Libraries, *Catalogue of manuscripts*, pp. 4-5.

⁵⁹ Colker, 'Texts of Jocelyn of Canterbury', p. 394.

⁶⁰ *Vita Æthelburgae* [f. 1r – Dublin, f. 81r Cardiff], in Colker, 'Texts of Jocelyn of Canterbury', p.398: 'Goscelin consecrates these things to the highest Maurice from the lowest'.

⁶¹ Goscelin, *Vita Wulfhildae* [f. 15r], in Colker, 'Texts of Jocelyn of Canterbury' p. 418: 'Faithful friend who has grasped goodness; Maurice, live forever by the pen of Goscelin'.

⁶² Colker, 'Texts of Jocelyn of Canterbury', p. 392.

⁶³ T.J. Hamilton, 'Goscelin of Canterbury, a Critical Study of His Life, Works and Accomplishments' (unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Virginia, 1973), pp. 106-11.

reform ideologies at Saint-Bertin, which had been reformed by Richard of Saint-Vanne in 1021, and which was known for its production of literary works, especially saints' Lives.⁶⁴ Frank Barlow suggests that Goscelin may have become acquainted with Herman during the latter's period of exile at Saint-Bertin (1055-1058). William of Malmesbury, in his *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, states that Goscelin came to England with Herman.⁶⁵ He was certainly in England by September 1065, when he attended the dedication of Wilton's church to St Edith.⁶⁶ It is possible that Goscelin joined the monastery of Sherborne, but it also seems that he acted as something of a personal secretary to Herman, accompanying the bishop on various journeys.⁶⁷ Goscelin also appears to have acted as chaplain to the Wilton community during his early years in England, as well as providing personal tuition to Eve, a nun of Wilton, and the inspiration for his *Liber Confortatorius*.⁶⁸ Upon the death of Bishop Herman in 1078, and apparently due to a difficult relationship with Herman's successor, Osmund, (a protégé of William the Conqueror) Goscelin was compelled to leave Wiltshire.⁶⁹ Until c. 1090, at which point he became resident at St. Augustine's, Canterbury, Goscelin led a peripatetic existence, visiting several English monasteries, and producing numerous hagiographical works.⁷⁰

Indeed, Goscelin has been described as 'one of the most prolific hagiographers at work in eleventh century England'.⁷¹ William of Malmesbury tells us that Goscelin 'spent much time visiting cathedrals and abbeys, and in many places left evidence of his notable learning; for in the celebration of the English saints he was second to none since Bede...'.⁷² In his thesis of 1979, Hamilton claimed that twenty-five hagiographical works could confidently be attributed to Goscelin.⁷³ Frank Barlow has also identified 25 texts as 'well-authenticated

⁶⁴ Barlow, ed., *The Life of King Edward who Rests at Westminster, Attributed to a Monk of Saint-Bertin* (Oxford, 1992), p. xlvii.

⁶⁵ William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum Anglorum: the History of the English Kings*, bk. iv, 342, ed. R.A.B. Mynors, R.M. Thomson and M. Winterbottom (Oxford, 1998), pp. 591-593; Stephanie Hollis claims, however, that Goscelin may have followed Herman over to England at a later point, an opinion based on her reading of the *Liber Confortatorius*. I have been unable to locate this information myself in the *LC*. See S. Hollis, *Writing the Wilton Women: Goscelin's Legend of Edith and the Liber Confortatorius* (Turnhout, 2004), p. 219 & n. 13.

⁶⁶ Hollis, *Writing the Wilton Women*, p. 225.

⁶⁷ Barlow, ed., *The Life of King Edward*, p. xlix.

⁶⁸ Hollis, *Writing the Wilton Women*, pp. 219-20.

⁶⁹ Goscelin, *Liber Confortatorius*, ch. 29, in Hollis, *Writing the Wilton Women*, p. 104.

⁷⁰ Barlow, ed., *The Life of King Edward*, p. xlix.

⁷¹ R. C. Love, *Three Eleventh-Century Anglo-Latin Saints' Lives: Vita S Birini, Vita et Miracula S Kenelmi and Vita S Rumwoldi* (Oxford, 1996), pp. xxxix-xl.

⁷² William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, bk. 4. 344:1, ed. M. Winterbottom, pp. 591-593.

⁷³ Hamilton, 'Goscelin of Canterbury', pp. 123-4. These include: *Historia maior Sancti Augusti*; *Historia minor Sancti Augusti*; *Historia maior de miraculis Sancti Augustini*; *Historia minor de miraculis Sancti Augustini*; *Historia translationis Sancti Augustini*; *Vita S. Mildrethae*; *Historia translationis et institutionis monasterii beate Mildrethae*; *Libellus contra usurpatores S. Mildrethae*; *Vita et virtutes S. Æthelburgae virginis*; *Vita et virtutes S.*

works of Goscelin', but also listed eleven other works which have at some point been attributed to Goscelin.⁷⁴ Rosalind Love has recently examined some of the texts believed to be Goscelin's, namely the hagiographies of the female saints of Ely, and has built a convincing case for the addition of at least two more texts to Goscelin's canon of works.⁷⁵ The full extent of Goscelin's work may not have yet been established, but reappraisal of an earlier tendency to assign anonymous Lives of English saints to Goscelin, and rigorous analysis of those assignments of the sort undertaken by Love, has brought us closer to understanding both Goscelin's hagiographical style, and his career as a hagiographer.

The body of work currently attributed to Goscelin contains a wide range of hagiographical styles and subjects. The range of texts produced by Goscelin includes saints' Lives, translation accounts, miracle accounts, histories, lessons, and vision accounts. There are also two distinct texts, the *Libellus contra usurpatores S. Mildrithae* and the *Liber Confortatorius*. The *contra usurpatores* represents a literary defence of St Augustine's claim to possess the relics of St Mildrith, which had been translated from Minster-in-Thanet to Canterbury in 1035.⁷⁶ The *Liber Confortatorius* is a work of spiritual instruction written by Goscelin for Eve, his pupil at Wilton. It is the most personal of Goscelin texts, and the only piece of his work which contains biographical information.⁷⁷

Wulfhildae virginis; Textus translationis S. Virginum Æthelburgae, Hildalithae ac Wulfhildae; De translatione vel elevatio sanctarum virginum Æthelburgae, Hildalithae ac Wulfhildae; The recital of a vision; Lecciones de S. Hildalitha; Vita S. Laurentii; Vita S. Melliti; Vita S. Iusti; Vita S. Honorii; Vita S. Deusdedit; Vita S. Theodori; Vita, miracula et translatio S. Ivonis; Vita, miracula et translatio S. Adriani; Vita S. Wlsini episcopus et confessoris; Vita S. Edithae et translatio ipsius cum sequentibus signis; Liber Confortatorius.

⁷⁴ Barlow's system of listing texts is slightly different from Hamilton's: in two cases works which were separated into two by Hamilton are recorded as one text by Barlow [the *historia minor de miraculis S Augustini* Barlow counts as one with the *historia maior*; the translation account of St Mildrith is counted as one with the Vita of the same saint.] The reason Barlow arrives at the same figure [25] as Hamilton is that he adds the attribution to Goscelin of the Vita et Miracula S Letardi and the Vita S Ætheldrede. The eleven attributed works include: Vita S. Amelbergae; *Historia translationis S Amelbergae*; Passio et miracula S. Eadwardi regis et martyris; Vita S. Eorcengotae; Vita S. Eormenildae; Vita S. Sexburgae; Vita S. Werburgae; Vita S. Withburgae; Vita SS. Aethlredi et Aethelberti martyrum et sanctarum virginum Miltrudis et Edburgis, idus Decembris; Passio beatorum martyrum Ethelredi et Ethelbricti cum genealogia eorum; Vita S. Milburgae.

⁷⁵ R.C. Love, *Goscelin of Saint-Bertin: the hagiography of the female saints of Ely* (Oxford, 1994). Despite some circumstantial evidence, Love is not fully convinced of Goscelin's authorship of the *Miracula S. Ætheldrethe* [pp. lxxv-lxxvi]; Goscelin therefore remains only a possible author of this text [although Barlow includes this in his list of 'well-authenticated works of Goscelin']. Similarly, the Lives of Seaxburg and Wihburg cannot conclusively be shown to be the work of Goscelin [pp. lxxxix-cxix]. However, Love builds a convincing case for Goscelin's authorship of the lessons for the feasts of St. Seaxburh and St. Eormenhild [pp. lxxviii-lxxx].

⁷⁶ Rollason, *The Mildrith Legend*, pp. 58-9.

⁷⁷ Hollis, *Writing the Wilton Women*, p. 3.

Goscelin's hagiographical subjects are also wide-ranging. Ten of the saints he wrote about were male, seven were female.⁷⁸ All of the male saints about whom Goscelin wrote were either archbishops or bishops, with the exception of St Adrian, who refused the archbishopric of Canterbury, but was appointed as adviser to Theodore during his archiepiscopate there. Seven of the male saints about whom Goscelin wrote were successive early archbishops of Canterbury, beginning with Augustine's reign in 598 and ending with Theodore's death in 690. St Adrian (d. 710) also belongs to the early Anglo-Saxon period, as does St Ivo, who was believed to be a Persian bishop who visited England in the conversion period. Therefore the only recent, or late Anglo-Saxon male saint, about whom Goscelin wrote, was the bishop Wulfsige of Sherborne. Of Goscelin's female subjects, four were royal (Mildrith, Seaxburg, Eormenhild and Edith) and three were probably of noble descent (Æthelburg, Hildelith and Wulfhild). With the exception of Edith, all of Goscelin's female saints were abbesses.⁷⁹ The Ely saints, Seaxburg and Eormenhild, are the only two of Goscelin's female subjects to have married and borne children.⁸⁰ The remaining five were virgins, three of whom had reportedly refused marriages in their youth (Mildrith, Edith and Wulfhild). As with the male group, the majority of Goscelin's female saints were of early Anglo-Saxon origin.⁸¹ Only the saints Edith and Wulfhild were recent, both having lived in the second half of the tenth century. Goscelin's canon of works is therefore predominantly concerned with saints of the early Anglo-Saxon period, and with episcopal and monastic leaders.

The earliest works of Goscelin belong to the period spent in Wiltshire with Bishop Herman. Although none of his known works were completed before the death of Herman in 1078,⁸² it is likely that he had begun work on both the *Vita S Wlsini* and the *Vita S Edithe* before this point. The Life of Wulfsige, bishop of Sherborne, was commissioned by the monks of

⁷⁸ I have only included the saints which historians definitely agree upon as being Goscelin's subjects. The male saints are Augustine, Laurence, Mellitus, Justus, Honorus, Deusdedit, Theodore, Ivo, Adrian and Wulfsige. The female saints are Æthelburg, Hildelith, Wulfhild, Edith, Seaxburg, Eormenhild and Mildrith.

⁷⁹ However, the Legend of Edith includes a vita of her mother, Wulfhryth, who was abbess of Wilton during Edith's life. There is also a tale in the Life of Edith in which the saint refuses the abbacy of Wilton.

⁸⁰ It is interesting to note that both Seaxburg and Eormenhild had daughters who also became saints. Eormenhild was the daughter of Seaxburg, and St Werburg was the daughter of Eormenhild.

⁸¹ Seaxburg, Eormenhild, Mildrith, Hildelith and Æthelburg were alive in the late seventh and early eighth centuries.

⁸² With the possible exception of the *Vita S Amelberge*, which may have been written while he was still at Saint-Bertin – in the Life of Werburg, Goscelin himself states that one of the miracles associated with Werburg was very similar to a story he had written in the Life of Amelberga. See *The Life of Waerburh*, ch. 6, edited and translated in Love, *Goscelin of Saint-Bertin*, p. 43. If Goscelin was the author of the Life of St Kenelm, it may also be the case that this was one of his earliest works, dating from some time in the 1070s.

Sherborne, and is dated to between 1077 and 1079.⁸³ It is dedicated to Herman's successor, the Norman bishop, Osmund.⁸⁴ The Life of Edith was similarly commissioned by the community of Wilton; Bishop Herman also apparently encouraged Goscelin to write the Life of this saint.⁸⁵ The Life of Edith was completed around 1080, and is dedicated to Archbishop Lanfranc. Goscelin's knowledge of, and familiarity with, the Wilton community is reflected in this work, which has been described as the most sophisticated of the *vitae* composed by Goscelin.⁸⁶ The one didactical text produced by Goscelin, the *Liber confortatorius*, was also produced in the context of Goscelin's stay in Wiltshire, and there is some evidence that it was written before the life of Edith, and possibly also before the Life of Wulfsige.⁸⁷ The *Liber confortatorius* was written for Eve, a nun of Wilton, to whom Goscelin acted as personal tutor. Her departure from Wilton c. 1080, to become an anchorite at Saint Laurent du Tertre, and Goscelin's mention of her departure in the *LC*, dates the work to shortly after 1080.

It is difficult to trace exactly Goscelin's itinerary between his departure from Wiltshire (shortly after 1078) and his arrival at St. Augustine's, Canterbury (c. 1091).⁸⁸ Goscelin himself mentions a stay at *Burg*, which Frank Barlow suggests is Peterborough.⁸⁹ Thomas Hamilton has suggested that Goscelin would have been at Peterborough around the year 1082, the date at which the *Liber Confortatorius*, the source in which Goscelin refers to his visit, was composed.⁹⁰ It is also possible that Goscelin visited Winchester, where he was remembered in prayers up to about 1122.⁹¹ We can be more confident in placing Goscelin at

⁸³ This is Talbot's dating; see C. H. Talbot, 'The Life of St Wulsin of Sherborne by Goscelin', *Revue Benedictine* lxxix (1951), pp. 68-85; and see R.C. Love, 'The Life of St Wulfsige of Sherborne by Goscelin of Saint-Bertin: a new translation with introduction, appendix and notes' in K. Barker, D. A. Hinton and A. Hunt eds., *St Wulfsige and Sherborne: essays to celebrate the millennium of the Benedictine abbey 998-1998* (Oxford, 2005), pp. 98-9, where she highlights Talbot's additional conjecture of a much later date. Love herself agrees with the 1078-80 date stated here.

⁸⁴ M. Lapidge and R. Love, 'The Latin Hagiography of England and Wales (600-1550)' in G. Philippard ed., *International History of the Latin and Vernacular Hagiographical Literature in the West from its origins to 1550* (Turnhout, 1994), pp. 203-325, at p. 226. The dedication does not explicitly name Herman's successor, but Osmund was his direct successor.

⁸⁵ Goscelin, *Vita Edithe*, prologue, in Hollis, *Writing the Wilton Women*, pp. 23-5.

⁸⁶ Lapidge and Love, 'The Latin Hagiography of England and Wales (600-1550)', p. 227.

⁸⁷ Hollis, *Writing the Wilton Women*, p. 218. In Book 1 of the *LC* Goscelin states that he has no completed work to his credit.

⁸⁸ Hamilton, 'Goscelin of Canterbury', p. 185, where Hamilton claims that Goscelin was an eyewitness to the translations of St Augustine's saints which took place in 1091.

⁸⁹ Barlow, ed., *The Life of King Edward*, p. 140. *Burg* could alternatively be identified as Bury St Edmunds, but Barlow points out that Peterborough is a more likely choice due to the people and places mentioned in the context of *Burg*.

⁹⁰ Hamilton, 'Goscelin of Canterbury', p. 177.

⁹¹ Barlow, ed., *The Life of King Edward*, p. 140. Barlow also suggests that his itinerary after leaving Wilton seems to have been influenced by introductions made at Winchester; Hamilton, 'Goscelin of Canterbury', p. 176, where Hamilton makes the statement that the Lives of both St Swithun and St Grimbald have tentatively

the monasteries of Barking, Ely and Ramsey, for whom he wrote a number of saints' Lives. The dedication of two of the Barking texts to Maurice, bishop of London (1086-1107)⁹² suggests that these two texts could not have been completed before 1086. The Life of Wulfhild makes reference to the ruling monarch as William,⁹³ which could be William the Conqueror or his son, William Rufus, so the latest date they could have been produced is 1100, the year in which William II died. Goscelin's visit to Ely occurred during the abbacy of Simeon (1082-1093). His presence there is recorded in the *Liber Eliensis*;⁹⁴ Rosalind Love suggests that Goscelin was at Ely in 1087 or 1088.⁹⁵ Goscelin's *Vita S Ivonis*, produced for the monastery of Ramsey, was dedicated to, and possibly commissioned by, their abbot, Herbert Losinga, whose abbacy occurred between 1087 and 1091. It is likely then that Goscelin was also at Ramsey sometime during those years.⁹⁶

In some cases, we are told explicitly that Goscelin's work was commissioned by the communities which housed the relics of the saint to be commemorated. We have seen that the Lives of St Wulfsige and St Edith were produced at the specific request of the communities of Sherborne and Wilton. Similarly, in his Barking texts, Goscelin informs us that he was asked by the abbess of Barking to record the miracles and translations of the Barking saints.⁹⁷ There is a connection between the commissioning of hagiographies by monastic communities, the rebuilding of monastic properties, and the translation of monastic patron saints. At Barking, the translation of its saints seems to have occurred at roughly the same time that the texts were produced, and shortly after an extensive rebuilding programme.⁹⁸ Goscelin's work for St Augustine's at Canterbury was similarly motivated by the completion of building and restoration works and relic translations which took place there in 1091.⁹⁹ Clearly, the commissioning role of the communities involved needs to be

been ascribed to Goscelin and, if proven to be the case, then it is likely that he spent time at both the Old Minster (site of St Swithun's relics) and the New Minster (a site closely associated with St Grimbald).

⁹² Goscelin, *Life of Æthelburg, prologue & Life of Wulfhild*, prologue, in Colker, 'Texts of Jocelyn of Canterbury', p. 398, pp. 418-419.

⁹³ Goscelin, *Life of Wulfhild*, prologue, in Colker, 'Texts of Jocelyn of Canterbury', pp. 418-419.

⁹⁴ Blake, *Liber Eliensis* (London, 1962), ii, 133, pp. 213-6.

⁹⁵ Love, *Goscelin of Saint-Bertin*, p. xix; Love may be following Hamilton in his 'Goscelin of Canterbury', p. 179, as he also asserts that Goscelin was at Ely in this year, the same year in which monks from Winchester were introduced into the Ely monastery.

⁹⁶ *Ibid*, p. xxi; Barlow, ed., *The Life of King Edward*, p. 141.

⁹⁷ Goscelin, *Translation of SS Æthelburg, Hildelith & Wulfhild* (longer version), ch. 2, in Colker, 'Texts of Jocelyn of Canterbury', pp. 436-437.

⁹⁸ Goscelin, *Translation of SS Æthelburg, Hildelith & Wulfhild* (longer version), in Colker, 'Texts of Jocelyn of Canterbury', pp. 435-445; also, see p. 388 of Colker's article and; Love, *Three Eleventh-Century Anglo-Latin Saints' Lives*, p. xliiii.

⁹⁹ R. Sharpe, 'Goscelin's St Augustine and St Mildrith: Hagiography and Liturgy in Context', *Journal of Theological Studies* 41 (1990), pp. 502-516, at pp. 504-5, 507.

considered alongside the influence of the hagiographer when reading their hagiographies. Similarly, the connection between translation ceremonies and production of hagiographical records requires further consideration in order to understand the context from which the text emerges.

In summary, the Barking cycle comprises a range of texts, all of which can be attributed to Goscelin. They were produced in the period of Goscelin's career which followed his departure from Wiltshire. It is possible, but not provable, that the cycle was produced before Goscelin settled at Canterbury c.1091. The date-range for two of the texts can be determined from their dedications and internal references as 1086x1100; the close association between these and the other texts of the Barking cycle, suggests that all of the texts belong to this date-range. The texts sit easily within the pattern of Goscelin's known work on saints of English communities, and especially on Bedan saints. However, the Barking group also includes a recent saint, Wulfhild. This is one of only three Lives of late Anglo-Saxon saints produced by Goscelin; two of these are of female saints, both produced for nunneries, at Wilton and Barking. Although two of the texts display a dedication to Bishop Maurice, the stimulus for producing the Lives seems to have come from within the community of Barking itself. It should be pointed out that the dating and placing of the Barking texts here applies specifically to the texts produced by Goscelin, that is, the texts as we now have them. Whether there were earlier texts behind some of Goscelin's work on Barking is a question which will be pursued later in the thesis.

An essential preliminary enquiry at this point is that of Goscelin's known sources and working methods. Thomas Hamilton has highlighted Goscelin's use of historical sources such as histories, chronicles and charters.¹⁰⁰ Bede's *Ecclesiastical History* in particular, seems to have been used extensively by Goscelin in his compilation of English saints' Lives. Hamilton has identified 13 of Goscelin's works as being based, in varying degrees, on the work of Bede, two of which form part of the Barking cycle.¹⁰¹ In his Life of Æthelburg, Goscelin informs us at the outset that he used Bede's account of Æthelburg to construct his own account of the saint. Chapters one to twelve of Goscelin's Life of Æthelburg follow the Bedan account of St Æthelburg. Goscelin's account of Æthelburg is considerably longer than

¹⁰⁰ Hamilton, 'Goscelin of Canterbury', pp. 291, 311, 317.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid*, pp. 303-4. These are, in order of greatest dependency to least: *Vita S Theodori*, *Vita S Laurentii*, *Vita S. Deusdedit*, *Vita S Honorii*, *Vita S Æthelburgae*, *Historia maior S Augustini*, *Historia minor S Augustini*, *Vita S Iusti*, *Vita S Melliti*, *Historia translationis S Augustini*, *Vita S Adriani*, *Vita S Mildrithae*, *Lecciones de S Hildelitha*.

Bede's, the latter constituting only four chapters as opposed to Goscelin's twelve. Goscelin appears, however, to have made no significant additions to Bede's work, rather he expounds the account through his own florid style, and with the addition of certain biblical stories and references.¹⁰² It should be noted though, that the remaining seven chapters of Goscelin's *Vita Æthelburgae* are distinct from Bede and describe, in Goscelin's words 'the deeds of modern times'.¹⁰³ The almost verbatim copying of some of Bede's writing about St Æthelburg in Goscelin's work accords well with his use of Bede in other Lives, for example the Life of Theodore. In the case of his *Lecciones de Sancta Hildelitha*, Goscelin's dependency on Bede's earlier account of her is demonstrated not only in terms of content, but also in its notably concise nature. Bede devotes only one chapter to Hildelith, the content of which is recounted over three chapters in Goscelin's work. Interestingly, a miracle described in Bede's chapter on Hildelith is not replicated in Goscelin's version, most probably because Bede does not directly attribute the miracle to Hildelith's powers.¹⁰⁴

Hamilton suggests that in all thirteen of the works which display Goscelin's indebtedness to Bede, Goscelin drew as much as possible from Bede's works, and supplemented this with other source material available to him.¹⁰⁵ In some cases, it appears that older versions of saints Lives, other than those produced by Bede, were available for Goscelin to consult. William of Malmesbury wrote in the twelfth century that Goscelin '...rewrote in more elegant fashion those [Lives] of ancient saints either lost by enemy action or published with no grace of style.'¹⁰⁶ In his Life of St Ivo, Goscelin informs us that he was able to make use of an earlier Life of Ivo by Withman, the abbot of Ramsey between 1016 and 1020.¹⁰⁷ Similarly, in his Life of St Mildrith, Goscelin claims that he used an ancient biography of Mildrith to inform his own work.¹⁰⁸ It also seems that Goscelin may have consulted Lives of other saints to garner information on the saint he was writing about. In his Life of Wulfhild, for example, Goscelin recites a miracle in which Wulfhild miraculously produces an endless supply of

¹⁰² Goscelin, *Life of Æthelburg*, ch. 1-12, in Colker, 'Texts of Jocelyn of Canterbury', pp. 398-412, and compare Bede, *Ecclesiastical History of the English People* ed., B. Colgrave and R.A.B. Mynors (Oxford, 1991), bk. 4, ch. 6-9, pp. 355-363.

¹⁰³ Goscelin, *Life of Æthelburg*, ch. 13, in Colker, 'Texts of Jocelyn of Canterbury', pp. 412-413.

¹⁰⁴ Compare Bede, *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, bk. 4, ch. 10, pp. 363-365, to Goscelin, *Lecciones de sancta Hildelitha* in Colker, 'Texts of Jocelyn of Canterbury', pp. 455-458.

¹⁰⁵ Hamilton, 'Goscelin of Canterbury', pp. 303, 307.

¹⁰⁶ William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, bk. iv, 342, pp. 591-593.

¹⁰⁷ Lapidge and Love, 'The Latin Hagiography of England and Wales (600-1550)', p. 230.

¹⁰⁸ Hamilton, 'Goscelin of Canterbury', p. 288.

wine for the bishop Æthelwold and his retinue, and then informs us that this miracle is also to be found in the pre-existing Life of Æthelwold.¹⁰⁹

There is indeed a similar miracle in Wulfstan's *Vita S Æthelwoldi*, however in this Life the miracle is attributed to Æthelwold himself. Wulfstan recounts a visit by King Eadred and his Northumbrian thegns to Æthelwold's monastery at Abingdon, in which the king demanded 'lavish draughts of mead' to be served.¹¹⁰ In true abbatial style,¹¹¹ Æthelwold obliged his royal guest's wishes and had his servants pour generous portions of mead through the day. Despite such generosity, and in true miraculous fashion, 'the level in the container [of mead] could not be reduced below a palm's measure.'¹¹² The use of a similar hagiographical topos in his *Life of Wulfhild*, suggests perhaps that Goscelin had access to the Life of Æthelwold, and used it when compiling his account of Wulfhild's life. It is also likely that, by drawing a comparison between the miracles of Æthelwold and Wulfhild, Goscelin was deliberately associating the abbess of Barking with a widely revered English bishop, a point which shall be explored later in the thesis.

Barbara Yorke has suggested that in writing his *Vita Edithe*, Goscelin may have been able to draw on an Old English Life of Edith which no longer exists.¹¹³ Goscelin does indeed claim in his Life of Edith that he used existing written sources, but it is not clear whether he was referring to an earlier Life of the saint.¹¹⁴ The only written source explicitly referred to in his Life of Edith is an account of the miraculous cure of the dancers of Colbek, which Goscelin claims was committed to writing in the vernacular.¹¹⁵ In his prologue to the Life of Wulfhild, Goscelin states that Wulfhild's holiness is recited 'in the mouths of many, as in

¹⁰⁹ Goscelin, *Vita Wulfhildae*, ch. 6, in Colker, 'Texts of Jocelyn of Canterbury', pp. 425-426: '*Talis etiam virtus inexhausti poculi legitur affatim in vita eiusdem patris Adeluoldi, qua beata Wulfilda tam sibi assimiletur, in eadem affectione quam Heliae prophetae in lechito olei et hydria farinae*': 'This virtue of the inexhaustible cup can be read in the life of the aforesaid father Æthelwold, in which the blessed Wulfhild is likened to him in that same affection as Elias the prophet in the flask of oil and the [hidria] of grain.'

¹¹⁰ M. Lapidge and M. Winterbottom, eds., *Wulfstan of Winchester: Life of St Æthelwold* (Oxford, 1991), ch. 12, p. 23.

¹¹¹ Æthelwold's *Regularis Concordia*, ed. T. Symons (London, 1953), ch. 10: 63, pp. 61-2 specifically states that the abbot of a monastery is to be zealous in providing hospitality for guests. Lapidge and Winterbottom, eds., *Wulfstan of Winchester*, p. 23, n. 6, also point out that, according to a thirteenth-century interpolation in the Abingdon Chronicle, Æthelwold was renowned for his generous provision of food and drink, especially mead, at the monastery. Apparently, Æthelwold introduced a new, larger measure of drink served in a flagon which was served twice a day, at lunch and dinner. The larger size of flagon became known as the *bolla Æthelwoldi*, or the Æthelwold beaker.

¹¹² Lapidge and Winterbottom eds., *Wulfstan of Winchester*, ch. 12, pp. 24-5.

¹¹³ B. Yorke, 'Carriers of the truth: writing the biographies of Anglo-Saxon royal saints' in D. Bates, J. Crick and S. Hamilton eds., *Writing Medieval Biography 750 – 1250: essays in honour of Professor Frank Barlow* (Woodbridge, 2006), pp. 49-60, at pp. 51-2.

¹¹⁴ Goscelin, *Vita Edithae*, prologue, in Hollis ed., *Writing the Wilton Women*, pp. 23-25.

¹¹⁵ Goscelin, *Translatio Edithae*, ch. 16, in Hollis ed., *Writing the Wilton Women*, pp. 87-88.

books' (*in ore multorum recitatur ut in libris*), though what exactly these books contained, or if indeed they constituted an earlier Life of Wulfhild, is difficult to determine due to a lack of surviving documentation. Indeed, as Hamilton points out, the vast majority of vernacular legends which were produced in the Anglo-Saxon period, and which were likely to have been available for hagiographers like Goscelin to draw on, have now been lost. This loss or destruction of sources written in the vernacular is likely to have been one effect of the increasing use of Latin in written documents from the eleventh century onwards.¹¹⁶ We should perhaps not be surprised if earlier versions of rewritten Lives were not always preserved alongside the newer texts. While Michael Lapidge has expressed doubt over the existence of lost Lives of Anglo-Saxon saints,¹¹⁷ Barbara Yorke has warned against underestimating the scale of loss of vernacular documents of the Anglo-Saxon period.¹¹⁸ Therefore, we should not rule out at this stage the possible existence of an earlier, vernacular, or indeed, Latin, Life of Wulfhild. Indeed, Goscelin records an earlier translation of St Wulfhild at Barking, which may have inspired the production of such a Life.

In addition to his use of written source material, Goscelin also drew his information from the memories of those communities which housed the saint's relics, and who, in some instances, had commissioned the hagiographical record of their saint. At Sherborne for example, Goscelin does not appear to have based his writing on an earlier Life of Wulfsige; rather he claims to have built his account on the oral traditions preserved at the monastery.¹¹⁹ At Wilton, Goscelin claims his principal source was the oral testimony of the abbess Godgifu and the Wilton nuns.¹²⁰ In his Life of Wulfhild, Goscelin states that it is the 'aged mothers' of Barking who provide him with information on Wulfhild. He identifies the nun Wulfrun, herself brought up under Wulfhild's abbacy at Barking, as his principal source, and makes more than one reference to her throughout the Life.¹²¹ Chapters 13 to 20 of the Life of Æthelburg, which represent the period after Bede's account of the saint and nunnery, are also apparently based on oral material from both the nuns and local nobility.¹²² The translation and vision accounts of the Barking cycle are also clearly informed by the oral testimony of Ælfgifu, abbess of Barking, and the female community there.

¹¹⁶ Yorke, 'Carriers of the Truth', p. 51.

¹¹⁷ M. Lapidge, 'The Saintly Life in Anglo-Saxon England' in M. Godden and M. Lapidge, eds., *The Cambridge Companion to Old English Literature* (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 243-263, at pp. 246, 253.

¹¹⁸ Yorke, 'Carriers of the Truth', p. 51.

¹¹⁹ Love, *Three Eleventh-Century Anglo-Latin Saints' Lives*, p. xli.

¹²⁰ Goscelin, *Vita Edithae*, prologue, in Hollis, *Writing the Wilton Women*, pp. 23-25.

¹²¹ Goscelin, *Vita Wulfhildae*, prologue, in Colker, 'Texts of Jocelyn of Canterbury', p. 418.

¹²² Goscelin, *Vita Æthelburgae*, ch. 13, in Colker, 'Texts of Jocelyn of Canterbury', pp. 412-413.

The use of oral tradition as a source for hagiographical writing is well evidenced in the medieval period. Thomas Head, in a study of saints' cults of the Loire Valley between the 9th and 12th centuries, found that both oral and written sources were commonly used in the production of their hagiographies.¹²³ Various examples of hagiographers across Western Europe using oral sources have been examined by Elisabeth Van Houts, who claims that eyewitness accounts as source material were in fact preferred by early medieval hagiographers.¹²⁴ One example discussed by Van Houts, that of the *Life of Saint Adelheid*, is of particular interest here. Written more than fifty years after the death of Adelheid, abbess of Vilich, the *Life* was based on the oral testimonies of Adelheid's younger contemporaries at the nunnery, and recorded the abbess's family history, path to sanctity and, interestingly, the nunnery's landed endowments.¹²⁵

It is clear therefore, that alongside consideration of the role and influence of the hagiographer in producing saints' Lives, we also need to remain aware of the narrative role played by monastic communities in the creation of hagiographical texts. Susan Ridyard reminds us of the highly subjective nature of hagiographical sources, particularly those built on oral tradition as provided by the commissioning community.¹²⁶ And, as Barbara Yorke points out, the long survival of nunneries such as Barking meant that key texts, and particularly hagiographies, were often re-shaped to suit changing situations.¹²⁷ The motivations of the monastic community, as they appear both within and without the hagiographies, deserve a fuller consideration if we are to appreciate the uses of sanctity, saints' cults, and hagiography by such communities.

Thus, following Goscelin's own statements, and using comparison with surviving known sources and his established working methods, it seems that a mixture of sources may lie behind Goscelin's Barking texts. While it is clear that Bede is the major source for the *Life of Æthelburg* and the *Lectiones de Sancta Hildelitha*, the miracles attached to the *Life of Æthelburg* are clearly later than Bede's account of the saint. These may derive from oral tradition at Barking; however, an earlier written form should not be dismissed out of hand. For the *Life of Wulfhild*, it appears that oral and, following Goscelin's own assertion, written sources, were used in his compilation of the text. Although such references to the use of

¹²³ T. Head, *Hagiography and the Cult of Saints. The Diocese of Orleans, 800-1200* (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 16-17.

¹²⁴ E. Van Houts, *Memory and Gender in Medieval Europe* (London, 1999), pp. 41-2.

¹²⁵ *Ibid*, p. 50.

¹²⁶ Ridyard, *The Royal Saints*, p. 12.

¹²⁷ Yorke, *Nunneries*, p. 73.

written source material should be used with caution, the existence of such sources should not be ruled out at this stage. There is at least one known earlier occasion which might have prompted the production of hagiographical material at Barking, namely the first translation of Wulfhild, which will be discussed more fully in a later chapter. However, the translation narrative and the associated vision account clearly belong to the post-Conquest date of these events, as do the Lives and *lecciones* as we now have them. As recent work on hagiography has made clear, it is essential to understand the contexts which shaped and even possibly inspired the production of hagiographical texts. Equally, those texts may themselves throw light on that context.

As we have seen, the Barking texts, as we now have them, were produced between 1086 and 1100 in the aftermath of the Norman Conquest, and at the request of the Barking community. Before considering the role of the Barking community in producing the hagiographical record of the nunnery, it is important to first place the texts within their wider hagiographical context. The following chapter will therefore consider the nature of hagiographical production in the period following the Norman Conquest of England.

Chapter Three

The Norman Conquest and Hagiographical Production

The Barking Cycle was written at a time when England was adapting to the Norman takeover of its royal, political and ecclesiastical structures. The widespread replacement of English leadership in both the secular and religious realms undoubtedly had an impact on the development of English society and culture. One of the areas in which this impact can be discerned is that of religious commemoration of saints' cults, and in particular, in the production of hagiographical texts. From the second half of the eleventh century, there was a significant upsurge in the production of hagiographies, translation accounts and miracle collections. Over 60 such texts were produced in England between the years 1066 and c.1140.¹²⁸ In contrast, surviving hagiographical texts from the period c.850 – c.1050 in England, are relatively few.¹²⁹ It would seem then, that the Norman Conquest of England, and the subsequent integration of Norman and English cultures, led to significant changes in the commemoration of saints and saints' cults in England. It is the purpose of this chapter to examine the changes in hagiographical writing and production in the aftermath of conquest, and to place the Barking texts within the context of this interaction and integration of English and Norman cultures.

The increase in hagiographical production in the years following the Norman Conquest has traditionally been attributed to Norman scepticism towards the Anglo-Saxon saints. It has been argued that while that the English were happy to accept their saints' validity without the need for written confirmation, the Normans, in contrast, adopted a more critical and questioning approach.¹³⁰ Thus, the increase in hagiographical texts responded to Norman criticism of English saints, and was in that way a method of defending English honour and tradition. David Knowles, in his 1940 study of *The Monastic Order in England*, takes this line, and claims that there was widespread outrage amongst the English monks at the 'disrespectful attitude' of their Norman abbots towards the Old English saints.¹³¹ Knowles

¹²⁸ Hayward, 'Translation-Narratives', p. 67.

¹²⁹ R. Love, 'Hagiography' in M. Lapidge ed., *The Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford, 1991), pp. 226-7.

¹³⁰ S. Yarrow, *Saints and their Communities: Miracle stories in twelfth-century England* (Oxford, 2006), p. 4. Yarrow is describing here the traditional view as espoused in: W. D. Macray, *Chronicon Abbatiae de Evesham ad Annum 1418*, RS 29 (London, 1863) and D. J. A. Matthew, *The Norman Conquest* (London, 1966).

¹³¹ Knowles, *The Monastic Order in England*, p. 118.

looks at four episodes which appear to confirm his claim of Norman antagonism: at Abingdon it appears that the feasts of two English saints, Æthelwold and Edmund, were banned;¹³² at St Alban's the Norman Abbot Paul allegedly condemned his predecessors as *rudes et idiotas*;¹³³ at Malmesbury, the Norman Abbot Warin is said to have removed many of the relics of English saints in his monastery;¹³⁴ and at Canterbury, Archbishop Lanfranc doubted and subsequently tested the sanctity of St Ælfheah.¹³⁵ The assimilation of Knowles's view into the historiography can be seen in the work of Ernest Blake, Richard Southern, Frank Barlow, and, to a lesser extent, that of David Rollason.¹³⁶ It has also been argued that Norman scepticism towards English saints led to a diminution in the number of these saints venerated in the English church. This has been attributed to a deliberate policy, undertaken by the Norman Archbishop Lanfranc, to remove Anglo-Saxon saints from liturgical calendars.¹³⁷

Susan Ridyard has challenged the historiographical view of Norman antagonism towards English saints. Ridyard re-examined the evidence used by Knowles, and in many cases put forward radically different interpretations.¹³⁸ Ridyard has argued against a generalised assumption of Norman scepticism, claiming that the interaction of Norman churchmen and English saint can only really be understood by detailed analysis and contextualisation of individual saints' cults.¹³⁹ Ultimately, Ridyard argues that Norman scepticism towards English saints is a 'myth', one which is based upon an expectation of scepticism and 'a

¹³² J. Stevenson, ed., *Chronicon Monasterii de Abingdon* (London, 1858), vol. 2, p. 284.

¹³³ T. Riley, ed., *Gesta Abbatum Sancti Albani a Thomas Walsingham, Regnante Ricardo Secundo, Ejusdem Ecclesiae Praeceptore, Compilata*, rolls series 28, vol. 5, (London, 1867-1869), vol. 1, p. 62.

¹³⁴ William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum: The History of the English Bishops*, bk. v: 265, ed. M. Winterbottom (Oxford, 2007), vol. 1, pp. 629-631.

¹³⁵ J. A. Giles, ed., *Vita Lanfranci*, in his *Lanfranci Opera* (Oxford, 1844), vol. 1, p. 310.

¹³⁶ See n. 25 above for details.

¹³⁷ E. Bishop, *The Bosworth Psalter* (London, 1908), pp. 27-34; Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 664.

¹³⁸ Ridyard, 'Condigna Veneratio', pp. 181, 201. In the case of St Albans for instance, at which Knowles claimed the Norman abbot Paul rejected the sanctity of his predecessors, Ridyard shows that nowhere in the *Gesta Abbatum Monasterii Sancti Albani*, from which the relevant passage is taken, does it state that these predecessors were considered to be saints. While it may demonstrate a measure of disrespect towards the earlier English abbots of St Albans, it cannot be used as evidence for Norman rejection of English saints. In fact, as Ridyard makes clear, the continued success of the cult of St Alban himself would seem to argue against Paul's wholesale rejection of English saints at his abbey. Also, by looking at the earlier and fuller account of Lanfranc's conversation with Anselm, found in Eadmer's *Vita Anselmi*, Ridyard is able to demonstrate that, while Lanfranc does appear to have had some reservations about the validity of certain English saints, Ælfheah included, this does not appear to have been the result of an inherently hostile attitude towards English saints. Lanfranc's specific concern in this case was that Ælfheah's 'martyrdom' did not appear to truly warrant the title of martyr. Anselm's defence of Ælfheah's sanctity was accepted by the archbishop who, it should be noted, then went on to commission the Life of St Ælfheah and encourage veneration of the saint.

¹³⁹ *Ibid*, p. 180.

consequent misreading of the available evidence.’¹⁴⁰ Ridyard rejects completely the assumption that hagiographies produced after the Conquest were contrived, by Englishmen and sympathetic foreigners, to recommend English saints to the Normans. Rather, she suggests that it was the Norman churchmen themselves, perceiving the usefulness of patron saints at their monastic institutions, who took steps to provide their saints with the documentation necessary for successful cult promotion.¹⁴¹ Underscoring this argument, Lapidge and Love, in their survey of English medieval hagiography, point out that it would only have been ‘prudent and politic’ for new Norman abbots to accept and utilise the patron saints of their houses. Furthermore, they argue that acceptance of a saint would have required formal recognition of their deeds and holiness.¹⁴² Subsequent historiography has tended to follow Ridyard’s lead, and the over-emphasis of Norman scepticism in earlier literature is now often highlighted.

Richard Pfaff has suggested that the historiographical argument that English saints were subject to a deliberate programme of removal from liturgical calendars by the Normans, stemmed from the well-known episode in Eadmer’s *Life of Anselm*, in which Archbishop Lanfranc questioned Anselm, abbot of Bec, about the validity of St Ælfheah’s cult at Canterbury.¹⁴³ While Anselm was ultimately able to convince Lanfranc of Ælfheah’s sanctity, the implication remains that Lanfranc, if unconvinced, could have removed St Ælfheah from the calendar at Canterbury.¹⁴⁴ Pfaff has argued however, that this view has developed from a misinterpretation of Eadmer’s record of the conversation between Anselm and Lanfranc.¹⁴⁵

Paul Hayward has also re-addressed some of the historiographical ideas about Norman hostility. In a study of translation accounts composed after the Conquest, Hayward detects a shift in their rhetorical form, which he sees as a direct consequence of the Norman takeover of the English church.¹⁴⁶ Hayward argues that many post-Conquest translation accounts centred on authorial figures such as kings, bishops and the pope. Their support of a saint is emphasised ‘with a new intensity’ which, for Hayward, suggests that these accounts were

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid*, p. 204.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid*, p. 205.

¹⁴² Lapidge and Love, ‘The Latin Hagiography of England and Wales 600-1550’, p. 224.

¹⁴³ Southern, ed., *Eadmer’s Vita Sancti Anselmi*, pp. 50-54.

¹⁴⁴ R. Pfaff, ‘Lanfranc’s Supposed Purge of the Anglo-Saxon Calendar’ in T. Reuter, ed., *Warriors and Churchmen in the High Middle Ages. Essays Presented to Karl Leyser* (London, 1992), pp. 95-108, at p. 95.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid*, p. 96.

¹⁴⁶ Hayward, ‘Translation-Narratives’, p. 69.

being formed in order to recommend the saints to a hostile Norman audience.¹⁴⁷ By including evidence of earlier kings' or bishops' approval, the English communities who were producing these accounts were seeking to protect their saints from potential attack.¹⁴⁸ Many of the accounts looked at by Hayward were addressed to Norman prelates who, Hayward suggests, were seen as hostile towards English cults. It may seem that Hayward's thesis is a return to earlier historiographical ideas on Norman hostility. Hayward is careful to point out however, that the Norman scepticism detected in the increasing use of authorial figures in hagiographical accounts, is evidence *only* of the English expectation and perception of such scepticism, rather than of actual Norman scepticism.¹⁴⁹

The increased promotion of English saints' cults has also been associated with the defence of England and the English against the Normans. Hugh Thomas has looked at the use of saints' cults in preserving and fostering English culture and identity after the Conquest, and has found that numerous sources link saints with England and Englishness.¹⁵⁰ The cult of St Alban, in particular, displays a strong sense of Englishness; as Thomas points out, Alban was often described as the 'protomartyr of the English' in the post-Conquest period. Despite having the term 'protomartyr' applied to him from the early eleventh century, it was not until after the Conquest that St Alban was really celebrated as such. Yet Paul Hayward suggests that it was the Norman archbishops of Canterbury that took the lead in promoting Alban's status as protomartyr of the English in the period between 1077 and about 1110.¹⁵¹

Nevertheless, saints' cults could be used in different ways to promote Englishness. Their Lives could serve to reinforce the constructs of Englishness, and to keep such constructs alive in people's consciousness. Also, immigrants' adoption of English saints' cults could lead to their assimilation into English culture, and separation from their own, continental, traditions.¹⁵² Certainly the Normans seem to have made little effort to replace English saints with Norman ones.¹⁵³ Popular cults also served to enhance the prestige of their country and followers, much as a saint of the royal line served to enhance the prestige of that family. A

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid*, p. 69; but, consider Davis Rollason's discussion of the tenth-century Lives of Dunstan and Æthelwold which, he claims, emphasise 'authority', in his *Saints and Relics*, pp. 170-171.

¹⁴⁸ Hayward, 'Translation-Narratives', p. 89.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid*, p. 90.

¹⁵⁰ Thomas, *The English and the Normans*, pp. 286-288.

¹⁵¹ P. Hayward, 'The Cult of St Alban, *Anglorum Protomartyr*, in Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Norman England', in J. Leemans ed., *More Than a Memory: the discourse of martyrdom and the construction of Christian identity in the history of Christianity* (Paris, 2005), pp. 169-199, at pp. 185, 198-199.

¹⁵² Thomas, *The English and the Normans*, p. 295.

¹⁵³ Hayward, 'Translation-Narratives', p. 90.

number of successful English saints' cults may have also served to create a more positive image of the country, which in turn may have served to overcome ethnic prejudices.¹⁵⁴

Saints' cults also had the potential to become focal points for resistance to Norman rule. The cult of St Æthelthryth at Ely played a part in the rebellion against King William which originated in that area. The *Liber Eliensis* records that the rebels were required to swear an oath on the relics of St Ethelthryth.¹⁵⁵ This does not seem to have affected her later popularity with the Norman abbots of that community however, so we are far from a simple national divide at Ely. David Rollason's examination of the cults of Walthcof, Harold and Hereward, all of whom had been involved in resistance to the Normans, shows that they did not become rallying points for English opposition. Even their Lives fail to exploit the saints for political and anti-Norman purposes, though their Englishness is definitely celebrated.¹⁵⁶

The increase in hagiography in the period following the Norman Conquest has also been explored in connection to the issue of patronage. Emily Mitchell has argued that the destruction of the English noble classes would have left those monasteries dependent upon their financial support in a difficult position.¹⁵⁷ Indeed, in the case of nunneries, Barbara Yorke has claimed that their failure to attract support from the new Norman regime, led ultimately to their decline.¹⁵⁸ The need to gain the favour and patronage of Norman royal and aristocratic families may then have resulted in the production of new hagiographical accounts of the saints' cults fostered at English monastic houses. The inclusion of hospitality miracles in the Barking hagiographies is seen by Mitchell as evidence for the argument that the production of saints' Lives in the few decades after the Norman Conquest were intended to replace their lost English patronage.¹⁵⁹

Mitchell has also argued that the practice of dedicating English saints' Lives to Norman churchmen was a method of recommending that community's saint to a Norman audience.¹⁶⁰ Stephanie Hollis, however, has put forward an alternative explanation for the dedications of vitae to new Norman ecclesiastics. Hollis sees Goscelin's dedication of the Life and *Translatio* of St Edith to Archbishop Lanfranc, for example, as a thinly veiled attempt by Goscelin to gain employment as a hagiographer in the archbishop's service. She further

¹⁵⁴ Thomas, *The English and the Normans*, p. 295.

¹⁵⁵ Ridyard, '*Condigna Veneratio*', p. 181.

¹⁵⁶ Rollason, *Saints and Relics*, pp. 217-220.

¹⁵⁷ Mitchell, 'Patronage and Politics at Barking Abbey', pp. 208-9.

¹⁵⁸ Yorke, *Nunneries*, p. 92.

¹⁵⁹ Mitchell, 'Patronage and Politics at Barking Abbey', pp. 208-11.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid*, pp. 208-11.

suggests that the same motive may have lain behind the author's dedication of his works on St Wulfsige and St Wulfhild to the bishops Osmund and Maurice. While Hollis concedes that Goscelin may have simultaneously been advancing the reputations of the commissioning communities by commending their patron saints, she believes that this motive may have been over-emphasised in the historiography. Furthermore, this over-emphasis may have given rise to an 'exaggerated impression' of the extent to which Anglo-Saxon communities were concerned to gain the favour of Norman churchmen through the production of hagiographical texts.¹⁶¹

Simon Yarrow's work on saints and miracles in the twelfth century arguably provides a more nuanced view of post-Conquest hagiographical writing, one which questions and rethinks the dichotomy of pre- and post-Conquest saints' cults and Lives. In response to claims of Archbishop Lanfranc's scepticism towards English saints' cults, Yarrow highlights the argument that Lanfranc's reluctance to promote saints such as Dunstan and Elphege may have been based on attempts to divert attention away from smaller cult figures, and to encourage devotion to central Church symbols such as Christ and the Eucharist.¹⁶² In addition, Yarrow argues that the cultivation of English saints' cults by both English and Norman churchmen and women enabled the English to record and celebrate their past, and offered the new Norman church leaders an opportunity to secure both their own positions within the English monastic communities, and the standing of their new institutions within society as a whole. Ultimately, Yarrow sees the increase in hagiographical output in the immediate post-Conquest period as part of a process of 'cultural and political assimilation' between English monastic communities and their new Norman overlords.¹⁶³

Evidence to suggest that Anglo-Saxon saints were subjected to a critical and questioning examination by Norman churchmen should perhaps be viewed in the wider context of church reform. The Christian church of the earlier eleventh century had undergone reforms which encouraged an increased level of scholarship and documentation within the church.¹⁶⁴ Lanfranc himself was a reformer with close ties to Rome.¹⁶⁵ Ascertaining the authenticity of

¹⁶¹ Hollis ed., *Writing the Wilton Women*, p. 222.

¹⁶² Yarrow, *Saints and Their Communities*, p. 5. Yarrow is summarising an argument put forward by J.C. Rubenstein in his 'The Post-Conquest Hagiography of Christ Church, Canterbury' (Oxford M.Phil thesis, 1991), pp. 131-136.

¹⁶³ Yarrow, *Saints and their Communities*, p. 6.

¹⁶⁴ K. Cushing, *Reform and the Papacy in the Eleventh Century: Spirituality and Social Change* (Manchester, 2005), pp. 29-30.

¹⁶⁵ Rollason, *Saints and Relics*, pp. 215, 225.

saints' relics, and providing written accounts of such evidence, could therefore be at least partly understood as part of this process of ratification encouraged by reform ideals. It should also be noted that Lanfranc and his Norman peers would often have had no prior knowledge of the saints venerated at English religious institutions.¹⁶⁶ Where Norman scepticism can be detected, as in the case of St Ælfheah, it appears to be based on a lack of knowledge and a desire to check the authenticity of unknown saints and their cults. In this attitude can be seen the beginnings of formal canonisation procedures which characterise the saint-making process of the later medieval and modern periods. Indeed, it became increasingly common throughout the twelfth century to compile written evidence of a saint's holiness in the form of Lives and miracle collections.¹⁶⁷

Any attempt to explore the removal of English saints from liturgical calendars following the Norman Conquest is seriously hampered by the low survival rate of English calendars from both the last quarter of the eleventh century and from the first quarter of the twelfth century. This in fact prevents a detailed comparison of pre- and post- 1066 commemoration of saints in English calendars, and significantly undermines the argument for a deliberate purge of Anglo-Saxon saints by the Norman archbishop Lanfranc at this time.¹⁶⁸ Where comparisons can be made, there appears to be 'neither a massive nor a systematic loss of the principle Anglo-Saxon saints' from English calendars. Rather, it seems that it was the more obscure, and less well-documented, though not always English, saintly figures, that were removed from calendars after the Conquest.¹⁶⁹

There is, on the other hand, ample evidence to support the case for promotion of English saints by Norman churchmen. At Ely and Bury St Edmunds for example, the new Norman abbots advanced their house cults through the production of Lives and miracle collections.¹⁷⁰ At Ely, it seems likely that the hagiographical texts on Æthelthryth, Withburh, Seaxburh and Eormenhild were produced in response to the translation of their relics which followed the completion of the new Norman cathedral in 1106, and which was overseen by the Norman

¹⁶⁶ A. Gransden, 'Traditionalism and Continuity during the Last Century of Anglo-Saxon Monasticism', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 40:2 (1989), pp. 159-207, at p. 198.

¹⁶⁷ M. Lapidge, *The Cult of St Swithun* (Oxford, 2003), p. 70.

¹⁶⁸ Pfaff, 'Lanfranc's Supposed Purge', p. 99.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 102-105. These removals include the translations of obscure English saints Athelmodus confessor (9 January) and Othulph (10 October); the Conception of John the Baptist, which appears in all 20 surviving pre-1100 calendars, but which is absent from those of the early post-Conquest period; and the feast of Mary and Martha (who are in some calendars referred to as part of a Persian family of martyrs known as Marius, Martha, Audifax and Abbacuc) which appears in 16 out of 20 pre-1100 calendars, and only in two of the existing twelve twelfth-century calendars.

¹⁷⁰ Ridyard, *The Royal Saints*, p. 251.

abbot Hervey.¹⁷¹ There was a similar association with building works, translation of relics, and production of hagiography under the Norman abbot Baldwin at Bury St Edmunds.¹⁷² Indeed, Baldwin's abbacy witnessed the confirmation of the monastery's landholding and privileges, as well as the construction of a new cathedral and the expansion of the nearby town of Bury.¹⁷³ The production of the *Vita Birini* and *Vita et Miracula Swithuni* at the turn of the twelfth century followed the translation of their relics by the Norman abbot Robert Losinga in 1093 from the Anglo-Saxon church at Old Minster, Winchester, to the newly constructed Norman cathedral church.¹⁷⁴ The completion of building works at St Augustine's abbey, undertaken by the Norman abbots Scolland and Wido, was also followed by translation of the relics of that abbey's saints. David Rollason highlights the prominence given to the English saints at this point; their tombs, once consigned to a side-chapel, were now established in positions of honour in the three eastern apses.¹⁷⁵ The hagiographies produced by Goscelin for St Augustine's also seem to have been produced to commemorate their translation ceremonies.¹⁷⁶

In fact, many of Goscelin's works appear to have been undertaken in connection with the rebuilding or renovation of monastic buildings, and subsequent translation ceremonies. Certainly this is the case at the monastery of Sherborne, at Barking Abbey, and also at Wilton, for whom Goscelin wrote the Life and translation account of St Edith. Goscelin's work at Ely, though undertaken some years before the translation of its saints, occurred during a building programme which included renewal of monastic buildings, and the start of a new Romanesque church at the site.¹⁷⁷ The production of hagiographic texts to commemorate the translation of a saint's relics had been practised in England from at least the late tenth century. For example, the translation of St Swithun at Winchester, in 963x984, was accompanied by a contemporary translation account, produced by Lantfred in c. 975,

¹⁷¹ Lapidge and Love, 'The Latin Hagiography of England and Wales', p. 246; Love, *Goscelin of Saint-Bertin*, pp. xxi-xxii.

¹⁷² Lapidge and Love, 'The Latin Hagiography of England and Wales', p. 244.

¹⁷³ Ridyard, '*Condigna Veneratio*', p. 187. Baldwin was appointed in 1065 by King Edward the Confessor, for whom he had previously served as physician. Ridyard, in her *Royal Saints*, p. 231, n. 80, highlights evidence to suggest that Baldwin oversaw the interpolation of Abbo's *Passio Edmundi* in such a way as to support the abbey's interests in its dispute with the bishops of East Anglia – on more see below.

¹⁷⁴ Lapidge and Love, 'The Latin Hagiography of England and Wales', p. 234; Ridyard, *Royal Saints*, p. 124. A number of conventual buildings had been destroyed by fire in 1065; by the late 1070s, under the auspices of the Norman bishop Wakelin, building work on the commenced on the new cathedral church.

¹⁷⁵ Rollason, *Saints and Relics*, pp. 230-231.

¹⁷⁶ Lapidge and Love, 'The Latin Hagiography of England and Wales', p. 233.

¹⁷⁷ Love, *Goscelin of Saint-Bertin*, p. xix.

which remains the earliest account of the translation of an English saint's relics.¹⁷⁸ Lantfred's translation account became widely influential on successive English hagiographers, and was almost certainly utilised as a model for the translation account of St Æthelwold by Wulfstan, which was completed to accompany the translation of his relics in 996.¹⁷⁹ By the late eleventh century, the literary commemoration of translation ceremonies had become commonplace, as is attested in the *translatio S Ælfegi*, the *Vita S Kenelmi*, the *Vita S Edithe*, the *Vita et translatio S Wulfsige*, the *Vita S Ivonis*, and the *Passio Eadwardi*, all of which were roughly contemporaneous with the Barking cycle.

It may be wise at this point to question Goscelin's motives and loyalties in relation to his production of hagiographies for English monastic institutions. We know that Goscelin was encouraged to write his earliest works by the Lotharingian bishop Herman. It is also clear that many of his works were commissioned by English communities. At Sherborne for instance, Goscelin was asked to write the Life of St Wulfsige by the English monks of that institution.¹⁸⁰ His work on St Edith was commissioned by the English abbess Godgifu.¹⁸¹ At Barking, the impetus for Goscelin's writing came from the English abbess Ælfifu.¹⁸² However, at both Ely and at St Augustine's, Canterbury, the commissioning abbots were the Normans Simcon and Wido.¹⁸³ If, as seems likely, Goscelin also composed the *Vita Kenelmi*, then this too was produced under the regime of a Norman, the abbot Galandus.¹⁸⁴ It is difficult then, to attribute any ethnic loyalties to Goscelin. Rosalind Love has described Goscelin's work for English communities in terms of 'relationships of debt for hospitality and patronage'.¹⁸⁵ Indeed, Thomas Hamilton has claimed that all of Goscelin's hagiographical works were composed at the actual sites where the subjects were venerated.¹⁸⁶ This is demonstrated by his familiarity with the history, customs and physical appearance of

¹⁷⁸ Lapidge and Love, 'The Latin Hagiography of England and Wales', pp. 217-8.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 219. Another example of this practice is the production of the Life of Oswald by Byrhtferth. This text records the elaborate translation of Oswald's relics ten years after his death in 992, and was probably written between 997 and 1002; the text was therefore likely to have been produced to accompany the event – see A. J. Turner and B. J. Muir, eds., *Eadmer of Canterbury: Lives and Miracles of Saints Oda, Dunstan and Oswald* (Oxford, 2006), pp. cvii, 298, n. 7.

¹⁸⁰ R. Love, ed., 'The Life of St Wulfsige of Sherborne by Goscelin of Saint-Bertin: a new translation with introduction, appendix and notes', prologue, in K. Barker, D. A. Hinton and A. Hunt eds., *St Wulfsige and Sherborne* (Oxford, 2005), pp. 98-123, at p. 103.

¹⁸¹ Goscelin, *Vita Edithae*, prologue, in Hollis, ed. *Writing the Wilton Women*, pp. 23-5.

¹⁸² Goscelin, *Translation of SS Æthelburg, Hildelith & Wulfhild* (longer version), ch. 2, in Colker, 'Texts of Jocelyn of Canterbury', pp. 436-437.

¹⁸³ Love, *Goscelin of Saint-Bertin*, pp. xix-xxii; Hamilton, 'Goscelin of Canterbury', pp. 187-192.

¹⁸⁴ Love, ed., *Three Eleventh-Century Anglo-Latin Lives*, pp. xci, xcvi-c.

¹⁸⁵ Love, *Goscelin of Saint-Bertin*, p. xxi.

¹⁸⁶ Hamilton, 'Goscelin of Canterbury', p. 175.

the monasteries he wrote for.¹⁸⁷ It also appears that Goscelin was, for a time, part of the community of monks at Sherborne,¹⁸⁸ and that he acted as chaplain to the nuns of Wilton.¹⁸⁹ Perhaps then we should view Goscelin's itinerant phase as one of a search for suitable accommodation and employment, and one in which he produced hagiographical texts in return for the support provided by commissioning monastic communities. This hypothesis does not, however, rule out the possibility that Goscelin may have been inspired to support monasteries' efforts to consolidate, or protect, their financial or political positions in the aftermath of the Norman Conquest, through the promotion of their Anglo-Saxon saints' cults.

Evidence of the celebration of Englishness and English saints in the post-Conquest period can be found in the 'dramatic resurgence' of Bedan studies and increased popularity and proliferation of his works at that time.¹⁹⁰ Interest in Bede and the saints of the early Anglo-Saxon period did not originate after the Conquest however. The tenth-century reform movement had similarly seen the Bedan period as a 'golden age' of monasticism and had striven to restore those standards in the late Anglo-Saxon period. Even after the deaths of the three major reformers Dunstan, Æthelwold and Oswald, around the turn of the eleventh century, monasticism in England had continued to be driven by awareness of an Anglo-Saxon inheritance, embodied predominantly by Bede. David Rollason has discussed the use of saints' cults in the process of unification of England during the ninth and tenth centuries, and has claimed that kings' association with saints of the early Anglo-Saxon period, as well as their creation of new saints of the royal line, served to bolster their claims to rule the whole of England.¹⁹¹ The celebration and remembrance of Englishness and an English past through the medium of sanctity and hagiography, was therefore already evident before the advent of the Norman Conquest. Such interest does, however, seem to have intensified in response to the Norman settlement.

The need for defence of English monastic land and rights against the new Norman hierarchy is no doubt linked to the increasing promotion of saints' cults after the Conquest. Such defence of English monastic lands and customs may not have been limited to English monastic landholders however – as we have seen, a good number of Norman abbots were also engaged in the promotion of saints' cults. Monastic houses seem to have suffered

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid*, pp. 145-7, 157.

¹⁸⁸ Love, ed. 'The Life of St Wulfsgie of Sherborne', prologue, p. 102.

¹⁸⁹ Hollis, ed., *Writing the Wilton Women*, p. 28.

¹⁹⁰ Gransden, 'Traditionalism and Continuity', p. 203.

¹⁹¹ Rollason, *Saints and Relics*, pp. 133-163.

depredation in the aftermath of the Norman Conquest; certainly the moveable wealth of the English church was plundered by the invaders. Ely, for example, had been forced to relinquish their church's treasure to King William in repentance for their involvement in rebellion against the Normans.¹⁹² While some seizures of church wealth and land were apparently authorised by the king, such as at Ely and also at Waltham Holy Cross, others seem to have been undertaken independently by officers of the king.¹⁹³ The *De Miraculis Sancti Edmundi*, for instance, records a number of invasions at the monastery of Bury St Edmunds. The author Hermann claims that an unnamed follower of the Conqueror invaded the abbey's estates,¹⁹⁴ and that the manor of Southwold was seized by Robert de Curzon.¹⁹⁵

Monasteries may also have had to protect themselves from encroachment of their authority by the new Norman episcopacy. Ely provides another example here, as their *Liber Eliensis* describes a dispute over the bishop of Lincoln's rights of jurisdiction over the abbey.¹⁹⁶ Resisting these claims of jurisdiction became the principal concern of the monastery in the early twelfth century, and ultimately ended with the creation of a new bishopric of Ely in 1109.¹⁹⁷ Hostility between the cathedral community at Winchester and its Norman bishop, Wakelin, is explained by William of Malmesbury as one effect of the latter's diversion of £300 worth of land from the endowment of the monks, to the estates of himself and his successors.¹⁹⁸ In the 1070s and 80s there were attempts by Herfast, the Norman bishop of East Anglia, to move his see into Bury St Edmund's. As such a move would have represented a threat to both the abbey's wealth and the status of its abbot, it was strongly resisted by the Bury community. Despite the royal court's ruling in 1081 against the move, and the subsequent transferral of the East Anglian see to Norwich in 1094, Herfast's successor, the Norman Bishop Herbert Losinga, continued to attempt to exert control over the monastery. The monks in turn continued to fight for exemption from episcopal jurisdiction, and the conflict continued through to the turn of the twelfth century.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹² Ridyard, 'Condigna Veneratio', p. 181; Love, *Goscelin of Saint-Bertin*, p. xix, where Love shows that the Norman abbot Simeon was in fact successful in his attempts to claw back some of the lands which had been plundered from Ely immediately after the Conquest.

¹⁹³ Williams, *The English and the Norman Conquest*, p. 140.

¹⁹⁴ T. Arnold, ed. 'Hermann Archidiaconi Liber de Miraculis Sancti Eadmundi' in his *Memorials of St Edmund's Abbey* (London, 1890-96), pp. 58-9.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 78-80.

¹⁹⁶ Blake, ed., *Liber Eliensis*, pp. 246-50

¹⁹⁷ Ridyard, 'Condigna Veneratio', p. 181.

¹⁹⁸ William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum*, bk. 2: 77: 1-2, ed., Winterbottom and Thomson, pp. 271-273.

¹⁹⁹ Arnold, ed., 'Hermann Archidiaconi Liber de Miraculis Sancti Eadmundi', pp. 60-67.

Certain monasteries therefore appear to have been motivated to defend their privileges, land and prestige. In most cases, this would have been achieved through recourse to pre-Conquest charters which were sometimes revised and updated to meet the community's current needs.²⁰⁰ But the hagiography of a patron saint could also serve as a record of their community's antiquity, prestige and landholding. David Rollason has argued persuasively that the cult of saints played a role in preservation and recovery of a community's lands and privileges.²⁰¹ There are numerous grants to monastic houses which are granted directly to the patron saint of a monastic house; even more prevalent are miracle stories of saints actively defending their community's lands and wreaking vengeance on those individuals who dared to challenge their protection.²⁰² But while this practice of using saints as 'undying landlords', to use Rollason's phrase, may have been enhanced by the Norman Conquest and its concomitant effect on the landholdings of monastic institutions, it was by no means initiated by it. Rollason argues that this function of saints became more pronounced after 850, seemingly in response to the disruption of the Viking invasions.²⁰³ Presumably the Norman invasion would have precipitated a similar hagiographical response.

It is clear then that there were a number of factors which may have led to the increase in production of hagiographical texts in the post-Conquest era. Above all, it seems that defence: of land, wealth, privileges, honour, Englishness and English traditions; was an important motivation to produce new or improved saints' Lives. While historians may no longer agree that the new Norman hierarchy was inherently hostile towards the English saints, and while examples do exist of pragmatic Norman promotion of Anglo-Saxon saints' cults, it remains likely that the English themselves had an expectation of Norman hostility, which in some cases was well-founded, and which they seem to have responded to by producing written accounts verifying the holiness and strength of their country's saints. Even in the case of Norman churchmen promoting English saints, it still seems that defence, of their new position and the material wealth of their institution, played a role in their promotion of saints' cults. The need to gain new forms of patronage is also another likely explanation for the promotion of saints' cults in the aftermath of a Conquest which had effectively wiped out the English ruling-class, and therefore, the monasteries' patronage. But, while these factors offer

²⁰⁰ Gransden, 'Traditionalism and Continuity', p. 199.

²⁰¹ Rollason, *Saints and Relics*, pp. 197, 207. Rollason also draws a link between forgery of charters and the production of hagiography (especially that which included miracles of the defence and retribution type), activities which he claims were 'closely associated'.

²⁰² *Ibid*, pp. 206-8.

²⁰³ *Ibid*, p. 207.

a general understanding of the changes in hagiographical production after the Norman Conquest, as Susan Ridyard states, it is only through ‘the detailed analysis and contextualisation of individual saints’ cults’²⁰⁴ that we can hope to gain an accurate understanding of the interaction of Norman churchmen and English saint, and, by proxy, understand the historical context from which the abundance of Anglo-Saxon saints’ Lives emerged.

In this spirit, the following chapter will explore the post-Conquest situation at the nunnery of Barking in Essex in an effort to understand its production of hagiographical material in the late-eleventh century. The Barking Cycle was written at some point between 1086, the year in which Maurice, bishop of London and dedicatee of the Lives of Wulfhild and Æthelburg, was appointed, and 1100, the year in which King William II, mentioned in the prologue of the Life of Wulfhild, died.²⁰⁵ These dates of production place the Barking Cycle within the wider movement of increasing production of English saints’ Lives, translation and miracle accounts. The six texts which form the Barking Cycle celebrate the Lives, miracles and translations of three Anglo-Saxon female saints. Two of these saints, Æthelburg and Hildelith, belong to the early Anglo-Saxon period and were celebrated by Bede in his *Ecclesiastical History*.²⁰⁶ The other, Wulfhild, was a relatively recent saint of the later tenth-century, who appears to have been closely connected with the West Saxon royal house. The celebration of Anglo-Saxon saints, including those of Bedan fame, also places the Barking Cycle within the norms of post-Conquest hagiographical developments. Two of the Barking texts, the *Vita Æthelburgae* and the *Vita Wulfhildae*, are dedicated to a Norman bishop, which may or may not place the production of these texts within the context of Norman hostility towards English saints.

While historians such as Marvin Colker, Barbara Yorke, Paul Hayward and Emily Mitchell have considered Barking Abbey and the Barking cycle in their work, there remains a need for more in-depth study of the hagiographical material associated with that house, and especially in the context of the early post-Conquest period. Colker’s contribution to the study of

²⁰⁴ Ridyard, ‘*Condigna Veneratio*’, p. 180.

²⁰⁵ It should be noted that the king described in the text is named only as ‘William’, and we are unable to determine whether this referred to William I or William II, therefore the latter’s death date is used as a *terminus post quem* for the work. It is, however, worth considering the fact that Goscelin became permanently employed at St Augustine’s, Canterbury in c. 1091; it is perhaps likely then that he had completed the Barking commission by that date.

²⁰⁶ Bede, *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, bk. 4, ch. 6-9, ch. 10, ed., Colgrave and Mynors, pp. 355-363, pp. 363-365.

Barking Abbey in this period is generally limited to analysis of the manuscripts themselves. In a discussion which precedes his edition of the Barking cycle, Colker is concerned primarily with dating the production of the texts, and with placing them within the context of Goscelin's corpus of hagiographical writings.²⁰⁷ Barbara Yorke deals with Barking as part of a wider study of Anglo-Saxon royal nunneries. Her focus on nunneries of the Anglo-Saxon period naturally precludes any detailed analysis of the effects upon them of the Norman Conquest and take-over of power. In addition, and perhaps due to Barking's ambiguous status as a 'royal' monastic house, an issue which will be discussed in the following chapter, Barking itself is not covered at an in-depth level in Yorke's study. Yorke's approach does, however, offer a useful model for further study of Barking in the post-Conquest period, for she has looked at the issue of abbatial replacement in some of the 'royal' female houses after the Conquest, and has discussed the apparent problem of monastic land-loss as part of the re-organisation of land under the new Norman regime.²⁰⁸ Paul Hayward has dealt with the production of translation accounts at Barking after the Conquest in more depth, though this still only represents a small part of his wider discussion of the translation of saints in the post-Conquest period. Hayward concentrates on the tensions between the English abbess, Ælfgifu, and the Norman bishop, Maurice, and claims that the Barking cycle was produced 'to persuade a hostile Norman bishop'.²⁰⁹ Hayward therefore highlights an issue which needs further exploration, one which will be addressed in the following part of this chapter.²¹⁰ Emily Mitchell's PhD thesis, on patronage at Barking Abbey in the tenth and eleventh centuries, represents the most detailed study of Barking in this period to date. The Barking cycle itself represents only a small portion of the evidence looked at by Mitchell however. Mitchell has drawn together evidence to suggest that the Barking cycle was produced in order to attract patronage from the new Norman regime during a period of financial uncertainty. Mitchell also discusses the apparently difficult relationship between Bishop Maurice of London and the community at Barking.²¹¹ Her focus on patronage as the main driving force for hagiographical production at this time does, however, leave unexplored the issue of

²⁰⁷ Colker, 'Texts of Jocelyn of Canterbury', pp. 383-397.

²⁰⁸ Yorke, *Nunneries*, p. 91.

²⁰⁹ Hayward, 'Translation-Narratives', pp. 81-2.

²¹⁰ It seems to me that Hayward's thesis, largely built on the dedication of the Barking Cycle to Bishop Maurice, ignores the role of gender, or, rather, gender apology, in Goscelin's dedication (which defends at length the use of female witnesses), and may therefore miss the point of Maurice being asked to 'defend' the legend of the Barking saints.

²¹¹ Mitchell, 'Patronage and Politics at Barking Abbey', pp. 208-211.

episcopal encroachment on the nunnery's land and jurisdiction, and therefore the motivating factor of defence in production of the Barking cycle.

The preceding discussion has highlighted the themes which may have inspired or impacted upon Barking's production of the Barking Cycle. As we have seen, the Barking texts belong to a wider movement of increased production of hagiographies after the Norman Conquest. What is clear from an examination of the historiography on Barking is that there is a need for further exploration into the issues of Norman despoliation of monastic land and episcopal encroachment of monastic jurisdiction in the post-Conquest period at Barking. Before considering these issues as they are displayed within the Barking texts themselves, it is first necessary to examine the non-hagiographical evidence for the more specific contexts surrounding Barking Abbey and its community in the late eleventh century, and, most importantly, the impact and role of these contexts in the production of the Barking Cycle.

Chapter Four

Barking after the Conquest

The Abbess and the Community

At the time of the Norman Conquest of England, the abbacy of Barking was held by the English woman Ælfgifu. According to Goscelin's translation account of the three saints Ætheburg, Hildelith and Wulfhild, Ælfgifu had been appointed as abbess of Barking by King Edward the Confessor. Goscelin tells us that she was entrusted with this position at the age of fifteen, and that she had held it continuously until the time of his writing, at which point she was fifty years old.²¹² No external references to the nature of the community at Barking in the late tenth and early eleventh centuries are available, but something of their composition can be discerned from Goscelin's hagiographical texts. In his prologue to the *Life of Wulfhild*, Goscelin claims that he collected eyewitness accounts from 'the aged mothers of the institution'.²¹³ Goscelin names one these women as Wulfrun, a disciple of St Wulfhild herself, and tells us that Wulfrun survived until the reign of King William.²¹⁴ Clearly then, the nunnery had retained at least some of its original, English, community, despite the upheavals which accompanied and followed the Norman Conquest. As Williams has shown, the effect of the Conquest on the English church mirrored that of the lay aristocracy, whereby positions of wealth and power were transferred from English to Norman individuals, either by deposition or following the death of English incumbents.²¹⁵ The replacement of English bishops by Norman elections, for example, was almost complete by 1073, at which point only two remained in position.²¹⁶ The effect on abbacies was similar, with most new appointments, and especially those to the most important monastic houses, being given to foreigners.²¹⁷ It does appear however, that little or no attempt was made to replace church

²¹² Goscelin, *Translation of SS Ætheburg, Hildelith & Wulfhild* (longer version), ch. 3, in Colker, 'Texts of Jocelyn of Canterbury', pp. 437-438. As the earliest production date for the Barking cycle is 1086, the earliest date at which Ælfgifu could have been appointed abbess is 1051 (and, at the latest, 1065).

²¹³ Goscelin, *Life of Wulfhild*, prologue, in Colker, 'Texts of Jocelyn of Canterbury', p. 418.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*

²¹⁵ Williams, *The English and the Norman Conquest*, p. 126.

²¹⁶ Thomas, *The English and the Normans*, p. 202. As Thomas points out however, there did remain in place a few foreign bishops from Edward the Confessor's reign.

²¹⁷ Williams, *The English and the Norman Conquest*, p. 132.

personnel below the level of abbot or prior, so that the majority of English monks and nuns remained in place, despite the upheavals at leadership level.²¹⁸

However, changes to the ethnic makeup of monastic communities in England occurred at least as early as Domesday Book, which shows the sons and daughters of Norman landowners beginning to enter religious houses. At Shaftesbury, a list of dowry properties reveals that daughters of the local Norman nobility were entering the nunnery within a few years of the Norman Conquest.²¹⁹ Furthermore, Williams has argued that as monasteries grew in size after the Conquest, English monastics may gradually have become outnumbered by the new Norman recruits. This situation may have led to increasing tension within monastic communities. There are certainly examples of animosity between newly-appointed Norman abbots and their English communities at, for example, St. Augustine's, Christ Church and Glastonbury.²²⁰ But there may also have been difficulties in integrating foreign and English members of monastic houses, even where leadership remained unchanged. At Barking, there is evidence of tensions within the community in the 1080s. In a letter written sometime between 1086 and 1089 to Maurice, bishop of London, Archbishop Lanfranc ordered the bishop to go to Barking to quell a dispute between the prioress and abbess. While the letter gives no indication of the nature of this dispute, it is perhaps possible that it relates to the issue of ethnic integration. It would appear that the tensions were long-standing, as Lanfranc stated in the letter that he had already requested the intervention of Maurice 'in previous letters'. What should be noted is the reference to division within the community of Barking at roughly the same date as production of the Barking Cycle.²²¹

The only other external reference to Barking's community at this time is found in a writ of William the Conqueror's, which can be dated to between 1066 and 1087. King William's writ records his confirmation of the abbess of Barking's right to hold 'all the customs which the abbey held in King Edward's day.' However, in this source the abbess is referred to only as 'A'.²²² Knowles and Brooke suggest that this is the same abbess of Barking as that found in the mortuary roll of Vitalis, abbot of Savigny, named as Ælfgyva, which is a Norman

²¹⁸ Thomas, *The English and the Normans*, p. 204.

²¹⁹ Yorke, *Nunneries*, p. 91.

²²⁰ Williams, *The English and the Norman Conquest*, pp. 132-133.

²²¹ H. Clover and M. Gibson ed. and trans., *The Letters of Lanfranc Archbishop of Canterbury* (Oxford, 1979), no.59, p. 175.

²²² D. Bates, ed., *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum: The Acta of William I: 1066-1087* (Oxford, 1998), no.10, pp. 124-125.

adaptation of the Old English name *Ælfgifu*.²²³ From Goscelin's comments on the abbacy of Barking in the same period of William's writ, it seems that it was indeed *Ælfgifu* to whom this charter was addressed. While the charter cannot be dated more precisely than to the years of William's reign, a reference in William of Poitiers' *Gesta Guillelmi* to the king's visit to Barking in 1067, may indicate that *Ælfgifu*'s confirmation of rights belonged to the very early part of the Norman occupation of England. According to William of Poitiers, William the Conqueror stayed at Barking during the winter of 1066/67, during the construction of fortifications in London.²²⁴ Ann Williams has also argued that Barking was, in January 1067, the site of the formal submission of the leading thegns of Mercia, including Earl Edwin and his brother Morcar, earl of Northumbria.²²⁵ Of course, it may not have been at the nunnery itself that William resided, or received submission of English earls, however Goscelin informs us that at 'that time when the dux of the Normans...succeeded to the kingdom of the English' the whole congregation of Barking, along with the abbess *Ælfgifu* withdrew 'into the neighbouring city of London'.²²⁶ It may be that William took advantage of the absence of the nuns at this time, or, conversely that the nuns withdrew due to his residence at the abbey. In either case, this is the most likely date and context for the production of William's confirmation charter for Barking.

Barking's confirmation charter represents only one of a number of such charters issued in the early part of William's reign. Interestingly, most of the surviving writs confirming the right to hold land are in favour of church institutions.²²⁷ Such confirmations seem to have been gained by both submission to the Norman king and the payment of often high sums of money. Abbot Brand of Peterborough, for instance, offered William 40 gold marks (£250) to redeem the estates claimed by the abbey.²²⁸ Indeed, Williams has highlighted the connection between the payments of such large sums of money by the English, with William's generous

²²³ D. Knowles & C. Brooke, *The Heads of Religious Houses, England and Wales 940-1216* (London, 1972), p. 208; L. V. Delisle ed., *Rouleaux des Morts du IX au XV Siècle* (Paris, 1886), p. 315. This source suggests that *Ælfgyva* was dead by 1122. A charter of Henry I provides the next reference to an abbess of Barking for the period 1114x1122, that is, the abbess Agneti.

²²⁴ R. H. C. Davis and M. Chibnall eds., *The Gesta Guillelmi of William of Poitiers* (Oxford, 1998), pp. 160-1: 'Leaving London, he spent a few days in the nearby place of Barking, while fortifications were being completed in the city as a defence against the inconsistency of the numerous and hostile inhabitants.' The *Gesta Guillelmi* was written in the main between 1071 and 1077.

²²⁵ Williams, *The English and the Norman Conquest*, pp. 7-8 & n.4; D. Whitelock, D. C. Douglas, and S. I. Tucker eds., *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Revised Translation*, (London, 1961) [hereafter *ASC*] (D) 1066 records that this submission took place at Berkhamstead; Williams, however, claims that the location was Barking.

²²⁶ Goscelin, *Vita Æthelburgae*, ch. 20, in Colker, 'Texts of Jocelyn of Canterbury', pp. 416-417.

²²⁷ Williams, *The English and the Norman Conquest*, pp. 7-8.

²²⁸ *ASC* (E) 1066.

distribution of treasure in Normandy in 1067.²²⁹ Ultimately, it appears that the submission and remuneration to the new king by monastic and episcopal churches generally secured their endowments.

As Barking seems to have secured confirmation of their lands very soon after the Conquest, we might expect, when looking at its holdings in Domesday Book, to find a good level of continuity in their landholding between 1066 and 1086, the year in which Domesday Book was compiled. The following part of this chapter will examine Barking's landholdings as documented in charters and in Domesday Book, both to ascertain the applicability of Chibnall's statement to Barking Abbey, and to explore one possible motive for the community's commissioning of the Barking Cycle.

²²⁹ Williams, *The English and the Norman Conquest*, p. 8.

Barking's Lands After 1066

By the time of the Domesday survey in 1086, Barking Abbey was one of the richest nunneries in England.²³⁰ Its landholding totalled over a hundred hides in Essex, Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Middlesex and Surrey. It had apparently benefitted, from its inception, from generous land grants which are recorded in various sources. There are three charters associated with the nunnery, all of which purport to record grants of the late seventh century, that is, the date of Barking's foundation. There is also a collection of charter material preserved at Ilford Hospital in a 16th-century transcript which appears to form part of the Barking archive. This collection consists of extracts from charters dating from the reign of King Swæfred (*fl.* 693/4)²³¹ to King Æthelred II (*d.* 1016). We also have a series of wills which appear to grant land to Barking in the tenth century. Finally, we have the evidence of Barking's landholdings in Domesday Book. Before we turn to a consideration of the Domesday evidence for Barking however, it is first necessary to examine the earlier charter and will evidence in order to establish the potential landholdings of the nunnery in the period prior to the Norman Conquest.

The earliest charter associated with Barking is a grant from Hodilredus '*parens Sebbi provincial East Sexanorum*'²³² to the abbess Æthelburg '*ad augmentum monasterii tui quae dicitur Beddanhaam*'. This grants 40 hides at *Ricingahaam*, *Budinhaam*, *Dagenham*, *Angenlabeshaam*, and *Widmundes felt* [Wyfields in Great Ilford], all 'probably' in Essex.²³³ This survives as a single sheet charter dating from between the late seventh and the late eighth centuries. It is possibly an original, but could also be a copy made up to 100 years after the date it purports to come from.²³⁴

²³⁰ Crick, 'The Wealth, Patronage, and Connections of Women's Houses', pp. 161-4. By 1066, Barking was the third richest nunnery in England with lands valued at about £168. Wilton was the richest with lands valued at approximately £296, and it was closely followed in wealth by Shaftesbury, which had lands valued at around £285.

²³¹ Swæfred succeeded his father Sæbbi as King of the East Saxons. Not much is known of Swæfred, though he was the founder of a double monastery at Nazeing, Essex. See Barbara Yorke, 'East Saxons, kings of the (act. late 6th cent.–c.820)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edn., Oxford University Press, Sept 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/52340>, accessed 10 July 2010].

²³² Hodilred is likely to have been of royal rank (due to his granting of charter at this early date), but he does not seem to be the father (as the charter claims) of Sebbi, as he was the son of Sæward.

²³³ S 1171.

²³⁴ C. Hart, *The Early Charters of Eastern England* (Hertfordshire, 1996), pp. 132-3: authentic, dates 685 x 687; P. Wormald, *Bede and the Conversion of England: the charter evidence* (Jarrow, 1985), pp. 9, 25: original, probably drafted by Bishop Eorcenwald; P. Chaplais, 'Some Early Anglo-Saxon Diplomas', *Journal of the Society of Archivists* (1969), pp. 315-336, at pp. 327-332: original charter left incomplete, then bounds, blessing and witness-list added in the eighth century, perhaps from a schedule formerly stitched to the parchment; A. Bruckner and R. Marichal, eds., *Chartae Latinae Antiquiores: Facsimile Edition of Latin Charters Prior to the*

Barking's alleged foundation charter survives in a sixteenth-century copy of a charter from the seventh century.²³⁵ This is generally held to be spurious in nature, though may be based on earlier, authentic, tradition.²³⁶ This charter takes the form of a pancarta, and represents the gifts made to bishop Eorcenwald by various kings which he then invested in his foundation at Barking.²³⁷ The lands listed in Eorcenwald's charter are: 40 hides at Barking and *Beddanhaam* [given to Eorcenwald by King *Suidfrid*]; 75 hides at *Ricingahaam*, *Budinhaam*, *Dagenham*, *Angenlabeshaam*, and *Widmundes felt* [Wyfields in Great Ilford] [granted by *Hodilredus*, cf. S 1171]; ten hides at Childerditch, Essex [also granted by *Hodilredus*]; 53 hides at Isleworth, Middlesex [granted by King *Æthelred* (of Mercia)]; 70 hides at Battersea, Surrey [granted by King *Ceadwalla* (of Wessex), cf. S 1248]; one hide *iuxta* London [granted by King *Wulfhere* (of Mercia)]; ten hides *supra vicum* London [granted by *Quoengyth*, wife ofaldi]; and 40 hides at Swanscombe and Erith in Kent [granted by King *Æthelred* (of Mercia)]. It will be noted that this charter records the granting of the same lands given to *Æthelburg* by *Hodilred*, though with a rather large discrepancy in the hideage given. In fact, *Chaplais* has examined the charter and discovered that while the number of hides granted now appears as *xl* [40] in the *Hodilred* charter, this figure is written over an erasure, and the erased numerals appear to have been *lxxv* [75].²³⁸ This suggests that some of the land was either alienated or exchanged in the period after the original grant, and that the adaption of the charter was made at the same time.

Ninth Century, parts iii and iv (Olten and Lausanne, 1963-7), p. 33: 'As the dictatus shows a curious mosaic composition of older and younger parts the charter may be suspicious.'; D. Whitelock, *English Historical Documents 1 c. 500-1042* (London, 1979), p. 486: 'it seems likely to me that *Hodilred*'s grant belongs to the reign of *Caedwalla* of Wessex (685-688)'.

²³⁵ S 1246.

²³⁶ *Chaplais*, 'Some Early Anglo-Saxon Diplomas', p. 330; Whitelock, ed., *English Historical Documents c. 500- 1072*, p. 486 & n. 9; M. Gelling, *Early Charters of Thames Valley* (Leicester, 1979), pp. 95, 149; K. Harrison, *The Framework of Anglo-Saxon History to AD 900* (Cambridge, 1976), p. 71; C.N.L. Brooke & G. Keir, *London 800-1216: the shaping of a city* (London, 1975), pp. 368, 379; B. Yorke, 'The Kingdom of the East Saxons', *Anglo-Saxon England* 14 (1985), pp. 1-36, at p. 6; R. Fleming, 'Monastic Lands and England's Defence in the Viking Age', *English Historical Review*, vol. 100, no. 395 (1985), pp. 247-65, at p. 256, n. 2; Hart, *The Early Charters of Eastern England*, p. 126 & n. 1. Hart believes the charter to be authentic: 'the Latin cannot be faulted as an example of contemporary prose' and 'examination of the land gifts listed leaves no room for doubt that these were authentic 7th century endowments of the abbey'. However, Hart concedes that 'Eorcenwald's charter, if genuine, is unique, for no other authentic general conformation of the lands and privileges of a 7th century English monastery survives'. While Hart claims that 'the charter is certainly not a post-Conquest forgery, nor...could [it] have been put together in its present form during the last century and a half of the Anglo-Saxon state', he also cites Dr. Eric John, who thinks that the charter could well have been fabricated in the tenth century or later (see Hart, *ECEE*, p. 126, n. 1, where he thanks Eric John for pointing this out to him – I cannot find reference to this comment in John's own works).

²³⁷ S 1246.

²³⁸ *Chaplais*, 'Some Early Anglo-Saxon Diplomas', p. 330.

The third charter normally associated with Barking, the 'Battersea charter', grants 28 hides at Battersea, 20 hides at *Watsingahaam* [which Hart claims is a lost village lying just south of Battersea]²³⁹ and 20 hides at *Hidaburna* [the river Wandle], all in Surrey.²⁴⁰ The charter survives as an eleventh-century copy, considered spurious, of a, possibly authentic, seventh-century charter.²⁴¹ Interestingly, the charter was preserved in the archives of Westminster, which would suggest its relevance to that place rather than to Barking. In fact, we cannot positively identify either's entitlement to the land, as both the benefactor and the beneficiary of this grant have been erased. Cyril Hart, however, has suggested that the replication of this grant in the Eorcenwald charter makes it likely that it was a grant from Eorcenwald to Barking Abbey.²⁴² The dubious nature of Eorcenwald's charter should be borne in mind here however. Indeed, the appearance of the same land grant in these two charters should raise our suspicions. Eorcenwald's charter, a likely forgery, perhaps of the eleventh century, assigns this land to Barking. The Battersea charter, apparently also a forgery of the eleventh century, grants this same land to someone whose name has been erased, and is preserved in archive of Barking's neighbour, Westminster.

The remaining land grants considered to form part of the archive of Barking abbey are preserved in the Ilford Hospital manuscript. Ilford Hospital had been founded in the twelfth century by an abbess of Barking for the care of the poor and infirm; it remained under the control of the abbey until its dissolution in 1539.²⁴³ The manuscript contains a selection of extracts from earlier land grants, not all of which is in favour of Barking itself. In fact, of nine extracts only one records a gift of land made directly to Barking itself. As Simon Keynes states however, we should generally expect that many of the estates held by religious houses to have been donated by local landowners, and therefore that the charters

²³⁹ Hart, *The Early Charters of Eastern England*, p. 139.

²⁴⁰ S 1248.

²⁴¹ H. Edwards, *The Charters of the Early West Saxon Kingdom*, BAR British Series, no. 198 (1988), pp. 306-8: probably genuine but interpolated; Brooke and Keir, *London 800-1216*, p. 370: spurious, at least in present form; Wormald, *Bede and the Conversion of England*, p. 25: broadly trustworthy; Hart, *Early Charters of Eastern England*, pp. 136-41: 11th-century copy of authentic charter with added bounds.

²⁴² Hart, *Early Charters of Eastern England*, pp. 137-8. Inspection of the erasures has revealed the first letter of the erased word appearing in the benefactor's space was 'E', and could easily have been filled by the name Eorcenwald. The erasure of the beneficiary is preceded by the word *beatae* which could only refer to a dedication to a female saint, and Hart argues that St Mary is the most likely dedicatee in this period – Barking was one of the few nunneries of the early Anglo-Saxon period with such a dedication.

²⁴³ W. R. Powell, ed., 'The Ancient Parish of Barking: abbeys and churches founded before 1830', *A History of the County of Essex: Volume 5* (1966), pp. 222-231. URL: <http://www.britishhistory.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=42726> Date accessed: 09 July 2010.

documenting the land grants to be addressed to individuals rather than to the religious houses themselves.²⁴⁴

The grant made directly to the monastic community at Barking (*monastice conuersationis familia in bercingum*), consists of four hides at *Lippanwelle* and four hides at *Ciricdune*, both in Essex, and was given by the West Saxon king, Eadred.²⁴⁵ The other extracts in the Ilford manuscript record land grants from Swaefred to Fymme: 30 hides at Nazeingbury and ten hides at *Ettunende obre*;²⁴⁶ from King Æthelstan to Beorhtsige, abbot: ten hides at Bowers Gifford;²⁴⁷ from King Eadred to Æthelgifu, a religious woman: four hides at Tolleshunt, Essex;²⁴⁸ from King Eadred to another religious woman, Eawynne: 19 hides at Hockley, Essex;²⁴⁹ from King Eadred to Ælfstan, his 'faithful minister': 17 hides at Wigborough, Essex;²⁵⁰ and from King Æthelred to Sigered, his minister: 20 hides at Hatfield, Essex and five hides at Horndon, Essex.²⁵¹

Barking was also allocated land in the late tenth/early eleventh century wills of Ælfgar, ealdorman of Essex, and his daughters Æthelflæd and Ælfflæd.²⁵² Ælfgar's will grants an estate at Baythorn to his daughter Æthelflæd, and after her death, to his 'other daughter' (Ælfflæd). He further states that if neither of them were to have children, then Baythorn should go to 'St Mary's foundation at Barking' [*sce marie Stowe at Berkynge*].²⁵³

Æthelflæd's will does not in fact mention Baythorn, but does grant an estate at Woodham to her sister Ælfflæd and her sister's husband, the ealdorman Brithnoth, which was to revert to 'St Mary's church at Barking' [*sca Marian cyrcan æt Byorcingan*].²⁵⁴ Both the Baythorn and the Woodham estates appear in Ælfflæd's will. The estate at Baythorn is granted directly to 'the community of Barking' [*Beorcingan þam hirede*], and the estate at Woodham is granted to Queen Ælfhryth, with the instruction that 'after her death it is to go to St Mary's

²⁴⁴ S. Keynes, *The Diplomas of King Æthelred "The Unready" (978-1016): a study in their use as historical evidence* (Cambridge, 1980), pp. 9-10.

²⁴⁵ S 552a.

²⁴⁶ S 65a and S 65b.

²⁴⁷ S 418a records a grant at *Buram* which has been identified as Bowers Gifford (by C. Hart, *The Early Charters of Barking Abbey* (Colchester, 1953).

²⁴⁸ S 517a records a grant at *Tollesfuntum* which has been identified as Tollesbury or Tolleshunt (by Hart, *The Early Charters of Barking Abbey*).

²⁴⁹ S 517b.

²⁵⁰ S 522a.

²⁵¹ S 931a and S 931b.

²⁵² D. Whitelock, *Anglo-Saxon Wills* (Cambridge, 1930), pp. 7, 35, 39, 104 (where Whitelock dates Ælfgar's will to between 946 and 951), 138 (where Whitelock dates Æthelflæd's will to between 962 and 991, probably after 975), p. 141 (where Whitelock dates Ælfflæd's will to 1002, or a year or two earlier).

²⁵³ Whitelock, *Anglo-Saxon Wills*, no. 2, p. 7.

²⁵⁴ *Ibid*, pp. 34-35.

foundation at Barking just as it stands, with the produce and with the men' [*æfter hiræ dege gange hit into sça Marian stowæ into Beorcingan æalswa hit stænt mid mæte, mid mannum*].²⁵⁵

A comparison of these lands apparently claimed by Barking at some point in the pre-Conquest period, with Barking's landholdings as recorded in Domesday Book, may reveal any land losses suffered by Barking abbey between the seventh and eleventh centuries. As we have seen, threats to the landholdings of monasteries in the period following the Norman Conquest may have been one of the motivations for the increasing promotion of saints' cults by English monasteries. The comparison which follows will therefore seek to highlight contexts of land loss at Barking Abbey associated with the Norman Conquest, and thus determine whether this formed one of the contexts for the nunnery's production of hagiographic texts in the late eleventh century.

At the time of the Domesday Survey, Barking Abbey held lands in Middlesex, Buckinghamshire, Bedfordshire and Essex. The majority of its landholdings were in Essex, in the Hundreds of Barstable, Harlow, Becontree, Winstree, Chafford, Chelmsford, Rochford and Thurstable. The abbey's largest landholding was in the hundred of Becontree, where it held 30 hides at Barking.²⁵⁶ This area of land corresponds to the grant of 40 hides at Barking and *Beddanhaam* recorded in Eorcenwald's charter, though minus ten hides. It is possible that the abbey had held these lands continuously from the time of its original grant, and that the ten missing hides represent the land at *Beddanhaam*, which cannot now be identified.²⁵⁷ It is therefore not possible to identify when the ten hides were alienated from the nunnery, though it would perhaps not be surprising if land granted in the seventh century had been lost or changed by the eleventh century. Of the 30 hides held at Barking, we can trace more specifically the land loss after 1066. According to Domesday, 24 acres of this land had been taken away between 1066 and 1086 by Goscelin the Lorimer.²⁵⁸ Goscelin the Lorimer was a Norman tenant of Frodo, brother of Abbot Baldwin of Ely Abbey, and a landholder in his own right.²⁵⁹ His lands were held in Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex. If we look at Goscelin's

²⁵⁵ *Ibid*, pp. 38-39.

²⁵⁶ A. Williams ed., *Little Domesday: Library Edition*, Alecto Historical Editions (London, 2000), [hereafter *LDB*], f. 17v.

²⁵⁷ *Beddanhaam* is not mentioned in relation to Barking Abbey in Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*. This may suggest that name was no longer in use by the eighth century.

²⁵⁸ *LDB*, ff. 17v-18r.

²⁵⁹ K. S. B. Keats-Rohan, *Domesday People: a prosopography of persons occurring in English documents 1066-1166* (Woodbridge, 1999), p. 234.

holdings in Essex, we find that he held three hides less 30 acres at Ilford. This land had been held by two free men in the time of King Edward.²⁶⁰ The manors of Ilford and Barking share a border, which may explain claims and depredations by neighbours. Alternatively, it may be that the land in the Barking manor had been held by a tenant of the abbey whose lands had been taken over after the Conquest.

The lands at *Ricingahaam*, *Budinhaam*, *Dagenham*, *Angenlabeshaam*, and *Widmundes felt* [Wyfields in Great Ilford] recorded as totalling 40 hides in the Hodilred charter, and 75 in the Eorcenwald charter, cannot be compared to its 1066 holdings due to a lack of corresponding land names in Domesday Book, and therefore cannot be shown to represent a loss of the Norman, or any other period.

The ten hides granted to Barking at Childerditch in Essex, as recorded in the Eorcenwald charter, were not in the possession of Barking Abbey by the time of the Domesday survey. Entries in Domesday under Childerditch reveal that the estate had been broken up: 'Harold held Childerditch, later the queen held it. Now the sheriff of Surrey holds it for one and a half hides';²⁶¹ 'Osbern holds Childerditch of Swein, which Ælfwyn, a free woman held TRE and it is not known how it came to Robert fitzWymarc. Then as now there is one hide and 40 acres';²⁶² 'In Childerditch Sasselin holds one manor with one and a half hides and 30 acres, which Ordgar, a free man, held TRE'.²⁶³ I have not been able to identify the free woman Ælfwyn or the free man Ordgar.²⁶⁴ Sasselin was a Domesday tenant-in-chief who held lands in Essex and Suffolk. His land at Childerditch bordered on the estate of West Horndon, which may have belonged at some point to Barking [see below]. It also bordered on Little Warley, an estate which was held by Barking at 1086.²⁶⁵ Swein was the son of Robert FitzWymarc, sheriff of Essex. He had succeeded his father as sheriff between c. 1075 and 1086.²⁶⁶ Most interesting is the ownership of land at Childerditch by the king; it may be that this estate reverted to the royal house at some point before the Norman Conquest, and that the king was responsible for breaking it up for re-grants to individuals such as Ælfwyn and

²⁶⁰ *LDB*, f. 94r.

²⁶¹ *LDB*, f. 5r.

²⁶² *LDB*, f. 42r.

²⁶³ *LDB*, f. 92v.

²⁶⁴ It is tempting to identify Ordgar as the same Ordgar, minister, who appears to have had a close connection with Horton, Barking's ?sister abbey. He appears witnessing charters between 1031 and 1050, and may be descended from Ordgar, father of Queen Ælfhryth, who, according to Goscelin's *Life of Wulfhild*, was a despoiler of Barking Abbey's lands. There is no evidence to support this theory however.

²⁶⁵ *LDB*, f. 18r.

²⁶⁶ Keats-Rohan, *Domesday People*, p. 424.

Ordgar. On the other hand, Ordgar and Ælfwyn may have been Barking's tenants. The involvement of the queen, presumably William I's queen, Matilda, in land previously held by Barking, is perhaps significant given other evidence of links between queens and nunneries.²⁶⁷

The 53 hides granted in the Eorcenwald charter to Barking at Isleworth in Middlesex had also apparently been lost by 1066. Domesday Book records that the estate at Isleworth was held by Walter de Saint-Valery for 70 hides. It had previously been held by Earl Ælfgar of Merica.²⁶⁸ Ælfgar had succeeded to the earldom of Mercia after the death of his father Leofric in 1057, though before this he had been the earl of East Anglia.²⁶⁹ It may be important to note here that Earl Leofric and his family were accused of despoiling the church of Worcester during the eleventh century.²⁷⁰ It has been suggested that Ælfgar's manor at Isleworth had been a royal estate at an earlier date. This argument is built upon the fact that its value is recorded in 1066 as £80, and that this was the value placed upon a considerable number of ancient royal manors before the Conquest.²⁷¹ It may be then, that the land reverted at some point before the Conquest to the ruling house, and then out again to the earls of Mercia. On the other hand, it may be that the land was simply taken from Barking by Ælfgar or his family. Walter de Saint-Valery was from Picardy; by 1086 he held a small tenancy-in-chief in England with lands in Essex and Gloucestershire.²⁷² Clearly, he had gained the land at Isleworth as part of the Norman takeover; however, it does not appear that this was the point at which Barking lost the estate.

²⁶⁷ Stafford, 'Queens, Nunneries and Reforming Churchmen', pp. 3-35.

²⁶⁸ A. Williams and R. W. H. Erskine, eds., *Great Domesday Book: Library Edition*, Alecto Historical Editions (London, 1986-1992), [hereafter *GDB*], f. 130r.

²⁶⁹ Ann Williams, 'Ælfgar, earl of Mercia (d. 1062?)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/178>, accessed 23 March 2011].

²⁷⁰ S. Baxter, *The Earls of Mercia: Lordship and Power in Late Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford, 2007), p. 168. However, this claim cannot be accepted without reservation, as it was written as part of a campaign to redefine tenurial relations between the monks of Worcester and the bishop of Worcester. See also A. Williams, 'Leofric, earl of Mercia (d. 1057)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, May 2005 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/16470>, accessed 10 July 2010], where we learn that Leofric, his brothers and his father Leofwine had a reputation amongst religious houses in West Mercia as spoliators. Interestingly, Leofwine [Ælfgar's grandfather] was given land by King Æthelred II which was later claimed by Pershore Abbey and Evesham.

²⁷¹ J.S. Cockburn, H.P.F. King, K.G.T. McDonnell, eds., 'Domesday Survey: Introduction V', *A History of the County of Middlesex: Volume I: Physique, Archaeology, Domesday, Ecclesiastical Organization, The Jews, Religious Houses, Education of the Working Classes to 1870, Private Education from the Sixteenth Century* (1969), pp. 98-118: URL: <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=22107>

²⁷² Keats-Rohan, *Domesday People*, pp. 453-454.

The 70 hides granted at Battersea in Surrey, and recorded in the Eorcenwald charter, and possibly also in the Battersea charter,²⁷³ were not in the landholdings of Barking at Domesday. Domesday Book records that Earl Harold held the Battersea estate before 1066 for 72 hides. By 1086 however, the estate had been greatly reduced to 18 hides and was now in the hands of St Peter's, Westminster. The Domesday entry records that 'King William gave this manor to St Peter's in exchange for Windsor'.²⁷⁴ This seems to indicate that St Peter's held the estate in the period between Harold's death and 1086. Here we should recall that the Battersea charter was preserved in the Westminster archives. Domesday Book also records that the 'bishop of Lisieux holds two hides of which the church was seised in the time of King William; and afterwards the bishop of Bayeux disseised it'.²⁷⁵ Within the same Domesday Book entry for Battersea lands it is stated that 'The Abbot of Chertsey holds one hide, which the reeve of this vill, on account of some enmity, took away from this manor and put in Chertsey'.²⁷⁶ This seems to indicate some sort of dispute over the Battersea lands, perhaps before 1066; it may be significant for our purposes that Chertsey had connections to Barking, having been founded by the same bishop, Eorcenwald, in the seventh century. There is no specific mention in Chertsey's Domesday holdings of a hide in Battersea however. They did hold one hide at Tooting, also in Brixton hundred, which was close to the manor of Battersea.²⁷⁷ This hide was previously held 'of King Edward' by Oswear. I cannot distinguish this Oswear from the numerous men of this name occurring in Domesday, but it may be significant that this land was held of the king, which often indicates that the holder was a royal official. It appears then, that Barking had lost the land at Battersea, if indeed it ever held it, before 1066 and to the king. This land would then presumably have passed to William the Conqueror, and it seems that William held on to part of the estate after 1066, as only a fraction of it was exchanged with St Peter's.

As part of Barking's archive preserved in the Ilford Hospital book, the nunnery held a charter granting 30 hides at Nazeingbury to an individual named Fymme. Barking does not appear in Domesday to hold any land in this area; rather, it was split between the religious houses of Waltham Holy Cross and St Paul's, London. Five hides at Nazeing were held by Waltham

²⁷³ Though note that the Battersea [S 1248] charter grants a total of 68, not 70 hides, not all of which is named as 'Battersea'.

²⁷⁴ *GDB*, f. 32r.

²⁷⁵ *GDB*, f. 32r.

²⁷⁶ *GDB*, f. 32r.

²⁷⁷ *GDB*, f.33r.

Holy Cross in 1066 and 1086.²⁷⁸ Nazeing borders on the estate of Waltham Holy Cross, but also on that of Great Parndon, at which Barking Abbey held half a hide at 1086.²⁷⁹ As Waltham Holy Cross was founded in 1060 by Harold Godwineson, it may have been at this time that it was invested with the land at Nazeing. It is therefore possible that this land belonged to the king before 1060, or to local ealdormen holding it in the king's name. Twenty-seven and a half hides in the hundred of Tendring at 'The Naze' were claimed by the canons of St Paul's, London to have been held 'then as now'.²⁸⁰ Clearly then, Barking had lost any claim to land at Nazeingbury before 1066. It is interesting that this land ended up in the hands of two nearby religious houses, and perhaps especially for our purposes, that the main part of it had gone to St. Paul's in London.

Unfortunately, the land at *Tunende obre*, for which Barking held a charter granting ten hides has not been identified, and we are therefore unable to trace its history.

The charter extract held by Barking in the Ilford book which grants ten hides at Bowers Gifford to the abbot Beorhtsig, does not correspond to any land held by the nunnery in 1066. Instead, it seems that the estate had been divided, and much reduced by 1066/86. Grim the reeve held two hides, one of which, we learn from Domesday, was 'from men who forfeited it to the king, which Grim added to his other land after the arrival of the king, through Robert fitzWymarc, the sheriff, as Grim says.'²⁸¹ Grim the reeve was an Englishman who held land of the king in Essex.²⁸² So, once again, there seems to be involvement by royal officials in land previously claimed by Barking. The rest of Bowers Gifford was divided between Walter the deacon, who held two hides of 'the land of his brother Theoderic';²⁸³ Serlo, who held one hide of Ranulph Peverel, 'which Ælfstan, a free man held TRE';²⁸⁴ and St. Peter's, Westminster, who held 50 acres, which an Englishman held of them.²⁸⁵ Walter the deacon was a Domesday tenant-in-chief. Some of his lands had been held before 1086 by his brother Theoderic; other lands held by him had apparently been given to him by Queen Matilda.²⁸⁶ Serlo was a Norman tenant-in-chief in Somerset, though clearly here he was a tenant himself

²⁷⁸ *LDB*, f. 16r.

²⁷⁹ *LDB*, f. 17v.

²⁸⁰ *LDB*, f. 13v. The hundred of Tendring was also the location of St Osyth's, Chich, a foundation supported by Bishop Maurice of London.

²⁸¹ *LDB*, f. 98r.

²⁸² Keats-Rohan, *Domesday People*, p. 238.

²⁸³ *LDB*, f. 86r.

²⁸⁴ *LDB*, f. 71v.

²⁸⁵ *LDB*, f. 14r.

²⁸⁶ Keats-Rohan, *Domesday People*, p. 454.

of Ranulf Peverel's. Ranulph Peverel was a Norman tenant-in-chief with lands in Shropshire, Norfolk, Suffolk, Oxfordshire, Kent, Middlesex, Berkshire, and, most extensively, in Essex.²⁸⁷ I have not been able to further identify Ælfstan. If Barking had held land at Bowers Gifford in 1066, it had clearly been tenanted, and it would appear that they were unable to reclaim it after the Conquest.

The original grant from King Eadred to the religious woman Æthelgifu, preserved in the Ilford Hospital book, named the land granted as *Tollesfuntum*, which has been identified as either Tollesbury or Tolleshunt.²⁸⁸ For that reason, we will explore both Tollesbury and Tolleshunt as they appear in Domesday Book. As Barking Abbey held an estate of eight hides at Tollesbury in both 1066 and 1086,²⁸⁹ it would seem that not only was the nunnery able to claim the land originally granted to the religious woman Æthelgifu, but in fact were able to augment the original grant of four hides. There does, however, seem to have been some sort of dispute about some of the estate after 1066, as Domesday records that in the same manor 'Ranulph Peverel holds one hide which Siward held of the abbey and he is willing to do such service as his predecessor did, but the abbess is not willing because [the land] was for the sustenance of the [nuns]'.²⁹⁰ Ranulph Peverel also held a manor at Tolleshunt D'Arcy for three and a half hides and 30 acres,²⁹¹ which had previously been held by Siward.²⁹² The manor of Tolleshunt D'Arcy shared a border with Tollesbury, the manor held by Barking Abbey. It is likely that the hide taken from Barking by Ranulph consisted of borderland between Tollesbury and Tolleshunt D'Arcy. It looks as if the nunnery was unsuccessful in recouping the hide previously held by Siward, and held by Ranulph in 1086. This entry highlights a possible loss of land before 1066 for Barking, in this instance to the tenant Siward. However, it is also possible that the land was not alienated until after 1066 by Ranulph Peverel. We have already seen the involvement of Peverel in land previously claimed by Barking; it is possible that he was a particularly predatory Norman landholder. It does appear however, that there were some questions about the nature of the tenure at

²⁸⁷ *Ibid*, pp. 355-356.

²⁸⁸ Hart, *The Early Charters of Barking Abbey*.

²⁸⁹ *LDB*, f. 18v.

²⁹⁰ *LDB*, f. 18v It is tempting, in light of the connections between Barking and Chertsey, to identify this Siward as Siward, the English abbot of Chertsey and bishop of Rochester who was allowed to retain his see until his death in 1075. There is, however, no evidence to support this claim.

²⁹¹ It is therefore possible that the estate claimed by Ranulph Peverel at Tolleshunt D'Arcy had also previously belonged to Barking.

²⁹² *LDB*, f. 75v.

Tollesbury, and that possibly, the abbess of Barking was trying to rectify a pre-existing land dispute through the Domesday enquiry.

Barking Abbey also appears to have lost ten acres of the manor of Tollesbury to Odo, a man of Swein after 1066: 'Odo, a man of Swein, has obtained ten acres which [belonged] to the [abbey] and the Hundred testifies to this, but he vouches his lord to warranty for them.'²⁹³ Swein's Domesday landholdings include the manor of Tolleshunt, made up of one and a half hides and 40 acres.²⁹⁴ Tolleshunt also shared a border with Tollesbury, so the ten acres taken by Odo (or Swein) may have been incorporated in that border. According to the entry for his landholding at Tolleshunt, the manor had originally been held by Brun, but his father, Robert FitzWymarc, had it 'after the king came to this land', and 'now [1086] Swein has it'. It is possible that Brun was originally a tenant of Barking Abbey's, and that his lands had been lost to the sheriff after the Conquest.²⁹⁵ So, Barking had lost, or exchanged, the ten acres which formed part of their manor at Tollesbury, at some point between 1066 and 1086. The involvement of Swein and his father Robert FitzWymarc, sheriff of Essex, once again, in lands previously claimed by Barking is worth noting, perhaps especially due to their statuses as royal officials.

At both 1066 and 1086 Barking held seven and a half hides at Hockley.²⁹⁶ This forms only part of the original 19 hide grant from King Eadred to the religious woman, Eawynne, which is preserved in the Barking Ilford collection. The only other landholder at Hockley was Swein, the same sheriff of Essex holding land at Childerditch and Tolleshunt, who claimed one hide and 30 acres. Domesday records that this manor of Swein's was held by 'one free man' before the Conquest.²⁹⁷ Again, this may have been one of Barking's tenants whose land was appropriated by the sheriff of Essex before the Conquest. As no other landholders at Hockley are recorded in Domesday Book, it is not possible to trace the ten hides missing from the original grant from King Eadred.

Similarly at Wigborough, Barking had managed to retain only part of the grant of 17 hides from King Eadred to his minister Ælfstan. Domesday Book records that Barking Abbey held eleven and a half hides, and 13 acres of land at Wigborough, in both 1066 and 1086.²⁹⁸ This

²⁹³ *LDB*, f. 18v.

²⁹⁴ *LDB*, f. 48r.

²⁹⁵ *LDB*, f. 18v.

²⁹⁶ *LDB*, f. 18v.

²⁹⁷ *LDB*, f. 43v.

²⁹⁸ *LDB*, f. 18r.

suggests that there were some losses from this estate before 1066. Other landholders at Wigborough were: Hamo the Steward ‘Vitalis holds (Little) Wigborough from Hamo which Goti, a free man, held before 1066 as a manor for seven hides of land and one hide of woodland’;²⁹⁹ Ranulph Peverel: ‘Ælfgar holds Wigborough from Ranulph, which one free man held before 1066 as a manor, for half a hide’;³⁰⁰ and Hugh St Quentin ‘Ælfric, a free man, held Wigborough as a manor, for two hides [now held by Hugh St Quentin].³⁰¹ Hamo the steward was a Norman who became sheriff of Kent from 1077 to his death in c. 1100.³⁰² The Englishman Goti appears to have been an official of King Harold’s, and a landowner in his own right in Essex and Suffolk.³⁰³ It is still possible however, that he was a tenant of Barking’s before the Conquest, and that his land was sequestered by the Norman Hamo. Similarly with Ranulf Peverel, whom we have seen more than once involved in Barking’s lands, and with Hugh St Quentin, who was a Norman tenant-in-chief in Essex, Hampshire and Somerset, it may be that their takeover of the lands of the ‘free man’ and of Ælfric, actually involved the removal of tenanted lands from Barking’s property. In any case, it appears that Barking had lost control of some of its estate at Wigborough by 1066, either to Norman usurpers of their tenanted land, or through earlier land appropriation or exchange.

Unfortunately, the place-names *Lippanwelle* and *Ciricdune*, at which the nunnery was apparently granted eight hides by King Eadred, have not been identified, and therefore we cannot trace their history.

Despite their possession of the charter from Æthelred to his minister Sigereð, granting 20 hides at Hatfield, Barking Abbey did not hold any land in Hatfield at 1066. An entry in the lands of the king for Hatfield Broad Oak records that ‘Harold held Hatfield (Broad Oak) before 1066 as a manor, for 20 hides’.³⁰⁴ Given the correspondence in hideage, it is very likely that this is the same manor once held by Barking; it seems then, that this estate had reverted to the crown at some point before the Conquest, and so perhaps this was considered comital land. This entry also records that ‘To the church of this manor belonged one hide and 30 acres, which Swein took away after he lost the sheriffdom.’³⁰⁵ It is difficult to know whether this land was in any way connected to Barking, but it does suggest that Swein, who

²⁹⁹ *LDB*, f.55v.

³⁰⁰ *LDB*, f. 73v.

³⁰¹ *LDB*, f. 93r.

³⁰² Keats-Rohan, *Domesday People*, p. 242.

³⁰³ Goti appears in *LDB*, f. 54v, holding ‘Ateleia’ in Essex ‘of Harold’ in 1066.

³⁰⁴ *LDB*, f. 2r.

³⁰⁵ *LDB*, f. 2r.

has appeared in numerous connections to Barking lands, had engaged elsewhere in the appropriation of church lands. There is another Hatfield in Essex, known as Hatfield Peverel. This was held at Domesday by Ranulph Peverel in lordship; it was held before 1066 by Ælmær for nine hides and 82 acres.³⁰⁶ I have not been able to identify Ælmær, but the occurrence of Ranulf Peverel once again in potential lands of Barking should be noted.

Barking Abbey also seems to have lost any claim to land at Horndon by 1066, despite their possession of the Æthelred charter granting five hides at Horndon to his minister Sigereð. Domesday Book records that the estate was divided between various landholders. The bishop of Bayeux held 20 acres in Horndon 'which one free man held before 1066'.³⁰⁷ Swein of Essex held West Horndon as one manor and as five hides and 15 acres which 'Alwine, a thegn of King Edward's held before 1066'. The entry records that King William gave it to Robert [fitzWymarc], and that it then passed to Swein.³⁰⁸ East Horndon was held by William Peverel 'which Ælmær, a free man, held before 1066 as a manor for one and a half hides'.³⁰⁹ William Peverel was a Norman tenant-in-chief with lands centred in Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire. There is no direct evidence of his being related to Ranulph Peverel, but it is highly likely that they were indeed related.³¹⁰ Though in combination these lands at Horndon exceed by almost two hides the grant in the Ilford Hospital Book, it is likely that they incorporate the original lands granted. The manor held by Swein corresponds very closely to the area of land recorded in the Æthelred charter; if this represents the same manor previously claimed by Barking, then it looks as if the estate had reverted at some point before 1066 to the king. It may then have been re-granted to Alwine, who was a thegn of King Edward's with extensive landholdings in Essex, Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Hertfordshire, Huntingdonshire, Middlesex, Nottinghamshire and Worcestershire.³¹¹

The estates at Baythorn and Woodham, granted in the wills of ealdorman Ælfgar and his family, were not in the possession of Barking at the time of Domesday. It may be that they were never in fact passed on to Barking, and perhaps here we should take especial notice of the clause in Ælflæd's will which grants Woodham first to Queen Ælfthryth. The estate at

³⁰⁶ *LDB*, f. 72r.

³⁰⁷ *LDB*, f. 23v.

³⁰⁸ *LDB*, f. 42r.

³⁰⁹ *LDB*, f. 90r. It could be that this is the same Ælmær who appears holding land at Hatfield; if so, this would perhaps suggest that he was a tenant of Barking's.

³¹⁰ Keats-Rohan, *Domesday People*, p. 494.

³¹¹ See 'Alwine 10' in *Prospography of Anglo-Saxon England*:

<http://www.pase.ac.uk/pase/apps/persons/CreatePersonFrames.jsp?personKey=27066>.

Baythorn mentioned in Ælfflæd's will is likely to be that held in 1086 by Ranulf, 'brother of Ilgar'. According to Domesday Book, Ranulf held Baythorne [End] in demesne 'which Ingvar held as a manor and two hides' in 1066.³¹² Ingvar appears in another Domesday entry for Essex as a thegn in 1066.³¹³ It seems then, that the estate of Baythorn had become the property of the king before 1066. The situation at Woodham is more complex, with some land being held by Ranulf Peverel, some by Ralph Baynard, and some by Henry de Ferrers. Henry de Ferrers held Woodham [Ferrer], in the hundred of Chelmsford, in demesne. This manor had been held by 'Bondi' in 1066 for 14 hides.³¹⁴ In the hundred of Dengie, the tenant Pointel held Woodham [Mortimer and Walter] of Ralph Baynard. This manor of seven hides had been held previously by 'Leofgifu'.³¹⁵ Also in the hundred of Dengie, Ranulf Peverel held Woodham [Mortimer and Walter] in demesne 'which Siward held as a manor and as five hides' in 1066.³¹⁶ This may be the same Siward who we have seen holding land associated with Barking at Tollesbury. Henry de Ferrers was a Norman tenant-in-chief who was particularly well endowed in Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire.³¹⁷ Ralph Baynard was a Norman tenant-in-chief, and, interestingly, the sheriff of Essex sometime between 1072 and 1080/6.³¹⁸ As I am unable to further identify Bondi or Leofgifu, or the tenant Pointel, it is difficult to determine exactly what had happened to the estate at Woodham before the Conquest; certainly by 1086 all of this land was in Norman hands. It does not appear though, that this land was taken from Barking itself after the Conquest.

Barking Abbey had accumulated some lands by 1066 which were not documented in any of their surviving pre-Conquest documents. In 1066 in the Hundred of Barstable, Barking held Mucking for seven hides. By 1086 however, 30 acres of this land had been taken away from the abbey by Turolde of Rochester.³¹⁹ Turolde was both a steward and tenant of the Bishop of Bayeux, and appears to have died around the time of the Domesday inquest.³²⁰ According to the Domesday Book, these 30 acres belonged, by 1086, to the fief of the bishop of Bayeux. Odo, Bishop of Bayeux was the half-brother of William the Conqueror and had accompanied him on his journey to England and in the Battle of Hastings. He became the castellan of

³¹² *LDB*, f. 81r.

³¹³ *LDB*, f. 22v.

³¹⁴ *LDB*, f. 57r.

³¹⁵ *LDB*, f. 69r.

³¹⁶ *LDB*, f. 73r.

³¹⁷ Keats-Rohan, *Domesday People*, p. 247.

³¹⁸ *Ibid*, p. 327.

³¹⁹ *LDB*, f. 17v.

³²⁰ Keats-Rohan, *Domesday People*, p. 431.

Dover and the earl of Kent, and had extensive landholdings in Kent, Surrey, Wiltshire, Dorset, Somerset, Hertfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Bedfordshire, Northamptonshire, Warwickshire, Nottinghamshire, Lincolnshire, Essex, and Norfolk.³²¹ Also at Mucking were 6 free men holding two hides and 50 acres of Barking's lands. According to the entry in Domesday, these free men once belonged to Barking 'but now the king can do with them what he likes'.³²² It is not clear whether the king could also do what he liked with the land they held of Barking, but this does highlight the very real possibility of loss of tenanted lands in the period after the Norman Conquest.

In the same Hundred of Barstable, Barking Abbey held Bulphan for seven hides, with two ploughs held in demesne. From the two ploughs, 'Ravengar' had taken away 24 acres.³²³ There is no other record of Ravengar; he does not appear to hold any lands in Domesday Book.

In the Hundred of Chafford, Barking held 40 acres at Stifford.³²⁴ Domesday Book records that 'there were also 40 acres [belonging] to this land which William de Warenne has by exchange, as he says'.³²⁵ William de Warenne was a Norman tenant-in-chief with extensive landholdings in Essex, Norfolk, Sussex, Hampshire, Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Yorkshire and Huntingdonshire.³²⁶ It is worth noting that in another entry for William de Warenne's landholdings in the Hundred of Chafford, it is recorded that 'three free men held Kenningtons as four hides TRE. Now William holds it as the same by exchange, as he says'.³²⁷ Kenningtons appears to be a short distance from Stifford, though apparently not adjacent to it. It is difficult now to ascertain whether de Warenne's claim to have gained the land at Stifford from Barking, or indeed at Kenningtons, by exchange, is genuine, or whether it represents unjust encroachment of English monastic land by a Norman lord.

The other lands held by Barking in Essex comprise three hides in [Great and Little] Warley in the Hundred of Chafford; three and a half hides and ten acres in Fryerning and Ingatestone; and one and a half virgates at Fristling, all in the Hundred of Chelmsford.³²⁸ Barking abbey

³²¹ *Ibid*, p. 309.

³²² *LDB*, f. 17v.

³²³ *LDB*, f. 17v.

³²⁴ *LDB*, f. 18r.

³²⁵ *LDB*, f. 18r.

³²⁶ Keats-Rohan, *Domesday People*, p. 480.

³²⁷ *LDB*, f. 37v.

³²⁸ *LDB*, f. 18r.

also held 28 houses in London, the moiety of a church in London, and three houses in Colchester.³²⁹ It is possible that the Barking's claim to houses and a church in London represent the remains of their original grant of land there by King Wulfhere (of Mercia) and by Quoengyth, as recorded in the Eorcenwald charter. It is also likely that the London church is that of All Hallows Barking-by-the-Tower, which is also likely to be the same church to which Goscelin claims the nuns retired to in times of war.³³⁰

The lands held by the abbey in Surrey were subject to some reductions in hideage after the Conquest. In Elmbridge Hundred, at Weston Green, the abbey held seven hides at 1066. The Domesday entry records that 'it is now [1086] assessed at three hides and one virgate'³³¹ (approximately quarter of a hide). In Wallington Hundred the abbey held two hides of land at 1066; however, Domesday Book records that 'In the time of King Edward, it was assessed at two hides, now one.'³³²

In its landholdings in Buckinghamshire and Bedfordshire, Barking appears to have suffered no depredations between 1066 and 1086. In total, these amounted to 16 hides (six hides at Slapton, Bucks. and ten hides at Lidlington, Beds.), and were claimed to have always belonged to the abbey.³³³

To summarise, the sources which record Barking's landholdings are: an original charter of the late seventh, or possibly late eighth century, which displays some signs of tampering, but in the early Anglo-Saxon period; an apparently spurious foundation charter, allegedly of the seventh century, but apparently much adapted and tampered with in the tenth and eleventh centuries; possibly, the Battersea charter, which again displays signs of adaptation; and the evidence within Domesday Book. Put together, they suggest that Barking's lands had suffered substantial losses since the seventh century. Furthermore, the possible production of a spurious foundation charter in the tenth/eleventh century suggests an attempt to put together documentation which could support large-scale claims for recovery. The Ilford Charters also suggest substantial losses since the mid-tenth century. Similarly, the wills of ealdorman Ælfgar and his family also seem to indicate loss of lands at some point after the turn of the eleventh century, perhaps even before they were passed on to the nunnery. Domesday Book

³²⁹ *LDB*, f. 17v-f.18r.

³³⁰ The church paid a pension of 6s. 8d. to Barking Abbey in 1291, see Record Commission in 1802: *Taxatio Ecclesiastica Angliae et Walliae Auctoritate P. Nicholai IV*, ed. T. Astle, S. Ayscough and J. Caley, p. 196.

³³¹ *LDB*, f. 34r.

³³² *LDB*, f. 34r.

³³³ *LDB*, f. 146r & f. 211r.

gives us some indication of the major beneficiaries of Barking's lands, who seem especially to have been kings and their officials: royal servants, ealdormen, earls in particular, but also sheriffs both pre- and post- 1066. One area of land in which Barking had potential claim was in the queen's lands, and was granted after 1066. The possible involvement of Queen Ælfthryth in the Woodham estate loss should also be noted. Other religious houses may also have been beneficiaries of land previously held by Barking. These include St. Paul's, London, Waltham Holy Cross and, possibly, Westminster, though, significantly, via a period when Barking land was again in royal hands.

It seems that other land owned by Barking may have been lost because their tenant's land was taken over by Norman successors. Tenancy was a major route for land loss, both before and after the Norman Conquest, often due to appropriation of leased land by tenant's families and successors. This danger would clearly have been more pronounced after 1066. There are a few Domesday Book entries which suggest that the abbess was using the opportunity of the survey to actively contest certain losses. In some cases, it looks as if the abbess may have been making attempts to reclaim land, including refusing to accept that land was tenanted in 1066, as opposed to held directly by the nunnery. Alongside this evidence for the abbess actively contesting land in 1066, we have the apparent charter forgeries. Together, these suggest that the abbey was pursuing claims at some earlier dates in the later tenth or eleventh century.

Overall then, Barking had clearly failed to hold on to some of its lands, not only from its original foundation, but also since the mid- tenth century. Royal officials had been the major beneficiaries of Barking's lost lands, which does not seem to be unusual as far as religious houses are concerned. The benefactions of Earl Ælfgar's family to the nunnery at Barking, when seen alongside ealdormen's claims to Barking lands at 1066, demonstrates the complexity of the land-holding situation in England, one which included gains, losses, exchanges, claims and disputes. There were also some potential issues with other religious houses.

Ultimately, it is clear that Barking experienced loss of lands, but in both the pre- and post-Conquest periods. There are plenty of contexts evident here for pushing and developing cults of saints as undying landlords, though they do not all necessarily belong to the post-1066 period. Similarly, the evidence of Barking's abbess using Domesday Book to contest the despoliation of nunnery lands needs to be seen alongside the apparent charter forgeries

undertaken in the tenth or eleventh centuries. While the Norman Conquest appears certainly to have been a catalyst for the reorganisation of Barking's documentary evidence, the impact and role of earlier, pre-Conquest contexts should not be ignored.

The contexts of land loss at Barking Abbey need to be considered in a reading of the texts themselves. Before undertaking such a reading, however, we shall first explore the final, and perhaps most important, context of episcopal encroachment of monastic houses' jurisdiction and autonomy in the immediate post-Conquest period, in an effort to determine the impact such encroachment had on the nunnery, and its production of the Barking cycle.

Barking and the Bishopric of London

The immediate context for the production of the Barking Cycle appears to be the translation of its three abbess saints from the old Anglo-Saxon church to a newly built church at Barking.³³⁴ The translation of the Barking saints occurred at the end of years of building work at Barking. According to Goscelin, Barking's abbess Ælfgifu had extended the boundaries of the monastery by removing houses which surrounded the abbey grounds, rebuilt the claustral walls, and constructed new buildings and roofs. Ælfgifu then planned to build a new, much larger, church. But in order to build it, it was first necessary to demolish the abbey's seventh-century church, and to move the relics of Æthelburg, Hildelith and Wulfhild. Goscelin claims that Ælfgifu's request to Maurice, bishop of London, and 'all the other religious fathers' for permission to undertake such work was refused.³³⁵ Ælfgifu and the Barking community decided, however, to proceed with the translation despite Maurice's refusal.³³⁶ Maurice's lack of support is made explicit in the *translatio*, as is his absence from the ceremony itself, to which he sent the archdeacon in his place.³³⁷ Mitchell, noting that this was probably the English archdeacon Edward, who died before 1096, suggests that Edward may have been considered a better communicator with Ælfgifu due to their shared English heritage.³³⁸ It is certainly possible that there were ethnic tensions between the Norman bishop Maurice and Barking's English abbess, but there is no specific evidence of this, and we should be wary of using this as an explanation without further exploration into the connections between Barking and the London bishopric.

The only external suggestion of difficulties between Maurice and Ælfgifu is found in the letter sent to Maurice by Lanfranc at some time between 1086 and 1089. As we have already seen, the letter contains a request from Archbishop Lanfranc for Maurice to go to Barking in order to quell the dispute between its abbess and its prioress. Lanfranc refers to 'previous letters' sent by him for the same purpose, which may suggest some reticence on Maurice's part to become involved in Barking's affairs.³³⁹

³³⁴ The actual date at which the Barking translations took place is difficult to determine precisely; internal evidence suggests that it cannot have occurred before 1086 or after 1100, though see the following discussion for more information.

³³⁵ Goscelin, *Translation of SS Æthelburg, Hildelith & Wulfhild* (longer version) ch. 3, in Colker, 'Texts of Jocelyn of Canterbury', pp. 437-438.

³³⁶ *Ibid*, ch. 4, pp. 438-439.

³³⁷ *Ibid*, ch.4 & ch.9, pp. 438-439 & 444-445.

³³⁸ Mitchell, 'Patronage and Politics at Barking Abbey', p. 212.

³³⁹ Clover and Gibson ed. and trans., *The Letters of Lanfranc*, no. 59, p. 175.

There is evidence, on the other hand, for a more positive relationship between Maurice and Ælfgifu. Two of the Lives which form part of Barking cycle are dedicated to Maurice. The *Life of Æthelburg* begins with the phrase ‘*Mauricio summo sacrat hec Goscelinus ab imo*’.³⁴⁰ The dedication then specifically calls for the defence of the Barking saints, or at least, their reputation, by Maurice: ‘*Decet ergo te, O princeps ecclesiastice, ut amicam sponsi et obsequiorem Dominicæ sponsæ, non solum hec suscipere uerum etiam contra temerarios latratus defendere*’.³⁴¹ The dedication of the *Life of Wulfhild*, which begins by naming the dedicatee as Maurice: ‘*Quæ pia sunt fidus capiat pietatis amicus: Mauricus Iugi uivat calamo Gocelini*’,³⁴² bears a similar plea for the protection of the bishop of London: ‘*Hec igitur decet tuam paternam excellentiam, O Lundonicae metropolis ierarcha, ut bonum nummularium et gemmarium Christi, non solum probabiliter assumere uerum etiam contra ferocium dentes potenter defendere qui ante malunt ignota damnare quam prenoscere*’.³⁴³

There also exists archaeological evidence connecting Maurice and Ælfgifu. An engraved stone found near the site of Barking nunnery bears the inscription ‘[M]AURICII. EPI. LONDONENSIS. ALFGIVAE ABBATISSAE’.³⁴⁴ The beginning of the inscription is missing which has led to various interpretations of its meaning. Loftus and Chettle suggest that it may have read ‘ORATE PRO ANIMABUS MAURICII...’ which would mean that the stone was engraved after their deaths.³⁴⁵ Cyril Hart, on the other hand, has suggested that it may have read ‘TEMPORE MAURICII...’ and have recorded an event which took place while Ælfgifu and Maurice were alive, quite plausibly the translation of the Barking saints.³⁴⁶ Both the dedication of the Barking texts to Maurice, and the production of an engraved stone linking Maurice and Ælfgifu may, in light of the decision to go ahead with the translation of the Barking saints without Maurice’s approval, represent a conciliatory gesture on behalf of Ælfgifu and the Barking community.

³⁴⁰ Goscelin, *Life of Æthelburg*, prologue, in Colker, ‘Texts of Jocelyn of Canterbury’, p. 398: ‘Goscelin consecrates these things to the highest Maurice from the lowest.’

³⁴¹ *Ibid*: ‘It is right therefore that you, O ecclesiastical prince, as the friend of the bridegroom and servant of the Lord’s bride, not only receive these things, [but] defend the truth against the reckless barking dogs.’

³⁴² Goscelin, *Life of Wulfhild*, prologue, in Colker, ‘Texts of Jocelyn of Canterbury’, p. 418: ‘Faithful friend who has grasped goodness; Maurice, live forever by the pen of Goscelin’.

³⁴³ *Ibid*: ‘Therefore this person befits your ancestral excellence O Bishop of London, so as the good money-changer or jeweller of Christ, not only to more probably to assume the truth, but also to defend it against the teeth of the fierce.’

³⁴⁴ M. Christy ‘Three More Essex Incised Slabs’, *Transactions of the Essex Archaeological Society* 12 (1913), pp. 315-322, at pp. 316-18.

³⁴⁵ Loftus and Chettle, *A History of Barking Abbey*.

³⁴⁶ C. Hart, ‘An Early Charter of Adam of Cockfield, 1100-1118’, *English Historical Review*, vol. 72, no. 284 (July, 1957), pp. 466-469, at p. 467. Though it should be noted that Goscelin’s translation account specifically states that Maurice was not present.

There is therefore a very unclear picture of the relationship between Ælfgifu and Maurice, and more generally, Barking Abbey and the bishopric of London. While Goscelin's translation account appears to condemn Maurice's attempted obstruction of the translation of the Barking saints, two of the saints' Lives which accompany the translation account seem to celebrate the same bishop, and, furthermore, to call on him to promote the sanctity of Barking's abbess saints. Similarly, while the letter from Lanfranc could be perceived as an indication of Maurice's neglect of the Barking community, the engraved stone appears to record a close link between Maurice and Barking's abbess. Before we can attempt to extract meaning from these sources and the hagiographical texts produced for Barking during the bishopric of Maurice, it is first necessary to explore, as far as possible, the relationship between Barking and the see of London, and in particular during the episcopate of Bishop Maurice.

The link between Barking and the bishopric of London extended back to its foundation in the seventh century. From Bede's *Ecclesiastical History* we learn that Barking was founded as a monastic house by Eorcenwald, the brother of Barking's first abbess, Æthelburg.

Eorcenwald founded a male monastery at Chertsey at the same time, over which he himself was abbot. In the same entry in the *Ecclesiastical History*, that is, for the year 664, Bede states that Eorcenwald then became the bishop of the East Saxons, situated in London.³⁴⁷

Barking is therefore likely to have come under the auspices of the bishop of London from its inception. It was situated within the diocese of London,³⁴⁸ and enjoyed (or suffered from) close geographical proximity with the seat of the London bishopric, at St. Paul's.³⁴⁹

From the mid-eleventh century the bishopric of London was held almost continuously by a series of foreign ecclesiastics. The Norman Robert of Jumièges held the position from 1044 until 1051, at which point he was promoted to the Archbishopric of Canterbury by Edward the Confessor.³⁵⁰ Edward then appointed Spearhafoc, an English monk of Bury St Edmund's

³⁴⁷ Bede, *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, ed. Colgrave and Mynors, bk. 4, ch. 6, pp. 355-357.

³⁴⁸ D. Hill, *An Atlas of Anglo-Saxon England* (Toronto, 1981), pp. 147-148.

³⁴⁹ While it is not clear that St. Paul's was the principal seat of the bishop of the East Saxons (a reference in Stephanus's *Life of Wilfrid* to Archbishop Theodore summoning Eorcenwald and Wilfrid to London might suggest that Eorcenwald was based elsewhere during his pontificate, perhaps at his monastic foundation at Chertsey), we can be sure that this became the principal, and permanent, episcopal seat of the diocese from the time of Eorcenwald's successor Wealdhere. See S. E. Kelly, ed., *Charters of St Paul's London* (Oxford, 2004), p.11. From modern-day St. Paul's cathedral to the former site of Barking Abbey (now Abbey Retail Park!) is a distance of just under ten miles.

³⁵⁰ W. Stubbs, *Episcopal Succession in England* (Oxford, 1858), p.20; H. E. J. Cowdrey, 'Robert of Jumièges (d. 1052/1055)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edn., Oxford University Press, Sept 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/23717>, accessed 19 June 2010].

and abbot of Abingdon from c. 1051, to the bishopric of London. Kelly argues that Spearhafoc's appointment may have been dictated by the political necessity of promoting an Englishman instead of a Norman. If so, Edward's plan was not successful, as Robert of Jumièges refused to consecrate him and he was ultimately expelled from the see and accused of despoiling the bishopric.³⁵¹ Spearhafoc was replaced in 1051 by Bishop William,³⁵² a Norman clerk of Edward the Confessor's. His appointment seems to have been influenced by Robert of Jumièges.³⁵³ Unlike at many other English episcopal sees, William was not replaced following the Norman Conquest. He remained in place until his death in 1075, and seems to have won the support of William the Conqueror, at least in terms of his efforts to increase the estates of St. Paul's.³⁵⁴ William was succeeded by Hugh d'Orevalle, about whom very little is known, apart from the fact that he was consecrated in 1075, and died in the January of 1085.³⁵⁵ Maurice, another Norman incumbent, was appointed as bishop of London at Christmas 1085,³⁵⁶ having previously served William I as a royal chaplain and chancellor.³⁵⁷

Maurice is remembered for his ambitious building programme at St Paul's which began after a fire in 1087 destroyed the Anglo-Saxon church there.³⁵⁸ The *Miracula S Erkenwaldi*, written between 1140 and 1145 by a canon of St Paul's,³⁵⁹ states that three days after the fire, Maurice and bishop Walkelin of Winchester examined the ruined church and discovered the tomb of the Bedan saint Eorcenwald to be undamaged by fire.³⁶⁰ Maurice's rebuilding works at St. Paul's which followed this discovery,³⁶¹ seem to have been undertaken alongside a

³⁵¹ Kelly, *Charters of St Paul's*, p. 122.

³⁵² Stubbs, *Episcopal Succession in England*, p. 20.

³⁵³ Kelly, *Charters of St Paul's*, p. 122.

³⁵⁴ Julia Barrow, 'William (d. 1075)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edn., Oxford University Press, Sept 2004 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/29458, accessed 19 June 2010]: 'As bishop of London, William succeeded in augmenting the church's estates after 1066, when William I allowed him to win back Layer, Southminster, and Warley in Essex and to buy Thorley in Hertfordshire. It is likely also that William was the bishop of London who purchased the numerous small manors in Essex which are listed under a separate heading in the Domesday returns (the *feudum* of the bishop of London as opposed to the *terra* or long-established lands of the bishop).'

³⁵⁵ Stubbs, *Episcopal Succession in England*, p. 22.

³⁵⁶ ASC (E) 1085; Stubbs, *Episcopal Succession in England*, p. 23, though Stubbs dates Maurice's consecration at April 5, 1086.

³⁵⁷ Falko Neinger, 'Maurice (d. 1107)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edn., Oxford University Press, Sept 2004 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/18381, accessed 19 June 2010].

³⁵⁸ ASC (E) 1087.

³⁵⁹ G. Whately ed. and trans., *The Saint of London: the life and miracles of saint Erkenwald* (London, 1989), p. 25.

³⁶⁰ *Miracula S Erkenwaldi*, in Whately ed., *The Saint of London*, p. 127.

³⁶¹ *Ibid*, p. 129.

renewed promotion of Eorcenwald's cult, which included the composition of a *Vita*.³⁶² The cult of Eorcenwald had remained an important one for St Paul's throughout the Anglo-Saxon period: Bede writes of miracles associated with Eorcenwald,³⁶³ he is listed under St Paul's in a pre-Conquest list of saints' resting places;³⁶⁴ and his feast day appears in various pre-Conquest church calendars.³⁶⁵ Gordon Whately has suggested that Eorcenwald's cult was both revived and recast during the bishopric of Maurice, and that it formed part of the Norman take-over of the cathedral chapter of St Paul's.³⁶⁶ While the new cathedral was far from finished by the end of Maurice's episcopate, the bishop had at least overseen the installation of the relics of Eorcenwald in the newly-built crypt of the church.³⁶⁷ This may have involved a translation ceremony, however this is not explicitly mentioned in the *Miracula*. Maurice was therefore at the forefront of both a campaign of church rebuilding, and the promotion of a Bedan saint, at his new English institution. This would align with the evidence discussed earlier of Norman churchmen promoting English saints. It is particularly interesting that Maurice's promotion of St Eorcenwald, who happened to be closely linked to Barking and its saints, occurred at precisely the same time that Ælfgifu was engaged in rebuilding and promoting the cult of Eorcenwald's sister, Æthelburg, at Barking Abbey.

Maurice was also involved in the promotion of another Anglo-Saxon saint in the late eleventh century – that of St Osyth at Chich. St Osyth's stood in an outlying area of the London diocese, more than 70 miles from St. Paul's, and approximately 60 miles away from Barking Abbey. St Osyth herself was an early Anglo-Saxon saint, apparently the daughter of the Mercian chieftain Frithwald, the wife of Sighere, King of the East Saxons, and the founder of a religious community at Chich, Essex. There is some evidence of a pre-Conquest cult of St Osyth in a list of saints' resting places which was copied into the *Liber Vitae Hyde Abbey* in c.1031; this records the resting place of her relics at St Peter's minster in Chich.³⁶⁸ There is

³⁶² Whately ed., *The Saint of London*, p. 13. Whately dates the composition of the *Vita* to 1087x1124. This date range is based on his assumption that Goscelin, writing the *Life of Æthelburg* in 1087, and including information in Eorcenwald in this text, did not have access to the *Vita Erkenwaldi* which was produced after the Conquest – rather he was working from Bede and possibly, an earlier, less detailed version of the *Life*. William of Malmesbury's use of some of the information found in the post-Conquest *Vita Erkenwaldi* sets a final date of composition at 1124. Though not altogether reliable as a dating system (the composition of the *Vita Æthelburgae* is actually datable to 1087x1100), it may suggest that it was Maurice who commissioned the text (although he died in 1107).

³⁶³ Bede, *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, ed. Colgrave and Mynors, bk. 4, ch. 6, pp. 355-357.

³⁶⁴ D. Rollason, 'Lists of Saints' Resting Places in Anglo-Saxon England', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 7 (1978), pp. 61-93, at p. 90.

³⁶⁵ Kelly, *Charters of St Paul's*, p. 111.

³⁶⁶ Whately ed., *The Saint of London*, p. 59.

³⁶⁷ *Miracula S Erkenwaldi*, Whately ed., p. 129.

³⁶⁸ Foot, *Veiled Women II*, p. 159.

some suggestion, though no surviving evidence, that the cult originated in a female monastic house at Chich.³⁶⁹ By 1066 however, no such community existed, certainly Domesday Book makes no reference to a church or monastery at Chich. Domesday does however highlight a connection between the bishopric of London and Chich, as a seven-hide estate there was held by the bishop of London in 1066.³⁷⁰ This connection can be traced back to the first half of the tenth century, when an estate at St Osyth was bequeathed to St Paul's by Theodred, bishop of London (909x926-951x953).³⁷¹ From the various Lives of St Osyth produced in the twelfth century, it seems that the cult was promoted with renewed vigour following the Norman Conquest. In 1076, a translation of Osyth's relics took place under Bishop Hugh d'Orevalle. A second translation, which took place c. 1086, and so less than a decade after the first, was undertaken personally by Bishop Maurice.³⁷²

It could not be argued, given the evidence laid out above, that Maurice was in any way opposed to promoting the cults of Anglo-Saxon saints. And yet the translation accounts which describe the transferral of the Barking saints to Ælfgifu's new church at Barking suggest he was anything but supportive of the Barking cults. It appears then that the hostilities evident in the Barking translation accounts were more specific to the relations of Maurice and Ælfgifu or Maurice and Barking. Could it suggest a context of competition between St Paul's/St Osyth's and Barking? Certainly the institutions were close enough to each other to feel threatened by either's promotion of successful saints' cults and the attention from patrons and pilgrims which that would draw. It is also possible, as suggested by Mitchell,³⁷³ and as has been assumed by various scholars of the early Anglo-Norman period,³⁷⁴ that ethnic prejudices between Norman bishop and English abbess affected Maurice's decision not to support the Barking cults. But a look at the situations at St Paul's and at St Osyth's themselves seems to suggest a more complex context and explanation for Barking's actions after the Conquest.

³⁶⁹ *Ibid.* The only reference to a female community at Chich was found in the now lost twelfth-century Life of St Osyth by William de Vere, a member of the priory of Augustinian canons founded in c. 1120.

³⁷⁰ *LDB*, f. 11.

³⁷¹ Whitelock, *Anglo-Saxon Wills*, no. 1, p. 3. The will is datable to 942x951.

³⁷² Jane Zatta, 'Vie Sainte Osith: Hagiography and Politics in Anglo-Norman England', *Papers on Language and Literature*, 41 (2005), pp. 367-393, at p. 367.

³⁷³ Mitchell, 'Patronage and Politics at Barking Abbey', p. 212.

³⁷⁴ Knowles, *The Monastic Order in England*, p. 118; Blake, ed., *Liber Eliensis*, p. xlix; Southern, *Saint Anselm and His Biographer*, p. 249; Barlow, *The English Church 1066-1154*, p. 191; Rollason, *The Mildrith Legend*, p. 59.

During his pontificate as the bishop of London, Maurice reorganised the chapter of St Paul's and its property into thirty separate prebends, and oversaw the first appointment of a dean.³⁷⁵ This re-organisation seems to have led to difficulties between the bishop and the community at St Paul's. In a document which dates from the later part of Maurice's pontificate (1091-1107), the bishop confirmed for the dean, archdeacon, and canons of St Paul's all of the customs, statutes, elections, and rights over their prebends and manors, as they had held them at the start of his pontificate. He also expressed repentance for the hurt he had caused the chapter during his time there.³⁷⁶ Part of the dispute between the bishop and the chapter was about the latter's right to control elections, both within the chapter and to the prebends.³⁷⁷ The canons' claim to the right to control recruitment of new members appears to be confirmed by a clause in one of the charters from King Edward the Confessor to St Paul's. Kelly however, has identified this charter as a probable forgery of the period of Maurice's episcopate.³⁷⁸

Another document from St Paul's which has similarly been identified as a forgery of this period,³⁷⁹ is a privilege in the name of Pope Agatho addressed to Eorcenwald 'bishop of St Paul's'. This forbids the seizure of any of the community's possessions by Eorcenwald, and grants the right of election of a new bishop to the community of St Paul's itself.³⁸⁰ Kelly has argued that the St Paul's privilege is based on a Chertsey privilege, also from Pope Agatho, to Eorcenwald 'abbot of Chertsey'.³⁸¹ The Chertsey privilege, which seems to be fundamentally authentic,³⁸² states that the election of a new abbot should be the sole responsibility of the Chertsey community; it also includes a provision that the monks of Chertsey were to have the controlling decision over the election of new priests or deacons. The Chertsey privilege also prohibits the involvement of any ecclesiastic in the monastery's affairs, and specifically

³⁷⁵ Kelly, *Charters of St Paul's*, pp. 46, 48.

³⁷⁶ M. Gibbs ed., *Early Charters of the Cathedral Church of St Paul's London* (London, 1939), no.59, pp. 42-3

³⁷⁷ S. Kelly, *Charters of St Paul's*, p. 48.

³⁷⁸ S 1104: '...and I forbid them to take into their minster any more priests than their estates can bear and they themselves wish...'; Kelly, *Charters of St Paul's*, p. 48 & pp. 206-210, where she lays out arguments against the authenticity of the charter.

³⁷⁹ *Ibid*, p. 76.

³⁸⁰ 'Privilege of Agatho to the Church of St Paul, London' in A.W. Haddan and W. Stubbs eds., *Councils and Ecclesiastical Documents Relating to Great Britain and Ireland. Concilia Magnae Britanniae et Hiberniae, a Synodo Verolamiensi A.D. CCCXLVI ad Londinensem A.D. CII CCXVII* (1869-1878). The source is noted by Haddan and Stubbs to be: 'Corrupt and spurious – it will easily be seen that this document is an awkward and corrupt fabrication, founded on the language of [the Chertsey privilege]'.

³⁸¹ S. Kelly, *Charters of St Paul's*, pp. 75-76.

³⁸² *Ibid*, pp. 76, n. 47; however, Whitelock claims in her *EHD* that the Chertsey privilege is also a forgery, though of an earlier date. Haddan and Stubbs in their *Councils and ecclesiastical documents* also believe that the Chertsey privilege is a forgery 'probably of the time of Edgar'.

forbids any bishop to seize any of the possessions of the monastery.³⁸³ While the St Paul's privilege does not include all of the provisions of its model, it is likely that in compiling the document, the community of St Paul's were attempting to gain the same papally-approved immunity from episcopal interference offered in Chertsey's privilege. Furthermore, Kelly claims that it was most probably forged in response to Maurice's establishment of the prebendal system at St Paul's.³⁸⁴

Maurice seems to have engaged in a similar programme of reorganisation at Chich. At some point in the late eleventh century, the bishop split up the property of the small college of priests at St Osyth's into prebends.³⁸⁵ Jane Zatta associates the production of the Life of St Osyth in the twelfth century with a wider movement of writing saints' Lives in order to protect the autonomy of monastic houses. In particular, she believes that episcopal encroachment of St Osyth's rights and lands which began in the later eleventh century under Bishop Maurice and continued through the twelfth century, provided the impetus for the creation of a Life of the saint, and that its purpose was to stress the independence of the house and its lands from the authority of the see of London.³⁸⁶

The Barking cycle may also fit into this context of hagiographical writing. As David Rollason has pointed out, the compilation of hagiographical records was often an important part of the preservation and recovery of a community's lands and privileges. Moreover, the production of such hagiographies was often linked to the practice of adapting and fabricating charters.³⁸⁷ It is particularly interesting therefore, that one of the charters preserved by Barking Abbey includes a provision similar to that found in the Chertsey and St Paul's privileges. The pancarta of Eorcenwald, while purporting to date from the late seventh century, is now generally believed to include spurious material, and to have possibly been altered in the tenth or eleventh century.³⁸⁸ The interesting clause within it for the purpose of this argument is one which claims specific exemption from episcopal interference in the affairs of the nunnery, including that of abbatial election:

'I [Eorcenwald] grant that no presul of any rank, or whoever shall succeed me, shall exercise any power in that monastery, nor may he presume to do any perturbing through the power of

³⁸³ 'Privilege of Agatho to the Monastery of Chertsey' ed. Haddan and Stubbs.

³⁸⁴ Kelly, *Charters of St Paul's*, p. 76.

³⁸⁵ Zatta, 'Vie Sainte Osith', citing Bethell, 'Richard of Blemis and the foundation of St Osyth's', *Transactions of the Essex Archaeological society* II, 3 (1970).

³⁸⁶ Zatta, 'Vie Sainte Osith', pp. 2-3.

³⁸⁷ Rollason, *Saints and Relics*, pp. 197, 207.

³⁸⁸ S 1246.

*his right, against the decrees of the canons, rather he should do only those things in the aforesaid monastery which pertain to the utility of souls, the ordination of priests, or the consecrations of the handmaids of God. Truly that same holy congregation which shows praises to God there on the account of the love of God, on the death of the abbess, from its own self, for itself, may elect another for the love of God.*³⁸⁹

While this clause would have benefitted the nunnery at any time in its history, it is certainly plausible that this was added in the context of increasing episcopal interference, or, at least, in the context of a perception of increasingly aggressive episcopal activity on Maurice's part, at monastic communities, as seems evident at St Paul's and St Osyth's. It may be that this was Barking's response to a fear of threat as much as to actual interference, a practice highlighted in general by Paul Hayward. The re-invigorated cult of St Eorcenwald at St Paul's may also have looked like such a threat, and the two combined may have been the catalyst for the renewed promotion of saints at Barking abbey during the episcopate of Maurice at London.

It seems likely then, that Barking Abbey was indeed under some pressure from the new Norman episcopacy in London. It is certainly possible therefore, that the Barking cycle, or at least the translation accounts which form part of it, were conceived in reaction, even resistance, to mounting pressures from the London bishopric. Ultimately, however, it seems that the community at Barking were potentially affected by a number of factors, only one of which was episcopal encroachment. The need for documentation of the nunnery's saints, the requirement for protection of both the community's wealth and autonomy, and the necessity of promotion to gain financial and political backing, all seem to have played a part in the production of the Barking cycle. While these factors were of the type affecting monastic houses and promoters of saints' cults in much of the medieval West, it is clear that their effect upon such houses, and indeed upon the texts produced by those houses, was intensified by the upheavals of 1066 and the subsequent integration of Norman and English societies and cultures. The following chapter will explore the texts of the Barking cycle in an effort to provide both a more detailed interpretation of the uses of hagiography by the community of

³⁸⁹ S 1246: 'Ego Ercnuualdus episcopus prouinciae East Saexanorum . seruorum Dei seruus . dilectissimis in Christo sororibus in monasterio quod appellatur Berecingas habitantibus . quod Deo auxiliante construxi . concedo ut tam uos quam posteri uestri in perpetuum . ut constructum est . ita possideatis . et ne quis presul cuiuslibet sit ordinis . uel qui in locum meum successerit . ullam in eodem monasterio exercent potestatem . nec sui iuris ditone contra canonum decreta inquietudines aliquas facere presumat . ea uero tantum faciat in predicto monasterio . quae ad utilitatem animarum pertinent . ordinationes sacerdotum . uel consecrationes ancillarum Dei . Ipsa uero sancta congregatio . qui propter Dei amorem ibidem Deo laudes exhibet . moriente abbatissa . ex seipsa sibi aliam eligat ad Dei timorem.'

Barking, and, a fuller picture of the nature and experiences of Barking abbey in the late eleventh century, and in the aftermath of the Norman Conquest.

Chapter Five

Reading the Barking Cycle

This chapter will examine the Barking texts in light of the late-eleventh century contexts discussed in the preceding section, and will seek to determine their relationship to the political and social milieu in which they were produced. The use of hagiographical material in this way has been practised by historians of various periods and localities, and has often led to greater understanding of both the historical periods and circumstances in which hagiographies were produced as well as the uses of hagiography itself. Some of the key hagiological works on Anglo-Saxon saints have provided insight into English monastic communities,³⁹⁰ the various uses of saints' cults and hagiographies,³⁹¹ and the types and functions of different groups of saints.³⁹² This reading of the Barking Cycle aims to present similar insight into the religious house of Barking and its promotion of three cults of female saints through the production of hagiographical texts.

The Barking Cycle is made up of six distinct, but complementary, hagiographic texts. These are: *The Life and Miracles of St Æthelburg*; *The Life of Miracles of St Wulfhild*; a shorter and longer version of *The Translation of SS Æthelburg, Hildelith, and Wulfhild*; *The Recital of a Vision*; and *The Lessons on St Hildelith*. This order represents that presented by Marvin Colker in his edition of the texts, which itself is based on that of the Trinity College Dublin manuscript.³⁹³ Colker has suggested that the Dublin manuscript may have belonged at one time to Barking Abbey, and so his ordering may align with that preferred, or read, by the Barking community itself.³⁹⁴ Here, however, the texts will be considered in what appears to be their three composite parts. Firstly, the translation account and the vision account which relates to the translation will be explored. These texts offer a view of the nunnery at the time

³⁹⁰ S. Keynes, 'Ely Abbey 672-1109' in P. Meadows and N. Ramsay eds., *A History of Ely Cathedral* (Suffolk, 2003), pp. 2-58; Love, *Goscelin of St Bertin*; Hollis, *Writing the Wilton Women*; Barker, Hinton and Hunt eds. *St Wulfsig and Sherborne*; A. Thacker, 'Saint-making and Relic Collecting by Oswald and his Communities' in N. Brooks and C. Cubitt, *St. Oswald of Worcester, Life and Influence* (London, 1996), pp. 244-268.

³⁹¹ Rollason, *Saints and Relics*; Love, *Three Eleventh-Century Anglo-Latin Saints Lives*; A. Thacker, 'Cults at Canterbury: relics and reform under Dunstan and his successors', in N. Ramsay, M. Sparks and T. Tatton-Brown, *St. Dunstan, His Life, Times and Cult* (Woodbridge, 1992), pp. 221-246.

³⁹² Ridyard, *Royal Saints of Anglo-Saxon England*; P. Pulsiano, 'Blessed Bodies: The Vitae of Anglo-Saxon Female Saints', *Parergon* 16:2 (1999), pp. 1-42.

³⁹³ Colker, 'Texts of Jocelyn of Canterbury', pp. 392-3. With the exception of *The Lessons on St Hildelith*, which is found only in the Cardiff codex along with *The Life of St Æthelburg*.

³⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 393. Though Colker does point out that there is no press-mark or ex-libris inscription to indicate this.

that the Barking Cycle was produced as they record the translation which occurred during the abbacy of Ælfgifu (c. 1051- c. 1114x1122).³⁹⁵ Following this, the Lives or lessons of the Bedan saints Æthelburg and Hildelith will be considered. The importance of St Æthelburg to the community at Barking is evident from even a cursory reading of the Barking Cycle; therefore it seems important to examine her Life before moving on to consider those of the other abbess saints of Barking. Hildelith's lessons are included in this section due to the close relationship between her and Æthelburg, and the sources on the two saints. Finally, the Life and translation of the tenth-century saint Wulfhild will be examined.

As we have seen, the Barking texts were written somewhere between 1086 and 1100, within the wider context of English reactions to the Norman Conquest and takeover of political, religious and social structures. The impetus for their production seems to have been the translation of the three female saints of Barking, which took place at some point in the same period.³⁹⁶ A reading of these texts may therefore reveal the experiences and attitudes of the monastic community of Barking, and their responses to, this period of apparent uncertainty, disruption and reorganisation.

³⁹⁵ Ælfgifu must have been dead by 1122 at the latest, as the next abbess recorded for Barking is Agneti, who ascendancy is recorded as occurring between 1114 and 1122 in a charter of Henry I [*Calendar of the Charter Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office Prepared Under the Superintendence of the Deputy Keeper of the Records*, vol. 5: *15 Edward II-5 Henry V A.D. 1341-1417* (London, 1903-1927), pp. 283-4].

³⁹⁶ It is difficult to determine the exact date of the translation, though a reading of the translation accounts reveals that it occurred over a period of seven years. The original request to Bishop Maurice to remove the saints from their ancient resting places (which must have occurred after Christmas day 1085, the date of Maurice's election) was followed by a period of 7 years in which they were held in a temporary location before their translation to the newly built church at Barking (which must then have occurred after 1094). This may explain why the fourteenth-century calendar and sanctorale of Barking abbey commemorated the translations of Æthelburg, Hildelith and Wulfhild on both March 7 and September 23: J. B. L. Tolhurst, ed., *The Ordinale and Customary of the Benedictine Nuns of Barking Abbey* (London, 1926-1928), pp. 3, 9. Also, note that Wulfhild has her own translation commemorated on 2 September – to be discussed further in chapters below.

PART ONE: The Translation and Vision Accounts

The Translation of SS Æthelburg, Hildelith and Wulfhild

The account of the translation of the three principal saints of Barking exists in two versions of a longer and shorter nature. As the shorter text merely represents a contracted version of the longer, and does not include any new material, nor deviations from the longer version, it is likely to have been created with a liturgical function in mind, that is, to have been used as lessons for the feast of the saint. This reading of the translation account will therefore consider the longer and more detailed version.

Goscelin states that his account of the translation was commissioned by the abbess and nuns of Barking.³⁹⁷ Indeed, the abbess Ælfgifu is named as the ‘architect of the translation’.³⁹⁸

Goscelin dedicates a full chapter to Ælfgifu, a child oblate of the nunnery, who secured the position of abbess at the age of 15, and held it until the time of Goscelin’s writing, at which point she was 50 years old. Here Goscelin may be drawing attention to Ælfgifu’s longevity as abbess and inherent understanding of the nunnery and its traditions. He further emphasises her legitimacy through reference to both her royal and episcopal connections, in descriptions of her appointment as abbess by King Edward the Confessor, and her consecration by Bishop William of London.³⁹⁹

The reasons for the translation of the three Barking saints are laid out very clearly at the beginning of the account. Goscelin describes the structural re-organisation of Barking which was undertaken by Ælfgifu in the period immediately prior to the translation, and which included the removal of houses, the extension of monastic buildings, the repairing of claustral walls and roofs, and the construction of a new church. In a study of female sanctity, Jane Tibbets-Schulenburg highlighted the frequent occurrence of building campaigns in vitae of Anglo-Saxon abbess saints. Their roles as instigators and overseers of the enlargement of monastic buildings seem to have formed part of their recognition as saints.⁴⁰⁰ While Ælfgifu is not herself promoted as a saint in the Barking texts, it may be that Goscelin was here

³⁹⁷ Goscelin, *Translation of SS Æthelburg, Hildelith & Wulfhild* (longer version), ch. 2, in Colker, ‘Texts of Jocelyn of Canterbury’, pp. 401-402. This is the only text of the Barking Cycle that explicitly names the abbess and community as the commissioners of the text.

³⁹⁸ *Ibid* ‘...huius translationis effectrix...’.

³⁹⁹ *Ibid*, ch. 3, pp. 402-404.

⁴⁰⁰ Tibbets-Schulenburg, ‘Female Sanctity and Public and Private Roles’, pp. 110-11.

highlighting her saintly nature through association with other saintly figures, for example St Seaxburg at Ely, who was also associated with building activity.⁴⁰¹

Goscelin records that Ælfgifu's programme of building and renovation could not be completed without the removal of the original church which housed the relics of Barking's saints.⁴⁰² The church, founded by Æthelburg and her brother Eorcenwald, represented their holy authority, and could not therefore be destroyed without reservation. Similarly, the removal of the relics of Barking's early saints from their resting places apparently caused some consternation within the Barking community. Goscelin claims that Ælfgifu and the nuns therefore sought the permission of their provincial bishop Maurice of London and 'all the other religious fathers' to carry out the construction works and translation. It is at this point that Goscelin introduces the theme of external resistance to the translation in the refusal of Maurice and the other ecclesiastics to undertake the translation of 'such holy bodies from their ancient resting place.'⁴⁰³ In fact, Goscelin has the bishop and his comrades declare themselves 'unworthy' to carry out such a task. He then describes a conversation between the nuns of Barking in which the suggestion is put forward that perhaps the Barking saints would prefer to be moved 'by their own servants'. One of the members suggests that while 'putting their faith in God', they should make their own attempts to move the saints 'with their protection'. Clearly, Goscelin, and indeed the community itself, were here recording their subsequent appeal to a higher authority – that of God, and the Barking saints themselves. Indeed, the conversation between the nuns is itself described as 'divine oracle',⁴⁰⁴ and serves perhaps to explain their subsequent disregard for the bishop of London's decision not to support the translation at Barking. If we are to accept Goscelin's rendering of these events, then it is not difficult to imagine that Ælfgifu's decision to proceed with the translation may have resulted in tensions between herself and Maurice, and, perhaps more generally, between Barking Abbey and the bishopric of London. Of course, such tensions may already have existed, and may help to explain Maurice's refusal to undertake the translation at Barking. Reading the translation account with these possibilities in mind seems to reveal not only a certain defensiveness, but also a concern to legitimise both the translation, and Ælfgifu herself, through links with important figures and signs of divine approval.

⁴⁰¹ *Life of Seaxburh*, ch. 5 & ch. 10 in Love, ed. *Goscelin of Saint-Bertin*, pp. 146-7, 156-7.

⁴⁰² Goscelin, *Translation of SS Æthelburg, Hildelith & Wulfhild* (longer version), ch.3, in Colker, 'Texts of Jocelyn of Canterbury', pp.437-438.

⁴⁰³ *Ibid*, ch. 4, pp.438-439: '...ab antique sua pausa tam sacra mouere corpora ...'.

⁴⁰⁴ *Ibid*: '... dictum quasi ex diuino oraculo prolatum.'

As mentioned above, Goscelin reports that abbess Ælfgifu's consecration was undertaken by Bishop William of London. In fact, Goscelin's account of her consecration makes a point of emphasising the importance of this bishop's involvement in the act. Goscelin reports that 'in the absence of the bishop of London', Ælfgifu's consecration as abbess of Barking had been delegated to 'another'. Bishop William's last minute appearance to undertake the consecration is described in miraculous fashion, and is claimed 'to have happened by God's will.'⁴⁰⁵ The reference to the absence of the bishop of London probably refers to the period just after the deposition of the English bishop of London Spearhafoc in 1051. Spearhafoc was appointed to the bishopric of London by King Edward the Confessor, but was not accepted by the Norman archbishop of Canterbury, Robert of Jumièges, and was ultimately expelled from the see.⁴⁰⁶ William 'the Norman', a clerk of Edward the Confessor's, was elected in his place, also in 1051, seemingly with the support of Robert of Jumieges. This is perhaps an example of the advance of non-English, and especially Norman clerics, from the 1040s onwards,⁴⁰⁷ and it is plausible that Goscelin knowingly highlighted the association of Ælfgifu and Barking with these early Norman churchmen in England. Indeed, the alignment of Ælfgifu and the nunnery with the current Bishop of London's predecessor but one, would have served to bolster their legitimacy with the current episcopacy by highlighting the tradition of support and co-operation between the two.⁴⁰⁸

Ælfgifu is also linked in this passage to Bishop Germanus of Auxerre, upon whose feast day she was apparently consecrated.⁴⁰⁹ St Germanus was widely celebrated in England; his suppression of the Pelagian heresy in Britain in the fifth century and leading role in the Britons 'Alleluia' victory over the invading Picts and Saxons was commended by Bede in his

⁴⁰⁵ *Ibid*, ch.3, pp.437-438: 'Dum absente suo Lundoniae presule alii delegaretur consecranda, miro fauore uenit in ianuam qui eam consecrauit ipse <episcopus> dioceseos Willelmus, quod Dei nutu ex insperato accidisse probatum est omnibus.'

⁴⁰⁶ *ASC* (E) 1048, *recte* 1051; John Blair, 'Spearhafoc (fl. 1047-1051)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/49416>, accessed 28 Jan 2011].

⁴⁰⁷ P. Stafford, *Unification and Conquest: A political and social history of England in the tenth and eleventh centuries* (London, 1989), p. 89. Many of the Normans who accompanied Edward on his return to England in 1041 were churchmen. His appointments to ecclesiastical positions during the 1040s also included Normans, though along with both English and Lotharingian incumbents.

⁴⁰⁸ From this passage, we can date Ælfgifu's consecration to the year 1051, which has bearing on the date of Goscelin's composition of the Barking texts. As Goscelin claims that Ælfgifu was 50 years old at the time of his writing, this would place the texts' composition in the year 1086. While this is certainly a plausible date for production of the texts, we must remain aware of the possibility that Goscelin had not accurately recorded Ælfgifu's ages at consecration or the time of composition.

⁴⁰⁹ Germanus's feast day is on 31 July; his translation is celebrated on 1 October: *The Oxford Dictionary of Saints*. David Hugh Farmer. Oxford University Press 2003. Oxford Reference Online. Oxford University Press. University of Liverpool. 5 November 2010 <<http://www.oxfordreference.com/views/ENTRY.html?subview=Main&entry=t100.e715>>

Ecclesiastical History.⁴¹⁰ Goscelin's placing of Ælfgifu's consecration on this day therefore associates her with a powerful episcopal figure of Bedan fame. The *Life of Germanus* by Constantius casts him not only as a monastic exemplar, but also as an effective role model for bishops,⁴¹¹ which may be significant due to the alignment of Germanus with Ælfgifu in the context of problems with securing the support of the bishop of London at the time of Ælfgifu's consecration.

Goscelin also states that in the process of opening the tombs of the Barking saints, Ælfgifu discovered the 'lost' relics of Germanus.⁴¹² Goscelin uses the discovery of his relics by Ælfgifu to claim that 'the blessing of this fatherly patron had smiled on this devoted custodian [Ælfgifu]'.⁴¹³ It seems to me highly significant that Ælfgifu is twice linked to St Germanus, and especially in the context of her acting against the advice of the bishop of London in opening the tombs of the Barking saints. In the absence of support from her diocesan bishop, Goscelin has Ælfgifu secure that of the model bishop Germanus. There may also be some significance in this English community's use of the figure of Germanus in a post-Norman Conquest context due to his renown as a bishop who supported the British against the invasions of the Saxons. In other words, Germanus may have been seen as a protector saint in terms of foreign invasion of Britain. Overall, the inclusion of St Germanus in the translation account serves to legitimise Ælfgifu's decision to translate the Barking saints, and especially since, according to Goscelin, Maurice had effectively forbidden it. The use of such an esteemed episcopal figure may in fact have been designed to negate Maurice's authority. Finally, by claiming the support of a saint celebrated for his defence of the original inhabitants of Britain, Goscelin and the Barking community were, just possibly, sending a message specifically to a Norman audience.

⁴¹⁰ Bede, *HE*, bk. I, ch. 17-21, ed. Colgrave and Mynors, pp. 55-67. Bede was using Constantius's *Life of Germanus* [J.M. Wallace-Hadrill, *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People: a historical commentary* (Oxford, 1993), p. 26].

⁴¹¹ Germanus promoted monasticism at Auxerre and founded a community of monks there. His previous career as a barrister and military commander gave him skill in diplomacy which arguably contributed towards his successful relations with other bishops: Jill Harries, 'Germanus [St Germanus] (d. c.437/48)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn., Jan 2007 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/10568>, accessed 5 Nov 2010].

⁴¹² In fact, there appears to be no evidence for Germanus's relics having been lost. Constantius, in his *Life of Germanus*, claims that the saint died in Ravenna and that his relics were transferred in the fifth century to Auxerre. Constantius does make the point however that his relics were divided between 'the empire and the church' (*Life of Germanus*, ch. xliii).

⁴¹³ Goscelin, *Translation of SS Æthelburg, Hildelith & Wulfhild* (longer version), ch. 3, in Colker, 'Texts of Jocelyn of Canterbury', pp. 437-438: '.. ut huic deuotae custodi tam festiui patris arrisise benedictionem asseras.'

The nuns' decision to move the Barking saints themselves also appears to have caused internal tension, something which emerges from Goscelin's recounting of a miraculous visitation from Æthelburg herself. Appearing to the abbess Ælfgifu on the night after the community's conversation about Maurice's decision, Æthelburg states that 'Today the *procuratrix* [prioress] of the church was very upset, as if anxious and uncertain about the consent to our translation.'⁴¹⁴ Æthelburg assures Ælfgifu that it is indeed her, and her saintly companions' wish, to have the old church destroyed and a new one built in its place, and for them to be moved from the old to the new church. Furthermore, Æthelburg instructs the abbess to inform the prioress of their preference.⁴¹⁵ This vision neatly answers any concerns within the community, and responds even more specifically to resistance on the part of the prioress. This is especially interesting if we recall the letter written by Lanfranc between 1086 and 1089, and therefore at roughly the same time as the production of these texts, in which Bishop Maurice of London is instructed to intervene in a dispute between the abbess and prioress of Barking.⁴¹⁶ The vision of Æthelburg, and her unambiguous statement about the preference of the Barking saints to have the translation and building works take place, also provides divine authority for the destruction of the ancient church at Barking, and serves to legitimise Ælfgifu's decision to go ahead with the translation without episcopal approval.

Maurice's resistance is also apparent in Goscelin's description of the translation itself. Goscelin tells us that the translation of the saints from the old church was presided over by the archdeacon of London, who came in place of Maurice, bishop of London, 'he himself being tied up elsewhere'. It is tempting, in light of Maurice's earlier refusal to assist with the translation, to view this as a deliberate slight on his part.⁴¹⁷ Emily Mitchell has argued that

⁴¹⁴ *Ibid.*, ch. 5, p. 440: "hodie turbata est procuratrix aecclesiae sicuti anxia et incerta de nostrae translationis uoluntate".

⁴¹⁵ *Ibid.*: "Tu uero absque ulla ambiguitate ex nostra legatione dic illi quia prorsus uolumus hinc efferri et ueteri monasterio destructo nouum suo spatio produci nosque in eo ubi sedes parata fuerit ultro reponi."

⁴¹⁶ Clover and Gibson ed. and trans., *The Letters of Lanfranc*, no.59, p.175; also, see previous chapter.

⁴¹⁷ Goscelin, *Translation of SS Æthelburg, Hildelith & Wulfhild* (longer version), ch.9, in Colker, 'Texts of Jocelyn of Canterbury', pp. 444-445: 'Venit autem uenerabilis archidiaconus Lundoniae in uice episcopi ipso alias prepedito.' There are echoes of Baudonivia's *Life of St Radegund* here. Baudonivia describes how Radegund was initially prevented from obtaining a relic of the True Cross by the (apparently deliberate) absence of Bishop Maroveus. It was only with the intervention of the king, and the aid of Bishop Eufronius of Tours, that Radegund was finally able to install the relic in her nunnery at Poitiers. See *Life of Radegund*, ch. 16, in J. McNamara & G. Whately, eds. *Sainted Women of the Dark Ages* (London, 1992), pp. 97-8. Goscelin may have been drawing a parallel between the actions of Maurice and Maroveus, both of whom attempted to prevent the celebration of relics at nunneries within their diocese. It is also interesting to note that Venantius Fortunatus's *Life of St Radegund* links Radegund with St Germanus of Auxerre (see above section on Ælfgifu and Germanus). Venantius claims that Radegund emulated Germanus by secretly ordering a millstone so that she could grind her own flour. Rosalind Love, in her discussion of the Life of Seaxburh, suggests that Goscelin is highly likely to have been aware of Venantius's *Life of Radegund*, as this text seems to have been used in his composition of the portrait of Seaxburh: Love, ed. *Goscelin of Saint-Bertin*, p. ciii.

the archdeacon may in fact have been the English archdeacon Edward, and that he was perhaps considered a better communicator with the Barking community (whether by the nuns themselves or by Maurice, Mitchell does not make clear) due to his shared ethnicity.⁴¹⁸ It is certainly possible that ethnic tensions existed between the English community at Barking and the Norman bishop Maurice. When seen alongside Maurice's reported resistance to the translation of the Barking saints however, ethnic enmity does not seem to me to explain sufficiently the apparent tensions between Barking and Maurice. An element of competition between the nunnery and the cathedral, both of which seem to have been promoting saints in the post-Conquest period, may explain such tensions. It may also have been the case that the bishopric of London claimed proprietary or jurisdictional rights over Barking. It may be that we should read the earlier absence of an episcopal figure, at Ælfgifu's consecration, in this same light. The pointed references to absent bishops of London may be significant, though each is overcome in different ways: i.e., at the consecration 'divine intervention' brings the newly-appointed Bishop William to Ælfgifu's aid; and at the translation another churchman is sent in place of Maurice. It is also possible that the discovery of Bishop Germanus's relics, and Goscelin's reference to him as Ælfgifu's 'special father' at the point of her translation of the Barking saints, is relevant in the context of a lack of support from the London episcopacy.

The account of the translation of Æthelburg's tomb to the basilica of the saints, in fact a temporary resting place to suffice until the new church could be built, is filled with immovability tropes commonly found in medieval translation accounts. Despite the multitude that appeared to help with the translation, and the prayers of the nuns, the tomb could not easily be moved. Goscelin here compares Æthelburg to the 'most immovable martyr Lucy', who became miraculously immovable when her persecutors tried to carry her to a brothel to be violated.⁴¹⁹ It is only once Ælfgifu recalls the earlier vision of the workman who excavated Æthelburg's tomb, in which he was instructed to tell the abbess to ensure that Æthelburg's treasures⁴²⁰ were kept with her relics throughout the translation, and orders them brought to her, that the relics become moveable.⁴²¹ It was also necessary to have the other

⁴¹⁸ Mitchell, 'Patronage and Politics at Barking Abbey', p. 212.

⁴¹⁹ For Goscelin, Lucy here acts as a female martyr *apposite*. It is interesting to note that Lucy, an early Christian martyr of the Diocletian persecution, was praised by Aldhelm in his *De Virginitate*, which was dedicated to the abbess Hildelith and the nuns of Barking in the seventh century.

⁴²⁰ In the vision account (chapter 8), the treasure is called *aurea nummismata* [golden coins/vouchers/medals]. In the recollection scene described here, the treasure is called variously *aurea nummismata* and *pretiosa monilia* [precious necklaces]. These variants have led to my general use of the term 'treasure'.

⁴²¹ Goscelin, *Translation of SS Æthelburg, Hildelith & Wulfhild* (longer version), ch. 8, in Colker, 'Texts of Jocelyn of Canterbury', pp.443-444. Here Æthelburg also tells the workman to 'tell it from me to the abbess that

relics which had been discovered during the excavation of Æthelburg's tomb, replaced within it.⁴²² Goscelin records that these were believed to be the bones of Eadgyth and Tortgyth 'whom the holy Bede in his Ecclesiastical History tells us were assumed to the blessed Æthelburg'.⁴²³ The significance of these two stories is not altogether clear. It is likely that the latter functions as a reminder of the ancient, and Bedan, tradition of sanctity associated with Barking Abbey. Certainly it would not hurt to emphasise the volume of relics present at Barking. It is interesting to note that in Goscelin's later account of the translations at St Augustine's, a similar discovery of relics is reported. Goscelin records that in the translation of the Archbishops Lawrence and Mellitus, a third tomb was discovered which contained the relics of an unidentified *Deo notus* [one known to God].⁴²⁴ The point of the treasure story is more difficult to determine, but may constitute a cautionary tale for those attempting to separate Æthelburg from her 'treasure', perhaps in a literal sense, or as a representation of the nunnery's assets.

The translation accounts of the relics of Wulfhild and Hildelith which follows that of Æthelburg also include themes of immovability. In both cases, the saints were moved easily from their original resting places in the old church. It was only during the placing of their tombs in the basilica that difficulties occurred, and these are depicted as resulting from the saints' reluctance to be placed at a distance from the tomb of Æthelburg. Goscelin recounts that it was only through the intervention and coercion of abbess Ælfgifu that Hildelith and Wulfhild were eventually transferred to their new sites.⁴²⁵ The immovability of the Barking saints, and the 'miraculous' resolution of this, perhaps responds to criticism, real or imagined, of the translation of them. But it also specifically legitimises Ælfgifu and her decisions. Ælfgifu is depicted in each case as the only individual able to overcome the problem, which, bearing in mind that she was still abbess of Barking at the time when the texts were produced, may be a deliberate construction aimed at inspiring confidence in her leadership abilities.

when she takes me from here, she should remember to carefully take with me the golden coins [*aurea nummismata*] which lie close to me': '“Verum tamen impsi preceptrici id summopere indic ex me quatenus dum me hinc eduxerit, aurea nummismata quae mihi adiacent gratissima mecum efferre sollicitè meminerit.”'

⁴²² *Ibid.*, ch. 6, pp. 440-441 – where Goscelin claims that the 'corpses of two holy virgins' were found during the search for Æthelburg's remains: '... inueniuntur a uestigiis sanctae institutricis duarum sacrarum virginum busta earumque ossa instar lactis candentia.'

⁴²³ *Ibid.*, ch. 10, pp. 446-448: 'Has autem uirgines plerique diuinant fuisse Eadgitham et Tortgitham, quas sacer Beda in *Aecclesiatica Hystoria* sua ad beatam Aethelburgam iam Deo acceptam mirabilis reuelatione inuitatione ac fide assumptas memorat.' Both Eadgyth and Tortgyth are named in Bede's account of Barking Abbey under the abbacy of Æthelburg. Both are involved in vision accounts which relate to either their own death, or the death of Æthelburg: see Bede, *HE*, bk. 4, ch. 8-9, ed. Colgrave and Mynors, pp. 359-363.

⁴²⁴ Sharpe, 'Goscelin's St Augustine and St Mildreth', p. 508.

⁴²⁵ Goscelin, *Translation of SS Æthelburg, Hildelith & Wulfhild* (longer version), ch. 12, in Colker, 'Texts of Jocelyn of Canterbury', pp. 450-452.

The need to validate the translation of the Barking saints is in fact apparent throughout the translation account. For instance, in the scene in which the relics were dug up, difficulties in locating Æthelburg's remains leads to a crisis of faith on the part of the workman seeking them. The prayers of the nuns, however, result in the discovery of her relics and the restoration of the workman's faith in the exercise. The point is further emphasised in a later vision account, in which Æthelburg appears to the workman to assure him that she and the other Barking saints 'want a church to be built and ourselves to leave here'.⁴²⁶ The vision appears to compliment Ælfgifu's earlier conversation with Æthelburg in which the saint confirms her desire for the translation to take place, and therefore, the abbess and the nuns' decision to translate the Barking saints. It also offers an example of doubt overcome by divine sanction, and is perhaps directed at those who suffered from similar misgivings over the act. Indeed, it is likely that any doubts or objections to the initial decision to translate the Barking saints would have been fuelled by the delay between their removal from the old church and their translation seven years later to the new church. These features of the translation and vision accounts may therefore have been a response to internal fears about the translation and its effects upon the community and its reputation, although similar doubts may have been held by a wider audience.

It is made clear throughout the translation account that Æthelburg is the most important, and most powerful saint at Barking. Æthelburg appears to be the primary communicator with the Barking community. It is she who appears in a vision to the abbess Ælfgifu confirming that it was the saints' wish to be translated.⁴²⁷ The saint similarly appears in a vision experienced by one of the workmen effecting the translation.⁴²⁸ Æthelburg's tomb was the first to be opened and her relics the first to be moved, the account of which spans five chapters.⁴²⁹ The translation of Hildelith's and Wulfhild's relics is described in a single chapter for each saint.⁴³⁰ The account of the discovery of Æthelburg's relics also emphasises the difficulty in their location. Goscelin claims that Æthelburg's remains were buried much deeper than the other saints 'evidently because of frequent attacks of pagans'.⁴³¹ This has the effect of elevating the importance and desirability of her relics. Æthelburg's is also apparently the only tomb to contain valuable grave goods, that is, the 'golden coins' or 'necklaces', and the

⁴²⁶ *Ibid*, ch. 8, pp. 443-444: 'Unde nos edificandae aecclisae uelle nosh inc cedere iam dubitare nolle.'

⁴²⁷ *Ibid*, ch. 5, p. 440.

⁴²⁸ *Ibid*, Ch. 8, pp. 443-444.

⁴²⁹ *Ibid*, ch. 6-10, pp. 440-448.

⁴³⁰ *Ibid*, ch. 11 & 12, pp. 448-450 & 450-452.

⁴³¹ *Ibid*, ch. 6, pp. 440-441: 'Nimirum propter frequentem paganorum irruptionem ...'.

relics of two other Bedan saints of Barking. It may be that this greater emphasis on Æthelburg is simply due to her status as the first abbess of Barking, and her relationship to its founder, bishop Eorcenwald. However, it is also possible that Æthelburg's prominence in Goscelin's account is influenced by her status as a Bedan saint. We have seen that there was an increased interest in, and reverence of, the Bedan period and in particular, the saints of this period, in the tenth and eleventh centuries in England. Goscelin may have thought it prudent to emphasise the saint most associated with the early Anglo-Saxon period in a work produced in this context. For whatever reason, it is clear that Goscelin, and indeed the Barking community, considered Æthelburg the most important of the Barking saints.

Even in Goscelin's account of the triple translation at Barking, Æthelburg 'the most worthy virginal mother', is given special prominence. Hildelith and Wulfhild are described as Æthelburg's 'virginal companions', who accompany her 'to the everlasting embrace of her everlasting bridegroom'.⁴³² This theme of companionship is reiterated throughout the text. Indeed, the reluctance of Hildelith and Wulfhild to be separated, even temporarily, from Æthelburg, is emphasised in the account of their removal from the original resting-places.⁴³³ One interpretation of this latter emphasis could be that there existed a threat to the continued alliance of these saints. Another passage in the translation account raises suspicions on this same point. In the account of a vision bestowed upon the workman seeking her tomb, Æthelburg is reported as saying to him: 'I saw your despair when you thought me taken from here or moved to another uncertain place'.⁴³⁴ Does this suggest doubts about the saint's whereabouts? It may be possible that Æthelburg's relics were claimed by another community. Perhaps on this point we should consider the mid-twelfth century *Life of Eorcenwald*, which was probably written by Arcoid, a canon of St Paul's.⁴³⁵ The notably short *Life* is almost wholly taken up with description of a dispute between Barking, Chertsey and St Paul's over ownership of Eorcenwald's relics. The *Life* states that Eorcenwald died whilst visiting Barking, and that, on hearing of this, the canons of London and the monks of Chertsey came to claim his body for their own institutions. An argument ensued, in which each claimed the right to keep the body, and in the fracas, the canons ran forward and carried him off. The nuns and monks followed behind, lamenting their loss and attributing the storm

⁴³² *Ibid*, ch. 2, pp. 436-437: 'Hinc ergo dies solennes decentissime celebramus uirginalis matris Aethelburgae suarumque uirginalium consortium Hildelithae ac Wulfildae ... ad semper amplectendum suae dilectionis sponsum.'

⁴³³ *Ibid*, ch. 11 & 12, pp. 448-450 & 450-452.

⁴³⁴ *Ibid*, ch. 8, pp. 443-444: '“Vidi hac nocte tuam desperationem ... dum putaretis me hinc ablatam uel aliquo incerto loco transpositam.”'

⁴³⁵ Whately ed., *The Saint of London*, p. 25.

which arose to Eorcenwald's wish to remain at Barking. A parting of the river, however, demonstrated Eorcenwald's desire to be taken to London, and silenced the complaints of the religious.⁴³⁶ There seems to be no historical basis for this story; indeed, it is not seen in any other source relating to Eorcenwald. For this reason, the editor of the text, Gordon Whately, has suggested it is 'literary fiction' and claims that 'there is no reason or evidence for supposing that any such struggle occurred at the time of Erkenwald's death or at any subsequent time...Its "truth" lies in its fidelity to the history and ideology of the author's own time, not to the Anglo-Saxon past'.⁴³⁷ Is it possible then that the basis for the story lies in a real dispute about the ownership of Eorcenwald's relics in a later, perhaps, early Norman period? One of the miracles included in Eorcenwald's *Miracula* claims that 'it was imputed to several English monasteries at that time that, astonished at the fame of Eorcenwald's miracles, they wanted to steal the body of the saint by night'. After one attempt to do so, the priests of St Paul's had Eorcenwald's relics moved to a safer location.⁴³⁸ There may therefore have been some basis for the ownership dispute episode in the Life of Eorcenwald, and here it should be noted that despite Chertsey's involvement in the dispute, the account gives prominence to Barking's claim by setting both the bishop's death, and the scene of the argument, there. It may also be significant that in the miracle account which includes reference to attempted thefts of Eorcenwald's relics, it is claimed that 'the same thing happened once to the most holy Æthelburg, his sister'.⁴³⁹ Seen together, the references in the translation account of the Barking saints and those in the *Life and miracles of St Eorcenwald* seem to suggest some context of relic-claims or even attempted thefts between St Paul's and Barking. And here it should be recalled that there were issues of land ownership and dispute between the two communities.⁴⁴⁰ It is also possible that one of the other saints was claimed elsewhere, and perhaps particularly Wulfhild, who, it will be seen, was actively linked with the community at Horton. This theme will therefore be discussed further later in the thesis.

⁴³⁶ *The Life of Eorcenwald*, ch. 1, in Whately, *The Saint of London*, pp. 91-97.

⁴³⁷ Whately, *The Saint of London*, p. 75.

⁴³⁸ *The Miracles of S Eorcenwald*, miracle 14, in Whately, *The Saint of London*, pp. 151-55. Though internal evidence does not allow dating of this miracle.

⁴³⁹ *Ibid*, and see below discussion of Life of St Æthelburg.

⁴⁴⁰ See section in chapter 4 on Barking's Lands After 1066.

The recital of a vision

Goscelin's 'recital of a vision' which records a vision experienced by Ælfgifu during the period in which the post-Conquest translation took place, is closely related to the translation account. The text is directly associated with the translation of the Barking saints to the new church at Barking, some seven years after their removal from the old church. It is therefore useful to consider this text in association with the translation account.

The recital begins with reference to the parable of the Hidden Treasure, which Goscelin then compares to the invention and translation of the Barking saints. This parable is generally interpreted as an illustration of the value of the Kingdom of Heaven in which the hidden nature of the treasure indicates that heaven, or God's power, is not yet revealed to everyone.⁴⁴¹ Goscelin's association of the treasure with Æthelburg, Hildelith and Wulfhild, may allude to the Normans' ignorance of these saints, and, more importantly, their divine power. The point is driven home in Goscelin's statement that '[The] Lord...deigned to show how he considered most dear the beloved virgins Æthelburg, Hildelith and Wulfhild through a vision to be remembered and a shining forth of signs...'.⁴⁴²

The account is set seven years after the translation of the Barking saints from their ancient resting places in the old church to the basilica of all saints, where they awaited completion of the building of the new church. According to Goscelin, the Barking saints who were 'voluntarily yielding to the destruction of the old church and the building of the new' were becoming impatient to move to their new homes, and made their feelings known through 'charming and insistent visions'.⁴⁴³ This passage clearly stresses the support of the saints for Ælfgifu's building and translation project.

In the first part of the vision, Ælfgifu is witness to a miraculous appearance of the former teacher of the monastery's school, in which she is told that Æthelburg wishes to communicate with her. Ælfgifu then experiences a feeling of being crushed between Æthelburg's tombs and the wall, which Goscelin interprets as the saint saying 'Learn from this narrowness in which I press you that you should lead me out of this narrow resting place in which I am

⁴⁴¹ Matthew 13:44.

⁴⁴² Goscelin, *Recital of a vision*, prologue, in Colker, 'Texts of Jocelyn of Canterbury', pp. 452-453: 'Dominus ... dilectissimas sibi uirgines Aethelburgam Hildelitham ac Wlfildam quam gratas habuerit ad sui nominis gloriam et honorem per memorandam ostendere dignatus est uisionem signorumque chorusationem ...'.

⁴⁴³ *Ibid.*, ch. 1, p. 453: '... ultroneae cedentes ueteri aecclisiae destruendae et nouae reedificandae ...'; '... Hinc mater monasterii blandis uel increpauis uisionibus sollicitatur ac monetur.'

held.’⁴⁴⁴ The vision continues with a terrifying image of Æthelburg rising up from her tomb amidst her billowing ‘cloths and draperies’ and instructing the abbess to ‘hasten to lead us out from here and establish us in the place prepared. These resting places vex us, the narrowness of the place shackles us, the rough resting place disfigures us’. To Ælfgifu’s promise to obey her command, Æthelburg responds ‘see that no delay prevents you’.⁴⁴⁵ The final part of the vision sees Æthelburg miraculously transformed into a small baby, whom Ælfgifu cuddled to her breast. At this point, there appeared around Ælfgifu many tombs and reliquaries which Goscelin claims were ‘believe[d] to have been of the other saints likewise to be...relocated with the blessed Æthelburg in the bosom of the new church by this mother [Ælfgifu]’.⁴⁴⁶ Goscelin may have been referring only to the relics of Hildelith and Wulfhild, but also perhaps to all the relics housed at Barking, that is, those of Eadgyth, Tortgyth, and Germanus, and the rest of the early Barking community.⁴⁴⁷

This entire vision account is therefore taken up with emphasising the Barking saints’ desire to be translated to the new church at Barking. It affords special prominence to Ælfgifu’s role in the affair, and highlights her nature as ‘mother’ of the institution. The majority of the vision account is concerned with Ælfgifu’s vision of Æthelburg. Ælfgifu features most prominently in this text, with Æthelburg as the predominant performer of visions. There is also an emphasis in the account on the need for a timely completion of the translation, which could reflect external delays in either the completion of the new church or in the provision of episcopal support for the final stage of the translation. In either case, the vision account admits criticism of the translation, and indeed its legitimacy, since Æthelburg herself reacts to the continued delay in finalising the translation process. The account therefore seems to indicate that it was the delay between the original removal of the saints and their final translation into the new church that stimulated criticism, perhaps especially within the community itself. This may explain the involvement of the *magistra* in Æthelburg’s communication with the abbess, who, as a respected community member, perhaps represents internal concern or unease over the drawn-out nature of the translation. The Vision also

⁴⁴⁴ *Ibid*, ch. 2, pp. 453-454: ‘“Disce ex hac artitudine qua te premo quatenus me educas ab hoc strict quo teneor hospitio.”’

⁴⁴⁵ *Ibid*, ch.3, p. 454: ‘“Iam hinc propera nos educere et in loco parato constituere. Grauant nos haec hospitia, stringit loci angustia, deformant inculta cubilia.”’

⁴⁴⁶ *Ibid*: ‘Dum ergo sic illam affectuosam amplexibus foueret, ecce apparuerunt circa eam sanctorum scriniola et busta ac philatria quae credimus aliorum sanctorum similiter transportandorum fuisse, pignora quae cum beata Aethelburga in gremio nouae aeccliesiae ab hac seruatrice matre errant collocanda.’

⁴⁴⁷ There is in fact mention of other saintly relics at Barking in the Life of Æthelburg, a reading of which follows this.

responds to these concerns by emphasising Ælfgifu's role as mother and nurturer of the saints of Barking, and the saints' support of her undertaking.

The translation and vision accounts reveal two linked events. Firstly, the translation text records the removal of the Barking saints from their original resting places in the ancient church of Barking, as well as the context surrounding the event and the subsequent narrative version of it. Secondly, the vision account records the translation of the saints into their newly-constructed basilica some seven years after the original translation and, again, reveals the contexts preceding and surrounding it. It seems clear that the translation and vision accounts are both related to and formed by a post-1066 context. There is little doubt that they respond to criticism of the translation, apparently both internal community concerns and external episcopal objections. It is therefore likely that Goscelin wrote with multiple audiences in mind, including Norman churchmen and English religious. It may be that the text was also intended for a lay readership, again plausibly Norman and English. As Mitchell has argued, the need for English nunneries to secure patronage must have been a very real one in a context of almost wholesale loss of the English aristocratic and royal patrons of English monasteries.⁴⁴⁸ But the text may also have been directed at the English laity, and perhaps especially those who worked on the land of or for Barking, and who were therefore tied to the economic success of the nunnery. The promotion of the cults of early and late Anglo-Saxon saints of Barking could also be seen in the light of Thomas's arguments about the preservation and promotion of Englishness in hagiographical texts written after the Conquest.⁴⁴⁹ There do not appear to be any overt symbols of Englishness in the translation or vision accounts, but the promotion of English saints' cults by an English abbess perhaps demonstrates a desire to preserve English religious and historical traditions. Goscelin's use of authority figures such as Germanus and William the Norman in these texts could also be interpreted along the lines of Hayward's argument that such figures were employed as a mechanism of defence against a hostile Norman audience, and perhaps the best example of this at Barking would be the use of St Germanus.⁴⁵⁰ Germanus may have served as a particularly appropriate legitimising figure for the Normans given his French origins. It is important, however, that we do not, in seeking to explain these texts in a context of Norman

⁴⁴⁸ Mitchell, 'Patronage and Politics at Barking Abbey', pp. 208-11.

⁴⁴⁹ Thomas, *The English and the Normans*, pp. 286-288, 295.

⁴⁵⁰ Hayward, 'Translation-Narratives', p. 69.

settlement, overlook the role and concerns of the community itself. There are clear indications in the translation and vision accounts that there was uneasiness about the nature of the original translation of the saints and about the length of time it took to complete the building programme at Barking. It is possible then that the texts were also intended to reassure and encourage the Barking community in their act against the wishes of the ecclesiastical community.

While the translation narratives address one set of issues, including apparently internal ones; the fact of translation, and the cults themselves may address different ones. In order to determine all the motivations for cult promotion at Barking, the following part of this chapter will consider the Lives contained within the Barking Cycle, and will begin with the Life of *Æthelburg*, since the translation narratives present her as the major saint, and this is the longest Life containing the most miracles, especially those which might be seen to pertain to the Norman period.

PART TWO: The Bedan Saints

The Life of St Æthelburg

Goscelin's work on St Æthelburg includes both a Life and miracle collection. We are therefore dealing with a source quite different in nature from the translation and vision accounts, and one which conforms to its own set of literary norms and influences. In his prologue to the Life, Goscelin notes his use of Bede's account of the saint, which itself, he claims, was constructed from an earlier book on the Life of Æthelburg.⁴⁵¹ Chapters one to twelve represent Goscelin's reworking on the Bedan material. The chapters which are not built on Bede's work are based, according to Goscelin, on other written sources.⁴⁵² The miracles of 'recent times' were transmitted orally by the nuns of Barking and 'other faithful people'.⁴⁵³

The Life of Æthelburg begins with a dedication to 'Maurice' [*Mauricio summon sacrat hec Gocelinus ab imo*]. This is almost certainly Maurice, the bishop of London (1086-1107).⁴⁵⁴ Maurice is also called upon to defend the veracity of the legend of the saint, which may be a pointed reference to external, possibly Norman, doubts about her worthiness.⁴⁵⁵ The dedication of Æthelburg's Life to Maurice raises questions as to his relationship with the saint and the Barking community. As we have seen, both Goscelin and Bede stress the family connections between the abbess of Barking and the bishop of London in the Life of Æthelburg. Dedication of the Life to Maurice may therefore belong to the context of traditional links between the two institutions. Alternatively, it may be that, given Maurice's apparent obstruction of the translation process, the dedication of Æthelburg's Life to him should be read as an apology for the community's decision to undertake the translation

⁴⁵¹ Goscelin, *Vita Æthelburgae*, ch. 4, in Colker, 'Texts of Jocelyn of Canterbury', pp. 404-405: 'for the edification of those who follow by many of those who knew are kept in a precisely ordered book of her life, these few have been most faithfully excerpted and are noticed/paid attention to [here].': '... quae ad aedificationem sequentium ab his qui nouere descripto libro uitae ipsius a multis habentur.'

⁴⁵² *Ibid*, prologue, p. 398: 'Sed et siquid his addimus, *alibi legendo accepimus*.'

⁴⁵³ *Ibid*, 'Quae autem proximis uel nostris temporibus propalata impius sanctae uirginis subiunguntur miracula, adhuc uiuentium sororum affection uel aliorum fidelium qui itidem uidere relatione, habentur notissima.'

⁴⁵⁴ That this was Maurice, bishop of London, is shown by reference to his position in other texts of the Barking cycle. The Life of Wulfhild, which is also dedicated to Maurice, includes in the prologue the phrase '*Lundonicae metropolis ierarcha*' in reference to him. Chapter four of the translation account refers to Maurice as the provincial bishop: '*provinciali episcopo Mauritio*'.

⁴⁵⁵ Goscelin, *Vita Æthelburgae*, prologue, in Colker, 'Texts of Jocelyn of Canterbury', p. 398: *Decet ergo te, O princeps ecclesiastice, ut amicum sponsi et obsequitorem Dominicae sponsae, non solum hec suscipere verum etiam contra temerarios latratus defensare.*

without his support or approval. Paul Hayward has suggested that the dedication to Maurice was an attempt to win the support of a 'hostile Norman bishop'.⁴⁵⁶ In fact, as Goscelin's dedication of the text to Maurice includes a call for the bishop to defend the legend of Æthelburg, this could instead be read as a request for patronage, or the support that appears lacking in the translation account. Such support, given the association between the bishopric of London and Barking Abbey, which itself is emphasised in the Life, was perhaps a feature of Barking's cult promotion that took no account of ethnic differences.

Goscelin begins the Life of Æthelburg by describing the saint's family. Æthelburg's brother Eorcenwald is introduced even before Æthelburg herself, clearly indicating Goscelin's adherence to Bede's order of events. However, Goscelin alone describes Eorcenwald as the enthusiastic disciple of Mellitus, successor to Augustine of the Gregorian mission to England, and third Archbishop of Canterbury, a fact which is not included in Bede's account of Eorcenwald.⁴⁵⁷ Æthelburg is introduced by Goscelin as a virgin who 'burnt for angelic joys with her brother'.⁴⁵⁸ Eorcenwald is described by Goscelin as the founder of the communities of Chertsey and Barking, and abbot of the former. Æthelburg is described as the 'most benign first parent [of Barking].' In both cases, Goscelin convolutes Bede's rather rudimentary description of the foundation and abbacies of Chertsey and Barking, though he does not seem to add any concrete details as such.⁴⁵⁹ Bede's description of Eorcenwald's election to the position of bishop of London is also expanded by Goscelin through an addition of biographical detail on Archbishop Theodore of Canterbury 'seventh of the Roman legates since Augustine', and overseer of Eorcenwald's consecration.⁴⁶⁰ Eorcenwald is also described as a saint himself in Æthelburg's vita. Following Bede, Goscelin records that the bier used to carry the infirm Eorcenwald on his journeys to preach the gospel became, after his death, renowned for its healing properties: 'Thus the vehicle of the sick man cures the ill, both those visiting it in its presence and those visited from it at a distance...By which signs,

⁴⁵⁶ Hayward, 'Translation-Narratives', pp. 81-2.

⁴⁵⁷ Bede, *HE*, bk.4, ch.6, ed. Colgrave and Mynors, pp. 355-357.

⁴⁵⁸ Goscelin, *Vita Æthelburgae*, ch. 1, in Colker, 'Texts of Jocelyn of Canterbury', pp. 400-401: '... ad angelica gaudia estuabat cum fratre.' Bede, *HE*, bk. 4, ch. 6, ed. Colgrave and Mynors, pp. 355-357.

⁴⁵⁹ Goscelin, *Vita Æthelburgae*, ch. 2, in Colker, 'Texts of Jocelyn of Canterbury', pp. 401-402: '... ipsa benignissima parens ... prima.'; Bede, *HE*, bk. 4, ch. 6, ed. Colgrave and Mynors, pp. 355-357. Gordon Whately notes the same tendency in Goscelin's Life of St Augustine which builds on Bede's, but is 'transformed by Goscelin into a sprawling romance of quite different character and intent, replete with new incidents and a new Anglo-Norman image of the saint': G. Whately, ed., *The Saint of London*, p. 75.

⁴⁶⁰ Goscelin, *Vita Æthelburgae*, ch. 3, in Colker, 'Texts of Jocelyn of Canterbury', pp.402-404: 'Romanorum legatorum ab Augustino septimus.'; Bede, *HE*, bk. 4, ch. 6, ed. Colgrave and Mynors, pp. 355-357.

his life is known as the most holy and is celebrated.’⁴⁶¹ While this focus on Eorcenwald’s holiness initially appears to diminish Æthelburg’s, the point is made on more than one occasion that Æthelburg in fact ‘equalled her brother’s merits in all purity and virtue’.⁴⁶² It is also clear that by describing the very high status of her brother, and associating Æthelburg very closely, and on more than one occasion, with him, Bede and Goscelin were seeking to raise the status of Æthelburg herself. By including extended references to Eorcenwald’s association with Mellitus and Theodore, Goscelin was arguably stressing the high status of Æthelburg’s family even further.

The association between Æthelburg and her brother Eorcenwald is similarly stressed in the twelfth-century *Vita et Miracula S Eorcenwaldi*. In the Life, Eorcenwald is said to have prompted enthusiasm for monastic discipline in his sister Æthelburg, and to have built the monastery of Barking for her.⁴⁶³ One of the miracles attributed to Eorcenwald, in which he miraculously enables his coffin to be moved into a space too small for it, is likened in the text to an earlier miracle of Æthelburg’s: ‘Those present affirmed that the same thing had happened once to the most holy Æthelburg, his sister’.⁴⁶⁴ Another miracle concerning Eorcenwald’s healing of a crippled nun of Barking seems to elevate Eorcenwald’s sanctity above that of Æthelburg’s. The episode is set in the abbacy of ‘Alviva’ (presumably Ælfgifu) and begins with the nun’s prayers at the tomb of Æthelburg ‘sister of St Eorcenwald and founder of the convent’. In answer to her prayers, Æthelburg appeared in a vision and instructed the nun to ‘remember to call continually to my brother Eorcenwald and ask him to intercede for you; for with his merits to help you, you will be restored to health.’ And indeed, Eorcenwald subsequently appeared in a vision to the nun and she was restored to full health.⁴⁶⁵ We might perhaps question why Æthelburg did not heal the girl herself, given her apparent powers. Clearly, the saintly connection between the brother and sister is being stressed in the Eorcenwald material, but it also seems that St Paul’s is highlighting here the superiority of St Eorcenwald, Æthelburg’s deference to his power, and perhaps, their saint’s

⁴⁶¹ Goscelin, *Vita Æthelburgae*, ch. 3, in Colker, ‘Texts of Jocelyn of Canterbury’, pp.402-404: ‘Adeo egroti uehiculum egrotos et praentialiter uisitantes et longius inde uisitatos exeunte uirtute sanat. ... Quibus indiciis uita eius sanctissima cognoscitur sicut et celebratur.’; Bede, *HE*, bk. 4, ch. 6, ed. Colgrave and Mynors, pp. 355-357.

⁴⁶² Goscelin, *Vita Æthelburgae*, ch. 2, pp. 401-402: ‘... tota puritate et sanctimonia aequabat fraternal merita.’; and ch. 3, where Goscelin, claims for Æthelburg ‘the same uprightness, the same mind and divine charity’: ‘... quam sibi eadem germanitas eadem probitas eadem mens et diuina iunxit caritas.’ as her brother.

⁴⁶³ *The Life of S Eorcenwald*, ch. 1, in Whately, ed., *The Saint of London*, pp. 87-89.

⁴⁶⁴ *The Miracles of S Eorcenwald*, miracle 14, in Whately, ed., *The Saint of London*, pp. 151-155.

⁴⁶⁵ *Ibid*, miracle 18, pp. 161-3.

proprietary rights over Barking. This is perhaps particularly significant given the tensions between Barking and the bishop of London which are revealed in the translation account.

From the outset of Goscelin's account, Æthelburg is depicted primarily as the mother of Barking. Goscelin describes her as 'a most benign first parent...in the holy companionship of virgins' who 'showed herself of equal worth in all things for the propagation of her flock, guarding all like the apple of her eye'. Goscelin further declares that 'she who had betrothed herself to Christ in perpetual virginity struggled in her uncorrupted fecundity to bring forth for him incorrupt children in all maternity' and that 'she made [apostolic doctrine] into honey for these same children of her parturition, whence the worthy daughters became like their mother'.⁴⁶⁶ Again, this is an expanded version of Bede's description of her as 'mother and nurse of devout women'.⁴⁶⁷ While references to Æthelburg as a mother figure are present in the Bedan version of Æthelburg's Life, they are much expanded by Goscelin, and are included throughout his version of the Life of Æthelburg.⁴⁶⁸ This image of Æthelburg as mother of the community, or rather, its increased emphasis in Goscelin's work, may reflect the opinion of the Barking community itself.⁴⁶⁹

Goscelin recounts a series of miracles wrought by Æthelburg during and shortly after her abbacy at Barking. These are based on those included in Bede's account, and as such are distinct from those described in the later section of the life which Goscelin explicitly states is not derived from Bedan material. The Bedan miracles belong to the early Anglo-Saxon period, and appear to display different characteristics and concerns from those appearing later

⁴⁶⁶ Goscelin, *Vita Æthelburgae*, ch. 2, in Colker, 'Texts of Jocelyn of Canterbury', pp. 401-402: '... ipsa benignissima parens sacro contubernio uirginum ... prima'; '... condignam se exhibeat in omnibus pro sui gregis foetura, custodiens omnes ut pupillam oculi.'; 'Quae enim se Christo perpetua uirginitate desponsauerat, incorrupta fecunditate incruptas ei soboles gignere tota maternitate decertabat'; 'mellificabat ipsis pignoribus parturitionis suae, unde dignam matrem dignae filiae assimilabant ...'.

⁴⁶⁷ Bede, *HE*, bk. 4, ch. 7, ed. Colgrave and Mynors, pp. 357-359.

⁴⁶⁸ For example, in the account of Barking's experience of plague [ch.4], Æthelburg is described as 'a most attentive mother protect[ing] her fortifications against ultimate attacks'. In the vision of Tortgyth [ch.7], Bede/Goscelin describes Tortgyth as 'the most ardent emulator of the virtues of this most remembered mother'. The account of Æthelburg's death [ch.8] also highlights her role as mother: 'Oh how sharp were the arrows of her sorrows, how intimate the wounds of desolate hearts, how tedious the life of those pupils who survived, when that same mother of their love and consolation was demanded to the stars in her last feebleness, when the crowds of her sorrowing daughters stood around her about to leave.' Æthelburg, 'surveying, with those eyes with which she had desired and with those hearts with which she had given all of them birth to the Saviour', said 'Do not weep, my most beloved daughters, but rather rejoice with me, give eternal thanks with me to the benign Lord...'. In Bede's account, Æthelburg is referred to as the 'mother of the society [*HE*, 4:7]; the 'mother of that congregation'; 'the same mother' and 'mother of that society' [*HE*, 4:9], and, in Tortgyth's vision account as 'my most dear mother' [*HE*, 4: 9]

⁴⁶⁹ This has implications for our interpretation of the episode in the vision account in which the image of Æthelburg as mother is inverted when she becomes a baby in need of nurture from Ælfgifu, the present mother of the congregation. Clearly, this has the effect of elevating Ælfgifu's authority at Barking.

in the text, which concern the nunnery during the Viking age and beyond. In many ways, the miracles derived from Bede's *Life of Æthelburg* concern not only the saint herself, but the whole community of Barking, and the events experienced by them. Indeed, not all of the miracles contained in this section of *Æthelburg's Life* are ascribed to the saint herself. In three separate accounts, the visions of other inhabitants of the nunnery are described. In the first, a three year old boy named Esica prophesies the death of Eadgyth, one of the Barking nuns.⁴⁷⁰ This account is followed by that of Eadgyth's vision of her own death, holy light and the appearance of a spiritual messenger.⁴⁷¹ The vision of Tortgyth, another nun of Barking, foretells the death of Æthelburg through the miraculous appearance of a body, swathed in linen, ascending golden ropes 'stretched to heaven'.⁴⁷² It may be recalled that both Eadgyth and Tortgyth were mentioned in Goscelin's translation account of the Barking saints. Given their apparent importance in the Bedan *Life of Æthelburg*, it is perhaps not difficult to see why Goscelin, or indeed, the community itself, felt compelled to include reference to the relics of these members of the early Barking community. Two other Bedan miracles record Æthelburg's powers of euthanasia in her responses to the prayers of a sick and tormented Tortgyth and another sick nun of Barking.⁴⁷³ The remaining miracles which are closely based on those included in Bede's account, while clearly establishing Æthelburg's own sanctity, similarly emphasise the collective power of the Barking community. For instance, the miracle in which the whole community witnesses a divine outpouring of light serves to highlight the collective experience of the community.⁴⁷⁴ In an even more explicit statement of the powers of the community as a whole, the final miracle of the Bedan collection sees a blind woman healed after praying to 'the whole congregation'. While in all of these miracle accounts, Goscelin remains faithful to those originally recorded by Bede, to the latter he added that 'this miracle was ascribed as much to the merits of the most blessed Æthelburg as to all her other children, buried with her in the earth, and reigning with her in

⁴⁷⁰ Goscelin, *Vita Æthelburgae*, ch. 5, in Colker, 'Texts of Jocelyn of Canterbury', pp. 405-406.

⁴⁷¹ *Ibid*, ch. 6, pp. 406-407. Goscelin describes Eadgyth's death as a sign of the 'grace of the children of mother Æthelburg', on account of it occurring as prophesied by the dying child Esica.

⁴⁷² *Ibid*, ch. 7, pp. 407-408: ('... in caelum tendentes.'). Tortgyth is described as 'the most ardent emulator of the virtues of this most remembered mother' who suffered daily illness for nine years ('... ardentissima emulatrix uirtutum huius matris memoratissimae ...').

⁴⁷³ *Ibid*, ch. 9 & 10, pp. 409 & 409-410.

⁴⁷⁴ *Ibid*, ch. 4, pp. 404-405. The use of light to demonstrate God's favour or intercession is common in medieval hagiography. On this point, see D. Weinstein and R. Bell, *Saints and Society: Two worlds of western Christendom* (Chicago, 1982), pp. 149-50.

heaven, so that with whom she was one in Christ, might be one in benevolence in him and in the grace of virtue.⁴⁷⁵

Goscelin's *Life of Æthelburg*, like Bede's before him, includes an account of the election of Hildelith as Æthelburg's successor. There is no mention in either account of the involvement of any external figure in her election or consecration, which may be significant in light of the apparent immunity claimed by the nunnery from outside intervention in abbatial election.

This depiction of the election of Hildelith from within the nunnery may reflect the validity of this immunity, or, it may serve to bolster the nunnery's claims to such freedom. In his section on Hildelith's time as abbess of Barking, Goscelin, again following Bede, describes an occasion in which she ordered the translation of the bones of earlier inhabitants of the nunnery. According to both Bede and Goscelin, Hildelith needed to create more space in the nunnery's cemetery, and so transferred the remains into the church. It is tempting to see this story as deliberately included to display a precedent for Ælfgifu's later translation, though it is in fact faithfully copied from the work of Bede. Nonetheless, this account places Ælfgifu's later translation in the context of Barking tradition, which is highlighted in the translation account in the discovery of the relics of the nuns Eadgyth and Tortgyth which were found alongside those of Æthelburg during Ælfgifu's translation ceremony.

Goscelin's treatment of the Bedan material on Æthelburg and Barking highlights the need to consider the role of the Barking community in recollecting the Bedan emphasis on the holiness of the community as a whole. Bede's, and subsequently, Goscelin's focus here serves to empower other members of the community at Barking. Certainly we should bear in mind the role of the community when reading the Barking Cycle, as it seems that their concerns formed part of its production.

From roughly the mid-point of the text, Goscelin departs from the Bedan model of St Æthelburg and presents 'the deeds of modern times'.⁴⁷⁶ The first account is placed in the reign of King Æthelred, which highlights a hiatus in either cult activity or record. As the text does not specify which King Æthelred is referred to, this could place the first account of the later material in either 865-871 (King Æthelred I) or 978-1016 (King Æthelred II). This may suggest a revival of the cult of Æthelburg in either the late ninth or late tenth/early eleventh

⁴⁷⁵ Goscelin, *Vita Æthelburgae*, ch. 12, in Colker, 'Texts of Jocelyn of Canterbury', pp. 411-412: 'Merito autem hoc miraculum ascribitur tam beatissimae Ethelburgae quam ceteris omnibus suis pignoribus sibi et consepultis in terra et conregnantibus in ethra ut quibus erat una in Christo beniuolentia una sit in ipso et uirtutis gratia.'

⁴⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, ch. 13, p. 412-413: 'acta diebus modernis'.

century or, of course, in the periods immediately following these, when perhaps the community would have referred to important figures of recent memory. The later material constitutes roughly the same amount as that of the Bedan section, but there is a decided shift in both the tone and content of the second half of the vita. In the later material, Æthelburg is portrayed as the powerful protector of the nunnery from outside invaders, or, to adapt David Rollason's phrase, Barking's 'undying landlady'.⁴⁷⁷ Alongside a collection of miracle stories which highlight the saint's power to defend Barking and its wealth are found certain healing miracles which advertise Æthelburg's saintly powers. There is therefore a departure from the emphasis on the collective powers of the Barking community in the later material, which may of course be explained by the absence of Bede's own emphases. For this later section Goscelin names his source as 'Judith', a sacristan of the church who survived up to the reign of 'this king', who can be identified only as either William I or William II.⁴⁷⁸ Judith relayed to Goscelin the testimonies of certain nobles [*ducibus*] who had witnessed miracles attributed to Æthelburg.⁴⁷⁹

The first miracle story of this collection is concerned with the protection of the nunnery from Danish invaders who had devastated England during the reign of King Æthelred.

Unfortunately, this reference does not help us to date the episode, or identify the king as either Æthelred I or II, as the reigns of both kings witnessed Viking attacks.⁴⁸⁰ In this story, the nunnery had been abandoned by the nuns, who 'had fled into the nearby city of London, as they usually did whenever they were afraid of the violence of war'.⁴⁸¹ Both Barking's foundation charter and Domesday Book record that Barking held property in London.

Specifically, Domesday records that Barking Abbey owned 28 houses and the moiety of a church in London, most likely that of All-Hallows-Barking-by-the-Tower, and it is likely that

⁴⁷⁷ Rollason, *Saints and Relics*, pp. 196-214.

⁴⁷⁸ Goscelin, *Vita Æthelburgae*, ch. 13, in Colker, 'Texts of Jocelyn of Canterbury', pp. 412-413. In the prologue of the *Life of Wulfhild*, Goscelin refers to 'our King William'. As we know that the texts were written during Maurice's episcopacy at London, we can date its production to between Christmas 1085 and 1107.

William I reigned from 1066 to 1087, his son William II reigned between 1087 and 1100.

⁴⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸⁰ The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* records that a 'great heathen army' arrived in England in 865, the same year that Æthelred became king of the West Saxons; within five years these Vikings had established their own rulers in Northumbria and East Anglia. In 870, they had sailed up the Thames and landed at Reading, where they set up a further base. Viking attacks in the reign of King Æthelred II were particularly intense in the 990s: the *ASC* records that in 991 a large Viking fleet landed at Folkestone, Kent, and proceeded up the south-east coast and the Blackwater estuary. In 994 the same fleet came up the Thames estuary towards London, and, in 1001 ravaged in Hampshire and later Devon. From these movements, it seems most likely that Barking was affected by the raids of 994, though their reasonably close proximity to the other areas of Viking activity makes it impossible to tell for sure.

⁴⁸¹ Goscelin, *Vita Æthelburgae*, ch. 13, in Colker, 'Texts of Jocelyn of Canterbury', pp. 412-413: 'Fugerant quippe omnes in proximam urbem Lundoniam, ut solent quoties formidant belli uiolentiam'.

these were the destination of the nuns at this time.⁴⁸² Goscelin later reports that the community had cause to withdraw to London once again at the time of the Norman Conquest;⁴⁸³ it may be that he was drawing a parallel between the nunnery's experience of Viking and Norman invasions, which would suggest appeal to a post-1066 audience, though it may also preserve a context of the nunnery's earlier experience. In the absence of the community, a 'hostile troop' of Danes attempted to loot the nunnery. Through the protective power of Æthelburg, however, and the miraculous appearance of wild beasts at the nunnery's entrances, the Danes were prevented from entering the building. Indeed, their amazement at Æthelburg's intervention leads them to pray to Æthelburg to be admitted to the church, no longer to loot, but to offer devotion. The tale ends with the Danes offering gifts 'sufficient for the daily feeding of the sisters for a whole month' in reparation for their earlier intentions to sack the nunnery.⁴⁸⁴ This whole episode would respond neatly to the post-1066 situation: there may have been some question of the nuns losing land after the Conquest which was used for their *victus*. Indeed, one of the Domesday Book entries relating to land claimed by Barking Abbey records a dispute over their estate at Tollesbury, from which Ranulf Peverel held one hide against the will of the abbess who argued that it should be returned as it was 'for the sustenance of the nuns' of Barking.⁴⁸⁵ Goscelin's comment that Æthelburg 'was worthy to protect vigilantly her house' further defines her role as defender of the nunnery and its assets, would certainly fit well with what we know about the experiences of monastic houses after the Conquest.⁴⁸⁶

This miracle is followed by one in which 'a most pagan crowd of the same people was stirred up to burn completely the monastery'.⁴⁸⁷ Æthelburg is again depicted as defender, when she miraculously heals one of the perpetrators who had fallen through the roof of the nunnery. Goscelin claims that the pagans were so impressed by the miracle that they gave up their 'idolatry', converted to Christ, and began to preach the merits of St Æthelburg. As with the earlier group of Danes, this group were similarly depicted as offering gifts and donations to Barking in reparation of their earlier actions.

⁴⁸² *LDB*, f. 17v-f. 18r.

⁴⁸³ Goscelin, *Vita Æthelburgae*, ch. 20, in Colker, 'Texts of Jocelyn of Canterbury', pp. 416-417.

⁴⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, ch. 13, pp. 412-413: '... ad diutinum uictum sororum integro mense sufficientem ...'.

⁴⁸⁵ *LDB*, f. 18v, and see section in chapter 4 on Barking's Lands After 1066.

⁴⁸⁶ Goscelin, *Vita Æthelburgae*, ch. 13, in Colker, 'Texts of Jocelyn of Canterbury', pp. 412-413: 'uigilanter tueri suum meretur domicilium'.

⁴⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, ch. 14, pp. 413-414: 'eiusdem gentis paganissima truba monasterium ... concremare flagrabat, ...'.

Another miracle involving the Danes records their attempts to open Æthelburg's mausoleum in an effort to discover its hidden treasures. Their attack of her tomb incites Æthelburg's 'divine wrath', and the looters thereafter became 'wretched, some with frenzy, others with blindness, the rest with diverse sufferings and injuries'. Thoroughly cowed, the Danes offered their devotion to Æthelburg and sought her indulgence and the restoration of their health.⁴⁸⁸ The final 'Danish' miracle records a separate group of raiders who had presumed to use the nunnery as lodgings for themselves and their horses. On the fourth night after their coming, a light in the church was miraculously lit, and could not be extinguished, or even approached. Overcome with terror, the Danes fled the building, 'and from then on both they and the rest of the Danes held that famous reprover Æthelburg and her church in the highest reverence.'⁴⁸⁹

These miracles deliver the message that Barking is under the protection of a very powerful, very effective, patron saint. Not only can Æthelburg prevent those without good intention from entering the buildings of the nunnery, but can also, in this way, head off damage or theft of the nunnery's property and goods. Indeed, Goscelin goes further in claiming that Æthelburg's powers are such that they bring about the conversion of the invading pagans to Christianity, the material and spiritual patronage of Barking and its saints by previously hostile Danes, and even the spread of devotion to Æthelburg amongst the invading forces. It is not difficult to see the relevance to a post-1066 audience in these miracle stories. Whether for a Norman or English audience, these miracles would have great significance. In the former, they serve both as a warning and as an advertisement for Æthelburg's miraculous powers of intervention, while for the latter, they act as a reminder of both the nunnery's successful perseverance through a similarly difficult period of invasion, and of the manifest power of the English saint.

The protection miracles are followed by a series of healing miracles. Each of these can be dated from the late tenth or early eleventh century at least, as they include references to St Wulfhild (Wulfhild died after 996),⁴⁹⁰ to the involvement of Judith, who was still alive at the time of Goscelin's writing, and to witnesses who 'still flourish[ed] at this time' i.e.

⁴⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, ch. 15, p. 414: '... et alii rabie alii cecitate reliqui diuersis cruciatibus et cladibus ...'.

⁴⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, ch. 16, pp. 414-415: '... ac deinceps tam illi quam caeteri Danorum famosam castigatricem Ethelbrugam eiusque ecclesiam in summam habuere reuerentiam.'

⁴⁹⁰ Wulfhild's Life states that she died on the vigil of the feast of the translation of St Æthelwold (ch. 10). As Æthelwold's translation occurred in 996, Wulfhild's death, and subsequent sanctification, cannot have been earlier than this date.

1086x1100.⁴⁹¹ The first protection miracle records the healing of three blind women, undertaken in this case by the trinity of Barking saints, Æthelburg, Hildelith and Wulfhild.⁴⁹² This miracle is related in abbreviated form in the *Lecciones de Sancta Hildelitha*, and clearly emphasises the cohesive nature of the Barking trinity of saints. This emphasis is also apparent in the translation account, and may therefore belong to a post-Conquest context. It may in fact respond to threats to their unity, either real or perceived, after 1066. Another miracle recounted by Goscelin features the crippled daughter of a local nobleman who is healed through prayer to Æthelburg. In an unusual turn of events, the healing miracle occurs after the girl has been ejected from Æthelburg's tomb by the nun Judith. Refusing the girl's request to spend the night of Æthelburg's feast at the saint's tomb Judith instructs the girl to 'pray outside, let holy Æthelburg cure you outside if she will, for we won't let you come inside'. His conclusion to the miracle account that 'heavenly remedies are not to be obtained so much by bodily presence as by faith and pure intention' suggests that Goscelin, and perhaps, given the involvement of Judith, the community itself, was emphasising Æthelburg's ability to perform miracles at a distance from her tomb, and therefore her wider reach as a saint.⁴⁹³ The third healing miracle, of a blind man, completes a sequence in which all those helped by Æthelburg were members of the laity. This may be significant in terms of emphasising Æthelburg's external powers and influence, especially in light of Goscelin's comment that her bodily presence was unnecessary. Goscelin seems to be underlining Æthelburg's sanctity in an eleventh-century, external and lay context, which would align well with promotion of the saint in the post-Conquest period, for either local or Norman consumption.

The most detailed and circumstantial miracle story in Goscelin's additions to the Bedan Life of Æthelburg is also the last, and apparently most recent. Set at the time of the Norman invasion of England, and the meeting of a military cohort at Barking,⁴⁹⁴ this account concerns the theft of a missal book from Barking Abbey by a corrupt Norman priest. Goscelin records that the priest removed the prayer book to his parish in Normandy, where it remained for eight years. Upon his return to England, and still in possession of the Barking missal, the priest was subject to Æthelburg's wrath and manipulation of the sea. Æthelburg is depicted as preventing, through the creation of 'tempests', 'attacking winds' and 'deep, mountainous

⁴⁹¹ Goscelin, *Vita Æthelburgae*, ch. 17, 18, 19, in Colker, 'Texts of Jocelyn of Canterbury', pp. 415-416.

⁴⁹² *Ibid*, ch. 17, p. 415.

⁴⁹³ *Ibid*, ch. 18, p. 415: 'non tam corporali presentia impetranda superna remedia quam fide et inentione pura.'

⁴⁹⁴ As discussed in the section on 'The Abbess and the Community', William of Poitiers records that William the Conqueror stayed at Barking in the winter of 1066/67.

waves', the priest's entry onto English land, from which 'they were kept distant for three days'. Only upon his remembrance of his theft from Barking, and his subsequent repentance, prayers to Æthelburg, and promise to return the missal book, did the sea calm and the priest's ship sail into Dover, from whence he could return the book to Barking and offer 'suppliant devotion' to Æthelburg. Interestingly, Goscelin returns here to the theme of miracles from a distance, as seen in one of the healing miracles, as he concludes this account with the statement that Æthelburg 'is as much present on sea and land when she is asked, as where she shines forth in her bodily presence.'⁴⁹⁵ This clearly demonstrates that Æthelburg's sanctity is not confined within the walls of Barking. It may be significant that Goscelin makes this point in miracle accounts concerning both nobles and Normans, and could in fact be directed at such an audience, though of course it also serves as a confirmation to the community itself of the power of their protectress. Overall, this detailed miracle account appears to send a clear message to the Normans, and, perhaps especially, to Norman churchmen. There may be significance in the churchman's punishment occurring eight years after the theft (presumably sometime around 1074 given that Goscelin sets the story at the time 'when the dux of the Normans...succeeded to the kingdom of the English'), and at the point of his return to England, both in terms of dating the text, and in attempts to understand the context of text production. Certainly the message is clear – transgressions against the nunnery are not forgotten, nor easily forgiven.

The Life of Æthelburg, in its use of both the Bedan material and later recollections of the Barking community, records the full span of her cult's history. The image of Æthelburg, initially as a community saint, or even as part of a saintly community, undergoes a shift as Goscelin moves from the Bedan to the later material, in which she becomes a more individually emphasised saint. There is also a clear difference between the miracles of the later section of Goscelin's Life of Æthelburg and those based on the Bedan material. While the latter focuses almost wholly on the community and internal issues, the former is mainly concerned with external threats and influence. The later material may therefore respond to the post-Conquest situation at Barking in terms of threats to landholding and wealth as well as abbatial authority. The post-Bedan material in particular casts Æthelburg as a powerful protector of her community, an image which could be interpreted as responding to Norman

⁴⁹⁵ Goscelin, *Vita Æthelburgae*, ch. 20, in Colker, 'Texts of Jocelyn of Canterbury', pp. 416-417: 'quae tam in pelage et longinquis terries adest rogata quam ubi corporali rutilat presentia.'

threats. Given the focus of these miracles on Viking raids, however, it is also possible that these respond to an earlier eleventh-century context of Danish invasions and rule. The associated image of the community as sharing in Æthelburg's power, seen in the Bedan material in particular, may also have been directed at an incoming regime, be that Danish or Norman. The empowering of the community in the Life of Æthelburg also has parallels with the translation account which emphasises their role in translating the saints against the will of the Norman bishop Maurice. Goscelin's depiction of Æthelburg as both mother and protector of the Barking community also serves to reinforce the position of the abbess in the community, and may have provided an exemplar for the later abbesses of Barking. Certainly this image of Æthelburg as a powerful saintly abbess allies to the translation accounts through its emphasis on a strong abbatial figure. The changing image of Æthelburg perhaps suggests that her cult was adapted over time to respond to changing contexts. It would be useful therefore, to explore evidence for the popularity of Æthelburg's cult, such as charters and lists of saint's resting places. While by 1066, Barking was clearly dedicated to St Æthelburg, an examination of its earlier status may shed light on Barking's use of this cult, and perhaps, the situations which led to cult promotion. This will therefore be returned to later in the thesis.

The Lessons of St Hildelith

Goscelin's *Leccionēs de Sancta Hildelitha* provide another resume of a Bedan saint of Barking. The text takes the form of a series of short passages about the saint, which were presumably intended for reading aloud on the saint's feast days. While only the *Leccionēs* survive, it is possible, but not provable, that the material on Hildelith was originally organised into a vita. As with his Life of Æthelburg, Goscelin uses the material contained in Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*, though in this case, he was working with a much smaller body of information. In most cases, Goscelin significantly expands Bede's material, though generally without adding any new details.

As we shall see, much of the text is concerned with the community of Barking as a whole, and the events and miracles which occurred there, which might suggest that it served as an internal record, or celebration of the house. However, both the didactic nature of the text and its explicit advertising of the 'many saints' of Barking, could also suggest that it was intended

to be read elsewhere, and therefore by multiple audiences, perhaps also including the new Norman clergy or laity. The use of hagiographical texts to promote saints and encourage patronage is well evidenced, and it is perhaps with this function of hagiographical production in mind that the *lecciones* should be read.

Despite its title, the *Lecciones de Sancta Hildelitha* could in fact serve as a record of the saintly nature of the Barking community as a whole. Goscelin opens the text with the statement that ‘Barking monastery is known to be the shrine of many saints’ (‘Berkinga monasterium multorum sanctorum dinoscitur esse sacrarium’). This is an explicit statement of Bede’s references to the collective power of those buried in the cemetery at Barking which we saw in his record of the miracle which occurred there during the abbacy of Æthelburg. Indeed, both the Life of Æthelburg and the translation text make clear Barking housed not only the relics of Æthelburg, Hildelith and Wulfhild, but also those of Tortgyth and Eadgyth, of other earlier members of the community (as mentioned in the Life of Æthelburg in the passage concerning Hildelith’s transferral of ‘so many bodies of saints’), and, apparently, those of Saint Germanus of Auxerre.

In an account which is not contained in any other of the Barking texts, or indeed in any other source, Goscelin records that ‘in the time when blessed King Edmund was immolated [by the ‘pagans’]...the whole congregation of holy virgins with their mother was burnt in this holy church’. The martyrdom of the abbess and nuns led, according to Goscelin, to their being ‘worshipped along with the former virgins [presumably Æthelburg and Hildelith] as if a heavenly people’.⁴⁹⁶ This focus on the multiple saints of Barking, while clearly important for all sorts of audiences, including a post-1066 one, also serves to bolster the community’s self-image, and echoes the focus on community seen in the Life of Æthelburg. The reference to St Edmund is perhaps also significant, given his status as an important early English saint. It also places the burning of the nunnery and its inhabitants, if indeed we accept the veracity of the tale, around 870, the year of Edmund’s death.⁴⁹⁷

Goscelin also refers at the very beginning of the text on Hildelith to the many signs of Æthelburg’s sanctity, and in particular, Tortgyth’s vision of Æthelburg’s ascent to heaven, an

⁴⁹⁶ Goscelin, *Lecciones de Sancta Hildelitha*, ch. 2, in Colker, ‘Texts of Jocelyn of Canterbury’, p. 455: ‘... tota congregatio sacrarum uirginum cum sua matre in hac sancta ecclesia a paganis est concremata, tempore uidelicet quo beatus rex Aedmundus ab his immolatus est ...’; ‘... cum superioribus uirginibus uelut plebs siderea ...’.

⁴⁹⁷ Antonia Gransden, ‘Edmund [St Edmund] (d. 869)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/8500>, accessed 4 Nov 2010].

account of which is contained in the Life of Æthelburg. Goscelin similarly highlights Wulfhild's sanctity in this text, stating that 'in modern times a new star has risen, the most blessed Wulfhild...has been made a companion so that by divine help in the praise of the trinity she might shine for us as a third crown from blessed Æthelburg'.⁴⁹⁸ There are parallels in this last statement to the translation text which refers at various points to the 'trinity' of saints at Barking. Clearly, this point is being emphasised by Goscelin, or the community itself. While the apparently Bedan focus on the holiness of the whole community at Barking is further drawn out by Goscelin, this focus on the trinity of Æthelburg, Hildelith and Wulfhild cannot date earlier than the beginning of the eleventh century, and seems in particular to be stressed in the post-Conquest cult development which is evidenced in the translation account.

This focus on the other saints of Barking undermines Hildelith's position as the central saint of this piece. Even some of the references to Hildelith's own sanctity are tempered by comparison to Æthelburg. For instance, at one point Hildelith is named as 'the most precious jewel, her star alone is shown the brightest, in her alone, *after the blessed Æthelburg*, is the title and name of sanctity solemnised'.⁴⁹⁹ She is described in another passage as a 'daughter similar to her mother, [who] strove to represent blessed Æthelburg in holy manners and studies',⁵⁰⁰ and as a 'worthy colleague of the most blessed mother Æthelburg'.⁵⁰¹ This is likely an effect of the influence of Bede's account of Hildelith, which is extremely short and significantly less detailed than that of Æthelburg. Neither does Bede ascribe any miracles to Hildelith, but only 'exemplary conduct, in the observance of regular discipline, and in the care of providing all things for the public use.'⁵⁰²

Goscelin, unlike Bede, does make attempts to elevate Hildelith's status as a saint. She is, according to Goscelin, 'placed first, the most glorious among the glorious'. She is described throughout the text in terms familiar to the reader of hagiography, as, for example, a 'teacher and model to all the virtues', 'a mother conspicuous in beautiful love', 'full with divine

⁴⁹⁸ Goscelin, *Lecciones de Sancta Hildelitha*, ch. 8, in Colker, 'Texts of Jocelyn of Canterbury', p. 457: 'modernis temporibus noua stella exorta Wlfilda beatissima ... et uenerando facta est socia ut in laudem deifice Trinitatis tercia nobis a beata Aethelburga fulgeat corona.'

⁴⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, ch. 1, p. 455: 'quod sola inter tot caelestes margaritas uelut pretiootissima gemma excipitur, sola inter sua sidera uelut clarissima premonstratur, sola in qua post beatam Aethelburgam sanctitatis titulo et nomine sollempnizatur.'

⁵⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, ch. 6, p. 457: '...uelut assimilis genitrici filia, beatam Aethelburgam sanctis moribus et studiis representare certabat.'

⁵⁰¹ *Ibid.*, ch.9, p. 458: '... beatissimae matris Aethelburgae digna college.'

⁵⁰² Bede, *HE*, bk. 4, ch. 10, ed. Colgrave and Mynors, pp. 363-365.

charity', 'excelling...in vigilance, abstinence, service, liberality, mercy, and the highest of the rest of virtues'.⁵⁰³ It becomes apparent in a complete reading of the *lecciones*, however, that these abstract notions of Hildelith's sanctity are in the main unsubstantiated by either miraculous or historical record. In fact, Goscelin struggles to provide evidence of her sanctity, which he attributes to the fact that 'her miracles or signs in written form are lacking',⁵⁰⁴ and that, while 'all of her holy deeds are described in heaven... [they are] obscure here'.⁵⁰⁵ While he claims that Hildelith's 'outstanding sanctity is demonstrated in the curing of many',⁵⁰⁶ the lessons in fact contain only one miracle account. Even this miracle is not attributed to Hildelith alone, but rather to the 'trinity' of Barking saints, Æthelburg, Hildelith and Wulfhild.⁵⁰⁷ Again, there is a focus here on the combined power of the three Barking saints, which places the text in an early eleventh-century context at the earliest, and which echoes the emphasis in the translation texts on the importance of their continued unity. This could be interpreted as a response to threats, real or perceived, to the trinity, or as a method of advertising the threefold saintly power manifest at Barking Abbey.

The absence of evidence of Hildelith's sanctity appears to necessitate the validation of her cult through recourse to external authority figures. Goscelin asserts that 'holy men have honoured her intercessions', and that she was celebrated not only by the 'modern saints, namely Dunstan, Æthelwold and Ælfheah, but also by former saints, whom it would take too long to recall'.⁵⁰⁸ It may be significant that the saints who *are* recalled are those associated with monastic reform. Dunstan's sanctity was widely celebrated in England almost from the point of his death in 988 in missals and benedictionals and hagiographies of the early tenth century (one by the cleric 'B', another by Adelard of Ghent), of the second half of the eleventh century (by Osbern and Eadmer), and of the early twelfth century (William of Malmesbury). Dunstan was venerated as an advocate of Benedictine monasticism and as a leading monastic reformer of the tenth century, and was certainly an impressive figure to be

⁵⁰³ Goscelin, *Lecciones de Sancta Hildelitha*, ch. 6, in Colker, 'Texts of Jocelyn of Canterbury', p. 457: 'omnibus uirtutum doctrix erat et formula precellens omnes sicut prepositura ita uigilantia abstinentia famulatu benignitate clementia cetrarumque uirtutum summa.' See also ch.4, p. 456.

⁵⁰⁴ *Ibid.* ch.4, p. 457: '... ipsius miracula uel scripturarum indicia defecere ...'.

⁵⁰⁵ *Ibid.* ch. 8, pp. 457-458: 'Ominia tamen eius sacra gesta celo credimus esse descripta, tanto ibi clariora quanto hic obscuriora.'

⁵⁰⁶ *Ibid.* ch. 3, p. 456: '... eius probatissima sanctitas in multorum salutem est predicata ...'

⁵⁰⁷ *Ibid.* ch. 10, p. 458. This is the same healing of three blind women which is found in the translation account of the Barking Cycle.

⁵⁰⁸ *Ibid.* ch. 3, p. 456. It is interesting to note that Goscelin also uses the saints Dunstan and Æthelwold (along with Oswald) to validate the cult of St Kenelm [*Life of St Kenelm*, prologue, in Love, *Three Eleventh-Century Anglo-Latin Saints Lives*, pp. 50-1].

aligned with in the late eleventh century.⁵⁰⁹ His contemporary Æthelwold was also renowned as a monastic reformer who adhered strictly to Benedictine practice, though his cult was somewhat less successful. The translation of his body twelve years after his death in 984 to the choir of Old Minster, Winchester was accompanied by composition of a Life by his pupil Wulfstan Cantor. In spite of these efforts, Æthelwold's popularity does not seem to have extended far beyond the monastic foundations with which he was associated, perhaps due to a degree of lay opposition to his methods of acquiring land for those foundations.⁵¹⁰ Ælfheah was associated with both Dunstan and Æthelwold, as the former's protégé, and the latter's successor as bishop of Winchester, as well as the promoters of both men's cults. Ælfheah was appointed archbishop of Canterbury in 1006 by Æthelred II, and frequently present at this king's court. Taken prisoner by Vikings in a siege of Canterbury in 1011,⁵¹¹ he was finally killed by them in April 1012,⁵¹² and then buried in London at St Paul's. His relics were translated from London to Canterbury in 1023 under the auspices of King Cnut,⁵¹³ and his translation was recorded by Osbern, the English monk of Christ Church, Canterbury.⁵¹⁴ Ælfheah is an interesting choice of supporter for the Barking community. According to Eadmer's Life of Anselm, Ælfheah's validity as a saint was questioned by Archbishop Lanfranc. Despite Lanfranc's ultimate acceptance of Ælfheah's saintly status, and his continued presence in the calendar of Canterbury in the eleventh century, this episode has been seen by later historians as evidence of Norman hostility towards English saints. This view has been somewhat revised however, and it is important to note that Eadmer's *Life of Anselm* was not completed until around 1125, which might suggest that doubts about Ælfheah were not a concern at the time of Goscelin's writing of the Barking Cycle.

The *Lectiones* contain a recollection of Hildelith's 'divinely inspired' decision to translate the bodies of the former inhabitants of Barking from the cemetery into the church 'so that they might be laid up as treasure' (*thesaurizanda*).⁵¹⁵ As we have seen, Goscelin included this Bedan material in his Life of Æthelburg, and he does not add anything of substance to it in

⁵⁰⁹ Michael Lapidge, 'Dunstan [St Dunstan] (d. 988)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/8288, accessed 5 Nov 2010].

⁵¹⁰ Barbara Yorke, 'Æthelwold (904x9–984)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/8920, accessed 5 Nov 2010]. Also see the Life of Wulfhild, which similarly makes reference to Æthelwold.

⁵¹¹ ASC (E), 1011.

⁵¹² ASC (E), 1012.

⁵¹³ ASC (C, D, E), 1023.

⁵¹⁴ Osbern, *Translatio Sancti Ælfegi Cantuariensis Archiepiscopi et Martiris*, in A. Rumble ed., *The Reign of Cnut: King of England, Denmark and Norway* (London, 1994), pp. 283-315.

⁵¹⁵ Goscelin, *Lectiones de Sancta Hildelitha*, ch. 7, in Colker, 'Texts of Jocelyn of Canterbury', p. 457.

the lecciones. As in the Life of Æthelburg, there is no reference to the involvement of an episcopal figure in the translation process. It may be important that this episode is referred to in both works, especially if we read it as setting a precedent for later translations at Barking, either by the abbess Leofflaed in the first half of the eleventh century, on which see below, or by Ælfgifu in the second half of the eleventh century. While we might expect Goscelin to use this Bedan material in the text on Hildelith, especially as there appears to have been relatively few sources on the saint, it is perhaps his inclusion of it in the Life of Æthelburg as well, a text for which he had much more material, which signifies its importance.

The apparent lack of material on Hildelith leads us to question her inclusion in Barking's cult of saints and the associated literature. Presumably it was her status as a saint celebrated by Bede, albeit to a much lesser extent than Æthelburg, that secured her a place in the Barking cults. This highlights the distinction between Æthelburg and Hildelith and the much more recent saint, Wulfhild. Hildelith seems in this text to act as a bridge between Æthelburg and Wulfhild, seen in Goscelin's stress of the trinity and companionship of Barking's holy abbesses and in the reference to 'the new star' of modern times. While this validation of the non-Bedan saint Wulfhild could belong to a post-1066 context of promoting English saints, it may also point to an earlier eleventh-century context of Wulfhild's addition to the Barking cults.

Goscelin's reference to the 'holy men' who honoured Hildelith, i.e. Dunstan, Æthelwold, and Ælfheah, links the Barking saints with some of the great recent figures of the Anglo-Saxon church. This represents a new sort of validation for a Barking saint, and one which was apparently not necessary for Æthelburg, which raises questions about the point at which Hildelith came to be venerated, especially in a literary form. The reference to St Edmund in the Lecciones is worth considering on this point. There is evidence that Edmund was sanctified within a generation of his death;⁵¹⁶ the earliest hagiography, Abbo of Fleury's *Passio sancti Eadmundi* dates from 985-7, and records the translation of Edmund's relics to Beadericesworth (later Bury St Edmunds). A second hagiographical text, Hermann's *De Miraculis sancti Eadmundi*, was composed around 1100 and records unbroken veneration of the saint through the eleventh century. By the late eleventh century the monastery which housed Edmund's relics was one of the richest in England, and seems to have owed much of

⁵¹⁶ Memorial coinage inscribed 'Sc̅ Eadmund Rex' was widely circulated in the Danelaw within a generation of his death, until c.930.

its success to the popularity of Edmund's cult.⁵¹⁷ Association with St Edmund was therefore relevant at any stage after his death in 870, but was perhaps more likely at the high points of his promotion which presumably align with the production of hagiographies in the late tenth and late eleventh/early twelfth centuries. The earliest of these dates aligns with the protection miracles in Æthelburg's Life which date from the late tenth/early eleventh century. This may also correspond to the protection from Viking miracles in the Life of Æthelburg which, as we have seen, could belong to the period of Viking attacks in the reign of Æthelred II (978-1016). The possibility that these protection miracles date from Æthelred I's reign in the late ninth century could also align with the use of St Edmund due to his early popularity in the same period. It is therefore possible that the cults of Æthelburg and Hildelith experienced renewed promotion in either the late ninth or late tenth/early eleventh century. Of course, the possibility remains that the inclusion of the popular saints Edmund, Dunstan, Æthelwold and Ælfheah in the Lessons on Hildelith belongs to a post-Conquest context. Goscelin's use of these authorial figures may support Paul Hayward's theory that English communities included reference to the support of earlier kings or bishops as a method of recommending their saints to a new Norman audience. The earlier eleventh-century fame of Dunstan, Æthelwold and Ælfheah may however, as with Edmund, suggest a relevance to that time, and therefore perhaps represents part a redefinition of Barking's saintly community at the point of Wulfhild's elevation to sanctity. Examination of the final text of Goscelin's Barking Cycle, the Life of Wulfhild, may shed further light on this matter.

⁵¹⁷ Antonia Gransden, 'Edmund [St Edmund] (d. 869)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/8500>, accessed 6 Nov 2010].

PART THREE: Wulfhild

The Life of Wulfhild

Goscelin's hagiographical account of St Wulfhild contains both a *vita* and a *translatio*. In his prologue to the *Life and miracles of St Wulfhild*, Goscelin begins by describing his source materials for the text. These he claims to have been both oral and written, though in the latter case he does not specify the actual texts used.⁵¹⁸ The orally-transmitted evidence came from 'the aged mothers of her institution', and, in particular, the nun Goscelin names as Wulfrun, who 'survived up until the reign of our King William'.⁵¹⁹ In a pointed reference to his use of female witnesses, Goscelin states that 'faithful testimonies of this kind are not to be rejected; the first and angelic messenger of the resurrection of the Lord teaches Mary and a crowd of prophetesses.'⁵²⁰ Elisabeth Van Houts has claimed that Goscelin was here attempting to justify his use of female testimony.⁵²¹ Indeed, Goscelin includes a similar statement in his *Life of Edith of Wilton*, for which he was also reliant upon the testimony of female religious.⁵²² Van Houts reads Goscelin's plea to Bishop Maurice of London to 'defend [the legend of Wulfhild] against the gnawing teeth of the unbelievers' in this same light, i.e. as an apology for the use of female informers.⁵²³ Goscelin's statement could however be read as an indication that there existed some doubt about Wulfhild's validity as a saint at the time when Goscelin was writing. Certainly his following comment that 'the rebels and faithless act against her' indicates some degree of antagonism towards her cult. From what quarter is difficult to determine. Goscelin may simply be referring to a lack of reverence amongst certain individuals or groups of English society. He may also however, have been referring to Norman opinion on Wulfhild's sanctity, a view which would align with those of David

⁵¹⁸ Thomas Head has noted that the use of both oral and written sources in the compilation of saints' Lives was quite normal in this period. See Head, *Hagiography and the Cult of Saints*, pp. 16-17.

⁵¹⁹ Goscelin, *Vita Wulfhildae*, prologue, in Colker, 'Texts of Jocelyn of Canterbury', p.418: '... Vulfruna, Iudith cognominata, a primeuo flore sub ipsa educata, quae ad nostri regis Vuilielmi superuixit scepra.' It is not possible to determine whether this was William I or II.

⁵²⁰ *Ibid.*: 'Huius quoque generis fidelia testimonia non respuenda docet prima et angelica nuncia resurrectionis Domini Maria sanctarumque prophetissarum turba.'

⁵²¹ Van Houts, *Memory and Gender*, p. 52.

⁵²² Goscelin, *Life of Edith*, prologue, in Hollis, *Writing the Wilton Women*, pp.23-25: 'Nor should the female sex be rejected as carriers of the truth, for [it was a woman] who carried the word of God and who with her faith argued against the incredulity of the Apostles and through an angel predicted the Lord's resurrection...'

⁵²³ Van Houts, *Memory and Gender*, p. 52. In full, this statement, which immediately follows that on the use of female witnesses, reads: 'Therefore this person befits your ancestral excellence, O Bishop of London...not only to more properly assume the truth, but also to defend it against the teeth of the fierce'. ('Hec igitur decet tuam paternam excellentiam, O Lundonicae metropolis ierarcha ... non solum probabiliter assumere uerum etiam contra ferocium dentes potenter defendere ...').

Knowles, Richard Southern and Frank Barlow on Norman hostility towards English saints. Indeed, Hayward suggests that Goscelin dedicated the Life of Wulfhild to Maurice in an attempt to 'persuade a hostile Norman bishop', in this case, Maurice himself.⁵²⁴ Another explanation for the dedication could be that Wulfhild was a saint of recent extraction and therefore in need of support or effective promotion. Indeed, Goscelin noted that, while Wulfhild's sanctity was widely celebrated, this renown was 'greatest in her own locality'.⁵²⁵ Wulfhild also lacked the legitimacy gained by the other Barking saints through their inclusion in Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*; effectively, Wulfhild required the authority provided for Æthelburg and Hildelith by longevity and widespread fame.

Goscelin begins his account of Wulfhild's life by tracing her lineage, at least as far back as her great-grandfather. According to Goscelin, Wulfhild's great-grandfather 'Nestingus' was abandoned in a forest as an infant and fortuitously discovered by King Alfred during a hunting trip. Goscelin records that when he was found by Alfred, Nestingus was 'wrapped in a purple cloak' and had 'a pair of gold bracelets on his arms', which of course was 'an indication of his nobility'.⁵²⁶ The child was then brought up under the care of King Alfred, indeed, Goscelin claims that he was given riches and a suitable wife, and that Nestingus became both wealthy and well-connected under Alfred's tutelage. The line of descent from Nestingus to Wulfhild is traced through Vuithtburd (Nestingus's son) and Wulfhelm (his grandson, and Wulfhild's father). Goscelin then provides an account of Wulfhelm's devout, and largely celibate nature, and of the almost miraculous conception of his daughter Wulfhild.⁵²⁷ This genealogical account serves many purposes. The symbols of nobility which Goscelin associates with Wulfhild's infant great-grandfather, that is, the purple robe and golden bracelets, create an image of high social stature. By association with King Alfred, Wulfhild's family is elevated to almost royal status. The association of Wulfhild's forefathers with King Alfred is an interesting one. Alfred was celebrated as an exceptional king even during his own lifetime in both the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* and Asser's *Life of King Alfred*, which was written in 893. The work of Æthelweard and Ælfric in the tenth century, and of Byrhtferth of Ramsey in the early eleventh century, served to secure his image as a wise and learned king who had protected his kingdom from Danish attacks and

⁵²⁴ Hayward, 'Translation-Narratives', pp. 81-2. A similar dedication of the Life of Æthelburg to Maurice may support Hayward's view that Maurice was in need of 'persuasion'.

⁵²⁵ Goscelin, *Vita Wulfhildae*, prologue, in Colker, 'Texts of Jocelyn of Canterbury', p. 418.

⁵²⁶ *Ibid.*, ch. 1, pp. 419-420: '... purpureo pallio inuolutum ... in brachiis gemellas armillas aureas nobilitatis indicium.'

⁵²⁷ *Ibid.*

invasion. His popularity in the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries was, however, challenged by that of Edward the Confessor,⁵²⁸ and, as Yorke argues, Alfred seems to have attracted little interest in the courts of his post-Conquest successors.⁵²⁹ This might suggest that the reference in Wulfhild's Life to her family's association with Alfred belongs to an earlier, pre-Conquest context. The use of Alfred as a legitimising figure in the Life of Wulfhild could therefore belong to any point from the saint's death onwards, which suggests that a review of the cult in the earlier eleventh century may be useful.

The depiction of Wulfhild's parents provides a tradition of sanctity in the saint's family. Goscelin claims that after Wulfhelm and his wife had remained celibate for 18 years of marriage, both were witness to a miraculous vision in which they were instructed to 'come together because it was right that they might now in their chaste age beget a spouse of Christ'.⁵³⁰ This has the effect of highlighting Wulfhild's holy status even before her birth, which itself was divinely ordained. Goscelin also records that Wulfhelm entrusted Wulfhild to the nunnery of Wilton whilst still an infant, which emphasises both Wulfhild's, and her family's, exceptional Christian devotion. Overall, Goscelin creates for Wulfhild a family tradition both noble and religious which aligns with other depictions of saints from the late Anglo-Saxon period, for example St Edith or St Eadburg. A comparison of Wulfhild with other tenth-century English saints would provide a better understanding of both the depictions of sanctity and those individuals selected for elevation in the eleventh century, and will therefore be undertaken later in the thesis.

Wulfhild's Life contains a long and circumstantial account of the saint's struggle to resist the amorous pursuit of King Edgar. Wulfhild's resistance to the King's 'blandishments, requests and persuasions', are depicted as a test of Wulfhild's resolve to remain a bride of Christ. Here Goscelin employs standard hagiographical topoi which relate to the virgin saint. Throughout the account of Edgar's pursuit, Goscelin likens Wulfhild to the early Christian martyr St Lucy.⁵³¹ Edgar himself is depicted in less than favourable terms, though again, this

⁵²⁸ S. Keynes, 'The Cult of King Alfred the Great', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 28 (1999), pp. 225-356, at pp. 228-229.

⁵²⁹ B. Yorke, 'Alfredism: the use and abuse of King Alfred's reputation in later centuries', in T. Reuter, ed., *Alfred the Great: papers from the eleventh century conferences* (Aldershot, 2003), pp. 361-380, at p. 362.

⁵³⁰ Goscelin, *Vita Wulfhildae*, ch. 1, in Colker, 'Texts of Jocelyn of Canterbury', pp. 419-420: '... ut conuenirent quia sic oporteret ut iam castiori aeuo sponsam Christi generarent.'

⁵³¹ This is the second time that Goscelin has associated one of the Barking saints with Lucy, though his reference to Æthelburg's similarity to the saint was based on her immovability as opposed to her trials at the hands of an unwelcome pursuer. As stated in n. 25, Lucy was one of the saints praised in Aldhelm's *De Virginitate*, a seventh-century work dedicated to the abbess and nuns of Barking abbey. It is likely then,

conforms to standard hagiographical accounts involving unwelcome (and often royal) advances towards a female saint.⁵³² Goscelin records that in his efforts to secure Wulfhild's hand in marriage, Edgar enlisted the help of her aunt Wenflaed who 'wanted for herself the summit of the kingdom by means of consanguinity'.⁵³³ Having been brought, by deception, to her aunt's estate at Wherwell, Wulfhild is faced with the unwanted advances of the king. The involvement of Wenflaed and mention of her estate at Wherwell is interesting, especially as Edgar's later wife Ælfthryth seems to have founded a nunnery in the same place.⁵³⁴ Indeed, the reference to Wherwell here may indicate the use of hagiography as evidence of land rights by the nunnery. Specific reference in this late-eleventh century text to Wenflaed and Wherwell suggests that exploration of historical contexts of the late tenth and earlier eleventh century, and perhaps especially of the nature and date of Wulfhild's cult at Barking at these times, might prove valuable. While this story was clearly still being told at Barking in the late eleventh-century, its inclusion in the later text may point to the existence of an earlier source or context.

The account of Wulfhild's elevation to the abbacy of Barking is depicted by Goscelin as forming part of Edgar's repentance for his pursuit of Wulfhild. This account claims that before giving Barking to Wulfhild, the king 'restored it to the ancient state of the time of the most blessed virgin Æthelburg'. Goscelin also claims that Edgar 'increased the patrimony of Wulfhild to 24 mansiones of villis' and provided an 'abundance of things' for the nunnery itself. The detailing of Edgar's gifts to Wulfhild contains one of the most interesting, but difficult to interpret, passages in the *Life of Wulfhild*. Goscelin states that 'Horton is like an umbilical tetrapolis, with four equally spaced towns, Wilton, Shaftesbury, Wareham and Hamtun [Southampton], each twelve miles distant'.⁵³⁵ In each of these towns, Goscelin

especially as this is the second reference to the saint, that Lucy was particularly revered by the Barking community.

⁵³² Goscelin's account makes Edgar's attempts to marry Wulfhild seem overbearing indeed. When Wulfhild attempts to remove herself from the king's dinner table she is placed under the 'harsh custody' of his guards, and is forced thereafter to lock herself in the privy chamber. Wulfhild is then said to have escaped her fate by crawling out of the building through the sewers, and hiding in 'the humble cottage of a certain poor woman' until the king gave up his search for her and left Wherwell, defeated for the moment. On her return to the nunnery at Wilton, Wulfhild is again faced with the challenge of resisting Edgar's 'instruments of capture'. When apprehended by him in the cloister, Wulfhild is miraculously freed by the tearing of her sleeve which remained 'complete, not so much torn as cut round...by scissors' in the king's hand. It is ultimately this miracle which ends Edgar's determined attempts to carry Wulfhild off.

⁵³³ Goscelin, *Vita Wulfhildae*, ch. 2, in Colker, 'Texts of Jocelyn of Canterbury', pp. 420-422: '... Vuenfledam, quae sibi apicem regni consanguinitatis affectu cuperet...'

⁵³⁴ Foot, *Veiled Women I*, pp. 6, 215-219.

⁵³⁵ Goscelin, *Vita Wulfhildae*, ch. 4, in Colker, 'Texts of Jocelyn of Canterbury' pp. 423-425: 'Est autem Hortuna quasi umbilicus tetrapolis in quattuor oppidis aequalibus spaciis, id est singulis duodenis milibus, distantibus, quae sunt Vuiltonia Scafesberia Vuarham Hamtunia.'

claims, Edgar granted to Wulfhild five *domus familiarum*,⁵³⁶ and also one church in each. It is made apparent in this, and other chapters, that the strongest association between Wulfhild and these five houses was with Horton. Indeed, in a later chapter, Goscelin describes Horton as Wulfhild's hereditary monastery [*hereditarum monasterium suum*].⁵³⁷ In another, she is named as the ruler of both monasteries, each having 'an equal number of sisters and in single peace'.⁵³⁸ Goscelin depicts Wulfhild as guiding both 'in a single love' and that she 'unified both together, and like the sun bore back the day of her presence, now here, now there.'⁵³⁹

Having thus compensated Wulfhild for his inappropriate advances, we are told that Edgar now 'received by divine dispensation' her cousin Wulfthryth as a wife. This statement links Wulfhild – and her *Vita* – to another of Goscelin's texts, the *Life of Edith*, which also contains a quasi-vita of Wulfthryth. This clearly calls for consideration of the *Life of Wulfhild* in relation to this text, not least because it too concerns two female nunnery saints of the recent past; this will therefore be addressed later in the thesis.

Wulfhild's humility is likened to that of Saint Agatha, a wealthy Christian and early virgin martyr. Agatha's vow of virginity was, according to her Acts, tested by incarceration in a brothel, torture and mutilation at the hands of her rejected suitor. Her endurance of sexual assault and indignity is, given his depiction of Wulfhild's torments at the hands of Edgar, most likely the basis for Goscelin's association of her with Wulfhild, though he may also have been emphasising Wulfhild's rejection of her secular status by parallel with Agatha's refusal to concur with the norms of her noble position.⁵⁴⁰

In his description of Wulfhild as abbess, Goscelin utilises standard hagiographical conventions which emphasise her loving charity, and exemplary nature in terms of abstinence and practice of prayers and vigils. Her generosity to the poor and needy is also highlighted, and Goscelin claims that Wulfhild paid the rents of such people from her own resources so

⁵³⁶ Sarah Foot points out that as *domus familiarum* translates as 'houses of households', we cannot be sure what Goscelin meant by this. If Goscelin had meant to say that Wulfhild was given authority over some kind of monastic congregation, he would have perhaps written *domos famularum*, which translates as 'houses of familiae/female servants of God'. Historians are in disagreement about the validity of this claim, which will be discussed further in the following chapter.

⁵³⁷ Goscelin, *Vita Wulfhildae*, ch. 8, in Colker, 'Texts of Jocelyn of Canterbury', pp. 427-428.

⁵³⁸ *Ibid*, ch. 9, pp. 428-429: '... aequali numerositate sororum et unica pace ...'.

⁵³⁹ *Ibid*, ch. 4, pp. 423-425: '... utramque ... unibat ac more solis nunc hic nunc illic presentiae suae diem referebat.'

⁵⁴⁰ Agatha" *The Oxford Dictionary of Saints*. David Hugh Farmer. Oxford University Press 2003. *Oxford Reference Online*. Oxford University Press. University of Liverpool. 6 November 2010 <<http://www.oxfordreference.com/views/ENTRY.html?subview=Main&entry=t100.e33>>

often that she herself became impoverished.⁵⁴¹ The theme of Wulfhild's generosity is extended to include an account of her hospitality towards King Edgar and the bishop Æthelwold. According to Goscelin, Wulfhild had invited the king and his retinue to dine at her monastery, but, on examining the nunnery's provisions, she discovered that there was not enough drink to entertain such a large contingent. Despite her servants' concerns, Wulfhild went ahead with the meal, and, miraculously, no matter how 'unceasingly the aforesaid liquor was given out', the containers 'remained as full as before'. Goscelin states that 'this virtue of the inexhaustible cup can be read in the Life of Bishop Æthelwold, in which the blessed Wulfhild is likened to him...'. Indeed, Wulfstan's *Life of Æthelwold* records that King Eadred and a large party of Northumbrian thegns visited Æthelwold's monastery at Abingdon and that, despite their drinking 'lavish draughts of mead' all day, 'the level [of mead] in the container could not be reduced below a palm's measure'.⁵⁴² While Wulfhild is not, as Goscelin claims, directly 'likened' to Æthelwold in his Life, it is clear that the miracle attributed to Wulfhild by Goscelin draws a favourable comparison. Indeed, it seems clear that this was Goscelin's intention.

The link between Wulfhild and Æthelwold is further emphasised in a later chapter which records Wulfhild's vision of her own death. Aware that her health is failing and death is imminent, Wulfhild tells the Barking community that she will die on the same date of the feast of St Æthelwold. And, indeed, her death is recorded as occurring as prophesied, on the celebration of the translation of Æthelwold, which is given in the text as the fifth ides of September.⁵⁴³ Goscelin further states that Æthelwold 'who had fully lit her lamp in perpetual charity, like the king's chamberlain and friend of the bridegroom, received her with great festivities into the bridal bed of Christ'.⁵⁴⁴ The linking of Wulfhild and Æthelwold may be significant, though it is difficult to know to what context such a reference would belong. Æthelwold was an important figure in the tenth-century monastic reforms in England, and

⁵⁴¹ Goscelin, *Vita Wulfhildae*, ch. 5, in Colker, 'Texts of Jocelyn of Canterbury', p 425. This suggests that Wulfhild retained her own wealth after becoming abbess of Barking, a fact which does not sit well with reform tenets of the tenth century.

⁵⁴² *Ibid.*, ch. 6, pp. 425-426: 'Talis etiam uirtus inexhausti poculi legitur affatim in uita eiusdem patris Adeluoldi, qua beata Vulfilda tam sibi assimiletur,...'; Wulfstan, *Life of Æthelwold*, ch. 12: 'That King Eadred came to the monastery and though the guests drank all day the drink could not be exhausted'. A similar miracle is also recounted in B's *Life of Dunstan*.

⁵⁴³ The fifth ides of September is on the 13th. Æthelwold's feast day occurs on 1 August, the date on which he died in 984. His translation, however, took place on 10 September 996, which corresponds very closely, if not precisely, to the date given here by Goscelin. We can surmise, at least, that Wulfhild died in September.

⁵⁴⁴ Goscelin, *Vita Wulfhildae*, ch. 10, in Colker, 'Texts of Jocelyn of Canterbury', pp. 429-430: '... ut qui eius lampadam amplius accenderat caritate perhenni ipse uti regis cubicularius et amicus sponsi festiuissime eam susciperet in thalamum Christi.'

association with such a figure is likely to have been deemed important for a monastic house which claimed reformed status. Goscelin's connecting of Wulfhild and Æthelwold may have responded to continued reform concerns of the later eleventh century. Alternatively, the reference may have been directed at Bishop Maurice. Indeed, mention of a revered English bishop, and indeed, his apparent relationship with one of the saints of Barking, may constitute a pointed reminder to the Norman bishop Maurice that the Barking saints had been well thought of by one of his own rank.

However, it is also possible that reference to Æthelwold, and therefore association with the monastic reform belongs to an earlier point in the eleventh century. As noted above, the success of Æthelwold's cult was limited, despite a translation of his relics in 996 and the production of a Life shortly afterwards. This might suggest that the association between Æthelwold and Wulfhild belongs to a point closer to his sanctification, that is, the late tenth or early eleventh century. It may also be significant that this is the second reference to Æthelwold in the Barking cycle. As we have seen, Goscelin linked Hildelith with Æthelwold in the *lecciones*, which suggests that he was thought of as an important figure at Barking. It may also point to earlier stages of the cults at Barking, though this is difficult to confirm.

Within the Life of Wulfhild, Goscelin also describes Leofflaed, a nun of Barking and Wulfhild's successor as abbess. Goscelin's account of the nun Leofflaed is an interesting one. Described as a female of 'illustrious descent' and 'outstanding appearance', Leofflaed is reported to have resisted her parents' attempts to marry her to a 'powerful noble' and to have escaped such a fate by the intervention of Wulfhild. Goscelin claims that Wulfhild, who thereafter kept Leofflaed as a co-worker and 'shaped her in total uprightness', later prophesied her succession to the position of abbess of Barking.⁵⁴⁵ Indeed, the translation account which follows the Life of Wulfhild makes it clear that Leofflaed did become abbess and was herself the instigator of Wulfhild's translation some years after her death. Three things strike me as important here. Firstly, this account makes clear that it is Barking abbesses who select their successors. The parallel to Goscelin's Life of Æthelburg, in which Æthelburg selects her successor Hildelith, further strengthens this claim, and was perhaps particularly important in the late eleventh century context of episcopal interference at Barking.⁵⁴⁶ Secondly, Leofflaed's translation of Wulfhild represents the third instance of a Barking abbess undertaking a translation of relics at the nunnery. As with that undertaken by

⁵⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, ch. 7, p. 427.

⁵⁴⁶ Consider also, the Barking charter which specifies the nunnery's right to elect their own abbesses.

Hildelith in the eighth century, no involvement of an outside authority is recorded. This may be a deliberate omission, and one which sets a precedent for Ælfgifu's rejection of the authority of Bishop Maurice in her late eleventh-century translation of the Barking saints. It is perhaps just as likely that these earlier translations were simply community affairs, which might explain the community's resistance to external interference in their cult promotion. In either case, Leofflaed's translation provides another example, and perhaps completes a motif, of Barking abbesses undertaking translations of Barking abbess saints. Finally, the description of Leofflaed as one driven to overcome her matrimonial fate, places her very firmly in the company of Wulfhild and many other female saints of the early medieval period. Was Goscelin attempting to elevate Leofflaed herself to saintly status? It is perhaps significant that his treatment of the other abbess of Barking, Ælfgifu, similarly demonstrates a concern to raise the profile of a Barking abbess, as Ælfgifu is celebrated for her instigation of the building programme (a traditional activity of abbess saints), for her royal connections (with King Edward) and for her visionary activity (usually a preserve of the saintly, particularly the female saint). All of these factors would seem to fit well with late-eleventh century concerns at Barking, which plausibly centred on the abbess's jurisdiction and the nunnery's right to elect their own leaders.

The one punishment miracle in Wulfhild's Life concerns the extravagant use of materials by 'a certain goldsmith of the church', and, more pointedly, his inappropriate response to Wulfhild's rebuke of him. Upon her reply that 'Before your end, you will atone for this defence of your fault and abuse of your mouth', the goldsmith was immediately struck dumb, and remained so until his death a year later. Indeed, despite his repentance, he was not relieved of his loss of speech –it is therefore made clear that Wulfhild did not forgive the slight to her authority.⁵⁴⁷ Here Wulfhild is constructed in a similar mould to that of Æthelburg, that is, as a powerful abbess and protector of Barking's resources, which again, would fit well with a post-Conquest context of threats, whether real or perceived, to the nunnery's resources or authority and autonomy. It is, however, just as plausible that this image of Wulfhild belonged to an earlier phase of her cult.

One of the most detailed accounts in the Life of Wulfhild is that which records the expulsion of Wulfhild from Barking at the hands of Edgar's queen, Ælfhryth. Goscelin casts the account in terms of a 'test' of Wulfhild's patience and humility. According to Goscelin, the

⁵⁴⁷ Goscelin, *Vita Wulfhildae*, ch. 8, in Colker, 'Texts of Jocelyn of Canterbury', pp. 427-428: ' "Ante tuum ... finem lues hanc culpae patrocinem et oris abusionem." '.

difficulties began when the *'officiarii'* of Barking rose up against Wulfhild, and with the support of Queen Ælfhryth, had her ejected from Barking, leaving them to rule the nunnery themselves. On her departure, which was, according to Goscelin, much lamented by the nuns, Wulfhild prophesied that 'on this very same day on which I leave, after 20 years I will return to remain permanently with you.'⁵⁴⁸ Wulfhild then withdrew to her 'hereditary monastery' at Horton. Goscelin then claims that, despite her absence from Barking, Wulfhild continued as a source of inspiration for the nuns there through 'orders and frequent messengers'.⁵⁴⁹

During Wulfhild's 20-year absence, Queen Ælfhryth, reportedly treating the nunnery 'as her own possession' allowed the nunnery, its resources and inhabitants, to fall into ruin and sickness. It is also said that Ælfhryth herself became sick while staying at the nunnery. At this point Ælfhryth was visited by the spirit of Barking's first abbess, Æthelburg, who appeared in 'wretched attire, her garment ragged and in shreds, her appearance weak', herself a manifestation of the nunnery's ruin, to scold Ælfhryth for her treatment of the house and its possessions, and to ask 'with what authority do you occupy this holy place?' Æthelburg warned that Ælfhryth's illness would continue and worsen if she did not revoke her earlier decision to remove Wulfhild from Barking. At this, Ælfhryth sent 'suitable legates' (as she herself was too greatly shaken by the vision) to restore Wulfhild as abbess of Barking. Thus, Wulfhild fulfilled her own prophesy of returning 20 years after her expulsion, and Ælfhryth returned to good health 'so that she might know that the cause of her illness had been the expulsion of [Wulfhild]'. Goscelin tells us that from that time on, and for seven more years until her death, Wulfhild '*ruled both monasteries as a single mother*'.⁵⁵⁰

This passage raises questions about the significance of Horton, especially as Goscelin referred to it in an earlier chapter as one of the houses over which Wulfhild had authority. The association is strengthened here by Goscelin's reference to it as Wulfhild's 'hereditary monastery'. However, the Life is at pains to show that, despite her exile to Horton, Wulfhild remained in contact with Barking and was determined to return there. In a later chapter depicting the immediate period following Wulfhild's death, Goscelin emphasises Wulfhild's continued alliance with Horton: 'Nor does she present herself with any lesser signs in her possession of Horton...inasmuch as she shows that she loves both places, thus as she

⁵⁴⁸ *Ibid*, ch. 9, pp. 428-429: "hac ipsa die et hac ipsa ianua, qua nunc egredior, post uiginti annos de reliquo uobiscum permansura regrediar.".

⁵⁴⁹ *Ibid*: "... et exemplis illas mandatis et nunciis crebro ...".

⁵⁵⁰ *Ibid*: "... utrumque monasterium unica mater ... rexit."

embraced both in a single rule.’⁵⁵¹ This statement is immediately illustrated with a miracle of most unusual nature. Goscelin claims that a woman ‘afflicted with injury both of the eyes and of the feet’ came to Horton to pray to the ‘healthgiving virgin’ Wulfhild. Here she was received the miraculous healing of her eyes, but was ‘divinely informed’ that, to receive healing of her feet, she must go to Barking and request Wulfhild’s help there. With ‘long and gasping effort’ she crawled to Barking (some twenty miles) and there received a second miracle which restored her health completely. Goscelin states that: ‘Thus the single parent Wulfhild...worked a double-saving action in both her places and joined together both monasteries by a double miracle and showed that both were uniquely dear to her in the double solace of one.’⁵⁵² Clearly, there was at some point an important link between the nunneries of Barking and Horton. Given that Horton does not appear to have been active as a religious house by 1066,⁵⁵³ the Barking/Horton questions that this raises may not be immediately comprehensible in the post-1006 circumstances which have so far been identified. The issue of Horton therefore requires further attention, and will form the subject of the following chapter.

The focus on the queen in Goscelin’s account of Wulfhild’s expulsion also raises questions on the relationship between the royal house and Barking Abbey, and seems particularly significant given the traditional links between nunneries and queens. The disparagement of Queen Ælfhryth in this text in fact places it within a wider literary tradition which casts Ælfhryth as a ‘wicked queen’, and which was still current in the late eleventh century, as William of Malmesbury, for example, demonstrates.⁵⁵⁴ The link with other stories of Ælfhryth, many of which emanate from English nunneries which also promoted saints of the tenth century, suggests that further consideration of this issue is necessary alongside that of other late tenth and eleventh century contexts affecting Barking and its promotion of the cult of Wulfhild. This issue will also, therefore, be considered at a later point in the thesis.

⁵⁵¹ *Ibid*, ch. 10, pp. 429-430: ‘nec minori signorum gratia se representat in sua possessiua Hortuna ... quatenus ostendat se utrumque locum diligere sicut utrumque complexa est unico moderamine.’

⁵⁵² *Ibid*, ch. 11, pp. 430-431: ‘Sic unica parens Vulfilda in una dupliciter destituta ... in gemellis locis suis est operata, utrumque cenobium bino miraculo in una coniunxit atque utrumque unice sibi dilectum in unius duplici leuamine ostendit ...’.

⁵⁵³ A charter of King Edward the Confessor’s, which purports to come from 1061, grants privileges to what appears to be a male house. This will be explored further in the next section of the thesis.

⁵⁵⁴ William of Malmesbury’s derisive treatment of Ælfhryth in his *Life of Dunstan* is followed through in his *Gesta Regum Anglorum* [bk. 2, ch. 157, 158, 159:2, 161 & 162] and *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum* [bk. 2, ch. 78:7, 86:4-6, 87:1, 95:1] which are both products of the 1120s.

The Translation of Wulfhild

Goscelin's *Life of Wulfhild* also includes a translation account and a collection of posthumous miracles associated with the saint. It should be noted that the account of Wulfhild's translation which is appended to Goscelin's *vita* records a separate translation to that of the Barking trinity of saints, and one which occurred prior to the Norman Conquest, in the earlier eleventh century. While this section of the text clearly serves as a demonstration of Wulfhild's sanctity, it may also reveal how that sanctity was shaped by post-1066 or earlier contexts.

According to the translation account, Wulfhild's death occurred while she, and the rest of the Barking community, was staying in the city of London. This was due, according to Goscelin, to the presence of 'external enemies' in the vicinity of Barking itself.⁵⁵⁵ While the nuns were preparing her corpse to be returned to Barking for burial, 'a certain person, to whom the holy mother had been hostile because of his offences, put his hands on the bier among the others'. This led to Wulfhild's tomb becoming miraculously immovable, and 'the wicked one' was identified by the rest of the retinue as the cause of such immovability. It was only once he had removed his hand from the tomb that the journey back to Barking could begin.⁵⁵⁶ Is there perhaps a suggestion here that someone from London was attempting to keep the body of Wulfhild there? Immovability miracles are usually associated with relic theft, or the prevention of it. This miracle is perhaps especially significant given the association between London and Barking. The post-1066 tensions between the bishop of London and Barking could certainly form the backdrop to such a tale, which leads to further questions about the relations between London and Barking. This may also serve as a reminder that such relations, and possibly tensions, may have applied earlier, especially given their close geographical proximity and historic links between the saints Eorcenwald and Æthelburg. It should also, perhaps, be considered in the light of Wulfhild's dual abbacy of Barking and Horton, a point to which I shall return later.

Goscelin states in the translation account that Leofflaed succeeded Wulfhild as abbess of Barking, as she had prophesied. It was at her instigation that 'about thirty years after her

⁵⁵⁵ Goscelin, *Vita Wulfhildae*, ch. 12, in Colker, 'Texts of Jocelyn of Canterbury', p. 431. The external enemies are presumably Danes: *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* records Danish attacks in south-eastern England in the last years of the tenth century and beyond.

⁵⁵⁶ *Ibid*: '... quidam cui sancta mater ob scelera sua infensa fuerat, inter caeteros manus apposuit feretro, ...'.

burial', Wulfhild was translated and reburied 'with more honour'.⁵⁵⁷ The death of Wulfhild around the turn of the eleventh century therefore places this event in the late 1020s or early 1030s. Before the translation occurred, Wulfhild appeared in a vision to one of the Barking nuns, requesting her help during the translation. Wulfhild instructed the sister to conceal her body with a cloth so that her body was not seen by the crowd. When the rest of the community learned of the vision, it was decided that this task would be best performed by the nun Wulfrun/Judith (whom Goscelin earlier described as his main informant on Wulfhild). While Goscelin reports that Wulfrun successfully concealed the holy corpse 'from unworthy eyes', he also describes the miraculous discovery by Wulfrun, the abbess Leofflaed, and all the other Barking nuns, that Wulfhild's body remained incorrupt 'in all her body and clothing'. Goscelin also describes 'smells of heavenly sweetness' within the tomb.⁵⁵⁸ While these features of Wulfhild's translation are fairly standard in form, the claim that they were witnessed only by the community of Barking could perhaps be read in light of Goscelin's earlier suggestion that there was some doubt as to the validity of Wulfhild's cult. Clearly, the faith of the community is used here to validate the cult.

The theme of immovability, which we saw at the point of Wulfhild's departure from Barking, arises once again when her relics are translated by Leofflaed. Despite a 'multitude of helpers', the sarcophagus could not be moved 'even the smallest amount'. Once again, the cause of immovability was the presence of someone who Wulfhild had disapproved of while alive. Goscelin states that Wulfhild had once condemned the woman to servitude for an act of theft, but that, on the prayers of the Barking nuns for Wulfhild's forgiveness, the saint relented and the tomb became once again moveable.⁵⁵⁹ There is a parallel here with Goscelin's account of the translation effected by abbess Ælfgifu. In both accounts the abbess of Barking undertakes a translation independent of outside authority, secular or ecclesiastic. In both accounts there occur immovability miracles which cast doubt on the appropriateness of the endeavour. And in both accounts such doubts are overcome by the pious efforts of the Barking community. It may be then that this episode should be read in light of the post-Conquest contexts at Barking, and especially in relation to apparent concerns within the community about their jurisdictional rights.

⁵⁵⁷ *Ibid*, ch. 13, pp. 431-432.

⁵⁵⁸ *Ibid*: '... paradysiacae suauitatis aromata ...'.

⁵⁵⁹ *Ibid*, ch. 14, pp. 432-433.

Wulfhild's translation is followed by a series of posthumous miracles which serve to confirm her saintly nature. Two of the miracles which are related in the translation account relate to the economic situation of the nunnery. In the first, which is set in a period 'when the monastery suffered depredations by a hostile army', the nun Wulfrun calls on Wulfhild to provide her with a new tunic. Soon after, and with money provided by the abbess, Wulfrun purchased a tunic in London, but, on her return to the nunnery, discovered that she still had the money intended for the purchase in her pocket. However, the merchant assured Wulfrun that she *had* paid, and thus it was clear that St Wulfhild had provided for both Wulfrun and the nunnery by miraculous intervention.⁵⁶⁰ The second miracle focused on the adornments of the presbytery 'which had been damaged by robbers'. On the day after one of the nuns had admonished Wulfhild for allowing her church to be 'so shabby and bare', a 'certain matron' offered a curtain ample enough to decorate the whole choir.⁵⁶¹ These miracles appear to respond to a context in which the nunnery was experiencing financial difficulties, and reveal an expectation that Wulfhild would provide for the community's needs.⁵⁶² But once again, this feature of the cult cannot easily be placed in one time period or another. The effects of the Norman Conquest on patterns of patronage provide a plausible context for the nunnery's financial concerns. But, disruptions to the English political and dynastic regime which may have led to financial depredation of monasteries did not, of course, only occur in the aftermath of 1066, but also in the earlier eleventh century conquest by Cnut. The effects of Viking raids could also provide a context for these miracle stories.

Clearly, then, Wulfhild was an important saint within the community of Barking whose cult had been cultivated and promoted from as early as the late 1020s. Much of the information supplied to Goscelin seems to have come from the memories of the nun Wulfrun/Judith, though perhaps was also recorded as part of Wulfhild's first translation ceremony and the apparent push for promotion of her cult in the earlier eleventh century. This raises the question as to how far the Life and translation of Wulfhild responds to post-Conquest contexts. Some elements of the Life and translation appear well-placed in the political situations of the late eleventh century, and therefore the period of Goscelin's production of the texts. For example, Wulfhild's appearance as an imperious punishing saint, which casts her in a similar role to that of Æthelburg as punisher of Viking and Norman transgressors,

⁵⁶⁰ *Ibid*, ch. 15, p. 433.

⁵⁶¹ *Ibid*, ch. 17, p. 434

⁵⁶² There are parallels here to Goscelin's Life of St Edith at Wilton which records the nuns' anger at Edith's lack of intervention despite their financial difficulties after the Conquest in 1066. See Goscelin, *Translation of Edith*, ch. 22, in S. Hollis, *Writing the Wilton Women*, pp. 90-91.

would fit well in the apparent context of external secular and ecclesiastical threat of the immediate post-Conquest period. Similarly, the emphasis on Wulfhild's role as provider for the community in times of financial difficulty may highlight the difficulties faced by the nunnery after the elimination of English noble and royal patrons. There are however, elements of the Wulfhild material that does not sit easily with an interpretation based on post-Conquest contexts. The condemnation of Queen Ælfthryth and her treatment of the nunnery 'as her own possession', which perhaps could be read as a warning to queens with an interest in the nunnery, is difficult to place in a context of royal Norman leadership which did not overtly involve queens. Another example is the emphasis on Barking's close relationship, even duality, with the nunnery of Horton, which seems somewhat irrelevant in a period in which the nunnery had apparently ceased to function. It therefore seems necessary to explore these contexts in particular, and the earlier eleventh century in general, in order to gain an understanding of the nature and production of the cult and Life of Wulfhild.

Conclusions

The Barking Cycle can, in many ways, be said to have responded to the situation in which Barking Abbey found itself in the aftermath of 1066. In particular, the translation and vision accounts appear to have been composed within the context of cult renewal and a significant building programme at Barking. The translation itself may have responded to the effects of Norman settlement in England, especially perhaps to the need to secure patronage from the new aristocracy, but also in terms of emulating the numerous Norman constructions of impressive church buildings. The translation account, however, appears to not only record the translation and building programme at Barking, but also to address external, predominantly episcopal, doubts about the process. The vision account, set seven years after the first translation, could perhaps be read as a response to internal, community concerns about the long interval between the initial translation of the relics, and their establishment in the new church. Both of these texts use the saints themselves to assuage doubts about the translation, and effectively legitimise the process. They also serve to emphasise the strong rule of abbess Ælfgifu through association with the secular authority of both Edward the Confessor and Bishop William 'the Norman', as well as the more ethereal authority of Bishop Germanus of Auxerre. The use of these latter two figures may represent appeal to a Norman audience in particular.

Association with Bishop William also serves to highlight a link between Barking and the London episcopacy, one which is further emphasised in the *Life of Æthelburg* through numerous references to Bishop Eorcenwald as the founder of Barking and the close relationship between himself and his sister Æthelburg. This association seems significant in light of the portrayal of Bishop Maurice in the translation account and may best be understood as a reminder of the long tradition of links between the two establishments. There also appears to be some issues regarding relic ownership between London and Barking. The *Life of Eorcenwald* records an attempt by Barking to claim Eorcenwald's relics at the time of his death. It also makes reference to an attempted theft of his relics at a later time, though in this case, the thieves are not named. The author of Eorcenwald's *Life* does however, make reference to a similar situation of attempted relic-theft at Barking. On this point, it is interesting to note that the theme of immovability arises surprisingly often in the Barking Cycle, especially as the texts do not explicitly suggest that any one of the Barking saints was subject to the threat of relic theft. All three saints have this topos applied to them: in the triple translation account, each of the saints in turn becomes immovable. In Æthelburg's case, this was because Ælfgifu had forgotten to move the golden coins along with her relics, and is resolved once she remembers them. For both Hildelith and Wulfhild, their immovability is associated with their reluctance to be placed at any distance from Æthelburg, and is resolved on the admonitions and blandishments of the abbess and nuns of Barking. In Wulfhild's *Life and Translation* account, the saint becomes immovable on two separate occasions. In the first instance, her tomb cannot be moved from London while the hand of an unidentified, but 'wicked' man remains upon it. In the second, it cannot be moved due to the involvement of a woman who had been condemned as a thief by Wulfhild. In both cases, the tomb can only be moved once the offending individuals had withdrawn from the procession. Earlier I suggested [n. 25] that the immovability themes may have responded to a threat of relic theft, but this is nowhere made explicit by Goscelin. This might suggest that these references belong to a context earlier than the one in which Goscelin was writing, and this theory certainly needs further consideration. On the other hand, it may be that the apparent connection between Bishop Maurice and the Barking saints, evidenced in the dedication of the *Life of Wulfhild* to him, the engraved stone bearing his and abbess Ælfgifu's name, and his role in the late eleventh-century translation process at Barking, is relevant here.

Indeed, we might consider that Maurice, a Norman churchman who quite clearly understood and valued the worth (material or otherwise) of Anglo-Saxon saints, was perhaps more

interested in the Barking saints than has previously been assumed. As we have seen in the previous chapter, Norman churchmen had quite quickly come to realise the value of English saints' cults, and indeed, had been active promoters of them. It may be possible then, that the burst of hagiographical writing in England just after the Norman Conquest, rather than simply representing an attempt by the English to recommend their saints to the Normans, or a recording of English history and spirituality, was in fact a response to attempted takeovers of English saints' cults by the new Norman episcopacy. Furthermore, it may be that the Barking Cycle itself represents an attempt by an English female monastic house to protect their rights to promote the cults of their saints, and indeed, to continue to receive the benefits which they offered. We could perhaps read the immovability theme present in the Barking Cycle as a statement that the saints belonged only to the nunnery, and responded only to the authority of the Barking abbess and community. Patrick Geary has argued that relic theft or appropriation usually occurred in the presence of particular circumstances, including at the point of foundation of a religious house, in periods of political turmoil (and the resultant need for protection from secular powers), as an effect of religious competition and rivalry between monastic houses, and as a means of overcoming defects in other areas, including a lack of popular devotion.⁵⁶³ Of the circumstances defined by Geary, three are applicable here. Firstly, the late eleventh-century post-Conquest period in England was clearly one of political turmoil. However, it is unlikely that Maurice, or indeed, St Paul's, was in need of protection from secular powers, quite the reverse in fact. The existence of competition between Barking and St Paul's, however, seems evident in both the charter material and the *Life of Eorcenwald*, which was produced in the early twelfth century as part of a renewal of the saint's cult under Maurice and his successors. The renewed promotion of Eorcenwald's cult was itself an effect of the destruction by fire of St Paul's in 1087, which could perhaps be seen in terms of Geary's theory of 'defectiveness' leading to relic appropriation.

Maurice's role in both the translation and the Barking cycle is, in many ways, difficult to interpret. On the one hand, he is portrayed as an obstacle to the promotion of the nunnery's saints. On the other, he is described as a protector of the cults who is honoured through dedication to him of the *Lives* of both Æthelburg and Wulfhild. Perhaps these conflicting portrayals of Maurice belong themselves to different times and contexts. It may be that the translation account was produced before the final version of the *Lives* of Æthelburg and Wulfhild, and that this records Maurice's initial resistance to Ælfgifu's ambitious programme

⁵⁶³ Geary, *Furta Sacra*, pp. 129-131.

of building and cult promotion. As it is clear that both the building works and translation took place despite Maurice's reservations, it may be that the bishop ultimately accepted and supported Ælfgifu's actions. The dedication of the Lives to Maurice may therefore belong to this later period of his acceptance, though conversely, the dedication of these Lives to Maurice could also be read as an attempt by the Barking community to gain Maurice's support. There is no mention of Maurice in the vision account which seems to have been produced at least seven years after the original translation of the Barking saints, and it may be that, by this time, Maurice's support was secured. This would also help to explain the existence of the memorial stone linking Ælfgifu and Maurice, which could conceivably have been produced to mark the completion of the translation programme. Ultimately, Maurice's role in the translation account is one which serves to emphasise the power and autonomy of Barking's abbess, who, despite Norman, episcopal opposition, carried out her plan to bolster the community's position.

There is, indeed, in all of the texts, an overarching emphasis on the power and authority of Barking's abbesses. Not only does Goscelin highlight the authority of Barking's saintly abbesses Æthelburg, Hildelith, and Wulfhild, which we might expect, he also goes to some effort to emphasise the strong rule of both abbess Ælfgifu and abbess Leofflaed. Ælfgifu, for example, is celebrated for her building programme and royal and episcopal connections. Leofflaed is in many ways portrayed as a female saint in terms of her rejection of a wealthy suitor in order to take up the monastic life at Barking. She, like Ælfgifu, is also reported to have instigated the translation of relics at Barking. In both Leofflaed's translation of Wulfhild's relics and Hildelith's translation of early relics of Barking, the abbess appears, perhaps deliberately, to manage the event without episcopal approval or support. Seen alongside Goscelin's portrayal of Æthelburg as both mother and protector of the Barking community and its assets, of Hildelith as a worthy successor to, and emulator of, Æthelburg as well as an exemplar figure, and of Wulfhild as the royally-sponsored provider of wealth at Barking, Goscelin's depictions of Leofflaed and Ælfgifu effectively serve to demonstrate a long tradition of abbatial power and authority at Barking. It may also be important that both Æthelburg and Wulfhild selected their own successors, and that, according to Goscelin, there was no involvement of an episcopal or secular figure in the process. This point would also align with the idea, discussed earlier in the thesis, that Barking was manipulating its charter material in response to jurisdictional claims in the post-Conquest period.

The translation and vision accounts also highlight the high volume of relics held by the nunnery, seen in the discovery of the relics of St Germanus and those of Eadgyth and Tortgyth, and the appearance of numerous reliquaries in Ælfgifu's vision. The theme of multiple saints at Barking is in fact expressed in all of the texts, most notably in the form of the trinity of Æthelburg, Hildelith and Wulfhild, but also through reference to the power of whole former communities of Barking in the *Life of Æthelburg* and the *Lessons of Hildelith*. This tableau helps to create an image of Barking as a nunnery with a long tradition of saint-making and a high level of divine support. It also serves as a reminder of the role of the community in the promotion of saints' cults at Barking. Indeed, it is arguable that the vision account responded directly to the community's concerns over the length of the translation process at Barking. This suggests that the nunnery as a whole played a part in the development of both the saints' cults and the literary commemoration of them.

The power of the Barking community is in fact highlighted at various points throughout the cycle. The community together make the decision to go ahead with the translation of the Barking saints, and take an active part in the process. Many of the early miracles in the *Life of Æthelburg* involve not only the saint, but the community as a whole. For example, a blind woman is healed after praying to 'the whole congregation' of Barking. The *Lessons of St Hildelith* also focuses on the power of the Barking community, as well as its possession of many relics and patron saints. This text also records the martyrdom of a previous community of Barking during Viking attacks; this community is described as being worshipped for their sanctity. The active role played by the community throughout its history is clearly being emphasised by Goscelin, quite likely at their behest.

The protection miracles included in Goscelin's *Life of Æthelburg* reveal the nunnery's concerns about invasion and theft of their resources. As we have seen, these miracles belong to the non-Bedan part of the *Life of Æthelburg*, and belong, at the earliest, to the reign of Æthelred I (d. 871). It is certainly possible, however, that these miracles, which depict Æthelburg as a strong protector of the nunnery, were aimed at a Norman audience, and were formed, at least in the version we now have, in response to threats to the nunnery's land or jurisdiction which belong to a post-1066 context.

The use of authority figures, seen throughout the cycle, may also respond to the post-Conquest contexts highlighted by historians such as Paul Hayward. Figures such as Bishop William and Edward the Confessor may have been deemed particularly appropriate for a

Norman audience, as perhaps would St Germanus. Emphasis on the connection between the Bedan saint Eorcenwald and Barking may have been directed at a Norman audience, though his position as Bishop of London seems to suggest a more precise intention to appeal to the London episcopacy. The use of authority figures to validate the Barking cults is most obvious in the text on Hildelith, which claims that Dunstan, Æthelwold and Ælfheah had honoured the saint. The Life of Wulfhild also strongly links that saint to Æthelwold. While it is possible that the use of these figures responds to post-Conquest doubts about the legitimacy of the saints at Barking, the earlier eleventh-century popularity of these figures seems to suggest that their inclusion belongs to a pre-Conquest period. References to King Alfred and King Edgar in the Life of Wulfhild could similarly belong to a pre- as well as post-Conquest context, as each was celebrated in England from at least their deaths onwards.

In fact, there are various themes within the Life of Wulfhild in particular which appear to belong to earlier eleventh century contexts. Besides the linking of the saint with King Edgar, Wulfhild is associated with his queen, Ælfthryth. Goscelin presents the tale of Wulfhild's expulsion in a way which condemns Ælfthryth for her involvement in the nunnery, and which serves perhaps as a warning for subsequent queens. Such a warning would not have been particularly relevant in the reign of either William I or II. Similarly, Goscelin's emphasis on the connections between the nunneries of Barking and Horton does not appear to make sense in a post-Conquest period, as Horton seems to have ceased to function as a female house by that point. Alongside Goscelin's use of authority figures of the earlier eleventh century, and the possibility of relic appropriation or claims by another monastic house at some point, these issues require further investigation if we are to gain a full understanding of both the Barking cycle and the experiences of the Barking community.

Ultimately, we need to consider the possibility that Goscelin was, in the late eleventh century, adapting material which had been formed in quite different circumstances. We know from Goscelin himself that he used both written and oral sources for compiling the Barking cycle. We also know that Wulfhild's relics were translated at an earlier point in the eleventh century, probably in the 1030s. As it is common to see production of translation accounts and saints' Lives at the same time at which translation ceremonies occurred, it is possible that the material on Wulfhild was gathered together at that point. It is also possible that the Life of Æthelburg and Lessons of Hildelith were redrawn at the same time. The following chapters will therefore consider Barking Abbey in its late Anglo-Saxon contexts.

Chapter Six:

Barking and Horton

Goscelin's *Life of Wulfhild* reveals a connection between Barking Abbey and the nunnery of Horton. At various points throughout both the *Life* and translation account of Wulfhild, Goscelin links the two nunneries through a shared abbess and mutual involvement in the expulsion scandal at Barking, and ultimately builds a case for a shared ownership of the saint. The Barking/Horton motif is found only in Goscelin's *Life of Wulfhild*; Horton is at no point referred to in any of the other texts which form the Barking Cycle. This may indicate that the connection described by Goscelin existed only during Wulfhild's lifetime; however, it was clearly important enough to have been recorded in the late eleventh-century written tradition associated with St Wulfhild. The lack of evidence for a nunnery at Horton after 1066 does however raise questions about the function of this tale, and perhaps suggests that Goscelin's *Life of Wulfhild* bears witness to earlier contexts at Barking.

The material on Horton is often anomalous. For example, Goscelin asserts both that Horton was Wulfhild's hereditary monastery, and that Edgar gave it to Wulfhild as part of a larger settlement. On the one hand, Horton is described as being at the centre of a group of nunneries, one of which was Barking. On the other, Barking is portrayed as equal to Horton in the two-part miracle which occurred at both Barking and Horton. In many ways, this treatment of Horton in the *Life* is odd. Given that Goscelin's *Life* was produced for Barking, we might expect to see some undermining of Wulfhild's links to Horton. Instead, Goscelin's *Life* seems to respond to questions about the ownership of St Wulfhild and, perhaps, of Barking itself. Indeed, some of the material in the Barking *Life of Wulfhild* looks more like the sort which would be included in a claim made by Horton. This may suggest that there was some sort of dispute over possession of the cult of St Wulfhild. Indeed, the translation account appended to Wulfhild's *Life* contains a miracle of immovability from Barking, of a type usually associated with the threat of relic theft. It may be that this miracle responded to threats of appropriation by Horton. However, the *Life* asserts an equality of Horton and Barking which Goscelin underlines by his account of the saint, and which might suggest that Goscelin was working together two different claims to possession of Wulfhild's relics. Goscelin's *Life of Wulfhild* may therefore incorporate traditions from both Barking and

Horton. This raises questions about the sources which Goscelin used to compile the Life in the late eleventh century.

In his prologue to the Life, Goscelin notes that Wulfhild's holy life 'is recited in the mouth of many as also in books'. He names the 'aged mothers of the institution' as oral witnesses to her sanctity, and in particular the nun Wulfrun, who had been alive under both Wulfhild's abbacy and at the time of Goscelin's writing.⁵⁶⁴ Wulfrun herself appears in a number of accounts contained in the translation account of Wulfhild, suggesting that these were the stories related to Goscelin by her.⁵⁶⁵ In his chapter on Wulfhild's ancestral history, Goscelin claims that his information was 'related by old people'.⁵⁶⁶ It would seem then, that Goscelin was predominantly dependent on oral source material and, as we might expect, tradition preserved at Barking itself. His reference to 'books' might, however, suggest that there existed an earlier Life of Wulfhild, or collection of miracles, from which he could draw. In light of the material on Horton, it may even be possible that there had been a Horton Life of Wulfhild which Goscelin adapted, or even answered, in his own, late eleventh-century version. Barbara Yorke has discussed the possibility that another of Goscelin's works, the Life of Edith, was based on an earlier, possibly English, hagiographical source. As with his Life of Wulfhild, Goscelin claims that his Life of Edith was based on both oral and written sources. Yorke suggests that Goscelin was drawing on a body of (written) material which was designed to assert the saint's royal descent, a feature of the Life that seems to respond to pre-Conquest contexts, specifically the succession crisis following her father Edgar's death.⁵⁶⁷ While some historians doubt the existence of earlier Lives of Anglo-Saxon saints, and cite the Viking invasions as a reason for the dearth of hagiographical writing in the late Anglo-Saxon period,⁵⁶⁸ it nevertheless remains possible that Lives written in this period, perhaps especially those written in English, were not preserved following their re-production in Latin in the post-Conquest era. This is perhaps especially the case for nunneries without a continuous history, such as Horton. We should perhaps not too easily dismiss then, the possibility that Horton, or indeed Barking, had produced a Life of Wulfhild prior to the one that we now have, and that Goscelin made use of it.

⁵⁶⁴ Goscelin, *Vita Wulfhildae*, prologue, in Colker, 'Texts of Jocelyn of Canterbury', p. 418 and see chapter four above.

⁵⁶⁵ *Ibid*, ch. 13, 15, 17, pp. 431-432, 433, 434.

⁵⁶⁶ *Ibid*, ch.1, pp. 419-420: '... retexitur ab antiquis.'

⁵⁶⁷ Yorke, 'Carriers of the Truth', p. 51.

⁵⁶⁸ Love, 'Hagiography', pp. 226-8; Lapidge, 'The Saintly Life in Anglo-Saxon England', pp. 243-63.

As it now stands, Goscelin's *Life of Wulfhild* represents the main body of evidence on Horton, and so must be the starting point for research into the house. The first reference to Horton in Goscelin's *Life of Wulfhild* occurs in his description of King Edgar's gift to Wulfhild of the abbacy of Barking. After relating the various augmentations made to Barking, Goscelin claims that Edgar also gave to Wulfhild control of five other religious houses at Horton, Wilton, Shaftesbury, Wareham and *Hamtonia*.⁵⁶⁹ Edgar is said to have given Wulfhild these five houses of female religious as well as one church in each town. In the passage describing Edgar's gifts to Wulfhild, Goscelin writes that 'Horton is like an umbilical tetrapolis, in four equally spaced towns, each twenty miles distant, which are Wilton, Shaftesbury, Wareham and Hamton.'⁵⁷⁰ His description of Horton as an 'umbilical tetrapolis' [*umbilicus tetrapolis*] places Horton in a central position within this grouping of nunneries, and perhaps suggests that the nunnery was already acting as the hub of an existing network. The maternal imagery which is conjured by the phrase may also be significant in terms of Goscelin's suggestion that Wulfhild exercised abbatial rights over these nunneries. Goscelin and the Barking nuns are clearly suggesting that Wulfhild was given authority not only over Barking, but also over the nunneries at Horton, Wilton, Shaftesbury, Wareham and Southampton, and furthermore, that these formed a wider network of nunneries. This claim has been questioned by various historians, and certainly requires further exploration. I will therefore return to a discussion of Barking's claim to overlordship of these nunneries at a later point.

Horton is also linked to Barking in a later chapter of the *Life* which describes Wulfhild's expulsion from Barking by Queen Ælfhryth. According to Goscelin, Wulfhild withdrew at this time to Horton, her 'hereditary monastery' [*ad hereditarium monasterium suum Hortunam recessit*], at which she was to remain for twenty years before returning to resume the abbacy of Barking.⁵⁷¹ This statement sits at odds with the claim that Edgar had given the

⁵⁶⁹ Goscelin, *Vita Wulfhildae*, ch. 4, in Colker, 'Texts of Jocelyn of Canterbury', pp. 423-425. In 1913 M. Esposito, in his 'La vie de Sainte Vulfhilde par Goscelin de Cantorbéry', *Analecta Bollandiana*, 32 (1913), pp. 10-26, at p. 17, n. 6, identified *Hamtonia* as Hampton in Gloucestershire, though more recently M. A. O'Donovan, in her *Charters of Sherborne* (Oxford, 1988), p. lix, has argued that it is more likely to be Southampton due to its geographical location. Goscelin points out in the *Life* that, with Horton at the centre, the other four houses were equally spaced twelve miles distant from Horton. In modern measurement, Wareham lies 19 miles from Horton; Wilton 22 miles; Shaftesbury 15 miles and Southampton about 30 miles (while Hampton in Gloucestershire is over seventy miles from Horton)

⁵⁷⁰ Goscelin, *Vita Wulfhildae*, ch. 4, in Colker, 'Texts of Jocelyn of Canterbury', pp. 423-425: *Est autem Hortuna quasi umbilicus tetrapolis in quattuor oppidis aequalibus spaciis, id est sigulis duodenis milibus, distantibus, quae sunt Vuiltonia, Scaftesberia, Vuarham, Hamtonia.*

⁵⁷¹ *Ibid*, ch. 9, pp. 428-429. While it is clear that Wulfhild's exile at Horton occurred in the last decades of the tenth century, it is difficult to be more precise. As her death dates are between 996 and 1008 (and if Goscelin

house to Wulfhild as part of a wider package of gifts and authority, which may indicate use by Goscelin of two divergent traditions, quite possibly those of both Barking and Horton. It is possible however, that if Horton was the property of Wulfhild's family, Edgar was simply confirming her control of it at the same time as giving her the abbacy of Barking. Wulfhild's retreat to Horton upon her expulsion from the abbacy of Barking would make sense if indeed Horton was her family house. On the other hand, Wulfhild may simply have been allowed to retain possession of Horton under the agreement made with Edgar. It is difficult to know what to make of Goscelin's claim, but it may be that this formed part of a claim to possession of Horton. It is also possible, however, that this view represents a Horton tradition which was designed to bolster their claim to ownership of St Wulfhild. We should therefore be wary of accepting this at face value, especially as no evidence survives to confirm this fact.

A dedication of the church at Horton to St Wolfrida, as noted in the historiography, does however suggest a link to Wulfhild's family. Wolfrida, as an adaptation of the name Wulfthryth, may refer to Wulfhild's cousin Wulfthryth, who herself became a saint at the nunnery of Wilton. Such a dedication would serve to strengthen Goscelin's claim that Horton was Wulfhild's family monastery. It might also serve as evidence for the grouping of the nunneries Horton, Wilton, Shaftesbury, Wareham and Southampton during the tenth century. Unfortunately however, the evidence for Horton's dedication to St. Wolfrida is not strong. The first extant reference to such a dedication is found in Tanner's *Notitia*, which does not record the source for this knowledge.⁵⁷² O'Donovan has suggested that the idea of a dedication to St Wolfrida may represent confusion with St Wulfhild due to her links with Horton.⁵⁷³ A charter of King Edward's dated 1061 in fact records that Horton was, at that time, dedicated to St Mary. The dedication to Mary by 1061 may reflect a change in the

has correctly recorded the length of time that Wulfhild spent away from Barking), then the earliest point at which her exile could have begun is 975, and, at the latest in 981, as Queen Ælfthryth is said to have been alive at the point of her return, and Ælfthryth's death occurred 999x1001, on which see Pauline Stafford, 'Ælfthryth (d. 999x1001)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/194>, accessed 21 Jan 2011].

⁵⁷² T. Tanner, *Notitia Monastica; or an account of all the abbies, priories and houses of friers heretofore in England and Wales, and of all the colleges and hospitals founded before 1540* (London, 1744), Dorset, xiii. The same information about the dedication is repeated in F. Arnold-Forster, *Studies in Church Dedications, or England's patron saints* (London, 1889), and M. M. C. Calthrop, 'Houses of Benedictine monks: The priories of Cranbourne and Horton', *A History of the County of Dorset: Volume 2* (1908), pp. 70-73, at p. 71. URL: <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=40142> Date accessed: 18 January 2011.

⁵⁷³ O'Donovan, *Charters of Sherborne*, pp. lix-lx.

nature of the monastery at Horton, in other words, it may belong to a re-founded monastery there, a point which will be discussed below.⁵⁷⁴

Goscelin claims that during her time at Horton, Wulfhild continued to rule both 'present and absent sisters', sending messages and orders to the nuns of Barking. Upon her return to Barking, and through the seven years remaining of her life, Wulfhild is said to have 'ruled both monasteries as a single mother *as before*'.⁵⁷⁵ Indeed, at an earlier point in the *Life*, before his description of Wulfhild's expulsion from Barking, Goscelin wrote that 'Thus two churches, like a pair of Christ's harnessed horses, and one house, she guided in a single love...'.⁵⁷⁶ While Horton is not named specifically in this passage, the later descriptions of Wulfhild's ruling them both together indicate that here Goscelin was referring to Barking and Horton. Clearly, as far as Barking, and indeed Goscelin, were concerned, Wulfhild had exercised abbatial rights and control over Horton as well as Barking. Here again we may be witness to an emphasis made by Horton, that is, that Wulfhild ruled there as much as at Barking, even during her time as Barking's abbess.

One external piece of evidence links Wulfhild to Horton. A reference to a female congregation at Horton in Dorset, found in the *Liber Vitae of New Minster and Hyde Abbey*, confirms that Wulfhild was abbess of a nunnery at Horton in the tenth century. A list of *feminarum illustrium* found within the *Liber vitae* contains the entry *Wulfhild abbatissa Hortun coenobia*.⁵⁷⁷ The entry is in the main hand of the manuscript which was compiled at New Minster in the year 1031 by the monk Ælfsige. Simon Keynes however, has argued that some elements of the *Liber Vitae* may have originated in the 980s under the regime of King Æthelred II.⁵⁷⁸ This may then represent a contemporary source confirming Wulfhild's abbacy at Horton.

⁵⁷⁴ It is also possible that Horton was dedicated to both Wolfrida and Mary, just as Barking Abbey was dedicated to both St Æthelburg and Mary. It should also be noted that the present church of Horton, built in 1722 on the site of the former Anglo-Saxon church, is also dedicated to St Wolfrida, not St Mary. Clearly then there was a continuation of this tradition, though there may have been a break in its usage as a dedication.

⁵⁷⁵ Goscelin, *Vita Wulfhildae*, ch. 9, in Colker, 'Texts of Jocelyn of Canterbury', pp. 428-429: '...utrumque monasterium unica mater ut primitus pacatissimus habenis rexit...'.
⁵⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, ch. 4, pp. 423-425: 'Binas itaque ecclesias ut Christi bigas et unam domum unica caritate aurigabat...'.
⁵⁷⁷ W. Birch, *Liber Vitae: Register and Martyrology of New Minster and Hyde Abbey, Winchester* (London, 1892), p. 57. The entry for Wulfhild is immediately followed by those for St Edith, 'sister of King Æthelred', and for Wulfthryth, 'abbess of Wilton'. Wulfhild's entry is, interestingly, immediately preceded by those for Ælfgifu, 'wife of King Cnut' and Ælfthryth 'mother of King Æthelred'. At the very least, this places Wulfhild within a group of highly influential royal women.

⁵⁷⁸ S. Keynes, *The Liber Vitae of the New Minster and Hyde Abbey Winchester* (Copenhagen, 1996), p. 31, states that: 'The account of the early history of the New Minster, which serves as an introduction to the *Liber Vitae*, reaches its climax with the building of the multi-storey tower, and reads as if it had been composed to

The *Liber Vitae of New Minster* is the only evidence, besides the Life of Wulfhild, for a female congregation at Horton in the pre-Conquest period. There is no evidence of its foundation, though Sarah Foot, in her survey of female communities in Anglo-Saxon England, lists Horton as a 'new tenth-century foundation'.⁵⁷⁹ The absence of any foundation charters or tradition for this nunnery, however, makes this pure conjecture. Goscelin's reference to Horton as Wulfhild's hereditary monastery would seem to suggest its existence prior to her time as abbess there. However we should remain cautious in accepting Goscelin's testimony in this case, especially as the possibility exists that this formed part of a Horton claim to possession of Wulfhild's relics. From the evidence available all that can be determined is that there was a female religious house at Horton roughly between the 970s and 990s, and that Wulfhild was its abbess. After this period, no reference to a nunnery at Horton can be found. M.M.C. Calthrop in his account on Horton in the *Victoria County History* claimed that Horton was most likely destroyed in Viking raids carried out in the area in 998, 1001 and 1003, all attested in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*.⁵⁸⁰ An entry in the chronicle for 1015 records Cnut's 'ravaging' of Dorset, perhaps another likely occasion for Horton's downfall.⁵⁸¹ Sarah Foot, however, has argued that financial depredation is a more likely cause for the community's demise.⁵⁸²

So, we have evidence of a nunnery at Horton existing somewhere between the 970s and 990s, and of Wulfhild's abbacy there during that time. Evidence for the latter may suggest a connection between Barking and Horton, but certainly does not confirm one. Rather, it confirms Wulfhild's tenure at Horton. There is also no evidence of Horton's foundation, or of its demise. One indication that Horton had ceased to function as a nunnery by the early eleventh century is a charter of 1033 which records a grant of seven hides at Horton from King Cnut to 'his faithful minister', Bovi.⁵⁸³ This suggests that Horton had become the

commemorate the ceremony of dedication of the tower on 7 July in a year not earlier than 980 and not later than 987.' The list of West Saxon kings ends with King Æthelred, suggesting that it was compiled before the reign of Cnut. It is possible that the list of illustrious women was also compiled in the late tenth century, as none of the entries include women active after the turn of the century. Given that Wulfhild's time at Horton appears to have ended before the turn of the eleventh century at which time she regained the abbacy of Barking, it would make more sense if the commemoration of her as abbess of Horton in the *Liber Vitae Hyde Abbey* belonged to the last decades of the tenth century than to the first decades of the eleventh.

⁵⁷⁹ Foot, *Veiled Women II*, p. 101.

⁵⁸⁰ Calthrop, 'Houses of Benedictine monks: The priories of Cranbourne and Horton', pp. 70-73.

⁵⁸¹ *ASC* (C, D, E) 1015.

⁵⁸² Foot, *Veiled Women II*, p. 102.

⁵⁸³ S 969. Bovi also appears in the witness lists of three other charters of Cnut's reign: S 955, S 961, and S 975 (in which Cnut grants land to Sherborne abbey). Two of these charters purport to date from before 1033, the other to 1035, on which see O'Donovan, *Charters of Sherborne*, p. xiii. A copy of Cnut's charter [S 969] is preserved in the Sherborne cartulary, and was presumably transferred to Sherborne around 1122 when Horton

property of Cnut by 1033. This may have been gained during his raids of 1015, or been acquired as part of his accession to the English throne. It may be then, that Horton had at some point reverted to the royal house, a practice which is well-attested in records of royal benefaction.⁵⁸⁴ It is worth noting here that several of Cnut's men settled in Dorset after 1017. Indeed, as Simon Keynes has pointed out, Cnut and his closest followers seem to have taken a special interest in the county 'as if they had decided to make the base of their operations in the south-west'.⁵⁸⁵

It is possible then, that Horton's lands had reverted to the crown under Æthelred II and that Cnut acquired them along with the English crown. An entry in William of Malmesbury's *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum* is interesting on this point. William records that '*there is in Dorset a wood near Horton, a place which by Eadwulf's generosity once counted an abbey, though now it is in ruins.*'⁵⁸⁶ William describes Eadwulf as the son of Ordgar, earl of Devon, and brother of Queen Ælfthryth. Eadwulf, or Ordulf as he is more commonly known, appears to have been an important figure in the reign of his nephew, King Æthelred II. He frequently appears as a witness on charters of Æthelred's dating between 981 and 1006, after which point his name disappears from the witness lists, suggesting either his death or retirement from court.⁵⁸⁷ He is named in one of these charters as the founder of Tavistock Abbey, and in another as a supporter of monasticism.⁵⁸⁸ It is not clear from William's account whether Ordulf is being described as the founder of a house at Horton, or merely as its benefactor, but he is linked at more than point with the monastery there. William records that '*When Eadwulf had laid aside his cares and felt this peaceful spot [Horton] calling him he would give a demonstration there of his amazing strength.*' William also claims that Ordulf left instructions to have his body buried at Horton, but that, due to his leaving gifts along with this instruction, the '*violent abbot Sihtric transferred gifts and giver alike to his own abbey*',

and Sherborne amalgamated – to be discussed below. The cartulary itself dates from around a quarter of a century later. O'Donovan accepts the charter as genuine, and representative of the date it purports to come from.

⁵⁸⁴ Yorke, *Nunneries*, p. 91; P. Stafford, *Queen Emma and Edith: Queenship and Women's Power in Eleventh-Century England* (Oxford, 2001), p. 152.

⁵⁸⁵ S. Keynes, 'Wulfsige, Monk of Glastonbury, Abbot of Westminster (c 990-3), and Bishop of Sherborne (c 993-1002)' in Barker, Hinton and Hunt eds., *St Wulfsige and Sherborne*, pp. 73-4.

⁵⁸⁶ William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum*, bk. 2: 95:5, ed. M. Winterbottom, pp. 318-319. William completed the *GPA* c. 1125, so after the amalgamation of Horton and Sherborne in 1122. By then Horton was so poor it had been demoted to a priory.

⁵⁸⁷ Ordulf appears as a witness of the following charters: S 838; S 840; S 843; S 844; S 850; S 852; S 861; S 864; S 865; S 867; S 868; S 869; S 872; S 874; S 876; S 877; S 878; S 879; S 880; S 881; S 882; S 883; S 884; S 885; S 886; S 887; S 888; S 889; S 890; S 891; S 892; S 893; S 895; S 896; S 897; S 898; S 899; S 900; S 901; S 902; S 903; S 904; S 905; S 906; S 907; S 909; S 910; S 911; S 914.

⁵⁸⁸ S 838 and S 876.

that is, to Tavistock.⁵⁸⁹ Mention of the abbot Sihtric has led Herbert Finberg to question the veracity of William's tale. As well as this reference to Sihtric, who became abbot of Tavistock in 1045/6, William records that Ordulf accompanied his 'kinsman King Edward' [the Confessor] on a ride to Exeter, and later that he died 'while still aglow with the heat of youth'. Finberg states that it is impossible that the son of a man who died in 971 [Ordgar], and brother-in-law of a king who died four years later [Edgar], should himself have died in the prime of his life under Edward the Confessor (1042-66).⁵⁹⁰ It may be that William confused this Ordulf with another, later, figure, also named Ordulf, who is seen witnessing charters as *minister* and *nobilis* between 1044 and 1050.⁵⁹¹ Finberg does however suggest that this later Ordulf was quite possibly a later descendent of Ordgar, earl of Devon, due to his name, position, and geographical ties to south-west England.

There are certain problems with Finberg's thesis. For one thing, it is not impossible that Ordulf went to Exeter with Edward, as Ordulf was clearly still alive in Edward's youth. Admittedly, William refers to his kinsman as 'King' Edward, though this does not necessarily mean that Edward was king at the time of their trip to Exeter; William's account may simply suffer from an anachronistic reference here. Thus, Ordulf may have died while still a relatively young man, but before Edward became king. Finberg also assumes that Ordulf's body was seized by Sihtric immediately after his death. Again, this is not necessarily the case. It is just as plausible that Sihtric claimed the body of Ordulf upon his accession to the abbacy of Tavistock, or even in the reign of William I, at which point, according to William of Malmesbury, 'Sihtric turned pirate, polluting his religion and bringing infamy upon his church'.⁵⁹² William's account therefore seems to suggest that Horton had indeed passed at some point into Queen Ælfthryth's family. This is especially interesting in light of the passage in the Life of Wulfhild which claims that Ælfthryth was responsible for ousting Wulfhild from the nunnery of Barking. It also seems to be the case that Horton ultimately remained part of the royal demesne, due to Cnut's possession of it in 1033.

⁵⁸⁹ William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum*, bk. 2, ch. 95, ed. M. Winterbottom, pp. 318-319.

⁵⁹⁰ H. P. R. Finberg, 'The House of Ordgar and the Foundation of Tavistock Abbey', *The English Historical Review*, 58:230 (1943), pp. 190-201, at p. 193.

⁵⁹¹ *Ibid*, p. 194. Finberg supports this claim with a charter of 1042 from King Edward to Ordgar, minister (who Finberg associates with the later Ordulf), which grants half a hide at Littleham, near Exmouth, and a Domesday Book entry which records that Littleham was, by 1066, owned by Horton Abbey.

⁵⁹² Domesday Book records some sort of dispute between the houses of Tavistock and Horton over an estate in Antony in Cornwall (*GDB*, f. 121r). This was held by Tavistock, but claimed by Horton in 1066, so there was clearly some links and tensions between these two houses.

Within the text of Cnut's charter of 1033 is a formal statement which resembles the précis of a vernacular memorandum of the type which recorded matters such as dispute settlements. This states that: '*Now it is declared here that Bovi defended that land successfully at law with his money in payment of tax due on it, the whole shire being witness.*'⁵⁹³ This suggests that there was some sort of dispute over the land at Horton, and perhaps, that Bovi gained the land through financial settlement. M. K. Lawson has noted that during Cnut's reign, those unable to meet their taxes might be forced to forfeit their lands to whoever could provide the money due on them.⁵⁹⁴ The charter to Bovi may record such an event. While the details underlying Bovi's purchase of Horton are now lost to us, it is likely that this same transaction resulted in counter-claims to possession of Horton, perhaps by the Barking community. It may be that Barking made attempts at this time to re-assert its proprietary rights over that nunnery, or its lands. Alternatively, it may be that the Horton nunnery had run into financial difficulties which led to Bovi's takeover by payment of tax owed to Cnut. A situation such as this may have led Horton to claim Wulfhild's relics in an effort to bolster their own revenues.

The only other charter specifically associated with Horton records a grant of privileges from King Edward and Queen Edith to Horton Abbey [Ðis is se freols ðe Eadweard cyngc 7 Eadgyð seo hlæfdige geuðon in to þam haligum mynstre æt Hortune Criste to lofe 7 Sancta MARIAN 7 eallon Cristes halgon].⁵⁹⁵ As this charter seems to indicate the existence of a male house at Horton at this time, Mary Ann O'Donovan has suggested that a re-foundation of Horton took place between 1033, that is, the point at which Bovi received Cnut's grant of seven hides there, and 1061, when it is referred to for the first time as a foundation in King Edward's charter. While there exists no explicit re-foundation charter or tradition, the statement in William of Malmesbury's *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum* has been used by historians to suggest the involvement of Queen Ælfthryth's family in the process.⁵⁹⁶ This is a possibility, though, as we have seen, William's account does not explicitly name Ordulf as the founder of a monastery at Horton. It is perhaps just as likely that Bovi founded a religious house following his grant of land there in 1033. Ultimately, it is not possible to date

⁵⁹³ O'Donovan, *Charters of Sherborne*, pp. 71-3.

⁵⁹⁴ Lawson, *Cnut: England's Viking King*, p. 44. Lawson cites the case of Eadric of Mercia in this context. Eadric gained possession of a Dorset estate of Sherborne's during Æthelred II's reign, when they were suffering from Danish attacks. Eadric later sold the estate to Wulfgar, who then returned it to the monks of Sherborne.

⁵⁹⁵ S 1032; O'Donovan, *Charters of Sherborne*, p. xiii, pp. 79-80. O'Donovan considers this an authentic eleventh-century text, and one which was based on Sherborne's ninth-century charter granting it liberties. It is therefore likely that the copy as it stands was made after 1122, the point of which Sherborne took possession of Horton.

⁵⁹⁶ O'Donovan, *Charters of Sherborne*, p. lx.

the foundation of a new religious house at Horton any more closely than to between 1033 and 1061.

The remaining Horton charters are preserved in the cartulary of Sherborne Abbey. This is because Sherborne and Horton were amalgamated in 1122, at which point Horton was demoted to a priory and Sherborne was made a full abbey under the abbacy of Thurstin.⁵⁹⁷ The other charters included in the Sherborne cartulary, but described as ex-Horton charters, date from 956 and 1005. Neither is in favour of Horton Abbey itself, but both include grants of land which were owned by the abbey at the time of Domesday. The earliest charter is a grant by King Eadwig to the noble woman Æthelhild of 15 and a half hides at Ipplepen, Dainton and Abbotskerswell, all in Devon.⁵⁹⁸ Horton held Abbotskerswell for one and a half hides in 1066 and 1086.⁵⁹⁹ The charter of 1005 records a grant from King Æthelred of one hide of land at Seaton, Devon, to Eadsige, minister.⁶⁰⁰ Seaton was included in the holdings of Horton at Domesday, though by that point, the abbey held only half a hide.⁶⁰¹ Neither of these estates link Horton to Barking.

Domesday Book also records that Horton held half a hide at Littleham in Devonshire, and half a hide at Beer.⁶⁰² The land at Littleham can be traced back to a charter of 1042, in which King Edward granted half a hide there to his minister, Ordgar, whom Finberg links to Ordulf of the mistaken identity in William of Malmesbury's entry on Horton. Finberg also claims that the later Ordulf, *minister* and *nobilis*, owned a manor at Beer Ferrers in Devonshire. Ordulf's ownership of this manor is evidenced in its Domesday Book entry. Finberg also claims, however, that this manor, along with much of Ordulf's lands, had passed to the Count of Mortain by 1086.⁶⁰³ Indeed, Domesday Book records that the Count of Mortain held Beer Ferrers for four hides, and that Ordulf had held it in the time of King Edward. However, the entry for Horton's manor at Beer includes the claim that one ferding and four salt-pans of

⁵⁹⁷ *Ibid*, p. xv.

⁵⁹⁸ S 601. This charter appears genuine. It is not known who Æthelhild was, but she may have been the same woman as that mentioned in S 1376, and is probably to be identified with the Æthelhild commemorated in the New Minster *Liber Vitae*, the wife of the *comes* Ælfsige. As there is no mention of her husband in S 601, it is likely that she was widowed by 956.

⁵⁹⁹ *GDB*, f. 104r. Ipplepen was held by Ralph de Feugeres, who held it from the king for 4 hides. It was held in 1066 by Goda [*GDB*, f. 113v]. I have not been able to identify Dainton in Domesday Book.

⁶⁰⁰ S 910. The charter appears genuine. In the rubric Eadsige is called the king's reeve, he may be the same Eadsige who, according to the *ASC*, led the king's army against the Danes in at Pinhoe, Devon in 1001. Ordulf attests this charter as 'minister'.

⁶⁰¹ *GDB*, f. 104r.

⁶⁰² *GDB*, f. 104r.

⁶⁰³ Finberg, 'The House of Ordgar', p. 197 & n. 4.

land had been taken away by the Count of Mortain.⁶⁰⁴ There was clearly some involvement of the Ordulf whom Finberg claims William of Malmesbury confused with Ordulf, brother of Queen Ælfthryth, but it is difficult to know what to make of it. The amount of land claimed by Horton at Domesday does not seem to suggest that this later Ordulf was a major benefactor of the house, and no other evidence, apart from Finberg's thesis, links him to Horton.

Horton's main landholding, as recorded in Domesday Book, was seven hides at Horton itself.⁶⁰⁵ This corresponds to Cnut's grant to Bovi, and therefore suggests an uninterrupted holding of this land from 1033 onwards. The entry for the abbey's holdings at Horton includes the information that two of their seven hides, indeed, the better two hides situated in the forest of Wimborne, were held by the king. This perhaps supports the theory that Horton remained connected to the royal house throughout its history. Domesday Book also records that Horton held one church in Wareham along with five houses.⁶⁰⁶ This is particularly interesting in light of Goscelin's claim that Wulfhild was given control of Wareham, along with Barking, Horton, Wilton, Shaftesbury, and Southampton, and will be discussed further in the following chapter.

In summary, the only evidence of links between Barking and Horton are those contained in Goscelin's *Life of Wulfhild* which was produced for Barking. There are however, other sources which connect Wulfhild to Horton, namely the reference to her as abbess of Horton in the *Liber Vitae* of New Minster and Hyde Abbey, and the possible dedication of Horton to her cousin, St Wulfthryth. These sources may support Goscelin's claim that Horton was in fact Wulfhild's hereditary monastery. It should also be noted, however, that much of the evidence for Horton points to ties with the West Saxon royal house from the reign of Edgar through that of Æthelred II, and including those of Cnut and Edward the Confessor. The *Life of Wulfhild* records that Horton was part of a network of nunneries over which Wulfhild was given authority by King Edgar. The *Gesta Pontificum* links Horton to King Æthelred's family. Cnut's charter of 1033 attests his possession of Horton, and King Edward's grant of 1042 continues the association between the royal house and Horton. Domesday's record of Horton's possession of the church at Wareham may also point to royal involvement.

⁶⁰⁴ *GDB*, f. 105r.

⁶⁰⁵ *GDB*, f. 78v.

⁶⁰⁶ *Ibid.* Horton also owned a house in Dorchester, 1 chapel in Wimborne minster as well as land for 2 houses.

The apparent demise of the nunnery at Horton, certainly by 1061, and in all probability, by 1033, suggests that the context for drawing links between Horton and Barking belongs to a period prior to this date. The granting of lands at Horton to the royal servant Bovi, and especially due to the apparent dispute over claims to that land, seems the most likely point at which Barking would have asserted its rights to rule Horton. The charter of Cnut's may, on the other hand, bear witness to the financial demise of Horton nunnery and, perhaps, its related claim to possess St Wulfhild and all the revenues which her cult may have brought. The promotion of the cult of Wulfhild at this time therefore requires consideration.

Our best evidence for this comes in the form of the earlier translation of Wulfhild, which can be dated to the reign of Cnut or shortly thereafter. In the *Life of Wulfhild*, Goscelin records that a translation of Wulfhild's relics took place some thirty years after her death.⁶⁰⁷ The date of Wulfhild's death is not known precisely; however, it is clear that it should be placed no earlier than 996, and, more likely, some time after that. The *Life* states that she died on the vigil of the feast of the translation of St Æthelwold.⁶⁰⁸ That latter event is precisely datable to 996.⁶⁰⁹ So the earliest point at which Wulfhild's first translation could have taken place is around 1026.⁶¹⁰ Internal evidence from the *Life of Wulfhild* suggests that the latest possible date for Wulfhild's death is 1008, as Goscelin claims that Wulfhild remained at Barking for seven years after her re-instatement by Queen Ælfhryth, who died in either 1000 or 1001. Based on this, the latest possible date for the translation is c. 1038.⁶¹¹ The occurrence of a translation at Barking in the 1020s or 30s seems significant in light of the evidence relating to Horton's demise at roughly the same time. The motif of connections between Horton and Barking may therefore reflect a situation which arose during the reign of Cnut, and which may have precipitated Barking's translation of St Wulfhild. Given the association between translation ceremonies and the production of commemorative texts, it seems highly likely that Goscelin's *Life of Wulfhild* was based on material which was produced at an earlier point in the eleventh century. This material may have derived from either Barking or Horton

⁶⁰⁷ Goscelin, *Vita Wulfhildae*, ch. 13, in Colker, 'Texts of Jocelyn of Canterbury', pp. 431-432.

⁶⁰⁸ *Ibid*, ch. 10, pp. 429-430.

⁶⁰⁹ Twelve years after his death in 984, on which see the *Life of Saint Æthelwold*, ch. 42-3, ed. and trans. M. Lapidge and M. Winterbottom, *Wulfstan of Winchester's Life of Saint Æthelwold* (Oxford, 1991), pp. 64-6.

⁶¹⁰ It should be noted that Colker claims the translation took place in 996 ('Texts of Jocelyn of Canterbury', p. 430, n. 212), but gives no reason for this dating, cf Foot, *Veiled Women II*, p. 32. In fact, internal evidence only suggests that her death could not have been earlier than 996, as this was the year of Æthelwold's translation.

⁶¹¹ It is, of course, possible that Goscelin's dates for both Wulfhild's abbacy and the translation are inaccurate, however it is quite likely that Wulfhild did die around the turn of the eleventh century, given that she was considered of marriageable age before Edgar's marriage to her cousin Wulfhryth (who also died c. 1000) in the late 950s or early 960s. Leofflaed's abbacy followed that of Wulfhild's, so again, the elapse of 30 years before her undertaking of the translation seems plausible.

traditions, or even both. It is difficult now to determine whether the Life of Wulfhild bears witness to a claim by Barking to ownership of Horton, or to a claim by Horton to ownership of St Wulfhild. In either case, it is clear that Goscelin's late eleventh century Life of Wulfhild records in its account of the translation an event which dates from the earlier eleventh century, and such an event would have responded to earlier concerns, and may well have been marked by the production of earlier documentation.

As there are other aspects of the Life which similarly seem to belong to earlier contexts and which may themselves form part of either Barking's claim to Horton or Horton's claim to Wulfhild, it seems necessary to explore further the contexts surrounding Wulfhild's first translation at this earlier point in the eleventh century as a way of illuminating some of those aspects of the text which remain difficult to explain in the light of late eleventh century contexts. That earlier translation also takes us back towards the reforming concerns of the late tenth and early eleventh centuries in which saint-making, relics and translation played such a significant role.⁶¹²

⁶¹² See e.g. Thacker, 'Cults at Canterbury', pp. 221-45, esp. pp. 226-35; and idem, 'Saint-making and relic collecting by Oswald and his communities', pp. 244-68.

Chapter Seven

The First Translation of Wulfhild

In his *Life of Wulfhild*, Goscelin records that a translation of Wulfhild's relics was undertaken by Leofflaed, Wulfhild's successor as abbess of Barking. He states that Leofflaed 'about thirty years having passed from the burial of [Wulfhild], ordered [her] to be translated and reburied with more honour...'.⁶¹³ There can be little doubt about the significance of this translation. It was the point at which Wulfhild's relics were brought to rest in a place of honour at the right side of the principal altar, and in close relationship to the tombs of Æthelburg and Hildelith, where they remained until the controversial later eleventh-century translation.⁶¹⁴ It was thus the point at which the grouping of saints which were so significant at later eleventh-century Barking was created. This recent abbess-saint was promoted especially now, and established alongside Barking's Bedan founders. The possible dates of Wulfhild's translation, which are, as we have seen, anywhere between 1026 and 1038, place this event in the reign of either Cnut or his son Harold Harefoot, and therefore at a time of adjustment to Danish takeover and rule. The context of this first translation must thus be considered not merely in relation to what can be established about Horton, but also in a broader perspective. Given the attention to cults and translations after 1066, it seems necessary at least to consider this earlier conquest, especially since references to Danes occurred within the Barking texts.

Cnut's conquest has received far less attention than that of William. That may be linked to the fact that, unlike William's, it did not prove permanent. It is certainly linked to the lesser documentation of this earlier conquest. It was, however, an event of great importance in eleventh-century English history. It was not, as with William's of 1066, followed by the almost complete removal of the English aristocracy. Indeed, a significant number of English nobles supported his regime; Earls Godwine and Leofric being prime examples.⁶¹⁵ A level of continuity was also provided by Cnut's marriage in 1017 to Emma, the widow of Æthelred II. There were, however, elements of Cnut's rule that must have been disruptive to, and unwelcomed by, the English. Cnut's efforts to gain control of Norway, for example, which

⁶¹³ Goscelin, *Vita Wulfhildae*, ch. 13, in Colker, 'Texts of Jocelyn of Canterbury', pp. 431-432: '*Hec iam exactis triginta circiter annis eiusdem matris sepulturae statuit...transfere et...celebrius recondere.*'

⁶¹⁴ *Ibid*, ch 14, pp. 432-433.

⁶¹⁵ Stafford, *Unification and Conquest*, p. 74.

required mercenary troops and ships, and therefore a considerable amount of money, seem to have been funded by high levels of taxation of the English. Such heavy taxation must have created financial anxiety amongst the English, and seems to have particularly affected London.⁶¹⁶ Lawson has highlighted instances in Cnut's reign of defaulters losing lands to those who could meet the taxes in their stead, and of churches melting down precious objects and mortgaging land to meet their new financial obligations.⁶¹⁷

Cnut is also, however, remembered as a generous patron of the English church and its saints. The New Minster *Liber Vitae* depicts a silver and gold cross filled with relics which was given to them by Cnut.⁶¹⁸ He made a later gift of his crown to the Old Minster, Winchester and donated a silver and gold-clad arm of St Cyriacus to Westminster Abbey.⁶¹⁹ Goscelin's *Life of Edith* states that Cnut ordered a gold shrine to be built at Wilton to house her relics.⁶²⁰ William of Malmesbury reports that Cnut visited the tomb of Edmund Ironside, and there left a cloak splendidly decorated with peacocks.⁶²¹ Cnut's law code of 1018 calls for national celebration of the feast of St Edward the Martyr.⁶²² Cnut also supported the translation of St Ælfheah's remains from St Paul's to Canterbury in 1023, and is known to have patronised the cult of St Edmund at Bury. Such patronage of numerous religious institutions attests Cnut's involvement in church affairs. Indeed, he seems to have exercised close control over appointments to major English churches, as with that of Eadsige, who replaced Æthelnoth as Archbishop of Canterbury, and Ælfwine, who became bishop of Winchester.⁶²³ It has been noted, however, that this benevolent image of Cnut is one which ignores the harsh social conditions of the time and the, often financial, oppression of many of his subjects.⁶²⁴

It is also important to consider the political motivations for such beneficence. Securing, and more importantly, legitimising, Cnut's right to the English throne required the support of

⁶¹⁶ ASC (D, E) 1018 states that the English paid £72,000 to Cnut in this year, and that the Londoners paid £10,500.

⁶¹⁷ Lawson, *Cnut*, p. 119.

⁶¹⁸ Birch, ed., *Liber Vitae Register and Martyrology of New Minster*, pp. v-vi. A drawing in the *Liber Vitae* shows both Cnut and Queen Emma standing on either side of the gold cross which they had donated to the New Minster.

⁶¹⁹ Lawson, *Cnut*, p. 126.

⁶²⁰ Goscelin, *Vita Edithae*, ch. 13, in S. Hollis, *Writing the Wilton Women*, pp. 43-44.

⁶²¹ William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, bk. 2:184, ed. M. Winterbottom, pp. 330-331.

⁶²² *Cnut* [14.6]; A. G. Kennedy, 'Cnut's Law Code of 1018', *Anglo-Saxon England*, v. 11 (1982).

⁶²³ M. K. Lawson, 'Cnut (d. 1035)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn., May 2005 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/4579>, accessed 25 March 2010]; Osbern, *Translatio S Elfege* in ed., Rumble, *The Reign of Cnut*, pp. 300-8, records the close association of Cnut and Ethelnoth.

⁶²⁴ M. K. Lawson, 'Cnut (d. 1035)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn., May 2005 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/4579>, accessed 25 March 2010].

English ecclesiastics. The noble connections of churchmen and their involvement in the secular and political worlds further necessitated his involvement in Church politics. Cnut's patronage of English saints' cults can, in some cases, also be placed in political contexts. Lawson suggests that Cnut's visit to the tomb of Edmund Ironside, which took place on the anniversary of his death, may have served as a public reminder of the treaty of peace between the two kings. Such actions may have been designed to diminish the extent to which Cnut was considered an usurper of the English throne. Adoption of the cults of St Edward the Martyr and Edith of Wilton, both of which had been patronised by his predecessor Æthelred,⁶²⁵ may similarly have been intended to legitimise Cnut's rule. Indeed, Susan Ridyard has argued that Cnut's support of these cults may have been intended to emphasise his connection to the West Saxon royal house, a point which was strengthened by his marriage to the queen of Æthelred II.⁶²⁶ On the other hand, Cnut's interest in the cults of Æthelred's siblings St Edith and St Edward the Martyr may have been, in effect, a political weapon which discredited his predecessor: the king he had usurped.⁶²⁷ The post-Conquest texts which record their deeds may support this view, as both undermine the legitimacy of Æthelred's succession by suggesting his involvement in the death of his brother and predecessor, Edward.

Cnut can be tentatively linked with the cult of the East Anglian Saint, Edmund. In his *Miraculis*, the late eleventh-century writer Hermann claims that it was Cnut who was responsible for the replacement of clerics by monks at St Edmund's church in Bury, an act warranted, according to Hermann, by the increasing popularity of Edmund's cult.⁶²⁸ A charter ostensibly from the early 1020s attests Cnut's patronage of Bury St Edmund's, though its authenticity is open to question.⁶²⁹ Lawson has argued that Cnut's association with the cult of St Edmund was an attempt to neutralise its powers as a focal point for English resistance to Danish rule.⁶³⁰

⁶²⁵ Æthelred's support of the cults of his sister and brother is recorded in the hagiographies associated with them. It is also attested by a grant of land from Æthelred to Shaftesbury at Bradford-on-Avon around the same time of Edward's translation, and specifically to provide a safe alternative location for Edward's relics at times of Viking attacks. See S 899.

⁶²⁶ Ridyard, *The Royal Saints*, p. 168.

⁶²⁷ D. Rollason, 'The Cults of Murdered Royal Saints in Anglo-Saxon England', *Anglo-Saxon England* 11 (1983), pp. 1-22, at p. 18.

⁶²⁸ Hermann, *De Miraculis Sancti Eadmundi*, ed. Arnold, p. 48. It should be noted however, that Antonia Gransden in her *Legends, Traditions and History in Medieval England* (London, 1992), pp. 11-12, has argued that the association with Cnut was an invention of the late eleventh century.

⁶²⁹ S 980.

⁶³⁰ Lawson, *Cnut*, pp. 132-33.

Cnut's involvement in the translation from St Paul's to Canterbury of St Ælfheah's remains also attests Cnut's interest in English saints' cults. Ælfheah was murdered in 1012 by his Danish captors, and then buried at St Paul's, London, at which he rapidly came to be venerated as a martyr.⁶³¹ The cult of Ælfheah in London may have been seen as a rallying point to those resistant to Danish rule; certainly, the Londoners were active in the battles leading up to Cnut's accession, and its support of Edmund Ironside following the death of Æthelred II may explain the heavy taxation which was brought to bear upon the city in 1018.⁶³² Cnut's support for Archbishop Æthelnoth's plan to translate Ælfheah's remains to Canterbury may therefore be at least partly understood as an act to quell dissension in the city.⁶³³ Osbern's account of the translation supports this view, as he records the presence of Cnut's housecarls as a measure against interference from the Londoners.⁶³⁴

In this connection, perhaps we should also consider the stories of Viking attacks in both the *Life of St Æthelburg* and the *Leccionnes de Sancta Hildelitha*. As we have seen, the *leccionnes* record that the community of Barking was attacked and burned by Viking invaders. This is specifically recorded as occurring at the same time at which King Edmund 'was immolated by the pagans'. The association with Edmund may have been deliberate. This could conceivably be an indication that the *leccionnes*, or some source behind them, may have been written at roughly the same time that Cnut was apparently patronising the cult of Edmund, though Edmund's cult continued to be popular. But it might be noted that the *leccionnes* denigrates the Danish invaders. This is, of course, the other reading of the cult of Edmund, and both may have been intended to appeal to anti-Danish sentiment within England. This feature is also seen in the *Life of Æthelburg* which, from its halfway point, includes various miracle accounts which emphasise the power of the abbess saint against the numerous Viking attacks of the Anglo-Saxon period. It is certainly interesting that the *leccionnes* also makes reference to the martyred archbishop Ælfheah. The archbishop was another native saint, whose cult had decidedly anti-Danish potential, and which was, perhaps as a result, of interest to Cnut. In the *leccionnes*, Ælfheah is portrayed as supporting the cult of Hildelith at Barking before his death. This may be an indication of the significance of English native

⁶³¹ ASC (E) 1012.

⁶³² Kelly, *Charters of St Paul's*, pp. 37-9.

⁶³³ ASC (D, E) 1023; Lawson, *Cnut*, p. 131; Kelly, *Charters of St Paul's*, pp. 39-40.

⁶³⁴ Osbern, *Translatio St Ælfege*, ed. Rumble, pp. 294-315. Though it should be noted that Paul Hayward, in his 'Translation narratives', claims that Osbern exaggerated Cnut's role in the translation so as to legitimise the saint for a new Norman audience.

saints after 1066. But, again, it may also highlight a period of growth and development of Barking Abbey's cults in the period of Danish rule.

If this changing political context has any bearing on Barking's cults, it may be that its possible timing should be extended into the 1030s. The *terminus post quem* of Wulfhild's translation is 1038. It is thus possible that this took place during the succession crisis of 1035-37, or early in the reign of Cnut's son, Harold Harefoot. Following Cnut's death in November of 1035, claims to the crown were made on behalf of Harold Harefoot, Cnut's son by his consort, Ælfgifu; Harthacnut, son of Cnut and his queen, Emma; and Edward and Alfred, Emma's sons by her first husband, Æthelred II.⁶³⁵ Harold Harefoot's claim prevailed, and by 1037, with Alfred murdered, Edward in Norman exile and Harthacnut still in Denmark, he was 'everywhere chosen as king'.⁶³⁶ Emma was exiled to Flanders in the same year, and did not return to England until the death of Harold in 1040.⁶³⁷ While not much is known of Harold's reign, this was clearly a time of disruption in England, and one in which monastic houses such as Barking may have suffered, financially or otherwise. The difficulties of this period, as indeed of that of Cnut's reign, may have led to political saint promotion and patronage. Indeed, the popularity of Ælfheah and Edmund during the reign of Cnut suggests an active promotion of their cults at this time. This would make sense in the context of a country suffering from years of Viking raids, settlement and ultimately, subjugation to Danish rule. The hagiographies associated with Edmund's cult suggest that he was sanctified within a generation of his death, and that there was unbroken veneration of his cult throughout the eleventh century.⁶³⁸ The cult of Ælfheah also seems to have prospered in the eleventh century, as his feast was celebrated in church calendars of that time, and the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* records that his intercession was sought by many at the time of his translation from St Paul's.⁶³⁹

All this, however, concentrates our attention on changes at royal level and their possible relevance to Barking's cults. But such changes had obvious significance at lower and more local levels, especially those at which noble patronage, or predation, occurred. It was such activities which we saw as at least one part of the post-1066 context for Barking's cults.

⁶³⁵ Stafford, *Unification and Conquest*, p. 78.

⁶³⁶ *ASC* (C) 1037.

⁶³⁷ Stafford, *Unification and Conquest*, p. 79.

⁶³⁸ Abbo of Fleury's *Passio Sancti Eadmundi* dates from 985-7 and records the translation of Edmund's relics to Bedericesworth (later Bury St Edmunds). Hermann's *De Miraculis Sancti Eadmundi*, composed around 1100, attests continued popularity of the saint in the eleventh century.

⁶³⁹ P. Wormald, ed. *English Kalendars Before A.D. 1100*, nos. 2, 4, 6-20; *ASC* (D) 1023.

Barbara Yorke has argued that the reigns of Cnut and his sons disrupted the patterns of patronage of nunneries due to a 'considerable loss of life among the nobility'.⁶⁴⁰ Stafford has also highlighted the English church's need for patronage in the aftermath of the Viking invasions, especially perhaps to replace movable goods which had been lost as a result of the heavy taxes of the period.⁶⁴¹ Loss of patronage would of course be one reason for promoting saints' cults, and it may be possible that the translation of Wulfhild in the 1020s or 1030s belongs to such a context, and that Barking was in fact reacting to a loss of noble and/or royal patronage following Cnut's accession. Certainly there is no evidence for patronage of the nunnery during Cnut or Harold Harefoot's reigns, and the Life of Wulfhild displays concerns about finances amongst the community, though this may reflect post-1066 conditions at the nunnery.⁶⁴²

We should, however, bear in mind the possibilities of patronage from both old-established English and newly settled Danish nobles at this date. The picture was far from uniformly bleak and predatory. Tofig the Proud, one of Cnut's great nobles, was a substantial patron of the Essex church of Waltham.⁶⁴³ Andrew Wareham has painted a particularly complex picture of relations between noble families, English and Danish, and the East Anglian monasteries in which ethnicity is seen as less important than relative social status, but where patronage was certainly still flowing to local foundations.⁶⁴⁴ The sort of economic and social changes which Wareham identifies are another context for Barking's cults. Sources for Barking do not permit the sort of analyses which can be made for these other houses, but we should certainly bear them in mind. For example, the abbey was a beneficiary of the will of Thurstan.⁶⁴⁵ He was a great-grandson of ealdorman Byrhtnoth, but Wareham places him firmly within the orbit of a regional nobility.⁶⁴⁶ His will is dated c.1043x4, but it may well have been men like him, and women like those of his family, at whom developing cults at places like Barking were angled. The fortunes of the great Fenland abbeys, as charted by Wareham, were closely linked to their ability to appeal to such patrons.

⁶⁴⁰ Yorke, *Nunneries*, pp. 89-90.

⁶⁴¹ Stafford, *Queen Emma and Queen Edith*, p. 148.

⁶⁴² Especially in the later miracles which concern lack of funding for decoration of the shrines and the miraculous reappearance of coins in a nun's pocket following her purchase of a new habit.

⁶⁴³ J. Blair, *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society* (Oxford, 2005), p 357 – specifically dated to the 1030s.

⁶⁴⁴ A. Wareham, *Lords and Communities in Early Medieval East Anglia* (Woodbridge, 2005), pp. 78-94.

⁶⁴⁵ Whitelock, *Anglo-Saxon Wills*, no 31, pp. 81-85.

⁶⁴⁶ Wareham, *Lords and Communities*, pp. 74-75.

Much of this must, however, remain tentative suggestion. There is little direct evidence for the popularity, promotion or fortunes of the Barking cults before 1066, apart from the translation itself. The *Secgan*, or list of saints' resting places for Anglo-Saxon England, records that Æthelburg was buried at Barking. Her entry belongs to the first half of the list, which appears to be of an earlier origin than that of the second half, and which deals primarily with saints of the pre-Viking period.⁶⁴⁷ This suggests that Æthelburg's cult was active prior to the tenth century. Liturgical material attests Æthelburg's continued popularity in the tenth and eleventh centuries. The Bosworth psalter, which has been broadly dated to the tenth or eleventh century records Æthelburg's feast day as 7 July. Æthelburg also appears under this date in the Red Book of Darley, dated c. 1061 and a product of Sherborne. Æthelburg is also celebrated on the 11 October in the Leominster prayer book, datable to 1029x1046, and in the Salisbury prayer book, an eleventh century production.⁶⁴⁸ Much of this, however, seems to attest her Bedan status and significance. This was certainly not irrelevant to Barking, but it does not point necessarily to any local promotion of Barking's part. There is unfortunately no record of the veneration of the cults of Hildelith or Wulfhild at Barking or elsewhere, which obviously prevents further exploration of the popularity or renewal of Hildelith's cult, or, of the successful promotion of Wulfhild's cult in the early eleventh century. The dates of the prayer books which record veneration of Æthelburg do however, suggest that her cult was popular throughout the Anglo-Saxon period, and, perhaps, especially in the earlier eleventh century. It is difficult to know, then, whether there was a renewal of the cults of the Barking saints at the same time as Wulfhild's translation. It might, however, be noted that the will of Thurstan, like the *Secgan*, associates Æthelburg directly with Barking, as it states that 'the outermost mill is to go to St Æthelburg at Barking'.⁶⁴⁹ By contrast the wills of his tenth-century predecessors, ealdorman Ælfgar, and his daughters Æthelflæd and Ælflæd, had left land to St Mary's church or stow at Barking.⁶⁵⁰ We should be wary of reading this as a change of dedication, or even a decisive shift in dedication, as Barking's lands in Domesday were still listed as lands of St Mary's.⁶⁵¹ But it may suggest a greater prominence of the cult of Æthelburg in the eyes of an eleventh-century patron, perhaps linked to Barking's own activities of saintly promotion.⁶⁵² Perhaps this was

⁶⁴⁷ Rollason, 'Lists of Saints' Resting-places', pp. 62-66; 90.

⁶⁴⁸ R. Rushforth, *An Atlas of Saints in Anglo-Saxon Calendars* (Cambridge, 2002), tables VII and X.

⁶⁴⁹ Whitelock, *Anglo-Saxon Wills*, no. 31, pp. 81-85.

⁶⁵⁰ *Ibid*, no. 2, 14 and 15, pp. 6-9, 34-37, 38-43.

⁶⁵¹ *LDB*, f. 17v.

⁶⁵² It may be worth noting that Thurstan's will survives in Bury St Edmunds cartularies. But this need not indicate that it was written there.

associated with wider cult promotion at Barking. But all of this remains the most tentative of speculation when evidence is so thin.

Ultimately the earlier eleventh century is a difficult period to study in Barking's history. The late eleventh-century *Life of Wulfhild* seems to preserve traditions of an earlier point in the nunnery's history, but elucidating that has proved very difficult. The first translation is to be dated now, and everything we know of translations suggests that this must be significant. But there are no explicit statements in the *Life* regarding the context of the first translation. It is likely that this was one of English adjustment to Danish rule, though that may include relations with noble families at local levels as well as with the king. It is also possible that Wulfhild's translation is to be linked to Horton's history in some way, and specifically as a response to claims of ownership of Wulfhild's relics by Horton. As we have seen, Horton's demise may be linked to Cnut's grant of land there in 1033 to his minister, Bovi. The charter which records this transaction also contains reference to a tax dispute, which may suggest that Horton was suffering from a lack of finances, which may have precipitated a claim to ownership of Wulfhild's relics, and the revenue that they might bring.

The translation did, however, mark an important advance of Wulfhild's claims to sanctity. These were the claims of a very recent saint, a recent abbess of the community and one who was, according to the *Life*, closely connected to the late tenth-century royal family. The *Life* is far from reticent on these issues. The final part of this thesis will consider the other theme within the *Life of Wulfhild* which similarly seems to belong to an earlier point than that at which it was produced, that is, the treatment of Queen Ælfhryth. This may help to clarify the reasons for Barking's promotion of Wulfhild's cult at this earlier point in the eleventh century; it may, perhaps, shed light on the experiences which precipitated this early eleventh-century translation of St Wulfhild. It will certainly take us back into Barking's tenth-century history, to a nunnery at a period when reform was gathering pace and to questions concerning nunneries and the royal dynasty.

Chapter Eight

Barking and the Queen

One of the most striking tales in Goscelin's *Life of Wulfhild* is that involving Queen Ælfhryth. Besides the account of Wulfhild's escape from the advances of King Edgar, the story of Wulfhild's expulsion from Barking by Queen Ælfhryth is the most detailed and anecdotal part of the *Life*. In the text, Goscelin tells us that the monastic *officarii* of Barking rose up against Wulfhild and 'did business for a price' with Queen Ælfhryth, who then had Wulfhild expelled from the nunnery. Goscelin states that these officials intended to run the nunnery themselves. At this point, Wulfhild retreated to what Goscelin calls her 'hereditary monastery of Horton', her departure much lamented by the nuns of Barking. The queen, claiming Barking 'as her own possession', allowed the nunnery to fall into disrepair, caused the 'death and destruction' of its animals, then of its men, and finally, after some twenty years, became ill herself while on a visit to the nunnery. Goscelin records a terrifying vision which came to Ælfhryth at that time, in which St Æthelburg berated the queen for her treatment of the nunnery, revealed that this was the reason for her illness, and warned that she would not recover, indeed would die, if she did not reinstate Wulfhild as Barking's abbess. According to Goscelin, the queen took action immediately to bring Wulfhild back from Horton 'with due honour and...worthy veneration'. Ælfhryth's health was restored, 'so that she might know that the cause of her illness had been the expulsion of [Wulfhild]'. Wulfhild spent the seven years which followed, that is, until her death, ruling both Barking and Horton as a single mother 'as before'.

This account arguably reveals much about the attitude of the Barking community towards outside intervention. There is a clear message here for authority figures, and perhaps especially royal ones, about the nunnery's right to choose their own abbess, and about the abuse of monastic property by secular leaders. But the account also raises various questions. Firstly, who were the monastic officials who plotted with Ælfhryth to have Wulfhild removed from Barking? Perhaps here we should bear in mind that, if the *Vita* is to be believed, Wulfhild herself seems to have been installed, by royal command, without reference to the community at Barking. And her apparently West Saxon noble origins

certainly lend credibility to such a scenario.⁶⁵³ This could certainly have led to animosity amongst the community, though it is by no means certain that these monastic officials were part of the community. Indeed, the opposite might be suggested by Goscelin's claim that the Barking nuns were devastated by Wulfhild's expulsion, though that could be a hagiographical topos. If Goscelin's claim that the community was re-founded by Edgar at the same time that Wulfhild was installed as abbess there is true, then it seems unlikely that the community would have resented her installation; this question will be further considered below. Whilst keeping in mind the reading of internal division within the community, parallel to that suggested in the post 1066 translation accounts, we should also keep open the possibility that the officials described here were clerics; use of the masculine form 'officiarii' not the feminine 'officiariae' certainly gives cause for thought. Could they even be clerics involved in the reform movement at the time? If they were internal, female officials, was their involvement itself possibly linked to the stresses within communities which we know reform could bring? Reform produced tensions, as study of its better documented continental European expression has shown.⁶⁵⁴ As we shall see, one person certainly involved in reform was Queen Ælfthryth. Again continental comparison suggests how reform could be used by 'external parties to further their own interests'.⁶⁵⁵ The prominence given in the *Vita* to the queen and to these events calls for more consideration of reform and Barking, and especially of the queen, reform and nunneries.

But the story of the queen and Barking needs also to be placed in a wider context within the *Life of Wulfhild*, namely the connections which the *Life* highlights between Barking Abbey and the West Saxon royal house. Goscelin claims, for instance, that Barking was refurbished and enriched by King Edgar.⁶⁵⁶ Goscelin also claims that Barking was grouped with other nunneries which were also apparently under the control of the king.⁶⁵⁷ We have already seen that one of these houses, Horton, was connected in one way or another to the royal house in the eleventh century. Indeed, Horton may have become associated with Queen Ælfthryth's family in the early eleventh century, which seems particularly significant given the depiction of Queen Ælfthryth in the *Life of Wulfhild*. It may pay therefore, to look in more detail at the other nunneries which Goscelin claims were linked with Barking.

⁶⁵³ Goscelin, *Vita Wulfhildae*, ch. 1, in Colker, 'Texts of Jocelyn of Canterbury', pp. 419-420, and see below on kinship to and links with other West Saxon noble and royal women.

⁶⁵⁴ J. Nightingale, 'Oswald, Fleury and Continental Reform', in *St Oswald of Worcester*, eds. N. Brooks and C. Cubitt (1996), pp. 23-45, especially pp. 33-4.

⁶⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

⁶⁵⁶ Goscelin, *Vita Wulfhildae*, ch. 4, in Colker, 'Texts of Jocelyn of Canterbury', pp. 423-425.

⁶⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

Wulfhild's royal connections are also stressed in the *Life*. Goscelin links Wulfhild with the West Saxon line through his association of Wulfhild's grandfather with King Alfred.⁶⁵⁸ Moreover, Wulfhild's family was clearly considered worthy of a marriage alliance with the West Saxons, as Goscelin records not only Edgar's attempt to marry Wulfhild, but also his subsequent union with Wulfhild's cousin, Wulfthryth. Goscelin also highlights Wulfhild's relation to the princess Edith, Edgar's daughter by Wulfthryth.⁶⁵⁹ These assertions demonstrate, surely purposely, that Wulfhild, and by proxy, Barking, was closely tied to the West Saxon royal house. They appear, at least at first sight, to sit at odds with the tale of Ælfthryth's unwanted, and ultimately destructive, interference at Barking, which seems to reveal tensions between the community and its royal sponsors. This apparent dichotomy may best be explored through consideration of the historic links between Barking and the West Saxon royal house, and of the changing nature of their relationship through the tenth and eleventh centuries.

This chapter will thus be concerned with the life of Wulfhild, as well as the *Life of Wulfhild*. It will discuss the tenth-century contexts of Wulfhild's abbacy, and the development of the nunnery and its royal connections. But the life and the *Life* raise different questions, which must be addressed. This chapter must address not only tenth-century Barking but also the presentation of tenth-century Barking in this later source.

Nunneries, Reform and the Queen

The monastic revival of tenth century England, fostered under the leadership of Archbishops Dunstan and Oswald and Bishop Æthelwold, and supported by the West Saxon Kings Edgar and Æthelred, found its highest expression in the prescriptive code entitled *Regularis Concordia Anglica nationis monachorum sanctimonialiumque*. This was the literary product of a council held at Winchester in the 970s which was attended by Edgar and his queen, Ælfthryth, the bishops, the abbots and the abbesses of England, as well as monks from Fleury and Ghent, representatives of the two schools of continental monasticism. The prime objective of the synod was the introduction and enforcement of regular Benedictine observance in English monasteries; the *Regularis Concordia* was therefore intended as a

⁶⁵⁸ *Ibid*, ch. 1, pp. 419-420.

⁶⁵⁹ *Ibid*, ch. 4, pp. 423-425.

supplement to the Benedictine Rule itself.⁶⁶⁰ Up until this point religious observance in English monastic houses seems to have been varied, based on the preferences of individual heads of houses. Indeed, no earlier monastic rule written for, or used by, any female community of the early Anglo-Saxon period is known.⁶⁶¹ The Rule of Saint Benedict, written for Benedict's own community in the first half of the sixth century, seems to have reached England sometime in the seventh century.⁶⁶² It had therefore already been known and used for some time in England; it was not, however, until the tenth century, and as a result of the monastic reform movement, that it became the exclusively prescribed rule for all English monastic houses.⁶⁶³

The reformers were also concerned at this point with clerical reform, of those increasing numbers of local priests and clerics who resided in minsters and who were considered by reformers to be too closely linked with lay society. The attack on clerics centred on reports of their holding land as individuals, marrying and having families, and living in a luxurious lay fashion.⁶⁶⁴ The lay associations of monks and nuns were also called into question, most specifically with regard to the overlordship of monasteries by secular persons. The *Regularis Concordia* also forbade socialising between religious and lay people.⁶⁶⁵ Conversely, the reformers placed the king as secular guardian over all the monasteries as a means of safeguarding their welfare. The *Regularis Concordia* also elevated the Queen, in this case Ælfhryth, to the position of protectress and guardian of the English nunneries. This was explicitly described as a move to avoid 'any breath of scandal', with the king as protector of male monasteries and the queen as defender of the female houses.⁶⁶⁶ Dunstan went further in instructing that no man 'whatever his rank', nor even a monk, should enter a nunnery, and that those with spiritual authority over the nuns should take care to use their powers appropriately.⁶⁶⁷ Reform is therefore best understood as an attempt to firmly separate the monastic and clerical sphere from the lay, with the understanding that the monastic life was the superior. The concern apparent in the *Regularis Concordia* for sexual morality was itself

⁶⁶⁰ R. Jayatilaka, 'The Old English Benedictine Rule: writing for women and for men', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 32 (2003), pp. 147-187, at p. 180.

⁶⁶¹ Yorke, *Nunneries*, p. 4.

⁶⁶² M. Gretsch, 'Æthelwold's Translation of the Regula Sancti Benedicti and its Latin Exemplar', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 3 (1974), pp. 125-151, at p. 125.

⁶⁶³ Jayatilaka, 'The Old English Benedictine Rule', p. 147.

⁶⁶⁴ Stafford, 'Queens, Nunneries and Reforming Churchmen', pp. 7, 16.

⁶⁶⁵ T. Symons, ed., *Regularis Concordia*, Proem, 10, p. 7.

⁶⁶⁶ *Ibid*, Proem, 3, p. 2.

⁶⁶⁷ *Ibid*, Proem, 7, p. 4.

based on the reformers idea of the superiority of the chaste, preferably virginal, life lived out in monasteries informed by the Benedictine Rule.

How far did this movement involve or affect the nunneries? References made in the *Regularis Concordia* to female religious, that is, to the attendance of abbesses at the Winchester council and of the specific provision of a female overlord in light of their particular vulnerability, have been variously interpreted by historians of Anglo-Saxon monasticism. Thomas Symons, noting such references as supplemented by others in the *Lives* of Dunstan, Æthelwold and Oswald, in the *Libre Vitae* of New Minster, and in the *Secgan*, suggested it was 'quite clear' that nuns as well as monks were actively involved in the work of reform.⁶⁶⁸ Bruce Vernerde takes a similar line, claiming that 'explicit discussion' of religious women in the *Regularis Concordia* is a reflection of their importance in the tenth century reform movement.⁶⁶⁹ David Knowles argued that the royal connections of most female houses would have facilitated their inclusion in the reform movement, and saw the royal nunneries at least, as fully Benedictinised as a result of their involvement in tenth century reform.⁶⁷⁰ Marc Anthony Meyer, assuming a negative effect of reform upon noble female houses, concluded that the royal nunneries became the only available outlet for female piety in the later Anglo-Saxon period.⁶⁷¹

More recent studies however, have stressed the lack of contemporary evidence for the reform of nunneries and warned of the dangers of accepting reform rhetoric as evidence of the actual involvement of nunneries in reform. The only explicit reference to reform of a female house is found in Wulfstan of Winchester's *Life of Æthelwold*, which deals somewhat briefly with the reform of Nunnaminster at Winchester.⁶⁷² Apart from this, we have only Wulfstan's comment in the same work which claimed that 'monasteries were established everywhere in England, some for monks [*monachis*], some for nuns [*sanctimonialibus*], governed by abbots and abbesses who lived according to the Rule.'⁶⁷³ The silence of the sources as regards reform of nunneries becomes more significant when compared to the various reform narratives concerning male monasteries, which attest to the endowment of new, regular,

⁶⁶⁸ *Ibid*, p. xxiii.

⁶⁶⁹ B. Venarde, *Women's Monasticism and Medieval Society: Nunneries in France and England 890-1215* (Ithaca, 1997), pp. 25-26.

⁶⁷⁰ Knowles, *The Monastic Order in England*, pp. 48-52.

⁶⁷¹ Meyer, 'Patronage of West Saxon Royal nunneries', pp. 338-339.

⁶⁷² Wulfstan of Winchester, *The Life of St Æthelwold*, ed. Lapidge and Winterbottom, ch. 22, pp. 36-39.

⁶⁷³ *Ibid*, ch. 27, pp. 42-44.

institutions as well as the reorganisation of existing communities.⁶⁷⁴ This silence has raised a number of questions within the recent historiography. Sarah Foot suggests that it may indicate a failure to produce such narratives for female communities, which may itself reflect a contemporary belief that nunneries were in fact not in need of reform; alternatively, that there was no systematic reform of female institutions, that they were expected to adopt the principles of reform without need of intervention, or that female houses adopted the Rule of Saint Benedict peacefully and compliantly. Perhaps rather less plausibly, Foot suggests that reformers may have deliberately suppressed accounts of reform of nunneries so as not to alarm the families of those who were to enter the female monastic life.⁶⁷⁵ Stephanie Hollis by contrast, argues that the lack of contemporary accounts of reform of female communities may in fact reflect their success in maintaining their autonomy, that is, that they had so much power and wealth that bishops preferred not to challenge them.⁶⁷⁶ The wealth and status of many of the reformed male houses would seem, however, to undermine this argument.

Ultimately, however, the nunneries' involvement in reform continues to be assumed, though with a more cautious approach. The references to abbots and abbesses, monks and nuns, in the *Regularis Concordia*, and their seemingly equal treatment therein, when viewed alongside various oblique indications in other sources of reform in practice at female houses, do indeed seem to suggest for the nunneries some form of participation in the tenth century reform movement.

As is often stressed, any exploration of the dynamics of English nunneries in the later Anglo-Saxon period must take into account first and foremost their familial functions. The majority of nunneries in England at this time are seen as in some way connected with the royal house, a question to which we will return. These royal connections can be construed as an indication of the nunneries' reformed status; conversely, however, the close connections between nunneries and the West Saxon dynasty could be seen as directly contravening the espousals of reform. Julia Crick's study of the documented female houses of the later Anglo-Saxon period, however, reveals a continuance of the family dynamic in nunneries *vis-à-vis* patronage, burial and governance throughout the reform period.⁶⁷⁷ If we consider the nunneries' function as repositories of the dynasty's females and, more importantly, their

⁶⁷⁴ Foot, *Veiled Women I*, pp. 92-93.

⁶⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 93-4.

⁶⁷⁶ Hollis, *Writing the Wilton Women*, pp. 255, 267.

⁶⁷⁷ Crick, 'The Wealth, Patronage and Connections', p. 180.

claims to inheritance,⁶⁷⁸ alongside the reformers' desire to stamp out the retention of personal wealth, the tensions between the nature of nunneries and that of reform become clear. An apparent decline in patronage of the nunneries in favour of male Benedictine houses has been seen as one effect of the reform upon female monasticism. Although Crick claims that the only alteration to patterns of donation to nunneries was that grants were now made to institutions rather than to individual nuns or abbesses,⁶⁷⁹ both Yorke and Halpin stress the lack of new foundations of nunneries in the post-reform period as well as a decline in levels of patronage and re-endowment.⁶⁸⁰ Pauline Stafford has suggested that the royal nunneries, specifically those rich and well-established houses at Wilton and Shaftesbury, may have engaged in reform specifically in order to transcend their familial roles and achieve greater autonomy.⁶⁸¹ Neither Wilton nor Shaftesbury received direct royal patronage after the reign of Edgar's son, Æthelred. Should we therefore understand declining levels of patronage as evidence of nunneries' reformed (and more independent) nature? Or should their subsequent disfavour as regards lay patronage conversely be seen as an indication of their failure to embrace the reform ideals which were in certain ways contradictory to their familial nature?

The attendance of abbesses at the Winchester synod (970x973), and more importantly, their equal treatment in the prefatory sections of the *Regularis Concordia*, would certainly seem to indicate an expectation of their, and their monasteries' active involvement in the movement for reform. At roughly the same time, three abbesses appear as witnesses in charters. Female witnesses were a rare occurrence in this period, and their appearance becomes more significant if we consider it alongside the contemporary decline of priests as witnesses to charters. Even abbots appear less as witnesses in the first half of the tenth century, only to become one of the more preponderant groups of witnesses as reform became more widespread and monasticism affirmed its superiority. The appearance of abbesses may therefore indicate a rise in their status as one effect of reform, although it should be noted that this female involvement in charter attestation was relatively short-lived.⁶⁸²

The equal treatment of monks and nuns apparent in the proem of the *Regularis Concordia* is similarly not followed through: the customary itself is written entirely in the male gender.⁶⁸³

⁶⁷⁸ Stafford, 'Queens, Nunneries and Reforming Churchmen', p. 17.

⁶⁷⁹ Crick, 'The Wealth, Patronage and Connections', p. 180.

⁶⁸⁰ Yorke, *Nunneries*, pp. 93, 130; Halpin, 'Women Religious', p. 99.

⁶⁸¹ Stafford, 'Queens, Nunneries and Reforming Churchmen', pp. 17-18.

⁶⁸² *Ibid*, pp. 12-13; also see S 741, S 1294, S 582.

⁶⁸³ C. Cubitt, 'Virginty and Misogyny in Tenth and Eleventh Century England', *Gender and History*, 12:1 (2000), pp. 1-32, at p. 10.

The translation of the Rule of St Benedict into Old English, however, has been seen as addressed to a female audience. This has traditionally been attributed to Æthelwold himself.⁶⁸⁴ Various manuscripts of the translation have survived from the tenth and eleventh centuries, indicating the reformers' concern to make the text accessible for English monasteries.⁶⁸⁵ Indeed, the *Account of King Edgar's establishment of the monasteries*, also written by Æthelwold, explicitly claims that translation of the rule was 'necessary for unlearned laymen who for fear of hell torment and for love of Christ abandon this wretched life and turn to their Lord and choose the holy service of this rule'.⁶⁸⁶ Æthelwold states that the translation was requested by King Edgar who 'wished to know the teaching of that same rule'.⁶⁸⁷ The *Liber Eliensis* goes further, claiming that both Edgar and Ælfthryth requested the translation, giving Æthelwold an estate at Sudborne in Sussex in exchange for his work.⁶⁸⁸

There are two references to nunneries in the *Account of King Edgar's establishment of the monasteries*. The first actively connects Ælfthryth to Edgar's newly founded nunneries; to her they were entrusted so that 'she might help them in every necessity'.⁶⁸⁹ The second is an instruction to abbesses 'to be deeply loyal and to serve the precepts of the rule', particularly where this concerns the alienation of monastic land to kinsfolk 'or to great secular persons'. As the account was preserved along with an early twelfth century manuscript copy of the Old English translation of the Benedictine Rule, it seems reasonable to assume that it was intended as a prologue. Certainly its date of production (c.970x984) would fit with that of the original Old English translation. The references to nunneries would therefore suggest that a version of the Rule was produced for female communities.

Following the work of Arnold Schröer at the end of the nineteenth century, historians have questioned whether the translation of the Rule into Old English was made initially for male monasteries or nunneries. With one exception, all the extant copies of the Old English translation of the rule appear to have been intended for use in male monasteries. Many of

⁶⁸⁴ For discussion of Æthelwold's authorship of the Old English translation, see M. Gretsch, 'The Benedictine Rule in Old English: A document of Bishop Æthelwold's reform politics' in M. Korhammer ed, *Words, texts and manuscripts: studies in Anglo-Saxon culture* (Woodbridge, 1992), pp. 131-158, at pp. 143-145.

⁶⁸⁵ Jayatilaka, 'The Old English Benedictine Rule', p. 147.

⁶⁸⁶ D. Whitelock ed., *An Account of King Edgar's Establishment of the Monasteries* in D. Whitelock ed., *Councils and Synods with Other Documents Relating to the English Church, I, A.D. 871-1204* (Oxford, 1981), p. 151.

⁶⁸⁷ *Ibid*, p. 150.

⁶⁸⁸ Blake, *Liber Eliensis*, bk. 2, ch. 37.

⁶⁸⁹ Whitelock ed., *An Account of King Edgar's Establishment of the Monasteries*, p. 150.

these, however, display traces of adaptation from a feminine exemplar. The Faustina manuscript, for example, contains a large number of feminine forms of the personal pronouns which have been partly erased and replaced with masculine forms.⁶⁹⁰ Schröer hypothesised that the Old English translation had first been produced for male monasteries, that this version had then been adapted for female houses, and that the version for nunneries had then been revised again for the use of monks. Somehow then, the revised edition for nunneries had become the exemplar for all the copies of the translation we now possess.⁶⁹¹ The exception to those copies produced for use in male monasteries is that of the Claudius manuscript which was rewritten for use by a female community. This text displays similarities to the Faustina manuscript in its variant readings of chapters one, sixty and sixty-two. In their opening passages, both Faustina and Claudius omit the instruction to celebrate mass found in other versions of the text, as would be appropriate for a Rule used in female monasteries.⁶⁹² Chapter 62 has been altered in both these manuscripts from its original instruction on the duties of monks ordained as priests, to prescriptions on the correct behaviour of priests when entering a monastery, saying mass, and hearing confession. Again, this appears to have been altered specifically in alignment with the needs of female houses.⁶⁹³ Mechthild Gretsch, after detailed examination of all the extant copies of the Old English Benedictine Rule, has argued that Æthelwold's first translation was an extensive adaptation of the Rule for use in nunneries; this was subsequently revised to produce a version which incorporated both the Latin and Old English texts which was adapted for male use.⁶⁹⁴ Rohini Jayatilaka, however, has more recently claimed that it is more likely, due to Æthelwold's reverence for, and textual adherence to, the original Benedictine Rule, that the 'A' manuscript, which is closest to the original rule and displays no traces of feminisation, was the original version produced by Æthelwold.⁶⁹⁵ Nevertheless, it can at least be shown that a version of the Benedictine Rule, translated into Old English, was produced for use in female communities, and that efforts were made to adapt certain parts for specific female usage.

Reformers were certainly concerned with female religious. Reform literature of the tenth century displays a shift in the use of language used to distinguish different forms of religious life. This shift is more marked in the case of females. The introduction of the term

⁶⁹⁰ Gretsch, 'Æthelwold's Translation', pp. 138-9.

⁶⁹¹ Jayatilaka, 'The Old English Benedictine Rule', p. 149.

⁶⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 177.

⁶⁹³ Gretsch 'The Benedictine Rule in Old English', p. 152.

⁶⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹⁵ Jayatilaka, 'The Old English Benedictine Rule', p. 182.

mynecena, used to denote a cloistered woman, was applied in opposition to that of the older term, *nunnas*, the monastically inferior secular vowess. This terminological hierarchy was also applied to the male religious states of cloistered monks and secular clergy, *munecas* and *preostas* or *canonicas* respectively.⁶⁹⁶ The distinction between *mynecena* and *nunnan*, seen for example in the law codes of Æthelred and Cnut, may reflect reformers' concerns over those females living religious lives outside the monasteries. Recent studies have emphasised the variety of arrangements for women religious in the later Anglo-Saxon period; reformist belief in the superiority of enclosure and life lived according to the Rule of Benedict, both reflected and condemned that practice. In asserting the superiority of monasticism, the reform movement also elevated the status of chastity, or, more preferably, virginity. The writings of the monk Ælfric, a student of Æthelwold's, clearly display a concern to promote sexual abstinence among not only the cloistered monks and nuns but also the secular clergy and secular vowesses. Throughout the body of his work however, Ælfric discusses the theme of virginity with little reference to female religious. In both his translation of Basil of Caesarea's *Admonitio* and *Lives of the Saints*, Ælfric states that the monastic life is open to both sexes, before addressing the remainder of the text to a male audience.⁶⁹⁷ Indeed, Ælfric's guarded treatment of female virgins, paired with an image of women as sexual temptresses, reflects a more general reform view of the 'impure' woman, a symbol of what should be rejected by the male religious.⁶⁹⁸ We have already seen the provisions in the *Regularis Concordia* for the strict enclosure of nuns and their avoidance of associations with men, even monks. This view also informs some of the later legislation of King Æthelred and those of his successor, Cnut. Both the law codes, Æthelred VI and Cnut V display concern for clerical celibacy, the legitimacy of marriage and the protection of widows, with the latter elaborating on issues of correct gender behaviour and sexual morality.⁶⁹⁹ So, while it may be the case that female religious were afforded some form of elevation above the ranks of the secular clergy as gender definitions gave way to monastic distinctions, it also seems that certain gender characterisations were being re-emphasised, with an association of women with the perils of sexuality, reflected in the reformers' persistent calls for stricter enclosure, perhaps especially with regard to women.

⁶⁹⁶ Foot, *Veiled Women I*, pp. 97-98.

⁶⁹⁷ Cubitt, 'Virginity and Misogyny', pp. 3, 9, 13.

⁶⁹⁸ Stafford, 'Queens, Nunneries and Reforming Churchmen', pp. 8-9.

⁶⁹⁹ Cubitt, 'Virginity and Misogyny', p. 23.

Overall, however, the balance of evidence suggests the involvement of at least some nunneries in the tenth-century reform movement. One sign of this may, indeed, be their active involvement in the cult of saints, including translations, like that of Wulfhild, since such activity has been seen as characteristic of reform.⁷⁰⁰ At least *prima facie*, therefore, we might expect to find Barking touched in some respects by reform if not involved in that movement.

As noted above, many nunneries, as indeed many male houses, fulfilled familial functions. A particular group of nunneries has been identified as 'royal'. That definition does not simply cover familial and dynastic functions, though it overlaps with them. It has been used, as we have seen, in arguments about nunneries and reform. It has also led, as will appear below, to interpretations of the queen's recurring role in the histories of nunneries at this date, as variously seen by historians like Barbara Yorke and Pauline Stafford. Historical opinion has been divided over whether Barking should be included in this group. This issue is clearly of potential significance for the relations between Barking and the queen, though, as we have seen, the role of the queen in reform means that the question of Barking and reform and the queen does not turn solely on such links.

Many of the studies on Anglo-Saxon nunneries have centred on the inter-relatedness of nunneries and West Saxon kings and queens. While such studies have taken different approaches and revealed different trends, in the main they agree that Anglo-Saxon nunneries were essentially royal institutions. There is also a general agreement that the defining features of a royal nunnery were: royal foundation and royal patronage;⁷⁰¹ material prosperity and considerable longevity;⁷⁰² royal leadership;⁷⁰³ royal burials; and promotion of cults of royal saints.⁷⁰⁴ On the basis of these categories, there is a consensus in the historiography that the nunneries at Amesbury, Romsey, Shaftesbury, Wherwell, Wilton and Winchester (the Nunnaminster) were all royal in nature.⁷⁰⁵ M. A. Meyer, Sarah Foot, and Barbara Yorke, however, also include Barking in the list of West Saxon royal nunneries. Meyer argues that

⁷⁰⁰ See e.g. A. Thacker, 'Cults at Canterbury', pp. 221-45, esp. pp. 226-35; and *idem*, 'Saint-making and Relic Collecting by Oswald', pp. 244-268.

⁷⁰¹ Crick highlights the apparent lack of lay patronage for these nunneries, a fact which stands in contrast to the numerous lay donations to royal male houses.

⁷⁰² The material prosperity of the royal nunneries, especially as compared to noble foundations, is considered by Foot, Crick and Yorke as directly related to royal sponsorship; the longevity of these nunneries, again in contrast to noble houses, is seen by Crick and Yorke as an outcome of royal patronage and support.

⁷⁰³ Though Yorke highlights a declining number of royal abbesses in the later Anglo-Saxon period.

⁷⁰⁴ Ridyard, *The Royal Saints*.

⁷⁰⁵ Meyer, 'Patronage of the West Saxon Nunneries'; Crick, 'The Wealth, Patronage and Connections' Stafford, 'Queens, Nunneries and Reforming Churchmen'; Yorke, *Nunneries*; Foot, *Veiled Women I*. Sarah Foot alone points to the royal connections with the nunnery at Horton; this is based on Wulfhild's abbacy there rather than royal foundation or patronage.

Barking should be considered a royal house as it had, by the mid-tenth century, ‘come firmly under the control of the royal family’.⁷⁰⁶ Foot claims that Barking, along with the other nunneries mentioned above, enjoyed close connections with the West Saxon royal house in the tenth and eleventh centuries, and should therefore be regarded as a royal house.⁷⁰⁷ Yorke highlights Barking’s status as one of the wealthiest nunneries in England until the Dissolution, and identifies it as one of the nunneries closely associated with the West Saxon dynasty from the tenth century.⁷⁰⁸ Julia Crick, on the other hand, argues that Barking should not be classified as part of this nexus of West Saxon royal nunneries due to the lack of a royal foundation tradition, low level of royal patronage, and apparent lack of royal leadership at the nunnery.⁷⁰⁹ Barking’s ‘royal’ status, at least in the historiography, is therefore ambiguous. Pursuit of that question, as of that of Barking and reform, requires brief consideration of the origin and development of the nunnery and any links to the royal house.

Barking in the tenth century: a royal nunnery?

The earliest reference to a monastery at Barking is found in Bede’s *Ecclesiastical History*, which records that it was built by Eorcenwald before he was made bishop of London in 675. Bede states that Eorcenwald had built two monasteries, one for himself at *Ceortisei* (Chertsey), and one for his sister, Æthelburg, at *Bercingum* (Barking).⁷¹⁰ A foundation date for Barking of 666 can be suggested due to the record in the Chertsey register of its foundation in the same year.⁷¹¹ There also exists a foundation charter for Barking, however this survives as a sixteenth-century copy of a charter from the seventh century which is thought to be spurious in nature, though it may be based on earlier, authentic, tradition.⁷¹² This charter records the gifts made to bishop Eorcenwald by various kings which he then transferred to Barking. The lands listed in Eorcenwald’s charter are: 40 hides at Barking and *Beddanhaam* [given to Eorcenwald by King *Suidfrid*]; 75 hides at *Ricingahaam*, *Budinhaam*, *Dagenham*, *Angenlabeshaam*, and *Widmundes felt* [Wyfields in Great Ilford] [granted by

⁷⁰⁶ Meyer, ‘Patronage of West Saxon Royal Nunneries’, pp. 334-335.

⁷⁰⁷ Foot, *Veiled Women I*, p. 6.

⁷⁰⁸ Yorke, *Nunneries*, pp. 72-73.

⁷⁰⁹ Crick, ‘The Wealth, Patronage and Connections’, pp. 173-175.

⁷¹⁰ Bede, *HE*, bk. 4, ch. 6, ed. Colgrave and Mynors, pp. 355-357.

⁷¹¹ BM MS. Cotton Vit. A xiii, f. 19.

⁷¹² S 1246 – on its authenticity, see section in ch. 4 on Barking and its Lands After 1066.

Hodilredus,⁷¹³ cf. S 1171]; ten hides at Childerditch, Essex [also granted by *Hodilredus*]; 53 hides at Isleworth, Middlesex [granted by King Æthelred (of Mercia)]; 70 hides at Battersea, Surrey [granted by King Ceadwalla (of Wessex), cf. S 1248]; one hide *iuxta* London [granted by King Wulfhere (of Mercia)]; ten hides *supra vicum* London [granted by *Quoengyth*, wife ofaldi]; and 40 hides at Swanscombe and Erith in Kent [granted by King Æthelred (of Mercia)].

Eorcenwald's confirmation charter raises questions as to his status as Barking's principal founder. Ostensibly, Eorcenwald was the founding father of both Barking and Chertsey, which would make these houses episcopal foundations. However, it also appears that the nunnery benefitted from the generosity of kings from the East Saxon, Mercian and West Saxon royal houses. It is difficult, however, to determine whether the lands given to Eorcenwald by these kings were originally intended for Barking, and therefore whether the nunnery, in origin, should be considered an essentially royal foundation. It has been suggested that the grant of 40 hides at Barking itself from the East Saxon king Suidfrid was in fact the original endowment of the monastery.⁷¹⁴ This would argue for royal East Saxon involvement in the foundation of Barking. The other kings granting land which ended up as part of Barking's foundation were all, to some degree, associated with that royal house or with rule of that kingdom. For instance, Æthelred of Mercia, like his brother Wulfhere before him, seems to have exercised authority over the East Saxons. Similarly, the West Saxon King Cædwalla exerted influence over Essex following his invasions of Sussex and Kent.⁷¹⁵ Cædwalla was also associated with Eorcenwald, as, besides the grant secured by Eorcenwald from Cædwalla for Barking, he appears as a witness on one of his other charters, probably because his see included Surrey, which had become part of Cædwalla's territory.⁷¹⁶ There may then be some connection between the foundation of Barking and the East Saxon royals, more loosely between its continued endowment and rule over the East Saxons. Indeed, we cannot rule out the possibility that Eorcenwald himself had some connection with the East Saxon royal line. This is indicated by the 'Eorcen' element of his name, which is probably of

⁷¹³ S 1171, which names Holdilred as '*parens Sebbi provincial East Sexanorum*'. Hodilred is likely to have been of royal rank (due to his granting of charter at this early date), but he does not seem to be the father (as the charter claims) of Sebbi, as he was the son of Sæward. S 1171 is possibly an original, but could also be a copy made up to 100 years after the date it purports to come from. – see section in ch. 4 on Barking and its lands after 1066.

⁷¹⁴ Hart, *The Early Charters of Eastern England*, p. 142; Yorke, 'The Kingdom of the East Saxons', p. 19, & n. 104.

⁷¹⁵ Yorke, 'The Kingdom of the East Saxons', pp. 32-33.

⁷¹⁶ S 235; and see Kelly, *Charters of St Paul's*, pp. 110-111.

Frankish origin and was rarely seen in England except in the early Kentish and East Saxon royal houses.⁷¹⁷ Ultimately, all that can be determined about Barking's foundation is that it was undertaken by the bishop of the East Saxons, and that it was supported by grants from kings of the East Saxon, Mercian and West Saxon realms.

The conquest of the East Saxons between 825 and 831 by the West Saxon King Ecgberht led to the absorption of East Saxon territories, which would have included Barking, by the West Saxon royal house.⁷¹⁸ It is not possible to determine the fate of the nunnery at this time, as the next reference to it in the historical record is a charter of the mid-tenth century. The silence of the sources for Barking in the ninth century has been attributed to the community's destruction during the Viking invasions.⁷¹⁹ This interpretation seems to stem from a story in the *Lecciones de Sancta Hildelith*. As we have seen, Goscelin's narrative records that the nunnery was burnt to the ground by the Danes, with all the nuns and the abbess inside.⁷²⁰ Goscelin claims that this took place in the same year in which King Edmund of East Anglia was killed by the Danes, that is, 870.⁷²¹ Indeed, archaeological evidence seems to suggest that the site of Barking Abbey was abandoned at some point in the mid-ninth century. There is, however, evidence for glass-making there in the first half of the tenth century, which suggests that the community had returned by this point.⁷²² It remains unclear whether there was a complete dispersal of the community in 870 due to Viking raids and possibly, settlement, and if so, how long it was until reoccupation of the site. It is possible that the Barking community left the nunnery for a better defended site at this time, as Goscelin claims they did during the Viking invasions at the time of King Æthelred II, and at the time of the

⁷¹⁷ The Frankish origin of Eorcenwald's name is evidenced by a reference in Bede to a Neustrian mayor of the palace named Eorcenwald [*JHE*, bk. 3, ch. 19]. The Kentish link is supported by the names of King Eorcenberht of Kent and his daughter Eorcengota. Æthelburg was also a Kentish name; and earlier example is that of the daughter of King Æthelberht of Kent. In the case of the East Saxon dynasty, there is some suggestion that the father of King Saebert (d. c. 616) was called Eorcenwine: see Yorke, *Nunneries*, p. 17, n. 16 and her 'The Kingdom of the East Saxons', p. 15 and n. 89; also see Hart, *The Early Charters of Eastern England*, p. 118, n. 6. See also P. Fouracre and R. A. Gerberding, *Late Merovingian France, History and Hagiography 640-720* (Manchester, 1996), pp. 99-104, and P. Fouracre, 'Britain, Ireland and Europe, c.500-c.750', in P. Stafford ed., *A Companion to the Early Middle Ages, Britain and Ireland c 500-c.1100* (Chichester, 2009), pp. 126-142, esp. pp. 130-1.

⁷¹⁸ *ASC* (A, E) 823, 825, 827; Kelly, *Charters of St Paul's*, pp. 19-20; Bede [*HE*, bk. 2, ch. 3] describes the East Saxon kingdom as being divided from Kent by the river Thames, and bordering the Eastern sea. He also names London as their chief metropolis. Kelly [*ibid*, p. 12] claims that the core of the East Saxon kingdom incorporated much of the later county of Essex, and that in the seventh century their territories included Middlesex and London, and possibly south-eastern Hertfordshire and Surrey.

⁷¹⁹ Knowles, *Medieval Religious Houses*, p. 210.

⁷²⁰ Goscelin, *Lecciones de Sancta Hildelitha*, ch. 2, in Colker, 'Texts of Jocelyn of Canterbury', pp. 455-456.

⁷²¹ *ASC* (A, E) 870.

⁷²² K. MacGowan, 'Barking Abbey', *Current Archaeology*, 149 (1996), pp. 172-8; and M. Redknap, 'The Saxon Pottery from Barking Abbey: part 1, local wares', *London Archaeologist*, 6:13 (1991), pp. 353-360, which demonstrates a transition in the tenth century to a new form of wheelthrown pottery at the Barking site.

Norman Conquest.⁷²³ This practice is recorded at, for example, Shaftesbury, which was given a cell at Bradford-on-Avon by King Æthelred II for the express purpose of providing a retreat at times of Danish invasion.⁷²⁴ There is, however, some argument for the uninterrupted use of Barking as a monastic community in the preservation of its archive, which might suggest either that the community did not abandon its nunnery at Barking, or, that they became a displaced community for a time, and thus that John Blair's scepticism about the destruction of religious life in East Anglia should be noted.⁷²⁵

A charter of the mid-tenth century from the West Saxon King Eadred to the monastic community at Barking (*monastice conversationis familia in bercingum*) suggests either the continued presence of a monastic community at Barking, or, the re-establishment of a religious house there.⁷²⁶ It also highlights an association with the West Saxon dynasty, though the nature of this association is difficult to determine. In fact, Eadred's gift to Barking Abbey in 950 seems to undermine Goscelin's assertion in the Life of Wulfhild that Edgar, who became king in 957/959, restored the nunnery himself.⁷²⁷ It should, however, be noted that there is no indication in Eadred's charter of the gender of the community at Barking at the time of his grant, so we cannot be sure that Eadred's grant favoured a female community at Barking, though of course it is likely that it did.

In this context, however, two other grants of King Eadred should be noted, both made to 'religiosae/sanctimoniales feminae'. The first records Eadred's gift of four hides at Tolleshunt, Essex to the *sancte monialis femine vocitate nomine Æthelgifu*. The charter is dated 946, and survives only in the sixteenth-century cartulary of Ilford Hospital.⁷²⁸ A charter of the same year, from the same archive, records a further grant of King Eadred's to the *religiose sanctæ moniali femine vocitato nomine Eawyn* of 19 hides at Hockley, Essex.⁷²⁹ The Ilford Hospital cartulary, as we have seen, preserves a selection of the charters of Barking nunnery. No specific connection can be made between either of these religious

⁷²³ Stafford suggests that this may be a method to explain the gap in evidence – a common topos, perhaps already in use by the eleventh century.

⁷²⁴ S 889.

⁷²⁵ Yorke, *Nunneries*, p. 60. Though, as Yorke argues, to have survived as a nunnery, it would have needed powerful support, most likely from the bishop of London or ealdorman. See also John Blair's arguments for continuity in the East Anglian minsters, including Barking, in his *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society*, pp. 318-20.

⁷²⁶ S 552a. This granted two 4-hide estates, one at Lippanwelle, the other at Ciricdune.

⁷²⁷ Goscelin, *Vita Wulfhildae*, ch. 4, in Colker, 'Texts of Jocelyn of Canterbury', pp. 423-425.

⁷²⁸ S 517a.

⁷²⁹ S 517b.

women and the nunnery at Barking.⁷³⁰ But the possession of these charters by Barking means that they require some attention, especially for what they may suggest about religious life there.

'Religiosae feminae' have been the subject of some historiographical interest, connected with the question of women, nunneries and reform. David Dumville drew attention to a series of royal grants made to religious women in the first half of the tenth century which favour the terms *religiosae femine*. He argued that this group of royal grants, which date between 939 and 955, are testimony to the effective spread of religious vocation among the nobility and the active support of this enthusiasm by the royal dynasty.⁷³¹ Sarah Foot suggests that the clustering of these grants to individual religious women in the same period for which there is a lack of evidence for female monastic houses may denote the emergence of an alternative form of individual female religious expression; alternatively we could simply be witnessing a general proliferation of royal grants in this period.⁷³² Foot further suggests that rather than link these women to established religious institutions, historians should view them as either the foci of small communities or as women who lived a religious life but who remained in the secular world.⁷³³ While Dumville sees the cessation of these grants to individual religious women as a probable effect of the rise to power of reformist bishops in Edgar's reign, and hence the discouragement of individual religious expression⁷³⁴ [he characterises these grants as part of a 'rather uninstitutionalised' enthusiasm, hence their disappearance as reformers gained power and, at least this is what he implies, communal life for women in nunneries became more established], Foot argues that individual female religious expression was still prevalent in the eleventh century.⁷³⁵

The earliest charter to use the term *religiosa femina* is dated 939, and is preserved as a thirteenth-century copy of an apparently authentic charter in the Abingdon archive. This charter records a grant of 15 hides at Brightwalden, Berkshire from King Æthelstan to the *religiose femine vocitate nomine Eadulfu*.⁷³⁶ Despite some attempts to associate Eadulfu with the community at Abingdon, her religious status and identity remain unclear due to lack of

⁷³⁰ Foot, *Veiled Women I*, p. 184.

⁷³¹ D. Dumville, *Wessex and England from Alfred to Edgar: six essays on political, cultural, and ecclesiastical revival* (Woodbridge, 1992), p. 165.

⁷³² Foot, *Veiled Women I*, p. 185.

⁷³³ *Ibid.*, p. 179.

⁷³⁴ Dumville, *Wessex and England*, pp. 165-6.

⁷³⁵ Foot, *Veiled Women I*, p. 185.

⁷³⁶ S 448; Stenton, Keynes and Kelly, among others, have deemed this charter authentic on diplomatic grounds.

evidence.⁷³⁷ The grant by King Æthelstan in 939 of 15 hides at East Overton, Wiltshire to the *sancte conversationi dedite Christi ancille nomine Wulfswith* is preserved as an original charter in the Old Minster, Winchester archive.⁷³⁸ There is no other evidence available to identify Wulfswith, nor can she be associated with the Old Minster community.

There are seven charters recording gifts from King Edmund to individual religious women. The earliest, dated 940, is apparently an original charter. This grants ten hides at Oswaldington, Kent to the *religiose sancte monialis femine vocitate Æthelswith*.⁷³⁹ This charter survived in the Canterbury archive; there is, however, no evidence to suggest that Æthelswith was connected to the monastic community there.⁷⁴⁰ A grant of the same year of five hides at Poolhampton, Overton, Wiltshire, to the *religiose sanctæ conuersationis monialis femine vocitato nomine Æthelthryth*, survives in the Winchester, Old Minster archive.⁷⁴¹ Again, there is no reason to assume a connection between the beneficiary Æthelthryth and the male community at Winchester.⁷⁴² In 941 King Edmund granted 15 hides at Buckland Newton and Plush, Dorset to the *religiose femine vocitate nomine Ælflæd*. This charter survives in the Glastonbury archive.⁷⁴³ Although there is no evidence to connect Ælflæd with Glastonbury, there is some suggestion that she was the queen of Edward the Elder, and that she was buried at the nunnery of Wilton.⁷⁴⁴ The next in this series of grants from King Edmund was made in 942 to the *religiose femine vocitate nomine Sæthryth*, and recorded the gift of eleven hides at Winkfield and Swinley, Berkshire. The charter is considered genuine, and survives in the Abingdon archive.⁷⁴⁵ Sæthryth is otherwise unknown, and cannot at present be linked to the Abingdon community.⁷⁴⁶

Also in 942, a grant of seven hides at Cheselbourne, Dorset, was made by King Edmund to the *religiose sancte conuersacionis femine vocitate nomine Wynflæd*, preserved in the

⁷³⁷ Foot, *Veiled Women I*; F. Stenton *The Early History of the Abbey of Abingdon*, p. 13; and Halpin, 'Women Religious', p. 104, argued that Eadulfu was a member of the Abingdon community, but fail to present evidence for such an argument.

⁷³⁸ S 449.

⁷³⁹ S 464; Sawyer and Keynes, amongst others, deem this charter an original mid-tenth century document.

⁷⁴⁰ Foot, *Veiled Women I*, p. 184; D. Dumville, *Wessex and England*, p. 177.

⁷⁴¹ S 465; Hart and Keynes agree that this is an authentic charter.

⁷⁴² Foot, *Veiled Women I*, p. 184; D. Dumville, *Wessex and England*, p. 177.

⁷⁴³ S 474.

⁷⁴⁴ William of Malmesbury identified an Ælflæd [though not necessarily this one?] as Edward's queen in his *Gesta Regum Anglorum* (ed. Stubbs, I, pp. 136-7); the same author claimed she was buried at Wilton (*GRA*, II, p. 126). Meyer has discussed her supposed interest in reform in his 'Women and the Tenth-Century English Monastic Reform' pp. 46-7. Sarah Foot, in her *Veiled Women I*, p. 181, suggests that Ælflæd may have taken religious vows while remaining a laywoman.

⁷⁴⁵ S 482; Kelly claims these are authentic copies.

⁷⁴⁶ Foot, *Veiled Women I*, p. 184; D. Dumville, *Wessex and England*, p. 177.

cartulary of Shaftesbury nunnery.⁷⁴⁷ A charter of 966, also surviving in the Shaftesbury cartulary appears to confirm a connection between a Wynflæd and the community at Shaftesbury as it records the confirmation by King Edgar of land granted to Shaftesbury by Wynflæd, Edgar's grandmother.⁷⁴⁸ This may be the same Wynflæd whose will grants to Shaftesbury an estate at Chinnock.⁷⁴⁹ Dorothy Whitelock detected further familiarity with Shaftesbury in the will-making Wynflæd's use of the terms 'the church' and 'the refectory' without further distinction when referring to Shaftesbury in her will.⁷⁵⁰ Both Whitelock and Foot have claimed that Wynflæd could not have been a cloistered member of the community at Shaftesbury due to her control of estates and other possessions.⁷⁵¹ This view however, is informed by a perception of cloistered religious which may be based on the normative reform literature of the tenth century, rather than by actual evidence. For the moment we should note the apparent connection to Shaftesbury of one [or perhaps two?] women by the name of Wynflæd, at least one of whom had been granted land as an individual 'religiosa femina'. This would be especially interesting since Shaftesbury was already a functioning female community by this date.

The next grant made by King Edmund to an individual religious woman was made in 943 to the *religiose feminae vocitate nomine Ælfswith*, and gave to her 15 hides at Burghclere in Hampshire. The charter survives in the archive of the Old Minster, Winchester.⁷⁵² We have no evidence to support a link between the beneficiary of this grant and the community at Old Minster.⁷⁵³ The final charter in this series of grants by King Edmund donates three hides at Rollington in Bulbridge near Wilton, Wiltshire to the *sancte conversationis monialis femine vocitate nomine Ælfgyth*. Interestingly, the Old English section of this charter refers to Ælfgyth as *nunnan*. The charter survives in the fourteenth-century cartulary of Wilton nunnery.⁷⁵⁴ The survival of an original charter dated 955 to *Ælfgyth sancti moniali in Wiltunensi monasterio degenti*,⁷⁵⁵ has led Sarah Foot to identify the Ælfgyth of S 493 and 563 as a 'cloistered woman from Wilton'.⁷⁵⁶ Although this is apparently true of the Ælfgyth of 955, we should bear in mind the possibility that the Ælfgyth described in the charter of 944

⁷⁴⁷ S 485.

⁷⁴⁸ S 744.

⁷⁴⁹ S 1539.

⁷⁵⁰ Whitelock, *Anglo Saxon Wills*, no. 3, p. 13.

⁷⁵¹ *Ibid*, p. 13; Foot, *Veiled Women I*, p. 182.

⁷⁵² S 487; Finberg and Hart claim its authenticity.

⁷⁵³ Foot, *Veiled Women I*, pp. 184-5, n. 140; D. Dumville, *Wessex and England*, p. 177.

⁷⁵⁴ S 493; Finberg claims this is authentic.

⁷⁵⁵ S 563.

⁷⁵⁶ Foot, *Veiled Women I*, p. 183.

may not have had the same status; perhaps it is also worth considering the influence of reform in the shift in terminology applied to this religious woman. Again Wilton was by now a functioning nunnery.

Charters from the reign of King Eadred include four royal grants to individual religious women. In addition to the two from the Barking archive, the fifteenth-century cartulary of Shaftesbury nunnery contains a grant of eight hides in the Isle of Purbeck, Dorset in 948 from King Eadred to the *religiose femine vocitate nomine Ælfhryth*.⁷⁵⁷ Although this land was included in that recorded as in the possession of the nunnery of Shaftesbury in Domesday, there is no way to determine whether she was a member of that community, though there appears to be a connection of some sort since the land ends up there. An original charter of 948, preserved in the Christ Church, Canterbury archive, records a grant of 6 hides at Wickhambreux in Kent to the *religiose femine vocitatae nomine Ælfwyn*. The land was given by King Eadred in return for two pounds of purest gold.⁷⁵⁸ Again, there is no evidence to support a link between Ælfwyn and the community at Canterbury.⁷⁵⁹ The final charter in this series of grants from Eadred to religious females is the aforementioned grant to *Ælfgyth sancti moniali in Wiltunensi monasterio degenti*. This original charter of 955 grants 20 hides at East Pennard, Somerset, in return for 120 gold *solidi*, and is preserved in the Glastonbury archive.⁷⁶⁰ The possibility that Ælfgyth was a cloistered nun at Wilton has been discussed, but the preservation of this charter at Glastonbury needs to be borne in mind.

Following this charter of 955, the practice of granting land to individual religious women came, in Dumville's words 'to an abrupt halt'. This would seem to be the case, save for a single grant of the year 970 from King Edgar to the *vidue santimonialique habitu... Ælfswith*.⁷⁶¹ The addition of the term *vidue* may be significant, as it is only following the advance of monastic reform that this reference to the beneficiary's marital status appears. Unlike with the majority of the earlier grants to religious women in this series, the beneficiary of this charter can be identified. Ælfswith was apparently the widow

⁷⁵⁷ S 534; Kelly deems this an authentic charter.

⁷⁵⁸ S 535.

⁷⁵⁹ Foot, *Veiled Women I*, p. 184.

⁷⁶⁰ S 563.

⁷⁶¹ S 775.

of the ealdorman Ælfheah; the couple made several grants to the abbey of Glastonbury, in whose archive the above charter was preserved.⁷⁶²

The charters granting land to women designated as ‘*religiosae*’ or some cognate term are a tantalising group. They record land gifts in Kent, Essex, Berkshire, Hampshire, Wiltshire, Somerset and Dorset. They are preserved in the archives of Abingdon, Glastonbury, Shaftesbury, Wilton, Ilford Hospital/Barking, Christ Church, Canterbury and Old Minster, Winchester. With one exception (S 563 – Ælfgyth at Wilton) none of the beneficiaries can be described with any certainty as members of any monastic community. It therefore seems likely that these were women, in some cases at least, following a religious calling outside of the cloister. Foot’s advice against attempts to link these women in all cases to monastic institutions seems sound. It may in fact be an anachronism influenced by subsequent reform literature that has led to such attempts; certainly they have been shown to be unprofitable.

The preservation of their charters in the archives of communities whose archives have survived could be explained in various ways; it is of course possible that some of these women *were* associated in some way with these communities; alternatively that their lands passed to the communities after their deaths. It is interesting that three of the four original charters were not copied into the cartularies of the institutions which preserved them. It is also interesting that the one charter which does affiliate the beneficiary with a monastic community is not preserved in the archive of that same community, suggesting perhaps a rather loose and changeable relationship between this religious woman and the communities with which she seems to have been connected.

What is clear is that these grants have a defined chronology. The one royal grant which belongs to the high period of reform is somewhat distinct in its use of the term *vidua*; are we perhaps seeing the influence of reformers in this use of further distinction – to cover women who would not be considered ‘nuns’ by full reform definitions? Royal grants to females after this period are usually made to communities, and on occasion, their abbesses. It is therefore impossible to compare the Latin terms for female religious after the reform period. The distinction which exists in the vernacular terminology of reform literature has been interpreted as the firming of distinctions between the cloistered and the non-cloistered along reform lines. However, it is difficult to identify that here.

⁷⁶² S 775; Sarah Foot, *Veiled Women I*, pp. 182-3, claims Ælfswith was Ælfheah’s widow, and that they both made ‘several’ grants to the community at Glastonbury; Foot does not supply the references for this information however, and I have so far been unable to confirm these points.

The dates of these charters- some of which survive as originals - appear to indicate a movement of support for individual religious females. David Dumville may indeed be correct in assuming an increase in such religious vocations for women at this time, though Sarah Foot's argument that this style of religious observance continued into the eleventh century would seem to undermine his suggestion that this was somehow curtailed with the advance of the reform movement. One factor that neither Dumville nor Foot have considered is that the majority of these charters were preserved in the archives of institutions which have subsequently been considered those most successfully reformed. Though there is some doubt as to the reformed status of the female communities in this group (Barking, Shaftesbury, Wilton) in current historiography, it is generally agreed that the male institutions (Canterbury, Glastonbury, Abingdon, and Winchester) experienced reform, indeed, were at the heart of the reform movement. Is it perhaps possible that these individual religious women, and of course their lands, were absorbed into the most established and orthodox communities of the tenth century? Of course it could be argued that what we see is not the disappearance of such women, but the end of royal grants to them. The cessation of royal grants to religious women at the same time as advancement of the monastic reform movement could therefore be understood as the successful suppression of [royal] *support* for individual religious expression, even if such expression was not successfully suppressed.

The 'religious women' whose charters survived in the Barking archive thus take us no closer to an answer about the survival or not of the Barking community across the ninth to tenth centuries. But the date of their appearance, and later absence, is part of a pattern which may indicate increasingly successful organisation of nunneries like Barking, and especially their increasing monopoly of royal patronage. Eadred's charter for the nunnery suggests that, by the mid-tenth century if not before, Barking had secured the support of the West Saxon kings. This might also have brought Barking into contact with the royally-sponsored monastic reform movement of the later tenth century, and also with the queen.

Royal wives appear in a series of wills which ostensibly favour Barking. The will of ealdorman Ælfgar, dated 946x951, grants an estate at Baythorn to his daughter Æthelflæd, with the provision that it should pass on her death to her younger sister, Ælfflæd, and following her death, to 'Sce Marie Stowe at Berkyng'.⁷⁶³ Æthelflæd was, briefly, the wife of King Edmund, and this grant is a tantalising direct link between a tenth-century queen and

⁷⁶³ Whitelock, *Anglo-Saxon Wills*, no. 2, pp. 7-9.

the abbey, and via the daughter of a local ruler of Essex. That link is, however, complicated by the provision for her [non-royal] sister's inheritance. The will of Æthelflæd, datable to 962x991, does not mention Baythorn, but does grant an estate at Woodham to her younger sister to revert to 'sca Marian cyrcan æt Byorcingan'. Ælflæd's will, datable to 1000x1002, however, grants the estate at Woodham not directly to Barking, but to Ælfhryth 'my lord's mother', with the direction that it should revert to 'sca Marian stowæ into Beorcingan' on Ælfhryth's death.⁷⁶⁴ This latter will points to a direct link between the nunnery at Barking and the queen, and perhaps, to queens and nunneries in general. Given that neither Woodham nor Baythorn are recorded as part of Barking's holding in Domesday Book, it may also point to appropriation of nunneries lands, and specifically Barking's, by Queen Ælfhryth. And the date of Ælflæd's will may suggest that Ælfhryth continued to hold Barking to the very end of her life. It is time to turn to the queen and nunneries and more specifically to Ælfhryth and her role at Barking.

The *Life of Wulfhild* records, as we have seen, the alleged wooing of Wulfhild by King Edgar. When the king abandoned his pursuit, he gave Wulfhild not only Barking, but also Horton. The latter was the 'umbilical tetrapolis' to which were somehow attached four other 'domos [sic] familiarum': Wilton, Shaftesbury, Wareham and 'Hamton'.⁷⁶⁵ Goscelin's statement has attracted much scepticism. Sarah Foot points out that as *domus familiarum* translates as 'houses of households', we cannot be sure what Goscelin meant. If Goscelin had meant to say that Wulfhild was given authority over some kind of monastic congregation, he would have perhaps written *domos famularum*, which translates as 'houses of female servants of God'.⁷⁶⁶ Foot claims that the historicity of this passage is somewhat dubious, that it may represent a retrospective claim by Barking nunnery to association with King Edgar, noting that the idea that Barking acquired some form of authority over these other houses is not supported by any other source.⁷⁶⁷ Julia Crick, while seeming to accept Goscelin's claim that Edgar had given Wulfhild the monastery of Barking along with a further 24 *mansiones*, describes his following assertion of her being given a further five houses as 'incomprehensible and apparently historically inaccurate'. Crick sees this claim as a propagandist attempt by Barking to acquire superiority over the houses at Wilton,

⁷⁶⁴ *Ibid*, nos. XIV & XV, pp. 35, 39.

⁷⁶⁵ Goscelin, *Vita Wulfhildae*, ch. 4, in Colker, 'Texts of Jocelyn of Canterbury', pp. 423-425.

⁷⁶⁶ Foot, *Veiled Women II*, p. 6.

⁷⁶⁷ *Ibid*, p. 32.

Shaftesbury, Horton, Wareham and *Hamtonia*.⁷⁶⁸ Barbara Yorke, however, is more reluctant to dismiss Goscelin's claim out-of-hand, suggesting that Wulfhild may have been given a supervisory role over these nunneries. This position Yorke likens to that bestowed on Ælfhryth in the *Regularis Concordia* of c. 973.⁷⁶⁹ Yorke thus takes seriously Wulfhild's own connections to the royal house. Linking them in some way to the development of the queen's role in nunneries is a very interesting idea.

Certainly, some of the other nunneries named by Goscelin as part of her '*domos familiarum*' were houses which traditionally came under the authority of the royal house.⁷⁷⁰ Wareham, for instance, was certainly a town associated with the West Saxon kings. The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* records that, in the year 786, Brihtric, King of the West Saxons, was buried at Wareham.⁷⁷¹ The first reference to a female community at Wareham comes from Asser, in his *Life of King Alfred*, in which he describes Wareham as a fortified site where there was a congregation of female religious.⁷⁷² The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* records that, in the year 876, a Danish army 'slipped past the army of the West Saxons into Wareham.'⁷⁷³ The author of the *Victoria County History* asserts that Wareham was destroyed by the Danes in 876, a judgement presumably based on the entry for that year in the *Chronicle*.⁷⁷⁴ Whether this was a time of ruin for the female house there is difficult to ascertain; there are however, no further references in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* to a monastic congregation at Wareham until 982, at which point the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* records that two abbesses of Dorset died, Herelufu of Shaftesbury and Wulfwyn of Wareham.⁷⁷⁵ This is a rare appearance of women in the

⁷⁶⁸ Crick, 'The Wealth, Patronage and Connections', p. 170 & n. 91.

⁷⁶⁹ Yorke, *Nunneries*, p. 169.

⁷⁷⁰ Discussion of the house at '*Hamtonia*' is difficult, not least due to a lack of positive identification. In 1913, *Hamtonia* was tentatively identified as Hampton in Gloucestershire by Esposito in his 'La vie de Sainte Vulfhilde', p. 17. More recently however, O'Donovan, in her *Charters of Sherborne*, p. lix, has argued that Goscelin was referring to a nunnery at Southampton, as this would align with Goscelin's statement that it lay within 20 miles of Horton. Unfortunately, however, the existence of a nunnery at Southampton cannot be corroborated by any external evidence: no charters, no reference in Domesday Book, and no architectural remains have been identified. Nor is there any record of a house in the antiquarian records of Leland or Dugdale. A lack of record may indicate the poor nature of such an establishment, if indeed it existed at all. Perhaps our only clue as to the fate of a religious house in Southampton is in the entry for 980 in the *ASC*: 'Southampton was sacked by a naval force, and most of the citizens killed or taken captive.' [*ASC*, 980] It therefore seems highly likely that any religious house that existed at Southampton had ceased to exist by 1066; certainly there is no reference to such a house in Domesday Book. The lack of evidence for a nunnery at Southampton beyond the reference in the life of Wulfhild means that we are not able to determine its relationship to either Barking or the West Saxon dynasty.

⁷⁷¹ *ASC* (E) 784.

⁷⁷² Asser, *Life of Alfred*, ch. 49, in W. H. Stevenson, ed., *Asser's Life of King Alfred, Together with the Annals of Saint Neots, Erroneously Ascribed to Asser* (Oxford, 1959).

⁷⁷³ *ASC* (A, E) 876.

⁷⁷⁴ Calthrop, 'Houses of Benedictine monks: The priories of Cranbourne and Horton', pp. 70-73.

⁷⁷⁵ *ASC* (C) 982.

chronicle; the significance of this record is difficult to determine, though the possible connection between Shaftesbury and Wareham should be noted, as should a possible familial tie between Wulfwyn and Wulfhild of Barking.⁷⁷⁶

There is also reference to a royal burial at Wareham in 978 in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. Following his murder at Corfe on 18 March, King Edward the Martyr was, according to the chronicle, ‘buried at Wareham without any royal honours.’⁷⁷⁷ This occurred, according to the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, only four years before the record of Abbess Wulfwyn’s death; it would seem likely therefore that there was a female congregation at Wareham at the time of Edward’s burial. However, the late tenth-century *Life of Oswald* by Byrhtferth of Ramsey claims that Edward was taken to ‘the house of a certain unimportant person’ where he lay ‘with a mean covering, waiting the light of day’, which suggests that he was not buried at a nunnery at all.⁷⁷⁸ The anonymous *Life of Edward the Martyr*, written in the late eleventh century, extends the tale and relates how, after being thrown into a ‘certain little house’ near the site of his murder, Edward’s body was discovered by men ‘from the neighbouring town of Wareham’. The author claims that Edward was then buried in the church of St Mary in Wareham.⁷⁷⁹ The story continues with a visit from the Ealdorman Ælfhere, who decided that Edward’s remains should be transferred to a ‘more fitting place’. Edward was then translated to Shaftesbury ‘because that monastery dedicated in honour of the holy mother of God Mary was considered very renowned.’⁷⁸⁰ It may be that these sources bear witness to the appropriation of Edward’s relics by Shaftesbury. Claiming that the current holders of a saint’s relics were unworthy for the job was a fairly common and effective method of securing such relics for a rival community. Alternatively, it may be that there was some co-operation between the female houses of Wareham and Shaftesbury, if indeed Edward was originally buried in a church associated with the nunnery there.

⁷⁷⁶ Barbara Yorke has drawn attention to the alliterative pattern of Wulfhild’s family’s names. Her cousin was Wulfhryth of Wilton; her father was called Wulfhelm, her aunt Wenflaed. Another kinswoman Wulfwenna (Wulfwaen?) was also a member of the Wilton community. It may be possible that the latter is the same Wulfwyn who became abbess of Wareham, although Wulfwyn of Wareham has traditionally been identified as a kinswoman of Ealdorman Æthelmaer, as a woman of that name is described as his Æthelmaer’s relative in the foundation charter for Eynsham Abbey. See also Foot, *Veiled Women II*, p. 198.

⁷⁷⁷ *ASC* (E) 978.

⁷⁷⁸ Eadmer, *Vita Oswaldi*, ch. 4, 19, in A. J. Turner and B. J. Muir, eds. and trans., *Eadmer of Canterbury: lives and miracles of saints Oda, Dunstan and Oswald* (Oxford, 2006).

⁷⁷⁹ C. E. Fell, *Edward King and Martyr* (Leeds, 1971), p. 8.

⁷⁸⁰ *Ibid*, p. 9; the *ASC* (E) for the year 980 also records Ælfhere’s involvement in the translation of Edward’s body from Wareham to Shaftesbury.

The links between Wareham and Shaftesbury described here may shed some light on the unusual appearance of the abbesses of these nunneries in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. Simon Keynes has highlighted the involvement of these abbesses in the events surrounding Edward's death and burial in the late 970s, and therefore at a time when politically sensitive decisions were being made as to where to preserve Edward's remains. While their deaths may not necessarily have been sinister, their appearance in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* is suspicious. It may simply be that it was their involvement in the events of 979 which earned them a place in the record of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*.⁷⁸¹

The reference to Abbess Wulfwyn in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* is the last explicit record of a nunnery at Wareham. There are no charters associated with a monastic house at Wareham, nor does there appear a monastery of that name in Domesday Book. All we can be sure of at Wareham is that there was a female congregation there in both the ninth and the tenth centuries; whether it was continually inhabited as such is impossible to tell. Even the date of its demise lacks record; we can only be sure that by 1066, any female community there had ceased to exist. By 1086 the town of Wareham was held by the king, of the two churches in Wareham one belonged, as we saw earlier, to the church of Horton, and the other to the church of St Wandrille.

Another of the houses which Goscelin claimed came under the authority of Wulfhild was Shaftesbury, which again, was clearly linked to the West Saxon royal house. The first reference to Shaftesbury as a religious house for women is found in Asser's *Life of Alfred*, written sometime between 880 and c. 893. Asser writes that King Alfred had ordered the building of a minster in Shaftesbury suitable for the housing of many noble religious women, and had appointed over them as abbess his daughter Æthelgifu.⁷⁸² Shaftesbury enjoyed a continuous history of royal patronage from King Alfred to Æthelred II.⁷⁸³ It was also the burial place of King Edgar's mother, Ælfgifu; Æthelweard's *Chronicle* reports the death of Queen Ælfgifu, wife of King Edmund, in the year 944. Her death was followed, according to Æthelweard, by miracles which occurred at her tomb in the monastery of Shaftesbury.⁷⁸⁴ By the end of the tenth century it had become the resting place of the murdered king, Edward.

⁷⁸¹ Keynes, *The Diplomas of King Æthelred 'The Unready'*, pp. 174-186.

⁷⁸² Asser, *Life of Alfred*, ed. Stevenson, p. 85.

⁷⁸³ S 357; S 419; s 429; S 630; and S 899 (A grant by King Æthelred II in 1002 to the 'ecclesie sancti Edwardi de Shaftisbury' of land at Bradford.) Also relevant here are S 485 and S 1539 (grant to Wynflaed, and will of Wynflaed, King Edgar's grandmother.)

⁷⁸⁴ A. Campbell, ed., *The Chronicle of Æthelweard* (London, 1962), p. 54.

The third nunnery named by Goscelin as one of those given to Wulfhild by Edgar is Wilton. There are two foundation traditions for Wilton, both of which associate the nunnery with the West Saxon house, though it should be noted that neither is considered particularly reliable. A charter of King Edgar's in the Wilton cartulary records the foundation of Wilton by his grandfather, Edward the Elder. Unfortunately, the charter itself is not genuine, though the foundation tradition its records may well be.⁷⁸⁵ An alternative tradition is found in the fifteenth century poem, the *Chronicon Vilodunense*. This claims that King Ecgbert founded the nunnery in 830 on the site of a church which had been founded by 'Erle Wolstonus'. The *Chronicon* also records subsequent re-organisation of the nunnery by King Alfred.⁷⁸⁶ The first secure reference to Wilton as the site of a monastic community is found within Wilton's cartulary in the form of two grants of land made by King Æthelstan.⁷⁸⁷ Neither of these charters, however, makes explicit reference to the gender of the inhabitants of Wilton, so cannot be confirmed as grants to the nunnery as such. The abbey's retention of the lands granted in these charters until Domesday and after, does, however, suggest some form of continuity at Wilton throughout the later Anglo-Saxon period.⁷⁸⁸ Patronage by Kings Eadred, Eadwig, Edgar, and Æthelred is attested in charters and wills.⁷⁸⁹ Patronage by King Cnut is suggested by Goscelin in his late-eleventh century *Life of St Edith*, in which he claims that Cnut provided the community with a golden tomb to house the relics of St. Edith.⁷⁹⁰ Edith, Edgar's daughter, had been a nun there in the later tenth century, and her mother, Wulfthryth, its abbess.

The places Goscelin lists are thus independently attested in at least three cases as closely associated with the royal dynasty, and specifically with that dynasty at the end of the tenth century. The possible familial links between Wulfwyn, Wulfthryth and Wulfhild connect them again, and link Horton and Barking into this group. Close connections with the dynasty

⁷⁸⁵ S 799. Whitelock claims the charter is spurious based on incorrect dating of Edgar's coronation; Sarah Foot, noting that the charter can have been produced no later than the 14th century (as this was when the cartulary was copied out), claims that it may in fact record earlier, possibly genuine, legends about the nunnery's foundation. See Foot, *Veiled Women II*, pp. 224-6.

⁷⁸⁶ C. Horstmann ed., *S. Edithe Sive Chronicon Vilodunense* (1883), fol. 195. Certain inaccuracies within the poem however, highlight the need for careful handling of this source, though it should not be dismissed completely.

⁷⁸⁷ S 424; S 438. The first, datable between 935 and 939, granted land at North Newton and Savernake Forest to 'the *monasterium* of the holy mother of God, Mary, called Wilton', the second, dated 937, donated six hides of land Burcombe in Wiltshire to 'the church of St Mary, Wilton.'

⁷⁸⁸ *GDB*, f. 68r (Burcombe), f. 67v (North Newton).

⁷⁸⁹ S 582: This grant of King Eadwig's donating 100 hides of land at Chalke, Wiltshire, in 955 explicitly names 'the venerable congregation of nuns at Wilton' as the beneficiaries; S 767; S 766; S 799; S 881; F. E. Harmer, *Select English Historical Documents of the Ninth and Tenth centuries* (Cambridge, 1914), doc. XXI, pp. 64-5.

⁷⁹⁰ Goscelin, *Translation S. Edithe*, ch. 13, in Hollis, *Writing the Wilton Women*, pp. 78-79.

extended, in the case of Wareham, Shaftesbury and Wilton, to the burial of the royal dead, in the persons of Edward and Edith, children of Edgar. It is thus not entirely surprising to find that the hagiography of Shaftesbury and Wilton has parallels to that of Barking, including concerns with Queen Ælfthryth.

As we have seen, Shaftesbury promoted the cult of the royal saint and son of King Edgar, Edward the Martyr. The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* records Edward's burial at Shaftesbury in 979, almost a year after his death and following an initial burial at Wareham nunnery.⁷⁹¹ The use of Shaftesbury as Edward's burial place is interesting, as Edward is the only king buried in a nunnery in the tenth and eleventh centuries.⁷⁹² Barbara Yorke has suggested that the use of a nunnery for Edward's burial may represent a slight to Edward's right to the throne, and reflect arguments about Edward's legitimacy.⁷⁹³ On the other hand, it may be that the promotion of Edward's cult formed part of a movement against his brother and successor Æthelred, a resistance which had its roots in the succession crisis following the death of Edgar in 975. Indeed, David Rollason has argued that the cult of Edward was regarded as a political instrument, and that promotion of the saint was itself a criticism of those who had benefitted from his death, and who may have been implicated in his murder.⁷⁹⁴ A translation of Edward's remains is said to have taken place at Shaftesbury around 1001.⁷⁹⁵

The *Passio Sancti Eadwardi*, which was produced for Shaftesbury, contains a damning portrayal of Ælfthryth which may shed light on the issue of Barking's treatment of Queen Ælfthryth. The *passio*, which as it stands was a product of either the late eleventh or early twelfth century,⁷⁹⁶ but which was arguably based on a text composed before 1001,⁷⁹⁷ records the events surrounding Edward's death and names Queen Ælfthryth as the instigator of a plot to have him killed. The author, who remains unidentified,⁷⁹⁸ describes the succession dispute which followed Edgar's death, Dunstan's support and consecration of Edward, and Queen

⁷⁹¹ ASC (E) 979, 980 (E).

⁷⁹² J. Crick, 'The Wealth, Patronage and Connections', p. 176.

⁷⁹³ Yorke, *Nunneries*, p. 171.

⁷⁹⁴ Rollason, *Saints and Relics*, p. 143.

⁷⁹⁵ Fell, *Edward King and Martyr*, pp. xix-xx.

⁷⁹⁶ A reference to Herman as bishop of Salisbury in the *Passio* supplies a *terminus post quem* of about 1075, as this was the year in which Herman obtained permission to transfer his see to Salisbury. William of Malmesbury's use of the *Passio* in his *Gesta Regum Anglorum* sets a *terminus post quem* of about 1124.

⁷⁹⁷ Fell, *Edward King and Martyr*, pp. xix-xx.

⁷⁹⁸ There has been some suggestion that it may have been Goscelin due to the similar portrayal of Edward's martyrdom in his *Life of Edith* [Fell, *Edward, King and Martyr*, p. xx; Ridyard, *The Royal Saints*, pp. 48-9]. Paul Hayward, however, suggests that it is an imitation of Goscelin's style which has 'little of the sweeping flair and distinctive vocabulary' of Goscelin's work. Hayward thinks the *passio* was more probably written by one of the nuns of Shaftesbury during the 1080s or 1090s [P. Hayward, 'Translation-Narratives', pp. 85-86].

Ælfhryth's moves to gain the throne for her son, Æthelred. The *passio* records that Ælfhryth's 'hatred' for her stepson Edward was such that, after his accession, she plotted with 'certain nobles' to have him murdered.⁷⁹⁹ The *passio* describes the scene of the murder as Corfe, which lay in Ælfhryth's estate of Wareham.⁸⁰⁰ The murder itself is assigned to one of Ælfhryth's accomplices, though the blame for his action is placed explicitly at the door of 'the most wicked queen' Ælfhryth. Indeed, 'not yet sated in the madness of her iniquity', Ælfhryth continues to offend by ordering the hasty burial of the king in un-consecrated ground.⁸⁰¹ In an episode which follows the murder of Edward, and which seems to absolve Æthelred of any blame in the killing of his brother, Ælfhryth is said to have severely beaten Æthelred with a candlestick for having shown his grief (and ingratitude) for Edward's death.⁸⁰² Clearly, then, there was some animosity towards Ælfhryth at Shaftesbury as well as at Barking. While the details of these two nunnery traditions are vastly different, indeed, they share none of the same themes, it may be that the impetus for producing these stories was similar. Before discussing this, however, we should consider Wilton.

Wilton was the home of another West Saxon royal saint and child of King Edgar. The cult of St Edith seems to have been promoted at Wilton from around the turn of the eleventh century. The *Life of Edith* by Goscelin records a translation of Edith's remains that was undertaken some thirteen years after her death, which seems to have occurred in or around 984.⁸⁰³ The *Life* as we now have it was written somewhere between 1078 and 1087, though, as with the *passio Edwardi*, the text seems to have been based on earlier traditions from the house which preserved the cult.⁸⁰⁴ Interestingly, this text also offers a disparaging view of Queen

⁷⁹⁹ *Passio S Edwardi Regis et Martyris*, ed. Fell, *Edward, King and Martyr*, p. 3.

⁸⁰⁰ *Ibid*, p. 4; Domesday records that Robert FitzGerald held Corfe (Mullen) 'of the king', *GDB*, f. 80v.

⁸⁰¹ Fell, *Edward, King and Martyr*, pp. 5-6.

⁸⁰² *Ibid*, p. 7.

⁸⁰³ There is some problem with accepting Goscelin's testimony in this case however, as he also claims that the translation was undertaken by Archbishop Dunstan, who in fact was dead by 988 [*ASC* (E) 988]. It appears then that Goscelin had miscalculated either the date of Edith's death or the period of time which elapsed before the translation took place, or, had incorrectly identified Dunstan as the prelate who presided over the ceremony. Susan Ridyard [*Royal Saints* pp. 40-1, 153] suggests that the latter is more plausible, and that Goscelin may have been seeking to enhance the prestige of Edith's cult. On Edith's death date: Goscelin notes, in the *Life of Edith*, that a future abbess who was born 30 days after Edith's death was baptised by Archbishop Ælfheah. According to the *ASC* (984 (E) & 1006 (E)) Ælfheah became bishop of Winchester in 984, and retained the position until 1005, at which point he became archbishop of Canterbury. Also, note that Edith's death date may have been as late as 987, as Goscelin states that she was aged 23 when she died, and we know that she was born before 964, the year in which her father Edgar married Ælfhryth.

⁸⁰⁴ The *Life of Edith* was written by Goscelin, who seems to have spent time at Wilton himself, possibly as one of their chaplains. It was dedicated to Archbishop Lanfranc, and therefore presumably written at some point during his archiepiscopate (1070-1089). It must have been written after the death of Goscelin's patron, Herman, bishop of Ramsbury (1045-78) and Sherborne (c.1060-78), in 1078, as Goscelin writes that he was encouraged to write the *Life* by 'father Herman of blessed memory'. The *terminus post quem* must be 1087, the year in

Ælfhryth, as it contains another accusation that Queen Ælfhryth was responsible for Edward the Martyr's murder. According to Goscelin, Edward was killed 'by a sword wielded on behalf of his brother' and was 'slain by the treachery of his stepmother'. Goscelin also records that Edith attended her brother's funeral, and depicts the pair as saintly siblings: 'he reaching out with his rose of martyrdom, she responding with the lily of virginity'.⁸⁰⁵ This is, then, the third of the group of nunneries given to Wulfhild by King Edgar that preserves a less than favourable view of Queen Ælfhryth, though here, as at Shaftesbury, the focus is on Ælfhryth's involvement in political intrigue and murder rather than, as at Barking, on the queen's interference in the nunnery's business.

Another passage in the *Life of Edith* relates to the connection between the queen and the oversight of nunneries. Here, Goscelin suggests that the role of overseer of the English nunneries had at one time been offered to Edith. Goscelin records that King Edgar granted his daughter Edith the headship of three houses: Nunnaminster, Barking, and another for which Goscelin did not know the name. While Goscelin depicts Edith as humbly resisting the offer, ultimately she is said to have assumed a position of authority over these houses and to have been consecrated as abbess at Nunnaminster by Bishop Æthelwold. As Edith did not wish to leave her own nunnery, she reportedly 'placed separate spiritual mothers as guardians over them' and remained with her mother at Wilton.⁸⁰⁶ As no extant source confirms Edith's headship of Barking or the Nunnaminster, the validity of this narrative has been doubted by historians, and is thus subject to various interpretations. Wilmart suggested that Edith's authority over these houses may have amounted to receipt of their revenues only.⁸⁰⁷ Ridyard and Hollis believe the story may only have been included in Goscelin's *Life of the Edith* as a means of demonstrating her humility, as she appointed others to rule in her stead, ostensibly because she preferred to remain under the subjection of her mother, the abbess of Wilton. Knowles and Brooke suggest that Goscelin may have misread an entry in the *Codex Wintoniensis* which claimed, incorrectly, that Eadgifu, abbess of the Nunnaminster 964x975, was the daughter of King Edgar.⁸⁰⁸

which King William died, as Goscelin refers to him as the reigning monarch. Susan Ridyard and Stephanie Hollis place the writing of the *Life of Edith* in c.1080 [Hollis, *Writing the Wilton Women*, pp. 1, 4; Ridyard, *The Royal Saints*, p. 38]

⁸⁰⁵ Goscelin, *Vita Edithe*, ch. 18, in S. Hollis, *Writing the Wilton Women*, pp. 50-51.

⁸⁰⁶ Goscelin, *Vita Edithe*, ch. 16, in Hollis, *Writing the Wilton Women*, pp. 47-48.

⁸⁰⁷ A. Wilmart, 'La legende de Ste Edith en Prose et Vers par le Moine Goscelin', *Analecta Bollandiana*, 56 (1938), p. 77, n. 6.

⁸⁰⁸ Knowles and Brooke, *The Heads of Religious Houses*, p. 223.

It is possible however, that this tale records a similar arrangement as that between Edgar and Wulfhild. Indeed, Hollis has pointed out that this arrangement echoes those involving some of the most eminent abbesses in the earlier Anglo-Saxon period.⁸⁰⁹ The dating of Edith's oversight of Barking is not necessarily problematic. In the *Life of Edith*, Goscelin states that Edith was given this position by her father, so this could not have occurred any later than 975, the year in which Edgar died. Indeed, it is more likely that Edgar's gift to Edith of the oversight of the nunneries of Barking and the other two houses would have taken place shortly before his death. Goscelin states that Edith was offered this position when she was around fifteen, so no earlier than c.975. Goscelin also follows the chapter in the *Life of Edith* which describes Edith's acceptance of the role with one on the death of Edgar. This would place the event shortly after the production of the *Regularis Concordia* and the general powers over nunneries given to Ælfhryth. This in itself seems odd, but it is possible that Edgar was attempting to secure for Edith some degree of authority and wealth. But this also suggests that Edgar reclaimed the position from Wulfhild, which is nowhere mentioned in the *Life of Wulfhild*. Rather, Wulfhild's expulsion from Barking is depicted as the action of Queen Ælfhryth and the monastic officials. Internal evidence suggests that the date of Wulfhild's retreat to Horton was no earlier than 975 and no later than 981,⁸¹⁰ which allows more than one possible scenario. Edgar may have been involved in Wulfhild's expulsion; indeed, this may have been intended to make way for his daughter's rule. Ælfhryth's newly-confirmed powers over nunneries may have made this task easier, and she may have acted as a conduit for the king's wishes. Alternatively, Wulfhild may have been expelled by Ælfhryth alone following the death of Edgar, and possibly, during the over-rule of Edith. There were certainly reasons for animosity between Edgar's queen and his daughter.

In this connection, it is also worth considering the claim made in the *Life of Edith* that Edith was considered in the succession dispute following Edward the Martyr's murder. Goscelin states that 'the judgment of the leaders and the people coincided and rejected Æthelred because of the murder of his brother'. Instead 'they all agreed to take St Edith from the monastery and to elevate her to her father's throne'. Edith is portrayed as rejecting the offer, preferring to remain in the spiritual sphere. Ridyard has expressed doubts about the

⁸⁰⁹ Hollis, *Writing the Wilton Women*, p. 332.

⁸¹⁰ Wulfhild's death dates, 996x1008, suggest that the earliest point at which her exile could have begun is 975, and, at the latest in 981, as Queen Ælfhryth is said to have been alive at the point of her return, and Ælfhryth's death occurred 999x1001.

authenticity of this tale; she sees it as a method of expressing Edith's humility.⁸¹¹ Barbara Yorke, on the other hand, highlights the delay between Edward's death and Æthelred's accession which seems to attest reservations about his suitability, and suggests that Goscelin's claim may reflect real concerns about Æthelred's succession.⁸¹² It may be, then, that this stock tale of a saint rejecting worldly power originates from a very real episode in the succession dispute following Edgar's death. This would also help to explain the involvement of Ælfhryth in Barking, if, indeed, Edith was exercising control of the nunnery at this time. It should be recalled here that, according to Goscelin, Edith appointed 'spiritual mothers' as guardians over the nunneries given to her – family links between Edith and Wulfhild are likely to have ensured Wulfhild's continued presence at Barking even if Edith assumed control of the house.

It may thus be possible to explain the treatment of Ælfhryth in the Lives of Edith and Edward in terms of family and dynastic politics. The succession dispute that followed the death of Edgar in 975, in which Edward, and presumably Edith, found themselves in opposition to their brother Æthelred and stepmother Ælfhryth, would have provided fertile ground for such character assassinations. Indeed, there is some evidence that, as part of these succession politics, the legitimacy of some of Edgar's children was brought into question. There was apparently a tradition, represented in Osbern's *Vita Dunstani* of the 1080s, that Edward was the illegitimate son of Edgar and a nun of Wilton. Furthermore, in the witness list of the New Minster foundation charter, dated 966, Edward, referred to as *eodem rege clito procreatus*, appears after his younger brother, Ælfhryth's first son, Edmund, who is referred to as *clito legitimus prefati Regis filius*.⁸¹³ Barbara Yorke has shown how the *Life of St Edith* contains an 'unusual assemblage' of information which seems designed to demonstrate the legitimacy of Edith as King Edgar's daughter.⁸¹⁴ Apart from Edward, Edith, as the older sibling of Æthelred, represented the only threat to Æthelred's succession, a fact which has bearing on Goscelin's claim that Edith was offered the crown before Æthelred. The *Life of Edith* has Edith supporting her brother Edward over Æthelred in the succession dispute, and involved in his burial at Shaftesbury.

⁸¹¹ Ridyard, *Royal Saints*, pp. 87-8.

⁸¹² Yorke, *Nunneries*, p. 170.

⁸¹³ Keynes, *The Diplomas of King Æthelred the 'Unready'*, p. 164; S 745 & Osbern's *Vita Dunstani* in W. Stubbs ed., *Memorials of Saint Dunstan Archbishop of Canterbury* (London, 1874).

⁸¹⁴ B. Yorke, 'The Legitimacy of St Edith', *Haskins Society Journal* 11 (2003), pp. 97-113.

Do these succession politics explain in any way the situation at Barking and the portrayal of the queen there? Wulfhild's familial links with Edith may have brought her and perhaps, the nunnery of Barking, into these succession politics. Did Wulfhild, as the cousin of Wulfthryth, abbess of Wilton and mother of Edith, support Edward's faction as opposed to Æthelred's in the dispute following Edgar's death? It is worth noting, however, that the *Life of Wulfhild* at no point mentions Ælfthryth's part in the murder of Edward, and this despite it being written by the same author as the *Life of Edith*, and seemingly after that text. This is perhaps especially surprising given Wulfhild's familial links with Edith, and, to some extent, Edward, and if Wulfhild was associated with that faction in the succession dispute following Edgar's death. Perhaps this is another pointer to the existence of an earlier version of the *Life of Wulfhild*, and one which pre-dated the tradition which accused Ælfthryth of her stepson's murder.⁸¹⁵ But perhaps it also points to a different reason for the negative image of the queen at Barking.

These hagiographies originate from nunneries. Edward's cult and *Passio* were products of the nunnery at Shaftesbury; Edith's cult was promoted at the nunnery of Wilton. Pauline Stafford has examined the link between the possible imposition upon nunneries of reforming ideals and their production of texts which are critical of Queen Ælfthryth. We have seen how the reform text, the *Regularis Concordia*, had empowered the queen to intervene in the affairs of nunneries. But for the nunneries themselves, reform called for a strict separation of the religious and the secular, redefining their relations with lay patrons, which, in some cases,

⁸¹⁵ None of the contemporary sources which describe Ælfthryth, that is, the *Regularis Concordia*, *An Account of King Edgar's Establishment of Monasteries*, one of the Anglo-Saxon writs of King Æthelred's reign, and the will of Ælflæd, make any mention of Ælfthryth's complicity in the death of Edward. The first to implicate Ælfthryth in any way is Byrhtferth's *Life of Oswald* which was written at some point between 995 and 1005. In Byrhtferth's version of events, during Edward's visit to his brother Æthelred, Ælfthryth's soldiers 'took evil counsel among themselves' before surrounding, detaining and killing him. The *Vita Oswaldi* is the earliest circumstantial account of Edward's death; in it neither Æthelred nor Ælfthryth are implicated directly in the murder of their relative, though the crime is said to have taken place on the queen's land. By the late eleventh century and early twelfth century, Ælfthryth was being accused of plotting, or even carrying out the murder, in the *Passio Edwardi*, the *Vita Edithe*, and the *Lives of Dunstan* by Osbern, Eadmer, William of Malmesbury. This theme is taken up by the twelfth century chroniclers John of Worcester, Henry of Huntingdon and Gaimar. There is also a particularly vivid condemnation of Ælfthryth in the late twelfth-century *Liber Eliensis*, which makes her the murderer of Ely's abbot, Byrhtnoth. Furthermore, Ælfthryth is shown in this source practicing witchcraft, transforming herself into an animal so as to satisfy 'the unrestrainable excess of her burning lust', and attempting to lure the abbot into her pernicious magical practices. Her method of killing Byrhtnoth also presents a disturbing image of the queen. On his refusal to be drawn into her confidence, Ælfthryth ordered that he be killed by the pressing of heated sword-thongs into his bowels. Her wicked nature is further highlighted by her pretence that this crime had been done by another. Her guilt was revealed years later, according to the *LE*, when she was doing penance at Wherwell, and was drawn to reveal the true manner of the death of abbot Byrhtnoth. The *Liber Eliensis* also claims that Ælfthryth had confessed to the killing of her stepson Edward, and in expiation of this, and her other 'crimes...sorceries and abominable deeds', she had founded the nunnery of Wherwell.

included the queen herself. Stafford argues that it was the rich, royally-connected nunneries, such as Shaftesbury and Wilton, which were in the best position to assert their independence from lay control.⁸¹⁶ Also, that it was this move towards independence which stimulated the creation of an institutional memory at these houses, a memory that was documented in charter collections, foundation accounts and saints' Lives.⁸¹⁷ Stafford argues that it was from these sources, or later reworking of them, that the negative image of Ælfthryth was derived, as one feature of the working out of relations between the queen and the nunneries.⁸¹⁸

The depiction of Ælfthryth in the *Life of Wulfhild* is readily understandable in this context of the queen's increasing powers of intervention into nunneries, and the link between that and reform. Indeed, it seems to explicitly respond to such a context. The traditions on Ælfthryth which emanate from Wilton and Shaftesbury could also be read in this way, though that does not exclude the impact of succession politics in their case. The material on Horton may have some bearing here, as we have seen that Horton seems to have ended up in the hands of Ælfthryth's family, which may be a reflection of the authority given to Ælfthryth in the *Regularis Concordia*. The nunneries of Horton, Wilton, Shaftesbury and Barking, all of which are linked in the *Life of Wulfhild*, also shared, to some degree, experiences of royal intervention, and seemingly especially by Queen Ælfthryth. At Barking in particular, it appears that the community experienced some sort of crisis during the reign of Queen Ælfthryth. This may have been an effect of Wulfhild's involvement in the succession dispute following Edgar's death. Perhaps more likely, it was linked to reform and the impact of reforming ideas. We cannot now untangle the tensions and stresses in late tenth-century Barking, though they do appear to have provided an opportunity for a very thorough-going queenly take-over of that house, perhaps in the name of reform, perhaps legitimised by the role reform gave the queen.

One final point should be noted here. In the *Life of Wulfhild* it is Horton, not Barking, which is the 'tetrapolis' and centre of the nunnery grouping. The *Life* is at pains to stress the equality of Horton and Barking, but the significance of Horton here is clear, and, as noted before, remarkable in a Barking text. Horton, a West Saxon house, is more obviously linked to the royal nunneries. And we should not preclude the possibility that Barking was drawn more firmly into that grouping via Wulfhild and Horton. Once again we are led to ask how

⁸¹⁶ Stafford, 'Queens, Nunneries and Reforming Churchmen', p. 17.

⁸¹⁷ *Ibid*, p. 24.

⁸¹⁸ *Ibid*, pp. 22, 24.

far the late eleventh-century Barking *Life* may be drawing on and adapting Horton traditions for Barking use, where tenth-century reality might have placed Horton at least as prominently if not more so.

This is also a reminder that these tenth-century developments were the context for the real life of Wulfhild, and have left their mark on and echo in her *Life*. But that *Life* is, as so often stressed here, a later text: late eleventh-century in the form we now have it, perhaps produced in an earlier form for her first translation, but thus long after the events considered here. Tenth-century reform, and tenth-century queens, affected Barking, and the *Life* retains signs of that. However, if we return to explore the Ælfthryth story in the context in which it was produced, that is, the late eleventh century, its function becomes more difficult to interpret.

The *Life of Wulfhild and queens*

Hagiography, like the cults it documents, may be read for insight into the history of the times in which it was set. But it is also a reflection of and response to the times in which it was produced. The significant role of the stories about the queen in the *Life of Wulfhild* requires us to question these contexts of production. As has already been noted, these stories have a general relevance as far as external intervention was concerned. And if tension between monastic officials and the abbess was an issue in the late eleventh century, the role of such officials, and its undesirable consequences, in the Ælfthryth story would have continuing relevance. But is that sufficient to explain the choice of such a story, i.e. featuring the queen? Would it explain its genesis?

If Barking was seeking to ward off similar queenly intervention through the telling of this story, then the creation or publication of it during the later reign of William I or that of William II, would have found no comparable queenly audience. That is not to suggest that Barking was not involved with the new Norman royal house. We know, for instance that William the Conqueror spent some time at Barking during 1067, and it is likely that it was at this time that the king confirmed Ælfifu in her position as abbess of Barking, a position which she retained until at least the early eleventh century. But from the death of Queen Mathilda in 1084 until the beginning of the twelfth century there was no Norman queen. There is evidence however, to suggest the involvement of Norman queens in the twelfth century. A charter of King Stephen's dated 1136 states that his wife Queen Matilda III had

Barking abbey in her ‘safe-keeping’ and furthermore records that her aunt, that is, Queen Matilda II, first wife of King Henry I, had similarly ‘kept it safe’.⁸¹⁹ This suggests a reversion of the house to queenly control following the death of abbess Ælfgifu, or perhaps as soon as there was another Anglo-Norman queen, which would suggest some continuing awareness of the queen’s claims on Barking after 1066. The story may thus have served as a defence against any future queen, even if none were around at the time of the composition of the *Life*. But is that sufficient to explain not only the inclusion, but also the creation of such a story?

If we suppose instead that the *Life* of Wulfhild was constructed at an earlier point, and specifically at the time of the first translation of Wulfhild in the 1020s or 30s, and therefore during the queenship of Emma, then perhaps the warning to queens is more explicable. There is much evidence to suggest that Emma was involved in the affairs of monastic houses, indeed, she is remembered as a generous patron of the church. The *Liber Eliensis* records a series of gifts made by Emma of precious textiles.⁸²⁰ Emma and Cnut are praised by the Abingdon chronicler for their generosity in giving a gold and silver shrine.⁸²¹ At Winchester, Emma was remembered for her efforts to decorate the church of St Swithun, and at Canterbury, for the provision of gifts, including an ornamented manuscript.⁸²² Emma seems to have been particularly generous at Sherborne, to which she gave twenty pounds’ worth of silver to fund the repair of the roof at St Wulfsige’s church.⁸²³ Emma was also involved in the translation of St Ælfheah’s remains from St Paul’s to Canterbury, indeed, the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* records her presence at the event.⁸²⁴ Goscelin claims, in his *Life* of Edith, that Emma was a particular patron of the cult of Edith at Wilton.⁸²⁵ Emma is also known to have engaged in the acquisition and distribution of relics, for example, at the New Minster, which gained the head of St Valentinus through her actions.⁸²⁶

⁸¹⁹ H. A. Cronne and R. H. C. Davis, *Regesta Regis Stephani ac Mathildis Imperatricis ac Gaufridi et Henrici Docum Normannorum, 1135-1154*, v. III, no. 31, p. 11.

⁸²⁰ Blake, ed., *Liber Eliensis*, bk. 3, cap 50, pp. 288-94.

⁸²¹ J. Stevenson, ed., *Chronicon Monasterii de Abingdon* (London, 1858), v. I, p. 433.

⁸²² T. F. Kirby, ed., *Annals of Winchester College from its Foundation in the Year 1382 to the Present Time* (London, 1892), p. 25; Gervase of Canterbury, *Gesta Regum* in W. Stubbs ed., *The Historical Works of Gervase of Canterbury* (London, 1879-1880), p. 56.

⁸²³ Goscelin, *Life of St Wulfsige of Sherborne*, ch. 14, ed. Love, ‘The Life of St Wulfsige of Sherborne by Goscelin of Saint-Bertin’ in Barker ed. *St Wulfsige and Sherborne*, pp. 98-123, at pp. 111-112.

⁸²⁴ ASC (D) 1023; Osborn, *Translatio St Ælfegi*, in Rumble ed., *The Reign of Cnut*, pp. 294-315.

⁸²⁵ Goscelin, *Vita Edithe*, ch. 13, in S. Hollis, *Writing the Wilton Women*, pp. 43-44.

⁸²⁶ Stafford, *Queen Emma and Queen Edith*, p. 144.

While there is no direct evidence of Emma's involvement at Barking, it is likely that she exercised the power given to queens in the *Regularis Concordia* which would have given her some form of authority over the nunnery. It may be that the story about Ælfhryth, and more importantly, her comeuppance at the hands of the Barking saints, responded to threats from Queen Emma, whether real or perceived or anticipated, of erosion of the abbess's authority, or the community's autonomy. It may also be the case that Emma was involved in the apparent dispute over Horton in the early eleventh century. As we have seen, there is evidence to suggest that either Horton was laying claim to Wulfhild's relics, or, that Barking was attempting to gain control of Horton during the reign of Cnut. It is perhaps possible that Emma, as the wife of King Æthelred II, had some claim to Horton, as evidence suggests that Æthelred's family was involved with that house after the death of Wulfhild. It may be then that abbess Leofflaed's translation in the 1020s or 30s was intended to counter external claims to ownership of Wulfhild's relics, and to ensure Barking's preservation of the cult of Wulfhild. Horton's demise as a nunnery, which may date from 1033, and Cnut's re-granting of lands there may also reflect this scenario, though this must remain speculation in the absence of further source material.

Ultimately, it is clear that Barking was closely tied not only to the royal house, but more specifically to the queen. That this attention was unwelcome is evidenced by the unfavourable depiction of Ælfhryth in the *Life of Wulfhild* and by the inclusion of this story at later points of cult promotion. Reform certainly seems to have played a role in the relationships between queen and nunnery, and it may be, as Stafford suggests, that the larger, more well-endowed nunneries such as Shaftesbury and Wilton, and, it appears, Barking, used the reform tenet of separation from lay control to move further away from unwanted royal intervention. Their success in such an enterprise is perhaps less important than their attempts to achieve it. The method by which such attempts were made was, it appears, the strategic promotion of the saints' cults which were fostered at their institutions.

But there are differences between the use of cults at Wilton and Shaftesbury and at Barking. While Shaftesbury and Wilton appear to have undertaken saint promotion of this kind around the turn of the eleventh century, that is, at the time of their translations of Edward and Edith, Barking's translation of Wulfhild appears to have taken place during or just after the reign of Cnut. Furthermore, the treatment of Queen Ælfhryth in the *Life of Wulfhild* is distinct from that in the *Lives of Edward and Edith*. While the *Life of Wulfhild* berates Ælfhryth for her treatment of the nunnery, the *Lives of Edward and Edith* accuse her of involvement in

regicide. It may be that Barking, with its more ambiguous status as a royal nunnery, and lack of a royal saint, experienced more secular interference than Wilton or Shaftesbury, and that, for the same reasons it was less involved in the succession dispute than Wilton and Shaftesbury, and therefore undertook the translation of Wulfhild in response to different pressures at a different time.

Ultimately, it seems that the prominence of the queen in the *Life of Wulfhild* is a reflection of the nunnery's experience of reform in the tenth century. While there are no explicit references to reform in any of the Barking texts, the preceding discussion has shown that the nunnery was well-placed for involvement in the reform movement and, that it may have been encouraged by the call for separation of lay and ecclesiastical spheres to push for greater autonomy, perhaps especially from the royal house. Ironically, it seems to have been the nunnery's links to the royal house that led to its involvement in the reform movement, and, the royal involvement in the reform movement that led to closer links between the nunnery and the queen. The parallels between the hagiographies of Wilton, Shaftesbury and Barking may attest similar experiences of and responses to the role given to Queen Ælfhryth in the *Regularis Concordia*. The *Life of Wulfhild* could therefore be read as evidence of a nunnery's experience of reform in the tenth century and, more importantly, as evidence of the nunnery's use of hagiography to achieve autonomy from subsequent royal authority. Barking's attempts to circumvent queenly interference may therefore belong, and indeed, respond to, the reign of King Cnut and Queen Emma. While there is no direct evidence of Emma's involvement at the nunnery, it is certainly possible, especially given the authority invested in her by the reform texts of the mid-tenth century. What seems clear from the *Life of Wulfhild* is that the nunnery was prepared to use its saintly resources to prevent the erosion of their autonomy. In their promotion of the cult of Wulfhild at a perceived time of threat, the nunnery may have set a precedent for their actions in the later, and more complete, conquest of 1066, and the subsequent threats from Norman episcopal quarters.

Chapter Nine: Conclusion

Sanctity, Reform and Conquest at Barking Abbey

c.950 - 1100

This thesis set out to explore the experiences of Barking Abbey during the tenth and eleventh centuries. The survival of a generous body of hagiographical material produced for the house at the end of the eleventh century, as well as charter, will and Domesday evidence, has enabled an in-depth study of the nunnery, and especially of its use of saints' cults and hagiography.

The Barking Cycle represents one of the numerous works of the hagiographer, Goscelin of Saint-Bertin. It was produced for Barking Abbey at some point between 1086 and 1100, though quite probably before c. 1091, the year in which Goscelin joined the community at St Augustine's, and quite possibly, if internal evidence for the age of abbess Ælfgifu is reliable, in 1086. The Cycle fits well with Goscelin's other known works which show a predominance of abbess saints of the early Anglo-Saxon period, and which also include a female group of abbess saints at the monastery of Ely. The Barking saints can also be said to have conformed to one of the standard types of female saints in the medieval period, that of the abbess. While male saints of the Middle Ages were usually drawn from the upper secular clergy or royalty, females, who were denied access to the clerical professions, more commonly gained sanctity through their roles as abbesses, queens or princesses. Founding abbesses seem in particular to have been rewarded with saintly reputations. As we have seen, Barking's three principle saints were abbesses. While Æthelburg is undoubtedly the founding abbess saint of Barking, there is some suggestion in the Life of Wulfhild that she was the first abbess following Barking's re-foundation in the tenth century. Jane Tibbets-Schulenburg has highlighted the association between founding abbess saints and protection of the community and its resources.⁸²⁷ Certainly Æthelburg would fit easily in this category; we have seen her power employed in protecting the nunnery on numerous occasions, and not only in her own Life. Wulfhild similarly displays protective traits, though to a lesser degree, while Hildelith, not a founding saint, does not appear to have been considered a protector. This highlights a difference in the sanctity of Hildelith which is in fact evident when her *Lectiones* are

⁸²⁷ Tibbets-Schulenburg, 'Female Sanctity and Public and Private Roles', p. 113.

compared with the Lives of Æthelburg and Wulfhild. It may be significant that Hildelith's *Leccionnes* are not gathered in the same manuscript collection as the rest of the Barking material, although she was clearly important enough to have been translated in the late eleventh century and to have been included in the Barking 'trinity' of saints in the translation and vision accounts. It has become clear that this trinity of abbess saints at Barking were employed to represent the community at various times of uncertainty, disruption and encroachment. I suggest that the presentation of three strong abbatial figures at Barking was a construction which was designed to reinforce the community's image as a powerful and autonomous female house. The female trinity at Barking therefore represents a powerful spiritual group which paralleled that of the living abbess and community.

While there appear to have been more than one context affecting the production of the Barking Cycle, and while we should not discount the spiritual motivations of the Barking community, it seems that, overall, the Cycle was produced as a literary commemoration of the triple translation ceremony which took place towards the end of the eleventh century. It is important to note that the translation, and the literary record of it, may have had different functions. The translation itself represented the culmination of a large-scale building project which ultimately saw the construction of a new church at the nunnery. The timing of this construction suggests that this was undertaken in emulation of the rebuilding programmes at institutions which had come under the auspices of Norman churchmen. Similarly, the translations at Barking, and the subsequent recording of them in Goscelin's translation accounts, can be placed in a wider context of cult activity and hagiographical production in England following the Norman Conquest.

There is, however, little evidence to suggest that the nunnery was translating and commemorating their saints in order to recommend them to a new Norman audience. The one indication that this was the case, that is, the dedication of the Lives of Æthelburg and Wulfhild to the Norman bishop Maurice, appears to belong to a context of dispute between the nunnery and the local bishop. Indeed, the production of texts at Barking in the late eleventh century has been shown to have responded to the issue of episcopal interference in general. The translation accounts make explicit the community's resistance to outside authority, especially in relation to the management of their saints' cults, but also perhaps of their other resources as well. The use of external authority figures such as Edward the Confessor and Bishop William the Norman may have served to bolster abbess Ælfgifu's claims to autonomous management of the nunnery, and perhaps especially for a new Norman

royal and episcopal regime. This aligns with Hayward's thesis on the use of authorial figures, but I would suggest that, rather than attempting to persuade a potentially hostile Norman audience of the validity of their saints, the use of authority figures in the Barking translation accounts was intended to support their claims to autonomy and independence from outside authorities. The use of St Germanus in this same context may have worked as a warning to bishops in particular.

Maurice's involvement, or lack of, in the Barking translations must be considered alongside the evidence for his own promotion of saints at both St Paul's and St Osyth's. Both of these communities experienced renewal and cult promotion under the auspices of Maurice; both were close enough to Barking to have represented competition in terms of cult patronage. I would suggest that Maurice's obstructiveness at Barking stems from his own efforts in cult promotion and the competition that the Barking saints represented. I would also argue that some of the immovability themes present throughout the Barking texts respond to a perception of threats to the nunnery's cults which may have come directly from the bishop of London. Here we should recall the later text on St Eorcenwald which seems not only to undermine the power of St Æthelburg at Barking, but also to suggest that there was a history of attempted relic appropriation between St Paul's and Barking. So, while the Barking Cycle, and especially the translation accounts, can be seen to respond to contexts of Norman settlement and takeover of power, they do not appear to have the intent of persuading a hostile audience, but rather to secure their independence from the local bishop and, perhaps, to protect their most valuable resources, that is, their saints. The possibility that the nunnery was simultaneously producing claims to immunity from episcopal interference in charter material strengthens this argument.

The resistance to outside interference evident in the texts needs also to be considered alongside evidence for land loss at the nunnery following the Conquest. It has been shown that Barking suffered from alienation of their lands in the period following the Conquest, and especially to royal officials. It is also the case, however, that lands had been lost at an earlier point in the Anglo-Saxon period, so we cannot assume that the promotion of saints' cults at Barking was a response to land loss. It is nevertheless likely that the Domesday survey encouraged organisation of records at monastic houses, and Barking is no exception. The protection miracles in the *Life of Æthelburg* may have formed part of a programme of securing the nunnery's assets.

Indications that Barking had lost land earlier in the Anglo-Saxon period suggest that the nunnery may have reacted to threats to their resources in a similar way at an earlier point, that is, through the promotion of the cult of St Wulfhild, and quite possibly, the promotion of SS Æthelburg and Hildelith at the same time, which is represented in an updating of their hagiographic records. The translation of Wulfhild's relics during, or just after the reign of Cnut, as well as the possible production of a Life, or series of Barking saints' Lives, at that time, seems to respond to a context of change in royal government. There may also have been interference at the nunnery by Queen Emma which precipitated the early-eleventh century translation. However, the tensions between the community and the queen which are apparent in the Life of Wulfhild belong historically to the tenth-century reform movement in England. The depiction of the queen can therefore be linked to the nunnery's experience of reform, and ultimately, their resistance to the reform measures which had placed the queen in a position of authority over the nunneries. That this seems to have taken the place of a role previously held by the abbess of Barking may help to explain the unfavourable portrayal of Queen Ælfthryth.

The Life of Wulfhild, along with charter evidence of the mid-tenth century, also records a close connection between the West Saxon royal house and the nunnery. This may have been a result of its association with the nunnery at Horton, a house which also shows links with the West Saxons, and especially with the family of Queen Ælfthryth. The evidence for Horton suggests that it was closely linked to Barking through the abbacy of Wulfhild, and, that it may have put forward claims in the 1030s to ownership of Wulfhild's relics. Indeed, this may have been the impetus for Barking's translation of Wulfhild at roughly the same time. On the other hand, it may be that Barking was making claims to ownership of Horton in the context of Cnut's takeover of Horton's lands.

The audience of the Barking Cycle appears to have included not only the Norman episcopacy, and the Norman, and possibly at an earlier point, Danish, royal house, but also the Barking community itself. This is particularly the case for the Life of Æthelburg, which displays a number of miracles undertaken by members of the community, the Lessons of Hildelith, which celebrates the community even more than it does the saint, and the vision account, which seems to respond to anxieties within the community regarding the translation of the Barking saints. While there is some indication that there were tensions within the community at the time of the translations, most notably in the letter from Archbishop Lanfranc to Bishop Maurice, it is perhaps the case that both the monastic community, and the

wider community at Barking, were concerned about the management of their resources and the interruption to patterns of patronage brought about by the Conquest and the delay in church building and translation of the saints at Barking.

Patronage was of course a perennial concern for monastic houses, and would have been even more so in the aftermath of the Norman Conquest which saw not only the replacement of the royal house, but also the elimination of local aristocratic families which may have previously supported the nunnery. This may have also been a concern at the time of the Danish Conquest, which, although not as devastating to the English nobility, must still have interrupted patterns of patronage. And, of course, the promotion of saints' cults can be seen as one method of securing patronage, both of wealthy families and of pilgrims. As, too, could the construction of new monastic buildings and the translation of saints relics.

Gaining patronage does not, however, seem to be the primary purpose of the production of the Barking Cycle, which demonstrates a much greater concern with the interference from external authorities. I suggest instead, that the Barking hagiographies were intended as protection from the intervention of outsiders at the point of conquest and regime change. In the case of the Norman Conquest, it seems to have been the interference of the local bishop in particular which caused difficulties and animosity at the nunnery. In the Danish Conquest, it may have been the intervention of the royal house, and specifically the Queen, which led to the promotion of the Barking saints and ultimately, a warning to queens to leave the nunnery alone. In both cases, it could be argued that the nunnery was resisting reform, as later eleventh-century reform highlighted the power and authority of bishops, while the tenth century monastic reform in England emphasised the power and authority over nunneries of the royal house, and especially, of the Queen.

Ultimately, this study has shown that the community of Barking made active use of their saints' cults to resist the control of outside authorities. In both the early eleventh and late eleventh century the nunnery promoted the cults of strong autonomous abbesses as a demonstration of their past and present power and celestial support. In both cases they were reacting to a new royal and political regime and the threats and instabilities that these could bring. But it was also in reaction to reform, and the intervention that this involved, that the nunnery employed its most valuable assets, that is, the saints Æthelburg, Hildelith and Wulfhild.

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