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**Constructions of Sanctity and the Anglo-Saxon Missions to the  
Continent (690-900).**

Part One.

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# Constructions of Sanctity and the Anglo-Saxon Missions to the Continent (690-900).

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This thesis explores the literary strategies used by hagiographers in the eighth and ninth centuries to establish as saintly the careers of those involved in the so-called 'Anglo-Saxon missions to the continent' (c. 690 – c. 789). It offers a fundamental reassessment of the relationship between the 'missions' and the Carolingian *vitae* that commemorated them, one that is based upon new studies of the ways in which the texts were shaped by their political and cultural contexts, and consequently by the authors' intentions. The thesis is structured thematically around hagiographical representations – often fictitious – of the bonds between saints and particular places. In the first chapter I examine the ways in which saints' Lives reinterpret why missionaries left Britain, in order to make the saints appeal to Irish- or Benedictine-influenced audiences. The next two chapters consider how monastic centres (for example Monte Cassino in Italy) and the papacy in Rome contributed to the image of the saint as a person spiritual and earthly authority; in particular, the relation of the *vitae* to eighth and ninth century ecclesiastical and Benedictine reforms is considered. Chapter four studies in detail Hygeburg's *Vita Willibaldi et Wynnebaldi*, and argues that her account of Willibald's pilgrimage to the Holy Land should be seen within the exegetical and liturgical contexts of Eichstätt in Bavaria, where it was written down. In the final two chapters I examine the ways hagiographers portrayed the transformation of the German and Frisian physical and cultural landscapes through the missionary work and church building of saints like Boniface; it is argued that, since most of the evidence for these activities is either spurious or contradictory, the reputation of the Anglo-Saxon missions as establishing the 'foundations of Christian Europe' is largely a product of literary responses to a range of problems faced by communities east of the Rhine between 754 and 888. The thesis concludes with a discussion of the factors that shaped Carolingian accounts of the missions, and outlines potential aspects of Carolingian hagiography and the missions that are in need of further study or re-evaluation.

## Contents.

Acknowledgements.	p. ii
Note on Translations.	p. iii
Abbreviations.	pp. iv-v
<b>Introduction.</b>	pp. 1-43.
<b>Chapter One: Anglo-Saxon Homelands in Constructions of Sanctity.</b>	pp. 44-85.
<b>Chapter Two: Monasteries as Institutions of Sanctity.</b>	pp. 86-126.
<b>Chapter Three: Rome in Representations of Sanctity.</b>	pp. 127-70.
<b>Chapter Four: Bavarian Sacred Spaces and Willibald's Pilgrimage to the Holy Land.</b>	pp. 171-212.
<b>Chapter Five: Sanctity and the Transformation of Central and Southern Germany.</b>	pp. 213-48.
<b>Chapter Six: Sanctity and the Transformation of Frisia and Saxony.</b>	pp. 249-90.
<b>Conclusion.</b>	pp. 291-307.
Bibliography: Primary Sources.	pp. 308-313.
Bibliography: Secondary Sources.	pp. 314-48.

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## **Note On Translations.**

Translations of non-English materials are my own throughout the dissertation unless indicated. Useful English editions of Latin texts are listed in the primary sources bibliography. Proper names have been Anglicised where a common English noun exists (e. g. 'Boniface' for 'Bonifatius', or 'Munich' for 'München').

## Abbreviations.

- AASS - *Acta sanctorum.*
- ARF - *Annales regni Francorum*, ed. F. Kurze, *MGH SRG 6* (Hanover, 1895).
- Tangl - *Die Briefe des heiligen Bonifatius und Lullus*, ed. M. Tangl, *MGH Epp. selectae in usum scholarum I* (Berlin, 1916).
- CC - *Corpus Christianorum.*  
 - SL - *series latina.*  
 - CM - *continuatio mediaevalia.*
- HE - *Historia ecclesiastica* (by Bede), ed. & transl. B. Colgrave & R. A. B. Mynors, *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English* (Oxford, 1969).
- MGH - *Monumenta Germaniae Historica.*  
 - AA - *Auctores antiquissimi.*  
 - Cap. - *Capitularia regum Francorum.*  
 - Conc. - *Concilia.*  
 - Epp. - *Epistolae.*  
 - Dip. - *Diplomata.*  
 - Dip. Karol. - *Diplomata Karolinorum.*  
 - SRG - *Scriptores rerum Germanicum in usum scholarum.*  
 - SRM - *Scriptores rerum Merovingicarum in usum scholarum.*  
 - SS - *Scriptores.*
- PL - *Patrologia Latina*, ed. J. P. Migne, (221 vols., Paris, 1844-64).
- SSualo - *Sermo Sualonis* (by Ermenrich), ed. O. Holder-Egger, *MGH SS 15 i* (Hanover, 1887), pp. 156-63.
- VA - *Vita Anskarii* (by Rimbert), ed. G. Waitz, *MGH SRM 55* (Hanover, 1884), pp. 13-79.
- VaB - *Vita altera Bonifatii* (anon.), ed. W. Levison, *MGH SRG 57* (Hanover, 1905), pp. 62-78.
- VAlc - *Vita Alcuini* (anon.), ed. W. Arndt, *MGH SS 15 i* (Hanover, 1887), pp. 182-197.
- VB - *Vita Bonifatii* (by Willibald), ed. W. Levison, *MGH SRG 57* (Hanover, 1905), pp. 1-58.

- VBurch* - *Vita Burchardi* (anon.), ed. O. Holder-Egger, *MGH SS* 15 i (Hanover, 1887), pp. 47-50.
- VCorb* - *Vita Corbiniani* (by Arbeo), ed. B. Krusch, *MGH SRG* 16 (Hanover, 1920), pp. 188-232.
- VG* - *Vita abbatis Gregorii* (by Liudger), ed. O. Holder-Egger, *MGH SS* 15 i (Hanover, 1887), pp. 63-79.
- VH* - *Vita Haimhrammi* (by Arbeo), ed. B. Krusch, *MGH SRG* 16 (Hanover, 1920), pp. 26-99.
- VL* - *Vita Leobae* (by Rudolf), ed. G. Waitz, *MGH SS* 15 i (Hanover, 1887), pp. 118-131.
- VLger* - *Vita Liudgerii* (by Altfred), ed. W. Diekamp, *Die Vitae sancti Liudgeri*, Die Geschichtsquellen des Bistums Münster 4 (Münster, 1881), pp. 1-54.
- VS* - *Vita Sturmi* (by Eigil), ed. P. Engelbert O. S. B., *Die Vita Sturmi des Eigil von Fulda. Literarkritisch-historische Untersuchung und Edition*, Veröffentlichungen der Historischen Kommission für Hessen und Waldeck 29 (Marburg, 1968).
- VWb* - *Vita Willibaldi or Hodoeporicon* (by Hygeburg), ed. O. Holder-Egger, *MGH SS* 15 i (Hanover, 1887), pp. 86-106.
- VWbrord* - *Vita Willibrordi* (by Alcuin), ed. W. Levison, *MGH SRM* 7 (Hanover & Leipzig, 1920), pp. 81-144.
- VWhad* - *Vita Willehadi* (anon.), ed. A. Poncetel, *AASS*, Nov. III (Brussels, 1910), pp. 835-51.
- VWyn* - *Vita Wynnebaldi* (by Hygeburg), ed. O. Holder-Egger, *MGH SS* 15 i (Hanover, 1887), pp. 106-117.

## Introduction.

On the morning of the 5<sup>th</sup> June, 754, a band of Anglo-Saxon missionaries working in Dokkum in northern Frisia was attacked and murdered by pagans.<sup>1</sup> News of the terrible event spread quickly to the Christian lands of the south. The bodies of the murdered missionaries were retrieved and returned to the Anglo-Saxon mission-station at Utrecht. With great speed a delegation of more Anglo-Saxons arrived from the regions of Hesse and Thuringia in Germania, where the lead missionary had spent much of his long career, in order to collect their leader's body; his remains were taken first to his archiepiscopal church in Mainz, and later to his own monastic foundation in Fulda. A monk in the monastery of St Martin's, Utrecht, later wrote:

And so in four most blessed places, that is Dokkum, Utrecht, in the city of Mainz and the monastery of Fulda, the presence of the blessed martyrs was felt in numerous signs and revelations, in which his many health-bringing intercessions from the Lord and other benefits became known everywhere to this day.<sup>2</sup>

The passage neatly illustrates two related religious interests of the early Middle Ages: the signs that proved the power of the saints on earth and the association between saints and places which helped to relate that power to earthly communities. The missionaries were not victims in the opinion of the St Martin's monk, but rather martyrs whose sanctity connected communities in Frisia and Germany with heaven and whose power healed those who venerated them.

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<sup>1</sup> Willibald, *VB* c. 8, pp. 47-50; Eigil, *VS* c. 15, pp. 147-9; *VaB* cc. 14-16, pp. 72-3.

<sup>2</sup> *VaB* c. 17, p. 74: 'In quattuor ergo felicissimus locis, id est Dokinga, Traiecto, in Moguntia urbe, in Fuldensi cenobio, beati martiris presentia visilibus crebro sentitur indiciis, in quibus per intercessionem eius plurime sanitates a Domino aliaque prestantur beneficia usque in hodiernum diem'.

Medieval writers invested the stories of saints with meaning and status through recording them in writing. In principle a 'saint' was defined by his or her pious deeds whilst alive.<sup>3</sup> There were many broad categories of saint. One of the most important groups were the martyrs.<sup>4</sup> Traditionally martyrs were men or women who had died for their faith like the Anglo-Saxons at Dokkum, although many people who suffered for their faith without dying (also called *confessores*) or those who mortified their own body through asceticism could also be included in this category.<sup>5</sup> Many other popular saints were 'holy men' (or, less commonly, 'holy women'), who were figures that had played an important role in leading or inspiring a community in spiritual matters.<sup>6</sup> Meanwhile others, particularly women, were venerated for having led chaste lives.<sup>7</sup> In practice definitions of sanctity could be hazy: not all people venerated as 'saint-like' had necessarily already died; not all chaste women had always been so; and many 'martyrs' had died for political rather than religious reasons. What mattered more than 'pious deeds' (or the lack thereof) was the way in which individuals were remembered. Churches, focal points for social activity, could be dedicated to certain saints, or could house saintly relics which might be used in communal worship.<sup>8</sup> The (re-)interpretation of a saint's life itself, however, was done by writers such as the St Martin's monk in

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<sup>3</sup> For orientation on saint types a good place to start is A. Angenendt, *Heilige und Reliquien. Die Geschichte ihres Kultes vom frühen Christentum bis zur Gegenwart* (Munich, 1997). For an influential analysis of types of saints see F. Graus, *Volk, Herrscher und Heiliger im Reich der Merowinger. Studien zur Hagiographie der Merowingerzeit* (Prague, 1965).

<sup>4</sup> On the form of martyrs' cults in the eighth and ninth centuries see J. T. Palmer, 'The Frankish cult of martyrs and the case of the two saints Boniface', *Revue bénédictine* (forthcoming).

<sup>5</sup> See C. Stancliffe, 'Red, white and blue martyrdom', in D. Whitelock, R. McKitterick & D. Dumville (eds.), *Ireland in Early Medieval Europe: Studies in Memory of Kathleen Hughes* (Cambridge, 1982), pp. 21-46, which, while focusing upon the example of Irish martyrs, also relates those ideas to the continent.

<sup>6</sup> The classic study of holy men in society is P. Brown, 'The rise and function of the holy man in Late Antiquity', *Journal of Roman Studies* 61 (1971), 80-101; reprinted in his *Society and the Holy in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley, 1982), pp. 103-152. For a discussion of women leading communities by example in the Anglo-Saxon missions see Y. Hen, 'Milites Christi utriusque sexus: gender and the politics of conversion in the circle of Boniface', *Revue bénédictine* 109 (1999), 17-31.

<sup>7</sup> The seminal work on female sanctity in the Carolingian period is J. M. H. Smith, 'The problem of female sanctity in Carolingian Europe c. 780-920', *Past & Present* 146 (1995), 3-37.

<sup>8</sup> On the form of saints' cults see P. Brown, *The Cult of Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christendom* (Chicago, 1981).

Utrecht who wrote *vitae* ('Saint's Lives' or 'hagiography') about the 'very special dead' and why they deserved veneration. Literary legends of the saints, in other words, were an important tool in defining the new saints of the early Middle Ages.<sup>9</sup>

A good opportunity to study the 'constructedness' of early medieval saints is provided by the many *vitae* written across Northern Europe in the eighth and ninth centuries commemorating the so-called Anglo-Saxon missions to the continent (*ca* 690-*ca* 789).<sup>10</sup> These 'missions', which were actually more concerned with church and monastic reform than evangelisation, were led by great figures like the Northumbrian St Willibrord (d. 739), the 'apostle of Frisia', and the Dokkum martyr St Boniface of Crediton, the 'apostle of Germany' (d. 754).<sup>11</sup> Willibrord, Boniface and their Anglo-Saxon, Frankish, German and Frisian supporters (the *Willibrordkreise* and

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<sup>9</sup> On the study of saints' Lives, see: H. Delehaye, *Les Légendes hagiographiques* (Brussels, 1905), transl. D. Attwater, *The Legends of the Saints* (Dublin, 1953, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn. Dublin, 1998); Graus, *Volk, Herrscher und Heiliger*; J. M. H. Smith, 'Review Article: Early medieval hagiography in the late twentieth century', *Early Medieval Europe* 1 (1992), 69-76; P. J. Geary, 'Saints, scholars and society: the elusive goal', in P. J. Geary (ed.), *Living with the Dead in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca & London, 1994), pp. 9-29.

<sup>10</sup> The classic account of the Anglo-Saxons in eighth-century Europe is W. Levison, *England and the Continent in the Eighth Century. The Ford Lectures Delivered in the University of Oxford in the Hilary Term 1943* (Oxford, 1946). The most recent study is L. E. Padberg, *Mission und Christianisierung. Formen und Folgen bei Angelsachsen und Franken im 7. und 8. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart, 1995). See also R. Fletcher, *The Conversion of Europe: From Paganism to Christianity 371-1386 AD* (London, 1997), pp. 197-222; I. N. Wood, *The Missionary Life: Saints and the Evangelisation of Europe 400-1050* (Harlow, 2001), pp. 55-141; P. Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom: Triumph and Diversity AD 200-1000* (Oxford, 1996, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. 2003), pp. 408-33.

<sup>11</sup> On Boniface the fundamental study remains T. Schieffer, *Winfried-Bonifatius und die christliche Grundlegung Europas* (Freiburg, 1954, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. Darmstadt, 1972), which was in part developed from his earlier 'Angelsachsen und Franken. Zwei Studien zur Kirchengeschichte des 8. Jahrhunderts', *Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur, Abhandlungen der Geistes- und Socialwissenschaftlichen Klasse, Jahrgang 1950*, 20 (Wiesbaden, 1951), 1327-1539. See also: *Sankt Bonifatius. Gedenkgabe zum zwölfhundertsten Todestag* (Fulda, 1954); T. Reuter, (ed.), *The Greatest Englishman: Essays on Saint Boniface and the Church at Crediton* (Exeter, 1980); L. E. von Padberg, *Wynfret-Bonifatius* (Zurich, 1989); M. Mostert, *754: Bonifatius bij Dokkum vermoord*, Gedenkwaardige momenten en figuren uit de vaderlandse geschiedenis 7 (Hilversum, 1999). On Willibrord the fundamental study was C. Wampach, *Willibrord. Sein Leben und Lebenswerk* (Luxembourg, 1953), but see now A. G. Weiler, *Willibrords Missie: Christendom en Cultuur in de Zevende en Achste Eeuw* (Hilversum, 1989). See also: G. Kiesel & J. Schroeder (eds.), *Willibrord, Apostel der Niederlande, Gründer der Abtei Echternach. Gedenkgabe zum 1250. Todestag des angelsächsischen Missionars* (Luxembourg, 1989); P. Bange & A. G. Weiler (eds.), *Willibrord, zijn wereld en zijn werk*, *Middeleeuwse Studies* 6 (Nijmegen, 1990).

*Bonifatiuskreise*)<sup>12</sup> contributed to what has been grandly called ‘the foundation of Christian Europe’ through their work in Frisia, Bavaria, Hesse and Thuringia.<sup>13</sup> The achievements of the Anglo-Saxons were said to include promoting papal authority and the *Regula s. Benedicti*, converting pagans and reforming heretics, and building new churches and monasteries.<sup>14</sup> They were, however, by no means the first missionaries or reformers to work in Frisia or Germany; scholarship over the last fifty years has revealed many of the foundations for their work had already been established by Franks, Irishmen and Romans.<sup>15</sup> Why, then, have figures like the Frank Cunibert of Cologne (d. 663) and Irishman Kilian of Würzburg (d. 689) often been overlooked as true founders of a Christian Europe? One possible answer is that the Anglo-Saxons wrote, preserved and inspired more *vitae* and other written sources than the circles associated with earlier figures, even allowing for the loss of many texts over time. It is essential to understand the literary strategies used to present the Anglo-Saxon ‘missionaries’ as saints and what these reveal about the communities across Northern Europe that venerated such figures; only then can the popularity of Willibrord, Boniface and their associates in the early Middle Ages and beyond be explained.

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<sup>12</sup> There is, unfortunately, no convenient shorthand that adequately reflects the diverse circles of the lead Anglo-Saxons. Boniface was the central and defining figure for a variety of disunited groups of missionaries, religious and nobles, so the German plural noun *Bonifatiuskreise* seems justified: see S. Schipperges, *Bonifatius ac socii eius. Eine sozialgeschichtliche Untersuchung des Winfrid-Bonifatius und seines Umfeldes*, Quellen und Abhandlungen zur mittelhessischen Kirchengeschichte 79 (Mainz, 1996), pp. 259-93. Willibrord’s circle could be considered to include those that travelled with him to Frisia from Ireland, his Frisian supporters at Utrecht and his Frankish supporters in Trier, where again Willibrord was the one defining character; the idea of *die Willibrordkreise* seems to be as justified a shorthand as *die Bonifatiuskreise*.

<sup>13</sup> Following the title of Schieffer’s, *Winfrid-Bonifatius*, which in full translates as ‘Winfrid-Bonifatius and the Christian foundation of Europe’.

<sup>14</sup> See in particular the classic biographies *Winfrid-Bonifatius* by Schieffer and *Willibrord* by Wampach.

<sup>15</sup> H. Büttner, ‘Mission und Kirchenorganisation des Frankenreiches bis zum Tode Karls der Grossen’, in H. Beumann (ed.), *Karl der Grosse, Lebenswerk und Nachleben: 1 Persönlichkeit und Geschichte* (Düsseldorf, 1965), pp. 454-87; For summaries see: J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, ‘A background to St. Boniface’s mission’, in P. Clemoes & K. Hughes (ed.), *England Before the Conquest: Studies Present to Dorothy Whitelock* (Cambridge, 1971), pp. 35-48, reprinted in his *Early Medieval History* (Oxford, 1975), pp. 138-54; T. Reuter, ‘Saint Boniface and Europe’, in T. Reuter, *The Greatest Englishman*, pp. 69-94.

Willibrord, Boniface and their circles are all the more intriguing because of the way in which they fitted into the changing political world of the eighth century.<sup>16</sup> When Willibrord first arrived in the Frankish kingdoms in 690 the most powerful figure was not the Merovingian king Theuderic III but rather a leading Austrasian nobleman Pippin II, Theuderic's mayor and one of the first truly powerful members of the family later known as the Carolingians. Pippin was succeeded as mayor by his illegitimate son Charles Martel despite the best efforts of Pippin's widow to prevent this occurring, and Charles managed to develop the family's power to the extent that he was able to govern the kingdom without a king for the last few years of his life.<sup>17</sup> The position of mayor was again passed down through the family on Charles's death but this time the kingdom was divided between east and west, and Charles's sons Carlomann and Pippin III respectively. Carlomann was a strong supporter of Boniface's church reforms before his retirement in 748. Pippin soon established himself in the east and in *ca* 749/50 successfully sought papal backing to seize the Frankish crown from the powerless Merovingian Childeric III.<sup>18</sup> Boniface and the Mercian Burchard of Würzburg both appear to have played roles in the establishment of the Carolingians as the Frankish royal family.<sup>19</sup> Anglo-Saxon ties with the new royal family persisted and Charlemagne, Pippin's son and future emperor, was close to Lull (who succeeded his teacher Boniface) and later with the missionary Willehad and the scholar Alcuin of York.

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<sup>16</sup> For convenient narratives of the Merovingian and Carolingian periods including discussion of the Anglo-Saxons see I. N. Wood, *The Merovingian Kingdoms 450-751* (London, 1994), R. McKitterick, *The Frankish Kingdoms under the Carolingians 751-987* (London, 1984) and the essays in R. McKitterick (ed.), *The New Cambridge Medieval History II, c. 750-c. 950* (Cambridge, 1995). See also the recent article J. Semmler, 'Bonifatius, die Karolinger und "die Franken"', in D. R. Bauer, R. Hiestand & B. Kasten (eds.), *Mönchtum – Kirche – Herrschaft, 750-1000* (Sigmaringen, 1998), pp. 3-49.

<sup>17</sup> On Charles Martel, an important figure in the careers of both Willibrord and Boniface, see P. Fouracre, *The Age of Charles Martel* (Harlow, 2000) and the essays in J. Jarnut, U. Nonn & M. Richter (eds.), *Karl Martell in seiner Zeit*, Beihefte der Francia 37 (Sigmaringen, 1994).

<sup>18</sup> *ARF* s. a. 749 [recte 750], pp. 3-4. For differing recent views of the events see: R. McKitterick, 'The illusion of royal power in the Carolingian annals', *English Historical Review* 460 (2000), 1-20; J. Semmler, *Der Dynastiewechsel von 751 und die fränkische Königssalbung*, *Studia Humaniora*, Series Minor 6 (Düsseldorf, 2003).

<sup>19</sup> *ARF* s. a. 749 [recte 750], s. a. 750 [recte 751], pp. 3-4.

Moreover the ninth-century Carolingian Renaissance under Charlemagne saw a flourishing in historical writing and many of the *vitae* about the Anglo-Saxons were written at this time.<sup>20</sup> The *Willibrordkreise* and *Bonifatiuskreise* were integral to Northern Europe's changing political and cultural landscapes.

The hagiographical accounts of the Anglo-Saxon 'missions' are in need of (re-) interpretation. While the challenges of postmodernism to history have created something of a paradigm shift towards studying literary constructions and authorial intentions in other historical subjects,<sup>21</sup> many studies of texts like the *Vita Bonifatii* and *Vita Willibrordi* remain rooted in the assumptions and questions of Levison, Schieffer or Wampach articulated in the 1940s and 1950s. There remains, in other words, the troubling idea that such *vitae* tell us about the 'real' activities of people like Boniface and Willibrord.<sup>22</sup> Many more *vitae*, meanwhile, have never received much scholarly attention. There also remains a tendency to construe the context of many *vitae* conservatively with regards to time and place. An example of such conservatism can be seen in the treatment of Rimbert's *Vita Anskarii* written in *ca* 870 in Hamburg-Bremen. The text has been studied extensively for what it purported to reveal about Anskar (800-865) and Hamburg-Bremen, but it has only recently been considered as Rimbert's

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<sup>20</sup> Most recently this is a theme that has been rigorously pursued by Rosamond McKitterick and her students, see: M. Innes & R. McKitterick, 'The writing of history', in R. McKitterick (ed.), *Carolingian Culture: Emulation and Innovation* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 193-220; R. McKitterick, 'Constructing the past in the early Middle Ages: the case of the Royal Frankish Annals', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 6<sup>th</sup> series, 7 (1997), 101-29; *eadem*, 'The illusion of royal power', 1-20; *eadem*, 'Political ideology in Carolingian historiography', in Y. Hen & M. Innes (eds.), *The Uses of the Past in the Early Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 162-74; Y. Hen, 'The Annals of Metz and the Merovingian past', in Y. Hen & M. Innes (eds.), *The Uses of the Past in the Early Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 175-190.

<sup>21</sup> See in particular N. F. Partner, 'Making up lost time: writing on the writing of history', *Speculum* 61 (1986), 90-107; G. M. Spiegel, 'History, historicism and the social logic of text in the Middle Ages', *Speculum* 65 (1990), 59-86; Geary, 'Saints, scholars, and society', pp. 17-29.

<sup>22</sup> A case in point are the edited volumes on Willibrord – Kiesel & Schroeder, *Willibrord, Apostel der Niederlande*, and Bange & Weiler, *Willibrord, zijn wereld en zikn werk* – where revision tends to focus on alternative readings of the sources with the intention of reconstructing Willibrord's career rather than discovering the motivations of early historians like Bede and Alcuin.

response to political and intellectual disputes in West Frankia in the 860s and 870s and his desire to promote missionary work in Scandinavia.<sup>23</sup> Similar reappraisals of the continental Anglo-Saxon *vitae* could hope to reveal new contexts, motivations and disputes which affected the ways in which the Anglo-Saxons were remembered in Germany and Frisia.

Constructions of sanctity related individual saints to the world around them in life and death, as the St Martin's monk indicated.<sup>24</sup> The Anglo-Saxons were foreigners in the 'missionfield' at a time when outsiders were not always welcome; one Gallic monk was once said to have exclaimed about some Anglo-Saxons at Tours in 804, 'This Brit or Scot has come to see the other Brit, who is inside. Oh God, free this monastery from these Brits!'<sup>25</sup> New Anglo-Saxon saints like Boniface therefore had to be established as figures pertinent to later communities in Frisia and Germania. Saints of the *Willibrordkreise* and *Bonifatiuskreise* did not just stand in relation to Anglo-Saxon England, Frisia and Germania; they also brought connections with distant monastic institutions like Monte Cassino, religious institutions like the papacy in Rome and, in the case of St Willibald of Eichstätt, the Holy Land and Byzantium. Examining how these associations were portrayed (or, in some cases, fictionalised) in the *vitae* will reveal much about the ways in which religious communities related to the (imagined) pasts of their saints.

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<sup>23</sup> J. T. Palmer, 'Rimbert's *Vita Anskarii* and Scandinavian mission in the ninth century', *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* (forthcoming).

<sup>24</sup> On the relationship between topography and sanctity see the recent case studies of Maastricht and Brittany by F. Theuws, 'Maastricht as a centre of power in the early Middle Ages', in M. de Jong & F. Theuws (eds.), *Topographies of Power in the Early Middle Ages*, The Transformation of the Roman World 6 (Leiden, 2001), pp. 155-216, and J. M. H. Smith, 'Aedificatio sancti loci: the making of a ninth-century holy place', in de Jong & Theuws, *Topographies of Power*, pp. 361-96.

<sup>25</sup> *VALc* c. 18, p. 193: "Venit iste Britto vel Scoto ad illum alterum Brittonem, qui intus iacet. O Deus, libera istud monasterium de istis Brittonibus!". On the insularity of the Frankish Church in relation to Boniface see E. Ewig, 'Milo et eiusmodi similes', in *Sankt Bonifatius*, pp. 412-40, but note that Willibrord does not seem to have had the same problems.

### **New Approaches to Reading Medieval Hagiography.**

A fundamental question to begin with is ‘what is a saint’s Life?’ A century ago Hippolyte Delehaye wrote that ‘to be strictly hagiographical the document must be of a religious character and aim at edification. The term then must be confined to writings inspired by religious devotion to the saints and intended to increase that devotion’.<sup>26</sup> More recently Ian Wood has suggested that ‘hagiography... could be history as much as it could be liturgy, theology, edification and propaganda, whether spiritual, cultic or political’.<sup>27</sup> It is, in other words, not a single genre ‘but a multiplicity’ of forms.<sup>28</sup> Felice Lifshitz, similarly, has argued that the idea of early medieval ‘genre’ is an anachronism and that to distinguish between hagiography and other forms of historical writing is a fallacy.<sup>29</sup> The arguments of Wood and Lifshitz, while based upon fundamentally different theoretical outlooks, lead to a similar conclusion: hagiography can no longer be interpreted as a distinct literary form. Perhaps the single defining feature of a saint’s Life is that it should be written about someone who was considered at least ‘saint-like’, but thereafter the form and purpose of the work depends entirely on what the author wanted to achieve. Determining intent, understood as a purposeful interaction between the author, his intended audience and their contexts, is central to the study of saints’ Lives.

Saints’ Lives were in part defined by the ways in which they were used. *Vitae* played particularly important roles in the cult of saints. They promoted cults while edifying their audiences and providing models of good behaviour to imitate. There are

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<sup>26</sup> Delehaye, *The Legends of the Saints*, p. 3.

<sup>27</sup> I. N. Wood, ‘The use and abuse of Latin hagiography in the Early Medieval West’, in E. Chrysos & I. N. Wood (eds.), *East and West: Modes of communication. Proceedings of the First Plenary Conference at Merida* (Leiden, 1999), pp. 93-109 at pp. 108-9.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 93.

<sup>29</sup> F. Lifshitz, ‘Beyond positivism and genre: “hagiographical” texts as historical narrative’, *Viator* 25 (1994), 95-113.

three different contexts in which hagiographical stories were used: as part of the liturgy in churches; read out at meal times and during services in monasteries; and through personal study of the text. (A fourth context, the *ad hoc* oral transmission of stories, is plausible but difficult to verify). Some of the different possibilities are illustrated by Alcuin of York in the dedication of the *Vita Willibrordi* to Beornrad:<sup>30</sup>

I have obeyed your command and I have set down two books, one walking along in prose which can be read publicly by the brothers in church... the other, running with Pieria [the muse of poetry], your pupils can read over and over again privately in their rooms.

For monks, whom one would expect to understand at least basic Latin, the oral transmission and study of *vitae* seems straightforward. Ascertaining precisely how stories would be told for a lay audience, if indeed they were, is particularly unclear. If *vitae* in the West were almost always written in Latin it invites the question of whether Latinity was widespread amongst the laity (which is unlikely) or whether the *vitae* were read out or glossed in the vernacular.<sup>31</sup>

It has been supposed that there were differences in how *vitae* were read and used between the western and eastern Frankish lands. Katherine Heene, for example, has argued that while many *vitae* were dedicated to lay audiences in the West, this was not the case in Germany.<sup>32</sup> This is, however, to exaggerate. Hygeburg's *Vita Willibaldi et Wynnebaldi*, written in Bavarian Eichstätt, includes amongst its dedicatees 'all noblemen of secular rank' (*omnes popularis condicies proceres*).<sup>33</sup> In Mainz, Willibald

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<sup>30</sup> Alcuin, *VWbrord* pref., p. 113: '... tuis parui... praeceptis et duos digessi libellos, unum prosaico sermone gradientem, qui puplice fratribus in ecclesia... alterum Piereo pede currentem, qui in secreto cubili inter scolasticos tuos tantummodo ruminare debuisset'.

<sup>31</sup> Heene, 'Merovingian and Carolingian hagiography: continuity or change in public and aims?', *Analecta Bollandiana* 107 (1989), 415-28 at 416; W. S. van Egmond, 'The audiences of early medieval hagiographical texts: some questions revisited', in M. Mostert (ed.), *New Approaches to Medieval Communication* (Turnhout, 1999), pp. 41-67.

<sup>32</sup> Heene, 'Merovingian and Carolingian hagiography', 424.

<sup>33</sup> Hygeburg, *VWb* pref., p. 87.

ambiguously refers to a potential audience of ‘religious-minded and orthodox men’ (*petenti religiosi ac catholici viri*) in the *Vita Bonifatii*, a phrase which potentially includes rather than excludes the laity.<sup>34</sup> In the *Vita Gregorii* Liudger wrote, ‘Oh, soldiers of Christ, listen, understand and take up the example of our most right and excellent father!’,<sup>35</sup> but his *sermo* also seems aimed at a lay audience because it chastised the Frankish laity for not doing enough to further missionary endeavours.<sup>36</sup> Many more *vitae* of the period, on the other hand, were more certainly intended for the edification and *correctio* of monks, nuns and other people of the Church alone. It is thus important when reading each text to be aware of the how the differences between lay and religious audiences might have affected the types of sanctity described, or indeed if it made any difference at all.

The transmission of *vitae* should be seen in the context of saints’ cults, which were one of the most popular aspects of medieval Christian culture. Peter Brown’s influential studies of saints’ cults have helped to establish that they had important functions within different societies.<sup>37</sup> Through the communal veneration of saints, for example, people were brought together, their differences forgotten and common ground reinforced. Moreover the role saints played in social cohesion meant that they came to reflect the Christian identity of, depending on scale, a faction, community or kingdom. At the same time veneration for saints could be a personal matter; many people suffering ill-health would, for example, pray at the shrines containing saintly relics in

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<sup>34</sup> Willibald, *VB*, pref., p. 2.

<sup>35</sup> Liudger, *VG* c. 13, p. 78: ‘Eia, milites Christi, audite et intelligite et assumite exempla patris huius rectissima et praeclara’.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, c. 11, p. 75; H. Löwe, ‘Liudger als Zeitkritiker’, *Historisches Jahrbuch* 74 (1954), 79-91 at 83-4.

<sup>37</sup> Brown, *The Cult of Saints*. For evaluations of Brown’s work and its influence, see the essays in J. Howard-Johnston & P. A. Hayward (eds.), *The Cult of Saints in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1999), especially P. A. Hayward, ‘Demystifying the role of sanctity in Western Christendom’, pp. 115-42, which warns against some of the more idealistic aspects of Brown’s functionalist outlook.

the hope that they would be healed. Most significantly, however, Peter Brown and other modern historians (and indeed social anthropologists) have only been able to investigate these social functions of saints' cults on the whole because of the accounts of saints' Lives. Historical anthropology – the study of past systems of meaning – relies largely upon hermeneutics.<sup>38</sup> It is through the *vitae*, in other words, that the social shape of saints' cults was reinforced and preserved. If the ritual of saints' cults reflects the identities, ideals and hopes of a community, then saints' Lives were a constituent part of that system of symbolic meaning. Hagiographical accounts of the past were not just texts in libraries but rather active components of medieval society, reiterating the symbolism of the saints every time the books were studied or heard at meal times or in church or at a feast.

The fact that most *vitae* are putatively historical (insofar as they contain stories located in the past) means they should be interpreted in relation to wider medieval attitudes to historical writing.<sup>39</sup> The idea that medieval monks wrote history simply for posterity fundamentally misunderstands the medieval interpretation of time. Time and the events contained, it appears, have no natural structures or meanings beyond those imposed by observers such as historians.<sup>40</sup> An influential medieval model of time was that of the Venerable Bede (d. 735), a monk from Wearmouth-Jarrow whose work was widely disseminated throughout Anglo-Saxon and Carolingian Europe. He believed that all events happened at points in a linear progression between God's creation of the

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<sup>38</sup> On the centrality of hermeneutics in studies of medieval ritual, see P. Buc, 'Text and ritual in ninth-century political culture: Rome, 864', in G. Althoff, J. Fried & P. J. Geary (eds.), *Medieval Concepts of the Past: Ritual, Memory and Historiography* (Cambridge, 2002), pp. 123-38 at pp. 124-6. Buc makes a good case against thinking it is possible to reconstruct ritual independently of textual intentions and criticises the popular approach of G. Althoff evident in, for example, 'The variability of rituals in the Middle Ages', in *ibid.*, pp. 71-87, for seeing rituals independently of the texts that describe them.

<sup>39</sup> See Lifshitz, 'Beyond positivism and genre', 102-4.

<sup>40</sup> P. Ricoeur, *Temps et récit* (3 vols., Paris, 1983-5), transl. K. McLaughlin & D. Pellauer, *Time and Narrative* (3 vols., Chicago, 1984-88); H.-W. Goetz, 'Die Gegenwart der Vergangenheit im früh- und hochmittelalterlichen Geschichtsbewußtsein', *Historische Zeitschrift* 255 (1992), 61-97.

world and the Day of Judgement; historical events were, therefore, to be interpreted theologically as part of the eschatological Christian development of time.<sup>41</sup> With this notion of historical writing, it was possible for a medieval historian to manipulate or even invent representations of the past to make them conform with the writer's idea of what constituted the correct progression of time.<sup>42</sup> This conception of history contributed to how the past was shaped in hagiographical stories about the saints. Interpreting an individual's past as saintly was, in effect, an allegorical enterprise in which their actions were related to Christian ideals and models of history. The past became little more than a vehicle for the expression of different ideologies.<sup>43</sup> Measurements of time, significantly, could be imposed illustratively. The extent to which any given medieval hagiographer adopted a specifically Bedan framework of time depended entirely on the individual, but the symbolic interpretation of the past offers a model of medieval historical writing more appropriate to the eighth and ninth centuries than the positivistic concept of posterity.

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<sup>41</sup> Bede, *De temporum ratione*, ed. C. W. Jones, *CCSL* 123B (Turnhout, 1977). On the text see: F. Wallis, *Bede: The Reckoning of Time*, *Translated Texts for Historians* 27 (Liverpool, 1999), pp. lxxvii-lxxxi; D. Janes, 'The world and its past as Christian allegory in the early Middle Ages', in Y. Hen & M. Innes (eds.), *The Uses of the Past in the Early Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 102-13; M. Richter, *Ireland and her Neighbours in the Seventh Century* (Dublin, 1999), pp. 89-90. More generally see K. Löwith, *Meaning in History* (Chicago & London, 1949), pp. 182-90 and Goetz, 'Die Gegenwart der Vergangenheit', 66.

<sup>42</sup> On the 'constructed-ness' of the medieval past, see: P. J. Geary, *Phantoms of Remembrance: Memory and Oblivion at the End of the First Millennium* (Princeton, 1994); Hen & Innes, *The Uses of the Past*, in which on *vitae* see C. Cubitt, 'Memory and narrative in the cult of early Anglo-Saxon saints', pp. 29-66.

<sup>43</sup> Rarely has 'the past' been written about any differently, making the nineteenth and twentieth century historians unusual in their preoccupation for historicity – see N. F. Partner, 'Historicity in an age of Reality-Fictions', in F. Ankersmit & H. Kellner (eds.), *The New Philosophy of History* (Chicago, 1995), pp. 21-39.

To study the meanings of saints' Lives is to investigate a range of intentions.<sup>44</sup> The most obvious of these are those of the author which are explicitly or implicitly set out in the course of the text. It is important to be aware of the potential variety of authorial intentions in a single text as, particularly in saints' Lives, each episode could be written with a different message and use in mind. The close proximity of 'imagined past' and 'creative present' – that is, if a hagiographer composed his or her work close to the time being written about – often meant that the freedom of the author was restricted by the memories of the living or by a present that was actually shaped by the subject of the historical writing.<sup>45</sup> It is not always possible to draw a distinction between the past and representations of it.<sup>46</sup> There are also intentions associated with the reproduction and reception of a *vitae*. By noting what other texts were copied alongside a particular *vita*, it is possible to see some of the contexts in which they were considered meaningful beyond those initially established by the author.<sup>47</sup> (I consider it doubtful, however, that if there was a tenth-century manuscript of a ninth-century text, then it would only be possible as a historian to reflect upon the work's tenth-century meaning). One can also study where and when a text is referred to or borrowed from in other texts, thus revealing further how it was interpreted away from the author.

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<sup>44</sup> For a recent case for making intentions the object of hermeneutic consideration, see M. Bevir, *The Logic of the History of Ideas* (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 31-77. For a subsequent debate on Bevir's ideas see V. Brown, 'On some problems for weak intentionalism for intellectual history', *History and Theory* 41. 2 (2002), 198-208, and Bevir's response, 'How to be an Intentionalist', *History and Theory* 41. 2 (2002), 209-17.

<sup>45</sup> P. Fouracre, 'Merovingian History and Merovingian Hagiography', *Past and Present* 127 (1990), 3-38.

<sup>46</sup> O. G. Oexle, 'Deutungsschemata der sozialen Wirklichkeit im frühen und hohen Mittelalter. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Wissens', in F. Graus (ed.), *Mentalitäten im Mittelalter. Methodische und inhaltliche Probleme* (Sigmaringen, 1987), pp. 65-118 at p. 69.

<sup>47</sup> R. McKitterick, 'The audience for Latin historiography in the early Middle Ages: text transmission and manuscript dissemination', in A. Scharer & G. Scheibelreiter (eds.), *Historiographie im frühen Mittelalter*, Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung 32 (Vienna & Munich, 1994), pp. 96-114; Geary, 'Saints, scholars and society', pp. 18-22.

The (re-)construction of hermeneutic meanings is necessarily a product of examining what Gabrielle Spiegel has called the 'social logic of the text'.<sup>48</sup> Each text fulfils a distinctive role in society that is a response to needs individual to a particular group, place and time. Meanings are not dictated purely by convention but can often be the result of creative uses of language which are grasped best through reference to associated signs or indicators in the context of an utterance.<sup>49</sup> A famous example discussed by the philosopher Donald Davidson is Mrs Malaprop's comment 'that was a nice derangement of epitaphs' which, despite its conventional meaning, was understood by all to mean 'that was a nice arrangement of epithets' because it followed a speech and the context strongly suggested Mrs Malaprop intended to praise the speaker.<sup>50</sup> There is to be a meeting, therefore, of literary interpretations of texts combined with an anthropological-inspired study of the texts' places in wider systems of cultural meaning and symbolic communication. Literary approaches to hermeneutic meaning in saints' Lives have been popular since František Graus's *Volk, Herrscher und Heiliger im Reich der Merowinger* (1965), in which Merovingian *vitae* were argued to be works of propaganda. The use of saints' Lives for a social anthropological view of early medieval Europe, meanwhile, has most prominently been pioneered by Peter Brown to reflect different *mentalités*.<sup>51</sup> In reality these two different approaches quickly collapse into the same project because systems and contexts largely depend upon interpreting texts, and interpreting texts depends upon systems and contexts. (Indeed the same is

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<sup>48</sup> Spiegel, 'History, historicism and the social logic of text', 77-86.

<sup>49</sup> In the philosophy of language this idea has been developed most notably by L. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* cc. 78-87, transl. G. E. M. Anscombe (Oxford, 1953, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. 1958), pp. 36-41 and D. Davidson, 'A nice derangement of epitaphs', in E. LePore (ed.), *Truth and Interpretation: Perspectives on the Philosophy of Donald Davidson* (Oxford, 1986), pp. 433-46. On the possible application of the idea in history, see Bevir, *The Logic of the History of Ideas*, pp. 32-52.

<sup>50</sup> Davidson, 'A nice derangement of epitaphs'.

<sup>51</sup> See especially Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom*, and the praise for its approach by Wood, 'The use and abuse', p. 102. On some of the principles of the history of *mentalités* see G. Duby, 'Histoire des mentalités', in C. Samaran (ed.), *L'histoire et ses méthodes* (Bruges, 1961), pp. 937-66.

true of interpreting anything, including artefacts and manuscripts).<sup>52</sup> This is not quite to say there is a problem of circularity, but rather that interpretations are mutually supportive of each other and, if we see historical enquiry as a dynamic process, with each new interpretation previous ones may need to be reassessed both in terms of their accuracy and in terms of their connections with other ones.

The emphasis on context now means that, for each text, work has to be put into the assembly of as much data as possible so as to be able to contextualise it rigorously.<sup>53</sup> The now-classic example of this is Thomas Head's *Hagiography and the Cult of Saints* (1989).<sup>54</sup> By focusing on a well-documented centre of hagiography – the diocese of Orléans – Head was able to construct a full picture of the institutional and intellectual contexts which shaped the 'day-to-day practice' of the cult of saints.<sup>55</sup> In the case of studying the Anglo-Saxons on the continent it is not certain that Head's approach would be tenable because their experiences collectively took in Ireland, England, Gaul, Denmark, Germany, Italy, Greece and the Holy Land and the many different cultures each of those places comprised; to contextualise that in absolute detail would require an unwieldy history of early medieval Europe and beyond. The letter collections alone reveal that the Anglo-Saxons preserved widespread networks to

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<sup>52</sup> J. Moreland, *Archaeology and Text*, Duckworth Debates in Archaeology (Harlow, 2001), pp. 77-97. On the broader problem of objective knowledge, and the inter-dependence of facts on each to obtain truth values, see: A. Danto, *Analytical Philosophy of History* (Cambridge, 1965), pp. 94-111; T. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago, 1970); D. Davidson, 'A coherence theory of truth and knowledge' in E. LePore, *Truth and Interpretation*, pp. 307-19; Bevir, *The Logic of the History of Ideas*, pp. 78-126.

<sup>53</sup> Spiegel, 'History, historicism, and the social logic of the text', 77-83; Geary, 'Saints, scholars, and society', pp. 18-29; Innes, 'Introduction: using the past', p. 4.

<sup>54</sup> T. Head, *Hagiography and the Cult of Saints: The Diocese of Orléans 800-1200*, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought 4<sup>th</sup> series 14 (Cambridge, 1990).

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19.

support their work.<sup>56</sup> In this thesis localised case studies must still be examined closely, but they must be placed firmly within the broader contexts to which they pertain, keeping a balance between the two levels of investigation. As Bruno LaTour has often argued with regards to science, the story itself should dictate topics and contexts of enquiry, not artificially imposed academic compartmentalism.<sup>57</sup>

Some progress has been made in this direction by Ian Wood in his recent study of early medieval missionary hagiography, *The Missionary Life*. Wood examined textual communities who produced saints' Lives about missionary activity, moving from time and place as the story of conversion dictated and, significantly, noting how different traditions affected later communities. Central to Wood's story of European mission were, of course, the *vitae* about the Anglo-Saxons. In seeking to outline the different *mentalités* of medieval mission as reflected by texts, Wood explicitly took influence from Walter Goffart's *The Narrators of Barbarian History*.<sup>58</sup> Goffart proposed that a number of historical works should be seen as 'textual arguments' in which a past was shaped by an author to answer present concerns. Whether he was successful with his subject matter is debatable;<sup>59</sup> but what caused a stir was his explicit citation of the theorist Hayden White on discourse.<sup>60</sup> The pragmatic application of

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<sup>56</sup> R. McKitterick, 'Anglo-Saxon missionaries in Germany: personal connections and local influences', Vaughn Paper 36 (1991); reprinted in her *The Frankish Kings and Culture in the Early Middle Ages* (Aldershot, 1995), I.

<sup>57</sup> See, for example, B. LaTour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, transl. C. Porter (Harlow, 1993), pp. 1-8.

<sup>58</sup> W. Goffart, *The Narrators of Barbarian History, A.D. 550-800: Jordanes, Gregory of Tours, Bede and Paul the Deacon* (Princeton, 1988). For reactions to Goffart's book, see Scharer & Scheibelreiter, *Historiographie im frühen Mittelalter*. Wood, in *The Missionary Life*, p. vi, notes that his pupils had called his lectures 'The Narrators of Missionary History'.

<sup>59</sup> On Goffart's discussion of particular medieval authors see: G. de Nie, 'Gregory of Tours' smile: spiritual reality, imagination and earthly events in the "Histories", in Scharer & Scheibelreiter, *Historiographie*, pp. 68-95; H. Mayr-Harting, 'Bede's patristic thinking as an historian', in Scharer & Scheibelreiter, *Historiographie*, pp. 367-74; W. Pohl, 'Paulus Diaconus und die "Historia Langobardorum": Text und Tradition', in Scharer & Scheibelreiter, *Historiographie*, pp. 375-405.

<sup>60</sup> Goffart, *The Narrators of Barbarian History*, p. 17; H. White, 'The value of narrativity in the representation of reality', in H. White (ed.), *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (Baltimore & London, 1987), pp. 1-25.

White's ideas to find out more about the author created something distinctly un-post-modern because of its commitment to a past that was examinable beyond the text; Goffart did, however, encourage a heightened awareness of the 'constructedness' of sources as reflections of the worlds that produced them.<sup>61</sup> *The Missionary Life*, likewise, brought elements of post-modernism to studies of the Anglo-Saxon *vitae* in a way that often preserves a more conservative view of historical practice; indeed, where Goffart only referenced White for his theory, Wood only mentioned Goffart and thus increased the distance between theory and practice. This leaves many more esoteric, but still fundamental, questions about constructions of sanctity, time and ideas of truth in hagiography to one side. Wood's approach helps to open up new interpretations of the *vitae*; there are, however, more questions to be considered, particularly incorporating non-missionary *vitae* and events.

### Sources.

Saints' Lives written about the Anglo-Saxon missions can usefully be bracketed together into a number of loose and overlapping schools: the eighth-century members of the Bonifatian circles who survived Boniface; Alcuin's connections in Frisia and Ferrières; the early ninth-century Fulda school; and the miscellaneous independent *vitae* from centres like Utrecht and Würzburg in the ninth century. It is worth bearing in mind from the outset some of the contexts and connections from which *vitae* were

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<sup>61</sup> Innes, 'Introduction: using the past', p. 3.

produced.<sup>62</sup>

The first of the *vitae* to be written about the Anglo-Saxon ‘missions’ was the *Vita Bonifatii*, sometimes called the *Liber s. Bonifatii*. This work was written in Mainz by the Anglo-Saxon priest Willibald on the orders of the Mercian Bishop Lull of Mainz (d. 786) and Bishop Megingoz of Würzburg (resigned 769), who had both been appointed by Boniface. A *terminus post quem* for the *vita* is provided by Megingoz’s resignation from Würzburg in 769; the *Vita Bonifatii* was, then, written within living memory of the saint for people who had known him.<sup>63</sup> Willibald’s work should be considered in conjunction with the *Vita Willibaldi et Wynnebaldi*, about the West Saxon brothers Willibald (d. 787) and Wynnebald (d. 761). This *vita*, judging by a cryptogram in the earliest manuscript of the two works, was written by the otherwise unknown nun, Hygeburg of Heidenheim.<sup>64</sup> Hygeburg seems to have been a relative of the brothers. She also seems to have written under Willibald’s supervision, providing a *terminus post quem* of 787, the year of Willibald’s death, for the completion of the work.<sup>65</sup> Together,

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<sup>62</sup> There are a number of ‘guides to sources’ for the early medieval period. The standard is W. Wattenbach, W. Levison & H. Löwe, *Deutschlands Geschichtsquellen im Mittelalter. Vorzeit und Karolinger*, 6 vols (Weimar, 1952-90) in which, on the Anglo-Saxon *vitae*, see W. Levison & H. Löwe, 2. Heft: *Die Karolinger vom Anfang des 8. Jahrhunderts bis zum Tode Karls des Großen* (Weimar, 1953) and H. Löwe, 6. Heft: *Die Karolinger vom Vertrag von Verdun bis zum Herrschaftsantritt der Herrscher aus dem sächsischen Hause. Das östfränkische Reich* (Weimar, 1990). Walter Berschin provides a useful analysis of biographical form and the different schools of Anglo-Saxon *vitae* in his *Biographie und Epochenstil im lateinischen Mittelalter 3. Karolingische Biographie 750-920 n. Chr.*, Quellen und Untersuchungen zur lateinischen Philologie des Mittelalters 10 (Stuttgart, 1991). Other recent guides can be found in G. Philippart (ed.), *Hagiographies*, Corpus Christianorum (2 vols., Turnhout, 1996), particularly in volume 2: T. Klüppel, ‘Die Germania (750-950)’, pp. 161-209; M. Carasso-Kok, ‘Le diocèse d’Utrecht, 900-1200’, pp. 373-411.

<sup>63</sup> On the dating of Willibald’s *VB*, see Berschin, *Biographie* 3, pp. 6-15; Klüppel, ‘Die Germania’, pp. 166-7.

<sup>64</sup> B. Bischoff, ‘Wer ist die Nonne von Heidenheim?’, *Studien und Mitteilungen zur Geschichte des Benediktinerordens* 49 (1931), 387-97. The most recent work on Hygeburg – Pauline Head’s ‘Who is the nun from Heidenheim? A study of Hügeburg’s *Vita Willibaldi*’, *Medium Ævum* 51. 1 (2002), 29-46 – is factually incorrect and, in portraying Hygeburg as wilfully subverting female stereotypes, provides a highly implausible interpretation of her work.

<sup>65</sup> The work was partly dictated by Willibald (so Hygeburg claimed) in 778 and Levison provided no further date (Wattenbach, Levison & Löwe, *Deutschlands Geschichtsquellen* 2, p. 178). On the likelihood of further work between 778 and 787 see: Berschin, *Biographie* 3, p. 19; Klüppel, ‘Die Germania’, p. 168.

the *vitae* about Boniface, Wynnebald and Willibald appear to have provided the main account of the *Bonifatiuskreise*, and were preserved together as early as the late-eighth century in Eichstätt or Freising.<sup>66</sup> Hygeburg and the priest Willibald wrote in the same convoluted style, following the model of Aldhelm of Malmesbury – a fact which underlines the Southumbrian heritage of both hagiographers.<sup>67</sup> In the ninth-century the *Vita Willibaldi* and *Vita Wynnebaldi* were preserved in the Mainz *Passionale sanctorum* alongside the *Passio Kiliani I* (ca 800), which modelled St Kilian of Würzburg on Boniface, and the *Miracula Waldburgensis*, which was written about Willibald and Wynnebald's sister Waldburga.<sup>68</sup> These *vitae* can therefore be treated as a united group because of their themes, style, and the contexts in which they were preserved.

The next *vita* to be written about an Anglo-Saxon traveller was Alcuin's *Vita Willibrordi*, written in ca 796.<sup>69</sup> Thiofrid of Echternach later claimed in the twelfth century that this was actually the second *vita* about Willibrord after a now lost Irish *vita*, but there is no evidence to substantiate this suggestion.<sup>70</sup> Alcuin (d. 804) had been a famous teacher in York but later taught at the court of Charlemagne before retiring to

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<sup>66</sup> Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 1086 and Rome, Biblioteca Vallicelliana, C73a: see Levison, 'Conspectus codicum hagiographorum', pp. 616 and 660.

<sup>67</sup> Wattenbach, Levison & Löwe, *Deutschlands Geschichtsquellen* 2, pp. 177-8, in which Levison dismissed Willibald and Hygeburg's Latin as 'barbarisch'. On Aldhelmian Latin see now A. Orchard, *The Poetic Art of Aldhelm*, Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England 8 (Cambridge, 1994).

<sup>68</sup> Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 4585: see Levison, 'Conspectus codicum hagiographorum', p. 616. On the dating of the *Passio Kiliani*, see Wattenbach, Levison & Löwe, *Deutschlands Geschichtsquellen* 6, pp. 731-2 Klüppel, 'Die Germania', p. 177. The manuscript also includes a *Passio Dionysii*.

<sup>69</sup> 796 is the date given by Berschin, *Biographie* 3, p. 115, and is plausible because it would coincide with Charlemagne's Saxon campaigns; Levison had been less certain, suggesting between 785 and 797 (Wattenbach, Levison & Löwe, *Deutschlands Geschichtsquellen* 2, p. 172).

<sup>70</sup> Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi* c. 24, ed. A. Poncelet, *AASS* Nov. 3 (Brussels, 1910), pp. 459-83 at p. 475: 'Nam primo quidam linguae et gentis Scottiae aggressus tanti viri gesta describere, rustico stilo detrivit dignitatem'.

the monastery of St Martin's at Tours.<sup>71</sup> The *Vita Willibrordi* was addressed to Beornrad, an Anglo-Saxon bishop of Sens and later abbot of Willibrord's Echternach.<sup>72</sup> Both Beornrad and Alcuin appear to have been Willibrord's relatives, a further indication that, as with the *Bonifatiuskreise*, family was an important aspect in the early *vitae* about the Anglo-Saxon missions.<sup>73</sup> From the Carolingian period only one manuscript has survived.<sup>74</sup> It is clear from other texts modelled on the work, however, that Alcuin's work had a wide circulation.

The *Vita Willibrordi* had great influence on hagiographical traditions in Frisia and Saxony, two regions united by interconnected nobilities, landholdings and church organisation.<sup>75</sup> It had a near-immediate influence on Liudger of Münster (d. 809), one of Alcuin's former pupils from York, who was inspired to write a *Vita Gregorii* as a sermon based around his memories of Abbot Gregory of Utrecht (d. ca 775) and his teacher Boniface.<sup>76</sup> In turn Altfrid, another bishop of Münster and relative of Liudger, quoted from the *Vita Willibrordi* when he wrote the *Vita Liudgeri* sometime between

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<sup>71</sup> On Alcuin see now D. A. Bullough, *Alcuin: Achievement and Reputation* (Leiden, 2004). Sources for Alcuin's life include a collection of around 300 letters and many poems: *Alcuini epistolae*, ed. E. Dümmler, *MGH Epp.* 4 (Berlin, 1895), pp. 1-481 and *Alcuini carmina*, ed. E. Dümmler, *MGH Poetae* 1 (1895), pp. 161-351. On the poetry see now A. Orchard, 'Wish you were here: Alcuin's court poetry and the boys back home', in S. Rees Jones, R. Marks & A. J. Minnis (eds.), *Courts and Regions in Medieval Europe* (York, 2000), pp. 21-43.

<sup>72</sup> On the importance of Beornrad as the first Anglo-Saxon in Charlemagne's service, see A. Hauck, *Kirchengeschichte Deutschlands* 2 of 5 vols. (1898-1911), p. 123.

<sup>73</sup> Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi* c. 29, p. 477.

<sup>74</sup> Stuttgart, Württembergische Landesbibliothek, XIV 1: see Levison, 'Conspectus codicum hagiographorum', p. 682.

<sup>75</sup> See for example I. N. Wood, 'Before or after mission: social relations across the middle and lower Rhine in the seventh and eighth centuries', in I. L. Hansen & C. Wickham (eds.), *The Long Eighth Century: Production, Distribution and Demand, The Transformation of the Roman World* 11 (Leiden, 2000), pp. 149-66, and W. S. van Egmond, 'Converting monks: missionary activity in early medieval Frisia and Saxony', in G. Armstrong & I. N. Wood (eds.), *Christianizing Peoples and Converting Individuals*, *International Medieval Research* 7 (Turnhout, 2000), pp. 37-45.

<sup>76</sup> Ian Wood (*The Missionary Life*, pp. 111-12) has recently argued for Alcuin's influence on Liudger's *VG* and consequently a date of ca 800, superseding the standard dating of ca 790 given in Berschin, *Biographie* 3, p. 41 and Klüppel, 'Die Germania', p. 171.

becoming bishop of Münster in 839 and his death in 849.<sup>77</sup> Altfred's book was reworked later in the ninth century to include more miracles, creating what is often referred to as the *Vita Liudgeri II*.<sup>78</sup> His original work also provided the inspiration for the *Vita antiqua Lebuini*, about the Anglo-Saxon Liefwine (d. ca 775) who worked with Boniface and Gregory.<sup>79</sup> At roughly the same time as Altfred was writing, the *Vita Willehadi* was composed in Bremen about the Northumbrian Willehad (d. 789), the first bishop of that town; that work too owed much to the model set down in the *Vita Willibrordi*.<sup>80</sup> The story of Willehad also formed part of the first Christian traditions of Hamburg and Bremen which, in the ninth-century, was expanded by Anskar's *Miracula Willehadi* (860), Rimbert's *Vita Anskarii* (ca 870) and the anonymous *Vita Rimberti* (ca 900).<sup>81</sup>

The Alcuinian hagiographical tradition was developed concurrently with the Frisian and Saxon *vitae* in the monastery of Ferrières, between Orléans and Sens, where Alcuin had been abbot. He was commemorated in ca 840 by an anonymous *Vita Alcuini*, written in the model of his own *vitae*.<sup>82</sup> Also from Ferrières at this time –

<sup>77</sup> For agreement on the 839-49 dating of Altfred's *VLger*, see: Wattenbach, Levison & Löwe, *Deutschlands Geschichtsquellen*, p. 824; Berschin, *Biographie* 3, p. 51; Klüppel, 'Die Germania', p. 172.

<sup>78</sup> On the development of hagiographical traditions in Münster and Werden see K. Hauck, 'Ein Utrechter Missionar auf der ältsächsischen Stammesversammlung' in V. H. Elbern (ed.), *Das erste Jahrtausend. Kultur und Kunst im werdenden Abenland an Rhein und Ruhr* 2 (Düsseldorf, 1964), pp. 734-45.

<sup>79</sup> Hauck, 'Ein Utrechter Missionar', p. 740; Wood, *The Missionary Life*, pp. 117-19.

<sup>80</sup> The *VWhad* is traditionally seen as a work from Bremen: see recently Wattenbach, Levison & Löwe, *Deutschlands Geschichtsquellen* 6, p. 838 and Klüppel, 'Die Germania', p. 198. For the old thesis that it came from Echternach, see G. Niemeyer, 'Die Herkunft der *Vita Willehadi*', *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters* 12 (1956), 17-35.

<sup>81</sup> The *VWhad*, *MWhad*, *VA* and *Vita Rimberti* are preserved together in the earliest extant manuscript to contain the *VWhad*, the twelfth-century Münster, Staatsarchiv, IB 228: see A. Poncelet, *AASS*, Nov. III (Brussels, 1910), pp. 839-40. Another extant twelfth-century manuscript – Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, lat. 9738 (Levison, 'Conspectus codicum hagiographorum', p. 644) – was written in Echternach but only contains the texts about Willehad. On the *vitae* see: I. N. Wood, 'Christians and pagans in ninth-century Scandinavia', in P. H. Sawyer, B. Sawyer and I. N. Wood (eds.), *The Christianization of Scandinavia* (Alingsås, 1987), pp. 36-67; J. T. Palmer, 'Rimbert's *Vita Anskarii* and Scandinavian mission in the ninth century', *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* (forthcoming).

<sup>82</sup> Little has been written on the *VAlc* except Bullough, *Alcuin*, pp. 24-34, in which the work is also linked to Anglo-Saxon *vitae* such as the early eighth-century *Vita Wilfridi* by Stephanus.

although possibly begun at Fulda – came Lupus' *Vita Wigberti*, written in 836 on the request of Abbot Bun of Hersfeld.<sup>83</sup> Lupus is one of the most celebrated Latinists of the Carolingian Renaissance because of his clear, classical style, which developed reforms set out by Alcuin. Such was his debt to the former abbot of Ferrières' ideas Lupus even began his *Vita Wigberti* with a quotation from Alcuin's *Vita Richarii*. The work is lacking in anything that could be considered historical fact, as Lupus himself admits, but the work nonetheless is interesting for intersecting Alcuinian traditions and Fulda traditions in the ninth century.

The monastery of Fulda, a Bonifatian foundation, in fact provides its own distinct traditions about the Anglo-Saxons on the continent. These traditions began when Abbot Eigil (d. 822) wrote the *Vita Sturmi* about the involvement of the Bavarian Sturm (d. 777) in the foundation of Fulda and the developments under the saint's abbacy. Although it is addressed to an otherwise unknown 'Angildruth' it appears to have been written primarily for the Fulda monks. The work is now dated to the 810s, a time when Eigil was attempting to restore order at Fulda after many turbulent years.<sup>84</sup> Eigil was later commemorated in the *Vita Eigil* by Brun Candidus at the request of Abbot Hrabanus Maurus of Fulda between 839 and 842.<sup>85</sup> Although Hrabanus was another former pupil of Alcuin, Brun's work shows little influence of Alcuinian

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<sup>83</sup> Berschin, *Biographie*, p. 182. Klüppel, 'Die Germania', p. 174 suggests Lupus had returned to Ferrières by the time he came to write the work. Lupus's letters provide another important collection from the Carolingian period, see Lupus, *Epistolae*, ed. E. Dümmmler, *MGH Epp.* 6 (Berlin, 1925), pp. 1-126. On Lupus see T. F. X. Noble, 'Lupus of Ferrières in his Carolingian context', in A. C. Murray (ed.), *After Rome's Fall: Narrators and Sources of Early Medieval History. Essays Presented to Walter Goffart* (Toronto, 1998), pp. 232-50.

<sup>84</sup> On the dating of Eigil's *VS*, see now P. Kehl, 'Die Entstehungszeit der *Vita Sturmi* des Eigil. Versuch einer Neudatierung', *Archiv für mittelrheinische Kirchengeschichte* 46 (1994), pp. 11-20. The *VS* had been dated to ca 796: see Eigil, *Vita Sturmi*, ed. P. Engelbert O. S. B., *Die Vita Sturmi des Eigil von Fulda. Literarkritisch-historische Untersuchung und Edition*, Veröffentlichungen der Historischen Kommission für Hessen und Waldeck 29 (Marburg, 1968), pp. 18-20. Heinz Löwe also suggested 794 in Wattenbach, Levison & Löwe, *Deutschlands Geschichtsquellen* 6, p. 694.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 696.

hagiographical traditions and instead used ideals about the Benedictine life and Eigil's own work as a model.<sup>86</sup> Under Hrabanus another Fulda monk, Rudolf, wrote a *Vita Leobae* about Leoba (d. 782), Boniface's kinswoman and first abbess of Tauberbischofsheim near Würzburg. Rudolf noted that the priest Mago, one of his informants, had died five years before he wrote the *vita*; other sources indicate Mago died in 831, giving us a date of 836 for the text, shortly before the translation of Leoba's relics from Fulda to the nearby St Peter's Mount.<sup>87</sup> The *Vita Leobae* is addressed to the unknown nun Hadamout, who was expected to study the text privately, but there are many lessons for the monks of Fulda evident too. When Leoba's relics were translated to St Peter's Mount in 838 by Hrabanus the new cult formed part of the new sacred landscape around Fulda.<sup>88</sup> It is curious to note, however, that while the three texts appear to provide a refined identity for the Fulda monks and their related communities, no single manuscript contains the three *vitae* together.<sup>89</sup> They were, however, composed around the same time, illustrate similar ideals and have common literary influences such as the *Vita Bonifatii*.

Various other *vitae* are less readily connected to any particular school.

Potentially the earliest of these unlocalised texts is known as the *Vita altera Bonifatii*.

According to the oldest surviving manuscript – the fourteenth-century Gotha,

Landesbibliothek, I 64 – the work was written by Radbod of Utrecht, but it seems more

likely that he only edited the introduction and conclusion given much of the style and

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<sup>86</sup> Wattenbach, Levison & Löwe, *Deutschlands Geschichtsquellen* 6, p. 697; G. Becht-Jördens, 'Die *Vita Aegil* des Brun Candidus als Quelle zu Fragen aus der Geschichte Fuldas im Zeitalter der anianischen Reform', *Hessisches Jahrbuch für Landesgeschichte* 42 (1992), 19-48.

<sup>87</sup> Wattenbach, Levison & Löwe, *Deutschlands Geschichtsquellen* 6, p. 709; Berschin, *Biographie*, pp. 260-1.

<sup>88</sup> J. Raaijmakers, 'Een sacraal landschap: Rudolf van Fulda over Hrabanus' relikentranslatie', *Millennium: Tijdschrift voor Middeleeuwse studies* 14. 1-2 (2000), 5-21.

<sup>89</sup> Eigil's *VS* and Rudolf's *VL* are attested together in the twelfth-century Erlangen-Nürnberg, Codex Erlangensis 321 (Levison, 'Conspectus codicum hagiographorum', p. 586), the oldest surviving copy of either text.

content.<sup>90</sup> There is general agreement that on internal evidence the core of the work was written in Utrecht and dates from before the 840s because it makes little of the vikings who raided Frisia from that time onwards.<sup>91</sup> It has been suggested that the author was Bishop Fredericus I of Utrecht, but few have found the idea entirely compelling.<sup>92</sup> The work might represent later versions of traditions that predate Liudger's *Vita Gregorii*, yet this, too, is uncertain.<sup>93</sup> Another mystery is provided by the anonymous *Vita Burchardi*, which is so short and blatantly inaccurate that it has received little scholarly interest. It seems to date from Würzburg *ca* 850,<sup>94</sup> and may be based upon an earlier work that is now lost.<sup>95</sup> The *Vita Burchardi* was preserved alongside Ermenrich of Passau's *Sermo Sualonis* (*ca* 840) which is itself interesting because Ermenrich came from Fulda and dedicated his work to Rudolf but developed distinctly non-Fulda traditions.<sup>96</sup> These are all works from the peripheries of Anglo-Saxon continental activities and appear to lack the strong connection to a particular school that characterises most *vitae* about the Anglo-Saxons.

Alongside the *vitae* there are a number of miscellaneous sources which pertain to the Anglo-Saxons' continental work. Most famously there is the collection of

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<sup>90</sup> Carasso-Kok, 'Le diocèse d'Utrecht', pp. 385-6. For the case against Radbod's authorship, see Levison, *MGH SRG* 57, pp. xlvi-liv and Wood, *The Missionary Life*, pp. 102-4.

<sup>91</sup> Levison, *MGH SRG* 57, pp. xlvi-liv; Berschin, *Biographie*, p. 14; Klüppel, 'Die Germania', p. 167; Wood, *The Missionary Life*, p. 103.

<sup>92</sup> Fredericus was suggested by Jan Romein in 'Wie is de "Presbyter Ultrajectensis"?', *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis* 44 (1929), 373-81. For sympathetic receptions of the argument, but with reservations about Fredericus specifically, see: Wattenbach, Levison & Löwe, *Deutschlands Geschichtsquellen* 6, p. 919; Berschin, *Biographie*, p. 16; Carasso-Kok, 'Le diocèse d'Utrecht', p. 386.

<sup>93</sup> Wood, *The Missionary Life*, p. 106.

<sup>94</sup> O. Holder-Egger, *MGH SS* 15 i, p. 46; Klüppel, 'Die Germania', p. 173. It is thought to be connected to either Hunbert or Gauzbert of Würzburg, on whom see A. Wendehorst, *Das Bistum Würzburg, Teil I: Die Bischofsreihe bis 1254*, Germania Sacra neue folge I. Die Bistümer der Kirchenprovinz Mainz (Berlin, 1962), pp. 39-46. The earliest manuscript – St Gall, Stiftsbibliothek, 571 – is certainly ninth-century (Levison, 'Conspectus codicum hagiographorum', p. 680).

<sup>95</sup> Wattenbach, Levison & Löwe, *Deutschlands Geschichtsquellen* 6, p. 732.

<sup>96</sup> Klüppel, 'Die Germania', p. 182; H. Löwe, 'Ermenrich von Passau, Gegner des Methodius. Versuch eines Persönlichkeitsbildes', *Mitteilungen der Gesellschaft für Salzburger Landeskunde* 126 (1986), 221-41. The *SSualo* is also preserved in St Gall, Stiftsbibliothek, 571.

approximately 150 letters written by or to Boniface, Lull and their friends which has provided historians with the backbone of information about the Anglo-Saxons' activities.<sup>97</sup> No such letters have survived from Willibrord, unfortunately, but we do have what appears to be a calendar he owned which includes a brief autobiographical note.<sup>98</sup> Many charters have survived which reveal Willibrord's landholdings,<sup>99</sup> and similarly there are charters connected to Boniface, Lull and Willibald of Eichstätt.<sup>100</sup> A number of capitularies which derived their content from Boniface's reform synods between 742 and 747 were fortunately preserved which reveal much about Boniface's idea of reform.<sup>101</sup> A variety of manuscripts associated with the Anglo-Saxons also survives; these reveal the sorts of penitentials and sermons they used, and what other

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<sup>97</sup> The fundamental study of the letter collection is M. Tangl, 'Studien zur Neuauflage der Briefe des hl. Bonifatius und Lullus', 1: *Neues Archiv für ältere deutsche Geschichtskunde* 40 (1916), 639-790, 2: *ibid.*, 41 (1917), 23-101; reprinted in W. Eggert (ed.), *Das Mittelalter in Quellenkunde und Diplomatie. Ausgewählte Schriften* 1 (Graz, 1966), 1: pp. 60-177, 2: pp. 178-240. Recently Tangl's work has seen revision and new interpretations of letter collections have emerged – see for example: C. Fell, 'Some implications of the Boniface correspondence', in H. Damico & A. H. Olsen (eds.), *New Readings on Women in Old English Literature* (Bloomington & Indianapolis, 1990), pp. 29-43; McKitterick, 'Personal connections'; M. Garrison, "'Send more socks": on mentality and the preservation context of medieval letters', in M. Mostert (ed.), *New Approaches to Medieval Communication* (Turnhout, 1999), pp. 69-99; A. Orchard, 'Old sources, new resources: finding the right formula for Boniface', *Anglo-Saxon England* 30 (2001), 15-38.

<sup>98</sup> *The Calendar of St Willibrord*, ed. H. W. Wilson, Henry Bradshaw Society 55 (London, 1918).

<sup>99</sup> The charters are edited in C. Wampach, *Geschichte der Grundherrschaft Echternach im Frühmittelalter II Quellenband* (Luxembourg, 1936). On the landholdings see Wampach, *Willibrord, passim*; Weiler, *Willibrords Missie, passim*; M. Costambeys, 'An aristocratic community on the northern Frankish frontier 690-726', *Early Medieval Europe* 3. 1 (1994), 39-62.

<sup>100</sup> Boniface's charters are *MGH Dip. Karol.* 1 nos. 4-5, pp. 6-8; Lull's Hersfeld's charters are *MGH Dip. Karol.* 1 nos. 89, 90, 103, 104, 105, 121, 126, 129, 142, 144, pp. 128-9, 130, 147-8, 148-9, 149-50, 169-70, 175-6, 179-80, 193-4, 195-6, and his individual charters are *Urkundenbuch der Kloster Fulda* nos. 40, 41, 167, ed. E. E. Stengel, Veröffentlichungen der historischen Kommission für Hessen und Waldeck 10, 2 vols. (Marburg, 1913-58), pp. 68-71, 71-2, pp. 253-6. Willibald's lone charter is *Urkundenbuch der Kloster Fulda* no. 172, pp. 258-9. On Boniface's Utrecht charters see C. van de Kieft, 'Bonifatius en het Bisdom Utrecht', *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis* 74 (1961), 42-63, 526-32. Despite Kurt-Ulrich Jäschke's 'Zu den schriftlichen Zeugnissen für die Anfänge der Reichsabtei Hersfeld', *Blätter für deutsche Landesgeschichte* 107 (1971), 94-135, Lull's charters remain largely unstudied. No attention has been afforded Willibald's charter.

<sup>101</sup> *Concilium Germanicum*, Tangl no. 56, pp. 98-102; *Concilium Liftinense*, ed. A. Werminghof, *MGH Conc.* 2. 1, pp. 5-7; *Concilium Suessionense*, ed. Werminghof, *MGH Conc.* 2. 1, pp. 33-6. There had been suggestion that there were more than three synods (see Schieffer, *Winfrid-Bonifatius*, p. 242) but this has been ruled out by J. Jarnut in 'Bonifatius und die fränkischen Reformkonzilien (743-748)', *Zeitschrift für Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte* 96 (1979), 1-26. See also: W. Hartmann, *Die Synoden der Karolingerzeiten im Frankenreich und in Italien* (Paderborn, 1989), pp. 47-63; T. Reuter, "'Kirchenreform" und "Kirchenpolitik" im Zeitalter Karl Martells: Begriffe und Wirklichkeit', in J. Jarnut, U. Nonn & M. Richter (eds.), *Karl Martell in seiner Zeit*, Beihefte der Francia 37 (Sigmaringen, 1994), pp. 35-59.

texts they had read.<sup>102</sup> Books on grammar and metre written by Boniface have survived, as have some poems by both him and Lull, which combine to reveal much about their non-historical literary interests.<sup>103</sup> The sources for the circles of Willibrord and Boniface still hardly provide an exhaustive picture, but they allow the ‘missions’ to be seen from a variety of hagiographical and non-hagiographical perspectives; combined the sources mean that those circles are some of the best documented of the early Middle Ages.

### **The Significance of the Anglo-Saxon ‘Missions’ in Twentieth-Century European Historiography.**

Modern historiography on Willibrord, Boniface and their circles has been a largely negative enterprise for the last fifty years. Before 1945 the Anglo-Saxons’ work was interpreted largely along religious and national lines in German, Dutch and English writings, almost always as the light in a ‘Dark Age’.<sup>104</sup> With the fall of Rome in the fifth century and the *Völkerwanderung* or ‘migration of peoples’ it was thought Europe had taken a step backwards towards less enlightened times. It was only with the establishment of a genuinely universal Church in the West, argued many, that European history was finally set back on its path to the modern era. But almost systematically since 1945 Anglo-Saxon achievements have been discounted: they were not unique in their reverence for Rome, their attachment to the *Regula s. Benedicti* was less than

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<sup>102</sup> R. Meens, ‘Willibrords Boeteboek?’, *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis* 106 (1993), 163-78; R. McKitterick, ‘Anglo-Saxon missionaries in Germany: reflections on the manuscript evidence’, in R. McKitterick (ed.), *Books, Scribes and Learning in the Frankish Kingdoms, 6<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> Centuries* (Aldershot, 1994), IV.

<sup>103</sup> Boniface, *Ars grammatica* and *Ars metrica*, ed. G. J. Gebauer & B. Löfstedt, *CCSL* 133 b (Turnhout, 1980), on which see V. Law, ‘The study of Latin grammar in eighth-century Southumbria’, *ASE* 12 (1983), 43-71; Boniface, *Ænigmata*, ed. E. Dümmeler, *MGH Poetae* 1 (Berlin, 1895), pp. 3-23, on which see A. Orchard, ‘After Aldhelm: The teaching and transmission of Anglo-Latin hexameter’, *Journal of Medieval Latin* 2 (1992), 96-133.

<sup>104</sup> Hauck, *Kirchengeschichte Deutschlands*, esp. pp. 576-8; R. R. Post, *Kerkgeschiedenis van Nederland* 1 (Utrecht, 1957), pp. 14-29; F. Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford, 1943, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn. 1971), pp. 165-76.

complete, and they were rarely genuine missionaries. It is worth surveying how the image of the Anglo-Saxons has changed and what questions remain unanswered.

One of the earliest changes was a move away from seeing the Anglo-Saxons in the context of national histories. In 1933 Erich Caspar had contrasted the Catholic Anglo-Saxons and their ‘undiluted German spirit’ (*unvermischter germanischer Geistigkeit*) with the unorthodox Spaniards and Irish in his history of the papacy.<sup>105</sup> That same year S. J. Crawford extolled the virtues of the Anglo-Saxons for invigorating culture and learning on the continent, neatly ignoring much that was already there.<sup>106</sup> Despite the book’s inaccuracies its general tenor and patriotism found favour with Sir Frank Stenton, who likewise wrote of how the Anglo-Saxons had, without help, saved the souls of the ‘heathen Germans’.<sup>107</sup> But in 1943 Wilhelm Levison’s Ford Lectures, *England and the Continent in the Eighth Century*, changed everything. Levison had been an important figure at the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica* in the early twentieth century but, as a Jew, was forced to flee Bonn in 1939 and take up home in Durham. His dislocation prompted a vision of a more European idea of ‘history’, shorn of division. He wrote *England and the Continent* precisely to illustrate how the Anglo-Saxons had learnt from the Franks and *vice versa*.<sup>108</sup> Levison’s ideals were taken up with enthusiasm by his pupils and especially Theodor Schieffer, who dedicated his 1954 book on Boniface and the foundations of Europe to his (by then deceased) teacher. The conversion to Europeanism was not immediate; Stenton, for example, took

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<sup>105</sup> E. Caspar, *Geschichte des Papsttum von den Anfängen bis zur Höhe der Weltherrschaft 2* (Tübingen, 1933), pp. 674-6 (quotation at p. 676. For Caspar’s assessment of Wilfrid see pp. 677-89, on Willibrord see pp. 690-1, and on Boniface see pp. 695-722.

<sup>106</sup> S. J. Crawford, *Anglo-Saxon Influence on Western Christendom* (Cambridge, 1933).

<sup>107</sup> Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 171.

<sup>108</sup> Levison, *England and the Continent*, pp. v-vii.

little notice of Levison's lectures.<sup>109</sup> The general trend since has been away from presenting the Anglo-Saxons as national German or English heroes, although much parochialism has remained.<sup>110</sup>

For many Catholic historians in the early twentieth century the single most important thing the Anglo-Saxons did was to create a bond between Germany and Rome. Albert Hauck, in his still fundamental *Kirchengeschichte Deutschlands* (1898-1911), wrote of Boniface's importance that:<sup>111</sup>

[He] had filled the German episcopate with the conviction that the German Church could shine only then, when it lived in close community with Rome. In this respect he is, however, one of the men who laid the foundations of the unity of the medieval church and medieval papal authority... Who, from the standpoint of confessional polemic... could accept that without Rome the development of the medieval Church would have had a straighter and healthier direction than it actually did[?]

Willibrord too was afforded such praise, if without the glowing rhetoric.<sup>112</sup> In England, meanwhile, Christopher Dawson wrote in 1932:<sup>113</sup>

St Boniface... had a deeper influence on the history of Europe than any Englishman who had ever lived... To him is due the foundation of the mediaeval German Church... It was through the work of St Boniface that Germany first became a living member of European society... [and] it was the Anglo-Saxon monks and, above all, St Boniface who first realised the union of Teutonic

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<sup>109</sup> J. Campbell, 'Stenton's *Anglo-Saxon England*', in his *The Anglo-Saxon State* (London, 2000), pp. 269-80 at pp. 273-4.

<sup>110</sup> On the problem of parochialism, as opposed to nationalism, see J. L. Nelson, 'Presidential address: England and the continent in the ninth century: I, ends and beginnings', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 6<sup>th</sup> series, 12 (2002), 1-22. It should also be noted that the title of Reuter's *The Greatest Englishman* was forced upon the editor by the publisher.

<sup>111</sup> Hauck, *Kirchengeschichte Deutschlands* 1, p. 577: 'Bonifatius hat den deutschen Episkopat mit der Überzeugung erfüllt, dass die deutsche Kirche nur dann blühen könne, wenn sie in enger Gemeinschaft mit Rom lebe. Insofern ist allerdings einer der Männer, welche den Grund zu der Einheit der mittelalterlichen Kirche und zu der mittelalterlichen Papstmacht gelegt haben... Wer vom Standpunkt der konfessionellen Polemik... kann annehmen, dass ohne Rom die Entwicklung der mittelalterlichen Kirche eine geradere, gesündere Richtung innegehalter hätte, als sie es wirklich hat'.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 422-3 and 431.

<sup>113</sup> C. Dawson, *The Making of Europe: An Introduction to the History of European Unity* (London, 1932), pp. 210-11, 213. See also, surprisingly, H. Mayr-Harting, *The Coming of Christianity to Anglo-Saxon England* (London, 1972, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn. 1991), p. 262.

initiative and Latin order which is the source of the whole mediaeval development of culture.

Revision began in earnest with Theodor Schieffer, who criticised the ‘unfruitful polemic of earlier generations’ on the first page of his 1954 book *Winfriid-Bonifatius*.<sup>114</sup> Turning then to the last page of the book one might be surprised to find strong echoes of Hauck and Dawson in his conclusion:<sup>115</sup>

[Boniface] remains not simply a justifiably venerated figure in all history: he also belongs firmly to our German and European history, we live off his inheritance, because his mediating of the final Romano-German meeting was historically productive in the highest sense; the monk from Wessex, who kept by the missionary authority of the see of St Peter, who worked amongst the Hessians, Thuringians, Bavarians, Frisians, amongst the Austrasian and Neustrian Franks, who renewed the cohesion of the universal church, belongs to the pioneering founders, to the architects of our cultural circles.

Here Schieffer was clearly still interpreting Boniface’s career with a strongly Anglo-German and Catholic-centred perception of what constitutes ‘Europe’ and ‘progress’; it is hard to imagine a Spanish or Danish historian writing a similar epitaph. The similarities between the conclusions of Hauck, Dawson and Schieffer illustrate how constant the over-arching themes could be even when their working details were very different indeed.

The idea that the Anglo-Saxons helped to end some perceived ‘Dark Age’ has also been challenged. One of the most influential works of the old literature was

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<sup>114</sup> Schieffer, *Winfriid-Bonifatius*, p. 1: ‘[die] unfruchtbare Polemik früherer Generationen’.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 286: ‘Er bleibt nicht nur eine über alle Geschichte hinweg verehrungswürdige Erscheinung: er gehört auch unverlierbar zu unserer deutschen und europäischen Geschichte, wir zehren von seinem Erbe, denn die von ihm vermittelte abschließende römisch-germanische Begegnung war geschichtsträchtig im höchsten Sinne; der Mönch aus Wessex, beim Stuhle Petri die Missionsvollmacht einholte, der bei Hessen, Thüringen, Baiern und Freisen, bei austrasischen und neustrischen Franken wirkte, der den universalkirchen Zusammenhalt erneuerte, er gehört zu den bahnbrechenden Initiatoren, zu den Baumeistern unseres Kulturkreises.’

Belgian historian Henri Pirenne's *Mohammed and Charlemagne*.<sup>116</sup> Pirenne characterised Boniface's time with the words: 'the entire people must have been... illiterate... The merchants of the cities were dispersed. The clergy itself had lapsed into a state of barbarism, ignorance and immorality'; it was thanks to Pirenne's heroic Belgian Carolingians, with Willibrord and Boniface's help, that the situation was arrested.<sup>117</sup> Pirenne, Hauck and Stenton also all agreed that had it not been for Charles Martel, a hero for defeating the Arabs in 723 but otherwise a despoiler of the Church, success could have been greater.<sup>118</sup> But over the last fifty years the Merovingian period has been the subject of serious study and can no longer be considered to be so backward.<sup>119</sup> Even Charles Martel's bad reputation was expunged as a fiction of Boniface and, later, Hincmar of Rheims.<sup>120</sup> The whole context within which the Anglo-Saxons were valued now looks entirely different.

A substantial number of works focused upon the role of the aristocracy as political players alongside the king.<sup>121</sup> This increased awareness of the intricacies of late-Merovingian and early-Carolingian politics affected perceptions of the Anglo-Saxons work because the two were inexorably linked; Willibrord, for example, was no longer seen as simply a supporter of Pippin II's subjugation of Frisia but also as a

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<sup>116</sup> H. Pirenne, *Mahomet et Charlemagne* (Brussels, 1937), transl. B. Miall, *Mohammed and Charlemagne* (London, 1939).

<sup>117</sup> Quotation from *ibid.*, p. 243; on Willibrord and Boniface see pp. 203, 206, 221-3.

<sup>118</sup> Hauck, *Kirchengeschichte*, pp. 391-9, esp. p. 397 on the 'Säkularisation' of the Frankish Church; Pirenne, *Mohammed and Charlemagne*, p. 208; Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 169.

<sup>119</sup> Amongst the many textbooks now available on the Merovingian period see for example: Wood, *The Merovingian Kingdoms*; J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *The Frankish Church* (Oxford, 1983), E. Ewig, *Die Merowinger und das Frankenreich* (Stuttgart, 1988, 4<sup>th</sup> edn. 2001).

<sup>120</sup> See the studies in Jarnut, Nonn & Richter, *Karl Martell in seiner Zeit*, especially A. Dierkens, 'Carolus monasteriorum multorum eversor ecclesiasticarum pecuniam in usus proprios communitor?' Notes sur la politique monastique du maire du palais Charles Martel', pp. 277-94; Fouracre, *The Age of Charles Martel*.

<sup>121</sup> See, for example, S. Airlie, 'The aristocracy', in McKitterick, *The New Cambridge Medieval History* 2, pp. 431-50; M. Werner, *Adelsfamilien im Umkreis der frühen Karolinger. Die Verwandtschaft Irminas von Oeren und Adelas von Pfalzel. Personengeschichte Untersuchungen zur frühmittelalterlichen Führungssicht im Maas-Mosel-Gebiet* (Sigmaringen, 1982).

friend of the nobility of Trier, Franconia and Frisia.<sup>122</sup> Charter evidence has, in such studies, played an important role in identifying both the ways in which figures like Willibrord and Boniface were bound to political leaders and factions and how the promotion of saints' cults affected monastic landholdings.<sup>123</sup> New questions had to be asked, in other words, about the role the Anglo-Saxons played as actors within Frankish society as a whole. When studying the *vitae*, moreover, the Anglo-Saxons' aristocratic connections, and consequently the different Frankish audiences for the hagiography, can become central as the case of the Frisian *Liudgeriden*'s veneration for Willibrord and Boniface suggests.

Religious life was revealed to be more vibrant and comprised of different influences than had been thought. Roman practices and a veneration for St Peter were, for example, shown to be strong before the arrival of the Anglo-Saxons.<sup>124</sup> The spread of Columbanian-Benedictine monasticism in the seventh century in particular has been the subject of much study.<sup>125</sup> There was, it seems, a strong semi-Benedictine flavour to continental monasticism before Boniface decreed that it should form the basis of monastic reforms, although it is doubtful this counted as *romanitas*, given that the

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<sup>122</sup> Weiler, *Willibrords Missie*, pp. 112-47; M. Costambeys, 'An aristocratic community on the northern Frankish frontier 690-726', *Early Medieval Europe* 3. 1 (1994), 39-62.

<sup>123</sup> A. Angenendt, 'Willibrord im Dienste der Karolinger', *Annalen des historischen Vereins für den Niederrhein* 175 (1973), 63-113; M. Innes, *State and Society in the Early Middle Ages: The Middle Rhine Valley 400-1000*, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought Fourth Series 47 (Cambridge, 2000).

<sup>124</sup> K. Hallinger, 'Römische Voraussetzungen der bonifatianischen Wirksamkeit im Frankenreich' in *Sankt Bonifatius*, pp. 320-61; E. Ewig, 'Der Petrus- und Apostelkult im spätrömischen und fränkischen Gallien', *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 71 (1960), 215-51.

<sup>125</sup> The fundamental study of Merovingian monasticism is F. Prinz, *Frühes Mönchtum im Frankenreich. Kultur und Gesellschaft in Gallien, den Rheinlanden und Bayern am Beispiel der monastischen Entwicklung, 4. bis 8. Jahrhundert* (2<sup>nd</sup> edn., Munich, 1972). See also now in the context of the broader survey of M. Dunn, *The Emergence of Monasticism: From the Desert Fathers to the Early Middle Ages* (Oxford, 2000). On Columbanus and Columbanian monasticism see the essays in H. B. Clarke & M. Brennan, *Columbanus and Merovingian Monasticism*, BAR International Series 113 (Oxford, 1981) and M. Lapidge (ed.), *Columbanus: Studies on the Latin Writings*, Studies in Celtic History 17 (Woodbridge, 1997).

*regula* was little known in Rome.<sup>126</sup> Boniface's own vision of monasticism has been shown – albeit on the basis of later hagiographical evidence – to be a *regula mixta* that blended Benedictine ideals with some insular and individual practices rather than the pure Benedictinism often supposed.<sup>127</sup> Similarly Willibrord's idea of monasticism whilst on the continent owed less to Benedictinism than had been thought;<sup>128</sup> however it is too far to follow Augustine van Berkum's suggestion that Willibrord followed a kind of Columbanian ('Iers-Columbaanse') monasticism on the available evidence.<sup>129</sup> The detailed analysis of more monastic foundations also led to new emphasis on certain characters. The case of Pirmin (d. 753), a monk of possibly Spanish origin and a contemporary of the Anglo-Saxons, is instructive as modern historians discussed him alongside Willibrord and Boniface.<sup>130</sup> Pirmin founded monasteries such as Reichenau, Hornbach and Murbach with Pippin III's support, just like Boniface worked with Carlomann's assistance; the ninth-century *Vita Pirmini* even claims Pirmin and Boniface met briefly in the 750s.<sup>131</sup> While it became clear that the Anglo-Saxons had not been alone in their work in the eighth century, archaeological evidence emerged that revealed many 'new' Anglo-Saxon continental churches and monasteries, such as

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<sup>126</sup> G. Ferrari, *Early Roman Monasteries: Notes for the history of monasteries and convents at Rome from the V through to the X century*, Studi di Antichità Cristiana 23 (Rome, 1957).

<sup>127</sup> See in particular C. Holdsworth, 'St Boniface the monk', in Reuter, *The Greatest Englishman*, pp. 47-61, and J. Semmler, 'Instituta sancti Bonifatii. Fulda im Wiederstreit der Observanzen', in G. Schrimpf (ed.), *Kloster Fulda in der Welt der Karolinger und Ottonen*, Fuldaer Studien 7 (Frankfurt, 1996), pp. 79-104.

<sup>128</sup> A. Angenendt, 'Willibrord im Dienste der Karolinger', *Annalen des historischen Vereins für den Niederrhein* 175 (1973), 63-113 at 85-94. On Willibrord's Irish background see further below, pp. 34-5.

<sup>129</sup> A. van Berkum, 'Willibrord en Wilfried. Een onderzoek naar hun wederzijdse betrekkingen', *Sacris erudiri* 23 (1978/9), 347-415.

<sup>130</sup> T. Mayer, 'Bonifatius und Pirmin', in *Sankt Bonifatius*, pp. 450-64; A. Angenendt, *Monachi Peregrini. Studien zu Pirmin und den monastischen Vorstellungen des frühen Mittelalters*, Münstersche Mittelalter-Schriften 6 (Munich, 1972); *idem*, 'Pirmin und Bonifatius. Ihr Verhältnis zu Mönchtum, Bischofsamt und Adel', in A. Borst (ed.), *Mönchtum, Episkopat und Adel zur Gründungszeit des Klosters Reichenau* (Sigmaringen, 1974), pp. 251-304; H. Löwe, 'Pirmin, Willibrord und Bonifatius. Ihre Bedeutung für die Missionsgeschichte ihrer Zeit', *La conversione al cristianesimo dell'alto medioevo*, Settimane di studio del centro Italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo 14 (Spoleto, 1967), 217-61, reprinted in K. Schäferdiek (ed.), *Die Kirche des früheren Mittelalters* 1, Kirchengeschichte als Missionsgeschichte 2: 1 (Munich, 1978), pp. 192-226.

<sup>131</sup> *Vita Pirmini* c. 10, ed. O. Holder-Egger, *MGH SS* 15 i (Hanover, 1887), pp. 20-31 at p. 30. Angenendt, 'Pirmin und Bonifatius'.

Büraburg and Eichstätt, had actually been re-founded using Frankish or Irish structures.<sup>132</sup> Franz Staab has even argued that Boniface's episcopal foundations were simply an extension of Merovingian episcopal organisation.<sup>133</sup> It seems that the Anglo-Saxons were not quite the 'pioneering founders' Dawson or Schieffer supposed, but rather people who developed ideals and organisations already present in Frisia and Germania.

A seminal moment in the interpretation of the Anglo-Saxons' continental work came with Wolfgang Fritze's 1969 thesis 'Universalis gentium confessio'.<sup>134</sup> Fritze shattered any lingering perceptions of early medieval mission as a series of national 'enterprises' by postulating a common motivation for apparently disparate missionaries like the Irishman Columbanus (d. 615), Amandus from Lower Poitou (d. ca 675) and Willibrord: 'universal mission', or mission to all peoples. Many of Fritze's working details, such as giving the papacy a central role, came under fire but the overall argument was widely accepted.<sup>135</sup> Because Fritze started with the example of Willibrord, the missionary imperative of the Anglo-Saxons came to be seen as having continuity with the Merovingian and Irish missions in seventh-century Belgium.<sup>136</sup> At the same time Fritze's other writings, alongside those of Heinz Löwe, developed the image of the Anglo-Saxons as frustrated missionaries who were unable to work for

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<sup>132</sup> D. Parsons, 'Sites and monuments of the Anglo-Saxon mission in Central Germany', *Archaeological Journal* 140 (1983), 280-321; *idem.*, 'Some churches of the Anglo-Saxon missionaries in Southern Germany: a review of the evidence', *Early Medieval Europe* 8. 1 (1999), 31-67; M. Werner, 'Iren und Angelsachsen in Mitteldeutschland. Zur vorbonifatianischen Mission in Hessen und Thüringen', in H. Löwe (ed.), *Die Iren und Europa im frühen Mittelalter* 1 (Stuttgart, 1982), pp. 231-318.

<sup>133</sup> F. Staab, 'Die Gründung der Bistümer Erfurt, Büraburg und Würzburg durch Bonifatius im Rahmen der fränkischen und päpstlichen Politik', *Archiv für mittelrheinische Kirchengeschichte* 40 (1988), 13-41.

<sup>134</sup> W. H. Fritze, 'Universalis gentium confessio. Formeln, Träger und Wege universalmissionarischen Denkens im 7. Jahrhundert', *Frümittelalterliche Studien* 3 (1969), 78-130.

<sup>135</sup> See for example Angenendt, 'Willibrord im Dienste der Karolinger', 104-7; Markus, 'From Caesarius to Boniface', pp. 162-3; von Padberg, *Mission und Christianisierung*, p. 16.

<sup>136</sup> Fritze, 'Universalis gentium confessio', pp. 81-106.

prolonged periods in any missionfield because it was too dangerous.<sup>137</sup> In recent accounts of the conversion of Europe, such as Richard Fletcher's, Willibrord and Boniface have come to be portrayed as figures who provided the organisation and inspiration for subsequent missions under a 'universal church', most notably with Charlemagne's campaigns against the Saxons and Slavs.<sup>138</sup> Robert Markus and Peter Brown, meanwhile, have suggested that the Anglo-Saxons' role in the long-term rise of Christianity came in the development of a strong stance against heresy; on this interpretation Willibrord and Boniface were more important for attacking residual pagan practice and folk superstitions than pagan religions themselves.<sup>139</sup>

The distinction between 'mission' and 'Christianisation' has become increasingly blurred with the application of anthropological models of conversion. Prominent amongst these has been the theory of 'enculturation' (popularly expounded by the anthropologist Clifford Geertz) whereby the process of conversion is seen as a drawn-out dialectical encounter between Christianity and paganism rather than as the simple supplanting of one with the other.<sup>140</sup> In studies of the Anglo-Saxon missions 'enculturation' has most explicitly been cited by Anton Weiler in his 1989 biography of

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<sup>137</sup> W. H. Fritze, 'Zur Entstehungsgeschichte des Bistums Utrecht. Franken und Freisen 690-734', *Rheinische Vierteljahrsblätter* 35 (1971), 107-51; Löwe, 'Pirmin, Willibrord und Bonifatius', pp. 208-24.

<sup>138</sup> Fletcher, *The Conversion of Europe*, pp. 199-213. On the necessity for strong military or political backing in successful missions see: A. Angenendt, *Kaiserherrschaft und Königstaufe. Kaiser, Könige und Papste als geistliche Patrone in der abendländischen Missionsgeschichte*, *Arbeiten zur Frühmittelalterforschung* 15 (Berlin & New York, 1984); *idem*, 'The conversion of the Anglo-Saxons considered against the background of the early medieval mission, in *Angli e sassoni al di qua e al di là del mare*, *Settimane di studio del centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo* 32 (Spoleto, 1986), pp. 747-81; M. Richter, 'Practical aspects of the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons', in P. Ní Chatháin & M. Richter (eds.), *Irland und die Christenheit* (Stuttgart, 1987), pp. 362-76.

<sup>139</sup> Markus, *The End of Ancient Christianity*, pp. 208-11; Markus, 'From Caesarius to Boniface', pp. 163-8; Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom*, pp. 416-28.

<sup>140</sup> See, for example, M. Richter, 'Models of conversion in the early Middle Ages', in D. Edel (ed.), *Cultural Identity and Cultural Integration: Ireland and England in the Early Middle Ages* (Dublin, 1995), pp. 116-28. The concept of 'enculturation' owes much to the theories of Clifford Geertz and essays such as 'Religion as a cultural system', in C. Geertz (ed.), *The Interpretation of Cultures* (London, 1973), pp. 87-125. Geertz's theories have been given undue attention by historians at the expense of other anthropological theorists: see J. Goodman, 'History and anthropology', in M. Bentley (ed.), *Companion to Historiography* (London, 2002), pp. 783-804 at pp. 788-9.

Willibrord, in which the Anglo-Saxon's Frisian career was presented as the product of interactions between a variety of Christian and non-Christian cultures.<sup>141</sup> Lutz von Padberg employed a similar gradualist model of conversion in his 1995 *Mission und Christianisierung*, although he did not cite Geertz as an influence.<sup>142</sup> The arguments of Weiler and von Padberg have contributed significantly to understanding the social influence of the Anglo-Saxons in Frisia and Germania alongside their effect upon matters of high politics and abstract religious matters. Whether the sources actually allow inferences to a social reality is doubtful. Von Padberg, following Otto Gerhard Oexle, does recognise the problem, but a sharper distinction is perhaps still needed between images of society and the societies authors actually inhabited.<sup>143</sup>

Studies of the early medieval world from many different perspectives have also shed new light on the insular background to the Anglo-Saxon 'missions'. Michael Richter and Augustine van Berkum, for example, argued that Willibrord was more likely to have been influenced by Irish monasticism than by Wilfrid of York, the arch-hero of Roman ideals in Anglo-Saxon England.<sup>144</sup> Consequently new emphasis came to be placed on the role of Ecgberht, an Anglo-Saxon monk who lived in Ireland and who sent Willibrord to Frisia.<sup>145</sup> Boniface and his circle, meanwhile, have recently begun to be understood better in relation to their Southumbrian background and in particular

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<sup>141</sup> Weiler, *Willibrords Missie*, pp. 16-18.

<sup>142</sup> Von Padberg, *Mission und Christianisierung*, p. 20.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19; Oexle, 'Deutungsschemata der sozialen Wirklichkeit', pp. 69-71.

<sup>144</sup> The important studies are: M. Richter, 'Der irische Hintergrund der angelsächsischen Mission', in H. Löwe (ed.), *Die Iren und Europa im früheren Mittelalter* (Stuttgart, 1982), pp. 120-37; *idem*, 'The young Willibrord', in Kiesel & Schroeder, *Willibrord*, pp. 25-30; *idem*, 'England and Ireland in the time of Willibrord' in Bange & Weiler, *Willibrord, zijn wereld en zijn werk*, pp. 35-50; van Berkum, 'Willibrord en Wilfried', 347-415. See also D. Ó Cróinín, 'Rath Melsigi, Willibrord and the earliest Echternach manuscripts', *Peritia* 3 (1984), 17-49; E. Honée, 'St Willibrord in recent historiography', in P. N. Holtrop & H. McLeod (eds.), *Missions and Missionaries*, Studies in Church History Subsidia 13 (Woodbridge, 2000), pp. 16-31.

<sup>145</sup> K. Schäferdiek, 'Fragen der frühen angelsächsischen Festlandmission', *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 28 (1994), 172-95.

their reverence for the work of Aldhelm of Malmesbury.<sup>146</sup> It is now possible (although not yet fully realised) to understand the Anglo-Saxons better through the intellectual and social circles from which they came, rather than just in terms of their continental activities. Not, however, that the Anglo-Saxon background was itself sealed from continental influences.<sup>147</sup> The conversion of the Anglo-Saxons to Christianity was itself instigated by Pope Gregory the Great in Rome in the late-sixth century, opening Anglo-Saxon society to Roman and Greek influences in the following centuries.<sup>148</sup> At the same time it is now possible to detect some Frankish political influences in the seventh century.<sup>149</sup> Economically, too, it is evident that North Sea trade – particularly with Frisia – meant that the kingdoms of Anglo-Saxon England were an integral part of an interconnected Northern European world, rather than isolated or peripheral units.<sup>150</sup> From such perspectives the subsequent involvement of Anglo-Saxons in Frankish, Frisian, German and Italian affairs can be seen as part of a broader world of cross-Channel relations.

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<sup>146</sup> P. Sims-Williams, *Religion and Literature in Western England 600-800*, Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England 3 (Cambridge, 1990); Orchard, *The Poetic Art of Aldhelm*, esp. pp. 60-7; P. P. Ó'Neill, 'Bonifaz und Virgil: Konflikt zweier Kulturen', in H. Dopsch & R. Juffinger (eds.), *Virgil von Salzburg, Missionar und Gelehrter* (Salzburg, 1985), pp. 76-83; B. Yorke, 'The Bonifatian mission and female religious in Wessex', *Early Medieval Europe* 7. 2 (1998), 145-72.

<sup>147</sup> On the relationship between Anglo-Saxon England and the continent, see Levison, *England and the Continent*, and now J. Story, *Carolingian Connections: Anglo-Saxon England and Carolingian Francia, c. 750-870* (Aldershot, 2003).

<sup>148</sup> Mayr-Harting, *The Coming of Christianity*, pp. 51-77; R. A. Markus, *Gregory the Great and his World* (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 177-87. On some of the later influences coming into England from Italy and Greece see M. Lapidge, 'The career of Archbishop Theodore', in M. Lapidge (ed.), *Archbishop Theodore*, Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England 11 (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 1-29; *idem*, 'Byzantium, Rome and England in the early Middle Ages', in *Roma fra oriente e occidente*, Settimane di studio del centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo 49. 1 (Spoleto, 2002), pp. 363-400.

<sup>149</sup> I. N. Wood, 'Frankish hegemony in England', in M. Carver (ed.), *The Age of Sutton Hoo: The Seventh Century in North-Western Europe* (Woodbridge, 1992), pp. 235-242.

<sup>150</sup> See, for example, the summaries in D. M. Wilson, 'England and the Continent in the eighth century: an archaeological viewpoint', in *Angli e sassoni*, pp. 219-44, and S. Lebecq, 'Routes of change: production and distribution in the West (5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> century)', in L. Webster & M. Brown (eds.), *The Transformation of the Roman World AD 400-900* (London, 1997), pp. 67-78.

An important if so far small literature has developed which has sought to understand the cults that arose from the Anglo-Saxon missions. Such studies may yet grow in importance as focus shifts from the saints themselves to the societies that venerated them. So far Boniface has again received more attention than anyone else with large-scale studies by Petra Kehl and Lutz von Padberg.<sup>151</sup> Smaller studies have also sought to explain why in later centuries Willibrord was presented as Frisian and Willibald as a relative of the Ottonians.<sup>152</sup> Liudger's cult, meanwhile, was discussed by Karl Hauck in reference to the physical environment of the church at Werden.<sup>153</sup> A telling article on the cult of Leoba, again by Kehl, illustrated that it took centuries for the Anglo-Saxon to be venerated as a saint without reference to Boniface.<sup>154</sup> The power of a martyr's cult lived long in the popular imagination and many of the 'missionary saints' were venerated because of their association with Boniface. It is imperative for understanding of the Anglo-Saxon missions to understand the *vitae* and changing hagiographical traditions in relation to developments in the cult of saints in the eighth and ninth centuries.

One area that has received uneven attention is the activities of and sources for the members of the *Willibrordkreise* and *Bonifatiuskreise* other than Willibrord or Boniface. The most extensive treatment has been given to the family ties of Liudger in

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<sup>151</sup> P. Kehl, *Kult und Nachleben des heiligen Bonifatius im Mittelalter (754-1200)*, Quellen und Abhandlungen zur Geschichte der Abtei und Diözese Fulda 26 (Fulda, 1993); L. E. von Padberg, *Studien zur Bonifatiusverehrung: Zur Geschichte des Codex Ragyndrudis und der Fuldaer Reliquien des Bonifatius*, Fuldaer Hochschulschriften 25 (Frankfurt, 1996). See also: Mostert, 754, pp. 68-83; Palmer, 'The Frankish cult of martyrs'.

<sup>152</sup> R. H. Bremmer, 'Willibrord through Anglo-Saxon and Frisian eyes: from history to myth', *Freisische Studien* 1 (1992), 1-28; S. Weinfurter, 'Das Bistum Willibalds im Dienste des Königs: Eichstätt im frühen Mittelalter', *Zeitschrift für Bayerische Landesgeschichte* 50:1-3 (1987), 3-40.

<sup>153</sup> K. Hauck, 'Apostolischer Geist im genus sacerdotale der Liudgeriden. Die "Kanonisation" Liudgers und Alfrids Bischofsgrablege in Essen-Werden (Beiträge und Miscellen)' in K. Hauck, K. Kroeschell, S. Sonderegger, D. Hüpper & G. von Oldberg (eds.), *Sprache und Recht. Beiträge zur Kulturgeschichte des Mittelalters. Festschrift für Ruth Schmidt-Wiegand zum 60. Geburtstag* 2 (Berlin & New York, 1986), pp. 191-219.

<sup>154</sup> P. Kehl, 'Die Verehrung der hl. Lioba', *Fuldaer Geschichtsblätter* 67 (1991), 141-50.

Frisia, and Willibald and his brother Wynnebald in Bavaria.<sup>155</sup> The ways in which the family ties of both groups were shaped by theological recasting of the natural family within the spiritual family have been profitably studied by Lutz von Padberg.<sup>156</sup> Meanwhile, the question of whether Willibald was bishop of Erfurt or bishop of Eichstätt has been the subject of much (inconclusive) debate.<sup>157</sup> Many of the other saints and their *vitae*, however, have received precious little attention because of 'historical inaccuracies' in the source material or the comparative perceived importance of Willibrord, Boniface, Liudger and Willibald over their contemporaries and friends. Lull, a Mercian and Boniface's assistant and successor at Mainz, has only been studied in any detail on three occasions, all before 1951.<sup>158</sup> Notable scholarly works on the *Vita Willehadi*, *Sermo Sualonis*, *Vita Gregorii*, and *Vita altera Bonifatii* are few and far between.<sup>159</sup> The *vitae* about Wynnebald, Wigbert and Burchard have barely attracted any attention at all. Hagiographical traditions from Fulda have received more attention with some good articles on the spiritual imagery and politics in the *Vita Sturmii* and the

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<sup>155</sup> On Liudger and his family see K. Schmid, 'Die "Liudgeriden". Erscheinung und Problematik einer Adelsfamilie', in K. Hauck & H. Mordek (eds.), *Geschichtsschreibung und geistiges Leben im Mittelalter. Festschrift Heinz Löwe* (Cologne & Vienna, 1978), pp. 71-101; Hauck, 'Apostolischer Geist'; S. Lebecq, 'La famille et les apprentissages de Liudger, d'après les premiers chapitres de la *Vita Liudgeri d'Altfred*', in M. Sot (ed.), *Haut Moyen-Age, culture éducation et société. Etudes offertes à Pierre Riché* (Paris, 1990), pp. 283-99. On Willibald see von Padberg, *Heilige und Familie*, *passim*; *idem*, *Mission und Christianisierung*, pp. 89-90.

<sup>156</sup> Von Padberg, *Heilige und Familie*.

<sup>157</sup> Schieffer, 'Angelsachsen und Franken', 1465; A. Bigelmair, 'Die Gründung des mitteleutschen Bistümer', in *Sankt Bonifatius*, pp. 247-87 at pp. 280-86; K.-U. Jäschke, 'Die Gründungszeit der mitteleutschen Bistümer und das Jahr des Concilium Germanicum', in H. Beumann (ed.), *Festschrift für Walter Schlesinger 2*, *Mitteldeutsche Forschungen 74/2* (Cologne, 1974), pp. 71-136; G. Pfeiffer, 'Erfurt oder Eichstätt? Zur Biographie des Bischofs Willibald', in Beumann, *Festschrift Walter Schlesinger 2*, pp. 137-61.

<sup>158</sup> Tangl, 'Studien... 2', pp. 178-95; Levison, *England and the Continent*, pp. 290-5; Schieffer, 'Angelsachsen und Franken', 1470-1529.

<sup>159</sup> On the *VWhad*, see Niemeyer, 'Der Herkunft' and J. Ehlers, 'Die Sachsenmission als heiligengeschichtliches Ereignis', in F. J. Felten & N. Jaspert (eds.), *Vita Religiosa im Mittelalter. Festschrift für Kaspar Elm zum 70. Geburtstag*, *Berliner historische Studien 31*, *Ordenstudien 13* (Berlin, 1999), pp. 37-53; on Liudger, *VG*, see Löwe, 'Liudger als Zeitkritiker'; on Ermenrich, *SS*, see Löwe, 'Ermenrich von Passau'; on the *VaB* see Romein, 'Wie is de "Presbyter Ultrajectensis"?'.

*Vita Aegil.*<sup>160</sup> Rudolf's *Vita Leobae* has also received much attention, although there has been a tendency to see the work out of its ninth-century context and instead as part of an abstract history of women in the early Middle Ages, devoid of much relevance to Fulda or Rudolf.<sup>161</sup> Recent books by Ian Wood, Lutz von Padberg and Richard Fletcher have attempted to provide a balanced picture of the personnel involved in the Anglo-Saxon missions.<sup>162</sup> There remain, however, figures and texts that are fundamentally misunderstood through a paucity of careful and in-depth studies on them.

Modern perceptions of the *Willibrordkreise* and *Bonifatiuskreise* have, overall, shifted towards a more nuanced appreciation of their part in a highly complex and changing world and away from the idea that the would-be missionaries alone brought light to some imagined 'Dark Age'. Recent studies have attempted to understand the different intellectual, political and social contexts in both Britain and on the continent that came into play to shape the work of the Anglo-Saxons, their circles, their rivals and the sources they produced. There has also been a move towards seeing the sources as literary arguments, although the full potential of this approach has only slowly been realised. It has, in some respects, taken the greater volume of research on the period to appreciate influences and motives that may have been obscured to earlier historians.

The methodology of such an approach has also needed development and refinement

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<sup>160</sup> Becht-Jördens, 'Die *Vita Aegil* des Brun Candidus'; Kehl, 'Die Entstehungszeit', M.-E. Brunert, 'Fulda als Kloster *in eremo*. Zentrale Quellen über die Gründung im Spiegel der hagiographischen Tradition', in G. Schrimpf (ed.), *Kloster Fulda in der Welt der Karolinger und Ottonen*, Fuldaer Studien 7 (Frankfurt, 1996), pp. 59-78.

<sup>161</sup> Amongst the better analyses of Rudolf's *VL* are: Schneider, 'Anglo-Saxon women', pp. 42 n. 38, 67-8 and 224-42; Smith, 'The problem of female sanctity'; J. L. Nelson, 'Women and the word in the earlier Middle Ages', in W. J. Shiels & D. Wood (eds.), *Women in the Church*, Studies in Church History 27 (1990), pp. 53-78, reprinted in her *The Frankish World 750-900* (London, 1996), pp. 199-221; Y. Hen, 'Milites Christi utriusque sexus: gender and the politics of conversion in the circle of Boniface', *Revue bénédictine* 109 (1999), 17-31. Great caution should be taken over the treatment of the *VL* in: S. Hollis, *Anglo-Saxon Women and the Church: Sharing a Common Fate* (Woodbridge, 1992), pp. 271-82; P. Head, 'Integritas in Rudolph of Fulda's *Vita Leobae abbatissiae*', *Parergon* 13. 1 (1995), 33-51; L. M. Bitel, *Women in Early Medieval Europe 400-1100* (Cambridge, 2002), pp. 141-4.

<sup>162</sup> Von Padberg, *Mission und Christianisierung*; Fletcher, *The Conversion of Europe*, pp. 197-222; Wood, *The Missionary Life*, pp. 57-141.

and will continue to do so. While the literary approach has only been imperfectly realised, the emphasis on particular saints and sources has also failed to do justice to the full range and breadth of the Anglo-Saxons' activities. In order for study of England and the continent in the early Middle Ages to progress, the emphases need to change and many long-standing assumptions about the sources need to be relinquished.

### **Creating Saints and Defining Places.**

This thesis explores the different strategies used in the eighth and ninth century to establish figures from the Anglo-Saxon missions as useful and meaningful parts of the recent past. More specifically, it examines the ways in which hagiographers developed or invented associations between saints and particular places in order to illustrate the sanctity of various individuals. Throughout I will study how the definitions of sanctity were affected by the intersections of politics, culture, and notions of sacred spaces and time. Fundamental questions will also be asked about what a saint *was*, and why in particular the Anglo-Saxon missions provided so many examples later communities wanted to commemorate through the imaginative stories of medieval hagiography.

The first chapter studies the justifications in the *vitae* which explain why pious Anglo-Saxons left their homelands. Modern historians have often discussed two rationales behind the missions: firstly, that the Anglo-Saxon wished to convert continental Germanic peoples with whom they perceived some kind of kinship; and secondly, that many Anglo-Saxons were inspired by *peregrinatio* (a voluntary ascetic exile from family and kin, often practised by the Irish). I will re-examine these views, and ask to what extent they are reflected in the hagiographical accounts of the missions.

Were the *vitae* indicative of genuine Anglo-Saxon attitudes to mission, or do they reflect different kinds of traditions?

*Peregrinatio* caused tensions with the desire to live a more stable monastic life, particularly exemplified by the *Regula s. Benedicti*. In chapter two we turn to the role of monastic *regulae* – especially as institutionalised within monasteries – in defining sanctity. To what extent did later attitudes to monasticism shape the image of new saints? In what ways were founding monasteries and establishing monastic observances part of perceptions of the Anglo-Saxon missions? Particular focus here will lie on the example of Leoba at Wimborne and Tauberbischofsheim, and Boniface and Sturm at Fulda.

The third chapter continues to develop ideas about how the relationship between saints and places established kinds of authority, this time concentrating upon images of Rome in the *vitae*. Because much has been made of the continuity and changes in Frankish attitudes to the papacy before and after Boniface, this chapter will examine Rome in Merovingian *vitae*, Bonifatian hagiography, Carolingian propaganda, and finally *vitae* from Frisia, Bavaria and central Germany in the ninth century to see if there are tangible changes. What role, if any, did papal authority play in the *vitae* to support later claims that individuals were saints? Are hagiographical stories about saints obtaining papal backing simple reflections of past realities, or do they reflect something deeper about the perceived nature of sanctity in the wake of the cult of Boniface?

The ways in which distant or unknown lands can be made intelligible or useful to small, localised communities will come to the fore in chapter four. Hygeburg's *Vita Willibaldi et Wynnebaldi* tells a story following Willibald from Wessex to Italy, then on to Jerusalem and the Holy Land on pilgrimage, before proceeding to Bavaria after further years spent in Greece and Italy again. What function might such a story have performed for its audience in Eichstätt if *historia* rarely preserved the past for posterity? Why, in particular, was so much care taken to describe the locations of the holy places? Comparison here will be made with near-contemporary works which discuss pilgrimage to the Holy Land, such as Adamnán of Iona's late-seventh-century *De locis sanctis*.

Finally the saints had a relationship with the Germanic lands in which they worked. They worked, according to the *vitae*, as missionaries, as founders of monasteries, and as builders of churches; saints shaped, in other words, the physical and cultural topography of the worlds they encountered. The role accounts of these activities played in constructions of sanctity, and consequently what the saints *meant* to their communities, will be the subject of the fifth and sixth chapters. Chapter five will focus upon the activities of the *Bonifatiuskreise* in central and southern Germany. There are a variety of long-standing questions here, including why it was that the *vitae* present Boniface as challenging Roman rather than genuinely Germanic paganisms. Questions about why the Mainz *Vita Bonifatii* puts emphasis on the authority of Würzburg also need to be addressed. The sixth chapter will follow many of the same themes for the hagiographical schools established in Frisia and Saxony in the ninth century. These offer an important contrast with the *Bonifatiuskreise* because they interwove native characteristics and ideals into their narratives which create culturally distinctive

definitions of sanctity. In particular questions will be asked about how the territorial and political upheavals of the mid-ninth century affected perceptions of saints if, as often seems the case, there were close ties between saints, defined territories and political structures.

## Chapter 1: Anglo-Saxon Homelands in Constructions of Sanctity.

The importance of the so-called Anglo-Saxon ‘missionaries’ to communities on the continent required rationalisation as time progressed and ideals of the religious life changed. Willibrord, Boniface and their followers travelled to Germany and Frisia against precepts set down in monastic *regulae* and established themselves within Germanic communities despite being outsiders both in terms of their origins and legal status. Consequently the Anglo-Saxons themselves needed to be able to justify why they had left Britain, and later generations of hagiographers had to gloss the careers of the saints to similar effect. This chapter will explore whether the two groups of justifications were similar or not and what this reveals about attempts to establish Anglo-Saxons as new continental saints. Focus will rest in particular upon the representations of the Anglo-Saxons’ relationships with their homelands because it was through such associations that an individual’s journey or status as an outsider was defined. How important, for example, was maintaining separation from the homeland either for the Anglo-Saxons or those who wrote about them? In what sense was it considered legitimate for an individual to stay in a particular foreign region? For what reasons, if any, were missionaries later ascribed with different motivations for leaving their homelands than reasons they themselves had given?

In modern historiography it is often said that the Anglo-Saxons either travelled as *peregrini pro Christi* (‘exiles for the love of Christ’), electing to live an ascetic life away from their *patria* in the model of Irish monks, or that they went with the intention of converting pagan peoples such as the Frisians and Saxons with whom they felt they

had ancestral ties.<sup>1</sup> For many missionaries the two motivations complemented each other because their *peregrinatio* took them into the missionfield; Richard Fletcher, for example, has recently commented that ‘the idea of pilgrimage was absolutely central to the missionary impulse of the early medieval period’.<sup>2</sup> In the last fifty years the importance of the ancestral ties between the Anglo-Saxons and continental Germanic peoples has been downplayed in favour of portraying early medieval mission as something for all peoples regardless of race; consequently the supposed singular importance of *peregrinatio* now dominates explanations of the eighth-century missions.<sup>3</sup> Often the evidence of saints’ Lives is taken to be equally representative of the Anglo-Saxons’ motivations as sources like the Bonifatian letter collections. Given the modern understanding of how those sources worked, however, this seems to be an untenable approach. The extent to which either *peregrinatio* or racial kinship is prominent in the *vitae*, and whether the image is strictly accurate, is important because this will help outline some of the ways an individual’s relationship with particular places helped to define their sanctity.

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<sup>1</sup> This two-fold explanation has frequently been cited in literature that covers the Anglo-Saxon missions. Some prominent examples include S. J. Crawford’s *Anglo-Saxon Influence on Western Christendom* (Cambridge, 1933), pp. 35-6, E. Caspar’s *Geschichte des Papsttums von den Anfängen bis zur Höhe der Weltherrschaft* 2 (Tübingen, 1933), p. 690; J. M. Wallace-Hadrill’s *The Frankish Church* (Oxford, 1983), p. 144; L. E. von Padberg, *Mission und Christianisierung. Formen und Folgen bei Angelsachsen und Franken in 7. und 8. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart, 1995), pp. 61-8. The classic studies of the early medieval phenomenon of *peregrinatio* are: K. Hughes, ‘The changing theory and practice of Irish pilgrimage’, *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 11 (1960), 143-51; A. Angenendt, *Monachi Peregrini. Studien zu Pirmin und den monastischen Vorstellungen des frühen Mittelalters*, Münstersche Mittelalter-Schriften 6 (Munich, 1972); F. Prinz, ‘Peregrinatio, Mönchtum und Mission’, in K. Schäferdiek (ed.), *Die Kirche des frühen Mittelalters* 1, Kirchengeschichte als Missionsgeschichte 2: 1 (Munich, 1978), pp. 445-65.

<sup>2</sup> R. Fletcher, *The Conversion of Europe: From Paganism to Christianity 371-1386 AD* (London, 1997), p. 232.

<sup>3</sup> The idea of universal mission was first promoted by Pope Gregory the Great: see R. A. Markus, *Gregory the Great and his World* (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 80-2. The seminal article on universal mission is W. Fritze’s ‘Universalis gentium confessio. Formeln, Träger und Wege universalmissionarischen Denkens im 7. Jahrhundert’, *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 3 (1969), 78-130. Fritze’s work has influenced much of Angenendt’s work, including *Monachi peregrini*, and was developed by Prinz in ‘Peregrinatio, Mönchtum und Mission’. The idea that the Anglo-Saxons were inspired by ‘universal mission’ bound with *peregrinatio* has had less influence on the English historiography, which still emphasises the importance of Germanic kinship: see for example F. Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, *The Oxford History of England* 2 (Oxford, 1943, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn. 1971), p. 165; J. Campbell, E. John and P. Wormald’s *The Anglo-Saxons* (London, 1982), p. 82.

The monastic background of the Anglo-Saxons will be an important consideration. Many monastic rules across Europe had been influenced by the *Regula s. Benedicti*, which condemned wandering monks (*gyrovagi*) travelling from place to place with little purpose.<sup>4</sup> Conrad Leyser has suggested that St Benedict created the idea of the *gyrovagi* specifically as a literary device to emphasise the virtues of monks who remain in the monastery (the *coenobi*).<sup>5</sup> Monks who followed the *Regula s. Benedicti* – at least in part, since it was often adapted to suit individual needs from place to place – were thus encouraged to take a vow of *stabilitas* and maintain a constant place of living. Neither the idea of *peregrinatio* nor the idea of monks working in the missionfield sat comfortably with such vows and so *peregrini* and would-be missionaries had to make it clear that they not *gyrovagi*.<sup>6</sup> The Carolingian monastic reforms of the eighth and ninth centuries, starting with the work of Boniface himself, promoted an increasingly strong adherence to the *Regula s. Benedicti*; it is therefore important to consider medieval discussions of Anglo-Saxon *peregrinatio* in relation to these developments.<sup>7</sup>

### **The Anglo-Saxons as *peregrini pro Christi* in the Irish Model**

*Irish 'peregrinatio' and Leaving the 'patria'.*

*Peregrinatio* – the act of wandering the Earth as a *peregrinus pro Christi* – has a long history as a way of life in the Christian Church. The word *peregrinus* was originally a

<sup>4</sup> *Regula s. Benedicti* c. 1, ed. A. de Vogüé & J. Neufville, *La Règle de Saint Benoît*, Sources Chrétiennes 281-5 (5 vols., Paris, 1972), pp. 438-40.

<sup>5</sup> C. Leyser, *Authority and Asceticism from Augustine to Gregory the Great* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 119-20.

<sup>6</sup> See for example the case of Rimbert, *VA*, discussed in J. T. Palmer, 'Rimbert's *Vita Anskarii* and Scandinavian mission in the ninth century', *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* (forthcoming).

<sup>7</sup> On the reform of the Frankish Church see: R. McKitterick, *The Frankish Church and the Carolingian Reforms 789-895*, Royal Historical Society Studies in History 2 (London, 1977), pp. 1-44 esp. pp. 13-14; W. Hartmann, *Die Synoden der Karolingerzeiten im Frankenreich und in Italien* (Paderborn, 1989); E. Ewig, 'Saint Chrodegang et la réforme de l'église franque', in *Saint Chrodegang* (Metz, 1967), pp. 25-53 (reprinted in H. Atsma [ed.], *Spätantikes und fränkisches Gallien. Gesammelte Schriften (1952-73)*, Beihefte der Francia 3/2 [Sigmaringen, 1979], pp. 232-59); J. Semmler, 'Benedictus II: una regula – una consuetudo', in W. Lourdaux & D. Verhelst (eds.), *Benedictine Culture 750-1050*, Mediaevalia Lovaniensia series I, studia XI (Leuven, 1983), pp. 1-49.

Latin word that simply referred to anyone in the Roman Empire who had come from beyond its frontiers and was thus not officially a citizen.<sup>8</sup> It came to be used in a specifically Christian context in the fifth century by Augustine of Hippo in *De civitate Dei*. Augustine wrote: ‘And because of the Lord he wanders [*peregrinatur*] as long as he is in that mortal body: he walked for faith, not for appearances’.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, Augustine continued, ‘mortal men are with the immortal God’, thus suggesting that Christians were subject to God and not earthly political structures.<sup>10</sup> To Augustine, then, *peregrinatio* was a metaphorical wandering of the Earth and the act of living an ascetic Christian life until heaven was obtained. Such ideas encouraged pious individuals to go on pilgrimages to specific places connected with holiness such as Jerusalem, and the same word *peregrinatio* was used to describe these journeys.<sup>11</sup> Through the act of travelling individuals could atone for sins, purify their soul and help ease the way to heaven.

The concept of *peregrinatio* was developed further in sixth-century Ireland into a more austere monastic ideal, and it was this refined ideal that has been seen as particularly influential in monastic practices across Europe between the sixth and tenth centuries.<sup>12</sup> Augustine’s idea that Christians did not have an earthly home had particular resonance for the Irish because, just as *peregrinatio* had a purifying quality for Augustine, in Irish law codes criminals could be punished by being expelled from their

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<sup>8</sup> ‘Peregrinus 2’, D. Du Cange, *Glossarium mediae et infimae latinitatis* 6 (10 vols, London & Paris, 1884-7), p. 271.

<sup>9</sup> Augustine, *De civitate Dei* XIX. 14, ed. B. Dombert & A. Kalb, *CCSL* 48 (Turnhout, 1955), p. 681: ‘Et quoniam, quamdiu est in isto mortali corpore, peregrinatur a Domino: ambulat per fidem, non per speciem’..

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, XIX. 14, p. 681: ‘... homini mortali est cum immortalis Dei...’

<sup>11</sup> On medieval pilgrimage see J. Sumption, *Pilgrimage: An Image of Medieval Religion* (London, 1975); D. Webb, *Medieval European Pilgrimage, c. 700- c. 1500* (Basingstoke, 2002).

<sup>12</sup> See A. Angenendt, ‘Die irische Peregrinatio und ihre Auswirkungen auf dem Kontinent vor dem Jahre 800’, in H. Löwe (ed.), *Die Iren und Europa im früheren Mittelalter* (Stuttgart, 1982), pp. 52-79, for a summary of the spread of the idea of Irish *peregrinatio*.

homeland.<sup>13</sup> With the growth of Christianity in Ireland a corresponding ascetic ideal developed where people voluntarily left their homeland and kin in order to live a purer life, free of earthly connections and possessions. One of the key exponents of this new ideal was Columbanus (d. 615), who agreed with Augustine that ‘we have no home on Earth because our father is in Heaven’.<sup>14</sup> Taking a particularly physical view of this notion, he left his homeland and his family in *ca* 590 and spent the rest of his life in holy work on the continent.<sup>15</sup> That work was enshrined in monasteries he founded such as Bobbio in Italy and Luxeuil in Burgundy in which *peregrini* could live a communal monastic life more in keeping with the *Regula s. Benedicti*. Columbanus was inspired by the sixth-century teachings of St Benedict of Nursia and by establishing monasteries for *monachi peregrini* a balance could be struck between forsaking the homeland and maintaining *stabilitas loci*.<sup>16</sup> In promoting the separation between the sacred and lay worlds, Columbanus followed biblical precepts from Genesis and the Gospels of Matthew and Luke.<sup>17</sup> These he interpreted as meaning that his *peregrinatio* was a permanent state of affairs. Thus when Jonas, a monk in Bobbio, came to write the *Vita Columbani* later in the seventh century, he emphasised how important it was that a

<sup>13</sup> T. Charles-Edwards, ‘The social background to Irish *peregrinatio*’, *Celtica* 11 (1976), 43-59. See also M. Richter, *Ireland and Her Neighbours in the Seventh Century* (Dublin, 1999), pp. 41-7.

<sup>14</sup> Columbanus, *Instructiones* VIII. 1, ed. G. S. M. Walker, *Sancti Columbani Opera*, *Scriptores Latini Hiberniae* 2 (Dublin, 1970), pp. 94-7 at p. 94: ‘Patriam... non habemus in terra, quia Pater noster in caelis est’. Columbanus is described by Angenendt as the father of *peregrinatio* (‘Die irische Peregrinatio’, pp. 52-4).

<sup>15</sup> A concise summary of Columbanus’s work and impact is given in Fletcher, *The Conversion of Europe*, pp. 136-143. See also the essays in H. B. Clarke & M. Brennan (ed.), *Columbanus and Merovingian Monasticism*, BAR International Series 113 (Oxford, 1981) and M. Lapidge (ed.), *Columbanus: Studies on the Latin Writings*, *Studies in Celtic History* 17 (Woodbridge, 1997).

<sup>16</sup> Angenendt, ‘Die irische Peregrinatio’, p. 69-71. On the principles of the *Regula* see J. B. Stevenson, ‘The monastic rules of Columbanus’, in Lapidge, *Columbanus*, pp. 203-16. The mixed Columbanian-Benedictine Rule came to be an important element in the monastic foundations of the Merovingians: see Friedrich Prinz’s survey in his *Frühes Mönchtum im Frankenreich. Kultur und Gesellschaft in Gallien, den Rheinlanden und Bayern am Beispiel der monastischen Entwicklung, 4. bis 8. Jahrhundert* (Munich & Vienna, 1965), pp. 152-85.

<sup>17</sup> Gen. 12.1: ‘Now the Lord had said unto Abram, “Get thee out of thy country and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, into a land I shall show thee”’. Luke 14.26: ‘If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple’. Matt. 19.21: ‘Jesus said unto him, “If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me’. The importance of these three passages is discussed by Arnold Angenendt in *Monachi Peregrini*, pp. 126-3.

*peregrinus* should never return home. In one story Columbanus fell foul of the wrath of the Neustrian queen Brunehilda, and her husband, Theuderic II, tried to expel the monk back to Ireland saying:<sup>18</sup>

You hope that I will grant you the martyr's crown; there will not be such madness so that this great crime can be perpetrated, but... since you withdraw from all sacred customs, you should be made to repeat your way [i. e. to go home].

Jonas wrote that Columbanus, led by Theudebert's soldiers, strenuously resisted the idea of breaking his vow never to return home; fortunately for the monk, a miracle occurred (the sea refused to calm) and the soldiers released him.<sup>19</sup> It was clear to Jonas that the ascetic values which had driven Columbanus to leave his home were an integral part of his sanctity; Columbanus's ideas were not just followed but recognised and defended by God, and the relationship between the *peregrinus* and his homeland was one characterised by a permanent separation.

#### *Irish Influence on Anglo-Saxon 'peregrinatio'.*

Irish monks and practices were important in the development of the early Anglo-Saxon Church, giving rise to the idea that Irish practice was fundamentally important to the Anglo-Saxon missions to the continent.<sup>20</sup> It was not, however, the example of

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<sup>18</sup> Jonas, *Vita Columbani* I. 18-19, ed. B. Krusch, *MGH SRG* 37 (Hanover, 1905), pp. 186-93 at p. 191: "Martyrii coronam a me tibi inlaturam speras; non esse tantae demetiae, ut hoc tantum patraret scelus, sed... ut qui ab omnium saecularium mores disciscat, quo venerit, ea via repetare studeat".

<sup>19</sup> Jonas, *Vita Columbani* I. 23, pp. 205-6, which explains the miracle with the statement 'Mirantes itaque omnes cognovere, non esse voluntatem Dei, ut retro amplius repetaret'.

<sup>20</sup> There was boom in the 1980s in historiography on the Irish influence on the Anglo-Saxon missions, characteristic of which are: M. Richter, 'Der irische Hintergrund der angelsächsischen Mission', in Löwe, *Die Iren und Europa im früheren Mittelalter*, pp. 120-37 and 'The young Willibrord' in G. Kiesel & J. Schroeder (eds.), *Willibrord, Apostel der Niederlande, Gründer der Abtei Echternach. Gedenkgabe zum 1250. Todestag des angelsächsischen Missionars* (Luxembourg, 1989), pp. 25-30; A. Van Berkum, 'Willibrord en Wilfried. Een onderzoek naar hun wederzijdse betrekkingen', *Sacris erudiri* 23 (1978/9), 347-415; D. Ó Cróinín's 'Rath Melsigi, Willibrord and the earliest Echternach manuscripts', *Peritia* 3 (1984), 17-49. For a survey of the literature see E. Honée, 'St Willibrord in recent historiography', in P. N. Holtrop & H. McLeod (eds.), *Missions and Missionaries, Studies in Church History Subsidia* 13 (Woodbridge, 2000), pp. 16-31.

Columbanus that was responsible.<sup>21</sup> Monks from the monastery of Iona, established by the Irish *peregrinus* Columba, were instrumental in the Christianisation of Northumbria in the seventh century.<sup>22</sup> Irish practices, and especially their dating of Easter each year, clashed with the Roman practices introduced to Britain by the Gregorian mission. Tensions led to the Frankish-led Synod of Whitby in 664, at which the controversial, Rome-educated bishop Wilfrid won the decision to have Irish practices denounced and Easter calculated according to the Roman method.<sup>23</sup> Nonetheless, the influence of Irish Christianity continued to be felt, especially in Northumbria.<sup>24</sup>

The connection between Irish *peregrinatio* and the Anglo-Saxon missions, despite the backdrop of Irish influence amongst the Anglo-Saxons, appears to have occurred in Ireland itself. A Northumbrian monk named Ecgberht fled an outbreak of plague for the safety of Ireland in the mid-seventh century and settled at the monastery of Rath Melsigi.<sup>25</sup> There Ecgberht developed the desire to become a missionary:

He knew that there were many peoples living in Germany from whom the Angles and Saxons, who now live in Britain, derived their origin... These were the Frisians, Rugians, Danes, Huns, Old Saxons and Boructuars. There are also many others in the

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<sup>21</sup> No known Anglo-Saxon monastery followed the Rule of Columbanus exclusively (Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 159), nor is any copy of Jonas's *Vita Columbani* known to have been in England in the period (D. A. Bullough, 'Hagiography as patriotism: Alcuin's "York Poem" and the early Northumbrian "Vitae Sanctorum"', in E. Patlagean & P. Riché [ed.], *Hagiographie, cultures et sociétés IVe-XIIe siècles* [Paris, 1981], pp. 339-59 at p. 347).

<sup>22</sup> Bede, *HE* III. 3, p. 218. On the role of the Irish in the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons, see: K. Hughes, 'Evidence for contacts between the churches of the Irish and English from the Synod of Whitby to the Viking Age', in P. Clemoes & K. Hughes (eds.), *England Before the Conquest: Studies in Primary Sources Presented to Dorothy Whitelock* (Cambridge, 1971), pp. 49-67; J. Campbell, 'The debt of the early English Church to Ireland', in P. Ní Chatháin & M. Richter, *Irland und die Christenheit* (Stuttgart, 1987), pp. 332-346; H. Mayr-Harting, *The Coming of Christianity to Anglo-Saxon England* (London, 1972, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn. 1991), pp. 94-102.

<sup>23</sup> Bede, *HE* III. 25, pp. 296-308; Stephanus, *Vita Wilfridi* c. 10, ed. W. Levison, *MGH SRM* 6 (Berlin, 1913), pp. 193-263 at pp. 202-4; Campbell, John & Wormald, *The Anglo-Saxons*, pp. 46-50; W. Goffart, *The Narrators of Barbarian History ad 550-800: Jordanes, Gregory of Tours, Bede and Paul the Deacon* (Princeton, 1988), pp. 257, 286-7, 306, 308-13; Mayr-Harting, *The Coming of Christianity*, pp. 103-113.

<sup>24</sup> See for example the survey of Irish and Roman influence in van Berkum, 'Willibrord en Wilfrid', 351-367.

<sup>25</sup> Bede, *HE* III. 27, p. 312. On the plague see C. Morris, 'The plague in Britain', *Historical Journal* 14 (1971), 205-15.

same regions who still practice pagan rites, to whom the soldier of Christ proposed to go...<sup>26</sup>

It seems, at least from Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica*, that Ecgberht viewed this missionary work as a spiritual personal task as he vowed that if he could not convert the heathen then he would undertake a pilgrimage to Rome; thus, as Wilhelm Levison argued, Ecgberht became the first Anglo-Saxon to bind the ideas of *peregrinatio* and mission together.<sup>27</sup> Ecgberht was ultimately inspired by both Irish and Roman ideals, remaining in voluntary exile in Ireland for the rest of his life and at the same time, much to Bede's approval, promoting Roman practices in Iona.<sup>28</sup>

Ecgberht was ultimately unable to fulfil either of his vows, but Bede suggests that Willibrord was sent from Rath Melsigi in his place.<sup>29</sup> Willibrord appears, starting from this Irish background, like an Irish *peregrinus*. For some historians such as Michael Richter and Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, Willibrord's Irishness, and thus his status as a *peregrinus*, has been confirmed by the clear insular influence displayed by manuscripts produced at his continental monastic foundation of Echternach, near Trier.<sup>30</sup> However, it is logically impossible to draw a causal connection between manuscript style and the personal motivations of monastic founders. Moreover Rosamond McKitterick's penetrating analysis of the Echternach manuscripts rather suggests that the monastery

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<sup>26</sup> Bede, *HE* V. 19, p. 476: 'Quarum in Germania plurimus nouerat esse nationes, a quibus Angli uel Saxones, qui nunc Britanniam incolunt, genus et originem duxisse noscuntur... Sunt autem Fresones, Rugini, Danai, Hunni, Antiqui Saxones, Borucuari. Sunt alii perplures hisdem in partibus populi paganis adhuc ritibus seruentes, ad quos venire praefatus Christi miles... disposuit...' See J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People: A Historical Commentary* (Oxford, 1988), p. 118. On the importance of Ecgberht to the Anglo-Saxon missions see: C. Wampach, *Willibrord. Sein Leben und Lebenswerk* (Luxembourg, 1953), pp. 206-7; K. Schäferdiek, 'Fragen der frühen angelsächsischen Festlandmission', *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 28 (1994), 172-95.

<sup>27</sup> Levison, *England and the Continent*, p. 44.

<sup>28</sup> Bede, *HE* V. 22, p. 552. The story of Ecgberht and Iona is one of the last in the *HE* and thus appears as a culmination to Bede's narrative of the rise of the *Angli*, whether it was the planned at the outset or not: see Mayr-Harting, *The Coming of Christianity*, p. 113; Wallace-Hadrill, *Bede's Ecclesiastical History*, p. 198.

<sup>29</sup> Bede, *HE* V. 10, p. 480.

<sup>30</sup> Richter, 'Der irische Hintergrund'; idem, 'The young Willibrord'; Ó Cróinín's 'Rath Melsigi'.

was a melting pot of styles and influences, and not a bastion of Irishness.<sup>31</sup> Evidence from a calendar believed to have been owned by Willibrord seems to confirm that Irish influence on Willibrord, while important, can be exaggerated. The calendar does clearly betray Irish influence because of its insular content.<sup>32</sup> There are, however, only four saints listed who are Irish and two of these – Columba and Aidan – were revered in Northumbria as well.<sup>33</sup> Furthermore there are far more entries concerned with Willibrord's native Northumbria, indicating his continuing pride in his homeland.<sup>34</sup> The Northumbrian entries are accompanied by several saints connected to Trier and the surrounding region, suggesting that Willibrord was also keen to adopt local patterns of worship in addition to his own.<sup>35</sup> The manuscript evidence therefore reveals a number of influences on Willibrord, not all of which were Irish. It is worth noting in this context that there is a margin note in the calendar, possibly written by Willibrord himself, that describes his break from Britain: *veniebat ultra mare in Francea* ('He came across the sea to Frankia').<sup>36</sup> It is a simple statement of travelling with no indication of ascetic

<sup>31</sup> R. McKitterick, 'Frankish uncial: A new context for the Echternach scriptorium', in P. Bange & A. G. Weiler (eds.), *Willibrord, zijn wereld en zijn werk*, *Middeleeuwse Studies VI* (Nijmegen, 1990), pp. 374-88; R. McKitterick, 'The diffusion of insular culture in Neustria between 650 and 850: the implications of the manuscript evidence', H. Atsma (ed.), *Les pays au nord de la Loire de 650 à 850*, *Beihefte der Francia* 16/11 (Sigmaringen, 1989), pp. 395-432 esp. pp. 421-9, reprinted in her *Books, Scribes and Learning in the Frankish Kingdoms, 6<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> Centuries* (Aldershot, 1994), III.

<sup>32</sup> Ó Cróinín, 'Rath Melsigi', 28-36; Richter, 'The young Willibrord', p. 29. See also: van Berkum, 'Willibrord en Wilfried', 397; A. G. Weiler, *Willibrords Missie: Christendom en Cultuur in zevende en Achste Eeuw* (Hilversum, 1989), p. 88.

<sup>33</sup> For Columba see *The Calendar of St Willibrord*, 9<sup>th</sup> June, fol. 37r, and Aidan, 31<sup>st</sup> August [margin], fol. 38r. The other two Irish saints were St Patrick (17<sup>th</sup> March, fol. 35v) and St Brigid (5<sup>th</sup> February, fol. 35r).

<sup>34</sup> *The Calendar of Willibrord*: these are Wilgil, Willibrord's father (30<sup>th</sup> January, fol. 34v), Aeuda (9<sup>th</sup> February, fol. 35r), Wilfrid (17<sup>th</sup> February, fol. 35r), Suidred (19<sup>th</sup> February, fol. 35r), Suidberht, Willibrord's successor (1<sup>st</sup> March [margin], fol. 35v), Chad of Lichfield (2<sup>nd</sup> March, fol. 35v), St Cuthbert (20<sup>th</sup> March, fol. 35v), Ethelwald of Lindisfarne (21<sup>st</sup> April, fol. 36r), Suaefgild (15<sup>th</sup> May [margin], fol. 36v), King Ecgrith (20<sup>th</sup> May, fol. 36v), Eota (2<sup>nd</sup> June [margin], fol. 37r), the priest Offa (23<sup>rd</sup> July, fol. 37v), Cidda (29<sup>th</sup> July [margin], fol. 37v) King Oswald (5<sup>th</sup> August, fol. 38r), King Oswin (19<sup>th</sup> August, fol. 38r), Haemric (7<sup>th</sup> September [margin], fol. 38v), Cynifrid (17<sup>th</sup> September [margin], fol. 38v), the two Hewalds (4<sup>th</sup> October, fol. 39r), Eodberga of Repton (8<sup>th</sup> October, fol. 39r), King Edwin (13<sup>th</sup> October, fol. 39r), Paulinus of York (14<sup>th</sup> October, fol. 39r), Hilda of Whitby (17<sup>th</sup> November [margin], fol. 39v).

<sup>35</sup> *The Calendar of Willibrord*: these are Valerius (29<sup>th</sup> January, fol. 34v), Basinus (3<sup>rd</sup> March, fol. 35v), Maximinus (margin, fol. 36v), Gauricus (12<sup>th</sup> August, fol. 38r), Paulinus (31<sup>st</sup> August, fol. 38r), Eucharius (8<sup>th</sup> December, fol. 40r), Anastasia (9<sup>th</sup> December, fol. 40r). See Fritze, 'Universalis gentium confessio', 101-3.

<sup>36</sup> *The Calendar of Willibrord*, fol. 39b.

concerns, and therefore no indication of *peregrinatio*. Overall, from the evidence closest to Willibrord, it is impossible to conclude that it was the Irish ideal of *peregrinatio* that shaped his relationship with his homeland, even if we cannot rule the possibility out.

For the other Anglo-Saxons who left Britain in the eighth century it is even more difficult to detect direct Irish influence. Perhaps the clearest evidence comes from the *Vita Bonifatii*, which recalls how Boniface met some itinerant Irish priests in his youth who ‘had come following the custom of their regions’.<sup>37</sup> It was not until nearly thirty years later, however, that Boniface actually left his homeland and over forty years more until this story was written down; whether story or fact, and what influence the priests actually had on Boniface, is unclear. He was notorious late in his life for clashing with Irish ideals, or at least those of the Irishman Virgil of Salzburg.<sup>38</sup> Generally speaking, if Boniface had been influenced by Irish *peregrinatio*, it is unlikely to have been accepted without some modifications to make it more acceptable to himself. Away from Boniface, there is no good evidence that figures such as Lull, Burchard, Willibald or Wynnebald ever visited Ireland or were directly influenced by Irishmen. The case of Willibrord and Ireland seems to be an exception rather than a rule, despite its prominence in modern historiography on the missions. Although Irish ideals might have had some residual influence on the Anglo-Saxon missions, the perception of a break from the *patria* is unlikely to have been conceived in terms precisely similar to or derived from those of Columbanus or Columba.

<sup>37</sup> Willibald, *VB* c. 1, p. 5: ‘... sicut illis regionibus moris est... adissent’.

<sup>38</sup> On the cultural differences between Boniface and Virgil, see: H. Löwe, ‘Ein literarischer Widersacher des Bonifatius. Virgil von Salzburg und die Kosmographie des Aethicus Ister’, *Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur, Abhandlungen der Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaftlichen Klasse, Jahrgang 1951*, 11 (Wiesbaden, 1952), 903-83; P. P. Ó’Neill, ‘Bonifaz und Virgil: Konflikt zweier Kulturen’, in H. Dopsch & R. Juffinger (eds.), *Virgil von Salzburg, Missionar und Gelehrter* (Salzburg, 1985), pp. 76-83. On Virgil see the essays in Dopsch & Juffinger, *Virgil of Salzburg* and H. Wolfram, ‘Virgil of St Peter’s at Salzburg’, in P. Ní Chatháin & M. Richter (eds.), *Irland und die Christenheit* (Stuttgart, 1987), pp. 415-20.

There are comparisons to be made between Anglo-Saxon elegies and Irish asceticism because both often focused on the idea of exile. The Old English elegy *The Seafarer* has, for example, long been considered to be about an Irish-style *peregrinatio pro Christi*.<sup>39</sup> Other Anglo-Saxon poems with strong themes of exile, such as *The Wife's Lament* or *The Wanderer*, contain stories of political expulsion instead of purely spiritual wanderings (although there may be echoes of such Christian thought).<sup>40</sup> On the continent there are numerous echoes of poetic culture in the Anglo-Saxons' written work.<sup>41</sup> Of particular note is the often ignored poem called *De transmarinis itineris peregrinatione* by Æthilwald, which describes a difficult pilgrimage to Rome and the joy of successfully returning home.<sup>42</sup> The poem, written to imitate the Latin octosyllabic verse of Aldhelm, is likely to have been composed in Malmesbury and sent to Mainz when Lull begged for some examples of Aldhelmian writings.<sup>43</sup> It is contained in a ninth-century collection of Boniface's letters where it appears to have been the final

<sup>39</sup> The interpretation of *The Seafarer* as a metaphor for the Christian ascetic life was established in D. Whitelock, 'The interpretation of *The Seafarer*', in C. Fox & B. Dickins (eds.), *The Early Cultures of Northwest Europe* (Cambridge, 1950), pp. 259-72. More recently see C. A. Ireland, 'Some analogues of the OE *Seafarer* from Hiberno-Latin sources', *Neophilologische Mitteilungen* 92. 1 (1991), 1-14.

<sup>40</sup> On the varieties of exile in Old English poetry see S. B. Greenfield, 'The formulaic expression of the theme of "exile" in Anglo-Saxon poetry', in G. H. Brown (ed.), *Hero and Exile: The Art of Old English Poetry* (London, 1989), pp. 125-32. For more specific studies of exile in the poems see: P. Cook, 'Woriað þa winsalo: the bonds of exile in *The Wanderer*', *Neophilologus* 80. 1 (1996), 127-37; S. B. Greenfield, 'The Wife's Lament reconsidered', in Brown, *Hero and Exile*, pp. 149-54. See also the interesting, if flawed, N. Howe, *Migration and Mythmaking in Anglo-Saxon England* (New Haven & London, 1989).

<sup>41</sup> Mayr-Harting, *The Coming of Christianity*, pp. 226-8; Howe, *Migration and Mythmaking*, pp. 108-40; J. P. Hermann, 'Boniface and Dokkum: terror, repetition and allegory', *Medievalia et Humanistica* 22 (1995), 1-29; A. Orchard, 'Old sources, new resources: finding the right formula for Boniface', *Anglo-Saxon England* 30 (2001), 15-38 at 37-8.

<sup>42</sup> Æthilwald, *De transmarinis itineris peregrinatione*, ed. P. Ewald, *MGH AA* 15 (Berlin, 1919), pp. 528-33. The manuscript in question is Vienna, Österreichische Bibliothek 751, which is edited in facsimile: *Sancti Bonifatii epistolae*, ed. F. Unterkircher, *Codices selecti phototypice impressi* 24 (Graz, 1971), 41r-42r. On Æthilwald see M. Lapidge & J. Rosier (eds.), *Aldhelm: The Poetic Works* (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 174-5 and A. Orchard, *The Poetic Art of Aldhelm*, Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England 8 (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 21-6 with pp. 61-3 on the relationship between Æthilwald's poetry and that of Boniface and Lull. Roman pilgrimages by Anglo-Saxons were common – see L. E. von Padberg, 'Missionare und Mönche auf dem Weg nach Rom und Monte Cassino im 8. Jahrhundert', *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 111/ 2 (2000), 145-68.

<sup>43</sup> Lull, *Tangl* no. 71, p. 144: 'Similiter obsecro, ut mihi Aldhelmi episcopi aliqua opuscula seu prosarum seu metrorum aut rithmicorum dirigere digneris...'

piece in the first phase of compilation.<sup>44</sup> The original designation of the poem as the closing document about the Anglo-Saxon missions perhaps suggests it was considered somehow symbolic of the Anglo-Saxons' *peregrinatio*. If so, however, it does not reflect Irish ascetic modes of living but rather the more familiar medieval image of a pilgrimage to a specific holy place from which one ultimately returns. The two concepts of *peregrinatio* – pilgrimage and Irish exile – may have overlapped but it is also important not to conflate them into one catch-all ideal because they resulted in different behaviour towards *patria* and kin, as we will now see.

*Family, Social Networks and Anglo-Saxon 'peregrinatio'.*

An important difference between Irish *peregrinatio* and the Anglo-Saxon missions lay in the attitude towards family. Irish ascetics, as we have seen, would specifically forsake their kin in order to follow the precepts articulated in Genesis and the Gospel of Luke and take a step closer to their heavenly home. But the Anglo-Saxons retained a strong sense of family, as studies by Lutz von Padberg and Rosamond McKitterick have shown.<sup>45</sup> Lull and Willibald both initially left Britain with their own kin.<sup>46</sup> On the continent, Anglo-Saxons established family monasteries such as Echternach near Trier and Heidenheim near Eichstätt. Control of these would pass from family member to family member. In the case of Echternach, for example, the monastery was governed successively by the relatives Willibrord, Aldberct and Beornrad, whose combined

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<sup>44</sup> Note the ornate patterns at the end of the poem in *Sancti Bonifatii epistolae*, 42r, after which the hand and the style of the titles for each letter is different from the first part of the manuscript.

<sup>45</sup> L. E. von Padberg, *Heilige und Familie. Studien zur Bedeutung familiengebundener Aspekte in den Viten des Verwandten- und Schülerkreises um Willibrord, Bonifatius und Liudger*, Quellen und Abhandlungen zur mittelhochdeutschen Kirchengeschichte 83 (Münster, 1980, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. Mainz, 1997); R. McKitterick, 'Anglo-Saxon missionaries in Germany: Personal connections and local influences', *Vaugan Paper 36* (Leicester, 1991), reprinted in her *The Frankish Kings and Culture in the Early Middle Ages* (Aldershot, 1995), I. See also discussion in S. Schipperges, *Bonifatius ac socii eius. Eine sozialgeschichtliche Untersuchung des Winfrid-Bonifatius und seines Umfeldes*, Quellen und Abhandlungen zur mittelhochdeutschen Kirchengeschichte 79 (Mainz, 1996).

<sup>46</sup> Lull, Denehard & Burchard, *Tangl* no. 49, pp. 79-80; Hygeburg, *VWb* c. 3, p. 90.

abbacies covered the first century of the monastery's existence.<sup>47</sup> Heidenheim, meanwhile, was a double-monastery established by the siblings Wynnebald and Waldburga near their brother Willibald's foundation of Eichstätt.<sup>48</sup> It is likely that many Anglo-Saxons from within the same kinship groups travelled to the continent specifically because other members had already made the journey and for no other reason.<sup>49</sup> One must therefore be careful not to generalise about *peregrinatio* as a factor that inspired all the Anglo-Saxons involved in the 'missions' to leave their homeland.

Some modern historians have attempted to reconcile the ideas of family and *peregrinatio*. Lutz von Padberg, for example, argued that the Anglo-Saxons had simply bound 'archaic traditions and Christian intentions' together.<sup>50</sup> In a sense their kinship ties had been broken, but had been reformed within the context of a spiritual family within the Church, or what Arnold Angenendt termed the *geistliche Familie*.<sup>51</sup> The ascetic demands of *peregrinatio*, Angenendt continued, 'were obviously so difficult to accomplish, that they would just have to overcome it with [their] relatives'.<sup>52</sup> There is a danger in such an argument that one could ascribe the Anglo-Saxons with a philosophically incoherent position: they had at the same time willingly rejected their relatives, and yet maintained contact with them. It seems peculiar that someone as concerned with rigorous standards as Boniface would have been comfortable with such a

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<sup>47</sup> A. Angenendt, 'Willibrord im Dienste der Karolinger', *Annalen des historischen Vereins für den Niederrhein* 175 (1973), 63-113 at 97-8.

<sup>48</sup> Hygeburg, *VWyn* c. 13, p. 116; Wolfhard, *Miracula s. Waldburgae* c. 1, ed. O. Holdger-Egger, *MGH SS* 15 (1887), pp. 538-55 at p. 539.

<sup>49</sup> See the references to family ties in: Eangyth, *Tangl* no. 14, p. 26; Leoba, *Tangl* no. 29, pp. 52-3; Lull, Burchard & Denehard, *Tangl* no. 49, p. 79; Beortgyth, *Tangl* no. 143, p. 282.

<sup>50</sup> L. E. von Padberg, *Wynfret-Bonifatius* (Zurich, 1989), pp. 118-19.

<sup>51</sup> A. Angenendt, 'Willibald zwischen Mönchtum und Bischofsamt', in H. Dickerhof, E. Reiter & S. Weinfurter (eds), *Der heilige Willibald – Klosterbischof oder Bistumgründer?*, Eichstätter Studien 30 (Regensburg, 1990), pp. 143-70 at p. 150; von Padberg, *Heilige und Familie*, esp. pp. 182-6.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 150: 'Das Leben in einer fremden Welt waren offenbar so schwer zu vollziehen, daß sie nur im Verein mit Angehörigen zu bewältigen waren'.

stance. One might instead conclude that, as far as the evidence allows one to see, no Anglo-Saxons embarked upon a life of *peregrinatio* in order to reject their family.

It was not just family networks that were preserved by the Anglo-Saxon *peregrini*, but also ecclesiastical and political networks.<sup>53</sup> Through these networks Boniface and his circle became something of a focal point for trade, or at least the procurement of particular items. King Æthelbert of Kent, for example, sent a silver, gold-lined drinking cup and two woollen cloaks to Boniface in the hope that he, in return, would send the king some hunting falcons.<sup>54</sup> Whether Boniface responded to Æthelbert is unknown, but he did send a hawk, two falcons, two shields and two lances to King Æthelbald of Mercia.<sup>55</sup> Even when Boniface first arrived in Frisia, his friend Bugga was quick to send him books, money and an altar cloth to help him in his new church.<sup>56</sup> There also appears to have been an unusual preoccupation with the sending of towels as gifts, particularly ones intended to dry feet.<sup>57</sup> Boniface's preservation of his English networks was not, it seems, entirely ascetic, but often rather involved the exchange of luxury items and other forms of help. Lull, Burchard and Denehard, similarly, sent spices back to Inkberrow, their *alma mater*.<sup>58</sup> One might, on the basis of the gift evidence, be hesitant to characterise the relationship between the Anglo-Saxon *peregrini* and their homeland purely in terms of ascetic modes of living.

<sup>53</sup> For non-family networks see again McKitterick, 'Personal connections', *passim*; Schipperges, *Bonifatius et socii eius*, *passim*; von Padberg, *Mission und Christianisierung*, pp. 75-80.

<sup>54</sup> Æthelbert II, *Tangl* no. 105, pp. 230-1.

<sup>55</sup> Boniface, *Tangl* no. 69, p. 142.

<sup>56</sup> Bugga, *Tangl* no. 15, pp. 27-8.

<sup>57</sup> *Tangl* nos. 32, 63, 75, pp. 56, 131, 158: ...*vollosam ad tergendos pedes*.... The priest Hygelac also sent Lull *una mappa* amongst other gifts (*Tangl* no. 72, p. 145), while Cardinal Benedict sent Boniface *sabanus unus et facitergus unus* (*Tangl* no. 90, p. 206), thus expanding Boniface's range of towels.

<sup>58</sup> Lull, Denehard & Burchard, *Tangl* no. 49, p. 80: 'Parva quoque munusculorum transmissio scedulam istam comitatur quae sunt tria, id est turis et piperis et cinnamomi permodia zenia, sed omni mentis affectione destinata' – in other words frankincense, pepper and cinnamon.

The maintenance of social and political networks also provided the motivation for many Anglo-Saxons to return to their homelands. Suidberht of Kaiserwerth, for example, returned to Britain to be ordained bishop by Wilfrid rather than seek Frankish ecclesiastical support.<sup>59</sup> Boniface's assistant Eoba, meanwhile, returned home as a messenger to take a letter to Eadburga.<sup>60</sup> Lull, Burchard and Denehard also told their teacher Cyneburga of Inkberrow that there was every possibility they might return to visit her.<sup>61</sup> There was, it seems, little sense of *peregrinatio* as a permanent state of affairs. It is therefore difficult to agree with Angenendt's assertion that Anglo-Saxon *peregrinatio* was a 'radical break parting from the homeland but not an absolute separation from relatives';<sup>62</sup> in reality it appears to have been neither.

*The Irish Ideal of 'peregrinatio' in Anglo-Saxon Missionary 'vitae'.*

Willibald's *Vita Bonifatii* and Alcuin's *Vita Willibrordi* contain statements that associate their actions with Irish *peregrinatio*, even if Boniface and Willibrord themselves are unlikely to have conceived of their actions in such terms. In the *Vita Bonifatii*, Boniface's decision to leave Britain for Frisia in 716 is described as follows:

But because a mind intent on God is not elated nor dependent upon the praise and approbation of man, [Boniface] began carefully and cautiously to turn his mind to other things, to shun the company of his relatives and acquaintances, and to set his heart not on remaining in his native land but on foreign travel [*peregrina*]. After long deliberation on the question of forsaking his country and his relatives, he took the counsel [of Abbot Winbert] of blessed memory, and frankly disclosed to him the

<sup>59</sup> Bede, *HE* V. 11, p. 484.

<sup>60</sup> Eadburga, *Tangl* no. 35, 60.

<sup>61</sup> Lull, Denehard & Burchard, *Tangl*, no. 49, p. 79: '... si cui nostrum continguit huius Bretanicae telluris scepra visitare...'

<sup>62</sup> Angenendt, 'Willibald', p. 150: '... [einer] radikaler Abscheid von der Heimat, aber nicht unbedingt von der Verwandtschaft'.

plans that up to that moment he had carefully concealed.<sup>63</sup>

This passage clearly contains the conventional formulation of Irish *peregrinatio* in terms of shunning the homeland and kin.<sup>64</sup> However, as was seen above, Boniface did not forsake his kinship group and actively encouraged them to join him on the continent. Moreover Willibald admitted there was no permanency involved in this vow, for when Boniface discovered that Frisia was in the midst of political torment he returned to the monastery he had ‘forsaken’ and remained there for two years.<sup>65</sup> Here there is a clear contrast with the behaviour of Columbanus, who desired never to return home. It is immediately clear that the passage belongs in the realms of conventional *topoi* and has little connection with Boniface’s actual lifestyle.

The question arises of why Willibald might have chosen to gloss this aspect of Boniface’s life in such an untruthful – and indeed unconvincing – manner. One suggestion that might fit is that the *Vita Bonifatii* was intended to be read in Bavaria where the genuine Irish *peregrinus pro Christi* Virgil was residing in Salzburg. Virgil – probably a Latinised form of the Irish ‘Fergil’ – had left his position as abbot of Agliahoe in what is now Queens County, Ireland, and travelled to Quierzy where he met Pippin III in 743.<sup>66</sup> Pippin sent him as a messenger to Bavaria two years later in the wake of Duke Odilo’s failed uprising, and Virgil settled in the region as abbot of St

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<sup>63</sup> Willibald, *VB* c. 4, p. 15: ‘Sed quia mens etiam Deo dedicata favoribus non adtollitur humanis nec laudibus sublevatur, coeperat ad alia multa sollicitudinis cura adtentius properare et parentum adfiniumque suorum consortia devitare et peregrina magis quam paternae hereditatis terrarum loca desiderare. Sed cum sic longo temporis intervallo secum sollertissime deliberaret, ut patriam parentesque desereret, tandem, arrepto beatae memoriae et praedicti patris consultu, cuncta animi sui secreta intra conscientiam ante ea abscontia patenter aperuit et magna precuum instantia ad consensum suae voluntatis sancti viri animum provocavit’.

<sup>64</sup> Angenendt, ‘Die irische Peregrinatio’, pp. 65-6; von Padberg, *Mission und Christianisierung*, pp. 61-2.

<sup>65</sup> Willibald, *VB* cc. 4-5, pp. 17-19.

<sup>66</sup> *Conversio Bagoariorum Carantanorum* c. 2, ed. H. Wolfram *Die Conversio Bagoariorum Carantanorum. Das Weissbuch der Salzburger Kirche über die Erfolgreiche Mission in Karantamien und Pannonien* (Vienna, 1979), p. 40.

Peter's monastery in Salzburg.<sup>67</sup> Almost immediately he clashed with Boniface when he disagreed with the archbishop over a rebaptism.<sup>68</sup> Shortly afterwards Boniface accused Virgil of heretical preachings about the nature of the Earth, which appear to have been drawn from Antique pagan sources.<sup>69</sup> Ian Wood has suggested that Virgil's circle, and in particular Bishop Arbeo of Freising, reacted against the *Vita Bonifatii*, which misleadingly portrayed Bavaria as having no ecclesiastical organisation before Boniface visited the region in 739.<sup>70</sup> Virgil was not, however, entirely at odds with the Anglo-Saxons and included both Lull and Willibald of Eichstätt to be remembered in his *Necrologica*.<sup>71</sup> The author of the *Vita Bonifatii* might, in this Bavarian context, have been encouraged to present Boniface as a saint in terms Virgil and his circle would have recognised; it was, in other words, the proximity of a genuine Irish *peregrinus pro Christi* to Willibald's text that might have helped to retrospectively restyle Boniface as an Irish-style *peregrinus*.

The *Vita Bonifatii* was not alone in containing the rhetoric of Irish *peregrinatio* when describing Anglo-Saxon *peregrini*. Alcuin's *Vita Willibrordi* contains a passage describing Willibrord's decision to leave his Northumbrian *patria* that, like the *Vita Bonifatii*, contains elements similar to Irish *peregrinatio*. It reads:

And because he [Willibrord] had heard that schools and learning flourished in Ireland, he was encouraged further by what he was told of the manner of life adopted there by certain holy men, particularly by the blessed bishop Ecgberht... and by Wictberht,

<sup>67</sup> For the clash between Pippin and Odilo see *The Fourth Book of the Chronicle of Fredegar* cc. 25-6, ed. J. M. Wallace-Hadrill (London, 1960), pp. 98-9.

<sup>68</sup> Zacharias, *Tangl* no. 68, p. 141.

<sup>69</sup> Zacharias, *Tangl* no. 80, pp. 178-9; Löwe, 'Ein literarischer Widersacher des Bonifatius', pp. 938-41; M. Smyth, 'Das Universum in der Kosmographie des Aethicus Ister', in Dopsch & Juffinger, *Virgil von Salzburg*, pp. 170-82; J. Carey, 'Ireland and the Antipodes: the heterodoxy of Virgil of Salzburg', *Speculum* 64 (1989), 1-10.

<sup>70</sup> I. N. Wood, *The Merovingian Kingdoms 450-751* (London, 1994), pp. 305-9; Wood, *The Missionary Life*, pp. 157-8; Willibald, *VB* c. 7, pp. 36-9.

<sup>71</sup> *Monumenta necrologica monasterii s. Petri Salisburgensis*, ed. S. Herzberg-Fränkell, *MGH Necrologia Germaniae* 2 (Berlin, 1904), pp. 3-64 at p. 26.

the venerable servant and priest of God, both of whom, for love of Christ, forsook home, fatherland and family and retired to Ireland, where, cut off from the world though close to God, they lived as solitaries enjoying the blessings of heavenly contemplation. The blessed youth wished to imitate the godly life of these men...<sup>72</sup>

Again the ideas of forsaking *patria* and kin are clearly expressed, although that clause specifically relates to Ecgberht and Wictberht; it is clear, however, that within Alcuin's narrative this was the lifestyle that Willibrord wanted to adopt. Whether this was really the case is unclear, as was discussed above, and we are not helped by the silence of Bede – Alcuin's principal source for Willibrord – as to the reasons why Willibrord left Northumbria. There is no mention of *peregrinatio* at all in relation to Willibrord's later journey to the continent. Instead Alcuin presented Willibrord as following the apostolic decree (Matt. 28. 19), which he illustrated by describing Willibrord as being thirty-three – the age Jesus made the decree – and having eleven companions, making them twelve apostles.<sup>73</sup> Alcuin presented the journey as a new start for Willibrord and his companions and it does not appear, at least in the *Vita Willibrordi*, that a specifically Irish *peregrinatio* was at the heart of Alcuin's model of Willibrord's mission.

It is possible that Alcuin's account of Willibrord as a *peregrinus* was inspired in part by the *Vita Bonifatii*. Ian Wood has argued that the *Vita Willibrordi* contains a

<sup>72</sup> Alcuin, *VWbrord* c. 4, pp. 118-19: 'Et quia in Hibernia scolasticam eruditionem viguisse audivit, etiam et quorundam sanctorum virorum, fama narrante conversatione incitatus et praecipuae beatissimi patris et episcopi Ecgbercti... necnon et Wictbercti venerabilis viri et sacerdotis Dei, quorum uterque ob caelestis patriae amorem domo, patria cognationeque relicta, Hiberniam secessit, ibique dulcissimos supernae contemplationis fructus, saeculo nudus, Deo plenus, solitaria cotidie hauriebat conversatione: horum beatus adoliscens emulari cupiens relegionem...'

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, c. 5, pp. 119-20: 'Tricesimo itaque et tertio aetatis suae anno maior egregio viro fidei flamma crescebat in pectore, ita ut parum ei videbatur sibi soli tantummodo in religionis sanctitate sudasse, si non et aliis quoque in praedicationis veritate prodesset... Adsumptisque secum undecim fratribus, eo fidei fervore armatos quo et ipse, navem conscendit...' See also Bede, *HE* V. 10, p. 480 where the imagery is less explicit. Jonas also described Columbanus as having twelve companions (*Vita Columbani* c. 4, p. 160: '... cum duodecim comitibus...'), but it is important to note the difference that Alcuin did not describe Willibrord and his companions as *peregrini* with similar motivations. For an attempt to identify the twelve see G. N. M. Vis, 'De twaalf gezellen van Willibrord', in P. Bange & A. G. Weiler (eds.), *Willibrord, zijn wereld en zijn werk*, *Middeleeuwse Studies* 6 (Nijmegen, 1990), pp. 128-48.

rather idealised conception of sanctity.<sup>74</sup> In particular, Alcuin appeared to create a model missionary through his text that stood in opposition to the image of Boniface as a missionary. Alcuin did not approve of people seeking martyrdom, as he suspected Boniface had; he preferred missionaries to instruct heathens about Christianity rather than to rely on showpiece stunts like Boniface's felling of the Oak of Jupiter in Gaesmere. At the same time, however, Alcuin did have reverence for Boniface as a saint and may have wished to make Willibrord appear like Boniface in other respects.<sup>75</sup> Elsewhere in the text the suggestion that Willibrord baptised the young Pippin III – a fact curiously ignored by Carolingian court history – may be an attempt by Alcuin to rival Carolingian claims that Boniface had anointed Pippin as king.<sup>76</sup> This may be doubly significant as in 796 it appears that Alcuin was effectively removed from the Carolingian court for criticising Charlemagne's conquest of Saxony. Thereafter Charlemagne does not appear to have looked too favourably upon Alcuin and chastised him for his community's *mala fama* after a convict had sought sanctuary in Tours and Alcuin refused to turn him over to his court rival Theodulf of Orléans.<sup>77</sup> There might, therefore, be reason to suspect that the association between Willibrord and Irish *peregrinatio* was more a literary construction designed to compete with the *Vita Bonifatii* and affirm Alcuin's familial connections with the Carolingian court than a representation of an historical past.

<sup>74</sup> Wood, *The Missionary Life*, pp. 86-7.

<sup>75</sup> See J. T. Palmer, 'The Frankish cult of martyrs and the case of the two saints Boniface', *Revue bénédictine* (forthcoming).

<sup>76</sup> Alcuin, *VWbrord* c 23, p. 133; *ARF* s. a. 750 [*recte* 751], p. 4.

<sup>77</sup> Alcuin, *Epistola*, no. 247, p. 400. Alcuin's criticisms of Charlemagne can be found in Alcuin, *Epistola* no. 111, pp. 159-62. He hinted that his appointment at Tours was forced in Alcuin, *Epistola* no. 101, p. 148: 'Mihi vero multum indigno regimen aecclesiae sancti Martini venit in manus, non voluntarie sed quodammodo necessarie et ex consilio multorum'; see also D. A. Bullough, *Alcuin: Achievement and Reputation* (Leiden, 2004), pp. 432-70. On the case of the escaped convict see also Alcuin, *Epistolae* nos. 246 and 249, pp. 398-9 and 401-4. On the rivalry between Alcuin and Theodulf see recently A. Orchard, 'Wish you were here: Alcuin's court poetry and the boys back home', in S. Rees Jones, R. Marks & A. J. Minnis (eds.), *Courts and Regions in Medieval Europe* (York, 2000), pp. 21-43 at pp. 35-9, and also chapter six below, pp. 260-1.

Alcuin's own perception of what constituted *peregrinatio* would not necessarily conform to what many historians would recognise as the classic Irish model. In 789 Alcuin wrote a letter to a Northumbrian friend who was working in the Saxon missionfield, enquiring about the successes of the mission.<sup>78</sup> At that time Alcuin was working at the court of Charlemagne, in principle making both him and his friend *peregrini*. Yet he wrote 'if only I could see Him, and He might employ my accursed life in *peregrinatio*!', which suggests that Alcuin did not think that the mere act of having left his homeland classified him as a *peregrinus*.<sup>79</sup> Alcuin appears to have thought there was something more specifically pious attached to the concept of *peregrinatio* beyond the leaving of the homeland to live the religious life. Given that his purpose in writing was to find out about the conversion of the Saxons, Danes, Wiltzes and Wends, Alcuin can only have meant that *peregrinatio* should be equated with mission. This is a different definition from that implied in the *Vita Willibrordi* but there is no need to maintain that Alcuin was always consistent, particularly given the different purposes and audiences for the saint's Life and the letter; the contradiction does, rather, help to establish the literary artifices employed in Alcuin's account of Willibrord's career.

Hygeburg's hagiographical doublet *Vita Willibaldi et Wynnebaldi*, meanwhile, presents us with another formulation of *peregrinatio* as the two saints are described embarking on a more traditional pilgrimage, at first to Rome but then with Willibald continuing on to the Holy Land.<sup>80</sup> Hygeburg suggested that Willibald was motivated as much by curiosity as by spiritual yearnings.<sup>81</sup> Moreover her convoluted Latin also

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<sup>78</sup> Alcuin, *Epistola* no. 6, p. 31.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31: 'Utinam videam eum, et sit cursus vitae meae consummatus in peregrinatione'.

<sup>80</sup> Hygeburg, *VWb* cc. 3-4, pp. 90-102.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, c. 3, p. 90: '... ille adolescens Christi vernaculus... ignotas peregrinationis vias probare volebat atque externas terminarum telluras adire speculareque optabat'. See Webb, *Medieval European Pilgrimage*, p. 45.

created a level of hyperbole surrounding her descriptions of Willibald's motives; she wrote, for example, that '[Willibald] longed to go on pilgrimage to a more unknown place than where he then was' when describing his decision to leave 'unknown' Rome for 'more remote' Jerusalem.<sup>82</sup> Wynnebald, meanwhile, was said to have returned home after seven years in Italy to encourage people to support the German missions;<sup>83</sup> there were clearly no echoes of Jonas's *peregrini* refusing to return home. Ultimately, in Hygeburg's work, there is little clear or consistent account of precisely what *peregrinatio* meant beyond wandering around with some (if not just any) religious purpose.

Other authors of Anglo-Saxon missionary *vitae* included different motivations for saints or less precise formulations of the Irish *peregrinatio* ideal. The *Vita Burchardi* described Burchard's break with Britain as *peregrinatio* and Boniface and his circle as *peregrini* but does not elaborate, suggesting that there was little importance placed upon the ideal in ninth-century Würzburg despite the growing cult of the Irish *peregrinus* Kilian (d. 689).<sup>84</sup> The distorted account of Boniface's life in Liudger's *Vita Gregorii* is littered with epithets like *athleta Dei peregrinus*, but Liudger uses so many different ones that they appear to be more the author's playful stylings than genuine descriptions.<sup>85</sup> At the same time, when Liudger described Boniface's parting from his homeland he merely stated that Boniface *veniebat* to the kingdom of the Franks;<sup>86</sup> there is no indication of anything other than a physical change in Boniface's relationship to

<sup>82</sup> Hygeburg, *VWb* c. 4, p. 92: 'et maioram iam tunc peregrinationis ignotitiam adire optabat, quam illa fuit, in qua tunc stare videbatur'.

<sup>83</sup> Hygeburg, *VWyn* c. 3, p. 108: '... nativitatis terram visitare volebat'.

<sup>84</sup> *VBurch*, c. 2, p. 48: 'tandem relicta Britannia peregrinationis obtentu, in quamdam Galliae partem transacto salo pervenit, ibique tamdiu sub habitu peregrini delituit, quoad, audita fama egregii praesulis Bonifacii, incenderetur ardore visendi pontificem santitatis fama vulgatum'.

<sup>85</sup> In Liudger's *VG* c. 2, pp. 67-70 alone Liudger describes Boniface using combinations of the words *athleta Dei*, *peregrinus*, *electus Dei martyr*, *viator*, *doctor*, *magister*, *futurus martyr*, *fama magister*, *profectus*, *pastor* and *sanctus* without straight repetition.

<sup>86</sup> Liudger, *VG* c. 1, p. 66.

his homeland. The relationship between the saints and their *patria* is vague in a variety of *vitae* from across Germany and Frisia in the eighth and ninth centuries, with the idea of *peregrinatio* recurrent as a literary construction indicating religious purpose and little else.

### **Anglo-Saxon *peregrinatio* and the Perceived Kinship Between *gentes*.**

#### *'Peregrinatio' and Kinship Between Peoples in Boniface's Letters.*

Boniface, regardless of the use of *peregrinatio* elsewhere, did use words related to the monastic ideal in his letters even though he may not have meant it in the Irish sense. One must therefore ask what he might actually have meant. A particularly dramatic example from the Bonifatian correspondence is provided by a letter Boniface wrote to Eadburga of Thanet in 735:

To his beloved sister Eadburga... [from] Boniface. May He who rewards all righteous acts cause my dearest sister to rejoice in the choir of angels above because she has consoled with spiritual light... an exile in Germany [*exul Germanicus*] who has to enlighten the dark corners of the Germanic peoples and would fall into deadly snares if he had not the Word of God as a lamp unto his feet and light upon his path... I earnestly beg you to pray for me because, for my sins, I am tossed by the tempests of the perilous sea...<sup>87</sup>

The dramatic language, with its 'exile', 'dark corners' and 'tempestuous seas', serves to remind us that many of the Boniface letters were written with an emphasis on literary stylings and preserved at Mainz precisely because of their value as examples of competent, and often Aldhelmian, writings.<sup>88</sup> The letter has been singled out as a classic

<sup>87</sup> Boniface, *Tangl* no. 30, p. 54: 'Delectissimae sorori... Eadburga... Bonifatius... Carissimam sororem remunerator aeternus iustorum operum in superna laetificet curia angelorum, quae... exulem Germanicum spiritali lumine consolata est, quia, qui tenebrosos angulos Germanicarum gentium lustrare debet, nisi habeat lucernam pedibus et lumen semitis suis verbum Domini in laqueum mortis incidet... [O]bsecro, ut pro me orare digneris, quia peccatis meis exigentibus periculosi maris tempestatibus quatior...'

<sup>88</sup> See C. Fell, 'Some implications of the Boniface correspondence', in H. Damico & A. H. Olsen (eds.), *New Readings on Women in Old English Literature* (Bloomington & Indianapolis, 1990), pp. 29-43 and Orchard, 'Old sources, new resources', 15-38, both of whom have looked profitably at the letters more in terms of literary sources than mines for historical facts.

example because of its dramatic turns of phrase.<sup>89</sup> Such imagery may be important when interpreting Boniface's use of the language of *peregrinatio*, because in another letter he hoped God, as the *causa est peregrinationis nostrae*, would bring him safely across the seas 'to the shores of the heavenly Jerusalem.'<sup>90</sup> It is almost certain that this was not meant literally. Boniface never, to our knowledge, attempted to visit Jerusalem, and from other references to the great city he appears to have seen it rather as a metaphor for heaven.<sup>91</sup> *Peregrinatio* here appears to refer to a spiritual journey, in some ways detached from physical geography; it cannot be seen as a *prima face* motivation for leaving Britain, because Boniface did not mean it literally.

Great care should be taken when interpreting the relationship between Boniface's idea of *peregrinatio* and his leaving of Britain. At one point he describes how his colleagues and he were 'wandering here on the orders of the apostolic see.'<sup>92</sup> Logically this would imply that *peregrinatio* was something that had been undertaken only after Boniface's circle of Anglo-Saxons had left Britain and visited the papacy. There is a basis for this in the Bonifatian letters because Pope Gregory II had instructed Boniface to investigate the religious situation in *Germania* in the 720s and report back to him.<sup>93</sup> Boniface's own conception of *peregrinatio* would therefore seem to have more meaning in terms of his work on the continent than in terms of leaving his *patria*.

<sup>89</sup> See for example Orchard, 'Old sources, new resources', 20-4.

<sup>90</sup> Boniface, *Tangl* no. 38, p. 63. The passage reads: '... ut pius Dominus, qui causa est peregrinationis nostrae, navem fragilitatis nostrae, ne fluctibus Germanicarum tempestatum submergatur, dextera sua protegente et gubernante inlesam custodiendo ad caelestis Hierusalem litus tranquillum perducatur'.

<sup>91</sup> Boniface, *Tangl* no. 63, p. 131 in which Boniface, according to Levison (*England and the Continent*, p. 283), quotes Cassiodorus's *Historia Tripartita* viii. 8: 'Habes, pater mi, sicut Antonius de Didimo fertur dixisse, oculos, quibus potest Deus videri et angeli eius et supernae Hierusalem gloriosa gaudia speculari'.

<sup>92</sup> Boniface, *Tangl* no. 74, p. 156: '... hic per preceptum apostolicae sedis peregrinamus'.

<sup>93</sup> Gregory II, *Tangl* nos. 17-21, pp. 28-36; Willibald, *VB* c. 5, p. 21.

Defining Boniface's conception of *peregrinatio* in terms of specific religious works rather than physical journeys offers a loose but important parallel with the *Regula s. Benedicti*. The Rule was, as we saw above, careful to distinguish between the worthy *peregrinus* and the *gyrovagi* who travelled from place to place, living parasitically off welcoming monasteries.<sup>94</sup> There remained space for the *peregrinus* in Benedict's world, and a monk travelling on a pious mission was to be received by a Benedictine monastery with the greatest honour.<sup>95</sup> Boniface himself promoted the use of the Rule at the *Concilium Germanicum* in 742.<sup>96</sup> He might therefore have wanted to make sure he presented himself as having a legitimate purpose underpinning his journeys. He found little more abhorrent than wandering 'holy men' like Aldebert, who believed himself to be a living relic ('he distributed his own fingernails and hairs to be honoured' wrote Boniface), and had claimed to have read a letter sent from heaven by Jesus.<sup>97</sup> It might also be a matter of speculation as to whether he wanted to guard himself against accusations that even as a *peregrinus* he might have indulged in some of the wandering excesses of the Irish as he wandered between Wessex, Frisia, Hesse, Thuringia, Bavaria, Lombardy and Rome. His attachment to the *Regula s. Benedicti* seems to have increased greatly as his life progressed, and unregulated wanderings were legislated against at Boniface's reform synods.<sup>98</sup> In the context of Benedictine reforms, moreover, one might wonder if uses of the word *peregrinatio* fail to explain anything about Anglo-Saxon or Frankish ascetic ideals generally as, shorn of Columbanian idealism, the word seemed to indicate little more than a journey undertaken with good intentions.

<sup>94</sup> *Regula s. Benedicti* c. 1, pp. 438-40.

<sup>95</sup> See for example *Regula s. Benedicti* c. 56, p. 622.

<sup>96</sup> *Concilium Germanicum*, Tangl no. 56, p. 101.

<sup>97</sup> On Aldebert, see Tangl nos. 59, 60, 62, pp. 109-18, 123, 127, 160. The quotation is from Boniface, Tangl no. 59, p. 112: 'Ungulas suas et capillos dedit ad honorificandum'. On Aldebert see: N. Zeddies, 'Bonifatius und zwei nützliche Rebellen: die Häretiker Aldebert und Clemens', in M. T. Fögen (ed.), *Ordnung und Aufruhr im Mittelalter. Historische und juristische Studien zur Rebellion* (Frankfurt, 1995), pp. 217-63; P. Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom: Triumph and Diversity AD 200-1000* (Oxford, 1996, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. 2003), pp. 421-3.

<sup>98</sup> Hughes, 'The changing theory', 145; Holdsworth, 'Saint Boniface the monk', p. 63.

It is difficult to look at Boniface's idea of *peregrinatio* in isolation from two events that formed Anglo-Saxon identity: the *adventus Saxonum*, when Germanic tribes invaded and settled in Britain from the fifth century, and the Gregorian mission, when Pope Gregory the Great sent St Augustine to convert the Anglo-Saxons a century later. These events were first recorded fully in *ca* 731 by Bede in Wearmouth-Jarrow. His *Historia ecclesiastica*, as Patrick Wormald has shown, created a united English identity for the disunited Anglo-Saxon tribes, based on Christian ideology rather than historical and political fact.<sup>99</sup> Of the *adventus Saxonum*, Bede wrote that the Angles, Saxons and Jutes had taken over Britain to punish the Britons for their sinfulness.<sup>100</sup> In the process Bede connected events with the exodus of the Israelites, which affirmed the Anglo-Saxons as a chosen people of God, and he connected the idea of migration with the purging of sin.<sup>101</sup> This would become expressed more explicitly elsewhere in the Old English poem *Exodus*.<sup>102</sup> The Anglo-Saxons were, however, heathens when they arrived and their rise to enlightenment occurred only with the decision of Gregory the Great to initiate the conversion of the English. Thus Rome came to have an important part in the Christian identity of the Anglo-Saxons.<sup>103</sup>

The Anglo-Saxons never forgot where they had come from. They spoke and looked like many Germanic peoples, and Frankish observers made few attempts to

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<sup>99</sup> P. Wormald, 'Bede, the Bretwaldas and the origins of the *Gens Anglorum*', in P. Wormald, D. Bullough & R. Collins (eds.), *Ideal and Reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Society* (Oxford, 1983), pp.99-129; P. Wormald, 'The Venerable Bede and the "Church of the English"', in G. Rowell (ed.), *The English Religious Tradition and the Genius of Anglicanism* (Wantage, 1993), pp.13-32. The concept of a single *gens Anglorum* only appears to have developed politically following developments at the court of King Alfred of Wessex late in the ninth century, on which see: S. Foot, 'The making of *Anglecynn*: English identity before the Norman Conquest', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 6<sup>th</sup> series, 6 (1996), 25-49; *eadem*, 'Remembering, forgetting and inventing: attitudes to the past in England at the end of the First Viking Age', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 6<sup>th</sup> series, 9 (1999), 185-200.

<sup>100</sup> Bede, *HE* I. 14, p. 48 and I. 15, p. 52.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, I. 15, p. 52.

<sup>102</sup> See Howe, *Migration and Mythmaking*, esp. pp. 72-107 which discusses the importance of the Israelite exodus in Anglo-Saxon literature at length.

<sup>103</sup> Bullough, 'Hagiography as patriotism', p. 340.

distinguish them from the ‘Old Saxons’ on the continent. According to Bede, Ecgberht had sent the first missionaries to Frisia because of the perceived relationship between these peoples.<sup>104</sup> Boniface too, who may not have known Bede’s *Historia ecclesiastica*,<sup>105</sup> made the connection. In a letter addressed to all the English, he wrote that the Saxons themselves were accustomed to say ‘We are of one blood and one bone.’<sup>106</sup> He hoped that the letter would encourage others to help convert the Germans and related it to salvation by making a familiar pun – the reward for the English or *Angli* would be in the *curia angelorum* – echoing the apocryphal story that Gregory the Great had sent Augustine to England because he thought the *Angli* resembled *angeli*.<sup>107</sup> Boniface employed similar puns in his letter to Eadburga cited above: he hoped his own reward would be in the *curia angelorum* as he worked to bring light to the *tenebrosae anguli Germanicarum*.<sup>108</sup> Boniface’s work stood squarely in relation to both the *adventus Saxonum* and the Gregorian mission.

Furthermore, in numerous references to the sea that separated Britain from the continent, it was clear that the physical geography was in many ways irrelevant because

<sup>104</sup> Bede, *HE* V. 9, p. 476.

<sup>105</sup> Such at least is the argument of Ian Wood in *The Missionary Life*, p. 45. Wood notes that the *HE* is not amongst the works of Bede Boniface requested from Wearmouth-Jarrow (*Tangl* nos. 74, 75, 91, pp. 155-8, 207). Wood also points out that the *HE* was not used by Willibald in the *VB*, although since it is silent on Boniface’s activities one might not be surprised. N. P. Brooks, however, has suggested that some of the questions Boniface asked Nothelm of Canterbury (Boniface, *Tangl* 33, pp. 56-8) imply that the missionary had a scholarly acquaintance with the *HE* (Brooks, ‘English identity from Bede to the Battle of Hastings’, unpublished Henry Loyn Memorial Lecture, University of Cardiff, 2003). The earliest evidence for a copy of the *HE* in the areas of Germany where Boniface worked is in an eighth-century library list from Würzburg (see E. A. Lowe, ‘An eighth-century list of books in a Bodleian manuscript from Würzburg and its probable relation to the *Laudian Acts*’, *Speculum* 3 [1928], 3-15, reprinted in L. Bieler [ed.] *Palaeographical Papers 1907-1965* I [Oxford, 1972], pp. 239-50), so it must have arrived relatively soon after 754 if it had not beforehand.

<sup>106</sup> Boniface, *Tangl* no. 46, pp. 74-5. Boniface was often compared to St Paul by Pope Zacharias, and it might therefore be significant that Boniface’s turn of phrase echoes faintly St Paul in Acts 17. 26-7: ‘[He] hath made of one blood all nations of men [and] that they should seek the Lord’.

<sup>107</sup> Bede, *HE* II. 1, pp. 132-4: ‘Rursus ergo interrogavit, quod esset uocabulum gentis illius. Responsum est quod Angli uocarentur. At ille, “Bene”, inquit, “nam et angelicam habent faciem, et tales angelorum in caelis decet esse coheredes”’. On the likelihood of these puns being genuine, see M. Richter, ‘Bede’s *Angli*: Angles or English?’, *Peritia* 3 (1984), 99-114.

<sup>108</sup> Boniface, *Tangl* no. 30, p. 54.

it could not disrupt the spiritual and ancestral relationships involved in the Anglo-Saxon missions.<sup>109</sup> This seems to have extended to it being important for the Anglo-Saxons to work near the German missionfield, as Boniface wrote to Abbot Fulrad of St Denis requesting that his colleagues (whom Boniface describes as *omnes peregrini*) be allowed to remain in the Maingau after he had died.<sup>110</sup> A clear contrast can be seen with the likes of Columbanus who did not mind where he was so long as he did not return home. For Boniface and his circle to travel to the continent was not for them to enter an ascetic way of life with a clear break with their homeland, but to enter into the continuation or extension of the spiritual progress of the Anglo-Saxons as a race.

If there is a connection between Boniface's perception of the *Angli* and his work for Rome, one might expect to find evidence of the papacy actively promoting the connection. Traditionally the dissemination of the view of the Saxons in Britain as *Angli* is associated with Canterbury rather than Rome;<sup>111</sup> there is, however, ample evidence to support the view that Rome played a more central role than has recently been allowed. Abbot Benedict Biscop of Wearmouth-Jarrow visited Rome four times from Britain and brought back numerous books and ideas with him.<sup>112</sup> Benedict was also accompanied once by his successor, Ceolfrith, who himself sent monks to Rome to obtain privileges for their monastery and who later set out again with an entourage of eighty monks, although he died before he reached his destination.<sup>113</sup> The activities of Benedict, Ceolfrith, Wilfrid and others suggest that there was an active link between Northumbria and Rome in the late-seventh century, rendering Canterbury redundant as the centre

<sup>109</sup> Howe, *Migration and Mythmaking*, pp. 126-8.

<sup>110</sup> Boniface, *Tangl* no. 93, p. 213.

<sup>111</sup> Wormald, 'Bede, the Bretwaldas and the origins of the *gens Anglorum*', p. 125; N. Brooks, 'Canterbury, Rome and the Construction of English Identity', in J. M. H. Smith (ed.), *Early Medieval Rome and the Christian West: Essays in Honour of Donald A. Bullough* (Leiden, 2000), pp. 221-245.

<sup>112</sup> Bede, *Historia abbatum* cc. 2, 4, 6, ed. C. Plummer, *Baedae Opera* (Oxford, 1896), pp. 364-404 at pp. 365-6, 367, 368-9.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, cc. 7, 15, 21, pp. 371, 379-80, 385-6.

from which all-things Roman spread, and providing a close link between Rome and Bede, who wrote at Wearmouth-Jarrow. Meanwhile, Canterbury itself was subjected to renewed Roman influence twice during this period. Firstly, King Egberht of Kent sent the priest Wighard to Rome in 665 in the hope that the monk would become the first native of Kent to be made archbishop but, when Wighard died in Rome, Egberht was instead sent Theodore of Tarsus, a learned man who had been deeply involved in Roman theological disputes.<sup>114</sup> Secondly Berhtwald, Theodore's successor, was forced to visit Rome in 692 to obtain papal support, where he met Pope Sergius I.<sup>115</sup> Both Theodore and Berhtwald went on to be amongst the most influential figures of their age in Britain. With this flow of important figures between Northumbria and Kent on the one hand, and Rome on the other, there is no need to postulate anything other than direct Roman influence on the spread of the concept of a *gens Anglorum* in Britain; Canterbury may well have 'colluded with Rome... to create a new history for a new English people',<sup>116</sup> but it was not the essential factor some modern historians have suggested.

The notion that the papacy was strong enough to initiate any mission in the eighth century has, however, been vigorously challenged because of its weak political position at the time.<sup>117</sup> This need not, of course, have affected the Anglo-Saxons' receptiveness to Roman plans because they revered the institution of the papacy regardless of its standing in the Mediterranean world. Wolfgang Fritze has made a case

<sup>114</sup> Bede, *Historia abbatum* c. 3, p. 366; Bede, *HE* IV. 1, p. 330. On Theodore see M. Lapidge, 'The career of Archbishop Theodore', in M. Lapidge (ed.), *Archbishop Theodore*, Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England 11 (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 1-29, and the other essays contained in that volume.

<sup>115</sup> Bede, *HE* V. 8, p. 474 and V. 11, p. 484.

<sup>116</sup> Brooks, 'Canterbury, Rome and English Identity', p. 246.

<sup>117</sup> See in particular T. Schieffer, 'Angelsachsen und Franken. Zwei Studien zur Kirchengeschichte des 8. Jahrhunderts', *Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur, Abhandlungen der Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaftlichen Klasse, Jahrgang 1950*, 20 (Wiesbaden, 1951), 1327-1539 esp. at 1435-8. Schieffer's argument was developed by H. Löwe in 'Bonifatius und die bayerisch-fränkische Spannung: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Beziehungen zwischen dem Papsttum und den Karolingern', *Jahrbuch für fränkische Landesforschung* 15 (1954), 85-127, who argued that Boniface, as papal legate, would have to have been invited to work in Bavaria by Duke Odilo in 739 rather than sent by Pope Gregory III.

for the notion that the papacy actively promoted the idea of mission in the seventh and eighth centuries, but as an enterprise for all peoples and the whole of the Church.<sup>118</sup> He made a sharp contrast between the idea of universal mission and the idea that the Anglo-Saxons were motivated by notions of shared kinship.<sup>119</sup> His thesis has proved popular – Angenendt hailed it as a ‘seminal contribution to studies of the early Middle Ages’<sup>120</sup> – but it has also had its detractors. Timothy Reuter, for example, observed that Fritze had ‘overstate[d] his case’.<sup>121</sup> One of Fritze’s key arguments against the Anglo-Saxons being motivated by kinship is that Bede lists two non-Germanic peoples that Ecgberht had desired to convert,<sup>122</sup> but this observation ignores that Bede clearly thought that both tribes were also Germanic and that the list appears to be quoted *verbatim* from a fifth-century source.<sup>123</sup> Fritze’s argument that Bede, at least, was inspired by universal mission rather than Germanic kinship therefore seems to distort what Bede actually wrote. There may, however, be something to his argument that the papacy did promote mission in some form.

There are some tantalising examples of connections between the Anglo-Saxons in Britain, the papacy and the beginnings of missions to the continent. Archbishop Berhtwald’s meeting with Sergius is initially intriguing because it presents us with a first (indirect) connection between Willibrord and Boniface. Within three years of the meeting, Sergius had consecrated Willibrord as (arch)bishop over Frisia,<sup>124</sup> and a few years later Boniface met with Berhtwald at Canterbury shortly before he decided to

<sup>118</sup> Fritze, ‘Universalis gentium confessio’, 106-21.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, esp. 121-3.

<sup>120</sup> Angenendt, ‘Willibrord im Dienste der Karolinger’, 104.

<sup>121</sup> T. Reuter, ‘Saint Boniface and Europe’, in T. Reuter (ed.), *The Greatest Englishman: Essays on St Boniface and the Church at Crediton* (Exeter, 1980), pp. 71-94 at p. 94 n. 96.

<sup>122</sup> Fritze, ‘Universalis gentium confessio’, 79-80. See also the recent defence of Fritze by K. Schäferdiek in ‘Fragen der frühen angelsächsischen Festlandmission’, *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 28 (1994), 172-95 at 176-80.

<sup>123</sup> Bede, *HE* V. 9, p. 476. On the list in Bede see Wallace-Hadrill, *Bede’s Ecclesiastical History*, p. 181.

<sup>124</sup> Bede, *HE* V. 10, p. 486.

leave Britain and work in Frisia.<sup>125</sup> Alas, since the sources for the popes at this time are rather thin, it is impossible to detect any identifiable papal machinations at work, but it would not be surprising. Since Gregory had taken the unusually active step in sending Augustine to Britain, the mission and its major players had received support from popes Boniface V, Honorius, John IV, Agatho, Benedict II, Sergius I, and John VI.<sup>126</sup> In the eighth century it was Gregory II who directed Boniface's mission to Germany, perhaps inspired by how his namesake had directed Augustine.<sup>127</sup> It was also Pope Zacharias who first likened Boniface's work to that of St Paul.<sup>128</sup> In the ninth century as well, Pope Nicholas I wrote to Boris, the Bulgar khan, about Gregory and the *Angli*, and to the Danish king Horik II about conversion just as his predecessors had written to the Anglo-Saxon kings two centuries earlier.<sup>129</sup> To a certain but unfortunately indeterminable point, therefore, the papacy stood as a constant influence over much of the missionary activity of the early medieval period.

*The Place of the 'gens Anglorum' in Missionary Hagiography.*

There is, in contrast to the evidence of Bede and Boniface, no suggestion in the eighth- or ninth-century *vitae* that Anglo-Saxon missionaries made their journeys because of a

<sup>125</sup> Willibald, *VB* c. 4, p. 13.

<sup>126</sup> For Boniface V see Bede, *HE* II. 8, 10, 11, pp. 156, 166, 172; for Honorius see Bede, *HE* II. 17, 19, pp. 194, 198; for John IV see Bede, *HE* II. 19, p. 198; for Agatho, and John VI see Bede, *HE* V. 19, p. 522; and for Sergius see Bede, *HE* V. 10, p. 486. Agatho, Benedict II, Sergius and John VI are also mentioned by Stephanus in the *Vita Wilfridi* cc. 29, 31-2, 43, 46, 51-2, 54, pp. 222-7, 238, 241-2, 244-6, 249-50.

<sup>127</sup> Willibald, *VB* c. 5, p. 22; Gregory II, *Tangl* no. 12, pp. 17-18.

<sup>128</sup> Zacharias, *Tangl* no. 57, pp. 102-3.

<sup>129</sup> Nicholas I, *Epistola* no. 99, c. 4 & c. 64, ed. E. Perels, *MGH Epp.* 6 (Hanover, 1925), pp. 572, 590; idem, *Epistola* no. 27, pp. 293-4.

perceived common kinship with the continental Germanic peoples.<sup>130</sup> While *peregrinatio* was considered appropriate as a standard for sanctity, the idea that missionaries were inspired by racial kinship perhaps had less currency as a widespread model for new saints. Many people who read the *vitae* in Bavaria or Gaul were not, of course, related to the same *gentes* and so were unlikely to be inspired by that particular aspect of the Anglo-Saxons' work. Moreover if 'universal mission' was a widely recognised ideal then the Anglo-Saxons' motivations would have had little place in a model account of a mission. It appears that the distinctiveness of particular peoples such as the continental Saxons was glossed over to create an impression of Christian universality in contrast to the reality of cultural and political diversity.<sup>131</sup> At the same time it is perhaps notable that Frankish writers were not even sure what to call the Anglo-Saxons; the anonymous *Vita Alcuini* from Ferrières, for example, variously used the terms *Angli*, *Engelsaxoni* and, less explicably, *Britti* and *Scotti* to describe Anglo-Saxons at Tours.<sup>132</sup> The ideological view of the *Angli* promoted by Bede and Boniface seems to have been little understood outside their close circles.

A contextualised survey of the language used to describe the Anglo-Saxons in the *vitae* supports the argument that the motivations the Anglo-Saxons discussed in letters or in Britain were reinterpreted in continental hagiographies. In the *Vita Bonifatii*, for example, there is only one reference to the *gens Anglorum*: '[Boniface] arrived at the

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<sup>130</sup> This observation is also made by von Padberg in his *Mission und Christianisierung*, p. 67, who concluded simply that it cannot have been that important. The evidence for references to the *Angli* and related concepts in the *vitae* is rather inexpertly discussed by G. Wieland in 'England in the German legends of Anglo-Saxon saints', in M. Korhammer, K. Reichl & H. Sauer (eds.), *Words, Texts & Manuscripts: Studies in Anglo-Saxon Culture Presented to Helmut Gneuss on the Occasion of his Sixty-Fifth Birthday* (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 193-212. While presenting a useful summary of the evidence, Wieland made no use of how different *vitae* related to each other chronologically and repeated some things, for example that Anskar wrote the *VWhad*, that have been outdated since the nineteenth century.

<sup>131</sup> L. E. von Padberg, 'Zum Sachsenbild in hagiographischen Quellen', *Studien zur Sachsenforschung* 12 (1999), 173-91 at 191 calls this '... die Repräsentanz der christlichen Universalität in einer gentilen Welt'.

<sup>132</sup> *VAlc* cc. 1, 4, 18, pp. 185, 186, 193.

place... which unto this day is called 'Lundenwich' [London] in the old language of the Angles and Saxons'.<sup>133</sup> Clearly there is no connection made between race and mission in this phrase. Elsewhere in the text, when discussing Boniface's background, Willibald stated simply that the saint came from 'Brittania' without reference to his racial origins, thus avoiding any nomenclature that might have carried more Germanic overtones.<sup>134</sup> There was a gap, in other words, between Boniface's actual motivations and how his successors at Mainz and Würzburg either wanted or had to portray him in order to have him recognised as a saint. This idea was echoed at Fulda in Eigil's *Vita Sturmi*, in which no mention of Boniface's origins were made. Eigil simply noted that 'at that time [in the 730s] the saintly and venerable Archbishop Boniface came to the region of Noricum', thus introducing the Anglo-Saxon as a fully-fledged saint already, whose *gens* or background needed no comment.<sup>135</sup> Herein perhaps lies the significance of how Boniface was portrayed: to the monks of Fulda he was not defined by anything like his status as a *peregrinus* but was rather a universal saint whose importance transcended time and space.

The *Vita Willehadi* from Bremen comes closest to any reference to an Anglo-Saxon leaving England specifically to convert Germanic pagans:

And so, having accepted consecration as a priest, [Willehad] heard that the hitherto disbelieving and pagan Frisian and Saxon people, abandon their culture of idols, now began to embrace in

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<sup>133</sup> Willibald, *VB* c. 4, p. 16: 'peruenit ad locum... usque hodie antiquo Anglorum Saxonumque vocabulo appellatur Lundenwich'. This phrase is presumably what Wilhelm Levison was referring to when he wrote 'the combined title of "Anglo-Saxon" originated and coalesced on the continent' (*England and the Continent*, p. 92) but, although it occurs in a text connected to the Anglo-Saxon missions, it is clearly not applied to the missions within the text itself.

<sup>134</sup> Willibald, *VB* pref., p. 2.

<sup>135</sup> Eigil, *VS* c. 2, p. 132: 'Tempore quodam sanctus ac venerandus archiepiscopus Bonifatius Noricam regionem ingressus'.

a certain way the mysteries of the Catholic faith and they wished to make clean the ancient blemishes through sacrament.<sup>136</sup>

There is also a reference to the Anglo-Saxons as the *gens Anglorum* rather than as *Saxones* when the power of the Northumbrian king Alchred is described shortly afterwards.<sup>137</sup> There is no explicit connection made between Anglo-Germanic kinship and missionary work, although that might be implied in the passage. The author of the *Vita Willehadi* had, in general, used Alcuin's *Vita Willibrordi* as a model; Alcuin had, however, written only vaguely that 'in the northern parts of the world the harvest was great but the labourers few', and instead put the emphasis on the universal mission of the apostolic decree.<sup>138</sup> The author of the *Vita Willehadi* appears to have thought that *gens* was more important than Alcuin had done, perhaps because he was writing in Saxony where such motivations would have made a Saxon audience more receptive to the cult of Willehad.

The Germanic origins of individual Anglo-Saxons are made clear in other *vitae*, but again little connection was made between common kinship and mission. When Hygeburg, who was English herself, came to write the *vita* about her brothers Willibald and Wynnebald, she described herself as being a member of the *gens Saxonica* but made no comment about the kinship between the *Angli* and *Saxones*.<sup>139</sup> Liudger made the first reference to the *gens Anglorum* in a continental saint's Life when he noted in the *Vita Gregorii* that Boniface was 'from Britain and the race of the English'.<sup>140</sup> Perhaps

<sup>136</sup> *VWhad* c. 1, p. 842: 'Denique, accepta consecratione presbiterii, audivit quod Fresones atque Saxones populi hactenus increduli atque pagani, relicta idolorum cultura, fidei catholicae quodammodo iam coepissent ambire mysteria, ac sacramento vetustatis cuperent maculis emundari'.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, c. 1, p. 842: 'Accessit ergo ad regem qui tunc temporis in gente Anglorum dominabatur, nomine Alachrat'.

<sup>138</sup> Alcuin, *VWbrord* c. 5, p. 119: '... in borealibus mundi messem quidem multam esse, sed operarios paucos'.

<sup>139</sup> Hygeburg, *VWb* prol., p. 86.

<sup>140</sup> Liudger, *VG* c. 1, p. 66: '... de Britannia et gente Anglorum'.

Liudger's education in York under Alcuin was of some influence here.<sup>141</sup> But when he came to write about missionary work Liudger emphasised the importance of non-Saxons as missionaries and missionary targets because he wanted to encourage Frankish nobles to support that work.<sup>142</sup> The universality of mission was again paramount. Bede's work, meanwhile, was influential in Utrecht where the St Martin's monk used the *Historia ecclesiastica* as a source for information on Britain.<sup>143</sup> The same anonymous monk also drew a link between the *Angli* and the *Saxones* when he wrote that 'the blessed Boniface originated from the island called Britain, which is now inhabited by the race of the English, who are thought to trace their descent to the Saxons'.<sup>144</sup> In Germany, however, it was not until Rudolf wrote the *Vita Leobae* in ca 836 that the concept of a *gens Anglorum* was mentioned in a *vita* but, again, there was no connection made with missionary work.<sup>145</sup> These references were followed in ca 850 by similar ones in the Würzburg *Vita Burchardi*.<sup>146</sup> The concept of a *gens Anglorum* only appears to have gained some currency in continental *vitae* early in the ninth century and not in relation to mission; the ideals expressed in the Bonifatian correspondence, therefore, had little

<sup>141</sup> Altfred, *VLger* I. 11, pp. 16-17.

<sup>142</sup> Liudger, *VG* c. 11, p. 75: 'Quidam enim eorum erant de nobili stirpe Francorum, quidam autem et de religiosa gente Anglorum, quidam vero et de novella Dei plantatione diebus nostris inchoata Fresorum et Saxonum, quidam autem et de Baguariis et Suevis praeditis eadem religione, vel de quacumque natione et gente misisset eos Deus'. See H. Löwe, 'Liudger als Zeitkritiker', *Historisches Jahrbuch* 74 (1954), 79-91.

<sup>143</sup> *VaB* c. 6, p. 66, for example, contains passages derived from Bede, *HE* I. 15, p. 50 and III. 19, p. 268.

<sup>144</sup> *VaB* c. 6, p. 66: 'Beatus Bonifacius genitale solum in insula que Britannia dicitur habuit, quam modo gens incolit Anglorum, que a Saxonibus originem traxisse putatur'. The anonymous author also seems to have read the letters of Gregory the Great, for he remarks on the etymology of the word *Angli* that '*Angli* vero ab angulo, id est firmamento regni derivari non absurde dicuntur', echoing Gregory, *Registi* VIII. 29, ed. P. Ewald & L. Hartmann, *MGH Epp.* 2 (Berlin, 1899), p. 30, '*gens Anglorum in mundi angulo posita*'.

<sup>145</sup> Rudolf begins his Life of Leoba proper with the phrase 'In Britannia insula, quam natio Anglorum inhabitat...' (*VL* c. 2, p. 123). Leoba's parents are also described as 'natione Angli' (*VL* c. 6, p. 124), and the lands from which Boniface recruited many of his colleagues was called 'terra Anglorum' by Rudolf (*VL* c. 9, p. 125).

<sup>146</sup> *VBurch* c. 2, p. 47: 'Venerabilis Burchardus, Anglorum genere nobilis...'

influence on the saints' Lives.<sup>147</sup>

### Justifying Why Anglo-Saxon Women Travelled to Germany.

Women played a prominent part in the Anglo-Saxon Church and one might expect to see this mirrored in the Anglo-Saxon missions.<sup>148</sup> According to Rudolf of Fulda, author of the *Vita Leobae*, it was not just men who left Britain to live in Germany but rather religious people of both sexes.<sup>149</sup> It was, however, often frowned on for women to travel long distances.<sup>150</sup> Abbess Eangyth, one of Boniface's early correspondents in England, expressed the desire to travel to Rome for the good of her soul, but also noted that there were many who would disapprove of her actions because they would contravene certain canons.<sup>151</sup> Significantly, from her letter and a reply from Boniface, she does not appear to have been alone in her desires.<sup>152</sup> Boniface appears to have been hesitantly sympathetic, but with the passing of time he came to encourage Archbishop Cuthberht of Canterbury not to allow 'matrons' (*mulierae*) and 'veiled women' (*velatae feminae*) to visit Rome 'because a great part of them perish and few keep their virtue'.<sup>153</sup> Worse

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<sup>147</sup> A further intriguing piece of evidence to support this idea comes from the transmission of Ardeo of Freising's *VH*, especially c. 1, p. 27. In the earlier 'A' recension of the text the English are described, following Gregory the Great again, as the people 'in the most Western corner' ('occidentales tot angulorum'), while in the ninth-century 'B' recension this had been modified to become 'The English of the far West' ('tot occidentales Anglorum').

<sup>148</sup> S. Foot, *Veiled Women 1: The Disappearance of Nuns from Anglo-Saxon England* (Aldershot, 2000), pp. 21-26. See also: Y. Hen, 'Milites Christi utriusque sexus: gender and the politics of conversion in the circle of Boniface', *Revue bénédictine* 109 (1999), 17-31; J. L. Nelson, 'Women and the word in the earlier Middle Ages', in W. J. Shiels & D. Wood (eds.), *Women in the Church*, Studies in Church History 27 (1990), pp. 53-78, reprinted in her *The Frankish World 750-900* (London, 1996), pp. 199-221; D. B. Schneider, 'Anglo-Saxon women in the religious life: a study of the status and position of women in an early medieval society', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Cambridge (1985).

<sup>149</sup> Rudolf, *VL* cc. 9-10, pp. 125-6.

<sup>150</sup> Schneider, 'Anglo-Saxon women', pp. 227-34.

<sup>151</sup> Eangyth, *Tangl* no. 14, p. 25.

<sup>152</sup> Boniface, *Tangl* no. 27, p. 48.

<sup>153</sup> Boniface, *Tangl* no. 78, p. 169: 'quia magna ex parte pereunt [et] paucis remanentibus integris'. Cuthberht does not, however, appear to have followed Boniface's advice: see C. Cubitt, *Anglo-Saxon Church Councils c. 650-c. 850* (Leicester, 1995), p. 105.

still, Boniface continued, this disgraced the whole English Church.<sup>154</sup> Boniface still enlisted the services of the Englishwomen Leoba, Tecla, Cynehilda, Berhtgyth, Cynetruth and Walburga in Germany.<sup>155</sup> The discrepancy between word and deed needs some explanation.

The majority of women who travelled to work in Germany appear to have been related to principal members of Boniface's circle. Cynehilda was, according to Ohtloh's eleventh-century *Vita Bonifatii*, Lull's maternal aunt, while Beortgyth was her daughter and thus Lull's cousin.<sup>156</sup> Walburga, meanwhile, was the sister of the brothers Willibald and Wynnebald, who are often taken to be relatives of Boniface.<sup>157</sup> Leoba was also related to Boniface, who had an unspecified blood tie with Leoba's mother, Æbbe.<sup>158</sup> In Rudolf's telling of events at least, the ties between Boniface and Leoba were so strong that Boniface was said to have insisted that Leoba be buried by his side in Fulda, although in the event the Fulda monks were too uncomfortable with the idea to carry the request through.<sup>159</sup> The presence of these female relatives emphasises again how important kinship ties were to Boniface and his circle, and goes some way to explaining why these women travelled despite the apprehension of many male clergy. These women still did not have licence to wander around unnecessarily. Rudolf, in describing how Boniface summoned Leoba to Germany, emphasised that such a journey was

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<sup>154</sup> Boniface, *Tangl* no. 78, p. 169, 'Quod scandalum est et turpitude totius aecclesiae vestrae'. That this is a specifically English *aecclesiae* is denoted by the description of the fallen women as 'adultera vel meretrix generis Anglorum'.

<sup>155</sup> This list is given in Otloh's *Vita Bonifatii* I. 25, ed. W. Levison, *MGH SRG 57* (Hanover, 1905), pp. 111-217 at p. 138.

<sup>156</sup> Otloh, *Vita Bonifatii* I. 25, p. 138. There is sufficient information in the letters and early *vitae* – much of it summarised above – to make Otloh's list sound at least plausible even if it is not entirely verifiable. Otloh at least attests to the *perception* that Anglo-Saxon women had joined their kin in Germany.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 138; Wolfhard, *Miracula s. Waldburgae* c. 1, p. 539.

<sup>158</sup> Leoba, *Tangl* no. 29, pp. 52-3.

<sup>159</sup> Rudolf, *VL* c. 21, p. 130.

exceptional because Leoba was a particularly pious individual.<sup>160</sup> He wrote that Boniface wanted her to join him in his *peregrinatio* but then emphasised her life in Tauberbischofsheim; perhaps this indicates that, like Boniface, Rudolf meant *peregrinatio* in terms of a spiritual journey rather than wandering around the physical Earth. It is perhaps significant, moreover, that Rudolf was writing after the Benedictine reforms of Benedict of Aniane and Louis the Pious, at a time when *peregrinatio* was less fashionable.

The role of women in the missions was largely restricted to activities behind cloistered walls. Women were encouraged, for example, to pray for the work in *Germania*, providing some solace for the missionaries and other Anglo-Saxons there.<sup>161</sup> Some became abbesses in new foundations, notably Leoba in Taubischofsheim, Tecla in Kitzingen and Ochsenfurt, and Walburga in Heidenheim. The implication of Rudolf in the *Vita Leobae* is that these women were specifically summoned from England to fulfil these roles.<sup>162</sup> To a certain degree this implies a distinct lack of faith in the ability of any available Christian Frankish or Saxon women to act as abbesses and, given Boniface's professed concerns over travelling women, shows how important Boniface thought having the right people was. Indeed Dagmar Schneider has shown that Boniface used more positive language when discussing women going on pilgrimage in his letters to trusted female correspondents than when he wrote about the issue didactically; trust was

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<sup>160</sup> Rudolf, *VL* c. 10, pp. 125-6: '[Bonifatius] cum epistolis legatos direxit ad Tettam abbatissam... desprecans, ut ad solatium suae peregrinationis atque ad auxilium legationis sibi iniunctae transmitteret ei Leobam virginem, quam fama sanctitatis et doctrina virtutum tunc per longinqua divulgaverat et laude celebri multorum ora repleverat'.

<sup>161</sup> See for example *Tangl*, nos. 27, 30, 46, 49, 65, 94, pp. 48-9, 54, 74-5, 78-9, 137, 215.

<sup>162</sup> Rudolf, *VL* c. 10, pp. 125-6: '... monasteria construere coepit, ut ad fidem catholicam populi non tam aecclesiastica gratia quam monachorum ac virginum congregationibus raperentur.' There then follows the account of how Boniface summoned Leoba to lead the female religious, which concludes that 'et monachis quidem Sturmii abbatem praetulit, Leobam vero virginem spiritalem virginum matrem esse decrevit' (c. 11, p. 126).

a key issue.<sup>163</sup> It was probably expected that nuns, and abbesses in particular, would provide a strong Christian example to the local women through their rigorous way of life.<sup>164</sup> They could also play important spiritual roles as teachers and carers of the sick.<sup>165</sup> In these ways women were expected to have critical interactions with the local populace. It might have been important, therefore, to have people that were known and could be relied upon, especially given the concerns of Boniface and Lull over the behaviour of many nuns.<sup>166</sup> With the idea that the *Angli* were somehow special Germanic peoples, it was also probably desirable to have English abbesses as part of the Anglo-Saxon mission. It may have been important in the early years of the missions to encourage known Anglo-Saxon women to risk travelling to Germany to work in the missionfield, although that would come to cause problems by the ninth century when the increased security of the Church in the North meant it was no longer so desirable to have women interact fully with lay communities.<sup>167</sup>

Within the monastic setting, book production and writing were also affected by women in England and Germany. Boniface requested a number of books from abbesses in England, and also commissioned Eadburga to produce a copy of St. Peter's epistles written in gold to impress pagans in Germany.<sup>168</sup> It is possible, despite a paucity of evidence, a similar situation came to develop on the continent where female religious houses were often centres for manuscript production; certainly Fulda and Echternach

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<sup>163</sup> Schneider, 'Anglo-Saxon women', esp. pp. 232-3.

<sup>164</sup> Hen, '*Milites Christi utriusque Sexus*', 29.

<sup>165</sup> Foot, *Veiled Women* 1, p. 59.

<sup>166</sup> Boniface, *Tangl* nos. 78, p. 169, and Lull, *Tangl* no. 128, pp. 265-6.

<sup>167</sup> Schneider, 'Anglo-Saxon women', p. 42 and n. 38; S. Hollis, *Anglo-Saxon Women and the Church: Sharing a Common Fate* (Woodbridge, 1992), p. 279.

<sup>168</sup> Boniface, *Tangl* no. 35, p. 60.

both quickly developed their own *scriptoria* to avoid any reliance on other centres.<sup>169</sup>

Women both facilitated and encouraged the production of *vitae*, with Hygeburg producing the *vitae* about Willibald and Wynnebald, and the *vitae* of Sturm and Leoba being produced for the nuns Angildruth and Hadamout. Despite this, Rudolf also seems to imply that he did not think that women should produce books, recording that the stories of Leoba had to be written down by men from the tales told by four of Leoba's disciples.<sup>170</sup> Yet their writing ability was not without merit; the Aldhelmian prose used by nuns such as Beortgyth, although flawed, was deemed interesting enough to be preserved alongside the letters of Boniface and Lull at Mainz, while Leoba also studied poetry, writing some simple verses for Boniface.<sup>171</sup> Here, as with whether women should travel or not, there appears to be a tension between what the men thought it was useful for women to do (since they could do it well), and what they thought they should do.

It appears from the evidence in general that women played important roles in the Anglo-Saxon missions, although there might have been some apprehension about the initial journey from Britain to join their relatives. This is not, however, always clear in the hagiography. As was seen above, Rudolf of Fulda's portrayal of Leoba's sanctity seemed to note that it was only because of her holiness that it was permissible for her leave her home in Britain. Rudolf thus seems to confirm the connection between migration and perceived sanctity. Similarly Wolfhard later in the ninth century explained

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<sup>169</sup> Hollis, *Anglo-Saxon Women and the Church*, p. 279; R. McKitterick, 'Nuns' scriptoria in England and Francia in the eighth century', *Francia* 19/ 1 (1989), 1-35, reprinted in her *Books, Scribes and Learning in the Frankish Kingdoms*, VII; *eadem*, 'Women and literacy in the early middle ages', in her *Books, Scribes and Learning*, XIII.

<sup>170</sup> Rudolf, *VL* c. 1, p. 122: 'Ego enim gesta illius omnia non didici, sed oauca quae refero a viris venerabilis ad meam notitiam pervenerunt, qui ea quattuor disciularum eius, Agathae videlicet et Teclae, Nanae et Eoleobae'.

<sup>171</sup> Fell, 'Some implications', p. 41; *Tangl* no. 29, p. 53.

the *peregrinatio* of Walburga squarely in relation to the activities of her brothers.<sup>172</sup>

Silence elsewhere might indicate some discomfort at the idea when applied to women; despite Leoba's role in the missions, Willibald only mentions that learned men came from Britain to help Boniface.<sup>173</sup> In the sphere of writing hagiography even Hygeburg, who was clearly an accomplished writer trusted enough by her colleagues to write *vitae* for their community, used a humility *topos* that downplayed her achievements more than any male humility *topoi*.<sup>174</sup> Hygeburg's example might indicate that although the women in the Anglo-Saxon missions were valued practically in the eighth century, there were concerns about their standing in connection with hagiographical records, perhaps because of the worries about women travelling long distances and the spiritual importance of saints' Lives. These concerns might explain why it was only once the distance of time had grown that, in the ninth century, the roles of Leoba, Walburga and others were finally recorded in *vitae*.

### Conclusion.

Central to any definition of sanctity was the ascription of recognised standards of piety. A popular expression of religious feeling in the early Middle Ages was the forsaking of the homeland to live as a *peregrinus pro Christi* away from the support networks of earthly family and community. The ideal of *peregrinatio* was popularised by Irish ascetics such as Columbanus who set up permanent centres on the continent where they could live a rigorous Christian life without having to rely on the support of people back

<sup>172</sup> Wolfhard, *Miracula s. Waldburgae* c. 1, p. 539: '... qui similiter ob amorem caelestis patriae peregrinari cupientes'.

<sup>173</sup> Willibald, *VB* c. 6, p. 34: '... et ex Britanniae partibus servorum Dei plurima ad eum tam lectorum quam etiam scriptorum aliarumque artium eruditorum virorum congregationis convenerat multitudo'.

<sup>174</sup> McKitterick, 'Women and literacy', pp. 30-1 warns against taking the *topos* too literally, as she feared Peter Dronke had in *Women Writers of the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1984), p. 35. It is, nonetheless, a strongly worded humility *topos*: 'Istis omnibus istic sub sacre legis moderamine menentibus ego indigna Saxonica de gente istic venientium novissima et non solum annis, sed et etiam moribus, et de illorum comparatione contribulum meorum quasi omuncula...' (Hygeburg, *VWb* pref., p. 86).

home. The Anglo-Saxons, as people who also left their homelands to live the religious life abroad, have been compared to the Irish. But there were clearly differences in the ways that the Anglo-Saxons and Irish approached the idea of *peregrinatio* even though they used similar Latin words to describe their lifestyles. Particularly among the *Bonifatiuskreise* there were many people who left their homelands to join other members of their family rather than to forsake them, and others who thought of themselves as working to convert their distant Germanic cousins. Many more Anglo-Saxons did not see their break from the homeland as a permanent state of affairs and returned home or else utilised their connections back home to obtain further support for those in the missionfields. The spiritual goals of Anglo-Saxon *peregrinatio* remained similar to the Irish ideal, but the ways individuals approached the lifestyle of a *peregrinus* encouraged the maintenance of earthly ties despite geographical separation.

Hagiographers in the eighth and ninth centuries paid little attention to the actual motivations of the Anglo-Saxons in leaving their homeland and instead sought to reinterpret their actions within ascetic traditions that non-Anglo-Saxon audiences recognised. Thus Boniface, for example, was presented as leaving Wessex for the same reasons an Irish *peregrinus* might have done – to forsake homeland and kin – even though it created a narrative incoherence in the *Vita Bonifatii* when he returned home again a few months later. At the same time the importance of perceived Germanic kinship was passed over, suggesting that it was not a concept that contributed to the image of Anglo-Saxons as new saints. Only in the case of hagiographical accounts of Anglo-Saxon women did the importance of family ties receive much attention and only, it seems, to emphasise that the women had not made the decision to travel themselves.

The reasons why the motivations of the Anglo-Saxons were reinterpreted were largely to specific to each hagiographer. Willibald and Hygeburg, writing as members of the *Bonifatiuskreise*, appear to have been keen to make Boniface and the brothers Willibald and Wynnebald retrospectively conform to expectations of what made a saint in Bavaria. Alcuin, meanwhile, wanted to portray Willibrord in terms that echoed the vocabulary used to describe Boniface. The rise of Benedictinism, it appears, did affect the way some saints – particularly the women – were portrayed because *stabilitas* became a more popular monastic ideal than *peregrinatio*. Some hagiographers passed over the origins or motivations of the missionaries in order to emphasise the universality of mission or sanctity; the more culturally specific the way a saint was defined, the less opportunity there was to promote him or her outside a particular cultural niche.

The traditional twin-explanation of the Anglo-Saxon missions – *peregrinatio* and the desire to convert continental Germanic kin – can no longer be seen as adequate. Attempts to fit the evidence within such a simple breakdown of the Anglo-Saxons' motivations fail to do justice to the variety of ideals expressed by the letters and saints' Lives; they also run the risk of conflating ideas that actually resulted in different kinds of behaviour. It is important to recognise representations of the leaving of the homeland as, in many cases, devices to convey ideas of piety. They also provided a useful strategy that helped fulfil the need to establish special figures from the recent past as saints in the present. Through reinterpretations of the Anglo-Saxons' travels to the continent, the ground was established to justify the new saints as figures worthy of veneration from the perspective of groups with different expectations of what made a saint in the eighth and ninth centuries.

## Chapter 2: Monasteries as Institutions of Sanctity.

Religious houses were central to both the Anglo-Saxon 'missions' and the production of *vitae*. Places like Fulda were founded by missionaries and went on to develop hagiographical traditions about their past. Monastic *vitae* could be employed to commemorate the founders of an institution and the ideals and influences which came to shape its communal life. At the same time, stories about the saint provided *exempla pro imitatione* for the religious community. It was natural for such *exempla* to be drawn from ideals of monastic rules or *regulae*, thus reinforcing the standards of the monastic life through the liturgy or private study. Part of what made a saint one of the 'very special dead', and so worthy of veneration, was his or her appropriateness as a spiritual role model. The relationship between the saint, the monastery and *regulae*, in other words, contributed to definitions of sanctity. St Augustine of Hippo, however, had warned in the fifth century that saints should not be so easy to imitate that anybody could attain their standards; a saint must, in some sense, be inimitable so that people would continue to strive for perfection.<sup>1</sup> A saint might, therefore, also be defined in terms of why his actions transcended expectations of normal monastic behaviour.

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<sup>1</sup> P. Brown, 'Enjoying the saints in late Antiquity', *Early Medieval Europe* 9. 1 (2000), 1-24.

## The Early Monastic Life and Foundations of Willibrord and Boniface.

### *Benedict and Columbanus.*

In the Middle Ages arguably the most influential monastic rule was the Rule of St Benedict of Nursia (d. ca 550).<sup>2</sup> Benedict himself described the work as ‘a little rule for beginners’.<sup>3</sup> This was in essence a set of guidelines intended to regulate communal religious life, covering topics such as the entry of novices into the monastery, the way the community was to elect abbots, and how a monk was to divide his day between manual work, contemplation and prayer, and sleep. These activities were expected to take place on one communal site so, as was seen in chapter one, monks were expected to remain in their home monastery.<sup>4</sup> Benedict’s work was indebted to earlier Rules such as Caesarius of Arles’s *Regula monachorum* and *Regula virginum*.<sup>5</sup> It also drew inspiration from *regulae* such as the *Regula magistri*, although where that contained an autocratic conception of the community led by the abbot, Benedict was at pains to create a more inclusive form of cenobitical living.<sup>6</sup> It was the brethren, for

<sup>2</sup> The classic study on the Rule of Benedict is A. de Vogüé, *La communauté et l'abbé dans la règle de s. Benoît* (Paris & Brussels, 1961), transl. C. Philippi and E. Perkins, *Community and Abbot in the Rule of St Benedict* (2 vols., Kalamazoo, MI, 1979, 1988). A useful summary of the nature of the Rule can be found in C. H. Lawrence, *Medieval Monasticism: Forms of Religious Life in Western Europe in the Middle Ages* (Harlow, 1988, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn. 2001), pp. 18-38. The most recent analysis of the Rule, including reasons for its popularity and a discussion of the nature of its authority, is Conrad Leyser’s *Authority and Asceticism from Augustine to Gregory the Great* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 101-28.

<sup>3</sup> *Regula s. Benedicti* c. 73, ed. A. de Vogüé & J. Neufville, *La Règle de Saint Benoît*, Sources Chrétiennes 181-2 (Paris, 1972), p. 674: ‘minimam... regulam descriptam adiuuante’.

<sup>4</sup> See chapter one, p. 46 and *Regula s. Benedicti* cc. 1, 61, pp. 436-8, 658-60.

<sup>5</sup> Caesarius, *Regula monachorum*, ed. J. Courreau & A. de Vogüé, *Césaire d'Arles: Oeuvres monastiques ii. Oeuvres pour les moines*, Sources Chrétiennes 398 (Paris, 1994), pp. 204-26; Caesarius, *Regula virginum*, ed. J. Courreau & A. de Vogüé, *Césaire d'Arles: Oeuvres monastiques i. Oeuvres pour les moniales*, Sources Chrétiennes 345 (Paris, 1988), pp. 170-273; *Regula magistri*, ed. A. de Vogüé, *La Règle du Maître*, Sources Chrétiennes 105-7 (Paris, 1964). See M. Dunn, *The Emergence of Monasticism: From the Desert Fathers to the Early Middle Ages* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 111-37; Lawrence, *Medieval Monasticism*, pp. 22-3.

<sup>6</sup> *Regula magistri*, ed. A. de Vogüé, *La Règle du Maître*, Sources Chrétiennes 105-7 (Paris, 1964); Dunn, *The Emergence of Monasticism*, p. 120; Lawrence, *Medieval Monasticism*, p. 24. M. Dunn has challenged the accepted view of the *Regula s. Benedicti* by claiming it came before the *Regula magistri*: see her ‘Mastering Benedict: monastic rules and their authors in the early medieval West’, *English Historical Review* 416 (1990), pp. 567-83. Many scholars have, however, remained unmoved: see A. de Vogüé, ‘The Master and Benedict: a reply’, *English Historical Review* 418 (1992), 95-103 (with a response from Dunn, ‘The Master and Benedict: a rejoinder’, *ibid.*, 104-11); M. de Jong, *In Samuel's Image: Child Oblation in the Early Medieval West* (Leiden, 1996), p. 24; Leyser, *Authority and Asceticism*, p. 103 and n. 9.

example, who were expected to choose new abbots, rather than the previous abbot.<sup>7</sup> As will be seen below, these considerations were of great importance in monasteries such as Fulda in the eighth and ninth centuries.

The *Regula s. Benedicti* was rarely followed in its pure form in European monasteries before the ninth century. Its dissemination was, in fact, notably slow, being relatively unknown even in Rome before the tenth century;<sup>8</sup> the idea that the *Regula s. Benedicti* denotes *romanitas* is something of an Anglo-Saxon creation. Far more common throughout Europe were *regulae mixtae* ('mixed Rules'). Like Benedict's Rule itself, abbots (or, perhaps more often, a monastery's founder) would compile their own *regulae* based upon different practices they encountered, read about or just considered practical. Across Europe, therefore, monastic living was governed by a variety of localised practices and observances. The most popular form of the *regula mixta* was that of the Irishman Columbanus, which was disseminated with great success from the monasteries of Luxeuil in Burgundy and Bobbio in Northern Italy with the help of the Merovingian court and thence to England.<sup>9</sup> The Rule was often known as the *Regula sancti Benedicti vel sancti Columbani* in the Merovingian kingdoms, neatly showing how Columbanus had taken Benedict's blueprint and modified it according to his own monastic ideals. In the case of Columbanus, these ideals created what Hugh Lawrence described as 'an ascetic regime so harsh and uncompromising that [it] chill[s] the

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<sup>7</sup> *Regula s. Benedicti* c. 64, pp. 648-52.

<sup>8</sup> G. Ferrari, *Early Roman Monasteries: Notes for the History of Monasteries and Convents at Rome from the V through to the X Century* (Rome, 1957), pp. 379-402.

<sup>9</sup> *Regula coenobialis*, ed. G. S. M. Walker, *Sancti Columbani Opera*, *Scriptores Latini Hiberniae* 2 (Dublin, 1970), pp. 142-69. The best account of the rise of Columbanian monasticism is F. Prinz, *Frühes Mönchtum im Frankenreich. Kultur und Gesellschaft in Gallien, den Rheinlanden und Bayern am Beispiel der monastischen Entwicklung, 4. bis 8. Jahrhundert* (Munich, 1972), pp. 121-51. For a convenient, if brief, English summary see Lawrence, *Medieval Monasticism*, pp. 47-52. See also the essays in H. B. Clarke & M. Brennan, *Columbanus and Merovingian Monasticism*, BAR International Series 113 (Oxford, 1981) and M. Lapidge (ed.), *Columbanus: Studies on the Latin Writings*, *Studies in Celtic History* 17 (Woodbridge, 1997).

blood'.<sup>10</sup> Nonetheless, the success of Columbanus's 'mixed Rule' brought the North an acquaintance with Benedict's precepts.

In England, monasticism was closely connected with the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons. Gregory the Great was deeply interested in monastic rules, and played an crucial role in the popularisation of the *Regula s. Benedicti*.<sup>11</sup> Before he was pope, Gregory wrote the *Dialogi*, which included a hagiographical discussion of the life and example of Benedict.<sup>12</sup> He also entrusted the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons to monks led by Augustine.<sup>13</sup> Not that he envisaged a pure Benedictine order in Britain: Gregory encouraged Augustine to adopt practices from Gaul that the monk thought beneficial to the religious life amongst the English.<sup>14</sup> Thus English monasticism was intended to be guided by mixed rules almost from its inception. The *Regula s. Benedicti* was clearly important in some Anglo-Saxon centres as time progressed. Stephanus attributed the full introduction of the *regula* to St Wilfrid, who established it as the basis of monastic life at Ripon.<sup>15</sup> The oldest surviving full copy of the Rule – Oxford University, Bodleian

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<sup>10</sup> Lawrence, *Medieval Monasticism*, p. 43. Jane Stevenson has explained the severity of the Rule in terms of Columbanus's attempts to preserve his own standards of monasticism: see J. B. Stevenson, 'The monastic rules of Columbanus', in Lapidge, *Columbanus*, pp. 203-16.

<sup>11</sup> On the importance of Gregory to later veneration for Benedict of Nursia, see K. Hallinger, 'Developments in the cult and devotion to St Benedict', *American Benedictine Review* 36. 2 (1985), 195-214.

<sup>12</sup> Gregory the Great, *Dialogi*, ed. A. de Vogüé, *Grégoire le Grand: Dialogues*, Sources Chrétiennes 251, 260, 265 (Paris, 1978-80); the 'Life of Benedict' is *Dialogi* II, *Sources Chrétiennes* 260, pp. 120-249. The *Dialogi* were written by Gregory in response to the Lombard sack of Monte Cassino in 577 with the intention of giving the brethren who fled to Rome renewed monastic discipline. On Gregory see: R. A. Markus, *Gregory the Great and his World* (Cambridge, 1997); Leyser, *Authority and Asceticism*, pp. 131-87.

<sup>13</sup> Bede, *HE* I. 23, p. 68.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, I. 27, p. 80; P. Meyvaert, 'Diversity within unity: a Gregorian theme', *Heythrop Journal* 4 (1963), 141-62; H. Mayr-Harting, *The Coming of Christianity to Anglo-Saxon England* (London, 1972, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn. 1991), p. 148.

<sup>15</sup> Stephanus, *Vita Wilfridi* c. 14, ed. W. Levison, *MGH SRM* 6 (Hanover, 1913), pp. 193-263 at p. 209; D. H. Farmer, 'St Wilfrid', in D. P. Kirby (ed.), *Saint Wilfrid at Hexham* (Newcastle, 1974), pp. 35-59 at pp. 44 and 46. It is unlikely that Wilfrid's influence at Ripon was continuous or strong enough to impose the *Regula s. Benedicti* to the exclusion of other *regulae*, nor is it clear that Wilfrid would have wanted to if it meant losing control of abbatial elections: Farmer, 'St Wilfrid', p. 57; A. van Berkum, 'Willibrord en Wilfrid. Een onderzoek naar hun wederzijdse betrekkingen', *Sacris erudiri* 23 (1978/9), 347-415 at 370-5.

Library, Hatton MS 48 – comes from south-western England *ca* 700, possibly from Bath or Worcester.<sup>16</sup> It is, however, more than likely that even there the house Rule was a mixed one.<sup>17</sup> In Northumbria, too, the *Vita Cuthberti* and Bede's *Historia abbatum* attest to mixed Rules derived from the *Regula* being followed at Lindisfarne and Wearmouth-Jarrow respectively.<sup>18</sup> The *Regula s. Benedicti* therefore had a place in early Anglo-Saxon monasticism, but by no means an exclusive one.

### *Willibrord, Alcuin and Irish Monasticism.*

The attachment of Willibrord to Northumbrian or Irish monasticism remains unclear because his career is only known through the works of Bede and Alcuin. Alcuin, however, wrote for a monastic audience at Willibrord's foundation at Echternach so one might expect some attempt at illustrating the relative merits of different kinds of monasticism. Alcuin did write that Willibrord had left Ripon for Ireland to pursue a 'more rigorous lifestyle' (*vita ardore*), and much has been made of this as an illustration of the attraction of stricter Irish monasticism.<sup>19</sup> Yet Alcuin's emphasis is narrower in focus than this implies. The 'rigour' Willibrord was attracted to in the *Vita Willibrordi* was the opportunity to engage in study 'because he had heard that scholastic erudition

<sup>16</sup> Bath is suggested by P. Sims-Williams in his *Religion and Literature in Western England 600-800*, Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England 3 (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 117-18; Worcester is suggested by H. Mayr-Harting in his *The Venerable Bede, The Rule of St Benedict and Social Class*, Jarrow Lecture 1976 (Jarrow, 1977), p. 8.

<sup>17</sup> P. Wormald, 'Bede and Benedict Biscop', in G. Bonner (ed.), *Famulus Christi: Essays in Commemoration of the Thirteenth Centenary of the Birth of the Venerable Bede* (London, 1976), pp. 141-69 at pp. 145-6; Mayr-Harting, *The Venerable Bede*, p. 7; Sims-Williams, *Religion and Literature*, pp. 117-18; Dunn, *The Emergence of Monasticism*, pp. 193-4.

<sup>18</sup> *Vita Cuthberti auctore anonymae* III. 1, ed. & transl. B. Colgrave, *Two Lives of St Cuthbert: A Life by an Anonymous Monk of Lindisfarne and Bede's Prose Life* (Cambridge, 1940), pp. 59-139 at pp. 94-6; Bede, *Historia abbatum* c. 11, ed. C. Plummer, *Baedae Opera Historica* I (2 vols., Oxford, 1896), pp. 364-87 at pp. 374-5. See Mayr-Harting, *The Coming of Christianity*, pp. 154, 157, 162, and Wormald, 'Bede and Benedict Biscop', p. 141-3.

<sup>19</sup> Alcuin, *VWbrord* c. 4, p. 118; A. G. Weiler, *Willibrords Missie: Christendom en Cultuur in de Zevende en Achste Eeuw* (Hilversum, 1989), p. 85 and van Berkum, 'Willibrord en Wilfried', 385-4.

flourished in Ireland'.<sup>20</sup> Nothing further is said about Irish monasticism. The description of Willibrord's attraction to monastic houses fits neatly with Alcuin's love of learning and – if Charlemagne's letter is to be believed – a relatively adaptable perception of monastic living.<sup>21</sup> Alcuin did not suggest that Willibrord's experiences of any monasticism were important to the later foundation and discipline of Echternach.<sup>22</sup> The extent to which Willibrord's sanctity was defined in relation to Echternach's monastic order seems minimal; the audience and form of a *vitae* was not enough to indicate authorial intention.

*Boniface, Willibald and Wessex.*

The priest Willibald, author of the *Vita Bonifatii*, appeared to envisage as wide an audience as possible for his work, in contrast to the limited monastic address of Alcuin's *Vita Willibrordi*, but was more explicit about monastic order. He claimed, for example, that Boniface was accepted as an oblate only after the abbot had consulted his community – something more in keeping with Columbanian than Benedictine monasticism –<sup>23</sup> but also states that life at Nursling was lived *secundum praefinitam*

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<sup>20</sup> Alcuin, *VWbrord* c. 4, pp. 118-19: 'Et quia in Hibernia scolasticam eruditionem viguisse audivit...' On England and the attraction of Irish learning, see in particular K. Hughes, 'Evidence for contacts between the churches of the Irish and English from the Synod of Whitby to the Viking Age', in P. Clemoes & K. Hughes (eds.), *England Before the Conquest: Studies in Primary Sources Presented to Dorothy Whitelock* (Cambridge, 1971), pp. 49-67, and J. Campbell, 'The debt of the early English Church to Ireland', in P. Ní Chatháin & M. Richter, *Irland und die Christenheit* (Stuttgart, 1987), pp. 332-346. Campbell warned that it is, however, difficult to assess precisely what influence Irish learning had on the Anglo-Saxons (*ibid.*, esp. at pp. 341, 343).

<sup>21</sup> Alcuin, *Epistola* no. 247, ed. E. Dümmler, *MGH Epp.* 4 (Berlin, 1895), p. 400; On some of Alcuin's intellectual interests, see: D. A. Bullough, *Alcuin: Achievement and Reputation* (Leiden, 2004), pp. 127-470; A. Orchard, 'Wish you were here: Alcuin's court poetry and the boys back home', in S. Rees Jones, R. Marks & A. J. Minnis (eds.), *Courts and Regions in Medieval Europe* (York, 2000), pp. 21-43.

<sup>22</sup> On the audience for the *Vita Willibrordi* see *The Missionary Life: Saints and the Evangelisation of Europe 400-1050* (Harlow, 2001), pp. 81-3. The work was addressed to Beornrad of Sens who became abbot of Echternach shortly afterwards, and Alcuin also produced a verse version of the text for the liturgy of a monastery at this time.

<sup>23</sup> C. Holdsworth, 'Saint Boniface the monk', in T. Reuter (ed.), *The Greatest Englishman: Essays on Saint Boniface and the Church at Crediton* (Exeter, 1980), pp. 47-68, pp. 55-6. On early medieval child oblation, including discussion of Boniface, see de Jong, *In Samuel's Image*.

*beati patris Benedicti rectae constitutionis formam insisteret.*<sup>24</sup> Boniface certainly promoted the *Regula s. Benedicti* later in his life, and made it a central tenet of his reforms at the 742 *Concilium Germanicum*.<sup>25</sup> These reforms were also continued by Chrodegang of Metz after Boniface's death, making them a current as well as a past concern for Willibald when he was writing the *Vita Bonifatii*.<sup>26</sup> But whether Boniface always followed that Rule alone or a mixed Rule has been the subject of some debate. Despite Wilhelm Levison's confident assertion that Boniface was 'trained in the spirit of St Benedict' in the monasteries of his youth,<sup>27</sup> Christopher Holdsworth has convincingly shown that the *Vita Bonifatii* illustrates what was at best a 'mixed Rule', combining a number of different Rules.<sup>28</sup> C. H. Talbot described the phrase about St Benedict in the *Vita Bonifatii* as 'a remarkable circumlocution that probably means that Boniface particularly liked some aspects of Benedict's Rule, not that he lived in a monastery particularly governed by that Rule'.<sup>29</sup> It is therefore impossible to ascertain whether Boniface left Britain with anything more than a passing acquaintance with the *Regula s. Benedicti*. What the passage does illustrate, however, is that Boniface was portrayed as a

<sup>24</sup> Willibald, *VB* c. 2, p. 10: 'according to the prescribed shape of the regulated law of the blessed father Benedict.'

<sup>25</sup> For Boniface's later promotion of the *Regula s. Benedicti* see the 'Concilium Germanicum', *Tangl* no. 56, p. 101. T. Schieffer, *Wifrid-Bonifatius und die christliche Grundlegung Europas* (Freiburg, 1954, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. Darmstadt, 1972), p. 210; W. Hartmann, *Die Synoden der Karolingerzeiten im Frankenreich und in Italien* (Paderborn, 1989), p. 52; M. de Jong, 'Carolingian monasticism: the power of prayer', in R. McKitterick (ed.), *The New Cambridge Medieval History II: c. 750-c.950* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 622-53 at pp. 629-30.

<sup>26</sup> On the overlap between the reforms of Boniface and Chrodegang, see: T. Schieffer, 'Angelsachsen und Franken. Zwei Studien zur Kirchengeschichte des 8. Jahrhunderts', *Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur, Abhandlungen der Geistes- und Socialwissenschaftlichen Klasse, Jahrgang 1950*, 20 (Wiesbaden, 1951), 1327-1539 at 1456-63; E. Ewig, 'Beobachtungen zur Entwicklung der fränkischen Reichskirche unter Chrodegang von Metz', in H. Atsma (ed.), *Spätantikes und fränkisches Gallien. Gesammelte Schriften (1952-73)*, Beihefte der Francia 3/2 (Sigmaringen, 1979), pp. 220-231 at pp. 225-8 (originally in *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 2 [1968], 67-77); *idem*, 'Saint Chrodegang et la réforme de l'église franque', in Atsma, *Spätantikes und fränkisches Gallien*, pp. 232-59 at pp. 238-40 (originally in *Saint Chrodegang* [Metz, 1967], pp. 25-53).

<sup>27</sup> W. Levison, *England and the Continent in the Eighth Century. The Ford Lectures Delivered in the University of Oxford in the Hilary Term 1943* (Oxford, 1946), p. 71.

<sup>28</sup> Holdsworth, 'Saint Boniface the monk', pp. 54-57.

<sup>29</sup> *The Life of Saint Boniface*, transl. C. H. Talbot, in T. F. X. Noble & T. Head (eds.), *Soldiers of Christ: Saints and Saints' Lives from Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (Philadelphia, 1995), p. 114, n. 15.

saint grounded in the principles he himself had wished others to follow in the 740s and which people like Chrodegang continued to develop in the 750s and 760s.

The early continental monastic foundations of Boniface are also described in oblique terms in the early hagiography. Willibald wrote that Amöneburg, Boniface's first foundation, was established simply so that the word of faith could be followed.<sup>30</sup> Little more is said about Ohrdruf, which is described simply as a place for work.<sup>31</sup> The two monasteries probably followed a mixed rule and played strategic roles in the expansion of Carolingian authority, but all that can be said from the *Vita Bonifatii* is that they were important simply because Boniface founded them.<sup>32</sup> Insofar as Amöneburg and Ohrdruf reflect Boniface's sanctity, it is as a founder of monasteries rather as a man imbued with any particular commitment to monastic *regulae*. Far more is known about Fritzlar because of a letter Boniface wrote reordering the monastery on the death of Wigbert I, its first abbot, and a *Vita Wigberti* that was written about that abbot.<sup>33</sup> (Willibald noted only that there was a church at Fritzlar.)<sup>34</sup> Friedrich Prinz argued that, as a forerunner of Boniface's Benedictine foundation at Fulda, Fritzlar was probably also governed by the *Regula s. Benedicti*.<sup>35</sup> Yet nowhere is this made explicit, and Semmler has instead characterised the image of Fritzlar as having a fluid *regula mixta*.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Willibald, *VB* c. 5, p. 26: 'Qui etiam, statim proficiscens pervenit et locum, cui nomen inscribitur Amanaburch, iuxta apostolum "enutritus verbis fidei et bonae doctrinae, quam adsecutus est"' (I Tim. 4. 6).

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, c. 6, pp. 33-4: '... constructum est in loco quae dicitur Orthorpf, qui propriis sibi more apostolico minibus victum vestitum que instanter laborando adquesierunt'.

<sup>32</sup> Prinz, *Frühes Mönchtum*, p. 238; Semmler, 'Instituta sancti Bonifatii. Fulda im Widerstreit der Observanzen' in G. Schimpf (ed.), *Kloster Fulda in der Welt der Karolinger und Ottonen*, Fuldaer Studien 7 (Frankfurt, 1996), pp. 79-103 at pp. 80-1.

<sup>33</sup> *Boniface, Tangl* no. 40, pp. 64-5; Lupus, *Vita Wigberti*, ed. O. Holder-Egger, *MGH SS* 15 i, pp. 39-43.

<sup>34</sup> Willibald, *VB* c. 6, p. 35.

<sup>35</sup> Prinz, *Frühes Mönchtum*, pp. 236-7 and p. 248 n. 389. See also de Jong, 'Carolingian monasticism', pp. 623-4.

<sup>36</sup> Semmler, 'Instituta sancti Bonifatii', pp. 82-3.

The *Vita Wigberti* simply says that Wigbert was consecrated abbot ‘in order that the monastery might follow religious norms’ and that Megingoz, the future bishop of Würzburg, had had to coerce the Fritslar brethren into following the correct lifestyle.<sup>37</sup> As with Amöneburg and Ohrdruf, no claim about monastic rules are made except to emphasise the importance of Boniface as the founder.

### Images of Monastic *regulae* in Bavaria.

*Willibald, Monte Cassino and the transmission of the Regula s. Benedicti.*

The clearest connection between the Anglo-Saxons in Germany and the *Regula s. Benedicti* can be seen in the career of Willibald, who allegedly spent ten years following the Rule at Monte Cassino between 730 and 740.<sup>38</sup> The monastery was not, however, portrayed as a particularly thriving centre by Hygeburg. Willibald is said to have found ‘only a few monks there’.<sup>39</sup> Moreover, although Willibald ‘learned much from their careful teaching’, he in turn allegedly taught them ‘what was the real spirit of their institute’ by following the Rule carefully.<sup>40</sup> Nonetheless Hygeburg puts great emphasis on how Willibald’s ten years in the monastery imbued the saint with a firm understanding of the observances of Benedict’s Rule. The different positions Willibald held are recalled, as Hygeburg outlined how he moved from being a sacristan of the church in his first year to finally leading visitors ‘in the traditional path of monastic

<sup>37</sup> Lupus, *Vita Wigberti* c. 5, pp. 39-40: ‘... Wigbertum sacerdotem secundi ordinis cenobio suo, cui nomen est gentili Germanorum lingua Friteslar, magistrum prefecit, uti monasticae illic religionis ... componeret. Ibi cum Megingozo... diu conversatus est, et laxam antehac et fluidam fratrum conversationem ad normam suae vitae coercuit, quae procul dubio Sanctarum Scripturarum regebatur auctoritate’.

<sup>38</sup> Hygeburg, *VWb* c. 5, p. 102; Levison, *England and the Continent*, p. 103.

<sup>39</sup> Hygeburg, *VWb* c. 5, p. 102: ‘... ibi nisi paucos monachos...’

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, c. 5, p. 102: ‘... Statimque illi magna mentis moderamine et dogmatum ingenio felicem fratrem contuberniam sedulis disputationum admonitiis, non solum verbis, sed morum venustatis visitando docebat et recte constitutionis formam et cenobialis vitae normam in semet ipso ostendendo prebebat, ita ut omnium amorem seu timorem in ipsum provocando arcessivit’. See Semmler, ‘*Institutia sancti Bonifatii*’, p. 84.

life'.<sup>41</sup> A two-way process is described in these passages: Willibald's monastic discipline was reinvigorated by his connection with Saint Benedict's own monasteries, while Willibald himself reinvigorated the following of the Rule itself. The saint's relationship with a place of spiritual importance is significant to Hygeburg's interpretation of Willibald as a saintly figure, but in turn Willibald came to embody the virtues associated with that place.

The story of Willibald's years in Monte Cassino set the scene for Hygeburg to portray the saint as a classic 'Holy Man' once he reached Bavaria.<sup>42</sup> After Willibald had journeyed to Germany at the request of Boniface, he was consecrated as a bishop. He then established the monastery of Eichstätt, which became the focal point for Willibald's episcopal and monastic work.<sup>43</sup> His pious example, in the model of a holy man, attracted many to the faith and encouraged Christian discipline. It is clear that Willibald was here credited with bringing the true spirit of Christianity to Bavaria, supplementing the pre-existing episcopal organisation. At the heart of this new, vigorous Christianity was, of course, the *Regula s. Benedicti*.<sup>44</sup> Through the observance of the Rule, Willibald's community was able to turn the 'wilderness' of Eichstätt into a well-cultivated site with riches akin to nectar and honey; Hygeburg's audience was to be left in no doubt as to the power and impact of Willibald's ascetic living.

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<sup>41</sup> Hygeburg, *VWb* c. 5, p. 102: '... alios cum illo in veneranda regularis vitae vestigial preibando perducebat...'

<sup>42</sup> The classic exposition of the role of a holy man in a community remains Peter Brown's 'The rise and function of the holy man in Late Antiquity', in P. Brown (ed.), *Society and the Holy in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley, 1982), pp. 103-152.

<sup>43</sup> Hygeburg, *VWb* c. 6, p. 105; Prinz, *Frühes Mönchtum*, pp. 253-4.

<sup>44</sup> Hygeburg, *VWb* c. 6, p. 105: '... et in loco que dicitur Eihstat monasterium construere incipiebat atque oeco ibidem sacram monasterialis vitae disciplinam in usum prioris vitae, quod videndo ad Sanctum Benedictum...'

It is clear that, despite what Hygeburg wrote, the *Regula s. Benedicti* was again only one part of the monastic rule at Eichstätt. The simple fact that Willibald was a bishop of a monastery may suggest insular influences.<sup>45</sup> The close connection between monks and clerics threatened the eremitical qualities of the *Regula s. Benedicti* by bringing monks into the world. This does not appear to have been a concern to Hygeburg: she wrote that Wynnebald, despite having left Mainz for Heidenheim in search of a more rigorous monastic life, still spent time preaching in Bavaria because of the residual paganism in the region.<sup>46</sup> The *regula mixta* of the *instituta sancti Bonifatii* is clearly evident.<sup>47</sup> Nonetheless Monte Cassino was again emphasised as the institutional and spiritual beacon for the Anglo-Saxons' monasticism around Eichstätt when Hygeburg recounted how Wynnebald wished to see out his days at the Italian monastery.<sup>48</sup> It is almost as if Monte Cassino did not so much represent the authority and orthodoxy of Benedictine monasticism alone, but also the *regula mixta* that had grown up around the *Regula s. Benedicti*. It provided an institutional authority to a collection of practices that were otherwise personal to the abbots and other religious figures who established them – a timeless symbol of monastic ideals standing in contrast to the temporality and fragility of human lives. Figures like Willibald and Wynnebald were

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<sup>45</sup> This has been the argument of Arnold Angenendt in his 'Willibald zwischen Mönchtum und Bischofsamt', in H. Dickerhof, E. Reiter & S. Weinfurter (eds). *Der heilige Willibald – Klosterbischof oder Bistumgründer?*, Eichstätter Studien 30 (Regensburg, 1990), pp. 143-70 at pp. 156-60. See also, for a general statement about monastic bishops, de Jong, 'Carolingian monasticism', pp. 627-8. The idea of Irish monastic bishops is problematical, and the differences between the structure of the Irish and continental Churches is often exaggerated: see T. M. Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland* (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 241-64 and esp. pp. 242-3. If monasteries were important as episcopal centres in Ireland it was because of practical problems such as the lack of towns: see, for example, the suggestions in K. Hughes, *The Church in Early Irish Society* (London, 1966), pp. 57-102. Willibald's position too could have been a matter of pragmatism if he was, as Andreas Bigelmair suggested, simply unable to take up a position as bishop of Erfurt ('Die Gründung der mitteleuropäischen Bistümer', in *Sankt Bonifatius. Gedenkgabe zum zwölfhundertsten Todestag* [Fulda, 1954], pp. 247-87 at pp. 281-2). Nonetheless his position as bishop of a monastery was certainly not entirely orthodox.

<sup>46</sup> Hygeburg, *VWyn* c. 7, pp. 111-12.

<sup>47</sup> Semmler, 'Instituta sancti Bonifatii', pp. 85-7.

<sup>48</sup> Hygeburg, *VWyn* c. 8, p. 113: '... Cumque mens iam in eo devotus et multo agilior quam corpus proferre poterat, magna mente devotione cupiebat, ut ad Sanctum Benedictum pergeret et ibi vitam finiret...'

important in Hygeburg's *vitae* because of their example, but they were not the most important people in their world as they stood alongside figures like Boniface, Pope Gregory III and the abbot Petronax; their association with places like Monte Cassino and Rome, however, helped give weight to the ideas they had come to represent in the *vitae*.

*Hygeburg's 'Vita Willibaldi' as a response to Arbeo of Freising.*

There is an earlier Bavarian *vita* that claims that the *Regula s. Benedicti* was already followed in the region before Willibald's time: Arbeo of Freising's *Vita Corbiniani*, written in *ca* 770. The work has been demonstrated to have been written as a reply to claims in the *Vita Bonifatii* about Boniface's impact on the Bavarian Church.<sup>49</sup> In part Arbeo's motivation was probably related to the fact that he belonged to the same circles as Virgil of Salzburg, Boniface's sometime opponent, for whom Arbeo wrote the work.<sup>50</sup> Despite the apparent opposition to the memory of Boniface, it would appear that Arbeo's *vitae* – he also wrote a saint's Life about Emmeram of Freising – renegotiated the significance of Boniface's work rather than denied that he did anything in Bavaria, because the Freising library preserved what is now the oldest extant manuscript of the *Vita Bonifatii*. Direct denial would have been impossible: Boniface, as a martyr, was still an important part of the Germanic Christian world whether Arbeo fully believed his

<sup>49</sup> I. N. Wood, 'Missionary hagiography in the eighth and ninth centuries', in K. Brunner & B. Merta (eds.), *Ethnogenese und Überlieferung: Angewandte Methoden der Frühmittelalterforschung* (Vienna, 1994), pp. 189-99 at pp. 191-3; I. N. Wood, *The Merovingian Kingdoms 451-750* (Harlow, 1994), pp. 307-9; I. N. Wood, *The Missionary Life*, pp. 157-8. On the competitive imagery of the papacy in the Anglo-Saxon and Bavarian *vitae*, see chapter three below, pp. 154-7.

<sup>50</sup> Arbeo, *VCorb* pref., p. 188. On the disputes between Boniface and Virgil, see: H. Löwe, 'Ein literarischer Widersacher des Bonifatius. Virgil von Salzburg und die Kosmographie des Aethicus Ister', *Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur, Abhandlungen der Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaftlichen Klasse, Jahrgang 1951*, 11 (Wiesbaden, 1952), 903-83; P. P. Ó'Neil, 'Bonifaz und Virgil: Konflikt zweier Kulturen', in H. Dopsch & R. Juffinger (eds.), *Virgil von Salzburg, Missionar und Gelehrter* (Salzburg, 1985), pp. 76-83. See also chapter one, pp. 59-60.

achievements or not, and the saint was also venerated by the Carolingian family, to whom Arbeo was sympathetic.<sup>51</sup> It is even possible that Boniface and Willibald originally undertook their work in Bavaria at the request of Duke Odilo.<sup>52</sup>

Everything that is known about Corbinian is derived from Arbeo's *vita*, making it difficult to assess for its truth values and to disassociate what is 'known' of Corbinian's career from the shadow of Boniface. He came from the region of Melun, and allegedly worked simultaneously with Pippin II and Gregory II even though this is impossible.<sup>53</sup> In Bavaria his significance was first as a holy man who from time to time advised leading figures in the region, and later because his body was housed at Mais, then Passau, and finally at Freising.<sup>54</sup> This final translation had been undertaken under the aegis of Arbeo himself, so his claims about the saint would have had direct bearing on his own diocese even though it was written for Virgil.

Arbeo presented Corbinian as a man who followed the *Regula s. Benedicti*. This was achieved primarily through a series of verbal borrowings from both the *Regula* and Gregory the Great's *Dialogi*. In chapter three of the *Vita Corbiniani*, which details Corbinian's ascetic early life in *Castro*, the influence of Benedict is apparent in references to monastic cells and silent study.<sup>55</sup> The following chapter also contains

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<sup>51</sup> On Arbeo's political sympathies, see: J. Jahn, 'Bischof Arbeo von Freising und die Politik seiner Zeit', in Brunner & Merta, *Ethnogenese und Überlieferung*, pp. 157-62; S. Airlie, 'Narratives of triumph and ritual submission: Charlemagne's mastering of Bavaria', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 6<sup>th</sup> series, 9 (1999), 93-119 at 102-3.

<sup>52</sup> This is the suggestion of Heinz Löwe in his 'Bonifatius und die bayerisch-fränkische Spannung: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Beziehungen zwischen dem Papsttum und den Karolingern', *Jahrbuch für fränkische Landesforschung* 15 (1954), 85-127 at 96-104. It relies on the argument from Schieffer, 'Angelsachsen und Franken', pp. 1435-8, that the papacy was in no position to attempt active involvement in affairs north of the Alps.

<sup>53</sup> Arbeo, *VCorb* cc. 1, 7, 10, pp. 189, 195, 197. The story that Pippin II countenanced Corbinian's visit to Gregory II is unlikely, given that Pippin died in 714 and Gregory only became pope in 715 (Krusch, *MGH SRG* 16, p. 195, n. 4).

<sup>54</sup> Arbeo, *VCorb*, c. 41, pp. 228-30.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, c. 3, pp. 190-1, which echoes *Regula s. Benedicti* cc. 31, 42, pp. 556, 584.

echoes of the Rule in a passage relating how a thief had stolen Corbinian's mule only for it to have been 'returned to the man of God'.<sup>56</sup> Later Corbinian visited Gregory II in order to obtain permission to continue his pursuit of an ascetic life, which again was explained with direct quotation from the Rule.<sup>57</sup> Corbinian then preached in Bavaria for a time, and his successes were again described with reference to the Rule.<sup>58</sup> The ideas of Benedictine monasticism were therefore an integral part of Arbeo's portrayal of Corbinian's spirituality and, consequently, his nature as a saint.

The image of a Benedictine saint would have had particular resonance for any Anglo-Saxon readers, or even those aware of Anglo-Saxon monasticism on the continent in the eighth century. As Ian Wood has argued recently, Arbeo 'might be seen as deliberately placing the saint within the monastic tradition which the English in general and Boniface in particular were popularising'.<sup>59</sup> Given the context in which Arbeo was writing, this is almost certainly possible. The 'English in general' might have included Willibald: the Anglo-Saxon was still active in the region himself in the 760s and 770s and, as we saw in chapter one, Virgil had included *Uilpald ep[iscopu]s* in his *Necrologica*.<sup>60</sup> The portrayal of Corbinian's activities earlier in the century would almost certainly have been as much a challenge to Willibald as a holy man to Bavaria as it would have been to Boniface as an episcopal organiser. One might therefore begin to see Hygeburg's writings in part as a reply to Arbeo's *vita*. By describing Bavaria as a semi-Christian wilderness, Hygeburg was by implication challenging the historical

<sup>56</sup> Arbeo, *VCorb* c. 4, p. 191, echoing *Regula s. Benedicti* c. 46, p. 108-9.

<sup>57</sup> Arbeo, *VCorb* c. 7, p. 197, quoting *Regula s. Benedicti* c. 48, pp. 594-6.

<sup>58</sup> Arbeo, *VCorb* c. 14, p. 201: 'Tunc beatus vir Dei venerabatur ab omnibus maxime vero a domesticis fidei...' This echoes *Regula s. Benedicti* c. 53, p. 612: 'omnibus congruus honor exhibeatur maxime domesticis fidei et peregrinis' (see Krusch, *MGH SRG* 16, p. 201 n. 5).

<sup>59</sup> Wood, *The Missionary Life*, p. 158.

<sup>60</sup> *Monumenta necrologica monasterii s. Petri Salisburgensis*, ed. S. Herzberg-Fränkell, *MGH Necrologia Germaniae* 2 (Berlin, 1904), pp. 3-64 at p. 26.

significance of figures like Corbinian who, the Anglo-Saxons clearly thought, had not done enough to Christianise the region properly.

### **Benedict of Aniane and the Carolingian Promotion of the *Regula s. Benedicti*.**

The eighth century saw two phases of monastic reform under Boniface and Chrodegang, but by the early ninth century there were renewed calls for reform led by Emperor Louis the Pious and Benedict of Aniane.<sup>61</sup> The extent to which Benedict's reforms could be called a 'reform movement' is debatable, because there was little uniformity amongst reformed monasteries in their timing or in their implementation of the *Regula s. Benedicti*.<sup>62</sup> Nonetheless many of the hagiographical accounts of the Anglo-Saxon missions post-date the *anianischen* reforms, which creates an important factor to consider when examining these sources.<sup>63</sup> Benedict himself was a nobleman from the region of Gothia who was attached to the Carolingian court as a boy.<sup>64</sup> He initially led a secular career, but soon desired to become a monk and, after flirtations with extreme asceticism, eventually became a Benedictine and changed his name from Witiza to

<sup>61</sup> On Benedict of Aniane, see: J. Semmler, 'Benedictus II: una regula – una consuetudo', in W. Lourdaux & D. Verhelst (eds.), *Benedictine Culture 750-1050*, Mediaevalia Lovaniensia series I, studia XI (Leuven, 1983), pp. 1-49; de Jong, 'Carolingian monasticism', pp. 630-4; Lawrence, *Medieval Monasticism*, pp. 73-8. There exists no comprehensive study of the impact of the *anianischen* reform. Rosamond McKitterick, in her *The Frankish Kingdoms Under the Carolingians 751-987* (London, 1983), p. 117, could only identify three case studies of the reforms: E. Lesne, 'Les ordonnances monastiques de Louis le Pieux et la *Notitia de servitio monasteriorum*', *Revue d'Histoire de l'Eglise de France* 6 (1920), 161-75, 321-38, 449-93, which interprets the success of the reform in terms of a list of monasteries that had had, for example, military service imposed upon them; J. Semmler, 'Studien zum *Supplex libellus* und zur *anianischen* Reform in Fulda', *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 69 (1958), 268-98, in which Semmler compared a Fulda list of demands about the monastic life to Benedict's own thought; and J. Semmler, 'Corvey und Herford in der benediktinischen Reformbewegung des 9. Jahrhunderts', *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 4 (1970), 289-319. To this list can now also be added G. Becht-Jördens, 'Die *Vita Aegil* des Brun Candidus als Quelle zu Fragen aus der Geschichte Fuldas im Zeitalter der *anianischen* Reform', *Hessisches Jahrbuch für Landesgeschichte* 42 (1992), 19-48, which builds upon Semmler's study of Fulda with the use of Brun Candidus' hagiographical account of Fulda's demands in the *Vita Aegil*.

<sup>62</sup> Semmler, 'Benedictus II', pp. 28-47; D. Geuenich, 'Kritische Anmerkungen zur sogenannten "anianischen Reform"' in D. Bauer, R. Hiestand & B. Kasten (eds.), *Mönchtum – Kirche – Herrschaft, 750-1000* (Sigmaringen, 1998), pp. 99-112.

<sup>63</sup> Certainly Rudolf's *Vitae Leoba*, Lupus's *Vita Wigberti*, Alfrid's *Vita Liudgeri*, the *Vita Willehadi*, the *Vita Burchardi* and the *Vita altera Bonifatii* were written around the time or later, and maybe also Eigil's *Vita Sturm* (see below).

<sup>64</sup> Ardo, *Vita Benedicti abbatis Anianensis et Indensis* c. 1, ed. G. Waitz, *MGH SS* 15 i (Hanover, 1887) pp. 198-220 at p. 201.

Benedict.<sup>65</sup> Thereafter he became Emperor Louis the Pious' chief religious advisor from 814 to 821. His reform of Carolingian monastic life was promulgated by imperial decree after councils at Aachen in 816 and 817.<sup>66</sup> A *vita* was written about Benedict to celebrate his achievements by Ardo, one of the monks at Benedict's own monastery of Aniane during the ninth century.

When Benedict first became a monk, Ardo wrote, he lived an extreme ascetic lifestyle at St Seine in Dijon. For the two years and six months Benedict fasted, 'endangering his flesh as if it was a bloodthirsty beast'.<sup>67</sup> This Benedict continued to do until 'his face grew gaunt with fasting, his flesh was exhausted by abstinence [and] his shrivelled skin hung from his bones like the dewlaps of cows'.<sup>68</sup> He refused to wash, which led to a colony of lice infesting his skin, and wore such raggedy clothes that even the other monks made fun of him.<sup>69</sup> Throughout this period Ardo presents Benedict as atoning for his earlier secular life, purging his body in order to establish himself ready for the next stage of his life and the promotion of the *Regula s. Benedicti*. At this stage, however, Benedict is said to have followed the examples of the eastern ascetic Basil and the Rule of Pachomius, scorning the *Regula s. Benedicti* as being 'for beginners and weak persons'.<sup>70</sup> The *Regula s. Benedicti* may indeed have been for beginners, but this harsher evaluation of the Rule helped Ardo to establish Benedict of Aniane as a man

<sup>65</sup> Semmler has commented on this name change ('Benedictus II', p. 5) but did not link it specifically to the end of Benedict's extreme asceticism.

<sup>66</sup> *Institutio canonicorum Aquisgranensis*, ed. A. Werminghoff, *MGH Conc.* 2 i (Hanover, 1896), pp. 308-421; *Institutio sancimonialium Aquisgranensis*, ed. A. Werminghoff, *MGH Conc.* 2 i, pp. 421-56. These two decrees were conflated to create the *Capitulare monasticum*, ed. A. Boretius, *MGH Cap.* 1 (Hanover, 1883), pp. 343-9: see J. Semmler, 'Zur Überlieferung der monastischen Gesetzgebung Ludwigs des Frommen', *Deutsches Archiv zur Erforschung des Mittelalters* 16 (1960), pp. 309-88.

<sup>67</sup> Ardo, *Vita Benedicti*, c. 2, p. 202: 'Sic quippe carni suae acsi cruentae bestiae erat infestus...'

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, c. 2, p. 202: 'Pallebant ora ieiuniis, et macie exausta carne, pellis ossibus inherebat hac in modum pallearia bovum rugata pendebat'.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, c. 2, p. 202.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, c. 2, p. 202: 'Regulam quoque beati Benedicti tironibus seu informis positam fore contestans, ad beati Basilii dicta necnon et beati Pacomii regulam scabdere nitens, quamvis exiguis possibilita gereret, iugiter inpossibilia rimabat'. On this period of Benedict of Aniane's life, see Semmler, 'Benedictus II', pp. 5-7.

whose holy discipline transcended the standards of the Rule he would go on to promote. Ardo does not appear to have offered Benedict's early asceticism as an *exemplum pro imitatione* for others. When Benedict was divinely inspired to become an example of salvation to others, then he was 'inflamed with love of the *Regula s. Benedicti*' and committed it to memory. It was probably also at this time that he changed his name in order to symbolise his spiritual commitment to the Rule. Thus, although Benedict had learnt the Rule at St Seine, he had internalised it and become himself an *exemplum* of monastic living entirely distinct from any institutionalised monastic centre like Monte Cassino. Overall Ardo had illustrated part of Benedict of Aniane's sanctity through the ways in which he had come to understand the nature of asceticism and ultimately embody the most appropriate form of monasticism for Ardo's community.

In Ardo's account of the spread of Benedict's influence, the promotion of the *Regula s. Benedicti* did develop an institutional basis but one of Benedict of Aniane's own creation. 'Not building upon another's foundations', Ardo claimed, Benedict 'began with new endeavour to erect houses as well as to expound the strange new way of salvation'.<sup>71</sup> Here, Ardo carefully omitted to mention the violent opposition Benedict had in fact faced in order to preserve the purity of his monastic movement.<sup>72</sup> People still looked to Benedict rather than his foundations for inspiration, but by creating new foundations himself he had established something that would live on after his death.<sup>73</sup> Halfway through the *Vita Benedicti* Ardo promoted the legal claim of the monastery of Aniane as the head of Benedict's monasteries, quoting a charter in which Charlemagne

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<sup>71</sup> Ardo, *Vita Benedicti* c. 3, p. 203: '... non super alienum fundamentum aedificans, sed novo opera construere domos coepit ignotamque salutis pandere curabit viam'.

<sup>72</sup> Semmler, 'Benedictus II', p. 9.

<sup>73</sup> For example Ardo, *Vita Benedicti* c. 6, p. 204: 'Preterea surrexerunt in regione eadem vel circumquaque nonnulli viri religiosi hedificantes monasteria adgregantesque monachos seseque ad exemplum beati viri exercitantes...'

granted the monastery to Benedict in its entirety.<sup>74</sup> The purpose of the charter was to establish immunities that prevented subsequent outside interference in Aniane's affairs. In particular Aniane obtained the privilege that the monastery's brethren could choose their own abbots in accordance with the *Regula s. Benedicti*, so long as those abbots would themselves lead the community in the spirit of Benedict.<sup>75</sup> But Benedict of Aniane still transcended these moves: Louis the Pious set Benedict as the spiritual governor over all the Frankish monasteries, and then Benedict produced the *Concordia regularum* to clarify and improve upon the *Regula s. Benedicti* – achievements given spiritual importance by their inclusion in the *Vita Benedicti*.<sup>76</sup> Josef Semmler has shown that Benedict of Aniane was not, ultimately, successful in establishing a universal set of monastic observances across the Frankish Empire,<sup>77</sup> but this is not evident in the triumphalistic tone of Ardo's work.

The image Ardo created of Benedict of Aniane presented the saint as an important source for the *Regula s. Benedicti*, who went on to found a new institutional basis for the observance of the Rule in the Frankish Empire in the form of new monasteries and texts. Earlier centres like Monte Cassino are notable for how little attention Ardo gives them, mentioning Benedict of Nursia's own monastery only once in passing.<sup>78</sup> Ardo was also scathing of the foundations of the Anglo-Saxons, writing that

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<sup>74</sup> Ardo, *Vita Benedicti* c. 18, pp. 206-8. The practice of putting legal documents in the centre of hagiographical texts was a common way of promoting legal claims: see, for example, Rimbert's *Vita Anskarii* c. 23, ed. G. Waitz, *MGH SRG* 55 (Hanover, 1884), pp. 49-51; Wood, *The Missionary Life*, pp. 126-7.

<sup>75</sup> Ardo, *Vita Benedicti* c. 18, p. 207: '... Et quandoquidem divina vocatione supra scriptus venerabilis Benedictus abbas vel successors eius de hac luce ad Dominum migraverint, qualem meliorem et nobis per omnia fidelem ipsa sancta congregatio de supra scripto monasterio aut qualicumque loco voluerint eligere abbatem, qui ipsam sanctam congregationem secundum regulam sancti Benedicti regere valeat...'

<sup>76</sup> Ardo, *Vita Benedicti* cc. 36-8, pp. 215-17.

<sup>77</sup> Semmler, 'Benedictus II', pp. 28-47.

<sup>78</sup> Ardo, *Vita Benedicti* c. 38, p. 217: '... Quam ob causam quos peritos esse compererat adtente sciscitabatur circa longeque positos, eos etiam qui istis in partibus ad Montem Cassinum accederent, veluti qui non audita solummodo, set visa perciperent'.

‘many monasteries had once been established in the Rule, but little by little firmness had grown lax and regularity of the Rule had almost perished’.<sup>79</sup> It is difficult not to see this as a comment on monasteries like Fulda that Boniface had established specifically to follow the *Regula s. Benedicti* rather than the *Regula sancti Columbani vel sancti Benedicti*. The mood of Ardo’s text is one of spiritual rebirth, with Benedict of Aniane’s personal ascetic journey marking him out as a saint, and then the corresponding rebirth of Carolingian monasticism establishing that status within the context of institutionalised monasticism and the cult of saints.

### **Sanctity and Monastic *Regulae* at Fulda and Tauberbischofsheim.**

#### *Authority and Rule at Fulda.*

At the forefront of the ninth-century Benedictine reforms was Boniface’s foundation of Fulda. The German monastery stands in history as one of the great religious centres of the Carolingian period and beyond.<sup>80</sup> It was founded in 744 and owed much of its early importance to the housing of the martyr’s relics. In the ninth century it grew as a major centre for learning – especially for the recently-conquered Saxons – and produced such important figures as Hrabanus Maurus, an abbot of Fulda (822-42) and later archbishop of Mainz (846-56), and Gottschalk of Orbais, the controversial figure at the centre of the Predestination debate. The monastery also played an important role in disseminating the

<sup>79</sup> Ardo, *Vita Benedicti* c. 36, p. 215: ‘... Multa denique monasteria erant, quae quondam regulariter fuerant institute; sed paulatim tepescente rigore, regularis pene deperierat ordo...’

<sup>80</sup> Fulda has consistently attracted scholars on a variety of subjects. In 1995 the 1250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the monastery’s foundation in particular occasioned G. Schimpf (ed.), *Kloster Fulda in der Welt der Karolinger und Ottonen* – a diverse collection of essays on all aspects of early medieval Fulda. Of these, of particular importance to the early foundation and monastic Rule of Fulda are M.-E. Brunert, ‘Fulda als Kloster in eremo. Zentrale Quellen über die Gründung im Spiegel der hagiographischen Tradition’, pp. 59-78, and J. Semmler, ‘*Institutia sancti Bonifatii*’. A useful consideration of how Fulda fitted into Boniface’s wider objectives is Karl Heinemeyer’s ‘Die Gründung des Klosters Fulda im Rahmen der bonifatianischen Kirchenorganisation’, *Hessisches Jahrbuch für Landesgeschichte* 30 (1980), pp. 1-45. On the archaeology of Fulda, which was the subject of several excavations between 1908 and 1953 that revealed the site to have been a Merovingian manor, see H. Hahn, ‘Die Ausgrabungen am Fuldaer Domplatz 1953’, *Sankt Bonifatius*, pp. 641-86.

*Regula s. Benedicti* following Benedict of Aniane's Benedictine reforms; indeed Brun Candidus's *Vita Ægil*, written at Fulda sometime between 839 and 842, illustrates the strong and programmatic interest of Fulda in such reforms.<sup>81</sup> Some of the origins of the movement can be seen in the crises that beset Fulda during the abbacy of Ratgar (802-816), which resulted in Ratgar's deposition and the election of Eigil in accordance with chapter 64 of the Rule of Benedict.<sup>82</sup> How, then, did these developments at Fulda affect the presentation of monastic rules in the *vitae* produced in Fulda at this time and, consequently, the images of Fulda's saints?

The principal source for Fulda's early years and monastic life is Eigil's *Vita Sturmi*, about the monastery's founder and first abbot Sturm.<sup>83</sup> Eigil, a relative and pupil of Sturm, recounted how Sturm had travelled through the Forest of Bochonia at length looking for a suitable site for a monastery.<sup>84</sup> Once a site had been decided on, the monastery was constructed by Sturm and his brethren.<sup>85</sup> It was not, however, Sturm who initially endowed Fulda with its monastic rule: the monastery was established as Boniface's personal monastery, and thus its patron laid down what he felt to be appropriate guidelines for the community.<sup>86</sup> There may be a case, as Karl Heinemeyer has argued, for seeing the foundation of Fulda as an integral part of Boniface's broader church reforms, in particular relating Fulda's monastic rule to the decree at the *Concilium Germanicum* that 'abbots and monks should follow the rule of saintly father

<sup>81</sup> Becht-Jördens, 'Die *Vita Aegil*', 44-7.

<sup>82</sup> The election of Eigil was the first time an abbot appears to have been elected in a northern monastery in accordance with the Rule of Benedict: see K. Hallinger, 'Regula Benedicti 64 und die Wahlgewohnheiten des 6.-12. Jahrhunderts', *Wiener Studien* 8 (1977), 109-30 at 117.

<sup>83</sup> The best work on Eigil's *VS* perhaps remains Pius Engelbert's introduction to his critical edition of the text, *Die Vita Sturmi des Eigil von Fulda. Literarkritisch-historische Untersuchung und Edition*, Veröffentlichungen der Historischen Kommission für Hessen und Waldeck 29 (Marburg, 1968).

<sup>84</sup> Eigil, *VS* cc. 4-12, pp. 133-43.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, c. 13, pp. 144-5.

<sup>86</sup> Heinemeyer, 'Die Gründung des Klosters Fulda', 30-1; *Tangl* no. 56, p. 101: 'abbates et monachi receperunt sancti patris Benedicti [regulam] ad restaurandam normam regularis vite'.

Benedict to restore norms to the regular life'.<sup>87</sup> It is worth noting, however, that Eigil did not credit Boniface with any role in establishing Benedict's Rule at Fulda. He is even, on one minor point, slightly critical of Boniface's guidelines: Eigil claimed that Boniface had encouraged the monks to drink weak beer and no wine, a decision that was soon relaxed 'in the time of Pippin' to Eigil's approval.<sup>88</sup> Josef Semmler preferred to describe Boniface's monastic standards using a phrase found in a later Fulda document that refers to a *institutia sancti Bonifatii*, which is characterised by a *regula mixta*.<sup>89</sup> There was, of course, no contradiction in Boniface promoting the *Regula s. Benedicti* but with his own amendments since that hitherto been the most common way to use Benedict's guidelines. Eigil's treatment of the question may, however, reveal more about his the arrangements of his own time than in the early days of Fulda.

The Fulda monks suffered a crisis of leadership in the first two decades of the ninth century. Abbot Ratgar had pursued a substantial building programme which became so labour-intensive that the brethren were ordered to spend less time on religious pursuits in order to bring the works to fruition.<sup>90</sup> Such leadership not only offended the religious sensibilities of many of the monks, but led to accusations that Ratgar had abused the office of abbot. Criticisms of his abbacy became more vociferous in 806 after an outbreak of plague killed two-thirds of the brethren and forced many of the others, including Eigil and Hrabanus, to flee. Ratgar clearly had some support within

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<sup>87</sup> Heinemeyer, 'Die Gründung des Klosters Fulda', 27-8.

<sup>88</sup> Eigil, *VS* c. 13, p. 145: 'Qui cum fratribus sacras exposuisset scripturas et quod nusquam vinum monachorum legeret esse, consensus omnium decretum est, ut apud illos nulla potio fortis qua inebriari posit, sed tenuis cerevisia biberetur. Quod post plures annos crescente familia propter aegrotos et imbecilles tempore Pippini regis synodali decreto immutatum est; aliqui tantum ex fratribus usque ad finem vitae suae se a vino et ceteris fortibus potionibus abstinerunt'. On Boniface's decree about alcohol and how it did not fit with traditional Benedictine practices, see Semmler, '*Institutia sancti Bonifatii*', pp. 94-5.

<sup>89</sup> Semmler, '*Institutia sancti Bonifatii*'.

<sup>90</sup> Brun Candidus, *Vita Aegil* c. 5, ed. G. Waitz, *MGH SS* 15 i, pp. 221-33 at p. 224; *Supplex libellus* c. 12, ed. E. Dümmler, *MGH Epp.* 4 (Berlin, 1895), pp. 548-51 at p. 549; Semmler, '*Studien zum Supplex libellus*', 271-2.

the community as well, and Brun Candidus's *Vita Aegil*, our principal source for the disputes, is notable for its careful and measured account of their resolution.<sup>91</sup>

Nonetheless the Fulda monks successfully petitioned Louis the Pious to depose Ratgar in 816, outlining the abbot's offences in the *Supplex libellus*. Petra Kehl has convincingly argued that Eigil's *Vita Sturm* belongs to this time because of parallels between Eigil's concerns and those in the *Supplex libellus*.<sup>92</sup> There is, in particular, a distinct interest in leadership common to the texts and, significantly, Sturm as the founder of monastic order in Fulda.<sup>93</sup> While the role of Boniface in the foundation is generally seen in a positive light, there is a tension between the ideals of the individual and the will of the community over the establishment of monastic discipline; the community may have agreed with Boniface 'by common consent' over weak beer, but they also changed their mind communally. The emphasis on the will of the community was both a distinctly Benedictine trait and an ideal promoted strongly in the *Vita Aegil* in the wake of the deposition of Ratgar. One might therefore detect in the *Vita Sturm* an attempt to resolve Fulda's early past as Boniface's personal monastery with the growing Benedictine feeling aroused by opposition to Ratgar. Eigil perhaps showed that even a saint like Boniface had no authority to dictate to a monastic community if it meant exceeding temporal authority and contradicting the communal will.

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<sup>91</sup> Becht-Jördens, 'Die *Vita Aegil*', 22-3.

<sup>92</sup> P. Kehl, 'Die Entstehungszeit der *Vita Sturm* des Eigil. Versuch einer Neudatierung', *Archiv für mittelrheinische Kirchengeschichte* 46 (1994), pp. 11-20. Her arguments have not found much favour: see, for example, Brunert, 'Fulda als Kloster *in eremo*', p. 59 and L. E. von Padberg, 'Zum Sachsenbild in hagiographischen Quellen', *Studien zur Sachsenforschung* 12 (1999), 173-91 at 176. On the traditional dating of the text – 796 – see Engelbert, *Die Vita Sturm des Eigil von Fulda*, pp. 18-20

<sup>93</sup> Sturm is mentioned in the *Supplex libellus* in c. 1, p. 548, c. 10, p. 549.

Eigil's interest in the proper execution of the office of abbot extends into his account of a dispute between Sturm and Lull.<sup>94</sup> Eigil claimed that Lull had sought control over Fulda upon succeeding Boniface as bishop of Mainz. Normally bishops expected to have some kind of authority over their local monasteries because they formed integral parts of the Christian structure of their sees.<sup>95</sup> Monastic and episcopal living was not always kept distinct, as in the case of Willibald at Eichstätt. Fulda was, however, different from most monasteries because Boniface had sought papal privileges for the monastery, in principle freeing it from any obligation to recognise outside authorities like unscrupulous bishops who might abuse its resources.<sup>96</sup> Lull, according to Eigil, was dissatisfied with this situation and Sturm's insistence on preserving it, and consequently 'bribed' Pippin to obtain permission to impose a certain Marcus as abbot in Sturm's place.<sup>97</sup> The unanimity of the Fulda brethren's actions at this point in Eigil's narrative are striking: they are all forced to accept Marcus, they collectively agree this was a bad idea, they all dismiss him and together go to the court of Pippin to demand the return of Sturm as abbot (although in the interim they unanimously all appoint Prezzold as abbot).<sup>98</sup> In the acceptance and subsequent dismissal of Marcus, one might see a parallel with how the community was able to accept and then dismiss Boniface's views on alcohol; the important, legitimising factor was that the brethren acted together as an collective whole. There are also strong parallels with the dismissal of Ratgar in the *Vita Aegil* in terms of the emphasis on the communal will, echoing the *Regula s. Benedicti* on

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<sup>94</sup> Eigil, *VS* cc. 17-22, pp. 151-7. The principal discussion of the dispute is that of Schieffer in his 'Angelsachsen und Franken', 1500-10. While Schieffer provides a useful analysis of how the dispute might have fitted into the church politics of the 760s, he neglects to ascribe any importance to Eigil as the author of the account.

<sup>95</sup> On the Sturm-Lull dispute as representative as a shift away from this situation, see de Jong, 'Carolingian monasticism', pp. 624-5.

<sup>96</sup> Boniface, *Tangl* nos. 86, 87, 89, pp. 193, 196, 203-4; Eigil, *VS* c. 20, p. 155.

<sup>97</sup> Eigil, *VS* c. 18, p. 151: 'Lullus interim obtinuit apud Pippinum regem munera iniusta tribuendo, ut monasterium Fulda in suum dominium donaretur, acceptaque super illud ditione, abbatem ibi qui sibi per omnia obtemperaret constituit, presbyterum quemdam qui dicebatur Marcus'.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, c. 18, p. 151.

how the appointment of an abbot depended on the communal will.<sup>99</sup> The dispute between Sturm and Lull creates a lesson for the community about the correct relationship between an abbot and his brethren.

Eigil also seems to have been particularly concerned with outside influences on Fulda in the course of the Sturm-Lull debate. There is, as was mentioned above, no other source that indicates that any such dispute ever took place. When Brun Candidus came to write the *Vita Aegil* twenty years later there was no apparent ill-feeling at Fulda towards Lull, if ever there had been. Lull was remembered with honour, for example, as the bishop who had consecrated Eigil as a priest.<sup>100</sup> Caution may therefore be urged in accepting *prima facie* that Lull was really a villain. It might be significant that the entire Sturm-Lull episode appears to be constructed as a prelude to the proclamation that Pippin confirmed the papal privileges Boniface had obtained from Zacharias and the statement ‘the privilege just mentioned is preserved to this day in the monastery’.<sup>101</sup> Two letters amongst the Boniface collection do record that Boniface had appealed to Zacharias for such a grant, using Lull as a messenger, and that Zacharias had agreed to the request.<sup>102</sup> The eighth-century Mainz letter collection Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 8112, contains the ending of such a privilege, but the beginning was on a folio that has been cut out.<sup>103</sup> The earliest surviving full version of the privilege is therefore in the ninth-century manuscript Karlsruhe, Großherzogliche Hof- und

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<sup>99</sup> For example the emphasis on the *fratres* in Brun Candidus, *Vita Aegil* cc. 3-8, pp. 223-5; Becht-Jördens, ‘Die *Vita Aegil*’, p. 29.

<sup>100</sup> Brun Candidus, *Vita Aegil*, c. 2, p. 225: ‘... ordinatur ab Lullo episcopo Mogonticensis ecclesiae presbyter, qui post sanctum Bonifacium magnum et electum Dei pontificum eius urbis episcopatum tenebat primus’. Schieffer, in ‘Angelsachsen und Franken’, 1524, noted that it was intriguing that the only person known to have been consecrated by Lull should have proceeded to show such ill will towards the man. Perhaps, though, the fact that we know this only from Brun Candidus suggests that under Hrabanus Maurus there were efforts afoot to create a new relationship between Fulda and Mainz.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, c. 20, p. 155: ‘Quod privilegium, usque hodie in monasterio conservatum...’

<sup>102</sup> Boniface, *Tangl* nos. 86, 87, pp. 193, 197.

<sup>103</sup> Tangl, *Die Briefe des heilige Bonifatius und Lullus*, p. vi. Tangl reconstructed the text from later copies of the manuscript.

Landbibliothek Rastatt, 22, but this represents an interpolated Fulda tradition of the text, possibly dating from *ca* 810 and probably the version to which Eigil was referring.<sup>104</sup>

Eigil's presentation of the Sturm-Lull dispute would seem to be designed to promote the freedoms of Fulda in the face of outside influences, rather than to criticise Lull *per se*; one must, however, consider what these outside influences might have been.

Fulda was useful to Charlemagne, who pursued a rigorous policy of binding East Frankish monasteries to his efforts to expand his authority further east, and into Saxony in particular.<sup>105</sup> This is reflected in charter evidence, such as Lull's 'gift' of his *Eigenkloster* of Hersfeld to Charlemagne in 775 in order to further the Saxon missions (as Lull remained abbot, Hersfeld's change of status was largely semantic).<sup>106</sup> Eigil perhaps welcomed Fulda's role in the Saxon missions, and presented a highly idealised account of the conversion of Saxony in the *Vita Sturmi*. However, the idea of the court maintaining involvement in the monastery was perhaps less welcome. It is in this context that we should see Eigil's presentation of the Sturm-Lull argument. Lull appeared to be an important figure in Charlemagne's Saxon policy, partly because of the location of Mainz in relation to the missionfield and partly because of the Anglo-Saxons' historic desire to convert the Saxons. This fact might be more important than the events of the 760s as far as the purpose of the Sturm-Lull story is concerned: the connection Eigil made between Lull and Pippin III seems anachronistic because between 754 and Pippin's death in 768 it does not appear that Lull had any influence within the Frankish kingdoms.<sup>107</sup> Lull was perhaps more symbolic of perceptions in the Middle

<sup>104</sup> Tangl, *Die Briefe des heilige Bonifatius und Lullus*, p. 203, n. 1.

<sup>105</sup> Schieffer, 'Angelsachsen und Franken', 1514-21; Heinemeyer, 'Die Gründung des Klosters Fulda', 31.

<sup>106</sup> *MGH Dip. Karol.* 1, no. 89, ed. E. Mühlbacher (Hanover, 1906), pp. 128-9; K.-U. Jäschke, 'Zu den schriftlichen Zeugnissen für die Anfänge der Reichsabtei Hersfeld', *Blätter für deutsche Landesgeschichte* 107 (1971), 94-135.

<sup>107</sup> Schieffer, 'Angelsachsen und Franken', 1487-90.

Rhine Valley of an interfering royal court during the Saxon campaigns than a genuine enemy of Fulda; for Eigil, Lull was a concrete figure on whom could be placed associations with the Carolingian threat to the self-governing principles of the *Regula s. Benedicti* and the monastery's separation from the temporal world. In this sense, Eigil's defence of Fulda's independence and the principles of the *Regula s. Benedicti* was a crucial element in the beatification of Sturm.

*Sturm's Visit to Italy and the 'Regula s. Benedicti'.*

Between Boniface's establishment of monastic Rule at Fulda and the Sturm-Lull crisis, the brethren of Fulda are said to have adopted the *Regula s. Benedicti* in earnest.<sup>108</sup> Eigil wrote:<sup>109</sup>

When the brethren had conceived a burning desire to follow the rule of the saintly father Benedict, and had striven to conform their minds and bodies to the discipline of the monastic life, they formed a plan of sending some of their members to well established monasteries in other places so that they could become perfectly acquainted with the customs and observance of the brethren. When this prudent plan was submitted to the bishop [Boniface] he heartily approved of it and commanded Sturm to undertake the legation.

Again the communal will is of great significance and, moreover, Sturm as the saint at the heart of the *vita* was now an agent of that will. The focus of Sturm's investigation was the monasteries of Rome.<sup>110</sup> On his travels, at least according to Eigil, Sturm also learnt much about monastic observances in Tuscany.<sup>111</sup> Finally, in 747, Sturm returned

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<sup>108</sup> Eigil, *VS* c. 14, pp. 145-7.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, c. 14, pp. 145-6: 'Porro cum fratres regulam sancti patris Benedicti in hianter observare desiderassent et ad monasticae disciplinae normam sua corpora mentesque toto annisu inclinassent, consilium utile inierunt, quatenus aliqui ex ipsis ad magna alicubi mitterentur monasteria, ut fratrum ibi concordiam et conversationem regularem perfecte discerent. Quod cum sancto fuisset indicatum episcopo, prudens illorum collaudavit consilium et hanc legationem studioso Sturmi iniunxit'.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, c. 14, p. 146: '... quarto ad locum praedictum ingressionis anno Romam profectus est atque in illa terra cunctis monasteriis lustratis et omnium mores ibi fratrum consistentium traditionesque monasteriorum ad plenum discens, integrum annum apud illa coenobia perseverans...'

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, c. 14, p. 146: '... quibus ea quae in Italiae partibus et Tusciae provinciae monasteriis a sanctis patribus didicerat...'

to Fulda, described all the things he had encountered and through his own behaviour inspired his brethren to follow the Rule. It is clear that this was not supposed to have been a pure form of the *Regula s. Benedicti* but, as would be expected, one improved by the monastic observances Sturm had encountered in Rome and Tuscany; nonetheless the key authority that Eigil wanted to emphasise was that of the *Regula s. Benedicti*.<sup>112</sup>

There is a logical problem with Eigil's account of Sturm's journey: Guy Ferrari demonstrated long ago that the *Regula s. Benedicti* was not followed in Roman monasteries until the tenth century.<sup>113</sup> Ferrari's study of Roman monastic observance revealed a clerical reaction against monasteries, and the *Regula s. Benedicti* in particular, following the death of Gregory the Great.<sup>114</sup> Thereafter, although some monasteries did follow the Rule, there is simply no evidence that any monastery followed it exclusively, and it was at best used as a guideline.<sup>115</sup> Whatever Sturm might have learnt, it is unlikely that he found out much about the *Regula s. Benedicti* in its pure form. It is equally unlikely that Eigil was misinformed about Sturm's activities since he claims, plausibly, to have been Sturm's pupil and friend for twenty years.<sup>116</sup> Perhaps it is pertinent to remember Paul Fouracre's warning that hagiographers are often at their most creative in their work when dealing with a saint's time abroad, covering events of which the audience has little knowledge – a problem only exacerbated when a great deal of time has also elapsed.<sup>117</sup> There was every potential for Eigil to have tailored an image of events to his liking since he was writing nearly 70 years after the events he was

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<sup>112</sup> Eigil, *VS* c. 14, p. 147: 'Desiderium tunc ingens inerat fratribus, ad omnia quae eis dicta vel ostensa fuerant sanctorum exemplis, semetipsos toto annisu aptare, et regulam sancti Benedicti quam se implese promiserant, ad omnia observabant'.

<sup>113</sup> Ferrari, *Early Roman Monasteries*, pp. 379-407; Leyser, *Authority and Asceticism*, p. 105 and n. 17.

<sup>114</sup> Ferrari, *Early Roman Monasteries*, pp. 389-91.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 380, 386.

<sup>116</sup> Eigil, *VS* c. 1, p. 131: '... ego Eigil in discipulatu illius plus quam viginti annos...'

<sup>117</sup> P. Fouracre, 'Merovingian History and Merovingian Hagiography', *Past and Present* 127 (1990), 3-38 at 37-8.

purporting to describe. In light of the fact that he was promoting the papal privileges of Fulda, the emphasis on Rome and the *Regula s. Benedicti* could be seen to be helping bind those two elements to the history of the monastery and thus reinforce the spiritual authority of the privileges.

Rudolf's *Vita Leobae*, written at Fulda only fifteen years later, suggests a different itinerary for Sturm's journey and consequently a different spiritual world for Sturm and the monastery. Describing how Boniface established Fulda and Leoba's Tauberbischofsheim, Rudolf wrote:<sup>118</sup>

And as he wished the observance in both cases to be kept according to the holy Rule, he endeavoured to obtain superiors for both houses. For this purpose he sent his disciple Sturm... to Monte Cassino so that he could study the regular discipline, the observance and the monastic customs which had been established there by St Benedict.

Sturm may well have visited Rome *en route* to Monte Cassino but Rudolf makes no mention of this and nor, notably, does Eigil make any mention of Monte Cassino. It seems peculiar to think that either Eigil or Rudolf might have thought Monte Cassino was a Roman monastery. One could try to reconcile the two sources, as has generally happened when historians have considered the founding of Fulda.<sup>119</sup> But since the two sources clearly say different things about the journey, it is more likely that the two Fulda monks were attributing different qualities to Sturm's journey. By binding Sturm to Monte Cassino itself, the very home of Benedictine monasticism, Rudolf reinforced the image of Fulda as a centre where the true spirit of the *Regula s. Benedicti* was strong,

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<sup>118</sup> Rudolf, *VZ* c. 10, p. 125: 'Volens ergo utrisque professionis ordinem regulariter observari, idoneum utriusque magisterium studuit adipisci; misitque in Casinum montem Sturmi... ut in monasterio quod beatus pater Benedictus instituit disciplinam regularem et vitam moresque monasticos agnosceret...'

<sup>119</sup> For examples of synthesising the two accounts, see: Prinz, *Frühes Mönchtum*, p. 249; Heinemeyer, 'Die Gründung des Klosters Fulda', p. 28; A. Angenendt, *Das Frühmittelalter. Die abendländische Christenheit von 400 bis 900* (Stuttgart, 1990, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn. 2001), pp. 273-4; Semmler, 'Instituta sancti Bonifatii', pp. 93-4.

because it had received that spirit directly.<sup>120</sup> Rudolf's opposition to Eigil's narrative perhaps suggests that there was a developing power in the symbolic nature of 'Monte Cassino' under Hrabanus Maurus and a changing attitude to the *Regula s. Benedicti* as the post-Aniane reforms progressed; Sturm, as the saintly medium that bound Fulda to its monastic order, consequently had to fulfil different roles depending on what it was that he was intended to symbolise.

Sturm's journey to Italy in ninth-century hagiography was, it appears, retrospectively shaped by the brethren's spiritual concerns at different points in the ninth century; it did not necessarily reflect a genuine past. On the one hand, when Eigil was writing, clearly the important 'symbol' was a spiritual relationship between Fulda and Rome; on the other hand, by the 830s it appears in Rudolf's work that the brethren were more concerned about spiritual purity of the Rule, and a relationship between Fulda and Monte Cassino. The vehicle of the message – the saint – remained the same, but through the reshaping of a saintly past new priorities and monastic identities could be expressed.

*Leoba and the Female Religious Life at Wimborne.*

In the twentieth century Rudolf's *Vita Leobae* has been studied primarily for its accounts of female religious order in Anglo-Saxon England and Germany. Rudolf was keen to illustrate the education that Leoba had had in Britain, because it was precisely because of her reputation while at the double-monastery of Wimborne that Boniface requested that she become abbess of Tauberbischofsheim. Hrabanus Maurus, who asked Rudolf to write the *Vita Leobae*, himself also noted the importance of Leoba's

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<sup>120</sup> The bond between Sturm and Monte Cassino has been acknowledged as important in bringing the true spirit of the Rule of Benedict to Fulda, but that link has been seen to be real rather than a later literary construction nearly a century later. See: Semmler, 'Studien zum *Supplex libellus*', p. 292; Prinz, *Frühes Mönchtum*, p. 248-50; Heinemeyer, 'Die Gründung des Klosters Fulda', pp. 28, 38, 41; Angenendt, *Das Frühmittelalter*, pp. 273-4; Semmler, 'Instituta sancti Bonifatii', pp. 93-4.

background in his *Martyrologium*.<sup>121</sup> At Fulda it was not just her time in Germany that was considered important. Rudolf described how the male and female monasteries at Wimborne had been constructed with large walls between them to maintain the separateness of the two communities, and how women entering the monastery were accepted on the condition that they did not leave.<sup>122</sup> This is followed by a description of the virtues of the abbess Tetta, who is said to have worked hard to keep the monks and nuns apart, as well as promoting peace and forgiveness amongst her community.<sup>123</sup> Finally in Rudolf's account of Wimborne, he described how Leoba had entered the monastery whilst a child and soon had no other interest than the monastery, at which stage in the narrative Rudolf recounts Leoba's virtues and a dream she had that proved she was destined to travel abroad.<sup>124</sup>

Whether Rudolf's story can be taken to say anything about Anglo-Saxon monasticism is uncertain. Rudolf's purpose in writing was predominantly didactic, and perhaps therefore coloured more by hagiographical traditions and sensibilities in ninth-century Fulda than by any factual basis for Leoba's life.<sup>125</sup> Having accepted this, however, historians writing about the historicity of the *Vita Leobae* have been divided between those who still see it as part factual and those who are more sceptical and doubt

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<sup>121</sup> Hrabanus Maurus, *Martyrologium*, 28<sup>th</sup> Sept., ed. J. M. McCulloh, *CCCM* 44 (Turnhout, 1979), pp. i-161 at p. 99: '...Leobae uirginis, quae in Britannia insula et Saxonum gente nata, uirginitatis propositum in monasterio posita nobiliter seruauit. Postea... a sancto Bonifatio... aduocata, ut famulas Dei in monasteriis Germaniae diuinis scripturas instrueret...'

<sup>122</sup> Rudolf, *VL* c. 2, p. 123: 'In quo duo monasteria antiquius a regibus gentis illius constructa sunt, muris altis et firmis circumdata et omni sufficientia sumptuum rationabili dispositione procurata, unum scilicet clericorum et alterum feminarum... Feminarum uero quaecumque saeculo renuntians earum collegio sociari uoluerat, numquam exitura intrabat...'

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, cc. 3-5, pp. 123-4.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, cc. 7-8, pp. 124-5.

<sup>125</sup> D. B. Schneider, 'Anglo-Saxon women in the religious life: a study of the status and position of women in an early medieval society', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Cambridge (1985), pp. 42 n. 38; S. Hollis, *Anglo-Saxon Women and the Church: Sharing a Common Fate* (Woodbridge, 1992), pp. 271-82; J. M. H. Smith, 'The problem of female sanctity in Carolingian Europe c. 780-920', *Past & Present* 146 (1995), 3-37 at 16-17; S. Foot, *Veiled Women 1: The Disappearance of Nuns from Anglo-Saxon* (Aldershot, 2000), p. 53.

that it says anything about the eighth century at all.<sup>126</sup> It is difficult to give Rudolf's statements about Wimborne any credence whatsoever, given his distance in time and space from Southumbrian monasticism before 750. Hollis noted that the image Rudolf presented was 'generally accepted as a historically accurate description of the form of organization assumed by the double monasteries in 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> century England', but with the caveat that Rudolf simply reflects that past and is not evidence of it.<sup>127</sup> It is clear, however, that the organisation of double monasteries in Anglo-Saxon England contained far more variety than Rudolf – or Hollis – suggested.<sup>128</sup> Women were not often as segregated from male communities, or even the lay world, as Rudolf implies: monasteries were aristocratic and economic units that formed part of broader Anglo-Saxon communities, and there was no prevailing sense that the female religious should live distinct from that world.<sup>129</sup> Even Aldhelm's *De virginitate*, which was written primarily for the nuns of the double monastery of Barking, blurred the distinction between male and female virtue and never went as far as to suggest the female religious should be divorced from the male and secular worlds absolutely.<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> Representative of the first school is Stephanie Hollis, who wrote that at times Rudolf was 'surely reconciling truth with didactic purpose' (*Anglo-Saxon Women*, p. 275). Hollis work was closely followed by Pauline Head in her 'Integritas in Rudolph of Fulda's *Vita Leobae abbatissiae*', *Parergon* 13. 1 (1995), 33-51. Even more trusting of the source have been Janet Nelson in her 'Women and the word in the earlier Middle Ages', in her *The Frankish World 750-900* (London, 1996), pp. 199-221 at p. 210 (originally in W. J. Shiels & D. Wood [eds.], *Women in the Church*, *Studies in Church History* 27 [1990], pp. 53-78), and Yitzhak Hen in his '*Milites Christi utriusque Sexus*: gender and the politics of conversion in the circle of Boniface', *Revue bénédictine* 109. 1-2 (1999), 17-31 at 24. Of the second school Julia Smith, in 'The problem of female sanctity', 16-17, is more overtly sceptical that the text reflects Leoba's life at all. Sarah Foot also appears to have strong reservations about what Rudolf says about Wimborne (*Veiled Women* 1, p. 48).

<sup>127</sup> Hollis, *Anglo-Saxon Women*, p. 272. For recent work on double monasteries, see: Schneider, 'Anglo-Saxon women', pp. 14-80; B. Mitchell, 'Anglo-Saxon monasteries', *History Today* 45. 10 (1995), 33-9.

<sup>128</sup> On the different double monasteries see Foot, *Veiled Women* 1, pp. 49-56, 59-60. John Blair has also described the alleged layout of Wimborne – and its famous walls in particular – as 'exceptional' within the context of the Anglo-Saxon Church: see his 'Anglo-Saxon minsters: topographical review', in J. Blair & R. Sharpe (eds.), *Pastoral Care Before the Parish* (Leicester, 1992), pp. 226-66 at pp. 257-8 and 259.

<sup>129</sup> Foot, *Veiled Women*, pp. 44, 53-6.

<sup>130</sup> Aldhelm, *De virginitate*, ed. R. Ehwald, *MGH AA* 15 (Berlin, 1919), pp. 226-323. Hollis does discuss this in her *Anglo-Saxon Women*, pp. 75-112, but failed to relate it to the later part of her book when discussing Leoba. I am grateful to Emma Pettit for her comments on this topic.

Rudolf's image of the female religious in England is not without parallels in other *vitae*. Willibald, in his *Vita Bonifatii*, also recounts how in Wessex nuns were unable to attend Boniface's sermons, although strictly speaking it does not say that they were not allowed to, just that they were 'continuously unable' to come.<sup>131</sup> More pertinently, it should be remembered that Bede said that in the 630s women who wished to enter the monastic life had to travel to Frankia to do so, providing plentiful opportunities for continental influences to affect Anglo-Saxon religious life.<sup>132</sup> Of the continental models for the female religious, in its austere spirit Rudolf's view perhaps most closely resembles that expressed by Caesarius of Arles in his *Regula virginum*, although no direct influence is clear within the *Vita Leobae*.<sup>133</sup> Caesarius was notably much stricter about the role the female religious should play in the lay world, and in most cases forbade it altogether.<sup>134</sup> This kind of female monasticism was not widely followed amongst the Merovingian monasteries Anglo-Saxons visited but rather, as we saw earlier, it was Columbanian monasticism that generally prevailed. It is notable that Frankish veneration for female saints tended to develop in these same areas.<sup>135</sup> But with the rise of the Carolingians, Julia Smith has argued, the example of saintly Merovingian women like Geretrud of Nivelles was shunned in favour of late antique models of male sanctity such as Sulpicius Severus's St Martin.<sup>136</sup> Such developments are probably related to the continuous process of Carolingian monastic reform, which severely limited

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<sup>131</sup> Willibald, *VB* c. 2, p. 10: '... quorum quidem quam plurimi, virili sexus robore confortati et lectionis instantia incitati, adeum confluxere et, saluberrimum scientiae fontem potantes, numerosa scripturarum volumina legendo recensere'.

<sup>132</sup> Bede, *HE* III. 8, p. 238.

<sup>133</sup> A good English elucidation of the work is given by William Klingshirn in his *Caesarius of Arles: The Making of a Christian Community in Late Antique Gaul*, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought Fourth Series 22 (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 117-24. See also D. Hochstetler, 'The meaning of monastic cloister for women according to Caesarius of Arles', in T. F. X. Noble & J. J. Contreni (eds.), *Religion, Culture and Society in the Early Middle Ages* (Kalamazoo, Mich., 1987), pp. 27-40.

<sup>134</sup> Caesarius, *Regula virginum*, c. 2, p. 180: '... Si qua relictis parentibus suis saeculo renuntiare et sanctum ouile voluerit introire, ut spiritalium luporum fauces deo adiuuante possit evadere, usque ad mortem suam de monasterio non egrediatur, nec in basilicam, ubi ostium esse videtur'.

<sup>135</sup> Smith, 'The problem of female sanctity', p. 9.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 14-17. On the development of the image of St Martin as a saint, see C. Stancliffe, *Saint Martin and his Hagiographer: History and Miracle in Sulpicius Severus* (Oxford, 1983).

the freedom of abbesses or nuns to leave cloistered walls or perform any religious ceremonies.<sup>137</sup> In his harsh view of female monasticism, therefore, Rudolf did far more than simply to imply women had less of a role in the post-conversion German Church: his work represented a more widespread shift in expectations of female sanctity.

The historian is left, then, with two ninth-century symbols of female religious orthodoxy: Wimborne and Tetta, its abbess. Hollis wrote of Rudolf's Wimborne that it was presented as 'a fount and origin no less impeccable than Monte Cassino'.<sup>138</sup> This seems correct, as Rudolf's justification of Leoba's appointment in Germany is juxtaposed with the moral authority of the abbot Sturm, who was said by Rudolf to have gained his knowledge of monastic rules from Monte Cassino.<sup>139</sup> Again it is pertinent to remember the influence of the Benedictine reforms on Rudolf. Tetta, however, although an admirable leader of the monastery, is restricted to playing the role of someone who marshals monastic discipline, not someone who was in themselves essential as an embodiment or siphon of monastic rule. Rudolf's view of monastic rule was, therefore, that it should be institutionalised and guided by the standards of special centres that acted as disseminators of knowledge independently of individuals.

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<sup>137</sup> See, for example, *Concilium Vernense (755)* c. 6, ed. A. Boretius, *MGH Cap.* 1 (Hanover, 1883), pp. 32-7 at p. 34, and *Institutio sanctimonialium* c. 18, ed. A. Werminghoff, *MGH Conc.* 2. 1 (Hanover, 1906), pp. 421-56 at p. 449. On the effect of Carolingian reforms on the female religious life see: Foot, *Veiled Women* 1, pp. 66-72; J. T. Schulenburg, 'Strict active enclosure and its effect on the female monastic experience (500-1000)', in J. A. Nichols & L. T. Shanks (eds.), *Medieval Religious Women* 1: *Distant Echoes* (Kalamazoo, MI., 1984), pp. 51-86 at pp. 56-8.

<sup>138</sup> Hollis, *Anglo-Saxon Women*, p. 274.

<sup>139</sup> Rudolf, *VL* c. 10, p. 125: '[Bonifatius] monasteria construere coepit, ut ad fidem catholicam populi non tam aecclesiastica gratia quam monachorum ac virginum congregationibus raperentur... misitque in Casinum montem Sturmum... ut in monasterio quod beatus pater Benedictus instituit disciplinam... Similiter et... [Tettam] deprecans ut ad solatium suae peregrinationis atque ad auxilium legationis sibi iniunctae transmitteret ei Leobam virginem...'

*Leoba and Tauberbischofsheim.*

Rudolf begins his account of Leoba's life in Germany by listing her virtues. His list reads much like an extended version of the list he had given for Tetta: she led by example, she was moderate in all things, and so on. Added to the list now, and clearly important in Rudolf's conception of the female religious, was the fact that Leoba worked hard at becoming extremely learned in scripture and helping the younger nuns at Tauberbischofsheim in their own study.<sup>140</sup> The importance of education was also linked back to Leoba's days in Wimborne, since it was specifically because 'she had been trained since infancy in the rudiments of grammar and the other liberal arts [that] she tried by constant reflection to gain a perfect knowledge of divine matters'.<sup>141</sup> This connection between Wimborne and Leoba's continental life illustrates how Leoba, in Rudolf's scheme, had come to embody the institutionalised standards she had encountered in England. It was, however, only in Germany that she came to perfect her monastic lifestyle, in Rudolf's account.<sup>142</sup> In part this might betray Rudolf's high hopes for monastic standards in Germany, as his mention of Monte Cassino alongside Wimborne as a source for German monasticism seems to confirm. Perhaps more significantly, it demonstrates how saints could transcend earthly standards of monastic discipline, even in the most mundane of ways like acquiring knowledge: Wimborne had set the standard, but in Germany Leoba's diligence had raised her soul higher.

Rudolf tells four stories about Leoba's time in Germany in order to illustrate Leoba's newfound sanctity. Each emphasises Leoba, not just as a saint, but more importantly as the leader of her community. In the first story outraged villagers accused

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<sup>140</sup> Hollis, *Anglo-Saxon Women*, p. 279.

<sup>141</sup> Rudolf, *VZ* c. 11, p. 126: '... Nam, cum ad ipsis infantiae rudimentis grammaticam et reliquis liberalium studiis esset institute, tanta meditationis instantia spiritalis scientiae perfectionem conabatur...'

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, c. 11, p. 126.

the nun Agatha of giving birth and killing the baby, after they had found an infant's body.<sup>143</sup> Faced with a hostile crowd, Leoba encouraged her sisters to remain calm and then organised them to pray continuously, which had the result of moving the real culprit – a young crippled girl – to admit her crime, thus saving the community's reputation. In the second story a fire broke out in the village, and this time she calmed panicked villagers and organised them to fight the fire.<sup>144</sup> This story is followed by one that more closely resembles a miracle story: a great storm broke out which terrified the local lay and religious communities so much they took refuge in the church, but Leoba again remained calm and, after some private prayer, challenged the storm directly with public prayer and brought about calm weather.<sup>145</sup> The final story in this section of the text recounts how Leoba cured the nun Williswind of haemorrhoids just as the young nun was beginning to lose hope of life.<sup>146</sup> The theme running through these stories is clear: Leoba was a calming presence when fear threatened the lay and religious communities at Tauberbischofsheim.<sup>147</sup> But in the interaction between nuns and lay communities they also seem to contradict the image of female religious enclosure Rudolf set up in Wimborne. What this says about Rudolf's conception of female monastic rules needs further consideration.

In the modern historiography about these stories there remain doubts as to whether the stories genuinely represent Rudolf's voice. Pauline Head in particular has suggested that many of these stories may have their roots in eyewitness accounts collected by the monk Mago, whom Rudolf cites as a source in the preface to the *Vita*

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<sup>143</sup> Rudolf, *VL* c. 12, pp. 126-7.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*, c. 13, pp. 127-8.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, c. 14, p. 128.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, c. 15, p. 128.

<sup>147</sup> These stories are often treated individually rather than collectively, which has perhaps obscured their common message: see, for example, Hollis, *Anglo-Saxon Women*, pp. 281-2 and Head, 'Ingetritas', p. 49.

*Leobae*, and that Rudolf simply copied them.<sup>148</sup> Her argument rests largely upon the use of direct speech in the stories, which Head cites as evidence that these stories were told by people like Agatha rather than invented. This is, however, impossible to substantiate. Given the strong use of literary models like Constantius' *Vita Germani* one might just as reasonably suspect that Rudolf's citation of Mago's sources was an elaborate attempt to give his own work credence.<sup>149</sup> Moreover, direct speech is often simply a literary device employed to give extra emphasis to features of a character or, because it binds words to people beyond the author's pen, credence to an idea.<sup>150</sup> Head's argument also relies on the idea that these stories must have been 'reports' because they create illogical breaks in Rudolf's themes that are never truly resolved; the interaction of female religious interaction with lay communities, for example, goes against Rudolf's concern for the seclusion of nuns. This idea is troubling: the events in these stories are supposed to have occurred before Boniface's martyrdom in 754, in other words over eighty years before Rudolf was writing, so why would he have felt so obliged to remain true to the nuns' experiences, especially when he was using literary models to invent so much else about Leoba?<sup>151</sup> If there are inconsistencies within the *Vita Leobae*, it is difficult to see them as anything other than Rudolf's own creations, by accident or design.

There might be a solution to the problem of Rudolf's inconsistencies that will help bring a better understanding of the author's views on monasticism and place. Much confusion stems from the natural assumption that because the *Vita Leobae* is addressed

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<sup>148</sup> Head, 'Integritas', pp. 41-2.

<sup>149</sup> For Rudolf's sources, see: W. Wattenbach, W. Levison & H. Löwe, *Deutschlands Geschichtsquellen im Mittelalter. Vorzeit und Karolinger*: H. Löwe (ed.), 6. Heft: *Die Karolinger vom Vertrag von Verdun bis zum Herrschaftsantritt der Herrscher aus dem sächsischen Hause. Das ostfränkische Reich* (Weimar, 1990), pp. 709-10, n. 179; Schneider, 'Anglo-Saxon women', p. 42 n. 38.

<sup>150</sup> See for example N. F. Partner, 'The new Cornificius: medieval history and the artifice of words', in E. Breisach (ed.), *Classical Rhetoric and Medieval Historiography*, Studies in Medieval Culture 19 (Kalamazoo, MI, 1985), pp. 5-59 at pp. 11-12.

<sup>151</sup> It is worth remembering again Fouracre's study of how hagiographical legends and truth separate over time and distance: Fouracre, 'Merovingian History'.

to the nun Hadamout, it represents a creation of female sanctity intended for a purely female audience.<sup>152</sup> Too much can be placed upon such addresses, however, and it is instructive to remember that the Fulda *Vita Sturmi* was addressed to the nun Angildruth but was clearly intended for a male audience as well.<sup>153</sup> The final three chapters of the *Vita Leobae* seem to suggest that Rudolf was writing for the monks of Fulda as well as Hadamout. Rudolf justifies why Leoba was not buried alongside Boniface (contravening his wishes) and explains why Eigil translated her relics from the north altar to the west porch.<sup>154</sup> Then Rudolf recounts two miracle stories proving the power of Leoba's relics, not for female worshippers, but for men: in the first a man was freed from some iron rings by praying at Leoba's tomb, and in the second a man with a debilitating twitch travelled all the way from Spain to the tomb where he was cured.<sup>155</sup> These stories appear to be more about the male veneration of female saints than anything to do with female religious behaviour or worship.

Combined with the earlier examples of female virtue which were clearly intended for a female audience, the *Vita Leobae* has much to say for both female and male audiences. In the beginning (chapters 1-11) it offers a picture of female monastic discipline culminating in the foundation of a male and female monastic family in Germany deriving authority from Wimborne and Monte Cassino; then (chapters 12-16) Leoba is established as a saint important to entire communities of men and women, before Leoba's status as a figure of importance for the whole of the Frankish Empire is established (chapters 17-20); and finally Leoba is presented as a figure worthy of male veneration (chapters 21-23). The text is not just about creating an *exemplum pro*

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<sup>152</sup> Rudolf, *VZ* pref., p. 121. Typical of an overemphasis on Hadamout at the expense of any other audience are Hollis, *Anglo-Saxon Women*, pp. 271-2, and Head, 'Integritas', pp. 43-4.

<sup>153</sup> Eigil, *VS* c. 1, p. 131.

<sup>154</sup> Rudolf, *VZ* c. 21, p. 130.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*, cc. 22-3, pp. 130-1.

*imitatione* for women but also about establishing Leoba as a saint worthy of universal veneration. Like the image of Ardo's Benedict of Aniane, Leoba as a saint eventually transcends monastic rules and was important for creating an institutional basis for others to follow monastic rules. Unlike Benedict, however, Leoba also gained her authority from the image of an earlier and significantly distant institution in Wimborne.

### **Frisian Monasticism in the *anianischen* Model.**

Monastic observances in early Frisian foundations are more difficult to investigate than in Germany. The fact that Willibrord appears to have had a monastic parish, with Utrecht and Süsteren under his personal sovereignty, seems particularly un-Roman.<sup>156</sup> That is, however, the impression of the charter evidence, and not how the situation was portrayed in the *vitae* of Liudger, Altfrid and the anonymous author of the *Vita altera Bonifatii*. In the *vitae* it is notable that, again, no explicit connection was made between Willibrord and monastic observances: he was remembered simply as a bishop and missionary. The first evidence for a Frisian concern for monastic observances comes from Altfrid, who wrote that Liudger visited Monte Cassino to learn about the *Regula s. Benedicti* at source.<sup>157</sup> There is little such interest, however, in Liudger's own *Vita Gregorii* despite being about an abbot. There are echoes of Boniface in Liudger's attack on lax standards in the Frankish Church, but nothing specifically monastic is discussed.<sup>158</sup> It is only Altfrid who provides any evidence about early Frisian interest in the *Regula s. Benedicti*, and his testimony should be treated carefully. The story about Liudger's journey to Italy helped to present the foundation of Werden – Altfrid's

<sup>156</sup> A. Angenendt, 'Willibrord im Dienste der Karolinger', *Annalen des historischen Vereins für den Niederrhein* 175 (1973), 63-113 at pp. 85-94; de Jong, 'Carolingian monasticism', p. 628.

<sup>157</sup> Altfrid, *VLger* I. 18, p. 410.

<sup>158</sup> H. Löwe, 'Liudger als Zeitkritiker', *Historisches Jahrbuch* 74 (1954), 79-91.

audience – as a centre of monastic orthodoxy.<sup>159</sup> Moreover, it did so at a time when the *anianischen* reforms had begun to take root in the Frankish Empire. The different interests and contexts of Liudger and Altfriid, therefore, did much to affect how they wrote about monasticism as the *Zeitgeist* changed from Bonifatian ideals to those of Benedict of Aniane.

### Conclusion.

Cults of saints in the early Middle Ages developed within monastic contexts. Relics were often buried and venerated within monasteries, while it usually took the literary and material resources of such institutions to produce saints' Lives. The extent to which definitions of sanctity were shaped by monasticism was, however, context specific. The fact that Alcuin was writing for the community at Echternach, for example, did not mean Willibrord was portrayed as a monastic *exemplum pro imitatione*. On the other hand Willibald, writing the *Vita Bonifatii* for a wider audience, still felt it appropriate to illustrate modes of monastic living and an attachment to the *Regula s. Benedicti*. Audience did not always determine content. Moreover, as the reform movements of Boniface, Chrodegang and Benedict of Aniane illustrate, there were always elements of lay society keen to involve themselves with monastic institutions, and elements of religious society with little interest in austerity or rules.

The cases of eighth-century Bavarian hagiography and Fulda's hagiographical traditions provide examples where saints were in part defined in relation to monasteries and monastic *regulae*. Willibald's ascetic authority was derived from time spent in

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<sup>159</sup> L. E. von Padberg, *Heilige und Familie. Studien zur Bedeutung familiengebundener Aspekte in den Viten des Verwandten- und Schülerkreises um Willibrord, Bonifatius und Liudger*, Quellen und Abhandlungen zur mittelhessischen Kirchengeschichte 83 (Münster, 1980, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. Mainz, 1997), pp. 112-4.

Monte Cassino, learning and – significantly – reinvigorating the *Regula s. Benedicti* at source. The dynamics that shaped this image of Willibald appear to have come from the Bonifatian reforms and, perhaps, a reaction to Arbeo of Freising's attempts to claim Corbinian had already introduced the *Regula* to Bavaria before Boniface's time. Rarely do constructions of sanctity appear devoid of didactic purpose or politics. Indeed in Fulda, Eigil responded to the monastery's problems in the early ninth century by promoting Sturm as a saint because, unlike Boniface, he could be portrayed as an agent of Fulda's communal will. But even this image of Sturm changed in Rudolf's *Vita Leobae* to put the emphasis back on Boniface and replace Eigil's Italian *regula mixta* with a purer Benedictine order learnt, again, from source at Monte Cassino; Hrabanus' own vision of Fulda's spiritual topography needed its own hagiographical expressions, and Sturm's relationship with monastic discipline had to shift as a result. One might also note the influence of the so-called *anianischen* reforms in developing attachments to the *Regula s. Benedicti* in the ninth century. Willibald, Sturm, Leoba and, maybe, Liudger in Werden were all presented in ways which reflected the monastic standards of the hagiographers rather than the pasts the *vitae* described.

The question remains of how imitable or inimitable the saints were in the ways they were presented to monastic audiences. Leoba perhaps comes closest to Ardo's Benedict of Aniane by transcending the standards she represented for other women to follow. In doing so, moreover, Leoba became a figure worthy of veneration by pious men and women alike. This appears exceptional amongst the *vitae* about the Anglo-Saxon 'missions'. Eigil shaped Sturm specifically to be a model abbot in the wake of the disastrous abbacy of Ratgar. Willibald also appears to have been presented as an *exemplum* others could imitate, because he illustrated the benefits of following

Benedictine principles in the context of institutionalised monasticism. Some audiences could, in other words, have been expected to learn about monasticism or have their monastic values reinforced through the stories of the saints; in these cases monastic *regulae* were in some sense integral to the saint's special status as they brought their audiences closer to distant monasteries and the order those centres embodied.

### Chapter 3: Rome in Representations of Sanctity.

Rome played a central role in the work of the Anglo-Saxons on the continent.<sup>1</sup>

Successive popes offered the Anglo-Saxons support and conferred authority upon Willibrord, Boniface and others. This bond between Rome and the Anglo-Saxons was also given a central role in *vitae*; the images of 'Rome' in these writings thus need to be reconsidered in relation to the process of creating and idealising saints. For many generations of modern historians there was little significance to the Anglo-Saxon missions beyond laying 'the foundations of the unity of the medieval church and medieval papal authority'.<sup>2</sup> The Roman conversion of the Anglo-Saxons had apparently instilled a strong bond between the papacy and the Germans of Britain; this bond, it was thought, Willibrord and Boniface subsequently took to the Franks.<sup>3</sup> Scholarship over the last fifty years has, however, claimed that the Merovingians already revered Rome, that the Anglo-Saxon 'missionaries' did not follow strict Roman practices themselves, and

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<sup>1</sup> The fundamental conceptualisation of continental Anglo-Saxon and papal relations remains T. Schieffer's 'Angelsachsen und Franken. Zwei Studien zur Kirchengeschichte des 8. Jahrhunderts', *Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur. Abhandlungen der Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaftlichen Klasse Jahrgang 1950* 20 (Wiesbaden, 1951), pp. 1426-1539 esp. at pp 1431-5. See also T. F. X. Noble, *The Republic of St Peter: The Birth of the Papal State, 680-825* (Philadelphia, 1984), pp. 61-71.

<sup>2</sup> A. Hauck, *Kirchengeschichte Deutschlands* 1 (Liepzig, 1898), p. 577: '[die] Grund... der Einheit der mittelalterlichen Kirche und... [die] mittelalterlichen Papstmach'. See also T. Schieffer, *Winfrid-Bonifatius und die christliche Grundlegung Europas* (Freiburg, 1954, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. Darmstadt, 1972), p. 286 and C. Wampach, *Willibrord. Sein Leben und Lebenswerk* (Luxembourg, 1953), p. 218.

<sup>3</sup> See for example H. Mayr-Harting, *The Coming of Christianity to Anglo-Saxon England* (London, 1972, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn. 1991), pp. 265-6 and P. Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom: Triumph and Diversity* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 272-3. (A change in emphasis in Brown's chapter on the Anglo-Saxons means the connection between Gregory the Great and Boniface was omitted from the second edition in 2002).

that the Carolingians' subsequent devotion to Rome was far from complete.<sup>4</sup> While debate has focused upon the presence or absence of a pro-Roman sentiments, little attention has been given to the ways in which the Anglo-Saxons' relationship with Rome was remembered in the historiographical and hagiographical writings of the eighth and ninth centuries.

The word 'Rome' could conjure up many different meanings, so it is imperative to be aware of what the term could signify. It is, further, important to recognise that not every connotation was equally meaningful everywhere or contained in every reference to the city. At a fundamental level Rome was, of course, a real place with a grand and emotive history. Within that city the papacy played a significant role, but by no means one that was all-encompassing or unchallenged; Rome and the papacy co-existed, but they were not one and the same thing.<sup>5</sup> Similarly Christians did not think of Rome as just the home of the papacy, but also as the location of a variety of (independent) churches, saints' cults and relics.<sup>6</sup> Even devotion to the cult of St Peter, while closely associated with the papacy, could also be explained by Peter's status as an apostle and need not necessarily imply an attachment to papal authority. The city of Rome was also

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<sup>4</sup> On pre-Bonifatian reverence for Rome on the continent, see: K. Hallinger, 'Römische Voraussetzungen der bonifatianischen Wirksamkeit im Frankenreich' in *Sankt Bonifatius. Gedenkgabe zum Zwölfhundertsten Todestag* (Fulda, 1954), pp. 320-61; E. Ewig, 'Der Petrus- und Apostelkult im spätrömischen und fränkischen Gallien', *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 71 (1960), 215-51. On the non-Roman influences of the Anglo-Saxons see: A. van Berkum, 'Willibrord en Wilfried. Een onderzoek naar hun wederzijdse betrekkingen', *Sacris erudiri* 23 (1978/9), 347-415; M. Richter, 'Der irische Hintergrund der angelsächsischen Mission', in H. Löwe (ed.), *Die Iren und Europa im früheren Mittelalter* (Stuttgart, 1982), pp. 120-37; J. Semmler, 'Instituta sancti Bonifatii. Fulda im Wiederstreit der Observanzen', in G. Schimpf (ed.), *Kloster Fulda in der Welt der Karolinger und Ottonen*, Fuldaer Studien 7 (Frankfurt, 1996), pp. 79-104. On the Carolingian Church and papal authority see now W. Hartmann, 'Zur Autorität des Papsttums im karolingischen Frankenreich', in D. R. Bauer, R. Hiestand & B. Kasten (eds.), *Mönchtum – Kirche – Herrschaft, 750-1000* (Sigmaringen, 1998), pp. 113-32.

<sup>5</sup> For a survey of recent thoughts on the interaction of the early medieval papacy with the Roman aristocracy and Italian state structures, see M. Costambeys, 'Review article: Property, ideology and the territorial power of the papacy in the early Middle Ages', *Early Medieval Europe* 9. 3 (2000), 367-96.

<sup>6</sup> On relics from Rome see A. Thacker, 'In search of saints: the English Church and the cult of Roman apostles and martyrs in the seventh and eighth centuries' in J. M. H. Smith (ed.), *Early Medieval Rome and the Christian West: Essays in Honour of Donald A. Bullough* (Leiden, 2000), pp. 247-77 and J. M. H. Smith, 'Old saints, new cults: Roman relics in Carolingian Francia', in Smith, *Early Medieval Rome*, pp. 317-39.

attractive for monks wishing to learn about monastic discipline, not just for those wishing to visit the see of St Peter. Many historians have all too easily taken a reference to a single part of Rome's diverse culture and extrapolated from it far greater Merovingian ideals of *romanitas* and papal authority than the sources allow.

### **Franco-Papal Relations Before 690.**

The impact of Boniface and his reforms on the Frankish veneration for Rome has proved particularly controversial. Before Theodor Schieffer's 'Angelsachsen und Franken' in 1951 two competing schools argued either, following Albert Hauck, that Boniface had faced much opposition from the independent Frankish *Landeskirche* or, following Johannes Haller, that Boniface had been greatly successful because of a pre-existing Frankish veneration for Rome.<sup>7</sup> Schieffer, however, argued that the two camps had exaggerated respectively the independence of the Frankish Church and the success of Boniface.<sup>8</sup> The Frankish Church had already incorporated ideas from the Roman Church, while Boniface had only played a limited – if still important – role in developing things further.<sup>9</sup> In order to understand how Rome was treated in Merovingian hagiographical works it is first necessary to consider precisely what 'Rome' meant to the Franks before the arrival of the Anglo-Saxons.

The relationship between the Frankish Church and Rome had a long, if uneven, history before 690 and the arrival of Willibrord.<sup>10</sup> The conversion of the Franks in the sixth century, for example, had been encouraged by Avitus of Vienne, who was a keen

<sup>7</sup> Hauck, *Kirchengeschichte Deutschlands* 1, pp. 509-10, J. Haller, *Das Papsttum: Idee und Wirklichkeit 1: Die Grundlagen* (3<sup>rd</sup> edn., Munich, 1965), esp. pp. 283-9.

<sup>8</sup> Schieffer, 'Angelsachsen und Franken', pp. 1431-5.

<sup>9</sup> See in particular Hallinger, 'Römische Voraussetzungen', *passim*. For Schieffer's continued insistence on Boniface's importance to developing Franco-Roman relations, see the concluding comments in his *Winfried-Bonifatius*, p. 286.

<sup>10</sup> For a useful English summaries: see J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *The Frankish Church* (Oxford, 1982), pp. 110-123; R. A. Markus, *Gregory the Great and his World* (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 168-77.

supporter of papal primacy even when he felt personally slighted by Pope Hormisdas.<sup>11</sup> Strong papal bonds with Arles and Vienne brought the importance of the papacy closer to the Franks. Later Gregory the Great, possibly capitalising on links with Burgundy, had personally encouraged and chided Franks such as Queen Brunhild, although no other pope quite matched his interest in the North.<sup>12</sup> Some historians have pointed to the influence of the Italian *Regula s. Benedicti* in Columbanian monasticism.<sup>13</sup> Use of the *regula* was, however, attested first in Frankia and since it was Frankish influence in the tenth century that established the *regula* in Rome; this could hardly be described as ‘Roman’.<sup>14</sup> Frankish liturgy in all its forms displayed Roman influence and became increasingly Romanised as the Merovingian centuries developed.<sup>15</sup> Roman influence was also felt in the adoption of some saints’ cults, with Roman martyrologies and *passiones* available in the North from the sixth century. In particular there was a relatively widespread cult of St Peter, the principal Roman saint.<sup>16</sup>

There remains, however, a clear difference between the notion that the Merovingians were open to and aware of the importance of Rome, and the proposition that they actively accepted papal authority. Early Frankish synods in particular had been

<sup>11</sup> For Avitus’s support for the conversion of Clovis, the first Catholic Frankish king, see Avitus, *Epistola* no. 46, ed. R. Peiper, *MGH AA* 6. 2 (Berlin, 1883), p. 75; D. Shanzer, ‘Dating the baptism of Clovis: the bishop of Vienne vs. the bishop of Tours’, *Early Medieval Europe* 7. 1 (1998), 29-57. For Avitus’s views on papal primacy, see Avitus, *Epistola* no. 39, p. 68; D. Shanzer & I. N. Wood (ed.), *Avitus of Vienne: Letters and Selected Prose* (Liverpool, 2002), pp. 13, 123-4.

<sup>12</sup> Wallace-Hadrill, *The Frankish Church*, pp. 115-18.

<sup>13</sup> On Merovingian monasticism see: F. Prinz, *Frühes Mönchtum im Frankenreich. Kultur und Gesellschaft in Gallien, den Rheinlanden und Bayern am Beispiel der monastischen Entwicklung, 4. bis 8. Jahrhundert* (2<sup>nd</sup> edn., Munich, 1972), pp. 152-85; H. B. Clarke & M. Brennan, *Columbanus and Merovingian Monasticism*, BAR International Series 113 (Oxford, 1981). On Columbanus’s monastic *regula* see J. B. Stevenson, ‘The monastic rules of Columbanus’, in M. Lapidge, (ed.), *Columbanus: Studies on the Latin Writings*, Studies in Celtic History 17 (Woodbridge, 1997), pp. 203-16.

<sup>14</sup> On the late establishment of the *Regula s. Benedicti* in Rome see G. Ferrari, *Early Roman Monasteries: Notes for the History of Monasteries and Convents at Rome from the V through to the X Century* (Rome, 1957), pp. 379-402. Compare, for example, van Berkum’s ‘Willibrord en Wilfried’ in which a dichotomy between Irish monasticism and Benedictine monasticism is presented as mirroring the differences between Celtic and Roman practices in Anglo-Saxon England.

<sup>15</sup> Hallinger, ‘Römische Voraussetzungen’, pp. 324-5.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 327-8; Ewig, ‘Der Petrus- und Apostelkult’, pp. 215-51.

conducted with apparent autonomy from the papacy, and had declined in regularity in correspondence with the decline in Merovingian royal authority.<sup>17</sup> There is no evidence that these synods were held as conscious rejections of papal authority; rather, it would appear that the pope was simply not a factor. After the death of Gregory the Great, a century passed in which there was little or no interest from Rome in Frankish affairs, nor from the Franks in papal affairs. The papal attitude is explained by a persisting preoccupation with the surviving Roman Empire, which meant that popes would often concentrate on the Mediterranean rather than the North.<sup>18</sup> Meanwhile, the Franks had emerged in a post-Roman world where political and cultural unity was a fading memory, and horizons were often limited. The works of Gregory of Tours, for example, betray a particularly parochial outlook where a great many things were important solely because of their significance for Tours itself.<sup>19</sup> Roman influence might have been important within Frankia, but it was not natural for the popes to assert their authority over Frankish bishops, nor for the Franks to seek papal injunctions, in the sixth and seventh centuries.

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<sup>17</sup> A. Angenendt, *Das Frühmittelalter. Die abendländische Christenheit von 400 bis 900* (Stuttgart, 1990, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn. 2001), p. 181. Hallinger, 'Römische Voraussetzungen', pp. 347-51 noted that there was Frankish representation at some early Roman synods and papal representation at some Frankish synods, but that these contacts were at best irregular and were almost entirely lacking by the time Boniface resumed Frankish synods in 743-7.

<sup>18</sup> Schieffer, 'Angelsachsen und Franken', p. 1436; Hallinger, 'Römische Voraussetzungen', pp. 320-1. On the papal change from concentrating on Mediterranean affairs to becoming more active in the North see Thomas F. X. Noble's *St Peter's Republic*.

<sup>19</sup> On the attitudes of Gregory of Tours see in particular R. van Dam, *Leadership and Community in Late Antique Gaul* (Berkeley & London, 1985), pp. 179-201, and Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom* (2<sup>nd</sup> edn., Oxford, 2003), pp. 154-65.

Representations of Rome in Merovingian hagiography confirm that the Eternal City's early importance was for its saints' cults and churches more than politics.<sup>20</sup> The *Vita sancti Geretrudis*, for example, recounts of how Geretrud of Nivelles sought relics and books from Rome.<sup>21</sup> Similarly in the *Vita Audoini* and *Vita Amandi*, Audoin of Rouen and Amandus of Maastricht are both said to have taken time to visit the shrines and churches of Rome in the seventh century.<sup>22</sup> Caution must be taken here, however, because both *vitae* describe the journeys in near-identical terms, thus indicating narrow literary conventions had developed for associating saints with visits to Rome.<sup>23</sup> Nowhere in these three *vitae* is the pope mentioned or sought out. Amandus is said to have had two visions of St Peter, one instructing him to become a preacher and the other reassuring him in a storm, but this says more about the cult of St Peter in the North and nothing about Frankish perceptions of the papacy.<sup>24</sup> Such stories have led to accusations from modern editors and historians that these references to Rome are later interpolations, if not parts of entire fabricated texts, written after Boniface had attempted to reform the Frankish Church.<sup>25</sup> In some cases this may be so; the *Vita domnae Balthildis* about Queen Balthild, the Anglo-Saxon wife of Clovis II, includes a story

<sup>20</sup> Note that this is not the same as saying the papacy was only a source of 'moralische Autorität' before Boniface, as Hauck insisted (*Kirchengeschichte Deutschlands* 1, pp. 407-8 and 510), but instead that Rome was important for reasons apart from the papacy. A good introduction to Merovingian hagiography, including some translated texts, is P. Fouracre & R. A. Gerberding, *Late Merovingian France: History and Hagiography 640-720* (Manchester, 1996). See also: I. N. Wood, 'Forgery in Merovingian hagiography', in *MGH Schriften* 33, *Fälschungen im Mittelalter* V (Hanover, 1988), pp. 369-85; *idem*, 'The *Vita Columbani* and Merovingian hagiography', *Peritia* 1 (1982), 63-80; P. Fouracre, 'Merovingian History and Merovingian Hagiography', *Past and Present* 127 (1990), 3-38.

<sup>21</sup> *Vita sancti Geretrudis* c. 2, ed. B. Krusch, *MGH SRM* 2 (Hanover, 1888), pp. 453-74 at p. 457: '... et per suos nuntios, boni testimonii viros sanctorum petrocinia vel sancta volumine de urbe Roma et de transmarinis regionibus gignaros homines ad docenda divini legis carmina, sibi et eius meditandum, Deo inspirante, meruisset habere'.

<sup>22</sup> *Vita Audoini* c. 10, ed. B. Krusch, *MGH SRM* 5 (Hanover, 1910), pp. 553-67 at pp. 559-60; *Vita Amandi* c. 6, ed. B. Krusch, *MGH SRM* 5 (Hanover, 1910), pp. 429-449 at p. 433-4.

<sup>23</sup> Compare the statement in the *Vita Audoini* c. 10, p. 559, that Audoin went '... ut ad sanctorum apostolorum limina adoranda Romae properare deberet', and the statement in the *Vita Amandi* c. 6, p. 434, that Amandus travelled '... ut ad limina beatissimum apostolorum Petri et Pauli properare deberet' (underlining indicates phrases common to both *vitae*).

<sup>24</sup> *Vita Amandi* c. 7, p. 434 and c. 10, p. 436.

<sup>25</sup> A classic example is the *Vita Amandi*, on which see Wood, *The Missionary Life: Saints and the Evangelisation of Europe 400-1050* (Harlow, 2001), pp. 40-2.

relating how she sent gifts to churches in Rome, but the story is only contained in the post-Bonifatian, ninth-century 'B' version of the text.<sup>26</sup> In general, this small selection of Merovingian *vitae* appears to show that Rome was considered important for its relics, churches and association with St Peter, not because of the papacy *per se*. The idea of labelling Frankish veneration of Rome as 'pre-Bonifatian' seems a redundant concept if the Merovingian attitude to Rome did not include the papacy as Boniface would later insist it should.

One Merovingian *vita* which stands out because it mentions the papacy is the *Vita Eligii*, although interpreting it as evidence is problematical because it has only survived in an expanded Carolingian version of the work.<sup>27</sup> It tells the story of Bishop Eligius of Noyon (d. 660), a powerful figure at the court of King Dagobert I (d. 638), and seems to have been written originally by Eligius's friend Dado. The passage about the papacy appears towards the end of the first book and recounts Pope Martin I's problems in combating the Monothelite heresy and subsequent death as an exile in Greece.<sup>28</sup> Whether this should be thought to reflect anything about the relationship between the Franks and the papacy in the seventh century would depend on the extent to which the core of the text is considered authentically Merovingian. Michel Banniard has defended the work's authenticity on linguistic grounds, while Paul Fouracre has

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<sup>26</sup> *Vita domnae Balthildis* c. 9, ed. B. Krusch, *MGH SRM 2* (Hanover, 1888), pp. 482-508 at p. 493-4. See Fouracre & Gerberding, *Late Merovingian France*, p. 115, although the following translation of the *vita* is misleading because it is not indicated which sections belong to the 'A' text and which to the 'B'.

<sup>27</sup> Dado, *Vita Eligii*, ed. B. Krusch, *MGH SRM 4* (Hanover, 1902), pp. 663-741.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, I. 33-34, pp. 689-91.

suggested that it has the vivid character of a near-contemporary *vita*.<sup>29</sup> The reference to Martin displays no post-Bonifatian interest in the institution and authority of the papacy. Martin, called simply *episcopus* rather than *papa*, is clearly revered within the confines of the text as a recent martyr who died valiantly defending the catholic faith against heresy; Dado wrote, for example, that ‘it is no lesser glory but rather more excellent to sustain martyrdom to keep the church from being torn apart by heresy than it is to be sacrificed for pulling down idols’.<sup>30</sup> It is also in this context of combating heresy, rather than developed Franco-papal relations, that a letter from Martin to Amandus requesting his support should be considered.<sup>31</sup> Dado’s work reveals an interest in Rome as the centre of a theological debate and home of a recent martyr; it is difficult to accept that there was anything resembling veneration of the papacy in the *Vita Eligii*.

Evidence from Merovingian *vitae* in general seems to mirror other pre-Bonifatian sources in representing Rome as a source of saints, relics and learning, not as the home of papal authority. When communities related to the past of saintly figures like Amandus they were bound to certain elements of Roman Christianity but by no means all. While this conclusion seems to reflect a pragmatic fact about the Merovingian relationship with Rome, it also helps to understand what Rome meant as an ideal; and where it had any meaning at all, Rome was not idealised by the Franks as something

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<sup>29</sup> M. Banniard, ‘Latin et communication orale en Gaule franque: le témoignage de la “Vita Eligii”’ in J. Fontaine & J. N. Hillgarth (eds.), *The Seventh Century – Changes and Continuity* (London, 1992), pp. 58-86; P. Fouracre, ‘The work of Audeonus of Rouen and Eligius of Noyon in extending episcopal influence from the town to the country in seventh-century Neustria’, in D. Baker (ed.), *The Church in Town and Countryside*, Studies in Church History 16 (Oxford, 1979), pp. 77-91 esp. p. 78. Against Banniard’s argument, see Y. Hen, *Culture and Religion in Merovingian Gaul AD 481-751* (Leiden, 1995), p. 196 and n. 245.

<sup>30</sup> Dado, *Vita Eligii*, I. 34, p. 691: ‘... non est inferior gloria, sed potius excellentior sustinere martyrrium, pro eo, ne scindatur ecclesia fallaciis hereticorum, quam est illa, ne immoletur idolis impulsu paganorum’.

<sup>31</sup> On Martin approaching the Gallic Church for support see *ibid.*, I. 33, p. 690. The letter is Pope Martin I, *Epistola* no. 2, ed. J. P. Migne, *PL* 87 (Paris, 1851), 135A-138C, on which see G. Scheibelreiter, ‘Grieches – lateinisches – fränkisches Christentum. Der Brief Papst Martins I. an den Bischof Amandus von Maastricht aus dem Jahre 649’, *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung* 100 (1992), 84-102.

contiguous with the papacy. On this basis, as we shall see, a contrast with Anglo-Saxon *vitae* is entirely appropriate.

### Anglo-Saxon Relations with Rome through Saints' Lives.

#### *The importance of Rome in insular Anglo-Saxon 'vitae'.*

The Anglo-Saxon veneration for Rome stemmed from the role of successive popes in supporting the conversion to Christianity.<sup>32</sup> The bond between Rome and the Anglo-Saxons inspired many pious Anglo-Saxons, such as Wilfrid and Benedict Biscop, to go on pilgrimage to Rome.<sup>33</sup> Evidence for these activities generally comes from three sources: Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica*; his *Lives of the Abbots of Wearmouth-Jarrow*; and Stephanus's *Vita Wilfridi*.<sup>34</sup> Again it should be remembered that these sources were historiographical texts – whether putatively hagiographical or not – that portrayed an idealised version of the past.<sup>35</sup> The idealisation of Rome was evident from the first

<sup>32</sup> Mayr-Harting, *The Coming of Christianity*, pp. 51-77. On the Gregorian mission see the differing accounts of Markus, *Gregory the Great*, pp. 177-87 and I. N. Wood, 'The mission of Augustine of Canterbury to the English', *Speculum* 69 (1994), 1-17.

<sup>33</sup> On the pilgrimages see L. E. von Padberg, 'Missionare und Mönche auf dem Weg nach Rom und Monte Cassino im 8. Jahrhundert', *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 111/ 2 (2000), 145-68. On royal retirements to Rome see C. Stancliffe 'Kings who opted out', in P. Wormald, D. Bullough & R. Collins (eds.), *Ideals and Reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Society: Studies Presented to John Michael Wallace-Hadrill* (Oxford, 1983), pp. 154-76.

<sup>34</sup> See throughout Bede's *HE*; *idem*, *Historia abbatum* cc. 2-4, 6, 17, 21, ed. C. Plummer, *Baedae Opera Historica* I (Oxford, 1896), pp. 364-87 at pp. 365-70, 381, 385-6; Stephanus, *Vita Wilfridi* cc. 3, 5, 29-32 and 50, ed. W. Levison, *MGH SRM* 6 (Hanover, 1913), pp. 193-263 at pp. 195, 198-9, 222-7 and 243-9.

<sup>35</sup> On the representations of ideas, especially Roman ones, in Anglo-Saxon hagiography see: D. Bullough, 'Hagiography as patriotism: Alcuin's "York Poem" and the early Northumbrian "Vitae Sanctorum"', in E. Patlagean & P. Riché (eds.), *Hagiographie, cultures et sociétés IVe-XIIe siècles* (Paris, 1981), pp. 339-59; A. Thacker, 'Lindisfarne and the origins of the cult of St Cuthbert', in G. Bonner, D. Rollason & C. Stancliffe (eds.), *St Cuthbert, His Cult and His Community to AD 1200* (Woodbridge, 1989), pp. 103-22; C. Cubitt, 'Memory and narrative in the cult of early Anglo-Saxon saints', in Y. Hen & M. Innes (eds.), *The Uses of the Past in the Early Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 29-66. On Bede's use of history to make ideological points see in particular P. Wormald, 'Bede, the Bretwaldas and the origins of the *Gens Anglorum*', in Wormald, Bullough & Collins, *Ideals and Reality*, pp. 99-129; *idem*, 'The Venerable Bede and the "Church of the English"', in G. Rowell (ed.), *The English Religious Tradition and the Genius of Anglicanism* (Wantage, 1993), pp. 13-32; W. Goffart, *The Narrators of Barbarian History, A.D. 550-800: Jordanes, Gregory of Tours, Bede and Paul the Deacon* (Princeton, 1988), pp. 235-328; H. Mayr-Harting, 'Bede's patristic thinking as an historian', in A. Scharer & G. Scheibelreiter, (eds.), *Historiographie im frühen Mittelalter*, Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung 32 (Vienna & Munich, 1994), pp. 367-74.

known Anglo-Saxon hagiography, which was written about Pope Gregory the Great.<sup>36</sup> Roman ideals also shaped Bede's *Vita Cuthberti*, about the first abbot of Lindisfarne.<sup>37</sup> Bede's *vita* was a re-working of an important seventh-century *Vita Cuthberti* associated with Melrose.<sup>38</sup> In the wake of the Roman victory at the 664 Synod of Whitby, the representation of Cuthbert in the earlier *vita*, which was distinctly Irish, was deemed not to be in keeping with the image of a champion of Roman virtues certain figures in the Northumbrian Church required; Bede was therefore asked to rewrite the *Vita Cuthberti*, giving a particularly Roman character to the saint.<sup>39</sup> The rewriting was accompanied by the rigorous promotion of the cult of the saint and the translation of the saint's relics, something which may have been influenced by Frankish practices.<sup>40</sup> This cultic promotion prompted the writing of another saint's Life, Felix's *Vita Guthlaci*, in order to provide a figure of Roman sanctity for the Mercians, independent of the Northumbrian saints.<sup>41</sup> Combined with the evidence of the *Vita Wilfridi* and Bede's other works, it becomes apparent that *vitae* played an important role for the Anglo-Saxons in expressing their attachment to Rome and its practices through their own past. For the Anglo-Saxons, moreover, the ideal of Rome included the papacy alongside the saints' cults and churches.

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<sup>36</sup> The so-called 'Whitby' *Vita Gregorii*: see *The Earliest Life of St Gregory*, ed. & transl. B. Colgrave (Cambridge, 1985). The most recent consideration of the text is that of K. Rambridge, 'Doctor noster sanctus: The Northumbrians and Pope Gregory', in R. H. Bremmer, K. Dekker & D. F. Johnson (eds.), *Rome and the North: The Early Reception of Gregory the Great in Germanic Europe* (Leuven, 2001), pp. 1-26.

<sup>37</sup> Bede, *Vita Cuthberti*, ed. and transl. B. Colgrave, *Two Lives of Saint Cuthbert: A Life by an Anonymous Monk of Lindisfarne and Bede's Prose Life* (Cambridge, 1940), pp. 141-307.

<sup>38</sup> *Vita Cuthberti auctore anonymae*, ed. and transl. Colgrave, *Two Lives of Saint Cuthbert*, pp. 59-139.

<sup>39</sup> Thacker, 'Lindisfarne and the origins of the cult', pp. 115-122 suggests that Bede's developments of the *Vita Cuthberti* owed much to the precarious position of Lindisfarne's independence after 664. On the differences between the two versions of the *Vita Cuthberti* see C. Stancliffe, 'Cuthbert and the polarity between pastor and solitary', in Bonner, Rollason & Stancliffe, *St Cuthbert*, pp. 21-44, and Cubitt, 'Memory and narrative', pp. 39-50. On the importance of the Synod of Whitby see: H. Mayr-Harting, *The Coming of Christianity*, pp. 102-13.

<sup>40</sup> Thacker, 'Lindisfarne and the origins of the cult', pp. 106-7.

<sup>41</sup> Felix, *Vita Guthlaci*, ed. and transl. B. Colgrave, *Felix's Life of Guthlac* (Cambridge, 1956); Cubitt, 'Memory and narrative', pp. 53-7.

*The importance of Rome in the 'vitae' of the Bonifatian Circles.*

Anglo-Saxons on the continent continued traditions developed in Britain, with the Roman papacy prominent in *vitae* as the centre from which the bishops Boniface and Willibald gained their authority. The influence of literary insular works on the *Bonifatiuskreise vitae* is unclear. Lull, for example, was still trying to obtain copies of Bede's *Vita Cuthberti* in its prose and verse forms in 764, not long before the latest the *Vita Bonifatii* could have been completed.<sup>42</sup> While it may be an exaggeration to say the *Bonifatiuskreise* were starved of books, it has often been difficult to determine whether they had read things like the *Historia ecclesiastica*.<sup>43</sup> Meanwhile the originality of the *Bonifatiuskreise* must be appreciated given the lack of any clear evidence for Anglo-Saxon or Merovingian influence on their *vitae*. Historians should see the work of Willibald and Hygeburg as distinctive cases, at once continuing Anglo-Saxon veneration for Rome and developing new ideals to suit their continental context.

Willibald's *Vita Bonifatii* contains the most detailed discussion of the relationship between the Anglo-Saxons and the papacy. Boniface visited Rome three times, in 719, 722 and 737-9. The importance of each visit was explained carefully by Willibald, and it was made clear that the papacy was at the root of all Boniface's authority even before he was consecrated as an archbishop. On his first visit, having

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<sup>42</sup> Gutberct, *Tangl* no. 116, p. 251.

<sup>43</sup> A. Orchard, 'Old sources, new resources: finding the right formula for Boniface', *Anglo-Saxon England* 30 (2001), 15-38 at 34-8; Wood, *The Missionary Life*, p. 43; N. P. Brooks, 'English identity from Bede to the Battle of Hastings', unpublished Henry Loyn Memorial Lecture, University of Cardiff, 2003. The impression that Boniface's circle was starved of books is derived from letters written by Boniface and Lull requesting books from England: see for example *Tangl* nos. 15, 35, 75, 76, 91, 125, 126, 127, pp. 26-8, 60, 156-8, 158-161, 206-8, 262-3, 263-4, 264-5. Clearly some books did arrive and many more were copied in places like Fulda, Würzburg and Hersfeld: see R. McKitterick, 'Anglo-Saxon missionaries in Germany: reflections on the manuscript evidence', *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society* 9 (1989), 291-329, reprinted in her *Books, Scribes and Learning in the Frankish Kingdoms, 6<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> Centuries* (Aldershot, 1994), IV. It is perhaps time for a more systematic study of the literary worlds of the Anglo-Saxons on the continent.

explained to Pope Gregory II that he wished to preach amongst the Germans, Boniface proceeded only with the pope's permission and, significantly, with the task redefined by the pope as discovering whether German pagans were ready for Christianity.<sup>44</sup> Boniface was also bound to the papacy at that time by the adoption of his new Roman name.<sup>45</sup> Rome proved to be a source of saints' relics for Boniface and he left with *numerosa reliquiarum*.<sup>46</sup> He then worked with Willibrord in Frisia for three years, but refused to succeed his countryman as bishop, saying, 'I came to the German people at the express command of Pope Gregory of blessed memory';<sup>47</sup> it is notable that the task was no longer presented as his own. The second visit to Rome is given prominence by Willibald, who placed it half way through the text and described the events in some detail.<sup>48</sup> On this occasion Boniface was summoned to Rome by Gregory II, who consecrated him as a bishop of Germany; again, the initiative is clearly explained as being taken by the papacy, not Boniface. The third visit receives less attention, but Willibald says Boniface 'went to Rome in order that he might have further discussions with the apostolic pontiff and to commend himself, now in his declining years, to the

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<sup>44</sup> Willibald, *VB* c. 5, 22: '... a beatissimo pape ad inspiciendos immanissimos Germaniae populos directus est, ut, an inculta cordium arva, euangelico arata vomere, praedicationis recipere semen voluissent, consideraret'. See also *Tangl* nos. 16-21, pp. 28-36, which show that Boniface returned to the Franks with the support of the papacy.

<sup>45</sup> W. Levison, 'Willibrordiana', *Neues Archiv der Gesellschaft für ältere deutsche Geschichtskunde* 33 (1908), pp. 517-30 at p. 529. Levison argued convincingly that Wynfrith was renamed by Gregory II on the 15<sup>th</sup> May 719 after the third-century martyr Boniface of Tarsus, whose festival was held on 14<sup>th</sup> May in Rome. The earliest explanations of Boniface's name emphasise its literal meaning, 'doer of good', in relation to scripture: see Liudger, *VG* c. 9, p. 74 ('benefacite his qui oderunt vos, ut sitis filii Patris vestri, qui in caelis est [Matt. 5. 44-5]') and *VaB* c. 1, p. 62 ('qui timet Deum, faciet bona [Eccl. 15. 1]'). Christoph Weber, 'Die Namen des heiligen Bonifatius', *Fuldaer Geschichtsblätter* 30 (1954), 39-66 at pp. 58-66 suggested that it was this literal meaning that gave 'Bonifatius' its special resonance when Gregory came to rename Wynfrith. For a detailed study of the relationship between the cults of the two Bonifaces, see J. T. Palmer, 'The Frankish cult of martyrs and the case of the two saints Boniface', *Revue bénédictine* (forthcoming), and also P. Kehl, *Kult und Nachleben des heiligen Bonifatius im Mittelalter (754-1200)*, *Quellen und Abhandlungen zur Geschichte der Abtei und der Diözese Fulda* 26 (Fulda, 1993), pp. 81-2, 137, 150-6 and 160 for some useful comments.

<sup>46</sup> Willibald, *VB* c. 5, p. 22.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, c. 5, p. 25: "'Ego... a beato sanctae recordationis Gregorio pape Germanicis mandatum gentibus detuli"'.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, c. 6, pp. 28-9.

prayers of the saints’;<sup>49</sup> after a year engaged in such prayer, Boniface returned home.

There are two clear images of Rome within this account: of Rome as city full of relics and shrines, and of Boniface as a figure who, despite his sanctity, was subordinate to the papacy.

Willibald’s representation of Boniface and the papacy was particularly significant because it helped portray the saint as the model of Catholic orthodoxy. This is evident in the description of Boniface’s reform synods of 742-7.<sup>50</sup> Willibald wrote that:<sup>51</sup>

At these Archbishop Boniface presided... and being a legate of the Roman Church and the Apostolic See, sent as he was by the saintly and venerable Gregory II and later by Gregory III, he urged that the numerous canons and ordinances decreed by these four important and early councils should be preserved in order to ensure the healthy development of Christian doctrine.

The passage seems *prima facie* ‘historical’; there were synods and Boniface was a papal legate. However, while Boniface actually seems to have worked with some independence, Willibald glossed the situation to present Boniface as justified because he

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<sup>49</sup> Willibald, *VB* c. 7, p. 36: ‘Romam venit ut apostolici videlicet patris salubri frueretur conloquio et sanctorum se, iam aetate proventus, orationibus commendaret’. Franz Flaskamp suggested, in his ‘Wilbrord-Clemens und Wynfrith-Bonifatius’, in *Sankt Bonifatius*, pp. 157-72 at p. 169, that the journey was prompted by the death of Willibrord in 739 and Boniface’s wish to retire to preach in Frisia. There is, however, no evidence to support this supposition.

<sup>50</sup> On the synods, see: Schieffer, ‘Angelsachsen und Franken’, pp. 1450-4; E. Ewig, ‘Milo et eiusmodi simili’, in *Sankt Bonifatius*, pp. 412-40 at pp. 424-9; W. Hartmann, *Die Synoden der Karolingerzeit im Frankenreich und Italien* (Paderborn, 1989), pp. 47-63; T. Reuter, “Kirchenreform” und “Kirchenpolitik” im Zeitalter Karl Martells: Begriffe und Wirklichkeit’, in J. Jarnut, U. Nonn & M. Richter (eds.), *Karl Martell in seiner Zeit*, Beihefte der Francia 37 (Sigmaringen, 1994), pp. 35-59.

<sup>51</sup> Willibald, *VB* c. 7-8, pp. 41-42: ‘In quo Bonifatius archiepiscopus... pontificatu praesidens, Romanae ecclesiae sedisque apostolicae legatus... – primum missus a sancto et venerabili sedis apostolicae pontifici Gregorio iunior, a primo secundo, et Gregorio a secundo iunior, cum primo tertio, viro honorabili – ob salutarem doctrinae caelestis augmentum admonuit conservari’.

was, in effect, an instrument of papal authority.<sup>52</sup> Willibald followed this image by comparing Boniface's synods to the anti-heretical synods of Nicaea (325), Constantinople (381), Ephesus (431) and Chalcedon (451).<sup>53</sup> Thus Boniface's synods were placed in the great tradition of the early ecumenical councils and the defence of the orthodoxy that Rome, in the papal sense of the word, had come to symbolise. Willibald did not simply give an account of the synods, but portrayed them in relation to papal authority and earlier synods in order to legitimise Boniface's assumed position as a leader within the Frankish Church.

The relationship between Boniface and the papacy as it is presented by Willibald fits easily within Anglo-Saxon perceptions of the Catholic Church. It is, however, clear from the Boniface correspondence that the relationship was stormier than the *Vita Bonifatii* suggests. Boniface appears to have felt confident enough to upbraid Pope Zacharias for letting pagan practices continue in Rome.<sup>54</sup> Later he accused Zacharias of the sin of simony, and Zacharias chastised Boniface for ordering a re-baptism after a Bavarian priest had made grammatical errors in the ceremony.<sup>55</sup> These were isolated interludes in an otherwise positive and supportive relationship but they prove that

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<sup>52</sup> It is important not to confuse Boniface's role as a papal legate with direct papal machinations, as Hauck and Caspar did; see, for example, Hauck, *Kirchengeschichte Deutschlands* 1, p. 499 and Caspar, *Geschichte des Papsttum* 2, p. 708. Boniface's letters suggest that he acted with independence and generally reserved making contact with Rome for the purpose of reporting developments, seeking approval for what he had done, and asking for help when his actions met with problems; see Schieffer, 'Angelsachsen und Franken', p. 1439.

<sup>53</sup> Willibald, *VB* c. 8, p. 42: 'Et quemadmodum in Nicena, Constantino Augusto orbis monarchiam gubernante, Arrianae eversa est perfidia blasphemia et CL patrum, Theodosio seniore Constantinopolim imperante, congregatio quendam Macedonium Spiritum sanctum Deum esse refutantem condemnavit atque ducentorum episcoporum unitas, sub iunior Theodosio apud Effesinam urbem adventata, Nestorium geminas in Christo personas profitentem a catholica iusto anathemate segregavit ecclesia necnon et Calcedonensis synodi DCXXX sacerdotum conventio Euticen Constantinopolitanae urbis abbatem et Dioscorum defensorum eius catholicae fidei munitate rebellantes iuxta praefinitam patrum sentiam anathematizat'.

<sup>54</sup> Boniface, *Tangl* no. 50, p. 85: 'Nam si istas paganas ibi paternitas vestra in Romana urbe prohibuerit, et sibi mercedem et nobis maximum profectum in doctrina aecclesiastica proficerit'. See Mayr-Harting, *The Coming of Christianity*, p. 268.

<sup>55</sup> Only Zacharias's indignant responses have survived, making it difficult to ascertain exactly what Boniface had originally written: Zacharias, *Tangl* nos. 58, 68, pp. 105-8, 141.

Boniface's connection with the papacy could be quite complex in practice. The *Vita Bonifatii* drew heavily on the letters of Boniface, but in creating a coherent narrative out of the nuggets of information they contained, Willibald smoothed over the cracks and thus invested the facts with a new meaning. The lengthy justification of Boniface's rights to hold synods was particularly important because in 742/3 he had used such a platform to assert the primacy of the papal see;<sup>56</sup> justifying such actions in a narrative about a saint brought renewed religious force to those assertions. Boniface's authority had, however, been questioned by the Franks: he had been refused the vacant see of Cologne and was forced to take up the see of Mainz, from which he had deposed Gewilib.<sup>57</sup> Later Lull was not recognised as archbishop of Mainz until 782, after twenty-seven years at the see, despite Boniface's efforts to secure the position of his friend before his death.<sup>58</sup> The *Vita Bonifatii* therefore recast Boniface's career to emphasise the powerful relationship he had with the papacy and how Lull was his successor to that relationship; with support from the Franks uncertain, the position of the Anglo-Saxons after 754 was thus legitimised.

The authority of the papacy was emphasised further in Hygeburg's *Vita Willibaldi et Wynnebaldi*. Hygeburg relates the story of how Willibald came to leave the monastery of Monte Cassino and became bishop in 741.<sup>59</sup> It was apparently the abbot Petronax who took the decision for Willibald to leave the monastery, committing him to accompany a Spanish monk on a visit to the papacy. This explanation is important within the text because, after Willibald's pilgrimage, it is concerned with the benefits of

<sup>56</sup> *Tangl* no. 78, pp. 161-70 at p. 163.

<sup>57</sup> Zacharias, *Tangl* nos. 60, 80, pp. 124, 179-8. Opposition to Boniface is generally seen in terms of aristocratic tensions with the Carolingian family; see: Schieffer, 'Angelsachsen und Franken', pp. 1450-4; Ewig, 'Milo et eiusmodi simili', pp. 424-9; H. Büttner, 'Bonifatius und die Karolinger', *Hessisches Jahrbuch für Landesgeschichte* 4 (1954), 21-36 at 32-4.

<sup>58</sup> *Tangl* no. 93, pp. 212-4 at p. 213; Levison, *England and the Continent*, pp. 233-40.

<sup>59</sup> Hygeburg, *VWb* c. 5, p. 104.

adhering to the *Regula s. Benedicti*, which expressly discouraged monks from wandering around without purpose or their abbot's permission.<sup>60</sup> While in Rome Willibald was informed by Pope Gregory III that Boniface had requested that the monk be sent to work in Germany. Initially, Hygeburg wrote, Willibald was reluctant to go without his abbot's permission because of his monastic vows. The pope, however, decreed that his own order was sufficient. Hygeburg's justification of the pope's action is worth quoting in full:<sup>61</sup>

The supreme pontiff, in whom is vested the highest authority, at once replied that his command was sufficient permission, and he ordered him to set out obediently without uneasiness of mind, saying, 'if I am free to transfer the Abbot Petronax himself to any other place, certainly he has neither the licence nor power to oppose my wishes'.

This is one of the earliest and most emphatic articulations of the power of the papacy written in the Frankish kingdoms. It is combined with a description of the pope as 'Ruler of the People/ Tribes' (*gubernator gentium*), an indication of the pope's supposed high earthly authority.<sup>62</sup> At the same time it is not clear from where, in reality, Gregory had derived the right to transfer Petronax anywhere and it is most likely a fiction. Hygeburg was not describing a practical relationship between the pope and someone with papal authority like an archbishop or legate, but she was instead making a grander claim to the universal authority of the pope over the Christian peoples.

The story of Willibald provides only half the story. In her often-ignored account of Wynnebald's life, Hygeburg developed the imagery of a powerful and controlling

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<sup>60</sup> *Regula s. Benedicti*, ed. A. de Vogüé & J. Neufville, *Sources Chrétiennes* 181-2 (Paris, 1972), cc. 1 and 61, pp. 438-40 and 636-40.

<sup>61</sup> Hygeburg, *VWb* c. 5, p. 104: '... summus ille sanctae auctoritatis pontifex respondit, illumque sine sollicitudinis ambiguitate securum cum suae iussionis licentia oboedientialiter pergere precepit, dicens: "Qui si illum ipsum abbatem Petronacem uspiam transmittere me libet, certe contradicere mihi licentiam non habet nec potestatem"'.  
<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, c. 5, p. 104.

papacy further. When Willibald and Wynnebald first arrived in Rome, Hygeburg claimed:<sup>63</sup>

Then [the pope], the agile master and hitherto a great tree [lit. that did not support vines] of the all-powerful throne, having been enriched by privilege and instigating celestial grace, was anxious to subjugate [Wynnebald] to the service of God and accept tonsure. And in this manner [the pope] shrewdly began to weave the wholesome authority of knowledge so that he established his army and, engaging with many great, divine, sacred lectures and irrigating with the moistness of heavenly dew, he brought to flower the germs of fruitful virtues in them.

On this occasion the location is given as the ‘church of St Peter, prince of the apostles’ (*basilica sancti Petri apostolorum principis*), making an explicit connection between the pope and St Peter. The imagery, almost lost in the convoluted prose, seems to present the pope as a lone figure, a ‘tree not supporting vines’ (*celeps*), who begins to become powerful by encouraging the Anglo-Saxons to take up pious work. Hygeburg attributes Gregory II with a direct role in encouraging Wynnebald to become a monk. It is worth reiterating that the papacy did not have to be strong to influence willing Anglo-Saxons, and indeed Hygeburg admits as much. If, as it seems, the story of Wynnebald was intended to develop a cult in Eichstätt in the 770s, then for the faithful to understand the legends of their saint meant they were expected to understand the fundamental role the papacy had played in guiding their saint to them.<sup>64</sup> The story of Willibald and Gregory III may have had a similar function. The *Vita Willibaldi et Wynnebaldi* appears to present some strong claims about the power of the papacy and, placed in the context of the text’s origins, promoted a reverence for the papacy in Bavaria in the second half of the eighth century.

<sup>63</sup> Hygeburg, *Wyn* c. 2, p. 108: ‘Tunc ille herus agilis et adhuc celeps omnipotentis Altithroni magna ditatus erat prerogativa et caeleste instigatus gratia, tonsuram accipere et Dei servitio se subiugarestudivit. Et sic sollerter saluberrimam sapientiae exorsus est auctoritatem, ut ille sacre lectionis ingenio absidue inherendo subsummatim divino se subdidit exercitio et superni roris humida inrigatus, germen in eo iam tunc frugiferum florere cepit virtutum’.

<sup>64</sup> On the cult of Wynnebald see chapter four below, p. 190.

*An Anglo-Saxon Response to Boniface and Rome?*

Legends about Willibrord and Rome may illustrate some Northumbrian rivalry with the traditions of the *Bonifatiuskreise*. According to the note in his own calendar, Willibrord visited Pope Sergius I in 695.<sup>65</sup> There is, however, by no means any agreement in the sources as to what happened next. The same margin note in the calendar tells us that Willibrord was consecrated as bishop, no more, no less.<sup>66</sup> Charters from his monastery of Echternach, near Trier, also indicate that he was only a bishop at this time.<sup>67</sup> Yet Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica*, the *Liber Pontificalis*, and Alcuin's *Vita Willibrordi* all claim that Willibrord had been consecrated *archbishop* over the Frisians.<sup>68</sup> The difference is important because as an archbishop Willibrord would have received the *pallium* from the pope and thus been bound closely to Rome.<sup>69</sup> It is also important to draw a contrast between metropolitan bishops, who had suffragan bishops under their authority as a matter of course, and archbishops, who supervised other churches through the delegated authority of the pope.<sup>70</sup> Recent readings of the evidence, and the *Vita Willibrordi* in particular, have tentatively suggested that Willibrord *was* made archbishop, but that it was perhaps only in the time of Charles Martel when he finally

<sup>65</sup> *The Calendar of Willibrord*, fol. 39v, ed. H. W. Wilson, Henry Bradshaw Society 55 (London, 1918). On Willibrord's visits to Rome see Wampach, *Willibrord*, pp. 216-18; A. G. Weiler, *Willibrords Missie: Christendom en Cultuur in de Zevende en Achste Eeuw* (Hilversum, 1989), pp. 98-9, 103-8.

<sup>66</sup> *The Calendar of Willibrord*, fol. 39v: 'In... anno sexcentesimo nonagesimo ab incar[n]atione ch[rist]i ... in dignus fuit ordinatus in romae epis[copus] ab apostolico viro domno sergio papa'.

<sup>67</sup> *MGH Dip. I*, nos. 4-7, pp. 93-6.

<sup>68</sup> Bede, *HE* V. 11, p. 486: 'Pippinus misit... Uilbrordum Romam... ut eidem Fresonum genti archiepiscopus ordinatur. Quod ita ut perierat impletum est, anno ab incarnatione Domini DCXCVI'. Alcuin, *VWbr* c. 7, p. 122: 'apostolicus eum ordinavit archiepiscopum'; *Liber Pontificalis* 86. 15, ed. T. Mommsen, *MGH Gesta Pontificum Romanorum* 1. 1 (Hanover, 1898), pp. 210 at p. 216: 'Hic ordinavit... archiepiscopum... Clementem in gentem Frisionem'.

<sup>69</sup> A. Angenendt, 'Willibrord als römischer Erzbischof' in G. Kiesel & J. Schroeder (eds.), *Willibrord, Apostel der Niederlande, Gründer der Abtei Echternach. Gedenkgabe zum 1250. Todestag des angelsächsischen Missionars* (Luxembourg, 1989), pp. 31-41 at p. 33.

<sup>70</sup> On the distinction see R. A. Markus, 'Ravenna and Rome, 554-604', *Byzantion* 51 (1981), 566-78 at 571 (reprinted in his *From Augustine to Gregory the Great* [London, 1983], XIV); Angenendt, 'Willibrord als römischer Erzbischof', pp. 31-3.

made Utrecht his (arch)episcopal see.<sup>71</sup> Such a conclusion makes implausibly strong assumptions about Willibrord's association with Utrecht, however, because the charter evidence suggests that Willibrord's base was Echternach, with Utrecht a poor second, right up until his death.<sup>72</sup> What is needed is a clearer understanding of why the sources disagree about Willibrord's status.

Bede almost certainly did not include stories about Willibrord lightly in the *Historia ecclesiastica* given the idealism that shaped the work. Bede had strong expectations about the place of the Anglo-Saxons within the Roman Church.<sup>73</sup> It was natural for him to present Willibrord, the first bishop of the Frisians, as an archbishop in imitation of Augustine of Canterbury, the first bishop of the English. It is now generally accepted that Bede initially finished writing the *Historia ecclesiastica*, in which he made his claims about Willibrord, in ca 731, although he continued to revise it up until his death in 735. Bede, however, had already written in his *Chronica maiora* from 725 that 'pope Sergius ordained the venerable man Willibrord, also called Clemens, as bishop [*episcopus*] of the Frisian people'.<sup>74</sup> Bede was not, therefore, consistent in his descriptions. This shift might be explained by the timing of the *Historia ecclesiastica*. In 732, when Bede was revising his text, Boniface was consecrated as archbishop over the Germans. Bede remained notoriously silent over the activities of Boniface, despite the fact that the West Saxon could be seen as helping fulfil Ecgberht's plans to convert the

<sup>71</sup> J. Schroeder, 'Willibrord – Erzbischof von Utrecht oder Abt von Echternach? Das Leben und Wirken des angelsächsischen Missionars aus der Sicht der frühmittelalterlichen Hagiographie', in P. Bange & A. G. Weiler (eds.) *Willibrord, zijn wereld en zijn werk*, *Middeleeuwse Studies VI* (Nijmegen, 1990), pp. 348-57 at pp. 351-2. The other evidence is from charters such as *Diplomata maiorum domus e stirpe Arnulforum* no. 11, ed. G. H. Pertz, *MGH Dip.* 1 (Hanover, 1872), pp. 98-99 which, dated to 722, confusingly calls Willibrord *episcopus* and *archiepiscopus*.

<sup>72</sup> Weiler, *Willibrords Missie*, p. 151.

<sup>73</sup> Wallace-Hadrill, *Bede's Ecclesiastical History*, p. 183; Angenendt, 'Willibrord als römischer Erzbischof', p. 41.

<sup>74</sup> Bede, *Chronica maiora [De temporum ratione LXVI]*, ed. C. W. Jones, *CCSL* 123B (Turnhout, 1977), p. 529: '... papa Sergius ordinavit venerabilem virum Willibrordum cognomine Clementem Fresonum genti episcopum'.

near-relatives of the *Angli*. Since Boniface worked in Frisia and Bede seems well informed about the missions there, Bede's silence appears deliberate. Perhaps the most plausible explanation is simply that Boniface was not from Bede's beloved Northumbria.<sup>75</sup> Furthermore, Boniface's status amongst the Germans downplayed the importance of the Northumbrian Willibrord. It is perhaps in this context that Willibrord was called *archiepiscopus* by Bede, in order to create a Northumbrian equal to Boniface.

Analysing Alcuin's *Vita Willibrordi* can lead to similar conclusions. Alcuin was notably even more patriotically Northumbrian than Bede had been and, for example, reinforced Bede's version of the conversion of Northumbria by omitting the Kentish background to Paulinus's mission in his 'York poem'.<sup>76</sup> The *Vita Willibrordi* stands in opposition to much of what Boniface represented as a missionary and saint; there is a clear dislike for Boniface's antagonistic missionary strategies and the desire for martyrdom.<sup>77</sup> Alcuin and Beornrad, the recipient of the *Vita Willibrordi*, were related to Willibrord, giving Alcuin a more personal reason to promote Willibrord as a saint. The two factors that might have influenced Bede to call Willibrord *archiepiscopus*, therefore – Northumbrian patriotism and the higher status of Boniface above Willibrord – have greater influence on Alcuin's work and are perhaps given more focus because of the personal connections with Willibrord. In the face of contradictory evidence over whether Willibrord was an archbishop it is notable that the two principle sources that attribute

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<sup>75</sup> Mayr-Harting (*The Coming of Christianity*, p. 264) puts Bede's silence down to being ignorant of Boniface but also suggests that ignorance stemmed from the limited horizons of Anglo-Saxon groups. On Bede's Northumbrian patriotism within the *HE*, see: Wormald, 'Bede, the Bretwaldas and the origins of the *Gens Anglorum*', pp.99-129; *idem*, 'The Venerable Bede and the "Church of the English"', pp. 13-32.

<sup>76</sup> Bullough, 'Hagiography as patriotism', p. 340.

<sup>77</sup> Wood, *The Missionary Life*, pp. 87-8.

him with this higher status both had strong reasons for reinterpreting the past.<sup>78</sup>

Willibrord appears, therefore, to have been bound to Rome retrospectively by his fellow Northumbrians.

### **The Carolingians and the Anglo-Saxon Reverence for Rome.**

In the eighth century the Carolingians, with the help of Willibrord and Boniface, developed tentative connections with Rome.<sup>79</sup> The practical role of the Anglo-Saxons has been much discussed; the influence of their hagiographical traditions upon Carolingian historical writing, however, has not. Ideals of papal authority were significant in Frankish history because of the role the papacy played in the build-up to Pippin III's coronation as the first Carolingian king in 751.<sup>80</sup> The writing of history at the Carolingian court was, however, characterised by many distortions made with the intention of justifying Carolingian authority.<sup>81</sup> In 749, according to the court *Annales regni Francorum*, Pippin sent Abbot Fulrad of St Denis and Bishop Burchard of Würzburg to Rome.<sup>82</sup> They were to ask Pope Zacharias whether it was right for

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<sup>78</sup> This leaves open the problem of how to interpret the claim of the *Liber Pontificalis* that Willibrord was made archbishop by Sergius. However, since the earliest extant manuscripts are all from the Frankish kingdoms, where the works of Alcuin and Bede were widely disseminated, there is every possibility that the author had been influenced by reinterpretations of Willibrord's career.

<sup>79</sup> The roots were by no means strongly Anglo-Saxon: see Schieffer, *Winfriid-Bonifatius*, pp. 260-4. On the Carolingians, Anglo-Saxons and Rome see now J. Semmler, 'Bonifatius, die Karolinger und "die Franken"', in Bauer, Hiestand & Kasten, *Mönchtum – Kirche – Herrschaft*, pp. 3-49.

<sup>80</sup> *ARF* s. a. 750 [*recte* 751], p. 4. The coronation of Pippin was a pivotal moment in Carolingian history and has thus received much scholarly attention, most recently in J. Semmler, *Der Dynastiewechsel von 751 und die fränkische Königssalbung*, Studia Humaniora Series Minor 6 (Düsseldorf, 2003). It has long been recognised that the sources for the events of 749-54 are inadequate and modern accounts such as Schieffer's in *Winfriid-Bonifatius*, pp. 256-64, Noble's in *The Republic of St Peter*, pp. 70-1 and R. Collins, *Charlemagne* (1998), pp. 33-7 have been judiciously sceptical about the Carolingians' reports. See also R. McKitterick, 'The illusion of royal power in the Carolingian annals', *English Historical Review* 460 (2000), 1-20.

<sup>81</sup> McKitterick, 'The illusion'; *eadem*, 'Political ideology in Carolingian historiography', in Y. Hen & M. Innes (eds.), *The Uses of the Past in the Early Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 162-74; *eadem*, 'Constructing the past in the early Middle Ages: the case of the Royal Frankish Annals', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 6<sup>th</sup> series, 7 (1997), 101-29; Y. Hen, 'The Annals of Metz and the Merovingian past', in Hen & Innes, *The Uses of the Past*, pp. 175-190; M. Innes & R. McKitterick, 'The writing of history', in R. McKitterick (ed.), *Carolingian Culture: Emulation and Innovation* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 193-220.

<sup>82</sup> *ARF* s. a. 749, pp. 3-4.

Childeric III, Pippin's powerless puppet king, to hold his position, or whether Pippin should be king; Zacharias replied that, indeed, it was not right for Childeric to sit on the throne. Buoyed by this decision, Pippin deposed Childeric and was anointed king himself in 750 (actually 751) by Boniface. Then, in 754, Pope Stephen II met Pippin at St Denis and confirmed papal approval of the coronation. Anglo-Saxon influence, and in particular the reform synods of Boniface in 742-7, has been recognised behind these events.<sup>83</sup> But the sources for the events are contradictory and misleading on several points, not least the peculiar re-dating of the coronation in the *Annales regni Francorum*. The role of the Anglo-Saxons therefore needs to be considered in relation to the developing historical traditions of the eighth century.

The claim in the *Annales regni Francorum* that Burchard was sent to Rome in 749-50 is surprising given the importance of the task. Curiously, traditions recorded at Würzburg about Burchard also fail to make any mention of his important mission, although the *Vita Burchardi* does anachronistically state that Pippin was already king in ca 743.<sup>84</sup> The see of Würzburg had only been in existence since 742 and any precise definition of its powers was still undefined.<sup>85</sup> Burchard's only claim to any genuine importance was that he was Boniface's most senior colleague.<sup>86</sup> By contrast his fellow *missus*, Fulrad, was Pippin's palace chaplain and abbot of the important West Frankish monastery of St Denis. Suggestions that the two were chosen to represent East Frankish and West Frankish interests respectively seem to falter on the issue of how

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<sup>83</sup> Schieffer, *Winfried-Bonifatius*, p. 258.

<sup>84</sup> *VBurch* c. 3, p. 48.

<sup>85</sup> C. J. Carroll, 'The archbishops and church provinces of Mainz and Cologne during the Carolingian period, 751-911', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Cambridge (1999), p. 22. On the foundation of Würzburg see A. Bigelmair, 'Die Gründung des mitteldeutschen Bistümer', *Sankt Bonifatius*, pp. 247-87.

<sup>86</sup> In Pippin's charter confirming the privileges of Fulda (*MGH Dip. Karol.* 1 no. 32, p. 45) at least, Burchard's signature as a witness is second only to that of Boniface.

representative Burchard was of the East, given his uncertain position.<sup>87</sup> Further suggestions that Burchard was chosen as someone independent of Boniface's influence also seem unlikely since sources for the bishop's life always associate him with his archbishop.<sup>88</sup> The opposite is more likely to be the case.<sup>89</sup> Meanwhile Frankish traditions, aside from those recorded in the *Annales regni Francorum* and repeated in the *Annales Laureshamensis*, do not make any mention of Zacharias's role in events. Some historians have consequently queried whether Fulrad and Burchard actually made any such appeal to the pope.<sup>90</sup> Burchard was, however, in Rome at roughly the right time; on 1<sup>st</sup> May 748, Pope Zacharias wrote a letter to Boniface in which he noted that Burchard was in Rome, having brought a report of the 747 synod to St Peter's.<sup>91</sup> Distorting the trip by saying it happened in 749 and on slightly different business is perhaps entirely in keeping with the distortions, as opposed to outright inventions, that characterise the *Annales regni Francorum*.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> McKitterick, 'The illusion', 17.

<sup>88</sup> Compare McKitterick, 'The illusion', 17. The historical sources for Burchard are: *Tangl* nos. 49, 53, 56, 73, 80, 82, pp. 78, 94-5, 99, 146, 172, 182; *MGH Dip. Karol.* 1 no. 32, p. 45; Willibald, *VB* c. 8, p. 44; Liudger, *VG* c. 6, p. 72.

<sup>89</sup> Semmler, 'Bonifatius, die Karolinger und "die Franken"', p. 44.

<sup>90</sup> McKitterick ('The illusion', 16-17) at least sees it as largely a literary construction.

<sup>91</sup> Zacharias, *Tangl* no. 80, pp. 172-80 at p. 172.

<sup>92</sup> I reject here Semmler's attempt to re-date the journey to 751 (*Die Dynastiewechsel von 751*, p. 14), partly because that leaves little time for Fulrad and Burchard to have made the journey, but mainly because Burchard's role still seems implausible and changing the date – especially to within a few months of Burchard's death – does not satisfactorily negotiate that problem.

Just as there are doubts over Burchard's role in Pippin's rise to power, some historians have thought it unlikely that Boniface was involved directly.<sup>93</sup> No historical traditions about Boniface away from the annals mention any grand ceremonial role in Pippin's elevation (or even that Pippin was made king), even though the saint's involvement on that day would have added prestige to his memory.<sup>94</sup> On a theoretical level it has been argued that the anointing of Pippin was intended to bring the Franks together, so the role of a dissident Anglo-Saxon archbishop would appear to contradict that purpose; a far more likely figure to have conducted proceedings was Bishop Chrodegang of Metz, who was Pippin's chief religious advisor.<sup>95</sup> Furthermore, letters from *ca* 751 written by Boniface do not indicate any closeness with Pippin: in one he had to ask Fulrad to approach Pippin on his behalf, and in another he had to ask for permission to attend a royal assembly in 753.<sup>96</sup> The sceptical argument is admittedly one

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<sup>93</sup> Schieffer, *Winfried-Bonifatius*, 259-60; K.-U. Jäschke, 'Bonifatius und die Königssalbung' *Archiv für Diplomatik* 23 (1977), 25-54; McKitterick, 'The illusion'. J. Jarnut's counter-argument in 'Wer hat Pippin 751 zum König gesalbt?' *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 16 (1982), 45-57, relies on the assumption that Boniface was simply too important to the Carolingians not to have been involved: 'Er war es, der Pippin salben mußte'. He also argues that the silence in other sources can be explained by the fact that Frankish sources were not interested in Boniface *per se* (pp. 51-4), while Willibald's *Vita Bonifatii* was more interested in the sacred aspects of Boniface's life (p. 52). Yet Lull, who requested the *Vita Bonifatii*, was close to the Carolingian family, who actively promoted the cult of Boniface; the silence of the sources seems too widespread for Jarnut's argument to be secure. Josef Semmler defended Jarnut in 'Bonifatius, die Karolinger und "die Franken"', pp. 45-6 on the grounds that the act of anointing was the kind of symbolism Boniface would have supported, but this argument also gets us no closer to resolving the differences in the sources.

<sup>94</sup> As well as all the eighth- and ninth-century *vitae* discussed in this thesis, see: *Vita tertia Bonifatii*, ed. W. Levison, *MGH SRG* 57 (Hanover, 1905), pp. 79-89; *Vita quarta Bonifatii*, ed. Levison, *MGH SRG* 57, pp. 90-106; *Vita quinta Bonifatii*, ed. Levison, *MGH SRG* 57, pp. 107-110; Otloh, *Vita Bonifatii*, ed. Levison, *MGH SRG* 57, pp. 111-217.

<sup>95</sup> Schieffer, *Winfried-Bonifatius*, p. 259; Angenendt, *Das Frühmittelalter*, p. 284; McKitterick, 'The illusion', p. 15. On Chrodegang little has yet replaced E. Ewig, 'Beobachtungen zur Entwicklung der fränkischen Reichskirche unter Chrodegang von Metz', *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 2 (1968), 67-77, reprinted in H. Atsma (ed.), *Spätantikes und fränkisches Gallien. Gesammelte Schriften (1952-73)*, Beihefte der Francia 3/2 (Sigmaringen, 1979), pp. 220-231, and *idem*, 'Saint Chrodegang et la réforme de l'église franque', in *Saint Chrodegang* (Metz, 1967), pp. 25-53, reprinted in Atsma, *Spätantikes und fränkisches Gallien*, pp. 232-59.

<sup>96</sup> The letter to Fulrad is *Tangl* no. 93, p. 213, in which Boniface appeals to the abbot: 'id est, ut meo verbo gloriosum et amabilem regem nostrum Pippinum salutaveris et illi magnas gratias referas de omnibus pietatis operibus, qui mecum fecit; et ut illi referas, quod mihi et amicis meis [veri] simile esse videtur'. The letter to Pippin is *Tangl* no. 107, p. 233, in which Boniface pleads: 'Propterea petimus vos, ut nobis indicetis, si ad placitum istum debeamus venire, ut vestram voluntatem perficiamus'.

from silence, as Josef Semmler has recently countered.<sup>97</sup> But given that there was so much written by or about Boniface one would expect there to be more tangible evidence than the Carolingian propaganda of the *Annales regni Francorum*, which had much to gain through an association with the first martyr of the Carolingian age.<sup>98</sup>

The author(s) of the *Annales regni Francorum* appear elsewhere in the work to have developed the legends about Boniface to justify their activities. It was reported that in 772 Charlemagne had destroyed the great Irminsul tree in Saxony, a focal point for pagan worship in the region.<sup>99</sup> The event was a crowning glory for the Frankish king and marked what he hoped was the final suppression of the Saxons. He was, however, greatly mistaken and the Saxons revolted in 774.<sup>100</sup> There then follows a story almost completely out of place in the early sections of the annals. The Saxons, it reports, attacked the settlement of Fritzlar, which had been established when Boniface chopped down the great Oak of Jupiter, another Irminsul, near Gaesmere in *ca* 724.<sup>101</sup> Back then Boniface had built a chapel out of the oak tree to symbolise the triumph of Christianity over paganism; in 774 it became a symbol of resilience as the Saxons failed to burn it down.<sup>102</sup> The story in the annal is peculiar because, in the middle of the earthly goings on, the story of Fritzlar is a miracle story in which the spirit of Boniface refuses to let flames take hold of the church. Thus it appears, at least through the *Annales regni Francorum*, that the Frankish court was developing an association between their rise and

<sup>97</sup> Semmler, 'Bonifatius, die Karolinger und "die Franken"', p. 45.

<sup>98</sup> Semmler, *Die Dynastiewechsel von 751*, p. 41; Palmer, 'The Frankish cult of martyrs'.

<sup>99</sup> *ARF* s. a. 772, p. 13.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, s. a. 774, p. 15.

<sup>101</sup> Willibald, *VB* c. 6, p. 31.

<sup>102</sup> *ARF* s. a. 774, p. 15: 'Cumque in eo loco qui nunc Frideslar ab incolis nominatur, basilicam a beato Bonifatio martire dedicatam incendere morlirentur, atque hoc efficere casso labore conarentur, immisso sibi divinitus pavore subitaneo, tuopi trepidatione confusi, domum fugiendo reverentur'. It has been suggested by David Parsons in his 'Sites and monuments of the Anglo-Saxon mission in Central Germany', *Archaeological Journal* 140 (1983), 280-321 at 286, that the chapel had been rebuilt using stone by 774 and that this was the reason why it did not burn down.

expansion, and a saint who embodied that very process through his ties with Rome and his missionary work. It is perhaps therefore appropriate that when, at the court of Emperor Louis the Pious, Ermoldus Nigellus came to celebrate the submission and conversion of the Danish king Harald Klak in 826, he also invoked the memory of Boniface.<sup>103</sup>

It might have been important for the Carolingians to tap into the developing cults of the Anglo-Saxons precisely because the *vitae* represented emotive historical traditions, independent of the court. The lack of congruence between Boniface's authority and Carolingian power is clearly illustrated in Willibald's *Vita Bonifatii*. Pippin III, for example, was presented as fallible when his decree that Boniface's body should remain in Utrecht was ignored.<sup>104</sup> Bells miraculously rang out from the church against the decision and the relics were taken away; God had not thought highly of the king's intentions. This story was tempered by the description of Pippin as *gloriosus rex*, but by the same token this only served to emphasise the lack of authority the great king had over matters of the holy. Earlier in the text, Pippin and Carlomann had been made to look subordinate to Boniface over the issue of church reform, while Charles Martel had been presented as little more than part of the political scenery of the 710s and 720s.<sup>105</sup> The image of the Carolingians in Willibald's work was more in keeping with Merovingian hagiography where the holy man was superior to the king, rather than Carolingian hagiography where the king could be more powerful. For the Carolingians it

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<sup>103</sup> Ermoldus Nigellus, *In honorem Hludowici IV*, ed. E. Dümmler, *MGH Poetae* 1 (Berlin, 1884), lines 733-8, p. 78: 'Mira fides rerum! Bonefatius almus in illo/ Tempore decessit, quem sacer ille videt/ Ferrea Frisionem Christi dum dogmate vellet/ Frangere corda, viam ad caelica regna dare/ Morbida heu medicum mox gens extinxit opimum/ Vulnere quippe suo regna paravit ei'.

<sup>104</sup> Willibald, *VB* c. 8, p. 53.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, cc. 4, 7, pp. 16-18, 39-41.

was enough to be associated with those legends through their annals; no new *vita*, it seems, was deemed necessary.

Hygeburg's *Vita Willibaldi et Wynnebaldi* is even more remarkable for its independence from Carolingian propagandist traditions because it was written in the years leading up to the Carolingian take-over of Bavaria in 786-8. Considering Willibald is often described as an early representative of Carolingian authority in the region, it is notable that there is no mention of the Carolingian family at all in Hygeburg's text.<sup>106</sup> Rather, the highest secular leader evident is Duke Odilo of Bavaria, who is presented as a strong leader and generous towards the Church.<sup>107</sup> Even then, as was seen above, it was the pope himself who was portrayed as the 'glorious governor of the tribes'. The only intermediary between the pope's authority and that of Odilo was Boniface; there is no obvious place for the Carolingians in the hierarchies presented in Hygeburg's work. The Carolingians had bought into Anglo-Saxon traditions on their own terms; the Anglo-Saxons had not themselves, as far as we can see, provided the Carolingians with a justificatory historical bond between the king and the pope. It was the Anglo-Saxons' *vitae* that perpetuated the idea of a Anglo-papal bond, and in turn that symbolism provided something that the Carolingians could use to their own ends.

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<sup>106</sup> For Willibald's place in Franco-Bavarian relations see S. Weinfurter, 'Das Bistum Willibalds im Dienste des Königs: Eichstätt im frühen Mittelalter', *Zeitschrift für Bayerische Landesgeschichte* 50: 1-3 (1987), 3-40, esp. 21 for the idea of Willibald's Eichstätt as a Frankish outpost.

<sup>107</sup> Hygeburg, *VWb* c. 5, p. 104.

## Images of Rome in Central and Southern Germany.

### *Boniface, Rome and the 'vitae' of Arbeo.*

Some of the first non-Anglo-Saxon *vitae* to mention Rome in connection to the missionfield were those of Arbeo of Freising.<sup>108</sup> These *vitae* have already been demonstrated to be a reaction against the Anglo-Saxon *vitae* with regards to monasticism, and Arbeo's references to the papacy suggest that he was also responding to the Anglo-Saxon veneration of Rome.<sup>109</sup> The relationship between the papacy and the Bavarian ducal Agilolfing family appears to have had some substance before the arrival of Boniface in 739 to restructure the Bavarian Church.<sup>110</sup> The *Liber pontificalis* suggests that Duke Theodo visited St Peter's itself which, if true, probably happened in 716.<sup>111</sup> Heinz Löwe suggested that these sources illustrate that the Bavarians were actively seeking the support of the papacy at this time, given that the papacy was supposedly in no position to seek allies such as the Bavarians.<sup>112</sup> On this argument, Boniface was probably welcomed in Bavaria as a papal legate until Carlomann began to threaten Duke Odilo, at which point Odilo attempted – and failed – to have Boniface replaced as papal legate to Bavaria.<sup>113</sup> Subsequently Arbeo's *vitae* seemed to challenge the idea that Boniface had been important to the formative Bavarian Church.<sup>114</sup>

Rome is mentioned twice by Arbeo in the *Vita Haimhrammi*. Emmeram first developed the desire to visit Rome, or so we are told, when he had a vision that he

<sup>108</sup> Arbeo's *VH* and *VCorb*, on which see most recently Wood, *The Missionary Life*, pp. 150-60.

<sup>109</sup> Wood, *The Missionary Life*, pp. 157-8. See also chapter two below, pp. 97-100.

<sup>110</sup> For the claim that Boniface restructured the Bavarian Church see Willibald, *VB* c. 7, pp. 37-9.

<sup>111</sup> *Liber Pontificalis* 91. 4, transl. R. Davis, *The Lives of the Eighth-Century Popes* (Liverpool, 1992), p. 5.

<sup>112</sup> Löwe, 'Bonifatius und die bayerisch-fränkische Spannung', 96-104.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 99-100.

<sup>114</sup> Wood, *The Missionary Life*, p. 158.

would end his life as a martyr.<sup>115</sup> Before he left he agreed to help Ota, the daughter of a local magnate, who had become pregnant by Sigibert, her lover and son of a local *iudex*.<sup>116</sup> To save Sigibert, Emmeram allowed Ota to tell her father, *dux* Landperht, that he was the father of the child; then he set out for Helfendorf, rather than Rome, where he awaited Landperht and his own martyrdom. Eventually Landperht found Emmeram and it is in a dramatic exchange at this stage in the story that Rome is mentioned for a second time in a part of a speech by Emmeram: 'I promised to travel to Rome, ... the threshold of Peter, prince of the apostles, whose church is distinguished as the founder of evangelical authority'.<sup>117</sup> Whether any of this is true is entirely open to speculation as there is no corroborating evidence. But in a *vita*, the veneration of Rome as a centre from which *evangelica auctoritate* was derived has more in keeping with Anglo-Saxon perceptions of topographies of sanctity than the attitudes evident in the continental *vitae* that preceded them.

The relationship between Arbeo's writings and the Anglo-Saxon veneration of Rome is, as in the *Regula s. Benedicti*, more apparent in the *Vita Corbiniani*. Corbinian is said to have visited Gregory II during the lifetime of Pippin II, a statement which, since Pippin died in 714 before Gregory became pope, is clearly spurious.<sup>118</sup> Moreover Gregory is said to have bestowed on Corbinian the *pallium* at this time, although this

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<sup>115</sup> Arbeo, *VH* c. 8, pp. 37-8: '... vir sanctissimus per spiritum providens finem suae vitae adpropinquantem... Coepit namque licentiam a cunctis inhabitantibus poposcere, ut orationis studio ad Romam ire licentiam ei concedere deberent'. On the symbolic imagery in Arbeo's account of St Emmeram's martyrdom see Palmer, 'The Frankish cult of martyrs'.

<sup>116</sup> Arbeo, *VH* c. 9, p. 39.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, c. 15, p. 47: "Ad Romam me iturum promisi, limina... apostolorum principis Petri, cuius ecclesiae euangelica auctoritate fundata esse dinoscitur". Compare again the *Vita Audoini* c. 10, p. 559 and *Vita Amandi* c. 6, p. 434 for the phrase *limina sanctorum principis apostolorum*, which clearly seems to have been a stock phrase used to describe the papacy. Perhaps surprisingly it is not a phrase used by Boniface or in the *vitae* about Boniface.

<sup>118</sup> Arbeo, *VCorb* cc. 5-7, pp. 194-5: '(5)... ad summum maiorem domui qui fuerat Pippinum pervenisset...(6) tunc demum inhians consilium, ad Romam orationis studio ire decrevit et ibidem apostolici doctrinae commendasse vel eius exortatione...(7) Oratione apostolorum facta principis Petri, ad beatae memoriae Gregorii pape se contulit plantis...'

was not common practice at the time.<sup>119</sup> Both parts of the story would appear to be attempts to put Corbinian at least on a par with Boniface and, since this was all supposed to have happened before Boniface had even reached the continent, Boniface's achievement would have been greatly diminished.<sup>120</sup> It is even possible to detect loose parallels between the *Vita Corbiniani* and the *Vita Bonifatii* in the sections on Rome.<sup>121</sup> Arbeo did more than just challenge the memory of Boniface through these measures; by their very nature, Arbeo was buying into the Bonifatian ideal of sanctity, even if he was doing so on his own terms.<sup>122</sup> The power of Bonifatian-papal authority as embodied in the *Vita Bonifatii* had therefore forced a change – or at least strengthening – in Bavarian perceptions of episcopal authority and sanctity, which in turn found their expression through *vitae*.

The Anglo-Saxon-Bavarian dialogue of saints' Lives that has been discussed by Ian Wood can perhaps be extended further in the Bavarian context. It should be remembered that Arbeo was writing between 769 and 772, in other words before the *Vita Willibaldi et Wynnebaldi* which dates from *ca* 778.<sup>123</sup> The previous chapter demonstrated how Hygeburg attempted to dismiss Arbeo's claims about the development of the *Regula s. Benedicti* in Bavaria;<sup>124</sup> it may also be no coincidence that it was after Arbeo's comments about Emmeram, Corbinian and Rome that the *Vita Willibaldi et Wynnebaldi* was written including the strongest expression of the Anglo-Saxon veneration for Rome in a contemporary *vita*. Willibald was named in Virgil of Salzburg's *Necrologica*, so there may have been personal links between Arbeo and the

<sup>119</sup> Arbeo, *VCorb* c. 9, p. 197: 'Recepto palleo cum sanctiones beati principis apostolorum Petri'.

<sup>120</sup> Wood, *The Missionary Life*, pp. 157-8.

<sup>121</sup> Krusch, *MGH SRG* 13, p. 139 and notes to cc. 8-10, pp. 196-8. These are, as Ian Wood pointed out (*The Missionary Life*, p. 166, n. 145), hardly convincing individually but are quite convincing when taken together.

<sup>122</sup> Palmer, 'The Frankish cult of martyrs'.

<sup>123</sup> On the dating of Arbeo's *vitae* see Wood, *The Missionary Life*, pp. 156-7.

<sup>124</sup> Chapter two, pp. 97-100.

Anglo-Saxon.<sup>125</sup> Towards the end of the eighth century there were also strong ties between Alcuin and Arn of Salzburg.<sup>126</sup> There is, of course, no inherent contradiction between the developing Bavarian historical traditions surrounding Salzburg, Freising, and Regensburg, and the story of the Anglo-Saxon foundation of Eichstätt; they even complemented each other enough for Freising to preserve Hygeburg's *vita*. But in the same way that Hygeburg's claims about Willibald and the *Regula s. Benedicti* in Bavaria suggested that whatever had been in place beforehand had been far from perfect, the impression of the papal support offered to Willibald reinforced that the Anglo-Saxons were claiming to have reformed the Bavarian Church on precisely the same grounds – Rome and Benedictinism – on which Arbeo was arguing the Church had been founded.

*Sualo, Burchard and Kilian.*

The image of Boniface and Rome was developed in increasingly spurious ways in the East Frankish *vitae* about Sualo, Burchard and Kilian. In order to understand these distortions it is important to contextualise the *vitae* properly. The *Sermo Sualonis*, *Vita Burchardi* and *Passio minor Kiliani* may all have been written within a few years of each other around 840.<sup>127</sup> Ermenrich, who wrote the *Sermo Sualonis*, had been a pupil of Rudolf of Fulda (to whom the *Sermo* was dedicated) and Bishop Gozbert of

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<sup>125</sup> *Monumenta necrologica monasterii s. Petri Salisburgensis*, ed. S. Herzberg-Fränkel, *MGH Necrologia Germaniae* 2 (Berlin, 1904), pp. 3-64 at p. 26. There is, at least, a 'Uuillipald ep[iscopus]' listed there alongside Lull.

<sup>126</sup> Wood, *The Missionary Life*, pp. 84-6.

<sup>127</sup> For the traditional datings of the *VBurch* and *SSualo* see T. Klüppel, 'Die Germania (750-950)', in G. Philippart (ed.), *Hagiographies* 2, *Corpus Christianorum* (Turnhout, 1996), pp. 161-209, at pp. 173 and 182 respectively. For the more complicated issue of the dating the *Passio minor Kiliani*, ed. W. Levison, *MGH SRM* 5 (Hanover, 1910), pp. 722-8 see K. Schäferdiek, 'Kilian von Würzburg. Gestalt und Gestaltung eines Heiligen', in H. Keller & N. Staubach (eds.), *Iconologia Sacra: Mythos, Bildkunst und Dichtung in der Religions- und Sozialgeschichte Alteuropas. Festschrift für Karl Hauck zum 75. Geburtstag*, *Arbeiten zur Frühmittelalterforschung* 23 (Berlin, 1994), pp. 313-40 at pp. 315-19. Much hinges on whether a reference to Pippin III as *rex orientalium Francorum* is an anachronism arising after Louis the German was made king over East Frankia.

Würzburg.<sup>128</sup> The connection with Gozbert may be significant because the *Vita Burchardi* was written in Würzburg during his episcopacy and the *Sermo* and *Vita* were copied into the same ninth-century manuscript.<sup>129</sup> Both Gozbert and Ermenrich had connections with Passau in Bavaria, the only see not to have produced traditions to contradict the *Vita Bonifatii*.<sup>130</sup> They also worked closely with King Louis the German who, in the early 840s, was engaged in a series of struggles with Emperor Lothar, his brother.<sup>131</sup> It may prove important to bear this political context in mind when interpreting aspects of the texts. If a late date is accepted for the *Passio minor Kiliani* then it too belongs in the context of Carolingian in-fighting and also the episcopacy of Hunbert, Gozbert's predecessor at Würzburg.<sup>132</sup> Hunbert was also connected with Fulda and exchanged books with Hrabanus Maurus.<sup>133</sup> It is, furthermore, possible that Hunbert came from Mainz.<sup>134</sup> The three hagiographies, it seems, come from the interlocking circles of Fulda, Würzburg and Passau.

Ermenrich's *Sermo Sualonis* perhaps presented the most distorted image of Boniface and the papacy. Boniface, Ermenrich claimed against the evidence of the

<sup>128</sup> See the dedicatory letter to the *SSualo*, pp. 155-6 and Ermenrich, *Epistola* (c. 30), ed. E. Dümmler, *MGH Epp.* 5 (Berlin, 1899), pp. 526-79 at p. 568. On the career of Gozbold see A. Wendehorst, *Das Bistum Würzburg 1, Die Bischofsreihe bis 1254*, Germania Sacra neue folge I. Die Bistümer der Kirchenprovinz Mainz (Berlin, 1962), pp. 42-6. On Ermenrich see 'Ermenrich von Passau, Gegner des Methodius. Versuch eines Persönlichkeitsbildes', *Mitteilungen der Gesellschaft für Salzburger Landeskunde* 126 (1986), 221-41 and Wood, *The Missionary Life*, pp. 176-8.

<sup>129</sup> St Gall, Stiftsbibliothek 571: see W. Levison, 'Conspectus codicum hagiographorum', *MGH SRM* 7 (1910), pp. 529-706 at p. 680.

<sup>130</sup> Gozbert appears to have been an *chorepiscopus* at Passau (*Momumenta necrologica monasterii s. Petri Salisburgensis*, p. 26; Wendehorst, *Das Bistum Würzburg*, p. 44) and Ermenrich was bishop of Passau 866-75.

<sup>131</sup> For a convenient account of the civil war see R. McKitterick, *The Frankish Kingdoms under the Carolingians 751-987* (London, 1984), pp. 169-76.

<sup>132</sup> On Hunbert see Wendehorst, *Das Bistum Würzburg* 1, pp. 39-42.

<sup>133</sup> Hunbert, *Hrabani epistolae* no. 26, ed. E. Dümmler, *MGH Epp.* 5, pp. 439-41. The letter also reveals an intriguing link between Fulda, Würzburg, Mainz and Fredericus I of Utrecht, a candidate for author of the Utrecht *VaB* (J. Romein, 'Wie is de "Presbyter Ultrajectensis"?', *Tijdschrift voor geschiedenis* 44 (1929), 373-81).

<sup>134</sup> Wendehorst, *Das Bistum Würzburg* 1, p. 40.

letters, never had contempt for the papacy.<sup>135</sup> Less explicitly, Ermenrich claimed Boniface was given archiepiscopal authority by Pope Leo III, pope from 795 to 816.<sup>136</sup> Leo was the pope who reportedly raised Charlemagne to the status of emperor in 800.<sup>137</sup> It seems implausible that Ermenrich could have made a genuine mistake about the chronology of two of the most famous figures in the Frankish history of the previous century, especially as a monk brought up in Hrabanus Maurus's Fulda. Rudolf, Ermenrich's teacher, had written a more factually correct (if still idealised) account of Boniface and the papacy only a couple of years earlier.<sup>138</sup> If the mistake was deliberate, however, it had the effect of giving Boniface the same source for his authority as Charlemagne; perhaps the ways in which the Carolingians' own historical traditions had affected the past were idealised in the Bonifatian heartlands. While Ermenrich was writing the Frankish Empire was strained by civil war and consequently the idea of *imperium* was threatened. Moreover Ermenrich wanted to become a missionary and for that he needed support. Perhaps in the *error gravissimus* of giving Leo a role in Boniface's life, Ermenrich was emphasising the unity of empire and mission. Certainly his later actions as bishop of Passau, when he led a delegation to the Bulgars in the 860s to stop Byzantine influences, suggest that he thought highly of a bond between politics and conversion.

The *Vita Burchardi* also displays a strong, if distorted attachment to Rome. The author claims that Pippin sent Burchard to Rome with Boniface.<sup>139</sup> Once in Rome, the story goes, Boniface was given authority over the German neophytes (*neofiti*) by Pope

<sup>135</sup> *SSualo* c. 1, p. 157: '[Bonifatius] ne per imperiale praeceptum contempneretur sedis apostolicae privilegium'.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, c. 1, p. 157: '[Bonifatius] Romam adiit; ibique a viro apostolico domno Leone accepta archiepiscopalis auctoritate'.

<sup>137</sup> *ARF* s. a. 801, p. 406; Einhard, *Vita Karoli Magni* c. 28, ed. G. Waitz, *MGH SRG* 25 (Hanover, 1880), pp. 23-4.

<sup>138</sup> Rudolf, *Miracula sanctorum* c. 1, ed. G. Waitz, *MGH SS* 15 i (Hanover, 1887), pp. 329-41 at p. 330.

<sup>139</sup> *VBurch* cc. 3-4, pp. 48-9.

Zacharias. The pope then suggested to Boniface that he divide the missionfield quoting Paul's epistle to the Galatians: 'Bear ye one another's burdens so you can fulfil the law of Christ'.<sup>140</sup> Boniface proposed to Zacharias that Würzburg would be a suitable location and Burchard a suitable bishop; he then had Burchard brought before the pope, and Zacharias invested the Mercian with the *infula* in order to confirm his appointment.<sup>141</sup>

The whole story is a blatant fabrication. It conflates two different events: firstly the consecration of Burchard in *Germania* by Boniface in 743, and secondly Burchard's visit to Rome in 748 to take letters from Boniface to Pope Zacharias.<sup>142</sup> These two events are attested by letters in the Boniface correspondence and show that Burchard neither travelled to Rome with Boniface nor was consecrated there by the pope.

Interestingly Gozbert, like Burchard, sought the commendation of the papacy when he was first appointed in 842 by Louis the German so it would have been apt to write about the connection between Würzburg bishops, Frankish kings and Rome during his episcopacy.<sup>143</sup> Perhaps what the *Vita Burchardi* achieves in its imagery is not just a distorted historical picture of Burchard's appointment, but rather a statement of the saint's authority through a purported papal consecration. Würzburg, in the past through Burchard and the present through Gozbert, thus had the highest possible authority. The repeated emphasis on unity, meanwhile, resonates well with the disunity of the 840s and it may be pertinent to place the need for papal justification in the context of the

<sup>140</sup> *VBurch* c. 3, p. 48: 'Alter alterius portate, et sic adimplebitis legem Christi' [Gal. 6. 2].

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, c. 4, p. 49: 'Veruntatem venerabilis praesul Bonifatius Burchardum in medium deducens, coepit illum dignis laudibus prosequi, dicens, hunc iuvenili aetate ab occidulis partibus advenisse secumque usque ad perfectam aetatem degentem, se nihil in eo reperisse, quod pontificali officio videatur contraire, ac per hoc se illum pontificali infula credere dignum'. An *infula* was, like the *pallium*, a white woollen garment worn to denote episcopal authority.

<sup>142</sup> *Tangl*, nos. 53, 80, pp. 94-5, 172.

<sup>143</sup> Gozbert, *Epistolae variorum supplementum* no. 3, ed. E. Dümmler, *MGH Epp.* 5, p. 618.

uncertainties of the time.<sup>144</sup>

The *Passio Kiliani minor* stands as the earliest of this East Frankish group of *vitae* and it too contains a curious image of the papacy. The story of Kilian (d. 689) may bridge the textual gap between the *vitae* of the *Bonifatiuskreise* and the legends about Sualo and Burchard. While in Würzburg Kilian announced a desire to visit Rome, saying:<sup>145</sup>

We will visit the threshold of the prince of the saintly apostles and present ourselves to the most blessed pope John [IV] and, if the Lord desires it, receive licence [to preach] from the apostolic see.

When he arrived in Rome Kilian found that John IV had died and the equally short-lived Conon had replaced him. The new pope approved of Kilian and granted the *licentia*.<sup>146</sup> It is unclear, however, why Kilian would have sought papal authority when only Willibrord of his near-contemporaries had done likewise. The reference to the otherwise unremarkable popes John and Conon perhaps indicates a kernel of truth; it is hard to imagine why anyone would invent such a story based around them.<sup>147</sup> Nonetheless the verbal borrowings from the *Vita Bonifatii* and the Bonifatian correspondence give a Bonifatian feel to the whole account.<sup>148</sup> The author of the *Passio* also claimed that the cult of Kilian was promoted by Boniface, Burchard, Pippin and Pope Zacharias, a comment which might have laid the groundwork for the distortions of the *Vita*

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<sup>144</sup> Lothar I used papal authority himself in 844 to have his half-brother Drogo of Metz appointed papal vicar of Gaul and Germany, although Drogo's role was never recognised north of the Alps so it is impossible to know if this had any affect on Gozbald's thinking. For Drogo's appointment see *Annales Bertiniani*, ed. G. Waitz, *MGH SRG* 5 (Hanover, 1885), p. 30.

<sup>145</sup> *Passio Kiliani minor* c. 4, p. 723: '... visitemus limina sanctorum principis apostolorum et presentemus nos optutibus beati papae Iohannis et si Domini volentes sit, ab apostolica sede accepta licentia...' This borrows from Zacharias, *Tangl* no. 80, p. 172: 'Sacris liminibus beati apostolorum principis Petri et nostri obtutibus presentatus presens Burghart...'. Again note the use of the stock description of Rome.

<sup>146</sup> *Passio Kiliani minor* c. 5, pp. 723-4.

<sup>147</sup> Schäferdiek, 'Kilian von Würzburg', p. 328. On John IV see *Liber Pontificalis* 84, ed. Mommsen, pp. 205-6 and on Conon see *Liber Pontificalis* 85, ed. Mommsen, pp. 207-9.

<sup>148</sup> Schäferdiek, 'Kilian von Würzburg', p. 329.

*Burchardi* and again emphasises the unity between secular, episcopal and papal power.<sup>149</sup> The earliest manuscript tradition of the *Passio* also places it alongside the *Vita Willibaldi et Wynnebaldi* and Hygeburg's descriptions of papal authority.<sup>150</sup> It is not clear that papal authority had any practical relevance to the author of the *Passio* because Würzburg's missionary work had Carolingian, not papal, backing.<sup>151</sup> It does seem that in East Frankia, as in Bavaria, a cultural legacy of the Anglo-Saxons was that an association between saints and Rome could enhance the authority of that saint in response to the uncertainties of the mid-ninth century.

#### *Pirmin and Rome.*

A further *vita* that portrayed a saint in the Bonifatian model was the ninth-century *Vita Pirmini* (818x880). Pirmin (d. 753) was a strict contemporary of Boniface and their careers bear comparison although they appear to have moved in different circles.<sup>152</sup> Their fields of work, for example, were quite different with Pirmin working more in Alemannia. The *Vita Pirmini*'s claim that Pirmin met Boniface towards the end of their lives has been met with general scepticism.<sup>153</sup> There is little in Pirmin's work that suggests any strong connection with Rome. The *Vita*, however, does claim that Pirmin visited Gregory II to obtain papal backing.<sup>154</sup> The closeness of the *Vita Pirmini* to the

<sup>149</sup> *Passio Kiliani minor* c. 15, p. 728.

<sup>150</sup> Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 4585: see Levison, 'Conspectus codicum hagiographorum', p. 616.

<sup>151</sup> Schäferdiek, 'Kilian von Würzburg', p. 328: 'Zur Entstehungszeit der *Passio* allerdings hatte das bonifatianische Vorbild des unmittelbaren engen Rombezugs in Mission und Kirchenorganisation keine aktuelle Bedeutung mehr'.

<sup>152</sup> On Pirmin and Boniface see: A. Angenendt, *Monachi Peregrini. Studien zu Pirmin und den monastischen Vorstellungen des frühen Mittelalters*, Münstersche Mittelalter-Schriften 6 (Munich, 1972); *idem*, 'Pirmin und Bonifatius. Ihr Verhältnis zu Mönchtum, Bischofsamt und Adel', in A. Borst (ed.), *Mönchtum, Episkopat und Adel zur Gründungszeit des Klosters Reichenau* (Sigmaringen, 1974), pp. 251-304. From the 1200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Boniface's martyrdom, but now a little dated, see also T. Mayer, 'Bonifatius und Pirmin', in *Sankt Bonifatius*, pp. 450-64.

<sup>153</sup> *Vita Pirmini* cc. 9-10, pp. 29-30; Angenendt, 'Pirmin und Bonifatius'. For a less sceptical view, see Fletcher, *The Conversion of Europe*, p. 204.

<sup>154</sup> *Vita Pirmini* c. 4, p. 24: '... ab apostolico per praedictum imperata fuerunt'.

*Vita Bonifatii* in this respect is intriguing given the differences between the two saints.<sup>155</sup> Pirmin, it seems, provides a further case where a saint has been made more like Boniface in order to underline his authority as a saintly figure. The *Vita Pirmini* was written sometime between 815 and 880 which, while hardly narrowing anything down, potentially locates the text in the same timeframe as the East Frankish *vitae*.<sup>156</sup> There are differences in the absence of references to Carolingians; while, for example, the *Vita Burchardi* had anachronistically called Pippin *rex*, the author of the *Vita Pirmini* referred more accurately to events happening in ‘the days of King Theoderich of the Franks’.<sup>157</sup> Hornbach’s monks had not incorporated their Carolingian patrons into their ideal of the past but the independent traditions of the Anglo-Saxons and Rome did offer an ideal to which the monks could aspire.<sup>158</sup>

### **Rome in Frisian and Saxon Representations of Mission.**

Concurrent with developments in central and southern Germany, hagiographical traditions in Frisia and Saxony also manipulated the Anglo-Saxon connection with Rome to convey something about saints’ cults in the North. The influence of Bonifatian traditions was strong in the region and the martyr was the primary focus of Liudger’s *Vita Gregorii* and the mysterious *Vita altera Bonifatii*. This veneration was at the expense of celebrating the many missionaries who had worked in the region before Boniface such as Willibrord.<sup>159</sup> It does not appear that early hagiographical traditions

<sup>155</sup> W. Berschin, *Biographie und Epochenstil im lateinischen Mittelalter 3. Karolingische Biographie 750-920 n. Chr.*, Quellen und Untersuchungen zur lateinischen Philologie des Mittelalters 10 (Stuttgart, 1991), pp. 63-4.

<sup>156</sup> For the dating of the *Vita Pirmini* see *ibid.*, p. 63.

<sup>157</sup> *Vita Pirmini* c. 1, p. 21: ‘in... diebus Theoterici regis Francorum’.

<sup>158</sup> Whether Hornbach’s lack of interest in the Carolingians stemmed from the lack of royal support granted the monastery or not is, unfortunately, difficult to ascertain.

<sup>159</sup> Palmer, ‘The Frankish cult of martyrs’. On the Frisian missionfield before the Anglo-Saxons, see H. Büttner, ‘Mission und Kirchenorganisation des Frankenreiches bis zum Tode Karls der Grossen’, in H. Beumann (ed.), *Karl der Grosse, Lebenswerk und Nachleben: 1 Persönlichkeit und Geschichte* (Düsseldorf, 1965), pp.454-87 at p. 457.

about Rome from Frisia were directly influenced by any Anglo-Saxon-produced *vitae*. Any acceptance of Anglo-Saxon ideas there must be seen as coming from three other sources: firstly, Willibrord and Boniface had obviously done much to establish Christianity in the region and they taught many of the next generation of Christians there;<sup>160</sup> secondly, Liudger had travelled to York to be educated by Alcuin before the scholar travelled abroad;<sup>161</sup> and thirdly, it is evident that at least St Martin's in Utrecht had obtained a copy of Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica*.<sup>162</sup> Any Anglo-Saxon influence on the Frisian and Saxon churches when it came to Rome and sanctity was adapted, as we would now expect, in order to fulfil the different needs of the ninth-century frontier.

Liudger's account of Boniface's relationship with the papacy bears little relation to events as retold elsewhere. He rearranged the chronology of Boniface's life so that the future martyr only visited the papacy towards the end of his life, accompanied by Gregory of Utrecht.<sup>163</sup> There is deliberateness in this distortion; it places the visit exactly halfway through Liudger's text and marks the transition between Boniface and Gregory as focal points for the *vita*. Much is made of the honours Boniface received in Rome and how he prostrated (*prosternere*) himself before Pope Gregory III, thus illustrating his subservience and devotion to St Peter. The second half of the text then starts with Gregory of Utrecht returning from Rome with 'many volumes of sacred scripture' (*plura volumina sanctorum Scripturarum*), now himself the agent for St Peter in the North.<sup>164</sup> Through his re-imagining of the past, Liudger was creating stronger ties between the memory of Boniface and Frisia, and emphasising the continuity between the Anglo-

<sup>160</sup> Liudger, *VG* c. 10, p. 75 ; Altfrid, *VLger* I. 4-6, pp. 9-11.

<sup>161</sup> Altfrid, *VLger* I. 11-12, pp. 16-17.

<sup>162</sup> Liudger, *VG* c. 6, p. 66; Wood, *The Missionary Life*, p. 103.

<sup>163</sup> Liudger, *VG* c. 7, pp. 72-3.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*, c. 8, p. 73.

Saxon missionary past and what had followed. Key to that creation again was the authority of Rome.

In the *Vita altera Bonifatii* the authority of the papacy was expressed simply by recounting how Boniface had wanted to be a missionary in Frisia and how he had received papal dispensation to do so on his three visits.<sup>165</sup> On the first visit Boniface sought, and received, no more than ‘a certain kindness’ (*quidem benedictionem*) from the pope, despite having visited Rome after a premonitory vision.<sup>166</sup> On the second visit, however, Boniface did discuss missionary work (*evangelica doctrina*).<sup>167</sup> The third visit, meanwhile, presents a link between preaching and the papacy as the champion of orthodoxy, suggesting that part of the importance of Boniface’s memory stood in opposition to heresy in Frisia.<sup>168</sup> Throughout Boniface was not presented as subordinate to the papacy as he had been in Willibald’s *vita*; indeed in the *Vita altera Bonifatii* Boniface even tells Pope Gregory III why the German mission is important in a manner which places the impetus firmly with the Anglo-Saxon. Nonetheless Rome and the papacy are a symbolic part of Boniface’s career as an official institution that supports, firstly, Boniface’s decision to be on the continent, then to be a missionary, and finally to be a defender of orthodoxy. No king or other secular leader is mentioned by the St Martin’s monk, coincidentally echoing the ambivalent attitude of the *Vita Pirmini* to secular affairs. Whoever the author was, the papacy alone had significance beyond the saints for the conversion of Frisia. The *Vita altera Bonifatii* in general attests to traditions from Frisia independent of Mainz, Carolingian or Bavarian traditions;<sup>169</sup>

<sup>165</sup> *VaB* cc. 7, 10, 11, pp. 67, 68, 70.

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*, c. 7, p. 10.

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid.*, c. 10, p. 68.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*, c. 11, p. 70: ‘Verum qui didicerat a Spiritu sancto et loquebatur mysteria, non habebat necesse ullis orthodoxi ingenii argumentis amplius erudiri...’

<sup>169</sup> See Wood, *The Missionary Life*, p. 104.

likewise when it comes to describing the authority of the papacy through Boniface, the St Martin's monk covers a well-worn theme from his own distinctive point of view.

By contrast the Saxon traditions of Hamburg-Bremen put much greater importance on both papal and Carolingian authority, more in keeping with East Frankish traditions to the south. The *Vita Willehadi* (ca 845), for example, integrates the *translatio imperii* – the translation of the imperial title from the Greeks to Charlemagne under the aegis (allegedly) of Pope Leo III in 800 – into its narrative.<sup>170</sup> This story, in the context of Willehad's career, had the effect of binding together the conversion and Christianisation of the Saxons with the papal-sponsored imperial office.<sup>171</sup> The author of the *Vita Willehadi*, perhaps more than the St Martin's monk, put little emphasis on the papacy as a driving force behind missionary work. Willehad did visit Rome himself, like a good Anglo-Saxon, in order to pray for the conversion of the Saxons to St Peter when times were hard.<sup>172</sup> Pope Hadrian, the story continues, consoled Willehad and the missionary was able to return to the Franks in high spirits. Here it is perhaps significant that praying to St Peter elicited a response from the pope to help the resolve of Willehad in the missionfield. The figure of Boniface can be seen in the background because Willehad was said to have begun his missionary work at Dokkum where Boniface was martyred, thus establishing Willehad as a successor to the martyr's missionary task.<sup>173</sup>

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<sup>170</sup> *VWhad* c. 5, pp. 843–4.

<sup>171</sup> J. Ehlers, 'Die Sachsenmission als heiligengeschichtliches Ereignis', in F. J. Felten & N. Jaspert (eds.), *Vita Religiosa im Mittelalter. Festschrift für Kaspar Elm zum 70. Geburtstag*, Berliner historische Studien 31, Ordenstudien 13 (Berlin, 1999), pp. 37–53.

<sup>172</sup> *VWhad* c. 7, p. 844.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*, c. 2, p. 843.

Rimbert's *Vita Anskarii* (ca 870) portrayed St Anskar of Hamburg-Bremen (d. 865) as a Bonifatian figure in the way he derived authority from the papacy.<sup>174</sup> Anskar became involved in the ninth-century missions to Scandinavia at the court of Louis the Pious in 826 when he was sent to accompany Harald Klak back to Denmark. Describing a later journey to Rome Rimbert, Anskar's favourite pupil and successor, wrote:<sup>175</sup>

The pope confirmed this, not only by authoritative decree, but also by the gift of the *pallium*, in accordance with the custom [*mores*] of his predecessors, and he appointed [Anskar] legate for the time being amongst all the neighbouring races of the Swedes and Danes and also the Slavs... At the tomb of confession of the holy apostle St Peter [Gregory IV] publicly committed [Anskar] to evangelise these races.

Several aspects of this quotation invite comparisons with Boniface. It is notable that the pope bestowing the *pallium* had become a custom (*mos*) in papal dealings with the Frankish Church since the days of Boniface (or Willibrord). Anskar's appointment as a missionary legate also has echoes of Boniface's position amongst the *Germani*. Finally, the Chapel of the Confession of St Peter was given as the location in which Boniface himself had received his papal commission. In terms of *mores*, Anskar was clearly Boniface's predecessor.<sup>176</sup> The *Vita Anskarii* cannot simply be taken as a factual account of what happened. Rimbert's work is full of distortions, half-truths, omissions and fanciful story-telling that serve to justify the possibly imaginary status of Hamburg-Bremen as a unified archbishopric and, at the same time, promote missionary work in

<sup>174</sup> I. N. Wood, 'Christians and pagans in ninth-century Scandinavia', in P. H. Sawyer, B. Sawyer and I. N. Wood (eds.), *The Christianization of Scandinavia* (Alingsås, 1987), pp. 36-67; J. T. Palmer, 'Rimbert's *Vita Anskarii* and Scandinavian mission in the ninth century', *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* (forthcoming).

<sup>175</sup> Rimbert, *VA* c. 13, p. 35: 'Quod etiam ipse tam decreti sui auctoritate quam etiam pallii datione more praedecessorum legatum in omnibus circumquaque gentibus Sueonum sive Danorum necnon etiam Sclaorum... et ante corpus et confessionem sancti Petri apostoli publicam evanglizandi tribuit auctoritatem'.

<sup>176</sup> The comparison is not made explicitly but then Rimbert omits mention of Willehad as Anskar's predecessor too, perhaps so as not to deflect from the image of Anskar as a saint. The one direct comparison is with St Martin; see Rimbert, *VA* c. 35, p. 66.

Scandinavia.<sup>177</sup> Anskar, and consequently Rimbert as his pupil, cannot have been unaware of the kind of ideals Boniface stood for as a saint because he had himself joined in the solemnities of the Feast of St Boniface at Fulda.<sup>178</sup> Here, in the new missionfields of the later ninth century, it seems possible that the hagiographical images of Boniface and the papacy had inspired new expressions of papal authority in the North. Moreover these ideals were expressed through the medium of a *vita* in order to establish in part the authority of Anskar as a saint, much as Willibald had done for Boniface a century earlier.

### Conclusion.

Anglo-Saxons such as Willibrord and Boniface did not, it seems, create a unity between the papacy and the German Church; the ways in which they were memorialised or imitated, on the other hand, do appear to have perpetuated an idealised image of the papacy as an institution whose authority contributed to the power of a saint. By seeking the sponsorship of the papacy, a saint was in some sense legitimised in their actions as they worked in opposition to a pagan or heretical secular hierarchy in the North. This image is largely absent from the Merovingian *vitae* from the West, in which Rome was valued as a place of saints' cults and churches, not as a source of *auctoritas*. To a certain extent the difference between Merovingian and Carolingian attitudes to hagiographical Rome can be explained by the changing *réalité* in which the Carolingians had to pay an increased interest in Roman affairs even if they did not fully accept papal authority

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<sup>177</sup> On the status of Hamburg-Bremen, R. Drögereit denied it was a unified ninth-century archbishopric in his 'Erzbistum Hamburg, Hamburg-Bremen oder Erzbistum Bremen?', *Archiv für Diplomatik* 21 (1975), 136-230, but this has been comprehensively refuted in W. Seegrün, *Das Erzbistum Hamburg in seinen älteren Papsturkunden* (Cologne & Vienna 1976) and B. Wavra, *Salzburg und Hamburg, Erzbistumgründung und Missionspolitik in Karolingischer Zeit* (Berlin 1991). The confusion has arisen out of the layers of forgery that have shaped the Hamburg-Bremen sources. On Rimbert's *VA* as missionary propaganda see Palmer, 'Rimbert's *Vita Anskarii*'.

<sup>178</sup> *Epistola Fuldensium fragmata* c. 37, ed. E. Dümmler, *MGH Epp.* 5, pp. 517-33 at p. 532: 'Bonifatii festum Nonis Iunii celebrat Theoto abbas Fuldensis: quo die ad se invitat Adalgarium abbatem sancti Viti et Ansgarium in epistolar sua ad eosdem'.

itself. The many distortions within the Carolingian *vitae*, however, suggest that any new pragmatic episcopal order does not fully explain the difference; there was, rather, a distinct trend towards shaping the past inspired by Bonifatian ideals above and beyond what was really happening which needs to be explained.

Perhaps the most telling examples of Bonifatian influence are where there were reactions against claims made in the *Vita Bonifatii*. It is likely that Bede had little interest in Boniface because he was not a Northumbrian; it is therefore suspicious that Willibrord, something of a hero to Bede, was called *episcopus* by Bede before Boniface was promoted in Rome, and *archiepiscopus* thereafter. Alcuin, who had some reservations about certain stories told of Boniface, later promoted Bede's story further. Meanwhile Arbeo of Freising, writing in response to the *Vita Bonifatii*, presented Emmeram and Corbinian with much spurious historical detail in order to illustrate that they, like Boniface, had revered Rome and the papacy. What is common to these responses is that they sought to establish saints who diminished the purported achievements of Boniface by creating a relationship with the papacy that mirrored Boniface's own; even contradicting the legend of Boniface had created a narrowing of the ways in which hagiographers sought to write about their saints.

Elsewhere the Bonifatian papal ideal was embraced positively but developed to more political ends. People did not adapt the imagery of Boniface and the papacy simply because Boniface was a popular saint – although he was that too – but rather because hagiographical representations of him bound sanctity together with institutional reference points of authority that had potential to be developed as a justificatory tool. Localised examples include Liudger warping the story of Boniface and Rome in order to

establish Gregory of Utrecht as the true heir to Boniface's Frisian work. For the wider public for whom the *Annales regni Francorum* was intended, Boniface became one of the corner stones on which Carolingian royal legitimacy lay. The shifting horizons of the mid-ninth century, meanwhile, prompted groups across the (new) East Frankish kingdom to reaffirm the Bonifatian ideal of a united papacy, episcopacy and secular leadership engaged in supporting and promoting missionary work. It is perhaps telling that, after only intermittent attention to Boniface between 754 and 840, new political divisions coincided with a renewed interest in history and a glut of *vitae* inspired in part by the Anglo-Saxons were composed. The papal legitimacy about which Willibald and Hygeburg wrote seems to have appealed more broadly to the need for justification and authority whilst new power structures were being negotiated.

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Saints' Lives had begun to alter perceptions of sanctity and authority in Frisia and Germany to include the role of the papacy, as distinct from Rome and its other churches and cults. The narratives of power promoted by Willibald and Hygeburg contributed to wider dialogues in which various groups pushed their own position within the changing political and cultural landscapes of the eighth and ninth centuries. Through actively denying or becoming associated with the Anglo-Saxon narratives, Franks, Bavarians and Frisians all developed ideas within the realms of sanctity in which the papacy was a more central source of *auctoritas* than had previously been the case.

## Chapter 4: Bavarian Sacred Spaces and Willibald's Pilgrimage to the Holy Land.

In Christian history few regions are as emotive as the Holy Land of the Middle East, and Jerusalem in particular, where the Christian religion first developed. The holy places were important both because of their connection with Christian history and because they could symbolise heaven. Patristic literature such as Augustine's *De civitate Dei* drew heavily on the image of Jerusalem in expounding the nature of Christianity. Pilgrims often travelled to the region on *peregrinatio* (in the non-Irish sense of the word) for spiritual benefit. A small genre of writings called *itineraria* developed around these travels, recording the places seen for the edification of others. Yet by the time of the Anglo-Saxons' work in Germany the popularity of pilgrimage to the Holy Land had declined markedly as the horizons of the post-Roman world shrank. This has made an account of Willibald of Eichstätt's pilgrimage to the Holy Land in the 720s, contained within the *Vita Willibaldi*, seem all the more remarkable, because it is almost unique in the Pippinid/ Carolingian period. It is a highly complex work that underwent several layers of composition, but the forms – plural – of the text have remained largely unstudied. The account raises some crucial questions about how the Anglo-Saxons wrote about sacred places in the context of hagiographical constructions of sanctity: what significance did the account of the holy places have for the communities of Eichstätt and Heidenheim? Further, why was the account preserved in a saints' Life rather than an *itineraria*?

Modern historians have tended to see Willibald's journey and the account of it as little more than an interesting historical curiosity. In their classic studies of the Anglo-Saxon missions to the continent, neither Levison nor Schieffer afforded Willibald's

journey much space.<sup>1</sup> Neither the pilgrimage nor the account of it seemed to have much significance to the history of Germany.<sup>2</sup> Often Willibald's travels are dismissed as little more than an extension of Anglo-Saxon *peregrinatio* in general,<sup>3</sup> which, while true, also runs the risk of losing sight of the distinctiveness of both the pilgrimage and the *vita*. A fundamental problem with interpreting the *Vita Willibaldi* within past frameworks of historical enquiry is that it provides information so out of character with the rest of the evidence for the *Bonifatiuskreis* that it does not appear to 'fit' within the story of the Christianisation of Germany. In other pertinent fields of research a similar uneasiness with the source is discernable. Historians of medieval pilgrimage, for example, tend to refer to Willibald as an isolated example of early pilgrimage to the Holy Land, but in doing so pay no attention to the form of the source itself.<sup>4</sup> To historians of the rising Islamic East, meanwhile, Willibald's journey has appeared as little more than an

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<sup>1</sup> Wilhelm Levison, in his *England and the Continent in the Eighth Century. The Ford Lectures Delivered in the University of Oxford in the Hilary Term 1943* (Oxford, 1946), wrote, 'There is no need to relate here the details of [Willibald's] journey, his dangers, hardship and adventures in Greek and Moslem countries' (p. 43). He described the account as 'mainly concerned... with places of devotion, biblical or legendary events, churches and tombs of saints' (pp.43-4) and added that it illustrates 'something of the curiosity of the explorer' (p. 44). See also T. Schieffer, *Wifrid-Bonifatius und die christliche Grundlegung Europas* (Freiburg, 1954, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. Darmstadt, 1972), p. 176.

<sup>2</sup> See also the cursory reference to the *Vita Willibaldi* in Ian Wood's *The Missionary Life: Saints and the Evangelisation of Europe* (Harlow, 2001), p. 64. In Lutz von Padberg's *Mission und Christianisierung. Formen und Folgen bei Angelsachsen und Franken im 7. und 8. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart, 1995) the focus on Willibald is entirely on his family, for example on pp. 89-90, and there is no real mention of the pilgrimage. There is a distinct silence on the pilgrimage in A. Angenendt, *Das Frühmittelalter. Die abendländische Christenheit von 400 bis 900* (Stuttgart, 1990, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn. 2001), R. Fletcher, *The Conversion of Europe: From Paganism to Christianity 371-1386* (London, 1997), and many other textbooks that cover the period in any depth.

<sup>3</sup> See for example A. Angenendt, 'Die irische Peregrinatio und ihre Auswirkungen auf dem Kontinent vor dem Jahre 800', in H. Löwe (ed.), *Die Iren und Europa im frühen Mittelalter 1* (Stuttgart, 1982), pp. 52-79 at p. 76.

<sup>4</sup> The classic study of medieval pilgrimages to the Holy Land, Jonathon Sumption's *Pilgrimage: An Image of Medieval Religion* (London, 1975), barely considers Willibald, mentioning him only in passing in connection with trade because the saint smuggled some oil out of the Middle East. The most recent work on pilgrimage, Diana Webb's *Medieval European Pilgrimage, c. 700-c. 1500* (Basingstoke, 2002) does give Willibald's journey more prominence, although she perhaps takes the *Vita Willibaldi* too much at face value. Some recent articles have studied the route Willibald took in comparison to those used by other medieval pilgrims: A. Davids, 'Routes of pilgrimage', in K. Ciggaar, A. Davids & H. Teule (ed.), *East and West in the Crusader States*, *Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 75* (Leuven, 1996), pp. 81-101, and D. Claude, 'Spätantike und frühmittelalterliche Orientfahrten: Routen und Reisende', in A. Dierkens & J.-M. Sansterre (eds.), *Voyages et voyageurs à Byzance et en occident du VIe au XIe siècle*, *Bibliothèque de la Faculté de Philosophie et Lettres de l'Université de Liège – Fascicule CCLXXXVIII* (Geneva, 2000), pp. 235-53 at pp. 247-9.

aberration, a blip in otherwise widespread Western disinterest in the Holy Land at the time.<sup>5</sup> But the distinctiveness of both Willibald's experiences and the *Vita Willibaldi* is precisely what ought to make it uniquely valuable in understanding Willibald's circle and maybe even the *Bonifatiuskreis* as a whole. Here, then, I shall consider what the varied contexts of both Willibald's pilgrimage and the text might bring to our understanding of developments in sanctity and place in the work of the Anglo-Saxons on the continent.

### The Genesis of Hygeburg's *Vita Willibaldi*.

The history of the production of the *Vita Willibaldi* is one of the most unusual of the early Middle Ages. Hygeburg relates the origins of the work as follows:<sup>6</sup>

We know these things because they were related to us, not by means of the meandering turnings of apocryphal stories, but because having encountered Willibald, we resolved to hear them as told to us in dictation from his own mouth and so to write them down – with two deacons as witnesses who heard them with me – on Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> June, the day before summer solstice.

From the information about the solstice it is likely that this dictation occurred in 778, following the consecration of Willibald's church in Eichstätt the previous year.<sup>7</sup> But the supposed oral origins of the work seems to be contradicted by the fullness of detail

Willibald gave; Walter Berschin has even suggested that Willibald must have kept some

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<sup>5</sup> Typical of the opinion of Willibald's journey in historiography on the Middle East is Hugh Kennedy in *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates: The Islamic Near East from the Sixth to the Eleventh Century* (Harlow, 1986), p. 121. Kennedy makes the point that there is little evidence for European interest in the Islamic Near East or Muslim interest in Europe, and that Hygeburg's narrative offers little to rectify this situation because of its focus on the Holy Places. This is perhaps to be too dismissive of the value of the text as a source for the Islamic eighth century – it does offer some images of what it was like for a visitor to travel in the Holy Land at the time – but the more general point is probably correct. See now also R. Fletcher, *The Cross and the Crescent: Christianity and Islam from Muhammad to the Reformation* (London, 2003), pp. 22, 24. On the problematical nature of Islamic historical sources of the period see P. Crone's *Slaves on Horses: The Evolution of the Islamic Polity* (Cambridge, 1980), pp. 3-17, and on the archaeological records see R. Schick, 'Palestine in the Early Islamic period: luxuriant legacy?', *Near Eastern Archaeology* 61 (1998), 74-108.

<sup>6</sup> Hygeburg, *VWb* pref., p. 87: 'Ista non apocriforum venia erradica dissertione relata esse cognoscamus, sed sicut illo ipso vidente et nobis referente de ori sui dictatione audire et nihilominus scribere destinavimus, duobus diaconibus testibus mecumque audientibus, 9. Kal. Iulii, pridie ante solstitia, Martii die'.

<sup>7</sup> O. Holder-Egger, *MGH SS* 15 i, p. 82, n. 5. Walter Berschin, in his *Biographie und Epochenstil im lateinischen Mittelalter 3. Karolingische Biographie 750-920 n. Chr.*, Quellen und Untersuchungen zur lateinischen Philologie des Mittelalters 10 (Stuttgart, 1991), p. 18 cautiously suggested that this could fit a variety of years between 767 and 778.

kind of travel diary.<sup>8</sup> There was, therefore, nothing casual in the nature of Willibald's reminiscences. More significantly, there are two distinct Latin styles employed within the *Vita Willibaldi*: much is written in the convoluted style of Aldhelm, in keeping with the Latin of the *Bonifatiuskreise*, but the account of the pilgrimage to the Holy Land itself is written in a plainer Latin more in keeping with that of the Vulgate.<sup>9</sup> The implications of the use of two written styles – particularly in a work that purports to be written up from a dictation – need to be considered.

A brief illustration of the two Latin styles contained within the *Vita Willibaldi* reveals a peculiar dichotomy. The break appears to happen after the first sentence of the chapter on Willibald's pilgrimage to the Holy Land (chapter four, *De transitu Willibaldi*). The first sentence reads:<sup>10</sup>

*Postquam ille inluster clarusque Christi crucicolus magna mentis intentione et cordis contemplatione ad superna internis vitae speculatione provide circumspectione proberabat et ad sublimioris rigidioris vitae virtutibus anhelando, iam non planem, sed arctam austerioris vitae viam per monachocalis vite normam inhiando desiderabat et maioram iam tunc peregrinationis ignotitiam adire optabat, quam illa fuit, in qua tunc stare videbatur; tunc ille strenuus, consilio amicorum contribulumque licentia flagitato, ut suorum opulatione orationum illum sequere dignentur, rogabat, ut tutis cursibus dilectabiles atque optibiles civitatis Hierusalem moenias peragrare specularique per illorum pia precuum presida possibiliter poterit.*

<sup>8</sup> Berschin, *Biographie und Epochenstil* 3, p. 21.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 21-2. On the use of Aldhelmian Latin by Boniface and his circle, see A. Orchard, *The Poetic Art of Aldhelm*, Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England 8 (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 61-5; *idem.*, 'Old sources, new resources: finding the right formula for Boniface', *Anglo-Saxon England* 30 (2001), 15-38.

<sup>10</sup> Hygeburg, *VWb* c. 4, p. 92: 'After this the illustrious bearer of Christ's cross had continued to pursue the life of perfection with great steadfastness of mind and inward contemplation, and he grew eager to follow a more rigorous life of virtue, not an easier one, but a more austere way of monastic life is what he most desired, and so now Willibald longed to go on pilgrimage to a [more] unknown place than where he then was; so, energetic as ever, he sought the advice of his friends and asked permission from his kinsmen to go so that, he asked, they would deign to follow him with their prayers, so that throughout the course of his journey their prayers would keep him from harm and enable him to reach the city of Jerusalem and gaze upon its pleasant and hallowed walls.'

This sentence is characteristically Aldhelmian in its unwieldy length and excessive alliteration, particularly in the final few words. This is a style that is used throughout the *Vita Wynnebaldi* and in the *Vita Willibaldi* up until this point in the text. There is then a marked change for much of the rest of the *Vita Willibaldi*, as illustrated by the next four lines:<sup>11</sup>

*Cumque, transactis dominice paschalis sollemnibatibus, agile exercitus levavit se cum duobus suis sociis, et peregere ceperunt. Cumque perrexerunt et venerunt usque ad urbem Teratinam in oriente, et ibi manebant duos dies; et inde pergentes, venerunt ad urbem Gaitam; illa stat in litore maris. Et ibi tunc ascendentes in navem, transfretaverunt ad Neabulem. Et illic relicto nave, in quo pergabant, stabant ibi duos ebdomadas.*

The style is completely different: each sentence is notably shorter, there is no alliteration, the Latin is simpler in structure and, in the constant use of *et*, *tunc* and *inde*, it is highly repetitive. The whole rest of the chapter *De transitu Willibaldi* is written in this simpler style. The fifth chapter, which takes Willibald's story from Monte Cassino to Eichstätt, mixes Aldhelmian phraseology and alliteration with this simpler style, as if Hygeburg was trying – and failing – to imitate the style of chapter four. Finally chapter six sees a full return to the excesses of the earlier portions of the *Vita Willibaldi*. Walter Berschin remarked that 'Willibald had probably already produced a work like the Journey of Paul, the *Itinerarium* of Egeria or Adamnán's *De locis sanctis*. Then he gave the work to the

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<sup>11</sup> Hygeburg, *VWb* c. 4, p. 92: 'So, after the solemnities of Easter were over, the restless soldier set off with two companions and began his journey. So they advanced and came to a town east of Fondi, and stayed there for two days; and then travelling, they came to the city of Gaeta; it stands by the seashore. And then having boarded a ship there, they sailed to Naples. And having left that ship, in which they travelled, they stayed for two weeks'.

learned nun Hygeburg, who left the powerful words of Willibald unchanged in essence'.<sup>12</sup> It is possible that Hygeburg edited some of Willibald's text, with the mixed Latin of chapter five representing an effort to blend Willibald's work into a wider piece. One might also note that Hygeburg's account of the origins of the *Vita Willibaldi* is, if not an outright lie, somewhat glossed to give it a new history exclusive to Eichstätt and Heidenheim. Overall, then, the *Vita Willibaldi* is not a single work but an earlier work, Willibald's *Itinerarium*, recast into a longer work, Hygeburg's *Vita Willibaldi*.

When the story of the pilgrimage was incorporated into the *Vita Willibaldi* by Hygeburg, it was entitled *De transitu Willibaldi* and became the fourth of six chapters. This probably happened concurrently with the preparation of the *Vita Wynnebaldi*. References to Willibald in the present tense imply it was written before the bishop's death in 787, so possibly between 782 and 786. Willibald therefore had the distinction of being able to oversee the production of his own *vita*, and maybe hypothetically even had chance to influence its content. He may also have influenced Hygeburg's *Vita Wynnebaldi*. The two *vitae* share a preface and are called, in the singular, the *Vita germanuum Willibaldi et Wynnebaldi* by Hygeburg, thus creating a single *Doppelbiographie*.<sup>13</sup> (It is for modern convenience that we tend to refer to the *Vita Willibaldi* and *Vita Wynnebaldi* as separate works). The text of Willibald's *Itinerarium* had therefore been incorporated into a broader hagiographical context. There was, however, another layer of production to come. Shortly after the *Vita Willibaldi et Wynnebaldi* had been written it was copied at Eichstätt into the

<sup>12</sup> Berschin, *Biographie und Epochenstil* 3, pp. 21-2: 'Vielleicht hatte Willibald vor, daraus ein Werk wie die Reise der Paula, das *Itinerarium* der Egeria oder Adamnans *De locis sanctis* zu machen. Dann hat er die Ausarbeitung der gelehrten Nonne Hügeburc überlassen, die den Wortlaut Willibalds im wesentlichen unverändert ließ'. On the basis of this conclusion I intend to continue by differentiating between the portions of the *Vita Willibaldi* written by Willibald himself and those written by Hygeburg; thus Willibald's sections will be denoted as his *Itinerarium* (followed by a traditional reference to its place in Hygeburg's *VWb* for orientation), whilst the rest will continue to be referenced as Hygeburg's *VWb*.

<sup>13</sup> Hygeburg, *VWb* pref., p. 86; Berschin, *Biographie und Epochenstil* 3, pp. 18-19.

manuscript now known as Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 1086.<sup>14</sup> The *Doppelbiographie* – which incidentally now placed the *Vita Wynnebaldi* first, contrary to the title and Hygeburg's preface – followed the *Vita Bonifatii* in the manuscript, thus creating an extended hagiographical account of the Anglo-Saxons in Germany.<sup>15</sup>

There are, then, three contexts in which *De transitu Willibaldi* was interpreted: firstly as a stand-alone *itinerarium*, then in the context of the genre of hagiography, and finally as part of the late-eighth-century composite memory of the Anglo-Saxon missions represented by Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 1086. Only if each layer of production is understood on its own terms can a fuller picture of the meaning of Willibald and his pilgrimage be gleaned.

### Hygeburg-Willibald's *De transitu Willibaldi* as Biblical Exegesis.

*Adamnán's 'De locis sanctis.'*

To begin making sense of *De transitu Willibaldi* it is worth considering the form and function of another *itineraria*, the *De locis sanctis* of Adamnán, written late in the seventh century in Iona. Although it is a text produced hundreds of miles away from Heidenheim a century earlier there are many good reasons to recommend the comparison. The meeting of Irish-Northumbrian culture in Britain had been replicated in Bavaria.<sup>16</sup> Moreover *De locis sanctis* was adapted by Bede (as shall be seen further below), in whose work the

<sup>14</sup> B. Bischoff, *Die südostdeutschen Schriebenschulen und Bibliotheken in der Karolingerzeit, Teil I: Die bayerische Diözesen* (Leipzig, 1940, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. Wiesbaden, 1960), pp. 57, 148.

<sup>15</sup> The significance of the manuscript is hinted at by Patrick Geary in his 'Saints, scholars and society: the elusive goal', in his *Living with the Dead in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca & London, 1994), pp. 9-29 at p. 18.

<sup>16</sup> See for example G. Wieland, 'Anglo-Saxon culture in Bavaria 739-850', *Mediaevalia* 17 (1994 for 1991), 177-200 on the presence of Irish-Northumbrian scriptoria cultures in Bavaria. On interaction between the Irish and Anglo-Saxon churches see: K. Hughes, 'Evidence for contacts between the churches of the Irish and English from the Synod of Whitby to the Viking Age', in P. Clemons & K. Hughes (eds.), *England Before the Conquest: Studies in Primary Sources Presented to Dorothy Whitelock* (Cambridge, 1971), pp. 49-67; J. Campbell, 'The debt of the early English Church to Ireland', in P. Ní Chatháin & M. Richter, *Irland und die Christenheit* (Stuttgart, 1987), pp. 332-346.

Anglo-Saxons on the continent had a keen interest. Culturally *De transitu Willibaldi* and *De locis sanctis* are not as remote as they may first appear. There are, meanwhile, many similar circumstances in the context of their production, and possibly some similar literary strategies employed by the respective authors. Of course differences exist too, so systematic study is needed to determine any justification for claiming similarities and the significance of any contrasts.

Until recently the *De locis sanctis* of Adamnán had, like Hygeburg's *Vita Willibaldi*, been treated as something of a historical curiosity, of no great importance but with a couple of interesting comments on the Middle East of the seventh century. Then in 1992 Thomas O'Loughlan demonstrated that the text was actually a significant work of biblical exegesis with great value to the monks of Iona.<sup>17</sup> In character, *De locis sanctis* is a dry geographical description of the Holy Land; it does not offer a narrative account of Arculf's pilgrimage. The text is divided into three books: the first focuses on Jerusalem, the second on Bethlehem, other nearby sites and Egypt, and the third and final book describes Constantinople. Adamnán's two main enterprises – in practice often the same concern – were to describe the locations of important Biblical sites and churches. These descriptions were often precise, and include details such as the size of churches and the lamps that decorate them; often, Adamnán included accompanying diagrams to illustrate the layout of particular churches. He purports to have written the text as it was dictated to him by Bishop Arculf, first on wax tablets and then later copied onto parchment.<sup>18</sup> In practice, many details were available to Adamnán from books in the library of Iona, and

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<sup>17</sup> T. O'Loughlan, 'The exegetical purpose of Adamnán's *De locis sanctis*', *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies* 24 (1992), 37-53; T. O'Loughlan, 'Adamnán and Arculf: the case of the expert witness', *Journal of Medieval Latin* 7 (1997), 127-46.

<sup>18</sup> Adamnán, *De locis sanctis*, pref., p. 37.

Arculf's contribution appears to have been limited to incidental details such as the locations of lamps in churches.<sup>19</sup>

There are several features to *De locis sanctis* that reveal it to be more complicated than it has initially seemed to many historians. The simple fact that Adamnán wrote the text is particularly important because he himself reveals that, as abbot, he was 'beset by laborious and almost insupportable ecclesiastical business from every quarter.'<sup>20</sup> For him to have taken time from these duties to write the text therefore implies that it was of some importance for his community.<sup>21</sup> The majority of the work refers to questions or statements that arise from the Bible. Descriptions of Jerusalem in Book I, for example, bring together and elucidate on references to the city and, in doing so, Adamnán helps to explain its status as a symbol for the Christian eschatology.<sup>22</sup> Adamnán also appears to tackle the Synoptic Problem and other difficulties that arise from contradictions within scripture. A description of the location of Rachel's *sepulchrum*, for example, is careful to confirm that it lies to the south of Jerusalem as is claimed in Genesis (Gen. 35.19-20), thereby silently dismissing the statement in I Samuel that it lay to the north (I Sam. 10.2).<sup>23</sup> Adamnán wrote that:<sup>24</sup>

Rachel's sepulchrum is in Efrate, which is in the region of Bethlehem, according to the book of Genesis but the *Liber locorum* says Rachel is buried in that region by a road. On asking Arculf about this road he said, 'There is a certain royal

<sup>19</sup> T. O'Loughlan, 'The library of Iona in the late seventh century: the evidence from Adamnán's *De locis sanctis*', *Ériu* 45 (1994), 33-52, esp. at p. 34; O'Loughlan, 'Adamnán and Arculf', 141.

<sup>20</sup> Adamnán, *De locis sanctis*, III.6, pp. 120-1: 'ego quamlibet inter laboriosas et prope insustentabiles tota die undique conglobatas ecclesiasticae sollicitudinis occupationes constitutus'.

<sup>21</sup> O'Loughlan, 'The exegetical purpose', 37.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 41-2.

<sup>23</sup> Adamnán, *De locis sanctis*, II. 7, p. 78-9; O'Loughlan, 'The exegetical purpose', 49.

<sup>24</sup> Adamnán, *De locis sanctis* II. 7, p. 78: 'Rachel in Efrata, hoc est in regione Bethelm, et liber Geneseos sepultam narrat sed et Locorum liber in eadem regione iuxta uiam humatam refert Rachel. De qua Arculfus via mihi percunctanti respondens ait: Est quaedam via regia quae ab Helia contra meridianam plagam Chebron ducti, cui viae Bethelm sex milibus distans ab Hierusolima ab orientali plaga adheret. Sepulchrum vero Rachel in eiusdem viae extremitate ab occidentali parte, hoc est in dextro latere, habetur pergentibus Chebron coherens...'

road which runs from Helia to the middle of the county of Chebron, whose course runs east near Bethlehem six miles from Jerusalem. Truly the sepulchrum of Rachel is on the end of that road by the western part, which is on the right-hand side on the way to Chebron’.

By describing the Holy Places, therefore, Adamnán was able to clarify certain problems contained within the Bible.

Adamnán’s methodology was particularly inspired by Augustine’s *De doctrina christiana*, in which the great bishop of Hippo set out what someone would need to know in order to interpret scripture. *De locis sanctis* illustrates two of Augustine’s principles: knowledge of what place names mean and knowledge of the places themselves. Augustine believed that sometimes it was only with such knowledge that certain messages within the Bible could be interpreted.<sup>25</sup> But this knowledge was more noble than simple geographical description, it was *narratio* – it relied on experiential knowledge rather than abstract principles learnt from books.<sup>26</sup> In this context, O’Loughlan has argued that Arculf came to be an ‘expert witness’ in Adamnán’s work because it was through his experience that features of the Holy Land were verified.<sup>27</sup> Arculf’s distinctive contribution to *De locis sanctis*, however, goes beyond simply adding the occasional detail to those Adamnán had already learnt from his library. The Gallic bishop testifies to changing times in the Holy Land, with references to a Saracen *rex* and Muslim *ecclesiae*.<sup>28</sup> Such references are, if anything, designed as comforting additions to Adamnán’s text. Arab

<sup>25</sup> Augustine, *De doctrina christiana* II. 16 (23), ed. J. Martin, *CCSL* 32 (Turnhout, 1982), pp. 1-167 at pp. 48-9.

<sup>26</sup> Adamnán, *De locis sanctis* II. 29 (45), pp. 63-4; O’Loughlan, ‘Adamnán and Arculf’, 137.

<sup>27</sup> O’Loughlan, ‘Adamnán and Arculf’, 141-6.

<sup>28</sup> Adamnán, *De locis sanctis*, II.28, pp. 98-9 says of Damascus: ‘in qua Saracinarum rex adeptus eius principatum regnat... et quaedam etiam Saracinarum ecclesia incredulorum et ipsa in eadem ciuitate quam ipsi frequentant fabricata est’. In I.9, pp.54-5, Adamnán relates that the name of the *rex* in the time of Arculf’s visit was ‘Mauias’, a rendering of Mu’awiya ibn Abi Sufan, caliph between 660 and 680: see Meehan’s introduction, p. 9. There is also mention of a large but unspectacular Muslim temple in Jerusalem (I. 1, pp. 42-3): ‘nunc Saracini quadrangulum orationis domum, quam subrectis tabulis et magnis trabibus super quasdam ruinarum reliquias contruentes uili fabricati sunt opere, ipsi frequentant; quae utique domus tria hominum milia, ut fertur, capere potest’.

expansion had seen the fall of Jerusalem in 638, Alexandria in 642, and naval attacks on Constantinople between 674 and 677, but within *De locis sanctis* it is made clear by comparison that Christian sites remained rich, powerful and favoured by God. The arrival of Arculf in Britain might therefore have occasioned the writing of *De locis sanctis* both because he brought home the threat the Muslims posed to the Holy Land as a Christian region and because at the same time he could stand as an expert witness to Christianity's persistence in the Middle East.

*Bede's 'De locis sanctis'.*

The work of Adamnán quickly became known amongst the Anglo-Saxons. Adamnán presented a copy to King Alfrid of Northumbria, who had studied in Ireland in his youth and also had an interest in cosmographies.<sup>29</sup> Not long afterwards, the venerable Bede obtained a copy of the work and twice adapted it to his own purpose.<sup>30</sup> In the first instance Bede paraphrased *De locis sanctis*. It would seem from some comments he made about the work that he considered Adamnán's prose to be overly elaborate and too confusing for many readers; he thus produced his own version of it in order to make *De locis sanctis* more readily accessible.<sup>31</sup> Just as the fact that Adamnán took time to write the work in the first place, that Bede took time to paraphrase the work indicates that he also thought it was of some importance. Bede was a famed exegete who wrote seventeen treatises on the Bible running to many more volumes.<sup>32</sup> It is likely that he recognised the useful exegetical

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<sup>29</sup> Bede, *HE V.* 15, p. 506; Levison, *England and the Continent*, p. 42.

<sup>30</sup> Bede, *De locis santis*, ed. I. Fraipont, *Itineraria et alia Geographica*, CCSL 175 (Turnhout, 1965), pp. 251-80.

<sup>31</sup> Bede, *HE V.* 17, p. 512: 'breuioribus strictisque sermonibus'. See W. Trent Foley & A. G. Holder, *Bede: A Biblical Miscellany*, Translated Texts for Historians 28 (Liverpool, 1999), p. 4.

<sup>32</sup> Bede lists his own works in the *HE V.* 24, pp. 566-70. On Bede as exegete see: B. Ward, *The Venerable Bede*, Outstanding Christian Thinkers (London, 2002), pp. 41-87.

purpose of *De locis sanctis* and was eager for students to use it when understanding scripture.<sup>33</sup>

Bede also inserted part of the text of *De locis sanctis* into his *Historia ecclesiastica*.<sup>34</sup> Bede's reasoning here is less clear: within the progression of the text, the brief summary of the Holy Places forms a striking digression from the spiritual progression of the *gens Anglorum* specifically and the British Isles in general. Michael Wallace-Hadrill sensibly suggested that it was a device to bring Bede's audience face-to-face with the roots of the Universal Church.<sup>35</sup> It would appear that Bede was concerned to place the English Church in broader contexts. While probably correct, the point could be expanded. It is interesting to note, for example, how Bede treats the *Historia ecclesiastica* as an opportunity to encourage people to read either Arculf's version of *De locis sanctis* or his own.<sup>36</sup> This might in turn imply that Bede hoped the potential wider circulation of the *Historia ecclesiastica* would be a good vehicle for promoting some more obscure texts on Christian understanding. Bede's biographical note that accompanies the *Historia ecclesiastica* and which lists his numerous exegetical and hagiographical works would seem to confirm this suspicion. The list does appear to have been used later by people requesting Bede's treatises.<sup>37</sup>

Bede's new version of *De locis sanctis* did contain one fundamental difference: Arculf's role as 'expert witness' was all but written out. Whereas Adamnán had repeatedly referred back to Arculf's experiences, Bede is rather oblique about his sources

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<sup>33</sup> Trent Foley & Holder, *Bede*, p. 4. It is more likely that it is this exegetical context that drove the production of the work rather than Webb's suggestion of 'armchair pilgrimage' (see Webb, *Medieval European Pilgrimage*, p. 176).

<sup>34</sup> Bede, *HE* V. 16-17, pp. 508-12.

<sup>35</sup> Wallace-Hadrill, *Bede's Ecclesiastical History*, p. 188.

<sup>36</sup> Bede, *HE* V. 17, p. 512; Ward, *The Venerable Bede*, p. 60.

<sup>37</sup> Levison, *England and the Continent*, p. 140 and see further below.

in his introduction to the work, does not mention Arculf at all during the text, and reserves his acknowledgement of Adamnán and Arculf until his concluding paragraph.<sup>38</sup> He did, on the other hand, give more details in the *Historia ecclesiastica*.<sup>39</sup> Historical narrative, for example the story of Arculf being shipwrecked in Britain, had no place in Bede's own version of the exegetical work. Bede's *De locis sanctis* is barely a 'narrative' in terms of 'telling a story', and is perhaps even less so than Adamnán's work for removing the 'expert witness' Arculf, upon whom the information was nominally contingent. Augustine's principle of *narratio* does not, therefore, appear to have been considered an important exegetical tool by Bede. 'Stories' such as Arculf's were better left for a work that could incorporate them into the historical world Bede, Adamnán and Arculf lived in, namely the *Historia ecclesiastica*. It is almost as if Bede was keeping a careful demarcation between the historical and the exegetical, and then hoped that his audiences would read both works as appropriate. This allowed Bede to create overlap between exegesis and history in a way that did not blur the purposes of his two projects.

In the Irish-Anglo-Saxon background to the Anglo-Saxon enterprises on the continent, then, a description of the Holy Land had become well recognised as a useful exegetical tool. The relationship between the so-called *narratio* of Arculf's experiences and the exegetical function of the text was fluid. *Narratio* necessarily permeated Adamnán's work, even if it was not actually reliant upon Arculf's experiences. Bede, however, saw fit to divorce them into two separate contexts. There was therefore no set model for describing the Holy Land. In neither Adamnán's work nor Bede's, however, was the Holy Land a mere intellectual curiosity.

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<sup>38</sup> Bede, *De locis sanctis*, 'versus eiusdem' and XVIII. 5, pp. 251 and 280.

<sup>39</sup> Bede, *HE* V. 15, p. 506.

*The continental transmission of 'De locis sanctis'.*

It is difficult to assess with any certainty whether either Adamnán's or Bede's *De locis sanctis* was known to Willibald or Hygeburg. Although there are similarities in some details about the Holy Land, there are no verbal borrowings from the work in Willibald's narrative and there are also many subtle differences. The earliest extant manuscripts of both versions of *De locis sanctis* are, on the other hand, continental and associated with centres such as Corbie and Freising with which the Anglo-Saxons had contacts. These manuscripts are from no earlier than the ninth century.<sup>40</sup> There remains the possibility that there were earlier exemplars in Germany, but it is impossible to tell where and when they might have been. It might be noted that *De locis sanctis* was not amongst the works of Bede requested from Northumbrian centres by either Boniface or Lull.<sup>41</sup> This does not mean that the missionaries did not want or know the work – they could equally have had a copy already or been sent one when Boniface made his general requests – but it does make it hard to know what interest there was in *De locis sanctis* in eighth-century Germany. Lull did, however, request some *libros cosmografiorum* from York.<sup>42</sup> Levison suggested that Lull was inspired by Cassiodorus's *Institutiones*, a work also employed by Adamnán in *De locis sanctis*.<sup>43</sup> What is perhaps more certain is the presence of copies of Augustine's *De doctrina christiana*, the inspiration behind Adamnán's original compilation, amongst the *Bonifatiuskreise*. A copy is attested in an eighth-century book

<sup>40</sup> Fraipont, *CCSL* 175, pp. 247-8, 250.

<sup>41</sup> In Boniface, *Tangl* nos. 75, 76 pp. 158, 159, Boniface asked in general for treatises on scripture. In no. 91, p. 207, he added specifically that he wanted Bede's *Homilies* and his commentary on the Book of Proverbs. Lull, in *Tangl* no. 116, p. 251, asked for the *Vita Cuthberti*; in *Tangl* no. 125, p. 263, he asked for the first part of Bede's commentary on Samuel, his three books on Ezra and Nehemiah and four books on Mark; in *Tangl* no. 126, p. 264, he asked for Bede's *De templo*, his commentary on the Song of Songs and some 'heroic meters'; finally in *Tangl* no. 127, p. 265, Lull again requested a copy of *De templo*.

<sup>42</sup> Lull, *Tangl* no. 124, p. 261.

<sup>43</sup> Levison, *England and the Continent*, p. 42, n. 2; O'Loughlan, 'The library of Iona', 52.

list associated with Würzburg and perhaps even Megingoz or Burchard.<sup>44</sup> The possibility therefore exists that Hygeburg or Willibald could at least have taken similar inspiration to Adamnán in compiling their account of Willibald's pilgrimage, if they did not know *De locis sanctis* itself.

*Willibald's 'Itinerarium' as Biblical Exegesis.*

Willibald's *Itinerarium*, like *De locis sanctis*, betrays a form that at least shapes its material in literary terms rather presenting a simple, remembered version of the past. The content must therefore be considered more closely, as O'Loughlan did with Adamnán's text. There are, of course, numerous differences between the production of the two texts: Willibald and Hygeburg were not as busy as Adamnán, and the account was more personal to the author(s) than was Arculf's, as a stranger, to Adamnán. Nonetheless, the timing of the dictation and the subsequent incorporation of the work into a *vita* indicates that it was produced because of more than idle curiosity. That does not necessarily mean Willibald's *Itinerarium* was in part a work of exegesis; one would have to look to see if it did explain anything about the Bible, and in particular those elements that were contradictory or ambiguous. The case of *De locis sanctis* shows us that geographical works can do this covertly: it does not mention that there is a contradiction, but instead states the preferred version of events with apparent authority. It is thus difficult to do more than note where Willibald mentions problematical stories and how he dealt with them in his work.

There are a number of references in the *Itinerarium* which do appear to create renewed certainty about contradictory stories relating to the Bible. Willibald is said to

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<sup>44</sup> E. A. Lowe, 'An eighth-century list of books in a Bodleian manuscript from Würzburg and its probable relation to the Laudian Acts', *Speculum* 3 (1928), 3-15, reprinted in L. Bieler (ed.), *Palaeographical Papers 1907-1965 I* (Oxford, 1972), pp. 239-50.

have visited Damascus where the body of St Ananias lay.<sup>45</sup> In *Acts* Ananias received Paul after his conversion on the road to Damascus, but in his epistle to the Galatians Paul wrote that he ‘conferred not with flesh and blood’ for three years after his conversion.<sup>46</sup> Here, then, the presence of Ananias’s body gives weight to his importance, and thus the account in *Acts*. A deceptively brief statement follows associating Nazareth with where Gabriel said ‘Hail Mary’ (Luke 1. 28).<sup>47</sup> This implicitly affirms the statement in Luke that Joseph had been in Nazareth before the nativity, and thus implicitly rejects the statement in Matthew that Joseph entered the city only after Herod’s death.<sup>48</sup> In this case it is a church on the site that acts as the proof for Willibald. No such evidence is offered in a subsequent reference to Capharnum and how Jesus saved the daughter of the local leader Jairus, but again a contradiction is ‘settled’, again in favour of Luke.<sup>49</sup> Mark reports how, when Jairus approached Jesus, his daughter was on the verge of death, whereas Luke says that she had died already.<sup>50</sup> Willibald simply makes reference to the account of Luke and ignores that of Mark. Willibald also takes time to explain why the True Cross was found by Helena within the walls of Jerusalem on Mount Calvary, whereas the Gospels seem to indicate the True Cross should be outside those walls:<sup>51</sup>

‘And then he came to the place where the sacred cross of the Lord was found; there is now a church in that place called Calvary; and this was formerly outside Jerusalem, but Helena, when she found the cross, placed that location within inner Jerusalem.’

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<sup>45</sup> Willibald, *Itinerarium* [Hygeburg, *VWb*, c. 4], p. 95: ‘perrexunt in Damascus 100 milia; et sanctus Ananias requiescit ibi’.

<sup>46</sup> Compare Acts 9. 10-19 with Galatians 1. 16.

<sup>47</sup> Willibald, *Itinerarium* [Hygeburg, *VWb*, c. 4], p. 95: ‘Et illic orantes, ambulabant in Galileam in illum locum, ubi Gabriel primum venit ad sancta Maria et dixit ‘Ave Maria’ et reliqua. Ibi est nunc aeclesia; et ille vicus, in quo est aeclesia, id est Nazareth’.

<sup>48</sup> Compare Luke 2. 4 with Matt. 2. 23.

<sup>49</sup> Willibald, *Itinerarium* [Hygeburg, *VWb*, c. 4], p. 96: ‘... et veniebant ad illo vico Capharnaum, ubi Dominus principis filiam suscitavit’.

<sup>50</sup> Compare Mark 5. 22-43 with Luke 8. 49-56.

<sup>51</sup> Willibald, *Itinerarium* [Hygeburg, *VWb* c. 4], p. 97: ‘Et inde venit ad Hierusalem, in illum locum, ubi inventa fuerat sancta crux Domini; ibi est nunc aeclesia in illo loco que dicitur Calvarie locus; et haec fuit prius extra Hierusalem; sed Helena, quando invenit crucem, collocavit illam locum intus intra Hierusalem’.

Willibald's *Itinerarium* could on such evidence be seen to offer the readers of the work a clearer picture of the Holy Places and the scripture that describes them.

Further evidence for how the *Itinerarium* clarified certain issues can be seen in the way Willibald testifies to the locations of events that are somewhat ambiguous in the Bible. In the Gospels, for example, the precise location of the transfiguration of Christ is omitted. From the fourth century onwards it came to be accepted that it occurred on Mount Thabor and a number of churches were built there. These churches were visited by Willibald and the two important justificatory aspects of the text - the building of churches and their being seen by Willibald - were again invoked to give credence to the tradition.<sup>52</sup> A similar situation exists with the ascension of Christ, where again there is no precise location given in the Gospels.<sup>53</sup> The problem is compounded because Matthew and Mark both give the impression that the story of Jesus ends in Galilee, while Luke locates the ascension near Jerusalem.<sup>54</sup> Tradition has sided with Luke's apparently more complete version of Jesus's last days and the ascension is said to have occurred on Mount Olivet near Jerusalem. Again this tradition is upheld within Willibald's text because he himself had seen the church that marked the ascension on that mountain. Meanwhile the continued importance of the site where Jesus was baptised by John the Baptist is noted, and it is located by Willibald as being a mile from Caesarea.<sup>55</sup> Some attempt is also made

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<sup>52</sup> Willibald, *Itinerarium* [Hygeburg, *VWb* c. 4], p. 95: 'Et inde pergentes, venerunt ad montem Thabor, ubi Dominus transfiguratus est; ubi est nunc monasterium monachorum et aeclesia Domino consecrata et Moysi et Helie'.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, [c. 4], p. 98: 'Et in monte Oliveti est nunc aeclesia, ubi Dominus ante passionem orabat et dixit ad discipulos: "Vigilate et orate, ut non intretis in temptationem". Et inde venit ad aeclesiam in ipso monte, ubi Dominus ascendit in caelum'.

<sup>54</sup> Compare Matt. 28. 16-20, Mark 16. 7, 14-20 and Luke 24. 33.53.

<sup>55</sup> Willibald, *Itinerarium* [Hygeburg, *VWb* c. 4], p. 96: '... et inde ibant super unum mil. ad Jordanne, ubi Dominus fuerat baptizatus. Ibi est nunc aeclesia in columnis lapideis sursum elevata, et subtus aeclesia est nunc arida terra, ubi Dominus fuit baptizatus in ipso loco; et ubi nunc baptizant, ibi stat crux lignea in medio, et parva dirivatio aque stat illic, et unus funiculus extensus supra Iordannem, hinc et inde firmatus: tunc in sollempnitate epiphannie infirmi et egroti venientes et habent se de funiculo et sic demergant in aquam, sed et mulieres que sunt steriles venient ibi'.

to locate Gilgal, where the twelve tribes of the Israelites erected a stone each to mark the crossing of the Jordan. It is emphasised twice that it lies five miles from the spot where Jesus was baptised, and that it lies seven miles from Jericho.<sup>56</sup> In addition to such statements, it is clarified where the bodies of certain important figures lie. The bodies of the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, for example, are noted as lying together in the town of Hebron, and the bodies of Elijah and Abdias (along with that of John the Baptist) are located in Sebaste.<sup>57</sup> In the majority of cases, places are mentioned in order to be geographically and spiritually located, almost as if it was produced as a guide to describe how the Holy Land in the eighth century reflected its illustrious past rather than as the curious reminiscences of Bishop Willibald.

The construction of the *Itinerarium* does, therefore, appear to give weight to certain readings of the Bible, with perhaps an emphasis on confirming the reality of the scriptures. The idea of the 'expert witness' is absolutely crucial to the work, and one explicitly stated by Hygeburg in the preface: 'It is these things we will undertake to narrate, which the reverend man Willibald saw with his own eyes and over which he trod with his own feet'.<sup>58</sup> It is a sentiment repeated later on in the work in relation to a description of Mount Vulcanus in Sicily: 'And that pumice stone that writers speak of he saw...'<sup>59</sup> Throughout it is the contingent details of Willibald's experiences that shine through. The story of the wedding at Cana is, for example, referred to with an added detail

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<sup>56</sup> Willibald, *Itinerarium* [Hygeburg, *VWb* c. 4], pp. 96-7: '... tunc et veniebant ad Galgala; ibi sunt inter 5 milia; et 12 lapides illic sunt in aecclesia; illa est lignea et non magna. Illic sunt 12 lapides, quos tulerunt filii Israel de Iordanne et portaverunt ad Galgala super 5 milia et ponebant ad testimonium transmigrationis illorum. Et tunc illic orantes, pergebant ad Hieicho super 7 milia a Iordanne'.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, [c. 4], p. 99: 'Et inde tunc ibat ad castellum Aframia; ibi requiescent tres patriarche, Abraham, Isac et Iacob, cum uxoribus suis; and p. 100: '... venerunt ad urbe Sebastia... et ibi requiescent nunc Iohannis baptista et Abdias et Heliseus propheta'.

<sup>58</sup> Hygeburg, *VWb* pref., p. 87: 'suisque oculis venerandi viri Willibaldi corporaliter cognita suisque plantis per omnia palpanto penetrandoque visibiliter comparuere'.

<sup>59</sup> Willibald, *Itinerarium* [Hygeburg, *VWb* c. 4], p. 102: 'Ille fomix, quem scriptores habere solent, illum videbat'.

to help give it more credence for the German audience: a large church near the site still had one of the six pots Jesus had filled with wine.<sup>60</sup> Furthermore, just as many of Arculf's explicit contributions to Adamnán's text came down to detailing the arrangement of lamps in the churches, similar details are recounted by Willibald about the church on Mount Olivet.<sup>61</sup> Augustine's notion that geographical knowledge should be narrated on the basis of contingent experience rather than derived from books would appear to have had some meaning in Heidenheim too. Willibald's *Itinerarium* therefore works because Willibald himself had seen the churches and tombs that were physical reminders and proofs of the places and events people in Willibald's orbit in *Germania* might have read about. That Hygeburg glossed over the textual origins of Willibald's account, recasting it as a dictation, may have been intended to strengthen the bond between Willibald, his experiences, and his flock in Bavaria. If the work explains anything by way of exegesis, it is the present reality of a remote Christian past for Willibald's community. This was perhaps a fitting message to promote with the dedication of a new church in a region with only a short Christian past. Willibald's centrality in this process, meanwhile, meant that he achieved near saint-like status in his own lifetime, a fact which goes some way to explaining why he was subject to a *vita* before he had even died.<sup>62</sup>

### **Willibald's Pilgrimage within Hagiography: Society and the Holy Places.**

Willibald's *Itinerarium* was given renewed life when it was incorporated into Hygeburg's *Vita Willibaldi et Wynnebaldi*. In the new *vita* the long account of the pilgrimage was

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<sup>60</sup> Willibald, *Itinerarium* [Hygeburg, *VWb* c. 4], p. 95: '... et veniebant in villam Chanaan, ubi Dominus aquas in vino convertit. Illic est aeclesia magna, et in illa aeclesia stat in altare unum de vi hydriis, quas Dominus iusserat implere aqua, et in vinum verse sunt'.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, [c. 4], p. 98: 'Et in medio aeclesiae stat de aere factum sculptum ac speciosum et est quadrans, illud stat in medio aeclesie, ubi Dominus ascendit in caelum; et in medio aereo est factum vitreum quadrangulum, et ibi est in vitreo parvum cisindulum, et circa cisindulum est illud vitreum undique clausum, et ideo est undique clausum, ut semper ardere possit in pluvia sed et in sole'.

<sup>62</sup> Willibald could be likened to a 'holy man', on which see P. Brown, 'The rise and function of the holy man in Late Antiquity', *Journal of Roman Studies* 61 (1971), 80-101, and above in chapter two.

something of a centrepiece. The new setting for the text brought it into a new spiritual context where it was associated with a genuine saint in Wynnebald and, in Willibald, a *vir venerabilis* on his way to becoming a saint. The different status of the two brothers helps to explain the overall shape of the *vita(e)*. In Hygeburg's intended schema, in which the story of Willibald preceded that of Wynnebald, the whole work builds to a spiritual crescendo in the translation of (St) Wynnebald's relics from Heidenheim to Eichstätt and the discovery that Wynnebald's body had remained incorrupt after fifteen years.<sup>63</sup> It was a fitting event with which to confirm Wynnebald's status, explain Willibald's policies at Eichstätt, and draw the work to a close. Clearly later copyists were less convinced by the ordering and placed the *Vita Wynnebaldi* first, despite the consequent disruption in narrative flow; presumably, since the *Doppelbiographie* followed the *Vita Bonifatii*, Wynnebald stood better than Willibald as a saintly figure alongside Boniface. There were, it seems, complicated ideals of sanctity involved in the writing and dissemination of the *vitae*.

The hagiographical context for the *Itinerarium* now placed the description of the Holy Land firmly in the realms of liturgy. In the Merovingian and early Carolingian period much hagiography appears to have been written with the intention of using it in the liturgy of the church.<sup>64</sup> Indeed Hygeburg addressed her work 'to all priests or deacons and all princes of churchly order... to all those venerable and most beloved in Christ priests [*sacerdotes*] known under the title of priest [*presbiter*] and deacons of excellent nature, notwithstanding the abbots and all noblemen of secular rank' – the inclusion of laymen

<sup>63</sup> Hygeburg, *VWyn* c. 13, pp. 115-17.

<sup>64</sup> See R. McKitterick, *The Carolingians and the Written Word* (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 241-3 and K. Heene, 'Merovingian and Carolingian hagiography: continuity or change in public and aims?', *Analecta Bollandiana* 107 (1989), 415-28; W. S. Egmond, 'The audiences of early medieval hagiographical texts: some questions revisited', in M. Mostert (ed.), *New Approaches to Medieval Communication* (Turnhout, 1999), pp. 41-67.

denoting that the work was not intended as an in-house monastic *vita*.<sup>65</sup> Hygeburg's use of narrative perhaps aided the transmission of the message in the public environment. The narrative form of Willibald's *Itinerarium* is one of the clearest ways it differs from Adamnán's work. In *De locis sanctis* Arculf's agency is limited to having seen things; Adamnán's prose does not tell a story about the Gallic bishop. Its structure is entirely geographical, and does not depend on the progression of Arculf from one place to the next. The *Itinerarium*, by contrast, is entirely dependent on Willibald's agency and the progression of the story about him. A possible explanation for the difference between the two texts is that *De locis sanctis*, despite its public origins, was not intended as a liturgical work whereas the *Itinerarium* almost certainly was, especially once it had been incorporated into a saint's Life.

The connection between the Holy Land and the community in Heidenheim was intensified by expanding the story of Willibald's life to include his work in Bavaria. Bearing in mind that the Holy Land remained an *ignotitia* for the diocesans of Eichstätt, their single connection to that region was through Willibald. It is perhaps for this reason that Willibald had his experiences committed to parchment – not for vanity, but in order to preserve the connection with the Holy Land for future generations. Hygeburg emphasised the importance of Willibald's experiences and how they affected his community in Bavaria, writing: 'The blessed man chose out the best from all that he had seen abroad with his own eyes, adopted it, and having adopted it, submitted it to his

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<sup>65</sup> Hygeburg, *VWb* pref., p. 87: '... ad omnibus presbiteris seu diaconibus et omnibus aecclesiastici regiminis proceribus... venerandis immoque in Christo carissimis omnibus sacerdotalis infule honore ditatis presbiteris preclareque indolis diaconibus et nihilominus abba sive omnibus popularie condicionis proceribus'. That it is noblemen rather than laymen in general that are addressed reveals much about Willibald's aristocratic connections, on which see S. Weinfurter, 'Das Bistum Willibalds im Dienste des Königs: Eichstätt im frühen Mittelalter', *Zeitschrift für Bayerische Landesgeschichte* 50:1-3 (1987), 3-40.

disciples for acceptance, showing them good example by word and deed.<sup>66</sup> There is also what might be a subtle comparison between the description of the holy places and Bavaria when Hygeburg wrote, 'And all through the land of Bavaria, now dotted about with churches, priests' houses and the relics of saints, he amassed treasures worthy of the Lord.'<sup>67</sup> Through the medium of the saint's Life, Hygeburg was able to bind the communities of Heidenheim and Eichstätt closer to the world where Christianity began. Like Bede in the *Historia ecclesiastica* this placed the church of the author in a wider context but, unlike Bede, Willibald and Hygeburg blurred the distinction between history and biblical exegesis in order to achieve their goal.

The church complex at Eichstätt might also reveal that the bond between the church and the Holy Land led to physical representations of that connection. Modern excavations have revealed a circular building with an upper storey and two towers next to the eighth-century cathedral church.<sup>68</sup> It seems likely, but by no means certain, that it was a chapel built in imitation of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem.<sup>69</sup> A similar structure has also been found at Fulda.<sup>70</sup> Precisely when the Eichstätt chapel was built is also unclear; it can be dated no earlier than the ninth century with any certainty.<sup>71</sup> But perhaps what is significant is that this relatively unusual structure should have appeared in Willibald's Eichstätt and Fulda (to whom Willibald left lands before his death)<sup>72</sup> at all

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<sup>66</sup> Hygeburg, *VWb* c. 6, p. 105-6: '... ille beatus barilion Willibaldus in omnibus, que late lustrando propiis cernebat luminiis, optima elegando arriepiebat arriepiendoque omnibus sibi subditorum falangis recte conversationis studium bene vivendo in verbo...'

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, c. 6, p. 106: '... per vitreos Baguariorum campos cum aecclesiis atque presbiteris sanctorumque reliquiis dignas Domino delibat dona'.

<sup>68</sup> D. Parsons, 'Some churches of the Anglo-Saxon missionaries in Southern Germany: a review of the evidence', *Early Medieval Europe* 8. 1 (1999), 31-67 at 49 (for a plan of the church complex) and 50 (for description of the circular building).

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 50-54. The church is described in Adamnán, *De locis sanctis* I. 2, pp. 42-6, and Hygeburg, *VWb* c. 4, p. 97.

<sup>70</sup> Parsons, 'Some churches', pp. 54-5.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 54.

<sup>72</sup> *Urkundenbuch der Kloster Fulda* no. 172, ed. E. E. Stengel, Veröffentlichungen der historischen Kommission für Hessen und Waldeck 10, 2 vols. (Marburg, 1913-58), II, pp. 258-9.

sometime after 787. This fact raises the possibility that ideas about the shape of religious spaces had in some way been influenced by the messages about Near Eastern sacred spaces contained within Willibald's /Hygeburg's work. Not only did the *Vita Willibaldi* establish a shared spiritual meaning for the churches of Bavaria and the Holy Land, but this in turn seems to have inspired some (admittedly small-scale) attempts to create physical echoes of the Holy Land in Germany.

The symbolic importance of churches in Willibald's *Itinerarium* needs further comment in this context. Nowhere is correct Christian practice illustrated better than in particular places of veneration. Churches appear to add a layer of certainty to Willibald's own eyewitness account, effectively creating two expert witnesses in himself and the Holy Places themselves. Rarely was it enough for Willibald to record that something happened in a particular location; wherever possible he remarked that there was some church or shrine to commemorate the event that occurred. One particular reference in *De transitu* helps lead to a consideration of the importance of churches in Hygeburg's text. It comes in a reference to the Gospel of John:<sup>73</sup>

Near the town [Sebaste] is the well where our Lord asked the Samaritan woman to give Him water to drink. Over that well there now stands a church, and there is the Mount on which the Samaritans worshipped and of which the woman said to our Lord: 'Our forbears worshipped on this mount, but Thou sayest that Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship' [John 4. 20].

The presentation of this biblical reference by Willibald is peculiar. Jesus's discussion with the woman in Sebaste is usually taken to be significant because it is a discourse on the

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<sup>73</sup> Willibald, *Itinerarium* [Hygeburg, *VWb* c. 4], p. 100: '... et ibi est puteus ille prope castella, ubi Dominus postulavit aquam bibere a Samaritana muliere. Et super illum puteum nunc est aecclesia, et illa mons est ibi, in quo adorabunt Samaritani, et illa mulier dixit ad Domino: "Patres nostri in monte hoc adoraberunt, et tu dicis, quod in Hierosolimis est locus, ubi adorare oportet"'.

nature of the Holy Spirit,<sup>74</sup> but that significance is entirely ignored by Hygeburg. Furthermore, the precise citation of John is misleading, for Jesus rebuffs the woman by saying ‘woman, believe me, the hour cometh when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father’.<sup>75</sup> It is possible that the quotation had been included simply because it related to the temple of Gerizim. Direct speech in medieval writing is, however, rarely included lightly because it could function as a rhetorical tool to communicate truths to an audience;<sup>76</sup> that Willibald was quoting from the Bible only makes this more important. One might therefore ask precisely what ‘truth’ Willibald was emphasising in his work.

The woman’s comment about places of worship could be seen as having great relevance to a society where patterns of religious worship had been altered. It is significant that the focus is on the woman’s question and not the answer Jesus gave. Since Jerome, Jesus’s answer has been interpreted as saying that earthly places of worship are in many ways unimportant compared to accepting and practicing the genuine faith, and has been related to pilgrimage and *peregrinatio*.<sup>77</sup> The woman’s question, on the other hand, looks the other way, to a conception of religion that focuses upon physical holy places as pivotal to proper worship. This is a conception that was perceived to be important in

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<sup>74</sup> John 4. 7-30.

<sup>75</sup> John 4. 20-1.

<sup>76</sup> See for example N. F. Partner, ‘The new Cornificius: medieval history and the artifice of words’, in E. Breisach (ed.), *Classical Rhetoric and Medieval Historiography*, Studies in Medieval Culture 19 (Kalamazoo, MI, 1985), pp. 5-59 at pp. 11-12.

<sup>77</sup> Jerome, *Letter* 58, cc. 2-3, ed. D. Vallarsi, *PL* 22 (Paris, 1845), 0580-2 invokes this passage in persuading Paulinus of Nola not to go on pilgrimage to Jerusalem because it is not important to visit physical places but to live a good life.

pagan *Germania*, with its sacred trees, springs and groves.<sup>78</sup> It is also a conception perpetuated to a certain degree by Christian works such as *De locis sanctis* and Willibald's *Itinerarium* with their emphasis on the spiritual importance of specific earthly places. In the missionfield these two attitudes had run side-by-side since Gregory the Great had ordered Augustine to adapt pagan temples in Britain to ease the transition of the Anglo-Saxons from paganism to Christianity.<sup>79</sup> Gregory's approach was itself adapted by the Anglo-Saxon missionaries with, for example, the monastery of Fritzlar being built on the site of the Oak of Jupiter. The name of Hygeburg's own monastery, *Heidenheim* (literally 'home of the heathen') strongly suggests that the *Vita Willibaldi et Wynnebaldi* was produced in precisely one of those kinds of adapted religious spaces.<sup>80</sup> In this context the statement of the woman in Sebaste might have had more significance for denying the importance of traditional pagan practices in the light of the adoption of the Christian faith, with perhaps Jerusalem meant metaphorically in Willibald's narrative as 'Christian places'.

### **Cultural Clash and Sacred Space in the *Vita Willibaldi*.**

#### *Willibald and Islam.*

Inherent in Willibald's account of his pilgrimage was a strong message about the strength of Christianity. Implicit in any such statement is the concern that things could be

<sup>78</sup> One may note the springs and groves listed at the *Concilium Germanicum* c. 5, ed. A. Werminghoff, *MGH Conc.* 2. 1 (Hanover & Leipzig, 1906), no. 1, pp. 2-4 at pp. 3-4; in the *Capitularia Saxonica* 1, ed. A. Boretius, *MGH Cap.* 1 (Hanover, 1883), pp. 68-70; and a list of superstitions and pagan practices included in a fragmentary manuscript possibly connected to Boniface's synod of Les Estinnes in 743. See A. Dierkens, 'Superstitions, christianisme et paganisme à la fin de l'époque mérovingienne – A propos de l'*Indiculus superstitionum et paganiarum*', in H. Hasquin (ed.), *Magie, sorcellerie, parapsychologie* (Brussels, 1984), pp. 9-26; W. Hartmann, *Die Synoden der Karolingerzeiten im Frankenreich und in Italien* (Paderborn, 1989), p. 55.

<sup>79</sup> Bede, *HE* I. 30, p. 106.

<sup>80</sup> It should be noted that there was already a church in Heidenheim before Willibald and Wynnebald founded their own monastery so the Anglo-Saxons cannot be credited with evangelising the area: see Parsons, 'Some churches of the Anglo-Saxon missions in southern Germany', 40-1; Wood, *The Missionary Life*, p. 65. The presence of an early church does not, however, mean that the pagan significance of the site had been forgotten, especially since the Anglo-Saxons were so concerned about semi-pagan superstitions in the area.

otherwise, which in turn invites the historian to look at the contexts of Hygeburg's writings in order to see if there were any likely or relevant worries in Heidenheim. It might be worth considering how Willibald's experiences of Islam could have affected the outlook in Heidenheim. What, in particular, did the *Vita Willibaldi* reveal about Islam to monks who studied the work or congregations who heard it read out on feast days in Eichstätt, Heidenheim or elsewhere? The fast and dramatic appearance and expansion of Islam had begun to threaten Europe directly in the early decades of the eighth century, just at the time when Willibald was on his pilgrimage. It is therefore worth considering the presentation of Islam in the *Vita Willibaldi*.

The strength of the truth of Christianity, and therefore the redundancy of the alternatives, forms a distinct subtext to the story of Willibald's pilgrimage. A comparison may be drawn with *De locis sanctis* and the suggestion made above that this dealt with the Muslim threat to Christendom in a way that helped to emphasise the superiority of Christianity. The extent to which the threat of Islam is likely to have been appreciated in the Frankish and Anglo-Saxon worlds of the eighth century is difficult to assess. The speed with which the incursions from Spain were repelled appears to have given many Christians removed from events a certain confidence. Bede, for example, mentioned the attacks in the final chapter of substance in the *Historia ecclesiastica*, noting that 'after a brief interval [the Muslims] paid the penalty of their wickedness.'<sup>81</sup> In the *Chronica maiora* he refers to attacks on Constantinople with great detachment.<sup>82</sup> He also repeated Adamnán's gleefully derogatory comments about the wooden mosque that was the forerunner of the Dome of the Rock.<sup>83</sup> Boniface does not appear to have been overly

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<sup>81</sup> Bede, *HE*, V. 23, p. 560.

<sup>82</sup> Bede, *Chronica maiora/ De temporum ratione* LXVI, ed. C. W. Jones, *CCSL* 123B (Turnhout, 1977), pp. 534-5.

<sup>83</sup> Adamnán, *De locis sanctis* I. 1, pp. 42-3; Bede, *De locis sanctis* II. 3, p. 257.

concerned about Muslims either; he mentioned them only in a letter advising Bugga not to go on pilgrimage until the Muslim threat near Italy had subsided, which he implies he did not think would take too long.<sup>84</sup> What these examples tell us is that Northern Europe was at least informed about the Arabic threat and people thought it merited mention; it was thus not irrelevant to communities in Germany, even if any threat was considered remote. One might therefore profitably consider the more extensive experiences of the Arab world Willibald brought with him to *Germania* and had in part committed to parchment.

The experiences of Willibald perhaps gave him reasons for both optimism and concern regarding the relative strength of Christianity against Islam. In the far west, expansion under Amīr al-Hurr al-Thaqafi beyond the Pyrenees had been checked by Duke Eudo of Aquitaine in 721, just a year before Willibald travelled through the West Frankish lands on the way to Rome.<sup>85</sup> Similarly in the East Amīr Sulymān (715-18) had attempted to seize Constantinople in 717 with a reported 80,000 troops and 1,200 ships; the new Greek emperor, Leo III, however, decimated the navy with Greek Fire, and Sulymān's successor Umar II (718-21) was forced to concede that the task was impossible.<sup>86</sup> It was only a short time afterwards in 724 that Willibald arrived in Syria. The military defeats the Muslims suffered compounded the financial problems of the empire, which had arisen due to the flamboyant expenditure of the amīrs.<sup>87</sup> There was also internal strife as the *Mawālī* (non- and half-Arab Muslims) sought rights on a par

<sup>84</sup> Boniface, *Tangl* no. 27, p. 48. See Fletcher, *The Cross and the Crescent*, p. 19.

<sup>85</sup> *Liber Pontificalis* 91. 11, trans. R. Davis, *The Lives of the Eighth Century Popes* (Liverpool, 1992), p. 8. For the most recent English assessment of 721 see P. Fouracre, *The Age of Charles Martel* (Harlow, 2001), pp. 84-5.

<sup>86</sup> Theophanes, *Chronographia* s. a. 6208-10 (AM), transl. H. Turtledove, *The Chronicle of Theophanes: An English Translation of anni mundi 6095-6305 (AD 602-813) with Introduction and Notes* (Philadelphia, 1982), pp. 82-91; Kennedy, *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates*, pp. 105-6.

<sup>87</sup> This financial crisis had, it should be noted, been firmly reversed by the late eighth century: see Walmsley, A., 'Production, exchange and regional trade in the Islamic East Mediterranean: Old structures, new systems?', in I. L. Hansen & C. Wickham (eds.), *The Long Eighth Century: Production, Distribution and Demand, The Transformation of the Roman World 11* (Leiden, 2000), pp. 265-343.

with Arab Muslims, and different tribal and religious factions fought for control.<sup>88</sup> A succession of short reigns had weakened caliphal power in the Islamic world, and it was only steadied with the long rule of the caliph Hishām (724-43), the fourth son of ‘Abd al-Malik to rise to power.<sup>89</sup> However, when Willibald arrived in his court as a prisoner in 724 Hishām’s reign had only just begun and there had been precious little time to bring peace.<sup>90</sup> Upon meeting Willibald, Hishām released him without penalty. This may be a topos, similar to the story of Willibrord’s release from the ‘court’ of a Frisian king.<sup>91</sup> Yet the tolerance displayed by the caliph contrasts with the image of unjust pagan chiefs elsewhere, and does fit with Hishām’s characteristically conciliatory policies.<sup>92</sup> Thus Willibald found himself in a region where there was insecurity and some degree of tolerance, making his three-year pilgrimage possible, but also making it dangerous.

A concerted effort had been made by the Arabs to alter the cultural and physical face of the Holy Land in the years between the pilgrimages of Arculf and Willibald. The Greek and Persian empires had been forced back and, in the latter’s case, consumed by the rise of Islam. Under the caliphates of ‘Abd al-Malik (685-705) and his son al-Walid (705-15) the last vestiges of Greek and Persian administrations were removed and Arabic was imposed as the official language of the new empire.<sup>93</sup> Al-Malik had, moreover, had the Dome of the Rock built in Jerusalem as a direct challenge to Judaism and Christianity

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<sup>88</sup> L. V. Vaglieri, ‘The Patriarchal and Umayyad Caliphates’, in P. M. Holt, A. K. S. Lambton & B. Lewis (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Islam, I a: the central Islamic lands from pre-Islamic times to the First World War* (Cambridge, 1970), pp. 52-103 at pp. 82-92.

<sup>89</sup> On the Hishām’s reign and the stabilising effect it had on the caliphate, see Kennedy, *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates*, pp. 108-12.

<sup>90</sup> Willibald relates that the name of the ‘king’ was *Myrmumus* (*Itinerarium* [Hygeburg, *VWb* c. 4], pp. 95 and 100). This is most likely a latinisation of Hishām’s official title, Amīr al-Mu’minīn (‘Commander of the Faithful’), the secular title employed by caliphs since Abū Bakr in 634, on which see Kennedy, *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates*, p. 52.

<sup>91</sup> Alcuin, *VWbrord*, c. 11, p. 125.

<sup>92</sup> On Hishām’s style of rulership, see Kennedy, *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates*, p. 108.

<sup>93</sup> Vaglieri, ‘The Patriarchal’, pp. 91-2.

since Arculf's visit.<sup>94</sup> This he achieved by locating the shrine on the rock where the Ark of the Temple had rested and decorating the building with inscriptions such as 'He [i.e. God] does not beget'.<sup>95</sup> From this point onwards, the spiritual landscape of the Holy Land was to mutate and become even more complicated than it had already been. Until the building of the Dome, Jerusalem had not even figured in Islamic thought, and was often called *Aelia* after the de-judaising name the Romans had bestowed on the city.<sup>96</sup> Henceforth, there appears to have been a conscious Islamification of the sacred landscape. In Damascus, for example, the Church of St John the Baptist – itself built upon a pagan shrine to Christianise the local sacred space – was converted into a mosque under the aegis of al-Walid.<sup>97</sup> Willibald spent time in both Jerusalem and Damascus on his travels and, in the heated religious climate, was likely to have been acutely aware of these developments.

Despite the increased visual presence of Islam in the Holy Land since Arculf's pilgrimage, Willibald and Hygeburg made fewer references to Islamic religious spaces than Arculf, Adamnán and Bede had done (none, in fact). It is possible that there is a direct correspondence between these two facts: Arculf had clearly not been impressed by the wooden temple in Jerusalem and thus it helped emphasise the superiority of Christianity, whereas in Willibald's day the Dome of the Rock was a far more impressive structure and thus a threat to the visual superiority of Christianity in the region. Wider Christian concerns from the Holy Land are made evident in Willibald's *Itinerarium* when it is reported that the Christians of Nazareth had been threatened by Muslims wanting to

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<sup>94</sup> On the Dome of the Rock, see: K. A. C. Creswell, *Early Muslim Architecture 1. 1: Umayyads AD 622-750* (New York, 1979), pp. 65-131, esp. p. 66 for a translation of Muqaddasī's retrospective account of al-Malik's motivations (985).

<sup>95</sup> On the Great Mosque of Damascus, see: *ibid.*, pp. 151-96.

<sup>96</sup> Bede also calls Jerusalem 'Aelia' throughout his work, unlike Adamnán.

<sup>97</sup> This is unlikely to have been the structure the Frankish pilgrim Arculf saw in Damascus in ca. 680 and reported by Adamnán in *De Locis Sanctis* I. 1, pp. 42-3, since al-Walid did not rise to power until 705.

destroy the local church,<sup>98</sup> the competition of sacred space was intense. Perhaps more importantly, this struggle for sacred space had a mirror in centres like Heidenheim in *Germania*. It is therefore possible that Hygeburg's work carries with it a message about the superiority of Christian topographies.

*Willibald and the Byzantine Iconoclast Controversy.*

Willibald encountered one consequence of Muslim expansion when he left the Holy Land on a boat from Tyre to Constantinople in 727 and found himself in the middle of the Iconoclast controversy.<sup>99</sup> The controversy was a long and bitter attempt to find, in Averil Cameron's words, 'a language by which God could be represented... in relation to the emphasis placed by writers... on symbolic interpretation and revelation through signs'.<sup>100</sup> Arguments centred upon whether images were suitable focal points for religious veneration or, because they could never hope to convey the perfect truth of God, they were misleading or even idolatrous. Iconoclasts (literally 'destroyers of images') believed the latter and dominated in Byzantine society for much of the eighth century before eventually losing out to the 'iconophiles', who believed in the veneration – but not worship – of images that could represent signs.

The causes of the debate are highly complex and largely tangential to the question of Willibald's experiences and the meaning of the *Vita Willibaldi*; it is, however, worth mentioning the immediate context into which Willibald had entered. Constantinople was

<sup>98</sup> Willibald, *Itinerarium* [Hygeburg, *VWb* c. 4], p. 95.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, [c. 4], p. 101. Useful for the basics (and more) of the Iconoclast controversy are: R. Cormack, *Writing in Gold* (London, 1985); A. Cameron, 'The language of images: the rise of icons and Christian representation', in D. Wood (ed.), *The Church and the Arts*, Studies in Church History 28 (Oxford, 1992), pp. 1-42; Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom*, pp. 383-406. It should be noted that Islamic expansion was but one of many contributing factors to Iconoclasm (Cormack, *Writing in Gold*, pp. 106-18; Cameron, 'The language of images', p. 18). A useful recent guide to the sources is L. Brubaker & J. Haldon (with R. Ousterhout), *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era (ca. 680-850): The Sources* (Aldershot, 2001).

<sup>100</sup> Cameron, 'The language of images', p. 41.

in a state of decline, with a dwindling population that felt increasingly at odds with the city's past and late-antique pagan imagery.<sup>101</sup> Muslim expansion to the south and nomadic incursions to the north had severely restricted Constantinople's sphere of influence. When a huge volcanic eruption exploded in the Aegean Sea in 726 – the year before Willibald's arrival – the beleaguered Greeks felt moved to actively re-seek God's favour.<sup>102</sup> Emperor Leo III, who was himself moved by the volcanic eruption according to Theophanes, replaced an icon of the face of Jesus which had stood over the entrance to the imperial palace with a simple rendering of the cross, and gave permission to frontier bishops to destroy icons in churches.<sup>103</sup> These actions did not please Pope Gregory II, who sent envoys to take issue with the emperor.<sup>104</sup> It was at this point that Willibald arrived, fresh from the Islamic countries; after seeing the mosques of Damascus and Jerusalem it seems unlikely that Willibald would not have understood the importance of this debate, although there was no widespread iconoclasm yet in the Arab world.<sup>105</sup> Willibald is said to have lived in Constantinople for nearly four years whilst the debate raged, so cannot have been unaware of its significance.

The *Vita Willibaldi* is, however, curiously reticent about the entire affair.

Constantinople was described purely in terms of which saints' bodies were at rest there.

Of Gregory II and Leo III, meanwhile, Hygeburg wrote simply that Willibald 'set sail from [Constantinople] with the envoys of the pope and the emperor' when he left for Italy

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<sup>101</sup> A. Cameron & J. Herrin, *Constantinople in the Eighth Century* (Leiden, 1984), p. 33; Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom*, p. 386.

<sup>102</sup> Theophanes, *Chronographia* s. a. 6218 (AM), p. 96. The symbolic importance of the volcanic eruption seems to have struck Peter Brown (*The Rise of Western Christendom*, p. 392) more than most. The impact of the physical environment upon early medieval culture is often marginalized as a subject of research. For some recent attempts to begin redressing the situation see: J. D. Gunn (ed.), *The Years Without Summer: Tracing AD 536 and its Aftermath*, BAR International Series 872 (Oxford, 2000); T. Palmer, *Perilous Planet Earth: Catastrophes and Catastrophism Through the Ages* (Cambridge, 2003), esp. pp. 336-362.

<sup>103</sup> Theophanes, *Chronographia* s. a. 6218 (AM), p. 97.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, s. a. 6217 (AM), pp. 95-6; *Liber pontificalis* 91. 23-4, pp. 15-16.

<sup>105</sup> On the indifference of the early caliphs to iconoclasm, see G. R. D. King, 'Islam, Iconoclasm and the declaration of doctrine', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 48 (1985), 267-77.

in ca 729.<sup>106</sup> This statement strikes a notably noncommittal note about Iconoclasm. It may be significant that Hygeburg (or Willibald) was writing at a time when the Iconoclast controversy was hotly debated in Frankia as well as Byzantium; coincidentally Willibald died the same year, 787, that the Second Council of Nicaea was held in an attempt to bring some resolution to the question.<sup>107</sup> A reference to the First Council of Nicaea, held by Constantine in 325 to denounce Arianism, may be more meaningful than it appears in the context of the sharp divisions Iconoclasm was bringing to the Church in both the East and West.<sup>108</sup> Willibald was said to have broken his stay in Constantinople to visit Nicaea, ‘where formerly the Emperor Constantine held a synod at which three hundred and eighteen bishops were present, *all taking active part*’ [my italics].<sup>109</sup> It has been suggested that Willibald’s motivation was to see the images of the 318 bishops before they were destroyed.<sup>110</sup> But Willibald’s own gloss on the First Council of Nicaea adds a significance beyond his visit that emphasises the unity of the Church. The necessity of a united Church was, of course, a common Bonifatian concern.<sup>111</sup> The repetition in Willibald’s account of the word *synodus* should remind us that synods were used by the *Bonifatiuskreise* in Germany to promote orthodoxy, but that many bishops did not attend.<sup>112</sup> The *Vita Willibaldi*, very much the product of the Bonifatian inner-circle, can therefore be seen to

<sup>106</sup> Willibald, *Itinerarium* [Hygeburg, *VWb* c. 4], p. 101: ‘Et post duobus annis navigaverunt inde cum nuntiis papae et caesaris’.

<sup>107</sup> See Angenendt, *Das Frühmittelalter*, pp. 348-9.

<sup>108</sup> For a convenient account of the First Council of Nicaea, see T. D. Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius* (Cambridge, MA, 1981), pp. 208-23.

<sup>109</sup> Willibald, *Itinerarium* [Hygeburg, *VWb* c. 4], p. 101: ‘... ubi olim habebat cesar Constantinus synodum, et ibi fuerunt ad synodo 318 episcopi, illi omnes habebant synodum’.

<sup>110</sup> M. Whittow, *The Making of Orthodox Byzantium 600-1025* (Basingstoke, 1996), pp. 139-40.

<sup>111</sup> C. H. Talbot, ‘St Boniface and the German mission’, in G. J. Cuming (ed.), *The Mission of the Church and the Propagation of the Faith*, Studies in Church History 6 (Cambridge, 1970), pp. 45-57 at pp. 52-3; J. Jarnut, ‘Bonifatius und die Fränkischen Reformkonzilien (743-748)’, *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte* 109: 66 (1979), 1-26; T. Reuter, ‘“Kirchenreform” und “Kirchenpolitik” im Zeitalter Karl Martells: Begriffe und Wirklichkeit’, in J. Jarnut, U. Nonn & M. Richter (eds.), *Karl Martell in seiner Zeit*, Beihefte der Francia 37 (Sigmaringen, 1994), pp. 35-59.

<sup>112</sup> See, for example, E. Ewig, ‘Milo et eiusmodi similes’, in *Sankt Bonifatius. Gedenkgabe zum zwölften Todestag* (Fulda, 1954), pp. 412-40; H. Büttner, ‘Bonifatius und die Karolinger’, *Hessisches Jahrbuch für Landesgeschichte* 4 (1954), 21-36.

promote a united orthodoxy on a universal, extra-Germanic level, using the symbolism of Constantinople and Nicaea as holy places.

The *Bonifatiuskreise* were by no means unaffected by the Iconoclast controversy in its theology, perhaps in part because of Willibald's experiences in the Near East. This is manifest in the hagiographical interest, or rather lack thereof, in the miraculous. Miracles were themselves considered to be 'signs' or 'icons'; symbols that allowed people access to the knowledge of God.<sup>113</sup> They too, therefore, were frowned upon by Iconoclasts as focal points for popular devotion. In the Frankish West a movement developed after 787 which has been characterised as following a *karolingische Rationalismus* that denounced miracles, certain paintings and even in extreme cases saints' cults.<sup>114</sup> The movement began with Theodulf of Orléans' *Libri Carolini*, which was the Carolingian court's official response to the Second Council of Nicaea.<sup>115</sup> A key influence on Theodulf's work was Augustine's *De doctrina christiana*,<sup>116</sup> which was also important in forming the principles on which the *Vita Willibaldi* was based. And indeed it is noticeable that there is little by way of the miraculous in the *Vita Willibaldi et Wynnebaldi*. The discovery of the incorrupt body of Wynnebald is the most otherworldly Hygeburg's work gets, but that in itself is symbolic of purity and asceticism rather than the wondrous.<sup>117</sup> Willibald himself was attributed with no miracles but, as we saw in

<sup>113</sup> Cameron, 'The language of images', pp. 30-1.

<sup>114</sup> On the Carolingians and Iconoclasm, see D. Ganz, 'Theology and the organisation of thought', in R. McKitterick (ed.), *The New Cambridge Medieval History II c. 700-c. 900* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 758-85 at pp. 773-7. The phrase *karolingische Rationalismus* is from Berschin, *Biographie und Epochenstil* 3, p. 16.

<sup>115</sup> On Theodulf as the author of the *Libri Carolini* see A. Freeman, 'Theodulf of Orleans and the *Libri Carolini*', *Speculum* 32 (1957), 663-705. On the significance of the *Libri Carolini* see: J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *The Frankish Church* (Oxford, 1983), pp. 219-23; R. McKitterick, *The Frankish Kingdoms Under the Carolingians* (London, 1984), pp. 163-4; Ganz, 'Theology and the organisation of thought', pp. 773-5.

<sup>116</sup> C. Chazelle, "'Not in painting but in writing": Augustine and the supremacy of the word in the *Libri Carolini*', in E. D. English (ed.), *Reading and Wisdom: The 'De doctrina christiana' of Augustine in the Middle Ages* (Notre Dame, 1995), pp. 1-22.

<sup>117</sup> On the symbolism of the incorrupt body see A. Angenendt, *Heilige und Reliquien. Die Geschichte ihres Kultes vom frühen Christentum bis zur Gegenwart* (Munich, 1997), pp. 149-52 including discussion of the opening of Wynnebald's crypt.

chapter two, simply the ability to lead by pious example. The literary world of Willibald and Hygeburg appears to display characteristics similar to the *karolingische Rationalismus* and it is tempting to see this as a result of Willibald's familiarity with the issues at stake in the Iconoclast controversy.

A question that has thus far remained open is the extent to which Willibald's own experiences helped to shape the outlook of the *Bonifatiuskreise*. Willibald does not appear to have been important politically; his name was always low down on lists of those attending synods. This is not necessarily a good indication of Willibald's spiritual clout. He was, after all, a bishop of a monastery, which alone makes him unique in the Germany of his time. He is, unfortunately, barely attested in the *Bonifatii epistolae*, but then if he saw his colleagues at Mainz or Würzburg regularly this might not be surprising. The firmest evidence we have for Willibald's activities away from the *vitae* and church archaeology is a charter granting land to Fulda, which at least reaffirms that Willibald still looked to the Bonifatian centres as the spiritual hubs of the 'Anglo-Saxon enterprise'. But it is tempting to note that Willibald's arrival in *Germania* coincides happily with a renewed asceticism amongst the Anglo-Saxons, as demonstrated by Boniface's reform synods and increased commitment to the *Regula s. Benedicti*. It is also significant that the *Vita Bonifatii*, preserved in conjunction with the *Vita Willibaldi et Wynnebaldi*, lacks any sense of the miraculous. Many ideals of purity and asceticism were already held by the *Bonifatiuskreise* before Willibald's arrival, but it seems strange to think his unique experiences were not valued by his colleagues given their shared interests in expressions of piety, sanctity and the establishment of new churches and liturgy.

*The 'Vita Willibaldi' and Aethicus Ister's 'Cosmographie'.*

The importance of the *Vita Willibaldi* is emphasised by the oldest surviving manuscript of the work, the late-eighth-century Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 1086. This manuscript was possibly written in Eichstätt, although the scriptorium in general has unfortunately left little evidence with which to compare the production, but if it was not copied in Willibald's monastery then it would have to have been put together in Freising; stylistically, then, the manuscript is certainly Bavarian.<sup>118</sup> Within the manuscript the *Vita Willibaldi* and *Vita Wynnebaldi* were collected together with the *Vita Bonifatii* which had, as was discussed in chapter one, caused much consternation in Bavaria among the circles of Arbeo of Freising and Virgil of Salzburg.<sup>119</sup> The copying of the *Vita Bonifatii* again in a Bavarian context, followed by two *vitae* which make more explicit claims about the Anglo-Saxon impact within Bavaria, perhaps hints at a persisting interest in precisely what the Anglo-Saxon had achieved in the region. The broader implications for seeing the *Vita Willibaldi* and *Vita Wynnebaldi* in the context of the Boniface-Arbeo debate has been considered further in chapters two and three; here debate will be restricted to possible parallels with the *Vita Willibaldi* and other works with regards to approaches to the Holy Land.

Few other texts written in eighth-century *Germania* betray as much interest in the wider world as does the *Vita Willibaldi*. There is, however, a highly singular work that

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<sup>118</sup> Bischof, *Die südostdeutschen Schreibschulen*, p. 57; Wieland, 'Anglo-Saxon culture in Bavaria', esp. 178-9.

<sup>119</sup> H. Löwe, 'Ein literarischer Widersacher des Bonifatius. Virgil von Salzburg und die Kosmographie des Aethicus Ister', *Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur, Abhandlungen der Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaftlichen Klasse, Jahrgang 1951*, 11 (Wiesbaden, 1952), 903-83; *idem*, 'Bonifatius und die bayerisch-fränkische Spannung: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Beziehungen zwischen dem Papsttum und den Karolingern', *Jahrbuch für fränkische Landesforschung* 15 (1954), 85-127; Wood, *The Missionary Life*, pp. 145-67.

does: the *Cosmographie* of Aethicus Ister.<sup>120</sup> The work purports to have been translated by Jerome from an old Greek text that described the known world. No modern historian believes this to be true, and the suspicion remains that it is a piece of eighth-century fiction.<sup>121</sup> It is of concern here because a fragmentary manuscript strongly suggests that it was produced in Salzburg, and thus possibly somewhere in the circle of Virgil and Arbeo.<sup>122</sup> This fact alone begs a comparison with the *Vita Willibaldi* to see how the two works differ in their presentation of the Holy Land, since geographically their genesis appears to have been close. From this, however, one should be wary of making any direct connections between the two texts; one can but compare the different attitudes to the holy places displayed by the two texts as evidence for different, rather than competing, ideologies in eighth-century Bavaria.

Aethicus Ister's connection with Bavaria has been discussed at length, and his relation to the dispute between Boniface and Virgil has been hotly disputed. It was Heinz Löwe who first made the connection in 1951, when he suggested that Virgil himself was 'Aethicus Ister'.<sup>123</sup> The *Cosmographie* betrays great learning (if in a rather idiosyncratic Latin style) and the influence of Irish texts.<sup>124</sup> The peculiar Latin, with, for example, passive and deponent verbs in active forms and a variety of Greek loanwords, finds

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<sup>120</sup> Aethicus Ister, *Cosmographie*, ed. O. Prinz, *MGH Quellen zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters* 14 (Munich, 1993).

<sup>121</sup> Löwe, 'Ein literarischer Widersacher', p. 906; O. Prinz, *MGH Quellen zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters* 14, p. 10; I. N. Wood, 'Aethicus Ister: an exercise in difference', in W. Pohl and H. Reimitz (eds.), *Grenze und Differenz im frühen Mittelalter* (Vienna, 2000), pp. 197-208.

<sup>122</sup> W. Stelzer, 'Ein Alt-Salzbürger Fragment der Kosmographie des Aethicus Ister aus dem 8. Jahrhundert', *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung* 100 (1992), 132-49. See also M. Zelzer, "'Quicumque aut quilibet sapiens Aethicus aut Mantuanum legerit." Muß der Name des Verfassers der Kosmographie wirklich "in geheimnisvolles Dunkel gehüllt bleiben?"', *Wiener Studien* 104 (1991), 183-207.

<sup>123</sup> Löwe, 'Ein literarischer Widersacher', pp. 903-83 esp. pp. 928-37.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 921-5. For a more recent analysis of Irish influences on Aethicus Ister see M. Richter, 'Sprachliche Untersuchung der Kosmographie des Aethicus Ister', in H. Dopsch & R. Juffinger (eds.), *Virgil von Salzburg, Missionar und Gelehrter* (Salzburg, 1985), pp. 147-53.

parallels with the work of Arbeo of Freising, Virgil's friend.<sup>125</sup> In Bavaria in the late-eighth century Virgil, as a learned Irishman, seemed to fit the image of the author. He was also accused by Boniface of having heretical ideas about geography, including what seems to be a belief in an antipodes, a world below this one, although that has proved difficult to tally with the world described in the *Cosmographie*.<sup>126</sup> Michaela Zelzer, meanwhile, has suggested that the idiosyncratic Latin 'Aethicus Ister' used was a deliberate attempt to illustrate to the grammarian Boniface that it was intention, not linguistic form, where meaning was to be found.<sup>127</sup> Virgil and Boniface had disagreed over whether a child should be rebaptised if an attending priest made mistakes in the Latin grammar of the blessings.<sup>128</sup> It is, however, difficult to date the *Cosmographie* to Boniface's lifetime, and the arguments of Löwe and Zelzer can perhaps only be considered suggestive at best.<sup>129</sup> But the circles of Virgil, Arbeo, Willibald and 'Aethicus Ister' overlapped enough independently of Boniface – if not better without Boniface –<sup>130</sup> for the concerns about sacred space to be familiar to both groups; at heart that was precisely what the debate over Boniface 'founding' the Bavarian Church was all about. What the text reveals about intellectual perceptions of space is therefore of some importance.

The treatment of the Holy Land in the *Cosmographie* is terse. There are, for example, only two references to Jerusalem and neither describe the city in the way

<sup>125</sup> Löwe, 'Ein literarischer Widersacher', p. 909; Zelzer, "'Quicumque'", 193.

<sup>126</sup> Zacharias, *Tangl* no. 80, p. 179; M. Smyth, 'Das Universum in der Kosmographie des Aethicus Ister', in Dopsch & Juffinger, *Virgil von Salzburg*, pp. 170-82; J. Carey, 'Ireland and the Antipodes: the heterodoxy of Virgil of Salzburg', *Speculum* 64 (1989), 1-10.

<sup>127</sup> Zelzer, "'Quicumque'", 204. On the differences between Boniface and Virgil's learning, see J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, 'A background to Boniface's mission', in J. M. Wallace-Hadrill (ed.), *Early medieval History* (Oxford, 1975), pp. 138-54 at p. 147; P. P. Ó'Neill, 'Bonifaz und Virgil: Konflikt zweier Kulturen', in Dopsch & Juffinger, *Virgil von Salzburg*, pp. 76-83.

<sup>128</sup> Zacharias, *Tangl* no. 68, p. 141.

<sup>129</sup> See Prinz, *MGH Quellen zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters* 14, pp. 11-14 for some criticisms – not all justifiable – of Löwe and Zelzer's arguments.

<sup>130</sup> Wood, *The Missionary Life*, p. 161.

Adamnán, Bede or Hygeburg did. The first of these references, which also includes the only mention of Mount Olivet, comes in relation to the conquests of Alexander the Great, placing it in a distinctly pre-Christian historical context.<sup>131</sup> A subsequent mention does identify it as the future place of judgement.<sup>132</sup> It is in the peculiar mix of statements like these that the *Cosmographie* straddles Classical and Christian ideals. The biblical importance of other parts of the Holy Land's geography, such as the River Jordan or the region of Canaan, are mentioned, but their significance ignored.<sup>133</sup> A (rather apocalyptic and apocryphal) reference to the crucifixion of Christ is also divorced entirely from any geographical setting.<sup>134</sup> Some other important places of Christian influence that were important to Adamnán, Bede and Hygeburg were omitted entirely by Aethicus. Of particular note is the absence of Thabor or Nazareth. It is almost as if the overlap between the Holy Places and Christianity was somewhat minimal. In this attitude it perhaps echoes Jerome's sentiment that no place on Earth was more important in Christianity than the inner soul. That Aethicus's *Cosmographie* purported to have been translated by Jerome perhaps strengthened the philosophical point the author was trying to convey.

The connection with the Bavarian Irish, as *peregrini pro Christi*, could be seen to gain some strength in this context. It was suggested above in chapter one that the adoption of the language of *peregrinatio* in the *Vita Bonifatii* could have had something to do with the arguments between Boniface and Virgil. Here, in the different attitudes to religious spaces displayed by Aethicus Ister and Hygeburg, there might be some resonance of this

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<sup>131</sup> Aethicus Ister, *Cosmographie*, VI, pp. 208-9: 'Tuos agitatur magnus Alexander dividat magna spolia, super montem Olivarum induere murinas et mitras, baltea regalia praecinge ex Hierusolima adlata...'

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, VI, pp. 238-9: '... et Salaruam superiorem ac tenuis ad Libanum ortus et aletris regum, vaticinia et ostenta atque prodigia festiva Hierusalem fabricata et sita est, ubi eorum vates futuram restaurationem mundi iudicariam impetus sui spiritus fore adfirmantur'.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, VI, pp. 238-9.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, I, p. 99: 'Et quot malis passuri sunt impii in infernum, tot plagae in ipso antiquo hoste praeferrandae et ostendendae erunt, cum et iusti videre merebuntur Dominum deum suum Christumque regem suum et signa et fixuras clavorum et videbant in quem transfixerunt et plangent se super eum omnes tribus terrae'.

challenge about *peregrinatio*. The idea of the Irish exile *pro Christi* contained strong echoes of Jerome's argument that place was unimportant; it was fundamentally a rejection of space. The Anglo-Saxons, with their strong attachments to traditional religious spaces in Britain and *Germania*, could be seen to have adopted a contradictory point of view. It is possible, if it is accepted that there is Irish influence in the *Cosmographie*, that Aethicus Ister's portrayals of places in the Holy Land reinforces the idea that they are just places, and that all that is important in Christianity is abstract from that physical world. Within such a portrayal could even be echoes of the debate between Boniface and Virgil over the priest's grammar; then Aethicus would be confirming Christian meaning over the earthly representations of the churches and shrines. It is tempting to wonder what influence awareness of the Iconoclast debates in the East had upon such arguments too, with the concerns for representation in religious devotion. What does seem certain, however, is that Willibald's *Itinerarium* and Hygeburg's *Vita Willibaldi et Wynnebaldi* were products of an area where there were many complex and competing attitudes to the issues that were being discussed by the Anglo-Saxons.

### **Conclusion.**

A close study of the account of Willibald's pilgrimage to the Holy Land reveals a complex interaction of ideals relating to sanctity, sacred spaces, devotional practices and literary forms. Willibald's experiences and the recording of them were not the product of idle curiosity but fed into some important debates on the nature of Christianity in the second half of the eighth century. What made 'a saint'? What was the meaning of sacred space in newly or imperfectly Christianised lands where old ideas persisted and there was no agreement on new ideas? What literary strategies best stimulated or reinforced

religious devotion? Establishing a rigorous and ‘correct’ form of Christianity was a leading principle of the *Bonifatiuskreis* and Willibald played an active part.

Willibald’s status as a saint in the *Vita Willibaldi et Wynnebaldi* is questionable given that he was still alive when Hygeburg wrote and edited the work. His special status is explained by his centrality within religious life at Eichstätt and Heidenheim. In particular his building of a new church at Eichstätt and the translation of the relics of Wynnebald were a key strategy in developing the identity of Christian community in the region. This was the focal point for veneration of the brothers. Moreover Willibald brought experiences from the wider Christian world: from Anglo-Saxon England, Rome, Monte Cassino, Constantinople and the Holy Land. By relating these experiences in church Willibald helped to locate Eichstätt’s place – physical and theological – in Christendom. What made his experiences distinctive from, say, Boniface was that he had seen the symbolic battle for space between Islam, Christianity and Judaism in the Holy Land, and heard the arguments about the representation of Christianity in Byzantine and maybe also Islamic thought. It was these things that shaped Willibald’s plans for his religious community. But what the success of his plans rested upon was the way in which they were articulated.

It seems that Willibald began by writing an *itinerarium* – a stylised account of his travels. In this work the memory of Willibald’s journey was structured so that it had a permanent and replicable (literary) form that would last beyond his lifetime; moreover, it fulfilled a distinctive purpose for his community in Germany. Through the description of the Holy Places the truth of the Bible, and thus its message, could be communicated to the religious and lay people in church. There were two testaments to this truth in the eighth

century: the churches in the Holy Land, which stood to commemorate particular events, and Willibald, who had seen those churches and other sites with his own eyes. At the same time the *Itinerarium* could be used to help clear up any discrepancies between stories and geographical descriptions. A similar literary tactic had been employed by Adamnán in his *De locis sanctis*, in which the pilgrimage of the 'expert witness' Arculf was transformed into a work of biblical exegesis. Adamnán's main influence, and plausibly Willibald's, was Augustine's *De doctrina christiana*, which encouraged the use of *narratio* and the comprehension of the symbolism of place in attempts to explain the meaning of Christianity.

The *Itinerarium* was incorporated into a *Vita Willibaldi et Wynnebaldi* during Willibald's lifetime and probably under his supervision. The new, expanded work brought a conceptual unity of purpose to Willibald's work in Eichstätt and Heidenheim. It meant, for example, that the *Itinerarium* formed part of a work that more recognisably had potential as a liturgical work. This could have been intended for Willibald's own church, which itself went on to be influenced by ideas of sacred space in the Holy Land in both its structure and its model of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. It also meant that Willibald's story was extended to include that of his brother Wynnebald, whose relics were translated into that same church by Willibald. Even the title, referring to a *vita* in the singular, attests to how the stories of the two brothers were to be seen together. In Eichstätt, therefore, the literary, the saintly and the architectural converged to convey a distinctive Christian message shaped by Willibald himself; it was, in fact, because he was essential to the form of the message that he appeared in a *vita* during his own lifetime. His programme for Eichstätt, close to areas that could still be remembered as pagan, can be seen as one response to debates about the nature of sacred space and sanctity evident elsewhere in

Islam, Iconoclasm and the work of Aethicus Ister. Willibald was not simply curious about the Holy Land, but came to appreciate the possibly fundamental importance that it could play when establishing the new Christendom envisaged by Boniface and his circle. It is in this context that the *Vita Willibaldi et Wynnebaldi*, and in particular the status of Willibald as a saint, should be considered.

## Chapter 5: The Transformation of Central and Southern Germany.

Central to definitions of sanctity were the ways in which the Anglo-Saxons and their associates were described as affecting the lands in which they had worked. It was primarily because of their roles in the conversion or Christianisation of particular places that these Englishmen were commemorated at all. In hagiographical stories, the potency of a saint was often illustrated through their transformative powers, for example in helping turn a pagan wilderness into an oasis of Christian order. There are, however, now familiar problems with these aspects of hagiographies: at the author's hand, time and place can become distorted and fact can become mixed with fiction to create an idealised expression of sanctity. These problems can make it hard to assess what impact the Anglo-Saxons actually had on things like paganism and ecclesiastical order in the lands in which they worked. The focus of this chapter will be on the ways in which hagiographical portrayals of the Anglo-Saxons work in Germany itself help to explain their sanctity; this will complement the next chapter which will look at the Anglo-Saxons in Frisia in a similar way.

This chapter will explore three issues: the Anglo-Saxons as missionaries, as founders of monasteries and as builders of churches. It was in these three fields that people like Boniface and Wynnebald (or at least their hagiographers) strived to mould the cultural, organisational and physical landscapes of Germany. In the reports of challenges to paganism and heresy there is the opportunity to examine not the old religions themselves but rather the end to which hagiographers reflected upon them. Similarly the building of monasteries and churches as described in the *vitae* potentially allows glimpses of the *mentalités* surrounding them, particularly when the *vitae* are

compared to the Bonifatian correspondence for changes in the reality and conceptualisation of Boniface's monastic and episcopal policies. By focusing on the role of the saints themselves in all these activities, moreover, it may be possible to see how models of sanctity were developed by hagiographers rather than derived from the past in which the events were said to have occurred.

### **Germanic Paganism in Eighth- and Ninth-Century Missionary *Vitae*.**

#### *Some Problems with Medieval Accounts of Paganism.*

Studying the portrayals of paganism in *vitae* has often proved controversial.<sup>1</sup> There are three main problems with the documentary evidence for early medieval paganism: the exclusively Christian-theological nature of the documentary sources; the attempts within those sources to understand Germanic paganism in terms of Roman culture; and also the fact that many sources reveal an ambivalence towards certain 'acceptable' pagan practices. With regards to the first of these problems, Lutz von Padberg has argued that Christian sources presented paganism as a unified religion, despite its localised varieties, in order to help define heathen beliefs clearly in terms of what Christianity was not.<sup>2</sup> Missionaries sought to eliminate paganism, not understand it.

Where references are made to specific gods they are often to the old Roman gods rather than Germanic ones. Gregory of Tours, for example, implied that Clovis I worshipped

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<sup>1</sup> J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *The Frankish Church* (Oxford, 1983), pp. 17-36; A. Dierkens, 'Superstitions, christianisme et paganisme à la fin de l'époque mérovingienne – A propos de l'*Indiculus superstitionum et paganiarum*', in H. Hasquin (ed.), *Magie, sorcellerie, parapsychologie* (Brussels, 1984), pp. 9-26; R. A. Markus, 'From Caesarius to Boniface: Christianity and paganism in Gaul', in R. Fontaine & J. N. Hillgarth (eds.), *The Seventh Century: Continuity and Change* (London, 1992), pp. 154-68; L. E. von Padberg, 'Christen und Heiden. Zur Sicht des Heidentums in ausgewählter angelsachsen und fränkischer Überlieferung des 7. und 8. Jahrhunderts', in H. Keller & N. Staubach (eds.), *Iconologia Sacra: Mythos, Bildkunst und Dichtung in der Religions- und Sozialgeschichte Alteuropas. Festschrift für Karl Hauck zum 75. Geburtstag*, *Arbeiten zur Frühmittelalterforschung* 23 (Berlin, 1994), pp. 291-312; I. N. Wood, 'Pagans and holy men, 600-800', in P. Ni Chatháin & M. Richter (eds.), *Irland und die Christenheit* (Stuttgart, 1987), pp. 347-61; *idem*, 'Pagan religion and superstition east of the Rhine from the fifth to the ninth centuries', in G. Ausenda (ed.), *After Empire: Towards an Ethnology of Europe's Barbarians* (Woodbridge, 1995), pp. 253-79.

<sup>2</sup> Von Padberg, 'Christen und Heiden', esp. at pp. 294-6.

Saturn, Jupiter, Mars and Mercury;<sup>3</sup> but, as Michael Wallace-Hadrill argued, if the Franks did not worship Woden then they probably worshipped ‘a god remarkably like him’.<sup>4</sup> The greatest problem, however, is that there is simply little solid documentary evidence for Germanic paganism in the two centuries before Boniface. Robert Markus has brought attention to the particularly poor evidence of the seventh century and has suggested that many Christians were more lenient towards rustic practices and festivals; thereafter, Boniface’s hard-line approach to such things marked the beginning of a new, vigorous age for Christianity and the ‘end of Ancient Christianity’.<sup>5</sup> Boniface appears angry in his letters about the standards of his time but – if we set aside his exaggeration<sup>6</sup> – it is impossible to observe precisely how continental Christianity developed incorporating pagan and secular elements.

In some cases there is archaeological evidence that can be used tentatively to identify places, artefacts and imagery of pagan significance. Karl Hauck’s studies on the symbolism of pagan gold bracteates (gold medallions) has proved particularly influential, at least in continental scholarship.<sup>7</sup> The temptation, therefore, is to use the documentary and archaeological evidence together in the hope that comparison will help the historian or archaeologist to create an accurate synthesis. In following such an

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<sup>3</sup> Gregory of Tours, *Decim libri historiae* II. 29, ed. W. Arndt, *MGH SRM* 1 (Hanover, 1885), pp. 31-450 at p. 90.

<sup>4</sup> Wallace-Hadrill, *The Frankish Church*, p. 22.

<sup>5</sup> Markus, ‘From Caesarius to Boniface’, esp. pp. 158, 166-8.

<sup>6</sup> For a reassessment of Boniface’s accusations against the Merovingian Church, and Charles Martel in particular, see: T. Reuter, ‘“Kirchenreform” und “Kirchenpolitik” im Zeitalter Karl Martells: Begriffe und Wirklichkeit’, in J. Jarnut, U. Nonn & M. Richter (eds.), *Karl Martell in seiner Zeit*, Beihefte der Francia 37 (Sigmaringen, 1994), pp. 35-59 at p. 37; A. Dierkens, ‘*Carolus monasteriorum multorum eversor ecclesiarum pecuniam in usus proprios communitor?* Notes sur la politique monastique du maire du palais Charles Martel’, in J. Jörg, U. Nonn & M. Richter (eds.), *Karl Martell in seiner Zeit*, Beihefte der Francia 37 (Sigmaringen, 1994), pp. 277-94.

<sup>7</sup> See passim H. Keller & N. Staubach, *Iconologia Sacra*, and Wallace-Hadrill’s comments in his *The Frankish Church*, p. 17. Representative of Hauck’s oeuvre is his *Goldbrakteaten aus Sievern: Spätantike Amulett-Bilder der ‘Dania Saxonica’ und die Sachsen-‘origo’ bei Widukind von Corvey*, Münstersche Mittelalter-Schriften 1 (Munich, 1970). For some judicious criticisms of Hauck’s project, see Wood, ‘Pagans and holy men, 600-800’, esp. p. 361.

approach care is needed to allow both the documentary and archaeological sources to be interpreted in themselves, rather than necessarily allowing the approaches of one discipline dictate the investigation of the other.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, although individually the two kinds of evidence can be used to obtain relatively coherent pictures of medieval paganism – bearing in mind that the ‘coherence’ itself relies upon limited source materials and the interpreter – it can be difficult to see where those pictures overlap.

St Anskar’s missions to Scandinavia provides us with a useful case study where there is much clear documentary and archaeological evidence that could be used to look at paganism. Anskar’s missionary career was recorded by Rimbert of Hamburg-Bremen, the saint’s pupil and successor, in the *Vita Anskarii* of ca 870.<sup>9</sup> Rimbert recorded that Anskar preached in the predominantly-pagan Scandinavian ports of Hedeby in Denmark and Birka in Sweden – ports from which we have ninth-century material evidence. For religion, the material evidence largely comes from graves or other deposits that could be interpreted as ‘offerings’. Graves and their associated goods can be difficult to interpret; extensive studies of burials in Birka offer few cases that can be labelled ‘Christian’ or ‘pagan’ with any certainty.<sup>10</sup> The resulting picture is one of a community of mixed religious views where syncretism was widespread. To a certain degree Rimbert offers a similar image. He described, for example, how the people of Birka were divided over the introduction of Christianity, and how they even held a series of town meetings to discuss their religious options.<sup>11</sup> All our evidence

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<sup>8</sup> On the problems of using archaeological and historical evidence together – although with an unduly negative portrayal of history as a discipline – see J. Moreland, *Archaeology and Text* (London, 2001).

<sup>9</sup> The text is highly complicated and can be read on a number of levels: see I. N. Wood, ‘Christians and pagans in ninth-century Scandinavia’, in B. Sawyer, P. H. Sawyer & I. N. Wood (eds.), *The Christianization of Scandinavia* (Alingsås, 1987), pp. 36-67; I. N. Wood, *The Missionary Life: Saints and the Evangelisation of Europe 400-1050* (Harlow, 2001), pp. 123-34; J. T. Palmer, ‘Rimbert’s *Vita Anskarii* and Scandinavian mission in the ninth century’, *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* (forthcoming).

<sup>10</sup> A.-S. Gräslund, *The Burial Customs: A Study of the Graves of Birka*, Birka IV (Stockholm, 1982).

<sup>11</sup> Rimbert, *VA* cc. 26-7, pp. 55-9.

points to syncretism in Birka, but graves do not tell us about town meetings, and Rimbert certainly does not mention Swedish burial practices, so the two kinds of sources cannot be said with any certainty to refer to precisely the same historical events. The relationship between the fragmentary documentary and archaeological evidence can often be loose at best.

The problem of finding alternatives to saints' Lives as sources for paganism is even more problematical when we look at the Anglo-Saxon missions in Germany. While Hedeby and Birka declined in the century after Anskar's mission and, apart from some ploughing, remained largely undisturbed and rural, many of the centres of Boniface's mission are now urban centres. Within those sites the Anglo-Saxons' churches have left few traces, sometimes because of extensive rebuilding, sometimes because of reasons it is impossible to infer.<sup>12</sup> Nonetheless the sites Boniface and his circle worked in can reveal the Anglo-Saxons' strategies, and these can be related to the hagiographical representations of paganism with care, particularly in the cases of Boniface at Geismar and Wynnebald at Sualaveld.

*The Problem of the 'Oak of Jupiter'.*

The most famous example of the Anglo-Saxons' encounters with paganism in Germany is Boniface's felling of the 'Oak of Jupiter' at Geismar. According to David Parsons, Geismar had been 'an important centre of Germanic population' since the Iron Age; it is located on the River Eder 2km from Fritlzar and Būraburg, where Boniface went on to found churches.<sup>13</sup> Willibald reported that Boniface used wood from the oak tree to

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<sup>12</sup> D. Parsons, 'Sites and monuments of the Anglo-Saxon mission in Central Germany', *Archaeological Journal* 140 (1983), 280-321; idem., 'Some churches of the Anglo-Saxon missionaries in Southern Germany: a review of the evidence', *Early Medieval Europe* 8. 1 (1999), 31-67.

<sup>13</sup> Parsons, 'Sites and monuments', 281-2.

build an oratory, and this has been identified with the church at Fritzlar. Fritzlar is, however, located on a steep hill so, rather than carrying the oak to the top, it might be that Fritzlar itself was the site of the pagans' sacred grove.<sup>14</sup> There, the oratory would have been significant to the local population as a symbol of Christianity's triumph over paganism.<sup>15</sup> Establishing a permanent bishopric at nearby Büraburg – a heavily fortified Merovingian fort – would appear to speak of Boniface's attempts to establish a visually meaningful expression of Christian dominance over the locality.

Despite the geographical and physical evidence supporting Willibald's claim that Boniface at least Christianised the area and converted certain individuals, his actual story is highly problematical. After a suggestion that many of the local populace still read entrails and made incantations – claims which appear to be derived from other literary sources –<sup>16</sup> Willibald described the event as follows:<sup>17</sup>

[Boniface] in their presence attempted to cut down, in a place called Geismar, a certain oak of extraordinary size called in the old tongue of the pagans the Oak of Jupiter. Taking his courage in his hands, for a great crowd of pagans stood watching and bitterly cursing in their hearts the enemy of the gods, he cut the first notch. But when he had made a superficial cut, suddenly the oak's vast bulk, shaken by a mighty blast of wind from above, crashed to the ground... As if by the will of God... the oak burst asunder into four parts, each part having a trunk of equal length. At the sight of this the heathens... ceased to revile and began, on the contrary, to believe and bless the Lord.

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<sup>14</sup> Parsons, 'Sites and monuments', 292.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 292. On the strategy of reusing pagan sites and Christian churches, see Gregory the Great's advice to Augustine: Bede, *HE* 1. 30, p. 106

<sup>16</sup> Wood, 'Pagan superstitions', p. 254.

<sup>17</sup> Willibald, *VB* c. 6, p. 31: '[Bonifatius] quendam mirae magnitudinis qui prisco paganorum vocabulo appellatur robor Iobis, in loco qui dicitur Gaesmere, servis Dei secum adstantibus, succidere temptavit. Cumque, mentis constantia confortatus, arborem succidisset, - magna quippe aderat copia paganorum, qui et inimicum deorum suorum intra se deligentissime devotabant, - sed ad modicum quidem arbore praeciso, confestim inmensa roboris moles, divino desuper flatu exagitata... corruit et quasi superni nutus solatio in quattuor etiam partes disrupta est, et quattuor ingentis magnitudinis aequali longitudine trunci... Quo viso, prius devotantes pagani... pristina abiecta maledictione, credentes reddiderunt'.

The most obvious problem with this passage is the identification of the pagans' oak with the Roman god Jupiter. Some historians have chosen to add their own gloss on the passage, calling the shrine instead the 'Oak of Donar' in order to give it a near-equivalent Germanic name.<sup>18</sup> It is clear, however, that Willibald interpreted the shrine in terms of traditional Roman terms, and therefore within the framework of a literate rather than oral culture.

It is also striking how the story resembles a story told about St Martin of Tours, if only loosely.<sup>19</sup> Martin, so Sulpicius Severus wrote, had destroyed a pagan temple and was about to cut down a pine tree associated with the temple when local pagans intervened: although they were happy to see the temple destroyed, it was too much to have the tree felled. In order to prove whether truth lay with the Christian God or the pagan gods, Martin was bound and made to stand by the tree on the grounds that if it crushed him the Christian God was clearly powerless. The tree unexpectedly fell away from Martin after God intervened with a gust of wind; the local populace all converted to Christianity, and Martin vowed to build churches on the site of every pagan temple he destroyed. In much of its detail the story is not like Willibald's. The symbolism

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<sup>18</sup> Calling the Oak of Jupiter the 'Oak of Donar' is common in Germanic literature (where it is 'die Eiche der Donar') – for three prominent examples, see: W. Levison, *England and the Continent in the Eighth Century* (Oxford, 1947), p. 75; T. Schieffer, *Wifrid-Bonifatius und die christliche Grundlegung Europas* (Freiburg, 1954, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. Darmstadt, 1972), p. 148; L. E. von Padberg, *Mission und Christianisierung. Formen und Folgen bei Angelsachsen und Franken im 7. und 8. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart, 1995), p. 98. The 'interpretation' appears to have crept into the Dutch literature too: see M. Mostert, *754: Bonifatius bij Dokkum vermoord* (Hilversum, 1999), p. 50 ('de... Donar gewijde eik'). English literature has proved more erratic with Peter Brown (*The Rise of Western Christendom: Triumph and Diversity AD 200-1000* [Oxford, 1996, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. 2003], p. 421) plumping for 'Thunar', and Wallace-Hadrill (*The Frankish Church*, p. 152) striking a rather arbitrary note with 'a great oak sacred to Woden'; Fletcher side-stepped the question altogether (*The Conversion of Europe*, p. 206). Amongst this illustrious crowd, only Ian Wood has actually called it the Oak of 'Jupiter' (*The Missionary Life*, p. 60).

<sup>19</sup> Sulpicius Severus, *Vita s. Martini* c. 13, ed. J. Fontaine, *Vie de Saint Martin*, Sources Chrétiennes 133 (Paris, 1967), pp. 280-2; Fletcher, *The Conversion of Europe*, p. 206; R. M. Price, 'The holy man and Christianisation from the apocryphal gospels to St Stephen of Perm, in J. Howard-Johnston & P. A. Hayward (eds.), *The Cult of Saints in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1999), pp. 215-38 at pp. 241-3; Wood, *The Missionary Life*, p. 60. On the plausibility of Sulpicius's story in the context of the fourth century, see C. Stancliffe, *St Martin and his Hagiographer: History and Miracle in Sulpicius Severus* (Oxford, 1983), pp. 328-40.

within the story, however, is identical in the way the felling of the tree moved the pagans to convert and in how the wood was used to build a church in order to create a physical reminder of that conversion. This comparison would presumably have been one Willibald's audience would have been expected to recognise, otherwise there would have been little point in making the allusion to Martin. The comparison could also have been made more explicit in an oral gloss if the story were related on the feast of St Boniface (5<sup>th</sup> June). There is, in other words, no reason to expect close verbal comparison between the two stories for there to be a connection. For Willibald's audience, the result of the allusion would have been to cast Boniface as a Martinian figure. Comparisons with St Martin were commonplace in Carolingian hagiographies because they helped indicate how people lived up to the recognised standards of sanctity Martin represented.<sup>20</sup> In the case of Boniface, where he is associated with Martin's powers to create a Christian landscape (which is a less common comparison), Willibald might also have been staking a claim for Boniface as a spiritual patron for Germany, much as Martin was for Gaul.

There is, then, a tension between the fact that Hesse's religious topography was changed in the eighth century, and the fact that Willibald offered a literary, rather than historical, representation of that change. But Willibald was not, of course, writing historically. We could note with Paul Fouracre that when a hagiographer writes close to the events, as is the case here, there is less scope for wild fabrication;<sup>21</sup> with Willibald's indebtedness to literary models here, however, this is a more difficult case to judge in such terms. There is an eighth-century list of pagan-like superstitions which Alain

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<sup>20</sup> See, for example, Rimbart, *VA* c. 35, p. 66. On the influence of Martinian legends on Carolingian hagiography, see J. M. H. Smith, 'The problem of female sanctity in Carolingian Europe c. 780-920', *Past & Present* 146 (1995), 3-37.

<sup>21</sup> P. Fouracre, 'Merovingian History and Merovingian Hagiography', *Past and Present* 127 (1990), 3-38.

Dierkens has shown to be associated with Boniface's reform synods, and it does mention tree-cults and cults of 'Jupiter', albeit separately.<sup>22</sup> The reference to Jupiter demonstrates that it was not just in hagiography that the Anglo-Saxons employed *interpretatio romana*.<sup>23</sup> But the entire document is too oblique to be of any certain value in looking for Germanic paganism. Indeed Peter Brown has commented that the *Indiculus superstitionum* appears to declare that 'in effect... paganism had ceased to exist', because it appears concerned with syncretism more than pure paganism.<sup>24</sup> It is perhaps more profitable, then, to consider the relationship between the more evident changes in Hesse and Willibald's representation of those changes.

Since the *Vita Bonifatii* was written specifically for Lull and Meginoz, and thus for the churches of Mainz and Würzburg, it might be expected that the text circulated around the churches under their care.<sup>25</sup> The works of Hygeburg and Eigil certainly suggest that this was the case. The circulation of the text need not, of course, mean the circulation of a manuscript: as Wolfert van Egmond has suggested, preachers who had read the story in one place could recount it (possibly in the vernacular) in another.<sup>26</sup> It is likely that the story was told either as part of the liturgy or as part of other festivities in Fritzlar and Büraburg. There in particular, where the physical remains of Geismar formed part of the local landscape only 2km away, the story would have had special significance because people could associate Boniface's actions with the religious topography they inhabited. Hearing the story added a layer of traditional,

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<sup>22</sup> *Indiculus superstitionum*, ed. G. H. Pertz, *MGH Leges* 1 (Hanover, 1831), pp. 19-20 at p. 19. On the proof of the connection between the *Indiculus superstitionum* and Boniface, see Dierkens, 'Superstitions, christianisme, paganisme', pp. 22-3.

<sup>23</sup> Dierkens, 'Superstitions, christisme, paganisme', p. 19.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 24-6; Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom*, p. 426.

<sup>25</sup> The *VB* was at least addressed to Lull and Meginoz: see Willibald, *VB* c. 1, p. 1.

<sup>26</sup> W. S. van Egmond, 'The audiences of early medieval hagiographical texts: some questions revisited', in M. Mostert (ed.), *New Approaches to Medieval Communication* (Turnhout, 1999), pp. 41-67 at p. 64.

Christian meaning onto the formerly pagan familiar; it was in the churches, not on the written page, that literate Latin culture met with memorial Germanic culture. In this context, that the landscape was portrayed as pagan need not have been a negative thing to the Hessians: Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica* opened when the Anglo-Saxons themselves were still heathens, and the story of their conversion illustrated a spiritual journey with a clear sense of what they were leaving behind.<sup>27</sup> Moreover, if Geismar was 'of more than local significance', then maybe the story would have spoken to audiences in churches across Germany, reaffirming their faith in opposition to the former pagan religious topography. The contexts in which Willibald expected the story to be heard should be remembered, because it was in those places that the meaning would have been conveyed to various audiences, who would then apply it to the world around them.

If Willibald's account of Hessian paganism was a literary construction, then it is imperative to be aware of the possibility that he was exaggerating in order to make Boniface a more impressive figure. This problem was raised by Rosamond McKitterick with regards to references to paganism in the *Vita Columbani* and *Vita Galli*.<sup>28</sup> Yitzhak Hen has since developed McKitterick's suggestion to argue that Carolingian *vitae* written about Merovingian saints often contained exaggerated accounts of paganism in order to discredit the Merovingians.<sup>29</sup> Stories of paganism could serve as propaganda, legitimising the Carolingian seizure of the Frankish throne in 751 by denouncing Merovingian society 'as Christian by name but pagan by practice'.<sup>30</sup> It might be prudent, as was seen in chapter three, to avoid interpreting the *Vita Bonifatii* in the

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<sup>27</sup> P. Wormald, 'The Venerable Bede and the "Church of the English"', in G. Rowell (ed.), *The English Religious Tradition and the Genius of Anglicanism* (Wantage, 1993), pp. 13-32.

<sup>28</sup> R. McKitterick, *The Carolingians and the Written Word* (Cambridge, 1989), p. 83.

<sup>29</sup> Y. Hen, *Culture and Religion in Merovingian Gaul AD 481-751* (Leiden, 1995), pp. 197-206.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 205.

context of Carolingian propaganda, but rather to see it as the first part of a more localised dialogue about the Anglo-Saxons' impact on Germany.<sup>31</sup> Willibald may have been referring to paganism in the Merovingian period, but he also portrayed Boniface as working in a land already (nominally) Carolingian; the story of Geismar reflected more upon the old bishops of Mainz and Cologne – of whom Boniface had disapproved – than the Merovingians *per se*.

It is, moreover, not certain that Willibald was exaggerating. Missionaries may already have been working in the region before Boniface,<sup>32</sup> but Willibald admitted as much. 'Many of the Hessians who at that time had acknowledged the Catholic faith were confirmed', he wrote, before commenting that while many people persisted with pagan practices, 'others, of a more reasonable character, forsook all the profane practices of the Gentiles'.<sup>33</sup> Willibald was not suggesting that Boniface alone was responsible for leading the Hessians away from paganism. Here, within Willibald's message, Fouracre's warnings about the restrictions placed upon fabrication in hagiography are helpful. Clearly Willibald could not portray Boniface as 'the saint who converted Hesse' because he was not writing in a vacuum of memory: in the churches of Fritzlar, Büraburg and beyond, people would know the story was not true. But Boniface had founded (or at least 're-founded') churches and a monastery in the region, so the story also stood in relation to factual and physical reference points. Insofar as paganism in the *Vita Bonifatii* was a device of propaganda, it was in affirming a literate, Christian meaning upon people's perceptions of the landscape, in a context where the

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<sup>31</sup> Chapter three, pp. 152-3.

<sup>32</sup> Schieffer, *Winfriid-Bonifatius*, pp. 87-8, 146-8; H. Büttner, 'Mission und Kirchenorganisation des Frankenreiches bis zum Tode Karls der Grossen', in H. Beumann (ed.), *Karl der Grosse: Lebenswerk und Nachleben 1, Persönlichkeit und Geschichte* (Dusseldorf, 1965), pp. 454-87 at pp. 457-8.

<sup>33</sup> Willibald, *VB* c. 6, p. 30: 'Cum vero Hessorum iam multi, catholica fide subditi ac septiformis spiritus gratia confirmati'. *Ibid.*, c. 6, p. 31: 'alii etiam, quibus mens sanior inerat, omni abiectat gentilitatis profanatione'.

cult of Boniface served as a medium for reinforcing that meaning. The story still gave Lull and Meginoz a strong hold over their churches, but in order to consider why Willibald's story worked it must be considered in the active environments of the church rather than the passive context of parchment.

*Wynnebald at Sualaveld.*

A strong impression of paganism was also presented by Hygeburg in the *Vita Wynnebaldi*. The passage comes in a section on the establishment of monasteries, and reads:<sup>34</sup>

[H]e began to live in a place called Sualaveld [where there were] many corrupt pagan practices: many inhabitants were deceived by false idols, others observed auspices, others chanted demonic divinations, others made frivolous incantations, others [engaged in] necromancy; but many more (too many to specify now) publicly and popularly performed ruinous rites – for shame!

Hygeburg then proceeded to complain about the marriage practices of the locals, who allegedly had a habit of marrying close relatives. The passage overall is not without its problems. Phrases in the Latin like *plurima paganice pravitatis prestigia* betray a highly affected Aldhelmian prose style.<sup>35</sup> In other words, the description was tailored by literary stylings rather than the desire to provide an accurate account of pagan beliefs. Moreover the list should be read in comparison with the similar list of Hessian practices given by Willibald. The *Vita Bonifatii* was, of course, a source for Hygeburg, and her list is also similar to the list of grievances listed in the *Indiculus*

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<sup>34</sup> Hygeburg, *VWyn* c. 7, p.111: '... terram Sualaveldorum inhabitare coepit, plurima paganice pravitatis prestigia, multos diabolice fraude deceptos idolatria colentes, alii aruspicia observantes, alii divinationes demonium dicentes, alii incantationum fribola facientes, alii negromanticas, sed et alios multas, quas nunc longum est enumerare, quas popularie et publice perniciose perficiebant, pro nefas!'

<sup>35</sup> On Aldhelmian Latin, including comments on the general influence of Aldhelm on the *Bonifatiuskreise*, see A. Orchard, *The Poetic Art of Aldhelm*, Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England 8 (Cambridge, 1994).

*superstitionum*.<sup>36</sup> As was seen above, both of these sources reflect not simply paganism but a mixed, syncretic environment dressed up as paganism. Indeed it seems possible that there was already a church in Heidenheim.<sup>37</sup> It is difficult to trust Hygeburg's description of Sualaveld as a 'historical' account of Wynnebald, but it shows the continuities between the hagiography of Mainz and Eichstätt.

Literary construction or not, Hygeburg's description of paganism sets up a classic forum in which to illustrate Wynnebald's sanctity. Beset by pagan aggression:<sup>38</sup>

the man of God was neither agitated, nor his mind changed, by little malignancy nor false and worthless idolatry, but was rather always constant and robust in his faith in the Lord, not wishing to bring the people away from the teaching and the persuading from the errors of the pagans' rites.

Thus Wynnebald was a saintly figure because of his steadfastness of faith. But he did much more than that: with *suavissimus vox* he challenged the pagans and their ways, bringing them to salvation. As Hygeburg concluded this chapter of Wynnebald's life:<sup>39</sup>

... and everyone... therefore rarely or never ceased to sing their divine praises, or to [sing] psalms or to [hear] readings or to study the scriptures, whether sowing or eating or drinking or doing something else... And in this manner the bright kingdom of the heavens was lit by a rainbow and the most-celebrated attending of the path of heavenly life by all.

Wynnebald was, therefore, a saint because he had shaped cultural life in Southern Germany, rooting out paganism and semi-Christian practices, and bringing rigorous Christian standards into all walks of life.

<sup>36</sup> Wood, *The Missionary Life*, p. 65.

<sup>37</sup> Parsons, 'Some churches of the Anglo-Saxon missionaries', 40.

<sup>38</sup> Hygeburg, *VWyn* c. 7, p. 112: '... vir Dei nec minis malignantium nec falsis adolantium fribolis mente agitatur nec mutatur, sed semper constans et fide robustus in Domino non desiderat docendo plebem ab erratica paganorum pravitate persuadendo educere'.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, c. 7, p. 112: 'et omnibus... ita ut raro aut numquam divine laudis in ipso cessavit modulatio, aut in psalmis aut in lectionibus aut doctinarum studio, disserendo sive manducando sive bibendo sive aliud agendo... Et sic clara caelorum regna per arctam et celeberrimam caelestis vitae callem omnibus apparuendo patefecit'.

*The Absence of Paganism in Other Germanic 'vitae'.*

There is a striking lack of paganism evident in the other Anglo-Saxon *vitae* from Central and Southern Germany. It has even been suggested that Boniface was not remembered as a missionary in Germany,<sup>40</sup> although one should be careful not to exaggerate such a case given the story of Geismar. The history of Boniface's successors, however, does appear to have been one of Christianisation rather than mission. It might be significant that these later *vitae* all continue and develop the stories in the *Vita Bonifatii*.<sup>41</sup> In a sense paganism had already been largely eliminated in Willibald's narrative because, apart from the question of paganism in northern Frisia, the German part of Boniface's career ended by emphasising the need for reform rather than mission. The only pagans Sturm was said to have engaged with, according to Eigil, were itinerant Slavs. Although they jeered at him initially, the entire scene is actually rather genial.<sup>42</sup> The absence of paganism is most evident in the *Vita Wigberti*, where there is no sense of Fritzlar, Geismar and Büraburg having a pagan past to the extent that Boniface was presented by Lupus as a *propugnator acerrimus fidei christianae [et] propagator vigilantissimus* ('most keen defender and vigilant propagator of the Christian faith') rather than as a missionary.<sup>43</sup> Subsequently, as we saw in chapter two, Fritzlar stood simply as an institutional embodiment of rigorous Christian living.<sup>44</sup> It is to the impact of monasteries on non-pagan Germany that I will turn to next.

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<sup>40</sup> Wood, *The Missionary Life*, pp. 57-78, 100-7.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 57-78.

<sup>42</sup> Eigil, *VS* c. 7, p. 139: 'Qui more gentilium servum Domini subsusannabant et cum eum laedere voluissent divina potentia compressi et prohibiti sunt. Unus autem ex illis qui erat ipsorum interpres, interrogavit eum quo tenderet. Respondit, in superiorem partem eremi se fore iturum'.

<sup>43</sup> Lupus, *VWig* c. 3, p. 39.

<sup>44</sup> Chapter two, pp. 93-4.

### The Transformative Power of Monasteries.

Boniface's first monastic foundation, that at Amöneburg, was established in order to capitalise on his alleged successes as a missionary. The site lies in a prominent position in the flat Ohm valley, and was probably a Merovingian hill-fort established as a defensive point against the nearby Saxons.<sup>45</sup> There, Boniface encountered the local leaders Dettic and Deorulf, whom he 'converted from the sacrilegious worship of idols, which they abused under the name of Christianity'.<sup>46</sup> Having 'collected together a congregation of the servants of God, [Boniface] constructed a [monastic] cell'.<sup>47</sup> The importance of building Christian structures to signify the defeat of paganism is clear, and is once again undertaken in imitation of St Martin and St Gregory. But it was also important that the *Vita Bonifatii* recorded that process; in the real world the church at Amöneburg represented Christianity's victory, but it was only through the retelling each year of the story of Boniface that it maintained that meaning. It was through the use of the physical site combined with the (liturgical?) story that Boniface's status as a saint was developed. Yet is notable that Amöneburg played no further role in the *Vita Bonifatii*; it was the saint, not the monastery, that transformed Hesse into a Christian landscape.

A different process can be observed with Fulda. The description of Fulda's foundation in Eigil's *Vita Sturm* provides a classic example where the *Bonifatiuskreise* were presented as transforming parts of Germany.<sup>48</sup> When, according to Eigil, Boniface and Sturm first discussed the foundation of a new monastery, Boniface emphasised the

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<sup>45</sup> Parsons, 'Sites and monuments', 285.

<sup>46</sup> Willibald, *VB* c. 6, p. 26: '... obtinuit, eosque a scilegia idulorum censura, qua sub quodam christianitatis nomine male abusi sunt...'

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, c. 6, p. 27: '... collecta servorum Dei congregatione, cellam construxit'.

<sup>48</sup> M.-E. Brunert, 'Fulda als Kloster *in eremo*. Zentrale Quellen über die Gründung im Spiegel der hagiographischen Tradition', in G. Schrimpf (ed.), *Kloster Fulda in der Welt der Karolinger und Ottonen*, Fuldaer Studien 7 (Frankfurt, 1996), pp. 59-78.

importance of the monastery being in a ‘desert’.<sup>49</sup> The first potential site Sturm found, where Lull’s monastery of Hersfeld was established later, was itself described as an *eremus* (‘wilderness’).<sup>50</sup> There is evidence, however, of pre-monastic settlement,<sup>51</sup> so it would appear immediately that Eigil was applying the *topos* of the monastic *eremus*. But even though Eigil presented this bleak image of Hersfeld, he claimed that Boniface had not thought it a remote enough site.<sup>52</sup> The narrative development in which Hersfeld was found but then deemed unsuitable was perhaps intended to emphasise the suitability of Fulda’s location. Sturm, ‘the avid explorer’, therefore continued until he found a suitably remote site.<sup>53</sup> Three things suggest that this was again a *topos*. Firstly, the site of Fulda had had a bridge since the Roman period, suggesting that it lay on a well-travelled old road.<sup>54</sup> Secondly, modern excavations have revealed traces of a Merovingian manor which had been in use until it was burnt down in *ca* 718.<sup>55</sup> Finally, Boniface obtained a charter from Carlomann to confer the land upon the monastery, which strongly implies that Carlomann already owned the land.<sup>56</sup> Eigil’s foundation story for Fulda, therefore, is but a patchwork of *topoi* designed to emphasise the seclusion of the monastery.

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<sup>49</sup> Eigil, *VS* c. 4, p. 134: ‘Pergite, ait episcopus, in hanc solitudinem quae Bochochia nuncupatur, aptumque servis Dei inhabitandum exquirite locum; potens est enim Deus parare servis suis locum in deserto’.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 134: ‘Perrexere itaque illi tres ad eremum, ingressisque solitudinis agrestia loca, praeter caelum ac terram et ingentes, arbores pene nihil cernentes, devote Christum poscebant, ut pedes illorum in viam pacis dirigeret. Die tertio pervenerunt ad locum qui usque hodie Hersfeld dicitur’.

<sup>51</sup> Parsons, ‘Sites and monuments’, 288.

<sup>52</sup> Eigil, *VS* c. 5, p. 135: ‘Locum quidem quem repertum habetis, habitare vos propter viciniam barbaricae gentis pertimesco; sunt enim, ut nostri, illic in proximo feroces Saxones. Quapropter vobis remotiorem et inferiorem in solitudine requirite habitationem, quam sine periculo vestri colere quaetis’.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, c. 7, p. 138: ‘avidus... explorator’; and c. 9, p. 141.

<sup>54</sup> Parsons, ‘Sites and monuments’, 290.

<sup>55</sup> H. Hahn, ‘Ausgrabungen am Fuldaer Domplatz im Jahre 1953’, in *Sankt Bonifatius. Gedenkgabe zum Zwölfhundertsten Todestag* (Fulda, 1954), pp. 641-86.

<sup>56</sup> Eigil, *VS* c. 12, p. 143. The ‘charter’, as preserved by Eigil in the *VS*, describes the grant in the following manner: ‘Locum quidem quem petitis et qui ut asseris Eihloha nuncupatur in ripa fluminis Fuldae, quidquid in hac proprium ibi videor habere, totum et integrum de iure meo in ius Domini trado, ita ut ab illo loco undique in circuitu ab oriente scilicet et ab occidente, a septentrione et meridie, marcha per quator milia passuum tendatur’.

The question arises of why Eigil might have wanted to portray the foundation of Fulda in this manner. Dom Engelbert suggested long ago that Eigil was simply creating the image of a desert in order to express the spiritual life of his monastery.<sup>57</sup> Maria-Elisabeth Brunert, however, has more recently suggested that there is an element of Carolingian propaganda involved as well.<sup>58</sup> By emphasising how much of a wilderness Thuringia had been, Brunert argued, Eigil was silently setting up Duke Hetan as a pre-Carolingian villain who had failed to Christianise the region. This was a literary sleight of hand that had been employed openly in the *Vita Bonifatii*.<sup>59</sup> There is, however, no clue in the *Vita Sturmi* that Carolingian propaganda was Eigil's intention; there can be a tendency, given the undoubted proliferation of Carolingian propaganda, to see it everywhere. There is no evidence to suggest anything except that Eigil was creating a spiritual *topos* for the foundation of Fulda.

The transformation of the wilderness was an integral part of Eigil's narrative, and therefore essential to the presentation of Sturm as a saint. Immediately Sturm and his brethren cleared a site in the forest and quickly constructed the new monastery.<sup>60</sup> Then, as was seen in chapter two, Sturm was at the forefront of efforts to establish monastic discipline at Fulda.<sup>61</sup> Alongside that story stood a clear change of context: Fulda was no longer in the wilderness. It was, rather, closely connected to the distant rest of the Carolingian kingdom through association with the royal court, Utrecht, and Jumièges. It had also become inexorably linked with nearby Mainz and its people,

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<sup>57</sup> Engelbert, *Die Vita Sturmi*, p. 123.

<sup>58</sup> Brunert, 'Fulda als Kloster *in eremo*', pp. 73-7.

<sup>59</sup> See Willibald, *VB* c. 6, p. 32, in which Hetan was described as a *tyrannus dux*.

<sup>60</sup> Eigil, *VS* c. 13, p. 144.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, c. 14, p. 145-7. See chapter two, pp. 111-14.

although the full extent of this is only revealed by the charter evidence.<sup>62</sup> One association that Eigil did emphasise was with the hill-fort of Hammelburg, which Pippin had granted to Fulda in 777;<sup>63</sup> this extended Fulda's influence south towards Würzburg and, by recording it in the *Vita Sturm* as well as a charter, helped to bind Fulda and Hammelburg together through the memory of Sturm. It was, therefore, through Sturm that Fulda ceased to be isolated and instead became bound with the wider world.

Fulda was not isolated in its *eremus* and was also forced to resist change in the form of Saxon attacks. They 'conspired to send a an elect group of men from their army to the same monastery [of Fulda] to burn it and all its contents, and slaughter the servants of God by the sword'.<sup>64</sup> But Sturm got wind of the news and ordered the brethren to escape to the safety of Hammelburg, taking the relics of St Boniface with them.<sup>65</sup> Quite how practical this advice actually would have been, given that Hammelburg lies nearly 70 km away from Fulda, one may wonder. The importance of the story is that it illustrated how Sturm was not just fundamental to the transformation of the Fulda district, but also to its spiritual protection.

The importance of the Anglo-Saxon monasteries as rallying points for the defence of Germany is even more evident in Lupus of Ferrières' *Vita Wigberti*. It has already been shown that Lupus credited Fritlzar and its abbot Wigbert with no

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<sup>62</sup> On Fulda's networks of patronage, see M. Innes, *State and Society in the Early Middle Ages: The Middle Rhine Valley 400-1000*, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought Fourth Series 47 (Cambridge, 2000), esp. pp. 21-2 and pp. 60-8.

<sup>63</sup> *MGH Dip. Karol.* 1, no. 116, p. 163; Eigil, *VS* c. 22, p. 157. On the ritual which accompanied the charter see Innes, *State and Society*, pp. 112, 138.

<sup>64</sup> Eigil, *VS* c. 24, p. 159: '... iterum postea gens prava et perversa a fide Christi devians, vanis se erroribus implicavit... [C]onspiraverunt ut electam virorum multitudinem de exercitu ad ipsum monasterium mitterent et cuncta quae reperirent, igni comburerent et servos dei ferro trucidarent'.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, c. 24, p. 159: '... vir sanctus Sturm statim vocatis ad se fratribus... ad properassent Hamelenburc'.

missionary function; Lupus did, however, dedicate much of the *Vita Wigberti* to the Saxon incursions of 774 and how Wigbert's spirit (he had died in 743) interceded to defend the Christians of the region. Lupus wrote that.<sup>66</sup>

Not long afterwards, when the same Saxons had returned... one of them took a torch, lay down some kindling, [and] began to set fire to the aforesaid church [of Fritzlar]. But in vanity and by impossible endeavour, [for they were], repulsed through the intercession of St Wigbert's divine virtue.

In Lupus's *vita*, Wigbert did little except live a rigorous monastic lifestyle whilst alive, but from heaven he could prove his worth as a saint through his defence of Hesse. A saint's ability to transform a place, and thus prove himself to be worthy of God's favour, was not limited by death.

The role of the brothers Willibald and Wynnebald in transforming Bavaria also bears repetition and further comment. As we saw in chapter two, Willibald was credited with transforming a Bavarian wilderness into a rich and cultivated land.<sup>67</sup> This transformation rested carefully upon having established Eichstätt as the monastic centre for his work. Wynnebald effectively followed suit, joining his brother at Eichstätt before he founded Heidenheim as his base for leading the people of Sualaveld away from improper practices.<sup>68</sup> This transformation of the landscape was for neither brother the fundamental thing that defined their sanctity: for Willibald it was his pilgrimage to the Holy Land, while for Wynnebald it seems to have been that his body was found incorrupt fifteen years after his death.<sup>69</sup> But it was their (supposed) role in Bavaria that gave them true significance to Hygeburg's audience. They were, in other words, only

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<sup>66</sup> Lupus, *Vita Wigberti* c. 19, ed. O. Holder-Egger, *MGH SS* 15 i (Hanover, 1887), pp. 36-43 at p. 42: 'Neque multo post, cum idem Saxones revertissent... unus eorum capit ignem, fomenta subicit, aecclesiam conflagrere iam dictam molitur. Sed casso infectoque nisu, divina virtute per intercessionem sancti Wigberti repulsus'.

<sup>67</sup> Hygeburg, *VWb* c. 6, pp. 105-6.

<sup>68</sup> Hygeburg, *VWyn* c. 7, p. 111.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, c. 13, p. 117.

meaningful saints in the *vitae* because they were attributed with some role in transforming the region in conjunction with the other markers of their sanctity.

### **The Transformative Power of Churches.**

#### *The Foundation of the Central German Bishoprics.*

One of the most enduring ways in which the Anglo-Saxons ‘transformed’ the landscape of Germany was with the construction of churches. The importance of these buildings is reflected in the *vitae*. In the *Vita Bonifatii* Boniface, just before he left for Frisia for the final time, is reported to have told Lull to ‘bring to completion the building of the churches that I began in Thuringia. Earnestly recall the people from the paths of error [and] finish the construction of the basilica at Fulda...’<sup>70</sup> Boniface was thus portrayed as thinking his churches comprised a fundamental part of his work.

The foundation of the Bonifatian churches has proved to be one of the most discussed aspects of Boniface’s career.<sup>71</sup> The principal debating points seem rather petty: were Würzburg, Erfurt and Büraburg founded in 741 or 742? Was Willibald consecrated at the same time, and for which church? Why did Erfurt and Büraburg fail to last as early bishoprics? Was the subsequent *Concilium Germanicarum* held in 742

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<sup>70</sup> Willibald, *VB* c. 8, p. 46: “...Sed tu, fili karissime, structuram in Thyringea a me ceptam aecclesiarum ad perfectionis terminum deduc; tu populum ab erroribus invio instantissime revoca tuque aedificationem basilicae iam inchoatae ad Fuldan...”

<sup>71</sup> T. Schieffer, ‘Angelsachsen und Franken. Zwei Studien zur Kirchengeschichte des 8. Jahrhunderts’, *Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur, Abhandlungen der Geistes- und Socialwissenschaftlichen Klasse, Jahrgang 1950*, 20 (Wiesbaden, 1951), 1327-1539 at 1463-71; A. Bigelmair, ‘Die Gründung des mitteldeutschen Bistümer’, in *Sankt Bonifatius. Gedenkgabe zum Zwölfhundertsten Todestag* (Fulda, 1954), pp. 247-87; W. Fritze, ‘Bonifatius und die Einbeziehung von Hessen und Thüringen in die Mainzer Diözese’, *Hessisches Jahrbuch für Landesgeschichte* 4 (1954), 37-63; H. Löwe, ‘Bonifatius und die bayerisch-fränkische Spannung: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Beziehungen zwischen dem Papsttum und den Karolingern’, *Jahrbuch für fränkische Landesforschung* 15 (1954), 85-127 at 110-20; K.-U. Jäschke, ‘Die Gründungszeit der mitteldeutschen Bistümer und das Jahr des Concilium Germanicum’, in H. Beumann (ed.), *Festschrift für Walter Schlesinger 2, Mitteldeutsche Forschungen 74/2* (Cologne, 1974), pp. 71-136; G. Pfeiffer, ‘Erfurt oder Eichstätt? Zur Biographie des Bischofs Willibald’, *Festschrift für Walter Schlesinger 2, Mitteldeutsche Forschungen 74/2* (Cologne, 1974), pp. 137-61; D. Parsons, ‘Some churches of the Anglo-Saxon missionaries in Southern Germany: a review of the evidence’, *Early Medieval Europe* 8. 1 (1999), 31-67 at 36-40.

or 743? Answers to these questions might at best indicate whether church reform had been hindered by Charles Martel, who died in October 741, and perhaps help us to understand what Willibald's position was originally intended to have been. The problem, as Timothy Reuter pointed out more than once, is that no definitive answer is possible because the nature of our sources is so fragmentary that too many uncertain assumptions are needed to fill in the gaps.<sup>72</sup>

It is, despite the impossibility of creating a complete picture of the church foundations, possible to compare what the fragments say with the image presented in the *vitae*. A brief summary of these fragments is required. The first time the churches are mentioned is in a letter from Boniface greeting Pope Zacharias for the first time; since Zacharias became pope in December 741 and dated his response to Boniface April 1<sup>st</sup> 743, it would seem that this letter was written sometime in 742.<sup>73</sup> This at best gives us a *terminus post quem* for the appointment of the new bishops, so historians have then turned to Hygeburg's *Vita Willibaldi et Wynnebaldi* for further evidence because it contains a lot of (vague) numerical data relating to when Willibald was consecrated. Hygeburg wrote that Willibald was made a priest on 22<sup>nd</sup> July, 'the feast of St Apollinaris and St Mary Magdalen' and then consecrated as a bishop 'after a whole year had passed'.<sup>74</sup> By itself this information is not particularly useful because Hygeburg does not specify a year. She did, however, say that Willibald was 41 when he became bishop and that Wynnebald was 60 when he died on 18<sup>th</sup> December 761 so, given that the brothers cannot have been born within nine months of each other,

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<sup>72</sup> T. Reuter, 'Saint Boniface and Europe', in T. Reuter (ed.), *The Greatest Englishman: Essays on St Boniface and the Church at Crediton* (Exeter, 1980), pp. 69-94 at pp. 92-3 (n. 73); idem, "Kirchenreform" und "Kirchenpolitik", pp. 48-9.

<sup>73</sup> Boniface, *Tangl* no. 50, pp. 80-6.

<sup>74</sup> Hygeburg, *VWb* c. 5, p. 104-5.

Willibald was probably born in 700 and consecrated on the 22<sup>nd</sup> July 741.<sup>75</sup> This does not, of course, allow for the Anglo-Saxons to be wrong about the date, which they had been before in the *Vita Bonifatii* in dating Boniface's martyrdom to 755.<sup>76</sup> A further consideration has been the timing of the *Concilium Germanicum* which is dated 21<sup>st</sup> April 742 and lists Willibald as bishop amongst its witnesses.<sup>77</sup> This would appear to rule out the possibility that Willibald had been consecrated later than 741 *except* the date of the council can be challenged because it does not give much time for Zacharias's letter from 1<sup>st</sup> April to have reached Boniface and to have been discussed; Schieffer, therefore, argued for a re-dating of 743 for the council.<sup>78</sup> The council could, however, have been held without the letter, and it is also worrying that as well as dating events a year too late, the Anglo-Saxons might also have been dating events a year too early. The picture is, indeed, confused, and we would do well to heed Reuter's warning that a definitive answer is simply not possible. If we avoid speculation and remain sceptical about the testimony of the *Vita Willibaldi et Wynnebaldi* (since Hygeburg's concern was not to write a work of history *per se*), then the only date we have to cling to is 742 for the *Concilium Germanicum*.

Part of the reason why the evidence is so poor might relate to the uncertainties surrounding the churches at Erfurt and Buraburg. Boniface described Erfurt to Zacharias as 'now formerly a city of rustic pagans'.<sup>79</sup> Zacharias, perhaps concerned by

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<sup>75</sup> See Jäschke's laborious workings out – covering far more indicators than noted here – in his 'Die Gründungszeit', pp. 80-101, esp. pp. 83-5, 92.

<sup>76</sup> Willibald, *VB* c. 8, p. 55; M. Tangl, 'Das Todesjahr des Bonifatius', in his *Das Mittelalter in Quellenkunde und Diplomatie. Ausgewählte Schriften* 1 (Graz, 1966), pp. 25-46.

<sup>77</sup> 'Concilium Germanicum', *Tangl* no. 56, pp. 98-102.

<sup>78</sup> Schieffer, 'Angelsachsen und Franken', p. 1464.

<sup>79</sup> Boniface, *Tangl* no. 50, p. 81: '... Erphesfurt, qui fuit iam olim urbs paganorum rusticorum'.

the idea of an *urbs rusticorum*, replied:<sup>80</sup>

But let your saintly fraternity think further and discern subtle considerations, if it is profitable, whether the place or crowd of people are of such a kind to be approved in order to merit having bishops. For remember, most beloved, what we are recommended to observe in sacred canons, that we should not ordain bishops in villages or modest cities, lest we denigrate the name of bishop.

It is therefore not surprising that, whilst Zacharias sent letters to approve Burchard's appointment to Würzburg and Witta's to Buraburg, there is no evidence that the plan for Erfurt continued.<sup>81</sup> Soon Buraburg too disappeared from the sources, leading to speculation over whether Boniface's move to the see of Mainz by 748, coupled with the death of Witta in 746, had seen a reorganisation of the Mainz and Würzburg dioceses.<sup>82</sup> In the 740s there appears to have been a fluid situation surrounding the central German bishoprics where their status, and indeed boundaries, were still under development; it was a situation that would continue to develop well into the ninth century.<sup>83</sup>

If the situation surrounding the sees was uncertain, then the position of Boniface's newly-appointed bishops must also have been ill-defined. It has, for example, struck many historians that Willibald was the most likely candidate for the bishopric of Erfurt because Hygeburg located his consecration at nearby Sülzenbrücken; he would, on this argument, only have been made bishop of Eichstätt

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<sup>80</sup> Pope Zacharias, *Tangl* no. 51, p. 86-7: 'Sed tua sancta fraternitas pertractet mature et subtili consideratione discernat, si expedit aut si loca vel populorum turbae talia esse probantur, ut episcopos habere mereantur. Meminis enim, carissime, quid in sacris canonibus precipimur observare, ut minime in villulas vel in modicas civitates episcopos ordinemus, ne vilescat nomen episcopi'.

<sup>81</sup> Pope Zacharias, *Tangl* nos. 52-3, pp. 92-95.

<sup>82</sup> Pope Zacharias, *Tangl* no. 80, p. 180. Bigelmair, 'Die Gründung', pp. 282-7 argued that Boniface simply incorporated Buraburg into the Mainz diocese, while Fritze, 'Bonifatius und die Einbeziehung des Hessen und Thüringen', 44-9 and 56-62, argued that Buraburg was incorporated into the Würzburg diocese before becoming part of the Mainz diocese. There is, however, no hard evidence to support either supposition.

<sup>83</sup> On the developing position of Mainz and its associated bishoprics, and comparisons with eighth-century Cologne, see C. J. Carroll, 'The archbishops and church provinces of Mainz and Cologne during the Carolingian period, 751-911', unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Cambridge (1999), pp. 20-38.

later when plans for Erfurt had been abandoned.<sup>84</sup> Here again we lack any confirming evidence. A passage from the *Annales Fuldenses* has been used to suggest that Willibald was bishop elsewhere first:<sup>85</sup>

746 – Archbishop Boniface, with the authority of the apostolic see and the consent of Carlomann, established two episcopal sees, one in the fortress of Würzburg where Burchard (from his brotherhood) was ordained bishop, the other in a place which is called Eichstätt, for which Willibald was ordained bishop.

If Willibald had been consecrated bishop by 742, as the record of the *Concilium Germanicum* suggests, he had already been bishop for at least four years before he became bishop of Eichstätt. But then another problem arises: what had Burchard's position been since 743, when Zacharias confirmed his appointment at Würzburg, if he had only actually become bishop of Würzburg in 746? The annal entry could be referring to some confirmation of Burchard's position, but if so then it could equally mean Willibald was only officially *confirmed* as bishop of Eichstätt at that point. That is not, however, what the annal says: it explicitly uses the verb *constituere* not *confirmere*. The implication, perhaps, is that neither had had a defined position before 746, although they could have been *episcopi sine sedes* following the example of Boniface. This interpretation is also not without problems, however, because the information in the annals excluding the date appears to have been derived from the *Vita Bonifatii*; indeed most of the annals' entries for before the 830s were taken from other

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<sup>84</sup> In favour of Willibald's consecration for Erfurt, see Bigelmair, 'Die Gründung', pp. 278-86 and, more recently, Parsons, 'Some churches of the Anglo-Saxon missions', pp. 36-40. The counter-argument, particularly as presented by Pfeiffer in his 'Erfurt oder Eichstätt?', pp. 141-60, centres on the silence of sources linking Willibald to Erfurt and the dubious canonical status of transferring bishops between dioceses. All that is certain, however, is that Willibald was soon after bishop of (or 'in') Eichstätt.

<sup>85</sup> *Annales Fuldenses* s. a. 746, ed. F. Kurze, *MGH SRG 7* (Hanover, 1891), p. 5: 'DCCXLVI... Bonifatius archiepiscopus cum auctoritate sedis apostolicae annuente Karlomanno duas sedes episcopales constituit, unam in castro Wirizburg, ubi Burghartum collegam suum ordinavit episcopum, alteram in loco, qui vocatur Eihstat, cui Willibaldus episcopus ordinatus est'. The use of the word *collegium* is perhaps quite significant because, in a Carolingian context, it implies that Boniface's immediate circle was not monastic but rather secular in nature.

sources, so it is interesting to note that in this case a compiler had added a date to the account of the saint's Life.<sup>86</sup>

The *Vita Bonifatii* provides a slightly longer account of the appointment of Willibald and Burchard:<sup>87</sup>

[Boniface] promoted two good and industrious men to the order of bishop, Willibald and Burchard, and divided between them a share of the churches committed to him in the eastern parts of the Franks and the borders of the Bavarians. And he commended to Willibald's governance the place whose name is Eichstätt, and indeed he delegated to Burchard the dignified office in the place called Würzburg, putting to his office the churches within the borders of the Franks and Saxons and Slavs.

It is notable within this narrative, as indeed it is in the *Annales Fuldenses*, that neither Büraburg nor Erfurt are mentioned. Their omission glosses over the uncertainty surrounding their foundation, substituting instead the certainty of the 760s where it was clear (or at least 'clearer') that Würzburg and Eichstätt were going to be lasting monuments to the Anglo-Saxons' work. That it was this version of events, bereft of controversy, that was reported in the *Annales Fuldenses* suggests that the *Vita Bonifatii* had provided an acceptable 'narrative of triumph'. To Boniface's successors, the archbishop was associated only with success in the *vita*, and that success helped to give solidity and legitimacy to the episcopal organisation that emerged in the 740s and 750s.

Willibald can appear rather dishonest in discussing what Boniface had actually established. He stressed the importance of building churches and the subsequent

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<sup>86</sup> On the problems of the composition of the *Annales Fuldenses*, see T. Reuter's introduction to *The Annals of Fulda*, transl. T. Reuter, Ninth-Century Histories 2 (Manchester, 1992), pp. 1-9.

<sup>87</sup> Willibald, *VB* c. 8, p. 44: 'Et duos bonae industriae viros ad ordinem episcopatus promovit, Willibaldum et Burchardum, eisque in intimis orientalium Franchorum partibus et Baguariorum terminis aecclesias sibi commissas inpartiendo distribuit. Et Willibaldo suae gubernationis parrochiam commendavit in loco cuius vocabulum est Haegsted, Burchardo vero in loco qui appellatur Wirzaburch dignitatis officium delegavit et aecclesias in confinibus Franchorum et Saxonum atque Sclavorum suo officio deputavit...'

establishment of ecclesiastical order, but this image does not accord well with what we know elsewhere about Boniface's actions in places like Würzburg. Würzburg appears to have been Christian since at least the mid-seventh century and was home to the relics of St Kilian, an Irishman who had been martyred in *ca* 689.<sup>88</sup> Boniface himself played an active role in promoting the cult of Kilian and translated the saint's relics to a new site in 752,<sup>89</sup> no doubt seizing on the importance of pre-existing cults in attempts to foster religious devotion. There was, therefore, a Christian past and Christian infrastructure at Würzburg that Boniface looked to in order to develop Christianity in the region. But then Willibald never claimed that Boniface built the church in Würzburg. Moreover, there is no indication that Würzburg had anything but local importance in terms of Church organisation before Boniface entrusted it with 'the churches within the borders of the Franks and Saxons and Slavs'. The translation of St Kilian might have been symbolic of Würzburg's changing status; previously the cult certainly had only local significance, and afterwards it was even celebrated at the Carolingian court.<sup>90</sup> Würzburg was, therefore, invested with renewed significance as a religious centre for the East Frankish Church. The silence of Willibald on the process involved is perhaps important. A reference to St Kilian in the *vita* might have detracted too much from Boniface's supposed achievements. It is, however, perhaps also prudent to remember that the episcopal organisation Würzburg was being associated with was still in a state of some fluidity: by writing in broad terms, Willibald was able to portray Boniface's impact as a saint in concrete terms.

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<sup>88</sup> *Passio Kiliani minor*, ed. W. Levison, *MGH SRM 5* (Hanover, 1910), pp. 722-28; Bigelmair, 'Die Gründung', pp. 253-6; A. Wendehorst, *Das Bistum Würzburg, Teil I: Die Bischofsreihe bis 1254*, *Germania Sacra* neue Folge I. Die Bistümer der Kirchenprovinz Mainz (Berlin, 1962), pp. 9-18; K. Schäferdiek, 'Kilian von Würzburg. Gestalt und Gestaltung eines Heiligen', in H. Keller & N. Staubach (eds.), *Iconologia Sacra: Mythos, Bildkunst und Dichtung in der Religions- und Sozialgeschichte Alteuropas. Festschrift für Karl Hauck zum 75. Geburtstag*, *Arbeiten zur Frühmittelalterforschung* 23 (Berlin, 1994), pp. 313-40.

<sup>89</sup> *Passio Kiliani* c. 15, p. 728; *VBurch* cc. 5-6, pp. 49; A. Wendehorst, *Das Bistum Würzburg*, p. 22.

<sup>90</sup> P. Kehl, *Kult und Nachleben des heiligen Bonifatius im Mittelalter (754-1200)*, *Quellen und Abhandlungen zur Geschichte der Abtei und Diözese Fulda* 26 (Fulda, 1993), pp. 78-9.

Consideration must also be given to precisely what Willibald was claiming fell under Würzburg's jurisdiction. Many of these sites also had pre-existing infrastructures. Amöneburg, as was seen above, appears to have been a Merovingian hill-fort. Likewise Büraburg, which may also have been the location for a pre-Bonifatian convent or a church, developed under Irish influence.<sup>91</sup> Erfurt, again, was probably an early fortress of some kind. Not only is it clear that Boniface was reusing hill-forts,<sup>92</sup> but it also seems that Boniface's intention was to utilise the entire defensive infrastructure that defended Hesse and Thurginia from Saxon attack.<sup>93</sup> Given Boniface's stated desire to convert the Saxons, the establishment of an Anglo-Saxon church infrastructure superimposed along the Saxon border perhaps speaks volumes about Boniface's long-term plans and pragmatism. That was the (apparent) reality; what was important then, for Boniface's successors, was conceptualising Boniface's development of the Hessian and Thuringian marches. When he discussed Amöneburg, Willibald mentioned the importance of evangelising the *Hessi* as far as the *finis Saxonum*.<sup>94</sup> Although it was often true that the 'frontier' was viewed as something through which missionaries sought to break,<sup>95</sup> they were also a reality with which the missionaries had to work. In part that was why Boniface never (to our knowledge) actually attempted to work in Saxony. According to the image of Burchard and Willibald in the *vita*, Boniface had invested a coherence in the fragmented Christian

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<sup>91</sup> Parsons, 'Sites and monuments', p. 288; M. Werner, 'Iren und Angelsachsen in Mitteledeutschland. Zur vorbonifatianischen Mission in Hessen und Thüringen', in H. Löwe (ed.), *Die Iren und Europa im frühen Mittelalter 1* (Stuttgart, 1982), pp. 231-318.

<sup>92</sup> Parsons, 'Sites and monuments', p. 294.

<sup>93</sup> N. Wand, 'Die fränkische Expansion in Nordhessen', in A. Wiczorek (ed.), *Die Franken, Wegbereiter Europas I. Vor 500 Jahren: König Chlodwig und seine Erben* (Mainz, 1996), pp. 323-30; M. Hardt, 'Hesse, Elbe, Saale and the frontiers of the Carolingian empire', in W. Pohl, I. N. Wood & H. Reimitz (eds.), *The Transformation of Frontiers from Late Antiquity to the Carolingians*, *The Transformation of the Roman World 10* (Leiden, 2001), pp. 219-232 esp. pp. 222-4.

<sup>94</sup> Willibald, *VB* c. 6, p. 27.

<sup>95</sup> I. N. Wood, 'Missionaries and the Christian frontier', in W. Pohl, I. N. Wood & H. Reimitz (eds.), *The Transformation of Frontiers from Late Antiquity to the Carolingians* (Leiden, 2001), pp. 209-18, esp. at p. 209.

landscape of central Germany, using the existing military organisations already in place. The importance ascribed to Würzburg therefore acted as a device to bring unity to the foundations and places Boniface was supposed to have worked in. Yet there is a further problem to be considered: why Würzburg? Why not Mainz?

*Lull and the Problem of Mainz.*

There are remarkably few references to Boniface and Lull's archiepiscopal see of Mainz in the *Vita Bonifatii*, given that Lull was an addressee of the text and that Willibald was so eager to outline the authority of Würzburg and Eichstätt. Willibald makes only three references to Mainz: once, in the context of discussing Boniface's reforms, he described Boniface as *archiepiscopus Magontiae civitati*; after the account of Boniface's martyrdom Lull was said to have come 'from Mainz' (*a Magontia*) to retrieve the body; and finally Boniface's body was brought 'to the aforementioned city of Mainz' (*ad civitatem superdictam Magontiam*).<sup>96</sup> The city of Mainz did not, of course, figure meaningfully in Boniface's work until about 748. Yet, with Boniface's attempts to reform the Mainz episcopacy, here would have been a clear example where Willibald could have illustrated Boniface's sanctity through the saint's transformation of religious life in a major centre of the age. An explanation is needed as to why Boniface's relationship with Mainz was not an appropriate case study in Willibald's efforts to portray Boniface as a saint.

Boniface's relationship with the city of Mainz began with a series of arguments. He appears to have clashed with Bishop Gerold, who had 'neglected to disseminate the preached word amongst his people and now defends part of it as if it was his own

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<sup>96</sup> Willibald, *VB* c. 7, p. 41 and c. 8, pp. 52 and 53.

parish'.<sup>97</sup> Boniface's concern that the existing Frankish episcopacy were neglecting their duties appears clear here. Later Boniface clashed with Bishop Gewilib, Gerold's son and successor. He had, according to Zacharias, denounced Gewilib as a *seductor* ('false teacher') and accused him of 'unlawfully holding the office of bishop'.<sup>98</sup> Gewilib then travelled to Rome, perhaps to defend himself, but Zacharias sided with Boniface and wrote saying 'and when he arrives action shall be taken as pleases God'.<sup>99</sup> None of this is to say that the Mainz clergy formed anything resembling an 'anti-reform party'.<sup>100</sup> The elite of Mainz, of whom Gerold and Gewilib must have belonged, were notorious for their unity, and in the seventh century were referred to as the *Macanenses* ('the men of Mainz').<sup>101</sup> The scene was therefore set for Boniface's move to Mainz to be somewhat uncomfortable.

Boniface had not particularly wanted to become archbishop of Mainz. In the same letter Zacharias wrote to Boniface about Gewilib, dated October 745, the pope noted that 'at the request of the Franks' he was to confirm Cologne as Boniface's metropolitan see.<sup>102</sup> Cologne had close ties to the Frisian missionfield on which Boniface had hoped to capitalise, no doubt remembering his time at Utrecht in the 720s. In a letter dated 1<sup>st</sup> May 748, however, Zacharias noted a report from Boniface

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<sup>97</sup> Gregory II, *Tangl* no. 24, p. 42: '... in eadem gente praedicationis verbum disseminare neglexerat et nunc sibi partem quasi in parrochiam defendit'. See also Schieffer, *Winfried-Bonifatius*, pp. 130-2, 149.

<sup>98</sup> Zacharias, *Tangl* no. 60, p. 124: '... tua... intimasti nobis de alio seductore nomine Geoleobo, qui antea false episcopi honore fungebatur...'

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 124: 'Et dum advenerit, ut Domino placuerit, fiet'.

<sup>100</sup> The classic polarised image of 'reformers' and 'anti-reformers' is given by E. Ewig, 'Milo et eiusmodi simili', in *Sankt Bonifatius. Gedenkgabe zum zwölfhundertsten Todestag* (Fulda, 1954), pp. 412-40, esp. pp. 412-421, but see now Reuter, "Kirchenreform" und "Kirchenpolitik", pp. 35-51 on the anachronism of such terminology, and Dierkens, 'Carolus', pp. 290-3 on Boniface's exaggeration of the crimes of the Merovingians.

<sup>101</sup> *Chronica* IV. 87, ed. J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *The Fourth Book of the Chronicle of Fredegar with its Continuations* (Oxford, 1960), pp. 73-4; M. Innes, 'People, places and power in Carolingian society', in M. de Jong & F. Theuvs (eds.), *Topographies of Power in the Early Middle Ages, The Transformation of the Roman World* 6 (Leiden, 2001), pp. 397-438 at p. 408.

<sup>102</sup> Zacharias, *Tangl* no. 60, p. 124: 'De civitate... Colonia, iuxta petitionem Francorum per nostrae auctoritatis preceptum nomini tuo metropolim confirmavimus...'

about Cologne that ‘the Franks had not preserved their word, which they had promised, and now your brotherhood resides in the city of Mainz’.<sup>103</sup> Boniface’s position in the city seems uncertain, although this is in no small part due to the fragmentary sources. Our one other source about Boniface in Mainz is a charter purporting to be from Pope Zacharias, raising the see to archiepiscopal status.<sup>104</sup> Michael Tangl pointed out that, contrary to what would be expected, there was no copy kept in Rome, and indeed the charter appears to be a later forgery based upon a genuine charter for Cologne.<sup>105</sup> Thereafter there is no information on Boniface in Mainz, not even in the *Vita Bonifatii*, until the 770s and the *Vita Wynnebaldi*.<sup>106</sup> Even then, although it is perhaps a *topos*, Wynnebald is said to have found life in Mainz unpalatable. One is left wondering, given Boniface’s problems with the *Macenenses*, how strong his connections were with the city early on, and how significant it is that the emphasis in the *Vita Bonifatii* was on Würzburg and Eichstätt (and a rather dislocated Lull) continuing his legacy.

After 754 Lull’s position at Mainz does not appear to have been a strong one. When he succeeded Boniface he was unable to command the position of archbishop until 782.<sup>107</sup> He might even have been responsible for the forged charter conferring archiepiscopal status upon Mainz.<sup>108</sup> When the papacy was petitioned to promote Lull from *episcopus*, even with Charlemagne’s support, Pope Hadrian was unhelpful and

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<sup>103</sup> Zacharias, *Tangl* no. 80, pp. 179-80: ‘... quod Franci non perseveraverunt in verbo, quod promiserunt, et nunc moratur tua fraternitas in civitate Magontia’.

<sup>104</sup> Zacharias, *Tangl* no. 88, pp. 201-2.

<sup>105</sup> M. Tangl, ‘Studien zur Neuausgabe der Briefe des hl. Bonifatius und Lullus, Teil I’, in his *Das Mittelalter in Quellenkunde und Diplomatik. Ausgewählte Schriften* 1 (Graz, 1966), pp. 60-177 at pp. 174-6.

<sup>106</sup> Hygeburg, *VWyn* cc. 6-7, pp. 110-11. In particular Wynnebald needed somewhere where *investigare possit* (c. 7, p. 111) away from Mainz’s *aliis diversa dapium dogma* (c. 6, p. 110).

<sup>107</sup> Levison, *England and the Continent*, p. 95.

<sup>108</sup> Tangl, ‘Studien zur Neuausgabe... Teil I’, p. 176; Schieffer, ‘Angelsachsen und Franken’, pp. 1488-9.

ordered an examination of Lull's consecration.<sup>109</sup> Hadrian's hesitancy might have been prompted by accusations of an uncanonical election, because Boniface had secured Lull's succession with petitions to King Pippin III and Pope Zacharias.<sup>110</sup> In the meantime the *Bonifatiuskreise*, and the associated missionary and reformatory ideals they stood for, had gone from being associated with the only archbishop amongst the Franks to having no strong links with the new, indigenous archbishops that had been established at Metz, Rheims, Trier and Rouen. Lull even had to approach Archbishop Chrodegang of Metz as a supplicant to seek justice against the priests Willefrith and Enraed, who had stolen many of Lull's slaves, horses and cows.<sup>111</sup> This would suggest that in the post-Bonifatian world Lull was only a suffragan bishop,<sup>112</sup> struggling to keep control over his own bishopric. At the same time Frankish Church reform, once dominated by the Anglo-Saxons, was now led by Chrodegang with little apparent input from the likes of Lull, Willibald or even their Frankish friend Megingoz. Having been close to the Frankish court in the 740s, the Anglo-Saxons found their status greatly diminished in the 750s and 760s.

Hadrian's attitude shows that, without Boniface, relations between the Anglo-Saxons in Germany and the papacy had not prospered either. This deterioration might have something to do with the decline in importance of Germany as a missionfield, particularly at a time when Saxony and the Slavic lands were gaining political importance with Charlemagne's expansionist policies. The emphasis on *Saxones atque Sclaves* in the *Vita Bonifatii* – the *atque* indicating that the two peoples were to be treated as bound together – would therefore appear to be making a case for the Anglo-

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<sup>109</sup> Flodoard, *Historia Remensis ecclesiae* II. 13, ed. I. Heller & G. Waitz, *MGH SS* 13 (Hanover, 1881), pp. 405-599 at pp. 461-4; Levison, *England and the Continent*, p. 234.

<sup>110</sup> Levison, *England and the Continent*, p. 234.

<sup>111</sup> Lull, *Tangl* no. 110, pp. 236-8.

<sup>112</sup> Schieffer, 'Angelsachsen und Franken', 1487-90.

Saxons' continued work in the later missionfields.<sup>113</sup> Würzburg, being located further to the east than Mainz, was better situated to be associated with such a claim. The mission to the Slavs and Avars, however, had already been entrusted to Salzburg, and Virgil and his successor Arno took their commission seriously.<sup>114</sup> Moreover, in Arbeo's *vitae*, Emmeram was attributed with wishing to convert the Avars,<sup>115</sup> while Corbinian was supposed to have been given the commission from Gregory II to preach *per universum orbem*.<sup>116</sup> Ian Wood has suggested that with all probability Arbeo's claims were made as a counter to Boniface's missionary commission.<sup>117</sup> It could also be that Arbeo was defending Bavarian missionary interests in the East in the wake of Willibald's claims about Würzburg and the Slavs.

Würzburg itself, however, appears to have been a place of 'consensus'. The *Passio Kiliani* contains literary borrowings from both the *Vita Bonifatii* and the works of Arbeo, perhaps indicating a less-polarised position between Willibald and Arbeo.<sup>118</sup> Moreover the *Vita Burchardi*, written in the 840s, appears to relinquish any claim Würzburg had over the Slavic missionfield. In a historically confused story (see chapter three), it was claimed that Burchard visited Rome in 743 where he was invested with a dispensation to missionary work; crucially, and in contrast to the *Vita Bonifatii*, it was only said that Burchard was given powers amongst the German peoples.<sup>119</sup> The timing

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<sup>113</sup> The importance of the *atque* was first discussed by Fritze in his 'Bonifatius und die Einbeziehung von Hessen und Thüringen', pp. 39-42, although he explicitly links these missionary concerns to the Anglo-Saxons' competition with Cologne over control of Utrecht.

<sup>114</sup> *MGH Dip. Karol.* 1, no. 211; Alcuin, *Epistolae* nos. 107, 112, 113, pp. 153-4, 162-3, 163-6.

<sup>115</sup> Arbeo, *Vita Haimhrammi* c. 3, ed. B. Krusch, *MGH SRG* 16 (Hanover, 1920), pp. 26-99 at p.30: 'Dum autem reverentissimus vir Hemmerammus Deo... pervenit ad eum fama, quod in quibusdam Europae partibus Pannoniensis plebs, tot Avarorum regna, excasecatis oculis a veritatis luce, quae est Christus, maxime ydolis deservieret... [C]ontatus est meditare, ut illuc Christum praedicare deberetur'.

<sup>116</sup> Arbeo, *VCorb* c. 9, p. 197.

<sup>117</sup> Wood, *The Missionary Life*, pp. 159-60.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 160-1.

<sup>119</sup> *VBurch* c. 3, p. 48. Pope Zacharias was, at least, said to be concerned with the *rudis... Germanorum fides*. On the *VBurch* see chapter three, pp. 157-61.

of the writing of the *vita* may be important because Adalwin of Salzburg either wrote or commissioned the *Conversio Bagoariorum et Carantanorum* about Salzburg's Slavic mission shortly afterwards.<sup>120</sup> This text, while not strictly hagiographical, set out Salzburg's history as a missionary centre. Particular attention was given to the achievements of Virgil and his successor Arno.<sup>121</sup> The author provides a highly legalistic account of Salzburg's missionary history, listing churches and naming priests in order to justify Salzburg's jurisdiction in Pannonia.<sup>122</sup> Adalwin was no doubt also responding to the competitive efforts of Constantine and Methodius to convert the Moravian Slavs at the same time.<sup>123</sup> In this almost aggressive, competitive environment over the conversion of the Slavs, it is notable that the *Vita Burchardi* effectively announced the see's abandonment of any claim to the eastern missionfields.

There are, then, two possible reasons why Willibald may have decided to remain silent on Boniface's association with Mainz. On the one hand Boniface had not always enjoyed a peaceable relationship with the *Macenenses* and Willibald may have diplomatically decided not to mention the issue. Lull's tenure at Mainz seems not to have left him in a position of strength either as he struggled to gain the title of *archiepiscopus* and, on the evidence of his petition to Chrodegang, even struggled to control his own diocese. There was, in other words, little worth celebrating in Boniface's relationship with Mainz (although, as Boniface's cult grew, Mainz had

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<sup>120</sup> *Conversio Bagoariorum et Carantanorum, excerptum de Karantanis* 1, ed. H. Wolfram, *Die Conversio Bagoariorum et Carantanorum. Das Weissbuch der Salzburger Kirche über die Erfolgreiche Mission in Karantanien und Pannonien* (Vienna, 1979), pp. 34-59 at pp. 58-9. H. Wolfram, *Salzburg, Bayern, Österreich. Die Conversio Bagoariorum et Carantanorum und die Quellen ihrer Zeit*, Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung, Ergänzungsband 31 (Vienna & Munich, 1995); Wood, *The Missionary Life*, pp. 168-86; S. Airlie, 'True teachers and pious kings: Salzburg, Louis the German, and Christian order', in R. Gameson & H. Leyser (eds.), *Belief and Culture in the Middle Ages: Studies Presented to Henry Mayr-Harting* (Oxford, 2001), pp. 89-105.

<sup>121</sup> *Conversio Bagoariorum et Carantanorum* cc. 2-8, pp. 40-9.

<sup>122</sup> Wood, *The Missionary Life*, pp. 171-3.

<sup>123</sup> Wolfram, *Salzburg, Bayern, Österreich*, p. 193. On Methodius see: Wood, *The Missionary Life*, pp. 173-6; Fletcher, *The Conversion of Europe*, pp. 351-60.

much to gain from its association with Boniface). On the other hand, the Anglo-Saxon centres in Germany were also being eclipsed as centres for mission so Willibald may have felt the need to reassert Boniface's earlier papal commission. The papacy at this time seems to have looked towards Salzburg instead, which was active in evangelising the Slavs and Avars. It is, therefore, notable that Willibald should have wanted to associate Boniface's legacy with the Slavic mission, and particularly with Würzburg which was better placed than Mainz to look to the expanding eastern frontier. Emphasising Würzburg and Eichstätt over Mainz, therefore, helped to give at least geographical plausibility to Willibald's claims. Thus, when it came to summarising Boniface's achievements in shaping German religious life, Willibald was striking a note which looked also to the future, and the way the *Bonifatiuskreise* could play an equally effective part in the new missionfields of the late-eighth century.

### **Conclusion.**

It is a notable, if obvious, feature of the saints connected to the Anglo-Saxon missions that they did not leave Germany as they found it. Their hagiographers used a variety of strategies to illustrate the effect the saints had had on central and southern Germany. Perhaps the most powerful image was of people who challenged paganism – or at least residual pagan practices within Christian communities – and consequently brought about a more rigorous Christian society. Creating such images in the context of hagiography, moreover, helped to reinforce the process of Christianisation by making those that read or heard the *vitae* confront their society's pagan past and Christian salvation. In the active environment of the *vita* as a liturgical or communal tool, a gap had to be bridged between the memorial or oral culture of the Germanic peoples and the written culture of the rigorous Christians. Familiar places were provided with an

*interpretatio romana* that does not just betray the cultural biases of the *Bonifatiuskreise* but also shows how they were interpreting the past for the Germanic peoples in terms of the Universal Church in order to stamp out divergent cultures. By placing Boniface and Wynnebald in particular at the forefront of these changes, their hagiographers were able to cement the importance of the Anglo-Saxons in some of the first examples of the literary produce of this new implanted culture. This new bond between the saints and the religious life of central and southern Germany in turn allowed people like Lull, Megingoz and Willibald to defend their positions as the spiritual heirs of Boniface on a fundamental, Christian level.

The saints, apart from rescuing people from the spiritual wilderness of paganism, were also given importance in the transformation of physical wildernesses. It was common to portray the sites of monasteries as formerly having been deep, dark forests, even though they often supplanted existing structures; this allowed the purity of the spiritual wildernesses to be illustrated. It also allowed the hagiographers to draw contrasts between the world before the Anglo-Saxons and their associates on the one hand, and how the world became on the other. These monasteries did not remain wildernesses but rather their influence spread quickly, sometimes as the institutional embodiment of the saints' transformation of Germanic culture, and often as parts of the broader infrastructure of the Carolingian kingdom. They also became significant for the spiritual defence of those kingdoms, much as many of the early Anglo-Saxon foundations like Utrecht had been about reinforcing Frankish expansion: when Saxons attacked in the 770s, Sturm could be seen to act to preserve the culture of Fulda by moving Boniface's relics and the brethren, while Wigbert intervened from beyond the grave to preserve Fritzlar. These saints therefore served to protect the very culture they

had helped to establish within central and southern Germany in the first place. Again those commemorating the saints found their position strengthened by their bond with figures so fundamental to the Christian spirit of Germany.

Germany's transformation helped to define these saints as figures with fundamental meaning for the Christian communities in the region. This allowed the cults of saints to be used for highly political purposes. Lull's position in particular seems to have been weak both in Mainz and as a leading figure in charge of mission following the death of Boniface in 754 and the rise of the bishopric of Salzburg under Virgil. The *Vita Bonifatii* carved out a position for Lull based on the influence on Boniface and his institutional reforms. Claims over the Slavic missionfield, however, were perhaps exaggerated too much and thus the *Vita Burchardi* appeared to relinquish such claims for Würzburg. The transformation of former missionfields could often be a fanciful illusion, written with equally imaginative political outlooks. Fundamental to such propaganda, however, was the idea that the Anglo-Saxons had made a significant and meaningful impact on Hesse, Thuringia and Bavaria.

## Chapter 6: Sanctity and the Transformation of Frisia and Saxony.

The conversion and Christianisation of Frisia and Saxony was an altogether different prospect from that of Hesse, Thuringia and Bavaria.<sup>1</sup> Anglo-Saxon missionaries were especially keen to work in these lands; Bede had, after all, identified the Frisians and Saxons as two of the peoples from whom the Anglo-Saxons had themselves come. The North, however, lay predominantly outside Romano-Frankish spheres and was to provide a more hostile territory for potential missionaries. Hagiographical and historical traditions about Frisia and Saxony had much in common because social, cultural and political horizons overlapped considerably. This cultural landscape, so different from the Germanic lands of the south, naturally produced *vitae* of a different character, often reflecting the harsh realities of a genuine missionfield, but occasionally producing even more fanciful stories. Moreover none were written by Anglo-Saxon religious with the exception of Alcuin's *Vita Willibrordi*. There is a chance, then, to observe whether there were different attitudes to binding saints of the Anglo-Saxon 'missions' with particular places in the North from those we have already identified in the missionfields of central and southern Germany.

Paganism was a prime concern, particularly because the *vitae* were often written close to genuine missionfields. Hagiographical representations of paganism were affected by some of the realities of the North, and the end result contributed greatly to

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<sup>1</sup> Still fundamental to studies of the conversion of Frisia and Saxony is W. Levison, *England and the Continent in the Eighth Century. The Ford Lectures Delivered in the University of Oxford in the Hilary Term 1943* (Oxford, 1946), pp. 45-69. More recently see L. E. von Padberg, *Mission und Christianisierung. Formen und Folgen bei Angelsachsen und Franken im 7. und 8. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart, 1995). For the early history of Utrecht see: R. R. Post, *Kerkgeschiedenis van Nederland in de Middeleeuwen 1* (Utrecht, 1957); M. Mostert, *754: Bonifatius bij Dokkum vermoord, Gedenkwaardige momenten en figuren uit de vaderlandse geschiedenis 7* (Hilversum, 1999). On Saxony see: R. Drögereit, 'Sachsen und Angelsachsen', *Niedersächsisches Jahrbuch für Landesgeschichte* 21 (1949), 1-62.

the definitions of northern sanctity. Also of paramount importance, as in Germany, was the association between saintly figures and particular centres of religious authority. In the context of Frisia and Saxony the important centres were Utrecht and Münster, which were dominated by the same family and had closely related hagiographical traditions.<sup>2</sup> Figures like Willibrord and Boniface were central to these traditions in stories, although their roles in the northern missionfields were exaggerated. Distinctive traditions also developed in Bremen, founded in *ca* 787 by the Anglo-Saxon Willehad in co-operation with Charlemagne. Willehad represented the last direct involvement of the Anglo-Saxons in Carolingian missionary work but, as we shall see, memorialising him was a repeatedly political act, affected by the 843 Treaty of Verdun – which disrupted both Bremen and Münster – and later by viking raids and the controversy surrounding the unification of Bremen with Hamburg.

### **The Relationship Between Frisia and Saxony.**

Mission and the Church connected Frisia and Saxony, including Westphalia, in a variety of ways in the eighth and ninth centuries.<sup>3</sup> Suidberht, possibly one of the first Anglo-Saxon missionaries to arrive on the continent with Wilfrid in 678, worked in Frisia until the arrival of Willibrord in 690, and thereafter moved to evangelise the *Boructeri*, settling at Kaiserwerth near Düsseldorf.<sup>4</sup> He was thereafter venerated in

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<sup>2</sup> I. N. Wood, *The Missionary Life: Saints and the Evangelisation of Europe 400-1050* (Harlow, 2001), pp. 100-22.

<sup>3</sup> Levison, *England and the Continent*, pp. 108-11; K. Hauck, 'Ein Utrechter Missionar auf der ältsächsischen Stammesversammlung' in V. H. Elbern (ed.), *Das erste Jahrtausend. Kultur und Kunst im werdenden Abenland an Rhein und Ruhr 2* (Düsseldorf, 1964), pp. 734-45. W. S. van Egmond, 'Converting monks: missionary activity in early medieval Frisia and Saxony', in G. Armstrong & I. N. Wood (eds.), *Christianizing Peoples and Converting Individuals*, International Medieval Research 7 (Turnhout, 2000), pp. 37-45.

<sup>4</sup> Bede, *HE* V. 11, p. 484. On Suidberht see Levison, *England and the Continent*, pp. 57-8; K. Schäferdiek, 'Fragen der frühen angelsächsischen Festlandmission', *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 28 (1994), 172-95, at 191-5; *idem*, 'Suidberht von Kaiserwerth', *Düsseldorfer Jahrbuch* 66 (1995), 1-21.

Utrecht, Kaiserwerth and, because of Willibrord, Echternach.<sup>5</sup> Later in 804 Liudger, who came from a noble Frisian family with many lands around Utrecht, became the first bishop of Münster.<sup>6</sup> Meanwhile Anglo-Saxon missionaries like Lebuin and Willehad worked in Frisia before turning their attentions towards Saxony.<sup>7</sup> There was, then, clear overlap between Frisian and Saxon missionary work, just as there was no clear demarcation between the two regions.<sup>8</sup>

Although in the eighth century both Frisia and Saxony came under the political domination of the Carolingians, the two regions retained persistent links with an independent (and incidentally, pagan) region: Denmark. The first properly-documented association comes from 777, when the *Annales regni Francorum* recorded that the Saxon chieftain Widukind, whose rebellions disrupted the work of Liudger and Willehad, ‘fled with his companions to Sigifred, king of the Danes’.<sup>9</sup> Soon afterwards Liudger, having already worked in Frisia and Saxony, is said to have wanted to preach in Denmark, but was refused permission by Charlemagne.<sup>10</sup> Later Einhard, writing at

<sup>5</sup> Schäferdiek, ‘Suidberht von Kaiserwerth’, 2-3.

<sup>6</sup> The so-called *Liudgeriden* have attracted much scholarly attention – see in particular: K. Hauck, ‘Ein Utrechter Missionar auf der ältsächsischen Stammesversammlung’ in V. H. Elbern (ed.), *Das erste Jahrtausend. Kultur und Kunst im werdenden Abendland an Rhein und Ruhr* 2 (Düsseldorf, 1964), pp. 734-45; *idem*, ‘Apostolischer Geist im genus sacerdotale der Liudgeriden. Die “Kanonisation” Liudgers und Altfrids Bischofsgrablege in Essen-Werden (Beiträge und Miszellen)’ in K. Hauck, K. Kroeschell, S. Sonderegger, D. Hüpper & G. von Oldberg (eds.), *Sprache und Recht. Beiträge zur Kulturgeschichte des Mittelalters. Festschrift für Ruth Schmidt-Wiegand zum 60. Geburtstag* 2 (Berlin & New York, 1986), pp. 191-219; K. Schmid, ‘Die “Liudgeriden”. Erscheinung und Problematik einer Adelsfamilie’, in K. Hauck & H. Mordek (eds.), *Geschichtsschreibung und geistiges Leben im Mittelalter. Festschrift Heinz Löwe* (Cologne & Vienna, 1978), pp. 71-101; S. Lebecq, ‘La famille et les apprentissages de Liudger, d’après les premiers chapitres de la Vita Liudgeri d’Altfred’, in M. Sot (ed.), *Haut Moyen-Age, culture, éducation et société. Études offertes à Pierre Riché* (Paris, 1990), pp. 283-99.

<sup>7</sup> Altfrid, *VLger* I. 13, pp. 17-18; *Vita Lebuini antiqua*, ed. A. Hofmeister, *MGH SS* 30 ii (Hanover, 1934), pp. 791-5; *VWHad* cc. 2-4, p. 843.

<sup>8</sup> On the social overlap between Frisia and Saxony, see I. N. Wood, ‘Before or after mission. Social relations across the middle and lower Rhine in the seventh and eighth centuries’, in I. L. Hansen & C. Wickham (eds.), *The Long Eighth Century: Production, Distribution and Demand*, The Transformation of the Roman World 11 (Leiden, 2000), pp. 149-66.

<sup>9</sup> *ARF* s. a. 777, p. 19: ‘... Widichindum... qui multoties sibi facinorum conscius... ad Sigifridum Danorum regem profugerat’.

<sup>10</sup> Altfrid, *VLger* I. 30, p. 36: ‘Fuit autem cupiens anxie gratia docendi Nordmannos adire, sed rex Carolus ad hoc nullatenus consensum praebuit’.

the court of Emperor Louis the Pious, commented that King Godefrid I of the Danes (d. 810) ‘had come to look upon Frisia and Saxony as belonging to him’.<sup>11</sup> It was also noted in the *Annales Bertiniani* for 838 that King Horik I demanded that Emperor Louis give Frisia and the Obrodites (a Slavic people who settled in Saxony) to him, although Louis considered the idea ludicrous.<sup>12</sup> A few years later, in 841, King Louis the German of the East Franks reportedly ‘feared that the Norsemen... might unite with the Saxons’.<sup>13</sup> In hagiography, meanwhile, Altfred referred to a *confinium Fresonum atque Danorum* – the *atque* implying a close correlation between the two groups.<sup>14</sup> Indeed he was probably writing after 826 when Louis the Pious had granted the region of Rüstingen (the northern area east of the River Ems) to the Danish king Harald Klak.<sup>15</sup> There appeared, then, to be some strong political connections between the lands north of the Franks. Ports of Viking-Age Scandinavia, such as Ribe, Hedeby and Birka, have also yielded much archaeological evidence which suggests that there were flourishing trade routes linking Frisia, Saxony, Denmark and Sweden.<sup>16</sup> Close social and economic links are also attested by Rimbert’s *Vita Anskarii* (written *ca* 870) and the *Vita Rimberti* (written *ca* 900).<sup>17</sup> What is abundantly clear is that the establishment of Christianity in Frisia and Saxony was not a matter of introducing new ideas to sealed-off localities, but the beginning of a long and complicated process of changing a cultural and economic world that stretched from the Rhineland across the Baltic to the lands of the *Rūs*.

<sup>11</sup> Einhard, *Vita Karoli* c. 14, ed G. Waitz, *MGH SRG* 25 (Hanover, 1880), p. 12: ‘Frisiam quoque atque Saxoniam haud aliter atque suas provintias aestimabat’.

<sup>12</sup> *Annales Bertiniani* s. a. 838, ed. G. Waitz, *MGH SRG* 28 (Hanover, 1883), p. 16.

<sup>13</sup> Nithard, *Historia* IV. 2, ed. G. H. Pertz, *MGH SRG* 44 (Hanover, 1870), p. 46: ‘Igitur metuens Ludovicus, ne idem Nortmanni necnon et Sclavi propter affinitatem Saxonibus... coniungerent’.

<sup>14</sup> Altfred, *VLger* I. 22, p. 26. The *atque* appears more significant when it is considered that Altfred was imitating a passage of Alcuin’s *VWbrord* (c. 10, p. 124) which referred to a *confinium Fresonum et Danorum*. The difference between the two designations implies Altfred thought Alcuin’s language was not strong enough.

<sup>15</sup> *ARF* s. a. 826, p. 94: ‘[Frisia] in qua provincia unus constiatus qui Hriustri vocatur’.

<sup>16</sup> For Hedeby see H. Jankuhn, *Haiithabu* (Neumünster, 1986); on Ribe see S. Jensen, *The Vikings of Ribe*, trans. G. Bibby (Ribe 1991); on Birka see B. Ambrosiani & H. Clarke (eds), *Early Investigations and Future Plans*, Birka Studies 1 (Stockholm, 1992).

<sup>17</sup> For example: Rimbert, *VA* cc. 20 and 27, pp. 45 and 59; *Vita Rimberti* c. 18, ed. Waitz, *MGH SRG* 55 (Hanover, 1884), pp. 81-99 at pp. 95-6.

The Anglo-Saxons saw themselves as belonging to part of this non-Frankish northern world. Archaeological finds, such as sceattas, indicate lively trade routes through the North Sea.<sup>18</sup> The Frisians, Saxons and Danes were all named by Bede as belonging to the same Germanic stock as the Anglo-Saxons.<sup>19</sup> Alcuin also imagined that Willibrord had travelled through Frisia, skirted around Saxony, and faced a fierce Danish king.<sup>20</sup> Furthermore Alfrid related stories which suggest strong, if sometimes tense, trading links between Frisia and Northumbria.<sup>21</sup> Some evidence is more difficult to deal with because the First Viking Age, and the establishment of the Danelaw in particular, brought Anglo-Saxon England firmly within the Scandinavian orbit. The epic *Beowulf*, for example, is an Old English poem firmly set within a Scandinavian heroic world, but the text has been variously dated between the eighth and tenth centuries, making it impossible to say if it indicates anything about Anglo-Saxon culture in the time of Willibrord and Boniface.<sup>22</sup> Overall, however, it would seem that the Anglo-Saxon missionaries were entering a world in which their society was in many ways already a part.

### **Paganism in Frisia and Saxony.**

Pagan religions in Frisian and Saxony were presented by hagiographers of the mission in a variety of misleading ways, just as paganism in Hesse, Thuringia and Bavaria had

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<sup>18</sup> D. M. Wilson, 'England and the Continent in the eighth century: an archaeological viewpoint', in *Angli e sassoni al di qua e al di là del mare*, Settimane di studio del centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo 32 (Spoleto, 1986), pp. 219-44.; D. Parsons, 'England and the Low Countries at the time of St Willibrord', in E. de Bièvre (ed.), *Utrecht, Britain and the Continent: Archaeology, Art and Architecture*, British Archaeological Association Conference Transactions 18 (London, 1996), pp. 30-48; S. Lebecq, 'Routes of change: production and distribution in the West (5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> century)', in L. Webster & M. Brown (eds.), *The Transformation of the Roman World AD 400-900* (London, 1997), pp. 67-78 at pp. 72-8.

<sup>19</sup> Bede, *HE* I. 5 and V. 9, pp. 50 and 476.

<sup>20</sup> Alcuin, *VWbrord* c. 9, pp. 123-4.

<sup>21</sup> Alfrid, *VLger* I. 11-12, p. 16.

<sup>22</sup> For a range of possibilities see the essays in C. Chase (ed.), *The Dating of Beowulf* (Toronto, 1981).

been. In hagiographical representations of Saxony in particular there is no evidence of any attempt to understand the pre-Christian past; instead the Saxons were portrayed in Christian literary terms, creating ‘the representation of Christian universality in a gentile world’.<sup>23</sup> It is striking, for example, how there is no mention of the Irminsul Tree – the great pagan shrine destroyed by Charlemagne in 772 – in any of the *vitae*, despite its supposed centrality to ‘public’ Saxon religion.<sup>24</sup> Modern historians therefore have to be cautious to distinguish between the fact of paganism (although that is always obscured) and the different ways in which a Christian writer might have perceived paganism in the eighth and ninth centuries.

Despite these problems, presentations of paganism do appear qualitatively different when used with reference to Frisia and Saxony than when they refer to Germany. Paganism appears, for example, to be far more aggressive. In the *Vita Bonifatii*, Boniface was unable to work in Frisia because of a pagan uprising in 716, and of course went on to be martyred at Dokkum in 754 by angry pagans.<sup>25</sup> This can be contrasted with the way Boniface was allegedly able to chop down the Oak of Jupiter unchallenged in Hesse.<sup>26</sup> Willibrord, meanwhile, was said to have encountered problems in Fositeland (modern Heligoland, off the western coast of Schleswig-Holstein) and narrowly avoided execution when rune stones cast by pagans landed in

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<sup>23</sup> L. E. von Padberg, ‘Zum Sachsenbild in hagiographischen Quellen’, *Studien zur Sachsenforschung* 12 (1999), 173-91, p. 191: ‘... die Repräsentanz der christlichen Universalität in einer gentilen Welt’.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 185. On the contrast between ‘public’ (pan-Saxon?) paganisms and ‘private’ or ‘family’ paganisms, see I. N. Wood, ‘Pagan religion and superstition east of the Rhine from the fifth to the ninth centuries’, in G. Ausenda (ed.), *After Empire: Towards an Ethnology of Europe's Barbarians* (Woodbridge, 1995), pp. 253-79 at pp. 261-3. The destruction of the Irminsul is recorded in *ARF* s. a. 772, p. 13.

<sup>25</sup> Willibald, *VB* cc. 4 and 8, pp. 16-17 and 48-51. It has been suggested on the evidence of the *VB* that Boniface was murdered by pirates rather than martyred by pagans but, since Willibald is unambiguous in saying he thought Boniface was martyred, it is dangerous to use the *VB* to prove any alternative state of affairs: see J. T. Palmer, ‘The Frankish cult of martyrs and the case of the two saints Boniface’, *Revue bénédictine* (forthcoming).

<sup>26</sup> Willibald, *VB* c. 6, p. 31.

his favour.<sup>27</sup> The author of the *Vita Willehadi*, imitating the story of Willibrord, wrote that Willehad had also narrowly avoided death after lots were cast in his favour in Frisia.<sup>28</sup> The levels of artistic licence may be questioned in these last two works, especially the latter, but they still attest to a general assumption: Frisia was at least expected to be far less hospitable than Germany.

The Saxons were also renowned for their ferocity.<sup>29</sup> In the *Vita Sturmi* and the *Vita Wigberti*, as was seen in the previous chapter, the Saxons were seen as enemies of the Church for their attacks on Fulda and Fritzlar.<sup>30</sup> Altfred recounted how Lebuin's church at Deventer in Saxony had also suffered repeated attacks.<sup>31</sup> When Lebuin himself challenged the Saxon leaders (*satraps*) at Marklô, according to the later *Vita Lebuini antiqua*, he suffered rebukes and had stones thrown at him.<sup>32</sup> Ultimately Lebuin could make little headway in the conversion of the Saxons. Likewise Willehad was said to have suffered great difficulties in his Saxon mission. Many of his companions were even said to have been martyred for destroying shrines at Drenthe.<sup>33</sup> Willehad himself only narrowly escaped because his assailant's axe struck an amulet the saint wore around his neck.<sup>34</sup> It was only with the backing of Charlemagne after 781, and again after 786, that Willehad was said to have made any progress at all, echoing Eigil's sentiment that Fulda could only be protected properly from the Saxons by

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<sup>27</sup> Alcuin, *VWbrord* cc. 10-11, pp. 124-6.

<sup>28</sup> *VWhad* c. 3, p. 843.

<sup>29</sup> Von Padberg, 'Zum Sachsenbild', p. 186. See for example Einhard, *Vita Karoli* c. 7, pp. 7-8 and the references to the Saxons' *natura feroces*.

<sup>30</sup> Eigil, *VS* c. 24, p. 159; Lupus, *VWig* cc. 13-22, pp. 41-2.

<sup>31</sup> Altfred, *VLger* I. 14, pp. 18-19.

<sup>32</sup> *Vita Lebuini antiqua* c. 6, pp. 793-4. The story of Marklô is much discussed for what it says about Saxon political structures. It is not, however, mentioned in the earlier account of Lebuin's career by Altfred, and is likely to provide an illustration of Lebuin's sanctity rather than Saxon politics: see Hauck, 'Ein Utrechter Missionar', pp. 744-5.

<sup>33</sup> *VWhad* c. 4, p. 843.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, c. 4, p. 843.

Charlemagne's force of arms.<sup>35</sup> It had not been for nothing that Isidore of Seville had commented that the Saxons were so called because they were 'hard' (*durus*), implying that they were like rocks (*saxae*).<sup>36</sup> In the missionary *vitae* of the eighth and ninth centuries, the Saxons appear to have lived up to their reputation. This representation of the Saxons was no doubt in part influenced by the military situation of the 770s and 780s,<sup>37</sup> but the consistency of the image suggests that it had some currency.

There are some literary parallels between accounts of mission in Frisia and Germany. Alcuin's tells a story of how Willibrord travelled to Fositeland and proved the redundancy of a local pagan holy place, much as Boniface had attacked the shrine at Geismar.<sup>38</sup> The shrine in Fositeland was a natural spring, which Willibrord blessed and used to baptise some of his followers.<sup>39</sup> He then proceeded to horrify watching pagans by slaughtering some nearby sacred cattle.<sup>40</sup> The basic elements of the story – a natural pagan shrine being defaced to Christian ends to the horror of the watching crowd – all invite comparison with Willibald's story of Boniface felling the Oak of Jupiter.<sup>41</sup> The god Fosite is, unlike Jupiter, not a Roman god, so this element of the story might indicate some genuine knowledge of Frisian paganism. Alcuin's background makes this plausible: his home town of York was closely connected to Frisia, as was seen above,

<sup>35</sup> *VWhad* c. 5, pp. 843-4; Eigil, *VS* c. 25, pp. 160-1.

<sup>36</sup> Isidore, *Etymologiarum*, ed. W. M. Lindsay, *Scriptorum Classicorum Bibliotheca Oxonensis* (2 vols., Oxford, 1911), IX. 2. 100: 'Saxonum gens in Oceani litoribus et paludibus inviis sita, virtute atque agilitate habilis. Unde et appellata, quod sit durum, et validissimum genus hominum et praestans ceteris piraticis'.

<sup>37</sup> Von Padberg, 'Zum Sachsenbild', pp. 185-6.

<sup>38</sup> Alcuin, *VWbrord* c. 10, p. 124: '... [Willibrordus] pervenit in confinio Fresonum et Daenorum ad quandam insulam, quae a quodam deo suo Fositae ab accolis terrae Fositesland appellabatur, quia in ea eiudem dei fana fuere constructa...'

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, c. 10, pp. 124-5: '... a fonte, qui ibi ebulliebat, aquam haurire nisi tacens praesummebat... Sed parvi pendens stultam loci illius religionem vel ferocissimum regis animnum, qui violatores sacrorum illius atrocissima morte damnare solebat, igitur tres homines in eo fonte cum invocatione sanctae Trinitatis baptizavit...'

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, c. 10, p. 125: '... et animalia in ea terra pascentia in cibaria suis mactare praecepit. Quod pagani intuentes, arbitrabantur, eos vel in fuorem verti vel etiam veloci morte perire'.

<sup>41</sup> Wood, 'Pagan religion and superstitions', p. 257; *idem*, *The Missionary Life*, p. 87.

and he is known to have had Frisian students, including Liudger.<sup>42</sup> The story of Willibrord in Fositeland was echoed closely by Altfrid in his *Vita Liudgeri* when he discussed Liudger's alleged pastoral work on the same island.<sup>43</sup> In the Utrecht-Münster tradition we therefore have an incremental problem: Frisian hagiographical traditions began with a factual basis; these were put into pre-existing hagiographical models, which were then developed without critical attempts to distinguish between the fact and the model. There was no clear line between the fact and fiction of paganism, just as was the case in Germany.

Altfrid, when he deviates from hagiographical models, does provide some of the richest evidence for non-Christian practices in early Frisia, but these too are problematical. He told the story, for example, of how Liudger's great-grandmother was going to kill Liafburg, his mother, when she was a newborn baby.<sup>44</sup> This was apparently permissible as long as the newborn had not yet tasted food. From this story one can infer much about pre-Christian attitudes to infanticide in Frisia. Rob Meens has convincingly argued that the story should be compared to crimes in the *Lex Frisionum* and sins mentioned in a book of penance which might have been owned by Willibrord himself.<sup>45</sup> But these attitudes, as von Padberg has also argued, had been re-employed by Altfrid in a theological context to illustrate how the *Liudgeriden* were predestined to

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<sup>42</sup> See above, pp. 253.

<sup>43</sup> Altfrid, *VLger* I. 22, pp. 26-7: '[Liudger] transfretavit in confinio Fresonum atque Denorum ad quandam insulam, quae a nomine Dei sui falsi Fosete, Foseteslant est appellata... Cumque habitatores terrae illius fide Christi imbueret, baptizavit eos cum invocatione sanctae Trinitatis, in fonte qui ibi ebulliebat, in quo sanctus Willibrordus prius homines tres baptizaverat...' [underlined portions indicate parallels with the sections of the *Vita Willibrordi* cited above in nn. 39 and 40]. Wood notes that, as well as Altfrid paralleling Alcuin, Liudger might actually have worked in Fositeland in order to imitate Willibrord's work (Wood, *The Missionary Life*, p. 111).

<sup>44</sup> Altfrid, *VLger* I. 6-7, pp. 11-12.

<sup>45</sup> R. Meens, 'Willibrords boeteboek?', *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis* 106 (1993), 163-78, esp. 168-9.

Christian greatness.<sup>46</sup> Altfred probably understood such pre-Christian practices, not through knowledge of early Frisia, but from sources such as the penitential which sought to stamp out things of which the Church might disapprove. These could be prone to exaggeration and heresy, as illustrated by some of the implausible 'pagan practices' listed in the *Indiculus superstitionem* or Charlemagne's first Saxon capitulary.<sup>47</sup> The *Liudgeriden* in the *Vita Liudgeri* likely inhabited a demonised and partly imaginary past, in which echoes of a real past are perhaps more coincidental or convenient than deliberate on Altfred's part.<sup>48</sup>

In Utrecht, possibly also in the mid-ninth century, the *Vita altera Bonifatii* provides a northern tradition that clearly owes nothing to anything resembling genuine pagan practices. Discussing Boniface's missionary exploits, it reads:<sup>49</sup>

And beforehand certain of them cultivated their groves and temples of demons and ghosts. But Boniface, carrying by hand a divine scythe, banished totally all of the fauns and satyrs, which not a few of the pagans called gods of the woods. But he similarly persuaded the dryads and dell-nymphs and other sorcerers of trifling divine portents to abandon all Christians... This man (full of the spirit of God) constructed a famous monastery and excellent churches, as well as altars suitable for divine sacrifice, in the places from which the abovementioned vanities were expelled; and there he decided to invoke the name of the God of Life, where the idol of death had long been cherished by the people.

<sup>46</sup> L. E. von Padberg, *Heilige und Familie. Studien zur Bedeutung familiengebundener Aspekte in den Viten des Verwandten- und Schülerkreises um Willibrord, Bonifatius und Liudger*, Quellen und Abhandlungen zur mittelhochdeutschen Kirchengeschichte 83 (Münster, 1980, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. Mainz, 1997), p. 99.

<sup>47</sup> *Capitulatio de partibus Saxoniae* 1, ed. A. Boretius, *MGH Cap.* 1 (Hanover, 1883), pp. 68-70.

<sup>48</sup> On this problem in general, L. E. von Padberg, 'Christen und Heiden. Zur Sicht des Heidentums in ausgewählter angelsachsen und fränkischer Überlieferung des 7. und 8. Jahrhunderts', in H. Keller & N. Staubach (eds.), *Iconologia Sacra: Mythos, Bildkunst und Dichtung in der Religions- und Sozialgeschichte Alteuropas. Festschrift für Karl Hauck zum 75. Geburtstag*, Arbeiten zur Frühmittelalterforschung 23 (Berlin, 1994), pp. 291-312.

<sup>49</sup> *VaB* c. 8, p. 68: 'Et illi quidem antea in suis lucis ac delubris larvas lemuresque coluerant; sed Bonifacius, falcem manu tenens divinam, omnes faunos et sathyros, quos nonnulli paganorum silvestres deos appellant, funditus extirpavit. Similiter autem et driades napeasque et cetera huiusmodi magis portenta quam numina christianis omnibus nauci pendere persuasit... Vir iste spiritu Dei plenus in locis, a quibus supradictas vanitates expulerat, ilico monasteria inclita et basilicas eximias, altaria quoque divinis sacrificiis apta contruxit ibique invocari statuit nomen Dei viri, ubi mortua ydola ab indigenis eatenus colebantur'.

It is unclear to where exactly the author of the work was referring. Ian Wood located the story in *Fresia Ulterior* – that is, Frisia north of the Rhine.<sup>50</sup> But the chapter actually begins: ‘However, hearing that a great many of the Germans were without God, he diverted there [from Utrecht].’<sup>51</sup> The following chapter then begins with Boniface in Alemannia, Bavaria and Thuringia.<sup>52</sup> The implication is that the paganism described refers to Germany. If so, it was a Germany full of Greco-Roman demons rather than the Roman gods recorded by the *Bonifatiuskreise*. The St Martin’s monk either did not know about Germanic paganisms or did not care for them in the context of his work.

The St Martin’s monk’s use of Greco-Roman images is perhaps derived loosely from Isidore of Seville’s *Etymologiae*, from which the monk repeatedly quoted. Isidore described fauns, demons, dryads and nymphs in a lengthy discussion of pagan and heretical superstitions that, perhaps significantly, was intended to be contrasted negatively with orthodox Christianity.<sup>53</sup> He also later mentions fauns and satyrs together in a borrowing from Jerome’s *Vita Pauli*, which tells the story of St Paul of Thebes, the first hermit.<sup>54</sup> It takes little imagination to transform the *silvae* of Latin and Greek legend into the *silvae* that stretched across Germany. But despite the direct quotations from Isidore elsewhere in the *Vita altera Bonifatii*, the passage on paganism seems to be a largely independent construction. Moreover, in the references to *lemures* and *nepeae*, and indeed in the overall imagery of the passage, the monk displayed a knowledge of pagan pastoral poetry that extended beyond Isidore and perhaps to the

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<sup>50</sup> Wood, *The Missionary Life*, p. 103.

<sup>51</sup> *VaB* c. 8, p. 67: ‘Audito autem, quod Germanorum plurima multitudo sine Deo esset, illuc letabundus divertit...’

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, c. 9, p. 68.

<sup>53</sup> Isidore, *Etymologiae*, VIII. 11. 10-16, 87, 96-7.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, XI. 3. 21.

works of Virgil, from which Carolingian poets took renewed influence in the ninth century.<sup>55</sup>

This willingness to experiment with the ideas of pagan poetry – albeit to create a negative image of the countryside – perhaps suggests connections between the monk and Theodulf of Orléans. Theodulf was notable at the Carolingian court for his love of Virgilian poetry.<sup>56</sup> He also shared with the St Martin's monk a distaste for the popularity of miracle stories, although it has perhaps been exaggerated how unusual such *realismus* was in the eighth and ninth centuries.<sup>57</sup> These overlaps in literary culture set up an intriguing contrast with Alcuin, who disliked Virgil, packed the *Vita Willibrordi* with miracle stories and, significantly, did not get on with Theodulf. The two intellectuals had duelled with poetry at court (even over the relative merits of porridge!) but had had a more serious clash in the case of the escaped convict which, as was seen in chapter one, served to illustrate how far out of Charlemagne's favour Alcuin had fallen in his latter days.<sup>58</sup> Whether these disagreements are reflected in the *Vita altera Bonifatii* is unclear. It is, however, striking that it should be Boniface and Willibrord – saints that had concerned Alcuin – rather than anyone else who received

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<sup>55</sup> On the Carolingian interest in Virgil, and in particular the *Eclogues*, see M. Garrison, 'The emergence of Carolingian Latin literature and the court of Charlemagne', in R. McKitterick (ed.), *Carolingian Culture: Emulation and Innovation* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 111-40 at pp. 114-15.

<sup>56</sup> On Theodulf's poetic interests, see F. J. E. Raby, *A History of Christian-Latin Poetry from the Beginnings to the Close of the Middle Ages* (2<sup>nd</sup> edn., Oxford, 1953), pp. 171-7, esp. p. 172.

<sup>57</sup> G. Barone, 'Une hagiographie sans miracles. Observations en marge de quelques vies du X<sup>e</sup> siècle', in *Les fonctions des saints dans le monde occidental (III<sup>e</sup>-XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle)*, Collection de l'École Française de Rome 149 (Rome, 1991), pp. 435-46, for example, cites the examples of the *VA* and *Vita Rimberti* for their lack of miracles and then emphasises that they came late in the ninth century, setting the scene for tenth-century *realismus*. Note, however, that there are few miracles in Willibald's *VB*, Hygeburg's *VWb* and *VWyn*, Liudger's *VG*, Alfrid's *VLger*, Eigil's *VS*, or indeed many Merovingian *vitae*: see I. N. Wood, 'Pagans and holy men, 600-800', in P. Ní Chatháin & M. Richter (eds.), *Irland und die Christenheit* (Stuttgart, 1987), pp. 347-61 at pp. 354-5.

<sup>58</sup> Alcuin, *Epistolae* nos. 246, 247, 249, pp. 398-9, 399-401, 401-4. On Alcuin and Theodulf's poetic fights, see: A. Orchard, 'Wish you were here: Alcuin's court poetry and the boys back home', in S. Rees Jones, R. Marks & A. J. Minnis (eds.), *Courts and Regions in Medieval Europe* (York, 2000), pp. 21-43 at pp. 35-9; Garrison, 'The emergence of Carolingian Latin literature', pp. 120-1; D. Schaller, 'Poetic rivalries at the court of Charlemagne', in R. R. Bolgar (ed.), *Classical Influences on European Culture 500-1500* (Cambridge, 1973), pp. 151-7. See chapter one, p. 62.

this distinctive hagiographical treatment at a time when Theodulf's influence could be felt. It is also notable that the *Vita altera Bonifatii* is so different from the *vitae* about Gregory, Liudger and Lebuin when those Frisian-Saxon traditions are closely associated with Alcuinian influence. In Utrecht, then, it is possible that the development of legends about Boniface as a missionary – the kinds of stories which establish individuals as the ‘very special dead’ – were influenced by rival literary circles which centred on a personality clash.

The different literary worlds of the two schools are illustrated further by the contrast between the St Martin's monk's Boniface fighting Greco-Roman creatures and Alcuin's Willibrord challenging legendary Germanic figures. Alcuin told a story about Willibrord in which his hero ‘travelled to the most ferocious people of the Danes’ and came face-to-face with a character who might come straight out of a heroic poem: the king Ongendus.<sup>59</sup> There is no good reason to suppose that this story is remotely true, and indeed the idea of Willibrord travelling so far to Denmark when he could barely get into *Fresia Ulterior* sounds implausible. The name of King Ongendus has attracted comparison, however, with a character in *Beowulf* called Ongentheow.<sup>60</sup> There are many reasons to be cautious: in *Beowulf* Ongentheow is Swedish, not Danish, and the names ‘Ongentheow’ and ‘Ongendus’ are not strictly equivalents.<sup>61</sup> These arguments can only count against Alcuin referring to *Beowulf* as it has been transmitted to us, which is unlikely to be how he would have encountered the story. Maybe Alcuin, sitting writing in Tours, distantly remembered hearing a story about some ferocious

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<sup>59</sup> Alcuin, *VWbrord* c. 9, pp. 123-4: ‘... ad ferocissimos Danorum populos iter euangelizandi convertit. Ibi tamen, ut fertur, regnabat Ongendus, homo omni fera crudelior et omni lapide durior, qui tamen, iubente Deo, veritatis praeconem honorifice tractabat’.

<sup>60</sup> See, for example, A. G. Weiler, *Willibrords Missie: Christendom en Cultuur in de Zevende en Achste Eeuw* (Hilversum, 1989), p. 127.

<sup>61</sup> Levison, *MGH SRM* 7, pp. 123-4 n. 3.

Scandinavian king with some name like 'Ongendus'; Alcuin himself prefaced the story with the phrase *ut fertur*, 'so we are told'. From other sources it becomes clearer that Alcuin knew such stories well, although he sometimes kept a critical distance from them.<sup>62</sup> It remains tempting, therefore, to see heroic tradition creeping into hagiographical tradition. Willibrord, then, appeared as a quasi-heroic figure himself, facing up to one of the most feared figures in the North and earning a friendly reception.

Images of paganism in Frisia and Saxony were overall quite different from those written in Germany. There might be a less fanciful basis for many stories about the pagan past, but distortion is rarely far away. Being written in places that were still imperfectly Christianised, they are also more likely to reflect real missionary concerns and experiences.<sup>63</sup> Throughout there is a pervading sense of danger, of a missionfield where missionaries were not welcome and martyrdom and murder were commonplace. Within this the missionaries were not described as victorious figures making light of their calling in the face of bemused onlookers, but rather as quasi-heroic people doing their best against the odds to make a Christian foothold in the frozen North. There was, as we will see further below, a clear indebtedness to these figures expressed by later churchmen and monks. While Willibald and Hygeburg had created a new Romanised past for the people of Hesse, Thuringia and Bavaria, in Frisia and Saxony hagiographers had created a new, partly mythological past where new Romano-Christian ideals gave new expression to more traditional northern ideals.

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<sup>62</sup> D. A. Bullough, 'What has Ingeld to do with Lindisfarne?', *Anglo-Saxon England* 22 (1993), 93-126. C. Chase ('Saints' Lives, royal Lives and the date of Beowulf', in Chase, *The Dating of Beowulf*, pp. 161-71) has denied that there is any heroic mood in the *VWbrord*, although the Ongendus story to me does have something of that character.

<sup>63</sup> Wood, *The Missionary Life*, p. 112.

### Adopting the Saints in Frisia.

Hagiographers of the Utrecht-Münster tradition carefully developed portrayals of the Anglo-Saxon missionaries in order to create a closer bond between those saints and the communities that venerated them. This was in contrast to the situation in Germany, where the emphasis was on promoting, rather than claiming, particular saints. In central and southern Germany hagiography was produced predominantly by the *Bonifatiuskreise* themselves, or at least groups closely connected to them. Where there were independent schools of hagiography, such as in Arbeo's Freising, there was no mention of the Anglo-Saxons. In Frisia and Saxony, however, there appears to have been a greater tradition of the indigenous population writing about the Anglo-Saxons. In the long-term this led to some odd claims; in the fourteenth century, for example, Willibrord was said to have been a Frisian.<sup>64</sup> Portrayals of the missionaries battling paganism were, as we have just seen, vital to this process, but were also only the beginning: hagiographers were also careful to bind the saints to particular groups of people and particular churches in order to reap the spiritual and political benefits from them.

### *Willibrord and the 'Liudgeriden'.*

The veneration of Willibrord in Frisia is peculiar because he was not afforded the honour of a *vita*. Rather, he appeared as an important secondary character in the early Frisian *vitae* of Boniface, Gregory and Liudger. Alcuin's *Vita Willibrordi* was referred to by Altfred, and it is likely that Liudger, who was taught by Alcuin, had also read the work.<sup>65</sup> But Alcuin's *vita* was written for the monks at Echternach, not Utrecht, and

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<sup>64</sup> On the development of such traditions, see R. H. Bremmer, 'Willibrord through Anglo-Saxon and Frisian eyes: from history to myth', *Freisische Studien* 1 (1992), 1-28.

<sup>65</sup> Wood, *The Missionary Life*, pp. 111-12.

consequently Alcuin focused little on Willibrord's time in Frisia.<sup>66</sup> It is unlikely that the *Vita Willibrordi* was an ideal text for the veneration of the saint in the North. It is therefore important to consider what Willibrord's significance was to the Frisians and how he was portrayed in relation to the Northern lands.

Wilhelm Levison once described Willibrord's significance in history with the words 'he was the first', by which he meant that Willibrord had been a trailblazer for many developments in the Frankish Church in the century that followed.<sup>67</sup> It is a sentiment that early Christian communities in Utrecht would have appreciated. Liudger, describing the conversion of Frisia in the *Vita Gregorii*, wrote 'first in this was St Willibrord, archbishop – also called Clemens – who with his disciples initiated the conversion of those peoples with the rudiments of Christian faith'.<sup>68</sup> In the *Vita altera Bonifatii* Willibrord was described as 'a great propagator of the Christian faith and one whom we think of as amongst Boniface and many others [of saintly virtue]'.<sup>69</sup> Willibrord was remembered as playing a fundamental founding role in the Frisian mission, from which all later evangelical and pastoral work stemmed. Moreover Wilfrid and Ecgberht – the original masterminds behind the Frisian mission – were excluded from the narrative, reinforcing the image of Willibrord as Frisia's original apostolic

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<sup>66</sup> Alcuin's account of Willibrord in *Fresia ceterior* has led to great criticism from modern historians for being inaccurate and cursory. See: W. H. Fritze, 'Zur Entstehungsgeschichte des Bistums Utrecht. Franken und Freisen 690-734', *Rheinische Vierteljahrsblätter* 35 (1971), 107-51 esp. 132-9; J. Schroeder, 'Willibrord – Erzbischof von Utrecht oder Abt von Echternach? Das Leben und Wirken des angelsächsischen Missionars aus der Sicht der frühmittelalterlichen Hagiographie', in P. Bange & A.G. Weiler (eds.) *Willibrord, zijn wereld en zijn werk*, *Middeleeuwse Studies* 6 (Nijmegen, 1990), pp. 348-57 at pp. 349-52.

<sup>67</sup> W. Levison, 'St Willibrord and his place in history', *The Durham University Journal* 32 (1940), 23-41 reprinted in his *Aus Rheinischer und Fränkischer Frühzeit* (Dusseldorf, 1948), pp. 314-29; sympathetically evaluated in A. Angenendt, "'Er war der erste...'" Willibrords historische Stellung' in P. Bange & A. G. Weiler (eds.), *Willibrord, zijn wereld en zijn werk*, *Middeleeuwse Studies* 6 (Nijmegen, 1990), pp. 13-34.

<sup>68</sup> Liudger, *VG* c. 10, p. 75: '... in qua primus sanctus Willibrordus cognomento Clemens archiepiscopus in conversione gentis illius initiavit rudimenta christianae fidei cum discipulis suis'.

<sup>69</sup> *VaB* c. 6, p. 66: '... Willibrordus... magnus christiane religionis propagator et iste de quo agimus ammirabilis Bonifacius multique alii, quos in libro Hystorie Anglorum virtutibus claruisse Beda commemorat'.

figure.<sup>70</sup> The author of the *Vita altera Bonifatii* certainly knew Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica*, and it is likely that Liudger had read the work if only at York, so the silence on Willibrord's predecessors appears deliberate.<sup>71</sup> There is also silence on Willibrord's association with Echternach and the fact that he had to flee Frisia. The general impression of Willibrord in the Frisian *vitae*, therefore, is of a man remembered exclusively as the first person to evangelise the Frisian people. But even this might be an exaggeration because it is not clear that Willibrord worked much beyond the River Lek.<sup>72</sup> Indeed the charter evidence suggests that Echternach, rather than Utrecht, was Willibrord's real home.<sup>73</sup>

Christians from Frisia appear to have venerated Willibrord more as time progressed. Altfrid portrayed him as a figure bound closely to early Christianity in Frisia, not just as a missionary, but as a man with connections to the *Liudgeriden* (the family of Liudger). The *Liudgeriden* were the first Christian family of the Frisians, so it was claimed, and had adopted the religion after the patriarch Wrrsing [sic] had spent time in exile in Neustria in order to escape from Radbod.<sup>74</sup> Willibrord's role came a little later when Adelburga, Liudger's maternal grandmother, handed over her brothers to him to be trained as Frisia's first indigenous clerics.<sup>75</sup> Many years after Willibrord's death, according to Altfrid, Liudger followed in his predecessor's image by preaching

<sup>70</sup> On the significance of Wilfrid and Ecgberht in the background to Willibrord's mission, see: M. Richter, 'Der irische Hintergrund der angelsächsischen Mission', in H. Löwe (ed.), *Die Iren und Europa im früheren Mittelalter* (Stuttgart, 1982), pp. 120-37; *idem*, 'The young Willibrord', in G. Kiesel & J. Schroeder (eds.), *Willibrord, Apostel der Niederlande, Gründer der Abtei Echternach. Gedenkgabe zum 1250. Todestag des angelsächsischen Missionars* (Luxembourg, 1989), pp. 25-30; K. Schäferdiek, 'Fragen der frühen angelsächsischen Festlandmission', *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 28 (1994), 172-95.

<sup>71</sup> *VaB* c. 6, p. 66 n. 1; on Liudger in York, Altfrid, *VLger* I. 11-12, pp. 16-17.

<sup>72</sup> H. Löwe, 'Pirmin, Willibrord und Bonifatius: Ihre Bedeutung für die Missionsgeschichte ihrer Zeit', *La conversione al cristianesimo dell'alto medioevo*, Settimane di studio del centro Italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo 14 (Spoleto, 1967), 217-61, reprinted in K. Schäferdiek (ed.), *Die Kirche des früheren Mittelalters* 1, Kirchengeschichte als Missionsgeschichte 2: 1 (Munich, 1978), pp. 192-226 at pp. 201-3.; pp. 203-4; Fritze, 'Zur Entstehungsgeschichte', 109-10.

<sup>73</sup> Weiler, *Willibrords Missie*, p. 151.

<sup>74</sup> Altfrid, *VLger* I. 1-3, pp. 6-8.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, I. 5, p. 10

in Fositeland, establishing an *Eigenkloster* (at Werden), and desiring to convert Denmark without success.<sup>76</sup> Willibrord's association with the *Liudgeriden*, therefore, established the family as a spiritual family as well as a natural family, and also helped bind Liudger's work with Willibrord's original mission.<sup>77</sup> Adopting the saint in this manner might also suggest some ongoing effort to control the cult of Willibrord in Utrecht by the *Liudgeriden*.<sup>78</sup>

The *Liudgeriden* were not the only aristocratic family to have a close relationship with Willibrord, although they were the only group to commemorate it in a *vita*. Charters preserved by Echternach and in Theotfrid's *Vita Willibrordi* reveal Willibrord to have been a focal point through whom groups on the Frankish-Frisian frontier could express their political allegiances through land grants.<sup>79</sup> This can in part be explained by the political role Willibrord played in supporting Pippin II's subjugation of the region.<sup>80</sup> He was bound to Pippin through Echternach, which Willibrord held on oath.<sup>81</sup> Subsequent gifts from Pippin were made directly to the monastery, rather than the Anglo-Saxon. Magnates from the Frankish-Frisian frontier, however, carefully made their gifts directly to Willibrord. By doing so, families newly under Frankish dominion could express allegiance to the Pippinids whilst also

<sup>76</sup> Alfrid, *VLger* I. 21-22 and I. 30, pp. 24-6 and 36; Wood, *The Missionary Life*, pp. 110-11.

<sup>77</sup> Hauck, 'Apostolischer Geist', pp. 192-6; von Padberg, *Heilige und Familie*, pp. 102-3, 138-9. To say, as von Padberg does, that Alfrid had no prosopographical interest in the *Liudgeriden* seems too strong given that it is precisely because of the natural family ties that he was writing.

<sup>78</sup> For a stimulating consideration of the importance of aristocratic families in the commemoration of bishops as saints, combined with an appreciation of rival 'centres of power', see: F. Theuws, 'Maastricht as a centre of power in the early Middle Ages', in M. de Jong & F. Theuws (eds.), *Topographies of Power in the Early Middle Ages, The Transformation of the Roman World 6* (Leiden, 2001), pp. 155-216.

<sup>79</sup> M. Costambeys, 'An aristocratic community on the northern Frankish frontier 690-726', *Early Medieval Europe* 3. 1 (1994), 39-62.

<sup>80</sup> Levison, 'St Willibrord', p. 318; A. Angenendt, 'Willibrord im Dienste der Karolinger', *Annalen des historischen Vereins für den Niederrhein* 175 (1973), 63-113 at 107-12; A. Angenendt, "'Er war der erste..." Willibrords historische Stellung' in P. Bange & A. G. Weiler (eds.), *Willibrord, zijn wereld en zijk werk*, *Middelleeuwse Studies* 6 (Nijmegen, 1990), pp. 13-34 at pp. 17-18. H. Löwe, 'Pirmin, Willibrord und Bonifatius', pp. 201-3.

<sup>81</sup> *Diplomata maiorum domus e stirpe Arnulforum* no. 5, ed. G. H. Pertz, *MGH Dip.* 1 (Hanover, 1872), pp. 94-5.

indicating some degree of independence.<sup>82</sup> Meanwhile Willibrord's personal power was strengthened to the extent that Charles Martel was forced to court his support in order to secure later Frisian conquests.<sup>83</sup> He was, therefore, a far more political figure than the Frisian *vitae* – or even the *Vita Bonifatii* – suggest. It might therefore be no coincidence that when a *vita* was finally written it came from Alcuin, a relative once closely bound to Pippinid/ Carolingian power. When Willibrord is seen in his political context, one wonders whether he would have appeared to be a figure worthy of canonisation to his contemporaries on the continent or whether he was too political a figure. If the latter case was true, this might explain why Willibrord only appeared as an idealised figure in *vitae* many years after his death.<sup>84</sup> At the same time, however, he had clearly allied himself with many of the early Christian families of the North, and for that reason played an important part in the family history of the *Liudgeriden*.

The spiritual significance of any cult of Willibrord was perhaps also tempered when it was eclipsed by the cult of Boniface.<sup>85</sup> It has been suggested that the first continental attempts to promote any cult of Willibrord came from Boniface when he moved to Frisia in 753;<sup>86</sup> if so, then the cult of Willibrord in Frisia was dependent on Boniface from the beginning. Although pagan Frisians had murdered Boniface, according to Willibald the Frisian people 'embraced after Boniface's death the teaching

<sup>82</sup> Costambeys, 'An aristocratic community', 41-2, 62.

<sup>83</sup> *Diplomata maiorum domus e stirpe Arnulforum* nos. 11-13, ed. G. H. Pertz, *MGH Dip.* 1 (Hanover, 1872), pp. 98-101; R. A. Gerberding, *The Rise of the Carolingians and the Liber Historia Francorum*, Oxford Historical Monographs (Oxford, 1987), pp. 127-9, 135-6; *idem*, '716: a crucial year for Charles Martel', in J. Jarnut, U. Nonn & M. Richter, *Karl Martell in seiner Zeit*, Beihefte der Francia 37 (Sigmaringen, 1994), pp. 205-216.

<sup>84</sup> On similar developments elsewhere, see P. Fouracre, 'Merovingian History and Merovingian Hagiography', *Past and Present* 127 (1990), 3-38.

<sup>85</sup> On the development of the cult of Boniface after his death, see: P. Kehl, *Kult und Nachleben des heiligen Bonifatius im Mittelalter (754-1200)*, Quellen und Abhandlungen zur Geschichte der Abtei und Diözese Fulda 26 (Fulda, 1993); L. E. von Padberg, *Studien zur Bonifatiusverehrung: Zur Geschichte des Codex Ragyndrudis und der Fuldaer Reliquien des Bonifatius*, Fuldaer Hochschulschriften 25 (Frankfurt, 1996); Palmer, 'The Frankish cult of martyrs'.

<sup>86</sup> M. Mostert, 'Bonifatius als geschiedvervalser', *Madoc: Tijdschrift over de Middeleeuwen* 9. 3 (1995), 213-21 at 217-18.

they had rejected while he still lived'.<sup>87</sup> Boniface certainly takes prime position in the Frisian *vitae*. The *Vita Gregorii*, for example, is not so much a *vita* about Gregory but one that interwove stories about Gregory into the story of Boniface. In the *Vita Liudgeri* there is also much space dedicated to the church Liudger built at Dokkum to commemorate Boniface's martyrdom.<sup>88</sup> Altfred even included two poems, one by an unknown poet from Alcuin's circle and another by Alcuin himself, commemorating the events of the 5<sup>th</sup> June.<sup>89</sup> Depending on chronology this either echoed or was echoed in the *Vita altera Bonifatii*, which also mentioned the church:<sup>90</sup>

[A]fterwards our church was constructed in great honour of the martyrs, next to which a fountain of sweet water emanates, when elsewhere throughout the whole region the water was salty and bitter. And [people] come to this fountain-discovery by Boniface to be sanctified, and therefore so much remarkable sweetness and the satisfaction of all was conveniently possible.

Here was a clear indication of the power of the martyr, physically manifest in Frisia. The water, maybe imitating the rites of baptism, clearly symbolised the cleansing power of the saint for the Frisian community through the contrast between the sweetness and bitterness.<sup>91</sup> The church and fountain were perhaps doubly important because the body of the martyr was interred many miles away in Fulda, so they helped to preserve a physical bond between the Frisian people and the saint. The emotive power of Boniface dying so that the Frisians could be saved meant he was cherished by the Frisian Church; however Willibrord, whose life contained more politics than drama,

<sup>87</sup> Willibald, *VB* c. 8, p. 52: '... et praefati antestitis doctrinae documentum quod eo vivente rennuerunt, etiam moriente..., suscipuerunt'.

<sup>88</sup> Altfred, *VLger* cc. 19-20, pp. 22-4.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, c. 20, p. 24.

<sup>90</sup> *VaB* c. 16, p. 73: '... postea in honore tanti martirii constructa est basilica nobilis, iuxta quam fons aque dulcis emanat, cum alibi per totam regionem illam salse et amare sint aque. Et ferunt hunc fontem a Bonifacio inventum et sanctificatum esse ideoque tanta dulcedine insignitum et potationi cunctorum satis accommodum'. A similar story was later added to Willibald's *Vita Bonifatii*: Willibald, *VB* c. 9, p. 57.

<sup>91</sup> On the importance of baptism to ideas of community see: S. Foot, "By water in the spirit": the administration of baptism in early Anglo-Saxon England', in J. Blair & R. Sharpe (eds.), *Pastoral Care Before the Parish* (Leicester, 1991), pp. 171-92 at p. 191; J. M. H. Smith, 'Religion and lay society', in R. McKitterick (ed.), *The New Cambridge Medieval History II: c. 750-c.950* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 622-78 at pp. 656-60.

was reduced to the position of a supporting saint in the history of early Christianity in the North.

*Was Boniface 'bishop of Utrecht'?*

An intriguing question is raised by Boniface's retirement from Mainz in 753 and subsequent relocation to Frisia: did Boniface become bishop of Utrecht? This question was addressed by C. van de Kieft and Reinier Post in 1961 in a debate which van de Kieft, arguing against the proposition, is considered to have won.<sup>92</sup> The two historians argued at length about: the obscure wording of two charters from Pippin III to Boniface in May 753 (one of which called Boniface *apostolicus vir et in Christo pater Bonifatius, Trajectensis episcopus*); Willibald's account of Boniface's time in Frisia; and a letter from Boniface to Pope Stephen complaining about Hildegard of Cologne's attempts to seize control of Utrecht.<sup>93</sup> Neither historian, however, made reference to how Frisians remembered Boniface in relation to Utrecht, and in particular the distorted testimonies of Liudger's *Vita Gregorii* and the *Vita altera Bonifatii*. Those works may be untrustworthy as historical narratives – presumably why they were overlooked in the debate – but they still reveal much about Frisian perceptions of Boniface; it is, therefore, worth re-evaluating the van de Kieft-Post debate in the light of those sources.

There were, in effect, three strands to van de Kieft's argument: firstly that the charters of 753, in their corrupted eleventh-century form, were impossible to trust; secondly, that neither Willibald, nor Eigil in the *Vita Sturmi*, said Boniface was bishop

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<sup>92</sup> C. van de Kieft, 'Bonifatius en het bisdom Utrecht', *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis* 74 (1961), 42-63 and 426-32; R. R. Post, 'Is Bonifacius biscchop van Utrecht geweest?', *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis* 74 (1961), 517-26. For two typical receptions of the debate, see: Löwe, 'Pirmin, Willibrord und Bonifatius', p. 208; T. Schieffer, *Winfried-Bonifatius und die Grundlegung christliche Europas* (Darmstadt, 1972), p. 336.

<sup>93</sup> *MGH Dip. Karol.* 1 nos. 4, 5, pp. 6-7, 7-8; Boniface, *Tangl* no. 109, pp. 234-6.

of Utrecht; and thirdly, that it was canonically unsound for Boniface to transfer dioceses. On the first two arguments van de Kieft cannot be faulted. On the third, however, one might point out that while Boniface was a famed critic of uncanonical practices, he had transgressed such law when he established Lull as his predecessor before he retired to Frisia; Boniface's famed canonical rigour is not a sufficient argument against Boniface having been bishop of Utrecht. (Indeed the case of Lull's election might invite modern historians to re-evaluate Boniface's ideas of canonical practice). Perhaps a more pertinent argument made by van de Kieft was that 'the city of Utrecht was still no genuine episcopal residence', although he did not develop the argument beyond this statement.<sup>94</sup> There is indeed no evidence that the organisational basis of a Frisian diocese had developed between Willibrord's time and Boniface's. It is often tempting to project the relative order of later times back onto the past, but it is unlikely that there was much order in Utrecht given the cultural and political changes it underwent in the eighth century.<sup>95</sup> Strictly speaking, therefore, the question of whether Boniface was bishop of Utrecht is misguided because there was no real concept of a well-defined bishopric. The Frisian *vitae* – which van de Kieft and Post mysteriously ignored – do, on the other hand, give some impression that Boniface was closely associated with the city, and should be given due consideration.

The *Vita Gregorii* appears unequivocal in its claim that Boniface 'succeeded' Willibrord at Utrecht. Liudger wrote that, '[When Willibrord] grew old in the work of God, he established his episcopate in a place called Utrecht... [and] St Boniface, the

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<sup>94</sup> Van de Kieft, 'Bonifatius en het bisdom Utrecht', p. 526: '... de stad Utrecht nog geen echte bisschopelijke residentie was...'

<sup>95</sup> On the fallacy of projecting too much order onto the northern Church, see Theuws, 'Maastricht as a centre of power', p. 181. On the creativity in charter culture in Frisia, see Costambeys, 'An aristocratic community', 53-5.

archbishop and martyr, succeeded him.<sup>96</sup> In turn, Liudger continued, ‘blessed Gregory succeeded him as his heir’.<sup>97</sup> Gregory was not, however, described as ‘bishop of Utrecht’, but rather as ‘pastor of the Frisian peoples’ (*pastor gentis Fresonum*). The verb *succedere* did not refer to Boniface and Gregory succeeding Willibrord as bishop of a particular see, but rather to their inheritance of the mission to the Frisians. Indeed the entire emphasis of that chapter of the *Vita Gregorii* is on the conversion of Frisia as a whole and not Utrecht. Moreover, as Lutz von Padberg has argued, the purpose of the passage was to illustrate how Gregory stood in relation to his ‘apostolic’ *praedecessores*, thus creating a saintly lineage.<sup>98</sup> It is a subject reiterated towards the end of the chapter: ‘With love and firmness of faith just like his predecessors – namely St Willibrord, the archbishop and confessor, and Boniface, the martyr and archbishop – [Gregory] illuminated [the Frisians] with long and sweet erudition’.<sup>99</sup> Utrecht was the centre from which these operations were conducted, but it had no permanent bishop until Aluberht was consecrated bishop in 772.<sup>100</sup>

A similar impression can be gained from the *Vita altera Bonifatii*. It has been argued that an early version of the work had been a source for Liudger, and indeed on the account of Boniface’s ‘succession’ to Utrecht there are comparisons to be made.<sup>101</sup> The monk of St Martin’s, unlike Liudger, described Willibrord and Boniface working closely together, employing the typically idiosyncratic metaphor *sicut in quodam*

<sup>96</sup> Liudger, *VG* c. 10, p. 75: ‘Willibrordus... deinde senescente eo in opere Dei, et stabilito episcopatu in loco qui nuncupatur Traiectum... successit Bonifatius idem archiepiscopus et martyr’.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, c. 10, p. 75: ‘beatus Gregorius... successit pius heres’.

<sup>98</sup> Von Padberg, *Heilige und Familie*, p. 137; Mostert, ‘Bonifatius’, 220.

<sup>99</sup> Liudger, *VG* c. 10, p. 75: ‘Eademque caritate sicut et fidei firmitate, qua praedecessores sui, sanctus videlicet Willibrordus archiepiscopus et confessor et Bonifatius martyr atque archiepiscopus, larga et melliflua eruditione populum illum irradiavit...’

<sup>100</sup> Alfrid, *VLger* I. 10, p. 407.

<sup>101</sup> On the *VaB* (or a version of it) as source for Liudger, see Wood, *The Missionary Life*, pp. 102-7.

*codice scriptum repperi* ('just as scripts are found in certain codices').<sup>102</sup> Thereafter they went their separate ways, the monk wrote, until:<sup>103</sup>

When the blessed Boniface had ministered in the bishop's seat of Mainz for many days for the Lord, it was revealed to him that the most sacred bishop Willibrord had disposed of his body and passed over to the glory of Heaven, and immediately the athlete felt strong, took a loving journey to him with his stones, and travelled to wage war against Goliath of the Philistines. And not uncertain of what was done – for the sacred spirit revealed all to him – he speedily travelled there by boat, where he would fight all the diabolical men, and soon he was carried down the flowing River Rhine to his most famous place, that is the town of Utrecht.

There is some substantial historical displacement in this story: Willibrord died in Echternach in 739 and Boniface did not, to our knowledge, travel to Utrecht until 753. The account of the *Vita altera Bonifatii* has been largely ignored because of such inaccuracies. However, by dismissing it out of hand one misses the crucial fact that the Frisians thought that it was desirable to point to a smooth succession from Willibrord to Boniface. This was not, however, a transition between 'bishops of Utrecht'. The St Martin's monk, like Liudger, commented simply that Willibrord came to reside (*subsedere*) in Utrecht late in his life, not that he was 'bishop of Utrecht' in any meaningful, institutionalised sense of the phrase. Boniface, meanwhile, simply turned up and went into the missionfield without undertaking any pastoral duties. The task that Boniface was said to have succeeded to was the conversion of the Frisians, not the care of a diocese of Utrecht.

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<sup>102</sup> *VaB* c. 9, p. 68.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, c. 13, p. 71: 'Cum beatus Bonifatius in Moguntine sedis presultatu plurimis diebus Domino ministrasset est ei Willibrordi sanctissimi episcopi carnalis depositio et ad celestem gloriam transmigratio, statimque sensit fortis athleta, sibi iterum peram cum lapidis suis sumendum, iterum cum Golyath Phylistheo bellum gerendum. Ac nequaquam incertus, quid ageret – Spiritus enim sanctus eidem omnia revelabat – confestim navigio illuc properavit, ubi cum dyabolo totis viribus certaturus erat, moxque per undas Reni fluminis notissimo sibi loco, id est Traiecto oppido, delatus est'.

*The Hagiographical Functions of Utrecht's Churches.*

Utrecht was clearly central to the conception of pastoral care in Frisia. Both Willibrord and Boniface had been named in charters relating to the old Roman fortress in the city.<sup>104</sup> The fort was no doubt symbolic of power in the region.<sup>105</sup> It had, however, only achieved its position as a place of unrivalled authority eventually, having originally been only one of several Roman forts on the Rhine and having been dwarfed by the commercial importance of nearby Dorestad.<sup>106</sup> It was, perhaps significantly, in an area where the *Liudgeriden* held much land.<sup>107</sup> Liudger even exaggerated the length of time Boniface had worked there from 719, claiming he was there for thirteen years rather than three.<sup>108</sup> Chronology in the Frisian hagiographical traditions was not fixed, but could rather be re-employed by hagiographers to bring new meaning to the past in Utrecht.

The situation within the fortress of Utrecht appears to have been complicated and has been the subject of intense recent debate.<sup>109</sup> Boniface wrote to Pope Stephen II claiming that Willibrord had founded a church he dedicated to St Salvatore, and then refounded a small church he dedicated to St Martin.<sup>110</sup> This second church, Boniface continued, had been established in the time of Dagobert I and entrusted to the bishopric of Cologne, but no Cologne bishop had utilised it as a missionary base. Boniface's story is now generally regarded as an idealistic forgery driven by the politics of his

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<sup>104</sup> *Diplomata maiorum domus e stirpe Arnulforum* nos. 11-13, pp. 98-101; *MGH Dip. Karol.* 1 nos. 4, 5, pp. 6-7, 7-8.

<sup>105</sup> Mostert, 754, p. 28.

<sup>106</sup> H. L. de Groot, 'Utrecht and Dorestad: fifteen miles apart, a world of difference', in de Biève, *Utrecht, Britain and the Continent*, pp. 12-21.

<sup>107</sup> Altfred, *VLger* I. 4, p. 405: 'qui veniens accepta hereditate propria habitauit in loco, qui dicitur Suabsua iuxta Traiectum...' See Wood, *The Missionary Life*, p. 100.

<sup>108</sup> Liudger, *VG* c. 2, p. 67.

<sup>109</sup> For a summary of the evidence and the different interpretations of them, see D. Parsons, 'Willibrord's "Frisian" mission and the early churches in Utrecht' in J. Hawkes & S. Mills (eds.), *Northumbria's Golden Age* (Stroud, 1999), pp. 136-49.

<sup>110</sup> Boniface, *Tangl* no. 109, pp. 234-6.

rivalry with Cologne rather than a desire to write ‘history’.<sup>111</sup> But the end result – the very existence of St Salvatore’s and St Martin’s – remained. ‘The question’, asked Eelco van Welie recently, ‘does not seem to be why Willibrord founded two churches in Utrecht, but rather, why he decided not to choose the existing church as the centre for his *monasterium*’.<sup>112</sup> Van Welie proceeded to point out that Liudger and Altfred only refer to St Salvatore’s, which suggests that the church was the principal church of Utrecht. St Martin’s has remained more troublesome. Leupen argued that Boniface tried to have it bound to Rome so Cologne could not make claims on it, but that as a result of the Pippin charter the church became a Carolingian *Rijkskerk*.<sup>113</sup> Alternatively it may be that Pippin made out the charter to St Martin’s following the tradition of royal patronage dating back, supposedly, to Dagobert.<sup>114</sup> The current consensus, regardless of the detail, is that St Martin’s was of particular political significance, in contrast to St Salvatore’s actual spiritual significance.

The recent debate about St Martin’s has, like other arguments, ignored the *Vita altera Bonifatii*. The work needs addressing here, however, because it claims to have been written by a monk of St Martin’s for the community at St Martin’s.<sup>115</sup> It would, if this is not a spurious claim, mean that the church (or monastery) was not simply politically symbolic, but also played a religious role in Utrecht independent of St Salvatore’s. The *vita* is unlikely to have been political propaganda *per se* because it does not mention Pippin, nor indeed any secular figures. Moreover, it makes nothing of the Boniface charters relating to St Martin’s, which suggests either no knowledge of the

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<sup>111</sup> Mostert, ‘Bonifatius’, 218-20.

<sup>112</sup> E. van Welie, ‘St Salvatore’s, St Martin’s and Pippin the Younger’, in de Biève, *Utrecht, Britain and the Continent*, pp. 58-68 at p. 60.

<sup>113</sup> P. H. D. Leupen, ‘Sint Salvator en Sint Maarten, Willibrord en Bonifatius’, in Bange & Weiler, *Willibrord, zijn wereld en zijk werk*, pp. 317-27 at pp. 322-4.

<sup>114</sup> Van Welie, ‘St Salvatore’s’, p. 64.

<sup>115</sup> *VaB* cc. 2, 3, 22, pp. 63-4, 78.

documents or an unwillingness to affirm Pippin's patronage.<sup>116</sup> It does mention both an *ecclesia* and a *monasterium* in the chapter on Boniface in Utrecht: 'And when [Boniface] had come near [to Utrecht], he went out and met an angelic chorus, which the excellent teacher Willibrord had attached to that monastery to praise and glorify the name of God. Therefore, he proceeded to the church with them...'<sup>117</sup> The passage does not necessarily help clarify matters, but it seems to claim that St Martin's was Willibrord's monastic church to St Salvatore's main church.<sup>118</sup> The *Vita altera Bonifatii* therefore creates an endorsement of Boniface's own story in a more historical – and consequently more tangible – form than the earlier letter. That immediately raises the question of whether the author knew Boniface's letters, which seems doubtful. Rather the text might reflect traditions established by Boniface himself whilst in Utrecht.<sup>119</sup>

The three *vitae* of the Utrecht-Münster tradition appear to present very different attitudes to the churches of Utrecht. The motivations of the three hagiographers should be considered. Heinz Löwe pointed out that in Liudger's *Zeitkritik* monasticism was a subject that was avoided, perhaps because the intended audience was secular.<sup>120</sup> In that context there would be no reason for Liudger to mention St Martin's. Moreover, the silence on Gregory's relationship with the *monasterium* of St Martin's helped to legitimise claims that he was the heir of Willibrord and Boniface by concentrating on the episcopal church of St Salvatore. Likewise Altfrid could be seen to be emphasising

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<sup>116</sup> This fact may help to confirm that Radbod of Utrecht (899-917) was not the author of the work, because he compiled a cartulary that included those documents.

<sup>117</sup> *VaB* c. 13, pp. 71-2: 'Et cum applicisset, vidit sibi obviam exire chorum angelicum, quem Willibrordus doctor eximius in monasterio illo ad laudem et gloriam nominis Dei aggregaverat. Cum hiis ergo processit ad ecclesiam...'

<sup>118</sup> Such a conclusion echoes Rudolf Schieffer's much maligned argument that Utrecht was a 'Frisian Canterbury': see R. Schieffer, *Die Entstehung von Domkapiteln*, Bonner Historische Forschungen 43 (Bonn, 1976), p. 178. For criticisms of Schieffer see Leupen, 'Sint Salvator en Sint Maarten', pp. 318-19 and van Welie, 'St Salvator's', pp. 59-60.

<sup>119</sup> See again Mostert's comments on Boniface forging a past for Utrecht in 753: Mostert, 'Bonifatius', 218-20.

<sup>120</sup> H. Löwe, 'Liudger als Zeitkritiker', *Historisches Jahrbuch* 74 (1954), 79-91 at 84.

Liudger's succession to Willibrord by exclusively mentioning St Salvatore, *quam sanctus Willibrordus construxerat*.<sup>121</sup> The *Vita altera Bonifatii*, therefore, represents the only view from monastic Utrecht. Through references to the churches in Utrecht, therefore, the three hagiographers in the Utrecht-Münster tradition could express the patronage of Willibrord and Boniface of either episcopal or monastic institutions, depending on the context. This attests to the many-faceted ways in which the two Anglo-Saxons could be adopted by the Frisian and Saxon clergy to help legitimise their own positions in the new Christian order in the North.

### **St Willehad: The Last Anglo-Saxon Missionary.**

The last genuine Anglo-Saxon missionary to the continent in the eighth century was St Willehad. He remains one of the least studied of all those who made the journey across the Channel.<sup>122</sup> In many respects Willehad simply does not 'fit': arriving in *ca* 770 he was not strongly connected with Willibrord, Boniface or indeed many of the people or places that characterise the Anglo-Frankish missionary work of the seventh and eighth centuries. The sole piece of evidence contemporary with Willehad in which he is mentioned is a letter from Alcuin to an unknown missionary in Saxony, in which Alcuin sends his greetings to the bishop.<sup>123</sup> He died, so we are told, in 789 and was buried in his own church in Bremen.<sup>124</sup> Little is known about Bremen then for the next fifty years, at which point the *Vita Willehadi* was written – a work once described as

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<sup>121</sup> Altfrid, *VLger* I. 16, p. 409.

<sup>122</sup> There is little on Willehad beyond references in textbooks, for example R. Fletcher, *The Conversion of Europe: From Paganism to Christianity 371-1386 AD* (London, 1997), p. 217. Similarly there are only a couple of notable works on the *VWhad*: G. Niemeyer, 'Die Herkunft der *Vita Willehadi*', *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters* 12 (1956), 17-35; J. Ehlers, 'Die Sachsenmission als heiligengeschichtliches Ereignis', in F. J. Felten & N. Jaspert (eds.), *Vita Religiosa im Mittelalter. Festschrift für Kaspar Elm zum 70. Geburtstag*, Berliner historische Studien 31, Ordenstudien 13 (Berlin, 1999), pp. 37-53.

<sup>123</sup> Alcuin, *Epistola* no. 6, p. 31.

<sup>124</sup> *VWhad* c. 10, pp. 845-6.

‘the most important *vita* of the Carolingian period’.<sup>125</sup> Nothing, however, has yet been written about why the work was suddenly written after so many years.

*The Genesis of the Vita Willehadi.*

The *Vita Willehadi* was probably written in the 830s or 840s – at a similar time, therefore, to Altfred’s *Vita Liudgeri*, Rudolf’s *Vitae Leobae*, Lupus’s *Vita Wigberti*, the *Vita Burchardi* and Brun Candidus’s *Vita Aegil*. More specifically, it may have been written between 837 and 848, because it refers to Bishop Willerich of Bremen (d. 837) as ‘of blessed memory’ and would seem to predate the see of Bremen’s unification with Hamburg under Anskar in 848.<sup>126</sup> During that time the see of Bremen was vacant between 845 and 848 and the work might relate to that period because the introduction emphasises the solace of saints.

In 1956 Gerlinde Niemeyer made a case for the author of the anonymous *Vita Willehadi* being a monk from Echternach, which would have brought Willehad into a memorial context close to Willibrord and Alcuin.<sup>127</sup> Key to Niemeyer’s argument was the fact that Anskar did not give any clear evidence that he had read the work in his *Miracula Willehadi*, which she took to mean that he did not know the work and that the work was not from Bremen.<sup>128</sup> Niemeyer then proceeded to outline the evidence in favour of an Echternach provenance for the *Vita Willehadi*: the work has textual

<sup>125</sup> Niemeyer, ‘Die Herkunft’, 17: ‘[die] wichtigste Vit[a] der Karolingerzeit’.

<sup>126</sup> W. Wattenbach, W. Levison & H. Löwe, *Deutschlands Geschichtsquellen im Mittelalter. Vorzeit und Karolinger Heft 6: Die Karolinger vom Vertrag von Verdun bis zum Herrschaftsantritt der Herrscher aus dem sächsischen Hause. Das ostfrankische Reich*, ed. H. Löwe (Weimar, 1990), p. 838, also identifies the *ante quem non* as 838. The death of Willerich is reported in Adam of Bremen, *Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae pontificum* I. 20, ed. B. Schmeidler, *MGH SRG 2* (Hanover, 1917), p. 22.

<sup>127</sup> Niemeyer, ‘Die Herkunft’, esp. 27-32. Her arguments have recently found favour in Wood, *The Missionary Life*, p. 98 (n. 126).

<sup>128</sup> Niemeyer, ‘Der Herkunft’, 18.

similarities with the *Vita Willibrordi*, Willehad might (according to a twelfth-century work) have been related to Willibrord, and he was venerated in Echternach.<sup>129</sup>

No part of the argument is ultimately convincing. There is no logical reason for Anskar to have referred to the *Vita Willehadi* in his own work, so this cannot be taken as proof that he did not know the saint's Life. If anything the spiritual prologue to the *Miracula Willehadi* bears comparison with that of the *Vita Willehadi*, suggesting it was written specifically to complement the earlier work.<sup>130</sup> Heinz Löwe has also put forward a forceful case for rejecting the Echternach hypothesis. To begin with, the *Vita Willibrordi* was, at the time, widely known even in Saxony.<sup>131</sup> The text of the *Vita Willehadi* itself, moreover, reads like the work of a Bremen cleric, particularly in its description of Willehad as *nostre pater* ('our father') and its account of Willehad's successor Willerich.<sup>132</sup> Finally, even if Willehad was related to Willibrord (which Löwe doubts) and venerated at Echternach, this proves nothing about who wrote the *Vita Willehadi*. Without firm evidence disassociating the text from Bremen one is left with nothing more than proof that people in Echternach were interested in the saint as well.<sup>133</sup>

*The Vita Willehadi, the 'Translatio imperii' and the 843 Treaty of Verdun.*

The *Vita Willehadi* is significant in the broader history of the Carolingian Empire for providing an account of the *Translatio imperii*, when in 800 Pope Leo III transferred the imperial title to Charlemagne.<sup>134</sup> Niemeyer argued that this was important in the

<sup>129</sup> Thiofrid, *Vita Willibrordi* c. 29, ed. A. Poncelet, *AASS* Nov. 3 (Brussels, 1910), pp. 459-83 at p. 477.

<sup>130</sup> Palmer, 'Rimbert's *Vita Anskarii*'.

<sup>131</sup> Wattenbach, Levison & Löwe, *Deutschlands Geschichtsquellen* 6, p. 838.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 838.

<sup>133</sup> See also von Padberg's comments in his *Heilige und Familie*, pp. 40-1.

<sup>134</sup> *VWhad* c. 6, p. 844.

context of the reign of Emperor Lothar I, who struggled to assert his authority over his brother Louis the German to the east of Lotharingia and half-brother Charles the Bald to the west following the Treaty of Verdun in 843.<sup>135</sup> Although the settlement was loosely based upon an 817 decree by Louis the Pious, the *Ordinatio imperii*, where an emperor would rule over sub-kings, in practice although Lothar was emperor his defeat meant that the sub-kings could not be controlled.<sup>136</sup> Interest in imperial authority was less likely to have been an issue in the west and east of the empire while Lothar was alive. It should be noted, however, that the *Translatio imperii* was an important moment in the history of the family, and any lesson intended by the telling of the story could just as easily have resonated for Louis and Charles too. In the context of the *vita*, Ehlers has argued, the story had the effect of binding together the Carolingian royal family with the mission to the Saxons.<sup>137</sup> This is more likely to have been of significance to Louis, to whom Saxony had been assigned at Verdun in 843.

The Treaty of Verdun has been seen as a pivotal moment in shaping the boundaries of modern Europe.<sup>138</sup> Following the death of Louis the Pious in 840, his heirs fought a bitter civil war for the best part of three years.<sup>139</sup> In the midst of the turbulence the northern regions of the Empire fell into some chaos, particularly when

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<sup>135</sup> Niemeyer, 'Die Herkunft', pp. 32-5.

<sup>136</sup> On the imperfect relationship between the *Ordinatio imperii* and Verdun, see T. Bauer, 'Die *Ordinatio imperii* von 817, der Vertrag von Verdun 843 und Herausbildung Lotharingens', *Rheinische Vierteljahrsblätter* 58 (1994), 1-24, esp. 15, 18-19.

<sup>137</sup> Ehlers, 'Die Sachsenmission', pp. 39-40.

<sup>138</sup> Johannes Fried's book on the medieval foundations of Europe, for example, started with Louis the Pious's death and the Treaty of Verdun: see *Die Formierung Europas 840-1046*, Oldenburg Grundriss der Geschichte 6 (Munich & Oldenburg, 1991). See also: F. L. Ganshof, 'Zur Entstehungsgeschichte und Bedeutung des Vertrags von Verdun (843)', *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters* 12 (1956), 313-30, transl. J. Sondheimer, 'On the genesis and significance of the Treaty of Verdun', in Ganshof's *The Carolingians and the Frankish Monarchy: Studies in Carolingian History*, (London, 1971), pp. 289-302; P. Classen, 'Die Verträge von Verdun und von Coulaines 843 als politische Grundlagen des westfränkischen Reiches', *Historisches Zeitschrift* 196 (1963), 1-35; Bauer, 'Die *Ordinatio imperii* von 817'.

<sup>139</sup> The main sources for the civil war are Nithard's *Historia*, the *Annales Bertiniani* and the *Annales Fuldenses*. For a convenient modern narrative see J. L. Nelson, *Charles the Bald* (London, 1992), pp. 105-39.

Lothar encouraged the *Stellinga* – a lower Saxon caste – to rebel against their rulers in exchange for the right to follow their old pagan laws.<sup>140</sup> When Lothar was eventually defeated by his brothers, they initially divided the Empire in two and excluded their sibling. Lothar returned, however, and a tripartite division was eventually agreed. Unfortunately no record of the precise agreement exists. Attempts to reconstruct the division rest largely upon the account of Nithard (who was critical of the agreement because he himself lost lands) and the 870 Treaty of Meerssen, in which Charles and Louis divided Lotharingia between themselves.<sup>141</sup> The guiding principles of Verdun were *affinitas*, *congruentia* and equivalence – that is, the shares were supposed to be equal and contain adjoining areas that shared an affinity.<sup>142</sup> From Nithard it is clear that Louis received everything east of the Rhine, plus Mainz, Speyer and Worms. Moreover, from the Treaty of Meerssen it appears that the contents of the kingdoms were largely defined in terms of dioceses.<sup>143</sup>

For the Saxon bishoprics the settlement of 843 brought with it a number of contradictions. Bremen and Münster were, for example, placed in Louis' East Frankia while still nominally under the archiepiscopal authority of Cologne, which was in Lotharingia. (It is little wonder that Louis was keen to unite the diocese of Hamburg and Bremen and create a new archbishopric!). Moreover the northern Frisian-Saxon coastal areas, which had been evangelised by Bremen and Münster – or, rather, Liudger and Willehad – were placed under Lothar's authority. The decision seems peculiar on

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<sup>140</sup> Nithard, *Historia* IV. 2, ed. G. H. Pertz, *MGH SRG* 44 (Hanover, 1870), p. 45. On the *Stellinga* uprising, see: E. J. Goldberg, 'Popular revolt, dynastic politics and aristocratic factionalism in the early Middle Ages: the Saxon *Stellinga* reconsidered', *Speculum* 70 (1995), 467-501; C. J. Carroll, 'The bishoprics of Saxony in the first century after Christianisation', *Early Medieval Europe* 8. 2 (1999), 219-245.

<sup>141</sup> On Nithard, see J. L. Nelson, 'Public *Histories* and private history in the work of Nithard', in her *Politics and Ritual in Early Medieval Europe* (London, 1986), pp. 195-238. For the Treaty of Meerssen, see *Annales Bertiniani* s. a. 870, pp. 110-13 and Nelson, *Charles the Bald*, pp. 124-5.

<sup>142</sup> Ganshof, 'On the genesis', p. 298.

<sup>143</sup> J. L. Nelson, *The Annals of St Bertin* (Manchester, 1991), p. 168 n. 13.

geographical grounds, but it should be remembered that Rüstringen had been given to the Danish king-turned-pirate Harald Klak, whose son had been baptised with Lothar as godfather.<sup>144</sup> The lands more than likely then nominally fell under the control of Cologne.<sup>145</sup> There is, unfortunately, no clear indication of the situation then until the *Annales Fuldenses* for 884, which indicates that Archbishop Rimbert of Hamburg-Bremen was once again in charge of Norden.<sup>146</sup>

It is possible that the *Vita Willehadi* represents a reaction to Bremen's losses in 843. Other histories written at a similar time, at least, appear to have been prompted by the separations.<sup>147</sup> It is arguable that the *Vita Willehadi* falls partly into the same category, and that appealing to Lothar and/or Louis was an intention of the author when recalling the *Translatio imperii*. The chapter that dealt with the establishment of the diocese of Bremen is careful in its detail:<sup>148</sup>

The excellent prince Charles, then in the city of Worms, had Willehad consecrated bishop... [and] appointed him pastor and rector over Wigmodia, Laras, Rüstringen and Östringen, as well as Norden and Wangerland, so that he might lead the people there with episcopal authority.

Martyrs who had previously helped Willehad in those places were also named:

'Folcardus the priest and Count Emmiggus in the district called Laras and Benjamin in Rüstringen; also the cleric Atrebanus in Ditmarschen Berg and Gerwalus with his

<sup>144</sup> *ARF* s. a. 826, p. 94; Ermoldus Nigellus, *In honorem Hludowici IV*. ll. 147-746, ed. E. Dümmler, *MGH Poetae* 2 (Berlin, 1884), pp. 62-78.

<sup>145</sup> Cologne was, as Boniface and Altfred note, often in control of Frisia: Boniface, *Tangl* no. 109, pp. 234-6; Altfred, *VLger* I. 17, p. 21.

<sup>146</sup> *Annales Fuldenses* s. a. 884, p. 101: 'Nordmanni cum Frisionibus in loco, qui vocatur Norditi, dimicantes superantur et plurimi ex eis occiduntur. Super quo proedio extat epistola Rinberti episcopi eiusdem loci ad Liutbertum Mogontiensem archiepiscopum destinata hunc modum continens...' The letter, unfortunately, is not included in any manuscript of the annals or elsewhere.

<sup>147</sup> Particularly see Nithard's *Histories* and Nelson's 'Public *Histories*', and Rimbert's *VA* and my 'Rimbert's *Vita Anskarii*'.

<sup>148</sup> *VWhad*, c. 8, p. 845: 'Post haec... praecellentissimus princeps, in Wormatia positus civitate, servum Dei Willehadum consecrari fecit episcopum... constituitque eum pastorum atque rectorum super Wigmodia et Laras et Riustri et Asterga, necnon Nordendi ac Wanga, ut inibi auctoritate episcopali et praesset populis...' See also on Wigmodia, B. Wavra, *Salzburg und Hamburg. Erzbistumgründung und Missionspolitik in karolingischer Zeit* (Berlin, 1991), p. 207.

company in Bremen'.<sup>149</sup> Legal and spiritual justifications for the see before 843 were thus established. This invites direct comparisons with Rimbert's *Vita Anskarii*, which did precisely the same thing by citing martyrdoms and legal precedents thirty years later to justify the unification of Hamburg and Bremen.<sup>150</sup> In both works in general there is strong emphasis on royal support for major actions undertaken, which bound further the ties between mission, episcopal organisation and royalty in the North.

The emphasis on royal authority is not restricted to Charlemagne. The *Vita Willehadi* also claims that Willehad left Northumbria on the authority of King Alchred.<sup>151</sup> This should perhaps be seen alongside Altfred's near-contemporary claim that Aluberht had travelled to York to be consecrated bishop of Utrecht, because this might have provided an occasion to inspire Willehad to travel to the continent.<sup>152</sup> The notion that Northumbria had authority over Frankish-controlled Frisia sounds implausible, but it would be an equally peculiar thing to invent in the Carolingian Saxony of the 840s (although one might also wonder, if the story was true, why it had not been forgotten to make way for a purely Carolingian version of Frisian-Saxon history). Perhaps the presence of Northumbria in the story, alongside the story of the *Translatio imperii*, serves to illustrate that the Carolingians had not always been *de facto* rulers within Northern Europe. Celebrating Charlemagne's imperial coronation does draw attention to his power, but it also shows how ephemeral and changeable earthly power could be. A third king is also mentioned in the *vita*: Pippin,

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<sup>149</sup> *VWhad* c. 6, p. 844: 'Folcardum presbiterum cum Emmiggo comite in pago denominato Leri, Benjamin autem in Ubhriustri, Atrebanum vero clericum in Thietmaresgaho, Gerwalum quoque cum sociis suis in Brema'.

<sup>150</sup> See R. Drögereit, 'Erzbistum Hamburg, Hamburg-Bremen oder Erzbistum Bremen?', *Archiv für Diplomatik* 21 (1975), 136-230; Wavra, *Salzburg und Hamburg*, pp. 283-328; W. Seegrün, 'Erzbischof Rimbert von Hamburg-Bremen im Erbe des päpstlichen Missionsauftrages', in *Rimbert, der Nachfolger Ansgars* (Hamburg, 2000), pp. 57-72; Wood, *The Missionary Life*, pp. 126-7.

<sup>151</sup> *VWhad* c. 1, p. 843.

<sup>152</sup> Altfred, *VLger* I. 10, p. 407; J. Story, *Carolingian Connections: Anglo-Saxon England and Carolingian Francia, c. 750-870*, Studies in Early Medieval Britain (Aldershot, 2003), p. 53.

Charlemagne's son and king of Italy from 781 to 810.<sup>153</sup> Willehad is said to have visited Pippin when hostilities in Saxony had restricted the opportunities for preaching there. His precise motivation seems to have been to visit Pope Hadrian in Rome, and Pippin is but mentioned in passing. It is striking overall, however, that this *prima facie* pointless reference to Pippin means that Willehad was presented as having the support and authority of three kings from different kingdoms, much as would have been ideal for Bremen after the tripartite division of 843. It is possible, therefore, that a central message of the *Vita Willehadi* was the importance of co-operation and unity between the three Carolingian brothers.<sup>154</sup>

Bremen was perhaps also facing some competition from the neighbouring diocese of Münster, or at least the *Liudgeriden*. Altfrid wrote the *Vita Liudgeri* at about the same time as the Bremen cleric was writing the *Vita Willehadi*, and it is notable that the areas in which they describe their respective saints working overlap. Indeed their stories have many parallels in their Anglo-Frisian backgrounds and the way their careers panned out.<sup>155</sup> The silence of both hagiographers on the topic is, however, a little disconcerting, because it is not as if they were averse to describing the activities of other missionaries. Altfrid took a narrative diversion in order to give an account of Lebuin's work and, as we have just seen, many of Willehad's comrades were named. In all these cases the important factor was that they were working either within or with the permission of the principal saint's circle; one may infer from this that no such relationship between Willehad and Liudger was remembered in the ninth century, or else it had been conveniently forgotten.

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<sup>153</sup> *VW*had c. 7, p. 844.

<sup>154</sup> On the message of unity as a response to the 840s see chapter three, pp. 160-1.

<sup>155</sup> Good examples of their interwoven story are told by Fletcher, *The Conversion of Europe*, pp. 217-19 and C. Mossig, 'Mittelalterliche Kirchengeschichte', in K.-E. Behre & H. van Lengen (eds.), *Ostfriesland: Geschichte und Gestalt einer Kulturlandschaft* (Aurich, 1995), pp. 187-97.

There is evidence of some competitive boasting in the two *vitae* in relation to Dokkum. Altfred made much of Liudger's time there, praising him for converting the Frisians. He also quoted in full two poems written for the church Liudger constructed.<sup>156</sup> The building was, as von Padberg noted, 'the crystallisation of [Liudger's] own conception of mission'.<sup>157</sup> But Willehad was also said to have worked for a long time in Dokkum and it was claimed 'many who once had strayed [Willehad] brought back to a true and Catholic understanding, and he showed himself to be the brightest light in that place'.<sup>158</sup> Such a description of Willehad recalls Liudger's own description of Boniface as coming to Frankia *quasi lucifer* ('like light'), and seems to turn it back on Liudger because by implication Willehad outshone the *pastor Fresonum* in that region.<sup>159</sup> Being a heir of Boniface was apparently not just important in the places where he had worked, but also in new areas of missionary work like Bremen. Whether there was room for both Münster and Bremen to succeed Boniface in his work in the mid-ninth century, however, appears to have been debatable.

The desire to create an heir of Boniface might explain the strong emphasis on East Friesland in the first half of the *Vita Willehadi*. After leaving Dokkum, it was claimed, Willehad worked with varying success east of the River Lauwers, first in Hunsingo to the north of modern Groningen, and then in Drenthe to the south of Groningen.<sup>160</sup> The impression given is that Willehad was the first missionary to work in these places. This helped to create an association between East Friesland and Willehad that then stretched from Dokkum and Boniface to the western edge of Bremen's

<sup>156</sup> Altfred, *VLger* I. 17, pp. 409-10.

<sup>157</sup> Von Padberg, *Heilige und Familie*, p. 138: '[der] Kristallisationspunkt seiner eigenen missionarischen Konzeption'.

<sup>158</sup> *VWhad* c. 2, p. 843: '... multosque errantes olim a fide ad veram et catholicam revocavit scientiam, seque maximun lumen supernae claritatis eodem in loco exhibuit'.

<sup>159</sup> Liudger, *VG* c. 1, p. 66.

<sup>160</sup> *VWhad* cc. 3-4, p. 843.

diocese at Norden. These lands, however, soon fell firmly under Liudger's control after the end of Widukind's Saxon revolt. According to Altfred, Liudger had been given the five districts of Hugmarch, Hunsingo, Fivelingo, Emsgau and Federitgau – all of which are near Groningen – and the island of *Bant* (only a few miles from Norden) by Charlemagne before the foundation of Münster.<sup>161</sup> This was then reinforced, at least in the *Vita Liudgeri*, by time Liudger spent preaching in the area around Delfzijl in Hunsingo after he had established Werden.<sup>162</sup> It needs to be asked why there is such a strong impression of the association between Werden and East Friesland; if this association had in the first instance been broken by Verdun and then challenged by Bremen, then there would be a clear political explanation for Altfred's writings.

It is unlikely, comparing the texts, that one was written as a reaction to the other; it is highly likely, however, that they were responding to the same political climate. The division in 843 between Lotharingia and the East Frankish territories in the North paid little apparent attention to the history of dioceses over the previous century. Utrecht, Dokkum and East Friesland were placed in Lotharingia under Emperor Lothar I, whilst Münster, Werden and Bremen were now in East Frankia under King Louis the German. Political boundaries had carved up the North. Münster and Bremen, moreover, were suddenly on the wrong side of the new border to make claims over East Friesland. The emergence at the same time of the two hagiographical traditions about Willehad and Liudger working in that region cannot be coincidence.

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<sup>161</sup> Altfred, *VLger* I. 22, pp. 25-6: '... pervenit eius fama ad aures gloriosi principis Caroli. Qui constituit eum doctorem in gente Fresonum ad orientali parte fluminis Labeki super pago quinque, quorum laec sunt vocabula Hygmerthi, Hunuga, Fivilga, Emsga, Federitga, et unam insulam, quae dicitur Bant'.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*, I. 25, p. 30.

*Commemorating and Forgetting Willehad (860-900).*

The author of the *Vita Willehadi* alludes to some discomfort over Charlemagne's forcible conversion of the Saxons, as he wrote that they 'had been forced into the gentle yoke of Christ'.<sup>163</sup> This line echoes Alcuin's rebuke to Charlemagne in 796, and of course Alcuin's *Vita Willibrordi* had been a model for the *Vita Willehadi*.<sup>164</sup> But whereas Alcuin's words had been tinged with idealism, the *Vita Willehadi* was written in a context where the Carolingian Saxon policy could be seen to be failing.<sup>165</sup> The frontier Church was under-funded and many people still remained hostile to Christians when Rimbert wrote the *Vita Anskarii* in Bremen in the 870s.<sup>166</sup> Willehad was to play an important part in creating spiritual solace for Christians in Saxony in the ninth century, but his cult proved to be as problematic as it was useful.

The veneration of St Willehad was employed by Anskar himself to help defend morale in the wake of viking raids in the 850s and 860s.<sup>167</sup> In *ca* 860 he wrote the *Miracula Willehadi* to prove that God had not forsaken his people during troubled times.<sup>168</sup> In keeping with the importance attached to the Carolingians evinced by the *Vita Willehadi*, Anskar also dated the miracles to the twenty-eighth year of the reign of Louis the German.<sup>169</sup> Most of the stories are short, for example:<sup>170</sup>

Also from the village of Ganderkessa a certain woman called Herimod was ruined by deafness for two years; who coming to

<sup>163</sup> *VWhad* c. 8, p. 845.

<sup>164</sup> For Alcuin's rebuke to Charlemagne see Alcuin, *Epistola* no. 111, pp. 59-62. On the connection between the *VWhad* and Alcuin's *VWbrord* see Wood, *The Missionary Life*, pp. 90-1.

<sup>165</sup> On the difficult situation in Saxony, see Carroll, 'The bishoprics of Saxony'.

<sup>166</sup> Rimbert, *VA* c. 38, pp. 72-4.

<sup>167</sup> Wood, *The Missionary Life*, p. 132.

<sup>168</sup> Anskar, *Miracula Willehadi* c. 2, ed. G. H. Pertz, *MGH SS 2* (Hanover, 1829), pp. 384-90 at p. 385. On the geographical scope of the miracles described see H. Röckelein, 'Miracles and horizontal mobility in the early Middle Ages: some methodological reflections', in J. Hill & M. Swan (eds.), *The Community, the Family and the Saint*, *International Medieval Research 4* (Turnhout, 1998), pp. 181-97.

<sup>169</sup> Anskar, *Miracula Willehadi* c. 2, p. 385.

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*, c. 15, p. 388: '... quoque ex villa Gandrikesarde quaedam femina Herimod nomine, duobus annis surda exiterat; quae ad praedictum deveniens locum, intercessione Sancti audiendo redire meruit'.

the aforementioned place [Bremen], deserved the intercession of the saint to return her hearing.

In this case the benefits of seeking out Willehad's tomb were made clear for the audience. The vast majority of miracle stories relate to the areas along the Weser and to the west, towards the Hunte. Only one related to (the still dismembered) East Friesland;<sup>171</sup> not a single story related to Hamburg. The community Anskar was defending, spiritually, in the *Miracula* did not include the peripheries, only the central areas around Bremen itself.

In the *Vita Anskarii*, written about fifteen years later in Bremen, Willehad had apparently been conveniently forgotten again. Rimbart, Anskar's successor and pupil, made no mention of Willehad as a spiritual predecessor of the 'Apostle of the North'. He chose, rather, to emphasise only the early Danish missionary activity of Anskar's mentor Ebbo of Rheims despite, as a later cleric in Hamburg-Bremen wrote, his *fama ambigua*.<sup>172</sup> The apparent insularity of the *Miracula Willehadi* may begin to offer an answer to Rimbart's silence. Even in 860, after twelve years of unification, Hamburg and Bremen did not appear to have been united communally, and Willehad was not a rallying point for spiritual solace in Hamburg. Not until Adam of Bremen's *Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae pontificum*, written in ca 1075, did Willehad finally appear in a history as a significant figure for the united diocese.<sup>173</sup> It is unlikely that the cult of Willehad had fallen foul of the aristocratic rivalries that characterised Tours, Maastricht or even Utrecht because none of the key players were native to Bremen or Hamburg. Perhaps instead Willehad simply represented the wrong ambitions for Rimbart in his idealised diocese. The *Vita Willehadi* had firmly established Willehad as a figure

<sup>171</sup> Anskar, *Miracula Willehadi*, c. 13, pp. 387-8.

<sup>172</sup> Palmer, 'Rimbart's *Vita Anskarii*'.

<sup>173</sup> Adam of Bremen, *Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae pontificum* I. xi (12)-xiii, pp. 12-17.

attached to a set geographical framework stretching from Dokkum to Wigmodia; Rimbart, on the other hand, had ambitions to take Christianity in a different direction, to head north to the Danes and Swedes and even to the monstrous realms he imagined existed beyond.<sup>174</sup> Anskar represented this ambition because he had undertaken such work and taken Christianity ‘unto the ends of the Earth’ (*finis mundi*).<sup>175</sup> The developing spiritual significance of saints could, it seems, be bound with the changing boundaries and ambitions of particular territories. When the *Vita Rimbarti* was written, Rimbart himself was portrayed as the spiritual heir of Anskar.<sup>176</sup> The importance of the Anglo-Saxons had not, however, been forgotten. Anskar himself is known to have visited Fulda to celebrate the feast of St Boniface.<sup>177</sup> Moreover, when Rimbart died he was laid to rest in Bremen in the church Willehad had founded alongside Anskar and Willehad.<sup>178</sup> Fittingly, the last missionary of the Carolingian age was, in death, united with the last great Anglo-Saxon missionary.

### Conclusion.

The missionary *vitae* of ninth-century Frisia and Saxony brought the missionary plans of Egberht two centuries earlier to a near close. From his list of missionary targets, as set out by Bede, the ‘Frisians, Rugians, Danes, Huns, Old Saxons and Boructuars’ had all received Christianity, even if the situation in Denmark remained uncertain at the turn of the tenth century. Moreover it remained the Anglo-Saxons who were the

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<sup>174</sup> Wood, ‘Pagans and Christians in Ninth-century Scandinavia’, in P. Sawyer, B. Sawyer, & I. N. Wood (eds.), *The Christianization of Scandinavia* (Alingås, 1987), pp. 36-67 at pp. 63-6. Further, on Rimbart’s interest in the *cynocephali* (dog-headed men) he believed lived beyond the Swedes, see: Ratramnus, *Epistolae variorum* no. 12, ed. E. Perels, *MGH Epp.* 6 (Berlin, 1925), pp. 155-7; A. Röpke, ‘Pro memoria Rimbarti’, in *Rimbart, der Nachfolger Anskars*, pp. 30-56 at pp. 34-6; Wood, *The Missionary Life*, pp. 252-3.

<sup>175</sup> Rimbart, *VA* c. 25, p. 55; Palmer, ‘Rimbart’s *Vita Anskarii*’.

<sup>176</sup> See for example *Vita Rimbarti* c. 2, p. 82.

<sup>177</sup> *Epistola Fuldensium fragmata* no. 37, ed. E. Dümmler, *MGH Epp.* 5 (Berlin, 1899), pp. 517-33 at p. 532: ‘Bonifatii festum Nonis Iunii celebrat Theoto abbas Fuldensis: quo die ad se invitat Adalgarium abbatem sancti Viti et Ansgarium in epistolar sua ad eosdem’.

<sup>178</sup> *Vita Rimbarti* c. 24, p. 99: ‘... sepelierunt eum foris basilicam prope tumbam sancti Willehadi’.

spiritual rock on which this task had been based unto the last page of the *Vita Rimberti* with Rimbert's burial alongside Willehad.

Paramount to the missionary hagiography in the Frisian and Saxon traditions was having – or at least creating – the right spiritual lineage. The actual importance of Willibrord and Boniface during their own lifetimes in the North was likely minimal; what was crucial was that their memory was seized upon by the developing Frisia-Saxon Church and bound, in the first instance, to the *Liudgeriden*. Extended and distorted accounts of their careers in Frisia emerged, for example with no impression that Willibrord worked outside Frisia and Boniface's second three-year spell expanded to thirteen. Into the stories of Liudger and Altfred the lives of local characters were interwoven with those of the saints: Gregory, Liudger, Lebuin, Aluberht, Marchelm and others. This helped to establish a tangible localised element to the legends of saints who were otherwise of more significance elsewhere. The important contrast between *Germania* on the one hand and Frisia and Saxony on the other, therefore, was that while Lull and Willibald had to act to impose their predecessors, friends and kin as saints, in the North the Anglo-Saxons were actively adopted and transformed to create focal points of spiritual, and perhaps even political, allegiance.

The associations with particular places were an important part of this. In the case of the churches of Utrecht, memorialising Willibrord or Boniface in relation to either St Salvatore's or St Martin's helped to express either the legitimacy of episcopal traditions or the more reflective importance of the martyr in Frisia. However both ways of looking at the saints involved fictive elements, sometimes drawn from Germanic heroic ideals or even, in the *Vita altera Bonifatii*, a unique blend of Isidore and Virgil.

Interpreting an individual within particular literary cultures was itself an integral part of making a saint relevant to the people who were supposed to venerate him or her; the transformation of Frisia and Saxony into a Christian land was, through the saint, reinterpreted within these same literary worlds. Through the *vitae*, a bond developed which both defined the saint's spiritual significance territorially and defined territories in relation to the saints. This is evident through the way the *Vita Liudgeri*, *Vita Willehadi* and *Vita Anskarii* defended land rights through associations with saints. The definition of a saint had to be negotiated, not just in relation to spiritual concerns, but also the worldly concerns of Christian communities.

## Conclusion.

Saints belonged to particular communities or locations through the power of stories that associated holy men or women with the local and distant worlds around them. When the monk from St Martin's, Utrecht, wrote the *Vita altera Bonifatii*, he described Boniface's connections with Mainz, Fulda, Utrecht and Dokkum and so created a perception of spiritual bonds along the Rhineland and beyond, which memories of Boniface had created. Through accounts of the nominally familiar and the strange, the monk also made Boniface into a symbol of the community of St Martin's, set apart from the seaborne life of the Frisian traders and the monsters of Germany, respectful of papal authority, and in need of a strong Christian past in a time of pagan viking threats. The *Vita altera Bonifatii* was more than just history; it was a semi-allegorical meditation on the world of ninth-century Utrecht, and at its heart lay the saints who had established that world. Ideals of sanctity and piety may have transcended the physical world but many saints, when thought of by those who venerated them, were interpreted within those ideals because of the ways they had interacted (or were imagined to have done so) with certain places.

Our question at the start of this thesis was about how saints were created in hagiography through writing about them in the world. If *vitae* were not *historiae* in a modern, positivistic sense, then what prompted eighth- and ninth-century hagiographers to write about new saints in the ways they did? In this final chapter I will draw together some of the strands which have emerged from my study and make some further suggestions about their implications for the nature of hagiography. I will also indicate some possible new directions research on saints' Lives and the Anglo-Saxon missions could take in future.

*The Role of Places in Constructions of Sanctity.*

Particular places were important in constructions of sanctity because of what they could signify. In chapters one and four we saw how places played a role in defining the nature of a journey. Saints, like other ideal pious individuals, never travelled on a whim in hagiographical stories. This was important because monastic reforms throughout the period encouraged the Benedictine ideal of *stabilitas* and the strict enclosure of the female religious.<sup>1</sup> Moving from monastery to monastery, or monastery to missionfield, the saint's purpose was carefully explained in relation to location as well as their own actions. Hagiographers could, moreover, make these explanations creatively. Willibald the priest and Alcuin both gave accounts of why Boniface and Willibrord left places to arrive elsewhere, and conceptualised such changes in location in terms of a model of Irish *peregrinatio* neither saint followed.<sup>2</sup> Hygeburg, meanwhile, paid great attention to the spiritual significance of each place Willibald visited on his pilgrimage to the Holy Land.<sup>3</sup> Two things become apparent. Firstly, it was imperative to describe the arrivals of the Anglo-Saxons on the continent in ways that provided suitable examples for other people to imitate, while at the same time defending the saints from being labelled *gyrovagi*. Secondly, it was possible to achieve this impression because they were bound, not by what had actually happened, but by the messages they wanted to convey and the audiences' expectations about standards of saintly behaviour. That such descriptions were not always convincing, for example when Boniface forsook his home only to return there shortly afterwards, only helps to illustrate their artificiality. The

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<sup>1</sup> Chapter one, p. 46; chapter two, pp. 115-18.

<sup>2</sup> Chapter one, pp. 58-63.

<sup>3</sup> Chapter four, pp. 185-9.

past in medieval historiography was, as Hans-Werner Goetz once wrote, a past orientated by the present.<sup>4</sup>

Places could also symbolise a variety of ideas. In Eichstätt, Hygeburg and Willibald were able to use the emotive power of the Holy Land, and the churches there in particular, to conceptualise sacred space in their new church.<sup>5</sup> Through comparisons between one place and another, Hygeburg and Willibald were able to illustrate the importance of worshipping in particular locations and the spiritual significance of saints' tombs. In this manner they can be seen to be trying to influence devotional practices in Eichstätt through an association with Willibald's experiences of the Holy Land. Hagiographers like Hygeburg, Eigil and Rudolf could also affirm their commitment to monastic *regulae* derived from the *Regula s. Benedicti*. Monte Cassino was a common place to reference in these circumstances because of its association with Benedict of Nursia.<sup>6</sup> There was no obvious equivalent centre for female religious living, but Rudolf of Fulda did reinvent Wimborne retrospectively as a centre of great orthodoxy.<sup>7</sup> A saint was thus in part established in relation to monastic standards as the product or founder of such centres. Similarly the authority of a saint could be expressed through an association with Rome and the papacy. Burchard's consecration as bishop of Würzburg, for example, was moved in the *Vita Burchardi* from Germany to St Peter's and included a more direct role for Pope Zacharias than had apparently been the case from the letters.<sup>8</sup> In the case of the *Vita Burchardi* it is striking that this text was written around a time (the 840s) when Bishop Gozbert of Würzburg himself sought papal support for his appointment. What

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<sup>4</sup> H.-W. Goetz, 'Die Gegenwart der Vergangenheit im früh- und hochmittelalterlichen Geschichtsbewußtsein', *Historisches Zeitschrift* 255 (1992), 61-97 at 72.

<sup>5</sup> Chapter four, pp. 192-5.

<sup>6</sup> Chapter two, pp. 94-7, 113-4, 111-14.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 118.

<sup>8</sup> Chapter three, pp. 159-61.

remains compelling throughout is how these ideals were denoted with distorted or formulaic stories, suggesting that Monte Cassino or Rome were not (just) important because Willibrord or members of the *Bonifatiuskreise* had been there but rather because of the symbolism of these places. In hagiography it was, however, important to make a connection between a saint and a symbolic place in order to bind veneration for the saint with the valuing or imitation of particular ideals.

The 'constructedness' of hagiographical pasts is also impossible to escape in stories about places or events immediately familiar to the audience. This is most evident in the Frisian traditions which distorted time to give Willibrord and Boniface closer bonds with Utrecht than non-Frisian traditions considered meaningful.<sup>9</sup> For example, whether Boniface spent three years in Frisia (719-21 in the *Vita Bonifatii*) or thirteen (719-31 in the *Vita Gregorii*) perhaps has less to do with actual activities and more to do with Willibald's emphasis on Germany and Liudger's interest in Utrecht. Such simple narrative reconfigurations of the past helped to define Willibrord and Boniface, not just as saints, but as saints who could be identified with the origins of the Christian past in Frisia. This identification is perhaps the most important aspect of defining a saint: it is essential for the audience to be able to comprehend why a particular individual is spiritually significant, and the easiest way to establish this is to make the saint symbolic of the things the audience finds familiar. Thus Willibrord could come to represent Frisian Christianity, Boniface could signify communities in the Middle Rhine valley, Willibald, Wynnebald and Waldburga could embody life in Eichstätt, Burchard and Kilian could symbolise Würzburg *et cetera*. The idea that saints were part of local identities often overlapped precisely with how they were established as saints in the first place.

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<sup>9</sup> Chapter six, pp. 264-7, 273.

An extension of defining a saint in terms of local identities and ideological symbolism was the use of new saints to make claims over lands or peoples. In the *Vita Bonifatii*, for example, Boniface's proclamation that Würzburg was to have authority over the East Frankish Church and Saxon and Slavic missionfields seems spurious, but it did lend saintly backing for the ambitions of Lull and Megingoz, who commissioned the text.<sup>10</sup> Later, in the 840s, the *Vita Willehadi* and Altfrið's *Vita Liudgeri* appear to have been written in part to respond to the impact of new political boundaries upon the perceived rights of Bremen and Münster in East Freisland.<sup>11</sup> Rimbart followed this tradition in his *Vita Anskarii* when he bound the image of Anskar as a saint together with claims to papal authority over the North.<sup>12</sup> The question of whether the papal letters supporting Anskar are genuine is in some ways irrelevant to this study; what is important is that a saint's Life, a statement of why Anskar was a saint, was a suitable forum in which to articulate such claims over land and assert authority. It helped the land define the saint and, in turn, the saint define the land. This is an important conclusion because such mutually supportive definitions avoid the idea that saints were tied to clearly demarcated territories by their activities in these areas, when often land definitions in the eighth and ninth centuries could be fluid and saintly activity in them could have been minimal. It was through the legends of the saints, as perpetuated by hagiography, that specific saints and lands could become synonymous with each other.

#### *The Influence of Audiences.*

Hagiographers used places in their constructions of sanctity often mindful of the kinds of things their intended audiences would understand. Perhaps surprisingly, there are here only a few discernible differences between saints' Lives written for monasteries and

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<sup>10</sup> Chapter five, pp. 237-40.

<sup>11</sup> Chapter six, pp. 279-86.

<sup>12</sup> Chapter three, pp. 167-8.

those written for a wider public. *Peregrinatio*, for example, is mentioned for both the *Vita Gregorii*'s partly lay audience and for the *Vita Willibrordi*'s audience in Echternach.<sup>13</sup> Saints are presented as having the power to transform regions through mission and pious example for many different kinds of audience.<sup>14</sup> The *Regula s. Benedicti* was an integral part of Willibald's portrayal of Boniface for a wide audience and Eigil's portrayal of Sturm for the monks of Fulda.<sup>15</sup> (Although perhaps interestingly it little affected the monastic writing of Liudger or the Utrecht monk).<sup>16</sup> Rome, meanwhile, loomed as large in the *Vita Burchardi* as the *Vita altera Bonifatii*.<sup>17</sup>

The consistency between models of sanctity and *vitae* suggests two significant conclusions. Firstly, it shows that in many respects the ways of defining a saint, while quite fluid, could be as appropriate for a lay audience as a monastic one. *Vitae* could be seen to offer *exempla pro imitatione* for both elements of society: pious behaviour was, after all, pious regardless of vocation, and lay people could be expected to support churches and monasteries and uphold their values. There were, it seems, few concessions made to lay culture in contrast with, say, Arbeo's muscular saints in Bavaria. The second conclusion is that it is possible to note here that differences in how texts were used – whether read out in churches or monasteries, or studied privately – had little apparent effect upon the ways of presenting someone as a saint. A text intended as a sermon, like Liudger's *Vita Gregorii*, does not rely upon fundamentally different principles of saint creation than a text intended for private study like, say, Rudolf of Fulda's *Vita Leobae*. It is not the use of the text that affects its meaning, but the relationship between the literary artifices and the context that produced them.

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<sup>13</sup> Chapter one, pp. 60-1 and p. 64.

<sup>14</sup> See throughout chapters five and six.

<sup>15</sup> Chapter two, pp. 91-3 and pp. 105-14.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 123.

<sup>17</sup> Chapter three, pp. 159-60 and pp. 165-6.

Some of the *ideals* expressed by the associations between saints and places were, on the other hand, naturally affected by intended audiences. Texts such as the *Vita Wigberti*, *Vita Sturmi* or *Vita Leobae*, which were aimed at monks and nuns, put great emphasis on centres of monasticism through which standards of cloistered living could be symbolised. There is a contrast here with texts like the *Vita Bonifatii* or *Vita Gregorii* in which papal authority was given greater attention. Hygeburg's *Vita Willibaldi et Wynnebaldi*, however, illustrates some of the problems with perceiving too sharp a distinction between monastic and public *vitae*. Addressed to a part-lay, part-clerical and part-monastic audience, the text spends much time emphasising the virtues and value of good monastic living.<sup>18</sup> It is, to repeat, important to recognise that the secular world was not indifferent to how monks followed monastic rules when such things affected the spiritual well-being of the region. This is perhaps exemplified most clearly by the support of Carlomann, Charlemagne and Louis the Pious at different times for monastic reform. A distinction maybe needs to be made between literary strategy and authorial intent since the same strategies could be used to different ends, but at the same time it is important to remember the overlap between the lay and religious worlds that produced *vitae*.

#### *Stimuli for Hagiographical Writing.*

The reasons that lay behind hagiographers' use of places in defining sanctity are often individual to each author and should not be synthesised to provide an 'ideal type' which cannot, in practice, be applied anywhere with any explanatory force. Conventions explain nothing if they are not studied as part of the dynamic and often non-conventional processes of discourse and historical action. Instead, the search for explanations should

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<sup>18</sup> Chapter two, pp. 94-6.

focus upon how and why people responded differently to the same events, or how and why they used literary strategies to respond to different events.

Saints' Lives were often prompted by concerns for status. It seems wrong, for example, to divorce entirely the production of the *Vita Bonifatii* from Lull's initial failure to obtain recognition as an archbishop.<sup>19</sup> It was Alcuin's loss of status, moved from the court to Tours, that seems to have motivated his account of Willibrord's position and relations with the court, perhaps in order to support some sense of moral authority he still felt over Charlemagne.<sup>20</sup> Most blatantly Rimbert's *Vita Anskarii*, with its lengthy justification for Hamburg's archiepiscopal status, illustrates neatly how saints' cults and literature could become the vehicles for someone's ambitions.<sup>21</sup> Discussions of status could be used from a position of weakness to make claims about desired or lost positions of power written about in relation to the past, present and intended future of the author or audience. Saints' cults were also used from a position of strength, for example to support Charlemagne's subjugation of Saxony, although it is perhaps notable that less hagiographical literature was produced in such contexts. The author of the *Vita Willehadi* wanted to associate himself with Charlemagne's power but showed no signs of close connections with the court itself, and likewise the *Vita Sturmi* and *Vita Wigberti* saw Eigil and Lupus, living outside the court, weave the case of Saxony into narratives about other things.<sup>22</sup> Often, it appears, these hagiographies were the response of the outsider, the marginalised, the threatened or those removed from the centre stage of political life.

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<sup>19</sup> Chapter five, pp. 240-6.

<sup>20</sup> Chapter one, p. 62.

<sup>21</sup> Chapter three, pp. 167-8; chapter six, pp. 282, 288-9; J. T. Palmer, 'Rimbert's *Vita Anskarii* and Scandinavia mission in the ninth century', *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* (forthcoming).

<sup>22</sup> Chapter five, pp. 226, 230; chapter six, pp. 279, 283.

The problems of the 840s seem to have provoked a noticeable rise in the production of *vitae* inspired by the Anglo-Saxons. It was about this time that *Vita Liudgeri*, *Vita Willehadi*, *Passio Kiliani*, *Vita Burchardi* and *Sermo Sualonis* were composed, creating an unprecedented amount of active interest in the Anglo-Saxons or characters associated with them. When studied in their specific contexts each seems to offer some response to wider Carolingian division. Alfrid and the Bremen cleric both made claims through the past of their saints that contradicted the territorial divisions as set down in the 843 Treaty of Verdun.<sup>23</sup> The stories about Kilian, Burchard and Sualo, meanwhile, all contain peculiar stories that reaffirm how their pasts had been established with papal authority, either in conjunction with or independently of Carolingian support.<sup>24</sup> The Anglo-Saxons and their ideals seem to have provided a useful model for expressing legitimacy east of the Rhine in the Carolingian period.

Defending Christian morale naturally also played a part in stimulating the production of saints' Lives and associated writings. Viking attacks in particular seem to have prompted Anskar to write the *Miracula Willehadi* to inspire his congregation at Bremen.<sup>25</sup> The Saxons fulfilled similar roles in Eigil's *Vita Sturmii* and Lupus' *Vita Wigberti*, where threats to Fulda, Fritzlar and Hersfeld were overcome through saintly intercession and Charlemagne's military might.<sup>26</sup> While pagan attacks were a direct stimulus for Anskar, however, Eigil and Lupus were well removed from any actual danger to inspire their writings, although the end products contained no less allegorical detachment from the worlds they described. Irrespective of the proximity to danger, then, stories of saints overcoming pagan or military threats consoled and strengthened

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<sup>23</sup> Chapter six, pp. 279-86.

<sup>24</sup> Chapter three, pp. 157-63.

<sup>25</sup> Chapter six, p. 286.

<sup>26</sup> Chapter five, pp. 226, 240.

communities; in these contexts it is only to be expected that the focus would be inward, upon the locality, rather than upon distant events.

The Anglo-Saxon missions appear to have been reinterpreted in response to Benedictine reforms, and particularly those of St Benedict of Aniane during the reign of Louis the Pious. Although in many respects these reforms had a continuity with those of Boniface and Chrodegang, Ardo of Aniane was keen to disassociate the later movement from earlier ones.<sup>27</sup> There had been changes in emphasis since Boniface's synods, particularly in Boniface's own foundation of Fulda where Ratgar's abbacy had opened up questions about outside interference in monastic affairs and the power of abbots.<sup>28</sup> Indeed, much of the Fulda hagiographical tradition seems to have built up in response to monastic reform. The effect this had on the image of the Anglo-Saxons is striking: Boniface was criticised for having established unpopular rules and making improper requests for Leoba's burial, while elements of Leoba's cloistered life were told in accordance with ninth-century standards. The past was little more than a reflection of the present in Fulda.

*Responses to the Anglo-Saxons and their Traditions.*

Cults of the Anglo-Saxons who went to the continent would not have achieved prominence without being accepted by the other people who lived in Germany and Frisia. Some cults achieved wider recognition than others, notably that of St Boniface. The earliest *vitae* – those of Boniface, Willibald and Wynnebald – arose out of the missions themselves but seem to have been responses to how the heirs of the Bonifatian enterprises had come to fit into the new socio-political landscape east of the Rhine.

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<sup>27</sup> Chapter two, pp. 102-4.

<sup>28</sup> Chapter two, pp. 104-11.

Some of their 'social logic', as indicated by the eighth-century Freising manuscript, can be found in the way Arbeo and Virgil were receptive to the image of sanctity even if they ignored some of the underlying messages in Willbald and Hygeburg's work.<sup>29</sup> It is perhaps significant that the Anglo-Saxon cults developed in this way because it means that they did not grow in a purely local environment; rather, the initial *vitae* fed into wider debates about what it meant to be a saint. The next two generations of heirs in places like Würzburg and Fulda continued to expand and refine such ideals of sanctity. Again not every development was positive and Alcuin, for example, took some exception to the image of Boniface as a martyr. In the North, heirs to Boniface's work like Liudger and, in some senses, Anskar took reverence for Boniface firmly into East Frisland and Saxony; the expansion of the Carolingian frontier, therefore, was another factor in expanding the popularity of the Anglo-Saxon cults. The Frankish court itself may have helped to promote some of these cults in Germany and, at the same time, some centres actively claimed associations between the Carolingians and saints like Willehad and Liudger. Few cults reached any prominence outside Germany and Frisia with, for example, only Boniface of the missionaries appearing in martyrologies and calendars from both Britain and Burgundy.

*Truth in Hagiographical Texts.*

An integral part of hagiographical stories about places was that they were not entirely fictitious, and many stories built upon or stretched associations between saints and localities that were recognised outside the confines of the text. There are a variety of strategies that can be employed to consider the 'truth values' of such associations. It is possible to use letters and charters to attest to the presence of the saints in certain

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<sup>29</sup> Chapter one, p. 60; chapter two, pp. 97-100; chapter three, pp. 154-7; chapter four, pp. 205-9.

locations. One may, however, wish to avoid saying letters and charters ‘verify’ these stories because both the composition and dissemination of these non-historical sources leave open the potential for literary playfulness, exaggeration, distortion and outright forgery. This can make it difficult to ascertain the precise nature of the relationship. The case of Willibrord in Utrecht is particularly instructive. Five hagiographers in this study mention Willibrord’s work in Frisia, as do Bede, the *Liber pontificalis*, Boniface’s letter to Pope Stephen II and a number of charters. Not a single one of these sources is, on its own, unproblematic: the hagiographers and historians contradict each other and exaggerate, the letter betrays Boniface’s capacity ‘to falsify history’ (as Marco Mostert put it),<sup>30</sup> and the charters appear corrupt in the sole collection of them which dates from the twelfth century. Perhaps all that can be reconstructed is the unhelpful-looking proposition, ‘it is likely Willibrord spent some time in Utrecht’. That this was a widely repeated proposition in saints’ Lives, however, suggests that it had meaning to the people who wrote these sources, even if it appears more likely that Echternach was more important to Willibrord. The lesson is that the hagiographers – Willibald, Alcuin, Liudger, Altfred and the St Martin’s monk – all wrote about Willibrord in a way that was widely recognised as meaningful outside the confines of their texts, even if that meaning was a distortion of ‘historical actuality’ or was imbued with extra meaning through the medium of the text.

It is rare that a hagiographer approached his or her art with complete freedom to invent and shape the past. Authors were limited, as we have just seen, by the meaning beyond the text itself. This point can be expanded to incorporate more generally the limitations brought upon the author by external factors. Willibald’s account of Boniface

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<sup>30</sup> M. Mostert, ‘Bonifatius als geschiedvervalser’, *Madoc: Tijdschrift over de Middeleeuwen* 9. 3 (1995), 213-21.

was, for example, a product of the recent past Boniface inhabited, Willibald's relationship with Lull and Meginoz, the content of the letters and reminiscences that informed Willibald of his subject, and the literary forms and styles – hagiographical, Aldhelmian, classical – that he employed to structure his account. It is, of course, impossible that it could have been otherwise, bearing in mind that the past can only ever be understood through the theories and structures imposed upon it, like all subjects of *a posteriori* investigation.<sup>31</sup> Therefore even once it has been established that something like Willibrord's association with Utrecht is meaningful, the nuances of each individual instance of such an assertion are dependent on the prejudices of the writer (and of course the modern historian who reads those assertions) and not the career of Willibrord himself. While Willibrord might have been an important saint in Utrecht because he had worked in the city, at the same time he was only meaningfully so subject to the ways in which that proposition was understood, repeated or transformed by people like Willibald and Liudger; the same holds true for all saints in all places.

It is important to locate the hagiographers' accounts of saints in relation to the kinds of theories appropriate to the tasks they undertook when writing. Saints are the products of interpretive acts. They could not be called *sanctus* or *martyr* without an individual or group defining them as such. Saints are, therefore, in many ways identical to the form and function of the saints' cults, which were often set out in saints' Lives. It is the literary representations of pious individuals, in other words, which are integral to their status *and utility* as a saint. These representations are guided by a variety of overarching authorial intentions, making the explanations of sanctity subject to a range of allegorical or symbolic, inspirational, emotional and devotional ideas. It is in the

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<sup>31</sup> Introduction, pp. 14-15.

subjective take on the past and within the gaps of what is known, that creative element of writing hagiography truly comes into play and the past gains a significance it did not have in itself.

*New Approaches to the Anglo-Saxon Missions to the Continent.*

The stories of the Anglo-Saxons on the continent in the eighth century begin to look very different when considered as the products of the subsequent century's developments in hagiographical writing. As in many historical subjects, the characters described become more remote and inaccessible as real people and instead appear to be literary vehicles used to express particular sets of ideals. In this respect it should now be clearer that the apparent importance of the Anglo-Saxon saints was in many ways the creation of different groups in the Carolingian period. It was not, however, a collection of pure inventions but rather symbolic reinterpretations of the past which fed into pre-existing sentiments about figures like Willibrord and Boniface. In that sense, although the missions themselves can now seem lost to modern historians, something of the relationships between the Anglo-Saxons' work and the later communities are inherent in the stories that were written.

Even a shift away from the saints themselves to the contexts which produced *vitae* provides a new understanding of the missions. By investigating Willibald of Eichstätt's role in the production of the *Vita Willibaldi et Wynnebaldi*, for example, it is possible to see how an Anglo-Saxon *peregrinus* who worked with Boniface went on to use ideas of sanctity, sacred space and the past to shape the outlook of people in Eichstätt. The *Vita Bonifatii*, meanwhile, invites a greater consideration of the weaknesses of Lull's position after the death of his mentor in 754. There remain many

under-utilised letters and charters connected with Lull which are in need of serious study if historians are to understand better the Anglo-Saxon missions between 754 and 786 (although for the purposes of this thesis they reveal little more about the *Vita Bonifatii*). The story of the missions does not end with Boniface's death but, in many ways, only really then begins.

One interesting challenge is to the chronology of the missions. Theodor Schieffer and Kurt-Ulrich Jäschke, for example, put great emphasis on the *Vita Willibaldi et Wynnebaldi* when they presented their arguments about the timing of the *Concilium Germanicum* and the establishment of the central German bishoprics. However if 'hagiographical time' (as one might call it) was illustrative rather than accurate, then the dating of Willibald's consecration as bishop becomes inadmissible as evidence. Texts like Liudger's *Vita Gregorii* and the *Vita altera Bonifatii* have also been dismissed as inaccurate because they present different versions of time to Willibald's *Vita Bonifatii*; if the historical authority of Willibald's work is to be rejected, however, then this premise has to be rejected too. Even the letters provide little refuge for the historian trying to reconstruct the story of the Anglo-Saxons because so few can be dated securely. In part the problems with chronology reaffirm how important it is to understand the *vitae* as reflections of later times. It also potentially allows an entire re-conceptualisation of what the Anglo-Saxons actually did: the paradigms and assumptions of Levison and Schieffer can be replaced by a new model of understanding based, not upon linear chronology, but upon how the Anglo-Saxons were a response to their insular and continental pasts and how, in turn, they became used in responses to later times.

A way into any new account of the missions themselves could attempt to bring the intellectual and theological thoughts of the *Bonifatiuskreise*, as revealed by the letters, to the centre. The letters of Lull, Megingoz and their correspondents must be studied more carefully in this context in order to help escape placing undue emphasis on Boniface at the exclusion of seeing the Anglo-Saxons as part of a broader network of peoples. Understanding these networks is fundamental to avoiding being too parochial about medieval studies and instead, for example, seeing events in Hesse as products of interactivity between Britain, Italy, Frisia and the Frankish territories. It will also be useful to consider further how people in later centuries viewed the Anglo-Saxons; it is striking, for example, just how many twelfth-century manuscripts contained copies of the *vitae*, including Erlangen-Nürnberg, Universitätsbibliothek, 321, which included *vitae* about Boniface, Burchard, Lull, Leoba, Sturm, Wigbert and Gregory of Utrecht. Stories of the Anglo-Saxons still resonated in communities centuries after the missions and the earliest *vitae* which recalled them; there was much about the Anglo-Saxons that created emotional and spiritual bonds east of the Rhine which, in different forms, still exist today.

Over fifty years ago Wilhelm Levison and his pupil Theodor Schieffer laid down the paradigms in which Willibrord, Boniface and their circles came to be interpreted. With the development of more literary and post-modern approaches to history, the Anglo-Saxon missions can now appear very different in character. The down-playing of people like Willibrord and Boniface from their old status as the founders of Christian Europe has led us to ask how and why they had come to appear so significant in the first place, and the answers appear to lie in the nature of the cult of saints in the

Carolingian period. Changing cultural and political horizons at that time led to the use of hagiography to interpret the world in terms of a range of spiritual and earthly allegiances and ideas, all of which could be reinforced communally through the cult of saints. East of the Rhine it was figures like Willibrord and Boniface, recent yet distant enough to be written about creatively, who most easily symbolised these ideals and thus it was in the ninth century that they were established as the founders of the Germanic Church many historians until recently had assumed them to be. This new understanding of the Anglo-Saxons' influence on the continent still demands contextualisation in its own right, perhaps in relation to attitudes to saints' cults closer to the centres of royal or imperial authority, and certainly in relation to other developments in Anglo-Saxon England, West Frankia and Italy. The early medieval counterpart to Peter Brown's magisterial *The Cult of Saints* remains unwritten, but perhaps progress in analysing the diversity of forms and functions of *vitae* in relation to new theory, contexts and questions can bring us closer to that goal and a greater understanding of religious and historical attitudes in a formative period of Europe's history.