

# St Edmund, King and Martyr: Constructing his Cult in Medieval East Anglia

By Rebecca Pinner

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# Abstract

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My doctoral thesis seeks to explore the social and political construction of sanctity with reference to the cult of St Edmund, king and martyr, in medieval East Anglia. It is an interdisciplinary project that utilises sources and approaches from a variety of disciplines (principally literature and art history, but also social history and anthropology) in order to develop a new methodology for the investigation of the cult of saints, a religious phenomenon central to the European Middle Ages which has hitherto often been considered in its constituent parts (hagiography, miracle collections, pilgrimage activity). This separation belies the complexity of saints' cults and my approach therefore seeks to explore the range of devotional manifestations in response to a particular saint in order to explore the social, cultural and political dynamics of cult construction.

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Right: Detail of Edmund's parents. London, British Library, MS Harley 2278, fol. 11v.



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# Prologue

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## **Synoptic account of the legend of St Edmund**

The primary aim of this thesis is to explore the evolution of the cult of St Edmund, attending to its development at particular historical moments. However, the following synoptic account of the legend of St Edmund is provided by way of introducing events and characters that will be discussed below:

Edmund was born of ‘the stock of the Old Saxons’, the son of King Alkmund and Queen Siware. He was a prudent and holy child, fulfilling the potential miraculously foretold to his father by a wise woman in Rome before the young prince’s birth.

On his way to the Holy Land on pilgrimage, Edmund’s uncle Offa, King of East Anglia, visited his relatives. He was so struck by Edmund’s virtues that he named him his heir. On his return from Jerusalem, Offa fell ill and died. His attendants travelled to the court of King Alkmund and presented Offa’s ring to the young prince as a sign of his inheritance. Reluctantly, Edmund’s parents agreed that he must leave, and with many tears they bade him farewell.

On his arrival in East Anglia, at ‘Maydensburgh’, Edmund knelt and gave thanks for a successful sea crossing. Five miraculous wells sprang forth and thereafter watered the land, bringing great fertility to the area. Edmund founded the town of Hunstanton, which was built nearby.

The new king travelled south across his kingdom to Attleborough, where he spent a year learning his Psalter. At the end of the year he was proclaimed king by public acclamation, and was crowned at the royal seat at Bures. He ruled wisely, administering justice, defending the church, and offering charity to

widows and orphans. He was also a valiant knight, hunting and hawking with his men.

Meanwhile, tales of the East Anglian king reached the Danish court. King Lothbroc taunted his sons, Hinguar and Hubba, claiming they were no match for Edmund. Whilst out alone, fishing, Lothbroc's boat was swept away from the Danish shore and carried across the North Sea. Beaching on the East Anglian coast, he was hospitably received by King Edmund, and the two spent many hours together, hunting and talking. However, one of Edmund's huntsman, Bern, was jealous, and lured Lothbroc to the forest, where he killed him. Lothbroc's faithful greyhound returned to court and led Edmund to the body. Bern was cast adrift in a boat without oars and washed ashore on the Danish coast. Unable to admit his own part in their father's murder, Bern told Hinguar and Hubba that Edmund had killed their father. Enraged, and still rankling from their father taunts, the Danes set sail for East Anglia.

The Viking army swept across the East Anglian countryside. Killing all in their path, they pillaged and burnt. Edmund rallied his troops and met the Danes in battle near Thetford. The East Anglians gained the victory, but appalled by the bloodshed and loss of life, Edmund vowed not to fight again, resolving instead to offer himself as a sacrifice to the Danes.

A messenger arrived from the Viking leaders, demanding that Edmund pay tribute and worship their pagan gods. The king refused, and was seized by the Danes. Stripped of his royal robes and cruelly beaten, he was tied to a tree and shot full of arrows. Edmund refused to cry out in pain, but continuously prayed for forbearance. Eventually the Danes tired of their sport and beheaded the king, leaving his body on the ground to be eaten by wild animals, but casting his head deep into a thorny thicket to prevent Edmund's followers from giving him a Christian burial.

Once the semblance of peace returned to East Anglia, Edmund's followers sought for the body of their king. Discovering the corpse, they were unable to

find the head. They heard a voice calling “here, here, here”, and following the sound came upon a monstrous wolf guarding Edmund’s head between his paws. Recognising the sanctity of their martyred king, the East Anglians reunited the head and the body, to which it was miraculously rejoined, with only a thin red line indicating his decapitation. They buried Edmund’s remains with great reverence in a small wooden chapel. Miracles began to occur at the chapel, and eventually Edmund was translated to the royal seat of Beodricesworth, where he was enshrined.

# Introduction

To us too had the last day, the inevitable moment, come: we were monks, the glory and honour of Eastern England were, but the fierce fire is seizing it all, and mastering the holy temple'.<sup>1</sup>

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In November 1535 Cromwell's Commissioners arrived at the abbey of Bury St Edmunds to report on the condition of the monastery and the extent of its wealth. Three years later they returned to confiscate the abbey's possessions for the Crown, writing to Cromwell of their successes:

Pleasith it your lordship to be advertised that wee have ben at saynt Edmond's Bury, where we found a riche shryne which was very comberous to deface. We have takyn in the seyd monastery in golde and sylver MMMMM markes, and above, over and besides a well and riche crosse with emereddes, as also dyvers and sundry stones of great value... and we assure your lordship that the abbott and convent be very well contented with every thing that we have done there.<sup>2</sup>

In September 1539 the abbey was dissolved. The 'riche shryne' belonged to St Edmund, erstwhile king of Norfolk and Suffolk who met his death at the hands of the Great Viking Army on 20 November 869. The value of the goods seized by the Commissioners attests to the wealth and prestige accrued by the abbey, 'the

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<sup>1</sup> Anon., *Incendium Ecclesiae*, in *Memorials of St Edmund's Abbey*, 3 vols., ed. Thomas Arnold, *Rerum Britannicarum Medii Aevi Scriptores* (Rolls Series) 96 (London: Printed for Her Majesty's Stationery Office by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1890-6), III, pp. 283-7; p. 285. This description of the fire which devastated the church of the abbey of Bury St Edmunds in 1465 owes much at this point to Panthus' lament on the Fall of Troy in Virgil's *Aeneid*: "The last day comes, Troy's inescapable hour./ Troy is past, Ilium is past, and the great glory of the Trojans:/ Jupiter carries all to Argos: the Greeks are lords of the burning city./ The horse, standing high on the ramparts, pours out warriors,/ and Sinon the conqueror exultantly stirs the flames." Virgil, *Aeneid*, trans. Sarah Ruden (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), II, ll. 324-9, p. 33.

<sup>2</sup> *Three Chapters of Letters Relating to the Suppression of the Monasteries*, ed. Thomas Wright, Camden Society, London, vol. 26 (London: printed for the Camden Society by John Bowyer Nichols and Son, 1843), p. 144.

glory and honour of Eastern England' referred to above by the monastic chronicler, due largely to the reputation and popularity of their saintly patron, St Edmund. More than sixty medieval churches throughout the country bore his dedication, many of which were also adorned with his image.<sup>3</sup> Between the tenth and sixteenth centuries more than thirty separate accounts of his legend had been written in Latin, Old English, Anglo-Norman, Old French or Middle English.<sup>4</sup> For much of the Middle Ages Bury was one of the most popular pilgrimage destinations in England and Edmund's cult also enjoyed some popularity abroad, particularly in Scandinavia and Iceland, at Saint-Denis, at Lucca in Italy (from the tenth to the twelfth century) and at Toulouse (from the thirteenth century).<sup>5</sup>

Edmund was an enduring favourite with the English monarchy. In 945, King Edmund I (922-46) granted the abbey possession of a defined area around the monastery, later known as the Liberty of the town or *banleuca*, within which they had absolute jurisdiction to the extent that no royal official was allowed to enter.<sup>6</sup> In 1020 Cnut (1016-35) replaced the community of secular clerks who tended St Edmund's remains at Beodricesworth (later Bury St Edmunds) with Benedictine monks, granting them a charter of privileges the following year.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Frances Arnold-Foster, *Studies in Church Dedications or England's Patron Saints*, 3 vols. (London: Skeffington and Son, 1899), III, pp. 354 and 359.

<sup>4</sup> For a summary of the development of the legend see Grant Loomis, 'The Growth of the Saint Edmund Legend', *Harvard Studies and Notes in Philology and Literature*, xiv, (1932), 83-113.

<sup>5</sup> For the cult in Scandinavia see Alison Finlay, 'Chronology, Genealogy and Conversion: The Afterlife of St Edmund in the North' in *St Edmund, King and Martyr: Changing Images of a Medieval Saint*, ed. Anthony Bale (Woodbridge: York Medieval Press, 2009), pp. 27-44; for Saint-Denis see Pamela Z. Blum, 'The Saint Edmund Cycle in the Crypt at Saint-Denis', in *Bury St Edmunds: Art, Architecture, Archaeology and Economy*, ed. Antonia Gransden, British Archaeological Association Conference Transactions, xx (Leeds: British Archaeological Association, 1998), pp. 57-68; for Lucca see Antonia Gransden, 'Abbo of Fleury's *Passio Sancti Eadmundi*', *Revue Bénédictine*, 105 (1995), 20-78, esp. 75-8. The Toulouse cult concerned a set of rival relics, claimed to have been stolen from Bury in 1216, most of which are now under the guardianship of the Duke of Norfolk in Arundel Castle. See Richard Gem, 'A Scientific Examination of the Relics of St Edmund at Arundel Castle', in BAA: *Bury*, pp. 45-56.

<sup>6</sup> See Antonia Gransden, *A History of the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds, 1182-1256* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2007), pp. 236-244 and Robin J. Eagen, *The Abbey and Mint of Bury St Edmunds to 1279* (London: Spink, 2006), p. 6.

<sup>7</sup> The earliest authority for Cnut's foundation is a marginal note to the Easter Tables in the Bury Psalter, now Vatican MS Reg. Lat. 12, fol. 16v. See Antonia Gransden, 'The

Arguably the most significant royal intervention came in 1043 when Edward the Confessor granted the abbey jurisdiction over the eight and a half hundreds of West Suffolk, elevating Bury to one of the foremost Benedictine houses in the country.<sup>8</sup> This territory came to be known as the Liberty of St Edmund and the abbots of Bury exercised the powers of a sheriff.

Edmund was long regarded as a patron saint of England, exemplified by his appearance on the glorious late fourteenth century Wilton Diptych where, along with Edward the Confessor and John the Baptist, he presents Richard II (1377-99) to the Virgin and Christ Child.<sup>9</sup> The personal relationship many monarchs enjoyed with St Edmund is also evident in Henry III's (1216-72) account of the birth of his second son, sent to the abbot of Bury, Henry of Rushbrooke (1235-48):

Know that on Monday after the feast of St Hilary [16 January 1245], when our beloved consort Eleanor, our Queen, was labouring in the pains of childbirth, we had the antiphon of St Edmund chanted for her, and when the aforesaid prayer was not yet finished, the bearer of this present letter, our valet [Stephen de Salines, told us that she had] ... borne us a son. So that you may have the greater joy from this news we have arranged for it to be told to you by Stephen himself. And know that, as you requested us if you remember, we are having our son named Edmund.<sup>10</sup>

The cult of St Edmund was vibrant and dynamic, widespread throughout all levels of society, and flourished throughout the Middle Ages.

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Legends and Traditions concerning the Origins of the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds', *English Historical Review* vol. 100, no. 394 (Jan. 1985), 1-24; 10-12.

<sup>8</sup> See Gransden, 'Origins', 12.

<sup>9</sup> See Fig. 1. See Shelagh Mitchell, 'Kingship and the Cult of Saints', in *The Regal Image of Richard II and the Wilton Diptych*, ed. Dillian Gordon, Lisa Monnas and Caroline Elam (London: Harvey Miller, 1997), pp. 115-24.

<sup>10</sup> M.J. Howell, 'The Children of Henry III and Eleanor of Provence', in *Thirteenth Century England 4*, ed. P.R. Coss and L.G. Lloyd (Woodbridge, 1992), pp. 57-72; p. 63. For Henry III's devotion to St Edmund see Gransden, *A History of the Abbey*, pp. 245-8 and Gransden, 'The abbey of Bury St Edmunds and National Politics in the Reigns of King John and Henry III', in *Monastic Studies: The Continuity of Tradition*, 2 vols., ed. Judith Loades (Bangor: Headstart Histoty, 1991), II, pp. 67-86.

**Fig. 1 The Wilton Diptych**



## 'King' Edmund

Yet in stark contrast to the popular 'saint' Edmund, virtually nothing is known of the historical 'king' Edmund. Numismatic evidence indicates that Edmund succeeded Æthelweard to the throne of East Anglia c. 855. Coins were issued during his reign in sufficient numbers to suggest that he ruled for several years.<sup>11</sup> The earliest written mention of Edmund is in the 'Parker' manuscript of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, compiled around 890. The compiler notes the arrival of the 'great heathen army' in 865 which 'took up winter-quarters in East Anglia; and there were supplied with horses, and the East Anglians made peace with them'.<sup>12</sup> Leaving East Anglia the army travelled north, capturing York, where it settled for several years before returning to East Anglia in the autumn of 869:<sup>13</sup>

In this year the raiding army rode over Mercia into East Anglia, and took winter-quarters at Thetford; and in that winter King Edmund fought against them, and the Danes gained the victory, and slew the king, and subdued all that land and destroyed all the monasteries which they came to.<sup>14</sup>

Edmund's death is thus recorded in scant detail and the exact manner of his demise is ambiguous.<sup>15</sup> However, in his *Vita Ælfredi regis Angul Saxonum*,

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<sup>11</sup> See Fig. 2. C.E. Blunt, 'The St Edmund Memorial Coinage' *Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology*, xxxi (1969), 234–53; 234.

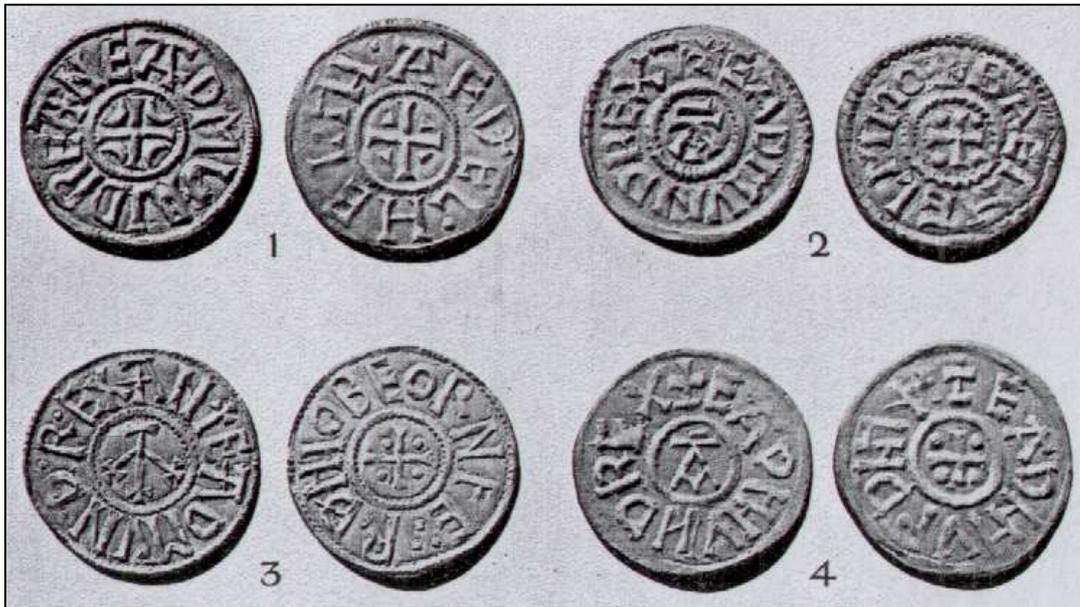
<sup>12</sup> *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, ed. Dorothy Whitelock with David C. Douglas and Susie Tucker (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1961), p. 45.

<sup>13</sup> The compiler for the Alfredian period began his year on 24 September; thus Edmund's death appears in s.a. 870 but actually occurred in November 869. See M.R.L. Beaven, 'The beginnings of the year in the Alfreidan Chronicle, 866-87', *English Historical Review* 33 (1918), 328-42, 336 and n. 36.

<sup>14</sup> *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, ed. Whitelock, p. 46.

<sup>15</sup> Loomis, however, notes that two manuscripts of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, (MS E: Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud 636 and MS F: London, British Library, MS Cotton Domitian A.viii) refer to 'Sce Eadmund' and cites this as evidence of early cultic veneration. However, MS E appears to be written in a single hand as late as c.1121, and MS F is most likely to have been produced in the late eleventh or early twelfth century. The references to 'Sce Eadmund' may therefore be later additions in response to Edmund's growing reputation. Loomis, 'Growth', 83-4.

**Fig. 2 Coins issued during Edmund's reign, c. 855-869**



**Fig. 3 Edmund memorial coinage, c. 895-910**



Obverse: letter 'A' at centre with legend SC EADMVNI. Reverse: small cross with legend plus the moneyer's name.

written in 893 and based primarily upon the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* up to the year 887, Asser interprets the annal to mean that Edmund died in battle:

In the same year, Edmund, king of the East Angles, fought fiercely against that army. But alas, he was killed there with a large number of his men, and the Vikings rejoiced triumphantly; the enemy were masters of the battlefield, and they subjugated that entire province to their authority.<sup>16</sup>

No reference is made to Edmund's death as an act of martyrdom. Asser was not the only author to draw upon the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* for inspiration and material, and its brief description of Edmund's death is repeated virtually unchanged in subsequent chronicles produced throughout the Middle Ages.<sup>17</sup> Susan Ridyard concludes that the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, and therefore to some extent the tradition which derives from it, records Edmund's story before it was 'subjected to the accretion of legend':

In these nearly contemporary sources there is no reference to his patronage or childhood, to the date or means of his rise to power or even to the nature of his rule. Nor is there any indication that his death was regarded as a martyrdom: the *rex sanctissimus* of later hagiographical tradition appears here simply as one among the many leaders and rulers of the Anglo-Saxons who lost both their kingdoms and their lives in the years preceding the 'Alfredian revival' of the late ninth century.<sup>18</sup>

What may be called the St Edmund chronicle tradition therefore constitutes the earliest narrative account of Edmund's *life* and demise. The contrast between these few scant details and the vast, elaborate cult which developed by the end of the Middle Ages is remarkable. It is the filling of this narrative void which this

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<sup>16</sup> Asser's *Life of King Alfred*, ed. W.H. Stevenson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1904), pp. 25-6.

<sup>17</sup> Loomis, 'Growth', 83-105.

<sup>18</sup> Susan Ridyard, *The Royal Saints of Anglo-Saxon England. A Study of West Saxon and East Anglian Cults* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 62.

thesis seeks to explore by considering how, why and when the cult of St Edmund developed.

### 'Saint' Edmund

Similar ambiguity also pertains in the earliest days of the cult. A series of silver pennies bearing on the obverse side the legend *sce eadmund rex* (O St Edmund the King!) circulated in the Danelaw, the Danish controlled-areas of England including East Anglia, from the mid-890s.<sup>19</sup> Around two thousand examples are extant, most recovered from buried hoards, indicating that the so-called St Edmund memorial coinage was issued in some quantity before production ceased c.910. It is unclear who initiated the issue since the coins bear no identifying features other than the name of the moneyer (+VVIDBVLD MOIIE) surrounding a central cross on the reverse, although the central A on the obverse is found on other East Anglian coins from this period indicating their production in the region. Scholarly opinion regarding the origin of these coins is divided. Ridyard proposes that the Danes who settled in East Anglia minted the coins as a way of easing relations with the indigenous inhabitants of their new kingdom who already celebrated the sanctity of their fallen king:

Their adoption of St Edmund may have been a move shrewdly calculated to enhance their political position within Edmund's kingdom. That position was from the outset open to challenge, and the cult of St Edmund, created by the East Angles, is most readily understood as a potent symbol of that challenge. Perhaps the Danish rulers, in acknowledging Edmund's status as 'saint', sought to perform an act of expiation and political reconciliation...perhaps even they sought to draw the sting from a cult of rebels.<sup>20</sup>

In contrast, Chapman has recently suggested that the West Saxon dynasty during the reign of Alfred (871-99) minted the coins in order to promote the cult

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<sup>19</sup> See Fig. 3.

<sup>20</sup> Ridyard, *Royal Saints*, p. 216.

of St Edmund as a means of enhancing their claim to the throne of the Eastern kingdom. Wessex influence over Danish East Anglia was established following the defeat of the Danish army at the Battle of Ethandun (Edington) in May 878. Alfred persuaded Guthrum and his men to convert to Christianity and they were baptised at Aller, with Alfred as Guthrum's sponsor. This gave Alfred some moral sway over the warriors of the Danelaw and implied some level of cultural and political superiority. Chapman proposes that Alfred had the coins minted as an additional means of undermining Danish control over East Anglia:

In the legend 'O St Edmund the King!', emblazoned by West Saxon moneyers across thousands of Viking pennies, Alfred and his successors managed to gloss over the last two decades of Viking rule in East Anglia. Instead of acknowledging whoever succeeded Guthrum to the kingship, they chose to honour Edmund as the only king; undermining Viking claims to legitimacy by removing them from the list of East Anglian rulers altogether.<sup>21</sup>

Thus numismatic evidence alone suggests that the cult of St Edmund may have originated as an expression of indigenous East Anglian resistance to their Danish overlords, an attempt by the Danes to appease the natives, or an a subtle means of West Saxon political subversion. The lack of certainty regarding Edmund as an historical figure and the origins of the cult has frustrated generations of historians. Yet it is that my assertion that this ambiguity is precisely what led to Edmund's popularity.

### Scholarly context

Due to his existence as a documented historical figure, previous scholarship on St Edmund has typically been concerned with establishing the circumstances and facts of his life and reign. This is exemplified by two of the seminal works on St Edmund: Whitelock's 'Fact and Fiction in the Legend of St. Edmund' and

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<sup>21</sup> Anna Chapman, 'King Alfred and the Cult of St Edmund', *History Today* 53/7 (July 2003), 37-43; 43.

Gransden's 'Legends and Traditions concerning the Origins of the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds', the titles of which hint at the preoccupations of their respective authors in recovering the historical 'truth'.<sup>22</sup> Each author attempts to negotiate the distance perceived to exist between history and hagiography, between 'king' Edmund and 'saint' Edmund. Gransden, for example, exclaims in dismay that 'Abbo knew almost nothing historical about St Edmund – not even the date of his death, which was recorded in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*'.<sup>23</sup> Lord Francis Hervey's *Corolla Sancti Eadmundi*, in which he compiled all the versions of the medieval legend known to him, evinces similar concerns. He explains that his purpose is to 'dissect from the mass of traditions the genuine history of S. Edmund' and goes on to present 'An Essay Towards Reconstruction' in which he produces an alternative account of Edmund's life.<sup>24</sup> Although Hervey's endeavours seem to have been prompted by interest in Edmund as a devotional figure, his principal concern was with the historicity of the legendary tradition. In 'The Growth of the Saint Edmund Legend' Grant Loomis is similarly interested in establishing the 'definitive' version of the legend. He discusses each version in chronological order, assessing how the texts relate to their predecessors and noting any additions they make to the overall legend. His aims are less purely historicist than Hervey's: when discussing Geoffrey of Wells' innovative account of the birth and boyhood of Edmund, for example, he states that 'it is not my purpose to test the historical value of this addition' and acknowledges that details such as these were often very likely added to appease the desire for further information regarding the saint's life which increased apace with his popularity.<sup>25</sup> However, his focus upon innovation in the legend means he dismisses briefly *The Liber Monasterii de Hyda*, Bartholomew Cotton's *Historia Anglicana*, the *Eulogium* and Walter of Coventry's *Memoriale* with the comment that whilst they 'all have short notices

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<sup>22</sup> Dorothy Whitelock, 'Fact and Fiction in the Legend of St. Edmund', *Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology* 31 (1969), 217-33; Gransden, 'Origins'.

<sup>23</sup> Antonia Gransden, *Historical Writing in England*, 2 vols. (London: The Hambledon Press, 1997) I, p.84.

<sup>24</sup> *Corolla Sancti Edmundi: The Garland of St Edmund, King and Martyr*, ed. Francis Hervey (London: John Murray, 1907), Preface, liv.

<sup>25</sup> Loomis, 'Growth', 91. See also Loomis, 'St Edmund and the Lodbrok Legend', *Harvard Studies and Notes in Philology and Literature* xv (1933), 1-23.

or accounts of St Edmund' they 'add nothing to the sum of our knowledge'.<sup>26</sup> He therefore fails to consider the implications of similarities and continuities across the tradition. The preoccupation exhibited by these authors in establishing chronologies, regnal lists and the like in relation to 'king' Edmund is understandable considering that the period in which Edmund reigned is one for which historical certainty often remains illusive. In terms of understanding the cult of 'saint' Edmund the deductions of these authors form a useful basis, illuminating the historical circumstances leading up to and surrounding Edmund's martyrdom. The tendency to prioritise the historical over the cultic in relation to historical saints remains a persistent trend. In Edmund's case this is particularly the case in relation to ongoing debate surrounding the location of the martyrdom.<sup>27</sup> This is typified by a recent collection of essays on St Edward the Confessor. Despite the promising sub-title, *The Man and the Legend*, only one of nine chapters directly addresses Edward's sanctity.<sup>28</sup>

Despite this, scholarly emphasis has to some extent shifted towards considering the social, cultural and political dimensions of saints' cults. In his influential work on canonisation and hagiography Pierre Deloos describes saints as constructed social entities which are able to teach us about the communities which venerated them:

All saints are more or less *constructed* in that, being necessarily saints *for other people*, they are remodelled in the collective representation which is made of them. It often happens, even, that they are so remodelled that nothing of the real original is left, and, ultimately, some saints are solely *constructed* because nothing is known about them

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<sup>26</sup> Loomis, 'Growth', 97

<sup>27</sup> The most frequently suggested and vociferously advocated locations are Hoxne (Suffolk), Hellesden, near Norwich (Norfolk), and Bradfield St Clare, near Bury St Edmunds (Suffolk). This thesis does not enter into this debate, except where it illuminates the development of Edmund's saintly identity. For further details and summaries of the debate see Gransden, 'Origins', pp. 7-8 and Eaglen, *The Abbey and Mint*, pp. 2-3.

<sup>28</sup> *St Edward the Confessor: The Man and the Legend*, ed. Richard Mortimer (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2009). The chapter in question is 'The Sanctity and Canonization of Edward the Confessor', by Edina Bozoky, pp. 173-86.

historically: everything, including their existence, is a product of collective representation.<sup>29</sup>

Similarly, the work of Donald Weinstein and Rudolph M. Bell drew attention to the ways in which ‘the pursuit as well as the perception of holiness mirrored social values and concerns’ in the medieval West.<sup>30</sup> In the case of St Edmund, a saint about whose historical existence so little seems to have been known even at the inception of his cult, it is entirely appropriate to describe his saintly identity as constructed. Furthermore, it seems likely that the ambiguity which so frustrated generations of modern scholars was actually one of the greatest strengths of Edmund’s cult, as in the absence of fact, Edmund was a blank canvas onto which could be written the ideologies and aspirations of generations of devotees.

The nature of those responsible for cultic promotion is the subject of ongoing debate. In his thought-provoking study, *The Cult of Saints*, Peter Brown suggests that cults were fundamentally an expression of the dominance of institutional elites.<sup>31</sup> Similarly, André Vauchez’s *Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages* emphasises the role of ecclesiastical authorities in controlling the cult of saints, one of the results of which was a frequent revision of the requirements for papal canonisation.<sup>32</sup> Although Edmund was never officially canonised, Vauchez’s exposition of the ways in which saintly identities were revised in response to particular circumstances is particularly relevant for a saint whose cult, I would suggest, was based upon his factual indeterminacy and resulting ability to signify in various ways.

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<sup>29</sup> Pierre Deloos, ‘Towards a Sociological Study of Canonized Sainthood in the Catholic Church’, trans. Jane Hodgkin, in *Saints and their Cults: Studies in Religious Sociology, Folklore and History*, ed. Stephen Wilson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 189-216; p. 195.

<sup>30</sup> Donald Weinstein and Rudolph M. Bell, *Saints and Society: The Two Worlds of Latin Christendom, 1000-1700* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), p. 6.

<sup>31</sup> Peter Brown, *The Cult of Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), esp. pp. 62-4.

<sup>32</sup> André Vauchez, *Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages*, trans. Jean Birrell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

The more popular elements of the cult of saints in general has been emphasised by a number of scholars. Aron Gurevich avers that medieval parishioners considered the saints to be ‘their own property’.<sup>33</sup> Similarly, in his study of English religious culture on the eve of the Reformation, Eamon Duffy stresses the personal relationships enjoyed by many later medieval people with the saints in their roles as intercessors, the so-called ‘debt of interchanging neighbourhood’ referred to by Caxton in his translation of the *Legenda Aurea*.<sup>34</sup>

### Methodology

It is within the vibrant scholarly tradition briefly outlined here that this study is located. The ongoing lively debates concerning the nature of medieval sanctity indicate both the vitality of research in this area and attest that much remains to be considered. Based upon Delooz’s assertions regarding the social construction of sanctity, this thesis seeks to explore the ways in which the cult of St Edmund developed throughout the Middle Ages with particular emphasis upon the groups and individuals responsible for its perpetuation and dissemination. Plurality is important: Delooz stresses that texts and artefacts must be considered in their original contexts, noting ‘a picture commissioned by a bishop of the Counter-Reformation period as a model destined to edify his flock should not be interpreted in the same way as a rough wooden statue born of rustic piety’.<sup>35</sup> Thus the human factors discernible in the development of Edmund’s cult will be considered in their social, cultural and political contexts.

Several studies have informed the methodology of this thesis. These will be discussed below in relation to their particular influences, but Virginia Blanton’s monograph on the cult of St Æthelthryth of Ely deserves special mention here

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<sup>33</sup> Aron Gurevich, *Medieval Popular Culture: Problems of Belief and Perception*, trans. János M. Bak and Paul A. Hollingsworth (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 41.

<sup>34</sup> *The Golden Legend or Lives of the Saints as Englished by William Caxton*, 7 vols., ed. F.S. Ellis (London: Temple Classics, 1900), VI, p. 97 cited in Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, 1400-1580* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992), p. 160.

<sup>35</sup> Delooz, ‘Towards a Sociological Study’, p. 197.

due to the numerous ways in which it converges with this current project.<sup>36</sup> It is the only longitudinal study of an Anglo-Saxon saint published to date and considers the development of the cult between 695-1615, a similar chronological range in which Edmund's cult flourished. Blanton likewise adopts an interdisciplinary approach, evaluating a range of textual, liturgical, documentary and visual sources. Comparisons may also be drawn between the two saints in question, Edmund and Æthelthryth: both are royal, Anglo-Saxon and renowned for their virginity and incorrupt corporeal remains. These similarities also draw attention to the ways in which this current project is original and distinctive, both in findings and approach. For example, whereas Blanton approaches the cult chronologically, discussing sources in date order, I have opted for a more thematic approach, organising material in terms of producers and recipients, with particular emphasis on the influence of Bury as the cult centre and the extent to which proximity to the abbey (both literal and by association) determined the construction and reception of Edmund's saintly identity. Blanton acknowledges the need to move beyond traditional periodic distinctions that separate Anglo-Saxon studies from medieval scholarship, and this is integral to my approach.<sup>37</sup> Despite their similarities, there are also significant differences between the two Saxon saints, most notably in relation to their respective genders, along with their contrasting lay and ecclesiastical statuses (Edmund is a king, whereas Æthelthryth flees her royal husband and takes the veil). A key question will therefore be the way in which these differences figure in the in which meaning is ascribed to each saint.

### Interdisciplinarity

Although to some extent interdisciplinary, Blanton's decision to base her study around a series of textual moments means that other material can at times feel merely supplementary. Discussion of the development of the textual cult of St Edmund forms a significant aspect of this thesis, but the truly interdisciplinary

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<sup>36</sup> Virginia Blanton, *Signs of Devotion: The Cult of St Æthelthryth in Medieval England, 695-1615* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2007). For Blanton's methodology see in particular her 'Introduction', pp. 1-16.

<sup>37</sup> For Blanton's defence of her chronological approach see p. 13.

nature of the majority means that each source is assigned equal merit and allowed to signify in its own right.

In general, a concomitant consequence of the realignment of scholarly attention towards saints' cults as social entities has been a shift away from hagiography as the principal method of cultic dissemination and recognition of saints' cults as multi-media phenomena. Recent interdisciplinary studies of single saints employ sources from various disciplines to great effect. The most recent reconsideration of St Edmund, a collection of useful and informative essays edited by Anthony Bale, is multi-disciplinary and considers the cult of St Edmund as manifested in various social and cultural contexts and in differing media.<sup>38</sup> However, due to its multi-authorship it is inevitably partial in its coverage, meaning that much ground is left to be covered.

In her explicitly interdisciplinary study of the cult of St Katherine in later medieval England Katherine Lewis moves beyond the textual to consider the *vitae* of St Katherine in their manuscript context, as well as utilising a wide range of visual and material artefacts along with documentary sources such as wills in order to place the cult of St Katherine firmly in its historical context and demonstrate the variety of ways in which her cult signified for medieval men and women.<sup>39</sup> Samantha Riches similarly insists upon the multivalency of St George, demonstrating through his presence in various media the development of a devotional identity which remains culturally prevalent in modern England but whose origins are little understood.<sup>40</sup> This present study likewise employs an interdisciplinarity approach. The chapters are based upon various interpretive strategies which transcend traditional disciplinary distinctions, with each exploring an aspect of the cult from a variety of perspectives in order to investigate the range of cultural roles performed by St Edmund.

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<sup>38</sup> Bale, ed. *Changing Images*.

<sup>39</sup> Katherine Lewis, *The Cult of St Katherine of Alexandria in Late Medieval England* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2000).

<sup>40</sup> Samantha Riches, *St George: Hero, Martyr and Myth*, rev. edn. (Stroud: The History Press Ltd., 2005).

A further influential and important study is Ashley and Sheingorn's collection of essays on the cult of St Anne in late medieval society.<sup>41</sup> Of particular relevance is the attention they devote to exploring areas of the cult where traditional disciplinary boundaries overlap or 'intersect' as this allows consideration of phenomena typically marginalised by traditional disciplinary distinctions. Ashley and Sheingorn locate their study in relation to three principle intersections: popular culture, popular piety and women's studies.<sup>42</sup> Although seemingly a very different saint to Anne, the principle of determining the key arenas in which Edmund's cult was manifested will similarly underpin this study.

### Cultural studies

Central to several recent studies of saints' cults is the notion of how individual saints functioned as cultural symbols. In another work by Ashley and Sheingorn they attest to the importance of attending to the meanings created by saints' cults in the context of the cultures in which they originated:

In analyzing these miracle narratives [of St Foy] as semiotic entities we must simultaneously attend to three aspects of the text; we must see them as rhetorical structures (a set of internally related signs), as historically contingent constellations of signs, and as sign systems designed to have historical agency.<sup>43</sup>

Although primarily concerned with the *miracula* of St Foy, I would contend that this three-fold practice of examining a text both in detail and in context is applicable to all cultic artefacts. The notion of a 'constellation of signs' is particularly relevant in an interdisciplinary context as the systems to which

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<sup>41</sup> Kathleen Ashley and Pamela Sheingorn, eds., *Interpreting Cultural Symbols: Saint Anne in Late Medieval Society* (Athens and London: The University of Georgia Press, 1990).

<sup>42</sup> Ashley and Sheingorn, *St Anne*, p. 1. For discussion of their methodology in general see pp. 1-6 and 48-53.

<sup>43</sup> Kathleen Ashley and Pamela Sheingorn, *Writing Faith: Text, Sign, and History in the Miracles of Sainte Foy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), p. 20.

cultic artefacts are related are not just textual, but visual, oral, cultural, social and political. Also implied are the semioticians themselves, those responsible for making meanings through the creation of cultic artefacts, and their respective outlooks and motivations.

Karen A. Winstead locates her study of virgin martyrs in relation to Ashley and Sheingorn's investigation of St Anne, noting that she is also concerned with the 'cultural work' performed by these saints.<sup>44</sup> Her study is of particular relevance as she considers how the *vitae* of these saints developed throughout later medieval England. She concludes that the 'remarkable transformations' in the legends of individual martyrs 'signal a struggle over the meaning of these powerful cultural symbols'.<sup>45</sup>

In addition to the cultic artefacts themselves and those responsible for their creation, the way in which aspects of a saint's cult were received and understood are also crucial. Although an object, text or image may have been created with a particular reader or viewer in mind, secondary recipients may also have had access to them and their participation in interpreting the cult of a saint such as Edmund must also be borne in mind. The title of Miri Rubin's study of the cult of the Virgin Mary indicates a similar investment in determining the reception of this all-pervasive medieval devotional figure which she achieves by citing a wide range of sources and artefacts from across medieval and Early Modern Europe.<sup>46</sup> Accounting for the popularity of a saint in varying contexts is similarly a concern of the essays in Jenkins and Lewis' study of St Katherine of Alexandria, which also employs an interdisciplinary approach.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Karen A. Winstead, *Virgin Martyrs: Legends of Sainthood in Late Medieval England* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1997), p. 4.

<sup>45</sup> Winstead, *Virgin Martyrs*, p. 4.

<sup>46</sup> Miri Rubin, *Emotion and Devotion: The Meaning of Mary in Medieval Religious Cultures*, Natalie Zemon Davies Annual Lecture Series (Budapest and New York: Central European University Press, 2009), esp. Chapter 3 'Emotions and Selves', which explores encounters with the figure of the Virgin Mary in word, image and sound.

<sup>47</sup> *St Katherine of Alexandria: Texts and Contexts in Western Medieval Europe*, ed. Jacqueline Jenkins and Katherine J. Lewis (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003).

'Blyssyd Edmund, kyng, martir and vyrgyne/ Hadde in thre vertues by grace a souereyn prys'<sup>48</sup>

In his lengthy mid-fifteenth century *vita* of St Edmund, the Bury monk John Lydgate repeatedly deploys a tripartite epithet in his descriptions of the martyr, referring to Edmund as 'martir, mayde and kynge'. The longevity and variety of Edmund's cult makes it unlikely that these were the only terms in which he was understood, or at least that many meanings could be read into each aspect of his identity. Blanton demonstrates a similar multi-valence in relation to St Æthelthryth. Although the saintly identity of the patroness of Ely could be reduced in similar terms to 'princess, abbess and virgin' Blanton demonstrates that St Æthelthryth's story in fact contains a far more nuanced set of cultural signs: royal asceticism, political marriage, conjugal chastity, monastic patronage, bodily incorruption, maternal nourishment.<sup>49</sup> This implies that Edmund's cultural signifiers will be equally complex. However, as will be discussed in detail below, Lydgate draws extensively on the pre-existing St Edmund tradition, meaning that his tripartite epithet, if somewhat reductive, is nevertheless broadly indicative of Edmund's reception by the mid-fifteenth century. It therefore provides a useful starting point for considering the constituent aspects of Edmund's saintly identity.

### Edmund the 'kyng'

The phenomenon of royal sanctity has attracted considerable scholarly attention in recent years with particularly notable works by Susan Ridyard, David Rollason and Alan Thacker exploring the cults of sainted Anglo-Saxon

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<sup>48</sup> John Lydgate's *Lives of Saints Edmund and Fremund* is printed in *Altenglische Legenden. Neue Folge*, ed. Carl Horstmann (Heilbronn: Henniger, 1881), pp. 376-445, I.192. All subsequent references will be in accordance with this edition and will be given in parentheses in the text. Prologue, 1-3.

<sup>49</sup> Blanton, p. 4. For a similar discussion of cultural symbols see also Sarah Beckwith, *Christ's Body: Identity, Culture and Society in Late Medieval Writings* (New York: Routledge, 2003).

monarchs.<sup>50</sup> A number of these studies assert that the cults of many Anglo-Saxon royal saints were promoted by royal patrons for political reasons.

At the other end of the scholarly spectrum are those who seek to locate the popularity of royal martyr cults in North Europe in Germanic, pre-Christian attitudes to the charisma of royal blood and sacral qualities of kingship. The first comprehensive survey of sacral kingship was offered by Sir James Frazer in *The Golden Bough* in which he drew upon comparative analysis of a vast array of cultures in order to examine the sacral power of the god-king, which he identified as primarily residing in his ability to influence the workings of nature.<sup>51</sup> Two highly influential monographs on the supernatural underpinnings of medieval kingship were inspired by Frazer: Fritz Kern's *Kingship and Law* and Marc Bloch's *The Royal Touch*.<sup>52</sup> Of particular relevance to this study are Kern's interest in the relationship between the supernatural and the political or social aspects of royal cults and Bloch's longitudinal approach to the charisma of royal sanctity and the ability of king's to enact healing. William Chaney's work continued the quest for pagan-Christian continuity.<sup>53</sup> More recently, Gábor Klaniczay has investigated similar issues in the cults of Central European saints.<sup>54</sup> In her discussion of Anglo-Saxon royal saints, Catherine Cubitt refines the pagan-Christian dichotomy and argues instead for the origins of royal cults in spontaneous, lay devotion, suggesting

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<sup>50</sup> Ridyard, *Royal Saints*; David Rollason, 'The Cults of Murdered Royal Saints in Anglo-Saxon England', *Anglo-Saxon England* 11 (1983), 1-22; Alan Thacker, 'Kings, Saints and Monasteries in Pre-Viking Mercia', *Midland History* 10 (1985), 1-25.

<sup>51</sup> Sir James George Frazer, *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion*, 12 vols, (London: Macmillan, 1906-15), esp. vols. 1-2, 'The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings. Parts I and II'.

<sup>52</sup> Fritz Kern, *Kingship and the Law in the Middle Ages*, trans. S.B. Chrimes (New York: Harper and Row, 1970) and Marc Bloch, *The Royal Touch*, trans. J.E. Anderson, (New York: Dorset Press, 1961).

<sup>53</sup> William A. Chaney, *The Cult of Kingship in Anglo-Saxon England: The Transition from Paganism to Christianity* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1970).

<sup>54</sup> Gábor Klaniczay, 'From Sacral Kingship to Self-Representation: Hungarian and European Royal Saints', in his *The Uses of Supernatural Power. The Transformations of Popular Religion in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, (Cambridge: The Polity Press 1990), pp. 79-94. See also Janet Nelson, 'Royal Saints and Early Medieval Kingship', *Studies in Church History* 20 (1983), 15-30.

that they should be regarded as manifestations of popular religion.<sup>55</sup> The questions raised by these studies indicate a possible tension in the cult of royal saints between the scholarly and the supernatural. This is perhaps evident in the appearance of the wolf in St Edmund's *vita*, and these issues will therefore be explored further below.

A seminal work in the canon of studies of individual sainted kings is Jacques Le Goff's monograph on St Louis.<sup>56</sup> The structure reveals methodological objectives comparable to this thesis: the first part deals with the biography of the living St Louis, the second focuses on the producers and mediators of the cult, and the third upon the varying ideologies and concepts that Louis was thought to represent. In methodological terms, Gábor Klaniczay's *Holy Rulers and Blessed Princesses* is similarly relevant. Rather than privileging one approach he considers a range of factors relating to sainted monarchs, including: pagan heritage, sacral kingship, martyrdom, the *rex iustus*, chastity and the *athleta patriae*, earthly versus heavenly authority and royal saints as propaganda.<sup>57</sup> Like Ridyard, Klaniczay traces the evolution of the notion of royal sanctity across several centuries. He notes that previous studies which focus too closely on one historical period preclude the opportunity of considering historical development within these cults, in response to which he offers 'a new synthesis, one different – and complementary – in approach and methodology from what has already been written on the subject'.<sup>58</sup> His principle objective is to attend closely to 'how distinctly the putatively timeless stereotypes...bore the stamp of the cultural milieu in which any concrete cult in fact found expression'.<sup>59</sup> This thesis employs a similar longitudinal approach and likewise seeks to locate responses to Edmund's royalty in an historical framework.

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<sup>55</sup> Catherine Cubitt, 'Sites and Sanctity: Revisiting the Cult of Murdered and Martyred Anglo-Saxon Royal Saints', *Early Medieval Europe* 9 (2001), 53-83. See also her 'Universal and Local Saints in Anglo-Saxon England' in *Local Saints and Local Churches in the Early Medieval West*, ed. Alan Thacker and Richard Sharpe (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002) pp. 423-54, esp. pp. 424-32.

<sup>56</sup> Jacques Le Goff, *Saint Louis* (Paris: Gallimard, 1996).

<sup>57</sup> Gábor Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers and Blessed Princesses: Dynastic Cults in Medieval and Central Europe*, trans. Éva Pálmai (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

<sup>58</sup> Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers*, 'Introduction', p. 16.

<sup>59</sup> Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers*, 'Introduction', p. 12.

### Edmund the 'martir'

Edmund's martyrdom was ultimately what guaranteed his status as a saint and was therefore undoubtedly an intrinsic part of his saintly identity. All saints were believed to possess intercessory ability, but some were perceived to be particularly potent often by virtue of the place they occupied in Christian history. Martyrs such as Edmund were afforded a special place amongst the ranks of saints. Weinstein and Bell describe martyrs as spiritual superheroes, 'purposeful heroes of dramatic and mortal struggles for the faith', who, through the exertion of their own will, attempted to further what they saw as God's work.<sup>60</sup>

Richard Gameson describes the martyrdom of a saint as the 'irreducible minimum' in terms of visual representation and refers to the tradition of depicting martyrs by allusion to, or at the moment of, their death.<sup>61</sup> This is also true of textual hagiographies, where the *Passio* often comprises the central narrative. In the case of St Edmund, his death at the hands of the Vikings is one of the few elements of his narrative that may be described as irreducible as it forms the basis of Edmund's brief mention in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, although it is the authors of the hagiographic tradition who construct the narrative of Edmund's death and portray him as a martyr, preferring to die rather than abjure his faith in favour of the Danes pagan religion. Gameson describes the way in which Becket's death was "used to redefine the spirituality of his life".<sup>62</sup> This was a relatively common hagiographic tendency whereby an individual's death was projected back upon the events of his or her life, which were subsequently redefined in relation to later actions. A glorious death implied a life equally well-lived. Thus the manner in which Edmund's life was constructed based upon the events of his death must be a key consideration in the examination of the development of his cult.

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<sup>60</sup> Weinstein and Bell, *Saints and Society*, p. 160.

<sup>61</sup> Richard Gameson, 'The Early Imagery of Thomas Becket' in *Pilgrimage: The English Experience from Becket to Bunyan*, ed. Colin Morris and Peter Roberts (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 46-89; p. 53.

<sup>62</sup> Gameson, "Early Imagery," p. 53.

In addition to the cause for which he died, the manner of Edmund's torture by arrows would also have been significant to the medieval faithful. Sagittation was not a form of martyrdom unique to Edmund: St. Sebastian was put to death in this manner, sometimes causing confusion as to which saint is depicted.<sup>63</sup> In addition, Edmund was eventually put to death by beheading and many early Christian martyrs were similarly executed after enduring lingering and violent torture. This implies that not only is Edmund continuing a long tradition of defending the faith, but that he is being represented as on a spiritual par with the earliest founders of Christian sainthood. His martyrdom therefore integrates him into the continuous narrative of Christian history, establishing a link with individuals from all periods which transcends conventions of era or nationality.

Considerable scholarly interest has been devoted to the representation of violence in saints' lives, particular the torture endured by most martyrs before their eventual demise, and the ways in which this violence was intended to be read by varying audiences.<sup>64</sup> However, Jocelyn Wogan-Browne notes that 'torture is not a static sign' but rather that it has 'no stable taxonomy from one legend to another...its meaning is not instrumental but enacted, produced in front of us in each legend's narrative exchange'.<sup>65</sup> Is the martyrdom therefore 'irreducible' in the sense of static and unchanging, or is it adapted to suit the circumstances for which it was produced? For example, is the violence more or less extreme in some versions of Edmund's legend, and if so, what does this imply about the intended audience?

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<sup>63</sup> For example, it is unclear whether the image on the roodscreen at Stalham (Norfolk) is St Edmund or St Sebastian.

<sup>64</sup> Robert Mills' *Suspended Animation: Pain, Pleasure and Punishment in Medieval Culture* (London: Reaktion Books Ltd., 2005) is an excellent introduction to the complicated issue of violence and its representation in medieval culture, as well as modern responses and assumptions. See especially Chapter 4, 'Invincible Virgins', pp. 106-44 and Chapter 5, 'Of Martyrs and Men', pp. 145-76. See also René Girard, *Violence and the Sacred*, trans. Patrick Gregory (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1977).

<sup>65</sup> Wogan-Browne, p. 108.

### Edmund the 'vyrgyne'

The representation of torture in saints' lives is an area in which lines of scholarly enquiry intersect and also indicates the relationship between Edmund's martyrdom and his attribution as a 'mayde', the third element of Lydgate's epithet. These coalesce in relation to the extent to which violence is gendered. This is particularly apposite in the case of a virgin martyr such as Edmund. As a genre, the majority of scholarly attention has been devoted to the large numbers of female saints who fit within this category. The torture and sexual threats suffered by these women has been interpreted as voyeuristic or even pornographic.<sup>66</sup> However, as a male virgin martyr, Edmund's relationship to these representational tropes must be considered.

Winstead defines the typical female virgin martyr as an attractive young woman who refuses to participate in pagan sacrifices, debates with her antagonists, affirms the fundamental tenets of Christianity, destroys idols, performs miracles, and endures excruciating torments and threats to her virginity before finally being put to death.<sup>67</sup> It is notable how closely Winstead's definition resembles the *vita* of St Edmund.

Numerous scholars, such as Vauchez, Kieckhefer, and Weinstein and Bell, have established that the changing social conditions of the later Middle Ages, especially the increasingly private and introspective nature of piety and increased lay agency, resulted in changing definitions of saintliness.<sup>68</sup> Despite this, the often generic *vitae* of the historically remote virgin martyrs remained

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<sup>66</sup> For the ways in which torture was read see Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, *Saints' Lives and Women's Literary Culture, c. 1150-1300: Virginity and its Authorizations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 106-17. For contrasting discussions concerning this debate see Kathryn Gravdal, *Ravishing Maidens: Writing Rape in Medieval Literature and Law* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991) and Katherine J. Lewis, "Lete me suffer": Reading the Torture of St Margaret of Antioch in Later Medieval England', in Jocelyn Wogan-Browne et al, eds., *Medieval Women: Texts and Contexts in Late Medieval Britain: Essays for Felicity Riddy* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000), pp. 69-82.

<sup>67</sup> Winstead, *Virgin Martyrs*, pp. 5-6.

<sup>68</sup> Vauchez, *Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages*; Weinstein and Bell, *Saints and Society*; Richard Kieckhefer, *Unquiet Souls: Fourteenth-Century Saints and Their Religious Milieu* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984).

popular.<sup>69</sup> Winstead suggests that this may in part be accounted for by attempts by the clergy to reinforce the barrier between the increasingly well-informed and enthusiastic laity and the saintly elite, as the virginal status of these particular saints marked their distinctiveness from the majority of a lay audience.

Jocelyn Wogan-Browne identifies a further key trait in the representation of virgin martyrs which point to further complications in the representation of St Edmund. She observes that female virgin martyrs are perpetually beautiful and youthful, freed from the mortal contamination of the Fall by their renunciation of marriage and sexual reproduction:

If virgins are vessels, they are precious but fragile. If they are flawless and eternally youthful, inhabiting bodies without menstrual and menopausal phases, then they are also excluded from historical process. Leading a life of silent veiled enclosure, 'dead to all earthly desires', virgins' real existence is in heaven, enclosed beyond mortal action and change, and they have no history.<sup>70</sup>

However, whilst Edmund does choose heaven and the martyr's palm he also exists in the temporal realm, as king of the Eastern Angles. The extent to which this formulation is also applicable to male virgin martyrs therefore requires testing.

Winstead notes that the virgin martyr was inherently a paradoxical symbol:

As the most vulnerable and carnal of human beings – women – the virgin martyrs testify that the flesh can indeed triumph over corporeal desires, that weakness can prevail over strength. As women who transcend their

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<sup>69</sup> See Winstead, *Virgin Martyrs*, pp. 10-18.

<sup>70</sup> Wogan-Browne, *Saints' Lives*, pp. 19-21; p. 21.

gender to become manly, the virgin martyrs evoke the mystery of a God made man.<sup>71</sup>

However, this formulation is problematic when applied to male virgin martyrs such as Edmund. It implies that if for a woman to triumph over weak and feeble flesh is to become 'manly', then Edmund's virginity is a natural male state, which is clearly not the case, especially for a ruling monarch who might reasonably be expected to perpetuate the royal line.

To some extent these questions arise due to the theoretical investigations upon which they are based being biased towards the study of female experience and sexuality. The study of masculinity and medieval men in general has experienced a relatively recent burgeoning of interest.<sup>72</sup> The most successful of these studies have focused on the plurality of male identities in the Middle Ages and the ways in which these identities were constructed and negotiated. Just as scholarship of women's roles in the Middle Ages has revealed their great variety and fluidity, medieval masculinities have proven equally diverse. Andrea Cornwall and Nancy Lindisfarne note that in many cultures the 'different images and behaviours contained in the notion of masculinity are not always coherent: they may be competing, contradictory and mutually undermining.'<sup>73</sup> This is reflected in a collection essays edited by Jacqueline Murray.<sup>74</sup> In her introduction to the volume Murray identifies what have commonly regarded as the characteristic components of medieval masculine identity: the physical prowess and bravery of the warrior elite, honour, power, authority and responsibility, and sexual veracity and reproductive capabilities.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Winstead, *Virgin Martyrs*, p. 12.

<sup>72</sup> Ground-breaking studies in this area include *The Making of Masculinities: The New Men's Studies*, ed. Harry Brod (Boston: Allen and Unwin, 1987), *Medieval Masculinities: Regarding Men in the Middle Ages*, ed. Clare A. Lees (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994) and *Becoming Male in the Middle Ages*, ed. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen and Bonnie Wheeler (New York: Garland, 1997).

<sup>73</sup> Andrea Cornwall and Nancy Lindisfarne, 'Dislocating Masculinity: Gender, Power and Anthropology', in *Dislocating Masculinity: Comparative Ethnographies*, ed. Cornwall and Lindisfarne (London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 11-46; p. 12.

<sup>74</sup> *Conflicted Identities and Multiple Masculinities: Men in the Medieval West*, ed. Jacqueline Murray (New York and London: Garland Publishing Inc., 1999).

<sup>75</sup> Murray, 'Introduction', *Conflicted Identities*, ix-xx.

As a king, Edmund belongs to the warrior elite and might be expected to conform to these behavioural norms. Yet as a martyr he shuns violence and chooses self-sacrifice and as a virgin who renounces the temptations of the flesh. The ways in which different manifestations of cultic devotion reconciled, or indeed elided, these apparent contradictions which be a key question of this project. A number of studies provide a useful lead, in particular *Holiness and Masculinity in the Middle Ages*, edited by P.H. Cullum and Katherine J. Lewis, and *Gender and Holiness: Men, Women and Saints in Medieval Europe*, edited by Samantha Riches and Sarah Salih.<sup>76</sup>

In an essay in the former volume, Jacqueline Murray explores the means by which men who entered the religious life and took vows of celibacy sought to redefine their masculinity. She concludes that by acknowledging carnal desire the clergy were able to present themselves as conquerors of the flesh, superior to men in secular life who submitted to desire. This involved the development of a vocabulary which deployed masculine militaristic imagery to describe the 'battle for chastity'.<sup>77</sup>

Chastity could provide a useful means by which reigns of childless kings such as Edward the Confessor or Richard II could be redefined as spiritually exalted, thus effectively diverting attention away from the dynastic difficulties brought about when no direct heir was forthcoming.<sup>78</sup> In their discussion of the backgrounds and origins of medieval saints, Weinstein and Bell suggest that this *topos* may largely account for the disproportionately large numbers of royal saints:

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<sup>76</sup> *Holiness and Masculinity in the Middle Ages*, ed. P.H. Cullum and Katherine J. Lewis (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005) and *Gender and Holiness: Men, Women and Saints in Medieval Europe*, ed. Samantha Riches and Sarah Salih (London: Routledge, 2002).

<sup>77</sup> Jacqueline Murray, 'Masculinizing Religious Life: Sexual Prowess, the Battle for Chastity and Monastic Identity', in *Holiness and Masculinity*, ed. Cullum and Lewis, pp. 24-42. On the vocabulary of chastity see also Michel Foucault, 'The Battle for Chastity', in *Western Sexuality: Practice and Precept in Past and Present Times*, ed. Philippe Ariès and André Béjin, trans. Anthony Forster (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985), pp. 14-25.

<sup>78</sup> See Lewis, 'Edmund of East Anglia, Henry VI and Ideals of Kingly Masculinity' and her 'Becoming a Virgin King: Richard II and Edward the Confessor', in *Gender and Holiness*, ed. Riches and Salih, pp. 86-100.

The spectacle of reversal, of sacrifice, of inversion of worldly status was crucial to the perception of sanctity. Inherited poverty was commonplace; voluntary poverty was sanctifying... For a farm labourer to take a vow of poverty or of humility was little more than to affirm an existing condition. But the whole point of holiness was rejection of the world and its values, overturning one way of life in favour of its opposite, shedding the 'old man' and putting on the new. The very material circumstances of the upper classes gave them the means to demonstrate to the world the fervour of their conversions.<sup>79</sup>

Pragmatically, virginity was not a desirable state for a monarch, but medieval writers of advice literature for kings and princes did stress the importance of self-restraint and chastity outside the sacramentally ordained bounds of marriage, arguing that a king must present the best possible role model to his people, and that he had no right, and little chance of success, in ordering his subjects to behave in a manner of which he was not capable.<sup>80</sup> Thus precedents existed for virginal royal saints, along with numerous strategies for accommodating this aspect of their saintly identity. The extent to which those responsible for the construction of Edmund's saintly identity deployed these strategies, or whether they developed alternatives, will therefore be explored. St Æthelthryth is a similarly chaste saint, and the comparison between the ways in which a virginal (female) nun and a virginal (male) king are represented should prove illuminating.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Weinstein and Bell, *Saints and Society*, p. 199.

<sup>80</sup> See Lewis, 'Edmund of East Anglia, Henry VI and Ideals of Kingly Masculinity', pp. 166-9.

<sup>81</sup> Blanton, *Signs of Devotion*, especially pp. 81-8, 99-105, 122-9.

## The scope of the project

The extent of the cult of St Edmund in medieval England was such that discussing it in its entirety would be unfeasible in a project of this length. The following investigation will therefore primarily focus upon the cult as it developed in East Anglia (the modern counties of Norfolk and Suffolk) from its inception in the ninth century to the Dissolution of the abbey of Bury St Edmunds in 1539. In terms of the written legend this presents no disadvantage as the majority of texts and manuscripts were originally authored or compiled at Bury. Norfolk and Suffolk also benefit from some of the highest concentrations in the country of surviving medieval church art which makes the region an eminently suitable focal point for exploring the iconography of St Edmund. East Anglia was Edmund's own kingdom and the region which housed his cult centre at Bury. Aspects of the early cult in particular show the influence of popular devotion, therefore considering Edmund in this context allows the relationship between indigenous responses to the cult and its official, ecclesiastical perpetuation via the monastic community at Bury to be considered.

## Chapter 1 - Texts and Contexts: The Legend of St Edmund

In his assessment of the growth of the legend of St Edmund, Loomis wryly observes that 'about a mere scrap of history, a vast amount of material has gathered to form in its collected bulk a veritable saga.'<sup>82</sup> The 'veritable saga' which Loomis imagined the medieval legend tradition of St Edmund to have become is exemplified in the Bury monk John Lydgate's mid-fifteenth century *Lives of Sts Edmund and Fremund*, which in more than three and a half thousand lines of verse, accompanied by one hundred and fifty full-colour miniatures, documents the life and death of his abbey's patron and his saintly cousin.<sup>83</sup> This is arguably the zenith of the medieval legendary tradition: the *Life*

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<sup>82</sup> Loomis, 'Growth', 83.

<sup>83</sup> John Lydgate's *Lives of Saints Edmund and Fremund* is printed in *Altenglische Legenden. Neue Folge*, ed. Carl Horstmann (Heilbronn: Henniger, 1881), pp. 376-445, I.192. All subsequent references will be in accordance with this edition and will be given

*of St Edmund* is the longest and most detailed version of the legend and Lydgate both draws together and elaborates upon the established tradition and introduces his own original details. It was also produced in fascinating historical circumstances, being commissioned by Lydgate's Abbot, William Curteys, to present to the young king Henry VI as a souvenir of his extended sojourn at the abbey between Christmas 1433 and Easter 1444. Lydgate's poem and the several illuminated manuscripts in which it is preserved are a far cry from the brief record of Edmund's death in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. The fundamental issue which this chapter addresses is therefore how, why and when the legend flourished from such humble beginnings to encompass more than thirty extant versions.

Loomis' characterisation of the growth of the legend of St Edmund during the Middle Ages is at once highly informative but also somewhat misleading. In particular, 'gathering' implies a process whereby the legend is drawn together in one location and suggests an almost teleological progression and development. However, the texts vary considerably in length, detail, form and authorship and, far from offering a coherent and unified version of the life and death of St Edmund, anachronisms and contradictions are present throughout. My assessment of the development of the legend proceeds from the assertion that it is more often than not these moments of narrative instability, which generations of historians have sought to resolve, that are most revealing about the textual construction of Edmund's saintly identity. Particular consideration will be afforded to how factors such as authorship, patronage and circumstance influenced each retelling of the tale.

An important distinction should be noted at the outset between references to Edmund in chronicles and the contrast they present to the exclusively hagiographic sources. In most instances it is important not to overplay the differences between genres as this has led to the traditional tendency to

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in parentheses in the text. A new edition by Anthony Bale and A.S.G. Edwards is being prepared for the Middle English Texts Series (forthcoming). For a facsimile of British Library MS Harley 2278, the manuscript presented to Henry VI, see *The Life of St Edmund, King and Martyr. A Facsimile of British Library MS Harley 2278*, with an introduction by A.S.G. Edwards (London: British Library, 2004).

privilege 'historical' chronicles over 'literary' saints' *Lives*. Whilst seeking to avoid value judgements of any kind it is certainly the case that the legend of St Edmund bifurcates along generic lines: whereas the hagiographic tradition was constantly evolving, with each author seeking to add new material and provide additional insights, on the whole the chronicles replicate virtually unchanged the account of Edmund's death found in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. As noted above, this led Loomis to readily dismiss them as of little interest or value. The difference cannot be accounted for simply in terms of authorship; many chronicles were written by monks, just as the majority of the *vitae* originated in the monastic community at Bury. Both the function and form of chronicles is likely to have affected their presentation of material. The chronological scope is often broad with the result that whilst Edmund is present he is not the protagonist. Whilst some historical works in which Edmund appears were written at Bury and are therefore more concerned with the abbey and its interests, including its patron, many were written elsewhere. Some, such as Ranulf Higden's *Polychronicon*, are universal histories covering large periods of time.<sup>84</sup> As such, the amount of detail in which subjects from earlier periods in particular are discussed is limited. The physical format may have a similar effect as the space for each entry was sometimes allocated many years in advance.<sup>85</sup> Whilst this does not preclude the author from writing in more depth, for example by encroaching upon the space for the next entry, such constraints make it more likely that details will be limited. The nature of what might be called the St Edmund chronicle tradition is therefore interesting for a number of reasons. Firstly, it indicates that the irreducible minimum of Edmund's narrative remained constant throughout the Middle Ages. Secondly, this sheds valuable light upon the development of the hagiographic tradition as it provides a base line against which the innovations of subsequent authors can be assessed.

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<sup>84</sup> *Polychronicon Ranulphi Higden monachi Cestrensis, together with the English translations of John Trevisa and of an unknown writer of the fifteenth century*, 9 vols., ed. Joseph Rawson Lumby, *Rerum Britannicarum Medii Aevi Scriptores*, 41 (London: Longman, Green, Longman, Roberts and Green, 1865-1886).

<sup>85</sup> Gransden, *Historical Writing*, I, p. 29.

Miracles attributed to St Edmund will also be considered alongside the *vitae*. Chapter Two draws upon miracles for information concerning the physical setting of the cult of St Edmund, but when considered as self-contained miracle collections they belong in the textual realm. Miracle collections were recorded in manuscripts, like *vitae*, and in most cases were similarly available to relatively limited audiences. There has been a scholarly tendency to divorce miracle accounts both from the physical contexts in which they occurred but also from the legendary contexts in which they originate. Simon Yarrow's recent consideration of the miracles of St Edmund reflects this trend.<sup>86</sup> Whilst offering insightful suggestions as to the meaning and significance of Edmund's miracles Yarrow fails to locate his discussion within the broader development of Edmund's legend and so the overall significance is lost. In contrast, this study treats miracles as an integral part of the formation of Edmund's saintly identity in a textual context.

Finally, it has been a common phenomenon in hagiographic scholarship to consider textual sources in isolation from their manuscript contexts. Cynthia Hahn goes some way to explaining this by suggesting that 'it is often assumed that pictures merely illustrate their texts' and are entirely dependent on the words they accompany, rendering them secondary and subordinate to the verbal narrative.<sup>87</sup> However, such logocentrism robs a text of its original performative context. In her discussion of manuscripts containing late-medieval English hagiographic texts, Mary Beth Long maintains that 'to ignore the physical context in which hagiographical texts are found – pictures, page material and thickness, and ink colour, as well as the content of accompanying texts and marginalia – is to miss a vital piece of the interpretative experience medieval readers would have of the individual *vitae*.'<sup>88</sup> Each of Edmund's *lives* and *miracula* is therefore considered in its codicological context and, in keeping

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<sup>86</sup> Simon Yarrow, *Saints and their Communities: Miracles Stories in Twelfth Century England*, Oxford Historical Monographs (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2006), pp. 24-62.

<sup>87</sup> Cynthia Hahn, *Portrayed on the Heart: Narrative Effect in Pictorial Lives of the Saints from the Tenth through the Thirteenth Century* (Berkeley, London: University of California Press, 2001), p.45.

<sup>88</sup> Mary Beth Long, 'Corpora and Manuscripts, Authors and Audiences', in *A Companion to Middle English Hagiography*, ed. Sarah Salih (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2006), pp. 47-69, p. 49.

with the overall objective of this thesis, in relation to its historical, social and cultural origins.

## Chapter Two – Saxon Saints and Murdered Kings: Encountering St Edmund at Bury

As the custodians of Edmund's remains, the abbey at Bury was the centre of his cult and, as Chapter One demonstrates, the primary location from which information about his life and legend was disseminated. Although mutually dependent in terms of cultic perpetuation, the textual cult and the physical remains of Edmund functioned in distinctly different ways in terms of audience and reception. Although pilgrimage was by no means a universal experience it was more readily accessible for the vast majority of people in the medieval West than the rare and precious manuscripts containing Edmund's *vitae* and posthumous deeds. By far the most public aspect of the cult at Bury were the sights and sounds encountered by the pilgrims who visited the shrine. Relatively little attention, however, has been paid to the ways in which the convent sought to determine Edmund's reception by the faithful through the visual and physical orchestration of the pilgrimage experience, although consideration of this aspect of the cult of other saints has yielded valuable results.<sup>89</sup> This chapter therefore attempts to redress this significant gap in scholarly understanding by reconstructing the experience of a pilgrim to the shrine of St Edmund.

The primary reason for this scholarly diffidence is scarcity of source material, especially the physical condition of the abbey ruins. Once the third largest Romanesque building in northern Europe, all that survives today of the site of St Edmund's shrine in the eastern arm of the abbey church are the remains of the crypt excavated in the late 1950s.<sup>90</sup> In his *Historical and Descriptive Account*

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<sup>89</sup> *Art and Architecture of Late Medieval Pilgrimage in Northern Europe and the British Isles*, ed. Sarah Blick and Rita Tekippe, 2 vols, Studies in Medieval and Reformation Traditions, 104 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2005).

<sup>90</sup> H.J.M. Maltby, 'Excavation of the Abbey ruins, Bury St Edmunds', *Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology*, xxiv (1949), 256-57.

of *St Edmund's Bury*, published in 1804, Edmund Gillingwater describes a model he had seen of the abbey church of Bury:

It was ten feet long, five feet wide, and of a proportionate height, containing some 300 niches and 280 windows, adorned with images and other Gothic figures... A model of the Abbey was likewise to be seen at Newmarket about fifty years ago, but whether this be the same as that above mentioned, we are not able to say.<sup>91</sup>

The interior of the church was evidently also visible, as Gillingwater remarks that the model of St Edmund's shrine was 'ornamented with images and crowns, gilt, as in its original state'.<sup>92</sup> At some point during the course of the nineteenth century this model disappeared from public view as M.R. James, writing ninety years later, plaintively cites the description in the 'faint hope that the model...might yet be in existence in some lumber-room'.<sup>93</sup> Despite the absence of detailed models such as that described by Gillingwater, or a significant quantity of physical evidence, other sources do exist which enable a reconstruction of the interior of the abbey church to be attempted.

Probably the best-known source relating to the abbey of Bury St Edmunds is the chronicle written by Jocelin of Brakelond in which he describes life in the monastery between 1173-1202 in vivid and immediate detail.<sup>94</sup> In particular, his account of the fire of 1198, in which St Edmund's shrine was badly damaged, suggests tantalising clues as to the appearance and arrangement of the church interior. Similarly, an anonymous account of the far more devastating fire of 1465 provides an indication of alterations made during the intervening years.<sup>95</sup> The *Gesta Sacristarum*, the deeds of the sacrists, lists the

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<sup>91</sup> Edmund Gillingwater, *Historical and Descriptive Account of St Edmund's Bury* (Saint Edmund's Bury: Printed by and for J. Rackham, Angel Hill, 1804), p. 65.

<sup>92</sup> Gillingwater, *Historical and Descriptive Account*, p. 65.

<sup>93</sup> M. R. James, *On the Abbey of S. Edmund at Bury*, Cambridge Antiquarian Society publications, Octavo series 28 (Cambridge: Deighton Bell, 1895), p. 177.

<sup>94</sup> Jocelin of Brakelond, *Chronicle of the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds*, trans. Diana Greenway and Jane Sayers (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

<sup>95</sup> *Incendium Ecclesiae*, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, III, pp. 283-7.

monastic officials responsible for various building works from the time of Abbot Baldwin () until the end of the thirteenth century and from this may be inferred some details of the interior arrangement of the abbey church.<sup>96</sup> In addition, numerous chronicles are extant, along with various lists of benefactors, details in wills, inventories, and registers, and a fascinating fragment of an account of the annual ritual activities of the abbey.<sup>97</sup>

Many of these sources were cited and described by M.R. James in his volume *On the Abbey of S. Edmund at Bury*, published in 1895, in which he describes his intention to collate all available materials which will be 'illustrative of the internal decorations and arrangements of the Abbey Church'.<sup>98</sup> Some of these texts had been published elsewhere, most notably by Thomas Arnold in his three volume *Memorials of St Edmund's Abbey*, but James also claims to 'bring to light some new material'.<sup>99</sup> One of the most significant 'new' sources relating to the interior of the abbey which James claims to 'bring to light' is a manuscript in the College of Arms, MS Arundel 30. The manuscript comprises 216 leaves and measures 9x5½ inches. The manuscript was owned after the Dissolution of the monasteries by Nicholas Bacon (1509-79), the Lord Keeper and a Suffolk landowner whose father acquired by royal grant various lands previously belonging to the abbey of Bury St Edmunds. It subsequently passed to the antiquary John Bale (1495-1563), then to Matthew Parker, archbishop of Canterbury (1559-75) and then to Lord William Howard of Naworth (1563-1640). It was acquired, along with other books from Naworth, by Thomas Howard, the second earl of Arundel (1586-1646) until William Dugdale persuaded Henry Duke of Norfolk to donate this and other volumes to the College of Arms in 1678.<sup>100</sup> It appears to have been written for Bury St Edmund's abbey, and contains a copy of the *Bury Chronicle* from the Fall until 1301, with additional annals for numerous years up to 1335, along with a fifteenth century copy of Nennius's *Historia Britonum* and other miscellaneous

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<sup>96</sup> *Gesta Sacristarum*, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, II, pp. 289-96.

<sup>97</sup> For a summary of the sources see James, *On the Abbey Church*, pp. 115-50.

<sup>98</sup> James, *On the Abbey Church*, p. 117.

<sup>99</sup> Arnold, *Memorials*. James, *On the Abbey Church*, p. 117.

<sup>100</sup> See *The Chronicle of Bury St Edmunds, 1212-1301*, ed. Antonia Gransden, (London: Nelson, 1964), xxxviii-xlii.

historical and ecclesiastical pieces.<sup>101</sup> The fly-leaves of the book are made up partly of palimpsest leaves of a large quarto copy of the *Aeneid*, written in an eleventh century English hand, on which are recorded a large collection of verses inscribed on wall paintings, altar pieces, painted windows, tapestries, sculptures and a range of other artefacts in churches in Peterborough, St Mary's abbey at York, Flixton and Framlingham in Suffolk, Lincoln, Spalding, Westminster, and Bury St Edmunds, with the majority pertaining to the latter location. The manuscript may also be loosely dated by internal evidence; it refers to images which appear to adorn the Lady Chapel at Bury, which was begun in 1275, and refers to a number of items, for example the great candlestick, destroyed in the fire of 1465, suggesting a date between these two events. The handwriting of the verses, however, dates from earlier in this period. Although M.R. James indicates that he believes a single author to have been responsible for copying down these inscriptions, at least four hands appear to be discernible, ranging from the late 13<sup>th</sup> to the mid-14<sup>th</sup> century. It therefore appears that at various times a number of individuals visited churches, primarily in East Anglia, but also as far afield at York and Westminster, and compiled a record of the inscriptions they found on images in various media. Considering the probable monastic provenance of the manuscript, successive sacrists of the abbey at Bury would be likely candidates for showing such detailed interest in the decorative schemes of other churches, possibly gathering ideas to implement in the abbey church at Bury. Relatively little scholarly attention has been paid to this aspect of Arundel 30, and many questions concerning its provenance remain to be answered which lie beyond the scope of this project. Despite this the inscriptions pertaining to Bury St Edmunds offer a unique insight into the decoration of the abbey church and the iconographic setting of the cult of St Edmund.

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<sup>101</sup> See W.H. Black, *Catalogue of Arundel Manuscripts in the Library of the College of Arms* (London: printed by S. and R. Bentley, 1829), pp. 44-57.

### Chapter Three - Beyond Bury: Dissemination and Appropriation

In keeping with the remit of this project to consider the cult of St Edmund throughout East Anglia the final chapter turns away from Bury to consider manifestations of devotion in alternative locations. The difficulties in distinguishing between ‘official’, Bury-authorized devotional practices and those which evolved spontaneously elsewhere are considerable. It is therefore unhelpful to think in terms of direct oppositions such as ‘official’ and ‘unofficial’, clerical and lay, learned and unlearned. Instead I would suggest that the distinction should be between ‘home’ and ‘away’ and will therefore explore how Edmund’s saintly identity was perceived and presented at a remove from the cult centre and how this equated to the official version of his sanctity propagated at Bury in both word and image. An important aspect of this which will be considered in this chapter is the way in which Edmund was written into the landscape of East Anglia and the locations which came to be associated with his legend, such as the site of his landing in East Anglia, near Hunstanton.

The fundamental difference between the cult at Bury and elsewhere was proximity to Edmund’s relics and their miracle-working *virtus*. The miracles discussed in the first two chapters are primarily those associated with Edmund’s relics, both before and after their enshrinement in the abbey church. The intact preservation of Edmund’s corpse and Bury’s vigorous promotion of its continued presence in the abbey means that any relics of the saint found elsewhere are likely to be secondary relics, such as the relic of Edmund’s coffin which Blomefield reports was in Thetford Priory, or the fragment of Edmund’s shirt preserved in crystal (*una pars camisie Sancti Edmundi in uno cristall*) in St Edmund’s church, Norwich.<sup>102</sup> In this chapter I will therefore consider miracles which occurred in the absence of the relics in order to determine whether this affected the nature of the miracles and thus the presentation of Edmund’s

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<sup>102</sup> The Thetford relic is cited by Francis Blomefield, *An Essay Towards a Topographical History of the County of Norfolk*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 11 vols. (London: Miller, 1805-10) II. 118. The relic of Edmund’s shirt is listed in *Inventory of Church Goods during the Reign of Edward III in the Archdeaconry of Norwich*, 2 vols., ed. Aelred Watkin, Norfolk Record Society, 19 (Norwich: Norfolk Record Society, 1947-8), I, p. 7.

saintly identity. In the absence of relics another means by which the presence of a saint could be invoked was through the use of visual imagery.

Representations of Edmund are extant in more than eighty locations in Norfolk and Suffolk and these will be used to determine the nature of his iconographic representation.

Implicit in this discussion is the question of who was responsible for disseminating Edmund's cult. The complex networks of patronage, both ecclesiastical and lay, means that even the most remote East Anglian community may have been connected to the abbey at Bury through the involvement and activities of certain individuals, connections which today may be lost or, at best, difficult to recover. Nevertheless, attempting to determine the role of individuals or communities in disseminating the cult is important as it provides additional insight into the social, political and cultural context in which Edmund was deployed.

# Chapter One-

## Texts and Contexts:

### The Legend of St Edmund

‘On such occasions each would contribute to the others such information as he himself had obtained; and thereupon one would afterwards confer with another.

I, too, used to furnish a few particulars which I had gained by word of mouth from others, or learned from reading aloud.’<sup>103</sup>

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#### **The Hagiographic Tradition**

In contrast to the largely static chronicle tradition, the hagiographic tradition was constantly evolving, with each author seeking to add to the repository of knowledge concerning Edmund’s life, death, and posthumous deeds. Many hagiographers make frequent inter-textual references, and whilst referring to previous versions of the legends bolsters their own authorial credibility, it also indicates that they are aware of contributing to a continuous, evolving narrative.

The hagiographic tradition appears to develop independently of the chronicle tradition as from the outset it offers a different version of events: whereas in the brief chronicle entries Edmund meets his death in battle, the hagiographers develop the narrative of martyrdom, where Edmund is captured by the Danes and dies in defence of his faith. The prototype for the chronicle tradition is an authoritative ‘historical’ work, the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, but the hagiographic tradition appears to have no similar documentary precedents. This reiterates

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<sup>103</sup> Geoffrey of Wells, *De Infantia Sancti Edmundi*, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, I, pp. 93-103; p. 93.

the assertion that Edmund's cult is almost entirely constructed. It also raises the question of how the alternative hagiographic versions originate and how they are authorised in ways which allow them to deviate from a source as respected and established as the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. This chapter therefore seeks to explore the evolution of the legend of St Edmund and its manuscript dissemination in hitherto unprecedented detail.

Winstead explores general trends in the textual representation of female virgin martyrs. The early *vitae* emphasise sensation and confrontation, whereas by the thirteenth century a more explicitly didactic mode of representation was dominant, including lavish prayers and passages of exposition.<sup>104</sup> Writers of the late fourteenth century distanced the saints from the increasingly prominent laity by emphasising their miraculous abilities and their contempt for institutions such as family and state.<sup>105</sup> In contrast, most likely in response to fear of Lollardy and mis-directed lay learning, the female virgin martyrs of the fifteenth century were significantly less racial and confrontational and more conservative. It is particularly note-worthy that Winstead identifies Lydagte's *Lives* of the female virgin martyrs Sts Margaret and Petronilla as conforming to these later medieval developments as this allows direct comparison with his presentation of Edmund.<sup>106</sup> These broad trends provide a useful model with which the St Edmund hagiographic tradition may be compared. As a virgin martyr he may be expected to conform to these developments, but if this is not the case then this suggests that other areas of his saintly identity are, at least in some instances, predominant.

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<sup>104</sup> Winstead, *Virgin Martyrs*, Chapter 1, pp. 19-63.

<sup>105</sup> Winstead, *Virgin Martyrs*, Chapter 2, pp. 64-111.

<sup>106</sup> Winstead, *Virgin Martyrs*, Chapter 3, pp. 112-146.

### **Abbo of Fleury, *Passio Sancti Eadmundi***

The first hagiographic version of Edmund's legend is the *Passio Sancti Eadmundi* by Abbo of Fleury.<sup>107</sup> Abbo was a monk of Fleury-sur-Loire, a renowned scholar, teacher and proponent of reformed monasticism.<sup>108</sup> He came to England in 985 at the request of Dunstan, archbishop of Canterbury (959-88) and the monastic community at Ramsey to teach the Ramsey monks. He taught at Ramsey for two years, and it was probably during this period or shortly after on his return to Fleury that he composed the *Passio*.<sup>109</sup> Abbo dedicates his *Passio* to Archbishop Dunstan, suggesting that it was composed before Dunstan's death in 988. Ælfric's early eleventh-century English translation of Abbo corroborates this, as he claims that Abbo arrived three years before Dunstan's death (i.e. in 985) and that he returned to Fleury within two years; the *Passio* was therefore composed between 985-7.<sup>110</sup>

The *Passio* is divided into chapters which fall into four sections: the first is a dedicatory epistle to Archbishop Dunstan (Epistle); this is followed by an historical and geographical preface (Chapters I-II); Edmund's reign and the events precipitating the Danish invasion are introduced (Chapters III-IV) before the martyrdom itself is described (Chapters V-XI); the *Passio* concludes with details of the aftermath of Edmund's death, the early development of the cult, and a number of miracles attributed to him (Chapters XII-XIX).

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<sup>107</sup> The most recent edition of the *Passio* is in *Three Lives of English Saints*, ed. Michael Winterbottom, Toronto Medieval Latin Texts, 1 (Toronto: Centre for Medieval Studies, 1972.) pp. 67-87, from London, BL,MS Cotton Tiberius B. ii (fols. 2-19v), of the eleventh century. The only complete translation of the *Passio* is by Hervey in his *Corolla*, pp. 6-59. Unless stated otherwise all translations of Abbo will be drawn from this edition.

<sup>108</sup> The fullest treatment of Abbo's career and achievements is Marco Mostert, *The Political Theology of Abbo of Fleury. A Study of the Ideas about Society and Law of the Tenth-Century Monastic Reform Movement* (Hilversum: Verloren, 1987), pp. 17-18, 40-64.

<sup>109</sup> Gransden believes that Abbo wrote the *Passio* whilst at Ramsey; Gransden, 'Passio', 23, 47-56. For an alternative view, that he wrote after his return to France see Mostert, *Political Theology*, pp. 17, 45.

<sup>110</sup> Ælfric's *Lives of Saints*, ed. and trans., W.W. Skeat, 2 vols., Early English Text Society os 76 and 82 (London: Oxford University Press for the Early English Text Society, 1966), II, pp. 314-35; p. 315.

## Provenance

The provenance of the *Passio* is worth considering as it provides an insight not only into the origins of an individual text but also illuminates the genesis of the entire hagiographic tradition concerning St Edmund.

It is apparent that Abbo utilised numerous sources in his composition. He cites liberally from the Bible, classical writers including Virgil and Horace, and there are strong echoes of Bede and allusions to the *Lives* of other saints, most notably Sts Cuthbert and Sebastian.<sup>111</sup> The *Passio* abounds with intertextual borrowings to the extent that Gransden dismisses it as ‘little more than a hotchpotch of hagiographical commonplaces’.<sup>112</sup> Whilst not denying his literary indebtedness, Abbo provides an alternative account of the ultimate source of his tale. Abbo claims that the story of Edmund’s martyrdom was first related to King Æthelstan (924-40) by a very old man (*sene decrepito*) who claimed to be Edmund’s armour-bearer (*armiger*). This tale was told in the presence of Archbishop Dunstan, who in turn told the story to the bishop of Rochester and the abbot of Malmesbury whilst Abbo was present.<sup>113</sup> One hundred and sixteen years had elapsed since Edmund’s demise and Abbo’s arrival at Ramsey, and the passing of time might reasonably be expected to have dimmed the memory of the events of 869 and thus cast doubt over the credibility of Abbo’s story.<sup>114</sup> Abbo, however, takes care to authenticate his claims. He refers to Dunstan’s claims that ‘the snows of [the armour bearer’s] head (*nix capitis*) compel belief’.<sup>115</sup> Abbo was, no doubt, deploying a common authenticating *topos* as great age was considered to add to the trustworthiness of those involved in the

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<sup>111</sup> For a detailed discussion of the *Passio*’s intertextuality see Gransden, ‘*Passio*’, 22-3, 29-40.

<sup>112</sup> Gransden, ‘Origins’, 86-7.

<sup>113</sup> Abbo, *Passio*, Epistle; Hervey, *Corolla*, p. 9.

<sup>114</sup> Elizabeth Van Houts discusses the validity of Abbo’s claims in *Memory and Gender in Medieval Europe, 900-1200* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2009), pp. 47-8.

<sup>115</sup> Abbo, *Passio*, Epistle; Hervey, *Corolla*, p. 9.

transmission of oral testimony.<sup>116</sup> Similarly, he claims that his narrative is derived from an eye-witness account of events:

To them you [Dunstan] averred, while the tears ran from your eyes, that you had in your youth learned the history from a broken-down veteran, who in relating it, simply and in good faith...declared on his oath that, on the very day on which the martyr laid down his life for Christ's sake, he had been armour-bearer to the saintly hero.<sup>117</sup>

In her discussion of the development of Becket's hagiography, Anne Harris suggests that the immediacy of the eyewitness is compelling because it is both performative and evidentiary.<sup>118</sup> In Edmund's case the armour bearer's testimony is performative because it is affective (Dunstan weeps as he recalls the tale and in turn is compelled to retell it) and evidentiary because of the impression of incontestable proof of hearing the story from someone who was actually present and witnessed the tortures inflicted upon Edmund which so moved the armour-bearer's audience. The role of the eyewitness, of someone who experienced at first hand all the action of the martyrdom, represents an important standard in hagiographic narration.<sup>119</sup> Despite its recognised tropic nature, scholars have treated this element of Abbo's *Passio* with surprisingly little suspicion. Whitelock is clearly convinced by Abbo's version of events, claiming that it must 'be treated with respect' as a result of his claim to first-hand testimony:

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<sup>116</sup> For the wisdom and virtue attributed to old age in the Middle Ages see John A. Burrow, *The Ages of Man. A Study of Medieval Writing and Thought* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), pp. 107-9, 150-1, 162-4. For the representation of old men in Anglo-Saxon literature see Phillipa Semper, "Byð se ealda man ceald and snoflig": stereotypes and subversions of the last stages of the lifecycle in Old English texts and Anglo-Saxon contexts' in *Medieval Life Cycles: Continuities and Change*, ed. Isabelle Cochelin and Karen Smyth (Turnhout: Brepols, forthcoming, 2011).

<sup>117</sup> Abbo, *Passio*, Epistle; Hervey, *Corolla*, p. 9.

<sup>118</sup> Anne F. Harris, 'Pilgrimage, Performance and Stained Glass at Canterbury Cathedral', in *Art and Architecture*, ed. Blick and Tekippe, 2 vols, *Studies in Medieval and Reformation Traditions*, 104 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2005), I, pp. 243-284; p. 249.

<sup>119</sup> Jeannett M.A. Beer, *Narrative Conventions of Truth in the Middle Ages* (Genève: Librairie Droz S.A., 1981), pp. 23-34.

On this central theme [the martyrdom], Abbo could not drastically have altered what he claimed to have heard from Dunstan...He could not have invented the armour-bearer. Nor is it likely that Dunstan should indulge in motiveless and flamboyant lying.<sup>120</sup>

Ridyard reiterates this, making the additional startling claim that 'it is at least possible that Abbo's narrative is a more reliable source for Edmund's death than either the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* or Asser', merely adding the cautionary caveat that 'it would be a mistake to...regard the *Passio* simply as a direct and straightforward reproduction of the armour-bearer's story' on the basis that time and the re-telling of the tale are likely to have resulted in the addition and embellishment of certain elements.<sup>121</sup> Even Gransden, normally sceptical of a literary-inspired motif, is circumspect, suggesting that 'Abbo's appeal in the Epistle to Dunstan's authority is so specific and the assertion that Dunstan's informant was a layman so unusual that it is hard to disbelieve'.<sup>122</sup>

Despite the extent to which many readers, both contemporary and modern, seem to have been convinced by Abbo's authenticating claims, he nevertheless presents knowledge of Edmund's legend at the inception of the textual cult in a very different light. Abbo states that the Ramsey monks' desire that the legend be written down was partly as a result of Dunstan's regard for the story, which caused him to 'store up [the armour bearer's] words in their entirety in the receptacle of [his] memory', but also due to their fear that it would fall into 'utter oblivion', presumably now that Dunstan was an old man and they feared that the story would die with him.<sup>123</sup> There is, however, a striking feature and function of the age and wisdom *topos* in this narrative, in having, apparently, practical limitations. Abbo avers that at the time of writing the story 'is unknown to most people, and has been committed to writing by none'.<sup>124</sup> Abbo's apparent urgency in recording the tale may have been particularly necessary as there appear to be some who doubted Dunstan's version of events. Abbo himself

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<sup>120</sup> Dorothy Whitelock, 'Fact and Fiction', 221.

<sup>121</sup> Ridyard, *Royal Saints*, p. 67 and pp. 63-4.

<sup>122</sup> Gransden, 'Abbo of Fleury's *Passio*', 57.

<sup>123</sup> Abbo, *Passio*, Epistle; Hervey, *Corolla*, p. 9.

<sup>124</sup> Abbo, *Passio*, Epistle; Hervey, *Corolla*, p. 7.

admits that ‘none would give credence’ to the miracles wrought by Edmund after his death, were it not for the ‘irrefragable authority’ of Dunstan’s assertions.<sup>125</sup> Even so, when Dunstan maintained the continuing incorruption of Edmund’s body, ‘one of those present anxiously raised the question of whether such things were possible?’<sup>126</sup> Dunstan reassures his listeners by referring them to the precedent offered by St Cuthbert.<sup>127</sup> It is possible, of course, that Abbo invented these details in order to legitimate his composition and invest it with urgency and import. Nevertheless, it implies that the hagiographic tradition originated at a moment when the legend of St Edmund was poised precariously between obscurity and renown.

The St Edmund hagiographic tradition seems ostensibly to derive from unambiguous devotion to Edmund and the desire on the part of the monastic community at Ramsey to preserve the legend for posterity and prevent it from falling into ‘utter oblivion’. However, it is likely that the *Passio* functioned as far more than a straightforward *vita*. One question in particular which continues to perplex scholars concerning the origins and purpose of the text is why Ramsey commissioned the *Life* of a saint buried elsewhere. It is possible that the congregation at Beodricesworth, only forty miles from Ramsey, may have learned of Abbo’s presence and commissioned him to write the *vita* of their patron saint, although there is no evidence that this is the case. Archbishop Dunstan is also likely to have favoured the strengthening of the Church in East Anglia after decades of Viking invasions. The development of the cult of St Edmund would help the monastery at Beodricesworth to grow and flourish, with the burgeoning influence of the community conferring stability and administrative control over the region. David Dumville goes as far as to claim that Beodricesworth was transformed from a secular to a Benedictine monastery in this period and that Abbo wrote to commemorate its refoundation.<sup>128</sup> It is generally agreed, however, that Beodricesworth was

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<sup>125</sup> Abbo, *Passio*, Epistle; Hervey, *Corolla*, p. 9.

<sup>126</sup> Abbo, *Passio*, Epistle; Hervey, *Corolla*, p. 9.

<sup>127</sup> Abbo, *Passio*, Epistle; Hervey, *Corolla*, pp. 9-11.

<sup>128</sup> David N. Dumville, *English Caroline Script and Monastic History. Studies in Benedictinism, AD 950-1030* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1993), pp. 77-8.

refounded in 1020.<sup>129</sup> Similarly, Gransden's claim that Dunstan sought to create a second East Anglian see based at Beodricesworth and encouraged Abbo to promote St Edmund as a means of legitimising Beodricesworth's planned diocesan status is unconvincing.<sup>130</sup> It therefore seems most likely that the *Passio* was written for, if not at, Ramsey.

Edmund himself was enthusiastically commemorated at Ramsey. The *Historia Regum*, the early sections of which were produced at Ramsey, mentions Edmund's death in 870 and notes that 'it would be fitting to include some thoughts on the honour of his passion' (*de cuius passionis honore libet aliqua inserere*).<sup>131</sup> There is also a couplet in his honour in the Metrical Calendar of Ramsey:

*Astra poli petit Eadmundus decoratus honore;  
Gaudent Angligeni laudibus almificis*

(Edmund, deocrated with honour, makes for the heavens of the high;  
The English people rejoice with generous praises.)<sup>132</sup>

The *Passio* is only the second hagiographic text to have been written during the tenth-century monastic revival in England so it is possible that Abbo sought to provide the Ramsey monks with a high-quality hagiographic model to inspire the composition of the *Lives* of other saints.<sup>133</sup> Gransden suggests that the *Passio* may in fact have been commissioned by Ramsey's abbot, St Oswald, also archbishop of York, who had a well-known interest in the cult of saints. By

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<sup>129</sup> Gransden, 'Origins', 10-12.

<sup>130</sup> For Gransden's suggestions concerning the creation of a second East Anglian diocese see her '*Passio*', 41-5.

<sup>131</sup> Symeon of Durham, *Libellus de exordio atque procursu istius, hoc est Dunhelmensis, ecclesie*, ed. and trans. David Rollason (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000). Much of the compiled material up until 887 is thought to derive from an earlier compilation by Byrhtferth of Ramsey. See Michael Lapidge, 'Byrhtferth of Ramsey and the Early Sections of the *Historia Regum* attributed to Symeon of Durham', *Anglo-Saxon England* 10 (1982 for 1981), 97-122.

<sup>132</sup> Michael Lapidge, 'A Tenth-Century Metrical Calendar from Ramsey', *Revue Bénédictine* 94 (1984), 326-369.

<sup>133</sup> The earlier text is Lantfred's *Translatio et miracula Sancti Swithuni*, ed. E.P. Sauvage, *Analecta Bollandiana*, iv (1885), 367-410.

promoting Edmund's cult he may have sought to raise the profile of East Anglia as a whole, perhaps even attempting to place it on a par with Northumberland; Abbo certainly likens Edmund to Cuthbert on a number of occasions.<sup>134</sup> In contrast, Lucy Marten has recently suggested that Ramsey's lay founder and benefactor, the ealdorman Æthelwine, may have been directly involved in the commissioning of the *Passio*.<sup>135</sup> It seems to be the case that during his stay at Ramsey Abbo had some contact with Æthelwine. Abbo's biographer, Aimo, wrote that during the monk's stay in England he received 'only words' from King Ethelred II (978-1016) but 'from the ealdorman he had gifts worthy of his sanctity and was treated with much reverence by him as long as he was in his company'.<sup>136</sup> Æthelwine appears to have fostered close connections with Ramsey; the *Ramsey Chronicle* refers to him as 'father', he lived close-by and visited frequently and chose to spend his final days in the monastery. Marten suggests that Æthelwine's interest in the region and its reputation may have led him to commission the *Passio*.<sup>137</sup> However, the way in which Edmund is depicted would not necessarily accord with the preoccupations of a tenth-century ealdorman and is probably more suited to a monastic audience. Exploring the ways in which Abbo constructs Edmund's sanctity is crucial in determining the origins and function of the *Passio*. As the first hagiographic account of Edmund's demise it also sets the precedent for subsequent authors. It is thus necessary to explore in detail the means by which Abbo elucidated the characteristics of his protagonist.

### A royal saint

The historical introduction with which Abbo prefaces the *Passio* enables him to establish Edmund's worthy lineage. He claims that Edmund was 'sprung from the noble stock of the Old Saxons' and 'descended from a line of kings'.<sup>138</sup> In the

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<sup>134</sup> Antonia Gransden, 'Origins', 83-4.

<sup>135</sup> Lucy Marten, *The Southfolk and the Northmen: Suffolk 840-1086* (Woodbridge, forthcoming).

<sup>136</sup> Aimo, *Vita et Martyrium S. Abbonis*, ed. Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, cxxxix, coll. 390-2; coll. 392.

<sup>137</sup> Marten, *Southfolk and Northmen*.

<sup>138</sup> Abbo, *Passio*, III; Hervey, *Corolla*, p. 15.

first chapter he describes the merits of the Saxons who, along with the Angles and the Jutes, are invited by the Britons to be their ‘protectors’ and who ‘defend their clients and themselves with courage’ and ‘unconquered bravery’.<sup>139</sup> Eventually frustrated by the sloth of the ‘wretched natives’, the three tribes seize the land for themselves, dividing it into three kingdoms and casting the Britons out.<sup>140</sup> Thus Edmund is shown to descend from noble conquerors.

Edmund is depicted as an exemplary king, but one who differs somewhat from his warrior ancestors:

He was in truth of a comely aspect, apt for sovereignty; and his countenance continually developed fresh beauty through the tranquil devotion of his most serene speech. To all he was affable and winning in speech, and distinguished by a captivating modesty; and he dwelt among his contemporaries with admirable kindness, though he was their lord, and without any touch of haughtiness or pride.<sup>141</sup>

In addition, Edmund fairly administers justice and is generous to widows and orphans.<sup>142</sup> These were all praise-worthy qualities in a king.<sup>143</sup> This portrait however, must be understood in relation to what Abbo tells us of the events of the martyrdom that complicate the notion of Edmund as exemplary king. Despite informing us that Edmund ‘was in the prime of life, and in the fullness of vigour’ and ‘a keen soldier’,<sup>144</sup> when confronted by the Danish invaders Edmund surrenders. It is this decision which leads to his capture and martyrdom and the transfer of his kingdom into Danish control. Rather than

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<sup>139</sup> Abbo, *Passio*, I; Hervey, *Corolla*, pp. 11-13.

<sup>140</sup> Abbo, *Passio*, I; Hervey, *Corolla*, p. 13.

<sup>141</sup> Abbo, *Passio*, III; Hervey, *Corolla*, p. 15.

<sup>142</sup> Abbo, *Passio*, IV; Hervey, *Corolla*, p. 17.

<sup>143</sup> For contemporary views of kingship see, for example, Abbo of Fleury’s *Liber Apologeticus* and *Collectio Canonum*, written for the Capetian kings Hugh and Robert the Pious, in which he outlines ideal kingship in similar terms. *Liber Apologeticus* is printed in Jacques-Paul Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, cxxxix, coll. 461-72; *Collectio Canonum* is printed in Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, cxxxix, coll. 473-508. For the extent to which Abbo’s depiction of Edmund accorded with contemporary theories of kingship see Gransden, ‘Abbo of Fleury’s *Passio*’, 45-56.

<sup>144</sup> Abbo, *Passio*, VI; Hervey, *Corolla*, p. 21.

being read as a failure of his kingship, however, Edmund's decision must be understood in terms of a different model: that of Christ. The paradigmatic shift occurs during Edmund's conversation with the bishop, in his response to the prelate's recommendation that he 'seeks safety in flight' or surrender to the Danes' demands for tribute and submission.<sup>145</sup>

I have always avoided the calumnious accusations of the informer; never have I endured the opprobrium of fleeing from the battle-field, realising how glorious it would be to die for my country; and now I will of my own free will surrender myself, for the loss of those dear to me has made life itself hateful.<sup>146</sup>

The mid-sentence caesura is the turning point of the narrative, when Edmund turns away from the world and embraces the hereafter and the martyr's fate. This is reflected in the lexical transformation which occurs almost simultaneously in the text. Edmund is no longer depicted as a temporal king but a champion of Christ, 'a standard bearer in the camp of the eternal king'.<sup>147</sup> The conflict becomes ideological, as Edmund refuses to submit to Hinguar unless the Danish chief and his army convert to Christianity.<sup>148</sup> Enraged, Hinguar sends soldiers to seize Edmund who drag him before the Viking chief 'like Christ before the governor Pilate'.<sup>149</sup> Like Christ, Edmund is 'mocked in many ways' and 'savagely beaten' before being tied to the tree and 'tortured with terrible lashes' before being shot full of arrows until he resembled 'a prickly hedgehog or a thistle fretted with spines'.<sup>150</sup> Twice we are told that throughout his suffering Edmund continued to call on Christ until he was finally beheaded:

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<sup>145</sup> Abbo, *Passio*, VIII; Hervey, *Corolla*, p. 27.

<sup>146</sup> Abbo, *Passio*, VIII; Hervey, *Corolla*, p. 27.

<sup>147</sup> Abbo, *Passio*, IX; Hervey, *Corolla*, p. 33.

<sup>148</sup> Abbo, *Passio*, IX; Hervey, *Corolla*, p. 33.

<sup>149</sup> Abbo, *Passio*, X; Hervey, *Corolla*, p. 33.

<sup>150</sup> Abbo, *Passio*, X; Hervey, *Corolla*, p. 35.

Thus in his departure from life, the king, following the footsteps of Christ his master, consummated that sacrifice of the Cross which he had endured continually in the flesh. Just as Christ, free from all taint of sin, left on the column to which he was bound, not for himself, but for us, the blood which was the mark of his scourging, so Edmund incurred a like penalty bound to the blood-stained tree, for the sake of gaining a glory that fades not away. Christ, whose life was without stain, suffered in his great benignity the bitter pain of unmerciful nails in his hands and feet in order to cleanse away the foulness of our sins; Edmund, for the love of the holy Name, with his whole body bristling with grievous arrows, and lacerated to the very marrow by the acutest tortures, steadfastly persisted in the avowal of his faith which in the end he crowned by undergoing the doom of death.<sup>151</sup>

The verbal equivalences and repeated use of the conjunctions ‘as’ and ‘like’ make the Christological parallels of Edmund’s death explicit.

Gransden suggests that even the passages purporting to describe Edmund’s temporal rule may be inflected by the prominence they afford to the sacrality of kingship. For example, she notes the emphasis placed by Abbo upon Edmund’s consecration and detects echoes of the consecration of a priest and the rites for the ordination of a bishop, such as Edmund’s acceptance of the ‘stole of baptism’ or the ‘ring of faith’.<sup>152</sup> Whilst these allusions are not conclusive, they further emphasise the nature of Abbo’s depiction of St Edmund and suggest the suitability of the text for a clerical audience.

### A regional saint

Edmund’s regional connections are also apparent throughout the *Passio*. Following the historical prologue in which he describes the *adventus* of the Germanic tribes and the division of the island into three kingdoms, Abbo

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<sup>151</sup> Abbo, *Passio*, XI; Hervey, *Corolla*, p. 37.

<sup>152</sup> Gransden, ‘*Passio*’, 48-50.

devotes a chapter to describing the geographic characteristics of one of these kingdoms, East Anglia. It is a richly fertile region with ‘delightfully pleasant gardens and woods’, with ‘abundant grazing for flocks and herds’ and ‘noted for its excellent sport’.<sup>153</sup> Thus Abbo refocuses his narrative from the general to the specific, deftly locating Edmund in the context of national history whilst asserting his regional identity. This chapter is frequently characterised by modern commentators as an accurate geographical description inspired by Bede’s opening to the *Ecclesiastical History*, which similarly describes an Edenic idyll which, in the *Passio*, is soon to be shattered by the invading Danes.<sup>154</sup> Yet Abbo’s East Anglia is also wild and lonely, affording to ‘not a few congregations of monks desirable havens of lonely life’.<sup>155</sup>

The above-mentioned eastern part attracts attention for the following and other reasons: that it is washed by waters on almost every side, girdled as it is on the south and east by the ocean, and on the north by an immense tract of marsh and fen, which starting, owing to the level character of the ground, from practically the midmost point of Britain, sloped for a distance of more than a hundred miles, intersected by rivers of great size, to the sea. But on the side where the sun sets, the province is in contact with the rest of the island, and on that account accessible; but as a bar to constant invasion by an enemy, a foss is sunk in the earth by a mound equivalent to a wall of considerable height.<sup>156</sup>

Lucy Marten suggests that far from describing an Edenic paradise, Abbo sought to emphasise the vulnerability of the region, suggesting that to a tenth-century audience facing the continued prospect of Viking raids, ‘a girdle of ocean and rivers was not a defence, but an invitation’.<sup>157</sup> The present threat posed by the Danes is reflected in Abbo’s powerful invective in which he condemns them as

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<sup>153</sup> Abbo, *Passio*, II; Hervey, *Corolla*, p. 15.

<sup>154</sup> Cf. Bede, *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, ed. Judith McClure and Roger Collins (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964; rpt. 1999), I.1, pp. 9-12.

<sup>155</sup> Abbo, *Passio*, II; Hervey, *Corolla*, p. 15.

<sup>156</sup> Abbo, *Passio*, II; Hervey, *Corolla*, pp. 13-15.

<sup>157</sup> Lucy Marten, *Southfolk and the Northmen*.

cruel, barbarous cannibals, followers of the Antichrist.<sup>158</sup> Abbo imagines the conflict between the Danes and the East Anglians in geographical terms, suggesting that the depravity of the northmen should not be wondered at 'seeing that they came hardened with the stiff frost of their own wickedness from that roof of the world where he had fixed his abode who, in his mad ambition, sought to make himself equal to the Most High'.<sup>159</sup> Abbo concludes bitterly that 'from the north comes all that is evil'.<sup>160</sup> Just as the Danes are products of their cold, forbidding homeland, so Edmund may be equated with his kingdom, depicted by Abbo as simultaneously rich and exposed, but also a holy kingdom which offers solace to those seeking a spiritual life. These characteristics are shared by Edmund, an admirable yet vulnerable king who privileges spiritual concerns above all others. Thus Abbo established an almost symbiotic relationship between king and kingdom.

This relationship is also expressed through Abbo's description of Edmund's subjects. Following the martyrdom, once the Danes had departed and relative peace was restored, Edmund's followers emerged from hiding to seek the king's severed head in order that he might be given a proper Christian burial.<sup>161</sup> Edmund is referred to as 'their king and martyr' and his subjects as 'united in great numbers', suggesting a collective and unanimous response.<sup>162</sup> The head guides them during their search 'by exclaiming in their native tongue, Here! Here! Here! Here!'<sup>163</sup> Edmund is portrayed as a true East Anglian who calls, literally and metaphorically, to his people, the only ones capable of discovering him. The sense of local identity is enhanced by Abbo's decision to record the head's Old English 'her, her, her' in his Latin text, which he glosses for his non-native readers by explaining '*Quod interpretatum Latinus sermo exprimit, "Hic, hic, hic"*'.<sup>164</sup> Edmund is constructed as an Old English, specifically East Anglian, saint.

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<sup>158</sup> Abbo, *Passio*, V; Hervey, *Corolla*, p. 19.

<sup>159</sup> Abbo, *Passio*, V; Hervey, *Corolla*, p. 19.

<sup>160</sup> Abbo, *Passio*, V; Hervey, *Corolla*, p. 19.

<sup>161</sup> Abbo, *Passio*, XII; Hervey, *Corolla*, pp. 39-41.

<sup>162</sup> Abbo, *Passio*, XII; Hervey, *Corolla*, p. 39.

<sup>163</sup> Abbo, *Passio*, XIII; Hervey, *Corolla*, p. 41.

<sup>164</sup> Abbo, *Passio*, XIII; Hervey, *Corolla*, p. 41.

This is reiterated in Abbo's depiction of the translation of the body some years later, from its humble resting place beneath the 'chapel of rude construction', to a more fitting location in Beodericesworth.<sup>165</sup> The translation was made possible as 'the conflagration of war and the mighty storms of persecution were over' but Abbo claims the people were ultimately motivated by 'the occurrence of marvellous works' by which Edmund 'made manifest by frequent miraculous signs the magnitude of his merits in the sight of God'.<sup>166</sup> Again Abbo is explicit that these events were witnessed by people 'of that province', and that the region was united in its devotion to Edmund, as 'high and low alike' recognised his sanctity.<sup>167</sup> It is also interesting to note that whilst Abbo dedicates the *Passio* to Dunstan and claims him as his authority, the commission originates from the community as a whole; Abbo is adamant that it is 'the brethren' who exhort him to write.<sup>168</sup> Whether genuine or another authorial conceit, Abbo implies that the creation of the textual cult had its origins amongst the people of East Anglia.

#### A virginal saint

At the outset of the textual cult Abbo of Fleury had been keen to stress Edmund's bodily incorruption, describing the condition of his remains upon the occasion of his first translation to Beodricesworth:

Whereas it was supposed that the precious body of the martyr would have mouldered to dust in the long interval of time which had elapsed, it was found to be so sound and whole that it would not be out of place to speak of the head having been reunited with the body, for there was absolutely no apparent trace of wound or scar. And so the king and martyr Edmund was with reverence pronounced to be a saint, and was translated whole and entire, and wearing every semblance of life, to

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<sup>165</sup> Abbo, *Passio*, XIV; Hervey, *Corolla*, pp. 43-5.

<sup>166</sup> Abbo, *Passio*, XIV; Hervey, *Corolla*, p. 45.

<sup>167</sup> Abbo, *Passio*, XIV; Hervey, *Corolla*, p. 45.

<sup>168</sup> He repeats this three times in the Dedicatory Epistle; Abbo, *Passio*, Epistle; Hervey, *Corolla*, pp. 7-9.

[Beodricsworth], where to this day without change of form he awaits the covenanted felicity of a blessed resurrection.<sup>169</sup>

Abbo explains that Edmund's wholeness was a physical manifestation of his inner purity, and a certain sign that he belonged to the noble ranks of those who had spurned the temptations of the flesh in favour of a life of chastity:

And how great was the holiness in this life of the holy martyr may be conjectured from the fact that his body even in death displays something of the glory of the resurrection without a trace of decay; for it must be borne in mind that they who are endued with this kind of distinction are extolled by the Catholic Fathers in the rolls of their religion as having attained the peculiar privilege of virginity, for they teach that such as have preserved their chastity till death, and have endured the stress of persecution even to the goal of martyrdom, by a just recompense are endued even here on earth, when death is past, with incorruption of the flesh.<sup>170</sup>

Abbo thus deploys a conventional argument in relation to Edmund, suggesting that despite his privileged life he was able to resist temptation:

Let us then consider what manner of man he was, who, stationed on the royal throne in the midst of worldly wealth and luxury, strove to conquer self by the incorruptibility of his flesh.<sup>171</sup>

Edmund's ability to resist carnal enticement is echoed by the stoicism he displays in response to the extreme physical suffering of his martyrdom; his inner spiritual strength is equalled by his physical resistance, a sure sign to his hagiographers and devotees that he was indeed a saint.

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<sup>169</sup> Abbo *Passio*, XV; Hervey, *Corolla*, p. 45

<sup>170</sup> Abbo *Passio*, XIX; Hervey, *Corolla*, pp. 55-7.

<sup>171</sup> Abbo *Passio*, XIX; Hervey, *Corolla*, p. 57.

The interest of tenth and eleventh-century monastic reformers in promoting clerical celibacy has been discussed at length.<sup>172</sup> Given the monastic audience for whom the *Passio* was most likely composed it is credible to read Edmund's virginitly as an attempt to present him as a role model for clerical readers. Blanton elucidates a similar strategy in the tenth-century manifestation of Æthelthryth's cult, whereby Æthelwold, Bishop of Winchester (963-84), a leading proponent of the Reforms, depicted the Saxon abbess as the embodiment of chastity, the evidence of which was similar found in her incorrupted remains.<sup>173</sup> However, Blanton notes that the presence of a female body in the midst of a now-male monastic community may have been deemed problematic. She suggests that Æthelwold sought to counter this by rendering Æthelthryth's body as a textual rather than physical entity and promoting liturgical commemoration in favour of pilgrimage to her shrine at Ely.<sup>174</sup> As a Bedan saint well-established by the time of the Reforms it was both necessary and desirable to recast Æthelthryth to suit the current circumstances. In this respect, therefore, Edmund may have presented a number of attractive advantages to the Reformers: as a male saint he was an ideal role model for male clerics, and as a hitherto undocumented saint the legend could be shaped from the outset to suit the prevailing ecclesiastical mood.

### Manuscript tradition

The dissemination of the first version of Edmund's legend provides an insight into the geographical scope of his cult in its formative stages. It also evinces the extent to which the *Passio* remained popular in subsequent decades and centuries. The earliest known version of the *Passio* is preserved in Lambeth Palace Library, London, MS 361, a mid-eleventh-century booklet containing a copy of the *Passio* marked for eight lessons, along with three hymns and a mass in honour of St Edmund.<sup>175</sup> Another early booklet pertaining to St Edmund (now in the Royal Library, Copenhagen, MS Gl. Kgl. 1558) was produced c.1100

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<sup>172</sup> For example, Murray, 'Masculinizing Religious Life'

<sup>173</sup> Blanton, *Signs of Devotion*, pp. 73-7, 96-105.

<sup>174</sup> Blanton, *Signs of Devotion*, pp. 122-9.

<sup>175</sup> See Gransden, '*Passio*', pp. 63-4 and Winterbottom, *Three Lives*, pp. 8-9.

and belonged to the abbey of St Denis, Paris.<sup>176</sup> The text is marked for twelve lessons and is followed by an office of St Edmund with musical notation. Gransden suggests that Abbot Baldwin may have been responsible for disseminating the legend of St Edmund to St Denis; he had been a monk at St Denis prior to his appointment at Bury and it is likely that he had previously taken a similar booklet of the *Passio*, along with a relic of St Edmund, to Lucca (Italy) on his way to Rome in 1071 to secure for Bury the privilege of exemption from Pope Alexander II.<sup>177</sup> Booklets containing a *life* of a saint and accompanying devotional material, usually prayers and a mass, were relatively common in the Middle Ages.<sup>178</sup> They were easily portable and were therefore an effective method for disseminating a cult, a function evinced by the distribution of St Edmund booklets as far apart as St Denis and Lucca at a relatively early date and the subsequent interest shown in the saint by these institutions.<sup>179</sup> Numerous other manuscripts of the *Passio* are extant; these are discussed by Winterbottom.

### ***De Miraculis Sancti Eadmundi: Hermann, Osbert and Samson***

As we have seen, Abbo recounts a number of posthumous miracles attributed to Edmund. Indeed, it was Edmund's miracle-working reputation which led to the recognition of his sanctity and his translation to Beodricesworth. The *Lives* of saints very often include miracles as evidence of the sanctity of the protagonist and as a means of defining their behaviour in relation to established, particularly Biblical and early Church, patterns of sanctity.<sup>180</sup> Thus

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<sup>176</sup> Gl. Kgl. 1558 is described by Ellen Jørgensen, *Catalogus Codicum Latinorum Medii Aevi Bibliothecae Regiae Hafnauensis*, 2 vols. (Copenhagen, 1923-6) II. 190. See also Gransden, 'Passio', pp. 64-5 and Winterbottom, *Three Lives*, pp. 8-9.

<sup>177</sup> See Gransden, 'Passio', 72-4.

<sup>178</sup> See Pamela R. Robinson, "The Booklet". A self-contained unit in composite manuscripts', *Codicologica* III (1980), 46-69.

<sup>179</sup> For example, the column capitals in the crypt at St Denis. Pamela. Z. Blum, 'The Saint Edmund Cycle in the Crypt at Saint-Denis', *BAA: Bury*, pp. 57-68. For a list of manuscripts of the *Passio* see Winterbottom, *Three Lives*, pp. 8-10.

<sup>180</sup> Benedicta Ward discusses the function of miracles in saints' *Lives* in *Miracles and the Medieval Mind. Theory, Record and Event, 1000-1215* (Aldershot: Wildwood House, 1987) pp. 166-91.

when Abbo claims that the discoverers of Edmund's head 'recognised in the most blessed Edmund a worthy parallel to that enviable man who, unharmed among the gaping jaws of hungry lions, laughed to scorn the threats of those who had plotted his destruction', he credits Edmund's subjects with the ability to make such connections, in this instance to Daniel in the lion's den.<sup>181</sup> The fact that this is a 'worthy' comparison to an 'enviable' man demonstrates the function of miraculous cross-referencing in the creation of a saintly typology. In addition to miracles found in saints' *lives*, miracles of individual saints were collected together and recorded in single volumes. These were similarly intended to demonstrate the saint's power, whether for the purposes of promoting the shrine or applying for official canonisation, but could also perform a subtly different function in the creation and dissemination of a cult. Often recorded by the keepers of a shrine, the books of miracles were frequently kept on or near the feretory. They formed a tangible link between the textual and physical cult and a means of demonstrating the on-going power of a saint to pilgrims. Thus the production of St Edmund's miracle collection marked a significant stage in the development of his cult. The following discussion creates a new synthesis of ideas as it focuses upon the ways in which the *miracula* characterise Edmund's sanctity, how this varies according to each recension of the collection and the extent to which this differs from Abbo's original presentation.

*Hermann archidiaconi liber de miraculis sancti Eadmundi*

The first collection of Edmund's miracles is *De Miraculis Sancti Eadmundi*, which details St Edmund's deeds up to 1096.<sup>182</sup> The immediate context for the composition of *De Miraculis* was Abbot Baldwin's rebuilding of the abbey

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<sup>181</sup> Abbo, *Passio*, XIII; Hervey, *Corolla*, p. 43.

<sup>182</sup> *Hermann archidiaconi liber de miraculis sancti Eadmundi*, in *Memorials of St Edmund's Abbey*, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, I, pp. 26-92. A partial edition was also produced by Felix Liebermann, ed. *Ungedruckte Anglo-Normannische Geschichtsquellen* (Strassburg: K.J. Trübner, 1879), 231-81. A new edition and translation of *De Miraculis* is currently being prepared by Tom Licence and Lynda Lockyer for Oxford Medieval Texts.

church, into which St Edmund was translated in April 1095.<sup>183</sup> New hagiographies were produced to accompany a number of the numerous post-conquest translations of saints, such as St Augustine at Canterbury.<sup>184</sup> These texts fulfilled a liturgical function by providing readings for the feasts of the saints, and also a way of advertising the efficacy of the saint in the hope of attracting pilgrims. The miracles are arranged chronologically and are discussed against the backdrop of English national events. The author refers to Abbo's *Passio* on a number of occasions and his work is intended as a continuation of the hagiographic tradition inaugurated in the *Passio*, providing details of Edmund's posthumous miracles which have occurred in the intervening years since Abbo's composition.<sup>185</sup>

The identity of the author of *De Miraculis* continues to incite scholarly debate. The author reveals his name in a miracle concerning Hermann, a monk of Binham Priory in Norfolk, who he claims reported the miracle 'to me, his namesake'.<sup>186</sup> The compiler of the late fourteenth-century collection of Edmund's miracles collated in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 240 cites Hermann as one of his sources and variously labels him 'archdeacon', 'Herfast's archdeacon' and 'Bishop Herfast's archdeacon'.<sup>187</sup> When Thomas Arnold published the only complete edition of the text in 1890 he attributed it to Hermann the archdeacon.<sup>188</sup> A hundred years later this was challenged by Antonia Gransden who suggested that Hermann had never existed and may have been accidentally created by Henry de Kirkstead, the fourteenth-century

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<sup>183</sup> Hermann, *De Miraculis*, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, I, pp. 87-91. See Eric Fernie, 'The Romanesque Church of Bury St Edmunds Abbey', *BAA: Bury*, pp. 1-15.

<sup>184</sup> Richard Sharpe, 'The Setting of St Augustine's Translation, 1091', in Richard Eales and Richard Sharpe, eds., *Canterbury and the Norman Conquest: Churches, Saints and Scholars 1066-1199* (London: Hambledon, 1995), pp. 1-13.

<sup>185</sup> References to Abbo include '*in passione sancti eadmundi*', Arnold, *Memorials*, I, pp. 28; '*in exarato ...passionis*', Arnold, *Memorials*, I, p. 84.

<sup>186</sup> Hermann, *De Miraculis*, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, I, p. 78. For further discussion of the debate surrounding the identity of the author see Tom Licence, 'History and Hagiography in the Late Eleventh Century: The Life and Work of Herman the Archdeacon, Monk of Bury St Edmunds', *English Historical Review*, cxxiv (June 2009), 516-44; 517-8.

<sup>187</sup> Carl Horstmann, ed., *Nova Legenda Anglie*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1901), II, pp. 592, 614, 620, 627, 631 etc.

<sup>188</sup> Hermann, *De Miraculis*, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, I, xxviii-xxiv.

prior and archivist of Bury commonly assumed to be the annotator of Bodley 240, as a result of a misreading.<sup>189</sup> It is, however, now generally accepted that Hermann was once an archdeacon in the service of the bishop of East Anglia who later became a monk at Bury St Edmunds for whom he composed *De Miraculis*.<sup>190</sup>

Hermann seeks authority for his text by claiming that for ‘some particulars’ he is ‘indebted to the confiding testimony of living persons’, perhaps including Bishop Herfast and Abbot Baldwin.<sup>191</sup> He also claims that in part he based *De Miraculis* upon details of St Edmund’s miracles which he ‘found scribbled in an impenetrable and adamant hand by some unknown writer’ although it has not been possible to convincingly identify this source.<sup>192</sup> It is clear, however, that Hermann draws extensively on Biblical authorities, a number of the classics including Horace and Virgil, and the Late Latin poets, a range of texts that were standard in a well-stocked late-eleventh-century library such as that at Bury.<sup>193</sup> He also refers extensively to the *Chronica Anglica*, a version of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* which ran at least until 1066.<sup>194</sup>

Like Abbo, Hermann alludes to the contemporary vulnerability of knowledge concerning St Edmund, claiming that Abbot Baldwin and the convent entreated him to record the miracles ‘in the hope that the events which had passed through too common neglect into oblivion, may, while I live, be restored to memory through a good use of the talent with which God has provided me’.<sup>195</sup>

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<sup>189</sup> Gransden, ‘The Composition and Authorship of the *De Miraculis Sancti Eadmundi* Attributed to ‘Hermann the Archdeacon’’, *Journal of Medieval Latin*, v (1995), 1-52; 29.

<sup>190</sup> The debates surrounding the identity of the author are summarised by Licence, ‘History and Hagiography’, 517-22.

<sup>191</sup> Hermann, *De Miraculis*, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, I, p. 27.

<sup>192</sup> Hermann, *De Miraculis*, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, I, p. 27. Various scholars have speculated as to the identity of this source but it has so far not been convincingly identified. For two contrasting perspectives on this debate see Gransden, ‘Composition and Authorship’, 27-8 and Licence, ‘History and Hagiography’, 531-6.

<sup>193</sup> For detailed discussion of Hermann’s textual borrowings see Licence, ‘History and Hagiography’, 536-8. For the composition of late-eleventh-century monastic libraries see Michael Lapidge, *The Anglo-Saxon Library* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

<sup>194</sup> For further discussion of Hermann’s use of historical sources see Licence, ‘History and Hagiography’, 538-9.

<sup>195</sup> Hermann, *De Miraculis*, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, I, p. 27.

Tom Licence notes that the theme of remembering is pervasive to the extent that in the prologue alone the noun *memoria* appears eleven times.<sup>196</sup> To Hermann, it was not simply a matter of propriety that Bury should record the deeds of its saintly patron. He makes it clear that there is far more at stake:

Before now, [St Edmund] had not to any great extent been proclaimed to the world by miraculous displays in the place where by divine guidance he had chosen for himself a most venerable sepulchre, partly, I am driven to think, because of the carelessness of writers who in their great folly attached little importance to the works, such as there were, of the exalted martyr, partly because of the ill-deserts of the people at that time and because the hour had not yet come for him to show compassion on them.<sup>197</sup>

In failing to appropriately commemorate St Edmund, the community at Bury were failing to fulfil what Caxton's refers to in his translation of the Golden Legend as 'the debt of interchanging neighbourhood', whereby a saint interceded with God on behalf of an individual or community in return for their devotion and remembrance.<sup>198</sup> Hermann therefore conceived of *De Miraculis* as not only continuing the hagiographic tradition begun by Abbo of Fleury but also as repaying an imagined 'debt' and ensuring St Edmund's continued intercession on behalf of his devotees, particularly his monastic guardians at Bury.

The nature of the miraculous intercessions attributed to St Edmund provides an insight into how the monastic community sought to construct the identity of their patron in the period in which Hermann was writing.<sup>199</sup> My statistical analysis of the miracles reveals that just over a third of the miracles involve healing, with Edmund demonstrating his ability to cure a wide range of maladies and afflictions. The range of cures he enacts is fairly typical of those

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<sup>196</sup> Licence, 'History and Hagiography', 540. See Arnold, *Memorials*, I, p. 26-27.

<sup>197</sup> Hermann, *De Miraculis*, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, I, p. 27.

<sup>198</sup> *The Golden Legend or Lives of the Saints as Englished by William Caxton*, 7 vols., ed. F.S. Ellis (London: Temple Classics, 1900), VI, p. 97.

<sup>199</sup> For a statistical breakdown of the miracles by type see Appendices 3a and 3b.

performed by saints in this period.<sup>200</sup> He is democratic in his provision of healing, interceding on behalf of old and young, rich and poor alike, extending his posthumous protection across the whole of his kingdom with the same charitable and paternal concern which Abbo claims characterised his earthly reign.<sup>201</sup> In his groundbreaking survey of medieval miracle culture, Ronald Finucane analysed over three thousand miracles performed by numerous saints and determined that nine out of ten involved healing.<sup>202</sup> This figure gives a sense of the centrality of healing to the medieval cult of saints. Even if we exercise a degree of scepticism regarding Finucane's statistics, this nevertheless suggests that Edmund was less concerned with healing than many other saints and raises the question of the nature of the remaining miracles. Hermann describes a variety of wonders including a number of rescues performed by the saint (accounting for 16% of the total), the marvel of Edmund's incorrupt remains (3%), his power over nature as evinced in the wolf's guarding of his head (3%) and a number of miracles which are unspecified, such as the 'many wonders' which occurred at the site of Edmund's first burial (6%).<sup>203</sup> The nature of the remaining 33% of miracles is revealed by the frequent interpolations into the generally humorous and lively tone of *De Miraculis* of narratives of vindictive and violent retribution meted out by St Edmund. Licence maintains that this was a deliberate authorial strategy:

Evidently Hermann thought it a trick to please his audience should the saint sometimes give his enemies a poke in the eye. Vengeance miracles are common in hagiography, but their treatment here as outlets for comedy couple with the author's disquieting enthusiasm for sharp instruments and for targeting the eyes – 'the most fragile members of the human body' as he admits – is vicious to an extreme.<sup>204</sup>

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<sup>200</sup> See Ronald Finucane, *Miracles and Pilgrims. Popular Beliefs in Medieval England* (London, Melbourne and Toronto: J.M. Dent and Sons Ltd., 1977) esp. pp. 59-82 and Tables of types of miracles pp. 144-5.

<sup>201</sup> Abbo *Passio*, IV; Hervey, *Corolla*, p. 17.

<sup>202</sup> Finucane, *Miracles and Pilgrims*, p. 59.

<sup>203</sup> See Appendices 3a and 3b.

<sup>204</sup> Licence, 'History and Hagiography', 526.

This punitive element of Edmund's saintly character is best understood in the social and political context in which Hermann was writing. It is notable that the largest single category of recipients in *De Miraculis* are aristocratic men, predominantly Normans, most of whom attempt to encroach upon the lands or Liberty of the abbey in some way and are punished dreadfully for their misdeeds. This contrasts with the more balanced picture offered by Abbo, in which Edmund's intercessions are more equally distributed according to status and gender.<sup>205</sup> This indicates that a change had occurred in the way in which Edmund was interpreted and deployed. In the context of post-conquest tenurial upheaval Edmund is depicted as a powerful and jealous defender of his lands and people. This is not a trait unique to Edmund. Blanton, for example, describes Æthelthryth similarly deterring Norman intruders in the *Liber Eliensis*, composed at Ely in the early twelfth century:

In the Ely narrative, the monastic community utilizes the image of Æthelthryth's royal and abbatial position to define itself as a sovereign body. In repeatedly underscoring the elements of royalty, chastity, inviolability, and immutability, the chronicle's description of the enshrined body establishes a recurring symbol of power through which the monks assert their sovereignty over the Isle of Ely and their autonomy in the monastery's governance. Using this imagery, the monks challenge anyone who might take advantage of them.<sup>206</sup>

Hermann's characterisation of Edmund was thus part of a broader strategy developing in the wake of the Norman Conquest by which monastic houses sought to defend themselves against the prospect of sweeping social and ecclesiastical changes. Like Æthelthryth, Edmund's royalty is emphasised as a means of portraying the Liberty of Bury St Edmunds as a kingdom over which Edmund still ruled. As well as reassuring the monastic community of the ability of their patron to defend them, *De Miraculis* also functions as a stark warning to

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<sup>205</sup> See Appendices 4a and 4b.

<sup>206</sup> Blanton, *Signs of Devotion*, pp. 132-3. See pp. 131-41 and 166-71 for broader discussion.

any who would do otherwise, indicating the imagined, or at least desired, ability of the cult of saints to shape political events.

This is equally true in an additional context. Edmund's ability to defend his territory was particularly relevant at the time when Hermann wrote *De Miraculis*. It is unlikely to be coincidence that Hermann was writing at the time the conflict between Norwich and Bury concerning the location of the Episcopal see was at its height. The conflict raged from the early 1070s until 1081 between Baldwin, abbot of Bury St Edmunds (1065-97/8) and Herfast, bishop of East Anglia (1070-84). Herfast wanted to re-locate the see to Bury, but the abbot and monks vigorously resisted, objecting to the encroachment on their authority which they feared this would bring about. Baldwin initially frustrated the bishop's plans by travelling to Rome in 1071 where he secured for Bury papal exemption from episcopal interference.<sup>207</sup> The dispute was eventually settled decisively in Bury's favour by William I in 1081, but not before Herfast had incurred the wrath of St Edmund. Hermann recounts with gleeful relish that whilst Herfast was out riding he cursed St Edmund and his abbey for thwarting his scheme, upon which he rode into a branch, 'the saint's means, I dare say, of revenge, plunging him into spasms of unexpected agony as both eyes are changed into a well of cascading blood'.<sup>208</sup> Hermann claims that he persuaded the bishop to resolve his dispute with Abbot Baldwin, physician to the Conqueror, in order that he might appeal for the abbot's help in curing this terrible injury.<sup>209</sup> Hermann was present at Bury while the bishop was treated by Baldwin and Herfast duly recovered.<sup>210</sup> Hermann's invocation of Edmund as a fierce and faithful protector of his people should therefore be read in this context, and Antonia Gransden concludes that Hermann wrote *De Miraculis* as 'a piece of propaganda' in which his object 'was to increase St Edmund's and the abbey's prestige in order to fortify it against its enemies, especially the bishop of East Anglia'.<sup>211</sup>

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<sup>207</sup> V.H. Galbraith, 'The East Anglian See and the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds', *English Historical Review*, xl (1925), 222-228; 228.

<sup>208</sup> Hermann, *De Miraculis*, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, I, p. 62.

<sup>209</sup> Hermann, *De Miraculis*, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, I, p. 63.

<sup>210</sup> Hermann, *De Miraculis*, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, I, p. 64.

<sup>211</sup> Gransden, 'Origins', p. 89.

Edmund likewise consistently demonstrates his ability to deter secular incursions. Hermann continually emphasises Edmund's kingship. He describes the saint as 'protector' and 'glory and shield' of the East Angles and claims that Edmund remained 'the patron of the East Anglian kingdom...winning from the Almighty the reward that no king after him, save God himself, should rule in those regions'.<sup>212</sup> This reiterates that not only was Edmund patron of a specific monastic house, but of the region as a whole.

In an incident analogous to the dispute with the Bishop of East Anglia, Hermann records that a Norman courtier of William I's household attempted to annex a Bury manor adjacent to his own land. He was struck blind, and only partially healed upon offering a very large candle to the shrine.<sup>213</sup> Several other miracles also attest to Edmund's willingness to defend his territory and his assertion of his right to dispense justice in the region.<sup>214</sup> One example concerns Leofstan, a local tenth-century sheriff who Hermann describes as a savage man who was too eager to inflict the severest of punishments allowed by the law.<sup>215</sup> Whilst Leofstan was holding court in the hundred of Thringoe (Norfolk) an accused woman fled to Bury St Edmunds and claimed sanctuary at St Edmund's shrine. Leofstan denounced both the woman's right to sanctuary and St Edmund's jurisdiction in the matter, offering, according to Hermann, a direct challenge to the saint to prove 'who was more powerful, either the martyr in setting her free, or the judge in condemning her'.<sup>216</sup> Perhaps inevitably, things went ill for Leofstan. As the sheriff's servants dragged the woman from the church the monks fell to their knees and prayed for vengeance. This was duly meted out: the plaintiff was freed and Leofstan was possessed by a demon for the rest of his life.<sup>217</sup>

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<sup>212</sup> Hermann, *De Miraculis*, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, I, pp. 46, 51, 28.

<sup>213</sup> Hermann, *De Miraculis*, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, I, pp. 58-9.

<sup>214</sup> For discussion of further territorial miracles see Yarrow, 'The Cult of St Edmund at Bury' in his *Saints and their Communities*, pp. 43-7.

<sup>215</sup> Hermann, *De Miraculis*, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, I, p. 31.

<sup>216</sup> Hermann, *De Miraculis*, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, I, p. 31.

<sup>217</sup> Hermann, *De Miraculis*, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, I, 32.

The most compelling example by far of Edmund's defence of his kingdom is Hermann's description of the events surrounding the death of King Sweyn Forkbeard. The son of King Harold of Denmark, Sweyn was an ambitious and experienced warrior. He drove his father out of Denmark shortly before 988 and campaigned extensively in England in the first decade of the eleventh century. In 1013 Sweyn led a full-scale invasion of England, as recalled in the Peterborough manuscript of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*:

King Swein came with his fleet to Sandwich, and very quickly turned round East Anglia into the mouth of the Humber, and so upwards along the Trent until he came to Gainsborough. And then Earl Uhtred and all Northumbria immediately submitted to him, and all the people in Lindsey, and afterwards the people of the Five Boroughs, and quickly after, all the raiding-army to the north of Watling Street; and he was granted hostages from every shire. Then after he recognised that all the people had submitted to him, he ordered that his raiding-army should be provisioned and horsed; then he turned southward with his whole army, and entrusted his ships and the hostages to Cnut, his son. And after he came over Watling Street, they wrought the greatest evil that any raiding-army could do, then turned to Oxford, and the inhabitants of the town immediately submitted and gave hostages – and from there to Winchester, and they did the same; then from there they turned eastwards to London... Then when he had travelled thus far, he turned northward towards his ships, and the whole nation had him as full king.<sup>218</sup>

In this extract the repetition of conjunctions reflects the steady and seemingly inevitable nature of Sweyn's conquest. Upon Sweyn's landing at Gainsborough, Hermann records that King Ethelred II (the 'unready') abandoned England and fled to Normandy with his wife, leaving the country at Sweyn's mercy.<sup>219</sup> He only ruled, however, until February 1014 when the Peterborough Chronicler rather

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<sup>218</sup> *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, ed. Whitelock, p. 92.

<sup>219</sup> Hermann, *De Miraculis*, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, I, p. 32.

spitefully records that ‘the happy event’ of his death occurred.<sup>220</sup> The received historical narrative is therefore of virtually unopposed conquest, but the hagiographic sources which feature the invasion and death of Sweyn offer a different version of events.

According to Hermann, all the East Anglian people (*tota plebs*) resisted and gathered around St Edmund’s shrine to exhort the saint to intervene on their behalf.<sup>221</sup> Edmund appeared to Sweyn in a vision and issued him with a strict warning: ‘Cease, cease to exact tribute which they have never under any king given. It was not taken or paid in the time of any of them after me, and if you do not remove this oppression from them, you shall soon see that you displease God and me on behalf of the people’.<sup>222</sup> Egelwyn, a monk of Bury, also visited Sweyn, cautioning him to heed St Edmund’s warning, but Sweyn refused. According to Hermann, Edmund appeared to Sweyn whilst the king was in bed, spearing him with his lance: ‘stationed at God’s right hand, he single-handedly strikes down his enemy, slays his adversary, halts the tribute.’<sup>223</sup> A later continuator of *De Miraculis* is even more emphatic in his version of this event:

And calling the king by his own name [Edmund] said, “Do you want to have a tribute, O King, from the land of St Edmund? Rise up, behold, take it.” He who was rising up sat down again in his bed, but soon began to cry out dreadfully when he saw the weapons. As soon as the soldier made the attack, he left him, pierced through with a lance, dying. Stirred up by his shout, we ran to it and found him defiled with his own blood, his soul belched forth.<sup>224</sup>

The invasion of Sweyn is likely to have had particular resonance when it was first recorded by Hermann in the 1090s. East Anglia continued to suffer raids in the late eleventh century, including one incident in the early 1080s when

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<sup>220</sup> *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, ed. Whitelock, p. 93.

<sup>221</sup> Hermann, *De Miraculis*, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, I, p. 33.

<sup>222</sup> Hermann, *De Miraculis*, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, I, p. 35.

<sup>223</sup> Hermann, *De Miraculis*, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, I, p. 36.

<sup>224</sup> Hermann, *De Miraculis*, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, I, p. 118.

pirates burnt a settlement near Bury, killing a number of the inhabitants.<sup>225</sup> Ultimately, though, Sweyn embodies all invaders, just as the *'tota plebs'* who flock to St Edmund's tomb represent the entire region's dependence on their saintly overlord. M.R. James proclaims that 'the story of Sweyn's death redounded more than anything else to St Edmund's glory'.<sup>226</sup> This is due partly to the type of miracle this represents: Edmund is, after all, killing a king. It is also particularly fitting that the king whom he kills is Danish, the successor of the Vikings who caused Edmund's own demise. In a sense, then, this episode represents Edmund's saintly 'coming of age', and completes the sequence of events begun by his own martyrdom. He has regained supremacy and wrested control of his kingdom back from those who sought once again to conquer it. Edmund's alleged dispatching of Sweyn also has broader political implications, as Hermann explains that it halted the Danish king's trajectory towards the conquest of England:

And so the saint was held in more renown for such an unexpected event. It was believed that by his [Sweyn's] removal not only were the poor of his town free, but throughout the whole of England his greedy invasion had ceased to rage, to the relief of the poor whom God had not forgotten.<sup>227</sup>

Hermann claims that Edmund's dispatching of Sweyn places him on a par with the early church martyr Mercurius 'who wrought vengeance on Julian the Apostate for his wicked blasphemies against the mother of God and St Basil'.<sup>228</sup> In addition to protecting his regional interests, this demonstrates Edmund's ability to intervene on behalf of the whole country, making him a saint of national importance, a defender of the faith and integrating him into the history of the universal Christian Church. Like Abbo, Hermann frequently alludes to

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<sup>225</sup> The raid is recorded by Goscelin of Saint-Bertin, C.H. Talbot, ed., 'The Liber confortatorius of Goscelin of Saint-Bertin', *Analecta monastica, troisième série: Studia Anselmiana*, xxxvii (Rome, 1955), 1-117; 67-8. See Licence, 'History and Hagiography', 522, for further discussion.

<sup>226</sup> James, *On the Abbey Church*, p. 137.

<sup>227</sup> Hermann, *De Miraculis*, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, I, p. 37.

<sup>228</sup> Hermann, *De Miraculis*, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, I, p. 36. For further discussion of this event see Licence, 'History and Hagiography', 539-40.

Edmund's virginity but in the context of his more aggressive sanctity it acquires additional meaning: just as Edmund's body was miraculously healed of its wounds, so too his kingdom remains inviolable. Susan Ridyard notes that whilst the monks of Bury sought to promote the benefits of Edmund's protection, they were cautious not to over-emphasise his regional identity, because 'a regional protector was always useful, but a separatist saint might be self-defeating'.<sup>229</sup> She suggests that Hermann attempts to balance this aspect of Edmund's sanctity by making him a kinsman of Edward the Confessor and detailing the fifteen kings who ruled between Edmund and the Norman Conquest, with no mention of the changes of ruling dynasty which had taken place.<sup>230</sup> This represents a subtle but significant re-formulation of Edmund's identity, and Ridyard concludes that 'Edmund's role as patron of the East Angles was paralleled, in short, by his role as patron of the English'.<sup>231</sup> The miracles attributed to Edmund by Hermann therefore mark a distinct stage in the development of his saintly identity. Although he still rigorously defends the Christian faith he also pro-actively seeks to defend his people and his kingdom in a way previously unimagined.

This is reiterated by the manuscript context of *De Miraculis*. The longest version of the text survives in London, British Library, MS Cotton Tiberius B. ii, an extremely high quality manuscript written at Bury by a single scribe around 1100.<sup>232</sup> This manuscript also includes a copy of Abbo's *Passio*, suggesting that it was intended to be a comprehensive account of Edmund's *life* and legend, his 'official biography'.<sup>233</sup> Two abridged versions are also extant: Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, MS latin 2621 (fols. 84r-92v) and Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Digby 39 (fols. 24r-39v), a compilation of mainly hagiographical texts. The Oxford manuscript dates from the early twelfth century and originates from Bury. The Paris manuscript is of a similar date and the work of an English-based,

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<sup>229</sup> Ridyard, *Royal Saints*, p. 230.

<sup>230</sup> Ridyard, *Royal Saints*, p. 230. Cf. Arnold, *Memorials*, I. 28 ff.

<sup>231</sup> Ridyard, *Royal Saints*, p. 230.

<sup>232</sup> For a full description see Rodney Thomson, 'Two Versions of a Saint's Life from St Edmund's Abbey: Changing Currents in Twelfth-Century Monastic Style', *Revue Bénédictine*, 84 (1974), 383-408; 385.

<sup>233</sup> Licence, 'History and Hagiography', 533.

Norman-trained scribe, but cannot definitively be identified as a Bury product.<sup>234</sup> Licence suggests that Cotton Tiberius B. ii and the Bn latin 2621 manuscript shared a lost exemplar, and that Digby 39 is a copy of Bn latin 2621.<sup>235</sup> Gransden's discovery that both abridged versions of *De Miraculis* were once unbound and self-contained suggests they may have been designed as promotional tracts for the cult of St Edmund, intended for ease of distribution and copying.<sup>236</sup> The majority of the material absent from the abridgements relates to historical details particular to Bury, presumably less desirable or necessary in an alternative context.<sup>237</sup> The *miracula* were clearly highly adaptable texts and represent not only a significant stage in the development of the cult at Bury but also provided an additional means by which the convent could promote St Edmund farther afield.

### Continuation

The fullest version of *De Miraculis* in Cotton Tiberius Bii concludes with a miraculous sea rescue which occurred in May 1096. This miracle is incomplete, terminating abruptly before the story is fully developed. It is possible that Hermann's death prevented the completion of his text. However, within a few years, probably between 1098-1118, *De Miraculis* was rewritten by another Bury monk.<sup>238</sup> Only one copy of this text survives, preserved in a richly illuminated manuscript made at Bury in the early twelfth century (New York, Pierpoint Morgan Library, MS M. 736, fos. 23r-76r).<sup>239</sup> The author makes some relatively minor stylistic and exegetical alterations to Hermann's text, and also completes the last unfinished miracle of *De Miraculis* before appending an expanded version of Hermann's cure of a disabled woman on the Feast of John the Baptist and adding four new miracles of his own.<sup>240</sup> Scholarly opinion

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<sup>234</sup> Gransden, 'Composition and Authorship', 6.

<sup>235</sup> Licence, 'History and Hagiography', 534.

<sup>236</sup> Gransden, 'Composition and Authorship', 6.

<sup>237</sup> Licence, 'History and Hagiography', 534.

<sup>238</sup> Thomson, 'Two Versions', 386 n.3.

<sup>239</sup> For further discussion of this manuscript and its relationship to Hermann's text see Licence, 'History and Hagiography', 526-31.

<sup>240</sup> New York, Pierpoint Morgan Library, MS. M. 736, fols. 66v-67r and Arnold, *Memorials*, I. 91.

concerning the provenance of the additional miracles is divided. Antonia Gransden believes that they were in fact written by Hermann, an opinion recently repeated by Simon Yarrow.<sup>241</sup> However, the reference in one of the additional miracles to the death of a monk named Hermann seems to refer to the author of *De Miraculis*. The reviser-continuator refers to the monk as preaching from St Edmund's shrine and showing the saint's bloodied undergarments to the assembled crowds. These same relics are afforded prominence in *De Miraculis* and Hermann describes his handling of them in a similar manner.<sup>242</sup> It therefore seems likely that the monk named Hermann is the same as the author of *De Miraculis*, and since his death is described in one of the additional miracles this renders it highly unlikely that they were written by the same author.

#### Revisions: Osbert de Clare and Abbot Samson

A fully revised version of *De Miraculis* survives in one composite manuscript, London, British Library, Cotton Titus Aviii.<sup>243</sup> This is a quarto-sized book containing a cartulary with miscellaneous thirteenth and fourteenth-century material from Westminster Abbey (ff. 2-64), an abbreviated copy of Abbo's *Passio* (ff. 65-78v) and a revised version of *De Miraculis* (ff. 78v-145v). Antonia Gransden notes that *De Miraculis* is on separate gatherings from the rest of the volume and bears the abbey's class mark, S. 153, probably entered by the fourteenth-century Bury bibliographer Henry de Kirststead, who also wrote notes in the margins, suggesting that it originated at the abbey.<sup>244</sup> This copy of *De Miraculis* dates from c. 1200 and was perhaps made for the abbey's library or for Abbot Samson himself. It is divided into two books: Book I contains a prologue and sixteen chapters; Book II opens with a prologue followed by a passage extolling the merits of St Edmund then twenty one chapters. That the version of *De Miraculis* in Titus Aviii is a compilation is apparent from both the

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<sup>241</sup> Gransden, 'Composition and Authorship', esp. 40-1, Yarrow, *Saints and Their Communities*, p. 49.

<sup>242</sup> *De Miraculis*, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, I, pp. 53, 54.

<sup>243</sup> Printed as Samson, *De Miraculis* in Arnold, *Memorials*, I, p. 107-208. For a full description of the manuscript see Thomson, 'Two Versions', 387-9.

<sup>244</sup> Gransden, *A History of the Abbey*, pp. 122-3.

subtle discrepancies in the depiction of St Edmund and from the prose style of the two books; Antonia Gransden observes that 'Book I is all in simple, straightforward prose' whereas the majority of Book II is written in 'inflated prose'.<sup>245</sup>

It is generally accepted that Abbot Samson (1182-1211) was responsible for compiling the Titus Aviii *De Miraculis*: simplifying the prose of the Pierpoint Morgan 736 version which constitutes the majority of the first Book, composing a number of original passages and inserting Book II.<sup>246</sup> The author of the section concerning St Edmund in Bodley 240 also ascribes seventeen of the miracles he cites to 'Samson', 'Samson abbas', 'Samson abbas sancti Edmundi', 'Ex libros miraculis eius Samson' and 'Ex libro primo miraculorum Samsonis abbatis'.<sup>247</sup> The simplified prose style accords with Jocelin of Brakelond's description of the abbot, in which he claims that when preaching Samson concentrated 'more on plain speaking than flowery language'.<sup>248</sup> Thus Samson's principle role was as compiler and refiner.

The majority of the 'inflated prose' of Book II of Titus Aviii is generally attributed to a single author. In marginal annotations Henry de Kirskestead attributes chapters 8-20 to Osbert de Clare, 'prior of Westminster'.<sup>249</sup> Osbert was a well-known hagiographer and a particularly keen supporter of the cult of St Edward the Confessor and author of the *Vita beati Eadwardi*.<sup>250</sup> He was prior of Westminster Abbey at the time of the election of Herbert as abbot in 1121, an episode which provoked controversy over the issue of free election. Osbert seems to have been at the heart of the controversy, as a result of which he

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<sup>245</sup> Gransden, *A History of the Abbey*, p. 126.

<sup>246</sup> See, for example, Samson, *De Miraculis*, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, I, p. xxxix-xli; Thomson, 'Two versions', 389-408; Gransden, *A History of the Abbey*, pp. 126-8.

<sup>247</sup> Horstman, *Nova Legenda*, II, p. 589, p. 593, pp. 596-9, pp. 599-600, pp. 608-9, pp. 609-10, pp. 611-13, p. 618, pp. 627-30, pp. 631-2, p. 632, pp. 632-2, pp. 633-4, pp. 637-8.

<sup>248</sup> Jocelin, *Chronicle*, p. 37.

<sup>249</sup> Samson, *De Miraculis*, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, I, p. 152-3. Chapters 1-5 are derived from the version of *De Miraculis* in Pierpoint Morgan 736, and the rest appear to date from the time of the compilation of Titus Aviii. See Thomson, 'Two versions', 388-9.

<sup>250</sup> Osbert de Clare, *Vita beati ac gloriosi regis Anglorum Eadwardi*, ed. Marc Bloch, *Analecta Bollandiana* 41 (1923), 5-131.

spent much of his subsequent life in exile from Westminster. A friend of Abbot Anselm of Bury, he probably stayed at Bury during his period of exile, c.1125-c.1134. It is likely that Osbert composed the material relating to St Edmund either during or shortly after his sojourn at Bury, perhaps in thanks for the convent's hospitality.<sup>251</sup>

Osbert's contribution to the corpus of St Edmund's miracles subtly refines the way in which the saint had hitherto been presented. The letter which appears at the beginning of Book II in Titus Aviii offers a commentary on Exodus 28:17, in which the virtues of St Edmund are likened to those symbolised in the gems found on the breastplate of Aaron:

These precious stones signify the diverse virtues in which, as we believe, the virgin king and martyr was resplendent in body, and he left himself as one to imitate in the glory of his holy works.<sup>252</sup>

Simon Yarrow suggests that the placing of Osbert's letter at the beginning of the second book, before the account of Edmund's translation into Abbot Baldwin's new church, is a deliberate attempt to reorganise the material of Hermann's *De Miraculis* in order to depict the translation as the beginning of a more positive phase of cult activity, beginning with the reaffirmation of Edmund's virtues in Osbert's letter.<sup>253</sup> Although Hermann's punitive miracles are retold in Book I, my calculations indicate that these represent a far lower proportion of Edmund's total miraculous activity in Titus Aviii (22% compared with 33% in the original).<sup>254</sup> The lengthy description of the dispute surrounding the location of the episcopal see is also notably absent. In the Titus Aviii version healings and cures are the predominant means by which Edmund interceded on behalf of his devotees, accounting for nearly half of the total (48%). The other categories remain roughly stable, and it is in the number of healings and punitive miracles where the greatest shifts occur. The recipients of the miracles

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<sup>251</sup> *The Letters of Osbert de Clare, prior of Westminster*, ed. Edward W. Williamson (London: Oxford University Press, 1929), nos. 5-8, 23.

<sup>252</sup> Samson, *De Miraculis*, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, I, p. 154.

<sup>253</sup> Yarrow, *Saints and their Communities*, p. 57.

<sup>254</sup> See Appendices 3a and 3b.

also betray the authors' subtly different preoccupations. Although the proportions of recipients from each 'class' or 'estate' remain roughly equal, it is notable that the miracles of the Titus Aviii version refer explicitly to ten per cent of those who benefitted from miraculous activity as being of the lower orders, predominantly servants but also figures such as the poor blind man who sheltered in the wooden chapel erected over the site of St Edmund's initial burial.<sup>255</sup> Similarly, there is greater emphasis upon the local origins of a number of the recipients, such as a girl from Clare (Suffolk) who is healed after losing the use of her limbs, a Dunwich man cured of dropsy, or the restoration of lost money to the servant of a knight of Copeland.<sup>256</sup> Yarrow suggests that these changes constitute a deliberate attempt by the compiler to remodel Edmund's saintly identity:

His refinements pared down the text, replacing its earlier moral and rhetorical digressions with simpler, more direct renderings of the stories. The result was a version that sharpened the focus of its monastic audience on the social significance of the miracles rather than their historical correctness<sup>257</sup>

It is notable that the majority of new or revised material may be found in the second book of the Titus Aviii *De Miraculis* attributed to Osbert de Clare. It is likely that Osbert's status as an outsider at Bury, albeit one who remained with the community for a considerable period of time, afforded him a different perspective on Edmund's sanctity, particularly in relation to the saint's vigorous defence of his lands and rights, in which as a non-Bury monk he may have had less of a vested interest.

It is equally possible that the more pastorally concerned Edmund who emerges from the Titus Aviii compilation may represent Abbot Samson's vision of the saint, subtly redefined as part of his efforts to inaugurate a new period of cult activity and promotion. Overall the Titus A.viii *miracula* reflect the regional

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<sup>255</sup> Samson, *De Miraculis*, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, I, p. 109-10, 140-1, 164-5, 180-1, 186.

<sup>256</sup> Samson, *De Miraculis*, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, I, p. 178-9, 189-91.

<sup>257</sup> Yarrow, *Saints and their Communities*, p. 53.

emphasis and less violent nature of Osbert's version. The revision of St Edmund's miracles accords with Samson's attempts to revive the cult by restoring the abbey church and shrine, much as Abbot Baldwin had inaugurated a new phase of cult promotion by the rebuilding of the abbey church and the commissioning of the original *De Miraculis* by Archdeacon Hermann.<sup>258</sup> Perhaps Samson sought to promote an image of St Edmund which he thought would be particularly appealing to pilgrims who might travel to Bury seeking the intercession of its patron.

### ***Vita et miracula***

The close relationship between Edmund's *life* and *miracula* is evinced by a number of manuscripts containing both texts.

#### London, British Library, MS Cotton Tiberius B. ii

London, British Library, MS Cotton Tiberius B. ii, is a high status manuscript written by a single scribe at Bury St Edmunds in the last decade of the eleventh century.<sup>259</sup> The version of the *Passio* in this manuscript is closely related to one of the abbreviated copies, now Gl. Kgl. 1558. The manuscript also includes a copy of Hermann's *De Miraculis*, suggesting that it was intended to be a comprehensive yet accessible account of Edmund's *life* and legend: his 'official biography'.<sup>260</sup> This is reiterated by an inscription in a fourteenth or fifteenth-century hand which claims that the manuscript was probably kept in the close vicinity of the shrine: (*liber feretrariorum sancti eadmundi*).<sup>261</sup> The dating of the manuscript places it within the abbacy of Baldwin (1065-97), the rebuilder of

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<sup>258</sup> See Chapter 2 below for further discussion of the physical context of the cult under both Baldwin and Samson.

<sup>259</sup> Cotton Tiberius B. ii was used by Winterbottom as the base text for his translation of Abbo's *Passio* and is discussed in his introduction: Winterbottom, *Three Lives*, pp. 8-9. See also Gransden, '*Passio*', 65-6.

<sup>260</sup> For further discussion of Cotton Tiberius B. ii as the definitive version of the legend at the time of its production see Licence, 'History and Hagiography', 533.

<sup>261</sup> Elizabeth Parker McLachlan, *The Scriptorium of Bury St Edmunds in the Twelfth Century* (New York and London: Garland Publishing Inc., 1986), p. 74.

the abbey church and staunch promoter of his abbey's saintly patron. In addition to attesting to the close relationship between the *vita* and *miracula*, this manuscript therefore also indicates the multi-disciplinary nature of the cult of St Edmund and reiterates the necessity of considering it from a variety of perspectives.

New York, Pierpoint Morgan Library, MS M. 736

The same is also true of New York, Pierpoint Morgan Library, MS M.736. This manuscript marks a striking development in the elaboration of Edmund's cult at Bury. Dated 1125-35, the manuscript may be securely attributed to Bury by the documents on the opening folios: ff. 2-4 contain copies of two letters, the first from Henry I to Abbot Anselm of Bury (1121-48) forbidding him to continue a planned journey and the second from the Prior of Bury, begging Anselm to return from Normandy in order to appease the king's displeasure. Following these on ff. 3-4 are lists of pittances instituted by Anselm along with the names of the manors from which the money was to be provided.<sup>262</sup> Elizabeth Parker McLachlan also identifies the various hands apparent throughout Pierpoint Morgan M.736 as consistent with other manuscripts known to originate from Bury during this period.<sup>263</sup>

The manuscript, now in a nineteenth century binding, consists of 100 bound vellum leaves measuring 274 x 187 mm. It contains three main texts: an otherwise unknown recension of Herman's *De Miraculis*, re-written with minor alterations and five new miracles<sup>264</sup> (ff. 23-76v); Abbo's *Passio* (ff. 77-86v); a set of Offices for the Vigil and Feast of St Edmund containing selections from the *Passio* and Herman's *Miracula*, interspersed with hymns, antiphons and

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<sup>262</sup> A detailed description of the manuscript may be found in Parker McLachlan, *The Scriptorium of Bury St Edmunds*, pp. 74-119.

<sup>263</sup> Parker McLachlan, *The Scriptorium of Bury St Edmunds*, pp. 75-7.

<sup>264</sup> Arnold suggests that Osbert de Clare was responsible for the version of *De Miraculis* in Pierpoint Morgan M.736. See Arnold, *Memorials*, I.xxxvi. This view was later echoed by Williamson in his introduction to *The Letters of Osbert de Clare*, p. 26. However, this has more recently been convincingly refuted by Thomson, who suggests that the author was an unknown Bury monk. 'Two Versions', 391-3. For a description of the nature of the Pierpoint Morgan M.736 revisions see also Thomson, 'Two Versions', 385-7.

responses with music (ff. 87-100v); additional lections for the Vigil of St Edmund's Feast are also included in the opening folios (ff. 5-6), presumably out of sequence due to later re-binding. The Morgan MS contains similar texts to Cotton Tiberius Bii which, along with the presence of the liturgical material, suggests that it was likewise intended for use as an altar book in the abbey church at Bury, perhaps intended to replace the earlier manuscript as the occurrence of new miracles necessitated an updated record of Edmund's posthumous activities.

### The miniatures sequence

What really sets Pierpoint Morgan M.736 apart is the set of thirty two luxurious, full-page miniatures which preface the texts (ff. 7-22v) and the thirty nine initials which accompany the *Passio* and *Miracula*.<sup>265</sup> The thirty two scenes are painted on double vellum pages in rich body colour with black outlines and touches of gold.<sup>266</sup> Stylistically, the miniatures seem to owe much to the style of the Alexis Master of the St Albans Psalter, although the nature of their relationship has been much debated.<sup>267</sup> It is now generally thought that the miniatures were produced at Bury by a visiting artist who first worked at St Albans.<sup>268</sup>

They form an independent narrative cycle of Edmund's *life*, passion and posthumous miracles, beginning with the invasion of Britain by his Germanic ancestors (ff. 7-8), followed by Edmund's *life* and martyrdom (ff. 8v-18), four miraculous episodes, one from the *Passio* (ff. 18v-19v) and three from the

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<sup>265</sup> A full description of each miniature and initial may be found in Parker McLachlan, *The Scriptorium of Bury St Edmunds*, pp. 74-119.

<sup>266</sup> Parker McLachlan, *The Scriptorium of Bury St Edmund*, p. 78.

<sup>267</sup> Otto Pächt attributed the miniatures to the Alexis Master himself. Otto Pächt, Charles R. Dodwell and Francis Wormald, *The St Albans Psalter (The Albani Psalter)*, (London: The Warburg Institute, 1960), p. 167. The certainty of this attribution was questioned by later scholars, such as Katherine R. Bateman, who instead attributed the Pierpoint Morgan M.736 miniatures to the 'workshop' of the Alexis Master. Katherine R. Bateman, 'Pembroke 120 and Morgan 736: A Re-examination of the St. Albans-Bury St. Edmunds Manuscript Dilemma', *Gesta* xvii, no.1 (1978), 19-26.

<sup>268</sup> This view is expounded, for example, by Parker McLachlan in her assessment of the stylistic similarities between the two manuscripts. Parker McLachlan, *The Scriptorium of Bury St Edmunds*, pp. 79-87.

*miracula* (ff. 20-22) and concluding with Edmund's apotheosis (f. 22v). The sequence conflates the narrative of Abbo's *Passio* with incidents from the *miracula*, resulting in a new version of the St Edmund legend. Hahn notes that whilst the artist 'expanded upon and even diverged from' the text of the *Passio*, he adheres more faithfully to the *miracula*, where his illustrative scheme 'involves primarily selection and emphasis'.<sup>269</sup> The way in which the Morgan artist interprets the two texts and his possible reasons for doing so will form the basis of the following discussion, offering a new insight into how the hagiographic tradition developed across both media.

### Region and nation

The overwhelming sense of regional identity with which Abbo imbued his *Passio* is largely absent from the Morgan miniatures. Instead, the artist locates the events of Edmund's life and death in a national context. This is apparent from the opening of the sequence, where three miniatures depict the coming of the Angles, Saxons and Jutes to England (f. 7), their defeat in battle of the native Britons (f. 7v) and their division of the kingdom between the three tribes (f. 8) (Figs. 4-6). These events are briefly described by Abbo but in the miniatures are afforded disproportionate significance.<sup>270</sup>

As we have seen, the threat of invasion is ever present in the legend of St Edmund, and it may seem probable that the conquest of England by Germanic tribes may perform the same semiotic function as the encroachments by the Vikings. Indeed, the Morgan artist utilises the same visual vocabulary to depict the Germanic and Viking invasions: both arrive in ships with animal-head prows, the armies wear similar helmets and both carry shields and spears (ff. 7 and 9v) (Figs. 7-8). Upon landing in England, both engage in battle with the native inhabitants (ff. 7v and 10). However, the nature of the combat in which each army engages reveals important differences between them. The chivalric combat of the Germanic tribes who wear chainmail and fight on horseback in

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<sup>269</sup> Cynthia Hahn, 'Peregrinatio et Natio: The Illustrated Life of Edmund, King and Martyr', *Gesta* xxx, no. 2 (1991), 119-139; 119.

<sup>270</sup> Abbo, *Passio*, I; Hervey, *Corolla*, pp. 11-13.

**Figs 4-8**

New York, Pierpoint Morgan Library, MS M. 736



Fig. 4 Fol. 7r, the arrival of the Germanic tribes kingdom



Fig. 5 Fol. 7v, the Germanic tribes battle against the Britons



Fig. 6 Fol. 8r, the tribes divide the



Fig. 7 Fol. 9v, the Viking invasion



Fig. 8 Fol. 10r, the Vikings attack a town

ordered ranks (f. 7v) contrasts sharply with the frenzied, disordered rapine of the bare-legged and unshod Vikings, who hack at their victims as the bodies pile up around them (f. 10). The location in which the battles occur is also significant. The Germanic tribes appear to meet the similarly mounted and well-equipped Britons on the field of battle, whereas the Vikings attack a populated settlement, which burns as the battle rages. The fallen in the first battle are clearly soldiers and all bear arms, whereas the majority of victims of the Viking onslaught are unarmed and some appear to be naked, reflecting Abbo's account of the event:

Boys, and men old and young, whom he [Hinguar] encountered in the streets of the city were killed; he paid no attention to the chastity of wife or maid. Husband and wife lay dead or dying together on their thresholds; the babe snatched from its mother's breast was, in order to multiply the cries of grief, slaughtered before her eyes. An impious soldiery scoured the town in fury, thirsty for every crime by which pleasure could be given to the tyrant who from sheer love of cruelty had given orders for the massacre of the innocent.<sup>271</sup>

Here the words and images are mutually reinforcing. Hahn notes that the Morgan artist recognised Abbo's textual clue and modelled the Danish attack on a representation of the Massacre of the Innocents. She concludes that since the Innocents were counted amongst the saints, the effect of this comparison in both word and image is to enhance the prestige of the East Anglian kingdom and the king who ruled it.<sup>272</sup>

The Morgan artist's disproportionate focus upon the coming of the Germanic tribes may also be explained in terms of Edmund's kingship. Abbo tells us very little of Edmund's origins and ancestry except that he was 'descended from a

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<sup>271</sup> Abbo, *Passio*, V; Hervey, *Corolla*, p. 21.

<sup>272</sup> Cf. the tenth-century *Codex Egberti* made for Egbert, Archbishop of Trier. Stadtbibliothek Trier, Ms. 24, f. 15v. See Hahn, '*Peregrinatio et Natio*', 129-30 and 138, n. 89. Cf also the Massacre of the Innocents in the St Albans Psalter, p.30.

line of kings' and 'sprung from the stock of the Old Saxons'.<sup>273</sup> This has been variously interpreted by subsequent authors, both medieval and modern, but the Morgan artist clearly equates the Old Saxons with one of the Germanic tribes who we see settling England in the opening miniatures.<sup>274</sup> His efforts to present them as chivalrous are therefore understandable as he seeks to furnish Edmund with worthy ancestors. It is also likely that the visual equivalences between the two invasions are intended to equate the Viking's invasion of East Anglia with the Germanic tribes' invasion of England as a whole. Eliding the distinction between the regional and the national locates Edmund within a broader historical context and suggests that his martyrdom, and presumably also his cult, are universally significant.

### Christological

The parallels which Abbo draws between Christ's Passion and Edmund's martyrdom are further emphasised in the Morgan miniatures (Figs. 11-18). Parker McLachlan maintains that the resemblance is heightened by the dependence of the Morgan martyrdom upon the style and iconography of the Passion of Christ in the St Albans Psalter.<sup>275</sup> In particular she draws attention to the similarity between the Flagellation of Christ and the scourging of Edmund (f. 13v), where the gestures and facial expressions of the men who raise sticks to beat Christ and Edmund respectively are remarkably similar (Figs. 9-10). The change in Edmund's sartorial appearance in the aftermath of the martyrdom may also be similarly accounted for. Abbo's description of the martyrdom has Edmund seized by the Danes, 'pinioned and tightly bound in chains', 'mocked in many ways', then 'savagely beaten' before being tied to a tree and 'for a long while tortured with terrible lashes'.<sup>276</sup> In contrast to Christ, who is stripped by his tormentors (Matthew 27: 28-29), Abbo does not ascribe this indignity to Edmund. The Morgan artist, however, in seeking to multiply the connections between Edmund's martyrdom and Christ's Passion includes a

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<sup>273</sup> Abbo, *Passio*, II; Hervey, *Corolla*, p. 15.

<sup>274</sup> For the likelihood that Edmund was a Continental Saxon see Whitelock, 'Fact and Fiction', 218.

<sup>275</sup> Parker McLachlan, *The Scriptorium of Bury St Edmunds*, p. 79; pp. 86-7.

<sup>276</sup> Abbo, *Passio*, X; Hervey, *Corolla*, pp. 33-5.

scene in which the Danes drag Edmund's outer robe from his head and shoulders, the violence of their actions apparent from their contorted facial expressions and Edmund's posture, bent double with the force of their exertions (f. 13). In order not to deviate too far from Abbo's narrative, the artist depicts Edmund clad in a robe for the next three scenes (ff. 13v-14v). However, by the time Edmund's followers discover his headless corpse on folio 15, Edmund is naked, clad only in a blue knee-length loincloth. The visibility of his shoulders when his head is reunited with his body (f. 17) and when he is borne away on a bier for burial (f. 17v) indicate that he is similarly naked. Parker McLachlan believes that the disparity in Edmund's appearance may be accounted for the artist's recourse to different models for these scenes. She suggests that Edmund's body when discovered by his followers is 'articulated almost line for line after the torso of the dead Christ of the St Albans Psalter Deposition'.<sup>277</sup> It is also noticeable that both figures are similarly clad in knee-length blue loincloths, the only place in the St Edmund sequence where this detail occurs, with the delicate, translucent fabric of Christ's garment perhaps testament to the superior talent of the Alexis Master compared with the far more solid drape of Edmund's robe. In this instance, then, it is apparent that the artist has interpreted visually the words of Abbo's *Passio* in order to amplify the Christological nature of Edmund's martyrdom, to the extent that he borrows the iconography of the Deposition of Christ from the St Albans Psalter. Although the extent to which the viewers of the Morgan miniatures would appreciate this direct connection is debatable, the change in visual tone would draw attention to the disparity and identify that a statement was being made concerning the nature of Edmund's martyrdom. At the very least, the viewer might be expected to recognise the posture and garments of Christ from similar depictions on painted or carved roods, perhaps present in the abbey church itself. The effect of this comparison would once again serve to emphasise the elevated nature of Edmund's sanctity.

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<sup>277</sup> Cf. St Albans Psalter, p. 47. Parker McLachlan, *The Scriptorium of Bury St Edmunds*, p. 86.

**Figs. 9-10 The Pierpoint Morgan martyrdom and the Passion of Christ in the St St Alban's Psalter**



Fig. 9. New York, Pierpoint Morgan Library, MS M. 736, fol. 13v, Edmund is beaten



Fig. 10. The St Albans Psalter, p. 44, The flagellation of Christ

**Figs. 11-18 The Pierpoint Morgan martyrdom**

New York, Pierpoint Morgan Library, MS M. 736

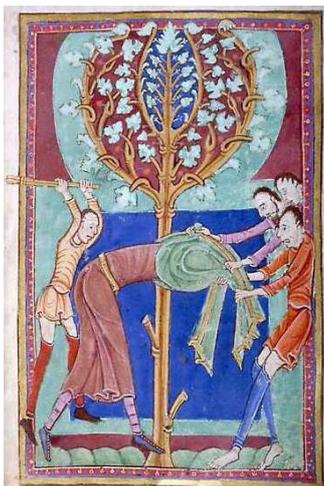


Fig. 11. Fol. 13r, Edmund is stripped



Fig. 12. Fol. 14r, Edmund is shot with arrows



Fig. 13. Fol. 14v, Edmund beheaded; his head is hidden



Fig. 14. Fol. 15v,  
Edmund's followers  
discover his body



Fig. 15. Fol. 16r,  
Edmund's followers  
discover his head  
guarded by the wolf



Fig. 16. Fol. 16v, The  
wolf follows as the  
head is carried away



Fig. 17. Fol. 17r, The  
head is re-attached to  
the body

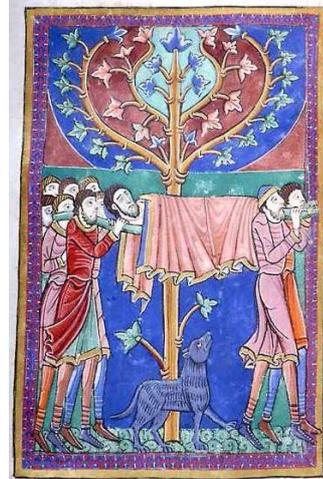


Fig. 18. Fol. 17v,  
Edmund's body is  
borne away for burial

## Kingship

Two miniatures illustrate Edmund's temporal reign as king of East Anglia.<sup>278</sup> Facing each other across the open book, f. 8v depicts Edmund's coronation and f. 9 shows the king distributing alms. The coronation scene is lively and dynamic, the cleric to Edmund's left still grasps the crown which he is placing on Edmund's head, and the cleric to his right is similarly handing over the royal sceptre. The image captures the very moment of Edmund's investiture. Seated frontally and gazing directly out at the viewer, Edmund is larger than his companions: he is literally the centre of attention. The iconography of the scene is derived from late-antique and medieval frontal ruler portraits and thus serves to emphasise his royalty.<sup>279</sup> In addition to the two clerics, probably bishops, Edmund is also flanked on either side by a number of other people. Untonsured and bearing arms, they are clearly secular, and probably represent the subjects of Edmund's new kingdom. They gaze towards the king in avid approval and reiterate Abbo's claim that Edmund was chosen king 'by the unanimous choice of his fellow provincials'.<sup>280</sup> This is similarly reflected in the united efforts of Edmund's followers to search for his head after the martyrdom and the unanimous popular acclaim by which he is acknowledged to be a saint.<sup>281</sup>

Apart from the coronation scene, the miniature on f. 9 is the only image in the sequence which depicts Edmund's reign prior to the events of the martyrdom. It therefore serves as the primary indicator of the version of Edmund's temporal kingship being offered in the miniatures. Abbo is generous in his praise of Edmund's rule, but gives few specific details of the deeds performed by the king, preferring to celebrate his moral worthiness and personal graces.<sup>282</sup> The Morgan artist is similarly terse. Abbo does, however, claim that Edmund was

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<sup>278</sup> See Figs. 19-20.

<sup>279</sup> Barbara Abou-El-Haj, 'Bury St Edmunds Abbey between 1070 and 1124: A history of property, privilege, and monastic art production', *Art History* 6 (1983), 1-29; 14 and 27 n. 101.

<sup>280</sup> Abbo, *Passio*, III; Hervey, *Corolla*, p. 15.

<sup>281</sup> Abbo, *Passio*, XII, XIV; Hervey, *Corolla*, p. 39-41, 45.

<sup>282</sup> Abbo, *Passio*, III-IV; Hervey, *Corolla*, p. 15-17.

**Figs. 19-20 Edmund's kingship**

New York, Pierpoint Morgan Library, MS M 736



Fig. 19. Fol. 8v, Edmund's coronation

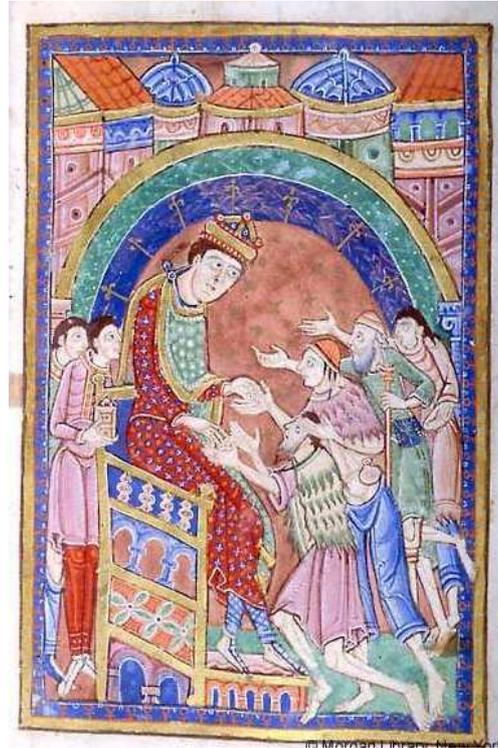


Fig. 20. Fol. 9r, Edmund distributes alms

'liberal in bounty to those in want, and like a benign father to the orphan and the widow', just as Edmund in the miniature is generously distributing alms.<sup>283</sup> This reflects the contemporary importance placed upon acts of charity and the protection of one's subjects as a fundamental royal function.<sup>284</sup>

### Post-mortem intervention

The Morgan miniatures reflect the tendency of Hermann's *De Miraculis* to emphasise Edmund's punitive post-mortem activities. Eight miniatures (a quarter of the total) depict Edmund's vengeance against those who wrong his shrine or relics.<sup>285</sup> One of the miracles is drawn from Abbo's *Passio* whilst the remaining two are from Hermann's *De Miraculis*. It is interesting that this collection of miracles more than any other evinces a bias towards male recipients.<sup>286</sup> In the context of the excessively punitive nature of these miracles, this suggests a distinction between the types of miracles experienced based on gender.

The first sequence (ff. 18v-19v) illustrates Abbo's narrative of the eight thieves who attempted to break into the abbey church in order to plunder the shrine (Figs. 21-3).<sup>287</sup> The first miniature (f. 18v) shows the thieves, armed with tools according to Abbo's description, attempting to gain entrance:

One laid a ladder to the door-posts, in order to climb through a window; another was engaged with a file, or a smith's hammer, on the bars and bolts; others with shovels and mattocks endeavoured to undermine the walls.<sup>288</sup>

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<sup>283</sup> Abbo, *Passio*, IV; Hervey, *Corolla*, p. 17.

<sup>284</sup> See William A. Chaney, *The Cult of Kingship in Anglo-Saxon England: The Transition from Paganism to Christianity* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1970), pp. 256-7.

<sup>285</sup> See Appendices 3a and 3b. Note that the figures in this instance refer to both the miniatures and initials.

<sup>286</sup> See Appendices 4a and 4b.

<sup>287</sup> Abbo, XVI; Hervey, *Corolla*, pp. 47-53.

<sup>288</sup> Abbo, XVI; Hervey, *Corolla*, p. 49.

**Figs. 21-23 Eight thieves attempt to rob St Edmund's shrine**

New York, Pierpoint Morgan Library, MS M 736

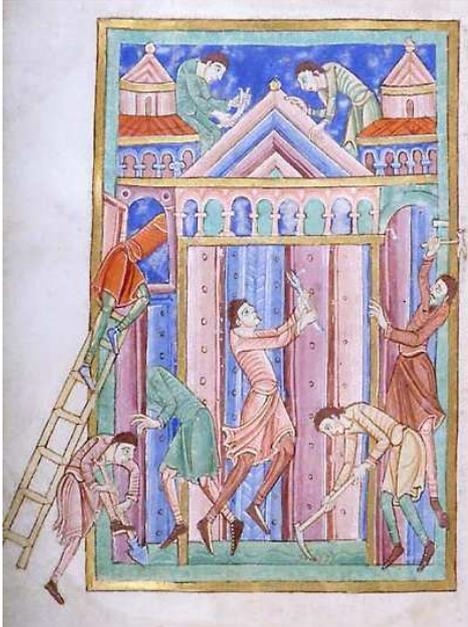


Fig. 21. Fol. 18v, Eight thieves attempt to rob the shrine



Fig. 22. Fol. 19r, The thieves are arrested

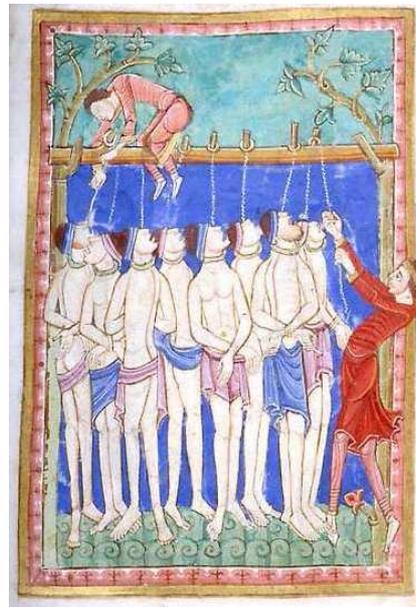


Fig. 23. Fol. 19v, The thieves are hanged

The whole façade of the church is visible, with a central gabled nave flanked by two double-storied towers. The architecture identifies the church as that begun by Abbot Baldwin (1065-97), which was almost complete at the time the miniatures were painted.<sup>289</sup> However, the larger central gable and the door appear to be made from multi-coloured wooden planks held together by vertical rows of nails, which the thieves attempt to extract with their tools. It is possible that the artist sought to conflate the new abbey church with its wooden predecessor, which Abbo describes as a ‘church of immense size, with storeys admirably constructed of wood’, in which Edmund’s remains were first placed upon their translation to Bury.<sup>290</sup> The effect of this may be to de-historicise the episode and indicate its universal and continuing relevance. Barbara Abou-El-Haj cites analogous Biblical episodes such as Psalm 73, verses 2-3 and 5-7, where the destruction of the temple is a metaphor for sacrilege, noting in particular the emphasis in the psalm on the destruction of the wooden parts of the building.<sup>291</sup> She similarly notes the equivalences between the illustration of the psalm in the Utrecht Psalter and the Morgan manuscript’s depiction of the thieves’ encroachment.<sup>292</sup> She concludes that the Morgan artist deliberately invoked this prototype in order to emphasise the sacrilegious nature of the attempted theft.<sup>293</sup> This in turn justifies the hanging of the thieves and explains the exaggerated violence and cruelty with which their execution is depicted (f. 19v). Trespassing upon Edmund’s shrine is thus shown to be a heinous crime, transgressing both physical and spiritual bounds, which will be punished accordingly. Notably, however, Edmund is not the perpetrator of this punishment, as although Abbo tells us that he ensures the thieves are transfixed to prevent their escape; it is Theodred, Bishop of London (909-26) who passes judgement upon them (f. 19r).<sup>294</sup> Abou-El-Haj suggests that this scene is indicative of the twelfth-century reality of clerical control over civil crimes within the Bury *banleuca*, as although the bishop was prohibited from

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<sup>289</sup> See *Gesta Sacristarum*, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, II, pp. 289-96.

<sup>290</sup> Abbo, XIV; Hervey, *Corolla*, p. 45.

<sup>291</sup> ‘Axes deep in the wood, hacking at the panels, they battered them down with mallet and hatchet’. Psalm 73, 6.

<sup>292</sup> Utrecht, Bibliotheek Der Rijksuniversiteit, MS 32, fol. 42r.

<sup>293</sup> Abou-El-Haj, ‘Property, privilege, and monastic art production’, 8-9.

<sup>294</sup> Abbo, XVI; Hervey, *Corolla*, pp. 49-51.

exercising justice on Bury lands, it served the purpose of the abbey to emphasise that clerical, rather than secular, justice prevailed.<sup>295</sup>

The theme of Edmund's aggressive retaliation is further emphasised by the inclusion of two incidents from Hermann's *De Miraculis*. Two miniatures illustrate the removal of Edmund's remains to London by his monastic guardian, Egelwyn, in order to escape the large invading Danish force led by Thurkill the Tall, who landed at Ipswich in the spring of 1010.<sup>296</sup> *En route* to London Egelwyn sought shelter with an Essex priest, Eadbricht, shown on f. 20 standing in the doorway of his house. The priest refused and was punished for his lack of hospitality: vivid scarlet flames leap from the windows towards the roof. Edmund's vulnerability is emphasised by the respective settings of the characters. Eadbricht peers around the door, holding the handle as if preparing to shut out his visitors. In contrast, Egelwyn leads the cart bearing Edmund's relics, pulled by a despondent-looking horse, across rough terrain, into the ambiguous unknown space of the margin. The peril is emphasised by the organisation of the miniatures as the viewer must turn the page to discover the fate of the entourage. In the next miniature Egelwyn and his precious cargo are still outdoors, this time negotiating a bridge which was too narrow for the cart to cross (f. 20v).<sup>297</sup> The water below looks turbulent and enormous fish wait expectantly. Egelwyn looks back anxiously at the wheel which hangs over the edge of the bridge. As in the preceding miniature, the hand of God appears from the upper margin and casts light upon the relics, reassuring the viewer that the cart will be miraculously enabled to cross the bridge in safety.

The first miniatures in the sequence of three which illustrate the death of Sweyn also features Egelwyn, warning the king to rescind his demand for tribute (f. 21) (Fig. 26). Sweyn is seated within an elaborate architectural frame which separates him from Egelwyn, who once again appears to be outdoors, standing on undulating ground. The force of Sweyn's refusal and the extent of Egelwyn's (literal) marginalisation is reiterated by two of Sweyn's henchmen,

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<sup>295</sup> Abou-El-Haj, 'Property, privilege, and monastic art production', 10.

<sup>296</sup> See Figs. 24-5. Hermann, *De Miraculis*, ed. Arnold, *Memorials* I, p. 40-1.

<sup>297</sup> Hermann, *De Miraculis*, ed. Arnold, *Memorials* I, p. 42.

**Figs. 24-5 Egelwyn takes the relics to London**

New York, Pierpoint Morgan Library, MS M 736



Fig. 24. Fol. 20r, Egelwyn and the priest



Fig. 25. Fol. 20v, The cart inhospitable miraculously crosses the bridge

**Figs. 26-8 The Death of Sweyn**

New York, Pierpoint Morgan Library, MS M 736



Fig. 26. Fol. 21r, Egelwyn warns Sweyn



Fig. 27. Fol. 21v, Edmund spears Sweyn



Fig. 28. Fol. 22r, A dying man in Essex is told of Sweyn's death in a vision

who burst through the architectural frame, one with a raised weapon, and thrust the monk into the right hand margin. The balance of power is restored by Edmund in the following miniature (f. 21v) in which he appears to Sweyn and kills him (Fig. 27).<sup>298</sup> Both kings are crowned and located under semi-circular arches but whereas Edmund stands tall, leaping towards his opponent, Sweyn is recumbent, eyes closed, mouth open and hands thrust outwards in agony as Edmund's spear pierces his chest. In this instance the frames emphasise Edmund's power as he effortlessly penetrates the boundary with his lance. The final miniature in this sequence (f. 22) depicts the death of Sweyn announced by a man in Essex who experienced a vision of the miracle on his deathbed (Fig. 28).<sup>299</sup>

The significance of the death of Sweyn is thus once again emphasised, not least by its placing in the overall sequence. It is the last incident recounted before the viewer is confronted by an image of Edmund in glory (f. 22v) (Fig. 29).

In an image which recalls the coronation miniature (f. 8v) Edmund is seated on a throne and likewise depicted at the moment of coronation, except in the latter miniature angels fly down from the heavens and place the crown upon his head whilst he is flanked by two others who invest him with a royal sceptre and a martyr's palm. A further pair of angels in the top corners of the miniature incline towards Edmund in gestures of veneration. This is Edmund's heavenly coronation, and the ultimate recognition of his sanctity. In the first coronation miniature the action takes place under a semi-circular arch, unifying Edmund and his subjects within a single frame. In the apotheosis miniature, however, the framing simultaneously emphasises Edmund's exalted status and his intercessory abilities. In contrast to the dynamic, asymmetrical coronation miniature, at the moment of his apotheosis Edmund faces fully to the front and appears tranquil and serene. The bold vertical and horizontal lines delineate the earthly realm below the frame, from which the monks reach up to kiss Edmund's feet, and the heavenly zone above, from whence the angels descend.

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<sup>298</sup> Hermann, *De Miraculis*, ed. Arnold, *Memorials* I, p. 36.

<sup>299</sup> Hermann, *De Miraculis*, ed. Arnold, *Memorials* I, p. 38.

**Fig. 29 Edmund's apotheosis**

New York, Pierpoint Morgan Library, MS M 736, fol. 22v



Edmund, however, occupies the central ground, his head projecting into the heavenly frame and his feet dipping below the lower frame, enabling the monks to reach them. Edmund's intercessory ability is likewise emphasised in the liturgical material for his feast towards the end of the manuscript, which describes the saint as 'this day...released from earth and ushered triumphantly into heaven' and asks him to 'intercede in heaven for us on earth who send up our sighs to you'. The image is trans-historical, eliding the facts of temporal chronology in favour of universal spiritual truths. Edmund's transition from earthly ruler to saintly overlord is thus complete.

### The initials

The emphasis upon authority of various kinds is also reflected in the thirty nine initials which accompany the text. Painted by a different artist to the miniatures, the majority are purely ornamental, containing foliage, interlace and animal motifs. The remaining fifteen contain scenes or characters connected with the narratives they accompany, providing an interpretive gloss to the text. Often overlooked in favour of the more striking miniatures, the initials nevertheless provide an additional insight into the interpretive context in which Edmund appears. The first initial in the manuscript, a standing haloed figure of St Edmund, is now on folio 5 and accompanies additional lections for the Vigil of St Edmund's Feast. This would most likely have originally appeared at the end of the manuscript with the other liturgical material and was misplaced when the manuscript was rebound. The first initial according to the original binding is on folio 23 and illustrates the opening of Osbert's *De Miraculis*. In contrast to the benevolent smiling figure on folio 5, this initial depicts a more familiar image of Edmund engaged in the despatching of King Sweyn (Fig. 30). Edmund is clad in chainmail with a helmet and shield according to Osbert's version of the miracle and spears the seated Sweyn while two of the king's followers look on, their hands raised to their faces in attitudes of grief, powerless to intervene despite the axes and spears they carry. This image appears out of chronological sequence and accompanies Osbert's Prologue to *De Miraculis* rather than the incident itself. This implies that the

artist selected this image as the most representative depiction of Edmund's posthumous sanctity and accords with the significance afforded to the incident elsewhere.

The remaining initials which accompany the miracles offer a more balanced view of Edmund's miraculous activity, depicting the miraculous light which radiated from his original burial place (f. 26v), his preserved corpse as it appeared when examined by Abbot Leofstan (1044-65) (f. 43v) and the cure of a fevered soldier (f. 50) (Figs. 31-3). Thus the initials represent the defining features of Edmund's sanctity: the divine light which announces his miracle-working capabilities, his bodily incorruption, his ability to heal and, perhaps most importantly, his willingness to punish.

A series of kings also accompany the miracles. Their presence led Parker McLachlen to suggest that there was no clearly discernible scheme to the initials as the kings play little active part in the text but are mentioned in towards the start of each chapter of *De Miraculis* in order to fix the date.<sup>300</sup> On the contrary, the royal initials reward further consideration as these references serve the historicising function of integrating events connected with Edmund into the context of national history. The choice of which kings are illustrated is also significant. Precise identification is difficult, but Parker McLachlen's suggestions, based upon references in the adjacent text, are convincing: Ethelred II, the unready (f. 28) (Fig. 34), Cnut (f. 1v), William I, the Conqueror (f. 49), Cnut (f. 58) (Fig. 35), and St Edmund (f. 74). Ethelred II's flight facilitated Sweyn's conquest and therefore resonates strongly in St Edmund's saintly biography. Cnut was instrumental in the foundation of the Benedictine community at Bury and it is therefore unsurprising that he appears twice. As Sweyn's son, he also provides an additional reminder of Edmund's greatest posthumous triumph. The presence of William the Conqueror is less readily explicable but may have served to reinforce the abbey's long history: as pre-conquest rulers, Ethelred and Cnut represent the antiquity of the abbey, whereas William marks a turning point in English history, in spite of which the

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<sup>300</sup> Parker McLachlan, *The Scriptorium of Bury St Edmunds*, p. 103.

viewer is reminded that the abbey has survived and flourished. Edmund's association with the sequence of kings reminds the viewer of his royalty and his place in the narrative of national affairs.

The portion of the manuscript containing Abbo's *Passio* is only accompanied by one historiated initial, depicting Abbo presenting a copy of his poem to St Dunstan (f. 77) (Fig. 36). The following lections, however, are also drawn from the *Passio* and of these the beheading of Edmund (f. 94v), the hidden eye-witness (f. 96) and the wolf and head (f. 97) are illustrated (Figs. 37-8). These are the key moments of the martyrdom narrative, similarly depicted in the miniatures sequence, and are unsurprising choices for illumination. The initials therefore indicate the stability of certain features of Edmund's narrative which are emphasised in other codicological contexts, both textual and visual.

As a whole Pierpoint Morgan M. 736 offers a distinctive version of Edmund's sanctity. The emphasis upon Edmund's punitive miracles is particularly striking considering the likely origin of the manuscript as an altar book, kept close to the shrine of St Edmund and used to commemorate him liturgically. The function of the manuscript in the context of the physical cult and its place within the abbey church will be discussed in further detail below.

**Figs. 30-8 Pierpoint Morgan initials**

New York, Pierpoint Morgan Library, MS M 736



Fig. 30. Fol. 23r, Death of Sweyn



Fig. 31. Fol. 26v, Divine light over Edmund's tomb



Fig. 32. Fol. 43v, Edmund intact



Fig. 33. Fol. 50r, Edmund heals a fevered soldier

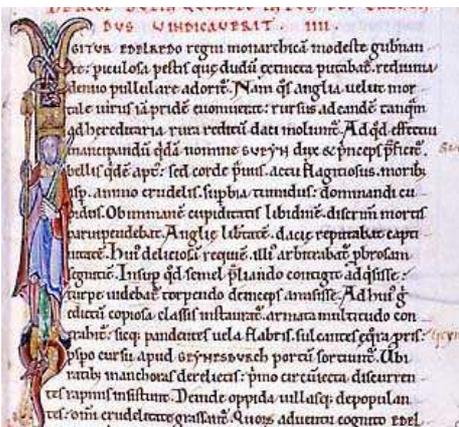


Fig. 34. Fol. 28r, King Æthelred II



Fig. 35. Fol. 58r, King Cnut



Fig. 36. Fol. 77r, Abbo of Fleury presents his *Passio Sancti Edmundi* to Archbishop Dunstan.



Fig. 37. Fol. 94v, Edmund's martyrdom and the hidden witness



Fig. 38. Fol. 96, The wolf guards Edmund's head

### **Geoffrey of Wells, *De Infantia Sancti Eadmundi***

The next major development in the St Edmund legend took place in the mid-twelfth century when Geoffrey of Wells was commissioned to write his *De infantia sancti Eadmundi* by Sihtric, prior of Bury St Edmunds.<sup>301</sup> *De Infantia* may be dated with some precision: it is dedicated to ‘dominus et pater Ordning’, who was abbot of Bury between January 1148 and February 1156.<sup>302</sup> The author also refers to Sihtric as prior at Bury, who was appointed by 1153 at the latest but probably held the post from c. 1150.<sup>303</sup>

Geoffrey of Wells was probably a canon of the abbey’s priory at Thetford. His close association with Bury is apparent from his claims that he participated in discussions about St Edmund with the monks at Bury. He also maintains that Sihtric travelled to Thetford to commission him to write *De Infantia*. There were three religious houses in the close vicinity of Thetford at the time of the composition of *De Infantia*: a Cluniac priory founded by Roger Bigod (d. 1107) in about 1104; a house of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre founded by William de Warenne III (d. 1148) between 1139 and 1146; and a small community of canons that cared for the parish church of St George, which by Geoffrey’s time was a priory of Bury St Edmunds Abbey. Paul Hayward suggests that the dedication of the priory church may account for Geoffrey’s specification of the place of Offa’s death as ‘at the river which travellers call St George’s arm’.<sup>304</sup> Blomefield claims that the priory was founded by Ufi, the first abbot of Bury (1020-44) to commemorate those who had died when Edmund’s army fought

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<sup>301</sup> *De Infantia* is edited by R.M. Thomson, ‘Geoffrey of Wells, *De Infancia sancti Eadmundi* (BHL 2393)’, *Analecta Bollandia* 95 (1977), 34-42 and also appears in Arnold, *Memorials*, I, pp. 93-103. Unless stated otherwise, all quotations will be from Arnold’s edition.

<sup>302</sup> David Knowles, Christopher N.L. Brooke and Vera C.M. London, *The Heads of Religious Houses, England and Wales, Volume 1, 940-1216*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 32.

<sup>303</sup> *Feudal Documents from the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds*, ed. David C. Douglas (London: Oxford University Press, 1932), nos. 135 and 136.

<sup>304</sup> Geoffrey of Wells, *De Infantia*, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, I, p. 96. Paul Anthony Hayward, ‘Geoffrey of Well’s *Liber de infantia sancti Eadmundi* and the ‘Anarchy’ of King Stephen’s Reign’, in *Changing Images*, ed. Bale, pp. 63-86; p. 66 n. 20.

the Danes at the Battle of Thetford.<sup>305</sup> St George would certainly be an appropriately martial dedication.<sup>306</sup>

The Wells from whence Geoffrey originated is unknown. Hayward speculates that Wells (Somerset) is plausible as there was a school here where a secular canon might obtain an education.<sup>307</sup> However, should we accept this reading? After all, Wells was a common place name, and an equally plausible case may be made for Wells-next-the-Sea (Norfolk) due in part to Geoffrey's familiarity with the landscape of Northwest Norfolk and the detail in which he describes it:

Now that region which is called East Anglia is recognised as being fairer and more illustrious than any other district. It contains within its limits two famous provinces, Norfolk and Suffolk. Both are fertile and opulent; and in them have flourished noble and brilliant sovereigns whose exploits and laws are still a source of exultation to the Christian laity, as is also their saintly lineage to the ecclesiastical orders.<sup>308</sup>

Geoffrey's praise for East Anglia is comparable with Abbo's lengthy descriptions of the fenland and similarly imbues *De infantia* with a sense of local authenticity.<sup>309</sup>

It is clear that Geoffrey intended his text to be a prequel to Abbo's *Passio. De Infantia* concludes with the Danes preparing for invasion and for details of the martyrdom Geoffrey refers his readers to an extant version which he maintains 'has been described by an eloquent man, Abbo of Fleury'.<sup>310</sup> Geoffrey relates his intention to record 'the story of the saint's arrival, that is, from Saxony into England' and duly presents the first account of Edmund's parentage and

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<sup>305</sup> Blomefield, I, p. 430.

<sup>306</sup> For St George as military patron see Riches, *St George*, pp. 101-39 and Jonathan Good, *The Cult of St George in Medieval England* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2009), pp. 4, 32-4, 54-5, 62, 71-2 and 82.

<sup>307</sup> Hayward, 'De Infantia', pp. 66-7.

<sup>308</sup> Geoffrey of Wells, *De Infantia*, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, I, p. 94.

<sup>309</sup> Abbo, *Passio*, II-III; Hervey, *Corolla*, pp. 13-17.

<sup>310</sup> Geoffrey of Wells, *De Infantia*, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, I, p. 103.

upbringing and his ascension to the throne of East Anglia.<sup>311</sup> He tells us that Offa, Edmund's predecessor in East Anglia, visited his kinsman the King of Saxony *en route* to the Holy Land to which he had undertaken to go on pilgrimage in the hope that his prayers for an heir might be granted.<sup>312</sup> His devotion was indeed rewarded, as in Prince Edmund he discovered a young man possessed of such 'studied civility and gallant bearing' that he appointed him his heir.<sup>313</sup> Following Offa's death Edmund was duly brought from Saxony to Norfolk, where he landed at Hunstanton before travelling to Attleborough where he was educated for a year before being crowned at Bures on Christmas Day.<sup>314</sup> Geoffrey also elaborates upon the identity and motivations of the invading Vikings, claiming that Edmund's fame as a virtuous and benevolent king had spread as far as Denmark, where King Lodbrok taunted his sons, claiming that they were far-surpassed by Edmund in royal dignity. Angered, Hinguar, Ubba and Bern invaded East Anglia in order to prove their worth.<sup>315</sup>

Hayward describes *De Infantia* as 'a startling contribution to Edmund's dossier', claiming that this kind of prolegomenon appears to be unique in English hagiography and in that of royal saints in general.<sup>316</sup> The question of why Geoffrey was commissioned to write must therefore be addressed. His avowed motivation is that as Edmund grew in reputation and popularity as a powerful miracle-working saint, interest in his life and background grew commensurately and stories began to circulate regarding his origins:

It has often happened that in my presence the story of the parentage and infancy of the blessed Edmund, the most holy king, and unconquered martyr of our Lord Jesus, has been told by some of the holy confraternity of monks owing you [Abbot Ording] obedience.<sup>317</sup>

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<sup>311</sup> Geoffrey of Wells, *De Infantia*, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, I, p. 94.

<sup>312</sup> Geoffrey of Wells, *De Infantia*, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, I, p. 94-5

<sup>313</sup> Geoffrey of Wells, *De Infantia*, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, I, p. 95-6

<sup>314</sup> Geoffrey of Wells, *De Infantia*, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, I, p. 97-101.

<sup>315</sup> Geoffrey of Wells, *De Infantia*, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, I, p. 102-3.

<sup>316</sup> Hayward, 'De Infantia', p. 67.

<sup>317</sup> Geoffrey of Wells, *De Infantia*, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, I, p. p. 93.

In contrast to Abbo or Hermann, who present individual memories of the saint as precious repositories of rare knowledge, Geoffrey appears to be dealing with a surfeit of recollections concerning Edmund's youth and parentage. He recounts that the brethren of the abbey at Bury frequently recounted different versions of this aspect of the legend and that Geoffrey himself would often 'furnish a few particulars' that he had heard from 'word of mouth from others, or learned from reading aloud'.<sup>318</sup> The 'others' from whom Geoffrey acquired these details are unfortunately not specified but it is plausible that in addition to the already authorised and accepted monastic versions of the legend the monks were hearing versions in circulation outside the monastery in popular culture. What is particularly striking is Geoffrey's assertion that, after hearing the details, the monks would 'contribute to the others such information as he himself had obtained; and thereupon one would afterwards confer with another'.<sup>319</sup> It appears that in response to the volume of material in circulation, the monks met to decide the definitive version of the legend and then employed Geoffrey to record their decisions. This impression is also reflected in the miracles described by Geoffrey, all of which are experienced by collective audiences comprising males and females, predominantly East Anglians.<sup>320</sup> So, in contrast to the pre-eminence of the individual and their ability to recall the legend in Abbo's *Passio*, Geoffrey presents his text as the product of collaborative authorship. In this instance the role of the hagiographer is not as preserver of individual recollections but as a refiner and definer of cultural memory. The impression created is of a legend by now entrenched in the popular and collective consciousness of which the monks occasionally, and seemingly accidentally, became aware. This raises the question of the extent to which conflicting versions of the legend existed within different communities, what they may have been and why this might have been the case, and of course the tantalising but unknowable possibility of what material was deemed unsuitable and edited out. Most commentators accept this account of the text's origins; Thomson, for example, maintains that *De Infantia* was 'a conscientious attempt to construct a sensible, historical narrative from scanty (unfortunately

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<sup>318</sup> Geoffrey of Wells, *De Infantia*, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, I, p. 93.

<sup>319</sup> Geoffrey of Wells, *De Infantia*, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, I, p. 93.

<sup>320</sup> See Appendices 4a and 4b.

unreliable) materials, to cover an excessively obscure period.<sup>321</sup> Hayward likewise suggests that much of the content of *De Infantia* may have been generated through an unconscious process as retelling and exegesis permitted the monks of the abbey at Bury to elaborate the story in small increments.<sup>322</sup> The flourishing of hagiography in the post-conquest decades is well documented and it is possible that Geoffrey was writing in order to reinforce the cult against Norman scepticism or the growth of imported cults.<sup>323</sup>

Hayward, however, suggests that *De Infantia* must also be read in relation to the broader historical context in which it was written.<sup>324</sup> He interprets Geoffrey's preoccupation with the circumstances in which Edmund succeeded to the throne of East Anglia as analogous to the turmoil following the death of Henry I, having left his daughter, the Empress Matilda, as his only legitimate heir.<sup>325</sup> Like Henry, Offa died without an heir, but unlike the protracted and disruptive civil war which followed Henry's death, Edmund's accession to the throne is comparatively peaceful. Offa acknowledges the potential troubles of a disputed succession and is careful to inform his followers of his chosen heir:

“You know how much evil disagreement spawns. In its prevalence, ambition is a friend, lording over others a familiar. For that reason it is fitting that this diabolical poison should be shunned when deliberating over the kingdom, and that the rule of peace and justice ought to prevail. Therefore, that all disagreement in electing a king might be obstructed

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<sup>321</sup> Thomson. 'Geoffrey of Wells', p. 30. For criticism of the historical accuracy of the *De Infantia* see James Campbell, 'Some Twelfth-Century Views of the Anglo-Saxon Past', *Peritia* 3 (1984), 135-50.

<sup>322</sup> Hayward, '*De Infantia*', p. 86.

<sup>323</sup> See Ridyard, *Royal Saints*, pp. 226-33; Hugh M. Thomas, *The English and the Normans: Ethnic Hostility, Assimilation and Identity 1066-c.1200* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 232.

<sup>324</sup> Hayward, '*De Infantia*', pp. 79-84.

<sup>325</sup> For detailed analysis of the causes and consequence of the various disputed royal successions in this period see George Garnett, *Conquered England: Kingship, Succession and Tenure, 1066-1166* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).

among you utterly, I designate as my successor a forceful governor for you, namely, the son of my kinsman, the king of the Saxons.”<sup>326</sup>

Hayward notes that in contrast to the political wrangling and sporadic outbursts of violence of the twelfth-century succession dispute, Edmund achieves the throne through patience and submission to the will of God, concluding that ‘acceptance of received arrangements is the principal virtue’ in *De Infantia*.<sup>327</sup> Edmund is chosen as Offa’s heir due to his merits and personal integrity; he accepts Offa’s proposition only when his father grants his assent; he spends a year studying the Psalter at Attleborough in order to prepare himself for ruling; he only becomes king when acclaimed by the people of his kingdom. Hayward suggests that this concern with approaches to royal succession constitutes an attempt ‘to make a constitutional point’.<sup>328</sup> He admits that it is unlikely that Geoffrey would be directly attempting to influence contemporary events but rather is writing in response to them, and offering a version of resolution which must have been desired by many in a time of turmoil. Bury had suffered directly as a result of the conflict; in August 1153, for example, a number of the abbey’s estates had been ravaged by Eustace (c. 1129-53), son of King Stephen, when the abbey refused his demands for money.<sup>329</sup> He died shortly afterwards and the monks were careful to explain that Eustace was struck down by St Edmund, poisoned by the produce he stole from their lands.<sup>330</sup> Edmund is thus offered as a model of kingly conduct, a device that was utilised by another of Edmund’s biographers, John Lydgate, and which will be discussed in greater detail below.

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<sup>326</sup> Geoffrey of Wells, *De Infantia*, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, I, p. 97. Translation from Hayward, ‘*De Infantia*’, p. 82.

<sup>327</sup> Hayward, ‘*De Infantia*’, p. 82.

<sup>328</sup> Hayward, ‘*De Infantia*’, p. 82.

<sup>329</sup> *Chronica Buriensis*, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, III, p. 6.

<sup>330</sup> Bodley 240, ed. Hostmann, *Nova Legenda Angliae*, II, 636.

### **Anglo-Norman verse *Lives of St Edmund***

The texts discussed thus far have each sought to contribute a fresh insight into the life and posthumous deeds of St Edmund. However, this was not a hagiographical prerequisite. Following Geoffrey of Wells' *De Infantia* the legend was not significantly augmented until John Lydgate's contribution in the mid-fifteenth century. Versions of the legend were produced in the intervening period and, by considering these as a whole rather than individual case studies, as has been done to date, for the first time we can determine the dissemination of the established legend in a variety of literary, linguistic and social contexts. In addition to the versions of the legend produced primarily for the benefit of monks and clerics, a further group of texts concerning St Edmund were in circulation during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. A considerable number of vernacular Anglo-Norman verse *Lives* of the saints were written during this period.<sup>331</sup> Legge suggests that they were intended primarily for the instruction and entertainment of secular audiences, but also acknowledges the possibility that they were also enjoyed by the monastic communities themselves, perhaps being read or sung on feast days.<sup>332</sup>

#### Denis Piramus, *La Vie seint Edmund le Rei*

Two Anglo-Norman verse *Lives* of St Edmund are extant. The first, *La Vie seint Edmund le Rei*, was composed at the abbey of Bury St Edmunds c. 1180-1200.<sup>333</sup> The author identifies himself as Denis Pyramus, but nothing is known

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<sup>331</sup> See Dominica Legge, *Anglo-Norman Literature and its background*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963) pp. 243-75.

<sup>332</sup> Legge, *Anglo-Norman Literature*, p. 275.

<sup>333</sup> The best edition of *La Vie seint Edmund le Rei* is by Hilding Kjellman (Göteborg, 1935), who produced an edition of the poem based on the only manuscript then known, BL Cotton Domitian XI. It is also printed in Arnold, *Memorials*, II, pp. 137-250 and Hervey, *Corolla*, pp. 224-359. Subsequently a second manuscript was discovered and this is now in the John Rylands Library, Manchester, Rylands French MS 142. The two versions differ considerably. A full collation is given by Harry Rothwell, 'The *Life* and *Miracles* of St Edmund: A recently discovered manuscript', *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library*, Ix (1977-8), 135-80. The texts in both manuscripts are incomplete; the Domitian manuscript ends incomplete, as does the John Rylands text, which also lacks 684 lines at the beginning. See Rothwell, art. cit., pp. 135-6. Other saint's lives were composed in Anglo-Norman verse for female patrons. Matthew Paris, for example,

of his life and career other than that which he tells us in the poem. In the opening passage he claims that he spent his youth in frivolity and sin (l. 4), frequenting the court and associating with the courtly (l. 5), composing for their pleasure 'satirical verses, songs, rhymes and messages between lovers' (ll. 6-8). However, now that he is approaching old age he wishes to reform his life and turn his mind 'to other things' (l. 20).<sup>334</sup> It is probable, therefore, that he was a court poet who later in life became a monk at Bury.<sup>335</sup> In the first part of the Prologue, Denis condemns writers of verse, such as he had once been, who tell fanciful or invented fables in order to please their patrons, citing contemporary examples of these in the romance style.<sup>336</sup> He claims instead that he will tell a true tale which will be pleasing for both the ear and the soul and 'a pastime in verses which are full of wisdom and so true that nothing can be truer'.<sup>337</sup> It is therefore perhaps ironic that Denis relies primarily upon hagiographic sources; Legge comments rather plaintively that 'Denis could not be expected to know [that these versions] are the wildest fiction'.<sup>338</sup> From Denis's perspective, however, these texts represented the authoritative version of Edmund's legend, produced at Bury by those closest to the saint's remains and therefore best placed to record miracles and anecdotes. As the author of another 'in house' version of the legend, it is natural that Denis should rely upon these texts.

Traces of alternative sources, however, are also present. In the Prologue to the second part of his poem, Denis claims that he has been asked by the senior monks to translate Edmund's legend '*e le engleis e del latin*' (l. 3268). The English text has not been identified, but he clearly draws upon Abbo's *Passio*,

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wrote a life of St Edward the Confessor for Eleanor of Provence, and a life of St Edmund of Abingdon and a life of St Thomas Becket for Isabel, countess of Arundel. See Richard Vaughan, *Matthew Paris*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1958), pp. 168-81; Legge, *Anglo-Norman Literature*, pp. 268-9; Dominica Legge, *Anglo-Norman in the Cloisters: the influence of the orders on Anglo-Norman literature* (Edinburgh, University Press, 1950), pp. 30-1.

<sup>334</sup> Lines 1-20, trans. Legge, *Anglo-Norman Literature*, p. 81.

<sup>335</sup> Gransden discusses the various theories concerning the identity of the author. *A History of the Abbey*, pp. 131-2.

<sup>336</sup> He refers disparagingly to the anonymous author of *Partenopeus de Blois* (l. 25) and Marie de France (l. 35); Legge, *Anglo-Norman Literature*, p. 82.

<sup>337</sup> '*Un dedut par vers vus dirray/ Ke sunt de sen e si verray/ K'unkes rien ne pout plus veir ester*', ll. 69-71, trans. Legge, *Anglo-Norman Literature*, p. 82.

<sup>338</sup> Legge, *Anglo-Norman Literature*, p. 82.

*De Miraculis* and *De Infantia*. He also appears to utilise Gaimar's *Estoire des Engleis* along with other Anglo-Norman sources such as Wace's *Roman de Brut*.<sup>339</sup> *La Vie* begins with a long account of British history inspired by the *Brut* tradition, including the invasion and settlement of the Saxons, Angles and Jutes, into which Denis integrates the account of Edmund's youth and upbringing (derived from *De Infantia*), the martyrdom (from Abbo's *Passio*) and a series of posthumous miracles (from Abbo and *De Miraculis*), including the Death of Sweyn, before the text in each manuscript concludes unfinished during the description of Edmund's cure of an ailing tenant. Once again we thereby see the legend integrated into the context of national history. This was most likely inspired by Abbo's prefatory narration of the coming of the Germanic tribes into England, but is amplified by Denis in his longer digression into national mythology which he borrows from the chronicle and romance traditions. The use of the vernacular and the merging of the sacred and secular traditions suggest that *La Vie* was composed for a secular patron or at least intended for a secular audience. This is reflected in the title, where Edmund's status as 'seint' and 'rey' are afforded equal prominence.

It is possible that the poem was commissioned to mark the occasion of a visit to the abbey of the secular patron for whom it was written.<sup>340</sup> Despite its primary reliance upon hagiographic sources, Legge felt that the overall tone of *La Vie* marked it out as distinct from its predecessors, suggesting that 'in form this *Life* has long outgrown any association with the liturgy, and appears to be more suited to the abbot's lodging than to the church building'.<sup>341</sup> Gransden suggests that the occasion it commemorated may have been one of the several royal visits which occurred around the time *La Vie* was composed.<sup>342</sup> The small number of surviving manuscripts suggests that its circulation was limited and

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<sup>339</sup> See Legge, *Anglo-Norman Literature*, p. 84.

<sup>340</sup> Matthew Paris's *Life of St Alban*, for example, seems to have been composed for occasion when members of the secular aristocracy, perhaps even royalty, joined the monks of St Albans to celebrate a particular occasion. See Vaughan, *Matthew Paris*, p. 181; Legge, *Anglo-Norman Literature*, p. 268.

<sup>341</sup> Legge, *Anglo-Norman Literature*, p. 246.

<sup>342</sup> Henry II went on pilgrimage to Bury in 1177 and again in 1188; Richard I visited in November 1189 following his return to England after the death of Henry II, and again in March 1194 on his release from captivity; and King John visited Bury on three occasions, in 1199, 1201 and 1203. See Gransden, *A History of the Abbey*, p. 133.

it may have been conceived as a unique gift for a patron whose favour the abbey sought to cultivate or maintain. That the abbey thought a *life* of St Edmund a suitable gift to present to a king is evinced by the fifteenth-century composition by John Lydgate, discussed below. It is plausible that *La Vie* was similarly intended not just for public performance whilst the royal party sojourned at Bury, but as a gift for the king on his departure. Thus in this instance Edmund's legend was modified to appeal to a secular audience. The saint is presented as nationally significant, on a par with the famous figures and events referred to in the Prologue, by which Denis sought to raise the profile of St Edmund amongst the aristocratic audience who would, it was most likely hoped, carry his name and legend throughout the country and beyond, and perhaps be inspired to patronise his shrine and the abbey which housed it.

#### *La Passiun de seint Edmund*

The second Anglo-Norman verse *life* of St Edmund is *La Passiun de seint Edmund*.<sup>343</sup> The poem is anonymous but, based on the author's familiarity with East Anglia, including allusions to a defensive dyke (ll. 145, 148) and a road which crossed the county (ll. 129-32), references which are original to this version, it is probable that the author was at least acquainted with the region. In addition, the familiarity with which the author describes the history of the abbey church (ll. 1109-44) and the exhortations to the saint and his shrine suggest a connection with Bury St Edmunds. *La Passiun* is essentially an Anglo-Norman verse rendering of Abbo's *Passio*, with very little additional material. It was composed c.1200 although the only known version is a thirteenth-century copy in a manuscript from St Augustine's, Canterbury.<sup>344</sup> It draws exclusively on Abbo and makes no reference to the versions of Edmund's legend written subsequently, such as *De Miraculis* or *De Infantia*. Like Denis Pyramus, the author of *La Passiun* has modified his source material to suit the context in which he was writing. Judith Grant notes the author's tendency to

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<sup>343</sup> *La Passiun de seint Edmund*, ed. Judith Grant (London: Anglo-Norman Text Society, 1978).

<sup>344</sup> Now Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, MS 435, pp. 105-28. For a description of the manuscript see *La Passiun*, ed. Grant, pp. 11-17.

simplify and curtail some of Abbo's lengthier passages, such as the description of the origin and homeland of the Danes and Edmund's lengthy speech in which he rejects the Hinguar's demands.<sup>345</sup> Conversely, some sections, such as the episode of the eight thieves, are augmented and direct speech added.<sup>346</sup> Grant maintains that these alterations were made in order to add to the drama of the tale in keeping with its probable oral presentation, most likely to a similar audience envisaged for *La Vie*. Both these *Lives* were composed during the abbacy of Samson (1182-1211) and therefore formed part of his campaign to reinvigorate the cult of St Edmund. The translation of the legend into the vernacular would also accord with what Jocelin de Brakelond tells us of Samson's linguistic preferences:

He was a good speaker, in both French and Latin, concentrating on plain speaking rather than flowery language. He could read books written in English most elegantly, and he used to preach to the people in English, but in the Norfolk dialect, for that was were he was brought up.<sup>347</sup>

Although not substantial alterations to the development of Edmund's saintly identity, *La Vie* and *La Passiun* once again reiterates the subtle influences of context and the importance of individual patrons in determining the development of the legend.

### **An Anglo-Latin life: Henry of Avranches, *Vita Sancti Eadmundi***

Similar influences may be seen at work in the third translation of St Edmund's *vita* made in the thirteenth century, this time into Anglo-Latin. The *Vita Sancti Eadmundi* is attributed to Henry of Avranches partly on the basis of stylistic

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<sup>345</sup> *La Passiun*, ed. Grant, p. 9. cf Abbo, *Passio*, V; Hervey, *Corolla*, pp. 19-21 and *La Passiun*, ll. 225-40 and Abbo, *Passio*, VIII & XIX; Hervey, *Corolla*, pp. 25-33 and *La Passiun*, 469-588 & 594-704 respectively.

<sup>346</sup> Cf. Abbo, *Passio*, XVI; Hervey, *Corolla*, pp. 47-53 and *La Passiun*, ll. 1209-1440.

<sup>347</sup> Jocelin, *Chronicle*, p. 37.

similarities with his other works.<sup>348</sup> It is also included in the compilation of Henry's *lives* made by Matthew Paris, now Cambridge, University Library, MS Dd. 11.78, the only manuscript in which the *Vita* is extant.<sup>349</sup> Riggs describes Henry as 'the foremost Anglo-Latin poet of the [thirteenth] century'.<sup>350</sup> He is one of the first poets known to have received direct payment for his poems: from 1243 to 1260 he was paid from the Exchequer of Henry III.<sup>351</sup> His *Vita Sancti Eadmundi* dates from early in his career when his main literary output seems to have consisted of writing saints' *Lives* for episcopal and monastic patrons.<sup>352</sup> All but two of his saints' *Lives* concern English saints and of these all but two are Anglo-Saxon.<sup>353</sup>

Henry's *Vita* consists of 598 lines in elegiacs. It is primarily based upon Abbo's *Passio*, some sections of which Henry abridges and some he omits, with the addition of a few details from *De Infantia* and the inclusion of a miracle from the later recension of *De Miraculis*.<sup>354</sup> Henry also alludes to the tradition established by Geoffrey of Wells that Edmund came from continental Europe, claiming that 'the Saxons sent a boy to be raised by the Angles,/ that he might restore what their fathers had plundered.'<sup>355</sup> This refines successive authors' concern with Edmund's personal genealogy and subsequent representation of the noble ancestors from whom Edmund descends and instead presents him as a gift from one nation to another, able to bring about reconciliation and heal

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<sup>348</sup> The most recent edition is by David Townsend, 'The *Vita Sancti Eadmundi* of Henry of Avranches', *Journal of Medieval Latin*, 5 (1995), 95-118. All references will be in accordance with this edition.

<sup>349</sup> The *Vita* is on ff. 125v-136v. See David Townsend and A.G. Rigg, 'Medieval Latin Poetic Anthologies (V): Matthew Paris' anthology of Henry of Avranches (Cambridge, University Library, MS Dd. 11.78)', *Medieval Studies* 49 (1987), 352-90.

<sup>350</sup> A.G. Rigg, *A History of Anglo-Latin Literature 1066-1422* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 179

<sup>351</sup> Rigg, *Anglo-Latin Literature*, p. 179.

<sup>352</sup> A canon of Henry's writings was established by Josiah Cox Russell and John Paul Heironymous in *The Shorter Latin Poems of Henry of Avranches relating to England* (Cambridge, Mass: The Medieval Academy of America, 1935).

<sup>353</sup> The English saints are: Birin, Edmund, Fremund, Guthlac, Hugh of Lincoln, Oswald and Thomas Becket. The exceptions are Sts Crispin-Crispianus and Francis of Assisi. For a description of each of these lives see Riggs, *Anglo-Latin Literature*, pp. 179-85.

<sup>354</sup> For further discussion of Henry's editorial practices see Townsend, 'The *Vita Sancti Eadmundi*', 99-100.

<sup>355</sup> *Vita Sancti Eadmundi*, ed. Townsend, ll. 17-18: '*Miserunt Anglis puerum saxones alendum/ Qui restauraret quod rapuere patres*'.

centuries-old wounds. Edmund is therefore not only of regional and national, but also international, importance.

Again, however, it is not its contribution to the development of the legend which is of primary interest, but rather the insight it provides into the role of individual patrons in the dissemination of the cult. Although it lacks a preface, it is plausible that the *Vita* was composed for the abbey of Bury St Edmunds.<sup>356</sup> The *Vita* is dated to c. 1220 which would place its composition within the first few years of the abbacy of Hugh de Northwold (1215-28). It is reasonable that a new abbot would seek to make his mark upon the cult of his abbey's patron by commissioning a translation of his legend. This would be particularly appropriate in Hugh's case given the controversy surrounding his election. Chosen by the convent following Samson's death in 1211, Hugh was not confirmed as abbot by King John until 1215. Even after his official assumption of the post, conflicts persisted between those who supported Hugh and the party who favoured the sacrist, Robert of Graveley.<sup>357</sup> One of the means by which Hugh sought to assert his authority in the abbey was to grant approval for significant construction projects including the rebuilding of the chapter-house and the casting of a great bell, known as the 'Neweport' after Richard of Newport, the sacrist who oversaw these works.<sup>358</sup> Hugh was personally devoted to St Edmund. Following his promotion to the bishopric of Ely in 1228 he dedicated a chapel to St Edmund adjacent to the presbytery where a wall-painting of Edmund's martyrdom from this period is still extant. Edmund's martyrdom is also carved at the foot of Hugh's tomb in Ely Cathedral and the figures of St Ætheltryth and Edmund decorate the sides.<sup>359</sup> Hugh's activities in

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<sup>356</sup> Riggs, *Anglo-Latin Literature*, p. 182. Townsend concurs, 'The *Vita Sancti Edmundi*', 98-9.

<sup>357</sup> An exceptionally detailed account of the election survives in the *Cronica de electione Hugonis abbatis postea episcopi Eliensis*. This has been edited and translated by Rodney Thomson, *The Chronicle of the Election of Hugh, Abbot of Bury St Edmunds and Later Bishop of Ely* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974).

<sup>358</sup> Hugh's patronage of building works at Bury is discussed in *The Chronicle of the Election*, ed. Thomson, pp. 195-6.

<sup>359</sup> Marion Roberts, 'The Effigy of Bishop Hugh de Northwold in Ely Cathedral', *Burlington Magazine* 130 (1988), 77-84.

promoting the cult of St Ætheltryth are well-documented.<sup>360</sup> It seems likely that he would go to similar efforts to promote St Edmund, perhaps taking advantage of Henry of Avranches's presence in East Anglia to commission the famous poet to re-write the *life* of the saint.<sup>361</sup> Thus partly through personal devotion and partly for political ends, the textual cult of St Edmund underwent further revision.

### **Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 240**

The most extensive collection of materials relating to the textual cult may be found in Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ms Bodley 240, a huge hagiographic compendium compiled at Bury in the last quarter of the fourteenth century, possibly by Henry de Kirkstead, prior and librarian c.1360-80.<sup>362</sup> An entry after the index at the start of the manuscript states that it was made in 1377 and belonged to the monks of Bury St Edmunds. The first 581 pages are occupied by a copy of John of Tynemouth's *Historia Aurea*. Following the *Historia Aurea* are a number of short *Lives* of mostly English saints (pp. 582-624), then a *Vita et Passio cum Miraculis Sancti Edmundi* (pp. 624-77). The rubric affirms that this was compiled from various chronicles, histories and legends. Its indebtedness to Abbo, *De Miraculis* and *De Infantia* for the events of Edmund's birth and upbringing, reign, martyrdom and posthumous miracles up to 1189 are readily apparent and acknowledged by the scribe in the margins.<sup>363</sup> The scribe adds a few details not known from other sources, such as the names of Edmund's parents (Alkmund and Siwara) and the place of his birth (Nuremberg). He also incorporates Roger of Wendover's augmented account of the events precipitating the martyrdom, namely that the Danish king Lothbroc

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<sup>360</sup> For Hugh's promotion of St Ætheltryth see Virginia Blanton, 'Building a presbytery for St Ætheltryth: Hugh de Northwold and the politics of cult production in thirteenth-century England', *Art and Architecture*, ed. Blick and Tekippe, pp. 539-65.

<sup>361</sup> That Henry of Avranches visited East Anglia is conjectured by Townsend, who suggests that he may have composed the lives of Edmund and Guthlac whilst staying in the region in the early to mid-1220s. See Townsend, 'The *Vita Sancti Edmundi*', 99.

<sup>362</sup> Richard H. Rouse, 'Bostonus Buriensis and the Author of the *Catalogus Scriptorum Ecclesiae*', *Speculum*, 41 (1966), 471-499.

<sup>363</sup> The events up to the martyrdom as described in Bodley 240 are printed in Hervey, *Corolla*, pp. 377-408.

is swept ashore in East Anglia and murdered by one of Edmund's men, causing Lothbroc's sons to invade seeking retribution.<sup>364</sup> The scribe also includes details of various confrontations between the Danes and the East Anglians before Edmund is seized. These include Edmund's tactics in tricking the Danes into ending their siege of one of his camps and the bribing of one of Edmund's masons to reveal the weak point in the defences of another fortress.<sup>365</sup> Far greater emphasis is placed on the military capabilities and tactics of each side than had hitherto featured in the legend. This is particularly apparent in the section describing Edmund's martyrdom which is entitled '*De bello inter sanctum Edmundum et Ingwarum prope thefordiam et modo martirii sancti edmundi*'.<sup>366</sup> This is the first occasion where a hagiographic version of Edmund's legend depicts him engaging in battle with the Danes and is arguably the most significant feature of the text. Previous hagiographers had followed Abbo's account of the martyrdom in which Edmund is peaceable to the extent that he willingly surrenders his kingdom in order to prevent bloodshed.<sup>367</sup> The scribe's attribution of these events as '*ex cronicis*' indicates the extent to which he has integrated material from the chronicle tradition which largely adhered to its prototype, the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, in asserting that Edmund 'fought against' the Danish army, who 'gained the victory, and slew the king'.<sup>368</sup> The legend hitherto bifurcated along these lines and whilst it is not readily apparent why the scribe chose to make these alterations, the transformation in Edmund's characterisation is striking.

The contrast is particularly apparent when the activities of the martial Edmund are compared to his posthumous deeds as recounted in a series of new miracles added by the Bodley 240 scribe.<sup>369</sup> These are dated primarily to the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, thereby updating the record of Edmund's interventions. Forty five new miracles are reported in Bodley 240: my analysis

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<sup>364</sup> Roger of Wendover, *Chronica sive Flores Historiarum*, ed. Henry O. Coxe (London: The English Historical Society: London, 1841), I, 300.

<sup>365</sup> Hervey, *Corolla*, pp. 390-92.

<sup>366</sup> Hervey, *Corolla*, pp. 397-402.

<sup>367</sup> Abbo, *Passio*, XIII-XIV; Hervey, *Corolla*, pp. 25-33.

<sup>368</sup> *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, ed. Whitelock, p. 46.

<sup>369</sup> The new miracles are printed in Arnold, *Memorials*, III, pp. 318-48.

reveals that 57% of these involve healing, 30% are rescues or miracles of general assistance (with around a third of these being rescues at sea), 10% are unspecified and only one miracle (2%) involves punishment.<sup>370</sup> The unlucky recipient of St Edmund's wrath in this instance was William Bateman, bishop of Norwich (1344-55), who the author claims was punished by St Edmund for his interference in the affairs of the abbey at Bury.<sup>371</sup> The statistical contrast between the nature of St Edmund's interventions in Bodley 240 and his activities in earlier miracle collections is striking.<sup>372</sup> The gender bias towards male recipients apparent in Appendices 4a and 4b are in this instance misleading. For example, in several instances male children are healed by St Edmund, who is usually invoked by both parents. Thus whilst the recipient of the miracle in these cases is male, the devotees, and vicarious beneficiaries of the miracles, are of both genders. Similarly, the number of individuals from ordinary, lower status backgrounds is likely to be much higher, perhaps even including the majority whose social standing is currently unspecified. This change in Edmund's saintly identity accords with patterns seen elsewhere in miracle collections. Miracles attributed to earlier periods reflect the often turbulent times in which they were recorded. This is particularly true of 'Viking-age' miracles and those occurring in the aftermath of the Norman Conquest.<sup>373</sup> In these contexts saints are often depicted as the patrons and protectors of their lands and interests and the monastic personnel associated with them. As this need for direct protective intervention diminished over time, the number of curative miracles, especially of pilgrims, increased and came to dominate the collections.<sup>374</sup> Such generalisations are evidently not applicable in every instance, but it is significant that Edmund's cult responds to broader developments in the perception and construction of sanctity. It is possible that the Bodley 240 scribe, conscious of his saintly patron's fearsome former reputation, sought to redress the balance between Edmund as peaceable healer and his ability to defend the abbey by integrating the martial characteristics

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<sup>370</sup> See Appendices 3a and 3b.

<sup>371</sup> Bodley 240, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, III. 320-7.

<sup>372</sup> See Appendices 3a and 3b.

<sup>373</sup> These trends are discussed by Ward, *Miracles and the Medieval Mind*, pp. 33-66.

<sup>374</sup> For the later predominance of healing miracles see Ward, *Miracles and the Medieval Mind*, pp. 67-88.

present in the chronicle tradition. Whether or not this was his intention, the resulting image of a 'super saint' was seized upon by John Lydgate and utilised to full effect in the last great flourishing of the St Edmund hagiographic tradition.

### **John Lydgate, *The Lives of Sts Edmund and Fremund***

John Lydgate (c. 1370-1449) was a monk in the abbey at Bury St Edmunds, which he had entered in his youth and to which he returned in the early 1430s following several periods of clerical and ecclesiastical service including acting as the unofficial poet for the Lancastrian regime.<sup>375</sup> Lydgate's *Lives of Sts Edmund and Fremund* is the culmination of the medieval hagiographic tradition concerning St Edmund yet to date it has received surprisingly little critical interest, especially within the context of the St Edmund tradition. At 3,693 lines it is one of the longest versions produced and, written largely in rhyme royal stanzas, is the first rendering of the legend into English verse.<sup>376</sup> Three of the manuscripts are also extensively illustrated. One of these, now British Library, Harley 2278, was prepared for presentation to Henry VI and is one of the most sumptuous English manuscripts to survive from the fifteenth century. It is lavishly illustrated with 120 high quality miniatures which provide a unique visual parallel to the text and an opportunity to examine how St Edmund was simultaneously presented in differing media.<sup>377</sup>

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<sup>375</sup> Derek Pearsall, *John Lydgate (1371-1449): A Bio-bibliography* (Victoria, B.C.: English Literary Studies, University of Victoria, 1997), esp. pp. 28-31.

<sup>376</sup> John Lydgate's *Lives of Saints Edmund and Fremund* is printed in *Altenglische Legenden. Neue Folge*, ed. Carl Horstmann (Heilbronn: Henniger, 1881), pp. 376-445, I.192. All subsequent references will be in accordance with this edition and will be given in parantheses in the text. A new edition by Anthony Bale and A.S.G. Edwards is being prepared for the Middle English Texts Series (forthcoming).

<sup>377</sup> For a facsimile of the manuscript see *The Life of St Edmund, King and Martyr: A Facsimile of British Library MS Harley 2278*, with an introduction by A.S.G. Edwards (London: British Library, 2004). For discussion of the illustrations of Harley 2278 see Kathleen Scott, *Later Gothic Manuscripts 1390-1490*, 2 vols. (London: Harvey Miller, 1996), II, 225-29 and A.S.G. Edwards's Introduction to *The Life of St Edmund, King and Martyr: A Facsimile*, pp. 8-13.

Lydgate's *vita* is a sophisticated and elaborate rendering of the legend, interesting in its own right for the insight it offers into how the cult of one of the most popular devotional figures of the Middle Ages developed over time. Lydgate describes his poem as a 'translacion', immediately locating it within the medieval hagiographic tradition concerning Edmund. Anthony Edwards suggests that Lydgate's primary source is likely to have been MS Bodley 240.<sup>378</sup> Unusually for Lydgate, however, he does not specify his source. Instead he refers rather vaguely to 'the noble story' (I. 81, 190), his 'auctours' (I. 428) or most frequently simply to 'the story'. Close reading similarly reveals that the *Lives* is far more than a simple rendering into English of one text and is in fact extremely complex in its intertextual indebtedness, with Lydgate drawing on a variety of additional sources. Some passages are also his own inventions: for example the Prologues (Prologue. 1-80; I. 81-234); his references to contemporary issues and events such as the 'lollardis' (I. 1014); and, perhaps most interestingly, details of Edmund's battle with the Danes (II.365-395). Although seeking authority for his composition by locating the *Lives* in the broader St Edmund tradition, Lydgate is clearly producing his own unique version of the legend. It is therefore necessary to consider the effect of these inclusions upon the narrative and the extent to which these digressions from the established tradition may be accounted for by its creation for a particular reader: Henry VI.

On Christmas Eve 1433, the twelve year-old King Henry VI arrived at the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds. He was greeted by five-hundred townspeople, his confessor William Alnwick, Bishop of Norwich, and William Curteys, the Abbot of Bury. Henry remained the guest of the Abbey until Easter the following year, dividing his time between the Abbey itself and the Abbot's palace at Elmswell

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<sup>378</sup> A.S.G. Edwards, 'John Lydgate's *Lives of Sts Edmund and Fremund*. Politics, Hagiography and Literature', in *Changing Images*, ed. Bale, pp. 133-45; p. 136.

(Suffolk).<sup>379</sup> The Abbey of Bury St Edmunds was one of the largest and wealthiest religious houses in fifteenth-century England and therefore a suitable choice for such an extended stay.<sup>380</sup> Renowned as a shrewd clerical politician, it is unsurprising that Abbot Curteys chose to mark the occasion of the royal visit by commissioning John Lydgate, a monk of the abbey and prolific author, to produce a translation of the legend of St Edmund 'out of Latin', with the intention, as Lydgate recounts, 'to yeue it to the kyng' as a 'remembraunce' of his stay (I. 192) (above, Fig. 39).<sup>381</sup> The resulting text was Lydgate's *Lives of Sts Edmund and Fremund*.

Curteys had himself authored a Latin version of St Edmund's legend, *Vita et Passio S. Edmundi Abbreviata*, which he copied into his Register. This *life* summarises previous versions of the legend and places particular emphasis upon the legal precedents by which Bury gained its independence.<sup>382</sup> A similar composite Latin *life* was written around this time at Bury by the Kitchener, Andrew Astone, whose *Vita et Passio Sancti Edmundi breviter collecta*, ending in 1032, makes much of the legal precedents by which Bury gained its independence.<sup>383</sup> Interest in promoting the abbey's rights and privileges was evidently prevalent at the time of Henry's visit and Lydgate's *Lives* should be read in this context.

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<sup>379</sup> Abbot Curteys records the event in his Register, now British Library Add. MS 14848, fol. 128-28v. For Curteys' Register See Rodney M. Thomson, *The Archives of the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press for the Suffolk Records Society, 1980) pp. 135-8. 'De adventu Regis Henrici VI ad monasterium de Sancto Edmundo' is pp. 136-7. Curteys' account is reprinted in Craven Ord, 'Account of the Entertainment of King Henry the Sixth at the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds', *Archaeologia*, 15 (1806), 65-71.

<sup>380</sup> See Walter F. Schirmer, *John Lydgate: A Study in the Culture of the Fifteenth Century*, tr. Ann Keep (London: Methuen, 1961) pp. 8-23 for a concise account of the Abbey. For more detailed discussions of the Abbey's history, architecture, culture and artistic role and finances see *BAA: Bury*.

<sup>381</sup> Fol. 6 of the presentation manuscript, BL Harley 2278, shows Lydgate presenting the *Lives* to Henry. For an account of Curteys's career see Arnold, *Memorials*, III. xxix-xxxiii.

<sup>382</sup> See Thomson, *Archives*, p. 137.

<sup>383</sup> Astone's *Vita* is on ff. 32-6 of the Kitchener's Customary, dated after 1425, now British Library, Cotton MS Claudius A. xii. For details see Thomson, *Archives*, pp. 146-7. The fullest discussion of both these Latin lives is by N.J. Heale, 'Religious and Intellectual Interests at St Edmunds Abbey at Bury and the Nature of English Benedictinism, c. 1350-1450: MS Bodley 240 in Context' (unpublished D.Phil thesis, University of Oxford, 1994).

**Figs. 39-40.** London, British Library, MS Harley 2278, John Lydgate's *Lives of Sts Edmund and Fremund*



Fig. 39. Fol. 6, Lydgate presenting the *Lives* to Henry VI

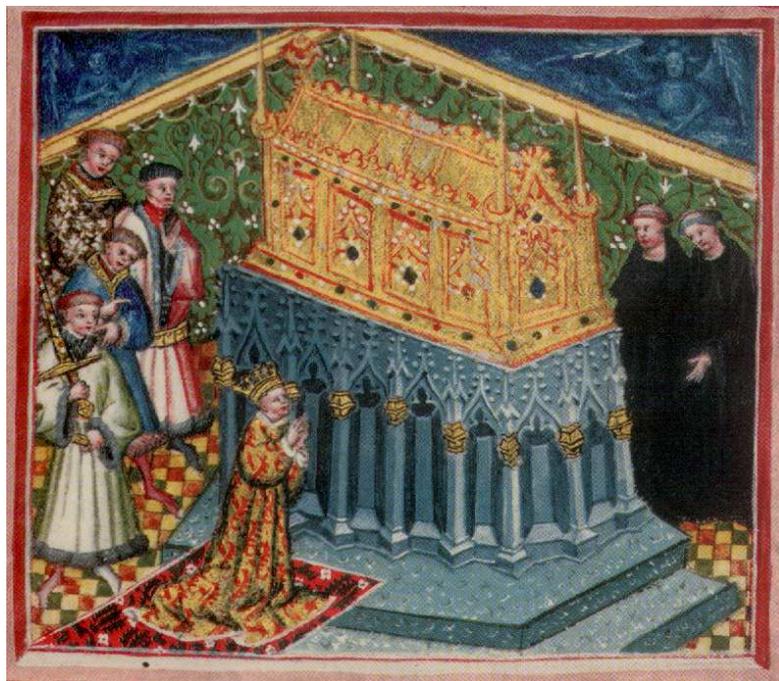


Fig. 40. Fol. 4v, Henry VI kneels before Edmund's shrine

Lydgate's *Lives* begins with two prologues, the first extolling Edmund's merits as protector for Henry VI, the second introducing the poem's protagonist and explaining the circumstances of its composition. The main body is divided into three Books: the first describes Edmund's parentage and upbringing and the circumstances in which he came to succeed to the throne of East Anglia; the second tells of his reign, the events which precipitate his martyrdom and his death at the hands of invading Vikings; the third is initially concerned with Edmund's cousin Fremund, the story of whose martyrdom is followed by details of miracles associated with St Edmund and concludes with the building of a new abbey church and shrine under the abbacy of Baldwin (1065-97). A closing prayer asks St Edmund to pray for Henry VI, and two envoys humbly ask the king to accept the *Lives* and protect the abbey of Bury St Edmunds. At some point after 1441 several additional miracles, possibly by Lydgate, were appended to the end of the poem.<sup>384</sup> The *Lives* was a popular success; twelve manuscripts of the complete text plus a number of selections or fragments survive.<sup>385</sup> Interest in the poem was maintained into the sixteenth century, when John Stow copied various passages and annotated some of the surviving manuscripts.<sup>386</sup>

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<sup>384</sup> These are found in four manuscripts as an appendix to the *Lives*: The Duke of Norfolk, Arundel Castle, *sine numero*, fols. 96r-99r; Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Ashmole 46 and MS Tanner 347, fols. 87r-96v; London, British Library, Yates Thompson MS 47, fols. 94r-104r. A version of the additional miracles, separate from the *Lives* and containing only the second and third, is in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud misc. 683, fols. 45v-52v. See Anthony Bale, 'St Edmund in Fifteenth-Century London: The Lydgatian *Miracles of St Edmund*', in *Changing Images*, ed. Bale, pp. 145-61.

<sup>385</sup> The complete texts are found in: His Grace the Duke of Norfolk, Arundel Castle MS, *sine numero*; Cambridge, University Library, MS Ee.2.15; London, British Library, Harley MSS 372, 2278, 4826, 7333 and Yates Thomson MS 47; Manchester, Chetham's Library, MS 6709; Oxford, Bodleian Library, MSS Ashmole 46, Rawlinson B.216 and Tanner 347; Oxford, Corpus Christi College, MS 61. The fragments or extracts include: Exeter, Devon County Record Office, Misc. Roll 59; London, British Library, Harley MSS 247; Oxford, Bodleian Library, MSS 6930, 10174 and 11568. Lydgate's *Lives* is no. 3440 in Julia Boffey and A.S.G. Edwards, *A New Index of Middle English Verse* (London: British Library, 2005).

<sup>386</sup> For details see A.S.G. Edwards and J.I. Miller, 'John Stow and Lydgate's *St Edmund*', *Notes and Queries* 228 (1973), 365-9 and Alexandra Gillespie, 'The Later Lives of St Edmund: John Lydgate to John Stow', in *Changing Images*, ed. Bale, pp. 163-86.

### The hagiographic *Lives*

John Lydgate was the most prolific English poet of his day: he produced nearly one hundred and forty five thousand lines of verse and around two hundred prose texts. He wrote several *vitae* in addition to the *Lives*, including his most popular work, the *Life of Our Lady*, which survives in fifty manuscripts, as well as those of Sts. Alban and Amphibalus, Austin, George, Giles, Margaret and Petronilla.<sup>387</sup> He was well-versed in the traditions of late-medieval hagiography and therefore ideally placed to undertake Abbot Curteys's commission. A saint's *life* was an appropriate gift with which to present the young king, as at the age of twelve Henry was already demonstrating the profound religious piety that was to be one of the most distinguishing features of his reign.<sup>388</sup>

The *Lives* is ostensibly a characteristic, if lengthy, example of late-medieval hagiography. Alain Boureau discusses the mimetic nature of hagiography, suggesting that hagiographic books were often objects 'endowed with sacred power' which 'signalled, recalled or evoked a vow or a past or ongoing practice'.<sup>389</sup> It is certainly the case that the *Lives* commemorates a particular vow and example of devotional practice. During his stay at Bury Henry displayed particular devotion to the abbey's patron, praying regularly before his tomb, and Lydgate records that before the king departed he was 'meuyd in himsilf of his benignyte, / of ther chapitle a brother forto be' (l.154-5), prostrating himself before Edmund's shrine as he was admitted to the confraternity of the

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<sup>387</sup> *A Critical Edition of John Lydgate's Life of Our Lady*, ed. Joseph A. Lauritis, Ralph A. Klinefelter and Vernon F. Gallagher (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1961); *The Life of St Alban and Saint Amphibal*, ed. J.E. van der Westhuizen (Leiden: Brill, 1974); 'St Austin', pp. 193-206; 'St George', pp. 145-54; 'St Gyle', pp. 161-73; 'St Margaret', pp. 173-92; 'St Petronilla', pp. 154-9, *The Minor Poems of John Lydgate*, Part 1, ed. Henry Noble McCracken, Early English Texts Society, es 107 (London: Oxford University Press, 1911).

<sup>388</sup> For a description of Henry VI's religious proclivities see Bertram Wolffe, *Henry VI* (London: Eyre Methuen, 1981) especially pp. 3-21.

<sup>389</sup> Alain Boureau, 'Franciscan Piety and Voracity: Uses and Strategies in the Hagiographic Pamphlet', in *The Culture of Print: Power and the Uses of Print in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Roger Chartier, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), pp. 15-58, p. 19.

abbey.<sup>390</sup> A miniature on fol. 4v in the presentation manuscript, Harley 2278, depicts Henry VI kneeling before Edmund's shrine and illustrates a prayer in which Lydgate urges 'alle men, present, or in absence' who are devoted to Edmund to recite, reminding them that 'two hundred days ys grantid off pardoun' to all those who do so (Prologue, 73, 77) (Fig. 40). Lydgate is seeking to remind the king of his membership of the confraternity. His reference to the pardon being 'write and registred afforn his hooly shryne' (Prologue, 78) also locates the *Lives* within the physical context of cultic devotion.

Lydgate's *Lives* is firmly located within the St Edmund devotional tradition. He draws on previous *vitae* in order to produce a text which synthesises its predecessors, uniting the accounts of Edmund's upbringing and his accession to the throne of East Anglia (*De Infantia*), his passion (Abbo, *Passio*) and his posthumous miracles (*De Miraculis*) into one narrative. The extent to which the *vita* accords with established hagiographies is particularly well-illustrated in Lydgate's description of the events surrounding Edmund's death. Lydgate adheres to the martyrdom narrative established by Abbo and repeated by subsequent authors: Edmund is beaten with 'shorte battis rounde', bound to a tree and shot with arrows until he resembled 'an yrchoun fulfillid with spynys thikke' (II.763), a simile drawn directly from Abbo, and both authors liken Edmund to 'seynt Sebastyan' (II.764).<sup>391</sup>

All the *vitae* explicitly characterise Edmund's death as martyrdom; Hermann's *De Miraculis* is particularly emphatic, stating that 'Edmund, the glorious king, went the way of all flesh, taking for his viaticum the palm of martyrdom'.<sup>392</sup> Lydgate's repeated use of the tripartite epithet 'martir, maide and kyng' indicates that his Edmund met a similar fate, giving his life in witness to the true faith of Christ. Lydgate depicts Edmund's encounter with the Danes as a conflict between two belief systems. The Danish leader Hinguar demands not only that Edmund renounce his kingdom and its treasures and submit to

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<sup>390</sup> Curteys's Register, in Craven Ord, 'Account of the Entertainment of King Henry the Sixth at the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds', 65-71.

<sup>391</sup> Abbo, *Passio*, X; Hervey, *Corolla*, p. 35.

<sup>392</sup> Herman, *De Miraculis*, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, I, p. 27.

Danish overlord-ship, but insists that he “forsake of Cristen-dam the feith,/And, to his [Hinguar’s] goddis that thow do reuerence,/To offre onto them with franc and with encence.” (II.494-5). Instead Edmund renounces ‘al lordshepe’ and submits himself to Christ, maintaining that he shall “neuer my lord forsake” and that he is willing to “weel suffre my blood for him to sheede” (II.599, 602). His willingness to forsake his temporal kingdom for the kingdom of heaven and sacrifice himself in Christ’s service accords with hagiographic conventions and locates Lydgate’s *Lives* firmly within this tradition of devotional literature.

Similarly, Lydgate’s Edmund is explicitly Christological. Lydgate follows Abbo’s example and refers to Edmund’s ‘passion’. His textual indebtedness is further apparent in his claim, taken almost verbatim from Abbo, that Edmund was brought before Hinguar ‘lyk as was Cryst whilom tofor Pilat’ (II.664).<sup>393</sup> Lydgate designates martyrs ‘Cristis champions’ (II.775) and conforms to the common hagiographic tendency to depict them as *imitatio Christi*:

In heuen bi grace they cleyme to haue an hoom,  
Folwyng the traces of Crist that is ther hed...  
Which feedeth his knyhtes with sacred wyn and bred,  
Set at his table in the heuenly mansioun,  
That drank the chalis heer of his passioun.

(II.778-9, 781-3)

This description of the special honours martyrs are afforded in heaven casts Christ in the role of a figurehead whom the martyrs follow and seek to emulate. It is also reminiscent of the medieval body politic, in which martyrs are fundamental to the faith in the same way that each member of the body is necessary in order for it to function. Lydgate’s assertion that in heaven Crist will ‘feedeth his knyhtes with sacryd wyn and bred’ also has eucharistic connotations, and in a phrase reminiscent of the Gospel of John, he goes on to

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<sup>393</sup> Abbo, *Passio*, X; Hervey, *Corolla*, p. 33.

suggest that at the time of his death, Edmund was 'pressid with grapis in the vyne' (II.787).<sup>394</sup>

### The secular *Lives*

To a great extent, therefore, Lydgate adheres to the established devotional tradition in his description of Edmund's demise. There is one aspect of the martyrdom narrative, however, in which he diverges from this model: Edmund goes into battle against the Danes (II.365-395). In this Lydgate seems to have been influenced by the account in Bodley 240, but the detail in which he describes the battle and its effect upon Edmund are unprecedented. Hinguar and his army are blown off course during the crossing from Denmark and land in 'Berwyk upon Tweede', from whence they advance towards East Anglia, murdering any who they encounter and despoiling abbeys and churches. They reach Norfolk, sacking Thetford and 'sleyng the peepel', before pitching camp near the remains of the settlement. When news of these events reaches Edmund he immediately leaves 'Castre' (Caistor St Edmund, near Norwich) and marches on the encamped forces, where 'euerich gan other ful mortally assaile'. In his description of the ensuing battle, which rages 'from the morwe' until 'it drouh to nyht', Lydgate is unequivocal in the part played by Edmund: he proves himself a 'ful manly knyht', from whom the enemy fly 'lik sheepe', and who sheds 'ful gret plente' 'of paynym blood'. Lydgate describes the battle in lurid detail:

The soil of slauhtre I-steynynd was with blood,  
The sharp swerd of Edmond turnyd red:  
For there was noon that his strook withstood  
Nor durste abide afforn him for his hed;  
And many a paynym in the feeld lay ded,  
And many cristen in that mortal striff  
Our feith defendyng that day lost his liff.

(II.386-392)

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<sup>394</sup> 'I am the true vine, and my father is the husbandman.' (John 15:1).

**Fig. 41-5 The 'secular' Lives.** London, British Library, MS Harley 2278



Fig. 41. Fol. 50, The Battle of Thetford



Fig. 42. Fol. 1v, Fig. 43. Edmund's Banner



Fol. 3v, Edmund's virtues



Fig. 44. Detail of Fol. 50, showing Edmund's carried in battle



Fig. 45. Fol. 34, Edmund enthroned surrounded by symbols of the three estates

In the accompanying miniature (fol. 50) Edmund is at the centre of the melee, dressed in full shining armour, blood dripping from the sword raised above his head (Fig. 41). The dominance of Edmund's army is represented by the proportion of the miniature which they occupy: whereas the Danes cower to the far right of the frame, the East Anglians hack their way across two thirds of the scene, urged on by three angels flying above. Lydgate's description of the Battle of Thetford is the most detailed and explicit account to be found in the legendary tradition and the extent to which he diverges from the other *vitae* at this point is striking.

Equally notable is the psychological effect that Lydgate presents this having upon Edmund. Hinguar and his troops retreat, and, left alone to survey the carnage of the battle field, Edmund 'gan to considere in his owyn siht' (II.397) the implications of the scene. He mourns not only the Christian dead but also the many pagans who, 'thoruh ther Iniquite' (II.402) are condemned to 'helle' where there is 'no redempcioun' (II.404). Lydgate's characterisation at this point is both subtle and effective and evinces an impressive level of psychological realism in his depiction of Edmund's mental state. After Edmund 'gan to considere' the carnage before him he seems unable to rid himself of the image. He frequently ponders 'withynne himself' (II.400) the fate of the dead, 'in his memorie narwely aduertisith' (II.410) the follies of war, and 'ofte in his mynde and his remembrance/This pitious mater was tournyd up so doun' (II.421-2). Lydgate paints a convincing portrait of a man troubled by the horrors of war. He stresses that although Edmund was 'bothe manly and vertuuous/And a good knyht' (II.406-7, he is so appalled by the day's events that he resolves 'for Cristis sake shedyng of blood teschew' (II.427). It is at this point, when Edmund chooses the path of martyrdom in favour of further conflict, that the narrative of the *Lives* rejoins that of the other *vitae*. Edmund is still described in martial terms but now, rather than fighting a physical battle, he bears a 'myhti sheeld' of 'Cristes feith' and a 'gostly swerd whettid with constance' (II.710-11). He renounces the way of war and submits meekly and patiently to his fate.

Like the account in Bodley 240, the *Lives* is clearly in dialogue with both strands of the established tradition. Lydgate undermines his own claim that his *vita* is a ‘translation’; his intertextuality is clearly far more subtle and complex. He reveals that he has consulted more than one text when he urges the reader to consult ‘cronycle’ sources (Prologue, 51) in order to corroborate his depiction of Edmund’s ‘Royal dignyte’ (Prologue, 52) Lydgate’s recourse to chronicles is in keeping with the education prescribed for young princes.<sup>395</sup> When Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, was appointed in 1428 as Henry VI’s guardian during the king’s minority he was instructed to ‘use examples culled from history books to teach the young king to ‘love, worship and drede God’.<sup>396</sup> The emphasis Lydgate places upon Edmund’s temporal kingship is therefore explicable in this context. The imperative to ‘use figures culled from history books’ may also go some way to explain Lydgate’s determination to incorporate material from the chronicle tradition, even when this meant departing from his hagiographic predecessors.

Lydgate’s recourse to these sources in order to establish a particular aspect of Edmund’s identity (his royalty) is significant, as his decision to unite both strands of the tradition may best be understood in relation to its putative reader. Theresa Coletti agrees that medieval writers were capable of tailoring their portrayal of saints to the aspirations of their readers:

[fifteenth-century] authors sought to model [the saintly subjects of their narratives] in accordance with the values and aspirations of their well-to-do patrons even as they engaged social, religious, and political issues that were relevant both to communities of lay readers and to the fortunes of church and nation.<sup>397</sup>

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<sup>395</sup> See Nicholas Orme, *From Childhood to Chivalry. The Education of English kings and aristocracy 1066-1530* (London & New York: Methuen, 1984).

<sup>396</sup> The instructions are summarised in John Watts, *Henry VI and the Politics of Kingship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) p.54; the Privy Council’s instructions are printed in Sir Harris Nicolas, *Proceedings and ordinances of the Privy Council of England*, 7 vols (London: Commissioners on the Public Records of the United Kingdom, 1834-1837), 3: 296, 299.

<sup>397</sup> Theresa Coletti, ‘*Pauperatus et donum Dei*: Hagiography, Lay Religion, and the Economics of Salvation in the Digby Mary Magdalen’, *Speculum* 76 (2001), 337-78.

Abbot Curteys had commissioned Lydgate to compose the *Lives* as a gift for Henry VI to mark his stay at Bury, and Lydgate frequently evokes Henry as reader and offers Edmund as a 'exaumpaire' whose devotional practices Henry should seek to emulate. In addition, Lydgate's assertion that Edmund will be 'a merour cler' (l.419) is a verbal nod towards the mirror for princes genre, in which didactic texts exemplified the character and behaviour of the ideal ruler.<sup>398</sup> This suggests that Lydgate was indeed tailoring his narrative to suit his intended reader with secular as well as devotional aims in mind.

However, in her discussion of the exemplary nature of the *Lives* Fiona Somerset concludes that Lydgate 'urges a spiritual model of life in place of a more secular one'.<sup>399</sup> She suggests that Lydgate's frequent mention of other saint-kings Fremund and Edward the Confessor in conjunction with his depiction of Edmund is an attempt to 'naturalize' the problematic aspects of Henry's kingship by providing 'an alternative spiritual lineage with which to affiliate himself' and offering a model of holy kingship more appropriate to Henry's proclivities:

Lydgate the Lancastrian ideologue, in the reign of Henry VI, found that hagiography became the only possible articulation of regal ideology: the only plausible way to write Henry VI, as Lydgate had written his father, into history. For Henry V the narrative backdrop that legitimized (even if it also critiqued) his kingship in the *Troy Book* and the *Siege of Thebes* was classicizing and 'secular'. But for Henry VI, as the full disaster of his impending personal rule became apparent...the only genre in which his rule could be naturalized, the only source of possible exemplars, the only means of pursuing the straitened advisorial ambition of protecting the regional interests of Lydgate's own abbey, was a hagiography of saintly

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<sup>398</sup> For the uses of mirrors for princes in royal education see Nicholas Orme, *From Childhood to Chivalry*, pp. 88-103 and John Watts, *Henry VI and the Politics of Kingship*, pp. 16-38 for the norms of kingship established by mirrors for princes.

<sup>399</sup> Fiona Somerset, ' "Hard is with seyntis for to make affray": Lydgate the 'Poet-Propagandist' as Hagiographer', in *John Lydgate. Poetry, Culture and Lancastrian England*, ed. Larry Scanlon and James Simpson (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006), pp. 258-278; p. 261.

kings. Thus, *St Edmund and St Fremund* [sic] is not merely, as it has typically been viewed, some sort of failed, disunified attempt at mixing genres between saint's legend and epic... Instead, *St Edmund and St Fremund* [sic] is Henry VI's *Troy Book*.<sup>400</sup>

Thus, according to Somerset, Lydgate emphasises Henry's unworldly qualities and places him on a seemingly inescapable trajectory towards martyrdom and sainthood in a pre-emptive effort to ameliorate the anticipated failure of his secular reign. However, this negative reading relies heavily on the benefit of hindsight and assumes that, even had questions been publicly raised at this point in his young life concerning Henry's fitness to rule, that it would be appropriate for him to be presented with what amounts to a 'get-out clause'. In contrast, Katherine Lewis offers a far more convincing reading of the *Lives* in relation to more traditional, secular, mirrors for princes. She compares the *Lives* with the most popular example of the genre in later medieval England, the *Secreta Secretorum*, demonstrating the ways in which Lydgate's depiction of Edmund accords with the ideal king described by this and other literary mirrors.<sup>401</sup> This type of mirror for princes seems a far more appropriate gift for the young king than that proposed by Somerset. Henry VI became king at the age of just nine months after the death of his celebrated father, Henry V, and as such was denied the opportunity to emulate a successful reigning monarch.<sup>402</sup> Yet in the absence of Henry senior, Lydgate offers Edmund as a surrogate model of exemplary kingly behaviour. On several occasions Lydgate makes it clear that Edmund is a role model whom Henry should seek to imitate; within the opening lines of the poem Lydgate advises that 'Edmund shal be his [Henry's] guide' (Prologue, 45), equating the saint with the nine worthies as a figure worthy of emulation.

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<sup>400</sup> Fiona Somerset, 'Lydgate the 'Poet-Propagandist' as Hagiographer', p. 261.

<sup>401</sup> Katherine J. Lewis, 'Edmund of East Anglia, Henry VI and Ideals of Kingly Masculinity', *Holiness and Masculinity in the Middle Ages*, ed. P.H. Cullum and Katherine J. Lewis (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2004), pp. 158-73.

<sup>402</sup> On Henry's youth and upbringing see Ralph A. Griffiths, *The Reign of King Henry VI* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 1998), pp. 51-7.

Lydgate was writing for the son of one of his most important former patrons. He addresses the young king directly throughout the poem and makes reference to his 'fadir, most notable of memory' and his great deeds (l.164). Derek Pearsall characterises Lydgate as the semi-official propagandist for the Lancastrian regime, and it is likely that in accepting his abbot's commission Lydgate was hoping to cultivate a relationship of patronage similar to that which he had enjoyed with the young king's father.<sup>403</sup> The manner in which Lydgate offers Edmund as an alternative exemplar is particularly apparent in a number of passages, seemingly anachronistic, which describe Edmund engaging with fifteenth rather than ninth-century enemies. Thus Lydgate's account of Edmund's suppression of the Lollard heresy, where he claims that 'to holichirche he was so strong a wal' and that he 'hated fals doctryn in especial' (l.1015-16), should not be read as an historical anachronism or an authorial error, but rather an allusion to the contemporary monarch and the difficulties he could expect to encounter during his reign. Less than two years before Lydgate was commissioned to write the *Lives*, Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, suppressed a Lollard uprising on the king's behalf whilst Henry VI was in France for his coronation.<sup>404</sup> Pearsall describes the anxiety experienced by the clerical establishment upon the succession of Henry VI, as it was feared that he would not prove so dedicated an upholder of the Church and persecutor of heterodoxy as his father.<sup>405</sup> On this occasion Lydgate was commissioned to write *A Defense of Holy Church* as a means of reassuring the establishment, and in the ballad composed for Henry VI's coronation in 1429 he urged the king to 'heretykes and Lollards for to oppresse'.<sup>406</sup> The reference to Lollards in the *Lives* is therefore another means of suggesting to King Henry the approach he should adopt towards the defence of the Church, by means of the exemplum of the saint-king Edmund.

Lydgate is also keen to emphasise the similarities between the two rulers. On several occasions in the poem he makes reference to Edmund's youth claiming,

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<sup>403</sup> Pearsall, *John Lydgate: A Bio-bibliography*, pp. 28-31.

<sup>404</sup> For details of this incident see Griffiths, *The Reign of King Henry VI*, pp. 139-141.

<sup>405</sup> Derek Pearsall, *A Bio-bibliography*, p. 18.

<sup>406</sup> 'Ballad to King Henry VI on His Coronation', *Minor Poems*, II, MacCracken, ll. 9-10.

for example, that he was fifteen at the time of his coronation (I.857). Yet Edmund's youth is not seen as problematic, rather it serves to emphasise his exemplary nature, as Lydgate writes that despite his youth he was a wise ruler: 'Yong of yeeris, old of discrescioun/ Flourying in age, fructuous of sanesse' (I.396-7). The natural imagery presents the young Edmund as vital and imbued with life and potential. Henry was himself a young king, and Edmund would therefore have been a particularly appropriate role model, with such positive references to Edmund's youth at the time of his succession emphasising that good kingship was possible at any age.

Other references to Henry VI throughout the poem also invite comparisons between him and the saint. The prayer in the Epilogue repeatedly describes Henry VI as 'thenherytour off Ingelond and France', referring to the dual monarchy he had inherited from his father, Henry V (Epilogue, 1464). Lydgate prays to St Edmund to help Henry VI govern both realms, apparently anticipating the problems presented by the dual monarchy, such as the refusal of the French people to accept Henry VI as their king.<sup>407</sup> The position of this prayer at the end of the poem means that it will already have been seen how Edmund, a Saxon king, was able to successfully rule a foreign kingdom originally not his own, suggesting again that if Henry VI follows his example then he will be equally successful.

Lydgate's emphasis upon Edmund's kingship is apparent throughout. He frequently refers to Edmund by means of the tripartite epithet, and in the opening line of the poem Edmund's royal identity is mentioned first: 'Blyssyd Edmund, kyng, martir and vyrgyne' (Prologue, 1). Lydgate describes Edmund's war banner which he bore 'Lyk a wys kyng' in battle against the Danes (Prologue, 9) and which Lydgate avers 'shal kepen and conserue/ this lond from enmyes' (Prologue, 41-2). This banner is carried into battle against the Danes in the miniature on fol. 50 (Figs. 42 and 44). The emphasis from the outset is

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<sup>407</sup> For discussion of the dual monarchy see Griffiths, *The Reign of King Henry VI*, esp. pp. 178-230.

therefore upon Edmund as king and his martial responsibilities to defend his realm. This is reiterated in the description of Edmund's second banner:

This other standard, feeld sable off colour ynde,  
In which off gold been notable crownys thre:  
The first tokne, in cronycle men may fynde,  
Grauntyd to hym for Royal dignyte,  
And the second for virgynyte,  
For martirdam the thrydde in his suffryng;  
To these annexyd Feyth, Hope and Charyte,  
In tokne he was martyr, mayde, and kynge.

(Prologue, 49-56)

Kingship is again the first attribute to be mentioned, and in the miniature which accompanies this description (fol. 3v) each 'tokne' is represented by a crown, the symbol of royal authority (Fig. 43).

Lydgate likewise emphasises Edmund's royal pedigree.<sup>408</sup> We learn in Book I that Edmund was born in 'Saxonie', the son of King Alkmund and his queen Siware. Alkmund is himself depicted as a model ruler:

A manli prince, vertuous of leuyng,  
And ful habounde of tresour and richesse,  
Notable in armys, ful renommed of prowesse,  
A semly persone, hardi and corageous,  
Mercuries in wisdam, lik Mars victorious,  
Eyed as Argus be vertuous prouidence,  
And circumspect as famous Scipioun;  
In kyngli honour of most excellence

(I.237-244)

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<sup>408</sup> For uses of royal genealogies as Lancastrian propaganda see J. W. McKenna, 'Henry VI of England and the Dual Monarchy: Aspects of Royal Political Propaganda, 1422-1432' *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 28 (1965), 145-162.

Just as Abbo and the artist of the Morgan miniatures sought to glorify Edmund's ancestors, Lydgate follows Geoffrey of Wells' example and emphasises that although Edmund was not born to throne of East Anglia, he was nevertheless of royal extraction and schooled from birth in the ways of good kingship, thus reiterating his ability to be a good ruler. Edmund's inherent regality is recognised by Offa when he makes the young prince his heir (I.431-507) and his royal potential is realised when, following Offa's death, he assumes the throne of East Anglia. Following Lydgate's account of Edmund's arrival in East Anglia, his acceptance by the people and his coronation, is a 'chaptile' which describes 'the Roial gouernance of seynt Edmond aftir he was crownyd kyng of Estyngland' (I.858-1088). Here we learn in detail of Edmund's rule of good government, his provision of justice and his concern with matters of state. He ensures that the Church, the law and trade are honourably run by honest men (I.892-934), and defends the Church vigorously against heresy (I.1015-16). Edmund is charitable: 'geyn poore folk shet was not his gate,/His warderope open, alle needy to releue' (I.1084-5). He governs in accordance with the four cardinal virtues and his rule is one of temperance and 'noon excesse' (I.869). Edmund encourages his nobles to follow his example by ensuring they attend church and by joining them in suitable past-times such as hunting and hawking and other knightly activities at which he excels (I.1047-53). Lydgate uses the conventional image of the body politic to illustrate Edmund's maintenance of 'dew ordre' and the balance between the various social estates (I.941). In the miniature which accompanies this passage (fol. 34) Edmund is depicted enthroned and supporting symbols of the estates: four knights bearing banners and weapons circumnavigate his head, a church (perhaps the abbey church at Bury) hovers before his abdomen, a ship above his lap and a plough-team labours at his feet. Edmund is seated outdoors in an oddly hilly landscape which echoes the shape of his throne, gesturing towards the ground in blessing or recognition, thus emphasising the bond between the king and his kingdom (Fig. 45).

### Codicological context

The emphasis which Lydgate places upon Edmund's kingship and the importance of acknowledging the circumstances in which the *Lives* was written is particularly apparent if the poem is considered in relation to its codicological context, especially in the case of a poet such as Lydgate. He was a multimedia poet in every sense of the word: his poems were frequently accompanied by pictures, not only in manuscripts but also stitched into wall-hangings and alongside paintings (perhaps most famously accompanying a large painting of the Dance of Death on the wall of the cloisters of Old St Paul's Cathedral) or accompanying a series of decorative allegorical pastries presented at Henry VI's coronation banquet. He also wrote poems for performance, to be either acted or sung.<sup>409</sup>

Lydgate's *Lives* enjoyed a far wider distribution than any other separately circulating Middle English saint's *life*.<sup>410</sup> The manuscript circulation of the *Lives* indicates that its readership was not exclusively royal. In most instances it is included with other works by Lydgate or by other writers. Copies of the *Lives* in the Harleian manuscripts provide a representative illustration: in MSS 372 and 7333 the *Lives* is included alongside a wide range of other texts, varying from short devotional poems, treatises on genealogy, moral tales and, in the case of the latter, a large selection of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*. MS 247 is even more eclectic and contains a fragment of the *Lives* as one of sixty five individual texts.<sup>411</sup> In MS 4826, however, Edmund's *vita* (ff. 4-50v) is accompanied by Lydgate's *Secrees of Old Philisoffres* (ff. 52-81) and Hoccleve's *De regimine principum* (ff. 84-144v). The nature of the accompanying texts suggests that in this instance Lydgate's *Lives* was treated as a mirror for princes. The general manuscript context of the *Lives* therefore reflects its popularity but is less informative concerning its reception.

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<sup>409</sup> Derek Pearsall, *John Lydgate (1371-1449): A Bio-bibliography*, esp. pp. 25-32.

<sup>410</sup> For comparisons see Boffey and Edwards, *A New Index of Middle English Verse*.

<sup>411</sup> For the contents of the MSS see *A Catalogue of the Harleian Manuscripts in the British Museum*, 4 vols. (London: British Museum Department of Manuscripts. Printed by command of H.M. King George III, 1808-1812).

**Figs. 46-9 Edmund's kingship** London, British Library, MS Harley 2278



Fig. 46 (above). Fol. 31, Edmund's coronation

Fig. 47 (above right). Fol. 32, Edmund holding court

Fig. 48 (below). Fol. 36, Edmund hearing pleas

Fig. 49 (right). Fol. 37, Edmund and his knights engaged in kingly sports



**Fig. 50 Pagan Danes** London, British Library, MS Harley 2278

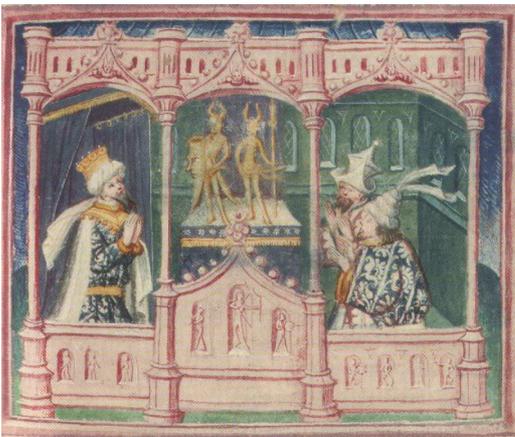


Fig. 50. Fol. 39, Lothbrok and his sons worshipping pagan idols

In contrast, the content and patronage of the illustrated copies of the *Lives* provide a clearer indication of how the poem was disseminated. Three copies of the *Lives* are extensively illustrated: British Library MS Harley 2278, British Library MS Yates Thompson 47 and the Arundel Castle Manuscript (*sine numero*). Of these, the first to be produced was the presentation copy made for Henry VI contained in Harley 2278. In this manuscript the ratio of illustrations to text is extremely high: they average more than one for each leaf and are more or less equally distributed throughout the text. Apart from the two full-page illustrations at the front of the manuscript, the rest are usually carefully positioned in relation to the textual narrative. Edwards notes that they are imbedded within the text and ‘illustrate faithfully what is described’ with the overall effect being ‘an unusually powerful synthesis in which the verbal and visual elements of the manuscript complement one another in a carefully integrated way’, noting that it is difficult to identify precedents for this degree of integration of text and image in the preparation of fifteenth-century Middle English verse manuscripts.<sup>412</sup>

Thus the lengthy descriptions of Edmund’s kingship are accompanied by several miniatures (Figs. 46-9). First we see Edmund’s coronation, depicted in a larger miniature, underlining its importance (fol. 31). The next folio contains an image of Edmund holding court (fol. 32), followed by illustrations of Edmund on his throne (fol. 34), Edmund hearing pleas (fol. 36) and Edmund engaging in kingly sports (fol. 37). By way of contrast we next see the Danish king Lothbroc and his sons worshipping idols (fol. 39): Edmund’s just Christian kingship is directly contrasted with the pagan Danes (Fig. 50).<sup>413</sup> In this instance the illustrations of Harley 2278 are clearly reinforcing the *Lives*’s didactic message by placing considerable emphasis upon Edmund engaged in appropriate kingly behaviour. Except for a few scenes which may derive from older iconographies it is likely that most of the pictures were created for Lydgate’s newly composed

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<sup>412</sup> See Edwards’s Introduction to the facsimile of Harley 2278, *The Life of St Edmund, King and Martyr*, p. 11.

<sup>413</sup> Ongoing research into the iconography and semiotics of Lydgate’s pagans is being undertaken by Sarah Salih, most recently presented as ‘How East Anglian writers Imagined Pagans’ at the *East Anglia and its North Sea World* conference (Norwich, 13-16 April 2010).

poem.<sup>414</sup> It is also probable that Lydgate had a hand in the selection of scenes. So in Harley 2278 the pictures form a coherent visual parallel to the text of the poem and both the verbal and visual narratives reinforce the understanding of the *Lives* as a mirror for princes.

However, subsequent copies do not share this emphasis. The two extensively illustrated descendent manuscripts (Yates Thompson 47 and the Arundel Castle Manuscript) both have around fifty miniatures and can be dated to after 1461 by internal references to Edward IV (substituted for the frequent appeals made to Henry VI in the original text).<sup>415</sup> They were produced by the so-called Edmund-Fremund workshop, which flourished in Bury in the 1460s.<sup>416</sup> The provenance of the Arundel Castle manuscript is untraceable until it came into the possession of William Stow (1525?-1605). Yates Thompson 47 was also acquired by Stow, and the precise identity of its original owner is similarly unknown, although an inscription on p. 213 provides some clues: 'Thys gyfen to my lady beaumoun be har lovfenge moder Margaret ffytz wauter wt all my hart'. Scott believes that the giver of the gift was probably Margaret Fitzwauter, or Fitzwalter, the second wife of Sir John Radcliffe (?1452-96) of Attleborough (Norfolk) although Lady 'beaumoun' has not been identified.<sup>417</sup> The production of *de luxe* copies at Bury suggests that the poem continued to enjoy a marked local appeal. Doubtless affluent patrons of the abbey felt it desirable and appropriate to possess a memorial of its patron saint, with its royal associations adding to its prestige.

Kathleen Scott describes these two manuscripts as 'virtual twins'.<sup>418</sup> They were written by the same scribe and there are few differences in illustration and only minor variations in iconography and composition: the miniatures always have the same subject, always occur in the same position on the page, are always

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<sup>414</sup> Kathleen Scott, *Later Gothic Manuscripts, 1390-1490*, 2 vols. (London: Harvey Miller, 1996), II, p. 228.

<sup>415</sup> For Yates Thompson 47 see Scott, *Later Gothic Manuscripts*, II, pp. 307-10 and for the Arundel Castle MS see Kathleen Scott, 'Lydgate's Lives of Saints Edmund and Fremund: A newly located manuscript in Arundel Castle', *Viator* 13 (1982), 335-66.

<sup>416</sup> Scott, 'A newly located manuscript in Arundel Castle', 335-8.

<sup>417</sup> Scott, *Later Gothic Manuscripts*, II, pp. 307-9; p. 308.

<sup>418</sup> Scott, *Later Gothic Manuscripts 1390-1490*, II, p. 308.

made to the same height of one or two stanzas and are usually identical in composition and frequently in their repetition of colours for the same objects. The illustrations from the two manuscripts are compared in Figs. 51-2. Admittedly, Harley 2278 seems to have exerted some influence over the format of the pictures in the descendent manuscripts as they are similarly embedded within the text. However, if we inspect the manuscript more closely, its influence on their iconography appears limited: only five miniatures from the presentation manuscript appear to have been used as models in the later copies. There are also more than twice as many illustrations in Harley 2278 so there is no question of a page by page similarity between the three manuscripts. Fig. 53 comprises a tabular comparison of the illustrations of the illustrations of the first two books in Harley 2278 and its descendent manuscripts. However, the extent to which there are thematic similarities, in the sense of similar episodes being depicted in similar ways, enables the emphasis of the presentation manuscript to be further considered.

All the major episodes of the legend are illustrated in Yates Thompson 47 and Arundel Castle; the martyrdom sequence, for example, is illustrated in ten miniatures in Harley 2278 and seven in the descendent manuscripts, a remarkably similar number given the relative total number of miniatures. Other important episodes, such as the murder of Lothbroc which precipitates the Danish invasion, are illustrated in similar detail. There are, however, some notable disparities. In particular, sequences of miniatures in Harley 2278 which endorse the *Lives* as a mirror for princes are absent from the later copies. For example, all three manuscripts show Edmund being crowned and in each the illustrations are of the larger size (Harley 2278 fol. 31 and Yates Thompson 47 and Arundel fol. 21v). However, in Yates Thompson 47 and the Arundel Castle manuscript the next illustration occurs at the beginning of Book II where we see Lothbroc hunting with his hounds (fol. 30). The sequence of miniatures illustrating Edmund's kingly conduct is lacking. Similarly, the emphasis upon the importance of taking counsel is absent from the miniatures of the descendent manuscripts. Whereas in Harley 2278 we see Edmund's father consulting his lords, in the descendent manuscripts we see none of this

**Figs. 51-2 Comparison of the presentation copy of the *Lives* with its descendent manuscripts**

London, British Library, MS Yates Thompson 47



Fig. 51. Yates Thompson 47, fol. 6, The widow sees the sun on Alkmund's breast; Alkmund kneels before the Pope; a veronica relic hangs above the altar

London, British Library, MS Harley 2278



Fig. 52. Harley 2278, fol. 12, The widow sees the sun on Alkmund's breast; Alkmund kneels before the Pope; a veronica relic hangs above the altar

**Fig. 53 Comparison of Harley 2278 and its descendent manuscripts**

The following table is a comparison of illustrations of the first two books of Lydgate's, *Lives*.

\* indicates that a miniature is full-size.

	Harley 2278	Yates Thompson 47/Arundel Castle
<b>Book 1: Prologue</b>		1: Lydgate with scroll kneeling before Edmund, who sits on a canopied throne, holding arrow & scepter
	1v: full page miniature Banner of St Edmund, Adam & Eve and Tree of Knowledge	96v: Shield in lower margins - the banner of St Edmund
	3v: Full page, 3 crowns: Arms of Bury	
	4v: *Young HVI kneeling at Ed's tomb	
	6: *Book being presented to HVI	
	9: Lydgate praying at Ed's shrine	4: Lydgate kneeling before Edmund's shrine
<b>Book 1: Life of Edmund</b>	10: *King Alkmund & Queen Siware	
	11v: Alkmund greeting Siware	
	12: *Alkmund with sun shining from heart & then kneeling before Pope	6v: *Two part:widow sees a sun shining from Alkmund's breast; Alkund keeling before the Pope
	13 :Return of Alkmund	
	13v: *Birth of Edmund	7v: Birth of Edmund with three women in attendance
	16v: *Offa on board ship	
	17: Offa landing in Saxony	
	18v: Offa meeting Edmund	10v: *Offa meeting with Alkmund, with Edmund, his mother Siware, & retinue
	19: Offa giving ring to Edmund	
	20: Offa's departure	12: Offa leaves for the Holy Land
		13: *Offa with retinue kneeling before the Holy Sepulcher
	21: Offa on his deathbed	14: *Offa on his death bed handing ring to his steward
	22: Offa's funeral	15: Above: Offa's funeral; Below: Steward gives Offa's ring to Edmund
	22v: *Offa's burial	
	<b>23: *Alkmund receiving news of Offa's death &amp; giving ring to Edmund</b>	
	<b>24: *Alkmund's lords in council</b>	
	<b>25: *Alkmund &amp; Edmund in court</b>	
	<b>25v: *Alkmund choosing clerks</b>	<b>16: Alkmund addressing the squires chosen to accompany Edmund</b>
	26: Edmund's departure	18: Two part: Edmund taking leave of his mother & father; & standing, gesturing towards boat
	27: *Edmund departing on board ship	
	27v: *Edmund arriving in England	
	28: Edmund praying: appearance of five wells	18v: Edmund kneeling in thanks, as five wells miraculously appear
	<b>28v: Edmund supervising building of Hunstanton</b>	
	<b>29: Edmund holding court</b>	
	29v: Bishop Kunbertus in a crowd, showing Offa's ring	
	30: *Edmund journeying to Bury	20v: *Noblemen accompanying Edmund to Bury
	<b>31: *Edmund's coronation</b>	<b>21v: *Coronation of Edmund</b>
	<b>32: *Edmund in his court</b>	
	<b>34: Edmund on his throne</b>	
	<b>36: "Edmund hearing pleas in his court</b>	
	<b>37: *Edmund engaging in kingly sports</b>	

<b>Book 2</b>	<b>39: *Lothbrok and his sons worshipping idols</b>	
	41v: Lothbrok boarding a boat with his hounds & then at sea	30: Two part: Lothbrok standing with hawk & hound; Lothbrok being swept out to sea in a boat
	42v: Lothbrok landing in Norfolk & being received by Edmund	31: *Lothbrok kneeling before Edmund, after being cast ashore in Norfolk
	43v: Lothbrok hunting	
	44: Lothbrok murdered by Bern and his body concealed	33: Bern killing Lothbrok with a club
	44v: Lothbrok's hound returning to Edmund's court	33v: Two part: Edmund giving bread to Lothbrok's hound; the hound returning with bread
	45v: Hound leading knights to discovery of Lothbrok's body	34: Two part: hound leading Edmund & retinue; knight finding Bern, who stands with club, while hound in trees bemoans Lothbrok's death
	46: Bern being cast adrift	35: Two part: trial of Bern before a judge & the bar; Bern set out to sea in a boat with no oars
	47: Bern arriving in Denmark	35v: Two part: Bern led out from boat; Bern kneeling before Hinguar & Hubba
	47v: Hyngwar & Ubba setting out with their navy	36v: The princes of Denmark before an army
	48: Danes engaging in destruction	
	49: Edmund submitting to the Danes	
	50: Edmund defeating Hyngwar	38v: *Battle of Thetford
	52: *Hyngwar sending messenger to Edmund	41: Two part: Hinguar sending a messenger; messenger leaving
	52v: Edmund receiving message	44: Two part: messenger giving letter to Edmund; messenger departing
		46: *Armies of Hinguar & Edmund meeting before a castle
	<b>54: Edmund consulting with a bishop</b>	
	<b>55v: Edmund talking to a bishop</b>	
	<b>56v: Edmund speaking to a messenger</b>	
	<b>58: Messenger kneeling before Hyngwar</b>	
	<b>58v: Edmund and Hyngwar</b>	
	60v: Edmund being beaten	48: Edmund, captured, being beaten & bound by Hinguar's soldiers
	61: Edmund's martyrdom	48v: Edmund, tied to a tree, being pierced with arrows
	62: *Edmund being removed from the tree	
	63: *Edmund being beheaded	50: Edmund commending his soul to God (in roundel on miniature frame), with soldiers watching, & one drawing sword
		50v: Two part: Edmund, as before, being decapitated; Edmund's soul, crowned, being received by God (in roundel)
	63v: The hiding of Edmund's head	51v: Danes throwing Edmund's head into a thicket
	64: The wolf guarding Edmund's head	
	65: *Christians seeking Edmund's head	
	66: *The finding of Edmund's head	53v: The head with a golden scroll saying "here, here, here", being guarded by a wolf, is discovered by four men
	67v: *The restoration of Edmund's head to his body	54: Two part: Edmund's head being brought to his body; the head being miraculously rejoined
	68v: *Burial of Edmund in his tomb	

decision making process. Likewise, following the Battle of Thetford, in contrast to his Harley counterpart, the descendent Edmund goes straight from victory in battle to martyrdom without consulting his bishop on how next to proceed.

These differences between the illustrative schemes may be variously accounted for.<sup>419</sup> It is probable that whilst it was appropriate in the presentation copy to emphasise the role of the *Lives* as a mirror for princes, when the poem was reproduced in different circumstances this was no longer fitting or desirable and the illustrative scheme was adjusted to accommodate these new conditions. Far from merely illustrating the text they accompany, therefore, the miniatures are possessed of their own agency and are able to influence reception and understanding. Hahn suggests that the relationship between text and image is shaped by the principle of selection, as ‘depending upon which parts of a written story they choose to represent, artists can shape pictorial narrative in ways radically different from texts’<sup>420</sup>. This is certainly the case with these three manuscripts and demonstrates the fundamental importance of the presence of Henry VI as imagined reader in determining both the visual and textual appearance of the *Lives*.

### St Fremund

Thus far little has been said concerning St Fremund, the other eponymous saint whose *life* Lydgate recounts. Illustrations of St Fremund in Harley 2278 are included in Figs. 54-7. Described by A.G Riggs as ‘obscure and possibly fictional’, virtually nothing is known of St Fremund.<sup>421</sup> His appearance in the *Lives* is therefore curious and has puzzled generations of scholars, the majority of whom have overlooked his much shorter section of the narrative in favour of the main body of the poem concerning Edmund. Indeed, Lydgate himself gives no indication of his intention to write about Fremund, announcing that he will ‘putte in remembrance’ ‘the noble story... of saynt Edmund’ (l. 1-2). Fremund’s

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<sup>419</sup> Scott, ‘Lydgate’s *Lives of Saints Edmund and Fremund*: A newly located manuscript in Arundel Castle’, 357-66.

<sup>420</sup> Hahn, *Portrayed on the Heart*, p. 46.

<sup>421</sup> Rigg, *Anglo-Latin Literature*, p. 182.

847 line interjection at the beginning of Book III therefore comes as something of a surprise. This is reflected in the transition between the two narratives, which is sudden and rather clumsy. Having concluded his account of Edmund's passion and posthumous miracles, Lydgate addresses the martyr directly, asking his permission to recount a different tale:

Now, glorios martir [Edmund], which of gret meeknesse  
For Crystes feith suffredist passioun,  
Qwyke my penne, enlumyne my rudenesse,  
To my dulnesse make a dirreccioun,  
That I may undir thy supportacioun  
Compile the story hangyng on this matere  
Off seyn Fremond, thyn owyn cosyn dere! (II. 995-1001)

Lydgate was not the first author to cite a familial link between Edmund and Fremund but the *Lives* is the first occasion where their narratives are contained in the same text. It is therefore necessary to consider the reasons why Lydgate made this interpolation and extent to which Fremund informs our reading of the poem and inflects the development of Edmund's saintly identity.

According to local tradition, after his death Fremund's body was taken to Offchurch in Warwickshire where his tomb became a place of pilgrimage. In about AD 931 his remains were taken to Cropredy in Oxfordshire, where the south transept still bears his dedication. The *Dunstable Chronicle* refers to a dedication of an altar to St Fremund in 1207 following the translation of some of his relics from Cropredy and in 1212 to a proliferation of miracles associated with this new shrine.<sup>422</sup> Despite this, the shrine at Cropredy continued to be venerated until early in the sixteenth century. Testamentary bequests confirm the presence of a shrine to St Fremund in Cropredy church. In 1489 Richard Danvers of nearby Prescote Manor bequeathed money to the chapel of St Fremund:

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<sup>422</sup> *Annales monastici*, ed. Henry Richard Luard, Rolls Series 36, vol. 3 (London, 1866). pp. 29 and 39.

**Figs. 54-7 Illustrations of St Fremund accompanying Lydgate's *Lives***

London, British Library, MS Harley 2278



Fig. 54. Fol. 79, Fremund's coronation



Fig. 55. Fol. 84v, Fremund prays on his island



Fig. 56. Fol. 88, Fremund is beheaded



Fig. 57. Fol. 97, The sow and her piglets attest to the presence of Fremund's remains

To Sir Raunhoh, chaplain of St Frethemund, to pay for my soul, 20s. To the fabric of the prebendal church of Cropredy, 100s. To the repair of the chapel of St Fremund where his shrine is situated, 20s.<sup>423</sup>

Richard Danvers' son John married Ann Stradling, through whom he acquired a property at Dauntsey in Wiltshire. John appears to have maintained his devotion to St Fremund in his new parish. John and Ann are buried in Dauntsey church and antiquarian evidence attests that above their tomb was once a stained glass window depicting Saint Fremund carrying his head in his hands in reference to the manner of his death. Beneath were John and Ann's four sons and above their heads a scroll entreating '*Sancte Fredismunde ora pro nobis*'.<sup>424</sup> In John's will of 1514 he left twenty shillings to Cropredy church and twenty shillings to 'St Frethemund's chapel', while Ann also remembered the chapel in 1539 when she bequeathed 'a cowe' each to the churches of Culworth and Cropredy and 'ten ewes' to the 'Chapel of Saynte Fredysmunde in Cropredy'.<sup>425</sup> The cult of Fremund therefore seems to have enjoyed some local popularity associated with one of his shrine sites. Nationally, however, evidence of his cult is scarce. No parish churches were dedicated in his honour.<sup>426</sup>

The earliest written version of his legend is extant in Dublin, Trinity College, MS, B.2.7, a manuscript dating from the early thirteenth century. This prose *life* was perhaps composed for Dunstable Priory (Bedfordshire) to coincide with the translation of Fremund's relics here in 1207. This prose *life* was translated into Latin hexametres in the 1220s by Henry of Avranches.<sup>427</sup> The *Vita Sancti Fremundi* is preserved, along with the *Vita Sancti Edmundi*, in Matthew Paris' compilation of Henry's hagiographic works.<sup>428</sup> It tells of the birth of Fremund to

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<sup>423</sup> Will of Richard Danvers, proved 20 February 1489, in *Some Oxfordshire wills proved in the prebendary court of Canterbury, 1393-1510*, ed. John R.H. Weaver and Alice Beardwood, (Banbury, Oxon: Cheney & Sons Ltd., 1958), p. 41.

<sup>424</sup> See Rev. Canon Wood, 'A forgotten saint?', *The Antiquary*, 27 (May, 1893), 202-7; 203.

<sup>425</sup> Cited by Wood, 'A forgotten saint?', 203.

<sup>426</sup> Arnold-Foster, *Studies in Church Dedications*, III.

<sup>427</sup> Rigg summarises Henry of Avranches' *life* in *Anglo-Latin Literature*, pp. 182-3. It has been edited by David Townsend, 'The *Vita Sancti Fremundi* of Henry of Avranches', *Journal of Medieval Latin* 4 (1994), 1-24.

<sup>428</sup> See Townsend and Rigg, 'Medieval Latin Poetic Anthologies', 352-90.

a childless couple, foretold by a three-day old infant. Fremund becomes king but is torn between his commitment to his royal office and his devout piety. Eventually he abdicates and becomes a hermit on a remote island, rejecting the devil's temptation to resume his royal duty. He does, however, respond to his parents' request for assistance against the Viking assailants responsible for Edmund's death. Fremund meets the Danes in battle and with the assistance of an angel, who makes his diminutive force appear one thousand times larger, defeats the numerically superior Danes, but is killed by the traitor Oswy who strikes off Fremund's head. Fremund is recognised as a saint and miracles occur at his tomb, which is discovered by three infirm women and also attested by the prophesised presence of a sow and her piglets. Further miracles occur and news of the burial is taken to Bishop Birin at Dorchester. Although Henry wrote *lives* of both Edmund and Fremund and alluded to the familial connection between them, there is no evidence that he paired their *lives* in the manner assumed by Lydgate. Townsend suggests that, like the earlier prose *life* on which it was based, the *Vita Sancti Fremundi* was probably composed for Dunstable Priory as part of their campaign to promote the cult of St Fremund.<sup>429</sup>

Fremund also features in a mid-fourteenth century manuscript of the *South English Legendary*, now British Library, MS Stowe 949.<sup>430</sup> It is perhaps significant that Fremund makes his first appearance in the *South English Legendary* in the same manuscript in which St Frideswide is first seen. Both saints were connected with Oxfordshire and this may suggest a local provenance for the manuscript. John of Tynemouth included Fremund in his mid-fourteenth century compendium of saints *Lives, Sanctilogium Angliae, Walliae, Scotiae et Hiberniae*, now extant in British Library, MS Cotton Tiberius E1 in which one hundred and fifty six saints' *Lives* and festivals are arranged in

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<sup>429</sup> Townsend, 'The Vita Sancti Fremundi', 5.

<sup>430</sup> St Fremund is no. 3192 in *The Index of Middle English Verse*, by Carlton Brown and Rossell Hope Robbins (New York: Columbia University Press for the Index Society, 1943). See *The Early South English Legendary*, ed. Carl Horstmann, Early English Text Society os 87 (London: Early English Text Society, 1887), xiii-xxiv, for tabulation of the contents of the MSS of the *SEL*. See also Horstmann's reflections of the differing content of each MS, ix.

calendrical order.<sup>431</sup> This was revised in the fifteenth century, with the content rearranged alphabetically. This was possibly undertaken by John Capgrave, under whose name the collection is most commonly known, although scholarly opinion remains divided on the matter of attribution.<sup>432</sup> This in turn was printed in 1516 by Winken de Worde, with some alterations and the addition of fifteen new *Lives*, as *Nova Legenda Anglie*.<sup>433</sup>

In each subsequent version Fremund's legend remains substantially the same as the early thirteenth-century original. It is unclear from whence Lydgate derived his information regarding Fremund. His legend is not included in Bodley 240. He claims that 'off Burchardus folwe I shall the style/ That of seyn Fremund whilom was secretarye/ Which of entent dide his liff compile' (III. 162-4). Burchardus, assumed to be a fictional character, is generally named as one of Fremund's companions on his island wilderness. Lydgate was clearly aware of other versions of Fremund's legend. In contrast to his depiction of Edmund's *life*, Lydgate retells Fremund's legend with few alterations. The question of why he chose to include Fremund alongside Edmund remains unanswered, but the similarities between the *lives* of the two saints may offer some explanation. In addition to the familial connection, there are further points of correspondence. Like Edmund, Fremund was of royal stock, according to Lydgate the son of King Offa of Mercia (Edmund's brother-in-law) and Queen Botyld.<sup>434</sup> His virtues were such that when his parents 'gan approachen to the stage/ Off decrepitus' (III. 283-4) they resigned their throne to Fremund, who ruled well and justly in their stead (III. 288-329). However, when the young Fremund 'hadde regned but a yeer' (III. 330) he renounced his birthright to become a hermit on the isle of 'Ilefaye' (III. 338), a place 'lyk a desert' (III. 350) where he lived a life of 'abstynence and contemplaion' (III. 408) with two companions, 'to god alway doynge reuerence' (III. 377). After seven years his peaceful life was disrupted. Hearing of the death of his kinsman, Edmund, the aged Offa desperately sought

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<sup>431</sup> *Nova Legenda Anglie*, ed. Horstmann, ix-xv.

<sup>432</sup> *Nova Legenda Anglie*, ed. Horstmann, xv-xvi.

<sup>433</sup> *Nova Legenda Anglie*, ed. Horstmann, xvi-xxi.

<sup>434</sup> This is not the same Offa whom Edmund succeeds to the throne of East Anglia. Although an historically attested king, there is no evidence that Offa of Mercia had a son named Fremund.

his son in order that he might defend his kingdom from the same marauding Vikings and 'ageyn the Danys to make a mortall werre' (III. 427). Fremund reluctantly resumed his royal duties and met the Danes in battle: 'with foure and twenty that day withoute obstacle/ Slouh fourty thowsand, only be myracle' (III. 531-2). Fremund, however, was betrayed: as he knelt to give thanks for his victory the 'ful traitourly' Oswy, a noble of his father's in league with the Danes, 'smet off his hed' (III. 567). Scorched by the holy blood, Oswy cried out for mercy and, in an episode reminiscent of the aftermath of Edmund's martyrdom, Fremund's decapitated head spoke to the traitor and offered him forgiveness (III. 591-602). Fremund then rose, seized his head, and walked. Pausing between 'Whittone and Harborugh' (probably Wigston, near Leicester and Market Harborough, both now in Leicestershire) he touched the ground with his sword whereupon a spring burst forth in which he washed the blood from his severed head after which he finally 'gaff up the gost' (III. 617-37). The repentant, and presumably startled, Oswy carried Fremund's body to 'Offecherche' (Offchurch, Warwickshire) where it was enshrined (III. 638-45). Fremund wrought many miracles, including the cure of three crippled virgins, who in gratitude carried his body to the banks of the river 'Charwelle' (Cherwell river, Oxfordshire) where they reburied it in 'a toumbe off gret delit'. (III. 646-700). The site became renowned as a place of healing and many miracles occurred there (III. 701-42). Following a vision and a series of miraculous signs, Fremund was translated for the last time, to 'Dunstaple' (Dunstable, Bedfordshire) (III. 743-826). Lydgate's account concludes with the description of more miracles and an invocation for Fremund, 'martir, mayde and kyng' (III. 827) to remember his faithful devotees (III. 827-47). By assigning the same tripartite epithet to Fremund which he uses for Edmund, Lydgate is reinforcing the connection between the two saints. To some extent, however, this connection is one of counterpoint rather than straightforward equivalence. For example, whilst Edmund is a successful and exemplary king, Fremund renounces his royal status. Similarly, Edmund is a great warrior who eventually chooses pacifism, whereas Fremund is summoned from his contemplative life to the active world of warfare. Winstead suggests that Fremund functions as a 'corrective' to Edmund, a means of reminding King Henry of the secular duties

of a king which should not be eschewed in favour of personal preferences, no matter how pious.<sup>435</sup> However, it seems unlikely that Lydgate would criticise, however subtly, the protagonist of his text and patron of his abbey. Instead, Anthony Edwards notes that the trajectory of Fremund's life is in direct contrast to Edmund's own, a technique he believes Lydgate employs in order to emphasise Edmund's saintly excellence:

Thus although both protagonists demonstrate the power of the miraculous to prevail over the forces of evil, in the overall shape of the narrative Fremund functions to amplify our sense of the achievements of Edmund himself. This is achieved not simply by the greater narrative weight that is given to Edmund, but through the ways in which Fremund's achievements are set within the encapsulating narrative of Edmund's own, both before and after his death and are implicitly measured against them.<sup>436</sup>

This is far more plausible, particularly if Fremund's *vita* is seen to some extent as a sequel to Edmund's. The presence of the same Danish villains means that Fremund's story is a continuation of Edmund's. Lydgate's summary at the end of Book II of the new narrative he is about to introduce indicates that the event of central significance is Fremund's defeat of the Danes:

Thoruh thy [Edmund's] fauor I cast me for tassaye  
To declare of humble affeccoun  
How seyn Fremond be miracle dide outraye  
Hyngwar and Vbba thoruh his hih renoun  
And them venquysshid in this regioun (II. 1002-6)

The constraints of the pre-existing legend, the irreducible minimum of which is that Edmund was killed by the Danes, prevent Lydgate's Edmund from

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<sup>435</sup> Karen A. Winstead, *John Capgrave's Fifteenth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), p. 131.

<sup>436</sup> Edwards, 'John Lydgate's *Lives of Ss Edmund and Fremund*: Politics, Hagiography and Literature', in *Changing Images*, ed. Bale, pp. 133-44; p. 140.

defeating the invaders. Lydgate, however, who presents Edmund as exemplary in every other aspect of his being, could not allow the Danes to go unpunished. Fremund's victory therefore completes the narrative by ensuring earthly retribution, just as Edmund's martyrdom ensures his spiritual superiority.

### Conclusion

Whether the young king read the poem which Lydgate wrote for him or admired the lavish illustrations is unknown. Yet how the *Lives* was received in actuality does not diminish the significance of its ability to function simultaneously as both a devotional manuscript and a work of secular instruction. As a devotional object the *Lives* seeks to offer Edmund as a model of kingly piety whom Henry VI should seek to emulate, and also reminds Henry of his own devotions to the saint and the vow taken before the martyr's shrine. It is likely that Abbot Curteys was taking advantage of the king's visit to promote the rights and liberties of the abbey and ensure a place for it in his benefactions. Lydgate hopes that the king will be 'diffence and protectour' (I.166) of the Abbey, and suggests that in return Saint Edmund 'shal to the kyng be ful proteccioun / Ageyn alle enemies' (I.160-1). This concept of mutual assistance and dependence attests to the special relationship perceived to exist between kings and saints, mediated here through the abbey of Bury St Edmunds. It establishes from the outset of the poem the notion that whilst the king's benefaction may be of value to the Abbey and its saintly patron, St Edmund's support would be of equal worth to any upon whom he chose to bestow it. However, by writing the reader into the text Lydgate transforms the *Lives* from simply a devotional object into one which is simultaneously sacred and secular. In order to present the saint as a suitable kingly role model Lydgate was able to capitalize on his position as both a monk of Bury and apologist for the Lancastrian regime to shape and recast the legend in order to fit his own purposes. It seems likely that he played on the young King Henry's religious sensibilities to exhort the virtues of kingly conduct (a model of kingship which might accord with Henry's own proclivities and ideals) in order to demonstrate that it was possible to be both kingly and holy. Pearsall describes the *Life* as

'surrounded by a mass of rhetorical circumstance'.<sup>437</sup> Ultimately it was this unique combination of events and individuals which resulted in the particular portrayal of Edmund in Lydgate's *vita*. In a poem intended to instruct the young king and influence him in both his temporal and devotional activities, Henry VI as anticipated reader exercises considerable influence over the text. Despite these evident preoccupations, Lydgate's *Lives* is in many ways the most balanced and complete version of Edmund's sanctity. The miracles described, for example, evince the most even distribution in terms of types of miracles and status of recipients of any version in the hagiographic tradition.<sup>438</sup> Lydgate's Edmund emerges as a saint for all circumstances.

## **Conclusion**

The development of the St Edmund textual tradition therefore conforms to some extent with the model elucidated by Winstead. Abbo's *Passio* accords with the trend of early *vitae* as it may certainly be described as sensational, monastic, and with an emphasis on virginity. However, the later tradition diverges markedly. The fourteenth-century compilation Bodley 240 does little to distance Edmund's *vita* from the laity as it includes a significant number of miracles derived from parochial sources. Also, by this period Geoffrey of Wells had written his *De Infantia*, whose influence can be seen throughout the later tradition, thus refuting Winstead's claim that hagiography evinced contempt for institutions such as the family. Concern for other institutions, notably the monarchy and the state, are abundant throughout Lydgate's *Lives*. Far from resorting to a conventional and conservative version of Edmund's life, as he did for Sts Margaret and Petronilla, Lydgate produced an innovative and strikingly different account, primarily concerning Edmund's kingship. This suggests that by the later Middle Ages, Edmund's virginity was not his only defining characteristic and that he was associated equally, if not more so, with kingship. The extent to which this is also the case in other media will be discussed below.

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<sup>437</sup> Derek Pearsall, *John Lydgate* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970), p. 282.

<sup>438</sup> See Appendices 3a and 3b and 4a and 4b.

This chapter has demonstrated that adopting a more holistic approach to devotional literature illustrates the fluidity of hagiographic tradition and the subtle interplay between reading, writing and devotion. In his Prologue to the *Fall of Princes* Lydgate characterises authors as possessed of great agency in their ability to shape our views of history:

Artificeres hauyng exercise  
May change and turne bi good discrecioun  
Shappis, formys, and newli hem deuyse,  
Make and vnmake in many sondry wyse,  
As potteres, which to that craft entende,  
Breke and renewe ther vesselis to a-mende.<sup>439</sup>

Due to the paucity of detailed ‘historical’ information concerning Edmund, the legendary tradition was a particularly potent site for the creation of knowledge and meaning. The relationship between each version of the legend is complex as their authors simultaneously seek to assert the originality of their own work whilst locating them within the established tradition. This is achieved in various ways. Ostensibly Abbo relies upon the authority of the eyewitness, although his persistent intertextuality provides an additional layer of credibility. Some authors, such as Geoffrey of Wells, frame their texts as supplementary adjuncts to a previous work, in Geoffrey’s case to Abbo’s *Passio*. This relies upon the novelty of innovation and the ability of the author to make convincing truth-claims for their work. Similarly, the purpose of miracle collections was to establish the continuing potency of their saintly protagonist, which primarily relied upon the addition of new examples of miraculous intervention. Illustrative schemes offer an additional insight into the processes of selection and adaptation. Consideration of the Pierpoint Morgan miniatures and initials and the illustrated manuscripts of Lydgate’s *Lives* highlights their coherence both as independent narratives but also their ability to act as counterpoints to the texts they accompany. Conversely, some authors claim to translate an

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<sup>439</sup> John Lydgate, *Fall of Princes*, 4 vols., ed. Henry Bergen, Early English Text Society os 121 (Oxford: Oxford University Press for the Early English Text Society, 1924, rpt. 1967), I, Prologue, ll. 9–14.

already existing text. This simultaneously establishes a literary legacy and locates meaning in the text rather than the writer. However, in medieval Latin *translatio* (translation) was often taken to be synonymous with *expositio* (interpretation).<sup>440</sup> Translations should therefore not simply be understood as transferring meaning unchanged from one language to another but as readings of source texts. This is evident even in versions of Edmund's legend that are heavily dependent upon a single source, such as a number of the Anglo-Norman verse *lives*, where seemingly minor stylistic alterations or changes of emphasis intended to make the texts more accessible to a lay audience nevertheless subtly refined Edmund's saintly identity. The influence of the imagined reader or viewer is most visible in Lydgate's *Lives*, where Edmund is explicitly fashioned as a model for Henry VI. Along with the persistent influence of the monastic community at Bury, it is therefore apparent that the adaptation of the legend according to circumstance is the most significant factor in the development of Edmund's saintly identity in the hagiographic tradition. The question of reception and response is similarly relevant in relation to the following second chapter, which considers the cult of St Edmund as presented to pilgrims to his shrine at Bury. The monastic community were likewise responsible for shaping Edmund's identity in this context but the origins and status of pilgrims were potentially very different to those with access to the written and manuscript *lives*, thus allowing the flexibility of Edmund's saintly identity to be explored further.

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<sup>440</sup> Alistair J. Minnis and A.B. Scott, *Medieval Literary Theory and Criticism, c.1100-c.1375: The Commentary Tradition* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), p. 374. For further discussion of the medieval concept of translation see *The Idea of the Vernacular. An Anthology of Middle English Literary Theory, 1280-1520*, ed. Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, Nicholas Watson, Andrew Taylor and Ruth Evans (Exeter: The University of Exeter Press, 1999), pp. 316-21.

# Chapter 2 – Saxon Saints and Murdered Kings: Encountering St Edmund at Bury

‘It is fully proved in his case...that though his spirit be in the enjoyment of heavenly glory, yet it has the power to revisit the body and is not by day or night far separated from the place where the body lies.’<sup>441</sup>

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## Introduction

In 1043 Edward the Confessor visited the abbey of Bury St Edmunds. As the towers of the church became visible in the distance the king dismounted from his horse and walked the last mile on foot (*modo pedes*), acknowledging the transition into the spiritual estate under the jurisdiction of St Edmund.<sup>442</sup> In a similar occurrence, an old blind man from Northumberland, having joined a party of pilgrims travelling to Bury, coming within sight of the high bell-tower they knelt and prayed, whereupon the blind man’s sight was restored.<sup>443</sup> The power of St Edmund which resided in his shrine was such that it became palpable even at a distance from the church and solicited a physical response in his devotees. Saints’ shrines were potent locations reverberating with the hopes and expectations of those who sought divine assistance or came to give thanks for help already received. In addition to the emotional impact of visiting a shrine, the physical experience would have been far outside the normal frame

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<sup>441</sup> Abbo *Passio*, XVIII; Hervey, *Corolla*, p. 55.

<sup>442</sup> Hermann, *De Miraculis*, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, I, p. 48.

<sup>443</sup> Hermann, *De Miraculis*, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, I, p. 371.

of reference for almost all pilgrims. The abbey church at Bury was the third longest Romanesque building in northern Europe, surpassed only by the churches of Cluny and Winchester (Figs. 58-9).<sup>444</sup> For the majority of medieval pilgrims this would therefore be the largest building they would ever encounter.

The scale of the church was matched by its architectural and artistic splendour. Pilgrims entering the monastic precinct from the west would pass beneath the imposing 5.86m (19ft 3 in) wide gateway of St James' tower (Fig. 60). This grand entrance was undoubtedly designed to impress and mark the significance of the transition from the temporal world beyond the gates to the spiritual realm within.<sup>445</sup> Pilgrims literally passed from darkness beneath the tower into the light of the western courtyard where they were confronted by the extraordinarily large western front of the abbey church (Fig. 61). At around 73m (240ft) it was almost twice the width of Winchester (39m/128ft), the only British church larger overall than Bury.<sup>446</sup> J. Philip McAleer claims that the west front at Bury was 'perhaps the most complex façade structure ever built in Britain or, indeed, on the Continent'.<sup>447</sup> There were three main elements: a west transept with an axial crossing tower, flanking double-storied chapel blocks and flanking octagons. The design is unusual. McAleer notes that a west transept is found at only four other churches in Britain: Ely, Kelso, Kilwinning and Peterborough. The axial west tower is similarly rare and found only at Ely and Kelso. The rarity of axial towers on major churches before the Gothic period leads McAleer to suggest that Bury was attempting to make a deliberate statement through the use of this form. He notes that single axial towers are more commonly associated with Anglo-Saxon churches and postulates that by adopting this form Bury sought to remind viewers of the community's pre-Conquest heritage.<sup>448</sup> Chapel blocks of this type associated with a west front are not found elsewhere in Britain (the closest comparisons are the comparatively

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<sup>444</sup> For comparative figures see Fernie, *Architecture*, Appendix 1: Dimensions, pp. 304-5.

<sup>445</sup> For the symbolic significance of doorways see M. Cecilia Gaposchkin, 'Portals, Processions, Pilgrimage and Piety: Saints Firmin and Honoré at Amiens', in *Art and Architecture*, ed. Blick and Tekippe, pp. 217-42.

<sup>446</sup> Fernie, *Architecture*, Appendix 1: Dimensions, pp. 304-5.

<sup>447</sup> J. Philip McAleer, 'The West Front of the Abbey Church', *BAA: Bury*, pp. 22-33; p. 22.

<sup>448</sup> McAleer, 'The West Front', pp. 29.

modest two-storey chapels opening directly off the transept arms at Ely). The flanking octagons are even more unusual and seem to be unique to Bury.<sup>449</sup> The architectural form of the abbey church was therefore distinctive and designed to impress. This is exemplified by various changes made to the layout of the church after building had begun which resulted in an irregular floorplan, including the departure of the line of the arcade wall northwards from the axis of the church by three degrees and the lengthening of the presbytery and the addition of an aisle to the east of the transepts. Fernie suggests that this is unlikely to be erroneous and instead resulted from a deliberate decision to widen the nave and aisles and lengthen the presbytery in order to ensure that the dimensions of the abbey church surpassed those of long-term rivals Norwich, where work on the new cathedral began in 1096.<sup>450</sup>

In addition to the architectural magnificence of the west front, the details of its embellishment were also designed to convey a particular message. Particularly striking would have been the pair of great bronze doors which are recorded in the *Gesta Sacristarum* as being made by Master Hugo (fl. c. 1130-50) during the abbacy of Anselm (1121-48) when Ralph and Hervey were sacrists:

*Valvas etiam dupplices in fronte ecclesiae, insculptas digitis magistri Hugonis, qui, cum in aliis operibus omnes alios vicerit, in hoc opere mirifico vicit se ipsum.*<sup>451</sup>

Double doors in the front of the church were sculpted by the hands (lit. 'fingers') of Master Hugo, who in other works surpassed all others, in this magnificent work he surpassed himself.

No other bronze doors are known in England from this period and this has led to speculation as to Master Hugo's origins and the model upon which the doors

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<sup>449</sup> For further details see McAleer, 'The West Front', pp. 23-9.

<sup>450</sup> Eric Fernie, 'The Romanesque Church of Bury St Edmunds Abbey', *BAA: Bury*, pp. 1-15; esp. 8-12. See also Stephen Heywood, 'Aspects of the Romanesque Church of Bury St Edmunds in their Regional Context', *BAA: Bury*, pp. 16-21; esp. 19-21.

<sup>451</sup> *Gesta Sacristarum*, Arnold, *Memorials*, II. 289-90.

were based.<sup>452</sup> Although it is not known which abbey first installed bronze doors, the commissioning of a similar pair for Saint-Denis by Abbot Suger (1122-51) attests to their association with high-status royal shrines. Suger's commentary on the 'cast and gilded doors' explains their symbolic significance, which at Saint-Denis was conveyed to pilgrims by inscriptions on the doors:

Whosoever thou art, if thou seekest to extol the glory of these doors,  
Marvel not at the gold and the expense but at the craftsmanship of the  
work,  
Bright is the noble work; but, being nobly bright, the work  
Should brighten the minds, so that they may travel, through the true  
lights,  
To the True Light where Christ is the true door.  
In what manner it be inherent in this world the golden door defines:  
The dull mind rises to truth through that which is material  
And, in seeing this light, is resurrected from its former submersion.<sup>453</sup>

It is probable that the doors at Bury were similarly gilded. The gilding is particularly significant as it represents the light of God by which the minds of pilgrims are illuminated and brought to truth. At Bury this would be particularly effective as pilgrims emerged from the darkness beneath St James' gate to be confronted with the blazing brightness of the doors.

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<sup>452</sup> James notes that bronze doors seem to have been more common in Southern Italy and suggests that Anselm may have been seeking to emulate examples he encountered whilst Abbot of St Saba's, where he possibly met Master Hugo and subsequently brought him to Bury (James, *On the Abbey Church*, p. 128). In contrast, Zarnecki suggests that Master Hugo originated from Lower Lorraine. Bronze doors are not known in this region but some have been related to Mosan art (George Zarnecki, *English Romanesque Lead Sculpture: Lead Fonts of the Twelfth Century* (London: Alec Tiranti, 1957), pp. 7-8, 25 n. 11). The debate is summarised by Elizabeth C. Parker, 'Master Hugo as Sculptor: A Source for the Style of the Bury Bible', *Gesta*, vol. 20, no. 1 (1981): Essays in Honour of Harry Bober, 99-109; 99-100. For the bronze doors in the context of other metalworking at Bury see Marian Campbell, 'Medieval Metalworking and Bury St Edmunds', *BAA: Bury*, pp. 69-80.

<sup>453</sup> Abbot Suger, *On the Abbey Church of Saint-Denis and its Art Treasures*, ed. and trans. Erwin Panofsky (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1948), pp. 47-9.

**Figs. 58-9 Plans of the abbey church, Bury St Edmunds<sup>454</sup>**

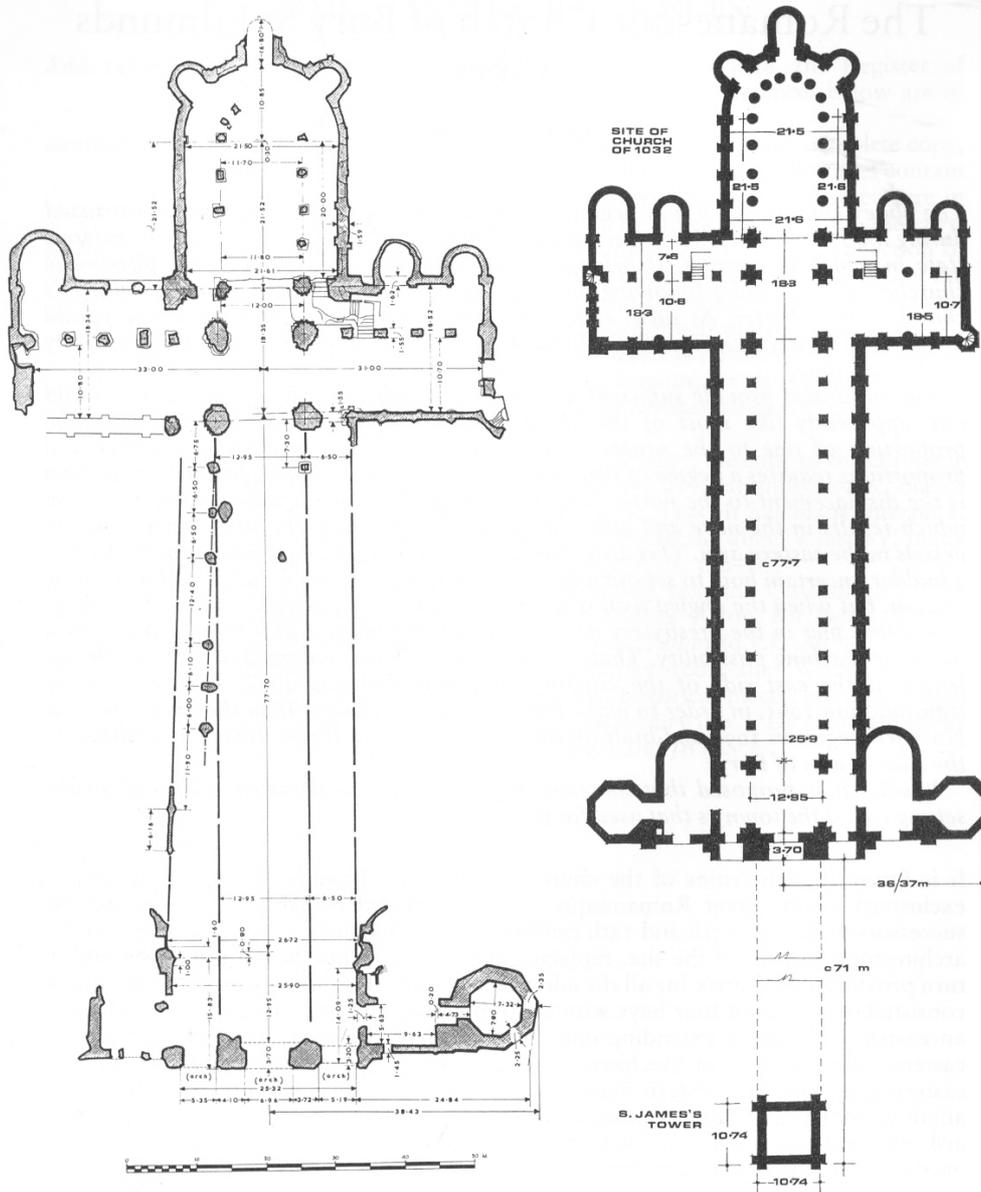


Fig. 58. Left: Plan of remains of the abbey church. Right: Reconstructed schematic plan of the abbey church with dimensions of surviving parts.

<sup>454</sup> Plans from Eric Fernie, 'The Romanesque Church of Bury St Edmunds Abbey', in BAA: *Bury*, pp. 1-2, Figs. 1, 2 and 4.

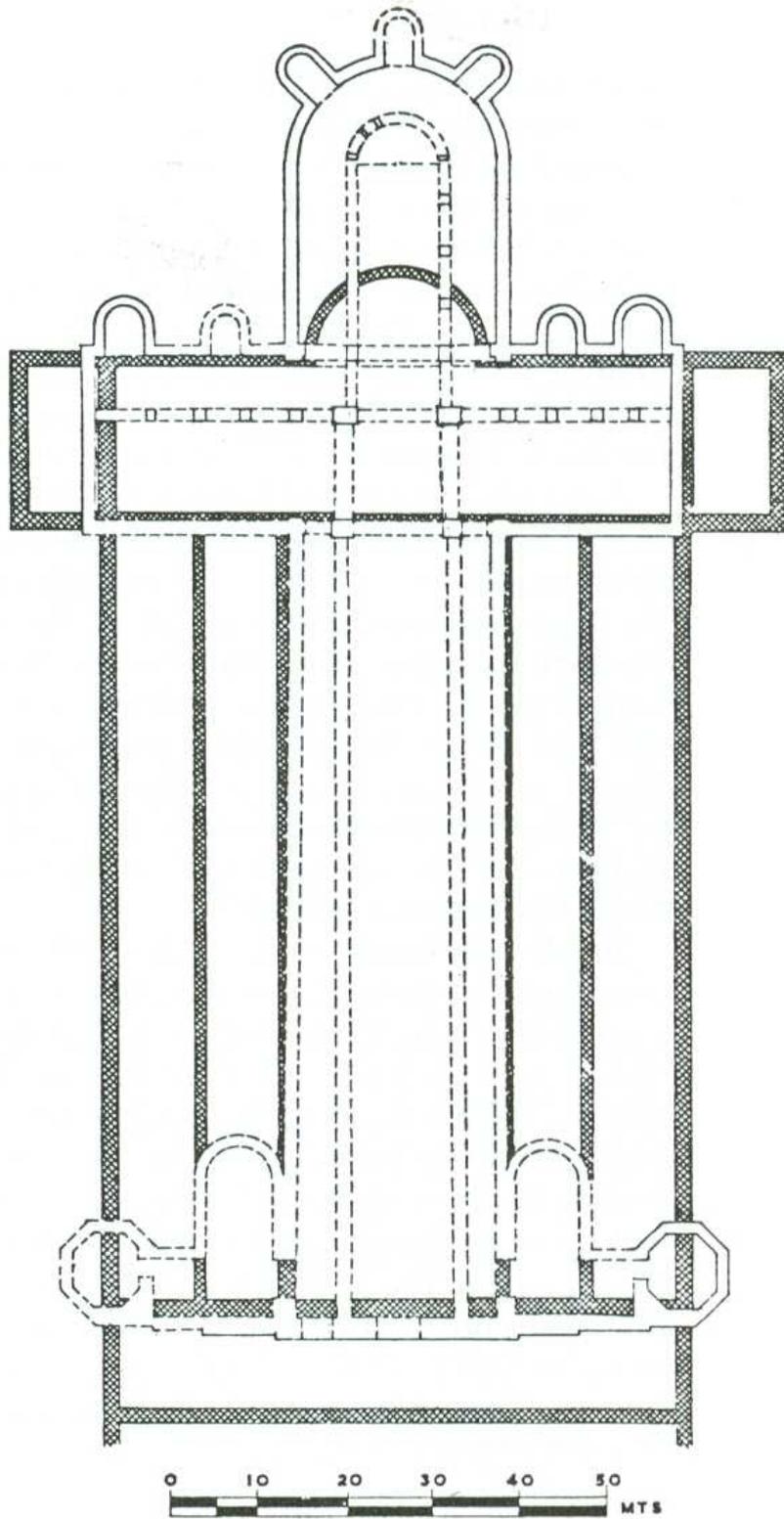


Fig. 59. Bury St Edmunds abbey church plan laid over Old St Peter's, Rome, to the same scale.

**Fig. 60 St James' tower, Bury St Edmunds**



**Fig. 61 The remains of the west front of the abbey church, Bury St Edmunds**



Upon entering the church pilgrims would encounter a multitude of sights and sounds and smells. As Blick and Tekippe affirm, pilgrimage was always largely a visual experience:

The story of pilgrimage and its practice cannot be told without thoughtful consideration of the visual culture developed to enhance and propagate the cults of saints in Europe. These physical objects helped the pilgrim to experience the sacred place. Certain aspects of pilgrimage sites signalled nuances of meaning and importance to visitors. The architectural forms, shrines, altars, wall paintings, stained glass, and sculpture coalesced; dignifying and enhancing the sacred spaces, thereby eliciting appropriate responses from devotees.<sup>455</sup>

Recovering the responses, appropriate or otherwise, of individual pilgrims is in most instances unachievable, but in addition to acknowledging the tangible impact upon pilgrims this quotation alludes to the opportunity afforded to the guardians of a shrine to determine the presentation of a saint in a unique environment. Although pilgrimage was by no means a universal experience it was more readily accessible for the vast majority of people in the medieval West than the rare and precious manuscripts containing Edmund's *vitae* and posthumous deeds. Even for those few with access to the textual cult in manuscript form, pilgrimage to the shrine would have constituted a distinct cultic experience. At the shrine St Edmund was encountered in public and his saintly identity was primarily mediated through the visual and auditory. This chapter will therefore explore the experience of pilgrimage to Bury St Edmunds, with particular emphasis upon how the architectural and artistic context in which the shrine existed contributed to the development of Edmund's saintly identity.

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<sup>455</sup> Blick and Tekippe, eds., *Art and Architecture*, 'Introduction', xvi.

### From 'Sutton' to Beodricesworth

Bury St Edmunds is the primary site associated with Edmund's cult, but before exploring in detail the nature of the pilgrimage experience at Bury it is important to note that this was not the location of St Edmund's initial burial.<sup>456</sup> Abbo claims that once the Danish army had retreated, Edmund's surviving Christian followers retrieved his severed head from the wolf assiduously guarding it and reunited it with his body, to which it was miraculously rejoined. They buried the now intact corpse in the woods near the site of his demise.<sup>457</sup> According to Abbo the East Anglians erected a 'chapel of rude construction' over Edmund's grave, where his body rested undisturbed for 'many years'.<sup>458</sup> However, once the 'conflagration of war and the mighty storms of persecution were over', the people of East Anglia turned their attention to the resting place of their erstwhile king. A bright light could be seen emanating from the chapel, and miracles were reported to have occurred (above, Fig. 31). Although Abbo does not elaborate upon the nature of these miraculous happenings, the version of *De Miraculis* commonly attributed to Abbot Samson cites a particular occurrence as the decisive moment in the establishment of Edmund's miracle working reputation. A blind man, led by his boy, had taken shelter in the wooden hut containing the tomb. Suddenly, a bright light filled the chapel, whereupon the blind man recovered his sight.<sup>459</sup> Abbo reports that as news of this wondrous occurrence spread, the people of East Anglia built a church at Beodricesworth (the name of the settlement which later became known as Bury St Edmunds, or 'St Edmund's burgh') of 'immense size, with storeys admirably constructed of wood'.<sup>460</sup> Edmund's remains were translated to Beodricesworth with 'great magnificence', and upon the opening of the coffin the body was found to be intact and uncorrupted, despite the passing of many years.<sup>461</sup> Edmund's intercessory ability was thus firmly established. The perceived

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<sup>456</sup> For a summary of the on-going debate surrounding the location of the martyrdom see above, Introduction, p. 34, n. 27.

<sup>457</sup> Abbo *Passio*, XIV; Hervey, *Corolla*, pp. 43-5.

<sup>458</sup> Abbo *Passio*, XIV; Hervey, *Corolla*, p. 45.

<sup>459</sup> Samson, *De Miraculis*, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, I. 109-10.

<sup>460</sup> Abbo *Passio*, XIV; Hervey, *Corolla*, p. 45.

<sup>461</sup> Abbo *Passio*, XIV-XV; Hervey, *Corolla*, pp. 45-7.

significance of this event is reflected by its illustration in one of the Pierpoint Morgan initials (New York, Pierpoint Morgan Library, MS M. 736, fol. 26v), one of the few narrative scenes which accompanies the *miracula* (above, Fig. 32).

In addition to emphasising this particular element of his saintly identity, the translation of Edmund's body was fundamental to the establishment of his sanctity as a whole. Prior to the controls over the canonisation process exerted by the papacy from the twelfth century, the act of translation was closely bound up with the proclamation of an individual's sanctity, with the physical act of moving their bodily remains to a new location symbolically representing and attesting to their new spiritual status.<sup>462</sup> Translation frequently involved elevation as well as relocation of the relics, the rationale for which may clearly be seen in the indignant complaint of the chronicler reflecting on the delay in the translation of St Erkenwald's remains, who protests that 'someone who shines forth so gloriously in the heavens should surely not be buried in such a foul garment as the earth'.<sup>463</sup> Ben Nilson notes that although high status tombs in general became taller and more elaborate during the course of the Middle Ages to the extent that architecturally and artistically they came to rival shrines, the bodies of the non-saintly usually remained buried beneath the level of the floor, with the elaborate tombs serving as coverings rather than containers.<sup>464</sup> This reflects the desire of the devout to honour the bodies of the sacred dead, removing them from the all-too temporal muck eloquently described by Erkenwald's chronicler. Physical elevation is also indicative of spiritual elevation as the saints are literally and morally closer to God. They occupy a liminal location, with their elevation above the earth symbolising their triumph over worldly concerns but the resting place of their remains upon a shrine base retaining their connection with the world of their devotees, ensuring

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<sup>462</sup> For papal controls over canonisation see Eric W. Kemp, *Canonization and Authority in the Western Church* (London: Oxford University Press, 1948).

<sup>463</sup> *The Saint of London: The Life and Miracles of St Erkenwald*, ed. and trans. E. Gordon Whately (Binghamton, New York: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1989), pp. 119-20.

<sup>464</sup> Ben Nilson, *Cathedral Shrines of Medieval England*, (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1998), p. 18.

the saint's ability to hear the prayers of the faithful and intercede on their behalf.

Edmund's first translation must have taken place in the earlier part of the tenth century, as in 945, Edmund, king of England (939-46), and namesake of the East Anglian martyr, donated the town of Beodricesworth to the church of St Edmund, making it one of the richest in the country. In 1020 King Cnut, perhaps in an act of expiation for his Viking ancestors' murder of St Edmund, and possibly in fear of the saint's supposed role in the death of Cnut's father, Sweyn, sanctioned the replacement of the community of secular priests with Benedictine monks and the building of a new church for the monastery, or at least the extension of the existing one, which was consecrated by Archbishop Æthelnoth in 1032.<sup>465</sup> In common with many saints, Edmund was re-translated on a number of occasions. After the Conquest, Abbot Baldwin began to build a great new church for the abbey, and Edmund's relics were translated on 29 April 1095, presided over by Walkelin, bishop of Winchester (d. 1098) and Ranulf Flambard (c. 1060-1128).<sup>466</sup> The major part of the Romanesque building was probably completed by 1142, and whilst alterations and additions were made throughout the following centuries, the Romanesque fabric remained the core of the church.<sup>467</sup> Edmund's translation took place in the context of the consecration of many of the great Anglo-Norman churches, events often accompanied by the translation of relics: St Augustine's, Canterbury received numerous relics in 1091<sup>468</sup>; several years earlier, in 1088, Paulinus was translated into the new cathedral of Rochester<sup>469</sup>; Winchester was consecrated in 1095, although the translation of St Swithun was delayed for several months,<sup>470</sup> The translation of saints as a result of building campaigns was often

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<sup>465</sup> This is stated in one of the marginal notes in the Easter Tables, opposite years 1032-5, in the mid-eleventh century Bury Psalter, now MS Reg. Lat. 12 in the Vatican Library, f. 17v. Cited in Gransden, *A History of the Abbey*, p. 106.

<sup>466</sup> Hermann, *De Miraculis*, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, I, pp. 86-91.

<sup>467</sup> See Fernie, 'The Romanesque Church', BAA: *Bury*, pp. 1-15.

<sup>468</sup> The translations were described by Goscelin of Saint-Bertin, '*Historia translationis Sancti Augustini Episcopi*', ed. Jacques-Paul Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, clv, coll. 33-34.

<sup>469</sup> J. Philip McAleer, *Rochester Cathedral, 604-1540: An Architectural History* (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 1999), pp. 17, 45.

<sup>470</sup> John Crook, 'St Swithun of Winchester', in *Winchester Cathedral: Nine Hundred Years, 1093-1993*, ed. John Crook (Chichester: Phillimore, 1993), pp. 57-68.

a matter of architectural necessity as the new layout and dimensions might not accommodate the saint in his or her previous location, and a new site might be desirable in order to facilitate pilgrimage. Such events could also be symbolic. Nilson suggests that when a disruption in the history of the church occurred, particularly in the wake of the Norman invasion, its shrine became a symbol of the past:

The new ecclesiastical hierarchy linked itself to the holiness and prestige of its Anglo-Saxon predecessors by ostentatiously translating the old saints into newly re-built churches. They thereby acquired the saint as patron and linked themselves with the entire history of the see and its possessions, negating the discontinuity of tradition and reaffirming the ancient heritage of the church.<sup>471</sup>

Thus it was not just the location to which the saint was moved that was significant, but the implied authority that this bestowed upon those initiating the move. There are numerous examples of translations which are described as being carried out against the wishes of the saint or in an inappropriate fashion. In one instance in late twelfth-century Worcester a number of people are reported to have experienced visions of St Wulfstan (c. 1008-95) demanding that his body be translated. Believing he was enacting the saint's wishes, one night in 1198 Bishop John (1196-8) opened the tomb in the presence of the convent and placed the bones in a newly prepared shrine and the accompanying vestments and ornaments in another. However, John died three weeks later, and the saint appeared in a vision to explain that this was punishment for carrying out the translation without papal approval and without due reverence.<sup>472</sup> Whilst this says as much about the increasing papal control over canonisation (the translation took place five years before Wulfstan's formal recognition as a saint and was therefore not officially sanctioned) it also serves to illustrate the important symbolic function of translation as if the saint

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<sup>471</sup> Nilson, *Cathedral Shrines*, p. 19. See also Paul A. Hayward, 'Translation-narratives in post-Conquest hagiography and English resistance to the Norman Conquest', *Anglo-Norman Studies*, xxi (1999), 67-93.

<sup>472</sup> This incident is cited in Emma Mason, *St Wulfstan of Worcester, c. 1008-1095* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1990), p. 278.

in question objected then the consequence were likely to be dire; a similar dialectic may be seen in the incident when Edmund intervened to prevent his forced translation, amounting to kidnap, by the Bishop of London.<sup>473</sup>

Although the location of Edmund's initial burial remains uncertain, more is known about the placement of his remains once they were removed to Beodricsworth. His corpse, along with the 'bera' upon which it had been transported, were housed in a rotunda in the monks' cemetery, commonly associated with the church built by Cnut which was accommodated into Baldwin's Romanesque church and stood in the angle between the north transept and the choir until it was demolished in 1275 to make way for the building of the new Lady Chapel founded by Simon de Luton (1257-79).<sup>474</sup> Edmund's body was by this time in the presbytery and the secondary relics remaining in the *rotunda* were removed to a chapel in the monks' cemetery to the south of the abbey church.<sup>475</sup> A circular centrally planned church was a relatively common form for a royal mausoleum or martyrium, the former based upon the prototype of the imperial chapel at Aachen, and the latter derived from the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem.<sup>476</sup> As Gransden notes, a circular chapel was therefore particularly appropriate for St Edmund's remains, invoking simultaneously two fundamental elements of his sanctity within its architectural form.<sup>477</sup>

Upon the completion and dedication of Abbot Baldwin's great Romanesque church, Edmund's body was translated into the presbytery, the most common setting for a major shrine. Despite a series of remodellings and replacements, it is apparent that the shrine remained in this location for the remainder of the life of the abbey.<sup>478</sup> In common with the placing of shrines in most Anglo-

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<sup>473</sup> Arnold, *Memorials*, I. 45; 123-5.

<sup>474</sup> See Appendix 5.

<sup>475</sup> 'rotunde capelle S. Eadmundi in cimiterio monachorum ex parte aquilonali presbiterii, in quo corpus S. Eadmundi requieuit ante translacionem suam', College of Arms, MS Arundel 30, folio 8v. See also *Bury Chronicle*, p. 58.

<sup>476</sup> See Richard Gem, 'Towards an Iconography of Anglo-Saxon Architecture', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 46 (1983), 1-18; 9-12.

<sup>477</sup> Antonia Gransden, *A History of The Abbey*, p. 107.

<sup>478</sup> See *Incendium Ecclesiae*, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, III, pp. 283-7.

Norman churches, St Edmund's shrine was located behind the high altar.<sup>479</sup> In his account of the fire of 23 June 1198, Jocelin of Brakelond mentions that a great rood beam, which also supported reliquaries and from which reliquaries were also suspended, had 'by God's will' been removed to be renovated with new carvings and replaced with a curtain which was destroyed in the fire.<sup>480</sup> John Crook suggests that the beam is most likely to have been supported on the chord piers of the apse, allowing the shrine to be more precisely located.<sup>481</sup>

### Sacred immanence

The reason for Edmund's translation to Bury was his manifestation of miraculous abilities and the resulting need to honour his remains in a more fitting location. Theoretically, miracles could occur in any location, but the perceived power of relics as sites of particular miraculous potency was a persistent and influential trope in the medieval cult of saints. The concept of 'holy radiation', whereby the saint's power was most potent in close proximity to his/her relics, provided the ultimate rationale for medieval pilgrimage, along with the understanding that visiting the saint in person evinced a suitable commitment to, and faith in, the saint's powers. The so-called 'holy hole' at Winchester leading under the feretory platform, which Crook suggests allowed pilgrims to 'crawl beneath the platform, presumably in order to absorb the holy radiance emanating from Swithun's remains' is a particularly striking example of the belief that proximity to saintly remains was of the highest importance (Fig. 62).<sup>482</sup> It is therefore useful to consider the extent to which the rhetoric of relics formed a part of the construction of Edmund's sanctity.

The monks of Bury, in common with the keepers of many shrines, were keen to remind the faithful of the benefits of visiting the saint in person (undoubtedly

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<sup>479</sup> On the positioning of shrines see Nilson, *Cathedral Shrines*, pp. 63-73.

<sup>480</sup> Jocelin, *Chronicle*, p. 95

<sup>481</sup> John Crook, 'The Architectural Setting of the Cult of St Edmund in the Abbey Church, 1095-1539', in *BAA: Bury*, pp. 34-44; p. 38.

<sup>482</sup> John Crook, 'The Romanesque East Arm and Crypt of Winchester Cathedral', *Journal of the British Archaeological Association* 142 (1989), 1-36; 19.

**Fig. 62 Winchester retro choir with the 'holy hole' in the background**



mindful of the financial benefits which this brought to their communities in the form of donations and offerings), and the collections of Edmund's miracles include a number of individuals who appeal for help from afar but are fully healed only when they make the journey to Bury. A knight of Lindsey, for example, suffers a paralytic seizure, but is partially cured after experiencing a vision of St Edmund. He asks to be carried on a litter towards Bury and on the way, in Hoyland, his former health is entirely restored.<sup>483</sup> Abbo of Fleury reminds his readers that St Edmund's power was likely to be most potent at the location of his burial on account of the perceived relationship between a saint and his or her remains:

It is fully proved in his [St Edmund's] case (as in that of all the other saints who already reign with Christ) that though his spirit be in the enjoyment of heavenly glory, yet it has the power to revisit the body and is not by day or night far separated from the place where the body lies, in union with which it has earned the joys of blessed immortality, of which even now it has the fruition.<sup>484</sup>

The notion of Edmund occupying a liminal location between this world and the next is depicted in the last of the Morgan miniatures (New York, Pierpoint Morgan Library, MS M. 736, fol. 22v). Crowned by angels leaning down from heaven and venerated by monks reaching up from below, Edmund exists in the space between (above, Fig. 29).

The relationship between the saint and his remains is frequently expressed in Edmund's violent defence of his relics and punishment of those who mistreated them. In an incident analogous to the punishment of the eight thieves who attempted to rob the abbey church, Hermann first recounts the occasion of an unexpected visit to the abbey by Edward the Confessor. The king brought with him both English and Danish retainers and desired that they should enjoy the

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<sup>483</sup> Samson, *De Miraculis*, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, I, pp. 196-9.

<sup>484</sup> Abbo *Passio*, XVIII; Hervey, *Corolla*, p. 55.

abbey's hospitality together.<sup>485</sup> Osgod Clapa, a Danish lord of Edward's household, swaggered into the church the morning after their arrival, his arms adorned with bracelets and brandishing his war axe. This disrespectful behaviour offended the saint and the presence of a Dane arrayed for battle perhaps stirred unpleasant memories for St Edmund. Osgod Clapa was struck with madness and King Edward arrived in the church to find his steward raving. The monastic community intervened, praying on behalf of the Dane, and Osgod's composure was restored. In addition to attesting once again to St Edmund's dislike of those who violated the sanctity of his shrine, this episode also emphasises the role of the monastic community in the rehabilitation of the afflicted, offering a strong incentive for those who sought St Edmund's help to visit the saint in person, and presumably also make an offering to demonstrate their gratitude.

The impact of St Edmund's enforcement of the highest standards of care of his remains was felt beyond the bounds of the Liberty and helped to ensure its continued independence. Jocelin cites the example of the attempts to raise the ransom to free Richard I from imprisonment in Germany, when the question of whether St Edmund's shrine should be partly stripped to pay the ransom was argued before the Barons of the Exchequer. The abbot of Bury refused to authorise this, but invited any who dared to come to the abbey and attempt to remove the precious materials. Each judge replied with an oath, 'I shall not go', 'Nor I. St Edmund vents his rage on the distant and the absent: how much greater will his fury be on those close at hand who seek to rob him of his clothing.'<sup>486</sup> The chronicler concludes that whilst there was 'not one treasure in England that was not given or exchanged for money' the shrine of St Edmund remained intact.<sup>487</sup>

The importance of the preservation of Edmund's remains to his saintly identity is apparent on occasions when this miracle was called into question. The

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<sup>485</sup> Hermann, *De Miraculis*, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, I, pp. 54-6.

<sup>486</sup> Jocelin, *Chronicle*, p. 86.

<sup>487</sup> Jocelin, *Chronicle*, p. 86.

version of *De Miraculis* commonly attributed to Abbot Samson includes an incident which occurred during the abbacy of Leofstan (1044-65), in which a woman from Winchester who was mute visited Bury in the hope of a cure. She was duly healed by the saint and also visited by him in a series of visions, in which Edmund complained about the monks' neglect of his shrine. Having restored her speech, perhaps to enable her to pass on this message, Edmund exhorted the woman to chide the monks on his behalf. The grateful woman obediently did so, and in response to her words Abbot Leofstan decided to inspect Edmund's remains, perhaps concerned that they, as well as the fabric of the shrine, had suffered. The monk Egelwyn, a former keeper of the shrine who removed the saint's body to London to protect it from the Viking raids of the early eleventh century, now a very old man, was summoned and verified that the corpse was indeed St Edmund's body. Not content that the corpse appeared intact 'and differed little from a living body', Abbot Leofstan resolved upon another test. Ordering one of the monks, Thurstan, to take hold of the feet, the abbot grasped the head, and the two monks pulled in opposite directions. The corpse remained whole, but St Edmund, understandably irritated by this impudent rough handling, retaliated. Abbot Leofstan was struck with a temporary blindness and dumbness (wryly appropriate given the healing of the mute woman which initiated the incident), and suffered a permanent withering of both the hands which he had irreverently placed upon the saint.<sup>488</sup>

An interesting contrast may be seen between this account of the inspection of Edmund's body, and a similar moment in the *vita* of St Æthelthryth. A Danish raider, hearing the legend of St Æthelthryth's post-mortem incorruption, made an opening in the shrine and forced a stick inside to see if he could determine the presence of the body.<sup>489</sup> The imagery of the narrative is redolent of sexual transgression or rape, with the saint's female body vulnerable to penetration and transgression. Monika Otter suggests that this is an allegory for the

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<sup>488</sup> Samson, *De Miraculis*, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, I, pp. 131-4.

<sup>489</sup> *Liber Eliensis*, ed. E.O. Blake, Camden Third Series, no. 92 (London: Royal Historical Society, 1962), pp. 55-6 and 229 (the incident is recounted twice).

potentially problematic presence of an intact female body in the midst of a male community and is meant as a warning to the monks not to be tempted (this is powerfully reinforced by the blinding of the Dane, who is therefore unable to see the saint's body, let alone touch it).<sup>490</sup> It is notable that although similar intrusions are made upon the bodies of Edmund and Æthelthryth, it is only in relation to the latter that the language of sexual transgression is deployed. Once again, Edmund's corporeal presence is seen as unproblematic and advantageous for his guardian community in comparison to his female Fenland neighbour.

### The incorrupt body

This latter incident indicates that the nature of the relics was also significant. In Edmund's case this was two-fold: Bury claimed to possess the entire corpse (along with various secondary relics) and claimed that the body was intact and undecayed.<sup>491</sup> The claim that the body was intact was doubly significant: it indicated Edmund's chastity and was also a signifier of his special merit. St Æthelthryth similarly evinced her chastity through bodily incorruption and the miraculous post-mortem healing of a wound to the neck. However, whereas her wound was an incision made by a surgeon's knife in an attempt to drain the suppurating growth on her neck, presumably a cut made with skill or at least great care, Edmund's head had been completely severed by the slashing swords of the Danes. It is tempting to read this as an instance of hagiographic 'one-upmanship' in relation to Bury's neighbours at Ely.

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<sup>490</sup> Monika Otter, 'The Temptation of St Æthelthryth', *Exemplaria* 9 (1997), 139-63. See also Blanton, *Signs of Devotion*, pp. 137-8.

<sup>491</sup> Norman Scarfe has suggested that Edmund's apparent bodily incorruption, and indeed that of many other medieval saints described as enjoying similar preservation, may in fact have been the result of embalming or some other similar preservative technique. A useful survey of the evidence is Norman Scarfe, 'The Body of St Edmund; An Essay in Necrobiography', *Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology* xxxi (1969), 303-17. Edmund's intact body is depicted in Harley 2278, fol. 117.

The prevalence of miracles concerning the preservation of Edmund's body attests to the value placed upon this element of Edmund's sanctity by the Bury monks, presumably because they thought it would appeal to and attract pilgrims. The most vivid and compelling example of the role of Edmund's relics in determining his sanctity, both in terms of their preservation and Edmund's ongoing relationship with them, may be found in Jocelin of Brakelond's account of the fire which devastated the abbey church in June 1198.<sup>492</sup> The extent of the damage was such that it was necessary to construct a new shrine casing, in which the relics were placed on 22 November of the same year. However, unbeknownst to the convent, Abbot Samson took this opportunity to examine Edmund's remains. Three days later, in the dead of night 'while the convent slept', Abbot Samson and fourteen specially selected monks, vested in albs, made their way through the darkened abbey church to the presbytery. Proceeding to St Edmund's shrine, they removed the heavy panels of precious metal and lifted out the coffin, placing it carefully on a nearby table. They removed the sixteen long nails which secured the lid and opened the casket to reveal a shrouded corpse which Jocelin claims fitted 'so perfectly' within the coffin, both in length and in breadth, 'that a needle could scarcely have been inserted between the wood and either the head or the feet'. Ordering all but the Sacrist and Walter the Physician, the two senior monks in attendance, to stand back, Abbot Samson stepped forward and began to remove the wrappings which covered the corpse:

The abbot, then, looking closely, first came upon a silk cloth covering the whole body, and after that a linen cloth of wonderful whiteness, and over the head a small linen cloth, and then another fine-spun silk cloth, like the veil of a nun. And after that they found the corpse wrapped in linen, and then at last all the features of the Saint's body were visible.<sup>493</sup>

Jocelin reports that when confronted with the martyred king, Abbot Samson was filled with misgiving, perhaps remembering the fate of his predecessor,

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<sup>492</sup> Jocelin, *Chronicle*, pp. 94-102.

<sup>493</sup> Jocelin, *Chronicle*, p. 100.

Abbot Leofstan (1044-65). Having reassured the saint that his intentions were entirely devout, he cautiously proceeded to examine the body, touching St Edmund's eyes and his 'very large and prominent nose', feeling his breast and his arms, and raising his left hand and placing his fingers between the saint's. He counted the toes upon feet which he found to be 'stiffly upright, as of a man who had died that very day'. The head was securely joined to the body, and a little raised on a small cushion. In order to verify his inspection he called forth six of the monks, whereupon the others also rushed forward to witness the 'marvels' within the coffin. This done, they re-wrapped the coffin in the same way and returned it to the shrine, atop a 'precious new silk cloth' given to the abbey that year by Archbishop Hubert of Canterbury. When the coffin had been transferred to the new shrine three days before, 'a golden angel the length of a man's foot' bearing a golden sword in one hand and a banner in the other had been found attached to the coffin above St Edmund's heart, with an inscription above the figure identifying him as St Michael whose image 'guards the sacred corpse'. Next to the golden angel the abbot now placed a silk box containing a 'parchment document written in English' by Egelwyn, a previous guardian of the shrine, to which the abbot added a document detailing the night's events and the findings of the inspection. Jocelin notes that immediately beneath the image of St Michael was an opening in the coffin lid through which he claims previous wardens of the shrine would touch the body, presumably to ascertain its continuing presence and preservation, all the while prevented from wrongdoing by the protective presence of the archangel. Jocelin also adds the curious observation that at each end of the coffin were two iron rings, which he likens to those found 'on a Norse chest', a particularly interesting detail considering the perpetrators of Edmund's demise and speculation as to the initial promotion of his cult in Danish-ruled East Anglia.<sup>494</sup> Following the placing of the documents the panels were carefully re-joined to the shrine and St Edmund's remains were once more left in peace.

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<sup>494</sup> H.E. Butler suggests that this may have been a gift from the archbishop of Trondheim who visited the abbey in 1181/2. *The Chronicle of Jocelin of Brakelond*, ed. and trans. H.E. Butler (London & Edinburgh: Nelson's Medieval Classics, 1949, rpt. 1951), p. 15.

## The shrine

Clearly determined to preserve the abbey's investment in the new shrine and its precious contents, Abbot Samson dismissed the wardens of St Edmund's shrine and of the nearby St Botolph's shrine, appointed new wardens and devised regulations 'for the better and more diligent care of the sanctuaries'. It was also at this time that the area between the shrine and the high altar, previously covered by the wooden dais which had been ignited by untended candles, was filled with stone and cement to prevent the risk of fire in the future.

Although ultimately blaming the fire upon the lax management of the custodians of St Edmund's shrine, Jocelin of Brakelond indicates that an alternative explanation for the blaze was disseminated in the aftermath which attributed it to Edmund's dissatisfaction at the care afforded to him by the monks. Jocelin recounts that an unknown 'distinguished person' experienced a vision in which 'the holy martyr Edmund appeared to be lying outside his shrine, groaning, and seemed to say that he had been robbed of his clothes, and that he was emaciated from hunger and thirst, and that his burial-place and the portals of his church were badly cared for.' Abbot Samson concluded that the saint had caused the fire to chastise the monks for their laxity in charitable giving and care of the poor. The monks, however, interpreted the vision differently, blaming Samson's reforms for reducing the standard of living within the monastery by removing many of their privileges and placing the chamber, sacristy and cellary under direct abbatial control with the result that they were 'dying of hunger and thirst'.<sup>495</sup> A delegation sent to Abbot Sampson bemoaned their condition, claiming, 'we...are the naked limbs of St Edmund, and the convent is his naked body, because we have been robbed of our ancient customs and liberties.'<sup>496</sup> It is unlikely to be coincidental that the incident involving Abbot Leofstan is first recorded in the miracle collection compiled during Samson's abbacy. Leofstan acts as a useful antetype, whose

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<sup>495</sup> For Samson's reforms see Jocelin, *Chronicle*, p. 96-8 and Gransden, *A History of the Abbey*, pp. 23-31.

<sup>496</sup> Jocelin, *Chronicle*, p. 97.

mistreatment of St Edmund and subsequent punishment contrasts with Samson's own careful handling and justified his reforms. Locating the first examination in an historically distant period also serves to emphasise the continuing nature of the miracle. The fire supposedly caused by St Edmund facilitated Samson's refurbishment of the abbey and its timely nature must have been seen as a further indication that Samson was acting in the saint's favour. Both incidents reinforce that paying due respect to St Edmund and his physical remains was of the utmost importance. The monks' interpretation of the vision reported to Samson also reveals the symbiotic nature of the relationship between St Edmund and his monastic guardians: just as he expected them to look after him, he also felt their pains when they were mistreated; the monks were the limbs of St Edmund who acted on his behalf in the world, but they were also his protective clothing and nourishment. The anxiety surrounding the condition of Edmund's remains, evinced in the various examinations undertaken, reiterates their fundamental importance to the cult at Bury.

Also evident in this narrative is the importance of the shrine and the physical setting in which Edmund's relics were housed in determining the pilgrimage experience. Although it is not always possible to ascertain the individual motivations of those who visited the abbey of Bury St Edmunds and made offerings at its altars and shrines, for the majority St Edmund is likely to have been the main attraction. The focus of cultic practice at Bury, as at many other pilgrimage sites, was the shrine. Simon Coleman and John Eade explain that the presence of a physical object embodying the cultic figure is an important aspect of the pilgrimage experience:

The culmination of most acts of pilgrimage is arrival at a sacredly charged space...The pilgrim knows that the spiritual summit of the journey has been reached because the sacred is not simply focused in a

specifically marked area, but more particularly is embodied by a specific object or set of objects.<sup>497</sup>

As the container which protected these potent relics from harm and the public gaze, the shrine was the physical manifestation of the wonders within. Sarah Blick and Rita Tekippe suggest that this endowed reliquary shrines with authority in their own right.<sup>498</sup> The often lavish materials from which a shrine was constructed displayed the power of the sainted individual within but were also instrumental in shaping the psychological response of a pilgrim. This was recognised by medieval shrine custodians, and is perhaps most eloquently expressed by Abbot Suger:

The material – gold and precious stones – clothe the object in light, and reflect or make manifest the transcendent, invisible, and all-powerful nature of visibility...Thus, when – out of delight in the beauty of the house of God – the loveliness of the many-coloured gems has called me away from external cares, and worthy meditation has induced me to reflect, transferring that which is material to that which is immaterial, on the diversity of the sacred virtues: then it seems to me that I see myself dwelling, as it were, in some strange region of the universe which neither exists entirely in the slime of the earth nor entirely in the purity of Heaven; and that, by the grace of God, I can be transported from this inferior to that higher world in an anagogic manner.<sup>499</sup>

The appearance and physical splendour of the shrine was therefore a fundamental aspect of the pilgrimage experience.

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<sup>497</sup> Simon Coleman and John Elsner, *Pilgrimage; Past and Present: Sacred Travel and Sacred Space in the World Religions* (London: British Museum Press, 1995), p. 48.

<sup>498</sup> Blick and Tekippe, *Art and Architecture*, I, 'Introduction', xxv.

<sup>499</sup> Abbot Suger, *On the Abbey Church of St Denis*, ed. and trans. Panofsky, pp. 63-5.

**Figs. 63-74 Depictions of Edmund's shrine in Harley 2278**



Fig. 63. Fol. 4v, Henry VI kneeling before the shrine



Fig. 64. Fol. 9, Lydgate kneeling before the shrine



Fig. 65. Fol. 100v, Devotees at the shrine



Fig. 66. Fol. 106, Woman pulled from the shrine by Leofstan's men



Fig. 67. Fol. 108v, Penitential knights



Fig. 68. Fol. 109, Thief attempts to bite a jewel from the shrine



Fig. 69. Fol. 110v, Osgoth the Dane



Fig. 70. Fol. 112v, Egelwyn and the relics are turned away by the inhospitable priest; the relics enter London at Cripplegate



Fig. 71. Fol. 113v, The Bishop of London attempts to translate Edmund's relics



Fig. 72. Fol. 114v, Egelwyn leaves London for Bury with the relics



Fig. 73. Fol. 115, Edmund's relics *en route*



Fig. 74. Fol. 117, Edmund's relics re-enshrined in the abbey church

Ostensibly, reconstructing the appearance of the shrine should be easy as no fewer than twelve of the miniatures accompanying Lydgate's *Lives* include a depiction of the shrine (Figs. 63-74).<sup>500</sup> Nicholas Rogers suggests that these indicate the development of the shrine during the later Middle Ages and are of particular use due to the lack of documentary evidence for the shrine during this period.<sup>501</sup> However, the majority are representations of the shrine at various stages in its history up to the translation of 1095. Only two miniatures purport to represent the shrine as it appeared in the 1430s – fol. 4v depicts the youthful Henry VI praying before the shrine, and fol. 9 depicts Lydgate likewise engaged. The general lack of period-specific depictions must raise the question of the reliability of the artist's information for the appearance of the shrine over four hundred years before he was painting. The existence of an elaborate shrine of the type depicted in the miniatures prior to the translation of 1095 must also be questioned. In an article discussing depictions of the shrine of Thomas Becket on medieval pilgrim badges Sarah Blick poses similar questions as to the accuracy of artistic representations of shrines:

Many medieval artists were not interested in the specifics of the shrine [of Thomas Becket at Canterbury]; rather their goal was to render an ideal 'shrine', either because they had not actually seen it or because an accurate depiction was unimportant.<sup>502</sup>

She concludes that the function of such an image was not to display the shrine with verisimilitude as only a 'general notion of 'shrine' was required' in order to fulfil the function of a pilgrim souvenir.<sup>503</sup> Although clearly a far more complex artefact, one of Lydgate's stated aims for his *Lives* was to act as a 'remembrance' of Henry VI's stay at Bury, thus fulfilling a similar function to a pilgrim badge. In this context it is likely that a precise representation of the

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<sup>500</sup> These may be found on folios: fol. 4v, Henry VI kneeling before the shrine; fol. 9, Lydgate praying at the shrine; fol. 100v; fol. 106; fol. 108v; fol. 109; fol. 110v; fol. 112v; fol. 113v; fol. 114v; fol. 115; fol. 117.

<sup>501</sup> Nicholas Rogers, 'The Bury Artists of Harley 2278 and the Origins of Topographical Awareness in English Art', in *BAA: Bury*, pp. 219-27.

<sup>502</sup> Sarah Blick, 'Reconstructing the Shrine of St Thomas Becket, Canterbury Cathedral', in *Art and Architecture*, ed. Blick and Tekippe, pp. 405-42; pp. 412-3.

<sup>503</sup> Sarah Blick, 'Reconstructing the Shrine', p. 419.

shrine, particularly as it appeared hundreds of years before the young king's visit, was not of primary importance. Henry had seen the shrine recently and could reasonably be expected to remember what it looked like; instead it was intended to provoke a more affective response, encouraging Henry to remember his experience of the shrine and its patron and monastic guardians.

Maintaining the visual consistency of the depiction ensured immediate recognition and identification. The miniatures are probably therefore most useful as an indicator of the mid-fifteenth century convent's perception of the glory and splendour of the shrine and of their attempts to portray this to an important patron.

The early origin and development of shrines in England related to the structure of tombs and burial practices. Burial within a church was reserved for those of the highest status, with tombs eventually being developed into rectilinear stone or wooden chests on the floor of the church, sometimes surmounted by a gabled roof, attested to by Bede in his description of the burial place of St Chad as 'a wooden coffin in the shape of a little house'.<sup>504</sup> Elevation of the bodies of sainted individuals became increasingly common so that shrines, comprising two parts, the feretory and the base, became distinct from tomb chests and marked out their inhabitants as especially deserving of veneration.<sup>505</sup>

Jocelin provides some indication of the structure of the base of Edmund's shrine. He recounts an incident from Abbot Samson's younger years when, following a failed mission to Rome on behalf of the abbey, he was so fearful of the abbot's retribution that when he returned to Bury he took refuge 'under St Edmund's shrine'.<sup>506</sup> This suggests that it took the common form of a *foramina* tomb with a hollow supporting base which enabled the faithful to gain closer access to the reliquary above in order to benefit from the 'holy radiation' of the remains, as illustrated in the well-known image from the Anglo-Norman verse *Life of St Edward the Confessor*, written in England probably in the late 1230s

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<sup>504</sup> Bede, *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, ed. McClure and Collins, IV.3, p. 178.

<sup>505</sup> For the development of tomb forms and burial practices see Nilson, *Cathedral Shrines*, pp. 34-5.

<sup>506</sup> Jocelin, *Chronicle*, pp. 43-5; p. 44.

Figs. 75-6 Foramina shrines



Fig. 75. Cambridge, University Library, Ms. Ee.3.59, Anglo-Norman verse *Life of St Edward the Confessor*, fol. 33r. Pilgrims seeking cures climb into the niches in the base of Edward's shrine



Fig. 76. The base of St Osmund's tomb in Salisbury Cathedral

or early 1240s (Fig. 75).<sup>507</sup> The tomb of Thomas Becket in the crypt at Canterbury Cathedral was encased in this type of structure, and the remains of a similar example at Salisbury (St Osmund) are extant (Fig. 76).<sup>508</sup>

The other component of greater shrines was the feretory or *feretrum*, a term which could refer to various related objects but most commonly pertained to a house-shaped reliquary chest, with a gabled, often ridged, roof: an embellishment on the idea of a coffin. Descriptions of the artwork of English feretra are rare, but the most common decorative scheme seems to have been images of the *life* of the saint on the sides of the feretory, with more universal Christian images occupying the ends. Although there is no record of the overall scheme of St Edmund's shrine, Jocelin implies that in part at least it conformed to this pattern: an image of Christ in Majesty adorned the front of the shrine and Jocelin reports that whilst the silver panels became loose and most of the stones fell out as a result of the fire, the 'golden Majesty' remained stable and intact, and was 'more beautiful after the fire than before, because it was solid gold'.<sup>509</sup> Nicholas Rogers suggests that the overall appearance of the shrine may have resembled early Mosan work such as the shrine of St Hadelin at Visé (Fig. 77).<sup>510</sup> No pre-Reformation English feretra survive, but evidence suggests similarity in shape and detail with Continental examples, and also indicates relative continuity and uniformity in form throughout the Middle Ages. The size of a feretory could vary according to the nature of the relics it housed, with an incorrupt body such as Edmund's requiring larger accommodation than a portion of a saint or a collection of disarticulated bones. Nilson suggests that a feretory for an intact adult corpse would be at least 160cms long, and probably 40-60cms wide.<sup>511</sup> The basic structure of the feretory was usually wooden and was decorated according to the wealth of the shrine and its patrons, with more

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<sup>507</sup> Cambridge University Library, *Ms. Ee.3.59* fol. 33r. For foramina shrines see Nilson, *Cathedral Shrines*, pp. 44-5.

<sup>508</sup> D. Stroud, 'The Cult and Tombs of St Osmund at Salisbury', *The Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Magazine* 78 (1984), 50-2.

<sup>509</sup> Jocelin, *Chronicle*, p. 95.

<sup>510</sup> Hanns Swarzenski, *Monuments of Romanesque Art: The Art of Church Treasures in North-West Europe* (London: Faber and Faber, 1954), fig. 226, pp. 349-51; Peter Lasko, *Ars Sacra, 800-1200* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1972), pp. 181-84, pls. 195-97.

<sup>511</sup> Nilson, *Cathedral Shrines*, p. 35.

**Fig. 77 The shrine of St Hadelin at Visé**



modest shrines painted and sometimes gilded, and the more elaborate encased in precious metal. The decoration of Edmund's shrine clearly reflected his high status as a saint, as Jocelin recounts that it was encased in sheets of silver affixed with nails and encrusted with precious stones, many likely to have been gifts to the shrine. Precious stones were believed to possess magical properties, particularly those of healing, and in addition to their obvious aesthetic attraction their perceived innate qualities added to the attraction of the feretory which they adorned.<sup>512</sup>

Such richly ornamented shrines were tempting targets for thieves, as attested by a number of Edmund's miraculous and wrathful interventions. Although proving himself willing and able to defend his remains, it seems that the monks of Bury sought to assist their saintly patron in deterring intruders. The Harley 2278 miniature of Lydgate praying before the shrine (fol. 9) depicts an iron grille running between circular piers and shutting off the sanctuary from the ambulatory, for which there is archaeological evidence (above, Fig. 64).<sup>513</sup> Defences of this kind, particularly iron grilles or fences, were a commonly employed means of protecting the shrine and its contents (Fig. 78).<sup>514</sup> Security was a serious concern and in some places a watching loft was installed which enabled the guardians of the shrine to observe pilgrims and ensure correct behaviour; examples are extant at Peterborough and St Albans (Fig. 79). It is unknown whether such an arrangement pertained at Bury, but fol. 9 and fol. 109 of Harley 2278 show two monastic custodians of the shrine, and the former also depicts a lay figure in a furred blue gown, reading a book (above, Figs. 64 and 68). He bears a white wand which may suggest that he was employed to

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<sup>512</sup> Nilson, *Cathedral Shrines*, p. 38 cf. *Miracula Erkenwaldi*, p. 220 n. 27

<sup>513</sup> Arthur B. Whittingham, *Bury St Edmunds Abbey, Suffolk* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1971), p. 13.

<sup>514</sup> For the grille at St Albans see Martin Biddle, 'Remembering St Alban: the site of the shrine and the discovery of the twelfth-century Purbeck marble shrine table', in *Alban and St Albans: Roman and Medieval Architecture, Art and Archaeology*, ed. Martin Henig and Phillip Lindley, British Archaeological Association Conference Transactions xxiv (Leeds: British Archaeological Association, 2001), pp. 124-61.

**Figs. 78-9 Protecting shrines**

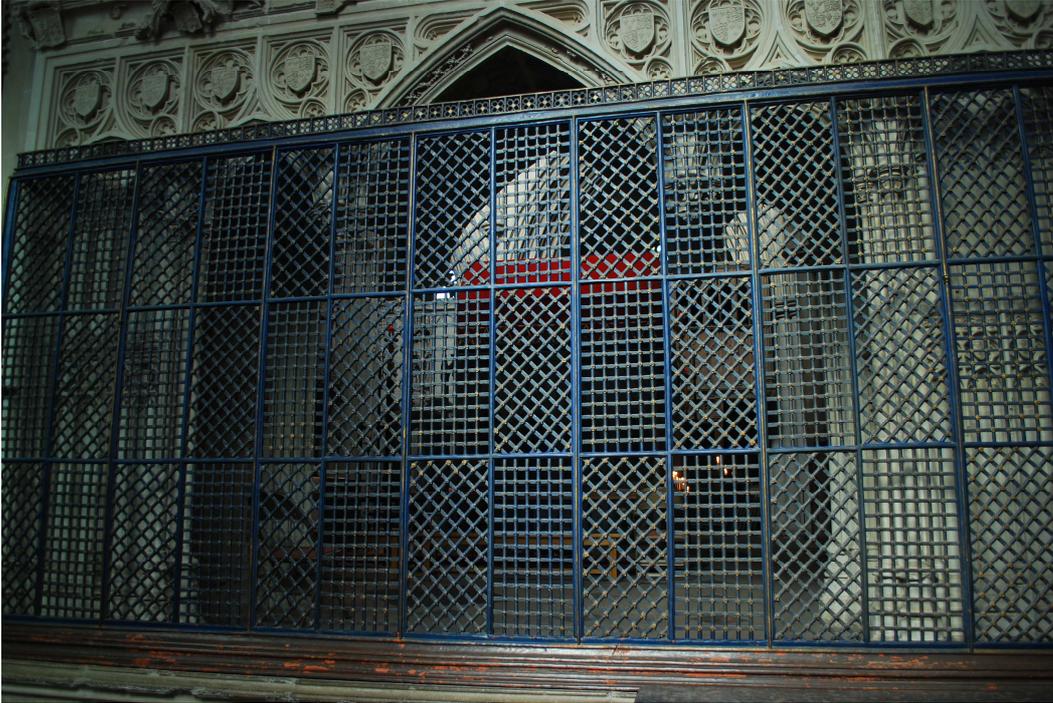


Fig. 78. Thirteenth-century grille in St Albans Cathedral separating the area of the shrine from the ambulatory.



Fig. 79. Fifteenth-century watching loft behind the reconstructed shrine of St Alban.

point out the salient features of the shrine to pilgrims, but he might equally be employed to maintain order amongst visiting pilgrims.<sup>515</sup>

It has been suggested that Henry III gave another entirely new shrine in 1269, although this seems to be based upon an erroneous observation made by J. C. Wall<sup>516</sup>, and Rogers maintains that this in fact relates to the shrine of St Edward the Confessor.<sup>517</sup> It is certainly the case, however, that a number of significant modifications were made to the shrine over the years, which presumably affected, intentionally or otherwise, the experience of a visiting pilgrim. In the late-1190s, for example, Abbot Samson embarked on a campaign of rebuilding and renovation of the precinct and church. Jocelin relates that the abbot was reluctant to refashion the silver frontal of the high altar and other similar panels throughout the abbey church as these had previously been stripped and sent, along with ‘many precious ornaments’, to help pay Richard I’s ransom when he was held hostage in Germany.<sup>518</sup> Instead, Samson ‘concentrated all his efforts on making a most precious canopy above the shrine of the glorious martyr Edmund, so that his work of art would be put in a position from which it could in no circumstances be taken down, and where no man would dare lay a hand on it’.<sup>519</sup> By the later Middle Ages most major shrines were protected with wooden covers that mimicked the shape of the feretory beneath. They were lifted vertically by means of ropes and pulleys, and in addition to protecting the feretory from dust and theft were presumably intended to contribute to the mystery and mystique of the pilgrimage experience by limiting visual access to the holy remains. Its efficacy as a protective covering is attested by the author of the account of the great fire of 1465 which devastated the abbey church, in which he attributes the survival of the shrine to the wooden cover which fell down upon it when the ropes holding the cover

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<sup>515</sup> Erasmus relates that when he visited the shrine of St Thomas at Canterbury, ‘*Prior candida virga demonstrabat contactu singulas gemmas, addends nomen Gallicum, pretium et autorem doni*’ (*Opera Omnia Desiderii Erasmi Roterodami*, 1-3 (Amsterdam, 1972), p. 490.

<sup>516</sup> Nichola Coldstream, for example, cites this suggestion in ‘English Decorated Shrine Bases’, *Journal of the British Archaeological Association* cxxix (1976), 15-34; 25. Cf. James C. Wall, *Shrines of British Saints* (London: Methuen and Co., 1905), p. 221.

<sup>517</sup> Rogers, ‘Origins of Topographical Awareness’, p. 224.

<sup>518</sup> Jocelin, *Chronicle*, pp. 85-6.

<sup>519</sup> Jocelin, *Chronicle*, p. 86.

aloft burnt through.<sup>520</sup> J.J.G. Alexander suggests that the miniature in which Henry VI kneels in prayer to St Edmund depicts the shrine with its cover lowered (above, Fig. 63).<sup>521</sup>

The earlier fire of 1198 also caused widespread damage in the abbey church although, according to Jocelin, it ultimately proved propitious as it ensured that the area around the shrine 'might be more carefully supervised and the abbot's plan carried out more speedily and without delay: this was to place the shrine, with the body of the holy martyr, more safely and more spectacularly in a higher position'.<sup>522</sup> Abbot Samson's plan to 'have marble blocks made for raising and supporting the shrine' conforms with renovations made to numerous other shrines during the twelfth century.<sup>523</sup> Nilson observes that the development of major shrines during the Middle Ages was 'continually upward'.<sup>524</sup> The reliquary containing St Alban's remains was raised up behind the high altar by Abbot Simon (1166-83) and at Winchester during the 1150s Bishop Henry of Blois (1129-71) elevated St. Swithun onto a large platform built into the eastern apse of the Norman Cathedral, with pilgrims able to benefit from proximity to the relics by crawling through the 'holy hole' underneath.<sup>525</sup>

In addition to structural modifications, St Edmund's shrine was also augmented by the gifts of pilgrims. A number of the miniatures in Harley 2278 depict a distinctive purple panel at one end of the shrine (fols. 9, 100v, 109, 117) (above, Figs. 64, 65, 68 and 74). Scarfe suggests that this may have been intended to allow inspection of the contents of the shrine, but Rogers' suggestion, that it was an inset piece of semi-precious stone such as porphyry, seems more likely.<sup>526</sup> It is tempting to connect this detail with the gift of the Bury man Wulmar, revived from a trance by St Edmund on his return from

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<sup>520</sup> *Incendium Ecclesiae*, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, III, p. 286.

<sup>521</sup> J.J.G. Alexander, 'Painting and Manuscript Illumination for Royal Patrons in the Later Middle Ages', in *English Court Culture in the Later Middle Ages*, ed. V.J. Scattergood, J.W. Sherborne (London, 1983), pp. 141-62; pl. 11.

<sup>522</sup> Jocelin, *Chronicle*, p. 96.

<sup>523</sup> Jocelin, *Chronicle*, p. 96. See Crook, 'The Architectural Setting', p. 41

<sup>524</sup> Nilson, *Cathedral Shrines*, p. 62.

<sup>525</sup> Crook, 'The Romanesque East Arm and Crypt of Winchester Cathedral', 19.

<sup>526</sup> Scarfe, 'The Body of St Edmund', caption to pl. xlviii; Rogers, 'Origins of Topographical Awareness', p. 224.

Rome, who offered ‘some marble’ at the shrine in thanks for his recovery.<sup>527</sup> The custom of giving jewellery towards the adornment of the shrine continued into the fifteenth century. Wills proved in 1457 and 1463, for example, each make provision for such donations.<sup>528</sup> Henry III made several gifts of gold, including ‘a fine crown with four flowers on its rim, worth £10 in all’, to be attached to the shrine.<sup>529</sup> In 1285 Edward I granted fines for trespass against the assize of weights and measures to the abbey ‘*reparacioni et decorationi feretri sancti Eadmundi*’.<sup>530</sup> Henry de Lacy, Earl of Lincoln, gave two gold crosses, one worth 6s 8d, which were affixed to the shrine, as was a carbuncle.<sup>531</sup> The miniature depicting Lydgate praying before the shrine (fol. 9) shows four crosses, one at each corner of the gabled feretory, two of them perhaps the gift of Henry de Lacy (above Fig. 64). The same miniature appears to depict three dimensional figures along the edge of the roof, possibly votive additions. A knight on horseback is affixed to the crest of the feretory, and two similar figures are visible on fol. 109 (above, Fig. 68). Edmund’s *miracula* indicate his particular intercessory patronage of the knightly classes in the immediate post-Conquest period and it is possible that these figures are intended to depict the gift of such an individual in gratitude for Edmund’s intervention. However, if we continue to suppose that the majority of the Harley miniatures depict an idealised or timeless shrine then the representation of the pair of figures on fol. 109 is ambiguous. Rather than being attached to the shrine they seem emanate from either end of the gabled roof.

The context of this miniature is significant as it depicts Edmund’s violent retribution against a man who attempted to steal a jewel from the shrine by

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<sup>527</sup> Hermann, *De Miraculis*, Arnold, *Memorials*, I, pp. 80-3 and Samson, *De Miraculis*, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, I, pp. 160-2.

<sup>528</sup> *Wills and Inventories from the Registers of the Commissary of Bury St Edmund’s and the Archdeacon of Sudbury*, ed. Samuel Tymms, Camden Society os xlix (London: Printed for the Camden Society, 1850), pp. 13, 35.

<sup>529</sup> For Henry III and the cult of St Edmund see Gransden, *A History of the Abbey*, pp. 245-8. On Henry’s gifts to Bury see Gransden, ‘The Abbey of Bury St Edmunds and national politics in the Reigns of King John and Henry III’, *Monastic Studies* 11 (1991), 83-86.

<sup>530</sup> *The Chronicle of the Abbey*, ed. Gransden, p. 83.

<sup>531</sup> James, *On the Abbey*, p. 136.

biting it off, only for his teeth to become securely attached.<sup>532</sup> The mounted figures resonate with Edmund's role as defender of his abbey and may depict his avenging spirit emanating forth to smite the unlucky thief. Edmund is consistently represented as an armed knight in depictions of his smiting of Sweyn.<sup>533</sup> He is similarly described in one of the few miracles recounted by Jocelin in which Henry of Essex, an affluent knight, despite his wealth refused to donate to Edmund's shrine and 'even used force and illegality to dispossess the church of an annual rent of 5s, which he appropriated for himself'.<sup>534</sup> However, Jocelin recalls that 'the good fortune that had smiled on him in these and similar activities now intervened to bring him unending tribulation, and behind the illusion of a happy beginning worked out a sorrowful end for him'.<sup>535</sup> In March 1163 Robert de Montfort, Henry's 'kinsman and his equal in birth and manhood' accused him of treason and cowardice whilst accompanying Henry II on his Welsh campaign of 1157. Henry of Essex refused to accept the charge and Robert refused to withdraw it, so the king ordered that the matter be settled by trial by combat. The knights met at Reading 'on an island not far from the abbey'.<sup>536</sup> Jocelin recounts that both fought hard but Robert began to gain the advantage. As Henry's strength failed he experienced a vision:

Henry looked round and was astonished to see, at the water's edge, the figure of the glorious king and martyr, Edmund, dressed in armour and apparently floating in mid-air. He was looking at Henry sternly, shaking his head repeatedly, and gesturing angrily and indignantly in a threatening fashion...The sight of [St Edmund] alarmed and frightened Henry, and he recollected that wickedness in the past leads to shame in the present. So becoming quite desperate, he turned to attack, abandoning defence in favour of aggression. But the more powerfully he struck out, the more powerfully he was himself struck, and the more

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<sup>532</sup> Bodley 240, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, I, pp. 373-4. Lydgate, *Lives*, III. 1184.

<sup>533</sup> Hermann, *De Miraculis*, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, I, pp. 32-4 and Samson, *De Miraculis*, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, I, pp. 114-19; Pierpoint Morgan 736, fols. 21v and 23; Lydgate, *Lives*, III. 845.

<sup>534</sup> Jocelin, *Chronicle*, pp. 61-2.

<sup>535</sup> Jocelin, *Chronicle*, p. 62.

<sup>536</sup> Jocelin, *Chronicle*, p. 62.

vigorously he attacked, the more vigorously he was attacked. In short, he was defeated and fell to the ground.<sup>537</sup>

Henry survived and led a reformed life, becoming a monk and cultivating 'the study of virtue'.<sup>538</sup> It is clear, therefore, that the image of Edmund arrayed as a knight reprimanding and punishing those who wronged his abbey clearly enjoyed currency in contexts other than the death of Sweyn. The shrine would be a suitable location in which to remind pilgrims of Edmund's defence of his relics and his abbey. Whether or not the Harley miniature depicts the shrine as it actually appeared, or whether it presents an imagined evocation of Edmund's saintly persona, in the context of the *Lives* as a mirror for princes it seems likely that this was another means by which Lydgate sought to promote Edmund's martial characteristics which he hoped Henry VI would imitate in defence of the abbey and its interests.

#### The context of the shrine

Whatever its precise appearance, it is apparent that the shrine of St Edmund was significant in a number of ways in terms of projecting a particular version of Edmund's sanctity to pilgrims. It was the focus of cultic devotion and a means of displaying the wealth and prestige of the cult and the involvement of its important patrons. Its function as the container of the saint's remains and the symbolic resonance of the materials from which it was constructed also rendered it a potent object in its own right. The shrine, however, did not exist in isolation. Numerous other items were commonly found in shrine chapels. Candelabra or tall candlesticks were usual, and the presence of the latter is attested to at St Edmund's shrine by College of Arms, MS Arundel 30 which refers to the '*magno candelabro*'.<sup>539</sup> Four of the Harley 2278 miniatures depict the shrine with a large candlestick at each corner (fols. 4v, 9, 100v, 106 in Figs. 63-6). Hanging basins might provide additional light, but could also be receptacles for holy water or for the receipt of offerings. Books belonging to the

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<sup>537</sup> Jocelin, *Chronicle*, p. 63.

<sup>538</sup> Jocelin, *Chronicle*, p. 63.

<sup>539</sup> London, College of Arms, MS Arundel 30, fol. 211.

shrine could be stored in chests or cupboards nearby, or chained, and at some shrines wooden *tabulae* provided written or pictorial exposition of the *life* and miracles of the saint. Nilson concludes that the overall impression offered by a thriving medieval shrine 'must have been one of sumptuous clutter'.<sup>540</sup> However, features such as these, although undoubtedly contributing to the experience of a pilgrim to Bury, are for the most part generic and common to many great shrines and it is rather in the specific orchestration of the east end of the abbey church at Bury that most may be discerned about the convent's attempts to determine the reception of their saint by the medieval faithful.

### The devotional context

A tract on the dedication of the altars, chapels and churches at Bury St Edmunds, along with details in the Bury Customary, both preserved in the *Liber Albus*, indicate that St Edmund's shrine was surrounded by a host of other relics and secondary altars. Useful details about the pre-Conquest cults at Bury may be gleaned from a mid-eleventh century psalter in the Vatican, and the litany and calendar indicate the major feasts of the abbey.<sup>541</sup> The presence of secondary cults in addition to the main patron was common at the majority of shrine churches, although the number of secondary cults differed; St Augustine's, Canterbury, for example, was particularly crowded, with a number of significant shrines crowded into the east end of the church (Fig. 80).<sup>542</sup> Many of the secondary cults at Bury were widespread in medieval England; the cult of the Virgin Mary, for example, grew in prominence and popularity throughout

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<sup>540</sup> Nilson, *Cathedral Shrines*, p. 53.

<sup>541</sup> The litany in Vatican MS Reg. Lat. 12, ff. 159-61, is printed in *Anglo-Saxon Litanies of the Saints*, ed. Michael Lapidge, Henry Bradshaw Society, cvi (London: The Boydell Press for the Henry Bradshaw Society, 1991), pp. 296-9; the calendar is printed in *English Benedictine Kalendars before AD 1100*, ed. Francis Wormald, Henry Bradshaw Society, lxxii (London: The Boydell Press for the Henry Bradshaw Society, 1988).

<sup>542</sup> See Richard Gem, 'The Significance of the Eleventh-Century Rebuilding of Christ Church and St Augustine's, Canterbury, in the Development of Romanesque Architecture', in *Medieval Art and Architecture at Canterbury before 1220*, ed. Nicola Coldstream and Peter Draper, British Archaeological Association Conference Transactions v (1982), pp. 1-19; p. 8.



the Middle Ages.<sup>543</sup> This was partly evinced in the dedication of the church: the first church at Beodricesworth to which Edmund was translated in the mid-tenth century was dedicated to St Mary, and its replacement, probably the circular rotunda chapel, was dedicated in 1032 ‘in honour of Christ, St Mary and St Edmund’.<sup>544</sup> There was still a church dedicated to St Mary when building began on Abbot Baldwin’s (1065-97) great new abbey church, and although this was demolished to accommodate the southern arm of the new building, Abbot Anselm (1121-48) replaced it with another St Mary’s to serve as a parish church within the abbey’s precinct, where its fifteenth-century successor still stands.<sup>545</sup> The presence of the cult of the Virgin within the abbey church was perpetuated by the construction of the Lady Chapel in 1272, the verses in MS Arundel 30 indicating that a significant quantity of Marian imagery probably adorned this structure.<sup>546</sup>

In addition to the Nativity of the Virgin Mary, the two pre-Conquest translations of St Edmund (30 March and 31 March respectively) and the dedication of the church in 1032, the other feasts entered in the calendar in gold majuscules include those of the popular saints Paul (29 June), Benedict (21 March) and All Saints (1 November). By the time the *De dedicationibus* was composed in the twelfth century a number of other widespread saints were venerated at Bury including the apostles Andrew and James, John the Evangelist, and Sts Denis, Faith, Giles, Margaret, Martin and Michael.<sup>547</sup> Other cults at Bury were less

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<sup>543</sup> For the cult of the Virgin Mary at Bury St Edmunds see Antonia Gransden, ‘The Cult of St Mary at Beodricesworth and then in Bury St Edmund Abbey to c. 1150’, *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* lv, pt 4 (2004), pp. 627-53 and Gransden, *A History of the Abbey*, pp. 106-10. For the cult of the Virgin Mary in general see Rubin, *Emotion and Devotion*.

<sup>544</sup> This is stated in one of the marginal notes in the Easter Tables, opposite years 1032-5, in the mid-eleventh century Bury Psalter, now MS Reg. Lat. 12 in the Vatican Library, f. 17v. Cited in Gransden, *A History of the Abbey*, p. 106.

<sup>545</sup> For the demolition of the old St Mary’s church see *De dedicationibus, altarum, capellarum, etc., apud Sanctum Edmundum*, in *The Customary of the Benedictine Abbey of Bury St Edmunds*, ed. Antonia Gransden, Henry Bradshaw Society xcix (London: Henry Bradshaw Society, 1973), pp. 114-21; p. 116, lines 22-3 – p. 117, lines 1-2. The construction of the parish church of St Mary under Abbot Anselm by the sacrists Ralph and Hervey is described in the *Gesta Sacristarum*, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, II, p. 289. See also Arthur B. Whittingham, ‘St Mary’s church, Bury St Edmunds’, *Journal of the British Archaeological Association* xxi (1865), 187-8.

<sup>546</sup> College of Arms, MS Arundel 30, fol. 209v.

<sup>547</sup> Gransden, *A History of the Abbey*, pp. 113-117.

common, and the majority of these are likely to have been introduced as a result of the devotion of a particular monastic official; the cult of St Saba, for example, to whom the northernmost of the three apsidal chapels was dedicated, is known nowhere else in medieval England, and was introduced by Abbot Anselm (1121-48) who had previously been abbot of St Saba in Rome.<sup>548</sup> Saints with a particular local significance were also common at larger shrine churches, and at Bury the cult of Little St Robert developed in the later twelfth century after the death of a local boy was blamed upon the town's Jewish community, a situation analogous to the cult of St William at Norwich which flourished four decades earlier.<sup>549</sup> The emergence of the cults of Robert and William in the mid to late twelfth century can be located in the context of devotional enthusiasm and institutional competition which existed in the wake of Becket's demise and exponential growth in popularity. The presence of two other cults at Bury, however, are less readily explicable.

In addition to the saints indicated above, the only other feasts entered in the calendar in gold majuscules are those of Sts Jurmin and Botulf. A marginal annotation in the Bury copy of the chronicle of John of Worcester claims that both saints were translated to Bury during the time of Abbot Leofstan (1044–1065).<sup>550</sup> The Bury customary refers to 'the altar of Sts Botulf, Thomas, Jurmin and their reliquaries', indicating that their shrines were served by a shared altar after their translation into Baldwin's abbey church. Due to the pressure of space in the presbytery James suggests their reliquaries were probably located to the east of St Edmund's shrine.<sup>551</sup> Their physical association with St

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<sup>548</sup> *De dedicationibus*, in *Bury Customary*, ed. Gransden, p. 116, lines 1-10, p. 121, line 10. For the location of the chapel see James, *On the Abbey Church*, pp. 137, 149, 161, 180. Frequent references to the cult of St Saba in the *Bury Customary* indicate its significance at Bury; see pp. 11-12, 55 line 19, 69 note 1, 71 line 4, 73 line 11, 83 line 30, 84 line 5, 85 line 15. The cult of St Nicasius was similarly idiosyncratic; see Gransden, *A History of the Abbey*, pp. 113-114.

<sup>549</sup> For the development of the cult of Little St Robert see Gransden, *A History of the Abbey*, pp. 117-121 and Anthony Bale, *The Jew in the Medieval Book: English Antisemitisms 1350-1500* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 105-44.

<sup>550</sup> *The Chronicle of John of Worcester*, 3 vols., II, ed. R.R. Darlington and Patrick McGurk, trans. Jennifer Bray and Patrick McGurk (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995); III, ed. Patrick McGurk (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998); I (forthcoming); III, pp. 316-7.

<sup>551</sup> *Bury Customary*, ed. Gransden, p. 12, line 16; see also James, *On the Abbey Church*, pp. 137, 149, 160. See Appendix 5.

Edmund makes it likely that they were enshrined in close proximity to Bury's saintly patron. Little is known of Jurmin, other than that he was a seventh-century East Anglian prince. The *Liber Eliensis* claims that he was the son of King Anna (c.640-54) and therefore brother of Etheldreda, the foundress of Ely, and it now seems more likely that he was Anna's nephew rather than his son, his equivalence to Edmund in terms of their regional royal connections is clear. Botulf was also an East Anglian saint. Born in the region, he built a monastery at Icanho in the mid-seventh century where he was abbot until his death in 680. Botulf built his monastery on land given by the king of East Anglia (either Ethelhere (c.654-5) or Ethelwold (c.655-64)) and thus echoes the royal favour which Bury enjoyed at various times throughout the Middle Ages. The monastery at Icanho was eventually destroyed in the Danish raids, providing a reminder of the origins of St Edmund's own cult.<sup>552</sup> The importance of the cults of Jurmin and Botulf at Bury is evident in the litany of the Bury psalter, where they, St Edmund, St Peter, St Benedict and All Saints are the only saints to share with Christ the honour of a double invocation.<sup>553</sup> Their close association with St Edmund is also apparent in one of the twenty two prayers appended to the psalter requesting protection of the church of St Mary and St Edmund along with Michael and Gabriel and Botulf and Jurmin.<sup>554</sup>

The cult of St Jurmin seems to have been exclusive to Bury St Edmunds and St Botulf was venerated in only a few other locations.<sup>555</sup> Their placing within Baldwin's abbey church and their physical proximity to Edmund's shrine indicates their high status within the hierarchy of cults at Bury, and whilst their presence must partly be accounted for by their local provenance, their cults also provide an interesting counterpoint to St Edmund and may best be understood in this context. They speak to particular elements of Edmund's

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<sup>552</sup> See F.S. Stevenson, 'St Botolph (Botwulf) and Iken', *Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology* xviii (1924), 30-52 and Stanley E. West, Norman Scarfe and Rosemary Cramp, 'Iken, St Botolph, and the Coming of East Anglian Christianity', *Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology*, xxxv (1984), 279-301.

<sup>553</sup> '...et sancto Eadmundo uictori ad martyrii nobilitatem, quem celestis priuilegii primiscrinium is alis sanctorum confessorum tuorum Botolfi et Hiurmini hierarchiasti...', in André Wilmart, 'The Prayers of the Bury Psalter', *Downside Review* xlvi (1930), 198-216; 215.

<sup>554</sup> See Wilmart, 'Prayers', 204-5.

<sup>555</sup> Gransden, *A History of the Abbey*, pp. 111-12.

sanctity: his regional identity and his royal pedigree, and locate him within a long-established tradition of indigenous sanctity.

Edmund's East Anglian identity is similarly celebrated in a number of the liturgical compositions associated with Bury St Edmunds. *In hoc mundo*, a monophonic chant consisting of six pairs of verses, was copied in the thirteenth century but perhaps originated in the twelfth. It is preserved on a single bifolium which contains monophonic items in honour of various saints, including another sequence in honour of St Edmund, *Dulci symphonia*, seemingly copied in liturgical order.<sup>556</sup> Lisa Colton suggests that the two sequences concerning St Edmund may have been performed from this manuscript as part of Mass on St Edmund's Day.<sup>557</sup> According to Colton, the vernacular is rarely used in the liturgy, but she notes that the tenth line of *In hoc mundo* claims that '*Rex "her" dicens in deserto, quod hic sonat in aperto lingua sub ytalica*' (the king says "here" in the place where he is abandoned, that is uttered aloud as "*hic*" in the Latin tongue).<sup>558</sup> The insertion of the head's vernacular utterance in an otherwise Latin text is reminiscent of Abbo of Fleury's account of this incident in the *Passio*.<sup>559</sup> Its repetition in two divergent sources indicates that it was considered an integral part of Edmund's *vita*. In particular, its appearance in a chant associated with the Mass of St Edmund signifies that the saint's indigenous identity was an officially authorised legendary element which the abbey at Bury sought to promote.

Similarly, *Ave miles celestis curie*, a mid-fourteenth-century motet, describes St Edmund as '*Rex patrone patrie, matutina lux Saxonie, lucens nobis in meridie, sidus Angligenarum*' ('King of our protectress, of our homeland, morning light of

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<sup>556</sup> The verses and music are preserved in Oxford, New College, MS 362, Fragment IX, fols. 31r-32v. In addition to two sequences in honour of St Edmund, *In hoc mundo* and *Dulci symphonia*, the other saints celebrated are the Virgin Mary, St Michael, St Catherine and an unknown, unnamed saint.

<sup>557</sup> For further discussion of *In hoc mundo* and *Dulci symphonia* and transcriptions of the verses and music, see Lisa Colton, 'Music and Identity in Medieval Bury St Edmunds' in *Changing Images*, ed. Bale, pp. 87-110; pp. 93-5 and Figs. 1 and 2.

<sup>558</sup> Translation by Colton, 'Music and Identity', p. 95.

<sup>559</sup> Abbo *Passio*, XIII; Hervey, *Corolla*, p. 41.

Saxony, shining upon as at midday, star over the children of Anglia').<sup>560</sup> Colton observes that the shining star motif is common in texts associated with translation ceremonies, and might therefore relate this motet to the liturgy of the Translation of St Edmund.<sup>561</sup> As discussed above, Nilson notes that the numerous translations of Anglo-Saxon saints which took place in the wake of the Norman Conquest were carried out as a means of emphasising the continuity of local tradition.<sup>562</sup> Thus the translation of St Edmund into the presbytery of the new Romanesque church in 1095 would be an ideal moment to emphasise his local identity by placing him alongside other regional saints. The significance of this was clearly not lost on the composers of the motet, and whilst this is known from a fourteenth-century source, it is possible that it represented a later manifestation of a continuous tradition.

The close physical association between the shrines of Edmund, Botulf and Jurmin is likely to have invited comparisons from pilgrims, with the undoubtedly more splendid patronal shrine emphasising Edmund's saintly pre-eminence. Attention would also be drawn to the alleged condition of the relics of each saint contained within these shrines. St Jurmin was translated whole from Blythburgh, his original burial place, but the relics of St Botulf, the more popular saint, were the subject of competitive acquisitiveness. His head eventually came to rest at Ely, with his other remains shared between Thorney and Bury St Edmunds. In addition to his shrine in the presbytery, there was also a chapel dedicated to Botulf elsewhere in the east end of the abbey church, possibly in a position corresponding to the Lady Chapel in the north, or in the south transept.<sup>563</sup> The Bury *Rituale* preserved in MS Harley 2977 refers to St

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<sup>560</sup> This motet is one of several which was copied in the 1330s or 1340s into the flyleaves of a twelfth-century Bury library book, now Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS e Musaei 7, items 7 and 8, fols. Vv-Vlr. It is edited and described in detail in Manfred F. Bukofzer, 'Two Fourteenth-Century Motets on St Edmund' in his *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance Music* (New York: Norton, 1950), pp. 17-33. They have since been re-edited in *Motets of English Provenance*, ed. Frank Harrison and Peter Lefferts (Monaco: Éditions de l'Oiseau-Lyre, 1980), from which texts and translations have been drawn unless otherwise stated. For further discussion of the lyrics of the motet see Colton, 'Music and Identity', pp. 98-102.

<sup>561</sup> Colton, 'Music and Identity', p. 102.

<sup>562</sup> Nilson, *Cathedral Shrines*, p. 19.

<sup>563</sup> See Appendix 5.

Botulf's arm as a separate relic, and it seems likely that this would be enshrined in his chapel, with the greater portion remaining alongside St Jurmin in the presbytery. Botulf's fragmented remains would have provided a striking contrast with Edmund's bodily wholeness - a symbol of his physical and spiritual purity which also emphasised Bury's exclusive claim on him as patron and therefore the principal recipient of his saintly intercession. The main feast days of the two saints also provided a balanced counterpoint to that of St Edmund on November 20<sup>th</sup>: Jurmin was remembered in February and Botulf in June, and it likely that the monks of Bury hoped that the distribution of these feast days throughout the year would ensure a regular flow of visitors, and therefore income, to the abbey.

In addition to the relics contained within the larger *feretra*, a number of smaller reliquaries were present at Bury, a situation common in most larger churches in medieval England. A number of these relics illuminate the way in which the abbey sought to promote the cult of its patron. The Bury *Rituale* indicates that during the Feast of the Translation of St Edmund (29 April), the saint's sword was carried in procession around the abbey church.<sup>564</sup> As we have seen, Edmund's martial kingship, to which his sword seemingly pertains, was an element of his sanctity actively promoted by the abbey. However, in the textual and codicological cult he is more frequently depicted posthumously as an active military figure, whereas the physical presence of the sword owned in life by the king suggests once again that in the context of his shrine the abbey sought to promote his temporal knightly vigour.

In his account of the fire of 1198 Jocelin describes his relief that the 'great beam which used to be beyond the altar had been taken down to be renovated with new carving' and was therefore spared from the conflagration.<sup>565</sup> This was a cause for celebration not only for the sake of the beam itself, which was evidently elaborate and valued highly enough to be restored rather than

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<sup>564</sup> BL, Harley MS 2977, fols. 49v-50r. Printed in James, *On the Abbey Church*, p. 90.

<sup>565</sup> Jocelin, *Chronicle*, p. 95.

replaced, but primarily because the objects normally placed on the beam had also been saved:

By chance, too, the cross and the 'Mariola' and the 'John' and the casket with the shirt of St Edmund, and the monstrance with the other relics that used to hang from the same beam, and other reliquaries which stood on the beam all had been taken down earlier: otherwise everything would surely have been destroyed by the fire, as was the painted hanging which had been put up in place of the beam.<sup>566</sup>

The 'Mariola' and the 'John', apparently carved by Master Hugo, presumably occupied the customary position at the foot of the rood, and although there is some doubt as to their provenance, they were evidently of considerable value. Jocelin claims that they were ornamented 'with a great weight of gold' and recalls an incident in 1175 when the convent considered selling the images in order to pay Pope Alexander III for a privilege granting the abbey exemption from all except papal authority.<sup>567</sup> Reliquaries placed on a beam were relatively common in larger churches. They offered an acceptable position for a minor shrine which did not need to be readily accessible to pilgrims and enabled conservation of precious floor space. The diagrammatic drawing of the east end of St Augustine's, Canterbury, indicates relics occupying a similar position atop the reredos (above, Fig. 80).<sup>568</sup>

It is less clear which other relics were housed in this location. Abbo refers to Oswen, 'a woman of blessed memory', one of the secular guardians of the shrine before Cnut's introduction of Benedictine monks, who tended St Edmund's remains until 'shortly before these recent times of ours':

This venerable woman, either from some divine intuition, or from excess of devotion, made it her constant practice to open the sepulchre of the

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<sup>566</sup> Jocelin, *Chronicle*, p. 95.

<sup>567</sup> Jocelin, *Chronicle*, p. 6. For discussion of the provenance of the images see Gransden, *A History of the Abbey*, p. 109.

<sup>568</sup> For the location of secondary reliquaries see Nilson, *Cathedral Shrines*, pp. 57-8.

blessed martyr year by year, at the anniversary of the Lord's Supper, and to trim and pare his hair and nails. These relics, one and all, she studiously collected, and stored in a casket; nor did she ever omit, as long as she lived, to cherish them with an affection that was wonderful, having placed them in a casket on the altar of the church to which I have referred. And there they are still preserved with due veneration.<sup>569</sup>

Edmund's corpse was not only intact but possessed of such saintly vigour that it continues to evince signs of life. In a prayer 'To St Edmund' John Lydgate invokes these relics as indictors of Edmund's sanctity and continued corporeal presence at Bury:

Thyn hooly nailles and thy royal heer  
Greuh by miracle, as seith þe cronycleer,  
Kept clos in gold and siluere, as I reede...

Which be conserved yit in thyn hooly place,  
With other relyques, for a memoryall,  
Frute of this marter growing up by grace<sup>570</sup>

His reference to them implies that they were still present in the abbey at the time of the prayer's composition in the fifteenth century. It is possible that these were later housed upon the beam.

Jocelin's assertion that the convent possessed a relic of St Edmund's clothing is corroborated by the Bury *Rituale* which indicates that the garment was carried in procession on important feast days; for example, the procession on Christmas day included the '*feretrum cum camisia St Edmundi*'.<sup>571</sup> Herman also refers to similar relics on a number of occasions, including during his account

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<sup>569</sup> Abbo *Passio*, XV; Hervey, *Corolla*, p.47.

<sup>570</sup> John Lydgate, 'To Saint Edmund', *Minor Poems of John Lydgate*, Part I, ed. Henry Noble MacCracken, EETS es 107 (London, NY and Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1911, rpt. 1961), pp. 124-7, lines 52-4 and 57-9.

<sup>571</sup> *Rituale*, London, British Library, MS Harley, 2977, f. 8, cited in James, *On the Abbey Church*, pp. 183-6.

of Abbot Leofstan's (1044-65) inspection of Edmund's remains, where he states that 'the saint is stripped of his holy martyr's vestments, in some places stained red with blood, in others riddled with arrow holes'.<sup>572</sup> This seems to be the occasion when the garments are permanently removed from the body and preserved as separate relics as Herman concludes his account of the incident by informing his readers that 'the clothes, stripped from the martyr, are kept in the sacrary coffer with the reliquaries', perhaps the chest atop the beam to which Jocelin refers.<sup>573</sup> Herman expounds the efficacy of secondary relics when he claims that the blood-stained garments provide 'the common people' with access to 'the benefits of the shrine's divine power'.<sup>574</sup> Herman claims that the shirt continues to be preserved at the abbey 'so that future believers may enjoy their healing power'.<sup>575</sup> The presence of the shirt relic further explains the anomaly of the depiction of Edmund's martyrdom in the Morgan miniatures where he is clad only in a loin cloth in some scenes, in imitation of Christ in the St Albans Psalter, but in others is clothed (above, Figs. 9, 11-18). In order both to emphasise the Christological nature of Edmund's martyrdom and legitimate the shirt relic Edmund has to appear in both guises.

Jocelin's account of the search for St Edmund's cup in the immediate aftermath of the fire indicates that this was also regarded as a significant relic:

Then, to our horror, some of our brethren shouted with a loud wailing that St Edmund's cup was burnt. But when some of them were looking here and there among the cinders and ashes for stones and sheets of precious metal, they drew out the cup in perfect condition lying in a heap of cinders that were no longer burning, and they found it wrapped in a linen cloth that was half burnt. The oak box itself, in which the cup had long been stored, was burnt to dust, and only the iron bands and lock were found. When we saw this miracle, we all wept for joy.<sup>576</sup>

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<sup>572</sup> Hermann, *De Miraculis*, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, I, p. 53.

<sup>573</sup> Hermann, *De Miraculis*, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, I, p. 54.

<sup>574</sup> Hermann, *De Miraculis*, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, I, p. 54.

<sup>575</sup> Hermann, *De Miraculis*, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, I, p. 53.

<sup>576</sup> Jocelin, *Chronicle*, pp. 95-6.

If it was normally kept atop the beam then the cup would presumably have been removed along with the other reliquaries during the restoration work. Its discovery by monks who were searching for stones and precious metal, presumably from the shrine, suggests that it stood in close proximity to Edmund's remains. This is corroborated by a miracle account which claims that a Dunwich man who suffered from dropsy was carried to St Edmund's shrine at the insistence of his family and friends whereupon he drunk from the cup and was duly healed.<sup>577</sup> Similar incidents include a rich woman who is cured of a fever after travelling to Bury and drinking from the cup<sup>578</sup>, and Gervasius, a Cluniac monk of St Saviour's, Southwark, who the author of the miracle collection claims recounted to him directly the story of his cure from an intermittent fever and an additional unspecified 'malady' after his admittance to the infirmary at Bury and the administering of St Edmund's cup.<sup>579</sup> The idea of a life-restoring cup had clear Eucharistic connotations and further serves to sacralise Edmund in life as well as death.

The cup of St Edmund also occurs in a less immediately explicable context. The author of the *Bury Chronicle* cites a dispute which occurred in 1300 between the abbey and Edward I concerning jurisdiction over the manor of Warkton in Northamptonshire as a result of the king's reform of the forests.<sup>580</sup> The author of this part of the chronicle uses the conventional format of dating an event by the regnal year, in this case the 'twenty-eighth year of the reign of King Edward', although interestingly he refers to him as the fourth king of that name, thus including the three Anglo-Saxon King Edwards in his enumeration. This sense of pre-Conquest continuity is particularly relevant in the context of a land dispute in which the claimants sought to establish their ancient customary rights. The author claims that 'it is well known that the manor from ancient times was not a part of the king's demesne' and recounts the story of a 'certain lord of this manor' and his wife who lived 'many years ago' who gave the manor to the abbey in gratitude to St Edmund for saving both their lives and

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<sup>577</sup> Samson, *De Miraculis*, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, I, pp. 189-91.

<sup>578</sup> Samson, *De Miraculis*, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, I, p. 187

<sup>579</sup> Samson, *De Miraculis*, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, I, pp. 202-4

<sup>580</sup> *The Chronicle of the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds*, ed. Gransden, pp. 158-60. See also her Introduction, xxxv, for the historical context of this dispute.

their souls.<sup>581</sup> The devil, jealous of the couple's devotion, 'sought to deceive them under the guise of religion' and incited them to extremes of religious fervour.<sup>582</sup> He convinced them that they must pursue martyrs' deaths but because there was no-one in the neighbourhood who would kill them 'they both rashly undertook to commit an accursed murder...by savagely attacking their own bodies'.<sup>583</sup> The author recounts that their custom was 'that every day after lunch, when thanks had been returned to God, a drink called the 'plenum' or 'brimming cup' of St Edmund should be quaffed in honour of the glorious king and martyr Edmund', and that when they partook of their customary drink on the day of their intended suicide, 'a small ray of light flickered in the darkness and deep shadows'.<sup>584</sup> At this point the narrative changes from the past tense into the historical present, accentuating the immediacy and drama of the events:

When the plenum of St Edmund is fetched the devil's evil influence is put to flight; when the sacred cup is tasted with devotion the enemy flies, blinded.<sup>585</sup>

The couple realise that they have been deceived, and hurry to Bury to offer repentance and thanks, giving the manor of Warkton with all its appurtenances to the abbey '*inperpetuum*', spending the rest of their days within the monastic precinct in the old hall called Bradfield.<sup>586</sup> Gransden suggests that the purpose of the story 'is to prove that Warkton was not ancient demesne because it had not belonged to the king before the Conquest'.<sup>587</sup> The propagandist element of the narrative is clear, as the author resorts to ancient oral custom, whether a genuine tradition or invented at the time of the dispute, in order to justify his abbey's land-holdings. The role of the cup of St Edmund within the narrative is less readily explicable. The author does not seem to suggest that the cup is one

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<sup>581</sup> *The Chronicle of the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds*, ed. Gransden, pp. 158-9.

<sup>582</sup> *The Chronicle of the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds*, ed. Gransden, p. 159.

<sup>583</sup> *The Chronicle of the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds*, ed. Gransden, p. 159.

<sup>584</sup> *The Chronicle of the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds*, ed. Gransden, p. 160.

<sup>585</sup> *The Chronicle of the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds*, ed. Gransden, p. 160.

<sup>586</sup> *The Chronicle of the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds*, ed. Gransden, p. 160.

<sup>587</sup> *The Chronicle of the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds*, ed. Gransden, p. 159, n. 1.

which belonged to St Edmund; rather it is a symbolic toast drunk to the memory of the saint. The imagery of the 'sacred cup' which puts to flight the devil has unmistakable Eucharistic overtones, particularly fitting in the context of the couple's quest for self-sacrifice and the emphasis placed upon Edmund's status as an exemplary martyr. The reference to the brimming cup also has more secular connotations of high-status ceremonial toasting of lords and warriors, a tradition with ancient origins which continued throughout the Middle Ages in north-western Europe.<sup>588</sup> The cup of St Edmund preserved at the abbey seems to have originated in a similarly secular context, rather than as a cup used by Edmund as a Eucharistic chalice, but was transformed by its miracle-working reputation, emphasised by its close physical association with the shrine, into a sacred relic. That similar objects can be invested with alternative meanings attests once again to the flexibility of Edmund's saintly identity. This is equally true of the whole assemblage of secondary relics associated with St Edmund at Bury. The cup and shirt were items which had been directly used and handled by the king, contributing to their potency as secondary relics. It is possible that they formed part of the regalia, but neither is described as made of precious materials or as being particularly valuable in its own right. Instead, the domestic nature of these items contributes a sense of authenticity and real human presence.

Although strictly not relics, additional items located in the vicinity of the shrine likewise attest to Edmund's sanctity in a variety of ways. The account of the great fire of 1465 refers to a wooden chest containing the bones of the sacrist Egelwyn, 'the former servant and charioteer of the martyr', who bore his body to safety in London during the Danish incursions of the early eleventh century, along with the bones of unspecified 'others'.<sup>589</sup> The author specifies that the casket was located 'high up, near the king's tomb', possibly indicating a

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<sup>588</sup> For drinking customs see Frederick P. Hackwood, *Inns, Ales and Drinking Customs of Old England* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1909), pp. 29-39; Marjorie A. Brown, 'The Feast Hall in Anglo-Saxon Society', in *Food and Eating in Medieval Europe*, ed. Martha Carlin and Joel T. Rosenthal (London and Rio Grande: The Hambledon Press, 1998), pp. 1-14; A. Lynn Martin, *Alcohol, Sex and Gender in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), pp. 1-9.

<sup>589</sup> *Incendium Ecclesiae*, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, III, pp. 286-7.

position atop the reliquary beam. Their preservation so close to St Edmund is explicitly characterised as a reward for their loyalty to their royal master, a trait which persisted beyond the grave, as the author records that when the fire had taken hold in the presbytery ‘some men had employed great force in trying to move them, inasmuch as the heat had already got to them; but, though the chest could ordinarily be lifted with one hand, they were unable to stir it’. He wonders admiringly, ‘was not this truly a faithful servant, who refused to forsake his king?’.<sup>590</sup> The high standards of duty and devotion which Edmund expected, and the potential rewards for providing such service, are therefore clear.

Other items, such as St Edmund’s sword and war banner, invoked his martial characteristics. Banners were frequently hung at shrines to be blessed by the saint prior to the owner going into battle, or the saint’s own flag could also be displayed.<sup>591</sup> The author of *The Rites of Durham* describes a vision experienced by John Fossour, Prior of Durham (1342-74), the night before a battle was to be fought against the Scots:

[the vision commanded] him to take the holie corporax cloth, which was within the corporax, wherewith St Cuthbert did cover the chalice, when he used to say masse, and to put the same holie relique, like unto a banner, upon a speare point, and on the morrowe after to goe and repaire to a place on the west parte of the citie of Durham, called the Readhills, and there to remayne and abyde till the end of the said battell.<sup>592</sup>

The Scots were duly defeated and the monks incorporated the corporax cloth into a lavish banner of silk and velvet, which continued to ensure victory in battle to any who bore it until its destruction at the Reformation, ‘by the

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<sup>590</sup> *Incendium Ecclesiae*, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, III, p. 287.

<sup>591</sup> See Nilson, *Cathedral Shrines*, pp. 51-2.

<sup>592</sup> *The Rites of Durham: being a description or brief declaration of all the ancient monuments, rites, & customs belonging or being within the monastical church of Durham before the suppression, written 1593*, ed. Joseph T. Fowler, Surtees Society cvii (Durham: Published for the Surtees Society by Andrews and Co., 1903), p. 20.

especiall grace of God Almightye and the mediacione of holie Saint Cuthbert'.<sup>593</sup> John Lydgate similarly describes Edmund's war banner which he bore 'Lyk a wys kyng' in battle against the Danes (Prologue, 9) as seen in the miniature of the Battle of Thetford on fol. 50, and which Lydgate avers 'shal kepen and conserue/ this lond from enmyes' (Prologue, 41-2) (Figs. 41-4).<sup>594</sup> Edmund's banner had come to be regarded as a powerful relic in its own right when it was borne before the victors at the battle of Fornham in 1173 when the army of Henry II under his Constable Humphrey de Bohun and the Chief Justice Richard de Luci routed the rebellious forces of Henry the Young King led by Robert de Beaumont, Earl of Leicester.<sup>595</sup> Banners captured from defeated enemies could also be given to a shrine in thanks for a saint's intervention on behalf of the victors, such as the banner of Isaac Comnenus (r. 1184-91), the defeated prince of Cyprus, which Richard I sent to the shrine of St Edmund in 1191.<sup>596</sup> Determining their heraldry was particularly appropriate for a royal saint such as Edmund and provided another opportunity to shape his identity by means of the imagery and symbolism deployed. The presence of these objects at the shrine clearly alluded to another aspect of Edmund's sanctity: his military prowess. Comparison with the banner made before the battle of Durham emphasises this further: whereas at Durham the banner was created from a devotional item associated with St Cuthbert, its counterpart at Bury was Edmund's own war banner, requiring no modifications. Edmund's complex saintly identity meant he was inherently suited to manifest his power in numerous and varied contexts.

The devotional context in which Edmund's shrine existed therefore contributed to his characterisation as a saint of particular potency and comprehensive appeal. Pilgrims were reminded of the potency of his relics by references to

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<sup>593</sup> *The Rites of Durham*, ed. Fowler, p. 22-3.

<sup>594</sup> See above, pp. 152-3.

<sup>595</sup> Roger of Hovedon, *Chronica Magestri Rogeri Houedene*, 4 vols., ed. William Stubbs, *Rerum britannicarum medii aevi scriptores* 51 (London: Longman, 1868-71), II, p. 55.

<sup>596</sup> *The Chronicle of the Reigns of Henry II and Richard I, AD 1169-92, commonly known under the name of Benedict of Peterborough*, 2 vols., ed. William Stubbs (London: Longmans, Green, Reader and Dyer, 1867), II, p. 164. See also W.T. Mitchell, 'The Shrines of English Saints in Wartime before the Reformation', *Pax: The Quarterly Review of the Benedictines of Prinknash* 30 (1940), 71-80; 79.

those who cared for his intact corpse and offered physical evidence of its post-mortem vitality. The fragmented nature of the remains of his companion, Botulf, drew attention to Edmund's own wholeness. The special rewards available to those who served him loyally were also emphasised, no doubt calling to mind the well-known fates of those who dared defy him. His association with other East Anglian royal saints attested to his regional and regal identity, and his wonder-working banner, along with other military emblems offered in tribute, confirmed his ability to defend his followers, whether within his own lands or as patron of more distant campaigns.

### The iconographical context

In addition to Edmund's saintly companions and the relics and other things associated with his shrine, another means by which the convent could determine Edmund's reception by the medieval faithful was the way in which he was depicted visually. The primary source regarding the iconographic context of the cult of St Edmund at Bury are the inscriptions recorded in London, College of Arms, MS Arundel 30. Embellishing artistic works with textual inscriptions was a relatively common practice. The complex inter-relationship of text and image are alluded to by Gilbert Crispin, Abbot of Westminster (1085-1117), in an imagined dialogue with a Jew who questions what he perceives to be the Christian practice of worshipping images. Crispin explains that 'just as letters are shapes and symbols of spoken words, pictures exist as representations and symbols of writing'.<sup>597</sup> Arundel 30 is the only record of the images implied by the inscriptions so it is not possible to consider them in their original context. It is possible, however, to speculate concerning their role in determining the pilgrimage experience at Bury. The practice of recording inscriptions on works of art is attested to elsewhere.<sup>598</sup> James transcribed another set of inscriptions, this time from stained glass windows in Canterbury Cathedral, recorded in an

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<sup>597</sup> Gilbert Crispin, *Disputatio Iudeu et Christiani*. Cited in Michael Camille, 'Seeing and Reading: Some Visual Implications of Medieval Literacy and Illiteracy', *Art History* 8.1 (1985), 26-49; 32.

<sup>598</sup> See, for example, Richard Gameson, *The Role of Art in the Anglo-Saxon Church* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), p. 80; Sabrina Longland, 'A Literary Aspect of the Bury St Edmunds Cross', *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 2 (1969), 45-74.

early fourteenth-century hand in a roll in the Cathedral and Chapter archives.<sup>599</sup> The inscriptions relate to a series of windows in the cathedral church, now lost, featuring an extensive Old and New Testament typological sequence.<sup>600</sup> James conjectures that these were probably located in a portion of the choir.<sup>601</sup> Although on a different scale and containing different subjects, the Canterbury manuscript nevertheless evinces a similar impulse to record inscriptions seen in Arundel 30. The nature of the roll in which the Canterbury inscriptions are recorded led James to speculate as to its original function. He notes that it is 9.5 inches wide and 8 feet 10 inches long, consisting of three skins fastened together with pins which he identifies as post-medieval. The writing is very large and some parts of the text are either rubricated or underlined in red. Based primarily upon the size of the writing, James suggests that the roll was hung up for display to pilgrims to the cathedral in order to facilitate their appreciation and understanding of the windows in a similar way to the display of lists of relics or institutional histories.<sup>602</sup> The significance afforded to the verses is attested by their preservation in an additional source. In the Catalogue of the Library made under Prior Henry of Eastry (d. 1331) item *ccxlv* is an entry for ‘*Versus pannorum pendenicum in ecclesia Cantauriensi/ Versus fenestrarum vitrearum ecclesie Christi Cantaur*’.<sup>603</sup> The monastic community at Canterbury clearly valued the verses and took care to preserve them. It is unclear whether the inscriptions at Bury were similarly presented but the Canterbury example does emphasise the care taken by the guardians of saints’ remains to ensure that pilgrims were appropriately guided and instructed.

Arundel 30 contains two sequences of inscriptions related to St Edmund which are likely to have been in the vicinity of the shrine (fol. 1 and fol. 208), the

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<sup>599</sup> M.R. James, *The Verses Formerly Inscribed on Twelve Windows in the Choir of Canterbury Cathedral*, reprinted from the manuscript with an introduction and notes by Montague Rhodes James, Cambridge Antiquarian Society publications, Octavo series 38 (Cambridge: Deighton Bell, 1901). The roll is number C 246 in the Cathedral and Chapter archives.

<sup>600</sup> For a transcription of the sequence see James, *Verses*, pp. 7-37.

<sup>601</sup> James, *Verses*, pp. 37-42.

<sup>602</sup> James, *Verses*, p. 2.

<sup>603</sup> Cotton, MS Galba E.iv. The catalogue is printed in Edward Edwards, *Memoirs of Libraries*, 2 vols. (London: Trübner and Co., 1859), I. pp. 122-236; p. 167.

nature of which provides a striking indication of the way in which the abbey sought to present its patron. Eleven inscriptions in leonine verse accompanying a sequence of images are recorded on fol. 1:

*Eadmundus Swanum perimit sic uulnere Danum.*

*Eadmundi Swanum sic punit lancea Danum.*

*Rex regem Danum sic punit morte Suanum.*

*Infestus Danus punitur morte Suanus.*

*Confossus Danus ruit en moriturque Suanus.*

*Intentu dulplici rex Sweyn consumitur Ici.*

*Morter [sic] Leofstanus moritur sic ūbū sanus:*

*Demone uexatur Leofstan et sic cruciatur.*

*Vt Rex mactatur, comitante lupo baiulatur.*

*“Heer” proclamatur: corpus capiti sociatur.*

*Qui non putrescit, hic martyr uirgo quiescit.*

*In densis iacitur capud alnum nec sepelitur.*

*Hic decollatur martyr qui non superatur:*

*Quod seclum loquitur, custode lupo reperitur.*

*Pro iactu teli fit conuitatio celi.*

*Fustibus est cesus Eadmundus et undique lesus:*

*Telis confoditur Eadmundus et ense feritur.*

*Turba ruit facta nece dum cadit ense subacta:*

*Plebs expungnatur; pars uincit, pars iugulatur.*

*Hic iubet ut Regem moneat contempnere legem:  
Suggerit hic Regi quedam contraria legi.*

*Saxonia uectus est regni culmen adeptus.*<sup>604</sup>

These images are designated in Arundel 30 as being ‘*in quadam cortina*’ (on a certain curtain).<sup>605</sup> Jocelin of Brakelond notes that at the time of the fire in 1198 ‘the great beam which used to be beyond the altar had been taken down to be renovated with new carving’. St Edmund’s shrine was located ‘beyond’, that is, east of the high altar and this beam therefore seems a likely location from which hangings depicting the *life* and miracles of St Edmund could be suspended.<sup>606</sup> The scenes appear to have been copied in reverse order, as they describe the *life* of St Edmund, from his coronation to his martyrdom and the miraculous discovery of his head guarded by the wolf. Appended to Edmund’s *passio* are two posthumous miracles. The first concerns Leofstan, the local sheriff who denounced the right of the accused to claim sanctuary in the abbey church and challenged St Edmund’s jurisdiction in legal matters.<sup>607</sup> The second describes the death of Sweyn. Although six verses are associated with this incident they are extremely repetitive and it is unlikely that there were six separate depictions of Sweyn’s comeuppance. It is possible that the copyist was improvising upon the theme of the original inscription, or that he was composing inscriptions to describe the images which he saw upon the curtain.

Fol. 208 lists another sequence of inscriptions in leonine verse which again describe the death of Sweyn:

*Mente ruit tota plebs sancto soluere uota.  
Nuncius hortatur iter ut celer aggrediatur.  
Nuncius affatur regem, sed mox reprobatur.  
Hic punit Danum rex martyr cuspidē Swanum.*

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<sup>604</sup> College of Arms, MS Arundel 30, f. 1.

<sup>605</sup> College of Arms, MS Arundel 30, f. 1.

<sup>606</sup> See Appendix 5.

<sup>607</sup> Hermann, *De Miraculis*, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, I, p. 48.

*Mane redi tutus, nullo terrore solyus* [sic].

*En moritur Swanus Eadmundo uindice Danus uel ecce ruit Swanus, etc.*<sup>608</sup>

The images are designated as being located ‘*ad reliquias*’. Considering the defining role this of this narrative as evinced in the codicological cult it is probable that the relics they accompanied were Edmund’s. The architectural arrangement of the presbytery, along with evidence in Arundel 30 of other art works in this area of the abbey church, leaves little wall space for this sequence of images to occupy. It therefore seems likely that these images were located in stained glass somewhere in the presbytery, perhaps in windows between the eastern-most radiating chapel and the chapels to the north and south.<sup>609</sup>

The repetition of the death of Sweyn underlines its significance in the construction of the cult at Bury. It is also noteworthy that in addition to the bare facts of Edmund’s *life* and martyrdom, the only two posthumous narratives depicted are those which involve punishment of individuals who violate the abbey and its patron. These are foolish individuals acting in lone defiance of the saint, in contrast with the ‘*tota plebs*’ who collectively invoke Edmund’s help against Sweyn and the ‘*plebs*’ of the *cortina* sequence who are overcome by the invading Danes. It is likely that the ‘*plebs*’ would be depicted in the images, with such reflexive representation encouraging pilgrims to believe that the prayers of people like them would be heeded by St Edmund, whilst also alluding to the dire consequences for those who transgressed.<sup>610</sup> Both the Leofstan and Sweyn narratives offer the opportunity to depict the shrine and thus in a similarly self-reflexive way remind pilgrims that the power of the saint was most potent in the vicinity of his relics.<sup>611</sup>

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<sup>608</sup> London, College of Arms, MS Arundel 30, f. 208.

<sup>609</sup> See Appendix 5.

<sup>610</sup> For the presence of the recipients of miracles, both benign and punitive, in images in the vicinity of shrine see Blick and Tekippe, eds., *Art and Architecture*, ‘Introduction’, xvii. See also Anne F. Harris, ‘Pilgrimage, Performance and Stained Glass at Canterbury Cathedral’ in the same volume, pp. 243–284.

<sup>611</sup> For illustrations of both these narratives see Harley 2278, fol. 100v (the people pray at the shrine for assistance against Sweyn, see above Fig. 65) and fol. 106–107v (In the first miniature the woman seeking sanctuary is pulled from the shrine by Leofstan’s men, see above, Fig. 66. In the second Leofstan is attacked by a demon and dies. Although the shrine is not depicted in the second miniature the incident is clearly

The scenes ‘*ad reliquias*’ and those ‘*in quadam cortina*’ are the only two sequences of images of St Edmund which are detailed in Arundel 30 as being located in areas of the church likely to have been visited by pilgrims. A similar message concerning Edmund’s power and the proprietorial nature of his sanctity is conveyed by the inscriptions accompanying a sequence of images in the monks’ choir which depicted the punishment of thieves who attempted to steal horses from the abbey church.<sup>612</sup> This location would have been inaccessible to pilgrims and it is significant that the convent chose to depict a narrative in which the thieves successfully violate the abbey in a private location, opposed to the public setting of the miracles of Leofstan and Sweyn, against whom Edmund intervenes before they are able to cause real harm. Perhaps the story of the horse thieves was meant to teach the monks humility and remind them of the need for vigilance, whereas Leofstan and Sweyn offered less ambiguous and more compelling instances of Edmund’s intercessory might to present to pilgrims.

It is possible that the Arundel 30 inscriptions existed only in manuscript form and did not relate to actual images in a church. They may have been composed in response to images in the abbey church or may represent plans for an imagined decorative scheme, or perhaps even scribal doodling.<sup>613</sup> This might explain the multiple versions of some inscriptions, if the scribe were experimenting with different forms of words.<sup>614</sup> Even if we assume that the inscriptions in Arundel 30 represent a faithful record of the imagery within the

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taking place in the vicinity of the abbey church, towards which the condemned woman looks back imploringly as Leofstan prepares to pass judgement against her.) Other miracles which occur at the shrine are illustrated on fols. 108-108v (knights steal horses from the abbey in the first miniature and are shown performing penance before the shrine in the second, see above, Fig. 67 ); fol. 109 (the thief who attempts to steal a jewel becomes stuck to the shrine); fol. 110v (Osgoth [sic] the Dane is punished for his irreverence, see above, Figs. 68-9).

<sup>612</sup> Bodley 240, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, II, p. 362.

<sup>613</sup> Baudri de Bourgueil (Baldricus Burgulianus), Archbishop of Dol (1046-1130), for example, is well-known for his experimentation in verse composition, experimenting with several versions of the same subject. See Baudri de Bourgueil, *Poèmes*, 2 vols., ed. Jean-Yves Tillette (Paris: Belles Lettres, 2002), II, pp. 151-7.

<sup>614</sup> Scribal experimentation is also attested by Baudri de Bourgueil’s multiple versions of some inscriptions. See Baudri de Bourgueil, *Poèmes*, texte établi, traduit et commenté par Jean-Yves Tillette, vol. 2 (Paris: Belles Lettres, 2002), pp. 151-7.

abbey church, this does not mean that these were the only images of St Edmund to have existed, but it does suggest that these were the only ones to have been accompanied by inscriptions at the time the authors of the manuscript were writing. In an essay on the miracle windows of the Trinity Chapel at Canterbury, Anne F. Harris suggests that inscriptions accompanying imagery played a figurative rather than just a literal role. She argues that the pictures can be understood without the words, which many pilgrims would be unable to read. She suggests that it is not what they say that is most significant, but that they are recognisable as text and therefore connote the authority of text.<sup>615</sup> As such they are intended to imbue the images which they accompany with additional veracity. And whether or not these two sequences were the only ones to be accompanied by inscriptions, Harris's suggestion seems apt, as these images of Edmund are fundamentally concerned with conveying his spiritual power.

The visual presentation of Edmund's authority in the abbey church would be further reinforced if, as Sandy Heslop has recently suggested, the Morgan miniatures cycle may actually be designs for, or based upon, a series of images in the abbey church, perhaps a series of hangings in the vicinity of the shrine.<sup>616</sup> This interpretation is primarily based upon the internal dynamics of the manuscript. In some senses the miniatures are ideally suited to be viewed on the page. Figures gesture across the folios at one another and the narrative disruptions caused by turning the page are addressed by the movement of figures through the margins, for example during the transportation of Edmund's relics to London, Egelwyn departs into the right hand margin of fol. 20r and reappears overleaf on fol. 20v. Heslop concludes that the Morgan cycle is therefore 'better adapted to the successive pages of a book, or more concerned with the continuity of the story than with isolated 'iconic'

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<sup>615</sup> Harris, 'Pilgrimage, Performance and Stained Glass', *Art and Architecture*, ed. Blick and Tekippe, pp. 260-1.

<sup>616</sup> T.A. Heslop, 'Arranging the Episodes: the picture cycles in two twelfth-century manuscripts', Research Seminar, University of York, 24th Feb 2010. I am grateful to the author for a copy of this paper. A similar transmission of imagery across media may be seen in medieval illustrations of St Cuthbert, see Malcolm Baker, 'Medieval Illustrations of Bede's *Life of St Cuthbert*', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* xli (1978), 16-49.

moments'.<sup>617</sup> In contrast, some aspects of the pictorial organisation make the miniatures better suited to an alternative method of viewing. The scenes are grouped in short narrative sequences, usually of three or six scenes, and are organised around the central event, the martyrdom. The moment of Edmund's death and the subsequent hiding of his head are shown in a double scene (fol. 14v), unique in the manuscript, emphasising the centrality of these events in both Edmund's legend and in the miniatures sequence, occupying as they do the sixteenth and seventeenth scenes respectively of the total thirty three. The miniatures either side of this visual meridian display a certain symmetry: the Danes who arrive on fol. 9v leave on fol. 15. This almost typological method of arrangement does have illustrative and textual precedents: Heslop argues that the St Albans Psalter evinces a similar arrangement and cites David Howlett's exposition of similar structural principles in the so-called 'Biblical style'.<sup>618</sup> The numerous visual equivalences of the Morgan cycle would be best appreciated if the images were viewed as a complete set, with each individual sequence intact. The total number of miniatures (thirty two) does not neatly accord with the tripartite arrangement of the sequences, unless the sub-divided fol. 14v is treated as two. Subdividing the miniatures into their sequences results in eleven sets of three. If these images were originally for public display a likely location would be between the columns of the presbytery, perhaps as tapestry hangings, leading pilgrims through the narrative of Edmund's *life* and death as they circumabulated the shrine.<sup>619</sup> The nature of the imagery of the Morgan cycle has been discussed above, and would certainly accord with the expression of Edmund's punitive authority seen in the inscriptions, most notably with the repetition of the death of Sweyn.

It is possible that the death of Sweyn appeared in at least one other location in the abbey church. In May 1987 the inscription plate from one of the monumental brasses in the disused church at Frenze (Norfolk) was removed from its slab for inclusion in the Monumental Brass Society's centenary

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<sup>617</sup> Heslop, 'Arranging the Episodes'.

<sup>618</sup> Heslop, 'Arranging the Episodes'. David Howlett, *British Books in Biblical Style* (Dublin: Four Courts, 1997).

<sup>619</sup> See Appendix 5.

exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum.<sup>620</sup> The inscription commemorates George Duke who, according to the monument, died in 1551 (Figs. 81-2):

Heare under lyeth George duke Esquyre, who maryed Anne the dawghter  
of syr thom' Blenerhaysett knight the whyche George dyed the xxv. daye  
of July In the yeare Of oure lorde god a M'. CCCCC. Li: whose sowle God  
pardon. Amen.

When the plate was lifted it was discovered that the brass was a palimpsest.<sup>621</sup> On the reverse is an image of a king seated in bed beneath a crown-shaped canopy. The bed rests on a tiled floor raised above the grass in the foreground by a low plinth with three triangular projections. The king is pierced with a spear, from the shaft of which is suspended a drawstring bag. The king's soul, a naked infant with a grotesque face, is seized by a winged hairy demon. Unfortunately no photographs of the brass are extant and following the exhibition it was returned 'king side down' to its original position in Frenze church, but a rubbing taken at the time of the exhibition indicates the remarkably close similarity between this image and the iconography of the death of Sweyn found in other contexts, most notably the death of Sweyn in the copies of Lydgate's *Lives*, both in Harley 2278 where the impish devil seizes Sweyn's soul (fol. 103v) in Yates Thompson 47 and the Arundel Castle manuscript where the king grasps the spear as it enters his body, from which is suspended a money bag (fol. 83) (Figs. 83-5). Despite this, the attribution of the image is contested.

The 1550s re-engraving has been assigned to Bury St Edmunds and it seems likely that the original engraving also originated in East Anglia. John Goodall notes that several aspects of the design can be paralleled in East Anglian art: for example, indented bases with roundels may be seen in windows from North Tuddenham (Norfolk), c.1460, East Harling (Norfolk) c.1462-80 and Long

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<sup>620</sup> John Page-Phillips, *Witness in Brass: The Catalogue of the Monumental Brass Society Centenary Exhibition*, (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 1987), p. 39, no. 205.

<sup>621</sup> On palimpsests in general, see John Page-Phillips, *Palimpsests: The Backs of Monumental Brasses*, 2 vols (London: Monumental Brass Society, 1980).

**Figs. 81-85 The death of Sweyn**

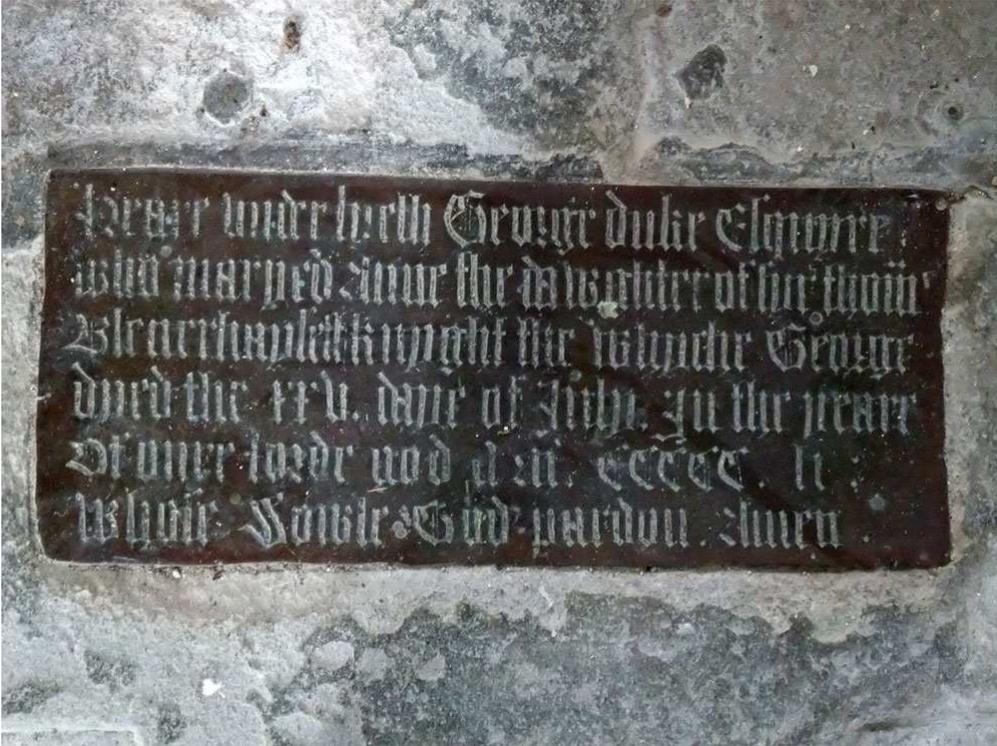


Fig. 81. The inscription plate commemorating George Duke, Esq., d. 1551, in Frenze church (Norfolk).



Fig. 82. The inscription plate in context in the slab to the north of the altar.



Fig. 83. Rubbing of the engraving on the reverse of the inscription plate from the church at Frenze (Norfolk). From Nicholas Rogers, 'The Frenze Palimpsest', *Monumental Brass Society Bulletin*, no. 64 (Oct. 1993), p. 75.

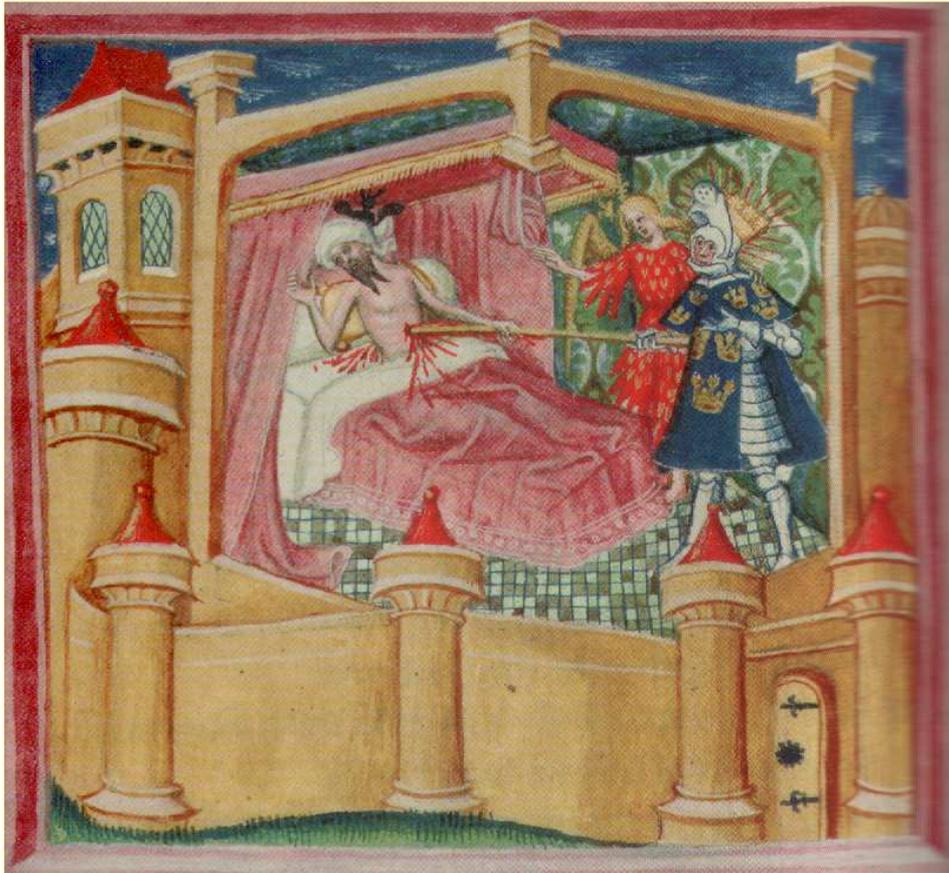


Fig. 84. London, British Library, MS Harley 2278, fol. 103v, the death of Sweyn.



Fig. 85. London, British Library, Yates Thompson 47, fol. 83, the death of Sweyn.

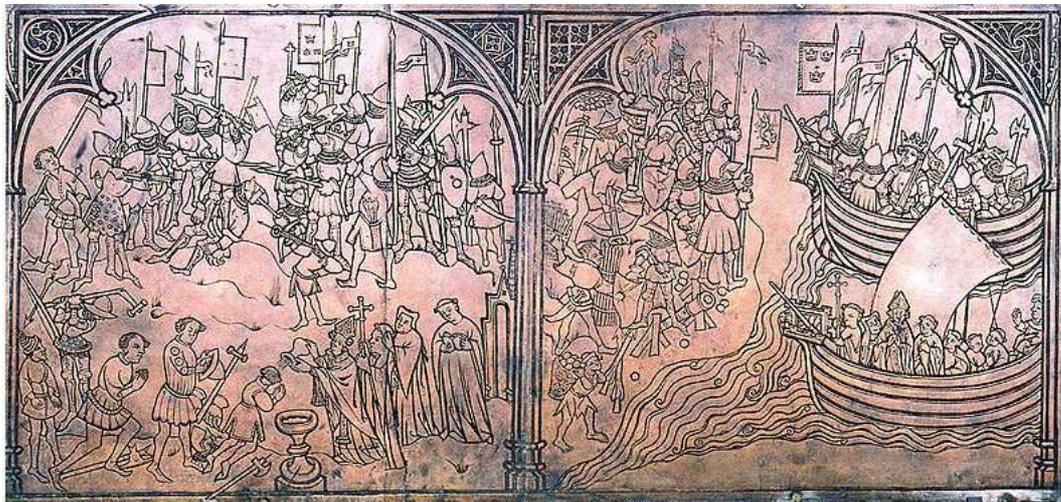


Fig. 86. Brass plates from the side of the shrine, c.1420, of St Henry of Finland at Nousisainen (Finland).



Fig. 87. London, British Library, Cotton Titus D.xvi, (St Albans, c. 1125), Prudentius, *Psychomachia*, fol. 28v, Faith slays Discord



Fig. 88. Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, MS I-2005, *The Macclesfield Psalter*, fol. 235v, The Offices of the Dead

Melford (Suffolk), also late fifteenth century. The tufts of grass in the foreground are also similar to those found on brasses made at both Norwich and Bury.<sup>622</sup> This indicates an East Anglian provenance, and suggests a date in the latter part of the fifteenth century.<sup>623</sup> This accords with John Page Phillips' suggestion that the brass may originally have been one of a sequence made to re-cover St Edmund's shrine following the fire which devastated the abbey church in 1465.<sup>624</sup> The convent's predilection for adorning the area surrounding the shrine with images of the death of Sweyn makes this attribution plausible. Brass plates would also be a relatively inexpensive means of re-embellishing the shrine with a fire proof material which would nevertheless, when polished, provide a suitably splendid covering for St Edmund's relics. Whilst this method of embellishing a shrine appears to have been unusual, it is not without precedent. The dark limestone sarcophagus of St Henry of Finland (d. 1156) at Nousisainen (Finland), was similarly covered with brass plate (Fig. 86).<sup>625</sup> Made c.1420 and probably of Flemish origin, the tomb represents what Anthony Cutler describes as the 'cosmopolitan artistic atmosphere' of Finland in the fifteenth century and its close connections with other major Northern European centres of artistic manufacture.<sup>626</sup> On the lid of the tomb was a large bronze plate with a figure of the deceased saint, whilst the side plates show scenes from the martyrdom and miracles of the twelfth-century English bishop sent to Finland by Pope Adrian IV (1154-9) and met his death in the aftermath of the Finnish 'crusade' of 1154.<sup>627</sup> Hans Eichler suggests that the now lost tomb of Wicbold von Dobilstein, Bishop of Kulm, made in 1398 in the Cathedral of

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<sup>622</sup> John Goodall, 'Death and the Impenitent Avaricious King: A unique brass discovered at Frenze, Norfolk', *Apollo*, n.s. 126 (Oct. 1987), 264-6; 265.

<sup>623</sup> For further assertions of the brass's East Anglian provenance see Nicholas Rogers, 'The Frenze Palimpsest', *Monumental Brass Society Bulletin*, no. 64 (Oct. 1993), pp. 75-77.

<sup>624</sup> John Page-Phillips, 'Palimpsest Brasses', in Jerome Bertram, ed. *Monumental Brasses as Art and History* (Stroud: Alan Sutton, 1996), pp. 132-145; pp. 134 and 136 fig. 104.

<sup>625</sup> M.R. James, 'The Sepulchral Brass of St. Henry of Finland', *Proceedings of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society*, x, 1901-2, 215-225.

<sup>626</sup> Anthony Cutler, 'The *Mulier Amicta Sole* and Her Attendants. An Episode in Late Medieval Finnish Art', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 29 (1966), 117-134; 130.

<sup>627</sup> See Tancred Borenius, 'St. Henry of Finland, an Anglo-Scandinavian Saint', *Archaeological Journal* lxxxvii (1930), 340-56 and Plate I.

Altenberg, near Cologne, was similarly covered at the sides with engraved brasses of narrative compositions, in this instance of the Passion of Christ, while on the upper plate was the figure of the deceased. Although not the shrine of a saint, Eichler maintains that the same workshop which made this tomb was responsible for Henry of Finland's shrine.<sup>628</sup> This clearly indicates a tradition of adorning tombs in this way and therefore establishes a precedent for the Frenze brass to have originated in a similar context at Bury St Edmunds.

In contrast, Goodall suggests that the scene depicts the death of an unrepentant avaricious king and the fate of his soul, likening the image to that of avarice in the illustrations of the *Ars moriendi* tradition which was extremely popular in northwest Europe by the fifteenth century. However, he concedes that this image does not accord exactly with the known *Ars moriendi* iconography which is remarkably homogenous in its representation of the temptations of the dying. Instead, he proposes that the Frenze image represents a hitherto unknown tradition. The uneven edges of the brass suggests that it was originally displayed in a frame and Goodall surmises that the image of avarice, along with the four other temptations and the five virtues of the dying, would originally have made a composition of around 1.5 m square, which he suggests once adorned the wall of a church to edify and admonish the congregation. His primary objection to the shrine attribution seems to be the lack of iconographic precedents for the death of Sweyn at Bury which could have provided a model for the engraver.<sup>629</sup> However, this thesis has clearly indicated that this was not the case, and that examples were in fact abundant in a variety of media. Goodall correctly surmises that this was unlikely to have been an isolated panel. The established iconography of the scene suggests that another plate to the right of the extant panel would depict St Edmund engaged in the act of spearing Sweyn. The plate varies from 3 to 5mm thick and now measures 40x20 cm, although it was originally slightly larger, as the top edge lacks the border which surrounds the other sides of the image. Assuming each

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<sup>628</sup> Hans Eichler, 'A Flemish Brass of 1398', *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* 61, no. 353 (Aug. 1932), 84-87; 85.

<sup>629</sup> Goodall, 'Death and the Impenitent Avaricious King', 265-6.

plate would have been of roughly equal dimensions, and assuming that each side of the shrine would have been covered in plates, it is likely that at around 20-24 plates would have covered the shrine.<sup>630</sup> If the engravers maintained the tradition of depicting universal Christian images such as the crucifixion or the Virgin and Child on the ends of the shrine, this would still allow at least 16 plates to be devoted to scenes from the *vita* and miracles of St Edmund. The extreme selectivity evinced by artists depicting Edmund in other contexts negates Goodall's anxiety concerning the large number of scenes it would be necessary to depict in order to fully illustrate the legend.<sup>631</sup> Similarly, his surprise that no other plates have been found and that this plate was not re-used until 1551 ignores the chaotic nature of the post-Reformation art market. Faced with a deluge of materials, it is plausible that a workshop in Bury would not have re-used a plate from the shrine until twelve years after it was dismantled. The question of whether or not other plates are still extant has surely not been definitively answered. The discovery of this plate twenty three years ago suggests that others may still be in existence, lying face down in the floors, or against the walls, of Norfolk and Suffolk churches.

The exclusive nature of iconography should also not be emphasised. Barbara Abou-El-Haj notes the similarity between the iconography of the death of Sweyn in the Morgan miniature with the slaying of Discord by Faith in a St Albans Prudentius manuscript of about 1125, which she suggests was probably the model for the Morgan artist (Fig. 87).<sup>632</sup> Rather than complicating the attribution of the Morgan miniature, this co-mingling of iconographic traditions further nuances Edmund's miraculous smiting because, as Abou-El-Haj notes, it was Edmund's refusal to renounce Christianity which led to his martyrdom, and thus his presentation in the guise of avenging faith is entirely appropriate.<sup>633</sup> Likewise, Sweyn is an avaricious king and Edmund does indeed bring death, so the suggestion that these images embody the *Ars moriendi*

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<sup>630</sup> This is based on the assumption that a feretory for an intact adult corpse would be at least 160cms long, and probably 40-60cms wide. For discussion of the relative size of *feretra* see Nilson, *Cathedral Shrines*, p. 35.

<sup>631</sup> Goodall, 'Death and the Impenitent Avaricious King', 266.

<sup>632</sup> Abou-El-Haj, 'Property, privilege, and monastic art production', 12.

<sup>633</sup> Abou-El-Haj, 'Property, privilege, and monastic art production', 12.

tradition is apposite. The similarity between the death of Sweyn scenes and the image of death striking a young man whilst his wife looks on, aghast, accompanying the Office of the Dead in the Macclesfield Psalter also serves to remind the viewer of the saints as conduits of the universal and enduring power of God, the ultimate arbiter in matters of mortality (Fig. 88).<sup>634</sup>

The chronology of these images of the death of Sweyn is uncertain. It is unlikely that they were all present simultaneously, and indeed uncertain that all of them were in fact present, so any conclusions must be provisional. What can be ascertained with some certainty is a continued interest at Bury St Edmunds in the death of Sweyn. Just as the manuscript illuminators chose to emphasise particular elements of Edmund's sanctity, so too the artists and craftspeople who decorated his shrine and its surroundings over at least one hundred and fifty years highlighted this scene as a central image of Edmund's saintly identity. The nature of the imagery in the context of pilgrimage is striking. As the defining feature of Edmund's post-mortem activities presented in numerous media in the abbey church, presumably of particular interest to pilgrims who sought his intercession, he appears a forbidding saint. However, as demonstrated above, far from being deterred by images of an aggressive saint engaged in acts of violent retribution, pilgrims to the shrine of St Edmund were intended to be impressed by the scope of his powers and reassured of his ability to intervene on their behalf, no matter what problem they brought to his attention.

Once again, these themes are also reflected in the fragmentary remains of the motet collection from Bury, which reveal an interest in ideal forms of kingship.<sup>635</sup> *Rex visibilium*, for example, is dedicated to Jesus Christ the King, and demonstrates an interest in righteous war and a divine struggle against evil in its laudatory lines, '*Rex invinctissime regnorum omnium, princeps milicie celorum civium*' ('Invincible king of all kingdoms, leader of the army of the

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<sup>634</sup> University of Cambridge, The Fitzwilliam Museum, MS I-2005, *The Macclesfield Psalter*, fol. 235v.

<sup>635</sup> The following motets are preserved in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS e Musaeo 7 (s. xiv) and discussed by Colton in 'Music and Identity', pp. 101-4

citizens of heaven'). Beneath this the tenor line emphasises the infinite *status quo*: '*Regnum tuum solidum permanebit in eternum*' ('Your firm kingdom will endure forever').<sup>636</sup> A motet in honour of St Benedict, *Lux refulgent monachorum*, reflects the Benedictine provenance of the collection. The opening line proclaims that '*Lux refulgent monachorum Regis in palacio*' ('The light of the monks shines in the palace of the king').<sup>637</sup> Colton suggests that these motets 'express Bury's perceived identity as a seat of royal sanctity on a par with the court itself, or with Westminster Abbey...; this may reflect the importance of the Liberty of Bury St Edmunds...within which the abbot's powers rivalled that of the reigning monarch.'<sup>638</sup> In this context she suggests that the 'palace of the king' could equally well refer to the church of God or to the abbey church which housed the remains of St Edmund.<sup>639</sup>

### The pilgrimage route

Attempting to determine the route by which pilgrims approached the shrine of St Edmund at Bury is important as pilgrimage is generally characterised as a physical experience; Edith Turner, for example, characterises it as a 'kinetic ritual'.<sup>640</sup> This is true of both the pilgrims' journeying to the sacred site and the ritual movements performed at these sites, such as perambulating around a shrine. Coleman and Elsner suggest that the act of encircling the sacred object ritually defines the space as holy as it distinguishes it from the journey undertaken to reach the shrine:

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<sup>636</sup> Translation from *Motets of English Provenance*, ed. Harrison and Leffers, p. 189.

<sup>637</sup> Translation from *Motets of English Provenance*, ed. Harrison and Leffers, p. 189.

<sup>638</sup> Colton, 'Music and Identity', p. 104.

<sup>639</sup> Colton, 'Music and Identity', p. 104.

<sup>640</sup> Victor and Edith Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1978), Introduction, xiii. Conversely, scholarly interest has also been paid to objects or locations which invite devotees to undertake 'mental pilgrimages' without leaving their current locations. See, for example, Jeanne Nuechterlein's discussion of Hans Memling's shrine of St Ursula made before 1489 for St John's Hospital, Bruges, where it is still located. Nuechterlein argues that this shrine encourages the viewer to reflect on the act of pilgrimage as well as being an object of devotion in its own right. Jeanne Nuechterlein, 'Hans Memling's St Ursula Shrine: The Subject as Object of Pilgrimage', *Art and Architecture*, ed. Blick and Tekippe, pp. 51-75.

The circumambulation continues the theme of the pilgrim's movement but rather than involving a directional, linear striving to reach the goal now encapsulates the sacred centre in a circular embrace.<sup>641</sup>

Thus at many greater shrine churches the physical movement of pilgrims as well as the visual and auditory experience was carefully orchestrated and formed an important element of the reception of the holy.

Abbot Curteys' Register indicates that Henry VI entered the abbey church via the south transept on his arrival at Bury on Christmas Eve in 1433.<sup>642</sup> This was likely to be partly a result of practical necessity: the west tower of the church partially collapsed in January 1430, when the south side fell; the following year the east side fell; and in April 1432 the north and west sides were taken down. Indulgences for its repair were granted by a papal bull of Eugenius IV (1431-39) and in 1435 a Colchester mason, John Wode, was given a contract for five years to rebuild the tower.<sup>643</sup> The west end of the abbey church would therefore have been a less desirable route for the king to enter the church on this occasion.

Allowing pilgrims access to a shrine by means other than the west door also had more general practical benefits. Accessing a shrine in the presbytery via the west door and thence the nave would require pilgrims to negotiate the numerous grilles and screens surrounding the tombs and chapels in their path and although this would certainly contribute to the anticipation of the occasion, the resulting logistical problems were likely to have been considerable. This arrangement would also require more extensive management to ensure that the movement and direction of pilgrims was maintained in accordance with the

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<sup>641</sup> Simon Coleman and John Elsner, *Pilgrimage, Past and Present: Sacred Travel and Sacred Space in the World Religions* (London: British Museum Press, 1995), pp. 32-3.

<sup>642</sup> Curteys' Register, BL Add. MS 14848, fol. 128r-v; this passage is reprinted in Craven Ord, 'Account of the Entertainment of King Henry the Sixth at the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds', *Archaeologia*, 15 (1806), 65-71.

<sup>643</sup> The fall of the tower is recorded in Curteys' Register, British Library, MS Add. 14848, fols. 105-6. See also James, *On the Abbey Church*, p. 122 and John Gage, 'Historical Notices of the Great Bell Tower of the Abbey Church of St Edmundsbury', *Archaeologia* xxiii (1831), 329-30.

church's wishes. An alternative arrangement seems to have been in place at a number of locations which accommodated these considerations.

At Ely and Westminster, for example, pilgrims entered the church via a special door in the north transept.<sup>644</sup> The evidence from Winchester is particularly compelling, where the north door of the nave, located in the western most bay of the north aisle, was known as St Swithun's Door, suggesting that this was the entrance used by pilgrims to St Swithun's shrine.<sup>645</sup> Similarly, the so-called 'Judgement Porch' at Lincoln was constructed c.1260 as part of the remodelling of St Hugh's Choir which took place between 1256-80 (Fig. 89). The Angel Choir was built to extend the presbytery and increase the space behind the altar for the accommodation of pilgrims and the remodelled space was provided with its own door to the east of the south transept to facilitate the ingress and egress of pilgrims.<sup>646</sup> At Bury, as at Lincoln, the cloister was to the north of the monastic church and thus an entrance for pilgrims to the south of the church would have been similarly convenient.

The location of the rotunda chapel to the north of the Romanesque church may have complicated the route taken by pilgrims, as even after Edmund's translation into the presbytery it is likely to have remained a significant feature of the pilgrimage experience until its demolition in 1275 and would most likely have been integrated into the pilgrimage route to enrich the encounter with St Edmund's remains and provide the additional opportunity for pilgrims to make offerings. Avoiding the crossing was a persistent necessity in monastic churches, and pilgrims entering via the south transept therefore presumably proceeded anti-clockwise around the presbytery and then returned the way they

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<sup>644</sup> Nilson, *Cathedral Shrines*, pp. 93-4. For further discussion of the route taken by pilgrims to Westminster Abbey see Francis B. Bond, *Westminster Abbey* (London, 1909), p. 67. For Ely see Thomas D. Atkinson, *An Architectural History of the Benedictine Monastery of St Etheldreda at Ely*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1933), I, p. 28.

<sup>645</sup> St Swithun's Door at Winchester is discussed by C.R. Peers and H. Brakespear, 'Architectural Description of Winchester Cathedral', *Victoria County History: Hampshire and the Isle of Wight*, vol. 5, ed. William Page (London: Constable, 1912), p. 58.

<sup>646</sup> Lynne Broughton, *Interpreting Lincoln Cathedral: The Medieval Imagery* (Lincoln: Lincoln Cathedral Publications, 1996), pp. 59-66.

**Figs. 89-92 Lincoln Cathedral 'judgement portal'**<sup>647</sup>

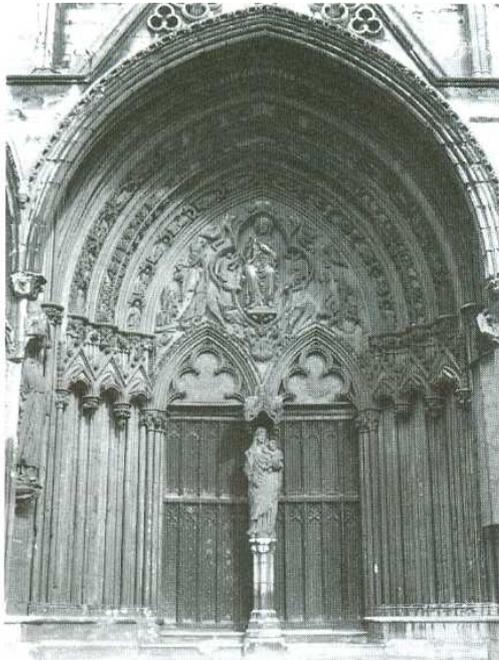


Fig. 89. Lincoln Cathedral 'judgement portal'



Fig. 90. Lincoln Cathedral 'judgement portal', detail of devils



Fig. 91. Lincoln Cathedral 'judgement portal', detail of Christ in Judgement



Fig. 92. Lincoln Cathedral 'judgement portal', detail of the hell mouth

<sup>647</sup> Images from Broughton, *Interpreting Lincoln Cathedral*, pp. 59-62, pls. 64, 68, 65, 69.

had come and exited by the same doorway.<sup>648</sup> Certainly after the demolition of the *rotunda* in 1275 it would be highly desirable for pilgrims to enter the precinct via this route, ensuring that they passed, and made offerings at, the chapel in the cemetery where the remains were rehoused. The bier and other relics would provide a prelude to the main spectacle of the great shrine in the presbytery. The absence of the coffin from the bier on which it once rested would have created a sense of expectation for what was to come and the funerary connotations of the bier contrasted with the spiritual glory signified by the shrine. These connotations would not have been lost with the destruction of the *rotunda* as the removal of the relics from the vicinity of Edmund's shrine increased the time, and therefore the anticipation, between encountering the secondary relics and the body of St Edmund himself.

It is unlikely, however, that the south transept was the only entrance for pilgrims. The majority of greater shrines were accessed via the nave since this was the public part of the church and the most convenient place for pilgrims to gather before visiting the shrine.<sup>649</sup> This would also allow them to pass and make offerings at altars and subsidiary nave shrines which could be of considerable financial benefit to the religious community.<sup>650</sup>

The architecture of the west front of the abbey church at Bury attests to its significance in the ritual life of the building.<sup>651</sup> In addition, particular details of its ornamentation and design affirm its symbolic importance. It appears that a frieze ran across the width of the façade above the three huge portals. The frieze as a form of external decoration was uncommon on medieval churches. Zarnecki notes that the majority of Romanesque examples are found in the Mediterranean region, where he suggests surviving Roman buildings provided the model.<sup>652</sup> This accords with the Roman connotations of the three giant

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<sup>648</sup> See Appendix 5.

<sup>649</sup> Nilson, *Cathedral Shrines*, p. 94.

<sup>650</sup> For the financial value of shrines see Nilson, *Cathedral Shrines*, pp. 134-82.

<sup>651</sup> See above, pp. 174-7.

<sup>652</sup> George Zarnecki, *Romanesque Sculpture at Lincoln Cathedral*, Lincoln Minster Pamphlets, second series, no. 2 (Lincoln: Friends of Lincoln Cathedral, 1970), p. 3.

arches on the west front at Bury and at Lincoln where the frieze survives.<sup>653</sup> Only two fragments of the Bury frieze survive and are preserved in Moyse's Hall Museum in Bury (Figs. 93-4).<sup>654</sup> One of the sculptures is of an angel, carved at what Zarnecki suggests was probably the angle of a door jam.<sup>655</sup> The second relief depicts the torments of the usurer (identifiable by the sack of money he carries) who is being thrust into a Hell-mouth by devils whilst snakes coil around him. This indicates that the frieze depicted the Last Judgement. The Last Judgement was a popular depiction above church portals as it reminded the faithful that the church was God's house and that they must be suitably repentant upon entering. In the context of pilgrimage it was particularly relevant for individuals to be suitably spiritually prepared as they approached the shrine to ask the saint to intercede on their behalf for God's favour. The relevance of this iconography to pilgrims is attested by the Judgement Portal at Lincoln.<sup>656</sup>

The octagons flanking the west front are one of the most unusual elements of the design and seem to have been unique to Bury.<sup>657</sup> The significance of circular churches as royal mausolea or martyria is discussed above and the connotations of Cnut's rotunda would also pertain in this context.<sup>658</sup> The original elevation and function of the west front octagons is unclear but their shape would certainly recall Cnut's rotunda which was obscured by the building of the Romanesque church. This feature may once again serve to highlight the continuity with the pre-Conquest cult and remind pilgrims of the presence of St Edmund within the church by presenting them with an architectural form with which they may have come to associate Edmund's remains. Equally, the integration of the octagons as one small part of an

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<sup>653</sup> Fernie notes that the giant arches at Lincoln and Bury have been compared to a Roman monument such as the Porte de Mars in Rheims. Fernie, *Anglo-Norman Architecture*, p. 110. For the Lincoln frieze see Zarnecki, *Romanesque Sculpture at Lincoln Cathedral*, pp. 3-13.

<sup>654</sup> For the fragments of the Bury frieze see George Zarnecki, *Further Studies in Romanesque Sculpture* (London: Pindar Press, 1992), pp. 327-8 and figs. 1 and 3.

<sup>655</sup> Zarnecki, *Further Studies*, p. 327 and fig. 1.

<sup>656</sup> Broughton, *Interpreting Lincoln Cathedral*, pp. 59-66.

<sup>657</sup> McAleer, 'The West Front', pp. 23-9.

<sup>658</sup> See above, pp. 174-7.

**Figs. 93-4 Sculptural fragments from the west front of the abbey church, Bury St Edmunds<sup>659</sup>**

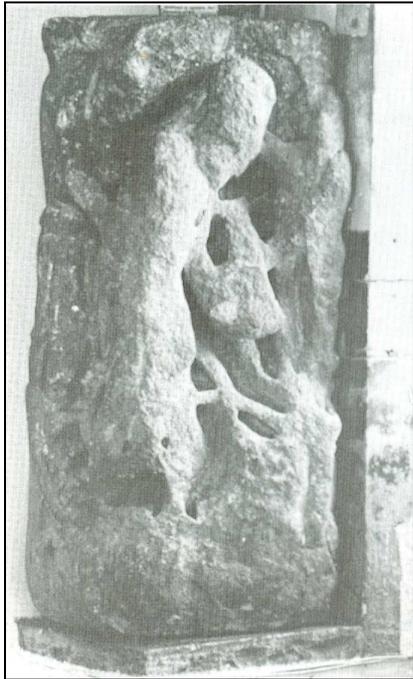


Fig. 93. Usurer thrust into a hell mouth by demons



Fig. 94. Angel

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<sup>659</sup> Images from Zarnecki, *Further Studies in Romanesque Sculpture*, pp. 332-3, Figs. 1 and 3.

enormous and elaborate whole contributed to a compelling architectural articulation of the dominance of the abbey.

### Conclusion

Ultimately, a pilgrim to the shrine at St Edmund at Bury would have encountered splendour befitting the erstwhile king of East Anglia and a national patron saint. Entering the abbey church through the vast, elaborate and symbolically resonant west front prepared pilgrims for the glories within and reminded them of the wealth of the abbey and the power of the saint whose remains it housed. Pausing in the monk's cemetery at the chapel containing his bier and other secondary relics built anticipation, with the empty bier attesting to Edmund's defeat of death, and his spiritual glory proclaimed by the jewel encrusted shrine which housed his remains. Once inside the church, the visual and auditory experience was designed to impress and shape the pilgrims' perception of Edmund's saintly identity. Edmund's bodily wholeness contrasted with the fragmented remains of another East Anglian saint, St Botulf, whose presence along with St Jurmin reminded the faithful of Edmund's regional identity and promoted East Anglia as a region renowned for sanctity. Similarly, the iconographical context in which the shrine was set reassured pilgrims that Edmund was a saint of national importance, a conqueror of kings, who was able in death to offer to his spiritual subjects the support and protection which in life he had been unable to provide.

# Chapter Three – Beyond Bury:

## Dissemination and Appropriation

‘The power of his moral excellence which brightly lights up England might be transferred through us to other parts of the world, and thus he may receive a worthy increase on account of his merits.’<sup>660</sup>

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### **Introduction – Dissemination and appropriation: the case of pilgrim badges**

So far this thesis has primarily been concerned with the cult of St Edmund as a Bury-centred entity: the hagiographic tradition which developed at the abbey, the miracles attributed to Edmund’s uncorrupted remains and the devotional and iconographic setting of the shrine in the abbey church. The intention of this thesis, however, is to examine the cult in its regional context and it is therefore necessary to consider the nature of devotion to St Edmund as manifested throughout East Anglia.

Evidence of the cult in outlying areas of East Anglia should not necessarily be taken as an indication of entirely independent devotional traditions, devoid of the abbey’s influence. Pilgrim souvenirs are a good example of the interaction between the cult centre and devotion to St Edmund elsewhere in the region. Although found throughout East Anglia and beyond, pilgrim badges were produced at Bury for the purpose of reminding pilgrims of their visit and their relationship with the saint.<sup>661</sup> Their role as private devotional objects is attested by a number of badges either pasted or sewn into Books of Hours or painted

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<sup>660</sup> Samson, *De Miraculis*, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, I, p. 177.

<sup>661</sup> Thomas Head discusses the extent to which devotees formed personal relationships with the saints, *Hagiography and the Cult of Saints*, p. 12.

representations of them in the margins.<sup>662</sup> Marike De Kroon demonstrates that in many cases pilgrim badges reflected the actual experience of pilgrims by depicting images and architectural forms encountered by them at the shrine site, reinforcing their function as commemorative souvenirs.<sup>663</sup> Known by contemporaries as signs, they were worn as a marker of the pilgrimage undertaken by that individual.<sup>664</sup> In addition, badges were also thought to possess their own physical efficacy. It was common practice to press souvenirs against the shrine in order that they might absorb some of the virtue of the remains within, transforming them into touch-relics and allowing pilgrims to carry to carry home with them some of the saint's *virtus*.<sup>665</sup>

Three distinct designs for St Edmund pilgrim badges have been identified. The simplest consists of a garb of arrows held together by a knotted belt, alluding to the manner of Edmund's martyrdom (Fig. 101). The significance of the belt is unclear although there are no references to a belt relic so it is likely to be aesthetic rather than symbolic. In some examples the arrows are held together by a crown. This changes the overall tone of the badge as it affords equal prominence to Edmund's kingship in addition to the manner of his death. The

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<sup>662</sup> For example, impressions of twenty nine pilgrim badges formerly stitched onto a blank leaf of a Flemish Book of Hours, c. 1460-80, reproduced in Brian Spencer, *Pilgrim Souvenirs and Secular Badges*, Medieval Finds from Excavations in London 7 (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press in association with the Museum of London, 1998, 2<sup>nd</sup>. ed. 2010), Fig. 10, p. 19. A leaf from another Flemish Book of Hours, c. 1512, shows the martyrdom of St Sebastian surrounded by a border of pilgrim badges. Sir John Soane's Museum, London, MS 4, fol. 122v.

<sup>663</sup> Marike de Kroon, 'Pilgrim Badges and their Iconographic Aspects', in *Art and Architecture*, ed. Blick and Tekippe, I, pp. 385-403; esp. pp. 387-8, 391-2, 394-5, 401.

<sup>664</sup> For a discussion of the terminology associated with pilgrim badges see Jennifer M. Lee, 'Searching for Signs: Pilgrims' Identity and Experience made visible in the *Miracula Sancti Thomae Cantuariensis*', in *Art and Architecture*, ed. Blick and Tekippe, I, pp. 473-91.

<sup>665</sup> For touch relics see Spencer, *Pilgrim Souvenirs and Secular Badges*, Introduction, pp. 16-18. For the amuletic use of relics and other sacred objects see Richard Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000). Documentary evidence for the practice is unsurprisingly sparse but is referred to in documents relating to the two-centuries long dispute at Le Puy between the hospital of St Mary and local merchants over the right to manufacture and sell pilgrim badges. A fifteenth-century document states that the hospital would only allow 'legitimate' badges (presumably those produced under its auspices) to be pressed against the statue of St Mary. See Esther Cohen, 'In haec signia: Pilgrim-Badge Trade in Southern France', *Journal of Medieval History* ii (1976), 193-214; 213 n. 29.

**Figs. 95-103 St Edmund pilgrim badges<sup>666</sup>**

Late thirteenth to early fourteenth century



Fig. 95



Fig. 96

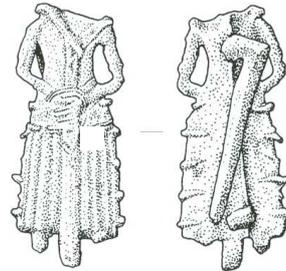


Fig. 97

First half of the fourteenth century



Fig. 98

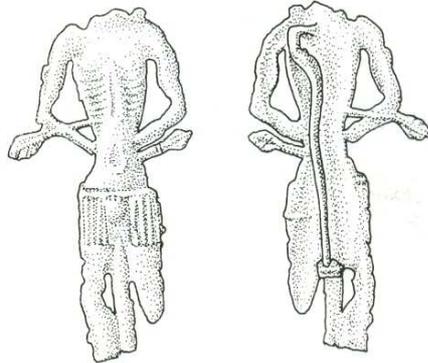


Fig. 99



Fig. 100

Late fourteenth to early fifteenth century

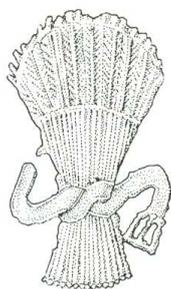


Fig. 101

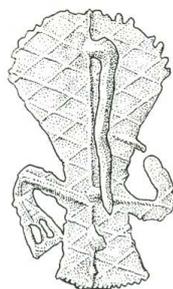


Fig. 102



Early fifteenth century



Fig. 103

<sup>666</sup> Figs. 95-8 from Spencer, *Pilgrim Souvenirs and Secular Badges*, p. 180, nos. 199-200c. Figs. 99, 101 and 103 from, Spencer, *Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum Medieval Catalogue*, p. 82, nos. 133-5. Fig. 100 from BAA: *Bury*, Plate xxv-h. Fig. 103 from Robinson, 'A late medieval pilgrim badge from Chaucer House', p. 66, Fig. 1.

most common pilgrim badge featured a version of Edmund's martyrdom. The earliest version of this design depicts Edmund uncrowned, bound to a tree and pierced with many arrows (Figs. 95-7). Based on the details of the braies Edmund wears in these badges, Spencer dates the design to c. 1250-1350.<sup>667</sup> A slightly later variant includes the wolf waiting at Edmund's feet, gazing up expectantly, whilst the body of the king, often wearing only a loicloth, is pierced with fewer arrows (Figs. 98-100). A more elaborate form featuring archers on either side of Edmund persisted at least until the fifteenth century (Fig. 102).<sup>668</sup> A third design appears to have emerged in the early fifteenth century. In these badges the presentation of Edmund differs considerably: robed and crowned, he holds either a single arrow or occasionally a bundle, the symbol of his martyrdom (Fig. 103). The contrast with the near-naked, tortured body is striking and offers a markedly different version of Edmund's sanctity, emphasising his spiritual triumph rather than his physical suffering.

As items intended to disseminate the cult of a saint and stimulate remembrance among devotees it was essential that each badge was distinct and easily recognisable.<sup>669</sup> It is thus reasonable to assume that the depiction of Edmund on pilgrim badges provides an indication of his standard iconographical form, or at least the way in which the convent sought to promote his image beyond the abbey. There is variety between the badges but also a marked contrast with the way in which Edmund seems to have been depicted in the abbey church where, as we have seen, the visual emphasis was upon his punitive intercession. It is easy to see that if these images were encountered out of context they would present a forbidding image of the saint, presumably leading the abbey to depict Edmund in a less aggressive mode on the badges.

This brief introduction to pilgrim badges, one of the most obvious means by which Edmund's saintly identity was dispersed, raises a number of questions

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<sup>667</sup> Brian Spencer, *Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum Medieval Catalogue. Part 2: Pilgrim Souvenirs and Secular Badges* (Salisbury: Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum, 1990), p. 49.

<sup>668</sup> See James Robinson, 'A late medieval pilgrim badge from Chaucer House, Tabard Street, SE1', *The London Archaeologist* 6, no. 3 (1989), 60-69.

<sup>669</sup> De Kroon, 'Pilgrim Badges and their Iconographic Aspects', p. 386.

concerning the relationship between the cult at Bury and its embodiment further afield which will form the basis of this chapter. The noticeable difference between the iconography of the abbey church and the badges raises the question of whether this was generally the case in depictions of Edmund beyond Bury. This will therefore be discussed below, primarily in relation to images of the saint in East Anglian parish churches. As we have seen in Chapter One, the majority of the miracles attributed to Edmund occurred in the vicinity of his shrine but a number are also recorded in locations beyond Bury. Although the *virtus* of the saints was strongest in the vicinity of their relics, their power was believed to extend beyond the confines of their shrines. Edmund's more widely dispersed miraculous activities will be considered with emphasis upon the extent to which it is possible to characterise miracles based on geographic location. Finally, the discussion will depart from the region altogether to consider alternative textual representations of St Edmund. As indicated in Chapter One, the vast majority of regional hagiographic output originated at Bury, but Edmund does appear in sermon manuals and collections of saints' *Lives* written elsewhere in England. Although not strictly within the remit of this project these texts offer the only opportunity to consider Edmund in a non-Bury based textual context and will therefore be discussed. Firstly, however, it is important to determine the locations other than Bury which were associated with St Edmund. In addition to church and chapel dedications, indicated on Figure 1, one of the ways this may be achieved is by mapping the legend of St Edmund onto the East Anglian landscape and noting the extent to which his *vita* relates to the region as a physical entity. Records of devotional activity are rare but we are fortunate to possess churchwardens' accounts which detail rituals associated with St Edmund in one Norfolk parish over the course of a century which provide a unique insight into the relationship between the official cult and its local manifestations.

## Writing St Edmund into East Anglia

Bury was the epicentre of the cult and the ultimate destination for pilgrims to St Edmund but other sites throughout Norfolk and Suffolk also came to be associated with the saint by the authorial practice of naming locations at which notable events of his legend occurred. As an authorising process and a method of cultic construction I see this as distinct from, although closely related to, the interest demonstrated in particular by Abbo and Geoffrey of Wells in the general physical characteristics of East Anglia.<sup>670</sup> It is certainly the case that the naming of locations associated with St Edmund similarly adds authenticity to the legend and embeds the cult within the local landscape, identifying Edmund as a saint with a distinct regional identity. However, the topographical specificity evinced by some authors seems to function in a distinct way and when considered in the context of pilgrimage activity and the physical presence of the cult these features acquire additional significance.

Appendix 2 shows the geographical distribution of the locations which came to be associated with St Edmund. Their dispersal throughout the region is striking, extending as they do from Hunstanton on the north-west coast of Norfolk to Bures on the boundary between Suffolk and Essex in the south (Figs. 104-6). Edmund is located at seats of royal governance (Bures and Thetford) and by Lydgate at Caistor St Edmund, an important strategic Roman fort (perhaps also the '*castro*' referred to by the Bodley 240 compiler) and forerunner of Saxon Norwich.<sup>671</sup> The legend locates Edmund at places across the length and breadth of the ancient kingdom of East Anglia. Stephen Reimer suggests that it seems 'almost as if someone deliberately set out to make sure that every region of the kingdom was represented in the story'.<sup>672</sup> This is particularly notable in the

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<sup>670</sup> See above, Ch. 1, pp. 72-6 and 122.

<sup>671</sup> See John A. Davis, *Venta Icenorum: Caistor St Edmund Roman Town* (East Dereham: Norfolk Archaeological Trust, 2001).

<sup>672</sup> Stephen R. Reimer, 'Unbinding Lydgate's *Lives of Saints Edmund and Fremund*', in *The Book Unbound: Editing and Reading Medieval Manuscripts and Texts*, eds. Sian Echard and Stephen Partridge (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), pp. 176-89; p. 181.

**Fig. 104 Topographical references in the St Edmund legend**

This table illustrates the places in East Anglia which Edmund is described as visiting during his lifetime. Places where he is credited with performing posthumous miracles are not detailed here as I would suggest that posthumous intercession involves a different type of interaction with Te occurrence of a place name is noted rather than the frequency with which it is mentioned. The texts tabulated here are those which make the most significant contribution to the development of the legend.

<b>Narrative context</b>	<b>Abbo</b>	<b><i>De Miraculis</i></b>	<b>Geoffrey of Wells</b>	<b>Bodley 240</b>	<b>Lydgate</b>
Landing in East Anglia; miraculous springs appear			Maydenebure (prob. St Edmund's Point nr. Hunstanton)	Maydenboure (prob. St Edmund's Point nr. Hunstanton)	Maydenburuh (prob. St Edmund's Point nr. Hunstanton)
Builds a royal town			Hunstanton	Honystanestoun	Hunstanton
Pre-coronation			Attleborough	Athlesburgh/ Civitas Athle	Attleborough
Coronation			Bures (St Mary)	Villa de Bure	Bures
Holding court when Danes invade	Hægelsdun <sup>673</sup>		*	' <i>In quodam castro</i> '/ ' <i>in castello</i> '	Castre (Caistor St Edmund)
Battle			*	Theofordiam	Thetford
Martyrdom			*		Hoxne
Hidden head	Haglesdun		*	Heylesdun	Heylesdone
Initial burial		Sutton	*	Hoxne	
Resting place of relics	Bedrices-gueord/Bedricicurtis	Bedericsworth	*	Bedricesworthe	Bury St Edmunds

\* After adding his original section concerning the upbringing and early life of Edmund, Geoffrey of Wells refers his readers to Abbo's *Passio*.

<sup>673</sup> Hægelsdun/Haglesdun/Heylesdone has traditionally been read as 'Hellesdon', a village now incorporated into the north-western suburbs of Norwich. However, the debate concerning the location of Edmund's martyrdom continued to incite scholarly debate (and local pride). See Introduction for further details.

**Figs. 105-6 Writing the legend into the landscape**



Fig. 105. St Edmund's point, Hunstanton (Norfolk)



Fig. 106. Chapel, Bures (Suffolk)

narrative first recorded by Geoffrey of Wells of Edmund's arrival in East Anglia and the events leading up to his coronation in which the young prince arrives at the furthest north-west corner of his new kingdom around Hunstanton, journeys to its centre where he resides for a year at Attleborough before travelling to its southern extremity to be crowned at Bures. There is no reason why Edmund should have landed in north-west Norfolk. Even given Geoffrey's interpretation of Abbo's claim that Edmund descended from the Old Saxons to mean that he was born in Saxony, in modern-day Germany, it would more feasible for him to land somewhere on the east coast, perhaps at the Saxon port of Ipswich.<sup>674</sup> The most plausible motivation for Edmund to land near Hunstanton is that it enables him, as Reimer suggests, to traverse the entire kingdom in the first actions of his reign.

Coleman discusses the relationship between texts and places of religious significance, noting the important function of texts as 'authoritative charters' which define the sanctity of a space or object.<sup>675</sup> In turn, sites associated with holy figures act as embodiments of myth-history and can serve as witnesses of the truth of a text or revelatory event: as the pilgrim encounters a holy place, he or she experiences physically what had previously perhaps been known only through sacred narrative or its visual illustrations.<sup>676</sup> Coleman concludes that in many cases texts and places are inextricably linked and mutually dependent as 'they both physically exist and gain mythological significance from their location in words as well as in a landscape.'<sup>677</sup> It is likely that the relationship between text and place was not always so neatly reciprocal. Coleman acknowledges that there are instances of shrine guardians 'generating' sacred texts in order to justify the charisma attributed to a particular location.<sup>678</sup>

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<sup>674</sup> Keith Wade, 'Gipeswic - East Anglia's first economic capital, 600-1066', in N. Salmon and R. Malster (eds), *Ipswich From The First To The Third Millennium* (Ipswich: The Ipswich Society, 2001), pp. 1-6.

<sup>675</sup> Coleman and Elsner, *Past and Present*, p. 202.

<sup>676</sup> Coleman and Elsner, *Past and Present*, p. 203.

<sup>677</sup> Coleman and Elsner, *Past and Present*, pp. 202-3.

<sup>678</sup> Coleman and Elsner, *Past and Present*, p. 203.

A likely site of this kind associated with Edmund is St Edmund's wells in Old Hunstanton (Norfolk) which today are still identified as a series of ponds in the vicinity of the church (Figs. 106-7). Geoffrey of Wells is the first author to mention the wells (there is no evidence to connect him with this location, although the toponymic equivalence is intriguing).<sup>679</sup> In his account of Edmund's arrival in East Anglia he relates that the young prince knelt and gave thanks for a successful sea crossing from 'Saxony':

At that place also, as he rose from his knees, and mounted his horse, there broke from the ground twelve springs of extraordinary clearness, which continue to flow, even in these days, to the admiration of all who behold them as they glide perpetually to the sea with a pleasant and cheerful murmur.<sup>680</sup>

The presence in saints' *Lives* of topographical features such as holy wells are usually taken as an indication of the influence of popular devotion on the development of a cult.<sup>681</sup> 'Popular religion' is a complicated term which defies precise definition, but which is usually understood to mark a distinction between learned and elite religion and the religion of the unlearned masses.<sup>682</sup>

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<sup>679</sup> A second spring associated with St Edmund lies close to Hoxne, to the north of Abbey Farm on the site of a Benedictine priory founded in 950 and dedicated to St. Athelbriht or Ethelbert. A deep moat or square pond encloses a small island on which was a freshwater spring, said to have emerged on the spot where Edmund's head was found guarded by the wolf. However, this spring does not feature in the medieval legend and appears to have acquired a folkloric association with the cult in the post-medieval period.

<sup>680</sup> Geoffrey of Wells, *De Infantia*, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, I. 99-100.

<sup>681</sup> Graham Jones discusses the numerous examples of medieval churches associated with wells which appear to have been places of much older, and in many cases pre-Christian, religious practice. Graham Jones, *Saints in the Landscape: Heaven and Earth in Religious Dedications* (Stroud: Tempus, 2007), pp. 125-7. For a detailed study of holy wells see James Rattue, *The Living Stream: Holy Wells in Historical Context* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1995).

<sup>682</sup> Some of the difficulties arising from this definition are readily apparent, such as the extent to which it is possible to divide people into such neat categories, the possibility of defining 'learned' and 'unlearned' and distinguishing who belonged in each category. Bob Scribner reflects on the debates surrounding this concept in 'Is a History of Popular Religion Possible?', *History of European Ideas* 10 (1989), 175-91. See also Natalie Zemon Davies, 'From "Popular Religion" to Religious Cultures', in Stephen Ozment, ed., *Reformation Europe: A Guide to Research* (St Louis: Centre for Reformation Research, 1982), pp. 321-41.

**Figs. 107-8 St Edmund's wells, Hunstanton (Norfolk)**



Fig. 107. London, British Library, MS Harley 2278, fol. 28, Edmund kneels and gives thanks for his safe sea crossing and wells spring forth



Fig. 108. St Edmund's wells, Hunstanton (Norfolk)

In the context of saints' cults this would normally suggest the spontaneous development of popular devotion independently of the authorised cult. Topographical references in a legend are a particularly clear indication of this as they suggest cultic activity in locations other than the cult centre.

Catherine Cubitt similarly notes the particular prevalence of topographical features in the legends of martyred and murdered Anglo-Saxon royal saints which she identifies as an indication of the popular origins of these cults.<sup>683</sup> She cites Bede's description of the early cult of St Oswald in which it appears that devotion to the martyred Northumbrian king developed in distinct ways in contrasting locations. At the battlefields of Heavenfield near Hexham (Northumbria) where Oswald defeated Caedwalla and the British and *Maserfelth* where he met his death the devotees appear to have been non-elite and the miracles included the healing of animals as well as humans, brought about by through the mediation of natural features such as the soil of *Maserfelth* which was deemed so potent that it was excavated by devotees to the depth of a grown man. In contrast, devotion at the ecclesiastical sites of St Peter's, Bamburgh (Northumberland), the monastery at Bardney in Lindsey (Lincolnshire) and a church built by the monks of Hexham (Northumberland) near Heavenfield seems to have focussed upon the corporeal relics of St Oswald where high-status participants benefited from of human healings and exorcisms, with no mention of animal cures.

There is no evidence for such extreme polarisation at the inception of the cult of St Edmund. An ancient oak tree at Hoxne was identified as St Edmund's Oak until the time it fell in September 1848 (a monument now marks the spot) (Fig. 109). The association was helped by the discovery within the remnants of the tree of 'a piece of curved iron, possibly an arrowhead', although subsequent investigation has identified this as a rusty nail or bent wire.<sup>684</sup> Trees are often seen as points of intersection between popular and learned religion due to their

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<sup>683</sup> Cubitt, 'Universal and Local Saints in Anglo-Saxon England', pp. 424-32. Cubitt, 'Sites and Sanctity', 53-83.

<sup>684</sup> Abstract of Proceedings, *Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology* 7 (1888-89), p. xli.

connotations of both the crucifixion and the sacred trees of pre-Christian Germanic traditions.<sup>685</sup> It is possible that the doubt which persists today concerning the location of the martyrdom also existed when Edmund's hagiography was first recorded, perhaps as a result of the upheaval of the Viking incursions. Edmund's body seems to have been translated to Bury within around seventy years of his death and it is possible that the then-secular community and later the Benedictines sought to promote the site of Edmund's final resting place in favour of the site of his martyrdom as a means of consolidating the cult in one location.

Abbo's *Passio* contains indications that devotion to St Edmund developed at least in part from popular impetus.<sup>686</sup> The additional details provided by Geoffrey of Wells indicate either that the popular cult continued to develop in the century and half since Abbo was writing, that as a monk of Bury and possibly a local man Geoffrey was more aware of local legends or, conversely, that he invented the stories. The political utility of writing the sites associated with St Edmund into the legend appropriates for the official cult and enables their meaning to be determined and managed by Edmund's monastic guardians. This was also a means by which the abbey could promote their interests and influence within the region. The Liberty of St Edmund comprising the eight and a half hundreds in west Suffolk was a physical and delimited territory but establishing the presence of St Edmund throughout the region suggests that there was also a sense in which the Liberty was a flexible concept, a spiritual rather than temporal entity, that the abbey's sphere of influence could and should be no more circumscribed than the life and footsteps of St Edmund himself. Thus the multiplication of sites associated with St Edmund should not be seen as competing with the cult centre at Bury, but rather as extending the cult across the East Anglian landscape.

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<sup>685</sup> James H. Wilks, *Trees of the British Isles in History & Legend* (London: Frederick Muller Ltd, 1972), p.134.

<sup>686</sup> See above, Ch 1, pp. 72-7.

**Fig. 109 Local legends**



Fig. 109. St Edmund's monument, Hoxne (Suffolk)

### **The local and regional cult: the Snettisham procession**

It can therefore be seen how the distribution of secondary cult sites associated with St Edmund functioned in the context of the legendary tradition. The question remains, however, of how these sites functioned in more practical ways in the sense of how devotion to St Edmund was manifested in these places and how this related to the cult centre at Bury. In some cases evidence suggesting cult activity at these locations is lacking, for example, at Attleborough, named as the location where Edmund spent a year learning the psalter before his coronation. This does not necessarily indicate a disjuncture between the textual cult and its physical realisation but speaks instead to the inevitable loss of records and material evidence over time.

In contrast, there is evidence to suggest long-term devotional activity associated with the place of Edmund's arrival in East Anglia at Hunstanton. The evidence comes not from Hunstanton itself, but from the near-by village of Snettisham, approximately five miles west of Hunstanton and slightly inland, and around fifty miles north-west of Bury St Edmunds (Figs. 110-12).<sup>687</sup> The churchwardens' accounts from Snettisham survive in a single volume dating from 1467/8 to 1581/2 and provide a remarkably detailed and invaluable insight into the calendar customs of the village over a century.<sup>688</sup> They include references to various dances, games, Mayes, processions and the intriguingly titled

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<sup>687</sup> See Appendix 6.

<sup>688</sup> The document is deposited in the Norfolk Record Office as NRO: PD 24/1, and is accompanied by a twentieth century transcription with the same classmark. The fullest treatment of the Snettisham Church Wardens' Accounts is by James Cummings, *Contextual Studies of the Dramatic Records in the Area Around the Wash c. 1350-1550* (Leeds: Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Leeds, 2001), pp. 193-231. This churchwardens' codex is bound in a single volume and is foliated in an extremely irregular manner, containing sections which are ordered chronologically but themselves are not always sequential. Additionally, one year's accounts may be scattered over multiple locations throughout the volume. The discussion which follows is therefore based on Cummings' transcription of the records included as Appendix 2 in his thesis in which entries are arranged chronologically and references given to both the date and the folio number. Cummings' transcription is included here as Appendix 6.

**Fig. 110 References to St Edmund in the Snettisham Churchwardens' Accounts (Norfolk Record Office, PD 24/1)**

<b>Expenses</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Fol.</b>
<b>Unspecified</b>	'payd ad seynt Edmundes'	viiij d	1486/7	72
	'payd ad seynt Edmundes'	iiij s viij d	1509/10	85
	'payd ad seynt Edmundes'	xiiij d	1515/6	86
	'payd ad seynt Edmundes'	xviiij d	1516/7-1518/9	88
	'for Costys at seynt Edmundys'	iiis viij d	1488/9	73
	'for Costys at seynt Edmundys'	xx d	1504/5	83
	'for Costys at seynt Edmundys'	iiij s viij d	1521/2	89v
	'for Costys at seynt Edmundys'	ii s iiij d	1521/2	90
	'payd at Sent Edmundes besyd ye gaderyng of Snetisham'	ij s viij d	1500/1-1502/3	80v
<b>For the procession to 'Saint Edmund's'</b>	'for the procession to Scent Edmundis'	iiij s iiij d	1507/8	84
	'for the procession to Scent Edmundis'	iiij s	1516/7-1518/9	87v
	'for the procession to Scent Edmundis'	iiij d	1537/8	110v
	'for the procession to Scent Edmundis'	ij d	1537/8	110v
	'in Costis of the procession to Sent Edmundes besyd the gaderyng of the town'	iiii s iiij d	1503/4	82v
	'solutis ad processione usque Sancti Edmundo'	xij d	1516/7-1518/9	87
<b>For the procession to 'Saint Edmund's Chapel'</b>	'pro processione usque Capellam Sancti Edmundi'	iiij s	1514/5	36v
<b>For washing surplices</b>	'for wasshyng of Syrples against the procession went scent Edmundis'	vj d	1508/9	84v
<b>For bearing 'shafts'</b>	'payd to ye young men for beryn ther shaftes to Sent Edmundes'	vj d	1500/1-1502/3	80v
<b>For 'washing St Edmund'</b>	'for washyng ageyn Sent Edmund'	x d	1480/1	69
	'for washyng ageyn Sent Edmund'	x d	1491/2	31v
<b>For a lamb</b>	'a lambe to seynt Edmundes'	xij d	1467/8	59
	'a lambe to seynt Edmundes'	xij d	1469/70	60v
	'a lambe to seynt Edmundes'	viiij d	1488/9	73
	'a lambe to seynt Edmundes'	viiij d	1499/00	79

**Figs. 111-2 Snettisham to Hunstanton**



Fig. 111. St Mary's church, Snettisham (Norfolk)



Fig. 112. Remains of St Edmund's chapel, Hunstanton (Norfolk)

Snettisham 'Rockfeste'.<sup>689</sup> Numerous references are also made to festive activities relating to St Edmund. A number of these refer to unspecified costs 'at seynt Edmundys' but others specify that the event is a procession. In this instance 'at' refers to a place as the entry for 1514/15 refers to the 'Capella[m] S[an]c[t]I Ed[mund]i'.<sup>690</sup> The chapel is only specified as the destination on one occasion; presumably the procession was so ingrained in local consciousness that no further elucidation was deemed necessary. Other entries in the churchwardens' accounts indicate that Snettisham participated in the processions of other communities, most notably Ingoldisthorpe, a near-by parish.<sup>691</sup> The nature of the payments for the St Edmund procession, however, indicate that this was Snettisham's own procession. The involvement of the community is indicated by the nature of some of the payments which specify that the churchwardens contributed funds 'besyd ye gaderyng of Snettisham' or 'besyd the gaderyng of the town', 'besyd' being used here in the sense of 'in addition to'.<sup>692</sup> The procession therefore seems to have been one in which the whole community participated.

It is unclear when the procession took place but the context of some of the entries suggest that they should be read in relation to other costs which do not specifically refer to the St Edmund procession. In the 1480/1 accounts, for example, the cost of 4d for 'y[e] schaft[es] of holy Thursday' are immediately followed by 6d 'for Ingaldysthorp p[ro]cession' and 10d for 'washyng ageyn Sent Edm[u]nd'.<sup>693</sup> Holy Thursday is Ascension Day, the Thursday immediately following Rogationtide, so it seems likely that these three processions occurred each year as part of a season of spring festivities.<sup>694</sup> The entry for xd 'washyng ageyn sent Edm[u]nd[es]' in 1491/2 is immediately followed by a payment also

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<sup>689</sup> The nature of the Rockfeste is unclear but it probably took place on 'Rock Monday', the first Monday after the twelve days of Christmas when women typically resumed spinning (using a distaff, or 'rock') after the seasonal festivities. For rituals and rites associated with the Christmas season see See Ronald Hutton, *The Stations of the Sun: A History of the Ritual Year in Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 9-24.

<sup>690</sup> Norfolk Record Office, PD 24/1, fol. 36v.

<sup>691</sup> For the Ingoldisthorpe procession see Cummings, *Contextual Studies*, pp. 197-200.

<sup>692</sup> NRO: PD 24/1, 1500/1-2/3, fol. 80v and NRO: PD 24/1, 1503/4, fol. 83.

<sup>693</sup> Norfolk Record Office, PD 24/1, fol. 69.

<sup>694</sup> For rogationtide rituals see Hutton, *Stations of the Sun*, pp. 277-87.

of xd 'to ye vykyr of honstant[u]n ffor a lombe'.<sup>695</sup> This suggests that the destination of the St Edmund procession was the cliff-top chapel at Hunstanton, presumably the 'sent Edm[u]nd[es]' which was 'washed' and cleaned in preparation for the festivities. The concurrence of place and time are appropriate, with the connotations of springtime renewal and regeneration befitting the location in which Edmund, the youthful king, arrived in East Anglia and where the kingdom itself sprung forth miraculous springs in recognition of his sanctity. The participation of the clergy at Hunstanton and the nature of other preparations, such as washing surplices and the bearing of shafts (presumably displaying banners), suggests that this was a formally recognised ceremonial occasion. Given the time of year that the procession took place it is possible that it marked the Feast of the Translation of St Edmund on 25 April. The most puzzling element of the procession is the lamb, which is frequently accounted for but whose purpose is unclear. The entry mentioned above, for 1491/2, suggests that the lamb was purchased from the custodians of the chapel (presumably to avoid the inconvenience of transporting it from Snettisham) and was a devotional offering to be presented at the chapel.

The participation of the villagers of Snettisham in the festivities of other communities raises the possibility that surrounding villages likewise contributed to the St Edmund procession. In particular if the procession did take place on the Feast of the Translation it is tempting to imagine the communities of north-west Norfolk joining together to celebrate their regional patron and his legendary presence in their area. The festivities would have occurred at the same time as other communities celebrated the Feast of the Translation, including the cult centre at Bury, with Hunstanton serving as an alternative, local devotional focus. Rita Tekippe notes the commonalities between pilgrimage and processions and the way in which the latter could function as a means of sacralising the local landscape.<sup>696</sup> Duffy likewise asserts the importance of the local in medieval pilgrimage:

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<sup>695</sup> Norfolk Record Office, PD 24/1, fol. 31v.

<sup>696</sup> Rita Tekippe, 'Pilgrimage and Procession: Correlations of Meaning, Practice and Effects', in *Art and Architecture*, ed. Blick and Tekippe, pp. 693-751; esp. 693-7 and 701.

For many medieval Christians, going on pilgrimage was...not so much like launching on a journey to the ends of the earth, as of going to a local market town to sell or buy geese or chickens: shrines were features by which they mapped the familiar, as much as signposts to other worlds and other social realities; a local, not a liminal, phenomenon.<sup>697</sup>

Thus secondary sites associated with St Edmund served an important function not only in mapping the cult onto the landscape for the benefit of the monastic community at Bury, but also for devotees removed from the cult centre. Writing the region into the legend thus served both to symbolically appropriate the region to the cult, but also integrated the saint into numerous localities, potentially creating a sense of identification for the local inhabitants and strengthening the sense in which Edmund was patron of the entire region.

### **Images of St. Edmund**

The notion that Edmund's patronage extended across the entire region, as manifested through his presence in the ritual landscape and calendar customs of outlying communities, raises the question of how his saintly identity was perceived by devotees at a remove from the cult centre and, crucially, from his relics, and how this equated to the official version of his sanctity propagated by Bury. The next part of this chapter will therefore explore the ways in which Edmund's cult was manifested in communities away from the abbey at Bury. In the absence of the primary relics, images were an important means by which the presence of the saint could be invoked.

As we have seen in relation to the cult at Bury, visual culture was fundamental to the dissemination of saintly identities. This was equally true at the parochial level. Richard Gameson maintains that some communities 'immortalis[ed] their particular holy man or woman in paint, stone, wood and precious metals as

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<sup>697</sup> Eamon Duffy, 'The dynamics of pilgrimage in late medieval England', in Colin Morris and Peter Roberts, eds., *Pilgrimage: The English Experience from Becket to Bunyan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 164-77; pp. 165-6.

much as, if not more so, than in verse and prayer.<sup>698</sup> Hagiographic art could fulfil many functions and its didactic potential was recognised by contemporaries. The familiar, homogenised code of church art provided a highly visible, pervasive reminder of the events described in sermons and commemorated in services and contemporary authors frequently invoked Gregory I in support of art as a means of instructing the illiterate.<sup>699</sup> In *Dives and Pauper*, for example, an early fifteenth-century prose commentary on the ten commandments, Dives, a layman, asks his adviser, Pauper, to teach him about images, the ‘book of lewyd peple’.<sup>700</sup> However, the notion of medieval church art as simply picture books for the illiterate fails to acknowledge the complex range of responses to images. Gameson suggests that ‘by the means of depictions, one could appropriate and possess any saint or particular figure’.<sup>701</sup> ‘Appropriation’ implies a degree of ownership which the elevated status of saints within medieval religion renders unlikely; saints were, after all, the conduits through which flowed the power of God. Rather than a one-way transaction, with the saint obediently at the behest of the community, the decision to depict a particular saint represented the creation of a mutually beneficent relationship, the ‘debt of interchanging neighbourhood’ referred to by Caxton in his translation of the *Golden Legend*.<sup>702</sup> An individual or parochial community would have hoped to attract the intercessory favour of the one depicted in return for identifying that particular saint as especially worthy of devotion. It was above all the reputation of the holy man or woman to act effectively on their behalf, whether based upon evidence from their life or, frequently, their posthumous activities, which encouraged those who sought their favour and intercession. Images played a key role in this process, able to represent the

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<sup>698</sup> Richard Gameson, ‘The Early Imagery of Thomas Becket’ in *Pilgrimage, The English Experience from Becket to Bunyan* ed. C. Morris and P. Roberts (Cambridge, 2002), pp. 46-89; p. 46.

<sup>699</sup> For recent discussions of the Gregorian topos see Lawrence G. Duggan, ‘Was art really the book of the illiterate?’, *Word and Image* 5 (1989), 227-51 and Celia Chazelle, ‘Pictures, Books and the Illiterate: Pope Gregory I’s Letters to Serenius of Marseilles’, *Word and Image* 6 (1990), 138-53. Richard Marks also discusses these issues in *Image and Devotion in Late Medieval England* (Stroud: Sutton, 2004) pp. 26-27.

<sup>700</sup> *Dives and Pauper*, ed. Priscilla Heath Barnum, 3 vols., Early English Text Society os 275, 280 and 323, (London: Oxford University Press for the Early English Text Society, 1976, 1980 and 2004), I, p. 91.

<sup>701</sup> Gameson, ‘Early Imagery,’ p. 45.

<sup>702</sup> *The Golden Legend*, ed. Ellis, VI, p. 97.

identity of a saint as understood by those involved in the creation of the image, whether at the level of commissioning, design or production. It is therefore important to consider the context in which an image may be found, both its physical location within a church and the social and cultural context in which it originated, as this helps to determine the ways in which individuals and communities perceived saints such as Edmund. For this reason I eschew the traditional tendency to group images according to medium. For ease of reference Fig. 113 shows a statistical breakdown of images by type, which are also categorised based on iconography in Fig. 114. It is certainly the case that certain media have particular connotations, such as stained glass representing the light of God, and some useful conclusions can be reached on this basis. However, it shall be seen that the variety of ways in which Edmund can be depicted within these types is even more revealing.

### The material

Images from parish churches are particularly useful as they survive in relatively large numbers, enabling comparisons to be made. Indeed, Duffy notes that Edmund is the most frequently depicted native saint.<sup>703</sup> Interestingly, he makes this observation in the context of discussing representations of female saints, including St Æthelthryth. Given her widespread popularity it is perhaps surprising that Æthelthryth does not appear more frequently in church imagery. Blanton suggests that this may be accounted for by the early construction of the cult as a textual entity as a means of eliding the problematic presence of the female body at Ely, which in turn may have affected her popularity with the laity.<sup>704</sup> She is also most commonly depicted in her role as abbess and monastic foundress, an aspect of her cult perhaps more appealing to the clergy. In contrast, the promotion from the outset of Edmund as a saint of the East Anglian people is reflected in this aspect of his cult including, as we shall see below, the way in which he was depicted visually.

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<sup>703</sup> Eamon Duffy, “Holy Maydens, Holy Wyfes”: The Cult of Women Saints in Fifteenth- and Sixteenth-Century England’, in *Women in the Church: Papers Read at the 1989 Summer Meeting and the 1990 Winter Meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society*, ed. W.J. Shiels and Diana Wood (Oxford: Bail Blackwell, 1990), pp. 175-96; pp. 178-9.

<sup>704</sup> Blanton, *Signs of Devotion*, p. 267.

**Fig. 113 Images of St Edmund (by type)**

<b>Type</b>	<b>Number documented</b>	<b>Number extant</b>	<b>Date ranges (approximate)</b>
Painted glass	27	13	1250-1558
Rood screen panels	15	14	15 <sup>th</sup> c
Unspecified 'image'	8	0	Unknown
Wall paintings	8	6	12 <sup>th</sup> -14 <sup>th</sup> c
Bench ends	6	6	15 <sup>th</sup> c
Roof bosses	4	4	1327-1480
Font images	3	3	1400-1475
Sculpted stone figures (miscellaneous)	4	3	Late 12 <sup>th</sup> -15 <sup>th</sup> c
Sculpted stone figure (on porch)	1	1	15 <sup>4</sup>
Sculpted stone figure (on tower)	1	1	c.1472
Sculpted stone figure (spandrel)	1	1	15 <sup>3</sup>
Carved wooden wall post	1	1	15 <sup>th</sup> c
Embroidered cope	1	0	1501
Engraved brass plate	1	1	1450-1500
Inscribed brass bell	1	0	Unknown
Misericord	1	1	15 <sup>th</sup> c
Painted cloth frontal	1	0	14 <sup>3</sup>
Pulpit image	1	1	
Retable	1	1	1300-1350
Stone inscription	1	1	c.1450-80
Painted indulgence	1	0	15 <sup>th</sup> c
<b>Totals</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>1100s-1558</b>

**Fig. 114 Images of St Edmund (by iconography)**

<b>Iconographic type</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Individual	51
Martyrdom	10
Wolf and head	10
Narrative	2
Text	2
Unknown	13

A further advantage is that images are sometimes, although not always, within their original context, and their containment within one clearly defined space allows speculation about not only the individual images but also relationships between images, the 'holy geography' of a church. Fig. 113 indicates that around ninety images of Edmund are known to have existed in churches in Norfolk and Suffolk, and of these nearly sixty are extant, although this number would undoubtedly have been higher before the Reformation.<sup>705</sup> Edmund is depicted in numerous formats, most frequently in painted glass and on rood screen panels, and is most frequently depicted as an individual figure bearing his attribute, the arrow. The range and frequency of depiction in each media as well as the iconographic types broadly accord with the manner in which most saints were depicted in English medieval churches.<sup>706</sup> The relative numbers of some types of images may be accounted for partly by fashion; for example, the fashion for painted murals declined in the later Middle Ages at the same time that other formats, particularly the painted screen and rood, came into favour.<sup>707</sup> Issues of destruction and survival are also influential. Painted glass and wall paintings were undoubtedly easier for reformers and iconoclasts to remove by breaking or whitewashing than a stone sculpture high on the roof of a porch or the side of a tower such as those which can be seen at Pulham St Mary and Acle. The particular vulnerability of certain types of images is reflected in the disparity between the numbers we know to have existed and those which survive, a trend which is likely to have continued after the periods of reforming zeal. More problematic are the unspecified 'images' frequently referred to in antiquarian sources.<sup>708</sup> Nevertheless images of St Edmund survive in sufficient quantities to enable them to illuminate a particular aspect of cultic devotion.

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<sup>705</sup> For Reformation in general, see Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, esp. pp. 377-593. For documents pertaining to the destruction of the shrine at Bury see *Three Chapters of Letters*, ed. Wright.

<sup>706</sup> For Norfolk, for example, see Ann Eljenholm Nichols, *The Early Art of Norfolk: a subject list of extant and lost art including items relevant to early drama* (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications/Western Michigan University, 2002).

<sup>707</sup> See Simon Cotton, 'Medieval Rood Screens in Norfolk – their construction and painting dates', *Norfolk Archaeology* 35 (1984), 44-54.

<sup>708</sup> See Nichols, *Early Art*, p. 10. It should be noted that Nichols assumed a fifteenth-century date for all unspecified images unless otherwise stated. This assumption has not been reproduced in my statistics.

The chronological range within which images of Edmund occurs is broad, ranging from twelfth-century sculptures and wall paintings in the chancels of St Edmund's, Emneth (Norfolk) and St Edmund's, Fritton (Norfolk) respectively, to glass installed in the north window of St Peter Parmentergate, Norwich, in 1558. However, the distribution of images within this range is by no means even. The twelfth-century sculpture at Emneth is uniquely early, and although a few images survive from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, it is in the fifteenth century that we see an exponential growth in numbers, with around two thirds of known images dating from after 1400. This apparent growth in Edmund's popularity in the later Middle Ages may be to some extent misleading, and it should not be assumed that a lack of earlier images represents a lack of devotion. Such a summation would depend upon the remaining images representing the full extent of the visual cult and this is evidently not the case. Churches were remodelled and rebuilt throughout the Middle Ages, and it was during the later fifteenth century, at the time of greatest prosperity, that the majority of both rebuilding and new church building took place in Norfolk and Suffolk.

To some extent the geographical distribution of images accords with a variety of geological, demographic and social determinants: settlement tends to be more dense in areas with good soil, such as the fertile Breckland region, and in turn settlement density affects the distribution of wealth and the presence of industry, particularly the worsted textile industry.<sup>709</sup> Once again, however, although the overall distribution of his cult may be attributed to general determinants such as these, Edmund's presence in particular locations can be identified as the result of the influence of certain groups or individuals.

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<sup>709</sup> These patterns are illustrated in *An Historical Atlas of Norfolk*, ed. P. Wade-Martins, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn., (Norwich: Norfolk Museums Service, 1994) pp. 18-19, 42-4, 76-77, 78-79, 94-95 and *An Historical Atlas of Suffolk*, ed. David Dymond and Edward Martin, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn., (Ipswich: Suffolk County Council, 1989), pp. 20-1, 76-8, 80-2, 140-2.

### Patronage and popularity

Key to understanding how Edmund is depicted is knowing who created an image and for what purpose. As Richard Marks notes, ‘images did not function in a vacuum, but were framed by current ideologies and local power structures... by their environment and by the particular historical moment they occupied’.<sup>710</sup> Although the function and reception of images may have altered over time, appreciating the context in which they originated invariably adds further nuance. Certain factors would have made the presence of an image of St Edmund within a church extremely likely, including the dedication of the church and the presence of a guild dedicated to the saint.<sup>711</sup>

### Dedication images

#### Wall paintings, St Edmund’s church, Fritton (Norfolk)

There are some notable examples of what may be termed ‘dedication images’. The wall paintings in St Edmund’s, Fritton (Norfolk) are of various dates, but the images of Edmund in the remarkable tunnel-vaulted Saxon apse of the church date from the twelfth century (Figs. 115-6). Discovered in 1967 surrounding a small Saxon window, the paintings consist of seven scenes. The martyrdom itself is in the spandrel above the window and flanking it are two very faint figures representing the True Church, on the left, and Unbelief or Paganism on the right. Below these are four archers, two on either side, shooting at Edmund. Below these again are, on the right, a saint usually identified as St Peter by the key which appears next to him, and on the left an unknown figure without a halo who may be the donor. The figure of Edmund is extremely fragmentary but he is readily identifiable by his crown, which has a square, castellated top, and by the many arrows that protrude from his body.

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<sup>710</sup> Marks, *Image and Devotion* p. 25.

<sup>711</sup> For discussion of patronal images see Marks, *Image and Devotion* pp. 64-85 and for guild images see Ken Farnhill, *Guilds and the Parish Community in Late Medieval East Anglia, c. 1470-1550* (York: York Medieval Press in association with the Boydell Press, Woodbridge, and with the Centre for Medieval Studies, University of York, 2001), pp. 34-40.

**Figs. 115-6 Wall paintings, St Edmund's church, Fritton (Norfolk)**



Fig. 115. Wall paintings in the chancel apse: Edmund's martyrdom is in the spandrel above the window, flanked by figures of the True Church, on the left, and Unbelief or Paganism on the right. Below these are four archers, two on either side, and below these again are, on the right, St Peter and on the left perhaps the donor.



Fig. 116. Detail of the martyrdom of St Edmund showing Edmund bound to the tree with the waiting wolf at bottom left. A second figure seems to pull out an arrow.

He is bound to the slender tree to his right whilst the pair of archers to either side loose arrows towards him. The manner in which the Danes at Fritton are depicted is unusual. Images in similar media and contexts, such as the fourteenth-century wall painting of the martyrdom at Troston (Suffolk), includes the standard image of grotesque, animalistic figures in short tunics. At Fritton, however, the figures are more respectably attired and elegantly postured. Although an unprovable assertion, it is possible that the alleged founding of the church by Cnut may have perpetuated a more nuanced attitude to the Danes than evinced elsewhere.<sup>712</sup>

Another iconographically unusual feature is the second figure that appears in the martyrdom frame, who seems to pull one of the arrows from Edmund's body. This is not part of the standard iconography of the martyrdom, in which Edmund usually stands alone except for the Danish archers. It is possible that this figure represents one of Edmund's followers who searched for the king's body after the departure of the Danes. This is also alluded to by the presence of the wolf, which stands on its hind legs, front paws braced, presumably against another tree, head turned to look at Edmund, ready to stand guard after the king is beheaded. Thus the artist has conflated narrative time in these images in order to convey the most significant elements of Edmund's identity: his kingship (evident in his crown), his martyrdom and his East Anglian origins (represented by the loyal follower and the presence of the wolf). The presence of the flanking figures of the True Church and Unbelief reflect the understanding that Edmund died a martyr's death in defence of his faith. Likewise, the presence of St Peter alludes to Edmund's role in promoting and preserving East Anglian Christianity, just as Peter ensured its spread during the earliest days of the Church. Thus these early paintings offer an important indication of the nature of Edmund's saintly patronage.

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<sup>712</sup> J. P. Wilkinson, 'Fritton Parish Church, Norfolk', church pamphlet (1930).

**Fig. 117 Antiphon window, St Edmund's church, Taverham (Norfolk)**



Fig. 117. Angels carrying scrolls with part of the opening line of the antiphon sung at Vespers on the eve of the Feast of St Edmund

Taverham antiphon window, St Edmund's church, Taverham (Norfolk)

Although similarly dedicated to St Edmund, the stained glass at Taverham (Norfolk) offers a different perspective on the dissemination of Edmund's saintly identity (Fig. 117). The only medieval glass now in the church is the northwest nave window (N5). The main lights contain a simple Crucifixion scene which is largely restored and not originally in this location.<sup>713</sup> The medieval glass in four of the six tracery lights, however, appears to be *in situ*. Each contains a demi-figure of an angel wearing a diadem and ermine tippet and holding an inscribed scroll.<sup>714</sup> The texts are incomplete and very difficult to read but King identifies them as follows: *Miles Regis* (A2); *P[ro] sal[ute]* (A4); *Ave rex ge[n]tis an[glorum]*.<sup>715</sup> This is clearly part of the antiphon sung at Vespers on the eve of the Feast of St Edmund.<sup>716</sup> The most widespread dissemination of the antiphon would have been through its adoption by the Sarum rite, but the direct influence of the abbey at Bury is also apparent. Lydgate exhorts readers of his *Lives* to recite 'with hool herte and dew reuerence' an 'Antephne and Orison' in order to gain an indulgence of two hundred days 'write and registred afforn his hooly shryne'.<sup>717</sup> The presence of the text of the antiphon on or near the shrine would be an affective means of disseminating it to pilgrims. Evidence of its propagation may be found in a number of medieval lead pseudo-coins found in St Mary's Church, Bury, which bear the opening words of the antiphon.<sup>718</sup> It is likely these were a form of pilgrim souvenir intended to remind devotees of the indulgence gained by visiting the shrine. In addition, Blomefield records the

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<sup>713</sup> David King, 'An Antiphon to St Edmund in Taverham Church', *Norfolk Archaeology* 35 (1977), 387-91.

<sup>714</sup> For other example of angels holding inscribed scrolls see Christopher Woodforde, *The Norwich School of Glass-Painting in the Fifteenth Century* (London: Oxford University Press, 1950), pp. 137-142.

<sup>715</sup> King, 'An Antiphon', 388.

<sup>716</sup> See Colton, 'Music and Identity', 89-95.

<sup>717</sup> Lydgate, *Lives*, Prologue, 73-80 and Antiphon and Orison (unnumbered in Horstmann's edition).

<sup>718</sup> Samuel Tymms, *A Historie of the Church of St Marie Bury St Edmunds* (Bury St Edmunds and London: Jackson and Frost, 1845), pp. 62-67.

antiphon written on the now-lost roodscreen in Fundenhall church (Norfolk).<sup>719</sup> Although now lost, the antiphon window once also contained the arms of the Braunche family along with donor figures, leading King to suggest that the glass was probably installed around 1478, when Robert Braunche of Stody and Hunworth presented to the church.<sup>720</sup> As a local man it is possible that Braunche went on pilgrimage to Bury. The presence of the antiphon at Taverham may therefore be as a result of general knowledge of it from the Sarum rites, via its dissemination through pilgrim souvenirs or from direct experience in the abbey church at Bury. This exemplifies that whilst images of St Edmund may derive from the dedication of the church, a far more complex network of influences and individuals are also likely to be involved.

Despite these notable examples, the relationship between dedication and depiction is further complicated by the overall evidence from Norfolk and Suffolk where, of the twenty three churches dedicated to Edmund, only eleven are known to have contained an image of the saint, and of the nine guilds dedicated to Edmund in Norfolk only four of these accord with the parochial dedication.<sup>721</sup> Whilst it is likely that these apparent anomalies may be accounted for by loss, either of an image or records relating to guilds, it is noteworthy that guild records do survive for two churches dedicated to Edmund and refer to guilds with alternative patrons.<sup>722</sup> Duffy avers that there is 'little sign in the later Middle Ages of strong individual devotion to the parish patron', and notes that few surviving screens portray such individuals, who also occur infrequently as recipients of bequests.<sup>723</sup> In determining the presence of an image of St Edmund within a church the affiliation of the parish may therefore be more significant than its dedication. In the case of St. Edmund, affiliation of a church or chapel with the abbey at Bury, either directly or via the connections with patrons of the abbey, would be likely to influence his inclusion.

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<sup>719</sup> Blomefield, V, p. 174.

<sup>720</sup> King, 'An Antiphon', 389.

<sup>721</sup> For dedications see Frances Arnold-Foster, *Studies in Church Dedications*, III, p. 359 and for guilds see Farnhill, *Guilds and the Parish Community*, pp. 172-211.

<sup>722</sup> Farnhill, *Guilds and the Parish Community*, pp. 172-211.

<sup>723</sup> Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, p. 162.

### Personal patronage

In addition to the patronage of an institution, the proclivity of the individual is also likely to be a significant factor in determining the presence of a saint. In contrast to the paucity of documentation surrounding the majority of parochial church images, literary renderings of saints' *Lives* sometimes include details as to why a particular individual has been selected. Although the medium and circumstances of patronage may differ considerably, the underlying principles of selection detailed in literary *vitae* may illuminate the choices of saints within a material context. In his fifteenth-century *Legendys of Hooly Wummen* Osbern Bokenham (1393-1447) describes the circumstances of the composition of each *vita*, informing us, for example, that the legend of St. Anne was composed for John and Katherine Denston who had a daughter named Anne, and that the *vitae* of Ss. Elizabeth and Katherine are dedicated to Elizabeth de Vere, Katherine Denston and Katherine Howard.<sup>724</sup> St. Anne is also invoked in her capacity as patroness of conception and fertility, representing a common appeal to saints associated with specific occupations or circumstances. Although documentary references are sparse, bequests to rood screens exhibit similar patterns of patronage; for example, at North Burlingham (Norfolk) the names of the donors of the rood screen correlate with the saints and frequently occur on the panel with their 'name' saint.<sup>725</sup>

### Thornham Parva retable

A similar naming pattern may be seen in relation to St Edmund. The mid-fourteenth century retable now in Thornham Parva church (Suffolk), along with the frontal now in the Musée de Cluny (Paris), was originally made for the church of a Dominican friary, evident in the inclusion of the two most

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<sup>724</sup> Osbern Bokenham, *Legendys of Hooly Wummen*, ed. Mary S. Serjeantson, Early English Text Society os 206 (London: Humphrey Milford, 1938), ll. 2092, 5054 and 6365-6 respectively.

<sup>725</sup> The donors at Burlingham include Edward Lacy, John and Cecilia Blake, Thomas and Margaret Benet and John Benet; amongst the saints are Edward the Confessor, John the Baptist, Thomas Becket, Benedict and Cecilia. Cited in Cotton, 'Medieval Roodscreens in Norfolk', 44-45.

prominent saints of the order, Dominic and Peter Martyr (Figs. 118-9). Various houses in East Anglia have been suggested as the original owners, but the most convincing is Thetford Dominican Priory.<sup>726</sup> Founded in 1335, it correlates with the date of the painting of the retable.<sup>727</sup> Connections can also be made to account for the retable's relocation from the Priory at the Dissolution and its rediscovery in a stable loft on the nearby Thornham Hall estate in 1926.<sup>728</sup> The choice of saints is also illuminating. The outer pair are Dominicans, then progressing towards the crucifixion in the centre next are Catherine of Alexandria and Margaret of Antioch, two female saints famed for their learning and preaching who therefore accord with Dominican ideology. The next pair, Peter and Paul, are standard in many contexts due to their role in the establishment of the Church, and again are known for spreading the word. The final pair, John the Baptist and Edmund, occupy the position of honour either side of the crucifixion, suggesting their importance, but are less readily explicable in this otherwise explicitly Dominican context. A convincing connection, however, can be made between the saints and the patrons of Thetford Priory, which was founded by John de Warenne, earl of Surrey (d. 1347) and Edmund de Gonville (d. 1351), a wealthy local priest and founder of Gonville Hall in Cambridge.<sup>729</sup> The otherwise unusual pairing can therefore be explained by reference to the retable's patrons.

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<sup>726</sup> Christopher Norton, David Park and Paul Binski, *Dominican Painting in East Anglia: the Thornham Parva retable and the Musée de Cluny frontal* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1987). For the provenance of the retable see Norton, 'History and Provenance', in *Dominican Painting*, pp. 82-101; esp. pp. 82-91.

<sup>727</sup> Binski, 'Style and Date', in *Dominican Painting*, pp. 57-81. See also Mary Kempster, 'A technical comparison of the Thornham Parva Retable with contemporary paintings, with particular reference to East Anglia' and Marie Louise Sauerberg, Helen Howard and Aloce Tavares da Silva, 'The wall paintings of c. 1300 in the Ante-Reliquary Chapel, Norwich Cathedral and the Thornham Parva Retable: a technical comparison', both in *The Thornham Parva Retable. Technique, conservation and context of an English medieval painting*, ed. Ann Massing, Hamilton Kerr Institute Painting and Practice Series 1 (London: Harvey Miller Publishers for the Hamilton Kerr Institute and the University of Cambridge, 2003), pp. 143-4 and 174-88 respectively.

<sup>728</sup> For how the retable came to be at Thornham Hall see Norton, 'History and Provenance', in *Dominican Painting*, pp. 95-101.

<sup>729</sup> For the foundation of Thetford Priory in relation to the retable and frontal see Norton, 'History and Provenance', in *Dominican Painting*, pp. 87-8 and n. 22.

**Figs. 118-9 The Thornham Parva retable**



Fig. 118 (above). Reconstruction of the Thornham Parva retable and the Musée de Cluny frontal

Fig. 119 (right). Detail of St Edmund front the retable



Devotion to the saints could also have a political dimension. As an erstwhile king of the region Edmund's cult was particularly strong in East Anglia, but in addition to being worshipped locally, he was for several centuries regarded as a patron saint of England and was a particular favourite of a number of English kings. In addition to the influence of individual preference in determining the presence of St Edmund imagery in the Norfolk parish church, the visual cult must therefore also be located in its political context, both locally and nationally. However, for many of the images under consideration here, as for the majority of medieval church art, the details of their patronage, craftsmanship, even date, remain fugitive. Yet despite the uncertainty surrounding their origin, I believe it is important to also consider those images for which context and patronage cannot so easily be determined.

### The iconography of St Edmund

#### The Norwich Cathedral cloister bosses

As part of the monastic precinct, the images of St Edmund found in the cloisters of Norwich Cathedral Priory exist in a different physical context and may therefore not be directly comparable to the majority of East Anglian images which occur in parish churches. It is possible that their context, in particular their intended monastic audience, may have resulted in representations of Edmund different from those on display to the general populace in a parish church, although the tendency of the cathedral to act as a prototype for work replicated elsewhere is also well known.<sup>730</sup> However, this is one of the few examples where multiple images of St Edmund survive in one location as part of a larger iconographic scheme and as such contributes a unique perspective to a discussion of Edmund's visual cult.

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<sup>730</sup> The Cathedral as an architectural prototype is discussed by Malcolm Thurlby, 'The Influence of the Cathedral on Romanesque Architecture' and Richard Fawcett, 'The Influence of the Gothic Parts of the Cathedral on Church Building in Norfolk', in *Norwich Cathedral: Church, City and Diocese, 1096-1996*, ed. Ian Atherton, Eric Fernie, Christopher Harper-Bill and Hassel Smith (London: Hambledon 1996), pp. 136-57 and pp. 210-227 respectively.

Although completed as part of the original cathedral building, the cloisters, along with much of the structure, suffered considerable damage during the riots in Norwich in 1272 and were rebuilt between 1300-1450 as part of a massive programme of repair. This included the sculpture and painting of the approximately four hundred keystone bosses which hold in place the ribs of the vaulting.<sup>731</sup> The north walk was the last to be restored, and the bosses here depict scenes from the *Lives* of the saints. Most are shown during their martyrdom, 'their most characteristic moment'.<sup>732</sup> Thus St. Martin is shown dividing his cloak with the peasant (CNJ3) and St. Laurence appears roasted on the gridiron (CNI5).<sup>733</sup> See Fig. 120 for a plan of the cloisters. Most saints are afforded only one boss, but Edmund appears twice, bound to the tree and pierced with arrows in the seventh bay (CNI7) and his followers discover the wolf guarding his severed head in the ninth (CNH7). This suggests that the creators of the bosses considered Edmund to be of suitable significance to be included twice: only Thomas Becket occupies a greater number, with his martyrdom depicted in a series of five (CNH3/5/6/8, CNI1).

Edmund also appears in the east walk, the first to be rebuilt, begun under Bishop John Salmon (1299-1325) and Prior Henry Lakenham (1289-1310). The bosses were completed in two phases: the first group spans eight bays and runs from the entrance of the Chapter House to the Dark Entry at the south end and were completed 1316-1319. The imagery here is mostly foliate, with a few figural images such as the Green Man, and numerous hybrids and mythical creatures.<sup>734</sup> The second phase, re-built between 1327-1329, runs northwards from the Chapter House to the Prior's Door into the Cathedral across six bays. The theme of these later bosses, the first sequence of narrative bosses carved in England, was the Passion of Christ.<sup>735</sup>

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<sup>731</sup> See Martial Rose, *Stories in Stone: the medieval roof carvings of Norwich Cathedral* (London: Herbert, 1997), pp. 23-50.

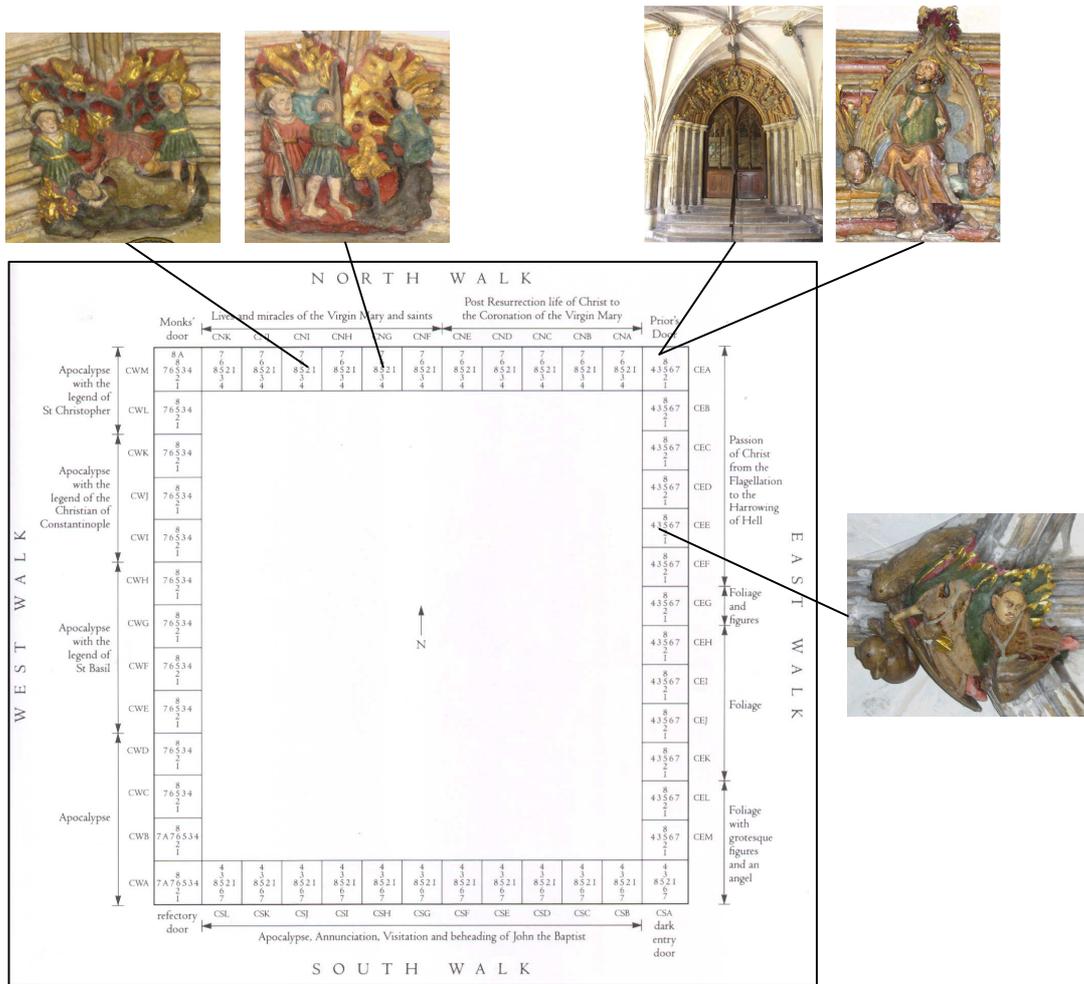
<sup>732</sup> Rose, *Stories in Stone*, p. 42.

<sup>733</sup> Reference to boss and bay numberings are given throughout in accordance with those in Rose, *Stories in Stone*.

<sup>734</sup> The imagery of the bosses in this walk is discussed by Sarah Mittuch in 'Medieval Art of Death and Resurrection', *Archaeology Today* 209 (May/June 2007), 34-40.

<sup>735</sup> Rose, *Stories in Stone*, p. 11.

**Figs. 120-2 Norwich Cathedral cloister bosses**



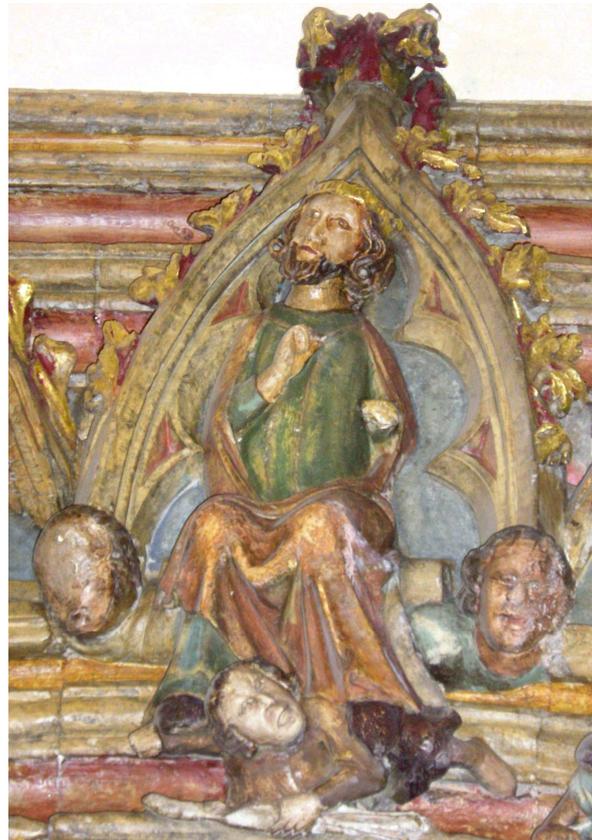
**Fig. 120. Plan of Norwich Cathedral cloisters showing the location of the St Edmund iconography in its iconographical context.<sup>736</sup>**

<sup>736</sup> The plan is from Rose, *Stories in Stone*, p. 47. The pictorial additions are my own.



Fig. 121 (above). The Prior's door

Fig. 122 (right). Detail of St Edmund (second from right) above the Prior's door



It is in the context of the Passion narrative that Edmund can be found. His martyrdom appears in the second bay and forms one of the 'orbital' bosses around the central scene of the Resurrection (CEB3). The sequence of bosses leads to the Prior's Door, through which the monks passed on their way through the cloisters to services in the Cathedral. Edmund is also depicted above the Prior's Door, where along with Moses and Ss. Peter and John the Baptist, he flanks an image of Christ enthroned (Figs. 121-2). The inclusion of Edmund, the only non-biblical saint, in this illustrious group again attests to the exceptionally high regard in which he was held. The image here is of Edmund crowned and made whole, and provides a sharp contrast with the bound and helpless individual depicted during his martyrdom in the second bay and the two north walk images. Edmund's presence in the Resurrection bay prefigures his appearance above the Prior's Door, and alludes to his spiritual glorification in the company of heaven. It also reiterates the sacrificial nature of Edmund's own martyrdom. Despite there being only two images of Edmund, their association with the larger Passion narrative invests them with a similar narrative progression of their own: just as Christ's passion culminates in His enthronement in heaven, so Edmund's suffering and death ensure his place in the company of heaven.

Edmund's depiction in the Cathedral cloisters suggests that for the creators of the bosses the martyrdom was the most characteristic scene from Edmund's *vita* and defined him in relation to other saints. His presence in the Resurrection bay, however, reiterates that whilst death marks the end of a saint's earthly life it is also the beginning of their heavenly existence and the means by which they may achieve glory in the company of heaven.

### Thornham Parva wall paintings

The other sequence of Edmund images are found in the early fourteenth-century wall paintings at Thornham Parva (Suffolk). The Edmund cycle is painted on the north wall of the nave, opposite the ornate Norman south door which formed the main entrance to the church, and runs from east to west (Figs. 123-5). It is one of only two surviving cycles of Edmund wall paintings in England. The other dates from the mid-thirteenth century and is in the north transept of St Helen's church, Cliffe-at-Hoo (Kent) (Fig. 126). On the opposite wall scenes from the Infancy of Christ run west to east, suggesting that the paintings were designed for a viewer entering the church at the west end and proceeding around the interior in an anti-clockwise direction. The paintings on both walls extend east as far as the rood screen and at their western limit are obscured by an eighteenth-century bow-fronted gallery. The Virgin Mary, dedicatee of the church, features prominently in the Infancy cycle and the theme of the incarnation of the saviour relates to the notion of Edmund as saviour of his kingdom, dying on behalf of his people. Thus Edmund is to an extent a type of Christ, evincing in his narrative universal Christian truths of salvation and redemption.

In contrast, certain details of the Edmund cycle attest to aspects of his saintly identity which seem to have particularly local relevance. The first of five visible scenes depicts Edmund on horseback riding away from a battlemented tower. This is iconographically extremely unusual and illustrates the narrative, first recorded by Geffrei Gaimar in his *Estoire des Engleis* around 1135-40, of Edmund's attempt to flee from the Danes following the East Anglians' defeat in battle:

**Figs. 123-6 Wall paintings, St Mary's church, Thornham Parva (Suffolk)**

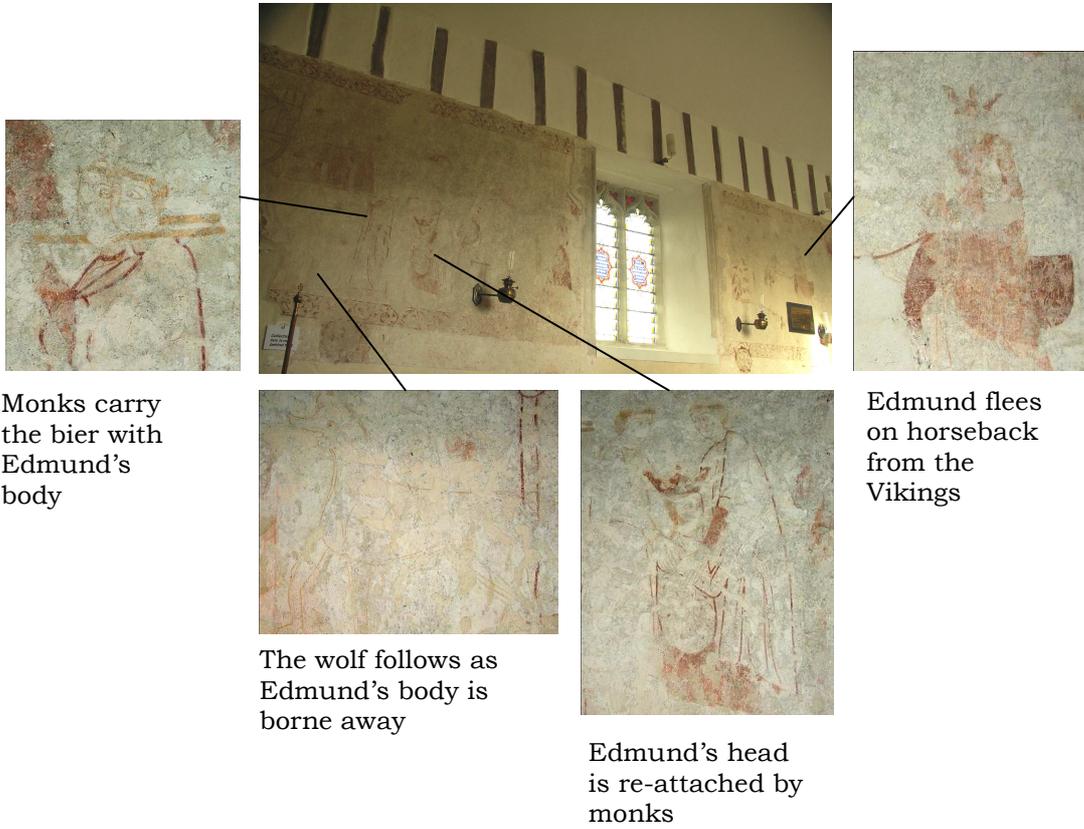


Fig. 123. The St Edmund sequence on the north wall of the church



Fig. 124. The final scene of the sequence incorporating the arch of the north doorway



Fig. 125. Detail showing Egelwyn transporting Edmund's relics to London

**Fig. 126 St Edmund wall paintings sequence, St Helen's church, Cliffe-at-Hoo (Kent)<sup>737</sup>**



Fig. 126. St Edmund sequence: middle row (left to right) – the martyrdom, the discovery of Edmund's body; top row (left to right) – Edmund's head is re-attached, the wolf follows as Edmund's body is borne away

<sup>737</sup> Picture from Roger Rosewell, *Medieval Wall Paintings in English and Welsh Churches* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2008), p. 178, Fig. 197.

The [Danes] fought with great ferocity and emerged victorious on the battlefield. God! What a calamity it was for their lord and king Edmund, who was driven back into a stronghold where his principle place of residence was. The heathens pursued him there, and Edmund came out to meet them. The first people who met him took him prisoner, asking him, "Where's Edmund? Tell us where he is." "That I will, and willingly so, you can be sure: for as long as I have taken refuge here, Edmund has been here, and I have been with him. When I left, he left as well. I have no idea whether he will get out of your clutches".<sup>738</sup>

Edmund is held by the Danes and eventually recognised by someone in Ingwar and Ubba's retinue, and is subsequently put to death. *Estoire* was probably composed for Constance, wife of Ralph Fitz Gilbert, a minor Lincolnshire magnate.<sup>739</sup> Up until the accession of Edgar in 959 it is primarily based upon the Northern Recension of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* and follows its annalistic format, although its narratives are heavily influenced by romance traditions.<sup>740</sup> At this date the textual tradition was still largely bifurcated into chronicle and hagiographic traditions and Edmund's depiction in *Estoire* is thus primarily drawn from chronicle sources in which Edmund engages the Danes in battle. The traditions would not be united textually until the compilation of Bodley 240 in the third quarter of the fourteenth century, around half a century later than the date usually ascribed to the paintings. The rest of the scenes are part of the standard hagiographic tradition and this raises a number of possibilities concerning the source upon which the cycle as a whole was based. The paintings might be later which would enable them to be based upon Bodley 240, which contains all the narrative elements depicted visually in the paintings. However, based on stylistic analysis this seems unlikely. The other possibility is that elements of the chronicle tradition had already been

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<sup>738</sup> The most recent edition and translation is by Ian Short, *Geffrei Gaimar. Estoire des Engleis* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), ll. 2871-2890, pp. 156-9.

<sup>739</sup> For the Fitz Gilberts see Short, ix-xi and notes to the text, ll. 5899, 6258, 6350-1.

<sup>740</sup> For the literary context see Legge, *Anglo-Norman Literature*, pp. 27-36; 276-8, also Rosalind Field, 'Romance as History, History as Romance', in Maldwyn Mills, Jennifer Fellows and Carol M. Meade, eds., *Romance in Medieval England* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1991), pp. 164-73.

incorporated into Edmund's *vita* by the early fourteenth century and the Thornham cycle is based either on oral traditions which were not yet formally recorded or upon an otherwise unknown text or visual source. This is also implied by evidence from the Cliffe-at-Hoo cycle which likewise contains Edmund's flight from the Danes. Dating from the mid-thirteenth century and geographically further removed from the cult centre, they suggest that this version of Edmund's legend was being disseminated at an earlier date than previously assumed. In terms of the development of Edmund's saintly identity this scene is a curious addition as his attempts to flee seem to undermine the notion of the willing heroic martyr. Short suggests that Geffrei includes local traditions and romance elements throughout *Estoire* in order to enliven his text for his secular baronial audience.<sup>741</sup> This incident is therefore part of the same trend that Geoffrey of Wells notes around the same time, where increasing interest in St Edmund led people to elaborate upon the legend. In much the same way as the details Geoffrey contributes concerning Edmund's youth and upbringing, his flight from the Danes serves to humanise an example of otherwise saintly perfection, making him more accessible to his devotees. The wall paintings are therefore indicative of the growth of local traditions and Edmund's increasing popularity.

The remaining scenes are part of a more standardised iconographic tradition. The next scene has been destroyed by the insertion of a later window but almost certainly showed the martyrdom, as in the Cliffe-at-Hoo cycle, probably in the conventional format of Edmund tied to a tree being fired upon by archers. He is depicted thus in the majority of wall paintings, including East Anglian examples at Boxford, Fritton and Troston (Figs. 115-6 and 133-4). In what was originally the third scene two tonsured monks are holding Edmund's wound-ridden corpse and fitting his head back onto it, the join clearly visible on his neck. Next, Edmund's body, accompanied by the wolf, is carried on a bier in a house-shaped casket topped with three small crosses. These scenes are derived from Abbo's *Passio* and are likewise depicted in the Pierpoint Morgan miniatures, although in the manuscript version the visual narrative adheres

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<sup>741</sup> Short, xxxix.

more closely to the textual source in depicting the followers who find and reattach Edmund's head and bury his body as laypeople.<sup>742</sup> It is possible that the context of the wall paintings made it more desirable to depict Edmund's followers as monks. The presence of the Morgan manuscript in the abbey church and its presumably limited readership meant that less ambiguity was likely to arise concerning the role of the convent as Edmund's guardians, whereas in an alternative location, at a remove from the shrine, viewers were reminded of the resting place of Edmund's remains.

The final visible scene illustrates the miraculous crossing of the narrow bridge during Egelwyn's transportation of the relics to London to escape the Danish raids. The figures of Egelwyn and the donkey, presumably to the left of the scene, are obscured by the gallery but the cart, painted on an enormous scale, is clearly visible. The artist has used the arch of the north door to represent the bridge and in addition to being a neat visual trick, this also sets up an evocative relationship between the paintings and the physical experience of the viewer. Thornham Parva is approximately eighteen miles east-north-east of Bury and therefore could not claim to be on Egelwyn's route south-west to London. However, Thornham Parva is situated a few miles east of what is now the A143, the main road between Bury and Great Yarmouth and a major arterial route in the region. It is also just west of the A140, the Cromer to Ipswich road, likewise a long-established major route. At around a day's walk from Bury it is likely that pilgrims travelling to St Edmund from the north or the east, either from elsewhere in Norfolk or Suffolk or from further afield via one of the ports, would have passed through Thornham Parva. In this context the cart evokes Edmund's own pilgrimage of sorts, establishing a relationship between the pilgrims' journey and that undertaken by Edmund's relics. It is tempting to assume that the final image in the cycle, now obscured by the gallery, would have been of Bury, located at the west end of the church in the direction of the pilgrims journey towards the shrine. The wall paintings recount both an historical narrative and the on-going, lived experience of the viewer.

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<sup>742</sup> See Pierpoint Morgan MS M. 736, fols. 15v-18r.

Despite their variation in media and context, these two sequences of images, the cathedral bosses and the Thornham Parva wall paintings, establish certain iconographic forms for the representation of St Edmund. He could be depicted either as a glorified individual with his arrow attribute in the company of heaven, during his martyrdom or in reference to a post-mortem incident, particularly the guardian wolf. As part of sequence or cycle these elements form part of a coherent narrative, but in the majority of instances Edmund is depicted in one of these three ways. The following examples therefore explore the significance of each of these iconographic forms, focussing upon the subtle variations arising according to context.

### Edmund the Martyr

Edmund's association with the martyrs of the early Church is made explicit in the spandrels above the west door of St. Laurence's church in Norwich, dating from the third quarter of the fifteenth century (Figs. 127-8). In the triangular spandrel to the left of the door, stretched across his gridiron, is the patron of the church, himself an early martyr who was beheaded. To the right is Edmund, bound to a tree and being shot at from close quarters by several archers, many arrows already protruding from his body. The allusion to decapitation is further emphasised by the wolf lurking in foliage at the bottom of the spandrel, waiting to take possession of the saint's head which will soon be struck from his body. Edmund's martyrdom similarly appears in two mid thirteenth-century roundels now in the east chancel window of St Mary's, Saxlingham Nethergate (Norfolk), where he is afforded two bosses, with Sts James and John in another and St Peter in a fourth (Figs. 129-31). This implies that not only is Edmund continuing a long tradition of defending the faith, but that he is being represented as on a spiritual par with the earliest founders of Christian sainthood. His martyrdom therefore integrates him into the continuous narrative of Christian history, establishing a link with individuals from all periods which transcends conventions of era or nationality.

**Figs. 127-31 The martyrdom of St Edmund**

Figs. 127-8 Martyrdom spandrels above the west door of St Laurence's church, Norwich



Fig. 127. St Laurence on the grid iron

Fig. 128. St Edmund shot with arrows whilst the wolf lies in wait

Figs. 129-31 Painted glass roundels now in St Mary's church, Saxlingham Nethergate (Norfolk)



Fig. 129 (above left). Chancel window with mid-thirteenth-century medallions showing James and John (top left), beheading of Peter (top right), martyrdom of Edmund (bottom left) and Edmund offering a garb of arrows to heaven (bottom right).

Fig. 130 (top right). Detail of the martyrdom of St Edmund.

Fig. 131 (above right). Detail of Edmund offering up his arrows.

**Figs. 132-4 The martyrdom of St Edmund**



Fig. 132. Misericord with the martyrdom of St Edmund, St Andrew's church, Norton (Suffolk)



Fig. 133. Wall painting of the martyrdom of St Edmund before restoration, St Mary's church, Troston (Suffolk)



Fig. 134. Wall painting of the martyrdom of St Edmund after restoration, during which a second pair of archers were discovered to the left of Edmund, restoring the symmetry usually found in depictions of the martyrdom.

I am extremely grateful to conservator Andrea Kirkham for allowing me access during the restoration and for supplying the photograph.

Images of the martyrdom span a broad chronological period: from the mid thirteenth-century roundels at Saxlingham Nethergate to the glass installed in St Peter Parmentergate, Norwich in 1558, indicating the longevity of this mode of representation. They also appear in a range of media. In addition to glass and the carved spandrels mentioned above the martyrdom appears in the Norwich Cathedral roof bosses, a fifteenth century misericord in the church at Norton (Suffolk), wall paintings at Fritton (Norfolk), Troston (Suffolk) and Stow Bardolph (Norfolk), although the latter image is no longer extant (Figs. 133-4). Considering its longevity and appearance in a variety of forms, it is surprising that relatively few representations of the martyrdom are known in East Anglian churches, accounting for just over a ninth of the total (Figs. 113-4). However, I believe this trend may in part be explained by reference to the variety of iconographic modes identified at the outset of this chapter in the pilgrim badges commemorating Edmund and also seen in the Cathedral cloister bosses. A variety of visual forms reflects the interpretive flexibility afforded to Edmund in other cultic contexts and indicates that he was depicted in certain ways according to circumstance. The following discussion will therefore explore these alternative modes of depiction and the contexts in which they are found.

### Edmund in glory

By far the most widespread mode of representation is Edmund as a single figure, clutching his attribute, the arrow. Accounting for nearly sixty per cent of known images, the majority depict Edmund crowned, robed and glorified, and whilst he holds the arrow, the symbol of his martyrdom, he bears no wounds from his ordeal (Figs. 135-6). The emphasis is upon Edmund's status as a martyr and the spiritual consequences of this event rather than the physical act of martyrdom itself. As in the final miniature in the Pierpoint Morgan manuscript (fol. 22v), Edmund is glorified. The medium of these images and their relative positioning within the holy geography of the church is also significant. The majority are either painted glass or painted rood screen panels, and the connotations of each reinforce the spiritual nature of Edmund's sanctity.

**Figs. 135-6 Edmund in glory**



Fig. 135. St Edmund holding an arrow, St Mary's church, Stody (Norfolk)



Fig. 136. Detail of St Edmund holding an arrow and royal sceptre from the rood screen, church of Sts Peter and Paul, Eye (Suffolk)

### Stained glass

Although stained glass undoubtedly fulfilled a highly decorative function, it also had theological connotations. Sarah Crewe describes the perceived mystical association of light with the spirit of God, for which it was a common metaphor.<sup>743</sup> Thus when light shone through a painted glass window, bringing to life the colours and shapes therein, this could be seen as analogous with the spirit of God radiating through the individuals depicted. In a general sense this may represent the omnipresence of the Holy Spirit, penetrating all aspects of creation just as light illuminates the multitude of scenes depicted in glass. However, it is particularly relevant to images of saints as it reiterates the role of the sainted individual as a conduit between humankind and God: their likenesses in glass refract light just as they were believed to refract the power of God. The saint is quite literally glorified, and although scenes of all types could be depicted in glass, it is a particularly appropriate medium in which to show saints as they were believed to exist in heaven.

### Roodscreen panels

Edmund is represented on screen panels in much the same way as in painted glass, royally attired and with the same attribute. Similarly, the physical context and associations of the screens also invests them with additional meaning. More than two hundred rood screens in various stages of preservation survive in Norfolk and Suffolk, the majority of which date from the fifteenth century, and of these around one hundred retain painted panels.<sup>744</sup> Fifteen panels depicting Edmund survive, twelve in their original screen

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<sup>743</sup> Sarah Crewe, *Stained Glass in England, c.1180-1540* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1987), pp. 7-8. For detailed discussion of medieval glass see also Richard Marks, *Stained Glass in England During the Middle Ages* (London: Routledge, 1993).

<sup>744</sup> East Anglian screens are surprisingly poorly documented but the main studies include: W.G. Constable, 'Some East Anglian Roodscreen Paintings', *Connoisseur* lxxxiv (1929), 141-7; W.W. Lillie, 'Screenwork in the County of Suffolk, III: Panels Painted with Saints', *Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology* xxi (1933), 179-202; W.W. Williamson, 'Saints on Norfolk Roodscreens and Pulpits', *Norfolk Archaeology* xxi (1957), 299-346; Simon Cotton, 'Medieval Roodscreens in Norfolk', 44-54; Julian Eve, *Saints and the Painted Roodscreens of North East Norfolk* (Norwich: J.R. Eve, 1997).

framework, with three disarticulated or re-framed. The original focus was the rood, now invariably lost, suspended from the rood beam, from which the structures derive their name. At the foot of the crucifix were Mary and John, and often on the tympanum above or behind them was a scene of the Last Judgement. The positions of the saints beneath the rood therefore represented the heavenly hierarchy. Duffy maintains that the presence of the saints on these screens and their relationship to the other figures 'spoke of their dependence on and mediation of the benefits of Christ's Passion, and their role as intercessors for their clients not merely here and now but at the last day'.<sup>745</sup> This is reiterated by the position of the screens within the internal dynamic of the church, marking as they did the move from lay to clerical areas of authority: just as the screens were the portals to the holiest part of the church, so the saints were spiritual portals between humankind and God. Edmund is thus once again represented in his capacity as spiritual intermediary, with emphasis upon his heavenly rather than earthly lineage. Representations of St. Edmund as an individual figure therefore appear to correspond with the iconographic scheme suggested in the Cathedral cloisters, emphasising the saint as intercessor. The emphasis is upon Edmund postmortem, but he is restored and glorified. He grasps the implement of his martyrdom, symbolising that his death was not a defeat, but a victory: his martyrdom is literally within his own grasp.

### Edmund the king

However, examining the iconographic context in which Edmund is found in these same media (stained glass and roodscreens) reveals a further aspect of his saintly identity. In some cases an image of Edmund occurs as one of a series of saints, often other sainted monarchs. The preservation of the surviving screens varies considerably and it is not possible in all cases to identify each figure. Whilst St. Edmund may be distinguished with considerable certainty on each screen due to his characteristic attribute the identity of many of his companions is at best ambiguous and in some cases entirely unknown. At

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<sup>745</sup> Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, p. 158

Catfield (Norfolk) however, and on the south screen at Barton Turf (Norfolk) it is clear that each individual is drawn from amongst the ranks of sainted English monarchs (Figs. 137-9). Although the screen at Catfield is damaged, two of the figures can be identified with certainty by their attributes as Ss. Edmund and Olaf, with others believed to be Ethelbert of East Anglia, Margaret of Scotland, Oswin of Deira and Edward the Confessor. The variety of ways in which even this relatively small sample achieved the status of saint and the subsequent influence this has upon their perceived identity differs considerably; it is difficult, for example, to draw many comparisons between the peaceable diplomat Edward the Confessor and the warrior-king Olaf (killed in battle and most often seen brandishing his war axe) other than that both were kings. The feature of their sanctity which unifies these figures is therefore their royalty. This is reiterated by Edmund's appearance: on all but the screen at Stalham he is crowned and richly robed; at Barton Turf, for example, his elaborately patterned mantel is trimmed with ermine. In addition, on around half the screens he is shown not only with an arrow, the means by which he achieved his heavenly status, but also a sceptre, a symbol of his earthly authority. Ann Nichols similarly notes that in the king sequences on Norfolk roodcreens none of the monarchs are nimbed, an omission which she feels places further emphasis upon their temporal status.<sup>746</sup> Edmund similarly appears in the company of other sainted kings in the glazing schemes of a number of churches including St Peter Mancroft (Norwich), Outwell, Marsham, Salle and Stody (Figs. 140-2). Anglo-Saxon kings such as Ss. Kenelm, Edward Martyr, Edward the Confessor and Ethelbert feature frequently. Where individuals are identified by means of a label, such as at St. Peter Mancroft, the use of 'rex' similarly emphasises their temporal status.

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<sup>746</sup> Nichols, *Early Art of Norfolk*, p. 317.

**Figs. 137-9 St Edmund in sequences of royal saints**



Fig. 137. South section of the roodscreen at All Saints' church, Catfield (Norfolk)



Fig. 138. Sts Henry VI and St Edmund on the north side of the south aisle screen, St Michael's church, Barton Turf (Norfolk)



Fig. 139. Sts Edward the Confessor and Olaf of Norway on the south side of the south aisle screen, St Michael's church, Barton Turf (Norfolk)

**Figs. 140-2 St Edmund in the royal saints sequences in the Toppes window, St Peter Mancroft, Norwich<sup>747</sup>**



Fig. 140. Sainted English kings now in windows I and SIV, originally in the tracery lights of the Toppes window, St Peter Mancroft, Norwich



Fig. 141. Detail of St Edmund (not original head)

Canopy Top	Canopy Top	Canopy Top	Canopy Top	Canopy Top
The Apostles stand guard at the tomb Kirk.	Jesus arrives at the tomb ?I 5g	The Assumption of the Virgin Mary ?lost to iconoclasm	The Apostles in discussion with the missing Apostle Kirk. / I 3f	The Apostles see the empty tomb Kirk.
The Apostles carry the bier Kirk.	The Funeral of the Virgin Mary Arrested by a Jew Kirk. / I 3g	The Conversion of the Jew Kirk.	St John the Evangelist hands the palm to the Jew Kirk. / Burrell	The Funeral of the Virgin Mary Kirk.
The Annunciation of the Death of the Virgin Mary ?lost to iconoclasm	The Miraculous Assembly of the Apostles Treasury	The Virgin Mary hands the palm to St John the Evangelist Kirk. / Felbrigg	?The Appearance of Jesus during the night	The Death of the Virgin Mary ?lost to iconoclasm
The Circumcision Kirk. / I 3a	The Presentation Felbrigg Hall	?Joseph's dream	The Flight into Egypt Dixon panel at Felbrigg Hall	The Massacre of the Innocents Kirk. / I 2g
The Annunciation Kirk. / I 2a	The Visitation Kirk. / I 2b	The Nativity Kirk. / I 2c	The Adoration of the Magi I 2e	The Adoration of the Magi I 2f
Arms of Toppes impaling Knyvett BL, Harley MS 1754	Arms of Toppes BL, Harley MS 1754	Robert Toppes and family I 1g	Arms of Knyvett BL, Harley MS 1754	Arms of Toppes impaling his merchant's mark BL, Harley MS 1754

Fig. 142. Reconstruction of the main lights of the Toppes window

<sup>747</sup> Images and diagram from King, *The Medieval Stained Glass of St Peter Mancroft*, Fig. 159 (images of kings) and clxxi, Fig. 153 (diagram)

### Politics and propaganda: St Edmund and St Henry VI

The majority of these images, both windows and screens, were installed during the mid-fifteenth century, the period that saw the deposition and reinstatement of Henry VI. Sequences of English kings were frequently used to present Henry VI's royal ancestry as a way of justifying the Lancastrian hold on the throne, and this appears to be the case, for example, in the original glazing at Salle (Norfolk).<sup>748</sup> Nothing remains of the main light glazing of the side chancel windows, but antiquarian evidence indicates that Edmund was once depicted here amongst other sainted kings, popes and archbishops in the main lights of the three triple-light windows on either side of the church.<sup>749</sup> An element of political propaganda in the Salle glazing is indicated by the presence in the sequence of the only non-English king, Louis IX of France, whom King suggests was probably chosen by the designer of the scheme in reference to and support of Henry VI's claim to the dual monarchy of England and France through his descent from Louis IX.<sup>750</sup> This is supported by the patronage implied by the inscriptions and heraldry which indicate links with Cardinal Beaufort and William de la Pole, both key supporters of Henry VI.<sup>751</sup> In addition to emphasising Edmund's own royalty, images such as these demonstrate that he was a useful example of an indigenous, saintly, pre-Conquest king who would therefore be an appropriate inclusion in a royal genealogy, and whose image could be deployed in support of another monarch, in this case Henry VI.

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<sup>748</sup> Richard Marks discusses other series of English kings to appear in ecclesiastical glazing schemes, including All Souls College, Oxford, which contains similar elements of genealogical propaganda in Marks, *Stained Glass in England*, pp. 88-9. For uses of royal genealogies as Lancastrian propaganda in other media see McKenna, 'Henry VI of England and the Dual Monarchy', 145-162.

<sup>749</sup> North side, left to right: St Lucius, Pope Eleutherius, St Fagan, St Ethelbert, Pope Gregory I, St Augustine, unknown, Pope Boniface, St Laurence of Canterbury. South side, right to left: St Alphege, Pope Urban I, St Edmund King & Martyr, St Thomas Becket, Pope Silvester, St Edward King & Martyr, St Edmund Rich, Pope John I, St Louis IX of France. Sequence reconstructed by David King, in 'Salle Church – The Glazing', *Archaeological Journal* cxxxvii, 1980, 333-35; p. 335.

<sup>750</sup> King, 'Salle Church', p. 335. Again, see McKenna, 'Henry VI of England and the Dual Monarchy', pp. 145-162.

<sup>751</sup> King, 'Salle Church', p. 335.

Following Henry VI's eventual demise in 1471 there is evidence that already in the 1470s the late king was himself revered as a saint.<sup>752</sup> His cult flourished in East Anglia and images of Edmund paired with Henry VI appear on the roodscreens at Barton Turf and Ludham (see above, Figs. 138-9 and 143).<sup>753</sup> Although Edward IV was understandably concerned about Henry's apparent apotheosis and attempted to suppress the fledgling cult of the king he had deposed, Richard III, in a gesture of expiation and reconciliation, had Henry's body exhumed and translated to Windsor in 1484. Henry VII likewise sought to promote the cult of his uncle, petitioning the papacy for his canonisation, in an attempt to legitimate the Tudor dynasty by tracing its origins back to his saintly relative.<sup>754</sup> In this post-mortem context, the long established and successful cult of Edmund would provide the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century cult of Henry VI with an historical context and precedent and reinforce it by association.<sup>755</sup> Edmund the royal saint was therefore not only part of an established tradition of holy monarchs, but a useful and relevant tool in the world of later medieval political propaganda. This facet of Edmund's saintly identity may be appreciated by considering the national political context in which it was reimagined. Evidence of patronage survives in very few cases, but where it does exist it can additionally illuminate the means by which the cult of St Edmund was manipulated to serve political ends at a local and personal level.

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<sup>752</sup> The cult of Henry VI is exhaustively documented by Paul Grosjean in *Henrici VI Angliae Regis Miracula Postuma* (Bruxelles: Société des Bollandistes, 1935); see also Francis Aidan Gasquet, *The Religious Life of King Henry VI* (London: G.Bell, 1923); Bertram Wolffe, *Henry VI* (London: Eyre Methuen, 1981) especially pp. 3-24 and pp. 351-360; J.W. McKenna, 'Piety and Propaganda: the Cult of Henry VI', in *Chaucer and Middle English Studies in Honour of R.H. Robbins*, ed. Beryl Rowland (London: Allen and Unwin, 1974), pp. 72-88.

<sup>753</sup> Richard Marks discuss the visual cult of Henry VI at a national level in 'Images of Henry VI', in *The Lancastrian Court*, Harlaxton Medieval Studies XIII, ed. Jenny Stratford (Donnington: Shaun Tyas, 2003), pp. 111-124.

<sup>754</sup> Wolffe, *Henry VI*, pp. 3-21.

<sup>755</sup> This element of the cult is also clear from the additional miracles added to Lydgate's *Lives* which Bale argues also connected with William de la Pole. See Bale, 'St Edmund in Fifteenth Century London', in *Changing Images*, ed. Bale, pp. 145-61.

**Fig. 143 Sts Edmund and Henry VI on the north section of the roodscreen, St Catherine's church, Ludham (Norfolk)**



### The Toppes Window, St Peter Mancroft, Norwich

The east window in the north chancel chapel of St Peter Mancroft, Norwich, was the gift of Robert Toppes, the richest merchant in Norwich and an active participant in the stormy political life of the city, including the troubles of the 1430s and 1440s.<sup>756</sup> The window displays Toppes's arms, his merchant's mark, and the arms of his wife's landed family, and may have been glazed by the time of the consecration in 1455 (above, Figs. 138-40).<sup>757</sup> Although the panels of the Toppes window are no longer *in situ*, King has reconstructed the original glazing scheme based upon surviving panels and fragments and the observations of a number of antiquarians.<sup>758</sup> The thirty main light panels contained scenes from the Infancy of Christ and the Death, Funeral and Assumption of the Virgin Mary. The tracery lights contained three series: Old Testament figures; sainted English bishops and archbishops; and (mainly) sainted English kings, amongst whom Edmund is to be found. The extant kings are all nimbed, hold either swords or sceptres or, in Edmund's case, the usual arrow. It seems likely that the kings were arranged in chronological order of date of death, and King has based his reconstruction of the missing figures upon this premise.<sup>759</sup>

Edmund's presence in the Toppes window is, literally, marginal, appearing as he does in one of the tracery lights, and his connection with the main subjects is not readily apparent. The national political significance of sequences of English kings created during this period has been discussed above. In this context, however, some aspects of the series assume particular, local significance. St Alban, for example, was not a royal saint but his presence may

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<sup>756</sup> For the background to this disturbance and details of the political unrest in the city in this period see Norman Tanner, 'The Cathedral and the City', in *Norwich Cathedral: Church, City and Diocese*, ed. Atherton et al., pp. 255-280; pp. 255-269.

<sup>757</sup> David King, *The Medieval Stained Glass of St Peter Mancroft, Norwich, Corpus Vitrearum Medii Aevi* Great Britain, vol. 5 (Oxford and New York, Published for the British Academy by Oxford University Press, 2006) lxxviii.

<sup>758</sup> King, *The Medieval Stained Glass of St Peter Mancroft, Norwich*, clxix-clxxxii

<sup>759</sup> King, *The Medieval Stained Glass of St Peter Mancroft, Norwich*, clxxxix-cxcii. The reconstructed sequence is: St Alban, St Oswald, St Oswin, St Ethelbert, St Alcmund, St Kenelm, St Edmund, King Athelstan, King Edgar, St Edward the Confessor. It will be noted that not all the figures are kings, and that likewise not all were sainted, points I will return to below.

have arisen from local political considerations, being a possible reference to the particular devotion of Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, to the English proto-martyr.<sup>760</sup> Gloucester was popular in Norwich, in contrast to William de la Pole, Duke of Suffolk, who King suggests is portrayed as the Jew interrupting the Funeral of the Virgin in the main lights below.<sup>761</sup> The exact significance of this reference is ambiguous; on the one hand de la Pole is depicted as committing a heinous act as he interrupts the Funeral of the Virgin Mary, whereas in adjacent panels we see the Jew converted, and subsequently being handed the palm given to St John by the Virgin. This ambiguity is likely to have arisen as a result of de la Pole's participation in the factional unrest in the city and his support of the Cathedral Priory's claims over those of the citizens, as whilst de la Pole was now dead and the troubles had largely subsided, the memory of his involvement may have lingered.

Similar themes are implied by the presence of Athelstan in the sequence of holy kings. Athelstan was a monarch renowned for his piety and for the number and importance of his charters, and this is therefore a possible reference to the recent signing of a new royal charter for the city in 1452. The charter marked the official reconciliation of the city with the king, following the years of political unrest which erupted in Gladman's Insurrection in 1443. Henry VI visited Norwich in February 1453, followed by Margaret of Anjou in April of that year, and these royal visits, symbolic of the city's reconciliation with the King, may have suggested the themes of political hostility and reconciliation found in the Toppes window. The sainted English kings, including Edmund, may therefore have also been part of the city leader's attempts to confirm the restitution of good relations between themselves and the King by asserting Henry's legitimacy and royal pedigree.

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<sup>760</sup> Gloucester's relationship with the Abbey of St Albans and its patron is discussed by K.H. Vickers in *Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester: A Biography* (London: Archibald Constable, 1907) pp. 329-332. See also Jane Kelsall, *Humphrey Duke of Gloucester, 1391-1447*, (St. Albans: Fraternity of the Friends of Saint Albans Abbey, 2000).

<sup>761</sup> The figure of the Jew is wearing a surcoat over full plate armour in pale blue glass on which are painted three leopards' faces in silver stain, a reference to William de la Pole whose arms were *Azure a fess between three leopards' faces two and one or*. King, *The Medieval Stained Glass of St Peter Mancroft, Norwich*, clxxxvi.

St Mary's church, Lakenheath (Suffolk), wallpaintings

In addition to secular politics, Edmund's image could also be deployed in ecclesiastical disputes. An example of this kind of appropriation may be seen in the wall paintings in the parish church of St Mary the Virgin, Lakenheath (Suffolk), near the Cambridgeshire border (Figs. 144-6). Evidence of the original twelfth-century church may be seen in the fine chancel arch, but otherwise the extant fabric attests to later building phases, including the extension of the nave westwards in the mid-thirteenth century, the alteration of the north aisle windows in the fourteenth century and the heightening of the nave and the addition of the angel hammer beam roof in the fifteenth. These successive building phases are significant as they are reflected in the five series of wall paintings which seem to have been repainted after each remodelling.

The paintings were largely uncovered during restoration works to the roof in the 1860s but subsequently deteriorated significantly.<sup>762</sup> Recent conservation work by the Perry Lithgow Partnership has revealed additional paintings and clarified the complex sequences apparent in the various layers.<sup>763</sup> These were summarised by the conservators<sup>764</sup>:

Scheme 1 (c.1220) A series of angels and associated decoration on the soffits and piers (N0-N3).

Scheme 2 (c.1250) Decorative scroll work and fictive tapestry on the spandrels of N3-N5 and associated decoration on soffits (N0-N3/4).

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<sup>762</sup> The pre-restoration condition of the paintings is described by Tobit Curteis in his 2003 Condition Survey: 'St Mary's Church, Lakenheath, Suffolk: Technical and Condition Survey of the Wall Paintings' (Tobit Curteis Associates, April 2003).

<sup>763</sup> I am grateful to the conservators for allowing me to visit during the restoration work and examine the wall paintings in detail. I am particularly indebted to the Project Manager, Matthew Champion, for supplying me with a copy of the Conservation Record and associated images and for our numerous conversations on the subject.

<sup>764</sup> Mark Perry, 'Church of St Mary the Virgin, Lakenheath, Suffolk: Wall Painting Conservation Record', (The Perry Lithgow Partnership, September 2009), p. 4.

Scheme 3 (c.1330) Passion cycle and Virgin and Child with St Edmund (N3). Large figures of saints (N1 and N2 spandrels) and associated decoration on the arcade mouldings (N0-N3). Painted fragments at the east end of the north aisle.

Scheme 4 (c.1500?) Unidentified traces on N3. The Risen Christ, nave lower east wall.

Scheme 5 (17<sup>th</sup>c) Traces of cartouche frames at clerestory level (N1-N3). Painted text on the upper south arcade.

Thus St Edmund appears in the third scheme, probably painted during the first third of the fourteenth century. Evidence of this scheme has only been found in bays N1-N3 but it appears to have been more substantial.<sup>765</sup> Extremely partial remains of life size figures are apparent in the upper arcade spandrels of N2 and N1. The figure in N2 is tentatively identified by the conservators as Paul but the other has no identifying attributes. Substantial remains of the third scheme may also be seen in the decoration within the arch mouldings. N3 occupies the position directly opposite the south door and the images here are therefore the first to be seen upon entering the church, arguably affording them additional significance. The images here consist of two sequences, a Passion sequence in the spandrel area and a large seated Virgin and Child below. The Passion cycle originally comprised six scenes. In the top register from left to right were an iconographically unusual Harrowing of Hell, in which a crowned figure assists Christ in leading the righteous from the gaping Hell Mouth; the Resurrection and *Noli Me Tangere*. On the tier below are the Flagellation and the Carrying of the Cross and below this an extremely fragmentary Crucifixion. The Virgin and Child is barely visible and was first tentatively identified by David Park in 1998, although the conservation works clarified the head of

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<sup>765</sup> Perry, 'Wall Painting Conservation Record', p. 6.

**Figs. 144-6 Wall paintings in the church of St Mary the Virgin, Lakenheath (Suffolk)<sup>766</sup>**



Fig. 144. The central pier of the north arcade, the church of St Mary the Virgin, Lakenheath, (Suffolk). At least four different paint schemes, spanning a total of three and a half centuries, are visible upon the same pier



Fig. 145. Detail of St Edmund from the mid-fourteenth-century paint scheme in the church of St Mary the Virgin, Lakenheath, (Suffolk)

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<sup>766</sup> I am grateful to Project Manager Matthew Champion for letting me visit whilst the paintings were being conserved and for supplying these images.

Fig. 146. Reconstruction of how the mid-fourteenth century 'Passion Cycle' may have looked when first painted.



Christ and details of the Virgin's hair and drapery.<sup>767</sup> Cleaning also revealed that the beautifully painted figure of St Edmund, readily identifiable by his crown and arrow, is positioned to the right of the Virgin and Child as part of the same image. The juxtaposition of a single saint with the holy family is unique in English wall painting and raises the intriguing possibility of why Edmund appears in this context. Given the affiliation of the church with Ely it is also surprising that no images of St Æthethryth have been found. As patron of the ecclesiastical establishment in charge of Lakenheath she would be a more obvious choice to occupy the privileged position at the foot of the Virgin and Child. Conservation Project Manager Matthew Champion suggests that the unique iconography may be explained by the history of the conflict between Bury St Edmunds and Ely for control of the parish, now in the diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich, but in the Middle Ages under the jurisdiction of Ely but located within the hundred of Lackford within the Liberty of St Edmund, the eight and a half hundreds in west Suffolk granted to the abbey by Edward the Confessor in 1044.<sup>768</sup> The resulting tension is exemplified in an incident described by Jocelin concerning market rights.<sup>769</sup> The Abbot's jurisdiction within the Liberty was deemed to be absolute, but in 1201 King John infringed the abbey's rights by granting to the Prior of Ely the right to hold a market in his parish of Lakenheath.<sup>770</sup> Abbot Samson (1182-1211) paid 50 marks for an inquisition which found that his market at Bury, fourteen miles hence, suffered as a result. Following Samson's pledge of 40 further marks and the gift of two palfreys, the king issued a new charter stating that no market could be established within the Liberty without the abbot's consent. King John sent a mandate to the justiciar, Geoffrey Fitz Peter (justiciar 1198-1213, earl of Essex 1199-1213), ordering him to demolish the market. Gilbert passed this duty to the sheriff of Suffolk but because he knew that he 'could not enter the Liberty of St Edmund or exercise any power there' he ordered the abbot by writ to

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<sup>767</sup> David Park, Courtauld Institute of Art, unpublished survey (1998), cited in Perry, 'Wall Painting Conservation Record', p. 7.

<sup>768</sup> For the Liberty see Gransden, *A History of the Abbey*, pp. 236-244.

<sup>769</sup> Jocelin, *Chronicle*, pp. 117-9.

<sup>770</sup> A copy of the charter, dated 25 March 1201, was entered in the king's charter rolls. See *Rotuli chartarum in Turri Londinensi asseravti*, ed. Thomas D. Hardy, vol. 1: 1199-1216 (London: Record Commissioners, 1837), p. 91.

implement the king's command. The bailiff of the hundred was sent to Lakenheath but was insulted and forcibly removed. Enraged at this blatant violation of his authority, Samson sent six hundred well-armed men who destroyed the stalls and seized livestock.<sup>771</sup> Although the third scheme of wall paintings are dated to around a century after the dispute concerning the market the message they convey may reflect ongoing tensions surrounding jurisdiction over the parish. Champion suggests that the presence of St Edmund in such a prominent position in the lay-controlled area of the church suggests that the parishioners felt their allegiance lay with Bury rather than Ely.<sup>772</sup> Edmund raises his left hand as if in blessing, presumably indented to reflect the mutual bond between the saint and his devotees.

Furthermore, the iconographically unusual additional figure in the Harrowing of Hell scene bears some similarities to the image of St Edmund below: both are crowned and share certain facial similarities. Champion suggests that Edmund may therefore be assisting Christ as he guides souls out of Hell.<sup>773</sup> If this is the case it would be iconographically unique but to some extent is supported by the visual language of the scene. In addition to the similarities to the Edmund figure below, the crowned figure stands in place of the columns used to demarkate the other scenes in the top register. Visually this enables the Harrowing of Hell to occupy a larger area whilst maintaining the register's compositional symmetry. In addition, a column connotes solidity and strength, an apposite attribute reminiscent of the protective blessing gesture of the larger Edmund below. The depiction of the Hell Mouth is also distinctive, appearing more boar-like than the usual feline, draconic or leviathan representations.<sup>774</sup> The boar was the emblem of the De Veres who controlled large land-holdings in

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<sup>771</sup> Jocelin, *Chronicle*, pp. 118.

<sup>772</sup> Matthew Champion, 'Religious art as a physical manifestation of local conflict: the Lakenheath case', unpublished paper presented at the *Icon? Art and Faith* conference (Norwich, 9-10 October 2009). I am grateful to Matt for discussing his theories with me in person.

<sup>773</sup> Champion, 'Religious art', October 2009.

<sup>774</sup> Gary D. Schmidt, *The Iconography of the Mouth of Hell: Eighth-Century Britain to the Fifteenth Century* (Sellinsgrove: Susquehanna University Press, 1995), pp. 35-60.

**Fig. 147 The De Vere boar**

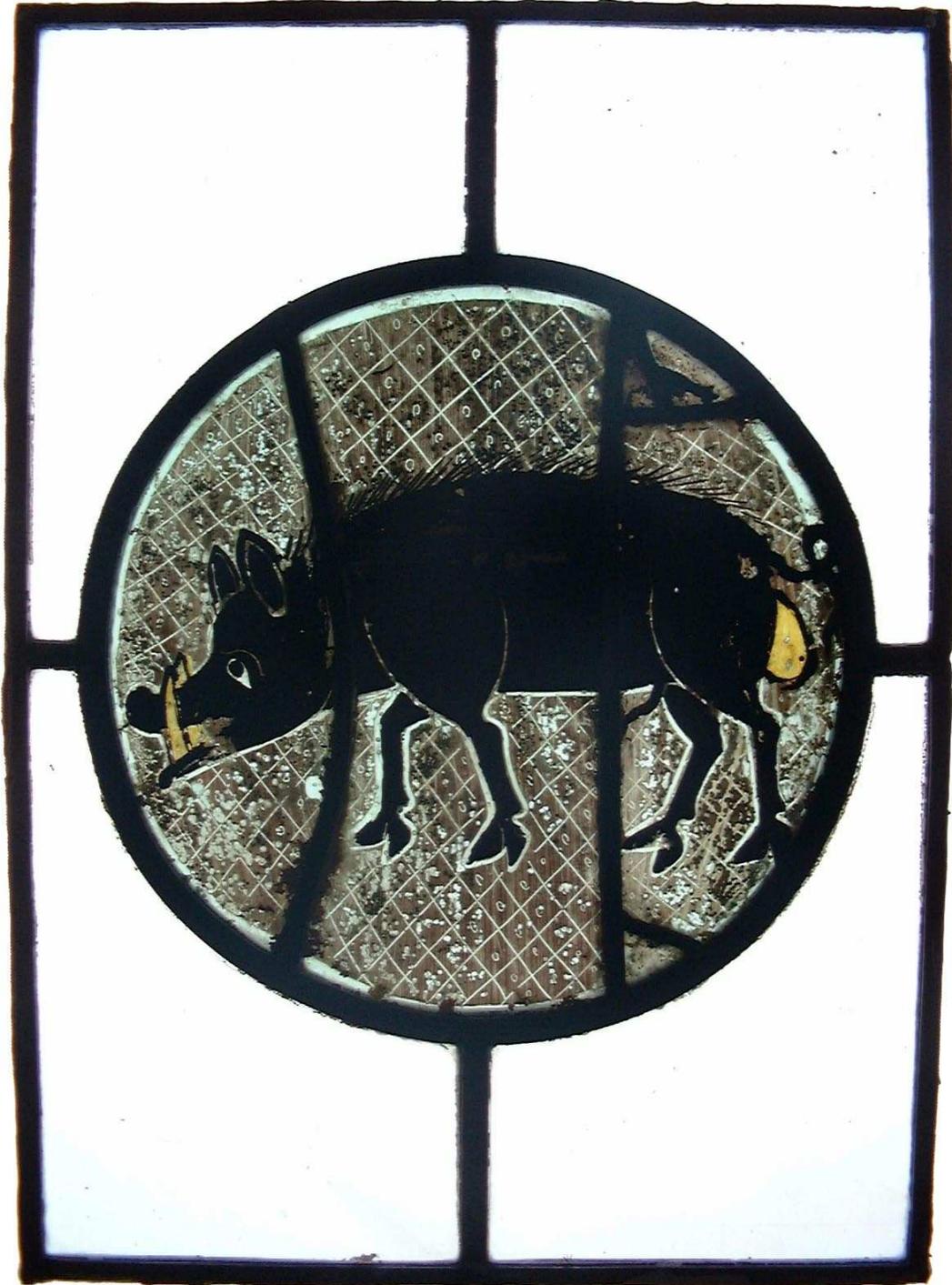


Fig. 147. Fourteenth-century stained glass roundel depicting a boar, now in the Stained Glass Museum, Ely, original provenance unknown

Suffolk and Cambridgeshire (Fig. 147).<sup>775</sup> They also held five and a half fees in the Liberty of St Edmund and therefore owed forty days of military service a year to the abbot, their feudal over-lord.<sup>776</sup> Relations between the abbey and its military tenants, including the De Veres, were not always harmonious. Shortly after Samson's succession in 1182 he summoned the knights to pay homage to him and requested of them an aid, an occasional tax a landlord was permitted to claim from his tenants. Officially the abbot of Bury St Edmunds owed the service of forty knights but, like other tenants-in-chief, had enfeoffed knights in excess of his quota. On this basis the fifty two knights of St Edmund refused to pay for the additional twelve, instead stating that the cost for forty knights would be borne between them all. An infuriated Samson vowed to pay back the knights 'injury for injury'.<sup>777</sup>

The opportunity arose some years later when, in 1196, Samson took the matter to the king's court and where the justiciar, Hubert Walter, decreed that each knight must answer individually for himself and his holdings. Samson compelled the knights to recognise his service to St Edmund and travelled with them and their wives to London to make their recognitions in the king's court. The last of the knights to comply was Aubrey de Vere (second earl of Oxford 1194-1214) who succumbed when Samson impounded and sold his cattle.<sup>778</sup> If the wallpaintings were created in response to conflicts between Bury and Ely, then reference to other areas in which the abbey's jurisdiction was questioned seem pertinent. St Edmund, champion of the Liberty, leads the vulnerable figures away from the boar-like Hell Mouth of secular landlords towards Christ and the Church. The decision to place Edmund in this context makes it plausible to read this image as a deliberate statement concerning the

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<sup>775</sup> Michael Powell Siddons, *Heraldic Badges in England and Wales*, 4 vols. (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press for the Society of Antiquaries of London, 2009). For De Vere badges see II, pt. II: *Non-Royal Badges*, pp. 299-303. For boars in general see III: *Ordinaries*, pp. 16-17. The De Vere boar is depicted in a stained glass roundel of c. 1340-60, now in the Ely Stained Glass Museum.

<sup>776</sup> Jocelin incorporates a list of the knights of St Edmund and their fees into his chronicle. See Jocelin, *Chronicle*, pp. 106-8. See also Helena M. Chew, *The English Ecclesiastical Tenants-in-Chief and Knight Service* (London: Oxford University Press, 1932), pp. 18-23.

<sup>777</sup> This incident is described by Jocelin, *Chronicle*, pp. 26-7.

<sup>778</sup> For more details see Gransden, *A History of the Abbey*, pp. 56-9.

proclivities of the parish. Edmund's surprising and iconographically unique presence in the Lakenheath wall paintings seems once again to attest to his role as protector of the abbey's rights and privileges.

#### Edmund of East Anglia: Wolves and Wuffings

The final examples to be considered are a group of images whose provenance cannot so easily be determined. These are carved wooden bench ends found at Gimingham, Neatishead, Walpole St. Peter and Wiggshall St Mary in Norfolk and Hadleigh and Hoxne in Suffolk (Figs. 148-51). They depict Edmund's head being guarded by the wolf which, according to his hagiographers, had been cast into the woods by the Danes following his decapitation to prevent a proper Christian burial. These images are primarily problematic due to their lack of provenance. They are difficult to date precisely but can be loosely assigned to 1400-1500. The benches are no longer in their original locations within their respective churches and are rare survivors of more extensive sets which are now lost. In addition, the bench ends at Walpole St Peter appear to have been reset. It is thus particularly difficult to assess how Edmund was being depicted in these contexts. Despite this I feel these images may still contribute to our knowledge of the cult, and rather than dismissing them it is instead necessary to approach them via alternative sources and methodologies.

The wolf was an important motif of the official cult, attested to by its presence on several surviving seals of the abbots of Bury St. Edmund's and on a number of pilgrim badges (Figs. 152-3).<sup>779</sup> The story of the wolf and the head is first recounted by Abbo and the incident is thereafter repeated throughout the medieval tradition. It forms part of the martyrdom narrative: chronologically it is the next scene to be described and appears to take place soon after

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<sup>779</sup> For examples of the seals of the Abbots of Bury St Edmunds see Roger H. Ellis, *Catalogue of Seals in the Public Record Office: Monastic Seals* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1986), p. 15, no. M140 and p. 16, nos. M142-4; for pilgrim badges including the wolf see Spencer, *Pilgrim Souvenirs and Secular Badges*, p. 182. The association of the image of the wolf with the abbey at Bury was so strong that to this day local folklore claims that the abbots kept wolves as pets in the abbey grounds. This is apocryphal and seems to derive from canine skulls recovered during excavations in the abbey grounds, now on display in Moyses's Hall Museum, Bury.

**Figs. 148-51 Bench ends depicting the wolf guarding Edmund's severed head**

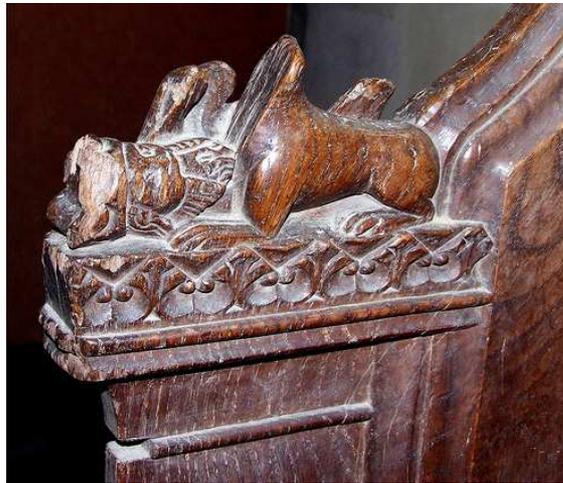


Fig. 148 (top left). Walpole St Peter (Norfolk)  
Fig. 149 (top right). St Peter's church, Neatishead (Norfolk)  
Fig. 150 (bottom left). St Mary's church, Hadleigh (Suffolk)  
Fig. 151 (bottom right). Church of Sts Peter and Paul, Hoxne (Suffolk)

**Figs. 152-3 Edmund of East Anglia**



Fig. 152. Reverse of the Privy seal of Bury St Edmunds abbey showing St Edmund's martyrdom with the wolf (indicated) guarding the severed head



Fig. 153. Canine skull recovered during excavations in the abbey grounds

Edmund's death. It is Edmund's first posthumous miracle, representing the saint's ability to overcome the wolf's usually savage nature.<sup>780</sup> It also alludes to the later rejoining of Edmund's head and body by virtue of the saint's physical purity as a result of his virginity. It is thus a key moment of transition, encapsulating Edmund's transformation from earthly king to heavenly saint. As such, it appears that we are once again being offered an image of the glorified saint displaying his powers. However, as illustrated above in relation to images in painted glass and on rood screens, an additional aspect of Edmund's sanctity is revealed when the images are contextualised, in this case in relation to evidence from archaeology and ethnography.

Edmund was probably the last of the pre-Danish kings of East Anglia, the last of the royal dynasty of the Wuffings who had ruled Norfolk and Suffolk for at least three hundred years.<sup>781</sup> Etymologically, the name Wuffa appears to be a diminutive form of Wulf, and should be translated as 'little wolf', with the patronymic form 'Wuffingas' being a variant of 'Wulfingas', literally 'the kin of the wolf'.<sup>782</sup> The wolf may also have been of significance to the Wuffing rulers above and beyond the genealogical origins of their clan, as an emblematic personification of their founder.<sup>783</sup>

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<sup>780</sup> Aleksander Pluskowski cites numerous examples of saints enjoying amicable relations with wolves. The Early Desert Fathers, for example, frequently shared their living space with wolves and other fierce animals and the wolf also appears frequently in Celtic hagiography. See Aleksander Pluskowski, *Wolves and the Wilderness in the Middle Ages* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2006) pp. 167-9.

<sup>781</sup> Little is known of the history of the Wuffings. A late eighth-century regnal list now in London British Library, Cotton MS Vespasian B vi traces the dynastic genealogy of the Wuffings back through fourteen generations and twenty rulers to the Norse god Woden/Óðinn. Cited in Peter Warner, *The Origins of Suffolk* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), p. 70. Bede similarly describes a king named Wuffa 'from whom the kings of East Anglia are called Wuffings'. Bede, *Ecclesiastical History*, ed. McClure and Collins, II.15, p. 99.

<sup>782</sup> Sam Newton, *The Origins of Beowulf and the Pre-Viking Kingdom of East Anglia* (Cambridge: Brewer, 1993), p. 106.

<sup>783</sup> For the significance of the wolf to the Wuffing dynasty see Newton, *Origins of Beowulf*, p. 106; for a broader discussion of the emblematic wolf in the Middle Ages see Pluskowski, *Wolves and the Wilderness*, pp. 134-53.

**Figs. 154-7 Edmund of East Anglia**



Fig. 154. Purse lid from Mound 1 at Sutton Hoo with the 'man between beasts' motif (indicated)

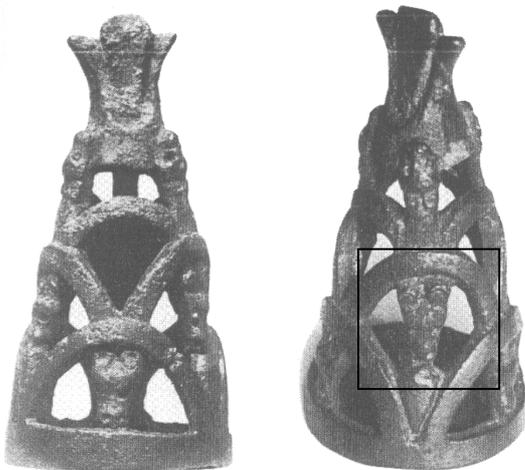


Fig. 155. The Eye seal with a wolf's head design (indicated)



Fig. 156. The wolf guarding Edmund's head on the porch at Pulham St Mary (Norfolk)

Fig. 157. Detail of the wolf and head

The importance of the wolf to the kings of East Anglia is reflected artistically. The Sutton Hoo ship burial, for example, believed to be the burial-place of the Wuffings during the late sixth to early seventh centuries, yielded several artefacts featuring an image of a wolf, most notably the purse lid retrieved from Mound One bearing the 'man between beasts' motif (Fig. 154). The lower limbs of the animals are entwined with the legs of the man, whose arms appear to reach towards their front paws. The proximity of the wolves' open mouths to the man's ears is suggestive of them whispering or speaking directly to him, possibly representing the communication of ancestral knowledge from the dynasty's totemic guardian animals. The relationship between the three figures is reiterated by the repetition of patterns, for example the blue millefiore gems on the wolves' forelegs and the man's abdomen. Sam Newton suggests that the 'peculiar flanking position of the beasts could be regarded as a representation of the protective presence of the putative ancestral guardian-spirit of the Wuffings'.<sup>784</sup> The possible underlying meaning of this image is thus remarkably similar to the manner in which the wolf is described as guarding the head of St. Edmund and how this was subsequently represented artistically.<sup>785</sup> The notion of the wolf as a protective presence is also seen in the fifteenth-century sculpture of the wolf and head atop the porch of the church at Pulham St Mary (Norfolk), along with a wodewose, a woodman and a greyhound, it guards the vulnerable entrance to the church (Figs. 156-7).

Whether notions of ancestral totemism persisted in the intervening centuries between the Sutton Hoo ship burial, the conversion of East Anglia to Christianity and the establishment of Edmund's cult is uncertain and the paucity of the material record from East Anglia in this period obscures attempts to establish the prevalence of wolf imagery. Wolves are, however, present on a

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<sup>784</sup> Newton, 'The Royal Money Belt', *Wuffings Website*, <http://www.wuffings.co.uk/MySHPages/SHTreasure/SHMoneyBelt.htm> (last accessed 27 July 2010).

<sup>785</sup> The wolf's possible status as a sacred animal in Wuffing East Anglia may also account for the popularity of images of the she-wolf and Romulus and Remus from the Roman foundation myth, for example on an eighth-century coin series of King Aethelberht of East Anglia. For further discussion and examples of this motif see Newton, *Origins of Beowulf*, p. 108 and Pluskowski, *Wolves and the Wilderness*, pp. 144-149.

seal found at Eye (Suffolk) in the nineteenth century.<sup>786</sup> It is the earliest physical evidence for an English seal and is believed to have belonged to Aethelwold, bishop of Dummoc, who made his confession to the Archbishop of Canterbury between 845 and 870.<sup>787</sup> The seal is bronze, mitre-shaped, of two rows of arches, supported in the interstices of the arches by nine wolves' heads with garnet eyes; the use of garnet is reminiscent of the material of the man between beasts images on the Sutton Hoo purse lid (Fig. 155). It is possible that Aethelwold is the bishop referred to in some accounts as advising Edmund during his negotiations with the Danes.<sup>788</sup> The date of the seal is important in determining the significance of the wolf and head motif. Although a precise date is not known, it is believed that Aethelwold held office until around 870. If it was created following Edmund's martyrdom it is possible that the use of the wolf was a gesture of religious and political defiance, referring simultaneously to the political autonomy and religious sensibility of the region in the wake of the Danish conquest. However, the likelihood of such an object being produced in the immediate aftermath of the Danish incursion is slight, suggesting that it dates from during, or before, Edmund's reign. If the seal was made before Edmund's martyrdom it would reinforce the link between Sutton Hoo and the wolf and head, and suggest that this element of Edmund's *vita* is in part a back formation by hagiographers to explain an earlier visual tradition and represents continuity in the popular use of the emblematic wolf in East Anglia.

It is of course impossible to determine the extent to which those who adorned their churches with the image of Edmund and the wolf were aware of such connotations. It is possible that the wolf came to be understood in a more generic heraldic sense, representing the royal dynasty without its previous totemic associations. The use of a symbol rather than a narrative scene distances the image from the sequence of events it represents, enabling the symbol to be invested with meaning above and beyond its immediate context.

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<sup>786</sup> Norman Scarfe, *Suffolk in the Middle Ages*, (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2004), p. 130 and plate 7 for the discovery of the seal.

<sup>787</sup> T. A. Heslop, 'English Seals from the mid-ninth century to 1100', *Journal of the British Archaeological Association* cxxxiii (1980), 1-16; 2-3.

<sup>788</sup> Ridyard, *Royal Saints*, p. 221.

Edmund himself becomes a symbol, once again of kingship but in this instance specifically regional East Anglian kingship, in a similar way in which the wolf and head is a symbol of Edmund as a saint. Thus the bench ends bearing this striking image, far from being rendered redundant by their lack of iconographic and social context, may still contribute to the debate surrounding Edmund's saintly identity if approached through alternative methods and sources.

### 'Martyr, Mayde and Kynge'

This tripartite epithet, repeatedly afforded to St Edmund by Lydgate throughout the *Lives* speaks as to his visual as to his textual identity.<sup>789</sup> Considering Edmund's iconographical presence within East Anglian parish churches has revealed that he could be depicted in one of three distinct ways: either during his martyrdom; as an individual figure with his characteristic feature, the arrow; or by means of a severed head guarded by a wolf. Whilst distinct in their own right, these three categories are afforded further nuance according to their material, physical, iconographic or social context, and where it is not possible to determine their provenance, by reading them through alternative sources and methodologies. Closer interpretation reveals multiple layers of meaning within these types. These variously emphasise Edmund's spiritual glorification, his intercessory ability, and his royalty. They are not restricted to one type of image and are not mutually exclusive; the co-existence of multiple meanings within one type of image attesting to a subtle and complex visual code.

The martyrdom is arguably the most characteristic, irreducible feature of Edmund's sanctity, ensuring his place in the ranks of the exalted. Images of Edmund bearing his attribute, the arrow, are not narrative scenes like the martyrdom, but rather the culmination of all narratives, the universal image that simultaneously depicted Edmund's royalty, his martyrdom, physical regeneration as a result of his chastity and his spiritual triumph and subsequent potency as intercessor and miracle worker. These elements are all implicit in each image, and through the manipulation of the context in which

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<sup>789</sup> Lydgate, *Lives*, Prologue, 1 and used frequently thereafter.

they were placed could be made to emphasise one whilst still encapsulating all. The incident of the wolf and head is miraculous; it is Edmund's first posthumous miracle, and confirms the sanctity which his life and the manner of death had suggested. In this sense it forms part of the narrative of his *passio*, linking his martyrdom with the later miracles attributed to him. As an image of his kingship, however, it relies upon very different conditions to generate meaning. It is to a large extent detached from Edmund's saintly history, emphasising as it does his temporal ancestral lineage; Edmund is in the company of his forebears rather than the company of heaven. Above all, these various visual identities once again demonstrate the complexity of Edmund's saintly identity.

### **Miracles beyond Bury**

An additional means of determining the variety of responses to the cult is by considering the miracles with which Edmund is credited. The majority of miracles hitherto discussed in the first two chapters are those associated with Edmund's corporal relics, both before and after their enshrinement in the abbey church. This is to be expected given the saintly *virtus* associated with a saint's remains. However, the narrative of Egelwyn's journey to London demonstrates that the potency of Edmund's relics was evident regardless of their location. Hermann relates Edmund's punishment of the arrogant Dane, 'filled with fierce intent', who disrespectfully approached the feretory and attempted to remove the pallium as the relics lay in their temporary home in St Gregory's church, London. The man was struck blind, but quickly repented and his sight was restored.<sup>790</sup> According to Hermann, Aelfhun, bishop of London (c.1002-c.1015), was so impressed by the miracles wrought by Edmund during his London sojourn that he attempted to translate the body from St Gregory's to the episcopal seat of St Paul's. However, despite Egelwyn's ability to move the coffin with ease, the Bishop and his helpers were unable to lift it because 'although his devotion was good, such an intention was at odds with the will of the

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<sup>790</sup> Hermann, *De Miraculis*, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, I, p. 44.

saint.<sup>791</sup> Yarrow suggests that this miracle should be read in the context of *furta sacra*, or relic thefts, in which the ability to translate the saint to a new location was taken as an indication of their silent assent.<sup>792</sup> In contrast, this miracle indicates Edmund's unwillingness to be relocated to St Paul's and speaks instead of his desire to return home to his own kingdom. Yet ultimately this display of saintly homesickness demonstrates that Edmund's miracle-working ability was not constrained by the location of his relics whilst also underlining the particular *virtus* associated with his remains.

Secondary relics associated with Edmund were also credited with manifesting miraculous abilities, such as his banner, borne before the victors at the battle of Fornham in 1173, or an arrow reputedly used at the martyrdom which thwarted attempts to remove it from its enshrined position in St Edmund's church in London.<sup>793</sup> This indicates that the question of the extent to which Edmund's miracles differed according to their location is less informative than the occurrence of miracles in relation to relics. Thus the primary distinction here will be between miracles which occurred in the presence of relics and those which did not. A number of miracles in each collection suggest that wonders occurred in the absence of relics, either primary or secondary. These miracles will be considered here, in particular the difference between the types of miracles which occurred through the direct mediation of relics or otherwise, and the resulting extent to which Edmund's saintly identity was perceived to differ according to proximity to his shrine.

In this instance relics also include Edmund's living body, in order to account for miracles associated with him before his martyrdom, such as the bursting forth of the springs at Hunstanton. 'Presence' is a loose term but for my present purposes I have defined a miracle as occurring in the presence of relics if: it occurred in or near the abbey church; if a relic of St Edmund is specified in the narrative, regardless of the location of the miracle; if a relic is not mentioned in

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<sup>791</sup> Hermann, *De Miraculis*, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, I, pp. 44-5.

<sup>792</sup> Yarrow, *Saints and their Communities*, pp. 35-6.

<sup>793</sup> For the battle of Fornham see Roger of Hovedon, *Chronica Magistri Rogeri Houedene*, ed. Stubbs, II, p. 55. For further discussion see above, Chapter 2, pp. 226-7. For the arrow see Bodley 240, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, I, pp. 375-6.

the narrative but one is known to have existed in that location at a relevant date. Due to the inextricable links between the abbey and the *banleuca* of Bury St Edmunds I have also included miracles occurring within the abbey's immediate vicinity in this category. In some cases it can be difficult to determine the exact location at which a miracle took place. In many cases the monastic authors were understandably keen to emphasise the occurrence of miracles at the shrine as a means of promoting pilgrimage to the abbey, frequently describing the journeys to Bury undertaken by supplicants which are duly rewarded with intercessory benevolence. For this reason I have assumed that any ambiguity indicates that a miracle occurred elsewhere. This is frequently supported by the narrative context in which miracles occur. For example, a miracle in Bodley 240 whose location is unspecified, describing a man who promises his son to St Edmund in return for the boy's restoration to health, is flanked by two miracles which the scribe states occurred in the diocese of Chichester. Although not conclusive, this suggests a short sequence of narratives acquired from Chichester, whether orally or passed on in manuscript form, to be copied at Bury and therefore suggests that the second, unattributed, miracle may also share this locational provenance. This ambiguity, however, makes it unfeasible in most instances to perform a detailed analysis of the type of miracles which occurred in the absence of relics in relation to their distance from the cult centre at Bury.

Fig. 158 indicates my calculation of the statistical breakdown of miracles 'with' or 'without' relics in each collection, given as both total numbers and percentages. The percentage of miracles in each category in each collection are expressed graphically in Fig. 159. It is interesting that at the inception of the textual cult, in Abbo's *Passio*, all the miracles occur in the context of Edmund's relics, probably representing the limited dissemination of the cult at this date and the desire to promote Bury as the location in which Edmund's *virtus* could be experienced. As the cult developed over time increasing numbers of miracle occur in locations other than those connected with Edmund's relics but on the whole the total proportion of miracles without relics remains fairly constant between 17 and 33 per cent. This most likely reflects the continued efforts of

the convent to retain control of the cult and promote the benefits of visiting the shrine, whilst simultaneously indicating that Edmund's miracle-working abilities were sufficiently great that they extended beyond the confines of the abbey church. As texts originating at Bury each collection is also likely to represent available knowledge of miracles attributed to St Edmund which was certain to have been greater concerning events in the church or its immediate surroundings.

A telling distinction can be seen between the types of miracles which occurred in association with the relics or otherwise.<sup>794</sup> All the revelations concerning Edmund's incorruption were, unsurprisingly, associated with his relics as in each instance his bodily wholeness is attested by the examination of his corpse. Similarly, the majority of natural wonders are either performed by Edmund during his life-time or concern the guarding of his head by the wolf. A small number of weather miracles are also attributed to the presence of relics, such as the ending of a drought leading to an abundant harvest which Hermann claims took place after the bishop ordered that Edmund's body be borne outside the church at the time of his translation in 1095.<sup>795</sup> The number of punishment miracles taking place in the absence of the relics may initially seem surprising considering the pattern noted above for Edmund's punitive interventions to be associated with violations of his shrine or the abbey church. However, Edmund also intervenes to protect the broader territory of the Liberty and the abbey's landholdings elsewhere and the death of Sweyn accounts for a considerable proportion of these miracles. Edmund's ability to intervene to prevent encroachments upon the abbey's lands and privileges and, in the case of Sweyn, those of the kingdom as a whole therefore forms a significant aspect of his saintly identity and it is natural that this should be emphasised in the miracle collections.

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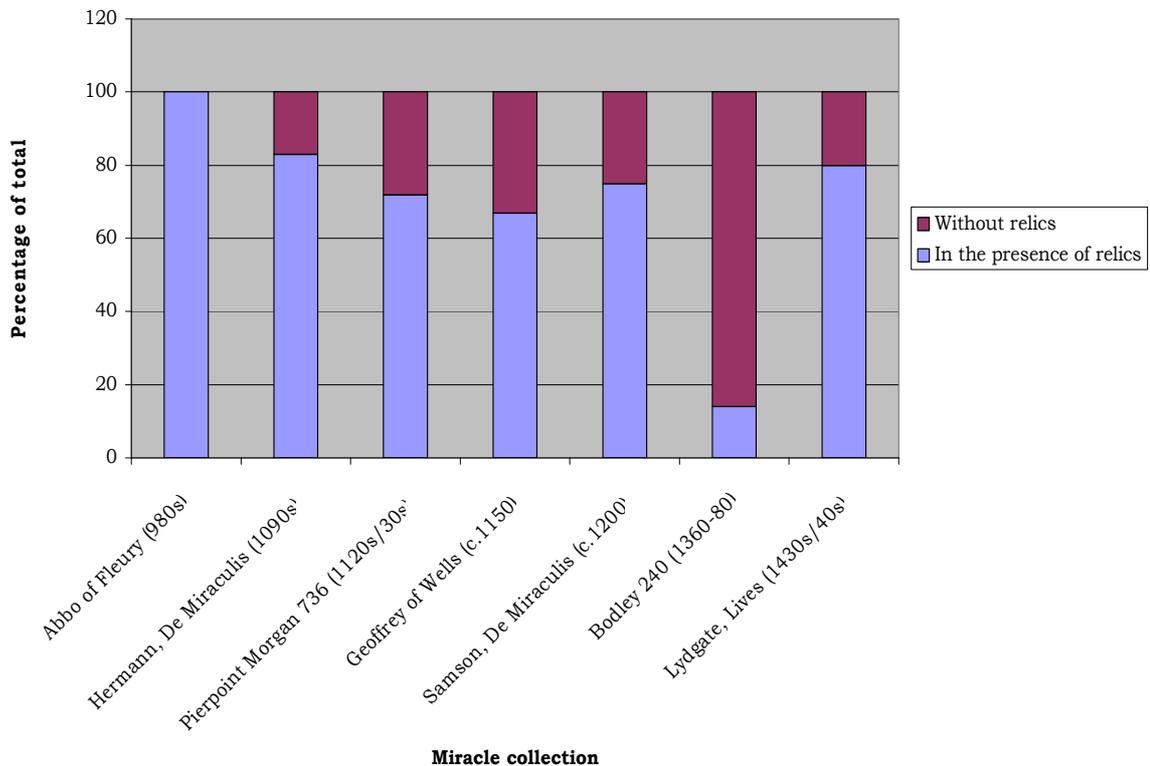
<sup>794</sup> The exception is the 'general' category, in which the miscellaneous nature and relatively small number of miracles makes meaningful analysis of this category unrewarding. See Appendix 6 for graphical analysis of each miracle by type.

<sup>795</sup> Hermann, *De Miraculis*, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, I, pp. 90-91.

**Fig. 158 Statistical breakdown of the total number of miracles which occurred in the presence of relics and those which did not**

Collection	In the presence of relics		Without relics	
	No. of miracles	% of total	No. of miracles	% of total
Abbo of Fleury, <i>Passio</i>	9	100	0	0
Hermann, <i>De Miraculis</i>	26	83	5	17
Pierpoint Morgan 736	13	72	5	28
Geoffrey of Wells, <i>De Infantia</i>	2	67	1	33
Samson, <i>De Miraculis</i>	40	75	14	25
Bodley 240	11	14	63	86
Lydgate, <i>Lives</i>	20	80	5	20

**Fig. 159 Graphical representation of the percentage of the total number of miracles in each collection which occurred in the presence of relics and those which did not.**



### Healing and helping

The least consistent statistics relate to miracles of healing as well as rescue and assistance. The relative size of the samples in some collections (Abbo's *Passio*, the Pierpoint Morgan illustrations and Geoffrey's *De Infantia*) and the extent to which this distorts the impression given by the statistics has been discussed above in relation to the nature of Edmund's miracles and how these evolved over time. However, even if we focus upon the collections where the number of miracles in these categories provide a meaningful sample (Hermann's *De Miraculis*, Samson's *De Miraculis*, Bodley 240 and Lydgate's *Lives*), the disparities are still notable. In both versions of *De Miraculis* and the *Lives* the proportion of healing miracles which occurred in the presence of relics ranges between 80-100 percent and miracles of rescue and assistance between 40-100 percent. In contrast, the figures for the same categories in Bodley 240 are starkly different: 9 and 7 percent respectively. This reflects the overall trend of the Bodley miracles in which, on average, only 14 percent are associated with relics of St Edmund, meaning that the vast majority (86 percent) occurred elsewhere. The reasons why the convent should wish to emphasise that Edmund's ability to heal and help his devotees was particular potent in the vicinity of his shrine is self-evident so the extent of the anomaly in Bodley 240 is particularly surprising: why should the compiler of this collection alone place so much emphasis upon miracles which occurred in locations other than Bury?

I believe this discrepancy may be accounted for by the provenance of the miracles in this collection. Fifty four are miscellaneous miracles which seem to have been collected at the abbey by the scribe from various sources including extant documents and oral testimony of miracles recently occurred. In contrast, the remaining miracles consist of two discrete sets associated with locations other than Bury St Edmunds: seventeen miracles are recorded at the chapel of St Edmund in Wainfleet (Lincolnshire) and seven from the chapel of St Edmund at Lyng (Norfolk). In neither case are relics of St Edmund mentioned and this necessarily has a considerable affect upon the overall proportions of Bodley 240. I would suggest that these miracles were compiled in their respective

locations and disseminated to Bury and where they were copied by the Bodley scribe. This is unique and intriguing evidence of the processes by which the miracle collections were compiled. Wainfleet and Lyng are also perfect examples of the complex networks of patronage and cultural exchange which influenced the cult.<sup>796</sup>

#### Miracles from Wainfleet (Lincolnshire)

The abbey held land and property in Wainfleet in the region of the Wash in Lincolnshire, including a chapel dedicated to St Edmund, in an area which Gransden suggests was of particular importance to the abbey as the salterns clustered around the Wash were the principle source of the abbey's salt.<sup>797</sup> The strategic importance of the area is attested by the presence in the immediate vicinity of Wainfleet of three further churches or chapels belonging to other monastic houses: All Saints' church was a possession of Bardney Abbey (near Lincoln); St Thomas's church in Northolme, now part of Wainfleet, belonged to Kyme Priory (near Sleaford, Lincolnshire); St Mary's to the Priory of Stixwold (near Lincoln).<sup>798</sup> St Edmund's chapel was therefore an important outpost of the abbey, representing its presence in the area. Similarly, in the face of fierce monastic rivalry for control of the valuable resources it would have suited the abbey to promote St Edmund's personal interest in the area, manifested in his numerous miraculous interventions on behalf of local devotees.

Further connections existed between Bury and this area of the Wash. Henry de Lacy, Earl of Lincoln (1272-1311) was a generous benefactor of the abbey and is recorded by the Bodley scribe as presenting a 'great jewel' to St Edmund's shrine at Bury, as well as making valuable bequests and generous land transactions in gratitude for his deliverance from peril in Aquitaine in 1308 after he invoked the saint.<sup>799</sup> The Douai register also records that Henry gave a gold cross worth 66s 8d which stood on top of Edmund's shrine and another

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<sup>796</sup> See Appendix 6.

<sup>797</sup> Gransden, *A History of the Abbey*, p. 224.

<sup>798</sup> Nikolaus Pevsner and John Harris, *The Buildings of England: Lincolnshire* (London: Penguin Books, 1973, rpt. 1978, rvsd. 1989 by Nicholas Antrim), p. 776.

<sup>799</sup> Bodley 240, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, II, pp. 366-7.

gold cross with jewels with a great carbuncle at the foot (possibly the jewel referred to by the Bodley scribe) which hung on the side.<sup>800</sup> The property of the Earls of Lincoln and the abbey in the area around the Wash were in close proximity from the early thirteenth century and although this resulted in conflict which was not resolved until the end of the century, the opportunities for interaction were considerable. Gransden, for example, discusses the exchange of books between the abbey and the earls of Lincoln in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.<sup>801</sup> The Bodley miracles from Wainfleet are dated 1373-4 and therefore not a direct result of the particularly close relationship which the abbey enjoyed with Henry de Lacy. They also date from a period when the title fell extinct for over a hundred years following the death of Henry of Grosmont in 1361.<sup>802</sup> However, the abbey's involvement in the area made it more likely that they would be aware of miracles occurring in a chapel under their jurisdiction. Similarly, the cultural interchange between the monks and the earls of Lincoln may have established connections in the area which outlived the earldom and ensured that the miracle accounts were forwarded to the abbey and duly copied by the Bodley scribe.

#### Miracles from Lyng (Norfolk)

The ruins of St Edmund's chapel at Lyng (Norfolk) are three-quarters of a mile south east of the present parish church of St Margaret. The chapel was originally part of a nunnery dedicated to St Edmund, reputedly founded to commemorate the site of a battle with the Danes during their ninth-century campaign which culminated with the death of Edmund in 869.<sup>803</sup> In 1176 the nuns moved to Thetford and occupied the Priory of St George, similarly founded to commemorate a battle between Edmund and the Danes, but which by the later twelfth century had diminished to two canons, Folchard and Andrew,

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<sup>800</sup> Douai Register, see James, *On the Abbey Church*, p. 136.

<sup>801</sup> Gransden, *A History of the Abbey*, pp. 224-5.

<sup>802</sup> For the history of the earldom see *Debrett's Peerage and Baronetage*, ed. Patrick Montague-Smith, (London: Macmillan for Debrett's Peerage Ltd., 1995). CS420 DEB

<sup>803</sup> Blomefield, *Norfolk*, VIII, p. 250. See also a guide to the church by M.J. Sayer, *Lyng* (East Dereham: C&J Murray, 1970).

following the deaths of the rest of their colleagues.<sup>804</sup> The history of Lyng hereafter is obscure but it seems to have persisted as a chapel dedicated to St Edmund under the control of the Prioress of St George's as in 1286/7 the Prioress of St George's, Thetford, was given permission to hold an annual fair at Lyng on the Feast of St Edmund and in 1437/8 was granted a licence to sell the Lyng property to the Rector of Lyng with the chapel, nine acres of land and property in Feltwell, Foulden and Hockwold in return for an annual pension of 4 marks which was paid up until the Dissolution.<sup>805</sup> By the fifteenth century there was also a guild dedicated to the saint.<sup>806</sup> Preceding its transfer to the Lyng nuns, St George's at Thetford had been a priory of St Edmund's Abbey and it is likely that the new proprietors would have maintained close links with the abbey, thus enabling the dissemination of miracles attributed to Edmund at the chapel at Lyng.

The extent to which saints could be accessed at locations other than their primary shrine or cult centre is evident in these local miracles. The role of visual imagery in attesting to the presence of the saint is also apparent, as two of the Wainfleet miracles refer to an '*ymago sancti Edmundi, situate in capella monachorum sancti Edmundi*'.<sup>807</sup> In one example from Wainfleet, sailors who are wrecked off the coast near Skegness (Lincolnshire) make a vow '*ad sanctum Edmundum et ejus capellam de Wainflet*'.<sup>808</sup> The choice of words is telling as it indicates that for these sailors, presumably local men, the primary *locus* for their devotion to St Edmund is their local chapel, not the cult centre at Bury. This reiterates Duffy's assertion that for many medieval men and women the cult of saints functioned primarily at a local level.<sup>809</sup> This is reflected in the

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<sup>804</sup> The transfer is described in a charter of Abbot Hugh (1157-80). '*Quomodo moniales S. Gregorii de Thetford ingressum habuerunt in Thetford*' in *Monasticon Anglicanum: A History of the Abbies and other Monasteries, Hospitals, Friaries and Cathedral and Collegiate Churches*, ed. William Dugdale, rpt. ed. John Caley, Henry Ellis and Bulkeley Bandinel, 6 vols. (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme and Brown, 1817-30), IV, pp. 477-7: '*quia saepe memoratum monasterium S. Georgii usque ad illum diem membrum ecclesiae nostrae fuisse constabat*'.

<sup>805</sup> Blomefield, *Norfolk*, VIII, p. 250.

<sup>806</sup> Farnhill, *Guilds and the Parish Community*, pp. 172-211.

<sup>807</sup> Bodley 240, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, III, pp. 327-8.

<sup>808</sup> Bodley 240, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, III, p. 331.

<sup>809</sup> Duffy, 'The Dynamics of Pilgrimage', pp. 165-6.

**Fig. 160 Geographical relationship between origins of miracle recipients and the location of miracles reported at chapels of St Edmund at Wainfleet (Lincolnshire) and Lyng (Norfolk)**

**Wainfleet<sup>810</sup>**

<b>Origin of recipient</b>	<b>Miles from chapel</b>	<b>Location of miracle</b>	<b>No. of miracles</b>
Wainfleet	0	Wainfleet	2
Croft	2	Wainfleet	1
Friskney	4	Friskney (?) <sup>811</sup>	1
Irby-in-the-Marsh	5	Irby-in-the-Marsh (?)	1
Skegness	6	Wainfleet	1
Wrangle	8	Wainfleet	1
Leake	10	Wainfleet	2
Boston	15	Boston (?)	1
Tattershall	15	Tattershall (?)	1
Unspecified	?	At sea (Lincolnshire coast)	1
Unspecified	?	At sea (unspecified)	2
York	c. 90	York (?)	1
Wainfleet (?), Barton-upon-Humber; Beverley	c. 65-75	Spain	1

**Lyng<sup>812</sup>**

<b>Origin of recipient</b>	<b>Miles from chapel</b>	<b>Location of miracle</b>	<b>No. of miracles</b>
Lyng	0	Lyng	1
Reepham	4	Lyng	1
East Dereham	5	East Dereham (?)	1
Scarning	7	Scarning (?)	1
Belaugh	12	Lyng	1
Sparham	15	Sparham (?)	1
Kent	At least 150	Lyng	1

<sup>810</sup> Bodley 240, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, III, pp. 327-35.

<sup>811</sup> ? indicates that the location at which the miracle took place is not specified but that the narrative implies that it occurred in or near the recipients home.

<sup>812</sup> Bodley 240, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, III, pp. 335-9.

origins of the recipients of miracles at both Wainfleet and Lyng: in each collection the majority of devotees are local people originating from within a fifteen mile radius of the chapel (Fig. 160). The majority of miracles similarly occurred either at the chapel in question or in or near the home of the recipient and are therefore equally local in their distribution. Two of the Wainfleet miracles occur at sea: one whose recipient and the location of the miracle are unspecified and a second in which sailors of unknown origin are rescued by St Edmund's intervention near Skegness. The second of these can certainly be categorised as a local miracle. The nature of these miracles reflects Wainfleet's coastal location and is likely to speak to the maritime preoccupations of its inhabitants.

In addition, in each collection St Edmund is credited with intervening at a greater distance or assisting devotees of non-local origins. In the Wainfleet miracles, Matildis of Westchester (perhaps near Camberley in Surrey) has the use of her hand and arm restored after praying in the chapel and a child at York who appears drowned is restored after his parents make a vow to St Edmund.<sup>813</sup> At Lyng, a woman from Kent who is both blind and deaf recovers her sight and hearing after it is recommended that she travel to St Edmund's chapel.<sup>814</sup> Although the location at which the miracle of the child from York occurred, it is significant that in each of the other cases the supplicants travel to the respective chapels, where they are cured. In the final case a chaplain, along with men from North Lincolnshire and South Yorkshire, is released from captivity in Spain after being captured and imprisoned on their return from pilgrimage to Compostella.<sup>815</sup> The origins of the men suggest they may have landed on the Lincolnshire coast on their return home and chose to give thanks at Wainfleet as this was the nearest chapel dedicated to St Edmund.

All of these miracles are benign acts of healing or rescue and assistance, reinforcing the notion that Edmund's punitive identity was a phenomenon of the early cult and a preoccupation of the convent at Bury St Edmunds. At Wainfleet and Lyng people were more concerned with the tribulations of

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<sup>813</sup> Bodley 240, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, III, pp. 328-9 and 332-3.

<sup>814</sup> Bodley 240, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, III, pp. 338-9.

<sup>815</sup> Bodley 240, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, III, pp.

everyday life and St Edmund demonstrates his ability to intervene on behalf of members of the local communities regardless of the location in which they find themselves in need and to extend this munificence to devotees from further afield, especially if they are willing to show their devotion by visiting one of his chapels.

### Soldiers and sailors

Although miracles of healing or rescue and assistance which may be designated as taking place in the absence of relics occur in different proportions in the collections originating at the abbey as opposed to those compiled at Wainfleet and Lyng, the nature of the wonders enacted by St Edmund nevertheless follow similar patterns. The majority involve travellers in peril, often at sea, who invoke St Edmund and are duly saved, such as a clerk from Lichfield who Edmund dragged from the sea by his hair after the man fell overboard *en route* to Jerusalem.<sup>816</sup> The compilers of these miracles understandably often emphasise the vows made by pilgrims in which devotees promise to visit the shrine or make an offering in exchange for intercession.<sup>817</sup> In one example, a group of pilgrims returning from Rome found themselves in peril when their boat sprung a leak and began to sink. Two men of St Edmund's jurisdiction, a priest named Wulfward and a man named Robert, convinced the passengers of the boat to place their trust in St Edmund and make a pledge of money for their safe deliverance. A collection was made and the boat continued its journey to port in safety. The money was taken to Bury where it was offered to the saint.<sup>818</sup> It is notable that in both of these examples, as in numerous others, the recipients of the miracles were on pilgrimage. This display of devotion marks them as worthy recipients of Edmund's patronage. The locations to which they journey (Jerusalem, Rome, Compostella) is also significant. Bury could not expect to compete with these international destinations and their importance for medieval Christians made it appropriate for St Edmund to assist devotees

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<sup>816</sup> Samson, *De Miraculis*, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, I, pp. 95-6.

<sup>817</sup> Finucane discusses the importance of vows to saints in *Miracles and Pilgrims*, pp. 35-6.

<sup>818</sup> Samson, *De Miraculis*, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, I, pp. 95-6.

on their journeys. In contrast, Edmund is not credited with assisting pilgrims to other English shrines which might represent realistic competition.

### St Edmund and St Nicholas

Edmund's particular patronage of those at sea also entailed the possibility of disseminating his cult even farther afield, as in addition to helping English devotees travelling abroad he is credited with assisting foreign travellers who encounter difficulties whilst journeying to England. Samson's *De Miraculis* includes the story of the influential Abbot Lambert of Angers, whose boat was prevented from sailing for England from Barfleur due to unfavourable winds.<sup>819</sup> An aged monk, Nicholas, advised the abbot to pray to St Edmund, reassuring him that St Nicholas, the customary patron of sea-goers, would not be offended as St Edmund's power was particularly potent in English waters. The abbot followed the monk's advice and the crossing was made in ten hours. Lambert's successful crossing and its commemoration in the record served to enhance the prestige of St Edmund by placing him in the company of internationally recognised saints. The curiously coincidental name of the mysterious aged monk who advised the abbot seems to suggest that St Nicholas himself acknowledged Edmund's power and jurisdiction. Abbot Lambert's status and position made him an ideal conduit through which Edmund's miracle working reputation could be transmitted overseas. As the aged monk predicts, on account of this miracle 'the power of his [Edmund's] moral excellence which brightly lights up England might be transferred through us to other parts of the world, and thus he may receive a worthy increase on account of his merits'.<sup>820</sup> The association between Sts Edmund and Nicholas is found in other miracle narratives. The clerk from Lichfield, whom Edmund hoisted by the hair, avers that as St Nicholas was famous for helping sailors, so too was St Edmund the patron of those shipwrecked at sea. Similarly, in 1190, a young man from Shimpling (Suffolk) was captured in a battle overseas, tortured and imprisoned,

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<sup>819</sup> Samson, *De Miraculis*, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, I, pp. 176-8.

<sup>820</sup> Samson, *De Miraculis*, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, I, p. 177.

but was set free when he invoked Sts Edmund and Nicholas.<sup>821</sup> When Richard I set sail for the Holy Land in 1190 his crusading fleet sailed under the protection of St Thomas, St Nicholas and St Edmund (Fig. 161).<sup>822</sup>

Similarly, James Robinson suggests that Edmund's patronage of sailors and those travelling at sea may be reflected in an aspect of his visual iconography, proposing that the shape of the most complex pilgrim badge type, in which Edmund is flanked by archers, may be likened to an anchor.<sup>823</sup> He notes that the anchor was a form associated with Edmund by a number of pilgrims. In 1173 fishermen from Dunwich, caught in a storm, invoked St Edmund and were saved. In gratitude they went on pilgrimage to Bury, where they offered an *ex voto* wax anchor at the shrine (above, Fig. 102).<sup>824</sup> Robinson maintains that it is highly likely that large quantities of similar images decorated the shrine at Bury, and suggests that the badge itself could have been worn as a charm for protection at sea.<sup>825</sup> Robinson offers no explanation for the development of this particular aspect of Edmund's saintly identity, but I would suggest it can be traced to Edmund's arrival in East Anglia which involved a successful sea voyage. Geoffrey of Wells makes it clear that due to Edmund's presence on board the ship, the East Anglian delegation are 'preceded and followed by the grace of God'.<sup>826</sup> Although this event is often overshadowed by Edmund's more dramatic posthumous activities, it nevertheless associates him from the outset with voyages by sea, and may go some way to explaining the emphasis placed on this aspect of his identity. Robinson's suggestion is not entirely convincing, as if this element of Edmund's sanctity was as pre-eminent as he suggests it might be expected that this would be referred to explicitly in his iconography, for example in a pilgrim badge depicting a ship. Nevertheless, it is certainly the case that Edmund's patronage of travellers at sea formed a significant part of his saintly identity in relation to miracles occurring in the absence of relics and

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<sup>821</sup> Bodley 240, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, I, p. 374.

<sup>822</sup> *The Chronicle of the Reigns of Henry II and Richard I*, ed. Stubbs, II, p. 116. This is illustrated in a fifteenth-century copy of the St Alban's Chronicle, now London, Lambeth Palace Library, MS 6, fol. 142.

<sup>823</sup> Robinson, 'A Late Medieval Pilgrim Badge from Chaucer House', 60-69.

<sup>824</sup> Bodley 240, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, I, p. 367.

<sup>825</sup> Robinson, 'A Late Medieval Pilgrim Badge from Chaucer House', 69.

<sup>826</sup> Geoffrey of Wells, *De Infantia*, ed. Arnold, *Memorials*, I, p. 99.

**Fig. 161 Richard I's crusading fleet sets sail for the Holy Land in 1190 under the protection of Sts Thomas, Nicholas and Edmund**

St Alban's Chronicle, 15<sup>th</sup>c. Lambeth Palace Library MS.6, fol. 142



that this was also manifested visually in offerings made at the shrine, two features which were likely to be mutually reinforcing, indicating once again the interactions between textual and visual manifestations of the cult, as well as the way in which incidents happening beyond Bury were ultimately integrated into the official narrative.

The association between Edmund and Nicholas is also evident on lead tokens discovered in St Mary's church at Bury. Apparently struck in imitation of silver groats and pennies, Bury is named on a number of them and the town's arms also appear, suggesting that they originated locally (Fig. 162). Golding identifies twenty one distinct types, of which nineteen refer to St Nicholas, mostly by way of invocation (*pie Nicholae ora pro nob.*) and some depicting a mitre or mitred figure.<sup>827</sup> In addition, seven of the tokens are inscribed on the reverse with the opening words from the antiphon to St Edmund which also featured in the glass at Taverham and which Lydgate tells us was inscribed before Edmund's shrine.<sup>828</sup> Golding suggests that they were struck during the reign of Henry VII but otherwise little is known about them, perhaps partly because they were in Golding's private collection and therefore largely inaccessible for public study.<sup>829</sup> Lead trade tokens of a similar size and material were produced to provide currency of a sufficiently small denomination for the purposes of every day commerce, in the same way that pennies were clipped to create halves or quarters.<sup>830</sup> The ecclesiastical overtones of the Nicholas and Edmund coins, however, suggest that they were not used in lieu of currency. Golding notes that many are pierced with two or three holes, suggesting they were suspended from a cord or sewn onto clothing, much like pilgrim badges. Their discovery in St Mary's church in Bury, where there was a guild of St Nicholas, makes Golding's suggestion that they were commemorative tokens issued by the guild to mark major festivals highly plausible.<sup>831</sup>

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<sup>827</sup> Charles Golding, *The Coinage of Suffolk. Consisting of the Regal Coins Leaden Pieces and Tokens of the Seventeenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (London: Printed privately by the author, 1868), pp. 14-19.

<sup>828</sup> Lydgate, *Lives*, Prologue, ll. 73-80.

<sup>829</sup> Golding, *The Coinage of Suffolk*, p. 14.

<sup>830</sup> Golding, *The Coinage of Suffolk*, pp. 21-3.

<sup>831</sup> Golding, *The Coinage of Suffolk*, p. 15-16.

**Fig. 162 Lead tokens with the mitre of St Nicholas and the opening words of the antiphon for the Vigil of the Feast of St Edmund<sup>832</sup>**



<sup>832</sup> From Golding, *The Coinage of Suffolk*, Plate 2.

The tokens honoured St Nicholas, the guild's saintly patron, whilst acknowledging St Edmund's spiritual patrimony over the town.

In addition, the verses in Arundel 30 indicate that there was a chapel to St Nicholas in the south transept, decorated with scenes from his legend showing Nicholas chosen by a voice from heaven, his consecration as bishop and his deliverance of condemned criminals.<sup>833</sup> Interestingly, no mention is made of his patronage of sailors, perhaps because the convent wanted to emphasise that this role was fulfilled by St Edmund. One of three leper hospitals in the town was also dedicated to St Nicholas.<sup>834</sup> Abbey accounts indicate that in 1249 9d was paid to the kitchener for 'wafres' (a kind of sweet biscuit with a savoury topping) for the monks on the feasts of St Edmund (20 November) and St Nicholas (6 December), with the provision of similar treats on these days suggesting that the feasts were held in similarly high regard.<sup>835</sup>

Thus consideration of Edmund's miracles which occurred at a remove from his shrine and in the absence of his relics demonstrates that the dissemination of the cult did to some extent affect the development of Edmund's saintly identity, particularly as devotees' perceptions of Edmund originating in outlying communities were fed back into the official cult. Finucane reiterates the importance of considering the development of a saint's reputation in context:

Unqualified statements about the 'growth of the cult' of a saint may be misleading, suggesting that such 'growth' was an abstract, even automatic, process unrelated to the society in which it occurred. The awareness of curative cults was not silently and mysteriously

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<sup>833</sup> Arundel 30, fol. 208.

<sup>834</sup> For the medieval hospitals of Bury see *Charters of the Medieval Hospitals of Bury St Edmunds*, ed. Christopher Harper-Bill, Suffolk Charters 14 (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press for the Suffolk Records Society, 1994) and Joy Rowe, 'The Medieval Hospitals of Bury St Edmunds', *Medical History* ii (1958), 253-63. For the treatment of leprosy in general see Carole Rawcliffe, *Leprosy in Medieval England* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2006).

<sup>835</sup> London, British Library, MS Harley 645 (the 'Kempe' register of the abbey), fol. 193v, cited in Gransden, *A History of the Abbey*, p. 257.

communicated to peasants in their huts or to knights in their halls, but was physically carried to them by living individuals.<sup>836</sup>

It is therefore particularly important when examining trends in miracles over time not to lose sight of the separate collections in which they originate. At the inception of the cult, in Abbo's *Passio*, all the miracles were associated with Edmund's relics as his proponents attempted to bolster the burgeoning cult and promote Bury as the official cult centre. A similar situation pertains a century later when Hermann composed *De Miraculis*. Perhaps in response to post-Conquest uncertainties the convent once again sought to reinforce the link between the saint and his resting place. By the time *De Miraculis* was revised at the turn of the thirteenth century, perhaps by Abbot Samson himself, the cult was more securely established. Miracles were occurring further afield and it is possible that the convent promoted Edmund's national and international reputation as a response to Becket's growing popularity. When the miracles in Bodley 240 were compiled the cult had spread still further, to the extent that the majority of miracles occurred beyond Bury and other communities were recording miracles associated with their own chapels and cult images. Lydgate's *Lives* offers a more balanced view of the range of Edmund's activities. As a text so entirely invested in promoting the abbey and its saintly patron it is unsurprising that the focus is upon Edmund's activities on home territory. Even in one of Lydgate's few miracles to take place in the absence of Edmund's relics, the narrative of a boy healed by Edmund after a fall from London Bridge, Anthony Bale sees the abbey attempting to forge connections between the abbey and the Lancastrian regime. He suggests that the anachronistic presence of Lord Fanhope (d. 1443) in the miracle may be explained by his role as a counsellor to Henry VI:

Far from attempting to wrest the miracle from Bury, [this miracle] may attempt to knit, imitatively and flatteringly, Henrician and Lancastrian models of piety and polity, lordship and counsel, with the city of London, through the image of Fanhope. London, the capital, become connected,

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<sup>836</sup> Finucane, *Miracles and Pilgrims*, p. 156.

through [this miracle], with Edmund's ancient capital, Bury. Through the potent image of the endangered child, recalling Henry VI himself, the miracle imagines a kind of sacramental, civic and distinctly urban authority, seamlessly uniting secular, clerical and royal jurisdictions.<sup>837</sup>

Thus as we would expect from a convent who sought so consistently to promote their patron and their abbey, each miracle served its purpose in furthering a version of Edmund's saintly identity which suited the abbey. As Geoffrey of Wells acknowledged in his description of the process by which the convent determined the 'official' version of Edmund's *vita*, even miracles which originated beyond Bury were ultimately filtered through the abbey's authors and scribes and so it should be unsurprising that the collections on the whole reinforce aspects of Edmund's sanctity seen elsewhere at Bury.

Moving beyond the cult centre to consider miracles which occurred in other locations has, perhaps inevitably, to some extent led back to Bury. The final sources to be considered, however, can be claimed as genuinely independent of the abbey.

### **Texts beyond Bury: legendary collections**

In addition to the many chronicles and the various hagiographic accounts, Edmund also appears in a number of sermon manuals and collections of saints' *lives*. These date from between the late thirteenth century to 1516 and although they fall into the category of hagiographies discussed above, they differ in their form and function to the extent that they merit consideration as a discrete group. In the context of cultic dissemination one of their main distinguishing features is that they were not written at Bury. Although there is evidence that some of these collections were widely distributed, none are of East Anglian origin, and whilst this does not necessarily further an understanding of the

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<sup>837</sup> Bale, 'St Edmund in Fifteenth-Century London: The Lydgatian *Miracles of St Edmund*', pp. 145-61; p. 155.

regional cult, it does offer the opportunity to consider the textual cult as it existed outside of the cultural milieu of Bury St Edmunds and determine any differences in the presentation of Edmund's saintly identity. In terms of the development of the textual cult of St Edmund, the legendary texts contribute little additional information. Although unequivocally part of the hagiographic tradition, the length of each *life* bears more similarity to the chronicle accounts: each version is brief, presenting only the basic details of Edmund's *life* and death. The interest of these texts is therefore primarily contextual, particularly in terms of the other saints alongside whom Edmund appears. The brevity of the accounts can also be illuminating in its own right as, much like the images of Edmund discussed above, it indicates what was considered to be the core of the narrative and therefore integral to Edmund's saintly identity.

### *The South English Legendary*

*The South English Legendary* (*SEL*) was initially composed in the 1280s, although only one early manuscript (Bodleian 1486 Laud Misc. 108) survives.<sup>838</sup> The remainder (an impressive fifty one examples, not including those containing single items) date from the early fourteenth to the late fifteenth century. The text underwent numerous revisions, with new material added at various times and this is reflected in the presentation of the legends, which do not follow the ecclesiastical Calendar.<sup>839</sup>

The authorship and origins of the *SEL* are the subject of ongoing critical debate. The dialect of the earliest manuscript suggests a Southern or South West Midlands origin, probably either at Gloucester or Worcester.<sup>840</sup> Several authors

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<sup>838</sup> *The South English Legendary*, ed. Horstmann. All references will be in accordance with this edition and will be given parenthetically in the text.

<sup>839</sup> See Manfred Görlach, *The Textual Tradition of the South English Legendary* (Leeds: University of Leeds, 1974) for a discussion of the history and dissemination of the *SEL* and a survey of extant manuscripts. See also Charlotte D'Evelyn, 'Collections of saints' legends', in *A Manual of Writings in Middle English, 1050-1500*, gen. ed. J. Burke Severs (Hamden: Connecticut Academy of Arts & Sciences, 1970), II, pp. 413-18; Klaus P. Jankofsky, ed., *The South English Legendary: A Critical Assessment* (Tübingen: Francke, 1992).

<sup>840</sup> Görlach, *The Textual Tradition of the South English Legendary*, summarises this discussion.

cite the SEL's favouring of St Dominic over St Francis as evidence of Dominican authorship.<sup>841</sup> The intended audience of the SEL is more controversial, although it is generally agreed to have been composed as a sermon manual for the use of parish clergy in the instruction of lay parishioners. Bella Millet, for instance, claims that the assumed cultural level is low, the tone is uncourtly and sometimes anti-clerical and 'the addresses to the audience are undeferential to the point of being patronising, and seem to assume public delivery to a sizeable audience, not chamber performance or solitary reading'.<sup>842</sup> The presentation of the legendary material certainly seems to accord with this view. Klaus Jankofsky suggests that the principles of composition of the *SEL* seem to be 'a simplification of complicated theological-dogmatic problems and hagiographic traditions', 'an explanatory, interpretative expansion of subject matter' and 'a process of concretization', which he suggests make it suitable for instructing a lay audience.<sup>843</sup> He also suggests that the SEL is characterised by the tendency to 'humanise' the saints, and by a 'new tone and mood of compassion and emotional involvement'.<sup>844</sup> Thus the saints are more approachable and attainable, in keeping with their role as exemplary role models for a lay audience.

This is apparent in the depiction of Edmund in the *SEL*. Edmund is referred to throughout as 'þe holie kyng', but the emphasis is upon his representative piety, rather than his actual historical role as ruler:

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<sup>841</sup> Dominican origins are often claimed for the collection; see, for example, William A. Hinnebusch, *The Early English Friars Preachers*, Institutum Historicum Ff. Praedictatorum Romae ad S. Sabine, *Dissertationes Historicae* 14 (Rome: Ad S. Sabine Institutum Historicum Ff. Praedictatorum, 1951) and Warren, F. Manning, 'The Middle English Verse *Life of St Dominic*: Date and Source', *Speculum* 31 (1956), 82-91. In contrast, Annie Samson claims the text was intended for the secular gentry. Annie Samson, 'The South English Legendary: Constructing a Context', in *Thirteenth Century England I*, ed. P.R. Coss and S.D. Lloyd. Proceedings of the Newcastle-upon-Tyne Conference, 1985 (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1985), pp. 185-95; pp. 192-4.

<sup>842</sup> Bella Millet, 'The Audience of the Saints' *Lives* of the Katherine Group' in *Reading Medieval Studies 16: Saints and Saints' Lives: Essays in Honour of D.H. Farmer* (1990), 127-56; 144.

<sup>843</sup> Klaus P. Jankofsky, 'Entertainment, Edification and Popular Education in the *South English Legendary*', *Journal of Popular Culture* 11 (1977), 706-17; 709.

<sup>844</sup> Klaus P. Jankofsky, 'Personalized Didacticism: The Interplay of Narrator and Subject Matter in the *South English Legendary*', *Texas A&I University Studies* 10 (1977), 69-77; 72.

Swyþe fair kny3t and strong he was and hardi and quoynte,  
Meoke and milde and ful of milce and large in eche poynte.

(p. 297, ll. 5-6)

Apart from this brief generic description we learn little about Edmund's character or activities as a king. The Danes' assault on East Anglia is similarly presented in general terms. We are told only that Hynguar and Hubba were 'in lufere þou3te...to bringue enguelond to nouþte' (p. 297, ll. 7-8), with no real explanation provided for the motivation behind their attack, other perhaps than Hynguar's jealousy of Edmund, of whose 'guodnesse' 'he heorde muche telle' (p. 297, l. 17). The SEL omits the exchange between Hynguar and Edmund concerning the fate of the East Anglian kingdom and its people, and Edmund arrives at his martyr's fate without the political wrangling and diplomatic negotiations present in other versions of the legend. This de-politicises and de-historicises the events which follow, in which the Christ-like Edmund is located within the timeless context of on-going Christian history in the company of 'ore louerd' (p. 297, l. 38) and 'seint sebastian' (p. 298, l. 53). He is stoic throughout the tortures inflicted upon him so that 'euere he stod ase him no rou3te' (p. 298, l. 56), calling to God 'wel bliue' (p. 298, l. 56). Although performed in extreme circumstances, Edmund's behaviour is exemplary as he submits patiently to the will of God.

The collection as a whole, however, does evince more overtly political concerns, in particular in its presentation of English saints. Anglo-Saxon saints account for nearly a quarter of the total number of legends in the *SEL*. Jankofsky maintains that the collection was deliberately designed to appeal to an English audience.<sup>845</sup> He claims this was achieved by a process of acculturation, or 'Englishing', whereby essentially Latin sources were adapted and imbued with a distinctive flavour and mood.<sup>846</sup> A key element of this is the inclusion of

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<sup>845</sup> Jankofsky, 'Entertainment, Edification, and Popular Education in the *South English Legendary*', 707.

<sup>846</sup> Klaus P. Jankofsky, 'National Characteristics in the Portrayal of English Saints in the *South English Legendary*', in *Images of Sainthood in Medieval Europe*, ed. Renate

historical-factual information about the English saints which is almost entirely absent from the *Lives* of non-English saints:

Place names and topographical details are mentioned; inheritance laws, death duties, the situation of the poor, the rights of the church versus state with specific instances of conflict, and historical-geographical accounts of the old English kingdoms and bishoprics are given, and even weather conditions are described when appropriate, such as the detailed account of a storm that flooded the south side of High Street in Oxford but not the northern part where St Edmund of Abingdon was preaching in the churchyard of All Saints.<sup>847</sup>

This is particularly apparent in the sixty-five line description of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms of England which begins the legend of St Kenelm:

Fyf kinges þare weren þulke tyme In engelande i-do,  
For Enguelond was guod and long and sum-del brod al-so.  
A-bouten ei3te hondret mile Engeland long is  
Fram þe South into þe North and to hondret brod i-wis  
Fram þe Est into þe West... (p. 235, ll. 9-13)

Renee Hamelinck suggests that details such as these are 'meant to remind the audience of the history of the country – a history they could be proud of.'<sup>848</sup> She characterises the *SEL* as a history of the English Church from the time of St Augustine up to the time of the *SEL*'s composition, and proposes that it demonstrates the Church's decline from Anglo-Saxon prosperity to a weakened position under the Norman kings.<sup>849</sup> In contrast to the nostalgia for the past implicit in Hamelinck's reading, Jankofsky suggests that the national

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Blumenfeld-Kosinski and Timea Szell (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), pp. 81-93, p. 83.

<sup>847</sup> Jankofsky, 'National Characteristics', p. 84.

<sup>848</sup> Renee Hamelinck, 'St Kenelm and the Legends of the English Saints in the *South English Legendary*', in *Companion to Early Middle English Literature*, ed. N.H.G.E. Veldhoen and H. Aertsen (Amsterdam: Free UP, 1988), pp. 21-30, p.27.

<sup>849</sup> Hamelinck, 'St Kenelm and the Legends of the English Saints', p. 21.

characteristics of the *SEL* are just as much about the present as the past. He cites numerous examples of adverbial phrases such as 'still' or 'yet' which indicate a continuity of tradition between past and present.<sup>850</sup> This is visible in the *life* of Edmund, where the author concludes by informing his audience that Edmund's miraculously preserved body is 'al hol and sound' and enshrined 'as ri3t was to do' in the town now called 'saint Edmundesbury' in his honour, and that 'a swyþe fair pilegrimage it is, þudere forto fare,/ for-to honouri þat holie bodi, þat þare hath i-leie so 3are' (p. 290, ll. ).

Jill Frederick cites numerous other techniques which contribute to the national tone of the collection and concludes that in relation to its depiction of English saints, the *SEL* is 'purely politically centred'.<sup>851</sup> The precise nuances of the *SEL*'s political concerns are undoubtedly various, and it is beyond the scope of this study to investigate them all. However, analysis of the broader textual circumstances of the *SEL* indicates that in this context Edmund should be understood in his role as an English, specifically Anglo-Saxon, saint.

### *Speculum Sacerdotale*

The *Speculum Sacerdotale* is a fifteenth-century collection of Sanctorale and Temporale sermons, of the same type as the *Festial* of John Mirk.<sup>852</sup> It survives in a unique early fifteenth-century manuscript (BL Additional MS 36791).<sup>853</sup> The identity of the author is unknown, but the dialect of the manuscript is standard English of the early fourteenth century, with some West Midland

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<sup>850</sup> Jankofsky, 'National Characteristics', p. 86.

<sup>851</sup> Jill Frederick, 'The *South English Legendary*: Anglo-Saxon Saints and National Identity', in *Literary Appropriations of the Anglo-Saxons from the Thirteenth to the Twentieth Century*, ed. Donald Scragg and Carole Weinberg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 57-73, p. 67. See also Diane Speed, 'The Construction of the Nation in Medieval English Romance', in *Readings in Medieval English Romance*, ed. Carol M. Meade (Cambridge: Brewer, 1994), pp. 135-57.

<sup>852</sup> John Mirk, *Festial: A Collection of Homilies*, ed. Theodor Erbe, Early English Text Society es 96 (London: Kegan Paul, 1905).

<sup>853</sup> *Speculum Sacerdotale*, ed. Edward H. Weatherly, Early English Text Society os 200 (London: Published for the Early English Text Society by Oxford University Press, 1936, rpt. 1971). All references will be in accordance with this edition and will be given parenthetically in the text.

characteristics.<sup>854</sup> It is likely that the author was a priest as he claims to be writing ‘for serteyne prestes which ben dere and famyliare vn-to me before alle other’ who have asked him to provide them with a vernacular collection to read out to their parishoners.<sup>855</sup> Several scholars have suggested that, like John Mirk, they were friars or canons who had responsibility for the pastoral care and instruction of the laity and thus needed comprehensive vernacular collections upon which to draw.<sup>856</sup> The narratives in the *SS* are arranged chronologically and are of four general types: legends of the Blessed Virgin Mary, *lives* and legends of other saints, exempla, and Biblical stories. Most of its chapters include narratives and expositions of church ritual and observance. Peter Heath maintains that in terms of the presentation of its subject matter, the *SS* is less naïve and sensational than Mirk’s *Festial* and presents doctrine and practice in a more balanced way, suggesting that it is a good indication of the quality and nature of the average parish homily in late medieval England.<sup>857</sup> The sources for the *SS* are in almost all instances either the *Legenda Aurea* of Jacobo de Voragine and Johannes Belethus’ *Rationale Divinorum Officiorum*.<sup>858</sup> Weatherly erroneously identifies the source of Edmund’s *life* as the *Legenda Aurea*, in which it does not in fact appear; it appears instead that the author relied upon the standard version of Edmund’s *vita* based upon Abbo.

Given the similarities in form, and arguably the function, to the *SEL* it is unsurprising that the version of Edmund’s legend found in the *SS* is very similar. Edmund’s generic kingly virtues are once again praised: he is ‘symple as the dowue, wyse as the serpent, and benigne to his subiects, discrete with the forward, meteable to the nedy, liberall to wydowes and children’ (p. 239, ll. 25-27). The *SS*, however, provides a fuller indication of the reasoning behind the Danes’ invasion, suggesting that they were ‘purposyng to gete vnder here 3okke this kingdom and to destroye Chistiante’ (p. 239, ll. 32-33). This is

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<sup>854</sup> See *Speculum*, ed. Weatherly, xvii-xxi for a detailed exposition of the various linguistic forms of the manuscript.

<sup>855</sup> *Speculum*, ed. Weatherly, pp 2-3.

<sup>856</sup> For example, Görlach, *Textual Tradition*, pp. 45-50.

<sup>857</sup> Peter Heath, *The English Parish Clergy on the Eve of the Reformation* (London: Routledge, 1969), p. 101.

<sup>858</sup> Weatherly details the sources by chapter in a table *Speculum*, pp. xxvii-xxix.

reiterated by Edmund's response to the Danes' attempts to agree terms for the surrender of East Anglia, where the use of direct speech adds to the power and emotive force of the sentiment:

'Let hym take and destroye oure tresoures and riches and sle þe seruauntes and after the kyng, and let the kyng of kyngis se it and rewarde it in his kingdom. But he shal wel knowe that I, Edmund, the Cristen man, shal neuer submitte me to hym þat is a pagane vnto the tyme that he be i-made Cristen.' (p. 240, ll. 2-7)

Unlike the *SEL*, the *SS* explicitly terms Edmund a 'marter' (p. 239, l. 24) and it is possible that this has significance beyond the level of nomenclature, tying in with his place in the collection as a whole. In contrast to the *SEL*, the *SS* contains the *Lives* of only two English saints: Edmund and Thomas Becket. This does not necessarily mean that Edmund is not to be understood in his role as a national saint as the compiler of the *SS* may have considered Edmund and Becket as the two most noteworthy examples of indigenous sanctity. It does, however, clearly highlight his status within the saintly hierarchy of late medieval England. This is similarly the case in the Norwich Cathedral cloister bosses discussed above in which Becket and Edmund are afforded more bosses than the other saints.<sup>859</sup> It also suggests that the compiler is attempting to produce a collection which reflects a broader Christian history than that of one nation. In this context it is appropriate that Edmund's death in defence of his faith is emphasised as, much like the *SEL*'s comparison of him with St Sebastian, it locates him within the long line of Christian martyrs and as a participant in universal Christian history. Again, this is the context in which Edmund is found in the east walk of the Cathedral cloisters.<sup>860</sup>

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<sup>859</sup> See above, pp. 287-92 and Figs. 120-2.

<sup>860</sup> See above, pp. 287-92 and Figs. 120-2.

### *Gilte Legende*

The *Gilte Legende* (*GiL*) is a translation of Jean de Vignay's *Légende Dorée* of about 1333-40, which is in turn a translation of the *Legenda Aurea*.<sup>861</sup> The author of the *GiL* refers to himself as a 'synfulle wrecche' but cannot be definitely identified.<sup>862</sup> The language of most of the manuscripts is fairly typical of a London dialect of the mid-fifteenth century.

The *Gilte Legende* is referred to as such in the colophon to Bodleian MS Douce 372, which also affirms that it was 'drawen out of Frensshe into Englysshe' in 1438. It survives in varying degrees of completeness in eight manuscripts, three of which (BL MS Add. 11565, BL MS Add. 35298 and Lambeth Palace Library MS 72) contain additional saints' *lives*, and it is amongst these that Edmund is to be found.<sup>863</sup> Most of the additional *lives* are of English saints and are de-versed versions of the *lives* in the *SEL*. It is therefore unsurprising that the additions to the *GiL* evinces a similar interest in placing the legends within a detailed physical and historical context. It likewise emphasises that Edmund was king 'of a partye of Ynglond that is callid Northfolke and Suffolke' (p. 149, ll. 1-2) and concludes by describing the many miracles which 'nowe' 'shewith daylye' at the shrine of St Edmund at Bury (p.150, ll. 47-8). Why a later compiler should choose to append a selection of English saints to the *GiL* is unclear, but it is again indicative of the importance placed upon Edmund's indigenous sanctity.

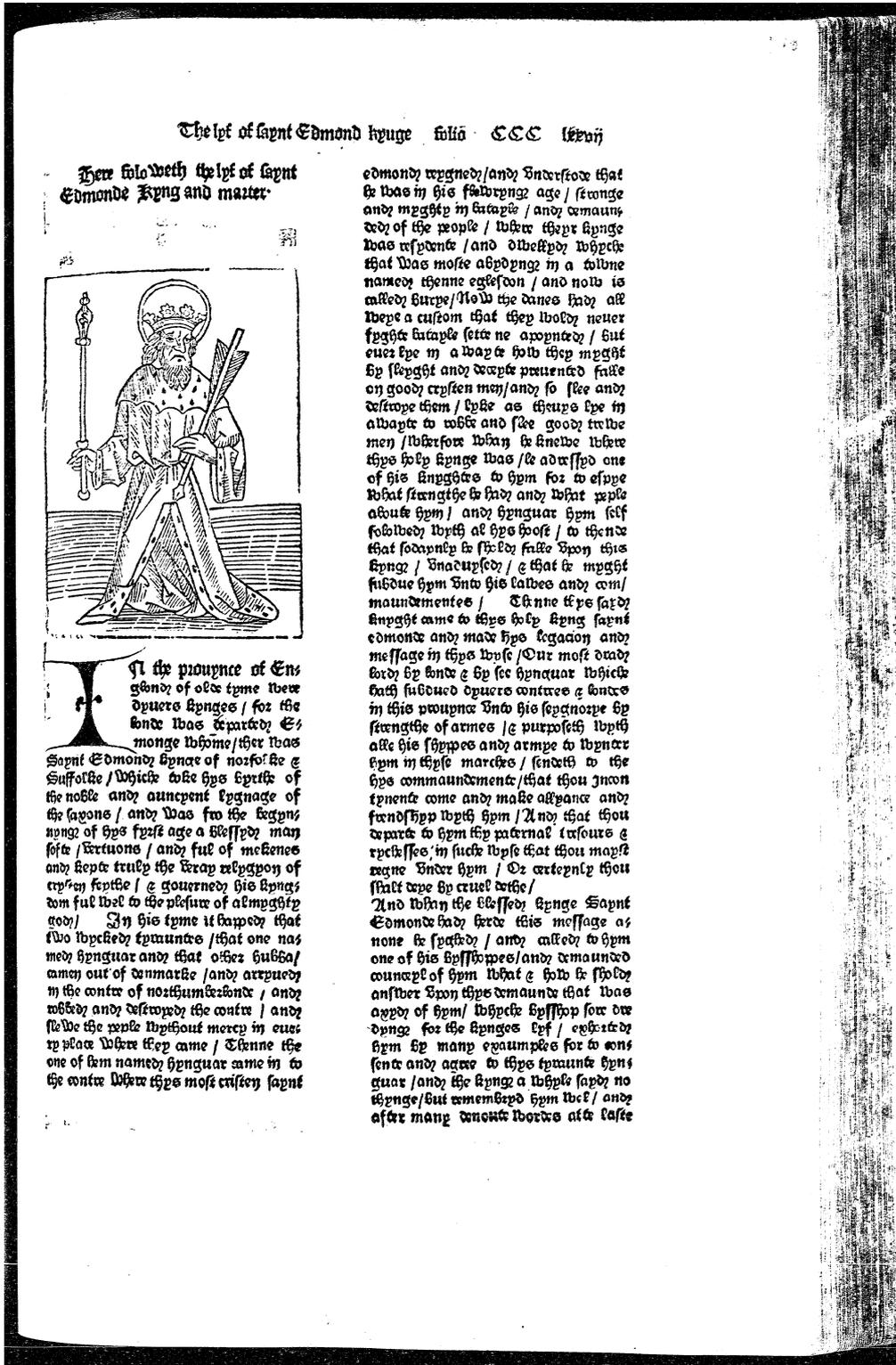
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<sup>861</sup> *Supplementary Lives in Some Manuscripts of the Gilte Legende*, ed. Richard Hamer and Vida Russell, Early English Text Society os 315 (Oxford: Published for the Early English Text Society by the Oxford University Press, 2000). All references will be in accordance with this edition and will be given parenthetically in the text.

<sup>862</sup> See *Supplementary Lives*, ed. Hamer and Russell, xx-xxi for discussion of the possible authorship.

<sup>863</sup> See *Supplementary Lives*, ed Hamer and Russell, xxi-xxvi for discussion of the additional *lives* manuscripts. For the *Gilte Legende* see *Gilte Legende*, 3 vols., ed. Richard Hamer and Vida Russell, Early English Text Society os 237 (Oxford : Published for the Early English Text Society by the Oxford University Press, 2006).

Fig. 163 St Edmund from William Caxton's *Golden Legend*



### Caxton's *Golden Legend*

Caxton's *Golden Legend* was based on three versions of the *Legenda Aurea*: the original Latin, de Vignay's French, and the English *Gilte Legende*.<sup>864</sup> He combined and adapted these, and made additions from other sources:

Against me here might some persons say that this legend hath been translated tofore, and truth it is; but forasmuch as I had by me a legend in French, another in Latin, and the third in English, which varied in many and divers places; and also many histories were comprised in the two other books which were not in the English book; therefore I have written one out of the said three books.<sup>865</sup>

In reworking the text, Caxton omitted some of the saints found in Voragine's original, but also added legends, many of English and Irish saints. The legends are arranged according to the liturgical year and each is illustrated with a woodcut which, as well as making the book visually appealing, also had the practical benefit of helping readers navigate through a large and unwieldy text (Fig. 163).

Although printed, the book was hand-finished, with initial letters being supplied in manuscript throughout the text, a common practice in early printed books. The colophon at the end of the work states that the book was finished on 20 November 1483, the first year of the reign of King Richard III. In the Preface Caxton claims that he was encouraged to pursue the project by William FitzAlan, the ninth Earl of Arundel, who promised to take a reasonable quantity of copies when completed, and to pay him an annuity of a buck in summer and a doe in winter as recompense for the effort.<sup>866</sup> Whilst this does not amount to a commission, it does indicate that the *Golden Legend* appealed, presumably by

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<sup>864</sup> William Caxton, trans., *The Golden Legend or Lives of the Saints*, edited by Frank S. Ellis (London: Temple Classics, 1900). All references will be in accordance with this edition and will be given parenthetically in the text.

<sup>865</sup> Caxton, *Golden Legende*, Prologue, p. 2

<sup>866</sup> Caxton, *Golden Legende*, Prologue, p. 3

design, to a lay audience who would utilise it in a private context. Thus whilst the version of Edmund's *life* found in Caxton's Golden Legend is based entirely upon pre-existing sources and therefore contributes very little to our understanding of how the saint was perceived in terms of the details of his *life* and death, once again, the context in which his legend was read is informative and indicates his wide appeal.

### *Kalendre of the Neue Legende of Englande*

Görlach attributes the *Kalendre of the Neue Legende of Englande* to a similar audience to that imagined by Caxton, suggesting that 'it is tempting to connect the factual style of this 'encyclopaedia' with a bourgeois readership eager for information but incapable of getting it from Latin texts'.<sup>867</sup> It is certainly the case that the *Kalendre* offers a similarly expanded version of Edmund's legend to that found in the *Golden Legend*.

The *Kalendre* was printed by Richard Pynson in 1516 and is the work of an anonymous compiler and translator. It is a précis of the legends of one hundred and sixty eight British saints and is the most comprehensive collection of its kind in English. Pre-dating the Reformation by only two decades, it was also the last collection of its kind produced in England. At least eleven copies are extant, and although it is unknown how many copies were originally printed, the possibility that there was a second edition suggests it may have been popular.

The *Kalendre* does not contain original material: it is based on the *Nova Legenda Anglie* printed by Winken de Worde in the same year, which in turn was a revision of John of Tynemouth's late fourteenth-century national legendary, *Sanctilogium Angliae, Walliae, Scotiae et Hiberniae*, which underwent an intermediary revision in the fifteenth century, possibly by John Capgrave.<sup>868</sup>

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<sup>867</sup> *The Kalendre of the Neue Legende of Englande*, ed. Manfred Görlach, Middle English Texts 27, (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag C. Winter, 1994). All references will be in accordance with this edition and will be given parenthetically in the text. For the audience of the text see *Kalendre*, ed. Görlach, p. 7.

<sup>868</sup> For a detailed discussion of the history of the collection see *Kalendre*, ed. Görlach, pp. 7-12.

In addition, it also appears that the compiler of the *Kalendre* used some additional materials, possibly the *Gilte Legende* and Caxton's *Golden Legend*, and Görlach notes that this intertextual indebtedness is particularly apparent in the *Kalendre* version of St Edmund's *life*.<sup>869</sup>

The influence of John of Tyneside, from whose *Sanctilogium* the *Kalendre* ultimately derives, may be seen in the preponderance of saints connected with Tyneside.<sup>870</sup> Overall, however, as its title suggests, the *Kalendre* is concerned with English saints in general, particularly those from the Anglo-Saxon period. This is emphasised by the small number of references to Biblical or other prominent 'international' saints. Görlach suggests that this is less surprising if the *Kalendre*, and other works like it, are understood as being intended to complement the international *Legenda Aurea*.<sup>871</sup> Local and national pride may have played a part in this as in addition to the comprehensiveness of the collection the resting-places of the saints are carefully mentioned, forming a sacred atlas of national sanctity akin to the Anglo-Saxon lists of resting places of the saints.<sup>872</sup> Thus once again Edmund should be understood within the context of his national identity as an English saint, with particular emphasis placed upon his pre-conquest origins.

It is also noteworthy that in contrast to the other legendary collections, which include a basic *passio* account of Edmund's demise, the *Kalendre* version considers the whole *life* of the saint, not just the martyrdom. The *life* begins by informing the reader that Edmund was 'borne in Saxony and was sone to the Kynge Alcmunde, whiche was kynne to Offa, Kynge of Eest Englonde' (p. 83, ll. 1-2), and goes on to relate the circumstances in which Edmund became king of the East Angles and the benign nature of his rule (p. 83, ll. 2-13). Although this aspect of Edmund's legend had been developed by Geoffrey of Wells in the thirteenth century, and the details were therefore not new, it is the first time

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<sup>869</sup> *Kalendre*, ed. Görlach, p. 15.

<sup>870</sup> *Kalendre*, ed. Görlach, p. 29, summarises the contents of the text in a table.

<sup>871</sup> *Kalendre*, ed. Görlach, p. 31.

<sup>872</sup> *Kalendre*, ed. Görlach, pp. 36-9. For the Anglo-Saxon tradition see David Rollason, 'Lists of Saints' Resting-places in Anglo-Saxon England', *Anglo-Saxon England* 7 (1978), 61-93.

that they are included in a legendary collection text.<sup>873</sup> Nearly a third of the narrative is devoted to Edmund's early *life*. Norman Blake believes that this is a deliberate literary strategy which may be accounted for by the context in which the work was produced, suggesting that 'as the possibilities for martyrdom diminished, so the model lives of these saints increased in importance'.<sup>874</sup> Thus the legend 'is little more than a compendium of vignettes or *exempla* illustrating the workings of various virtues', rather than emphasising suffering.<sup>875</sup> This is more akin to the images of Edmund in glory than the majority of textual precursors. It therefore seems that once again Edmund's saintly identity was considered versatile enough to remain relevant in shifting circumstances.

### Conclusion

Whilst ostensibly similar, these collections nevertheless shed light on the supra-regional textual cult of St Edmund in a number of ways. In their arrangement all follow the basic structure of the *Legenda Aurea*. Part of the popularity of this structure, apart from ease of reference, lies in its adaptability, as authors or scribes could add or omit narratives according to personal or local preferences, or to suit the specific devotional interests or pastoral needs of a projected audience. This was not primarily achieved in the details of the individual narratives as the nature of the collections meant that these were by necessity relatively brief, although certain features of a saint's character could be given prominence. Primarily, however, the authors and compilers were able to achieve a particular emphasis by the selection and organisation of their material.

Both the *South English Legendary* and the *Speculum Sacerdotale* appear to have originated as sermon manuals for use by clerics in the public instruction of lay parishoners. The Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 had decreed that priests were to preach in the vernacular once a week in order to improve the knowledge of the laity, and the author of the *SS* maintains that his aim is to provide an

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<sup>873</sup> For Geoffrey of Wells see above, Chapter One, pp. 121-6.

<sup>874</sup> Norman F. Blake, *Middle English Religious Prose* (London: Arnold, 1972), p. 14.

<sup>875</sup> Blake, *Middle English Religious Prose*, p. 20.

alternative to sermons in 'Latyne or Romaine tonge' that many people will not be able to understand (p. 3).<sup>876</sup> Legendary collections were a practical solution to meeting this requirement and by the later Middle Ages priests could choose from a variety of texts. In addition to the *South English Legendary* and the *Speculum Sacerdotale*, the *Northern Homily Cycle* and John Mirk's *Festial* were also enjoyed wide circulation. Sermons were most commonly preached on Sundays during the course of the morning Mass (the other two services for the laity on Sundays were Matins and Vespers or Evensong). H. Leith Spencer notes that sermons on the saints were a frequent alternative to preaching the Sunday lesson.<sup>877</sup> The prologue to the *SS* offers guidance as to when a saint's *life* should be delivered to the congregation:

Among all other holy customs of holy church the whiche oweth to be worshipid with a souerayn deuocion, this semeth right commendable and to be kepud with a good diligence and desire. That is to say that in alle the chirches of the worlde, the prested of hyem which are sette to the gouernaunce of the parishenus aftur the redyng of the gospel and of the offeratorie at masse yurne hem vnto the peple and schewe openliche vnto hem alle the solempnitees and festes whiche shall falle and be hadde in the weke folowyng.<sup>878</sup>

Whilst it is probable that a saint's *life* would be read on his or feast day, it is also possible that they could be heard at other times, including the preceding Sunday when forthcoming feasts were announced.

Of greater significance in terms of how a saint such as Edmund would be presented in one of these collections is the explanation provided by the author of the *SS* as to why it was necessary to hear the sermons on the saints. He stresses that the saints should 'be scewid vn-to youre peple that God may be

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<sup>876</sup> See Leonard E. Boyle, 'The Fourth Lateran Council and manuals of popular theology', in *The Popular Literature of Medieval England*, ed. Thomas J. Heffernan (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1985), pp. 30-43.

<sup>877</sup> H. Leith Spencer, *English Preaching in the Late Middle Ages* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), p. 31.

<sup>878</sup> *Speculum*, ed. Weatherly, pp. 2-3.

glorified in youre chirches' but also identifies their role as models of exemplary conduct:

The olde fadres a-fore tymes made fro bigynnyng the festyuites of holy apostles and martires whiche were before hem to be louyd and halowed as i-seen, and specially in entent that we, the herers of here blessid commemoracions whiche ben in tymes of here festes redde and songen, my3te þrou3 here prayers and medes be in here euerlastyng fellaschip and holpen here in erþe.<sup>879</sup>

Thus in this context Edmund is primarily valued for the *exemplar* of holy living (and dying) which he offered to a congregation, hence their tendency to focus upon these generic aspects of his sanctity in favour of his royalty or his historical presence. This was similarly appropriate in the context of private devotion, for which the *GiL*, the *GoL* and the *Kalendre* are likely to have been produced.

The importance of context in determining the representation of St Edmund has consistently been demonstrated throughout this thesis and it is equally apparent in the legendary collections. In addition to their expository role, the inclusion of large numbers of insular saints in the *SEL*, the additional *lives* of the *GiL*, and the *Kalendre* attest to a desire on the part of their authors or compilers to emphasise the saintly heritage of Britain. Diane Speed suggests that the *SEL* is an important sign of an emerging institution of an English national literature, equating it with the production of verse romances in English which began around the same time.<sup>880</sup> In this context it is clear that Edmund's status as a national saint is particularly significant. To some extent this is emphasised by the *SS*, which includes only two English saints, Thomas Becket and Edmund, as the compiler may have considered Edmund and Becket as the two most noteworthy examples of indigenous sanctity. It also serves to highlight Edmund's exceptionally high status within the hierarchy of English saints.

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<sup>879</sup> *Speculum*, ed. Weatherly, p. 1.

<sup>880</sup> Speed, 'The Construction of the Nation in Medieval English Romance', pp. 135-57.

The legendary collections span a period of over two hundred and thirty years, during which time the hagiographic tradition underwent significant developments and expansions. In contrast, Edmund's narrative in the legendary collections remains largely static. The authors of these collections were satisfied by the exemplary model offered by the basic details of Edmund's legend, whereas the hagiographic authors continually sought to contribute new details. This is undoubtedly due in part to their close associations with the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds, where successive abbots sought to capitalise on Edmund's reputation as a wonder-working saint of great power in order to attract pilgrims and protect the interests of their monastic community. In this context updating the legend was a means of demonstrating Edmund's ongoing relevance. The hagiographers' proximity to the source and subject of these stories is also likely to have contributed a degree of authenticity which would be lacking in a work produced elsewhere.

In comparison with the Bury-based hagiographic tradition, Edmund's depiction in the legendary collections neither contributes new material nor contradicts the longer *vitae*. It does, however, indicate that a number of features of the hagiographic tradition are distinct, in particular its emphasis upon Edmund's kingship and his regional identity, two aspects which, as discussed above, are closely linked. This suggests that the regional cult in its textual manifestation is subtly, but significantly, different to how Edmund was imagined on a national scale.

# Conclusion – ‘Martir, mayde and kyng’, and more

‘Blyssyd Edmund, kyng, martir and vyrgyne,  
Hadde in thre vertues by grace a souereyn prys,  
Be which he venquysshed al venymes serpentine.’<sup>881</sup>

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This thesis has demonstrated that the tripartite epithet repeatedly cited by Lydgate throughout the *Lives* does an injustice to the nature and complexity of the medieval cult of St Edmund. He was indeed a royal virgin martyr but implicit in these terms are a multitude of subtle nuances and inflections that indicate the vitality of Edmund’s cult over nearly six and a half centuries.

My stated intention was to explore how, why and when the cult developed. What has become strikingly apparent is that it is not possible to separate these three lines of enquiry. As a constructed saint (to borrow Delooz’s term), everything we know about ‘saint’ Edmund is mediated through the individuals and communities who wrote about him, painted him, sculpted images of him, processed in his name and prayed at his tomb. In studying the cult of a medieval saint we are in fact studying the societies in which the holy man or woman was venerated. The plural is important as in addition to acknowledging the social setting of cultic development we must also pay attention to the range of origins and agendas of those involved. Considering the cult from a variety of perspectives has thus facilitated a greater understanding of the ways in which Edmund’s saintly identity developed in response to particular circumstances.

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<sup>881</sup> Lydgate, *Lives*, Prologue, 1-3.

### Audience and reception

The first chapter considered the evolution of the legend of St Edmund in its textual and manuscript context. Reading these lives in relation to hagiographic patterns identified in other cults by scholars such as Winstead indicates that whilst Edmund's *vita* developed in line with some devotional trends, in many ways it was distinctive. The influence of the monastic community at Bury was overwhelmingly apparent as the majority of versions of the legend were composed at or for the abbey. Rare and precious manuscripts were largely the preserve of ecclesiastics and the secular elite who were therefore the most likely to encounter Edmund in this context. High status lay interaction is evident, whether through the presentation of manuscripts such as the Harley 2278 copy of Lydgate's *Lives* presented to Henry VI, listening to a vernacular version adapted for their benefit by Henry of Avranches, or being allowed to view the sumptuous illustrations of Pierpoint Morgan 736. Nevertheless, the textual and manuscript tradition should not be characterised as entirely exclusive or Bury-based. The widespread dissemination of the cult in other contexts indicates that Edmund's *life* and legend was known beyond the abbey gates. The abridged versions of Abbo's *Passio* which were distributed as far as Saint-Denis and Lucca ensured that the details of Edmund's *vita* were circulated within ecclesiastical circles. Similarly, the numerous accounts in sermon manuals and hagiographic compendia facilitated lay access across a broader social spectrum. The absorption rather than dissemination of information is fleetingly visible, tantalisingly alluded to by Geoffrey of Wells' references to the integration of popular traditions into the official cult, suggesting that the tendency to embellish the legend may not always have originated within the abbey.

Edmund's shrine in the abbey church offered a cultic experience available to all who were willing or able to make the journey to Bury. The audience of the cult in this context and the manner in which Edmund was encountered was thus markedly different from the majority of the textual and manuscript tradition, and the presentation of Edmund's saintly identity differed accordingly. Distinguishing between aspects of the Bury-based cult in terms of audience was

particularly enlightening as it highlighted that whilst the monastic community was responsible both for the creation of Edmund's saintly identity in the textual cult and in orchestrating the experience of pilgrims to the shrine, the version of Edmund's saintly identity differed in each case as a result of the audience for which it was intended.

Audience in the final chapter was conceived of in terms of proximity to the cult centre. The aim of this chapter was to explore the extent to which manifestations of the cult differed at a remove from the monastic community. Analysis of miracles occurring in the absence of relics of St Edmund revealed hitherto unremarked contrasts with the nature of Edmund's intercessions in the vicinity of his shrine. Once again, this may be accounted for by the varying requirements of his devotees. Thus at Bury Edmund is the powerful and punitive saintly landlord, protecting the rights and interests of his shrine, the abbey and its monastic community. Elsewhere, however, his intercessions reflect the more mundane needs of the communities in which they took place and Edmund becomes the munificent guardian of injured children, the sick and sailors in peril.

#### People, places and moments

Certain individuals had a fundamental influence on the development of the cult, although the manner of their involvement and their motivations differed greatly. Arguably the most significant is Abbo of Fleury. One wonders how, and indeed if, the legend would have developed without his input. As a respected hagiographer his version of the legend garnered approval and credibility which might not have been afforded to the work of a less prestigious author. His *Passio* inaugurated the hagiographic tradition and also set the tone for subsequent versions. His influence is evident in the repeated deferrals of later authors to his established authority. The time in which Abbo wrote affected the way in which he depicted St Edmund. As a proponent of monastic reform he emphasised Edmund's virginity in keeping with increasing strictures on clerical celibacy. This aspect of Edmund's sanctity which had such a profound and

long-lasting influence on how he was perceived thus originated in response to a particular historical moment.

Similarly, whilst the motivations behind Abbo's composition remain the subject of debate, whether commissioned by the monastic community at Bury or a local secular magnate, the genesis of the St Edmund legend speaks to the desire of East Anglians, most readily evident in Abbo's lengthy praise of the local landscape, to promote the merits of their region and its saintly heritage.

Arguably the greatest flourishing of cultic activity took place in the late-eleventh and early-twelfth centuries. In the latter part of the eleventh century the monastic community and its saintly patron faced turbulent times, first from attempted encroachment by the bishop of East Anglia and then as a result of the confusion and uncertainty resulting from the Norman Conquest. In these contexts Edmund became the defender and protector of his abbey and its privileges, blinding the ambitious bishop and fending off incursions from Normans keen to acquire Bury lands. This element of Edmund's saintly identity remained one of Edmund's defining characteristics, reflected in the way in which the Pierpoint Morgan miniaturist emphasises Edmund's punitive activities. Images of Edmund's wrathful intercessions were also offered to pilgrims to the abbey church, but in the context of the glory of Edmund's shrine were intended to impress and reassure rather than intimidate pilgrims who showed correct devotion, once again demonstrating the importance of context.

Hermann the Archdeacon played a key role in this stage of Edmund's development. His connections with both the Episcopal and abbatial camps allowed him a unique insight and enabled him to effectively locate St Edmund within the dispute. The political connections of Abbot Baldwin should also be emphasised as these helped ensure the survival of the abbey and the perpetuation of Edmund's cult, including its dissemination on the Continent. His influence on the physical setting of the cult was also profound, as the abbey church he caused to be rebuilt survived for much of the Middle Ages.

Abbot Samson was similarly influential and equally determined in his promotion of St Edmund. He also undertook extensive refurbishment of the abbey church, most notably restoring the shrine after the disastrous fire in 1198. He also oversaw the reinvigoration of the textual and manuscript cult, rewriting Hermann's *De Miraculis* in order to emphasise Edmund's ability to assist as well as punish. Given that Edmund's more benign attributes most commonly feature in miracles occurring at a remove from Bury, this seems to be an attempt to appeal to pilgrims and promote St Edmund to the masses.

At the latter end of the Middle Ages a unique combination of people and historical circumstances led to a remarkable period of cultic development. In the context of the troubled reign of Henry VI, the shrewd Abbot William Curteys sought to shape the turbulent political circumstances for the benefit of his abbey. His means of achieving these aims was John Lydgate, whose links with both the abbey and the court made him the ideal conduit through which royal favour could be sought. Lydgate's *Lives* is a testament both to the complex inter-relationships between patron, author, text and audience and to the nature of Edmund's saintly identity which was flexible enough to be re-shaped to offer an exemplum of secular kingship.

In addition to notable individuals and historical moments, a few of which are outlined above, the influence of less readily definable groups and communities are apparent. The churchwardens' accounts at Snettisham, for example, indicate that this parish community undertook a procession to St Edmund's chapel at Hunstanton every year for over a century, but due to the nature of the records the exact composition of this group, their motivations and what they thought about St Edmund can only be surmised. One of the most noteworthy findings of the third chapter was the difficulty of determining the involvement of Bury in cultic activity which took place at a remove from the shrine. As a major landholder in the region, the abbey's influence extended beyond the *banleuca* and the Liberty to their many estates and manors elsewhere in Norfolk and Suffolk which in many cases was likely to have accounted for the presence of St Edmund in, for example, imagery within the parish church. Connections

between the abbey and other wealthy patrons could have a similar effect, such as at Wainfleet in Lincolnshire where the flourishing micro-cult of St Edmund was most likely promoted by the abbey's presence through its landholdings in the area but also perhaps through the personal devotion of Henry Lacey, earl of Lincoln, a local magnate and generous benefactor of the abbey church.

### Methodological insights

Adopting a longer term view of the cult allows the development of Edmund's saintly identity to be fully appreciated. Similarly, limiting the range of enquiry to medieval Norfolk and Suffolk allows devotion to St Edmund in his spiritual heartland to be considered in hitherto unattempted depth. Edmund's status as royal favourite has inevitably led to the focus of scholarly attention upon his presence on high status artefacts such as the Wilton Diptych or the personal devotions of kings such as Henry III. However, relocating the cult within the region in which it originated reveals elements of Edmund's saintly identity which are little in evidence elsewhere. This is particularly the case regarding Edmund's role as regional patron. In a broader context his kingship is used as a means to integrate him into national history. In the legendary collections, for example, Edmund appears as one of many indigenous, English kings which speak to a growing sense of national identity at the time the texts were composed. However, in the regional cult Edmund also manifests features which allude to his East Anglian origins. The prevalence of imagery of the wolf and head is a good example of this as the longevity of the motif indicates its ongoing significance in the mythic narrative of East Anglia and aligns Edmund with alternative traditions. This distinctive and significant feature of the cult may only be fully appreciated in a regional context.

In large part this thesis is a methodological exercise to test the proposition that approaching saints' cults from an interdisciplinary perspective is more rewarding than adhering to traditional disciplinary boundaries. The benefits of this approach are apparent throughout. In the first chapter, literary, art historical and statistical analysis were brought to bear on texts and images too

often considered in isolation from each other to reveal in detail the way in which the legend of St Edmund evolved over five centuries in response to particular circumstances.

The methodological challenges of reconstructing the experience of a pilgrim at the shrine of St Edmund at Bury are considerable, as in contrast to the wealth of printed legends the material relating to the architectural and art historical cult at Bury are disparate and sparse. Above all, therefore, this chapter demonstrates the necessity of approaching saints' cults from an interdisciplinary perspective and the resulting benefits. The prevalence of imagery relating to the death of Sweyn is a prime example of this. Discussed by previous scholars in its textual and manuscript setting as a noteworthy example of the manifestation of Edmund's saintly abilities, the extent of its significance has hitherto gone unnoticed but is duly revealed by compiling sources relating to the abbey church. Similarly, combining seemingly disparate sources in the third chapter around a unifying interpretive approach elucidates the processes by which the cult was disseminated by the monastic community at Bury and appropriated by author individuals and communities to suit their varying purposes.

Comparing Edmund with other native saints such as St Æthelthryth has elucidated the ways in which his cult accorded with devotional trends, as well as highlighting aspects of devotion particular to him. Although beyond the scope of this project, additional comparisons with other saints would refine this understanding further.

#### Edmund's saintly identity

This study has revealed the complex nature of Edmund's saintly identity. His martyrdom guaranteed his inclusion in the ranks of the holy and his integration into the long history of Christian sanctity. His virginity alluded to his purity and elevated spiritual status and, by association, the inviolability of the community which housed it.. It appealed to ecclesiastical reformers as an

image of the clerical ideal and in the context of Edmund's kingship allowed him to be presented as a model of royal chastity which other monarchs could emulate. The alleged preservation and intactness of Edmund's corpse as a result of his virginity also allowed the monastic community to lay exclusive claim to his primary relics, securing their monopoly over the cult.

Edmund embodied the institution of the monarchy and appealed to history and indigenous Englishness, providing a sense of continuity and a legitimising link between both the Anglo-Saxon and post-Conquest kingdoms and later royal dynasties. He also offered a precedent in light of which contemporary events could be understood and recast. As an erstwhile king of Norfolk and Suffolk Edmund continued to be cast in the role of defender of his people, especially the monastic community which guarded his remains. Other saints offered similar benefits, but Edmund's regional identity made him particularly appealing in an East Anglian context. He was a symbol of the region, its past autonomy and origins, and as its former ruler was ideally placed to offer the protection which in life he had been unable to provide. Above all, multifarious personas allowed Edmund to appeal to numerous sensibilities in varying contexts.

### Challenging assumptions

In addition to developing an alternative methodology, this thesis has also helped to challenge some of the assumptions made concerning the medieval cult of saints, such as Ridyard's assertion that the cult of St Edmund was entirely political or Cubitt's contrasting claims which overstate the influence of popular culture.<sup>882</sup> Instead, both of these are present in the development of the cult. Nor as, Guerevich claims, should it be assumed that 'low' culture always existed in antagonism to 'high' culture.<sup>883</sup> John Arnold offers a far more convincing conceptualisation of medieval religious culture. He rejects a simplistic idea of 'popular' piety and the 'religion of the laity' as divergent from, and in opposition to, a stable orthodoxy represented by the established Church. Instead he suggests a model of authority inspired by Michel Foucault in which

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<sup>882</sup> Ridyard, *Royal Saints*, p. 216; Cubitt, *Sites and Sanctity*, 53-83.

<sup>883</sup> Guerevich, *Medieval Popular Culture*, esp. pp. 41-3.

he sees power 'not as a straight line, one thing pushing at another, but as a field of relationships: a web of interactions and tensions that *pull* as much as push us into particular social, cultural and political hierarchies'.<sup>884</sup> The idea of interaction is particularly relevant in relation to the construction of Edmund's identity, which developed over time as a result of ongoing renegotiations between individuals and communities from across the social spectrum. He was indeed 'martir, mayde and kynge', but this could mean many things to many people. Far from being problematic, I believe that Edmund's historical indeterminacy, which has so troubled historians, was in fact his greatest asset, enabling successive generations of devotees to redefine Edmund to suit their own proclivities and requirements and ensuring his enduring appeal.

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<sup>884</sup> John H. Arnold, *Belief and Unbelief in Medieval Europe* (London: Hodder Arnold, 2005), pp. 7-14; p. 14.

# Appendices

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## Appendix 1 Chronology of significant events and texts associated with the cult of St Edmund

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c. 840?	Edmund born 'of Old Saxon stock'
c. 855?	Edmund crowned King of East Anglia at Bures (Suffolk)
865	The Great Heathen army invades. Edmund barter horses with the Vikings and they march north to Yorkshire
869	The Vikings return to East Anglia. Edmund is captured and killed
878	Alfred defeats the Vikings at the Battle of Ethandun
c. 890	The first account of Edmund's death recorded in the <i>Anglo-Saxon Chronicle</i> (Parker manuscript)
893	Asser includes Edmund's death in his <i>Vita Ælfredi Regis Angul Saxonum</i>
c. 895-910	St Edmund memorial coinage issued
c. 905? 'Sutton'	Edmund's remains translated to Beodricesworth (later Bury) from their original burial place at
945	King Edmund grants the secular community control over the <i>banleuca</i>
c.985-7	Abbo of Fleury, <i>Passio Sancti Edmundi</i>
1010	A Danish army under the leadership of Thurkill the Tall lands at Ipswich. Egelwyn travels with Edmund's relics to London
1013	Edmund's relics returned to Bury St Edmunds

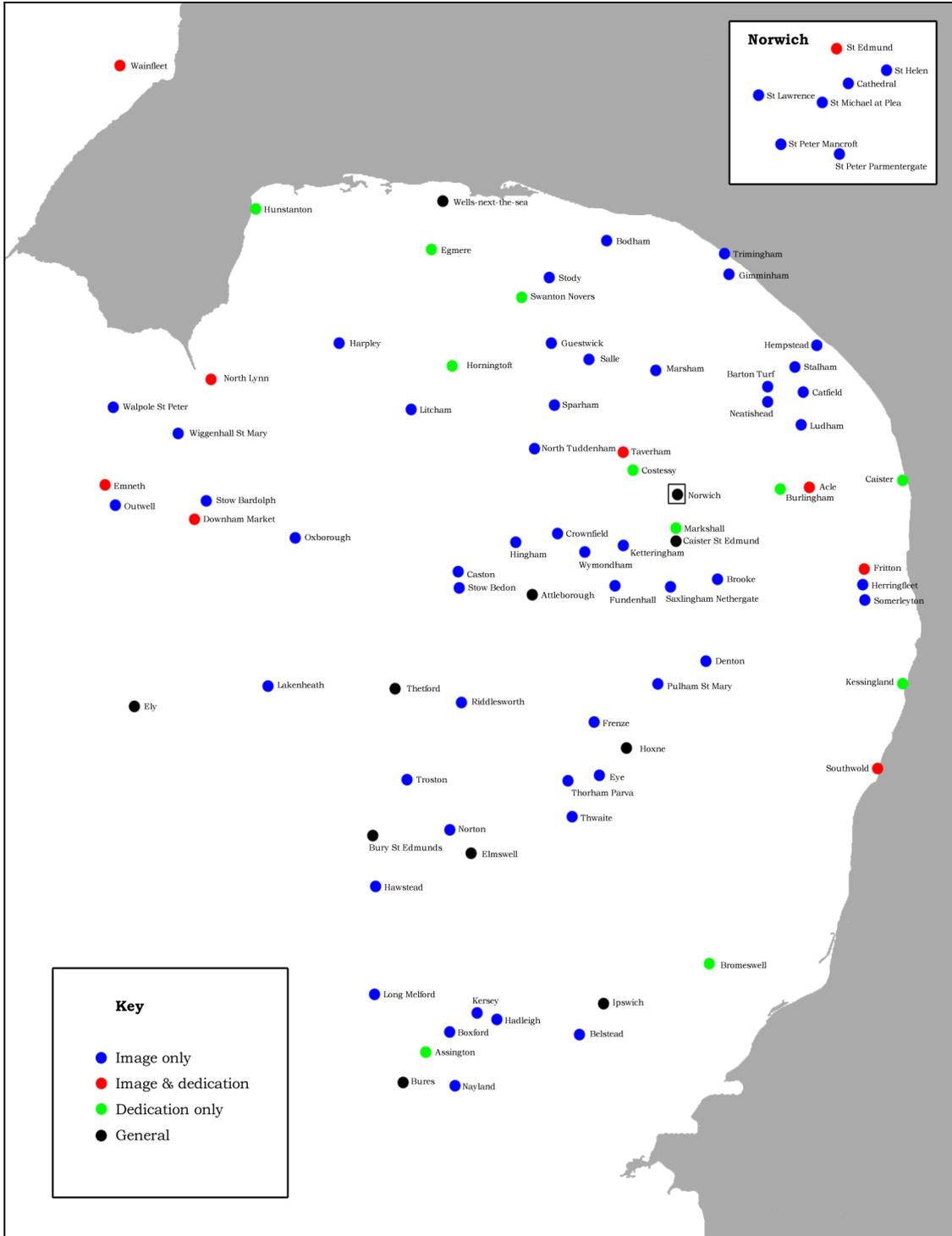
- 1013 King Sweyn Forkbeard claims control of England. King Æthelred 'the unready' flees England
- 1014 King Sweyn dies suddenly, allegedly speared by St Edmund
- 1020 King Cnut replaces the community of secular clerics with Benedictine monks
- 1021 King Cnut grants the abbey a charter of privileges
- 1032 Re-built or extended abbey church consecrated by Archbishop Æthelnoth
- 1043 King Edward the Confessor visits Bury and grants the abbey jurisdiction over the eight and a half hundreds of West Suffolk
- 1044-65 Abbot Leofstan inspects Edmund's remains and finds them intact and uncorrupted
- Mid. 11<sup>th</sup>c Earliest known version of Abbo's *Passio* preserved in Lambeth Palace Library, London, MS 361
- c. 1150-56 Geoffrey of Wells, *De Infantia Sancti Edmundi*
- 1153 Abbey estates pillaged by Eustace, son of King Stephen, when the abbey refused his demands for money
- 1065-97/8 Baldwin abbot of Bury St Edmunds
- 1066 The Norman Conquest of England
- 1070-84 Herfast bishop of East Anglia
- c.1070-81 On-going dispute between the abbey at Bury and the episcopate concerning the location of the Episcopal See
- 1081 King William I forced to intervene and settle the dispute

1071	Abbot Baldwin travels to Rome, via Lucca, to secure privilege of exemption from Pope Alexander I
1095	St Edmund's relics translated into the new abbey church
Late 11 <sup>th</sup> c	Archdeacon Hermann, <i>De Miraculis Sancti Edmundi</i>
c. 1098-1118	<i>De Miraculis</i> revised by another Bury monk
c. 1100	London, British Library, Cotton Tiberious Bii, including <i>De Miraculis</i> and Abbo's <i>Passio</i>
Early 12 <sup>th</sup> c	Promotional tracts circulate with abridged versions of <i>De Miraculis</i> (Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Digby 39 and Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS latin 2621)
1121-48	Anselm abbot of Bury St Edmunds
c. 1125-35	New York, Pierpoint Morgan Library, MS M. 736 produced at Bury
c. 1125-34	<i>De Miraculis</i> revised again, probably by Osbert de Clare, prior of Westminster
c. 1135-40	Geffrei Gaimar, <i>Estoire des Engleis</i>
By 1142	Majority of the Romanesque abbey church completed
1173	Edmund's war banner borne by the victors at the Battle of Fornham
c. 1180-1200	Denis Pyramus, <i>La Vie seint Edmund le Rei</i>
1182-1211	Samson of Tottington abbot of Bury St Edmunds
1198	23 June, fire destroys much of the east end of the abbey church
1198	November, Edmund's relics translated to a new shrine in the abbey church. Abbot Samson inspects the body and finds it uncorrupted

c. 1200	Abbot Samson revises Osbert de Clare's version of <i>De Miraculis</i> (preserved in London, British Library, Cotton Titus Aviii)
c. 1200	<i>La Passiun de seint Edmund</i> (anon.)
Mid. 13 <sup>th</sup> c	Henry of Avranches, <i>Vita Sancti Eadmundi</i>
1275	The <i>rotunda</i> of St Edmund demolished to make room for a new Lady Chapel. St Edmund's relics moved to a chapel in the monks' cemetery
1280s	<i>South English Legendary</i>
Mid 14 <sup>th</sup> c	Inscriptions pertaining to images in the abbey church recorded (preserved in London, College of Arms, MS Arundel 30)
c. 1360-80	Compilation of Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 240
c. 1370-1449	John Lydgate
Early 15 <sup>th</sup> c	<i>Speculum Sacerdotale</i>
1429-46	William Curteys abbot of Bury St Edmunds. Author of <i>Vita et Passio S. Edmundi Abbreviata</i>
1430s	Abbey church tower partially collapses
1433-4	Christmas Eve, King Henry VI arrives at the abbey and stays until Easter 1434, during which time he is admitted to the Confraternity of the abbey
c. 1435	John Lydgate, <i>Lives of Sts Edmund and Fremund</i>
After 1441	Additional miracles appended to Lydgate's <i>Lives</i>
Mid 15 <sup>th</sup> c	<i>Gilte Legende</i>

- 1461-83 Descendent manuscripts of Lydgate's *Lives* (London, British Library, MS Yates Thompson 47 and the Arundel Castle manuscript, *sine numero*) copied and illustrated at Bury
- 1465 Fire devastates much of the abbey church
- 1467/8 First account of the St Edmund procession at Snettisham (Norfolk)
- 1483 William Caxton's *Golden Legend*
- 1516 *Kalendre of the Newe Legende of Englande* printed by Richard Pynson
- 1535 Cromwell's Commissioners visit the abbey. They deface the shrine and remove other treasures and relics
- 1539 The abbey is dissolved
- 1550s Inscribed brass plate, possibly from the shrine of St Edmund, re-inscribed in memory of George Duke and laid, image-side down, in St Andrew's church, Frenze (Norfolk)
- 1581/2 Last record of the St Edmund procession at Snettisham (Norfolk)

**Appendix 2 Map of East Anglia showing locations associated with St Edmund**



### **Appendices 3a and 3b Miracles analysis: types of miracles**

The following piecharts and graph show the nature of the miracles in each of the main hagiographic texts (Abbo's *Passio*, Geoffrey of Wells' *De Infantia*, Hermann's *Miracula*, Samson's *Miracula*, Bodley 240 and Lydgate's *Lives*) and the miniatures and initials of Pierpoint Morgan 736. These have been singled out because they represent a significant stage in the development of the codicological cult and/or because they contain large numbers of miracles. The miniatures and initials of Pierpoint Morgan 736 are included as a separate item because they form a coherent and unique visual narrative. The texts of Pierpoint Morgan 736 are not included because they are either the same as (in the case of the *Passio*) or extremely similar to (in the case of the *miracula*) other texts analysed here.

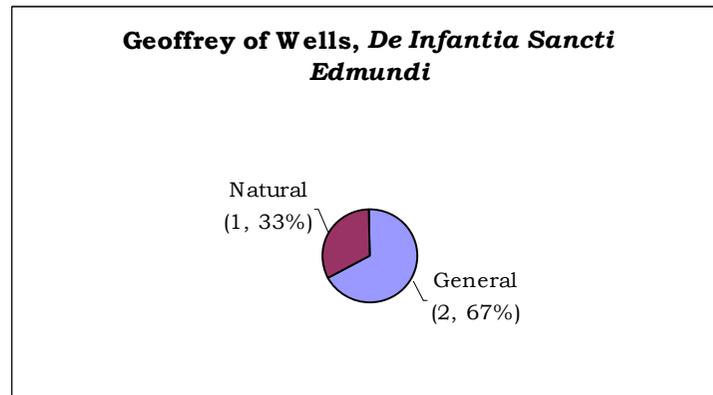
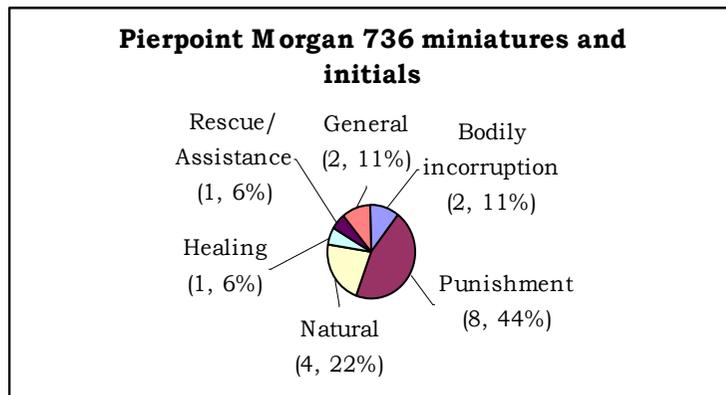
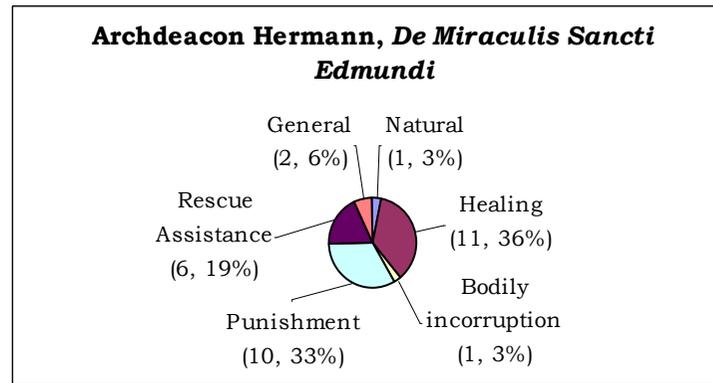
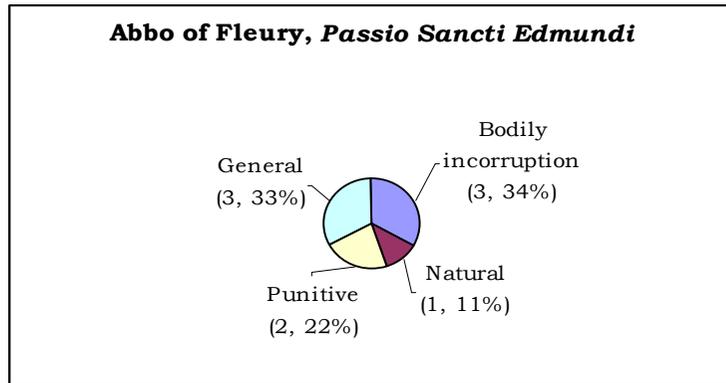
#### Miracle categories

The miracles in each text have been placed within one of six categories:

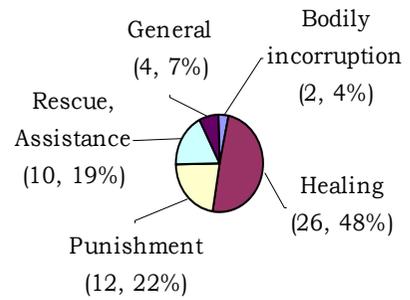
- Bodily incorruption – miracles concerning the preservation of Edmund's remains, including the rejoining of his head following the martyrdom and the discovery of incorruption upon subsequent examinations of his remains.
- Punishment
- Nature – natural wonders including weather miracles, the bursting forth of miraculous springs and the wolf guarding Edmund's head
- Healing
- Rescue/Assistance – non-healing miracles which involve some other kind of assistance (for example, the recovery of lost property) or rescue.
- General – instances where we are told that something miraculous has occurred but where the author does not specify the nature of the event. Other miracles placed in this category include miracles concerning Edmund but with which he is not personally credited (for example, the woman in Rome sees a miraculous light shining from Alkmund's breast which foretells Edmund's birth). These miracles are included in this separate category because they do not directly inform our understanding of the nature of Edmund's sanctity.

**Appendix 3a The proportion of miracles in each text, by type, expressed as piecharts**

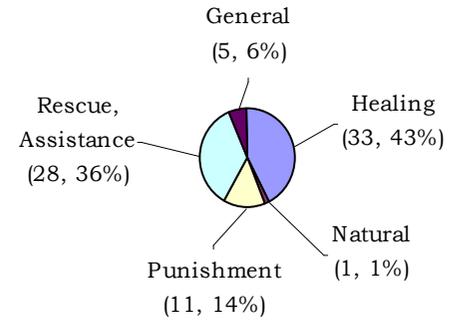
The frequency of each type of miracle and the percentage this represents of the total miracles in each text are given in brackets.



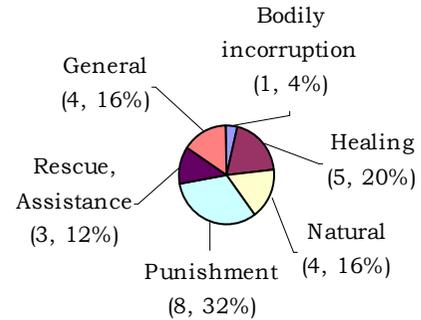
**'Abbot Samson', *De Miraculis Sancti Edmundi***



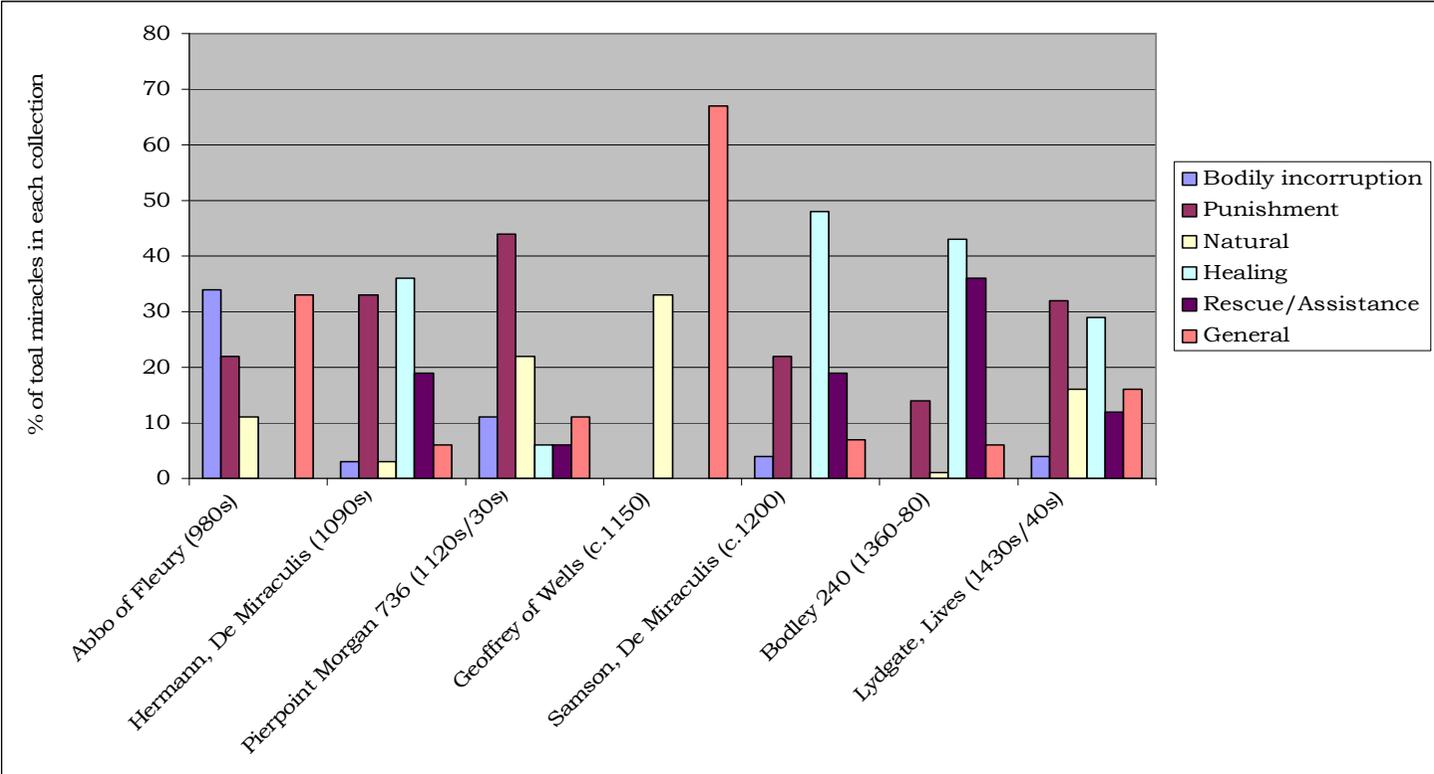
**Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 240**



**John Lydgate, *Lives of Sts Edmund and Fremund***



**Appendix 3b Proportion of types of miracles in each collection expressed graphically**



## **Appendices 4a and 4b Miracles analysis: recipients of miracles**

The following piecharts show the nature of the recipients of miracles in each of the main hagiographic texts (Abbo's *Passio*, Geoffrey of Wells' *De Infantia*, Hermann's *Miracula*, Samson's *Miracula*, Bodley 240 and Lydgate's *Lives*) and the miniatures and initials of Pierpoint Morgan 736.

### Appendix 3a Categories of recipients: status

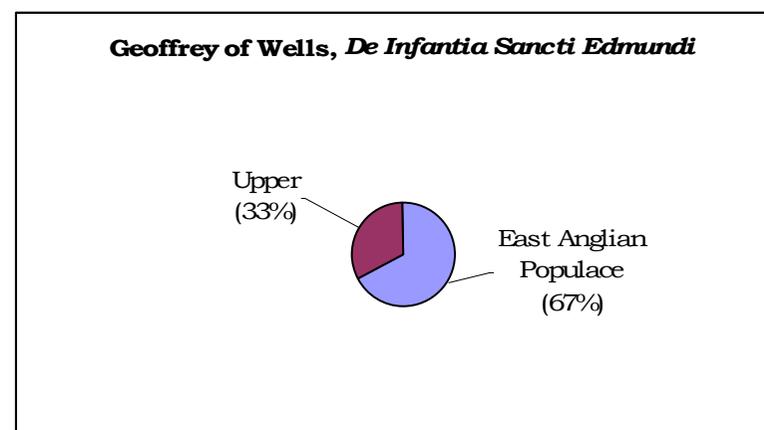
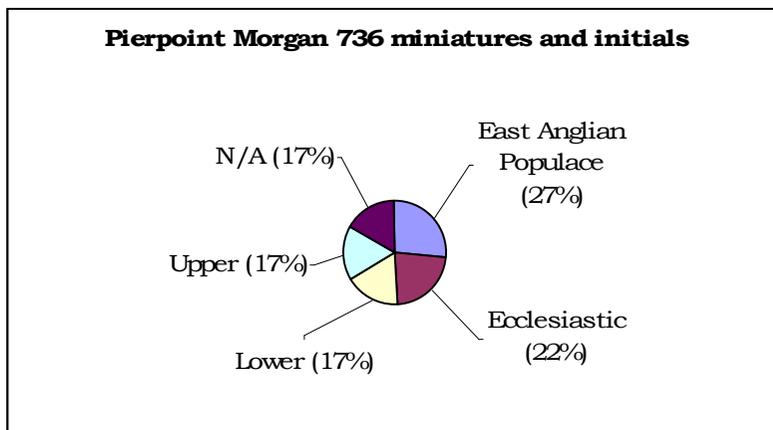
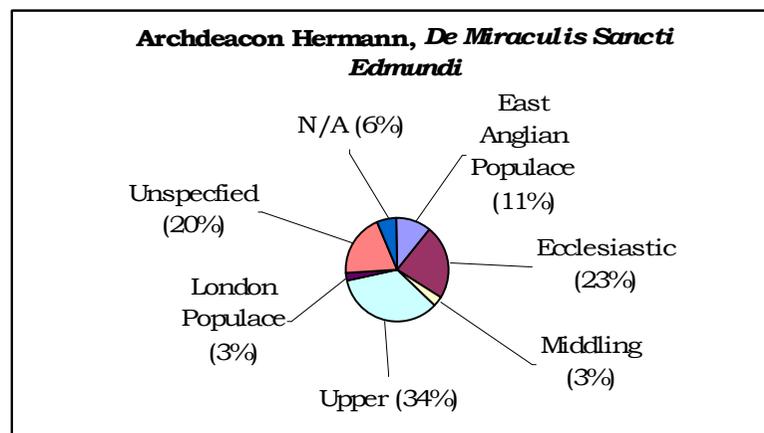
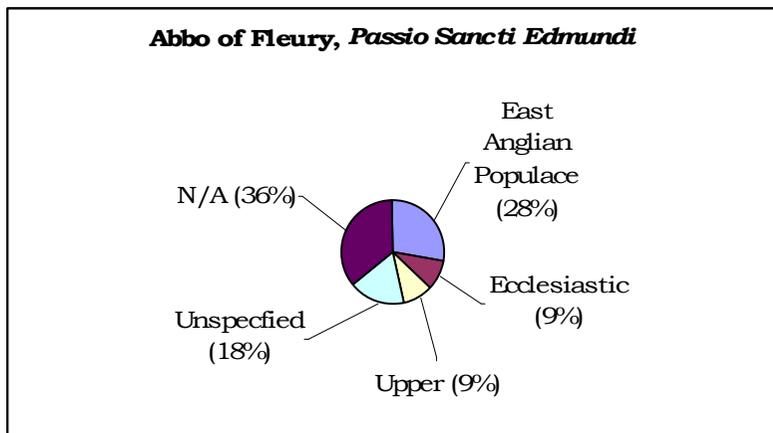
The difficulties associated with assigning individuals to social ranks based upon the often brief details provided in miracle narratives are considerable, as are the risks of transposing modern categories onto the past. It is largely for these reasons that the 'unspecified' categories are relatively large in many cases. However, for the sake of analysis the recipients of miracles in each text have been placed within one of eight categories:

- East Anglian populace – where miracles are specified as benefitting 'the people' or 'the many' of East Anglia.
- Ecclesiastics – church men and women of all ranks and types.
- Upper – royalty, aristocrats and nobles.
- Middling – in a few instances individuals are specified as belonging to professions which identify them as distinct from the upper or lower ranks.
- Lower – only used when an individual is specifically referred to as poor, impoverished, lowly etc.
- London populace – miracles which occur during the removal of Edmund's relics to London and which are described as benefitting 'the people' or 'the many' of London.
- Unspecified – in some cases the status of the recipient(s) can be inferred according to the context of the miracle but occasionally it is not possible.
- N/A – mostly refers to general or vague references to miraculous events but where few narrative specifics are provided.

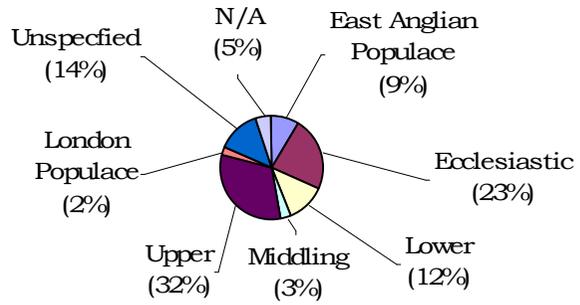
### Appendix 3b Categories of recipients: gender

- Male or female - individuals or groups are categorised as male or female if they are explicitly identified as such.
- Unspecified - in some case, usually with infants, gender is unspecified.
- Mixed – groups of unspecified gender.
- N/A - mostly refers to general or vague references to miraculous events but where few narrative specifics are provided.

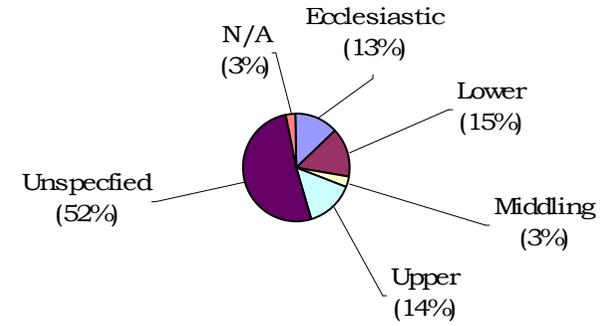
**Appendix 4a The proportion of miracles in each text, by status of recipient, expressed as piecharts**



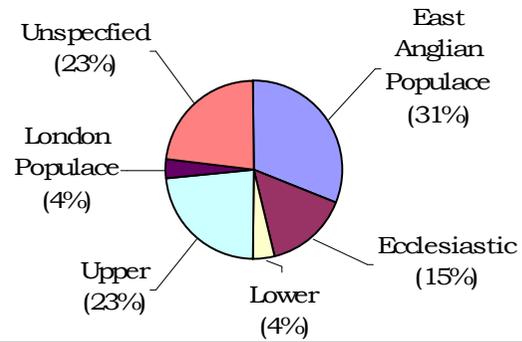
**'Abbot Samson', *De Miraculis Sancti Edmundi***



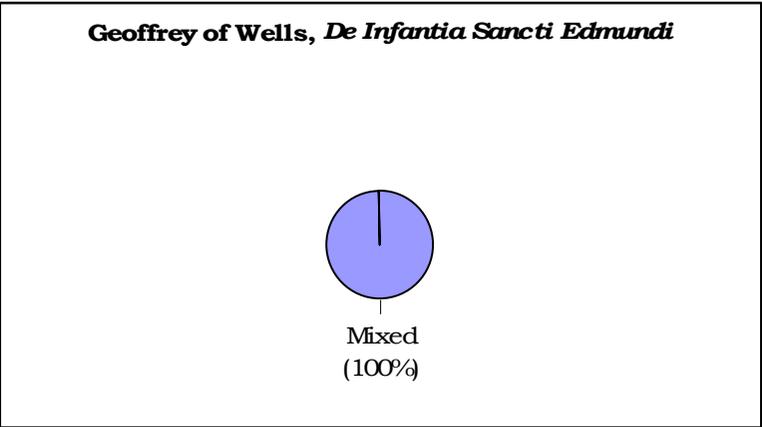
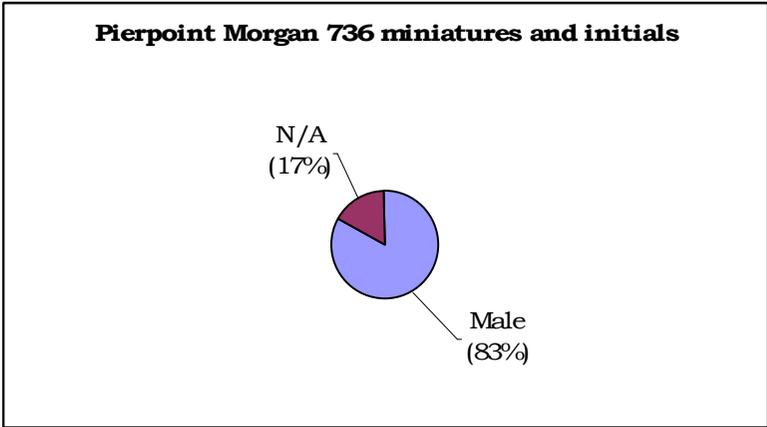
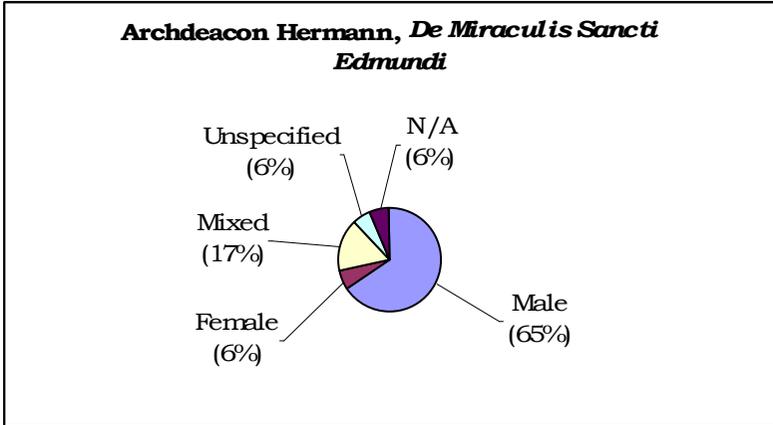
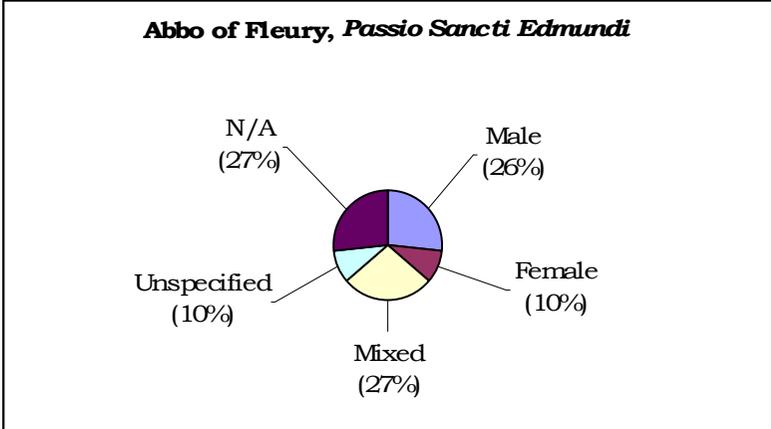
**Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 240**



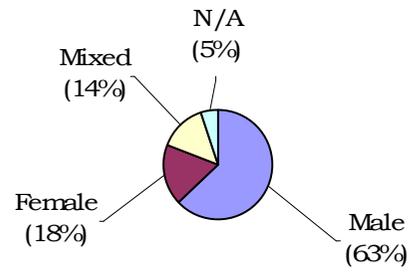
**John Lydgate, *Lives of Sts Edmund and Fremund***



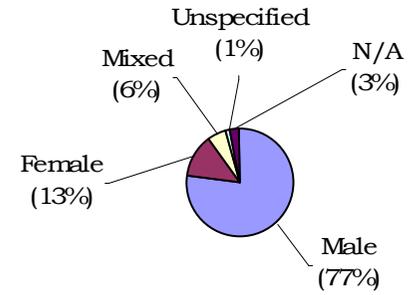
**Appendix 4b The proportion of miracles in each text, by gender of recipient, expressed as piecharts**



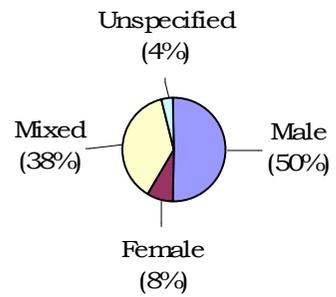
**'Abbot Samson', *De Miraculis Sancti Edmundi***



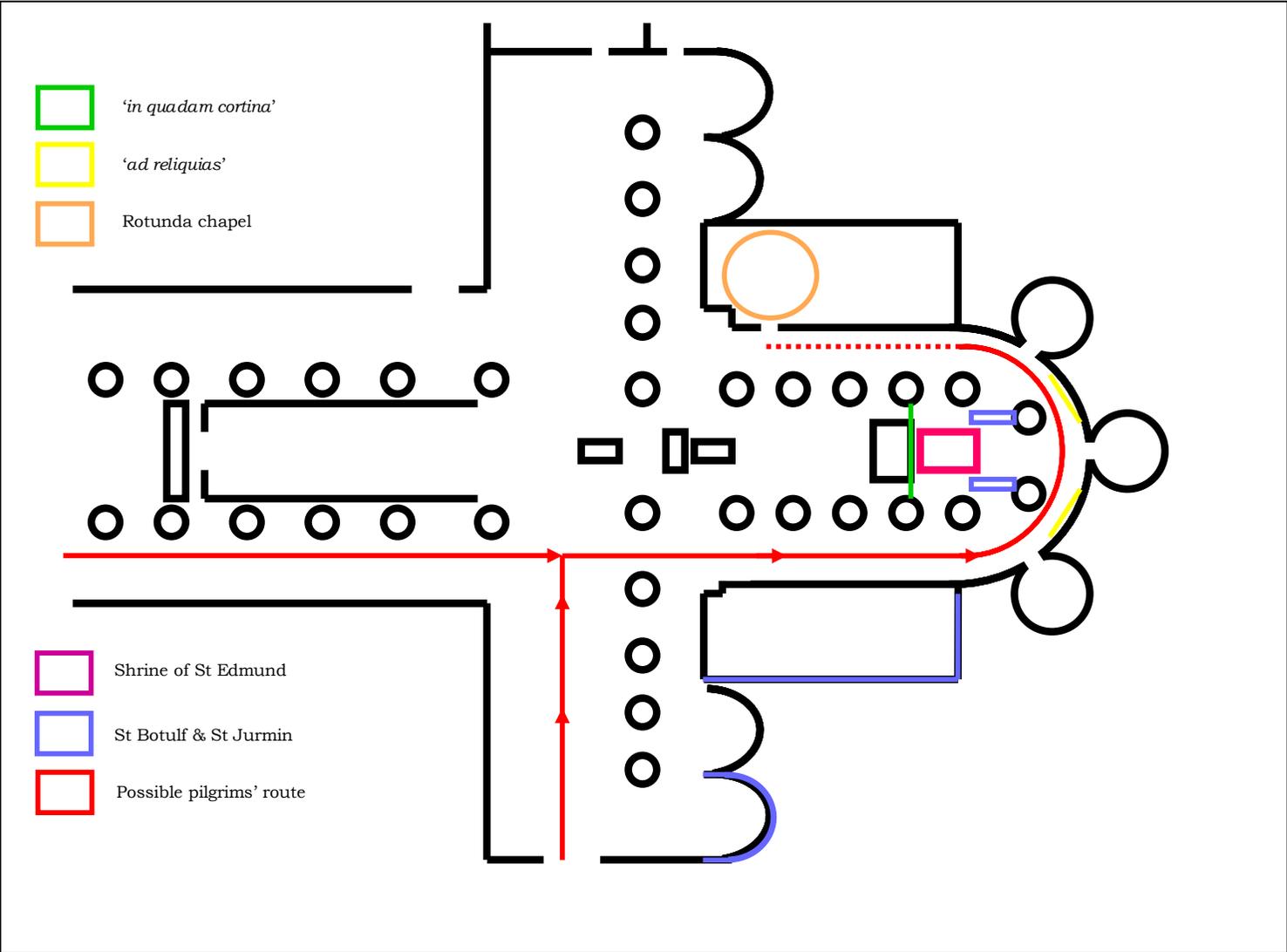
**Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 240**



**John Lydgate, *Lives of Sts Edmund and Fremund***



**Appendix 5 Annotated plan of the east end of the abbey church showing areas and objects of particular relevance to the St Edmund pilgrimage experience**



**Appendix 6 Extracts from the Snettisham Churchwardens' Accounts**  
**NRO: PD 24/1 (1467/8-1581/2)**

**1467/8**

[fol. 59]

...

Item payd for costes of Ingaldisthorp procession — vijd

...

Item for costes on hallow thrysdaye for beryng of ye chaftē — ijd

Item for j lambe to Seynt Edmundes — xijd

...

**1468/9**

[fol. 22]

...

Item *receperunt* de potacione facta in dominica post festum sancti / Edmundi Regis & martyris in brasio iij tribus [—iij vj—] / de gravis ecclesiasticus omnibus claris allocatis — xijs vjd

...

[fol. 22v]

...

Item *receperunt* de potacione facta in dominica post festum corporis Christi de ij quarters / brasio ex gravis ecclesiasticus omnibus claris allocatis — xviijs vjd Item *receperunt* de potacione die lune proxime sequenter — vjd

...

[fol. 23]

...

Item *receperunt* de potacione facta in dominica proxime ante festum apostolorum Phillippi & / Jacobi de gravis ecclesiasticus videlicet j quarter mixtelyum et ij quarters / brasio cum omnibus aliis allocandis clare — xxd

...

Item *receperunt* de potacione facta in dominica ante festum sancti Jacobi apostoli in brasio / ij quarters & ij cumbes mixstilioum de gravis ecclesiasticus omnibus claris allocatis — xvs viijd

...

[fol. 60]

...

Item payd in costes at Ingaldysthorp procession — ijd

Item payd for beryng of ye chaftes on hallow thursdaye — iijd

Item payd for costes of ye plowys in barly seele — xviijd

...

Item payd for costes of Brycham game — xiiijd

...

**1469/70**

[fol. 60v]

...

Item for ye costes of ingaldisthorp procession — vijd

Item for beryng of ye chaftes in holy thursdaye — iijd

Item for a lambe to Seynt Edmundes — xijd

...

Item for costes of ye plowys in barly seele — xviijd

...

[fol. 61]

Item Doliveryd to ij drynkynges — viij cumbes

Item delyveryd to ye plow for ij yeres — iiij cumbes

...

**1470/1**

[fol. 61v]

...

Item for costes of Ingaldisthorp procession — vjd

...

Item for beryng of ye chaftes on hallow thursdaye — iiijd

...

**1472/3**

[fol. 63]

...

Item payd for ye chaftes in hallow thursdaye — iiijd

...

**1473/4**

[fol. 24]

...

Item receperunt de le plow — vijs

...

[fol. 63v]

...

Item for Ingaldesthorp procession — vjd

Item for ye schaftes on holy thursdaye — iiijd

...

**1474/5**

[fol. 24v]

...

In primis recepetum est de potacione facta in die dominica passionis domini — xijs viijd

...

[fol. 26]8

...

Item receperunt de Nortunhill dawnse — xxs

...

[fol. 27]

...

Item ffrom Willelmo Wade — jd

Item ffrom Gilda sancti iohannis — xd

Item ffrom Gilda sancte Anne — xijs iiijd

Item ffrom Markette dauns — iijs

Item ffrom Nortyn hylle Rokfest — xs

Item ffrom Sutton hylle dauns — vjs viijd

Item ffrom Norton hylle dauns — xxvjs viijd

...

Item receperunt de le plow — vjs

...

[fol. 64]

Item payd for of9 Ingaldisthorp procession — vjd

...

Item payd to ye schaftes on holy thorysday — ijd

...

**1475/6**

[fol. 27v]

...

Item de le plowe — vijs vjd

...

*Item receperunt* of a drynkyn made in ye secunde Sunday of Clene Lentt / alle thynges rekynynd & alowyd *with* ij *semilis* of ye churche malte — xiijs vd

...  
[fol. 65v]

...  
*Item* payd for ye procession of Ingaldysthorp — vjd

...  
*Item* payd for ye schaftes on hallow thursdaye — ijd

...  
*Item* payd for a lyne to ye menies schaftes — iijd

...  
*Item* payd for Ryngstede game — ijd

*Item* payd for costes of hecham maye — viijd

...  
*Item* payd for fryng maye — vjd

...  
**1476/7**

[fol. 28]

...  
*In primis pro potacione facta in dominica passionis domini* — xxs

...  
*Item receptum* of ye plowe — vijs iiijd

...  
*Item receptum de potacione facta in die dominica post festum petri et pauli* — xjs ijd

...  
*Item receptum pro anima Johannis Rust* — vjs viijd

*Item receptum de gilda sancti Jacobi* — vjs viijd

*Item receptum de gilda sancti Johannis* — vjs viijd

*Item receptum de norton hyl Rockfeste* — vijs

*Item receptum de potacione facta in quarta dominica quadragesime* — xijs viijd

*Item de nicholao Smiythe pro sowgate dawnce* — iijs iiijd

...  
[fol. 66v]

...  
*Item* for Ingaldysthorpe processyon — vjd

*Item* for hegghyng11 at ye gylde hall — jd

...  
**1477/8**

[fol. 67]

...  
*Item* for ye processyon of Ingaldysthorpe — vjd

*Item* for ye schaftes on holy thorsday — iiijd

...  
**1478/9**

[fol. 28]

*Item receptum de norton hylle dawnse* — xjs

...  
[fol. 29]

...  
*Item* de le plow — vjs vjd

...  
Et de brasio vj [—omnibus—] *pro* le plow et ij *bussellis pro* david down / Et *there remandi* iij *combes brasii*

...  
[fol. 67v]

...  
Item for ye processyon of Ingaldysthorpe — vjd  
Item for ye schaftes on holy thorsday — iiijd

...  
Item for makyng of ye plow torche — xxd

...  
**1479/80**  
[fol. 68v]

...  
Item for mendyng of ye northehyle — vjd

...  
**1480/1**  
[fol. 29v]

...  
In primis receptum anima thome clerke — vjs viijd  
Item receptum de gilda *Jesus Christi* — xijs  
Item receptum de tripudio de marketstede — vjs viijd  
Item receptum de nortonhulle dawnce — viijs iiijd

...  
In primis for ye floytes — ijs

...  
[fol. 69]

In primis for ye schaftes of holy Thursday — iiijd  
Item for Ingaldysthorp processyon — vjd  
Item for washyng [—yat—] ageyn Sent Edmund — xd  
Item for mendyng of surples yat tyme — xijd  
Item for a lambe — xd  
Item for beryng of schaftes yat tyme — xijd

...  
**1483/4**  
[fol. 69v]

...  
Item for Ingaldysthorpe processyon — vjd  
Item for ye schaftes on holy thorsday — iiijd

...  
**1484/5**  
[fol. 30]

...  
Item receptum de le maye / xxxs ijd ob *omnibus computatis et allocatis* [—xxvijs ijd—]  
Item receptum de gilda *sancta anne* — iijs iiijd  
Item receptum de gilda *sancti jacobi* — xxd  
Item receptum de gilda *Jesus Christi* — iijs viijd

...  
Item pro ffloytes — ijs iiijd

...  
[fol. 70]

...  
Item for Ingaldysthorpe processyon — vjd  
Item schaftes on holy thorsday — iiijd

...  
**1485/6**  
[fol. 70]

...  
Item for Ingaldesthorpe processyon — vjd

...

[fol. 71]

*Item* for yngaldysthorpe processyon — vd

*Item* for ye schaftes of holy thorsday — iiijd

*Item* for ye ballys at hecham — ijd

...

*Item* for Costys of ye plays — ixd

...

[fol. 71v]

...

*Item* in costes ffor Ingaldysthorpe processyon — vd

...

**1486/7**

[fol. 30v]

...

In *primis* receptum de le maye — xxvs

*Item* receptum de le plow in anno *predicto* — viijs iiijd

...

*Item* pandoxatori ad le maye vjd

*Item* pro visitacione *episcopi* — j combe

*Item* pro ye plow vj *bussellis*

...

[fol. 72]

...

In *primis* payd to ye schaftes of holy thorsday — iiijd

...

*Item* payd ad19 seynt Edmundes — viijd

...

*Item* payd ffor mendyng of sadyll hurt in ye maye — vjd

...

**1487/8**

[fol. 30v]

...

In *primis* ffor Ingaldysthop processyon — vjd

...

[fol. 72v]

...

In *primis* ffor Ingaldysthorpe processyon — vjd

*Item* for schaftes of holy thorsday — iiijd

...

*Item* ffor costes of hecham may — iiijd

...

**1488/9**

[fol. 73v]

...

In *primis* ffor Ingaldysthorpe processyon — vjd

*Item* ffor schafte on holy thorsseide — iiijd

*Item* for j lambe to seynt Edmundys — viijd

*Item* for Costys at seynt Edmundys — iijs viijd

*Item* for Costys of docking game — ijd

...

**1489/90**

[fol. 31v]

...

Summa pro *organis* — xxiijs viijd

...

[fol. 74v]

...

In primis ffor Ingaldisthorp procession — vjd  
Item ffor schaftes of holy thorsday — iiijd

...

Item payd ffor costes of Walfyrton game — vd  
Item payd ffor costes of hecham may — vd

...

**1490/1**

[fol. 31v]

...

Item de market stode dawnce — ijs

...

**1491/2**

[fol. 31v]

...

In primis of ye maye — xviijs iiijd

...

[fol. 75]

...

In primis ffor Ingaldsthop processyon — vjd  
Item ffor ye schaftes of holy thorsday — iijd  
Item for washyng ageyn sent Edmundes — xd  
Item payd to ye vykyr of honstantun ffor a lombe — xd

...

[fol. 76]

...

Item payd for costes of Ingaldysthorp processyon — vd  
Item payd ffor schaftes on holy thorsdey — iiijd

...

[fol. 76v]

Item payd ffor Ingaldythorpe processyon — vd  
Item payd ffor schaftes on holy thorsdey — iiijd

...

[fol. 77]

...

Item ffor Costys off fryng game — vd  
Item payd at ffryng game — xiiijd

...

**1492/3**

[fol. 32]

...

In primis of ye maye — xvjs

...

Item receptum of ye plow — vijs iijd

...

[fol. 32v]

...

Item for the Organys — xxxiijs iiijd

...

[fol. 77v]

...

Item ffor Ingaldysthorpe processyon — vjd  
Item ffor schaftes on holy Thursday — iiijd  
Item payd for ale at ffryng — iiijd

...  
*Item for peynttyng of Marye & John — ijd*  
 ...  
**1493/4**  
 [fol. 78]  
 ...  
*Item for processhon for ynggaldsthorpe — vd*  
*Item for the shaftes on holy thyrsdaye — iiijd*  
 ...  
**1494/5**  
 [fol. 78v]  
 ...  
*Item payd for ye processyon of yngalldesthorpe in bred & ale — vjd*  
 ...  
*Item payd for bred & ale for Sharnbrun processyon — vjd*  
 ...  
**1499/1500**  
 [fol. 79]  
 ...  
*Item payd for a lamb offeryng at sent Edmundes — viijd*  
*Item payd for oder Costes & charges at ye said Chapell — ijs iiijd*  
 ...  
 [fol. 79v]  
 ...  
*Item payd for costes in ye prosesshon of ynggylthorp — vjd*  
*Item payd for ye shaftes on hawlowe thyrsdaye — iiijd*  
 ...  
**1500/1**  
 [fol. 33]  
 ...  
*Item receptum the ^[same] yere [—of—] at the plowe daye — vijs iiijd*  
 ...  
**1500/1-1502/331**  
 [fol. 33v]  
 ...  
*Item receptum anno xvij at ye plowlyght — viijs iiijd*  
 ...  
*Item receptum de recepcione pro le maye de Snetisham — xvjs viijd*  
 ...  
*Item browyn for Dounis erday the furst yere — ij bussellis*  
*Item browyn for the plowe ye same yere — vj bussellis*  
*Item for David Dounis eyrdaye ye secound yere — ij bussellis*  
*Item Ingaldisthorpe prossecion — ij bussellis*  
*Item browyn for the plowe — vj bussellis*  
 ...  
 [fol. 80v]  
 ...  
*Item for bred for [—alle—] ale for Ingaldisthorp procecion — iijd*  
*Item payd at Sent Edmundes besyd ye gaderyng of Snetisham — ijs viijd*  
 ...  
*Item for brede to Ingalisthorp prossesion — iiijd*  
*Item for wassyng of the syrples agayn ye prossesion — vjd*  
*Item payd to ye young men for beryng ther shaftes to Sent Edmundes — vjd*  
 ...  
*Item for bred & Ale for hecham maye — iiijd*

...  
Item payd to Richard Wright for strykyng the stage and other warke — vd  
...  
[fol. 81]  
...  
Item payd to ye men shaftes — viijd  
Item payd for aspysing to the maye rode — iiijd  
...  
**1502/3**  
[fol. 34]  
...  
Item *receptum pro le plowe* — vjs  
...  
[fol. 82]  
...  
Item for the costes of ye *procession* to scent *Edmundes* — iijs iiijd  
...  
**1503/4**  
[fol. 82v]  
...  
Item payd for bred <sup>^</sup>[ale] to the processeon of Ingaldisthorp — vjd  
...  
[fol. 83]  
...  
Item in Costis of the *procession* to Sent *Edmundes* / besyd the gaderyng of the town —  
iijs iiijd  
...  
**1504/5**  
[fol. 83]  
...  
Item for Costys at scent *Edmundes* — xxd  
...  
**1505/6**  
[fol. 83v]  
...  
Item for Ingaldysthorp *procession* — vijd  
...  
**1506/7**  
[fol. 34v]  
...  
Item *receptum* of the maye — xxijs iiijd  
...  
[fol. 35]  
...  
Item *receptum* of the plough — vijs vjd  
...  
[fol. 83v]  
...  
Item *solutis pro pane & servicia pro processione* de Ingaldisthorp — vjd  
...  
Item *solutis pro pane pro le Maye* de Sharnburne — jd  
Item *solutis pro pane & servicia pro le maye* Segeforth — vjd  
...  
**1507/8**  
[fol. 35]

Item *receptum* of John Smyth for Halowmes lyght — ijs vjd  
Item *receptum* of the Seme lyght on Alsolme Daye — xvijjd  
Item remaynith in the handes of William Hoo — xij *combes* of barly price — xijs iiijd /  
Thereof to be alowyd for v *bussells* malte browne for the plowe price — xxd

...  
Item *receptum* of the plough — xijs iiijd

...  
[fol. 84]

...  
Item for bred & ale for Ingaldisthorp procession — vjd  
Item for the procession to Scent *Edmundis* — ijs iiijd

...  
Item in brede for Sharnburn Maye — jd  
Item in brede & Ale for segeforth maye — vjd

...  
**1508/9**  
[fol. 84v]

...  
Item for bred & ale for Ingaldsthorp procession — vjd  
Item for wasshyng of Syrples agaynst the procession went scent *Edmundis* — vjd

...  
Item for brede & ale for Segefurd maye — iijd  
Item for brede & ale to Hecham maye — iijd

...  
**1509/1038**  
[fol. 85]

...  
Item in brede & ale for Ingaldisthorp procession — vjd  
Item at scent *Edmundes* — ijs viijd  
Item in brede & ale for Segefurd may — iijd

...  
**1510/1**  
[fol. 35v]

...  
Item John Audeley<sup>39</sup> for a tree — ijs

...  
**1512/3**  
[fol. 36]

...  
Item at ye plowe — vs iijd

...  
**1514/5**  
[fol. 36v]

...  
Item de *Willelmo* Grene pro Southgate Rocfest — xxs

...  
Item *receptum* de le maye mony — Lijs iiijd

...  
[fol. 86]

...  
Item In pane & *servicia* arga processionem de Ingaldisthorp — vjd  
Item pro processione usque *Capellam Sancti Edmundi* — ijs

...  
Item pro emendacione le pavement in le South Ale — ijd

...

**1515/6**

[fol. 86]

...

Item payd for bred & ale for the *procession* of Ingaldisthorp — vjd

...

[fol. 86v]

...

Item payd at Scent Edmund — xiijd

...

[fol. 86v]

...

Item *solutis pro punctis duobus vicibus pro le Maye* — vjdItem *solutis Ricardo Stone diversis vicibus pro factura Instrumentorum & procuracione sua* — xlvs

...

**1516/7-1518/9**

[fol. 87]

...

Item in pane & *servicia pro processione* de Ingaldisthorp — vjd

...

Item *solutis ad processione usque Sancti Edmundo* — xijd

...

[fol. 87v]

...

Item *receptum* de Johanne Halyday & Willelmo Grene<sup>46</sup> de Maye money — xijs iiijd

...

Item for brede & ale for Ingaldisthorp *procession* in Cros weke [ij yere] — xijdItem for Sharnburn *procession* one yere — iiijdItem for the *procession* to Scent Edmundes one yere — ijs

...

[fol. 88]

...

Item payd for makyng of the plowe Torcheis — ijs iiijd

...

Item payd at Scent Edmundes — xvijd

...

**1519/20**

[fol. 37]

...

Item *receptum* of the Daunce mene clerly — xvijs vijd

...

**1521/2**[fol. 89]<sup>47</sup>

...

Item fro brede & drynke to Ingaldisthorp / *procession* — vjd

...

[fol. 89v]

...

Item *primis* payd for brede to the *processyon* of Ingaldisthorp — iijdItem for the Costys to [—scb—] Scent Edmundes in *processione* — ijs viijd

...

Item for bred &amp; ale to the maye of Brycham — ijd

...

[fol. 90]

...

Item payd for costys to scent *Edmundes* — ijs iiijd

...

**1525/6**

[fol. 90v]

...

Item for bred & ale for *Ingaldysthorpp* procession — vd

...

[fol. 125]

...

Item recevyd of the maye money — [—vijs xjd—] ijli vijd

...

Item recevyd of the money yat was gatherd to *dersyngham* maye more / yan was paid — xiiijd

Item recevyd of *qwuyte* gild stokes to the churches — xs

Item recevyd of the gild of *Sent Anne* — vs xd

Item recevyd of the gild of *Scent James* — jli [blank]s

...

**1527/8**

[fol. 92]

...

Item for *Ingaldisthorp* processyon — vjd

...

[fol. 93]

...

All yn barley recevyd of the dettes of the *polowe* boks of the same / barley sowyn v *combes* & ij *bussellis* at the *cherch* landes

...

**1528/9**

[fol. 94]

...

Item for drynke for *yngalsthorpe* processyon att ye *rogatyon*es dayes — vjd

...

Item for vj *poolys* to stage wyth — xvd

...

**1529/30**

[fol. 95]

...

Item for prycke *Wandes* & *byndyng*50 for ye *churche* howse and for ye *gylde* hall — ijs ijd

...

[fol. 96]

...

Item yn brede for *yngalstorpe* processyon — ijd

...

[fol. 96v]

...

Item for ale for *ynglastorpe* processyon — iiijd

...

[fol. 97]

...

Item on ye *plowe* daye — xxvjs [—v—] iijd

...

Item recevyd off ye maye moneye — ijli

...

[fol. 97v]

...

Item receyvyd off ye maye moneye — xxxvs

...

**1530/1**

[fol. 97v]

...

In primis on the plowe daye — vijs

...

[fol. 98v]

Item for brede and ale for yngalsthorppe processyon — vjd

...

**1531/2**

[fol. 101]

...

Item for bredde and ale for yngalstorp processyon — vjd

...

**1532/3**

[fol. 39]

...

In primis on receyvyd on the plowhe daye — vjs viijd

...

[fol. 103v]

...

Item for bredde for yngalstorpe processyon — ijs

...

**1533/4**

[fol. 39]

...

In primis of the plowhe — xijs iijd

Item of the cystemasse lorde — ijs iiijd

...

Item of the gatheryng lefte of *Sir* Thomas myller — xjd

...

[fol. 39v]

...

In Primis on sowlmasse daye — xixs

...

In Primis on sowlemasse daye — xixs

...

[fol. 104]

...

Item for a drynke on hallowmasse nygth — ijs viijd

...

Item for a drynke for byrcham maye — ijd

...

[fol. 104v]

...

Item for yngalstorpe processyon — vjd

...

**1534/5**

[fol. 105v]

...

Item for yngalstorpe processyon — vjd

Item for Byrcham maye — ijd

...

**1535/6**

[fol. 40]

...

In primis of the plowhe stocke — iiijs

...

Item of the maye mony — xxxs

...

[fol. 107v]

...

Item for bredde for yngalstorp processyon — ijd

...

Item for a pullye for the plowhe — iijd

...

[fol. 108]

...

Item for yngalstorp processyon — iijd

Item for dryncke att Saynte Edmundes — vd

Item for dryncke for Byrcham maye — ijd

Item for dryncke for Seggeforde maye — ijd

...

**1536/7**

[fol. 40]

...

In primis att the plowhe daye — vs

...

In primis att he plowhe day — vs

...

Item for the maye rodde — vijd

...

[fol. 108v]

...

Item for yngalstorp processyon — iijd

...

[fol. 109]

...

Item for yngalstorp processyon — ijd

Item for darsyngham maye — vd

Item for byrcham maye — ijd

...

**1537/8**

[fol. 40v]

...

In primis on Sowlemass daye — ix s ijd

Item of ye plowhe — vs

...

In primis on Sowlemass Daye — ix s ijd

Item of the plowhe — vs

...

[fol. 110v]

...

Item for yngalstorp processyon — iijd

Item for saynte Edmundes processyon — iijd

...

[fol. 111]

...

Item for yngalstorpe processyon — ijd  
Item Saynte Edmundes processyon — ijd

...

**1541/2**

[fol. 111v]

...

Item payed to John Crystmasse for schotyng of the belle / brasys — xs

...

Item for makyng of ye Swerdawnce lygths & for fyeryng — xiijd

...

Item for breade ad dryncke for yngalstorp men — vjd

...

[fol. 112]

...

Item for lygth on ye dedycatyon daye — jd

...

**1542/3**

[fol. 112v]

...

Item for yngalstorpe processyon — iijd

...

Item for ye swerdawnce lygth makyng — viijd

...

[fol. 113]

...

Item for mowyng of corne to garlonde — xxiijd

...

Item for yngalstorpe processyon — iijd

...

[fol. 113v]

...

Item for the Swerdawnce lygthmakyng — viijd

...

**1543/4**

[fol. 114]

...

Item for bredde and drynck for yngalstorpe men — iijd

...

[fol. 115]

...

Item for ye *common* lygth makyng — xd

Item for kepyng of ye same lygth — ijd

...

Item for bredde & dryncke for yngalstorpe men — vd

...

**1544/5**

[fol. 41v]

...

Item of ye gatheryng yn ye towne — xs vijd

...

[fol. 115v]

...

Item for ye *common* Lygth makyng — xijd

...

[fol. 116]

...  
Item for yngaldesthorpe processyon — viijd

...  
Item for v processyonerys — xxd

...  
Item for lygth on ye dedycatyon daye — jd

...  
[fol. 117]

...  
Item for ye commonlygth makyng — ijs

**1545/6**

[fol. 118]

...  
Item for ye common lygth makyng — ijs

...  
Item for yngaldesthorp processyon — vjd

...  
Item for processyoners — vjs iiijd

...  
Item for lygth on ye dedycatyon daye — jd

**1546/7**

[fol. 42v]

...  
Item de Joanne Redhedd de le Rockefest de Sowthgate — iijs iiijd

Item de Alano nuttyng de eodem Rockefest / de Sowthgate — iijs iiijd

...  
[fol. 119]

...  
Item for makyng of the common lygth — xiiijd

Item for kepyng of the same lyghth — ijd

...  
[fol. 119v]

...  
Item for makyng of the common lygth — xd

...  
Item for yngaldesthorpe processyon — viijd

...  
Item for lygth on ye dedycacyon daye — jd ob

**2 Nov 1547**

[fol. 120v]

...  
Also the same daye Mary Awdeleye wyddowe / hathe delyveryd unto ye use of ye sayde  
Churche of / Snettysshā — vjs viijd sterlyng for the dette of John Audeleye late hyr  
husbande And — ijs iiijd of ye / rockefest of Sutton hyll of ye wyche — vjs viijd and / ye  
sayde — ijs iiijd ye parysche and towneschyppe hold / yeir Selff well and truly  
contentyd and payd and / ye sayde Marry Awdeley yereof to be quyett for ever / by the  
presente Wyttenesyng all ye parysch / as ys behynde wryttyn

**1548/9**

[fol. 122v]

...

Item payed to Roberte Grawnte for brekyng up of yee altars — iiijd  
Item payed to ye same Roberte for x dayes worke / meate and wages — iijs iiijd

...

**1551/2**

[fol. 124]

...

ffyrste for pullyng downe of ye awters — iijs viijd

...

**1552/3**

[fol. 43]

...

Item of Roberte Hunte for ye gatheryng — viijd

...

Item of ye bulle — xxd

...

[fol. 124]

...

Item for ye peynting of ye Kynges<sup>61</sup> arms / yn ye churche — vs ijd

Item for ye Indentures makyng and / ye weyeng of ye chalyce / and other costs att  
walsyngham — iijs

Item to ye glaycers before all saynctes — vijs ijd

...

**1554/5**

[fol. 1]

...

Item to Sayncte *Johannis* for Rent of ye gyld hall — jd

...

Item for drynkyng of Ingaldesthorpe processyon — vjd

...

[fol. 43]

...

In primis Recevyd of ye plowe — xviijs ijd

...

**1556/7**

[fol. 2]

...

Item for peynting of ye Roode<sup>63</sup> [ ^ ffor paynting of the divell -/-6-/-2- ] — vjs ijd

...

[fol. 2v.]

...

Item for Ingaldesthorpe processyon — xd

...

[fol. 44]

...

Item att the plowe day — xiijs iiijd

...

In primis of the plowe — ixs

...

In Primis of ye plowe — ixs

...

**1557/8**

[fol. 3v]

...

Item for mendyng of ye cuckystoole — vjd

Item for Ingaldesthorpe processyon — xd

...

**1558/9**

[fol. 4]

...

In primis for the oblacyon for ye benefactores — ijd

Item for breade and dryncke for Ingaldesthorpe / processyon — iiijd

...

**1559/60**

[fol. 4v]

...

Item for dryncke for Ingaldesthorpe processyon — vjd

Item for breade for Ingaldesthorpe processyon — iijd

...

[fol. 44v]

...

In primis of ye churche stocke of ye last reckenyng — xs

Item of ye plowe stocke — vjs xd

...

In primis att hallowmass Recknyng — xs

Item of ye plowe — vjs xd

...

**1561/2**

[fol. 45]

...

In Primis Receyved of hallowmass Reckenyng — xs vijd

...

Item of hallowmasse Recknyng — xs vijd

...

**1563/4**

[fol. 8]

...

Item yn expeses for caryeng the ij belles to Walsingham — ijs xd

Item yn expeses att the schotyng of ye belles — viijs vi[jd]

Item for fecchyng home of the belles — vijs

Item for the bellstockes — vs

Item for a horse to carye ye — ijd

Item to the bellfowder yn parte paymente for shottyng — iijli

...

[fol. 47v]

...

Item the gatheryng on blowe munday — xvvs

...

**1568/9**

[fol. 48]

...

Item of John Savage for the yere that he was *Christemasse* lorde — iijs ixd

...

Item of Thomas Norris for the yere yat Richard Skayth was *Christemasse* lorde — ixvs

...

**1574/5**

[fol. 16v]

...

Item at ffakenham at the mustere ffor gown powthere — viijd

...

**1579/80**

[fol. 56r]

...

Item to the ryngers uppon the Coronation daye — xijd

Item my chardges at the courte at Fakenham — viijd

...

Item to one who gathered for the Quenes bench — xijd

...

Item my chardges at the courte — viijd

...

Item at ffakenham when I was excommunicated — vjd

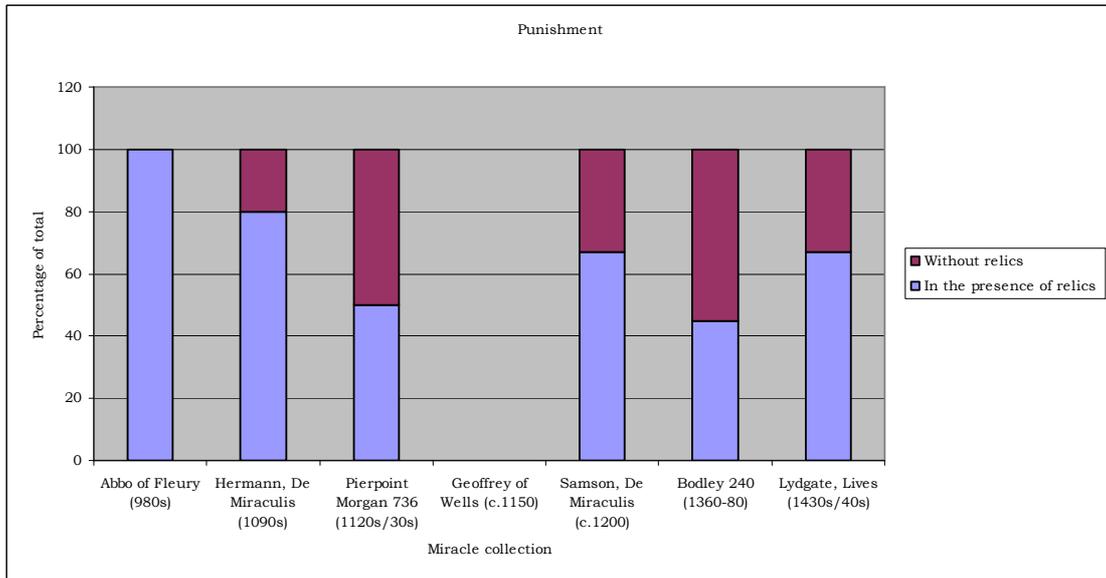
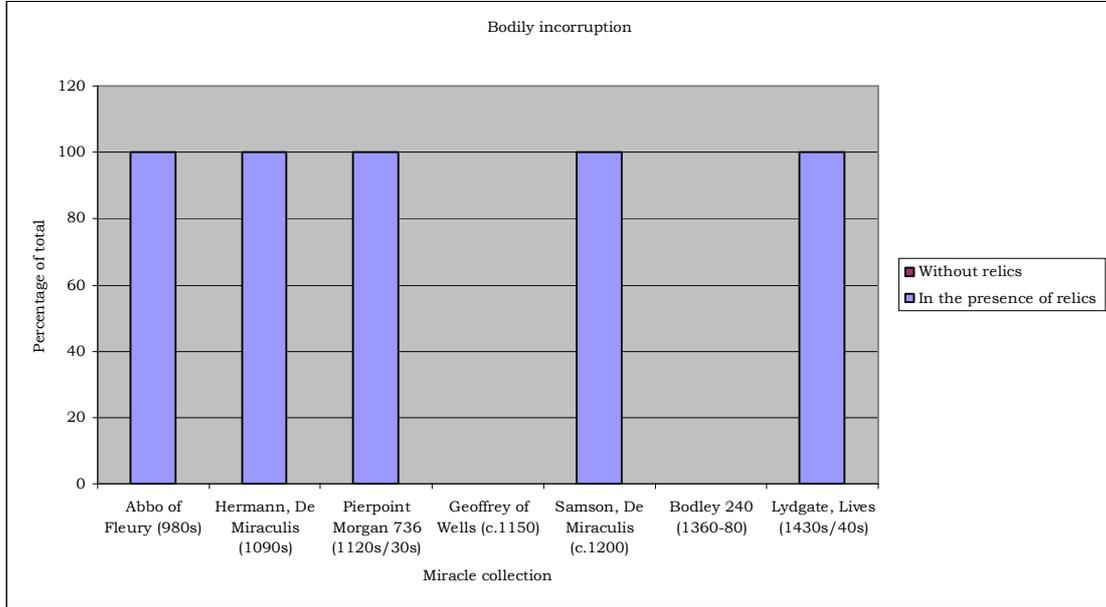
...

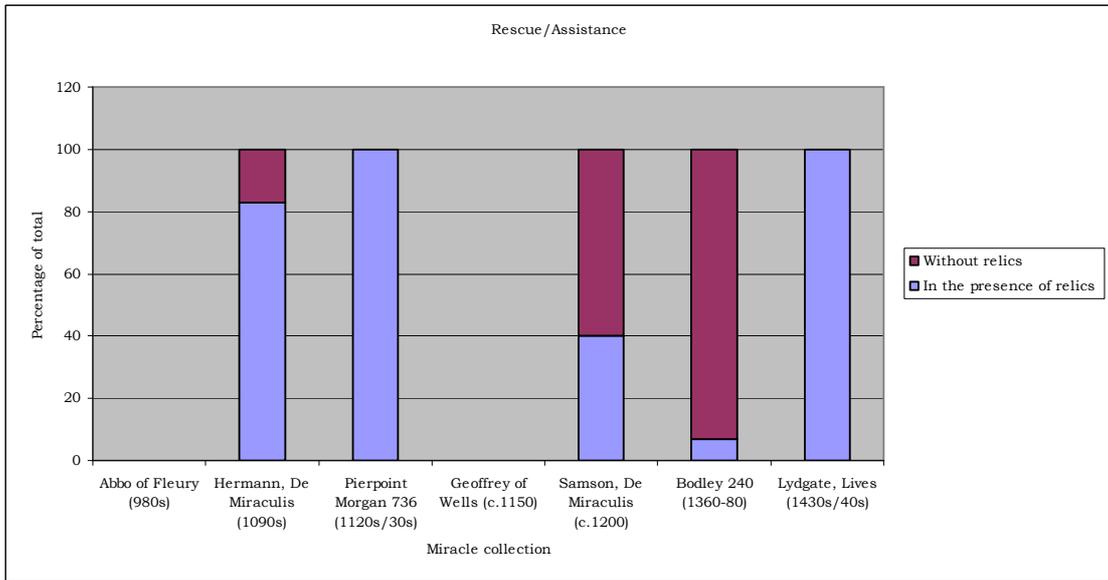
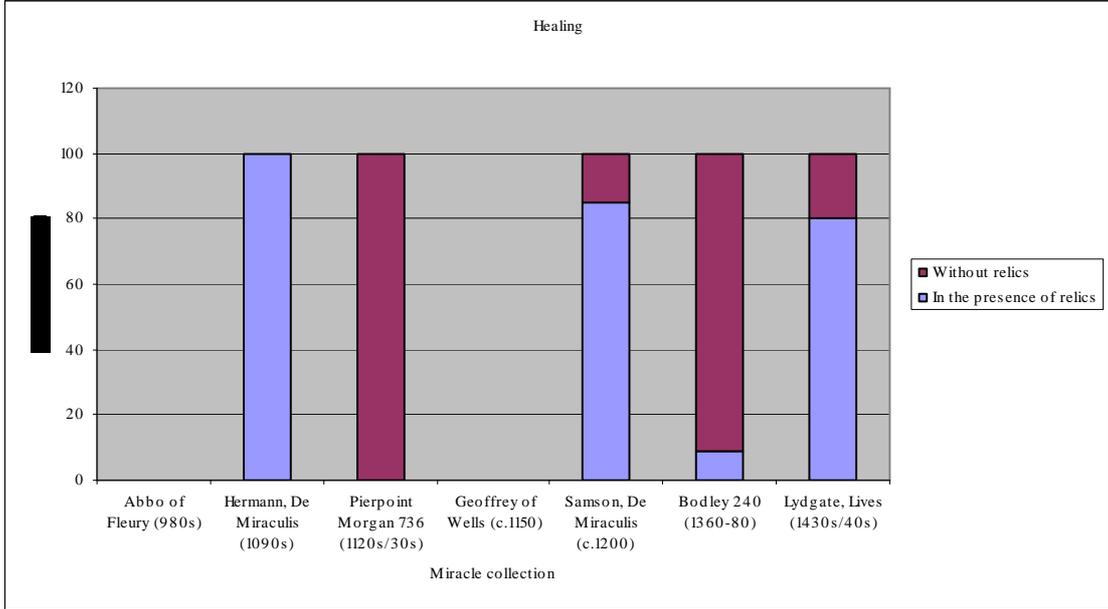
Item at Lynne for one booke of Artycles — vjd

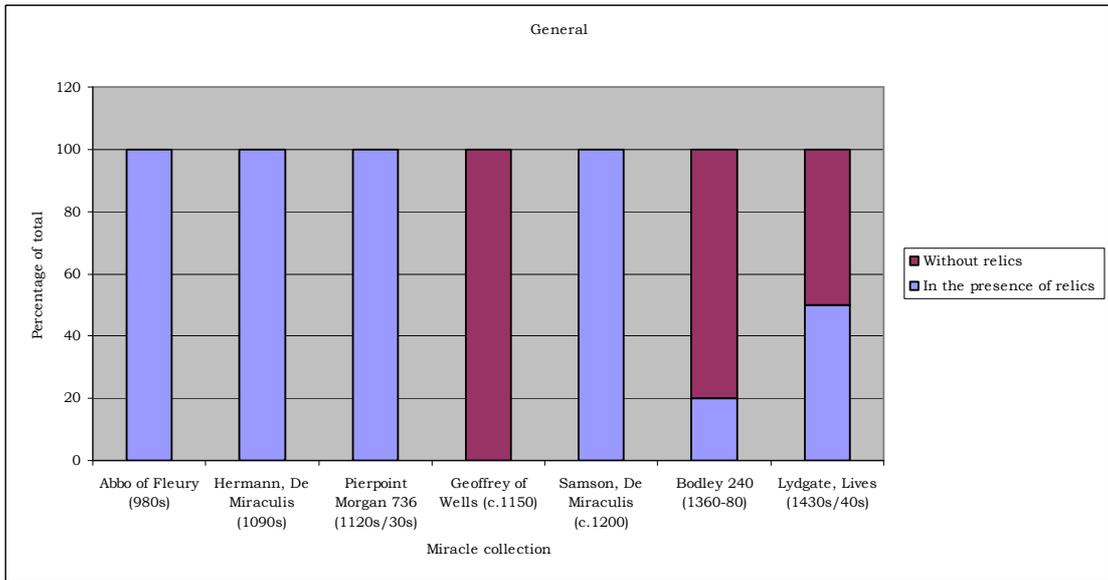
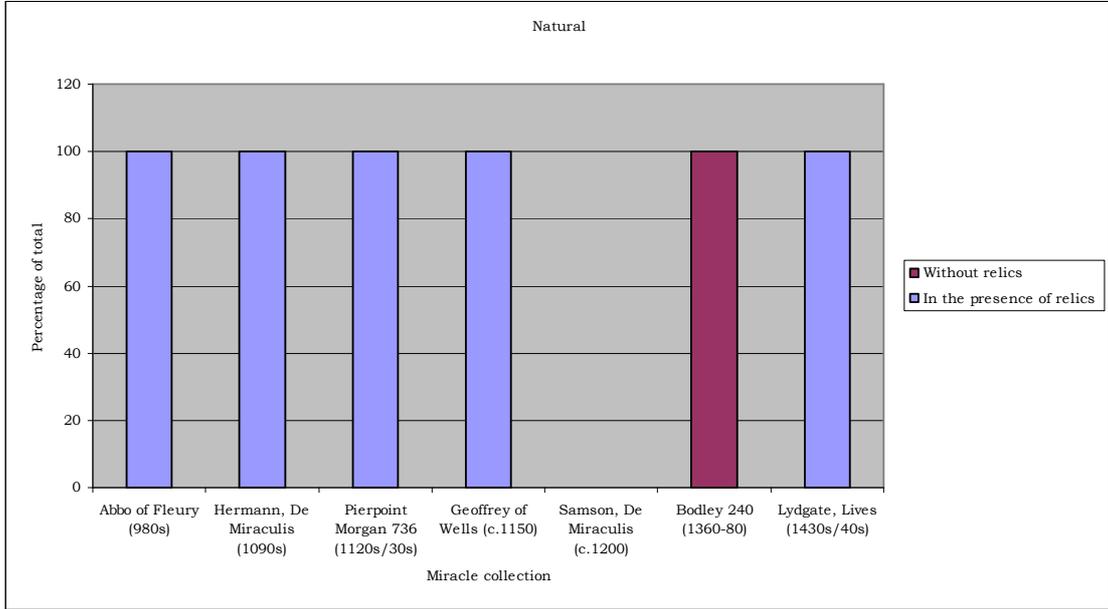
Item my chardges there — vjd

...

**Appendix 7 Graphical representation of the percentage of each type of miracle in each collection which occurred in the presence of relics and those which did not**







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