A WELSH SAINT IN ENGLAND: TRANSLATION, ORALITY, AND NATIONAL IDENTITY IN THE CULT OF ST. GWENFREWY, 1138-1512

by

JAMES RYAN GREGORY

(Under the Direction of Elissa R. Henken)

ABSTRACT

Known in English as Wenefred, Gwenfrewy († *ca*. 650) was the primary female saint of medieval Wales. According to her legend, she was beheaded for refusing the sexual advances of a prince but was resurrected by her uncle, St. Beuno, to live a second life as a nun. She died again years later as abbess of Gwytherin, a monastery thirty miles from Holywell, the site of her martyrdom in North Wales. In 1138 Gwenfrewy was translated to Shrewsbury Abbey in England, from which time she was officially venerated in two countries. Previous studies have examined her manifestation in Welsh or English culture specifically, or have evaluated a restricted number of texts dealing with her legend. By contrast, this dissertation is a chronological survey of all available literary evidence for the development of both her Welsh and English cults over the course of the Middle Ages. Through close reading of this evidence and by situating it in its political and historical contexts, this study explores the division between the saint's cult sites in Wales, the impact of oral tradition on her earliest Latin *vitae*, and the extent to which nationalist interests influenced the spread of her cult and legend in later medieval England. Although she was occasionally claimed as an English saint in the fifteenth

century, Gwenfrewy remained for most people living in the medieval British Isles a distinctly Welsh figure, albeit one who could be employed to court Welsh acceptance of English political hegemony. Still, textual evidence from late medieval Wales reveals a seemingly nationalist response to Gwenfrewy's continued appropriation by the English—the attempt to counter the cultural loss of her relics by overlooking her 1138 *translatio*. One original contribution of this study is the examination of the composite Latin Life of Wenefred in BL Lansdowne MS 436, a text that reveals the currency of Gwenfrewy's legend in England in the fourteenth century. Additionally, Osbern Bokenham's verse *Lyf of Seynt Wenefrede* from the Abbotsford MS is here fully transcribed and analyzed for the first time, and it reveals the widespread popularity and importance of Gwenfrewy's cult in fifteenth-century England.

INDEX WORDS: Wales, England, Welsh saints, Hagiography, Translation, Translatio, Furtum sacrum, Furta sacra, Orality, Nationalism, National identity, National consciousness, Wenefred, Winefride, Winifred, Gwenfrewy, Gwenfrewi, Owain Glyn Dŵr, Owen Glendower, Lansdowne MS 436, Osbern Bokenham, Abbotsford MS, Virgin martyr, Dotality, Holywell, Gwytherin, Basingwerk, Shrewsbury Abbey, St. Werburgh's Abbey

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to several important people. Firstly, to Rachel Mahan, for her selfless love and support over the long year it took to accomplish this task. Without you, this project simply would not have been finished. I also dedicate this work to my family, but most especially my parents, Jim and Patricia Gregory, and my grandparents, Dewey Gregory and Sarah Worthy, and Rocco and Jamilla Oliverio. Yes, everyone, I'm finally done.

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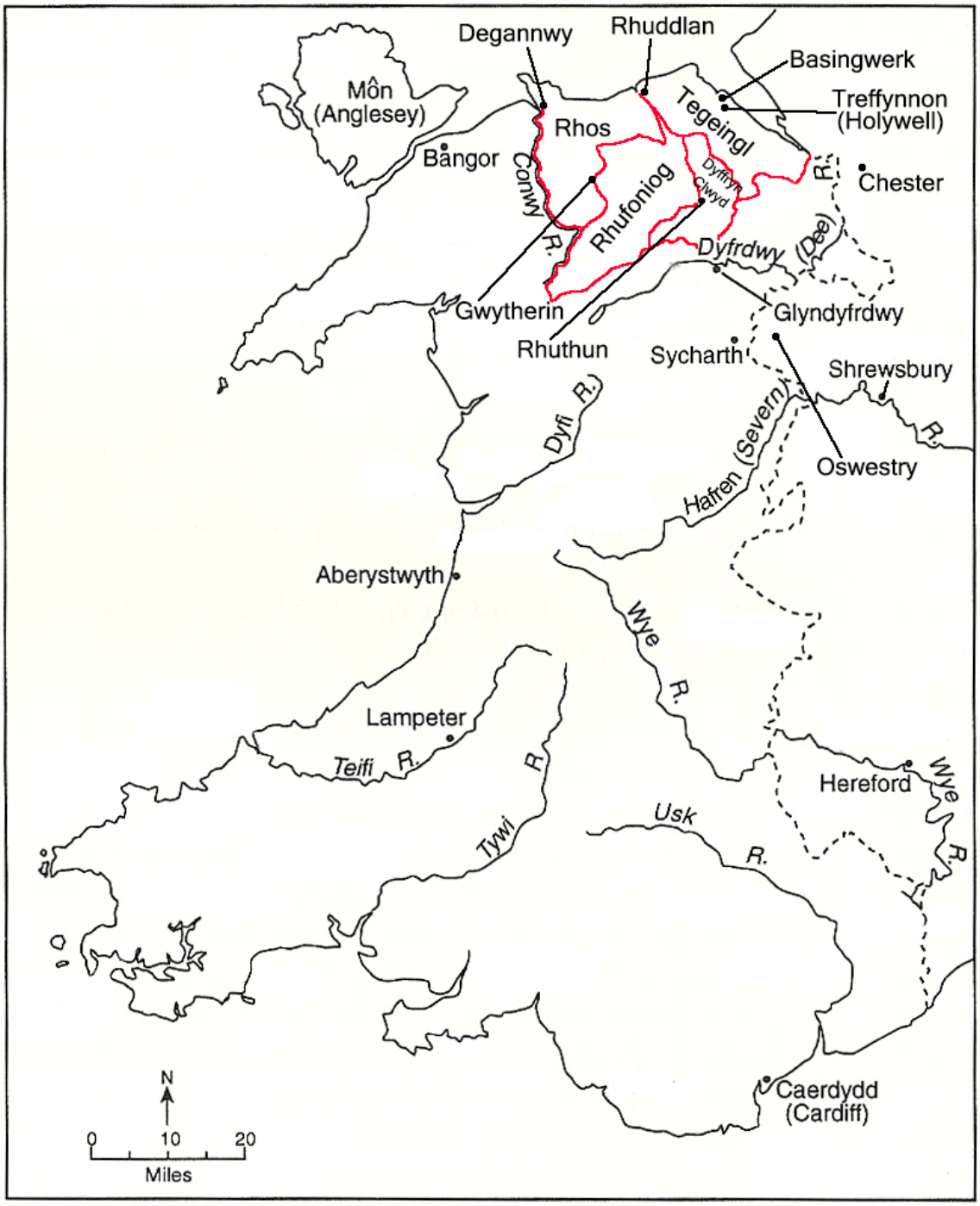


Figure 1: Map of Wales Showing *Y Berfeddwlad* (The Middle Country) in Red

Taken and modified with permission from Elissa R. Henken, *National Redeemer: Owain Glyndŵr in Welsh Tradition* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996), xii.

A note regarding references: The footnotes and bibliography in this dissertation were compiled using Endnote X5. Although every attempt has been made to ensure that all references follow proper Chicago Style (16th ed.), the idiosyncrasies of the Endnote software have at times introduced errors or oddities that could not be resolved.

"Et qui nunquam eatenus ibi fuerat, nec prius locum tumuli aliquo designante cognoverat, solus Deo præduce atrium illud ingressus, ad sanctæ virginis sepulcrum nil devians venit. . . . Duo ex fratribus . . . cum fossoribus et ligonibus terram fodere cœperunt. . . . ad optatum pervenerunt thesaurum. . . . extracta de pulvere ossa."

("And he who had never before been there nor known before the place of the tomb by anyone describing it, entered that churchyard first, with God guiding him, and came straight to the sepulcher of the holy maiden. . . . Two of the brothers . . . began to dig up the earth with shovels and hoes. . . . they came to the desired treasure. . . . the bones were extracted from the dust.")

—Prior Robert Pennant, *ca*. 1140

Anything is what she is
Anywhere is where she's from
Anything is what she'll be
Anything as long as it's mine
. . . .
Point me to the sky above
I can get there on my own
Walk me to the graveyard
Dig up her bones

—The Misfits

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Known in English as Wenefred, Gwenfrewy was a virgin martyr who lived in northeastern Wales in the first half of the seventh century.[1] According to her legend, she was beheaded for refusing the sexual advances of a local prince but was resurrected by her uncle, St. Beuno, to live a second life as a nun and abbess. The site of her martyrdom, Holywell (Welsh, *Treffynnon*) took its name from the healing fountain that erupted when her head (or, alternately, her blood) struck the ground. The stones in this fountain were forever stained with the color of the virgin's blood and the fragrant moss that grew in the waters of the fountain came to be known as Gwenfrewy's Hair.[2] Many

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[1] The saint's name is a matter of some difficulty since it appears in a Welsh and an English form, both of which exhibit a wide range of orthographic variety. So far as is possible, I use the saint's Welsh name, spelled *Gwenfrewy*, both when referring to her in general terms and when discussing her Welsh cult or her appearance in material written in Wales or in Welsh. On the other hand, when discussing her English cult or her presence in texts written in England (whether in Latin or English), I shall refer to her by her English name, spelled *Wenefred*. (In practice, this distinction is not always easy to maintain and at times will be, essentially, arbitrary. This is especially true in chapters 3 and 5, in the former of which I discuss the saint's Welsh cult at Gwytherin alongside Robert's descriptions of the cemetery there, and in the latter of which I discuss the saint's English cult in the fifteenth century.) My decision to use *Wenefred* in this study rather than a more common English form such as *Winifred* or *Winefride*, stems from my own introduction to the saint via the earliest Latin Lives, in which her name is uniformly spelled *Wenefreda*. My decision to use *Gwenfrewy* over the other common form, *Gwenfrewi*, is a matter of mere personal preference based on the prevalence of the former spelling in the saint's later medieval Welsh *Bucheddau* ("Lives"). However, when quoting editions or translations of the manifold medieval Lives, or when citing secondary studies on her medieval cult, I retain without comment the spelling employed by the editor, translator, or scholar in question. Switching freely back and forth between alternate versions of the saint's name is intended to keep in focus the fact that she is, in origin, a Welsh saint, but one who had two distinct regional affiliations—if not national identities—in the Middle Ages, one based in her two cult sites in Wales (Holywell and Gwytherin) and the other connected to her cult site in England (Shrewsbury). It is hoped that the use of both names will not cause the reader undue confusion.

[2] Scientists have identified the "blood" on the stones as another moss. Neither of the mosses, however, survive at Holywell today. The water of the well was diverted by mining in the early twentieth century, and is now supplied via the municipal water system. The treated water killed off the natural growth in the well. On the mining incident that caused the fountain to run dry and the subsequent re-routing that allowed it to flow again, see John A. Shaffer, *Winifred's Well* (Nashville, TN: Cold Tree Press, 2008). The red

years later, Gwenfrewy died for the second and final time as abbess of Gwytherin, a dual monastery some thirty miles from Holywell. Her Life survives earliest in two Latin texts of the twelfth century, both of which tell essentially the same story, albeit with minor variations in emphasis and detail.[3] The shorter of these Lives, the *Vita S. Wenefrede*, is anonymous, although it was once ascribed to Gwenfrewy's preceptor at Gwytherin, St. Eleri, and while it is usually held to be the *Vita Prima*, its exact date of composition has never been determined.[4] The longer of Gwenfrewy's Latin Lives was written *ca*. 1140 by Robert Pennant, Prior of the Benedictine Abbey of SS. Peter and Paul at Shrewsbury, and dedicated to Gwarin, Prior of Worcester.[5] In 1138, Robert had led an expedition to Wales to retrieve Gwenfrewy's bones on behalf of his abbey, and the prior attached a

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moss was *Byssus jolithus*, and the fragrant moss was *Jungermannia asplenoides*. T.W. Pritchard, *St. Winefride, Her Holy Well, and the Jesuit Mission: c.650-1930* (Wrexham: Bridge Books, 2009). 33-34.

[3] Both of Wenefred's Latin *vitae* are edited in Charles De Smedt, ed., *Acta Sanctorum, tom. I. Nov* (1887). 691-731. Later versions of the story, of course, introduce very minor differences in structure or detail. For a survey of the legend and its development over the centuries, see Elissa R. Henken, *Traditions of the Welsh Saints* (Woodbridge: D.S. Brewer, 1987). 141-51. The anonymous *Vita Prima* has been translated twice, first by Wade-Evans complete with an edition of the Latin text, and more recently by Hugh Feiss. See A.W. Wade-Evans, *Vitae Sanctorum Britanniae et Genealogiae* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1944). 288-309; and *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*, trans. Ronald Pepin and Hugh Feiss (Toronto: Peregrina Publishing, 2000). 95-113. Gwenfrewy's story was popularized in the twentieth century by Ellis Peters in the first of her Brother Cadfael novels. Ellis Peters, *A Morbid Taste for Bones: The First Chronicle of Brother Cadfael* (London: Macmillan, 1977).

[4] The anonymous Life survives in its full form in only one manuscript, on fols. 138r-145v of BL Cotton Claudius A.v, a codex of the very late twelfth century. On this manuscript, see Wade-Evans, *VSBG*: xvi-xvii. See also chapter 4, note 146 below. There also exists in BL Lansdowne MS 436, a manuscript of the early fourteenth century, a version of the anonymous Life partly conflated with the longer Latin *Vita* written by Prior Robert of Shrewsbury. For a full discussion of this composite text, see chapter 4 below. For the sake of reference, I have provided the Table of Primary Manuscripts and Printed Texts Discussed in this Study at the end of this introduction.

[5] The earliest copy of Robert's text is preserved on fols. 140r-163v of Bodleian MS Laud Misc. 114, a manuscript of the twelfth century. This manuscript cannot be, as Baring-Gould and Fisher claim, "possibly the original" that Robert penned. See S. Baring-Gould and J. Fisher, *The Lives of the British Saints*, vol. 3 (London: Charles J. Clark, 1911). 186. I am grateful to Dr. Richard Sharpe for walking me through Laud Misc. 114 to demonstrate the inaccuracy of Baring-Gould and Fisher's claim. For more on this manuscript, see Appendix A below. The other surviving copies of Prior Robert's *Vita et translatio* are found in the thirteenth-century Cambridge Trinity College MS O.4.42 and the seventeenth-century Brussels Bibliothèque Royale MS 8072. Robert's text has been translated by Ronald Pepin in *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 23-93.

detailed, firsthand account of the journey to his version of the saint's legend, the entire text coming to be known as the *Vita et Translatio S. Wenefrede ex Wallia*.

From the time of her *translatio* onward, Gwenfrewy was a saint venerated in two countries, and this dissertation is a detailed study of both her Welsh and English cults over the course of the high and late medieval periods. As such it fills a scholarly gap, for while previous studies have focused on particular aspects of her manifestation in either Welsh or English culture specifically, or else have considered only a restricted number of texts that preserve her story, often as part of a larger enterprise unconnected with Gwenfrewy herself, no effort has been made to assess the route by which this Welsh saint came to be widely known and venerated in England in the fifteenth century, a process that began with her physical and textual translation to Shrewsbury in the late 1130s.[6] My

[6] Fiona Winward has produced the most extensive study to date of the Latin *vitae*: Fiona Winward, "The Lives of St Wenefred (BHL 8847-8851)," *Analecta Bollandiana* 117 (1999). Elissa R. Henken has presented a digest of the Gwenfrewy legend from various sources as well as an index of its motifs: Henken, *Traditions of the Welsh Saints*. M.J.C. Lowry and Anne F. Sutton have examined the historical and political contexts for Caxton's 1484 printed translation of Prior Robert's *Vita et translatio*: M.J.C. Lowry, "Caxton, St. Winifred and the Lady Margaret Beaufort," *The Library*, 6th Series, V, no. 2 (1983); Anne F. Sutton, "Caxton, the Cult of St. Winifred, and Shrewsbury," in *Of Mice and Men: Image, Belief and Regulation in Late Medieval England*, ed. Linda Clark, *The Fifteenth Century V* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 2005). Lisa Eryl Jones has provided editions of the two earliest Welsh Lives of Gwenfrewy: Lisa Eryl Jones, "Golygiad o Fuchedd Gwenfrewy" (University of Cardiff, 2000). Maredudd ap Huw has edited and examined the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Welsh poetry to the saints of North Wales, including that to Gwenfrewy and her well: Maredudd ap Huw, "A Critical Examination of Welsh Poetry Relating to the Native Saints of North Wales (c. 1350-1670). 2 vols." (University of Oxford, 2001). Jane Cartwright has discussed the Welsh cult of Gwenfrewy in relation to female spirituality in Wales in general: Jane Cartwright, *Feminine Sanctity and Spirituality in Medieval Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2008). Susan Powell has edited John Mirk's Wenefred sermon as part of her critical examination of Mirk's *Festial* collection: Susan Powell, ed., *John Mirk's Festial: Edited from the British Library MS Cotton Claudius A.II, vol. 1*, Early English Text Society, o.s. 334 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009). Nancy Edwards and others have discussed the surviving fragments of Gwenfrewy's reliquary shrine: Lawrence Butler and James Graham-Campbell, "A Lost Reliquary Casket from Gwytherin, North Wales," *The Antiquaries Journal* 70 (1990); Nancy Edwards, "A Fragment of the Shrine of Gwenfrewi," *Archaeology in Wales* 31 (1991); Nancy Edwards and Tristan Gray Hulse, "A Fragment of a Reliquary Casket from Gwytherin, North Wales," *The Antiquaries Journal* 72 (1992); Nancy Edwards and Tristan Gray Hulse, "Gwytherin (SH 876 614)," *Archaeology in Wales* 37 (1997); Cormac Bourke, "The Shrine of St Gwenfrewi from Gwytherin, Denbighshire: An Alternative Interpretation," in *The Archaeology of the Early Medieval Celtic Churches*, ed. Nancy Edwards (Leeds: Maney Publishing, 2009). Tristan Gray Hulse has written extensively about the cult of Gwenfrewy in unpublished materials, and work on Gwenfrewy's post-Reformation cult includes Colleen M. Seguin, "Cures and Controversy in Early Modern

general method is to work chronologically, situating the surviving Latin, English, and Welsh texts dealing with this saint and her legend in relation to one another and to their political and historical contexts. In the end, I have found that issues of nationalism, national consciousness, or national identity, while at times significant, were in fact only occasionally at play in the spread of Gwenfrewy's cult in the Middle Ages. The sporadic attempts on the part of some fifteenth-century English writers to claim Gwenfrewy as an English saint were facilitated, of course, by the fact that she had been translated physically to England centuries before, but for most people living in the medieval British Isles, Gwenfrewy remained a Welsh saint in spite of this fact. Indeed, the English monarchy's ability to use her as a channel through which to court Welsh acceptance of English political hegemony in the context of the Glyn Dŵr revolt at the outset of the fifteenth century could only have been possible if Gwenfrewy was understood to be a Welsh saint—and one who clearly supported the legitimacy of the English crown.

Behind Ss. David and Beuno, Gwenfrewy is perhaps the best known of Welsh saints—and certainly of female Welsh saints. And while she had a notable cult in the Welsh and English borderlands from the early twelfth century and a substantial following among the royalty and nobility of England during the later Middle Ages, her original cult site in northeastern Wales, the location of her martyrdom and a miraculous fountain, remained the primary locus of her spiritual power throughout the fifteenth century and indeed remains an active site of Catholic pilgrimage even today. Gwenfrewy truly was

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Wales: The Struggle to Control St. Winifred's Well," *North American Journal of Welsh Studies* 3, no. 2 (2003); and Robert E. Scully, "St. Winefride's Well: The Significance and Survival of a Welsh Catholic Shrine from the Early Middle Ages to the Present Day," in *Saints and their Cults in the Atlantic World*, ed. Margaret Cormack (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2007). T.W. Pritchard has written an extensive history of Jesuit involvement with Wenefred's cult: Pritchard, *St. Winefride, Her Holy Well, and the Jesuit Mission*.

and is, therefore, a saint of international repute, and her cult and legend provide a unique opportunity to explore a point of Welsh and English contact in medieval Britain. The number and variety of texts preserving her legend in Latin, English, and Welsh conceal the fact that such opportunities for the study of cross-cultural interaction are rarely so rich. Given that richness, it must be conceded that the subtitle for this dissertation is rather arbitrary, as observations and conjectures will be offered at many points about the history of Gwenfrewy's cult both before 1138 and after 1512. These dates were chosen, however, because they reflect significant points in that history—the former marks the saint's *translatio* to Shrewsbury, the point from which she officially became a saint with two cults in two countries, while the latter is the date of Siôn ap Hywel ap Llywelyn Fychan's *awdl* to Gwenfrewy. This poem marks the end of a heightened devotion to the saint on the part of the Welsh bards at the close of the Middle Ages—after the Reformation there occurred in the native poetry a shift away from focusing on Gwenfrewy's agency in the healings performed at her Holywell shrine to a celebration of the beauty of the cult site itself.[7]

Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century hagiologists discounted Gwenfrewy as "a monkish post-Conquest fabrication" dreamt up to advertise the shrine at Holywell for the sake of profit.[8] This dismissive attitude is itself no longer taken seriously, and while the details of Gwenfrewy's Latin *vitae* may not inspire faith in the value of these texts as sources of historical fact for the seventh century, the existence of her cult in northeastern

[7] ap Huw, "Critical Examination of Welsh Poetry," cix-cxv.
[8] For quotation see, Donald John Hall, *English Mediaeval Pilgrimage* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965). 21; for dismissals of Wenefred as a ficticious saint, see William Fleetwood, *The Life and Miracles of St. Wenefred Together with Her Litanies and Some Historical Observations Made There On*, 2nd ed. (London, 1713). 61; and J.W. Willis-Bund, "Some Characteristics of the Welsh and Irish Saints," *Archaeologia Cambrensis* 11 (1894): 290-91.

Wales in the centuries leading up to the Shrewsbury expedition of 1138 is now held beyond question.[9] That Gwenfrewy was a native Welsh saint with a notable cult operating before the twelfth century at Holywell and, perhaps to a lesser degree, at Gwytherin is certain. The wealth of detail in Robert's *translatio* account, as well as the seemingly local traditions preserved in his *vita* and in the anonymous Life, suggest as much, especially in combination with the physical evidence from the landscape at Gwytherin. Evidence for the survival of Gwenfrewy's reliquary shrine (*Arch Gwenfrewy*) and the grave chapel dedicated to her (*Capel Gwenfrewy*) in the saints' cemetery at Gwytherin into the early decades of the eighteenth century reveals, moreover, the continuing popularity of her Welsh cult centuries after her translation.

During the early medieval period and even after Prior Robert's expedition, though, Gwenfrewy's legend was most likely kept alive at Gwytherin and Holywell primarily without the benefit of written texts. Welsh culture is extremely oral in orientation, and the native bards in the Middle Ages were responsible for preserving and handing down the *tri chof* or "three memories:" the history of Wales, the ancient Welsh tongue, and the genealogies of Welsh nobles in addition to other traditional lore.[10] Moreover, the native people living near Gwenfrewy's cult sites at Holywell and Gwytherin would no doubt have known and told her legend as a matter of local pride, keeping the story alive for each new generation. The two twelfth-century *vitae*—one of which was certainly composed by a non-Welsh monastic and the other was most likely to have been—cannot therefore be taken to represent the definitive versions of

[9] See for instance Winward, "Lives of St Wenefred," 92-94.
[10] On the *tri chof*, see, for example, J.E. Caerwyn Williams, "Gutun Owain " in *A Guide to Welsh literature, volume 2: 1282-c.1550*, ed. A.O.H. Jarman and Gwilym Rees Hughes (Landybïe, Wales: Christopher Davies, 1984), 263-65. See also the sources cited there.

Gwenfrewy's Life. On the contrary, they are merely snapshots, fossilized glimpses of one version of the saint's legend at a particular time and in a particular place.[11] By necessity, of course, we must rely on these snapshots for a great deal of our information about Gwenfrewy in the early and high medieval period, and the versions of the legend that they record influenced later traditions and retellings on both sides of the Welsh border. It is with these observations in mind that I will explore, largely in the first three chapters of this study, the extent to which the twelfth-century *vitae* represent what can be called the Holywell and Gwytherin versions of Gwenfrewy's legend.[12] Throughout this dissertation I will often refer to the *version* of the story preserved by the anonymous author, or the *version* written down by Prior Robert in order to recognize and emphasize not only the protean qualities of hagiographical narrative, but also the continuing importance of oral traditions in both Wales and England for the perpetuation of Gwenfrewy's story. While it is at times possible to determine that one or the other of the Latin *vitae* directly influenced a later retelling of her legend, we must remember that these stories continued to exist in the realm of oral discourse and were disseminated and expanded upon without regard to versions recorded perhaps centuries before. In other words, reference to Prior Robert's *version* of the story or to the anonymous author's *version* should only be taken to mean a strain of the legend closely related to or reflected by the respective author's written text.

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[11] On the static nature of written hagiography in comparison with oral storytelling, see, e.g., Thomas J. Heffernan, *Sacred Biography: Saints and their Biographers in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988). 22.

[12] This distinction was first proposed by Mr. Gray Hulse in his unpublished "Winefride and Beuno: Towards a Holywell Dossier."

With these caveats having been laid out, Robert's version of the saint's Life—which is the longest and most detailed—runs in outline as follows.[13] Gwenfrewy was the only daughter of Tyfid fab Ennydd, a wealthy landowner second only to the king and resident in northeastern Wales.[14] Driven by divine inspiration, St. Beuno one day approaches Tyfid requesting land on which to build a small church, a request that the nobleman happily fulfills, resituating his own dwelling to be nearer to the new foundation. At the same time, Tyfid places Gwenfrewy's education in Beuno's hands, and the young girl soon develops an intense devotion for God, eventually determining to live a chaste and holy life. Fearing, however, that her parents will oppose this desire, Gwenfrewy convinces Beuno to intercede and he secures permission for her to take the veil. Gwenfrewy then becomes even stricter in the observance of her faith, unwittingly attracting the notice of the devil. As luck would of course have it, Gwenfrewy remains at home ill one Sunday while her parents attend mass and it is at this time that she receives a visitor named Caradog, the son of a local ruler who has come on an errand to her father.[15] Seeing the maiden's beauty, however, the prince soon forgets his purpose for coming and propositions her outright. Gwenfrewy is initially unable to dissuade these unwelcome advances, but finally manages to convince Caradog that she requires a few moments alone in her chamber to better array herself for his affections.

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[13] Containing many variations in emphasis and detail, the anonymous Life differs at many points from the story given here, as do the numerous later versions of Gwenfrewy's story in English and in Welsh. For a survey of these variations, see Henken, *Traditions of the Welsh Saints*: 141-51. Many of the discrepancies between these different texts will be explored later in this study, specifically in chapters 3 and 4.

[14] This is the Welsh spelling of Gwenfrewy's father's name. Robert spells the name *Theuith* son of *Eliuth*. The anonymous author gives *Teuyth, Eylud filius*. Except when directly quoting the text of a particular Life, I will use the Welsh form *Tyfid* throughout this study. I will follow the same procedure for most of the names involved in the legend.

[15] Robert and the anonymous author give the prince's name as *Kadocus*/*Chadrocus* and *Karadauc* respectively, but the Welsh spelling, which I use throughout this study, is *Caradog*. His father's name is given as *Alanus* by Robert and *Alauc* by the anonymous author. The Welsh form is *Alâog*. Robert presents Beuno as *Beunous*, and the anonymous author gives his name as *Bennonus*. I use the standard Welsh form, *Beuno*, throughout.

Once free of his sight, she bolts out a back door toward Beuno's little church, but moments later the prince, having realized the ruse, is in furious pursuit. He catches up with her on the hill above the chapel and, his sword drawn, demands that she acquiesce to his lustful desire, but Gwenfrewy is obstinate, declaring that she is already joined to the heavenly king, and will not leave him for a mortal man. Caradog beheads her. Then, from the spot where the head falls there erupts a marvelous spring that can heal the ills of both man and beast—the famous Holywell fountain. The head, however, does not stop on the hill, and it rolls down and into the church where Beuno is still saying mass. Tyfid and the other parishioners are understandably distraught at the gruesome site, but Beuno picks up the maiden's severed head and marches outside to confront her killer. As Caradog disinterestedly wipes his bloody sword on the grass, Beuno decries the prince's unrepentant attitude and calls divine justice down upon him. The young man drops dead that instant, his body melting away and the earth opening up to absorb it, a sight that makes no small impression on those standing nearby. Beuno next places Gwenfrewy's head back on her shoulders and covers her body with his cloak; he then returns to the mass and delivers a sermon on the maiden's merits. Here he beseeches the congregation to pray for her recovery so that she might fulfill her religious vows and, when the prayer ends, Gwenfrewy miraculously revives, sitting up to wipe the sweat and dust from her brow, the only mark of her ordeal a thin white line that would forever remain round her throat.

This maiden formerly known as *Brewa* is, on account of this scar and its color, henceforth called *Wenfrewa*, whence the Latin form *Wenefreda*, (*G*)*wen* being the Welsh word for "white." The place of the martyrdom, previously called Dry Vale, has from the

miraculous fountain, come to be *Fennan Wenfrewa*, that is, Gwenfrewy's Fountain. In the bottom of this wondrous well are stones spotted forever with the martyr's blood in sign of her sacrifice, and the moss growing on them smells like incense. Soon after these unprecedented events, Gwenfrewy takes the veil at Beuno's hand and the holy man makes ready to depart elsewhere, guided by divine providence to leave the present site to his resurrected protégé. Before leaving, Beuno admonishes Gwenfrewy's parents to follow her example and explains to the girl herself that God has bestowed upon her three gifts: the stones in her well; the fact that anyone who seeks relief from sickness in her name will receive his or her desire by the third entreaty or else will die having gained spiritual rewards; and the annual gift that she must send to Beuno through the agency of her well's stream. He also informs her that she will dwell in her current place for seven years, after which time she will be sent elsewhere. Beuno departs. Gwenfrewy sends the annual gift (a chasuble) via the fountain's stream until the time of Beuno's death, and, having spent seven years as an abbess at Holywell, she makes her way to St. Eleri at his dual monastery of Gwytherin with the guidance of two male saints, Diheufyr at Bodfari and Sadwrn at Henllan. After the death of Tenoi, the current abbess and Eleri's mother, Gwenfrewy is appointed to lead the other nuns and she maintains an existence of model severity until her own death and burial alongside her predecessor.[16] It is here, some 500 years later, that Prior Robert exhumes her body in fulfillment of his abbey's desire to possess the bones of a powerful patron saint.

Instead of the *translatio* narrative that Robert appends to his edition of the saint's Life, the anonymous *Vita S. Wenefrede* ends with a long dossier of miracles performed at Holywell, the *Libellus Miraculorum*. Several of these miracles are of a vengeful bent,

[16] Robert gives the names of these saints, respectively, as *Elerius*, *Deiferus*, *Saturnus*, and *Theonia*.

while the healing miracles in the *Libellus* read almost like an advertisement for the well's power. Robert includes a variety of miracle stories at the end of his *vita*, but he does not repeat any from the anonymous Life or the *Libellus*, texts that may have been written to secure the right to control the Holywell shrine, perhaps by a Norman monk at the nearby abbey of Basingwerk.[17] Robert's text, on the other hand, is concerned to demonstrate the power of the saint and to support his abbey's claim to her bones. Beyond these general distinctions, the legend as preserved in Robert's *Vita et translatio* and in the *Vita S. Wenefrede* is essentially the same, and the minor but noteworthy details that distinguish them will be considered over the course of this study. It remains, therefore, to outline the methods and organization of this dissertation in greater detail.

After underscoring the links between saints and landscape in early Welsh tradition, chapter two examines the function of *translatio* narrative and situates Prior Robert's both historically and politically. While Robert never states directly how he and his brethren located Gwenfrewy's burial site, the historical evidence and the clues in his own account suggest that the monks of St. Werburgh's Abbey in Chester were the most likely source not only for his information about Holywell, but also about Gwytherin. The consideration of the historical contexts of Robert's work demonstrates that Holywell and Gwytherin operated largely independently of one another by the later eleventh and early twelfth centuries. The separation posited here between these two sites sets up arguments in subsequent chapters for the notion that, as already mentioned, the anonymous Life records the specifically Holywell tradition of Gwenfrewy's legend while Robert's *Vita et translatio* represents aspects of what can be called the Gwytherin tradition. Although his *vita* and the *translatio* are both carefully authored texts intended to serve particular

[17] For this assertion, see in general Winward, "Lives of St Wenefred."

spiritual and political agendas, Robert often shows himself to be a trustworthy recorder of the events and circumstances that marked his 1138 expedition to Gwytherin.

Drawing on the work of Tristan Gray Hulse and others, chapter three takes a close look at the physical and documentary evidence for the significance of Gwytherin as a medieval cult site, beginning with the possibility that Gwytherin was in the pre-Norman period a mother church controlled by a *clas*, an often hereditary ecclesiastical community common in medieval Wales. The surviving fragments of Gwenfrewy's reliquary shrine, known in Welsh as *Arch Gwenfrewy*, offer further clues to the status and importance of the site. Moreover, on the basis of what appear to be Anglo-Saxon artistic elements in the construction of the *Arch*, this reliquary suggests a brief period of contact between Holywell and Gwytherin at an early point. In addition to the basic layout of the site, other physical evidence at Gwytherin—including a pair of fourteenth-century grave slabs and a row of four standing stones of perhaps fifth-century date—can also be shown to substantiate or at least support the accuracy of much of Robert's eye witness account of Gwenfrewy's resting place in Wales. The late medieval tomb slabs, in combination with late seventeenth- and eighteenth-century documentation, also help to illuminate the erstwhile presence of a grave chapel dedicated to Gwenfrewy that once stood on the site. All of this evidence ultimately suggests that Robert's report of Gwytherin should not be dismissed as the exaggeration typical of an over-zealous hagiographer, and that the place was one of significance both before and after the Shrewsbury expedition of 1138. Whether or not Gwenfrewy was the sole focus of that significance prior to the twelfth-century, however, remains a matter of speculation, but the posited eighth- or ninth-

century date for *Arch Gwenfrewy* would imply that her presence in the Gwytherin landscape was not insignificant.

The fourth chapter reconsiders the textual evidence for the spread of Gwenfrewy's cult from the twelfth through the early fourteenth centuries. This reconsideration takes Prior Robert's assertion that he drew on both oral and written material in compiling his *Vita et translatio* as the starting point for an investigation not only of Robert's sources but also those of the anonymous author of the *Vita S. Wenefrede*. The discussion attempts to identify elements in each Life that may have stemmed from oral tradition rather than from the now lost *Vita S. Beunoi* that Fiona Winward has posited as a source for both of the twelfth-century *vitae* and that is now preserved in abbreviated form in the fourteenth-century Welsh *Hystoria o Uuched Beuno*.[18] Winward's study of the Lives emphasizes their written sources, but does not consider the extent to which oral tradition informed both of Gwenfrewy's *vitae*; this chapter will revisit the texts to establish the influence on the *vitae* of oral tales current at Holywell and Gwytherin in the twelfth century. The differences between Gwenfrewy's legend as recorded in the two earliest Latin accounts not only lend weight to the aforementioned notion of distinct Holywell and Gwytherin traditions of the story, but also underscore the division between Gwytherin and Holywell as cult sites. Also presented in the course of chapter four is the case for dating the *Vita S. Wenefrede* and the appended *Libellus miraculorum* to the end of the twelfth century, rather than to the years 1135-38 as has traditionally been done. The chapter then ends with a close examination of a previously unexamined Latin Life of Wenefred, the composite *vita* contained in the early fourteenth-century BL Lansdowne MS 436. This text is a deliberate and careful

[18] Ibid.

combination of the anonymous Life with portions of Robert's *Vita et translatio*, and it demonstrates that the eventual predominance of Robert's version of the saint's legend was not inevitable in the century or more after the two Latin Lives first appeared. On the contrary, the Lansdowne Life reveals that both the *Vita S. Wenefrede* and Robert's *Vita et translatio* were circulating simultaneously and in close proximity to one another by the beginning of the fourteenth century. Moreover, because it situates Wenefred in the company of Anglo-Saxon saints, the Lansdowne manuscript reveals Wenefred's continuing integration into English culture in the period between the appearance of her earliest Latin Lives in the twelfth century and the proliferation of her vernacular Lives that occurred at the end of the Middle Ages. The Lansdowne Life also highlights the extent to which the saint's story could be modified to suit the needs of different audiences. While Robert was concerned to prove Wenefred's sanctity and to demonstrate the claim that his abbey had on her bones, he was also concerned to articulate her power to convey originary identity on an ecclesiastical institution—something achieved through what Jocelyn Wogan-Browne calls virginal dotality, the power of the virgin to give herself and to be given.[19] By contrast, the Lansdowne compiler has taken elements of Robert's dotal narrative to present Wenefred as a model abbess for English nuns.

The fifth and final chapter of this study explores the spread of Wenefred's English cult from the end of the fourteenth century, reviewing the historical and political circumstances that paved the way for her to become a saint venerated on a national scale in England. These circumstances included the rise of the Lancastrian monarchy and the revolt of Owain Glyn Dŵr. Having established these contexts, the chapter examines the

[19] Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, *Saints' Lives and Women's Literary Culture, c. 1150-1300* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001). See esp. chapter 2, "Virginity and the Gift."

many English Lives of Wenefred that were produced in prose and verse over the course of the fifteenth century, including those by William Caxton and the hagiographer Osbern Bokenham, the latter of whom composed a verse Life that, having been only recently discovered, has not been studied at length before.[20] A central concern of this examination of the English Lives is the extent to which Gwenfrewy can be claimed to have been divorced from her Welsh national origins and made into an English saint serving English interests. The discussion presented here demonstrates that in fact, while some attempts were made to overlook her national background, Gwenfrewy remained an essentially Welsh saint even to her devotees in England. Moreover, while the cult at Shrewsbury might at times and for political reasons have hoped to overshadow the cult at Holywell, the latter site continued for her followers in England and in Wales to be the pole toward which personal devotion was drawn in the last century of the Middle Ages. Alongside this consideration of the English Lives of Wenefred, there is offered an examination of the late medieval *Buchedd Gwenfrewy* (*Life of Gwenfrewy*) as well as of the various Welsh poetry dedicated to the saint and her Holywell shrine in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. According to Maredudd ap Huw, the work of the *Cywyddwyr* in the second half of the fifteenth century reveals an increasing interest in the Welsh saints, and the poetry to Gwenfrewy demonstrates the ways in which this devotion was tempered by the onset of Reformation ideals in the sixteenth century.[21] I will suggest that the interest of the Welsh bards in Gwenfrewy may have been a partial

[20] The Life survives in Bokenham's expanded English translation of the *Legenda Aurea* that is preserved in the Abbotsford MS, a codex discovered by the Faculty of Advocates, Edinburgh, during the cataloging of Sir Walter Scott's library at Abbotsford House. For the discovery and identification of the manuscript, see Simon Horobin, "'The Angle of Oblivioun': A Lost Medieval Manuscript Discovered in Walter Scott's Collection," *Times Literary Supplement*, November 11 2005; and Simon Horobin, "A Manuscript Found in the Library of Abbotsford House and the Lost Legendary of Osbern Bokenham," in *English Manuscript Studies, 1100-1700*, ed. A.S.G. Edwards (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007).

[21] ap Huw, "Critical Examination of Welsh Poetry."

response to her continuing appropriation by the English. In a related fashion, I will suggest that the version of *Buchedd Gwenfrewy* in the late fifteenth-century NLW Peniarth MS 27ii represents an ideological re-writing of the history of the saint's cult by its not including and, therefore, by its denying of her *translatio* to England in the twelfth century. Scholars have supposed that *Buchedd Gwenfrewy* is a translation of Prior Robert's *Vita et translatio*, and my discussion here bears out that supposition.[22] Moreover, by reference to the two earliest copies of *Buchedd Gwenfrewy*—that surviving in Peniarth 27ii and another in NLW Llanstephan MS 34—I will further suggest that these texts stem from a now lost copy of Robert's Latin narrative that included extra details about the Gwytherin expedition, a copy that also stands behind Caxton's 1484 printed English translation of the *Vita et translatio*.

One final matter remains before we can move forward. Any discussion of national identity, no matter how brief, has first to acknowledge the complexity of that task. As a concept the nation is a mass of difficulties.[23] To begin with, how is it to be defined? And according to what particular criteria? The factors cited as prerequisites for a group to be considered—or to consider themselves—a nation usually include a recognized language and literature, a body of legal custom, an awareness of territorial boundaries, a shared cultural or historical mythology, a shared religion, and some degree of economic and military organization. But in which age and part of the world do these

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[22] E.g., Richard Hamer and Vida Russell, *Supplementary Lives in Some Manuscripts of the Gilte Legende*, Early English Text Society, no. 315 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000). 39; Cartwright, *Feminine Sanctity and Spirituality in Medieval Wales*: 72. Jones observed that at least parts of the Llanstephan 34 B*uchedd Gwenfrewy* were translated from Robert's text: Jones, "Golygiad o Fuchedd Gwenfrewy," 237.

[23] For general surveys and critiques, see, for instance, Anthony D. Smith, *Nationalism and Modernism: A Critical Survey of Recent Theories of Nations and Nationalism* (London: Routledge, 1998); and cf. Len Scales and Oliver Zimmer, eds., *Power and the Nation in European History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005). For a survey of theories of national consciousness particularly in England, see Krishnan Kumar, *The Making of English National Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

features coalesce to produce the first true nation? General consensus on the answer to that question hardly exists, and claims have been made for the existence of the idea of the nation in a number of countries throughout history. And although England is perhaps the most commonly touted example of the world's first nation, students will find little agreement on the exact point at which the English recognized themselves as one. Alongside these concerns, the phenomenon of nationalism that the nation makes possible presents its own host of problems, beginning with the issue of what exactly the word "nationalism" should be taken to mean. One definition holds that nationalism is an ideological movement that arose in response to the "novel conditions" of the modern world, i.e., "capitalism, industrialism, the bureaucratic state, urbanisation and secularisation."[24] Known as the modernist position, this view claims the nation itself as a relatively recent historical development, one that cannot be said to pre-date the late eighteenth century. It also holds that the nation arises from the need of elites to unify and standardize a variegated population through mass education and culture in an era of industrialization and political revolution. The welding of national sentiment to political machinery in the service of particular ideological goals, nationalism acts as the "religion

[24] Anthony D. Smith, "National Identities: Modern and Medieval?," in *Concepts of National Identity in the Middle Ages*, ed. Simon Forde, Lesley Johnson, and Alan V. Murray (Leeds: University of Leeds Press, 1995), 23. Recognizing the varied nature of the elements that help to define the phenomenon he discusses, Smith rejects the use of "nationalism" as an umbrella term because it does not allow for sufficient distinction between the different aspects involved. He emphasizes instead the need to differentiate between "nationalism" as an ideological movement, and "national sentiment," "the feelings of collective belonging to a nation and a desire for its security and welfare." Ibid., 24-25. Of course, terminology of this sort is never free from contention; see, for instance, the modification of Smith's definition of nationalism from an ideological movement to a political one in John Breuilly, "Changes in the Political Uses of the Nation: Continuity or Discontinuity?," in *Power and the Nation in European History*, ed. Len Scales and Oliver Zimmer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 67-101. On the terminological issues at stake in the discussion of nations and nationalism in general, see Kumar, *The Making of English National Identity*: 47-48. See also Louis L. Snyder, *Encyclopedia of Nationalism* (New York: Paragon House, 1990). 245. Miroslav Hroch observes that the various meanings ascribed to the term nationalism over the years serve primarily to hinder its usefulness as a scholarly designation. Miroslav Hroch, "Nationalism and National Movements: Comparing the Past and Present of Central and Eastern Europe," *Nations and Nationalism* 2 (1996): 36.

surrogate" of the modern age, and, in combination with nations themselves, provides for industrial society the "essential cement, the necessary solidarity without which it would disintegrate into anarchy and chaos."[25] While modernists assign nations and nationalism strictly to the modern era, perennialists emphasize the evidence for nations, nationalism, national sentiment, or national consciousness in pre-modern periods.[26] Although not every scholar arguing for national consciousness in the centuries before the nineteenth will fall squarely under the heading, perennialists contend that "nations, if not nationalism, are coeval with history" and that nations "have always existed, as long as there have been written records."[27] This school of thought often makes little distinction between nationality and ethnicity, claiming that ethnic groups or nations are cognate

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[25] Smith, "National Identities: Modern and Medieval?." The extremely brief summary of modernist theories here presented fails to do justice to the complex nuances of the work of modernist scholars. However, given the extent of those nuances, and given that the present study is concerned only with theories of the nation in the twelfth through the fourteenth centuries, further summary of modernist scholarship was deemed unnecessary. An initial bibliography of seminal modernist studies of the nation and nationalism would include but not be limited to Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1983); Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, 2nd ed. (London: Verso, 1991); Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); John Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1994). See also S.J. Woolf, ed., *Nationalism in Europe, 1815 to the Present: A Reader* (London: Routledge, 1996).

[26] The dichotomy presented here between modernists and perennialists is by necessity an oversimplification. Within these primary categories there exist further divisions of scholarly thought into two camps, i.e., primordialism and instrumentalism. These schools are, however, concerned more with ethnicity and ethnic identity than with nations and nationalism proper. Primordialists focus on the essential, affective, and ineffable ties (either sociobiological or cultural) that form the sense of ethnicity and ethnic identity that guides human behavior. In this regard they take a bottom-up approach and see ethnicity and nationality as being based on "primordial" criteria, e.g., language, kinship, territory, and religion. Primordialists emphasize the intimate bonds between these criteria that create a powerful sense of collective belonging which in turn fosters the willingness to accept the self-sacrifice characteristic of nations and nationalism. By contrast, instrumentalists take ethnicity and nationality as the loci of and resources for the mass mobilization of ethnic communities by often rationalizing, self-interested elites. To the instrumentalist, the "competition of elites and their consequent selections of cultural resources have the effect of politicising the culture and changing the self-definition of the community from that of an ethnic group to one of a nationality competing with others in the political arena." It used to be that primordialists were always perennialists and that instrumentalists were always modernists, but this is no longer the case. Smith, *Nationalism and Modernism*: 155 and 223. For quotation, see 155.

[27] Smith, "National Identities: Modern and Medieval?," 22.

social and historical constructs.[28] While accepting the modernity of nationalism, perennialists view nations as a "constant and fundamental feature of human society throughout *recorded* history," a fact that explains the perception of nations as immemorial.[29] Modern nations are then seen as either "updated versions of immemorial ethnic communities, or as collective cultural identities that have existed, alongside ethnic communities, in all epochs of human history."[30] In many ways then, the distinction between nation and ethnicity is a matter of semantics.

In the case of England, arguments have been made for its status as a nation, and for the existence there of nationalism, in every century prior to the eighteenth.[31] For example, Alfred Smyth, James Campbell, Patrick Wormald, Sarah Foot, and Adrian Hastings locate the beginnings of English national identity in the pre-Conquest period, citing among other factors Bede's vision of the English as a new Israel, King Alfred's wars with the Danes and his legal reforms and promotion of vernacular literature, as well as the subsequently increasing organization and centralization of Anglo-Saxon bureaucratic and economic administration.[32] John Gillingham argues for the emergence

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[28] Smith, *Nationalism and Modernism*: 159.
[29] Ibid.
[30] Ibid.
[31] A thorough survey and critique of theories on the development of England's national status and of English national consciousness in the medieval and early modern periods can be found in chapters 3 through 6 of Kumar, *The Making of English National Identity*. A general critique of such theories can also be found in Breuilly, "Changes in the Political Uses of the Nation: Continuity or Discontinuity?."
[32] Alfred P. Smyth, "The Emergence of English National Identity, 700-1000," in *Medieval Europeans: Studies in Ethnic Identity and National Perspectives in Medieval Europe*, ed. Alfred P. Smyth (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998); James Campbell, *The Anglo-Saxon State* (London: Hambledon and London, 2000). See chs. 1 and 2; Patrick Wormald, "Bede, the *Bretwaldas* and the Origins of the *Gens Anglorum*," in *Ideal and Reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Society: Studies Presented to J.M. Wallace-Hadrill*, ed. Patrick Wormald, Donald Bullough, and Roger Collins (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983), 99-129; Patrick Wormald, "The Venerable Bede and the 'Church of the English'," in *The English Religious Tradition and the Genius of Anglicanism*, ed. Geoffrey Rowell (Ikon: Wantage, 1992), 13-32; Patrick Wormald, "*Engla-Lond*: The Making of an Allegiance," *Journal of Historical Sociology* 7 (1994): 1-24; Sarah Foot, "The Making of *Angelcynn*: English Identity before the Norman Conquest," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 6 (1996); Adrian Hastings, *The Construction of Nationhood: Ethnicity, Religion and Nationalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997). On the importance of kingship to medieval peoples'

of both English nationalism and imperialism in the twelfth century, an assertion based in part on the attitude of English historians that the Irish, Welsh, and Scots were barbarians on account of their outdated economic, military, and marital practices.[33] M.T. Clanchy argues that a feeling of national identity sprung up among the English gentry as a result of conflicts over royal administrative decisions favoring foreign-born courtiers and legates in the thirteenth century.[34] Thorlac Turville-Petre situates the advent of nationalism in England in the linguistic, literary, and historiographical developments of the fourteenth.[35] Agreeing with Turville-Petre, R.R. Davies sees the development of what he calls "linguistic nationalism" in fourteenth-century England, while Anthony Smith maintains that it is only from the fifteenth century that we can discern with confidence "a growing sense of English national identity, in a wider national state."[36] Philip Schwyzer sees the growth of nationalism in sixteenth-century England and Wales specifically in the role played by memory and nostalgia in the Early Modern literary imagination, and Liah Greenfeld situates the initial appearance of English national sentiment in the early 1500s as a result of the majority of the "people" identifying themselves with the "nation," something evidenced by a broad range of contemporary

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sense of identity, see Susan Reynolds, *Kingdoms and Communities in Western Europe, 900-1300*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997). See esp. chapter 8, "The Community of the Realm."

[33] John Gillingham, *The English in the Twelfth Century: Imperialism, National Identity and Political Values* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2000).

[34] M.T. Clanchy, *England and its Rulers, 1066-1272: Foreign Lordship and National Identity*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998). Cf. also ch. 5 of Michael Prestwich, *English Politics in the Thirteenth Century* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990).

[35] Thorlac Turville-Petre, *England the Nation: Language, Literature, and National Identity, 1290-1340* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996). See the later qualification of the ideas expressed in this book in Thorlac Turville-Petre, "Afterword: The Brutus Prologue to *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*," in *Imagining a Medieval English Nation*, ed. Kathy Lavezzo (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004), 340-46. See also Derek Pearsall, "The Idea of Englishness in the Fifteenth Century," in *Nation, Court and Culture: New Essays on Fifteenth-Century English Poetry*, ed. Helen Cooney (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2001), 15-27.

[36] R.R. Davies, "The People of Britain and Ireland 1100-1400: IV. Language and Historical Mythology," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 7 (1997): 3; Smith, "National Identities: Modern and Medieval?," 35. Cf. Pearsall, "The Idea of Englishness in the Fifteenth Century."

literature and later shored up by the Henrician Reformation and the establishment of the independent English church.[37] Hans Kohn maintains that the Puritan Revolution of the seventeenth century first united the English people into a clearly identifiable nation, one possessed of a nationalism espousing the principles of equality and common destiny, familiarly based on the Old Testament idea of Israel as the nation after which England sought to model itself.[38] From a consideration of these manifold and generally conflicting theories, Krishnan Kumar has concluded that

> Nationalism is so important a principle, and so consequential in its effects, that the desire to discover its founding moment and formation in one's own period is difficult to resist. But clearly the period-bound historians cannot all be right; or rather, the likelihood is that they are looking at different things.[39]

Certainly, one cannot take the terminology of one era and hope to apply it without issue to another, and, with an awareness of changing cultural and historical circumstances and the terminological shifting these inevitably produce, individual phenomena can be identified as evidence for "nations" or "nationalism" in any period one chooses to examine. Simply put, these terms signal different concepts, different political and cultural constructs, at different points in time, none of which need necessarily overlap or connect with one another in any sort of teleological narrative of inevitable progress or evolution. The modernist conceptions of "nations" and "nationalism" validly explain the socio-political arrangements of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-centuries, but these terms cannot be said to apply in exactly the same way to political ideas and institutions of the

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[37] Philip Schwyzer, *Literature, Nationalism and Memory in Early Modern England and Wales* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Leah Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992).
[38] Hans Kohn, "The Genesis and Character of English Nationalism," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 1 (1940); Hans Kohn, *The Idea of Nationalism: A Study in Its Origins and Background* (New York: Macmillan, 1944).
[39] Kumar, *The Making of English National Identity*: 41.

tenth. At the same time, this does not mean that something we might today choose to describe as a nation, national consciousness, or nationalism did not exist at earlier points—it simply existed in a form different from roughly comparable phenomena of later eras for which no sufficiently different terminology is available. With such a caveat in mind, we can turn to Jonathan Good's approach to nationalism in his study of St. George as the patron of medieval and modern England,

> National*ism*, the uncompromising demand that one's own nation possess its own unif[i]ed sovereign state, with the refusal to acknowledge other forms of political organization as even legitimate, may be a modern phenomenon, but *national*ism—a sense of belonging to a nation coupled with a feeling of partiality towards it—is not necessarily so, and is one reason why modern nationalism has been politically so strong.[40]

Even here, of course, one could quibble about the meaning of the "nation" toward which a given group feels a "sense of belonging," and such arguments can extend *ad nauseam*. Working from Good's distinction between national*ism* and *national*ism just quoted, however, it is certain that, as social creatures, human beings of all eras naturally conceive of themselves as part of one group or another based on a variety of shared criteria or attributes that contrast with the criteria or attributes by which other groups define themselves. Some of these criteria are recognized as being shared broadly enough to place individuals in the community of a country, a homeland, or, indeed, a nation. At least in terms of the individual subject, Lesley Johnson suggests that the case of someone like Gerald of Wales demonstrates the fluidity of a claim to a given national identity and implies that "national identity is a relational term and represents *one of a number of ways* in which any subject might seek to identify themselves or be named and classified by

[40] Jonathan Good, *The Cult of St. George in Medieval England* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2009). 7. For Good's succinct survey of the questions and problems related to the study of nations and nationalism both modern and medieval, see 4-16.

others."[41] This implication leads to the idea that "discussions of national identity can be most satisfactorily conducted in terms which allow recognition of its co-articulation with other constituative [*sic*] markers of the subject."[42] Robert Bartlett makes a similar point in regard to Gerald: "nationality is not [a] matter of objective classification at all. It is a matter of identification . . . a social process [in which] Self-identification exists in a close relationship with identification by others and identification of others."[43] Indeed, it is at the border, the point of contact and contrast with others whose cultural attributes differ markedly from one's own that awareness of one's broadest community, one's nation, becomes clearest.

The present study will examine the development of Gwenfrewy's cult in England and in Wales from the twelfth through the sixteenth centuries, a development that occurred in the context of various other social and cultural interactions between the English and the Welsh that had far-reaching effects on the continued relationship of the two peoples.[44] Political relations between their countries were being redefined in the post-Conquest era: after conquering England, the Normans had attempted the same in Wales but had made only piecemeal, though substantial progress by the end of the eleventh century. This was in part a result of the fragmentation that characterized the Welsh political system, for the invaders had no single Welsh ruler whom they could

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[41] Lesley Johnson, "Imagining Communities: Medieval and Modern," in *Concepts of National Identity in the Middle Ages*, ed. Lesley Johnson Simon Forde, Alan V. Murray (Leeds: University of Leeds Press, 1995), 8. Emphasis added.
[42] Ibid., 9.
[43] Robert Bartlett, *Gerald of Wales, 1146-1223* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982). 10.
[44] For what follows here, see R.R. Davies, *Conquest, Coexistence, and Change: Wales, 1063-1415* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987). On the Norman invasion of Wales generally see chapters 1-4; on the Welsh church from the twelfth through the mid-fourteenth centuries, see chapter 7.

defeat and whose authority they could usurp.[45] The Normans perhaps had equal if not greater initial success in their attempts to reform the Welsh church and to bring it in line with continental organization and practice. The Welsh responded by asserting the long-standing independence of the Welsh church under St. David, and by composing hagiographies that insisted on the ancient character and status of native ecclesiastical institutions reaching back to the sixth and seventh centuries, the Age of the Saints.[46] All of these processes were ongoing at the time of Gwenfrewy's *translatio* in the late 1130s.

Indeed, Gwenfrewy was taken from her native land during a decade of momentous change for both Wales and England, a time during which perceptions of Welsh and English identity—as well as the historical relations between the two—were being re-examined and reconfigured. Along with the onset of civil war following the death of Henry II late in 1135, this was the decade in which Geoffrey of Monmouth completed his immensely influential *Historia Regum Brittaniae*, a work that created and popularized both a glorious history and a prophetic future for the Welsh at a time when they were, according to John Gillingham, coming to be perceived by the English as uncivilized barbarians.[47] In opposition to this attitude Geoffrey's *Historia* offered

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[45] Michael Richter, "The Political and Institutional Background to National Consciousness in Medieval Wales," in *Nationality and the Pursuit of National Independence: Papers Read Before the Conference Held at Trinity College, Dublin, 26-31 May, 1975*, ed. T.W. Moody (Belfast: The Appletree Press, 1978), 39.

[46] On this point see, for instance, Wendy Davies, "Propery Rights and Property Claims in Welsh *Vitae* of the Eleventh Century," in *Hagiographie Cultures et Sociétés IVe-XIIe siècles* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1981).

[47] For the Latin text of *Historia Regum Britanniae* see Neil Wright, ed., *The Historia Regum Britanniae of Geoffrey of Monmouth*, 5 vols. (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1985). The standard English version is Lewis Thorpe, trans., *Geoffrey of Monmouth: The History of the Kings of Britain* (London: Penguin, 1966). Numerous Welsh translations of Geoffrey's text, collectively known as *Brut y Brenhinedd*, were made before the end of the twelfth century. For which, see Brynley F. Roberts, ed., *Brut y Brenhinedd: Llanstephan MS. 1 Version*, Mediaeval and Modern Welsh Series 5 (Dublin: Institute for Advanced Studies, 1971); and John Jay Parry, ed. and trans., *Brut y Brenhinedd (Cotton Cleopatra Version)* (Cambridge, MA: Mediaeval Academy of America, 1937). <http://www.medievalacademy.org/Digital_Editions/Parry_0027_BkmrkdPDF.pdf>, accessed May 11, 2012. See also Brynley F. Roberts, "Geoffrey of Monmouth, *Historia Regum Britanniae* and *Brut y*

narratives of hope against which the Welsh could balance their present state of subordination and through which they could aspire to a better future. At the same time, the 1130s were the decade in which the Welsh were coming to accept that they were a people relegated to one corner of the island over which they had long laid a much larger claim. Evidence for this comes from the shift in Latin nomenclature that the Welsh appear to have used to refer to themselves in historical chronicles.[48] According to R.R. Davies, a name is the essence of a people's identity, and therefore, "to change a people's name is to change its identity."[49] A name is the label into which the complexities of that identity are distilled and under which a group understands itself to be a single, cohesive unit: "Names in that sense make a people; no people can exist without its name. That is precisely why peoples were so haunted by the prospect of the loss of their name."[50]

Brenhinedd," in *The Arthur of the Welsh: The Arthurian Legend in Medieval Welsh Literature*, ed. A.O.H. Jarman, Rachel Bromwich, and Brynley F. Roberts (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1991), 97-116; and chapter 2, "The Context and Purpose of Geoffrey of Monmouth's History of the Kings of Britain," in Gillingham, *The English in the Twelfth Century*. For the links between prophecy and inchoate national identity in medieval Wales, see Peredur I. Lynch, "Proffwydoliaeth a'r Syniad o Genedl," (Bangor: University of Wales Bangor, School of Education, 2007). Lynch takes the modernist approach to the study of nations and nationalism, but notes that these phenomena did not arise in the modern world *ex nihilo*, and points to what he identifies in medieval Wales as the broad sense of belonging to a common people with an attachment to a local *patria*. I am grateful to Dr. Lynch for discussing his views with me at the 2011 CSANA Annual Meeting. For Gillingham's views on twelfth-century English perceptions of the Welsh, see note 55 below. On the literary links that Welsh culture had with continental culture during the medieval period, something that stands in opposition to the perception that they were "barbarians," see Ceridwen Lloyd-Morgan, "Crossing the Borders: Literary Borrowing in Medieval Wales and England," in *Authority and Subjugation in Writing of Medieval Wales*, ed. Ruth Kennedy and Simon Meecham-Jones (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

[48] Huw Pryce, ""British or Welsh?" National Identity in Twelfth-Century Wales," *The English Historical Review* 116, no. 468 (2001): 775-801. See also the discussion in R.R. Davies, "The Identity of 'Wales' in the Thirteenth Century," in *From Medieval to Modern Wales: Historical Essays in Honour of Kenneth O. Morgan and Ralph A. Griffiths*, ed. R.R. Davies and Geraint H. Jenkins (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2004), 45-52. Cf. Pryce's and Davies's discussions of this terminological shift with Gillingham's observations on the ways in which twelfth-century historians like Geoffrey Gaimar and Henry of Huntingdon understood and employed the terms "Norman" and "English." Gillingham, *The English in the Twelfth Century*: chapters 7 and 8.

[49] R.R. Davies, "The People of Britain and Ireland 1100-1400: I. Identities," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 4 (1994): 2 and 3.

[50] Ibid., 3.

Among the peoples of the Isles, it was the ancestors of the English who first sorted their name (*gens Anglorum, Angli, Anglici, Angelcynn*), and that by no later than the beginning of the eighth century.[51] By contrast, the Welsh did not achieve such terminological fixity for themselves until several centuries later. Before the twelfth century, Latin terms for Wales (*Britannia*) and the Welsh (*Britones, Britannii*) were ambiguous in meaning, as was the vernacular word *Cymry*—they could refer to Celtic peoples from Strathclyde to Wales and even to Brittany, and in the case of *Cymry* did not clearly distinguish between the land and its inhabitants.[52] While by some point in the eleventh century the meaning of *Cymry* seems to have narrowed to denote Wales and the Welsh alone, Huw Pryce observes that, faced with the realities of conquest, the Welsh needed to differentiate themselves from other Celtic peoples and territories in Latin, not just in their own language by the early twelfth century. In the 1130s, therefore, the native annals and chronicles (i.e., the *Brut* tradition) more or less ceased to use the word *Britaniaid* and reverted instead to using *Cymry*, indicative of a shift from a "British" to a "Welsh" vocabulary, i.e., a shift from *Britones* to *Walenses*, etc., in the Latin chronicles underlying the native ones. Pryce maintains that the Welsh could no longer afford the semantic ambiguity of terms like *Britannia* and *Britones*, and so adopted the English-derived Latin terminology (*Wallia, Walenses*) as a means of distinguishing themselves from other Brittonic peoples. Latin terminology highly out of touch with the political and geographical situation of the early twelfth century simply could not express a unique identity on the international stage, and the Welsh were forced to accept and employ terms of non-native origin to retain a distinct national identity in the eyes of foreigners. In such

[51] Ibid., 7.
[52] For what follows, see Pryce, ""British or Welsh?" National Identity in Twelfth-Century Wales," 775-801.

fluctuating circumstances, the Welsh had not yet achieved an identity for themselves stable enough to support more fully elaborated expressions of national consciousness. According to one commentator, it was not until the thirteenth century, in the process of political unification under Llywelyn ap Gruffudd, that "Welsh national consciousness found the earliest expressions which can still be traced."[53]

Still, by the 1130s, the decade in which Gwenfrewy was translated to England, the Welsh clearly understood their position as a distinct people occupying a distinct region and the English regarded them as such.[54] By the beginning of the twelfth century, the descendants of the Normans living on the Welsh border had begun to be absorbed into English culture and embraced an English identity, while at the same time they came to view themselves as culturally and morally superior to their Celtic neighbors.[55] In the

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[53] Richter, "The Political and Institutional Background to National Consciousness in Medieval Wales," 38. Anticipating Pryce to a certain degree, Richter notes that the native rulers of Wales adopted a new name for themselves by the end of the twelfth century, changing from "Britons" (*Britones*) to "Welshmen" (*Wallenses*). He maintains that this shift indicates a weakening of the link between Welshmen and their sense of a glorious past, a move from a "retrospective mythology" to a "prospective" one. In the *intitulatio* formulae of the charters issued by Welsh rulers over the course of the twelfth century, Richter identifies further terminological changes—the abandonment of native territorial designations (e.g., *Venedotia*, *Demetia*, *Argwestli*, *Powyssentium*) in favor of English-derived ones (*Norwallia*, *Sudwallia*). For discussion of these matters, see ibid., 44. R.R. Davies argues that key to thirteenth-century attempts to "make" Wales was the way in which Welsh rulers appropriated the term *Wallia* "as a watchword of their political programme and political dreams," rendering it a political rather than a purely geographic designation, one that signaled a unified people bound by native laws and common descent under the banner of Gwynedd. Davies, "The Identity of 'Wales' in the Thirteenth Century," 45.

[54] Wales had emerged as an identifiable geographical unit in the tenth and eleventh centuries. See Davies, "The Identity of 'Wales' in the Thirteenth Century," 46.

[55] On English absorption of the Normans, see Max Lieberman, *The March of Wales, 1067-1300: A Borderland of Medieval Britain* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2008). 56-57; Hastings, *Construction of Nationhood*: 5, 43-45, and 171; Turville-Petre, *England the Nation*: 91-98; R.R. Davies, "The People of Britain and Ireland 1100-1400: II. Names, Boundaries and Regnal Solidarities," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 5 (1995): 7 and 11-13. On the perceived cultural superiority of the English, see chapter 3, "Conquering the Barbarians: War and Chivalry in Britain and Ireland," in Gillingham, *The English in the Twelfth Century*: 41-58. See also Lieberman, *The March of Wales, 1067-1300*: 63-67. On Shropshire as a model for the political and military construction of the March, see Max Lieberman, *The Medieval March of Wales: The Creation and Perception of a Frontier, 1066-1283* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010). For the Norman adoption of Anglo-Saxon royal saints, see Susan J. Ridyard, "*Condigna Veneratio*: Post-Conquest Attitudes to Anglo-Saxon Saints," *Anglo-Norman Studies* 9 (1987); and Susan J. Ridyard, *The Royal Saints of Anglo-Saxon England: A Study of West Saxon and East Anglian Cults* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988). 251-52.

chaotic opening years of Stephen's reign, the Welsh undertook their most significant revolt of the twelfth century, and the conflicts of the period brought to Anglo-Norman attention the outdated military practices of the Welsh (and, later in the century, of the Scots and Irish as well).[56] According to Gillingham, while economic development and the influence of continental ideas had fostered the concept of chivalry in England, the Welsh remained in a relatively moneyless and pastoral economy where killing hostages was more common that ransoming them, and where, on the other hand, war also remained a means of acquiring slaves. Coupled with negative perceptions of Welsh and Irish marital practices—polygamy, divorce, remarriage, consanguinity—these ideas about Celtic practices in warfare led the Anglo-Normans to develop in the twelfth century a hatred for the peoples of the Celtic fringe that first gave rise to English imperialism. Adrian Hastings has argued somewhat similarly for the advent of English imperial attitudes, claiming that Anglo-Saxon national identity, modeled on Bede's view of the English as a new Israel and strong enough to absorb the Normans within a century of the conquest, was itself transformed under Norman influence into an aggressive and specifically imperial nationalism:

> As [the Normans] fused with the English, they turned the latter into potential imperialists. . . . If the English gave the world the model of a nation-state, the Normans assured that it would be an aggressive model, and necessarily productive of counter-nationalism among the ethnicities it overran.[57]

It was at the end of the decade in question, in 1138, that Gwenfrewy was taken from her native soil and carried to a shrine in a foreign abbey, and it was likely before the

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[56] On the significance of the Welsh revolts of 1136-38, see Sir John Edward Lloyd, *A History of Wales from the Earliest Times to the Edwardian Conquest*, 2 vols. (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1967). 469-80; Davies, *Conquest, Coexistence, and Change*: 45-46; Gillingham, *The English in the Twelfth Century*: 32.

[57] Hastings, *Construction of Nationhood*: 45.

end of the decade, by *ca*. 1140, that Robert penned his account of her life and the mission that brought her to Shrewsbury. We can, therefore, detect in his narrative of the *translatio* some of the attitudes that Gillingham and other scholars claim as characteristic of the 1130s, thereby marking the event further as one of imperialistic cultural appropriation. At no point does Robert comment directly on the character of his Welsh contemporaries, but at the beginning of his *translatio* account, he notes that Wales was a province "ante multis inhabitata sit sanctis quorum merita diversis in locis prædicabantur" ("previously inhabited by many saints whose merits were proclaimed in diverse places").[58] This description of Wales as a land once filled with holy people contrasts with Robert's general lack of remarks about twelfth-century Welshmen throughout the remainder of the narrative. However, in Robert's report of his meeting with the prince of Gwynedd, the Welsh ruler in whose territory Gwenfrewy's bones reside, Robert has him muse on the possible cause of the saint's desire to be translated out of Wales—her countrymen have likely failed to revere and respect her sufficiently on account of negligence or outright scorn, and she has logically chosen to abandon them for strangers who will do her more honor.[59] An even more damning picture of the Welsh appears in Robert's report of the man at Gwytherin whose opposition to the *translatio* Robert silenced with a bribe, a change of heart that the man's fellows—ignorant of the exchange—are said to have taken as a sign of divine agency working on behalf of the Shrewsbury monks.[60] As these scenes demonstrate, one of Robert's primary intentions in the *Vita et translatio* is to prove that his abbey is more worthy to hold Gwenfrewy's relics

[58] De Smedt, *AASS, t.I. Nov.*: 727; *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 77. Robert opens his narrative of Gwenfrewy's Life with a very similar sentiment. For which, see ibid., 27.
[59] De Smedt, *AASS, t.I. Nov.*: 728; *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 81.
[60] De Smedt, *AASS, t.I. Nov.*: 729; *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 86.

than are the saint's own countrymen. He was, of course, working within established hagiographic topoi, but one should not assume that Robert did not believe in the righteousness of his mission. To accomplish his task, Robert and his fellows must certainly have thought themselves entitled to the bones of this Welsh martyr—indeed, the basic premise of the *translatio* narrative could only be accepted by Robert's audience if Welsh spiritual negligence was something that could be accepted without question. This sort of morally superior attitude may well have informed Gwenfrewy's continued appropriation by the English in later centuries, a process in which she came on the one hand to be enlisted as a recognizably Welsh saint supporting the hegemony of the English crown, and on the other as a saint whose Welsh origins could be completely ignored by her appropriators as she was resituated among the saints of England. As we shall see by the end of this study, however, that process was not ever completely successful, and Gwenfrewy's connection with Wales could never fully be broken.

Table 1: Primary Manuscripts and Printed Texts Discussed in this Study	
Latin *Vitae Wenefredae*	
London, BL Cotton MS Claudius A.v	Early 13th-ct. MS, possibly written at Worcester, containing anonymous *Vita S. Wenefrede* (fols. 138r-145r)
London, BL Lansdowne MS 436	Early 14th-ct. MS owned by the nuns of Romsey Abbey, Hampshire, and containing conflated version of the *Vita S. Wenefrede* and Prior Robert's *Vita et translatio* (fols. 107r-109r)
Oxford, Bodleian Laud MS 114	12th-ct. MS containing Prior Robert's *Vita et Translatio* (fols. 140r-163v); not Robert's original (see discussion in Appendix A below).

Table 1: Primary Manuscripts and Printed Texts Discussed in this Study (Cont.)	
Welsh *Bucheddau Gwenfrewy* and Related Items	
Aberystwyth, NLW Llanstephan MS 34	Later 16th-ct. MS containing Welsh Lives (*Bucheddau*) of Katherine, Gwenfrewy (fols. 189-249), Mary Magdalene, Martha, Mary of Egypt, and Margaret
Aberystwyth, NLW Peniarth MS 27ii	Late 15th-ct. MS containing Welsh Lives of Mary Magdalene and Gwenfrewy. Life of Gwenfrewy (pages 91-121) omits account of *translatio* to Shrewsbury
Oxford, Jesus College MS 119	14th-ct. MS known as *Llyvyr Agkyr Llandewivrevi* (*Book of the Anchorite of Llanddewibrefi*) containing the *Hystoria o Uuched Beuno* (*History of the Life of Beuno*) on fols. 104r-109r
English *Lives of Wenefred*	
Edinburgh, Advocates Library, Abbotsford MS	MS datable to *ca*. 1450-75 containing Osbern Bokenham's translation of *Legenda Aurea*. Bokenham's verse *Lyf of Seynt Wenefrede* appears on fols. 214v-218v.
London, BL Additional MS 35298	Only copy of the *Gilte Legende* to include the Lives of Edward the Confessor, Wenefred, and Erkenwald (fols. 48r-57r). This is the closest MS to the lost exemplar (*C) of Caxton's *Golden Legend* of 1483, an exemplar that also had the lives of Edward, Wenefred, and Erkenwald.
Oxford, Bodleian MS 779	Early 15th-ct. copy of the *South English Legendary* containing the verse *Seint Vonefrede the Holi Virgine* (fols. 189r-189v)
London, BL Cotton MS Claudius A.II	Copy of John Mirk's *Festial* that was compiled from various exemplars by different scribes over a long period of time. This copy of the *Festial* includes Mirk's sermon for Wenefred's June feast day (fols. 82v-84r)
Oxford, Bodleian MS Gough Ecclesiastical Topography 4	Mid-15th century copy of John Mirk's *Festial* that includes his sermon for Wenefred's June feast day

Table 1: Primary Manuscripts and Printed Texts Discussed in this Study (Cont.)	
Oxford, Bodleian MS Douce 302	Defective copy of John Audelay's poems, including two to Wenefred. Manuscript is datable to *ca*. 1426-31
New York, Pierpont Morgan Library Bühler MS 379	Late 16th-ct. MS containing a *Lyfe of St. Weneffryde* (fols. 1r-6v) that seems to derive from Caxton's printed versions of 1483 and 1484
Stonyhurst College Library MS A.II.8	16th- or 17th-century copy of John Mirk's Wenefred sermon appended with a dossier of miracles that occurred at Holywell from 1556 to 1668
Printed *Lives of Wenefred*	
STC 24873	William Caxton's 1483 translation of the *Legenda Aurea* known as *The Golden Legend* containing a *Lyf of Saynt Wenefryde* closely related to that in BL Additional 35298
STC 25853	Caxton's 1484 printed (and condensed) translation of Prior Robert's *Vita et translatio* entitled *The lyf of the holy and blessid vyrgyn saynt Wenefryde*

CHAPTER 2

SAINTS, PEOPLES, AND LANDSCAPES IN THE EARLY BRITISH ISLES

Exploring the evidence provided by early Anglo-Saxon calendars for "the highly localized nature of native cults" in the eighth and ninth centuries, Catherine Cubitt underscores the "power of the written word to shape and diffuse the cult of saints."[1] Those cults shaped and diffused through liturgical and hagiographical texts in England and elsewhere differed, of course, in character and focus from popular reverence for the holy dead, tied as it was to sacred features in the landscape and kept alive orally rather than on the manuscript page.[2] Before the tenth century, the veneration of saints in Anglo-Saxon England was a highly localized phenomenon, and it was only with the advent of the Benedictine reformers and their interest in English saints of the pre-Viking Age that previously local cults began to be known more widely through hagiographical accounts written to promote the interests of reformed minsters.[3] A similar situation obtained over the border in early medieval Wales, where the veneration of most native saints was geographically restricted, focused on sites considered to be founded by or

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[1] Catherine Cubitt, "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), 439-40.

[2] Ibid., 426; see also Graham Jones, *Saints in the Landscape* (Stroud: Tempus 2007). For an examination of the interaction between written and oral elements of saints' cults in Brittany that serves as a starting point for much of what follows here, see Julia M. H. Smith, "Oral and Written: Saints, Miracles and Relics in Brittany, *c*. 850-1250," *Speculum* 65 (1990): 309-43.

[3] John Blair, "A Saint for Every Minster? Local Cults 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). On the promulgation of martyrologies by tenth-century reformers, see Michael Lapidge, "The Saintly Life in Anglo-Saxon England," in *The Cambridge Companion to Old English Literature*, ed. Malcolm Godden and Michael Lapidge (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 250.

important to a given holy person.[4] From the eleventh century on, however, Norman reorganization of Welsh ecclesiastical institutions gave rise to the composition of *vitae* intended to advertise a given saint's powers and to support the claims to lands and privileges made in the name of a particular saint by individual foundations.[5] John Blair has argued that the density of local saints' cults in pre-Conquest England was probably not so different from that in early medieval Wales or Cornwall, and the related suggestion that early English saints were closely connected to the landscape resonates with Elissa R. Henken's observations on the links between saint and site in Welsh tradition:

> The Welsh saints, those fifth- and sixth-century men and women whose lives as hermits, ascetic clerics, missionaries, or founders of religious centres, caused them to be termed *sant*, that is *sanctus* or saint, were generally local heroes whose cults did not extend far beyond their own immediate territories. . . . [where they] took on all the attributes of kingship and were perceived as guardians of the land, [but were] also identified with the land itself.[6]

Such a combination of saintly and secular prerogative is not surprising in a society where the boundaries between ecclesiastical and lay authority were not always sharply defined.[7] Perhaps the best example of Welsh sanctity acting in defense of Welsh territory can be

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[4] On this point generally, see E.G. Bowen, *The Settlements of the Celtic Saints in Wales*, 2nd ed. (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1956); and E.G. Bowen, *Saints, Seaways and Settlements in the Celtic Lands* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1969).

[5] Wendy Davies, "Propery Rights and Property Claims in Welsh *Vitae* of the Eleventh Century," in *Hagiographie Cultures et Sociétés IVe-XIIe siècles* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1981); John Reuben Davies, "The Saints of South Wales and the Welsh Church," in *Local Saints and Local Churches in the Early Medieval West*, ed. Alan Thacker and Richard Sharpe (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 395. J. Wyn Evans has noted that "The *Lives* of the saints appear . . . to tell us more of the cult of a saint at a particular place in the medieval period rather than about the saint himself or herself." See J. Wyn Evans, "The Early Church in Denbighshire," *Transactions of the Denbighshire Historical Society* 35 (1986): 65.

[6] Elissa R. Henken, "Welsh Hagiography and the Nationalist Impulse," in *Celtic Hagiography and Saints' Cults*, ed. Jane Cartwright (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2003), 26-28; for connections between saint and landscape generally, see Elissa R. Henken, *Traditions of the Welsh Saints* (Woodbridge: D.S. Brewer, 1987). Cf. Catherine Cubitt, "Sites and Sanctity: Revisiting the Cult of Murdered and Martyred Anglo-Saxon Royal Saints," *Early Medieval Europe* 9, no. 1 (2000): 53-93.

[7] See R.R. Davies, *Conquest, Coexistence, and Change: Wales, 1063-1415* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987). 174-78. For the values and codes of secular society taken up by the saints, namely *nawdd* (privilege), *braint* (honor), *sarhad* (insult), and *cam* (punishment), see 175-76.

found in the tenth-century vaticinatory poem *Armes Prydein Vawr*, which casts all the Welsh saints, but most particularly St. David (*Dewi Sant*), as protectors of Wales whose prerogatives have been abused by English aggression. David's prominence in this text has traditionally been ascribed to the poet's assumed connections with South Wales, indicating the degree to which, as Henken has it, "some [Welsh saints] expanded their influence from local to regional and even national levels, playing a role in the politics of both Church and State."[8] *Armes Prydein Vawr* represents the first clear reference to David in surviving Welsh literature, and for Nikolai Tolstoy "it is arguable that the poem indicates that he had become the prime saint of all Cymry by the time of its composition" in the tenth century.[9] The poem preserves the earliest uses of the word *Kymry* (ModW

[8] Henken, "Welsh Hagiography and the Nationalist Impulse," 27. The poem is edited in Ifor Williams, *Armes Prydein: The Prophecy of Britain from the Book of Taliesin* (Dublin: Institute for Advanced Studies, 1982). Williams first suggested that the poet was a monk from South Wales writing in opposition to the policy of cooperation with the English pursued by his king, Hywel Dda (d. 950). To support this position Williams underscored references in the poem to the south Walian kingdoms of *Dyfet* and *Glywyssy[n]g*, posited that news of the pan-Celtic and Norse alliance envisioned in the *Armes* would have passed through the Welsh monasteries, and concluded that the poem was written in support of a joint military effort against Æthelstan that ended in defeat at Brunanburh in 937. Revising Williams's dating, David Dumville places *Armes Prydein ca*. 935-80: David N. Dumville, "Brittany and *Armes Prydain Vawr*," *Études Celtiques* 20 (1983): 145-59. Helen Fulton reads the *Armes* not as an actual call to arms, but as an elegy on the death of Hywel Dda written before 952 and intended to unite Dyfed and Glywysing against Gwynedd at a time when the Scandinavians of Northumbria seemed to be gaining the upper hand against Wessex in the struggle to control York: Helen Fulton, "Tenth-Century Wales and *Armes Prydein*," *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion* 7 (2001): 5-18.

[9] Nikolai Tolstoy, "When and Where was *Armes Prydein* Composed?," *Studia Celtica* 42 (2008): 145. David appears in Latin sources prior to *Armes Prydein* including the *Martyrology of Tallaght*, Wrmonoc's *Life of St. Paul de Léon*, and Asser's *Life of King Alfred the Great*, all of which have been dated to the ninth century. He is listed as well in the ninth-century Irish verse *Martyrology of Oengus the Culdee*, and in the ninth- or tenth-century Latin *Catalogue of the Saints of Ireland*. These texts indicate the spread of David's cult to Ireland, England, and Brittany from an early point and are reviewed in D. Simon Evans, *The Welsh Life of St. David* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1988). xv-xviii. A possible reference to David that pre-dates all of these sources is to be found in the now fragmentary IDNERT stone at Llanddewibrefi, an epigraph apparently belonging to the first half of the seventh century. The notes and observations of Edward Lhuyd and other early antiquarians are today our only access to the full inscription—HIC IACET IDNERT FILIVS JACOBI QVI OCCISVS FVIT PROPTER PREDAM SANCTI DAVVID (i.e., "Here lies Idnert, son of Jacob [Iago], who was slain because of the despoiling of St. David [i.e., defending the church of St. David from robbery]"). Taking the work of these early scholars as accurate, the inscription indicates not only the strength of David's cult from a very early point, but also the connection between the saint and a specific location in which he was thought or known to have been active during his lifetime. See Geraint Gruffydd and Huw Parri Owen, "The Earliest Mention of St. David?," *Bulletin Board of Celtic Studies* XVII (1956-58): 185-93. For an extended analysis of the inscription's numerical patterning, hidden

Cymry) to designate the Britons (i.e., the Welsh) as a distinct people, and presents them as united with the Irish, Scots, and Bretons, as well as with the Scandinavians of Dublin, in opposition to the men of Wessex (*Iwys*) under the leadership of the traditional redeemer heroes Cynan and Cadwaladr. The poet foregrounds the notion of the Welsh as a discrete, self-conscious group in the opening lines, announcing that after the foreigners have been scattered there will be rejoicing,

> A chymot Kymry a gwyr Dulyn.
> Gwydyl Iwerdon Mon a Phrydyn.
> Cornyw a Chludwys eu kynnwys genhyn. (Lines 9-11)
>
> (and there will be reconciliation between the Cymry and the men of Dublin,
> the Irish of Ireland and Anglesey (?) and Scotland,
> the men of Cornwall and of Strathclyde will be made welcome among us.)[10]

The poet aligns himself with the *Kymry*, the "us" among whom (*genhyn*) all the Brittonic peoples will be included (*kynnwys*), a group distinct from the "men of Dublin" and the *Gwydyl* (Irish) of various origins, a group comprised of peoples conscious of their own territorial affinities but embracing a pan-British identity—that is, the Welsh, the Cornish, and the men of Strathclyde (i.e., the Cumbrians).[11] Ultimate sanction and support for the

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meanings, and overall "biblical style," see C. Thomas, "The Llanddewi-Brefi 'Idnert' Stone," *Peritia* 10 (1996): 136-83. For further connections between St. David and the ritual landscape of St. David's, see Heather James, "The Cult of St. David in the Middle Ages," in *In Search of Cult: Archaeological Investigations in Honour of Philip Rahtz*, ed. M. Carver (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1993), 105-12; Heather James, "The Geography of the Cult of St. David: A Study of Dedication Patterns in the Medieval Diocese," in *St. David of Wales: Cult, Church and Nation*, ed. J. Wyn Evans and Jonathan M. Wooding (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2007), 41-83; and Nancy Edwards, "Monuments in a Landscape: The Early Medieval Sculpture of St. David's," in *Image and Power in the Archaeology of Early Medieval Britain: Essays in Honour of Rosemary Cramp*, ed. Helena Hamerow and Arthur MacGregor (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2001), 53-77.

[10] Williams, *Armes Prydein: The Prophecy of Britain from the Book of Taliesin*: 2 and 3.

[11] On the basis of its usage in later Welsh law, Thomas Charles-Edwards prefers to translate *kynnwys* in line 11 as "include" rather than as "made welcome," because "include" comes closer to conveying the "full flavour" of the term *kynnwys*: T. Charles-Edwards, *Wales and the Britons, 350-1064*, Oxford History of Wales (forthcoming). For the discussion of *Armes Prydein*, see chapter 16. Charles-Edwards presents a thorough review of the historical evidence for the date of the poem and concludes that it belongs

entire coalition lies, though, with God and St. David: the *Kymry* "commend themselves to God and Dewi" (*y Dduw a Dewi yd ymorchymynynt*, line 51) and "will raise on high the holy standard of Dewi" (*A lluman glan Dewi a drychafant*, line 129); the poet demands to know why the enemy has "trampled upon the privileges of our saints? Why have they destroyed the rights of Dewi?" (*Neu vreint an seint pyr y saghyssant* / *neu reitheu Dewi pyr y torrassant*, lines 139-40); and in his closing invocation beseeches God that Dewi might be "the leader of our warriors" (*poet tywyssawc Dewi yr kynifwyr*, line 196). Although Tolstoy challenges the long-held assumption of the poem's origin in South Wales, situating it instead at the court of Idwal Foel of Gwynedd following the death of Æthelstan in 939, the fact remains that David, a saint originally linked most closely with Dyfed, appears here "already established as a defender of the Welsh nation" some two centuries before the Norman Conquest of England.[12]

The notion of a secular north Walian origin for *Armes Prydein* is bolstered by the fact that the poem survives only in the fourteenth-century Book of Taliesin, a broad collection of verse including, in addition to prophecy, both praise and elegy as well as scholarly and religious poetry, much of which focuses on the mythos of the Old North. And although the text itself is written in a south Walian hand, the vaticinatory material is, according to Marged Haycock, unified by its deliberate appropriation of Taliesin's legendary persona and his moral authority as a sort of Ur-poet of the court of Gwynedd, a court whose mythic history linked it to northern Britain through Cunedda Wledig and his

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somewhere between 927 and 942. I am extremely grateful to Professor Charles-Edwards for allowing me to see this work in advance of its publication.

[12] The quoted phrase is from Henken, "Welsh Hagiography and the Nationalist Impulse," 33. Charles-Edwards accepts the possibility that the poem could have originated in Gwynedd and notes that by the date of composition "it is possible that some northerners would have accepted that St David was the premier saint of Wales." See chapter 16 of *Wales and the Britons, 350-1064* (forthcoming).

descendants.[13] Given the intentionally popular nature of prophetic verse as an instrument of propaganda, *Armes Prydein*, a poem deliberately attempting "to incite both the political leaders and the rank and file to rise up against the traditional enemy," presents an image of David as guardian of the land that is likely to represent sentiment that was widespread, or at least widely acceptable, at the time of its composition.[14]

The picture seemingly painted in the *Armes* of David as a saint of all Wales is not at odds with the perceived extent of his authority as presented in Latin hagiography of the later eleventh century, specifically Rhygyfarch's *Vita S. Dauidis* of *ca*. 1091-93.[15] In Rhygyfarch's text, David is given power over the whole island of Britain and all its residents, lay and ecclesiastical, and his authority is constructed in terms that connect him closely with the land itself. Directed by an angelic vision to the spot on which he is to build his monastery, David lights a fire with his disciples in *Vallis Rosina* and the smoke spreads throughout the entire country and Ireland too, and the local warlord Baia is cast into despair at this omen of the saint's authority over all the land. To his wife's queries about the cause of his gloom, Baia replies

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[13] See in general the introduction to Marged Haycock, *Legendary Poems from the Book of Taliesin* (Aberystwyth: CMCS Publications, 2007). 1-39. See especially 9-21.

[14] For the popular nature of prophetic poetry, see A.O.H. Jarman and Gwilym Rees Hughes, eds., *A Guide to Welsh Literature, vol. 1* (Swansea: Christopher Davies, 1976), 117-19. Accepting the usual ascription of the poem to South Wales and emphasizing what he considers to be in lines 145-46 a reference to St. Garmon of Powys, G.R. Isaac maintains that *Armes Prydein* cannot "be regarded as evidence for a David cult representing the whole of Wales in the tenth century," but instead represents "an ideological position from which just such a generalisation at some point must really have been made." See G.R. Isaac, "*Armes Prydain Fawr* and St David," in *St David of Wales: Cult, Church and Nation*, ed. J. Wyn Evans and Jonathan M. Wooding (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2007), 168. So far as the appeal of the poem on a more general level, Fulton argues that *Armes Prydein* is a "cultural product whose intertextuality links it to a range of different contexts and historical moments," one that can be "repeated and reworked over a long period of time while it continues to have an ongoing mythic resonance beyond any one specific historical moment," and she suggests that "[i]ts reappearance in the fourteenth-century Book of Taliesin as part of an anti-English discourse testifies to its continued value as cultural myth for Welsh patrons into the later medieval period." See Fulton, "Tenth-Century Wales and *Armes Prydein*," 6 and 18.

[15] For a recent translation of the Vespasian recension of Rhygyfarch's text, see J. R. Davies and Richard Sharpe, "Rhygyfarch's *Life of St David*," in *St. David of Wales: Cult, Church and Nation*, ed. J. Wyn Evans and Jonathan M. Wooding (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2007), 107-55.

> I have been disturbed by the sight of the smoke rising from *Vallis Rosina*, which is encompassing the whole country, for I am certain that he who lit that fire will excel everyone in power and glory wherever the smoke of his sacrifice travels, even to the end of the earth.[16]

Kindling fire in order to claim land represents a ritual act, one that appears also in the early Lives of St. Patrick, and it indicates the extent to which the saint's power is both based in and extended over the landscape in which he operates.[17]

A more explicit and perhaps more famous example of David's close connections to the land can be found in the sequence in Rhygyfarch's Life in which David is made metropolitan archbishop of all Wales. In response to the resurgence of Pelagianism, the Welsh bishops convene a universal synod in Brefi and plan to preach against the heresy to the multitudes of people who gather there. Even after the clergymen have heaped up a tower of clothes (*erecta uestimentorum turre*) from which to deliver their sermons, none of the bishops present can make himself heard by the majority of the crowd. David's old teacher Paulinus, recognizing that his former disciple is not present, suggests that he be sent for. After three unsuccessful attempts to bring David to Brefi, SS. Deiniol and Dyfrig convince him to make the journey by refusing to eat until he agrees to attend the synod. Once there, and refusing to stand upon the tower of clothes but only upon a handkerchief, David preaches to the gathered masses who hear him equally well no matter how near or far they might be. Significantly, while David addresses the throngs, the earth beneath his feet miraculously rises up and becomes a hill so that he can be seen,

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[16] Ibid., 123.
[17] For the sequence in which Patrick lights a fire on Tara and offends a pagan king, see A.B.E. Hood, *St. Patrick: His Writings and Muirchu's Life*, Arthurian Period Sources (London: Phillimore, 1978). 88-90.

as well as heard, by all. During this sequence, the land over which David had earlier laid claim itself exalts him—quite literally—above the other saints of Britain.[18]

While separated by roughly a century and a half and belonging to two very different literary genres, Rhygyfarch's *Vita S. Dauidis* and *Armes Prydein Vawr* both present David as a saint closely connected to the Welsh people and landscape, broadly conceived. Of course, *Armes Prydein* participates in the tradition of prophetic literature that appealed to both the learned and the laity, the noble and the low-born, while Rhygyfarch's text is obviously concerned with promoting David's cult to secure the interests and privileges of a particular ecclesiastical institution (i.e., St. David's). David's leadership role in each work—chief saintly defender of all the Welsh people and, later, archiepiscopal head of all the Welsh churches—suggests, however, the proximity of popular to elite expressions of the saint's cult over the course of the Middle Ages. A holy figure traditionally associated with a particular region of South Wales (Dyfed), David

[18] Sharpe, "Rhygyfarch's *Life of St David*," 142-47. The importance of the Llanddewibrefi synod episode is made obvious by the alternative version of it told in Lifris of Llancarfan's *Vita Cadoci*. Although in this account David himself is commanded by an angel to convene the synod, he is not eager to do so without St. Cadog's express permission. Finally convinced, however, by the promise that Cadog will be out of Britain on pilgrimage, David calls the meeting. When Cadog returns to the island and discovers David's presumption, he becomes incensed, and angelic intervention is required to make Cadog forgive his fellow saint. See A.W. Wade-Evans, *Vitae Sanctorum Britanniae et Genealogiae* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1944). 54-55 and 60-63. Other examples of the extent to which David is supported or honored by the land in Rhygyfarch's Life can be found in the sequences describing his conception and birth. Having been raped by Sanctus, ruler of Ceredigion, the nun Nonnita conceives David and in joyous response and in defense of her modesty the earth sprouts two giant stones—one at her head and one at her feet—at the site of the rape. When Nonnita is later giving birth, a local tyrant swears to murder by his own sword the powerful child that is to be born in the place marked by his wizards. The king is prevented by storms and hail from finding Nonnita, however, while she herself remains in a pocket of heavenly sunshine during the birth. The rock into which she presses her hand during the birth pangs splits in two in sympathy with her (half of it even jumping over her head!), and the pieces are eventually incorporated into the foundations of a church built on the site. Indicative of David's connections with the land even prior to his birth are the three gifts discovered by his father on the banks of the River Teifi some three decades before he rapes Nonnita: a stag, a fish, and a honeycomb. These gifts foreshadow, we are told, David's life on earth, for the stag represents his power over the enemy of man, the fish signifies his abstinence (David is known as *Aquaticus* or "Water Man" because he eats only bread and drinks only water), and the honeycomb marks the spiritual wisdom that David discerns in seemingly simple or mundane things. For the discovery of these gifts, see Sharpe, "Rhygyfarch's *Life of St David*," 108-11. For the rape and birth sequences, see 113-17. For discussion of the traditions associated with David generally, see Henken, *Traditions of the Welsh Saints*: 31-73.

could eventually be enlisted to support the Welsh nation at large in vernacular poetry and to protect the rights of his church—and that of all Wales—in Latin hagiography. The sort of continuity suggested here between a more popular expression of devotion to David on the one hand, and a clearly ecclesiastical expression on the other, resonates with "the interdependence of written texts and oral traditions in the cults of Breton saints" identified by Julia Smith.[19] While oral and written manifestations of a given saint's cult may often have been quite different from one another, Smith stresses the "constant process of osmosis" between spoken and written modes of discourse in the Middle Ages, and she sets out "to challenge assumptions about the antagonism between written and oral manifestations of Christian beliefs."[20] Smith explores hagiography "as evidence for the oral world beyond the immediate confines of churches and monasteries," and maintains that relationships between written hagiographical texts and their oral contexts raise the possibility that "a cult might be manipulated by the choice of material included in hagiographical texts," something that leads to a consideration of "what significance should be attached to omitted material."[21] By considering the effect of recording certain miracles or saintly powers at the expense of others, Smith ultimately seeks to illuminate "the relationship between written text and cult site."[22] Her focus is on Lives composed in Brittany from the mid-ninth to the mid-thirteenth centuries, but she draws close parallels between Breton hagiography and that composed in contemporary Wales to indicate the

[19] Smith, "Oral and Written," 311; for the oral and written traditions of the Welsh saints in general, see Henken, *Traditions of the Welsh Saints*; for an example of David's political import in the vernacular poetry of twelfth-century Wales, see Nerys Ann Jones and Morfudd E. Owen, "Twelfth-Century Welsh Hagiography: The *Gogynfeirdd* Poems to Saints," in *Celtic Hagiography and Saints' Cults*, ed. Jane Cartwright (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2003).
[20] Smith, "Oral and Written," 311.
[21] Ibid., 312.
[22] Ibid. For another discussion of the significance of details omitted from written hagiography, see Cynthia Turner Camp, "Inventing the Past in Henry Bradshaw's *Life of St Werburge*," *Exemplaria* 23, no. 3 (2011): 244-67.

degree to which oral and written expressions of cult interacted with one another while serving different social ends.

The key to Smith's approach is the recognition that cults of native saints in medieval Brittany were highly localized, based on physical aspects of the landscape and oral reports of healing miracles rather than on written accounts of a saint's power as manifested in punitive miracles linked to bodily relics and clerically controlled shrines. The issue is, essentially, one of place, for if popular devotion proclaimed a given site holy to a local saint, there would be little need for official written texts to perpetuate the cult there.[23] Moving the saint's bones to a new location, however, required a documentary record of his or her holiness to generate the cult in the new locale. The necessary link between hagiographical texts and the creation of cults in both Brittany and Wales is to be found, then, in moving corporal remains: "Writing created . . . cults in communities into which . . . saints were intruded, but it did so in conjunction with corporal relics."[24] Conversely, the stories and miracles of native or local saints who remained untranslated were preserved by word of mouth, and these holy individuals were rendered present for their non-clerical devotees by visible reminders of their activities that were either embedded in the land—healing springs and other topographical features—or else connected to the saint in life—bells, crosiers, Gospel books, staffs.[25] Breton saints were linked to their local communities by such non-corporal items, and they had, therefore, "no need of written propaganda for their ability to work miracles," because

[23] Of course, written texts would still be necessary for liturgical purposes in church or as evidence for outside authorities of the saint's rights and privileges.
[24] Smith, "Oral and Written," 337.
[25] See Gerald of Wales's comments on the piety of the Welsh and their reverence for these sorts of saintly relics in Lewis Thorpe, trans., *Gerald of Wales: The Journey Through Wales/The Description of Wales* (London: Penguin Books, 1978). 253-54.

> Knowledge of saints' attributes, cult sites, healing powers, or vengeful tendencies circulated orally in medieval Brittany. But written texts supplemented these traditions or introduced new ones on the rare occasions when the translation of corporal relics took place, when clerical rights and property were affected, or, . . . when they were needed for pedagogical and edificatory purposes within the monastic community. We may suspect that the written texts are but the tip of an iceberg whose submerged mass was formed of oral stories, irrecoverably lost. And most Breton saints certainly never had a written life at all. Where saints were "at home," these oral traditions needed no clerical impresarios to mediate between saint and community, and relics were not essential flash points of contact between the human and the divine.[26]

Nancy Edwards has confirmed archaeologically what Smith has discerned textually—that in Wales and Brittany there was a general "reluctance to disturb the bodies of the saints" that resulted in Welsh and Breton saints being much more intimately bound to their localities, to "the immediate area where their corporeal relics were interred."[27] Edwards bases her conclusions in part on the situating of later churches over "special graves" left undisturbed, a practice that she feels might reflect the manner in which saintly corporal remains were treated by the devout in the early centuries of Christianity. Given that the papacy was officially reluctant to encourage the division of relics prior to the ninth century, the implication of the hagiographical and archaeological evidence is that the early medieval Welsh church, adhering to the standard set early on by Rome, was by nature "archaic and conservative."[28] The trend in Wales seems to be that saint's bodies were not usually translated or elevated prior to the Norman Conquest when continental

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[26] Smith, "Oral and Written," 338.

[27] Nancy Edwards, "Celtic Saints and Early Medieval Archaeology," in *Local Saints and Local Churches in the Early Medieval West*, ed. Alan Thacker and Richard Sharpe (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 265; see also Alan Thacker, "*Loca Sanctorum*: The Significance of Place in the Study of the Saints," in *Local Saints and Local Churches in the Early Medieval West*, ed. Alan Thacker and Richard Sharpe (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 31-34.

[28] Edwards, "Celtic Saints and Early Medieval Archaeology," 238. On the matter of relic division and its implications for the theology of bodily resurrection in Western antiquity, see chapters 1 and 2 in Caroline Walker Bynum, *The Resurrection of the Body in Western Christianity, 200-1336* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995). I am grateful to Dr. Cynthia Camp for this reference.

attitudes toward the veneration of relics became more prevalent in the British Isles. By contrast, Edwards maintains that evidence from Ireland and Scotland arguably indicates that in those countries relics were, as a general trend, disinterred and divided with greater frequency from about the seventh century on.[29]

The surviving genealogies of the Welsh saints may provide further evidence for the reluctance of the Welsh to disinter and distribute the bodies of their holy dead. Apparently compiled in the twelfth century, *Bonedd y Saint* (Lineage of the Saints) is earliest preserved in a manuscript of the thirteenth-century, while a related tract, *Achau'r Saint* (Pedigrees of the Saints), earliest survives in a sixteenth-century copy.[30] In addition to genealogical information, these texts often record the locations in which Welsh and other Celtic saints were thought to reside. For instance, *Bonedd y Saint* situates the holy descendents of Llawdden Llwyddog thusly:

> Lleudat yn Enlli, a Baglan yg Coet Alun, ac Eleri ym Pennant Gwytherin yn Rywynnyawc, a Thegwy a Thyuriawc yg Keredigyawn Is Coet, meibyon Dyngat m. Nud hael m. Senyllt m. Kedic m. Dyuynyeual hen m. Ydnyuet m. Maxen wledic; a Thenoi verch Lewdwn lluydawc o Dinas Eidyn yn y Gogled eu mam.[31]
>
> (Lleddad in Bardsey, and Baglan in Coed Alun, and Eleri in Pennant Gwytherin in Rhufoniog, and Tegwy and Tyuriog in Ceredigion Is Coed, sons of Dyngat son of Nudd Hael son of Senyllt son of Kedic son of Dyfynyefal Hen son of Ydnyfed

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[29] Edwards, "Celtic Saints and Early Medieval Archaeology," 227-43. See esp. 238-43. As partial evidence of her assertion that saints were being translated in Ireland and Scotland earlier than in Wales or Brittany, Edwards points to the archaeological evidence taken from excavations in Scotch Street at Armagh. She maintains that early Christian burials discovered here may be the *Ferta Martyrum* ("burial ground of the martyrs") noted by Muirchú as being the location of the first Patrician foundation. One grave in particular (Grave A) suggests that the body contained within it had been translated early on: "It was wider than a normal grave but too short to have contained an extended adult. The fragmentary remains of two long bones and a skull were found at the east end. The evidence suggests that the body was disarticulated, and that the remains had perhaps been translated from a previous grave in which the body had decomposed. There is also some evidence that the grave was subsequently elaborated: a small pit dug through the west end originally contained two squared posts which would presumably have acted as some sort of above-ground grave-marker. An early date for the site is suggested by two radiocarbon determinations from an adjacent, stratigraphically earlier grave of cal. AD 420-640 and cal. AD 560-685." See 239.

[30] See P.C. Bartrum, *Early Welsh Genealogical Tracts* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1966). 51-71; Wade-Evans, *VSBG*: xvii.

[31] Bartrum, *Early Welsh Genealogical Tracts*: 57, no. 18. Translation is my own.

> son of Maxen Wledic, and Tenoi daughter of Llawdden Llwyddog from Edinburgh in the North, their mother.)

It is unlikely that these saints could be said to be "in" a given place if their bodies had been, or plausibly could be, dug up and dismembered for the sake of creating corporal relics. If the Welsh were, on the whole, content to let their holy departed rest both in peace and place, the same cannot be said about the Normans. In the case of Eleri specifically, we know from a relic list surviving from Shrewsbury Abbey that the monks there seem to have obtained his bones at some point between their original expedition to Gwytherin in 1138 and *ca*. 1170, that is, in the same century that the compiler of the *Bonedd* felt confident in asserting that Eleri was—and would likely remain—"in" Pennant Gwytherin.[32]

To return to Smith's work, she has indicated that the translation of relics requires written support that will establish the saint in the community into which he or she has been intruded, and this support comes in the form of a *translatio* narrative, a miracle dossier, or both. These accounts seek to elide the cultural discontinuity which attends the transferral of relics from one place to another, the implications of which act have been underscored by Patrick Geary.[33] Whether relics are stolen, are given freely, or are otherwise obtained, only the relics themselves, as physical realities, can be relocated—cultural meanings, symbols, or values associated with them cannot be transferred.[34] For

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[32] The relic list is printed in H. Owen and J.B. Blakeway, *History of Shrewsbury, vol. 2* (London 1825). 42-43. For further examples of statements from the *Bonedd* that saints are located "in" a particular place, see, for instance, nos. 29 and 43 in Bartrum, *Early Welsh Genealogical Tracts*: 59 and 61.

[33] Patrick J. Geary, *Furta Sacra: Thefts of Relics in the Central Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978). On the significance of *translationes* in a specifically Anglo-Saxon context, see also David Rollason, "The Shrines of Saints in Later Anglo-Saxon England: Distribution and Significance," in *The Anglo-Saxon Church: Papers on History, Architecture, and Archaeology in Honour of Dr. H.M. Taylor,* ed. L.A.S. Butler and R.K. Morris (London: Council for British Archaeology, 1986).

[34] Geary, *Furta Sacra*: 7-9.

the fact remains that relics, "although symbolic objects, . . . are of the most arbitrary kind, passively reflecting only exactly so much meaning as they were given by a particular community."[35] *Translatio* narrative is then the means by which a saint's identity is "standardized and stabilized during [the] perilous move from an old to a new symbolic context,"[36] and records of miracles performed before, and especially after the *translatio* serve to publish and popularize the saint's power in his or her new community. While hagiography may be considered a primarily literary genre, one concerned to demonstrate the subject's conformity to pre-established models of sanctity, often with little concern for historical or biographical accuracy, for Geary *translatio* narratives are "in many ways hybrids, spanning the hiatus between the purely literary *vitae* and the more 'historical' forms of medieval writing, chronicles and annals."[37] The purpose of the *translatio* account is to glorify the saint after death and at the same time to celebrate his or her patronage of a new community; because they are concerned with particular historical events situated in time, these accounts "provide a valuable insight into the activities of a religious community at an important moment of its existence."[38] As David Rollason has it,

> translations seem *par excellence* to provide evidence that the communities involved were being vigorous in promoting relic-cults and therefore in promoting their own prestige and influence. Relics could of course be moved from one place to another and their ownership transferred from one community to another. Such translations naturally involved transfers of the power believed to reside in the relics and the sources tell us that they were often bitterly resented by those losing their relics. In practical terms, we should study the incidence of translations of this type since this may clearly provide an indication of which places or communities were rising in prestige and influence at the expense of others.[39]

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[35] Ibid., 5.
[36] Ibid., 8-9.
[37] Ibid., 11.
[38] Ibid., 12.
[39] Rollason, "The Shrines of Saints in Later Anglo-Saxon England: Distribution and Significance," 32.

In the end, *translationes* are stylized reports, and they draw inspiration from pre-existing models such as the story of Empress Helen's invention of the true cross or Paul the Deacon's ninth-century account of Fleury's acquisition of St. Benedict's relics. As a result *translatio* narratives often follow a standardized plotline:

> First the bishop, abbot, prince, or the entire community decide to move the body. Frequently, they seek permission from ecclesiastical or secular authorities. At a public ceremony they open the tomb with reverence and remove the body. Often initial efforts to carry off the saint fail, and success comes only after fasting, prayer, and repeated invocations addressed to the saint. On the route back the saint is accompanied by the religious of the community and a joyous multitude who witness numerous miracles. Finally the saint reaches his new home and after the abbot or bishop has examined the relics to confirm their authenticity, they are deposited in their new shrine amid general rejoicing.[40]

The fact that *translatio* accounts were often used in the liturgy of a given community also required that they adhere to a rather rigid structure to facilitate their division into lessons for reading at matins. Ultimately, however, the *translatio* narrative "serves as a clue that there is something important going on at a moment in history, and it may suggest where to start looking to discover the larger context in which the activity took place."[41]

Prior Robert's *Vita et translatio S. Wenefrede ex Wallia* is indeed a clue that "something important" was going on in the Welsh Marches of the early twelfth century. This unique text, however, has not been interrogated in depth for what it can reveal about the significance and spread of Gwenfrewy's cult at that time, nor for what it can tell us about the links between the political landscape of northeastern Wales and the religious houses of England that were situated near the Welsh border. The very fact of Gwenfrewy's *translatio*, first evidenced by Robert's text, demonstrates that the saint

[40] Geary, *Furta Sacra*: 13.
[41] Ibid., 16.

became known well outside of northern Wales and suggests significant political and ecclesiastical connections between Shrewsbury, Chester, and the North Walian kingdoms by the early decades of the 1100s. This chapter will now explore the importance of, as well as the division between, Gwenfrewy's cult sites at Holywell and Gwytherin in the twelfth century by reference to the historical context of Robert's *translatio* account. The combined implication of the historical and literary evidence is that the cults at Holywell and Gwytherin were largely independent of one another in Robert's day, the former being under English control and the latter under Welsh—both sites appear, however, to have been of some significance from an early point, and the cult of Gwenfrewy seems to have been thriving at each of them by the time that the *translatio* took place. So far as the historical context is concerned, an examination of the links between Shrewsbury, Chester, and the kingdoms of North Wales helps to illuminate the possible channels through which the site of Gwenfrewy's burial was found, for Robert's account reveals only that the monks of Chester put their brethern at Shrewsbury into contact with the cult at Holywell and does not actually indicate how the location of the body was later discovered. Robert's *translatio* narrative is also evidence for Anglo-Norman attitudes toward Welsh sanctity in the century after 1066, but the structural and thematic relations of his text to trends in post-Conquest hagiography of non-Norman saints have not been examined in detail. These and other observations, elaborated and supported below by reference to the historical context of Robert's narrative, provide support for the argument of the fourth chapter that the anonymous Life records the specifically Holywell tradition of Gwenfrewy's legend, while Robert's version of the story and his account of the *translatio* expedition represent aspects of what can be called the Gwytherin tradition.[42]

[42] This division between the two cult sites was first suggested by Tristan Gray Hulse in his unpublished

The ultimate basis for this distinction is to be found though in the shifting political circumstances of northeastern Wales, as well as its connections with Cheshire from the early Anglo-Saxon period into the era of Norman incursion.

PRIOR ROBERT'S *VITA ET TRANSLATIO*: THE GENERAL HISTORICAL CONTEXT

While in the *Vita* proper Robert gives little information regarding the time in which Gwenfrewy's martyrdom and subsequent life were supposed to have occurred, he situates his account of the *translatio* expedition to North Wales with greater temporal certainty. Passing over in a few words the centuries that separate his saintly subject from his own day, Robert first recounts the foundation of Shrewsbury Abbey. He gives, however, only general information regarding the personages involved, perhaps indicative of the assumption that his audience would be a local one—either Gwarin and the other monks at the nearby priory of Worcester, or else Robert's fellow brethren at Shrewsbury. At the same time, the brevity with which Robert mentions the abbey's secular founder, Roger of Montgomery, Earl of Shrewsbury, may indicated Roger's concern to de-emphasize the extent of lay control over Shrewsbury's monastic identity and to situate that identity and its privileges in God's hands via Wenefred, something accomplished through the focus of the *translatio* account itself:[43]

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work on the cult of Gwenfrewy, and I am grateful to him for allowing me to read this material and for discussing it with me at length. The conclusions elaborated in this and the subsequent chapter are at several points very much indebted to his insight on the subject. As an explanation for the existence of the two cult sites, Baring-Gould posited long ago the existence of two Gwenfrewys—one a virgin martyr associated with Holywell and the other a nun who lived at Gwytherin sometime after the death of the first Gwenfrewy. See S. Baring-Gould, *The Lives of the Saints*, 16 vols., vol. 13 (London: Longmans, Green, & Co., 1898). 72.

[43] Other monastic institutions in England (e.g., Winchester, Ely, Bury, etc.) were, in the twelfth century, able to trace their origins back to royal saints of the Anglo-Saxon period, but Shrewsbury's monastic history did not extend much, if at all, before the Conquest. Robert's *Vita et translatio* as a whole seeks to rectify that situation, and the mention of Earl Roger's involvement in the founding of the abbey may have

> [R]egnante Willermo rege, qui primus de Normannis regnavit in Anglia, Rogerus comes, vir illustris et in omni morum et religionis honestate conspicuus, in urbe Solopesberiæ cœnobium ædificare cœpit. Ad hoc perficiendum cum diligenti cura intendens, sumptibus suis illud adauxit; dehinc abbatem posuit, fratresque ibidem Deo servituros constituit. Processu vero temporis locus ille Deo miserante excrescens, multis ad viam salutis profuit, cunctisque patriam illam incolentibus divini odoris fragrantiam præbuit.[44]
>
> ([W]hile King William was reigning, who first of the Normans ruled in England, Roger, an earl, a man illustrious and conspicuous in all honourableness of morals and piety, began to build a monastery in the city of Shrewsbury. Intending to complete this with diligent care, he added to it at his own expense. Then he installed an abbot and appointed brothers there to serve God. In truth, with the passing of time that place, growing by the mercy of God, benefitted many on the path of salvation, and it offered the fragrance of heavenly perfume to all who dwelt in that country.)[45]

To these bare details we can add a good deal of information and can better establish the political and spiritual contexts in which Robert crafted his narrative.

Originally a Saxon town (*Scrobbesbyrig*), Shrewsbury enters the historical record in 901 when a royal grant of land to Much Wenlock priory was witnessed there.[46] By 1066 it had five churches, a population of roughly twelve to fifteen-hundred people, and a suburb known as the Foregate growing up to the east of the town across the river Severn. Shortly after the Conquest, King William created Roger de Montgomery, a close friend who already held Chichester and Arundel, earl of Shrewsbury following the death of the

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been little more than perfunctory. I am grateful to Cynthia Camp for these observations. On the church of St. Peter as a "private monastery" before the intervention of Earl Roger, see page 51 below.

[44] Charles De Smedt, ed., *Acta Sanctorum, tom. I. Nov* (1887). 726.

[45] *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*, trans. Ronald Pepin and Hugh Feiss (Toronto: Peregrina Publishing, 2000). 77. For no reason in particular, Pepin and Feiss spell the saint's name "Winefride," a spelling that I retain when quoting from their translations.

[46] For the account that follows, see in general Nigel Baker and Steve Allen, eds., *Shrewsbury Abbey: Studies in the Archaeology and History of an Urban Abbey* (Shropshire: Shropshire Archaeological and Historical Society in association with Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit, 2002); Nigel Baker, *Shrewsbury Abbey: A Medieval Monastery* (Shropshire Books, n.d.); Ian Ross and Robin MacKenzie, *Shrewsbury Abbey: The Parish Church of the Holy Cross* (Much Wenlock: RJL Smith & Associates, 2008); Marjorie Chibnall, *The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis* 6 vols., vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969-80). 1-6; A.T. Gaydon, ed. *The History of Shropshire*, The Victoria History of the Counties of England, vol. 2 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), 18-19 and 30-40; and Una Rees, ed., *The Shrewsbury Cartulary I* (Aberystwyth: The National Library of Wales, 1975). x-xii.

rebellious Earl Edwin of Mercia in 1071. In the Foregate suburb of the town stood a wooden chapel dedicated to St. Peter and described by contemporaries as the poorest of the town's five foundations; it seems more likely, however, to have been "a moderately-well endowed private monastery."[47] William of Malmesbury relates that St. Wulfstan of Worcester was in the habit of praying at St. Peter's prior to its re-foundation. When the saint was queried as to why he never prayed at a more prominent church when in Shrewsbury, Wulfstan reportedly foretold that St. Peter's would one day be the foremost of the churches in the region.[48] The small foundation had been established by Siward son of Æthelgar, a local magnate with substantial holdings in the area and familial links to Edward the Confessor. Submitting to the Conqueror soon after 1066, Siward had surrendered his Shrewsbury property to the crown in exchange for the manor and church of Cheney Longville. Upon coming to power Earl Roger placed the church of St. Peter in the hands of Odelerius of Orleans, the father of the historian Orderic Vitalis. After a pilgrimage to Rome in 1082 on which he vowed before the shrine of St. Peter to replace the saint's wooden church at Shrewsbury with one made of stone, Odelerius convinced Roger to establish in his city a monastery of Benedictine monks in the names of SS Peter and Paul. Monasticism was at a low ebb in Shropshire at the time, and in a public ceremony early in 1083 the Earl set his gloves upon the altar of the wooden chapel, pledged to found a monastery there, and granted to it the entire area outside the east gate, subsequently known as the Abbey Foregate, which eventually became its own private borough under the civic jurisdiction of the abbot. The suburb included three very lucrative mills, and the resulting monopoly held by the abbey would prove a source of

[47] Steven Bassett, "Anglo-Saxon Shrewsbury and its Churches," *Midland History* 16 (1991): 13-14.
[48] *William of Malmesbury's Life of Saint Wulstan*, trans. J.H.F. Peile (1934; repr., Felinfach: Llanerch Publishers, 1996). 40.

tension with the townspeople through the early sixteenth century, even though the mills were held jointly by the town and the monks after 1267. Following Earl Roger's pledge, Odelerius released all claim to the small church and even offered a donation toward its re-foundation as a Benedictine house. Supervision of the construction project was assigned to Fulchred and Godfrey, two monks from the Norman abbey of Sées, one of Roger's earlier foundations, and regular monastic life began at Shrewbury in 1087. While on the whole the surviving documents from the abbey deal with its external affairs, it was known in the Middle Ages for its scholarship, a reputation perhaps reflected in Robert's highly wrought, self-conscious style.[49]

Such are the details lying behind Robert's brief narrative of the founding of Shrewsbury Abbey. He next relates the urgency with which the monks desired to secure the relics of a saint, through whose patronage, in response to their regular devotions, they might be better protected by God. The brethren concentrate their search specifically on Wales, a land "ante multis inhabitata sit sanctis quorum merita diversis in locis prædicabantur" ("previously inhabited by many saints whose merits were proclaimed in diverse places"); a land in which still, so they have heard, "multorum corpora sanctorum retineri" ("the bodies of many saints were preserved").[50] Robert then provides the story of Wenefred's "discovery," which begins with an unnamed monk of Shrewsbury falling ill and the other brothers praying for his recovery. Monks of neighboring churches are asked to pray on his behalf, and in due course the Benedictines of "the church of Chester" (*Cestrensis ecclesiæ monachis*) take up the cause. While chanting the Seven Penitential

[49] Little survives from the abbey's library. Of the two books listed by Ker, one is apparently a thirteenth-century text on chess (*Liber ruber scaccarii*) and the other is an eleventh- or twelfth-century lectionary. N.R. Ker, *Medieval Libraries of Great Britain: A List of Surviving Books*, 2nd ed. (London: Royal Historical Society, 1964). 179.
[50] De Smedt, *AASS, t.I. Nov.*: 726; *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 77.

Psalms before the altar with his fellows, the sub-prior Ralph, "vir admodum simplicis animi" ("a man of absolutely simple soul"), falls asleep and is visited in a vision by a beautiful maiden who asks why the monks are praying so ardently.[51] Ralph explains that "Frater quidam ex nostris familiaribus" ("a certain brother from our community") is seriously ill; the maiden declares that the stricken man suffers from delirium (*mentis alienationem*) and reveals how he can be cured: "si ejus sanitatem veraciter optatis, unus ex vobis eat ad fontem sanctæ Wenefredæ et in ecclesia quæ ibi est in illius memoria missam celebret, statimque liberabitur frater ægrotus" ("if you truly seek his health, let one of you go to the spring of Saint Winefride and celebrate Mass in her memory in the church which is there. The sick brother will be released immediately").[52] Fearing to be scorned, however, Ralph does not relate his vision to the other monks for over a month until one day, hearing news that the brother at Shrewsbury continues to suffer, he can hide no longer what he has been shown. Ralph's fellows believe his story of the vision, and moreover they all agree that the maiden who appeared to him must have been Wenefred herself. Although she had required only one monk to visit the spring, two of the Chester brethren are sent there to say mass; the monk at Shrewsbury, it is later discovered, recovered from his sickness in the very hour in which the mass was celebrated. In thanksgiving for his restoration, the formerly ill brother journeys to the well and prays in the church nearby; he then drinks from and is bathed in the spring, returning afterward to Shrewsbury in perfect health. His fellow monks are thereby

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[51] De Smedt, *AASS, t.I. Nov.*: 727; *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 78. Pepin's translation of the phrase "vir admodum simplicis animi" might be more accurately rendered "a man of honest mind," especially if we perceive that Robert's intention here is to emphasize, as seems appropriate, Ralph's trustworthiness as witness to the vision described. Cf. Caxton's 1484 translation of the line: "a man of good lyf and symple courage." Carl Horstmann, "Prosalegenden I: Caxtons Ausgabe der Heilige Wenefreda," *Anglia* 3 (1880): 305. See also M.J.C. Lowry, "Caxton, St. Winifred and the Lady Margaret Beaufort," *The Library*, 6th Series, V, no. 2 (1983): 108-09.

[52] De Smedt, *AASS, t.I. Nov.*: 727; *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 78.

inspired to seek out even the smallest of the saint's corporal relics and the search for her resting place begins.

That the Benedictines of Chester were willing to aid their brother monks is in no way brought into question, although we might suspect that the Shrewsbury community was feeling its lack of a suitable patron with particular acuity since the seemingly ancient church of St. Werburgh's, converted by Earl Hugh of Chester into a Benedictine abbey only five years after monastic life had begun at Shrewsbury, had at the time of its re-foundation long held the bones of its namesake.[53] Roger of Shrewsbury had, furthermore, endowed a number of local houses and had restored the Cluniac priory of Much Wenlock that held the bones of St. Milburga.[54] Being hemmed in, as it were, by houses in possession of Anglo-Saxon saints, Shrewsbury seems to have seized the opportunity to take a novel route and distinguish itself through the acquisition of an equally ancient Welsh saint, even if her blood was not so royal as that of Werburgh or Milburga, and even if the monks at Chester were the channel through which Shrewsbury came to know of her. A desire to differentiate may also have been spurred by an apparent resurgence in the cult of St. Werburgh from the middle of the eleventh century that perhaps influenced Earl Hugh's conversion of her minster in 1092.[55] At any rate the re-foundation of the house appears to have re-energized the cult, and the Benedictines of Chester seem from early on to have modeled their patroness "as the special protector of the earls and their city."[56]

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[53] B. E. Harris, ed. *A History of the County of Chester*, The Victoria History of the Counties of England, vol. 3 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 132-33.
[54] *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 9 and 11.
[55] C.P. Lewis and A.T. Thacker, eds., *A History of the County of Chester: General History and Topography*, The Victoria History of the Counties of England, vol. 5, part 1 (Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer, 2003), 24-25.
[56] Ibid., 31.

To judge from Robert's account there can be little doubt that Shrewsbury's main source of information about Gwenfrewy was the Chester community, for the Normans seem to have been aware of the Holywell shrine from an early point, perhaps even before the close of the eleventh century. Indeed, soon after Earl Hugh refounded St. Werburgh's his wife Adeliza in 1093 reportedly bestowed upon the abbey control of the shrine and chapel of "Haliwella."[57] Regardless of whether the earlier Domesday references to a *Weltune* can be thought to refer to Holywell or whether we can accept the authenticity of Adeliza's gift of 1093, the evidence of her son Richard's confirmation grant of 1119 demonstrates that the site was of note to the Normans by no later than the early twelfth century.[58] Here we learn that one of Earl Richard's men gave the church of Holywell to

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[57] Various writers have noted the existence and content of Adeliza's 1093 grant, but none of them provide a source for this information and I have been unable to trace the source myself. For mention of Adeliza's gift to St. Werburgh's, see, for instance, D.R. Thomas, *The History of the Diocese of St. Asaph: General, Cathedral, and Parochial, vol. 2*, New, Enlarged, and Illustrated ed. (Oswestry: Caxton Press, 1911). 188; , *Archaeologia Cambrensis* 76 (1921): 398; T. Charles-Edwards, *Saint Winefride and Her Well: The Historical Background* (London: The Catholic Truth Society, 1971). 6; David Williams, "Basingwerk Abbey," *Cîteaux* 32 (1981): 99; Christopher David, *St. Winefride's Well: A History and Guide* (Llandysul: Gomer Press, 2002). [3]; Glanmor Williams, "St. Winifred's Well: Ffynnon Wenfrewi," *Flintshire Historical Society Journal* 36 (2003): 35; and T.W. Pritchard, *St. Winefride, Her Holy Well, and the Jesuit Mission: c.650-1930* (Wrexham: Bridge Books, 2009). 47 and 50. Donald Hall mentions the grant and refers the reader to Henry Bradshaw's sixteenth-century Life of Werburgh, but Bradshaw only discusses the founding of St. Werburgh's in 1093, not Adeliza's grant to the monks of Basingwerk. See Donald John Hall, *English Mediaeval Pilgrimage* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965). 26. So far as I have been able to determine, Higden does not mention Adeliza's grant in his *Polychronicon*, and there is no mention whatsoever of the grant in either James Tait, ed. *The Chartulary or Register of the Abbey of St. Werburgh, Chester* (Manchester: Chetham Society, 1920); or Geoffrey Barraclough, ed., *The Charters of the Anglo-Norman Earls of Chester, c. 1071-1237*, The Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, vol. 126 (Gloucester: Alan Sutton Publishing, Ltd., 1988).

[58] For the notion that the *Weltune* of Domesday refers to Holywell, see Thomas, *History of the Diocese of St. Asaph, New ed.*: 188; S. Baring-Gould and J. Fisher, *The Lives of the British Saints*, vol. 3 (London: Charles J. Clark, 1911). 187-88; and Fiona Winward, "The Lives of St Wenefred (BHL 8847-8851)," *Analecta Bollandiana* 117 (1999): 94-95. For the grant of 1119 confirming the gifts to St. Werburgh's made not only by Earl Richard and his men, but also those made by the earl's father Hugh I and his men, see Tait, *Register of the Abbey of St. Werburgh*, 39-46; Barraclough, *Charters of the Anglo-Norman Earls of Chester*: 14-16. Control of the church at Holywell was contested by the monks of Chester and Basingwerk during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and at some point in the earldom of Ranulf II (1128/9-53) the church and town of Holywell were given to the monks of Basingwerk by Robert de Pierrepont. Then, at some point in the earldom of Hugh II (1153-81), Holywell was again in the possession of St. Werburgh's. By the end of the twelfth century the Welsh had regained control of the shrine, and in 1240 Dafydd ap Llywelyn confirmed Holywell as a dependent of Basingwerk. Tait, *Register of the Abbey of St. Werburgh*, 45n5 and 236-37; Barraclough, *Charters of the Anglo-Norman Earls of Chester*: 43, 51-4,

the monks of St. Werburgh's: "Burel dedit ecclesiam de Haliwella, et decimam de molendino suo et de omnibus rebus suis" ("Burel gave the church of Holywell, and a tithe from his own mill and from all his other holdings").[59] Much later, in the sixteenth-century metrical *Life of St. Werburge* written by Henry Bradshaw (d. 1513), the monk of Chester, we also learn that Earl Richard supposedly visited Holywell on pilgrimage in 1115.[60] Having then possibly been put into contact with the cult of Gwenfrewy from an early point in the history of their abbey and having definitely been in possession of Holywell by 1119, the monks of Chester would naturally have been quite familiar with the saint by the time that Robert wrote. Indeed his narrative implies that the monks of Chester were in reasonably regular contact with their Welsh shrine and the saint venerated there—after all, they recognize the maiden in Ralph's vision as Wenefred and they display a ready knowledge of the location of her spring. There is no indication of uncertainty on their part as to what it is or where it lies, and given the intentional aligning of interests between Shrewsbury and Chester that Robert's text works to produce, this is no surprise, for doubts expressed by the monks of St. Werburgh's regarding the saint or her well would undermine Robert's purpose. On the other hand, the monks of Chester do not appear to have been able to tell Robert or his fellows where Gwenfrewy was actually buried, and Robert's vagueness on this point may mask real uncertainty on the part of the community of St. Werburgh's. While Robert does not reveal from where exactly the

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and 147.. For a *Weltune* held by Hugh fitzNorman, see *Domesday Book: A Complete Translation*, ed. Ann Williams and G.H. Martin, Alecto Historical Editions (London: Penguin, 2003). 737.

[59] Tait, *Register of the Abbey of St. Werburgh*, 41; Barraclough, *Charters of the Anglo-Norman Earls of Chester*: 15. Translation is my own.

[60] Joan Greatrex, "Bradshaw, Henry (*d*. 1513)," ed. Lawrence Goldman, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004-), http://www.oxforddnb.com.proxy-remote.galib.uga.edu/view/article/3196; Henry Bradshaw, *The Life of Saint Werburge of Chester*, Early English Text Society, o.s. 88 (London: Trübner, 1887; repr., Kraus, 1973). 179-81. For the likely apocryphal nature of Bradshaw's story, see Lewis and Thacker, *History of the County of Chester, vol. 5, no. 1*, 26.

Shrewsbury monks learn of Gwenfrewy's burial site, he explicitly states that, in the peace of Henry I's reign, his monastery "nuntios in Walliam transmittentes, ubinam excellentiores sancti requiescerent, vel potius ubi præfatæ virginis tumulus esset, sollicite quæsiverunt" ("sent messengers into Wales, and they steadfastly sought where the more outstanding saints reposed, or preferably, where the grave of the aforementioned maiden was").[61] If the Cestrian brothers knew where Gwenfrewy's body reposed, there would be no need to send messengers through Wales in search of her tomb.

That the early twelfth-century monks of Chester should be ignorant of the exact location of Gwenfrewy's grave is plausible due to the military and political conflicts that marked the region in the preceding centuries. Although the strip of land near the banks of the Dee estuary stretching from Holywell to Hawarden was early settled and long held by English pioneers, Gwytherin is situated in an area that was largely under Welsh control during the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries.[62] As one of the early Welsh names for northeastern Wales implies, *Y Berfeddwlad* (The Middle Country) stood between the larger kingdoms of Powys and Gwynedd.[63] This region was composed of four *cantrefi*: Rhos, Rhufoniog, Tegeingl, and Dyffryn Clwyd—Gwytherin lay very near

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[61] De Smedt, *AASS, t.I. Nov.*: 727; *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 80. For Henry I's subjugation of Wales and the Marches, see Davies, *Conquest, Coexistence, and Change*: 40-45.

[62] For the layout of early English settlement on the Dee estuary, see C. P. Lewis, "Welsh Territories and Welsh Identities in Anglo-Saxon England," in *Britons in Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. N.J. Higham (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2007), 137-40; for the same topic see more generally C. P. Lewis, "English and Norman Government and Lordship in the Welsh Borders, 1039-1087" (University of Oxford, 1985). While Hugh of Chester initially granted manors to St. Werburgh's on Anglesey and even in Rhos, these were not held long, due to Welsh uprisings in the mid-1090s, and contact with them or their environs would consequently have been minimal. See Harris, *History of the County of Chester, vol. 3*, 133. In general, the earldoms of Cheshire and Shropshire had their most immediate interests in the Welsh regions to which they were directly adjacent—i.e., Chester was focused on Gwynedd while Shrewsbury was focused on Powys. The possibility that connections between Shrewsbury and Powys—as opposed to or in conjunction with connections between Chester and Gwynedd—could explain how Prior Robert came to discover the location of Gwenfrewy's burial site will be discussed below.

[63] For much more detailed discussion of the history of and interactions between North Wales and Cheshire in the centuries before Robert's expedition, see Appendix C below.

the border between the first two; Holywell was in Tegeingl (English, *Englefield*).[64] From an initial period of Mercian intrusion in the eighth century until its recapture by Owain Gwynedd in the mid-twelfth, Tegeingl was subject largely to the English and, later, to the Normans.[65] The Welsh always remained, however, a substantial presence in the area, and it appears that the English or Norman hold on Tegeingl was, quite literally, marginal:

> The Domesday place-names there were a mixture of English names and Welsh names, neither set showing any apparent influence from the other language. It seems likely that there were separate communities of Welsh and English speakers in the territory in 1066. The area seems to have been under English control from the 790s until perhaps the 1010s, then in Welsh hands until 1063 or 1064. Judging from the distribution of place-names, English settlement was confined to the narrow coastal strip from the Dee estuary round to the marshy land at the mouth of the river Clwyd, and to the hillsides immediately behind the coast.[66]

In the centuries leading up to the time that Prior Robert composed his *translatio* narrative, however, this general region had been subject not only to the vicissitudes of border conflict first between Welsh and English, and then between Welsh and Norman, but also to the political ambitions and personal fortunes of the rulers of Powys and Gwynedd. Northeastern Wales had, then, been long contested by foreigners and native Welsh alike by the time that Robert and the monks of Shrewsbury Abbey began their search for a patron saint. Moreover, the division created by Norman control of Tegeingl and Welsh control of Rhos and Rhufoniog makes plausible the division between the cults at Holywell and Gwytherin that I have already suggested. While Robert was no doubt employing established hagiographical topoi when describing the search for Gwenfrewy's

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[64] Sir John Edward Lloyd seems to imply that *Y Berfeddwlad*, rather than *Gwynedd is Conwy*, was the earlier name for the region. Sir John Edward Lloyd, *A History of Wales from the Earliest Times to the Edwardian Conquest*, 2 vols. (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1967). 239.

[65] Ibid., 242; Wendy Davies, *Wales in the Early Middle Ages* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1982). 110.

[66] Lewis, "Welsh Territories and Welsh Identities," 137. See also Lewis, "English and Norman Government and Lordship in the Welsh Borders, 1039-1087," 144-46. For the layout of place-names and English holdings T.R.E., see maps 12 and 24, as well as pages 109 and 115.

grave, and while he certainly sought to create an exciting yet credible narrative with himself in a leading role, the history of northeastern Wales suggests that his statements about the initial difficulties in finding the saint's burial site may not be complete fabrication.

Robert's Meetings with Bishop and Prince: Cross-Border Connections and the Cult at Gwytherin

Robert's narrative indicates that the Chester community of St. Werburgh's was Shrewsbury's primary source of information regarding the saint and her holy spring, but it also implies that the Chester brethren did not know the location of Gwenfrewy's actual burial place. Could this, however, be entirely true, or could it be part of Robert's rhetorical fashioning or his seeming disinterest in matters of a political or historical bent not immediately associated with the miraculous and spiritual elements of the story he relates? The anonymous Life focusing upon the locality of Holywell, while apparently not seen by Robert, is at least aware of the fact that Gwenfrewy was interred at a place called Gwytherin, and it would therefore seem to indicate that the cult at Holywell was not entirely ignorant of that at Gwytherin in the twelfth century. That Robert would have visited Holywell or would have at least obtained information directly from it is implied not only by the fact that the Chester monks knew and visited the site on behalf of the Shrewsbury community, but also by Robert's own statements in his prologue about the sources that he uses for his account.[67] Given the Norman refortification of Degannwy on the river Conwy in the 1080s as an outpost from which to attack Gwynedd, and given the military support that the Earls of Chester lent to the Welsh rulers of Tegeingl in 1118 in

[67] On which, see chapter 4 below.

their struggle to retain Dyffryn Clwyd, it is apparent that Chester had an interest in the general region wherein Gwytherin lay.[68] Further, the sequences in which Robert describes his negotiations with the Welsh bishop and prince as well as his arrival in Gwytherin contain details that strengthen the suggestion that Chester was indeed the source of Robert's knowledge of the burial site and that his narrative is deliberately vague on this particular point. At the same time, the alternate possibility remains that relations between Shrewsbury and Powys in the early twelfth century could account for Robert's knowledge about Gwytherin.

As already noted, Robert clearly states that it is Henry I's success at maintaining peace in Britain which allows the brothers to dispatch messengers safely throughout the country to find the maiden's grave, or, failing that, the sepulcher of some other preeminent saint.[69] And while he does not reveal from where exactly the Shrewsbury monks learn of Gwenfrewy's burial site, he does record that the grave is in the diocese of the bishop of Bangor—as would have been the case in the 1130s, since St. Asaph was vacant until 1143 and the lands over which its prelate would hold jurisdiction, which included the Cledwen valley where Gwytherin lay, were at this time subject to the see of Bangor.[70] With the bishop's help the Shrewsbury brethren are able to secure the support of secular rulers, but the king's death and the subsequent revolts against Norman domination in Wales prevent the project from going further. Then, "Secundo . . . imperii regis Stephani anno" ("in the second year of the sovereignty of King Stephen"),[71] and

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[68] On these events, see Appendix C below.
[69] See page 57 above.
[70] That is, so much as episcopal structure was able to exercise its authority in a region that was the site of repeated conflict between Welsh and Norman rulers. See Glanmor Williams, *The Welsh Church from Conquest to Reformation* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1993). 3.
[71] De Smedt, *AASS, t.I. Nov.*: 727; *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 80.

with order restored in the country—or, more accurately, with native rulers and Norman lords alike having claimed large amounts of territory for themselves and having greatly weakened royal influence in Wales[72]—Abbot Herbert sends Prior Robert and a monk named Richard into Wales to continue the pursuit of Gwenfrewy's relics. In Robert's own words he was "in hujus rei procuratione ceteris sollicitior" ("more solicitous than others in the conduct of this matter"), and after sending letters and messengers throughout the region he receives word that, should he himself come, he would obtain the object of his quest.[73]

The bishop of Bangor at the time of Robert's journey was David the Scot, a man of possibly Welsh descent who had served as chaplain to William Rufus and had supposedly been elected to the see of Bangor with the consent of the Prince of Gwynedd, Gruffudd ap Cynan, as well as of the local church, but had also professed obedience to Canterbury when consecrated in 1120.[74] The previous bishop, a Breton named Hervé, had been installed in the then-vacant see by Earl Hugh of Chester in 1092, during the short period of Norman ascendancy in Anglesey and Gwynedd, only to be driven out of his diocese shortly thereafter by the revolts of 1094-95.[75] Hervé's relationship with the Welsh was strained at best: he surrounded himself with an armed bodyguard while the local people killed his relatives and made threats on his own life. Unable to return to his see after Norman influence in the area waned, and attempting to be transferred out of

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[72] Davies, *Conquest, Coexistence, and Change*: 46.
[73] De Smedt, *AASS, t.I. Nov.*: 727; *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 80.
[74] Davies, *Conquest, Coexistence, and Change*: 44, 180; see also Huw Pryce, *The Acts of the Welsh Rulers, 1120-1283* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2005). 321-22; and C. P. Lewis, "Gruffudd ap Cynan and the Normans," in *Gruffudd ap Cynan: A Collaborative Biography*, ed. K.L. Maund (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1996), 75-76. For Owain Gwynedd's later control over the see, cf. Davies, *Conquest, Coexistence, and Change*: 48.
[75] Davies, *Conquest, Coexistence, and Change*: 179; Williams, *The Welsh Church*: 2; Lloyd, *History of Wales*: 392, 448-49.

Bangor, at first unsuccessfully, Hervé was finally sent to the newly established see at Ely in 1109 and Bangor was without a bishop for the next eleven years, a testament to Gruffudd ap Cynan's influence in the matter.[76] From Robert's account it is clear that the Shrewsbury brethren began their search for a patron at some point not too long before 1135; as David the Scot was the bishop of Bangor well prior to and also after that time (from April 4, 1120 until 1138), he would have been the one through whom the monks had secured initial secular support for the *translatio* before the king's death and with whom Robert had direct dealings roughly two years later.

Responding to the bishop's invitation, Robert heads to Bangor and is immediately sent on to the local prince. This figure, like the bishop, is left unnamed, but in all likelihood was Owain Gwynedd, the eldest son of Gruffudd ap Cynan. The *translatio* expedition occurred in 1137 or 1138, the former being the year of Gruffudd's death, and the activities of Owain and his brothers in Rhos and Rhufoniog, as well as in areas further south and east, indicate that the old king had long before given effective control of his realm to his heirs, if in fact he had not already died, by the time that Robert appeared on the scene.[77] That Bishop David would have sought the consent of the princely house before granting to the Shrewsbury Benedictines permission to carry Gwenfrewy back to England is demonstrated by the close relationship Gruffudd ap Cynan had with the see of Bangor. Not only was David at least ostensibly elected with Gruffudd's approval after the expulsion of the intruded Hervé, but according to the author of *Historia Gruffud vab Kenan*, David was present at Gruffudd's death bed and witnessed his final ecclesiastical benefactions there as one of "the greatest and wisest men of the whole kingdom" (*y gwyr*

[76] Davies, *Conquest, Coexistence, and Change*: 44; Lloyd, *History of Wales*: 448.
[77] On the activities of Gruffudd ap Cynan's sons in North Wales at this time, see Appendix C below.

mwyaf a doethaf o'r holl gywoeth).[78] In addition to Bishop David, also attendant on the prince at this time were the archdeacon of Bangor Simeon of Clynnog, and, most significantly, an unnamed prior of St. Werburgh's (*prior manachlog Kaer*).[79] Robert himself asserts that the prior of St. Werburgh's accompanied him on the journey to Gwytherin along with a Welsh priest from the same abbey, and he claims that both men were well known in the area around the burial site (*per patriam illam bene notos*).[80]

As with most of the seven-member mission to Wales, Robert leaves his prior from Chester anonymous, but given the temporal proximity of the Welsh king's death and the *translatio* expedition, along with Robert's assertion that the Cestrian prior was well known in the region, it is possible that this man in Robert's party was the same one who witnessed Gruffudd's final bequests. Indeed, Gruffudd's gifts reveal connections with the Benedictine Abbeys of the marcher lordships, as well as with Welsh and Irish foundations—in addition to leaving money for the good of his soul to churches in Dublin, St. David's, Bangor, Holyhead, Penmon, Clynnog, Bardsey, Meifod, Llanarmon, and Dineirth, Gruffudd made bequests to St. Peter's in London, to St. Werburgh's, and to Shrewsbury. Robert claims to have secured permission from "principes et nobiles patriæ" ("the leaders and the nobles of the country") for Gwenfrewy's translation directly

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[78] D. Simon Evans, *Historia Gruffud vab Kenan* (Caerdydd: Gwasg Prifysgol Cymru, 1977). 32. Translation is my own. See also Lloyd, *History of Wales*: 469.

[79] Evans, *Historia Gruffud vab Kenan*: 32. Evans offers the following explanation for the prior's anonymity in the *Historia*: "Nid enwir y prior, am nad oedd, y mae'n ddiau, yn hysbys i'r awdur, yn enwedig os yn y chwe degau y lluniwyd y gwaith. Ond fe ellir gweld pam yr oedd yn awyddus bod cynrychiolydd teilwng o wlad y Norman ymhlith y mawrion a oedd yn bresennol adeg marw Gruffudd. Sylwer hefyd ei fod yn cynnwys y prior ymhlith 'y gwyr mwyaf a doethaf o'r holl gywoeth' (32.8-9), ei roi felly o fewn tiriogaeth Gruffudd!" ("The prior is not named because, doubtless, he was not known to the author, especially if the work was completed in the 1160s. But it is possible to see why he was eager that a worthy representative of the land of the Normans was among the great men who were present at the time of Gruffudd's death. Note also that he includes the prior among "the greatest and wisest men of the entire kingdom," therefore placing the prior within the territory of Gruffudd!"). See 107n10-11. Translation is my own.

[80] *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 82; De Smedt, *AASS, t.I. Nov.*: 728.

through the Bishop of Bangor, and these negotiations were apparently underway a few years prior to the death of Henry I in 1135.[81] All this suggests that Gruffudd ap Cynan could have been at least cursorily involved in these proceedings near the end of his life, and it might then be that his gifts to Shrewsbury and to St. Werburgh's were related to the arrangements for allowing Gwenfrewy to be translated, even though the *translatio* was not actually completed until after Gruffudd's death when the initial convulsions of Stephen's reign had subsided. To sum up then, we have at Chester in the 1130s a prior and a Welsh priest seemingly well traveled and well known in North Wales, the former of whom could have been in attendance upon Gruffudd ap Cynan at the time of his death. In combination with Chester's demonstrated interest in the general region wherein Gwytherin lay, the presence of these two men at St. Werburgh's would suggest that Robert's implied claim that the monks of Chester knew nothing of the burial site is not wholly accurate. Whether or not Robert met directly with Gruffudd or with his son Owain, the permission granted for the *translatio* may be construed as a spiritual benefaction meant to augment the dying ruler's more material bequests to both native and foreign churches, including the abbeys of Chester and Shrewsbury.

As an interesting side note, William Caxton's English translation of Robert's *Vita et translatio*, published early in 1484, adds the names of the prior and priest from Chester who accompanied Robert to Gwytherin—the prior was apparently named Wulmere and the Welsh priest Idon.[82] In Robert's original text, we learn only that the delegation to Wales consisted of seven people:

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[81] De Smedt, *AASS, t.I. Nov.*: 727; *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 80.

[82] Horstmann, "Prosalegenden I," 308. For more on this and related vernacular Lives of the fifteenth century, see chapter 5 below. Outside of Caxton's 1484 text, the names of the prior and Welsh priest of Chester only occur in a sixteenth-century Welsh version of Robert's *Vita et translatio*.

> [P]ræfatus videlicet prior, et cum eo viri venerabiles, prior Cestrensis, quidamque sacerdos, multarum virtutum vir, eadem gente progenitus, fraterque quem de monasterio secum prior adduxerat, tresque viri alii.[83]
>
> ([N]amely, the aforementioned prior, and with him reverend men: the prior of Chester and a certain priest (a man of many virtues, born of that same nation), and a brother whom the prior had brought with him from his monastery, and three other men.)[84]

We know from an earlier reference that the "brother whom the prior had brought with him from his monastery" was called Richard, but otherwise Robert leaves the members of his group unnamed. Caxton's exact source for the additional names that he gives is unknown, but his many connections with the gentry of Shrewsbury and his seeming interest in promoting Wenefred's cult there suggest that he had access to genuine traditions from Shrewsbury Abbey, and the influence of Robert's text on later medieval versions of the saint's legend implies that it was widely available by Caxton's day, perhaps in copies preserving unique and variant details, e.g., the names of others involved in the expedition to Gwytherin.[85] So far as the accuracy of Caxton's additional names, however, comparison with the list of Chester's abbots in the 1130s and the following decades produces no one named Wulmere or anything similar.[86] So if Caxton's information is correct we can conclude that while Wulmere may have been an important ambassador to the Welsh of Gwynedd, he did not secure election as abbot of Chester after his tenure as prior.

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[83] De Smedt, *AASS, t.I. Nov.*: 728.
[84] *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 81.
[85] Anne F. Sutton, "Caxton, the Cult of St. Winifred, and Shrewsbury," in *Of Mice and Men: Image, Belief and Regulation in Late Medieval England*, ed. Linda Clark, *The Fifteenth Century V* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 2005), 109-26. For more on this point, see chapter 5 below.
[86] Harris, *History of the County of Chester, vol. 3*, 144. Ralph (*Radulphus*), the sub-prior of Chester who witnesses the vision of Wenefred at the beginning of Robert's *translatio* narrative, is most likely the Ralph who served as abbot of St. Werburgh's from 1141-57.

In addition to the perhaps deliberate lack of detail in Robert's report of the search for Gwenfrewy's grave, his rhetorical fashioning of the *translatio* narrative can also be glimpsed in the sequence recording the approval of both bishop and prince, an episode reflecting post-1066 trends in Anglo-Latin hagiography regarding *translatio* narrative. As Patrick Geary has demonstrated, *translatio* narratives were a standard hagiographical sub-genre on the Continent from at least the ninth century, often presenting the acquisition of a saint's remains as a holy theft (*furtum sacrum*) resulting from a given individual's overpowering piety.[87] This sub-genre, separate from *vitae* proper, was possessed of certain defining features, including, as earlier noted, a public ceremony during which the tomb or grave was opened and the relics removed, the failure of initial efforts to bear the body away and the resolution of the problem with fasting or prayer, and the occurrence of miracles on the journey to the saint's new home.[88] Paul Antony Hayward, however, has identified a development in this sub-genre as it appears in post-Conquest hagiography of Anglo-Saxon saints written up to about 1140.[89] The innovation is, specifically, "the attention given to the role of terrestrial authorities in the making of cults."[90] While Anglo-Latin hagiography composed after 1066 sometimes includes

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[87] Geary, *Furta Sacra*. For the general origins and outlines of the tradition, see chapter 1, "Relics and Saints in the Central Middle Ages;" for the role of the thief's supposed piety in justifying relic theft, see 139-40.

[88] Ibid., 13. Robert's account of the *translatio* includes many of the tropes identified by Geary, including a healing miracle that demonstrates the power of the saint's relics while they are in transport to Shrewsbury. So far as the failure of efforts to move the relics away from their initial resting place, the only difficulties encountered are distinctly not supernatural—the disapproval of the inhabitants of Gwytherin—but they are overcome by vigil, prayer, and, most exceptionally, by a monetary bribe. See *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 82-86 and 89-90. Caxton's translation of Robert's text omits the sequence involving the bribe, but does include an extra episode wherein the Shrewsbury monks, after stopping to rest some ten miles from home, are unable to continue because Wenefred's bones cannot be moved. The solution is to wash them in the water of a fountain that miraculously springs up at the spot. See Horstmann, "Prosalegenden I," 311. See also chapter 5 below.

[89] Paul Antony Hayward, "Translation-Narratives in Post-Conquest Hagiography and English Resistance to the Norman Conquest," *Anglo-Norman Studies* 21 (1998): 67-93.

[90] Ibid., 69.

"clear statements to the effect that certain historical kings or prelates had 'authorised' a cult," Hayward maintains that "a more subtle and frequent device is to allege that such figures were involved in the *translatio* or *elevatio* with which the cult was crystallised."[91] It is the intensity with which post-Conquest hagiographers emphasize the role of secular authorities in the inception of a cult that Hayward marks out as significant, and whether or not the persons named actually participated in or lent their support to the transfer of the saint's relics is immaterial. The purpose of this emphasis was as much to validate the cult of a native saint as it was to insulate it from Norman ridicule or doubt, and Robert's account, functioning as *translatio* narratives did to "establish a claim on a particular relic or to make acceptable the presence of a saint's body in a remote monastery with which he never had any connection," is clearly concerned to present Gwenfrewy's *translatio* as an event endorsed by royal and ecclesiastical authority.[92]

As was already noted, though, Robert does not give the names of the authorities with whom he confers regarding his mission. Further, if we were to assume that Robert was concerned about potential suspicions that might be raised in England against the cult of a decapitated and resurrected non-Norman saint, we might expect him not to emphasize the role of Welsh authorities but of Anglo-Norman ones in the search for Gwenfrewy's remains.[93] So far as the validity of the cult is concerned, Robert presents

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[91] Ibid.

[92] Geary, *Furta Sacra*: 14. See 47 and 135-36 for ninth-century Carolingian legislation requiring permission of a prince and/or (*vel*) bishop for a *translatio* to take place.

[93] Coincidentally, the only historical figures whom Robert names in his *translatio* narrative are Kings William I, Henry I, and Stephan, the Marcher Lord Roger de Montgomery, Abbots Godfrey and Herbert and Brother Richard of Shrewsbury, Ralph the sub-prior of St. Werburgh's, and, of course, himself. As noted on page 64 above, William Caxton, in his translation of Robert's account published in 1484, would add to this list Wulmere and Idon, respectively the Prior and a Welsh priest of St. Werburgh's, members of the *translatio* party left unnamed by Robert himself. For the willingness of Normans to adopt non-Norman saints in the post-Conquest period, see Susan J. Ridyard, "*Condigna Veneratio*: Post-Conquest Attitudes to Anglo-Saxon Saints," *Anglo-Norman Studies* 9 (1987): 179-206. See also Susan J. Ridyard, *The Royal*

himself and other characters in his narrative as incredulous and, therefore, trustworthy observers. He thereby allays any concerns on the part of his audience regarding the essential truth of Gwenfrewy's existence or sanctity. Examples include the statements Robert makes in his preface regarding the discretion with which he handled his sources and the careful identification of Ralph, the sub-prior of Chester who experiences and initially doubts a vision of the saint. Although Robert does not name the Welsh prelate and ruler with whom he confers, he does give the prince a long speech in which he offers reasons for supporting the *translatio* and also his desire to take part personally in the operation; consequently, it would appear that Robert participates in the model outlined by Hayward in emphasizing the role of bishop and prince in his narrative.[94]

The Welsh ruler's approval of the monks' mission is stated in the clearest of terms in the account of his meeting with the Shrewsbury delegation. The prince remarks that the brethren would not "tantum laborem sine Dei nutu et beatæ virginis voluntate assumpsisse" ("have taken up so great a labour without the approval of God and the willingness of the blessed maiden"), and he submits to her desire in the matter, lest he be forced "indignationem ejus in ultione pati" ("to suffer her displeasure in punishment").[95] He even goes so far as to claim that, as mentioned, were he not burdened by secular and administrative duties, he would himself dig up her bones and hand them over to the monks from Shrewsbury. Furthermore, the prince recognizes the validity of their pursuit not only by their assiduousness, but by the visions that they have been shown (*visiones*

Saints of Anglo-Saxon England: A Study of West Saxon and East Anglian Cults (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988). See esp. chapter 8.

[94] At the end of the *translatio* account, Robert also notes the approval granted by the local bishop to move Wenefred's bones officially into Shrewsbury Abbey following a period of deposition in the nearby Church of St. Giles. See *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 90-91.

[95] De Smedt, *AASS, t.I. Nov.*: 727-28; *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 81.

vobis ostensæ).[96] Most significant, however, are the prince's thoughts on why the saint would want to be translated:

> Forte enim videns debitam sibi reverentiam a suis non inferri, alias asportari desiderat, ut ab alienis honorem accipiat quem sibi sui impendere aut contemnunt aut negligunt.[97]
>
> (For, perhaps, seeing that the respect owed her is not rendered by her own people, she desires to be taken elsewhere so that she might receive from strangers the honour which either her own people disdain to give her or neglect to give.)[98]

But even if the local people are negligent in offering proper devotion to the maiden, they are, the prince notes, unlikely to respond favorably to an attempt to carry her off, a situation that will require secular as well as spiritual authority to be resolved:

> [I]nventuri, ut reor, aliquos qui vestræ dispositioni rebelles existent. Sed confidite: quia illius obtentus eos vobis pacificabit cujus affectus vos tantum laborem arripere incitavit. Verumtamen ego ad illos homines in quorum patrimonio prædictæ virginis corpus requiescit nuntium destinabo, qui et iis voluntatem meam insinuabit et eos aliquanto pacificiores vobis efficiet.[99]
>
> ([Y]ou will find, I think, some who are opposed to your intention. But, have confidence, because the patronage of the one whose devotion has moved you to take up so great a labour will make them peaceful toward you. Nevertheless, to those men in whose patrimony the body of the aforementioned maiden rests, I shall send an emissary who will make my will known to them and who will make them somewhat more peaceful toward you.)[100]

"The men in whose patrimony the body of the aforementioned maiden rests" would be the local rulers of Rhos and Rhufoniog, *cantrefi* held by Gwynedd since the death in 1118 of Hywel ab Ithel, the client ruler of these *cantrefi* who was loyal to Powys, and Robert clearly records the dissatisfaction felt by the inhabitants of that region regarding his plan

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[96] Pepin translates this line as "visions shown to us," but Robert's text clearly has *vobis*; the distinction is an important one.
[97] De Smedt, *AASS, t.I. Nov.*: 728.
[98] *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 81.
[99] De Smedt, *AASS, t.I. Nov.*: 728.
[100] *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 81.

to take away their most prominent local saint. Having left the Welsh prince's dwelling, Robert and his companions make straight for Gwytherin, and while discussing the errand on which they have set out they meet "hominem unum illius patriæ non ignobilem" ("a man of that country, one who was not of low birth") seeking the prior of Shrewsbury. Having been directed to Robert, the man announces that

> Legationem virorum qui illud prædium inhabitant in quo sanctæ Wenefredæ virginis ossa continentur, quod Witheriacus nuncupatur, tibi dicturus adveni. Noveris gravi eos indignatione adversum te commoveri, quod sanctorum corpora penes se reposita, quibus ipsi et omnia sua sunt commissa, asportare conaris; sciasque pro certo quia nec principis timor nec dominorum suorum comminatio, neque alicujus pecuniæ cupiditas, eos tibi in hac re consentientes efficient.[101]
>
> (I have come to tell you the message of the men who dwell in that district which is called Guitherin, where the bones of the maiden, Saint Winefride, are preserved. Know that they are stirred by great indignation against you because you are trying to carry off the bodies of saints kept in their possession, to which they and all their own are entrusted. And know for certain that neither fear of the prince nor the threatening of their lords nor desire for any money will make them agree with you in this matter.)[102]

The reluctance of the Welsh to disturb the bodies of their holy dead has already been discussed, and this statement of defiance best exemplifies that attitude in the present context.[103] While Robert was obviously working within a genre that required narrative conflict to establish the sanctity and desirability of his subject, the sentiments here recorded are likely based in fact, for they reflect the degree to which Welsh saints were intimately attached to and perceived to be responsible for their local communities; indeed, the men of the district and their families "are entrusted" to the protection of the saints they possess. A subsequent episode illustrates the point further. When the monks later approach Gwytherin, they send the prior and Welsh priest of Chester ahead "sollicite

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[101] De Smedt, *AASS, t.I. Nov.*
[102] *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 82.
[103] See page 43ff. above.

omnia quæ necessaria eis erant provisuros" ("to provide carefully for everything that they needed"), and it is here that Robert remarks on their being well known in that district.[104] Initial negotiations with the villagers go well. Speaking through an interpreter, a local priest who has been admonished in a vision not to obstruct the removal of the saint's remains, Robert has all but convinced the people to grant him his desire when an angry man, "vir Belial" ("a soldier of Belial"), bursts forth from the crowd and voices loud opposition.[105] He claims that "non esse justum dicens ut sancti a suo natali solo evellantur et ad patriam nihil ad eos pertinentem deportentur" ("it was not right that saints be torn away from their native soil and carried off to a country which had nothing to do with them") and shouting "clamitans quasi furiis ageretur, se illud nullatenus pati posse" ("as if he were being attacked by robbers, he said that he could in no way endure this"). After the man has been silenced, his fellows set off to deliberate the matter and Robert, on the advice of his brother monks, sends a mediator to the troublemaker. The mediator succeeds in convincing the man to reconsider his position by means, ironically, of a monetary bribe, and Robert specifically relates that the other villagers hold his new turn of mind to be a miracle performed "vi divina" ("by divine power"), whereby they become "eoque magis accendebantur rogata perficere" ("even more inspired to carry out what was requested").[106] Gwenfrewy's presence at Gwytherin may have been of great significance to the local population as a whole, but, if Robert's account can be trusted at this point, then some were apparently more concerned with the presence of funds in their pockets that could be secured by letting the saint go. Of course, the scene could be part of Robert's attempts to portray the Welsh as unworthy possessors of Gwenfrewy's bones,

[104] De Smedt, *AASS, t.I. Nov.*: 728; *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 82.
[105] De Smedt, *AASS, t.I. Nov.*: 729; *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 86.
[106] De Smedt, *AASS, t.I. Nov.*: 729; *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 86.

and its crassness is so egregious that Caxton omitted it from his 1484 translation of Robert's text and Roger Morris, the scribe who copied a Welsh translation of Robert's work into NLW Llanstephan MS 34 toward the end of the sixteenth century, left out the bribe itself while retaining the other details of the sequence. The angry words of the Gwytherin villager do, however, seem a genuine expression of Welsh attitudes toward the reverence due to saints' relics. At the same time, the multiple levels of opposition that Robert records, as well as the neglect he claims Gwenfrewy suffered at the hands of the local inhabitants, function as standard hagiographical topoi that increase the saint's importance and desirability while simultaneously justifying Robert's claim to her bones.[107] Since it is possibly part of Robert's rhetorical fashioning, the willingness of the *vir Belial* to exchange a saint for money should not be taken somehow to undermine the importance of Gwytherin as a ritual site or the status of Gwenfrewy's cult in the area in the 1130s. Her *translatio* to Shrewsbury indicates that Gwenfrewy had become known outside northern Wales prior to 1138, something that likely resulted from the established strength of her cult at Gwytherin and at Holywell before the twelfth century, as well as from Chester's interests in the general regions in which both sites lay.

While Chester was the most likely channel by which Shrewsbury learned the location of Gwenfrewy's burial site at Gwytherin, regardless of what Robert implies to the contrary, it remains to note one other general possibility, namely that the Shrewsbury monks could have been made aware somehow of Gwytherin through the connections between Shrewsbury and Powys in the early twelfth century. After all, the Welsh genealogical tracts *Bonedd y Saint* and *Achau'r Saint* reveal that Gwenfrewy was thought

[107] One wonders what Gerald of Wales would have to say about the Gwytherin villager's change of heart. For Gerald's thoughts on the fickleness of Welshmen, see Thorpe, *Gerald of Wales: The Journey Through Wales/The Description of Wales*: 256. For Gerald's comments on the greed of Welsh people, see 262.

to have descended from the ancient line of Powys through her mother Gwenlo, and, according to these same texts, her uncle Beuno was of the same lineage.[108] It is not unlikely, then, that her legend may have been known in Powys before 1137. Given the control that Powys exercised over Rhos and Rhufoniog through Hywel ab Ithel until 1118, it is also possible that knowledge specifically of Gwytherin, the place where a saintly descendent of the early rulers of Powys was buried, would have been circulating in that kingdom well prior to the 1130s. Moreover, connections between Shropshire and Powys in the early twelfth century were significant. Max Lieberman has argued that the reign of Henry I was pivotal in the creation of a Marcher aristocracy in this particular region.[109] Frederick Suppe, having explored the intermarriage of Welsh and English families on the Shropshire-Powys border over the course of several generations in the twelfth century, concludes that these families gained prominence as interpreters in Anglo-Welsh relations and were related to the leading political figures in the area between whom they facilitated negotiations.[110] In such circumstances, it is plausible that the monks of Shrewsbury would have been involved at one point or another in matters that could have brought to their attention the legend of Gwenfrewy, a saint with ties to the early royal line of Powys. While the evidence in favor of Chester as the channel by which Shrewsbury discovered Gwytherin is more direct, it was no doubt through the sort of general connections that Suppe underscores that Prior Robert and his brethren first

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[108] Bartrum, *Early Welsh Genealogical Tracts*. See 59, no. 30, and 70, nos. 26 and 27. See also chapter 4 below.

[109] Max Lieberman, *The Medieval March of Wales: The Creation and Perception of a Frontier, 1066-1283* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010). 248-52.

[110] Frederick C. Suppe, "Interpreter Families and Anglo-Welsh Relations in the Shropshire-Powys Marches in the Twelfth Century," in *Anglo-Norman Studies*, ed. C. P. Lewis (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2008), 211-12.

"heard that the bodies of many saints were preserved in Wales."[111] And it was certainly through these same sorts of connections that "the brothers often sent messengers into Wales, and . . . steadfastly sought where the more outstanding saints reposed, or preferably, where the grave of the aforementioned maiden was."[112]

Conclusions

The monks of St. Werburgh's were, to judge from Robert's narrative, the channel by which Shrewsbury first came to discover the cult of Gwenfrewy at Holywell. On the evidence of his own account, of the *Historia Gruffud vab Kenan*, and of Chester's general interests in northern Wales, it appears most likely that Prior Robert and his brothers at Shrewsbury also learned of Gwytherin through the monks of St. Werburgh's, even if Robert himself fails to acknowledge this link. Although mention of Gwytherin in the anonymous Life reveals that the cult sites had at least some knowledge of one another, the political and military conflicts between Chester, Gwynedd, and Powys during the eleventh and twelfth centuries provides ample explanation for a lack of immediate contact between Holywell and Gwytherin.[113] The former was in territory held almost exclusively by non-Welshmen from the eighth century onward, while the latter was beyond the range of early English settlement and situated in a remote region that saw a good deal of conflict after the arrival of the Normans. Although Chester had contact both with Holywell and with the area around Gwytherin, there is no need to assume that the two cult sites would have had much direct interaction with one another, even if both were known to the monks of St. Werburgh's and venerated a common saint. The division

[111] *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 77.
[112] Ibid., 80.
[113] For more on these conflicts, see Appendix C below.

between the cult sites proposed here on historical grounds will be elaborated further by reference to the internal evidence of Robert's text and the *Vita S. Wenefrede* in chapter four below. This historical and literary evidence cannot be taken to imply, however, that these sites had no contact with each other in the Middle Ages, and evidence for such contact—a reliquary shrine kept at Gwytherin but possibly constructed at or obtained through Holywell—will be presented in chapter three as part of a discussion of the status of Gwenfrewy's cult at Gwytherin during the medieval period and later.[114] In addition to Robert's own account of the burial site, chapter three will examine the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century records relating to the church and graveyard at Gwytherin, as well as the physical artifacts associated with Gwenfrewy's cult there, some of which still survive today. To support his claim to the saint's bones, Robert maintains that Gwenfrewy was neglected by the local people when he and his brethren sought her out at Gwytherin—indeed, he puts this very sentiment into the mouth of the Prince of Gwynedd. On the contrary, however, to judge from Robert's account of the cult site at Gwytherin, as well as from later physical and documentary evidence, it is likely that Gwenfrewy was of some importance at Gwytherin before Robert arrived. Ever the careful hagiographer, Robert obviously tailored his narrative as his needs required.

[114] For the evidence suggesting the existence of an English cult of Wenefred at Holywell from an early point, see the discussion of *Arch Gwenfrewy* in chapter 3 below and of the saint's English names in Appendix B.

CHAPTER 3

THE MEDIEVAL SIGNIFICANCE OF GWYTHERIN

The opposition to the removal of Gwenfrewy's corporal relics that Robert records in his *translatio* narrative serves to highlight her importance as a powerful saint, something that Robert is, of course, concerned to demonstrate. At the same time, his carefully authored text claims that Gwenfrewy was neglected enough by the local population that she sought out a more worthy resting place for her bodily remains. Robert is no doubt trying to reconcile these two competing claims, especially in light of the fact that perfectly legitimate transfers of relics by sale or gift were often recast in medieval hagiography as *furta sacra* (holy thefts) to increase the perceived power and value of the remains in question.[1] If, however, Robert's account can be taken at least partially at face value, the opposition that he records suggests that Gwytherin was a place of note at the time of his visit—whether or not Gwenfrewy's presence was the sole or primary reason for Gwytherin's importance is, though, debatable. Indeed, just as an account of *furtum sacrum* draws attention to and enhances a saint's reputation for those who acquire his or her relics, the transfer itself can equally serve to elevate the saint's significance for those who have lost his or her remains.

Regardless of Gwenfrewy's exact role at Gwytherin in the centuries following her burial there, evidence does exist in support of the notion that Gwytherin church, as well as its sizeable parish, were of some importance both well before and well after the late

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[1] Patrick J. Geary, *Furta Sacra: Thefts of Relics in the Central Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978).

1130s. That the cult of Gwenfrewy at Gwytherin grew in the centuries after Robert's expedition can be established by the witness of post-medieval documentary records relating to Gwytherin church and its precincts. In combination with Robert's account of the saints' graveyard at Gwytherin, these records also help to establish the medieval layout of the site and, reciprocally, they reveal the substantial accuracy of Robert's report. To this evidence can be added the surviving fragments of *Arch Gwenfrewy,* a reliquary shrine now preserved at the Museum of the Pilgrimage at Holywell and perhaps dating to the eighth or ninth century but known to have been at Gwytherin in the seventeenth.[2] It has also been suggested that the *Arch* dates to a much later period, that it is essentially contemporary with the *translatio* of 1138.[3] The different dates posited for *Arch Gwenfrewy* have, of course, particular implications for the status of the cult of Gwenfrewy before and after the arrival of the Shrewsbury party and, therefore, the arguments for each dating will be reviewed in detail below. If the *Arch* was actually constructed before the Norman Conquest, it would attest to the existence of Gwenfrewy's cult at Gwytherin at a point well antecedent to the Latin *vitae,* and indeed, on the evidence of an engraved stone dating perhaps to the fifth century, Gwytherin was a center of Christian activity for a long time before Gwenfrewy was exhumed from there. The focus of the present chapter is then twofold. Firstly, it reviews the evidence, much of which has been discussed only in unpublished materials, for the status and importance of

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[2] Lawrence Butler and James Graham-Campbell, "A Lost Reliquary Casket from Gwytherin, North Wales," *The Antiquaries Journal* 70 (1990): 40-48; Nancy Edwards, "A Fragment of the Shrine of Gwenfrewi," *Archaeology in Wales* 31 (1991): 41-42; Nancy Edwards and Tristan Gray Hulse, "A Fragment of a Reliquary Casket from Gwytherin, North Wales," *The Antiquaries Journal* 72 (1992): 91-101; Janet Bord and Tristan Gray Hulse, "St. Winefride's Well, Holywell, Clwyd," *Folklore* 105 (1994): 99-100.

[3] For this alternate dating of the shrine to the twelfth century, as well as the suggestion of it having an Irish, rather than an English provenance, see Cormac Bourke, "The Shrine of St Gwenfrewi from Gwytherin, Denbighshire: An Alternative Interpretation," in *The Archaeology of the Early Medieval Celtic Churches,* ed. Nancy Edwards (Leeds: Maney Publishing, 2009), 375-88.

Gwytherin in the centuries both preceding and following Robert's visit.[4] Secondly, and from much the same evidence, it considers the physical layout of Gwytherin in the 1130s to demonstrate that Robert's account of this ritual site is highly accurate in many particulars, something that in turn suggests the accuracy with which he recorded oral traditions about Gwenfrewy as well as the authenticity of those traditions, both of which are central concerns in the following chapter. For even if Gwenfrewy was not the most important saint buried at Gwytherin, Robert's description of the site supports the argument that it was established as a place of religious significance well before the twelfth century.

WAS GWYTHERIN A MOTHER CHURCH?

Pointing to what appears to be a bank cutting through the present churchyard and to archaeological evidence that possibly Iron Age enclosures were "reused as early Christian cemeteries," J. Wyn Evans has suggested that Gwytherin church and its graveyard rest atop an ancient promontory fort, an idea supported by the presence of four standing stones aligned in a row on the northern side of the *llan* (ecclesiastical enclosure), just at the point where the ground falls steeply away toward a small stream.[5] The westernmost stone, dated to the fifth or sixth century A.D., is inscribed vertically on its eastern face with the phrase "Vinnemagli fili Senemagli" in debased Roman capitals.[6] While possibly not in their original position, these stones may commemorate, according

[4] Much of this chapter reproduces and attempts to build on unpublished work on the cult site of Gwytherin by Tristan Gray Hulse. I am both deeply indebted and grateful to Mr. Gray Hulse for his willingness to share this important material with me, and full attribution is given throughout this chapter.
[5] J. Wyn Evans, "The Early Church in Denbighshire," *Transactions of the Denbighshire Historical Society* 35 (1986): 67.
[6] V.E. Nash-Williams, *The Early Christian Monuments of Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1950). 121.

to Wyn Evans, "successive generations of an aristocratic family . . . buried in an enclosure which may have been the family home."[7] The contours of the land on which Gwytherin church sits could plausibly have formed an ancient hill fort, as the ground drops away sharply on the northern, southern, and eastern sides, with only the western side allowing a level approach to the site. The southern boundary of the present churchyard is demarcated by a straight hedge that runs along the course of a dried up stream and that divides the originally egg-shaped, curvilinear *llan* into a northern and southern half. This latter portion consists of another hill with steep sides on its northern, eastern, and southern faces, offering clear views of the surrounding valley.[8]

Besides the possibility of Gwytherin being a locus of aristocratic power from an early date, evidence of the continuing importance of the site some two centuries after the Shrewsbury expedition is found in the 1334 *Survey of the Honour of Denbigh*, from which source Wyn Evans notes that a due known as *abbadaeth* was paid to the *abbates* of Gwytherin, descendents of one Cynon ap Llywarch. He suggests that this reference could indicate that, by the fourteenth-century, Gwytherin had come to be governed by

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[7] Wyn Evans, "The Early Church in Denbighshire," 67-68.

[8] This southern half is now scheduled by CADW, the Welsh government's historic preservation service, while the northern half on the other side of the hedge is still used as a graveyard by the Church in Wales. The church itself, however, a Victorian structure built on the original medieval foundations in the northern half of the enclosure, was closed in 2004, sold, and is now in secular use. I am thankful to Alison Goulbourne, the present owner of Gwytherin church, as well as to Tristan Gray Hulse and Janet Bord for showing me the church and its environs in August 2011. Aerial photography best demonstrates the essential unity of the northern and southern halves of the *llan*, and an aerial photo of Gwytherin church is printed in Nancy Edwards, "The Dark Ages," in *The Archaeology of Clywd*, ed. John Manley, Stephen Grenter, and Fiona Gale (Mold: Clywd County Council, 1991), 135. In the caption, Edwards notes that the churchyard is "unusually large." For the closing date of Gwytherin church I rely Gray Hulse's unpublished "A Note on Two Medieval Grave Slabs at Gwytherin." On the continued use in Wales of Iron Age burial places into and through the early medieval period, see Heather James, "Early Medieval Cemeteries in Wales," in *The Early Church in Wales and the West: Recent Work in Early Christian Archaeology, History and Place-Names*, ed. Nancy Edwards and Alan Lane (Oxford: Oxbow, 1992). Curvilinear churchyards in Ireland are generally thought to pre-date the Gregorian reforms of the twelfth century. Thomas Charles-Edwards, pers. comm. On curvilinear structures in early Ireland generally, see Matthew Stout, *The Irish Ringfort* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1997). On the development in eleventh- and twelfth-century Ireland of rectilinear churches in stone, see Tomás Ó'Carragáin, *Churches in Early Medieval Ireland: Architecture, Ritual and Memory* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010).

"hereditary successors of the leaders of an ecclesiastical community" who held a notable portion of land perhaps in the commote of Uwch Dulas.[9] Evidence from the Welsh laws as well as from *Brut y Tywysogion* and Gerald's *Itinerarium Cambriae* implies that these "hereditary successors" would have been laymen who had come to control what previously had been a *clas* community ruled by an *abad* (abbot).[10] Common throughout early Wales, a *clas* was

> a self-contained ecclesiastical community, consisting of an abbot (who might also, as in St Davids, be a bishop) and a group of canons, sharing a common income but living as secular clerks, often indeed as married clerks and even transmitting their property and ecclesiastical offices to their children.[11]

The law texts associate *clasau* not with monasteries but with mother churches, and although the anonymous Life and Robert's account both claim that a split house of monks and nuns was to be found at Gwytherin, no reliable physical evidence for the existence of a monastic foundation has been uncovered there.[12] A center of ecclesiastical oversight

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[9] Wyn Evans, "The Early Church in Denbighshire," 68. Charles-Edwards notes that the *Survey* indicates Gwytherin's status as a "family monastery" in the fourteenth century: T.M. Charles-Edwards, "Gwenfrewi (*fl. c.*650)," in *The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. Lawrence Goldman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004-). For the survey itself, see Paul Vinogradoff and Frank Morgan, eds., *Survey of the Honour of Denbigh, 1334*, Records of the Social and Economic History of England and Wales (London: Oxford University Press, 1914). In regards to the cult of St. Morderyn at Nantglyn, Maredudd ap Huw has suggested that the payment of *abbadaeth* by some inhabitants of the parish as recorded in the 1334 survey was possibly a "continuation of the local church's former status as a *clas* of the *cwmwd* of Is Aled." Maredudd ap Huw, "A Critical Examination of Welsh Poetry Relating to the Native Saints of North Wales (c. 1350-1670). 2 vols." (University of Oxford, 2001), lxiv.

[10] Wyn Evans, "The Early Church in Denbighshire," 71.

[11] R.R. Davies, *Conquest, Coexistence, and Change: Wales, 1063-1415* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987). 174.

[12] Wyn Evans, "The Early Church in Denbighshire," 73. There are two sites, not far from one another in Pennant Gwytherin valley, that are held locally to be the ruins of the saint's nunnery. One of these is an old house on a farm, Tai Pellaf, about a mile away from Gwytherin church. Janet Bord, pers. comm. The identification of this spot with the nunnery in which Gwenfrewy lived goes back to at least the mid-nineteenth or early twentieth century, for in 1849 Father John Griffith Wynne S.J. had heard "a tradition that the site of the monastery was at Penant Gwytherin, now a farmhouse, and higher up the valley." Frances Margaret Taylor, *St. Winefride; or Holywell and its Pilgrims: A Sketch*, New revised ed. (London: Burns, Oates & Washbourne, Ltd., 1922). 27. If Gwenfrewy's monastery was anything other than a memory by Prior Robert's day, we would have expected him to mention something of its layout, operation,

and pastoral care, mother churches (singular, *mam eglwys*) were part of a network of churches both major and minor and controlled the *parochiae* of medieval Wales, large units of administration that possibly coincided with the bounds of secular governmental districts, that is, with the *cantrefi* and their sub-divisions, the *cymydau*.[13] Mother churches in many cases became laicized and in fact the powers held by the leaders of these institutions "were clearly modelled on the values of lay society."[14] The exact features of mother churches are not, however, entirely clear, since neither their physical layout nor the extent or precise nature of their influence can be fully discerned, but their being a significant part of native ecclesiastical organization throughout Wales is undoubted.[15] While the matter remains speculative, then, Wyn Evans suggests that Gwytherin, originally governed by a *clas* community that later made way for a secular one, may have at one point been the mother church of the *cwmwd* of Uwch Aled, in which case it would certainly have been of regional importance, even after its secularization.

One aspect that reveals the significance of the *mam eglwys* was its claim to the privilege of sanctuary (*nawdd*), a concept specifically tied to the honor (*braint*) of the saint or saints to whom the mother church was dedicated. As noted, the exact form and physical delineation of the *llan fam eglwys* (mother church enclosure) is unclear, but it was the boundary to which a saint's immediate protection was considered to extend, and

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or organization. He says, of course, nothing of the sort. For further discussion of Tai Pellaf and another site located nearby and also associated with Gwenfrewy's nunnery, see chapter 4 below, page 182ff.

[13] For an attempted definition of the mother church as a concept, see R.J. Silvester and J.W. Evans, "Identifying the Mother Churches of North-East Wales," in *The Archaeology of the Early Medieval Celtic Churches*, ed. Nancy Edwards (Leeds: Maney Publishing, 2009), 22-24. For a discussion of the physical form of mother churches and their precincts, see 26-37; for comparison between the Welsh mother church and the Anglo-Saxon minster, see 27-31.

[14] Davies, *Conquest, Coexistence, and Change*: 175.

[15] Silvester and Evans, "Identifying the Mother Churches of North-East Wales," 24.

within it could be found a variety of spaces and structures. The evidence suggests that mother churches were surrounded not by one, but by a series of concentric enclosures: the first containing the church buildings and *mynwent* (cemetery), the second (known as the *corflan*) containing the houses of those who served the mother church, while the third, larger enclosure marking out the *noddfa* (sanctuary) was defined by ditches and fences often laid out by a bishop. The demarcation of this final space was not strictly, however, a matter of tangible limits:

> This area, which could enclose thousands of acres, sheltered not only those who had fled thither with their families for protection, but also their families and livestock. Their cattle ran with those of the church as far as they could go in a day until they came back to the fold at night. . . . Indeed, the distance the cattle travelled traditionally delimited the area of refuge rather than any physical boundary.[16]

As noted, this protection was an issue of rights understood as belonging to the institution's saintly founder who was buried within its innermost precincts. Violations of this privilege in the form of physical violence enacted inside the *noddfa* would result in heavy monetary fines being paid to the saint's representative body, the *abad* and *claswyr* themselves. The saint's place of burial, often becoming the site of a free-standing shrine separate from the church itself and known in Welsh as *eglwys*- or *capel-y-bedd* (church- or chapel-of-the-grave), served as the "symbol of his [or her] abiding presence" in the world in combination with his or her "living embodiment," that is, the religious community he or she had established.[17] The mother church would also house and be responsible for the care of a saintly founder's non-corporal relics, either Gospel books,

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[16] Ibid., 22. Cf. Gerald of Wales's description of sanctuary boundaries in Wales in Lewis Thorpe, trans., *Gerald of Wales: The Journey Through Wales/The Description of Wales* (London: Penguin Books, 1978). 253-54.

[17] Silvester and Evans, "Identifying the Mother Churches of North-East Wales," 23.

altars, staffs, or bells that were "potent instruments by which his [or her] community and thus the saint exercised power in the contemporary world, for oaths were sworn on them and important transactions recorded within them."[18]

Tradition does not maintain that Gwenfrewy was the founder of the Gwytherin community. The medieval church was dedicated to St. Eleri, Gwenfrewy's male preceptor who was buried under its floor.[19] The church was later made over to St. James, and only after its demolition and the construction of a new church on the original foundations in 1867 was the site dedicated to Gwenfrewy.[20] While Gwenfrewy was not then a founder saint, she was closely connected with the community at Gwytherin and had indeed been set, according to Robert's version of her Life, over her fellow nuns by the male founder himself. Robert notes the fame of Eleri's miraculous powers, but it is Gwenfrewy who has attracted the attention of a distant and foreign monastery.[21] Eleri may have been the originator of the community, but to judge from Robert's account of the resistance that he and his companions met when travelling to Gwytherin to disinter Gwenfrewy's body, she seems ultimately to have been the most significant saint there. Not only do the men of Gwytherin keep and preserve her remains, but "they and all their own are entrusted [to her]," and it is not right that she "be torn away from [her] native

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[18] Ibid.

[19] For a recent discussion of Eleri that takes a completely different approach to that offered in the present chapter and the one following, see Andrew Breeze, "St. Eleri of Gwytherin," *Denbighshire Historical Society Transactions* 20 (2012): 9-18. I am grateful to Dr. Richard Sharpe and to Tristan Gray Hulse for supplying me with copies of this article.

[20] On June 3, 1869. D.R. Thomas, *The History of the Diocese of St. Asaph: General, Cathedral, and Parochial, vol. 2*, New, Enlarged, and Illustrated ed. (Oswestry: Caxton Press, 1911). 313.

[21] For Eleri's miracles, see *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*, trans. Ronald Pepin and Hugh Feiss (Toronto: Peregrina Publishing, 2000). 67-68. The monks of Shrewsbury were not content with acquiring Gwenfrewy alone, and a surviving relic list for the abbey reveals that, as already mentioned, Robert's community had collected the bones of Eleri by *ca*. 1170. This list is printed in H. Owen and J.B. Blakeway, *History of Shrewsbury, vol. 2* (London 1825). 42-43.

soil and carried off to a country which had nothing to do with [her]."[22] While this episode is no doubt colored by Robert's need to demonstrate Gwenfrewy's power and appeal, the sentiments here expressed are likely to have been authentic. They are also reciprocal—the local people keep and honor the saint's relics, and she in turn provides them with supernatural defense and oversight. Although not expressed in strictly legal terms in Robert's text, the local people clearly enjoy the saint's protection (that is, her *noddfa*), something closely connected to her being physically present in the landscape and extending her powers over it. Whether or not Gwytherin was ever an actual mother church, these attitudes suggest the centrality of the site in the local spiritual economy. While we have noted that Robert could have exaggerated Gwenfrewy's importance at Gwytherin for the sake of his narrative and of his own monastery (especially if his account of her neglect is to be believed), it should not be doubted that the Welsh people he encountered at Gwytherin were less than pleased to learn of his intentions. In short, the opposition that Robert records could well have been genuine.

Prior Robert's Cemetery of the Saints and *Capel Gwenfrewy*

The presence of a medieval *capel-y-bedd* built over Gwenfrewy's grave and known to have survived into the eighteenth century, as well as the six hand-drawn sketches and two wooden fragments attesting to the existence of Gwenfrewy's reliquary shrine at Gwytherin, all indicate that the location was from an early point one of ritual and ecclesiastical significance not unlike a mother church, a locus of pilgrimage and

[22] *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*. For the quotations above, see 82 and 86.

veneration whose power derived at least in part from the relics housed there.[23] Documentary evidence of the vibrancy of Gwenfrewy's cult at Gwytherin and, by extension, of the importance of the site throughout the Middle Ages, begins with Robert's own account of his deliberations with the local people and of the exhumation of Gwenfrewy's bones.[24] Robert gives a detailed and fascinating report of the ritual landscape of Gwytherin, the center of which was a special cemetery used exclusively for the burial of saints and kept separate from the wider cemetery used for current inhumations. Taking into account the present-day layout of Gwytherin churchyard, a close examination of Robert's descriptions of the site, in conjunction with post-medieval documentation, demonstrates the substantial accuracy of Robert's report and strongly suggests that the saints' cemetery was in the southern half of the *llan* as it remains today.

To judge by Robert's account, Gwenfrewy herself was the focus of the saints' graveyard in the 1130s:

> Porro locus in quo tantus thesaurus retinebatur cœmiterium est ab alio cœmiterio ubi nunc morientium corpora condiuntur discretum, plurimorum aliorum sanctorum corporibus refertum: quod hactenus in tanta ab incolis reverentia est habitum ut nullus tantæ temeritatis esse audeat qui illud nisi gratia orationis intrare præsumat. In cujus medio, id est ad caput sanctæ Wenefredæ, lignea stat ecclesiola, magnis populorum frequentationibus honorata; ad quam facilis patet accessus omnibus ibidem orare volentibus.[25]
>
> (Furthermore, the place in which so great a treasure is kept is separate from another cemetery where the bodies of those who die now are buried, and it is filled with the bodies of many other saints. Up to this time it has been held in such great awe by the inhabitants of the area that no one dares to be of so great a

[23] Note Gerald of Wales's statements on the reverence in which the Welsh held relics and the churches that housed them in Thorpe, *Gerald of Wales: The Journey Through Wales/The Description of Wales*: 253-54.
[24] For the following discussion of Gwytherin as a ritual site both during Robert's time and the post-medieval period, I am, as already noted, indebted to the unpublished work of Tristan Gray Hulse, primarily but not exclusively the paper delivered at the twenty-ninth annual International Congress on Medieval Studies: Tristan Gray Hulse, "Gwytherin: A Welsh Cult Site in the Mid-Twelfth Century," (Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo 1994). It was this essay that prompted CADW to schedule the southern half of Gwytherin *llan* for preservation in 1995.
[25] Charles De Smedt, ed., *Acta Sanctorum, tom. I. Nov* (1887). 729.

> rashness that he presumes to enter that place except for the sake of prayer. In the middle of it, that is at the head of Saint Winefride, there stands a little wooden church which is frequented by great crowds of people. There is an easy access open to it for all wishing to pray there.)[26]

The wooden grave chapel ("lignea . . . ecclesiola") here mentioned is the site of miraculous healings, for those suffering from various diseases are said to receive immediate cures after praying there, specifically on account of the "sanctorum meritis" ("merits of the saints"). Earlier in his narrative Robert makes passing mention of a "lapidem" ("stone") or "laminam" ("layer of marble") covering Gwenfrewy's grave, and although he does not refer to it at this point or when he describes the actual exhumation, it remains a detail of interest.[27] Beyond these immediate details, the twelfth-century layout of the chapel environs within the saints' cemetery, as well as some of the folk memory surrounding the site, is revealed by combining the first-hand description of the place that Robert gives in the *translatio* narrative with the careful account that he provides of Gwenfrewy's death and burial in the *vita* itself. In Robert's Life, the saint specifically asks Eleri to bury her "juxta corpus beatæ Theoniæ matris" ("next to the body of his mother, Blessed Theonia").[28] This request Eleri fulfills, and Robert discusses at length the location of the burial, the particulars of which are worth quoting in full:

> In eodem quoque cœmiterio multi quidem et magnorum meritorum viri requiescunt; sed et præclariores et majoris famæ feruntur sanctissimi confessores Chebius et Senanus, quorum prior ad caput illius tumulatus est, alter vero in eodem ordine quo ipsa jacet requiescit. Qui utique magnarum virtutum viri fuisse apud indigenas memorantur, eumdemque locum ob sanctorum adisse frequentiam quos ad exemplum vitæ præsentis agonem illuc convenisse audierant. Extant adhuc in eadem provincia nonnullæ in illorum memoria basilicæ, in quibus quantorum ante Deum sint meritorum per crebra mortalibus miracula manifestatur. Ad lævam illius beata Theonia, de qua supra retulimus, sepulta

[26] *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 86-87.
[27] Ibid., 85. See 102ff. below.
[28] De Smedt, *AASS, t.I. Nov.*: 723; *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 66.

> quiescit; ceterum aliorum sanctorum nomina vel numerum ibidem quiescentium solius Dei cognitio retinet. Tanta enim sanctorum congerie isdem locus venerabilis habetur ut nullus mortalis omnino omnium eorum nomina scire vel etiam numerum congestorum comprehendere potuerit.[29]
>
> ([M]any men of great merit also rest in the same cemetery; even the famous and most holy confessors, Chebius and Senanus, are reported to be there. The first of these is buried at Winefride's head; indeed, the other rests in the same row in which she lies. Certainly they are remembered among the native people there to have been men of great virtues, and to have come to the same place on account of the multitude of saints whom they heard had gathered there to complete the struggle of the present life. In the same district there still exist some churches in their memory, in which their great merit before God is shown clearly to men through numerous miracles. Buried to the left of Winefride rests Blessed Theonia, about whom we reported above; God alone knows the names and number of the other saints who repose there. Indeed, that place is held to be venerable due to so great a gathering of saints that no mortal at all could know their names or even comprehend the number of those gathered.)[30]

There are a few items of note in this description of Gwenfrewy's burial site. First is Robert's apparent reliance upon the testimony of local people for the presence of particular saints buried in the graveyard—Chebius (Welsh, *Cybi*) and Senanus (Welsh, *Sannan*)—and, by extension, Robert's reliance upon popular memory as a witness to the antiquity of the location as a place of ascetic retreat—Chebius and Senanus are remembered to have come to Gwytherin to finish their lives specifically because so many other saints had done so before.[31] Although Robert does not doubt that "many men of great merit" reside with Gwenfrewy in the cemetery, his language here indicates that he cannot completely verify the traditions regarding those saints buried immediately adjacent to her. For while he confidently asserts that Theonia's grave is located to the

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[29] De Smedt, *AASS, t.I. Nov.*: 723.
[30] *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 67.
[31] On Cybi, see Elissa R. Henken, *Traditions of the Welsh Saints* (Woodbridge: D.S. Brewer, 1987). 233-37. On a Sannan other than the one mentioned here, see S. Baring-Gould and J. Fisher, *The Lives of the British Saints*, vol. 4 (London: Charles J. Clark, 1913). 182-94. For the Denbighshire Sannan, however, see 183n1.

left of Gwenfrewy's, Robert only observes that Chebius and Senanus "famæ feruntur" ("are reported to be there"), the former buried at Gwenfrewy's head and the latter in the same row in which she is found. He seems to know little if anything about the identity of these individuals, but he does note the existence in the region of churches dedicated to their memory, and it can be suggested in the case of Senanus that Robert was referring to Llansannan some three miles from Gwytherin. Indeed, present-day tradition at Llansannan maintains that Sannan was a companion of Gwenfrewy's father Tyfid and that Sannan was buried at Gwytherin.[32]

So far as Gwenfrewy's grave being the specific focus of the cemetery in both Robert's *vita* and his *translatio*, one should note that the "lignea . . . ecclesiola" that stands at the head of her sepulcher, that is, to the west of it, is said to be in the middle of the saints' special cemetery (*In cujus medio*), and that, as mentioned, Gwenfrewy herself is apparently surrounded by the bodies of other renowned holy people. The situation of the chapel and the other graves reflects then the practice of burial *ad sanctos* (or, in this case, *ad sanctam*) wherein the inhumation of a particularly revered individual would attract the burials of those wishing to partake of that person's holiness and protection; while Gwenfrewy asks to be buried beside Theonia, Chebius and Senanus appear to have been buried specifically in relation to Gwenfrewy.[33] The site is noted in the *translatio*

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[32] Wendy Harders, "The Parish of Petryal: St. Sannan's Church/Llansannan; A Short History of the Church," (n.d.); Thomas Pennant, *A Tour in Wales, vol. 2* (1783; repr., Wrexham: Bridge Books, 1991). 53. Llansannan is situated almost directly between Gwytherin and Henllan, so on the journey from Holywell to Gwytherin that Wenefred makes in Robert's account we might assume that she passed through Llansannan, even though Robert never mentions it. See note 138, and also chapter 4 below.

[33] The practice of burial *ad sanctos* appears to have been started by Ambrose with his own burial between SS. Gervasius and Protasius in the *Basilica Ambrosiana* in Milan, but biblical precedent can also be cited in I Kings 13:31. See Alan Thacker, "*Loca Sanctorum*: The Significance of Place in the Study of the Saints," in *Local Saints and Local Churches in the Early Medieval West*, ed. Alan Thacker and Richard Sharpe (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 10; for the influence of special graves on other burials as well as on the construction of grave chapels and later churches, see Nancy Edwards, "Celtic Saints and Early

narrative as a place where Gwenfrewy worked posthumous miracles, and the grave chapel, always open and of easy access, is the focus of this power:

> Multi languidi, multi diversorum morborum molestiis oppressi, illam ad postulandum sibi remedia intrant. Nec diu dilata dolent quæ postulant: nam protinus sanctorum meritis indulta sibi sanitate sospites ad propria revertuntur.[34]
>
> (Many invalids, many troubled by the afflictions of various diseases enter it to ask for cures for themselves. They do not lament that the cures which they ask for are long delayed, for with health granted to them straightaway through the merits of the saints, they return to their own homes safe and sound.)[35]

While in his *translatio* narrative Robert clearly notes the existence of a grave chapel, in his *vita* Robert mentions nothing of the sort, but Gwenfrewy's grave itself seems in that account to be the center of her miraculous efficacy:

> Cum quibus omnibus eumdem exornat locum beata virgo Wenefreda, virtutibus clara et miraculis innumeris coruscans. Post mortem vero ejus multi illuc advenientes et per ipsius suffragia poscentes a Deo infirmitatum suarum medelam, votiva sunt adepti remedia. Locus autem ille in magna celebritate deinceps est habitus atque cum magna reverentia et veneratione a multis orationis causa expetitus.[36]
>
> (With all of these [other saints] the blessed maiden, Winefride, famous for virtues and illustrious for her countless miracles, adorns the same place. Truly, after her death, many who came there and sought from God a cure for their infirmities through her aid obtained the desired remedies. Moreover, that place was held in great renown and was sought out with great reverence and veneration by many for the sake of prayer.)[37]

Medieval Archaeology," in *Local Saints and Local Churches in the Early Medieval West*, ed. Alan Thacker and Richard Sharpe (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 230-35; for evidence of the practice in the poetry of twelfth-century Wales, and for the reference to I Kings above, see ap Huw, "Critical Examination of Welsh Poetry," xxi. Regarding the layout of the chapel and graves in the saints' cemetery at Gwytherin it is perhaps worth noting that in combination Robert's two accounts seem to place Wenefred's *ecclesiola* on top of Chebius's grave, since the former is said in the *translatio* to stand *ad caput sanctæ Wenefredæ*, and the latter is said in the *vita* to be buried *ad caput illius*. The imprecision or rhetorical styling of this phrasing might be revealed by the fact that, when Robert first approaches the saint's grave, he stands *ad caput beatæ virginis*. See De Smedt, *AASS, t.I. Nov.*: 730. On graves situated near a saint's grave being partly covered over by the saint's *capel-y-bedd*, see note 74 below.

[34] De Smedt, *AASS, t.I. Nov.*: 729.

[35] *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 87.

[36] De Smedt, *AASS, t.I. Nov.*: 723.

[37] *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 67.

Indeed, while Robert mentions the traditions that Chebius and Senanus are also buried in the special cemetery he does not note any particular miraculous powers that they hold there. He instead situates their primary influence in the nearby churches dedicated to them, "in which their great merit before God is shown clearly to men through numerous miracles," thereby leaving Gwenfrewy as the main source of supernatural power in Gwytherin.[38] Eleri's posthumous miracles are briefly noted and are even said to have continued in Robert's own day, but as Eleri died "aliquantorum . . . curricula annorum" ("a period of some years") after Gwenfrewy, it is unsurprisingly her miraculous potency that establishes Gwytherin as a locus of healing and prayer in Robert's narrative.[39]

In addition to beliefs regarding the presence of other saints in the separate graveyard, Robert provides further glimpses of the local traditions surrounding the site, as well as other details regarding its layout, in order to underscore Gwenfrewy's preeminence there. Firstly, no beast is suffered to enter the saints' cemetery—any animal that grazes upon the grass growing over the holy graves dies instantly on the spot. Secondly, anyone entering the graveyard for any purpose besides prayer will not avoid divine retribution. Mention of this latter tradition seems to have been spurred by an ancient and towering oak tree that Robert reports as growing among the graves in the special cemetery.[40] The tree seems to have had a mark on it that was connected to a story of a punishment miracle that Robert records: it is reported (*refertur*) that some two years before the Shrewsbury monks arrived a man seeking material for shoelaces entered the saints' graveyard with an axe, hoping to cut some of the bark from the oak and to use it to

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[38] Ibid.
[39] De Smedt, *AASS, t.I. Nov.*: 723; *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 66.
[40] There are no trees growing in the middle of the southern half of the *llan* today, but this is not surprising given the fact that, prior to its scheduling by CADW in 1995, the site had been rented out by the Church in Wales for use as glebe land.

tie his newly made rawhide shoes. Upon striking the tree, however, the axe stuck fast and the man's hand and arm adhered to the handle and then withered to a pitiable and useless state. A crowd gathered in response to his cries and admonished him to repent "quia sanctis reverentiam non exhibuerat" ("because he had not shown respect to the saints").[41] His parents arrived and prayed prostrate before Gwenfrewy's grave since "quia nomen illius virginis ceterorum sanctorum ibidem quiescentium vocabulis celebrius erat et merita exsuperabant" ("the name of that maiden was more celebrated than the names of the other saints reposing there, and her merits surpassed theirs").[42] Once everyone present, both the man and all the onlookers, called upon Gwenfrewy's mercy together, the transgressor's hand and arm were restored and the axe fell from the tree. This event redounded to the saint's glory and the site itself was also held in greater reverence by the local people as a result, the cut in the oak remaining fresh both as a warning and a sign that the story is true—as are those stories regarding other miracles tied to the site that Robert claims to have passed over in silence.[43]

These then are the details that Robert provides regarding the saints' cemetery at Gwytherin, all of which is intended to suggest the uniqueness of the place as a powerful focus of veneration and restoration, as well as of strong local sentiment. There was a special graveyard separate from that used for contemporary burial within which no animal could graze, into which no one could go except to pray, and in which stood a

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[41] *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 88; De Smedt, *AASS, t.I. Nov.*: 730.
[42] De Smedt, *AASS, t.I. Nov.*: 730; *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 88.
[43] In Welsh tradition, trees growing on land belonging to Beuno were considered to be protected by the saint's power, and those who tried to cut them down risked Beuno's deadly wrath. S. Baring-Gould and J. Fisher, *The Lives of the British Saints*, vol. 1 (London: Charles J. Clark, 1907). 220. In this regard we might also recall the story in *Hystoria o Uuched Beuno* of the oak tree that slays Englishmen who wander beneath its branches. See A.W. Wade-Evans, "Beuno Sant," *Archaeologia Cambrensis* 85 (1930): 316. The tree is also mentioned in an anonymous *cywydd* to Beuno probably composed in the fifteenth century: Henken, *Traditions of the Welsh Saints*: 83-84. For an edition and translation of the full poem, see ap Huw, "Critical Examination of Welsh Poetry," 61-63.

wooden chapel at the head of Gwenfrewy's grave. Within this unique *llan* inside a *llan* other holy people of local repute were buried close to Gwenfrewy on almost every side. Her wooden chapel was a locus of healing miracles, the tall oak that grew among the graves was the focus of at least one punishment miracle, and the entire place was of special status and power. The layout of Gwytherin churchyard is somewhat different now, but in large part attests to the accuracy of Robert's account: the bisecting of the *llan* into a northern and a southern portion along the line of a former stream suggests that the saints' graveyard stood in the southern half of the enclosure, partly because the northern half is still used for burials—recall that Robert mentions a separate section of the yard used for contemporary graves—and partly because the southern half, now nothing more than an empty, grass-covered hill, is still known locally as *Penbryn Capel*, that is, "hilltop of a chapel."[44] The name apparently commemorates a saint's *capel-y-bedd* that once stood on the site, and indeed, since at least the early nineteenth century, the place has been known as the location of Gwenfrewy's burial and has also been associated with a chapel.[45] And while the name of the site would suggest that Gwenfrewy's *capel-y-bedd* stood at the very top of the hill, a more likely place is a wide section of flat ground about half-way up the rise facing east. This space is more or less triangular in shape and in the flattest portion offers "an approximate measurement of 20 feet by 20 feet."[46] Geophysical surveying in 1995 revealed this flat portion of land to be the most disturbed of all the ground in the southern half of the *llan*, suggesting that this was the spot on

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[44] Wyn Evans, "The Early Church in Denbighshire," 66; Thomas, *History of the Diocese of St. Asaph, New ed.*: 312.

[45] According to the Rev. Rowland Williams, vicar of Meifod, "[t]he tradition of the village . . . is, that Winifred was buried in Bryn y Capel, (the hill of the chapel)." Quoted in Owen and Blakeway, *History of Shrewsbury, vol. 2*: 40n1.

[46] Janet Bord, pers. comm. I am grateful to Bord and Gray Hulse for measuring the site on my behalf on November 3, 2011.

which the *capel-y-bedd* stood and in which Gwenfrewy and the other saints were buried.[47] Furthermore, this disturbed space is located roughly in the center of the southern portion of the *llan*, and as noted above, Robert informs us that Gwenfrewy's grave and *ecclesiola* were to be found in the middle of the saints' special cemetery.

More direct evidence for the saints' graveyard and Gwenfrewy's chapel being previously located in the space to the south of the present-day *llan* is found in a pair of fourteenth-century tombstones still preserved inside Gwytherin church.[48] The first of these slabs, carved with an expanded-arm cross, originally marked the grave of an armiger or knight, and the second, carved with a floriated cross and engraved with the name of the deceased, commemorates a chaplain by the name of Llywarch. They are currently installed into the fabric of Gwytherin church—the knight's stone has been incorporated into the north wall of the nave between the vestry door and the sanctuary; the Llywarch stone is set as the extreme northern end of the step up to the sanctuary and abuts the bottom of the knight's slab. While no medieval account of Gwytherin is known to exist besides Robert's own, the earliest post-medieval documents relating to the site record important information regarding these tombstones. The first of these references are a series of three annotated drawings made for or by Edward Lhuyd *ca*. 1698 but not

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[47] Tristan Gray Hulse, pers. comm. Gray Hulse also recalls that the survey noted patterns in the soil that just might have indicated the corner of a structure previously standing on the spot.

[48] Colin A. Gresham, *Medieval Stone Carving in North Wales: Sepulchral Slabs and Effigies of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1968). 247. For drawings and discussion of these slabs, see 101-02 and 107-09; my own observations of these stones, coupled with Gresham's printed descriptions and drawings of them, form the basis of my discussion here. While Gresham places these stones in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, cross slabs from central and northern England similar to the two under consideration here have been dated elsewhere to as early as 1100. See L.A.S. Butler, "Minor Medieval Monumental Sculpture in the East Midlands," *Archaeological Journal* 121 (1964): 111-15; P. Ryder, *The Medieval Cross Slab Grave Cover in County Durham*, Architectural and Archaeological Society of Durham and Northumberland Research Report, vol. 1 (Durham, 1985); A. McClain, "Medieval Cross Slabs in the North Riding of Yorkshire: Chronology, Distribution and Social Implications," *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal* 79 (2007): 155-93. I am grateful to Dr. Madeleine Gray for these references.

published until 1909 under the title *Parochialia*.[49] The stones were also drawn by Gresham in 1968, but comparison with Lhuyd's sketches indicate that by that time both had been badly worn and much reduced in size. At the top of the knight's slab can still be seen a carving of an encircled, expanded-arm cross, in the center of which a much smaller, equal-arm cross has been set; attached to the bottom of the larger cross is a shaft with a knob at its top extending to the bottom of the slab where it ends in a stepped base. To the dexter side of the cross and shaft is a sword, although this does not seem to have been recognized as such by Lhuyd or his associate and is now difficult to discern on the slab itself; Gresham's drawing provides the clearest image.[50] The hilt of the sword is, however, now largely eroded away and the tip of the blade was cut off when the slab was trimmed down, presumably to fit into its present position in the north wall sometime in the last century—now measuring 4'4" by roughly 1'5" the knight's stone was at the time of Lhuyd's drawing "a foot or more longer and tapered from top to bottom."[51] As drawn by Lhuyd or his assistant *ca*. 1698, the Llywarch slab is carved with an encircled, floriated cross atop a long shaft that ends in a two-stepped base. To the dexter side of the shaft, near its top, is clearly incised a simple chalice, below which might be a depiction of a small altar or paten. The shaft bears a one-line inscription in false-relief Lombardic Capitals once reading †H(I)C IACET LLEWARCH CAPELL(anus) and thereby commemorating one Llywarch, a chaplain. In the last forty years or so since Gresham

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[49] As a supplement to *Archaeologia Cambrensis* edited by Rupert H. Morris: Edward Lhuyd, *Parochialia: Being a Summary of Answers to Parochial Queries in Order to a Geographical Dictionary, etc., of Wales; Part 1-North Wales* (London: Charles J. Clark, April 1909). The drawings relating to Gwytherin are on 27-29.

[50] For other examples of the design coupling cross with sword, see, for instance, No. 45 (92-94), Nos. 53 and 54 (99-100), Nos. 80 and 81, (116-19), and No. 96 (125-26), in Gresham, *Medieval Stone Carving in North Wales*. Thomas Pennant mistook the sword for "an antient battle-axe, the usual weapon of the deceased" in Pennant, *A Tour in Wales, vol. 2*: 55.

[51] Gresham, *Medieval Stone Carving in North Wales*: 102.

made his drawing of this slab though, the lower half of the shaft as well as its stepped base have been all but obliterated; the only portion of the inscription now legible is †H(I)C IACET LLEW. Like the knight's slab, this stone has been seriously reduced in size to fit into its present position in the sanctuary step; measuring 5'5" by 11.5" it seems from the *Parochialia* drawing to have been "at least 6 ft. long and 1 ft. 6 in. wide" in its original state.[52]

We can assume that these tombstones were originally located somewhere in the graveyard at Gwytherin, and we know something of their movements within the church from the early eighteenth century on, but the scant evidence for earlier periods only allows us to trace the knight's stone outside the church itself. This latter evidence is still significant, for while the Llywarch slab is noted in *Parochialia* in the late seventeenth century as being "In Gwethrin Church," the drawing of the knight's slab is labeled as "A Tombstone at Kappel Gwenfrewi in ye South part of Gwetherin Church Yard."[53] When the original medieval church was demolished in 1867, however, both of these tombstones were discovered in the sanctuary flooring near the altar. It would appear that the knight's stone at least had been installed there at some point after 1717 specifically in an attempt to address the repeated complaint of the early eighteenth-century rural deans' reports (1710, 1713, and 1717) that a paving was missing within the church.[54] From Lhuyd's captions and these decanal reports it seems that the knight's slab was taken from the

[52] Ibid., 108.
[53] Lhuyd, *Parochialia*: 27-28.
[54] This suggestion comes from Tristan Tristan Gray Hulse, "A Note on Two Medieval Grave Slabs at Gwytherin," (2011), 1-2. This note is unpublished, but it includes citations for the three deans' reports that note the lack of paving within the church. These documents are housed at the National Library of Wales as part of the St. Asaph diocesan archive. The references are as follows: NLW MS. SA/RD/7 p.6; NLW MS. SA/RD/9, p.1; and NLW MS. SA/RD/14, p.1. On these and other documents relating to Gwytherin Church, see G.M. Griffiths, *Schedule of the Church in Wales Records: Diocese of St. Asaph*, 2 vols. (Aberystwyth: National Library of Wales, 1954). I am grateful to Mr. Gray Hulse for all of these references.

Capel after 1717 and used as a paving inside the church alongside the Llywarch stone, a grave slab that was in the church by the time of Lhuyd's visit, perhaps already in place by the altar. According to D.R. Thomas, during construction in the late 1860s the knight's slab was next used as a cill for the new porch door while the Llywarch stone was installed in its current position in the sanctuary step. Then, at some point after Thomas wrote his revised description of the church in 1911, at which point the knight's slab was still in use as a porch cill, that stone was moved to its present location in the north wall.[55] From the label in *Parochialia* noted above, however, we know that the knight's stone was found at the turn of the eighteenth century in "Kappel Gwenfrewi in ye South part of Gwetherin Church Yard."[56] We have here clear proof that a grave chapel dedicated to Gwenfrewy, *Capel Gwenfrewy*, was still standing at the end of the 1600s and that it was located in the southern half of the churchyard. This, no doubt, was the southern portion of the *llan* surviving today, one and the same with the space noted by Robert as being separate from the cemetery in contemporary use in the 1130s. The "Kappel Gwenfrewi" must then have been the successor to Robert's "lignea . . . ecclesiola," and indeed it was common for wooden grave chapels to be made over in stone from the twelfth century on.[57]

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[55] Thomas, *History of the Diocese of St. Asaph, New ed.*: 314. In the original edition of his diocesan history published in 1874, Thomas recorded the following regarding these slabs: "In taking down the old church, two floriated crosses were discovered near the altar,—one bearing a sword, memorial to an armiger or knight; the other a chalice, indicating a priest's grave. Both of them, however, are described in Pennant [1783]; and the former, that is, the knight's stone, is said to have originally belonged to the chapel [i.e. Capel Gwenfrewy]" (545). In the second edition of his diocesan history published in 1911, Thomas revised his description as follows: "When the old church was taken down the two coffin lids were found near the altar; one of them was utilised as an altar step and the other as a cill to the porch door: but both are about to be placed in more suitable positions" (314).

[56] Lhuyd, *Parochialia*: 27.

[57] Madeleine Gray, "Contested Relics: Winefride, Dyfrig and the Atlantic Churches," (forthcoming). This paper was read at the Matter of Faith conference held at the British Museum in October of 2011. I am grateful to Dr. Gray for allowing me to see a revised draft prior to its publication.

Why, though, is there no trace of Gwenfrewy's grave chapel inside the southern half of the *llan* today? Besides recording information about the two fourteenth-century tombstones now situated inside Gwytherin church, the reports of eighteenth-century rural deans cited above also allow us to reconstruct the fate of the saint's chapel and at the same time provide a glimpse of local traditions associated with the site. In 1710, dean Thomas Williams reported the following after his trip to Gwytherin: "The Churchyard is not very well fenced. In a little ruined Chappell adjoyning to the Churchyard, I was shiwed a Grave stone made in the form of a Coffin."[58] The report goes on to detail other items of significance in the church and its yard, but for the moment it will suffice to notice that the "Chapell adjoyning the Churchyard" here mentioned was no doubt the "Kappel Gwenfrewi" noted in *Parochialia* as standing in the southern part of Gwytherin churchyard. Notable also is the fact that dean Williams describes the "chappell" as "ruined" only some twelve years after the visit to Gwytherin made by Lhyud or his assistant in about 1698. In 1729, nineteen years after Williams wrote his description of the site, dean Thomas Winne reported that, at Gwytherin,

> They have a clean and spacious Churchyard, but it wants a decent Fence; Most of it being fenced with a rotten Hedge. There are within the Churchyard the Ruins of Winifrede's Chappel which had a Chappel Yard, but it is now made one with the Churchyard. There are Persons now living in this Parish that remember this Chappel standing, and have seen it converted into a Dwelling House by a poor Widow who lived in it several years and made use of part of its yard for a Garden. The supposed Gravestone of Winifrede lies flat upon the Ground within the Ruins of the Chappel. It has been supported by decent Pillars in the memory of Man: At which time, as unwarrantable tradition relates, several sick persons were cured of their maladies by being put to lie under this Stone. There are upon it the Figures of a Hand, a Sword and a Head. There are no letters upon it. They have another tradition that goes current here viz. That Winifrede was so affronted at her Chappel-yard being plowed and sowed, that the Person that did it did not long survive the Fact, and that no Corn came up. Yet Mr Edwards, late Rector of this

[58] Quoted in Gray Hulse, "Gwytherin: A Welsh Cult Site in the Mid-Twelfth Century," 2.

> Parish, made free with the Stone of the Chappel of Winifrede to build upon some purchased Lands of his own, and escaped with Impunity.[59]

Twenty years after Winne's report, the 1749 Terrier records the following:

> Item A small piece of Ground on the south of the Churchyard, of about a quarter of an Acre, inclosed and adjoyning on the West and South to the Land of the Duke of Ancaster and on the South-East to the Land of Mr John Salusbury aforesaid. Here, as Tradition has it, stood a Chapel, dedicated to St Winifred, some years agoe demolished by one Edwards lately Rector of this Parish, who converted all the materialls of it to build a House upon a Tenement purchased by him in this neighbourhood.[60]

These documents corroborate Robert's account of the medieval cult site at Gwytherin and provide succinct witness to the use and importance of the location in later centuries up to the final disappearance of *Capel Gwenfrewy* in the early 1700s.

It remains, then, to sum up the evidence for the origin, use, and decline of the saint's *Capel* at Gwytherin. The "lignea . . . ecclesiola" seen by Robert in 1138 standing at the head of Gwenfrewy's sepulcher must have been made over in stone directly on top of her empty grave at some point in the five and a half centuries before Lhuyd or his assistant visited Gwytherin *ca*. 1698, but most likely at a point soon after Gwenfrewy's *translatio*. Based on the caption to the *Parochialia* illustration of the knight's tomb slab—which must be the same slab described by Williams in 1710 and by Winne in 1729—the location of the original *ecclesiola* and the later stone structure must have been in the southern half of the *llan*, that is, Robert's special cemetery connected to but separate from the main churchyard and known locally today as *Penbryn Capel*. This

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[59] NLW MS. SA/RD/18. Quoted in ibid., 2-3. The house that Edwards built is located on the farm Tai Pellaf; for which see note 12 above. While Winne asserts that Edwards avoided supernatural punishment for his desecration of the saint's chapel, oral tradition still current in Gwytherin maintains that the house that he attempted to build from the fabric of *Capel Gwenfrewy* was destroyed each night after the construction work had stopped. Ibid., 5.

[60] Quoted in ibid., 3.

early fourteenth-century tomb slab carved with an expanded-arm cross and a sword—used as a paving within Gwytherin church at some point after 1729, made into a porch cill after the demolition of the medieval church in 1867, and then worked into the fabric of the north wall sometime after 1911—seems to have been placed over Gwenfrewy's grave and supported by pillars inside her stone chapel in the later Middle Ages, presumably at some point after the memory of the person whom the slab originally commemorated had faded entirely out of local consciousness. To judge from Thomas Winne's 1729 report, the raised slab was part of an empty tomb shrine under which the sick and penitent would crawl in search of healing through a practice known as sacred incubation, a common feature of the cult of saints in Europe both during and after the Middle Ages, and the chapel at some point had its own yard separated from the remainder of the churchyard by some sort of boundary.[61] Winne's assertion in 1729 that the site had been one of healing within "the memory of Man" resonates with Prior Robert's claim that the *ecclesiola* was a place of restorative miracles always open to the sick and it indicates the continuing importance of the chapel and of Gwytherin itself as a locus of miraculous power into at least the seventeenth century.

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[61] For a general introduction to the subject of sacred incubation in or on the graves of saints, see Mary Hamilton, *Incubation, or, The Cure of Disease in Pagan Temples and Christian Churches* (St. Andrews: W.C. Henderson & Son, 1906). Hamilton's primary focus is on Greece and the Mediterranean world, but she notes examples of incubation in the hagiography of medieval Britain and Gaul on 113-14. See also the examples from the tombs of Julian of Brioude in the Auvergne, Martin at Tours, Maximinus at Tréves, and Fides at Conques on 159-71. The examples discussed by Hamilton indicate that the practice of incubation in medieval Europe included sleeping within churches as well as in, over, or on holy graves. Note that some of the miracles recorded by Robert and the compiler of the *Libellus miraculorum* involve a sick or deceased person spending a night in Wenefred's church at Holywell, on which see chapter 4, note 151 below. On the practice of incubation at Llanbabo, Llaniestyn, and Llanddwyn, see ap Huw, "Critical Examination of Welsh Poetry," xliv-lxvi and the sources cited there. On the practice at Clynnog Fawr, see lii-liii. For the suggestion that "many of the poems to native saints were composed during nightly vigils of incubation at the graves of the saints," see cv. For an explicit medieval reference to incubation at the grave of St. Dwynwen, see E.D. Jones, ed., *Gwaith Lewis Glyn Cothi* (Caerdydd and Aberystwyth: Gwasg Prifysgol Cymru, 1953). 88, lines 29-32.

While the chapel was apparently still standing around 1698, it had fallen into ruins by the time that dean Williams surveyed Gwytherin church in 1710, at which point the knight's slab was still to be found within the chapel remains. When Winne viewed these remains nineteen years later in 1729, the slab was resting flat on the ground although it had at some point previously been supported on pillars, and a large portion of the stone of the chapel itself had been carried off by Richard Edwards, rector of Gwytherin from 1684 until 1727, for use in the construction of a house nearby.[62] Besides the fact that Edwards had demolished the structure for his own domestic needs, the site must have been out of religious use for some notable time prior. Evidence for this deduction is found first in the fact that the widow whom Winne claims had converted the chapel into a dwelling is said to have lived in it for "several years," something that would have occurred, presumably, before the chapel was "ruined" as it apparently was by 1710. And by the time that Winne made his report in 1729 the widow's residence in the chapel was no more than a memory among certain members of the parish. Also, when Winne wrote the knight's tombstone was assumed to depict significant motifs in Gwenfrewy's legend—a hand, a sword, and a head, only the second of which is actually present in the carving—and must therefore have been substantially worn as a result of either natural weathering through exposure or perhaps also as a result of centuries of pilgrim activity, the latter of which can be assumed to have slowed considerably (if it had not stopped entirely) by the time that the chapel was made over into a house and garden, probably no later than the first decade of the eighteenth century. By 1749 the presence of *Capel Gwenfrewy* in the southern half of the churchyard had become a matter of tradition alone; still, in 1784, Thomas Pennant was able to report that although "Capel Gwenfrewi is now

[62] Thomas, *History of the Diocese of St. Asaph, New ed.*: 315. See also note 59 above.

totally destroyed" there remained to be seen of it "some slight ditches and foundations."[63] In 1849, however, Father John Griffith Wynne S.J. "could not find out where the bodies of the Saints had lain, nor [could he locate] any remarkable tomb or hear of such having formerly existed."[64] But he was shown "a little orchard with substructions and worked stones, such as used in buildings, in and around it," which was claimed as "the spot where the *convent* stood."[65] A medieval stone structure replacing Robert's wooden *ecclesiola* and in regular use as a religious site until at least the mid-1600s, *Capel Gwenfrewy* originally stood in the southern half of Gwytherin churchyard but was in ruins by 1710, had been demolished and largely carried away by 1729, and had become, by 1749, a matter of memory and tradition alone. By 1849 it was, apparently, a distant memory.

As noted above, Robert briefly mentions during one of the several visions recounted in his *translatio* narrative a "stone" (*lapidem*) or "layer of marble" (*laminam*) under which the saint is buried, and this detail is important for what it suggests about the

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[63] Pennant, *A Tour in Wales, vol. 2*: 55.

[64] Wynne's account of his 1849 visit to Gwytherin, written by him in 1859, is only preserved in a pamphlet originally published *ca*. 1860 by the "Author of Tybourne," Fannie Taylor: Taylor, *St. Winefride*: 27-29. The quotation here is found on 28. Taylor dates Wynne's trip to Gwytherin to 1844, but Gray Hulse maintains in an unpublished commentary that the authentication note accompanying Countess Isabella English's fragment of *Arch Gwenfrewy* and dated 1860 reveals the date of Wynne's trip given by Taylor as an error. The countess's fragment was apparently sawn off of the larger one that Wynne acquired during his visit to Gwytherin, and her note records that this larger fragment was "Found in the church of Gwtherin [sic] and purchased of the Protestant Sexton in the year 1849." This date is supported by a reference in the *Flintshire Observer* that Wynne was at Holywell to celebrate Gwenfrewy's feast on November 3, 1859, a very likely time for him to have presented his relic to the church there and to have written his account of its origin in which he notes that his journey to Gwytherin occurred "ten years ago." The countess's note, as well as her fragment and the larger one belonging to Wynne from which it was taken, are all on display in the Museum of the Pilgrimage at Holywell. For these issues of dating I rely on Tristan Gray Hulse, "*Arch Gwenfrewi* - Documentation and Comment," (2011), 5-7. For discussion of *Arch Gwenfrewy*, see pages 106-22 below.

[65] Taylor, *St. Winefride*: 28. Emphasis added. For the significance of the assumption that the saint's convent stood within the bounds of Gwytherin *llan*, see chapter 4, page 182ff. below.

twelfth-century layout of Gwenfrewy's gravesite.[66] The specific context is the tripartite angelic visitation experienced by the Welsh priest of Gwytherin some year or more before the Shrewsbury party arrives warning him not to oppose the efforts of those who wish to bear the saint's remains away. The unnamed priest has the vision in the early morning hours of the Saturday of the Easter vigil, having spent the entire night praying and reciting the Psalter in the church of St. Eleri. Prior to singing the morning hymns and weary with sleep at his station before the altar, the priest sees "quidam juvenis splendidissimus, angelicum præferens vultum" ("a certain most splendid youth exhibiting an angelic countenance") who commands him to arise (*surge*), but the priest refuses, saying that the time has not yet come to begin the office.[67] The youth departs, but returns after a heavier sleep has overtaken the priest. This time the visitor commands him twice to arise (*surge, surge*), but the priest covers his head with his cloak and continues to sleep. Shortly thereafter, the youth returns, wrenches the cloak from the reluctant cleric's head and demands three times that he arise (*surge, surge, surge*) and then orders the man to follow him. They enter the graveyard and come "usque ad sepulcrum beatæ virginis Wenefredæ" ("as far as the tomb of the blessed maiden, Winefride"), at which point the angelic presence stops and delivers a stern order:

> Diligenter . . . locum istum notato, et verba quæ ego tibi dixero tenaci reconde memoria. Si huc venerit aliquis in hoc anno, aut in sequenti, qui lapidem istum hinc amovere voluerit, laminam ostendens quæ sacro corpori superposita fuerat, cave ne ullatenus contradicas. Quod si pulverem istum hinc ejicere voluerit, similiter patere, nulla ratione resistens. Si autem ossa virginis hinc asportare

[66] For the possible significance of these terms in this context, see also Cormac Bourke, "The Shrine of St Gwenfrewi from Gwytherin, Denbighshire: An Alternative Interpretation," in *The Archaeology of the Early Medieval Celtic Churches*, ed. Nancy Edwards (Leeds: Maney Publishing, 2009), 383. No marble slabs are known to have survived from northern Wales, and only a few have survived from southern Wales. See Sally Badham and Malcolm Norris, *Early Incised Slabs and Brasses from the London Marblers* (London: Society of Antiquaries of London, 1999). I am grateful to Madeleine Gray for this reference. See also page 126 below.

[67] De Smedt, *AASS, t.I. Nov.*: 729; *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 84.

> voluerit, non repugnes, sed manum appone, in omnibus quibus poteris adjutorium ei præbens.[68]
>
> (Note that place carefully, and store away with steadfast recollection the words that I shall say to you. If anyone comes to this place in this year or in the next who wants to remove this stone from here (he was pointing to the layer of marble which was placed over her holy body), beware not to object in any way. But if he wants to take away the very dust from here, likewise yield; do not resist for any reason. Moreover, if he wants to carry off the maiden's bones, do not fight against him, but lend a hand, offering help to him in every way you can.)[69]

The youth warns the priest that failure to abide by his warning will result in a painful death after a long sickness, and of course when Robert arrives the priest helps him by acting as an interpreter with the local people. Robert does not again mention the "stone" or "layer of marble" here noted as laying on top of Gwenfrewy's grave, even when he describes the actual process of exhuming her remains, but John Leland records that "There is an hille with pasture in Guitheryn paroche in Denbigh lande caullid Penbere, *i.e., caput sepulcri*, [wher] a stone like a flat stone of a grave lyith, and one, as it is sayde, lyith under it byried."[70] This sixteenth-century witness to a tombstone lying flat on *Penbryn Capel* could possibly refer to the slab covering Gwenfrewy's grave, even though Leland asserts that tradition maintains someone is *still* buried under this stone. In combination with Robert's own mention of a stone laid over her sepulcher, Leland's comments might suggest that a tomb slab was a central part of Gwenfrewy's shrine at

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[68] De Smedt, *AASS, t.I. Nov.*: 729. Madeleine Gray has suggested that the reference here to the "pulverem istum" ("the very dust") of Gwenfrewy's grave indicates the notion of soil as a relic, and she compares this scene to the concern expressed in Lifris's Life of Cadog that Britons might enter the saint's tomb in Italy to steal the sacred earth (*sacrum humum*). Pers. comm.

[69] *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 85.

[70] Lucy Toulmin Smith, ed., *The Itinerary in Wales of John Leland in or about the Years 1536-1539, vol. 3* (London 1906). 99. Italics original. See also Thomas, *History of the Diocese of St. Asaph, New ed.*: 312. Leland knew Prior Robert's *Vita et Translatio* and he includes summarized extracts from it in his *Collectanea*. See Lucy Toulmin Smith, ed., *The Itinerary in Wales of John Leland in or about the Years 1535-1543, Parts IV and V; With an Appendix of Extracts from Leland's Collectanea, vol. 2* (London 1908). 119-22.

Gwytherin before and after the *translatio*—perhaps also indicating that sacred incubation was practiced there from a very early point. At any rate, Leland's note implies that one slab or another was placed back over Gwenfrewy's grave after her relics were removed. This slab presumably disappeared at the Reformation and was apparently replaced with the knight's slab which was in turn kept in place until at least 1729 when Thomas Winne reported that the tombstone of Gwenfrewy—i.e., the knight's stone—was still lying "flat upon the Ground within the Ruins of the Chappel."[71] The replacement of Gwenfrewy's original tomb slab with what appears simply to have been an available substitute speaks to the continuing importance of Gwenfrewy's cult at Gwytherin, if not its material wealth, until at least the seventeenth century.

The fact that the knight's stone was interpreted as representing elements from Gwenfrewy's legend, including a representation of her head, finds some parallel in surviving tomb shrines such as that of St. Ronan at Locronan in Brittany, where an ornately carved slab depicting the saint and supported on pillars protects and provides access to the empty grave beneath for the sake of ritual acts.[72] By comparison with this slab and others like St. Iestyn's on Anglesey it is possible that Gwenfrewy's original grave stone—the *lapidem* or *laminam* mentioned by Robert or another that replaced is soon after the *translatio*—was carved with a depiction of her, and the fact that the replacement slab was interpreted in the eighteenth century as showing her head perhaps

[71] Robert uses more than one term to refer to the maiden's grave—*tumba*, *tumulus*, and *sepulcrum*—but the exact nature of her burial site implied by these words remains hazy. See *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 730; Bourke, "Shrine of St Gwenfrewi," 383.

[72] For St. Ronan see Baring-Gould and Fisher, *LBS*, 4: 120-25. For an image of his grave shrine, see 122. Ward Lock's *Guide to Brittany* offers the following description of the tomb and of the ritual acts performed there: "Over the tomb is a slab supported by six pillars against which stand allegorical figures. Upon the slab is an effigy of the saint in episcopal robes, although he was but a hermit. On the day of the pardon, the second Sunday in July, sick persons crawl under the slab in the hope thereby of being healed." See *Guide to Brittany*, Ward Lock's Tourist Guides (London: Ward, Lock & Co., n.d.). 134.

represents local folk memory of just such an earlier stone and its decoration. So far as the interior layout of *Capel Gwenfrewy,* Tristan Gray Hulse offers the following tentative description based on a comparison with Ronan's shrine and with the surviving *capeli-y-beddau* of SS Pabo and Iestyn on Anglesey:

> The slab would have stood on four or more carved pillars, the whole shrine being erected over the site of the original grave. . . . Such a shrine, and particularly the substitute stone surviving at Gwytherin [i.e., the knight's stone], give us our only clue to the size of the chapel. If the shrine was free-standing, as at Locronan and formerly at Llaniestyn; and allowing for free circulation around [the grave]; the chapel would have had an approximate minimum measurement of eighteen feet by fifteen—perhaps six feet longer if it had an altar.[73]

The measurements of the spot on *Penbryn Capel* where *Capel Gwenfrewy* is most likely to have stood would just allow for the figures offered by Gray Hulse along with the estimated extensions for an altar, and the possibility that Gwenfrewy's grave chapel did have its own altar is supported by the second fourteenth-century tombstone found in Gwytherin church.[74] As mentioned that slab commemorates one LLEW[ARCH CAPELL(anus)], that is, Llywarch the chaplain. That he served an altar in *Capel Gwenfrewy* can be suggested by the fact that Gwytherin has always been a rectorial benefice and that no other church is known to have existed there besides the parish church dedicated first to Eleri, then to St. James, and finally to Gwenfrewy, and that no

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[73] Gray Hulse, "Gwytherin: A Welsh Cult Site in the Mid-Twelfth Century," 5.

[74] For the measurements of the spot on *Penbryn Capel* where the grave chapel was likely located, see page 92 above. The possible layout of the *Capel* can be guessed from that at Llaneilian on Anglesey, which measures 12' by 15' and allows room for an altar. See J.G. Edwards, ed., *The Royal Commission on Ancient & Historical Monuments in Wales & Monmouthshire: An Inventory of the Ancient Monuments in Anglesey* (London: H.M. Stationary Office, 1937). 60-61. I am grateful to Gray Hulse and to Janet Bord for bringing this reference to my attention. If other graves were indeed immediately adjacent to Gwenfrewy's, they were possibly covered over either partly or in full by the grave chapel. Such a layout is not uncommon, and one can compare other *capeli-y-beddau* that were constructed on top of graves near the one being venerated. See, for example Edwards, "Celtic Saints and Early Medieval Archaeology," 230-34.

chapel is known to have stood there besides Gwenfrewy's own.[75] If Llywarch had held a higher office (rector or priest) one would expect his tombstone to record that position, and the inscription could then plausibly refer to his being the chaplain of an altar in *Capel Gwenfrewy*. If this is the case, Gwytherin remained in the fourteenth century—long after Gwenfrewy's translation to England—a popular site of pilgrimage and cult activity, just as Robert seems to imply it was in his own day.[76]

Arch Gwenfrewy: Gwenfrewy's Reliquary Shrine at Gwytherin

Beyond the clues regarding the existence and location of *Capel Gwenfrewy*, further material evidence for the vibrancy of Gwenfrewy's cult at Gwytherin, not only after but perhaps also before the *translatio* of 1138, is found in the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century sketches of the saint's reliquary shrine known in Welsh as *Arch Gwenfrewy*, two small portions of which have been discovered within the last twenty years.[77] The early history of the *Arch* is hazy at best, and it has at one point or another been confused with other containers kept at Gwytherin, but its importance as evidence for the cult of Gwenfrewy there cannot be doubted. The earliest witness to this shrine is a detailed drawing possibly made by Edward Lhuyd himself *ca*. 1698 alongside sketches of the Gwytherin tombstones discussed above. This drawing of the shrine was subsequently

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[75] For the rectorial nature of Gwytherin parish church, see D.R. Thomas, *Esgobaeth Llanelwy: The History of the Diocese of St. Asaph* (London: James Parker, 1870). 544-46; evidence for the assertions that no other church besides the parish church and that no chapel other than Gwenfrewy's ever stood in Gwytherin can be found in A.W. Wade-Evans, "Parochiale Wallicanum," *Y Cymmrodor: The Magazine of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion* 22 (1910): 103.

[76] Gray Hulse, "Gwytherin: A Welsh Cult Site in the Mid-Twelfth Century," 5. For a full discussion of the purpose of Robert's narrative in relation to that of the anonymous Life, see the next chapter.

[77] For the discussion of *Arch Gwenfrewy* which follows, see Butler and Graham-Campbell, "A Lost Reliquary Casket from Gwytherin, North Wales."; Edwards, "A Fragment of the Shrine of Gwenfrewi."; and Edwards and Gray Hulse, "A Fragment of a Reliquary Casket from Gwytherin, North Wales." For conclusions regarding the origin, construction, and use of the shrine which differ from those presented in these articles, see Bourke, "Shrine of St Gwenfrewi."

bound into one of Lhuyd's notebooks now kept at the Bodleian library; a much simplified copy was later made from this drawing and included in his *Parochialia*.[78] In both the manuscript and the *Parochialia*, the sketch is labeled "Arch Gwenfrewi yn eglwys Gwytherin yn swydh Ddimbech" ("Shrine of Gwenfrewy in Gwytherin Church in Denbighshire") although in the manuscript the caption is not in Lhuyd's. The pictures reveal that the shrine was triangular in shape like a tent and made of wood, and that it was at the end of the seventeenth century still partly covered with the remains of metal sheeting and decorated with horizontal bands and vertical strips. In addition the reliquary stood on short legs; on its front were mounted three roundels and a pair of conjoined hexagonal-shaped ornaments; surmounting the top ridge was a finial cross. The drawings also show a lozenge-shaped feature, perhaps the remnant of a strap attachment, on the one gable end that is visible.[79] Lawrence Butler and James Graham-Campbell have dated the shrine, primarily on the basis of the roundels depicted in these drawings, to either the eighth or the ninth century, and they offer two possible conclusions regarding the shrine's origin: either it was produced in Wales under Irish influence or else it was manufactured in and imported directly from Anglo-Saxon England.[80] Cormac Bourke, however, has dated the shrine to the twelfth century and maintains that it is of Irish origin.[81] A review

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[78] The fuller sketch made by or for Lhuyd is found on fol. 29r of Bodleian Library, Rawlinson MS B 464. The original sketches of the knight's tombstone and the Llywarch slab are on fols. 27r and 28r respectively. Among other drawings of the shrine which are known to exist is one executed by Moses Griffith, the illustrator who accompanied Thomas Pennant on his journeys through Wales in the late eighteenth century. This drawing is printed in the eight-volume, extra-illustrated edition of Pennant's *Tours in Wales* held at the National Library of Wales, but it was likely derived from the sketch found in the Bodleian manuscript just cited, perhaps with reference to the actual shrine as well. See Butler and Graham-Campbell, "A Lost Reliquary Casket from Gwytherin, North Wales," 41-42. The drawings of the shrine in the Bodleian manuscript, *Tours in Wales*, and *Parochialia* are reproduced on 41 and in plate VII.

[79] For more detailed discussion of the physical construction and decoration of the shrine, see ibid., 42-46. Bourke discounts the notion that the lozenge-shaped mount was part of a carrying assembly: Bourke, "Shrine of St Gwenfrewi," 376-77. See also note 86 below.

[80] Butler and Graham-Campbell, "A Lost Reliquary Casket from Gwytherin, North Wales," 46.

[81] Bourke, "Shrine of St Gwenfrewi," 375-88.

of the arguments for both dates will be necessary before discussing the importance of the *Arch* as evidence for the cult of Gwenfrewy in the medieval period.

In June of 1991, Gray Hulse discovered a fragment of the shrine in the presbytery of St. Winefride's Catholic Church in Holywell; it was identified as a piece of the reliquary that had been acquired by Father John Griffith Wynne S.J. from the sexton of Gwytherin in 1849 and then presented to the church at Holywell probably in 1859.[82] This small piece of oak wood, smoothed by an axe and measuring approximately 5.43" in width by 4.61" in height, and a little less than half an inch thick, was identified as the lower half of a gable end of the shrine, although not the end depicted in Lhuyd's drawing. The overall dimensions of the *Arch*, estimated from this surviving piece by Edwards and Gray Hulse, would have been 8.19" in width by 10.24" in height, with an overall length of roughly 13.78."[83] On the front of the fragment, almost in the center and towards the top, has been carved a patriarchal cross, possibly in recognition of an oath sworn on this portion of the shrine;[84] in addition to the remains of a few wooden pegs and some copper-alloy rivets, faint remnants of the metal sheeting once set over the wood are still visible under a microscope. Part of a hole originally measuring about 0.79" across remains on the right side of the fragment, half of it having been lost when the right-hand corner of the piece was sawn away; this hole is of uncertain intent.[85] Above this partially surviving hole, the remaining rivets and rivet holes outline a lozenge shape similar to that depicted in the Lhuyd drawing, and Edwards and Gray Hulse suggest that it could have been part

[82] Edwards and Gray Hulse, "A Fragment of a Reliquary Casket from Gwytherin, North Wales," 91-92. See also note 64 above.
[83] For the measurements of the fragment in millimeters, see ibid., 93. For the estimated measurements of the whole reliquary in millimeters, see 95. Drawings of the fragment can be found on 94 and 96.
[84] Ibid., 96.
[85] Ibid., 93.

of a hinge-and-strap apparatus used for carrying the shrine not unlike that posited by Butler and Graham-Campbell for the opposite end of the reliquary.[86] A flaky, dark yellow residue observed near to and on the edges of the hole just mentioned proved to be beeswax and an unknown resin and was perhaps a polish for the wood itself or else part of the original adhesive for the metal sheeting. Alternatively, the resin could represent oil poured through the hole and onto the relics for the creation of holy oil which would then have been poured back out through the hole once again.[87]

In 1997 a second fragment of the gable end of the shrine was found in the possession of Father David Higham of Stoke-on-Trent.[88] This small portion (2.99" in width by 0.59" in height and 0.47" thick) apparently comes from higher up on the end than does the portion discovered in 1991, and judging from the two copper-alloy rivets on its top that would have held in place a sheet-metal binding strip Edwards and Gray Hulse argue that the upper part of the shrine apparently represented by this smaller fragment was separate from the lower part and perhaps functioned as a lid. This small piece can be traced to Countess Isabella English (d. 1888), who describes in a note of authentication kept with the piece in the Museum of the Pilgrimage at Holywell how she received it at the shrine on August 20, 1860, and observes that it had originally been purchased by Father Wynne from the sexton of Gwytherin in 1849.[89] This enterprising sexton appears to be responsible for the eventual disappearance of much of *Arch Gwenfrewy* in the nineteenth century, for besides Wynne's fragment from which the Countess's was taken,

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[86] Ibid., 97. Mr. Gray Hulse, in agreement with Bourke's interpretations, now maintains that the lozenge shape in the Lhuyd drawing and that discernible on the fragment in question were not intended as part of a carrying assembly. Pers. comm. See note 79 above.
[87] Ibid.
[88] For this and the following information on the second fragment, see Nancy Edwards and Tristan Gray Hulse, "Gwytherin (SH 876 614)," *Archaeology in Wales* 37 (1997): 87-88. Both fragments are now on display in the Museum of the Pilgrimage at the Holywell shrine.
[89] See note 64 above.

a third fragment of the shrine, now lost, was acquired from the sexton *ca*. 1851 by Father Thomas Meyrick, S.J.[90] Based on the overall estimated dimensions of the reliquary, Edwards and Gray Hulse conclude that the shrine could not have contained the fully articulated skeleton of Gwenfrewy, even though some local traditions maintained that the *Arch* or another container at Gwytherin was used to house her mortal remains, and they suggest instead that it may have held smaller corporal relics like hair or nail clippings or, more likely, relics of a secondary nature.[91]

In opposition to these conclusions regarding the origins and construction of Gwenfrewy's shrine, Cormac Bourke draws parallels between the aesthetic and practical features of the *Arch* and those of St. Manchán's tent-shaped, early twelfth-century shrine from Lemanaghan, Co. Offaly, to posit a twelfth-century date and Irish origin for Gwenfrewy's reliquary.[92] Perhaps most significantly he argues that the larger surviving portion of *Arch Gwenfrewy* was in fact the gable end illustrated by Lhuyd or his assistant, that it belonged not to the bottom half of this end, but to the upper half, and that the shrine was therefore much larger than Edwards and Gray Hulse suggest: approximately 27.5" in length, 20.5" in height, and 16.4" deep.[93] Consequently, Bourke maintains that the *Arch* would not have been carried via detachable straps or chains but would instead have been fitted with metal feet and attached rings for the sake of carrying the reliquary with poles. This is a design element of St. Manchán's shrine and one that finds its ultimate origin in Christian tradition in the Ark of the Covenant, in conscious imitation of

[90] For Meyrick and his fragment, see Edwards and Gray Hulse, "A Fragment of a Reliquary Casket from Gwytherin, North Wales," 92-93 and the sources cited there.
[91] Ibid., 97.
[92] Bourke, "Shrine of St Gwenfrewi."
[93] For these estimated measurements in millimeters, see ibid., 378. For the suggestion that the larger surviving portion was in fact part of the gable end illustrated by Lhuyd, see 376 and 382.

which medieval reliquaries were often made, an imitation that the Welsh name of Gwenfrewy's shrine (*Arch Gwenfrewy*) could plausibly recognize.[94] Based upon the evidence of an entry in the Minute Book for the Society of Antiquaries of London dated November 18, 1724, Bourke also suggests that, uniquely at Gwytherin, in addition to the tent-shaped, wood-and-metal reliquary of Gwenfrewy, one or more similarly shaped stone shrines were to be found in the churchyard in memory of Tenoi, Cybi, or Sannan, if not in memory of Gwenfrewy herself. The Minute Book entry is accompanied by a pair of drawings, one that depicts the row of four stones standing just to the north of Gwytherin church briefly mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, and another that depicts "St. Winifrids Shrine in the Chh yard of Guitherin."[95] The object depicted is tent-shaped and devoid of ornament, although on the gable end there appears a rectangle that Bourke suggests might represent a *fenestella* for visual or tactile access to the relics inside, something which would find parallel in Irish grave shrines of similar shape. Most importantly though, "St. Winifrid's Shrine" is said here specifically to be "in the Chh yard," a statement unlikely to apply to a richly decorated and portable reliquary and which must therefore allude to some other object or structure—according to Bourke, a stone shrine for one of the other Gwytherin saints that was erroneously associated with Gwenfrewy.[96] The deans' reports for 1710 and 1729 might support Bourke's position (i.e., that the Minute Book sketch depicts a gabled stone shrine commemorating one of the other Gwytherin saints that was somehow mistaken as a monument marking

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[94] Bourke notes the relatively wide semantic range of *arch* but observes that it usually refers to "a substantial container," ibid., 379. The *Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru* attests *arch*, s.v., as meaning "arc, chest, coffer, coffin, box; shrine" from *ca*. 1400, and as meaning "trunk, body, waist, side, breast" from the thirteenth century. Given its clear associations with funeral containers and even with bodies, the name of Gwenfrewy's shrine, *Arch Gwenfrewy*, could arguably reflect early beliefs that it held her corporal remains.
[95] Ibid., 382. For more on the standing stones, see pages 122-28 below.
[96] Ibid., 382-83. Gray Hulse maintains that the drawing in the Minute Book does in fact represent the *Arch* at a point when most all of its exterior decoration had been lost. Gray Hulse, "*Arch Gwenfrewi*," 3-4.

Gwenfrewy's tomb) because in their description of Gwenfrewy's grave slab within the ruins of the *Capel* both seem to refer to the knight's stone discussed above, and neither says anything about a tent-shaped shrine. To judge from the original size of the knight's stone according to Lhuyd's drawing, this slab is not likely to have been used as part of a tent-shaped structure, but more importantly the 1729 report notes in particular that Gwenfrewy's grave shrine had been of the slab-and-pillar variety.[97] If tent-shaped stone shrines were located in the cemetery at Gwytherin, none of them was originally intended, it seems, to mark Gwenfrewy's burial place.

Bourke's ultimate argument is that "the production of [Gwenfrewy's] shrine and the translation of [her] relics were more or less contemporary, and that the shrine was big enough to have held the saint's skull and disarticulated bones;" consequently then the *Arch* "need have no bearing on the prior history of the cult."[98] As Bourke notes, though, Prior Robert at no point makes reference to a special shrine and instead specifically mentions that Gwenfrewy's bones were placed "into cloths" (*in mantilibus*) after their exhumation. However, Bourke posits that *Arch Gwenfrewy*—imported from Ireland perhaps at Benedictine request during a time when links between Wales and Ireland were, according to Bourke, still strong—would have been used only during the formal procession that brought the relics into the abbey church at Shrewsbury and onto its altar, after which event it would have been returned to Gwytherin, a possibility perhaps supported by the comment of the Gwytherin sexton recorded in Father Wynne's 1859 report that the *Arch* had held "the *body* of St. Winefride <u>when brought back from</u>

[97] The statement in dean Williams's 1710 report that he "was shiwed a Grave stone made in the form of a Coffin" likely refers to the original tapered shape of the knight's slab, and not to a tent-shaped structure built from at least four or five different pieces of stone. For the original shape of the slab, see Lhuyd, *Parochialia*.
[98] Bourke, "Shrine of St Gwenfrewi," 385-86.

Shrewsbury."[99] There are no medieval records of such an event having occurred, but a seventeenth-century Welsh carol on the Life of Gwenfrewy by Gwilym Pue notes what appears to be a similar tradition of the saint's original coffin having been left at Gwytherin for the sake of future pilgrims:

> Mewn ysgrîn hi a roddwyd, mewn gweryd gosodwyd
> Yn barchus llei claddwyd Gwenfrewi;
> Yn y ddaearen bu yn gorfedd y seren
> Wrth feddau Saint Sennen a Chybi.
>
> Pedwarcant blwyddyn y cadwodd Gwytherin
> Esgyrn ac ysgrîn Gwenfrewi,
> Nes i Rupert yn unig, oedd brior Beneddig,
> Gan ei symud i'r 'Mwythig ei chyrchu.
>
> Mewn ysgrin o arian rhoed creiriau y lleian
> I'r 'Mwythig pan symudan' Gwenfrewi;
> Gadawan' yr hen ysgrîn yn eglwys Gwytherin
> Fal y gallo'r pererin ei pharchu. (Lines 181-92)
>
> (She was placed in a coffin, she was placed in the earth
> Respectfully where Gwenfrewi was buried;
> In the soil lay the star
> By the graves of saints Sennen and Cybi.
>
> For four hundred years did Gwytherin keep
> The bones and coffin of Gwenfrewi,
> Until Rupert on his own, who was a Benedictine prior,
> Fetched it, moving it to Shrewsbury.
>
> In a coffin of silver were the relics of the nun
> Placed when they move Gwenfrewi;
> They leave the old coffin in the church of Gwytherin
> So that the pilgrim may respect it.)[100]

Father Wynne himself offers further pertinent observations regarding the portion of the chest that he was shown at Gwytherin:

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[99] Ibid., 386. For Wynne's comments, see Taylor, *St. Winefride*: 28. Italics original, underlining added.
[100] ap Huw, "Critical Examination of Welsh Poetry," 222. For the text of the carol, see 214, for the translation, see 214. I have slightly rearranged the first two lines of ap Huw's translation in order to reflect more accurately the Welsh syntax.

> [W]hen produced, it proved to be one end of a very rude box of oak-wood, much too small to contain the body, but just the size to contain a third part of it; it had been made of four plain boards nailed together, and smoothed *by an axe*, as the marks on it prove (showing it to have been made before the introduction of planes); and the clerk said the greater part had been carried off by people who occasionally came there, and often gave him a shilling to let them cut off a piece of the chest by way of remembrance of their visit to Gwytherin; in fact, nothing remained but one of the end boards entire, with a small fragment of one of the sides.[101]

The large fragment discovered at the Catholic Church in Holywell in 1991 is, as noted above, the same one that Wynne carried away from Gwytherin in 1849, and whether or not *Arch Gwenfrewy* can attest to the existence of Gwenfrewy's cult at Gwytherin prior to the twelfth century, its presence there certainly speaks to the endurance of the cult in later times, as does its eventual disappearance—Gwytherin still saw just enough pilgrims in the nineteenth century for the sexton to be able to part out the reliquary for a small profit.[102]

Combining Edwards and Gray Hulse's position that the shrine held only secondary relics with Bourke's suggestion that it could have held the saint's corporal remains during the official presentation to Shrewsbury abbey and that it was later returned to Gwytherin, it might be proposed that the *Arch* could have, at different times, held both types of relics. If used in the final leg of the *translatio* the reliquary would have itself functioned as a secondary, contact relic upon its return to Gwytherin, one into

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[101] Taylor, *St. Winefride*: 28-29. Italics original.

[102] Besides Wynne's report of the sexton's capitalizing on the pilgrim traffic at Gwytherin, a history of Shrewsbury published in 1825 quotes a similar statement from the Rev. Rowland Williams: "There is an old rotten piece of wood preserved in Gwytherin church, which nothing but heretic incredulity can doubt of having been a piece of the saint's coffin. The Roman Catholics of Holywell, and of some other places, continue to visit Gwytherin occasionally, and are greatly delighted upon obtaining a morsel of this invaluable relic to carry home." Owen and Blakeway, *History of Shrewsbury, vol. 2*: 40n1. The evidence of the *Arch*'s existence at Gwytherin in the nineteenth century indicates that Gwenfrewy's cult had survived the destruction of her chapel in the southern half of the *llan*. And with the loss of the chapel the *Arch* would no doubt have become of greater interest to the pilgrims arriving there. In fact, the obliteration of the chapel may well have sped up the disassembly of the *Arch*.

which other, non-bodily objects associated with the saint would have been placed. It should be cautioned, however, that at the relevant juncture in the narrative Robert makes no mention of a feretory, that is, a container used to transport the saint's relics, while at the same time he does note various church ornaments used in the procession—on the day when the relics are taken from St. Giles's church to Shrewsbury abbey, the brothers make the procession "cum crucibus et candelis" ("with crosses and candles") as well as "cum pretiosioribus ornamentis ecclesiæ" ("with the precious ornaments of the church"), but no other object is named.[103] While Robert sometimes omits particulars that would seem to be significant (e.g., the actual date of the translation into the abbey which from later evidence seems to have been on September 19, 1138),[104] his usual attention to detail would argue against the *Arch* being part of the procession since it is not mentioned. If a rich shrine had been commissioned by the abbey for the purposes of the *translatio*, Robert can be expected to have mentioned it at least in passing, if not at length, especially since in his description of the exhumation he explicitly notes, as mentioned, that "extracta de pulvere ossa" ("after the bones had been extracted from the dust"), the brothers "in mantilibus decenter ligata composuerunt" ("placed them, properly bound, in mantles").[105]

Circumstantial evidence for the presence of *Arch Gwenfrewy* at Gwytherin from possibly the twelfth century comes from the medieval dug-out chest moved from Gwytherin church to the Museum of the Pilgrimage at Holywell on November 10, 2005.[106] It has been suggested that this chest dates from the twelfth or the thirteenth

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[103] *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 92; De Smedt, *AASS, t.I. Nov.*: 731.
[104] On this date, see chapter 4, note 71below.
[105] *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 89; De Smedt, *AASS, t.I. Nov.*: 730.
[106] After its initial arrival, the chest was immediately sent to the conservation laboratories at Liverpool University, from which it was returned to Holywell in December of 2005. Tristan Gray Hulse, pers. comm.

century.[107] Roughly carved from a single block of oak and secured with heavy iron straps and two lockable latches, this box was certainly intended to hold something of value, but in the absence of a slot for offerings in the lid and given its relatively small internal dimensions, it seems unlikely to have been used as an offertory or for the storage of vestments. If, however, Edwards and Gray Hulse's estimated dimensions of the saint's shrine are accurate, the chest could have been intended to house *Arch Gwenfrewy*.[108] In support of this assertion is testimony from the eighteenth century onward for the existence at Gwytherin of more than one container associated with Gwenfrewy, containers that appear from the beginning to have been closely connected with one another. Dean Thomas Williams's report for Gwytherin reveals that in 1710 there was at the church "a new Chest but not wth. 3 Locks" and that in the church was "shewd an old Shrine s'd to be ye Repository of S^{t}. Winifrid's Bones."[109] The dug-out chest preserved today in the Holywell museum could not have been new in 1710, and the "old Shrine" mentioned by Williams must either be it or the *Arch* itself.

Assuming that the dug-out chest was indeed present in the church at the time of Williams's report, the fact that he makes no distinction between chest and *Arch* could indicate the degree to which traditions regarding the two had become conflated, something that later reports seem to demonstrate.[110] In his *Journey to Snowdon* first published in 1781, Pennant recorded that "in the church is shewn the box in which

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[107] Ellis Davies, "Gwytherin," *Proceedings of the Llandudno, Colwyn Bay and District Field Club* 19 (1935-38): 42.
[108] For the thoughts presented here regarding the use of the chest, I rely on Gray Hulse, "*Arch Gwenfrewi*," 15-16. I quote the dimensions of the box here from the same pages: "From the front inner edge to the back inner edge its measures vary slightly from 12 ¾" (left) to 13 ¼" (right). At the back its depth measures from 7 ¾" (left) to 8 ¼" (right); and at the front, from 8 ¼" (left) to 8" (right).... The interior of the lid is flat." The estimated dimensions of the *Arch* presented by Edwards and Gray Hulse would require it to have been laid flat on its side in order for it to fit in to the dug-out chest.
[109] Quoted in ibid., 3.
[110] Ibid.

[Gwenfrewy's] reliques were kept, before their removal to Shrewsbury," and in 1825 the Rev. Rowland Williams noted that Catholic pilgrims from Holywell and other localities came occasionally to Gwytherin and carried away small portions of "the saint's coffin," a clear reference to the belief that the *Arch* itself had contained Gwenfrewy's corporal relics.[111] Lewis's *Topographical Dictionary of Wales*, originally published in 1833, next observes that within Gwytherin church "were deposited the mortal remains of Theonia and St Winifrid, which latter were removed, after a lapse of five hundred years from her death, to Shrewsbury: the wooden chest in which these were preserved is still kept."[112] After Wynne saw the remains of Gwenfrewy's reliquary in 1849, J.O. Westwood commented in 1858 that "within the church are preserved two old, rude, wooden chests, in one of which a piece of wood is shown as being a portion of the coffin of St. Winifrid," and he adds that he "could hear of no other relics."[113] Gray Hulse suggests that these two chests mentioned by Westwood were the "new" chest recorded by Williams in 1710 and the medieval dug-out chest now kept at Holywell, the latter of which would have been the one shown to Westwood in 1858 as containing some part of Gwenfrewy's "coffin," that is, Williams's "Repository of S^{t}. Winifrid's Bones," i.e., *Arch Gwenfrewy*.[114]

Twenty-four years after Westwood's account the Cambrian Archaeological Association noted that, in August 1882, the rebuilt Gwytherin church retained "a rough and rude chest of one block, 40 in. by 20 in. and 17 in. deep," any connections that this

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[111] *The Journey to Snowdon* was republished in Pennant, *A Tour in Wales, vol. 2*. For the quotation above, see 55. Rowland Williams is quoted in note 102 above.
[112] The quotation from Lewis's *Dictionary* is taken from Butler and Graham-Campbell, "A Lost Reliquary Casket from Gwytherin, North Wales," 40.
[113] J.O. Westwood, "Further Notices of the Early Inscribed Stones of Wales," *Archaeologia Cambrensis, 3rd Ser.* 4 (1858): 405.
[114] Gray Hulse, "*Arch Gwenfrewi*," 13.

remaining container had had with the saint apparently having been forgotten by this point.[115] It would appear then that one of the two chests noted by Westwood had been removed from the church, most likely at the time of its rebuilding in 1867-69, and the one so removed was probably that which Williams had reported as being "new" in 1710, as the measurements presented in the 1882 account are generally consistent with those of the chest now at Holywell, indicating that it was the one still at Gwytherin in the later nineteenth century.[116] Thomas noted in 1911 the popular conflation of the remaining chest and the *Arch* as follows:

> [T]he piece of wood shown to Mr. Westwood as a portion of the coffin of St Winifrid may have been part of the shrine, and what is now so-called was no doubt an old cyff or chest, hollowed out of a solid block of oak. The dimensions are, externally, 36 inches long, 18 inches wide, and 18 inches deep; internally, 27 inches long by 13 inches wide, and 8 inches deep.[117]

Next, in 1914, the Royal Commission for Ancient Monuments inventory for Denbighshire noted the presence of "the church chest, 3 feet 3 inches long, . . . formed out of a part of a single tree trunk," adding that it was by that time "much decayed."[118] The measurements given in 1882, 1911, and 1914, while not entirely consistent between themselves, are on the whole comparable to the actual measurements of the dug-out chest now at Holywell, indicating that it was the chest referred to in these late reports and, therefore, that it was at Gwytherin in the later nineteenth century and most likely for a long time prior. In support of the latter notion, the Rev. Ellis Davies writing in 1935-38 offers the following:

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[115] "Report of the Cambrian Archaeological Association Annual Meeting at Llanrwst," *Archaeologia Cambrensis, 4th Ser.* 13 (1882): 330.
[116] Gray Hulse, "*Arch Gwenfrewi*," 14.
[117] Thomas, *History of the Diocese of St. Asaph, New ed.*: 314.
[118] "Royal Commission on Ancient Monuments in Wales and Monmouthshire IV: Inventory of the County of Denbigh," (London: H.M. Stationary Office, 1914), 64-65.

> An old chest that is supposed to have been connected with Winefred, lies at the east end of the church. This is carved out of a block of wood, measuring a yard in length. It is difficult to say how old it is. It dates probably from the 12th or 13th century. Of this chest Pennant writes: 'In the church is shewn the box in which Winefred's reliques were kept.'[119]

Davies's "old chest" is the dug-out one now in the Holywell museum, and the identification of it with Pennant's "box" places it at Gwytherin in the eighteenth century. Furthermore, if Pennant's information is in any way trustworthy—and this is admittedly problematic, given that he claims the "box" to have been used to house Gwenfrewy's relics before their removal to Shrewsbury while Robert mentions no such container, only *mantilia*—then the dug-out chest was at Gwytherin in the twelfth century and used to hold either the saint's bones or the *Arch* which itself may have held some of them. At the very least, as Butler and Graham-Campbell have it, there is "the possibility that the much described 'church chest' was used at some period to house the reliquary 'box' referred to by Pennant [1781], so linking it with the saint, as noted by Thomas [1911]."[120] It should be noted that while Davies identifies Pennant's "box" with the dug-out chest now at Holywell, Butler and Graham-Campbell understand Pennant's "box" to be the *Arch* itself.

As mentioned above, the different dates posited for *Arch Gwenfrewy* have particular implications for the cult of Gwenfrewy before and after the arrival of the Shrewsbury party. If indeed it can be placed as far back as the eighth or ninth centuries and if in fact the roundels indicate Anglo-Saxon influence on its decoration as Butler, Graham-Campbell, Edwards, and Gray Hulse suggest, then we have in the *Arch* the suggestion of a significant and early cult thriving not only at Gwytherin but perhaps also at Holywell. Since the latter was in a region subject to sporadic Anglo-Saxon incursions

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[119] Davies, "Gwytherin," 42.
[120] Butler and Graham-Campbell, "A Lost Reliquary Casket from Gwytherin, North Wales," 41.

up to the time that Mercia made permanent headway there in the tenth century, the presence of Anglo-Saxon ornament on the *Arch* might suggest a certain degree of communication, at least for a time, between the cults at Holywell and Gwytherin. Could the artistic styling of a Gwytherin reliquary have been introduced by way of the English cult at Holywell? Further, since the *Arch* was most likely intended to have held non-corporeal relics, this shrine, if it can be dated to the eighth or ninth centuries, may be evidence of Gwytherin's mother church status, for as noted above mother churches were often concerned to collect non-corporeal remains.[121] But if the shrine was at Gwytherin from such an early point, why would Robert have failed to comment on it? After all, mention of a magnificent reliquary would only add to the prestige of the saint whom he had come to take away. One logical explanation is that the *Arch*, if indeed it was at Gwytherin before the Benedictines arrived there, could have been hidden from them in the fear that they would try to take the saint's shrine filled with non-corporeal relics in addition to her bones. Given the high value that Welsh religious culture placed on secondary relics rather than bodily ones, we might well expect a great concern to keep such an object away from acquisitive foreigners. And finally, if the *Arch* can be dated to the eighth or ninth centuries and placed at Gwytherin from about that time, it would also suggest that Robert was not exaggerating Gwenfrewy's importance at Gwytherin in the early twelfth century.

On the other hand, if the *Arch* was not constructed until the first half of the twelfth century, it may reflect an attempt to elevate the cult at Gwytherin in reaction to Gwenfrewy's translation to Shrewsbury. That is, the *Arch* may represent an effort on the part of the cult at Gwytherin to compensate for the loss of the saint's remains by drawing

[121] See page 83 above.

attention to some non-corporeal relic(s) still *in situ*. This could have been the case even if, as Bourke suggests, the shrine had been constructed to hold Gwenfrewy's bones as they were carried into Shrewsbury abbey, for once it had arrived at Gwytherin the *Arch* would itself have functioned as a secondary, contact relic at the same time that it housed other objects linked with the saint. Even if Gwenfrewy was not the most important saint at Gwytherin before Robert arrived, her removal could have aroused local sentiment toward her, and indeed, as Madeleine Gray has noted, an undercurrent of coercion runs throughout Robert's account of the final acquisition of Gwenfrewy's remains.[122] An act of cultural oppression and expropriation, forcible *translatio* could easily stir local feelings.[123] Regardless of its ultimate provenance though, and accepting its presence at Gwytherin from an early point, whether the eighth century or the twelfth, this reliquary speaks to the strength of devotion to Gwenfrewy in a thoroughly Welsh region of northeastern Wales in the centuries following her translation. Although Robert was concerned to craft a narrative that served particular ends and could, therefore, have manipulated his account to exaggerate Gwenfrewy's status among the people of Gwytherin, the Shrewsbury monks are unlikely to have carried off to their abbey an individual whom they thought was of absolutely no prior repute. And although the Welsh were not as concerned with corporeal relics as were the Anglo-Normans, the removal of Gwenfrewy's bones was, to judge from Robert's account, not well received on all sides. It seems safest to assume that Gwenfrewy was of some standing at Gwytherin in the centuries leading up to 1138, but that she may not have been the most

[122] Gray, "Contested Relics."
[123] For a brief survey of the political power of relics, and by extension of forced *translatio* as cultural oppression, see Alexandra Walsham, "Introduction: Relics and Remains," *Past and Present* 206, suppl. 5 (2010): 24-27. See also the other sources cited in Gray, "Contested Relics."

important of the saints buried there. Robert employed particular hagiographical topoi to elevate the importance and desirability of his saintly subject, but he could well be telling the truth when he claims that she was both revered and neglected, if by neglected we understand "not revered so highly that her translation elsewhere would be difficult." Before making, however, a final statement on the significance of Gwytherin and Gwenfrewy's place there—before or after her departure hence—there remains to consider one last element of Gwytherin's early medieval landscape.

THE GWYTHERIN STANDING STONES

Just to the north of Gwytherin church, standing at the edge of a steep decline leading to a stream that forms the northern boundary of the *llan* is a row of four seemingly ancient stones aligned east to west. Roughly 3.5' high, these standing stones were first placed on record in dean Thomas Williams's report of August 3, 1710:

> In this Church-yard of Gwytherin are to be seen two rude and unpolish'd stones standing on end in ye Ground with these words Cutt in ym. Vinnemagle. Sennemagle. The Names of Abbotts, (if we believ Tradition) yt liv'd formerly att Gwytherin.[124]

Williams gives no clue as to the exact location of the stones within the churchyard at the time when he was writing, but it has been suggested that the so-called Vinnemagli stone is still *in situ*.[125] Significantly, though, Williams mentions only two stones and the possibility that his observations may be careless is suggested by his implication that both stones under consideration bore early engravings; at the same time, it is possible that in 1710 only two stones were present on the north side of the church and that the remaining

[124] NLW MS. SA/RD/7. Quoted in Gray Hulse, "Gwytherin: A Welsh Cult Site in the Mid-Twelfth Century," 2.
[125] See Edwards, "The Dark Ages," 131-32. For a drawing of the stone and its inscription, see 130.

two were added at some later point. Regardless, and as can be seen today, the name VINNEMAGLI FILI SENEMAGLI is engraved on the eastern face of the westernmost stone in Roman capitals, but the remaining three stones were apparently never inscribed. The next witness to the stone row is the drawing submitted by Roger Gale to the Society of Antiquaries of London on November 18, 1724.[126] The text accompanying Gale's drawing of the stones, which were apparently situated by this point in their present-day position, reads as follows: "4 stones set end wise rude thus, near, [sketch] on one is cut these Letters VINNEAAGLI F SENFAAGL."[127] Following Gale's notice, the stone row was next commented upon by Pennant, who, noting the almost complete disappearance of any remnant of *Capel Gwenfrewy* in his day, remarked in passing only that the row consisted of "four rude upright stones."[128] Roughly thirty or so years later, the line of stones had taken on a new role, for according to George Nicholson's 1813 edition of *The Cambrian Traveller's Guide* the "4 upright stones are still shewn as Winefred's tomb," something perhaps to be expected after the loss of the *Capel*.[129] Further information regarding this apparently new function for the stones is revealed by G.N. Wright's 1833 *Scenes in North Wales*, in which is found the following observation: "four upright stones, forming a continued right line, on one of which the name of Winifred is graven in ancient characters, are still shown in the churchyard at Gwytherin as the grave of this celebrated virgin martyr."[130] This tradition that the standing stones marked the tomb of the saint seems to have died out not long after Wright's account, for in 1849 Father Wynne was unable to find "where the bodies of the Saints had lain," and neither could he locate "any

[126] The sketches and related text are reproduced in Bourke, "Shrine of St Gwenfrewi," 382.
[127] Ibid.
[128] Pennant, *A Tour in Wales, vol. 2*: 55.
[129] George Nicholson, *The Cambrian Traveller's Guide*, 2nd ed. (London 1813). col. 635.
[130] G.N. Wright, *Scenes in North Wales* (London 1833). 113.

remarkable tomb or hear of any such having formerly existed."[131] It appears then that the stone row was no longer being exhibited as Gwenfrewy's grave by the mid-nineteenth century, something borne out by Professor J.O. Westwood's scholarly report on Gwytherin published in 1858:

> In the churchyard, at the north side of the church, are erected four upright stones about two feet high. They are placed in a row; and on the eastern side of the most westernly of them is the inscription, VINNEMAGLI FIL SENEMAGLI (*i.e*. the body or tombstone of Vinnemaglus, the son of Senemaglus). The letters are slightly debased, tall Roman capitals; the M and A in both lines conjoined, and the O partaking of a miniscule form, without the straight bar at top, common in some of the Welsh inscriptions. The whole exhibit a Romano-British inscription probably of the sixth century.[132]

This is the first accurate translation of the inscription on record, and it signals the end of the tradition that identified the stone row as a marker of Gwenfrewy's burial place. Nash-Williams dates the Vinnemagli stone to the fifth or early sixth century A.D, and Edward Hubbard assigns a similar date to the entire row.[133] Nancy Edwards dates the inscription to the fifth or sixth century and suggests that the formula used, "X son of Y," implies Irish influence in the region at the time.[134]

The original function of the row remains obscure, but the stones themselves were for a time in the eighteenth century thought to have been connected with the ancient religious community at Gwytherin and, in the first half of the nineteenth, with Gwenfrewy specifically. Gray Hulse has suggested that Williams's 1710 report records the medieval tradition surrounding these stones at the very point when Gwenfrewy's

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[131] Taylor, *St. Winefride*: 28. Wynne was, of course, shown a portion of a "very rude box of oak-wood, much too small to contain the [saint's] body, but just the size to contain a third part of it." See page 114 above.
[132] Westwood, "Further Notices."; quoted in Thomas, *History of the Diocese of St. Asaph, New ed.*: 313.
[133] Nash-Williams, *Early Christian Monuments*: 121; Edward Hubbard, *Clwyd (Denbighshire and Flintshire)*, The Buildings of Wales (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1986). 178.
[134] Edwards, "The Dark Ages," 131. Thomas Charles-Edwards notes that the Irish origin of this formula is debatable. Pers. comm.

grave chapel, a focus of cultic activity, was finally disintegrating, an event that would have brought greater attention to the other objects at Gwytherin—i.e., the standing stones and the *Arch*. And while we do not known for certain whether or not the stones are in their original position, and while as noted above it has been suggested that the Vinnemagli stone remains in its original place, it is worth bearing in mind that in 1710 Williams commented on the presence of only two stones in the churchyard and that he does not say exactly where they were situated. His report does observe, however, as does the one made in 1729, that Gwytherin church specifically lacked a proper fence, and in light of Gale's 1724 sketch depicting the four stones standing together Gray Hulse has suggested that the full row, placed at the most precipitous point within the *llan* at some point after 1710, could have been erected as a half-hearted attempt to correct this deficiency.[135] At the very least, these documents seem to indicate that some of the stones in the row at Gwytherin are not in their original location within the churchyard. The question to consider then is where these stones were located in the twelfth century if indeed they have been moved around within the *llan*. In the first edition of his *History of the Diocese of St. Asaph*, Thomas proposed that a misreading of the inscription on the Vinnemagli stone could have provided Prior Robert with the names of the saints buried alongside Gwenfrewy in the special cemetery:

> One can hardly help recognising here some of the names that occur in the legend; possibly they may have suggested some of the details, e.g., *Win*i-fred, *Senna*n; and in the one case, *Mael*, or perhaps *Nudd Hael*, the father of [the] Gwytherin [after whom the entire site had supposedly been named]. On the other hand it looked in part like CILI, for Cybi.[136]

[135] Tristan Gray Hulse, "'4 Stones Set Endwise': The Tradition of the Gwytherin Stone Row," (2011), n.p. Besides the 1710 decanal report, that for 1729 also notes the want of decent fencing.
[136] Thomas, *History of the Diocese of St. Asaph*: 544. For Gwytherin [ap Dingad] ap Nudd Hael, see 543n1.

We will recall that Robert mentions, in his account of the dream vision experienced by the priest of Gwytherin, a *lapidem* or *laminam* covering Gwenfrewy's grave. He does not say anything about this stone when he describes the actual exhumation, but Madeleine Gray has commented that while none of the standing stones "quite fits Robert's description," it remains "possible though unlikely that the second from the east could originally have been a grave cover."[137] Accepting then that some of these stones could have at one time functioned as grave markers, and taking Williams's claim that the names on the Vinnemagli stone were held to be those of ancient abbots and combining it with Thomas's proposition that the names suggested figures in Gwenfrewy's legend, it could be that in Robert's day the Vinnemagli stone specifically was to be found in the saints' cemetery marking out the tombs of revered members of the Gwytherin community, perhaps in close proximity to Gwenfrewy's "lignea . . . ecclesiola." Indeed it stands to reason that for Robert to have associated the names on the Vinnemagli stone with some of the holy dead interred near Gwenfrewy—"Chebius" (Cybi?) and "Senanus" (Sannan?)—he would have had to have seen that stone standing in the southern half of the *llan* very close to Gwenfrewy's grave. Further, the misreading that Thomas ascribes to Robert should perhaps be ascribed to the local people, for Robert's tone in recording the names of those buried alongside Gwenfrewy is cautious at best—he notes only that Chebius and Senanus "famæ feruntur" ("are reported to be there").[138] So far as the twelfth-century location of the unmarked stones in the present-day row, we should note Robert's assertion that a great number of holy people were

[137] Gray, "Contested Relics."
[138] De Smedt, *AASS, t.I. Nov.*: 723; *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 67. Present day tradition at Llansannan still maintains that Sannan was buried with Gwenfrewy at Gwytherin. Harders, "A Short History of the Church." See also note 32 above.

buried in the saints' cemetery. If Gwenfrewy's grave or those nearby were marked out with stones, it seems logical that the other graves upon which Robert briefly comments would also have been so marked. If the other stones of the present-day row were to be found in the southern half of the *llan* in the 1130s, then the fact that they were never engraved might explain Robert's statement that "ceterum aliorum sanctorum nomina vel numerum ibidem quiescentium solius Dei cognitio retinet" ("God alone knows the names and number of the other saints who repose there").[139]

If in the Middle Ages the stones of the present-day row were associated with the graves of the holy dead buried in the southern half of the *llan*, dean Williams's 1710 report appears to prove the continuance of that tradition into the early eighteenth century. However, with the loss of *Capel Gwenfrewy* soon thereafter—and with the subsequent fading of knowledge of its original function and location—the earlier memory that these stones had been markers for the graves of abbots perhaps buried near to Gwenfrewy seems to have morphed into a tradition that they indicated the location of Gwenfrewy's tomb itself. In this regard we will recall that by the time of Father Wynne's visit in 1849 the southern half of the *llan* was no longer thought to be the site of Gwenfrewy's burial but of her nunnery. This scenario is, of course, largely speculative, an attempt to situate the stone row in relation to Robert's own account of the site, an account that, as this chapter has sought to demonstrate, seems to be highly accurate in its physical details. In the present state of the evidence, we cannot connect further the standing stones or *Arch Gwenfrewy* to Robert's experiences at Gwytherin. Certainly, however, the stone row and the remaining fragments of Gwenfrewy's reliquary, as well as Robert's eyewitness account of the saints' special burial ground and the later evidence for the existence of

[139] De Smedt, *AASS, t.I. Nov.*: 723; *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 67.

Capel Gwenfrewy, all suggest the significance of Gwytherin in the Middle Ages and beyond. As noted above, on the evidence of possibly Anglo-Saxon decorative features the *Arch* may date to the eighth century. If the artistic elements of the shrine are indeed of Anglo-Saxon origin, a significant possibility that, *pace* Bourke, cannot be ignored, then the *Arch* may have some connection with the early English cult of Wenefred at Holywell even though in later centuries this object was specifically connected with her cult at Gwytherin.[140] If the *Arch* does somehow demonstrate interaction between these two places at an early point, the history of the region as reviewed in the previous chapter and Appendix C below would indicate that this interaction had largely stopped by the high medieval period. As the next chapter will demonstrate, the disparities between Gwenfrewy's two twelfth-century *vitae* support this suggestion. The evidence reviewed in the present chapter indicates, however, that even if Gwytherin was not closely tied to Holywell by the time of the Shrewsbury expedition in the 1130s, it remained an important site in the local spiritual economy, an economy that was in the centuries that followed specifically centered on Gwenfrewy's patronage, if not her physical presence in the landscape.

[140] For discussion of an English cult of Wenefred at Holywell from an early date, see Appendix B below.

CHAPTER 4

THE LATIN LIVES OF WENEFRED FROM THE TWELFTH THROUGH THE EARLY FOURTEENTH CENTURIES

The previous chapter explored the evidence for Gwytherin being an important ritual site in Gwenfrewy's Welsh cult in the early twelfth century. By reference to the historical circumstances of the regions involved, the second chapter of this study had argued that St. Werburgh's Abbey in Chester was the most likely route by which the monks of Shrewsbury learned of Gwytherin, and that the cult sites of Holywell and Gwytherin were not in regular contact with one another in the period leading up to Robert's expedition in the late 1130s. The present chapter will consider the textual evidence for this division between Holywell and Gwytherin in the twelfth century. It begins with a close reading of portions of Robert's *Vita et translatio* (*ca*. 1140) alongside similar scenes in the anonymous *Vita S. Wenefrede* (generally dated *ca*. 1135-38) to map both the connections, and the distances between these texts and the traditions they record. Fiona Winward has posited a lost Latin Life of Beuno as the common written source for both of Wenefred's Latin lives, and she has identified specific episodes in each *vita* that are likely to have derived from that source.[1] In his prologue though, Robert expressly states that he composed his Life of Wenefred from a combination of written and oral

[1] Fiona Winward, "The Lives of St Wenefred (BHL 8847-8851)," *Analecta Bollandiana* 117 (1999): 118-25. All translations of the anonymous Life are quoted from Feiss's edition, which is based on the Latin text in Charles De Smedt, ed., *Acta Sanctorum, tom. I. Nov* (1887). 702-08. Periodic reference will also be made to the Latin text of the *Vita S. Wenefrede* and the *Libellus miraculorum* printed and translated in A.W. Wade-Evans, *Vitae Sanctorum Britanniae et Genealogiae* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1944). 288-309. All translations of Robert's Life are quoted from Pepin's edition, which is based on the Latin text in De Smedt, *AASS, t.I. Nov.*: 708-31. For Pepin and Feiss, see *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*, trans. Ronald Pepin and Hugh Feiss (Toronto: Peregrina Publishing, 2000).

sources. As this chapter will demonstrate, it is possible through a parallel reading of the two Lives to identify those portions of Robert's narrative that are likely to have been drawn from oral sources at or near Gwenfrewy's two cult sites; some of the episodes that Winward identifies as having come from a lost *Vita S. Beunoi* need not have done so. In addition, the possibility that Gwenfrewy's legend as recorded by Robert preserves echoes of pre-Christian religious practices supports the likelihood that her cult was already of some antiquity by the twelfth-century. At the same time, the differences between the version of the story recorded by Robert and that preserved in the anonymous Life underscore the division between Holywell and Gwytherin by suggesting the localized nature of the texts themselves—the *Vita S. Wenefrede*, with its attached miracle dossier known as the *Libellus miraculorum*, represents what Tristan Gray Hulse has described as the Holywell version of Wenefred's story, while portions of Robert's *Vita et translatio* embody the Gwytherin tradition of the legend.[2] The distinct nature of the two twelfth-century Lives also serves as the basis for proposing here a revised date of composition for the *Vita S. Wenefrede*. Whereas scholarly opinion has generally situated the anonymous Life and the *Libellus miraculorum* at some point between 1135 and 1138, a case will be made here for placing them at the very end of the twelfth century or the beginning of the thirteenth. Finally, the chapter concludes with a discussion of the unique composite Life of Wenefred found in BL Lansdowne MS 436, an early fourteenth-century manuscript that was owned in the later medieval period by the Benedictine nuns of Romsey Abbey in

[2] Gray Hulse makes the distinction between a Holywell and a Gwytherin version of the legend in his unpublished "Winefride and Beuno: Towards a Holywell Dossier," and I am grateful to him for allowing me to see this material prior to its completion. The present chapter is indebted to many of the insights Gray Hulse provides in his dossier.

Hampshire.[3] It will be suggested that this Life, a careful and deliberate combination of the *Vita S. Wenefrede* and Robert's *Vita et translatio*, is evidence not only for the continuing popularity of Gwenfrewy's cult in the centuries immediately after the expedition to Gwytherin—something that eighteenth- and nineteenth-century scholars doubted—but also for the widespread dissemination of both Lives concurrently before Robert's version became the more or less standard account of Gwenfrewy's story.[4] The Lansdowne Life serves as a forerunner to the Latin and vernacular versions of the saint's legend that appear in hagiographical collections produced in England in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. This composite Life also demonstrates the extent to which Gwenfrewy's legend could be modified to suit the needs of particular audiences outside of Wales. Moreover, it reveals that the predominance of Robert's version in the later Middle Ages was not always a foregone conclusion, something that might appear to have been a natural development if one judges from the number of surviving copies (three) of the *Vita et translatio* in contrast with the one extant copy of the anonymous Life.

ROBERT'S LIFE OF WENEFRED:

POPULAR BACKGROUNDS, ORAL TRADITION, AND THE *VITA S. BEUNOI*

The search for a connection between pre-Christian or pagan beliefs on the one hand and the popular convictions of medieval Christians on the other is fraught with difficulty, in part, at least, because much of our evidence for early religious practice

[3] N.R. Ker, *Medieval Libraries of Great Britain: A List of Surviving Books*, 2nd ed. (London: Royal Historical Society, 1964). 164.
[4] On eighteenth- and nineteenth-century scholarly opinions of Wenefred, see chapter 1, pages 5-6 above.

derives from the written records of the clerical elite.[5] The influence of popular veneration on learned religious expression has not, however, gone unnoticed. Malcolm Lambert has recently remarked that Christianity was, in late antique and early medieval Britain, "a minority religion . . . a strand among others right down to the departure of the legions."[6] And, noting that in the *vitae* of Anglo-Saxon royal saints who died violently we find characteristics "not derived from biblical and patristic Christianity," Catherine Cubitt has argued that these texts reveal sources for cults in non-clerical devotion and popular story, offering thereby a "window onto lay and non-élite religious beliefs" in pre-Norman England.[7] She sees a common narrative pattern connecting the cults of the royal martyrs Oswald, Edwin, and Edmund to those of murdered royal saints like Kenhelm, Kings Edward and Æthelberht, and the Kentish princes Æthelberht and Æthelred.[8] This patterning consists of an emphasis on vengeance miracles, topographical associations, and the theme of decapitation, but it is also manifest in the strength of lay veneration that arose in response to the violent and unjust nature of these saints' deaths:

> In contrast to texts like Bede's *Life of St Cuthbert* or the eleventh-century *Life of St Æthelwold*, which generally imitate either the Bible or the standard hagiographical models such as Sulpicius Severus' *Life of St Martin*, these *vitae* recount stories about severed heads, dismembered corpses, sacred trees and holy wells. Such motifs probably have their origins in pre-Christian beliefs which

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[5] For a succinct summary of the problems related to an investigation of popular, pre-Christian religion in the Middle Ages see Catherine Cubitt, "Sites and Sanctity: Revisiting the Cult of Murdered and Martyred Anglo-Saxon Royal Saints," *Early Medieval Europe* 9, no. 1 (2000): 55-58 and the sources quoted there.
[6] Malcom Lambert, *Christians and Pagans: The Conversion of Britain from Alban to Bede* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010). xv.
[7] Cubitt, "Sites and Sanctity," 57.
[8] For the popular nature of Oswald's story and the pagan elements in it, see Alan T. Thacker, "*Membra Disjecta*: The Division of Body and the Diffusion of the Cult," in *Oswald: Northumbrian King to European Saint*, ed. E. Cambridge and C. Stancliffe (Stamford: 1995), 97-107. See also C. Tolley, "Oswald's Tree," in *Pagans and Christians: The Interplay Between Christian Latin and Traditional Germanic Cultures in Early Medieval Europe*, ed. T. Hofstra, L.A.J.R. Houwen, and A.A. MacDonald, *Germania Latina* (Groningen: E. Forsten, 1995). For the pagan aspects absorbed into Anglo-Saxon culture in general, see John D. Niles, "Pagan Survivals and Popular Belief," in *The Cambridge Companion to Old English Literature*, ed. Malcolm Godden and Michael Lapidge (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991). On saints' Lives specifically, see 134.

> continued into the Christian period and which were often absorbed into the religious practices of the ordinary laity and probably not perceived as pagan or opposed to Christian traditions. The written records of the majority of these cults incorporate evidence for the priority of lay devotion to the saints before a clerical cult was established. Many also display a strong topographical element which suggests that the cults were rooted in the local landscape and not only practised at their ecclesiastical shrines. Another distinctive aspect of these royal *vitae* is the preponderance of vengeance miracles, a type otherwise rare in Anglo-Saxon hagiography. These may have been used to validate the saint's authority but a number show high status persons receiving punishment from the saint and may be indicative of ordinary lay devotion.[9]

In the model of popular piety here implied, these saints "were the subject of popular discussion[,] and . . . storytelling may have been an important element in their cult for the ordinary devotee."[10] The narrative pattern for which Cubitt argues demonstrates then the degree to which oral tales came to undergird Anglo-Saxon hagiography, and in this respect her conclusions resonate with Elissa R. Henken's on the secular origin of biographical patterns in the Lives and folklore of Welsh saints:

> The Welsh saints have less in common with the martyred saints of Europe than with the mythological and secular heroes of their own land. Moreover, while the

[9] Cubitt, "Sites and Sanctity," 57-58. In a letter dated October 20, 2011, Tristan Gray Hulse has pointed out to me that Cubitt's argument that elements in these hagiographies derive from oral tales fails to consider all the possible evidence and that it might, therefore, be accepted only with caution. For example, Cubitt discusses at length the popular and oral background to the cult and legend of Kenhelm, but she does not consider what could be a particularly revealing detail of his story. Instead of carrying his severed head about in the fashion most common for decapitated martyrs, Kenhelm merely catches his head in what Rosalind Love calls a "static cephalophoria," that is, an episode in which a head is caught by not carried anywhere. According to Gray Hulse, this motif in Kenhelm's *vita* seems to derive from the *passio* of Justus of Beauvais, one of the only, if not the only place in which it occurs outside the life of Kenhelm. The fact that Justus's *passio* was well known in England by the time that Kenhelm's *vita* was composed *might* argue against the latter's static cephalophoria having derived from oral tradition. On the other hand, of course, one could counter that an origin for this motif in widespread oral tradition could equally well explain its presence in Justus's *passio*. For a discussion of Kenhelm's Life, see Rosalind C. Love, *Three Eleventh-Century Anglo-Latin Saints' Lives* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996). lxxxviii-cxxxix. For an edition and translation with detailed commentary, see 49-89. Supplementary material is on 123-34. On static cephalophoria, see 60-61. On the *passio* of St. Justus, see Maurice Coens, "Aux origines de la céphalophorie: Un fragment retrouvé d'une ancienne Passion de S. Just, martyr de Beauvais," *Analecta Bollandiana* 74 (1956). Admitting Gray Hulse's caveat, I still accept the general thesis of Cubitt's article.

[10] Cubitt, "Sites and Sanctity," 83.

> biographical pattern differs for the men and the women saints, in each case it parallels the patterns of their secular counterparts.[11]

In Welsh hagiography, a space "where native cultural values greatly overshadowed church traditions," Henken has found that the Lives of male saints closely follow the outlines of hero stories from secular myth and legend, albeit modified to meld with the religious nature of the saint.[12] At the same time, the female saints of Wales appear in a more domestic light, one that reflects the roles accepted for women in medieval Welsh society. For example, while in Welsh hagiography the righteousness of male saints is regularly foretold and acknowledged before their births, female Welsh saints are generally not identified as holy until they are confronted in some way by male sexuality, a force from which they must flee or must in some way overcome or avoid.[13] While not concerned with the secular patterning of saints' legends, Julia Smith has revealed the "interdependence of written texts and oral traditions in the cults of Breton saints," and, thereby, has challenged "assumptions about the antagonism between written and oral

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[11] Elissa R. Henken, *The Welsh Saints: A Study in Patterned Lives* (Woodbridge: D.S. Brewer, 1991). 1. Henken's focus is on hagiography as the written reflex of oral and folkloric tradition. She notes seven stages of development for the male saint: 1. conception and birth; 2. childhood and education; 3. the performance of an initial miracle demonstrating spiritual maturity; 4. the saint's first travels through the world founding churches and gathering disciples; 5. the saint's conflict with and victory over secular powers; 6. the saint's ruling over a territory with the advantages and privileges won from the secular authorities previously overcome; 7. death. For further discussion of the influence of popular stories on Welsh hagiography, see Kenneth H. Jackson, *The International Popular Tale and Early Welsh Tradition* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1961). 25-27; and J. MacQueen, "Epic Elements in Early Welsh and Scottish Hagiography," in *The Heroic Process: Form, Function, and Fantasy in Folk Epic*, ed. B. Almqvist, S. Ó Catháin, and P. Ó Héalaí (Dun Laoghaire: Glendale Press, 1987).

[12] Henken, *The Welsh Saints: A Study in Patterned Lives*: 12-13.

[13] Ibid., 7. In the anonymous Life, Wenefred is said to have desired a holy existence since childhood, that is, before being taken officially under Beuno's tutelage and subsequently facing the lustful and irrascible Caradog. Her first speech occurs, however, only in the scene of the confrontation with the prince. By contrast, in Robert's version of the story, it is her father's decision to place her under Beuno's guidance that sparks Wenefred's later resolve to become a nun, and her first direct speech occurs when she voices to Beuno her intention to take the veil, something that occurs before Caradog's arrival. She does not actually become a nun in Robert's version until after her resurrection. *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*. For Wenefred's early desire for a holy existence in the anonymous Life, see 97. For her first direct speech in that same text, see 99. For Tyfid's decision to put Wenefred under Beuno's tutelage in Robert's version, see 29. For her first direct speech there, see 31.

manifestations of Christian beliefs."[14] The recognition that oral traditions both preceded and influenced written hagiographical texts in the medieval world is central to the examination of Gwenfrewy's legend offered in this chapter.[15]

As noted above, Winward has argued that the *Vita S. Wenefrede* and Robert's *Vita et translatio* both draw in part on a Latin Life of Beuno that, according to A.W. Wade-Evans, survives today only in a fourteenth-century Welsh paraphrase, *Hystoria o Uuched Beuno* (*History of the Life of Beuno*), preserved in Oxford, Jesus College MS 2, a manuscript also known as *Llyvyr Agkyr Llandewivrevi* (*Book of the Anchorite of Llanddewibrefi*).[16] The *Hystoria* contains the episode in which Beuno resurrects Gwenfrewy, but this is only one part of the longer narrative of Beuno's life. While the *Vita S. Beunoi* may have included more information on Gwenfrewy than the *Hystoria* that is based upon this lost Latin text, Robert and the anonymous author could still have been obliged, if they drew on the *Vita S. Beunoi*, to seek material from other sources to flesh out their accounts of Gwenfrewy's story. That Robert's *Vita et translatio* and the *Vita S. Wenefrede* do indeed share a common written source is suggested by verbal parallels

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[14] Julia M. H. Smith, "Oral and Written: Saints, Miracles and Relics in Brittany, *c*. 850-1250," *Speculum* 65 (1990): 311. She mentions well cults at 323, 329, and 335.

[15] Underscoring the general reliance of hagiography on anecdote, praise, and persuasion, as well as its connections to the collective experiences of liturgy and group prayer, Evelyn Birge Vitz maintains that hagiographical narrative is not just "a fusion of oral and written traditions," but a fusion of "oral and written mentalities." Evelyn Birge Vitz, "From the Oral to the Written in Medieval and Renaissance Saints' Lives," in *Images of Sainthood in Medieval Europe*, ed. Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski and Timea Szell (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), 97. On the existence of Wenefred's cult before her twelfth-century *vitae* were written, see Winward, "Lives of St Wenefred," 93-94 and the sources cited there.

[16] Winward, "Lives of St Wenefred." The Welsh text of *Hystoria o Uuched Beuno* is printed in Wade-Evans, *VSBG*: 16-22. For the episodes involving Gwenfrewy, see §§11-13. For the notion that this Welsh text is an abbreviation of a longer one in Latin, see xix. For an English translation of the *Hystoria*, see A.W. Wade-Evans, "Beuno Sant," *Archaeologia Cambrensis* 85 (1930): 315-41. A new English translation is included in A.W. Wade-Evans, *Vitae Sanctorum Britanniae et Genealogiae*, ed. Scott Lloyd, Classic Texts in Medieval Welsh Studies, vol. 1 (Welsh Academic Press, 2010).

between the description of the saint's fountain in both these Lives.[17] Given what she identifies as verbal parallels between the anonymous Life and the *Vita S. Cadoci*, Winward also suggests a connection between those two texts, perhaps with lost *Vita S. Beunoi* as the link between them.[18] Moreover, and as Winward notes, Robert himself hints at the existence of a Life of Beuno when recounting that saint's death after many years of living as a hermit near the sea:

> De cujus vita vel obitu, et quæ juvenis egerit, vel quæ post mortem mirabilia fecerit, habentur adhuc in reverenti memoria monumenta, illius vitæ modum et mores designantia. Hoc quoque præcipuum et memoriale de eo prædicatur, quod multo plura miracula mortuus faciat quam vivens.[19]
>
> (Records indicating the manner of [Beuno's] life and his ways, records concerning his life or his passing, and what he did as a youth, or what miracles he performed after his death, are still kept in respectful memory. This outstanding memorial is also proclaimed about him, that after death he performed many more miracles than while living.)[20]

Robert's specific mention here of a "memorial" (*memoriale*) that is "proclaimed" (*prædicatur*) might also, of course, suggest sources for Beuno's story in oral tradition. Accepting, though, a lost *Vita S. Beunoi* as the origin for some of the narrative in both of Wenefred's *vitae*, it remains to identify those portions of Robert's account that did not come from a written text.

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[17] See Winward, "Lives of St Wenefred," 92. For the episodes shared between the *Vita S. Wenefrede*, Robert's *Vita et Translatio*, and the *Hystoria o Uuched Beuno*, see 121-22.

[18] For verbal parallels between the anonymous Life of Wenefred and Lifris of Llancarfan's *Vita S. Cadoci* (*ca*. 1090) which could indicate a connection between these two Lives, see 113-14. See also pages 142-44 below. An edition and translation of *Vita S. Cadoci* is printed in Wade-Evans, *VSBG*: 24-141. On the composite structure of this Life of Cadog, see Hywel D. Emanuel, "An Analysis of the Composition of the *Vita Cadoci*," *National Library of Wales Journal* 7, no. 3 (1952).

[19] De Smedt, *AASS, t.I. Nov.*: 718.

[20] *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 50. For Winward's discussion of this passage as evidence for the existence of a *Vita S. Beunoi*, see Winward, "Lives of St Wenefred," 121.

We know that, in part, Robert drew on oral traditions in his search for information about Gwenfrewy, for he says as much in his prologue to Gwarin.[21] Here he offers not only clues about the nature of his source material, but also his thoughts on the validity and usefulness of that material. Robert emphasizes that he has sent the Life of Wenefred "arranged in order" ("digestam") and claims to have gathered his information about the maiden "partim per schedulas in ecclesiis patriæ in qua deguisse dignoscitur" ("partly through documents in the churches of the country in which she is known to have lived")

[21] In general terms, the origin of much of Robert's account in local oral tradition is also revealed by his frequent references to the knowledge or practices of the inhabitants of the region around Wenefred's spring. For example, he notes what the inhabitants of Holywell have to say regarding the fate of Caradog's body: "multis asseverantibus tellure dehiscente absorptum fuisse et cum spiritu suo in barathro demersum" ("many people affirmed that it had been swallowed up by the gaping earth and had sunk with his soul into the abyss"). He also claims that it is "Famosum satis atque patriam illam incolentibus notissimum est, fontem illum adhuc pristino more durare, et lapides, ut prædiximus, cruentatos in illo inveniri" ("very well known to the inhabitants of that country that the spring still continues in the original way, and the stones in it, as we said before, are found to be stained with blood"). Similarly, when referring to St. Deiferus's prayer that anyone who bathed in his spring would be healed of illness, Robert observes that "quod ita factum esse plerique ibidem sanitatem adepti contestati sunt" ("Many people who obtained their health there have asserted that this was done"). See De Smedt, *AASS, t.I. Nov.*: 713, 714, and 719; *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 37, 39, and 52. Another such reference occurs in the sequence where Robert describes the stone in the fountain steam. We are told that it "usque hodie in rivo fontis manet, et lapis sancti Beunoi ab incolis appellatur" ("even today remains in the stream of the spring and is called 'Saint Beuno's stone' by the inhabitants of the place"). De Smedt, *AASS, t.I. Nov.*: 715; *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 42. Robert does not give an actual Welsh name for this stone, but in later Welsh tradition it is called *Maen Beuno*. By contrast, the anonymous Life does not record the name of the stone at all, but its appended miracle dossier refers to is as "saxum Beunoi." Wade-Evans, *VSBG*: 298. If the above mentioned Welsh form was in use at Holywell in the 1130s, Robert may not have felt any particular need to record it since he may not even have recognized it as a proper name—*Maen Beuno*, just like *lapis sancti Beunoi*, simply means "Beuno's Stone." Something similar could be said of the Latin name that Robert gives for the Holywell site before Wenefred's decollation and resurrection. Robert's *Sicca Vallis* ("dry valley" or "dry vale") has, essentially, a meaning identical to Welsh *Sechnant* (ModW *sych nant*, "dry river" or "dry glen") which is the name given for the site in the anonymous Life. For Robert's *Sicca Vallis*, see De Smedt, *AASS, t.I. Nov.*: 714. Pepin translates this name as "Dry Vale," *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 39. For the *Sechnant* of the anonymous Life, see De Smedt, *AASS, t.I. Nov.*: 702. Feiss leaves the term untranslated. *Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru*, 2006, s.vv. "nant," "sych." While the example of Beuno's stone is inconclusive, we can be sure that Robert knew Welsh names for significant elements in the legend and the landscape—and, by extension, that he had close contact with local traditions—from the correspondence of meaning between *Sicca Vallis* and *Sechnant*, from his explanation of the Latin meaning of Welsh *Fennan* ("fountain") when discussing what the inhabitants call the saint's spring, as well as from his comments on the origin and meaning of Wenefred's Welsh name, for which see ibid., 714; *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 38-39. A stone reputed to be *Maen Beuno* still resides at Holywell, permanently attached to the bottom of the bathing pool filled by the saint's fountain. The Protestants of Holywell sought to remove this stone ("a 'superstitious relic'") during repairs at the well carried out over Good Friday, 1859, but the local Catholics protested, and ultimately the stone remained. "Repairs &c. of St. Winefred's Well," *Flintshire Observer* Friday, April 29, 1859. I am grateful to Tristan Gray Hulse for providing me with a copy of this article.

and partly "partim quorumdam sacerdotum relationibus . . . quos et antiquitas veneranda commendabat et quorum verbis fidem adhibere ipse religionis habitus compellebat" ("from the reports of certain priests whom venerable antiquity commended and whose words their habit of religious life compelled us to trust").[22] The documents here referenced are likely the *legendaria* of the churches at Basingwerk and Gwytherin, and the "certain priests" are probably the clergy stationed in these places.[23] Robert also announces his reasons for writing—fear of God if he failed to declare Wenefred's power, his love of the maiden herself and his desire that she be venerated widely, and the devotion his monastic brothers have for him—but he also indicates that he has deliberately left details out:

> Ceterum quod de itinere illius ad Romam penitus silui, consultus egi, sicut et nonnulla plurimorum ore trita funditus omisi, quia nec ea in libris inveni nec qui illa allegatione sua prædicabant æstimatione hominum digni erant quorum sermonibus fidem adhiberem.[24]
>
> (For the rest, in that I have been completely silent about her journey to Rome, just as also I have entirely omitted some familiar stories in the mouths of many people—I have done this advisedly, because I did not find these in books nor were those who proclaimed them by their own assertions worthy in the estimation of men whose words I would trust.)[25]

He goes on to assert that he is satisfied to present "omni ambiguo remoto conversationis illius series simplici sermone" ("the story of her manner of life . . . in simple language, with all ambiguity removed").[26] He then notes further omissions and the reasons for them:

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[22] De Smedt, *AASS, t.I. Nov.*: 708; *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 26.
[23] S. Baring-Gould and J. Fisher, *The Lives of the British Saints*, vol. 3 (London: Charles J. Clark, 1911). 186.
[24] De Smedt, *AASS, t.I. Nov.*: 708.
[25] *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 26.
[26] De Smedt, *AASS, t.I. Nov.*: 709; *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*.

> Ultro tamen quædam intermisi veridicorum assertione contestata, ne nimius in verbis invenirer et superfluitate aliqua redarguerer, sciens hæc ad sacratissimæ hujus virginis vitam dignoscendam sufficere posse, simulque credens ejus opitulatione tuæque precis astipulatione me a Deo mercedem laboris mei adepturum.[27]
>
> (Moreover, certain things that were challenged by men who speak truly I have left out lest I be found excessive in words and be found guilty of some superfluity, knowing that these words can suffice for discerning the life of this most holy maiden, and likewise believing that with her assistance and the assent of your prayer I shall obtain from God the reward of my labour.)[28]

A significant point to underline initially is Robert's statement that he has arranged Wenefred's legend "in order" ("digestam . . . vitam"). Coupled with the specific mention of details excluded from his final version, the implication is that he has drawn on and combined a number of disparate episodes, ones not necessarily linked clearly to one another in a linear, chronological fashion. According to Walter J. Ong, loose, episodic structure is characteristic of oral epic, and perhaps of any body of stories concerning a single hero or figure that are circulated by word of mouth.[29] It is, by contrast, the habit of the literate mind to construct connected narrative in a climactic linear order, and Robert's literary pretensions are abundantly clear from his ornate and self-conscious style.[30] From the outset then, we are made aware that Robert's text is a carefully constructed edifice,

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[27] De Smedt, *AASS, t.I. Nov.*: 709.
[28] *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 26.
[29] Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (London: Routledge, 2002). See especially chapter six, "Oral Memory, the Story Line, and Characterization."
[30] One might compare Elias Lönnrot's *Kalevala*, a coherent work of epic poetry compiled in writing in the nineteenth-century from disparate elements of Finnish and Karelian oral mythology. Elias Lönnrot, *The Kalevala: An Epic Poem after Oral Tradition*, trans. Keith Bosley, Oxford World's Classics (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999). In an Anglo-Saxon context, note Catherine Cubitt's observations that the *Vita et miracula sancti Kenelmi* "is a catena of traditional stories which must owe more to the 'songs' to which the author refers [in his introduction] and to oral stories than to the written norms of hagiography displayed, for instance, in the *vitae* of the Benedictine reformers." Cubitt, "Sites and Sanctity," 69. Commenting on the appearance of every major element from Kenhelm's *vita* in Stith Thompson's compendious index of folk motifs, Cubitt argues that the saint's story "owes more to oral and local tales than to written hagiography" and that it represents "a fusion between learned and popular" traditions. Ibid., 71. See, however, the caveat in note 9 above.

one that combines both oral and documentary sources dealing with the same saint but not necessarily agreeing on particular details. Cubitt has noted the ways in which Bede's prose Life of Cuthbert, with its deliberate, narrativizing focus on cause and effect, overwrote Cuthbert's anonymous Life and created an officially sanctioned meaning for his memory that was acceptable to the Lindisfarne community. In her examination, Cubitt has declared that "Narrative is essentially an artifice, a literary device, the function of which is to create the illusion of actuality and to endow fragmented and disconnected events with meaning."[31] A text compiled from oral and written sources but without reference to Wenefred's anonymous Life, Robert's *Vita et translatio* is, similar to Bede's Life of Cuthbert, an attempt to create meaning for the saint's cult and memory in a new cultural and religious milieu, i.e., his Benedictine abbey at Shrewsbury.[32] Robert's reliance upon the words of "certain priests" and "men who speak truly" to support the stories that he has gathered indicates his concern to validate Wenefred's legend for his Norman brethren, and it underscores his own bias toward institutional and assumedly literate authority, something not surprising in a man of the church whose "deeply

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[31] Catherine Cubitt, "Memory and Narrative in the Cult of Early Anglo-Saxon Saints," in *The Uses of the Past in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Yitzhak Hen and Matthew Innes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 47. In her approach to Bede's deliberate narrativizing of Cuthbert's legend, Cubitt draws on the work of Hayden White, according to whom "narrative is not merely a neutral discursive form that may or may not be used to represent real events in their aspect as developmental processes but rather entails ontological and epistemic choices within distinct ideological and even specifically political implications." Hayden White, *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (London and Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987). ix.

[32] On the ways in which *translatio* narrative explain and make acceptable the presence of a saint's relics in a new location, see Patrick J. Geary, *Furta Sacra: Thefts of Relics in the Central Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978). 14. On the scepticism toward Anglo-Saxon saints supposedly held by the Normans, see Susan J. Ridyard, "*Condigna Veneratio*: Post-Conquest Attitudes to Anglo-Saxon Saints," *Anglo-Norman Studies* 9 (1987); and Susan J. Ridyard, *The Royal Saints of Anglo-Saxon England: A Study of West Saxon and East Anglian Cults* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

interiorized literacy" is so obvious.[33] For someone like Robert, written documentation would best serve to demonstrate the truth of a given matter, but as R.R. Davies has it, "until at least the thirteenth century," native Wales was "a largely preliterate society," in which, as Julia Smith describes, "oral or visual testimony and collective memory formed the essence of proof."[34] There seems then no reason to doubt that oral tradition played a large part in the perpetuation of Gwenfrewy's legend well prior to Robert's arrival in northeast Wales. And so, while he remains a man whose ultimate faith lies in the written word, Robert's text demonstrates his necessary comfort with—if not the mere necessity of—incorporating non-written sources into his version of the saint's Life.

Given Robert's direct mention of Wenefred's Roman pilgrimage in his prologue alongside other "plurimorum ore trita" ("familiar stories in the mouths of many people") that he has chosen to omit, that episode is the logical point from which to begin a consideration of Robert's non-written sources. Recorded almost in passing in the *Vita S. Wenefrede*—our only source for any details of the story—the Roman journey occurs at some point after Beuno's departure from Holywell:

> Eo tempore, ut memorant, Romam petiit, visitandi causa sanctorum apostolorum loca, ut ibi in præsentia reliquiarum sanctorum se totam Deo devote offerret. Quo peracto, ad desertum pristinum repedavit.[35]
>
> (People remember that once she set out for Rome in order to visit the places of the holy apostles and there to offer herself devoutly and completely to God in the presence of the relics of the saints. When the trip was over, she returned to her former desert.)[36]

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[33] The term is Ong's; it denotes an advanced point in the transition from magical or "prelogical" thought to more rational or domesticated modes of information processing. Cf. for example, Ong, *Orality and Literacy*: 28-29.
[34] R.R. Davies, "The Administration of Law in Medieval Wales: The Role of the *ynad cwmwd* (*judex patriae*)," in *Lawyers and Laymen: Studies in the History of Law Presented to Professor Dafydd Jenkins on His Seventy-Fifth Birthday, Gŵyl Ddewi 1986*, ed. T.M. Charles-Edwards, Morfydd E. Owen, and D.B. Walters (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1986), 258; and Smith, "Oral and Written," 342.
[35] De Smedt, *AASS, t.I. Nov.*: 704.
[36] *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 102.

Following her return to Holywell we find in the anonymous Life a short account of the "Synod of Wenefredus," at which all of the saints of Britain were said to be in attendance.[37] This synod decrees that saints, heretofore dwelling individually and according to their own wills, ought now to gather under appointed leaders in places conducive to holy living, and Wenefred is duly set to rule over a community of eleven virgins at Gwytherin where she remains until her death, thereby rationalizing the existence of two cult sites associated with the same saint.[38] Winward suggests that "the unconvincing and sketchy reports of Wenefred's trip to Rome and her attendance at a synod . . . smack of the author imposing typical credentials to sanctity and importance upon her."[39] Specifically noting that *Hystoria o Uuched Beuno* contains no reference to a Roman journey made by either Beuno or by Gwenfrewy, Winward still finds it "possible that the lost [*Vita S. Beunoi*] contained an episode in which Beuno traveled to Rome (since this was a hagiographical commonplace) which the author of the *Vita S. Wenefrede* simply lifted and transferred to Wenefred's *vita*."[40] Roman pilgrimages are common in the Lives of Welsh saints and were also common in the lives of the Welsh laity, but Winward suggests that the *Vita S. Cadoci* may have been the source of the Roman episode in the anonymous Life, if not through the medium of the lost *Vita S. Beunoi* then perhaps directly.[41] As evidence she underscores verbal parallels between the description

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[37] In his translation, Feiss suggests that "Wenefredus" might be an error, and that the text should be emended to mean Whitby. Ibid. See 102 and 113n2.
[38] T.M. Charles-Edwards, "Gwenfrewi (*fl. c.*650)," in *The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. Lawrence Goldman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004-).
[39] Winward, "Lives of St Wenefred," 122.
[40] Ibid., 124.
[41] Ibid. For mention of Cadog's various trips to Rome, see §§14, 26, 27, and 35 in *Vita S. Cadoci* in Wade-Evans, *VSBG*. On the commonplace nature of Roman pilgrimages in the Lives of Welsh Saints, see Henken, *The Welsh Saints: A Study in Patterned Lives*: 141. For the commonplace nature of pilgrimages

of a trip to Rome made by Cadog and the description in the anonymous Life of Wenefred's journey to the Holy City:[42]

> **Life of Cadog:** In illo tempore, cum uenerande memorie Cadocus Romam adisset, et omnia sanctorum loca per Italiam atque Galliam constituta peragrasset, gratia uisendi reliquias sanctorum. . .[43]
>
> (In that time, when Cadog of venerable memory approached Rome, and had traveled through Italy and Gaul to all of the places established by the saints, for the sake of visiting the relics of the saints. . .)[44]
>
> **Anonymous Life:** Eo tempore, ut memorant, Romam petiit, visitandi causa sanctorum apostolorum loca, ut ibi in præsentia reliquiarum sanctorum se totam Deo devote offerret. Quo peracto, ad desertum pristinum repedavit.[45]
>
> (People remember that once she set out for Rome in order to visit the places of the holy apostles and there to offer herself devoutly and completely to God in the presence of the relics of the saints. When the trip was over, she returned to her former desert.)[46]

The verbal echoes identified here are faint, but they might arguably suggest a connection between the anonymous Life and the *Vita S. Cadoci* with, as mentioned above, the *Vita S. Beunoi* perhaps serving as an intermediary. However, although Winward's analysis is careful, another explanation for knowledge of the Roman journey on the part of the anonymous author and Robert may be offered. On the evidence of Robert's prologue, for instance, there is certainly no reason to assume that Gwenfrewy's journey to Rome was to be found verbatim in the Latin Life of Beuno—indeed, if we take Robert at his word then it most certainly was not. As noted, Robert declines to include the Roman pilgrimage in his account of Wenefred's Life specifically because he was not able to find

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made by the Welsh laity to Rome and other sites of international Christian significance from at least the thirteenth century onwards, see R.R. Davies, *Conquest, Coexistence, and Change: Wales, 1063-1415* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987). 206.

[42] Winward, "Lives of St Wenefred," 114.

[43] Wade-Evans, *VSBG*: 96.

[44] Translation is my own.

[45] De Smedt, *AASS, t.I. Nov.*: 704.

[46] *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 102.

it recorded in a book (*quia nec ea in libris inveni*), nor was he able to trust those who told such a story about the saint because, somewhat circuitously, they were not worthy of trust in the opinions of men who were (*nec qui illa allegatione sua prædicabant æstimatione hominum digni erant quorum sermonibus fidem adhiberem*).[47] While again oral stories could be of some value, primarily if they came from established men of the church, written documents were the ultimate source of authority to Robert's way of thinking. Therefore, if he was working in part from a written Latin source that included the Roman episode, we would expect him to have included that episode in his own version of the legend—he most certainly would not have categorized it with the "familiar stories in the mouths of many people" that he cut from his finished account. Robert includes some oral stories while excluding others.

Winward's suggestion that the story of Wenefred's Roman pilgrimage could have been "lifted" from an episode in the *Vita S. Beunoi* in which Beuno himself traveled to Rome remains a possibility. After all, Robert specifically notes that he did not find the story of Gwenfrewy's Roman pilgrimage in writing—but that does not mean that he did not see the story of a similar journey made by Beuno. The fact that *Hystoria o Uuched Beuno* fails to mention any pilgrimage to Rome made by Beuno is, however, one objection to the idea that the *Vita S. Beunoi* contained any such episode, and this objection is strengthened by comparison with other texts in the Book of the Anchorite.[48] Beuno's *Buchedd* was transcribed and, presumably, abbreviated from its Latin source by

[47] Robert's declaration that he was unable to find the Roman pilgrimage "*in libris*" has traditionally been cited as evidence that he did not know the *Vita S. Wenefrede*. Baring-Gould and Fisher, *LBS*, 3: 186.
[48] It should, of course, be noted that the anchorite introduces his account of Beuno's final days with the statement that "Llawer o betheu ereill a beidyassam ni ac wynt ac adawssom heb y dywedut rac barnnv y llyuyr hwnn yn angkryno" ("Many other things there are we desist from and leave without mention, lest this book be judged inconcise"). Wade-Evans, *VSBG*: 21; Wade-Evans, "Beuno Sant," 321.

one individual, the Anchorite of Llanddewibrefi, in 1346. This Welsh Life of Beuno survives alongside a Welsh Life of David (*Buchedd Dewi*), which is the abbreviation of a Latin text, Rhygyfarch's *Vita S. Davidis*.[49] According to chapters forty-four through forty-eight of Rhygyfarch's detailed account, David made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem with Ss. Eliud (Welsh, *Teilo*) and Paternus (Welsh, *Padarn*), on which excursion David was consecrated archbishop, and the Welsh abbreviation in the Book of the Anchorite preserves a brief reference to this journey.[50] In the *Buchedd Dewi*, however, the location of the consecration is changed to Rome, and no further details are given, including whether or not David had any companions on his trip. Still, if the Anchorite knew and retained, albeit in altered form, a story of David's journey to a holy place of great importance, why would he have omitted entirely a similar tale that he found in the Latin account of Beuno's life? Perhaps in compiling his work in a region of Wales closely associated with and loyal to David, the Anchorite may have felt obliged to diminish the status of a rival saint from North Wales by neglecting to preserve the story of his trip to Rome.[51] Be that as it may, Robert's clear statement that he did not find such a story in writing, coupled with the fact that the story is missing entirely from *Hystoria o Uuched Beuno*, strongly suggests that the *Vita S. Beunoi* never included a Roman episode at all. Logically then, this Latin Life of Beuno also cannot have been the source of the

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[49] For an introduction to and a translation of the Welsh Life of David, see Elissa R. Henken, "The *Life of St. David* Set Down by an Anchorite at Llanddewibrefi," in *Medieval Hagiography: An Anthology*, ed. Thomas Head (New York: Garland, 2000). For the mention of David's trip to Rome, see 756. For the same in the Welsh text of the Life, see D. Simon Evans, *The Welsh Life of St. David* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1988). 9.

[50] J. R. Davies and Richard Sharpe, "Rhygyfarch's *Life of St David*," in *St. David of Wales: Cult, Church and Nation*, ed. J. Wyn Evans and Jonathan M. Wooding (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2007), 138-41.

[51] On the other hand, including Beuno at all might argue against the notion that the Anchorite was somehow seeking to diminish his status. In fact it has been suggested that the Book of the Anchorite was a nationalistic endeavor meant to celebrate the two most important saints of North and South Wales in an era of national difficulty. Elissa R. Henken, pers. comm.

pilgrimage story in the *Vita S. Wenefrede*, but the echoes from the *Vita S. Cadoci* that Winward identifies in the anonymous Life suggest that Cadog's Life somehow influenced the anonymous author's description of Wenefred's Roman journey. Because the story does appear in the anonymous Life, Robert's omission of the Roman episode is generally taken as evidence that he never saw the *Vita S. Wenefrede*. If, however, Robert did not know the anonymous Life, and if the *Vita S. Beunoi*—which he does seem to have known—did not include Gwenfrewy's trip to Rome, how then did Robert come to learn of it?

The possibility remains that, during the twelfth century, the tale of Gwenfrewy's journey to Rome was an oral legend current at Holywell, and perhaps at Gwytherin, one that was being circulated before either of her Latin *vitae* were composed.[52] The fact that Robert feels compelled to mention the Roman journey at all, and especially in combination with other "familiar stories in the mouths of many people" indicates the strength of circulation that this and other undocumented tales must have had at Gwenfrewy's cult sites in Wales. Evidence for this assertion is to be found in the language of the *Vita S. Wenefrede* itself. The anonymous author specifically relates that people "remember" (*memorant*) Wenefred's trip to the Holy City, and while *memorare* can be taken to mean the act of remembering in writing, it more often refers to the act of recalling in speech.[53] A common motif of written Cambro-Latin hagiography in general,

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[52] Winward makes a similar claim regarding another of Wenefred's journeys, one that is only recorded in Robert's version of the legend: "It seems plausible to posit the lost *vita* of Beuno as [Robert's] main written source, and that he supplemented this with information derived from oral report, such as the description of Wenefred's journey to Gwytherin, which is not found in either *Hystoria o Uuched Beuno* or the *Vita S. Wenefrede*." (121). For more on this particular point, see page 164ff. below.

[53] *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources*, comp. R.E. Latham (London: Oxford University Press, 1975), s.v. "memorare." The primary and secondary definitions given for "memorare" here are "to mention" and "to narrate, relate, tell," while only the tertiary definition is "to note, record." The majority of subsequent definitions relate to the act of recollecting with or retaining in the mind.

the idea of a Welsh saint's journey to Rome was likely to have been standard fare in popular, oral stories about saints as well, and even the author of the anonymous Life may have first encountered such a tale involving Gwenfrewy through oral traditions preserved at Holywell. His recollection of a similar episode in the Life of Cadog would, in this scenario, simply have colored his own wording of the pilgrimage story when he came to write it into Wenefred's Life, as opposed to the Life of Cadog supplying both the material and the language for Wenefred's Roman pilgrimage as Winward suggests.[54]

Partly on the evidence of the confused legend of the saint's name given in the *Vita S. Wenefrede*, Winward concludes that the anonymous author seems to be working with Cambro-Latin materials that he does not fully understand, and she posits a Norman monk of Basingwerk as one possible author for the anonymous Life. If the thirteenth-century monks of Basingwerk are any indication of their twelfth-century forebears, this lack of comprehension is not entirely surprising: in a land dispute involving Llywelyn ap Gruffudd in 1281, one monk of Basingwerk was able to assert that he knew nothing of the laws and customs of the Welsh, and we might assume therefore that the anonymous author, if indeed he were a monk of Basingwerk as Winward argues, was similarly unfamiliar with the natives of his district and their culture.[55] The brevity of the Roman episode in the anonymous Life may be explained by the author's shallow knowledge of local, oral customs regarding Gwenfrewy. As a monk of Basingwerk, his acquiring a

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[54] Something similar may be said about the number of virgins (eleven) over whom Wenefred is said to have ruled at Gwytherin. The very brief nature of the references to Gwytherin in the anonymous Life suggest that the author knew little if anything about the place, and his assertion that eleven virgins dwelled there with Wenefred could have been influenced by the widely known story of Ursula and the eleven thousand virgins. On the similarity between Wenefred's story and that of Ursula, see T.M. Charles-Edwards, trans., *Two Mediaeval Welsh Poems* (Llandysul: Gwasg Gomer, 1971). [11].

[55] Arthur Jones, "Basingwerk Abbey," in *Historical Essays in Honour of James Tait*, ed. J.G. Edwards, V.H. Galbraith, and E.F. Jacob (Manchester: 1933), 174; David Williams, "Basingwerk Abbey," *Cîteaux* 32 (1981): 91.

general awareness of the pilgrimage story is plausible. However, if he knew the story only in outline from common report and did not care to elaborate from his own imagination, he would have been obliged either to model his rendition of the story on a similar one (i.e., the one from the Life of Cadog) or else to keep it very short. If one accepts the verbal parallels that Winward identifies between the *Vita S. Cadoci* and the *Vita S. Wenefrede* in their descriptions of Roman journeys (by no means an unarguable proposition), the anonymous author seems to have done both—he borrowed the language for the pilgrimage story in his Life of Wenefred from that in the Life of Cadog and, because he had few details to hand with which to develop the episode, he kept it very brief.

Significant portions of Robert's version of Wenefred's Life, including the story of the Roman pilgrimage, seem to have a basis in oral traditions current in Holywell or Gwytherin in the late 1130s. The account of Wenefred's yearly gift to Beuno after his departure for the coast is, in both *vitae*, one of the episodes that likely originated as an oral tale. In the version of the story found in the anonymous Life, Beuno announces immediately after Wenefred's resurrection that he must leave Holywell and requests at the same time that the maiden send him a gift "circa hunc diem unoquoque anno" ("each year about this time").[56] The specific gift that he desires is a cloak (*casula*) of her own design (*de vestro opere proprio*), but Wenefred is uncertain how she will deliver the item, since she does not know where Beuno will be:

> "Domine mi," inquit, "hoc tibi impendere meo non extat molestum cordi**,** sed permaxima mihi videtur difficultas, id qualiter ad te pervenerit: ignoro enim quo habitaveris." Cui sanctus: "De hoc tibi absit sollicitudo. Saxum extat in medio

[56] De Smedt, *AASS, t.I. Nov.*: 703; *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 101.

> fontis rivo, supra quod meas consuevi ruminare preces**.** Superpone huic in constituto termino casulam: et si mihi advenerit, adveniat."[57]
>
> ("My Lord," she said, "in my heart there is no resistance to granting you this, but to me it seems that [it] will be very difficult for it to reach you. I don't know where you are going to live." The saint said to her, "Do not worry about that. A stone stands in the middle of the fountain's flow. On it I have been accustomed to repeat my prayers. Put your cloak on it as prearranged. Then let it come to me, if it will.")[58]

The following year, on the vigil of John the Baptist (June 23), the day preceding the anniversary of her martyrdom and return to life as recorded in the *Vita S. Wenefrede*, the maiden sends the cloak according to Beuno's instructions by placing it atop the stone: "saxum vero ipsam interius et exterius siccam cum fontis fluctibus labans, usque in mare deferebat, et sic per mare ad portum Sachlen usque ad Bennonum" ("The rock, submerged in the fountain's stream, carried it, dry inside and out, all the way to the sea, and through the sea to the port of Sachlen and to Beuno").[59] The author of the anonymous Life adds one further detail: Beuno's new cloaks were of such wondrous power as a result of Wenefred's holiness that, when he wore one, "nec pluvia humectari nec pilus ejus posset vento moveri" ("rain could not drench him, nor could the wind dishevel his hair"). From this miraculous fact, so we are told, Beuno earned the name "Casulam Siccus" ("dry cloak").[60]

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[57] De Smedt, *AASS, t.I. Nov.*: 703. The Bollandists use italics to indicate direct speech; in my quotations from their work I have replaced italics with roman and have inserted quotation marks as necessary.
[58] *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 101.
[59] De Smedt, *AASS, t.I. Nov.*: 703; *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 101. Assuming that the cloak went "to Beuno's chief church at Clynnog Fawr," Thomas Charles-Edwards suggests that "[Wenefred's] church at Holywell, the principal cult site of Tegeingl, was thus attached to one of the principal churches within the heartland of Gwynedd, which at the date of the [anonymous Life, i.e., *ca*. 1135] had recently conquered Tegeingl." Charles-Edwards, "Gwenfrewi (*fl. c*.650)." According to Baring-Gould and Fisher, there is a creek near Clynnog Church known as "Porth y Casul." S. Baring-Gould and J. Fisher, *The Lives of the British Saints*, vol. 1 (London: Charles J. Clark, 1907). 219. In relation to the cloak story as whole, they note a parallel in the Life of St. Senan, ibid., 220.
[60] De Smedt, *AASS, t.I. Nov.*: 703; *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 101. Robert does note the tradition that, "among the people of Wales" ("apud Walliæ homines"), Beuno was dubbed, as a result of

Predictably, Robert's version of this episode is both longer and more detailed, but the differences between his account and that in the anonymous Life imply that both authors collected the story largely from oral tradition, rather than from some written source—the fact that *Hystoria o Uuched Beuno* does not include the tale of Wenefred's annual gift to Beuno further supports this assertion. G. Hartwell Jones has suggested that control of the elements, specifically of water, in the Lives of Celtic saints derives from older traditions concerning pagan water deities, and in turn sacred waters appear often to have been linked with a reverence for severed heads in the early British Isles, a connection that has been cited as a precursor for the association of decapitated saints with holy wells.[61] Winward notes the pre-Christian resonance of the cloak episode in the

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Wenefred's annual gift, "Beuno Dry Chausuble" (*Beunous Casul Sech*/*Beunous Casula Sicca*), but he ascribes this solely to the fact that the cloak arrived each year at Beuno's dwelling without having been dampened by the water of the stream in which it was sent. Ibid., 50; De Smedt, *AASS, t.I. Nov.*: 718. The same word, *casula*, appears in both the anonymous Life and in Robert's text. In his translation of the latter, however, Pepin renders the word as "chasuble" because at the end of the sequence in which the item appears, Robert claims that Beuno "in ecclesia reposuit, tam sui ipsius quam aliorum servorum Dei usibus deinceps exhibendum" ("placed it in the church to be kept thereafter for his use as well as that of the other servants of God"). See ibid., 717; *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 20 and 49. In the Middle English *Seint Vonefrede the Holi Virgine* preserved in Bodley MS 779 and printed by William Fleetwood in 1713, the cloak is referred to as a "Chesible." See William Fleetwood, *The Life and Miracles of St. Wenefred Together with Her Litanies and Some Historical Observations Made There On*, 2nd ed. (London, 1713). 126, line 78. For discussion of the Bodleian 779 Life, see chapter 5 below. The motif of a saint's power preseving a holy object from water also appears in the Lives of David and Cadog, for which see Elissa R. Henken, *Traditions of the Welsh Saints* (Woodbridge: D.S. Brewer, 1987). 287.

[61] As Jones has it, "some of the stories relating to the saints, who took over the functions of water-spirits, are deeply tinged with magical ideas." G. Hartwell Jones, "Primitive Magic in the Lives of the Celtic Saints," *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion* (1936): 78. See also Elias Owen, "Holy Wells, or Water-Veneration," *Archaeologia Cambrensis* 46 (1891); Anne Ross, "The Human Head in Insular Pagan Celtic Religion," *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* 91 (1957-58); Anne Ross, "Severed-Heads in Wells: An Aspect of the Well Cult," *Scottish Studies* 6 (1962); Anne Ross, *Pagan Celtic Britain: Studies in Iconography and Tradition* (London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1967). 20, 104-05; for a discussion of the pagan antecedents to the imagery associated with the Holywell fountain in an anonymous, likely fifteenth-century Welsh poem, see the introduction to Charles-Edwards, *Two Mediaeval Welsh Poems*; Miranda J. Aldhouse-Green, *The Gods of the Celts* (Gloucester: A. Sutton, 1986). 31-32, 131, 155, and 218; Francis Jones, *The Holy Wells of Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1992). 21-57, see esp. pp. 36-39 and also chapter 1; Miranda J. Green, "Vessels of Death: Sacred Cauldrons in Archaeology and Myth," *The Antiquaries Journal* 78 (1998): see esp. page 67; and Winward, "Lives of St Wenefred," 109-13. Winward also comments here on the pre-Christian origin of malediction, the means by which Beuno punishes Caradog for Gwenfrewy's murder. For a discussion of the possibly pagan background to Gwenfrewy's well cult, see Catherine Hamaker, "Winefride's Well-Cult," in *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride* (Toronto: Peregrina Publishing, 2000). For the veneration of water in early British

anonymous Life, but Robert's version, markedly dissimilar to that presented in the *Vita S. Wenefrede*, has an even stronger pre-Christian flavor.[62] Besides the fact that the *casula* is crafted by Wenefred with the help of her virgins at Holywell, rather than by her hand alone, the date on which and the manner in which the item is sent are different. While the anonymous author avers that Wenefred sent the cloak on the vigil of John the Baptist, that is, on June 23, Robert specifically states that she sent it every year on the first of May:

> [I]n proximo instare perpendit diem discessionis illius, in qua scilicet ab ea ipse discesserat et munus sibi mitti præceperat. Quod autem illa sollicita sedulitate in memoriam retinens, tam sui ipsius quam virginum suarum labore casulam unam competenti textura composuit, viro Dei transmittendam. Illucescente itaque die, quo xenium illud mitti debebat, qui est kalendis maii, venit beata virgo cum pluribus aliis ad fontem, in quo præcepto viri Dei munus suum depositura erat; acceptamque casulam albo prius mantili involvit, sicque in medio fontis eam deposuit, se dicens fontis ministerio hanc beato viro Beunoo dirigere. Et ecce, mirabile dictu et nisi fideli homini minime credibile, panniculus ille, quo casula involvebatur, nullam læsionem ab aqua patiebatur nec vel minimam aquæ infusionem sentiebat; sed omnino siccus cum casula permanens, impetu decurrentis aquæ per rivum est deductus atque in magno flumine transvectus; totaque illa die, cum sequenti nocte, illud virginis munus per marinos fluctus deductum, mane ad litus illud depulsum est super quod vir sanctus habitacula sua composuerat.[63]
>
> ([S]he thought that the day of his departure was drawing near, namely, the day on which he had departed from her and commanded that a gift be sent to him. Moreover, keeping this in her memory with unceasing earnestness, by her own toil and that of her virgins, she made a chasuble of one single texture to be despatched to the man of God. And so, the day dawning on which that present was to be sent, which is the first of May, the blessed maiden came with many others to the spring in which she was to place her gift according to the command of the man of God. First she took up the chasuble and wrapped it in a white cloth and thus placed it in the middle of the spring, saying that she was directing it to the blessed man, Beuno, through the agency of the spring. And behold—a thing wondrous to say and unbelievable except to a man of faith—that small piece of

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culture in general, see Janet Bord and Colin Bord, *Sacred Waters: Holy Wells and Water Lore in Britain and Ireland* (London: Granada, 1985). See also Ronald Hutton, *The Pagan Religions of the Ancient British Isles: Their Nature and Legacy* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991).

[62] Winward, "Lives of St Wenefred," 113.

[63] De Smedt, *AASS, t.I. Nov.*: 717.

> cloth in which the chasuble was wrapped suffered no injury from the water nor did it experience even the least infusion of water, but remaining altogether dry with the chasuble, it was carried by the rush of the flowing water and conveyed on the great stream. And that whole day and the following night, that gift of the maiden was carried over the waves of the sea; in the morning it was cast upon that shore on which the holy man had built his dwellings.)[64]

Besides the somewhat magical preservation of the *casula* from the water, this scene contains ritual, and perhaps pagan elements, for Wenefred and her maidens arrive specifically at dawn and the saint appears to address the stream itself as she places her gift into its waters. The latter seems an act of oral magic, one that brings to mind the command of the elements noted above as being associated with the Welsh and Irish saints and connected with their "step[ping] into the prerogatives of the . . . Druids."[65] Although Christianized in Robert's version by the absence of its seemingly magical powers against wind and rain and by the fact that it appears to be a clerical vestment rather than a mere cloak, the gift itself could in the context of Robert's telling even be construed as the faint echo of an offering to a stream or river deity.[66] It is, however, the date on which Robert says the cloak was dispatched—that is, May 1—which renders the pagan and, perhaps, oral background of the story even more plausible, especially in combination with the date that Robert later gives for Wenefred's second death at Gwytherin—i.e., November 2,

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[64] *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 47-48.
[65] S. Baring-Gould, "The Celtic Saints," *Journal of the Royal Institution of Cornwall* 14 (1899-1900): 25.
[66] On the veneration of water as an animate entity in pre-Christian Wales and the later adaptation of holy wells to the rites of baptism, see Owen, "Holy Wells, or Water-Veneration," 8-11. Note too Gildas's remarks on the nature worship of the pre-Christian Britons: Michael Winterbottom, ed. and trans., *Gildas, The Ruin of Britain and Other Works* (London: Phillimore & Co. Ltd., 1978). 17. So far as water veneration in the cult of Gwenfrewy, Winward suggests that the miracle story recorded in the *Libellus miraculorum* of three very bright pebbles (*lapilli . . . tres limpidissimi*) which bobbed in the spring might be related to "a pre-Christian Welsh and Scots custom of using quartz charms to give water magical potency." Winward, "Lives of St Wenefred," 117. For the discovery of quartz peebles in graves excavated at Capel Maelog (Radnorshire) and Pennant Melangell (Montgomeryshire), see Nancy Edwards, "Celtic Saints and Early Medieval Archaeology," in *Local Saints and Local Churches in the Early Medieval West*, ed. Alan Thacker and Richard Sharpe (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 232-33. For an example of a grave containing quartz peebles from the islet of Illaunloughan, Co. Kerry, see ibid., 240.

both of which are important points in the folk calendar of the early British Isles. According to Robert's version of events, Wenefred asks Beuno to give her the nun's veil immediately after her return to life, a request to which the saint accedes after having consulted briefly with her parents. We are then informed that, "in brevi" ("in a short time"), the maiden rose to perfection in the knowledge and practice of her new discipline.[67] Beuno is present throughout this time, for we learn that, with Wenefred's continuing progress, "beatum virum pro nimia charitate sua admodum lætificabat" ("the blessed man [was] very glad on account of her great charity").[68] Beuno then makes ready to depart after having said his goodbyes to Wenefred's parents and after having told the saint herself that she must now, by God's command, succeed to his labors and duties. He orders Wenefred to gather other holy virgins and to remain in this place as an example for them and for others over the course of the next seven years, at which time she will be directed elsewhere by God. After detailing for Wenefred a series of three gifts divinely bestowed upon her in honor of her martyrdom, Beuno then leaves amidst general lamentation and, from the sequence in which Wenefred actually sends the *casula* to him, we know that, in Robert's account, Beuno left on May 1.

We have seen in the anonymous Life, however, that Beuno was said to depart from Holywell immediately after Wenefred's resuscitation, an event that occurred in the fourth week of June if we are to judge from Beuno's instructions in that text that the cloak be sent to him "each year about this time" and from the subsequent mention that Wenefred actually sent it on the vigil of John the Baptist (i.e., June 23).[69] Holywell tradition and late medieval calendars celebrate the martyrdom on June 22; the anonymous

[67] De Smedt, *AASS, t.I. Nov.*: 715; *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 41.
[68] De Smedt, *AASS, t.I. Nov.*: 715; *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 41.
[69] *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 101; De Smedt, *AASS, t.I. Nov.*: 703.

Life, however, gives June 24 ("VIII kalendas julii") as the date of her decollation and even conflates this date with that of Wenefred's second death at Gwytherin, which as just noted Robert gives in his account as November 2 ("quarto nonas novembris").[70] The disparity indicates the degree of separation between the two cult sites, for the anonymous author seems not to have known the tradition that Robert collected, presumably at Gwytherin, of Gwenfrewy's final death having occurred in early November and he simply uses June 24 as the date for both of her deaths. Oddly, Robert does not mention June 24 at all, but it seems unlikely that he would not have known its significance, given his apparent contact with Holywell and with Gwenfrewy's cult there.[71] If Robert did

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[70] *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 66 and 102; De Smedt, *AASS, t.I. Nov.*: 704 and 723. June 22 is the date of the saint's decollation in a number of Welsh calendars surviving from the late fifteenth century onwards. See Baring-Gould and Fisher, *LBS*, 1: 72. Beuno's feast day is April 21. Ibid., 221. See also the discussion of dates associated with Wenefred in De Smedt, *AASS, t.I. Nov.*: 696. De Smedt notes here the confusion that has attended the saint's festal days since the time of the *vitae*.

[71] It should be noted that, in the *translatio* narrative, Robert also fails to give the date on which Wenefred's relics were finally carried into Shrewsbury Abbey. In his translation of Robert's text printed in 1484, however, William Caxton inserts a brief passage introducing the *translatio* narrative where he notes the date on which Wenefred's arrival at the abbey was celebrated: "And herafter by the grace of god shalle folowe the translacion of this blessyd vyrgyne saynt Wenefrede, how by grete myracle her bones were brought to thabbay of Shrewsbury, whiche translacion is halowed the XIX day of Septembre." Carl Horstmann, "Prosalegenden I: Caxtons Ausgabe der Heilige Wenefreda," *Anglia* 3 (1880): 304. On Caxon's 1484 Life, see also M.J.C. Lowry, "Caxton, St. Winifred and the Lady Margaret Beaufort," *The Library*, 6th Series, V, no. 2 (1983); and Anne F. Sutton, "Caxton, the Cult of St. Winifred, and Shrewsbury," in *Of Mice and Men: Image, Belief and Regulation in Late Medieval England*, ed. Linda Clark, *The Fifteenth Century V* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 2005). Given Caxton's significant personal links with Shrewsbury we can take his knowledge of these dates as accurate, and it is virtually certain, therefore, that September 19 was the date on which Wenefred's relics were formally processed into Shrewsbury Abbey in 1138. Robert himself can hardly have been ignorant of the date, so he must consciously have excluded it from his text, perhaps because he felt it would have been so well known to the monks at Shrewsbury and Worcester that to recount it would have been unnecessary. Perhaps more plausible though is the suggestion that the date of the formal procession was not immediately observed as an annual celebration and was not, therefore, a date that Robert was moved to record. Regardless, Wenefred appears with twelve lessons—"S. Wenefrede V. et M. lc. xij."—in the calendar of the Worcester Antiphasser at September 19: Dom André Mocquereau, ed., *Paléographie Musicale. Les principaux manuscrits de chant* 12 (1922): 37. She also appears on the same date, as *Gwenfrewi*, in two seventeenth-century Welsh calendars, and she is entered on September 20 in a third dating to the turn of the sixteenth century. According to the first two calendars and to others of similar date, her translation occurred on November 3. See Baring-Gould and Fisher, *LBS*, 1: 74-75. Gwenfrewy is not, however, in that most important calendar of Welsh saints, that found in BL Cotton Vespasian A.xiv of *ca*. 1200: Silas M. Harris, "The Kalendar of the *Vitae Sanctorum Wallensium*," *Publications of the Historical Society of the Church in Wales* 3 (1953). That Gwenfrewy should be missing from this calendar and from the collection of Lives that it precedes is not entirely surprising, for the contents of the manuscript were likely compiled at

indeed know that June 24 was the date of Gwenfrewy's martyrdom—something he probably did not learn from the posited *Vita S. Beunoi*, for no date associated with Gwenfrewy is given in the *Hystoria o Uuched Beuno* that derives from it—then Robert's account implies that Beuno remained at Holywell for some eleven months after the decollation and resurrection, that is, from late June until the beginning of May in the following year, even though this is never explicitly stated. Coupled with the fact that the anonymous Life links Wenefred's death and resurrection with Beuno's departure from Holywell, the vagueness with which Robert situates these events in time allows for a link between them in his account as well, and perhaps suggests that, in Robert's oral sources, they even took place on the same date (i.e., May 1), albeit a year apart. Whether or not Robert meant to imply that Wenefred's resurrection and Beuno's departure both occurred on May 1, the cloak is sent on that day specifically in gratitude for Beuno's having raised Wenefred from the dead. The First of May is, therefore, a date on which Wenefred's death and rebirth are on some level memorialized in Robert's version of the legend.

The point is that a comparison of the dates given by Robert for the sending of the *casula* and for Wenefred's second death (i.e., the permanent one) reveals a curious parallel with pagan Celtic traditions.[72] The former is said to have occurred on May 1 and

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Monmouth from materials gathered at Gloucester but originating at Llanbadarn Fawr and possibly Llandaf, all of which were located far from the center of Gwenfrewy's cult. For similar reasons, no doubt, Beuno is also missing from the Vespasian calendar and collection. On the origin of the contents of the Vespasian manuscript, see Kathleen Hughes and David N. Dumville, *Celtic Britain in the Early Middle Ages: Studies in Scottish and Welsh Sources* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 1980). 53-66. See also Wade-Evans, *VSBG*: viii-x. Gwenfrewy does, however, have an entry for November 3 in the calendar in Bodleian MS Barlow 41 on f. 163r. This calendar came from Evesham and dates to the third quarter of the fourteenth century, but Gwenfrewy's entry—"Sce Wenefrede v^{i}ginis et mart^{i}"—is in a fifteenth century hand. The late addition of Gwenfrewy here is likely a response to the elevation of her feast throughout the Canterbury province in 1398 or to her re-elevation in 1415. On the dating of this entry in the Barlow calendar, see Francis Wormald, ed. *English Benedictine Kalendars after AD 1000, vol. 2* (London: Henry Bradshaw Society, 1946), 37. On the Canterbury elevations, see chapter 5 below.

[72] A series of suggestions quite similar to those made here have been made for the cult of St. Eiliwedd/Eluned in John A. F. Thomson, "St. Eiluned of Brecon and Her Cult," in *Marytrs and*

the latter on November 2.[73] These days and the events associated with them—an act performed on the First of May in gratitude for a resurrection and a death occurring near the beginning of November—immediately recall the festivals of Beltaine and Samhain. Beltaine, May 1, was the beginning of spring in the traditional Celtic year, a time of rebirth and renewal, whereas Samhain, November 1, was a harvest festival announcing

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Martyrologies: Papers Read at the 1992 Summer Meeting and the 1993 Winter Meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society, ed. Diana Wood, *Studies in Church History* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1993). Thomson draws very brief parallels between the legends of Eiliwedd and Gwenfrewy—both of whom were decapitated for refusing earthly lovers, a miraculous well springing up in response to both of their martyrdoms—to argue for the pagan background of their stories, citing the connections often posited between decapitation and holy springs in pre-Christian British religion. Thomson also bases his case on the fact that Gerald of Wales and the eighteenth-century antiquary Hugh Thomas mention festivities held in Eiliwedd's honor that incorporate seemingly non-Christian traditions. According to these sources, these celebrations occurred, respectively, on August 1 and May 1, both of which are significant days in the ancient Celtic calendar, and Thomson uses this as evidence that pagan traditions stand behind Eiliwedd's cult. To support the suggestion that Eiliwedd was linked to pre-Christian solar worship, Thomson highlights a reference in the late twelfth- or early thirteenth-century *De situ Brecheniauc* to "Eiliveth. filia Brachan. ygrugc gors anail" and another reference in the sixteenth-century *Cognacio Brychan* to "Elyvet in Monte Gorsauael, que pro amore castitatis martirazata est." His case rests on the emendation of "gors anail"/"Gorsauael" to *Gorsaf hael*, meaning "Station of the Sun." My conclusions regarding the oral, ancient, and perhaps pagan influences on Gwenfrewy's legend were made before I had read Thomson's study, and I am thankful to Tristan Gray Hulse for bringing this article to my attention. One addition may be made to Thomson's work. He notes that William of Worcester records in 1478 a tradition that anyone who recites the Lord's Prayer in honor of God and St. Eiliwedd on the stone where she was beheaded or who drinks from her holy spring will find on the said stone one of the saint's hairs. A distant parallel to this belief might be found in the Holywell tradition that the fragrant moss in the spring, the site of Gwenfrewy's martyrdom, was actually Gwenfrewy's hair ("Gweryd Gwenbhrewy"). On this piece of folklore, see Henken, *Traditions of the Welsh Saints*: 147; see also Baring-Gould and Fisher, *LBS*, 3: 191n2; and Donald John Hall, *English Mediaeval Pilgrimage* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965). 43. On the continuation in the late eighteenth century of possibly pre-Christian rites held in the names of Wenefred and Beuno on the first Sunday (*Dydd Sul y Saint*, "Sunday of the Saints") after St. James's Day (July 25), see the references to Thomas Pennant's work in ibid., 42. I am grateful to Tristan Gray Hulse for first directing me to this passage, which appears in Pennant's *Whiteford and Holywell*. On St. Eiliwedd/Eluned in general, see Jane Cartwright, *Feminine Sanctity and Spirituality in Medieval Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2008). 70-71.

[73] The movement of Gwenfrewy's November feast from the second to the third day of the month occurred at some uncertain point, but appears to have been the result of the introduction of the Feast of All Souls on November 2. More properly known as the Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed, this feast was first observed at Cluny in the early eleventh century, and in the first half of the twelfth was spreading to other Benedictine Houses and into popular observance. It would seem that this new, universal feast displaced the local one of Wenefred at Shrewsbury, and since another major feast, that of All Saints, was already being held on November 1, the next logical date to which observation of her feast could be moved was November 3. Tristan Gray Hulse, pers. comm. For Cluny's role in the spread of the Feast of All Souls, see Klemens Löffler, "St. Odilo," *The Catholic Encyclopedia, vol. 11*(1911), http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/11207c.htm.

the arrival of the dark half of the year and also the beginning of the new.[74] In Robert's version of events, Wenefred's rebirth is celebrated on May 1, and her final death occurs very near the beginning of November. Such a correspondence is unlikely to be a coincidence, especially given Gwenfrewy's uniqueness as a Welsh female saint who was decapitated and resurrected, who was closely associated with a powerful holy spring, and whose written Lives attest to the popularity of her cult by the early decades of the twelfth century and, surely, well before that time. If Gwenfrewy's story contains elements of a pre-Christian well cult, June 22 and 24, as well as May 1, could all have held special associations for those involved in that cult. Indeed, the traditions that place Gwenfrewy's death and resurrection on June 22 or 24 may conceal pre-Christian antecedents for the legend as it was known in Holywell. That date is close to the summer solstice, and, to judge from Gregory the Great's famous letter to abbot Mellitus preserved by Bede, the early English church was charged with replacing the pagan associations of temples, groves, and festivals with Christian ones.[75] While this directive did not apply to the British church, the absorbtion of pagan practices into Christian ones has long been recognized as a general characteristic of the western Middle Ages.[76] It is possible, therefore, that the Vigil of John the Baptist (June 23) in the anonymous Life represents a

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[74] Graham Webster, *Celtic Religion in Roman Britain* (Totowa, New Jersey: Barnes & Noble, 1986). 31-33; Hutton, *Pagan Religions of the Ancient British Isles*: 176-83. See more generally Nicholas Rogers, *Halloween: From Pagan Ritual to Party Night* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002). 11-21.

[75] Gregory's letter of July 18, 601, to Abbot Mellitus is found in Book I, chapter 30 of the *Historia Ecclesiastica*. See Bertram Colgrave and R.A.B. Mynors eds., *Bede's Ecclesiastical History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969). 106-09. See also Lambert, *Christians and Pagans: The Conversion of Britain from Alban to Bede*: 177-78.

[76] One example of this absorption in a Celtic context is St. Brigid, a saint venerated in both Ireland and Wales. Known in the latter country as Sant Ffraid, the Welsh Brigid was, according to Henken, a conglomeration of at least three different figures: St. Brigid of Kildare, a St. Brigid from North Wales, and the Swedish St. Birgitta of Vadstena. St. Brigid of Kildare was herself a combination of a pagan goddess and the historical St. Brigid of Cill-Muine. Henken, *Traditions of the Welsh Saints*: 161. See also Hutton, *Pagan Religions of the Ancient British Isles*. 153-54, 167, 285, and 287. For the coincidence of the pagan festival Imbolc with St. Brigid's feast day (February 1), see 182.

Christianization of a pagan festival associated with the story of a female deity's beheading—John's Nativity, June 24, matches the date of Wenefred's martyrdom and resurrection in the *Vita S. Wenefrede*, and the fact that John was a martyr beheaded for opposing an unlawful union may have made his birth a particularly apt replacement for a festival connected to an earlier version of Gwenfrewy's story.[77] It is possible, therefore, that Gwenfrewy herself represents a conflation of Christian and pagan figures in a manner similar to the Irish St. Brigid.[78]

To be sure, when coupled with the seemingly pagan elements of her *vitae* outlined above, the very nature of Gwenfrewy's legend suggests that veneration of a sacred woman tied to the landscape was the norm at Holywell for a very long time before Robert arrived.[79] And significantly, aspects of the anonymous Life and of Robert's text reveal in combination that much of the legend is concerned with the elements, and more specifically with the opposition of wet and dry in both Christian and, seemingly, pagan contexts: Beuno's cloak, transported specifically through water to the seashore without being moistened, keeps him dry in rain and untouched by wind; the spilling of Wenefred's blood occurs just outside a church where the Eucharistic sacrifice—itself a matter of liquid and dry bread—is about to be performed and her martyrdom results in a gushing spring, a symbol of life rising from the maiden's death, in a place (*Sechnant* or

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[77] Relevant to the suggestions made here regarding the pagan significance of May 1, midsummer, and November 1 in the medieval British Isles, Hutton offers the following conclusions: "the records of folklore, combined with those of the early literature, suggest that the four great Irish quarter days were celebrated all over the Gaelic areas of the British Isles. Two of them, Samhain and Beltine [*sic*], are well attested across the whole archipelago, although the former seems to have been more important in the Gaelic parts and the latter more so in the Brythonic parts. It is possible, though doubtful, that Midsummer was also commemorated by the pagan Celts of these islands. But there is no sign that they kept any feasts at the equinoxes, nor, despite the prehistoric wonders of Newgrange and Maes Howe, at Midwinter: they were interested in marking the opening of the seasons, not the range of the sun." Hutton, *Pagan Religions of the Ancient British Isles*: 183.

[78] See note 76 above.

[79] Baring-Gould and Fisher, *LBS*, 3: 191-92.

Sicca Vallis) previously known for its lack of water; water was also one of the items that Wenefred was to bring to the mass; and Caradog himself melts into a pool under the heat of God's ire. Robert even includes a miracle near the end of his *translatio* account wherein the maiden's relics miraculously hold raindrops suspended in the air while the procession is kept dry as it marches at last into Shrewsbury Abbey.[80] All of these observations merely reinforce the connection between saint and landscape that is so common a part of Welsh hagiography—in this case, the life-giving properties of Gwenfrewy's power are embodied in water that sprouts from and flows through the land of her martyrdom—and this connection is no doubt related to the links between sacred places and their associated gods or heroes in pre-Christian Welsh traditions. Indeed, the synthesis of pagan and Christian concepts and cultures was a common phenomenon in the early British Isles.[81]

Although the anonymous Life is focused particularly on Holywell, Robert's account of the saint's time there reveals traditions that connect her to the landscape of her martyrdom even more closely.[82] In Robert's version, as noted briefly above, Beuno informs Wenefred that her yearly present for him—which he does not specify must be a cloak and which he only indicates must be sent via the stream, not specifically on the stone—is but one of three gifts that God has granted to her in honor of her holy death. The first gift is the insoluble stain of her blood upon the stones in the Holywell spring in

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[80] Cf. this miracle to the similar one that Gerald of Wales claims occurred during the *translatio* of St. Caradog: Lewis Thorpe, trans., *Gerald of Wales: The Journey Through Wales/The Description of Wales* (London: Penguin Books, 1978). 144-45.

[81] As Hamaker has it, while "'true' paganism did not exist as a discrete entity alongside the Christian majority, the Christianity of Britain preserved pagan traditions in its native population by appropriating them to itself." Hamaker, "Winefride's Well-Cult," 119.

[82] At the end of his *Vita*, Robert notes that more miracles occur at Holywell than at Gwytherin on account of Wenefred's preference for the former place as the site where her religious life began. See *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 75-76. See also page 191ff. below.

memory of her chastity and of God's majesty. The second gift is that anyone suffering some sickness or oppression who calls repeatedly upon Wenefred's aid will be delivered by the third request at the latest or else will die, having at least obtained a small measure of grace for having invoked the saint. The third gift is the annual present she is to send to Beuno through the stream. Along with this last gift, the honor of the bloody stones is tied specifically to the Holywell landscape. Indeed, in Robert's account, Beuno first informs Wenefred of her divine gifts only after he has brought her to stand specifically upon the stone in the middle of the stream, upon the symbolic center of her holy site. Having described for Wenefred the significance of her recently acquired gifts, Beuno next walks Wenefred through the terrain adjacent to the spring as he bequeaths to her the church and its environs, noting that his words, stored in her memory and later reported in reverence, will be of benefit to people in future ages. With the two saints making a ritual lustration through the heart of this sacred place, Robert's version here subtly connects both orality and locality—tied to and now in possession of the land in which she will dwell, Wenefred will be the vessel of Beuno's words for the benefit of future generations. However, while the sequence as a whole seems to derive from Welsh tradition, the second gift carefully de-centers Wenefred's power in a way that makes her more universally accessible, and it functions as one of the many small maneuvers that help to set up and validate Robert's *translatio* account and the events related there, for it attests to Wenefred's power beyond the bounds of her cult sites.[83] A translated saint must be able to exercise her power in a

[83] Comparison with an episode in the Life of David arguably suggests that this portion of Robert's account is likely to have come from Welsh tradition. In the *Vita S. Davidis*, the saint's royal father discovers three gifts on the banks of the River Teifi some three decades before his son is conceived. These divine presents—a stag, a fish, and a honeycomb—are even more closely linked to the land than are Wenefred's, and they are said to foreshadow David's manner of living on earth. The stag symbolizes his power over the Devil, the fish his abstinence (since he eats only bread and drinks only water, David is dubbed *Aquaticus* or "Water Man"), and the honeycomb the spiritual wisdom that David discerns in everyday things. See

new location, and the specific mention of Wenefred's ability to do so anticipates potential concerns on the part of his audience in this regard. The sequence as a whole indicates both Robert's familiarity with the Holywell landscape and the traditions of its inhabitants, but also underscores his concern with the portability and accessibility of the saint's power.[84]

From the foregoing discussion it is clear that Robert's account of Wenefred's time at Holywell contains elements of local, and most likely oral, traditions collected at that site. To the episodes already reviewed we can add Robert's description of Caradog's death, which differs from the story in the anonymous Life in that the killer not only melts as a result of Beuno's curse, but is also swallowed by the earth:

> His dictis, juvenis illico ad terram corruens expiravit. Mirumque dictu, in conspectu omnium astantium corpus defuncti liquefactum disparuit, multis asseverantibus tellure dehiscente absorptum fuisse et cum spiritu suo in barathro demersum.[85]
>
> (When these words had been spoken, the youth instantly fell to the ground and died. And wondrous to say, in the sight of all standing there, the body of the dead

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Sharpe, "Rhygyfarch's *Life of St David*," 108-11. The connection with Gwenfrewy's story as related by Robert is that both saints are tied to the natural environment by virtue of the three gifts that announce their sanctity. The appearance of narrative elements or motifs in groups of three is, of course, very common in Celtic myth and legend, and in a Welsh context is perhaps best exemplified by the Triads: Rachel Bromwich, *Trioedd ynys Prydein: The Triads of the Island of Britain*, 3rd ed. (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2006). The second of the three gifts as related in Robert's *Vita* have been taken as the origin of the pilgrim custom of passing three times through the Holywell pool. Christopher David, *St. Winefride's Well: A History and Guide* (Llandysul: Gomer Press, 2002). [15].

[84] In relating the nature of Wenefred's second gift, Robert uses the verbs *requirere* and *petere* to describe the necessary actions of those who would be healed by the saint. *Requirere*, meaning "to ask for" but also "to seek," could indicate that only those who had traveled to Wenefred's spring to petition (*petere*) her aid would be able to benefit from her power. But since Robert does not explicitly state that suppliants must look for Wenefred's help specifically and exclusively at Holywell, and given his account of miracles performed en route to Shrewsbury during the actual *translatio*, the verb *requirere* need not preclude the idea that Robert refers here to Wenefred's accessibility outside of her ritual sites in Wales. At the end of §21, however, Robert does record Wenefred's farewell wish for Holywell—that those who come there in her name will be healed by God. See *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 51. Still, the notion that those desirous of healing would need to come to a location associated with Wenefred would remain beneficial to Robert, since after the *translatio* Wenefred's power would also reside in Shrewsbury Abbey.

[85] De Smedt, *AASS, t.I. Nov.*: 713.

> youth melted and disappeared and many people affirmed that it had been swallowed up by the gaping earth and had sunk with his soul into the abyss.)[86]

It should be noted that Robert specifically ascribes to the affirmation of many people the claim that Caradog was swallowed by the earth and that his soul descended into hell. Although Robert could be referring to the words of those who supposedly witnessed the prince's demise in the seventh century ("in conspectu omnium astantium"), the independent ablative clause beginning with "multis asseverantibus" might imply that this detail was collected from twelfth-century individuals living in Holywell.[87] Coupled with the other elements of the Holywell legend likely drawn from oral folklore and already discussed above, this possibility is but one further clue of the degree to which Robert wove his text from various sources in an environment in which "a distinction between official and popular religious practices along a supposed line of cleavage between written and oral [was] unwarranted."[88]

Native Oral Traditions and Gwenfrewy's Journey to Gwytherin

We have so far considered the extent to which non-written sources influenced Robert's account of Gwenfrewy's Life. Evidence for the influence of oral tradition in Robert's description of Gwytherin in his *translatio* narrative were discussed at length in the previous chapter—i.e., the story of the sacred oak tree standing within the saints' cemetery at Gwytherin, the priest's story of a foreboding angelic visitation, and the

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[86] *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 37.
[87] Winward takes the motif of a villain being swallowed by the earth to be a particularly Cambro-Latin one, and she suggests that Robert found it in the lost Latin Life of Beuno. It does not, however, appear in *Hystoria o Uuched Beuno*. Winward, "Lives of St Wenefred," 130. On this motif in Gwenfrewy's legend as told in the anonymous Life, *Hystoria o Uuched Beuno*, and later medieval Welsh poetry, see Henken, *Traditions of the Welsh Saints*: 143-44. This motif is common in Welsh hagiography and appears, for instance, in Lifris of Llancarfan's Life of Cadog. See ibid., 328; andWade-Evans, *VSBG*: 58.
[88] Smith, "Oral and Written," 342. See also 335 and 337-38.

traditions surrounding the presence of Chebius and Senanus in the graveyard. A further example of a local, oral tradition to be found in Robert's work is his lengthy account of Wenefred's journey from Holywell to Gwytherin seven years after the departure of Beuno. This search for a new place of faith appears at the end of Robert's *vita* and can be summarized as follows: while praying one night Wenefred is informed by a divine revelation that, with one maiden as her companion, she is to seek the Blessed Deiferus (Welsh, *Diheufyr*) at Botavarrus (Welsh, *Botfari*), from whom she will be given further directions. Upon arriving at his hermitage some eight miles from Holywell, Wenefred is warmly welcomed, but Deiferus admits that he was unaware of her coming. Later, in the midst of his nightly vigil, Deiferus receives a message from heaven instructing him to send Wenefred to St. Saturnus (Welsh, *Sadwrn*) in Henthlantus (Welsh, *Henllan*). Saturnus learns from a divine utterance that Wenefred is approaching, and when she arrives he instructs her to remain for the night. This she does, and on the morrow Saturnus reveals that Wenefred is to travel to abbot Elerius (Welsh, *Eleri*) at Witheriacus (Welsh, *Gwytherin*), "multorum sanctorum pigneribus refertus, et pro illorum reverenda conversatione a Deo electus atque ab omni populo in nimia reverentia habitus" ("a place filled with the relics of many saints . . . chosen by God on account of their venerable manner of living, and . . . held in very great awe by all the people").[89] Here Wenefred is to remain for the rest of her earthly life as an example and a leader to others in spiritual pursuits. Saturnus's deacon accompanies Wenefred to Gwytherin and upon arriving relates to Elerius the story of Wenefred's travels and revelations so far, even though the abbot had been informed of her coming in advance by a divine message. After some initial doubts, and after a night of prayer, Elerius is given the confidence to accept

[89] De Smedt, *AASS, t.I. Nov.*: 719; *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 55.

Wenefred and he immediately presents her to the nuns in the convent and to his mother, Theonia (Welsh, *Tenoi*), their superior. Eventually Theonia dies, and Elerius places Wenefred as abbess over her fellow virgins, in which post she shines ever brighter as an example not only to the members of her convent, but also to all those living in the district at large.

Given the focus and detail of this story, Robert is likely to have collected it at Gwytherin, and if so the episode lends weight to the suggestion that alternate, site-specific versions of the saint's Life were preserved in each place—that there were, essentially, Holywell and Gwytherin versions of the legend in oral circulation.[90] As we have seen, in the anonymous Life, a text closely focused on Holywell, Gwytherin itself is given only the briefest of notice and Wenefred's journey to that place is not mentioned at all. In addition to the political and military history of these regions in the preceding century, the different foci of each text suggest that the cults at Holywell and Gwytherin were not in direct or regular contact in the 1130s.[91] That is not, however, to imply that they never were in contact with one another. Thomas Charles-Edwards has commented briefly on the early links between these sites, observing that Gwytherin may have been established by the Holywell community "as a place of refuge when Tegeingl came under Mercian rule in the tenth century."[92] Indeed, the faint memory of such a connection seems to be recorded in the genealogical tracts *Bonedd y Saint* (Lineage of the Saints) and *Achau'r Saint* (Pedigrees of the Saints), where we find a subtle but significant link in

[90] On the oral nature of this particular story, see also note 52 above.
[91] For more on the political and military interactions between North Wales and Cheshire in the century before 1138, see Appendix C below.
[92] Charles-Edwards, "Gwenfrewi (*fl. c.*650)." He has also suggested here that the general difference between "a monastic retreat and a major cult site open to lay people" might explain the existence of two sites associated with the same saint.

Gwenfrewy's family tree that ties Holywell to Gwytherin. Moreover, Robert's account of the saint's journey to Gwytherin appears to preserve the same relationship, albeit unknowingly. The genealogical links that Robert recorded apparently unawares suggest that his account of Wenefred's journey to Gwytherin, rather than being something he fabricated from his own imagination, should be taken as an authentic Welsh tradition, one that had become by the early twelfth century specifically part of the cult at Gwytherin.[93]

Robert's story of Wenefred's transfer from Holywell ascribes the whole affair to heavenly inspiration. He gives no particular reason why Wenefred should stay at Gwytherin other than the fact that this place was held to be sacred on account of the many other holy people who had lived and died there. Working from the genealogies, however, another explanation is possible, for according to the *Bonedd* and the *Achau*, Gwenfrewy, Beuno, Tenoi, and Eleri were apparently all related to one another.[94] In the *Achau* we find the following about Beuno's lineage:

> Beunno vab Pinsi (vab Gliws) vab Gwynlliw o Berygferen i vam.[95]
>
> (Beuno the son of Pinsi (son of Gliws) son of Gwynllyw by Perygferen, his mother.)

The *Bonedd* corroborates this statement:

> Beuno m. Heugi m. Gwynlliw m. (Gliwis m.) Tegit m. Cadell, a Pherferen verch Lewdwn lluydawc o Dinas Eidin yn y Gogled y vam.[96]

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[93] The connection between Holywell and Gwytherin recorded in the genealogies and silently preserved by Robert was first explored by Tristan Gray Hulse in his unpublished dossier "Winefride and Beuno: Towards a Holywell Dossier." I am extremely grateful to him for allowing me to see this material, and the conclusions here presented draw heavily from his insights on the matter.

[94] For an overview of Wenefred's genealogy that notes and supports much of what follows, see Henken, *Traditions of the Welsh Saints*: 151.

[95] P.C. Bartrum, *Early Welsh Genealogical Tracts* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1966). 70, no. 26. All translations from the genealogies are my own.

[96] Ibid., 59, no. 30.

> (Beuno son of Heugi son of Gwynlliw son of (Gliwis son of) Tegit son of Cadell, and Perferen the daughter of Llawdden Llwyddog from Edinburgh in the north, his mother.)

P.C. Bartrum notes in the manuscripts of the *Bonedd* a range of variant spellings for the name of Beuno's father, one of which is Binsi.[97] This name could also appear as Pinsi, and it is found in that form in the entry in the *Achau* recording Wenefred's parentage:

> Gwenvrewy verch Dyvid o Wenlo verch Insi, vrenin Powys, i mam.[98]
>
> (Gwenfrewy, the daughter of Tyfid by Gwenlo the daughter of Insi, king of Powys, her mother.)

Comparison of these entries indicates that the traditions preserved in both the *Bonedd* and the *Achau* are the same—Beuno and Gwenfrewy's mother Gwenlo have the same father and are descended from the kingly line of Powys. Beuno was, therefore, Gwenfrewy's maternal uncle, an important familial relationship in Celtic culture and something suggesting that Beuno's arrival in the land of Gwenfrewy's father Tyfid might not have been the matter of divine guidance that Robert's *vita* claims.[99] Neither Prior Robert nor the anonymous author seem to be aware of the familial connection between Gwenfrewy and her spiritual teacher, but knowledge of this connection certainly existed and spread eventually outside of Wales, for it was known nearly one hundred years before the first witness of the *Achau* was written down. Indeed, John Audelay, the early fifteenth-century poet of Haughmond Abbey, knows in his carol to Wenefred that Beuno was her uncle:

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[97] Ibid., 59.
[98] Ibid., 70, no. 27. For the identification of Insi with Pinsi, see ibid., 146n27. On Beuno's lineage see also Henken, *Traditions of the Welsh Saints*: 74-75.
[99] Bartrum notes that Beuno and Wenefred are uncle and niece. Bartrum, *Early Welsh Genealogical Tracts*: 146n27.

> Þe*n* Bewnou, þi nu*n*kel, w*it*h gret pete,
> Set þi hede to þi body;
> Þou leuedust aft*er* merwesly
> Xv ȝere; h*i*t is no nay.[100]

The *Achau* observes that Gwenfrewy's mother, Gwenlo, was the daughter of Binsi, the King of Powys. The *Bonedd* records that Beuno was the son of Binsi by Perfferen or Perefferen. Seeing that both Gwenlo and Beuno have the same father we might assume, in the absence of any statement to the contrary, that they also had the same mother, i.e., that Perfferen was also the mother of Gwenlo.[101] The *Bonedd* offers further information about Perfferen, for through her father Llawdden, it makes her a sister to Tenoi, the mother of Eleri at Gwytherin:

> Lleudat yn Enlli, a Baglan yg Coet Alun, ac Eleri ym Pennant Gwytherin yn Rywynnyawc, a Thegwy a Thyuriawc yg Keredigyawn Is Coet, meibyon Dyngat m. Nud hael m. Senyllt m. Kedic m. Dyuynyeual hen m. Ydnyuet m. Maxen wledic; a Thenoi verch Lewdwn lluydawc o Dinas Eidyn yn y Gogled eu mam.[102]
>
> (Lleddad in Bardsey, and Baglan in Coed Alun, and Eleri in Pennant Gwytherin in Rhufoniog, and Tegwy and Tyuriog in Ceredigion Is Coed, sons of Dyngat son

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[100] Ella Keats Whiting, *The Poems of John Audelay*, Early English Text Society, o.s. 184 (London: Oxford University Press, 1931). 172, lines 13-16. Beuno's parentage is also noted in the nine *lectiones* for matins for November 3 in the 1531 Paris edition of the Sarum Breviary. Here Beuno is introduced as "Venerabilis Dei servus Bennous, a nobilibus viris scilicet Bengo patre et Berthen matre juxta Sabrinam in provincia quae dicitur Powis oriundus" ("Beuno, the venerable servant of God, arose from noble people, viz., from his father Bengo and his mother Berthen in a province near the Severn which is called Powys"). In all other particulars, the Sarum lessons follow Prior Robert's *Vita* (minus the appended *translatio* narrative), no doubt because they derive from the twelve lessons of the Benedictine Office as it would have been kept at Shrewsbury Abbey, which in turn would have been drawn directly from Robert's account. The inclusion of this extra information about Beuno, in combination with the reference in Audelay's poem, indicates the continued spread outside of Wales of the genealogical tradition first recorded in the *Bonedd*. See Francis Proctor and Christopher Wordsworth, *Breviarium ab usum insignis ecclesiae Sarum. Fasciculus III.* (Cambridge, 1886). col. 989. Translation above is my own. I am grateful to Tristan Gray Hulse for this reference. According to Maredudd ap Huw, the earliest Welsh reference to Beuno being Gwenfrewy's uncle is in an *awdl* by Siôn ap Hywel dated to 1512: "Mawr yw'r gwyrthiau brau gwedi'i briwo—wnaeth / Nith ferch chwaer i Feuno: / Troi gloywddwr, tragl iddo, / Trwy grai gnwd daear a gro" ("Great are the generous miracles following her injury which the niece of Beuno [who was his] sister's daughter perform'd: turning clear water, a medicine for him, through the fresh produce of earth and gravel"), Maredudd ap Huw, "A Critical Examination of Welsh Poetry Relating to the Native Saints of North Wales (c. 1350-1670). 2 vols." (University of Oxford, 2001), 177, lines 17-20. For the translation, see 183.

[101] On this point, see Baring-Gould and Fisher, *LBS*, 1: 209.

[102] Bartrum, *Early Welsh Genealogical Tracts*: 57, no. 18.

> of Nudd Hael son of Senyllt son of Kedic son of Dyfynyefal Hen son of Ydnyfed son of Maxen Wledic, and Tenoi daughter of Llawdden Llwyddog from Edinburgh in the North, their mother.)

This family tree makes Tenoi into Beuno's aunt and Eleri into Beuno's cousin. If Perfferen be accepted as Gwenlo's mother, as Baring-Gould and Fisher suggest, Tenoi would then be Gwenfrewy's great-aunt, and in light of such a connection Robert's claim that Wenefred became abbess over the nuns at Gwytherin after Theonia's death gains extra resonance.[103] Was this succession a hereditary and pre-agreed arrangement, the fact of which was preserved in Robert's story of a pilgrimage from Holywell to Gwytherin? Robert appears to have recorded, accurately enough but at the same time unwittingly, a coherent Welsh tradition that explains the link between two rather different cult sites associated with the same saint.[104] If so, Robert has inadvertently proven his trustworthiness and also the substantial authenticity of the other traditions he records in his *Vita et translatio*. For while the earliest manuscript witnesses belong to the latter half of the thirteenth century, A.W. Wade-Evans dates the *Bonedd* to the twelfth century, and Bartrum accepts this dating in his edition of the text.[105] Such dating indicates that the traditions recorded in the *Bonedd* were current in the century that the anonymous author and Robert were composing their *vitae*, and indeed the entry for Beuno's parents is found

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[103] See again Baring-Gould and Fisher, *LBS*, 1: 209. Bartrum accepts that Tenoi was Gwenfrewy's great-aunt, and, by inference, that Perfferen was Gwenlo's mother. See P.C. Bartrum, *A Welsh Classical Dictionary: People in History and Legend up to about A.D. 1000* (Aberystwyth: National Library of Wales, 1993). 316. According to tradition, Tenoi was the wife of Dingad, King of Bryn Buga: Wade-Evans, "Beuno Sant," 323n4.

[104] Similarly, from the Latin hagiographical perspective, the "Synod of Wenefredus" mentioned in the anonymous Life has been taken as another rationalization of the existence of the saint's two cult sites. See page 142 above. On the importance of semi-legendary genealogies in Latin and vernacular hagiography of female saints in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, see Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, *Saints' Lives and Women's Literary Culture, c. 1150-1300* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001). 63-65. For the suggestions of "a family tradition of female activity" in the cartulary of the Benedictine abbey of Wherwell, see 201-03.

[105] Wade-Evans, *VSBG*: xvii; Bartrum, *Early Welsh Genealogical Tracts*: 51.

in the three earliest manuscripts. The same cannot exactly be said for the *Achau*, however, which Bartrum describes as "a late offshoot" of the *Bonedd*, and it should be noted that the *Achau* entry for Gwenfrewy's parents has no parallel in the earlier text.[106]

One might argue that the entry in the *Achau* represents an addition to the genealogies, one specifically responding to Robert's hagiographical account of Wenefred's journey to Gwytherin. One might also suggest that the familial connections recorded in the *Bonedd*, if they originated in the twelfth century, need not have preceded Robert's account, but could instead have been inspired by it—perhaps the genealogists sought to emphasize the blood ties between the saints involved so as to strengthen the ties between the cult sites themselves.[107] If any of that were the case, however, we could expect the genealogies to be more explicit about the links between Gwenfrewy, Beuno, and their relatives at Gwytherin, especially if these entries were responding specifically to Robert's story of Wenefred's departure from Holywell. Further, there is no direct evidence to suggest that, following the *translatio*, the cult sites attempted or had particular reason to attempt more frequent contact, although perhaps a need to attract pilgrims in light of Shrewsbury's acquisition of the saint's bones could have made such a scenario plausible.[108] As preserved in the *Bonedd* and the *Achau*, however, the relationships between Gwenfrewy, Beuno, and their kin at Gwytherin are not made immediately clear; they are discernable only by comparing various separate entries and are left, therefore, largely implicit.[109]

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[106] Bartrum, *Early Welsh Genealogical Tracts*: 68.
[107] I am grateful to Patrick Wadden for these caveats.
[108] Noting evidence for the suggestion that, from at least the seventeenth century, pilgrims to Holywell typically made a visit to Gwytherin part of their pilgrimage, Gray Hulse has observed that, "[although] there is no direct evidence, it might seem likely that this continued a medieval practice." Pers. comm.
[109] Batrum notes in his introduction that the genealogical tracts "are all interconnected, and [that] a general unity underlies the whole system" (Bartrum, *Early Welsh Genealogical Tracts*: vii.). Such "general unity"

These entries in the *Bonedd* and the *Achau* suggest that, in his account of Wenefred's journey from Holywell to Gwytherin, Robert preserved a genuine strand of Welsh genealogical folklore—that is, the story of Wenefred's succession to Theonia's position that is underpinned by Welsh genealogical traditions linking these two figures. Further indication that oral tradition preserved Gwenfrewy's story before the twelfth-century *vitae* were written down, and also well after that time, is to be found in two other references in the genealogies that offer glimpses of a version of Gwenfrewy's legend significantly different from those found in the *Vita S. Wenefrede* and in Robert's text. The first of these is an entry in a mid-sixteenth-century recension of the *Bonedd* that records the lineage of St. Elfodd (Elwad):

> Elwad sant ap Kowlwyd esgob Kaergybi a Gwenvrewy verch Tyvid ap Evnydd oedd i vam.[110]
>
> (St. Elfodd son of Kowlwyd, bishop of Holyhead, and Gwenfrewy, daughter of Tyfid son of Evnydd was his mother.)

Any suggestion that Gwenfrewy bore children is seriously at odds with the account of her life given by Robert and the anonymous author, where Wenefred is notable specifically because she died defending the virginity which she had pledged eternally to God. She is here presented, however, as the mother of St. Elfodd, and yet the late genealogies provide even more drastic variations on her story. In the version of the tribal list known as *Pymthec Llwyth Gwynedd* (the Fifteen Tribes of Gwynedd) attributed to Ieuan Brechfa in Peniarth MS 131 we find the following entry:

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would not necessarily be apparent or, perhaps, useful to a non-Welshman, even to one as assiduous in the collecting of folk knowledge as Prior Robert was. The nature of his account of the journey to Gwytherin suggests that Robert recorded it, and preserved the "general unity" of the characters involved, unawares.

[110] Ibid., 64, no. 64. The recension of the *Bonedd* in question is in Peniarth MSS 128 and 181, pp. 51-55 and 274-82 respectively. An entry similar to the one quoted here is also found in the edition of the *Bonedd* in Peniarth MS 75. See ibid., 53. See also Bartrum, *A Welsh Classical Dictionary*: 316.

> Tyfid ap Ennydd arglwydd Tref y Ffynonn a chann mwya Swydd y Flynt. Tad oedd y Ywain pennyverw yr hwnn a laddodd Kradoc ap Alnoc, brenin Penn Arlaoc.[111]
>
> (Tyfid son of Ennydd, lord of Holywell and the greater part of Flintshire. He was the father of Owain Pennyverw, the one who slew Caradog son of Alâog, king of Hawarden.)[112]

The details regarding Gwenfrewy's family here recorded are startlingly different from those handed down by Robert and the *Vita S. Wenefrede* author, for according to Brechfa's list, Gwenfrewy's father had a son named Owain, brother to the saint, who was responsible for killing the man who assailed his sister. Beuno's miraculous malediction that reduced Caradog to a molten pool has no place in this version of events. These details indicate that traditions highly divergent from those recorded by Robert and the anonymous author were current in medieval Wales, no doubt in oral circulation. Indeed, as Gray Hulse has observed in unpublished work on the subject, Owain Pennyverw "is mentioned nowhere else [for] this version [of the story] may have always remained in the domain of the oral tradition of medieval Wales, until the time Brechfa committed this fragment . . . to writing."[113] Gray Hulse further maintains that the details noted by Brechfa "must considerably predate the *Vitae* themselves," for this version of Caradog's demise "could hardly have been invented after the composition of the *Vitae* . . . and the

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[111] P.C. Bartrum, "Hen Lwythau Gwynedd a'r Mars," *National Library of Wales Journal* 12, no. 3 (1962): 232. See also 235. On the relation between *Penn Arlaoc* and Hawarden, see Bartrum, *A Welsh Classical Dictionary*: 8 and 101. The various portions of Peniarth MS 131 date to the latter fifteenth century and to the first half of the sixteenth. Daniel Huws, *Medieval Welsh Manuscripts* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2000). 62 and 64.

[112] Translation is my own.

[113] Tristan Gray Hulse, "Winefride and Beuno: Towards a Holywell Dossier," (2011), §3a. I am, as always, thankful to Mr. Gray Hulse for allowing me to use this material in my own work. On a related note, Bartrum is unaware "of any family which claimed descent from [Owain's father]." Bartrum, "Hen Lwythau Gwynedd a'r Mars," 235.

wide spread of their versions of the tradition."[114] The fact that Brechfa's account of Caradog's death appears nowhere else suggests that, no matter when it was invented, the version of the legend Brechfa in part records was not widely circulated or repeated, although it obviously survived in some form concurrently with the standard versions preserved in the *Vitae*. Given the plausibility of a vengeance killing for a family offense in the secular world of medieval Wales, Gray Hulse also maintains that "Beuno's curse belongs entirely to the literary hagiographical tradition[,] perhaps developed in the Early Medieval period around the physical features of the Holywell sacred landscape."[115] The division here implied between popular and more properly hagiographical versions of the story may well be valid, and indeed in light of the pre-Christian elements of the story discussed above, one could suggest that Brechfa's fragment is a small remnant of an older and perhaps pagan (or at least non-Christian) version of Gwenfrewy's legend, one in which a female deity was attached to the Holywell landscape by way of some self-sacrifice that led to the eruption of the wondrous fountain. Beuno's malediction, however, need not have been drawn solely from written sources as Gray Hulse suggests. Given the emphasis on non-written sources for Robert's narrative in this chapter, the saint's curse could equally well have come from a version of the legend circulated orally at Holywell.

According to such a scenario, the fantastical story of a saint's malediction would have overtaken the more mundane fact of Caradog's murder at the hands of Gwenfrewy's angry brother, an event that, if it occurred at all, would have had little spiritual impact—certainly not enough for a written hagiographical account. In this regard, the story

[114] Gray Hulse, "Winefride and Beuno: Towards a Holywell Dossier," §3a.
[115] Ibid.

recorded in *Hystoria o Uuched Beuno* of another beheaded maiden whom Beuno resurrects might be related to the version of the Holywell legend involving Owain Pennyverw and preserved by Brechfa. Tygiwg, the daughter of a king, Ynyr Gwent, is given in marriage to a handsome man from Aberffraw who arrives at her father's court. The man turns out to be a landless worker, and, embarrassed of his lowly station, he beheads his new wife as she sleeps one evening on their journey to Anglesey. The man then uses Tygiwg's dowry to elevate himself at the court of Gwynedd. Having been brought to Tygiwg's body by his shepherds, Beuno resurrects the woman by placing her head back on her shoulders, a miraculous well—*Ffynnawn Digiwc*—springing up from the ground where her blood had fallen. She remains with Beuno to serve God, but one day her brother, Iddon ab Ynyr Gwent, appears to retrieve her. Learning of her new life in religion, Iddon makes for Aberffraw to reclaim her dowry with Beuno as support. When he sets eyes on his erstwhile brother-in-law, however, Iddon decapitates him, and peace is restored to the court only after Beuno resurrects the man, receiving in return from the king of Aberffraw a mansion known as *Aelwyt Veuno* (Beuno's Hearth).[116] The outlines of the tale are suggestive for Brechfa's version of the Holywell legend wherein Wenefred's brother slays Caradog, and indeed Brechfa's account of events may even represent a conflation of Wenefred's and Tygiwg's stories as told in *Hystoria o Uuched Beuno*.

Further evidence for the circulation of versions of Wenefred's story concurrent with, but not entirely dependent upon either the version in Robert's text or in the *Vita S. Wenefrede* can also be noted here. Book one of Ranulph Higden's *Polychronicon* (*ca*.

[116] For this story, see Wade-Evans, "Beuno Sant," 320-21 (§§ 17-20). For the Welsh text, see Wade-Evans, *VSBG*: 20-21. Baring-Gould and Fisher claimed that, in their time, Tygiwg's Well at Penarth in Clynnog was still well known. Baring-Gould and Fisher, *LBS*, 1: 214n2.

1327-40) includes a verse chapter (38) on Wales that draws its information largely from Giraldus Cambrensis.[117] At the end of this chapter, however, after observations on the retributive nature of Welsh saints and the Welsh custom of venerating the staves and bells of holy men, we find a brief notice of Wenefred's well that includes a significant addition to the story. Higden's original Latin and John Trevisa's fourteenth-century Middle English translation of the sequence run as follows:

Ad Basingwerk fons oritur,	At Basyngwere is a welle,
Qui sacer vulgo dicitur;	Þat sacer hiȝt, as men dooþ telle.
Et tantis bullis scaturit,	Hit springeþ so sore, as men may see,
Quod mox injecta rejicit;	What is cast yn, it þroweþ aȝee.
Tam magnum flumen procreat,	Þere of springeþ a grete stronde;
Ut Cambriæ sufficiat.	Hit were i-now for al þat londe.
Ægri, qui dant rogamina,	Seke at þat place
Reportant medicamina.	Haueþ boþe hele and grace.
Rubro guttatos lapides	In þe welmes ofter þan ones
In scatebris reperies;	Is y-founde reed splekked stones;
In signum sacri sanguinis,	In tokene of [þe] blood reed,
Quem Wenefredæ virginis	Þat þe mayde Wynefrede
Guttur truncatum fuderat.	Shadde at þat putte,
Qui scelus hoc patraverat,	Whan hire þrote was i-kutte.
Ac nati et nepotuli,	He þat dede þat dede
Latrant, ut canum catuli;	Haþ sorwe on his sede;
Donec sanctæ suffragium	His children at alle stoundes
Poscant ad hunc fonticulum,	Berkeþ as whelpes of houndes.
Vel ad urbem Salopiæ,	For þy pray þat mayde grace
Ubi quiescit hodie.	Riȝt at þat welle place,
	Oþir in Schroysbury strete;
	Þere þat mayde resteþ swete.

In the fifteenth century, an anonymous translator rendered this same passage into prose:

> Also at Basyngwere spryngethe an holy welle, whiche is of so grete feruence that hit castethe owte thynges caste in to hit, whiche bredethe so grete a water that myȝhte suffice to alle Wales; whiche water ȝiffethe grete helpe to seke peple; where thou schalle fynde stones hauenge in theym as dropes of blood, in the signe

[117] While the bulk of the text had been completed by 1340, Higden made additions in the period *ca*. 1341-52. For the dating of the *Polychronicon*, see Antonia Gransden, *Historical Writing in England, vol. 2: ca. 1307 to the Early Sixteenth Century* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982). 44-45. I am grateful to Cynthia Camp for this reference.

> of the holy bloode whiche floede owte from the throte of Seynte Wenefride. For whiche offence the doers of hit and alle theire childer and successores berke in the maner of dogges, vn til thei aske the suffrage and helpe of Seynte Wenefride at that welle, other elles at the cite of Shrewisbury, where sche restethe now, hade there in grete veneracion.[118]

Osbern Bokenham, the widely traveled English hagiographer, records this same story in his fifteenth-century verse *Lyf of Seynt Wenefrede* (*ca*. 1448-75) that was recently discovered in the Abbotsford MS of the Advocates Library in Scotland.[119] Bokenham translated part of the *Polychronicon*, and he both draws on and makes several references to it in his Life of Wenefred, including at the point where he mentions the barking

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[118] Ranulph Higden, *Polychronicon Ranulphi Higden Monachi Cestrensis; Together with the English Translations of John Trevisa and of an Unknown Writer of the Fifteenth Century*, Rolls Series, vol. 1 (London 1865). Ranulph's Latin text, along with the two translations quoted here, appear on 429-31. Baring-Gould and Fisher quote a Welsh reference to the story of Caradog's descendants barking like dogs from Peniarth MS 163: "Ef a vydd plant oi lin Ef yn kyvarth val kwn hyd pann ddelwynt yno [Holywell] i offrwm nev i mwythic." Baring-Gould and Fisher, *LBS*, 3: 189n2. This may be translated as "The children of his lineage will bark like dogs until [the time] when they should come here [Holywell] to make an offering or to Shrewsbury." The tradition of the barking curse itself is noted in T. Gwynn Jones, *Welsh Folklore and Folk-Custom* (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1976). 115-16. See also Henken, *Traditions of the Welsh Saints*: 144. According to an article in the first volume of *Archaeologia Cambrensis*, Michael Drayton appears to have recorded an interesting offshoot of the tradition, presumably in his *Polyolbion*: "Drayton maintained that no dog could be drowned in the waters of [Wenefred's] well; nor have their preserving properties suffered much in the public esteem even to this day." See Ab Ithel, "Holy Wells," *Archaeologia Cambrensis* 1 (1846): 53. I have not been able to trace the exact basis of this comment in *Polyolbion*, but in the tenth song of his 1622 edition (STC 2nd ed. 7228, p. 160) Drayton does recount Wenefred's legend and the miraculous faculties of her fountain—which he claims was formed from the tears shed by her severed head—and one of these is the fact that the saint will not allow living creatures to sink (and, presumably, to drown) in the waters of Holywell: "What-euer liuing thing into the Well you throwe, / Shee strongly beares it vp, not suffring it to sinke."
Michael Drayton, *A chorographicall description of tracts, riuers, mountains, forests, and other parts of this renowned isle of Great Britain*, (London 1622), http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:177791:111. Cf p. 166: http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:177791:114. Drayton also mentions the well and its redolent, restorative moss on page 59 of his 1622 edition: http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:177791:50.

[119] This manuscript was discovered in 2005 by Simon Horobin. For an account of the discovery, a discussion of the manuscript, and a review of its contents, see Simon Horobin, "'The Angle of Oblivioun': A Lost Medieval Manuscript Discovered in Walter Scott's Collection," *Times Literary Supplement*, November 11 2005; Simon Horobin, "A Manuscript Found in the Library of Abbotsford House and the Lost Legendary of Osbern Bokenham," in *English Manuscript Studies, 1100-1700*, ed. A.S.G. Edwards (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007); Simon Horobin, "Politics, Patronage, and Piety in the Work of Osbern Bokenham," *Speculum* 82, no. 4 (2007).

curse.[120] There can be little doubt, then, that Bokenham's knowledge of the punishment for Caradog's unrepentant obstinacy came from Higden:

> And for the grete remedyis wich fo***û***de ben there
> The hooly welle yt ys clepyd on to this day
> But the toun therof hyht Basyngwere
> Policronica seyth so yt ys no nay
> In whom so seke he fynde may
> What veniaunce regnyth on the kynrede
> Of Cradoc wiche dede this horryble dede
>
> For notw^{t}stondyng that the seyd auctour
> Of this trespace bothe soule & body
> Sank in to helle in the same our
> The wiche yt dede euene sodeynly
> As ys seyd beforn perpetuelly
> Ther to a bydyn yet a general peyne
> On the kynrede as the seyd book seyth doth regne
>
> For alle the chyldryn as he doth merke
> Wiche ony wher ben born of that kynrede
> Lych doggys euere whoule & berke
> Tyl s***û***me of here frendys hem do lede
> Remedye to sekyn of blyssyd Wenefrede
> At this hooly welle or at the leste
> At Shrewysbury wher she now doth reste (fols. 216v-217r, lines 435-55)

Needless to say then, the account of the supernatural punishment inflicted on the descendents of Caradog was well known in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries—indeed, it also appeared in Caxton's 1482 printing of Trevisa's translation (STC 13438).[121] The very notion that Caradog had descendants, however, seems to fly in the face of the versions of the legend preserved by Robert and the anonymous author. Here

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[120] Higden's mention of the barking curse is the only reference to Wenefred in his entire *Polychronicon*. See Ranulph Higden, *Polychronicon Ranulphi Higden Monachi Cestrensis; Together with the English Translations of John Trevisa and of an Unknown Writer of the Fifteenth Century*, Rolls Series, vol. 9 (London 1886). 75.

[121] Book 1, chapter 38. Ranulph Higden, *Prolicionycion*, (Westminster: William Caxton, 1482), http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:6945:73. We might recall here, too, that Caxton prepared and printed a translation of Robert's *Vita et translatio* in 1484. Horstmann, "Prosalegenden I," 293-319; Sutton, "Caxton, the Cult of St. Winifred, and Shrewsbury," 109-26.

of course the prince is immediately stricken dead after having murdered the maiden, leaving him little time to beget offspring elsewhere, and there is no indication that he had children by the time he encountered Wenefred. On the other hand, though, in the strand of the legend first recorded by Higden, Caradog may have been already married with children by the time that he met Wenefred at Holywell.[122] If such a tradition stands behind the story preserved by Higden and his translators, it might even be part of the story of Caradog's death at the hands of Owain Pennyverw transmitted by Brechfa. The attempted sexual assault of young girl by a man already married would be a double offence—both rape and adultery—and a brother's indignation would be all the more inflamed in such a scenario, for the attacker could not even have offered to make good on his crime by marrying the girl afterwards.

The possibility of a connection between Higden's version of the story and that given by Brechfa is at best extremely tentative; conversely, however, the distinctions between Higden's story, the *Vita S. Wenefrede*, and Prior Robert's text are more immediately apparent. The *vitae* seem to imply that Caradog was not married when he propositioned Wenefred. Indeed, in the anonymous Life, Caradog insists not only that Wenefred copulate with him, but that she marry him as well:

> Deprehendensque illam solam in domo absque alterius testimonio, sitim obliviscens præ amoris magnitudine intulit ei: "O carissima virgo, meis adquiesce consiliis, mecum procorum familiaritatem patrando; te enim vehementer concupisco." Ad hæc virgo: "Domine mi, quale elogium est hoc, viri tam ingenui ut tu ad ancillam tam degenerem uti ego. Iterum, Domine, nequaquam hoc agere queo. Desponsata sum enim alteri viro, cui ad præsens nubere debeo." Audiens hæc, Caradocus furore repletus, ait: "Dimitte insulsa hæc frivola nugatoria loqui, et mecum commisceri consenti. Mihi nube, et ego te uxorem ducam."[123]

[122] I am indebted to Tristan Gray Hulse for this observation.
[123] De Smedt, *AASS, t.I. Nov.*: 703.

> (Finding her alone in the house without any witnesses, he forgot his thirst, so great was his love. He said to her, "O dearest virgin, agree to my plans by granting the intimacy of suitors, for I desire you passionately." To these things the virgin replied, "My Lord, what utterance is this of a man so highborn as you to a handmaid as common as I? Sir, I cannot to [*sic*] do this. I am betrothed to another man, whom I soon must marry." When he heard this, Caradog was furious. He said, "Stop talking this irritating and meaningless nonsense and agree to have sex with me. Agree to marry me and I will make you my wife.")[124]

In Robert's version, Caradog makes no demand that Wenefred marry him, but the maiden takes his promise of riches as a reference to marriage:

> "Patienter," inquit, "adventum illius exspectabo, si tu interim in amicitiam meam veniens voluntati meæ assensum præbueris. Regis me filium esse non ignoras, divitiis et honoribus multis refertum, te etiam affluenter locupletaturum, si meæ petitioni assentire volueris." Illa autem, sentiens eum de concubitu sermonem inseruisse, paululum demissa vultum roboreque suffusa, simulavit quidem primo graviter se ferre quod eam incomptam et inornatam invenisset. Deinde dixit ei: "Cum tu, regio ortus genere, post modicum, Deo annuente, rex sis futurus, felicitate seculari me opulenter replendam esse non dubito, tuo matrimonio copulatam."[125]
>
> ("I shall patiently await his arrival if you, meanwhile, become my friend and submit to my desire. You know that I am the son of a king, full of riches and many honours; I shall enrich you abundantly if you are willing to agree to my request." Indeed, knowing that he was speaking about copulation, with downcast look and blushing with shame, she pretended that she was indeed chagrined because he had found her unkempt and unadorned. Then she said to him: "Since you, born of royal stock, will soon be a king, God willing, I do not doubt that I should be richly filled with worldly happiness joined in marriage to you.")[126]

Both of these versions of the encounter seem to preclude the notion that Caradog was already married when he arrived at the house of Tyfid that fateful Sunday in June. Extrapolating from this observation, Robert's account and that of the anonymous author, for all their disparities between themselves, must largely stem from a tradition different from those preserved by Higden and Brechfa. If that is indeed the case, then it is even

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[124] *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 99.
[125] De Smedt, *AASS, t.I. Nov.*: 712.
[126] *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 34.

more notable that Higden recognizes that Wenefred's relics were enshrined at Shrewsbury, an indication that he perhaps knew Robert's version of the legend.[127] Given the fact that Higden was a monk of St. Werburgh's—the very monastery that led Prior Robert to Holywell and, quite probably, to Gwytherin in the 1130s—Higden could have had access, on some level, to Robert's account of Wenefred's Life and *translatio*. Even if he did not, his account of the punishment inflicted on the descendants of Caradog proves that he obviously knew other, perhaps oral traditions current about the saint, and at any rate Higden can hardly have been ignorant of her shrine at Shrewsbury, for the monks there would have drawn attention to the saint's presence through the declaration of indulgences if not the continued circulation of Robert's Life.[128] It is possible, of course, that even if Higden did know Robert's account, he would not have noticed the subtle contradictions with his own story noted here, but the likely fact that these texts represent separate strands of the Gwenfrewy legend cannot be ignored. And so far as the idea that Caradog was not married in the versions of the legend collected by Robert and the anonymous author, it should also be noted that *Hystoria o Uuched Beuno* might not agree with either of them on this point. The word that Caradog uses in the *Hystoria* to describe the maiden when demanding that she submit to him is (*g*)*orderch* (ModW

[127] There survives in the early tweflth-century London Gray's Inn MS 3 the first part of what was originally a multi-volume legendary belonging to St. Werburgh's Abbey, Chester. At the beginning is a sixteenth-century table of contents for the entire collection, but there is no mention of a Life of Wenefred. While this collection would appear to have been the primary legendary at Chester, its existence does not preclude the monks of St. Werburgh's from owning other legendaries or individual saints' Lives. Moreover, if the early twelfth-century dating of the Gray's Inn manuscript is correct, then the collection as a whole pre-dates both of Gwenfrewy's Latin *Vitae*, making the absence of a *Vita Wenefrede* from the collection unremarkable. Produced after the Gray's Inn legendary was completed, any Life of Wenefred based on Prior Robert's version or that of the anonymous author would have been preserved at Chester in another volume entirely. On the Gray's Inn manuscript and its table of contents, see N.R. Ker, *Medieval Manuscripts in British Libraries, vol. 1* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969). 52-55. I am grateful to Cynthia Camp for this reference.

[128] On the promotion of Wenefred's cult by the monks of the abbey of Shrewsbury in the fourteenth century, see chapter 5 below.

gordderch), a term that can be translated as "lover," but also as "adulterer, mistress, lady-love, paramour, concubine, adulteress, harlot," or "whore."[129] The matter is not conclusive, but the overtones of adultery in this word are marked, and it is perhaps possible that the *Vita S. Beunoi* which stands behind *Hystoria o Uuched Beuno* may have contained traces of a tradition that Caradog was married, a tradition either identical with or similar to that later handed down by Higden and, possibly, by Brechfa. At the very least, the use of the term (*g*)*orderch* implies that Caradog had little regard for the woman he desired as a person.

Ultimately, the survival of variant fragments in the *Bonedd*, the *Polychronicon*, and *Pymthec Llwythau Gwynedd* well after Gwenfrewy's official Latin *vitae* were penned underscores the existence in medieval Wales of versions of her story markedly dissimilar to those recorded in the *Vita S. Wenefrede* and Robert's text. These dissimilar versions are most likely to have been in oral circulation, and the fact that they existed for centuries after Robert and the anonymous author had established the standard outlines of the story indicates the strength with which oral tradition preserved Gwenfrewy's legend. In his prologue, Robert himself declares that he drew on oral sources for some of his information about the saint, and also that he was highly selective when it came to incorporating into his final account the various stories that he encountered. Combined with the variant traditions recorded by the *Bonedd*, Higden, and Brechfa, Robert's introductory statements support the possibility that distinct versions of Gwenfrewy's legend existed concurrently at Holywell and Gwytherin in the twelfth century, especially in light of the differences noted earlier in this chapter between the *Vita S. Wenefrede* and

[129] For the term in *Hystoria o Uuched Beuno*, see Wade-Evans, *VSBG*: 18. For its possible translations, see *Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru*, 2006, s.v. "gordderch." In his translation of the *Hystoria*, Wade-Evans renders (*g*)*orderch* as "mistress." See Wade-Evans, "Beuno Sant," 318.

Robert's text. Indeed, various oral traditions about Gwenfrewy persisted in Wales long after the end of the Middle Ages—we will recall the story collected by Father John Griffith Wynne from the sexton of Gwytherin in 1849 that the saint's reliquary, *Arch Gwenfrewy*, had held her bones when they were *returned* from Shrewsbury.[130] Furthermore, Henken has commented upon the different strains of the legend as preserved by eighteenth- and nineteenth-century antiquarians, and Gray Hulse has recorded twentieth-century oral traditions linking the rumored location of Gwenfrewy's convent to her place of burial and to Holywell.[131]

These traditions demonstrate the enduring strength of folk memory in the preservation of Gwenfrewy's story, and suggest that oral tales about the saint were common fare in Robert's day. Present day oral tradition in the area around Gwytherin is rich; there are today two locations, not far from one another, that are popularly associated with the religious house in which Gwenfrewy is said to have ruled as abbess. The first site is on a farm known as Tai Pellaf, situated about a mile south by southwest of Gwytherin church at the head of the Pennant Gwytherin valley. According to the late Mrs. J. Owen, a woman who had lived on the farm all of her life, one of the outbuildings had always been referred to as *mynachdy* (monastery), and until the later 1960s was regularly visited by Catholic pilgrims.[132] This building, superseded by a nineteenth-century farmhouse and now in ruins, was originally built as a house in the 1710s or the 1720s by Richard Edwards, then rector of Gwytherin, and the link between this structure and Gwenfrewy's nunnery may come from the fact that Edwards used the rubble of

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[130] Frances Margaret Taylor, *St. Winefride; or Holywell and its Pilgrims: A Sketch*, New revised ed. (London: Burns, Oates & Washbourne, Ltd., 1922). 28.
[131] Henken, *Traditions of the Welsh Saints*. See Chapter 12. Gray Hulse, Personal letters to the author, November 6, 2011 and November 17, 2011.
[132] Mrs. J. Owen of Tai Pellaf, interview by Gray Hulse, 1993.

Capel Gwenfrewy to erect it. This event left its mark on local tradition, for in the region it is related that those who tried to build from the ruins of the *capel* found the previous day's work supernaturally demolished each morning.[133] In terms of the connection between this old farm house at Tai Pellaf and Gwenfrewy's nunnery, John Griffith Wynne was told in 1849 that the southern half of Gwytherin *llan*, actually the site of *Capel Gwenfrewy*, had instead been the site of the saint's convent.[134] Wynne's memory may be confused on this point, for he wrote his account a decade after visiting Gwytherin, and he also claimed that he had been unable to locate there any sign of Gwenfrewy's tomb even though the Vinnemaglus stone and its companions had been popularly established as the site of the saint's grave for some time before Wynne arrived.[135] On the other hand, Gwilym Puw's *Carol Buchedd Gwenfrewi*, composed in the latter half of the seventeenth century, implies that the saint's convent was one and the same with the church, the *llan*, at Gwytherin, for we are informed that

> Yn ôl hyn o hanes bu fyw yn fanaches
> A sanctaidd abades Gwenfrewi
> Yn llan Gwyrf Fertheryn, lle yn agos at Ruthun,
> Dan Elyr a Theoyn yn crefyddu. (ll. 105-08)[136]
>
> (After this episode [i.e., her resurrection] Gwenfrewi lived as a nun
> And a holy abbess
> In the church of Gwytherin, a place near Rhuthun,
> Serving God under Elyr and Theoyn.)[137]

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[133] Stowers Johnson, *Hearthstones in the Hills: People and Places in the North Wales Heartland* (London: Robert Hale, 1987). 99.
[134] Taylor, *St. Winefride*: 28. See also D.R. Thomas, *Esgobaeth Llanelwy: The History of the Diocese of St. Asaph* (London: James Parker, 1870). 543.
[135] On the standing stones being identified in the nineteenth century as Wenefred's tomb, see George Nicholson, *The Cambrian Traveller's Guide*, 2nd ed. (London 1813). col. 653; M.L.L., *Gleanings of a Tour in North Wales* (Liverpool 1824). 27; G.N. Wright, *Scenes in North Wales* (London 1833). 113; Samuel Lewis, *A Topographical Dictionary of Wales, vol. 1* (London 1833). s.v. "Gwytherin"; see also Charles Frederick Cliffe, *The Book of North Wales*, 2nd ed. (London, 1851). 97. As with many such references, I am indebted to Mr. Gray Hulse for bringing these to my attention.
[136] ap Huw, "Critical Examination of Welsh Poetry," 209-10.
[137] Ibid., 219.

Similarly, the poem by Thomas Gent published in 1889, drawing its information largely from Fleetwood's 1713 *Life of St. Winefride*, maintains that Wenefred's nunnery was "contiguous" with St. Elerius's:

> *Wytheriacus* was the Building call'd;
> Part govern'd by THEONYE, Abbess fam'd;
> And where, contiguous, very strongly wall'd,
> Were Monks, taught by her Son, *Elerius* nam'd;
> Soon after which in CHRIST she did expire,
> Whilst he was Priest to all the Virgin Choir.[138]

If Wynne, Puw, and Gent preserve a genuine local tradition that the saint's convent had been located within the *llan* at Gwytherin, it would appear that Rector Edwards's removal of the stones of *Capel Gwenfrewy* to Tai Pellaf was responsible for transferring the location of the nunnery, in popular memory, to this latter site. A short distance to the west of Tai Pellaf, at a bend in the river Cledwen and on the north bank, one finds a second place associated with Gwenfrewy's convent. Pilgrims have long come here to visit the ruins of a roughly east-west running wall and a collection of rubble, the apparent remains of the convent church. The site has been so definitively identified that pilgrims have even "discovered" there the vestiges of the holy water font. The supposed church appears to be, however, nothing more than natural boulders and a pair of crumbling field walls standing on opposite sides of an old road, still a path of public right-of-way.[139]

Moving from these general traditions, we must note one final piece of evidence in support of the argument that Robert collected the story of Gwenfrewy's journey to

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[138] Thomas Gent and Robert Chambers, *Yorkshire Chap-Books* (London 1889). 81. In a footnote to this stanza, Gent notes that Elerius was the "Gentleman that erected the Monastery; who, by conjoining the Exercises of eremitical and monastical Conversation, had sundry Disciples of religious Gentlemen and Ladies under one Roof, tho' in different Apartments."

[139] Tristan Gray Hulse, Personal letter, November 6, 2011.

Gwytherin from oral folklore near the saint's burial site. In the Gwytherin valley, a story persists even today that the route by which Gwenfrewy traveled from Holywell to the location of her eventual burial was once marked by an unbroken line of yew trees, one at every mile along the way.[140] According to the tradition, these yews served in later ages as a guideline leading pilgrims from the site of the saint's martyrdom to her final place of burial. There are today yew trees still noted locally as the remains of this line: the yews in Gwytherin *llan* mark the end of Gwenfrewy's journey, and about a mile north by northeast of the churchyard there is a yew on a local farm, Hafod, cited as part of the line once leading from Holywell. Another local tradition, passed on by Mrs. J. Owen to Gray Hulse in 1993, maintained that the saint's path from Holywell continued south by southwest past Gwytherin all the way to Tai Pellaf, and indeed a yew tree standing beside Rector Edwards's dilapidated farm house (the *mynachdy*) was known to Mrs. Owen as one of the trees that stood every mile along the route of Gwenfrewy's journey.[141] So far as she could recall, the saint's path was thought to pass through no villages, although it came near to some inhabited places like the farm Hafod. Owen also knew of a tradition claiming that a second yew had formerly stood on the site of the nineteenth-century farmhouse at Tai Pellaf, and she was once told by a local woman that a tunnel ran underground from the *mynachdy* all the way to Gwytherin *llan*.[142] Another local story maintains that, at every point where Prior Robert and the Shrewsbury delegation stopped to rest on their return journey from Gwytherin, a holly tree rose up in protest at the

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[140] Ibid. To this story we might compare the episode noted by Cubitt in the legend of Æthelberht of Kent that a great tree rose up in Essex on the spot where the saint rested while en route to Mercia. Cubitt, "Sites and Sanctity," 76.

[141] In 1870 D.R. Thomas noted that "Three yew trees on a spot about a mile from the village [of Gwytherin] are said to mark the site of an old monastery. If so, it was probably the *old collegium*." Thomas, *History of the Diocese of St. Asaph*: 543n3.

[142] Gray Hulse, Personal letter, November 17, 2011.

removal of Gwenfrewy's bones.[143] A final piece of the tradition connecting Tai Pellaf to Gwytherin and to Holywell along a supposed route running roughly southwest to northeast might be glimpsed in the name of a farm standing approximately halfway between Tai Pellaf and Gwytherin *llan*. This farm is known in the area as Llwyn Saint (Grove of the Saints),[144] but the origin of its name is apparently unknown. Mrs. Owen, however, who came from a family of first-language Welsh speakers, thought that *llwyn* (grove) may have been a corruption of *llwybr* (path), a possibility that would seem to connect the spot with Gwenfrewy's notional journey to the convent at Tai Pellaf, and indeed Llwyn Saint does stand on the straightest route from Gwytherin to Tai Pellaf.

THE *VITA S. WENEFREDE* AND *LIBELLUS MIRACULORUM*: LATE TWELFTH-CENTURY WORKS?

The focus of the anonymous Life on the Holywell region is marked, and is underscored by the brief, almost perfunctory mention of Gwytherin made at the end of the text. Stronger evidence for the localization of this Life comes, however, from the appended dossier of miracles known as the *Libellus miraculorum*. This is a compendium of twenty-four miracle stories set solely in or around the Holywell shrine, "incolis cognita vel visa" ("known to the local inhabitants or seen by them") and "digna relatu" ("worthy of retelling").[145] The relationship of the *Libellus* to the *Vita* itself is problematic. These

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[143] Johnson, *Hearthstones in the Hills*: 98. Cf. Caxton's story about the healing well at Woolston that sprang up to provide water for washing the saint's bones just before Robert and company brought them at last into Shrewsbury. The well appeared after the delegation attempted to continue their journey following a short rest. Horstmann, "Prosalegenden I," 311.

[144] *Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru*, 2006, s.v. "llwyn."

[145] De Smedt, *AASS, t.I. Nov.*: 706; *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 103. Throughout the miracle list, the compiler refers to his informants as *incolae* and *indigenae*, often noting what they saw or heard at the well. I count the final story about the individual punishments of two clerics who stole from Holywell church as two separate miracles.

two texts survive on fols. 138r-145v of BL Cotton MS Claudius A.v, and there is no specific indication there that they are of separate origin; the manuscript itself appears to hail from Worcester *ca*. 1203.[146] It has been suggested, however, that they are of different date and the work of independent authors, largely on the grounds of their notably distinct rhetorical styles and the uniqueness of the *Libellus* as a miracle dossier in extant Welsh hagiography.[147] Given the smaller number of vindictive miracles in relation to those of a curative bent (nine of the former, fifteen of the latter) it would appear that the list combines, respectively, both Welsh and non-Welsh hagiographical preferences, and Smith and Winward underscore the possibility that the *Libellus* was collected from oral sources and penned for or by the Norman monks of Basingwerk

[146] Cotton Claudius A.v is a composite of three manuscripts, the final of which is a collection of the following saints' Lives: the *Vita S. Erkenwaldi* (fols. 135r-138r), the *Vita S. Wenefrede* and the *Libellus miraculorum* (fols. 138r-145v), the *Vita S. Neoti* (fols. 145v-159v), and William of Malmesbury's *Vita S. Wlstani* (fols. 159v-199v). The text is written out in two columns of twenty-eight lines on very thick parchment. The *Vita S. Wenefrede* and the *Libellus* have their own rubrics but are copied out in the same hand as the remainder of the manuscript. This small legendary belonged to the Cistercian Abbey of Holme Cultrum, Cumbria, but seems to have been written at Worcester. Ker, *Medieval Libraries of Great Britain*: 102. The Worcester origin of the collection has been posited based upon the presence of the Malmesbury Life in conjunction with the facts that Robert's *Vita et translatio* was dedicated to Prior Gwarin of Worcester and that the thirteenth-century Worcester Antiphasser includes an entry for Wenefred at September 19; the latter two observations have been taken to indicate an interest in Wenefred on the part of the Worcester monks. Wulfstan of Worcester (d. 1095) was canonized in 1203, just about the time that the Cotton manuscript was copied out. Wade-Evans, *VSBG*: xvi-xvii. In his *Vita S. Wlstani*, which is also dedicated to Prior Gwarin and only survives in the present manuscript, Malmesbury claims that Wulfstan often visited the chapel of St. Peter at Shrewsbury before it was converted into a Benedictine Abbey, always maintaining that it would one day be the most glorious church in the region. This *Vita*, a Latin recension of a now lost English Life, has been dated *ca*. 1124-42. However, Malmesbury ends his account of Wulfstan's prophecy for St. Peter's with the following statement, one presumably addressed to Prior Gwarin: "So he spake at that time, and the thing came to pass according to his promise, as is too well known to you for me to ply my pen in telling you of it." Could this be a reference to Robert's *Vita et translatio*? If so, the *Vita S. Wlstani* should be re-assigned to the years 1138-42. *William of Malmesbury's Life of Saint Wulstan*, trans. J.H.F. Peile (1934; repr., Felinfach: Llanerch Publishers, 1996). 40. For the Latin text of this Life, see R. R. Darlington, *Vita Wulfstani* (Royal Historical Society, 1928). The other two manuscripts (fols. 2-134) that make up Cotton Claudius A.v hail repectively from the Benedictine foundations at Peterborough and Belvoir. Ker, *Medieval Libraries of Great Britain*: 9 and 151.

[147] Winward, "Lives of St Wenefred," 115 and the sources cited there. Cf., however, Charles-Edwards, "Gwenfrewi (*fl. c.*650)."

Abbey.[148] We will recall Winward's position that the *Vita S. Wenefrede* was also most likely written by a monk of Basingwerk. There seems little doubt that the anonymous Life and the *Libellus* are the work of non-Welshmen using similar sources, in part because both refer to the saint as *Candida Wenefreda*, a name that would be redundant to someone who knew both Latin and Welsh: *Candida* and (*G*)*wen* are, respectively, the Latin and Welsh terms for "white." They seem then to have been combining native Welsh traditions with information derived from elsewhere.[149]

A reconsideration of the nature and focus of the miracles presented in the *Libellus miraculorum* alongside what can be established regarding the chronology of Basingwerk's control over the Holywell shrine will make possible the suggestion that the anonymous Life and its appended miracle dossier, traditionally dated *ca*. 1135-38, can perhaps be placed instead at the end of the twelfth century.[150] The miracles in the *Libellus*, when compared to those recorded in Robert's text, suggest the different uses to which both Lives were put, and help, therefore, to illuminate the context and purpose of each work. Before moving into the *translatio* account, where he records punishment

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[148] Winward, "Lives of St Wenefred," 115-18; Smith, "Oral and Written." 329 and 341. On the distinction in Irish hagiography between vengeance and healing miracles on the one hand, and miracles meant to demonstrate the saint's direct connection to God on the other, see Clare Stancliffe, "The Miracle Stories in Seventh-Century Irish Saints' Lives," in *The Seventh Century: Change and Continuity; Proceedings of a Joint French and British Colloquium held at the Warburg Institute 8-9 July 1988*, ed. Jacques Fontaine and J.N. Hillgarth (London: The Warburg Institute, University of London, 1992).

[149] On the sources for the *Libellus* compiler's material, see note 145 above. On *Candida Wenefreda*, see Appendix B below. The *Libellus* compiler refers to the saint as *Candida Wenefride* during his account of her well flowing with a milky substance *post expulsionem Francorum a tota Venedocia*. It is possible that the alternate spelling *Wenefrida* might indicate separate authorship for the *Libellus*, since the *Vita S. Wenefrede* author consistently spells the name with an e, *Wenefreda*. However, the second and final time that her name appears in the *Libellus*, it appears with an e, *Wenefreda*. The i-spelling could be a copyist's error, and it is curious that Wade-Evans reads *Candida Wenefroeda* in the sequence in the *Vita* where the saint's name is explained, the only other time in the two texts that the appellation *Candida* is used. The Bollandists give the standard spelling at this point (i.e., *Wenefreda*). See Wade-Evans, *VSBG*: 294; De Smedt, *AASS, t.I. Nov.*: 704.

[150] Winward discusses this possibility and, based on the difficulty of dating the anonymous Life securely, observes that, in relation to Robert's *Vita*, "the primacy of the *Vita S. Wenefrede* should no longer be taken for granted." Winward, "Lives of St Wenefred," 128. See also 99-100 and 124-28.

miracles that occurred at Gwytherin, Robert ends his Life of Wenefred with a short list of curative and punitive wonders that occurred at Holywell, but he does not register any of those reported in the *Libellus*.[151] Of the five miracle stories he relates in detail, two deal with healings and three with punishments, but with one exception Robert's punitive miracles are far less severe in nature than are those in the dossier attached to the anonymous Life, which involve physical deformations, accidental impalement, whipping, and several deaths.[152] Robert was, of course, writing to advertise the power of the saint he was bringing to Shrewsbury, not to defend any claim on her shrine as the author of the anonymous Life seems to have been doing.[153] Also unlike the author or compiler of the *Libellus*, who makes frequent reference to miracles occurring "Diebus . . . Francorum" ("in the days of the French") and who employs other similar temporal markers, Robert does not situate any of his miracle tales in a specific time.[154] These references on the part of the *Libellus* compiler have been cited as evidence that the list could not have been

[151] Only Robert's first story demonstrates any similarity to the miracles reported in the *Libellus*. The first miracle that Robert recounts involves a blind girl whose father brings her to the church at Holywell where she spends the night in prayer and receives her sight the following morning, an event that attracts much attention from the local population (a standard element in all of Robert's miracle stories). To the structure of this tale we might compare the final healing miracle recounted in the *Libellus*, a story involving the resurrection of a dead girl. A man brings the body to Wenefred's church for burial but arrives late in the evening, so the corpse, wrapped in bandages, remains locked in the church overnight. When the presbyter returns in the morning to begin the office of the dead, he finds the girl, freed of her winding sheets, crawling upon the ground and asking for food. For these miracle stories, see *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 69 and 112.

[152] Robert's punishment miracles all respond to thefts, usually of animals but in one case of critical components from a mill. The only one of these to include any degree of violence against the perpetrator, however, is the story of a bandit who steals the horse of a man praying in Wenefred's well chapel. The horse had been tied to the chapel door, so the thief committed the crime within the saint's enclosure. Wenefred's wrath manifests itself in a painful and debilitating sickness that results in the withering and eventual falling away of the robber's right arm, apparently the very one with which he unbound the horse. The man repents, and he remains at Holywell to warn others against insulting the maiden or infringing on her rights. See ibid., 69-71. Earlier in his narrative Robert had related another postmortem miracle story involving horse theft, this time two horses taken from Deiferus' church at Bodfari while their owners pray inside. The culprits are unable to escape the saint's power, however, and repeatedly find themselves drawn back to the enclosure from which they began, ultimately being forced to confess their crime and return the animals. Robert claims that this is but one of many such stories reported about Deiferus. See ibid., 51-53.

[153] For more on this point, see page 191 below.

[154] De Smedt, *AASS, t.I. Nov.*: 706. On the same page the *Libellus* compiler uses the phrase "Tempore . . . Francorum."

assembled in the 1130s and that it must, therefore, represent a later addition to the *Vita S. Wenefrede*, for such references would have perhaps been odd at a time when the Normans had so recently exerted their control over territories in North Wales.[155] Because of its significance for dating the *Libellus*, one of the wonders said to have occurred in the time of the French deserves special mention—the story of how the saint's well ran with a white, milky liquid ("lacteo liquore") for three days following the expulsion of the Normans from Gwynedd ("post expulsionem Francorum a tota Venedocia"), an event that occurred in the aftermath of Henry I's death in 1135.[156] We learn here that this milk-like substance was of curative power for those who imbibed it, but that, almost from the moment it first appeared in the spring, it slowly faded until, at the end of the third day, nothing was left but the pure water of the well. The compiler makes clear that this miracle was not the result of meteorological events:

> Et ne quis existimet ventorum turbine aut pluviarum intemperie hoc accidisse, sciat non breve tempus ante et post, etiam tunc, absque ulla elementorum commotione fuisse. Et nullatenus inde debet oriri hæsitatio vel dubium, quia et hoc sæpius venisse ab indigenis est auditum.[157]
>
> (Lest anyone think that this occurred because of the force of the winds or unseasonable rain, he should know that not for some time before or after was there any disturbance of the elements. Nor should any hesitation or doubt arise, because the inhabitants say that this often happened.)[158]

The date at which this miracle must have occurred has been taken as a *terminus post quem* for the *Libellus*, and given the fact that the anonymous Life seems unaware of

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[155] Baring-Gould and Fisher, *LBS*, 3: 185-86; Winward, "Lives of St Wenefred," 115.
[156] De Smedt, *AASS, t.I. Nov.*: 707.
[157] Ibid., 707-08.
[158] *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 111. It should be noted that, in later ages, the well was said to run white after steady rain: "[The well] never freezes, although intensely cold, and scarcely ever varies in the supply of water, the only difference after wet weather being a considerable discoloration of a wheyey tinge." John Murray, *Handbook for Travellers in North Wales*, 4th ed. (London 1874). 43.

Gwenfrewy's *translatio*, that text has usually been dated before Robert's expedition.[159] Disregarding the oddity of referring to recent events as having occurred "Diebus . . . Francorum," the whole compilation could be placed, therefore, between 1135 and 1138. A major problem with accepting a date in this range, however, is that Robert, for all of his assiduousness, does not appear to have seen these texts, for if he had, he may have included in his own *Vita* the story of the saint's Roman pilgrimage and perhaps the recent miracle of the milky liquid appearing in her fountain, something which seems to have occurred just a few years before his arrival.[160] And Gerald of Wales mentions nothing whatsoever of Gwenfrewy when recounting his brief stay at Basingwerk in 1188, something that is perhaps strange if the anonymous Life did originate there earlier in the century, but is by no means definitive evidence against the existence of the *Vita S. Wenefrede* at this point late in the century.[161] While Robert's *Vita et translatio* records traditions from both Holywell and Gwytherin, his primary concern is to demonstrate the saint's power and to justify the claims of Shrewsbury Abbey to that power. At the same

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[159] Winward, "Lives of St Wenefred," 90; Charles-Edwards, "Gwenfrewi (*fl. c.*650)."

[160] Of course, given his own background and his ties with Chester, it is possible that Robert would have suppressed or at least altered the story of the milky liquid flowing through the well in celebration of the Norman withdrawal from Gwynedd. Alternatively, but for the same reasons, the story may have been withheld from him, or, if it were a complete invention, may not even have been conceived by the time he arrived. That Robert had not seen the *Libellus* is also demonstrated by his seeming unawareness of Gwenfrewy's penchant for healing epilepsy, something the *Libellus* compiler singles out as one of her widely known specialties. *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 109.

[161] Gerald does take note of nearby silver mines and of Coleshill. See Thorpe, *Gerald of Wales: The Journey Through Wales/The Description of Wales*: 36 and 196. Ultimately Gerald's silence cannot be taken as evidence that the anonymous Life had not been written or that Gwenfrewy's cult was somehow defunct at the time of his visit, for while he was an assiduous preserver of both written and oral information, he could have left the saint and her well unmentioned for any number of reasons. For starters, his mention of Basingwerk is very brief, and, if he wanted to avoid taking sides in a contentious issue, Gerald may have decided to overlook the saint and her well if, as was likely at this time, it were a matter of friction between the monks of Basingwerk and of Chester. On the other hand, he may have left Gwenfrewy out of his narrative as a result of the traditional rivalry between North and South Wales, a rivalry that existed (and still exists) not only among the Welsh people but among their saints. While Holywell is located in northeastern Wales, Gerald himself hailed from the complete opposite corner of the country. On the rivalry between Welsh saints, see also the discussion of the Welsh Lives of Beuno and David on pages 144-46 above.

time, his emphasis on the miraculous efficacy of the Holywell shrine works to the benefit of his brethren at Chester, who were likely in control of Holywell at the time of the *translatio*. Basingwerk Abbey, although it would later prove a contestant against St. Werburgh's in the struggle to hold the saint's shrine, had been established for only a few years when Robert and his entourage arrived in North Wales.[162] Robert's account celebrates the power of Wenefred's relics, essentially drawing attention to their new resting place in Shrewsbury, but in the miracle episodes centered on Holywell he is careful not to undermine the interests of the monks of Chester. He even goes so far as to elevate Holywell above Gwytherin as a place of miraculous efficacy at the very end of his *Vita*, but he does not overstate the difference:

> Multoque uberius ibidem super infirmantes divinæ fiunt miserationes quam in loco in quo sanctissimi corporis ejus gleba tumulata fuit: quod ideo reor factum esse, quod illum locum semper specialius peculiarem habuerit, in quo conversionis suæ primordia micuerunt et ipsa divinis mysteriis est initiata, et in quo signa martyrii illius per omne tempus recentia perseverant. Verumtamen utrobique mirabiliter divina virtus operatur, et per ipsius suffragia innumera fiunt magnalia, ægrisque cupita præstantur remedia.[163]
>
> (And much more copiously do divine mercies occur there [i.e., at Holywell] for the infirm than in the place where the clay of her most holy body was entombed. I think this has happened for this reason, that she always held that place as her own special one in which the beginnings of her monastic life first shone forth and she was initiated into the divine mysteries, and in which the signs of her martyrdom remain fresh for all time. Nevertheless, divine power works wondrously in both places, and through her aid countless mighty works occur, and desired remedies are granted to the sick.)[164]

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[162] Basingwerk was established in 1131. Control of Holywell was given to Basingwerk by Robert de Pierrepont sometime during the earldom of Ranulf II of Chester (1129-53). The fact that the monks of Shrewsbury first learned of and had easy access to Gwenfrewy's cult through their brethren at St. Werburgh's seems, though, to suggest that Basingwerk had not yet gained control of Holywell by the time of Robert's expedition. Further, we might expect Robert to have asserted the claims of Chester to the shrine at some point in his narrative if those claims were in any way under threat at the time of his writing. See Huw Pryce, *The Acts of the Welsh Rulers, 1120-1283* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2005). 345 and the sources cited there. On the founding of Basingwerk, see Williams, "Basingwerk Abbey," 89.
[163] De Smedt, *AASS, t.I. Nov.*: 726.
[164] *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 75-76.

Robert's praise of Holywell is robust, but it does not seem to be part of any debate over who should control it, and he includes Gwytherin, the site where Gwenfrewy's bones formerly rested, as a place of holy wonders. In combination with the *Vita S. Wenefrede*, conversely, the *Libellus miraculorum* is a much more overt expression of interest in the inviolability and power of the Holywell shrine, something perhaps indicating that these two texts belong to a period in which the contest over Holywell had become more heated. Besides noting the saint's special power for curing epilepsy, the *Libellus* compiler gives a long list of particular diseases that she regularly heals, something that reads almost like an advertisement.[165] The references to the "days of the French"—if they were not just overly exuberant and celebratory declarations made in the years immediately following 1135—would seem to support the idea that the *Libellus* includes material belonging to the latter portion of the twelfth century. Interest in corporal relics or the places where they do or did reside is completely absent, and the anonymous *Vita* and *Libellus* focus closely on the power of Holywell. Together, the anonymous Life and the miracle dossier can be read as the sort of formal documentation required to articulate or enforce a given party's claims in a dispute over an important cult site. Alternately, these might be the sort of texts that could be used to shore up claims recently confirmed. In this regard, we will do well to recall that the anonymous Life, unlike Robert's *Vita et translatio*, records in great detail the process of securing royal approval for the transfer of a specific portion of Tyfid's land into Beuno's hands, the very portion on which he constructs the little church that Wenefred herself eventually comes to possess and that stands very near to her healing well.[166] This emphasis in the *Vita S.*

[165] Ibid., 109-11.
[166] Ibid., 97-98.

Wenefrede on the legal transfer of Tyfid's property into monastic hands, whether or not the details came from a lost *Vita S. Beunoi*, subtly underscores a claim to that property on the part of the twelfth-century owners of Beuno's original foundation—the monks of Basingwerk. The *Libellus* backs up this claim by demonstrating Wenefred's willingness and capacity to punish those who abuse the sanctity of her well. The best example of this is a miracle story involving the secular Norman owner of the property on which the Holywell shrine is situated. The man, wishing to establish a mill on the fountain stream, is irked by the presence of Beuno's stone (*saxum Beunoi*) because it interferes with the flow of the water. Having employed without success a hundred oxen and numerous workmen to move this large rock, the man kicks it in anger with the result that his leg is horribly disfigured and he is left crippled for life. Immediately thereafter the man's wife, who is completely healthy, decides to bathe in the well. For her affrontery at defiling the holy place needlessly, she is rendered barren for the remainder of her life, and the *Libellus* compiler ends the story with the following sentiment:

> Equum quippe fuit, ut, qui in hereditatem martiris uenientes eius sanctuarium illicite polluerunt, omnibus postmodum in eorum circuitu forent illusio et derisum, subsanatio et obprobrium. Talibus et his mirabilioribus infinitis miraculis contra prauos uirgo Domini claruit. Que omnia, si literali memorie traderentur, tempus deficeret cicius quam copia fandi.[167]
>
> (It was fair that those who encroached on the inheritance of the martyr and unlawfully polluted her sanctuary would afterwards be for all those in the neighbourhood an object of mockery and scoffing, insult and disgrace. The virgin of the Lord was renowned for these miracles and innumerable others, yet more wondrous, worked against the perverse. If all were handed down and remembered in writing, time would run out before the supply of words.)[168]

[167] Wade-Evans, *VSBG*: 300.
[168] *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 106-07.

If the *Vita S. Wenefrede* and the *Libellus miraculorum* are in fact statements meant to support claims to control the well, when were they made? While the exact chronology is unclear, we know that Holywell was passed back and forth between Basingwerk and Chester in the twelfth century, until it was finally confirmed as a possession of the former by Dafydd ap Llywelyn in July of 1240.[169] A charter exists, however, recording Llywelyn ap Iorwerth's gift of the Holywell church, which presumably included Gwenfrewy's shrine, to Basingwerk Abbey, and this charter, while not of absolute certain date, has been placed somewhere between mid-1196 and late 1202.[170] The grant of 1240 confirms this one, and we will recall that the *Vita S. Wenefrede* and the *Libellus miraculorum* first appear in a manuscript of *ca*. 1203. The Cotton manuscript seems, of course, to have been written at Worcester, far away from northeast Wales, but Worcester had a demonstrable interest in Gwenfrewy's cult in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries as is evidenced by the dedication of Robert's *Vita et translatio* to Gwarin and Wenefred's September 19 entry in the Worcester Antiphasser.[171] It might be possible that the anonymous Life and its appended miracle dossier were composed at Basingwerk by two different authors in defense of—or to shore up—their abbey's claims to Holywell against those of Chester, perhaps around or leading up to the time that Llywelyn ap Iorwerth formally recognized the shrine as a Basingwerk possession. The fact that the anonymous Life ignores Wenefred's *translatio* and claims that her body still resides at Gwytherin might be a deliberate attempt to steer attention

[169] Sometime between 1155 and 1162, Henry II confirmed Basingwerk's rights to Holywell that had been granted at some point between 1131 and 1153. Sometime during the earldom of Hugh II of Chester (1153-1181), the church and shrine reverted back to St. Werburgh's. For Dafydd ap Llywelyn's grant of 1240, see Pryce, *The Acts of the Welsh Rulers, 1120-1283*: 460, no. 292. For the earlier history of the ownership of Holywell, see ibid., 345; Winward, "Lives of St Wenefred," 125. See also Appendix C below.
[170] Pryce, *The Acts of the Welsh Rulers, 1120-1283*: 346, no. 216. Holywell church is given in this grant "cum omnibus pertinentiis suis" ("with all of his own holdings pertaining [to it]").
[171] On the Antiphasser, see note 71 above.

away from Shrewsbury and to focus it on the healing power of the Holywell shrine now in Basingwerk's control. That the *translatio* could be ignored is not so surprising, for something similar occurs in the late fifteenth-century Welsh translation of Prior Robert's Life, *Buchedd Gwenfrewy*, in NLW Peniarth MS 27ii. The translator—who cannot have been unaware of the *translatio* given that he was working from a version of Robert's text some 450 years after Gwenfrewy was moved to Shrewsbury—completely excises the *translatio* narrative, and he ends his text with the assertion that the saint remains buried at Gwytherin.[172] This deliberate excision of the *translatio* account is likely to have stemmed from the Welsh preference for leaving bodily relics in place, and the act of overlooking the *translatio*, therefore, may well have been, at least in the Peniarth *Buchedd*, an ideological move to overwrite or reverse a cultural loss.[173]

In emphasizing in the *Libellus* stories of Normans punished for encroaching on the shrine in the days when the struggle over Tegeingl was most intense (i.e., "Diebus . . . Francorum") the monks of Basingwerk, while themselves Normans, may have been trying to align themselves with local sentiments against the claims of a rival monastery in England. In this regard, it should be remembered that the Normans had, in the first generations following the Conquest, demonstrated great facility and zeal in adopting and promoting Anglo-Saxon saints. Speaking to the survival and prosperous development of the cults of Anglo-Saxon royal saints in the decades after 1066, Susan J. Ridyard has commented that, while we can trace the mechanisms of the survival of these cults only rarely, when we can "the most striking attribute of the Norman churchmen [involved] is

[172] Cf. Winward, "Lives of St Wenefred," 99. On this Welsh translation of Robert's Life, see chapter 5 below.
[173] On the Welsh preference for leaving relics undisturbed, see chapter 2 above. For more on the ideological positioning of the Peniarth *Buchedd*, see again chapter 5 below.

not their scepticism toward, their contempt of or their hostility to the English saints: rather it is their businesslike readiness to make the heroes of the past serve the politics of the present."[174] To this observation Ridyard adds that "the status and function of the saint as monastic patron" provides the key to understanding the adoption of Anglo-Saxon saints by Norman churchmen, for the saint

> was a crucial part of the equipment used by the religious community in the definition of both its internal relations and of its relations with external secular and ecclesiastical powers. The legend and cult of the saint were essential to the proper functioning of the religious community; and the Norman churchmen had nothing to gain by rendering their communities incapable of functioning properly. Accordingly there was created in the years following 1066 a powerful coaltion of continental churchman and Anglo-Saxon saint in opposition to the threats posed variously by Norman aristocrat, by English layman, by Norman bishop, by rival religious house and on occasion by rebellious monk. There was no place in the Anglo-Norman realm for the alignment of Norman monk and Norman layman against Anglo-Saxon saint.[175]

Judging from these observations, the statement in the anonymous Life that Wenefred remained at Gwytherin could well be part of the sort of cultural and religious adaptation that the Normans had displayed in England, and the monks of Basingwerk did have the support of the Welsh princes in their struggle with Chester to control Holywell. In the miracle story of the milky liquid running through the well, Frederick Suppe has noted "hints of nationalistic feeling," and Winward maintains that we need not assume non-

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[174] Ridyard, *Royal Saints of Anglo-Saxon England*: 251. On this topic in general, see also Ridyard, "*Condigna Veneratio*: Post-Conquest Attitudes to Anglo-Saxon Saints." On the ability of the Normans to adapt to the values and identity-markers of a conquered culture, see, e.g., the introduction to Laura Ashe, *Fiction and History in England, 1066-1200* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007). 1-27. Cynthia Camp has informed me that the sort of adoption or re-alignment on the part of Normans to Welsh culture or identity that I propose here would be all the more plausible in a monastery where the will of the community would be subordinated to that of the abbot. If the monastery depended upon the patronage of a Welsh prince, as Basingwerk did from the turn of the thirteenth century, then the abbot would have all the more reason to conform himself and his community to Welsh interests.

[175] Ridyard, *Royal Saints of Anglo-Saxon England*: 252.

Norman authorship for this episode, even if it does celebrates the departure of the Normans from North Wales:[176]

> [I]t is possible that an author writing for a Norman audience would include stories of past history the saint had had with their countrymen. Demonstrating that Wenefred grants no mercy to violators whether they be Norman or otherwise would also be appropriate, since the purpose of the *libellus* is to demonstrate the power and preserve the sanctity of the saint.[177]

The Cistercians were closely allied with the Welsh princes, and in 1147 they absorbed the Savignac Order of which Basingwerk was originally a part.[178] If the *Libellus* were composed or compiled by a Cistercian at Basingwerk, he could have been attempting to ignore the Norman origins of his own community and align himself and his brethren with Welsh interests, including anti-Norman sentiments in his text as a way of refuting the claims of the Chester Benedictines by subtly aligning them with foreign interests. Under Abbot Thomas Pennant in the late fifteenth century, Basingwerk became known for its patronage of Welsh poets, but there is no clear indication of the abbey having had such a reputation or having fostered Welsh sympathies in earlier times.[179] On the contrary, the monks of Basingwerk in the later thirteenth century claimed ignorance of Welsh custom and law in a land dispute involving Llywelyn ap Gruffudd, something that perhaps problematizes the suggestions made here regarding Basingwerk Cistercians deliberately siding with Welsh interests in the later twelfth century.[180] Of course, it is not impossible that the monks could have tailored their political loyalties as a given situation required,

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[176] Frederick C. Suppe, "review of Elissa R. Henken's *The Welsh Saints: A Study of Patterned Lives*," *Speculum* 69, no. 1 (1994): 172-73.
[177] Winward, "Lives of St Wenefred," 117.
[178] Davies, *Conquest, Coexistence, and Change*: 196.
[179] Williams, "Basingwerk Abbey," 104. For the fifteenth-century literary prominence of Basingwerk, see, for example, the translation and discussion of Tudur Aled's *cywydd* "Stori Gwenfrewi a'i Ffynnon" in Charles-Edwards, *Two Mediaeval Welsh Poems.* See also chapter 5 below.
[180] See page 147 above.

acknowledging or denying knowledge of or involvement in Welsh matters according to their political needs. What's more, the contest concerning Llywelyn occurred some eighty years after the date of composition proposed here for the *Vita S. Wenefrede* and the *Libellus miraculorum*, more than enough time for changes of sentiment to occur among the Basingwerk community.

BL Lansdowne MS 436 and the Spread of Wenefred's *Vitae* in the Fourteenth Century

Ultimately, the revised dating here proposed for the *Vita S. Wenefrede*, as well as the scenario it entails, is purely conjectural and will no doubt invite lively criticism. It is offered for the sake of exploring a possibility heretofore unconsidered. No matter where the anonymous Life should be situated temporally, we know that the version of the legend it records was eventually overshadowed by Prior Robert's account, which survives in more copies and which more directly influenced the later medieval tradition of Gwenfrewy's legend in Latin, English, and Welsh. That the *Vita S. Wenefrede* and Robert's text could co-exist without impacting one another, however, might be borne out by the apparent fact that copies of both were at Worcester by *ca*. 1203. Robert addressed his Life to Gwarin of Worcester (d. 1142) in about 1140 and the anonymous Life was copied out there, some sixty years later, in a manuscript containing William of Malmesbury's *Vita S. Wlstani*, a text also addressed to Prior Gwarin, indicating that Gwarin's other books—perhaps including the *Vita et translatio S. Wenefrede*—were still at Worcester when the *Vita S. Wenefrede* was copied into the Cotton manuscript. If this were the case, then it is significant that the anonymous Life reveals no influence from

Robert's *Vita et translatio*, for it was obviously felt to be a text that could stand on its own without the additional information provided in Robert's narrative. This latter work emerges at the end of the medieval period, however, as the standard version of Gwenfrewy's legend, for the many English and Welsh versions datable to the fifteenth century draw directly on the outlines of Robert's account.[181] But from the two and a half centuries following its initial composition *ca*. 1140, only one other copy of the *Vita et translatio* survives, that found in the thirteenth-century Cambridge, Trinity College MS O.4.42. The notable paucity of copies surviving from this time has been taken as evidence of skepticism towards Gwenfrewy herself, and indeed, no copies of the anonymous Life as it appears in Cotton Claudius A.v surface from these centuries either.[182] A recension of the *Vita S. Wenefrede* does appear in one manuscript of the fourteenth century, however, and the nature of this copy indicates that the process by which Robert's text became the standard version of Gwenfrewy's legend was not a simple matter of overwriting or replacement. The *Vita S. Wenefrede* that appears in BL Lansdowne MS 436 is a composite text, one that carefully integrates passages from Robert's Life into the anonymous author's own, yet here the text of the anonymous Life predominates.[183] Based on the evidence of the Lansdowne Life of Wenefred then, the predominance of Robert's *Vita et translatio* from an early point can no longer be taken

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[181] Some brief, tantalizing elements of the legend as preserved in the anonymous Life do appear in fifteenth-century vernacular Lives of Wenefred, for which see chapter 5 below.

[182] See Fleetwood, *The Life and Miracles of St. Wenefred*: 23-24; and Baring-Gould and Fisher, *LBS*, 3: 187. Winward rightfully notes that the lack of copies from these centuries could be the result of poor rates of manuscript survival or of the highly localized nature of Gwenfrewy's cult. Winward, "Lives of St Wenefred," 93-94.

[183] I have prepared a full transcription and translation of the Lansdowne 436 Life of Wenefred but have excluded them from this dissertation due to new University of Georgia mandates requiring all theses and dissertations to be made available online through the university library system immediately after graduation. I am preparing my transcription and translation for publication in the near future. For further information, please contact me at James[dot]Ryan[dot]Gregory[at]gmail[dot]com.

for granted, and his account cannot be said to have become the primary one until sometime after the composition of the Lansdowne text. Furthermore, the saintly company in which Wenefred appears in the Lansdowne manuscript reveals the extent to which she was already, by the fourteenth century, being incorporated into the pantheon of English saints, a process that would gain momentum throughout the 1400s.

To judge from a fifteenth-century *ex libris* inscription on fol. 1v, Lansdowne 436 belonged, at least in the later Middle Ages, to the Benedictine nunnery at Romsey in Hampshire.[184] The manuscript dates to *ca*. 1300 and besides the Life of Wenefred, the surviving text consists of forty-two other *vitae*, all for English saints.[185] All of these Lives have been abbreviated, re-written, or both, possibly by a single redactor, and the *Vita S. Wenefrede* is no exception. The *Libellus miraculorum* is missing, and the Life of Wenefred, appearing on fols. 107r-109r, is the thirty-fifth text in the manuscript, preceded by a Life of Abbess Hilda and followed by a Life of Ebba, virgin and abbess. The compilation contains the Lives of both male and female saints, and besides twelve royal virgins and abbesses it includes hermits, confessors, abbots, bishops, archbishops, and martyred kings in its catalog of English sanctity. The size of the Lansdowne manuscript would facilitate reading out loud, and given the prominence of female lives in the compilation it appears to have been produced for a conventual community. And

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[184] For a brief description of the manuscript, see Love, *Three Eleventh-Century Anglo-Latin Saints' Lives*: lxxxii. See also 197-99. For a list and discussion of its contents, see Paul Grosjean, "Vita S. Roberti: Novi Monasterii in Anglia Abbatis," *Analecta Bollandiana* 56 (1938). See also De Smedt, *AASS, t.I. Nov.*: 692, §7; and Ker, *Medieval Libraries of Great Britain*: 164. For the history of Romsey Abbey, see Henry George Downing Liveing, *Records of Romsey Abbey: An Account of the Benedictine House of Nuns, with Notes on the Parish Church and Town (A.D. 907-1588)* (Winchester: Warren and Son, Ltd., 1912). For the archeological record of the abbey, see Ian R. Scott, *Romsey Abbey: Report on the Excavations 1973-1991* (Hampshire Field Club & Archaeological Society, 1996).

[185] The manuscript includes an index of fourteenth-century date indicating that the compilation originally consisted of forty-seven Lives. See Love, *Three Eleventh-Century Anglo-Latin Saints' Lives*: 198. See also n2 on the same page.

although it can be placed at Romsey in the later medieval period, the fact that the collection gives no pride of place to the *vitae* of Ethelfleda and Modwenna, respectively the foundress of Romsey and her successor as abbess, may indicate that the manuscript was not originally created for the nuns there. Starting with the Augustinian mission of the late sixth century and ecclesiastics active in the Benedictine reforms of the tenth, the collection moves forward roughly chronologically to incorporate the Lives of twelfth- and thirteenth-century eremitical saints. So, as Wogan-Browne has observed, "rather than being a house dossier or a calendrical legendary," the Lansdowne collection "is an ecclesiastical history of Britain through its church leaders and some of its saintly Anglo-Saxon kings;" moreover, it is "an expression of female communities' interest in their own ecclesiastical history."[186] Indeed, unlike the Cotton Claudius A.v version of the *Vita S. Wenefrede*, the Life of Wenefred in the Lansdowne manuscript opens by situating Wenefred specifically among the saints of England ("inter sanctos Anglie"); moreover the Lansdowne compiler removes the names of Tyfid's three landed estates and the process by which he alienates one of them to the church, geographical and legal information that would have held little interest or meaning for English nuns:

> Quia virgo sancta Wenefreda sua corporali presentia abbatiam monachorum nigrorum apud Salopiam, id est Provesbury divina dispositione a Wallia illuc translata gloriose venustat et suo patrocinio protegit et adjuvat aliqua de ejus gestis inter sanctos Anglie interserere decrevimus. In diebus illis quibus Cathuanus super Venedocie partes regnabat, strenuus quidam miles trium dumtaxat possessor villarum nomine Teuith filius Cylut in Tekeyngleya manebat. Huic Teuith propago non fuit data excepta sola Wenefreda. Hec statim ab ineunte etate cepit sponsum celestem amare homines que transitorios respuens, soli Christo dicavit suam virginitatem. Cujus sancto proposito congaudens pater liberalibus artibus imbuendam tradere proposuit. (fol. 107r[a])
>
> (Because the holy virgin Wenefreda adorns with her own corporal presence the abbey of the black monks near Shrewsbury, that is Provesbury, gloriously

[186] Wogan-Browne, *Saints' Lives and Women's Literary Culture*: 198-99.

> translated there from Wales by divine arrangement, and with her own patronage protects and aids it, we have determined to sow something regarding her deeds among the saints of England. In those days in which Cathuanus was reigning over the parts of Venedocia, a certain vigorous soldier, Teuith by name, son of Clyut, remained in Tekeyngleya, the possessor of only three vills. To this Teuith no children were given except for Wenefreda alone. This girl began from early age to love a heavenly spouse, rejecting transitory men, and dedicated her virginity to Christ alone. Whose father, rejoicing over this holy proposition, proposed to submit his daughter to the liberal arts, for she was in need of instruction.)[187]

The Lansdowne Life is, from the beginning, a precisely crafted text, one concerned to present an image of the saint that would be of greatest benefit to the nuns for whom the collection was apparently prepared. The selections from Prior Robert's Life are not random or haphazard, but are carefully tailored and inserted into the text of the *Vita S. Wenefrede*, and it is clear that the compiler of the Lansdowne Life was reading the anonymous Life side by side with the *Vita et translatio* and combined passages from parallel episodes. Judging from minor variations in his text of the *Vita et translatio* in comparison with the earliest surviving copy, that in Bodleian Laud Misc. MS 114, the compiler seems perhaps to have been working from a version of Robert's text different from that in the Laud manuscript. While Robert's account of Wenefred's Life and translation is concerned to demonstrate the strength of a foreign saint's authorizing holiness and, more specifically, the mobility of that holiness for the sake of his house of male monastics, the Lansdowne Life of Wenefred emphasizes her role as an exemplary abbess worthy of inclusion in the English pantheon of saints specifically because her body now rests at Shrewsbury Abbey. This fourteenth-century composite *vita* therefore subordinates Robert's text—which in its own right underscores Wenefred's efficacy as

[187] All translations from the Lansdowne Life of Wenefred are my own. For the opening passages of the anonymous Life in Cotton Claudius A.v, see Wade-Evans, *VSBG*: 288-89.

the head of a conventual household—to the anonymous Life for its concise narrative style and its focus on Wenefred's place in the early history of the British church.

Robert's version of Wenefred's Life reveals Anglo-Norman perspectives on the sanctity of non-Norman saints, specifically in regards to the power of the virgin body to confer, through its wholeness, identity and continuity upon the institution that holds and controls it. In regard to this perspective, Jocelyn Wogan-Browne has shifted scholarly concerns away from the seemingly erotic and voyeuristic nature of female *passio* narratives and has refocused it on the significance of what she calls "dotality," that is, the power of the virgin herself to give or to be given in hagiographical narrative.[188] The perception of wholeness as manifested in the virginal body is key to this transmission of authority and institutional identity, with the post-mortem career of the virgin reinforcing the inviolable and continuous nature of that identity.[189] The emphasis on giving in Anglo-Norman Lives of female saints, either in Latin or the vernacular, derives from the long-standing connection in Anglo-Norman society between women and land, and from the shift in post-Conquest England from territorial acquisition through conquest to "a vigorous marriage and inheritance market, [that] trad[ed] among lineages and territories."[190] Eleventh- and twelfth-century Anglo-Norman hagiography is, therefore, concerned with "embodying legitimacy and continuity for monastic houses in the rewritten lives of founding virgins of Anglo-Saxon England."[191] Robert's *Vita et translatio* is no exception to this trend, even though it is—and perhaps more so because it

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[188] Wogan-Browne, *Saints' Lives and Women's Literary Culture*. See specifically chapter 2, "Virginity and the Gift."
[189] Ibid., 67.
[190] Ibid., 57.
[191] Ibid. On the post-Conquest co-option of Anglo-Saxon saints by the Normans, see Ridyard, *Royal Saints of Anglo-Saxon England*. See also Ridyard, "*Condigna Veneratio*: Post-Conquest Attitudes to Anglo-Saxon Saints."

is—concerned with a Welsh, rather than an English saint. From the outset, Robert's text is focused on the mobility, the dotality, of Wenefred's virginal body as a source of spiritual power and authority. In his prologue, Robert situates his love for the maiden between his fear of God and the devotion his monastic brethren have for him, thereby establishing his affection for her as part of a relationship between men.[192] This arrangement is underscored by the fact that the work in which Wenefred's resurrected and restored body is inscribed is dedicated and given to another man, Gwarin of Worcester. From this point, Wenefred's exchange between men continues inside the narrative, but her capacity to convey originary identity and prestige on the Abbey of SS Peter and Paul at Shrewsbury stems particularly from the fact that she is not a distant universal saint and is instead connected to "a specific topographical and communal identity asserted or contested within Britain."[193]

Wenefred's ability to transfer identity and power from one region or community to another derives as much from her sacred, virginal integrity and her association with particular geographical areas as from her circulation between male ecclesiastics. She is valuable because she can be given as a gift between men, but only because she first gave herself whole to the supreme masculine authority. Commenting on the ways in which the virgin is often cast in Anglo-Norman hagiography as a precious gem or a valuable treasure, Wogan-Browne notes that "These are not simple gestures of commodification, but suggest more fluid relations and boundaries between persons and things than in our own [modern] paradigms."[194] In at least one instance Robert indeed refers to Wenefred's body as a "treasure" (*thesaurus*), and her exchange value between men both within and

[192] See page 138 above.
[193] Wogan-Browne, *Saints' Lives and Women's Literary Culture*: 67.
[194] Ibid., 75.

without the narrative of her Life establishes relationships largely between men—between Tyfid and Beuno, Beuno and Deiferus, Deiferus and Saturnus, Saturnus and Elerius, Elerius and Theonia, Elerius and Robert, and, finally, between Robert, Gwarin, and the monks of Shrewsbury.[195] Still, it is Wenefred's freely chosen corporal integrity that preserves her spiritual integrity, and even though Robert and his fellows unearth Wenefred's bones at Gwytherin rather than her incorrupt corpse, her physical and spiritual wholeness are secured by the story of her fragmentation through decollation and of her reconstitution by male intercession thereafter.[196] Wenefred's explicit spiritual integrity reinforces, in the face of her corporal decay, an implicit bodily unity that cannot be denied, for in conquering death her body was made again whole, and it remained undecayed after that encounter with death for many years. In combination, her spiritual and bodily integrity guarantee a continuous integrity of identity for Shrewsbury Abbey.[197]

The imagery of exchange then, chiefly between men, more thoroughly permeates Robert's version of Wenefred's legend than it does the *Vita S. Wenefrede* in Cotton Claudius A.v. In both of these recensions of the Life, Wenefred first comes under masculine tutelage in connection with a land exchange made between secular and

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[195] *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 86; De Smedt, *AASS, t.I. Nov.*: 729.

[196] On the theology of bodily resurrection and perceptions of spiritual wholeness in spite of corporal fragmentation in the twelfth through the early fourteenth centuries, see especially chapters 5 through 8 of Caroline Walker Bynum, *The Resurrection of the Body in Western Christianity, 200-1336* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995). I am grateful to Cynthia Camp for this reference.

[197] In Robert's brief account of the founding of Shrewsbury Abbey, it is significant that he focuses, albeit briefly, on the house's secular patron, Earl Roger of Shrewsbury, for the abbey had no local spiritual patron, only SS Peter and Paul, which is the very reason for the *translatio* expedition. As Wogan-Browne points out, universal saints are unable to fulfill a community's longing for specific identity in the way that local saints can. Wogan-Browne, *Saints' Lives and Women's Literary Culture*: 67. For Robert's account of the founding of the abbey, see *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 77. For arguments regarding the cult of Etheldreda of Ely and that saint's ability to bestow, convey, and preserve institutional identity that are similar to those I offer for Wenefred, see Virginia Blanton-Whetsell, "*Tota Integra, Tota Incorrupta*: The Shrine of St. Æthelthryth as Symbol of Monastic Autonomy," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 32, no. 2 (2002). I am grateful to Cynthia Camp for this reference.

religious men of noble standing. Yet while in the anonymous Life she decides before Beuno's arrival to dedicate her virginity to God, in Robert's version it is her father, Tyfid, who first encourages her to attend to the holy man's teachings, something that eventually leads to her decision to give her virginity to her heavenly bridegroom. In Robert's telling, Wenefred's desire is accomplished through Beuno's intercession with her parents, and her free will in the matter is necessary to avoid rendering her virginity a commodity, something that would undermine later institutional claims on the value of her virginal state.[198] Although the lives of virgin martyrs often present the female saint as being possessed of some masculine qualities, specifically freedom of will, as part of a standard *virago* trope, Robert casts freedom of will at this point in his narrative as a masculine virtue to reassert the claim of masculine institutional authority to Wenefred's spiritual power:

> Immo quicquid consummatæ virtutis virum habere decet, penes illam satis abunde inveniebatur et totum in illa divinæ plenitudo gratiæ sufficienter infuderat.[199]
>
> (Certainly, whatever of consummate virtue it is fitting for a man to have was found abundantly enough in her, and the fullness of divine grace had poured the whole sufficiently into her.)[200]

After the encounter with male aggression that gives to her the spiritual authority to become an abbess, Wenefred explicitly receives in Robert's text three divine gifts directly from God that signal her power and chastity. These gifts continue the focus on

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[198] Wogan-Browne, *Saints' Lives and Women's Literary Culture*: 86. It is telling that in Robert's version Wenefred's first direct speech is an expression of this desire to Beuno. In the anonymous Life, and more in line with Welsh hagiographical traditions, Wenefred's first direct speech occurs only when she is faced with and must define herself in relation to the aggressive masculinity of Caradog. *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 31 and 99. On the tendency of Welsh hagiography to ignore female saints before they are confronted by male sexuality, see Henken, *The Welsh Saints: A Study in Patterned Lives*: 7. See also note 13 above.

[199] De Smedt, *AASS, t.I. Nov.*: 711.

[200] *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 32.

dotality and gift giving, and they are, according to Beuno, the irremovable stain of her blood upon the stones in the Holywell fountain, the promise that any who beseech God through Wenefred for relief from spiritual or physical anguish will receive it by their third request or not at all (a gift for Wenefred that is essentially a gift for her devotees), and, somewhat strangely, the gift that Wenefred is herself to send to Beuno every year through the fountain stream. Wenefred's annual gift of a cloak appears in the anonymous Life, but Robert's more detailed contextualization of the episode here emphasizes her own choice in the matter, for unlike in the anonymous Life Beuno does not in Robert's version demand a specific object (a *casula*) but instead leaves the choice of gift to Wenefred. In Robert's *Vita*, before Beuno departs, he openly grants to Wenefred the church he had founded with her father's leave, instructing her to gather virgins there and establishing her, as a result of her martyrdom, as a sort of surrogate foundress. When she arrives at Gwytherin years later, Elerius places her over all the other sisters except his mother, whom Wenefred does in time succeed with Elerius' leave, underscoring once again Wenefred's ability to reinforce and give continuity to the identity and spiritual authority of a monastic institution.

The process by which Wenefred arrives at Gwytherin in Robert's version of the legend also reveals an interest in virgin dotality, for her journey from Holywell is foretold by Beuno and involves not a direct course to her new place of religion, but consists of a series of episodes in which she is passed from one male monastic to another. While Robert is careful to emphasize Wenefred's own desire for a new dwelling, noting that once the majority of her fellow nuns had died she "odio habere locum illum cœpit in quo eatenus conversata erat" ("began to hate the place in which she had dwelt thus far"), he

reinforces the role of male consent in the matter, for she is explicitly unable to depart from Holywell until the seven-year period prophesied by Beuno has expired.[201] Once it has, Wenefred is sent by divine utterance first to Deiferus in Bodfari, who sends her by heavenly command on to Saturnus at Henllan, who in turn sends her at God's insistence to Elerius at Gwytherin. While as argued earlier the story of this journey is likely to have stemmed from native Welsh tradition, Robert may have been influenced in his decision to include it in—and in the way that he recorded it for—his final narrative because it underscored his own interests in signaling and explaining Wenefred's power to convey grace and identity upon his own monastic house. Furthermore, with Wenefred having been revived from death and made whole again to live for many years thereafter, this episode casts her as a living relic, an incorrupt virginal body able, within the constraints of male ecclesiastical oversight, to exert her will and bring spiritual benefit and prestige to a new religious institution.[202] Indeed, Saturnus indicates that her time at Gwytherin is intended by God to improve the community there.[203] Because she is rendered here as a living relic, something highlighted by the scar on her neck which proves the authenticity of her experience and serves as a focus of devotion for the faithful, any concerns connected to Wenefred's later ossification are further smoothed over, for her bodily integrity has been thoroughly demonstrated through her resurrection and subsequent life by the time Robert arrives to exhume her.[204] Moreover, the story of Wenefred's journey from Holywell subtly authorizes Robert's translation of her bones to Shrewsbury as

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[201] De Smedt, *AASS, t.I. Nov.*: 718; *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 51.
[202] Similarly, in Henry Bradshaw's sixteenth-century Life of Werburgh, the female saint's power to give herself is restricted to her will to remain a virgin, and her other dotal functions are manifested in her being traded between men and institutions. Cynthia Turner Camp, "Inventing the Past in Henry Bradshaw's *Life of St Werburge*," *Exemplaria* 23, no. 3 (2011).
[203] *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 55.
[204] Wogan-Browne reads the neck scar as a "badge of office" symbolic of Wenefred's headship over her nuns at Gwytherin. Wogan-Browne, *Saints' Lives and Women's Literary Culture*: 205.

described in his *translatio* narrative. As Wenefred has once deigned to move to a new location for the spiritual amelioration of those dwelling there, so in death can she decide to do so again, and the visions recorded in the *translatio* account underscore the maiden's desire to be moved to Shrewsbury.[205] Wenefred's willingness to move herself both in life and after death seemingly removes male clerical authority from the dotal process at the same time that that willingness validates decisions made by men. Similarly, Wenefred's request to Elerius that her body be buried next to Theonia also prefigures her ability to decide where her bones should rest, and, more specifically, her posthumous decision that they should be relocated to England.[206] To Norman sensibilities, the fragmentation of the saintly *corpus* provided wider access to the spiritual whole that was the saint him- or herself, but the story of Wenefred's transfer from Holywell to Gwytherin not only prepares the way for her transfer from Gwytherin to Shrewsbury, but also celebrates her wondrous wholeness as a living relic passed from one monk to another.

While Robert's *Vita* is then interested in establishing Wenefred's sanctity and power and in legitimately transferring those qualities to Shrewsbury for the benefit of his brethren there, the Lansdowne Life of Wenefred uses elements of Robert's text to achieve different goals. This Life is not, as has been previously claimed, simply a version of the

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[205] It is interesting to note, however, that in the case of the vision recounted by the priest at Gwytherin, it is not the maiden herself who admonished him not to obstruct those who would move her bones, but a certain angelic youth.
Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride: 84-85. Also interesting is the observation that, although in the *vita* Robert claims to have been told that no one who experiences a vision of Wenefred ever fails to see the scar about her neck, in the description of the vision of Wenefred experienced by Ralph of Chester at the beginning of the *translatio* narrative the saint's scar goes noticeably unmentioned. Ibid., 39, 78-79. The scar is never mentioned in *Hystoria o Uuched Beuno*, and in combination with Robert's claim to have heard that the scar is always visible in visions of the maiden, it is possible that the tradition of the scar was local to Holywell and did not derive from the *Vita S. Beunoi*.
[206] Ibid., 66.

Vita S. Wenefrede "into which the occasional passage of Robert's frothy verbiage has been added."[207] Besides the fact that the selections from the longer Life are carefully chosen and seamlessly integrated into the *Vita S. Wenefrede*, the compiler adds framing and descriptive commentary and at several points rewrites passages from the anonymous Life to fit his own needs. While a full appreciation of the significance of the Lansdowne Life of Wenefred would only be possible in the context of a complete study of the manuscript's other contents, the preliminary discussion offered here will demonstrate the significance of this text for the spread of Gwenfrewy's legend in the period between its initial recording in the twelfth century and its flourishing in the fifteenth. And, as already indicated, the examination of the Lansdowne Life offered here will reveal that the process by which Robert's text came to be the standard version of the story over the *Vita S. Wenefrede* was not a simple matter of inevitable replacement.

The Lansdowne Life of Wenefred retains the major outlines of the story as they are given in the anonymous Life, but by incorporating selections from Robert's text, and by omitting some details from the *Vita S. Wenefrede*, it refocuses attention on Wenefred's entry into and success in a conventual life. The Lansdowne Life presents the saint's dotal function in less explicit terms than Robert's narrative because the text was meant for an audience of female religious rather than one of male monastics. While not presenting her dotality as a means to secure institutional identity for a particular ecclesiastical foundation, the compiler's focus on Wenefred's ability to to make her own decisions regarding her spiritual life still presents her as a dotal object and provides a model for the intended female audience to follow. While the Lansdowne compiler has excised the Roman pilgrimage and the Synod of Wenefredus, his composite work preserves many

[207] Winward, "Lives of St Wenefred," 129.

signature episodes and details from the anonymous Life—Caradog chases Wenefred on his horse; when cursed by Beuno, he melts but is not swallowed by the earth; the scar on Wenefred's neck is thin but is not specifically white in color; the cloak which Beuno directly requests is sent on the vigil of John the Baptist, and Beuno specifically instructs Wenefred to place it on the stone on which he used to pray (which is not named, just as in the Cotton manuscript copy of the anonymous Life). In addition, at the end of the Lansdowne Life we learn that, on account of her wise speech, the saint is commonly known as *Candida Wenefrede*. Wogan-Browne has observed that the Lives of female saints written in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries tend to emphasize the liturgical, communicative, or scholarly abilities of their subjects, something that further marks the saint out as an exemplary member of her religious community.[208] In this specific regard, the Lansdowne compiler presents Wenefred as a model for female religious at the end of his text when he underscores the wisdom and mellifluence in speech from which she earned the appellation *Candida*. In selecting the story of Wenefred's name as it appears in the *Vita S. Wenefrede*, rather than relating the origin of her name according to Robert, the Lansdowne compiler conforms to the pattern that Wogan-Browne has discerned.

Besides retaining a number of features from the *Vita S. Wenefrede* in his composite work, the Lansdowne compiler has also added, as noted above, an entirely new introduction, one in which he explains Wenefred's appearance in a catalogue of English saints:

> Quia virgo sancta Wenefreda sua corporali presentia abbatiam monachorum nigrorum apud Salopiam, id est Provesbury divina dispositione a Wallia illuc translata gloriose venustat et suo patrocinio protegit et adjuvat aliqua de ejus gestis inter sanctos Anglie interserere decrevimus. (fol. 107r[a])

[208] Wogan-Browne, *Saints' Lives and Women's Literary Culture*: 199.

> (Because the holy virgin Wenefreda adorns with her own corporal presence the abbey of the black monks near Shrewsbury, that is Provesbury, gloriously translated there from Wales by divine arrangement, and with her own patronage protects and aids it, we have determined to sow something regarding her deeds among the saints of England.)

For the compiler, Wenefred's current geographical location—as well as her patronage of that location—override any potential concerns about her origins as a non-English saint; her presence is acceptable because of her translation to an English religious institution. Unlike some later vernacular legendaries into which she has been inserted, the Lansdowne text does not elide or ignore Gwenfrewy's Welsh origins and render her, essentially, an English saint. Her Welsh background requires explanation and her presence must be authorized, but her national background is kept clearly in view by the fact that the compiler has retained references to the location in which her story is set: her father dwelt "in Tekeyngleya" which is within "Venedocie partes." And consonant with the compiler's interest in presenting a chronological account of the English church through the stories of its saints, he retains information needed to situate Wenefred in time, being sure to retain the fact that she lived in the reign of Cadfan (*Cathuanus*). As already noted, however, he does overlook unnecessary territorial detail that would be of little concern to a community of female religious living in England, leaving out the names of Tyfid's three vills and the episode in which Tyfid must seek Cadfan's permission to alienate land to the church. On the other hand, and just like the anonymous author of the *Vita S. Wenefrede*, the compiler still casts Wenefred's initial decision to devote herself entirely to God as something that precedes Beuno's arrival, thereby underscoring her own strength of will, a dotal act in itself that, as mentioned above, increases the value of a female saint's virginity.

The account of Wenefred's martyrdom in the Lansdowne *Vita* is essentially the same as in the anonymous Life, which includes Caradog's direct promise of marriage that Wenefred denies, but from this point the compiler begins to insert passages taken from Robert's narrative to give texture to Wenefred's life as a nun and abbess. By borrowing and reworking certain passages, the compiler emphasizes Wenefred's freedom of will in taking the veil in a way that the anonymous Life does not, and at the same time the compiler presents Wenefred as a more benevolent patron than Robert's *Vita* might be taken to do. Following her resurrection and the appearance of the fountain, the Lansdowne compiler adds two selections from the sequence in Robert's *Vita* where Robert describes Wenefred's consecration as a nun at Beuno's hands with her parents' permission. The compiler has edited out, however, all reference to her parents' consent, and refocuses the scene, therefore, on Wenefred's own will in the matter. The only role left to Wenefred's parents in the Lansdowne compiler's version of events is to accept their daughter's decision and to follow Beuno's advice that they in turn heed her examples and admonitions after he has gone. Returning to the text of the *Vita S. Wenefrede*, the compiler recounts Beuno's request for the yearly gift of a cloak, leaving out the garment's magical properties against the elements, but he then inserts two more passages from Robert. The first is Beuno's speech to the maiden wherein he commands her to gather virgins in God's service and then prophesies her eventual departure from Holywell and her role as an intercessory healer.[209] The next is an extract from the sequence in which Beuno reveals to Wenefred her three divine gifts.[210] The compiler has

[209] This is taken from §15 of the *Vita et translatio* as numbered by the Bollandists and Pepin. De Smedt, *AASS, t.I. Nov.*: 715; *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 41-42.
[210] Taken from §16 of the *Vita et translatio*. De Smedt, *AASS, t.I. Nov.*: 715-16; *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 42-44.

excised, however, the first and the final gifts—respectively the bloody stains on the stones in Wenefred's fountain and her annual gift of a cloak for Beuno—and has focused on the second, the promise that any devout soul who calls on Wenefred for relief or aid will receive his desire by the third petition or not at all. In the quotation from the Lansdowne Life below, the underlined text has all come from Robert, and the brackets enclose material of Robert's that the Lansdowne compiler has removed from his borrowed text:

> Nam quicumque aliqua infortunia passus te requisierit et per te a sua invaletudine seu oppressione se liberari pecierit, prima sive secunda aut certe tertetcia vice voluntatis sue compos effectus quod postulaverat se impetrasse gaudebit. Si autem contigerit petentem te trine vicis petitione quod optaverat non consecutum fuisse, certissime sciat [se præsentis vitæ luce in proximo cariturum, atque ideo] occulto Dei judicio precis sue fructu in præsenti frustra tum fuisse. Proficere sibi tamen ad anime sue medelam te invocasse constanter intelligat, atque per te aliquid sibi majus divinitus præstari quam si quod petebat exterius consequeretur. His dictis post benedictionem mutuam discesserunt. (Fols. 108r^{b}-108v^{a})[211]
>
> (For whoever has suffered some misfortune and sought you and asked to be freed from his illness or oppression through you, will rejoice that he has gotten what he asked for when he has been granted his wish the first or second or surely the third time. Moreover, if it happens that one petitioning you has not obtained what he wanted by the third request, let him know most certainly that [he will be deprived of the light of the present life soon, and so] through the hidden judgment of God he has at present lost the fruit of his prayer. Yet, let him understand that to have called upon you constantly benefits him for the healing of his soul, and through you something greater is divinely given to him than if he obtained outwardly what he requested." With these things said, after a mutual blessing, they parted.)[212]

Notable is the fact that the compiler has deleted the harsher side of this particular gift as originally described by Robert. For in the full text of the *Vita et translatio* we learn that he who fails to receive his request from God through Wenefred's intercession will soon

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[211] For the sake of simplicity and clarity, I have not indicated here the few minor discrepancies between Robert's text as preserved in the Laud manuscript and Robert's text as quoted here by the Lansdowne compiler.

[212] *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 43. I have translated the short sentence added by the Lansdowne compiler to the end of this passage.

thereafter die ("se præsentis vitæ luce in proximo cariturum, atque ideo"), having lost "the fruit of his prayer" but having gained extra merit for calling on the holy virgin.[213] By including this episode but softening its potentially frightening implications, the compiler stresses Wenefred's universal accessibility as well as her benevolence in a way that the anonymous Life does not.

After briefly noting Beuno's departure, the Lansdowne compiler draws again from Robert, this time a passage describing Wenefred's time as an abbess at Holywell.[214] This extract details Wenefred's chaste devotion to God and depicts her as a teacher leading her virgins away from the enticements of the secular world and to the veil. In the *Vita S. Wenefrede*, Wenefred becomes an abbess only at Gwytherin, and the virgins with whom she dwells there are not explicitly consecrated nuns. Moreover, the anonymous author gives very few details of her time among them, instead only noting in general the ineffable quality of her speech and thought.[215] The inclusion, therefore, of this passage from Robert's text addresses the concerns of a conventual community, for whom interest in Wenefred's story would lie in her manner of living with and ruling over a group of professed nuns. Before inserting another extract from Robert, the compiler returns to the text of the *Vita S. Wenefrede* and recounts the story of Wenefred's cloak sent to Beuno on the vigil of John the Baptist. While he notes that the cloak is the source of Beuno's

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[213] The drastic consequence of failing to receive the object of one's prayer presented here would appear to be an offshoot of the vengeful nature of the Welsh saints in general. Like the Lansdowne Life, later versions of Gwenfrewy's legend that derive from Robert's redaction also soften this particular point in the narrative. These revisions of this episode in English and in Welsh smooth over the harsh result of failing to receive one's petition, perhaps in an effort to rationalize what might seem to be a cruel or illogical reaction on the part of the saint (or of God acting on behalf of the saint). For the late medieval vernacular Lives of Gwenfrewy, see chapter 5 below.

[214] Taken from §18 of the *Vita et translatio*. De Smedt, *AASS, t.I. Nov.*: 716-17; *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 45-47.

[215] Wenefred becomes an abbess in the anonymous Life only after the "Synod of Wenefredus." See *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 102.

nickname, he leaves out, as mentioned, its preternatural powers against wind and rain, a detail that might have been deemed more appropriate to a popular telling of Wenefred's tale rather than to one intended to present the saint as an example for nuns. It is a detail that adds, in the end, nothing to Wenefred's abilities as an abbess, so its removal by the compiler is not a surprise. After the cloak episode, the compiler borrows again from Robert, introducing Beuno's death—something the anonymous Life overlooks—and Wenefred's desire to move away from Holywell after receiving news of his passing, a reworking that draws attention once again to Wenefred's dotality, her free will in choosing a life that is guided by masculine clerical authority.[216] This latter selection, including as it does Wenefred's prayer that God would guide her to a new place and would bless her original dwelling, also emphasizes the efficacy of the Holywell shrine to cure disease for those who make a pilgrimage there and beseech the saint's aid. The compiler ends this section with a new addition, locating the fountain by reference to its present owners: "Predictus autem locus simul et fons beate Wenefrede monachorum nunc sunt de Bazingwerk, Ordinis Cisterciensis" ("Moreover, the aforementioned place and, likewise, the fountain of blessed Wenefred are now [owned by the] monks of Basingwerk, of the Cistercian Order").[217]

The closing section of the Lansdowne Life draws on Robert once more, this time to provide details about Wenefred's experience at Gwytherin and to underscore the holiness of that place, the latter of which is left without comment in the anonymous Life. Symptomatic of his approach that combines two different source texts, the compiler

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[216] Taken respectively from §§20 and 21 of the *Vita et translatio*. De Smedt, *AASS, t.I. Nov.*: 717-18; *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 49-51.

[217] Fol. 108v, col. B. Translation is my own. That Basingwerk was in control of the Holywell shrine would likely have been relatively common knowlege by the time that the Lansdowne compiler was working. Dafydd ap Llywelyn had confirmed the abbey's control over the well in 1240. See note 169 above.

begins by giving both Robert's spelling of the name, *Witheriacus*, and also his own, *Wytern*, and he is sure to include Robert's reference to the many saints' relics that reside there.[218] The material he takes from the *Vita et translatio* is, in its original context, direct speech by Saturnus to Wenefred, but the compiler has rendered it into simple descriptive narration, altering verb tenses to suit his needs. These selections introduce Elerius and the nuns over whom he ruled, emphasizing the zeal with which the abbot had fled worldly concerns and the lifelong celibacy of the sisters.[219] In this borrowing and reworking, Theonia and the monks of Gwytherin are completely overlooked, but this is not entirely surprising given the intended audience of the Lansdowne Life, and the image that the compiler hopes to present to that audience is clear from the way in which he incorporates the material borrowed from Robert. As noted already, the *Vita S. Wenefrede* does not explicitly state that the virgins at Gwytherin were professed nuns, but Robert makes the point very clearly and the compiler takes from him the direct assertion that the virgins were "Deo dicate" and had been dedicated to chastity "ab ipsis infancie rudimentis" ("from the very beginnings of their childhood").[220]

The Lansdowne Life of Wenefred ends with the compiler's own summary of her days at Gwytherin. He emphasizes the fact that Elerius held her up as an example to the other nuns and celebrates the honor and veneration shown to her not only by locals (*domestici*) but also, significantly, by foreigners (*extranei*). In the quotation below, the material underlined has been taken almost verbatim from the *Vita S. Wenefrede* as preserved in Cotton Claudius A.v:

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[218] The *Vita S. Wenefrede* gives *Gurtherin*. Wade-Evans, *VSBG*: 294.
[219] Taken from §§23 and 24 of the *Vita et translatio*. De Smedt, *AASS, t.I. Nov.*: 719-20; *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 53-55.
[220] De Smedt, *AASS, t.I. Nov.*: 720; *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 55.

> Quibus processu temporis ab eodem Elerio virgo Wenefreda in exemplum sanctitatis prelata est. Que nihil intactum dimittebat, quod ad propriam salutem vel aliorum exemplum et utilitatem pertinere cognoscebat. Unde ab universis simplici diligebatur affectu, et tam extranei quam domestici propter vite sanctitatem et miraculorum operationem honorem ei exhibebant et eam reverenter venerabantur. Quanta autem scientie eloquentia hæc virgo sancta prefulserit non est nostre facultatis edissere. Sermones namque elogii ipsius melle dulciores lacte nitidiores, in sensibus audientium reputabantur. Unde et ab omnibus publice Candida Wenefreda nominata est. Candore enim sophie eloquebatur et conformiter degebat. (Fol. 109r[a])[221]
>
> (To whom, by process of time, the virgin Wenefreda was held forth by the same Elerius as an example of sanctity. She who left nothing untried which she thought pertained to proper health or the utility and example of others. Whence she esteemed all things with simple affection, and foreigners and locals showed her honor on account of her sanctity of life and working of miracles and they venerated her reverently. Moreover with what eloquence of knowledge this sacred virgin shone forth, it is not in our skill to set out. And in fact her conversation and her speech were reputed sweeter than honey and brighter than milk in the minds of those who heard her. Whence she was known by all publicly as White Wenefreda, for she used to speak with and, likewise, spend her time in the radiance of wisdom.)[222]

In his borrowing from the anonymous Life the story of the origin of her name, *Candida Wenefreda*, the compiler reveals again his concern that Wenefred be recognized as both a saint and a professed nun, for here she is not just a *virgo* as the anonymous author maintains, but is instead a *virgo sancta*.[223] And to emphasize again why Wenefred, a Welsh woman, should be included in a catalog of English saints, the compiler reminds his audience that she has been translated to England where she continues to work miracles. His interest in chronology is apparent too in the fact that he situates this event in time, albeit inaccurately—having noted that her death occurred on July 24, the compiler tells us

[221] Once again, I have not noted here minor discrepancies between the borrowed material as presented by the Lansdowne compiler and that material in its source manuscript. For this passage in the Cotton manuscript, see Wade-Evans, *VSBG*: 294-95.
[222] Translation is my own.
[223] For the anonymous author's use of *virgo* rather than the Lansdowne compiler's *virgo sancta* at this point in the narrative, see De Smedt, *AASS, t.I. Nov.*: 704; and Wade-Evans, *VSBG*: 294.

that her *translatio* occurred "tempore regis Henrici," but another hand has corrected the reading to "tempore regis Stefani":

> Sed postea tempore regis Henrici [Stefani] illinc ad Salopiam translata debito honore veneratur. Florent autem in locis quibus habitaverat et ubi nunc honorifice est translata innumera ob ejus merita divinorum operum indigentibus miracula, ut in hiis que de ejus vita et translatione scribuntur plenius et prolixius continetur. (Fol. 109r^{a-b})
>
> (But afterwards she, translated in the time of King Henry [Stephan] from there to Shrewsbury, is [yet] venerated with due honor. Moreover, innumerable miracles flourish in the places wherein she dwelt and where now honorably she has been translated, on account of her merits, for those needing divine works, such as those found in those things which are written about her life and translation more fully and in more detail.)[224]

The closing reference to other written Lives is not mere narrative convention, for we know that the compiler was drawing on both the *Vita S. Wenefrede* and Robert's *Vita et translatio*. We might wonder too, given his emphasis here on miracles and written texts, if he was not also acquainted with the *Libellus miraculorum*. Regardless, his Life of Wenefred indicates that the anonymous Life at least had wider circulation and currency than has previously been thought.

The Lansdowne compiler carefully reworks Wenefred's two twelfth-century Latin *vitae* in order to present her as a model nun and abbess for female religious in England. He succeeds in part because he integrates some of Robert's emphasis on what Wogan-Browne calls virginal dotality, the female saint's ability to give and be given that creates for her a spiritual integrity which in turn provides a stable identity for religious institutions and their male clerics. In Robert's *Vita et translatio,* Wenefred's being sent between male monastics on her way from Holywell to Gwytherin, a journey foretold by her uncle Beuno, is the place where this dotal ideal appears most clearly. The

[224] Translation is my own.

Lansdowne compiler, however, uses Wenefred's dotal function to emphasize her free will in becoming a nun and in leading a model religious existence. He also reworks some of Robert's text to render Wenefred a more benevolent figure whose power is universally accessible, even though her bones and her primary cult site are situated far from the nuns of Romsey Abbey who eventually came to possess the Lansdowne manuscript. By ending with a statement on Wenefred's translation to England and her continuing miraculous demonstrations in both Shrewsbury and Holywell, places under the explicit control of male monastics, the compiler presents Wenefred as a foreign saint fully mediated into the saintly pantheon of England and, therefore, one worthy of veneration. This process began, of course, with Robert translating Wenefred from Wales long before, and his detailed account of the expedition and of the saint's life paved the way for her to be known and venerated in England. His textual account of the *translatio* was initially necessary to convey the power of her relics into a new cultural and linguistic environment, and indeed his version of the saint's Life became the standard one throughout England and even Wales by the end of the Middle Ages.[225] Well within 100 years of the Lansdowne legendary having been compiled, John Tynemouth used Robert's text as the basis for the Life of Wenefred in his nationalizing *Sanctilogium Angliae Walliae Scotiae et Hiberniae*, and although he includes the detail, not present in either of the twelfth-century Lives, that Holywell was near to the monastery of Basingwerk, Tynemouth shows no indication of having known any account of her *Vita* other than Robert's.[226] Still, the Lansdowne Life of Wenefred proves that Robert's text and the

[225] On the importance of *translatio* narrative for creating the meaning and significance of relics in a new location, see again Geary, *Furta Sacra*: 14.

[226] The text of Tynemouth's Life of Wenefred is printed by the Bollandists alongside the text of Robert's *Vita et translatio*; it is also printed in Carl Horstmann, *Nova Legenda Anglie, vol. 2* (Oxford: Clarendon

anonymous Life were circulating at the same time, and it reveals that the predominance of Robert's work was not inevitable in the centuries immediately following the saint's *translatio*. Depending on the situation, the anonymous Life may have been better suited than the *Vita et translatio* to address the needs of a given audience. By the same token, that Robert's text became the standard version of the legend is not entirely surprising, for regardless of its prolixity, while Robert himself brought her relics to Shrewsbury, his text effectively translated Gwenfrewy's sanctity into a new cultural context, advertising her power and rendering her both acceptable and accessible to new devotees. Conversely, no matter when exactly in the twelfth century they were actually composed, the *Vita S. Wenefrede* and its appended miracle dossier seem intended for a narrow monastic audience, one concerned with the origin of the saint's shrine at Holywell and with the assertion of claims to control it. These texts have no interest in matters further afield, and the focus on Gwenfrewy's Welsh cult would not have made the anonymous Life of much interest to most people in England. That she did garner attention in England is clear from the number of English versions of her story that survive from the fifteenth century. Toward the end of that same century, the Welsh poets demonstrate a keen interest in her cult at Holywell, and Welsh translations of Robert's *Vita et translatio* begin to appear. While Robert's text brought Gwenfrewy to the attention of English readers and devotees, the Welsh did not relinquish their hold on her so easily. Indeed, late medieval interest in Gwenfrewy's cult on the part of the Welsh belies Robert's claim that the saint wished to be translated specifically because her countrymen had not shown her the reverence she deserved.

Press, 1901). 415-22. For Tynemouth's mention of Basingwerk's proximity to Holywell, see De Smedt, *AASS, t.I. Nov.*: 714.

CHAPTER 5

OF WALES OR OF ENGLAND?

GWENFREWY (AND WENEFRED) IN THE LATER MIDDLE AGES

That Gwenfrewy was a native Welsh saint with a notable cult operating before the twelfth century at Holywell and, perhaps to a lesser degree, at Gwytherin is certain. The popularity of Holywell as a site of Catholic pilgrimage continues unabated to this day, and Gwenfrewy's cult at Gwytherin attracted devout penitents until at least the middle of the last century, both of which phenomena are extensions of Gwenfrewy's popularity during the Middle Ages. However, while renowned in Wales before and after the 1138 *translatio*, Gwenfrewy's fame in England does not seem to have arisen immediately after Robert penned his account of her life, martyrdom, and translation. Indeed, direct textual evidence for interest in Gwenfrewy outside Wales in the centuries after the twelfth is thin at best. Alongside the view that she and her cult at Holywell were a complete invention, suggestions that her authenticity was doubted even in and after Prior Robert's time were once asserted based upon this dearth of later texts of her life.[1] While the earliest copy of Robert's *Vita et translatio* survives in a twelfth-century manuscript (Bodleian Laud Misc. 114) and the sole copy of the anonymous Life is preserved in a book of *ca*. 1200 (BL Cotton Claudius A.v), only three texts of Wenefred's *vitae* survive from the subsequent two hundred years. These are the copy of Robert's *Vita et translatio* in Cambridge, Trinity College O.4.42, a manuscript dating to the first half of the thirteenth century; the

[1] Fiona Winward, "The Lives of St Wenefred (BHL 8847-8851)," *Analecta Bollandiana* 117 (1999): 94. See also chapter 1 above.

composite Life surviving in BL Lansdowne 436, a manuscript of the first half of the fourteenth century; and John of Tynemouth's abbreviated version of Robert's *vita* that appears in the *Sanctilogium Angliae, Walliae, Scotiae et Hiberniae* that survives in BL Cotton Tiberius E.i, a manuscript of the fourteenth century. The traceable history of these five manuscripts reveals, unsurprisingly, that Wenefred's story spread outward from the West Midlands: the Laud manuscript was part of the medieval library of Pershore Abbey, a Benedictine foundation in Worcestershire; the portion of Cotton Claudius A.v containing the *Vita S. Wenefrede* belonged to the Cistercian Abbey of Holme Cultram in Cumberland but is thought to have originated at Worcester; the Trinity College, Cambridge manuscript was owned by the Cistercian Abbey at Dore in Herefordshire; and the Lansdowne manuscript was owned by the Benedictine nuns of Romsey Abbey, Hampshire. Cotton Tiberius E.i, however, was part of the library at the Benedictine Priory of St. Amphibalus at Redbourn, about five miles from St. Albans, which is not far from London.[2]

As Robert's text had been originally dedicated and presumably sent to the prior of Worcester, its presence in a manuscript from nearby Pershore is no great surprise, and it could easily have made its way westward to Dore from either Pershore or Worcester. Further, if the Cotton Claudius manuscript was in fact composed at Worcester, then it is possible that this was the place where the anonymous Life and Robert's account first

[2] N.R. Ker, *Medieval Libraries of Great Britain: A List of Surviving Books*, 2nd ed. (London: Royal Historical Society, 1964). See 58, 102, 150, 158, and 164. Evidence for the provenance of Bodleian Laud Misc. 114 comes from the marginal inscription "Pershor" on fol. 23r. It was later owned by Sir John Prise and was eventually donated by him to Jesus College, Oxford. H.O. Coxe, *Laudian Manuscripts*, Bodleian Library Quarto Catalogues, Vol. 2 (Oxford: Bodleian Library, 1973). 547; N.R. Ker, *Books, Collectors and Libraries: Studies in the Medieval Heritage* (London: The Hambledon Press, 1985). 491. I am grateful to Dr. Richard Sharpe not only for this reference, but also for his help with and insights on the Laud manuscript. On Laud Misc. 114, see Appendix A below. On Cotton Claudius A.v, see chapter 4, note 146 above.

rubbed shoulders before being combined into a single work in Lansdowne 436 more than a century later. Because Benedictine houses were known to share information about their local saints with one another, it seems reasonable that the Lansdowne compiler could have drawn on material from Worcester, and perhaps from Shrewsbury, when drafting his work for the Benedictine nuns of distant Romsey. The same explanation could plausibly be offered for Wenefred's presence in John of Tynemouth's nationalizing legendary, the sole surviving copy of which was presented to the Benedictine Priory of St. Amphibalus in the mid-fourteenth century. That Wenefred's legend made its way to a Cistercian abbey in Cumbria, some 235 miles north of Worcester, is perhaps less easy to explain. E. Gordon Whatley suggests that the collection of Lives in Cotton Claudius A.v reflects an interest on the part of the Holme Cultram monks in "early English hagiology in general,"[3] but regardless of the channels by which this small legendary found its way to Cumbria, the fact remains that Wenefred's story was known from the far north to the far south of western England by the middle of the fourteenth century. And as Tynemouth's version of her Life demonstrates, Wenefred was also known near London by the same time.[4]

The spread of Wenefred's legend in England up to the mid-1300s serves as both a prelude and a backdrop to the increasing popularity and prestige of her cult at Shrewsbury in the latter half of the fourteenth century. It was during the fifteenth century, however, that English interest in Wenefred outside of Shropshire reached its apex. The present chapter will chart the development of Wenefred's cult in England over

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[3] E. Gordon Whatley, *The Saint of London: The Life and Miracles of St. Erkenwald* (Binghamton, N.Y.: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1989). 2.

[4] Tynemouth's text has been edited by De Smedt in Charles De Smedt, ed., *Acta Sanctorum, tom. I. Nov* (1887). 709-26. For another edition see Carl Horstmann, *Nova Legenda Anglie, vol. 2* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1901). 415-22.

the course of this period and will argue that royal devotion to Wenefred during the late 1300s and early 1400s served as the most significant catalyst to her wider recognition in England in the last century of the Middle Ages. With two cult sites in Wales and another in England, Gwenfrewy was a saint tied to three specific localities, but as a result of the attentions of Richard II and his Lancastrian successors Wenefred came to be seen as a Welsh saint with decidedly English leanings. This perception paved the way for English writers of the fifteenth century intermittently to destabilize her regional affiliation and, by extension, her national identity as they de-emphasized her connections with Wales to draw attention to her cult at Shrewsbury. John Mirk's *Festial* sermon for Wenefred's June feast is an example of such de-emphasizing, but more overt attempts at overlooking her Welsh origins are found in the Life appearing in the anonymous Middle English translation of the *Legenda Aurea* known as the *Gilte Legende,* and in another Middle English Life found in one version of the *South English Legendary*.[5] These texts date to the first half of the fifteenth century and indicate that, from the time of Richard II onward, the saint's national identity was in flux and could be re-written as necessary. Still, Gwenfrewy's Welsh origins were never totally elided by her English devotees. Evidence for this assertion comes from the fact that the presence of her relics at Shrewsbury, while rendering her readily accessible to the English monarchy and the laity, did not eclipse the significance of her original cult site at Holywell. For example, a chapel built at Holywell by Henry IV and pilgrimages to that place by Richard II, Henry V, and Edward IV, in addition to an annuity granted to the Abbot of Basingwerk by Richard III, demonstrate that the English crown never lost sight of Holywell as the

[5] I discuss these texts at length later in this chapter.

primary locus of the saint's spiritual power.[6] The works of John Audelay and Osbern Bokenham, moreover, demonstrate that Holywell, not Shrewsbury, was the pole to which personal devotion toward Wenefred was drawn in the middle years of the fifteenth century.[7] With so much attention focused on Holywell, the saint's nationality can hardly have been forgotten, or at least not for long.

THE CULT OF WENEFRED IN ENGLAND AT THE END OF THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY: THE 1398 ELEVATION OF WENEFRED'S FEAST AND THE REVOLT OF OWAIN GLYN DŴR

We can reasonably assume that the monks of Shrewsbury had held Wenefred in continuous devotion in the centuries following Prior Robert's expedition, for if Shrewsbury of all places had not continued to honor her, why would any copies of her Legend have been circulated in England during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuires? Her enduring importance at Shrewsbury during this time can be glimpsed in an early fourteenth-century refectory pulpit decorated with images of Wenefred and Beuno standing together, as well as of Peter, Paul, Mary and Gabriel, still visible on the abbey grounds today.[8] During the abbacy of Nicholas Stevens (1361-99), however, the abbey

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[6] I discuss at greater length Henry IV's Holywell chapel, as well as the royal pilgrimages mentioned here, later in this chapter.

[7] Once again, these poems will be dealt with in detail later in the present chapter. Based upon the evidence reviewed in chapter 3 above, it would appear that Gwytherin remained an important cult site in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, but in light of the present discussion Holywell and Shrewsbury appear to have greatly overshadowed Gwytherin at this time, especially for the saint's devotees outside Wales.

[8] Probably constructed in the 1320s or 1330s, the reader's pulpit stands now across the Abbey Foregate road that runs immediately adjacent to the south side of the abbey itself. Thomas Telford built the road in the 1830s, straight through the monastic cloister, in the south range of which the refectory stood. After an incident of vandalism in the mid-1990s, the carved panels showing Wenefred, Beuno, *et al*., were removed from the pulpit for safe keeping and replaced with replicas molded on the originals. Nigel Baker and Steve Allen, eds., *Shrewsbury Abbey: Studies in the Archaeology and History of an Urban Abbey* (Shropshire: Shropshire Archaeological and Historical Society in association with Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit, 2002), 39-41. More widespread monastic devotion to Wenefred in the early and mid-fourteenth century is witnessed by the Lansdowne Life and John of Tynemouth's abbreviation of Robert's *Vita et translatio*.

received numerous improvements and modifications that suggest Wenefred's increasing local reputation at the end of the fourteenth century. These modifications—including a rebuilding of the west end where the parish worshipped and a re-glazing of the west window with parish support around 1390—no doubt reflected the growing prestige of the local community, but also seem to have been aimed at accommodating (or perhaps at encouraging) increased pilgrim traffic. Evidence for parish interest in Wenefred's cult and its pilgrims comes from the fact that, in contrast to the more usual arrangement whereby a reliquary is installed in the east end of a church, Wenefred's stone shrine is believed to have stood in the north aisle of the nave, beneath the arcade arch that stands opposite the north porch. Abbot Stevens oversaw the construction of a new stone screen for this shrine and a fragment, possibly from the earlier screen or shrine, carved with images of Wenefred, Beuno, and John the Baptist remains on display in the north aisle.[9] In addition to the new tower and belfry, the largest bell in which was dedicated to Wenefred and survived until 1730, it was also during Stevens's time that the monks of Shrewsbury forcibly obtained the relics of Beuno from Rhewl near Chirk, a felony for which the abbey was fined but for which no further action was taken.[10] The bones were installed in a shrine standing beneath statues of Beuno and Wenefred. Archaeological investigations on the abbey grounds also suggest the expansion of guest accommodations during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.[11] Given these developments, and given that

[9] This fragment may also have come from the reredos of the parish altar. Ibid., 26.
[10] As mentioned previously, the Shrewsbury monks had already acquired the relics of Eleri by the 1170s. See chapter 3, note 21 above. For the tradition that Beuno's relics had been miraculously triplicated in order to settle a dispute between his devotees, see Elissa R. Henken, *Traditions of the Welsh Saints* (Woodbridge: D.S. Brewer, 1987). 88. The three identical bodies were sent to Clynnog Fawr, Nefyn, and Enlli, but the residents of Clynnog claimed to hold the saint's true corpse.
[11] Baker and Allen, *Shrewsbury Abbey: Studies in the Archaeology and History of an Urban Abbey*. On the improvements to the church fabric made during Abbot Stevens's time and the century following, see 203-05. For more detailed discussion of Wenefred's screen and its possible surviving fragment, see 26 and 140-

unincorporated fraternities to local saints were common in medieval England, it has been suggested that a confraternity of Wenefred was already established among the local parish at Shrewsbury by the later fourteenth century.[12] The conjectured placement of Wenefred's shrine supports this possibility.

Whether or not an informal group dedicated to Wenefred was in existence at this time, the saint began to enjoy formal acclaim in England well beyond the borders of Shropshire from this point onward. The process began when, for reasons that are not quite clear, Archbishop Roger Walden ordered at Convocation in February of 1398 that Wenefred's November feast be celebrated with nine lessons throughout the Canterbury Province. The feasts of SS. David and Chad (March 1 and 2 respectively) were elevated to the same status and a weekly commemoration of Thomas Becket's martyrdom was also mandated at the same meeting.[13] Richard II had seen Walden installed with papal

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42. The discovery of this fragment in an archaeological context of pre-Dissolution date suggests that it is part of the shrine that was replaced by Abbot Stevens rather than part of the shrine he constructed. Ibid., 142., 142. An image of the fragment is printed in Nigel Baker, *Shrewsbury Abbey: A Medieval Monastery* (Shropshire Books, n.d.). 7. It is referred to here as possibly being a part of the saint's shrine itself. For another photograph, see Ian Ross and Robin MacKenzie, *Shrewsbury Abbey: The Parish Church of the Holy Cross* (Much Wenlock: RJL Smith & Associates, 2008). 6. For a reproduction of a nineteenth-century illustration of the fragment, see T.W. Pritchard, *St. Winefride, Her Holy Well, and the Jesuit Mission: c.650-1930* (Wrexham: Bridge Books, 2009). 66. On the rebuilding of the church and on Wenefred's shrine or screen, including its situation in the north aisle, see also A.T. Gaydon, ed. *The History of Shropshire*, The Victoria History of the Counties of England, vol. 2 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), 33 and 37.

[12] Anne F. Sutton, "Caxton, the Cult of St. Winifred, and Shrewsbury," in *Of Mice and Men: Image, Belief and Regulation in Late Medieval England*, ed. Linda Clark, *The Fifteenth Century V* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 2005). On the possible existence of a confraternity of Wenefred in the late fourteenth century, see 113-14 and 116-17.

[13] David Wilkins, *Concilia Magnae Britanniae et Hiberniae, ab Anno MCCCL ad Annum MDXLV, vol. 3* (repr., 1737; Brussels, 1964). 234-36. The text printed by Wilkins is a letter of March 2 sent by Walden to Robert Baybrooke, Bishop of London from 1381 to 1404. Tristan Gray Hulse maintains (pers. comm.) that Shrewsbury would have been keeping Wenefred's feast with twelve lessons long before the 1398 provincial mandate. The nine lections for matins for Wenefred's feast of November 3 are preserved in the Sarum Breviary printed in Paris in 1531, and they are the longest such lections for any saint venerated with nine lessons in the Sarum sanctorale cycle. The text is drawn primarily from Prior Robert, but the first lection also includes information on Beuno's parentage and region of origin that Robert does not record. The text ends with the death of Theonia and does not include the story of Wenefred's *translatio*, something that would have been of more interest at Shrewsbury than in the Canterbury province at large and that would, therefore, have formed the final three lections of Shrewsbury's suggested twelve. The Hereford

permission only months before, on November 8, 1397, as a replacement for Thomas Arundel who had been exiled for his involvement in the supposedly treasonous activity of his brother, the Marcher lord Richard Fitzalan, Earl of Arundel (1346-97).[14] Walden had, however, no formal qualifications for the position and was, according to Adam of Usk, "better versed in things of the [military] camp and the world than of the church or study."[15] What, then, were his motivations for elevating the feast days of early British saints, something never before done by an English Convocation? Elizabeth Keohane has

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Use also observed Wenefred's November 3 feast, but the associated breviary lessons end at Caradog's arrival, strangely omitting the martyrdom itself. For the 1531 Sarum lections, see Francis Proctor and Christopher Wordsworth, *Breviarium ab usum insignis ecclesiae Sarum. Fasciculus III.* (Cambridge, 1886). col. 989-1000. For the Hereford lections, see William Howard Frere and L.E.G. Brown, eds., *The Hereford Breviary, vol. 2* (Henry Bradshaw Society: London, 1911). 392-93. I am grateful to Tristan Gray Hulse for these references. It should be noted that, as printed by Wilkins, the text of Walden's March 2 letter places Wenefred's November feast on the nones, that is, on November 5. It also claims that her bones rested in the monastery of St. Thomas: "necnon S. Wenefridae virginis, in non. Novemb. cujus corpus et reliquiae in ecclesia conventuali monasterii S. Thomae mart. extra muros villae Salopiae Cov. et Lich. dioec. ac provinciae nostrae Cant. reconduntur, et etiam continentur, per universas ecclesias nostrae Cant. provinciae, quamlibet viz. dictarum festivitatum, cum 9. lectionibus . . . ordinavimus et statuimus, annis singulis, perpetuis futuris temporibus, a clero dictae nostrae provinciae devotius celebrari, diebusque praenotatis, ut praefertur, debito devotionis obsequio dicend. de eisdem, ac festa sanctorum hujusmodi, sub diebus et mensibus praenotatis, in aliquo cujuslibet ecclesiae dictae nostrae Cant. provinciae calendario intitulari pariter et signari" ("and also [the feast] of St. Wenefred the virgin, on the nones of November, whose body and relics are concealed and also preserved in the church of the conventual monastery of St. Thomas the martyr outside the walls of Shrewsbury, in the diocese of Coventry and Lichfield, and in our province of Canterbury; through all the churches of our province of Canterbury, however, namely, of the aforementioned feasts [of David, Chad, and Wenefred] with nine lessons, . . . we have ordered and established that [these feasts] be celebrated, every year and for all time to come, devoutly by the clergy of our aforesaid province, on the days noted before, as is preferred, with duly pious ceremony having to be said regarding the same (saints), and that the feasts of these saints, on the previously noted days and months, be written in and, equally, be designated in every calendar of every church of our aforesaid province of Canterbury"). Translation is my own. Wilkins, *Concilia Magnae Britanniae et Hiberniae, vol. 3*: 235. Robert's original text gives the day of Wenefred's death as "quarto nonas novembris." De Smedt, *AASS, t.I. Nov.*: 723. It could be that Wilkins simply mistranscribed "in non. Novemb." from his source, which probably read "iij non. Novemb." The version of Walden's letter sent by Guy Mone, Bishop of St. David's from 1397 to 1407, to his own diocese for implementation, gives the correct date of Wenefred's November feast: *The Episcopal Registers of the Diocese of St. David's, 1397-1518*, vol. 1, Cymmrodorion Record Series (London: Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion, 1917). 32-33. I am grateful to Tristan Gray Hulse for this reference.

[14] C. Given-Wilson, "Fitzalan, Richard (III), fourth earl of Arundel and ninth earl of Surrey (1346–1397)," ed. Lawrence Goldman, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004-), http://www.oxforddnb.com.proxy-remote.galib.uga.edu/view/article/9535.

[15] "magis militaribus et mundialibus negociis quam clericalibus aut liberalibus imbutus." E.M. Thompson, ed., *Chronicon Adae de Usk, A.D. 1377-1421*, 2nd ed. (London, 1904; repr., New York: AMS Press, 1980). 38 and 193. R. G. Davies, "Walden, Roger (d. 1406)," ed. Lawrence Goldman, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004-), http://www.oxforddnb.com.proxy-remote.galib.uga.edu/view/article/28445.

suggested political expediency in the turbulent atmosphere of the later 1390s as the most likely possibility, citing royal mistreatment of the Arundels as a dangerous stimulant to rising discontent in northeast Wales, an area under Arundel control.[16] The family of Owain Glyn Dŵr, the famous Welsh rebel who in September of 1400 proclaimed himself Prince of Wales and led a revolt against the English crown for some fifteen years thereafter, was based in this region and had had close ties with the earls of Arundel and other English Marcher families during the fourteenth century. Glyn Dŵr's father, Gruffudd Fychan, had acted as steward of the important Arundel lordship of Oswestry in 1346-48, and Glyn Dŵr's grandfather, Gruffudd ap Madog, had been the chief layman in the Arundel lordship of Chirkland. Ap Madog had also married into the influential Lestrange family of Shropshire, and had served as a captain in the Welsh force that went to Scotland in the 1330s; it is also possible that he had acted as steward of Maelor Saesneg, a portion of Flintshire, in 1331.[17] Glyn Dŵr himself may well have enlisted in the personal retinue of Richard Fitzalan when the earl joined Richard II on his invasion of Scotland in summer 1385, but Glyn Dŵr was undoubtedly a squire in the earl's service in 1387, when he served on the wildly successful campaign that routed a Franco-Flemish fleet and raided Sluys.[18] While other members of that retinue were knighted in celebration of the victory, Glyn Dŵr himself received no such honor, but his and his family's connections to the Arundels remain notable nonetheless.

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[16] Elizabeth Keohane, "A Re-Interpretation of the Power and Function of Late Medieval English Convocation" (Fordham, forthcoming). I am grateful to Elizabeth Keohane for sharing her dissertation research with me prior to its completion.

[17] On the connections between Glyn Dŵr's family and the earls of Arundel, see R.R. Davies, *The Revolt of Owain Glyn Dŵr* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995). 136; See also Anthony Goodman, "Owain Glyn Dŵr Before 1400," *Welsh History Review* 5 (1970-71): 67-70; and Anthony Goodman, *The Loyal Conspiracy: The Lords Appellant under Richard the Second* (London: Routledge and K. Paul, 1971). 34.

[18] Davies, *Revolt of Owain Glyn Dŵr*: 146-49. On Richard Fitzalan's political position in the Marches generally, see ibid., 38-39.

In the context of the great upheavals in the power structure of the Welsh Marches between 1396 and 1399, which included Richard II's execution of Richard Fitzalan in 1397, a land dispute between Glyn Dŵr and his neighbor, Reginald de Grey of Ruthin, could have partly influenced the elevation of important Welsh feast days as an attempt to soothe brewing dissatisfaction with English treatment of the Welsh in general.[19] Besides the confrontation over borders, de Grey is reported to have further provoked Glyn Dŵr by purposefully delaying a royal summons requiring him to serve on a proposed expedition to Scotland. We do not know when exactly the antagonism toward Glyn Dŵr began, but de Grey and his father had been on bad terms with the natives of northeastern Wales since the 1380s.[20] Taken together, Reginald de Grey's actions ignited a Welsh revolt that would burn at various intensities for over a decade, and the "long-festering grievances" that de Grey released may well have been of the sort that the 1398 Convocation sought to address before they boiled over.[21] In this scenario, David, as the patron saint of Wales, would be a natural choice for the honor of elevation, and Wenefred had lived and her cult continued to thrive in the very same region from which Glyn Dŵr hailed. Holywell is in fact situated on the estuary of the river (i.e., the Dee) from whose valley Glyn Dŵr took his name.[22] As an important saint in Glyn Dŵr's home region,

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[19] On Fitzalan's execution, see Given-Wilson, "Fitzalan, Richard (III), fourth earl of Arundel and ninth earl of Surrey (1346–1397)." On the extent of the power shifts of 1396-99 as well as their impact on the "political awareness and engagement" of the Welsh, see Davies, *Revolt of Owain Glyn Dŵr*: 79-83. See also the maps on 84-85.

[20] Davies, *Revolt of Owain Glyn Dŵr*: 9 and 153-54. For a contemporary notice of the land dispute which was partly responsible for Glyn Dŵr's rebellion, see Thomas Walsingham, *The Chronica Maiora of Thomas Walsingham, 1376-1422*, trans. David Preest (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2005). 318-19. The episode of the delayed summons is recounted in the Evesham Chronicle, for which see George B. Stow, ed., *Historia Vitae et Regni Ricardi Secundi* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1977). 167-68.

[21] Davies, *Revolt of Owain Glyn Dŵr*: 153.

[22] Glyn Dŵr is an abbreviated form of *Glyndyfrdwy*, a Welsh word meaning "Valley of the Dee" and the name of the village where Owain proclaimed himself Prince of Wales in September of 1400. Holywell is approximately twenty-seven miles due north of this spot. Iolo Goch, a poet who praised Glyn Dŵr's home

Wenefred may have been elevated in order to bring the Welsh of the northeastern Marcher lordships into sympathy with the king following the execution of Fitzalan and the first grumblings of the Glyn Dŵr—de Grey dispute. After all, by this point Richard II had been actively cultivating his power in northern and western Wales, as well as in Chester, and Fitzalan had held important lordships in the area around Cheshire, so there can be little doubt that the region would have been of interest to the king.[23]

Further reasons for the elevations ordered by the 1398 Convocation can be found in Richard's devotional activities. He made a number of pilgrimages in the 1380s and 1390s, including one to Lichfield in 1387 that marked the beginning of his devotion to St. Chad.[24] Similarly, Richard's interest in Wenefred may well have started during the Great Parliament he held at Shrewsbury Abbey in January of 1398, in what R.R. Davies calls "his hour of political triumph."[25] The meeting nullified the acts of the Merciless Parliament of 1388 whereby Richard had become subject to the oversight of the Lords Appellant. Abbot Nicholas Stevens was still alive at the time and actively promoting Wenefred's cult, and it was only a month after the Shrewsbury parliament that the Canterbury Convocation under the leadership of Richard's newly appointed archbishop Roger Walden ordered the elevation of Wenefred's feast in addition to those of Chad and David.[26] It would appear that Richard made his reported 1398 pilgrimage to Wenefred's

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and hospitality at Sycharth, has long been associated with a *cywydd* to Gwenfrewy. The authorship of the *cywydd* is ultimately, however, uncertain. See note 259 below.

[23] Davies, *Revolt of Owain Glyn Dŵr*: 36-38 and 79.

[24] Diana Webb, *Pilgrimage in Medieval England* (London: Hambledon and London, 2000). 133-34. Chad (d. 672) was a Northumbrian by birth and had connections with the early British church. As sainted bishop of the Mercians, he was particularly revered in the Midlands. David Hugh Farmer, *The Oxford Dictionary of Saints*, 5th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003). 101-02.

[25] Davies, *Revolt of Owain Glyn Dŵr*: 78.

[26] Anne Sutton has suggested that the advocacy of Abbot Stevens was a factor in the 1398 elevation of Wenefred's feast. Sutton, "Caxton, the Cult of St. Winifred, and Shrewsbury," 113.

shrine at Holywell soon thereafter.[27] So while the king may first have learned of Wenefred at Shrewsbury, her origins and her shrine in northeastern Wales made her an ideal vehicle through which to deal with royal concerns there.

The 1398 elevation and Richard II's pilgrimage to Holywell mark the beginning of increasing devotion to Wenefred on the part of the noble and royal families of England over the course of the fifteenth century, a process that seems to have provided some English writers with the impetus to obscure Wenefred's national background and to situate her among the pantheon of decidedly English saints. One might speculate, however, that this process began as early as the late thirteenth century, when in the autumn of 1283 Edward I held at Shrewsbury the first Parliament attended by shire knights and burgesses as well as the usual magnates of the realm.[28] This was the meeting at which Dafydd ap Gruffydd was sentenced to death for his part in the revolt in North Wales the previous year—the rebellion that had ended with the death of Dafydd's brother Llywelyn, the last native prince of Wales—and while Wenefred has no recorded role in the proceedings, one can imagine the English taking extra satisfaction in the irony of condemning a Welsh rebel under the presumed patronage of an important north Walian saint. With Dafydd's death sentence being delivered in Shrewsbury, Wenefred could easily have been seen as supporting the English cause—if, of course, anyone had cared to consider her enshrined physical presence there as a mark of her general favor toward the English to begin with. In this regard it is significant that Edward had invited the commons so that they could witness and report back to their respective shires news of the

[27] Webb, *Pilgrimage in Medieval England*: 134.
[28] Michael Prestwich, *Edward I* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988). 202-03 and 458-59.

final English triumph over Welsh rebellion and outlawry.[29] It was, further, in the sixty or so years following Edward's 1283 parliament that the Lansdowne compiler and John of Tynemouth included Wenefred in their nationalizing surveys of primarily English saints, something that may have seemed more appropriate as her cult became more widely known and she began to be seen as having English sympathies.

To return to more certain ground, we have suggested that the 1398 elevations of the feasts of David and Wenefred may have been intended to secure general support in Wales for the sweeping shifts in power in the Marches that Richard II was overseeing at that time, and that Glyn Dŵr's grievances may also have been part of the picture. Support for these suggestions is found in the possibility that Richard's order for the weekly commemoration of Thomas Becket was meant to shore up the king's position with the English. Although Becket was a martyr to the careless interjection of Henry II and is, therefore, generally held to be an anti-monarchical saint, Sarah Blick has argued that his cult was employed by English kings to secure favor among their subjects at large, and Richard was the primary patron of Canterbury and of Becket's cult in the 1390s.[30] If Richard's support for Becket was politically motivated, his support for the cults of Welsh saints could have been as well. No matter what the exact reason for Wenefred's elevation in 1398 though, this event did not instantly render her an English saint anymore than it

[29] Ibid.

[30] Sarah Blick, "King and Cleric: Richard II and the Iconography of St. Thomas Becket and St. Edward the Confessor at Our Lady of Undercroft, Canterbury Cathedral," in *Beyond Pilgrim Souvenirs and Secular Badges: Essays in Honour of Brian Spencer*, ed. Sarah Blick (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2007). On Becket as an anti-monarchical saint co-opted by English kings, especially Richard II, for the sake of garnering popular support, see 185-90. See also Barrie Dobson, "The Monks of Canterbury Cathedral in the Later Middle Ages, 1220-1540," in *A History of Canterbury Cathedral*, ed. Patrick Collinson, Nigel Ramsay, and Margaret Sparks (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 142. I am grateful to Elizabeth Keohane for both of these references.

did David, the very symbol of Welsh independence from Canterbury.[31] These assertions are based on Thomas Arundel's apparent repeal of the elevation of the feasts of Wenefred, David, and Chad soon after his return to the see of Canterbury on October 1, 1399. Such a repeal is suggested by the fact that the 1415 re-elevation of these feasts under Henry Chichele was made with no reference to these saints ever having enjoyed provincial status in the past. Arundel's posited negative reaction to the elevation of these Welsh saints finds further support in Jonathan Good's argument that Arundel invoked the inchoate spiritual patron of all England, St. George, at Convocation in October of 1399 as part of a direct and effective rebuke to Richard's absolutist pretentions.[32] In a moment of English national pride, Arundel seems to have rejected the erstwhile king's proclivity for Welsh saints (or in the case of Chad, those with British tendencies) at the same time that he criticized Richard's autocratic rule. This sense of pride looks as if it became relatively widespread in the immediate aftermath of Glyn Dŵr's revolt in the very first years of the fifteenth century, for if Arundel had not officially disavowed the elevations of Wenefred, David, and Chad in 1399, he almost certainly would have done so following the passage

[31] On David in general, see Henken, *Traditions of the Welsh Saints*: 31-73; Elissa R. Henken, "Welsh Hagiography and the Nationalist Impulse," in *Celtic Hagiography and Saints' Cults*, ed. Jane Cartwright (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2003), 26-44; and J. Wyn Evans and Jonathan M. Wooding, eds., *St. David of Wales: Cult, Church and Nation* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2007). See also Farmer, *The Oxford Dictionary of Saints*: 138-39.

[32] Referring to George as the "spiritual patron of all English soldiers," the clergy demanded that his feast "ought to be instituted through all England and solemnly celebrated, just as other nations celebrate their patrons' feast days." This proclamation formed part of a papal petition, and in the following year George appeared in a list of the Canterbury feast days for the first time. Arundel was restored to the see of Canterbury on October 1, 1399, and the petition that recognized George as "totius militiae Anglicanae spiritualis . . . patronus" and that demanded the institution of his feast "per totam Angliam" was completed only five days later. Jonathan Good, *The Cult of St. George in Medieval England* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2009). 81. The translation quoted here is Good's own and is made from the text printed in Wilkins, *Concilia Magnae Britanniae et Hiberniae, vol. 3*: 241. The original Latin reads in full as follows: "Item, quod festum sancti Georgii martyris, qui totius militiae Anglicanae spiritualis est patronus, et penes quem in artibus armorum prae caeteris sanctis habetur devotius et confidentius memoria, instauretur per totam Angliam festive ac solenniter ferianda, et colenda, sicut caeterae nationes suorum patronorum festa colunt."

in Parliament of anti-Welsh legislation during the opening months of 1401.[33] These punitive statutes were a knee-jerk reaction to the outbreak of violence in Wales the previous year, and they arose from an atmosphere of xenophobia in which neither the English king nor commons were likely to have been interested, let alone content, to celebrate the feasts of Welsh saints on a broad level.

However, this does not mean that attitudes remained completely unchanged until Henry V was able to order the re-elevation of the feasts in 1415 following the death of Thomas Arundel. Indeed, to explain Henry's interest in Wenefred in the mid-1410s we must consider the origins of his personal devotion to the saint. This devotion began at the Battle of Shrewsbury on July 21, 1403, where Wenefred was thought to have favored the English royal victory and to have aided the Prince of Wales in recovering from a potentially fatal injury.[34] Following this event, it appears that Henry IV and his followers, including his son, began to venerate Wenefred openly, something that could only have brought her to the attention of a wider audience in England. And on the evidence of John Mirk's Wenefred sermon and John Audelay's Wenefred poems, it is clear that her cult continued to thrive in Shropshire throughout the first decades of the fifteenth century. The delay in her national re-elevation, and in that of David and of Chad, may then have been the combined result of opposition from Archbishop Arundel and of the continuing revolt in Wales.[35] If the 1398 Convocational mandate had been

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[33] Glanmor Williams, *Owain Glyndŵr* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1993). 38-39; R.R. Davies, *Owain Glyn Dŵr, Prince of Wales*, trans. Gerald Morgan (Talybont, Wales: Y Llolfa, 2009). 139.

[34] For Wenefred's role in Prince Henry's recovery, and for the position that Wenefred supported the royal army at the Battle of Shrewsbury, I rely on personal communication with Philip Morgan of Keele University. Dr. Morgan is currently working on a detailed study of the battle. See also Sutton, "Caxton, the Cult of St. Winifred, and Shrewsbury," 114. See too n28.

[35] On Arundel's frictions with Henry IV before 1413 and with Henry V afterward, see Jonathan Hughes, "Arundel , Thomas (1353–1414)," ed. Lawrence Goldman, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*

made in partial response to Welsh discontent that culminated in the Glyn Dŵr rebellion, then the re-elevations of 1415 may well have been partly intended to bookmark the end of the uprising. In this scenario, the elevations suggest that Wenefred at least, a saint already somewhat "Englished" as a result of her *translatio*, had come to be seen as a Welsh figure who clearly supported the English crown, and the re-elevations of 1415 may have been attempts to reconcile the English with the Welsh after the official end of a long, drawn out revolt against English rule. If so, the perception that Wenefred had long supported the English crown would have provided a subtle example for her countrymen to follow.

In essence, Wenefred symbolized in 1415 Welsh acceptance of English hegemony, but her Welsh identity was never construed as having been fully replaced by an English one. As noted above, and regardless of what some English writers may have attempted later in the fifteenth century, Wenefred was never completely divorced from her Welsh origins, something made clear from the attention lavished on Holywell during the 1400s—as mentioned, Henry IV appears to have constructed a chapel and well crypt at Holywell, while Henry V and Edward IV made pilgrimages there. Because Shrewsbury would seem to have provided much easier access to the saint, these royal expenditures on and journeys to Holywell indicate that Wenefred's greatest power was consistently thought to have inhered in Wales. At the same time, however, that power was considered available to bolster causes further afield. By the points at which Henry V and Edward IV made their pilgrimages to Holywell, Wenefred was perceived as more than just an obscure Welsh saint venerated at a remote cult site; these kings were visiting the primary

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(Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004-), http://www.oxforddnb.com.proxy-remote.galib.uga.edu/view/article/713.

shrine of a Welsh saint whose power and patronage were thought to extend to England as well as Wales. Derek Pearsall has noted that Henry V's "French campaign of 1415 was, in some measure at least—like the encouragement of English in official and literary circles—an assertion of the unified identity of nation, language, and king."[36] Occurring in such circumstances, the re-elevation of Wenefred's feast and Henry's Holywell pilgrimage imply that this Welsh saint was being called on to support perceptions of unity in the Isles under an umbrella of English supremacy.[37] The impetus for this call originated, however, in the clash between Welsh and English interests many years earlier.

THE TURNING POINT: WENEFRED'S ROLE IN THE BATTLE OF SHREWSBURY

As observed above, Wenefred was thought to have played a significant part in the royal victory at the Battle of Shrewsbury on July 21, 1403. The confrontation pitted forces led by Henry IV and his son Henry Prince of Wales against soldiers under the command of Henry Percy (Hotspur) and his uncle Thomas, earl of Worcester. The Percies had recently switched sides and now openly supported Glyn Dŵr against the new king, and it is possible that their march on Shrewsbury was a move deliberately coordinated with Glyn Dŵr's simultaneous advances in South Wales. Unfortunately for the alliance, Hotspur was killed in the battle and his uncle executed two days later.[38] And while it appears that the royal army had visited Wenefred's shrine in Shrewsbury Abbey prior to the battle and subsequently ascribed their victory, at least in part, to the saint's

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[36] Derek Pearsall, "The Idea of Englishness in the Fifteenth Century," in *Nation, Court and Culture: New Essays on Fifteenth-Century English Poetry*, ed. Helen Cooney (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2001), 18.
[37] M.J.C. Lowry maintains that "The ostentatious pilgrimage and the new festivals were potent and perfectly timed gestures to declare the reconciliation and solidarity of the island races." See M.J.C. Lowry, "Caxton, St. Winifred and the Lady Margaret Beaufort," *The Library*, 6th Series, V, no. 2 (1983): 111. See also page 258ff. below.
[38] Davies, *Revolt of Owain Glyn Dŵr*: 184-85.

favor, the king's contingent did not escape unscathed. Prince Henry himself suffered a horrific arrow wound to his face that left him with a permanent scar, but he survived nonetheless and his recovery was credited to Wenefred's intervention.[39] It is possible that some connection was drawn between the mortal neck wound from which Wenefred herself was miraculously restored and for which she became famous, and the grievous facial injury from which Prince Henry recovered. Regardless, the prince did not forget Wenefred's favor, and the attention he would lavish upon the saint after he became king in 1413 would bring her squarely into the English national spotlight.

The prince was not, though, the only one to express his thanks and devotion to Wenefred after the Battle of Shrewsbury. Among the king's retinue in 1403 was the Earl of Warwick, Richard Beauchamp, who in his will of 1435 ordered the installation of an east window depicting Ss. Wenefred, Thomas Becket, John of Bridlington, and Alban in his mausoleum at St. Mary's Warwick; in the same document he also decreed that statues of himself, bearing his arms and wrought from twenty pounds of gold, were to be placed at each saint's shrine.[40] Two years later his wife Isabella donated a russet velvet gown to drape Wenefred's statue at the Holywell shrine.[41] That shrine had been rebuilt by Henry

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[39] The barbed arrow had apparently embedded itself some six inches into the prince's head on the left side of his nose, and it was not removed for several days. Carole Rawcliffe, *Medicine and Society in Later Medieval England* (Stroud: Alan Sutton Publishing Ltd., 1995). 76. I am grateful to Dr. Anne F. Sutton for this reference. For the section of BL MS Harley 1736 that reports Prince Henry's ordeal, as well as a depiction of the instrument that the surgeon used to remove the arrowhead, see Richard Theodore Beck, *The Cutting Edge: Early History of the Surgeons of London* (London: Lund Humphries, 1974). 117.

[40] On Beauchamp's Wenefred window at St. Mary's Warwick, see Richard Marks, *Stained Glass in England during the Middle Ages* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993). 61. On a Wenefred window at Haseley, Warwickshire, which was probably the result of Beauchamp devotion, see Sutton, "Caxton, the Cult of St. Winifred, and Shrewsbury," 115 and n32.

[41] T. Charles-Edwards, *Saint Winefride and Her Well: The Historical Background* (London: The Catholic Truth Society, 1971). 5. Charles-Edwards here states, erroneously, that William Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, commissioned the golden statue for Wenefred's shrine. It was, in fact, Richard Beauchamp, earl from 1401 until 1439, who made the commission. See Christine Carpenter, "Beauchamp, Richard, thirteenth earl of Warwick (1382–1439)," ed. Lawrence Goldman, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004-), http://www.oxforddnb.com.proxy-

IV himself, with the well enclosed behind a grate and a new chapel constructed over it, according to Osbern Bokenham's Middle English verse Life of Wenefred completed sometime after 1448.[42] Moreover, the battlefield chapel erected at Shrewsbury in 1409 to memorialize the slaughter of 1403 had a Wenefred window.[43] Further evidence of Wenefred's popularity in mid-fifteenth-century England comes from her appearance in four different books of hours, two of which at least can be localized to London. One of these books, Pierpont Morgan MS 105, was owned by Sir William Porter, a man close to Henry V who also served as one of his executors, and it contains on fol. 73 an ornate miniature depicting the major episodes in Wenefred's legend.[44] The image shows the saint holding her martyr's palm while Caradog gives chase atop a white horse, his sword drawn. In the foreground flows the well, surrounded on three sides by stone walls, while in the background Beuno is replacing Wenefred's head outside the Holywell church.[45] The fact that Caradog rides a horse in the miniature suggests, interestingly, that a version of the legend akin to that recorded in the *Vita Prima* influenced the depiction, for only the anonymous Life includes the detail that Caradog caught up with Wenefred by riding his

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remote.galib.uga.edu/view/article/1838. See also Lowry, "Caxton, St. Winifred and the Lady Margaret Beaufort," 111.

[42] For further discussion of this chapel see also pages 290ff. below. Bokenham's *Lyf of Seynt Wenefrede* from the Abbotsford MS is unpublished, but I have presented a complete transcription of it in Appendix D below with the permission of Douglass Gifford, Honorary Librarian for Abbotsford, and of Andrea Longson, Senior Librarian for the Faculty of Advocates. Simon Horobin is at work on a full edition of the Abbotsford MS for the Early English Text Society. Simon Horobin, "Politics, Patronage, and Piety in the Work of Osbern Bokenham," *Speculum* 82, no. 4 (2007): 949n57.

[43] Marks, *Stained Glass in England during the Middle Ages*: 187.

[44] Sutton, "Caxton, the Cult of St. Winifred, and Shrewsbury," 115. Sutton notes, in n30, the three other fifteenth-century memorials or suffrages to Wenefred, two of which can be tied to London. One of the London manuscripts includes a calendar entry for Wenefred, and the other a depiction of her in a historiated initial, a letter into which has been drawn a recognizable scene or figure. Michelle P. Brown, *Understanding Illuminated Manuscripts: A Guide to Technical Terms* (London: J. Paul Getty Museum and the British Library, 1994). 68.

[45] I am grateful to Tristan Gray Hulse for showing me a photograph of this miniature. The three-sided structure in the image does not depict the structure described by Bokenham as having been built by Henry IV. For the Henry IV's well chapel in Bokenham's verse Life of Wenefred, see again pages 290ff. below.

horse.[46] A final indication of enduring Lancastrian devotion to Wenefred is found in Henry V's intention to establish a one-chaplain chantry at Shrewsbury in the saint's honor, something he was unable to accomplish before he died. His son and successor did, however, grant revenues in 1449 to support a chaplain who would serve as a brother of Shrewsbury Abbey and who would pray for the souls of the kings both dead and alive, but papal confirmation did not arrive until 1463.[47]

Taken all together, these material and liturgical dedications to the saint indicate that she made a notable impression on the victorious party at Shrewsbury in 1403. If Richard II had seen the elevation of Wenefred as a way to consolidate his influence and power in northeastern Wales and Cheshire, he did so because he viewed Wenefred predominately as a Welsh saint, one incidentally, but nonetheless conveniently transplanted to England and, therefore, available for supporting the concerns of the English monarchy. Similarly, Henry IV must have taken the favor of this Welsh saint in the Battle of Shrewsbury as a sign of her support for the new Lancastrian regime over and against those who would threaten it. The fact that this battle saw the defeat of men aligned with Glyn Dŵr suggests that Wenefred's Welsh origins were considered no hindrance to her supporting English royal authority, but, as mentioned above, this is not to suggest that her national identity was wholly overwritten. If indeed Osbern Bokenham's account is correct, Henry IV's major construction project at her primary cult site in Wales can only have reinforced awareness of her Welsh background, and if anything her dual presence on or near the March, at Shrewsbury and at Holywell, would serve as a reminder of her liminal position between England and Wales. Judging from

[46] Cf. *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*, trans. Ronald Pepin and Hugh Feiss (Toronto: Peregrina Publishing, 2000). 100. I am grateful to Tristan Gray Hulse for drawing my attention to his fact.
[47] Sutton, "Caxton, the Cult of St. Winifred, and Shrewsbury," 115.

the Lancastrian response to the victory at Shrewsbury that included the construction of a chapel and crypt at Holywell, Wenefred appears to have been viewed in the early fifteenth century as a Welsh saint who inclined readily to English royal interests, and it would be the re-elevation of her feast in 1415 and Henry V's pilgrimage to her well (either that at Woolston or, perhaps, at Holywell) that brought her into wider English consciousness. Still, the presence of her relics at Shrewsbury provided an alternative point of access to Wenefred at the expense of Holywell, and an attempt to center attention on Wenefred's English cult site rather than on Holywell is detectable in the earliest English version of her Legend, a sermon found in John Mirk's *Festial*.

WENEFRED'S FIRST ENGLISH LIFE: JOHN MIRK'S *FESTIAL* SERMON

Mirk's sermon suggests that, from the late fourteenth century at least, Wenefred's power could be perceived by her English devotees as residing primarily in Shrewsbury rather than Holywell. Mirk's sermon is the earliest of the vernacular (i.e., non-Latin) evidence for the spread of Wenefred's cult and legend in England, and it appears in his *Festial*, a compilation of preaching material in Middle English for major church festivals likely composed in the later 1380s while Mirk was a canon regular at the Arrouaisian abbey of Lilleshall in Shropshire, not far from Shrewsbury itself.[48] A missionary order from their inception, the Austin canons were primarily concerned with pastoral outreach and Arrouaisian houses generally took great interest in the structure and ritual of the

[48] For the background to, dating of, and manuscript context for Mirk's text, see the introduction to Susan Powell, ed., *John Mirk's Festial: Edited from the British Library MS Cotton Claudius A.II, vol. 1*, Early English Text Society, o.s. 334 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009). x-cxxi. On the history of Lilleshall, see Gaydon, *History of Shropshire, vol. 2*, 70-80. All translations from Middle English in this chapter are my own unless otherwise indicated.

liturgy.[49] Combined with Mirk's two other surviving works—the English verse *Instructions for Parish Priests* and the Latin prose *Manuale Sacerdotis*—the *Festial* was likely meant to form a complete pastoral program for a typical poor parish. Indeed, Mirk overtly intended his sermons for "helpe of suche mene clerkus as I am myselff . . . so he that hathe lust to study therein he schal fynde redy of alle the principale festis of the ȝere a schort sermon nedful for hym to techy[n] and othur for to lerne."[50] The *Festial* is probably the second of Mirk's three texts, and it consisted originally of sixty-four sermons drawn explicitly but not exclusively from Jacobus de Voragine's thirteenth-century *Legenda Aurea*, all arranged in liturgical order and intended for oral delivery.[51] The work was soon reorganized, however, into the service-book categories of *Temporale* and *Sanctorale*—the former of which consists of the sermons for major church festivals while the latter contains sermons specifically for saints' days—and copies of Mirk's collection in both its earlier form (Group A) and its later rearrangement (Group B) survive today in twenty-two different manuscripts.[52] A more thorough revision (Rev.) based on a Group B manuscript and aimed at a more educated audience than Mirk initially envisioned was made sometime after 1434, and it survives in whole or in part in

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[49] Gaydon, *History of Shropshire, vol. 2*, 76.
[50] Powell, *Mirk's Festial, 1*: 1.
[51] The sermons for the local SS. Wenefred and Alkmund do not derive from Voragine's text, and neither do the sermons for the Conception of the Virgin or for the Translation of Thomas Becket. Ibid., xxxii. On the original chronological arrangement of Mirk's text according to the church calendar, see xxx.
[52] The *Temporale* and *Sanctorale* are the two groupings under which the variable portions, or Propers, of the mass are collected in the missal. The Proper consists of the epistle and gospel readings for a given day, as well as the sermon that is itself often based on these readings. As H. Leith Spencer explains, "the *Temporale*, apart from the inclusion of a few fixed dates associated with the Nativity season, takes account of the variable date of Easter which causes the number of weeks in the preceding Epiphany season and following Trinity Sunday to fluctuate from one year to the next. The second calendar, the *Sanctorale*, sets out the Propers for saints' days: these, of course, occur on fixed days in each month, and, unlike the *Temporale*, there is no variation from year to year. Sermons based on the former calendar are *sermones de tempore*; when they follow the latter, they are *sermones de sanctis*." H. Leith Spencer, *English Preaching in the Late Middle Ages* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993). 24. For more complete discussion of the differences between and uses of these two calendars, see 23-33.

four manuscripts, while nineteen other manuscripts contain between one and twenty of Mirk's sermons or extracts from them.[53]

The *Festial* obviously enjoyed wide popularity throughout the Middle Ages and was printed repeatedly by Caxton, de Worde, and several others between 1483 and 1532; at least twenty-four different editions are known, but none of them ever contained Mirk's Wenefred sermon.[54] Many of these printed versions did include, however, extra sermons or catechetical material added by the printer, and the popularity of Mirk's collection continued even after the Reformation, as is partly demonstrated by the Welsh translation of fifteen of his sermons—not including the one for Wenefred—surviving in Cardiff Public Library MS Havod 22 (*ca*. 1550-75).[55] These *Temporale* texts have been freely translated from a printed edition of Mirk's collection and set alongside portions of the mystical treatise *Cysegrlan Fuchedd* (*Holy Living*), Gospel extracts, assorted *parochialia* including the Communion, Paternoster, and Creed, prophetic material, and even a Passion drama, all of which are in Welsh.[56] The fact that Wenefred is missing from the *Festial* material translated here is perhaps surprising given the northeastern dialect of the text, but it must be emphasized that the Mirk sermons in the Cardiff manuscript are exclusively for *Temporale* feasts (Advent to Pentecost) and that none of the printed

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[53] Powell, *Mirk's Festial, 1*: xliii-xliv. The post-1434 Revision may have been meant as a counter to the Lollard sermon cycles in circulation in the mid-fifteenth century. Ibid., lii-lv. On the priority of Group A, see lxii-lxv.

[54] Ibid., lv-lvii; James M. Girsch, "An Elizabethan Manuscript of Mirk's *Festial* Sermon on St. Winifred and Observations on the 'Shrewsbury Manuscript'," *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 96 (1995): 265. Neither of Caxton's two editions of the *Festial* included the Wenefred sermon. Sutton, "Caxton, the Cult of St. Winifred, and Shrewsbury," 111n6.

[55] Powell, *Mirk's Festial, 1*: lviii-lix.

[56] Susan Powell, ed., *John Mirk's Festial: Edited from the British Library MS Cotton Claudius A.II, vol. 2*, Early English Text Society, o.s. 335 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011). 593-96 and the sources cited there. On *Cysegrlan Fuchedd* in general, see R. Iestyn Daniel, *A Medieval Welsh Mystical Treatise* (Aberystwyth: University of Wales Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies, 1997).

editions of Mirk's text such as the one on which the Havod translation was based contained the Wenefred sermon.[57]

The Wenefred sermon does appear, however, in six of the Group A manuscripts, in one manuscript that combines material from Groups A and B (BL Cotton Claudius A.II), and in the sixteenth- or seventeenth-century Stonyhurst College Library MS A.II.8, a text based on a Group A manuscript now lost.[58] The late Stonyhurst manuscript, whose Wenefred material consists of the Mirk sermon and a dossier of miracles performed at Holywell between 1556 and 1668, has been taken as evidence for the wide popularity of the Wenefred sermon, another copy of which may have been in existence in the early nineteenth century in a conjectured but now untraceable codex commonly referred to as the "Shrewsbury Manuscript."[59] Group A manuscripts seem in general to have had a wide distribution, but are predominant in the central-west and south-west Midlands, and the manuscripts containing the Wenefred sermon have been localized to Warwickshire,

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[57] Girsch, "An Elizabethan Manuscript of Mirk's *Festial* Sermon on St. Winifred," 268n6. Judging from internal evidence, Powell maintains that the Havod translation is based on a printed edition of the *Festial* dating from 1491 or later. Powell, *Mirk's Festial, 2*: 593n225. Caxton's second edition of 1491 (STC 17959) skips from the sermon for St. John at the Latin Gate (no. 35) to that on the Nativity of John the Baptist (no. 44). John Mirk, *Incipit liber qui vocatur festialis*, (Westminster: William Caxton, 1491), http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:10205:90 and http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:10205:91.

[58] The six Group A manuscripts preserving the Wenefred sermon are (A) BL MS Lansdowne 392; (B) BL MS Harley 2403; (C) BL MSS Harley 2420 and 2417 (which were once a single manuscript and are the only Group A texts to separate the *Festial* into *Temporale* and *Sanctorale* sections); (D) Bodleian Library MS Gough Ecclesiastical Topography 4; (I) Cambridge, Gonville and Caius College MS 168/89; and (K) Southwell Minster Library MS 7. The first four date to the mid-fifteenth century, while (I) belongs to the third quarter of the fifteenth and (K) to its close. See Powell, *Mirk's Festial, 1*: lxvii and lxxvii; and Powell, *Mirk's Festial, 2*. 539-44 and 550-51. Cotton Claudius A.II (α) is the work of several hands over a long period of time, for which see the comprehensive discussion in Powell, *Mirk's Festial, 1*: lxxxiii-cx. On the date of the Stonyhurst manuscript, see Charles De Smedt, "Documenta de S. Wenefreda," *Analecta Bollandiana* 6 (1887): 306; and Girsch, "An Elizabethan Manuscript of Mirk's *Festial* Sermon on St. Winifred," 267n2. On the relationship of Stonyhurst to the Group A texts, see Powell, *Mirk's Festial, 1*: lviii-lix; and Powell, *Mirk's Festial, 2*: 596-97.

[59] Girsch, "An Elizabethan Manuscript of Mirk's *Festial* Sermon on St. Winifred," 265; on the "Shrewsbury Manuscript," see also Powell, *Mirk's Festial, 2*: 597 and the sources cited there. The Stonyhurst manuscript text has been edited in De Smedt, "Documenta de S. Wenefreda," 307-10.

Worcestershire, Staffordshire, Shropshire, and Nottinghamshire. Group B manuscripts, on the other hand, are tightly situated in the Central Midlands and the Wenefred sermon is present in none of them.[60] The early reworking of the text represented by Group B also omits the sermon on St. Alkmund (d. 800), a sermon which seems from its statement that Alkmund is "patron to þis chyrch" to have been intended for preaching in Lilleshall Abbey itself, the site of that saint's burial before his translation to Derby.[61] Group B appears, therefore, to have left out saints whose cults did not extend to the region in which the recension was prepared and circulated. Besides the addition of thirty new sermons, the post-1434 revision (Rev.) of the *Festial* also excised the sermons for Wenefred and Alkmund, something to be expected given that this revision was based on a Group B text and a more careful selection of material from the *Legenda Aurea*, a work which never included these saints.

The value of Mirk's Wenefred sermon for the present study is the evidence it provides for lay veneration of the saint in Shropshire and the surrounding regions in the later fourteenth century; the royal connections of Lilleshall Abbey and its proximity to Shrewsbury could only have served to reinforce the spread of her cult from that time onward. While the Latin versions of her life in Lansdowne 436 and Tynemouth's *Sanctilogium* (Cotton Tiberius E.i) indicate an increasing monastic devotion to Wenefred

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[60] The regular appearance of Group A sermons in anthology manuscripts argues for the broad dissemination of this earlier rendition of the *Festial*. Powell, *Mirk's Festial, 1*: xlviii-xlix. Wenefred's cult seems also to have been known in the southern Marches, particularly Ewias and Erging. Farmer, *The Oxford Dictionary of Saints*: 544. From Llanfeuno in the Olchon valley there survives a copy of the Hereford Missal, now preserved in the library of University College, Oxford, in the calendar of which the feast of Wenefred has been written in with red ink. Charles-Edwards, *Saint Winefride and Her Well*: 2. It might be noted that the *Festial* manuscripts containing the Wenefred sermon have a distribution roughly similar to that for the saint's earlier Latin Lives; for which, see page 223ff. above.

[61] Powell, *Mirk's Festial, 1*: xxiii; Powell, *Mirk's Festial, 2*. See 219, 221, 416n117 and 416n125-26. See also 221 and 417n138-40. David Rollason, "Ealhmund [St Ealhmund] (d. 800)," ed. Lawrence Goldman, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004-), http://www.oxforddnb.com.proxy-remote.galib.uga.edu/view/article/49420.

in the middle years of the fourteenth century, manuscript copies of Mirk's vernacular Wenefred sermon exist in much greater numbers, arguing for an even wider base of lay veneration by the end of the century.[62] Given that the *Festial* most likely belongs to the later 1380s and that manuscripts of the earliest version often contain the Wenefred sermon, the *Festial* likely reflects the influence of Abbot Nicholas Stevens's promotion of Wenefred's cult at Shrewsbury some twenty miles west of Lilleshall. Her cult was certainly well known in the early fifteenth century at Haughmond Abbey, which was situated less than five miles from Shrewsbury and was the final residence of John Audelay, a blind priest from whose pen two poems to Wenefred survive.[63] Lilleshall itself was considered a royal foundation because it had been established on the endowments of the secular college of St. Alkmund in Shrewsbury, which had in turn been founded by Ethelflaed, queen of Mercia.[64] The abbey had, therefore, connections with as well as obligations toward local gentry and the nobility: Richard II stayed at Lilleshall while en route to his Great Parliament of 1398 and John of Gaunt rested with a fever there for two days after the meeting.[65] The knowledge of and veneration for Wenefred

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[62] The possibility that Wenefred's legend also influenced the late fourteenth-century alliterative poem *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* supplies further evidence of her growing popularity among the laity in the Midlands at this time. See Mary-Ann Stouck, "Of Talking Heads and Other Marvels: Hagiography and Lay Piety in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*," *Florilegium* 17 (2000); J.S. Ryan, "Sir Gawain and St Winifred: Hagiography and Miracle in West Mercia," *Parergon* n.s. 4 (1986); Edmund Colledge and J.C. Marler, "Céphalogie: a Recurring Theme in Classical and Medieval Lore," *Traditio* 37 (1981); and John Burrow, *A Reading of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (1965; repr., London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977). 190-94.

[63] Ella Keats Whiting, *The Poems of John Audelay*, Early English Text Society, o.s. 184 (London: Oxford University Press, 1931). The Wenefred poems are nos. 24 and 26. There is also a Wenefred reference in no. 47 (a poem on virginity) at line 15. See xvii, 171-78, 206, and 247-48. The sole manuscript of Audelay's work, Bodleian MS Douce 302, includes a colophon after poem 18 giving the date 1426. Because many more poems follow, it appears that Audelay was active for some time thereafter. Ibid., xiv. On Haughmond Abbey, see Gaydon, *History of Shropshire, vol. 2*, 62-70. Audelay's poems have been edited more recently in Susanna Fein, ed., *John the Blind Audelay, Poems and Carols (Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Douce 302)*, TEAMS (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 2009). For further discussion of Audelay's Wenefred poems, see page 261ff. below.

[64] Gaydon, *History of Shropshire, vol. 2*, 71-72.

[65] Ibid., 76; Powell, *Mirk's Festial, 1*: xxiii-xxiv.

on the part of the monks of Lilleshall could well have primed Richard for a more thorough introduction to her cult and legend under the influence of Abbot Stevens at Shrewsbury shortly thereafter. If nothing else, the existence of the Wenefred sermon and the distribution of the Group A manuscripts in the central-west and south-west Midlands suggest that Abbot Stevens had been successful in publicizing the saint's cult in the region around his abbey and that Richard would have learned of Wenefred while traveling through the region even if he had not spent time at Shrewsbury Abbey itself.

According to Susan Powell, evidence of Wenefred's importance within the *Festial* collection is found in the fact that her sermon, unlike most of the sermons Mirk composed, was meant to be preached on her actual feast day of June 21.[66] Mirk seems usually to have intended sermons for saints to be read out on the Sunday before their festal day, and he gives special status to major celebrations like Christmas and Lent by assigning their sermons to the feast day itself. Evidence for Mirk's intentions as to when a given sermon was to be delivered comes from the phrasing with which he opens his different texts. Most of the sermons for saints begin with the formula "suche a day," an indication that the preacher was meant to insert the name of the weekday on which the feast would fall in the coming week. By contrast, the Wenefred sermon in Cotton Claudius A.II and the other major sermons begin with the expression "Thys day," signalling that the text was to be read out on the actual feast day under consideration. Besides Wenefred, the only saints whose sermons were meant to be delivered on their actual feast day were Stephen, John the Evangelist, Holy Innocents, and Thomas of Canterbury, the so-called Christmas saints whose festivals followed one another from

[66] Powell gives June 21 as the date of the feast, but see chapter 4, note 70 above on the confusion surrounding the saint's festal days. The date often given in late medieval Welsh calendars is June 22.

December 26 to 29.[67] It is curious, though, that Mirk's Wenefred sermon is intended for her June feast, that which celebrates her decollation at Holywell, rather than the November feast for her second death at Gwytherin, a date that must have been of primary importance at Shrewsbury since Robert gives it explicitly in his *Vita et translatio*.[68] Moreover, this November feast, and not the feast in June, was the one elevated by Convocational order in 1398. This is a point to which we will return shortly.

Given its provenance in Shropshire, Mirk's sermon is, unsurprisingly, a heavily truncated paraphrase of the Wenefred legend as recorded in Robert's *Vita et translatio*, conjoined with three miracle stories that center on the healing power of Wenefred's shrine at Shrewsbury Abbey. The first is an incubation miracle where a crippled man named Adam is cured after sleeping in front of the saint's stone shrine. In the second and third miracle stories, it is the water in which her bones have been washed that acts as the agent of healing. The second story deals with a man cured of a poisonous spider bite when his wound is rinsed with the saint's bone-washing water, and the third involves a mute man who is able to speak again after Wenefred commands him in a vision to drink of the same water. All three individuals are said to have become the saint's servants or pilgrims for the rest of their lives. The sermon itself does include a number of Prior Robert's more dramatic and entertaining details, such as Caradog's being swallowed by

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[67] Powell, *Mirk's Festial, 1*: xxx-xxxi. For the opening of the Wenefred sermon in Cotton Claudius A.II, see 162, line 2. It should be noted, however, that while the Cotton manuscript opens the Wenefred sermon with the "Thys day" formula, the Wenefred sermon begins with the phrase "suche a day" in Bodleian MS Gough Ecclesiastical Topography 4 (Powell's manuscript D) and in Stonyhurst College Library MS A.II.8. For the Bodleian manuscript text see Theodor Erbe, ed., *Mirk's Festial: A Collection of Homilies*, Early English Text Society, e.s., 96 (London, 1905; repr., Millwood, N.Y.: Kraus, 1973). 177; for the Stonyhurst text, see De Smedt, "Documenta de S. Wenefreda," 307. For a modern English translation of the Bodleian manuscript text as printed by Erbe, see Karen A. Winstead, ed. and trans., *Chaste Passions: Medieval English Virgin Martyr Legends* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000). 82-85. Winstead does not include the two *narraciones* that follow the Life in Erbe's edition.

[68] *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 66.

the earth and Wenefred's wiping away the dust from her brow after her resurrection. At the same time, however, Mirk leaves out details that would have been less helpful in promoting the shrine at Shrewsbury; he omits the story of the cloak that Wenefred sends annually to Beuno and mentions none of the healing properties of the well that Robert specifically notes. While Robert's account includes Beuno's explicit statement that God has granted Wenefred three miracles—the stain of her blood on the stones of her fountain, the promise that those who call on her will be relieved of their oppressions by the third entreaty, and the aforementioned yearly gift to Beuno—Mirk instead asserts that God showed her "þre grete miracles" of a wholly different nature and then curiously goes on to note four:

> On was wan þe erþe swolowed hym bodly þat hadde slayne hyr. Anoþer was for, þereos þe heued abode, anone sprong a fayre welle þere, þoȝ none was sene beforen. Þe þrydde, whan scheo þat was slayne ros aȝeyne to lyue. Þe ferþe was: eure whil scheo lyvyd, þer was a whyte serkul aboute hur nek þeras þe strok was, leke a whyte threde. Wherefore þereas scheo was before called Brewa, fro þis day forth men called hyr Wenefrede, þat is in englys a whyte threde.[69]
>
> (One was when the earth swallowed bodily him who had slain her. Another was, there where the head lay, immediately there sprung a fair well there, though none had been seen before. The third [miracle was] when she who was slain rose again to life. The fourth was, ever while she lived, there remained a white circle about her neck where the stroke had been, like a white thread. Therefore, while she was previously called Brewa, from this day forth men called her Wenefred, that is, in English, a "white thread.")[70]

Although he introduces his own meaning for the second half of the saint's full name, Mirk is obviously still drawing on some version of Robert's text in this passage.[71] In re-

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[69] Powell, *Mirk's Festial, 1*: 163. For the three miracles that Beuno describes to Wenefred in Robert's text, see *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 42-44.

[70] All translations from Middle English are my own.

[71] Robert notes that Wenefred's scar is thin "like a thread," and from that detail Mirk seems to have concluded that the saint's original name, Brewa—which Robert does not translate—meant "thread." *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 38. For more on the saint's name, see Appendix B below.

conceiving the "grete miracles" shown to her, however, Mirk de-emphasizes the importance of her healing fountain at Holywell. Indeed, the second miracle here listed is Mirk's only direct reference to her well and he never mentions any of its healing properties, while the *narraciones* that end the sermon keep attention squarely centered on Wenefred's presence at Shrewsbury. Moreover, Mirk's sermon almost completely elides Wenefred's national origins; it never mentions Holywell or Gwytherin by name and makes only one passing reference, at the beginning of the *translatio* account, to Wenefred's being buried in "Walys." The only other mention of Wales is even more fleeting. It appears not in the sermon proper but in the third and final *narracio*, where the mute man who travels to Shrewsbury to witness the transfer of the relics from St. Giles Church to the abbey proper is said to have come with knights who were Welsh.[72]

Mirk's excising from Robert's text those details not immediately relevant to the cult at Shrewsbury can be explained in part by reference to the context for which Mirk was composing: not only was he writing the sermon in the region where Wenefred's English cult was strongest, but, as Mirk says in his prologue, he intended to provide for each of the principal feasts in the year "a schort sermon nedful for . . . to techy[n] and . . . for to lerne."[73] The removal of details unrelated to the Shrewsbury cult of Wenefred would have been done at least partly in the interest of length. On the other hand, however, the emphasis that Mirk places on the water in which Wenefred's bones were washed, coupled with his de-emphasizing the well at Holywell, suggest that he viewed Wenefred's power as being equally if not more efficacious in Shropshire than it was at her original cult site in North Wales. Mirk's mention of the bone-washing water is

[72] Powell, *Mirk's Festial*, 1:166.
[73] Ibid., 3.

significant because it appears to be a detail tied to traditions local to Shropshire. According to the English translation of Prior Robert's *Vita et translatio* printed by William Caxton in 1484, a well miraculously sprung up about ten miles outside of Shrewsbury at a spot where Robert and his fellow monks rested with Wenefred's bones on the final leg of their journey home.[74] When preparing to go on again, the monks found that the saint's relics could not be moved. Deciding that the bones had to be washed before they could be brought into the city, the brethren were amazed by the sudden eruption of the new fountain, "whiche yet renneth a grete cours contynuelly in to this day lyke to the rather welle."[75] After Wenefred's relics are washed in the water, the stones submerged in it become stained as if with blood, just like at Holywell. While Caxton does not claim that this new fountain possessed any healing properties, the likelihood that he printed the Life for, or at least at the instigation of, his various contacts in Shrewsbury suggests, in combination with Mirk's focus on Shrewsbury and his references to the healing water in which Wenefred's bones were washed, that both men are referring to the same local tradition. Although unmoveable bones are a standard trope in *translatio* narrative and although washing bones is a common hagiographical motif, the implication of Mirk's and Caxton's accounts is that, for people in Shropshire, the new well in essence stood as a substitute for and perhaps even eclipsed Wenefred's fountain at Holywell.[76] In this regard it has been suggested that Henry V's pilgrimage to Wenefred's well in 1416 was actually to this new well at Woolston, rather than to her original

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[74] Carl Horstmann, "Prosalegenden I: Caxtons Ausgabe der Heilige Wenefreda," *Anglia* 3 (1880): 311. For a quotation and further discussion of the relevant passage, see page 309 below. This new well must be the one at Woolston near Oswestry. For which, see http://www.landmarktrust.org.uk/BuildingDetails/Overview/100/St_Winifreds_Well.

[75] Horstmann, "Prosalegenden I," 311.

[76] Patrick J. Geary, *Furta Sacra: Thefts of Relics in the Central Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978). 13.

fountain in north Wales.[77] Mirk himself makes no mention of the new fountain, and while he implies that the bone-washing water is kept at Wenefred's shrine in Shrewsbury Abbey he does not claim explicitly that it is available to pilgrims in his day, but combined with Caxton's later account, Mirk's *narraciones* suggest that the water of the Woolston well was a specifically Shropshire tradition, one that re-situated Wenefred's power in the landscape near Shrewsbury Abbey.

If Mirk's sermon demonstrates the strength of Wenefred's cult in and around Shrewsbury in the final decades of the fourteenth century, the various copies of the sermon surviving today also reveal the further spread of the cult, as well as the impact of the 1398 elevation. To begin with the second of these points, while certain versions of the *Festial* sermon for Wenefred have been updated to reflect Archbishop Walden's Convocational mandate, others have not.[78] The opening lines of the sermon in Cotton Claudius A.II, for instance, are essentially the same as most other surviving versions, and they do not recognize Walden's order:

> Thys day is Seynt Wenefreday. It is not ordeynid to be haly-day bot þeras men han devocion. Wherefore whosoeure hath devocion comyth þat day to chyrch and doth hir worchep, þe wych was maydyn and martir.[79]

In Powell's manuscript D of the mid-fifteenth century, however, the opening statement has been altered to reflect the elevation of Wenefred's feast:

> Cristen men and wome*n*, suche a day schal be Seynt Wynfrydus day. Þe which day is now ordeynet to be halowet, an[d] þ*e*r ar mony men that han deuoc*y*on to þis holy mayden. Wherfor ȝe þ*a*t haue deuocion to þis holy seynt, comet þ*a*t day to þe chyrch to worschyp God and þis holy mayden and martyr.[80]

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[77] Sutton, "Caxton, the Cult of St. Winifred, and Shrewsbury," 114.
[78] Powell, *Mirk's Festial, 2*: 381n2-3.
[79] Powell, *Mirk's Festial, 1*: 162.
[80] Erbe, *Mirk's Festial: A Collection of Homilies*: 177.

The text of the sixteenth- or seventeenth-century Stonyhurst manuscript has also been modified to recognize the elevation, but the incomplete nature of the modification leaves the reader of the sermon with a confusing first sentence. One might assume either that the scribe made an error in copying out the text or that his exemplar itself contained an imperfect correction to the line:

> Godo [*sic*] men and weemen, suche a day shal be St. Wenefryds day, which daye is ordayned to be hallowed, but there as men have devotion to this holie mayden: wherefore they that have devotion to this holie saynte cometh that day to worshipp God and this holie mayden and martyr.[81]

It seems that the redactor excised the word *not* before *ordayned*, but failed to update the following clause to align it with the sense of his previous excision. More importantly, if Powell is correct in her assertion that the more important festivals of Mirk's collection were intended for reading on the actual feast day itself, something indicated by the use of the opening phrase "Þys day," it is curious that the manuscript D and Stonyhurst readings, both of which acknowledge the 1398 elevation, do not appear to follow this convention.[82] While the Cotton Claudius text opens with the phrase "Thys day," suggesting that the sermon was in fact to be read on Wenefred's June feast, the manuscript D and Stonyhurst versions use the phrase "suche a day," a formula that, as mentioned above, Powell takes as a cue to the lector, reading the sermon on a Sunday, to insert the name of the day in the coming week on which the feast would fall. Powell identifies the language in D as a Staffordshire dialect, and the Stonyhurst manuscript remains in the possession of Stonyhurst College in Lancashire, but was copied from a lost

[81] De Smedt, "Documenta de S. Wenefreda," 307.
[82] See note 67 above.

Group A manuscript that cannot be localized.[83] The Stonyhurst text is titled in the manuscript as "The Lyfe of St Wenefreide. Anno Domini 1401," and as mentioned the incomplete correction to the opening statement argues for a post-1398 date.[84] It is possible that the Cotton Claudius text of the Wenefred sermon derives from Shrewsbury, the place where Wenefred's feast would most likely have been celebrated on the actual feast day.[85] Conversely, the other manuscripts, if they reveal that the sermon was not to be read on the actual feast day, indicate that Wenefred's cult, while important in the surrounding region, was not as prominent as in Shropshire itself even after the 1398 elevation. The fact that the Cotton Claudius text fails to note the elevation could be explained by Thomas Arundel's disavowal of Roger Walden's constitutions soon after his return to the see of Canterbury.[86] At the same time, it should be remembered that the 1398 Convocation elevated Wenefred's November feast (that for her final death), and not

[83] Powell, *Mirk's Festial, 2*: 544. See also 596-97. The text of the Stonyhurst sermon, copied in an Elizabethan hand, has been modernized very slightly, making dialect localization of the exemplar more difficult. Girsch, "An Elizabethan Manuscript of Mirk's *Festial* Sermon on St. Winifred," 265. From the fact that all the miracles in the sermon occur in Shrewsbury, however, De Smedt concludes that the Stonyhurst text is "Sermo habitus Salopiæ" ("a sermon delivered in Shropshire"). See De Smedt, "Documenta de S. Wenefreda," 305-07.

[84] De Smedt, "Documenta de S. Wenefreda," 307.

[85] Powell describes the Cotton manuscript as "an uneven text, compromised by a piecemeal assemblage of the text, perhaps from different periods, certainly by different scribes using different exemplars which themselves may well have been copied from other different exemplars." Powell, *Mirk's Festial, 1*: lxxxiii. She identifies the language in which the Wenefred sermon has been copied into Cotton Claudius A.II as coming from the "border of East Central Staffordshire and West Central Derbyshire." Ibid., xciii.

[86] Bound into Cotton Claudius A.II along with Mirk's *Festial* and his *Instructions for Parish Priests* is a list of *festa ferianda* that purports to have been promulgated by Richard (*recte* Thomas) Arundel: "Hec sunt festa ab omnibus operibus tenenda per constitutionem Ricardi Arundel Cantuariensis archiepiscopi." The list includes the feasts of Wenefred, Chad, and George, but not David, and if genuine would seem to indicate that Thomas Arundel did not, in fact, discount Walden's elevations. However, as C.R. Cheney has concluded from comparison with other festal lists, the present one is most probably "an unofficial fifteenth-century list based upon a pre-1362 list," and "Its claim to record a provincial constitution of Archbishop Thomas Arundel cannot be upheld." C.R. Cheney, "Rules for the Observance of Feast Days in Medieval England," *Bulletin of the Institute for Historical Research* 34, no. 90 (1961): 133. See also Powell, *Mirk's Festial, 1*: lxxxvii and civ-cvi. Powell maintains on the basis of Wenefred's presence that the list originated in Shropshire. For a transcript of the list, see Powell, *Mirk's Festial, 2*: 682-84.

the June feast of her martyrdom that Mirk's sermon celebrates.[87] Someone reading the sermon at Shrewsbury in celebration of the saint's June feast can be expected to have been aware of the distinction, while further afield there may have existed some confusion regarding the date intended for elevation.[88] Still, the Cotton Claudius text of the sermon agrees with most other copies in not updating the opening statement to reflect the elevation of Wenefred's feast, and the most likely explanation is that the 1398 order was not widely or long observed.

THE RE-ELEVATION OF WENEFRED'S FEAST IN 1415

As Mirk's sermon ultimately demonstrates, Wenefred's English cult was well established in the western Midlands at the end of the fourteenth century and no doubt had been for some time. Richard II's interest in Wenefred in the closing years of that century certainly provided some impetus for spreading knowledge and veneration of her well beyond the borders of Shropshire, but with the end of Richard's reign and Archbishop Arundel's apparent repeal of the 1398 elevations it seemed that Wenefred's cult, while significant, was to remain local to Shrewsbury and Holywell. However, the idea that Wenefred had not only helped to secure a military victory for the English crown at the Battle of Shrewsbury, but had also ensured the future well being of the Lancastrian line by aiding Prince Henry's recovery after the battle, would certainly help to explain why Henry IV rebuilt her Holywell shrine and why later, as Henry V, his son was so keen to advance Wenefred's cult. The most significant development in that advancement came in November of 1415, when Henry Chichele, Archbishop of Canterbury, re-elevated the

[87] See note 13 above.
[88] Note the apparent confusion over the exact date of Wenefred's November feast in Archbishop Walden's letter to Robert Baybrooke. See again note 13 above.

feasts of Wenefred, David, Chad, and George at royal command following the victory at Agincourt a month previously.[89] George's feast of April 23 was to be celebrated as a "magis duplex" or greater double, a mark of its increased liturgical significance vis-à-vis other festivals, while the feasts of the remaining three saints were to be kept with nine lections "cum regimine chori" ("with the direction of choir"), the signal of the more important feasts according to the Sarum Use, the use that Chichele "seems to have regarded as a national liturgical standard."[90] In addition, the feasts were to be observed with a cessation of servile labor "per omnes civitates et loca ipsius provinciae nostrae" ("through every city and location of our own province").[91]

The potential reasons for these elevations which, as noted earlier, made no reference to those of 1398, were many. Prior to his accession to the see of Canterbury, Chichele had held a prebend at Lichfield, the locus of the cult of St. Chad, and he had also served in Wales: in 1400 he had accepted the canonry of Abergwili in the diocese of St. David's, and in 1407 he had been provided to the see of St. David's with papal approval, even though he was not enthroned until 1411.[92] During his time as Bishop of

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[89] Wilkins, *Concilia Magnae Britanniae et Hiberniae, vol. 3*: 376; E.F. Jacob, ed., *The Register of Henry Chichele, Archbishop of Canterbury 1414-1443, vol. 3* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1945). 8-10. This manadate accurately identified Wenefred's November feast as being on the third day of that month: "festa SS. David, et Ceddae episcoporum, ac Wenefredae virginis, de caetero per totam provinciam nostram antedictam, suis temporibus, viz. sancti David primo, sancti Ceddae secundo mensis Martii diebus, Wenefredae autem tertio die Novembris cum regimine chori et IX. lectionibus, perpetuis futuris temporibus, etiam celebrentur" ("indeed let the feasts of the bishops SS. David and Chad, as well as of the virgin Wenefred, be celebrated separate from others through our entire province aforesaid, on their own days, that is, the feast of St. David on the first day of March, the feast of St. Chad on March the second, and, moreover, the feast of Wenefred on the third day of November with the rule of choir and nine lessons, for all time to come"). Translation is my own. This text is from Chichele's letter to the bishop of London dated January 4, 1416 in which the primate formally orders the announcement of the elevations.

[90] Jeremy Catto, "Chichele, Henry (c.1362–1443)," ed. Lawrence Goldman, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004-), http://www.oxforddnb.com.proxy-remote.galib.uga.edu/view/article/5271. See also Charles-Edwards, *Saint Winefride and Her Well*: 3. On *magis duplex*, see John Hobson Matthews, ed., "Glossary," *Cardiff Records, vol. 5*, http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=48215.

[91] Wilkins, *Concilia Magnae Britanniae et Hiberniae, vol. 3*: 376.

[92] Catto, "Chichele."

St. David's, Chichele had developed an interest in Welsh saints.[93] We have noted the likely reasons for Henry V's initial interest in Wenefred—the healing of his wound after the Battle of Shrewsbury and the royal victory there. After his accession to the throne in March 1413, Henry also initiated an immediate process of pacification and unification with Wales, and in July 1415 plans were in place to bring Glyn Dŵr into the king's peace, but the Welsh leader passed from history soon thereafter.[94] Wenefred was a saint tied to Glyn Dŵr's home region while David was the patron saint of Wales, and the re-elevation of both of their feasts late in 1415 followed Henry's campaigns in France where Welshmen had formed a notable portion of the English royal army.[95] So as earlier observed, if the 1398 elevations had been instituted at the command of Richard II in order to shore up his support and power in northeastern Wales, the re-elevations of 1415 could well have served a similar purpose. As Martin Lowry has it, Wenefred "offered a means of wooing Celtic sensibilities" at a time when the English ruling class was beginning to understand that "if it was to rule England or conquer France it would need to draw some of its most valuable man-power from Wales."[96] If these conjectures are correct, then Henry V must have viewed Wenefred as a Welsh saint just as his father and Richard II had also done. Bookending the Glyn Dŵr revolt, the elevations of 1398 and 1415 may indeed have been independent attempts to garner Welsh support for royal activities and, in the latter case, also to recognize the Welsh contribution to Henry's military triumphs

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[93] On Chichele's interest in Welsh saints, see Farmer, *The Oxford Dictionary of Saints*: 544.
[94] Davies, *Revolt of Owain Glyn Dŵr*: 455-56; Thompson, *Chronicon Adae de Usk, A.D. 1377-1421*: 129, 313. Early sources place Glyn Dŵr's death on 20 or 21 September, 1415. Williams, *Owain Glyndŵr*: 79. For the tradition that Glyn Dŵr did not die, see Elissa R. Henken, *National Redeemer: Owain Glyndŵr in Welsh Tradition* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996). 64-88.
[95] Some Welshman, perhaps supporters of Glyn Dŵr, fought on the French side. See A. Carr, "Welshmen and the Hundred Years War," *Welsh History Review* 4 (1968-69). See esp. page 36.
[96] Lowry, "Caxton, St. Winifred and the Lady Margaret Beaufort," 110-11.

abroad, but these attempts could only have succeeded if the Welsh saints in question were indeed perceived by all those concerned as being Welsh.

The critical point is, of course, that these were Welsh saints perceived as supporting or upholding the English monarchy—therefore offering to all devout Welshmen a model to follow—and Henry V underscored that point more than either of his immediate predecessors. Sometime in late 1415 or early 1416, presumably just after the victory at Agincourt and certainly just as Chichele was promulgating the re-elevation of Wenefred's November feast alongside those of David, Chad, and George, the king made a barefoot pilgrimage from Shrewsbury to her sacred well. While Adam of Usk implies that this journey took Henry all the way to Holywell, the more likely possibility is that he went only to the well at Woolston, which as mentioned had, according to Caxton's 1484 printed Life of Wenefred, sprung up some ten miles northwest of Shrewsbury when Prior Robert's contingent rested at the spot while en route from Gwytherin in 1138.[97] As Wenefred had supported Henry years before against the rebellious nobles of England and Wales, so she now had supported him on a campaign of greater scale. Lowry claims that, with spectacular victories in France and the final extinguishing of a Welsh national revolt that had extended for more than a decade, "[t]he ostentatious pilgrimage and the new festivals were potent and perfectly timed gestures to declare the reconciliation and solidarity of the island races."[98] If this seems an overly emphatic statement, we can at least underscore from the aforegoing discussion the idea that Wenefred was seen by Richard II and the early Lancastrians as a thoroughly Welsh

[97] Adam of Usk reports that "Rex cum magna devocione ad fontem sancte Wenefrede in Northwalia et pedes a Salopia peregre proficiscitur." Thompson, *Chronicon Adae de Usk, A.D. 1377-1421*: 129 and 313; on the Woolston well, see Charles-Edwards, *Saint Winefride and Her Well*: 7-8. See also page 310 below.
[98] Lowry, "Caxton, St. Winifred and the Lady Margaret Beaufort," 111.

saint who could be enlisted to lend her support to the English royal cause, and Henry V's actions late in 1415 and early in 1416 certainly brought Wenefred more directly into the English national consciousness. Indeed, popular interest in her is revealed by the number of English translations of her Life that survive from the fifteenth century. These include the version in some manuscripts of the *Gilte Legende*, the verse *Lyf of Seynt Wenefrede* that Osbern Bokenham included in his translation of the *Legenda Aurea*, Caxton's brief *Lyf of Saynt Wenefryde* in his own edition of the *Legenda Aurea* known as the *Golden Legend* (STC 24873) printed in 1483, and his sixteen-leaf folio translation of Prior Robert's *Vita et translatio* entitled *The lyf of the holy and blessid vyrgyn saynt Wenefryde* (STC 25853) printed in 1484. In addition there survives a short verse *Seint Vonefrede the Holi Virgine* in a very full manuscript text of the *South English Legendary* that was composed in the first half of the fifteenth century, Bodleian MS 779. To these may be added the apparent evidence for perhaps another Middle English Life, a late sixteenth-century *Lyfe of St. Weneffryde* that claims to have been copied "out of an ould pryntinge boocke" and that shows close affinities with the *Gilte Legende* Life and with Caxton's text of 1483, but agrees entirely with neither of them.[99] A close inspection of these various Lives reveals that, depending on the interests of a given writer, both Holywell and Shrewsbury could be presented as the primary site of Wenefred's power. The bulk of the historical and literary evidence indicates, however, that Shrewsbury never eclipsed Holywell as Wenefred's most important cult site. While popular with English nobles and the English crown for reasons personal as well as political, Wenefred remained a thoroughly Welsh saint throughout the fifteenth century.

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[99] Curt F. Bühler, "A New Middle English Life of Saint Winifred?," in *Medieval Studies In Honor of Lillian Herlands Hornstein*, ed. Jess B. Bessinger Jr. and Robert R. Raymo (New York: New York University Press, 1976). All of the English Lives mentioned above will be discussed below.

JOHN AUDELAY'S WENEFRED POEMS

Before considering any of these other English versions of Wenefred's legend, however, we should turn to one further example of local veneration for the saint in Shropshire: the poems preserved in the defective Bodleian MS Douce 302 of *ca*. 1426-31.[100] Unusual for its time, this manuscript contains the collected works of a single author and the texts repeatedly remind the reader that they are the product of the priest John Audelay, and scholars do agree that the manuscript is his original dictation to two scribes. The first of two colophons reveals that the blind and deaf Audelay was working on his text some five miles from Shrewsbury at Haughmond Abbey, the Augustinian house where he spent his final years and where Wenefred was, apparently, highly honored: an effigy of her standing on Caradog's head survives on the exterior of the chapter house ruins. This same colophon seems also to date the first eighteen poems to 1426 or before, and it appears that the remaining poems were completed after that point. A second colophon adds that Audelay was a chantry priest in the service of Richard le Strange, Lord of Knokin.[101] Out of the fifty-five surviving poems in this carefully ordered religious miscellany, two are addressed directly to Wenefred (a carol and a *salutacio*), and a third, labeled in the manuscript *De virgin[i]tate*, contains a reference to her alongside Ss. Margaret and Katherine.[102] The carol, poem number 24, recounts

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[100] For the general information that follows on the life and work of John Audelay, see Whiting's introduction, esp. xiv-xvii, and Fein's introduction, 1-23. See also Michael Bennett, "John Audelay: Some New Evidence of His Life and Work," *Chaucer Review* 16 (1982); and Melissa Jones, ""Swete May, Soulis Leche": The Winifred Carol of John Audelay," *Essays in Medieval Studies* 14 (1997), http://www.illinoismedieval.org/EMS/EMSpdf/V14/V14Jones.pdf.

[101] The first colophon, which is in Latin, gives two titles for the first eighteen poems: *The Counsel of Conscience* and *The Ladder of Heaven and the Life of Eternal Salvation*. For both colophons, see Fein, *John the Blind Audelay*: 1. On the dating and apparent chronological arrangement of the manuscript, see 7.

[102] For the poems see Whiting, *Poems of John Audelay*: 171-78 and 206-07; and Fein, *John the Blind Audelay*: 164-71. The carol is also printed in Richard L. Greene, *The Early English Carols*, 2nd ed.

Wenefred's legend and, at thirty verses, this is also the longest of all Audelay's carols, including the six others that are addressed to saints, and it appears in the manuscript before a *salutacio Sancte Wenefrede*, completely separate from the twenty-five other carols that are grouped together later in the manuscript. Because the carol includes elements from the hagiographical genres of *passio*, *miraculum*, and *vita*, Melissa Jones takes it as evidence for the sincerity of Audelay's own devotion toward Wenefred, and indeed such devotion is made all the more clear by the special "double treatment of her legend" in the miscellany.[103]

The carol skips over all introductory details and jumps right to the martyrdom scene before moving quickly into an extended description of three miracles that occurred at the saint's Holywell shrine. The first involves a young boy who falls into the water of the well stream and is saved from a nearby mill-wheel through Wenefred's intervention.[104] The second, brief to the point of being cryptic, tells of a man who dropped a groat in the well, only to recover it later in another well from which others were unable to remove it.[105] The third and final miracle account deals with the result of poisoned wine being stored in Wenefred's well chapel, presumably the chapel reconstructed by Henry IV earlier in the century.[106] So long as the wine remained, "The

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(Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977). 191-93. All quotations of the poems are from Fein's edition and references will be made to the line numbers in that same edition.

[103] See Jones, ""Swete May, Soulis Leche": The Winifred Carol of John Audelay". Pars. 6-9. Jones draws on the work of Paul Strohm in her discussion of hagiographical genres.

[104] Fein, *John the Blind Audelay*: 166. Lines 51-60. This story reappears in slightly altered form and dated to the year 1666 in William Fleetwood, *The Life and Miracles of St. Wenefred Together with Her Litanies and Some Historical Observations Made There On*, 2nd ed. (London, 1713). 104. See also Greene, *Early English Carols*: 420-21.

[105] Fein, *John the Blind Audelay*: 166. Lines 61-66.

[106] Ibid., 166-67. Lines 67-114. For the likening of the water in Gwenfrewy's well to wine in late medieval Welsh poetry, see Henken, *Traditions of the Welsh Saints*. For the full context of the examples that Henken cites, see pages 164, 173-74, 183-84, 189, and 197 of Maredudd ap Huw, "A Critical Examination of Welsh Poetry Relating to the Native Saints of North Wales (c. 1350-1670). 2 vols." (University of Oxford, 2001).

wel stod styl, ran never a del; / Hit troblid as hit had bene with clay" ("The well stood still and ran not a bit; / It grew muddy as if with clay," Lines 69-70). Furthermore, we learn that

> Ther was no fuyre, truelé to tele,
> Myght hete the water of the wel,
> To seth ne dyght no vetel,
> Wile that wyne in that chapil lay. (Lines 73-76)
>
> (There was no fire, truth to tell,
> Might heat the water of the well,
> To boil nor prepare any food,
> While that wine in that chapel lay.)

The local people finally realize the source of the disturbance and cast the wine out into the street, where an unfortunate passerby, drenched by the wine, falls ill from the poison in it. Through the grace of God and Wenefred the man recovers, and the water of the well stream instantly begins to clear:

> Anon this wel began to clere;
> The streme ran forth as hit dede ere;
> The plumys thai mad a hedus bere,
> When thai began to play. (Lines 91-94)
>
> (Immediately this well began to clear;
> The stream ran forth as it did before;
> The plumes they made a head's gesture,
> When they began to operate.)

Audelay next takes the opportunity to remind his reader that business matters are not to be conducted in the house of God before briefly noting the various healing miracles performed at Holywell:

> Ther hath be botynd moné a mon,
> Blynd and crokid, that myght not gon,
> Seke and sorouful, moné hone,
> Ther at that wel there hur heed lay. (Lines 109-12)

(There have been healed many a man,
Blind and lame, that might not go,
Sick and sorrowful, many a one,
There at that well where her head lay.)

At this point Audelay returns to the narrative of Wenefred's life, picking up at the episode in which she is made an abbess and Beuno departs "Over the se" (Line 136). Audelay ends his account of Wenefred's Life with the story of her annual gift for Beuno and then remarks on the numerous miracles performed at Wenefred's Shrewsbury shrine before drawing the carol to a close with three verses beseeching the saint's aid for those listening to or reading the work, for the abbey and convent, and, of course, for the poet himself. Audelay ends with the statement that the carol is to be read "reverently" (i.e., not sung) because he "hit mad with wepyng ye," and Michael Bennett suggests that the repentant tone which marks all the poems in Audelay's collection can be traced to the attack that Audelay's patron, Lord le Strange, made on another knight at Easter in 1417, an event recorded in a London court document.[107] Occurring inside a church on a Sunday and resulting in the death of an innocent person, le Strange's assault parallels Caradog's to some extent and Jones takes the affair as the impetus for Audelay's interest in Wenefred.[108] Regarding the extent of this interest, Ella Keats Whiting posits that Audelay made a pilgrimage to Holywell at some point in his lifetime, no doubt to be healed of his blindness. And while it should be noted that none of the miracle stories

[107] For the quotation, see lines 176-77. Even though she claims the carol to have been based on written sources, Jones sees the injunction that it be read as part of the general and long-term shift of hagiography from an oral to a written genre. This sort of injunction occurs again only at the end of Audelay's carol for St. Francis. For which, see Fein, *John the Blind Audelay*: 209, lines 73-74. For Bennett's discussion of the 1417 Easter attack, see Bennett, "John Audelay: Some New Evidence of His Life and Work," 346-48. Fein suggests that Audelay was made chantry priest at Haughmond following the public penance that le Strange and his retinue were forced to perform in London after this incident. See Fein, *John the Blind Audelay*: 6.
[108] Jones, ""Swete May, Soulis Leche": The Winifred Carol of John Audelay". Par. 13.

recorded in detail in Audelay's carol are healings, they all occur at Wenefred's well in Wales rather than at the Shrewsbury shrine which would have been, presumably, more accessible to the blind poet.[109]

If Audelay did in fact connect the le Strange incident of 1417 with Wenefred's legend, it could have been in part a result of her recent re-appearance on the national stage as marked by Henry V's pilgrimage to her well (either at Holywell or Woolston), a pilgrimage that would likely have inspired many others, including, possibly, the poet's own, in subsequent years. Moreover, echoes of the 1415 re-elevation of her November feast might arguably be discerned in Audelay's carol when the poet declares "Glad mai be al Schrosberé / To do reverens to that lady" ("Glad may be all Shrewsbury / To do reverence to that Lady"), a statement that has been taken as Audelay's acknowledgement of the recent convocational order.[110] However, for Audelay to have been involved in the le Strange attack on Easter Sunday in 1417—and indeed at trial he was found guilty of aiding and abetting the assailants—he would have to have not yet been afflicted by the blindness he so often laments in his poetry.[111] Given that he refers to himself as blind in the colophon dated 1426, we can assume that he had lost his sight by that point, and, because they appear later in the manuscript, the Wenefred poems seem to have been written subsequently.[112] If Wenefred's story as related in the carol was drawn from local

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[109] Whiting, *Poems of John Audelay*: xvii. Given Audelay's focus on Wenefred's martyrdom in his carol, coupled with the miracle of the mill wheel—many of which once stood on the Holywell stream—there seems no reason to assume that Audelay was referring to wonders performed at the well at Woolston rather than at the original fountain at Holywell. On the structure of the Woolston well, see S. Baring-Gould and J. Fisher, *The Lives of the British Saints*, vol. 3 (London: Charles J. Clark, 1911). 193.

[110] Lines 57-58. Greene suggests that these lines refer to the 1391 (*sic*) elevations, but if they refer to any such event it is most likely to the more recent re-elevation of 1415. Greene, *Early English Carols*: 421. See the note to stanza 26, line 2.

[111] For a summary of the violent event and its aftermath, see Bennett, "John Audelay: Some New Evidence of His Life and Work," 346-48.

[112] Audelay refers to himself as "the Blynd Awdlay" at the end of the Wenefred carol, line 78.

tradition as Richard L. Greene has remarked, at least in the case of the miracle stories that tradition seems to have been local to Holywell, and it would therefore appear that Audelay made his suggested pilgrimage to that shrine, where such stories would have been collected, prior to composing his Wenefred poems.[113] Taken together, these observations imply that Audelay's interest in Wenefred could have begun as early as 1417, possibly a result of Henry V's pilgrimage and the re-elevation of her feast, in addition to the events of Easter Sunday, 1417; that he went blind sometime between that year and 1426; and that any pilgrimage he made to Holywell would have occurred at some point after 1426.

If he was composing for a Shropshire audience, however, the obscurity of at least one of his miracle stories could imply that Holywell traditions were relatively well known in and around Shrewsbury. While the first and the final miracle stories take up a total of seven verses, the second story—that regarding a groat lost in the well and later recovered from another well—is given only one, seemingly in the expectation that the audience would have been able to fill in the gaps. Indeed, the compression of narrative detail in the carol as a whole has been taken as evidence of local familiarity with the Wenefred legend in Shrewsbury and its environs, and Greene has suggested that the carol does not draw on a specific written source.[114] Could Audelay have included a reference to a Holywell story widely known in Shropshire between two other tales that he collected on his own pilgrimage to the well? This remains an interesting possibility, but Audelay's

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[113] Greene, *Early English Carols*: 420. Because he continues to refer to himself as blind in the poems following the carol and *salutacio* to Wenefred, it also appears that, if Audelay did visit Holywell, he was not healed, and this is something that could have compounded the sense of guilt running through his collection. Still, his enthusiasm for and devotion to Wenefred appear none the weaker.

[114] Jones, ""Swete May, Soulis Leche": The Winifred Carol of John Audelay". Par. 7; Greene, *Early English Carols*: 420.

Wenefred poems provide more certain evidence for knowledge of Holywell traditions in Shropshire during the early decades of the fifteenth century.

The poems clearly demonstrate that Audelay was familiar not only with a version of Wenefred's legend akin to that recorded by Prior Robert, but also with a version similar to that related in the *Vita Prima*. While Audelay's carol notes in accordance with Robert's version that Wenefred's scar was "A thred of perle" ("A thread of pearl") and that after Caradog's attack "the erth him swoloud in that stede," ("the earth swallowed him in that place"), it also includes the detail recorded in the *Vita Prima* that Wenefred's annual gift for Beuno was carried to him by a stone:

> Then Bewnow toke his leve anon,
> And betoke here this tokyn:
> "Over the se schal swem a stone
> To bryng vestementus—ther ys noo nay!" (Lines 121-24)[115]
>
> (Then Beuno took his leave immediately,
> And gave her this token:
> "Over the sea shall swim a stone
> To bring holy vestments—there is no doubt!")

The carol does connect Wenefred closely with Shrewsbury by never mentioning Wales or any place there by name, and further by claiming that "Son after" she died, "At Schrosberé men dedon here schryne" where "Moné a merakil ther hath be syne / Of dyvers pepul in fer cuntré" ("Soon after [her death] / At Shrewsbury men did make her shrine / Many a miracle there has been seen / By diverse people from many countries,"

[115] Cf. Greene, *Early English Carols*: 420. Because Audelay, in his Wenefred carol, mentions both the well miracles and Wenefred's yearly gift to Beuno, Whiting concludes that Audelay did not derive his material from Mirk's *Festial* but instead from Caxton's *Golden Legend* "or some version of it." Whiting, *Poems of John Audelay*: 247. The suggestion that Audelay knew Caxton's original text is patently impossible, however, as Audelay was writing in the first half of the fifteenth century and Caxton did not print the *Golden Legend* until 1483. That Audelay should be aware of details from Prior Robert's account that were not recorded by Mirk is unsurprising given the close proximity of Haughmond Abbey to Shrewsbury and given the certainty that knowledge of Wenefred's cult and legend was commonplace in the region by Audelay's time.

Lines 145-48).[116] At the same time, however, these miracles are related in only the briefest outline, and one of them, the breaking of prisoners' fetters, does not appear in Robert's account but is present in the *Libellus miraculorum*.[117] Moreover, the *salutacio* also includes what appears to be an interesting combination of elements from the two earliest recorded versions of Wenefred's story. In Robert's account, Beuno relates to Wenefred that she has been granted three gifts by God: the stones drenched forever with her blood, the promise that those who pray in her name will receive their boon by the third entreaty, and the fact that Wenefred can send her annual gift to Beuno by means of the well stream.[118] In his *salutacio*, Audelay also notes these gifts, but the last has significantly become the first, and, as in the *Vita Prima*, it is specifically the stone in the water that brings Wenefred's yearly present to her uncle:

> Thre giftis geven thee has:
> A ston to eswem over the se;
> The stonus in the wel blodé to be;
> And al that seche sokor to thee
> To have mercé and grace. (Lines 41-45)

> (He has given you three gifts:
> A stone that swims over the sea;
> The stones in your well bloody to be;
> And all who seek succor from thee,
> To have mercy and grace.)

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[116] Greene maintains that the phrase "Son after" cannot be taken to modify the statements in the remainder of the stanza. See his note to stanza 25, line 1 on page 421.

[117] According to Greene, Audelay seems to have taken from the *Libellus miraculorum* the story of Wenefred's miraculous breaking of fetters at Holywell and transferred it to Shrewsbury. See his note to stanza 26, line 2 on page 421. For this miracle in the *libellus*, see *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 108. It might be also noted at this juncture that there are very distant parallels between the last of Audelay's three Holywell miracles (i.e., that involving wine stored in the saint's chapel that results in the well to clogging up as if with mud), and the miracle recorded in the *Libellus miraculorum* in which the well runs with a milky fluid for three days after the expulsion of the Normans from Gwynedd in 1135. See ibid., 111-12. Jones's statement that the miracles in Audelay's carol "are taken straight from Prior Robert's account" is wholly inaccurate. Jones, ""Swete May, Soulis Leche": The Winifred Carol of John Audelay". Par. 11.

[118] *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 42-44.

Finally, the *salutacio* offers further circumstantial evidence for Audelay's own pilgrimage to Holywell, not simply because it focuses solely on Holywell, but because it opens with the sentiment that the poet's words are not enough to convey the truth of the miracles performed at Wenefred's well and that they must be seen to be believed. The statement gives the impression that Audelay himself has been present for such miracles and that he truly is unable to convey their emotional force in words:

> Hayle, Wenefryd, that worchipful with thi vergeneté,
> Hayl, mervelus marter and merceful may.
> Haile, meror of meraclys, our medecyne to be.
> Haile, solans to the seke, here soker, I say,
> Treuly in trouth!
> Thi grace, thi goodnes, I con not telle,
> Thi merakels and thi gret mervell,
> Bot woso wil go to thi welle,
> Ther may thai se the soth. (Lines 1-9)
>
> (Hail, Wenefred, worshipful in your virginity.
> Hail, marvelous martyr and merciful maid.
> Hail, mirror of miracles, our medicine to be.
> Haile, solace to the sick, their succor, I say,
> Truly in truth!
> Your grace, your goodness, I cannot tell,
> Your miracles and your great wonder,
> But whoso will go to your well,
> There may they see the truth.)

Recalling the two different traditions of the legend posited earlier in this study—one closely linked to Holywell (that represented by the anonymous Life) and one connected to Gwytherin (that recorded by Prior Robert in the latter half of his *Vita*)—it can be suggested that the *Vita S. Wenefrede*, a text copied out at Worcester *ca*. 1200, provided one channel by which these elements from the Holywell tradition of Wenefred's legend made their way into the local and oral traditions of Shropshire. Regardless, the presence of these elements in Audelay's poems indicate that a version of the story akin to

that related by the *Vita Prima* had a wider and more lasting influence than has been generally considered, especially in the Midlands. Prior Robert's account of Wenefred's Life certainly impacted important retellings of the story—e.g., the Sarum lections that would have been in use throughout the Canterbury province after the 1415 re-elevation of Wenefred's feast—but the other version of the legend, one redaction of which survives in the *Vita Prima*, can by Audelay's poems be shown to have remained current even after 1415. Audelay could, of course, have encountered the Holywell tradition of the legend on his conjectured Holywell pilgrimage, but the fact that he was composing his poems for a specifically Shropshire audience no doubt most familiar with a version of the story closer to Prior Robert's account implies that the *Vita Prima* version, or at least elements of it, were also well known in the same area. In this regard, the Pierpont miniature in Sir William Porter's book of hours mentioned above also suggests knowledge of the *Vita Prima* version of the legend on a more widespread basis in the fifteenth century than has previously been considered.[119]

In brief, Audelay's devotion to Wenefred might be explained as a result of political events on both local and national levels. The compression of narrative detail in Audelay's carol suggests that Wenefred's story was well known in Shropshire in the early decades of the fifteenth century, and, taken with his *salutacio*, the carol implies that local knowledge of the saint in Shropshire preserved elements from the two different versions of her story, versions of which records survive today in the two twelfth-century *vitae*. Audelay's combination of details found separately in the two recorded versions of Wenefred's legend is the sort of natural mingling that would have occurred as the story was told and retold, both in and out of an ecclesiastical setting. Audelay's poems,

[119] See note 44 above.

therefore, hint at the popularity of Wenefred among the laity of Shropshire in the early fifteenth century. By the same token, they perhaps lend weight to the possibility that an informal confraternity of Wenfred had already been in existence at Shrewsbury by the time that Audelay was writing. The presence of elements from the Holywell version of Wenefred's legend in Audelay's work clearly demonstrates that, even in Shropshire, Prior Robert's version of the story was not the only one current or available. These elements could have come to the region via the *Vita Prima*—they just as well could have arrived there in the mouths of pilgrims who had made their way from Shrewsbury to Holywell and back—and it is just possible that that text was still circulating in the West Midlands early in fifteenth century. Audelay's use of these elements, and indeed his focus on Holywell itself, is more important, however, for what it can tell us about the various approaches to Wenefred that were being pursued in fifteenth-century Shropshire. It will be recalled that Mirk de-emphasizes the significance of Wenefred's original cult site in Wales at the same time that he draws attention to what seems to have been a Shropshire tradition about a new holy well at Woolston linked to the saint. Mirk's sermon represents an official, liturgical deployment of Wenefred's legend, while Audelay's poetry reveals a deep, personal devotion attached to the saint's healing fountain in northeast Wales. Mirk's focus on Shropshire and the Shrewbsury shrine may well have been the result of Nicholas Stevens's active, official promotion of Wenefred's cult at his abbey. Audelay, however, demonstrates that individual attention to the saint even in Shropshire could still incline easily toward her miraculous fountain at Holywell. The first two Lancastrian kings of England reverenced both sites, and, in combination with the literary evidence examined thus far, their actions indicate that Wenefred had

something of a malleable identity as a saint present in both England and Wales. But while she served devotees at either of her cult sites, Wenefred was, on the whole, still perceived as a Welsh saint up to this point. In English hagiographical compilations of the later fifteenth century, though, that perception could easily change.

BL ADDITIONAL MS 35298: THE *LYFE OF SEINT WENEFRIDE* FROM THE *GILTE LEGENDE*

Moving on chronologically from Audelay's poems, another English version of Wenefred's Life is to be found in a single manuscript copy of the *Gilte Legende* (*GiL*). While ultimately derived from Prior Robert's account, the *GiL* Life presents Wenefred as much more of an English rather than a Welsh saint, and it was clearly intended for a far less localized audience than Audelay's Wenefred poems or even Mirk's Wenefred sermon. Once thought to be the work of Osbern Bokenham, the *GiL* is an English translation of Jean de Vignay's fourteenth-century French *Légende Dorée*, which is itself a translation of Jacobus de Voraigne's *Legenda Aurea*. According to the colophon in the Bodleian MS Douce 372 version of the *GiL*, this English translation was completed in 1438.[120] Three of the eight surviving copies of the *GiL* "contain extra material, mostly in the form of additional Saints' Lives, the majority of which are shared by the three manuscripts concerned."[121] Richard Hamer and Vida Russell refer to these twenty-one new legends as the *Additional Lives* (*ALL*), and note that the majority deal with English saints and were de-versifed from the nationalizing *South English Legendary* (*SEL*), most likely for specific inclusion in the *GiL*, all of which is in prose. Manfred Görlach concludes that the *ALL* are not the work of the original *GiL* author, and Hamer and

[120] Richard Hamer and Vida Russell, *Supplementary Lives in Some Manuscripts of the Gilte Legende*, Early English Text Society, no. 315 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000). xx.
[121] Ibid., xiii.

Russell note that "Lives of interest to the institution, locality or nation of the compiler" were commonly added to medieval legendaries.[122] One of the three expanded copies of the *GiL*, BL Additional MS 35298 (A2) contains Lives above and beyond the twenty-one *ALL*: a Life of St. Edward, a Life of St. Erkenwald, and appearing between them in the manuscript a *Lyfe of Seint Wenefride*.[123] These Lives, which Hamer and Russell refer to as the A2 group, appear on fols. 48r-57r (Wenefred takes up both columns of fol. 53r), right in the middle of the standard *GiL* text, while the *ALL* do not begin until fol. 73r and run through 84r. Besides the Additional manuscript, two other copies of the *GiL* containing this group of three extra Lives once existed; one is known from a table of contents surviving as a pastedown in Paris B.N. MS Nouv. Acq. Lat. 3175 (P*) and

[122] Manfred Görlach, *Studies in Middle English Saints' Legends*, Altenglische Forschungen, 257 (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag C. Winter, 1998). 124-27. For the quotation, see Hamer and Russell, *Supplementary Lives*: xiii. On the *ALL* and *GiL* in general, see also O.S. Pickering, "Saints' Lives," in *A Companion to Middle English Prose*, ed. A.S.G. Edwards (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2004).

[123] All three Lives are printed in Hamer and Russell, *Supplementary Lives*: 1-72. The Middle English Life of Erkenwald in Additional 35298 is a very free translation of the anonymous *Vita S. Erkenwaldi* of *ca*. 1087-1124 combined with Arcoid's *Miracula S. Erkenwaldi* of *ca*. 1141. This English Life of Erkenwald also draws on Tynemouth's completely rewritten version of the former and his reordered version of the latter, but given the loose nature of the translation the exact manuscript sources for this English Life are impossible to discern. The *Vita S. Erkenwaldi* survives earliest alongside the *Vita S. Wenefrede* in Cotton Claudius A.v; the other lives in that manuscript are an anonymous Life of St. Neot and William of Malmesbury's Life of St. Wulfstan of Worcester. A slightly abridged and altered copy of the *Vita S. Erkenwaldi* also appears in Lansdowne 436. See Whatley, *The Saint of London: The Life and Miracles of St. Erkenwald*: 1-6. On the composite Life of Wenefred from Lansdowne 436, see chapter 4 above. The repeated appearance of the Lives of Wenefred and Erkenwald alongside one another in what can perhaps be described as nationalizing legendaries might be linked generally to the later medieval impulse to re-appropriate the British and Anglo-Saxon past. Indeed, the alliterative Middle English *St. Erkenwald* centers on the saint's interactions with the soul of a pagan British judge whose tomb is discovered during renovations at St. Paul's Cathedral. Erkenwald's tears baptize the ancient man and his spirit is finally allowed to proceed to heaven. On medieval understandings of the past, see Monika Otter, "'New Werke': *St. Erkenwald*, St. Albans, and the Medieval Sense of the Past," *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 24 (1994). For editions of the alliterative *St. Erkenwald*, see Henry L. Savage, ed., *St. Erkenwald: A Middle English Poem*, Yale Studies in English (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1926); and Ruth Morse, ed., *St. Erkenwald* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1975). 12-18. According to Gorläch, no direct source for the Life of Edward the Confessor in the Additional manuscript has been found: Manfred Görlach, *The South English Legendary, Gilte Legende, and Golden Legend* (Braunschweig: Technische Universität Carolo-Wilhelmina zu Braunschweig, Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik, 1972). 21n12.

another manuscript (C*) now wholly lost was used by Caxton when creating his *Golden Legend* of 1483.[124]

That the *GiL Lyfe of Seint Wenefride* was intended for a popular English audience is suggested by more than the language in which it was composed. To begin with, the redactor has re-ordered the basic narrative so as to bring some of the underlying morals closer to the surface, making the story as didactic in nature as it is entertaining—in this rendition of the legend Wenefred is able to witness the death of her own killer. Unlike the usual version of the story, Beuno here waits to curse Caradog until *after* the maiden has been resurrected, a re-organization of the martyrdom episode that also occurs in Audelay's carol, albeit there without comment or particular effect.[125] The sequence in the *GiL* Life is worth quoting in full:

> And when thaye aros vp fro prayer, þis mayde ros vp made alyf ayen by the power of God, wherefore al the people praysid his holy name for this grete myracle shewid for this holy virgyn Seinte Wenefride. And as longe as she levid after, þere appierid aboute hir necke a rednesse lyke a red silkyn threde in signe and tokyn of hir martirdome.
>
> And the tyraunte that did slee hir had wyped his swerde on the grasse and stode style þerbeside, and he had neither power to go awaye nor to repente hym of that cursid dede. And then this holy man Beuno reprevid hym, not only of that homycide but also that he yeafe no reuerence to the Sabbot daye and to the grete power of God þer shewid vpon this holy virgyn. And then this holy man saide to hym: 'Whye hast thou no contricion for thy mysdede, wherefore I beseche almyghty God to rewarde the after thy deseruyng.' And then he felle downe dede to the grownde and his body was alle blacke and sodenly borne awaye with feendis.[126]
>
> (And when they arose from prayer, this maiden rose up, made alive again by the power of God, for which reason all the people praised his holy name for this great

[124] Hamer and Russell, *Supplementary Lives*: xiv-xxi. On *P, see W. Sauer, "Review of *The South English Legendary, Gilte Legende, and Golden Legend*," *Anglia* 93 (1975): 247-50; and Görlach, *Studies in Middle English Saints' Legends*: 83-84.

[125] Whiting, *Poems of John Audelay*: 172. The resurrection occurs in stanza four of Audelay's carol, and Caradog is swallowed by the earth in stanza six. The Life of Wenefred that Caxton printed in his 1483 Golden Legend was based closely on the *GiL Lyfe*, and it too retains the narrative order wherein Wenefred returns to life before Caradog dies. See page 302ff. below.

[126] Hamer and Russell, *Supplementary Lives*: 42. Translation is my own.

> miracle shown for this holy virgin St. Wenefred. And as long as she lived after, there appeared about her neck a redness like a red silk thread as a sign and token of her martyrdom.
>
> And the tyrant that slew her had wiped his sword on the grass and stood still there beside, and he had neither the power to go away nor to repent of his cursed deed. And then this holy man Beuno reproved him, not only for the homicide, but also because he gave no reverence to the Sabbath day and to the great power of God shown there upon this holy virgin. And then this holy man said to him: "Why have you no contrition for your misdeed? For it I beseech almighty God to reward you according to your desserts." And then he fell down dead to the ground, his body all black and suddenly born away by fiends.)

In Robert's account and its derivatives Beuno invokes God's curse as soon as he realizes how unrepentant the murderer actually is and only then tends to his fallen niece. And while in the Latin Lives Caradog's dead body either melts away or melts and is swallowed by the gaping earth, he here "felle downe dede to the grownde and his body was alle blacke and sodenly borne awaye with feendis." Without a doubt, the maiden's faith and humility are well repaid when she witnesses after her resurrection the swift punishment of her killer at the hands of devils. Any possibility, furthermore, that this subtle rearrangement of the story was unintentional is pushed aside when Beuno reproves Caradog not just for violating the Sabbath, but also for disdaining "the grete power of God þer shewid vpon this holy virgyn," a detail missing from other versions of the scene.[127] That is, Caradog is cursed for having failed to recognize God's power inherent in the miracle of Wenefred's resurrection. By delaying the moment of vengeance until after God has brought Wenefred back to life, the redactor places special emphasis on the opportunity for repentance that Caradog fails to grasp. The notion is, of course, that even the most heinous of sins will be forgiven if the sinner will only admit his or her guilt and accept appropriate penance. As in the usual version of the story, Caradog refuses to do

[127] Cf. *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 36-37. In Audelay's carol the prince is swollowed without Beuno saying a word. See Fein, *John the Blind Audelay*: 165, lines 31-36.

anything of the sort, but in the *GiL* Life he also explicitly denies the promise of resurrection, the Christian truth that God will raise from the dead any who follow him. The punishment for this denial is, logically, eternal death, the fate which Caradog suffers immediately upon failing to acknowledge the divine and miraculous power "þer shewid vpon this holy virgyn." The versions of the legend recorded in the *Vita S. Wenefrede* and Prior Robert's account are less direct in their assertions of Caradog's final spiritual destination—the anonymous author only notes that he melted like a candle and Robert claims that, after the body dissolved, "many people affirmed that it had been swallowed up by the gaping earth and had sunk with his soul into the abyss."[128] The unique detail of Caradog's being seized by fiends leaves, however, absolutely no doubt about where his soul will be taken. By allowing Wenefred to behold this moment of divine retribution, the *GiL* redactor emphasizes that the faithful humility of God's saints is supported by a power greater than that of any earthly lord.

This emphasis on Wenefred's humble faith in the face of abusive secular power might be compared to that which Thorlac Turville-Petre has identified as a mark of nationalist hagiography in the *South English Legendary.* Theorizing on the development and perception of English national identity in texts composed in the Southwest Midlands during the years 1290 to 1340, Turville-Petre has argued that in the vernacular *SEL* it is the extreme humility of saints in the face of aggressive secular authority that reinforces their identification with the common people, the base of English national identity, and that through this identification the church becomes the defender of national interests.[129]

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[128] *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 100 and 36.
[129] Thorlac Turville-Petre, *England the Nation: Language, Literature, and National Identity, 1290-1340* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996). 59-67. Cf. Thorlac Turville-Petre, "Afterword: The Brutus Prologue to

The humility of saints is, of course, a hagiographical commonplace, but if Wenefred were to be linked by the *GiL* Life with a given people, they were most certainly the people of England, as is clear not only from the language of the text, but also from its narrative setting and its physical situation in the manuscript. The *GiL* Life elides Wenefred's Welsh origins by omitting any and all references to Wales; it also mentions her well and its powers only once in passing and ignores entirely the *translatio* from Gwytherin.[130] While it does recount the story of Wenefred's annual gift for Beuno, the only locations named in the *Lyfe of Seint Wenefride* are "Yrlonde," the place to which Beuno departs after the resurrection, and "Witheriacus," the monastery to which Wenefred retires in the company of Elerius and Theonia; her time with these saints is treated very briefly, and her place of burial is never identified. Furthermore, the *GiL* Life appeared after the elevation of Wenefred's feast in 1415, and its textual setting in the manuscript between the Lives of Edward and Erkenwald, two English royal saints heavily culted in London, in combination with its vague narrative settings already noted, brings Wenefred near the center of English political and religious culture.[131] Indeed, Manfred Görlach observes that the Lives of Edward, Wenefred, and Erkenwald in the Additional MS are "important for their details of London-Westminster traditions" and that they "make it seem only natural that Caxton, in printing at Westminster, used a [*Gilte Legende*] MS" similar to Additional 35298 when producing his *Golden Legend* of 1483.[132] Besides Caxton's

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Sir Gawain and the Green Knight," in *Imagining a Medieval English Nation*, ed. Kathy Lavezzo (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004).

[130] All that the *GiL* Life says about the well is as follows: "And in the same place where hir hed felle to the grownde þer sprone a fayr welle, the which into this daye heelyth and curith manye dissesis, and in the bottom of the saide welle appiere stonys alle blody which maye not be waish awaye with no crafte nor with no laboure." Hamer and Russell, *Supplementary Lives*: 42. See also page 303ff. below.

[131] In relation to the elevation of Wenefred's feast, it should be noted that the *GiL* Life gives the date of Wenefred's final death, bizarrely, as "the .v.th daye of Decembre." Ibid., 43.

[132] Görlach, *Studies in Middle English Saints' Legends*: 82. Cf. also 132.

version which draws directly on it, the Life in the Additional MS is the only one that alters the details of Wenefred's martyrdom to emphasize her humility in a manner akin to that which Turville-Petre claims as a mark of nationalist hagiography in the *SEL*, and only the Additional Life places Wenefred in the textual company of these London saints. Moreover, that the intended audience was a popular English one is indicated by the change of Wenefred's scar from white to red, a shift that not only emphasizes the grievous nature of the wound, but that also precludes the inclusion of Robert's etymologizing on the origin of her name, thereby removing another indicator of her non-English national background.[133]

If the redactor of the Additional MS was intending to add the Lives of important English saints to the *GiL*, his decision to include Edward the Confessor and Erkenwald, abbot of Chertsey and bishop of the East Saxons, is logical enough. But why choose Wenefred when a varity of other, purely English saints were available for the job? We have noted that the *GiL* first appeared in 1438, well after the 1415 re-elevations, and we know that royal interest in Wenefred continued on some level in Henry VI's time: Henry established a chaplain at Shrewsbury in the saint's honor in 1449, something that his father had intended to do but did not live long enough to accomplish.[134] Wenefred herself appears in high-status company in the Additional manuscript—Edward is a pre-Conquest king and Erkenwald an Anglo-Saxon bishop, and both of them had cults based in London. These details imply that Wenefred, as a virgin martyr of the seventh century, is meant to complete a triptych of pre-Norman holiness in the British Isles, something

[133] The color of Wenefred's scar in the *GiL* may have been suggested by the red scar on the neck of Edmund of East Anglia, a royal saint whose Life appears among the *ALL* in the Additional manuscript. I am grateful to Cynthia Camp for bringing this possibility to my attention. On Wenefred's name, see Appendix B below.
[134] See page 241 above.

that the *GiL* redactor must have felt was missing from the original compilation. In the end, the *GiL Lyfe of Seint Wenefride* reveals the extent to which Wenefred was situated in England's political and religious cultures—both popular and official—by the middle years of the fifteenth century. The obscuring of the legend's narrative setting on the part of the *GiL* redactor functions in much the same way as Mirk's focus on Shrewsbury and the water in which the saint's bones were washed (no doubt the water of the Woolston well). The effect of both is an elision of Wenefred's national background that resituates her power in a locality accessible to the intended audience. For Mirk this elison placed Wenefred's spiritual presence and power in Shropshire. Similarly, placing Wenefred in the company of royal English saints venerated in London and ignoring the *translatio* from Gwytherin as well as other localizing details was a way for the *GiL* redactor to bring Wenefred into popular English consciousness as a wholly English saint.

BODLEIAN MS 779: *SEINT VONEFREDE ÞE HOLI VIRGINE*

While many of the Lives added to the *GiL* derive from the *South English Legendary*, the Life of Wenefred in Additional MS 35298 bears no apparent relation to the one *SEL* Life of Wenefred known today, that surviving on fols. 189r and 189v of Oxford, Bodleian MS 779.[135] The manuscript is a very full copy of the *SEL* dating from the first half of the fifteenth century (SC 2567), one containing epitomes of Lives not

[135] This verse Life was printed in Fleetwood, *The Life and Miracles of St. Wenefred*: 125-27. For this text Fleetwood gives the antiquated shelf mark "E Cod. MS. in Bibl. Bodl. Sup. Art. A&c. 72. fol. 189. a." I am grateful to Colin Harris and to Bruce Barker-Benfield of the Department of Special Collections at the Bodleian Library, as well as to Tristan Gray Hulse, for helping me locate the appropriate manuscript. All quotations here presented are taken from Fleetwood's edition with reference to the manuscript. The Bodleian MS 779 Life is, I think, the "untraceable" verse Life mentioned in Hamer and Russell, *Supplementary Lives*: 40. Further, the "old English Legend" mentioned by Fleetwood and discussed briefly by Hamer and Russell appears to be the short Life of Wenefred in Caxton's *Golden Legend* of 1483 or some close version thereof. Fleetwood, *The Life and Miracles of St. Wenefred*: 127. Cf. Bühler, "A New Middle English Life of Saint Winifred?."

found in other surviving copies of the collection. The Lives in Bodleian 779 are presented in no particular order, and appear to have been written into the manuscript as they became available.[136] The Wenefred Life itself is an exceedingly curious text, inserted as it is between the Lives of Pope Calixtus/Callistus I (October 14) and St. Luke (October 18). These Lives are preceeded and followed by other saints whose feasts fall in October (e.g., Denis the Martyr and the Eleven Thousand Virgins, respectively October 9 and 21), but Wenefred's primary Sarum feast was, of course, in November. Moreover, while the Bodleian 779 Life is in some ways closer than the *GiL* Life to the version of the story recorded in Robert's *Vita*, the version to which both of these Middle English Lives are most indebted, the Bodleian 779 Life of Wenefred alters the names of several principal characters rather severely. Wenefred herself appears as "Uonefred" or "Wonefred(e);" Caradog is unnamed and instead appears variously as "the Kinges Sone," "this fool Child" and "this ȝong Child;" Eleri is recast as "Bulopius;" and his mother, Tenoi, appears as "Eusebie" and "Euzebye." Gwytherin has become "Veterat" and "Syre Aleyn" is "King of Ingelonde." Only "Beuno" appears unchanged. Titled in the manuscript *Seint Vonefrede þe Holi Virgine*, this Life never mentions Wales or any place therein, and no comments are made upon the origin of Wenefred's name. Unlike Prior Robert's account but similar to the *GiL* Life, this text also has the unnamed Caradog taken away by the powers of hell. Here, however, Beuno has nothing at all to do with the prince's death and Caradog is stricken down as soon as the martyrdom is complete:

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[136] Laura Braswell has noted that "The items have not been arranged in any kind of order: even *temporale* and *sanctorale* matter has been interchanged." Laura Braswell, "Saint Edburga of Winchester: A Study of her Cult, A.D. 950-1500, with an Edition of the Fourteenth-Century Middle English and Latin Lives," *Mediaeval Studies* 33 (1971): 322. See also 321. The table of contents in the manuscript begins with St. Brendan (May 16) and St. Patrick (March 17) and indicates that the collection then proceeds, for example, to Oswald the King (August 16), Thomas Becket (December 29), Oswald the Bishop (February 28), and Katherine of Alexandria (November 25). I am grateful to Cynthia Camp for her thoughts on the order of Bodleian 779.

> And suththe he deyde sodeynliche, so the Bok telleth me,
> The Devel was tho iredy, and Body and Soul nom,
> So that no man Nyste whodyr that he bycom.[137]
>
> (And since he died suddenly, so the book tells me,
> The Devil was then prepared, and took his body and soul,
> So that no man knew where he had gone.)

On the other hand, *Seint Vonefrede* does follow the usual narrative trajectory wherein Caradog dies before Wenefred is resurrected, and as in Robert's version and its derivatives her scar is here pure white:

> Ever therafter aboute here Nekke was as they hit were a Threde
> In tokenyng of the marterdom þat ȝhe was onso dede.
> Whyter thyng ne myȝte be than the Threde was.[138]
>
> (Ever thereafter about her neck was, as it were, a thread
> In token of the martyrdom, that she once was dead.
> A whiter thing there might not be than was this thread.)

Both the *GiL* Life and *Seint Vonefrede* include a detailed summary of the chasuble episode, and as in Robert's version the gift is sent in a white mantel via the stream with no mention of Beuno's Stone. Both of these Middle English Lives also report the duration of Wenefred's stay in Holywell as seven years, as does Robert, but in other particulars they differ: the *GiL* Life sends Beuno fifty miles over the sea to "Yrlonde," while *Seint Vonefrede* only claims that his new dwelling is in "another Contre" some "thritty myle and mo" from Holywell.[139] The figure of fifty miles given in the *GiL* Life could have been drawn from the epitome of Robert's *Vita* in Tynemouth's *Sanctilogium*, for Tynemouth adds this detail to the chasuble episode while Robert gives no exact figure for the distance separating Holywell from Beuno's new dwelling: "Et licet quinquaginta

[137] Fleetwood, *The Life and Miracles of St. Wenefred*: 125-26, lines 35-36.
[138] Ibid., 126, lines 59-61.
[139] Ibid. See 126, line 67 and 127, line 86.

miliaria illos separabant, vnius tamen noctis spacio per marinos fluctus [munus] ad viri dei ianuam inuentum est" ("And although fifty miles were separating them, nevertheless in the space of one night [having come] through the ocean waves the gift was found at the door of the man of God").[140] Although they do not seem to draw on a shared written source, both of these Middle English Lives derive from the strain of the legend recorded in Robert's *Vita*; at the same time both subtly overwrite Wenefred's national background by not mentioning Wales, the meaning of her name, or even the *translatio*.[141] In *Seint Vonefrede*, moreover, the fact that "Syre Aleyn" is not merely a regional Welsh ruler but the "King of Ingelonde" makes the unnamed Caradog heir apparent to the English throne and implies that the tale is staged on English soil, as does the apparent Germanicization of the primary character names. Like the *GiL* Life, this one fails to include information about Wenefred's burial place, but if her martyrdom is presented as if it occurred in England, the logical conclusion is that she was herself meant to be perceived here as an English saint, one whose story appears in a compilation including many other English saints' Lives.

THE ABBOTSFORD MS: OSBERN BOKENHAM'S *LYF OF SEYNT WENEFREDE*

Chronologically, the next English Life of Wenefred to appear after *Seint Vonefrede* is a verse addition to still another translation of the *Legenda Aurea*, this one undeniably the work of Osbern Bokenham and dating to the middle of the fifteenth

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[140] Horstmann, *Nova Legenda Anglie, vol. 2*: 420. Translation is my own. For the sequence in Robert's text, see *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 43-44 and 48-49.

[141] The *translatio* is ignored by both texts, no doubt, because that event would have been of most interest only to a Shropshire audience as opposed to an English one more broadly conceived. Further, retelling the *translatio* would require an acknowledgement of Wenefred's origins. Cf. the apparent removal of the *translatio* narrative from the Sarum *lectiones* for matins discussed in note 13 above.

century.[142] Bokenham (b. October 6, 1392/93, d.1464 or later) was an Augustinian friar at Clare Priory, Suffolk, and is most commonly recognized for a collection of thirteen female saints' Lives in English verse individually dedicated to various East Anglian patrons and known today as the *Legendys of Hooly Wummen*.[143] His is the first all-female hagiographical collection to survive in any language.[144] Until very recently, however, Bokenham's translation of Jacobus de Voragine's hagiographical compendium was considered lost, and the only clue to its existence had been Bokenham's own reference to it in the opening lines of his *Mappula Angliae*, a partial translation of Ranulph Higden's *Polychronicon* that Bokenham intended as a companion volume to his version of the *Legenda Aurea*:

> For as moche as in the englisch*e* boke the which*e* y haue co*m*piled of lege*n*da aurea and of oþ*er* famous legendes at the instaunce of my speciall*e* frend*is* and for edificacio*u*n and comfort of all*e* tho þ*e* which*e* shuld reden*e* hit or her*e* hit, is often*e*-tyme in lyvis of seynt*is*, Of seynt Cedde, seynt Felix, seynt Edwarde, seynt Oswalde and many oþ*er* seynt*is* of Englond, mencyou*n* made of dyu*er*s p*ar*tis, plagis, regnis & contreis of this lande Englonde, þe w^{che}, but if þey be declared, byn*e* full*e* hard to knowen*e*. Therfor*e*, for þe mor*e* clerer*e* vndirstandyng*e* of the seid thyng*is* and othur, y haue drawe owt in to englisch*e* XV chapturs þe which*e* Arnulphus Cistrensis in his policronica of this landis descripciou*n* writeth*e* in the last ende of his furst boke; the wch well*e* knowen*e* & cowde, hit shall*e* byn*e* easy ynough*e* to vnderstande all*e* þat is towched þ*er*-of in the seyd legende.[145]
>
> (Often in the English book that I have compiled from the *Legenda Aurea* and from other famous legends at the insistence of my special friends for the edification and comfort of all those who should read it or hear it read, reference is made in the Lives of saints (e.g., the Lives of Ss. Chad, Felix, Edward, Oswald,

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[142] Bokenham's *Lyf of Seynt Wenefrede* has not previously been published, but see Appendix D below for my full transcription of it.
[143] Douglas Gray, "Bokenham, Osbern (b. 1392/3, d. in or after 1464)," ed. Lawrence Goldman, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004-), http://www.oxforddnb.com.proxy-remote.galib.uga.edu/view/article/2785. For the *Legendys of Hooly Wummen*, see Mary S. Serjeantson, ed., *Bokenham's Legendys of Hooly Wummen*, Early English Text Society, o.s. 206 (London: Oxford University Press, 1938; repr., New York: Kraus, 1971); and Osbern Bokenham, *A Legend of Holy Women*, trans. Sheila Delany (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1992). The *Legendys* survives in only one copy, BL Arundel MS 327.
[144] Delany's introduction to Bokenham, *A Legend of Holy Women*: xxvii.
[145] Carl Horstmann, "Mappula Angliae, von Osbern Bokenham," *Englische Studien* 10 (1887): 6.

> and many other saints of England) to various places, areas, regions, and countries of this land, England, which, if they are not explained, are very difficult to understand. Therefore, for the sake of clearer understanding of these things and others, I have drawn out into English fifteenth chapters that Ranulph of Chester wrote at the very end of the first book of his *Polychronicon*, which describes this land. With these things well known and comprehended, it will prove easy enough to understand all that is touched on regarding them in the aforesaid text.)

In 2005, Simon Horobin identified Bokenham's lost work in a manuscript found in Sir Walter Scott's personal library at Abbotsford House.[146] The Abbotsford MS in which the text survives was composed at Bokenham's priory at Clare, and dates to *ca*. 1450-75. As he indicates at the opening of the *Mappula Angliae*, Bokenham has added a number of prose and verse Lives, for Welsh as well as for English saints, to his translation of the *Legenda Aurea*, including those for Ss. David and Cedde in prose (fols. 69r-71v), and a Life in rime royal for Wenefred that appears at the end of the defective manuscript (fols. 214v-218v).[147] The *Lyf of Seynt Wenefrede* is, in fact, one of only eight new Lives that Bokenham has rendered in verse out of the 183 Lives that make up his translation.[148] The decision to present certain Lives in verse (e.g., Barbara, Vincent, and Audrey) seems to derive from a special connection between Bokenham and the saints in question—in the

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[146] For detailed description and discussion of the Abbotsford MS and its contents, see Simon Horobin, "'The Angle of Oblivioun': A Lost Medieval Manuscript Discovered in Walter Scott's Collection," *Times Literary Supplement*, November 11 2005, 12-13; and Simon Horobin, "A Manuscript Found in the Library of Abbotsford House and the Lost Legendary of Osbern Bokenham," in *English Manuscript Studies, 1100-1700*, ed. A.S.G. Edwards (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), 130-62; for a discussion of its literary and patronal contexts, see Horobin, "Politics, Patronage, and Piety," 932-49. Prior to the discovery of the Abbotsford MS, it had been suggested that Bokenham's "englische boke" was, in fact, the *Gilte Legende* of 1438. Cf., for instance, Horstmann, "Mappula Angliae," 2-3.

[147] The English saints whose Lives appear in the Abbotsford MS include Gilbert, John of Beverley, Aldhelm, Alban, Felix, Dunstan, Wulfstan, Botolph, Wilfred, Audrey, and Thomas Becket. The Lives of Oswald and Edward, mentioned in the *Mappula*, are missing, but this is no doubt the result of the manuscript being defective. See Horobin, "A Manuscript Found in the Library of Abbotsford House," 139-40. See also 157.

[148] The Abbotsford MS contains a total of seventeen Lives in verse, nine of which are revisions from the *Legendys of Hooly Wummen*: Lucy, Agnes, Agatha, Dorothy, Margaret, Mary Magdalene, Christina, Faith, and the 11,000 Virgins. The verse Lives of Anne, Katherine, Cecilia, and Elizabeth that appear in the *Legendys* are missing from the Abbotsford MS due to a loss of quires. The remaining eight verse Lives are unique to the Abbotsford text: Barbara, Paul the first hermit, Vincent, Apollonia, Mary Egyptian, Ambrose, Audrey, and Wenefred. See ibid., 141-49.

Legendys, for instance, Bokenham claims Barbara as one of his special "valentyns;" Vincent had a chapel at Clare dedicated by Joan of Acre, an important patron of the priory; and Audrey was the founder of the neighboring abbey at Ely.[149] From these observations it is possible to suggest that Bokenham attached a similar importance to Wenefred. That his devotion to the saint was personal rather than patronal is suggested by the mention in his Wenefred Life of a pilgrimage that he made to Holywell in 1448; it was here, so Bokenham reports, that he collected the unique miracle stories added to his account of the saint's legend. And again, the fact that the *Lyf of Seynt Wenefrede* is presented in verse further suggests the friar's close relationship with this Welsh saint.

Prior to the discovery of the Abbotsford MS, several scholars had argued that Bokenham's *Legendys of Hooly Wummen* and his translation of the fourth-century *De consulatu Stilichonis* were intended to promote Yorkist interests, and Horobin has demonstrated that the Abbotsford MS was in fact presented to the patron of Clare Priory, Richard Duke of York, but was intended for his pious wife Cecily Neville (d. 1495).[150] The removal of dedications to specific patrons in those Lives taken from the *Legendys*, however, suggests that Bokenham "did not consider his audience to be limited to, or

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[149] Horobin, "Angle of Oblivioun," 12. For Bokenham's reference to Barbara as one of his "valentyns," see Serjeantson, *Bokenham's Legendys of Hooly Wummen*: 225.

[150] On Bokenham's Yorkist connections, see chapter 1, "Introductions" in Sheila Delany, *Impolitic Bodies: Poetry, Saints, and Society in Fifteenth-Century England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998). See esp. pages 15-32; John Watts, "*De consulatu Stilichonis*: Texts and Politics in the Reign of Henry VI," *Journal of Medieval History* 16 (1990); Carroll Hilles, "Gender and Politics in Osbern Bokenham's Legendary," *New Medieval Literatures* 4 (2001); and A.S.G. Edwards, "The Middle English Translation of Claudian's *De consulatu Stilichonis*," in *Middle English Poetry: Texts and Traditions*, ed. A.J. Minnis (York: York Medieval Press, 2001). On Cecily Neville's ownership of the Abbotsford MS, see Horobin, "A Manuscript Found in the Library of Abbotsford House," 149-55; and Horobin, "Politics, Patronage, and Piety." The Abbotsford MS is substantial, and it would have been suitable for a noble patron. It is 2.9 inches thick at the fore edge, and the leaves measure approximately 10.25 by 15.19 inches. The text is arranged in two columns and the poetic Lives use red ink braces to link rhyming lines. The folios were once ornatedly decorated, although many if not all of the illuminations have been cut out.

entirely dependent upon, [an] East Anglian group," as has generally been thought.[151] Indeed, Bokenham's various journeys in Britain, Italy, and Spain attested to in the Abbotsford Lives of Ss. Wenefred, David, Nicholas of Tolentino, and Laurence, and in the *Legendys* versions of the Lives of Ss. Margaret and Mary Magdalene, suggest wider possible routes of dissemination for his work.[152] According to Horobin, Bokenham's concerns in reworking Lives for inclusion in the Abbotsford collection are generally apolitical and speak primarily to the devotional and literary interests of the patron. He claims that many of the Abbotsford Lives have been revised and expanded so as to emphasize not the miraculous or theological elements of the legends, but the sound moral and spiritual qualities of the saints, presenting them as exemplars of the mixed life that was so popular in Bokenham's time:

> Bokenham's saints were designed to emphasize a coherent set of moral qualities, including modesty, humility, prudence, continence, and to show how these qualities manifested themselves in acts of charity, chastity, edifying conversation, preaching, and so on. Bokenham plays down supernatural acts and miracles in favor of saints who embody virtues of greater concern to fifteenth-century noble families, such as dressing appropriately, being modest and demure, affable in company, and obedient to one's parents. In this way Bokenham's holy men and women become less models of sanctity and spirituality and challenges to the social hierarchy and more the embodiment of the fifteenth-century ideal of *courtesye*.[153]

Wenefred's legend can easily be taken to promote the virtues of modesty, humility, affability, and obedience as Horobin claims the Abbotsford Legendary was intended as a

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[151] Horobin, "Politics, Patronage, and Piety," 943.
[152] Ibid., 940 and 947-49. In his Life of David, Bokenham notes details of the saint's shrine that he claims to have seen himself. Specifically, he records (fol. 70v) some short Latin verses that were etched into the walls around, as well as on tablets mounted near, David's tomb. These verses refer to Pope Calixtus's indulgence that two pilgrimages to Menevia (i.e., St. David's) are equal to one to Rome. Bokenham also claims to have heard at St. David's—but not to have seen written there—the claim that Calixtus also granted pilgrims who make trips to Menevia the indulgence to eat white meat during Lent.
[153] Ibid., 937-38. See also 947.

whole to do. Indeed, in Bokenham's version Wenefred's parents encourage their daughter's tutelage under Beuno specifically

> Hopyng there by that she shuld lere
> After here entent w***û***manly honeste
> For of naturys yiftys she had plente
> As bewte shap & eek comelynesse
> Eloquence in speche & affabylnesse (fol. 215r, lines 94-98)
>
> (Hoping thereby that she should learn,
> After their intention, womanly honesty,
> For of nature's gifts she had plenty,
> That is, beauty, form, and also attractiveness,
> Eloquence in speech and affableness.)

On the other hand, however, Bokenham has not removed the miraculous qualities of the story in his verse rendition. He cannot be said either to have downplayed these qualities, even though, of course, given the nature of Wenefred's resurrection it is hardly possible to overlook the marvelous in a retelling of her martyrdom.

Bokenham's Life of Wenefred ultimately testifies, therefore, to the widespread popularity of the saint in the middle years of the fifteenth century in devotional as well as in political contexts. As mentioned, the fact that the Life is presented in verse demonstrates Wenefred's special place in either Bokenham's devotion, or, possibly, in that of his devout and influential patron, Cecily Neville. So far as the latter possibility is concerned, however, Cynthia Camp has demonstrated that the Abbotsford Legendary, rather than addressing the political or devotional interests of its patron, speaks more to the hagiographic concerns of the Austin Friars and Clare Priory.[154] Pointing to the

[154] Cynthia Turner Camp, "Osbern Bokenham and the House of York Revisited," *Viator* (forthcoming). I am grateful to Dr. Camp for allowing me to read this article in advance of its publication. Highlighting Bokenham's emphasis on the efficacy of preaching and the value of reason in the Lives of the Abbotsford collection, Karen Winstead maintains that this legendary, in comparison with Bokenham's *Legendys of Hooly Wummen*, reveals an increasing engagement with the issue of Christian education, a matter of public

complete lack of Lives for saints whom Cecily would have clearly favored—northern saints like Cuthbert or Ninian whom the Nevilles had particularly adopted, the anti-Lancastrian Richard Scrope, or the continental female mystics to whom Cecily had a personal attachment—Camp maintains that Bokenham's purpose in compiling the Abbotsford collection was to promote "the antiquity, longevity, and current prestige of his order," something he did by including the Lives of saints specifically associated with the Austin Friars: e.g., Monica, Simplician of Milan, and Nicholas of Tolentino. At the same time, and in order to bolster, according to Camp, his priory's reputation and to raise awareness of Clare as a house of efficacious prayer worthy of continued financial support, Bokenham included a Life of Vincent of Saragossa, a saint to whom Joan of Acre had dedicated a chapel at Clare. This Life ends with the assertion that any church dedicated to Vincent is as powerful in its miraculous potential as the one that holds his relics, and moreover Joan herself was buried in—and according to Bokenham's *Mappula Angliae* worked miracles at—her Vincent chapel at Clare. So while no evidence exists to demonstrate Cecily Neville's interest in Wenefred, and in fact the Abbotsford Legendary cannot be shown to cater to her individual hagiographical preferences, it might be noted that, according to Anne Sutton, Anne Neville, queen of Richard III and daughter of Cecily's nephew Richard, Sixth Earl of Salisbury, was "well aware" of Wenefred. Sutton has suggested, furthermore, that Caxton's printed English edition of Prior Robert's *Vita et translatio* could have been connected to Anne's accession.[155] If, therefore, Bokenham's

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debate in Bokenham's time. She makes, however, no particular comments upon the *Lyf of Seynt Wenefrede*. Karen A. Winstead, "Osbern Bokenham's "englische boke"," in *Form and Reform: Reading Across the Fifteenth-Century*, ed. Shannon Noelle Gayk and Kathleen Ann Tonry (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2011). I am grateful to Cynthia Camp for referring me to this article.

[155] Sutton, "Caxton, the Cult of St. Winifred, and Shrewsbury," 116-17. On Caxton's printed editions see page 302ff. below. The oft-posited devotion of Margaret Beaufort to Wenefred is not substantiated by current research on her life. For more on this point, see note 241 below.

Life of Wenefred is not concerned to promote a given political agenda—indeed, the Life speaks primarily to Bokenham's own interest in her—it at least demonstrates the saint's continued high status in England through the mid-fifteenth century.

So far as Bokenham's personal devotion to Wenefred, he clearly states in the Life that he made a pilgrimage to Holywell in 1448 and that this is the place where he collected the unique miracle stories he interpolates into his version of the legend. After recounting the details of the barking curse visited upon the descendants of Caradog, an element that he drew from Higden's *Polychronicon*, Bokenham introduces a long personal digression with the following statement:[156]

> But dygressy***ô***n lesth now returne
> And aftyr the legende tellyn I wyl ageyn
> Of two wundrys wiche in the burne
> Of this hooly welle be founde certeyn
> Ex**p**ience me tawt the soth to seyn
> The yer of grace to spekyn pleynly
> A thoused foure hundryd & eygthe & fourty (fol. 217r, lines 477-83)
>
> (But digression I leave, and now return
> And according to the legend I will tell again
> Of two wonders which in the bosom
> Of this holy well are found certainly
> As experience taught me, truth to tell,
> The year of grace, to speak plainly,
> A thousand four hundred and eight and forty.)

The "two wundrys" from Wenefred's legend mentioned here are the insoluble red spots on the stones in the well and its stream, and the redolent moss that grows in the same vicinity. Bokenham claims that if anyone should think that the red spots are anything other than Wenefred's blood, then he should toss a new stone into the well where it too

[156] For the barking curse in *Polychronicon*, see chapter 4, page 173ff. above. That Bokenham drew directly on Higden's work is made clear by his several direct references to the *Polychronicon* by name, including at the point where he recounts the legend of the barking curse. See fol. 216v, line 438.

will soon be covered in the same red spots (fols. 217r, lines 486-511).[157] Bokenham has not seen this wonder with his own eyes, but purports to have heard it from his unnamed host at Holywell:

> Of this laste balade y haue no euydence
> But oonly relacy**ô**n of men in that cuntre
> To whom me semyth shuld be youyn credence
> Of alle swyche thyngys as ther doon be
> For whan y was there myn hoost told me
> That yt soth was wyth owte drede
> For hym self had seyin yt doon in dede (fol. 217r, lines 512-18)
>
> (Of this last story I have no evidence
> But only the words of men in that country,
> To whom I think should be given credence,
> For all such things as there are done,
> For when I was there my host told me
> That it was true without dread
> For he himself had seen it done in deed.)

This observation sets up and leads to a longer miracle story that Bokenham collected from his host, the tale of a Carmelite friar from Coventry whose devotion to Wenefred leads him to rash action at her well. The friar was in the habit of making an annual pilgrimage to North Wales at a time when the Holywell fountain was not fully accessible to visitors because of a great chapel structure that "Kyng herry the fourte" had built over it "for the tendyr loue / Wich that he had to this virgyn pure" (fol. 217v, lines 540-41). This building restricted access on three sides, but the water from the well could run out through a grate in the front. Stirred by intense devotion to the saint, our friar one day decides to thrust both of his arms through the grating and into the water of the well, as opposed simply to bathing in the stream that runs down from it. He beseeches the saint for a token of her friendship, and, when he removes his arms from the water, they are

[157] Cf. Caxton's account of "whyte asshen cuppes" placed in the well at Woolston turning red with Wenefred's blood. See page 309 below.

covered in the same insoluble red spots for which the stones in the well stream are famous. Some people claim the spots to be God's vengeance for the friar's importunity; others think it to be a token of Wenefred's grace. The friar himself is uncertain, and the following day he says mass "Ouyr the welle in the chapel of his lady" (fol. 217v, line 605), after which "Deuouhtly to the welle do***û***n he went" (fol. 217v, line 625). He then places his arms back through the grate and asks Wenefred to take the spots from him if indeed they were intended as a sign of her favor. The marks are of course removed and the friar returns happily to Coventry.

So ends the new miracle story, a noteworthy aspect of which is the well chapel of Henry IV, a detail that underscores the significance Wenefred held for the Lancastrian regime. Bokenham does not offer an extended description of this structure, but, as the quotations above and below demonstrate, it appears to have been the predecessor or model for the crypt and chapel that stand over the well today, that is, a three-sided, vaulted structure surrounding the well with a chapel dedicated to Wenefred standing atop it. The primary difference from the present-day buildings seems to be the grate on Henry's well structure that restricted access to the source of the water.[158] Bokenham clearly states that the king had placed the grating so as to prevent anyone from getting too near the well:

> Kyng herry the fourte for the tendyr loue
> Wich that he had to this virgyn pure
> Dede maken a chapel ouer the welle aboue
> Myhty and strong for to endure
> On thre partys closyng yt in sure
> And that no man presum***y*** shuld to com ther ny

[158] It must, however, be remembered that the current well crypt was formerly far more elaborate in its stone work, the effects of time having taken their toll. At one time there was, apparently, a stone screen separating the well proper from the area in which pilgrims could bathe. Christopher David, *St. Winefride's Well: A History and Guide* (Llandysul: Gomer Press, 2002). [15].

A gret grate ys sette on the fourte party

For pleynly hym thouhte aftyr his entent
In to that welle wich clepyd ys holy
That ony man shuld goon was not c***ô***uenyent
Syth men myht watyr han sufficyently
Hem wyth to wasshyn euene therby
Wich at the grate yssuyth owt so sore
That knedeep yt ys at the fallyng or more (fol. 217v, lines 540-55)

(King Henry the Fourth, for the tender love
That he had to this virgin pure,
Did make a chapel over the well above,
Mighty and strong to endure,
On three sides closing it in sure,
And that no man should presume to come near there,
A great gate is set on the fourth side.

For clearly he thought, after his intent,
Into that well that is called holy
It was not convenient for any man to go
Since men might have sufficient water
With which to wash themselves immediately nearby
Which at the grate issued out so sorely
That kneedeep it was at the falling or more.)

Wenefred's status was apparently such that Henry IV deemed it inappropriate for just anyone to approach her holy site too closely, and this posits an even stronger Lancastrian interest in Wenefred from the beginning of the fifteenth century than has previously been considered. It seems from this evidence, then, that Henry V made his pilgrimage in 1416 to a noteworthy well chapel—Bokenham does describe it as "Myhty and strong for to endure"—that his father had built, assumedly sometime after the Battle of Shrewsbury in 1403. And while we would expect Adam of Usk to have mentioned, when noting Henry V's pilgrimage, that the Holywell shrine had been elaborately rebuilt by Henry's father and predecessor, it could even be that the 1416 pilgrimage was meant in part to advertise the newly erected shrine. The construction of a new chapel structure and a royal

pilgrimage to it would have been a fittingly thankful gesture toward a Welsh saint who had aided the English king in his struggle against a Welsh rebel from the saint's own part of Wales.

Of course, against the evidence of Bokenham's account we must set Pope Martin V's granting the Abbot of Basingwerk the right to sell indulgences for the restoration of the Holywell shrine in 1427, the official notice of which reads as follows:

> Relaxation, during ten years, of a year and forty days of enjoined penance to penitents who on the principal feasts of the year and the dedication, the octaves of certain of them and the six days of Whitsun week, and of a hundred days to those who during the said octaves and days visit and give alms for the repair and conservation of the chapel of St. Winifred the Virgin, called Haliwell, in the diocese of St. Asaph, whose buildings are collapsed.[159]

If Henry IV had in fact built a chapel structure at Holywell "Myhty and strong for to endure," we would hardly expect it to have collapsed within thirty years' time. Still, Bokenham heard the tradition that Henry was responsible for raising the chapel buildings during his pilgrimage of 1448 and this was, presumably, less than fifty years after they were erected and just over twenty years after Martin V's grant. It appears likely, then, that Henry IV's connection to a notable structure at Holywell is genuine, and the papal grant could have been intended to repair damage to it that was significant but not completely destructive—for all we know, something as prosaic and unpredictable as severe weather could have caused the roof of Henry's chapel, no matter how stoutly built, to have collapsed. In other words, a need for repairs in 1427 does not mean that a substantial building was not in place at Holywell at the beginning of the fifteenth century.

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[159] "Lateran Regesta 269: 1426-1427," ed. J.A. Twemlow, *Calendar of Papal Registers Relating to Great Britain and Ireland, Volume 7: 1417-1431* (1906), http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=104379. See page 504. See also Pritchard, *St. Winefride, Her Holy Well, and the Jesuit Mission*: 58.

Moreover, it has been asserted that the 1427 grant was aimed at repairs for the *parish* church now dedicated to St. James that stands adjacent to the present well crypt and chapel and that had been damaged during the Glyn Dŵr uprising.[160] Ultimately, both Henry's chapel structure and Martin's grant indicate Wenefred's continuing high status over the first three decades of that century. We should also note, though, that a story about a Lancastrian king building a chapel at the cult site of an important saint, one whom Bokenham himself held in particular affection, does not seem to support the Yorkist leanings that some scholars claim to have discerned in Bokenham's pre-Abbotsford literary works.[161] In fact, if Bokenham were composing his Wenefred Life soon after his 1448 Holywell pilgrimage, that is, just about the time that the Duke of York came into conflict with Henry VI in 1450, then we might expect him to have overlooked, as a Yorkist partisan, the detail that Henry's grandfather had established Wenefred's well crypt and chapel, especially as the collection was intended for a Yorkist patron.[162] Because Bokenham includes this detail, we have further evidence that he was not staunchly pro-Yorkist in his political affiliations.

So far as Bokenham's sources, other than the unique story of the Carmelite friar, his *Lyf of Seynt Wenefrede* derives primarily from Prior Robert's twelfth-century *Vita*.

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[160] Both Pritchard and David state that the structure in need of repairs in 1427 was, in fact, the parish church of St. James, the tower of which is the only portion surviving from the medieval period. Pritchard, *St. Winefride, Her Holy Well, and the Jesuit Mission*: 58; David, *St. Winefride's Well*: [8]. At the same time, Pritchard seems to imply that there may also have been damage to any structure standing over the well (which, on the evidence of Bokenham, would have to have been Henry IV's). However, it is unlikely that Henry would have constructed his Holywell chapel before 1406 as Flintshire was, until March of that year, under the control of Hywel Gwynedd, one of Glyn Dŵr's most adamant supporters. Soon after Hywel's death, the men of Flintshire surrendered to English officials at Flint, and Henry's chapel would probably have been begun at some time, but not necessarily immediately, thereafter. Davies, *Revolt of Owain Glyn Dŵr*: 123-24. It also seems unlikely that, if the Lancastrians were as devoted to Wenefred as they appear to have been in the early fifteenth century, they would have allowed her primary chapel to remain in ruins for more than twenty years. The 1427 grant seems, then, to have been intended for repairs to the parish church.

[161] On Bokenham's Yorkist sympathies, see the sources cited in note 150 above.

[162] I am grateful to Cynthia Camp for drawing my attention to this possibilty.

While Bokenham gives no indication that he had been to Shrewsbury, it is possible that he would have encountered a copy of Robert's *Vita* at St. Werburgh's, Chester, an abbey with which he seems to have had connections and from which he assumedly acquired, perhaps on his 1448 pilgrimage to Holywell, a copy of Higden's *Polychronicon* (Higden was, after all, a monk of St. Werburgh's).[163] Evidence that Bokenham drew directly on Robert's text, rather than on the presumably more widely available Sarum lections that derive from it, can be found in several of Bokenham's references to his source—which he calls "This virgyns legende" (fol. 217r, line 485)—and in the details he includes from it. Indeed, in their geographical description of Wales, the opening lines of the *Lyf* clearly echo the beginning of Robert's *Vita*, even though they mention *Polychronicon* by name and use it to expand upon Robert's own geographical report of Wales. This descriptive material is not present in the Sarum lections.[164] Further, when noting the speed of Wenefred's spiritual growth under Beuno's tutelage, Bokenham refers to her legend and includes information found in Robert's account but not in the Sarum text:

> No wundyr for as wytnessyth hyre legende
> The holy gost dwellyd hyre wyth inne
> Wiche not oonly hyre dede defende
> From the unclennesse of deedly synne
> But many a good dede eek to begynne
> He hyre styryd by grace inward
> And by blyssyd Bennons doctrine owtward (fol. 215r, lines 106-12)
>
> (No wonder for as her legend relates,
> The Holy Ghost dwelled within her
> And not only defended her
> From the uncleanliness of deadly sin,

[163] On the clues to Bokenham's links with Chester and with Wales, see Horobin, "Politics, Patronage, and Piety," 948-49.

[164] For Robert's geographical orientation at the beginning of the *Vita*, see *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 27. Compare the opening lines of Bokenham's Wenefred Life with the following text from Bokenham's translation of Higden: "The III[d] p*ar*te of this lande in Þ*e* furst p*ar*ticiou*n* was cleped Cambria, of Cambro, Þe III. son*n*e of Brute, but now in our*e* vulgar hit is cleped Wales, of Gualesia, kyng*e* Ebrankes doughtur*e*, Þe w[*che*] was somtyme kyng*e* ther*e*." Horstmann, "Mappula Angliae," 12.

But many a good deed also to begin
He stirred her by inward grace
And by blessed Beuno's outward doctrine.)

At the appropriate point in the lections there is no mention of the Holy Spirit's role in Wenefred's development, but Robert takes care to note it specifically: "She, moreover, through the mercy of God inwardly inspiring her, increased daily in goodness and advanced in wisdom, her soul fervently inflamed by the Holy Spirit."[165] Bokenham also notes that Beuno, when placing Wenefred's head back on her neck, "in hyre nosethyrls he blew softely" (fol. 216r, line 304), a detail found in Robert's account but again not in the Sarum lections.[166] Finally, while Bokenham's text takes the story up to Wenefred's own death in "The monyth of Nouembre on the thrydde day" (fol. 218v, line 812), the lections end with Theonia's death and burial some years before.[167]

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[165] *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 30. Robert's Latin reads: "Nam virgo, futura Dei templum, ardenti percipiebat desiderio quæ auribus hauriebat et tenaci memoria recondebat, in proximo operibus exhibitura quod tunc in animo congerebat. . . . Illa autem, interius inspirante Dei clementia, quotidie crescebat in melius et proficiebat in sapientia, mente sua a Spiritu sancto ardenter debriata. Jam omnem virum penitus abdicare disponebat atque solius Dei complexibus inhiare cogitabat; sed hoc parentibus suis innotescere formidabat." De Smedt, *AASS, t.I. Nov.*: 710. ("For the maiden, about to become a temple of God, recieved with ardent longing what she heard with her ears and stored it in her tenacious memory, soon to show in her works what then she was heaping up in her mind. . . . She, moreover, through the mercy of God inwardly inspiring her, increased daily in goodness and advanced in wisdom, her soul fervently inflamed by the Holy Spirit. Then she determined to renounce utterly every man, and she intended to long for the embraces of God alone, but she was afraid for this to become known to her parents.") *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 29-30. Cf. the Sarum lections: "Wenefreda vero cælesti dogmate mox inebriata omnia Christi mandata, quæ a doctore suo prædicata ardenti desiderio et auribus patulis hauriebat, tenaci memoria recondebat : in proximo operibus exhibitura, quod tunc in animo congerebat. Omnem virum enim abdicare disponebat : sed hoc parentibus suis innotescere formidabat." ("Wenefred, soon indeed inebriated with the heavenly doctrine was drinking in with ardent desire and with ears wide open all the commandments of Christ, which things were proclaimed by her own teacher; but she was afraid for this to become known to her parents.") Proctor and Wordsworth, *Breviarium ab usum insignis ecclesiae Sarum. Fasciculus III.*: col. 990. Translation is my own. The Hereford lections are even briefer than those of Sarum and also do not mention the Holy Spirit at this juncture in the narrative or indeed at any other point: "Sicque inspirante domino virtutibus virgo proficiens, propositum mentis sue doctori suo aperuit dicens, Omnem seculi luxum amodo abdicare delegi, et virginitatem meam christo incontaminatam conseruare disposui." Frere and Brown, *The Hereford Breviary, vol. 2*: 393.

[166] Cf. *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 37; and Proctor and Wordsworth, *Breviarium ab usum insignis ecclesiae Sarum. Fasciculus III.*: col. 993.

[167] Proctor and Wordsworth, *Breviarium ab usum insignis ecclesiae Sarum. Fasciculus III.*: col. 1000. While one might suggest that Bokenham drew on Tynemouth's epitome in composing his *Lyf of Seynt*

While Bokenham's text is defective, breaking off just at the point where Wenefred dies at Gwytherin, it appears that his version never included any part of Robert's *translatio* account. The final lines in the Abbotsford MS are clearly part of a closing prayer, the sort that Bokenham uses to conclude many Lives in his *Legendys of Hooly Wummen* and that begin with the word "Now:"[168]

> Now blyssyd Wenefrede wiche the passage
> Of bodyly deth twyist dedyst make
> Of the secunde deth from the cruel owtrage
> Thy seruantys preserue that the fendys blake
> Ne power moun han hem thedyr to take (fol. 218v, lines 813-17)
>
> (Now blessed Wenefred, who the passage
> Of bodily death twice did make,
> Of the second death, from the cruel outrage
> Your servants preserve so that the fiends black
> Might no have power them hence to take)

At the bottom of the folio after the partial stanza there is a catch phrase, a bit of text meant to help the binder link the correct quire to the end of the current one, and it reads "Whan they hens passe." Circumstantial supporting evidence that this stanza marks the end of the Life, rather than a transition into Robert's *translatio* account, comes from the fact that the scribe has dotted the first letter in each of these final lines with red ink,

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Wenefrede, it should be noted that Tynemouth almost entirely excises Robert's opening geographical descriptions—he only says that Beuno "in occidua Maioris Britannie regione enituit" ("shined forth in the western region of Great Britain")—and, at the appropriate juncture, he makes no mention of Wenefred having been inflamed by the Holy Spirit but instead claims that she grew spiritually "inspirante dei clementia" ("with the mercy of God inspiring her"). Tynemouth does, on the other hand, note that Beuno blew in Wenefred's nostrils ("in naribus illius insufflauit") after placing her head back on her shoulders. Horstmann, *Nova Legenda Anglie, vol. 2*. See 415 and 418.

[168] Cf., e.g., the ending prayers in his Lives of Ss. Margaret and Christine: Serjeantson, *Bokenham's Legendys of Hooly Wummen*: 38 and 85-6. I am grateful to Cynthia Camp and Tristan Gray Hulse for drawing my attention to the likelihood that the final lines of Bokenham's *Lyf of Seynt Wenefrede* are in fact a closing prayer.

obviously indicating that he viewed them as being in some way significant.[169] Lastly, that Bokenham should have excluded Robert's *translatio* account is not surprising, for like the Sarum lections his text was intended for an audience beyond Shrewsbury and he had himself visited Wenefred's fountain in Wales rather than her corporeal relics in England.

Accepting Horobin's position that Bokenham's text was intended for the Duchess of York, the verse Life of Wenefred contained therein provides significant evidence for the saint's importance among leading members of the English aristocracy in the mid-fifteenth century.[170] From Bokenham's account of the well site and from external documentation already noted we know that Wenefred was clearly popular with the Lancastrians; however, the fact that Bokenham composed the Abbotsford Legendary for Cecily Neville, in combination with a *cywydd* by the Welsh poet Tudur Aled (*ca*. 1465-1525x7), provides evidence of Wenefred's popularity among the Yorkists.[171] While Bokenham's inclusion of this Welsh saint in a work intended for a Yorkist matriarch does not appear to have been overtly political in nature, even though the manuscript can be dated to the significant period *ca*. 1450-75, Aled's poem hints at Wenefred's continuing political capital a few decades after Bokenham's 1448 visit to Holywell. In *Stori Gwenfrewi a'i Ffynnon* (*Story of Wenefred and her Well*), after recounting Wenefred's

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[169] The only other place in the Wenefred Life where this sort of marking occurs is at lines 715-21 on fol. 218r, where Beuno instructs Wenefred to send her annual gift until such time that she finds it remaining in the stream the day after having placed it there, an indication that Beuno himself has died.

[170] The Wenefred memorials or suffrages noted by Sutton in London books of hours date to the same period. See Sutton, "Caxton, the Cult of St. Winifred, and Shrewsbury," 115n30.

[171] Tudur Aled has long been associated with the parish of Llansannan, a few miles from Gwytherin, but there is reason to doubt his link with the region and he seems more likely to have been a native of Iâl. A. Cynfael Lake, "Tudur Aled (c.1465–1525x7)," ed. Lawrence Goldman, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004-), http://www.oxforddnb.com.proxy-remote.galib.uga.edu/view/article/318.

martyrdom and noting the continuing celebrity of her restorative fountain, Aled comments on the high-status visitors who have paid homage to the saint at Holywell:

> Pob iarll âi, pawb o wŷr llys,
> Pob brenin, pob rhyw ynys;
> Edwart, daeth i dir at hon,
> A'r gweryd ar ei goron;
> Rhoen ar wellt, yr hen a'r iau,
> Ag ar lawnt, eu garlantau;
> Mae goruthr am ei gweryd,
> Maint oedd bwys minteioedd byd; (lines 95-102)
>
> (Every earl used to go, every courtier,
> Every king, every kind of realm.
> Edward came to his land to her,
> And the moss upon his crown.
> Let them place upon the grass, old and young,
> And on the lawn their garlands.
> Wonderful, about her grave,
> So great was the throng of the world's companies.)[172]

The Edward that Aled mentions is Edward IV, who could perhaps have made his pilgrimage to Holywell from Shrewsbury following his victory over Henry VI at the Battle of Towton Moor in March, 1461.[173] The *gweryd* or moss here said to have been in Edward's crown can only have been the fragrant moss of Wenefred's well, and Edward's placing it in his diadem may be taken as a sign of his thanks for his triumph over the House of Lancaster. Such a gesture would not be surprising given the attention that Wenefred had received from Richard II, Henry IV, and Henry V, and indeed in the 1480s and beyond she would receive similar attention from the last of the Yorkist monarchs as

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[172] T.M. Charles-Edwards, trans., *Two Mediaeval Welsh Poems* (Llandysul: Gwasg Gomer, 1971). [16-17]. The poem is also printed and translated in ap Huw, "Critical Examination of Welsh Poetry," 165-75. Ap Huw's prose translation of lines 95-102 reads as follows: "Every earl would go, every courtier, every king of every vicinity. Edward came to land [to visit] her, [with] the earth on his crown; let them place upon the hair of the old and young, and upon the lawn, their garlands; there is a might rush for her ground, how great was the press of the world's multitudes!" See ibid., 175.

[173] Charles-Edwards, *Saint Winefride and Her Well*: 6. For the suggestion that Edward's Holywell pilgrimage should be dated to the summer of 1473, see Lowry, "Caxton, St. Winifred and the Lady Margaret Beaufort," 113.

well as his successor. Prior to that point, in the final years of Edward IV's reign (*ca*. 1477), work was begun on wall paintings in Eton College chapel at Windsor, one of which depicted Wenefred.[174] While this painting of Wenefred argues for Edward's continuing devotion to the saint in the years after the visit recorded by Aled, we can make some further observations to contextualize the poet's uncorroborated report of the king's Holywell pilgrimage and note the various channels by which Edward would have become interested in Wenefred. While Edward himself cannot be shown to have supported the Shrewsbury cult of Wenefred in any particular way, his ties to Shrewsbury itself are more certain: his father had had close relations with the town; Edward had spent time there in his younger years and was apparently closely engaged with the Shrewsbury Drapers' company; his second son was born in Shrewsbury and his eldest had been hosted there many times and was involved in directing the town's trade guilds. Moreover, the Prince of Wales's household under Edward IV retained one Adam Grafton, a cleric who was the first listed member of Wenefred's official confraternity at Shrewsbury in 1487 and who later had ties to William Caxton.[175] Through his grandmother, Anne Mortimer, who was descended from Llywelyn ab Iorwerth, Edward was also able to assert a degree of Welsh ancestry.[176] All of these points suggest that Edward IV, with his various personal and family connections to Shrewsbury, would have at least been aware of the Welsh saint enshrined there. And the small measure of Welsh blood in his veins, in combination with

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[174] Andrew Martindale, "The Wall-Paintings in the Chapel of Eton College," in *England and the Low Countries in the Late Middle Ages*, ed. Caroline Barron and Nigel Saul (Stroud: Sutton Publishing Ltd., 1995).
[175] For Edward IV's connections with Shrewsbury, see Sutton, "Caxton, the Cult of St. Winifred, and Shrewsbury," 115. On Adam Grafton, see 115-17, 121-22, and 124-26.
[176] Madeleine Gray, "Welsh Saints in Westminster Abbey," *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion 2006* 13 (2007): 6.

the political capital Wenefred was obviously thought to hold, may have been the factor that drew Edward ultimately to Holywell.

Bokenham's verse *Lyf of Seynt Wenefrede* is significant for a number of reasons. It clearly demonstrates that Wenefred was popular among the English nobility in the mid-fifteenth century, even though it does not present her as the particular patron of either the Lancastrian or the Yorkist cause. By extension, the Life indicates that Bokenham himself was not the Yorkist partisan he has previously been claimed to be. Furthermore, the Abbotsford Life also offers a glimpse of the significance the Lancastrians attached to Wenefred by providing evidence that Henry IV had constructed a notable crypt and chapel at the Holywell shrine. Like John Audelay's Wenefred carol, Bokenham's verse Life is a personal account of the saint's legend, and both excise the story of Wenefred's *translatio*. Both writers were aware that Wenefred's bones remained at Shrewsbury, but their personal devotions to her focus on the power of Holywell. By contrast, John Mirk's sermon, an official, liturgical account of her legend, strove to resituate Wenefred in Shropshire in response to the prominence of her cult at Shrewsbury under Abbot Nicholas Stevens. Other retellings like the *GiL* and Bodleian MS 779 Lives sought to transfer Wenefred to England more generally as a response to the 1415 re-elevation of her feast. However, based on the attention paid to the saint's original cult site by Richard II, the Lancastrians, and Edward IV, it would appear that the ultimate locus of her spiritual potency never truly shifted away from Holywell, even if all of these monarchs first came to know of Wenefred through contact with her cult at Shrewsbury. Wenefred remained throughout the fifteenth century a saint whose power resided ultimately in Wales.

WILLIAM CAXTON'S PRINTED LIVES OF WENEFRED, 1483-84

It was Caxton who produced the last new English Lives of Wenefred in the 1480s, the decade during which the saint's medieval English cult seems to have reached its apex. The first and shorter of Caxton's Wenefred Lives was included in the *Golden Legend* of 1483 (STC 24873), the printer's own translation of the *Legenda Aurea* to which he added a large number of Lives for saints from the British Isles. As noted already, Caxton drew on an earlier English version of the *Legenda*, the *Gilte Legende* of 1438, when compiling his own edition and this source text clearly included the *GiL Lyfe of Seint Wenefride* already discussed above.[177] Regarding the printer's handling of his source, Anne Sutton has noted that while "Caxton is known to have made minor additions to lives in his *Golden Legend* . . . none have been identified for the 'Life' of Winifred," and she underscores the importance of his recognized additions for revealing the wealth of material at his disposal when expanding on his source text for the sake of particular audience interests.[178] However, a close reading of Caxton's Life of Wenefred from the *Golden Legend* does in fact show that Caxton did make both additions and deletions to his source, a *GiL* Life similar to that preserved in BL Additional MS 35298. Furthermore, while we know that Caxton published his *Golden Legend* in 1483, no exact date has been determined for the release of his printed translation of Robert's text (STC 25853), although based on typographical and codicological evidence this work can likely be dated to early 1484.[179] Circumstantial supporting evidence for this dating comes from

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[177] See page 274 above. Caxton also made reference to Voragine's original Latin text and to the *Légende Dorée*, a French translation by Jean de Vignay, when preparing the *Golden Legend* of 1483. For an edition of Caxton's *Lyf of Seynt Wenefryde* in his *Golden Legend*, see F.S Ellis, ed., *The Golden Legend or Lives of the Saints as Englished by William Caxton, vol. VI* (London: J.M. Dent, 1900; repr., New York: AMS Press, 1973). 127-32.

[178] Sutton, "Caxton, the Cult of St. Winifred, and Shrewsbury," 111.

[179] Ibid., 112.

the observation that some of the additions Caxton made to his *Golden Legend* Life of Wenefred are likely to have derived from a version of Robert's *Vita*—indeed, it appears that Caxton was familiar with the *Vita et translatio* and took elements from it while he was preparing the *GiL* Life for inclusion in his *Golden Legend*.

In essence, Caxton's brief 1483 *Lyf of Seynt Wenefryde* largely reproduces that which had been inserted into some manuscripts of the *GiL*. For instance, Caxton's 1483 Life retains the odd narrative sequence whereby Wenefred is resurrected before Caradog dies, and in both versions Wenefred's scar is red, not white as in Robert's text. Neither Caxton's Life nor that from the *GiL*, furthermore, mentions Wales by name, and both ignore the *translatio* while maintaining that, after his time at Holywell, Beuno departed for Ireland some fifty miles across the sea. So far as deletions, Caxton removes the erroneous reference to Wenefred's feast day—"the .v.th daye of Decembre"—found at the end of the *GiL* text. Besides some other minor excisions, Caxton adds a few notable details to his 1483 *Lyf of Seynt Wenefryde*, all of which seem to derive from some version of Robert's *Vita*. The primary addition comes in the description of Wenefred's well, Robert's prolix report of which is in part as follows:

> [E]t, quod dictu vel auditu mirabile est, lapides illi conspersi sanguine adhuc pristinam conspersionem retinent, ut patet usque hodie scire volentibus. Nam sunt quasi congelato cruore perfusi, nec situ temporis nec assidua præterfluentis aquæ eluvione detersi. Muscicula vero, quæ eisdem lapidibus adhæret, quasi thus redolet. Famosum satis atque patriam illam incolentibus notissimum est, fontem illum adhuc pristino more durare, et lapides, ut prædiximus, cruentatos in illo inveniri, merita virginis patenter ostendentes et spem omnibus portantibus eamdem virginem se invocantibus opitulari posse.[180]
>
> (And, a marvel to say and to hear, those stones spattered with blood still retain that original spattering, as is well known even today to those wanting to know. For they are stained as if by the congealed blood, nor are they wiped clean by the mold of time nor by the constant washing of the water flowing past. In fact, the

[180] De Smedt, *AASS, t.I. Nov.*: 714.

> moss which clings to these same stones smells like incense. It is acclaimed enough and very well known to the inhabitants of that country that the spring still continues in the original way, and the stones in it, as we said before, are found to be stained with blood, clearly manifesting the merits of the maiden and bringing hope to all that this same maiden can aid those calling upon her.)[181]

By comparison, the *GiL* Life reports the eruption of the well only briefly, making no notice of the moss that Robert records as growing on the stones:

> And in the same place where hir hed felle to the grownde þer spronge a fayre welle, the which into this daye heelyth and curith manye dissesis, and in the bottom of the saide welle appiere stonys alle blody which maye not be waish awaye with no crafte nor with no laboure.[182]
>
> (And in the same place where her head fell to the ground there sprung a fair well, which even today heals and cures many diseases, and in the bottom of this well appears stones all covered in blood that may not be washed away by any means or effort.)

Caxton then expands on this short notice from the *GiL* Life by incorporating material from Robert's text, most notably information on the moss that flourishes in the water of the well:

> And in the same place where as the hede fyll to the ground ther sprange up a fayr welle gyuyng oute haboundauntly fayr clere water where our lorde Gode yet dayly shwewth many myracles. And many seke peple hauyng dyuerse dyseases haue there ben cured and heled by the merites of this blessid Virgyne Saynt Wenefryde. And in the sayd welle appiere yet stones bespryncte and specled as it were with bloode whiche can not be had awey by no meane. And the mosse that groweth on these stones is of a merueylous swete odour. And that endureth unto thyes day.[183]
>
> (And in the same place where the head fell to the ground there sprang up a fair well giving out abundantly fair, clear water where our Lord God yet shows daily many miracles. And many sick people having diverse diseases have been cured there and healed by the merits of this blessed virgin St. Wenefred. And in this

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[181] *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 39.
[182] Hamer and Russell, *Supplementary Lives*: 42.
[183] William Caxton, *Legenda aurea sanctorum, sive, Lombardica historia*, (London: William Caxton, 1483), http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:25637:359.

> well there still appear stones besprinkled and speckled, as it were, with blood that cannot be removed by any means. And the moss that grows on these stones is of a marvelously sweet odor. And that remains even today.)

The stones in Caxton's well are not merely "alle blody," but are "bespryncte and specled as it were with bloode," an echo of Robert's "sunt quasi congelato cruore perfusi." And Caxton's statement about the moss and its odor, as well as the longevity of the spring, seems closely modeled on Robert's observations regarding these things. The only other addition that Caxton made to the *GiL* Life is the emendation whereby he gives the number of years that Wenefred spent as abbess at Gwytherin. The *GiL* Life only notes that she "contynued in the seruyce of God þer certeyn yeris," but in the final lines of his *Lyf* Caxton gives the exact figure of "eyght yere," a detail that does not appear in any known version of Robert's text.[184]

As mentioned, Caxton's more substantial *Lyf of the holy and blessid vyrgyn saynt Wenefryde* (STC 25853) seems on the basis of typography and paper datable to the opening months of 1484, and three complete copies and four fragments survive today.[185] This sixteen-leaf folio text consists of a condensed translation of Robert's *Vita et translatio* accompanied by Wenefred's Latin office, and the excisions and contractions made presumably by Caxton himself, as well as the few additions, serve to focus the reader's attention on Shrewsbury more than do the surviving copies of Robert's original

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[184] Hamer and Russell, *Supplementary Lives*: 43. It might be noted that, coincidentally, the *Vita Prima* gives the date of Wenefred's death at Gwytherin as the "8th day of the calends of July," but the possibility of a connection between Caxton's "eyght yere" and the anonymous Life's "VIII kalendas julii" is at best exceptionally remote. *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 102; De Smedt, *AASS, t.I. Nov.*: 704. See also note 196 below.

[185] These copies are in the British Library, Lambeth Palace Library, and the Pierpont Morgan Library. Sutton, "Caxton, the Cult of St. Winifred, and Shrewsbury," 112. Cf. Lowry, "Caxton, St. Winifred and the Lady Margaret Beaufort," 101n1. For a survey of what Caxton removed from Robert's text, see ibid., 104-06. Sutton disagrees with Lowry on the extent to which Caxton abridged his source, and I am not entirely convinced that his translational and editorial procedures were as "urgent" or as "careless" as Lowry claims. The complete text of Caxton's folio *Lyf* has been edited by Horstmann, "Prosalegenden I," 293-316.

twelfth-century account. Indeed, while Robert's *Vita* was much longer than his *translatio* narrative, Caxton's version makes the two of equal length, and there are other indicators of a Shrewsbury slant in this English text, such as the inclusion of details regarding Wenefred's feasts as celebrated at Shrewsbury Abbey.[186] Caxton's reasons for printing this edition are not entirely clear, but were no doubt connected with the development of Wenefred's cult in the 1480s. Because Caxton's folio *Lyf* of Wenefred was not dedicated to any named individual, Anne Sutton has suggested that Caxton acted independently but on sound market knowledge in producing it, and indeed she has traced the printer's numerous, close connections to merchant families hailing from Shrewsbury who were linked with the saint's cult.[187] She observes too that while the *translatio* account and the Latin office were "probably in [Caxton's] source, . . . their inclusion in his printed text made it a handbook for devotees of the cult [i.e., primarily in or from Shrewsbury] and much more than just another saint's 'Life.'" Through his contacts, Caxton essentially had a "ready-made market for an English 'Life'" of Wenefred. [188] Martin Lowry, on the other hand, views the folio *Lyf* as Caxton's "sure and uncontroversial means of keeping his presses occupied during the anxious months of waiting to see how the restored Lancastrian regime would treat a hardened Yorkist sympathizer."[189] He also suggests that Caxton produced the edition at the request of Thomas Mynde, Abbot of Shrewsbury, as a means of securing royal patronage for the confraternity of Wenefred given royal license in 1487 and that, therefore, the *Lyf* was critical in the Tudor dynasty's acceptance

[186] Cf. Lowry, "Caxton, St. Winifred and the Lady Margaret Beaufort," 104-06; and Sutton, "Caxton, the Cult of St. Winifred, and Shrewsbury," 113.
[187] Sutton, "Caxton, the Cult of St. Winifred, and Shrewsbury," 126.
[188] Ibid.
[189] Lowry, "Caxton, St. Winifred and the Lady Margaret Beaufort," 101.

of the Westminster printer.[190] In the end, none of these possible reasons for Caxton's printing of the folio *Lyf* are mutually exclusive and in fact the confluence of all these factors may well have the provided impetus for translating and disseminating Robert's text.

Either Caxton or his source made various adjustments to the *Vita et translatio*, all of which are significant for what they reveal about Caxton's intended audience and the context for this folio *Lyf*. Because of these changes, Sutton maintains that we cannot determine exactly the source that Caxton used, nor that he "translated any Latin text of which a copy still exists."[191] Whether or not the version of Robert's *Vita et translatio* that Caxton used already contained the saint's Latin office and had already been modified to center attention on Shrewsbury, however, the fact that such a version was *printed* in the 1480s speaks to the strength of her English cult in Shropshire and, indeed, in London at that time. While in theory Caxton could have used any of the versions of Wenefred's legend still surviving today—i.e., the *Vita Prima*, Robert's *Vita et translatio*, John of Tynemouth's epitome, Mirk's sermon, Bokenham's verse text, and the *GiL* and *SEL* Lives—the most likely scenario seems to be that he used an unknown copy of the *Vita et translatio* and that he modified it to accord with the interests of and information available to his Shrewsbury contacts, and that he added a few other details by brief reference to the *GiL* Life. So far as the latter is concerned, Caxton's folio *Lyf* of 1484 reports that Wenefred's neck scar was not white but red, and it also asserts that Beuno's new dwelling was exactly fifty miles away from Holywell, both of which are details first

[190] Ibid., 116.
[191] Sutton, "Caxton, the Cult of St. Winifred, and Shrewsbury," 113.

attested in the *GiL* Life and repeated by Caxton in his *Golden Legend* Life of Wenefred of 1483.[192]

Other modifications to Robert's text found in Caxton's folio edition are more substantive, and while many seem intended to sanitize, rationalize, or otherwise improve the story, others must reflect information that was local to and current in Shropshire. Taken together, these alterations overwrite elements of the story that could cast doubt on Wenefred's sanctity or beneficence, or that might call into question the legitimacy of her presence at Shrewsbury. For instance, Caxton's text excludes the brief sequence wherein Elerius expresses doubts about Wenefred's purpose in coming to Gwytherin, and Caxton also completely excises the episode in which Robert employs a monetary bribe to silence the Welshman at Gwytherin who angrily opposes the removal of Wenefred's bones.[193] At the same time, Caxton softens the nature of one of the three gifts that Beuno announces to Wenefred after her martyrdom. Instead of a penitent dying if he has not received grace after petitioning God in Wenefred's name for a third time as in Robert's version, Caxton's folio text offers the following reconfiguration:[194]

> and yf hit so happe that he gete ne haue not that thynge that he desyred ne that it folowe not after his peticion, knowe he for certayne that, yf ther be ony thynge more godly for the helthe of his sowle than hit that he demaunded, þ*at* it shal folowe ¬ come to hym for his good: for oftymes we of our frelnes aske and desyre thynges whiche parauentur shold torne more to our hurte than to oure wele; god knoweth what is best for vs.[195]
>
> (And if it so happens that he does not receive that which he desires or that which he gets does not accord with his petition, let him know for certain that, if there is anything more beneficial for the health of his soul than that which he had

[192] Horstmann, "Prosalegenden I," 298 and 301. Bokenham claims that Beuno dwelt "By yund the watyr fyfty myle space" (fol. 216v, line 379), but in his version the scar is white, for "The colour signyfyid hyre virgynyte" (fol. 218r, line 684). Robert's text never gives an exact distance between Holywell and Beuno's new home by the sea, but the color of Wenefred's scar is, of course, white in his version of the story.
[193] Cf. .*Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 55-57 and 85-86.
[194] Ibid., 43.
[195] Horstmann, "Prosalegenden I," 300.

> requested, that it shall soon come to him for his benefit: for oftentimes we in our frailness ask and desire things that, as it turns out, should contribute more to our detriment than to our well-being; God knows what is best for us.)

Inserted between the account of the legend and the narrative of the *translatio*, Caxton's text also includes a statement laying out Wenefred's three feast days celebrated at Shrewsbury, and he modifies the date of Wenefred's death as given by Robert to accord with current liturgical practice. Whereas Robert clearly states that she died at Gwytherin on November 2, Caxton changes this to "the thyrdde day of Nouembre."[196] The folio edition also shifts the focus of the story from Wales to England by overlooking the detailed description of Wenefred's burial site at Gwytherin given at the end of Robert's *Vita*. Moreover, the folio *Lyf* achieves this geographical refocusing by adding to the *translatio* narrative an account of what must be the well at Woolston near Oswestry, no doubt based on information which must have come from local Shrewsbury tradition (either directly to Caxton or through his source text). Having healed a sick man at an inn with dust from Wenefred's skull, when Robert's party

> cam to a place vpon a ten myle fro Shrewesbury, they restyd ¬ taryed there. And whanne they sholde haue departyd, they coude not remeue the bones: wherfor they counceyled to gyder and concluded that the bones shold be wesshen at that place. And thenne there was no water: but anone sprang vp there a fayr welle, which yet renneth a grete cours contynuelly in to this day lyke to the rather welle. In which welle they wesshe the bones of the blessyd saynt Wenefrede. And euer after the stones that lye and reste in that water, ben besprynct as it were with dropes of blood, in so moche that for certayne ther hath ben certayne deuoute persones which haue done to be leyd certayne whyte asshen cuppes in this sayd welle, and whanne they haue ben in the water a seuen dayes or ther-aboutes, they

[196] Ibid., 304. Caxton also claims here that Wenefred lived a total of fifteen years after her martyrdom, a figure that he seems to have reached by combining the seven years that Robert and the *GiL* author give as the length of time Wenefred spent at Holywell with the "eyght yere" Caxton himself claims she spent at Gwytherin in his *Golden Legend* of 1483. The *GiL* Life in Additional 35298, a copy close to the one (*C) on which Caxton based his *Golden Legend* Life, only mentions that she spent "certeyn yeris" at Gwytherin. See *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 42; and Hamer and Russell, *Supplementary Lives*: 43. See also notes 184 above and 210 below.

> haue appieryd al besprynct as it were with blood—and this is dayly shewed: whiche is a grete myracle.[197]
>
> (came to a place some ten miles from Shrewsbury, they rested and stayed there. And when they should have departed, they could not remove the bones. Wherefore they took council together and concluded that the bones should be washed at that place. And though there had been no water there, immediately a fair well sprung up which, even until today flows continually at great volume just like the other well [i.e., Holywell]. In this [new] well they washed the bones of St. Wenefred. And forever after the stones that remain at rest in that water have been besprinkled as it were with drops of blood, so much so that certain devout persons have lain white cups of ash in the well that, when they have been in the water seven days or so, appear all besprinkled, as it were, with blood. This is daily demonstrated and is a great miracle.)

Like Mirk's focus on the water in which Wenefred's bones were washed, this episode transfers the power inherent in the saint's holy fountain at Holywell to the English Midlands. In fact, as has been suggested above, the source of Mirk's bone-washing water was most likely the very well that Caxton describes as erupting "ten myle fro Shrewesbury," and including references to miraculous water linked to the saint and available in Shropshire, Mirk and especially Caxton overwrite the Holywell shrine to bolster the prestige of Wenefred's cult at Shrewsbury. In essence, the addition of the Woolston well sequence marks the final adjustment by which Caxton's text focuses on Wenefred's English cult rather than her Welsh one, a process that began very early in the narrative when Caxton claimed that Beuno was "a monk in the said Englond."[198]

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[197] Horstmann, "Prosalegenden I," 311. None of this is to be found in Robert's original text, but he does note that, in addition to the healing of the sick man at the inn, "By many other signs also was it made known to them along the way that what they were bearing was a divine gift." Cf. *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 90. This last statement appears in Caxton's text just before the account of the Woolston well. On the Woolston well account being a local Shrewsbury tradition, cf. the emphasis on the water in which Wenefred's bones have been washed in John Mirk's miracles stories. See page 249ff. above.

[198] Horstmann, "Prosalegenden I," 295. The source text for Horstmann's transcription includes a marginal note that adjusts the sentence to read "in the said provynce of walys ┐ a parte now of Englond." Significantly, the reconfigured statement still implies that the legend which follows concerns saints who have been assimilated into English national heritage. See 295n2.

To support the suggestion that Caxton translated a now unknown copy of Robert's account we can compare his folio *Lyf* to a late sixteenth-century Welsh translation of the *Vita et translatio*. The Welsh text in question, *Buchedd Gwenfrewy* (*Life of Gwenfrewy*), is preserved in NLW Llanstephan MS 34, the largest hagiographical compilation in Welsh and one that bears comparison with the *Legenda Aurea*.[199] The Llanstephan collection is in the hand of Roger Morris (*fl*. 1580-1607) of Llanfair Dyffryn Clwyd in northeast Wales.[200] It should be noted initially though that the Life of Gwenfrewy in the Llanstephan manuscript shows very close affinities to another *Buchedd Gwenfrewy*, that preserved in the late fifteenth-century NLW Peniarth MS 27ii, a work also originating in northeast Wales.[201] It is possible, therefore, that Roger Morris copied his *Buchedd Gwenfrewy* from the Peniarth manuscript or a related copy, or perhaps even from a lost Welsh translation of Caxton's own Latin source. That this last scenario is most likely can be demonstrated by the fact that the Peniarth *Buchedd* completely excises Robert's *translatio* account while the Llanstephan *Buchedd* includes it in full; at the same time the

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[199] While observing that the Welsh poets who composed poems to the saint's Holywell shrine drew on oral traditions current in that region in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, Maredudd ap Huw suggests that the Llanstephan *Buchedd Gwenfrewy* "may be indicative of the source used in teaching at Treffynnon [Holywell] at the end of the fifteenth century." ap Huw, "Critical Examination of Welsh Poetry," ciii.

[200] Lisa Eryl Jones, "Golygiad o Fuchedd Gwenfrewy" (University of Cardiff, 2000), 24; Daniel Huws, *Medieval Welsh Manuscripts* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2000). 260.

[201] There survive today a total of four copies of *Buchedd Gwenfrewy*. In chronological order, they are as follows: NLW Peniarth MS 27ii (s. xv^2), NLW Llanstephan MS 34 (s. xvi^2), NLW Peniarth MS 225 (1594-1610), and NLW Llanstephan MS 104 (s. xviii^2). For the date of Peniarth 27ii I am grateful to Dr. Barry Lewis of the Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies at Aberystwyth; I discuss Peniarth 27ii and its contents at greater length below. For the dates of the other three manuscripts I rely on Jane Cartwright, *Feminine Sanctity and Spirituality in Medieval Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2008). 125-26, table 1. For a discussion of Gwenfrewy in English that includes general information on Peniarth 27ii and Llanstephan 34, see ibid., 72-6. The Life of Wenefred that Cartwright here claims was included in "certain versions of the *South English Legendary*" (73) must be a reference to that preserved in Bodleian MS 779. For brief information on Peniarth 27ii, Llanstephan 34, and Peniarth 225, see pages 63, 190, 248, and 260 in Huws, *Medieval Welsh Manuscripts*. For detailed information on the contents and order of Peniarth 27ii, see J. Gwenogvryn Evans, ed., *Report on Manuscripts in the Welsh Language, vol. 1* (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1898-1910). 355-58. For general discussion in Welsh of all four manuscripts containing *Buchedd Gwenfrewy*, see Jones, "Golygiad o Fuchedd Gwenfrewy," 20-31.

above mentioned close similarities of language between the text of Gwenfrewy's Life in the Peniarth and Llanstephan versions suggest that these are copies of a single Welsh text, rather than independent translations of the same Latin text. To have been the source for the Peniarth *Buchedd*, this posited single Welsh text must have been produced in Caxton's time, making possible the suggestion that it was translated from a lost copy of Robert's *Vita et translatio* very similar to that used by Caxton for his folio *Lyf*. The following stemma will clarify the proposed relationship between the texts and manuscripts:

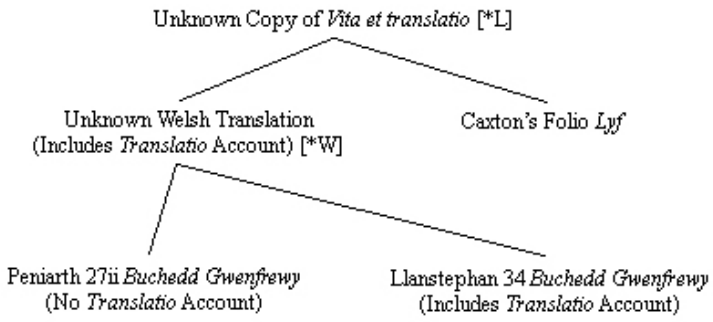


Figure 2: Posited Relationship between Caxton's Folio *Lyf* and the *Bucheddau Gwenfrewy*

The proposed Welsh exemplar (*W) of both the Peniarth and Llanstephan *Bucheddau* was not likely to have been a translation of Caxton's folio *Lyf*. The surest evidence for this assertion comes from reading the *Bucheddau* themselves—they present a condensed translation of Robert's account but include many if not all of the details that Caxton's version abridged or removed. By way of an initial, albeit inconclusive example, the *Bucheddau* agree with surviving copies of Robert's text, in opposition to Caxton, that Gwenfrewy's scar was white, not red:

> **Llanstephan 34:** Ac yna, gwedy cyssylldu o Dduw y penn ar y corph yn y modd gorau ac y buassei erioed, y trigodd byth tra fu byw a chraith burwenn ar lun edau gyfrodedd ynghylch y mwnwgyl phordd y torrassid, y arddangos y gwyrthyau a wnaethoedd Duw erddi. A phobyl y wlad honno a ddywad mae Brewy oedd i henw hi. Yna, ac o achaws yr edau wenn oedd ynghylch y mynwgyl y gelwid hi o hynny allan Gwenfrewy.[202]
>
> (And then, after God connected the head to the body in the best way and as it had been before, forever there remained while she lived a scar pure white in color, a twisted thread, round her neck in the place it had been cut, to demonstrate the miracles which God performed for her. And people of that country said that her name was Brewy. Then, and because of the white thread which was around her neck, she was called from that time on Gwenfrewy.)[203]

While Caxton no doubt collected from the *GiL* Life the notion that the saint's scar was red and then carried it over into his translation of Robert's *Vita et translatio*, this minor but central detail of the legend is of the sort commonly altered in the transmission of stories by word of mouth. Indeed, in Tudur Aled's poem mentioned above, *Stori Gwenfrewi a'i Ffynnon*, we learn that Gwenfrewy's scar was red, not white:

> Nod o amglych nid ymgudd
> Nod yr arf yn edau rudd (lines 23-24)
>
> (The mark around her neck is not concealed
> The mark of the weapon is a crimson thread)[204]

There is, therefore, no way to determine conclusively whether or not this detail of the scar being red rather than white was to be found in the unknown Latin source (*L) that I suggest both Caxton and *W shared. However, because the *Bucheddau* claim that the scar was white, and because Caxton's assertion that it was red probably came from the *GiL* Life of Wenefred, the likelihood is that the Latin source for all these Lives contained

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[202] Jones, "Golygiad o Fuchedd Gwenfrewy," 156. This passage appears in the manuscript, which is paginated rather than foliated, on pages 200-01. For the same passage in the Peniarth text, see ibid., 74.
[203] All translations of the *Buchedd Gwenfrewy* in NLW Llanstephan MS 34 are my own.
[204] Charles-Edwards, *Two Mediaeval Welsh Poems*: [10-11].

both Robert's original claim that the scar was white and his folk etymology of the saint's name that this detail makes possible. Caxton leaves this etymology out entirely, but, as the quotation from the Llanstephan manuscript above demonstrates, the *Bucheddau* offer a condensed version of it.[205] At the same time, the *Bucheddau* include features that agree with Caxton, suggesting that they both drew on a textual tradition now lost. Like the Caxton folio *Lyf*, the *Bucheddau* soften the nature of Wenefred's second gift at Holywell:

> **Llanstephan 34:** Yr ail, pa ofid bynnac o'r byd a fo ar y neb a'th weddio ac a geisio gwared gennyd, ef a'i caiph y waith gyntaf, ne yr ail, neu yr drydydd. Beth bynnac a archo ac a fo kyfiawn, ef a'y cayph yma ac yn y nef.[206]
>
> (The second [gift is], whatever trouble in the world may be on the one who prays to you and seeks deliverance through you, he shall get it the first time, or the second, or the third. Whatever he should seek, and he being a righteous man, he will have it here and in heaven.)[207]

Also like Caxton, the *Bucheddau* give a numeric figure for the distance between Holywell and Beuno's new dwelling, something surviving copies of Robert's Latin text do not do. Caxton claims that the two lay fifty miles apart, and the Llanstephan text agrees, for we are told there that the two are separated by "dec milldir a deugain neu fwy" (fifty miles; literally "ten miles and forty or more").[208] The Peniarth text gives the same figure.[209] And rather than agreeing with known copies of Robert's *Vita*, all of which give the date of Wenefred's final death as November 2, the end of the Llanstephan *Buchedd* agrees with Caxton that the saint died at Gwytherin on "y trydydd dydd o vis Calan gayaf" (the third day of November), but it includes no statement about the other two

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[205] Cf. Horstmann, "Prosalegenden I," 208.
[206] Jones, "Golygiad o Fuchedd Gwenfrewy," 159. For the same passage in the Peniarth text, see 52 and 76. The Peniarth manuscript is damaged at this point and some loss of text has occurred.
[207] I am grateful to Elissa R. Henken for her help translating this passage. For Caxton's version of this passage, see pages 308-09 above.
[208] Jones, "Golygiad o Fuchedd Gwenfrewy," 162. Cf. *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 43 and 48.
[209] Jones, "Golygiad o Fuchedd Gwenfrewy," 80.

feasts, let alone their celebration at Shrewsbury.[210] At the same time, the Llanstephan *Buchedd* concludes the saint's legend with the same Holywell miracles with which Robert ended his account after noting in detail the description of the Gwytherin cemetery, all of which is missing from Caxton's edition, probably not because this material was absent in his source but rather because of Caxton's intention to focus on the cult at Shrewsbury.[211] Conversely, the Llanstephan text does not include Caxton's account of the Woolston well.[212] As has been suggested, much of Caxton's extra material—i.e., the information on the saint's festal celebrations at Shrewsbury and the story of the well at Woolston—could have come from oral or written sources known to Caxton's Shrewsbury contacts, and therefore may not have been in his Latin exemplar (*L) at all. This would imply that the lack of this material in the Llanstephan *Buchedd* can have no bearing on a posited Latin source for Caxton and *W. Another critical piece of information found in both the folio *Lyf* and the Llanstephan *Buchedd* indicates, however, that they were indeed drawing on the same textual tradition. In agreement with Caxton, the *translatio* account

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[210] In accordance with known copies of Robert's *Vita*, the *Bucheddau Gwenfrewy* do not give the total length of time the saint lived after her martyrdom, and, like Robert, they mention only that she spent seven years at Holywell before moving to Gwytherin. Caxton claims in his 1483 Life, however, that she spent eight years at Gwytherin, while in his folio edition he claims that she lived a total of fifteen years after her resurrection. Since these figures do not appear in the *Bucheddau*, we can assume that they were not present in *L, and the figure of eight years that Caxton mentions in his 1483 Life does not appear to have been in his source *C (for which, see note 196 above). It appears, therefore, that Caxton himself either invented these figures or, more likely, that he learned of them from his Shrewsbury contacts while preparing his two printed Lives of Wenefred. See also pages 321-2 below.

[211] Jones, "Golygiad o Fuchedd Gwenfrewy," 170-76. Pages are missing from Jones's thesis, so refer also to the manuscript transcription on 126-35. For the quotation above, see 170. Cf. *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 66-76. The Peniarth manuscript has suffered severe damage, and the passage noting Gwenfrewy's death day is partially obliterated. Enough of the end of the text is preserved, however, to determine that neither the *translatio* account nor Robert's Holywell miracles were ever part of the Peniarth *Buchedd*. For further discussion, see page 342ff. below. The posited Latin text *L could have contained the date of Wenefred's death as November 3, explaining its presence in both Caxton's folio *Lyf* and the Llanstephan *Buchedd* rather than the date of November 2 that surviving copies of Robert's *Vita* give, but since both Caxton's edition and the Llanstephan text were produced well after the 1415 re-elevation of Wenefred's November 3 feast, it is equally likely that Caxton or the posited Welsh exemplar *W had updated their source *L to reflect current liturgical practice.

[212] See Jones, "Golygiad o Fuchedd Gwenfrewy," 183.

in the Llanstephan *Buchedd* provides the names of the prior and Welsh priest of Chester who accompanied Robert on his journey to Gwytherin; the former was Wlmar (Wulmare) and the latter Jddon (Idon).[213] This information appears in no other known texts of the *translatio* narrative. Finally, we may note one last parallel between Caxton's folio and the Llanstephan text. While Caxton entirely leaves out the episode wherein Robert bribes the angry Welshman at Gwytherin, the Llanstephan text only leaves out the bribe itself and claims that the man was persuaded to abandon his greivance at the advice and urging of those present.[214] The implication is that the full episode was in the conjectured Latin source (*L) for Caxton's *Lyf* and *W, and that Caxton and the anonymous Welshman who translated *W opted to edit Prior Robert's morally questionable means of convincing his opponent.

So, Caxton and the *Bucheddau* soften the nature of Gwenfrewy's second divine gift at Holywell, and all of them give the same numeric figure for the distance between Holywell and Beuno's new dwelling, something that surviving copies of Robert's *Vita et translatio* do not do at all. Moreover Caxton amd the Llanstephan text agree on the date of the saint's death, and both include the names of the prior and Welsh priest from Chester who accompanied Robert to Gwytherin. Both Caxton and the Llanstephan text also edit the scene wherein Robert bribes a villager at the saint's burial place. The conclusion suggested by these various parallels and the discrepancies is that Caxton drew on an unknown copy of Robert's *Vita et translatio* (*L), one that was also the basis for the suggested Welsh exemplar (*W) of the Peniarth and Llanstephan *Bucheddau*

[213] Horstmann, "Prosalegenden I," 308. For the passage including the names of the prior (Wlmar) and Welsh priest (Jddon) of Chester in Llanstephan 34, see Jones, "Golygiad o Fuchedd Gwenfrewy," 179.
[214] For the points in the Welsh narrative where these episodes would appear, see Jones, "Golygiad o Fuchedd Gwenfrewy," 181-83

Gwenfrewy. This posited Latin source included a slightly revised version of the Life which softened the second of Wenefred's three post-martyrdom "gifts" and noted the distance between Holywell and Beuno's new dwelling.[215] This unknown text also contained a version of the *translatio* that included additional information regarding the delegation to Gwytherin. Caxton edited and revised this text to meet the interests of his intended audience at Shrewsbury, adding material from local traditions both oral and written, including Wenefred's Latin office, to produce a stand-alone edition that responded to the growing popularity of the saint's cult in England. That Morris's copy of *Buchedd Gwenfrewy* in Llanstephan 34 draws on the same source that Caxton used, rather than on Caxton's folio *Lyf* itself, can be suggested by the fact that Morris does not include Caxton's additional information at the end of his version of the Life. And, as Morris does not appear to have been concerned with concision or reserved about slanting the story away from Wales—the Llanstephan 34 *Buchedd* incorporates all of Robert's details regarding the *translatio* and events in Shrewsbury—we would expect him to have mentioned the Woolston well or the saint's official feast days if he were drawing on Caxton's folio *Lyf*. To judge from the surviving copies of this edition—three complete and four fragmentary—Caxton's folio text may well have been produced in large numbers, an indication of Wenefred's popularity in England, but it still cannot be said

[215] Based on the phrase in Caxton's folio *Lyf* that the stones in Wenefred's well remained bloody "lyke as hit was the first day," a phrase also found in the *Vita Prima* ("utpote in die prima"), Sutton implies that the version Caxton used may have contained elements from the anonymous Life. The Llanstephan text does not offer further support for this possibility and I find it a remote one at best. See Sutton, "Caxton, the Cult of St. Winifred, and Shrewsbury," 113. It should be noted that the Lansdowne MS 436 Life contains a similar phrase: "cuius lapides usque in hodiernum diem utpote die prima sanguinolenti videntur" (fol. 107v^{b}).

that his edition was the basis for either the Llanstephan or Peniarth *Bucheddau Gwenfrewy*.[216]

A Sixteenth-Century English Life of Wenefred and Wenefred's English Cult at the End of the Middle Ages

That some versions of Wenefred's English Lives were still circulating in Roger Morris's time, however, is suggested by what appears to be a late sixteenth-century handwritten copy of a unique Middle English Life of Wenefred.[217] The legend as recorded here closely parallels that preserved in the *GiL* and in Caxton's 1483 *Golden Legend*, but it agrees entirely with neither of them and is placed in the manuscript alongside texts in Welsh. Bühler notes that this curious work is closer to Caxton's own than to the *GiL* Life, and he draws attention to the colophon with which the Life ends:

> Thus endeth the lyfe of Saint Wenefryd martir, drawen out of an ould pryntinge boocke word by word & cetera per Jo. P. And also as yt ys a-forsayd the lyfe which she after her decollacion lyved by the space of xv yeres, & departed out of this lyfe the thyrd day of Novembre 651. And further, yt ys to be vnderstood that the bodie of the sayd holie virgine lay at Gwytherine for the space of 477 yeres and in the yere of our lord God 1138 in the second yere of the reigne of King Stephen, the bones of the sayd blessed vyrgyne Saint Weneffryd weare brought by grett myracle to the Abay of Shrewsbury, which translacion ys halowed the xixth day of Septembre. And also yt ys to be knowne that the forsayd martirdome of this blessed Saint Weneffred, her pasion and decolacion, was the xxijth day of June anno 636, which thrie ffestes aforsayd bene solempnly halowed in the sayd

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[216] While Lowry observes that the folio *Lyf* is "extremely rare," implying that Caxton only produced a short run of this edition, it should be noted that, generally speaking, very few printed saints' Lives survive from the Middle Ages in more than one copy today. The number of extant copies and fragments of Caxton's folio *Lyf* suggest, therefore, that it was actually produced in relatively large numbers, that it was quite popular, and that it was widely read. I am grateful to Cynthia Camp for this observation. Cf. Lowry, "Caxton, St. Winifred and the Lady Margaret Beaufort," 101.

[217] Bühler, "A New Middle English Life of Saint Winifred?," 87. Bühler prints the entire text of this Life on 89-91. The manuscript was owned by Bühler, formerly of the Pierpont Morgan Library, and was numbered 26 in his manuscript collection; it is now Pierpont Morgan Library Bühler MS 379. See also Görlach, *The South English Legendary, Gilte Legende, and Golden Legend*: 21n13.

> Abbaye of Shrewesbury to the lawde and praysinge of allmighty God, and of this blessed and holie vyrgyne Saint Weneffryd.[218]
>
> (Thus ends the Life of St. Wenefred the martyr, drawn out of an old printed book word by word, etc., by Jo. P. And also, as is aforesaid, the life that she lived after her decollation was the space of fifteen years, and she departed out of this life on the third day of November, 651. And further, it is to be understood that the body of this holy virgin remained at Gwytherin for the space of 477 years and, in the year of our Lord God 1138, in the second year of the reign of King Stephen, the bones of the said blessed virgin St. Wenefred were brought by a great miracle to the abbey of Shrewsbury, which translation is observed on the nineteenth day of September. And also it is to be known that the aforesaid martyrdom of this blessed St. Wenefred, her passion and decollation, was on the twenty-second day of June, in the year 636, which three feasts aforesaid are solemnly kept in the said abbey of Shrewsbury to the glory and praise of Almighty God, and of this blessed and holy virgin St. Wenefred.)

Bühler suggests that this unique Life is most likely to be "free copy" of Caxton's 1483 text, but he does not note the similarities between the colophon in the sixteenth-century Life and that with which Caxton ends his folio *Lyf* of 1484. Caxton's colophon is as follows:

> And in the same place [i.e., Gwytherin] the sayd body lay vnto the tyme of kyng Steuen, kynge of Englond: in whos tyme by dyuyne reyelacions and myracles before goynge the bones of the blessyd vyrgyne were translated vnto thabbeye of Shrewysburye, where moche peple comyng by the suffrages and merytes of many askyng remedye of theyr Infyrmytees and sekenesses haue ben heled and maade all hole. Thus endeth the martirdome of this blessyd saynt saynt Wenefrede, whiche passion and decollacion was the one and twentyest day of Juyn. And also, as is afore sayd, the lyf whiche she after hyr decollacion lyued by the space of XV yere, and the departyng of hyr oute of thys lyf was the thyrdde day of Nouembre. And herafter by the grace of god shalle folowe the translacion of this blessyd vyrgyne saynt Wenefrede, how by grete myracle her bones were brought to thabbay of Shrewsbury, whiche translacion is halowed the XIX day of Septembre. Whiche thre festes ben solempnly halowed in the sayd Abbaye of Shrewesbury to the laude and praysynge of almyghty god and of this blessyd and holy vyrgyne seynte Wenefryde, to whome late vs praye to be a specialle aduocatryce for vs in alle thynges to vs necessarye and behoeffulle.[219]

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[218] Bühler, "A New Middle English Life of Saint Winifred?," 91.
[219] Horstmann, "Prosalegenden I," 304.

> (And in the same place [i.e., Gwytherin] the said body remained until the time of King Stephen, King of England, in whose time by divine revelations and miracles occurring before, the bones of the blessed virgin were translated to the abbey of Shrewsbury where many people came by the mercy and merits [and] many who were seeking remedy of their infirmities and sicknesses have been healed and made all whole. Thus ends the martyrdom of this blessed saint, St. Wenefred, whose passion and decollation was the twenty-first day of June. And also, as is aforesaid, the life that she lived after her decollation was the space of fifteen years, and her departure out of this life was on the third day of November. And hereafter, by the grace of God shall follow the translation of this blessed virgin St. Wenefred, how by great miracle her bones were brought to the abbey of Shrewsbury, which translation is observed on the nineteenth day of September. These three feasts are solemnly observed in the said abbey of Shrewsbury to the glory and praise of Almighty God and of this blessed and holy virgin St. Wenefred, to whom let us pray to be a special advocate for us in all things necessary and requisite.)

Caxton's 1484 colophon is not in his 1483 *Golden Legend* Life of Wenefred to which Bühler's sixteenth-century Life appears to be closely related. Several possible scenarios can explain the colophon in Bühler's manuscript Life: 1. the copyist of this sixteenth-century text (Jo. P.) knew and combined Caxton's 1483 and 1484 Lives; 2. Jo. P.'s source ("an ould pryntinge boocke") had already combined elements of Caxton's two Lives; 3. Caxton's source for his 1483 *Golden Legend* Life, a now lost copy of the *GiL* (*C), may have ended with information on Wenefred's feasts at Shrewsbury and Jo. P. could perhaps have been drawing on that source or a related copy directly, bypassing Caxton's editions altogether. In this last scenario, Caxton would have removed the colophon from the Life of Wenefred that he found in *C while reworking that text into his *Golden Legend* but would then have added it to his 1484 folio *Lyf*. However, Jo. P. claims to have transcribed a *printed* text, not a manuscript properly speaking, and, according to Bühler, Jo.P.'s Life is closer to Caxton's 1483 *Golden Legend* text than to the *GiL* Life of Wenefred in Additional 35298, a version closely related to *C, Caxton's source for his

1483 text. Moreover, Caxton would appear to have had no reason for leaving festal information found in *C out of his 1483 *Golden Legend* Life only to include it in his 1484 Life, although it is conceivable that he could have done so.[220] And finally, Jo. P.'s colophon, like that in Caxton's 1484 Life, claims that Wenefred lived for a total of fifteen years after her martyrdom, a figure that appears in writing nowhere else except a late fifteenth-century *cywydd* to Gwenfrewy and her well by Ieuan Brydydd Hir:

> Pymtheg mlynedd mewn gweddi,
> Vo aeth hon ni bu waeth hi. [221]
>
> (Fifteen years in prayer,
> She went; she was not worse.)

The claim that Wenefred lived fifteen years after her resurrection and the information on the Shrewsbury feasts are all missing from the *Bucheddau Gwenfrewy*, implying that this material was not in the posited source *L from which these Welsh Lives and Caxton's 1484 *Lyf* seem to derive. Caxton himself must, therefore, have collected the fifteen-year figure from some unknown, probably oral source. Given that the figure appears in Jo. P.'s colophon in language closely parallel to that in Caxton's 1484 text, and combined

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[220] While Caxton does carry particular details (e.g., that Wenefred's scar is red, not white) from his 1483 *Lyf* over into his 1484 folio *Lyf*, thereby modifying Robert's text, he deliberately leaves other details from the 1483 text out of his folio edition (i.e., Beuno's departing explicitly to "Irlonde"). Both of Caxton's printed Lives end the narrative of Wenefred's story with similar statements: the 1483 Life ends "to whome late vs praye to be a specialle intercessour for vs AMEN;" The 1484 Life, "to whome late vs praye to be a specialle aduocatryce for vs in alle thynges to vs necessarye and behoeffulle." Given the addition of the details about Wenefred's well in the 1483 *Lyf* (see page 304 above), Caxton's two Lives of Wenefred seem to have been cross-pollinating one another. The final line of each of Caxton's Lives perhaps also indicates the close interest he and his Shrewsbury contacts had in the saint.

[221] The *cywydd* is printed in ap Huw, "Critical Examination of Welsh Poetry," 160-64; and M. Paul Bryant-Quinn, ed., *Gwaith Ieuan Brydydd Hir* (Aberystwyth: Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies, 2000). 57-58. The text and translation given above are taken from Henken, *Traditions of the Welsh Saints*: 150. In his *awdl* to Gwenfrewy and her well dated to 1512, Siôn ap Hywel ap Llywelyn Fychan notes that Gwenfrewy was thirty years old when she died: "Dau bymtheg teg ydoedd oed hon, / A diwedd ei hoed ydoedd hyn" (Thirty fair years was her age / And this was the end of her sadness). A. Cynfael Lake, ed., *Gwaith Siôn ap Hywel ap Llywelyn Fychan* (Aberystwyth: Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies, 1999). 69, lines 24-25. Translation is my own. For another edition and a translation of the *awdl*, see ap Huw, "Critical Examination of Welsh Poetry," 176-85.

with the likelihood that the *C text did not include a colophon from which Caxton derived his own, the most probable of the scenarios suggested above is the first: Jo. P. had direct access to and combined both of Caxton's printed Lives of Wenefred, although he could also have been drawing on an intermediate printed text that had already combined Caxton's two Lives. Regardless, this sixteenth-century handwritten text ultimately demonstrates that Lives of Wenefred linking her closely with England were still circulating well after the close of the Middle Ages, a further testament to the widespread popularity of her cult in later fifteenth-century England and to the possibility that Caxton's folio edition was more widely circulated than has previously been surmised.[222] That edition seems to mark the high point of Wenefred's political importance in medieval England and it has been suggested that the text may have been prepared initially for the accession of Anne Neville in 1483, if not as part of Abbot Mynde's campaign to secure a royal license for the Shrewsbury confraternity.[223]

Even if the 1484 folio *Lyf* was not produced in large quantities, it existing at all still attests to the strength of Wenefred's English cult in the later fifteenth century, and, as this chapter has argued, English interest in Wenefred had continued steadily in the hundred years preceding Caxton's edition. Following the advocacy of Abbot Nicholas Stevens and the elevation of Wenefred's November feast in 1398, royal and noble attention to the saint increased sharply after the Lancastrian victory at the Battle of Shrewsbury, as is evidenced by Henry IV's Holywell chapel, the re-elevation of Wenefred's feast in 1415, and Henry V's pilgrimage soon thereafter. By Caxton's day, Wenefred had become something of a fixture of royal devotion, but the intervening

[222] On the production run of Caxton's 1484 *Lyf*, see notes 185 and 216 above.
[223] Sutton, "Caxton, the Cult of St. Winifred, and Shrewsbury," 116; Lowry, "Caxton, St. Winifred and the Lady Margaret Beaufort," 116.

period produced a number of English Lives, like the *GiL Lyfe of Seint Wenefride* or the poetic works of John Audelay and Osbern Bokenham, that reveal the extent to which she was reverenced in England by people of less-than-royal status. Still, the English monarchy continued to take an interest in Wenefred at the end of the fifteenth century: Richard III had ties with Shrewsbury and Wenefred was one of sixteen saints venerated at his college at Middleham. Likewise, Richard granted an annuity of ten marks to the abbot of Basingwerk to support a chaplain at Holywell, something perhaps suggesting that Holywell was still thought to be Wenefred's primary cult site at the end of the Middle Ages.[224] Richard's queen, Anne Neville, was the daughter of Anne Beauchamp, Countess of Warwick, and, as noted earlier in this chapter, Beauchamp interest in Wenefred extended back to the beginning of the fifteenth century.[225] Moreover, the confraternity of Wenefred at Shrewsbury, given royal license on February 9, 1487, may well have existed informally under Abbot Thomas Mynde for a long time before, and perhaps began as far back as the time of Abbot Stevens in the late fourteenth century.[226] Henry VII was supposedly inspired to grant the license "by the sincere devotion which we have and bear towards St. Wenefrida virgin and martyr," but Mynde paid a large sum of money to the king for this devout act.[227] Still, Henry would later be buried in his Lady Chapel at Westminster Abbey under a statue of Wenefred and Madeleine Gray maintains that "[t]he decoration of Henry's chapel was . . . designed to point not to his origins but to

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[224] Sutton, "Caxton, the Cult of St. Winifred, and Shrewsbury," 116; Lowry, "Caxton, St. Winifred and the Lady Margaret Beaufort," 113.
[225] Sutton suggests that Anne Neville's accession was the impetus for seeking royal license for the Shrewsbury confraternity and that Caxton's folio *Lyf* may have been an early move in the process. Sutton, "Caxton, the Cult of St. Winifred, and Shrewsbury," 116-17.
[226] Ibid., 117.
[227] H. Owen and J.B. Blakeway, *History of Shrewsbury, vol. 2* (London 1825). 124.

his ultimate objectives—legitimacy, unity, and of course salvation." Wenefred, "[v]irtually the second patron saint of Wales" was then part of that ultimate plan.[228]

So far as perceptions of Wenefred's national identity or political inclinations at this time, Abbot Mynde's founding statues for the Shrewsbury confraternity required that English be used in the organization's regular offices and this mandate may reflect the further politicization of Wenefred's cult in England. The two chaplains established by the license were required to proclaim the following to the congregation before the daily mass at Wenefred's altar:

> Ye shall prey for the goode state and prosperite of the kyng our souereyne lord Henry the seventh and quene Elizabeth his wyf, and of Thomas now abbot of Schrowesbury furst foundour of this ffraternite of Seynt Wenefride, and for the prosperite of his couent of this monastery, and the mastur, brethurne and susturne of this ffraternite that byn on lyve, and for the sowles of alle thoe that ben decesid euery mon and woman of his charite seyth a pater noster and an ave.[229]

And then, upon the deaths of the king, queen, and abbot, the pre-mass proclamation was to be recited as follows:

> Ye shall preye for the sowlys of kyng Henry, &c. the sowlys of Thomas late abbot of S. furst foundour, &c. the soulys of his fadur and moder, and also for the good prosperite of the master, the bredurn, and sisturn of thes same ffraternite, and for the sowlys of all thoe that ben decesyd euery mon and woman of his charite, &c.[230]

Following the death of an ordinary member of the confraternity, the chaplains are further enjoined to "especially pray in English words for the soul of that deceased brother or

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[228] Gray, "Welsh Saints in Westminster Abbey," 9. There are more than eighty saints depicted in stone at Henry's tomb, but besides Wenefred only one is clearly Welsh, the obscure Welsh/Breton St. Armel who appears twice.
[229] Owen and Blakeway, *History of Shrewsbury, vol. 2*: 126.
[230] Ibid.

sister."[231] Lowry has noted the unusual nature of these stipulations, and indeed Mynde's concerns with English echo the linguistic nationalism of fourteenth- and early fifteenth-century England as underscored by Thorlac Turville-Petre and Derek Pearsall and already discussed at the outset of this study.[232] In brief, Turville-Petre has linked the use of English in texts composed in the Southwest Midlands during the period from 1290 to 1340 to a rising, but geographically and temporally restricted sense of English national identity, while Pearsall noted that a similar phenomenon is also observable in the official use of English during the reign of Henry V (1413-22). Pearsall cautions, however, that in medieval England there was no sustained, consistent development of a sense of English national consciousness tied to the increasing use of the English language in administration or literature.[233] Be that as it may, for people living in the British Isles in the Middle Ages, language was still among the most significant of criteria for defining one's ethnic identity and political loyalties:

> [A]ny theory of language in the middle ages would have taken the eleventh chapter of Genesis as its point of departure with its description of the Tower of Babel and the deliberate divine decision to mix language and to make them mutually incomprehensible. . . . The division of languages was, therefore, no human accident; but a divine plan which had served to shape the peoples of the world and which explained their relationship to each other. Isidore of Seville put the point with characteristic crispness: "Peoples have arisen from different languages, not languages from different peoples." Another thinker expressed it even more telegraphically: language makes a people, *gentem lingua facit*. If that indeed was the theoretical orthodoxy, then language was truly primary in the making, and thereby in the definition, of a people. If so, language was as much a hallmark of a people as were its laws, customs and life-style. Language was not merely a matter of vocabulary, grammar and syntax; rather was it the expression of the soul or character of a people.[234]

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[231] Ibid.
[232] Lowry, "Caxton, St. Winifred and the Lady Margaret Beaufort," 115; Turville-Petre, *England the Nation*; Turville-Petre, "Afterword: The Brutus Prologue to *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*."; Pearsall, "The Idea of Englishness in the Fifteenth Century," 15.
[233] Pearsall, "The Idea of Englishness in the Fifteenth Century," 17.
[234] R.R. Davies, "The People of Britain and Ireland 1100-1400: IV. Language and Historical Mythology," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 7 (1997): 9. See also 10. Pearsall agrees that "A people must

While not necessarily part of some sweeping program intended to foster English national identity through the use of the English language, Mynde's orders about the use of English in the offices recited by the Shrewsbury Confraternity can hardly have been made unconsciously and were obviously deliberate in their emphasis. If, as R.R. Davies argues, linguistic uniformity was regarded in later medieval and early Modern Europe as "a necessary precondition for a strong and unified state," then it is not unthinkable that Abbot Mynde's stipulations were politically motivated.[235] By mandating the use of English, Mynde could well have been attempting to assert the Englishness of his abbey's patron saint in a manner akin to the *GiL* and *SEL* Lives. He may therefore have been attempting to elide Wenefred's Welsh origins while drawing attention away from her original cult site at Holywell, a place whose fortunes were beginning to increase in the last decades of the fifteenth century under the influence of Thomas Pennant, Abbot of Basingwerk.[236] The fact that the confraternity had just received royal license from Henry VII when Mynde issued his orders may support such assertions, and it is even possible that the royal license for Shrewsbury was something of a counterbalance to Richard III's aforementioned annuity to Basingwerk whereby the abbot could maintain a priest at the Holywell chapel. As noted above, Wenefred's statue appears in Henry VII's Lady Chapel, the decoration of which has been claimed as emblematic of that king's "ultimate objectives," i.e., "legitimacy, unity, and of course salvation."[237] If this appraisal of

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have a common language before they can be fully conscious of themselves as a nation [for] it is the enabling condition of nationhood," and he notes that language was "of paramount importance" in the development of English national identity. Pearsall, "The Idea of Englishness in the Fifteenth Century," 27.
[235] Davies, "The People of Britain and Ireland 1100-1400: IV. Language and Historical Mythology," 14.
[236] I discuss Abbot Pennant and Gwenfrewy's Welsh cult at Holywell in the late fifteenth century below.
[237] Gray, "Welsh Saints in Westminster Abbey," 9.

Henry's chapel is accurate, Wenefred's value for the English crown as a channel by which to attract Welsh acceptance of the legitimacy of English political hegemony—as well as the unity such hegemony may have implied—appears at the end of the fifteenth century no less robust than it had been in the time of Henry V.[238]

WELSH DEVOTION TO GWENFREWY AT THE END OF THE MIDDLE AGES: THE POEMS OF THE *CYWYDDWYR* AND THE ANONYMOUS *BUCHEDD GWENFREWY* IN NLW PENIARTH MS 27II

The English were not the only ones interested in Wenefred during the closing years of the Middle Ages, and the latter half of the fifteenth century witnessed a heightened interest in native saints on the part of Welsh bards.[239] Gwenfrewy was no

[238] Continuing English awareness of Wenefred in the early sixteenth century is attested by the inclusion of her Life in Pynson's 1516 printed edition of *The Kalendre of the Newe Legende of Englande*, which is itself an abbreviated version of Wynkyn de Worde's *Nova Legenda Anglie* printed in the same year. Unlike the *Kalendre*, the *Nova Legenda* was in Latin and was based directly on John of Tynemouth's *Sanctilogium*. For the Life of Wenefred in Pynson's *Kalendre*, see Manfred Görlach, ed., *The Kalendre of the Newe Legende of Englande* (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag C. Winter, 1994). 169-70. Like other versions of her Life found in English hagiographical collections of the late medieval period, Pynson's edition only observes that Wenefred retired to "Wyltheriacus," never mentions Wales at all, and closes by noting that she was translated to Shrewsbury in 1138. For the edition of Wenefred's Life in the *Nova Legenda*, see Horstmann, *Nova Legenda Anglie, vol. 2*: 415-22.

[239] Cf. ap Huw, "Critical Examination of Welsh Poetry." The general argument of ap Huw's thesis, on which I rely in my own discussion of late medieval Welsh poetry, runs as follows. Vernacular poetry addressed to the native saints of Wales in the later medieval and early modern periods does not represent a distinct or independent genre rooted in the practice of the twelfth-century *Gogynfeirdd*. In other words, the three extant *awdlau* to Cadfan, Dewi, and Tysilio by *Gogynfeirdd*-era poets, which focus on the militaristic and aristocratic backgrounds of the saints, do not seem to have directly influenced the more numerous work of the fourteenth-century *Cywyddwyr*, and if they did, the essential link, the development between the two forms, is missing, for the thirteenth century is all but bereft of poems to native saints. While the earlier material should be, according to ap Huw, considered for the element of personal devotion inherent in it—this is not praise sung to a religious house or lord—the later material falls into a variety of sub-categories and embodies elements of secular panegyric and eulogy, sometimes revealing the influence of a specific religious patron, but always indicating the popularity of a given saint's cult at the time of composition. This late medieval verse can also include an element of personal devotion, however, and draws on the *gofyn* (asking) genre and includes various requests for specific or more general intercession on the part of the saint. The poetry addressed to Gwenfrewy ultimately reveals, so ap Huw maintains, the decline of a popular religious fervor for native saints that had risen steadily in the second half of the fifteenth century. This decline is evident in the shift from addressing the saint herself or from relating her story in *cywyddau*, to a focus on the miraculous powers of her holy spring expressed through shorter *englynion*. Gwilym Pue's seventeenth-century poems to Gwenfrewy were, then, a deliberate but short-lived attempt to resuscitate the older model. On the *Gogynfeirdd* poems to native saints, see also Nerys Ann Jones and Morfudd E. Owen,

exception, and her Holywell cult was flourishing in the time of Thomas Pennant, Abbot of Basingwerk (*ca*. 1481-1522), a hospitable patron of letters and architecture to whom praises were sung by the Welsh poets Tudur Aled, Siôn Ceri, and Gutun Owain; an elegy was also composed for Pennant by Siôn ap Hywel ap Llyweyln Fychan.[240] While Tudur Aled and Siôn ap Hywel celebrate Pennant's efforts to restore the Holywell shrine, the heraldry of the surviving stone work there attests to the involvement of not only the abbot of Basingwerk, but also of other notable donors. These other contributors include Sir William Stanley (d. 1495), a prominent Yorkist partisan with influence in Cheshire and northeast Wales and the brother of Thomas Stanley, the second husband of Lady Margaret Beaufort; the arms of Sir William's second wife, Elizabeth Hopton, as well as those of Catherine of Aragon (d. 1536), are also visible at the shrine.[241] However, while there are a number of Stanley and Tudor emblems decorating the well and chapel, the long-held association between Lady Margaret Beaufort and Holywell has not been

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"Twelfth-Century Welsh Hagiography: The *Gogynfeirdd* Poems to Saints," in *Celtic Hagiography and Saints' Cults*, ed. Jane Cartwright (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2003).

[240] ap Huw, "Critical Examination of Welsh Poetry," xciv. See also "Thomas Pennant, Abbot of Basingwerk," University of Wales Trinity St. David and Universitat de Lleida, http://www.monasticwales.org/person/71. After his retirement, Pennant's sons secured the family's hold on the ecclesiastical and economic resources of Holywell and its environs.

[241] For images and brief discussion of the masonry, see David, *St. Winefride's Well*: [6-9]. On Sir William Stanley, see Michael Bennett, "Stanley, Sir William (c.1435–1495)," ed. Lawrence Goldman, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004-), http://www.oxforddnb.com.proxy-remote.galib.uga.edu/view/article/26282. On Lady Margaret Beaufort, see Michael K. Jones and Malcolm G. Underwood, "Beaufort, Margaret, countess of Richmond and Derby (1443–1509)," ed. Lawrence Goldman, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004-), http://www.oxforddnb.com.proxy-remote.galib.uga.edu/view/article/1863. See also Sutton, "Caxton, the Cult of St. Winifred, and Shrewsbury," 114. Gray Hulse maintains ("Winefride and Beuno: Towards a Holywell Dossier," §12) that the connection between Beaufort and the Holywell shrine can be first traced directly in an anonymous comment published in 1775: "The countess of Richmond, mother of King Henry the Seventh, founded the elegant little cloyster which covers the well; and over it a chapel" *A Gentleman's Tour through Monmouthshire and Wales, In the Months of June and July, 1774*, (London, 1775). 167. Gray Hulse attributes the continued spread of this link between Beaufort and Holywell to Thomas Pennant, who was the first to comment on the Stanley heraldry in the well crypt. Beaufort's last husband was Baron Thomas Stanley. Pennant also claimed that Lady Beaufort's profile was carved into the stone of the crypt. For these comments, see Thomas Pennant, *A Tour in Wales, vol. 1* (1783; repr., Wrexham: Bridge Books, 1991). 30.

substantiated by current research on her life, which concludes that "there is no clear evidence of [Lady Beaufort's] devotion to the saint."[242]

On the other hand, Abbot Pennant's role in boosting the status of Gwenfrewy's Welsh cult in the late fifteenth century is certain. As mentioned, praise of Pennant's hospitality and his efforts to rebuild Holywell is found, for example, in a *cywydd* by Tudur Aled (*ca*. 1465-*ca*.1526) and an *awdl* by Siôn ap Hywel ap Llyweln Fychan (*fl*. 1490-1532), the latter of which is dated to 1512. Aled, perhaps a native of Llansannan near Gwytherin but possibly from Iâl and one of the foremost Welsh bards of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, composed *ca*. 1500 the *cywydd* known as "Arglwydd Dad Cymru" ("Lord Father of Wales"), in which he addresses Pennant as "llwyn anant" ("protector of minstrels"), observing that "Pab, o feddwl pawb, fyddych, / Pan aned ti" ("Pope everyone thought you would be / When you were born").[243] Aled then goes on to celebrate the extensive nature of Pennant's work at Holywell, claiming that the abbot would not exchange the honor of that place for an English archbishopric:

> Ni weddill i'th dai newyddion,—a 'th wŷr
> Lai no theiriaith dynion;
> Gosod dy waith i'r gost hon,
> A'th bobl, fal yng ngwaith Bablon.
>
> Bablon neu Faddon, un faint—yw'r gangell,
> Iwch, cafell ŷch cwfaint;
> Ni rout hon, awr, hyd henaint,

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[242] Susan Powell, "Lady Margaret Beaufort and her Books," *The Library*, 6th Series, XX, no. 3 (1998): 113-14. See also Michael K. Jones and Malcolm G. Underwood, *The King's Mother: Lady Margaret Beaufort* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992). 150. *Pace* Lowry, "Caxton, St. Winifred and the Lady Margaret Beaufort."

[243] T. Gwynn Jones, ed., *Gwaith Tudur Aled, cyfrol 1* (Caerdydd: Gwasg Prifysgol Cymru, 1926). 33, lines 5 and 3-4. I am grateful to Llyr Lewis for his help in translating Aled's *cywydd*. On Aled's life and work, see Eurys Rowlands, "Tudur Aled," in *A Guide to Welsh literature, volume 2: 1282-c.1550*, ed. A.O.H. Jarman and Gwilym Rees Hughes (Landybïe, Wales: Christopher Davies, 1984), 322-37; and Lake, "Tudur Aled (c.1465–1525x7)." Other editions, as well as translations, of Tudur Aled's *cywydd* and also of the anonymous *cywydd* mentioned above are printed in Charles-Edwards, *Two Mediaeval Welsh Poems*; and ap Huw, "Critical Examination of Welsh Poetry."

Er cynnyg it Iorc new Gaint.

Caer Gaint uchelfraint, i chwi,—mwy wyneb
Maenol Dinas Basi;
Mae'r hafn hyd ĭ muriau hi,—
Môr glas am yr eglwysi. (Lines 13-24)[244]

(For your new buildings and your men, there remains not
Less than three nations of men;
Set your work to this price,
And your people, as in the work of Babylon.

Babylon or Bath, the same size is the chancel,
To you, chancel to your convent;
You would not give this, now, until old age,
Although York or Kent were offered to you.

Canterbury of high priviledge, to you, more honor [is]
The vale of Basingwerk;
The haven is along her walls,
A blue sea about the churches.)

Aled does not fail to mention either the quality of Pennant's hospitality. He emphasizes the expense that the abbot's generosity incurs, and notes the support Pennant receives from his native land in recompense for the favor he shows to guests, most specifically to the Welsh bards:

Diofer yw'ch gwledd, difyrrwch gwlad,
Difyr oes cannwr, difrys cennad;
Difraw'n diwallaw dillad—i westyn,
Di-addaw'n estyn dy dda'n wastad.

Di-grynu dwylaw, digrwn daliad,
Di-grwn o'r rhuddaur, digon rhoddiad;
Di-glo, di-gryno, digroniad—cywaeth,
Digon ehelaeth dy gynheiliad.

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[244] Jones, *Gwaith Tudur Aled, cyfrol 1*: 33-34. For more of these sorts of sentiments about Pennant's work at Holywell, see the final lines of Aled's *Cywydd Gwenfrewi a'i Ffynnon* in Charles-Edwards, *Two Mediaeval Welsh Poems*. For another edition of Aled's *cywydd*, see, as mentinoed, ap Huw, "Critical Examination of Welsh Poetry," 165-75.

Di-ryfyr heblaw dy rif ar blâd,
Dirwy fawr i'ch cost ar fôr y'ch cad;
Dirwyir gwledd-dir arglwydd-dad—Cymru
Dirus, i dalu dros y deiliad.

Diameu roddion, da `marweddiad,
Di-omedd i glêr, di-ymwedd gwlad;
Di-ymyr, f'eryr, ar fwriad—crynoi,
Diarbed yn rhoi da'r byd yn rhad. (Lines 91-106)[245]

(Not fruitless is your feast, entertainment of the land,
Pleasant is the life of a hundred men, unrushed messenger;
Fearlessly supplying clothes to guests,
Without unfulfilled promise, ever extending your good.

Untrembling hands, complete payment,
Liberal from the ruby gold, enough of a gift;
Unlocked, unmiserly, bountiful wealth,
Full enough is your support.

Not too few is your number at table,
A great payment for your expense, by sea did you receive it,
The feast-land of the lord-father shall be fined,
Brave Wales, to pay on behalf of this tenant.

Undoubted gifts, good manners,
Without refusing minstrels, land without need of asking,
Undisturbed, my eagle, by the intention of hoarding,
Ceaselessly giving the goods of the world freely.)

In his 1512 *Awdl i Wenfrewi a'i Ffynnon* ("Ode to Gwenfrewy and her Well"), Siôn ap Hywel ap Llywelyn Fychan, a poet from Whitford, some three miles north of Holywell, also extols Pennant's openhandedness and his work to restore or augment the Holywell shrine:[246]

O law Tomas urddaswin
Yr aeth y gost ar waith gwen:
Diwan adeilad, da iawn y dylud,
Da y darparwyd, iti y darperir.

[245] Jones, *Gwaith Tudur Aled, cyfrol 1*: 36.
[246] On Siôn ap Hywel's background and work, see Lake, *Gwaith Siôn ap Hywel ap Llywelyn Fychan*: 1-12.

Pymthecant (mi a'i gw'rantwn)
A deuddeg oed oedd Duw gwyn;
Dwy fodfedd am bunt o'r bont i'r clochdy,
O'r ddaear i frig yr eurdderw fry;
Deg mil deg cant yw gwaith y tŷ—`n Sychnant,
A deugain rifant i dŷ Gwenfrewy. (Lines 42-51)

(From the hand of Thomas of distinguished wine
Did the expenditure proceed on the construction work [at the well of] the fair maid:
A stout building, full well were you entitled [to it],
Well was it provided, for you is it provided.

Fifteen hundred (I would aver it)
And twelve [years] was the age of blessed God;
Two inches for a pound from the bridge to the belfry,
From the earth to the top of the fine oak above;
Ten thousand [and] ten hundred is the labour of the house in Sychnant,
And forty do they account to the house of Gwenfrewi.)[247]

While the praise of Thomas Pennant in these poems and others offers a glimpse of the late medieval resurgence of Holywell in material terms, other Welsh poetry of this era testifies to the strength of native devotion to Gwenfrewy at the end of the Middle Ages. As noted above, the second half of the fifteenth century witnessed a growing interest on the part of the Welsh bards in their native saints in general, and the poems addressed to Gwenfrewy in this period demonstrate a sincere affection for her, something that characterized poetry to native saints since the twelfth century.[248] Besides a *cywydd* to Gwenfrewy's fountain that has long been attributed to Iolo Goch (d. 1395), one of the poets who, as already mentioned, sang the praises of Owain Glyn Dŵr, there exist two *cywyddau* to Gwenfrewy and her well, one of which is anonymous while the other is the

[247] ap Huw, "Critical Examination of Welsh Poetry," 178. Translation is ap Huw's, for which see 184. For another edition of and notes on ap Hywel's *awdl* to Gwenfrewy and her well, see Lake, *Gwaith Siôn ap Hywel ap Llywelyn Fychan*: 69-72 and 161-64. There is also a reference to "Gwen-frewy" in line 6 of Siôn ap Hywel's poem "I'r Grog," for which see ibid., 63 and 157.
[248] ap Huw, "Critical Examination of Welsh Poetry," cxiii-cxiv. On the political and literary contexts of the *awdlau* (odes) to the native saints written by the twelfth-century *Gogynfeirdd*, see Jones and Owen, "Twelfth-Century Welsh Hagiography: The *Gogynfeirdd* Poems to Saints."

work of Ieuan Brydydd Hir (*fl*. 1450-85), the "tall poet" (*brydydd hir*) from Ardudwy, Merionethshire in northwestern Wales who seems also to have spent some time in Flintshire.[249] Tudur Aled's *Stori Gwenfrewi a'i Ffynnon*, as well as Siôn ap Hywel's *awdl* cited above, also evince the saint's popularity among the native poets at the end of the medieval period. Much like the verse material of John Audelay and Osbern Bokenham, these Welsh poems attest to Holywell's continued ability to attract personal devotion in the late Middle Ages, for it is clear that the native poets viewed Holywell as Gwenfrewy's primary cult site and this at a time when Shrewsbury was asserting itself most strenuously as the locus of the saint's official cult, at least in England. It is, of course, to be expected that Welsh poets should regard a Welsh cult site of ancient standing more highly than one established across the border relatively recently, especially since the Welsh, unlike their post-Conquest neighbors in England, traditionally considered holy sites and non-bodily relics to provide greater access to saints than did corporeal remains.

These late medieval Welsh poems relate the saint's legend, but their primary emphasis is on Gwenfrewy's power as manifested in the waters of the well. While some of these poems mention Thomas Pennant, they are, on the whole, not concerned with praising a patron or entertaining an audience, for the information that is provided is not didactic, but is allusive and can be fully appreciated only by someone who already knows the outline of the saint's story.[250] The element of personal devotion is, therefore,

[249] For Ieuan's background and his work, see Paul Bryant-Quinn, *Gwaith Ieuan Brydydd Hir*: 1-24.
[250] ap Huw, "Critical Examination of Welsh Poetry," cxiii. The allusive nature of and the personal devotion expressed in these Welsh poems are distinct and are perhaps comparable to that of John Audelay's Wenefred poems of the early fifteenth century already discussed above.

paramount, as can be seen in the opening and closing lines of Ieuan Brydydd Hir's *Cywydd i Wenfrewi a'r Ffynnon*:

> Y fun wyrf o'r fain oror
> A droes y maen dros y môr,
> E gâi wan ac awenydd
> Gennyd ras ac enaid rydd. (Lines 1-4)
>
> (The virgin maiden from the rocky border region
> Who sent the stone over the sea,
> A weak person and a poet
> Would obtain grace from you and a cleansed soul.)
>
> ...
>
> Down ati, wen, dan y to
> Â phib win, a phawb yno.
> Yno cawn, ddyn unig gwan,
> Ddiod fal buchedd Ifan.
> Ychydig (dysgedig oedd)
> Â'r forwyn yn arferoedd.
> Dafnau o'i gwyrthiau a gaf,
> O'i chyfeddach, iach fyddaf. (Lines 45-52)
>
> (We shall come to her, the fair maiden, beneath the roof
> With a wine butt, and everyone there.
> There we shall enjoy, lonely [and] weak person[s],
> A drink like the life of John.
> Few (she was learned)
> Are of the same practices as the virgin.
> I shall receive drops of her miracles,
> Through her company I shall be healthy.)[251]

The brevity of the narrative elements in these poems to Gwenfrewy is most extreme in the *cywydd* to the well often attributed to Iolo Goch (d. 1395). The only details of the story come in the opening lines:

> Rhedodd o'r ddaear hoywdeg
> (Rho Duw!), o chwŷl, rhadau chweg,
> Ffynnon, gwell dafn na phunnoedd,

[251] Ibid. For the text of the poem see 160 and 162, for the translations, see 163 and 164. The *cywydd* is also printed in Paul Bryant-Quinn, *Gwaith Ieuan Brydydd Hir*: 57-58. Textual notes are on 142-48.

Dwfr ei flas, da feiriol oedd.
Lle gwelid gynt, helynt hawdd,
Sychnant, heddiw sy' wychnawdd,
Lle bu gartref, wiwnef wedd,
Tyfid Sant a'i etifedd;
Lle y llas pen Gwen (bu gwir,
Fro wiw gu) Frewi gywir. (Lines 1-10)

(There flowed from the lovely earth
(my God!), by circumstance, sweet graces,
A well, a drop of [which] is better than pounds,
[And] the taste [of whose] water was [the result of] good dissolution.
Where once was seen, ready course,
A dry valley, is today a splendid sanctuary;
Where the home, fine heavenly appearance,
Of St. Tyfid and his progeny was;
Where righteous Gwenfrewi's head was cut off
(This was true, [in] a fine [and] cherished region)).[252]

Clearly the poet—either Iolo Goch or another *cywyddwr*—was not concerned with relating Gwenfrewy's legend at length and was primarily focused on the spectacle of her well, which the remainder of his poem describes in careful detail. Although the other poems under consideration here include other particulars of the saint's story, they focus their greatest energies on emphasizing that Gwenfrewy is the source of the well's restorative powers. The anonymous *Cywydd Gwenfrewi a'i Ffynnon* insists, for instance, that

Fe gâi ynfadwyr ynfydion
Synnwyr deg, os yno y dôn'
Gan y ferch y sy' berchen
Ar iechyd y byd o'i ben.
Os cleifion efryddion fydd,
Hi a'u lleinw mewn llawenydd. (Lines 49-54)

[252] ap Huw, "Critical Examination of Welsh Poetry." For text see 144, for translation, see 151. If the ascription were more certain, this *cywydd* associated with Iolo Goch could possibly support suggestions about the 1398 elevation of Wenefred being a move to appease Glyn Dŵr by celebrating a saint from his home region. Dafydd Johnston, however, does not include the *cywydd* in his edition of Iolo's poetry. See Dafydd Johnston, ed., *Iolo Goch: Poems*, The Welsh Classics (Llandysul, Dyfed: Gomer Press, 1993). For another edition of this *cywydd*, see T. Roberts H. Lewis, and I. Williams, eds., *Gwaith Iolo Goch ac Eraill*, 2nd ed. (Caerdydd: Gwasg Prifysgol Cymru, 1937). 104-06.

(Foolish madmen would obtain
The sense of ten men, if they come there,
From the girl who is owner
Of the health of the world throughout it.
If there be the disabled [and] sick,
She will fill them with joy.)[253]

Tudur Aled is even more emphatic in ascribing the healing force of the water to Gwenfrewy's intercession. After noting that the well healed one hundred people in one night just before he completed his poem, Aled recites a list of the illnesses and conditions that Gwenfrewy herself, whom he describes as a "feddyges" ("doctor"), will alleviate:

Gwyliwch gant, goleuwch gŵyr
Gwelais yno gael synnwyr;
Y dall a wŷl, aed i'w llan,
A dyn crupl, o dôi'n cropian;
Doen yno â dyn annoeth,
Oddiyno daw yn ddyn doeth;
Aed i offrwm y diffrwyth,
E ddeffry hon iddo ei ffrwyth;
Eithr, deufraich a thraed efrydd,
A fai yn rhwym, fo âi'n rhydd;
Blin a thrwm, heb law na throed,
A ddaw adref ar ddeudroed;
Bwrw dwyffon i'w hafon hi,
Bwrw naid ger ei bron, wedi;
Byddair, help a ddyry hon,
Mud a rydd ymadroddion;
Arwyddion Duw ar ddyn dwyn
Ef âi'r marw'n fyw er morwyn.
Os help y feddyges hon,
Y ddau iechyd a ddichon—
Iechyd corff, uchod y caid,
A chadw i'n iechyd enaid. (Lines 73-94)

(Look at a hundred people, light candles,
I saw senses recovered there:
The blind man sees, let him go to her church,
And the cripple, if he came by crawling;
Let them come there with the fool,

[253] ap Huw, "Critical Examination of Welsh Poetry." For text, see 156, for translation, see 158-59.

From there he comes a wise man;
Let the childless man go and make his offering,
She will raise up offspring to him;
The arms and feet of the cripple,
Which were in bonds, went free;
A man exhausted, weighed down, without hand or foot,
Will come home on his two feet.
The man who throws his crutches in her river
Will leap before her afterwards.
To the deaf she gives help.
To the dumb she gives speech.
So that the signs of God might be accomplished,
A dead man would depart alive for a girl's sake.
If this doctor will help,
She can work two cures:
The cure of the body (it is obtained above)
And the assuring for us of our souls' cure.)[254]

Although the well is the channel by which the saint's power is made accessible to her devotees, the emphasis in Aled's *cywydd* is on the agency of Gwenfrewy herself. Similarly, Siôn ap Hywel celebrates the efficacy of the well but highlights the saint's active role in the healing process, beginning his *awdl* with maternal imagery that ties Gwenfrewy to the landscape of her martyrdom and presents her as a savior of her people:

Gwenfrewy, Duw fry, gwaed y fron,—mor debyg
'Dyw'r aber i'r ffynnon;
A gwaed rhudd yw godre hon,
Gweryd ar y main geirwon.

Geirwon fantellfrig ei gwerin,—a'i bryn
Fal bron Sant y Catrin;
Glwyswaed o'i mwnwgl iesin,
Gwared gair o'r gwridog win.

Llawnwin ffons 'n llenwi'n un ffair,—llu'n nofio
'N llyn afon y byddair;
Lloer wingrofft, llawr ariangrair,
Llwyth o fryn nef, llaethfron aur. (Lines 1-12)

(Gwenfrewy, [O] God above, blood of the breast, how similar

[254] Charles-Edwards, *Two Mediaeval Welsh Poems*: [14-17].

Is the flow [of it] to the well;
And red blood is the border of this [i.e. the well],
[Like] soil on the rough stones.

The coarse cloak-heads of her people, and her hill
Like the bosom of St. Catherine;
Precious blood from her fair neck,
Deliverance comes from the red-coloured wine.

A fountain full of wine filling in a singular commotion, a multitude swimming
In the lake of the river of the deaf;
Moon of the winefield, floor of the silver relic,
The family from the hill of heaven, excellent milk-breast.)[255]

Many of the poets under consideration here refer to the water of the well as wine in order to stress its unique spiritual nature.[256] And while ap Hywel does emphasize the significance of the water, he repeatedly draws attention back to Gwenfrewy's direct responsibility for the miracles that occur in her well. He maintains the maternal imagery throughout his *awdl* as well:

Drwy hon, dŵr o'r fron wedi'r frawd,—o'i mynwes
Mae anadl y Drindawd;
O dir godre dŵr gwaedrawd
Dwg yn iach enaid a chnawd. (Lines 38-41)

(Through this girl, water from the breast after the judgement, from her bosom
There is the breath of the Trinity;
From the borderland of the water coursing with blood
Make healthy soul and body.)

...

Nid rhaid myned heb wared o'r dŵr a bery;
Os dyn gwan heinus, fo dynn gwenn hynny;
Os brad gan friwiad, Gwenfrewy—a'i barn'
Nac un ias gadarn na gwayw nis gedy. (Lines 56-59)

[255] ap Huw, "Critical Examination of Welsh Poetry." For text, see 176, for translation, see 183.
[256] Besides ap Hywel's *awdl*, the imagery of wine appears in the *cywyddau* by Ieuan ap Brydydd Hir and Tudur Aled, as well as in the *englynion* by Siôn Phylip and Huw Madog. Ibid. See 162, 166, 189, and 197. See also Henken, *Traditions of the Welsh Saints*: 148-49. See also page 262 above.

(There is no need to go away without deliverance, the water will remain;
If there be a weak [and] infected man, Gwenfrewi will remove that [affliction];
If there be treachery by a wound, Gwenfrewi will judge it;
She will not ignore a single cruel shudder or spasm.)[257]

This poetic emphasis on Gwenfrewy's personal intervention in the healings performed at her well was, as Maredudd ap Huw has argued, eventually replaced with a primary focus on the healing power of the well itself. This shift came with the arrival of the Reformation and the advent of changing attitudes about saints and pilgrimages, and it was marked by a switch on the part of poets writing about Holywell from long works in the *cywydd* and *awdl* meters to shorter *englynion*.[258] These brief compositions celebrating the well in *englyn* survive from the pens of William Llŷn, Wiliam Cynwal, Siôn Phylip, Wiliam Tomas ab Edwart, Wiliam Burchinshaw, Syr Robert Miltwn, and Huw Madog, and they generally center attention on the beauty and miraculous force of the well, rather than on Gwenfrewy's legend and her role in the healings performed at Holywell.[259] For instance, the *englynion* by Siôn Phylip are concerned only with the water itself:

Gwin saint, glyn ennaint, glân waneg—gwenffriw,
Ac o iawnffrwd loewdeg;
Gwared rhad, gweryd rhedeg,
Gwynfriw dŵr Gwenfrewi deg.

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[257] ap Huw, "Critical Examination of Welsh Poetry." For text, see 178-79, for translation, see 184-85. Charles-Edwards has argued that Tudur Aled's *cywydd* specifically links Gwenfrewy's martyrdom to Christ's Passion, connecting the flow of the water in her well to the blood flowing from Christ's wounds. Charles-Edwards, *Two Mediaeval Welsh Poems*: [5-6].

[258] See, e.g., ap Huw, "Critical Examination of Welsh Poetry," cix-cx. According to ap Huw, many of these later compositions are "suggestive of an attempt at a metrical excercise" (cx), rather than an expression of true devotion. On the meters used by later medieval Welsh poets, see Rowlands, "Cynghanedd, Metre, Prosody," 202-17.

[259] From the seventeenth century there also survives a *cywydd* and a substantial narrative carol to Gwenfrewy by Gwilym Pue. For a quotation from this poem, see chapter 3, page 113 above. Ap Huw maintains that these late compositions were "unique expressions of one exceptional cult which had survived the advent of the Reformation," and he further observes that "Whilst he may have been aware of the earlier tradition of poetry addressing native saints, Gwilym [Pue] cannot be said to have inherited the poetic art directly from the earlier *cywyddwyr*, and his work cannot be said to represent the final expression of a *genre*, the origins of which could be traced back to the late-medieval period." ap Huw, "Critical Examination of Welsh Poetry," cxi.

(Wine of saints, valley of a bath, pure surge—of blessed appearance
And [issuing] from a fitting stream bright and fair;
Gracious deliverance, flowing salvation,
White and broken is the water of fair Gwenfrewi.)[260]

Syr Robert Miltwn's *englynion* evince a similar approach to the water, and in fact do not even mention the well's restorative or salvific properties at all:

Ffynnon ffrwyth eigion, ffraeth agwedd—ffrwythlawn,
Ffraethloyw ferwddysg grychedd;
Ffynnon Gwen, ffein iawn ei gwedd,
Frewy enwog fawr rinwedd.

Ffraethglod ffrwd hynod, ffriw tonnau—cedyrn
Yn codi'n glochennau;
Ffriw o dân gwyllt, ffrwd yn gwau
Ffris a'i enw ffres winau.

(Well [which is] the fruit of the deep, lively and luxuriant appearance,
Rippling of seething skill [and] swift and bright;
Well of fair appearance
Of famous Gwenfrewi of great virtue.

Remarkable stream of swift fame, face of powerful waves
Rising as bubbles;
Face of wild fire, a stream weaving
A fresh and brown frieze and its fame.)[261]

Although the foregoing examples might imply otherwise, not all of the *englynion* composed for the Holywell shrine in the sixteenth century overlook Gwenfrewy's connection to the place, as is clear from this short *englyn* by Wiliam Burchinsaw:

Croywddwr, iach ferwddwr fawrddawn,—badd cynnes,
Fan doethles fendithlawn;
Ffynhonddwr hoff unionddawn,
Gwenfrewy a ddyry ddawn.

Berwglych aroglwych firaglwedd,—ffrydiog

[260] Ibid., 189-90.
[261] Ibid., 195-96.

Ddŵr enwog dda rinwedd;
Ffynnon mewn gorhoff annedd,
Gwn fry mai Gwenfrewy a'i medd.

(Clear water, great gift of healthy seething water—warm bath,
Place of wise beneficence [and] full of blessings[s];
Dear well water of just grace,
Gwenfrewi will give grace.

Miraculous appearance of seething [and] splendidly fragrant bubbles—streaming
Water of famous [and] goodly virtue;
Well in an excellent dwelling,
I know that it is Gwenfrewi above who possesses it.)[262]

We have noted that, prior to this shift in poetic attention away from Gwenfrewy herself with the onset of the Reformation, the Welsh bards evidenced a keen personal devotion to her that testifies to the popularity of her cult site at Holywell at the close of the medieval period. Ap Huw maintains that this was part of a general elevation in interest on the part of the Welsh poets in the saints of their homeland in the later fifteenth century, and considering the official promotion of Wenefred's English cult at the same time, it may be suggested that the surviving *cywyddau* and *awdl* celebrating Gwenfrewy's well in Flintshire were partly, but not exclusively, a response to developments across the border with England. Although Holywell and Shrewsbury were distinct cult sites that offered quite different access to the saint's power, it is hardly possible that the Welsh poets were completely unaware that a substantial cult had grown up around the saint's relics in England. This is perhaps especially the case given the national elevation of her November feast day many years earlier, a feast day of primary importance at Shrewsbury (and, of course, Gwytherin), whereas Gwenfrewy's chief feast at Holywell, the memorial of her decollation, fell in mid-June. While the native poetry to Gwenfrewy and her

[262] Ibid., 193-94.

fountain give a strong indication of the reverence in which the Welsh continued to hold the saint, as well as the degree to which they viewed her as a patron of Wales specifically—witness the maternal imagery of Siôn ap Hywel's *awdl*—one final piece of evidence from the era offers a clue to Welsh attitudes about continuing English appropriation of this virgin martyr.

That evidence is found in the aforementioned Welsh translation of Prior Robert's *Vita et translatio* preserved in NLW Peniarth MS 27ii (*olim* Hengwrt MS 218), a manuscript dating to the second half of the fifteenth century and originating from North Wales. The manuscript is a miscellany of religious and secular material—prophecy, hagiography, chronicles, genealogy, medicine, and astrology are all present—and was compiled in stages; *Buchedd Gwenfrewy* appears on pages 91-121.[263] Of the four copies of the *Buchedd* extant today, only the Peniarth 27ii text, as Jane Cartwright has observed, "emphasizes the importance of the Welsh sites at Holywell and Gwytherin."[264] Indeed, of the surviving copies, only *Buchedd Gwenfrewy* in Peniarth 27ii

> omits the account of the translation to Shrewsbury and focuses instead on the importance of the burial site at Gwytherin, emphasizing that countless other saints were also buried there, including local saints such as Cybi, Sanan, and Theon.[265]

The end of the Peniarth 27ii text is, of course, a translation of the final passages of Robert's *Vita* which also mentions these details, but by entirely excising his *translatio* account, the *Buchedd* certainly does serve to refocus attention on Gwytherin. Moreover, the translator adds extra stress, if not urgency, to his description of the Gwytherin cemetery by clearly asserting the presence there of Cybi and Sannan, and he achieves this

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[263] For an outline of the contents, see again, Evans, *Report on Manuscripts in the Welsh Language, vol. 1*: 355-58. See also the sources cited in note 201 above.
[264] Cartwright, *Feminine Sanctity and Spirituality in Medieval Wales*: 72.
[265] Ibid.

additional emphasis by slipping, briefly but notably, into the first person at this point in the narrative:

> A chyda hi yn yr vn vonnwent honno i may korfforoydd llawer o saint gwyrthvawr yn gorffowys, a hynota rrai ysydd yno yw Kybi a Sanan, y naill ysydd yn gorwedd vwch i ffenn a'r llall yn y ffvrf. Ar eilvn i may hithav. A'r gwyr hynny a goffa eraill etwa i bod yn wyr mawr yn i buchedd a mynychv onaddvnt y lle hwnnw o achos y saint a oydd yno. Ac etwa y may yn y gwledydd hynny eglwysav yn i koffav ac yn dangos i gwythiav rrac bron Duw a dynion yn amlwc. O'r tv asw iddi hithav i may Theon, yr honn a gymwyllasom ni gynav, yn gorffowys. Henwev y saint eraill ysydd yn gorffowys yno ac yn anrrydeddv y lle ni wn inav i rrifedi, nid oys a'i gwypo onid Duw. A chyda y rrai hynny i may y wynvededic Wenvre[wy] [ ]okav y lle hwnnw ac yn ymddywanygv o an[ ]awb gwedi i marw hithav or a ddelai y gweddi [ ] a geffynt gwared oi heiniau ac ymh[ ]y hynny y gwyvededic eliri yn [p]erffeithrwyd a ayth or byd [ ] kladdwyd yn i eglw[ys] ehen [ ] ynni hyd heddiw (121) y ffynon [*illegible text*] [ ] i merthyroliaeth hi he[ ]ayth y dwr noc ir dim ir ddangos gwythi[av] a ffawb a gant gward oi heiniav yno. (120-21)[266]
>
> (And with her in that same cemetery rest the bodies of many powerful saints, and the most famous ones which are there are Cybi and Sannan, the one lies above her head and the other in the manner and the form that she does. And those men others remember even now to be great men in life and they frequent that place because of the saints who were there. And still there are in those regions churches dedicated to them and showing their miracles clearly before God and men. On her left side rests Theon, the woman whom we extolled a short while ago. We ourselves do not know the number or the names of the other saints who repose there and honor that place; no one would know them but God. And with those [saints] the blessed Gwenfrewy [ ] that place and shines with [ ] everyone after her death who came to pray to her [ ] received deliverance from their ills. And in [ ] that [ ] the blessed Eliri [ ] perfection went from the world [ ] was buried in his own church [ ] for us until today (121) the well [*illegible text*] [ ] her martyrdom [ ] the water than anything to reveal miracles and everyone can have relief from their maladies there.)

[266] Peniarth 27ii has suffered extensive damage from mice and liquid, and all of its leaves are now mounted as singletons. The transcription presented here draws on Jones's edition and my own examination of the manuscript. In her edition, Jones has overlooked a few lines at the bottom of page 120, but I have supplied the missing lines here and underlined them. All translations from the Peniarth text are my own. At this point in the narrative, the Peniarth compiler, in addition to modifying his source text, seems to have been condensing it, for comparison with the closing passages of the *Buchedd* in Llanstephan 34 reveals that the passage in question in each manuscript does not parallel its counterpart as closely as earlier sections of the text in each manuscript had done. I am grateful to Barry Lewis for his help in deciphering the final passages of the Peniarth 27ii *Buchedd Gwenfrewy*.

Robert's tone in his original account is cautious in asserting the presence of the other saints—"sed et præclariores et majoris famæ feruntur sanctissimi confessores Chebius et Senanus" ("even the famous and most holy confessors, Chebius and Senanus, are reported to be there")—and when relating later in the *translatio* narrative the miracles performed in the cemetery Robert leaves these saints anonymous and claims for Wenefred miraculous power greater than theirs.[267] As is clear from the foregoing Welsh passage, however, the Peniarth translator is unequivocal in claiming the presence of these other saints alongside Gwenfrewy; while she is the focus of the graveyard, the assertion that Gwenfrewy has attracted the company of other Welsh saints reinforces the spiritual power of the site: "A chyda hi yn yr vn vonnwent honno i may korfforoydd llawer o saint gwyrthvawr yn gorffowys, a hynota rrai ysydd yno yw Kybi a Sanan" ("And with her in that same cemetery rest the bodies of many powerful saints, and the most famous ones are Cybi and Sannan"). Moreover, Robert's "multi quidem et magnorum meritorum viri" ("many men of great merit") have here been transformed into "llawer o saint gwyrthvawr" ("many powerful saints").[268] And as mentioned, the Peniarth translator adds extra emphasis to the statements about the Gwytherin cemetery by switching one of Robert's sentences from the third to the first person, something he does not do at any other point in the surviving text.[269] Robert's statement reads:

> ceterum aliorum sanctorum nomina vel numerum ibidem quiescentium solius Dei cognitio retinet. Tanta enim sanctorum congerie isdem locus venerabilis habetur

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[267] For the report of the cemetery in the Life, see De Smedt, *AASS, t.I. Nov.*: 723; *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 67. For the cemetery miracles in the *translatio*, see ibid., 86-88; De Smedt, *AASS, t.I. Nov.*: 729-30.

[268] De Smedt, *AASS, t.I. Nov.*: 723; *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 67. The Llanstephan 34 *Buchedd Gwenfrewy* includes the same translation of this last phrase; that is, it also claims that the bodies buried in the Gwytherin cemetery belong to "lauer o saint gurthvaur." Jones, "Golygiad o Fuchedd Gwenfrewy," 127.

[269] Cf. Jones, "Golygiad o Fuchedd Gwenfrewy," 94n792-94.

> ut nullus mortalis omnino omnium eorum nomina scire vel etiam numerum congestorum comprehendere potuerit.[270]
>
> (God alone knows the names and number of the other saints who repose there. Indeed, that place is held to be venerable due to so great a gathering of saints that no mortal at all could know their names or even comprehend the number of those gathered.)[271]

But the Welsh translator has altered and condensed the statement to read emphatically "Henwev y saint eraill ysydd yn gorffowys yno ac yn anrrydeddv y lle ni wn inav i rrifedi, nid oys a'i gwypo onid Duw" ("We ourselves do not know the number or the names of the other saints who repose there and honor that place; no one would know them but God"). It could of course be that the translator has merely transposed the use of the first person from the preceding sentence ("O'r tv asw iddi hithav i may Theon, yr honn a gymwyllasom ni gynav, yn gorffowys;" "On her left side rests Theon, the woman whom we extolled a short while ago"), a sentence that in Robert's original is also in the first person. The use, however, of the optional conjunctive pronoun *inav* (we *ourselves*) argues for a more deliberate and definitive statement on the part of the Peniarth copyist, a statement that he seems to present on behalf of the people of Gwenfrewy's home region. Moreover, the version of *Buchedd Gwenfrewy* appearing in Llanstephan 34, while very close to the Peniarth 27ii text, does not include this emphatic use of the first person in its description of Gwenfrewy's burial place:

> Or tu aral idi y mae Theon a dyuetpuyd vchod yn gorphouys. Nid oes a uypo rhif o Saint a gladuyd yno onid Duu.[272]
>
> (On her other side lays Theon who was spoken of above. There is no one who would know the number of the saints buried there except God.)

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[270] De Smedt, *AASS, t.I. Nov.*: 723.
[271] *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 67.
[272] Jones, "Golygiad o Fuchedd Gwenfrewy," 128. Translation is my own.

This minor addition to the description of the Gwytherin cemetery in the Peniarth text may be deemed insignificant if considered alone, but given that no copy of Robert's *Vita* is known to have circulated without his *translatio* narrative attached, this more confident assertion of Gwytherin's status at the point where the translator deliberately ends his text is worthy of notice. It seems very unlikely that the person responsible for copying a Welsh version of Robert's *Vita* into Peniarth 27ii would not have known of Gwenfrewy's *translatio* completed nearly four hundred years earlier, and indeed it has been argued above that the copyist was working from a Welsh translation (*W) of Robert's full and complete text.[273] If, as I have maintained in this chapter, the Llanstephan 34 *Buchedd Gwenfrewy* also derives from this lost Welsh translation, the fact that the Llanstephan text does not include the emphatic alteration to the description of the Gwytherin cemetery suggests that this alteration was not to be found in *W and was, therefore, the work of the Peniarth copyist. Regarding the absence of the *translatio* account in Peniarth 27ii, manuscript damage, significant though it is in this case, cannot be blamed. The very last lines of the *Buchedd* do survive and immediately after them there begins a prophetic text of the sort common in medieval Welsh tradition—it involves the dire struggles of a red and a white dragon, the long established prophetic symbols of Wales and of England, and it runs on for six pages.[274] When combined with the story of

[273] If we accept as deliberate the Peniarth translator's refusal to accept Gwenfrewy's *translatio*, then it is just possible that his position also reflects local sentiments in the region around Gwytherin in the later Middle Ages, for we will recall the local tradition recorded by John Leland in the sixteenth century that someone remained buried under the stone atop *Penbryn capel*. See chapter 3, pages 103-04 above.

[274] The story of the red and white dragons battling for supremacy of the island is found in its earliest and fullest form in the *Historia Brittonum*. It also appears, slightly truncated, in Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae*, and a related story is found in *Cyfranc Lludd a Llefelys*, a brief tale contained in *The Mabinogion*. According to the *Historia Brittonum*, King Vortigern, at the advice of his magicians, sought to construct a stronghold in which to hide from the Saxons. The king began to build in Eryri (Snowdon), but every morning found that the previous day's work had completely vanished. The magicians inform Vortigern that he must sprinkle the blood of a fatherless boy on his stronghold if it is to

Vortigern (the Welsh king responsible for inviting the Saxons into Britain) and the genealogy of Arthur, both of which immediately precede Gwenfrewy's Life in the Peniarth manuscript, the vaticinatory text that follows *Buchedd Gwenfrewy* places this hagiographical work within a suitably Welsh context. The account of the two dragons essentially replaces Robert's account of the *translatio*, which is, after all, a story of one specific struggle between England and Wales, the story of a Welsh saint "torn away from [her] native soil and carried off to a country which had nothing to do with [her]."[275] Overwriting, as it were, the account of Gwenfrewy's *furtum sacrum*, the prophetic text following *Buchedd Gwenfrewy* demonstrates that the contest to preserve Welsh identity will go on, even in the face of imperialistic cultural appropriation that claims artifacts of Welsh identity and tears them away from their native soil and carries them off to a land that has nothing to do with them. Given the heightened interest in native saints on the part of Welsh bards in the later fifteenth century and the expansion of Wenefred's cult in England during the same period, the act of replacing Robert's *translatio* narrative with a prophecy about the ancient and future struggles between the English and the Welsh could

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be completed and remain standing, so he sends messengers throughout Wales to find such a prodigy. The apparently fatherless Ambrosius (who is in Geoffrey's version Merlin Ambrosius) is soon brought before the king. Before he can be sacrificed, however, the youth is able to reveal the true reason for Vortigern's difficulties in building the castle and he makes a special point out of humiliating the king's wizards. The source of the trouble is a subterranean pool standing underneath the spot on which Vortigern is attempting to build. At the bottom of this pool are two vessels, between which is located a carefully folded cloth. Inside the cloth are two dragons, a red one representing the Britons and a white one representing the Saxons. When unfolded the cloth itself represents the island of Britain and the dragons battle for supremacy upon it. After watching the contest in which first the white dragon but then the red is strongest and pushes his adversary off the cloth and over the pool, Ambrosius declares to King Vortigern that the spectacle foretells the eventual dominance of the Britons over the Saxons. Vortigern rewards the boy by leaving the site of the pool to him and granting him a kingdom to go with it. See John Morris, *Nennius: British History and the Welsh Annals* (London and Chichester: Phillimore, 1980). 29-31. For the version of the story as told by Geoffrey of Monmouth, see Lewis Thorpe, trans., *Geoffrey of Monmouth: The History of the Kings of Britain* (London: Penguin, 1966). 166-69. For the story of two dragons, one red and one white, whose fighting endangers the fertility of the island of Britain and its native inhabitants in *Cyfranc Lludd a Llyfelys*, see Gwyn Jones and Thomas Jones, trans., *The Mabinogion*, New Revised ed., Everyman Library (London: J.M. Dent, 1993). 76-78.

[275] These are, of course, the terms in which the angry Welshman at Gwytherin characterizes the aim of Prior Robert's mission in the *Vita et translatio*. *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 86.

not have been more partisan. At this point in the manuscript, the Peniarth compiler seems concerned to demonstrate that Gwenfrewy was a purely Welsh saint—and so far as he was concerned she was going to remain so.

In brief, this miscellany illuminates the attitudes and interests of a literate Welsh person at the end of the Middle Ages, a person who, given the manuscript's origins in North Wales, could well have been familiar with Gwenfrewy's cult from personal experience.[276] In essence then, the Peniarth 27ii *Buchedd Gwenfrewy* abbreviates Robert's narrative as it appropriates and translates his words in a reverse *furtum sacrum* that alters their symbolic function and meaning. It stresses the power and sanctity of Gwenfrewy's burial place in Wales while ignoring, and essentially denying, the translation of her bones that occurred centuries before. That this is denial rather than merely ignoring the facts of history can be demonstrated by re-considering the significance and effects of linguistic translation.[277] Commenting on the inherent

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[276] J. Gwenogvryn Evans long ago suggested that the second section of Peniarth 27 was in the hand of Gutun Owain, the famous poet and nobleman in whose hand the first and third portions of Peniarth 27 are written, but recent research denies the ascription. See Evans, *Report on Manuscripts in the Welsh Language, vol. 1*: 355; and Huws, *Medieval Welsh Manuscripts*: 190. Still, Gutun's life and work provide a suitable glimpse of intellectual trends in North Wales during the later fifteenth century. He spent some forty years at Valle Crucis Abbey, but also had strong connections with Basingwerk and as noted above composed a *cywydd* for Abbot Thomas Pennant. Gutun also wrote most of the famous *Llyfr Du Basing* (Black Book of Basingwerk), NLW MS 7006D, a collection of historical texts whose marginal annotations were probably made by Abbot Pennant. *Llyfr Du Basing* contains copies of *Ystoria Dared* (a Welsh version of the Latin *Dares Phrygius* that records events up to the fall of Troy), *Brut y Brenhinedd* (the Welsh translation of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae*), *Brenhinedd y Saesson* (a Welsh continuation of Geoffrey up to 1197), and Gutun's further continuation of historical narrative up to 1461 based in part on two versions of *Brut y Tywysogion*. J.E. Caerwyn Williams, "Gutun Owain " in *A Guide to Welsh literature, volume 2: 1282-c.1550*, ed. A.O.H. Jarman and Gwilym Rees Hughes (Landybïe, Wales: Christopher Davies, 1984), 262-77; "The Black Book of Basingwerk (NLW MS 7006D)," Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru, http://www.llgc.org.uk/index.php?id=blackbookofbasingwerknlwms. For *Brut y Brenhinedd*, see John Jay Parry, ed. and trans., *Brut y Brenhinedd (Cotton Cleopatra Version)* (Cambridge, MA: Mediaeval Academy of America, 1937). For *Brenhinedd y Saesson*, see Thomas Jones, ed. and trans., *Brenhinedd y Saesson or The Kings of the Saxons* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1971). For Gutun Owain's poetic corpus, see E. Bachellery, ed., *L'Oeuvre poétique de Gutun Owain*, 2 vols. (Paris: Librairie ancienne Honoré Champion, 1950-51).

[277] By comparison, see the discussion of the ways in which Middle English writers ignored Wales as part of a "semiconscious policy of cultural erasure," in Simon Meecham-Jones, "Where Was Wales? The Erasure

ambivalence of translating both relics and texts, Margaret Bridges suggests that composing hagiography is closely akin to translating a saint's remains, and in her reading *translatio* narrative rationalizes and explains a saint's "unlikely" presence in a new location.[278] With such a notion in mind, I would suggest that copying a Welsh translation of Robert's text while ignoring his first-hand account of the *translatio* is, in effect, an attempt to re-claim the saint and to re-situate her power in her native land at a time when her cult was achieving high political currency in England. The *Buchedd* is, in effect, both linguistic translation and figurative *translatio* that brings Gwenfrewy's story and her power back to Wales and denies the claims of Shrewsbury to possess her true spiritual essence. Copied 350 years or more after Robert completed the actual transfer of Gwenfrewy's bones to the Abbey of Ss. Peter and Paul, at a point when royal English interest in the saint's cult had achieved its apex following the accession of Henry VII in 1485, the Peniarth 27 *Buchedd* reverses the prior's *Vita et Translatio S. Wenefrede ex Wallia* in a figurative and vernacular *Vita et Re-translatio S. Wenefrede ad Walliam*.

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of Wales in Medieval English Culture," in *Authority and Subjugation in Writing of Medieval Wales*, ed. Ruth Kennedy and Simon Meecham-Jones (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008). For the quotation above, see 5.

[278] Margaret Bridges, "Uncertain Peregrinations of the Living and the Dead: Writing (Hagiography) as Translating (Relics) in Osbern Bokenham's *Legend of St. Margaret*," in *Chaucer and the Challenges of Medievalism: Studies in Honor of H.A. Kelly*, ed. Donka Minkova and Theresa Tinkle, *Studies in English Medieval Language and Literature* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang: Europaeischer Verlag der Wissenschaften, 2003). See also Evelyn Birge Vitz, "From the Oral to the Written in Medieval and Renaissance Saints' Lives," in *Images of Sainthood in Medieval Europe*, ed. Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski and Timea Szell (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), 100-01.

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APPENDIX A

THE *VITA ET TRANSLATIO* IN OXFORD, BODLEIAN LAUD MISC. 114: NOT PRIOR ROBERT'S ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPT

The earliest surviving copy of Prior Robert's *Vita et translatio S. Wenefrede ex Wallia* survives in the twelfth-century Oxford, Bodleian Laud Misc. MS 114, a primarily hagiographical collection. Baring-Gould and Fisher claimed long ago that this manuscript was "possibly the original" copy of Robert's text.[1] There is, in fact, absolutely no evidence to support this assertion and, on the contrary, much to reject it. Firstly, the *Vita et translatio* begins on fol. 140r, immediately after the final lines of the anonymous Life of Frideswide. Both are in the same hand, so unless Robert wrote his Life of Wenefred into the manuscript after having copied Frideswide's there, there is no way that the present copy of the *Vita et translatio* is Robert's original. On the other hand, the booklets of *vitae* that make up Laud Misc. 114 appear to have been bound together *ca*. 1200, perhaps for Prior Gilbert of Pershore Abbey, Worcestershire, on account of their similar contents and shared themes, as well as of their more or less uniform size. The contents of the manuscript are laid out in the following table. The quires of Laud Misc. 114 consist of three bifolia each, but only those quire divisions which help to illuminate the separate nature of the texts have been indicated below. Equally, no attempt has been made to identify every change of hand in the manuscript.

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[1] S. Baring-Gould and J. Fisher, *The Lives of the British Saints*, vol. 3 (London: Charles J. Clark, 1911). 186. For the brief discussion of Laud Misc. 114 that follows I am entirely indebted to Dr. Richard Sharpe of Wadham College, Oxford.

Table 2: Contents of Oxford, Bodleian Laud Misc. MS 114	
Fol. 1r	Two tables of contents and sixteenth-century(?) sketches of heads
Fol. 1v	Letter by William Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury and Chancellor of the University of Oxford, dated 1635
Fols. 2r-23v	Augustine's *De Doctrina Christiana*
Fols. 24r-37v	Life and Miracles of St. Andrew the Apostle [beginning of a new quire in a new hand]
Fols. 38r-38v	Ruled but otherwise left blank
Fols. 39r-61v	Passion of St. Vincent, Martyr
Fols. 61v-65v	Passion of St. Ignatius, Bishop (of Antioch) and Martyr
Fols. 65v-68v	Passion of St. Blaise, Bishop and Martyr
Fols. 69r-81v	Life of St. William, Confessor [this Life begins on the hair-side of a new folio in a new quire; Blaise ends on the hair-side of the previous folio and quire]
Fols. 82r-84r	Life of St. Audoenus by Fridegodus the Deacon [beginning of new quire; text of this Life is incomplete]
Fol. 84v	Blank
Fols. 85r-120r	Life of St. Eadburga, Virgin, by Osbert of Clare
[The folios are mis-numbered in the manuscript at the end of Osbert's text. Immediately after 110v, the numbering jumps to 120 on the next folio, it then goes on the subsequent folio immediately to 130. After this point the numbering returns to normal.]	
Fol. 120v	Defective text dealing with Theobald, Archbishop of Canterbury (1139-61)
Fols. 130r-131v	Sixteenth-century(?) sketches of people

Table 2: Contents of Oxford, Bodleian Laud Misc. MS 114 (Cont.)	
Fols. 132r-140r	Life of St. Frideswide, Virgin [beginning of new folio]
Fols. 140r-163v	*Vita et Translatio S. Wenefrede ex Wallia* by Prior Robert of Shrewsbury
Fols. 164r-184v	Passion of St. Katherine, Virgin and Martyr [separate, physically smaller text in a new hand bound in with the preceding material]
Fols. 185r-186v	Blank

Two distinct groups of texts can be identified in this collection. The first group is made up of Lives of confessors (Andrew, Vincent, Ignatius, Blaise, William, and Audoenus). The second group consists of Lives of virgins (Eadburga, Frideswide, Wenefred, and Katherine), all of which were composed in a time relatively recent to the first table of contents in the manuscript. This table of contents appears at the top of fol. 1r in a hand of *ca*. 1200, perhaps that of Prior Gilbert himself; a second table of contents is at the bottom of the leaf in a sixteenth-century italic hand that is similar to but most definitely is not John Leland's. The older table of contents accounts for every item presently in the manuscript except Augustine's *De Doctrina Christiana*, (fols. 2r-23v) and Fridegodus the Deacon's Life of Audoeunus (fols. 82r-84r). The second table of contents notes only those *vitae* that can be ascribed to a named author—viz. Fridegodus' Life of Audoeunus, the Life of Eadburga by Osbert of Clare, and the Life of Wenefred by Robert of Shrewsbury. After recording the presence of this last text, the sixteenth-century writer adds the following note which situates the manuscript at Pershore Abbey: "Fundatio monasterÿ Persorensis in comitatu Wygorn(iensis) : et de reliquis S.

Wenefredae ei translatis. Existimo hoc opusculu(m) eundem Osbertu(m) agnoscere authoreni" ("Foundation of the monastery of Pershore in the county of Worcestershire and regarding the relics of St. Wenefred translated there. I think that the same Osbert claims authorship for this little work").

On fol. 23r the word "p*er*shor" is written into the right-hand margin, and the hand of the earlier table of contents on fol. 1r has been identified as the same as that in St. John's College MS 96, a manuscript which was, on the evidence of its contents and two ownership inscriptions, connected with Prior Gilbert of Pershore Abbey.[2] Based on the inscription "p*er*shor" on fol. 23r and on the handwriting of the earlier table of contents on fol. 1r, Laud Misc. 114 must also have belonged to Pershore Abbey, and most probably to Prior Gilbert. Laud Misc. 114 was later owned by Sir John Prise, who donated it to Jesus College, Oxford, and it was in turn acquired by Archbishop Laud in 1635. The presence of Robert's *Vita et Translatio S. Wenefrede* in a Pershore manuscript can be explained by the proximity of Pershore to Worcester, the place to which Robert sent his text initially. Prior Gilbert must have copied Robert's text—or must have had it copied—into the manuscript that is now Laud Misc. 114, perhaps from the very copy that Robert had dedicated to Prior Gwarin of Worcester *ca*. 1140.

[2] For the identification of the handwriting of the first table of contents in Laud Misc. 114 with the handwriting of Oxford, St. John's College 96, see H.O. Coxe, *Laudian Manuscripts*, Bodleian Library Quarto Catalogues, Vol. 2 (Oxford: Bodleian Library, 1973). 597; and N.R. Ker, *Books, Collectors and Libraries: Studies in the Medieval Heritage* (London: The Hambledon Press, 1985). 491. The ownership inscriptions in St. John's College 96 appear on fol. 1 ("G. P^{i}") and fol. 58 ("liber Gill' p^{i}"): ibid., 489. For the Perhsore ownership of both Laud Misc. 114 and St. John's College 96, see also N.R. Ker, *Medieval Libraries of Great Britain: A List of Surviving Books*, 2nd ed. (London: Royal Historical Society, 1964). 150.

APPENDIX B

GWENFREWY, WENEFREDA, AND *WINEFRIDE*: EVIDENCE FOR THE EARLY ENGLISH CULT AT HOLYWELL?

It was noted in chapter three that the artistic elements of Gwenfrewy's reliquary shrine at Gwytherin, *Arch Gwenfrewy*, may reflect eighth- or ninth-century Anglo-Saxon influence. If so, it was suggested that that influence may have been introduced via the saint's English cult at Holywell at a point when that site and Gwytherin had some degree of contact with one another. Corollary evidence for the existence of such an English cult at Holywell in the centuries before the arrival of the Normans might be gleaned from the English forms of the saint's name—i.e., *Winifred*, *Winefride*, *Winefrith*, etc. It was long ago suggested that these forms represent the saint's original name, and, therefore, that the Welsh form *Gwenfrewy* is a later extrapolation from them.[1] This is an unlikely proposition. On the other hand, it is almost certain that these English forms do not themselves derive philologically from either the saint's Welsh or Latin names, although, as I will suggest here, that they might represent phonological anglicizations of one or both of these. Prior Robert provides a similar phonological explanation for the Latin form *Wenefreda*, claiming that it derived directly from Welsh *(G)wenfrewa*:

> Porro ubi caput ipsius prius collo tenus resectum et postea vi divina compactum atque resolidatum fuerat, albedo quædam tenuissima in modum fili collum ambiebat et locum sectionis obducebat; quod deinceps ad demonstrandam capitis illius resectionem atque miraculi ostensionem, quamdiu virgo in corpore deguit, semper uno modo permansit. Inde ferunt illius provinciæ homines eam Wenefredam fuisse vocitatam, cum antea, ut ipsi asseverant, Brewa nominata sit. Quod enim ipsi in sua lingua *Wen* dicunt, latine *candidum* vocant: sicque ex occasione albedinis collum circumdantis, ex re nomen habere dicta est, adjecta

[1] S. Baring-Gould and J. Fisher, *The Lives of the British Saints*, vol. 3 (London: Charles J. Clark, 1911). 190-91. See also note 6 below.

> particula, quæ est *Wen*, atque euphoniæ causa pristini nominis duabus litteris transmutatis, compositum obtinere vocabulum quod *Wenefreda* dicitur.[2]
>
> (Henceforth, where her head had first been severed along the neck, and afterward by divine power it had been attached and reunited, a certain very slender whiteness, like a thread, surrounded her neck and covered the place of the cutting. Thereafter, this always remained this way as long as the maiden lived in the body to indicate the severing of her head and the proof of a miracle. They say that from that time, people of that province called her Winefride, when before, as they affirm, she was named Brewa. For what those people call "Wen" in their tongue, they call "candidum" (white) in Latin, and so, on account of the whiteness encircling her neck, she is said to have her name from this. With the particle "Wen" added, and with two letters of her former name shifted for the sake of euphony, a word is constructed to obtain the name which is called "Winefride.")[3]

While the form *Gwenfrewy* is not attested directly in Welsh sources until the *Hystoria o Uuched Beuno* of 1346, this passage clearly demonstrates that Robert knew Wenefred's Welsh name *ca*. 1140. By comparison to the Cornish St. Menfre whose name was Latinized first as *Menfreda* and later as *Menefreda*, Winward has demonstrated that *Gwenfrewy* is a genuine Welsh name, one that could have been easily Latinized as *Wenefreda* in the early twelfth century, thereby disproving Baring-Gould and Fisher's notion that Gwenfrewy derived from *Winefride* or a similar English form.[4] Further, and especially because Robert himself seems unaware of its meaning, if the second element of the name *Gwenfrewy* is related to Modern Welsh *briw* (wound, injury), Robert's folk etymology of the saint's name may well represent an authentic tradition among the Welsh people of Holywell during the twelfth-century.[5] Assuming that *Gwenfrewy* does mean

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[2] Charles De Smedt, ed., *Acta Sanctorum, tom. I. Nov* (1887). 714.
[3] *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*, trans. Ronald Pepin and Hugh Feiss (Toronto: Peregrina Publishing, 2000). 38-39. The anonymous Life gives a wholly different account of the saint's name, one that, according to Winward, strongly suggests he was a non-Welshman. See Fiona Winward, "The Lives of St Wenefred (BHL 8847-8851)," *Analecta Bollandiana* 117 (1999): 100-03. For the story of the name in the anonymous Life, see *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 102. See also chapter 4, page 188 above.
[4] For the discussion of *Wenefreda* and its relation to *Gwenfrewy*, see Winward, "Lives of St Wenefred," 101-03..
[5] *Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru*, 2006, s.v. "briw."

something like "White Wound," a reference to the saint's neck scar, the English forms of her name cannot have any philological connection to her Welsh name. On the contrary, the English forms *Winifred, Winefride, Winefrith*, etc., have generally been taken to stem from a combination of two Anglo-Saxon elements, perhaps either *wine* (friend) or *wynn* (joy) and *friđ* (peace) or *frīđ* (stately, beautiful).[6] It is unlikely that either Anglo-Saxon *wine* or *wynn* would have taken on the meanings of Welsh *(g)wen* (white, shining, holy), since there were already words in Old English to express these ideas and *wine* and *wynn* were prominent words with established definitions.[7] The divided nature of English and Welsh settlement in Tegeingl in the Anglo-Saxon period would also seem to preclude any scenario whereby *wine* or *wynn* would take on the meanings associated with *(g)wen*. The same may be said about the meanings of *friđ* and *frīđ* in relation to the second element in *Gwenfrewy*, a form that, as already noted, may be related to Modern Welsh *briw*.[8]

In brief, therefore, the saint's Welsh name has nothing to do philologically with her English name, and her English name equally has no philological relationship to her Latin name, a form that, on Robert's evidence, is itself a simple phonological approximation of Welsh *(G)wenfrewa*. In the same way, however, the faint similarities of pronunciation between *Gwenfrewy* and the English forms of the saint's name might

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[6] Baring-Gould and Fisher maintain that the saint's original name—which they claim to be *Winefridu*—was purely English, a compound of *wine* (friend) and *fridu* (peace), from which the name *Gwenfrewy* was later extrapolated. Baring-Gould and Fisher, *LBS*, 3: 190-91. For the etymologies of *wine* and *wynn*, see F. Holthausen, *Altenglisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1963). 397 and 411. See also T.M. Charles-Edwards, "Gwenfrewi (*fl. c.*650)," in *The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. Lawrence Goldman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004-).

[7] *Geiriadur Mawr*, 2002, s.v. "gwyn." *Gwen* is the feminine form of this adjective.

[8] I am grateful to David Clark and Dr. Jeannette K. Marsh for their thoughts on the relationship of the meanings of Old English *wine* and *wynn* to Welsh *(g)wen*. For the nature of Welsh and English settlement in Tegeingl by 1066, see C. P. Lewis, "Welsh Territories and Welsh Identities in Anglo-Saxon England," in *Britons in Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. N.J. Higham (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2007), 137. It should be noted that, so far as place-names are concerned, Lewis maintains that although there were "a mixture of English and Welsh names" in late eleventh-century Tegeingl, "neither set show[ed] any apparent influence from the other language " (Ibid.).

suggest that the latter may stem from a phonological rendering of *Gwenfrewy* into Anglo-Saxon, and there is likely to have been enough contact between the two languages in the area around Holywell for this sort of adoption in pronunciation, if not in semantics, to occur.[9] Perhaps more plausible is the possibility that Latin *Wenefreda* is the link between the Welsh and Old English forms of the saint's name. The fact that both Robert and the author of the *Vita S. Wenefrede* independently use the same Latin form for her name implies that it was commonly known, at least around Holywell, by the twelfth century.

Winward observes that *Wenefreda* could have been the form used in the source that Robert and the anonymous author share, the *Vita S. Beunoi*, but she finds this possibility problematic, given that the anonymous author presents an etymology for the saint's name that is wholly different from Robert's and that is, coincidentally, thoroughly unconvincing. The anonymous author claims that the saint came to be known as *Candida Wenefroeda* on account of her wise and mellifluous speech, but if *Wenefreda* does in fact derive from *Gwenfrewy*, then *Candida Wenefroeda* would literally mean something like "White White Wound." Judging from this observation, the anonymous author is, according to Winward, most unlikely to have been a native Welsh speaker who would understand the meaning of the Welsh form standing behind *Wenefreda*. Because the anonymous author and Robert provide conflicting origins for the saint's name, therefore, Winward only cautiously suggests that the name *Wenefreda* appeared in their common source, the *Vita S. Beunoi*. What Winward does not consider is that the lost Latin text could have contained the form *Wenefreda* but not the story of its meaning, in which case

[9] Drawing on Baring-Gould and Fisher, Bartrum maintains that such a connection stands behind the two names: "Gwenfrewy and Winifred are only superficially similar. There is no philological relationship between them." P.C. Bartrum, *A Welsh Classical Dictionary: People in History and Legend up to about A.D. 1000* (Aberystwyth: National Library of Wales, 1993). 316.

Robert and the anonymous author would have had to seek explanations elsewhere. In such a scenario, Robert would have simply been the one who uncovered a genuine Welsh account of the name while the anonymous author made up an explanation from the scraps of information he was able to gather from the locals with whom, unlike Robert, he seems to have had little contact. The fact that the *Hystoria o Uuched Beuno*, a later medieval Welsh translation of the lost *Vita S. Beunoi*, contains no etymology for Gwenfrewy's name, might support this possibility.[10]

Assuming, however, that *Wenefreda* was the common Latin form of the saint's name in Holywell during the eleventh and twelfth centuries, a period when the coastland along the Dee estuary was largely in English hands and an ecclesiastical presence of some sort can be assumed at Holywell, *Wenefreda*, the name of a prominent local saint, may well have been rendered as *Winefridu* by the English-speaking inhabitants of the area. The phonological proximity of *Winefridu* or a similar form to *Wenefreda* suggests as much, and the fact that *Winefridu* in Old English gives the saint's name a meaning ("Friend of Peace") that meshes reasonably well with her legend would only serve to reinforce the use of the derivative English form.

[10] See Winward, "Lives of St Wenefred," 101-03. For the anonymous author's etymology of "Candida Wenefroeda," see A.W. Wade-Evans, *Vitae Sanctorum Britanniae et Genealogiae* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1944). 294-95; De Smedt, *AASS, t.I. Nov.*: 704; and *Two Mediaeval Lives of Saint Winefride*: 102.

APPENDIX C

NORTHEASTERN WALES AND THE NORTHWESTERN MIDLANDS FROM THE SEVENTH THROUGH THE EARLY TWELFTH CENTURIES

The conflicts which marked northeastern Wales and the northwestern Midlands in the five hundred or so years before the Shrewsbury expedition to Gwytherin help to explain not only the difficulties that Prior Robert encountered in locating Gwenfrewy's place of burial, but also the division for which I have argued in this study between the saint's cult sites at Gwytherin and Holywell.[1] The history of northeastern Wales is closely connected with that of Cheshire, an area that was itself likely to have been under British control at one time and that witnessed struggles between the Welsh and the Mercians from at least the seventh century. The success of the English at securing their hold over the former Roman fortress at Chester enabled them to push gradually into northeastern Wales and to establish on the western coast of the Dee estuary a pocket of foreign occupation that would last for centuries. When Æthelfrith of Northumbria triumphed over the British at the Battle of Chester in *ca*. 616, the city may well have been in the political ambit of Powys, perhaps even serving "as the seat of a branch of the royal dynasty of the Cadelling, whose representatives were prominent in the battle."[2] One of these representatives was Selyf ap Cynan, whose sons, according to the *Vita S. Wenefrede* and *Hystoria o Uuched Beuno*, drove St. Beuno out of his original dwelling and into the estates controlled by Gwenfrewy's father, Tyfid. If British political influence in the

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[1] Given complexity of the historical data, and in the interests of clarity, this material was deemed best presented as an appendix rather than as part of the preceding chapters. I am deeply indebted to Thomas Charles-Edwards for his oversight on this appendix.

[2] C.P. Lewis and A.T. Thacker, eds., *A History of the County of Chester: General History and Topography*, The Victoria History of the Counties of England, vol. 5, part 1 (Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer, 2003), 16.

region seems uncertain from this historical distance, British Christianity was certainly well established in Cheshire in the early seventh century, as can be glimpsed from Bede's report that Æthelfrith, during the fight for the city, slaughtered some 1200 monks from the important monastery of Bangor-is-y-coed (Flints.) while they beseeched God to show favor toward the British.[3] Whether or not Chester and its environs fell entirely to Mercian as opposed to British control after the battle is dependent on the location of the elusive *Westerna* of the Tribal Hidage, an Anglo-Saxon tax or tribute list perhaps dating to the late seventh century and generally taken as a record of the taxable value (in hides) of those kingdoms near to and under the sway of Mercia in the mid-seventh century.[4] Beginning with the 30,000-hide value of the core of Mercia itself (*Myrcna landes is þrittig þusend hyda þær mon ærest Myrcna hæt*), the document next lists the values of those peoples situated around the Mercian kingdom in apparently clockwise fashion from north to east to south.[5] The second and third entries give 7,000-hide assessments for the *Wocen sætna* and the *Westerna*: *Wocen sætna is syfan þusend hida*; *Westerna eac swa*. The emendation of *Wocen sætna* to *Wrocen sætna* is universally accepted, and these people have been identified as the "Wrekin-dwellers," a group living in the north

[3] Bangor-is-y-coed was the site of a synod after 600, and archaelogical and place-name evidence indicates the early prevalence of British Christian settlements in the area: B. E. Harris and A.T. Thacker, eds., *A History of the County of Chester*, The Victoria History of the Counties of England, vol. 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 239-40; for Æthelfrith's slaughter of the monks and for Selyf ap Cynan's role in the Battle of Chester, see Sir John Edward Lloyd, *A History of Wales from the Earliest Times to the Edwardian Conquest*, 2 vols. (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1967). 179-81. For the account of the Battle of Chester, see Bertram Colgrave and R.A.B. Mynors eds., *Bede's Ecclesiastical History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969). 140-43.

[4] For a general introduction to and edition of the Tribal Hidage, see David N. Dumville, "The Tribal Hidage: An Introduction to its Texts and their History," in *The Origins of Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms*, ed. Steven Bassett (London: Leicester University Press, 1989), 225-30. For the traditional dating of the text and the situation it reflects, see Margaret Gelling, *The West Midlands in the Early Middle Ages* (London: Leicester University Press, 1992). 85. For an alternative interpretation that sees the Tribal Hidage as a Northumbrian, rather than a Mercian, document recording the reduced state of Mercia following the Battle of *Hefenfelth* in 634, see Nicholas Brooks, "The Formation of the Mercian Kingdom," in *The Origins of Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms*, ed. Steven Bassett (London: Leicester University Press, 1989).

[5] For the clockwise nature of the list, see Gelling, *The West Midlands in the Early Middle Ages*: 85.

Shropshire plain and named for the large massif at the border of their territory known as the Wrekin. The people in the third entry have proven more difficult to situate: once thought to be residents of Cheshire, the *Westerna* have been argued by later scholars to be identical with the Magonsæte of Herefordshire.[6] Coupled with the seemingly clockwise nature of the beginning of the Tribal Hidage list, however, place-name evidence of English settlement in seventh-century Cheshire supports the earlier association of the *Westerna* with the northern Welsh borderlands.[7]

Regardless of this evidence, Mercia was undoubtedly pushing into northeast Wales by the end of the seventh century and the beginning decades of the eighth, for Wat's Dyke, which terminates in its northern end near Flint, was constructed as a boundary between the Welsh and the English perhaps in the reign of Ethelbald of Mercia (716-57).[8] Such a boundary would appear to leave the site of Wenefred's spring further to the northwest in Welsh territory, and indeed Basingwerk and Holywell lay "beyond the area of predominantly English place-names."[9] The larger dyke constructed by

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[6] Stenton maintained that the *Westerna* probably belonged in Cheshire: Frank Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971; repr., 2001). 201 and 296. For discussion of the notion that the Magonsæte of Herefordeshire and the *Westan Hecanorum*, a possible Latin translation of Old English *Westerna*, were one and the same, see Kate Pretty, "Defining the Magonæte," in *The Origins of Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms*, ed. Steven Bassett (London: Leicester University Press, 1989), 181-83. See also Harris and Thacker, *History of the County of Chester, vol. 1*, 247. For a rejection of this view, see Patrick Sims-Williams, *Religion and Literature in Western England, 600-800*, Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990). 40-43.

[7] Sims-Williams, *Religion and Literature in Western England, 600-800*: 18. For the place-name evidence, see Harris and Thacker, *History of the County of Chester, vol. 1*, 242ff. For the argument that the Anglo-Saxon border kingdoms of the Hwicce, the Magonsæte, and the Wreocensæte were culturally, if not ethnically British, see for example Sims-Williams, *Religion and Literature in Western England, 600-800*: 75-84; and Damian J. Tyler, "Early Mercia and the Britons," in *Britons in Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. N.J. Higham (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2007), 91-101.

[8] S.C. Stanford, *The Archaeology of the Welsh Marches*, Revised Second ed. (Ludlow: Old Farm House, 1991). 118-20; Harris and Thacker, *History of the County of Chester, vol. 1*, 237-38; Nancy Edwards, "The Dark Ages," in *The Archaeology of Clywd*, ed. John Manley, Stephen Grenter, and Fiona Gale (Mold: Clywd County Council, 1991), 139; David Hill, "Wat's and Offa's Dykes," in *The Archaeology of Clwyd*, ed. John Manley, Stephen Grenter, and Fiona Gale (Mold: Clwyd County Council, 1991), see esp. 142-45.

[9] Stanford, *Archaeology of the Welsh Marches*: 120; Harris and Thacker, *History of the County of Chester, vol. 1*, 247-48. Compare, however, the opinion that while the study of English place-names west of Offa's

Ethelbald's successor, Offa (r. 757-96), runs parallel to the earlier earthwork on its western side, and although it "represents a demarcation of [Anglo-Saxon] ambitions in terms of direct rule and settlement," English expansion west of the dyke in both the north and the central marchland was common at this time.[10] Both earthworks would then have marked, essentially, fallback positions that secured "the best line of defence behind the ragged edge of pioneering acquisitions."[11] Regardless of these artificial boundaries, however, much of northeastern Wales remained disputed territory, as can be seen from the notice in the *Annales Cambriae* of a battle fought at Rhuddlan in 797, the year in which Offa died.[12] It has been suggested that this battle was an attempt on the part of the English to defend a new frontier in Tegeingl, and certainly the position of Offa's Dyke in relation to Wat's Dyke southwest of Chester would indicate that the borders of Mercia were expanding westward in the eighth century.[13] Offa seems to have increased the English territory enclosed by his predecessor's earthwork to include both Holywell and Basingwerk, the latter of which takes its name from the nearby *weorc* or fort of Bassa and was noted in the fourteenth-century as being the termination point of Offa's Dyke.[14] These two sites would then have passed, it seems, out of Welsh and into English hands

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Dyke is important for understanding its origins, "the Dyke at its northern end is too uncertain for [such] discussion to be based on it": Gelling, *The West Midlands in the Early Middle Ages*: 106.

[10] R.R. Davies, *Conquest, Coexistence, and Change: Wales, 1063-1415* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987). 25.

[11] Stanford, *Archaeology of the Welsh Marches*: 120. See also Gelling, *The West Midlands in the Early Middle Ages*: 106-13.

[12] John Morris, *Nennius: British History and the Welsh Annals* (London and Chichester: Phillimore, 1980). 47.

[13] Lloyd, *History of Wales*: 201; Harris and Thacker, *History of the County of Chester, vol. 1*, 247.

[14] Stanford, *Archaeology of the Welsh Marches*: 120; David Williams, "Basingwerk Abbey," *Cîteaux* 32 (1981): 87. See also fig. 115 in Hill, "Wat's and Offa's Dykes," 142. The stretch of earthwork enclosing the shore of the Dee estuary is often considered to be a part of Wat's rather than of Offa's Dyke, but regardless the structure clearly separates the coastal region stretching from Basingwerk and Holywell in the northwest to Flint in the southeast, from the hills of the Welsh inlands to the south and west. See fig. 122 in ibid., 149. For a discussion of the problems surrounding the identification of the northern line of the earthwork with either "Wat" or Offa, see ibid., 146-52.

from an early point, perhaps thereby providing for divergent traditions regarding Gwenfrewy at Holywell and Gwytherin.[15] While the former came under English influence from as early as the eighth century, the latter remained in territory that—while hotly disputed in later centuries by the native Welsh and the Normans—remained primarily under Welsh control through the Middle Ages. Further English incursions into northeast Wales continued after Offa's time, for his successor Cenwulf (r. 797-821) pushed west of the Clwyd and into Rhufoniog and Snowdon in 816, and two years later into Dyfed; his death at the fortress of Basingwerk in 821 may have occurred during another expedition against the Welsh.[16] The following year the Mercians destroyed Degannwy, a Welsh stronghold associated with the semi-legendary Maelgwn Gwynedd on the eastern banks of the Conwy, and also conquered most of Powys. From an initial period of Mercian intrusion in the eighth century until its recapture by Owain Gwynedd in the mid-twelfth, Tegeingl was subject largely to the English and, later, to the Normans.[17] The Welsh always remained, however, a substantial presence in the region, and it appears that the English or Norman hold on Tegeingl was, quite literally, marginal:

> The Domesday place-names there were a mixture of English names and Welsh names, neither set showing any apparent influence from the other language. It seems likely that there were separate communities of Welsh and English speakers in the territory in 1066. The area seems to have been under English control from the 790s until perhaps the 1010s, then in Welsh hands until 1063 or 1064. Judging from the distribution of place-names, English settlement was confined to the narrow coastal strip from the Dee estuary round to the marshy land at the mouth of the river Clwyd, and to the hillsides immediately behind the coast.[18]

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[15] On Gwytherin see chapter 3 above.
[16] Lloyd, *History of Wales*: 202; Wendy Davies, *Wales in the Early Middle Ages* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1982). 113; Gelling, *The West Midlands in the Early Middle Ages*: 125-26.
[17] Lloyd, *History of Wales*: 242; Davies, *Wales in the Early Middle Ages*: 110.
[18] C. P. Lewis, "Welsh Territories and Welsh Identities in Anglo-Saxon England," in *Britons in Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. N.J. Higham (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2007), 137. See also C. P. Lewis, "English and Norman Government and Lordship in the Welsh Borders, 1039-1087" (University of Oxford, 1985), 144-46. For the layout of place-names and English holdings T.R.E., see maps 12 and 24, as well as pages 109 and 115.

In the centuries leading up to the time that Prior Robert composed his *translatio* narrative this general region had been subject not only to the vicissitudes of border conflict first between Welsh and English, and then between Welsh and Norman, but also to the political ambitions and personal fortunes of the rulers of Gwynedd and Powys. As one of its early Welsh names implies, *Y Berfeddwlad* (The Middle Country) stood between these larger kingdoms and was composed of four *cantrefi*: Rhos, Rhufoniog, Tegeingl, and Dyffryn Clwyd—Gwytherin lay very near the border between the first two; Holywell was in Tegeingl.[19] In the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries Powys was being reconstituted after having been absorbed into Gwynedd for roughly two hundred and fifty years.[20] Although Powys remained a kingdom of high renown at the turn of the twelfth century, the geographical area associated with it at that time was apparently relatively modest if we are to judge by the reference to "Powis enwauc" ("famous Powys") in *Mawl Hywel ap Goronwy*, an anonymous eulogy on the ascension of Hywel ap Goronwy to the kingship of Brycheiniog composed *ca*. 1101.[21] The reference appears

[19] Lloyd seems to imply that *Y Berfeddwlad*, rather than *Gwynedd is Conwy*, was the earlier name for the region. Lloyd, *History of Wales*: 239. For the supporting argument that the latter name came into currency only from the reign of Gruffudd ap Llywelyn, see page 399 below.

[20] For the absorption of Powys into Gwynedd in the ninth century, see Davies, *Wales in the Early Middle Ages*: 105-06. See also 110. On the rise of Powys in the early twelfth century, see, for instance, Lloyd, *History of Wales*: 422; Davies, *Conquest, Coexistence, and Change*: 43 and 50; K.L. Maund, *The Welsh Kings: The Medieval Rulers of Wales* (Stroud, 2000). 142. For the argument that the rise of Powys should be assigned to the early 1130s and the reigns of Maredudd ap Bleddyn and his son Madog, as opposed to the more traditional view that the death of Owain ap Cadwgan in 1116 marked the *end* of the kingdom's ascendancy, see David Stephenson, "The 'Resurgence' of Powys in the Late Eleventh and Early Twelfth Centuries," in *Anglo-Norman Studies*, ed. C. P. Lewis (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2008), 182-95.

[21] For an edition and discussion of the poem in Welsh, see R. Geraint Williams, ed., "Awdl Fawl Ddienw i Hywel ap Goronwy," in *Gwaith Meilir Brydydd a'i Ddisgynyddion*, ed. J.E. Caerwyn Williams and others, *Cyfres Beirdd y Tywysogion* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1994), 3-21. For the purpose of the poem and its dating to *ca*. 1096, see Nerys Ann Jones, "Golwg Arall ar 'Fawl Hywel ap Goronwy'," *Llên Cymru* 21 (1998): 1-7; and Rhian M. Andrews, ed., *Welsh Court Poems* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2007). 44. For a revised date of composition *ca*. 1101, see David Stephenson, "*Mawl Hywel ap Goronwy*: Dating and Context," *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies* 57 (2009): 41-49.

in a list of the names of the regions from which representatives had come to attend the ceremony proclaiming Hywel's rule, and Powys is here set alongside and seemingly made comparable with small territories like Dyffryn Clwyd, Nant Conwy, and Cyfeiliog.[22] As already noted, Powys and northeast Wales had suffered Mercian incursions from the seventh century onward, and the *Annales Cambriae* record the destruction of Degannwy and the conquest of Powys by Ceolwulf of Mercia in 822.[23] Subsequent contraction of the kingdom resulted from the ascendancy of Gwynedd under the descendants of Merfyn Frych, the Merfynion, in the later ninth century.[24] After the death of Hywel ap Rhodri Molwynog, the last descendent of Maelgwn Gwynedd, in 825, Merfyn took the crown of Gwynedd and married Nest, the daughter of Cadell ap Brochwel of Powys. Merfyn died in 844 and control of Gwynedd passed to their son, the famous Rhodri Mawr. According to Edward Lloyd and Wendy Davies, the death in *ca*. 854 of Rhodri's maternal uncle Cyngen, Cadell's successor, brought Powys under the authority of Gwynedd.[25] More recently Thomas Charles-Edwards has suggested that Gwynedd could only have taken over Powys after the battle fought between the sons of Rhodri Mawr and Æthelred of Mercia at the mouth of the Conwy in 881, following which Mercian power in Wales collapsed outside the southeast. Prior to that point, "any Venedotian conquest of Powys would surely have been most firmly resisted by the English overlord."[26] Regardless of the exact date by which the takeover had been accomplished, the absorption of Powys by Gwynedd was an established fact well before

[22] Williams, "Awdl Fawl Ddienw i Hywel ap Goronwy," 6.
[23] Gelling, *The West Midlands in the Early Middle Ages*: 126; Morris, *Nennius: British History and the Welsh Annals*: 48.
[24] For the discussion which follows of the reigns of Merfyn and his son, see Lloyd, *History of Wales*: 243-45 and 324-25; Davies, *Wales in the Early Middle Ages*: 104-12; and chapter 15 of T. Charles-Edwards, *Wales and the Britons, 350-1064*, Oxford History of Wales (forthcoming).
[25] Lloyd, *History of Wales*: 324-25; Davies, *Wales in the Early Middle Ages*: 105-06. See also 110.
[26] Charles-Edwards, *Wales and the Britons*. See chapter 15.

the end of the ninth century.[27] From that time Powys, previously a client kingdom of Mercia, "was ruled as part of Gwynedd and had no history as a separate kingdom until the later eleventh century."[28]

In this same period, that is the later ninth and early tenth centuries, Chester was an important point of contact between the English and their western neighbors. Danish occupation of the city in the winter of 893-94, coupled with evidence that an important mint may have been active there from *ca*. 890, suggests Chester's growing strategic and economic importance in the region, being situated as it was near to a major trade route between Scandinavian Dublin and York.[29] The re-founding of the minster church of St. Werburgh and the translation of her relics from Hanbury, events likely datable to the early tenth century and possibly ascribable to Æthelflæd, are perhaps indicative of the city's rising ecclesiastical significance.[30] When Æthelflæd died in 918, her power was soon usurped by Wessex under her brother Edward. In acquiring his sister's kingdom, Edward seems also to have inherited Mercian dominance over the grandsons of Rhodri Mawr—Hywel ap Cadell of Dyfed and Idwal Foel ap Anarawd of Gwynedd—who between them now ruled most of Wales outside the southeast. Nonetheless, two years after subduing Chester Edward was building a fortified enclosure of some eighty acres at *Cledemuþa*, that is, at the Clwyd mouth or Rhuddlan, perhaps with the intent "to establish

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[27] Davies, *Wales in the Early Middle Ages*: 110-13.
[28] Ibid., 110. See also Charles-Edwards, *Wales and the Britons*: chapter 17, part ii ("The Eleventh Century: New Dynasties").
[29] Harris and Thacker, *History of the County of Chester, vol. 1*. See also 260-63; Lewis and Thacker, *History of the County of Chester, vol. 5, no. 1*, 17, 20-22.
[30] Lewis and Thacker, *History of the County of Chester, vol. 5, no. 1*, 19. For the pre-Norman history of St. Werburgh's, see B. E. Harris, ed. *A History of the County of Chester*, The Victoria History of the Counties of England, vol. 3 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 132; see also Harris and Thacker, *History of the County of Chester, vol. 1*, 251-52. For the church in Anglo-Saxon Cheshire generally see ibid., 268-73.

a fortified town there on the site of what was probably already a small settlement."[31] The entry in the *Annales Cambriae* for 921 records a "Gueith Dinas Neguid" or a "battle of the New Fortress," the site of which is quite likely to be identified as Edward's new fortification at Rhuddlan.[32] Given the likelihood that Idwal ap Anarawd, the ruler of Gwynedd, had submitted to Mercia prior to the takeover of that kingdom by Wessex though, it is possible that the confrontation in 921 was between an allied force of English and Welsh against a Viking army, rather than a battle between the English and Welsh themselves.[33] It has also been suggested that, given the increase of Viking attacks in the region toward the end of the tenth century, English influence there weakened and that *Cledemuþa* did not long survive as an English burh.[34] Regardless, the records demonstrate that northeast Wales and the northwestern Midlands remained in the late ninth and early tenth centuries an area wherein native and foreign interests met and often collided. The account of Edgar's meeting with his client-kings at Chester in 973 signals the continuing importance of the city in the later Anglo-Saxon period.[35]

For nearly a century following the death of Hywel Dda in 950, the political situation in Wales was marked by the power struggles between the southern and northern Merfynion, respectively the descendants of Hywel Dda and those of his brother Idwal Foel.[36] The Dyfed line, in the person of Maredudd ap Owain (d. *ca*. 999), was largely dominant in the later decades of the tenth century, and the marriage of Maredudd's

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[31] Harris and Thacker, History of the County of Chester, vol. 1, 254.
[32] Morris, *Nennius: British History and the Welsh Annals*: 49.
[33] Charles-Edwards, *Wales and the Britons*. See chapter 16.
[34] Harris and Thacker, *History of the County of Chester, vol. 1*, 262; Davies, *Conquest, Coexistence, and Change*: 25 and 161.
[35] Lloyd, *History of Wales*: 349-50.
[36] For the following see chapter 17, part i ("The Decline of West Saxon Power over Wales") and part ii ("The Eleventh Century: New Dynasties) of Charles-Edwards, *Wales and the Britons*. See also Davies, *Wales in the Early Middle Ages*: 106.

daughter to Llywelyn ap Seisyll (d. 1023) produced an heir—Gruffudd ap Llywelyn—who eventually controlled the majority of Wales until the eve of the Norman Conquest of England. Gruffudd came to power in Gwynedd in 1039, some sixteen years after the death of his father. In the meantime the kingship seems to have been held by Gruffudd's paternal uncle and then by Rhydderch ab Iestin of Gwent and Iago ab Idwal of Anglesey. In addition to territorial gains for Gwynedd both in Wales and beyond Offa's Dyke, Gruffudd's reign involved close alliances with the Earls of Mercia. The greatest of the former occurred in 1055, when Gruffudd killed his rival in the south, Gruffudd ap Rhydderch ab Iestin, after which event Gruffudd ap Llywelyn's power "extended from the north of Anglesey to the Severn estuary."[37] According to Charles-Edwards, Gruffudd's family seems to have had its power base in northeast Wales, primarily at Rhuddlan, and the evidence of Domesday Book indicates that Gruffudd eventually dominated Tegeingl at the expense of the Mercians as well.[38]

In the same year that Gruffudd defeated and killed Gruffudd ap Rhydderch, Ælfgar, son of Earl Leofric of Mercia was exiled, perhaps as a result of his opposition to the appointment of Tostig Godwinsson to the earldom of Northumbria. Arriving in Gwynedd with a fleet from Ireland, the outlawed English nobleman sought the aid of Gruffudd ap Llywelyn and at about the same time the Welsh ruler married Ælfgar's daughter, Ealdgyth. The allies sacked Hereford, located in territory held by the house of

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[37] Charles-Edwards, *Wales and the Britons*. See chapter 17, part i.

[38] Ibid. See chapter 17, part ii. The relevant Domesday entries appear on fols. 263r and 269v respectively. Regarding Exestan hundred we learn that "King Edward gave to King Gruffydd all the land that lay beyond the water which is called the Dee. But after Gruffydd himself wronged him, he took this land from him, and restored it to the Bishop of Chester and to all his men who formerly held it." And in the hidated portion of Atiscros, "King Gruffydd had 1 manor, Bistre, and had 1 plough in demesne; and his men [had] 6 ploughs. When the king himself came there, every plough rendered him 200 loaves and 1 vat full of beer and 1 firkin of butter." *Domesday Book: A Complete Translation*, ed. Ann Williams and G.H. Martin, Alecto Historical Editions (London: Penguin, 2003). See 717 and 737.

Godwine, and soon after they negotiated a peace settlement. In the following year, however, the new bishop of Hereford, Leofgar, instigated new hostilities against Gruffudd and was killed in the process. It may have been the subsequent peace arrangements that put Gruffudd in control of those areas of northeastern Wales outlined in Domesday Book. In 1057 Ælfgar succeeded to his father's earldom and in 1058 was again ousted, but with the support of a Norwegian fleet under the prince of Norway, Gruffudd helped reestablish his father-in-law in Mercia. Ælfgar appears to have died a few years later, in 1062, and at Christmas 1063 Earl Harold launched a surprise attack on Gruffudd at Rhuddlan from which the Welsh ruler only narrowly escaped. Spring of 1064 then saw dual assaults on Gwynedd from land and sea, the former led by Tostig Godwinsson and the latter by his brother Harold, and the result was Gruffudd's betrayal and murder by his own men. The lands he had held in Tegeingl reverted to the new Earl of Mercia, Ælfgar's son Edwin. The significance of this territory in Gruffudd's reign is not to be underestimated, for in that period alone was the royal seat of Gwynedd situated east of the Conwy. All other rulers of Gywnedd held power in locations to further west, (e.g., Aberffraw on Anglesey), but Gruffudd's main *llys* was at Rhuddlan, very near the border with England.[39] By the time of his betrayal and death in 1064, Gruffudd had become sole ruler of all Wales, even controlling areas in the north- and southeast well beyond Offa's Dyke; the political proximity with the Earls of Mercia that were in part responsible for Gruffudd's success was seemingly mirrored in the physical proximity of his primary court to the English border.[40]

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[39] Charles-Edwards, *Wales and the Britons*. See chapter 17, part ii. Charles-Edwards takes the location of Gruffudd's main *llys* as partial evidence that he was responsible for formalizing the system of *cantref* and *cwmwd* in Wales.

[40] Lloyd, *History of Wales*: 364-71; Davies, *Conquest, Coexistence, and Change*: 24-27.

Having received the King of Gwynedd's head, Harold Godwinsson instated Gruffudd's maternal half-brothers Bleddyn and Rhiwallon ap Cynfyn over Gwynedd and Powys while other rulers were set up in Deheubarth, Morgannwg, Gwynllŵg, and Upper Gwent.[41] Murdered in 1075, Bleddyn ap Cynfyn is one of the few rulers known to have amended *Cyfraith Hywel Dda* ("Law of Hywel the Good") and his death served as the signal for the famous Gruffudd ap Cynan to champion the claim of his family to rule in Gwynedd, an honor they had not held since Gruffudd's grandfather, Iago ab Idwal, was killed in 1039 and Gruffudd ap Llywelyn had taken the throne.[42] Gruffudd came of mixed Welsh and Irish-Scandinavian ancestry and was raised near Dublin; in pursuing his right to rule in Wales, he was opposed by Trahaearn ap Caradog, a ruler based in the *cantref* of Arwystli who, claiming that he was first cousin to Bleddyn ap Cynfyn, had taken the throne of Gwynedd in 1075. Trahaearn's rule was not welcome by the men of the northwest and Gruffudd used their discontent to support his own claim to the crown—in addition to men supplied by Robert of Rhuddlan, the cousin of Earl Hugh of Chester and ruler of Tegeingl since 1073. After slaying Cynwrig ap Rhiwallon, Trahaearn's co-ruler in Llŷn, Gruffudd defeated Trahaearn himself at the Battle of Gwaed Erw in Meirionnydd in 1075 and thereby acceded to the throne of Gwynedd.

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[41] Lloyd, *History of Wales*: 372; Charles-Edwards, *Wales and the Britons*: chapter 17, part ii.

[42] Lloyd, *History of Wales*: 378; Davies, *Conquest, Coexistence, and Change*: 65. For the life of Gruffudd ap Cynan in general, as well as the account of northern Welsh history during the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries that follows on the next several pages, see Lloyd, *History of Wales*: 379-422. See also 463-69; D. Simon Evans, *Historia Gruffud vab Kenan* (Caerdydd: Gwasg Prifysgol Cymru, 1977); D. Simon Evans, *A Medieval Prince of Wales: The Life of Gruffudd ap Cynan* (Lampeter: Llanerch, 1990); John Davies, *A History of Wales* (London: Allen Lane, 1993). 101-17; K.L. Maund, ed. *Gruffudd ap Cynan: A Collaborative Biography* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1996); Paul Russell, ed. and trans., *Vita Griffini Filii Conani: The Medieval Latin Life of Gruffudd ap Cynan* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2005); and Davies, *Conquest, Coexistence, and Change*. For Davies's account of Gruffudd's life, see chapters 2, 3, and 4 *passim*.

Gruffudd next turned on and attacked Robert, his erstwhile Norman ally, but failed to take the keep at Rhuddlan. Upon returning to Gwynedd, Gruffudd was met with serious disaffection, mainly in response to the Irish contingent retained in his household. After losing the Battle of Bron yr Erw, Gruffudd was driven back to Ireland by the previously vanquished Trahaearn ap Caradog who supported the revolt against Gruffudd with the help of Gwrgenau ap Seisyll of Powys.[43] Having been expelled from and having returned to power in Gwynedd within the same year, Trahaearn held the crown tenuously for the next six while Robert of Rhuddlan proceeded to take control of more territory in the northeast. Robert overran Rhos and Rhufoniog, the *cantrefi* on the borders of which Gwytherin lay, and he converted the fortress of Degannwy on the eastern banks of the Conwy into a Norman castle in preparation for the conquest of Gwynedd. In 1081, however, Gruffudd ap Cynan returned and, with the aid of Rhys ap Tewdwr of Deheubarth, slew Trahaearn and his southern allies at the Battle of Mynydd Carn. Gruffudd was though soon deceived by the Norman Earls of Chester and Shrewsbury and was subsequently imprisoned for many years at Chester. At this time Earl Hugh and his cousin Robert were reaching a high point in their control of northeastern Wales, reclaiming for the invaders lands that had been taken by Gruffudd ap Llywelyn earlier in the century. The stretch of coast from Basingwerk to Hawarden remained in foreign hands as it had since the time it was settled by Mercians in the tenth century.[44] In addition Robert's mastery of Rhos and Rhufoniog extended foreign settlement and influence into north Wales farther than the Anglo-Saxons had ever managed. He

[43] For Gruffudd's expulsion from Wales in 1075, his later imprisonment, and the Norman advance in the northeast, see Lloyd, *History of Wales*: 382-86.
[44] Ibid., 386.

accomplished this by imprisoning Hywel ab Ithel, the ruler of these *cantrefi* whose power derived from the support of Powys.

By the time Gruffudd ap Cynan was in Norman custody, Earl Roger of Shrewsbury was pressing into Powys, and by 1086 having established the castle of Montgomery well to the west of Offa's Dyke and near the banks of the Severn he was able to move to the very borders of Deheubarth in preparation for its overthrow.[45] The Conqueror's death in 1087, however, prevented for a time further incursions against the Welsh, as many of the Marcher Barons, with the notable exception of Hugh of Chester, rebelled against William Rufus. After peace had been restored and William II was solidly established on the English throne, Earl Hugh took control of the lordship of Gwynedd, his cousin Robert having been killed by the Welsh upon his return to Degannwy, perhaps in early July, 1088.[46] Hugh expended no small energies on the seizure of the region; he built castles on Anglesey and at Carnarvon and Bangor, while following the assassination of Rhys ap Tewdwr of Deheubarth in 1093 Earl Roger of Shrewsbury launched an expedition into Dyfed from his base in Arwystli. Roger's son Arnulf established a castle at Pembroke, and other Norman fortresses were established at Cardiff and Rhydygors providing further inroads against Gower and Dyfed. Buellt, a central *cantref* west of the Wye, also fell to the Normans about this time. Seeing these rapid losses of territory in both the north and the south, the Welsh took the opportunity to retaliate when King William left for the continent during the Lenten season of 1094. The revolt began in Gwynedd, reclaimed Anglesey, and brought all of Earl Hugh's castles

[45] Ibid., 389-90.
[46] Ibid., 390-91. For discussion of the evidence that Robert's death should be dated to July of 1093 rather than of 1088, see David Moore, "Gruffuff ap Cynan and the Medieval Welsh Polity," in *Gruffudd ap Cynan: A Collaborative Biography*, ed. K.L. Maund (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1996), 36-39.

west of the Conwy under Welsh control. As the Earl of Chester was also on the continent, the second son of Robert of Shrewsbury, also called Hugh, led the Norman response in north Wales. He accomplished little, however, and Gruffudd ap Cynan returned to Gwynedd after escaping from prison while in the south the Welsh claimed all of the Norman castles save Pembroke and Rhydygors. William returned to England at the end of the year but was distracted from the problems in the West by the revolt of Earl Robert of Northumberland in 1095. Only with the Welsh occupation of the castle at Montgomery did the English king find the necessary urgency and opportunity to intervene. His campaign began, however, in October, and by early November it was clear that he would achieve little; William therefore abandoned the mission and returned to England through Chester.[47]

The year 1096 witnessed a continuation of hostilities, with the men of Gwent, Gwynllŵg, and Brycheiniog joining the fray and Rhydygors being subsequently abandoned by the Norman garrison while Pembroke was closely beset. The defender of the latter, Gerald of Windsor, managed to hold out against the besieging Welsh army and initiated a shift in the course of the revolt in south Wales. In the following year Gerald was able to launch punitive raids into Pebidiog, and William again visited the country to supervise the initial construction of new castles in the south.[48] During all of this time Tegeingl remained under Norman control, and the sons of Edwin ap Gronw, tenant rulers based in Tegeingl, were induced to guide the forces of the Earls of Chester and Shrewsbury against Gwynedd in 1098 in order to reclaim territories lost by the Normans there. The Welsh had hired a Danish fleet to secure their position on Anglesey, but the

[47] Lloyd, *History of Wales*: 405-06.
[48] Ibid., 408.

Normans made better offers and the Danes switched sides, forcing the Welsh leaders, Gruffudd ap Cynan and Cadwgan ap Bleddyn, to make for Ireland. With the defenders having fled, the Normans ruthlessly pillaged the island until a fleet under Magnus Barefoot of Norway appeared in the Irish Sea and began to attack. Hugh of Shrewsbury was slain, reportedly by an arrow shot by Magnus himself, and the Norwegians departed having rendered the Norman position on Anglesey far less secure. Realizing that they were overstretched, the Norman forces left the island and the following year Gruffudd ap Cynan and Cadwgan ap Bleddyn returned to reclaim their respective territories in Anglesey and Ceredigion. In Gruffudd's case this reclamation seems to have occurred by the leave of Hugh of Chester, and the new Earl of Shrewsbury, Roger of Bellême, invested Cadwgan not only with Ceredigion but also with ancestral territories in Powys.[49] At that same time, and again with the support of Powys, Hywel ab Ithel was reinstated over Rhufoniog and those parts of Rhos that were not retained by the Normans. Chester, however, kept control of Tegeingl as it had before the revolts and continued to do so uninterruptedly until the reign of Owain Gwynedd in the mid-twelfth century.

The brief predominance of Powys in the opening years of the twelfth century brings us close to the period in which Prior Robert was writing and reveals the state of affairs in the northeast. While having been largely subject to Gwynedd since the rise of the Merfynion in the ninth century, Powys was able to benefit from a confluence of favorable events at the turn of the twelfth: the death of Rhys ap Tewdwr, the devastation of Gwynedd under the Normans, and the downfall of the house of Montgomery. This last event resulted from a baronial revolt against William Rufus in 1102 that saw the defeat and exile of Robert of Bellême. Roger de Montgomery's oldest son, Robert had

[49] Ibid., 408-10.

held the earldom of Shrewsbury from the death of his brother Hugh in 1098, but was now stripped of his lands and banished from the realm after his Welsh allies in Powys proved unfaithful in the attempted uprising. His brother Arnulf, first Norman lord of Pembroke, was also dispossessed by the crown and sent packing. A few years later, in 1105, Pembroke came into the hands of Arnulf's erstwhile castellan, Gerald of Windsor who had married Nest, a daughter of Rhys ap Tewdwr. During this first decade of the twelfth century, there began under the rule of Cadwgan ap Bleddyn a process of internal conflict in Powys that would eventually lead to the eclipse of that kingdom's influence in Wales.[50] This process started with the abduction of Gerald of Windsor's wife in 1109 by Cadwgan's son Owain, a prince who created by this daring move no small problems for his father. Following the murder of Cadwgan in 1111, Owain returned from exile in Ireland and took control of those portions of Powys not seized by his cousin Madog ap Rhiryd, the man responsible for Cadwgan's death. Blinding Madog in 1113, Owain avenged his father and held all Powys until his own death in 1116—the vengeance of Gerald of Windsor—at which time Owain's brothers began to divide his holdings between themselves and the brief political dominance of their kingdom came largely to an end.[51]

A decade prior, in 1105, Owain ab Edwin, one of the client rulers of Tegeingl by leave of Chester, had died. His brother Uchtryd had then accepted the territories of Meirionydd and Cyfeiliog from Cadwgan ap Bleddyn, in exchange for promises of

[50] Ibid., 416. For the genealogy of Cadwgan ap Bleddyn, see 769.
[51] Ibid., 419-21. Cf., however, the opinions expressed regarding the twelfth-century rise of Powys in Stephenson, "The 'Resurgence' of Powys in the Late Eleventh and Early Twelfth Centuries." See also note 20 above.

fidelity.[52] Upon the death of Cadwgan's son Owain in 1116, however, Uchtryd took the opportunity to revolt against Cadwgan's remaining sons. It was a failed endeavor, however, and Uchtryd, originally associated with Tegeingl, went to abide with his nephews in Dyffryn Clwyd—Llywarch, Gronw, and Rhiryd ab Owain. These nephews, the sons of the Owain ab Edwin who had died in 1105, were brothers-in-law to Gruffudd ap Cynan of Gwynedd through that prince's marriage to their sister Angharad in about 1095. Not long after Uchtryd had returned to the northeast, Hywel ab Ithel, the client ruler of Rhos and Rhufoniog, moved in 1118 against Dyffryn Clwyd with troops commanded by Maredudd ap Bleddyn of Powys and Maredudd's nephews, the surviving brothers of Owain ap Cadwgan. In the events that followed, however, Gwynedd took no part. In response to Hywel ab Ithel's agression, the rulers of Dyffryn Clywd called on their uncle and the old enemy of Powys, Uchtryd ab Edwin, and with the support of troops from Chester took their stand near Rhuthun. Here they were defeated; Llywarch ab Owain was killed and his brothers and their forces were scattered. On the side of the Powys contingent, however, Hywel ab Ithel was mortally wounded and died six weeks later, creating a vacuum in Rhos and Rhufoniog that would be filled by the sons of Gruffudd ap Cynan a short while later. The Red Book text of *Brut y Tywysogyon* states that the leaders of Powys did not press home their advantage and seize Dyffryn Clwyd at this time specifically because of the power of the French of Chester.[53] Then, in 1125 Cadwallon ap Gruffudd ap Cynan confronted his maternal uncles, the survivors of the

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[52] For the genealogy of Uchtryd and Owain ab Edwin, see Lloyd, *History of Wales*: 767.

[53] "Ac yna yd ymhoelawd Meredud a meibon Cadwgawn adref heb lauassu gwerescyn y wlat rac y Ffreinc, kyt caffont y uudugolyaeth" ("And then Maredudd and the sons of Cadwgan returned home without daring to take possession of the land, because of the French, even though they had obtained the victory"). Thomas Jones, *Brut y Tywysogyon or The Chronicles of the Princes: Red Book of Hergest Version*, Board of Celtic Studies, University of Wales, History and Law Series (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1955). 102-03.

battle near Rhuthun, and slew them all, in Christopher Lewis's words, "a slaughter best read as the first blow in a struggle for power within the ruling kin after the retirement of its head."[54] At this point Dyffryn Clwyd was annexed to Gruffudd ap Cynan's kingdom and the stage was set for later incursions eastward. Indeed, it was in Nanheudwy, a region close to the English border, that Cadwallon was slain in 1132 in retribution for the murder of his uncles in 1125. Cadwallon's ambitions in the northeast in the 1120s and early 1130s can be seen as attempts to carve territory for himself out of his father's domain by eliminating potential rivals at a time when Gruffudd ap Cynan had handed effective control of the kingdom over to his sons—especially if Cadwallon's brother Owain was in a position to gain control of the northwest.

It remains to sum up matters in northeast Wales from the Anglo-Saxon period through the early twelfth century. Tegeingl, the *cantref* on the Dee estuary where Gwenfrewy's healing spring at Holywell was situated, had been subject to sporadic Mercian control from the eighth century, firmer Mercian rule from the early tenth with Edward the Elder's refortification of Rhuddlan, had passed for roughly a decade into Welsh hands during the last years of Gruffudd ap Llywelyn's reign, and subsequently was held by the earls of Chester. By the early decades of the 1100s, the strip of land on which Holywell lay had long been subject to English and then Norman incursion and settlement, as can be gleaned from the orientation of eighth-century Saxon earthworks and the occurrence of seemingly English place-names in the area.[55] The *cantrefi* of Rhos and Rhufoniog, on the borders of which Gwytherin lay, the location of Gwenfrewy's

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[54] C. P. Lewis, "Gruffudd ap Cynan and the Normans," in *Gruffudd ap Cynan: A Collaborative Biography*, ed. K.L. Maund (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1996), 76.

[55] B.G. Charles, *Non-Celtic Place-Names in Wales* (London: University College, 1938). For the place-names of Denbighshire and Flintshire, see 192-233. For Englefield/Tegeingl, see 231-33.

grave, had been under the sway of Powys until 1081 when Robert of Rhuddlan, cousin of Earl Hugh of Chester, refortified Degannwy on the banks of the Conwy. Rhos and Rhufoniog were largely controlled by Powys again after 1099 with the return of the client ruler Hywel ab Ithel, and was eventually lost to Gwynedd after Hywel's death in 1118 following a battle for control of Dyffryn Clwyd. In this battle the rulers of Powys fought against the sons of Owain ab Edwin of Tegeingl, who were related by marriage to Gruffudd ap Cynan and who were supported by the Normans of Chester. Dyffryn Clwyd itself fell to Gwynedd in 1125 when Gruffudd's eldest son killed its remaining rulers, his maternal uncles, and thereby ended the native dynasty of Tegeingl. The Earl of Chester, however, still held Rhuddlan at this time, and possibly lands stretching all the way to Degannwy.

Northeastern Wales had, then, been long contested by foreigners and native Welsh alike by the time that Prior Robert and the monks of Shrewsbury Abbey began their search for a patron saint. Like control of the area in general, control of Gwenfrewy's cult site at Holywell would also remain a matter of contention between Norman and Welsh for some time. In *ca*. 1131, a Savignac monastery was established not far from Holywell at Basingwerk, perhaps at the command of Ranulf II of Chester (r. 1128/29-53), and the possibility exists that Ranulf, if indeed the founding of the abbey can be ascribed to him, "may have hoped that the presence of Norman monks west of the Dee would help to stabilise his authority there."[56] In that regard, Basingwerk has been described as being "'in Wales', but not 'of it'," and this description led Fiona Winward to

[56] Williams, "Basingwerk Abbey," 89; Davies, *Conquest, Coexistence, and Change*: 46. On Basingwerk Abbey, see also Arthur Jones, "Basingwerk Abbey," in *Historical Essays in Honour of James Tait*, ed. J.G. Edwards, V.H. Galbraith, and E.F. Jacob (Manchester: 1933), 169-78; A.J. Taylor, "Basingwerk Abbey: Flintshire," (London: His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1946).

suggest that the anonymous Life of Wenefred could have been composed by a Norman monk at the abbey who did not fully comprehend the Welsh sources on which he drew.[57] The original location of the abbey is unknown; it certainly was not on the site of the present day ruins at Greenfield near Holywell, although it seems not to have been far from there and at any rate the monks moved to this latter site soon after the initial foundation.[58] Basingwerk was always, however, ideally situated for the abbots "to act as intermediaries between the Welsh princes and the English king."[59] Indeed, while Holywell had been under the jurisdiction of St. Werburgh's Abbey since possibly as early as 1093, at some point during Ranulf II's earldom the church and town were made over to the monks of Basingwerk by Robert de Pierrepont.[60] Along with all Savignac houses, Basingwerk was subsumed into the Cistercian Order in 1147 and it was seemingly restored after a period of apparent vacancy ten years later—perhaps a result of Welsh aggression in the region—and was reconfirmed as a daughter house of Buildwas in Shropshire, Basingwerk's founding abbey.[61] Hugh II of Chester (r. 1153-81) then put St. Werburgh's back in control of Holywell at some point during his earldom, but by the end of the twelfth century the shrine and its environs were again in Welsh hands. Control of the shrine thus passed back and forth between the Benedictines of Chester and the monks of Basingwerk until Dafydd ap Llywelyn's confirmation of Basingwerk's rights to the

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[57] Williams, "Basingwerk Abbey," 91; Fiona Winward, "The Lives of St Wenefred (BHL 8847-8851)," *Analecta Bollandiana* 117 (1999): 124. So far as the national character of the community, Williams notes that "all the known monastic names of Basingwerk's monks are English right down until the late 15th Century," (91).
[58] Williams, "Basingwerk Abbey," 89-90.
[59] Ibid., 91.
[60] See Huw Pryce, *The Acts of the Welsh Rulers, 1120-1283* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2005). 345 and the sources cited there.
[61] Williams, "Basingwerk Abbey," 90.

cult site in 1240.[62] This shifting generally followed the political dominance of Welsh and Norman rulers in the area, the former of whom supported the claims of Basingwerk to the shrine while the latter supported the claims of St. Werburgh's.

[62] James Tait, ed. *The Chartulary or Register of the Abbey of St. Werburgh, Chester* (Manchester: Chetham Society, 1920), 45n5 and 236-37. See also Winward, "Lives of St Wenefred," 98. For the implications that this struggle for the control of Holywell has on the dating of the *Vita S. Wenefrede*, see chapter 4 above.

APPENDIX D

OSBERN BOKENHAM'S *LYF OF SEYNT WENEFREDE*

FROM THE ABBOTSFORD MS

Bokenham's *Lyf of Seynt Wenefrede* from the Abbotsford MS has not yet been published, but I have here prepared a complete transcription of it with the permission of Douglass Gifford, Honorary Librarian for Abbotsford, and of Andrea Longson, Senior Librarian for the Faculty of Advocates. This transcription is intended to augment my discussion of the *Lyf* in chapter 5 above. My method of transcription is quite literal; not only have I left abbreviations unexpanded, but I have reproduced so far as is possible the layout of the manuscript page. This latter decision has required at many points that I modify the size of the typeface in a given line so as to preserve the overall formatting of the original text. This shift in letter size is not a feature of the manuscript. Clear punctuation is used sporadically through the text, but primarily in the first third or so, and I have preserved the *puntci* and the *virgulae suspensivae*. I have omitted, however, the numerous light slashes that regularly appear between words. While the *virgulae* could sometimes represent a pause, they are certainly used at other times to indicate abbreviations; in some places their meaning is not quite clear. I have preserved other abbreviations as best as possible by using characters with circumflexes to mimic the abbreviation markers used in the manuscript. The bold and italic typeface used in this transcription to highlight such abbreviations is my addition and does not replicate any particular feature of the manuscript text. I use endnotes to highlight various features of the text throughout.

[214v[a]]

The lyf of Seynt Wenefrede.[i]

A[ii]t the west ende of Brytayne the m*ô*r
Lyith a Prouince · a ful fayr cuntre
Wich aftyr Policronicas lore
Buttyth on the gret Occyan see
Wich ys distinct in to partys thre
Wyth dyuers watyrs ful of hillys & valys
And in oure wulgare · now ys clepyd walys

¶ But how this name cam of Sualesia
Kyng Ebrankye dought ·/ wich ther was quen
As yt of Cambrio was fyrst clepyd Cambria
Ner of the comodytes wich in that c*û*try been
As bestys & foulys wax hony & been
And many other thyngys here spekyn nyl y
Wich seyd Policronica declaryth opynly

¶ For myn entent ys not at this our
To ben ocupyid abowtyn Topographye
But the princypal cause of this labour
Ys blyssyd Wenefredys lyf to descrye
Wiche be cruel hefdyng onys dede dye
And reysyd ageyn · yerys ful fyftene
Lyuyd aftyr that a pure mayde & clene

¶ This nobyl vyrgine ·/ this blyssyd Wenefrede
Doughtyr was to oon clepyd Tenyht
A wurthy man · wich lyneally dede procede
From the royal · euene do*û*n ryht

[214v[b]]

A man of gret rychesse & of gret myht
For in north Walys where he dede dwelle
Was noon lych hym the soth to telle

¶[iii] And not oonly thys Tenyht ryche owtward
Was by habundaunce of tem*p*al possessyoun
But also dayly in hys thouth inward
He hym c*ô*myttyd to goddys proteccy*ô*n
At al tyme redy of pure affeccy*ô*n
To releuyn & helpyn w[t] elmesse dede
Swich as hym thouthe ·/ had myster & nede

¶ And among manye othere dedys of cheryte
Wiche he dede ·/ thorgth ·/ goddys grace
A ful ryche possessyo*n* of his yaf he
To bylden up on ·/ a religious place
Of munkys to ther counforth & solace
At the suggesty*ô*un of hym & styryng
Wich famous was thanne ·/ of holy lyuyng

¶ This holy mannys name ·/ was Beunoon
Wiche long to forn ·/ for cristys sake
Owt of his natal sool was goon
And al werdly glorye had forsake
And to ben a munk had had take
In pouert hym purposyng god to serue
All hys lyf aftyr tyl he dede sterue

¶ This munk Beunoon this blyssyd man
In many a sundry & diuers cuntre
Many a holy monasterye began
And fully *p*formyd or than that he
To this place cam here abot to be
But euere ouyr al bothe here & there
Ful religiously he hym dede bere

¶ And for hys lyuyng was so hooly & good
And so edificatyf his comunycacyoun
In the nyhtys affeccyoun so deep he stood
That pleynly in al his conuersacyoun
He reulyd was aftyr his exhortacyoun
And not oonly he but his wyf also
And yung Wenefrede here douht·/ ther to

¶ No mo chyldryn had this seyd Tenyht
But oonly this douhtyr thys yung Wenefrede
Wich al his ioye was & al his delyth
Hopyng by here that shulde succede
The lyneal descens of hys kynrede
By processe of tyme whan she to age
Come were of abylnesse to maryage

¶ But not forthan what so euer purposyth

[215r[a]]

Ony man in his entent to doo
At his owyn wyl god yt dysposyth
Whan tyme of werkyng yt comyth to
And by Tenyht o hys douht·/ yt ferd so
For he hyre purposyd to ben a wyf
And god hyre disposyd to a c***ô***tyn***ê***t lyf

¶ And for as myche as in al his clennesse
Hyre fadyr & hyre modyr wold that she
Educat were they dede here besynesse
Whan Beunoon prechyd that she shuld be
Present & syttyn evene undyr his kne
Hyre chargyng ententyfly for to lere
What he seyde & yt away to bere

¶ And this they dedyn for that entent
That she shuld kun lyuyn verteuously
Whan she to maryage aftyr were sent
And aduouterye fleen & al lecchery
As goddys lawe byddyth certeynly
And in trewe weedlok hyre so to reule & gye
That fruht in honeste she myht multyplye

¶ For wiche cause they ful glad were
That she wyth hym had famylyaryte
Hopyng there by that she shuld lere
After here entent w***û***manly honeste
For of naturys yiftys she had plente
As bewte shap & eek comelynesse
Eloquence in speche & affabylnesse[iv]

¶ Yet thow she were fayr she more good was
For grace in hyre surm***ô***untyd nature
For euere as she greu in bodyly spaas
Sche c***ô***tunely labouryd w[t] besy cure
For to encresyn in vertu pure
And so she dede for w[t]in short space
Endewyd she was w[t] manyfold grace

¶ No wundyr for as wytnessyth hyre legende
The holy gost dwellyd hyre wyth inne
Wiche not oonly hyre dede defende
From the unclennesse of deedly synne
But many a good dede eek to begynne
He hyre styryd by grace inward
And by blyssyd Bennons doctrine owtward

¶ For what so euer to hyre he seyd
This holy Bennon this nobyl doctour
Sche therto euer good ere leyde
And yt to ***p***forme dede hyre labour
For al that longyd to goddys honour
Aftyr the doctryne of hooly cherche

[215r[b]]

Sche hyre euere offryd redy to werche

¶ And contrarye to that hyre fadyr ment
Inspiryd thorgth heuenely influ***ê***ce
Wyth al hyre herte & of hool entent
Sche hyre purposyd of continence
The vertu to kepyn wyth owtyn offence
And neuer to han knowleche of man flesshly
Wher to saf Bennon was noon pryuy[v]

¶ Aftyr wiche tyme up on a sunday
Whan Tenyht & hys wyf to cherche were goon
Why & for what cause y kan not say
Yung Wenefrede bylefth at hoom alon
And forthw[t] unwarly cam in anoon
A ryht ioly man bothe fressh ·/ & yung
Wich sone was of Alanus the kyng

¶ And whan he saw Wenefrede by the feer
Stondyng alone & no mo but she
Wyth owte lettynge he drow hyre neer
And askyd hyre where hyre fadyr myht be
Q she syre for sothe at the cherche ys he
Wherfore wyth hym yf ye owt wyl doo
Abydyth awhile y shal hym clepe you to

¶ Abydyn ***q*** he y wyl ryht gladly
Upon a condycio***û*** his hom comyng
That ys to seyne yf thou wylt frely
Assentyn Wenefrede to myn askyng
The sone y am thou knowyst weel of a kyng
And in gret astat stonde & dygnyte
Wherfore thou awtyst ben glad to plesyn me

¶ Myn askyng ys this that thou wyl assente
On to the lust of my plesaunce
And y the wyl endewyn w[t] londe & rente
And to hy wurshyp y the shal enhaunce
Of rychesse & welthe w[t] gret habundaunce
~~Of rychesse & welthe w[t] gret habundaunce~~[vi]
And what caas here aftyr that be falle
Y the meyntene · wyl ageyns men alle

¶ And yf yt so be that thou sey nay
And deynyst no wyse to my lust assente
Pleynly assayin y wyl yf y may
Of my desyr to fulfyllyn the entente
Or than y passe for fro me hente
Schal the no man the soth to seye
But that he or y therfore shal deye

¶ Whanne these wurdys herde blyssyd Wenefrede
Knowyng ryhtweel that he was dislauy[vii]

[215v[a]]

Of his reule ful of preuy drede
Sche vex in hyre herte inwardly
But not for than she owtwardly
Dissymulyd & feynyng glad chere
To hym she answerd on this manere

¶[viii] Syre for sothe y am ryht sory
That thus unwarly ye come up on me
For of youre comyng yf y had wyst treuly
Myche bettyr arayid y shuld haue be
And more plesauntly to youre dygnyte
For on to plesaunce of a kyngys sonys lust
On the fresshest wyse a w***û***man ara***y*** hyre must

¶ Therfore syre syth of youre ientylnesse
Ye lyst youre affeccy***ô***n to settyn on me
For the embesshyng of my sympylnesse
Wiche as ye seen stonde dyscheuele
That y more plesauntly arayid may be
Suffryth me a while to myn chaumbyr goon
And fresshlyere arayid y shal returne anoon

¶ And he hyre lycencyd wenyng that she
Wold haue doon lych as she promysyd
And the halle stylle hyre abood he
And whanne she from hym thus was di[ix]mysyd
Entryng hyre chambyr she fully was auysyd[x]
Aftyr that no more returnyn hym to
What so euere wyth hyre god wold do

¶ For weel she wyst yf she ageyn went
So hym the flour of hyre virgynyte
Sche shuld haue lost geyns hyre entent
And leuere she had on born to haue be
For that to god beheest had she
To noon erdly creature wiche dede lyue
To be deed therefore she neuere wold yiue

¶ And whan she stood in this perplexyte
And what she myht doon & hyre herte dede caste
Owt at the chambyr wyndow went she
And chercheward began to renne fast
Whom whan he aspyid at the laste[xi]
Bethyngkyng how she hym deceyuyd had
For very malyncolye he wex ner maad

¶ And at a styrt he hyre ouyr ran
By thanne she cam in to the cherche yerd
Aha ***q*** he untrewely w***û***man
Why woldyst thou · thus han maad my berd
Thou shalt dye therfore & owt hys swerd
Anoon he drow & w[t]owte more lette
Hyre heed of at a oo strook he smette

[215v[b]]

¶ Wiche doon the body fel do***û***n to grounde
In the same place the strook was tan
But the heed rollyd euene do***û***n rounde
And among folkys feet in to the cherche yt ran
Wherof gretly astoynyd was yche man
Sore amaruaylyng what yt myht be
That so rollyd abowtyn & in swych degre

¶ And whan yt was wyst what yt was
And knowyn for the heed of Wenefrede
Sorwe gan awakyn in that plaas
Am***ô***g al the peple w[t]owte drede
But whan hyre fader & moder of that dede
Informyd wern most lamentably
They sorwyd & weptyn & thus dede cry

¶ Alas the whyle that we were born
Of oure doughtyr this syth to see
Alas alas now haue we lorn
Alle the ioye of oure antiquyte
Alas we hopyd she shuld haue be
Oure singuler counfort & our solas
But now ys al goon · Allas allas

¶ And whan of this carful cry the soun
To the eerys cam of blyssyd Bennon
Dredynge ther had ben sum sedycioun
Among the peple fallyn he anoon
Cam do***û***n as faste as he myht goon
And diligently of hem began to enquere
The cause of here mornyng in that manere

¶ And whanne he had takyn cler informacy***ô***n
How cruelly slayn & hefdyd was she
Whom he had hopyd by holy consecracy***ô***n
Goddys wyf of heuene sacryd to haue be
From terys no lengere conteyne myht he
For whan he so tendyrly saw al men wepe
Hymself from wepyng no lengere myht he kepe

¶ But al the tyme of this heuynesse
In the cherche this cruel homycyde
Obstinat in his malyciousnesse
Dreed of god & man fer set a syde
In the cherche yerd stylle dede a byde
And his swerd of hyre blood wich weet was
He bisyly wypte on the grene gras

¶ Fle thens he serteyn in wolde in no wyse
And for that he a kyngys sone was
As of swyche ***p***sonys yt ys the guyse
Lytil or noon he held his trespas
And stylle he stood w[t] a shameles faas

[216r[a]; Bottom of folio cropped away; text is safe.]

Waytyng alwey yf ony man hym to
Wolde for that dede eythyr seyn or do

¶ But whan Beunoon undyrstond***y*** had al the caas
And how he stylle contunyd in his contumacye
Nothyng ashamyd of his gret trespaas
Sory he was for hys obstynacye
And as faste as he cowde he hym dede hye
Wenefredys heed in his handys beryng
To hymward al the peple folwyng

¶ To whom he seyid thus o cursyd creature
Wiche doon hast this abhomynabyl dede
And slayn this yung fayr virgyne & pure
Wich do***û***n descendyd of the kynrede
Of the blood royal & here maydynhede
To god hath avowyd why rep***ê***tyst nouht
That thou so horryble a cryme hast wrouht

¶ Wherfore syth thou on this manere
Defoulyd hast the cherche w[t] thyn offence
And troublyd the pees of the peple here
And to the sunday doon dysreuerence
And of thy obstynacye stondyst in defence
The lord y beseche wich for ***m***akynde steruyd
To yiue the now lych as thou hast deseruyd

¶[xii] At wich wurd of Beunoon w[t]owtyn more
He fel doun deed euene sodeynly
And the erthe opnyd hem alle before
And swelwyd hym bothe soule & body
By wich punysshement god shewyd opynly
How greuous & displesaunt in his syht was
The unrepentaunt obstynacye of his trespas

¶ Whan thus was shewyd this gret v***ê***iaunce
Upon this blyssyd vyrgyns enmy
Gretly abasshyd of that nouel cha***û***nce
Was al the peple wich stood therby
And wyth oo voys they preyid enterly
God of his grace them to preserue
On swich deth that they shuld not sterue

¶ Whan on this wyse this tiraunt was deed
Al the peple present ther beholdynge
Ful oft tymys Wenefredys heed
Beunoon dede kysse ful sore wepynge
And the body to cherche he aftyr dede brynge
Where to the heed anoon leyd he
In the same ordre yt was wone to be

¶ Wich doon efthsonys he gan yt kysse
And in hyre nosethyrls he blew softely

[216r[b]]

And w[t] his mantel curyd yt dede blysse
Hyre fadyr & hyre modyr ful benyngnely
Exhortyng to wepyn more moderatly
And here intollerable sorwe to represse
And this doon he forth wente to hys messe

¶ Whan messe was doon ful relygyously
To the deed cors Beunoon cam do***û***n
And to the peple wich wepyng stood by
To preyin he yaf an exhortacy***ô***un
That yf god wouchydsaf this mayd***y*** shuld mo***û***n
Lyuyn ageyn & hyre avow fulfille
Wiche whyl sche lyuyd she maad hym tylle

¶[xiii] And thus to preye not oonly you shuld styre
Hyre awow ***q*** he but your comodyte
Wiche also to you shal growe by hyre
Yf yt plese god that yt mowe so be
Wherfore preyth hertyly for cheryte
At whos counsel yche man that stounde
To makyn his preyere fel plat to grounde

¶ And whanne they thus long had pryuatly
Plat on here face in preyere leyn
Besechyng god of his myche mercy
That mayde Wenefrede myht lyuyn ageyn
Beunoon forthwyth roos up certeyn
And bothyn his handys to heuene spredyng
Thus gan to preyin alle men heryng

¶[xiv] lord ih***û*** cryst for whos loue
Alle ordly thyngys dede forsake
This maydyn & heuenely thyngys abowe
Douly desyryd vouchesaf to take
The preyere wiche for hyre we make
And shewe lord that yt plesyth thy pyte
In thy syht oure preyers herd to be

¶ And al be yt lord that we dowte nouth
This virgyne hefdyd for loue of the
To ben in the blysse wich thou hyre to bouth
And of oure felashyp haue no necessyte
Yet lyke yt lord thy mercyful pyte
To acceptyn the entent of thy chyldryns preying
And grauntyn hem the effect of her askyng

¶[xv] Y mene thus yf yt plese thy maieste
That the soule of this virgyns deed body
Knyt ageyn therto mow now shene the
Of bothe reulere to ben veryly
And she eek reuyuyd so maruelously
As longe as she aftyr in thys lyf doth drye
May preyse they name & yt magnyfye

[216v[a]]

¶ And so she aftyr long lyuys space
Wyth the encrees of holy conersacy*ô*n
Returne mow ageyn thorgth thy grace
Of manye good dedys w[t] multiplicacy*ô*n
To the hyre spouse in to heuenely h*î*tacy*ô*n
Where w[t] thy fadyr & the hooly god inse*p*abylly
Thou lyuyst & regnyst oo god & in*t*mynabylly

¶ And whan thus his preyere endyd had Beunoon
And al the peple had answerd deuouhtly
Amen from undyr his mantel anoon
Wenefrede roos up euene sodeynly
Wypyng hyre face ful sobyrly
And as fressh of colour & hew was she
As she not deed but a slepe had be

¶ As glad eek she was of countenaunce
Bothe of cher & look as she was wone to be
Ner she hyre conpleynyd of no greuaunce
Ner of noen hurt wich takyn had she
For al hool she was in yche degre
Ner no tokne she had in no party
That she deed had ben of hyre body

¶ Saf in the nekke where the swerd yeed
Whan yt from the body hyre heed dede race
Aperyd of the brede of twyin threed
A cercle whytere than in othyr place
And so yt there enduryd al hyre lyuys space
The cercle shewyd how martyrd was she
The colour signyfyid hyre virgynyte

¶ And this signe she wold shewyn gladly
To alle them wiche hyre wold requere
Yf she *p*ceyuyd that deuouthly
They yt desiryd & of herte entere
Exhortyng hem wyth ful sad chere
To yiuyn laude & thankyng to goddys *g*ce
Wich so glad lengthyd hyre lyuys space

¶ O how meruelous was this myracle
And how fer beyundyn al m*â*nys wyt
That notwythstondyng naturys obstacle
The heed from the body so fer flyt
And so longe awey ageyn was knyt
Therto & to the cure of that pyne
Neuere nedyth helpe of lechys medycine

¶ Weel may this leche be clepyd a lord
Wich contunyd dyuydyd so vyolently
And discontunyd can at **a word**[xvi]
Settyn ageyn & so craftyly
Contun*y* the partys & hem sette so ny

[216v[b]]

Wyth owte leche crafth that unothe aspye
Where deuysy*ô*n was shuld a subtyl ihe

¶ And not oonly maruelous this myracle was
Of the vyrgyns uprysyng ageyn
But many other thyngys wich in the plaas
Wern in the mene tyme doon certeyn
As they wiche there present were seyin
Wyth here owyn eyne & so m*ô*n yet tho
Wich thedyr on pilgrymage lyst for to go

¶ Fyrst al the begynnyng whan Wenefreds heed
Cradoc smet of w[t] grete cruelnesse
So was hys name of blood ful reed
Sprang abowtyn gret plenteuousnesse
Up on the stonys bothe more & lesse
Wiche in the aleye as yt do*û*n ran leyn
Wich neuer aftyr awey myht wasshe no reyn

¶ More ouyr wher the heed took restynge
Aftyr yt longe had rollyd to & fro
Anoon so plenteuous a welle gan sprynge
That al the fyrst fal therof myht goo
A mylle sufficyently & so myht moo
Yf nede were & in to the see doun
Of watyr yt sendyth gret foyso*û*n

¶ Gret wundyr yt was for the place before
Wher this newe plenteuous welle dede sprynge
Was wone watyr to han neuere more
Lesse gret reyn thedyr ony dede brynge
Yet whanne yt ther cam wyth owte tar*y*ge
Among the stonys yt wanysshd gret & smal
Wherfore yt clepyd was the drye wale

¶ But nowe chawgyd ys w[t]owte drede
The name therof as the legende doth spelle
For in here language ·/ Fenwey · Wenefrede
Yt ys clepyd & in oure speche the welle
So man & beste of euery maladye
Wyth deuocy*ô*n souht ys founde remedye

¶ And for the grete remedyis wich fo*û*de ben there
The hooly welle yt ys clepyd on to this day
But the toun therof hyht Basyngwere
Policronica seyth so yt ys no nay
In whom so seke he fynde may
What veniaunce regnyth on the kynrede
Of Cradoc wiche dede this horryble dede

¶ For notw[t]stondyng that the seyd auctour
Of this trespace bothe soule & body
Sank in to helle in the same our

[217r^{a}; Bottom of folio cropped away; text is safe.]

The wiche yt dede euene sodeynly
As ys seyd beforn perpetuelly
Ther to a bydyn yet a general peyne
On the kynrede as the seyd book seyth doth regne

¶ For alle the chyldryn as he doth merke
Wiche ony wher ben born of that kynrede
Lych doggys euere whoule & berke
Tyl s***û***me of here frendys hem do lede
Remedye to sekyn of blyssyd Wenefrede
At this hooly welle or at the leste
At Shrewysbury wher she now doth reste

¶ But not oonly for the deth of this virgyne
Whom Cradok in hys cruel tyrannye
Slow with his swerd thorgth male engyne
But eek fro the froward obstynacye
In wiche unrepentaunt he dede dye
This veniaunce fel on his kynrede
The remedye reseruyd to seynt Wenefrede

¶ By wiche punysshment men m***ô***un c***ô***ceyue
How gret displesaunce beforn the face
Of god yt ys frowardly to weyne
By fynal irrepentaunce from his grace
Wherfore yche man whyl he hat space
In this werd here for no maner synne
From hope of mercy loke he neuere tw***y***ne

¶ For doctours seyn that yet neuer was synne
So greuous dom in this lyf sothly
That yf the doere ther of wold blynne
And wyth a contryt herte cryin god mercy
He shuld yt han for Judas treuly
Schuld not han be dampnyd thow he cryst betrayid
Had not his herte by wanhope ben afrayd

¶ But dygressy***ô***n lesth now returne
And aftyr the legende tellyn I wyl ageyn
Of two wundrys wiche in the burne
Of this hooly welle be founde certeyn
As ex***p***ience me tawt the soth to seyn
The yer of grace to spekyn pleynly
A thoused foure hundryd & eygthe & fourty

¶ These ben the wundrys where of doth telle
This virgyns legende w^{t}owte fable
That stonys wich ben in the seyd welle
What grete & smale innumerable
Whethyr they be fix or meuable
In many sundry placys sprenklyd be
W^{t} dropys of blood al fressh to se

[217r^{b}]

¶ And not oonly thus in the welle hed
But also doûnward in the rennyng flood
Stondyn on the stonys dropys as reed
As yt were newely sprenklyd blood
The mos eek wich ther growyth ys good
Up on the stonys & of redolence
As plesaunt as Oliban***û*** or franken***ê***ce

¶ And notwythstondyng that contunely
The watyr ouyr rennyth w^{t} gret uiolence
The forseyd stonys semyng blody
Yet may yt no wyse awey wasshe thens
The blody dropys swich resistence
Ys youyn ther to by the lord aboue
For the blyssyd virgyns Wenefredys loue

¶ But yf ony man dowte her of & wene
That the kynde of the stonys ys so to growe
Lete hym brynge thedyr fayr & clene
Stonys not spottyd & in the welle hem throwe
And marke hem so that he kun hem knowe
And aftyr certeyn tyme come thedyr ageyn
And as spottyd as othere he shal h***ê*** fynde certeyn

¶ Of this laste balade y haue no euydence
But oonly relacy***ô***n of men in that cuntre
To whom me semyth shuld be youyn credence
Of alle swyche thyngys as ther doon be
For whan y was there myn hoost told me
That yt soth was wyth owte drede
For hym self had seyin yt doon in dede

¶ Anothyr thyng also myn oost me told
Ryth notable aftyr myn opyny***ô***n
Wich to reportyn me makyth the more bold
That yt excityn may m***ê***nys affeccy***ô***n
And styryn hem to han the more deuocy***ô***n
To the blyssyd virgyne Seynt Wenefrede
And to trostyn in hyre helpe yf they haue nede

¶ The mater ys thys who so lyst to here
Wiche feythfully my forseyd ost told me
That a religyous man a whyht frere
Dwellyng as he seyde in couentre
ffor the synguler affeccy***ô***n wich that he
Had to this vyrgyne was wone yerly
Thedyr to comyn on pylgrymage deuohtly

¶ Wher com***ô***unly he abood oo day or two
And sumtyme more aftyr his deuocy***ô***n
And ych day hys leggys & his body also
He wessh in the watyr wich rennyth do***û***n
Owt of the welle for no men mo***û***n

[217v[a]]

W[t]in the welle comyn ***q*** he sothly
At this dayis & this the cause ys why

¶ Kyng herry the fourte for the tendyr loue
Wich that he had to this virgyn pure
Dede maken a chapel ouer the welle aboue
Myhty and strong for to endure
On thre partys closyng yt in sure
And that no man presum***y*** shuld to com ther ny
A gret grate ys sette on the fourte party

¶ For pleynly hym thouhte aftyr his entent
In to that welle wich clepyd ys holy
That ony man shuld goon was not c***ô***uenyent
Syth men myht watyr han sufficyently
Hem wyth to wasshyn euene therby
Wich at the grate yssuyth owt so sore
That knedeep yt ys at the fallyng or more

¶ And the lengere this frere had in usage
Wich as y seyd cam fro couentre toun
Hedyr to this welle on pilgrimage
The more euer greu his affeccyoun
To seynt Wenefrede & his deuocyoun
As he to us wiche here do dwelle
Ful oft***y*** whanne he cam wepyng wold telle

¶ For sekyr hym thoute whan he had ben here[xvii]
And cam hom ageyn as he oftyn had doo
That no syknesse of al that yer
Wiche myche myht hurt***y*** shuld com***y*** hym to
And more he fully trustyd also
That thorgth the meryht of his lady
That yer he ne deyin shuld sodeynly

¶ This frere ***q*** myn ost this relygious man
Oo tyme but late whan he was here
And hym to wasshyn as he was wone began
Besyde the welle in the ryuer
Whan he saw how fayr was & cleer
The watyr in the welle anoon desyryd he
Yf yt had be possible ther in to haue be

¶ And whan he saw that by no maner myht
In to the welle com***y*** myht al his body
In at the grate as fer as he myht
Bothyn hys armys he shof deuouhtly
In his herte besechyng his lady
That she his deuocy***ô***n wouchydsaf to attende
And of hyre frenshyppe sum tookne hym sende

¶ And whan he awhyle his armys there
Had holdyn & drow hem owt ageyn

[217v[b]]

Ful of rede spottys bothe they were
Lich as the stonys wiche in the welle leyn
As alle men wiche there present were seyn
Wiche for no wasshyng he thens myht remeue
Ner shulde thogh he had wasshyn tyl eue

¶ Whan puplysshd was this nouel chaunce
Anoon diuers opynyouns mong the peple gan growe
S***û***me seyde yt was a signe a veniaunce
For his presumpcyo***û*** of god up on hym throwe
And s***û***me seydyn that they dede trowe
That a specyal tookne yt rathere shuld be
That in Wenefredys grace syingulerly stood he

¶ And whan he these diuers opynyouns dede here
And what yche man seyde bothe moost & leest
Trustyng in his lady he was of good chere
Hopyng alwey that al was for the beste
And when euene cam he wente to hys reste
Y kan not seyn whethyr or not he slepte
But weel y wot the spottys al nyht he kepte

¶ And on the morwyn ful deuothly
Up he roos whan the day gan sprynge
Ouyr the welle in the chapel of his lady
As he cowde he hym dysposyd to synge
In wich messe ful tendyrly wepynge
Brefly in his herte on this manere
To hyre he maad hys preyere

¶ Lady ***q*** he for whos sake
Y hedyr am come on pylgrymage
Yf yt be so thou weniaunce hast take
Upon me here for myn owtrage
Good lady neuere hem fro me swage
Whyl y lewe here for the correccyoun
Of the gret offence of my transgressyoun

¶ And yf for ony other cause yt be
That thou this tookne to me hast sent
Enterly lady y beseche the
Of alle myn herte wyth hool entent
That these spottys from me hent
On the same place where them tok y
This ys the s***û***me of my preyere lady

¶ And aftyr this whan he messe had doo
Deuouhtly to the welle do***û***n he went
And as he dede fyrst ageyn ryht so
In at the grate w[t] deuouht entent
As fer as he myht boothe armys he sent
And aftyr a whyle drow hem owt ageyn
Fayr & clene wyth owte spotte or bleyn

[218r[a]]

¶ Wich doon he laude yaf & preysyng
To his lady & loue blyssyd Wenefrede
And aftyr that he takyn had refresshyng
Lych as he cam he hom ageyn yede
Lo syre ***q*** my ost so god me spede
This story ys soth wich y you haue told
Wherfore to reportyn yt ye may be bold

¶ Now alle lateral maters lete we be
Of this seyd welle wiche clepyd ys holy
And to the fyrst processe ageyn turne we
And forth do procede in the story
Of hyre legende where as seyd haue y
Aftyr hyre hefdyng & reysyng up ageyn
So many grete maruayls were shewyd & seyn

¶ Whan men dwellyng in that prouynce
Wiche long beforn god not knowyng
Seyns his grace dede wrestle & wynce
Relacyoun had takyn of euery thyng
Wich doon was at Wenefredys hefdyng
They come to Beunoon & hym dede beseche
That the feyth of cryst he wold hem teche

¶ Whom he receyuyd ful benyngnely
And baptisyd hem wiche not baptisyd were
And hem instruit ful dyligently
Of goddys byddyng in the holsum lore
And so euere dayly more & more
Crystys feyth abowtyn gan sprynge & sprede
Thorgh meryth of Beunoon & of Wenefrede

¶ But in hyre lyf specyally forth to procede
Y sey that whan she was reysyd ageyn
From deth to lyf she noon othere dede
Wold doon but Beunoon folwyn certeyn
Diligently attendyng what he dede seyn
And specyally tho thyngys wyche hyre myht brynge
To that she desyryd ***p***fyht lyuynge

¶ And whan she informyd was sufficyently
In swyche thyngys as she desiryd to be
Ryth sone aftyr ful deuouhtly
Sche fel plat be forn here maystrys knee
Besechyng hym that he hyre ueyle wold he
And w[t] his holy handys hyre sacryn as nunne[xviii]
Desyring to ***p***forme that she had begunne

¶ And long aftyr hyre fadrys assent
Had ther to & of hyre frendys alle
Performyd was hyre holy entent
And hyre heed curyd w[t] a blak palle
And she entryd & set in a n***û***nys stalle[xix]

[218r[b]]

So to enduryn wyth goddys grace
Al the resydue of hyre lyuys space

¶[xx] Whan al this ***p***formyd was & doon
And Wenefrede stablysshd in hyre newe grace
By an aungel monestyd was Beunoon
To remeuyn on to a solytarye place
By yund the watyr fyfty myle space
But not forthan or he thens went
To Wenefrede he told al hys entent

¶ Fyrst of al thyngys y c***ô***mytte ***q*** he
My place here on to your gouernaunce
In wich y wyl that youre dwellyng be
These seuene yer aftyr w[t] owte waryaunce
Aftyr wiche tyme by goddys ordynaunce
From hens ye shul remeue also
As god wyl al thyng must nedys be doo

¶ Wich seyd anoon he took his weye
Of whos partynge she was sory
Saf that goddys wyl she ne durst geyn sey
And to the welle she hym folwyd where cruelly
Sche hefdyd was & there fynally
He hyre counfortyd & bad in god be glad
For two grete pryuylegys he hyre grauntyd had

¶ The fyrst ys that the stonys here in this welle
Shul neuere for bern here reednesse
But as spottyd w[t] blood shul euere stylle dwelle
Of thy martyrdam to bern wytnesse
The secund ys that who in ony distresse
To the deuouhtyly make his preyere
By the thrydde tyme god shal hym here

¶ More ouyr douhtyr yt ys goddys wyl
That yerly a present tyl that y deye
Thou me sende but how me tyl
Yt shal be brouht y wyl the seye
Here in this welle loke thou yt leye
And how forth to me yt shal be brouht
Lete god alone & kare thou nouht

¶ But the next day aftyr come hedyr ageyn
And whan thou comyst yf yt not here bee
Wote weel that y yt receyuyd haue certeyn
And in contrarye wyse yf thou yt here see
Of my deth take that for a suyrte
And haue of me rememberaunce in thy preyere
Fareweel Wenefrede for y leue the here

¶ This seyd & doon forth wente Beunoon
Thedyr god had ordeynyd his dwellyng

[218v[a]]

And blyssyd Wenefrede returnyd anoon
Hom ageyn ful weel remembryng
Al that was seyd at here departyng
And to fulfillyn al his comaundement
Sche hym yerely aftyr sent a present

¶ And by processe of tyme the soth to tel
A fayr newe chesyble messe in to doo
Sche ordeynyd & wrappyd in a whyth mantel
Ther he had bodyn she yt leyd also
But on the next morwe whan the welle to
Sche retornyd hyre present there she fond ageyn
Wich to hyre of hys deth was tokne certen

¶ And whanne Wenefrede ther in c*ô*tynuel absty*n*ece
Of body and in spirytual afflicyo*û*
God hath seruyd wyth gret dylygence
Ful yerys seuene by heuenely *û*monycyo*û*
Aftyr the prophecye of hyre mast·/ Beunoon[xxi]
She excytyd was to a nothyr place
The remnaunt to *p*formyn ther of hyre space

¶ The place wich she styryd was to
That tyme was clepyd Wythyriatus
A monasterye of men & w*û*m*ê* also
Se*p*atly dwellyng the story seth thus
Hyre abot was blyssyd Elerius
Wiche alle ordly thyngys hauyng in dyspyht
In heuenely thyngys oonly set hys delyht

¶ To wich monasterye blyssyd Wenefrede
Tweyne men of ryht *p*fyht lyuyng
Deiferus and Saturnus dede lede
To the Abot Elerye hyre recomendyng
And whan the entent he know of hyre comyng
Ful benyngnely hyre receyuyd he
As a man wiche ful was of cheryte

¶ To whom whanne she wyth wepyng yhe
Of hyre lyf had told al the processe
He hyre c*ô*myttyd to blyssyd Theonye
Hys modyr wiche that tyme Abbesse
Was of the vyrgins & with gret gladnesse
She hyre admyttyd on to hyre couent
There to *p*formyn hyre holy entent

¶ Of whos gouernaunce what shuld y sey more
But that she wich excercysyd was suffyciently
Ere she cam there in relygious lore
Was to hyre sustrys a noble exemplary
Of *p*fyht lyuyng wherfore wurthily
Whan Theonye was takyn to goddys grace
She succedyd Abbesse in hyre place

[218v[b]]

¶ And al be yt that she loth was ther to
Yet at the Abot Elerius comaundement
She hyre submyttyd his wyl to doo
Of al hyre herte w[t] humble entent
And anoon swich lyht of exemple she sent
Be forn hyre sustrys of *p*fyht holynesse
That styryd were to folwyn hyre bothe mor·/ & lesse

¶[xxii] But certeyn ful fer yt passyht my wyt
To tellyn w[t] how feruent deuocy*ô*n
She to god in hyre soule was inwardly knyt
And how she upward was rapt in c*ô*templacy*ô*n
And how exempler was hyre owtward c*ô**û*sacy*ô*n
For unatainyd pleynly no thyng lesth she
Wich to hyre sustrys of helthe example myht be

¶ And whan thus long tyme ful *p*fyhtly
God seruyd hadde blyssyd Wenefrede
He hyre yaf warnyng thorgth hys mercy
That the tyme was com*y* to receyu*y* hyre mede
In eternal blysse for hyre good dede
And this warnyng was youyn the sothe to say
As be nyht in hyre oratorye in preyere she lay

¶ And whan she this wyse had warnyng take
Oh hyre passage to goddys grace
Wyth al hyre herte hyrs redy to make
She began anoon & w[t]in short space
Aftyr the Abot she sent of the seyd place
Blyssyd Elerye & he cam ful sone
Of whom mong other thyngs[xxiii] she axyd a bone

¶ The bone was thys than whan she were
Dissoluyd & past owt of thys owtlawrye
Hyre body myht be byryid euene there
Next hys modrys body blyssyd Theonye
Wich grauntyd to heueneward hyre ihe
She lyfth up & deuouhtly began to preye
In wiche preyere she thus dede seye

¶ Lord ih*û* gramercy wich of thy goodnesse
Wouchystsaf to clepe me on to thy grace
Now receywe lord thorgth thy mercyfulnesse
My sprryt to the syht of thy blysful face
Wich seyd anoon yt forth dede pace
On the ioyful blysse wich lestyth ay
The monyth of Nouembre on the thrydde day

¶ Now blyssyd Wenefrede wiche the passage
Of bodyly deth twyist dedyst make
Of the secunde deth from the cruel owtrage
Thy seruantys preserue that the fendys blake
N[xxiv]e power moun han hem thedyr to take

Whan they hens passe·/

[i] This title is written in the red ink of the rhyme braces. It appears on line 24.
[ii] Three-line initial illuminated in gold and framed in a red-and-blue background with white highlights. To the left, a three-branched frond decoration stretching to line 21 below and 14 lines up into the legend of All Souls.
[iii] This paragraph mark is written inside the left-hand ruling of the column, whereas the first three were written outside of it. The third and fourth paragraph marks in this column are also written outside the ruling.
[iv] The last two lines of this stanza have no rhyme braces.
[v] This word appears to be written "pry***n***y," but sense calls for "pryuy."
[vi] This line is struck through in red ink, perhaps the same ink as the rhyme braces.
[vii] This word appears to be written "disla***n***y."
[viii] This paragraph mark, like the last paragraph mark on the previous side of the folio, is rubricated in red. I have carefully reproduced the coloration of all the paragraph marks throughout this transcription.
[ix] This "i" is dotted with the red ink of the braces.
[x] This word could perhaps be read as "a***n***ysyd."
[xi] This final "e" has been deliberately crossed out with the end of the rhyme brace.
[xii] This paragraph mark is written outside the left-ruling of the column.
[xiii] There is a large, brown fingerprint smudge over this paragraph mark.
[xiv] Another brown fingerprint smudge is to be found over this paragraph mark, although it is a somewhat smaller and lighter smudge than the one noted in previously.
[xv] Again, there is here another fingerprint smudge, albeit still smaller and lighter than the previous ones on this folio.
[xvi] "a word" has been written in darker ink (black) over a scratched out portion of the original text.
[xvii] The final "e" of this word is blotted out by the red ink of the braces.
[xviii] The last words of this line are difficult to make out.
[xix] It seems as though there was something once written in the space immediately below the text on this page. It appears to have been later than the text of the *Lyf* itself and was erased by abrasure.
[xx] From here to the end of the text, the paragraph marks alternate between being written just inside the left-hand ruling of the column and just outside of it. Previously, all paragraph marks were written inside this ruling, as is the present one. The red one following it is written outside the ruling and the alternation continues from there on.
[xxi] The red used here is the same as that in the paragraph marks, not the darker red ink of the braces.
[xxii] This paragraph mark appears to the right of the left-hand vertical ruling.
[xxiii] This "s" has been added in lead point.
[xxiv] This "n" shows only the faintest traces of red highlighting, and the "t" in the line above it is about the same in this regard, but the traces are no doubt there. As with the highlighting of lines 715-23 above, the ink used here is the red of the paragraph marks, not that of the rhyme braces.