

St Winifride's Relics:
The Twelfth-Century Life of St Winifride
by Prior Robert of Shrewsbury and A
***Morbid Taste for Bones* by Ellis Peters**



Prof. Jane Cartwright

Hagiography (Lives of the saints – *vita* in Latin *buchedd* in Welsh)

- Hagiography – Greek ἅγιος, ‘holy’, and γράφια, i.e. sacred writings
- one of the richest and most significant literary genres of the medieval world.
- Thomas Head: ‘Hagiography provides some of the most valuable records for the reconstruction and study of the practice of premodern Christianity...Works of hagiography can thus tell us at least as much about the author and about those who used the text – their ideals and practices, their concerns and aspirations – as it does about the saints who are their subjects.’

- First Christian saints were martyrs who died for their faith, including biblical figures such as St Peter and St Paul;
- historical characters one of the earliest accounts = martyrdom of Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna who was burned alive c. 150-180; his hagiographer claimed his flesh smelt of 'burning bread'.

Image: engraving by Michael Burghers 1685; Alekajs at en.wikipedia, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons



- Another historical martyr, St Perpetua of Carthage, was thrown into prison c. 203 when she refused to sacrifice to pagan gods, and much of the account of her terrifying experiences is thought to have been composed by her during the period in which she was incarcerated with her young child. Perpetua was eventually thrown to wild animals, along with other Christians including Felicity and Saturninus, at the military games organized in celebration of Emperor Septimius Severus's birthday.

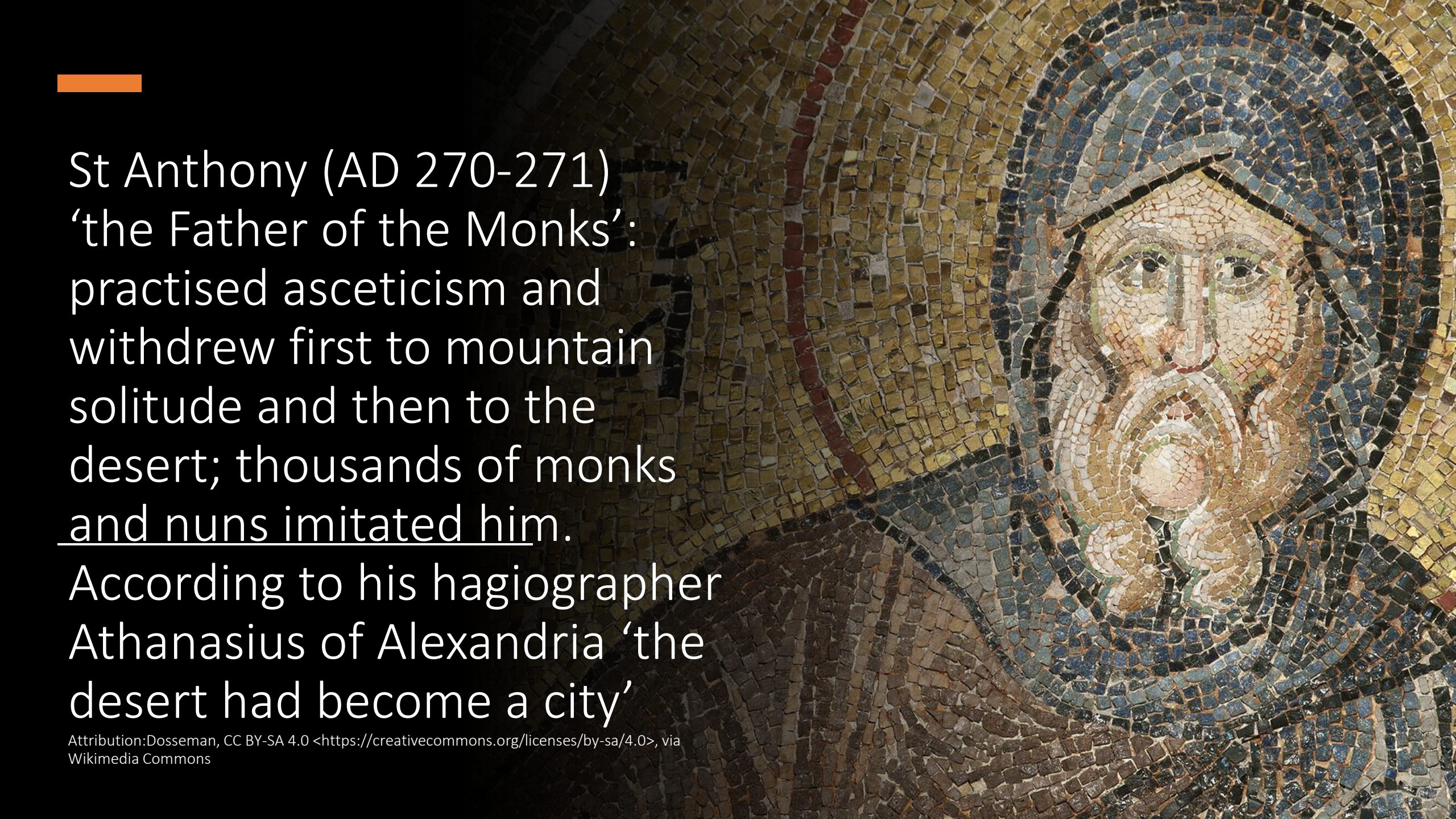
Image :[https://www.learnreligions.com/thmb/QUqQI4LQvcO_BUFR_-cl2glATsw=/768x0/filters:no_upscale\(\):max_bytes\(150000\):strip_icc\(\)/ScreenShot2019-04-04at9.21.54PM-30a0e0faddad43eebc8d1a9476c825e2.png](https://www.learnreligions.com/thmb/QUqQI4LQvcO_BUFR_-cl2glATsw=/768x0/filters:no_upscale():max_bytes(150000):strip_icc()/ScreenShot2019-04-04at9.21.54PM-30a0e0faddad43eebc8d1a9476c825e2.png)



- Persecution of Christians in the Roman Empire began with Nero in 64 CE and ended after the Christian conversion of Constantine (306–337) when Christianity was finally legitimized by the Edict of Milan in 313.
- When it was no longer necessary to die for one's Christian beliefs, a new form of 'martyrdom' became prevalent among the early saints: this involved sacrificing personal wealth and property, one's sexuality, emotional ties, and familial bonds.

Image: [Constantine Slaying the Lion \(tapestry\) - 1637.jpg \(887×1500\) \(wikimedia.org\)](#)



A detailed mosaic of St. Anthony, showing him with a long, curly beard and hair, wearing a blue and gold robe. He is depicted with a halo, and the background consists of concentric circles of gold and blue mosaic tiles. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

St Anthony (AD 270-271)
'the Father of the Monks':
practised asceticism and
withdrew first to mountain
solitude and then to the
desert; thousands of monks
and nuns imitated him.

According to his hagiographer
Athanasius of Alexandria 'the
desert had become a city'

Attribution: Dosseman, CC BY-SA 4.0 <<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>>, via
Wikimedia Commons

- In the fourth century veneration of the saints' relics began to be formalized, since, as noted by Peter Brown, the dead bodies of saints were perceived to bridge the gap between heaven and earth.
- One of the principal roles of the saint was to act as an intercessor, mediating between ordinary Christians and God.
- Although strictly speaking all Christians could be regarded as saints once they had entered the kingdom of heaven, the honorific title came to be reserved for a selection of particularly worthy holy men and women who gained direct access to heaven because of their personal sacrifice and great virtues.

- Ambrose of Milan (c. 340–397) discovered the remains of the twins St Gervasius and St Protasius, translated them to his own newly-built basilica in Milan (where he was later buried between them), and actively promoted their cults and the healing powers associated with their relics.
- Fragments of their relics were distributed throughout Italy and Gaul and many other churches were dedicated to the martyred twins: effectively Ambrose set a precedent demonstrating how saints' cults could spread, proliferate and become international.

Introduction to hagiography, see Jane Cartwright, *Hystoria Gweryddon yr Almaen: The Middle Welsh Life of St Ursula* (Cambridge: MHRA, 2020) and Thomas Head (ed.), *Medieval Hagiography* (Routledge: London, 2000).

- 
- 
- Christian ascetics Lives of St Antony and St Martin hugely influential; many historical martyrs and ones presumed legendary; noteworthy examples of Merovingian, Irish, Anglo-Saxon and Welsh saints' Lives.
 - Virginity became almost a pre-requisite for feminine sanctity and the body of the virgin is often a metaphor for the body of the Church; pollute the virgin's body = pollute her faith.

- St Jerome:
- ‘while a woman serves for birth and children, she is different from man as body is from soul. But when she wants to serve Christ more than the world, then she shall cease to be called a woman and shall be called man.’
(*Commentarium in Epistolam ad Ephesios*, PL, 26 cols 459-533)

- Third gender? Chaste clerics

Peter Brown: virginity in the early Church important for men and women; by Middle Ages predominantly linked with female sanctity.

Howard Bloch: ‘a certain inescapable logic of virginity, most evident in medieval hagiography, leads syllogistically to the conclusion that the only good virgin – that is, the only true virgin – is a dead virgin’ (p. 120)

- Female saints regarded themselves as married to Christ (their eternal husband) and many of their Lives revolve around the conflict that ensues when they refuse to marry or have intercourse.

E.R. Henken:

‘Tradition pays no, or virtually no, attention to their lives until they are confronted with male sexuality...The encounter with male sexuality is the only major element in the biographical pattern which appears with any consistency for the Welsh women saints.’ (*Traditions of the Welsh Saints*, pp. 13-14)



Welsh saints:

David (Dewi), Beuno, Winefride (Gwenfrewy), Deiniol, Teilo, Dwywnwen, Tudful, Wrw, Wnnen, Brigit (San Ffraid), Illtud, Cadog, Cynog, Non, Melangell etc.

Sources for the Welsh saints:

- Prose Lives of saints (*vitae* in Latin, *bucheddau* in Welsh)
- Poetry to saints: Poets of the Princes and Poets of the Nobility
- Saints' genealogies: *Bonedd y Saint* and *Plant Brychan*
- place names, church dedications, holy wells, calendars and images (e.g. stained glass, wall paintings).

AHRC project '*Seintiau: Saints in Wales, Vitae Sanctorum Cambriae*'



Canolfan Uwchefrydiau Cymreig a Cheltaidd Prifysgol Cymru
University of Wales Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies



Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David

KING'S
College
LONDON



Arts & Humanities
Research Council

Medieval Welsh Poetry:

Poets of the Princes (3)

Canu Cadfan – Llywelyn Fardd (*fl. c.* 1150-75)

Canu Tysilio – Cynddelw Brydydd Mawr (*fl. c.* 1155-1200)

Awdl i Ddewi Gwynfardd Brycheiniog (*fl. c.* 1180)

Poets of the Nobility (84)

Matthew, Mark, Luke, John

Archangel Michael, John the Baptist, Peter, the seven Archangels, Nicholas, Mary Magdalene, Katherine, Margaret, Simon and Jude

David, Beuno, Winefride, Curig, Mwrog, Cawrdaf, Cynhafal, Tydecho, Illtud, Deiniol, Tysilio, Cadfan, Cathen, Cynog, Dwynwen, Tyrnog, Cedig, Pedrog, Llawddog, Mechyll, Mordeyrn, Elian, Tyfodwg, Llonio, Cadog, Ffraid (Brigid), Dyfnog

Middle Welsh Prose Lives

Native saints 25%

Dewi/David

Beuno

Gwenfrewy / Winefride

Collen

Curig

Ieuan Gwas Padrig

Llawddog

Hystoria Gweryddon yr

Almaen Wrswla/Ursula

International saints

75%

Catrin / Katherine of Alexandria

Mair Fadlen / Mary Magdalene

Martha

Margred / Margaret of Antioch

Mathew / Matthew

Marc / Mark

Edmwnd /Edmund

Luc / Luke

Doret / Dorothy

Ieuan / John

Andras / Andrew

Iago / James

Mihangel / Michael

Mair o'r Aifft/Mary of Egypt

Tomas o'r India / Thomas of India

Marthin / Martin

Nicolas / Nicholas

Paul Ebostol / Paul

Pedr / Peter

Erasmws /Erasmus

Einion neu Fartholomews / Bartholomew

Silfestr / Silvester

Simon a Jwd / Simon and Jude

Lawrens / Laurence

Welsh Poetry to St Winefride (Gwenfrewy)

Ieuan Brydydd Hir (*fl.* 1450-1485)

Tudur Aled(*c.* 1465-*c.* 1525)

Siôn ap Hywel ap Llywelyn Fychan
(*fl.* *c.* 1490-1532)

Anonymous poetry in metre
known as *cywydd*.

*Image: Stained glass at Holywell; Martin Crampin Stained Glass in
Wales website*



The Lives of St Winefride

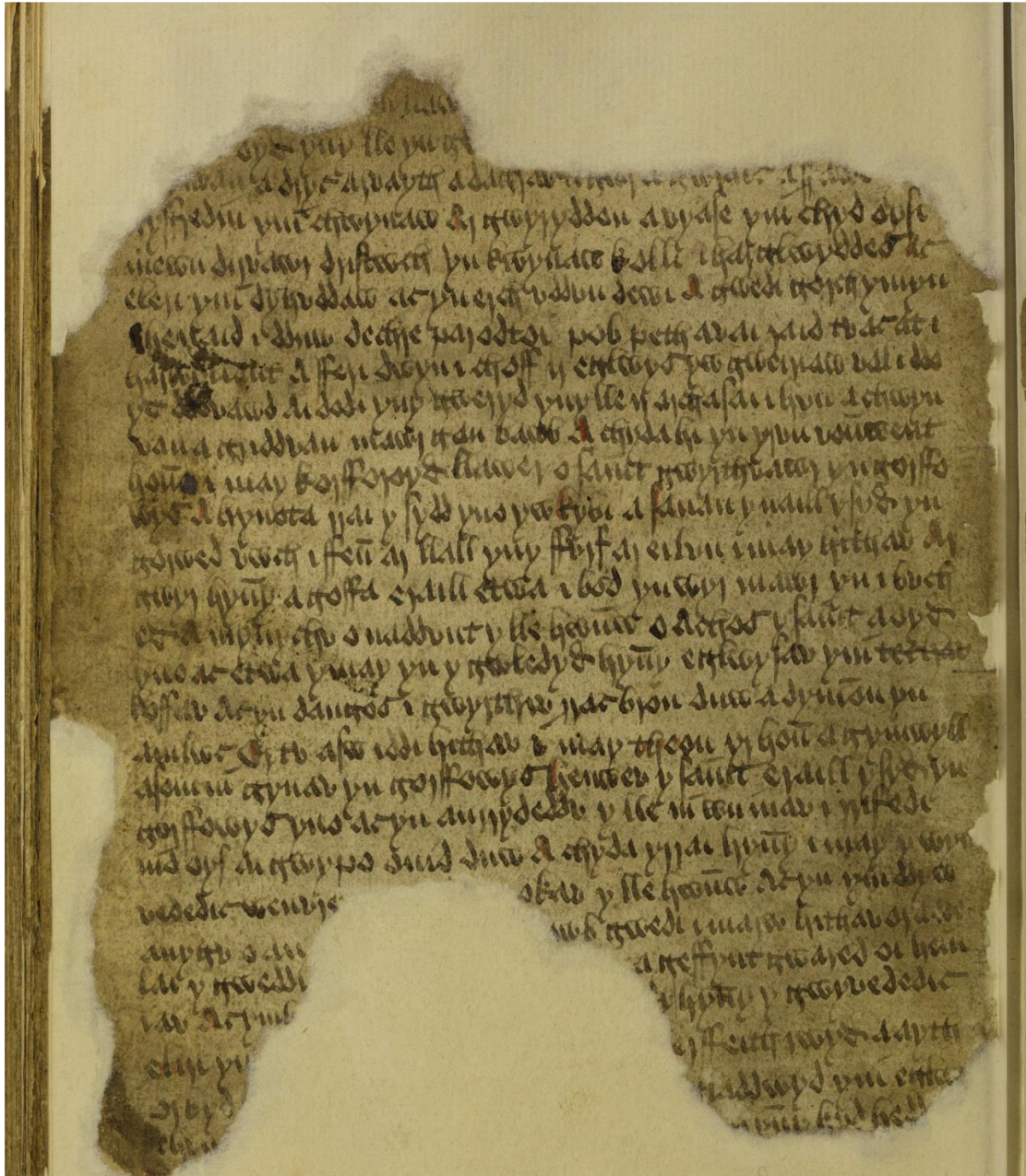
The twelfth-century Latin Lives:

- anonymous *Vita S. Wenefrede* (s. XII) London, British Library, Cotton MS Claudius A.v, fols 138r-145r (s. XIII1)
- Prior Robert of Shrewsbury's *Vita et translatio S. Wenefredae* Oxford, Bodleian Library, Laud. Misc. 114 (s. XII); Cambridge, Trinity College O.4.42 (s. XIII) and Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale, 8072 (1631)



The Welsh manuscripts:

- Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, MS Peniarth 27ii, pp. 91-121 (s. XV₂)
- Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, MS Llanstephan 34, pp. 189-249 (1580x1600)
- Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, MS Peniarth 225, fols 269-302 (1594-1610)
- Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, MS Llanstephan 104, pp. 217-99 (c.1710x1715)
- *Hystoria o Uched Beuno*, Oxford, Jesus College, MS 119 c. 1346 (summary of her legend in the Life of St Beuno), fols 104r-109r



The Welsh manuscripts:

- Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, MS Peniarth 27ii, pp. 91-121 (s. XV₂)
- Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, MS Llanstephan 34, pp. 189-249 (1580x1600)
- Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, MS Peniarth 225, fols 269-302 (1594-1610)
- Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, MS Llanstephan 104, pp. 217-99 (c.1710x1715)
- *Hystoria o Uched Beuno*, Oxford, Jesus College, MS 119 c. 1346 (summary of her legend in the Life of St Beuno), fols 104r-109r

Summary of the Life of St Winefride by Prior Robert

- Winefride daughter of Tewyth lives with her parents in Tegeingl, Flintshire.
- Her father grants St Beuno land near his home so that he can build a church there.
- Winefride receives a religious education from Beuno and decides that she does not wish to marry but remain chaste.
- One day when her parents are at church with Beuno a local prince called Caradog ab Alawog calls at the house and she offers him a drink and extends hospitality towards him whilst waiting for her parents.

Life of Winefride 2

- Caradog, filled with lust, requests that she sleeps with him and reminds her that he is the son of a wealthy king.
- Winefride says that she will go to her room for a short while to prepare, but escapes from the house and runs to the church.
- Realising that she has tricked him, Caradog inflamed with rage chases her and catches up with her. He says he previously loved her but if she will not have intercourse with her willingly, he'll cut off her head with his sword.
- Winefride tells him that she is betrothed to the son of the eternal king and that he should cut off her head since she rejects Caradog.
- He decapitates her and a miraculous healing well springs forth from the pool of blood. Her head rolls down the slope and over the threshold of the church door and her body falls outside.

Life of St Winefride 3

- Hearing the commotion Caradog and the congregation come out of the church and are horrified to see Caradog standing there with his bloody sword, showing no remorse.
- Beuno curses Caradog and he falls down dead: his body melts and disappears as he is swallowed up by the earth.
- Beuno places the virgin's head back on her shoulders, covers her body with his cloak and blows in her nostrils.
- She comes to life again and is well but always bears a white scar around her neck. Thereafter she is known as Wenefreda (Winefride wen – meaning 'white'; whereas before she was called 'Brewa').

Life of St Winefride 4

- The place, formerly known as Sychnant (Dry brook) was thereafter known as Ffynnon Winefride (Treffynnon Holywell).
- Maen Beuno /Beuno's Stone spattered in blood always remained in the well as a reminder of what had happened and the blood never washed away.
- Winefride became head of a community of nuns first at Holywell and later at Gwytherin and every year she would send Beuno a chasuble as a gift.
- Having served as abbess at Gwytherin for many years Winefride died much to the lamentation of her nuns and she was buried in the graveyard at Gwytherin where many other saints were also buried. Many miracles occurred and people were healed of all sorts of illnesses at her well in Holywell.

Life of St Winefride 5

The Translation:

During the reign of William the Conqueror a man named Roger built a monastery at Shrewsbury.

One of the monks at Shrewsbury became ill and the monks at Chester, hearing of this, held a vigil. Their sub-prior Radulph had a dream in which St Winefride told them to go on pilgrimage to her well and the sick monk would be healed. Two of them went and celebrated Mass in her church at Holywell and the brother at Shrewsbury regained his health.

The monks at Shrewsbury had long wished to obtain relics of their own. They had heard that there were many relics in Wales and they received permission from the bishop of Bangor to obtain Winefride's relics.

Life of St Winefride 6

- Abbot Herbert suggested that Prior Robert should journey to Wales to seek the relics. Robert again received permission from the bishop and also asked the local prince for his blessing [Probably Owain Gwynedd who took over from his father Gruffudd ap Cynan in 1137]
- The prince responded that since his own people did not show her the veneration she deserved, he would 'willingly comply'.
- Seven of them including Robert, the prior of Chester, a Welsh priest and a brother from the monastery went to seek the relics.
- A local nobleman warns them that the local people are opposed and they will meet resistance. That night the prior and his fellow monk experienced visions in which a woman (and former monk Godfrey) told them they would be successful.

Life of St Winefride 7

- They visit the local priest who tells them he had a vision in which an angel took him to the grave of St Winefride and told him not to oppose removing the stone from her grave and digging her up.
- A wicked local man objects and says the saints should not be torn from their native soil. He is paid off and they visit the cemetery where Winefride is buried alongside many other saints near her wooden chapel.
- No ordinary people can be buried there and a man who tried stealing bark from an oak tree in the cemetery (in order to make shoe laces) is struck ill when his hand withers.

Life of St Winefride 8

- The prior of Chester and the brother from Shrewsbury dig up the saint's bones. On their return journey a sick man is healed at an inn when given a drink containing dust from Winefride's skull.
- Winefride's body is set to rest at St Giles's Church and then translated to Shrewsbury Abbey accompanied by a grand procession and although rain clouds filled the sky, the deluge was held back by God. Countless miracles are said to occur at Shrewsbury [but none are in fact are described.]



Ellis Peters, *A Morbid Taste for Bones*

- Ellis Peters = Edith Pargeter (28 September 1913 – 14 October 1995)
- an English author of works in many categories, especially history and historical fiction; pseudonym was drawn from the name of her brother, Ellis, and a version of the name of the daughter of friends, Petra.
- She is probably best known for her murder mysteries, both historical and modern, and especially for her medieval detective series The Cadfael Chronicles.
- born in the village of Horsehay (Shropshire, England). She had Welsh ancestry, and many of her short stories and books (both fiction and non-fiction) are set in Wales and its borderlands, or have Welsh protagonists.
- During World War II she worked in an administrative role in the Women's Royal Naval Service; she never went to University and never married.
- [Image: edith pargeter - Bing images](#)

Ellis Peters (Edith Pargeter) 2

- In 1947 Pargeter visited Czechoslovakia and became fascinated by the Czech language and culture. She became fluent in Czech and published award-winning translations of Czech poetry and prose into English.
- She wrote 20 novels in the crime series The Cadfael Chronicles under the pseudonym Ellis Peters, many of which were televised.
- Cadfael = a fictional Benedictine monk of Welsh descent at Shrewsbury Abbey.
- Praised for her knowledge of medieval Catholicism and attention to detail in her historical fiction set in the Middle Ages.
- In an interview in 1993, she mentioned her own work before the Second World War as a chemist's assistant, where they prepared many of the compounds they sold. "We used to make bottled medicine that we compounded specially, with ingredients like gentian, rosemary, horehound. You never see that nowadays; those tinctures are never prescribed. They often had bitters of some sort in them, a taste I rather liked. Some of Cadfael's prescriptions come out of those years."

Ellis Peters (Edith Pargeter 3)

She also wrote four novels about Llywelyn ap Gruffudd, 'y llyw olaf' the last Prince of Wales d. 1282:

- *Sunrise in the West* (1974)
- *The Dragon at Noonday* (1975)
- *The Hounds of Sunset* (1976)
- *Afterglow and Nightfall* (1977)

A full list of her publications can be found on Wikipedia.

- Died aged 82 at her home in Shropshire following an earlier stroke.
- On 14 September 1997, a new stained glass window depicting St Benedict was installed in Shrewsbury Abbey and was dedicated to the memory of Edith Pargeter, with funds raised by donations from admirers of the author.

Source: [Edith Pargeter - Wikipedia](#)

Summary of A Morbid Taste For Bones

- In May 1137, Prior Robert of Shrewsbury Abbey is determined that the Abbey must have the relics of a saint. Finding no suitable local saint, Robert finds one in nearby Wales.
- Columbanus and Brother Jerome, Robert's clerk, go to St Winefride's well in North Wales for a cure for the sick monk at the abbey
- When they return Columbanus says Saint Winifred appeared to him, saying that her grave at Gwytherin was neglected; she wished to lie somewhere more accessible to pilgrims. Abbot Heribert approves the trip to Wales to retrieve Winifred's remains. Robert, Sub-Prior Richard, Jerome and Columbanus are joined by Cadfael (fluent in Welsh) and John (for menial work).

Summary of A Morbid Taste For Bones 2

- The bishop of Bangor and Owain Gwynedd (prince of Gwynedd) consent.
- When the monks reach Gwytherin the local priest, Father Huw, objects to Winifred's remains being removed without approval by the free men of the parish.
- Rhisiart, the community's most influential landowner, opposes Winifred's removal. Robert tries to bribe him, and Rhisiart is offended.
- The assembly dissolves, agreeing with Rhisiart. Father Huw persuades Robert to ask Rhisiart for another meeting the next day, to which he agrees.
- While John helps the servants (and Jerome and Columbanus keep vigil at Winifred's chapel), Robert, Richard, Cadfael and Huw await Rhisiart; he does not appear. The landowner is found dead in the woods, with an arrow in his chest bearing the mark of Engelard (an Englishman in love with Rhisiart's daughter, Sioned).
- When Engelard appears, Robert insists he be taken into custody. Engelard flees, and Brother John impedes the only local man close enough to stop him. Robert orders John held for breaking the law of Gwynedd and his vow of obedience; this pleases John as he is held where his love, Annest, lives.

Summary of A Morbid Taste For Bones 3

- Cadfael realises that Engelard's arrow did not kill Rhisiart: his back is damp, while his front is dry. Rhisiart was stabbed from behind by a dagger, falling face-down. After it rained, someone turned him over and pushed an arrow into the wound from the front.
- The locals see Rhisiart's death as an omen, and agree to Winifred's removal; Robert plans to exhume her remains after a three-night vigil. Cadfael hopes the superstition that a corpse will bleed if touched by the murderer will force a confession. At his suggestion Sioned asks that after each night's prayer, those keeping watch place their hands on Rhisiart's heart. Jerome does so, but Robert refuses.
- The third night, Cadfael and Columbanus keep watch. Columbanus has another seizure; he is removed unconscious in the morning, evading Sioned's request. He recovers after mass, saying that Winifred told him Rhisiart should be buried in her grave when she is removed.

Summary of A Morbid Taste For Bones 4

- Winifred is exhumed, her linen-wrapped skeleton placed in the coffin brought from Shrewsbury and the coffin sealed with wax.
- As Rhisiart is prepared for burial, Sioned asks Peredur (another suitor) to place a jewelled cross on his body. Peredur refuses, confessing that he found Rhisiart dead and pushed Engelard's arrow into the wound so Engelard would disappear as rival for Sioned's hand.
- Cadfael finds the flask of poppy syrup (brought for Columbanus) nearly empty, recalling that when Rhisiart was murdered, only Jerome drank the wine provided for the vigil; if Jerome slept through the vigil, he would be ashamed to admit it.
- Before the monks depart, Columbanus offers to keep vigil and falls asleep; a vision of a young woman wakes him, asking why he murdered Rhisiart. Columbanus confesses, begging forgiveness.
- Touching her veil, Columbanus realises the saint is Sioned and slashes at her with a knife before fleeing. Cadfael and Engelard tackle him outside, and Engelard accidentally breaks Columbanus' neck. Cadfael acts quickly; he, Engelard and Sioned undress Columbanus, open Winifred's coffin, replace her above Rhisiart's body and place Columbanus's body in the coffin and ensure that the coffin appears undisturbed.

Summary of A Morbid Taste For Bones 4

- Columbanus' sandals, shirt and habit are found on the chapel floor, with hawthorn petals around them and it assumed a miracle has taken place and he has gone to heaven.
- Robert proclaims that Columbanus's prayers have been answered. The villagers load the saint's coffin on a cart, and as they leave Cadfael sees John bidding them farewell.
- Two years later Bened calls at Shrewsbury, telling Cadfael that John and Annest are married and John will become smith after Bened. Sioned and Engelard, also married, have named their child Cadfael. Bened also notes that Winifred's former resting place is the scene of pilgrimages and cures; the Abbey reliquary is ignored by pilgrims. Cadfael muses that the saint will not mind sharing her grave with Rhisiart.

A Morbid Taste For Bones

How is Prior Robert portrayed in the novel?

p. 10 An alien priory, only a few miles distant, with its own miracle-working saint, and the great Benedictine house of Shrewsbury as empty of relics as a plunderer's almsbox! It was more than Prior Robert could stomach. He had been scouring the borderlands for a spare saint now for a year or more, looking hopefully towards Wales, where it was well known that holy men and women had been common as mushrooms in autumn in the past, and as little regarded.

- Prior Robert's fine frosty face momentarily registered displeasure and suspicion when he heard how his delegation was to be augmented. p. 29

Prior Robert, none too wisely, raised his commanding voice to shout them down. 'She said no word to you, for you had left her forgotten and unhonoured. She has turned to us for recognition, when she could get none from you.' pp. 67-68

Bishop of Bangor and local prince:

Life of St Winifride

And so coming there, he first visited the bishop of the church of Bangor and, having been sent over from him to the leader of that land, he was received in a kindly enough manner by him. When he had revealed the course of his journey and the reason for his arrival, the leader responded to him with these words, 'I for my part would not have supposed you and your fellows to have taken up such a work without the will of God and the desire of the blessed virgin. For perhaps seeing that the veneration due to her is not paid by her own people, she desires to be taken away elsewhere, so that she might receive honour from foreigners, which her own people either refuse or neglect to bestow on her. For that reason I grant willingly and I declare that I agree with his good will, in case that, opposing it, I should be forced to suffer her wrath as retribution.'

(ed. and trans. David Callendar – not yet available, but forthcoming on the Saints in Wales website; see also ed. and trans. Pepin and Feiss *Two Mediaeval Saints Lives* posted in Moodle)

A Morbid Taste For Bones

Bishop of Bangor and local prince

- In the third week of May they came to Bangor, and told their story to Bishop David, who was sympathetic, and readily gave his consent to the proposed translation, subject only to the agreement of Prince Owain, who was regent of Gwynedd owing to the illness of the old king, his father. They ran the prince to earth at Aber, and found him equally obliging, for he not only gave the desired approval, but sent his one English-speaking clerk and chaplain to show them the best and quickest way to Gwytherin. *MTFB*, p. 30

Life of St Winefride

interpreter and wicked local opposition paid off:

Then the prior, with that priest mediating and likewise being an interpreter, having addressed the company of people which was standing nearby, revealed the reason for his journey to them, and urged with pleasing words that they should grant him their assent. And leaving nothing of the visions or of the other things which had happened unsaid, and publicly asserting that he had taken up such a task on account of that virgin's urging and incitement, almost prevailed on them to fulfil his wish. But a certain person, a very evil man, suddenly appearing, stirred up the whole gathering, saying it was not just, that saints should be uprooted from their native soil and banished to a land not belonging to them at all. Still he continued, crying out as if induced by Furies that he could by no means allow it. But some, subduing his noise, asked the rest to seek advice and, words having been said, to respond suitably following the decision of everyone. Having agreed this and going away to take council, the prior, seeing the mind of the aforementioned man to be resolutely in a wicked condition, and that he was their only hindrance, at the advice of the brothers he sent a message to him, and, after money had been given, he allied that man more closely to himself, and sent him back to his fellows.

Cf. MTFB p. 26 on language issue and pp. 70-71 in MTFB Prior Robert tries to bribe local nobleman Rhisiart and fails.

[Cadfael S02E03 A Morbid Taste for Bones - Bing video](#)

A Morbid Taste For Bones

Finding the grave

Without hesitation and without haste he made his way to a little, overgrown mound aligned with the east end of the chapel, and sank to his knees at its head. 'Saint Winifred lies here,' he said... The saint had taken their prior by the hand and led him to her grave. No, the man had never before been to that place, nor had the grave been marked in any way, by a belated attempt to cut the brambles from it, for instance. It was as it had always been, and yet he had known it from all the rest.

No use at all pointing out, to a crowd swayed by emotion, that if Prior Robert had not previously been to the chapel, Brothers Jerome and Columbanus, his most faithful adherents, had, only the previous day, and with the boy Edwin to guide them, and what more probable than that one of them should have asked the child the whereabouts of the lady they had come all this way to find? *MTFB*, p. 135

Life of St Winefride

Finding the grave:

And so when the aforementioned brothers were brought to this place, to have what they had come for and to obtain their desire, coming before his companions at the prompting, I think, of the holy spirit, the aforementioned prior alone, with no-one leading him or pointing out the way, came by a direct path to the grave of St Winefride. And he who had never yet been there, and had never before been aware of the place of the grave through anyone showing him, having entered that churchyard alone with God as a guide, he came to the holy virgin's grave without deviating. And, standing at the head of the blessed virgin and awaiting companions, as if by some divine pronouncement it was brought to his mind inwardly that this was the tomb of the blessed virgin which he desired. Truly, when those who were supposed to indicate that place arrived, they showed him that same place which he himself had already chosen, and by which he was standing.

Middle Welsh Life similar to Prior Robert's but...

Llanstephan 34 names prior and priest:

Ydd oeddynt yno seithwyr i gyd. Nid amgen y prior a ddywetpwyd vchod a chyd ac ef gwr anrhydeddus Prior Caer[Lleon] Wlmar oedd y enw ac opheiriad santaidd a elwid Iddon a hanoedd o'r genedyl honno, a brawd o'r vynachloc a ddygassai gyd ac ef a thrywyr eraill.
(There were altogether there seven men. Namely the prior mentioned above and with him an honourable man the Prior of Caerleon called Wlmar and a holy priest named Iddon who was descended from that nation, and a brother of the monastery who he was taking with him and three other men.)

ed. and trans. Jane Cartwright (forthcoming Saints in Wales website)

Caxton (1484) names prior and priest:

And they were of them seuen persones / that is to wyte the pryour / And with hym the pryour of Chestre named wulmare / & a preest a man of grete vertue named Idon born of the same countrey / a monke also whome the pryour toke with hym / and thre other men