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**Competing Influences: Francia, Rome and the English in the
Seventh Century**

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CALUM HILARY FRANCIS PLATTS—COMPETING INFLUENCES: FRANCA, ROME AND THE
ENGLISH IN THE SEVENTH CENTURY

Francia and Rome loom large in English history in the seventh century. Both are visible in the evangelization of the English in the first half of the century, and their interaction is exemplified by Bishop Wilfrid's career (c. 650–710), including his connections with Frankish bishops and his appeals to Rome. Recent scholarship has proven beyond all doubt the significance of Frankish links and has begun to challenge the traditionally assumed dominance of Rome in the early missionary activity in Kent. In addition, it has sought to discern which Frankish kingdoms were most involved, arguing Austrasia and Burgundy dominated the Gregorian mission, while Chlothar II's (584–629) ultimate victory gave his kingdom of Soissons and later Neustria a more significant presence. This scholarship is scattered across various works and too often different threads of the narrative are divorced from one another—Wilfrid's career, for example, is rarely understood in the light of the earlier links forged by the missionaries. Furthermore, the English are often reduced to mere pawns in wider Frankish power-struggles. This thesis consequently seeks to analyse this theme of engagement with the Franks and the papacy across the whole seventh century from an English perspective, directly comparing the competing influences of the papacy in Rome and the Franks upon the English and seeking to discern their relative importance, their nature and whether they alter across the seventh century.

The thesis is structured around the 'Age of Wilfrid'. The evidence for Frankish and Roman contact is strongest around the figure of Bishop Wilfrid and the contact of others, such as the archbishops of Canterbury, Theodore (668–690) and Berhtwold (692–731), is in part a reaction to him. However, Wilfrid's contact was not unique and other figures must be analysed in their own right. It opens with a consideration of the evangelization, firstly from a Gregorian perspective (Chapter One) and then a Bedan perspective (Chapter Two), judging the relative significance of the Franks and the papacy in the evangelization and setting up the 'Age of Wilfrid'. Chapter Three explores the evidence of travel across the 'Age of Wilfrid', highlighting the regions with which the English had contact in this period and exploring its nature. Chapters Four and Five analyse Wilfrid and the English in Francia and Rome respectively. Chapter Six considers Wilfrid in the English Church, appraising the evidence which locates the bishop within his own Church. It also considers the memorialisation of Wilfrid in the eighth century, in particular the vexed question of Bede's attitude to the prelate.

This thesis argues that both the Franks and Rome were important to the English across the seventh century but that their relative importance alters depending upon time and context. Rome consistently took precedence in ecclesiastical affairs, while the Franks seem to have mattered more to Anglo-Saxon courts. In the figure of Wilfrid, he conceptualised Rome as underpinning his authority. That being said, Frankish connections shift significantly in the seventh century. Ties of kinship and movement bound the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms principally to Neustria. By the end of the century, such socio-political ties are no longer visible, with the connections being dominated by Willibrord's mission to Frisia under Austrasian protection. Wilfrid alone provides earlier evidence for contact with Austrasia and his links with Willibrord provide circumstantial evidence that Wilfrid was the figure about which this change occurred. While these Frankish and Roman links cannot be discounted, there is evidence both from Wilfrid's monasteries and his career as a bishop that shows Wilfrid was both influenced by and engaged with his own Church. Bede honoured Wilfrid for his orthodox Roman and Frankish links but constrained him, in contrast to Stephen, by acknowledging they were not unique and allowing episcopal authority to be grounded in other factors, such as individual sanctity.

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CONTENTS

LIST OF MAPS AND TABLES	iv
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	v
INTRODUCTION	1
<i>Historiography</i>	4
The Merovingian Hegemony	7
The Evangelization	8
The Career of Wilfrid	12
English links to Rome and Francia	15
<i>Primary Sources</i>	19
<i>Research Questions</i>	22
CHAPTER ONE: THE ‘ROMAN’ MISSION TO THE ENGLISH: FRANKISH AND ROMAN CONTRIBUTIONS—THE GREGORIAN EVIDENCE	27
<i>The Registers of Gregory the Great</i>	29
The Creation of the Manuscript Tradition	30
The Preservation of the Mission Letters	33
A Complete Record?	35
A Quantitative Approach	36
The Frankish Perspective	38
<i>What did Gregory ask for and from where?</i>	39
Translators	40
Protection	42
The Bishops	46
<i>Gregory’s Letters of Thanks</i>	48
<i>The Pallium of Syagrius of Autun</i>	51
<i>Simony and the Frankish Church</i>	58
<i>Conclusion</i>	61
CHAPTER TWO: THE ‘ROMAN’ MISSION TO THE ENGLISH: FRANKISH AND ROMAN CONTRIBUTIONS—THE BEDAN EVIDENCE	64
<i>The Letters of Gregory the Great: Bede Vindicated</i>	65
Bede and Gregory’s Letters	65
Bede and the British and Irish Churches	67
<i>Historia Ecclesiastica</i> Book I Chapter 25	69
<i>Æthelberht and the Prittlewell Burial: the pre-Augustinian Christian context</i>	73
The Conversion of Æthelberht	73
Bertha and Liudhard	79
The Prittlewell Burial	84
Francia and Rome and the beginnings of English Christianity	86
<i>Bede and the Franks (1): the Paganism of Eadbald</i>	87
<i>Bede and the Franks (2): the Mission after the death of Gregory and Augustine</i>	89
The Council of Paris (614)	90
Birinus, Felix, Agilbert and Leuthere	91
<i>Conclusion</i>	94
CHAPTER THREE: TRAVELING TO ROME IN THE AGE OF WILFRID	97
<i>Sources</i>	100
<i>Knowing the Route</i>	106
<i>Accommodation and Supplies</i>	111
<i>Via Rectissima</i>	118
<i>Conclusion</i>	132

CHAPTER FOUR: WILFRID AND THE ENGLISH IN FRANCA	135
<i>The English and Frankish Churches</i>	136
An Institutional Link? Canterbury and Lyon	139
<i>The English in Neustria</i>	145
The Benefit to the Franks	145
English Agency and the Question of Quentovic	148
The role of kinship	151
The role of female religious	152
<i>Queen takes Bishop: Iurminburh, kin-groups and Dagobert II—the first expulsion of Wilfrid of York (c. 675/6–8)</i>	154
Identifying Iurminburh	158
Wilfrid’s Expulsion	163
The Chronology of Wilfrid’s Fall	164
Wilfrid in Exile	165
Wilfrid and Austrasia	167
<i>The Battle of Tertry, Wilfrid and Willibrord: an Austrasian Shift</i>	169
<i>Conclusion</i>	173
CHAPTER FIVE: WILFRID AND THE ENGLISH IN ROME	176
<i>Rome: Guaranteeing Episcopal Authority</i>	178
Wilfrid	180
Wigheard and Theodore	182
<i>Appeals to Rome: Balancing Archiepiscopal and Papal Authority</i>	187
<i>The Archbishop of Britain and Metropolitan of York? Theodore, Rome and Wilfrid</i>	196
Wilfrid’s opposition to papal judgements?	204
<i>Conclusion</i>	208
CHAPTER SIX: WILFRID AND THE ENGLISH CHURCH	211
<i>Wilfrid and the Monastic Life</i>	215
The Regula Sancti Benedicti and Wilfridian Monasticism	216
Wilfrid the Monk?	220
Wilfrid’s Monasteries	223
<i>Wilfrid’s Episcopacy</i>	228
Wilfrid’s Missionary Style	229
Wilfrid’s Network—the Question of Acca	231
Wilfrid and the Church of Lindisfarne	234
<i>Discordant Memories of Wilfrid? Bede and Stephen of Ripon</i>	242
Wilfrid’s Orthodoxy	244
Sanctity as a Counterpoint in the <i>Historia Ecclesiastica</i>	247
Honoured yet Constrained	249
Biblical Corroboration	252
<i>Conclusion</i>	257
CONCLUSION	260
<i>Institutional versus Personal Contact</i>	261
<i>Ecclesiastical versus Socio-political Contact</i>	264
<i>Continuity versus Change</i>	266
<i>The Relative Importance of Francia and Rome to the English</i>	268
The Evangelization	268
Royal Contact	270
The Career of Bishop Wilfrid	271
<i>Looking to the Eighth Century</i>	275

LIST OF MAPS AND TABLES

The Manuscript Traditions of Gregory's Letters	30
Table of Concordance of Gregory's Missionary Letters by Manuscript Tradition	33
Annual survival rates of Gregory's Letters	36, n. 46
Map of Francia, c. 583	82
Map of the Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms and Francia	121
<i>Via Rectissima</i>	129
Family tree of Anglo-Saxon and Frankish royal and noble families	156

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ΥΠΠΑ	Procopius, <i>Ἐπὲρ Τῶν Πολέμων Λόγοι</i> (ed. Dewing)
AA	<i>Acta Aunemundi</i> (ed. Perrier, trans. Fouracre and Gerberding)
AAE	<i>Aldhelmi et ad Aldhelmum Epistulae</i> (ed. Ehwald)
AE	<i>Alcuini epistolae</i> (ed. Dümmler)
ALC	<i>Annales Lindisfarnenses, Cantauriensis et Sancti Germani Minores</i> (ed. Pertz)
AG	<i>Admonitio Generalis</i> (ed. Boretius)
ASC	<i>Anglo-Saxon Chronicle</i> (ed. Plummer)
ASC E	<i>Anglo-Saxon Chronicle E</i> (ed. Irvine)
AU	<i>Annals of Ulster</i> (ed. Mac Airt and Mac Niocaill)
AVC	<i>Adomnán, Vita Columbae</i> (ed. Anderson and Anderson)
BLE	<i>S. Bonifatii et Lulli Epistolae</i> (ed. Dümmler, trans. Emerton)
CC	<i>Codex Carolinus</i> (ed. Gundlach)
CE	St Columbanus, <i>Epistulae</i> (ed. Walker)
CF	<i>Concilium Francofurtense</i> (ed. Werminghoff)
CM	<i>Capitularia Merowingica</i> (ed. Boretius)
CP	<i>Concilium Parisiense</i> (ed. Massen)
CPS	<i>Capitulatio de Patribus Saxoniae</i> (ed. Boretius)
CUCT	<i>Concilium universale Constantinopolitanum tertium</i> (ed. Roberts)
DL	Gregory the Great, <i>Dialogorum libri</i> (ed. Vogüé, trans. Zimmerman)
EAA	Bede, <i>Expositio Actuum Apostolorum</i> (ed. Laistner)
EE	Bede, <i>Epistola ad Ecgbertum Episcopum</i> (ed. Grocock and Wood)
ESPR	<i>Epistolae selectae Pontificum Romanorum</i> (ed. Dümmler)
FC	Fredegar, <i>Chronicarum quae Dicuntur Fredegarii Scholastici</i> (ed. Krusch, trans. Wallace-Hadrill)
GMV	John the Deacon, <i>Sancti Gregorii Magni Vita</i> (ed. Migne)
GPA	William of Malmesbury, <i>Gesta Pontificum Anglorum</i> (ed. Thomson)

<i>GPRE</i>	Gregory the Great, <i>Gregorii I Papae Registrum Epistolarum I–II</i> (ed. Ewald and Hartmann)
<i>HA</i>	Bede, <i>Historia Abbatum</i> (ed. Grocock and Wood)
<i>HE</i>	Bede, <i>Historia Ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum</i> (ed. Colgrave and Mynors)
<i>HF</i>	Gregory of Tours, <i>Historia Francorum</i> (ed. Krusch and Levison, trans. Thorpe)
<i>HL</i>	Paul the Deacon, <i>Historia Langobardorum</i> (ed. Waitz)
<i>LHF</i>	<i>Liber Historiae Francorum</i> (ed. Krusch)
<i>LIS</i>	<i>Lives of Irish Saints</i> (ed. Plummer)
<i>LP</i>	<i>Liber Pontificalis</i> (ed. Mommsen)
<i>LVD</i>	<i>Liber Vitae Dunhelmensis</i> (ed. Rollason)
<i>LVP</i>	Gregory of Tours, <i>Liber Vitae Patrum</i> (ed. Krusch, trans. James)
<i>PL</i>	<i>Passio Liudegarii</i> (ed. Krusch)
<i>PMEE</i>	<i>Passio Beatorum Martyrum Ethelredi atque Ethelbricti</i> (ed. Rollason)
<i>RM</i>	St Columbanus, <i>Regula Monachorum</i> (ed. Walker)
<i>RSB</i>	St Benedict, <i>Regula Sancti Benedicti</i> (ed. Fry and Baker)
<i>UM</i>	<i>Die Urkunden der Merowinger</i> (ed. Kölzer)
<i>VA</i>	Anon., <i>Vita Cuthberti</i> (ed. Colgrave)
<i>VB</i>	<i>Vita Bertilae</i> (ed. Krusch and Levison)
<i>VBaW</i>	Willibald, <i>Vita Bonifatii auctore Willibaldi</i> (ed. Levison)
<i>VC</i>	Anon., <i>Vita Ceolfredi</i> (ed. Grocock and Wood)
<i>Vit. Columb.</i>	Jonas of Bobbio, <i>Vita Columbani</i> (ed. O’Hara and Wood)
<i>Vit. Tr.</i>	<i>The Tripartite Life of St Patrick</i> (ed. Stokes)
<i>VM</i>	<i>Vita Deo dilectae virginis Mildrethae</i> (ed. Rollason)
<i>VP</i>	Bede, <i>Vita Cuthberti</i> (ed. Colgrave)
<i>VSEE</i>	Alcuin, <i>Versus de Patribus Regibus et Sanctis Euboricensis Ecclesiae</i> (ed. Godman)
<i>VSG</i>	Anon., <i>Vita Sancti Gregorii</i> (ed. Colgrave)
<i>VSS</i>	<i>Vita Sancti Samsonis</i> (ed. Flobert, trans. Taylor)

VW

Stephen of Ripon, *Vita Wilfridi* (ed.
Colgrave)

Translations accord with above, unless otherwise stated. Minor alterations to published translations are placed in [].

Biblical quotations in Latin come from the Vulgate, using the Stuttgart edition and translations come from Douay-Rheims.

Anglo-Saxon and English are both used in this thesis. English is used generally for the people, while Anglo-Saxon is used as a technical term, when ‘English’ would inappropriately imply unity.

Footnotes and bibliography are given in accordance with the ASNC Style Sheet.

INTRODUCTION

*Pergens auxiliante domino Deo nostro Iesu Christo ad patrimonium quod est in Galliis gubernandum volumus ut dilectio tua ex solidis quos acceperit vestimenta pauperum vel pueros Anglos, qui sint ab annis decem et septem vel decem et octo, ut in monasteriis dati Deo proficiant, comparet, quatenus solidi Galliarum, qui in terra nostra expendi non possunt, apud locum proprium utiliter expendantur.*¹

This extract from a letter of Pope Gregory I to his agent in Francia, Candidus, captures Wilhelm Levison's description of the English in the seventh century as 'receptors'² of external influences perfectly. In this instance, English slaves were the object of an economic exchange between the papacy and the Franks. In terms of papal interest, one could contend the slaves barely resonated with Gregory, being on a par with buying clothes for the poor. However, I wish to focus upon the fact that this reference places the English in a dual Frankish-papal context. This dualism is continued throughout the seventh century, with the Franks and papacy in Rome often being set alongside each other in the primary material. Bede notes the presence of Frankish translators with Augustine when he landed on the Isle of Thanet, before briefly discussing the Christian exposure Æthelberht had had owing to his Frankish wife, Bertha, and her bishop, Liudhard.³ The continuous history of Gregory's mission at Canterbury has to be blended with the Frankish presence in East Anglia and Wessex.⁴ As Christianity came to integrate itself within the fabric of Anglo-Saxon society, it brought different influences with it. A similar picture emerges as the English began to engage self-consciously with these impulses; Benedict Biscop's desire to visit Rome must be balanced against his monastic vows at Lérins,

¹ *GPPE* I vi.10. 'As you set out with the help of our Lord God, Jesus Christ, for the patrimony which must be governed in Gaul, from the gold coins which you receive, we want your Beloved to purchase clothing for the poor, and to buy English boys who are about seventeen or eighteen years old, so that they may profit by serving God in monasteries. Thus, the gold coins from Gaul, which cannot be spent in our own country, may be spent profitably in their own land.'

² Levison, *Continent*, p. 4.

³ *HE* i.25.

⁴ *HE* ii.15, iii.7.

while Wilfrid's papal education and appeals are complemented by his time in the household of Aunemundus and episcopal consecration by twelve Frankish bishops.⁵

This study examines two of the principal strands in the English conversion and Christianization across the seventh century, those of Francia and Rome, and their reception by the English. The latter point is crucial: overseas influences are widely recognized, but how their input was received, their relative importance and why some elements gained traction and others did not, is a topic with considerable potential. Rome and Francia are both visible in two of the most useful native sources for the period: Bede's *HE* and Stephen's *VW*. That they were important to eighth-century English writers should guide our attention to these two regions in particular. The papacy in Rome appears far more consistently and directly in both works, directing the original mission to Kent and subsequently being drawn into internal disputes within the English Church. The Franks are more ephemeral and it begs the question why this major political and economic force in early medieval Europe and a close neighbour to the southern Anglo-Saxon kingdoms appears not to have played as significant a role in English affairs as the papacy. Given the ecclesiastical origins of our source material, is this simply the bias of churchmen, or does it reflect the realities of the seventh century? Picking apart these eighth-century texts can elucidate these two competing strands of influence and determine their relative importance to the English.

It should, of course, be acknowledged that the missionaries from Rome and Francia were by no means the only Christian forces at work amongst the English. There are shadowy hints of British involvement along the western fringes of the Anglo-Saxon settlement.⁶ The mission from Iona can reasonably be said to have pioneered the evangelization of Northumbria and Mercia and there is ample evidence for English ecclesiastics travelling into Ireland, both

⁵ *HA* 2; *VW* 3–6, 12, 29–33, 47–54.

⁶ Sims-Williams, *Western England*, pp. 54–86; Stancliffe, 'British Church', pp. 107–40.

seeking an education and spending their careers within the Irish Church.⁷ The Irish connections of the English Church are made explicit by Bede in the *HE* but, as Oswiu's attitude made clear at the Synod of Whitby, it ultimately could not compete with Rome for authority.⁸ There is, however, a contrast between Bede's presentation of an independent Ionan mission and the Frankish presence in the Gregorian mission, which is clearly subordinate to Augustine.⁹ Likewise, Bede carefully notes Felix of East Anglia's commission by Honorius of Canterbury, while the Frankish presence in Wessex succeeds the original papal commission of Birinus.¹⁰ No obvious ties to Canterbury explain Birinus' activities, although the West Saxon origins of Deusdedit, the first English bishop of Canterbury, do raise an interesting question in that regard.¹¹ Rome ultimately came to supersede Ireland; according to Bede it always had primacy over Francia.

The accuracy of this statement is open to interpretation. Bede's overwhelmingly ecclesiastical perspective means that royal and noble interests may well be obscured by his attachment to the Apostolic See. As is often the case, Stephen's *VW* may challenge Bede's presentation of ecclesiastical affairs. Travelling to Rome, Wilfrid turned aside for some time at Lyon.¹² While he ultimately completed his Roman journey and spent some months there under the tutelage of Archdeacon Boniface, Wilfrid chose to spend a further three years in Lyon and might have spent his life there but for the martyrdom of his mentor, Aunemundus.¹³ There was evidently something attractive about Lyon that not only made Wilfrid pause what Stephen presents as a pilgrimage to Rome, but also meant that he was willing to spend more time studying in Lyon than in Rome. A single example is evidence too slender to contend at the

⁷ *HE* iii.5, iii.21, iii.24, iii.27, iv.4, v10, v..22; *VC* 2; *GPA* v.214; *AAE* 5.

⁸ Mayr-Harting, *Coming*, pp. 103–13; Stenton, *England*, pp. 124–5 cf. Dailey, 'Easter', pp. 62–4.

⁹ *HE* i.25.

¹⁰ *HE* ii.15, iii.7.

¹¹ *HE* iii.20.

¹² *VW* 3.

¹³ *VW* 5–6.

outset that Rome should be replaced by Francia upon the English horizon, but it raises the question of Roman, papal influences competing against Frankish connections.

Wilfrid is the obvious figure to focus upon, given the scale of Frankish and Roman influences in his career. There is a caveat to attach to that; Wilfrid is not the only figure in the second half of the seventh century to have contact with the Franks, the papacy or both. Arguably his contact influences that of other people (Theodore's and Berhtwold's responses to his papal appeals for example), but any analysis must be constructed to acknowledge the existence of a broader field of contact. It is also worth giving space to the evangelization of Kent and further afield, where dual Roman-Frankish influence was felt. In itself, this can provide interesting evidence of these two regions competing in English affairs. However, it also provides the background from which Wilfrid's career, and those of his peers, stemmed. The influences visible in the evangelization are important to track through the 'age of Wilfrid' in the second half of the seventh century and into the early eighth century. A survey of the extant historiography can help clarify the relevance of these topics and the precise research questions to focus upon.

Historiography

In classic appraisals of the seventh century, Francia's influence is very much secondary to Rome's if it is really acknowledged at all. Frank Stenton, for example, provided a traditional survey of the evangelization and the figures of Theodore and Wilfrid, stressing the presence of Rome in the origins of English Christianity. The principal competition to Rome came from the Irish mission of Iona, whose ecclesiastical institutional, if not cultural, influence was broken at the Synod of Whitby.¹⁴ Little more than a page is dedicated to Frankish influence, which fundamentally serves as a list of Kentish kings with Frankish names. Moreover, it all declines

¹⁴ Stenton, *England*, pp. 104–116, 130–45, 182–7.

to one damning sentence: ‘But a somewhat remote connection with the decadent Frankish royal house of the seventh century brought no material strength to an English king and Eorcenberht and his successors are insignificant figures in comparison with their contemporaries in the midlands and the north.’¹⁵ In essence, Francia mattered only in Kent and even there it was of little consequence. Wilhelm Levison’s appraisal was more positive, stressing the value of the economic links that existed and which, consequently, pulled the English and Frankish worlds together. He observed that these links undoubtedly superseded the occasional evidence of contact with the Langobards, but they nonetheless paled in comparison to the links which could be discerned with Rome.¹⁶ Many recent general surveys tend to stress the dual Roman-Irish heritage of the English Church, especially in Northumbria, and the influence of these upon the Northumbrian Golden Age.¹⁷

That being said, direct Frankish influence upon their English, especially Kentish, neighbours, is not a novelty in the historiography. Margaret Deanesly in particular stressed the Frankish influence upon the Kentish court, suggesting Æthelberht structured it after the Merovingian example.¹⁸ There was a strong reaction against her work; Levison carefully demolished her suggestions that Æthelberht’s charters might be genuine and betray Frankish links (although he acknowledged the forgeries themselves betrayed continental links).¹⁹ Similarly, Michael Wallace-Hadrill pushed back against her characterisation of Æthelberht’s court as Merovingian. He observed that Æthelberht did not radically alter the nature of his court to imitate Frankish practice; there is no evidence that he introduced charters, minted coins, or converted to Christianity. Augustine, behind him Rome, was responsible for the first and the

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 61.

¹⁶ Levison, *Continent*, pp. 4–44.

¹⁷ James, *Britain*, pp. 180–4; Sawyer, *Roman Britain*, pp. 97–8; Thacker, ‘England’, pp. 472–4, 481–3; Higham and Ryan, *World*, pp. 147–8, 153–5.

¹⁸ Deanesly, ‘Minsters’, pp. 25–69; Deanesly, ‘Paris’, pp. 97–104; Deanesly, ‘Æthelberht’, pp. 101–14.

¹⁹ Levison, *Continent*, pp. 174–233, although cf. Morris, *Sources* 2, pp. 89–98.

last of those.²⁰ Nonetheless, he did allow the pendulum to begin to shift away from Rome in *Early Germanic Kingship*. His work was essentially comparative in nature, rather than a search for direct influence, but he acknowledged that Frankish ideas helped to drive developments in English kingship.²¹

As such, from Levison's lacklustre comparison with Rome and Stenton's complete rejection, a recognition of a Frankish presence in the seventh century has emerged and developed. James Campbell's work began to stress a Frankish presence in the evangelization, which Bede appeared to have downplayed.²² Nicholas Brooks' survey of Canterbury's history naturally looks primarily to Rome, but acknowledges, for example, that Mellitus and Justus found sanctuary in Francia after Æthelberht's death and moots a shadowy Frankish pressure upon Eadbald to convert.²³ Similarly, Berhtwold's consecration at Lyon appears as a tactical move by the new archbishop to circumvent specifically Wilfrid's earlier links to the see.²⁴ Frankish influence was a reality that even Roman Canterbury had to acknowledge, even if it only occasionally breaks through in the source material. Henry Mayr-Harting's *Coming of Christianity* also shows an increasing awareness of the Frankish world. The admirable survey it provides of the first century of English Christianity places Rome as the dominant theme, but the Frankish influence upon Wilfrid is carefully drawn out, while there is acknowledgement, albeit brief, of the Frankish presence in the Gregorian mission.²⁵ In general, however, Rome has retained its dominance.

²⁰ Wallace-Hadrill, *Kingship*, pp. 24–32. On charters: Chaplais, 'Augustine', pp. 526–42 *cf.* Snook, 'Theodore', pp. 257–84.

²¹ Wallace-Hadrill, *Kingship*, pp. 33–9, 67–70. Wallace-Hadrill's views evolved over time, allowing a greater Frankish role in the evangelization. Wallace-Hadrill, *Frankish Church*, pp. 114–15 *cf.* Wallace-Hadrill, 'English Church', pp. 526–30.

²² Campbell, 'Bede I', pp. 3–4; Campbell, 'Bede II', pp. 53–5; Campbell, 'Observations', pp. 72–3. See also, Pickles, 'Historiography', p. 71.

²³ Brooks, *Canterbury*, p. 64.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 78.

²⁵ Mayr-Harting, *Coming*, pp. 63–4, 129–39, 178–81.

The Merovingian Hegemony

Rome's dominance has been severely challenged by a radical and controversial reinterpretation of the political ties between the Merovingians and, in particular, Kent. While there were earlier, more cautious suggestions of some form of political subordination, Ian Wood has asserted that the Merovingians secured political overlordship of Kent by the mid-sixth century, principally citing evidence from Procopius.²⁶ The argument has been developed over the last four decades, incorporating additional forms of evidence to include other kingdoms, principally Wessex and East Anglia, and to extend it into the seventh century.²⁷ If Wood's conception of the political relationship between the people of Kent in particular and the Franks is correct, this has obvious ramifications upon the evangelization and the course of contact in the seventh century. The evidence is slender to say the least; Procopius' comments are open to interpretation and Roger Collins and Judith McClure have published a partial rebuttal of Wood's evidence, focussing upon the sixth century.²⁸ His seventh-century evidence is based upon inference and the putative evidence from the sixth century: an English presence at the Council of Paris is a sign of Chlothar's authority; Felix's role in East Anglia and the presence of Anglo-Saxon royal women in Frankish monasteries are expressions of Merovingian authority.²⁹ The most straightforward objections to it, Collins' and McClure's rebuttal apart, is the very limited nature of the evidence and its absence not only from English narratives of the seventh century but Frankish discussions of the same period and earlier.³⁰ Wood's reliance on hints scattered across disparate source material raises serious questions about why a significant political relationship would not be more clearly present in the source material. In particular, it is difficult to explain why Gregory of Tours would write so much

²⁶ YTHA, 8.xx; Wood, *North Sea*, p. 12; Stenton, *England*, p. 59; Wallace-Hadrill, *Kingship*, p. 25.

²⁷ Wood, 'Channel', pp. 93–7; Wood, 'Sutton Hoo', pp. 1–14; Wood, 'Frankish Hegemony', pp. 235–41; Wood, 'Migration', pp. 41–64; Wood, 'Augustine', pp. 68–82; Wood, 'Quentovic', pp. 165–76; Wood, 'Britain', p. 24.

²⁸ Collins and McClure, 'Rome', 17–42.

²⁹ Wood, 'Augustine', pp. 68–82; Wood, 'The Channel', p. 96; Wood, 'Sutton Hoo', pp. 11–12.

³⁰ *HE*, *VW*, *FC*, *HF*, *LHF*.

about Frankish efforts to subdue Brittany, including an explicit statement of subordination, but limit his discussions of Kent to two vague references to Bertha's marriage to Æthelberht if there were formal ties that acknowledged Merovingian overlordship of Kent.³¹ The slender nature of the evidence makes it difficult to accept for the sixth century, let alone the seventh, where it relies on inference not from texts but the simple presence of Frankish bishops in Anglo-Saxon kingdoms and English royal women in Frankish monasteries. More pertinently, defining seventh century contact simply as expressions of Frankish power risks oversimplifying contact, which is dualistic in nature and so requires consideration of the role of the English in the relationship.

The Evangelization

While Wood's conception of a hegemonic relationship between the English and the Franks is best handled cautiously, he has made a significant, irrefutable contribution to the study of the Gregorian mission and the Roman presence in the evangelization of the English. As noted, there has been a slow shift towards acknowledging a Frankish presence in the evangelization. Wood, dismissing the Bedan evidence as an essentially secondary literature, focussed instead upon the contemporary evidence of the papal letters of Pope Gregory I (590–604). His conclusions radically shifted the nature of the mission to Kent, making it far more Frankish in nature. His comparatively brief analysis of the letters has two primary points: that Gregory sought Frankish aid, and that he obtained it. This help principally came from Brunhilda, grandmother and regent for Theuderic II and Theudebert II, and her supporters, especially Syagrius of Autun, who received a *pallium* for his role.³² An element of this argument is that Brunhilda, in control of Burgundy and Austrasia, sought to surround Chlothar's northern kingdom, by extending her influence into Kent; as such, Wood has highlighted the necessity

³¹ *HF* Bretons: iv.4, v.26, v.29, v.31, ix.18, ix.24, x.9; Kent: iv.26, ix.26.

³² Wood, 'Mission', pp. 5–9.

of nuancing ‘Frankish’ influence and recognizing the fluctuating politics and competing regions of Francia.³³

The importance of the Franks has found strong support in the historiography. The editors of the *Converting the Isles* volumes stress the Frankish dimension in the mission, including the possibility that political ties in some form prompted the conversion.³⁴ Likewise Catherine Cubitt carefully notes the close connections between the English and Frankish Churches, while various historians, including Thomas Charles-Edwards and Cristina Ricci, broadly agree with Wood’s conclusions in their own work.³⁵ Rob Meens takes a similar position, arguing that Bede neglected the Frankish Church’s role in the mission to Kent, but that later contacts between the two Churches testify to the Frankish Church’s original importance.³⁶ Marilyn Dunn has tried to push Wood’s arguments further by mooted the involvement of Childebert II in prompting the original mission, the evidence being Augustine’s return to Rome for new instructions and letters of introduction: a supposed necessity owing to Childebert’s death and the consequent alteration of the political situation.³⁷ While an intriguing idea, it does rest on negative evidence, for which the Occam’s razor solution is that Gregory simply had not issued letters before Augustine returned and appraised him of the difficulties he and his monks were encountering.³⁸

It should be noted that Wood’s arguments for large-scale Frankish involvement have not received universal support in the historiography. Henry Mayr-Harting’s Stenton Lecture stresses that Æthelberht sought to avoid Merovingian influence in receiving Christianity, as does Peter Brown in *The Rise of Western Christendom*.³⁹ One of Wood’s principal points,

³³ Ibid., pp. 8–9.

³⁴ Flechner and Ní Mhaonaigh, ‘Introduction’, p. 3.

³⁵ Cubitt, *Church Councils*, p. 8; Charles-Edwards, ‘Pagan and Christian’, pp. 274–5; Ricci, ‘Gregory’s Missions’, pp. 47–9; Gameson, ‘Augustine’, pp. 11–14, 23; Dunn, *Christianization*, pp. 48–9; Yorke, *Conversion*, pp. 124–5; Higham, *Convert*, pp. 70–1, 80, 86–7.

³⁶ Meens, ‘Augustine’s Mission’, p. 5.

³⁷ Dunn, *Christianization*, pp. pp. 48–51.

³⁸ Gameson, ‘Augustine’, pp. 9–10.

³⁹ Brown, *Western Christendom*, pp. 344–5; Mayr-Harting, *Two Conversions*, pp. 7–9, 12.

derived from Gregory's letters, is that Æthelberht almost certainly approached the Franks first; neither study successfully rebuts this.⁴⁰ On the whole, Wood's arguments mean that there is some acknowledgement of Frankish involvement. To that end John Blair speaks of the importance of Frankish bishops and that private oratories, comparable to Frankish ones, appeared in Kent, while Collins and McClure observe a Frankish dimension in the consecration of Augustine and the importance of Frankish aid on the journey to Kent.⁴¹ Where Wood's conclusions sit least comfortably is with ecclesiastical culture and the impact that it had upon English identity, which Nicholas Brooks and Alan Thacker have studied. Brooks has demonstrated that Rome formed the core of a burgeoning English Christian identity, while Thacker's study of the cult of saints again shows a remarkable focus on Rome, with Frankish trends only emerging towards the mid-seventh century.⁴²

There is a significant side theme within the discussions of a Frankish presence in the evangelization. In essence, it is that Bede's narrative is flawed; in an effort to highlight English links with Rome he downplayed other Christian influences.⁴³ This observation has received more push back than Wood's analysis of Gregory's letters. Campbell stated that Bede actually tells us a lot about these Frankish links.⁴⁴ This is perhaps a generous description of the amount of detail recorded in the *HE* and most rebuttals place their emphasis elsewhere. The focus tends to be upon the fact that Bede does tell us some things, which are not replicated elsewhere, and so imputing deliberate intention to write the Franks out of his highly Roman account of Gregory's mission is unfair. Furthermore, it is not clear how much evidence Bede had in front of him and so his efforts to recognize some Frankish presence across various kingdoms may in

⁴⁰ Wood, 'Mission', pp. 8–9.

⁴¹ Blair, *Church*, pp. 9, 34, 70–1; Collins and McClure, 'Rome', pp. 31–5.

⁴² Brooks, 'Identity', pp. 221–46; Thacker, 'Saints', pp. 247–76; Thacker, 'Local Saint', pp. 45–73.

⁴³ Pickles, 'Historiography', p. 71; Wood, 'Mission', p. 16; Wood, 'Augustine', p. 79; Wood, *Missionary*, pp. 9–10; Higham, *Convert*, p. 56; Lambert, *Christians and Pagans*, p. 169; Fletcher, *Barbarian*, p. 116.

⁴⁴ Campbell, 'Bede II', p. 55.

fact be a commendable effort.⁴⁵ Essentially, the general tenor of Wood's criticisms of Bede is difficult to sustain.

Serious attacks on Bede's accuracy for the early missionary period have also been made. Suso Brechter stated Bede deliberately altered the early history of the mission by placing Augustine at Canterbury not London.⁴⁶ The argument failed to find purchase and has been effectively rebutted by Brooks, but it has been reworked by Roy Flechner, who suggests Augustine was originally in London but moved to Canterbury.⁴⁷ Bede neglected this either through ignorance or, as Brechter suggested, because of the threat to Canterbury's primacy.⁴⁸ Flechner does not overcome Brooks' critique of Brechter's arguments, in particular the observation that if there were concerns about Canterbury's primacy it makes little sense for Bede to have included a Gregorian letter that attributed metropolitan status to London. Flechner's new evidence for reappraising Brechter's suggestion is a *Lundunensis synodus* in a letter of Boniface of Mainz.⁴⁹ However, *synodus* could simply refer to a council, rather than the metropolitan see, and that is how Boniface understood it. Flechner never effectively explains why Boniface's perception should be ignored. Furthermore, a council need not be held in the metropolitan see and the English Church clearly had a tradition of meeting in the diocese of London.⁵⁰ In short, Bede's account of early Christian Kent is not fatally flawed by getting a simple detail, like Augustine's see, wrong. That being said, Bede's account is quite far removed in time from the missionary period and has its own agendas; these criticisms of Bede's early account serve as a pertinent reminder that the *HE* must be used cautiously. By contrast Wilfrid's

⁴⁵ Yorke, 'Pagan', p. 244; Shaw, *Gregorian*, pp. 248–9; Collins and McClure, 'Rome', pp. 31–2.

⁴⁶ Brechter, *Quellen*, pp. 241–51; Brechter, 'Bekerbungsgeschichte', pp. 191–215.

⁴⁷ Brooks, *Canterbury*, p. 8; Flechner, 'Boniface', pp. 41–62

⁴⁸ Flechner, 'Boniface', p. 58.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

⁵⁰ Cubitt, *Church Councils*, pp. 27–39 *cf.* Keynes, *Clofesho*, p. 49.

career is exceptionally well documented, owing to the survival of Stephen's hagiographic *VW*, as well as Bede's own narration of Wilfrid's life in the *HE*.

The Career of Wilfrid

Wilfrid provides an excellent point of entry into the question of competing influences. Both Bede and Stephen stress the dual Frankish and Roman presence in his career and that he was a significant force in importing orthodoxy into the English Church. Despite that, he is essentially divorced from the missionary period and the connections that existed or were forged during that time. Mayr-Harting, who places Wilfrid within a wider seventh-century English ecclesiastical context, does not draw any particular links from one to the other.⁵¹ Even a discussion of Gregorian influences on Wilfrid's missionary style did not prompt analysis of Wilfrid's ties to Canterbury and the influence they may have had upon him.⁵² Likewise, explorations of his career in both earlier and later studies appraise Wilfrid within his own time and the connections he forged then, rather than contextualising him in earlier trends.⁵³ A single nod to Augustine's mission appears in Éamonn Ó Carragáin's and Alan Thacker's study of Wilfrid and Rome: 'How he prepared himself is of considerable interest. He clearly understood that Canterbury, where Gregory's envoy Augustine had himself preached and sung, was the perfect place in England to prepare for an extended visit to Rome.'⁵⁴

That being said, the scale of the influence of both Rome and Francia is generally acknowledged and not simply in Wilfrid's conception of his episcopal office, but in his architecture and liturgy.⁵⁵ The relative importance of their influence is less visible but

⁵¹ Mayr-Harting, *Coming*, pp. 120–3, 129–47.

⁵² *Ibid.*, pp. 144–7.

⁵³ Kirby, 'Northumbria', pp. 8–11; Farmer, 'Wilfrid', pp. 40–3; Thacker, 'Cult', pp. 7–8; Grocock, 'Bede', pp. 102–6; Fouracre, 'Continent', pp. 186–199; Wood, 'Journeys', pp. 200–11.

⁵⁴ Ó Carragáin and Thacker, 'Rome', pp. 216–17.

⁵⁵ Mayr-Harting, *Coming*, p. 147; Fouracre, 'Continent', pp. 186–199; Wood, 'Journeys', pp. 200–11; Ó Carragáin and Thacker, 'Rome', pp. 212–30; Bailey, 'European', pp. 112–23; Cambridge, 'Architecture', pp. 136–51; Billet, 'Music', pp. 168–76.

nonetheless disputed. Mayr-Harting was inclined to see predominantly Frankish influence upon Wilfrid's episcopal career, but Trent Foley has observed that popes too could wield significant authority, act as great patrons and challenge lay powers.⁵⁶ In a similar vein, Erin Dailey's studies of the Synod of Whitby have stressed the importance of Wilfrid's Roman education to his contribution.⁵⁷ Thacker has also observed that Stephen contrasts Wilfrid's support for Roman practices and authority with Cuthberht, bishop of Lindisfarne's Irish background, thereby grounding him more in his papal links than his Frankish ones.⁵⁸ Cubitt's careful analysis of Wilfrid's Frankish and Roman links suggests a respect for Rome which guaranteed Wilfrid's position and rights and those of his monasteries alongside a strong Frankish influence, perhaps most obviously with the traditions of Columbanian monasticism.⁵⁹ Ultimately, they are presented jointly as vital to understanding his career and 'its triumphs and failures.'⁶⁰ There is no consensus on whether Francia or Rome was more important to Wilfrid and perhaps a certain reluctance to make a definitive statement one way or another, which provides scope for a close analysis of the question.

A significant thread to this argument is how Wilfrid was commemorated in early-eighth-century Northumbria. Stephen wrote a polemic apology for his hero Wilfrid and sought to cast Wilfrid as the wronged champion of the Northumbrian Church, whose actions had firmly established pure and true Roman Christianity in Northumbria.⁶¹ His borrowings from the *VA* and indeed Bede's subsequent recasting of this suggest that Stephen was seeking to present Wilfrid as the ideal bishop and the true apostle to the Northumbrians, to the detriment of Cuthberht.⁶² Indeed, the suggestion that the explosion of Northumbrian literature in the early

⁵⁶ Mayr-Harting, *Coming*, pp. 130–9; Foley, *Images*, pp. 88–103.

⁵⁷ Dailey, 'Reappraising', p. 37; Dailey, 'Easter', p. 61.

⁵⁸ Thacker, 'Cult', pp. 5–13.

⁵⁹ Cubitt, 'Wilfrid', pp. 313–14, 317–19, 323–4. For the Columbanian and Frankish influence upon papal privileges see: Savill, *Privileges*, pp. 116–19.

⁶⁰ Cubitt, 'Wilfrid', p. 330.

⁶¹ Thacker, 'Cult', pp. 3–4; Colgrave, *Wilfrid*, p. xi; Goffart, *Narrators*, p. 281.

⁶² Goffart, *Narrators*, pp. 283–5; Stancliffe, 'episcopacy', p. 19.

eighth century is a product of this very debate is highly plausible.⁶³ A significant part of this conflict was the legacy of the Ionan mission and their perceived ‘Quartodeciman’ heresy.⁶⁴ Stephen sought to condemn them and those who associated with them, while Lindisfarne and Bede aimed to emphasise their merits in the figures of Cuthberht and Aidan. Whitby and Bede then also undermined Wilfrid’s claims to authority by pointing to Gregory the Great and his missionary Paulinus.⁶⁵ What remains unresolved is Bede’s precise attitude towards Wilfrid and indeed the place of Wilfrid within the narrative of the *HE*. There is nothing obviously negative in Bede’s great work about Wilfrid, and indeed the dedication of some of his works to Acca, Wilfrid’s one-time confessor and successor as bishop of Hexham, suggests a close relationship with Wilfrid’s supporters. Much of this analysis rests upon how Bede recasts Wilfrid in comparison to Wilfrid’s own biographer, Stephen.⁶⁶ This has also led to arguments that Bede disapproved of some of Theodore of Tarsus’ actions, through his minimisation of, or silence on, certain events that Stephen mentions.⁶⁷ The reliance on negative evidence does create problems, although the point to note is how Wilfrid’s connections with the orthodox Frankish and Roman Churches were stressed by Stephen to enhance Wilfrid’s credentials in comparison to those of Cuthberht.

There is an additional, particularly iconoclastic strand to the historiography of Wilfrid that must be acknowledged. Dailey and Mayr-Harting have both pointed to Wilfrid’s ‘Celtic’ connections. Dailey’s comments derive from possible connections to Columbanian monasticism in Francia, but in the febrile atmosphere of post-Whitby Northumbria he contends that Wilfrid and Agilbert both had sufficiently ‘Celtic’ credentials that Oswiu could alter his

⁶³ Goffart, *Narrators*, p. 264.

⁶⁴ Stancliffe, *Bede*, pp. 7–9.

⁶⁵ *VSG*; *VA*; *VP*; *HE* ii.9, iii.5.

⁶⁶ Stancliffe, ‘episcopacy’, p. 11; Kirby, ‘Eddius’, p. 102; Campbell, ‘Bede I’, pp. 20–2; Chadwick, ‘Theodore’, p. 92; Grocock, ‘Wilfrid’, pp. 101–10; Higham, ‘*Historia*’, p. 64; Goffart, *Narrators*, pp. 307–24.

⁶⁷ Campbell, ‘Bede II’, pp. 41–2.

position on Easter without creating a fatal break with the traditions of his kingdom.⁶⁸ While they derived from his Frankish links, Dailey implies Wilfrid had a more positive relationship with Irish tradition than many scholars contend.⁶⁹ In this respect, he agrees with Mayr-Harting, but Mayr-Harting grounds Wilfrid's positivity not in Frankish links but his youth at Lindisfarne. Mayr-Harting adduced evidence in the *VW* that showed that Stephen had Irish influences. He observed that the model of Abraham, cited by Wilfrid to Aunemundus, was a standard for Irish pilgrims and that the narrative of Wilfrid's imprisonment and angelic light and of angelic visitation has parallels in Adomnán's *Vita Columbae*.⁷⁰ Mayr-Harting contended: 'it is easy to underrate the influence on Wilfrid of ... Lindisfarne.'⁷¹ These two scholars' suggestions provide an intriguing alternative perspective on a bishop often characterised as pugnaciously pro-Roman.

English links to Rome and Francia

However unusual Wilfrid was in the scale of his Roman and Frankish links, they were not unique. Ecclesiastical links are visible with both Rome and Francia elsewhere, perhaps most obviously in the figure of Biscop.⁷² Understandings of these connections have also seen development in the scholarship. Taking Rome first, there is a tendency to see the mid-seventh century as a nadir in contact with Rome, which can, to an extent, account for the apparent novelty of Wilfrid's career. Richard Shaw's careful study of the timings of journeys to Rome in the *HE* has suggested they were appeals for the *pallium* for newly elected bishops of Canterbury.⁷³ His analysis goes up to the episcopacy of Deusdedit (655–64), for whom there is no known journey and whose episcopacy is generally described as being overshadowed by

⁶⁸ Dailey, 'Reappraising', pp. 38–9.

⁶⁹ Charles-Edwards, *Ireland*, p. 429; Charles-Edwards, 'Celts', p. 245; Stancliffe, *Bede*, pp. 3–4; Goffart, *Narrators*, pp. 326–7; Stancliffe, 'Episcopacy', p. 38; Farmer, 'Wilfrid', pp. 55–6.

⁷⁰ Mayr-Harting, *Coming*, pp. 143–4; Stancliffe, *Bede*, p. 3.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 142.

⁷² Fletcher, *Biscop*, p. 9.

⁷³ Shaw, 'Augustine', pp. 476–86.

more forceful bishops, such as Agilbert.⁷⁴ The extent to which this is simply absence of evidence is difficult to determine, although its coincidence with the death of the last of Gregory's missionaries may be significant. Whatever the realities of Deusdedit's episcopacy, links with Rome certainly re-emerge upon his death, as an appeal was made to Rome for a new bishop of Canterbury.⁷⁵

The nature of this appeal to Pope Vitalian I (657–72) has been queried by Shaw, who has suggested the Roman mission in Canterbury essentially collapsed during the plague of 664.⁷⁶ What is clear is that Theodore's time as bishop of Canterbury and archbishop of Britain saw a change in the dynamic of relations with Rome.⁷⁷ Papal privileges for monasteries begin to emerge in the historical record.⁷⁸ Theodore, with his authority deriving from Rome, concentrated authority in his hands and brought the English Church in line with canon law, using a combination of sheer will-power and provincial synods to drive his agenda.⁷⁹ Two of the most significant changes were the use of the papacy as a judge in English ecclesiastical affairs (a change driven by Wilfrid) and the enhancement of Theodore's status to archbishop of Britain, which seems to occur as Wilfrid made his first appeal.⁸⁰ The themes of Theodore's archiepiscopacy continue into Berhtwold's, with the papacy being used by both Berhtwold and Wilfrid to shore up their authority.⁸¹ In general, communication with Rome appears to have increased in this period, with ecclesiastics travelling for both religious and educational

⁷⁴ *HE* iii.20, iii.28, iv.1. Stenton, *England*, p. 122; Brooks, *Canterbury*, p. 68.

⁷⁵ *HE* iii.27.

⁷⁶ Shaw, 'Wighard', pp. 521–43; cf. Brooks, *Canterbury*, pp. 69–71.

⁷⁷ Theodore's career: Lapidge and Bischoff, ed., *Theodore*, pp. 133–89.

⁷⁸ Savill, *Privileges*, pp. 51–60, 100–101.

⁷⁹ Cubitt, *Church Councils*, pp. 10–12.

⁸⁰ Gibbs, 'Agatho', pp. 213–46; Thacker, 'Archbishops', pp. 44–69; Mayr-Harting, *Coming*, pp. 144–7; Ó Carragáin and Thacker, 'Rome', pp. 222–5; Farmer, 'Wilfrid', pp. 48–53.

⁸¹ *GPA* i.34–5; Brooks, *Canterbury*, pp. 77–9.

purposes, a reality reflected in the historiography of travel which revolves around the road to Rome.⁸²

Arguably, the greatest developments have come in the analysis of Frankish links. Once again, Wood has a presence here, alongside Régine Le Jan. The contact with Rome and its associated travel may have contributed to the Frankish links as English travellers passed through their territories.⁸³ However these contacts emerged, Le Jan and Wood have detected connections of greater importance and depth than certainly Stenton anticipated.⁸⁴ Both have managed to unpick the royal and aristocratic networks that tied the English to their Frankish neighbours. Wood describes the marriage alliances of the Anglo-Saxon courts, alongside the movement of people, both those travelling to Rome and royal women entering Frankish monasteries. His analysis suggests that there was a particular link with the family of Agilbert, the Faronids, who supplied two bishops of Wessex (Agilbert and Leuthere) and had links with the monasteries to which English royal women went, especially Faremoutiers.⁸⁵ Alongside this Faronid connection to Wessex, he restates the better-known link between the Kentish royal house and Erchinoald, the Neustrian *maior domus*. Ymme, the queen of Eadbald, was probably Erchinoald's daughter and Wood speculates that the Faronids sought to secure a West Saxon counterweight to Erchinoald's Kentish support.⁸⁶ By contrast, Le Jan, stressing the importance of the English women in Frankish monasteries, understands it instead as the means by which Erchinoald sought to assert his own power over Faremoutiers.⁸⁷ Both papers, however, ignore

⁸² Mayr-Harting, *Coming*, pp. 120–3. Although a useful caveat on the 'aura' of the papacy: Wallace-Hadrill, 'English Church', p. 531. Pelteret, 'Rome', pp. 18–21; Matthews, *Road*, pp. 12–17; Pelteret, 'Travel', p. 248.

⁸³ Mayr-Harting, *Coming*, pp. 120–3.

⁸⁴ Wood, 'Connections', pp. 443–78; Le Jan, 'competition', pp. 243–69. Wood analysis in 'Connections' develops from: Wood, 'Quentovic', pp. 165–76. Cf. Stenton, *England*, p. 61.

⁸⁵ Wood, 'Connections', pp. 456–67.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 456.

⁸⁷ Le Jan, 'competition', pp. 254–5.

questions of English agency. To Le Jan, the English women are simply Erchinoald's tools, while Wood speaks of Frankish influences over the English solely from a Frankish perspective.

There is, however, a strand within French historiography which seeks to weave a narrative incorporating the actions of both the English and the Franks. Quentovic, along with Dorestad, was the main hub through which English trade and travellers flowed and so contact with the Franks was maintained.⁸⁸ French scholarship has identified the English as being behind the foundation of Quentovic, a point underappreciated in English analysis.⁸⁹ The works of both Jan Dhondt and Michel Rouche, developed by Stéphane Lebecq have demonstrated these English origins. Dhondt's arguments were principally geographical in nature, but Rouche observed that there was strong Saxon settlement in the vicinity of Quentovic.⁹⁰ In 1989, Lebecq commented that the name Quentovic accords with English linguistic tradition (*Hamwic*, *Lundenwic*, *Sandwich*, *Ipswich*). The 'vic' element was unique in the Frankish kingdom, so that Quentovic was often referred to as 'Vic' or 'Wic'.⁹¹ Lebecq then built further on this linguistic and ethnic evidence with numismatics. The moneyers of Quentovic had names such as Dagolfus, Dutta, Anglus, Donna and Ela—English names.⁹²

Le Jan took up this argument and from her interpretation of Lebecq, understood an implicit assumption on Lebecq's part that the driving force behind the founding of Quentovic was English traders.⁹³ Le Jan observes that Quentovic was founded in a region inhabited by the Merovingian kings and in the vicinity of the tax authorities.⁹⁴ She then expands into a study of Merovingian royal and Neustrian aristocratic competition, based upon monastic foundation and

⁸⁸ Grierson and Blackburn, *Middle Ages*, pp. 134–5.

⁸⁹ See: Hodges, *Audit*, p. 101 (*cf.* Hodges, *Achievement*, p. 55); Lebecq, 'Change', p. 75. Quentovic is usually mentioned with no reference to English origins: Gannon, *Iconography*, p. 48; Fouracre, *Ebroin*, pp. 145–6; Wood, 'Journeys', pp. 202, 205–6.

⁹⁰ Dhondt, 'Quentovic', pp. 200–1; Rouche, 'origines', pp. 457–8; Soulat, 'presence', pp. 147–64.

⁹¹ Lebecq, 'Neustrie', pp. 419–20.

⁹² Lebecq, 'Parallèle', pp. 419–21. Zedelius also observed that the Crondall hoard shows economic links between Kent and Quentovic. Zedelius, 'Münzprägung', pp. 369–70.

⁹³ Le Jan, 'élites', pp. 178–9.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 181.

intermarriage, both within Neustria and with East Anglia and Kent. One example she provides is the foundation of Saint-Wandrille by Erchinoald on a tax domain, as well as Fontenelle: evidence of a royal policy of monastic foundation on fiscal territory. This, coupled with marriage alliances with the English, allowed the Merovingians to control the trade of *Quentovic*.⁹⁵ To Le Jan, Frankish royal and aristocratic interest in control of the systems of exchange along the Normandy coast was proof of their involvement in the earliest stages of *Quentovic*. The southern Anglo-Saxon kingdoms were a growing economic hinterland, ripe for Merovingian exploitation.⁹⁶ Her entire argument stems from a disbelief that the Merovingians and their nobles would have lacked agency in an important economic centre.⁹⁷ This is an entirely reasonable point to make, yet her argument, as with her discussion of English royal women in Frankish monasteries, essentially removes agency from the English, assuming that they were simply pawns in a Frankish power struggle.⁹⁸ In essence, recent appraisals of the links between the Franks and the English have demonstrated a remarkable depth and durability to those connections and which must be acknowledged in any study of competing Roman and Frankish influences.

Primary Sources

The evidence base for this study is similar as those done previously. It relies upon a blend of source materials, which alters according to the specific questions in order to bring together archaeological, English, Frankish and papal evidence where relevant. However, one of the fundamental aims of this work is to give the English perspective on their continental engagement. As such, much of the evidence base is the literary works of the early eighth

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 188.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 193–4.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 178–9.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 190–1. Cf. Le Jan, ‘competition’, pp. 254–5.

century, Bede's *HE* and the hagiographies of that period, above all Stephen's *VW*. It is important to stress the background against which this explosion of Northumbrian literature occurred because it has a direct bearing upon this thesis and its principal character: Bishop Wilfrid. While there is some debate as to the precise order in which they were written, seven historical or hagiographical works were written within four decades in Northumbria. This corpus is comprised of the anonymous works: the *VA*, the *VSG* and the *VC*, Stephen's *VW* and Bede's substantial contributions, the *VP* and his two histories: the *HA* and the *HE*. The *HE* has a fairly secure date at the end of the corpus, existing in its current form in *c.* 731.⁹⁹ Two works, the *VA* and the *VSG*, compete for the accolade of oldest piece of English-produced literature. Neither has a particularly secure date. Colgrave's observations on the *VSG* placed it between 704 and 714, based on references to Æthelred of Mercia and Ælfflæd.¹⁰⁰ The *VA* was composed in Aldfrith's reign and after the translation of Cuthberht's relics, providing a relatively narrow date range of 698–705; Thacker, in particular, is inclined to favour an association with the translation in 698 or the years immediately following it.¹⁰¹ What is definite, however, and more important, is that the *VW* (July 712–March 714), written at Ripon, reacted to the *VA* and was in turn reacted to by the *VP*, which Bede composed at the request of the Lindisfarne community.¹⁰² Colgrave was inclined to place the *VP* in 721, a date which Clare Stancliffe broadly follows, although Thacker and Walter Goffart both take a longer view, simply putting it between the *VW* and *c.* 721/2.¹⁰³ The *VC* and the *HA* both belong somewhere in the decade 717–27 and were written at Wearmouth-Jarrow.¹⁰⁴ The two texts are closely related. The former is generally taken as the earlier of the two, although a recent argument has inverted that

⁹⁹ *HE* v.24. Sharpe has mooted that Acca may have altered sections relating to Bishop Wilfrid after Bede's death in 735: Sharpe, 'Ceadwalla', p. 219.

¹⁰⁰ Colgrave, ed., *Gregory*, pp. 47–8; Goffart, *Narrators*, p. 256; Breeze, 'Woman', p. 345.

¹⁰¹ Colgrave, ed., *Cuthbert*, p. 13; Goffart, *Narrators*, p. 256; Thacker, 'Shaping', p. 404.

¹⁰² Stancliffe, 'Dating', pp. 22–4; *cf.* Colgrave, ed., *Bishop Wilfrid*, p. x; Colgrave, 'Earliest', p. 37; Bullough, 'Hagiography', pp. 341–2; *VP* Preface.

¹⁰³ Colgrave, ed., *Cuthbert*, p. 16; Stancliffe, 'Episcopacy', p. 10; Thacker, 'Shaping', p. 407; Goffart, *Narrators*, p. 257

¹⁰⁴ Grocock and Wood, ed., *Abbots*, p. xviii.

pattern.¹⁰⁵ That Bede would not have ignored a papal letter is quite slender evidence for such a significant reappraisal.¹⁰⁶ Furthermore, the *VC* reads as a more emotive text, as if written shortly after the departure of Ceolfrith; Bede's text is more controlled, perhaps owing to the passage of time.¹⁰⁷ What is striking is how febrile the atmosphere in Northumbria must have been to produce these works, which, given survival rates of medieval texts, is probably only a sample of what was produced. Hagiography and history are both intimately linked to the construction and security of a community identity. For so much to have been written so quickly and in the case of Lindisfarne and Wearmouth-Jarrow for rewrites to have been needed, one can posit that the Northumbrian Church was going through an identity crisis.¹⁰⁸

Goffart, building on the work of David Kirby, has demonstrated that Northumbria was split at this precise time in the eighth century in a debate over the spiritual leadership of the kingdom's Church and who in the Church could claim authority, although his interpretation of the *HE* has been criticised and Stancliffe has proposed a looser relationship between the *VW* and *VP*.¹⁰⁹ The aftermath of the Synod of Whitby (664) created tensions concerning the legacy and indeed legitimacy of the Irish Church and one of the underlying currents to the *VW* seems to be the ebbs and flows to this debate and which party was dominant.¹¹⁰ The ramifications of this dispute were not confined to Northumbria, with the policies of Archbishop Theodore reacting and adapting to this dynamic.¹¹¹ In the context of this thesis, one of the striking points to make is the significance of the Franks and the papacy within this debate. Much of Wilfrid's identity is mediated through his claims to have introduced orthodox practice and his appeals to

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. xviii–xxii.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. xxi; Thacker, 'History', p. 180.

¹⁰⁷ *VC* 23–26; *cf. HA* 17.

¹⁰⁸ The *VW* may have been rewritten too: Kirby, 'Eddius', pp. 106–12; *cf. Stancliffe*, 'Dating', pp. 24–25.

¹⁰⁹ Kirby, 'Eddius', pp. 106–10; Goffart, *Narrators*, pp. 235–328; Thacker, 'Early Cult', pp. 116–22 *cf. Higham*, 'Bede's *Historia*', pp. 54–66; Stancliffe, 'Episcopacy', pp. 20–24.

¹¹⁰ Stancliffe, *Bede*, pp. 3–4, 20–1.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 12–17.

Rome.¹¹² The *HA* narrates Biscop's travels and the knowledge and materials he brought back with him, while both this and the *VC* climax with Ceolfrith's departure for Rome.¹¹³ The importance of this theme within the *HE* can perhaps be summed up by the description of Archbishop Theodore's pontificate with *Neque umquam prorsus, ex quo Britanniam petierunt Angli, feliciora fuere tempora*;¹¹⁴ a state mediated in part through the knowledge Theodore brought with him. Remarkably, Whitby, a house closely linked to the Irish tradition in Northumbria, produced the *VSG*, linking the Northumbrian Church to Edwin and Paulinus and through them Gregory's original missionary impulse.¹¹⁵ External connections, taken as a whole, had a transcendent relevance. Rome in particular, and the established Christian civilisation of mainland Europe more generally, played a legitimising role as the institutional and spiritual underpinning of English Christianity; a role of which the authors of the eighth century were acutely aware. It is vital to appreciate this background to sources that are particularly pertinent to this enquiry. If Rome was being weaponised within the context of a regional ecclesiastical debate, its presence in the primary sources must be treated with exceeding care. It is perfectly possible that links to Rome were over-emphasized, if not exaggerated, and so within the context of competing influences, one may need to rebalance the evidence in order to appraise it fairly.

Research Questions

With this problem in mind, it is noteworthy that much of the historiography is spread across various articles and there is a tendency to study Frankish and Roman links within the context of Wilfrid's career rather than placing Wilfrid within the wider context of English links to these

¹¹² *VW* 29–34, 47, 50–54, 57.

¹¹³ *HA* 21–3; *VC* 21–40.

¹¹⁴ *HE* iv.2. 'Never had there been such happy times since the English first came to Britain'.

¹¹⁵ *VSG* 11, 14–19.

areas. Pulling these strands together into a general study of contact in the seventh century and seeking to explore the relative importance of Francia and Rome has merit. Within this Wilfrid is the obvious character to build the thesis around. To that end, it is important to understand the Roman and Frankish links forged in the evangelization and how the careers of other individuals, both ecclesiastical and lay, in Francia and Rome intersect with his own. In addition, Paul Fouracre's examination of the return of Dagobert II demonstrates the need to incorporate questions of English agency and the influence the English could have upon their Frankish neighbours.¹¹⁶ Certain themes can percolate throughout the thesis, such as continuity or change, institutional or personal and ecclesiastical or lay, as the history of these competing contacts with Francia and Rome is examined.

The evangelization is the natural starting point, as the connections generated by it provide the background against which Wilfrid's career may be judged. Wood's work has made the involvement of the Franks clear, although there is still scope for pinning down their importance in relation to Rome. There are two strands of evidence that require analysis, the external evidence of Gregory's letters and the internal evidence of Bede's history and archaeological discoveries, such as Liudhard's medalet and the Prittlewell burial. Wood has proven the utility of Gregory's letters beyond any doubt, but it is necessary to push the analysis further, by considering them as a corpus and incorporating discussion of their complicated manuscript tradition. Ironically, given the concerns about Bede's reliability, he is the earliest witness to Gregory's letters. This allows the letters to be approached in a new light, which offers a different reading of events. An appraisal of Gregory's letters can then be used to test Bede's account and the internal English evidence can be analysed for Roman and Frankish influence, including the recent discoveries at Prittlewell. In essence, the scale of the competing Roman and Frankish influences can be appraised, as well as that of different regions and rulers of

¹¹⁶ Fouracre, 'Continent', pp. 186–99.

Francia, alongside discussion of the involvement of Frankish institutions in the evangelization. This re-examination of the evidence of the evangelization can then neatly set up the discussion of the material concerned with the second half of the seventh century and Wilfrid himself.

This can begin with a critique of accounts of travel, focussing not only on the destination in Rome but the journey through Francia. Given that travel was necessary for evangelization and Wilfrid, amongst others, was an enthusiastic traveller it provides a theme in common across the seventh century. As contact and communication of any form in the early medieval period involved a journey, it is difficult to ignore questions of travel when considering English external engagement. It is possible to examine the nature of these connections through consideration of how travellers over successive generations knew where to go and the support they received on the journeys. Furthermore, analysis of the routes taken can highlight where the links were being made and whether they remained constant or changed over the course of the seventh century.

The age of Wilfrid proper can then be examined. The two strands to this are the English in Francia and the English in Rome. In both instances, Wilfrid's career, with the amount of evidence emanating from Bede and Stephen, can drive the argument. The impact of Wilfrid's time in Rome and Francia upon his career and its influence upon his English career will be assessed. However, it is important to place Wilfrid within the wider context of contact that did exist alongside him. To that end, the evidence for ecclesiastical contact with the Franks should be considered. It is worth reappraising the case-studies of Quentovic and Anglo-Saxon royal women in Frankish monasteries from an English perspective, as it provides crucial evidence for the networks that existed between the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms and the Franks. It is then easier to appraise the significance of Wilfrid's connections with individuals like Aunemundus, Agilbert and Dagobert II.

Similarly, with Rome, it is important to stress how other bishops also sought a Roman education and how the English perceived their connections with Rome. In particular, the circumstances surrounding Theodore's elevation to archiepiscopal status pose intriguing questions because of the papal context in the change and the subsequent reaction Wilfrid appears to have had. It potentially mitigates the image that Stephen created of Wilfrid as the guard-dog of papal authority in the English Church.

Mayr-Harting's and Dailey's suggestions grounding Wilfrid in an alternative 'Celtic' tradition also need to be taken seriously. In particular, Mayr-Harting's proposal that Wilfrid's life must, in part, be understood through his early experiences in Lindisfarne is interesting. It raises questions about how grounded Wilfrid was in the English Church and consequently adds a third influence into the competing Roman and Frankish presences in his career. The sources should be re-examined from that perspective; any evidence that suggests he was influenced by places such as Canterbury or Lindisfarne requires careful consideration. Within a discussion of Wilfrid's place in the English Church, one should discuss Wilfrid's memorialisation and how Bede and Stephen weaved their different narratives of the bishop, focussing in particular on whether Bede took a hostile view of Wilfrid and his career.

This study is consequently best divided into six chapters. Chapters One and Two examine the evangelization, focussing upon the external Gregorian evidence and internal Bedan and archaeological evidence respectively. Chapter Three then proceeds to discuss the evidence of travel to Rome and its implications in the Age of Wilfrid. Chapters Four and Five cover the same period and considers Wilfrid and the English in Francia and Wilfrid and the English in Rome respectively. Chapter Six then analyses Wilfrid in the English Church, before the study proceeds to the conclusion.

Irrespective of specifics, it is remarkable that when the English emerge into the full light of history they do so through interaction with other peoples. The evangelization prompted their integration into a wider world, stretching from the Byzantine Empire to Ireland. Situated on what was thought to be on the edge of the world, the English placed a high premium on bonds with its core, as now understood from a Christian perspective. The development of links with the Roman Church amongst the English saw the desire to exploit this contact grow. More to the point, it highlights the core theme of this thesis; Francia and Rome are both present in the evangelization. The role of Gregory's missionaries must be balanced against that of the Frankish courts and Church, and Æthelberht's pre-existing Frankish ties. These ties did not emerge from nowhere; Æthelberht's father's name, Eormenic hints at Frankish connections and the English had Germanic origins.¹¹⁷ Likewise, these links continued to evolve in the eighth century and onwards. Continental engagement in one form or another is arguably a consistent theme throughout the history of the island of Britain and so this thesis offers a small but significant snapshot of it. It is apt, opening this discussion with the evangelization and the return of Roman influence to a former province, to recall the words of a first-century poet commenting on Claudius' conquest of Britannia: '*coniunctum est quod adhuc orbis et orbis erat.*'¹¹⁸

¹¹⁷ Brooks, *Canterbury*, pp. 64–5; Hamerow, 'kingdoms', pp. 263–4, 269–70.

¹¹⁸ Anon., '*de Britannia*'. 'Now united, what was once two worlds.'

CHAPTER ONE: THE 'ROMAN' MISSION TO THE ENGLISH: FRANKISH AND ROMAN
CONTRIBUTIONS—THE GREGORIAN EVIDENCE

*Necnon et ego primus post obitum primorum procerum, a sancto Gregorio
directorum, Scotticae virulenta plantationis germina eradicarem?*¹

Wilfrid's pleas at the Synod of Austerfeld (c. 703) are extremely important for understanding the controversial bishop. While Stephen may have provided some judicious editing, they give a sense of how Wilfrid defined his own career. Unsurprisingly, as the above quote alludes to, the Easter controversy was one of the foundations upon which Wilfrid structured his career. What is interesting is how Wilfrid located himself in history; he regarded himself as a (perhaps even *the*) successor to the Gregorian missionaries. As such, it is worth looking to the missionary activity of the early-seventh century in order to set up the background to Wilfrid's life; a background of which he was clearly aware. Appraising the competing influences of Francia and Rome, it would be inappropriate to draw lines back from Wilfrid to the missionaries. Rather, the background to Wilfrid must be appreciated on its own terms, thereby contextualising Wilfrid.

The fact that Christianity had to be imported and actively taught by clergy means that the evangelization is defined, above all else, by interaction with others. The *HE* is dominated by the dual influences of Iona and Rome in this endeavour.² However, the completeness of this picture has often been questioned. Bede's dismissal of the British Church for never preaching the Gospel to the English has come under sustained criticism.³ More significant are the recent interpretations of Frankish involvement in the Gregorian mission to Kent. Bede acknowledges a limited Frankish presence in the translators that accompanied Augustine to Kent.⁴ He also

¹ VW 47. 'Was I not the first, after the death of the first elders who were sent by St Gregory, to root out the poisonous weeds of the Scots?'

² Rome: *HE* i.23–ii.20; Iona: *HE* iii.3, iii.5, iii.14–17, iii.21–24.

³ Theories have emerged concerning the survival of a British Church and 'local' evangelization: Sims-Williams, *Western England*, pp. 78–83; Stancliffe, 'British Church', pp. 117–24; Brooks, 'Identity', pp. 237–40.

⁴ *HE* i.25, ii.15, iii.7.

reports Franks acting as the bishops of Wessex and East Anglia.⁵ Bede goes into most depth in his description of the marriage of Bertha and Æthelberht.⁶ Not only does Bede allow oblique references to Bertha's marriage in the *HF* to be properly defined, he provides details of that marriage agreement.⁷ Bertha was allowed to maintain her Christian faith and to bring with her a bishop.⁸ Bertha and Liudhard provide a Frankish context for the initial impetus of conversion. However, none of these Frankish contributions is explored by Bede in any detail.

The registers of Pope Gregory reveal a concerted effort to involve the Frankish Church in the evangelization. Wood has suggested that Bede's unwillingness to acknowledge the Frankish contribution that he has detected in Gregory's letters is because 'For Bede, and probably for Canterbury, the English church started with Pope Gregory. To have emphasized Brunhild or Bertha would have sullied the purity of the papal stream of influence.'⁹ Consequently, the evangelization of the English allows for the general picture of contact with the Franks and the papacy to be analysed; there are competing Frankish and Roman influences within the 'Roman' mission, which are worth drawing out and exploring. This includes questions of the scale of the Frankish contribution in comparison to the Roman; whether Frankish institutions, such as the Frankish Church and courts involved themselves in the mission and, if so, where; and whether particular regions of Francia were more involved than others. This chapter sets the scene for the development of Christianity amongst the English and the career of Wilfrid, focussing upon the Gregorian evidence, with the Bedan evidence discussed in the next chapter.

Wood's work has proven beyond all doubt the utility of Gregory's letters, showing Gregory wanted to involve the Frankish Church in Augustine's mission. However, his analysis of the

⁵ *Ibid.* ii.15, iii.7.

⁶ *Ibid.* i.25.

⁷ *HF* iv.26, ix.26.

⁸ *HE* i.25.

⁹ Wood, 'Mission', p. 16.

letters is brief.¹⁰ The letters have a complicated manuscript tradition, which needs to be understood in order to appreciate fully the information they contain. Furthermore, a detailed textual analysis of the letters, grouped by topic, allows for Gregory's requests of the Frankish Church and the aid that was forthcoming to be understood. These groups are: what Gregory requested of the Frankish Church and courts; what he thanked them for; how the *pallium* of Syagrius of Autun relates to Augustine's mission and, finally, the significance of Gregory's thoughts concerning simony within the Frankish Church and how that influenced his attitude towards Frankish involvement in the mission to Kent. An analysis of these themes allows Gregory's understanding of Frankish involvement and how it compared to Rome's to be drawn out.

The Registers of Gregory the Great

The letters that Gregory wrote are the only contemporary material to have survived from the mission to Kent. As such, their information is uniquely valuable. However, little headway can be made without a careful appraisal of how Gregory's letters have survived; and this allows some assessment to be made of how contemporaries viewed them, as well as discussion of their difficulties as a historical source. The decision to preserve or copy documents is not a dispassionate act. The manuscripts within which the letters are preserved reflect the activities of individuals and institutions, which had their own agenda for preserving certain letters. As such, the preservation of Gregory's letters does not constitute the work of sixth-century papal scribes, whose job it was to record papal communication, it is the work of ecclesiastics from the eighth century onwards, who saw in the letters some benefit to themselves. That being said nearly the entire corpus has been derived from the sender's tradition, being copied from the

¹⁰ Ibid. pp. 5–7.

original register of letters compiled in Rome during Gregory’s pontificate.¹¹ This register, extant in the ninth century but subsequently lost, was characterised by Dag Norberg as *L*.¹² At the outset it is worth observing that Bede is the earliest witness for Gregory’s letters and his copies are largely accurate.¹³ There are three principal manuscript traditions, all derived from *L*: *P*, *C* and *R*.¹⁴ The origins of *P* and *C* are uncertain, because the archetypes no longer exist. Given the subsequent manuscript tradition, it is quite likely that they were eighth-century, Frankish creations.¹⁵ The oldest exemplars of both traditions derive from eastern Francia; *Pa I* was made for Corbie Abbey, while *C I* was made for Hildebold, archbishop of Cologne. Hildebold’s codex also includes a copy of *P*, known as *Pb I*.¹⁶

Manuscript Tradition	Description
<i>L</i>	The original registers, compiled by papal scribes during Gregory I’s pontificate, lost after John the Deacon completed his ninth century life.
<i>P</i> ¹⁷	A Frankish copy circulating in the eighth century. Its origins are unclear but by the late eighth century two distinct traditions had developed, one at Corbie (<i>Pa</i>) and the other at Cologne (<i>Pb</i>).
<i>C</i> ¹⁸	A Frankish copy circulating in the eighth century. Its origins are unclear but a copy was made at Cologne in the late eighth century.
<i>R</i> ¹⁹	A Roman compilation of letters from the original registers, copied on the orders of Pope Hadrian. The original has been lost and it survives in various tenth and eleventh century manuscripts.

The Creation of the Manuscript Traditions

It is unclear when the Frankish Church first received copies of Gregory’s letters. It is, however, likely that Boniface of Mainz obtained them. He was certainly interested in Gregory’s

¹¹ An exception is the letter Gregory sent to the missionaries urging them on and making Augustine their abbot. It is possible that the register’s copyists chose not to preserve this letter and may suggest a written record survived in Canterbury. *HE* i.23. MGH Epp. 1, p. 425; cf. Shaw, *Gregorian*, pp. 32–3, 210–16.

¹² CChr. SL 140, pp. v–vi.

¹³ *HE* i.23–4, i.28–32; cf. *GP*RE I vi.50–50a, II xi.36–9, xi.45, xi.56.

¹⁴ *Ibid.* p. v.

¹⁵ MGH Epp. 2, p. viii.

¹⁶ *Pa I*: St Petersburg, Rossiiskaia Natsionalnaia Biblioteka, F.v.1.7; *Pb I* and *CI*: Cologne, Erzbischöfliche Diözesan- und Dombibliothek, 92.

¹⁷ MGH Epp. 2, pp. xvi–xix.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. xiv–xvi.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. viii–xii.

writings by 735 when he asked Nothhelm, archbishop of Canterbury, for a copy of the *Libellus Responsionum*, having failed to find it in the papal archives in Rome.²⁰ The approach to Nothhelm is significant. It suggests that there was no tradition of reading Gregory's correspondence in Francia. Nothhelm had previously obtained copies of papal letters, which he passed onto Bede for his history at the advice of Albinus, abbot of the monastery of Ss Peter and Paul, Canterbury.²¹ Albinus' involvement in this transmission might suggest that Nothhelm originally obtained these letters for the Church in Canterbury. Nothhelm is the first person known to have made copies of Gregory's letters. Consequently, Boniface contacted both the man and the see most likely to be able to help him.

Approximately ten years later (c. 746–7), Boniface was able to send Ecgberht, archbishop of York, some of Gregory's letters that he believed to be unknown in Britain.²² Boniface's interests had developed from his initial communication with Nothhelm. He had been actively collecting Gregory's letters, asking for a complete copy of the registers from Gemmulus, a deacon of the Roman Church.²³ The best context in which to understand Boniface's interest in them is his concern with the good governance of the Church, both in terms of morals and structure.²⁴ Such a hypothesis is supported by his interest in the *Libellus Responsionum* and his concern with the accuracy of the guidance concerning marriage laws.²⁵ Boniface presumably regarded Gregory's letters as a source of authority, hence his concern to ensure that a statement permitting marriage in the third degree was accurate. Boniface's position as the origins for Frankish interest in the letters must remain hypothetical, although it seems quite likely.

²⁰ *BLE* 33.

²¹ *HE* Preface.

²² *BLE* 75.

²³ *Ibid.* 54.

²⁴ Noble, 'Introduction', pp. xiv–xviii.

²⁵ *BLE* 33.

Gregory's authority is equally clear with *R. C I*, *Pb I* and *Pa I*, all date from the last quarter of the eighth century; the *R* tradition dates from this period too, although the earliest manuscript witnesses date from the tenth century.²⁶ However, John the Deacon (d. c. 880), who composed the first Roman account of Gregory's life, notes that Hadrian ordered a collection of Gregory's letters to be compiled.²⁷ Hadrian's pontificate saw the growth of papal independence and a staunch assertion by Hadrian of the rights of the See of Peter to judge the Churches of the world.²⁸ By appealing to Gregory's actions as recorded in his letters, Hadrian could point to a pope who had involved himself with Churches throughout the Mediterranean, creating a precedent for Hadrian's ecclesiology. Certainly, Gregory is the source of authority in the twenty-fifth chapter of a letter that Hadrian sent to Charlemagne about the use of images in worship.²⁹ Charlemagne also asked for Hadrian to provide him with the sacramentary Gregory was thought to have created.³⁰ King and pope evidently respected Gregory's statements as guidance for their own actions.

The two surviving Frankish exemplars both originate from ecclesiastical centres closely associated with Charlemagne. Corbie produced one tradition (*Pa I*). Desiderius, king of the Lombards, may have been exiled to Corbie after his defeat in 774.³¹ Charlemagne's cousin, Adalhard was its abbot and Adalhard, a trusted adviser, was part of the regency council for Pippin in Italy.³² He also represented Charlemagne in Rome during the *filioque* dispute.³³ Hildebold of Cologne (*C I* and *Pb I*) was so valued as an adviser that he was permanently attached to the court.³⁴ In other words, it is significant that two senior advisers at

²⁶ Trier, Stadtbibliothek, 171 and St Gall, Stiftsbibliothek, 670. See: Martyn, ed., *Letters*, I, p. viii; MGH Epp. 2, pp. vii, xiv, xvi.

²⁷ *GMV* iv.71.

²⁸ Morrison, *Tradition*, pp. 191–2.

²⁹ *ESPR* 2.

³⁰ *CC* 89.

³¹ Nelson, *Charlemagne*, p. 148.

³² *Ibid.* p. 409.

³³ *Ibid.* p. 475.

³⁴ *Ibid.* p. 315.

Charlemagne's court, both involved in his reform program, had copies of Gregory's letters. As a result, the copying of *R*, *C 1*, *Pb 1* and *Pa 1* is best contextualised as the selection of authoritative guidelines for governing the Church.

The Preservation of the Mission Letters

The specific letters that refer to the mission are provided in the following table, along with the manuscript traditions in which they survive:

MGH No.	Martyn No.	<i>HE</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>P</i>
vi.49	6.51		✓		
vi.50	6.52	i.24	✓		
vi.50a	6.53	i.23			
vi.51	6.54		✓		
vi.52	6.55		✓		
vi.53	6.56		✓		
vi.54	6.57		✓		
vi.56	6.59		✓		
vi.57	6.60		✓		
viii.4	8.4		✓		
xi.56a	8.37	i.27			
ix.222	9.223		✓	✓	
xi.34	11.34		✓		
xi.35	11.35		✓		
xi.36	11.36	i.31	✓		✓
xi.37	11.37	i.32	✓		✓
xi.38	11.38		✓		✓
xi.39	11.39	i.29			✓
xi.40	11.40		✓		✓
xi.41	11.41		✓		
xi.42	11.42		✓		
xi.45	11.45	i.28	✓		
xi.47	11.47		✓		✓
xi.48	11.48		✓		✓
xi.50	11.50		✓		
xi.51	11.51		✓		
xi.56	11.56	i.30	✓		

Discerning a pattern is not straightforward since no tradition includes all of the letters. Context suggests that Bede's approach to the letters was mediated through the lens of evangelization.

In the case of *R*, the curious point is that the omissions are those most concerned with the

mission. To that end the *Libellus Responsionum* (xi.56a) is absent, as is the letter to the monks (vi.50a) and the letter concerned with the structure of the English Church (ix.39).³⁵ All other letters show Gregory engaging with bishops, kings, queens and nobles. Consequently, mission does not appear to be the primary motivation in preserving these letters, rather it was the span of Gregory's influence. The most surprising absence in this regard, therefore, is that of xi.39, especially as xi.36 is included, which warns Augustine about pride. However, this latter letter shows Gregory admonishing Augustine, in other words the pope admonishing a metropolitan bishop.³⁶ It is possible that the former letter showing the establishment *de novo* of a diocesan structure was too exceptional to aid Hadrian's claims of papal authority over the ancient Churches.

A similar point should be made about *P* and *C*. While the *C* tradition only contains one relevant letter, Cologne 92 contained *Pb 1* as well as *C 1*.³⁷ As such, Hildebold possessed the seven letters of the *P* tradition relating to the mission. Neither Corbie nor Hildebold, however, possessed anything approaching a complete corpus of the missionary letters. Consequently, it is likely that the letters preserved were selected out of interest in their content. The letter warning Augustine against pride, for instance, is a good example of Gregory's theology.³⁸ In the context of Charlemagne's harsh measures against Saxon paganism in the *Admonitio Generalis*, it seems important that Gregory's letter to Æthelberht is preserved, in which he urged him to destroy pagan idols; significantly the letter to Mellitus, backtracking on this advice and advising moderation, is absent from both Frankish traditions.³⁹ Several of the other letters are principally concerned with the reform of the Frankish Church and only have

³⁵ *GPRE* I, vi.50a; II xi.39, xi.56a. For discussion concerning the authenticity of the *Libellus Responsionum*, see: Deanesly and Grosjean, 'Canterbury Edition', pp. 1–49; Farmer, 'Gregory's Answers', pp. 419–22; Meyvaert, 'Bede's text', pp. 15–33; Wood, 'Historical Re-identifications', p. 32.

³⁶ *GPRE* II xi.36.

³⁷ *Ibid.* ix.222.

³⁸ *Ibid.* xi.36.

³⁹ *GPRE* II xi.37, *cf.* xi.56; *AG* 65; *CPS*.

tangential references to the mission.⁴⁰ In this regard, the letter to Augustine about the English episcopacy might have been of interest, given the references to how metropolitans should relate to each other.⁴¹ Charlemagne's reform programme involved expanding the number of metropolitans and strengthening the hierarchy of the Frankish Church.⁴² An exception is the letter to Syagrius of Autun, praising him for aiding Augustine, granting him the *pallium* and explaining how the grant will impact the province of Lyon, which is only found in the *C* tradition. Hildebold of Cologne was the first archbishop of Cologne, promoted to this status in 795. As such, evidence of a novel grant of the *pallium*, by the eighth century closely linked to archiepiscopal and metropolitan status, may have attracted his attention.⁴³ The only letter solely concerned with the English mission preserved in a Frankish tradition is xi.48, which thanked Brunhilda for her contributions to the English mission and asked for aid for Mellitus. The general context does not suggest that Frankish interest in the letters was sparked by their involvement in the mission to Kent. A similar point can be made about Roman interest. Gregory's registers were preserved because they contained information relevant to governing the contemporary eighth-century Church. The letters were not preserved by a Frankish or Roman Church proud of its historic association with Gregory's mission. This is an interesting silence in itself and creates the possibility that more significant material might have been lost.

A Complete Record?

This is closely linked to an important methodological implication of the letters' survival, which directly impacts our reading of the Frankish context. How complete are the registers? Views on this matter range from essentially intact to substantially missing.⁴⁴ Firstly, a register

⁴⁰ *GP*RE II xi.38, xi.40, xi.47.

⁴¹ *Ibid.* xi.39.

⁴² Wormald, 'Offa', p. 106.

⁴³ Garrison, 'Israel', p. 127.

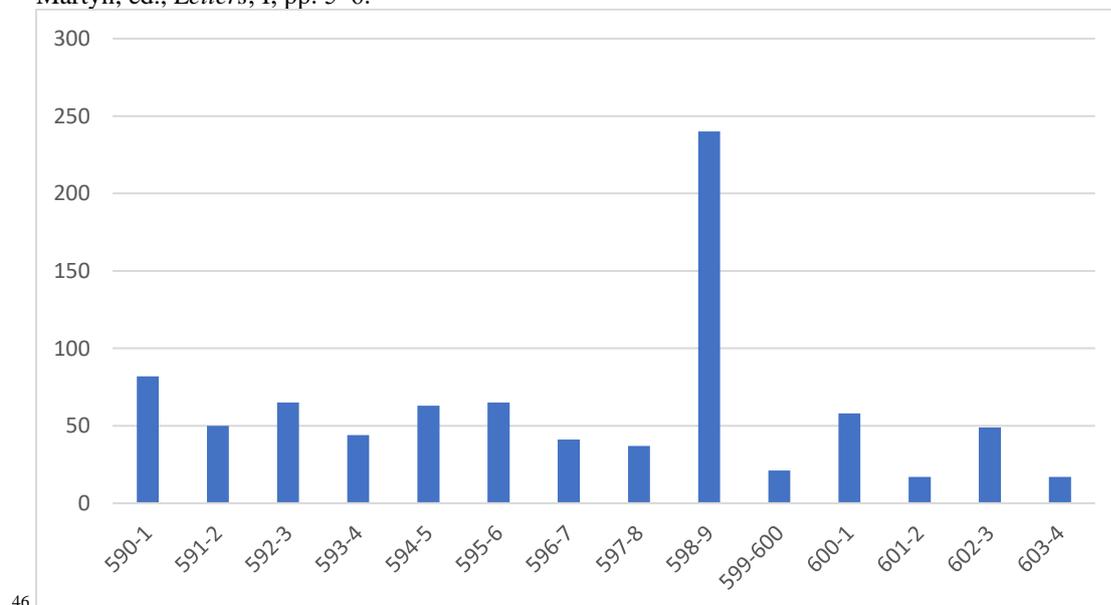
⁴⁴ *Cf.* Martyn, ed., *Letters*, I, p. 13; Mayr-Harting, *Coming*, p. 52; Collins and McClure, 'Rome', pp. 28–9; Poole, *Chancery*, p. 32.

does not have to be a complete record and the size discrepancy for the ninth year of Gregory’s pontificate is concerning; 240 letters survive from this year. His first year has the second largest number preserved, but the tally is only eighty-two. His twelfth and fourteenth years have only seventeen letters each. That Gregory was ill in the ninth year of his pontificate and so had plenty of time for letter writing is unconvincing.⁴⁵ It is difficult to explain the differences in number from year to year without speaking of variances in preservation.⁴⁶ Gregory’s letters from the ninth year of his pontificate may have been disproportionately interesting to later scribes concerned with Church reform and papal authority and may well indicate how much has been lost from other years.⁴⁷

A Quantitative Approach

In the context of Gregory’s requests for Frankish aid, this makes a simple quantitative approach difficult to sustain. The territories of Theudebert and Theuderic, under the regency

⁴⁵ Martyn, ed., *Letters*, I, pp. 5–6.



⁴⁶ This bar graph sets out the relative number of Gregory’s letters according to each year of his pontificate.

⁴⁷ The letters within the registers provide evidence for at least another dozen letters. Furthermore, Columbanus wrote to Gregory the Great in c. 600 but no reply is known. However, Gregory does reference Columbanus in two of his letters, dated to 594 and 600. The letter of 594 is particularly curious, because Gregory notes that he sent Columbanus a copy of the *Pastoral Care*. It implies an earlier correspondence between Gregory and Columbanus that has been entirely lost. *GPPE* I v.17, II xi.9; *CE* 1; Martyn, ed., *Letters*, I, p. 13.

of Brunhilda, received by far the most requests for aid. Of the seventeen recipients, thirteen of them were Brunhilda, Theudebert, Theuderic or bishops from their territories. This proportion increases to twenty-one out of twenty-five when the letters sent, rather than recipients (some of whom received multiple letters), is counted.⁴⁸ Only two were certainly sent to Chlothar II or his bishops.⁴⁹ The position of Simplicius of Paris is unclear in the fractious politics of the time and Licinius is otherwise unknown.⁵⁰ Given the distance separating extant manuscripts from the original registers, the degree to which this distribution can be deemed reliable is impossible to determine. Of particular interest are the three letters to multiple bishops.⁵¹ The original scribes presumably chose to save time by noting the addressees rather than making multiple copies of the same letter. However, to what extent can the historian trust either the original scribes or subsequent copyists to have accurately replicated the addressees? Eye-skip is far more significant here than in the main body of the text. There is a hint that this may have happened. Bede's attribution of the one papal letter he copied to a Frankish bishop as being sent to Aetherius of Arles has typically been dismissed as error; according to the registers, it was sent to Pelagius of Tours and Serenus of Marseilles.⁵² While the description of Aetherius as bishop of Arles is certainly a mistake (he was bishop of Lyon), it is possible that Aetherius was originally one of the addressees. Aetherius' name (but not his see) is embedded in the text of the letter Bede provides, and Bede's care in copying his written evidence suggests that the copy he received had Aetherius as the letter's recipient.⁵³ Nothhelm could have made an error

⁴⁸ Theuderic: vi.49, xi.47; Theudebert: vi.49, xi.50; Brunhilda: vi.57, xi.48; Pelagius of Tours: vi.50; Serenus of Marseilles: vi.50, xi.41; Virgil of Arles: vi.51, xi.38; Desiderius of Vienne: vi.52, xi.34; Syagrius of Autun: vi.52; Prostatius of Aix: vi.53; Aregius, patrician of Gaul: vi.56; Aetherius of Lyon: xi.40; Menas of Toulon: xi.41; Lupus of Châlon-sur-Saône: xi.41; Aigulf of Metz: xi.41; Aregius of Gap: xi.42.

⁴⁹ Chlothar: xi.51; Melantius of Rouen: xi.41.

⁵⁰ According to the *Chronicle of Fredegar* Chlothar seized Paris in 596, but in 600 was forced back between the Seine and the Oise. While this might imply Chlothar had lost Paris then, in 604 Theuderic defeated Chlothar again and at this point is noted as entering Paris in triumph. It is best to err on the side of caution and not assign Simplicius. *CF* iv.17, iv.20, iv.26; Simplicius and Licinius: xi.41.

⁵¹ *GP*RE I vi.50, vi.52; II xi.41. This does not include vi.49 sent jointly to Theudebert and Theuderic.

⁵² Colgrave and Mynors, ed., *Ecclesiastical History*, p. 71, n. 2.

⁵³ *HE* i.24; Shaw, *Gregorian*, pp. 34–5, 65.

when copying the letter in Rome. However, Bede is the earliest witness to Gregory's letters and this particular letter (vi.50) does not survive elsewhere until the ninth century.⁵⁴ Suffice it to say, Bede's copy of this letter raises the possibility that not all of the letters' recipients are known.⁵⁵

Further supporting evidence may come from xi.41, which is addressed to seven different recipients in the registers; six of these are only known to have received this letter.⁵⁶ However, Serenus of Marseilles was previously contacted.⁵⁷ This letter to the seven bishops is little more than a circular, asking for aid for Mellitus' party. There is no acknowledgement that any of these bishops might have previously aided Augustine (or been contacted to do so).⁵⁸ This aligns with the two other bishops known to have been contacted for aid twice: Virgil of Arles and Desiderius of Vienne. The requests for Mellitus do not acknowledge the prior aid requested for Augustine.⁵⁹ Consequently, this raises the possibility that bishops other than Serenus included in that circular had also been previously contacted. Little can be said for certain about the original extent of Gregory's registers, however there is good reason to doubt that the registers are complete and because of this a quantitative approach should not be attempted.

The Frankish Perspective

There is an additional, related methodological issue to consider when studying the letters of Gregory concerned with the mission to Kent. The Frankish perspective is missing. The dialogue that Gregory was engaged in only survives from Gregory's own contributions to it.

⁵⁴ It survives in the *R* and *r* tradition. Martyn, ed., *Letters*, I, p. viii. The *r* tradition is derived from Hadrian's collection but is only the first half. MGH Epp. 2, p. xii.

⁵⁵ MGH Epp. 1, p. 424, n. vi 50. If later copyists erred in the attribution of this letter, Bede's (and Nothhelm's) copy may suggest how the original registers looked. Bede apparently did not know that this letter was also sent to Pelagius of Tours and Serenus of Marseilles, which could suggest the letters were copied in individually. *GPRE* I v.58, vi.51; *GPRE* II ix.216, ix.218, ix.224, xi.38, xi.45; Shaw, *Gregorian*, p. 34.

⁵⁶ Menas of Toulon, Lupus of Châlon-sur-Saône, Aigulf of Metz, Simplicius of Paris, Melantius of Rouen and Licinius.

⁵⁷ Along with Pelagius of Tours and possibly Aetherius of Lyon.

⁵⁸ *GPRE* II xi.41.

⁵⁹ Virgil: *GPRE* II xi.38, *cf.* I vi.51; Desiderius: *GPRE* II xi.34, *cf.* I vi.52.

This is a problem. In gauging the success of Gregory's requests to the Frankish Church and courts, one can only rely upon his requests and subsequent letters of thanks, which may well have a diplomatic veneer. In addition, Frankish bishops and rulers may have involved themselves without a formal request from the pope. Gregory's sole letter to Chlothar II dates from 601 but acknowledges the aid Chlothar gave to Augustine.⁶⁰ Was that aid solicited and an earlier letter lost or did Chlothar choose to aid Augustine when he showed up unexpectedly at his court? The letters represent one view of events unfolding in western Christendom and it cannot be said with confidence that this view accounts for those of other peoples or even gives a complete view of Gregory's own thoughts and actions. In using the material that has survived, it must be accepted that it does not represent the full corpus and consequently due caution must be exercised when drawing conclusions from it. With all that being said, the letters provide us with an extraordinary insight into the pontificate of Gregory I and with it the English mission, the Frankish Church and much more.

What did Gregory ask for and from where?

Despite emphasizing the importance of Gregory's letters, the historiography, if not passing over them in silence, does not engage closely with the texts themselves or with the corpus as a whole.⁶¹ What immediately becomes apparent upon a detailed analysis of the letters is that the Frankish courts were asked for surprisingly little, which has obvious ramifications for any appraisal of the Frankish contribution to Augustine's mission.⁶² Such an analysis can be divided into three parts. The first two parts break down the letters sent to Frankish rulers,

⁶⁰ *GP*RE II xi.51.

⁶¹ Wood, 'Mission', pp. 6–7; Dunn, *Christianization*, pp. 49–53.

⁶² The division of Francia was as follows: Chlothar II controlled the kingdom of Soissons, encompassing the northern most regions of Francia. This kingdom formed the core of the later kingdom of Neustria. Theuderic possessed Burgundy, while Theudebert controlled Austrasia. *CF* iv.2, iv.16; *LHF* 35; Van Dam, 'Gaul', pp. 202–3, 229.

focussing firstly upon the translators that Gregory asked to be sent with Augustine and secondly upon the protection Gregory also sought for the missionaries. The third section shifts to the letters sent to the bishops and the themes that may be adduced from them.

Translators

Within the context of Franks operating with the mission in Kent itself, all that can be said with confidence is that Gregory asked for translators. In his joint letter to Theuderic II and Theudebert II, Gregory made the following statement: *Quibus etiam iniunximus, ut aliquos secum e vicino debeant presbyteros ducere, cum quibus eorum possint mentes agnoscere et voluntates ammonitione sua, quantum Deus donaverit, adiuvere.*⁶³ Gregory specifically wanted Augustine to take Frankish priests with him but qualified their function in a specific way. They were not going to minister to the English, but rather to allow the missionaries that Gregory had sent to understand the English desires and to advise them on fulfilling them. Indeed, the phrasing of this section clearly separates out the Frankish priests from Augustine's Roman priests.

The letter to Brunhilda is less explicit. However, given that she was acting as regent for her grandsons in 596, letters to them and to her can reasonably be read alongside one another. The three made up the ruling core of Austrasia and Burgundy and it is hardly likely that Gregory would have sent contradictory information. Brunhilda's letter reads: *Quorum ne animae in aeterna damnatione valeant deperire, curae nobis fuit praesentium portitorem Augustinum servum Dei, cuius zelum et studium bene nobis est cognitum, cum aliis servis Dei illic dirigere, ut per eos ipsorum potuissemus voluntates addiscere et de eorum conversione vobis quoque adnitentibus, in quantum est possibile, cogitare. Quibus etiam iniunximus ut, ad agenda haec*

⁶³ *GP*RE I vi.49. 'We have also ordered that they should take some priests with them from nearby, through whom they might understand their thoughts and whose advice might help them to get what they want, whatever God should give them.'

*e vicino secum debeant presbyteros ducere.*⁶⁴ Once again, it is possible to detect a separation between the roles of the Romans and the Franks in Gregory's mind and the role of the Franks appears to be defined again as translators, intermediaries between the English and the Roman missionaries. The crucial point is that in both letters Gregory was concerned with communication. He sought to understand the wishes of the English and saw the Franks as the solution.

This is corroborated by what Gregory specifically referenced when thanking Brunhilda for her support. He mentioned the miracles being performed in Kent and then stated: *Ex qua re magnam vos oportet habere laetitiam, quia maiorem sibi partem hac in re praestitorum vestrorum solacia vindicant, cuius post Deum auxiliis verbum illic praedicationis innotuit.*⁶⁵ If Gregory intended this to say that Brunhilda's agents were acting as missionaries or preachers, he chose an oddly circuitous way to express himself. The thrust of the sentence is that Brunhilda's agents helped preaching become known; by implication they were not preachers themselves.⁶⁶ All three letters concur in suggesting that Augustine took Frankish priests to act as translators. The Franks, therefore, stood between the English and the Roman missionaries in the dynamic of conversion. They were translators and, as far as can be inferred from the letters, that is the only explicit demand that Gregory made for aid in Kent itself. It is of course risky to make an argument *ex silentio*. However, Gregory's specific requests are both clear and consistent and so unusually one can suggest what he did not want. This clarity means that the

⁶⁴ *GP*RE I vi.57. 'And so that their souls should not perish in eternal damnation, we have taken care to send there the bearer of this letter, Augustine, a monk, whose zeal and earnestness is well known to us, together with other monks, so that through them we might learn the wishes of the people themselves and consider their conversion, as far as is possible, with your support also. We have also warned them that they should take priests with them from nearby to carry out these things.'

⁶⁵ *GP*RE II xi.48. 'And from this, you should feel great happiness, because the support of your excellent agents can claim a greater share in this matter, with whose help the word of preaching there became known, after God.'

⁶⁶ Cf. Wood, 'Mission', p. 16.

pope appears to have been careful not to ask the Franks to undertake a sacramental role in the evangelization.

At this juncture it is worth considering whence this aid came. There is no evidence to suggest Chlothar provided it.⁶⁷ Likewise, only Brunhilda was singled out for thanks for the translators.⁶⁸ Given Brunhilda's position as regent for Theuderic and Theudebert, ruling Austrasia and Burgundy, in 596, one can locate this aid as coming from those kingdoms. However, it is difficult to be more specific. The significance of Syagrius of Autun's *pallium* is difficult to judge in relation to his involvement in Augustine's mission (see below, pp. 51–8).⁶⁹ However, as Wallace-Hadrill has observed, Syagrius was closely linked to Brunhilda, to the extent that she petitioned for him to receive the *pallium*.⁷⁰ As such, one can tentatively moot that Brunhilda sought priests from Syagrius and his Burgundian diocese.

Protection

Gregory made one other clear request. He asked for protection for Augustine from various Frankish rulers and made a similar request in 601 when Mellitus was heading to reinforce Augustine. For Augustine, in contrast to the request for the translators, Theuderic's and Theudebert's letter is less explicit than Brunhilda's. Their letter simply states *vestra eos potestas tueatur et adiuvet*.⁷¹ Brunhilda's provides more detail: *dignetur habere in omnibus commendatum atque ei tuitionis suae gratiam vehementer impendat et labori eius patrocinii sui ferat auxilium et, ut plenissime possit habere mercedem, ad suprascriptam Anglorum gentem sua tuitione securum ire provideat*.⁷² Gregory specifically asked that Brunhilda get the

⁶⁷ *GPRE* II xi.51.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.* xi.47, xi.50; *cf.* xi.48.

⁶⁹ *Cf.* Wood, 'Mission', pp. 6–7.

⁷⁰ *GPRE* II viii.4; Wallace-Hadrill, *Frankish Church*, p. 58.

⁷¹ *GPRE* I vi.49. 'let your power protect and assist them.'

⁷² *Ibid.* vi.57. 'you should deign to accept his commendation entirely and bestow on him eagerly the grace of your protection and give his labour the help of your patronage and so that he might have a reward in full, provide him with a safe journey to the above-mentioned people of England, under your protection.'

missionaries safely to the English and this would ensure Brunhilda's reward. This is significant for two reasons. Firstly, it shows Gregory engaging the rulers of Austrasia and Burgundy with the protection of Augustine. Secondly, there is no suggestion that Gregory asked either Brunhilda, or her young charges, to involve themselves or their Church directly in the evangelization in Kent itself; their protection applied only within their own borders.

The letters sent to Brunhilda and the kings concerning Mellitus have a similar vein. Theuderic, by now probably out of his minority, was explicitly asked for help *ad proficiscendum*.⁷³ Likewise, the letter sent to Chlothar focusses upon ensuring the missionaries *sine mora iter expleverint*.⁷⁴ However, there is a slight complication in Brunhilda's and Theudebert's letters. Both are more extensive and the language is less explicitly tied to the idea of travel. Having detailed Augustine's need for reinforcements, Brunhilda's letter states: *ita eis in omnibus adesse dignemini, quatenus, dum bonis excellentiae vestrae initiis meliora successerint et nullas illic moras vel difficultates invenerint*.⁷⁵ Likewise, Gregory informed Theudebert *De qua re maximas gratias exsolventes petimus, ut et monachis praesentium portitoribus, quos ad eundem fratrem nostrum direximus, vestra uberius beneficia ministretis, quatenus, dum vobis patrocinantibus nullas illic difficultates invenerint, sed coeptum iter facile Christo adiuvente peregrint*.⁷⁶ Specifically, the word *illic*—'over there'—requires definition, because it could be understood as meaning Kent. There is the possibility then that Gregory may have been specifically asking Brunhilda and the king of Austrasia, Theudeberht, for protection for Mellitus' party in Kent itself. It provides slender evidence for Wood's suggestion that Chlothar's opponents sought to squeeze him in his northern kingdom by encircling him through

⁷³ *GP*RE II xi.47. 'For the purpose of setting out.' Own translation.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.* xi.51. 'complete their journey without delay.'

⁷⁵ *Ibid.* xi.48. 'deign to give them full assistance in this way, in such a way that, while better results may follow the good beginnings of your Excellency, and no delays nor any difficulties may be found there.'

⁷⁶ *Ibid.* xi.50. 'We express our very great thanks to you over this matter and ask that you are more generous in providing your benefits also to the monks carrying this letter, whom we directed to the same brother of ours, so that they shall find no difficulties there under your patronage, but will easily complete the journey begun by them, with Christ's help.'

alliances with Kent facilitated by the mission.⁷⁷ However, Theudeberht had forced Brunhilda out of his kingdom in 599 and she had been welcomed by Theuderic. As such, the apparent divergence between Theuderic's and Brunhilda's letters is concerning.⁷⁸ Furthermore, it is equally plausible that from Gregory's perspective in Rome he was speaking of the missionaries in Francia and was simply enjoining all the Frankish rulers to protect his missionaries while they were in their territories.

There is little in the letters themselves to pin down the reading. Both letters stress the aid that was provided for Augustine on his journey.⁷⁹ While it is tempting to suggest that this allows the letters regarding Augustine to inform interpretations of those concerned with Mellitus, one cannot be certain that Gregory sought the same sort of aid for Mellitus. From Augustine's reports, Gregory was probably more aware of the geo-political situation in Francia and Kent. Furthermore, it had changed since 596. Chlothar had been defeated in 600 and driven back beyond the Seine and the Oise.⁸⁰ It is perfectly plausible, however, that he was seeking accommodation and safe passage for Mellitus and his party. The contrast in the letter to Theudebert about finding no difficulties but completing the journey could be read literally to mean getting Mellitus to Kent, placing the context for Gregory's request firmly within Francia. Alternatively, an allegorical interpretation could suggest that the journey was the progress of the mission in Kent.⁸¹ Brunhilda's letters, speaking of excellent beginnings and no delays, could be taken to refer to earlier help for moving Augustine through Francia or help for him in Kent itself.⁸²

⁷⁷ Wood, 'Mission', p. 9.

⁷⁸ *CF* iv.19.

⁷⁹ *GP*RE II xi.48, xi.50.

⁸⁰ *CF* iv.20.

⁸¹ *GP*RE II xi.50.

⁸² *Ibid.* xi.48.

The letter to Chlothar II provides some context, as do letters to certain Frankish bishops, which also adds a further dimension to the aid that Gregory sought. On having thanked Chlothar for his help for Augustine and asking for similar aid to Mellitus, Gregory wrote: *Praeterea pervenit ad nos, quod sacri illic ordines cum datione pecuniae conferantur.*⁸³ Gregory was consistently complaining to Frankish rulers and bishops about simony in the Frankish Church.⁸⁴ Consequently, *illic* in this instance can only refer to Chlothar's Frankish territories.

In his letters to the Frankish bishops in 601, Gregory asked for aid for Mellitus. In a letter to Virgil of Arles, the context is explicitly that of travel.⁸⁵ Moreover, this has the clearest context for *illic*: there is a contrast between the missionaries being delayed *illic*⁸⁶ and moving swiftly on their journey. *Illic* is thus almost certainly Francia. Furthermore, it appears in other letters to bishops, consistently in the context of Mellitus visiting those bishops, thereby underscoring the interpretation that it refers to aid within Francia.⁸⁷

Pulling these two corpora of letters together, one must of course acknowledge that different letters might have different meanings and in fact have been preserved for different reasons, but the letters to Brunhilda and Theudebert are subject to interpretation and the weight of evidence from other letters to bishops is quite conclusive. As such, it is difficult to maintain that Gregory either wanted the Frankish court to support Augustine and his mission directly in Kent or understood that they had taken such a role upon themselves. Primarily what seems to have concerned Gregory is that Augustine, and at a later stage Mellitus, reached Kent safely.

⁸³ Ibid. xi.51. 'Furthermore, it has come to our attention that Holy Orders are being conferred there with a gift of money.'

⁸⁴ *GPPE* I v.58, 5.60; *GPPE* II viii.4, ix.213, ix.215, ix.218, ix.219, ix.222, xi.38, xi.40, xi.42, xi.46, xi.47, xi.49, xi.50, xi.51.

⁸⁵ *GPPE* II xi.40.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid. xi.41, xi.42.

The Bishops

Such a general effort seems visible concerning the aid of the bishops. The aid requested for Mellitus certainly included bishops from the territories of all three Frankish kings.⁸⁸ Fewer letters to bishops exist for Augustine's mission. As with Mellitus, material aid for the journey was sought. Desiderius of Vienne, Syagrius of Autun and Virgil of Arles were also all asked to fulfil any requests that Augustine made of them.⁸⁹ Gregory did not elaborate on these requests and so what Augustine asked for is unknown. However, there is a curious additional request made of the bishops for Augustine, which has been hitherto neglected. Gregory wanted the bishops to provide spiritual aid. To that end, Pelagius of Tours and Serenus of Marseilles (and plausibly Aetherius of Lyon) were asked for *sacerdotali studio*⁹⁰ and *solacia*.⁹¹ To Desiderius of Vienne and Syagrius of Autun Gregory also spoke of providing comfort in every way that Augustine and his followers might need.⁹² Virgil of Arles received a slightly more detailed letter. In it, Gregory wrote *In qua re oratione vos eum et auxiliis adiuuare necesse est atque, ubi opus exegerit, solaciorum vestrorum ei praeberere suffragia et paterna ac sacerdotali illum consolatione*.⁹³ Gregory clearly wanted the prayers and spiritual support of the Frankish bishops for Augustine. It is possible he sought a prayer network across Francia to garner God's support for the undertaking, akin to the request Boniface made of the English a century and a half later.⁹⁴

To summarise, the general tenor of the letters is that Gregory expected Frankish aid to be confined to Francia. The English themselves are kept at a curious distance from the Frankish

⁸⁸ Ibid. xi.38, xi.40, xi.41, xi.42.

⁸⁹ *GP*RE I vi.51, vi.52.

⁹⁰ Ibid. vi.50. 'priestly zeal.'

⁹¹ Ibid. 'comfort.'

⁹² Ibid. vi.52.

⁹³ Ibid. vi.51. 'And in this matter, you must assist him with prayer and help and, when need arises, provide him with the support of your comfort and refresh him with the consolation of a father and a priest.'

⁹⁴ *BLE* 46.

bishops. What this discussion reveals therefore is that the Frankish Church and courts were involved in the mission of Augustine in an institutional way. However, this involvement was largely confined to Francia. The kings and Brunhilda provided Augustine and Mellitus with protection while they journeyed to Kent and the bishops sought to support the missionaries in their journey and provide spiritual comfort and prayers as well. The exception is that Augustine was to take Frankish priests to act as translators. Consistently, the agency of evangelization remains with Augustine. There is no evidence in any letter that Gregory sought direct Frankish intervention in Kent that either superseded or even complemented Augustine's work. Instead, in Gregory's mind the Franks were to get Augustine there, itself an important task, and then serve as intermediaries to allow Augustine to begin the work of conversion. The Franks were therefore important to the success of the mission, but Rome took precedence.

In terms of discerning variances in Frankish aid, this is slightly more complex. Brunhilda seems to have been particularly involved in arranging the translators and her association with Syagrius of Autun might suggest a Burgundian origin for them. Beyond that, Gregory clearly sought the support of Theudebert and Theuderic and the bishops of their realms. Determining the involvement of Chlothar and his kingdom is difficult. It is clear that Chlothar involved himself in Augustine's mission despite no letter surviving from Gregory asking him to do so. Likewise, at least one of Chlothar's bishops was approached for aid for Mellitus. The manuscript tradition of Gregory's letters is too complicated and comparatively late to be able to say with any confidence that this discrepancy between Chlothar on the one hand and Brunhilda, Theudebert and Theuderic on the other is significant. However, the evidence that does exist for Chlothar's involvement hints that Gregory was anxious to secure general Frankish support for Augustine's mission.

Gregory's Letters of Thanks

The letters of thanks that Gregory sent to the four rulers of Francia provide a complementary perspective on the English mission, albeit once the mission had been in progress for four years. The thanks given precedes the discussion of aid for Mellitus and is usefully dealt with as a form of evidence in itself because it allows comparison with the earlier requests for Augustine. The general tenor of Gregory's requests is replicated in his thanks. As mentioned, the only specific action mentioned is Brunhilda's involvement in supplying translators for the mission.⁹⁵ What is significant, however, is that placing the four letters of thanks alongside each other produces the somewhat surprising result that Chlothar, rather than Brunhilda or Theudebert or Theuderic, did the most to support Augustine.⁹⁶ The letter to Brunhilda has a panegyric tone, as Wood rightly points out.⁹⁷ It is also more detailed in contrast to the more general letters sent to Theuderic and Theudebert.⁹⁸ Within the context of their kingdoms this is significant; it further corroborates the impression that Brunhilda, rather than her grandsons, was the driving force behind support for Augustine. However, one should be cautious about placing too much emphasis upon Gregory's language as a marker of outstanding support. There are two reasons for this. The first, very simply, is that Gregory regarded Brunhilda as the main driving force within Francia who could institute the reform of the Frankish Church (see below, pp. 58–61).⁹⁹ In other words, a lukewarm reaction to her could have undermined the pope's drive to end simony within the Frankish Church.

The second and far more important reason is how the letters compare with each other. While Brunhilda's stands out, there is a consistency to aspects of the language of the letters sent to

⁹⁵ *GP*RE II xi.48.

⁹⁶ Cf. Wood, 'Augustine', pp. 69, 77; Wood, 'Mission', pp. 6, 9, 16; Dunn, *Christianization*, pp. 51–3; Stenton, *England*, p. 105; Higham, *Convert*, p. 90; Lambert, *Christians and Pagans*, p. 165.

⁹⁷ Wood, 'Mission', p. 6.

⁹⁸ *GP*RE II xi.48; cf. xi.47; xi.50.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.* viii.4, ix.213, xi.46, xi.49, xiii.5.

the Austrasian and Burgundian courts when it comes to their help for Augustine. To Theuderic the phrase was *Quanta praeterea bona reverentissimo fratri et coepiscopo nostro Augustino ad Anglorum gentem proficiscenti excellentia vestra praebuerit.*¹⁰⁰ This is very similar to the letter to Brunhilda: *Quanto autem favore quantaque opitulatione excellentia vestra reverentissimum fratrem et coepiscopum nostrum Augustinum proficiscentem ad Anglorum gentem adiuverit*¹⁰¹ and to Theudebert: *Quanta praeterea bona proficiscenti ad Anglorum gentem reverentissimo fratri et coepiscopo nostro Augustino excellentia vestra impenderit ... cognovimus.*¹⁰² These quite bald statements of thanks, which focus on Augustine setting out, contrast rather sharply with Chlothar's letter, which reads: *Quidam igitur, qui cum reverentissimo fratre et coepiscopo nostro Augustino ad Anglorum gentem perrexerant, remeantes, quanta eundem fratrem nostrum excellentia vestra in praesenti positum caritate refecerit quantisque suffragiis proficiscentem adiuverit, narraverunt.*¹⁰³

Chlothar's letter is extremely curious. The *que* appended to the *quantis* separates out the aid that Chlothar provided Augustine, between the aid Augustine received as he set out and the aid he received placed in Kent. It suggests that the latter assistance continued while Augustine was engaged in missionary work across the Channel.¹⁰⁴ There is certainly an additional layer to the aid that Chlothar had provided that is not visible in Brunhilda's, Theuderic's or Theudebert's letters. Defining *refecerit*¹⁰⁵ is consequently very important. It has connotations of Augustine being made anew or refreshed. It is possible that it might simply refer to the

¹⁰⁰ Ibid. xi.47. 'What great benefits Your Excellency provided for our most reverend brother and fellow bishop, Augustine, when he was setting out to the English people.'

¹⁰¹ Ibid. xi.48. 'With what great favour and with what great assistance Your Excellency helped our most reverend brother and fellow bishop, Augustine, as he set out [to the English people].'

¹⁰² Ibid. xi.50. 'We have learnt what great benefits Your Excellency bestowed on our most reverend brother and fellow bishop, Augustine, as he set out [to the English people].'

¹⁰³ Ibid. xi.51. 'Certain men, therefore, who had gone to the English people with our very reverend brother and fellow bishop, Augustine, came back home and described with how much affection your Excellency restored that brother of us [in his present position] and with how much approbation you helped him as he set out.'

¹⁰⁴ For discussion that Augustine was an opportunity for Æthelberht to break ties with Chlothar: Higham, *Convert*, p. 90. A possible explanation for why Gregory wrote no letters to Neustria: Lebecq, 'Logistics', p. 61.

¹⁰⁵ *GPRE* II xi.51. 'restored.'

renewal of Augustine physically or mentally after his journey, but the separating out of the aid between *in praesenti positum*¹⁰⁶ and *proficiscentem*¹⁰⁷ seems significant. It is conceivable, albeit unlikely, that Augustine's initial contact resulted in his expulsion from Kent and Chlothar re-established him in the kingdom. However, this sits poorly with Gregory's triumphant letter to the bishop of Alexandria in 598 and Bede's failure to mention any such expulsion, despite the fact that he was willing to discuss the flights of Justus and Mellitus and indeed Laurence's willingness to join them.¹⁰⁸ The most likely explanation seems to be that Chlothar was providing material aid for Augustine directly in Kent.

Precisely what Chlothar's aid might have constituted has to be little more than speculation. The missionaries would have needed wine and wheat flour to make the white bread, both for use in the Eucharist, which may have been most easily obtained from Chlothar.¹⁰⁹ Perhaps Chlothar facilitated the introduction of the missionaries to Æthelberht. He was the first cousin of Æthelberht's wife, Bertha, and so, conceivably, was in a good position to do so.¹¹⁰ Whatever Chlothar did, this single letter is hugely significant. It qualifies the somewhat normative narrative provided by the requests that Gregory made and his panegyric praise of Brunhilda. One can see slender evidence of direct Frankish involvement in Kent, although once again it concerns Augustine rather than the conversion of the English. As such, it is not tenable to say that Augustine's mission was dominated by Brunhilda out of a mixture of piety and political opportunism. Brunhilda supplied translators; there is no evidence to sustain other conclusions. Alongside her Burgundo-Austrasian help is Chlothar's support. Given the implication of direct involvement, it is just possible to suggest that Augustine received more aid from Chlothar than Brunhilda or her grandsons. This sits far more comfortably with the earlier and later evidence

¹⁰⁶ Ibid. 'in his present position.' Own translation.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid. 'setting out.'

¹⁰⁸ *GP*RE II viii.29; *HE* ii.5–6.

¹⁰⁹ Dr D. Banham, pers. com.

¹¹⁰ Theuderic and Theudebert were also Bertha's cousins but slightly more distant: first cousins once removed.

of Kentish-Frankish interaction, which focusses upon the north-western regions of Francia that became the Neustrian kingdom in the early seventh century: Æthelberht married the daughter of a King of Paris; Kentish (and East Anglian) princesses entered Neustrian monasteries; Quentovic, the gateway to the Continent, came to lie in Neustria.¹¹¹ Thus, far from being a specifically Burgundo-Austrasian effort to squeeze Chlothar's territories, Frankish aid for Augustine appears to have been generally forthcoming.

The Pallium of Syagrius of Autun

This is the point, therefore, at which the *pallium* of Syagrius of Autun becomes significant in the analysis of competing influences in the mission to Kent. The controversial nature of the grant is reflected in the historiography (such as it is), which takes two views of it. Scholarship on the Anglo-Saxons and Franks stress Augustine's mission as the cause for the grant and thus it is further evidence of the abnormal level of support emanating from Brunhilda and her confidant and favourite, Syagrius.¹¹² By contrast, papal historians speak of simony as Gregory's motivation.¹¹³ An engaging, alternative interpretation has emerged from Ralph Mathisen, which places the *pallium* within the context of power struggles within the Frankish Church with the see of Autun attempting to increase its authority over the course of the sixth century.¹¹⁴ Establishing which interpretation is correct clarifies Syagrius' role in the evangelization. If Gregory did make the grant owing to the aid Syagrius gave to Augustine, it is an exceptional gift. The *pallium* in the West in the sixth century was closely associated with the pope himself. Highly visible, both in terms of colour and by being worn over other

¹¹¹ *HE* i.25, iii.8; *HF* iv.26, ix.26; Van Dam, 'Gaul', pp. 202–3.

¹¹² Wood, 'Mission', p. 6; Wood, *Kingdoms*, p. 130; Wallace-Hadrill, *Frankish Church*, p. 116; Wallace-Hadrill, 'English Church', p. 530. Schoenig, in his brief discussion, emphasizes Augustine's mission. Schoenig, *Wool*, p. 11.

¹¹³ Kellet, *Relations*, pp. 50–1, 55; Straw, *Gregory*, pp. 39–40.

¹¹⁴ Mathisen, 'Syagrius', pp. 260–90.

vestments, its yoke-like shape stresses moral probity, through the pope's obedience to God.¹¹⁵ It took on a further symbolism when worn by a bishop; it stressed the closeness of the receiving bishop to St Peter and his successor in Rome by allowing the bishop to dress as the pope. It was granted rarely and as a distinct honour.¹¹⁶ As such, it would imply that Syagrius' role (and behind him Brunhilda's) in the evangelization was far more substantial than Gregory's letters suggest.

However, Syagrius' *pallium* is odd. Gregory himself detailed the normal circumstances for a grant to Brunhilda and so provided a useful norm, both for subsequent popes and modern historians.¹¹⁷ It was firstly a mark of the good deeds and life of the recipient. It could also only be made at the request of the bishop himself, implying that Brunhilda approached Gregory first, rather than Syagrius.¹¹⁸ In addition, the context of the other grants suggests that with the exception of Syagrius (and Augustine of Canterbury for obvious reasons) Gregory acted according to tradition.¹¹⁹ Desiderius of Vienne tried to claim the *pallium* in 599 according to precedent. He was rebuffed, though, because Gregory had ordered *in ecclesiae nostrae scrinio requiri fecimus, et inveniri nil potuit*.¹²⁰ However, Gregory encouraged him to look amongst his own archives, because *Nam qui nova concedimus, vetera libentissime reparamus*.¹²¹ In other words, Gregory's entire response is mediated through the need for precedent; he concedes he could act without it, but his emphasis on restoration rather than novelty suggests a reluctance to do so. Moreover, Gregory moved towards associating the *pallium* with metropolitan bishops. It must be stressed that this was not a universal association; Sicilian sees were often granted

¹¹⁵ Serfass, 'Pallium Dispute', p. 79; Schoenig, *Wool*, p. 25.

¹¹⁶ Schoenig, *Wool*, p. 14.

¹¹⁷ Ibid. p. 12.

¹¹⁸ *GPRES* II viii.4. This hinders Mathisen's argument: 'Syagrius', pp. 276–8.

¹¹⁹ *GPRES* I v.58, v.61, v.62, vi.7, vi.8; *GPRES* II ix.176, ix.227, xiii.40.

¹²⁰ *GPRES* II ix.220. 'we have made a search through the [archive] of our Church and nothing could be found.' Schoenig, *Wool*, p. 11.

¹²¹ *GPRES* II. ix.220. 'For while we grant new honours, we are very willing to restore old ones.'

the *pallium* owing to their close connections to the papacy.¹²² However, the Sicilians apart, there appears to be such a link and indeed Gregory's description of the structure of the English Church was the foundational point for the establishment of such a link over the course of the early medieval period.¹²³ Indeed, with Syagrius' grant Gregory was very careful to state that *metropolis suo per omnia loco et honore servato*.¹²⁴ While the see of Autun was ranked second in the province, in no way was Syagrius' grant to undermine the position of the metropolitan see of Lyon (which had not received the *pallium*), indicative of the potent impact the vestment could have upon ecclesiastical hierarchy even at such an early date in the late sixth century.

Gratitude to Syagrius could serve to explain Gregory's break with tradition. Holiness was a prerequisite for the *pallium* and Syagrius' support of Augustine would fulfil this. At the outset of the correspondence concerned with this matter in 597 Gregory stated his reasons for making the grant and, when speaking of Syagrius' good life, only noted *quid in fratre nostro Augustino fecerit*.¹²⁵ This then seems to become explicit two years later. To Brunhilda, Gregory stated that *Cui fratri nostro pro eo, quod se in ea praedicatione quae in Anglorum gente auctore Domino facta est devotum vehementer exhibuit, pallium ad missarum sollemnia utendum transmisimus*.¹²⁶ A similar sentiment was expressed to Syagrius himself.¹²⁷

The problem with this apparently straightforward interpretation is that the issue of simony percolates throughout Gregory's letters. In both letters to Brunhilda this heresy is juxtaposed with the grant of the *pallium*. In the letter of 597 it immediately succeeds it, while in the letter of 599 simony and a request that Brunhilda end this heresy precedes it.¹²⁸ This potentially

¹²² Serfass, 'Pallium Dispute', pp. 83–5, 92; *GPPE I* vi.8; *GPPE II* xiii.40.

¹²³ *GPPE I* iv.1, v.16, v.58, v.62, vi.7; *GPPE II* ix.227, xi.39. Notifications to suffragans: *GPPE I* v.10, v.63, vi.7. Schoenig, *Wool*, pp. 11, 13, 28–9.

¹²⁴ *GPPE II* ix.222. 'the metropolitan's place and honour should be preserved for him entirely.'

¹²⁵ *Ibid.* viii.4. 'what he did in the case of our brother Augustine.'

¹²⁶ *Ibid.* ix.213. 'We have sent a *pallium* to this brother of ours, for the reason that he showed himself ardently devoted to that preaching which has been done among the English people, with God's authority.'

¹²⁷ *Ibid.* ix.222.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.* viii.4, ix.213.

coincidental link becomes more significant when Brunhilda's letters are placed in context. Gregory sent two more letters to Syagrius in July of 599. The first, also sent to Aetherius of Lyon, Virgil of Arles and Desiderius of Vienne, detailed the abuses of the Frankish Church, in which simony took up about half of the letter.¹²⁹ The second was concerned with the grant of his *pallium*. On having discussed Syagrius' support for Augustine and deemed that sufficient for receipt of the vestment, Gregory proceeded to impose a condition upon the grant, in sharp contrast to the *pallium*'s nature as a gift.¹³⁰ It was to be granted *si prius per synodi definitionem emendari promiseris quae corrigenda mandavimus*¹³¹ in the preceding letter. This letter strongly implies that Augustine was simply an excuse and Gregory was dangling the *pallium* before Syagrius to incentivise him to convene a Frankish synod to denounce simony.¹³²

This receives corroboration in a letter to Aregius, the bishop of Gap, also sent in July of 599. The main reason Gregory had for writing was to console Aregius about a plague that had swept through his diocese and to grant his request, made in person in Rome, that he and his deacons might use dalmatics. However, he also wanted Aregius to attend and report back on the synod on simony that Syagrius was to convene.¹³³ Within this he informed Aregius that *eidem fratri ita pallium quod transmisimus tribui, si prius se promiserit illicita, quae prohibuimus, per definitionem synodi a sancta ecclesia remove*.¹³⁴ The most straightforward explanation of this letter is that it clarifies what was on Gregory's mind. He was not engaged in diplomatic or legal niceties, as he was when discussing the grant with both Brunhilda and Syagrius. The letter to Aregius completely removes Augustine and the mission from the picture. The general impression that consequently emerges is that Gregory used Augustine as

¹²⁹ Ibid. ix.218.

¹³⁰ Serfass, 'Pallium Dispute', p. 92.

¹³¹ *GP*RE II ix.222. 'if you first promise to emend through the decision of a synod, what we have ordered to be corrected.'

¹³² Mathisen, 'Syagrius', p. 276.

¹³³ *GP*RE II ix.219.

¹³⁴ Ibid. 'we have sent a *pallium* to that brother, which we have bestowed on him, provided he first promises to remove from the Holy Church those illegal acts prohibited by us, through the decision of the synod.'

a convenient excuse, by which he could legitimise the grant of the *pallium* to Syagrius, while also using it as bait to generate a Frankish response to simony.

Such an interpretation is corroborated because the imposition of a condition is completely at odds with the process of which Gregory himself informed Brunhilda in his letter first discussing the matter in 597. Gregory stated that the good things he had heard of Syagrius, not least his aid to Augustine, merited the award provided that Syagrius himself made the request. That Gregory goes against his own explanation of the grant is powerful evidence that there is more to Gregory's correspondence than meets the eye.¹³⁵

Moreover, Gregory granted several *pallia* during the course of his pontificate and the imposition of a condition, having conceded the *pallium* in principle, is unique to Syagrius. The closest parallel comes from Maximus of Salona, but Gregory accused him of achieving his see through simony and in the course of the dispute excommunicated him.¹³⁶ Only when he had sworn that he was innocent of the charge of simony on relics and performed penance for his conduct during the dispute did Maximus receive the *pallium*. The crucial difference between Maximus and Syagrius is that Gregory considered Maximus to be an illegitimate bishop, withholding the *pallium* for that reason. The actions Maximus took were to prove that he was a legitimate bishop, rather than to receive the *pallium*. The condition of the grant to Syagrius is therefore unique and consequently becomes more important.

How the letters survived may be of significance. If they were indeed copied because of general concerns with Church governance, this would suggest that it was the response to simony that caught the attention of the eighth-century ecclesiastics involved in the copying. Only the letter to Brunhilda in 597 is not preserved in a Frankish tradition, appearing solely in

¹³⁵ Ibid. viii.4.

¹³⁶ For the course of the dispute, see: *GPRES* I iv.6, iv.20, v.6, v.29, v.39, vi.3, vi.25, vi.26, vi.46, vii.7; *GPRES* II viii.24.

R. Simony is simply a hypothetical in this letter; a threat Gregory warns Brunhilda against, rather than a reality she had to condemn and eradicate. By contrast, it clearly details how a *pallium* could be granted and so may have been of more interest to Hadrian and papal scribes involved in making *R* than to ecclesiastics in the Frankish Church. The other letters provide a narrative for Gregory's approach to the problem and so may have been understood as a good example for both the Frankish Church and the papacy. As such, the broader context of the *pallium* in Gregory's own pontificate and his own description of the customs confirm the oddity of the condition imposed upon Syagrius. When this is combined with the attitude of the copyists whose efforts have preserved the letters, our attention should be drawn to simony as the main reason why Gregory was willing to make the grant.

That Syagrius never seems to have received the *pallium* is inexplicable if the grant was associated with his actions towards Augustine. Gregory did state that he had sent it to Candidus to give to Syagrius in 597 and likewise informed Brunhilda in 599 that he had sent it.¹³⁷ However, in letters to Syagrius and Aregius in 599 Gregory wrote as if Syagrius had still not yet received the vestment because he had yet to hold the synod Gregory had requested.¹³⁸ These two letters seem to lie behind John the Deacon's decision to state that Gregory had not granted Syagrius the *pallium*.¹³⁹ The simplest solution to the apparent contradictions of these four letters is that Gregory had sent it to Candidus but with instructions to bestow it upon Syagrius only once he had convened the synod. This again points towards simony as the explanation for Syagrius' *pallium*.

My interpretation of the episode would consequently run thus. Gregory sought to deal with the issue of simony in Francia.¹⁴⁰ He knew that the powerful queen Brunhilda wanted to honour

¹³⁷ *GP*RE II viii.4, ix.213.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.* ix.219, ix.222.

¹³⁹ *GMV* iii.2; Schoenig, *Wool*, p. 57.

¹⁴⁰ Markus, *Gregory*, pp. 172–3; Ricci, 'Gregory's Missions', pp. 43–4.

her favoured bishop Syagrius with a *pallium*. He may even have been aware of Syagrius' putative ambitions for his see.¹⁴¹ As such, he saw an opportunity to extract their support by getting them to organise a synod and condemn simony. However, to grant a *pallium* in such a situation was unacceptable and contravened the customary way in which the *pallium* was granted. The *pallium* was a gift, meant to honour those who lived a godly life, to symbolise their close relationship with and obedience to the papacy.¹⁴² It was not an incentive for those who fell short to reform themselves. Indeed, Gregory threatened one bishop, Natalis of Salona, whose life fell short of the pope's standards that he would strip him of the right to use the vestment.¹⁴³ To this conundrum the English mission provided a much-needed solution: Gregory had asked Syagrius for aid for Augustine. What had been forthcoming was demonstration of Syagrius' goodness and could therefore allow the pope to act according to custom, while nonetheless incentivising the queen and her bishop. Schoenig's general statement about the nature of the gift of the *pallia* is also pertinent. The recipient could 'never comparably reciprocate, which left the donor in a superior position and the recipient lastingly in his debt.'¹⁴⁴ It was essential to papal dignity and authority, not that the vestment was worn, but that it was given.¹⁴⁵ The negotiation visible in Syagrius' *pallium* undermines such a relationship. Syagrius had agency in the grant that no other bishop received and this, perhaps more than anything else, demonstrates Gregory's acute concern about simony within the Frankish Church.

Therefore, Syagrius' *pallium* is not evidence of exceptional involvement in the English mission. While it would certainly be going too far to say that he played no part, the subtext and context of Gregory's letters diverts attention firmly away from Augustine and to simony as the

¹⁴¹ Mathisen, 'Syagrius', pp. 276–8, 284.

¹⁴² Serfass, '*Pallium* Dispute', pp. 77–9, 92.

¹⁴³ *GP*RE I ii.20.

¹⁴⁴ Schoenig, *Wool*, p. 24.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.* p. 25.

explanation for the grant. To that end, the implication of the letters of thanks are confirmed. Brunhilda's involvement was valuable and probably exceeded that of her grandsons, but there is no suggestion that it superseded Chlothar II's involvement. There is no evidence to suggest that Brunhilda's aid went beyond the translators, for which Gregory asked and thanked her for. This concern with simony also provides an explanation for why Gregory did not ask the Frankish Church to aid in the process of evangelization itself.

Simony and the Frankish Church

In a sense, whether the Frankish Church was suffering from endemic simony is immaterial; what matters is that Gregory thought it did.¹⁴⁶ However, Caesarius of Arles was concerned with the matter and Frankish councils in the sixth century issued repeated denunciations. Gregory of Tours' history does not go into details, but he does mention instances of laymen becoming bishops, incidents about which Gregory I also complained.¹⁴⁷ That the pope's other complaint can be corroborated does give greater strength to his accusations of simony. On this point, the *LVP* speaks of the election of St Gallus as bishop of Clermont in the early sixth century. Here, Gregory of Tours wrote: *Arverni vero clerici cum consensu insipientium facto et multa munera ad regem venerunt. Iam tunc germen illud iniquum coeperat fructificare, ut sacerdotium aut vinderetur a regibus aut compararetur a clericis.*¹⁴⁸ While he may have been unwilling to discuss the issue at length, Gregory here does acknowledge that simony was a problem in the contemporary Frankish Church. The Merovingians certainly involved themselves closely with

¹⁴⁶ For simony in the Frankish Church see: Klingshern, *Caesarius*, pp. 267–9; Wood, *Kingdoms*, p. 133–4; Meier-Welcker, 'Simonie', pp. 65–6, 70–5; Leinz, *Simonie*, pp. 4, 62–3.

¹⁴⁷ *HF* vi.7, vi.9.

¹⁴⁸ *LVP* vi.3. 'As for the clerics of Clermont, they came to find the king, bringing the consent of the people and bearing many gifts. At that time, like a pernicious weed, that custom by which sacred offices were sold by kings and bought by clerics already started to grow.'

episcopal elections.¹⁴⁹ Gift giving, whether understood as payment for the office (and so simony) or not, became standard.

Gregory I's attitude to such gift-giving was one of anxiety. In a letter to John, bishop of Prima Justiniana, in which Gregory recognized his appointment and conferred the *pallium*, the pope noted his extreme reluctance to accept John's gifts.¹⁵⁰ Gregory admitted that the conferral of the *pallium* traditionally was accompanied by payment and ordered such a practice to end.¹⁵¹ Not only does this show why Gregory was reluctant to accept John's gifts, it reveals a strict conception of simony, such that he would have taken a dim view of Frankish episcopal elections. While simony forms a generic theme in Gregory's letters, its appearance in his letters to the Franks is different.

Gregory sent vague warnings about the dangers of simony to several bishops, including the patriarchs of Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem.¹⁵² A carefully thought-out theological circular was sent to Virgil of Arles, John of Corinth and the bishops of Epirus.¹⁵³ What is then notable about the Frankish dimension is that Gregory consistently maintained the theme throughout his pontificate. Even after Syagrius' death in c. 600, Gregory continued to ask Brunhilda to convene the synod to condemn it.¹⁵⁴ He also mentioned the need to Aregius of Gap.¹⁵⁵ What is most striking is that one of Gregory's longest letters is a denunciation of errors in the Frankish Church, focussing at length upon simony.¹⁵⁶ Such persistence, in contrast to more casual references when writing to other Churches, suggests that Gregory thought he perceived a real problem.

¹⁴⁹ Halfond, *Patronage*, pp. 68–70.

¹⁵⁰ *GPPE* I v.16.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.* v.57a, v.62.

¹⁵² *GPPE* II ix.135, xi.28, xiii.44.

¹⁵³ *GPPE* I v.58, v.62, vi.7.

¹⁵⁴ *GPPE* II xi.49.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.* xi.42.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.* ix.18.

The reality of the issue aside, Gregory's understanding of it was that simony corrupted all that it touched. A good example of his thoughts on the matter is in a letter to Theudebert and Theuderic. He wrote:

*Hinc igitur non solum in ordinatoris et ordinati animam letale vulnus infigitur, verum etiam excellentiae vestrae regnum episcoporum culpa, quorum magis intercessionibus iuari debuerat, praegravatur. Si enim is dignus sacerdotio creditur, cui non actionis merita, sed praemiorum copia suffragatur, restat, ut nihil sibi in honores ecclesiasticos gravitas, nil defendat industria, sed totum auri profanus amor optineat. Et dum vita honore munerantur, in locum ultoris is qui fortasse fuerat ulciscendus adducitur, atque hinc sacerdotes non proficere sed perire potius inritantur. Vulnerato namque pastore, qui curandis ovibus adhibeant medicinam? Aut quando populum orationis clipeo tueatur, qui a iaculis se hostibus feriendum exponit? Aut qualem de se fructum producturus est, cuius gravi peste radix infecta est? Maior ergo metuenda est locis illis fore calamitas, ubi tales intercessores ad locum regiminis adducuntur, qui Dei in se magis iracundiam provocent, quam per semetipsos populis placare debuerant.*¹⁵⁷

‘And so from this not only is a lethal wound inflicted on the soul of the consecrator and of the consecrated, but also the kingdom of your Excellencies is weighed down by the fault of the bishops, when it ought to have been helped rather by their intercessions. For if he is not worthy of the priesthood who is supported by plenty of bribes, not by the merits of his actions, it follows that seriousness and hard work cannot claim ecclesiastical honours for him, but with the profane love of gold obtains it all. And while vices are rewarded with honour, he who perhaps should have been punished is promoted to the rank of punisher and thus priests are incited not to improve themselves but rather to perish. For when the shepherd is wounded, who might apply medicine to cure the sheep? Or how might he protect the people with the shield of his prayer, if he exposes himself to the enemy to be struck by their darts? Or what sort of fruit is he going to produce from himself, if his root has been infected with a serious disease? Greater calamity, therefore, should be feared as bound to happen in those places where intercessors of such a sort are promoted to a place of rule, that they provoke the anger of God against themselves all the more, which they ought to have placated through themselves, for their people.’

Gregory not only linked the presence of a heresy to the health of the kingdom, but suggested it spread by contact. The act harmed both the consecrated and the consecrator and thus wounded they were unable to minister to the people. In other words, the souls of the laity were threatened because the sacraments and prayers of simoniacs were invalid. Indeed, Gregory wrote to Chlothar that simony placed men *in periculum animarum*.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁷ Ibid. ix.215.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid. xi.51. ‘[in danger of their souls.]’

With this in mind, it is notable that the only sacramental role allowed to the Frankish Church regarding the mission to the English was the consecration of Augustine. Gregory was very clear that he gave his permission for the consecration to be carried out by, as Gregory puts it, the bishops of the Germanies.¹⁵⁹ Firstly, this presumably gave Gregory a degree of control as to whom to ask to perform this sacrament. Secondly, Gregory's correspondence with bishops like Virgil of Arles and Syagrius of Autun shows that he did regard some Frankish bishops positively and as potential reformers and so could involve them in the consecration of his missionary bishop. In general, however, Gregory had to overlook Frankish ecclesiastics for a sacramental role in the evangelization of the English because it would potentially have imperilled their salvation.

Conclusion

Gregory's letters are a mine of valuable information about the Frankish contribution to the mission to Kent. What is perhaps rather surprising is how limited the pope envisaged the Frankish role as being. Both in his requests for help and his thanks, Gregory strongly suggests that the Franks were to get Augustine to Kent, supply him with translators and then let him get on with it. That being said, there is an intriguing hint that Chlothar may have involved himself more directly than the other rulers of Francia. Unfortunately, owing to this being the sole letter that survives from Gregory to Chlothar, it is unclear if Gregory always intended the king closest to Kent to provide more significant aid to his missionaries than other regions of Francia. Focussing upon the translators, the specific thanks that Gregory sent to Brunhilda suggests they should be associated primarily with her. Given her close association with Syagrius of Autun, it is logical to assume that she would have turned to this particular bishop to supply the clerics to

¹⁵⁹ Ibid. viii.29.

accompany Augustine. However, it has to be stressed that this is simply hypothesis and there is no evidence for the origins of the translators. The most significant ramification of this study of Gregory's letters to the Frankish Church is that it undermines notions that Brunhilda, Theudebert and Theuderic dominated Frankish efforts as part of a wider strategy against Chlothar. Analysis of Syagrius of Autun's *pallium* also undermines this. Augustine seems to have been primarily an excuse, used by the pope to justify the grant, which in reality was more of an incentive to get the bishop and Brunhilda to end simony in the Frankish Church. Indeed, this elucidates Gregory's desire to leave the evangelization in the hands of Augustine. The risk that simony posed to the validity of the sacraments meant that Gregory could not offer the English salvation through potentially corrupted ministers.

Consequently, Gregory regarded the 'Roman' mission as being precisely that. He understood Augustine and his monks as playing the decisive role in the evangelization. To that end he observed that God was working miracles through Augustine.¹⁶⁰ Gregory also directed that Æthelberht listen carefully to the advice of Augustine.¹⁶¹ Gregory consistently and clearly identifies Augustine as the principal agent of evangelization in his letters; the Frankish Church and courts played a significant supporting role, but a supporting role nonetheless. Further evidence that separates the Frankish Church from the evangelization is in Augustine's requests for reinforcements. Gregory's circular to several bishops observes that *Quia igitur redemptoris nostri gratia cooperante tanta de Anglorum gente ad christianae fidei gratiam multitudo convertitur, ut reverentissimus communis frater et coepiscopus noster Augustinus eos qui secum sunt ad hoc opus exequendum per diversa loca asserat non posse sufficere.*¹⁶² Augustine's instinct when looking for aid in the work of mission was to seek support from

¹⁶⁰ *GPRE* II xi.36.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.* xi.37.

¹⁶² *Ibid.* xi.41. 'And so, with the support of our Redeemer's grace, such a great multitude from the English race is being converted to the grace of the Christian faith that our most reverend joint brother and fellow-bishop, Augustine, asserts that those who are with him are insufficient to carry out this work through the various locations.'

Rome and Gregory, despite the easier access he had to the Frankish Church and indeed the Frankish Church had to Kent. Such an attitude is inexplicable if Gregory had wanted the Franks to be closely involved in the work of evangelization itself.

Overall, therefore, in terms of defining competing influences in the mission to Kent, Gregory's letters very clearly place the Roman Church in pride of place. Its leadership was Roman and the evangelists themselves were too. Frankish aid was undoubtedly sought and was evidently forthcoming, arguably on an institutional level, involving the Frankish courts and Church in the endeavour. However, this aid appears to have been located primarily in Francia, with the courts and Church aiding first Augustine's party and then Mellitus' through their kingdoms. While all of Francia appears to have been involved in some form in the mission, the north-south axis of Chlothar's and Theuderic's kingdoms stands out. A small, possibly Burgundian, group of clerics accompanied Augustine to undertake the necessary work of translation. Likewise, Chlothar seems to have supported Augustine in his endeavours but Gregory's brevity means that what he actually did has been lost. In a sentence, there was no Frankish mission to Kent, simply a Frankish contribution to the Roman mission in Kent.

CHAPTER TWO: THE 'ROMAN' MISSION TO THE ENGLISH: FRANKISH AND ROMAN
CONTRIBUTIONS—THE BEDAN EVIDENCE

*qui primus inter episcopos qui de Anglorum gente essent catholicum vivendi
morem ecclesiis Anglorum tradere didicit.*¹

Just as Wilfrid located himself in the history of Gregory's missionaries, so too does Bede place him within earlier traditions. While Bede does not explicitly state which earlier non-English ecclesiastics had introduced Catholic customs, it is probable that Gregory and Augustine were in his mind. In addition, Bede's discussion of Wilfrid's responsibility for the evangelization of Sussex and the Isle of Wight closed the narrative arc of mission that Bede had opened with Gregory and Augustine.² In other words, Bede's account of Wilfrid's career further underscores the need to view Wilfrid and his contemporaries in light of the Gregorian mission. While Wilfrid, with his origins in Northumbria and Lindisfarne, may not have been directly influenced by it, he stood in its traditions. The connections forged by the missionaries in Canterbury provide the background for Wilfrid and the Frankish and Roman connections of the second half of the seventh century. As with Gregory's letters, it is important to assess the early sections of Bede's *HE* to discern the connections that Bede, with his complimentary English perspective, highlights. Bede's continuous narrative to his own time allows the analysis to be extended beyond Gregory's own death when his registers naturally end. Despite concerns with Bede's account, it provides unique information that cannot be overlooked.

Criticisms of Bede's accuracy (see above, pp. 10–11) are the obvious place to begin and this can be tested with Gregory's letters. With Bede's accuracy defined it is then possible to engage with Bede's account. The first point to consider is the evidence for conversion before the arrival of Augustine and his missionaries in 597. This must focus upon Bede's comments

¹ *HE* iv.2. 'who was the first bishop of the English race to introduce the Catholic way of life to the English churches.'

² *HE* iv.13, iv.16.

regarding the conversion of Æthelberht, blended with the archaeological evidence of the Liudhard medalet and the Prittlewell burial in Essex. The second point considers the conversion of Eadbald and the activities of Frankish bishops. Bede makes it clear that the Franks must be incorporated into any account of the Roman mission to the English. This chapter, however, seeks to discuss the roles of both Francia and Rome in the evangelization from the Bedan perspective, quantifying and qualifying their respective contributions.

The Letters of Gregory the Great: Bede Vindicated

As is clear in surveying Gregory's letters, one struggles to find evidence for substantial Frankish involvement in Kent itself. Gregory's letters are, however, sparse on details concerning the mission once it reached Kent and so one must turn to Bede. Wood is undeniably correct to describe Bede as secondary literature for the evangelization; the accuracy of Bede's account has attracted serious criticism.³ However, placing Bede's account alongside another source, in this case Gregory's letters, allows the Bedan narrative to be appraised in context. To all intents and purposes, Bede's account matches that which can be constructed from Gregory's letters.

Bede and Gregory's letters

In part Bede simply copied out Gregory's letters, leaving them to speak on their own.⁴ The sole letter to a Frankish bishop that he copied out, which he erroneously addressed to Aetherius of Arles, does limit the scope of Frankish involvement to a degree.⁵ It does not reflect the sheer number of letters sent and also neglects the presence of the Frankish rulers in the mission. One

³ Wood, 'Mission', pp. 4–5; Brechter, *Die Quellen zur Angelsachsenmission*, pp. 241–51; Brechter, 'Bekerkungsgeschichte', pp. 191–215 cf. Brooks, *Church of Canterbury*, p. 8. Flechner, 'Boniface', pp. 41–62.

⁴ *HE* i.23–4, i.28–32. For how Bede acquired the letters and incorporated them see: Markus, 'Chronology', p. 17; Meyvaert, 'Bede's text', pp. 31–2.

⁵ *HE* i.24.

should not, however, assume this was deliberate. One cannot be certain which letters Nothhelm brought to Bede. While Bede stresses that Nothhelm brought the letters of Gregory, this may simply be due to Bede's overwhelming interest in that particular pope.⁶ As Shaw has rightly observed, Nothhelm actually returned to Kent with letters from a range of popes.⁷ Given the dominance of Gregory's letters at the end of Book I, it is hard to explain why Bede would not have included more if he had access to them, even if only in abbreviated form.⁸ It is, however, worth dwelling on the fact that Bede included a letter that he thought was sent to the bishop of Arles, a metropolitan and the papal vicar in Francia.⁹ This places the letter with a bishop at the top of the Frankish ecclesiastical hierarchy. Certainly, Bede appears to have regarded the bishop of Arles as playing an important role in the mission, given that he later attributes Augustine's consecration to Aetherius, as bishop of Arles.¹⁰ The care Bede took in describing Aetherius' role does suggest he was pushing against the limits of the evidence that he had.¹¹ As such, Bede was careful to incorporate the evidence he possessed of Frankish episcopal involvement and interpret it to the best of his abilities; it hints at the limits of the letters that Nothhelm brought with him.

In addition, there is the reference to the translators.¹² Determining from where Bede got this information is difficult. He knew Gregory was involved in obtaining the translators. As such, this is possible evidence for Bede's knowledge of other letters. However, the general context of the chapter, which does not include a papal letter and seems to provide a Kentish perspective or memory, might suggest it derived from a tradition preserved in Canterbury.¹³ What is important about Bede's construction of the role of the see of Arles and the translators is that

⁶ *HE* Preface. On Bede's general attachment to Gregory: Thacker, 'Reform', pp. 134–6.

⁷ Shaw, *Gregorian*, p. 12; cf. Wallace-Hadrill, *Commentary*, p. 68.

⁸ See: *HE* i.31; cf. *GPPE* II xi.36.

⁹ *GPPE* I v.58.

¹⁰ *HE* i.27.

¹¹ Shaw, *Gregorian*, pp. 24–5, 59–62.

¹² *HE* i.25.

¹³ *Ibid.*; cf. Shaw, *Gregorian*, pp. 40–1.

they demonstrate Bede's awareness of a Frankish presence in the early mission. Errors were made in the transmission of this record but this should not distract from the basic accuracy of Bede's account that Gregory sought help and help was forthcoming.

Bede and the British and Irish Churches

Bede's varying attitudes to neighbouring Churches is also instructive. Bede was cautiously positive about the Irish. While he deplored the Irish errors concerning Easter, he nonetheless praised them for their ability to reform and for sending bishops to the Northumbrians to effect their and their neighbours' conversion.¹⁴ His antipathy to the British Church lay in their failure to accept Roman correction, compounded by their supposed failure to preach Christianity to the English.¹⁵ Stancliffe suggests this was due to a misreading of Gregory's complaint about the sloth of the neighbouring Church, a letter which also references Augustine's need for translators.¹⁶ However, it is worth observing that the two statements are completely different. Bede wrote: *numquam genti Saxonum sive Anglorum, secum Britanniam incolenti, verbum fidei praedicando committerent.*¹⁷ Gregory stated: *sacerdotes qui in vicino sunt pastorem erga eos sollicitudinem non habere*¹⁸ and *sacerdotes e vicino neglegere.*¹⁹ It is only inference that links the two together, rather than textual similarity. It is also difficult to explain why Bede would not mention Gregory's condemnation (especially when he links Gregory to the translators). An alternative explanation for Bede's condemnation of the British Church is that his conception of conversion was mediated through an episcopal lens—the establishment of a bishopric was a singular moment.²⁰ British bishops are largely absent from the picture of the seventh-century

¹⁴ *HE* iii.5, iii.17, v.22.

¹⁵ *HE* i.22, ii.2, v.22. The truth of this is contested, see: Sims-Williams, *Western England*, esp. ch. 3; Stancliffe, 'British Church', pp. 118–40.

¹⁶ *GPRE* I vi.57; Stancliffe, 'British Church', pp. 108–9.

¹⁷ *HE* i.22. 'they never preached the faith to the Saxons or the Angles, who inhabited Britain with them.'

¹⁸ *GPRE* I vi.57. 'the priests who are in the neighbourhood have the pastoral care towards them.'

¹⁹ *Ibid.* vi.49. 'the priests from nearby neglect them.'

²⁰ *HE* i.25, i.27, ii.3, ii.9, ii.15, iii.5, iii.7, iv.13.

English Church, an exception being the consecration of Chad.²¹ Certainly, Sims-Williams' model of British involvement is one of local contact and acculturation, rather than a mission led by bishops.²² If Bede knew of the activities of British priests, he may not have recognized a mission, which dominates his *HE* as an organised and hierarchical entity.²³

This attitude towards the Irish and British makes it harder to countenance that Bede was simply ignoring or downplaying the Frankish Church.²⁴ Bede mentioned Liudhard as a bishop in Kent before Augustine and notes the influence that Bertha had had upon Æthelberht in making him aware of Christianity.²⁵ Why sully his account with their influence if his purpose was simply to stress the link to Gregory? Bede was also willing to acknowledge the roles of Felix in East Anglia, and Agilbert and Leuthere in Wessex.²⁶ The contrast in the accounts between Felix, who was under Canterbury's authority, and Agilbert, who appears not to have been, is curious.²⁷ It suggests Bede did take great pains to narrate accurately the arrival of bishops in various kingdoms. Furthermore, Berhtwold's consecration by Godwin, bishop of Lyon, was acknowledged.²⁸ This is particularly significant because a casual reading of the *LP* implies a papal consecration.²⁹ In other words, Bede carefully recorded Berhtwold's Frankish consecration, despite it hindering the archbishop's link with Rome. Perhaps Bede could have told us more; perhaps he was constrained by his sources. Overall, there is no positive evidence either in Bede's account or his biases to suggest that he deliberately wrote the Frankish Church or rulers out of the *HE*.

²¹ *HE* iii.28; *VW* 14.

²² Sims-Williams, *Western England* pp. 75–84.

²³ Sims-Williams suggests his silence is most attributable to the geographical limits of his sources. *Ibid.* p. 59.

²⁴ Wood, 'Mission', p. 16; Wallace-Hadrill, 'English Church', pp. 519–20.

²⁵ *HE* i.25.

²⁶ *HE* ii.15, iii.7.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ *HE* v.8.

²⁹ *LP* 86; Shaw, *Gregorian* p. 25; Colgrave and Mynors, ed., *Ecclesiastical History*, p. xxxi.

Historia Ecclesiastica, Book I Chapter 25

This does not provide proof *per se* that Bede's account independent of Gregory's letters is accurate; he still wrote nearly a century and a half after the events. However, that there is concordance between Gregory's letters and the *HE* provides some confidence, an impression underscored by the lack of evidence that Bede ignored the Franks. The chapter that has come under intense scrutiny and swift dismissal is i.25, which describes Æthelberht's and Augustine's first meeting. The objections concern the meeting in the open air. Bede noted that *caverat enim ne in aliquam domum ad se introirent, vetere usus augurio, ne superventu suo, siquid maleficae artis habuissent, eum superando deciperent*.³⁰ There are also objections to the reference to the Frankish rogation litany: *Deprecamur te*.³¹ Concern with the first point revolves around Æthelberht's prior knowledge of Christianity. The argument runs that because of this he could not therefore have feared bewitchment at the hands of Augustine.³² Turning to the litany, it was written in Francia and was unknown in Rome in the sixth century. It is also thought unlikely that Augustine could have heard it given that he returned to Rome when his monks' fears got the better of them.³³

Æthelberht's anxiety about bewitchment cannot be dismissed so lightly. Belief in the efficacy of magic has a long history, irrespective of Christian knowledge.³⁴ While Gregory suggests Æthelberht requested the mission, his letters also suggest a lack of clarity. Indeed, the letter sent to Theuderic and Theudebert notes that the translators were to help the Roman missionaries understand the desires of the English.³⁵ This suggests Æthelberht was cautious in

³⁰ *HE* i.25. 'He took care that they should not meet in any building, for he held the traditional superstition that, if they practised any magic art, they might deceive him and get the better of him as soon as he entered.'

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² Wood, 'Mission', p. 3; Wood, 'Augustine', p. 156; Colgrave and Mynors, ed., *Ecclesiastical History*, p. 74, n. 2; Shaw, *Gregorian*, p. 43.

³³ Wood, 'Mission', p. 3; Wood, 'Journey', pp. 37–8; Cubitt, *Church Councils*, pp. 129–30. For the rogation litanies: Wallace-Hadrill, *Frankish Church*, p. 11; Hen, *Liturgy*, pp. 23–4.

³⁴ Yorke, *Conversion*, p. 253; Hen 'Medieval West', pp. 183–206; Flint, *Magic*, pp. 79–80, 386–9.

³⁵ Shaw, *Gregorian*, p.43; *GPRES* I vi.49.

his approach to Rome. While Æthelberht presumably was comfortable in his wife's presence, his relationship with Liudhard and Christian ritual is harder to determine and in the context of the meeting with Augustine it is that latter concern which is crucial. To that end, it may be significant that Æthelberht granted his wife the Church of St Martin to worship in.³⁶ It lay to the east of Canterbury; outside of the city.³⁷ This is despite the presence of churches still being visible in the ruins of Roman Canterbury.³⁸ In other words, Æthelberht was firmly placing Christian rituals outside of his chief settlement. Furthermore, Augustine and his followers used St Martin's until the king converted and was baptized.³⁹ It suggests at the least a cautious attitude, if not an overtly hostile one, to Christian rituals. As such, there is arguably a consistency in Æthelberht's attitude towards Christian rites prior to his definitive conversion. While Bede's account here of the open-air meeting cannot be independently verified, Æthelberht's prior knowledge of Christianity is no reason to reject it.

There are also elements of the account of the rogation litany that ring true. It is just possible that Augustine was actually present in Francia during Rogationtide. Rogations occur before the Feast of the Ascension, which is forty days after Easter. Easter in 596 was on 22 April, placing Ascension on 1 June.⁴⁰ Gregory's letters to the monks is dated 23 July.⁴¹ It is not clear where in Francia the monks were, but given the addressees of the letters it is likely that they were still quite far south. Nor is it clear when Augustine arrived in Rome. However, seven and a half weeks is plenty of time to get from the south of Francia to Rome (see below, pp. 118–32). Augustine could comfortably have heard the rogation litanies and then travelled to Rome. Furthermore, he left his monks behind who may themselves have heard it and also took

³⁶ *HE* i.26.

³⁷ Colgrave and Mynors, ed., *Ecclesiastical History*, p. 76, n. 2.

³⁸ *HE* i.33.

³⁹ *Ibid.* i.26.

⁴⁰ Corning, *Celtic and Roman*, p. 25, Table 2.2.

⁴¹ *GPRE* I vi.50a.

Frankish priests as translators with him, who would themselves have known it.⁴² It is worth observing that rogation litanies originated in Vienne and Desiderius, bishop of Vienne, is one of three bishops that Gregory is known to have written to regarding both Augustine and Mellitus.⁴³ Originating in Vienne, Sidonius of Clermont and Caesarius of Arles were quick to grasp the utility of rogations, showing the rapid spread of rogations in fifth- and sixth-century Gaul.⁴⁴ There is need to be cautious, owing to the late manuscript tradition of *Deprecamur te*.⁴⁵ However, there was ample opportunity for Augustine, or his followers to have come into contact with the rogation tradition in general. Furthermore, Gregory was interested in litanies. Gregory instituted the *letania septiformis* as a penitential exercise for all the people of Rome, Augustine would have taken part in this litany.⁴⁶ The use of litanies as instruments of pastoral care fits perfectly within a Gregorian worldview, so the idea that Augustine and his party would sing a litany is quite compelling. There is sufficient evidence, therefore, that he or someone in his party would have had opportunity to know the tradition (although the origins of the specific litany remain unknown). Likewise, their association with Gregory provides a context for such behaviour. On balance, it is plausible.

There is a third element to the chapter that should receive greater attention: *imaginem Domini Salvatoris in tabula depictam*.⁴⁷ Bede provides a powerful image with the description of its use by Augustine as he was preaching. Colgrave and Mynors rightly point out that such icons, while extant in the sixth century, were brought to Wearmouth-Jarrow by Biscop.⁴⁸

⁴² *GPRE* I vi.49, vi.50a, vi.57.

⁴³ *Ibid.* vi.52; xi.34; Hen, *Liturgy*, pp. 23–4. On Bede’s supposed invention of this section: Wood, ‘Journey’, pp. 37–8; cf. Shaw, *Gregorian*, p. 44.

⁴⁴ Wallace-Hadrill, *Frankish Church*, p. 11.

⁴⁵ Wood, ‘Journey’, pp. 37–8.

⁴⁶ For more detailed discussion: Latham, ‘*letania septiformis*’, pp. 293–304; Serfass, ‘*Pallium Dispute*’, pp. 95–6.

⁴⁷ *HE* i.25. ‘the image of our Lord and Saviour painted on a panel.’

⁴⁸ Colgrave and Mynors, ed., *Ecclesiastical History*, p. 75, n. 3; *HA* i.9.

However, icons make occasional appearances in Gregory's letters and his conception of them is significant. A letter to Serenus of Marseilles contains the following paragraph:

*indico dudum ad nos pervenisse, quod fraternitas vestra quosdam imaginum adoratores aspiciens easdem ecclesiis imagines confregit atque proiecit. Et quidem zelum vos, ne quid manufactum adorari possit, habuisse laudamus, sed frangere easdem imagines non debuisse iudicamus. Idcirco enim pictura in ecclesiis adhibetur, ut hi qui litteras nesciunt saltem in parietibus videndo legant, quae legere in codicibus non valent. Tua ergo fraternitas et illa servare et ab eorum adoratu populum prohibere debuit, quatenus et litterarum nescii haberent, unde scientiam historiae colligerent, et populus in picturae adoratione minime peccaret.*⁴⁹

'we indicate that it has recently come to our attention that your Fraternity saw some people adoring images and you smashed those images and threw them out of the churches. And we certainly applauded you for having had the zeal not to allow anything made by human hands to be adored, but we judge that you ought not to have smashed those images. For a picture is provided in churches for the reason that those who are illiterate may at least read by looking at the walls what they cannot read in books. Therefore, your Fraternity should have preserved them and should have prohibited the people from their adoration, so that the illiterate might have a way of acquiring a knowledge of history and the people would not be sinning at all in their adoration of a picture.'

Gregory regarded icons as a useful tool for ministering to the people, giving the illiterate access to the Bible, so the presence of an icon when Augustine first preached to Æthelberht is striking; it fits perfectly within a Gregorian understanding of teaching the faith. Naturally, lacking independent corroboration, none of these points can be shown conclusively to have occurred. However, with the litany and the icon one can draw a direct link to Gregory's own worldview; one which Augustine, having been prior of Gregory's monastery, would presumably have known and shared.⁵⁰

There are two main points to stress from this analysis. Firstly, there are elements of Bede's account that suggest he had accurate information concerning the behaviour of the early missionaries, which provides some security for his assertions of Roman primacy. Secondly, given Bede's willingness to acknowledge the Irish, with their dubious dating of Easter, in his conversion narrative, suggestions he wrote the Franks out to highlight Rome fail to convince.

⁴⁹ *GP*RE II ix.208.

⁵⁰ Gameson, 'Augustine', pp. 8–9.

Moreover, the concordance between Bede's account and Gregory's letters means that one can turn to elements of his conversion narrative that cannot be compared to papal letters with a degree of security. Bede provides the vital internal perspective. This is primarily Kentish but does on occasion have a wider, English purview. Gregory's letters, as fascinating as they are, give very little insight into the situation in Kent itself and only relate to the first seven years of the mission's existence.

Æthelberht and the Pritlewell Burial: the pre-Augustinian Christian context

There is very little direct historical evidence for the pre-Augustinian Christian context, so the importance of archaeological evidence increases dramatically to fill the void left by the absence of a written record. Æthelberht's conversion and the Pritlewell burial capture this neatly, balancing a slender historical record against a remarkable but unique archaeological discovery, with both hinting at a pre-Augustinian Christian context. Careful analysis of their evidence can hint at the cultural context in which Christianity was received and consequently further the analysis of the Frankish and Roman influences upon the English.

The Conversion of Æthelberht

It is self-evident that there was a Frankish dimension lying behind Æthelberht with Bede acknowledging the influence that Bertha had upon her husband. Bede does not expressly link Liudhard to Æthelberht, focussing on his role as Bertha's chaplain, but that there was no contact between the two seems unlikely.⁵¹ There are two important questions to ask: the timing of Æthelberht's conversion and, consequently, the roles of Liudhard and Bertha.

⁵¹ *HE* i.25.

There is a hint preserved by Bede that Æthelberht's conversion began before the arrival of Augustine and his mission. This derives from an apparent conflict between two calculations that Bede relates to the king's death. The first notes that Æthelberht died in 616 and comments that this was *annus vicesimus primus ex quo Augustinus cum sociis ad praedicandum genti Anglorum missus est*.⁵² This is perfectly straightforward, providing the year 596; the year in which Gregory dispatched his missionaries. The second complicates matters by describing Æthelberht's death *post xx et unum annos acceptae fidei*.⁵³ Taking 616 as the year of Æthelberht's death, this produces 595, which is problematic given Bede's clarity that Æthelberht was baptized only after Augustine's arrival. There are two matters at hand. Can Bede's account be trusted and what does conversion actually mean?

Various attempts exist to explain the apparent conflict in this chapter. Harrison has suggested scribal error.⁵⁴ However, both the Leningrad and Moore Bede agree on the reading of the sentence.⁵⁵ If it is an error it crept in remarkably early in the manuscript tradition. The mistake would probably have to have been in Bede's original. Given the *et unum*, it is also unlikely that he miswrote *xix* for *xxi* and clearly a later scribe would not have misread one for the other. As such, any scribal error would have to be in the source material Bede received from Canterbury and so is inaccessible to us.

An alternative explanation is one suggested by Brooks that Bede had two dates of Æthelberht's death, 616 and 618.⁵⁶ It is ostensibly an elegant solution, which apparently finds support from the 'E' recension of the ASC and the continental Lindisfarne and Canterbury annals. This agreement between the two sources carries less weight under closer inspection.

⁵² *HE* ii.5. 'the twenty-first year after Augustine and his companions had been sent to preach to the English nation.'

⁵³ *Ibid.* 'twenty-one years after he had accepted the faith.'

⁵⁴ Harrison, *Framework*, p. 79.

⁵⁵ UL Kk.5.16 f.30 v; NLR lat. Q.v.1.18 f.33 r.

⁵⁶ Brooks, *Myths*, p. 48.

The various recensions of the *ASC* all place Æthelberht's death in 616.⁵⁷ It is only in the 'E' recension that any discrepancy arises because of details in the notice of Æthelberht's succession. His succession is in 565 and his reign is noted as lasting 53 years, giving his death in 618.⁵⁸ As Brooks concedes, an alternative explanation is that the entry is misplaced and *lvi* has been misread as *liii*.⁵⁹

His more significant source, the continental annals derived from Lindisfarne and Canterbury, cannot be regarded as conclusive.⁶⁰ Story's detailed manuscript study has demonstrated that Æthelberht's obit has been poorly copied, meaning that it is far from clear to which year it belongs. In one manuscript recension, *W*, it is given as 620x622, while in *PI* it is placed 617x624.⁶¹ As such, claiming Æthelberht died in 618 from this evidence is untenable. There is nonetheless an apparent discrepancy in the day of Æthelberht's death. Bede claimed 24 February 616 and the annals placed it on Wednesday, 6th kalends of March (25 February).⁶² However, that Bede is a day out of step can be accounted for given that 616 was a leap year. If Bede forgot that when calculating the 6th Kalends he would get 24 February.⁶³ As a result, the continental annals do themselves suggest that Æthelberht died in 616 not 618 and in fact support Bede's own slightly erroneous dating of the event.

It is possible to suggest that Bede made a mathematical error when writing this section of the *HE*, but this is unprovable and, given the simplicity of the calculation, unlikely. It also clashes with a similar calculation in the same chapter. As such, with a secure date of Æthelberht's death in 616 and no reason to dismiss it, Bede's comment *Defunctus vero est rex*

⁵⁷ *ASC* 616.

⁵⁸ *ASC* E 565.

⁵⁹ Brooks, *Myths*, p. 48.

⁶⁰ Story, 'Frankish Annals', 59–109.

⁶¹ *Ibid.* p. 82. *W* is Würzburg Universitätsbibliothek, M.p.th.f.46 ff. 2–21. *PI* is Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 13013, 8v–18r.

⁶² *ALC*.

⁶³ Story, 'Frankish Annals', p. 82.

*Aedilberct die XXIII mensis Februarii post XX et unum annos acceptae fidei*⁶⁴ requires serious consideration. It is the sort of statement that could have been found in an annal akin to those studied by Story; alternatively, Shaw has mooted it came from the king's epitaph.⁶⁵ It suggests that 595 was a significant date in Æthelberht's Christian journey. The statement is fairly vague and it does not have to mean baptism.⁶⁶ There is a curious progression in the twenty-sixth chapter of the first book, which speaks of Æthelberht converting and then being baptized.⁶⁷ Consequently, the vague notice in his obituary might suggest the first private step and tentative beginnings in Æthelberht's journey towards baptism.

Such an interpretation of stages to conversion was suggested by Edward James in his discussion of the conversion of Clovis I. James contends that three basic stages of conversion are visible in Gregory of Tours' account of Clovis' conversion. Firstly, he made a personal decision to accept the teachings of Christ. Secondly there was a public announcement of such a decision. Thirdly, the process of conversion is ended by receiving baptism and formally being accepted into the Church.⁶⁸ James' model lends itself to seeking historical markers (such as catechizing and baptism) that missionaries would record.⁶⁹ This risks buying into the missionaries' understanding of the process of conversion, but it places emphasis on the convert's actions.⁷⁰ This is a reasonable compromise, given the source base derives entirely from a Christian perspective.

⁶⁴ *HE* ii.5. 'King Æthelberht died on 24 February, twenty-one years after he had accepted the faith.'

⁶⁵ Shaw, *Gregorian*, p. 120.

⁶⁶ Kirby, *Kings*, pp. 24–5.

⁶⁷ *HE* i.26.

⁶⁸ *HF* ii.30–1; James, *Franks*, p. 123.

⁶⁹ This is in contrast to Milis' tripartite structure that Yorke uses in *The Conversion of Britain*, which focusses upon control of internal and external behaviour, which seems to better fit Christianisation and finding evidence of control of internal behaviour is essentially impossible in an early medieval context. Yorke, *Conversion*, p. 98.

⁷⁰ For how the missionaries' ideas might deviate from that of the converts' see the conversion of the Dii people: Drønen, 'Conversion', pp. 213–15. Wickham has also provided a useful study of theories of conversion and their pitfalls and the relationship between modern anthropology, its methodologies and medieval society. Wickham, 'Comparative Method', pp. 13–37.

That conversion might occur in stages is visible in Bede's narratives. Edwin's is the most detailed narrative he provides and there is a protracted private conversion, which Bede draws out across several chapters, followed by a public acknowledgement of Edwin's new faith and ultimately notice of his baptism.⁷¹ While the dates of Edwin's conversion are disputed, Bede notes Paulinus' episcopal consecration as occurring in July of 625 (implying the Northumbrian mission began then) and Edwin's baptism on 12 April 627.⁷² Paulinus must have spent over a year, at least, working with Edwin. A similar progression is visible in the account included in the *VSG*.⁷³ The conversion of Cynegisl, only mentioned in a sentence, notes a period as a catechumen prior to baptism; public acknowledgement prior to baptism. In addition, Bede appears to relate Cynegisl's decision to convert to the preaching of Birinus.⁷⁴ James' work in a Frankish context, and its apparent relevance to the writings of both Bede and the anonymous author of the *VSG*, provide circumstantial evidence that support understanding Æthelberht's conversion as a slow process beginning in 595 and coming to an end several years later, after Augustine had arrived.

There is other evidence to suggest 595 is a significant date in the history of English conversion. It was in 595 that Gregory first referenced the English, ordering Candidus to buy English slaves.⁷⁵ There is a reference to hallelujahs being heard in Britain in *Moralia in Iob*, which could be from 595 as well.⁷⁶ It is true that Gregory's letter does not state the ultimate destination of the slaves.⁷⁷ However, it is too much of a coincidence to have Æthelberht seemingly beginning to convert and Gregory first showing interest in the English in 595, with

⁷¹ *HE* ii.9–14.

⁷² *HE* ii.9, ii.14.

⁷³ *VSG* 14–16.

⁷⁴ *HE* iii.7.

⁷⁵ *GPPE* I vi.10.

⁷⁶ Gregory, *Moralia* III, p. 1346. Dating the reference to Britain in *Moralia in Iob* is difficult. Three different positions are: Dunn, *Christianization*, p. 44; cf. Richards, *Consul*, pp. 262–3; cf. Adrien, ed. *Moralia* I, p. vi.

⁷⁷ Dunn, *Christianization*, p. 50; Fletcher, *Conversion*, pp. 112–14; Lambert, *Christians and Pagans*, p. 165.

significant papal activity to organise a mission in the subsequent year.⁷⁸ It is also entirely possible that the story of the pope coming across English slaves in the Roman market has its origins in the letter to Candidus and could contain the reason for buying them: information about the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms.⁷⁹ Moreover, this clarifies the papal evidence of English agency in starting the mission. Æthelberht, having begun the process of conversion, wanted more information and instruction before making a definitive public step.

595 should be regarded as a date of some moment in the history of the evangelization of the English. The relevance that this has to the question of Frankish influence in Kent is that it places the process of Æthelberht's conversion more securely within a historical context and forces one to look for other influences upon Æthelberht than Rome and Augustine, which appear later. The logical place to turn is the Franks.

However, in 595 there is only a limited possibility for external Frankish influence upon Æthelberht's decisions. In 595, the political situation in Francia was hardly conducive towards influencing a neighbouring king to convert. Chlothar II was a minor struggling to survive. In 593 he had had to deal with an assault on his kingdom from Wintrio, duke of Champagne.⁸⁰ Childebert, the ruler of the rest of the Frankish kingdom and an adult, went to war with the Bretons in 594 and had to suppress a Thuringian rebellion in 595, before dying in 596, leaving his kingdom to be partitioned between his young sons Theudebert and Theuderic.⁸¹ It is doubtful that any Merovingian court was in a position to bring influence to bear upon the Kentish court in 595. Indeed, Higham is forced to conclude that any previous relations between the Kentish court and a Frankish court would have broken down due to the situation within the

⁷⁸ That this flurry of activity appears only from July may mean no more than Gregory sent no letters with the missionary party as it set out. Indeed, Gameson has suggested Gregory failed to consider the practicalities of the mission and it was Augustine who stressed the need for letters of introduction once the monks got cold feet. Gameson, 'Augustine', pp. 9–10.

⁷⁹ *GP*RE I vi.10; *HE* ii.1; *VSG* 9; Higham, *Convert*, p. 66; Dunn, *Christianization*, p. 49.

⁸⁰ *FC* iv.14.

⁸¹ *Ibid.* iv.15–16.

Frankish kingdoms.⁸² This is then further underscored by the failure of the Franks to send missionaries in response to the request that Gregory notes they had received.⁸³

Bertha and Liudhard

This turns our vision inwards to Kent, to Liudhard and Bertha. The Christian influence that Bede notes upon Æthelberht is that of his wife.⁸⁴ It is likely, although not made explicit, that Liudhard played a role as well. The question at hand, therefore, is how to characterise such influence. Liudhard's status as a bishop has attracted a lot of comment. He is sometimes taken as firm evidence of Æthelberht's obligation to receive Christianity from the Franks.⁸⁵ Such an interpretation of Liudhard's role has to be taken carefully, because his success was at best partial. Bede is explicit that Æthelberht only converted and received baptism after Augustine's arrival.⁸⁶ Only the more enigmatic *Defunctus vero est rex Aedilberct die XXIII mensis Februarii post XX et unum annos acceptae fidei*⁸⁷ may be attributed to Liudhard's efforts. Perhaps Liudhard began Æthelberht on the road to baptism, which his death or some other factor prevented him from completing, leading to the appeal to Rome.⁸⁸

It is, however, worth considering if Liudhard's status may have something to do with the exceptional nature of Bertha's marriage to a pagan across the sea. This could complement a possible evangelistic role but might provide an alternative explanation. It is curious that Gregory, when discussing episcopal consecration with Augustine, asks (presumably rhetorically) *Nam quando de Gallis episcopi veniunt, qui in ordinatione episcopi testes adsistant?*⁸⁹ He evidently did not feel that easy reference to the Frankish episcopate was

⁸² Higham, *Convert*, pp. 70–1.

⁸³ *GP*RE I vi.49, vi.57.

⁸⁴ *HE* i.25.

⁸⁵ Wood, 'Mission', p. 11; Yorke, *Kings and Kingdoms*, pp. 28–9; Lambert, *Christians and Pagans*, pp. 166–7.

⁸⁶ *HE* i.26.

⁸⁷ *HE* ii.5. 'King Æthelberht died on 24 February, twenty-one years after he had accepted the faith.'

⁸⁸ Yorke, 'Pagan', p. 244.

⁸⁹ *HE* i.27. 'For how often do bishops come from Gaul who can assist as witnesses at the consecration of a bishop?'

possible. Those negotiating Æthelberht's and Bertha's marriage may have concurred and felt a bishop was necessary to safeguard the orthodoxy of Bertha's faith in all eventualities. A possible example of this is the consecration of Bertha's church. While Martin is a fourth century saint and it is just conceivable that such a dedication could have survived the disorder of the decline of the Roman Empire and the coming of the Anglo-Saxons, this is exceedingly unlikely.⁹⁰ In all probability Liudhard consecrated the church as such, an act that would have required a bishop. As early as the Synod of Orange held in Gaul in 441 bishops were understood as being necessary for the consecration of a church.⁹¹ Bertha's faith and the situation in Kent may lie behind Liudhard's status, rather than a desire to convert her husband.

That being said, it is possible to trace connections between Liudhard and Bertha and Francia. The dedication of Bertha's church near Canterbury to St Martin suggests a close association with Tours.⁹² This is then furthered by the close relationship between Bertha's mother, Ingoberga, and Gregory of Tours. Gregory aided her with her will, while Ingoberga made bequests to the church of St Martin in Tours and the monastery there, as well as to the cathedral of Le Mans.⁹³ At this point the Liudhard medalet becomes particularly relevant in determining Frankish connections. The iconography on it is unique in a numismatic milieu.⁹⁴ However, Werner has pointed to Radegund's (wife of Chlothar I) activities in acquiring a piece of the True Cross, which resulted in a gift of relics from the Byzantine emperor. Initially displayed in Tours, it was brought to Poitiers.⁹⁵ As tempting as it is to suggest a dominant link between Canterbury and Tours, this should be balanced against the context of the hoard that the medalet was discovered in. Wallace-Hadrill has observed that this demonstrates a link to

⁹⁰ Fletcher, *Conversion*, p. 111; cf. Lambert, *Christians and Pagans*, p. 167; Yorke, *Conversion*, p. 122.

⁹¹ von Hefele, *Canons*, p. 161.

⁹² Werner, 'Liudhard', p. 33.

⁹³ *HE* ix.26.

⁹⁴ Werner, 'Liudhard', p. 28.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.* pp. 31–4.

the Garonne valley, further south than either Tours or Poitiers.⁹⁶ Consequently, the links that can be drawn between Bertha and Liudhard point quite generally to the western regions of Francia, with Tours, (possibly) Poitiers and the Garonne showing a very broad geographic sweep.

Werner's hypothesis that the Liudhard mint was small and for use as Easter offerings does require re-evaluation.⁹⁷ The increasing discovery of Merovingian coins in single finds and the fact that Anglo-Saxon weights were calibrated to Frankish standards demonstrates the need to regard Liudhard's coinage as fulfilling a practical, commercial endeavour.⁹⁸ Currency was closely associated with Merovingian Francia, which may itself provide further clarification. The minting of coins may well have been an attempt on Liudhard's part to stress an association between Christianity and Merovingian practices. The unique and striking Christian iconography of the coin of the cross of Golgotha might corroborate Liudhard's desire to emphasize a link.⁹⁹ As such, the Liudhard medalet is proof of the flow of materials from Francia to Kent for Christian functions. This is admittedly a broad bracket, but St Martin's Church should perhaps draw out attention. It is unlikely that the structure Bertha and Liudhard found needed no work; indeed, when describing Augustine's activities, Bede stresses that he had to build or restore churches.¹⁰⁰ It is perhaps telling that a century later, Biscop headed to Francia to find masons who could build him a stone church.¹⁰¹ Liudhard may have had similar instincts and needing to pay his craftsmen had coins struck. In general, the medalet forms further

⁹⁶ Wallace-Hadrill, 'English Church', p. 527; For a discussion of the two coins, one from Agen, the other from Saint-Bertrand-de-Comminges, see: Grierson, 'Coin-ornaments', pp. 46–8.

⁹⁷ Werner, 'Liudhard', p. 41.

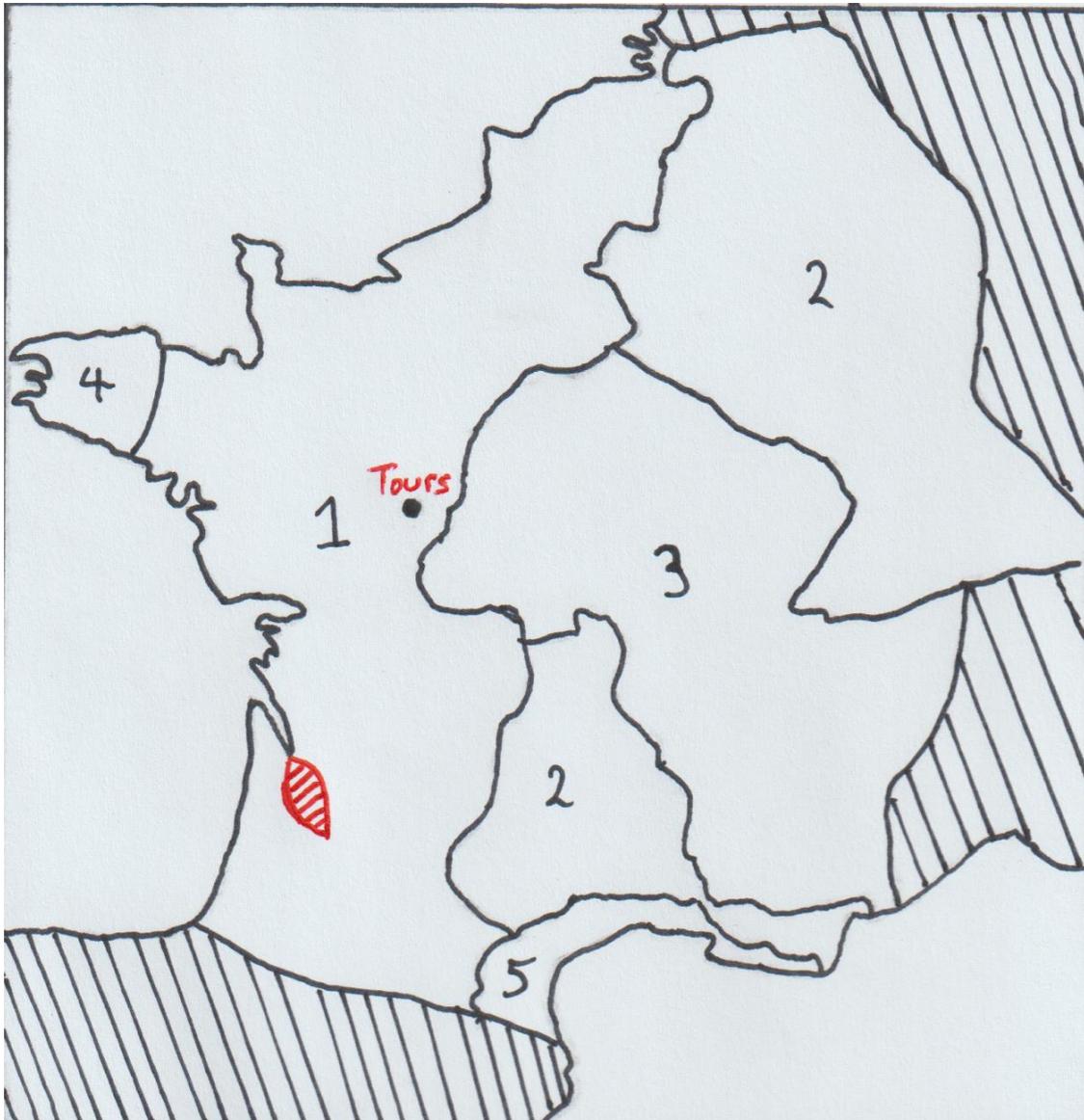
⁹⁸ Naismith, *Britain*, p. 43.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 50.

¹⁰⁰ *HE* i.26.

¹⁰¹ *HA* i.5.

evidence of the trade links between Kent and the Franks but places a curious Christian spin to that contact.¹⁰²



The Frankish Kingdoms c. 583. 1) The Kingdom of Chilperic; 2) the Kingdom of Childebert II; 3) the Kingdom of Guntrum; 4) Brittany; 5) Septimania
The Garonne valley and Tours are marked in red within Chilperic's kingdom.
(Based on: James, *Franks*, p. 177, fig. 22.)

Does any of this suggest a link between Liudhard and an evangelistic purpose? The amount of time between Æthelberht's probable marriage to Bertha and 595 does not lend itself to the idea that Æthelberht was to accept Christianity as condition of the marriage. Bertha was

¹⁰² For the trade links: Hawkes, 'Anglo-Saxon Kent', p. 72; Welch, 'Kent', p. 192; Welch, 'Cross-Channel Contacts', pp. 123-4.

probably born during Charibert's reign (561–7).¹⁰³ By 595, the couple may have been married for twenty years, although around ten years is perhaps a more realistic guess.¹⁰⁴ Wood's suggestion that Æthelberht's father, King Eormenric of Kent, prevented him from publicly identifying himself with his wife's religion due to hostility makes little sense.¹⁰⁵ It is difficult to reconcile such a position with Eormenric's necessary agreement for his son's marriage and the known provisions regarding Bertha's faith. If his hostility towards Christianity was such that he would prevent his son from publicly committing to the faith, why allow his son to convert at all? As such, it is likely Æthelberht's conversion was slow in coming; the result of gradual exposure to his wife's faith and an increasing interest in it.

How should the links with western Francia consequently be understood? Chilperic, king of Soissons, managed to seize most of this region in the late 570s and 580s, the period when Bertha's marriage most likely occurred.¹⁰⁶ Higham suggests the marriage was a demonstration of amity between Soissons and Kent. It ridged Chilperic of a minor princess and allowed him to flatter the Kentish royal family with a dynastic tie to the Merovingians.¹⁰⁷ This may risk overlooking that ties with Kent may have brought Chilperic himself benefits (see below, pp. 145–8), but whatever the case the most interesting point that emerges from this probable background is that it contextualises Chlothar's unique involvement in the letters of Gregory.¹⁰⁸ It suggests he may have inherited links from Chilperic, his father, which he utilised to support Augustine. The decade or more taken to persuade Æthelberht to move towards Christianity makes it unlikely that there was pressure emanating from Chilperic's court for him to convert as a condition of the marriage.

¹⁰³ *HF* iv.26.

¹⁰⁴ Brooks, *Canterbury*, pp. 5–6.

¹⁰⁵ Wood, 'Mission', p. 11.

¹⁰⁶ James, *Franks*, pp. 169–77; *HF* iv.47, v.2, v.48; Brooks, *Canterbury*, pp. 5–6.

¹⁰⁷ Higham, *Convert*, pp. 70–1.

¹⁰⁸ *GPRE* II xi.51.

The pre-Augustinian evidence of Æthelberht, Liudhard and Bertha consequently points very strongly to Frankish influence. However, the date of 595 hinted at in the *HE* suggests a local and personal Frankish influence, deriving from the Frankish community within Kent itself, rather than pressure emanating from a Frankish court. Æthelberht's conversion, when it came, appears as a genuine response to changing religious convictions under the influence of his Frankish wife. What is intriguing, however, are the links the Liudhard medalet and the dedication of Bertha's chapel to St Martin had with regions of Francia under Chilperic's control. These presage the hints of links to Chlothar that Gregory suggests existed. While the mission Gregory dispatched was a novel historical phenomenon, it may have integrated itself within pre-existing networks of contact to support itself and gain aid in its endeavours.

The Prittlewell Burial

A change of faith prompted by an exposure to Christianity rather than formal mission is also suggested by the evidence of the Prittlewell Burial, discovered in 2003 at Prittlewell, Southend-on-Sea, Essex. Such was the care that went into the preparation of the body with its Christian symbolism of gold foil crosses placed over the eyes and the *tremisses* with crosses on them in the hands, that it is hard to deny the Christian faith of the East Saxon individual or the existence of a wider community that prepared his body. This is underscored by the separation of the body itself from other artefacts, most notably the sword.¹⁰⁹ It is worth briefly discussing the date, but the crosses need to be the focus of the analysis in determining the cultural milieu in which the individual was exposed to Christianity. The coins discovered in the grave might suggest a Frankish context to the Christianity of the buried individual. However, their presence, as with the Liudhard medalet, is best understood from a commercial perspective.¹¹⁰ As such, while the coins appear to have been deliberately chosen for their

¹⁰⁹ Blackmore *et al.*, *Prittlewell*, p. 336.

¹¹⁰ Williams, 'Function', p. 161; Williams, 'Coins', pp. 125–28; Naismith, *Britain*, p. 43.

Christian iconography, their presence is not indicative of Frankish influence.¹¹¹ They are reflective of the wider trade networks in which the East Saxon kingdom stood as the end of the sixth century.¹¹²

Naturally, the potential that the Prittlewell burial has for being pre-597 in date significantly alters the narrative of conversion. It suggests that Christianity had found a foothold at least amongst the English before Augustine and more strikingly beyond Kent with its Frankish Christian community in Canterbury. The preferred model that the authors of the report used produced a 95% probability of a date between 575–605 and 68% 580–600, which results in an 80% probability of a pre-597 date.¹¹³

However, it worth noting a few questions that the numismatic evidence raises. Firstly, Depeyrot dates the activities of Vitalis, who minted one of the Prittlewell coins, to 620–40.¹¹⁴ Gareth Williams notes the dating in the report and reasonably observes that it is unexplained; Depeyrot's assertion simply appears in a table.¹¹⁵ However, this does introduce an element of doubt into the security of the dating. Williams' discussion suggests a wide date range of 580–630.¹¹⁶ Although not precluding either earlier or later dates, analysis of the gold content of the coins suggests that they most comfortably fall into the sole reign of Chlothar II (613–29).¹¹⁷ This would align with Depeyrot's dating of Vitalis' minting career. An early date is possible and there is no direct evidence from the coins to disprove it. However, it is worth noting that the numismatic evidence may lie more comfortably slightly later in time.¹¹⁸

¹¹¹ Blackmore *et al.*, *Prittlewell*, p. 112.

¹¹² *Ibid.* pp. 148–51.

¹¹³ *Ibid.* pp. 285–6.

¹¹⁴ Depeyrot, *Numéraire*, p. 133.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*; *cf.* Blackmore *et al.*, *Prittlewell*, p. 147.

¹¹⁶ Blackmore *et al.*, *Prittlewell*, p. 146.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.* p. 277.

¹¹⁸ Dr R. Naismith, pers. comm.

The gold foil crosses are far more intriguing. There is no Frankish context for them, consequently, one has to look for direct contact between the individual in the grave and Lombard Italy, Alemannia or Bavaria, where gold foil crosses are also found, for the inspiration in their use.¹¹⁹ However, the crosses are sufficiently distinct in both size and function in the burial to suggest the adaptation of them to local desires.¹²⁰ The date of the burial would suggest that the Prittlewell crosses are fairly early in the tradition of gold foil crosses, which appear in the late sixth century, but increase in frequency in the seventh century.¹²¹ The foot stool in the grave assemblage also points to the individual having links with that part of the world.¹²² In other words, the Prittlewell burial may well represent a pre-Augustinian Christian influence stemming from beyond Francia. More to the point, the weight of evidence would suggest the most likely source of information for the crosses would be Lombard Italy (283 Italian finds to 92 north of the Alps).¹²³ Furthermore, the use of the gold foil crosses is typically associated with a ‘Romanic’ tradition, contrasting with Arian practices.¹²⁴ While it is inappropriate to draw too strong an association, given the clear local adaptation, it is instructive for the culture with which the Prittlewell individual may be associated.¹²⁵ Overall, I surmise that as a Frankish Christian influence percolated in Kent, there was some contact in Essex with a Christian culture that was deliberately drawing attention to its links with Rome.

Francia and Rome at the beginnings of English Christianity

The most striking point to emerge from this discussion is the dichotomy between the Frankish Christian presence in Kent and the ‘Romanic’ Christian culture that lies behind the

¹¹⁹ Ibid. p. 138.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Riemer, ‘*Folienkreuze*’, pp. 620–1; cf. Blackmore *et al.*, *Prittlewell*, pp. 140–1.

¹²² Blackmore *et al.*, *Prittlewell*, pp. 218–19, 337.

¹²³ Riemer, ‘*Folienkreuze*’, pp. 624–35.

¹²⁴ Burnell and James, ‘*Archaeology of Conversion*’, pp. 95–6.

¹²⁵ It is worth noting that the specialist studying the crosses stated that the Occam’s razor solution to them was Augustine’s mission, which provided direct contact with Italy at the end of the sixth century. Blackmore *et al.*, *Prittlewell*, p. 145, although cf. p. 337.

gold foil crosses of the Prittlewell burial. As such, Rome and Francia, visible in the mission to Kent, is visible to a certain extent in the pre-Augustinian period too. However, the point with both is that they appear to be local. There is no real evidence to suggest that Æthelberht was under pressure from a Frankish court to convert. The time lapse between his marriage and the hint of movement towards Christianity in 595 is too great to suggest anything more than a gradual transition prompted by exposure to his wife's faith and her chaplain. Likewise, the gold foil crosses' form implies local adaptation of the style. In general, it suggests that there was slow gravitation towards Christianity amongst the elite that meant that when Augustine arrived, his words fell on fertile soil.

Bede and the Franks (1): the Paganism of Eadbald

Eadbald's paganism is more secure historical evidence. What is particularly curious about Eadbald's religious beliefs in *c.* 616 is the connections that he almost certainly had to the Frankish world, a remarkably neglected topic in the history of English conversion. Only a single article has seriously considered the significance of this, arguing that it was an insurance policy on Æthelberht's part to safeguard his dynasty should the people of Kent have revolted against his own conversion.¹²⁶ While there is some merit in such an argument, it largely overlooks the extended period of time, at least fifteen years, between Æthelberht's baptism (no later than 601) and his death (almost certainly in 616). The more pertinent and confusing point that Angenendt overlooks is the Christianity of Bertha, Eadbald's probable mother.¹²⁷ Higham has injected doubt into the general narrative by suggesting that Eadbald apostatized, having

¹²⁶ Angenendt, 'Anglo-Saxons', p. 754.

¹²⁷ It is never made explicit that Bertha is Eadbald's mother, although the timing of Bertha's marriage in the 580s makes it likely. It is also likely that Bertha predeceased Æthelberht, but Bede's language is vague. *HE* ii.5, ii.9, ii.20.

been baptized during his father's reign.¹²⁸ Bede, however, is explicit that Eadbald was baptized after he became king; an impossibility had he already been baptized.¹²⁹

This is extremely difficult to reconcile with Eadbald's Merovingian and consequently Christian relations. It is unlikely that no mention was made in the marriage agreement with Æthelberht regarding the religion of any children, as Bede explicitly notes discussion about Bertha's Christianity.¹³⁰ This, along with Liudhard's status, demonstrates the importance the Merovingians placed upon ensuring Bertha's adherence to Christianity. Indeed, the norm suggested by the narrative of conversion, when a marriage between a pagan and Christian occurs, is that the children are baptized. This is present, for example, in both the *HE* and the *HF*.¹³¹ As such, Eadbald's paganism irrespective of Æthelberht's is truly remarkable. One would have expected him to have been baptized at birth.

This has serious consequences for interpretations of the pre-Augustinian Frankish Christian presence in Kent.¹³² Eadbald's paganism demonstrates that the influence of the Merovingians and their bishops upon the Kentish court, even with a bishop in Kent, was minimal and underscores the implications of the above analysis. While it cannot describe the scale of the Frankish presence in Augustine's mission, Eadbald's continuing paganism through Æthelberht's reign further argues against significant Frankish leverage in Kent. It is of course also one of the Roman missionaries' major oversights. However, at no point were the Franks in a position to ensure the baptism of the grandson of a Merovingian king.

Ultimately, it was a Roman missionary, Laurence, who succeeded in converting Eadbald after showing him the wounds from a miraculous beating from St Peter.¹³³ While this has clear

¹²⁸ Higham, *Convert*, pp. 133–4. He also suggests that Eadbald was finally re-converted by Justus in the 620s, *cf.* Blair, 'Paulinus', pp. 7–8.

¹²⁹ *HE* ii.5.

¹³⁰ *HE* i.25, ii.9.

¹³¹ *HE* ii.9; *HF* ii.29.

¹³² *HE* i.25.

¹³³ *HE* ii.6.

hagiographic overtones, the fundamental assertion that Eadbald received conversion from Roman missionaries is difficult to dispute.¹³⁴ In terms of judging the relative importance of Rome and Francia in the conversion, it further stresses the role that Rome played. Furthermore, the circumstances of this beating are curious. It occurs after the flight of Mellitus from Essex and of Justus from Rochester to Francia. Laurence intended to follow and it was this beating that stopped him from fleeing too.¹³⁵ In terms of judging the nature of support that the Franks were able to offer to the missionaries it is highly instructive.¹³⁶ It suggests that Chlothar II felt no responsibility for the safety of the fledgling English Church in Kent or Essex. By contrast, the missionaries perceived Francia as a safe haven.¹³⁷ This Bedan evidence corroborates the implication that the Merovingian protection that Gregory requested was only limited to Francia. In c. 616 Chlothar II was an adult, the sole Frankish king and probably the most powerful Merovingian in a century.¹³⁸ Twenty years earlier, there were three competing kingdoms, with minorities and regencies. If Chlothar were unwilling (or unable) to intervene in Kent and Essex in c. 616 this is highly indicative for the state of affairs during the initial stages of Augustine's mission. It underscores the general absence of the Franks from Kent itself, although it once again demonstrates the supporting role that Francia played throughout the mission.

Bede and the Franks (2): the Mission after the Death of Gregory and Augustine

While the early mission does seem to have been dominated by the Roman missionaries, the mission after Gregory's and Augustine's deaths saw a greater role played by evangelists from elsewhere: specifically, Felix in East Anglia and Birinus, Agilbert and Leuthere in Wessex.

¹³⁴ Shaw, *Gregorian*, pp. 130–1. Although Blair has questioned which bishop of Canterbury was responsible: Blair, 'Paulinus', pp. 7–8.

¹³⁵ *HE* ii.5–6.

¹³⁶ *GP*RE I vi.49, vi.57; II xi.47–48, xi.50–51.

¹³⁷ *HE* ii.5–6.

¹³⁸ Wallace-Hadrill, *Frankish Church*, pp. 104–5.

Furthermore, there is the curious evidence provided by the Council of Paris, where two of the Roman missionaries in Kent, Justus, bishop of Rochester, and Peter, abbot of Ss Peter and Paul in Canterbury, subscribed to the council's canons. All of this evidence firmly moves away from the Roman Church and requires definition in terms of judging competing influences within the evangelization of the English.

The Council of Paris (614)

The Council of Paris was convened in 614 under the authority of Chlothar II. Whether Justus and Peter's presence is in some way indicative of Chlothar's influence in Kent, as their presence is traditionally interpreted, is difficult to determine. This is because of both the pagan reactions in Essex and Kent in 616 and the fact that Chlothar himself did not subscribe to the canons.¹³⁹ He only responded to them a week later and made some significant divergences, such as neglecting to rule out simony or royal involvement in episcopal appointments.¹⁴⁰ As such, there is a disconnect between the ecclesiastical and royal legislation and so it is impossible to know if Peter's and Justus' presence was a royal desire. More generally, the presence of these English ecclesiastics needs to be placed in context. Political inferences would be inappropriate from Mellitus' presence at an otherwise unknown Roman synod.¹⁴¹ Nor would the presence of English ecclesiastics at the Council of Frankfurt in 794 suggest anything about Carolingian authority over Offa of Mercia.¹⁴² This can also be set alongside the evidence of Wilfrid's presence at the Roman synod in 679 and Frankish ecclesiastics at the legatine synod of 786 in both English ecclesiastical provinces. Cubitt's comments on both the Synod of Hatfield (679) and the English presence at Frankfurt are pertinent: 'These consultations ... underline the place of the Anglo-Saxon church within Western Christendom.'¹⁴³ In other

¹³⁹ *CP*, pp. 185–92; Wood, 'Sutton Hoo', p. 12; Wood, *Kingdoms*, pp. 141–2.

¹⁴⁰ *CM* 9; Klingshern, *Caesarius*, pp. 268–9; Halfond, *Patronage*, p. 71.

¹⁴¹ *HE* ii.4.

¹⁴² *CF*, pp. 159–60; Cubitt, *Church Councils*, p. 64.

¹⁴³ Cubitt, *Church Councils*, p. 64.

words, this normalises the presence of Justus and Peter in Paris; Churches worked together for the common good. Furthermore, Gregory had encouraged such mutual cooperation, both in getting the mission underway and in correcting the errors in the Frankish Church.¹⁴⁴ He directed Augustine to the Frankish Church as a suitable place to draw upon for a liturgy for the English Church.¹⁴⁵ He even anticipated that Augustine might visit the bishop of Arles with reform in mind.¹⁴⁶

This provides a suitable context to explain Justus' and Peter's presence in Paris. As discussed (see above, pp. 58–61), simony in the Frankish Church had preyed upon Gregory's mind. The Council of Paris was, amongst other things, a very late response to Gregory's ever more urgent requests.¹⁴⁷ Gregory was obviously long dead by the time of the council; as a result, there may have been a deliberate attempt to harness the pope's authority by requesting the presence of two of his missionaries. It is also plausible, as Flechner has suggested, that Peter and Justus wanted to take the proceedings back to Canterbury.¹⁴⁸ The English episcopate may have wanted Merovingian models both to guide the English Church and to show the two English Christian kings in 614, Æthelberht and Sæberht, how the Church should operate and where the limits of royal power lay. In essence, the Council of Paris is evidence of the scale of Gregory's legacy and more importantly demonstrates the existence of communication and cooperation, for which Gregory aimed in his letters.

Birinus, Felix, Agilbert and Leuthere

Such a conclusion is corroborated by the activities of non-Roman bishops in the second generation of the mission. Bede is our sole source of information for the evangelism of Birinus,

¹⁴⁴ *GP*RE I vi.49–53, vi.56–7.

¹⁴⁵ *HE* i.27.

¹⁴⁶ *GP*RE II xi.45.

¹⁴⁷ *CP*, p. 186.

¹⁴⁸ Flechner, 'Boniface', pp. 48–9.

Felix, Agilbert and Leuthere. Within the general Roman-Frankish dynamic Birinus is a curious anomaly. While Birinus possessed a papal mandate from Pope Honorius it is not made clear precisely from where Birinus came. His consecration by Asterius, bishop of Milan, in Genoa might suggest his origins lay in northern Italy.¹⁴⁹ Furthermore, as far as Bede's knowledge goes (which evidently was not that far), Birinus acted independently of Canterbury. Birinus' separate papal commission for his activities may also account for the independence of Agilbert when he acted as the bishop of Wessex.¹⁵⁰ Consequently, while Birinus represents a 'Roman' thread to the missionary endeavour, it is one that ostensibly is independent of the one begun in Canterbury under Augustine.

The origins of the Frankish bishops are both more secure and more interesting. Bede noted that Felix, bishop of East Anglia, (c. 630/1–c. 647/8) was Burgundian in origin.¹⁵¹ There are suggestions that Felix had been the bishop of Châlon-sur-Saône. At roughly this point in time Felix of Châlon-sur-Saône vanishes from the Frankish documentary record and McClure and Collins moot that Chlothar II's death may have forced him into exile.¹⁵² This suitably accounts for the sudden appearance of a Frankish bishop in Canterbury, where Honorius of Canterbury gave him his commission to the East Angles. While this brings Felix within the 'Roman' sphere of influence, his Burgundian identity is important. It provides some corroboration that Brunhilda's translators may indeed have been Burgundian in origin and that such a link with the English Church may have been perpetuated.

Agilbert (c. 650–before 664) and Leuthere (c. 670–6), by contrast, were both bishops of Wessex and members of the influential Neustrian family of the Faronids.¹⁵³ Agilbert's

¹⁴⁹ It is curious that neither Gregory nor Honorius consecrated their missionaries as bishop but left it to occur on the journey to Kent and Wessex respectively.

¹⁵⁰ *HE* iii.7.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.* ii.15.

¹⁵² McClure and Collins, *Ecclesiastical History*, pp. 381–2.

¹⁵³ Le Jan, 'élites', pp. 190–1.

involvement in the West Saxon Church is not as straightforward as Felix's or Leuthere's. Bede's description is curious: *venit ... de Hibernia pontifex quidam nomine Agilberctus, natione quidem Gallus sed tunc legendarum gratia scripturarum in Hibernia non parvo tempore demoratus*.¹⁵⁴ Agilbert had spent a long time in Ireland and had become a bishop there. Consequently, describing his involvement simply as evidence of 'Frankish' missionary activity does not fully capture the various cultural influences upon Agilbert. Nevertheless, Agilbert deliberately chose to seek out Cenwealh and succeeded in becoming his bishop.¹⁵⁵ Given that Agilbert ended his career as bishop of Paris, he evidently maintained contact with Francia, presumably his kinsmen, and Agilbert's decision to ingratiate himself with Cenwealh may have been strategic.¹⁵⁶ As with Felix, therefore, Agilbert's involvement cannot be reduced to a single trend. Furthermore, while Leuthere's succession as bishop of Wessex was negotiated between Agilbert and Cenwealh, Theodore consecrated him as bishop, firmly placing the bishops of Wessex under Canterbury's authority.¹⁵⁷ While Agilbert's Frankish links while he was bishop of Wessex are at best shadowy, both he and Leuthere represent continued northern Frankish influence in English evangelism, something arguably begun by Chlothar II before 601.¹⁵⁸ Consequently, Felix, Agilbert and Leuthere provide further, albeit limited, evidence of the importance of the Neustrian and Burgundian kingdoms that Gregory's letters hint may have existed previously with Soissons and Burgundy.

However, the Irish background to Agilbert could suggest that the idea of *peregrinatio* lay behind his evangelism and possibly his career in Ireland. The monastery of Faremoutiers was founded by Agilbert's kinswoman Burgundofara and was heavily influenced by Columbanian

¹⁵⁴ *HE* iii.7. 'there came ... a bishop named Agilbert, a Gaul by birth, who had spent a long time in Ireland for the purpose of studying the Scripture.'

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁶ *HE* iii.28; see: Le Jan, 'élites', pp. 190–1.

¹⁵⁷ *HE* iii.7.

¹⁵⁸ *GP*RE II xi.51.

monasticism.¹⁵⁹ This would apply to Leuthere too. Equally, Felix, as a Burgundian, would have been well placed to have heard of the career of Columbanus.¹⁶⁰ Birinus' obscure origins mean saying anything definitive about him is difficult. His episcopal consecration might suggest he came from a region near Genoa. This would place him near Bobbio, Columbanus' northern Italian foundation. It is interesting that the Frankish bishops all seem to have links to regions with significant Columbanian influence, suggesting an Irish cultural context to their actions.

Overall, the evidence of the second generation of missionaries replicates intriguing hints visible in the letters of Gregory the Great that Neustria and Burgundy both contributed to Augustine's mission in Kent. Agilbert and Leuthere maintain the Neustrian link, while Felix does so for Burgundy. There is potentially a curious Columbanian background to their involvement too. However, this needs to be balanced against Birinus' Roman commission and Felix's initial approach to Canterbury. There were complex and various trends in missionary activities after Gregory's and Augustine's deaths. However, there is little to suggest that Frankish missionary activity ever superseded that of Rome. More to the point, however, the various origins of these four bishops should be placed within the context of Augustine's Roman background and Theodore's Syrian and Greek heritage. As with the Council of Paris, it is testament to the dynamism and scale of the seventh-century Church and the level of cooperation extant within it.

Conclusion

What is immediately clear from this analysis is that the Franks are undeniably present in the evangelization of the English. Indeed, in Bertha and Liudhard they stand at the very start of the

¹⁵⁹ Charles-Edwards, *Ireland*, pp. 383–4.

¹⁶⁰ *HE* ii.15; Blair, *Bede*, pp. 107–8.

process of conversion as the most likely Christian influence upon Æthelberht, which prompted his request to Rome for a mission. However, there is a consistent theme of Roman involvement. Even the Prittlewell burial, with the gold foil crosses, may suggest a pre-Augustinian link to Italy that transmitted the Christian faith. Bede's *HE* also places Rome in the leading position, although he does not deny a Frankish presence in the form of the translators. The paganism of Eadbald, as related by Bede, despite his connections to the Merovingian dynasty further confirms the distance of the Frankish Church and courts from the religious life of Kent.

Even in later Frankish involvement, Rome retains its presence. Felix of East Anglia was given his commission by Honorius of Canterbury. Leuthere's appointment was arranged by Agilbert and Cenwealh, but Leuthere was consecrated by Theodore of Canterbury. While Agilbert appears to have operated in Wessex independently of Canterbury, he succeeded Birinus, who had his own papal commission to conduct a mission. As such, there is a Roman dimension to the West Saxon Church that needs to be acknowledged. Furthermore, the careers of all four, Birinus, Agilbert, Leuthere and Felix, may hint at an Irish, perhaps Columbanian, influence, to further complicate matters of cultural context and motivation.

There are still interesting regional variations in the Frankish involvement that can be detected in Bede's account. Liudhard and Bertha can tentatively be linked to Tours, given the dedication of Bertha's chapel in Kent to St Martin, her mother's association with Gregory of Tours, while the context of the hoard the Liudhard medalet was discovered in points to the Garonne region, south of Tours. It suggests a connection with the eastern regions of Francia but it is difficult to judge how significant such links were, especially given that Æthelberht only appears to begin to convert in 595. The political situation in Francia was such that an external Frankish influence upon Æthelberht, as opposed to that of his wife and her chaplain, is unlikely to have existed. Consequently, Æthelberht's Frankish links and their influence upon

him are best characterised as personal, even intimate, rather than expressions of wider institutional links between Kent and Francia.

The evidence of Agilbert, Leuthere and Felix suggest that northern Francia (the kingdom of Soissons, then Neustria) and Burgundy were the regions most heavily involved. When placed alongside Gregory's letters, it is immediately striking that the same places consistently emerge. The letters of thanks hint that Chlothar II directly aided Augustine in Kent. Furthermore, Brunhilda appears to have arranged the translators for Augustine. Given her close association with Syagrius, it is logical to suggest that she approached him for the priests needed to support Augustine in that matter. The backgrounds of Agilbert and Leuthere, both members of the Faronid dynasty, are Neustrian, while Felix was Burgundian. In other words, there is a curious Neustrian-Burgundian axis that appears to have become involved in Gregory's mission and then maintained its involvement. In general, therefore, the influences that Bede draws out of Francia and Rome match those visible in Gregory's letters. Furthermore, Bede's interpretation of the mission prioritises Rome's role, which accords with how Gregory presented the organisation of the mission in his letters.

The evangelization therefore sets up the major external influences upon the English in the seventh century and the major players in Wilfrid's life: the Franks and Rome. One can focus in upon Neustria and Burgundy as the main source of Frankish involvement. However, Rome appears as the driving force in the evangelization. It is difficult to be certain about institutional ties, but there is no compelling evidence to suggest that either the Frankish Church or courts were directly involved; individuals predominate. To that end, the 'Roman' mission can legitimately be described as such, with the Franks supporting Rome in its endeavours.

CHAPTER THREE: TRAVELING TO ROME IN THE AGE OF WILFRID

*suggestente spiritu sancto, apellare et videre sedem apostoli Petri et apostolorum principis, adhuc inatritam viam genti nostrae temptare in cor adolescentis supradicti ascendit.*¹

Accompanied by Biscop, Wilfrid appears to have begun the trend of the English pilgrimage to Rome in c. 653. Wilfrid would go on to make another two visits; Biscop six.² On their journeys, they had dealings with kings and bishops, forming contacts that became embedded into their careers. Consequently, any analysis of interaction between peoples must recognize that travel lies behind many religious, political or socio-economic developments. The physical movement of people allows for the transmission of ideas and news. The origins of Christianity amongst the English are defined by movement, not least the Roman missionaries coming in contact with the Frankish world. Ultimately, the evangelization defines the relative scale of the competing influences of the Frankish kingdoms and Rome within the Anglo-Saxon world; it is evidence of continental trends moving into the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms. A study of English travellers allows this image to be nuanced by incorporating English agency into the discussion. Where did the English choose to go and with whom did they interact? It allows some judgement to be made concerning the places that the English regarded as important. For example, the defining features of the ecclesiastical careers of Wilfrid and Biscop are their journeys, above all the journeys to Rome. These helped to form the perceptions of the eighth-century writers that recorded their lives.³ As such, questions of travel help highlight regional biases and the contacts that might have developed over the seventh century.

The significance of Wilfrid's and Biscop's journeys is that they appear as the first Englishmen to travel to Rome. Rome was not the only destination in mainland Europe for the

¹ VW 3. 'it came into the heart of this same young man, by the promptings of the Holy Spirit, to pay a visit to the see of the Apostle Peter, the chief of the Apostles, and to attempt a road hitherto untrodden by any of our race.'

² VW 3, 29, 50; HA 2, 4–6, 9.

³ Grocock and Wood, ed., *Abbots*, p. xxv; Wood, 'Journeys', p. 211.

English, but it is the one best represented in the surviving evidence. The only Frankish destination explicitly mentioned as such is Compiègne, where Wilfrid was consecrated bishop.⁴ Bede notes that Biscop once travelled simply to Francia but neglects to provide details.⁵ The evidence for travel is overwhelmingly ecclesiastical in nature, which may account for the dominance of Rome in the sources, and which poses a methodological problem. In addition, no native source provides details of a non-ecclesiastic's journeys. It is only Paul the Deacon's account that notes Cædwalla stayed at the court of Cunincpert, king of the Lombards, on his way to Rome. The principal questions concerning travel are why and how. Why did people undertake journeys and how did they operate in practice? The why is fairly well established: trade, pilgrimage, education, ecclesiastical and royal business.⁶ How is a more vexing issue.

At the outset it must be acknowledged that the primary material for this early period is scanty in the extreme. No journey undertaken by travellers in this period is ever described in detail; an occasional place name is the most that is ever mentioned. As such, previous studies tend to note these names and speak in general terms of where travellers may have gone, especially in their attempts to reach Rome. Recent studies of travel are largely hypothetical when they seek to reconstruct the individual routes. Pelteret, in *Anglo-Saxon England and the Continent*, when describing Wilfrid's and Biscop's journey to Rome, for example, notes that they left Lyon and could either have travelled south in order to avoid the Alps by sailing to Rome or, alternatively, headed eastward to cross the Alps by the Mont Cenis pass.⁷ Likewise, in *England and Rome in the Early Middle Ages* his tone is fundamentally speculative, comparing the merits of travelling by sea to Bordeaux to those of landing at *Quentovic* in an attempt to reach Italy.⁸ Matthews' *Road to Rome* focusses primarily on the mechanics of travel.

⁴ *HE* iii.28.

⁵ *HA* 5

⁶ Matthews, *Road*, pp. 12–17, 61–71; Pelteret, 'Travel', pp. 256–7.

⁷ Pelteret, 'Travel', p. 248.

⁸ Pelteret, 'Rome', pp. 18–21.

To that end, he has useful discussions on the road network, the timings of the journey and the possible routes that were available to travellers.⁹ However, where he did list each journey, routes and their practicalities were largely absent from the discussion, and when they breakthrough, such as Wilfrid's putative voyage around Spain after the murder of Aunemundus, they likewise conform to the speculative tone that Pelteret takes.¹⁰ Such is the nature of the evidence that neither Fouracre nor Wood, quite reasonably, attempt to deal with the issue of the mechanics of travel in their contributions to *Wilfrid: Abbot, Bishop, Saint*, rather focussing upon the political implications of the known interactions of their subject with people and places.¹¹

A significant trend when travel is spoken of is to analyse each journey in isolation. There is logic in such an approach, although it perhaps overlooks the regularity that the sources demonstrate about those who were making these journeys. Wilfrid and Biscop often appear as travellers in the narrative. Journeys were a crucial part of their lives and a defining feature of their achievements in the eyes of Bede and others. Direct contact with distant places was a rare privilege that in itself lent travellers—and above all travellers of high status who moved in the loftiest ecclesiastical circles—a certain mystique. For this reason, the way in which travel became regularised and familiar, as a way of enhancing reputation and authority, is worthy of detailed analysis, calling on the full range of the available sources. This is very much the approach taken by McCormick in *Origins of the European Economy*.¹² It allows for comparison, which then allows patterns to emerge, which in itself can confirm what is currently only hypothesis and potentially direct our attention to new areas. Moreover, by having a focus on travel in general, rather than specific journeys, seemingly less useful or pertinent

⁹ Matthews, *Road*, pp. 12–17.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* pp. 1–2, 39–40, 45–52.

¹¹ Fouracre, 'Continent', pp. 186–99; Wood, 'Journeys', pp. 200–11.

¹² McCormick, *Economy*, pp. 151–73.

information is more easily incorporated into the wider discussion, such as the abortive journey of Winfrith, the deposed bishop of Lichfield, or Berhtwold's hurried journey to Lyon and Rome to receive consecration as bishop before taking up the see of Canterbury.¹³ There are several precise points to focus upon. Firstly, one should ask how the first generation of English travellers knew where to go; is it appropriate to conceive simply of various local guides leading them over the course of their journey? Secondly, what does the evidence of accommodation and supplies suggest about the contacts that were developed over the course of the seventh century? Thirdly and finally, there is the complicated question of routes taken and what these routes may suggest about the connections that existed in the seventh century between the English, Frankish and Roman worlds. At the outset, though, it is worth briefly considering the sources that detail travel and the extent to which their information can be deemed credible.

Sources

The sources for this analysis are Stephen's *VW*, the anonymous *VC* and Bede's two works: the *HE* and the *HA*. In a sense, the incidental nature of the references to travel makes them straightforward to use. The basic details of movement and places visited do not drive the didactic purposes that underlie these texts. However, of these three authors the only one that can be said to have travelled in Francia and Italy is Stephen of Ripon, who may have travelled with Wilfrid on his third appeal to Rome.¹⁴ As such, the narration of only a single journey, which unfortunately is described in no more detail than any of the others, may be the product of personal experience. With that potential limitation in mind, it is necessary to consider the

¹³ *VW* 25; *HE* v.8.

¹⁴ *VW* 50.

various journeys that are recorded for this period and how the information might have been transmitted variously to Stephen, Bede and the anonymous author.

Starting with the *VW*, Stephen references Wilfrid's three journeys to Rome, as well as his long visit to Francia to receive consecration as bishop.¹⁵ He also notes the assault in Francia on Bishop Winfrith.¹⁶ This is perhaps the most problematic reference to travel. Stephen had constructed the account to demonstrate God's protection of Wilfrid, claiming *Dominus enim de manu inimicorum, quasi de manu Herodis, liberavit eum*.¹⁷ However, inventing an assault to claim God's protection for Wilfrid seems an unlikely thing for Stephen to have done and there is nothing implausible in the account. Furthermore, Winfrith had been the Mercian bishop.¹⁸ Wilfrid had close connections with the kingdom and had founded monasteries there, including Oundle, where he died.¹⁹ As such, it is reasonable to think that reliable information about a former bishop of Lichfield could have reached Stephen.

One can also be fairly content with Stephen's reliability when it comes to Wilfrid's travels. As mentioned, Stephen may well have been present with him as Wilfrid made his second appeal to Rome.²⁰ As to Wilfrid's first appeal and his original journey with Biscop, Stephen had access to the memories of both of Wilfrid's favoured communities of Ripon and Hexham.²¹ Tatberht, abbot of Ripon, and Acca, bishop of Hexham, had commissioned him to write the *Vita*.²² Moreover, Tatberht was the kinsman of Wilfrid, to whom he had told his life story.²³ Acca was Wilfrid's confessor and so presumably knowledgeable about his life too.²⁴ Clearly, Stephen

¹⁵ *VW* 3–6, 26–8, 33, 50, 55–7. Bede is more forthcoming on details of Wilfrid's movements concerning his episcopal consecration. *VW* 12; *cf.* *HE* iii.28.

¹⁶ *VW* 25

¹⁷ *Ibid.* 'But the Lord freed him from the hands of his enemies, as though from the hands of Herod.'

¹⁸ *HE* iii.6.

¹⁹ *VW* 48, 65; Foot, 'Empire', pp. 30–1.

²⁰ *VW* 50, 52–3.

²¹ Although Stephen's description of Aunemundus' martyrdom has caused concern. Wood, 'Journeys', p. 201.

²² *VW* Preface.

²³ *VW* 65.

²⁴ *VW* 56.

had access to men in whom Wilfrid had confided. While a lot of Stephen's information was presumably based only upon oral tradition, it was both a recent tradition and one that was based upon Wilfrid's own memories.

The account of his journeys may be tested against an alternative source: the *HE*, which, if not strictly an independent source, does provide additional evidence of Wilfrid's movement. Acca told him that Wilfrid had visited Willibrord on his last journey to Rome.²⁵ Bede also notes that Wilfrid was consecrated bishop at Compiègne.²⁶ In addition, when describing Wilfrid's first visit to Rome, Bede could potentially draw upon the memories of Biscop within his own community.²⁷ Wilfrid's companionship goes unmentioned in the *HA* but such a reference would have served no narrative purpose and might have risked diverting attention away from Biscop.²⁸ While Grocock and Wood have suggested the two accounts of Bede and Stephen are difficult to reconcile, this is hard to sustain.²⁹ Bede's account is far less detailed, most notably not mentioning the encounter with Aunemundus in Lyon.³⁰ However, both accounts agree on Biscop's eagerness to reach Rome.³¹ Concordance on this point does suggest the preservation of an accurate tradition in both works. Both authors had access to reliable traditions about Wilfrid.

With the *HA* and the *VC*, similar points may be made to those concerning Stephen. The *VC*'s utility lies in its account of Ceolfrith's attempted retirement to Rome.³² The author was clearly a member of the Wearmouth-Jarrow community and so had easy access to the memories of Ceolfrith.³³ He does also refer to Ceolfrith as *praepositus noster*³⁴ which suggests that he

²⁵ *HE* iii.13.

²⁶ *HE* iii.28.

²⁷ *HE* v.19; *VW* 3.

²⁸ *HA* 2.

²⁹ Grocock and Wood, ed., *Abbots*, p. 25, n. 16.

³⁰ *VW* 3.

³¹ *Ibid.*; *HA* 2.

³² It does mention Ceolfrith's and Biscop's earlier travels too, but only in passing. *VC* 22, 31–2, 34–7.

³³ Grocock and Wood, ed., *Abbot*, p. xiii.

³⁴ *VC* 1. 'our overseer.'

had known Ceolfrith as his own abbot. As such, he could have drawn upon his own memories to describe Ceolfrith's departure. Significantly the text also makes clear that he spoke to Ceolfrith's travelling companions. The author was informed about the miraculous smell and light from Ceolfrith's body by those that had been with him.³⁵ As a result, the report of the journey was based on first-hand accounts.

The *HA* lacks such an acknowledgement of personal interaction. There is mention of brothers returning—*partim mutata intentione qua Romam ire desiderant domum magis qua hunc sepultum nuntiarent reverti*³⁶—but it lacks the use of the first person that appears in the *VC*. This could be evidence that the *HA* is indeed later in date and Bede based his account of Ceolfrith's death upon that of the anonymous author.³⁷ Ultimately, whatever the precise relationship of the two texts, the account of Ceolfrith's journey conforms to a single tradition, which appears to go back to his fellow travellers.

By contrast, Bede provides far more detail about Biscop's travel to Rome than the anonymous author. Bede had been a member of Biscop's foundation since the age of seven. Consequently, he had memories that reached back to the early history of his monastery; he would certainly have known Biscop and his successors personally.³⁸ Given his age, it is unlikely that Bede could consistently and accurately draw upon his own recollections, but he would have had access to stories and traditions handed down within his monastery about events in the recent past. One can have confidence that Bede knew the personal histories of his abbots and so take his information concerning Biscop's journeys as reliable.

³⁵ *Ibid.* 40.

³⁶ *HA* 21. 'while some of them changed their minds and preferred to turn back for home where they could relate news of the burial, rather than wanting to go on to Rome.'

³⁷ Grocock and Wood, ed., *Abbots*, p. xxi.

³⁸ *HE* v.24.

This may be corroborated by the *HE*. Bede provides details about six journeys in his work, including Wilfrid's and Biscop's travels. However, Bede does reference seven other journeys, mostly to Rome. The journeys about which Bede provides information in the *HE* are:

1. Abbot Peter's death in the English Channel while travelling to Gaul³⁹
2. Wilfrid's and Biscop's arrival in Lyon on the way to Rome⁴⁰
3. Theodore's and Hadrian's progress to Kent, guided by Biscop⁴¹
4. the precentor John's journey to Kent and Northumbria, guided by Biscop⁴²
5. Berhtwold's consecration in Lyon⁴³
6. Wilfrid's visit to Willibrord while heading to Rome.⁴⁴

The seven journeys for which he only states the destination are:

1. Mellitus' arrival in Rome and participation in a synod⁴⁵
2. Mellitus' and Justus' flight to Gaul⁴⁶
3. Wigheard, seeking episcopal consecration in Rome⁴⁷
4. Offfor's visit to Rome to study⁴⁸
5. Cædwalla's retirement to and baptism in Rome⁴⁹
6. Coenred of Mercia's and Offa of Essex's retirement to Rome and subsequent tonsuring⁵⁰
7. Ine of Wessex's pilgrimage to Rome.⁵¹

³⁹ *HE* i.33.

⁴⁰ *HE* v.19.

⁴¹ *HE* iv.1.

⁴² *HE* iv.18.

⁴³ *HE* v.8.

⁴⁴ *HE* iii.13.

⁴⁵ *HE* ii.4.

⁴⁶ *HE* ii.5.

⁴⁷ *HE* iv.1.

⁴⁸ *HE* iv.23.

⁴⁹ *HE* v.7.

⁵⁰ *HE* v.19.

⁵¹ *HE* v.7.

What is immediately apparent is that there is a distinction between the regions that Bede can and cannot supply information for concerning travel. Hwiccian, Mercian, East Saxon and West Saxon journeys were evidently known to him, but their specific details were not.⁵² By contrast, it is only Kentish and Northumbrian journeys that receive greater detail (although not uniformly, as some of the Canterbury journeys demonstrate). This accords with what Bede suggests about the quality of his information. His preface implies that his greatest source of information outside of Northumbria was Albinus in Kent, with Nothhelm as intermediary, and within Northumbria that he had his own knowledge and the evidence *innumerorum testium*.⁵³ Theodore's and Hadrian's journey may belong to either Kentish or Northumbrian traditions, or both. A point unmentioned in the *HE* but found in the *HA*, is that Biscop acted as their guide.⁵⁴ Bede could have used his own memories or those of his community. Likewise, Albinus, who presumably had spent his life at the abbey of Ss Peter and Paul in Canterbury, having been educated by both Theodore and Hadrian, would have been well placed to supply both that information and that concerning Berhtwold.⁵⁵ The importance of this regional variation is that it supplies evidence of Bede interacting with the information in front of him. Kent and Northumbria could supply him with the details of journeys, while the other kingdoms either could not or did not. It demonstrates that Bede's information is not random and the pattern creates a degree of trust in it. Thus, Bede with the *HE*, as with the *HA*, worked with the evidence in front of him, which derived from people that can reasonably be expected to have known this information (including himself); his accounts are reliable. Overall, the theme common to all the sources is that the authors had access to the travellers themselves or those that knew them and so building an argument from incidental references in their works has potential.

⁵² Otffor was from Whitby, but Bede's narrative suggests he left Northumbria to study and never returned. *HE* iv.23.

⁵³ *HE* Preface. 'of innumerable witnesses.'

⁵⁴ *HE* iv.1; *HA* 3.

⁵⁵ *HE* Preface, v.20.

Knowing the Route

The question of how travellers knew where to go would appear to have a perfectly straightforward answer: guides were supplied by local rulers, who shuttled travellers from one territory to another. This is certainly Matthews' favoured approach to the problem, although he concedes that the evidence is slender.⁵⁶ Stephen records that having encountered Dagobert II and been offered the see of Strasbourg in 679, Wilfrid was supplied with a guide in the form of the bishop Deodatus.⁵⁷ Indeed, it is this evidence that serves as the basis of Matthews' interpretation and suggests his hypothesis is correct, but caution is necessary. The remit of Deodatus is not stated. A Deodatus of Toul appears in the witness list to the synod held in 680, suggesting that Deodatus was also travelling to Rome.⁵⁸ It is not clear whether he and Wilfrid deliberately sought out Perctarit, whose court they arrived at and who also supplied Wilfrid with guides to help him reach Rome.⁵⁹ It is possible that Deodatus could guide Wilfrid to Rome himself.

More problematically, no other reference to guides suggests relays taking travellers only through their local area. When Wilfrid left Aunemundus in Lyon, the bishop supplied him *cum ducibus et opibus*.⁶⁰ Wilfrid could not have reached Italy, let alone Rome, remaining within the territory of the see of Lyon. Either Stephen does not provide the full picture or Aunemundus' guides had a broader remit than hitherto suspected. That the latter is perhaps more likely finds support from the *HA*. Bede notes that Biscop *vel illo pergenti vel ibidem docenti pariter interpretes existere posset et ductor*.⁶¹ The crucial point is that Biscop was envisaged by Pope Vitalian as guiding Theodore and Hadrian from Rome to Kent itself; he was responsible for

⁵⁶ Matthews, *Road*, pp. 26–7.

⁵⁷ VW 28.

⁵⁸ Fouracre, 'Continent', p. 197.

⁵⁹ VW 28.

⁶⁰ VW 4. 'with guides and supplies.'

⁶¹ HA 3. 'could act equally as ... interpreter and guide.'

the entire journey, not simply part of it. By this point in time Biscop had made the journey from Britain to Rome twice and so might no longer have needed local knowledge.

This does still beg the question of how Biscop would have known where to go on his first journey. What is telling in this regard is that both Wilfrid and Biscop went to Canterbury before crossing to the Continent.⁶² Prior to their journey to Rome, the only recorded journeys that exist concern people from Kent. Three journeys to Francia are mentioned: Mellitus and Justus fleeing after Sæberht's and Æthelberht's deaths; Peter drowning while travelling to Gaul and Uscfrea and Yffi being sent to Dagobert I from the Kentish court by Æthelburh to protect them from Oswald and Eadbald.⁶³ Beyond these examples, travel was principally a matter of Canterbury ecclesiastics maintaining contact with Rome. To that end, Bede notes the return of Laurence and Peter to Rome *c.* 600 and the dispatch of the second party of missionaries under the leadership of Mellitus.⁶⁴ This is then followed up by occasional notices that show that people were leaving Kent to reach Rome:

1. Mellitus was present at a Roman synod in 610⁶⁵
2. Justus sent letters to Boniface V (as did a Kentish king, convincingly identified by Blair as an otherwise unknown Æthelwald)⁶⁶
3. the letter to Æthelburh from Boniface V implies that the information Boniface used to compose his letters to her and Edwin came from Kent⁶⁷
4. the *pallium* for Honorius of Canterbury was sent by Pope Honorius I at his request.⁶⁸

This perhaps goes some way to explaining why Eanflæd sent Wilfrid to Canterbury and why Biscop also went there. It was in Kent, perhaps principally in the cathedral in Canterbury, where

⁶² VW 3.

⁶³ HE i.33, i.5, ii.20.

⁶⁴ HE i.27, i.29.

⁶⁵ HE ii.4.

⁶⁶ HE ii.8; Blair 'Paulinus', pp. 7–8.

⁶⁷ HE ii.11.

⁶⁸ HE ii.18.

it was possible to find information concerning the route to Rome and so was a necessary starting point for the two Northumbrians. Biscop, consequently, might have received information to help him navigate and guide the party to Rome.

The importance of Canterbury for subsequent departures is difficult to determine. Biscop departed for Rome from Canterbury on his third journey from Britain to Rome, but as he was the abbot of the monastery of Ss Peter and Paul this is probably not significant.⁶⁹ By contrast, Offor, having studied at Canterbury, headed to Rome. He is the first known member of the house at Whitby to travel to Rome and so may well have needed Canterbury's knowledge of the route.⁷⁰ However, a visit to Canterbury was not necessary for Ceolfrith's second journey to Rome; he took ship in Northumbria and intended to sail directly to Francia.⁷¹ Wilfrid likewise appears to have avoided Canterbury on his first and second appeal to Rome.⁷² This might suggest that once knowledge of travelling to Rome was known to individual monastic houses, there was no need to travel to Kent to establish details of the journey at Canterbury. This in itself provides some corroboration for suggesting that Biscop's and Wilfrid's appearance in Canterbury as having something to do with collecting information for their journey. As such, even on his first journey, Biscop might have been able to guide his party to Rome.

Within this, it is worth considering the language used to describe the 'guides' in both the *VW* and the *HA* because it nuances the picture and suggests that these individuals were responsible for more than simply navigation. Dagobert *cum Deodato episcopo suo duce ad apostolicam sedem emisit*.⁷³ *Dux* is the word identifying Deodatus as Wilfrid's guide and the word is repeated when Perctarit sent Wilfrid on *cum ... ducibus*.⁷⁴ Gangulf supplied Ceolfrith's

⁶⁹ *HA* 4.

⁷⁰ *HE* iv.23.

⁷¹ *VC* 31.

⁷² *VW* 25, 48.

⁷³ *VW* 28. 'he sent him with bishop Deodatus as his guide to the apostolic seat.' Own translation.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.* 'with guides.'

companions who wished to continue to Rome with *duces*.⁷⁵ Biscop when guiding Theodore and Hadrian was their *ductor*.⁷⁶ Biscop is described in a similar light concerning his very first journey with Wilfrid. Wilfrid remained in Lyon, separated *ab eo austeræ mentis duce*.⁷⁷

That the role of these people needs to be reassessed is suggested by the high status of the identifiable individuals: Biscop, originally a thegn of Oswiu and later an abbot of a royal monastery, and Deodatus, a bishop. How plausible is it that a bishop would be attached to a traveller, even a fellow bishop, simply to show that individual where to go? Indeed, the status of Biscop and Deodatus might provide an alternative explanation to interpreting the title *dux* in this context. Rather than meaning guide, it perhaps should be taken simply as the leader of the party. Both Biscop and Deodatus were closely linked to a king. Deodatus was appointed by Dagobert, while Biscop was a thegn of Oswald and was also selected by Eorcenberht of Kent to lead Wilfrid to Rome.⁷⁸ Likewise, Stephen notes that Aunemundus and Perctarit appointed the guides to help Wilfrid get to Rome.⁷⁹ It might suggest that *duces* were vouched for by a ruler, perhaps given letters of commendation, and so were able to lead their party and protect them on the onward journey. That this may have been the case is hinted at in the account of Ceolfrith at the court of King Chilperic II. Ceolfrith did not receive a guide from Chilperic, but the king *epistolas illi per omnes regni sui provincias dedit, ut in pace susciperetur ubique*.⁸⁰ With Chilperic's letters, Ceolfrith was empowered to lead his party through Chilperic's realm. This does beg the question of what Ceolfrith intended as he set out. The *VC* simply notes that Ceolfrith procured all that was necessary for the journey.⁸¹ Whether that included commendatory letters is not clear. Either way, it gives a different perspective on how travelling

⁷⁵ *VC* 38.

⁷⁶ *HA* 3. 'guide.'

⁷⁷ *VW* 3. 'from his stern guide.'

⁷⁸ *VW* 3, 28; *HA* 1.

⁷⁹ *VW* 4, 28.

⁸⁰ *VC* 32. 'gave him letters of transit for all the provinces of his kingdom, so that he should be received in peace everywhere.'

⁸¹ *VC* 22.

parties were guided upon their journey. Furthermore, Hadrian and Theodore travelled with commendatory letters from Pope Vitalian.⁸² This also accords with the evidence of Gregory's mission, in which Gregory gave Augustine and Mellitus letters introducing and vouching for them. In this regard, it is interesting that *duces* only appear for Ceolfrith's followers once Ceolfrith had died.⁸³ Ceolfrith himself may have been fulfilling that role.

Turning to the first appeal of Wilfrid and Deodatus' leadership, this raises the question of why Wilfrid needed Deodatus and the *duces* that Perctarit provided. He was known to Dagobert and apparently made it through Frisia on his own, once he secured Aldgisl's support.⁸⁴ However, Wilfrid had fled Northumbria and according to Stephen was being hunted by his enemies, including the powerful Neustrian *maior domus* Ebroin.⁸⁵ Perhaps both Dagobert and Perctarit felt that Wilfrid would have been unsafe, even with their letters of commendation, and so appointed someone else to act as his *dux* on the journey. Certainly, Dagobert's realm was in an unsettled state; he himself was assassinated shortly after Wilfrid's visit and Ebroin had supporters in his kingdom, who had aided him in setting up Clovis in opposition to Theuderic III.⁸⁶ Might those supporters have threatened Wilfrid if he were travelling unaccompanied? Given the cloud under which Wilfrid left Northumbria and the assault on Bishop Winfrith, one wonders how much of a risk Wilfrid took in travelling to appeal his case to Rome. This suggests that the decision of senior ecclesiastics to travel personally involved urgency or great need. It is worth bearing in mind that Wilfrid also sent followers with written appeals to the popes Benedict and Sergius.⁸⁷ His personal appeals seem to have followed significant confrontations with the Northumbrian king and archbishop of Canterbury.⁸⁸

⁸² *HE* iv.1.

⁸³ *VC* 38.

⁸⁴ *VW* 26, 28.

⁸⁵ *VW* 27–8.

⁸⁶ Wood, *Kingdoms*, p. 233.

⁸⁷ *VW* 51.

⁸⁸ *VW* 24, 46.

Wilfrid's example perhaps suggests that patronage and protection were significant elements in the role of the *dux* in a travelling party.

Discerning how travellers knew where to go is therefore something of a contentious question. The individuals noted as *duces* could well have guided their parties but those noted as such in the eighth-century Northumbrian material do not appear to have been concerned with guidance through local areas. Deodatus guided Wilfrid to Italy; Aunemundus supplied people to get Wilfrid to Rome. Whether guides in local regions were also used is difficult to say; it is a logical assumption but such figures do not break into the source material. What should be stressed about those as *duces* is that they appear primarily to be those who could establish contact with regional and national leaders. They were high status individuals, apparently connected with a powerful figure in their native region. These *duces* were not only well-placed socially to lead a travelling party but the act of travelling allowed them to create networks of contact with those they encountered. However, in this regard the role of Canterbury as a repository of knowledge is interesting. It points to the importance of personal knowledge and communal memory of travel within ecclesiastical houses and which spread as individuals from other houses sought advice and consequently cultivated that knowledge in their own church.

Accommodation and Supplies

The links that were cultivated on journeys can be tested through accommodation and supplies, which also demonstrate how travellers survived. Matthews briefly goes into these issues, noting that in the eighth century Boniface and Willibrord both used tents and that Willibald was forced to beg in the Holy Land.⁸⁹ Such accounts indicate what could have been done, but the seventh

⁸⁹ Matthews, *Road*, pp. 25–6.

century source material does not preserve such evidence and more intriguingly allows for the analysis of more formalised arrangements.

The account of Theodore's and Hadrian's journey is the most straightforward to assess in this regard. Bede's narrative reads as follows:

Qui cum pariter per mare ad Massiliam, ac deinde per terram Arhelas pervenissent et tradidissent Iohanni archiepiscopo civitatis illius scripta commendaticia Vitaliani pontificis, retenti sunt ab eo, quousque Ebrinus maior domus regiae copiam pergendi quoquo vellent tribuit eis. Qua accepta Theodorus profectus est ad Agilbertum Parisiorum episcopum ... et ab eo benigne susceptus et multo tempore habitus est; Hadrianus perrexit primum ad Emme Senonum et postea ad Faronem Meldorum episcopos, et bene sub eis diutius fuit: coegerat enim eos imminens hiems ut ubicumque potuissent quieti manerent.⁹⁰

'They came together by sea to Marseilles and then by land to Arles and handed to John, the archbishop of that town, the commendatory letters of Pope Vitalian. They were kept back by John until Ebroin, the king's mayor of the palace, gave them leave to go where they pleased. Thereupon Theodore went to Agilbert, the bishop of Paris ... He was kindly received and entertained by the bishop for a long period. Hadrian went first to Emme, bishop of Sens, and then to Faro, bishop of Meaux, and lived comfortably with them for a long time; for the approach of winter compelled them to stay quietly wherever they could.'

The passage is explicit in demonstrating the importance of episcopal households as Hadrian and Theodore made their way to Kent. It is evident that with the bishops of Paris, Sens and Meaux the travellers were in some way incorporated into the bishops' communities for the winter. Precisely what lies behind the interaction between Hadrian and Theodore and John of Arles is less clear. *Retenti sunt* could suggest that 'they were guarded' or perhaps even 'they were protected' within the umbrella definition of being held back. It might suggest a quite personal interaction that implies they lived with John until he had informed and received instructions from Ebroin about them. However, this is not explicit, in contrast to the above interaction. Suffice it to say that Bede demonstrates that travellers could attach themselves to episcopal households to find support.

The description of Hadrian's movements is particularly intriguing in this regard. Unlike Theodore, who only stayed with the bishop of Paris, he moved from the bishop of Sens to the

⁹⁰ *HE* iv.1.

bishop of Meaux. There is no explanation for the move and a reasonable hypothesis would be that it had something to do with the paranoia of Ebroin that ultimately prevented Hadrian from departing for Kent with Theodore.⁹¹ However, an alternative explanation might lie in the curious statement that Theodore was to give Hadrian a place *in quo cum suis apte degere potuisset*.⁹² The followers referenced here are apparently specifically Hadrian's, rather than Theodore's (perhaps monks from his former monastery). Assuming they remained with Hadrian rather than some staying with Theodore, perhaps the move had something to do with resources, which would have been at a premium in the winter months. Certainly, Bede's note that winter enforced their stay with the bishops in and around Paris supports such an interpretation and the note is juxtaposed with the details of Hadrian's movements. It might be a hint as to the strain that a travelling party could place upon even episcopal resources.

The necessary question at this juncture is how representative such an account, even a very brief and incomplete one, can be. Theodore and Hadrian were senior ecclesiastics and had papal letters of commendation and were guided by a high-status Northumbrian; it is not surprising that the Frankish Church would accommodate them, even through the winter. Within the *HE* the journey of John the precentor presents the travel of a less senior ecclesiastic, albeit one still with a papal mission and once again in the company of Biscop.⁹³ John received the hospitality of St Martin's monastery in Tours and was asked by the community to visit on his return journey.⁹⁴

The *VC* is not explicit about whether Ceolfrith received hospitality on his journey, but the hints that exist allow for the incorporation of the secular world into the discussion. The statement *illis in partibus magnifice ab universis, maxime ab ipso rege Hilperico honoratus*

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid. 'a suitable place to live with his followers.'

⁹³ *HE* iv.18.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

*est*⁹⁵ implies interaction with the king and ecclesiastical and secular elites, who may have housed him. This becomes more secure with the description of Ceolfrith's reception by Gangulf. Gangulf appears to have wanted to host Ceolfrith: *quippe qui ipsum et in via prius inveniens illo venire et benigne suscipi, etiam si ipse non adesset*.⁹⁶ Moreover, Ceolfrith was welcome to stay in the region if he were unable to continue his journey and be looked after until his death *ad loca sanctorum martyrum*.⁹⁷ In other words, these two extracts suggest that an ecclesiastical centre was available to Ceolfrith through the patronage of a local lord.

There are two examples of secular travel that may be added to these. The first is the presence of Cædwalla at the court of Cunincpert, king of the Lombards. Cædwalla stayed with him on his way to Rome seeking baptism.⁹⁸ There is also the first journey of Wilfrid and Biscop. Their precise status is unclear; neither was tonsured on setting out.⁹⁹ That being said, Wilfrid had affiliated himself with a monastic community and Bede's narrative in the *HA* suggests Biscop had renounced the world, a point replicated in Bede's homily on Biscop.¹⁰⁰ As such, they perhaps stood on the threshold of the ecclesiastical world and while they may have had a tentative and junior position within the Church, both were of noble birth.¹⁰¹ Consequently, they were not poor pilgrims of little significance. Wilfrid at least managed to attach himself to the bishop of Lyon's house.¹⁰² What Biscop did is unclear. The implication of Stephen's account is that Biscop left Wilfrid, the two of them having arrived in Lyon. The fourth chapter of the *VW*, describing Wilfrid's stay in Lyon, expands upon the ending of the third chapter, which notes that he, unlike his companion, stayed in Lyon a while.¹⁰³ Bede's recasting of the narrative

⁹⁵ *VC* 32. 'he was magnificently honoured in those regions by everyone, and especially by King Chilperic himself.'

⁹⁶ *VC* 35. 'who had met him earlier on the road and commanded him to come there and receive a warm welcome, even if he was not there in person.'

⁹⁷ *Ibid.* 'at the place of the holy martyrs.'

⁹⁸ *HL* vi.15.

⁹⁹ *HA* 2; *VW* 2–3, 6.

¹⁰⁰ *VW* 2; *HA* 1; *Homily* I. 13 7.

¹⁰¹ *HA* 1; *VW* 2.

¹⁰² *VW* 4.

¹⁰³ *VW* 3–4.

has Aunemundus keep Wilfrid back, suggesting that both Wilfrid and Biscop had interacted with the archbishop.¹⁰⁴ Wilfrid clearly received episcopal hospitality in Lyon; Biscop may have done so too.

It is not known what Biscop did for support in Rome and unclear what Wilfrid did, although he may have received support from Boniface, the archdeacon who taught him. Stephen's description of Boniface's teaching implies a close relationship: *quasi proprio filio suo*.¹⁰⁵ Furthermore, Boniface presented Wilfrid to the pope.¹⁰⁶ Consequently, Boniface appears as Wilfrid's patron in Rome and so perhaps might have taken responsibility for housing him. There is, therefore, a consistent pattern within the source material that shows that ecclesiastical accommodation was available. Both Ceolfrith, in the patronage of Gangulf, and Cædwalla at Cunincpert's court also show that lay potentates could become involved. How representative this is must be questioned given that even if they were not all senior ecclesiastics, all travellers for whom this information survives were of high status.

The question of poorer or lower status travellers is more difficult to judge. There were *xenodochia*, where such travellers could have stayed. *Xenodochia* certainly existed in Autun and Lyon, which were probably on the *via rectissima* (see below, pp. 118–31) for travellers to Rome. However, they are surprisingly absent in the English source material.¹⁰⁷ An alternative explanation is provided by Ceolfrith's journey and, to an extent, Theodore's and Hadrian's. In the latter case, Hadrian's followers joined him in receiving the hospitality of the bishops of Sens and Meaux.¹⁰⁸ It suggests that he had responsibility for those who accompanied him on his journey. Ceolfrith's journey corroborates the impression and is more straightforward than Hadrian's companions, who may have been his monks, to whom Hadrian had a duty of care

¹⁰⁴ *HE* v.19.

¹⁰⁵ *VW* 5. 'as though he were his own son.'

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid*.

¹⁰⁷ Beauhard, '*xenodochium*', pp. 396–407; Valenzani, 'Foreigners', p. 76.

¹⁰⁸ *HE* iv.1.

anyway. The anonymous author notes, when discussing supplies for the journey, *Nam et ipse suis praeceperat ministris ut si quem de comitantibus se alimentum non habere comperissent, confestim ei vel cibum vel pretium darent.*¹⁰⁹ Ceolfrith, as the leader of his travelling party, took responsibility for all members in it. Poorer travellers would probably attach themselves to wealthier travellers and receive their protection and patronage on the journey, possibly benefiting from the hospitality the wealthier travellers received.

The above quote about poorer travellers also gives a hint about how supplies were handled on the road. Ceolfrith was careful to ensure that he had money that could be used to purchase more food as needed by his party. However, there is a sense that this is a contingency. The *VC* also noted that *sufficienter ea quae tanto itineri essent necessaria procuravit.*¹¹⁰ Interpreting *sufficienter* is important because it could mean that supplies were for the journey as a whole, rather than one stage until they could be replenished. Perhaps the most straightforward explanation is that Ceolfrith had to plan ahead, presuming that they might be unable to find hospitality and secure supplies *en route*. However, there could be an expectation that accommodation and supplies could go hand in hand is suggested by the events after Ceolfrith's death and Wilfrid's stay at Lyon. Gangulf gave supplies to those heading to Rome and returning to Northumbria.¹¹¹ Aunemundus gave Wilfrid supplies (along with guides) when he departed for Rome.¹¹² The prolonged stay of both Wilfrid and Ceolfrith's followers in their respective regions presumably meant any supplies they had with them had either been consumed or spoilt. These examples demonstrate that hospitality may have extended beyond accommodation to supplies as well. Overall, the simplest explanation of the issue of supplies is that provided by the *VC* that travellers could expect the munificence of those they encountered on their journey

¹⁰⁹ *VC* 34. 'For he himself had instructed his servants that if they found that any of his travelling companions had no food, they were immediately to give him some food or money for it.'

¹¹⁰ *VC* 22. 'he secured enough provisions needed for such a great journey.'

¹¹¹ *VC* 38.

¹¹² *VW* 4.

but brought their own supplies to safeguard themselves, whilst ensuring that they had the means to obtain more on the road.

Turning to questions of receiving support and forming communication networks and their perpetuation, Cædwalla's arrival at Cunincpert's court is interesting in light of Cædwalla's connections to Wilfrid.¹¹³ Wilfrid had received hospitality from Cunincpert's father, Perctarit.¹¹⁴ Wilfrid may have facilitated an introduction that gave Cædwalla access to the Lombard court. Further evidence of the importance of personal connections comes from the fact that Wilfrid stayed with Willibrord on his second appeal to Rome. Willibrord had been a monk at Ripon and Wilfrid maintained contact with his mission, consecrating Swithberht as bishop for them.¹¹⁵ The travel of John the precentor is also pertinent. Bede observes: *Nam et benigno ecclesiae illius hospitio, cum Britanniam iret, exceptus est rogatusque multum a fratribus, ut Romam revertens illo itinere veniret atque ad eam diverteret ecclesiam.*¹¹⁶ The links he forged on his first visit meant that he could rely upon St Martin's hospitality on the return journey. It also begs the question whether Biscop had prior links to St Martin's, which explain why he took John there in the first place.¹¹⁷ The links developed on his journeys may also explain Biscop's role in Theodore's and Hadrian's journeys.¹¹⁸ The intriguing statement that Biscop had known Cenwealh before his third journey to Rome from Britain creates the possibility that he knew Agilbert, which may explain why Theodore ended up in Paris.¹¹⁹ In the *HE* Bede also notes that Hadrian *maiolem huius itineris peragendi notitiam haberet.*¹²⁰ His prior experience and perhaps the links he had made were an advantage for this journey to

¹¹³ *VW* 42; *HE* iv.16; Sharpe, 'Cædwalla', pp. 195–219.

¹¹⁴ *VW* 28.

¹¹⁵ *HE* v.11.

¹¹⁶ *HE* iv.18. 'He had been hospitably entertained by the church in that place on his way to Britain and had been earnestly asked by the brothers to take that road on his return to Britain and to stay at the same church.'

¹¹⁷ Alternatively, John had to go there because of his papal mission regarding the Monophysite heresy.

¹¹⁸ *HA* 3.

¹¹⁹ *HA* 4.

¹²⁰ *HE* iv.1. 'he was therefore better acquainted with the road.'

Britain. The most explicit evidence comes from Biscop's third journey from Britain to Rome. Bede notes that Biscop had friends in Vienne, with whom he had left purchases he had made.¹²¹ Consequently, the evidence of accommodation also suggests the importance of networks of contact that were built up by individuals on their journeys. They provided points of security on journeys and could be transferred from individuals and across generations.

Thus, the evidence as it stands for accommodation and supplies in this period suggests that ecclesiastical and lordly hospitality was available to high-status travellers, of which use was made. Poorer travellers may have connected themselves to high-status travellers, presumably to benefit from their patronage. The need to find accommodation and supplies gave travellers the opportunity to develop relations with senior ecclesiastical and noble figures in the regions they travelled through, perpetuating links with particular centres.

Via Rectissima

With such evidence in mind, determining a sense of the routes that were taken is important in opening the nature of international communication and interaction up for analysis. Searching for hints as to where travellers went produces some intriguing results. As an important corollary, it is necessary to consider the importance of ships and the problem of the Alps when individuals were travelling to Rome.¹²² Overall, it is possible to get a sense of where people went and regional biases in their travels.

People entered and left Britain at a wide variety of points. Ceolfrith clearly left from Northumbria, rather than Kent, while Wilfrid may have done likewise for his appeals to

¹²¹ *HA* 4.

¹²² As to the road network, there is nothing to add to Matthew's comments that there are few firm facts but there are no complaints about the state of roads and medieval authors could distinguish different types of Roman roads, implying they remained a significant feature in the landscape. Matthews, *Road*, pp. 19–20.

Rome.¹²³ Wilfrid may also have sailed directly to Northumbria after his first appeal, given that Stephen notes that *longa spatia terrarum peragrans, Dei adiutorio in navigio maris magnitudinem superans, illaesus cum omnibus evasit ad regionem propriam*.¹²⁴ By contrast on his first journey with Biscop, Wilfrid departed from Kent, while he arrived at Sandwich after his episcopal consecration.¹²⁵ Theodore and Biscop arrived in Kent from Rome in 669 and while Hadrian's point of entry is not mentioned, it is likely to have been the same.¹²⁶ It is also reasonable to believe that when Biscop brought John the precentor with him, entry was via Kent. While Bede focussed upon his teachings as a musician at Wearmouth-Jarrow, his legatine function was to discuss the Monophysite heresy in the east, of which Theodore was highly cognizant.¹²⁷ As such, it would be surprising if he had not sought out Theodore immediately, and only once he had spoken to him proceeded to Northumbria. Wood has suggested *Hamwic* in Wessex should be regarded as one of the key points of entry into Britain, given that both Biscop and Wilfrid sought out Cenwealh upon returning from Rome.¹²⁸ It is a compelling suggestion, but unfortunately lacks positive evidence and it is perhaps significant that the West Saxon Boniface departed to join Willibrord's mission via London.¹²⁹ The *HA* and the *VW* give no details as to how Biscop and Wilfrid came to Wessex. It is tempting to assume that they would have travelled via Kent and the shortest sea-crossing, with this entry point being the norm for travellers.¹³⁰ However, as the Northumbrian arrivals and departures show, people were willing to bypass Kent, significantly eschewing the shortest sea-route to the Continent and showing a willingness to cover longer distances by ship.¹³¹

¹²³ *VC* 31; *VW* 25–6, 50.

¹²⁴ *VW* 34. 'having traversed many lands, and with the help of God having passed over a great tract of sea by ship, he reached his own land unharmed, together with all his companions.'

¹²⁵ *VW* 3, 13.

¹²⁶ *HE* iv.1.

¹²⁷ *HE* iv.18; *HA* 6; Lapidge and Bischoff, *Theodore*, p. 80.

¹²⁸ Wood, 'Journeys', pp. 201–2.

¹²⁹ *VBaW* 4–5.

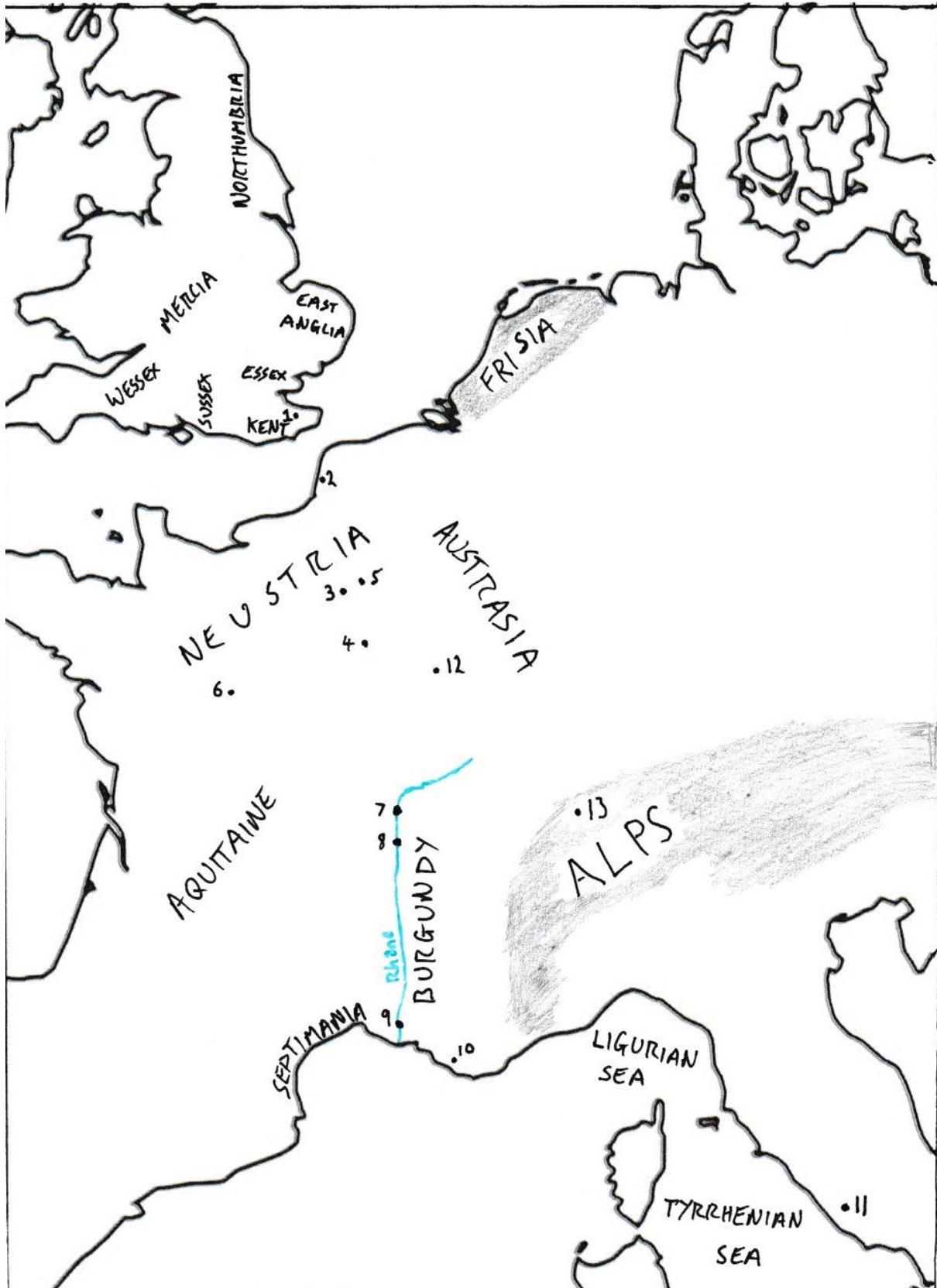
¹³⁰ Pelteret, 'Rome', pp. 18–19.

¹³¹ *VC* 32; *VW* 56; *HE* iv.4.

The routes taken to Rome also suggest that there were a variety of options available to travellers. The route that Ceolfrith took that included Langres is unlikely to have been the same that Wilfrid and Hadrian took through Meaux (with Theodore going to Paris at this stage of their journey). To go to Meaux and then to Langres would mean heading south, before south-east; an illogical action to take, especially for Ceolfrith who was anxious to reach Rome before his death. Likewise, John the precentor travelled via Tours. He may have desired to visit St Martin's grave, being abbot of St Martin's in Rome. Equally, his papal mission concerning the monophysite heresy might have included the Frankish bishops as well; certainly, he seems to have informed the monks of the abbey of St Martin of his task.¹³² What is curious is the description of the request of the monks for him to visit them upon his return. Bede used the word *diverteret*. It does mean visit, as Colgrave and Mynors translate it, but literally means to divert or turn away. The hint, whether it comes from the monks of Tours or simply from Bede, is that Tours was not on the direct road to Rome. Frisia was also accessible to travellers. Wilfrid certainly passed through it twice when appealing to Rome, although whether he ever returned to Britain through it is never mentioned.¹³³

¹³² *HE* iv.18.

¹³³ *VW* 26, 34, 56; *HE* iii.13.



Map of the Anglo-Saxon and Frankish kingdoms, with places mentioned in the context of travel.
 1) Canterbury; 2) Quentovic; 3) Paris; 4) Sens; 5) Meaux; 6) Tours; 7) Lyon; 8) Vienne; 9) Arles;
 10) Marseilles; 11) Rome; 12) Langres; 13) Great St Bernard Pass.
 (Outline taken from freeworldmaps.net)

However, something might be said of the quickest route. Stephen, in accounting for the assault on Winfrith of Lichfield, noted: *Inimici vero praesulis nostri malorum suorum memores, putantes in austrum ad Qwoentawic, navigantem ea via rectissima ad sedem apostolicam pergentem, praemiserunt nuntios suos cum muneribus ad Theodericum ... et ad Eadefyrwine.*¹³⁴ Quentovic therefore stood at the head of the most direct route to Rome. Moreover, Wilfrid's enemies expected him to take that route, which implies that it was quite generally known and commonly travelled. The only other mention of Quentovic appears in the description of Theodore's and Hadrian's journey. On having set out from Rome, they reached Francia by sea and travelled along the coast to Arles. They then appear in northern Francia, with Theodore at Paris and Hadrian at Sens and then Meaux. Arles stands close to the mouth of the Rhône and serves as an entrance to the Rhône valley. This valley was evidently significant to travel between Rome and Britain in this period; it can fill in the undocumented gap in their journey.¹³⁵ Wilfrid and Biscop visited Lyon; travelling north from Arles would naturally bring a person there, while Berhtwold, archbishop of Canterbury, was consecrated at Lyon.¹³⁶ The Rhône valley also appears in the *HA*; Biscop left purchases with friends in Vienne, which lies a little to the south of Lyon.¹³⁷ Theodore's journey admittedly took a year to complete. However, this is not a powerful argument against the quickest route to Britain being a sea-journey from Rome to Marseilles, followed by a journey up the Rhône valley before heading north-west towards the region around Paris and beyond that Quentovic and, of course, vice versa for Britain to Rome. Theodore and Hadrian were hindered for an unspecified amount of time by Ebroin in Arles; winter then forced them to stay put and Theodore fell ill before

¹³⁴ *VW* 25. 'But the enemies of our prelate, mindful of their misdeeds, believed that he would be sailing south to [Quentovic] and making his way by the most direct route to the Holy See and they sent ahead their messengers with bribes to Theodoric ... and to Ebroin.'

¹³⁵ For the importance of the Rhône valley: McCormick, *Economy*, pp. 77–82.

¹³⁶ *VW* 3; *HE* v.8.

¹³⁷ *HA* 4.

embarking his ship at Quentovic.¹³⁸ Briefly considering the role of Canterbury in guiding early travellers, such a direct route can plausibly be reconstructed from Gregory's letters for Augustine, albeit with a large detour to Tours.¹³⁹

This putative route has two important consequences. Firstly, English travellers seeking to get to Rome quickly in the seventh century did not cross the Alps and secondly, in connection with the former point, Rome was reached by sea.¹⁴⁰ As regards Alpine travel, there is only one explicit reference. It occurs on Wilfrid's first appeal to Rome: *montana transcendens, in regionem Francorum pervenit*.¹⁴¹ While this describes his return, it presumably also applies to his outward route too because he returned over the mountains hoping to reach the lands of Dagobert, from which he had departed to get to Italy.¹⁴² His more easterly route would have allowed him to approach the Alps from the north and might suggest he took the Great St Bernard Pass. This same route might also describe his outward journey on his second appeal, when he went through Frisia again.¹⁴³ Ceolfrith might also have intended to cross the Alps at the Great St Bernard Pass; Langres would be an obvious place to pass through for such a route. However, it is also possible to head to Lyon from Langres. The point to stress is that the one journey that demonstrably incorporated a crossing of the Alps was the journey where Stephen explicitly noted that Wilfrid did not take the direct route from Quentovic.¹⁴⁴

The alternative, sea travel, is as well, if not better, attested for this period as crossing the Alps. There is the already mentioned example of Theodore and Hadrian arriving with Biscop in Marseilles.¹⁴⁵ Furthermore, Biscop's earlier career included a period at the monastery on

¹³⁸ *HE* iv.1.

¹³⁹ Wood, 'Mission', p. 6.

¹⁴⁰ For discussion of the vitality of the Mediterranean economy and maritime movement: Horden and Purcell, *Sea*, pp. 153–72. For a general discussion of the practicalities and realities of sea travel: McCormick, *Economy*, pp. 402–30.

¹⁴¹ *VW* 33. '[crossing the mountains], he came to the land of the Franks.'

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

¹⁴³ *HE* iii.33.

¹⁴⁴ *VW* 25.

¹⁴⁵ *HE* i.1.

Lérins. It is unclear whether Biscop knew of the monastery having previously sailed past it on the way to Rome or whether it was mentioned by someone in Rome.¹⁴⁶ The important point is that he took a merchant ship to Rome, which demonstrates both his willingness to travel by sea and the fact that one could move by sea between Frankish territory and Rome.¹⁴⁷ This is then underscored by earlier journeys of the missionaries, who probably landed in Marseilles and proceeded north, having visited Lérins.¹⁴⁸ In addition, Romanus, bishop of Rochester, drowned in the Italian Sea while on a mission to Pope Honorius.¹⁴⁹ There was clearly a tradition for sailing from Francia to Rome, which would account for the importance of the Rhône valley for English travellers at this time. Furthermore, this would accord with the willingness shown by Wilfrid and Ceolfrith to sail from Northumbria to the Continent; there was no obvious fear of moving by sea.

This may all be underscored by analysing Bede's intriguing statement concerning Berhtwold's consecration at Lyon and the reference to him in the *LP*. Bede notes that on 29 June Berhtwold was consecrated in Lyon and was in Canterbury on 31 August for his enthronement.¹⁵⁰ He must have headed to Rome after his consecration in order to collect his *pallium*. The *LP* notes that Sergius I ordained Berhtwold archbishop of Britain.¹⁵¹ This might contradict Bede's account but only three bishops are named: Berhtwold, Damian of Ravenna and Clement (*i.e.* Willibrord) of Frisia. It then mentions another 97 bishops consecrated by Sergius.¹⁵² The three named bishops all received the *pallium* and as such the distinction that is presumably being drawn concerns the status of the bishops. It is, therefore, reasonable to suggest that Berhtwold arrived in Rome already consecrated a bishop but was specifically

¹⁴⁶ *HA* 2.

¹⁴⁷ *HA* 3.

¹⁴⁸ *GPRE* I vi.50, vi.54.

¹⁴⁹ *HE* ii.20. Bede's Italian Sea may be either the Ligurian Sea or the Tyrrhenian Sea.

¹⁵⁰ *HE* v.8.

¹⁵¹ *LP* 86.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*

ordained archbishop of Britain by the pope, through the act of granting him his *pallium*.¹⁵³ He cannot have headed to Rome before Lyon; Sergius would not have given a *pallium* to a bishop-elect.

Assuming Berhtwold did not travel on the days of either his consecration or enthronement and spent one day in Rome, Bede provides 61 days (30 June to 30 August inclusive, minus one day in Rome) for him to get from Lyon to Rome and thence to Canterbury. This provides an opportunity to test routes that Berhtwold could have used. The ORBIS Geospatial Model of the Roman World calculates the time for different routes, also allowing the testing of different methods of transport.¹⁵⁴ Naturally, there are flaws using such a system. Firstly, it is built for classical models; consequently, how well it maps onto a medieval journey must be queried. Determining the continued presence of Roman roads in the landscape is difficult. McCormick strikes a useful balance between the evidence for routes changing in the medieval period and Roman roads being refurbished.¹⁵⁵ Secondly, the model limits which routes can be checked. It is not possible to select Canterbury; London must be chosen instead, but it is possible to manually correct this error. Canterbury to London is approximately 100 kilometres. ORBIS provides an estimate for how far any mode of transport could go in a day (30 kilometres walking and 56 on horseback for example). Consequently, the approximate number of days required for such a journey can be extrapolated from the final result. Quentovic, unsurprisingly, is also not on the map; the nearest port is Boulogne. A similar correction can be made. Quentovic is approximately 30 kilometres to the south of Boulogne. It is also necessary to recognize that the full road network is not reproduced, simply the main routes and rivers. Thirdly, it provides an average model, which would be unlikely to accord with the experiences of any single traveller, most of whom would have made a quicker or slower journey.

¹⁵³ Brooks, *Canterbury*, pp. 77–8.

¹⁵⁴ ORBIS.

¹⁵⁵ McCormick, *Economy*, p. 395.

Nevertheless, despite these flaws, it provides a useful gauge as to what might have been possible for Berhtwold.

The means by which Berhtwold made his journey is not referenced, however, it seems likely that he travelled on foot (which ORBIS takes to mean he covered 30 kilometres a day) and the evidence suggests that this was the norm. Wilfrid, on his second appeal when he must have been approaching 70 and had been a bishop for forty years, travelled to Rome on foot.¹⁵⁶ He did likewise on his return and only when taken ill did he ride a horse before ultimately being carried on a litter.¹⁵⁷ During his first journey with Biscop, Wilfrid is described as *pedibus velox*.¹⁵⁸ While the description has poetic overtones, there is no reason to reject the implication that Wilfrid and Biscop walked to Lyon. Both Bede and the anonymous author describe Ceolfrith as getting on a horse, having crossed the Wear.¹⁵⁹ However, the *VC* notes that Ceolfrith left Wearmouth on 4 June and boarded his ship at the Humber on 4 July. Even assuming difficult terrain and then a delay in boarding the ship, a month is a remarkable length of time and suggests that Ceolfrith was not using the horse for speed. This receives support from a description by the anonymous author that Ceolfrith kept on celebrating the Eucharist daily: *etiam cum prae nimietate languoris equitare non valens caballario ferretur in grabato*.¹⁶⁰ This is, of course, not definitive, but two points are worth stressing. Firstly, as it stands the evidence only allows for travel on horseback when a traveller was sick and unable to walk. Secondly, travel on horseback does not necessarily equate to faster travel over longer distances.

Whether Berhtwold made use of the river networks is unclear and so it is worth providing assessments of both. There is only limited reference to river travel. One is Ceolfrith crossing

¹⁵⁶ *VW* 50.

¹⁵⁷ *VW* 56.

¹⁵⁸ *VW* 3. 'swift of foot.'

¹⁵⁹ *HA* 17; *VC* 27.

¹⁶⁰ *VC* 33. 'even when he was so utterly weak that he could not ride and was borne along on a horse-drawn litter.'

the Wear by boat as he began his journey.¹⁶¹ This is hardly commanding evidence but does show that there was some English knowledge of small river craft. Firmer evidence of riverine travel comes from a Frankish source, the AA. The body of Aunemundus was returned to Lyon using the river systems of Francia.¹⁶² River travel clearly was a reality in the seventh and early-eighth centuries and as such, it is worth incorporating it into calculations of travel times.¹⁶³

It is clear from ORBIS that Berhtwold, given the time parameters Bede provides, cannot have crossed the Alps from Lyon to Rome. Such a journey would have taken 40¹⁶⁴ days. Even if he travelled down the Rhône valley and took the coastal road, this would still have taken 35¹⁶⁵ days. He could not have got back to Lyon within 62 days, let alone Canterbury. Naturally, he could have arrived in Rome by sea and then returned to Britain by the shortest route. This latter part of the journey crosses the Alps by the Great St Bernard pass before running north-west to Boulogne and would have lasted 64 days; thus, it cannot have been Berhtwold's route.¹⁶⁶

Assuming he walked, ORBIS calculates that the journey from Lyon to Marseilles would have taken 12 days, then 7 days for the ship to Rome, with 8 days for the return journey and another 12 days to get back to Lyon. Lyon to Paris (as Theodore took)¹⁶⁷ is suggested as the fastest route and would have taken another 20 days. Travel from Paris to Boulogne would last another 8 days, followed by another 5 to reach London. In total from Lyon to Rome and thence to London, this model would suggest it would have taken Berhtwold 72¹⁶⁸ days. The extra 130 kilometres generated by the flaws of travel of Canterbury to London and Quentovic to

¹⁶¹ VC 26–7; HA 17.

¹⁶² AA 12.

¹⁶³ McCormick, *Economy*, p. 400.

¹⁶⁴ All results are rounded to the nearest whole number to better relate the nature of travel. The results ORBIS provided are in the footnotes; *sic* 39.5.

¹⁶⁵ 35.1.

¹⁶⁶ 63.5.

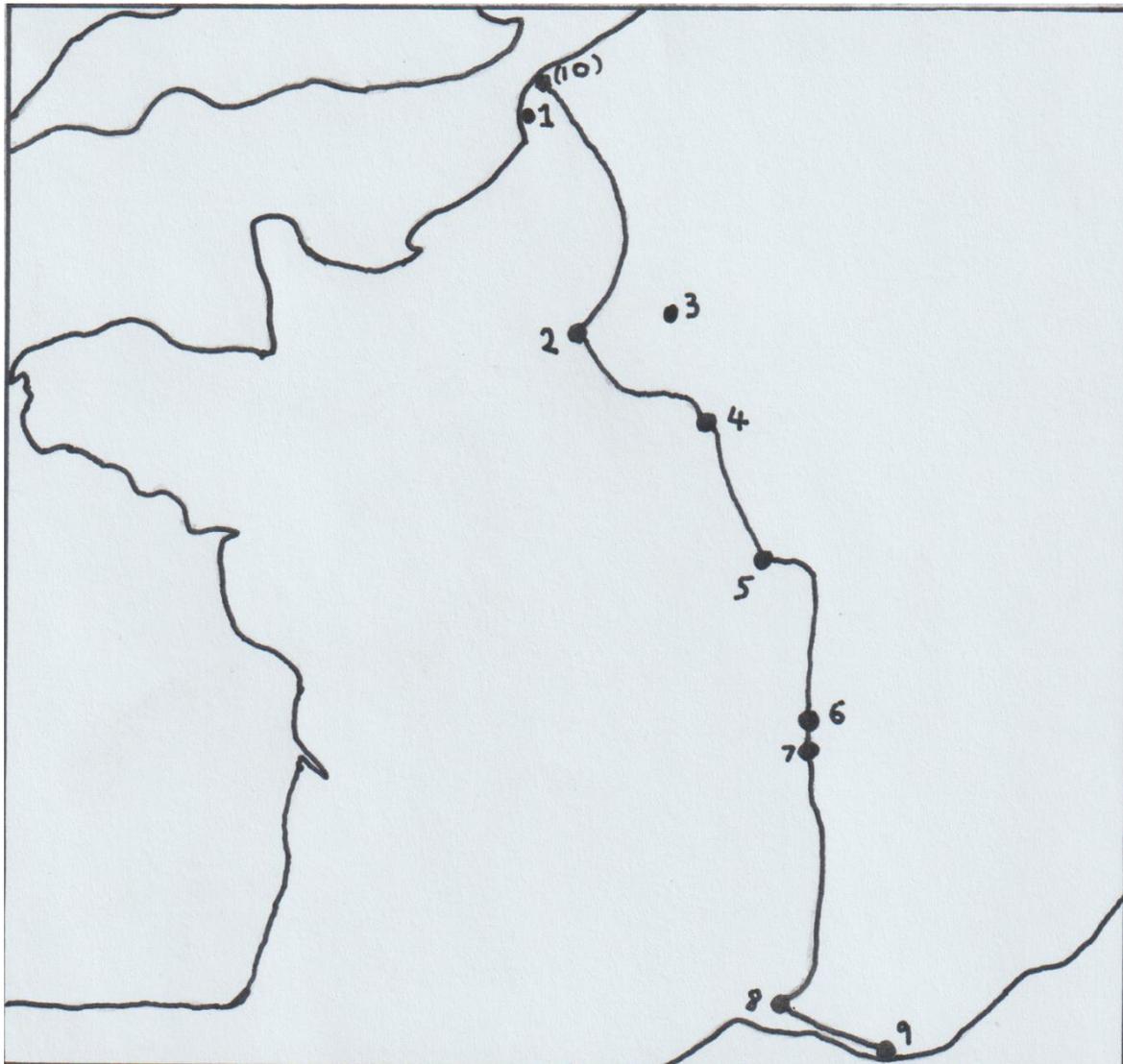
¹⁶⁷ Lyon to Sens or Meaux is not possible to select on ORBIS, although it appears to be a slightly more direct route to the English Channel, suggesting in theory it could have been quicker than going through Paris.

¹⁶⁸ 11.6+6.9+8.2+11.6+19.6+8.3+4.6=70.8.

Boulogne allows around four days to be removed. This gives an approximate result of 68 days. Even acknowledging the flaws and using the results simply as a rough guide, it is not likely that Berhtwold walked the entire way.

Incorporating travel by water does reduce the duration of the journey. Lyon to Marseilles would only take 8 days, followed by the same 7 days to get to Rome. These parameters alter for the return journey: Rome to Marseilles would have taken 8 days and heading up the Rhône valley, walking is quicker than taking a boat and so 12 days is given for that journey. The journey from Lyon to Paris, incorporating the waterways, would have lasted 16 days. The route to Boulogne and then London is the same, giving 8 and 5 days respectively. This results in 64¹⁶⁹ days for the journey. Removing the additional four days produced by the flawed required parameters of the model reduces this to 60 days. This also provides him with time to stay in Rome. This route would allow Berhtwold to travel on foot from Lyon to Rome and thence to Canterbury within the time Bede provides. Moreover, it is the quickest route available to someone on foot. Consequently, based on this data, it is reasonable to believe that the western route essentially running north-south through Francia with sea travel at either end did constitute the most direct one available to travellers between Britain and Rome. Hadrian and Theodore almost certainly followed it; Berhtwold probably did too; Wilfrid may have done, given his arrival in Meaux after his second appeal. Overall, given the prevalence of the Rhône valley in

¹⁶⁹ 7.6+6.9+8.2+11.6+15.7+8.3+4.6=62.9.



The *Via Rectissima* with significant towns numbered. 1) Quentovic; 2) Paris; 3) Meaux; 4) Sens; 5) Autun; 6) Lyon; 7) Vienne; 8) Arles; 9) Marseilles; 10) Boulogne.

(Based on Gameson, 'Augustine', p. 11.)

the sources it was probably quite generally used, especially if travellers were anxious to move swiftly.

With this route identified for the seventh century, it is therefore curious to note a drift to the east, which became the established route.¹⁷⁰ This is marked by Wilfrid's Frisian starting points, at least one of which included a crossing of the Alps, and the fact that Ceolfrith ended up in Langres.¹⁷¹ Two of these journeys stand right at the end of the period under analysis, with

¹⁷⁰ Pelteret, 'Rome', pp. 24–6, 28–9; Matthews, *Road*, pp. 45–52.

¹⁷¹ VW 26; VC 32; HE iii.13.

Wilfrid's appeal to Rome in *c.* 703 and Ceolfrith's journey in 716. This route appears to have been pioneered by Wilfrid as a reaction to the threat that Ebroin posed to him, combined with the fact that he probably calculated that he would receive a warm reception from Dagobert in Austrasia.¹⁷² Why it endured is more complicated to understand, but important to try and define. There are two possible explanations. Firstly, the English mission was underway in Frisia in the early-eighth century and the two early travellers known are Wilfrid and Ceolfrith. This is worth dwelling on because of the links between Wilfrid and both Willibrord and Ceolfrith. Willibrord and Ceolfrith had both been monks in Wilfrid's re-founded monastery at Ripon.¹⁷³ As such, it is significant that this easterly route involves a group of ecclesiastics with a background in the same monastic house.¹⁷⁴ Willibrord's presence in Frisia may have made the eastern route easier for Wilfrid and Ceolfrith as they could seek hospitality and support from a man with whom they had a shared history. As the English mission developed and drew in ecclesiastics from other kingdoms, most famously Wessex, it may have allowed the route to become more generally used.¹⁷⁵ Indeed, if Boniface's appeal to the English people for their prayers is considered, it may suggest how diverse the mission and its connections with the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms had become by the mid-eighth century.¹⁷⁶ It once again suggests the importance of personal connections that both enabled and facilitated journeys. The extent to which this route may have been perpetuated is visible in the itinerary of Archbishop Sigeric (990–4). It too takes a more easterly route, although passing through Sombre in northern France, rather than Frisia. While it is difficult to trace any of his journeys, Wilfrid appears to have been the first Englishman to have crossed the Alps, presaging Sigeric's own passage. Moreover, Ceolfrith's arrival in Langres does fit with the route Sigeric took, with Langres lying

¹⁷² VW 25, 28.

¹⁷³ VW 26; VC 3.

¹⁷⁴ Accepting of course that where Ceolfrith was before he arrived in Langres is unclear.

¹⁷⁵ McKitterick, *Missionaries*, pp. 10–11, 15, 23–4.

¹⁷⁶ BLE 46.

between Blessonville and St Geosmes.¹⁷⁷ While Sigeric's journey suggests the route continued to develop, elements can perhaps be traced to the careers of Ceolfrith and Wilfrid.

The second explanation is the growing Islamic threat, which by Ceolfrith's journey had increased considerably. This may have made the western route less secure, especially in the region of the Rhône valley and the Mediterranean.¹⁷⁸ While McCormick has convincingly observed that its ramifications for maritime commerce should not be overstated and indeed that war could create commercial ventures, these opportunities do not necessarily appeal to pilgrims and diplomats.¹⁷⁹ A secure route would have been more attractive than a profitable one, while Islamic raiding may also have disrupted networks of contact that had previously existed.

This analysis reveals three pertinent points. Firstly, there were multiple routes that could guide a traveller to Rome. However, it is possible to identify the fastest route as that taken by Theodore and Hadrian and described by Bede. Arriving in Quentovic, it ran south towards Paris, before turning south-east towards Lyon and then south down the Rhône valley to Arles and Marseilles, where a ship could be taken to Rome. Secondly, sea-travel in the Mediterranean was an important means of transport and should have a greater position in the discussion of movement in the seventh century. A result of this is that it diminishes the importance of the Alpine routes and the shortest channel crossing between Kent and northern Francia. Thirdly, the favoured route changed in this period, with a more easterly route being taken, probably to benefit from the presence of English missionaries and to avoid the increased threat of Muslim raiders further west. This in itself further stresses the importance of personal networks as the pioneers of this route seem to have been Wilfrid and Ceolfrith, who had known each other, and were connected to Willibrord, the first leader of the English mission to Frisia.

¹⁷⁷ Ortenberg, 'Sigeric's', pp. 230–1.

¹⁷⁸ Kennedy, 'Muslims', p. 258; Wallace-Hadrill, *Frankish Church*, p. 358.

¹⁷⁹ Pelteret, 'Rome', p. 29; McCormick, *Economy*, pp. 575–8.

Conclusion

Travel reveals interesting biases in the interactions the English had with Francia and Rome. Both Biscop and Wilfrid travelled to Francia and yet both Bede and Stephen place stress upon the journeys where Rome was the destination. As such, perhaps this is the first point to stress; details arise primarily from journeys to Rome. Interaction with Francia is largely dealt with in a generic manner. In itself this demonstrates that Rome superseded Francia in these interactions in the minds of the eighth-century ecclesiastics who recorded these journeys. Nevertheless, these descriptions reveal the links between power centres and how small the world still was in the early medieval period. Despite the disintegration of the Roman Empire and the political vicissitudes of the succeeding centuries, it was still possible to get from what had been the outermost province of the Empire to Rome in a little under six weeks. Given the greater cohesion and security of the Frankish kingdoms in the early ninth century in comparison to the late seventh century, it is remarkable how well the data from Berhtwold's journey fits with that gathered by McCormick. He suggests that 40 kilometres was probably the normal maximum daily range for a Frankish traveller in the early ninth century.¹⁸⁰ The seventh-century world was highly interconnected and a young English traveller from Northumbria could find hospitality in Lyon and education in Rome.

The dynamics of this are curious. Evidently, sea travel was common and embraced by English travellers willingly and was preferred in the seventh century to crossing the Alps.¹⁸¹ Furthermore, it is clear that guides were available to travellers and accommodation and supplies could be obtained *en route*. However, these guides were not (as far as can be gathered) locals, rather they were high-status individuals, who were closely linked to the ruler who appointed them, whether the local bishop or lord or the king or pope. This may explain the use of the

¹⁸⁰ McCormick, *Economy*, pp. 477–9.

¹⁸¹ Cf. Pelteret, 'Travel', p. 248.

word (or its variants) *dux* to describe them. In turn, they could approach rulers that they encountered on their journeys and seek their support and vouch for those that had accompanied them. The links forged on these journeys could then be used in the future (hence Biscop's friends in Vienne) and perhaps even transferred, as Wilfrid's and then Cædwalla's links to the Lombard court suggests. Indeed, the links that existed between Willibrord, Wilfrid and Ceolfrith seem to account in part for the shift in the route further east, as Willibrord and later the English mission offered more secure connections for travellers to rely upon.

To a degree, one could contend that these journeys, which high-status ecclesiastics made, were as much a matter of people as places. The opportunities they presented to develop networks with nobles, bishops and abbots was invaluable to enhance their personal prestige and, by association, the prestige of their institution. To that end, it is telling that the times when the *via rectissima* is visible are at points of emergency: the (ultimately slow) arrival of the new bishop of Canterbury; a bishop's appeal to Rome and an abbot's rush to receive episcopal consecration and the *pallium* in the face of a disputed election to an episcopal see. Biscop's and John's journey evidently did not take the quickest route. The issues posed by the Monophysite heresy may have made it advantageous for John to visit as many Frankish ecclesiastical centres as possible, drumming up support for the papal position to be set out in 680. Likewise, Wilfrid's first appeal avoided a dangerous route, in favour of a route where he could further develop his links with his ally, Dagobert II. Travellers deliberately sought routes to their advantage and speed was not their only consideration; the people they met mattered as much as the destination.

The personal contacts that are visible from this process produce an intriguing pattern. For much of the seventh century, English contact was with the northern Frankish kingdom of

Neustria and the southern kingdom of Burgundy, which were often governed as one.¹⁸² At the end of the seventh century, into the eighth century, Austrasia appears to have grown in importance, with Wilfrid beginning this shift, owing to the dangers of travel on his first appeal to Rome. This route was then perpetuated because of the English mission and conceivably Islamic raiding in southern Francia, which threatened the Rhône valley. Exploring the realities of the socio-political contact of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms to their Frankish neighbours provides further evidence for the dynamism of the seventh century and forms the core of the next chapter.

¹⁸² Fouracre, 'Francia', pp. 375–6.

CHAPTER FOUR: WILFRID AND THE ENGLISH IN FRANCA

*per tres annos simul cum eo mansit et a doctoribus valde eruditibus multa didicit.*¹

This is how Stephen chose to sum up Wilfrid's time in Lyon. It is frustratingly brief and pales in comparison to the narrative Stephen proffers of Aunemundus' martyrdom, which gave him the perfect excuse to demonstrate Wilfrid's sanctity by placing him in the account, willing to accept martyrdom himself.² There is a curious similarity in approaches to Wilfrid's time in Lyon. Both his own biographer and later historians regard it as a formative time, but the former uses it to further a spiritual agenda, while the latter see it as explanation for Wilfrid's later pugnacious behaviour.³ Despite Stephen's brevity, the three years Wilfrid spent studying at Lyon in Burgundy demonstrates the importance of the Frankish Church to his career, a point highlighted by his decision to be consecrated bishop at Compiègne in Neustria.⁴ However, the analysis cannot be confined solely to ecclesiastical matters. Wilfrid's involvement in Frankish affairs culminated spectacularly in the aid he provided the Austrasian nobility in the return of Dagobert II from Ireland.⁵

What is perhaps most striking about this brief introduction to the elements of Wilfrid life where he engaged directly with the Franks and Francia is how well it maps onto the evidence provided by the evangelization of the English and by analysis of travel. The north-south axis formed by Neustria and Burgundy is visible in Wilfrid's early career, while Austrasia suddenly dominates the picture (far more so than in questions of travel), from the mid to late 670s.

One of the points to stress, however, is that Wilfrid is not alone in having such contacts and it is possible, through considering the subtext of both Bede's and Stephen's respective

¹ VW 6. 'for three years he remained with him, learning many things from the most learned teachers'.

² Ibid.

³ Mayr-Harting, *Coming*, pp. 132–4; Foley, *Images*, p. 103.

⁴ *HE* iii.28.

⁵ VW 28.

accounts, to weave a more detailed narrative that elucidates ties between English royal and noble families and their Frankish peers. As such, Wilfrid's career provides a useful backdrop for this discussion but it should not dominate it to the detriment of other links that have survived less clearly. With such an approach it is possible to define English-Frankish contacts more broadly in the second half of the seventh century and into the early eighth century. Consequently, there are three areas to focus upon. The first is how the English Church related to its more established neighbour. Second is how the English related to Neustria. This is best dealt with by approaching the links that the English forged in Neustria itself and, developing from this, by focussing more tightly upon Northumbria as a case-study of courtly links. Wilfrid's first expulsion from Northumbria is re-evaluated in light of these links through consideration of the Austrasian shift visible in his career and as such sets up the third and final issue to be addressed: the battle of Tertry and the success of Austrasia. Wilfrid and Willibrord will be considered with reference to this shift in English-Frankish relations at the end of the seventh century. In essence, this chapter will define English-Frankish connections, judge their importance and consider how they altered over the sixty years of Wilfrid's long career.

The English and Frankish Churches

When discussing the influences of Rome and Francia upon Wilfrid's musicality, Billet makes the useful observation that it 'is a contrast largely elided by Bede and Stephen.'⁶ While distinctions existed, a point Bede must have been aware of given his knowledge of the *Libellus Responsum*, the Frankish Church was in full communion with Rome, the crucial point of distinction with the Ionan Church.⁷ This immediately creates complications in seeking to pin down Frankish influences upon the English Church. This is compounded by the vague tone

⁶ Billet, 'Music', p. 168.

⁷ Ibid.; *HE* i.27.

struck by both Stephen and Bede in their description of Frankish influence. Stephen runs over three years of Wilfrid's education at Lyon in a clause, while Bede acknowledges the Frankish presence in Biscop's career but only specifies it occasionally.⁸ A rare exception to this trend encapsulates this problem perfectly. Biscop sought to construct a stone church, regarding it as a display of Roman culture, but contracted the necessary workmen from the Franks.⁹ Half a century later in *c.* 711, King Nechtan of the Picts approached Ceolfrith to help him construct a stone church as part of his Romanizing reforms.¹⁰ To a degree, one could argue that 'Rome' was a concept, a congregation of Churches in communion with each other, aspiring to follow individual, idealized perceptions of Roman custom; it was not necessarily a term that implied direct dependence upon the customs enacted in Rome itself.

Reading between the lines of Stephen and Bede is consequently necessary and has produced compelling evidence of links between the Frankish and English Churches. In the context of liturgy and music, both Billet and Cubitt have demonstrated the importance of the Franks upon individuals such as Biscop and Wilfrid.¹¹ Billet is nonetheless cautious, observing that both men still drew upon traditions unknown in the Frankish Church in the seventh century.¹² Mayr-Harting has also pointed to Frankish influences upon Wilfrid's dedication of the altars at Ripon.¹³ Even in a Canterbury context, Helmut Gneuss has discerned evidence of Frankish influence in the Old Hymnal.¹⁴ He suggests Augustine himself could have brought it with him, although Billet has suggested Biscop as an alternative.¹⁵ Gneuss' suggestion is preferable because it provides a context for Augustine's question to Gregory concerning divergent

⁸ *VW* 6; *HA* 2, 4.

⁹ *HA* 5.

¹⁰ *HE* v.21.

¹¹ Billet, 'Music', pp. 168–72; Cubitt, 'Liturgy', pp. 51–4; Cubitt, *Church Councils*, pp. 127–32.

¹² Although Billet is cautious about drawing too sharp a distinction between the general Roman and non-Roman elements of the office, within the office's essential Roman structure. Billet, *Divine Office*, pp. 93–8, 132.

¹³ Mayr-Harting, *Coming*, pp. 180–1.

¹⁴ Gneuss, 'Latin Hymns', p. 409; *cf.* Brooks, *Canterbury*, pp. 91–3.

¹⁵ Gneuss, 'Latin Hymns', p. 409; Billet, *Divine Office*, p. 107.

practices between the Frankish and Roman Churches and how to develop an English rite.¹⁶ It arguably provides a context for an early awareness of Frankish Minor Litanies, such as *Deprecamur te*.¹⁷ The point Cubitt stresses is that the liturgical evidence points primarily to personal networks of transmission; networks which were developed by the movement of English ecclesiastics through Francia.¹⁸

Such a point is also valid concerning the development of the library at Wearmouth-Jarrow. Bede stresses the importance of friends, potentially in Vienne, who gifted Biscop books on one of his journeys to Rome.¹⁹ In more general trends within the English Church, there is the introduction of double houses and the development of ceremonies for the translation of relics. In both instances the presence of English women in Frankish convents is important. The foundations of Chelles and Faremoutiers had links to the Kentish and East Anglian royal families and were both double houses.²⁰ East Anglia appears to have been a hub for the transmission of these influences. Whitby is arguably the most famous double house, founded by Hild.²¹ Her sister Hereswith was the mother of King Ealdwulf of the East Angles and had entered Chelles and Hild had planned to join her until Aidan recalled her to Northumbria, implying some form of contact between the siblings.²²

Similarly, Thacker observed that the translations of Æthelthryth and Cuthberht from their graves in the churchyard into the churches of Ely in 695 and Lindisfarne in 698 respectively derived from a Frankish tradition.²³ Faremoutiers had translated the bodies of both the East Anglian Æthelburh and Kentish Eorcengota and as such was the obvious point of contact for the practice to spread to East Anglia and so to Ely.²⁴ Thacker stops short of suggesting how the

¹⁶ *HE* i.27. See above, pp. 70–1.

¹⁷ Cf. Cubitt, *Church Councils*, pp. 129–30.

¹⁸ Cubitt, 'Liturgy', pp. 55–6.

¹⁹ *HA* 4; Love, 'Library', p. 609.

²⁰ Blair, *Church*, p. 42; Sims-Williams, *Western England*, p. 121.

²¹ *HE* iv.23.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ Thacker, 'Local Saint', pp. 45–8.

²⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 58–9; *HE* iii.8.

practice reached Lindisfarne. Æthelthryth obviously had significant Northumbrian connections, given her marriage to Ecgfrith.²⁵ However, Bede observes that Wilfrid was a witness to her incorrupt body.²⁶ This raises the possibility that Wilfrid was the point of transmission into Northumbria. Certainly, a comparable ceremony was enacted by Wilfrid's followers at his death.²⁷ This nuances the direct importance of the Frankish Church upon Wilfrid; in this instance Frankish influence was almost certainly mediated through another, English, party. In general, this further supports the notion of individuals seeking ties and acting as points of transmission as they moved around and developed networks of communication, rather than the existence of broader 'institutional' trends.

An Institutional Link? Canterbury and Lyon

In that regard, it is interesting that Lyon appears as a place of consistent significance. If Bede's information was correct Augustine was consecrated bishop by Aetherius of Lyon in Arles.²⁸ About a century later, Berhtwold was also consecrated by Godwin of Lyon.²⁹ Wilfrid studied at Lyon and it is worth bearing in mind his year in Canterbury before departing for Rome with Biscop; his experience of the Canterbury Church could have influenced his desire to stay in Lyon.³⁰ If the Rhône valley was indeed the main conduit of communication between Rome and Canterbury then Lyon would also have hosted Mellitus and Romanus as bishops of the English Church, along with an unknown number of messengers.³¹ Coville has even suggested that Godwin, archbishop of Lyon (*fl.* 690s) was English himself; Godwin potentially being an Anglo-Saxon name.³² If Godwin was English (something that will probably never be more than a hypothetical), it suggests two things. Firstly, it provides some corroboration for

²⁵ *HE* iv.19.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *VW* 66; Thacker, 'Local Saints', pp. 61–2.

²⁸ *HE* i.27; Shaw, *Gregorian*, pp. 60–1.

²⁹ *HE* v.8.

³⁰ *VW* 2.

³¹ *HE* ii.4, ii.20.

³² Coville, *Recherches*, pp. 424–5.

the patronage that Wilfrid received from Aunemundus, even if Stephen exaggerated it to prove Wilfrid's saintly exceptionalism.³³ Secondly, it hints that English ecclesiastics studying in Lyon was a more regular occurrence than either Bede or Stephen suggests.

It is worth dwelling a little bit further on Berhtwold's consecration at Lyon. The hints of a disputed election, with Berhtwold as the Kentish or Canterbury choice, could account for his failure to be consecrated by bishops of his own province.³⁴ What is more confusing is the fact he did not seek papal consecration, unless he felt that his position was insecure and that it would be better to present the papacy with a *fait accompli*. In this light, his choice of Lyon becomes deliberate and suggests that Lyon was perceived as dependable from a Canterbury perspective. While this is slender evidence, it gives a glimpse of the potential depth of the relationship between the two sees. This is all underscored by the simple fact that two bishops of Canterbury were consecrated by bishops of Lyon and only one by the bishop of Rome.³⁵

The obvious point to explain is why such a link would develop. In general terms the Rhône valley was a significant cultural centre. Vienne had been responsible for major liturgical innovations in the fifth and sixth centuries, which had spread quickly through Burgundy and further afield and Wood has demonstrated the continuation of its influence into the seventh century with the Bobbio Missal.³⁶ Arguably, the most likely source for Augustine's question to Gregory concerning Roman or Frankish practice is his experience of Burgundian liturgy.³⁷

³³ VW 4.

³⁴ HE v.8; GPA i.34.

³⁵ Lyon: Augustine and Berhtwold; Rome: Theodore. HE i.27, iv.1, v.8.

³⁶ Wood, 'Missal', pp. 207–9, 217–18.

³⁷ HE i.27.

Furthermore, both Wilfrid's and Biscop's careers suggest the Rhône valley was an intellectual hub.³⁸

The notion of the intellectual prominence of Lyon is admittedly not as secure as it once was. Lowe suggested that a large number of early manuscripts could be assigned to Lyon.³⁹ The complexity of the manuscript evidence is such that Lowe changed his mind on what could be deemed an early Lyonnaise production and McKitterick has gone further to dispute whether any of the manuscripts should be assigned to Lyon before the ninth century.⁴⁰ The material includes biblical and exegetical texts, as well as the writings of Jerome, Augustine, Origen, Cyprian and Eucherius of Lyon.⁴¹ However, the possibility exists that a theological education was available in Lyon in the seventh century and that Lyon could have supplied books for monastic and cathedral libraries.⁴²

Searching for an explanation for Lyon's attraction, Lemarignier described the Frankish Church as existing in two halves, with the southern half adhering to a conciliar tradition of bishops operating in synods and the northern half following a monastic tradition.⁴³ While the sharpness of his distinction is too great, it is an idea worth bearing in mind.⁴⁴ The one work that can be attributed to Lyon with confidence around the turn of the seventh century is the *Collectio Vetus Gallica*, a collection of Church council canons according to subject. Mordek, while cautious, even goes so far as to attribute its production to Aetherius of Lyon, the putative

³⁸ HA 4; VW 6.

³⁹ Lowe, *lugdunenses*; Lowe, *Codices*, nos 589, 591, 771, 773a and b, 774a, 782a, 783.

⁴⁰ McKitterick, 'Scriptoria', p. 182.

⁴¹ *Ibid.* pp. 178–80.

⁴² VW 5.

⁴³ Lemarignier, 'l'organisation ecclésiastique', pp. 458–62.

⁴⁴ Blair, *Church*, p. 42.

consecrator of Augustine.⁴⁵ The English link to Lyon could be viewed in the context of Lyon as a centre of canon law.

Regarding the southern Frankish Church as ‘conciliar’ is striking because that is the approach the early English Church took.⁴⁶ Boniface referred to a synod of London in a letter to Pope Zacharias.⁴⁷ Justus of Rochester and Peter, abbot of the monastery of Ss Peter and Paul in Canterbury, attended the Council of Paris (614).⁴⁸ This council was convened by Aridius, bishop of Lyon. By the end of the sixth century Lyon was unquestionably the pre-eminent Frankish see.⁴⁹ Its bishops had engaged with kings and fellow bishops, managing political and ecclesiastical affairs. Gregory of Tours relates St Nicetius intervening with Chilperic in *c.* 572 to save the life of Munderic, who had aided Sigibert.⁵⁰ Similarly St Nicetius was involved in the deposition of two bishops at the request of King Guntram (*c.* 567).⁵¹ Likewise, Aetherius, along with other bishops, was selected by Guntram to accompany him to Paris for the baptism of Chlothar.⁵² Aridius, in addition to chairing the Council of Paris, allied with Brunhilda to organise a council and to depose Desiderius of Vienne (603).⁵³ Aunemundus was brought up at the royal court, was godfather to Chlothar III and may have been an important adviser to the court.⁵⁴ Mayr-Harting posits that this would have impressed Wilfrid and that he would have imbued much of the culture of Lyon.⁵⁵ In many respects the same is true for the bishops in Canterbury, perhaps especially so for Augustine with his background in a Roman monastery. The practical experiences of the Frankish episcopate could have been invaluable as he developed his strategy for approaching Æthelberht. Lyon, with its metropolitan status and links

⁴⁵ Mordek, *Kirchenrecht*, pp. 79–82; Meens, ‘canon law’, p. 69.

⁴⁶ Lemarignier, ‘l’organisation ecclésiastique’, pp. 458–62.

⁴⁷ *BLE* 40.

⁴⁸ *CP*, p. 190.

⁴⁹ Mathisen, ‘Syagrius’, p. 288; Coville, *Recherches*, pp. 360–1; Shaw, *Gregorian*, p. 60

⁵⁰ *HF* v.5.

⁵¹ *HF* v.20.

⁵² *HF* x.28.

⁵³ *FC* iv.24.

⁵⁴ *AA* 2.

⁵⁵ Mayr-Harting, *Coming*, pp. 133–4.

to ‘barbarian’ kings, might have been peculiarly attractive. Perhaps Lyon provided the bishops of Canterbury with a proto-history, from which they could derive examples and precedents as they sought to develop an English Church under their own authority and form ties with Anglo-Saxon kings.

Did Wilfrid’s education in Lyon bring anything new to the English Church? It is just possible to draw a link between the conciliar history of Lyon and Wilfrid’s own actions. Gregory of Tours narrates the deposition of Salonius and Sagittarius at a council in Lyon. Despite their deposition both appealed successfully to Rome.⁵⁶ Mayr-Harting asserted that it was ‘generally accepted that bishops who felt that they had suffered infringement of their rights should appeal to the pope’⁵⁷, picking up on Gregory’s description as evidence. In principle, he is correct, but it is worth considering that statement more closely in an English context. Wilfrid was not the first English bishop deposed but he was the first to appeal to Rome. Winfrith of Lichfield was deposed by Theodore, some time between the council of Hertford in 672 and the consecration of Eorcenwold to the see of London, an act dated to *c.* 675.⁵⁸ Winfrith also chose to appeal to Rome, but Stephen implies that he only travelled at the same time as Wilfrid, which meant that Ebroin’s men confused him with Wilfrid.⁵⁹ Moreover, Stephen does note that Wilfrid discussed the situation with other bishops before he informed Ecgfrith of his decision to appeal to Rome.⁶⁰ What is significant is that, despite his earlier deposition, Winfrith does not appear to have sought to appeal the decision and Stephen implies that when he did so it coincided with Wilfrid’s. As such, there is reasonable circumstantial evidence to suggest that Wilfrid introduced the idea of appealing depositions to Rome and that he came across this idea while at Lyon. Moreover, even if he stood within an institutional relationship between

⁵⁶ *HF* v.20.

⁵⁷ Mayr-Harting, *Coming*, pp. 144–5.

⁵⁸ *HE* iv.5–6; Colgrave and Mynors, ed., *Ecclesiastical History*, p. 355, n. 3.

⁵⁹ *VW* 25.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.* 24.

Canterbury and Lyon, this returns us once again to the importance of the individual and personal transmission.

Individuals within the English Church clearly looked to its Frankish neighbour for inspiration. Frankish influence seems present in many areas of the English Church: liturgy, canon law, its cult of saints and intellectual heritage. It is just possible that Lyon's tradition of canon law and its position as the preeminent see of the Frankish Church prompted links to form with Canterbury, as the young English Church sought to establish itself and relate to the Kings of Kent. It is certainly intriguing how regularly Lyon appears in the source material, in contrast to the generally intermittent and personal links that existed elsewhere. That being said, Wilfrid may have personally introduced the idea of appealing against Canterbury to the papacy from his studies in Lyon. Likewise, the careers of Biscop, Æthelburh and Eorcengota all stress the importance of the individual in allowing for the transmission of both knowledge and practices. These personal ties appear to have been far more important and perhaps explain the limited nature of the evidence. These links were not part of an institutional identity and so were not remembered in such works as *HE*, *HA* or *VW* in any great detail, surviving in them only as incidental and fragmentary evidence. The English chose to cultivate these links: Wilfrid and Biscop clearly chose to develop ties with Lyon and Vienne; Augustine and Berhtwold chose to receive consecration from successive bishops of Lyon. English individuals had agency in their decisions and this must be remembered when considering the socio-political aspect of English-Frankish ties. The links forged by ecclesiastics, especially those of royal women and of Wilfrid, provide much of the evidence for this and reading between the lines of Stephen's and Bede's work allows their significance to Anglo-Saxon courts to be gauged.

The English in Neustria

Within this, it is important to remember that the significance of these ties did not only run one way. This is probably best expressed by the reaction of Ebroin to Hadrian's appearance in Francia. Bede observed that *Hadrianum autem Ebrinus retinuit, quoniam suspicabatur eum habere aliquam legationem imperatoris ad Britanniae reges adversus regnum, cuius tunc ipse maximam curam gerebat*.⁶¹ Colgrave and Mynors observed that Ebroin's suspicions demonstrate the integration of the English with continental politics.⁶² Their inference is undoubtedly correct: Ebroin's behaviour demonstrates that diplomatic contact between the Byzantine Empire and Britain was possible in the seventh century. More importantly for our purposes here, Ebroin's hostility towards Hadrian, if it is not simply written off as paranoia, suggests that the English were neighbours with whom Ebroin wanted to maintain good relations and whose enmity he could ill-afford.⁶³ In essence, it demonstrates that the English were not simply the objects of Merovingian and Frankish noble ambitions. Ebroin was forced to react, albeit erroneously, to the risk of independent action by his neighbours.

The Benefit to the Franks

At the outset, it is worth considering how links to various Anglo-Saxon courts benefitted the Franks who made them. As Richard Gerberding has demonstrated, the Pippinids used marriage alliances to build their influence.⁶⁴ Le Jan has placed a socio-economic construction upon the links that developed between the English and Frankish worlds in the seventh century, suggesting that such links were developed in order to control systems of exchange.⁶⁵ This has undeniable merit and will be considered in greater detail. However, it arguably places the

⁶¹ *HE* iv.1. 'Ebroin kept Hadrian because he suspected him of having some mission from the emperor to the kings of Britain, which might be directed against the kingdom over which at that time he held the chief charge'.

⁶² Colgrave and Mynors, ed., *Ecclesiastical History*, p. 332, n. 2.

⁶³ For an explanation of Ebroin's hostility, see: Lapidge and Bischoff, *Theodore*, pp. 123–32.

⁶⁴ Gerberding, *Carolingians*, pp. 92–6.

⁶⁵ Le Jan, 'élites', p. 188.

emphasis too late, as an expression of power as opposed to a means to develop that power. These were ties that Frankish families sought to develop and it consequently suggests that the English had something to offer. The timings of the links that developed between Kent and Wessex and Neustria in the seventh century are worth considering. The dating of the marriage of Ymme and Eadbald, forging ties to Erchinoald, is unclear but presumably occurred in the late 610s or early 620s. The central point is that it dates two decades before Erchinoald reached the pinnacle of his career as *maior domus*. He only achieved the position in Neustria in 642, on the death of Aega.⁶⁶ In other words, did the links Erchinoald forge with Kent aid his rise? The *FC* notes that Erchinoald was related to Dagobert's mother, although it does not specify the closeness of the relationship.⁶⁷ It does, however, imply that the link facilitated Erchinoald's appointment, embedded as the information is, in the middle of the statement: *Post discessum Aegane Erchynoaldus maior domus, qui consanguaneus fuerat de genetrici Dagoberto, maior domi palacium Chlodoviae effecetur.*⁶⁸ In this regard, Bede's comment concerning Æthelburh, that Dagobert *erat amicus illius*,⁶⁹ is curious. Potentially a legacy of her father's and mother's marriage, it suggests that the Kentish court had close ties to the Merovingian court. By developing ties with Eadbald, Erchinoald may consciously have been trying to integrate himself within the Merovingian court. Kentish connections were not simply a facet or an expression of Erchinoald's power; they were a necessary step in the development of his power.

Wood has mooted the possibility that the Faronid presence in Wessex was a counter to the rising power of Erchinoald.⁷⁰ It is a remarkable coincidence that Agilbert appeared in Wessex to coincide with Cenwealh's restoration after three years in East Anglia, with its strong ties to

⁶⁶ *FC* iv.83–4.

⁶⁷ *FC* iv.84.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.* 'Erchinoald, a relation of Dagobert's mother, was made mayor of the palace to Clovis after the death of Aega'.

⁶⁹ *HE* ii.20. 'was her friend'.

⁷⁰ Wood, 'Connections', p. 456.

Francia.⁷¹ Furthermore, the proximity of Wessex to Kent may also have had its benefits. Agilbert developed his ties with Cenwealh during Erchinoald's time as *maior domus*. Consequently, his presence in Wessex might have disrupted any support that Kent could provide Erchinoald and he seems to have created connections with Northumbria as well.⁷² When he returned to Francia Agilbert progressed to the see of Paris.⁷³ It once again suggests that English links could lay the foundations for a successful Frankish career. The importance of these ties for the Faronids is suggested by the succession of Leuthere, despite the insult Cenwealh did to Agilbert by bringing Wine as a bishop into his kingdom in *c.* 660. The Faronids were seemingly willing to re-establish themselves in Wessex when Cenwealh reached out.⁷⁴

There are hints as to what Cenwealh sought from the relationship as well. Cenwealh suffered a series of military defeats, which Bede suggests stopped when he secured Leuthere to act as bishop in Wessex.⁷⁵ This may simply be coincidence, but Frankish connections could be seen to bolster the strength of a kingdom. However, Cenwealh's reign provides further evidence for the need to incorporate English agency into discussions of these contacts. Despite the apparent benefits and possible alliance with the Faronids that Agilbert's presence brought him, Cenwealh brought Wine into his kingdom.⁷⁶ Nothing is known of Wine's origins besides his Frankish episcopal consecration, but the crucial point is that his presence deeply offended Agilbert and caused him to depart from Wessex. It is possible that Cenwealh sought to further develop his Frankish ties, which threatened the Faronids' position. In other words, Cenwealh was able to disrupt the ties the Faronids had sought to develop. This might also clarify the Northumbrian dimension to Agilbert's career; he sought to replace the Faronids' West Saxon

⁷¹ *HE* iii.7; Fletcher, 'Gaul', p. 78; Leroy, 'Quentovic', p. 123.

⁷² *VW* 9.

⁷³ *HE* iii.28; Forsman, 'Agilbert', pp. 100–1.

⁷⁴ *HE* iii.7.

⁷⁵ *HE* iii.7.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

alliance with a Northumbrian one. Cenwealh's renewal of his relationship with the Faronids then further bolstered the Faronid position. However, it was not the loss of his Faronid links that seems to have prompted Cenwealh's military disasters. Rather it was the expulsion of Wine and the removal of all Frankish links from his court; hence Cenwealh's decision to renew his Faronid ties. In short, both examples demonstrate that the Franks deliberately engaged with Kent and Wessex, because it brought benefits to them. As such, the Frankish nobility sought out English ties, appearing as supplicants in their quest to develop their family's power; English agency has to be incorporated into this analysis.

English Agency and the Question of Quentovic

Quentovic provides a useful case study to explore this question in more detail. The English origins of the emporium are generally accepted.⁷⁷ However, broader questions of elite involvement in the foundation of these economic centres have complicated the picture. To that end, despite accepting Lebecq's conclusions concerning the English presence in Quentovic, Le Jan has firmly argued for the involvement of Neustrian rulers and nobles in Quentovic's foundation. Quentovic was founded in a region in which the Merovingians were a regular presence and tax authorities were in the vicinity.⁷⁸ Furthermore, both the Merovingians and noble families were involved in monastic foundations, seemingly with the aim of securing greater levels of control over land and systems of exchange.⁷⁹ However, there are two logical flaws to her arguments.⁸⁰ Firstly, the proximity of Quentovic to authorities is not necessarily an indicator of Frankish involvement, but rather a recognition by traders of where the money for their goods was. Secondly, it is difficult to assume that Merovingian or noble involvement in monastic foundation, even on fiscal land, logically implies their involvement in the

⁷⁷ Hodges, *Audit*, p. 101 (cf. Hodges, *Achievement*, p. 55); Lebecq, 'Change', p. 75; Lebecq, 'Neustrie', pp. 419–20; Lebecq, 'Parallèle', pp. 419–21.

⁷⁸ Le Jan, 'élites', pp. 179–81.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 186–8.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 190–1.

foundation of Quentovic. There is a qualitative distinction in the function of monasteries and emporia and their position in the socio-political landscape, which makes it difficult to transfer patterns from one foundation to another. While the evidence of Merovingian aims and ambitions in the monastic foundations is convincing, placing Quentovic in this framework is difficult.⁸¹ Can one reliably extrapolate back from the monastic foundations to define the origins of Quentovic? Alternatively, are the monastic foundations and the concomitant development of royal control over trade a reaction to Quentovic's foundation outside of royal control? The monastic foundations would thereby become a means for the Merovingians and the Neustrian nobility to compete for control of Quentovic's hinterland and by extension the *emporium* itself.

There is an extensive debate in the scholarship concerning the role of elites in the foundation of emporia. Le Jan clearly favours an elite model for the foundation.⁸² The argument for this was that the elites could then control the trade in prestige items.⁸³ A prominent theory that developed alongside as a proof was that the layout of emporia could help determine the nature of the foundation. The logic ran that emporia that possessed a regular plan were probably royal foundations, with *Hamwic* and *Haithabu* cited as examples.⁸⁴ Actually proving this from either textual or archaeological sources is exceedingly difficult.⁸⁵ *Haithabu* is an exception; it seems that Godofred of Denmark did establish the settlement. However, he does not seem to have sparked the economic activity, simply moving traders from a pre-existing site to *Haithabu*.⁸⁶ This sort of example has led recent scholarship to down-play elite involvement in the foundations of emporia.⁸⁷ Communities in agriculturally marginal areas along the coast needed

⁸¹ Le Jan, 'élites', pp. 186–8; Malbos, *Ports*, pp. 194–5.

⁸² Le Jan, 'élites', pp. 179–81.

⁸³ For example: Hodges, *Achievement*, p. 55; cf. Loveluck, *Northwest Europe*, pp. 180–1.

⁸⁴ Wood, 'Connections', pp. 472–3; Hodges, *Economics*, pp. 51–2.

⁸⁵ Quentovic has only been partially excavated: Hill *et al.*, 'site', pp. 965–9; Hill *et al.*, 'defined', pp. 51–5; Hill, 'port', p. 22. McCormick, 'emporia', pp. 47–9

⁸⁶ McCormick, *Economy*, pp. 579–80.

⁸⁷ Hodges, *Audit*, pp. 8–9, 101–2.

to undertake trading activities in order to survive.⁸⁸ Furthermore, Fleming undertook a comparison of economic sites in the Anglo-Saxon and British kingdoms. The two looked completely different and indeed the archaeology suggests a royal monopolistic control in the British kingdoms absent from English sites.⁸⁹ In addition, archaeological discoveries show that the prestige items, supposedly distributed under the careful control of elites, were commonplace in coastal societies.⁹⁰ Elites became interested in emporia as a source of income and, crucially, tolls and thereby elite involvement only appears some time after the emporia were established.⁹¹

Quentovic appears to fit this model of mercantile foundation, with elite control appearing later in its history. Malbos, building upon Le Jan's and Leroy's ideas, has observed that the emporium was situated in the duchy of Dentelin, a region that was under only tenuous royal control and frequently changed hands between Neustria and Austrasia until the mid-seventh century.⁹² The monastic foundations, as Malbos and Leroy stress, were a means to establish royal control once Merovingian (Neustrian) authority in the region was assured. The earliest coinage minted in Quentovic suggests a foundation no later than the last quarter of the sixth century.⁹³ Consequently, it is likely that English traders settled Quentovic on their own initiative, possibly taking advantage of the duchy of Dentelin's position as a shifting hinterland between Neustria and Austrasia.

Precisely when the Merovingians or a noble family succeeded in establishing some authority over Quentovic is unclear. Nonetheless, it is certain that Ebroin had some level of

⁸⁸ Loveluck, *Northwest Europe*, p. 183; Loveluck and Tys, 'Coastal Societies', pp. 142–3.

⁸⁹ Fleming, 'English towns', p. 423.

⁹⁰ Loveluck and Tys, 'Coastal societies', pp. 161–2.

⁹¹ Fleming, 'English towns', pp. 423–4; Loveluck, *Northwest Europe*, pp. 211–12; McCormick, *Economy*, pp. 579–80; Hodges, *Audit*, p. 101.

⁹² Malbos, *Ports*, pp. 194–5; cf. Leroy, 'Quentovic', p. 123; Le Jan, 'élites', pp. 179–81.

⁹³ Malbos, *Ports*, pp. 254–5.

control by the 670s.⁹⁴ However, once a degree of English agency is entered into the narrative, its history in the seventh century suggests a curious position standing between the Franks and the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, especially in light of English royal women in Frankish monasteries.⁹⁵ There are two points to stress as regards the movement of people in the early medieval world. The first is the role of kindred and the second is the monasteries that these women entered; both suggest English interest in Quentovic endured well into the seventh century.

The role of kinship

In an English context kinship has been underplayed as a societal force, with the relationship between lord and retainer being emphasized in its place. The most famous evidence for this was the account of Cynewulf and Cyneheard in the *ASC*, stating that the retainers claimed to value their dead lord more highly than their relatives.⁹⁶ A recent reinterpretation of the dynamics at play in the account has, however, sought to strike a more even balance, allowing kinship a more central role in English society.⁹⁷ The function of the kin-group was to provide mutual protection and support to its members, with the aim of furthering the group's power.⁹⁸ In the context of English women in Frankish monasteries, the family links between Kent and (more tentatively) East Anglia, and Erchinoald (the *maior domus* of Neustria) and the Merovingians have been recognized.⁹⁹ Consequently, Erchinoald exploited his own and the royal kin group in order to enhance his control over Faremoutiers. The women, whose names and families are known, at Faremoutiers include Eorcengota, Sæthryth and Æthelburh. Eorcengota was the daughter of Eorcenberht of Kent, while Sæthryth was Anna of East

⁹⁴ VW 25. Fouracre, *Ebroin*, pp. 145–6; Grierson and Blackburn, *Middle Ages*, pp. 97–100.

⁹⁵ Malbos stresses the importance of competing interests, but only in Francia: *Ports*, p. 259.

⁹⁶ *ASC* 755.

⁹⁷ White, 'Kinship', pp. 1–18; Lancaster, 'Society—I', p. 248; Lancaster, 'Society—II', pp. 367–8, 373–6; Hough, 'Kinship', pp. 277–8; Loyn, 'Kinship', pp. 201–2, 207–9; Fell, *Women*, pp. 74–88.

⁹⁸ Althoff, *Family*, pp. 23–7; Loyn, 'Kinship', p. 205.

⁹⁹ Le Jan, 'competition', pp. 254–5.

Anglia's stepdaughter and Æthelburh was Anna's daughter.¹⁰⁰ We also know of Hereswith, the sister of Hild, who entered Chelles and was the great-niece of King Edwin. She had also married East Anglian royalty and was the mother of Ealdwulf, king of the East Angles.¹⁰¹ Bede's statement that *filiis suas eisdem erudiendas ac sponso caelesti copulandas mittebant*¹⁰² reveals that firstly the named examples are simply a discrete selection, perhaps only royal daughters. Secondly, he implies that their families were involved in the decision. It would be naïve to assume that no discussion was held with the Frankish authorities, but to deny a role to the English kin-groups is equally reductive. Consequently, the decision to send these women to Francia and indeed the monasteries they entered can be located, at least in part, with their families.

The role of female religious

Why was such action taken by Anglo-Saxon royal (and possibly noble) families? Bede's justification is *eo tempore necdum multis in regione Anglorum monasteriis constructis*.¹⁰³ This statement still leaves unresolved the question of why the English would go abroad, rather than found native monasteries. That some who travelled to Francia returned is suggested by the eighth-century *VB*, which stressed the wealth sent to the English by Bertila, abbess of Chelles, (d. 692) including holy men and women to help found monasteries.¹⁰⁴ It is conceivable that Frankish monasteries served as a training ground for English religious. Nevertheless, Bede does not suggest that either Heiu or Hilda, neither of whom went abroad, had trouble in establishing their monasteries in Northumbria.¹⁰⁵ Likewise, the abbey of Ss Peter and Paul in Canterbury seems to have had a straightforward foundation.¹⁰⁶ Naturally, it was a male house

¹⁰⁰ *HE* iii.8.

¹⁰¹ *HE* iv.23.

¹⁰² *HE* iii.8. 'they sent their daughters to be taught in them and to be wedded to the heavenly bridegroom'.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.* 'At that time, because there were not yet many monasteries founded in England'.

¹⁰⁴ *VB* 6; McKitterick, 'insular culture', pp. 409–10.

¹⁰⁵ *HE* iv.23.

¹⁰⁶ *HE* i.33.

and was closely associated with the Roman missionaries, but it shows that Kentish kings could make monastic foundations and that there were sufficient English vocations to allow the monastery to endure. Native monastic vocations existed, as did a native ability to answer such a call, sending women to Francia was deliberately preferred, therefore, and consequently suggests some benefit.

To that end, the houses that these women entered are significant. Bede notes that they went *maxime in Brige et in Cale et in Andilegum monasterio*.¹⁰⁷ These are the monasteries of Faremoutiers, Chelles and Les Andelys, respectively. Eorcengota, Sæthryth and Æthelburh all entered Faremoutiers, with the latter two becoming abbesses, while Hereswith joined Chelles.¹⁰⁸ Both Chelles and Faremoutiers were closely associated with the ruling elites, coming under royal control. While having relatives in control of Faremoutiers may have been advantageous for Erchinoald, it would have also given their own families a means of access to the highest echelons of the Merovingian polity.¹⁰⁹ More to the point, these provide evidence of the Neustrian court's control of the maritime regions at the centre of which stood Quentovic and its trade links with the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms.¹¹⁰ Not only did Anglo-Saxon royal families have female members placed firmly within the ambit of the Merovingians and their *maior domus*, but within this network of exchange. As such, they could represent the interests of their families within this system, giving the courts of Kent and East Anglia, at least, a degree of influence in Quentovic's Neustrian hinterland.

This stands alongside the Frankish presence in Kent and East Anglia.¹¹¹ Once it is recognized that English designs must be included in any assessment of English royal women in Frankish monasteries, one can discern a curious parallelism on either side of the Channel.

¹⁰⁷ *HE* iii.8. 'mostly to the monasteries at Brie, Chelles and Andelys-sur-Seine'.

¹⁰⁸ *HE* iii.8; iv.23.

¹⁰⁹ Le Jan, 'competition', pp. 254–5.

¹¹⁰ Le Jan, 'élites', p. 188.

¹¹¹ *HE* i.25, iii.18; *VM* 3; *PMEE* 4; Wood, 'Connections', pp. 447–8; McKitterick, 'insular culture', p. 387.

Both the English and the Franks sought to establish contacts in close proximity to each other's power centres. Elite control over emporia seems to have developed over the course of the later seventh century, seemingly with the objective of gaining revenue.¹¹² To that end, while it is difficult to describe Quentovic's precise position between the polities, it should not be understood as a means by which the Franks sought to expand into an English hinterland.¹¹³ Instead, it stood as an important socio-economic hub between the two polities. The monastic and marital ties between the Franks and the English would have necessitated negotiation. Simultaneously, they are evidence of both competition and cooperation. Both the English and the Franks sought to exploit Quentovic's remarkable economic potential, yet the interests of the other prevented unilateral action. While Quentovic ultimately stood in Frankish territory and was under Frankish authority, the Franks could not deny or prohibit English interest in the territory. To do so would probably have been to threaten the viability of the settlement. As such, Quentovic appears as a negotiated frontier zone; the emporium and the cross-Channel dynamics it seems to have generated testify to close and seemingly positive contact, which ultimately embedded English elites in Neustria and vice-versa, as different families competed for prestige and power.

*Queen takes Bishop: Iurminburh, Kin-groups and Dagobert II—the First Expulsion of
Wilfrid of York (c. 675/6–8)*

This cross-Channel contact provides the crucial backdrop to Wilfrid's first expulsion from his see. Anglo-Saxon royal courts and English trade looked to Neustria; Austrasia appears largely ephemeral to the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms. Wilfrid alone provides evidence of contact with the

¹¹² Fleming, 'English towns', pp. 423–4; Loveluck and Tys, 'Coastal societies', pp. 161–2.

¹¹³ Le Jan, 'élites', p. 188.

Austrasian nobility.¹¹⁴ Fouracre recognized this dynamic in Wilfrid's career, but omitted to draw the focus out to the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms as a whole.¹¹⁵ As the above analysis shows, Kent and East Anglia had strong links to Neustria. The West Saxons, through Bishop Agilbert, were linked to the Faronids, while Hamwic also drew them into continental trade networks.¹¹⁶ These three kingdoms all had dynastic and economic ties to Neustria. The Northumbrian position within this network is unexplored. The Northumbrians were drawn into a dynastic network that included the Merovingians and, probably, the family of Erchinoald. The Northumbrian motivation for doing so is difficult to determine. Evidence for continental trade between the Humber and the Fens suggests economic incentives.¹¹⁷ However, a political explanation also works, as a reaction to Northumbria's expanding power and a desire for status.

Some support for this latter hypothesis may derive from the fact that these Northumbrian-Neustrian links originate through Northumbrian kings' marriages to Kentish princesses. Edwin of Northumbria married Æthelburh, the daughter of Æthelberht and Bertha of Kent, in c. 625.¹¹⁸ Via Æthelburh Edwin became linked to the Merovingians. Æthelburh was the great-granddaughter of Chlothar I and, the first cousin, once removed, of Chlothar II. As such, Edwin was creating ties with the wealthiest Anglo-Saxon kingdom, in recent years the most powerful one too, and the one with dynastic ties to the powerful Merovingian kings (even if only through a minor princess). Such a marriage may have further secured Edwin upon the Northumbrian throne and enhanced his prestige beyond Northumbria's borders. Furthermore, after Edwin's death and Oswald's ultimate succession to the Northumbrian kingdom, Æthelburh *misit in Galliam nutriendos regi Dagobercto, qui erat amicus illius*,¹¹⁹ Uscfrea, Edwin's son, and Yffi, his grandson. She feared that her brother, Eadbald of Kent, would succumb to Oswald's

¹¹⁴ VW 28.

¹¹⁵ Fouracre, 'Continent', p. 197.

¹¹⁶ Wood, 'Connections', p. 456.

¹¹⁷ Loveluck, *Northwest Europe*, pp. 188–9.

¹¹⁸ HE ii.9.

¹¹⁹ HE ii.20. 'sent these children to Gaul to be brought up by King Dagobert, who was her friend'.

of Wilfrid by Ecgrith of Northumbria (670–85) and his subsequent exile because his father, Oswiu of Northumbria (642–70) married Eanflæd, Edwin’s daughter.¹²¹

It would be fascinating to know whether Eanflæd spent any time in Francia. The example of Uscfrea and Yffi suggests that the Kentish court might have had children fostered at the Merovingian court.¹²² At the very least, one can point to the contacts enjoyed by her mother and indeed by her cousin, King Eorcenberht of Kent, the father of Eorcengota.¹²³ Eanflæd maintained contact with Eorcenberht.¹²⁴ Eanflæd, therefore, was a descendent of a Merovingian king, a distant cousin of the current ruler and, by marriage, related to one of the most powerful Neustrian aristocratic families.

The Merovingian dimension is worth teasing out a bit further because it is easy to conflate ‘Merovingian’ with ‘Frankish’. Bertha was the daughter of the king of Paris, whose realm stretched north to the English Channel and her marriage was probably organised by Chilperic, whose kingdom of Soissons also lay in the north.¹²⁵ Dagobert I, with whom Æthelburh was close friends, and his father, Chlothar II, were both kings of all Francia. However, Chlothar II began his reign as king of Soissons and in that capacity aided Gregory’s mission, with his kingdom providing the core for Neustria.¹²⁶ Chlothar then split the kingdom with Dagobert in 623 and gave him Austrasia. After Chlothar’s death, Dagobert copied him in *c.* 634 and established his son, Sigibert as king in Austrasia.¹²⁷ When Uscfrea and Yffi were sent to Dagobert, they were sent to the senior Frankish king, whose seat lay in Neustria. Furthermore, the English royal women headed to Neustrian monasteries. As such, the Merovingian links

¹²¹ *HE* iii.15.

¹²² *HE* ii.20.

¹²³ *HE* ii.20, iii.8.

¹²⁴ *VW* 3.

¹²⁵ *LHF* 29.

¹²⁶ See above, pp. 48–51.

¹²⁷ This shows the distinctions between the regions of Francia. The Merovingian heartland lay in Neustria; kings, when given the choice, kept Neustria for themselves. Wood, *Kingdoms*, pp. 145–6.

betray a north-western, later Neustrian bias. The significance of this is that Ecgfrith, Eanflæd's son, had this dynastic heritage. As a result, Wilfrid's decision to aid Dagobert II in his return to Austrasia, to the detriment of Neustrian interests, would conceivably have negatively impacted his standing in Ecgfrith's court.

Identifying Iurminburh

However, it is possible to go beyond Ecgfrith's Kentish and Neustrian heritage. The identity of his second wife, Iurminburh, is important, not least because Stephen perceived her actions as being the main reason for Wilfrid's expulsion.¹²⁸ The 'Iurmin/Ermin' name element is curious. It is rare in an English context, but extremely common as a Frankish name.¹²⁹ Ymme, the name of Eadbald's queen, is a pet-form of 'Iurmin' and it is possible that Iurminburh was part of the Kentish royal family.¹³⁰ One finds Eormenburh mentioned in the Mildrith Legend as the daughter of Eormenred.¹³¹ Possibly the same woman then appears in a Kentish charter, which references a synod of the Kentish Church, as an abbess.¹³² Stephen notes that Iurminburh did become an abbess.¹³³ However, there are problems with such an identification. The record of the Kentish royal line is highly detailed and indeed the marriage of her sister, Domne Eafa, to King Merewahl of the Magonsætan is recorded.¹³⁴ Neither Eormenburh, nor the other sister, Eormengith, are noted as marrying. According to the *VW* Iurminburh's sister married Centwine of Wessex.¹³⁵ Both marriages, to a Northumbrian king and a West Saxon king respectively, would be far more significant than to a King of the Magonsætan. In the context of the texts, the marriage of Domne Eafa produced St Mildrith and so would naturally draw attention. A similar

¹²⁸ *VW* 24.

¹²⁹ Förstemann, *Namenbuch*, pp. 474–85.

¹³⁰ Brooks, *Canterbury*, p. 64; Higham, 'southern England', p. 209.

¹³¹ *VM* 4; *PMEE* p. 93. The manuscript tradition of the Mildrith Legend is highly complicated and lengthy. For ease of reference, citations are provided to the texts edited by Rollason. For the manuscript tradition and for a comparison: Rollason, *Mildrith Legend*, pp. 15–31, 73–87.

¹³² *S20*.

¹³³ *VW* 24.

¹³⁴ *VM* 4; *PMEE* p. 93.

¹³⁵ *VW* 40.

point may be made about the marriage of Eormenhild and Wulfhere, which produced St Wærburh.¹³⁶ Furthermore, the dynastic information recorded is by no means universal. Æthelthryth herself is mentioned at one stage and is not linked to Ecgfrith.¹³⁷ Consequently, while the failure to mention the marriage is troubling, it is not conclusive evidence against identifying Eormenburh with Iurminburh.

One basic question that should be asked, however, is whether Eormenburh would have been an obvious bride for Ecgfrith. The marriage took place after *c.* 672 and before the outbreak of the Wilfrid dispute. This was a period of expanding Northumbrian power. Ecgfrith had defeated the Picts early in the 670s and repelled Wulfhere of Mercia in *c.* 674.¹³⁸ It also came before the defeat of Northumbria by Æthelred of Mercia at the Battle of the Trent in 679.¹³⁹ Eormenburh was the daughter of Eormenred, whose precise status is uncertain. Eormenred was the brother of Eorcenberht, whose existence as king of Kent is known from both the *HE* and the *VW*.¹⁴⁰ Eormenred is not referred to by either source but may have been a king.¹⁴¹ That Kent could have multiple kings is known.¹⁴² However, the absence of Eormenred from the eight-century narrative sources only makes sense if he was subordinate to his brother. As such, Eormenburh was, at best, the daughter of a Kentish sub-king, dead by the 670s. Her sister, Domne Eafa, had married a Mercian sub-king, while it was her cousin Eormenhild, daughter of the senior Kentish king, who married the Mercian king. A marriage to the Northumbrian king, at the height of his power, while possible, is surprising. An additional point to consider about both Eormenburh and Eormengith is their vocation and, in that context, the example of their other cousin,

¹³⁶ *VM* 5.

¹³⁷ *VM* 5; *PMEE* p. 92.

¹³⁸ *VW* 19–20.

¹³⁹ *HE* iv.21.

¹⁴⁰ *HE* iii.8, v.19; *VW* 3.

¹⁴¹ Rollason, *Mildrith Legend*, p. 38.

¹⁴² Hunter-Blair, 'Paulinus', pp. 7–8; Chadwick, *Institutions*, pp. 271–4.

Eorcengota. There is no suggestion that she was married prior to becoming a nun.¹⁴³ Might Eormenburh and Eormengith have spent their lives as nuns?

Further evidence is in the *LVD*; an Iurminburg appears under the heading *nomina reginarum et abbatissarum*.¹⁴⁴ This is presumably Ecgfrith's queen, Iurminburh. The *LVD* purports to record the benefactors of the Church of Lindisfarne and then its successor of Durham. The original core, in which 'Iurminburg' appears, dates from the ninth century; it is possible that the list is drawing upon an earlier, seventh-century *Liber Vitae* tradition.¹⁴⁵ The significant point is that Iurminburh appears between Eanflæd and Ælfflæd.¹⁴⁶ These are presumably Oswiu's queen and daughter respectively and so provide the right context, both temporally and socially, for Ecgfrith's queen to be recorded alongside them. Furthermore, both Eanflæd and Ælfflæd ruled Whitby jointly as abbesses.¹⁴⁷ Consequently, Iurminburh appears in a firmly Northumbrian context in the *LVD*. It suggests that when Stephen says she became an abbess she did so in Northumbria, perhaps at Whitby. Eanflæd and Ælfflæd had ruled the house jointly; Iurminburh might have followed in Oswiu's queen's footsteps. Alternatively, Briggs speculates that she might have entered a community in Carlisle.¹⁴⁸ This separates her from the Kentish princess and abbess Eormenburh. Furthermore, Eanflæd after Oswiu's death remained in Northumbria, rather than returning to her native Kent.¹⁴⁹ In other words, her example provides supporting evidence that Iurminburh would have remained in Northumbria after her husband's death, as appears to have been common practice.¹⁵⁰ In these circumstances, it is unlikely that Iurminburh would have returned to Kent for a synod responding to local

¹⁴³ *HE* iii.8

¹⁴⁴ Domitian A VII f. 16 r. 'Names of queens and abbesses.'

¹⁴⁵ Rollason, ed., *LVD* I, pp. 23–4, 30–1; Gerchow, '*Liber Vitae*', pp. 57–61.

¹⁴⁶ Domitian A VII f. 16 r.

¹⁴⁷ *HE* iv.26.

¹⁴⁸ Briggs, *Religion*, I, p. 27.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁰ Levison, *Continent*, p. 28.

problems within the Kentish Church.¹⁵¹ As a result, Iurminburh's presence in the *LVD* does suggest that Iurminburh probably was not Eormenburh and so the apparently obvious Kentish connection dissolves.

Looking for an alternative identity for Iurminburh, it is possible that she was Frankish. Ecgfrith, by his patronage for Wilfrid, Biscop and their monasteries, self-consciously identified himself with continental trends.¹⁵² In the seventh-century Frankish record, plenty of senior figures had 'Iurmin' in their name. It is problematic to construct a family tree based on naming traditions alone. Bouchard has carefully expounded the logical flaws in using such a methodology for the Carolingian and Capetian nobility and it applies to the Merovingians just as well.¹⁵³ Nevertheless, Le Jan has done a statistical analysis of names in family trees that can be constructed with some confidence. 90% of the 31 families she studied transmitted name elements to their children.¹⁵⁴ In 75–90% of families, name elements of close relatives were passed to a majority of the children (62–76%).¹⁵⁵ As a result, similar names provide possible evidence of kinship, even if the analysis cannot be taken further.

Turning to Frankish figures with a 'Iurmin' name element, the first example must be Ymme of Kent. She shows that 'Iurmin' existed as a name within the family of Erchinoald. In 627 the *gubernatur palatiae* of Charibert II was Ermenarius and Aighyna killed him at an assembly in Clichy.¹⁵⁶ Where Charibert's palace was and so who Ermenarius was is unclear. After Chlothar II's death, Dagobert granted Charibert Burgundy, but whether this respected a pre-existing situation that their father had established during his reign is not clear.¹⁵⁷ A Neustrian context

¹⁵¹ S20; Kelly, ed., *Augustine's*, pp. 41–2.

¹⁵² HA 4–7; VW 17. Given East Anglia's links to Francia, Æthelthryth might also demonstrate Ecgfrith's desire to build ties with the Franks.

¹⁵³ Bouchard, *blood*, pp. 7–10.

¹⁵⁴ Le Jan, *Famille*, pp. 181–2, esp. Table 6, p. 182.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 183.

¹⁵⁶ FC iv.55. 'comptroller of the palace'.

¹⁵⁷ FC iv.57.

is certainly found with the *domesticus* of Clovis II, who was an Ermenric.¹⁵⁸ In a charter of 653 he appears in a senior position, ahead of Aigulf, the *comes palatii*.¹⁵⁹ A series of *placita* concern a substantial gift that an Ermelenus had made to the abbey of St Denis.¹⁶⁰ With the exception of one, which is dated to 659–60, the others broadly fall in the period 660–673 and appear to be concerned with estates in Neustria. The assassin of Ebroin in c. 680 was an Ermenfred, who fled from Neustria to Pippin in Austrasia.¹⁶¹ A different Ermenfred nearly forty years earlier murdered Count Chainulf at Seine-en-Marne. It is specified that he fled to the Austrasian church of St Rémi of Rheims, which suggests he too was Neustrian.¹⁶² Significantly, he was married to the daughter of Aega, the Neustrian *maior domus*, which suggests he was from an important family.¹⁶³ In other words, if Ecgrith's Iurminburh was Frankish, there are several examples of powerful men, who share the 'Iurmin' name-element. Moreover, these men are Neustrian. While there is no positive proof of Iurminburh's origins, it is consequently reasonable to proceed on the basis that she came from Neustria.

Further corroboration of the Neustrian connection comes from the mistaken assault on Winfrith. Stephen is vague in describing who asked Ebroin to stop Wilfrid, but it is most likely that the request came from Northumbria.¹⁶⁴ More to the point, it shows that Northumbrian links had developed with the highest echelons of the Neustrian kingdom in the 670s. Agilbert also seems to have had close links to Ebroin.¹⁶⁵ In that light, it is curious that Iurminburh and her sister appear in the two kingdoms with which Agilbert is known to have close links; perhaps he arranged the marriages. Kent is harder to see in this network, but Theodore's stay with

¹⁵⁸ *FC* iv.90.

¹⁵⁹ *UM*, 85. 'count of the palace.'

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, nos 93–5.

¹⁶¹ *LHF* 47; *FC Continuationes* 4.

¹⁶² *FC* iv.83

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁴ *VW* 25.

¹⁶⁵ Forsman, 'Agilbert', pp. 94–102.

Agilbert over the winter of 668/9 provides some context.¹⁶⁶ Arguably, by the 670s English links focussed upon Ebroin.

Wilfrid's Expulsion

Pinning English links down within a specific Frankish political faction definitively is impossible. Even determining whether Iurminburh was from the Kentish royal family or part of the Neustrian aristocracy is difficult. What she almost certainly represents in Ecgfrith's court is a link to Neustria, whether directly by birth, or indirectly through Kent. With this in mind, her role in Wilfrid's expulsion and exile becomes clearer. Stephen, in explaining Wilfrid's role in Dagobert II's (675/6–9) return, notes *per arma ditatum et viribus sociorum elevatum magnifice ad suam regionem emisit*.¹⁶⁷ Wilfrid seems to have provided forces to aid those of Dagobert's Austrasian supporters. Consequently, not only did Wilfrid act against the interests of Neustrian power and consequently the kin of his king and queen, he armed a rebellion against it.¹⁶⁸ Given the mutual support that kin-groups provided for each other, such an action could hardly have been tolerated.¹⁶⁹ Significantly, Stephen states that Iurminburh complained about Wilfrid's *innumerum exercitum sodalium regalibus vestimentis et armis ornatum*.¹⁷⁰ According to his own biographer, Wilfrid's martial power was a concern for the Northumbrian court. This would also accord with Stephen's reluctance to specify Theodore's case in 679. A martial role is hardly in keeping with the image of the bishop, patiently struggling alone, against the heavy-handedness of kings and archbishops. More to the point, it goes far beyond simply helping an exile, as Wilfrid claims when accosted by a Frankish bishop.¹⁷¹ This is a curious section because Stephen does not give the name of the bishop and, through him, exposes the faults of

¹⁶⁶ *HE* iv.1.

¹⁶⁷ *VW* 28. 'He sent him forth to his own country in great state, well supplied with weapons and supported by the strength of his companions.'

¹⁶⁸ Fouracre, 'Continent,' p. 197.

¹⁶⁹ Althoff, *Family*, p. 23–7.

¹⁷⁰ *VW* 24. 'his countless army of followers arrayed in royal vestments and arms.'

¹⁷¹ *VW* 33.

Dagobert, thereby giving Wilfrid the opportunity to justify his actions.¹⁷² One could, consequently, query the historicity of the passage—would the bishop really release Wilfrid without recourse to Ebroin; how could Wilfrid have completed his journey in ostensibly hostile territory? Ultimately, it shows that Stephen was sensitive to criticism about Wilfrid on this precise point and felt it was sufficiently valid that he needed to place words in Wilfrid’s mouth in order to defend him.¹⁷³

The chronology of Wilfrid’s fall

Chronologically, linking Wilfrid’s fall with the return of Dagobert in *c.* 675/6 works as well. The chronology of his fall is difficult to reconstruct, the only secure date being his appearance at the Lateran Council in October 679.¹⁷⁴ Wilfrid overwintered in Frisia and while it is unclear how many months he spent there, this means he must have left Northumbria in 678.¹⁷⁵ It is unlikely that he would have begun to travel in winter and Stephen’s narrative implies a period of preaching.¹⁷⁶ As such, it is reasonable to infer that he set out during the summer months of 678. The time of his fall, prior to this, is not clear. The narrative is: Iurminburh persuaded Ecgrith to rid himself of Wilfrid; Ecgrith persuaded Theodore to depose Wilfrid; Theodore found and consecrated new bishops; Wilfrid became aware of this and the situation was explained to him; Wilfrid consulted with his fellow bishops; finally, Wilfrid made preparations to appeal to Rome.¹⁷⁷ How long each stage took is very difficult to say. For instance, was Theodore persuaded immediately, or did Ecgrith have to negotiate with him? How long did it take Theodore to find suitable bishops? How should Wilfrid’s consultation with his fellow bishops be understood? There is nothing definitive to suggest

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ Ibid. Given Stephen’s sources, this may well be how Wilfrid chose to present his involvement with Dagobert, in which case Wilfrid himself felt the need to justify his behaviour in this instance, in the face of criticism.

¹⁷⁴ VW 29; Levison, ‘Akten’, pp. 249–82.

¹⁷⁵ VW 28.

¹⁷⁶ VW 26.

¹⁷⁷ VW 24.

Wilfrid set out from Northumbria in 678 and, as with his second expulsion, it is possible he initially exiled himself.¹⁷⁸ Unless there was a convenient synod, it would have taken time for him to communicate with some of the other bishops. One cannot impose specific time parameters on any of these points, but it is worth being aware of them and that the process behind Wilfrid leaving Northumbria may have been protracted.

Wilfrid in exile

Further circumstantial corroboration may be found from where Wilfrid was able to go in the years after his return from Rome. After his possible arrest and imprisonment he was exiled from Northumbria.¹⁷⁹ On having found hospitality in Mercia, Æthelred forced him to depart *pro adulatione Ecgfrithi regis*.¹⁸⁰ Ecgfrith's sister was married to Æthelred.¹⁸¹ A similar reaction met Wilfrid in Wessex, where Iurminburh's sister was the queen of Centwine.¹⁸² Wilfrid ultimately found safety in Sussex, a kingdom not linked by ties of marriage and kinship to Northumbria.¹⁸³ Consequently, where a link to Neustria existed, Wilfrid was unable to remain. It is telling that he never sought refuge in Kent and it may have been vehement Kentish opposition that prevented his succession to Canterbury.¹⁸⁴

Moreover, the counterfactual works. Once the Neustrian ties dissipated, Wilfrid was able to return. As such, when Cædwalla succeeded to Wessex, he summoned Wilfrid.¹⁸⁵ With Ecgfrith's death, Wilfrid was able to return to Northumbria and reconciled with Theodore.¹⁸⁶ Ecgfrith's successor, Aldfrith, lacked the Kentish and Neustrian ties of his half-brother.¹⁸⁷ He

¹⁷⁸ VW 45.

¹⁷⁹ VW 34.

¹⁸⁰ VW 40. 'to flatter King Ecgfrith'.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ VW 41.

¹⁸⁴ Berhtwold's papal letter may hint at this: it was not addressed to the king of Kent. *GPA* i.34.

¹⁸⁵ VW 42.

¹⁸⁶ *HE* iv.13; VW 44. For further details, see below, pp. 236–41.

¹⁸⁷ VW 44.

was probably Oswiu's son by an Irish woman.¹⁸⁸ Oswiu's ties to Kent and Neustria were by marriage to Eanflæd, through whom Ecgrith inherited them, alongside the probable links through Iurminburh. As such, Wilfrid's involvement in Dagobert II's return would have been inconsequential to him. With Ecgrith gone in Northumbria, Æthelred would have had greater freedom of action. Certainly, he became one of Wilfrid's staunchest supporters.¹⁸⁹ Given the apparent importance of the kin-group, the role of Æthelred's queen and Ecgrith's sister, Osthryth, is somewhat problematic. It was only at Theodore's request, however, that Æthelred reconciled with Wilfrid.¹⁹⁰ After the Battle of Trent in 679 Theodore had intervened to prevent further fighting between Northumbria and Mercia; Bede, remarkably, thought there were good reasons for the fighting to continue.¹⁹¹ Whether the archbishop could make representations by virtue of his office or Theodore personally was especially respected is unclear. Either way, Æthelred would have listened to his requests for peace that superseded his immediate familial interests.

Wilfrid's second exile from Northumbria at the hands of Aldfrith was for different reasons. Stephen recorded that Wilfrid objected to Ripon's loss of property, its loss of freedom due to becoming an episcopal see and that Aldfrith upheld certain unspecified canons of Theodore.¹⁹² This serves to further emphasize the personal animosity that was involved in Wilfrid's previous fall. Furthermore, by the time that Wilfrid appealed Aldfrith's actions and returned to Neustria on his way back from Rome, the Austrasian nobility had triumphed. In c. 687 Pippin II won

¹⁸⁸ *VP* 24; Colgrave and Mynors, ed., *Ecclesiastical History*, p. 430, n. 1.

¹⁸⁹ *VW* 43, 45, 48, 57.

¹⁹⁰ *VW* 43.

¹⁹¹ *HE* iv.21.

¹⁹² *VW* 45. Stancliffe, *Bede*, p. 16.

the Battle of Tertry and control of the entire Frankish kingdom.¹⁹³ The Neustrian nobility was presumably no longer a threat to him.

To summarise, the reasons for Wilfrid's first expulsion from Northumbria can be linked to Iurminburh's antipathy. Iurminburh almost certainly had Neustrian links. Whether she was Frankish is unprovable but seems quite likely. Ecgfrith too had dynastic ties to the Merovingians and to the Neustrian nobility. Iurminburh's hostility was the result of Wilfrid's temporal power, including armed retainers, whom he supplied to Dagobert II to aid his return. Dagobert's return angered the Neustrian nobility to the extent that Ebroin wanted to seize Wilfrid. In light of English links to Neustria, it is reasonable to connect Wilfrid's fall to Dagobert II's return. Wilfrid was hounded out of every kingdom where such Neustrian links might be found and was only able to return once they had gone. Wilfrid's first fall is, thus, a further testament to the socio-political integration of the Neustrian and the English worlds.

Wilfrid and Austrasia

Wilfrid alone provides evidence of contact with Austrasia. This is surprising because of his own links to Neustria-Burgundy given his education in Lyon and episcopal consecration in Compiègne and the ties between Agilbert, Wilfrid's patron, and Ebroin.¹⁹⁴ Wilfrid's behaviour does appear duplicitous at times; his apparent support for Cædwalla has led to accusations that he displayed treachery towards his South Saxon patron Æthelwath.¹⁹⁵ This should not be ruled out entirely but the curious point about Stephen's account of Dagobert's return is how deliberate it appears. Having heard that Dagobert was alive in Ireland from travellers, *amici et proximi eius ... miserunt nuntios suos ad beatum Wilfrithum episcopum, petentes ut eum de*

¹⁹³ *FC Continuationes* 5.

¹⁹⁴ Fouracre, 'Continent', pp. 196–7.

¹⁹⁵ Farmer, 'Wilfrid', p. 50; Mayr-Harting, 'Sussex', p. 7 *cf.* Sharpe, 'Cædwalla', pp. 216–17.

*Scottia et Hibernia ad se invitasset et sibi ad regem emisisset.*¹⁹⁶ Wilfrid was sought out, which suggests he had already developed ties with these friends and kinsmen of Dagobert, who seem to have thought that he could be relied upon to support their cause.

The figure of Balthild could provide some hint. She is one of the villains in the *VW*, ordering the execution of Aunemundus, a role corroborated by the *AA*.¹⁹⁷ Fouracre has sought to further explain this hostility by discussing the possibility that Agilbert was an enemy of Balthild, observing that Agilbert's return to Francia in *c.* 664 coincides very neatly with her downfall.¹⁹⁸ Stephen's chronology is too vague to be certain that Wilfrid was in Francia at this moment and Bede's reference to Tuda's episcopacy complicates when Wilfrid was chosen as bishop, suggesting it may not have occurred until 665.¹⁹⁹ Fouracre's point is a useful one, and the focus should still be upon Balthild and Aunemundus, even if Stephen's account raises questions as to whether Wilfrid actually witnessed either the queen's downfall or the bishop's martyrdom.²⁰⁰ At the very least, Stephen, and so presumably Wilfrid, knew of the circumstances surrounding Aunemundus' death. In the context of the Merovingian dynasty, Dagobert was the son of Sigibert III.²⁰¹ Balthild's children with Clovis II: Chlothar III, Childeric II and Theuderic III, succeeded to the various Frankish kingdoms.²⁰² Clovis III, installed by Ebroin in Austrasia after Childeric II's murder, was presented as Chlothar's son.²⁰³ How Wilfrid might have related to Ebroin, the *maior domus*, is unclear. Ebroin seems to have done nothing to prevent Balthild's fall and seclusion in Chelles and may even have played a hand in it. Nevertheless, she must have approved his appointment and Wilfrid, with his dogmatic logic, could have perceived him

¹⁹⁶ *VW* 28. 'his friends and kinsmen ... sent messengers to the blessed Bishop Wilfrid asking him to invite [Dagobert] across from Scotland and Ireland and to send him out to them as king'.

¹⁹⁷ *VW* 6; *AA* 3.

¹⁹⁸ Fouracre, 'Continent', p. 193.

¹⁹⁹ *HE* iii.26.

²⁰⁰ *VW* 6; *cf.* *AA*; Nelson, 'Jezebels', p. 66; Fouracre, *Ebroin*, pp. 100–8; Fouracre and Gerberding, ed., *Hagiography*, pp. 174–5; *cf.* Fouracre, 'Continent', pp. 187–90.

²⁰¹ *LHF* 43.

²⁰² *LHF* 44; *FC Continuationes* 1.

²⁰³ *PL* 19.

as her creature.²⁰⁴ In essence, the possibility should be considered, therefore, that Wilfrid did not regard his Frankish contacts within the brackets of ‘Neustria’ and ‘Austrasia’, rather he saw himself within an ‘anti-Balthild’ party, opposing her children and her (possible) allies. The opportunity to support those hostile to her legacy, literally backing a different branch of the Merovingian dynasty, may have had its attractions for Wilfrid, even if it meant opposing his king and queen and turning his back on old allies such as Agilbert.²⁰⁵ Wilfrid’s loyalties to Aunemundus arguably defined his position within Frankish politics and either provided him with some opportunity to build a network with those who later sought his aid in the return of Dagobert or at least marked him as someone sympathetic to their cause.

All of this represents the complexities of Frankish-English interactions in the seventh century and probably only scrapes the surface. Wilfrid’s connections cast a long shadow over his life and loyalties, just as those formed by royal courts influenced their behaviour. The crucial point to focus upon from the evidence of both Quentovic and the expulsion of Wilfrid is the importance of Neustria in Anglo-Saxon politics. It was a source of competition, but also a source of wealth. The ties that developed meant that they were unwilling to allow an impertinent bishop to threaten them. The question at hand, then, is why does this evidence vanish towards the end of the seventh century?

The Battle of Tertry, Wilfrid and Willibrord: an Austrasian Shift

The truism runs that absence of evidence is not evidence of absence. Certainly, the end of the seventh century is the point where Bede’s *HE* begins to decrease in detail. The evidence of the

²⁰⁴ *LHF* 44–5; Fouracre, *Ebroin*, pp. 86–7; Wood, *Merovingian*, p. 225; Gerberding, *Carolingians*, p. 69; Dupraz, *Contribution*, p. 358; Ewig, ‘*Teilreiche*’, pp. 123–4.

²⁰⁵ Fouracre, ‘*Continent*’, p. 197.

eighth century contacts principally lies in the letters sent by Boniface, Lull and Alcuin.²⁰⁶ The shift in the nature of the evidence might account for an apparent silence. However, it is with Alcuin and Charlemagne that links may begin to be drawn between courts. Offa and Charlemagne corresponded and, for the first time perhaps in 100 years, a marriage alliance was proposed; one between one of Offa's daughters and Charles the Younger.²⁰⁷ Consequently, the re-emergence of evidence within the letter-writing culture of the eighth century, as well as Frankish narrative accounts in the ninth century, might suggest that earlier silences should be taken as indicating that contact had indeed reduced. Furthermore, in a Kentish context, royal names no longer betray Frankish links. Eormenric, Eormenred, Hlothere are names confined to the seventh century. Where evidence does exist, it is of traders, lower down the social ladder.²⁰⁸

In this regard, the strength of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms' Neustrian links may be crucial. The balance of power shifted decisively in the Frankish kingdoms after the Battle of Tertry in 687. The victory of Pippin II rebalanced Frankish politics in Austrasia's favour. In other words, power was now held by a region with which Anglo-Saxon courts had no links. The significance of the Battle of Tertry, of course, has to be dealt with carefully. Regarding the battle as the crucial moment in the rise of the Carolingians, leading inexorably towards the triumphs of Charlemagne, is an outdated, teleological approach.²⁰⁹ However, in the context of 687 it was a major victory that provided Pippin II with an opportunity to develop his power. The Battle of Tertry saw Austrasia overwhelmingly defeat Neustrian forces and Pippin was able to impose his own peace upon the Neustrian *maior domus*, Berthar, and the king, Theuderic III, unifying

²⁰⁶ *BLE* 9–11, 13–15, 23, 27, 29, 30, 33–6, 39, 46–7, 63–5, 69–70, 73–8, 91, 94, 100–1, 105, 111–12, 116–17, 121–7, 130–1, 139; *AE* 3, 7–9, 16–24, 30–1, 42–4, 46, 48, 61–4, 85, 87, 100–1, 104–6, 108–9, 114–16, 122–4, 127–30, 226, 230, 255, 285, 288, 290–4, 300, 311.

²⁰⁷ *AE* 87; Stenton, *England*, p. 220; Nelson, *Charles*, pp. 270–2; McKitterick, *Charlemagne*, pp. 282–4.

²⁰⁸ S133; Levison, *Continent*, pp. 7–8.

²⁰⁹ Bonnel, *Anfänge*, p. 125; Gerberding, *Carolingians*, pp. 92–3; McKitterick, *Frankish Kingdoms*, p. 28.

the Frankish kingdom under his authority.²¹⁰ Fouracre's prosopographical study makes a compelling case for the slow growth of Pippinid influence and the degree of continuity visible in the documentary record.²¹¹ Nonetheless, there was a shift in power in Francia and the scale of Pippin's control over Neustria can perhaps be seen in his appointments for the Neustrian *maior domus*, firstly his own supporter, Nordebert, and then his young son, Grimoald.²¹² Consequently, the Neustrian nobility had a new situation to deal with, one which arguably drew their eyes east at the expense of previous links to the north.

English contact at this point in time shifted overwhelmingly from the political to the ecclesiastical. The missions of Willibrord and Boniface and their disciples form the evidence base for relations between the Franks and the English from the late seventh century onwards. Wilfrid provides the most economical explanation for this reshaping of relations. Wilfrid, despite perhaps belonging to an anti-Balthild party rather than an Austrasian one *per se*, is the only figure prior to Willibrord with links to Austrasia.²¹³ Furthermore, he had ties to Willibrord, who had been a member of the community at Ripon prior to Wilfrid's first expulsion.²¹⁴ These ties were perpetuated, as Wilfrid was asked to consecrate Swithberht bishop and Wilfrid visited Willibrord on his journey to Rome before his second appeal.²¹⁵ The scale of Wilfrid's involvement is difficult to gauge and Palmer has suggested that Stephen downplayed Wilfrid's continued involvement in Frisia as a missionary.²¹⁶ Certainly, given Wilfrid's own missionary efforts in Frisia and the evidence of continuing links to him, it is reasonable to see him in the background to Willibrord's missionary impulse, alongside Ecgberht of Iona.

²¹⁰ Fouracre, 'Influence', pp. 3–4.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 9–11.

²¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 7, 11–12; McKitterick, *Frankish Kingdoms*, p. 90.

²¹³ VW 28.

²¹⁴ VW 26.

²¹⁵ *HE* iii.13, v.11.

²¹⁶ Palmer, 'Frisians', pp. 237–238

How involved Wilfrid was prior to Willibrord's mission is, however, unclear, because there is a curious shift in the approach taken with Willibrord's effort. Bede notes that on arrival Willibrord and his companions sought out Pippin II and learnt from him that he had taken over Frisia.²¹⁷ In other words, they deliberately sought Pippin out as the first step of the mission, irrespective of his recent successes in the region, which they learnt of when they met him. Previous missionaries, such as Wihtberht and even Wilfrid himself, seem to have acted independently of any Frankish interest and while the Frisians tolerated them, they experienced little success.²¹⁸ Consequently, this change needs to be accounted for, as does the scale of support that Pippin was willing to give them.²¹⁹ Wilfrid provides the obvious answer, having aided the *amici et proximi*²²⁰ of Dagobert II in Austrasia. Whether this includes Pippin is not clear and Wood is cautious about identifying him as such.²²¹ However, Pippin did resist Ebroin's encroachment and so his involvement in Dagobert's return would make sense.²²² At the very least, it is unlikely that he was ignorant of the circumstances surrounding Dagobert's return and would have known of Wilfrid, even if he had had no direct contact with him in the events preceding Dagobert's reign. Wilfrid was ideally placed to arrange the introductions between Willibrord and Pippin, having ties to both parties. Willibrord's mission begins the pattern of English evangelization on the eastern Frankish borders, closely associated with Arnulfing patronage, which ultimately blossomed with Boniface's work with Carloman and Pippin III. Thus, Wilfrid appears as the point about which Frankish-English contacts turn, preparing the ground for the English missions of the eighth century.

²¹⁷ *HE* v.10.

²¹⁸ *HE* v.9; *VW* 26.

²¹⁹ *HE* v.11.

²²⁰ *VW* 28. 'friends and kinsmen.'

²²¹ Wood, *Kingdoms*, pp. 232–3.

²²² *LHF* 46.

Conclusion

Evidently, the English cannot be separated out from the Frankish world. The links of both the English Church and the Anglo-Saxon courts ran deep. Bede's general statement about families sending their daughters to Frankish monasteries suggests that what has survived is no more than the tip of the iceberg. Ecclesiastics incorporated elements of Frankish liturgy and ritual into their own practice, while the long tradition of canon law at Lyon, combined with its leadership of the Frankish Church, makes it just possible that an institutional link developed with Canterbury. Anglo-Saxon courts, especially Kent, developed links with Neustrian noble families and the Merovingians as well.

The vital point, however, is that the English had their own purposes in developing these links. They sought benefits in those that they cultivated with the Franks, whether Biscop in the form of books and masons or the Kentish and East Anglian courts seeking influence over Quentovic. It should be stressed that interaction is clearer and more developed in socio-political contexts than in ecclesiastical circles. A possible explanation could be that courts were acting from a spirit of both competition and cooperation with both the English and the Franks having something to contribute to the relationship. The economic exchanges at Quentovic, for example, were lucrative and worth controlling. Neither side, however, could ignore the other without threatening the emporium's viability. Considering Erchinoald's career, his marriage alliance with Kent further integrated him into the Merovingian family tree, enhancing his influence and prestige and arguably supporting him as he sought the position of *maior domus*. Erchinoald, in turn, gave the Kentish court access to Quentovic's hinterland. Arguably, the English Church had little it could offer the Frankish Church in the seventh century. While English ecclesiastics chose to look to the Frankish Church, they were beneficiaries of those links, rather than engaging in a partnership; a situation that changed significantly with Willibrord's mission.

More pertinently, this chapter exposes the underlying realities of the eastern shift visible in the movement of travellers in the seventh and early eighth centuries. The Neustrian-Burgundian axis remains visible in where ecclesiastical ties were forged. The political ties are more focussed. While Kentish links to the Merovingians are not necessarily reducible simply to Neustria, the Merovingian powerbase lay in Neustria. Furthermore, beyond those royal ties, the evidence is exclusively Neustrian. The strength of these ties is visible in the expulsion of Bishop Wilfrid, where his support for the return of Dagobert II to Austrasia resulted in him being hounded out of every kingdom where a Neustrian link is detectable. However, it is this involvement in Austrasian politics that is most significant in the wider view of the seventh century. The shift in the balance of power wrought by the Battle of Tertry and the need for the Neustrian nobility to react to this changed state of affairs by focusing their efforts inwards, is the simplest explanation for the apparent decline of aristocratic and royal ties at the end of the seventh century. However, Wilfrid's prior ties to Austrasia provided him and his followers with an opportunity. Wilfrid was the person most able to make the introduction of Willibrord and Pippin II, tying missionary efforts to Frankish political leaders, a strategy hitherto not attempted. In essence, the history of Frankish-English links in the seventh century is their transition from primarily socio-political to overwhelmingly ecclesiastical.

Wilfrid's role here defines another important observation: the role of the individual. While Canterbury's links with Lyon might be conceived of as institutional and Kent's ties to the Merovingians and Neustria's nobility had clearly become a tradition, transmission of influence was nonetheless personal. Wilfrid's studies at Lyon and his knowledge of Salonius and Sagittarius' deposition may have introduced the idea for bishops to appeal directly to Rome into the English Church. It was through Eorcengota and Æthelburh that the rite of translation became known in the English Church. Furthermore, it was Eorcengota, Æthelburh and Sæthryth who appear to have been significant links in the bonds between East Anglia, Kent

and Neustria. They were crucial both to enhancing Erchinoald's control over Faramoutiers and to ensuring continued Kentish and East Anglian interest in Quentovic.

In short, Neustria was of especial importance to Anglo-Saxon courts. The Frankish Church seems to have had a more diffuse influence upon its English neighbour, but the Rhône valley appears with a remarkable consistency, focussing upon Lyon. Wilfrid appears to have pioneered the relations of the English Church with the Arnulfings and acted as the fulcrum about which English-Frankish relations turned from the seventh to the eighth centuries. However, this all has to be balanced against the persistent influence of Rome. Francia could support the English Church; it could enrich and enhance the prestige of kings. Nevertheless, in Rome things could be acquired *quae nec in Gallia ... repperiri valebant*.²²³ What these things were and their significance to the English is the subject of the next chapter.

²²³ HA 6, 'which could not be found even in Gaul'.

CHAPTER FIVE: WILFRID AND THE ENGLISH IN ROME

*praesentavit eum papae beatae memoriae et omnem causam itineris adolescentuli servi Dei mirabiliter ostendit; qui ponens manum suam benedictam super caput eius, cum oratione benedixit eum.*¹

It is easy to pass over this section of Stephen's account of Wilfrid's life. It comes at the end of the fifth chapter and falls between the details Stephen provides about Wilfrid's Roman education under the tutelage of Archdeacon Boniface and the martyrdom of Aunemundus.² It is difficult to be certain of precisely what Stephen is describing. It could either be a simple papal blessing or an imposition of hands, with the pope praying over Wilfrid indicating that he was confirmed while in Rome.³ Whatever the precise details, it is of inordinate significance because this is the first time that Stephen presents Wilfrid engaging with a Christian rite. While Wilfrid acted as Cudda's servant as part of the Lindisfarne community, Stephen carefully stresses that he remained *laicus capite*.⁴ Any action undertaken at Lindisfarne, such as learning the Psalter, was inspired by his own piety.⁵ The same is true of his actions in Canterbury, which included learning the Roman Psalter, praying, fasting and reading.⁶ Even his first encounter with Aunemundus lacks formal ecclesiastical engagement.⁷ Such a presentation is obviously fanciful. Wilfrid's baptism was presumably carried out by the Ionan missionaries. He could hardly have escaped the communal life of both Lindisfarne and Canterbury. However, Stephen's careful crafting of Wilfrid's early life reveals the centrality of Rome in his account. Wilfrid only began to engage with the Church in Stephen's account after his papal blessing, receiving the tonsure from Aunemundus and ordination from Agilbert.⁸ Stephen stresses

¹ VW 5. 'he presented him to the Pope of blessed memory and explained to him with singular clearness the whole reason for the journey of the young servant of God. The Pope placed his blessed hand on Wilfrid's head, prayed over him, and gave him his blessing.'

² VW 5–6.

³ Banting, 'Confirmation', pp. 148–50.

⁴ VW 2. 'untonsured.'

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ VW 3.

⁷ VW 4.

⁸ VW 6, 9.

Wilfrid's orthodoxy and his authority by sweeping aside his early life and beginning Wilfrid's ecclesiastical career with him kneeling before the pope.

For Stephen, Wilfrid's career is in that sense defined by the papacy and he draws out the influence that Rome had upon Wilfrid far more clearly than that of Francia. Boniface's teachings on the four gospels, matters of ecclesiastical discipline and *computus* are carefully spelt out.⁹ Turning to Bede, he had a notion that Rome provided knowledge unavailable in Francia.¹⁰ If Francia was orthodox, Rome was beyond reproach. More to the point, the personal links that form the clearest evidence of Frankish contact are contrasted with the institutional links with Rome. Bishops and archbishops of Canterbury maintained a link with Rome materially symbolised by the *pallium* and with every new election that connection was renewed.¹¹ Wilfrid's appeals show the English Church turning to Rome as a court which could attempt to resolve its disputes. In a sense this is all encapsulated by the Synod of Hatfield, convoked at the papacy's request to denounce the Monothelete heresy, which had sprung up in the Byzantine Empire.¹²

There are therefore two points to focus upon in this chapter. The first is that both Bede and Stephen suggest an upswing in interest in Rome amongst English ecclesiastics, beginning with Wilfrid, from the mid-seventh century and it is necessary to consider how this manifested itself by examining known travellers to Rome, along with the motives and consequences of their trip. The second point focusses upon Rome's increasing visibility as an arbitrator within the English Church, largely thanks to Wilfrid's two appeals to Agatho (678–81) and John VI (701–5). Likewise, at this point in time, papal privileges begin to appear, with Wilfrid's and Biscop's foundations.¹³ It raises questions about how this evolving relationship with Rome influenced

⁹ VW 5.

¹⁰ HA 6; HE v.20.

¹¹ Shaw, 'Augustine', pp. 485–7.

¹² HE iv.17.

¹³ VW 47; HA 6; Savill, *Privileges*, pp. 101–2.

the ecclesiology of the English Church and where Theodore and the new title of ‘archbishop of Britain’ stood within this dynamic.

One of the curious points to emerge from the previous chapter was how Francia could both stand for Rome within the context of orthodox practice and yet nonetheless be superseded by Rome the place. This does raise a methodological issue, specifically that the febrile atmosphere of the early eighth century resulted in contemporary concerns being projected onto the past in an effort to politicise it. Why, for example, did Stephen describe what Wilfrid learnt in his few months in Rome, but pass over in silence the three years he spent sitting at the feet of Lyon’s masters?¹⁴ While the eighth-century interpretations of seventh-century ecclesiastics’ behaviour is instructive, it is necessary not to be overly credulous and, where necessary, to separate the interpretation from the action. Rome was evidently a significant feature on the English horizon, but it would be incorrect to perceive it as an unchanging monolith. This chapter will explore how the English relationship with Rome evolved over the course of the second half of the seventh century.

Rome: Guaranteeing Episcopal Authority

Bede carefully identified two bishops whose merits were in part mediated through their travel to and experiences in Rome: Oftfor and Acca. Oftfor appears in the list of bishops that Whitby produced. The list stood as a testament to the learning and devoutness of the community that Hilda had founded. In that context, Oftfor was separated out and Bede introduced him as follows: *cum in utroque Hildae abbatissae monasterio lectioni et observationi scripturarum operam dedisset, tandem perfectiora desiderans venit Cantiam ad archiepiscopum beatae recordationis Theodorum. Ubi postquam aliquandiu lectionibus sacris vacavit, etiam Romam*

¹⁴ VW 5–6.

*adire curavit, quod eo tempore magnae virtutis aestimabatur.*¹⁵ The precise purpose of his visit to Rome is unclear. However, the use of *etiam* implies continuity from Canterbury, linking his studies there with the decision to go to Rome. More to the point, having Roman credentials marked Oftfor out as special. An explanation of how studying in Rome improved the standing of English ecclesiastics is given in the context of Acca's career. While in Rome *multa illic, quae in patria nequiverat, ecclesiae sanctae institutis utilia didicit.*¹⁶ This is a significant statement in three ways. Firstly, in the context of Acca's career, it is Bede's final statement on the bishop. He has discussed Acca's knowledge of theology and ecclesiastical music and custom; his education with Bosa and then Wilfrid, and only then introduces Rome. In other words, Bede builds up to it because it is the most powerful evidence of Acca's learning and importance to the English Church. Secondly, it clarifies the merits of Oftfor's journey to Rome. Rome was a centre of Christian knowledge and contact with it enhanced the English Church as it deepened its understanding and awareness of the Christian faith. Thirdly, it provides a hint as to why this contact was necessary, albeit in an oblique way.

Bede prefaced Acca's education with a rather odd sentence: *Nam et ipse episcopus Acca cantator erat peritissimus, quomodo etiam in litteris sanctis doctissimus et in catholicae fidei confessione castissimus, in ecclesiasticae quoque institutionis regulis sollertissimus extiterat.*¹⁷ The details of Acca's education, culminating in the hitherto unknown Roman knowledge, appear as evidence for this statement. It is such an emphatic statement that it draws attention to itself and one is forced to wonder if Bede protests too much. Bede's staunch defence of

¹⁵ *HE* iv.23. 'after he had devoted himself to the reading and observance of the Scriptures in both of Hild's monasteries, being anxious to reach still greater heights, he went to Kent to join Archbishop Theodore of blessed memory. After he had spent some further time in sacred studies there, he decided to go to Rome too, which in those days was considered to be an act of great merit.'

¹⁶ *HE* v.20. 'he learned many valuable things about the institutions of the holy Church which he could not have learned in his native land.'

¹⁷ *Ibid.* 'Bishop Acca was himself a musician of great experience as well as a very learned theologian, untainted in his confession of the catholic faith and thoroughly familiar with the rules of ecclesiastical custom; and he will not cease to be so until he gains the reward of his piety and devotion.'

Acca, ironically, raises questions of Acca's orthodoxy; it implies there was criticism of Acca. To such an accusation, Rome and Roman learning was the ultimate rebuttal. Bede evidently felt that placed Acca's orthodoxy beyond all question and, as with Otfor, enhanced his authority as a consequence. This link between Rome, orthodoxy and authority becomes more significant in light of the careers of both Wilfrid and Theodore.

Wilfrid

Wilfrid's Roman education contrasts slightly with Acca's and Otfor's because it comes before the Synod of Whitby rather than after it. Wilfrid's justification of his entire career, according to Stephen, lay in a concern to ensure English practice matched that of the Roman Church. At the Synod of Austerfeld Wilfrid protested that he was the first since Gregory's original mission to challenge the heresies of the Scots and that he introduced the Dionysiac dating of Easter and the tonsure *secundum apostolicae sedis rationem*.¹⁸ Consequently, Wilfrid's conception of his own importance was mediated through the Roman customs that he introduced. Bede follows him with the acknowledgement that he was the first English bishop to introduce catholic customs to the English Church.¹⁹

There is a progression to Wilfrid's career, from youth in Rome to bishop of Northumbria, which seems to have been grounded in that Roman education and which needs to be viewed from the perspective of the dating of Easter. It is striking that Stephen claimed that *indicavit ei Alchfrithus rex de sancto Wilfritho abbate ab apostolica sede veniente*²⁰ before listing his worthiness for ordination in accordance with Titus' list of episcopal qualities.²¹ Importantly, in the construction of the chapter Wilfrid's qualities appear to stem from the initial introduction of him as a man coming from the Apostolic See. There are two interpretations of this

¹⁸ VW 47. 'in accordance with the practice of the Apostolic See.'

¹⁹ HE iv.2.

²⁰ VW 9. 'King Alhfrith told him about St Wilfrid the abbot who had come from the Apostolic See.'

²¹ Titus 1:9.

introduction. Either Stephen was presenting these qualities as stemming from his study in Rome, or it could stand at the head of the list as Wilfrid's first positive characteristic. It is interesting that the subsequent qualities were reported third hand by King Alhfrith, whereas to Wilfrid's Roman origins Alhfrith could testify himself. Either way, Wilfrid's time in Rome appears as a, if not the, crucial reason behind Alhfrith's and Agilbert's patronage and is a prominent feature in heralding Wilfrid's episcopacy.

Stephen notes that Wilfrid learnt *alias multas ecclesiasticae disciplinae regulas*²² while at Rome, which is only slightly less vague than his description of Wilfrid's time with the teachers at Lyon. However, he also focussed upon the fact that Wilfrid *quattuor evangelia Christi perfecte didicit et paschalem rationem*.²³ The Easter question in part rested upon mathematical calculations, but also involved relating the synoptic Gospels with the Gospel of John.²⁴ The chronology of John's Gospel differs from the other three and depending which passion narrative is preferred would produce a different attitude towards the date of Easter.²⁵ Consequently, the education that Stephen focusses upon were the two elements necessary for Wilfrid's role at Whitby, disputing the matter of Easter with Colmán and championing the Dionysiac calculation over the *Latercus*. Furthermore, in the context of Wilfrid's relationship with Agilbert at Whitby, Wilfrid's knowledge was presumably superior. It is unclear when the Frankish Church fully switched from the Victorian to the Dionysian tables, but it seems to have been some time after Wilfrid's Roman education.²⁶ Agilbert's earlier Irish career would suggest that he was familiar with the Victorian Easter and that through his contact with Wilfrid he became aware of the Dionysiac calculations.²⁷ Wilfrid's Roman education therefore not only gave him the abilities to deal with the *Latercus* in Northumbria but to supersede the knowledge

²² VW 5. 'many other rules of ecclesiastical discipline.'

²³ Ibid. 'learned the four Gospels of Christ perfectly and the Easter rule.'

²⁴ Ohashi, 'Victorius', pp. 140–2; Pelteret, 'Apostolic Authority', pp. 159–69.

²⁵ Pelteret, 'Apostolic Authority', pp. 151–3.

²⁶ Palmer, 'Controversy', pp. 215–16.

²⁷ Pelteret, 'Apostolic Authority', pp. 171–2.

of Agilbert; he was ideally suited as the Roman spokesman and his learning placed him above bishops. Furthermore, from Stephen's perspective, it was Wilfrid's willingness to accept Roman discipline and his ability to teach it that was central to his episcopal election.²⁸ Wilfrid's knowledge of Roman orthodoxy defined his role at Whitby and gave him an authority, which, as his plea at Austerfeld suggests, he used to underpin his entire career.

Wigheard and Theodore

It seems likely that Wilfrid's success at Whitby led to the appeal to Rome for a new bishop.²⁹ The papal letter, having described Oswiu's request, includes the sentence: *Profecto enim dum huiusmodi apta reppertaque persona fuerit, eum instructum ad vestram dirigemus patriam, ut ipse et viva voce et per divina oracula omnem inimici zizanium ex omni vestra insula cum divino nutu eradicet.*³⁰ Consequently, there appears to be some link between the Easter controversy, Roman knowledge and the approach to Vitalian for a bishop. There are two statements that Bede makes which allows for this to be unpacked a little further. The first is a comment Bede made explaining the origins of the Synod of Whitby: *Unde merito movit haec quaestio sensus et corda multorum, timentium ne forte accepto Christianitatis vocabulo in vacuum currerent aut cucurrissent.*³¹

To say that Whitby was concerned with orthodoxy is hardly novel, but it clarifies Bede's explanation of the appeal to Rome. According to Bede, Oswiu and Ecgbert sent Wigheard to Rome to be ordained so that *quatinus accepto ipse gradu archiepiscopatus catholicos per omnem Britanniam ecclesiis Anglorum ordinare posset antistites.*³² Taken with the papal letter

²⁸ VW 11.

²⁹ HA 3; HE iii.29.

³⁰ HE iii.29. 'But as soon as a fit person is found, we will send him to your land with full instructions so that he may, by his preaching and with the help of the word of God, entirely root out, with His blessing, the tares sown by the enemy throughout your island.'

³¹ HE iii.25. 'This dispute naturally troubled the minds and hearts of many people who feared that, though they had received the name of Christian, they were running or had run in vain.'

³² HE iii.29. 'when he had received the rank of archbishop, he could consecrate catholic bishops for the English churches throughout the whole of Britain.'

and Bede's preface to Whitby, the appeal to Rome was wrapped up in issues of orthodoxy. By looking beyond the English and British bishops alive in 664 the question of legitimacy, which Wilfrid had raised himself, could be circumvented. Furthermore, this bishop could receive instruction directly from the pope. His legitimacy and orthodoxy would then feed back into the English episcopate, through Canterbury's central role in consecrating his province's bishops. By an appeal to Rome, the catholicity of the English bishops would be guaranteed and the validity of their actions assured.

There is another issue at play in the appeal to Rome and that is whether Wigheard was the nominee of Ecgbert and Oswiu, as Bede states.³³ Shaw's detailed analysis of Bede's narrative in the *HA* and the *HE* and the papal letter has led him to conclude that Bede gradually accumulated contradictory evidence. He tried to reconcile these accounts, while prioritising the narrative he had received from Biscop.³⁴ He further points out two flaws with Bede's account. The first, simply, is the idea that a bishop would make the dangerous journey to Rome for consecration and as evidence he cites Augustine's, Berhtwold's and Wilfrid's Frankish consecrations.³⁵ However, the obvious rebuttal is that Berhtwold did go to Rome to acquire the *pallium*.³⁶ The second, the involvement of Ecgbert, is a stronger point, not least owing to his absence from the letter of Vitalian, but it does rely upon negative evidence.³⁷ The letters sent to Æthelberht and Bertha, and Edwin and Æthelburh demonstrate that popes might send letters to closely related people on similar subjects but not refer to the other person or the other letter.³⁸ Ecgbert's absence from Vitalian's letter to Oswiu should not be relied upon too heavily.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Shaw, 'Wigheard', p. 535.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 532.

³⁶ *LP* 86.

³⁷³⁷ *HE* iii.29; Shaw, 'Wigheard', p. 533.

³⁸ *GPRE* II xi.35, xi.37; *HE* ii.10–11.

Moreover, if the English links to Rome are considered in the context of 664 it is difficult to think that Kent would have been overlooked. Is it plausible that Oswiu would have mounted a mission to Rome without consulting Kent, which had been in contact with the city for over half a century? Both Biscop and Wilfrid went to Kent before travelling to Rome.³⁹ Furthermore, Eanflæd, Oswiu's wife, had already helped Wilfrid reach Rome via Canterbury. Not only might she have represented Kent's interests in its principal episcopal see to Oswiu, but she also provides an obvious point of contact for communication between the two kingdoms on the issue. In addition, writing Kent out because it was in a parlous state should be done cautiously.⁴⁰ Sergius' letter of 693 to Aldfrith of Northumbria, Æthelred of Mercia and Ealdwulf of East Anglia suggests that they opposed Berhtwold's appointment.⁴¹ In other words, the Kentish kings, Wihtred and Swæfheard arguably managed to ignore their more powerful neighbours and select their preferred candidate.

Bede's account should not be dismissed out of hand therefore and it is important to reconsider Wigheard and Vitalian's letter. In his analysis, Shaw assumes that the papal letter makes a straightforward presentation of the facts, rather than Vitalian having his own agenda in how he presented Oswiu's letter. In this regard, Bede's editing out of material concerned with Easter and Vitalian's comment about the new bishop rooting out the enemy's tares is significant.⁴² Stancliffe, in her analysis of Theodore's Penitentials, notes the existence of both a moderate and an extreme approach to those who had formed the Ionan party at Whitby.⁴³ Dailey's analysis of Oswiu's careful manoeuvrings at and after Whitby has further adduced that Oswiu was able to shift to the Dionysiac Easter without alienating either the Victorian or *Latercus* adherents in Northumbria.⁴⁴ As such, there is a disconnect between Oswiu's attitude,

³⁹ VW 3.

⁴⁰ Shaw, 'Wigheard', p. 533.

⁴¹ *GPA* i.34.

⁴² *HE* iii.29.

⁴³ Stancliffe, *Bede*, pp. 10–11.

⁴⁴ Dailey, 'Easter', p. 62.

most visible in the appointment of Chad, and that stated back at him by Vitalian.⁴⁵ Precisely what Vitalian said about Easter cannot be reconstructed but, in light of his comments about rooting out tares, it is possible he was chastising Oswiu for deigning to tolerate ecclesiastics that had adhered to the *Latercus*. As Stancliffe's analysis of Theodore's reaction to Chad in the *VW* makes clear, such clerics' orders were deemed completely invalid and they needed reordination.⁴⁶ In this light, Colgrave's and Mynor's suggestion that Vitalian would have disapproved of Wigheard is credible.⁴⁷ Wigheard's death was convenient for Vitalian and allowed him to ignore Wigheard's request for consecration and take upon himself the appointment of a new metropolitan for the English Church.

In this context, Vitalian's care in his selection of the new bishop becomes clearer. Precisely where Bede got his information concerning the protracted papal selection from is unclear. Biscop is a possibility but given the discrepancies between the *HA* and the *HE* on Wigheard and Theodore's appointment, a Canterbury source is perhaps more likely; Albinus, for example, is noted as being a pupil of both Theodore and Hadrian.⁴⁸ Hadrian, Vitalian's initial choice, was introduced as *sacris litteris diligenter inbutus, monasterialibus simul et ecclesiasticis disciplinis institutus, Graecae pariter et Latinae linguae peritissimus*.⁴⁹ Hadrian then recommended Theodore as a more suitable man, both in learning and age, and Bede notes that he was *vir et saeculari et divina litteratura et Graece instructus et Latine*.⁵⁰ The stress on their knowledge of divine literature and Hadrian's knowledge of monastic and ecclesiastical discipline underscores the idea that Vitalian was concerned with orthodox teaching and the proper ordering of the Church.⁵¹ Oswiu and Ecgbert were anxious to ensure the catholicity of

⁴⁵ *VW* 14; *HE* iii.28–9.

⁴⁶ Stancliffe, *Bede*, pp. 14–16.

⁴⁷ Colgrave and Mynors, *Ecclesiastical History*, p. 322, n. 1.

⁴⁸ *HE* Preface.

⁴⁹ *HE* iv.1. 'well versed in the holy Scriptures, training both in monastic and ecclesiastical ways and equally skilled in the Greek and Latin tongues.'

⁵⁰ *Ibid.* 'a man well trained in secular and divine literature, both Greek and Latin.'

⁵¹ *HE* iii.29.

the Church and so sent Wigheard to reengage the English episcopate with the orthodox centre. Vitalian, in turn, was concerned with the leniency of Oswiu and the ‘moderate’ party to which Wigheard presumably belonged and used his death as an opportunity to impose his own candidate on the English Church. Theodore’s appointment pulled the English Church more firmly into line with Rome than either Oswiu or Ecgbert could have envisioned.⁵²

Theodore’s policies sought to bring the English Church in line with the rest of the Catholic Church. The Synod of Hatfield is most eye-catching in this regard, with its statement of faith, including a creedal statement that uses the *filioque* and its support for the five oecumenical councils.⁵³ It is certainly important in demonstrating the close links between the English Church and Rome. The impetus for the synod came from Rome and a renewed concern with the Monothelete heresy and it is a testament to the Roman gaze of Theodore and his diocesans that they reacted swiftly in support of Agatho.⁵⁴

It is the Synod of Hertford, however, that shows Theodore apparently introducing canons, generally accepted throughout the Catholic Church, into the English Church. The text of the council, in which Theodore asked the bishops whether they were willing to accept canonical decrees from ancient times, implies that even if they were known in the English Church, they were not necessarily followed. This finds corroboration in the fact that Theodore felt it necessary to select certain decrees from the Council of Chalcedon and get the council to accept them, thereby giving them force within the English Church.⁵⁵ Indeed, Bede seems to define his career in this light. In the chapter concerned with Theodore’s death, Bede summed up his career

⁵² Stancliffe, *Bede*, pp. 5–17.

⁵³ *HE* iv.17.

⁵⁴ Chadwick has suggested that Theodore arranged Hatfield as a response to accusations from Wilfrid, which John was sent to investigate. However, Agatho’s letter to Constantinople stated that he wanted Theodore to attend his council and so John probably served as Agatho’s messenger asking for Theodore’s aid and Hatfield was Theodore’s answer. Stevenson, *Theodore*, pp. 32–43; Lapidge and Bischoff, *Theodore*, pp. 139–46; Chadwick, ‘Theodore’, pp. 89, 93–5; *CUCT* I, pp. 132–3; *HE* iv.17–18.

⁵⁵ *HE* iv.5; Cubitt, *Church Councils*, pp. 62–3.

by stating that he led the English Church to new spiritual heights.⁵⁶ The one detail of Theodore's career that Bede chose to emphasize from his epitaph was:

*Princeps pontificum, felix summusque sacerdos
Limpida discipulis dogmata disseruit.*⁵⁷

A great high priest was he, the church's head,
Who in sound doctrine his disciples fed.

Bede defined Theodore's career as guiding the English Church to a more perfect faith through his orthodoxy, which had been Vitalian's aim in appointing him.

Appeals to Rome: Balancing Archiepiscopal and Papal Authority

Vitalian's actions in appointing Theodore to Canterbury were arguably the most direct form of papal involvement in the English Church since the original mission was sent by Gregory. In a sense it seems to have reset papal relations with the English. While the papacy is certainly not absent from English history prior to Theodore's archiepiscopate, the evidence shows quite a limited line of communication existing between Canterbury and Rome, briefly extending to Northumbria but being cut at almost the same moment by Edwin's death and Paulinus' flight in c. 633. The relationship also appears to have been dominated by the *pallium*, sought for each new bishop of Canterbury, although the hints of a more consistent relationship in the first generation of the mission with Mellitus and Romanus travelling to Rome may have been perpetuated through successive episcopacies.⁵⁸ From Theodore's appointment, the involvement of the papacy in English affairs seems to increase. English ecclesiastics sought a

⁵⁶ *HE* v.8.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ Shaw, 'Augustine', pp. 485–7; *HE* ii.4, ii.20.

Roman education; papal diplomas freeing monasteries from episcopal control begin to appear and, most famously, bishops appealed against Theodore's actions to Rome.⁵⁹

This latter point is particularly significant. Wilfrid's actions as related by Stephen in the *VW* are couched in appeals to the authority of the papacy and it is now a truism to state that the validity of the documents Wilfrid brought back with him was never questioned, simply their authenticity.⁶⁰ The idea of papal authority was accepted and arguably potent, yet a careful analysis of Wilfrid's appeals and the English episcopate's response to it suggests a curious reaction to increasing papal involvement within English ecclesiastical affairs.

Wilfrid understood his legitimacy as stemming from papal authority, rather than any innate English ecclesiastical tie or even the validity of his episcopal consecration at the hands of Frankish bishops. Consequently, at the outset of this theme within the narrative in the *VW*, one finds an interesting dichotomy between the thirty-third and thirty-fourth chapters. Chapter thirty-three stresses Wilfrid's obedience to Rome; his return journey is prefaced within the information that he was *indubitata fide praeceptus apostolicae sedis ... in omnibus humiliter oboediens*.⁶¹ Against this is set King Ecgfrith's counsellors' reaction, who contumaciously rejected it in the king's presence and accused Wilfrid of bribery in obtaining the papal judgement.⁶² In the context of questions of papal authority, it is telling that the emphasis is on the support of the papacy for him and that those who opposed Wilfrid were in conflict with Apostolic authority.⁶³ This receives further corroboration from the fact that Aebbe, abbess of Coldingham, diagnosed Queen Iurminburh's illness as the product of rejecting the papal

⁵⁹ Savill, *Privileges*, pp. 101–2.

⁶⁰ Mayr-Harting, *Coming*, p. 145; Ortenberg, 'Church', pp. 42–3; *VW* 34.

⁶¹ *VW* 33. 'humbly obeying with unwavering loyalty the commands of the Apostolic See.'

⁶² *VW* 34.

⁶³ *VW* 36.

decrees.⁶⁴ Stephen arguably constructed an episode of divine wrath to demonstrate the validity of Wilfrid's original assertion of papal authority.

Wilfrid's dispute with Aldfrith is distinct from that with Ecgrith; it was not presented overtly from the outset as involving questions of Roman authority. That being said there is an interesting comparison between Aldfrith, who attacked Wilfrid, and Æthelred, who received Wilfrid with honour *propter reverentiam apostolicae sedis*.⁶⁵ This might draw attention to a lack of respect for Rome on Aldfrith's part, especially as the text implies that the trouble was caused in part by Aldfrith upholding the decrees of Theodore that Wilfrid appealed against to Rome.⁶⁶ Whatever the situation at the outset of the dispute, Roman authority was definitely apparent at the Synod of Austerfeld. Wilfrid countered the claims of his fellow bishops by observing that they had resisted Apostolic authority for the previous twenty-two years.⁶⁷ Consistently, opposition to Wilfrid appears as opposition to the papacy.

Likewise, the reverse is equally true, with support for Wilfrid being equated to support for the papacy. Theodore's reconciliation with Wilfrid is mediated through the phrase: *auctoritatem apostolicae sedis ... honorificans*.⁶⁸ The letter Theodore wrote to Æthelred contains an appeal to Rome, which provides corroboration that this theme was not simply an invention of Stephen but a genuine reaction to, at least in part, how Wilfrid and his peers understood the debate. The letter is somewhat restrained, simply observing that he is making this suggestion *quia apostolica hoc ... commendat auctoritas*.⁶⁹ Stephen constructed Theodore's appeals to Aldfrith upon papal authority and heralded the letter to Æthelred as evidence of Theodore acting in accordance with the commands of Rome.⁷⁰

⁶⁴ VW 39.

⁶⁵ VW 45. 'on account of his reverence for the Apostolic See.'

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ VW 46.

⁶⁸ VW 43. 'honoured the authority of the Apostolic See.'

⁶⁹ Ibid. 'for the Apostolic authority commends this.'

⁷⁰ Ibid.

The theme is then perpetuated into Wilfrid's relationship with Æthelred and Aldfrith. Æthelred accepted Wilfrid into his friendship *propter auctoritatem beatissimorum pontificum Agathonis scilicet et Benedicti, Sergiique*,⁷¹ a point replicated with Aldfrith's initial reconciliation.⁷² Æthelred (by this time a monk) then had the most positive reaction to Wilfrid's return after his second appeal, bowing before the papal letter and vowing to obey the canons and seeking to ensure they were fulfilled.⁷³ Berhtwold likewise was swayed by the papal commands, albeit, as Stephen wished to portray it, through compulsion because *scriptis ... territus est*.⁷⁴ The reconciliation with Aldfrith was also driven by the authority of Rome. Aldfrith, having fallen ill: *statim, ut erat sapientissimus, agnoscens, ab apostolica potestate percussus se esse, poenitentia ductus, confessus est peccatum suum, in Wilfrithum episcopum contra apostolicae sedis iudicia commissum*.⁷⁵ What is particularly curious about this is the lengths Stephen goes to prove it, citing both Ælflæd, abbess of Whitby and daughter of King Oswiu, and an Abbess Æthilberg.⁷⁶ Furthermore, Ælflæd carried Aldfrith's decision to the Synod of Nidd (706) and it stood behind the bishops' reconciliation with Wilfrid.⁷⁷ It is possible that Stephen knew of Ælflæd's statements at Nidd and reconstructed Aldfrith's deathbed decision from them; either way it provides further evidence of contemporary concern with Apostolic authority beyond Wilfrid's own circle.

There is, however, a tension in Stephen's account when it comes to Apostolic authority. When describing the charges against Wilfrid during his second appeal to Rome, the first accusation made was that Wilfrid had rejected Berhtwold's authority. The way in which

⁷¹ Ibid. 'on account of the authority of the most blessed popes, to wit, Agatho, Benedict and Sergius.'

⁷² VW 44.

⁷³ VW 57.

⁷⁴ Ibid. 'he was terrified by the writings.'

⁷⁵ VW 59. 'Being a prudent man he realized that he had been struck by the Apostolic power and, moved by penitence, confessed the sin which he had committed against Bishop Wilfrid in defiance of the judgements of the Apostolic See.'

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ VW 60.

Berhtwold's authority was conceived is significant. Stephen related it thus: *Hoc est primum capitulum nostrae accusationis, quod iste praesens Wilfrithus episcopus iudicia sancti archiepiscopi Berhtwaldi Cantuariorum ecclesiae et totius Britanniae, ab hac apostolica sede emissi, statuta coram synodo contumaciter renuens contempsit.*⁷⁸ The delegates claimed apostolic authority for Berhtwold too, as someone sent by Rome as archbishop.

One could dismiss this as Stephen drawing an ironic comparison between the actions of the archbishop and Wilfrid. However, the implication is that Stephen was amongst Wilfrid's companions at this stage of his life. A comparison of his accounts of Wilfrid's first and second appeals shows a shift in the narration. The first appeal is told exclusively in the third person.⁷⁹ The second, by contrast, sees the occasional use of the first-person plural. As such, Stephen speaks of *nostrae petitionis*⁸⁰ and that the archbishop's party *primum adversum nos dicerent*.⁸¹ Likewise, the news of the excommunication and the embarkation is narrated in the first-person, before switching to the third-person for the journey to Rome, in which the return journey was also told.⁸² This creates a slight tension in the account because Stephen could have inserted other people's recollections and neglected to alter the language. It is most likely, however, that he chose to insert himself at moments of particular excitement. A similar intrusion of the first-person in a nominally third-person account occurs during the description of the moonbow.⁸³ Stephen was evidently a witness to this event, but only at the end, as he reveals the significance of the miracle, does he slip into the first person.

⁷⁸ VW 53. 'This is the first section of our accusation, that this Bishop Wilfrid here present contumaciously refused and despised, in the presence of the synod, the judgements of the holy Berhtwold, Archbishop of the Church of the Kentishmen and of all Britain, who had been sent forth from this Apostolic See.'

⁷⁹ VW 29–34.

⁸⁰ VW 52. 'our petition.'

⁸¹ VW 53. 'were to speak against us first.'

⁸² VW 50, 55–7.

⁸³ VW 68.

The importance of this is that it is quite likely, therefore, that Stephen witnessed the claims of the archbishop's party and so their appeal to apostolic authority is consequently quite likely too. The link between the papacy is then reinforced by Wilfrid's petition to Agatho. Wilfrid held back from directly making an accusation against Theodore (although in so doing carefully highlighting Theodore's perceived crimes against him) because *ab hac apostolicae summitatis sede directus est*.⁸⁴ This concern was then perpetuated throughout the dispute between Wilfrid and his fellow bishops and the Northumbrian kings. At the Synod of Nidd, the bishops questioned whether they could change what Ecgfrith and Theodore *ab apostolica sede emissus*⁸⁵ had decided. Likewise, the conflict with Aldfrith was, in part, caused by his insistence on abiding by the decrees of Theodore *archiepiscopi ab apostolica sede misso*.⁸⁶ While this theme is more apparent for Theodore, it is significant that a similar claim was made for Berhtwold. As such, this was not simply a statement about Theodore's origins in Rome and his selection by Vitalian personally for the see of Canterbury. It suggests that the English Church and Wilfrid himself recognised a close relationship between the sees of Canterbury and Rome, which enhanced the authority of Canterbury.

In placing Stephen's account of manifestations of apostolic authority in the English Church alongside each other, it is significant that there was no doubt about the validity of apostolic authority. However, there is a dichotomy between a focus upon the archbishops and their ties to Rome and those formed by Wilfrid during his appeals. It suggests that there was a debate within the English Church about whence papal authority emanated. The repeated associations of the archbishops with papal authority suggest that the English episcopate understood that the archbishop was the mediator between Rome and the English. Roman authority and orthodoxy flowed through the see of Canterbury. Such an interpretation of Canterbury's relations with

⁸⁴ VW 30. 'he has been despatched by the Apostolic and the Principal See.'

⁸⁵ VW 60. 'sent forth from the Apostolic See.'

⁸⁶ VW 45. 'the archbishop who had been sent from the Apostolic See.'

Rome elides perfectly with the idea that seems to underlie Oswiu's and Ecgbert's request for Wigheard to be consecrated in Rome: *quatinus accepto ipse gradu archiepiscopatus catholicos per omnem Brittaniam ecclesiis Anglorum ordinare posset antistites*.⁸⁷

There is an additional dimension, visible in the bishops' concerns at the Synod of Nidd, which focusses more upon the governance of the English Church. Stephen notes that *Episcopi vero resistentes dixerunt: "Quod praedecessores nostri olim, Theodorus archiepiscopus, ab apostolica sede emissus, et Ecfrithus rex censuerunt et postea in campo, qui Eostrefeld dicitur, una nobiscum paene totius Britanniae episcopi tuaque, archiepiscopo, praesentia excellentissima cum rege Aldfritho iudicavimus, quomodo immutare quis valeat?"*⁸⁸ The focus on the decisions of almost all the bishops of Britain is the principal point. It implies that the bishops also regarded Wilfrid's appeals as an assault on the synodal governance of the English Church, laid down by Theodore at the Council of Hertford.⁸⁹

Consequently, Wilfrid's appeals to Rome appear to have short-circuited the English episcopate's understanding of its relationship with Rome. Wilfrid clearly believed that the papacy could intervene directly in the affairs of the English Church, overturning decisions that it perceived were out of step with canon law.⁹⁰ This not only ran against the relationship understood to exist between the archbishop and the pope, but struck a blow at the heart of the governance of the English Church. In essence, the English episcopacy could not be confident in its actions against a troublesome ecclesiastic, with the constant risk that an appeal to Rome would render their decision null and void.⁹¹ They were left with the difficult task of trying to

⁸⁷ *HE* iii.29. 'when he had received the ranks of archbishop, he could himself consecrate catholic bishops for the English Churches throughout the whole of Britain.'

⁸⁸ *VW* 60. 'The bishops however resisted and said "Who can anywise alter that which was once decided by our predecessors, Archbishop Theodore who was sent forth from the Apostolic See, and King Ecgrith; and what we and the bishops of almost the whole of Britain and in your most excellent presence, archbishop, afterwards decreed with King Aldfrith in the place called Austerfeld.'

⁸⁹ *HE* iv.5.

⁹⁰ *VW* 31–2, 53.

⁹¹ Cubitt, *Church Councils*, pp. 50–1.

reconcile archiepiscopal authority, with its papal backing and synodal governance, with direct papal authority, and the evidence would suggest that the latter was staunchly resisted in favour of the former.

The Wilfridian dispute only appears to have ended when Pope John VI authorised the archbishop to settle the affair and, if he were unable to, the English Church corporately was invited to appeal to Rome for judgement.⁹² John ordered Berhtwold to hold a council at which the bishops were to reconcile with Wilfrid, but Berhtwold was given control over what holdings Wilfrid received back.⁹³ The summary that Berhtwold gave at the Synod of Nidd broadly accords with John's letter to Æthelred and Aldfrith, in which Berhtwold was to convene a council, hear the conflicting parties and come to a decision acceptable to both him and the two parties.⁹⁴ Stephen tries to present this as a triumph for Wilfrid, but he had failed to resolve the matter in Rome. This contrasts with Agatho's decision, which largely favoured Wilfrid but failed to find acceptance within the English Church and Northumbria.⁹⁵ Furthermore, it is telling that Wilfrid was reluctant to return to Northumbria after John's decision; the Pope had to order him to return.⁹⁶ It suggests that Wilfrid perceived that his direct appeal to papal authority had failed and, ultimately, had only confirmed Rome-backed archiepiscopal authority and the decisions of English synods. The dispute between Wilfrid and his fellow bishops shows a universal acknowledgement of the external authority of the papacy; there was, however, debate as to how that authority was enacted amongst the English; ultimately the view that it was mediated through the archbishops appears to have triumphed.

The attitude of kings is more difficult to define in terms of letting Theodore and Berhtwold stand between the English and Rome. Papal letters reveal direct contact with kings and queens

⁹² VW 60.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ VW 54.

⁹⁵ VW 32.

⁹⁶ VW 55.

but only Vitalian's letter to Oswiu acknowledges that the king himself had sent a letter.⁹⁷ While Sergius' letters could have been prompted by complaints from the kings and bishops themselves, there is no obvious section of the letter that demonstrates that. It is perfectly plausible that his comments were prompted by Berhtwold's own testimony on English affairs.⁹⁸ Linking Wilfrid's appeal to Sergius with Berhtwold's election is no more than inference and similarly would not prove that Wilfrid was acting as a royal agent in the matter.⁹⁹ One of the points in common between Stephen's accounts of Wilfrid's appeals to Rome is that his opponents were representatives of the archbishop; there is no indication of other parties directly representing kings in the dispute.¹⁰⁰ Wood has suggested Biscop acted as Ecgfrith's agent in Rome during Wilfrid's appeal.¹⁰¹ This is highly unlikely, given Cubitt's firm dating of the Synod of Hatfield to September 679.¹⁰² The *acta* of the synod which heard Wilfrid's appeals date to October of the same year.¹⁰³ Given that Biscop guided John the precentor from Rome, who is explicitly noted by Bede as taking part in the Synod of Hatfield, Biscop must have left Rome before Wilfrid's appeal was heard.¹⁰⁴ Coenwald, Theodore's representative, is noted as carrying letters, which Andrew of Ostia notes included reports from those other than Theodore.¹⁰⁵ Stephen's brevity makes certainty difficult, but it seems that the kings were happy to let Theodore and Berhtwold handle Wilfrid's appeals to Rome. This is not to say kings did not come into contact with Rome; their encouragement and approval seems to have been central, for example, to appeals for papal privileges.¹⁰⁶ Rather direct contact was limited and in the affair of Wilfrid, kings seem to have been happy to allow the archbishop to control the

⁹⁷ *HE* iii.27.

⁹⁸ *GPA* i.34–5.

⁹⁹ *VW* 43. Stephen places the appeal to Sergius in the narrative with Wilfrid's reconciliation with Theodore and Æthelred, so Wilfrid's appeal might have preceded Berhtwold's journey.

¹⁰⁰ *VW* 29–32, 50–3.

¹⁰¹ Wood, 'Journeys', pp. 208–9; Savill, *Privileges*, p. 58.

¹⁰² Cubitt, *Church Councils*, pp. 252–6.

¹⁰³ Levison, 'Akten', p. 288.

¹⁰⁴ *HE* iv.18.

¹⁰⁵ *VW* 29.

¹⁰⁶ Cubitt, 'Wilfrid', p. 317; Savill, *Privileges*, p. 287. *VW* 34 *cf.* *HA* 6.

matter. The only time direct royal contact is known to have occurred, Oswiu's and Ecgbert's letter, is at a point when there was an interregnum at Canterbury. Ecgfrith needed Theodore to depose Wilfrid; Aldfrith sought Berhtwold's opinion before using force against Wilfrid.¹⁰⁷ Kings clearly recognized Canterbury's authority in internal ecclesiastical matters; it is arguable that, like the bishops, they saw the see as important in papal affairs too.

One question that does emerge from this analysis is from where did this attitude towards archiepiscopal-papal authority come? One could contend that it lay in the grant of the *pallium* and that the English bishops and kings understood the *pallium* as a mark of authority, as well as a symbol of obedience to Rome. A complementary explanation would be that Theodore's assertive style and novel approach to governance of the English Church altered perceptions of metropolitan power and the relationship with Rome that lay behind it. In this context, one of the more striking developments of Theodore's pontificate was his adoption of the title of archbishop of Britain. Theodore evidently sought to alter Canterbury's status: the pertinent questions are why and where the papacy fits into this process.

The Archbishop of Britain and the Metropolitan of York? Theodore, Rome and Wilfrid

The relationship of the early metropolitans at Canterbury with Rome has attracted a lot of comment, because it marks one of the early steps towards more direct papal oversight of the western Church. The *pallium* was the all-important link between the two sees and served as an expression of the institutional nature of the ties between them. Each new bishop of Canterbury sought the *pallium* by virtue of his office rather than any personal relationship and as a consequence perpetuated and strengthened the extant links.¹⁰⁸ While it is important to stress

¹⁰⁷ VW 24, 47.

¹⁰⁸ Shaw, 'Augustine', pp. 485–7.

that there is no evidence to suggest the papacy were peculiarly attached to the English Church such that it would grant it unique privileges, there seems to have been a willingness to experiment with new forms of ecclesiastical authority.¹⁰⁹ Specifically, Gregory I pushed conceptions of the *pallium* in a new direction. In the grant of Augustine's *pallium*, Gregory made an odd demand, observing *usum tibi pallii in ea ad sola missarum sollemnia agenda concedimus, ita ut per loca singula XII episcopos ordines, qui tuae subiaceant dicioni*.¹¹⁰ Despite routinely insisting that it was for exclusive use in the Eucharist, Gregory linked the *pallium* to Augustine's consecration of bishops.¹¹¹ Gregory mediated the metropolitan bishop's authority through the consecration of suffragans and inserted the papacy into that relationship through the *pallium*.¹¹² Furthermore, he asserted that each new bishop of Canterbury had to have this right reaffirmed through receiving the *pallium* from Rome.¹¹³

Such innovation with the *pallium* seems to have created tensions in Rome. Such direct intervention in a metropolitan's authority by use of the vestment is markedly absent from Gregory's correspondence with, for example, Virgil of Arles or John of Corinth.¹¹⁴ Boniface V's grant to Justus is interesting: *Pallium praeterea per latorem praesentium fraternitati tuae benignitatis studiis invitati direximus, quod videlicet tantum in sacrosanctis celebrandis mysteriis utendi licentiam imperavimus: concedentes etiam tibi ordinationes episcoporum exigente oportunitate ... celebrare*.¹¹⁵ He seems to have sought to disassociate the *pallium* from the consecration of bishops, while nonetheless retaining Canterbury's need to seek papal license to consecrate bishops. It may be evidence of the reaction against Gregory that occurred

¹⁰⁹ Savill, *Privileges*, pp. 18–28, 100–1, 287 cf. Brooks, *Canterbury*, pp. 66–7.

¹¹⁰ HE i.29. 'we grant to you the use of the *pallium* in the church but only for the performance of the solemn rites of the mass: so that you may ordain twelve bishops in various places who are to be subject to your jurisdiction.'

¹¹¹ HE i.29 cf. GPRE I v.11.

¹¹² Schoenig, *Wool*, p. 11; Brooks, *Canterbury*, pp. 66–7.

¹¹³ HE i.29.

¹¹⁴ GPRE I v.58, v.62–3.

¹¹⁵ HE ii.8. 'Moved by your zeal we are sending you a *pallium* by the bearer of this present letter and confer upon you permission to use it only when celebrating the sacred mysteries. We also grant you the privilege of consecrating bishops as occasion demands.'

in the years after his pontificate, while nonetheless demonstrating that the papacy sought to maintain the newfound authority it had secured over the English metropolitan.¹¹⁶ Ultimately, Gregory's link between the *pallium* and papal consecration was reaffirmed by Honorius I in his grant of the vestment to Honorius of Canterbury and Paulinus of York. The stated reason in his letter was *ut per nostrae praeceptionis auctoritatem possitis Deo placitam ordinationem efficere*.¹¹⁷

Jo Story, in summarising the early history of the *pallium* in the English Church, observed that the English Church helped to forge the crucial association of metropolitan authority with the *pallium* and that the *pallium* also provided a means of the papacy to maintain oversight of the English Church's standards.¹¹⁸ However, it is important to push the association further to the diocesans as well. The influence these grants would have had upon perceptions of metropolitan authority specifically and episcopal authority more generally was infused throughout the English Church. In this light, it is easy to understand how they perceived metropolitan authority as acting as the medium between themselves and the papacy and, indeed, how Egbert and Oswiu saw Canterbury as the expression of papal authority and orthodoxy in the English Church.¹¹⁹ This association forged between Canterbury and Rome for over half a century perhaps goes some way to explaining why Wilfrid's appeals caused such problems.

This serves as the background for Theodore and the tradition in which he seems to have initially placed himself. While Thacker has hypothesised that Theodore only received the *pallium* after the Roman synod of 679, it would be surprising if this were the case.¹²⁰ Agatho's decrees at this point read: *archiepiscopus, qui pro tempore ab hac apostolica sede pallii honore*

¹¹⁶ Markus, *Gregory*, p. 203.

¹¹⁷ *HE* ii.18. 'so that you may carry out the consecration as God wills, by our authority and command.

¹¹⁸ Story, 'Honorius', p. 790.

¹¹⁹ *HE* iii.29.

¹²⁰ Thacker, 'Archbishops', p. 58.

*decoratur, provehat atque sacerdotali gradu eos canonice ordinet.*¹²¹ The phrasing does not suggest a grant, rather Agatho seems simply to be reaffirming the traditional authority of Canterbury in the context of Wilfrid's dispute and linking the *pallium* to episcopal consecration.¹²² Nevertheless, there is an interesting novelty, the title *archiepiscopus*. Theodore's decision to adopt the title has attracted discussion but much of it is at cross-purposes. Brooks, for example, sees it simply as a manifestation of Theodore's success in enhancing Canterbury's authority and prestige.¹²³ Marion Gibbs has suggested Theodore shifted from originally endorsing York's metropolitan status and that it was a reaction to the changing political situation in Kent, the threat of Mercia and the need to seek Ecgfrith's protection.¹²⁴ Thacker suggests that it was a buttress against Wilfrid's metropolitan aspirations.¹²⁵

Brooks' interpretation sits uncomfortably with the timing of the appearance of Theodore's archiepiscopal status. By the Synod of Hertford in 672 Theodore had travelled throughout his province and consistently exercised his metropolitan prerogative to consecrate bishops.¹²⁶ While the evidence is limited and it is impossible to say definitively that Theodore adopted the title archbishop of Britain in 679, in 672 Theodore was still speaking of himself simply as the bishop of Canterbury.¹²⁷ Understanding Canterbury's archiepiscopal status purely in the context of Theodore's insular achievements, while not impossible, is not compelling.

Gibbs' and Thacker's arguments are both more convincing, but essentially run counter to each other, with opposing views on Theodore's attitude towards Wilfrid.¹²⁸ Remodelling and

¹²¹ Levison, 'Akten', p. 291. 'the archbishop, who is currently adorned with the honour of the pallium by this Apostolic See, shall advance and canonically ordain them from the priestly grade.' Own translation.

¹²² Cubitt, 'Wilfrid', pp. 328–9.

¹²³ Brooks, *Canterbury*, p. 76.

¹²⁴ Gibbs, 'Agatho', p. 224.

¹²⁵ Thacker, 'Archbishops', p. 58.

¹²⁶ *HE* iv.2–3., iv.5.

¹²⁷ *HE* iv.5 *cf.* Charles-Edwards, *Ireland*, p. 431.

¹²⁸ Gibbs, 'Agatho', pp. 217–22 *cf.* Thacker, 'Archbishops', p. 58.

blending the two arguments together provides a slightly different reading of events. Thacker's comments elsewhere, concerning Stephen's presentation of Wilfrid as a metropolitan, are also useful.¹²⁹ Gibbs asserts that Wilfrid regarded himself as a metropolitan and that this met with Theodore's approval and that the ninth canon of the Synod of Hertford, which discusses the creation of new bishoprics, is evidence of this compact.¹³⁰ Her interpretation of the Synod of Hertford is not without its problems. Firstly, it requires an unnatural reading of the ninth canon, because the term *metropolitanus* is absent. Furthermore, while one must be cautious about using hindsight, Theodore's subsequent actions in both East Anglia and Northumbria provide context which would corroborate the implication that the canon was concerned with dioceses and dioceses, not metropolitans and provinces.¹³¹ Secondly, as Brooks has pointed out, Gibbs' argument rests on speculative readings of damaged portions of the records of Agatho's synod of 679 and other papal letters.¹³²

It seems far more likely that Wilfrid was asserting his metropolitan status as bishop of York and successor to Paulinus, and that Theodore took steps at the Synod of Hertford to cut Wilfrid down to size.¹³³ Thacker has noted an important discrepancy between Bede's and Stephen's account of the translation of Chad to Lichfield.¹³⁴ Bede presents the matter in a completely straightforward manner as solely Theodore's initiative, both the completion of his ordination and his translation.¹³⁵ Stephen, however, suggests Wilfrid was behind the translation and, even more significantly, that Chad obeyed Wilfrid and Theodore in all things and that they *per omnes gradus ecclesiasticos ad sedem praedictam plene eum ordinauerunt et, honorifice rege*

¹²⁹ Thacker, 'Cult', pp. 6–7.

¹³⁰ Gibbs, 'Agatho', p. 222.

¹³¹ *HE* iv.5, iv.12.

¹³² Brooks, *Canterbury*, p. 343, n.26.

¹³³ *HE* i.29; VW 16.

¹³⁴ Thacker, 'Cult', pp. 6–7.

¹³⁵ *HE* iv.2–3.

*suscipiente eum, in locum praedictum constituerunt.*¹³⁶ Incorporating Stancliffe's discussion of Chad's translation and reordination pushes Thacker's argument slightly further. She observed that Stephen's account of reordination is more accurate than Bede's of reconciliation.¹³⁷ As such, Wilfrid's self-aggrandisement at this point in Stephen's narrative has to be taken seriously. He may genuinely have sought to place himself on a par with Theodore and assert York's metropolitan status.

Theodore's response to this is arguably visible at the Synod of Hertford but in the eighth canon, rather than the ninth. It reads: *Ut nullus episcoporum se praeferat alteri per ambitionem, sed omnes agnoscant tempus et ordinem consecrationis suae.*¹³⁸ Admittedly, the general tone of the canon may mean that Theodore felt the statement was necessary for the English Church in general, but Wilfrid's behaviour with Chad hints that Theodore had Wilfrid in mind here. Further evidence against Gibbs' suggestion that Theodore and Wilfrid were cooperating to enact the Gregorian plan comes from the list of bishops that heads the Synod and which, presumably, was drawn up in accordance with the eighth canon. Wilfrid was very firmly placed amongst Theodore's suffragans at Hertford, appearing after Bisi of East Anglia.¹³⁹ Wilfrid's decision to dispatch proctors has often been seen simply as evidence of ill-health or opposition to Theodore's proposals to divide dioceses.¹⁴⁰ However, an alternative reading, suggested by Thacker, is that Wilfrid regarded himself as controlling a separate province and so not subject to Theodore's summons; the proctors were a gesture of good-will between two metropolitans.¹⁴¹ If this was Wilfrid's intention, it backfired spectacularly. By not appearing

¹³⁶ VW 15. 'thereupon consecrated him fully to the said see through all the ecclesiastical degrees. The king received him in an honourable manner and the bishops installed him in the said place.'

¹³⁷ Stancliffe, *Bede*, pp. 15–17.

¹³⁸ *HE* iv.5. 'That no bishop claim precedence over another bishop out of ambition: but all shall take rank according to the time and order of their consecration.'

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁰ Colgrave and Mynors, *Ecclesiastical History*, p. 350, n. 1; Brooks, *Canterbury*, p. 74; Cubitt, *Church Councils*, pp. 40–1.

¹⁴¹ Thacker, 'Cult', p. 7.

himself, Wilfrid arguably ceded the stage entirely to Theodore who was consequently able to treat Wilfrid as any other bishop and perhaps even assert the principle of the eighth canon without having to discuss Gregory I's original plan for York.

Consequently, the circumstances in which Theodore adopted the title *archiepiscopus Britanniae insulae* need to incorporate this backdrop of what appears to have been the first dispute between Canterbury and York concerning the extent of Canterbury's authority. Rather than a panicked attempt to legitimise the deposition of Wilfrid, Theodore was reacting against a bishop who was challenging his authority and asserting his independence as a metropolitan.¹⁴² His decision to adopt archiepiscopal rank and authority over Britain was arguably designed to supersede any claim Wilfrid made to metropolitan authority and ensure he remained subordinate to Canterbury. In this regard, it is important to stress Theodore's apparent appeal to the papacy to adopt this enhanced title and deviate from the Gregorian plan.¹⁴³ The centuries long dispute between York and Canterbury began in the 670s and Agatho initially resolved the matter resoundingly in favour of Canterbury. While it marked a significant shift in the expression of Canterbury's power, its construction remained constant, stemming from repeated papal approbation.

Why Agatho would allow such deviation from Gregory's plan, which Wilfrid does seem to have known, is the question and the answer is probably the Monothelite heresy. The first two appearances of archbishop of Britain are the Synod of Hatfield and a letter Agatho sent to Emperor Constantine IV on the heresy, in which he discussed Theodore as Βρετανίας ἀρχιεπίσκοπον.¹⁴⁴ Agatho also sent his apologies in the delay in sending Rome's position on Monothelism to Constantine but he had hoped specifically for Theodore to be able to attend

¹⁴² Thacker, 'Archbishops', p. 58.

¹⁴³ Levison, 'Akten', p. 291; CUCT I, pp. 132–3; Thacker, 'Archbishops', p. 58.

¹⁴⁴ *HE* iv.5; CUCT I, pp. 132–3.

the council.¹⁴⁵ Theodore seems to have been uniquely able to aid the papacy in this regard, possibly because he had attended Pope Martin I's original denunciation at the Lateran Council of 649.¹⁴⁶ Theodore's position was unusually strong in 679 and he may have offered Agatho a *quid pro quo*: affirm and enhance Canterbury's authority and in return Theodore would provide a clear condemnation of the Monotheletes for Agatho's use. Furthermore, Agatho sought to engage western Christendom in his denunciation of them in 680. Agatho had carefully consulted with the various western Churches on the matter and at his synod in 680 the archbishop of Milan, two Frankish bishops and a Frankish deacon attended, as well as Wilfrid.¹⁴⁷ While an exercise in denouncing heresy, it was also arguably an opportunity to enhance papal prestige both in Europe and in the mind of the emperor. In that sense, speaking of an archbishop of Britain, as well as his learning, could only enhance the papacy's reputation as an expression of the breadth of papal authority and the learning present even in a far-flung corner of the western Church.

The importance of Rome is further stressed in the circumstances surrounding the disputed election of Berhtwold to Canterbury. Sergius I send two letters in support of Berhtwold, one to Aldfrith of Northumbria, Æthelred of Mercia and Ealdwulf of East Anglia and the other to the bishops of Britain.¹⁴⁸ This latter letter is difficult to use with confidence because the points at which Sergius affirms Berhtwold's authority are precisely those which may have been doctored by later Canterbury forgers.¹⁴⁹ What is clear, using the letters in conjunction with each other, is that Berhtwold's position as the chief bishop of all of Britain was affirmed.¹⁵⁰ If there is any authority in the structure of this section to the letter to the bishops, Berhtwold may have sought

¹⁴⁵ CUCT I, pp. 132–3. 'archbishop of Britain.'

¹⁴⁶ Lapidge and Bischoff, *Theodore*, p. 80.

¹⁴⁷ Cubitt, *Church Councils*, pp. 252–4. For the subscription list: Mansi, *Conciliarum* XI, pp. 305–6; Poole, 'Chronology', pp. 36–7.

¹⁴⁸ *GPA* i.34–5.

¹⁴⁹ *GPA* i.35; Brooks, *Canterbury*, p. 343, n. 41.

¹⁵⁰ *GPA* i.34–5.

confirmation of this primacy.¹⁵¹ It suggests there may have been a reaction against Theodore's enhanced authority and perhaps the dispute over Theodore's successor may have concerned his governance of the English Church. It is perhaps telling that the three kings who received Sergius' circular all ruled kingdoms that had experienced Theodore's direct intervention with their bishops.¹⁵²

Canterbury's authority seems to have been challenged during Theodore's and Berhtwold's archiepiscopates. Their instinct was to turn to Rome to confirm their authority and such confirmation was apparently consistently forthcoming. This neatly clarifies the bishops' anxiety about reversing decisions taken by either Theodore or Berhtwold. The papacy had been tying metropolitan and papal authority closely together with the *pallium*. More to the point, when Wilfrid had challenged Canterbury's authority over him, Canterbury's rights had not only been affirmed but enhanced. This provides an interesting alternative angle on Wilfrid's staunch defence of papal authority.

Wilfrid's opposition to papal judgements?

While Thacker and Gibbs disagree on the circumstances running up to 679 and Wilfrid's appeal to Rome, they agree that the door may have been left open for Wilfrid's ambitions.¹⁵³ Much has been made of his grandiose claim at the Roman Synod of 680 to subscribe *pro omni aquilonali parte Britanniae et Hiberniae insulisque quae ab Anglorum et Brittonum necnon Scottorum et Pictorum gentibus colebantur*.¹⁵⁴ It has been interpreted as indicative of Wilfrid's wide-reaching metropolitan ambitions and, significantly, that they were expressed in Rome and legitimated by appearing in the subscription to a papal synod.¹⁵⁵ While they may well express

¹⁵¹ *GPA* i.35.

¹⁵² *HE* iv.5–6, iv.12; Thacker, 'Archbishops', p. 57.

¹⁵³ Thacker, 'Archbishops', pp. 59–60; Gibbs, 'Agatho', pp. 229–30 *cf.* Story, 'Honorius', pp. 814–15.

¹⁵⁴ *VW* 53. 'for all the northern parts of Britain and Ireland and the islands, which are inhabited by the races of Angles, Britons, as well as Scots and Picts.'

¹⁵⁵ Charles-Edwards, *Ireland*, pp. 416–17, 432–5; Thacker, 'Archbishops', p. 60; Thacker, 'Cult', p. 7.

Wilfrid's ambitions, they do not reflect the reality in 680. Wilfrid's subscription as it appears in the synodal documents actually reads: *Wilfridus s. eccl. Eboracenaе insulae Britanniaе legatus venerabilis synodi per Britanniam constitutae*.¹⁵⁶ There is a significant point of comparison with the Frankish legates, who were sent from the synod *per Galliarum provincias*.¹⁵⁷ The acknowledgement of multiple provinces in the Frankish Church means that the constitution of the English Church as a single British synod constrains Wilfrid. Rather than asserting his authority over sections of Britain and Ireland, Wilfrid appears simply part of the wider British Church over which Theodore had just confirmed his own authority.¹⁵⁸ It suggests that any metropolitan ambitions Wilfrid had were rejected. The fundamental point, however, is that the image of Wilfrid projected by Stephen suggests that once he returned from his first appeal, Wilfrid refused to accept the papally approved enhanced status of Canterbury and arguably continued to assert his independence. Indeed, this lies behind Berhtwold's complaint during Wilfrid's second appeal.¹⁵⁹

Canterbury's authority over Britain is consistently challenged in the *VW*. Only once does Stephen acknowledge Canterbury's claim and only as expressed by Berhtwold's representatives in Rome.¹⁶⁰ He is careful never to suggest that Rome or Wilfrid recognized the title and tellingly the closest Wilfrid ever comes to acknowledging it is: *paene totius Britanniaе archiepiscopus*.¹⁶¹ The careful assertion that Berhtwold's authority was not

¹⁵⁶ Mansi, *Conciliarum* XI, pp. 305–6. 'Wilfrid of the holy church of York, legate of the venerable synod constituted throughout Britain.' Own translation.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid. 'throughout the Frankish provinces.'

¹⁵⁸ Lapidge and Bischoff, *Theodore*, p. 143, n. 34.

¹⁵⁹ *VW* 53.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ *VW* 60. 'archbishop of almost all of Britain.'

complete suggests he still perceived himself as standing outside of Canterbury's authority, despite repeated papal affirmation.

This raises questions about the accuracy of Stephen's presentation of the papal judgements. There are sections in both Agatho's and John's decisions which cast doubt on the completeness of Canterbury's authority. After restoring Wilfrid to his see, Stephen claims the synod of 679 asserted *quos cum consensu consilii ibidem congregandi elegerit sibi adiutores episcopos, cum quibus debeat pacifice conversari, secundum regulam superius constitutam a sanctissimo archiepiscopo promoti ordinentur episcopi*.¹⁶² It is not a complete assertion of Wilfrid's independence, but it does appear to grant him a degree of control over the other northern bishops, interrupting Theodore's direct control of the Northumbrian dioceses.¹⁶³ In comparing Stephen's account to Agatho's *acta*, both agree on the legitimacy of Theodore's right to consecrate the bishops of his province but the *acta* do not accord the bishop of York any special right to select the Northumbrian bishops.¹⁶⁴ The *acta* must be used cautiously and this is, admittedly, precisely the sort of grant a later Canterbury forger would have removed.¹⁶⁵

John's judgement is clearer cut in referring the matter back to Berhtwold to resolve. However, Stephen copies a papal letter to Aldfrith and Æthelred in which he claims Pope John ordered that Berhtwold *synodum convocet una cum Wilfritho episcopo*¹⁶⁶ and then summon the bishops Bosa and John. Likewise, at the Synod of Nidd, Stephen presents Berhtwold and Wilfrid as arriving together, perhaps trying to associate them in status.¹⁶⁷ This sits uncomfortably, both with the reality of the synod and the rest of the papal letter. Berhtwold

¹⁶² VW 32. 'those whom he shall choose as fellow-bishops with the consent of the council there to be assembled, men with whom he may live peacefully, according to the rules previously laid down, shall be preferred and consecrated as bishops by the most holy archbishop.'

¹⁶³ Thacker, 'Archbishops', p. 60.

¹⁶⁴ Levison, 'Akten', pp. 289–93.

¹⁶⁵ Gibbs, 'Agatho', pp. 218–19.

¹⁶⁶ VW 54. 'to hold a synod with Bishop Wilfrid.'

¹⁶⁷ VW 60.

clearly chaired the synod and in its actual proceedings Wilfrid is accorded no special role.¹⁶⁸ Likewise John's judgement gave Berhtwold alone the right to settle the matter or refer it back to Rome.¹⁶⁹ It is conceivable that both Agatho and John were leaving the door open to a later reassertion of the Gregorian plan.¹⁷⁰ However, the discrepancy between Wilfrid's synodal subscription in the *VW* and in the synodal documents themselves is concerning. It shows that the account in the *VW* has been doctored, either by Wilfrid in his own recollections of events or by Stephen when composing his account. The reference to Ireland in the *VW* subscription is particularly interesting because it falls outside of Canterbury's claims to authority over Britain and consequently muddies Wilfrid's subordinate relationship with the archbishops.¹⁷¹ Moreover, it demonstrates the need to acknowledge the possibility that subsequent assertions of Wilfrid's special status in papal documents have been doctored.

Consequently, Wilfrid's consistent and staunch defence of papal authority becomes somewhat ironic.¹⁷² He and his biographer seem to have gone to great lengths to assert his independence from Canterbury despite repeated papal judgements in Theodore's and then Berhtwold's favour on the matter.¹⁷³ His apparent knowledge of Gregory's original plan may go some way to explaining this.¹⁷⁴ Rome clearly loomed large in Wilfrid's mind and he evidently held it in great esteem.¹⁷⁵ However, the *VW* makes it clear that he would stubbornly

¹⁶⁸ *VW* 60.

¹⁶⁹ *VW* 54.

¹⁷⁰ Gibbs, 'Agatho', pp. 240–1.

¹⁷¹ *VW* 53.

¹⁷² *VW* 33, 59.

¹⁷³ *CUCT* I, pp. 132–3; *GPA* i.34–5.

¹⁷⁴ *VW* 16.

¹⁷⁵ Ó Carragáin and Thacker, 'Rome', pp. 229–30.

maintain his rights irrespective of royal and archiepiscopal opposition; this attitude can now arguably be extended to Rome too.

Conclusion

In comparison with the limited and personal links evident between the English and the Franks, Rome remained a consistent presence upon the horizons of the English. This relationship was also institutional, enduring consistently across various popes and bishops of Canterbury. With the universal acceptance of Roman authority at Whitby, this link spread to Northumbria, with its ecclesiastics heading to Rome to benefit from its ancient learning. This concern to learn directly from Rome demonstrates the anxiety in the English Church after Whitby to ensure the orthodoxy of its practices and the introduction of material hitherto unknown from Rome indicates an ambition to move increasingly in line with Roman practice.

Likewise, episcopal authority was closely associated with Rome. Canterbury's right to consecrate bishops was associated with the *pallium* and so the papacy inserted itself into episcopal consecration. A careful analysis of the *VW* demonstrates that both Wilfrid and his opponents constructed their arguments around papal authority, but that his opponents understood papal authority as an integral element of their metropolitan's status. While Rome's leadership was not challenged by the English episcopate, Canterbury stood between them and Rome. Wilfrid's appeal directly to Rome challenged this state of affairs and while it was ultimately upheld by John VI it seems to have caused serious anxiety in the English Church about the rights of its metropolitan and synodal governance.

The major dispute within the English Church, however, may not have been Wilfrid's deposition and how to readmit him to his possessions. Rather, it was the staunch assertion by Wilfrid of his metropolitan status and independence from the see of Canterbury. While the

evidence is limited and Agatho's decrees and one of Sergius' letters have been altered by forgers, Canterbury's right to govern the whole English Church was affirmed. In quite spectacular fashion, Theodore took advantage of the resumption of the Monothelete dispute to acquire archiepiscopal status over the entire island of Britain. Not only did this place Theodore's status within the Church above Wilfrid's but it firmly subordinated the Church of York to Canterbury. The fundamental point, however, is that both Theodore and Berhtwold looked to the papacy to affirm this new status. Continuity and change sum up this first Canterbury-York dispute, with the novel archiepiscopal status being matched by the traditional appeal to the papacy to guarantee Canterbury's authority over its bishops.

In assessing Wilfrid's career, it is remarkable how Stephen consistently fails to recognize Canterbury's authority and arguably alters Wilfrid's interaction with the papacy in order to suggest that Wilfrid was not an average diocesan bishop. This may reflect Wilfrid's own behaviour in the wake of papal judgements and at the very least indicates that Wilfrid's attitude towards the papacy was more nuanced than Stephen suggests. Wilfrid regarded himself as an independent metropolitan bishop and never seems to have deviated from that position, despite repeated papal decisions in Canterbury's favour. Wilfrid was willing to challenge papal judgements, possibly because he felt Gregory's original plan for the English Church had foundational authority and so could not be changed.

A consistent theme is the externalisation of orthodoxy and authority. While Wilfrid (and indeed kings and archbishops) may have disagreed with papal judgements, they always returned to the see of Rome as judge and teacher. Consequently, one can approach the English Church's relationship with the papacy from a quasi-colonial perspective. The identity of the original missionaries was consistently external to the English and for many, above all the first five bishops of Canterbury, their identity was grounded in their Roman origins. Gregory's mandate further emphasized their dependence upon the papacy in terms of justifying their

actions and his letters ensured their safety. His requirement that Augustine's successors seek the *pallium* from Rome perpetuated the link and institutionalised it, such that by the mid-seventh century kings felt the need to turn to Rome to consecrate their bishop and thereby reaffirm the orthodoxy and authority of the English episcopate.

Rome's perception of its relationship with the English Church must be handled carefully and notions of the English Church having a 'beneficial' relationship with the papacy should be played down or dismissed. Theodore may have been able to use his personal knowledge of Monotheletism to his advantage in a unique situation to ensure that Agatho would accept his self-promotion to archbishop and claim to the island of Britain. The English perception, especially after Whitby, seems to have been that they were tied closely to the Roman Church. Kings and bishops sought to engage with popes, even if they did not like or even accept their decisions. In essence, English relations with Rome were turbulent but demonstrate a consistent respect for its leadership of western Christendom.

CHAPTER SIX: WILFRID AND THE ENGLISH CHURCH

*elevata voce cum hymnis et canticis introduxerunt ad se et in basilicam, quam sanctus pontifex noster olim in honorem sancti Petri apostoli aedificavit et dedicavit, corpus sanctissimi viri honorifice deposuerunt anno aetatis suae septuagesimo sexto. Quantos vero per quadraginta sex annos episcopatus sui episcopos et presbiteros et diacones ordinaverat et quantas ecclesias dedicavit, quis enumerare potest?*¹

Stephen's description of Wilfrid's death and transportation to Ripon for burial is remarkable for capturing the raw emotion of the event. Furthermore, it appeals to Wilfrid's Frankish and Roman credentials. The ceremony of his translation and burial at Ripon originated within the Frankish Church about sixty years before his death.² The more remarkable element of Stephen's account is the reference to his ordinations and dedications of churches. It is reminiscent of the closing sections of the *LP*, which list the ordinations done by the recently deceased pope and occasionally the churches he had endowed or consecrated.³ Even in his death, Stephen appears to have associated Wilfrid with the papacy and so stresses his authority within the English Church.

Objectively, this applies to much of Wilfrid's career. As the previous two chapters have elucidated, there can be no denying the scale of the influence that Wilfrid's experiences of Francia and Rome had upon him and the events of his life. Wilfrid's Roman education gave him a precocious authority that not only prompted Alhfrith's patronage but gave him the leadership of the Roman party at the Synod of Whitby and election to the episcopate at the young age of thirty.⁴ In a similar manner, his time at Lyon and the connections Wilfrid forged

¹ VW 66. 'Raising their voices in hymns and canticles, they brought in the body of the most holy man with honour and placed it in the church which our most holy bishop had once built and dedicated to the honour of St Peter the Apostle. He was in the seventy-sixth year and who can tell how many bishops, priests and deacons he had ordained and how many churches he had dedicated during the forty-six years of his episcopate?'

² Thacker, 'Local Saint', pp. 54–9.

³ For example: *LP* 34, 39, 42, 44–49, 51, 53–6, 62, 65–6, 72, 74–5, 80, 82–3, 86–88; Davis, ed., *Pontiffs*, pp. xxi–xxii, xxvii–xxviii; McKitterick, *Invention*, pp. 72–3.

⁴ VW 5, 7, 10–11. See above, pp. 180–2.

within the febrile and fluctuating networks of Frankish noble alliances brought him into conflict with Ecgfrith and Iurminburh and precipitated his first expulsion from his see.⁵ His experience of Rome around the time of Martin I's conflict with Constans II, combined with his experience of the politically powerful Frankish bishops, such as Agilbert and Aunemundus, may have heavily influenced his concept of the episcopal office, such that he was willing to challenge royal power.⁶ He conducted himself with royal grandeur; supported Alhfrith in a challenge to Oswiu's authority at Whitby; and returned Dagobert II to Austrasia despite the probable opposition of Ecgfrith.⁷

It is important, however, to be cautious. The above quote, from the sixty-sixth chapter of the *VW*, hints at the extent to which this is a constructed image that Wilfrid seems to have sought to project throughout his long career and which Stephen faithfully replicated in his *vita*. If there is an allusion to the *LP* it has naturally been inserted as a literary device to associate Wilfrid with the papacy. The more interesting element is the ceremony of translation. While it was Frankish in origin, it had entered the English Church in the late seventh century, probably via East Anglia; Æthelthryth was translated into the church of Ely in such a fashion.⁸ Consequently, it raises interesting questions about Wilfrid's relations with Æthelthryth and how they impacted his career.

There are two events to focus in upon. Firstly, Wilfrid's aid for Dagobert may not have been the first occasion Wilfrid had angered Ecgfrith for acting independently. Bede recounts that Ecgfrith asked Wilfrid to convince Æthelthryth to consummate their marriage, offering him estates and money to do so.⁹ It may be doing a disservice to Wilfrid to suggest that

⁵ *VW* 4, 6, 24, 28. See above, pp. 154–69.

⁶ Mayr-Harting, *Coming*, pp. 132–3; Foley, *Images*, pp. 80–7.

⁷ *VW* 7–10, 24, 28; Mayr-Harting, *Coming*, pp. 107–8; Dailey, 'Easter', pp. 60–2.

⁸ *HE* iv.19; Thacker, 'Local Saint', pp. 45–6.

⁹ *HE* iv.19.

Æthelthryth simply offered him a higher price: the estate he used to found Hexham.¹⁰ Either way, Wilfrid definitely failed to convince Æthelthryth and the fact he veiled her at Coldingham himself could suggest he defied Ecgfrith's requests and sided firmly with Æthelthryth.¹¹ The animosity that may have sprung up between him and Ecgfrith over Æthelthryth's vocation could easily have influenced Ecgfrith's unwillingness to tolerate Wilfrid further when Iurminburh brought her complaints against him, a concern perhaps compounded by Wilfrid's role in the Easter Controversy and Alhfrith's attempts to destabilise Oswiu.¹² The important point is that this shows that Wilfrid's behaviour in Northumbria and his English connections could impact upon his life; it is not solely defined by connections to Rome and Francia. Secondly, Wilfrid's association with Æthelthryth and his presence at her translation makes such a connection between the manner of their burials unsurprising.¹³ However, it demonstrates that a Frankish element in Wilfrid's life may actually derive from an English source, rather than directly from Francia. What is more significant is the use of the ceremony at Lindisfarne for Cuthberht.¹⁴ These two points place Wilfrid firmly within an English ecclesiastical milieu and, more to the point, one which includes his presumed opponents who stood in an Ionan tradition.¹⁵ While having a ceremony in common should not obscure the evidence for a dispute between a Wilfridian and a Lindisfarne party, it serves as a useful reminder that both operated within a single Church.

It would be going too far to suggest that Wilfrid was not heavily influenced by his Frankish and Roman education but when assessing Stephen's presentation of him it is necessary to recognise the centrality of these aspects of Wilfrid's life to his saintly credentials. While

¹⁰ VW 22.

¹¹ HE iv.19.

¹² VW 24; Mayr-Harting, *Coming*, pp. 107–8; Dailey, 'Easter', pp. 60–2.

¹³ VW 19, 22; HE iv.19.

¹⁴ VA iv.14; VP 40; HE iv.30; Thacker, 'Local Saint', pp. 45–6.

¹⁵ Stancliffe, *Bede*, pp. 20–1; Charles-Edwards, 'Celts', pp. 247–50; Thacker, 'Cult', pp. 11–13; Goffart, *Narrators*, pp. 262–93; Stancliffe, 'Episcopacy', pp. 24–5, 31–37.

Stephen clearly is seeking to justify Wilfrid's life, it is difficult to accept that Stephen was writing an *apologia* rather than hagiography.¹⁶ Stephen arguably grounded Wilfrid's saintliness upon his staunch defence of orthodox principles and papal authority. This was anchored in his education at Lyon and Rome and the conflict he had with kings and archbishops over this and for which he suffered.¹⁷ In essence, he was a confessor of orthodoxy.¹⁸ This comes through most strongly at the Synod of Austerfeld, where Wilfrid founded two of his four defences upon his introduction of Roman practice to the Northumbrian Church and also presented himself as the heir to the Gregorian missionaries.¹⁹ Likewise, the association of Wilfrid with the martyrdom of Aunemundus allowed Stephen to prove Wilfrid's qualities as a confessor and that he could have won the martyr's crown but for God's desire to preserve him for the English.²⁰ The historicity of Wilfrid's presence aside, it clearly furthers Stephen's hagiographic agenda.²¹ In other words, the overwhelming Roman and Frankish credentials that Wilfrid possesses are a caricature developed by his hagiographer.

This inevitably results in a one-sided picture of Wilfrid's career and as a consequence occasional references that anchor him within the English Church, such as his association with Æthelthryth, are of disproportionate significance. It is therefore necessary to consider Wilfrid's legacy as well and discuss the apparent controversy in Northumbria after his death. Bede's position on Wilfrid is controversial, with interpretations ranging from positivity to outright hostility.²² A particular flaw with much of the work on this topic is that it necessarily relies on

¹⁶ Thacker, 'Cult', pp. 3–4.

¹⁷ VW 14, 24, 26–7, 33–4, 36, 38, 45–7, 49, 58.

¹⁸ Norris, 'Euphrosyne', p. 122 n. 9.

¹⁹ VW 47.

²⁰ VW 6.

²¹ AA 3, 8; cf. VW 6; Coville, *Lyon*, pp. 364–416; Colgrave, ed., *Wilfrid*, pp. 154–5; Nelson, 'Jezebels', p. 66; Fouracre, *Ebroin*, pp. 100–8; Fouracre and Gerberding, ed., *Hagiography*, pp. 169–5 cf. Fouracre, 'Continent', pp. 187–90. Fouracre's recent argument for Wilfrid's presence does not overcome the problems posed by the differences between the accounts in the AA and the VW.

²² Stancliffe, 'Episcopacy', p. 11; Kirby, 'Eddius', p. 102; Campbell, 'Bede I', pp. 20–2; Chadwick, 'Theodore', p. 92; Grocock, 'Wilfrid', pp. 101–10; Higham, 'Historia', p. 64; Goffart, *Narrators*, pp. 307–24.

indirect evidence, seeking to account for Bede's omissions. Arguments that rest upon negative evidence will always be open to dispute. Re-examining Wilfrid's legacy in light of his continental connections has merit because both Stephen and Bede acknowledge them as underwriting his importance in the English Church.

One approach to Wilfrid within the English Church is through a monastic lens, examining him through his interactions with his monastic communities; the other is through an episcopal lens, considering his episcopal career. With both, there are three points to focus on. The first is Wilfrid's introduction of the *RSB* into his communities and the ramifications that this has on how Wilfrid related to the Ionan heritage of Northumbria. The second queries whether Wilfrid was a monk himself and whether his experiences at Lindisfarne and knowledge of the *RSB* influenced his lifestyle. The third examines the influence of the *RSB* upon Wilfrid's monasteries. Turning to his episcopal career, the first point considers Wilfrid's mission to the South Saxons and the style of evangelization that he pursued. The second assesses Acca's position within the Northumbrian Church and what his career suggests about Wilfrid's supposed inveterate hostility towards the intruder bishops in the Northumbrian kingdom. The third analyses Wilfrid's reconciliation with Theodore after the death of Ecgfrith and reappraises Wilfrid's brief incumbency of the see of Lindisfarne. Having considered these, Wilfrid's legacy can be re-examined more clearly. Overall, this chapter will seek to recontextualise Wilfrid's career and place it more firmly within an English ecclesiastic milieu, while nevertheless acknowledging that his legacy rested upon the influences the Franks and papacy had upon him.

Wilfrid and the Monastic Life

Wilfrid's monastic confederation is one of the central features of his career. Providing a definition of this confederation is difficult. Monastic rules and practice might be logical starting

points but limited evidence renders their universal presence in the confederation assumptions at best.²³ The links seem very personal, focussing upon the figure of Wilfrid rather than institutional ties.²⁴ Sarah Foot's consideration of various models to understand the confederation ultimately settled on *familia*, stressing Wilfrid's fatherly role in both Stephen's hagiography and Aldhelm's letter to Wilfrid's abbots.²⁵ Such a conclusion fits neatly with Stephen's comments about Selsey in his day: it was held by Wilfrid's *subiecti*.²⁶ Stephen related to the monks at Selsey not through some formal link or shared practice, rather even after his death, it was the personal tie to Wilfrid that mattered, a point replicated by the bishops and abbots gathering on Wilfrid's anniversary.²⁷ Through this connection, Wilfrid's monasteries allowed his presence to be felt not only in Northumbria, but in Mercia, Wessex and Sussex.²⁸ His close association with Æthelthryth's vocation might extend Wilfrid's influence into East Anglia.²⁹ Two foundations in particular mattered to Wilfrid, Ripon and Hexham, which form distinct chapters in the VW. Their peculiar importance to Wilfrid is clear from the papal privilege he secured for them, their presence in his appeal to John VI and his willingness to settle matters at Nidd for their return to him.³⁰

The *Regula Sancti Benedicti* and Wilfridian Monasticism

The papal privileges place Wilfrid within a continental context, not only because of the Roman connection but the parallels they create with the Columbanian house at Bobbio.³¹ However, the clearest evidence of Wilfrid's ties to (presumably) Frankish monastic practice is thought to be his use of the *RSB*.³² Wilfrid stressed his orthodox behaviour at Austerfeld and

²³ Foot, *Life*, p. 263.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 258–65; Foot, 'Empire', p. 39

²⁵ Foot, 'Empire', pp. 37–9 *cf.* Foot, *Life*, pp. 258–65.

²⁶ VW 41. 'followers.'

²⁷ VW 68; Foot, 'Empire', p. 38.

²⁸ Foot, 'Empire', pp. 30–3.

²⁹ *HE* iv.19.

³⁰ VW 17, 22, 51, 60.

³¹ Foot, 'Empire', p. 30; Wood, 'Casket', pp. 10–11; Savill, *Privileges*, pp. 118–19.

³² VW 47.

called attention to his Roman and Frankish background. Consequently, Wilfrid is generally accepted to have found the *RSB* abroad and it forms part of the evidential strand of the importance of external Christian influences upon Wilfrid and his importance in introducing them to the English Church.³³ Wilfrid is often identified as the first known Benedictine in English history and while few seek an earlier English history, Stephen's statement that Wilfrid introduced the *RSB* to Northumbria is normally stressed so as not to preclude that possibility.³⁴ However, Stephen's narrative does not accord with a Frankish or Roman interpretation; it also works against Dailey's suggestion that Wilfrid adopted a mixed Columbanian-Benedictine rule from somewhere in Francia.³⁵

Stephen narrated Wilfrid's return from Francia after his consecration and discovery of Chad's intrusion.³⁶ He then noted that Wilfrid carried out episcopal functions in Mercia and Kent.³⁷ Then, at the end of the chapter, he observed: *Ideo autem venerabiliter vivens, omnibus carus, episcopalia officia per plura spatia agens, cum cantoribus Aedde et Eonan et caementariis omnisque paene artis institoribus regionem suam rediens, cum regula sancti Benedicti instituta ecclesiarum Dei bene meliorabat.*³⁸ Evidently, Wilfrid returned to Northumbria, went to Mercia and Kent and then returned to Northumbria again, this time with the *RSB*. This would imply that he found the *RSB* already within the English Church, probably in Kent. Corroboration may be found in the fact that Wilfrid returned to Northumbria with the

³³ Knowles, *Order*, pp. 21–2; Farmer, ed., *Benedict*, p. 24; Wormald, 'Bede', p. 7. For a dissenting view, stressing Wessex, see: López, 'Rule', pp. 45–9; Dunn, *Monasticism*, p. 193.

³⁴ VW 14, 17. Foot, *Life*, pp. 50–2.; Knowles, *Order*, pp. 21–2; Woodman, ed., *Northern*, p. 233; Farmer, ed., *Benedict*, p. 24; Farmer, 'Wilfrid', p. 44; Wormald, 'Bede', pp. 4–5. Ferrari proved that Gregory's monastic model was not Benedictine but basilican. Ferrari, *Monasteries*, pp. 386–8.

³⁵ Dailey, 'Reappraising', pp. 38–9.

³⁶ VW 14.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Ibid.* 'So he lived in honour, dear to all men, and, after fulfilling episcopal duties in various places, returned to his own land with the singers Ædde and Æona and with masons and artisans of almost every kind and there, by introducing the rule of St Benedict, he greatly improved the ordinances of the church of God.'

RSB and the singers Ædde and Æona; Bede explicitly noted that Ædde was a singer invited from Kent by Wilfrid.³⁹

Colgrave picked up on this fact but dismissed it, stating that Wilfrid must have learnt of the *RSB* in Lyon or Rome.⁴⁰ There is a slight discordance between Colgrave's interpretation of Stephen's words and what Stephen actually wrote. Colgrave assumed that Stephen's statement meant that Wilfrid learnt of the *RSB* in Kent after his return from Lyon. There is no need to read Stephen's words in that way. The implication is that Wilfrid simply obtained a copy of the *RSB* in Kent, when he procured the two singers and the artisans. There is further evidence of a link between Wilfrid's monasticism and Canterbury, which underscores the implications of the *VW* at this point. The *VC* notes that Ceolfrith went to Canterbury after joining the community at Ripon *ob studium discendi maxime vitae monasterialis*.⁴¹

The obvious question at this juncture is whether it is plausible that the *RSB* could be found in Canterbury in the mid-seventh century. There are three possible routes that can be identified. The first is that it came with Augustine; that he was not Benedictine does not mean that he was unaware of Benedict and his rule. Gregory I's *Dialogues* show the respect the Pope had for Benedict.⁴² The *RSB* might have been amongst the texts Gregory sent to Augustine.⁴³ That copies of the *RSB* might be kept simply as an edifying text, rather than as a functional item for the chapter house, is suggested by both the quality of Hatton 48 and its state of preservation.⁴⁴ Farmer concluded that it had been kept 'largely unused in a monastic library, treasury or shrine.'⁴⁵ As a result, Canterbury from its earliest days could have known of the *RSB* and kept a copy, even if its monastic life looked to a different model. Ferrari, whose work conclusively

³⁹ Colgrave, ed., *Wilfrid*, p. 161.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ *VC* 3. 'because he was extremely eager to learn the practices of the monastic life.'

⁴² *DL* II.

⁴³ *HE* i.29.

⁴⁴ Hatton 48.

⁴⁵ Farmer, ed., *Benedict*, p. 26.

ended the idea that Gregory and Augustine were Benedictines, still thought Augustine carried the *RSB* to Kent.⁴⁶ The second possible route is via Felix of East Anglia.⁴⁷ Felix's Frankish, possibly Burgundian, origins provide ample opportunity for him to have come across the *RSB*.⁴⁸ The *RSB* appears to have established itself first in Burgundy and then spread throughout Francia through the growth of Columbanian monasticism.⁴⁹ As such, Felix could have brought knowledge of it to Canterbury, when he visited it prior to going to East Anglia.⁵⁰ The third option is via the royal women in Frankish monasteries. Faremoutiers, to which three of the four women named by Bede went, was part of the Columbanian network, having been founded with Columbanus' aid.⁵¹ It followed a blend of Columbanus' rule and the *RSB*.⁵² As such, the movement of women may also have allowed for the *RSB* to find its way to Canterbury. There is, it must be stated, no proof for any of these routes, but they provide cultural milieux in which the transmission of the text was possible, so that Wilfrid could find the *RSB* in Kent.

This fact alone is important; it shows that Wilfrid's ecclesiology owed something to his own Church, rather than those solely in Francia and Rome. It is important to recognize the year that Wilfrid spent in Canterbury before his journey to Lyon and Rome and that he was exposed to new texts, such as the Psalmody *more Romanorum iuxta*.⁵³ Whether he came across the *RSB* this early or (as Colgrave suspected) encountered it first in Lyon or Rome is unclear. However, that Canterbury, with its ties to the authority of Rome, had an influence upon Wilfrid needs to be taken seriously; the *RSB* may hint at its scale.

⁴⁶ Ferrari, *Monasteries*, p. 388.

⁴⁷ *HE* iii.18.

⁴⁸ Brooks, *Canterbury*, p. 65.

⁴⁹ Wormald, 'Bede', p. 6; Dunn, *Monasticism*, pp. 173–4; Charles-Edwards, *Ireland*, pp. 383–8. On the coherence of Columbanian monasticism cf. Dierkens, 'Conclusion', pp. 430–1; Diem, 'Heritage', pp. 259–60.

⁵⁰ *HE* iii.18.

⁵¹ *Vit. Columb.* i.26, ii.7, ii.11; Charles-Edwards, *Ireland*, pp. 383–4.

⁵² Charles-Edwards, *Ireland*, p. 384.

⁵³ *VW* 3. 'after the Roman use.'

Wilfrid the monk?

Judging the importance of the *RSB* upon Wilfrid himself is, however, not straightforward. One of the most striking absences from the accounts of Wilfrid's life is evidence that he took monastic vows and so was formally subject to the control of a monastic rule.⁵⁴ Stephen is very careful not to associate Wilfrid formally with the monastic community of Lindisfarne and his tonsuring in Lyon may simply indicate Wilfrid's formal admittance as a cleric to the episcopal household.⁵⁵ Likewise, Wilfrid is never described simply as a *monachus*, although the occasional references to him as *servus Dei* could be significant; Gregory I, for example, often referred to monks in such a manner.⁵⁶

This must be balanced against the strong monastic influence present throughout Wilfrid's life. Despite insisting upon Wilfrid's lay status at Lindisfarne, Stephen nonetheless says something rather surprising: the brothers of the monastery loved him *pro eo quod omnem regularem vitam cum intimo cordis amore in humilitate et obedientia adimplere nitebatur*.⁵⁷ It places Wilfrid firmly within a monastic context and arguably implies that Wilfrid had a monastic vocation. Furthermore, Wilfrid's first formal position within the English Church was abbot of Ripon. Bede makes a big complaint of laymen being tonsured and becoming abbots rather than monks, which suggests that abbots were not necessarily monks.⁵⁸ However, with both points Stephen's anti-Ionan agenda needs to be borne in mind; he sought to stress that Wilfrid had no sacramental contact with 'Quartodecimans'. Stephen explicitly notes that Wilfrid *abbas ordinatus est*⁵⁹ but the question is who 'ordained' him. The sudden shift in the

⁵⁴ Stancliffe, 'Episcopacy', p. 30. The evidence is certainly clearer for Cuthberht, Æthelthryth and Ceolfrith. *VA* ii.1; *VP* 6; *HE* iv.19; *VC* 3. It is worth noting that the only explicit reference to a monastic vow is in the *HA* concerning Biscop at Lérins. *HA* 2.

⁵⁵ *VW* 6.

⁵⁶ *VW* 3, 5, 6, 7; Colgrave and Mynors, ed., *Ecclesiastical History*, p. 78, n. 1.

⁵⁷ *VW* 2. 'because with a loving heart he sought to live the full monastic life in all humility and obedience.'

⁵⁸ Bede, *Epistola* 13.

⁵⁹ *VW* 8. 'was ordained abbot.'

sentence from Alhfrith as the subject and the verbs in the active tense, to Wilfrid as the subject with *ordinatus est* in the passive, prevents any interpretation that this was an investiture ceremony involving Alhfrith. Indeed, the use of the same verb to describe his ordination as priest strongly implies an ecclesiastical ceremony.⁶⁰

The timing of Wilfrid's installation as abbot of Ripon is significant because it preceded Agilbert's arrival in Northumbria.⁶¹ There is also no obvious reason why Stephen would not state that Agilbert ordained Wilfrid as abbot if he had done so. It is possible Stephen sought to regularise Wilfrid's appointment as abbot, given the febrile circumstances of Ripon's refoundation, and so inserted the clause. Alternatively, Stephen excised the details because they too closely associated Wilfrid with the pre-Whitby Northumbrian Church. 'Orthodox' episcopal oversight in Northumbria would have been notably lacking, the options probably limited to either the bishop of Lindisfarne or the bishop of the Lindisfarne mission in Mercia.⁶² Oswiu was willing to remain in communion with the British and Ionan Churches after his adoption of the Dionysiac Easter, as Chad's consecration makes clear.⁶³ Alhfrith, before seeing a political opportunity in the Easter dispute, may have done likewise. The possibility needs to be considered that any formal profession of monastic vows too closely associated Wilfrid with the discredited Ionan Church and so would have undermined the unimpeachably orthodox image that Stephen constructed.⁶⁴

Bede's description of his early life explicitly notes that he chose the monastic life, which contrasts rather strikingly to Stephen's more vague statement that he sought the Kingdom of Heaven.⁶⁵ It is just conceivable that Bede is subtly contradicting Stephen's account and

⁶⁰ VW 8.

⁶¹ VW 8, 9.

⁶² Cf. Biscop's observation for the need for a bishop to install his successor. HA 11.

⁶³ Dailey, 'Easter', pp. 62–3.

⁶⁴ Thacker, 'Cult', pp. 12–13; Foley, *Images*, pp. 115–16.

⁶⁵ HE iv.19 cf. VW 2

implying a more formal association between Wilfrid and pre-Whitby Northumbrian monasticism. There is no evidence of monastic vows (which could be a deliberate omission), but both Bede and Stephen place monasticism at the beginning of Wilfrid's spiritual journey, suggesting it was a formative experience, and consistently associate Wilfrid with monasteries throughout his career. Moreover, the simple fact that he obtained a copy of the *RSB* implies interest in the monastic life.

In this context, while he may never have formally submitted to a monastic rule, it is worth considering the evidence of Wilfrid's life and the influences that may lie behind it. Wilfrid's personal asceticism may provide evidence that he was heavily influenced by an Irish tradition. Beginning with his sleeping patterns, Wilfrid bathed at night and also conducted vigils.⁶⁶ The *RSB* makes no real comment on the amount of sleep monks should have, simply warning against too much.⁶⁷ By contrast, Columbanus understood that his monks would lack sleep due to the exertion of their religious life.⁶⁸ Stephen's comments do not allow for a definitive comment on Wilfrid's sleeping pattern, but they at least imply that he would deprive himself of sleep as part of his devotional exercises. Wilfrid's actions with wine are also worth examining. He drank sparingly, such that he never drank a full cup of wine, irrespective of the heat of the sun or cold of winter.⁶⁹ Again, Columbanus warns against drunkenness and prescribes sufficient drink to sustain the body.⁷⁰ Benedict allowed a set amount of half a bottle of wine, although he accepted that individuals aspiring for a better life might choose to consume less.⁷¹ This is an equivocal example, but Wilfrid sits more comfortably with Irish ascetic principles. It suggests that Wilfrid's personal asceticism was more extreme than the norm prescribed by Benedict, but commonly found within the Irish tradition. In theory, such a life

⁶⁶ *VW* 21.

⁶⁷ *RSB* 4.

⁶⁸ *RM* 10.

⁶⁹ *VW* 21.

⁷⁰ *RM* 3.

⁷¹ *RSB* 40.

could point to a Frankish influence, through the Columbanian influence in Burgundy, or contact with Agilbert and his relatives at Faremoutiers.⁷² However, one cannot write off his formative experiences in Northumbria, especially as that is the sole Irish monastic context in which Wilfrid is placed by Stephen. The crucial point though is that these examples begin to separate out Wilfrid's life from Benedict's principles.

Wilfrid's bathing is the most eye-catching of his activities.⁷³ That the activity was rigorous and difficult is suggested by the advice of John VI that he desist owing to his age.⁷⁴ That it had a devotional element is suggested by its juxtaposition with the question: *in vigiliis et orationibus, in lectione et ieiuniis quis similis ei inveniebatur?*⁷⁵ In general, Stephen seems to have been providing examples of Wilfrid's remarkable piety and the account suggests that Wilfrid would keep vigil through the night and pray in holy water. This provides a clear parallel with the tale in both the *VA* and *VP* that Cuthberht prayed in the sea.⁷⁶ Cuthberht clearly stood in an Irish tradition and further examples can be cited of Irish saints, including Patrick and Coemgen, doing likewise.⁷⁷ Wilfrid immersed himself in water as a devotional act, akin to Cuthberht and other Irish saints before him. This places Wilfrid more firmly within a Northumbrian ascetic context and hints that his early life at Lindisfarne may have had a lasting impact upon him.

Wilfrid's Monasteries

Lacking positive evidence of Wilfrid's monastic vows, such personal evidence cannot be taken as indicative of the rule used in Wilfrid's houses. That being said, evidence of his interactions with his monasteries may provide some indication of their governance. The *RSB*

⁷² Mayr-Harting, *Coming*, p. 142; Dailey, 'Reappraising', pp. 38–39.

⁷³ *VW* 21.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ *Ibid.* 'In watching and prayers, in fastings and study, who was to be found like him?'

⁷⁶ *VA* ii.3; *VP* 10.

⁷⁷ *Vit. Tr.*, p. 484; *LIS* II, p. 123; Colgrave, ed., *Cuthberht*, p. 319.

clearly held some authority in Wilfrid's view of the monastic life. This is primarily apparent from his claims at Austerfeld but may also be blended with the evidence of Hatton 48.⁷⁸ Hatton 48's precise provenance is uncertain. It certainly ended up at Worcester, although Bath has also been suggested, because it was later absorbed by Worcester.⁷⁹ If the Bath hypothesis is correct, Hatton 48 can easily be associated with Wilfrid, owing to his presence in Bath's foundation charter.⁸⁰ Even if Hatton 48's origins cannot be pinned down with such precision, Wilfrid can still be linked with the manuscript. Farmer observed that the wealth that went into the manuscript, combined with the lack of Irish features and the fact that the subject was the *RSB* made Wilfrid, with his respect for the *RSB*, his southern monastic foundations, his evident wealth and his strong adherence to Roman culture, an obvious patron.⁸¹ Ultimately, it is unlikely that Wilfrid's involvement with Hatton 48 will ever be more than inference, but there is good cause to associate the two. Thus, there is evidence to show a respect for the *RSB* throughout Wilfrid's monastic confederation, which included to the foundations he made outside Northumbria and so provides a wider context for Wilfrid's use of the *RSB* than the Northumbrian one stressed at Austerfeld.

That being said, there are elements of Stephen's narration of the ordering of Wilfrid's monasteries, which do not accord with the *RSB*. The focus here must naturally be upon Hexham and Ripon, the two foundations for which the most detail survives.⁸² The most obvious point is how he ordered the succession of his monasteries of Hexham and in particular Ripon, whose abbacy Wilfrid never seems to have surrendered.⁸³ He ordered that after his death Tatberht, his

⁷⁸ VW 47.

⁷⁹ López, 'Rule', pp. 52–3; Sims-Williams, *Western England*, pp. 52–3.

⁸⁰ S 51.

⁸¹ Farmer, ed., *Benedict*, p. 25

⁸² Ripon: VW 8, 17–18, 44, 47, 51, 59–60, 63–4, 66, 68; Hexham: VW 22, 44, 51, 60, 62, 65 *cf.* Selsey: VW 41, Oundle: VW 65; Lichfield: VW 15; Ripple (?): VW 17; Bath S 51. There is an unnamed monastery referenced at VW 40; Foot, 'Empire', pp. 29–33.

⁸³ Wormald, 'Bede', p. 5.

kinsman, was to succeed as abbot of Ripon, while Acca was to succeed to Hexham.⁸⁴ The comparison with Wearmouth-Jarrow is interesting; election and appointment are not necessarily incompatible and the influence of Biscop's appointment of co-abbots upon any election may have been great.⁸⁵ Both Bede and the anonymous author imply that Biscop, in some sense, nominated Ceolfriht, which was met with the approval of the brethren.⁸⁶ Biscop seems to have been concerned his own kin did not succeed him just because they were his kin, rather he looked for someone suitably wise and devout.⁸⁷ In that context, his concerns match the *RSB* closely: *Vitae autem merito et sapientiae doctrina eligatur qui ordinandus est.*⁸⁸ Such concession to the community and concern with good life is absent from Stephen's description of Tatberht's and Acca's succession. Indeed, Wilfrid's comments that Tatberht was his relative and inseparable companion imply that Tatberht was chosen specifically to preserve Wilfrid's family's control over Ripon.⁸⁹ This basic fact demonstrates that whatever Wilfrid's use of the *RSB* in his monasteries, it was certainly not total.

This impression is further confirmed by his distribution of wealth. Colgrave's translation of *Inhripis ... gazofilacium aperire claviculario praecepit*⁹⁰ inserts 'his', so that it reads 'he ordered his treasurer to open his treasury at Ripon'. Such an interpretation of the Latin is perfectly reasonable and muddies the water, rendering it unclear whether Wilfrid was distributing monastic property or his own wealth, gathered during his episcopacy. However, using the definite article in the translation is arguably simpler, avoiding the need to insert a pronoun, and creates a different impression: 'he ordered the treasurer to open the treasury at Ripon'. He then distributed the treasure fourfold, leaving it to Rome, the poor, the abbots of

⁸⁴ VW 63, 65.

⁸⁵ Wood, *Church*, pp. 128–9.

⁸⁶ HA 13; VC 16.

⁸⁷ HA 11.

⁸⁸ *RSB* 64. 'Let him who is to be appointed be chosen for the merit of his life and his enlightened wisdom.'

⁸⁹ VW 63. Hexham's transformation into an episcopal see may have made attempts to retain similar control there futile.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.* 'He ordered his treasurer to open his treasury at Ripon.'

Ripon and Hexham and Wilfrid's followers that had shared in his exile.⁹¹ The implication is that Wilfrid was distributing the wealth of Ripon and, if correct, that he regarded this monastic wealth as his own, to distribute as he wished. Furthermore, *recordatus est omnes terras in diversis locis, quas abbatibus ante dederat aut tunc dare iussit, ut erat coenobium Inhegustaldesiae, quod Accan presbitero ... in possessionem dare praecepit.*⁹² This reads as Wilfrid distributing wealth in his personal possession and the inclusion of Hexham in that is startling.

To an extent, one could interpret this within the purview of the *RSB*. Benedict made the abbot responsible for property and looking after the needs of his monks.⁹³ However, the level of control Wilfrid had over the distribution of monastic wealth and lands (apparently including a monastery wholesale) does not accord with Benedict's concerns with the holding of property in common.⁹⁴ If one again draws a comparison with Biscop and Wearmouth-Jarrow, there is no distribution of monastic property; his sole concern, apparently, was that his library be well cared for.⁹⁵ Objectively, therefore, Wilfrid is deviating from Benedictine practice. However, the point made by Susan Wood is that founder-abbots often kept personal control of their wealth and even monks might retain their private property.⁹⁶ Consequently, Biscop's apparent uninterest in the distribution of monastic wealth is out of step and certainly Wilfrid's actions appear more in keeping with seventh-century Northumbrian practice. Stephen, while listing Wilfrid's good qualities, wrote that *paene omnes abbates et abbatissae coenobiorum, aut sub suo nomine secum substantias custodientes aut post obitum suum haeredem illum habere*

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² *VW* 65. 'he recounted all the lands in various localities which he had previously given to abbots or now willed to give; thus he bade that the monastery at Hexham should be given to the priest Acca.'

⁹³ *RSB* 33.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ *HA* 11.

⁹⁶ Wood, *Church*, pp. 126–7.

*optantes, voto voverunt.*⁹⁷ The description suggests that the abbots and abbesses were free to distribute monastic property at will and appoint Wilfrid their heir. Wilfrid's actions are not in keeping with the spirit of the *RSB* but as a founding abbot this does not definitively prove or disprove the importance of the *RSB* in his monasteries. However, it is powerful contextual evidence, because his actions elide well with the behaviour of other monastic leaders in the Northumbrian Church and it is Biscop that stands out with his own strong Frankish and Roman links.

There are therefore legitimate grounds for querying the exceptional nature of Wilfrid's monasteries based on the *RSB*. This is then strengthened by asking a simple question: what was the rule at Ripon? Alhfrith gave Wilfrid the monastery at Ripon to refound when he returned from Lyon in c. 660.⁹⁸ Stephen is clear that it was only after Wilfrid was consecrated bishop that he returned with the *RSB* to Northumbria.⁹⁹ This occurred after 666 and before 669. In other words, there is a gap of at least six years, probably longer, when Ripon must have operated under a different rule. Whatever this rule was, it has not survived and Stephen fails to describe daily life at Ripon. However, it is logical to think that Ripon's rule would have had Irish influences. That was the prevailing culture at the time in the Northumbrian Church, it is what the monks sent to Ripon would have known and, given Wilfrid's monastic experience at Lindisfarne, it is what Wilfrid would have known too. Ceolfrith's background would accord with this. He entered the monastery of Gilling, which had links to the Irish Church; his brother, Cynefrith, had been its abbot but surrendered the office to study in Ireland.¹⁰⁰ More pertinently, Ceolfrith, after his ordination as priest, departed from Ripon to study the monastic life in Canterbury and Botulf's monastery of *Icanhoe*.¹⁰¹ This happened in 669, after Wilfrid's

⁹⁷ VW 21. 'Almost all the abbots and abbesses of the monasteries dedicated their substance to him by vow, either keeping it themselves in his name or intending him to be their heir after their death.'

⁹⁸ VW 8.

⁹⁹ VW 14.

¹⁰⁰ VC 2.

¹⁰¹ VC 3, 4.

acquisition of a copy of the *RSB*.¹⁰² The *VC* implies that Ceolfrith was observing other monastic rules in order to aid the creation of a more perfect rule for Ripon. Consequently, even after Wilfrid's arrival with the *RSB* the implication is that Ripon was governed by a *regula mixta*.¹⁰³ The lasting influence of an Irish tradition upon Wilfrid's confederation may be seen in the large number of anchorites in it. There is nothing in the *RSB* against such a vocation and Benedict does praise it, but it was primarily a feature of Irish monasticism.¹⁰⁴

There is circumstantial evidence, therefore, that places Wilfrid and his monastic confederation within an Irish tradition. While this should not be overemphasized, it is a significant nuance of Wilfrid's continental credentials and must be viewed in conjunction with Mayr-Harting's evidence of Irish influences upon the *VW*.¹⁰⁵ This is compounded by the fact that the Benedictine influence, as far as it can be reconstructed, came from Kent rather than Lyon or Rome. Wilfrid's desire to use the *RSB* may well show Wilfrid reacting to trends visible in particular in Francia, but where he found it and the apparent limits to its use places Wilfrid firmly within an English and, more narrowly, Northumbrian ecclesiastical context. Wilfrid looked to his own for inspiration, just as much as he did to the Franks and the papacy.

Wilfrid's Episcopacy

Wilfrid's conduct as a bishop was undeniably influenced by his Frankish connections and education in both Lyon and Rome. The grandeur of his conduct, his liturgical borrowings and the architecture of his churches all provide incontrovertible evidence of this.¹⁰⁶ His episcopacy is also supposedly marked by hostility to the bishops intruded by Theodore and through them

¹⁰² Grocock and Wood, ed., *Abbots*, p. 81, n. 20.

¹⁰³ Wormald, 'Bede', p. 4; Foot, *Life*, p. 52; Blair, *Church*, pp. 80–1.

¹⁰⁴ *RSB* 1.

¹⁰⁵ Mayr-Harting, *Coming*, p. 143.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 132–5, 179–81; Billett, 'Music', pp. 168–76; Ó Carragáin and Thacker, 'Rome', pp. 216–29; Cambridge, 'Architecture', pp. 136–51.

the continuing influence of Lindisfarne. Certain actions undertaken by Wilfrid during his episcopacy allow for a more refined picture of him to emerge.

Wilfrid's Missionary Style

Wilfrid's missions amongst the Frisians and South Saxons provides a useful starting point. Mayr-Harting's analysis of missionary style detected a 'Celtic' and a 'Roman' style. The 'Celtic' was based upon the example of Martin of Tours and it centred upon the confrontational and the dramatic. The saint would place himself in physical danger in order to demonstrate the power of God over the pagan superstitions.¹⁰⁷ Against this was the 'Roman' style, found in the letters of Gregory I, which advocated the striking of a balance between pagan and Christian practices and gently guiding converts into their new faith.¹⁰⁸ Mayr-Harting's conclusion was that Wilfrid clearly adhered to the 'Roman' model in Stephen's description of his activities in Sussex.¹⁰⁹

Some consideration must be given to Wilfrid's first encounter with the South Saxons, when he was blown onto the Sussex coast after his episcopal consecration in Francia.¹¹⁰ The narrative is that of a great Christian triumph over pagan peoples. In particular, a contrast is drawn between the chief priest's vain attempts to curse Wilfrid's men and magically bind their hands and the success of one of Wilfrid's companions who killed the chief priest with a slingshot, blessed *ab omni populo Dei*.¹¹¹ Similarly, Wilfrid and his clergy prayed while his companions fought a battle against overwhelming odds.¹¹² A dramatic confrontation between Christians and pagans had conclusively demonstrated the superiority of the Christian faith. This occurred fifteen years before Wilfrid's mission in Sussex and the lack of an evangelistic context prevents

¹⁰⁷ Mayr-Harting, *Coming*, p. 145.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 146.

¹⁰⁹ VW 41.

¹¹⁰ VW 13.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.* 'by all the people of God.'

¹¹² *Ibid.*

this from dovetailing neatly with Mayr-Harting's point, but it begins to undercut the sharp division that he constructed.

Such a division of missionary styles along 'Celtic' and 'Roman' lines becomes inherently problematic with the mission itself. To pick up on a single image that Stephen uses—*lac sine dolo*¹¹³—the other figure in English history who used this analogy to milk as a guide for evangelizing is St Aidan. He rebuked his predecessor for failing to offer *lac doctrinae mollioris*.¹¹⁴ Aidan's career, at least as it is presented by Bede, accords with the 'Roman' model. Aidan was described as *summae mansuetudinis et pietatis ac moderaminis virum*.¹¹⁵ Bede spoke of Aidan's conversion activities through the prism of personal, individual encounters, that he would approach the rich and poor equally on the road, discussing their faith with them and urging them to turn to Christian precepts.¹¹⁶ In essence, the impression that one gets of Aidan is of a man who gently approached his pagan audience through conversation and preaching. What is certain is that he lacks the great confrontational triumph that Mayr-Harting perceives as typical of 'Celtic' evangelists.¹¹⁷ Significantly, it provides Wilfrid with an Irish model for his evangelism. Wilfrid would almost certainly have met Aidan when he joined the Lindisfarne community in c. 648 and he would also have heard about the missionary activity undertaken since c. 635.¹¹⁸ Consequently, Wilfrid's model for his work in Sussex cannot simply be assumed to be 'Roman'.

It is equally plausible that Wilfrid came into contact with the Gregorian mission and its precepts in Kent while waiting for a year to depart for Rome.¹¹⁹ He also acted as bishop in

¹¹³ VW 41. 'milk without guile.'

¹¹⁴ HE iii.5. 'the milk of gentler teaching.'

¹¹⁵ HE iii.3. 'a man of outstanding gentleness, devotion and moderation.'

¹¹⁶ HE iii.5.

¹¹⁷ Mayr-Harting, *Coming*, p. 145.

¹¹⁸ VW 2.

¹¹⁹ VW 3.

Kent, during the interregnum between Deusdedit and Theodore.¹²⁰ Stephen's awareness of York's metropolitan history might even suggest an awareness of Gregory's letters and consequently the missionary strategy he sent to Augustine via Mellitus.¹²¹ It is necessary to be equivocal in drawing any conclusions about Wilfrid's inspirations as a missionary. However, there is a curious verbal echo between how Bede constructed Aidan's work and Stephen Wilfrid's. Wilfrid could have modelled himself upon Aidan, which locates Wilfrid within the traditions of his childhood at Lindisfarne.

Wilfrid's Network—the Question of Acca

Further English contextualisation comes with the role that Acca played in Wilfrid's life. That Wilfrid's network stretched across Europe and included Irish figures, undermining notions that he had an anti-Irish stance and suggesting that he requires more careful characterisation, are well studied.¹²² The network which Ceolfrith of Wearmouth-Jarrow belonged to and his links with Wilfrid have also been attested.¹²³ However, there is a tendency to assume an impenetrable barrier between the pro- and anti-Wilfridian parties in the Northumbrian Church from Wilfrid's first expulsion.¹²⁴ Acca's personal history would militate against such interpretations. Bede detailed his early career as follows: *qui a pueritia in clero sanctissimi ac Deo dilecti Bosa Eboracensis episcopi nutritus atque eruditus est; deinde ad Wilfridum episcopum spe melioris propositi adveniens, omnem in eius obsequio usque ad obitum illius explevit aetatem.*¹²⁵ Acca was educated by Bosa, one of the intruders of the Northumbrian diocese, to whom Wilfrid was supposedly irreconcilably opposed.¹²⁶ Moreover,

¹²⁰ VW 14.

¹²¹ VW 10, 16; HE i.29; Thacker, 'Cult', p. 6.

¹²² Ó Cróinín, 'Willibrord', p. 32; Fouracre, 'Continent', pp. 195–7; Wood, 'Journeys', p. 207; cf. Charles-Edwards, 'Celts', pp. 243–59; Charles-Edwards, *Ireland*, p. 429.

¹²³ Wood, 'Journeys', p. 207.

¹²⁴ Goffart, *Narrators*, pp. 264–96; Thacker, 'Cult', pp. 11–13; Stancliffe, *Bede*, pp. 4, 19–21.

¹²⁵ HE v.20. 'He was brought up from childhood with the clergy of the holy Bosa, beloved of God, bishop of York, and was instructed by them. Then he came to Bishop Wilfrid in the hope of finding a better way of life and remained in his service all his days until Wilfrid's death.'

¹²⁶ VW 30.

he was sufficiently influenced by him that Acca informed Bede of Bosa's role in his life.¹²⁷ He then chose, possibly through a monastic vocation, to seek out Wilfrid.¹²⁸ As such, Acca had links to both sides of the conflict in the Northumbrian Church and, as far as Bede suggests, regarded both Bosa and Wilfrid with fondness.

Piecing a chronology together is complicated. Bosa held York from Wilfrid's first deposition until his restoration under Aldfrith (c. 678–c. 687) and then was restored to the see after Wilfrid's expulsion until his death (c. 692–c. 706). Determining when Acca was educated by Bosa and then came to Wilfrid is consequently tricky, more so not knowing Acca's date of death or rough age. If he came to Bosa during his first tenure, Wilfrid's resumption of the see would have created a natural transition from one to the other. However, Bede's account, with *adveniens*, implies that Acca chose to seek Wilfrid out. It is easier to see this all happening during Bosa's second tenure, perhaps in the early 690s; Acca goes unmentioned in Wilfrid's life prior to his second appeal to Rome.¹²⁹ The most likely scenario therefore involves the deliberate transfer of an ecclesiastic from the community of one of Wilfrid's opponents to Wilfrid: evidence of contact between Wilfrid and his opponents.

If one considers the evidence of Ceolfrith's transfer first to Ripon and then to Wearmouth, the leaders of the community were involved. He moved to Ripon *invitatus a Ulfrido episcopo*¹³⁰ and then Biscop and Wilfrid arranged for his transfer to Wearmouth.¹³¹ Admittedly, both of these references concern the transfer of a monk. Whether York was monastic is unclear. Alcuin of York, a century later, praised Bosa and wrote about the community at York that suggests they kept the hours, rejected personal property and were separated from the world.¹³² This

¹²⁷ *HE* v.20.

¹²⁸ This is further evidence that might closely associate Wilfrid with monasticism but does not prove Wilfrid's own vocation, simply that he was in control of his monastic confederation.

¹²⁹ *VW* 56, 65.

¹³⁰ *VC* 3. 'at the invitation of Bishop Wilfrid.'

¹³¹ *VC* 5.

¹³² Alcuin, *VSEE*, lines 857–70.

might indicate a monastic community, although Bede's statement that Acca sought a better life argues against such a suggestion.¹³³ The example of Ceolfrith may therefore not map perfectly onto Acca's situation. Nonetheless, it suggests that dialogue was needed to effect movement. Acca would certainly have needed Wilfrid's consent to enter his community. It would be startling if he had not also needed Bosa's permission to depart. The fifth canon of the Synod of Hertford is pertinent here, observing: *Ut nullus clericorum relinquens proprium episcopum passim quolibet discurrat, neque alicubi veniens absque commendaticiis litteris sui praesulis suscipiatur. Quod si semel susceptus noluerit invitatus redire, et susceptor et is qui susceptus est excommunicationi subiacebit.*¹³⁴ Not only does it suggest that Acca needed Bosa's permission to depart, he needed commendatory letters. Some form of dialogue between Wilfrid and Bosa was necessary to receive Acca. In contrast to the utter disregard that Stephen presents Wilfrid as having for the intruders, Acca provides evidence of meaningful contact in ecclesiastical matters prior to the formal reconciliation at the Synod of Nidd.

In Wilfrid's community, Acca acted as Wilfrid's confessor and was sufficiently highly regarded that he was made Wilfrid's heir to the monastery of Hexham.¹³⁵ He also became Wilfrid's successor as bishop of Hexham, which suggests he was well thought of in the wider Northumbrian and English Church.¹³⁶ Of the Northumbrian bishops, he was the only one drawn from Wilfrid's circle. Such an appointment ostensibly makes sense, given the parochial nature of episcopal succession.¹³⁷ However, it is at odds with the general pattern in Northumbria, which sought bishops from monasteries with Irish links, most famously Hild's community at

¹³³ It also has implications for Wilfrid within a monastic context, although cannot demonstrate whether he formally entered into the monastic life, simply that he was closely associated with it. See above, pp. 220–3.

¹³⁴ *HE* iv.5. 'That no clergy shall leave their own bishop nor wander about at will' nor shall one be received anywhere without letters commendatory from his own bishop. If he has once been received and is unwilling to return when summoned, both the receiver and the received shall suffer excommunication.'

¹³⁵ *VW* 56, 65.

¹³⁶ *HE* v.20.

¹³⁷ Cubitt, 'Usurping', pp. 22–3.

Whitby.¹³⁸ As such, the possibility should be considered that Acca became bishop because of his time with Bosa. Given that he was bishop of Hexham, his appointment can be conceptualised as a diplomatic move precisely because he stood between the ‘Irish’ and ‘Roman/Wilfridian’ parties in the Northumbrian Church. In this sense, he would keep the monks of Hexham content but equally would not disrupt the ecclesiastical life of the wider Church.

Acca’s career is therefore evidence of positive contact between the two ‘opposing’ parties of the Northumbrian Church. His move from Bosa to Wilfrid demonstrates contact between the two on ecclesiastical affairs and that they could work productively together in the interests of a junior cleric. Furthermore, he rose to a trusted position as Wilfrid’s confessor and heir, and was still elected to succeed him as bishop of Hexham. Acca’s career suggests that Wilfrid could have productive communication with the intruders to his see. Moreover, such a background was no impediment to Acca’s career in Wilfrid’s eyes. Whether Acca is simply the outstanding example of more general contact or an extreme, isolated example cannot be determined. Nonetheless, his career in both the ‘Irish’ and ‘Wilfridian’ camps suggests that the two were not as estranged as might be inferred from the *VW*. This moderates Wilfrid’s position and suggests that he could cooperate with the wider Northumbrian Church.

Wilfrid and the Church of Lindisfarne

The astonishing vitriol present in Wilfrid’s denunciation of the poisonous weeds of the Scots at the Synod of Austerfeld gives ample reason for thinking that such contact was limited.¹³⁹ More to the point, the relationship between the *VA*, the *VW* and the *VP* is hardly conducive to positive interpretations of Wilfrid’s contact with the centre of the Ionan heritage

¹³⁸ *HE* iii.26, iv.12, iv.25, iv. 27–8.

¹³⁹ *VW* 47; Stancliffe, *Bede*, pp. 20–2.

of Northumbria: Lindisfarne.¹⁴⁰ Objectively, however, there is a risk in using the evidence of a pamphlet war as proof of outright hostility; the polemical nature of the literature is designed to push specific agendas, not create a balanced picture of socio-political reality.

This is not to say that Wilfrid never attacked the community at Lindisfarne. His role as spokesman for the Roman party at the Synod of Whitby involved a repudiation of Lindisfarne and Ionan tradition. Both Bede and Stephen agree that Colmán of Lindisfarne's (661–4) argument was based at least in part upon the authority of Columba and his practices.¹⁴¹ Wilfrid's arguments did not simply reject an alternative date for Easter and the accompanying theological arguments but risked dismissing the saint at the head of the Ionan confederation as a heretic. That is the implication of Stephen's account and Bede has a similar sentiment, although he portrays Wilfrid as choosing not to denounce Columba fully, accepting that he kept the *Latercus* through ignorance.¹⁴² Wilfrid's Roman education and consequent leadership of the Roman party at Whitby (see above, pp. 180–2) necessitated a rejection of Lindisfarne's traditions and associations with Iona and Columba. As expressed at the synod, Columba lacked the authority of Peter, and Wilfrid, as Peter's champion, had brought Peter's triumph about at the expense of Colmán, Columba's champion.¹⁴³ It is difficult to believe that there was no hostility between Wilfrid and Lindisfarne either at or in the wake of the Synod of Whitby and Rome's dismissal of Columba's authority and Lindisfarne's heritage as heresy.

There is a risk, however, in assuming that hostility is the only way of defining Wilfrid's relations with Lindisfarne. John VI's letter to Æthelred and Aldfrith seems to express a change in attitude as there is an astonishing omission. John ordered Berhtwold to convoke a synod, to which Bosa of York and John of Hexham were summoned; Eadfrith of Lindisfarne is notable

¹⁴⁰ Goffart, *Narrators*, pp. 281–92; Stancliffe, 'Episcopacy', pp. 12–20.

¹⁴¹ *HE* iii.25; *VW* 10.

¹⁴² *HE* iii.25; *VW* 10; Mayr-Harting, *Coming*, pp. 108–10; Laynesmith, 'Rhetoric', pp. 68–71.

¹⁴³ *VW* 10; *HE* iii.25.

by his absence.¹⁴⁴ Consequently, the intersection of Wilfrid's grievances with the legacy of the Ionan mission during his second appeal to Rome needs to be handled cautiously. In essence, his appeal focussed upon control of the see of York and his monasteries of Ripon and Hexham.¹⁴⁵ It is unclear precisely which canons of Theodore Wilfrid objected to, but the absence of Lindisfarne and its bishop from his appeal means that a dispute over the interpretation of the *Latercus* as heresy and communion with its adherents should be discounted.¹⁴⁶ An alternative reading might be that Wilfrid continued to object to Theodore's enhancement of Canterbury's authority as archbishop of Britain.¹⁴⁷ In other words, there is scope to believe that by the early eighth century Wilfrid had reached some form of compact with Lindisfarne.

This raises the question of Wilfrid's brief control of the see of Lindisfarne in 687–8. His episcopacy coincided with a great trial for the Lindisfarne community that lasted a year.¹⁴⁸ The careful treatment of controversial subjects by Bede means that the lack of an explicit link between Wilfrid's tenure, noted in the *HE*, and the trials in the *VP* is not significant.¹⁴⁹ As such, it is often proffered as evidence of the negative impact Wilfrid had upon the community and so his continuing hostility to the Ionan heritage of the Northumbrian Church owing to their perceived heretical associations.¹⁵⁰ Thacker has suggested Wilfrid need not have attacked the

¹⁴⁴ VW 54. Eadfrith does seem to have attended the Synod of Nidd. Stephen notes that Osred arrived with three of his bishops. VW 60.

¹⁴⁵ VW 51.

¹⁴⁶ Stancliffe, *Bede*, pp. 16–17.

¹⁴⁷ See above, pp. 204–8.

¹⁴⁸ VP 40; HE iv.29.

¹⁴⁹ Cf. Sharpe, 'Ceadwalla'.

¹⁵⁰ Colgrave, ed., *Cuthbert*, p. 357; Goffart, *Narrators*, pp. 276, 284, 291–2; Foley, *Images*, pp. 109–10; Stancliffe, *Bede*, p. 20 cf. Higham, 'Historia', pp. 54, 61; Mayr-Harting, *Coming*, p. 166.

community as such. Instead, the community itself may already have been split on an issue and Wilfrid, perhaps accidentally, made it worse by siding too firmly with one side.¹⁵¹

Locating the turmoil, at least in part, within the community itself is an interesting approach and may be supported by the word Bede used to describe Lindisfarne's troubles: *temptatio*.¹⁵² 'Trial' is a perfectly reasonable translation, but the connotations of temptation (itself an alternative translation) are curious.¹⁵³ It could imply something external to the Lindisfarne community generating internal debate. While this would not preclude Wilfrid from being a cause, it does sit uncomfortably with suggestions that he deliberately attacked the community. Furthermore, Bede's description of Wilfrid's time as Bishop of Lindisfarne is open to interpretation. In the *HE episcopatum ecclesiae illius anno uno servabat venerabilis antistes Wilfrid, donec eligeretur, qui pro Cudbercto antistes ordinari deberet*.¹⁵⁴ If the subjunctive tense is stressed, so that Wilfrid served as bishop until someone *could* be elected, it might suggest that the trials were within the community. Bede's depiction of Cuthberht's death scene includes an injunction that the brethren of Lindisfarne should have no communion with the schismatics who failed to celebrate Easter at the proper time.¹⁵⁵ He went so far as to state that *si vos unum e duobus adversis eligere necessitas coegerit, multo plus diligo ut eruentes de tumulto tollentesque vobiscum mea ossa recedatis ab his locis, et ubicunque Deus providerit incole maneatis*.¹⁵⁶ What is significant about this order that the brethren depart is that *illam temptationis aura concussit, ut plures e fratribus loco magis cedere, quam talibus vellent interesse periculis*.¹⁵⁷ The appearance of Cuthberht enjoining the brethren to depart rather than

¹⁵¹ Thacker, 'Shaping', pp. 419–20.

¹⁵² *VP* 40.

¹⁵³ '*Temptatio*', Logeion.

¹⁵⁴ *HE* iv.29. 'the reverend Wilfrid held the bishopric at that church for a year until the consecration of Cuthberht's successor.'

¹⁵⁵ *VP* 39.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.* 'if necessity compels you to choose from one of two evils, I would much rather you should take my bones from the tomb, carry them with you and departing from this place dwell wherever God may ordain.'

¹⁵⁷ *VP* 40. 'so great a blast of trial beat upon that church that many of the brethren chose to depart from the place rather than be in the midst of such dangers.'

submit to schismatics, followed by a description of monks leaving creates a strong link between the two sections and suggests that they should be read together.

In this light, the trials and tribulations that struck Lindisfarne in 687 can be understood as a re-emergence of the Easter controversy, not Wilfrid himself. Stancliffe has commented on the sheer fear present in Cuthberht's injunction and Charles-Edwards, expanding on her observations, has pointed to Ecgfrith's defeat at Nechtansmere as providing a context for that fear.¹⁵⁸ Ecgfrith's campaigns against the Irish in 684 and the Picts in 685 may have been motivated in part by the question of Easter and directed against perceived heretics and schismatics.¹⁵⁹ Ecgfrith's defeat arguably gave opponents of the Dionysiac Easter not only breathing space but an opportunity to assert themselves. This context is external, not only to Lindisfarne, but Northumbria. Whether the Easter controversy could have reasserted itself within the kingdom is another matter.

There is, however, an interesting discrepancy between Bede and Stephen in their descriptions of the aftermath of Whitby. Bede carefully states that all those who dissented left Northumbria, while Stephen focusses solely on Colmán.¹⁶⁰ Furthermore, Stephen spoke of a 'Quartodeciman' party, which corrupted the mind of King Oswiu.¹⁶¹ He suggests that a group opposed to the Dionysiac Easter retained significant political influence and as a result implies that the question of Easter remained a social reality. This latter implication is confirmed by the *Penitentials* of Theodore. The thrust of Stancliffe's Jarrow Lecture on them was to note that two distinct positions (reconciliation and reordination) were advocated in the teachings and that these matched the two distinct accounts of Chad's translation to Lichfield in the *HE* and the *VW*.¹⁶² There are two points to stress about this evidence from the *Penitentials*. The first is

¹⁵⁸ Stancliffe, *Britons*, pp. 22–3; Charles-Edwards, 'Celts', p. 248.

¹⁵⁹ Charles-Edwards, *Ireland*, pp. 432–5; Charles-Edwards, 'Celts', p. 248.

¹⁶⁰ *HE* iii.26; *VW* 10.

¹⁶¹ *VW* 14–15.

¹⁶² Haddon and Stubbs, *Concilia*, III, pp. 180–82 *cf.* p. 197; Stancliffe, *Bede*, pp. 14–16.

that penitential literature is closely related to society, reacting to vices that the priest may encounter in the course of his ministry.¹⁶³ As such, Theodore regarded ‘Quartodeciman’ clerics as an issue that he and his own clergy would have to deal with. Secondly, Theodore had time to change his mind, although providing a date for this is tricky. The *Penitentials* suggest a continuing need within the English Church to rehabilitate schismatic clergy.

The Synod of Hertford arguably provides further evidence of a continuing issue. The canons Theodore recorded were, in his view, of particular importance for his bishops to follow.¹⁶⁴ The first canon stressed the need for uniformity in the date of Easter; that all should celebrate it on the Sunday after Nisan 14.¹⁶⁵ A recalcitrant bishop in 672 is unlikely, especially with Theodore’s willingness to remove disobedient bishops. An alternative explanation is that there was a degree of toleration of the 84-year cycle, perhaps continuing communion with the Ionan and British Churches, akin to Dailey’s suggestion concerning the election of Chad as bishop.¹⁶⁶ Theodore wanted the bishops to enforce a common Easter observance and, at least in this regard, end the Ionan influence in the English Church. This elides fairly neatly with the implications of his *Penitentials*.

There is, it must be stressed, no evidence that any of the brethren at Lindisfarne proved recalcitrant concerning Easter in the decades between Whitby and Wilfrid’s occupancy of the see. However, Bede’s *VP* indicates that a conservative faction that preferred Lindisfarne’s Ionan traditions endured. Cuthberht’s reforms to the Lindisfarne rule prompted severe opposition from those who championed the older usage.¹⁶⁷ As such, the circumstances in 687 should be analysed closely for evidence that may have provided a conservative faction with an

¹⁶³ Stenton, *England*, pp. 140–1; McNeill and Gamer, ed., *Handbooks*, pp. 3–4, 26–7, 46–7; Mayr-Harting, *Coming*, pp. 258–60; Lapidge and Bischoff, *Theodore*, pp. 150–5.

¹⁶⁴ *HE* iv.5.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁶ Dailey, ‘Easter’, pp. 62–3; Stancliffe, *Bede*, pp. 15–17.

¹⁶⁷ *VP* 16.

opportunity. The situation that Charles-Edwards has discerned in the aftermath of Nechtansmere and Adomnán, abbot of Iona's visit of 687 may supply it. Adomnán seems to have abandoned the *Latercus* for the Dionysiac Easter in 687.¹⁶⁸ Consequently, in 687 there was discussion in some form of the Easter controversy. Aldfrith's educational background also needs close examination. Colin Ireland has observed that there is no evidence to suggest Aldfrith was anything other than Roman in his Easter observance.¹⁶⁹ However, he was certainly associated with Iona; he seems to have been on the island when Ecgrith died and he also had a close friendship with Adomnán.¹⁷⁰ Ireland, while acknowledging some Ionan influence, suggests a peripatetic education, which he has convincingly centred upon Bangor, Co. Down.¹⁷¹ If correct, this provides a firmly northern context for Aldfrith's education and Daíbhí Ó Cróinín has demonstrated that suggestions that Bangor had adopted the Dionysiac Easter in the early seventh century were incorrect.¹⁷² Indeed, Ó Cróinín concluded that Bede's division of the Irish Church into north and south on the matter of Easter was essentially correct.¹⁷³ The evidence of Aldfrith's early life suggests he would have followed the *Latercus* tradition. The evidence of his kingship points conclusively to Dionysiac adherence. The logical inference is that Aldfrith altered his position at some point, presumably when, or shortly after, he took the Northumbrian throne. Consequently, there is a suitable context for a conservative section of the Lindisfarne community to have asserted itself.

Adomnán's visit in 687 and the implications of a discussion concerning Easter are particularly significant because in 687, unlike 685 or 686, Easter was different in the *Latercus*

¹⁶⁸ *AU* 687; *HE* v.15; Corning, *Celtic and Roman*, pp. 152–3; Charles-Edwards, *Ireland*, p. 410; Sharpe, ed., *Adomnán*, pp. 48–51; Yorke, *Conversion*, p. 17. For a reinterpretation of the timing of Adomnán's conversion: Woods, 'Easter', pp. 12–13.

¹⁶⁹ Ireland, 'Educated', pp. 51–2.

¹⁷⁰ *VA* iii.6; *HE* v.15.

¹⁷¹ Ireland, 'Educated', pp. 63–73.

¹⁷² Ó Cróinín, 'Mo-Sinnu', pp. 288–9, 294–5 *cf.* Jones, 'Victorian', p. 419; Grosjean, 'Recherches', p. 228.

¹⁷³ *HE* ii.3.

and the Dionysiac tables.¹⁷⁴ Given the crisis at Lindisfarne in 687 and Theodore's seemingly sudden desire to reconcile with Wilfrid in 686, this is a remarkable elision of events. Wilfrid's rehabilitation consequently takes on a completely different veneer: Theodore needed Wilfrid in Northumbria to recover the situation, perhaps even to debate *computus* with Adomnán and persuade Aldfrith of the accuracy of the Dionysiac Easter. It would even make Theodore's offer to associate Wilfrid with him in the see of Canterbury more explicable.¹⁷⁵ In the context of a resumption of the Easter debate and a threat of schism within the English Church, Wilfrid's Roman education and role at Whitby made it imperative to reinstall him in Northumbria and, if necessary, take over the governance of the English Church.

Wilfrid's tenure as bishop of Lindisfarne should be seen, therefore, as an attempt to ensure the orthodoxy of the community, not as an embittered man inflicting deliberate damage upon old enemies. This reading of the evidence stresses the importance of Rome to Wilfrid's career, but it does not do so at the expense of Wilfrid's links to the general Irish heritage of Northumbrian Christianity, as opposed to the specific errors of the *Latercus*, perceived by Wilfrid as the 'Quartodeciman' heresy, and its continuing place within the Ionan confederation.¹⁷⁶ Rather it would affirm both the implications of Acca's presence in his entourage and show him cooperating with his 'opponents' in the Northumbrian Church. The obvious objection is the comparative silence of Bede and Stephen on these matters, although any interpretation of Wilfrid's time as bishop of Lindisfarne must address this reality.¹⁷⁷ Bede's conception of Whitby was that it decisively resolved matters in the English Church, allowing it to be united and attain new spiritual heights under Theodore's leadership.¹⁷⁸ His willingness to mention it obliquely in the *VP* can be explained because it allowed him to demonstrate

¹⁷⁴ Corning, *Celtic and Roman*, pp. 110, Table 6.1.

¹⁷⁵ *VW* 43.

¹⁷⁶ Stancliffe, *Bede*, pp. 2–4.

¹⁷⁷ Ireland, 'Educated', pp. 51–2.

¹⁷⁸ *HE* iv.2, v.8.

Cuthberht's orthodoxy, justify brethren departing from the community rather than opposing the schismatics and ultimately, prove Lindisfarne's own orthodox nature through the successful election of Eadberht.¹⁷⁹ Stephen's silence is comprehensible because it would show that Wilfrid's success at Whitby was not decisive and that he had not successfully driven all schismatics out of the Northumbrian Church during his sole episcopacy; it threatened Wilfrid's status as a confessor of orthodoxy.¹⁸⁰ This also explains Stephen's decision to include the letter Theodore sent to Æthelred, reconciling him with Wilfrid, but not Aldfrith's: it contained embarrassing details that exposed the limits of Wilfrid's successes in uprooting the Scottish weeds. The image of Wilfrid presented by both Bede and Stephen was influenced as much by how they wished to remember him as the reality of his life.

Discordant Memories of Wilfrid? Bede and Stephen of Ripon

Objectively, the different perspectives and purposes of Bede and Stephen in writing the *HE* and the *VW* naturally mean that their images of Wilfrid would differ. It is immediately obvious that Stephen wrote a polemic apology for his hero. He sought to cast Wilfrid as the wronged champion of the Northumbrian Church, whose actions had firmly established pure and true Roman Christianity in Northumbria.¹⁸¹ His borrowings from the *VA* and indeed Bede's subsequent recasting of the work as the *VP* suggest that Stephen was seeking at least in part to present Wilfrid as the ideal bishop and the true apostle to the Northumbrians, to the detriment of Cuthberht.¹⁸² The suggestion that the explosion of Northumbrian literature in the early-eighth century is a product of this very debate is plausible.¹⁸³ A significant part of this conflict

¹⁷⁹ *VP* 39, 40.

¹⁸⁰ *VW* 10, 21.

¹⁸¹ Thacker, 'Cult', pp. 3–4; Colgrave, *Wilfrid*, p. xi; Goffart, *Narrators*, p. 281; Foley, *Images*, pp. 13–14.

¹⁸² Goffart, *Narrators*, pp. 283–5; Stancliffe, 'Episcopacy', p. 19.

¹⁸³ Goffart, *Narrators*, p. 264.

was the legacy of the Ionan mission and their perceived ‘Quartodeciman’ heresy.¹⁸⁴ Stephen sought to condemn them and those who associated with them, while Lindisfarne and Bede aimed to emphasize their merits in the figures of Cuthberht and Aidan (although Bede tied himself in knots trying to deal with Aidan’s association with the *Latercus*). Whitby and Bede then also simply undermined Wilfrid’s claims to primacy by pointing to Gregory I and his missionary Paulinus.¹⁸⁵ What remains unresolved is Bede’s precise attitude towards Wilfrid and indeed the place of Wilfrid within the *HE*. There is nothing obviously negative in Bede’s great work about Wilfrid and indeed the dedication of some of his works to Acca, Wilfrid’s confessor and successor as abbot and bishop of Hexham, suggests a close relationship with Wilfridian supporters. Much of the analysis rests upon how Bede recasts Wilfrid in comparison to Wilfrid’s own biographer, Stephen.¹⁸⁶ This has also led to arguments that Bede disapproved of some of Theodore’s actions, through his minimisation of or silence on certain events that Stephen mentions.¹⁸⁷

The degree to which these comparisons can be accepted is debatable, resting as they do upon inferences from Bede’s silence in comparison to the partisan Stephen. Furthermore, one could contend that ‘approval’ and ‘disapproval’ are inappropriate labels to place upon the *HE*. The core of the work is the construction of a halcyon past in order to provide edifying examples for contemporary rulers. Therefore, Bede sought to encourage reform of both the Church and society in an attempt to return to those truer Christian examples that he provides.¹⁸⁸ In a sense, Bede provides a sanitised account, in which the political realities that Wilfrid and Theodore faced would undermine the point that he sought to make. Bede’s silences are therefore not necessarily critiques of people and their actions, so much as a necessity in order to construct

¹⁸⁴ Stancliffe, *Bede*, pp. 7–9.

¹⁸⁵ *VSG*; *VA*; *VP*; *HE* ii.9, iii.5, iii.17.

¹⁸⁶ Stancliffe, ‘Episcopacy’, p. 11; Kirby, ‘Eddius’, p. 102; Campbell, ‘Bede I’, pp. 20–2; Chadwick, ‘Theodore’, p. 92; Grocock, ‘Wilfrid’, pp. 101–10; Higham, ‘*Historia*’, p. 64; Goffart, *Narrators*, pp. 307–24.

¹⁸⁷ Campbell, ‘Bede II’, pp. 41–2.

¹⁸⁸ Wormald, ‘Bede’, p. 62.

his didactic narrative. Consequently, taking a theme common to both, Wilfrid's orthodoxy derived from his studies in Rome and Francia, allows for a more direct comparison between the two authors and allows a better understanding of their perceptions of the controversial Northumbrian prelate.

Wilfrid's Orthodoxy

Wilfrid's engagement with Rome and Francia makes up a significant strand of the narrative that Stephen provides. Out of the sixty-eight chapters that make up the *VW* no fewer than twenty-one detail his journeys to Rome and his experiences there, as well as in Francia and Frisia. Wilfrid's authority as a bishop was guaranteed by papal judgements, just as his enemies were condemned by their rejection of Rome's authority. This is furthered by Wilfrid's progression through the Church, which is consistently marked by Frankish bishops. Wilfrid first received his tonsure from Aunemundus, archbishop of Lyon.¹⁸⁹ When describing Wilfrid's ordination as priest Stephen was careful to stress that Agilbert was *episcopus transmarinus*.¹⁹⁰ Stephen sought to ensure that the reader should be in no doubt as to the validity of Wilfrid's orders. Stephen's silence on Agilbert's ministry in Wessex suggests that his priority was to separate Agilbert from the ongoing dispute within English Christianity about Easter. This is then made explicit in Wilfrid's episcopal consecration, when he asked to be consecrated by Frankish bishops, to avoid communion with schismatics.¹⁹¹ Stephen also contrasts the situation in Britain, with that in Francia by stressing the presence of *catholici episcopi*¹⁹² twice within three sentences. Consistently, Wilfrid's position in the English Church is guaranteed by his association with either the Franks or Rome.

¹⁸⁹ *VW* 6

¹⁹⁰ *VW* 9. 'a foreign bishop.'

¹⁹¹ *VW* 12.

¹⁹² *Ibid.* 'catholic bishops.'

In a febrile atmosphere dominated by questions of orthodoxy, Stephen presumably sought to prevent any association with a tainted Northumbrian Church. His conception of Wilfrid's authority within the Northumbrian Church is made clear at the Synod of Austerfeld. Although it is unlikely that Stephen accurately reproduced direct speech from a decade earlier, it is probable that he captured the themes Wilfrid drew out. The first point Wilfrid made was his seniority as a bishop, having held the rank for nearly forty years. His second claim was more complex, focussing upon the practices that he introduced into the Northumbrian Church: the Dionysiac Easter, the Roman tonsure, the use of harmony as in the primitive Church and the *RSB*. The latter two are introduced individually and their point of origin is not specified, although Canterbury seems logical.¹⁹³ In general terms, therefore, Wilfrid's engagement with the wider Catholic Church allowed him to purify Northumbrian Christianity and so underpinned his authority.

Easter and the tonsure provide him with a more specific claim and they are treated as a discrete group, with an interesting reference to the original Gregorian mission: *Necnon et ego primus post obitum primorum procerum, a sancto Gregorio directorum, Scotticae virulenta plantationis germina eradicarem; ad verumque pascha et ad tonsuram in modum coronae, quae ante ea posteriore capitis parte e summo abrasa vertice, secundum apostolicae sedis rationem totam Ultrahumbensium gentem permutando converterem?*¹⁹⁴ Wilfrid constructed himself as the first to combat Irish errors since the Gregorian mission. Despite acknowledging predecessors, they were placed firmly in the past and he seems to have claimed primacy within the Roman mission. By speaking of the death of the first elders, Wilfrid implies a gap between Gregory's missionaries and his own career, perhaps even that Gregory's mission failed,

¹⁹³ VW 14.

¹⁹⁴ VW 47. 'Was I not the first after the death of the first elders who were sent by St Gregory to root out the poisonous weeds planted by the Scots? Did I not change and convert the whole Northumbrian race to the true Easter and to the tonsure in the form of a crown in accordance with the practice of the Apostolic See, though their tonsure had been previously at the back of the head, from the top of the head downwards?'

allowing Irish encroachment. His championing of Roman orthodoxy rekindled that earlier flame: he was the saviour of the Roman Church amongst the Northumbrians championing practices *secundum apostolicae sedis rationem*.¹⁹⁵

The point to stress in any comparison with Bede is that this is one of Wilfrid's defining characteristics in the *HE*. His introduction to Bede's narrative is mediated through his experiences at Rome and Lyon.¹⁹⁶ He is described as Alhfrith's instructor in Christianity and as a man learned in doctrine having studied in Rome and spent time in Lyon with Aunemundus.¹⁹⁷ From the start Bede emphasized his learning acquired from two great centres of Christianity and that they were correct in comparison to Irish principles.¹⁹⁸ As such, all subsequent references to Wilfrid can be mediated through this initial reference to Rome and Lyon. To that end, Bede heralded the reconstruction of the English Church after the Synod of Whitby and the plague at the end of his third book with a reference to Wilfrid. This reference precedes chapters concerned with Oswiu and Ecgbert seeking a new bishop of Canterbury and Jaruman re-evangelizing Essex, giving Wilfrid primacy in this reconstruction.¹⁹⁹ Consequently, Wilfrid's importance lies in not only his knowledge and his acceptance of catholic orthodoxy, but his ability to disseminate it throughout the English churches. In many respects, this accords with Wilfrid's assertion at Austerfeld. However, Bede provides a crucial qualification, describing Wilfrid as *primus inter episcopos qui de Anglorum gente essent catholicum vivendi morem ecclesiis Anglorum tradere didicit*.²⁰⁰ There are two deviations with the Austerfeld defence: Wilfrid was acting amongst the English churches and he was only the first Englishman. As such Bede constrains Wilfrid's primacy, but nonetheless acknowledges the importance of Wilfrid's reimportation of catholicity and the special authority with which he

¹⁹⁵ Ibid. 'in accordance with the practice of the Apostolic See.'

¹⁹⁶ His first offhand reference is in connection with a story Acca told about staying with Willibrord. *HE* iii.13.

¹⁹⁷ *HE* iii.25.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ *HE* iii.29–30.

²⁰⁰ *HE* iv.2. 'the first bishop of the English race to introduce the catholic way of life to the English churches.'

did so and, furthermore, expanded his importance from simply Northumbria to a wider English setting. Therefore, Bede, like Stephen, recognized the Frankish and Roman background to Wilfrid's career and conceived of it as enhancing his authority.

Unlike Stephen, however, Bede was careful to note other figures whose legitimacy derived from their Roman connections. Most notably, there are the important figures of Theodore and Hadrian, whose appointments were wrapped up in concerns with orthodoxy.²⁰¹ However, the shift between Stephen's Northumbrian perspective and Bede's English one is crucial. Bede was aware of the continuous history of orthodox missions in East Anglia, Wessex and above all Kent, with Canterbury's continuous contact with Rome for over half a century before Wilfrid's own journey to Rome. However, he freely acknowledged Wilfrid's primacy amongst the native English bishops in this regard as preceding the careers of Acca and Othfor, who both also studied in Rome.

Sanctity as a Counterpoint in the *Historia Ecclesiastica*

That being said, Bede did not only define the special merit of bishops in relation to their orthodox background. For those within the tradition of the Ionan mission, Bede emphasized their sanctity. This is most obvious with Aidan. Bede dedicated an entire chapter to elucidating Aidan's great merit as an ecclesiastical leader.²⁰² Essentially, Bede rested Aidan's legitimacy as a bishop upon his compassion and that he sought to enact the teachings of the evangelists, apostles and prophets.²⁰³ Bede carefully delayed any mention of Easter until he had made this latter point. While stressing Aidan's error and his own detest for it, Bede intermingled this criticism with high praise for Aidan's holiness.²⁰⁴ As such, Bede carefully structured his account of Aidan to demonstrate his sanctity and thereby his legitimacy, only introducing the

²⁰¹ *HE* iii.29.

²⁰² *HE* iii.5.

²⁰³ *HE* iii.17.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

question of Easter when he had proven Aidan's goodness to such an extent it could not be refuted. Sanctity could therefore triumph over concerns about orthodoxy in Bede's mind when considering a bishop's legitimacy.

A similar picture emerges with Chad. Oswiu wanted Chad as a bishop because of his modesty and learning and the care he took to carry out biblical teachings.²⁰⁵ Chad's orders were suspect owing to the presence of two British bishops during his consecration.²⁰⁶ Bede then returned to Chad's merits, describing his diligent behaviour as a bishop, preaching throughout his diocese and leading it in humility and temperance.²⁰⁷ Bede buried the questionable nature of Chad's consecration within praise firstly for his suitability to be a bishop and then in his excellence as one. This then received further support from Theodore's reaction to him. Chad's humility in accepting Theodore's authority and judgement demonstrated his sanctity. As such, Theodore kept him as a bishop, completing his consecration.²⁰⁸ Bede also noted that Theodore knew of Chad's great sanctity.²⁰⁹ These two brief references to Theodore's attitude support Chad's suitability for office and ground that suitability in his holiness. This quality allowed Theodore to look beyond Chad's errors and accept him as a colleague.

Cuthberht too emerges from Bede's narrative as a bishop due to his holiness. Unlike Chad or Aidan, Bede did not acknowledge any problem caused by his association with the Ionan tradition. He was described before his election as a teacher, an evangelist and devoted to keeping his monastic rule.²¹⁰ Over time Cuthberht grew in the merit of his religious life and he turned to the hermit's life before his election.²¹¹ Once elected *ad imitationem beatorum*

²⁰⁵ *HE* iii.28.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁷ *HE* iv.2.

²⁰⁸ *HE* iv.2.

²⁰⁹ *HE* iv.3.

²¹⁰ *HE* iv.27.

²¹¹ *HE* iv.28.

*apostolorum virtutum ornabat operibus.*²¹² His merit continued to lie in his desire to teach, pray and help those in need and in general his exceptional conduct as a bishop. Indeed, the direct comparison of his work as bishop to that of the apostles seems to be unique. This places Cuthberht beyond his peers in the level of sanctity that Bede perceived to be in him and, given that the apostles were the first bishops, it is a remarkable push to demonstrate not only Cuthberht's legitimacy as a bishop but the scale of his authority as one.

Just as Bede recognized the wider English picture in terms of bishops introducing catholic customs, he understood episcopal authority as deriving from sources other than an orthodox education. In acknowledging the value of Roman and Frankish links, Bede nonetheless refused to allow them to dominate his narrative as the sole source of authority, as Stephen does. Stephen's hagiography, naturally, required sole focus upon Wilfrid, whereas Bede's history allowed for wider recognition of competing positive influences upon the English Church.

Honoured yet Constrained

Directly comparing Stephen and Bede demonstrates a degree of similarity in approach to Wilfrid. Bede did pick up on the fundamental point that Wilfrid sought to stress at the Synod of Austerfeld: Wilfrid's engagement with the wider Church, what he had learnt there and consequently what he had been able to introduce did indeed give him greater authority.²¹³ In this sense, Bede had respect for Wilfrid and accorded him a high position within his history as a bringer of true Christianity to the English. Nevertheless, Bede sought to nuance his account, as the desire to describe him simply as the first English bishop to introduce catholic customs suggests. Bede consequently left the stage clear for other figures to supersede Wilfrid. The wider context of this recognition is a chapter concerning Theodore's ordering of the English Church, including the grand statement that *Neque umquam prorsus, ex quo Britanniam*

²¹² Ibid. 'his works of virtue, like those of the apostles, became an ornament to his episcopal rank.'

²¹³ *HE* iv.2; *VW* 47.

*petierunt Angli, feliciora fuere tempora.*²¹⁴ In other words, the most immediate juxtaposition is between Wilfrid and Theodore and by limiting Wilfrid as simply an English bishop, Bede allows the inference that primacy rested with the archbishop.

This is supported by how Bede related the careers of Theodore and Wilfrid. Wilfrid was an evangelist, a traveller and an advocate for orthodoxy.²¹⁵ Precisely what was novel about the catholic precepts he taught goes unmentioned. Even within the context of the Synod of Whitby his support for the Roman Easter is not presented as a straightforward introduction. Kent was already orthodox; Laurence had already challenged the Irish directly and various figures lived in Northumbria according to Roman precepts.²¹⁶ This leaves the great orthodox statements of the Synods of Hertford and Hatfield and their novelty within a wider English context to dominate not only the fourth book but the entire narrative. They provide contemporary evidence for Bede to demonstrate the veracity of his claim that Theodore guided the English Church to new spiritual heights. Bede thus accepted Wilfrid's importance but nonetheless sought to direct attention to Theodore as the prime mover of the English Church towards the true exemplar of Christianity, derived from oecumenical councils and the learning of the ancient, Mediterranean churches.

Moreover, Bede limited Wilfrid's importance within the context of native English bishops. Stephen's account presents Wilfrid as essentially peerless in transmitting orthodox knowledge to the English Church, although the archbishops are something of an exception.²¹⁷ By describing Acca's and Offfor's learning, acquired directly from Rome, akin to part of Wilfrid's career, the unique authority Wilfrid has in the *VW* is removed in the *HE* and arguably refuted.²¹⁸ Bede understood Wilfrid simply as part of a group: he was the most significant and important

²¹⁴ *HE* iv.2. 'Never had there been such a happy time since the English first came to Britain.'

²¹⁵ *HE* iii.25, iv.13, v.19.

²¹⁶ Dailey, 'Easter', pp. 55–6.

²¹⁷ *VW* 30, 33–4, 43, 47, 53, 60. Thacker, 'Cult', p. 13; Stancliffe, 'Episcopacy', p. 19.

²¹⁸ *HE* iii.25, iv.2, iv.23, v.19–20.

member of that group, but by contextualising Wilfrid Bede contested and rejected the claims made in the *VW*. Thus, in Bede's references to bishops with Roman backgrounds Wilfrid was constrained and subordinated to Theodore, although still accorded a significant amount of respect.

Similarly, the acknowledgement of sanctity as an alternative source of episcopal authority limits Wilfrid's place within the Bedan narrative in comparison to that of Stephen's. Moreover, it is a useful guide as to how Bede positioned himself in the debate concerning Wilfrid's legacy. Its use in relation to Aidan, Chad and Cuthberht undoubtedly acted as an apologetic response to the indiscriminate Wilfridian attack on Scottish weeds and the Ionan heritage of the Northumbrian and the wider English Church.²¹⁹ However, it goes beyond that: Bede conceived of holiness as a quality that could overcome concerns about a bishop's orthodoxy.²²⁰ This served as a check on the Wilfridian emphasis that authority derived from orthodoxy and the catholic customs to be found in Rome and Francia. The *HE* does not contradict such a stance, indeed Bede acknowledged with no less a figure than Theodore that authority could be derived in such a manner.²²¹ However, crucially, a bishop's authority could stem from other qualities. As such, Bede was not attacking Wilfrid *per se* nor denying him a central place within his history of the English Church. Nevertheless, he does accord similar places to those Wilfrid and his followers opposed and that through their holy lives contended that they too were legitimate bishops. In comparison to the *VW* this is unquestionably a diminished picture of Wilfrid and one that stands in opposition to much of Stephen's polemic. Yet it is not a negative picture and it might even suggest that Bede in the *HE* was trying to draw a line under the entire debate. Both the Ionan and Wilfridian parties were legitimate and both brought valuable things to the English Church: the former a remarkable devotion both to God and their congregation, the

²¹⁹ Stancliffe, *Bede*, pp. 23–7.

²²⁰ *HE* iii.5, iii.17, iii.28, iv.2.

²²¹ *HE* iii.29; iv.1.

latter catholic precepts and practices previously unknown that allowed for a more perfect understanding of the Christian faith.

Overall, Bede's handling of the appeal to orthodoxy demonstrates a respect for Wilfrid and a willingness to accord him an important role within the history of the English Church. Nevertheless, it was a role that was constrained in order to make Wilfrid a less controversial figure. The scale of his authority that could be derived from his catholicity was diminished through reference to Theodore, Acca and Otfor. Furthermore, those of the Irish tradition were given comparable standing through their holiness. Through these two points, the Wilfridian party was deprived of ammunition to attack the Ionan legacy and appeals to the orthodoxy of their leader were limited due to other figures with similar backgrounds. The overwhelming impression one gets is that Bede sought to pour oil on troubled waters. Both the Wilfridian and Ionan parties brought important qualities to English Christianity. The *HE* sought to end the controversy by providing a generally edifying picture of all for the benefit of the Church to which Bede was writing: to do so Wilfrid had to be cut down to size but celebrated nonetheless.

Biblical Corroboration

The idea that Wilfrid is a figure of qualified positivity in the *HE* receives some support from the biblical allusions within the *HE*'s text. Stephen was very free with the comparison of Wilfrid to patriarchs, prophets and apostles. Thacker has briefly noted most of the comparisons.²²² However, it is Laynesmith who has delved into the allegorical significance of these biblical allusions and emphasized a split in the *VW* between the first half which looked to Old Testament figures and the second half which referred to those of the New Testament, above all to St Paul, although through language rather than direct comparisons.²²³ The

²²² Abraham and Jacob: *VW* 2–4, 65; Joseph: *VW* 38, 42; Moses: *VW* 13, 17; Elijah: *VW* 34; David: *VW* 9; Solomon: *VW* 17; Andrew: *VW* 5, 26, 41, 68; Peter: *VW* 36, 41, 68; John the Evangelist: *VW* 6; Thacker, 'Wilfrid', pp. 4–5.

²²³ *VW* 10, 28–30, 35–8, 41; Laynesmith, 'Stephen', pp. 174–6.

fundamental point of Stephen's allusions seems to be the justification of Wilfrid's actions and by inference a reply to his critics using biblical precedents.²²⁴ Consequently, understanding Bede's allusions can further clarify how Bede engaged with Wilfrid's legacy. It is worth querying how visible such allusions would have been, especially textual ones, rather than direct comparisons to biblical figures. Suffice it to say that monastic life was saturated with the biblical narrative and it obviously held a position of great authority in their lives, so it is certainly entirely plausible that both authors would look to it to support their respective narratives. Whether individuals would have understood all the references probably depended upon that individual. How Albinus of Canterbury read the *HE* probably differed from how Coenwulf of Northumbria did, given Albinus' greater theological knowledge and training. While caution must be exercised in not bringing too great a weight to bear on allusions which could have served stylistic rather than didactic purposes, it is worth exploring the issue.

Bede made no comparisons with Wilfrid by name, as Stephen was wont to do.²²⁵ Moreover some of the scenes by which Stephen drew biblical comparisons are not to be found in the *HE*. For instance, the events that allowed Wilfrid's comparisons to Moses, his defence against the pagans of the South Saxons and the dedication of the Church of Ripon, are absent from Bede's account.²²⁶ Bede goes into great detail about Wilfrid's work evangelizing the South Saxons, as Stephen does. However, Stephen directly mentions Peter as an apostolic model for Wilfrid.²²⁷ No biblical allusion is visible in the account provided by the *HE*. Even the Synod of Whitby, in which there may be a Pauline comparison due to the casting of the 'Quartodecimans' as

²²⁴ Thacker, 'Cult', pp. 4–5; Laynesmith, 'Stephen', p. 177.

²²⁵ The prolonged narratives concerning Wilfrid are: *HE* iii.25, iv.13, v.19.

²²⁶ *HE* iv.13, v.19; *VW* 13, 17.

²²⁷ *VW* 41.

Jews, is recast by Bede, so that such an allusion is impossible.²²⁸ Furthermore, the textual allusions to Paul as an exemplar for Wilfrid are completely absent.²²⁹

Such direct comparisons are not completely absent from the *HE*. When relating a miracle of John of Beverley, Bede stated that the man he cured was like the man cured by the Apostles Peter and John, who stood up and entered the Temple with them.²³⁰ The comparison is admittedly between the reaction of the two sick men who received the cure. Nevertheless, the simple comparison of the miracles associates those that performed them and so John is placed alongside Peter and John. Likewise, Æthelfrith of Northumbria, despite his paganism, is directly compared to Saul, king of Israel.²³¹ Such comparisons are very rare and suggest something of how Bede preferred to write his text. Nevertheless, the failure to make such allusions with respect to Wilfrid suggests a deliberate decision on Bede's part not to do so.

The allusions that are then present would suggest Bede sought to restrain the grandiose claims of Stephen. I have found only two textual biblical allusions for Wilfrid in the *HE*, one of which should probably be dismissed as a literary trope. This one is the description of Wilfrid as *bonae indolis*,²³² which is paralleled in 1 Kings concerning Jeroboam.²³³ The phrase appears in the *VW* itself and *AVC*, suggesting it had become a stock phrase.²³⁴ The other allusion concerns his evangelizing work amongst the South Saxons. The phrase Bede used is *praedicabat eis Christum*,²³⁵ which resonates with a passage in Acts which runs *praedicabat illis Christum*.²³⁶ The context of this phrase is the deeds of Philip the Evangelist during Saul's persecution of the Church of Jerusalem. After the martyrdom of Stephen, Philip headed to

²²⁸ Laynesmith, 'Rhetoric', pp. 67–79.

²²⁹ Laynesmith, 'Stephen', p. 175.

²³⁰ *HE* v.2.

²³¹ *HE* i.34.

²³² *HE* v.19. 'of good disposition.

²³³ 1 Kings 11:28.

²³⁴ *VW* 2; *AVC* iii.19.

²³⁵ *HE* v.19. 'he preached Christ to them'

²³⁶ Acts 8:5. 'he preached Christ to them.'

Samaria to evangelize the people there, a task in which he experienced great success.²³⁷ Consequently, one can contend that there is a resonance between the two texts: two successful evangelists forced into exile.

It is, in comparison to the *VW*, a muted allusion. There are two figures, however, who may be compared to St Paul. The first is Aidan, whose reference to *lac doctrinae mollioris*²³⁸ alludes to Pauline teachings and which demonstrated his suitability to evangelize the Northumbrians. A similar allusion to milk in an evangelistic context prompted Laynesmith to suggest Stephen was drawing a comparison with Paul.²³⁹ Such an allusion to Pauline teaching rather than Paul's actions themselves may be an association with orthodox teaching rather than the saint himself. This may be the case with Aidan in particular; Bede may have placed him in a Pauline tradition deliberately to stress the validity of his evangelism and so remove the sting of his divergence on Easter. Theodore is the other figure who has Pauline associations. Bede draws a direct comparison with Paul, when describing the shape of Theodore's original tonsure: *habuerat enim tonsuram more orientalium sancti apostoli Pauli*.²⁴⁰ He also observes that Theodore was *natus Tarso Ciliciae*,²⁴¹ which is the phrase used by Paul to describe his own origins.²⁴² There are two other possible but less direct Pauline allusions. The first is the use of the word *cooperator*²⁴³ for Hadrian in his role aiding Theodore. In Philippians, Epaphroditus is related to Paul in the same manner (it also appears in 3 John, in the broader sense of being a fellow testifier to the Truth).²⁴⁴ Bede may have conceived of Hadrian's and Theodore's relationship as being akin to that between Epaphroditus and Paul. The final potential reference concerns Theodore's travels and again may allude to Paul's travels in Acts. Bede's comment that

²³⁷ Acts 8.

²³⁸ *HE* iii.5; 1 Corinthians 3:2. 'the milk of gentler teaching.'

²³⁹ Laynesmith, 'Stephen', p. 175.

²⁴⁰ *HE* iv.1. 'for he had received the tonsure of the holy apostle Paul, after the Eastern manner.'

²⁴¹ *Ibid.* 'a native of Tarsus in Cilicia.'

²⁴² Acts 22:3.

²⁴³ *HE* iv.1, v.20. 'fellow worker.'

²⁴⁴ Phil. 2:25; 3 John 8.

Theodore *ab eo benigne susceptus et multo tempore habitus est*²⁴⁵ may be comparable to Publius, who hosted Paul and *qui nos suscipiens, triduo benigne exhibuit*.²⁴⁶

Bede's use of Acts as an underlying model for the *HE* means that the allusions to Acts in particular, while slender, do need to be treated seriously. The general structure of Acts, with the Council of Jerusalem serving as a crucial transition from the early Church to the Pauline missions to the Gentiles, arguably further secures Theodore's Pauline association.²⁴⁷ Bede seems to have conceived of the Synod of Whitby as an English Council of Jerusalem and so Theodore's arrival matches the expansion of Paul's missionary activity.²⁴⁸ Bede seems to have sought to stress Theodore above all as a Pauline figure within the English Church, perhaps completing the mission in the West that Paul had begun with his arrival in Rome.²⁴⁹

Quite obviously, therefore, Wilfrid is diminished if Bede regarded him as comparable to Philip the Evangelist; Philip is clearly a junior figure to Paul. That being said, the comparison is to a holy man, a successful evangelist, to whom angels spoke and with whom Paul stayed on his final journey to Jerusalem.²⁵⁰ While this is very muted in comparison to Stephen's allusions, it is not a negative reference. Broadly speaking, this would accord with the general implications of how Bede handles Wilfrid's appeal to his Frankish and Roman background. Bede legitimised Aidan through a reference to Paul and asserted the authority of Theodore through more direct comparisons. Wilfrid's actions were subordinated to theirs; the comparison of him

²⁴⁵ *HE* iv.1. 'He was kindly received and entertained by him for a long period.'

²⁴⁶ Acts 28:7. 'who received us and entertained us honourably for three days.'

²⁴⁷ Williams, *Acts*, pp. 27–33; Barrett, *Commentary*, pp. 26–34.

²⁴⁸ Ray, 'Triumph', pp. 80–1.

²⁴⁹ Acts 28:17–31 *cf.* *EAA* cap. 28, lin.78.

²⁵⁰ Acts 8:26, 21:8.

to Philip the Evangelist renders him simply part of the wider Church, governed by, amongst others, Paul.

Conclusion

The presentation of Wilfrid by Stephen in the *VW* is as a man apart within the English Church, exceptional in his orthodoxy and his desire to respect and uphold apostolic authority emanating from the papacy in Rome. It is easy to follow this image presented by Stephen of Wilfrid as a man defined by his contact with Francia and Rome. In many respects, there is justification in doing so. Wilfrid's great success at the Synod of Whitby was built upon the education he had received at Rome, while the grandeur of his episcopal style sits comfortably within a Frankish model. Bede follows Stephen in this regard by summing up Wilfrid's importance as the first English bishop to introduce catholic customs.

That Wilfrid's career owed a lot to his Roman and Frankish travels cannot be denied. However, there is a risk in assuming that Wilfrid was defined solely by these experiences. A close analysis of Wilfrid within monastic and episcopal contexts creates a more rounded picture of a man who was also influenced by Northumbrian and English trends. While Wilfrid's status as a monk must be left as uncertain, his engagement with the *RSB* locates him in an English context. Firstly, he appears to have acquired a copy of the text from Canterbury. Secondly, the ascetic nature of his life points more to an Irish influence, most obviously derived from his childhood at Lindisfarne. Thirdly, his engagement with his monastic foundations in appointing abbots and dividing the treasury at Ripon is not in keeping with Benedictine principles. However, it places Wilfrid alongside the abbots and abbesses who granted their foundations to him and, if anything, renders Biscop and Wearmouth-Jarrow the oddities. Likewise, the timing of the foundation of Ripon before his acquisition of the *RSB* forces a reconsideration of the

Benedictine nature of Wilfrid's monastic foundations. The time Ceolfrith spent observing monastic life in Canterbury and East Anglia suggests a *regula mixta* influenced by the practices of other foundations within the English Church, perhaps blended with Northumbrian traditions known to the first monks of the Ripon refoundation. In other words, Wilfrid's monastic confederation sits comfortably within the English Church and neither it nor its head was uniquely influenced by the novel introduction of the *RSB* from Francia or Rome.

Likewise, reading between the lines of Wilfrid's actions as a bishop it is possible to see him engaging with the Northumbrian Church. His missionary style is not so easily reducible to either a 'Roman' or 'Celtic' style, as Mayr-Harting suggested, with Stephen arguably demonstrating hallmarks of both. In all probability, such distinct approaches to evangelization did not exist in the seventh-century English Church. The 'Roman' style, for example, is certainly not confined to the traditions of the Gregorian mission; Bede suggests Aidan focussed upon gentle persuasion rather than a major confrontation. In other words, the possibility that Aidan influenced Wilfrid's missionary style needs to be acknowledged. Likewise, Wilfrid's engagement with Acca reveals positive communication with Bosa of York, one of the intruder bishops. The general progression of Acca's career in Wilfrid's service suggests Wilfrid did not hold those ties against Acca and indeed his promotion to the see of Hexham may have been motivated by the fact Acca stood in a dual tradition. Moreover, Wilfrid's time at Lindisfarne may not have been the cause of the violent disruption to the monastic house. That may have been caused by a re-emergence of the Easter controversy, prompted by the defeat of Ecgfrith and the succession of Aldfrith to the Northumbrian throne. Wilfrid's appointment to the see was conceivably an attempt to prevent schism in the English Church and, when Adomnán visited Northumbria in 687, to restate the case for the Dionysiac Easter. Such an interpretation

once again stresses Wilfrid's Roman education but at the same time removes evidence of Wilfrid's continuing hostility towards Lindisfarne.

Ultimately, though, it is the Roman background, as well as the Frankish, which helps clarify Bede's perception of Wilfrid, because both Bede and Stephen recognize the importance of it to Wilfrid's career. It allows for comparison of a common theme, rather than inferences from Bede's silences. Throughout the *HE* Bede accorded Wilfrid respect and a positive role in the English Church. However, his position was diminished; his unique catholic status, stressed by Stephen, was constrained by Bede with reference not only to the earlier Gregorian missionaries but to Theodore, Acca and Otfor. Moreover, Bede saw authority deriving from sanctity as well as orthodoxy, thereby allowing the Ionan missionaries a commanding role in the *HE*. Bede sought to honour Wilfrid yet constrain him in both a Northumbrian and English context. Biblical references, above all to Acts, suggests that Bede viewed Wilfrid as Philip the Evangelist, contrasting with a clear casting of Theodore as Paul. Furthermore, a Pauline reference allowed Bede to legitimise Aidan's work by association. In essence, Bede seems to have sought to end the discord within the Northumbrian Church over the legacy of the Irish mission and accord all respect.

CONCLUSION

*Et ut ea quoque quae nec in Gallia quidem repperiri valebant, Romanis e finibus ecclesiae suae provisor impiger ornamenta vel munimenta conferret, quarta illo post compositum iuxta regulam monasterium projectione completa, multipliciore quam prius spiritalium mercium fenore cumulatus rediit.*¹

These comments by Bede in the *HA* perhaps best capture the relative importance between the Franks and Rome in the English mind in the seventh century. Francia was a legitimate point of contact but was superseded by Rome, which had a Christian culture and spiritual authority that the Franks simply could not match. Both Bede in the *HE* and Stephen in the *VW* express this quite succinctly. When describing Offfor's education, Bede noted that *etiam Romam adire curavit, quod eo tempore magnae virtutis aestimabatur.*² Stephen likewise conceptualised Wilfrid's first visit to Rome as conferring a spiritual benefit never replicated by his Frankish contacts: *apellare et videre sedem apostoli Petri et apostolorum principis, adhuc inatritam viam genti nostrae temptare in cor adolescentis supradicti ascendit et ab ea omnem nodum maculae solvendum sibi credens et beatitudinem benedictionis accipiendam.*³ However, the central point buried in Bede's description of Biscop's fourth journey is the constant presence of both Francia and Rome on the horizons of the English.

This accords with the implications of the evangelization, the realities of travel and the career of Bishop Wilfrid. Consistently Rome and Francia appear in the primary material engaging with the English. However, at the outset it is important to inject a degree of subtlety in this Frankish context. The evidence of evangelization and of travel consistently suggest that Neustria and Burgundy were the areas with which the English had the greatest levels of contact

¹ *HA* 6. 'Moreover, so that this tireless provider might bring back from the area around Rome attractive and useful items for his church which could not be found even in Gaul, once the monastery was established according to the rule he completed a fourth journey, and returned profitably laden with many more spiritual acquisitions than before.'

² *HE* iv.23. 'he decided to go to Rome too, which in those days was considered to be an act of great merit.'

³ *VW* 3. 'it came into the heart of this same young man ... to pay a visit to the see of the Apostle Peter, the chief of the Apostles, and to attempt a road hitherto untrodden by any of our race. By so doing, he believed he would cleanse himself from every blot and stain and receive the joy of the divine blessing.'

in the seventh century. In judging the competing influences of the Franks and Rome upon the English in the seventh century, it is worth bringing together certain recurring themes noted in previous chapters: institutional versus personal contact; ecclesiastical versus socio-political and continuity versus change. With those themes explored it is then possible to provide an answer to the question of the relative importance of Rome and the Franks in firstly the evangelization, secondly royal contacts and then finally Wilfrid's career, the combination of which answers the overarching question of their relative influences upon the English in the seventh century.

Institutional versus Personal Contact

The evidence of travel neatly encapsulates the competing importance of institutions and individuals in the development of contact in the seventh century. The prominence the sources give to the *duces* stresses this dualism. On the one hand, they were often appointed by someone in authority, a king or a bishop, to lead a travelling party. The link of the *dux* to a ruler implies an institutional relationship; the *dux*'s authority and ability to vouch for his companions was guaranteed in turn by his relationship to a seat of power. That being said, individuals could form personal relationships on their travels which then facilitated future journeys. Biscop clearly benefited from having friends in Vienne and his contact and experience of the route may explain why Vitalian asked him to guide Theodore and Hadrian to Kent, while Wilfrid's ties to the Lombard court seem to have later benefited Cædwalla. Likewise, the route taken may betray shifting importance between the institutional and the individual. The early history of travel to Rome is dominated by Canterbury and both Biscop and Wilfrid headed to Canterbury before beginning their travels, presumably because they needed to learn the route: Canterbury's institutional memory was important to them. However, the apparent shift of the

English road to Rome eastwards towards the end of the seventh century emphasizes the individual. Wilfrid pioneered this route and it is those with personal ties to him, Willibrord and Ceolfrith, that seemingly chose to follow his example. Evidently, the institutional could give way to the personal.

Comparing English contact between the Franks and the papacy in Rome in the seventh century suggests that it was different in nature. Rome looms consistently large in the primary material; Bede and Stephen both carefully recorded communication with the papacy, whether in the form of journeys, judgements or letters. In contrast, Frankish links appear more incidental, emerging in the sources mainly as staging posts on the way to Rome and as useful contacts for an individual to have. This may be no more than a bias within a historical record derived primarily from ecclesiastical sources, many with a strongly pro-Roman bent. There is, however, a consistency to contact between Rome and the English Church which implies an institutional link. The origins of the English Church lay in Rome and the manner in which Gregory invested Augustine with authority, through the *pallium*, sought to perpetuate a relationship between the sees of Rome and Canterbury. The papacy invested Canterbury with metropolitan authority, which was renewed across successive generations. The manner of the English Church's foundation directed English attention to Rome; the success of Gregory's plans is perhaps most clearly expressed by the appeal of Oswiu and Ecgbert to Rome for Wigheard's consecration. Even kings felt that authority in the English Church required interaction with the papacy.

The only Frankish link which might betray an institutional element is contact with Lyon, constant across the seventh century. Augustine and Berhtwold both received episcopal consecration from bishops of Lyon and Wilfrid spent three years in Aunemundus' household. The primacy of Lyon within the Frankish Church and the hints that it was still a centre of learning, especially in canon law, may have made it an obvious place for the fledgling English

Church to develop links with, alongside the more distant Roman see. Beyond Lyon, the links between the English and the Franks appear to be dominated by personal networks. In that sense, royal houses developed dynastic ties with the Merovingians and Frankish noble houses, strengthening those ties by placing members of their kin-group in Frankish religious houses. The Franks seem to have pursued a similar strategy, with Frankish bishops and queens a recurrent theme in Wessex, East Anglia and Kent in the seventh century. As such, the Frankish practice of translating saintly relics seems to have entered the English Church via Æthelthryth in Ely, whose step-sister, Sæthryth, was an abbess of Faremoutiers.

The turbulent career of Bishop Wilfrid captures this distinction neatly. Wilfrid was expelled from his see by King Ecgrith because Wilfrid's personal links to the Frankish kingdom had resulted in facilitating the return of Dagobert II to Austrasia. This ran counter to the interests of Ecgrith, Iurminburh and the wider ties of kinship that Anglo-Saxon royal families had made with Neustria; once those ties dissolved, Wilfrid was able to return. By contrast, Wilfrid turned to the papacy because he saw the popes, by virtue of their Apostolic See, as possessing authority to intervene within the English Church. As with his Frankish links, this disrupted the English Church's structures and internal authority, which had been developing from the early days of the Gregorian mission. While papal authority was acknowledged, it was construed as underscoring the metropolitan authority of Canterbury. Wilfrid's direct appeals to the papacy consequently undermined how the English Church understood its relationship with Rome because he circumvented Canterbury's papally granted authority. It is telling that a resolution was only found at the Synod of Nidd when John VI ordered Berhtwold to convene a synod to settle the matter and if unable to do so to refer the matter himself to Rome for judgement. In essence, ties with Rome were founded upon offices not individuals and concerns about where authority in the English Church stemmed from; ties with the Franks were personal, often dissolving with the death of the individuals that formed the links.

Ecclesiastical versus Socio-political

Beginning with the evidence of travel once again, it is very easy to assert that the contact the English had with the Franks and the papacy in the seventh century was dominated by the Church and so fundamentally ecclesiastical in nature. The travellers who are known about are almost uniformly high-status ecclesiastics. An exception is Cædwalla, who was still high-status and arguably travelled for ecclesiastical purposes, given that he received baptism in Rome in 689. Certainly, it is difficult to discern any non-ecclesiastical contact with Rome in the seventh century. Contact originated with evangelization and was perpetuated by bishops of Canterbury sending messengers to attend councils and secure the *pallium*. Wilfrid's appeals were concerned with the governance of the English Church and his position within it. While kings were recipients of papal letters, they were overwhelmingly concerned with either evangelization or the affairs of the English Church (most notably the disputes prompted by Bishop Wilfrid). Likewise, the first instance of kings writing to the papacy, when Oswiu and Ecgbert wrote to Vitalian I, is firmly ecclesiastical in nature, focussing upon the appointment and consecration of a new bishop of Canterbury.

The Frankish evidence is less straightforward, although there is undeniably an ecclesiastical element. The Frankish Church clearly influenced the liturgy of the English Church, while Wilfrid's three years at Lyon and relationship with Agilbert almost certainly influenced his conception of episcopal office. The presence of Frankish bishops in East Anglia and Wessex and English royal women in Neustrian monasteries also obviously has an ecclesiastical nature. However, these must be balanced against the evidence of Quentovic and the marriage ties that definitely developed in Kent and plausibly in Wessex, East Anglia and Northumbria as well. It is easy to reduce all these ties to the manifestation of Neustrian power-struggles in a wider hinterland. However, to neglect questions of English agency is overly reductive. Erchinoald's marriage alliance with Eadbald predates his appointment as *maior domus*. In other words, these

ties were not expressions of Frankish nobles' power, rather a means to develop it; alliances with the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms could provide something to Frankish families. This is certainly the implication of the Faronid links to Wessex if they are conceived as a counterweight to Erchinoald's Kentish ties.

Quentovic's foundation by English traders in Francia raises further questions. It provides an alternative means of explaining the movement of people across the Channel in the seventh century. Its remarkable economic wealth was an obvious lure to royal and noble families in both the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms and Neustria. Control of it would naturally provide an advantage but unilateral action would risk destroying the trade networks that fed the settlement. Competition led to communication, which in turn prompted cooperation, tying the Anglo-Saxon and Frankish worlds more closely together through marriage alliances and placing family members in strategically important ecclesiastical institutions, such as the see of Wessex or the monastery of Faremoutiers. The presence of English relations at Faremoutiers, for example, gave Erchinoald greater control over the important house; by the same token the kings of East Anglia and Kent had female relatives placed in close proximity to the Neustrian *maior domus*, giving them influence in the affairs of their neighbour.

Once again, the involvement of Wilfrid in the return of Dagobert II to Austrasia gives some indication of how closely involved the English could be in Frankish power struggles. Moreover, the implications that Wilfrid supplied arms and men, as well as simply facilitating the return, hints at the central role that they could play. More to the point, the reaction of Ecgfrith and Iurminburh to Wilfrid's involvement, driving him out of all kingdoms with which they had ties of kinship, gives some sense of the importance the English placed upon links between themselves and Neustria. Ties with Francia were more complex than those with Rome, with the ecclesiastical blending with socio-political, creating competing networks both in Francia and, most visibly, Northumbria, between the king and queen and their bishop. However,

Wilfrid's ties with Austrasia prompted a significant shift at the end of the seventh century to a relationship dominated by ecclesiastics. Wilfrid was able to engineer the introduction of Willibrord to Pippin II and so begin the English evangelization of Frisia and Saxony.

Continuity versus Change

This introduction facilitated by Wilfrid provides the clearest evidence of change in the seventh century. Not only did the nature of English-Frankish links (or at least recorded links) shift from a blend of the ecclesiastical and socio-political to the exclusively ecclesiastical, the geographic scope of the links completely altered. The evidence of evangelization, travel, the movement of ecclesiastics and marriage alliances points to Neustria as the centre of English ties, occasionally extending into Burgundy. By the end of the seventh century and for most of the eighth century the extant links were with Austrasia. The explanation for this change appears to be the battle of Tertry (687), which shifted the balance of power in the Frankish kingdom towards Austrasia, arguably prompting the Neustrian nobility to refocus their attention inwards to cope with the change. It is possible that Bede's unwillingness to relate the affairs of his own time and a general move in the source material away from the narrative to the documentary has obscured the continuity of links with Neustria. It is nevertheless worth noting that evidence of contact re-emerges in the letters of Alcuin and Charlemagne. It may also hint at the importance of geography. The mooted marriage alliance between Offa and Charlemagne may have occurred when Charles the Younger was granted a *regnum* beyond the Seine. Rulers in southern Britain and northern France had to engage with each other. In the late seventh and eighth centuries, when the Frankish centre of power lay further east, ties lapsed. Likewise, as English ecclesiastics further integrated themselves into the marches between Francia and Saxony it

encouraged travellers eastwards, possibly also providing a safer route as Muslim raiding in the south-west increased.

This sharp change evident in Frankish links is not so visible in ties with Rome. From the evangelization to the appeals of Wilfrid, Rome was a consistent source of authority for the English Church. While the nature of the ties may remain constant, the dynamic did alter. For the first half of the seventh century, contact seems to have been focussed upon Canterbury, granting the *pallium* and guiding missionary efforts. In the second half of the century contact had widened out as Canterbury's authority had expanded to include the whole English Church in the aftermath of Whitby. English ecclesiastics also began to turn to Rome to settle disputes, such as Theodore's promotion to archiepiscopal status in the face of Wilfrid's metropolitan ambitions, and Wilfrid's recurrent appeals against his depositions at the hands of archbishops and Northumbrian kings. The general impression is that the English began to deal more self-consciously with Rome over the course of the seventh century, moving from being a receptor of Christian influence to engaging with the papacy directly in ecclesiastical matters. Overall, Rome's role as the source of ecclesiastical authority remained constant over the seventh century, although how the English interacted with it gradually altered; links with the Franks centred upon Neustria for much of the same period, involving kings as well as bishops, before suddenly shifting both eastwards to Austrasia at the end of the century and firmly to the ecclesiastical. English ties to both the Franks and Rome can consequently be expressed as

blending continuity and change in the seventh century with Wilfrid being one of the key figures that brought this about.

The Relative Importance of Francia and Rome to the English

As the above discussion has made clear, relations between the English, Rome and Francia fluctuated across the seventh century and consequently are not reducible to a straightforward summarizing statement. Context matters in evaluating these competing influences and how their relative importance was perceived by kingdoms and the Church as well as individual kings and ecclesiastics. To take an example given in Chapter Four, Ecgrith's Neustrian links were of considerable importance to the king and consideration of them significantly influenced his attitude towards Wilfrid. Frankish concerns seem to have been entirely absent from Aldfrith's dealings with the troublesome bishop. That being said, both kings display a respect for Roman authority in guiding ecclesiastical matters, to the point that Ecgrith attacked Wilfrid for forging papal documents rather than the papacy for supporting him. Consequently, any overarching observations must be made with due caution.

Evangelization

In contrast to recent assessments, there is a compelling case for placing Rome well ahead of the Franks in the matter of the evangelization of Kent. Gregory's letters consistently prioritise the role of his own missionaries and suggest that the direct involvement of Frankish clerics was as translators, a point that Bede ostensibly follows. Gregory's anxiety about perceived faults within the Frankish Church, most notably simony, may account for his desire to reserve sacramental roles for Roman missionaries, about whose orthodoxy he could be certain. In essence, Gregory's letters suggest that he envisaged the Frankish role as primarily one of support in facilitating Augustine's journey to Kent, involving both the Frankish courts

and Church. Perhaps the most compelling single piece of evidence about the greater role of Rome in the evangelization is that Augustine turned to Gregory for reinforcements rather than any of the Frankish rulers, despite their aid on his journey to Kent. The influence of the papacy is more diffuse in Wessex and East Anglia, which saw greater Frankish involvement, but Canterbury was included in Felix's efforts in East Anglia and the Italian Birinus began the mission to Wessex with a papal commission.

In judging the Frankish contribution to the evangelization of the English it appears both regional and personal. While far more letters to the rulers and bishops of Austrasia and Burgundy have survived, the variable annual survival rates of Gregory's letters make such a straightforward quantitative assessment difficult to rely upon. It is undeniable that Brunhilda's support, possibly associable with the Burgundian Syagrius of Autun, was important. However, the text of the sole letter that survives to Chlothar II hints that he may have provided some form of support for Augustine directly in Kent. In other words, his northern Kingdom of Soissons, which formed the core of the later Neustrian kingdom, arguably provided the greatest level of support for the mission. This would match the patterns visible both earlier and later. Agilbert and Leuthere were Neustrian, while there are reasons for suspecting that Felix was Burgundian. Likewise, the pre-Augustinian evidence of Bertha's marriage to Æthelberht and the archaeological context of Liudhard's medalet points to contact with Chilperic, king of Soissons. Bertha's marriage emphasizes the importance of the Franks as points of personal influence, given the role Bede acknowledges she (and possibly Liudhard) played in exposing Æthelberht to Christianity and so preparing the ground for Augustine's mission. While this, combined with the recent evidence of the Prittlewell burial, may suggest the Roman mission

superseded an earlier Frankish influence, the gold foil crosses in the burial suggest early links with a tradition designed to highlight adherence to Roman Christianity.

Royal Contact

The marriage of Bertha and Liudhard raised the question of how Anglo-Saxon rulers perceived these dual influences. As noted, there is consistent evidence of royal and noble interaction between some of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms and the northern kingdoms of Francia, Soissons and then Neustria. Kent appears to be where the links originated, with Bertha's marriage providing definitive evidence, although there is a possible shadowy pre-history hinted at by Æthelberht's father's name: Eormenic. Kent's links spilled over into Northumbria through the marriage alliances with Edwin and Oswiu. The underlying causes of East Anglian and West Saxon ties to Francia are obscure, although the model of Quentovic, economic interests prompting a blend of competition and cooperation and so pulling two regions closer together, may hint at the answer. It seems likely that to a lay audience these Frankish ties were more important than papal ties. The example of Ecgrith's hostility to Wilfrid mentioned at the outset of this section lends itself to such a conclusion. Likewise, Wilfrid never seems to have been able to enter Kent, with the closest ties to Neustria, after his support for Dagobert, despite his papal appeals and reconciliation with Theodore. The day-to-day realities of trade links and competing networks of alliances (Kent and Erchinoald, Wessex and the Faronids for example) presumably kept Francia more firmly in the vision of Anglo-Saxon kings.

This is not to say that Rome was unimportant to them, simply a less consistent influence to be dealt with. From a royal, rather than ecclesiastical perspective, interaction with the papacy appears intermittent. While this may be a result of lack of evidence, it is interesting that only a single letter is known in the seventh century from Anglo-Saxon kings (Oswiu and Ecgbert) to the papacy. While other papal letters, such as that from Sergius, may imply contact, there is

nothing akin to Vitalian's acknowledgement of Oswiu's letter that would suggest such direct communication. It is worth noting that in both of Wilfrid's appeals, Stephen only acknowledges the presence of the archbishops' representatives, although the papacy wrote to both the archbishops and various kings in making the outcomes known. Consequently, there is an impression that kings largely left papal matters to Canterbury to deal with, a suggestion that fits neatly with Aldfrith's willingness to force Wilfrid's return to Austerfield, but only with Berhtwold's consent, or Ecgfrith's acceptance that he needed Theodore's involvement to depose Wilfrid. Oswiu's and Ecgbert's unique foray into papal affairs is explicable because it comes at a moment of crisis in the English Church, when it was lacking not only a bishop of Canterbury, but its episcopate (and presumably its priesthood and diaconate) had been ravaged by plague. Communication with Rome arguably provided access to the ancient imperial and Christian heritage of the Roman world and so gave prestige to individual kings; however, this did not overshadow the real presence of their Frankish neighbours and the need to live with them.

The Career of Bishop Wilfrid

Wilfrid found out the strength of these ties to his cost. Despite that, Wilfrid's career was defined by Stephen in relation to his Frankish and Roman interactions and, to an extent, Wilfrid's actions informed the decisions of those around him. As such, the competing influences of Francia and Rome can be judged in the light of the Wilfridian evidence. Stephen constructed Wilfrid's career and authority primarily upon his Roman contact. To an extent this is visible in the way that Stephen stresses Wilfrid operating in accordance with the judgement of the popes and his enemies contumaciously opposing them and being punished for it. This is powerful evidence of the dominant position Rome held in Wilfrid's mind; the Frankish Church, despite its orthodoxy, could not match Rome for authority. There are two comparative examples that corroborate such a statement. Firstly, the details of his comparatively brief

Roman education are given (*computus*, the four Gospels and matters of ecclesiastical discipline), while his three years at Lyon are merely noted. In particular, his knowledge of *computus* and the four Gospels were central to his campaign against the perceived heresy of the *Latercus* and championing of Dionysiac orthodoxy. This education provided the bedrock of his position within the English Church as an expert on Roman practices, which placed him in the leading role at Whitby and which arguably lay behind his reconciliation with Theodore and reinstatement in Northumbria in the wake of Aldfrith's succession. Secondly, Wilfrid's ecclesiastical career in the *VW* begins with his papal blessing and only after Wilfrid has received approbation from the centre of western Christendom does he receive the tonsure, the priesthood and ultimately the episcopate from Frankish bishops.

The second point shows that Francia was important to Wilfrid and cannot be written out of his career, but primacy was given to the papacy. The influences that the Frankish Church had upon Wilfrid, whether in his liturgy, music or knowledge of canon law, all emerge from incidental references in and inferences from Stephen's text. Rome and the papal judgements in favour of Wilfrid form cornerstones of the *VW*'s narrative. The papacy could intervene in the affairs of the English Church and uphold Wilfrid's status as a bishop in a way the Franks could not. However, this second point also raises the idea that this is a constructed image. The careful presentation of Wilfrid first engaging with Christian ritual when he met the pope is an effective didactic point but cannot be historically accurate, given the time he spent at both Lindisfarne and Canterbury.

Wilfrid's utter devotion to Roman authority does wilt somewhat under close inspection. His aspirations to metropolitan status and independence from Canterbury's authority never seem to have been recognized by Rome. More pertinently, the papacy continually affirmed Canterbury's authority. Theodore, taking advantage of his unique knowledge of the Monothelete heresy in 679, managed to have Canterbury promoted from a metropolitan see to

an archiepiscopal see with responsibility for the entirety of Britain. The higher status as archbishop ensured York, irrespective of its metropolitan ambitions, remained subordinate to Canterbury, a point emphasized by the assertion of authority over Britain. The title archbishop of Britain was never recognized by Wilfrid and the pursuit of his independence from Canterbury formed part of Berhtwold's complaints to John VI. There seem to have been limits to Wilfrid's willingness to accept papal authority when the judgements were not in his favour.

The image of the staunch defender of Rome is one constructed by Stephen to further his hagiographic purpose. Wilfrid's authority within the English Church derived from his interactions with Rome and Francia and so Stephen stressed his relationship with them. A study of Wilfrid's relationship with the monastic life and his career as a bishop contextualises him within his own Northumbrian and, more widely, English background. While it is difficult to be certain whether Wilfrid ever took monastic vows, he was closely associated with Northumbrian monasticism. A piece of evidence often cited as part of his 'continental credentials' is his introduction of the *RSB* into the Northumbrian Church. However, Stephen's narrative strongly suggests that he acquired his copy of the text in Kent, probably Canterbury. Likewise, Wilfrid's own personal life suggests he was influenced by his experiences at Lindisfarne, with his asceticism going further than a Benedictine norm and finding parallels in Cuthberht's life and the lives of Irish saints. While this cannot be taken as a decisive indicator of the rule in Wilfrid's monasteries because of the lack of clarity as to whether Wilfrid took monastic vows, there is limited evidence to suggest the *RSB* was introduced wholesale. Wilfrid's actions regarding abbatial succession and monastic property do not fit with the *RSB* and Ceolfrith's early life saw him visiting various other monastic houses, including one in Canterbury and one in East Anglia, to study their rules. It suggests Wilfrid's houses adhered to a *regula mixta* and one that was heavily influenced by practices found elsewhere within the English Church. Even the continental *RSB* seems to have entered the Wilfridian confederation from an English source.

More intriguingly, there are hints that suggest that Wilfrid's personal life stood, at least in part, in a Lindisfarne tradition.

These hints continue in Wilfrid's episcopal career. The style of his evangelism is difficult to pin down, but while it could owe something to Canterbury and Gregory the Great, it could equally derive from Aidan and his time at Lindisfarne: Wilfrid's moderate style matches Bede's reports of Aidan's work. Likewise, Wilfrid's victory over the pagans of Sussex does allude to a trope Mayr-Harting identified in 'Celtic-influenced' evangelists, although this is limited because the context is not one of conversion. The career of Acca further places Wilfrid within the Northumbrian Church. In order for Acca to join Wilfrid there must have been communication between Bosa and Wilfrid, something Stephen's presentation of Wilfrid's antipathy towards the intruded bishops would imply was impossible. Furthermore, Wilfrid does not seem to have attacked the bishop of Lindisfarne in his second appeal. Equally, his tenure as bishop of Lindisfarne seems to have been prompted by a resumption of the Easter controversy. It was this, rather than Wilfrid, that lay behind the trials that Lindisfarne experienced in 687. As such, evidence of Wilfrid's hostility to Lindisfarne and Northumbria's Ionan traditions dissipates and arguably there is evidence that suggests he could engage positively with both. While Rome and Francia were central to Wilfrid's career, he was still influenced by his childhood experiences and the ecclesiastical culture of his own Church.

Similarly, it was Rome and Francia that formed the cornerstone to both Stephen's and Bede's presentation of Wilfrid. This point in common allows for a reappraisal on how Bede chose to remember Wilfrid's turbulent career, rather than seeking to extrapolate out from silence. Bede, due to his wider focus, placed Wilfrid on a broader stage, which included the bishops of Canterbury and the Ionan missionaries. To that end, he acknowledged Wilfrid's primacy in catholic introductions amongst English bishops but admitted the earlier efforts of Gregory's mission and the concurrent career of Theodore. Furthermore, while Stephen

grounded episcopal authority in orthodoxy, Bede perceived sanctity as also conferring legitimacy upon a bishop. Consequently, Bede honoured Wilfrid and gave him a positive role in the *HE*, but constrained him, acknowledging different means by which catholic traditions entered the English Church and the important legacy present in the Ionan traditions of Northumbria. Such an impression is confirmed by the biblical allusions, above all to Acts, which may see Wilfrid cast as Philip the Evangelist, while Theodore and, to a lesser extent Aidan, are cast in a Pauline role.

Looking to the Eighth Century

Naturally, these themes do not abruptly end at the close of the seventh century and they raise some intriguing questions about developments in the eighth century. Firstly, from a sources' perspective, Nothhelm's search for papal letters in Rome seems to mark the beginnings of interest in the letters of Gregory I. It begs the question of what was going on within the English Church to inspire such a search. In a similar vein, it can clarify the origins of the papal and Frankish manuscript traditions of Gregory's letters and the role the English Church played in it.⁴ Furthermore, if the role of Wilfrid in the origins of the missionary impulse is stressed, the debate concerning Willibrord's competing Irish and Northumbrian ties perhaps should be revisited.⁵ In addition, it should be considered why Pippin II and his successors were comfortable allowing English ecclesiastics such a prominent role in their affairs but, as far as the evidence suggests, made no effort to create formal ties with an Anglo-Saxon royal house until the end of the eighth century.⁶ Equally, does the decline of Neustrian ties at the end of the seventh century in Kent and Wessex help to explain the later rise of Mercia? Curiously, Mercia

⁴ *HE* Preface; *BLE* 33; cf. *MGH* Epp. 2, p. viii.

⁵ Ó Cróinín, 'Willibrord', pp. 17–49; McKitterick, 'insular culture', pp. 397–405.

⁶ Levison, *Continent*, pp. 53–93; Moore, 'Francia', pp. 253–68; Story, *Carolingian*, p. 50.

does not appear to have had direct ties with Neustria. These ties evidently brought some benefits for the Anglo-Saxon houses that forged them; their termination could conceivably have weakened Mercia's rivals, giving Mercia the advantage.

Ultimately, Francia and Rome were both important places on the English horizons. Their competing influences alter depending on time and context, but the source material, above all the *HE* and the *VW*, show the enduring impact that they both had upon English history and, as a microcosm, the worldviews of the authors of those two texts. The English self-consciously engaged with the Franks and the papacy across the seventh century, contact which drove some of the most important changes in English history and which lies behind the dynamic engagement of the English with their neighbours in the eighth.

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